

# WRITING FOR DESIGN

SCARLETT WILLIAMS

## PHYSICAL CONTEXT

**01-02** Site Writing/Slow Looking

**03-04** Site Mapping

**05-06** Photographic Montage

**07-10** Zooming In, Site Details

**11-12** Creative Writing

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

**13-16** Timeline

**17-22** Selfridges - In Depth Research

## CRITICAL CONTEXT

**23-40** Extraction Of The Concept 'Home' Within Retail Design

**41-44** Extraction Of The Concept 'Home' Within Retail Design - Draft

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## SITE WRITING/SLOW LOOKING

**Changes.** The Tottenham Court Road side of Oxford Street has been experiencing a drastic change over the recent years, with a resurgence in the area through large-scale developments such as the Outernet, the introduction of the Elizabeth line and London's largest Primark store, which drives significant footfall. When looking at the buildings in the immediate area, the variety of building styles, ages, and scales is apparent, indicating the development of the street over time, a fascinating history that I intend to draw on within the project.

**Building.** Standing from across the site, the immediate presence of the consumer giants overshadows the site, both commercially and physically. The Primark to the west is such a scale that the council forced it to have three separate facades with separate entrances to ensure the language of the rest of the street is consistent. To the East is a McDonald's, which features a bold facade with monotone green and eye-catching signage. Both stores are considerably taller and feature a more expansive facade, allowing more time to grab consumers' attention. These factors must be carefully considered so that the store is noticed and relevant.

**Atmosphere.** The never-ending stream of people results in a chaotic experience, and even when standing still to observe this, the uneasy feeling from doing so is apparent. People push past to get to A-B, with people having little consideration for their surroundings. The flurry of people travel in both directions, with most moving in groups, making it difficult to navigate around the pavement and move in a direction against the general 'flow'. Primark and McDonald's being located on either side of the store means large numbers stand stationary, forcing people to speed up past the proposed site and reducing any attention placed on the building because the public disguises it.



## SITE MAPPING

Multiple tube stations are located in the immediate vicinity of the store, leading to a loud and **chaotic environment** from which the store should form an **escapism**.

- Existing trees help combat **ever-growing pollution** in the area.
- Existing green areas to escape the chaos and pollution in the area.

- 1 Oxford Street Tube Station
- 2 Tottenham Court Road Tube Station
- 3 Goodge Street Tube Station
- 4 Leicester Square Tube Station
- 5 Covent Garden Tube Station

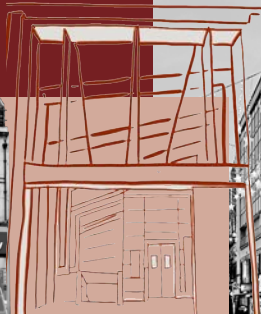
Demonstrated is the number of trees and green spaces around the site, indicating how minimal there are. This shows the negligence in **attitudes regarding pollution levels**, making our skin more vulnerable. This is reflected physically in store with the 'scoops' revealing pristine, **undamaged layers** of our skin, which is further shown with the extensive use of leather to be **worn away over time**.



# PHOTOGRAPHIC MONTAGE



THE SITE



TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD STATION



OXFORD CIRCUS

OXFORD CIRCUS STATION



SELFRIDGES

## ZOOMING IN, SITE DETAILS

Taking a more in-depth view into the smaller details around the site can help provide a deeper understanding of not only the site itself but can enable inspiration to be drawn, which is not only relevant to the site but, in some cases, elements which would otherwise not have been considered. Oxford Street has witnessed extensive changes over time, which are particularly evident when looking at smaller details.

To the right, the image depicts the edge of the wall in which the proposed site is located. The corner has been shaven to result in a more **chamfered edge**, adding a **softness** and an interesting detail. The smaller detailing is rounded, tying into the rounded facade of the proposed site and 'scoop' elements, all featuring the same aesthetic language.



## ZOOMING IN, SITE DETAILS



The site itself currently features a change in materiality, which **separates** what part of the store from the pavement. This has influenced the proposed Aesop project and will be introduced as a means of **transitioning** between the street environment and the store interior.



Areas around the site have become relatively **uncared for** and are now **damaged**, reducing the appeal of the overall site. The multiple **cracks** form an interesting texture upon what would be a featureless, uninteresting surface, showing how unintentional elements can become ones of interest.



Features further down Oxford Street and towards 'The Flying Horse' checkered tiles have been used on the stairs to lower levels of the establishment. This **bold statement** upon the exterior is impactful and encourages **discovery**. It has been implemented in the proposed Aesop store through the drastic change in materiality through the shingle flooring.



Here, three different textures and colours have been used on different surfaces, and whether this was intentional or not has created a point of interest. The three colours complement each other and indicate different functions of each structure, with the far left serving a more **decorative function** for Primark and the right bringing a more **structural** element that helps support part of the existing site's facade.

## OBJECT CREATIVE WRITING

**Physical.** The object comprises two elements constructed from different materialities, both serving distinct functions. The lower component is expressive and exudes what the brand wishes to portray with the considered glossy design, displaying luxury and sophistication. The main element is a hollow cube with smooth edges, which feel delicate and elegant. The faces are moulded into a liquid-like finish, reflecting the contents of the object. The upper component is opaque and reflects any light, feeling more robust and contrasting the glass element below. Inside the glass, a liquid appears to have movement even when motionless as it moulds around the concave unconventional curves seamlessly. The entirety of the object emits a golden hue by being integrated into every element, with the liquid contents featuring this most. The lid is weightless and can be removed with ease to immediately reveal warm floral scents that are light and delicate.

