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FRESH INSPIRATION

From the 4th until the 6th of December last year's A.R.E. Retail Design Collective took place in New York City. All over the city the famous Holiday Windows and the latest retail design trends spread in famous and new stores. Sonja Löbbel and Matthias Spanke report from New York City.

"There is no doubt: The beginning of December is the best period for retail designers and visual merchandisers to visit New York City", emphasises Matthias Spanke. "The Retail Design Collective summarises everything that is worth seeing and knowing about this gigantic city – you can hardly have faster and more sustainable inspiration anywhere else", Sonja Löbbel confirms. Subsequent to the trade fair the two experts of INSPIRED Visual Merchandising were able to channel different tendencies to main trends. These trends show connecting elements: "Current values like tradition, freedom, individuality and honesty are mirrored in the visual merchandising tendencies", Matthias Spanke explains, who could identify three big trends together with Sonja Löbbel:

DIY Aesthetics – wood, tools, and boxes

This trend is omnipresent at the moment. Boxes, planks, or jacked wooden boards: The main thing is to use rough, natural materials. "Often the theme is influenced by handicrafts. On rather industrial spaces this decoration

communicates a lot of warmth and so it breaks the modern strictness. That seems to be inviting for the customer", Spanke states. A big part of this trend is the Outline Projects. Here, clear, geometrical forms, mostly cubes, are constituted only by contours. Frames made of wood and metal are used to position mannequins or goods on hangers or presenters. The clear silhouette of the cube creates a natural focus.

Heritage – a trend on its zenith

"Heritage is still intact as a language of design. Old, used objects form a harmonic unit. Often you can see old loupes, telescopes, or even hourglasses. Depending on the season also plants are used", Sonja Löbbel explains. But the visual merchandising experts are sure that from now on the Heritage trend will slowly lose importance. "People simply have enough. Heritage will soon have transcended its zenith", Spanke and Löbbel say in unison.

Monochrome White – minimal colour, maximal effect

Matthias Spanke and Sonja Löbbel agree: "Monochrome White is a new ten-

dency, but also a huge challenge." No matter if a large back panel of a room or a bigger object like a logo which is put together by several smaller objects: the main thing is that everything is kept in perfect white. The positioning of the single design elements has to be well considered. As a material plastic would be the best, but there are no limits for creativity. "Next to all these handwork-inspired and cosy, nostalgic styles, Monochrome White brings wind of change into the shop windows and on the sales areas", says Sonja Löbbel.

Mannequins – extreme facets

The Retail Design Collective in New York City was not only trend-setting in the field of entire decorations but also regarding the use of mannequins. Matthias Spanke: "The biggest mannequin trend at the moment is creating mannequins with extreme facets." Those can be realistic as well as stylised. They become a new design object by surrealist alienation. This trend goes from coloration, via painted masks through to 3D-collages in a DIY-look. In rather commercial settings mannequins with very long wigs are used. In the

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premium segment especially realistic mannequins can be seen. But even in this sector little, detailed aspects are used.

“DIY Aesthetics and Heritage are still very strong, but especially Heritage slowly comes to its zenith. At the moment the design tendency is still oriented towards cosiness at PoS”, Matthias Spanke summarises and Sonja Löbbel adds: “It is noticeable that both trends are rather warm and full of details whereas Monochrome White establishes with a modern and minimalist design language. I think we will see this more often in the future.”

The biggest challenge still is the implementation. “It is still the most important thing to transfer the trends to the own brand world”, Sonja Löbbel and Matthias Spanke say.



„DIY Aesthetics“ – Levis



„Monochrome White“ at Camper



„Heritage“ at Chanel