**Sentimental.** This perfume has particularly great importance to me, being purchased by my grandma for a previous birthday. The smell always gives me a feeling of home and comfort, which feels reassuring, especially when my everyday life consists of being so far from home. As a child, I always remember she would have such a variety of glass perfume bottles, all of which glistened in the sun. I found them enchanting with their elegance and sophistication, which subconsciously created a correlation between her and perfumes. Most birthdays involve receiving a perfume that represents that year, and I can use it to evoke memories upon each use in the future, making perfumes a very personal product.

**Design Project Relation.** The Aesop brand sells a wide variety of products, including perfume; however, this is often overshadowed by skincare, which dominates most stores. Within my design project, I intend to switch the focus to perfume, creating a store with an altered identity with the option to create personalised perfumes. Perfume is an expression of yourself, an immediate interaction with someone without any communication; it can reflect your mood, the weather, or things you like/enjoy. Although there are extensive perfumes on the market, the option to create a fragrance that is unique to you is limited and often regarded as an 'experimental workshop' and a novelty experience. I intend to create a space where this can become a typical way to purchase perfume without limitations and constraints. This will allow consumers to form a deeper connection to the space as the memory-triggering scents created and tailored to your tastes will only be found in the 'Aesop Home' store, encouraging repeat customs.

Having witnessed the deep emotional connection scents can have when relating to times in life, this relationship I intend to carry this through to the interior of the space, evoking feelings of comfort within the environment, which will allow users to explore their identity and how to reflect themselves truly.

Within the store itself, inspiration will be drawn from the senses triggered when using perfume bottles and the luxurious connotations established to respect everyday use, which in turn would cause repeat custom to the store. The liquid-like shapes, smooth movement, and glossy texture will all be implemented to establish a tranquillity that envelops the space and, in turn, allows the users to construct a comforting and inviting environment. The warmer tones will be featured in the lighting and considered in the materiality choices to ensure a natural glow and a palette that puts consumers at ease to explore the perfumes and how best to create scents to reflect their identity.





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## OXFORD STREET TIMELINE

Stretching **1.2 miles** and located within the Westminster Borough of London, Oxford Street has been occupied since the Romans and used to **trade goods** such as fabrics, fish, and cattle. During the Middle Ages, the Street was seen as a relatively **undesirable** area due to the introduction of the gallows at Marble Arch, where public executions would take place. Initially, the area was known as Oxford Road and was later altered with the term Street in the 18th century, which was caused by a major shift in land use to become **primarily retail**. This development continued into the 20th century when stores which are recognisable today emerged, such as the department stores Selfridges and John Lewis & Partners, both of which made a name for themselves on Oxford Street. During WWII, Oxford Street **experienced bombings** that demolished a number of buildings and resulted in a street with various building types demonstrating a number of architectural styles. Due to the economic climate and changes in attitudes towards the physical and online retail world, the Street is experiencing **issues regarding its survival**. Solutions are being devised to keep the street thriving, which is outlined in the **Westminster Council's 2021 framework**, but to date, these large-scale alterations are still to be seen.



### THE PHOTOGRAPHERS GALLERY: 1710 (PREDICTED)

The gallery moved to its current site in 2012, a building that previously served as a **textile warehouse**. Architects O'Donnell + Tuomey completed renovations in 2010, **merging old and new together** in a bold and graphic manner. Glass has been used extensively to **integrate views** of the surroundings and almost provide means of the building to become part of an exhibit.



### HERTFORD HOUSE: 1897

The building was constructed in 1788 and, after a number of years of being used by the Spanish Embassy, was then used as a private residence in 1797 with the Hertford family. The building is located in Manchester Square and was converted into a museum between 1897 and 1900 to become the public space we know today. A number of works are displayed, most of which are paintings from between the 15th and 19th Centuries.



### THE APPLE STORE, REGENT STREET: 189

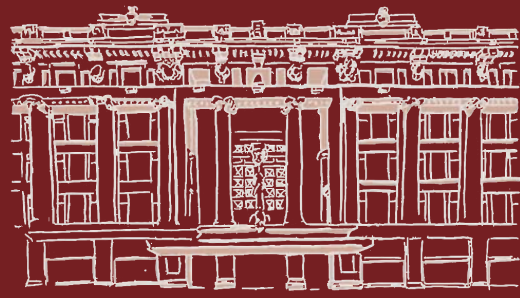
The original facade, now grade II listed, was home to Antonio Salviati, a mosaicist who was most recognised for his work in the Albert Memorial Chapel and St Paul's Cathedral. In 2004, the architecture practice Foster + Partners sympathetically redesigned the facade and completed extensive works to the interior, implementing Apple's signature product sales strategy to the space and making it the site of one of their flagship stores.

## OXFORD STREET TIMELINE



### **LIBERTY'S: 1922- 1924**

Arthur Lasenby founded Liberty's with the goal of encapsulating all the most luxurious premium products from around the world and providing it all within one store. The stylistic design has separated itself from competitors. The Tudor revival has a more traditional layout with smaller rooms rather than an open-plan layout, which is often seen in larger department stores.



### **SELFRIDGES: 1909**

See pages 13-18 For further information.



### **BBC BROADCASTING HOUSE: 1934**

Designed by G Val Myer, the Broadcasting House was the first BBC's first purpose-built space for radio broadcasting. The building was bombed twice during the Second World War and has experienced many renovations since. Most recently, a glass extension was constructed that allows the public to view the interior, which helps form a connection between both parties and introduces a realistic human element into the BBC's production.



### **CENTREPOINT: 1966**

Designed by the architecture practise R. Seifert and Partners, the building is composed of 34 floors and was one of the first skyscrapers in London. In 1995, it became grade II listed. Initially, the site was uninhabited for many years and was later acquired by the homeless charity Centrepoint. After standing empty for extended periods, the building was purchased, and Conran and Partners were tasked with redeveloping a portion of the site. The redevelopment involved converting office units into residential. In 2009, it won the 'Concrete Society's Mature Structures Award.



### **THE OUTERNET: 2022**

Located in front of the Tottenham Court Road tube station, the Outernet instantly creates impact through LED screens, which adorn the walls and floor with an open gallery-type space. The complex provides immersive walkways to connect Denmark Street. It holds a 2000-capacity music venue, drawing people further East down Oxford Street to reignite the excitement and interest towards the East part of Oxford Street.

## SEFRIDGES OVERVIEW

“The brainchild of American entrepreneur Harry Gordon Selfridge (1858-1947), the Oxford Street department store was opened on 15 March 1909, to great fanfare.”<sup>1</sup> He had worked for 24 years in the retail industry, starting in a junior role and progressing throughout his career to become the dynamic head of retailing. Selfridges enlisted Daniel Burnham from D. H Burnham & Co., who specialises in such work. The store was opened in several stages, the first being 406-422 Oxford Street.

The construction “employed a rational, gridded plan, familiar in London from warehouse buildings but seldom exploited hitherto by British retailers.”<sup>2</sup> Introducing “American advances in metal-framed structures allowed a fast-track construction”.<sup>3</sup> This resulted in a revolutionary store regarding its interior design and speed of construction. Although only having 1/3 of the facade of today, it was enough to create a genuine presence. Unlike all of Selfridge’s competitors, he boldly decided to make a department store from the outset rather than gradually grow over time, immediately setting him apart.

From 1915-1925, plans for a dome and tower were deliberated and explored, with many architects enlisted. However, a scheme was never realised, with many believing this was down to financial reasons. Alongside this, in 1918, Selfridge undertook the ‘second phase’ of the store, which comprised two parts, first the North West section (Orchard Street and Somerset Street) and in 1919-1922, the South West section (Orchard Street and Oxford Street). Between 1927 and 1928, the pinnacle’s primary entrance to the store was constructed and adorned with decorative arts and crafts elements that exhibited exquisite craftsmanship and details. In 1930, Gilbert & Bayes was commissioned to design a focal point above the door, which featured the queen at the time.

With developments in technology and ways of living, it was essential for Selfridges to undergo a significant change to fit these ever-changing ideologies. Between 2014 and 2018, David Chipperfield Architects was tasked with uniting the ground floor wing along Duke Street. The scheme targeted the unorganised plan to create a more united and contemporary solution (as shown in image 3, Duke Street elevation).

1 Staveley-Wadham, R. (2021) ‘Selfridges Steps Out – The Opening of a Department Store As Told By Our Newspapers’, *The British Newspaper Archive*, December 16. Available at: <https://blog.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/2021/12/16/selfridges-steps-out-opening-of-a-department-store/> (Accessed: 07/01/23).

2 Survey of London. (2020) ‘Selfridges, 398–454 Oxford Street’, *The Survey Of London*, 23 December. Available at: <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/survey-of-london/2020/12/23/selfridges-398-454-oxford-street/> (07/01/23).

3 Survey of London. (2020) ‘Selfridges, 398–454 Oxford Street’, *The Survey Of London*, 23 December. Available at: <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/survey-of-london/2020/12/23/selfridges-398-454-oxford-street/> (07/01/23).

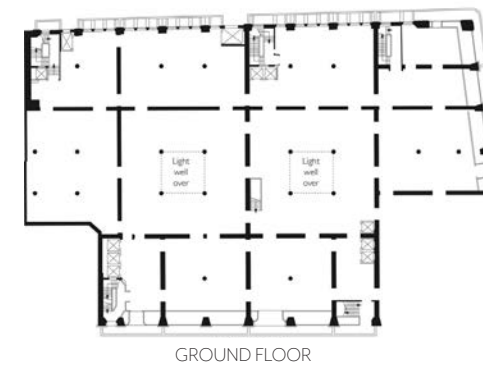
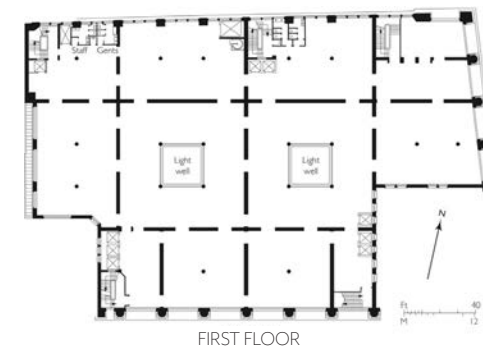


Fig. 1 Selfridges 1907 Floor Plans. 406-422 Oxford Street



Fig. 2 Selfridges 2018 Floor Plan. David Chipperfield Architects



## CURRENT SELFRIDGES

Selfridges still operates as one of Oxford Street's major department stores and is renowned for being forward-thinking and pushing boundaries, with continuous pop-up events and ensuring a sense of community at every opportunity with installations such as the 'The Bowl'. The variety of products has only continued to grow with a focus on high quality and premium consumer experience. A mixed-use space with a food hall featuring cafes, restaurants, and grocery items creates a space that allows users to lose all sense of time by having everything needed to spend endless hours in an opulent 'oasis'.

David Chipperfield Architects designed a "new entrance building and accessories hall, which together create a more coherent identity for the store, improving its urban presence, clarity in circulation and reintroducing the glamour and grandeur of the original building."<sup>1</sup> The plan opens creates vast open spaces which hold the beauty and accessories hall. The grid concept is still evident with fashion houses having their section to communicate their identity and ensure a personalised and intimate experience.

The interior shell of the building, including columns and more intricate elements, has been treated with a minimal colour scheme and selection of materials, expressing a contemporary approach to luxury. Throughout the entire store, the lighting remains bright and the spaces open, which feels serene and calm, contrasting the chaos of the street outside, encouraging more extended periods in the store.

Being part of the shopping experience is exhilarating and rewarding as the mixture of customer service and the surroundings, followed by the iconic yellow bag, adds an overwhelming, fulfilling feeling. Areas such as the beauty hall and staircase voids feature high footfall, creating a buzz of excitement.

The store is navigated through the central voids, which feature escalators and create a major hub for all movement. Signage generally indicates what is available on each floor, and exploration is encouraged once on the right floor.

The facade exudes opulence and dominates the western end of Oxford Street with the endless illuminated vertical columns and flags proudly waving. The marketing and window dressings are something that Selfridges is renowned for, with recent designs featuring interactive elements, ensuring the highest consumer experience, whether inside or out. Many entrances provide easy access to the building, with the primary entrance adorned with such detail, highlighting that the store has always upheld such a presence. Above the door is a glowing canopy, which is a warm welcome and creates that separation from the rest of the street before stepping in-store. Notably, the mixture of design styles around the perimeter of the various entrances almost indicates a different shopping experience, whether introduced through the accessories hall, food hall, or 'corner shop'.

<sup>1</sup> *Selfridges Duke Street London, UK 2014-18*. Available at: <https://davidchipperfield.com/projects/selfridges-accessories-hall> (07/01/23).

## FUTURE SELFRIDGES

Selfridges tries to engage with changing trends and attitudes to retail with facilities such as garment renting and the repair section, pushing sustainability within the brand. Fashion is such a problem when tackling climate issues, so it will be interesting to see how this will be explored further. One option could be to push renewable energy to power the site to reduce the overall carbon footprint or force pop-ups to be as sustainable as possible by forcing the reuse of materials used. For a store of this size and the decline of the high street, it will be an ongoing challenge to ensure such targets can be met to sustain.

Smaller-scale marketing to target younger customers is underway in stores but should be at the forefront of plans. Apps such as TikTok can quickly communicate messages and events and grab attention to stay relevant. A more drastic plan is to introduce even more mixed-use onto the site with the introduction of ultra-luxury apartments and restaurants, which would then encompass everything needed not to leave the site, perfect for guests who love luxury and an effortless stay.



Fig. 4 Selfridges 2018 Redesigned Duke Street Entrance

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## EXTRACTION OF THE CONCEPT 'HOME' WITHIN RETAIL DESIGN

As the architect Frank Harmon states, “Our homes are our unwritten biographies, the places in which we are most emotionally attached.”<sup>1</sup> Alison Blunt further expands on this; it is “invested with meanings, emotions, experiences and relationships that lie at the heart of human life.”<sup>2</sup>

### HOME:

Due to the abstract definition of ‘home’ and how it is interpreted differently - depending on the user - we can manufacture individual and unique relationships with it, some positive and some negative. In the publication ‘Home’, Alison Blunt discusses how “your senses of a home might be closely shaped by your memories of childhood, alongside your present experiences and dreams for the future.”<sup>3</sup> It is a genuine part of our lives whilst also being one of the most significant idealised factors, almost removing it from our reality. We are fed fabricated constructs of home in which we compare our experiences to those in pop culture, consumerism and media, which can distort users’ views of what the ‘home’ is. While the notion of ‘home’ could often be regarded as a place of sanctuary and comfort, Alison Blunt further explains that a “historically unprecedented number of people migrating across countries as ... refugees and asylum seekers, or as temporary or permanent workers”<sup>4</sup> and how this disruption of the ‘home’ demonstrates how the feeling of belonging is a “key characteristic of the contemporary world”<sup>5</sup>. This can lead to the ‘home’ relating to their identity, community or memories as opposed to their place of dwelling, forming a more comprehensive understanding of how complex the concept of the home truly is.

This text aims to identify how the three main retail sectors reconstruct elements of the ‘home’ to manipulate consumers within stores. It is crucial to recognise that home, food and fashion retail categories all adopt different primary themes. Home retail has the most blatant relation due to the direct correlation with the purchasable goods, which will be explored through object curation, comparable to what we instinctively do in the home. Food retail draws inspiration from the community and identity, which many consider an essential part of the home, encouraging a space that constructs a deeper emotional connection. Lastly, fashion retail through the home’s physical attributes, with rooms tailored to feel personal to us and enable atmospheres that manipulate our emotional response.

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1 Harmon, F. (2023) ‘Rooms to Live In: An Architect’s Recollections’, *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, Volume 43 Issue 6, p.410. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07351690.2023.2235254> (Accessed: 30/11/23)

2 Blunt, A and Varley, A. (2004) ‘Geographies of home’ *Cultural Geographies*, Volume 11 Issue 1, p.3. Available at: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/200880451?parentSessionId=yUcknEcezWcbGVxg%2Fhc0zmCA5C%2Fkvqvx34vgjso6U9w%3D&pq-origsite=primo&accountid=12441>(Accessed: 30/11/23)

3 Blunt, Alison, and Robyn Dowling. *Home*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/REDACTED/de-tail.action?docID=274420>.

4 Blunt, Alison, and Robyn Dowling. *Home*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mdx/de-tail.action?docID=274420>.

5 Blunt, Alison, and Robyn Dowling. *Home*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mdx/de-tail.action?docID=274420>.

### HOME, OBJECT CURATION:

The home is “a complex and multi-layered geographical concept”<sup>1</sup> that reflects the user’s identity and is used as a form of self-expression. Human nature is to place meaning on items and is “typically associated with sets of abstract relations and conditions, which create a lasting impression on us.”<sup>2</sup> We find comfort in these items, whether by evoking memories or bringing joy through their stylistic design, and when curated together, they help establish our identity as an extension of us in a more materialistic form. Subconsciously, we often treat objects differently depending on our form of connection with them. Items with a stronger emotional connection are often displayed in a manner that relates to spaces which trigger moments of pause and are usually removed from areas with great functionality, such as the kitchen. If the object is a more stylistic item, this is typically the most celebrated and located where the most footfall would be. Whereas items that are generally just functional will be removed from sight, placing very little consideration on them. Although we still have deep connections to the objects within our homes, particularly those that relate beyond physical properties, it is evident that this has shifted over time. This is due to a more capitalist attitude toward objects, resulting in a throwaway culture. Mass-produced items, fed to us through new ‘trends’ aimed to depict idealised homes, alter our values of the home and manipulate consumers to believe certain items are ‘better’ than what we currently own. Anna Moran and Sorcha O’Brien state that we have an increasingly “disposable character in material culture and design”<sup>3</sup> where “older things must be ejected from one’s material empire”.<sup>4</sup> This attitude is relatively new and enables retailers to thrive by pushing sales and increasing product purchasing. This is particularly evident with the retail giant IKEA, who have enforced retail strategies that encourage such behaviour, which will be discussed in further detail later.

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1 Blunt, Alison, and Robyn Dowling. *Home*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mdx/de-tail.action?docID=274420>.

2 Moran, A. and Sorcha, O’Brien. (2014) *Love Objects: Emotion, Design and Material Culture*. First Published. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

3 Moran, A. and Sorcha, O’Brien. (2014) *Love Objects: Emotion, Design and Material Culture*. First Published. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

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## FOOD, COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY:

Imogen Racz discusses the home as the “physical backdrop to everyday life”<sup>1</sup> and “by which memories and experiences are felt and relived”<sup>2</sup>. Memories associated with the ‘home’ form a sense of comfort through familiarity and help develop a feeling of nostalgia. The memories are often aided by how the home enables a space for community and togetherness to thrive, which is particularly evident in the kitchen. Labelled as the ‘heart of the home’, it “may be regarded as a private museum, a space in which objects of personal, artistic or cultural interest are stored and displayed to narrate untold stories being lived”<sup>3</sup>. It is a space that sustains us through food preparation, and although often a space of congregation, it can facilitate intimate experiences where more profound memories are formed by the food being a multi-sensory sensation. As mentioned previously, the home does not have to be a fixed location. Instead, it can be developed through memories, potentially allowing people to have multiple places they consider ‘home’, whether by past experiences or forming a sense of community and identity covering numerous areas. One food retailer that has constructed their business strategy upon this is Eataly, which encourages a sensorial experience through implementing elements to trigger memories whenever possible and promote community and identity to form a stronger sense of belonging in-store.

## FASHION, ATMOSPHERICS AND TAILORED SPACES:

Although the idea of ‘home’ is very abstract and composed of several factors, exploring the most direct view, the physical attributes are essential. Undoubtedly, when looking at a ‘home’, conventionally speaking, it is simply a series of rooms that we have tailored to meet both our physical requirements as well as our emotional needs and enable particular activities to occur. Through investigating how users behave and react to spaces, Rana Abudayyeh states how our “reliance on rooms is a testament to their resilience”<sup>1</sup> as they allow “narratives to unfold in instalments”<sup>2</sup> which “animates the occupant’s experience and is central to inhabitation”.<sup>3</sup> We typically ensure that the primary difference between each room is the altered atmosphere, which results in the desired emotional response. One of the significant spaces where this methodology is used is when the users travel between the more public and intimate spaces in the home, often with different materiality, lighting and overall object curation.

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1 Racz, I. (2020) *Art and The Home: Comfort Alienation and the Everyday*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts.

2 Racz, I. (2020) *Art and The Home: Comfort Alienation and the Everyday*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts.

3 Meah, A. (2016) ‘Extending the Contested Spaces of the Modern Kitchen’, *Geography Compass*, Vol 10 issue 2, 50. Available at:

<https://compass-onlinelibrary-wileycom.ezproxy.mdx.ac.uk/doi/full/10.1111/gec3.12252>

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1 Abudayyeh, R. (2021) ‘The Changing Room: Toward an Interior Multiplicity’, *Interiors*, Vol.11 Issues.2-3, P.328. Available at: <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.mdx.ac.uk/doi/epdf/10.1080/20419112.2021.1962619?needAccess=true>

2 Abudayyeh, R. (2021) ‘The Changing Room: Toward an Interior Multiplicity’, *Interiors*, Vol.11 Issues.2-3, P.328. Available at: <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.mdx.ac.uk/doi/epdf/10.1080/20419112.2021.1962619?needAccess=true>

3 Abudayyeh, R. (2021) ‘The Changing Room: Toward an Interior Multiplicity’, *Interiors*, Vol.11 Issues.2-3, P.328. Available at: <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.mdx.ac.uk/doi/epdf/10.1080/20419112.2021.1962619?needAccess=true>





Figure 1. IKEA Philippines depicting separate rooms within a fabricated house.



Figure 3. IKEA located in Nagasandra, India, exhibits an atmospheric moody space



Figure 2. IKEA located in Foshan, China, reflecting a light bright interior.





Figure 5. Eataly, Sao Paulo, Brazil food stalls.



Figure 4. Eataly, London cheese markets with wayfinding suspended from the ceiling.



Figure 6. Eataly, LA dining space.



## CONCLUSION

Throughout this essay, I have demonstrated how the 'home' - regardless of its definition - can be physically represented within a space to further attract potential consumers. Whether a brand aims to replicate the feelings and connotations that collate with the identity of a home, reproduce an atmosphere through food and the kitchen, or simply recreate the physical space itself. It is done so with the intention of putting customers at ease and welcoming them into both the store as well as the brand's ideology.

Combined, the three retail sectors that I have chosen to focus upon throughout this essay, create a holistic overview of both the abstract definition of the home as well as how separate brands replicate and manipulate this interpretation in order to attract and retain new and old customers alike. These concluding statements closely mirror those made by Tversky and Simonson who make reference to a consumers' choices of store and product preferences being directly influenced by factors such as assortment composition and store ambience<sup>1</sup>.



Figure 7. Gucci 2019 Milan Design Week pop-up apartment living room.



Figure 8. Gucci Manhattan fitting room.

<sup>1</sup> Bickle, M. Buccine, R. Makela, C. Mallette, D. (2006) 'Consumers' Uniqueness in Home Decor: Retail Channel Choice Behaviour' *Distribution and Consumer Research*, Vol.16 Issue.3, p. 317 – 331. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline-com.ezproxy.mdx.ac.uk/doi/epdf/10.1080/09593960600697030?need-Access=true> (Accessed: 17/12/23)  
37 Critical Context.

## IMAGE LIST:

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## EXTRACTION OF THE CONCEPT 'HOME' WITHIN RETAIL DESIGN - DRAFT

What defines a home has long been debated, with countless opinions of what it truly means. Physically 'a house is not necessarily nor automatically a home'. Instead, it is 'more than this, home is an idea and an imagination that is imbued with feelings'.<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly the 'house is hence a complex and multi-layered geographical concept'<sup>3</sup> which ultimately leads back to a sense of comfort, personal identity and connection.

This essay aims to deconstruct how the concept of home is reflected in the retail environment. In order to do this, it is necessary to focus on the three primary sectors. Object curation and individuality will be explored through the home retailer Ikea. The community and identity of a home are reflected in food retail stores, which is particularly evident in Eataly. Tailored rooms, which harbour different atmospheres and emotional responses that correlate with the more intimate areas of the 'home', are a technique that Gucci has mastered. Before further examining the home, a deeper understanding of these brands is essential, covering their ideologies and histories.

Ikea is a Swedish home furnishings retailer and "was the world's largest seller of furniture in the early 21st century, operating more than 300 stores around the world."<sup>4</sup> They specialise in "low priced goods, sold whenever possible in compact 'flat pack' form"<sup>5</sup>. Gillis Lundgren, who in 1956 worked as a furniture draughtsman at Ikea, popularised 'flat-pack' furniture and celebrated its economic and spacial saving benefits, which numerous home retailers have adopted. Ikea itself is one of "few international brands that have such an explicitly national profile"<sup>6</sup>, and it has made "Swedishness a virtue in itself, as well as an essential aspect of its strategy for the brand"<sup>7</sup> The branding both in-store with Swedish furniture names and food being served which is accompanied by the blue and yellow wrapping around the entirety of the stores facades emulating the Swedish flag upon arrival which can then be taken home with you in the form of the iconic heavy duty bags. "Their success is so extraordinary "that its catalogue, discontinued in 2020, reportedly distributed more copies a year globally than the bible."<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly, Ikea transformed the attitudes of home retail and the strategies used in their stores, inspiring other retailers for decades.

Founded by Oscar Farinetti, Eataly was established to provide a supermarket featuring authentic, high-quality produce accessible to the masses. The concept was supported by friend Carlo Petrini, founder of the slow food movement<sup>1</sup>. In 2007, the first store opened in Turin, Italy, with the idea of the store being radical compared to regular food retailers. The aim was to "re-create the atmosphere of traditional markets: there are many stalls where customers can touch, smell and choose food"<sup>2</sup>. It was paramount that the stalls celebrated the best local produce and were divided in a way that excited the consumer, which was achieved by each having their own identity and function in the space by selling cold meats, cheeses, vegetables, and even ice cream parlours. This concept proved successful, allowing the brand to expand throughout Italy and later globally in major cities such as Tokyo, New York and London

Gucci, founded by Guccio Gucci in 1921, initially specialised in luxury leather goods and luggage items, which were popular among the wealthy Italian upper classes. Following the Second World War, there were significant shortages of materials such as leather, forcing Guccio Gucci to adapt and reimagine his products, resulting in the utilisation of cotton and creating an identity through the 'double G' monogram, branding still featured. Guccio Gucci passed away in 1953, and the fashion house experienced numerous owners, including family members and currently Kering, who owns multiple other major fashion houses such as Balenciaga, Alexander McQueen and Yves Saint Laurent. Gucci today is known for its "bold and eclectic mix of materials, patterns, and colours, often incorporating unexpected combinations of textures and prints"<sup>3</sup> which is "characterised by a playful and irreverent approach to fashion, with an emphasis on creativity, individuality, and self-expression."<sup>4</sup> Gucci has recently established itself as more than a fashion house and instead become a term in itself to refer to something 'doing well', often featuring in pop-culture references and everyday terminology.

1 Blunt, Alison, and Robyn Dowling. Home, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mdx/detail.action?docID=274420>.

2 Blunt, Alison, and Robyn Dowling. Home, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mdx/detail.action?docID=274420>.

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5 IKEA 2023. Britannica Academic. Retrieved 12 November 2023, from <https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.mdx.ac.uk/levels/collegiate/article/IKEA/627960>

6 Kristofferson, S. (2014) Configuring Ikea. In Design By Ikea: A Cultural History. Place of publication: Bloomsbury Publishing.

7 Kristofferson, S. (2014) Configuring Ikea. In Design By Ikea: A Cultural History. Place of publication: Bloomsbury Publishing.

8 Hopps, K. (2021) 'How Ikea helped build a flatpack revolution', Express (Edition), 01/11. Available at: <https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/property/1514948/ikea-history-flatpack-furniture-interior-design> (Accessed: 12/11/23).

41 Critical Context.

1 Slowfood. A charity that embodied the opposite of 'fast food' with "its main objective to safeguard the agricultural, food and wine traditions of all parts of the world."

2 Sebastiani, R. Montagnini, F. Dalli, D. (2013) 'Ethical Consumption and New Business Models in the Food Industry. Evidence from the Eataly Case', Journal of Business Ethics, Vol 144 no.3, 483. Available at: <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.mdx.ac.uk/stable/23433793?sid=primo>

3 Highsnobiety (no date) Gucci. Available at: <https://www.highsnobiety.com/tag/gucci/> (Accessed: 12/11/23).

4 Highsnobiety (no date) Gucci. Available at: <https://www.highsnobiety.com/tag/gucci/> (Accessed: 12/11/23).

## IKEA:

Ikea is a pioneer within home retail in creating the link between the two and using this to control consumers. Several marketing strategies are in place that imitate emotional and physical reactions, some more subtle than others. These can be broken down into three main categories: the trophy effect, showroom interaction and mixed-use spaces.

The IKEA trophy effect is a concept that emerged along with the flat-pack furniture with the term used to describe the sense of achievement once the furniture is assembled. This emotional response to products, which would otherwise be unachievable when buying built things, allows Ikea to sell mass-produced items and introduce a sense of individuality and personal connection. The building process drives this as “people tend to often overvalue their often poorly made creations and even prefer them to comparable products created by experts”<sup>1</sup>, leaving “everyday items can turn into our ‘trophies’ that become almost unsaleable”<sup>2</sup>. This emotional response directly relates to how we curate our homes and the objects we choose to display, with items that reflect who we are being celebrated most. Consumers today crave a sense of individuality within their homes, which, although IKEA is known for their globally mass-produced products, has tackled through the curation of these products in stores, each visit being displayed in a slightly different arrangement and manner which, when combined, inspires visitors to adopt this approach.

In-store, the consumer is immediately forced into constructed ‘homes’ that feature products curated in a way that mimics rooms, forming a sense of familiarity and comfort. The rooms themselves are uninhabited. However, “Ikea implies that the occupants of these living spaces are not entirely absent either,”<sup>3</sup> with photos that could imply someone’s travels and even family photos, all of which fabricate a perception of ‘home’. You are encouraged to interact with these spaces, which almost makes you the inhabitants for a period, creating an illusion of intimacy with the rooms and products.

Within Ikea stores, each function has been broken into different sections: Cafe, showrooms and warehouse, all strategically placed to encourage maximum time spent in the store, encouraging people to lose any sense of time and enjoy exploring everything on offer. The store has created a space that removes any feeling of shopping and, instead, a place to socialise, meet people and share food, all of which are the critical components of what defines a ‘home’.

1 Bühren, C. Pleßner, M. (2023) ‘KEA vs Trophy effect – an experimental comparison’, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Volume 40 Number 4, 493. Available at: <https://www-emerald-com.ezproxy.mdx.ac.uk/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JCM-09-2021-4881/full/html> (Accessed: 12/11/23)

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3 Garvey, P. (2011) *Consuming IKEA: Inspiration as Material Form*. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290257503\\_Consuming\\_IKEA\\_Inspiration\\_as\\_Material\\_Form](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290257503_Consuming_IKEA_Inspiration_as_Material_Form) (Accessed: 12/11/23)

## EATALY:

‘The relationship between food and memory - mobilised by senses - has become a common trope in contemporary food industries’<sup>1</sup> and through this has resulted in the kitchen often being regarded as ‘the heart of the home’, where memories are formed, activities take place and where people unite through the sharing of food. It is a space that offers the most insight into someone and “may be regarded as a private museum, a space in which objects of personal, artistic or cultural interest are stored and displayed to narrate untold stories of lives being lived.”<sup>2</sup> These emotions evoked in the kitchen are something that Eataly has replicated, where informal dining has been combined with “a genuine and authentic relationship between consumer and brand”<sup>3</sup>. The dining combined with groceries plays a pivotal role in the success of Eataly and has extended the kitchen beyond the home, creating a third space that encourages community and connectivity.

1 Meah, A. Jackson, P. (2015) ‘Re-imagining the kitchen as a site of memory’, *Social & Cultural Geography*, Volume 14 Issue 4, 514.

2 Meah, A. (2016) ‘Extending the Contested Spaces of the Modern Kitchen’, *Geography Compass*, Vol 10 issue 2, 50. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.mdx.ac.uk/doi/full/10.1111/gec3.12252>

3 Bertoldi, B. Giachino, C. Stupino, M (2015) ‘Innovative approaches to brand value and consumer perception: The Eataly case’, *Journal of customer behaviour*, Vol.14 no.4, 358. Available at: <https://web-p-ebcsohost-com.ezproxy.mdx.ac.uk/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=ed9dc87d-90be-44f6-8789-16e02d7a9939%40redis>

## EXTRACTION OF THE CONCEPT 'HOME' WITHIN RETAIL DESIGN - PLAN

The essay will revolve around three main concepts to distinguish connections between home and retail.

**Paragraph 1:** The introduction. I will explore the idea of home and what this means through multiple relevant quotes to produce a condensed summary. The three primary concepts will be outlined briefly and key phrases and words explained if necessary.

**Paragraph 2:** Home retail, Object Curation. Here I will discuss how home retail uses varying levels of subtly to relate to the home and different strategies in place to create those connections.

**Case study 1:** Ikea. Immediately the sense of home is created through the designers creating whole apartments which can be explored and almost 'moved into.'

**Paragraph 3:** Food Retail. Understanding how a sense of connection, home and community can be established in food stores. Often specialised food stores will introduce the idea of what the 'kitchen' means to enable this.

**Case study 1:** Eataly. Selling produce from Italy which is displayed in a manner that is elevated compared to supermarkets. The introduction of cafes and restaurants promotes the idea of community and loosely relates to the third space concept due to the mixture of shopping, dining and socialising.

**Paragraph 4:** Clothing retail. Clothing retailers often try to create a sense of comfort and familiarity in stores as the experience can be very personal especially when trying on items.

**Case study 4:** The major luxury fashion houses, particularly Gucci. The extreme end of the shopping experience and where whole apartments can be built for direct comparison to home.

## PHYSICAL CONTEXT

**01-02** Site Writing/Slow Looking

**03-04** Site Mapping

**05-06** Photographic Montage

**07-10** Zooming In, Site Details

**11-12** Creative Writing

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

**13-16** Timeline

**17-22** Selfridges - In Depth Research

## CRITICAL CONTEXT

**23-40** Extraction Of The Concept 'Home' Within Retail Design

**41-44** Extraction Of The Concept 'Home' Within Retail Design - Draft

**45-46** Extraction Of The Concept 'Home' Within Retail Design - Plan

## APPENDICES

**47-48** Critical Reflection

**49-50** Bibliography/Image List

## CRITICAL REFLECTION

Upon reflection, I found the entirety of the project to be truly **enjoyable, engaging**, and different from anything completed in previous years. I had admired Aesop's interiors for many years, and I was incredibly excited about the opportunity to design a store. I allowed myself more **creative freedom** than in previous projects. I tried to explore as many design solutions as possible, removing the self-destructive pressure I initially placed upon myself. This allowed me to consider design approaches I may have otherwise disregarded due to the lack of investigation.

Previously, I have often focused more attention on the future of the site rather than the past. Yet, in Aesop's case, I knew it would be faithful to the brand and help win the design pitch if I stuck to their design thinking of being true to the site's location and drawing inspiration from it. This helped my design in the early stages and created a guideline to work from. I **sketched a lot** more in this project and used this as a means of design, which I believe is a crucial skill and one I am determined to improve on over the next project before entering the workplace.

Unlike previous years, I **used my essay to inform my design** and study how the relationship between the 'home' and retail environments is prevalent in marketing strategies. This was crucial to establishing the 'Aesop Home' and helped understand how the concept of home could be introduced. I integrated findings that contributed to a sense of community and identity to help make the store feel more personal to each user.

I **pushed my 3D modelling skills** and rendering techniques to achieve visuals that would support my design in a manner that helped demonstrate the space accurately. I wanted the elements to come together and sell the design to the client. Pushing myself regarding the 3D elements also meant I could have more creative freedom as I chose not to limit my creativity concerning whether I could physically model and render ideas, which progressed my creativity. I stayed consistent throughout the **graphic language** to produce an overall scheme that feels considered. However, I struggled with elements of this due to my need for more experience in branding and creating identities through this. More work could have been completed in the area, but I believe everything has come together well overall.

When working through the upcoming project, I intend to explore different ways of working and researching, particularly in material research and effective ways of combining materials without rendering endless options. This will help reduce wasted time and increase productivity in the scheme. Exploring new material options could result in ideas unconsidered otherwise and a more experimental design.



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## IMAGE LIST

Fig. 1 Jones , H. Selfridges 1907 Floor Plans. 406-422 Oxford Street, Selfridges, 398–454 Oxford Street. <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/survey-of-london/2020/12/23/selfridges-398-454-oxford-street/> (Accessed: 07/01/23).

Fig. 2 David Chipperfield Architects. Selfridges 2018 Floor Plan, <https://davidchipperfield.com/projects/selfridges-accessories-hall>. (Accessed: 07/01/23).

Fig. 3 David Chipperfield Architects. Selfridges 2018 Redesigned Accessories Hall, <https://davidchipperfield.com/projects/selfridges-accessories-hall>. (Accessed: 07/01/23).

Fig. 4 David Chipperfield Architects. Selfridges 2018 Redesigned Duke Street Entrance, <https://davidchipperfield.com/projects/selfridges-accessories-hall>. (Accessed: 07/01/23).

