

## The future of retail spaces.

It is recognized that this pandemic might never end in the public health aspect.

The end of this pandemic could be when we familiarize ourselves with it, as suggested by historian Allan Brandt: "As we have seen in the debate about opening the economy, many questions about the so-called end are determined not by medical and public health data but by sociopolitical processes" (Kolata 2020).

Retail spaces have already and will need to adapt to this change. The visual and textual appearance of these spaces will be significantly influenced not only by health advisories but also by social-political arrangement of their local authority.

### ***Modulized experience***

A significant increase in the use and growth of online/virtual applications (UNIDO 2020) illustrates a simple but efficient solution. Notably, there has been an 800% increase in Myer's online sales (Hall 2020), and renowned art auction houses such as Christie's and Sotheby's make most of their important auctions online. Our focus on retail experience, especially those classified as 'non-essential', could be more focused on the virtual experience rather than the actual space. This is one of the natural aspects of virtual experiences which are often highly modulised. This character should also reflect on the visual and textual elements of the physical site. The site does not have to be a location, but rather the package or the service experience. For those that are still considered essential, the focus might be transferring or merging these health safety barriers into their visual narrative, thus making these aspects a part of the 'design.'

The health and safety requirements, combined with the political arrangement, might force these retail spaces to transform into modulised experiences in a warehouse situation.

### ***Warehouse & installation***

The impact of the virus on the global supply chain (Unglesbee 2020) and the economy differ and the issues that many retail stores are facing may generate the need for displaying shipping and storing their merchandise in one location. Additionally, the site will need to be easy to clean, and not complex in visual language□ a warehouse situation I called. The downside of virtual shopping, the limitations of instant pleasure of acquisition (Maxwell 2020), would also need to be satisfied in this situation. These might also be transformed into installations so as to reduce costs and do not require a fixed location. An example I am contemplating of will be a vending machine, a beautiful looking vending machine.

### ***Social & community center***

There is already significant social and community elements in the retail experience design. This is especially in recent years as beautiful retail spaces have become stages for social media posts. Beauty is the key, as highlighted by the Sergio Mannino Studio (Sergio Mannino Studio 2020). Considering the current situation, it is fair to say that retail spaces will become interactive social experiences in both actual and virtual situations. There will be smaller amounts of people gathering, taking risks and seeking an intimate, interactive experience where they are close or want to get close. Otherwise, they may just be seeking a beautiful stage for their Instagram post, for value, and even to remind themselves of the importance of their existence.

Overall, my prediction of future retail spaces is based on the potential that this pandemic might never truly end. Retail will heavily rely on the virtual application; and the physical site might end up being in a warehouse situation or be transferred into an installation and act as gathering points for social networking.

### ***Bibliography***

Hall, J 2020, Myer rehires 2000 staff due to online sales soaring by 800 per cent, NewsComAu, viewed 28 July 2020, <<https://www.news.com.au/finance/business/retail/myer-rehires-2000-staff-due-to-online-sales-soaring-by-800-per-cent/news-story/5f00a365ac367528947815b77e825676>>.

Kolata, G 2020, 'How Pandemics End', The New York Times, 10 May, viewed 27 July 2020, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/10/health/coronavirus-plague-pandemic-history.html>>.

Maxwell, P 2020, Why the battle between sales and fulfilment will redefine the physical store, Frame Publishers, viewed 28 July 2020, <<https://www.frameweb.com/news/fulfilment-centres-bod>>.

Unglesbee, B 2020, The impact of the coronavirus on retail, Retail Dive.

UNIDO 2020, The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on e-commerce and its interplay with cybersecurity and privacy in the digital space | UNIDO, www.unido.org, viewed 28 July 2020, <<https://www.unido.org/news/impact-covid-19-pandemic-e-commerce-and-its-interplay-cybersecurity-and-privacy-digital-space>>.



La Scarpa shoe shops  
Sofia Bulgaria 2014  
Elia Nedkov

What of the history of retail spaces?

**Location is everything.**

The location of retail spaces, whether it be a fish market or a high-end fashion store, is the most critical factor. The location I am referring to is more than simply geographic coordinates, but also involve factors such as time and social status.

The retail character is often immersed in the marketplace, which at the earlier period of our history, was defined by a spontaneous gathering point centered around some kind of natural resource. This resource was often water simply because we all depended on it. This concept of retail resource evolves with the development of society and technology; it could also be a shelter, a castle, or force by an authority.

Associated with geographic location and the culture that has developed from it, time would also significantly impact the value of location. Too dark or too cold of a geographic time would affect the form of retail space for obvious reasons. With the development of technology, especially the advent of electricity, we have access to lights, air conditioning, and the Internet. Now, we can ignore many natural influences, we can even to some extent, shop around the clock. The impact of geographic time on retail space becomes more of a culture/political limitation than a 'real' barrier.

In the past, the value of a location is more dependent on their advantage of natural resources. Along with our society's development, the concept of location has been transformed, and moved toward a culture/political force. This location could be the most significant image on the website, tax support from the local government, or the experience provided.

**Community generator**

From Rome to Chang'an, the retail place is always a generator of social networks. We exchange objects, information, and credit.

During this exchange process, a nature connection will be established and integrated with other factors (such as common social interests) to form a community. Authorities use their power, shape these spontaneous gathering points to their best benefit, which could be for public health and safety or even religion/political influences.

'If home is the primary place, and work is a second place, then a third place anywhere else one goes to be around other people—to build community, to hang out, to feel connected.' - Ray Oldenburg (Trufelman 2015)

Retail space is that third space, and this is especially true of shopping malls. Public facilities provided in the shopping mall becomes the resources that attract visitors as we don't come only for shopping, but also for celebrating their lives, and even engage in social networking with those we like or pretend to like.

Retail space is a type of urban resource that services as generators for their communities. The connection generated through the process of exchanging credits, goods, and information.

**Components of the city**

'The whole city as an interconnected structure: a network, and a great piece of processing machinery.' (Pimlott 2016)

Retail space is a component of the city. The city needs it in order to preserve its residents as long as private property still exists. Like other components such as public transportation and the police force, retail spaces keep the city running and alive. It is essential. Imagine a city without any retail spaces...There are even retail spaces in a prison and they are controlled by the authority or by prisoners.

I wondered, do the activities that occur in retail environments satisfy our nature to hunt and harvest? For instance, instead of using swords and knives, we instead use credit and money to hunt.

*What makes a retail space? What potential defines a retail space? The function of credit exchange, the existence of communication media, and manipulation of the environment (virtual & actual). I think these are the aspects that comprise a retail space.*

*Throughout the history of retail space, it is recognised that location is critical. Retail space is a generator for social networking and is also a component of the city.*

**Bibliography**

Judy, C, Inaba, J, Rem Koolhaas, Tsung, S, Cha, T-W, Harvard & Harvard 2001, *Harvard Design School Guide To Shopping*, Taschen, Köln ; New York.

Pimlott, M 2016, *The public interior as idea and project*, Jap Sam Books, Heijningen.

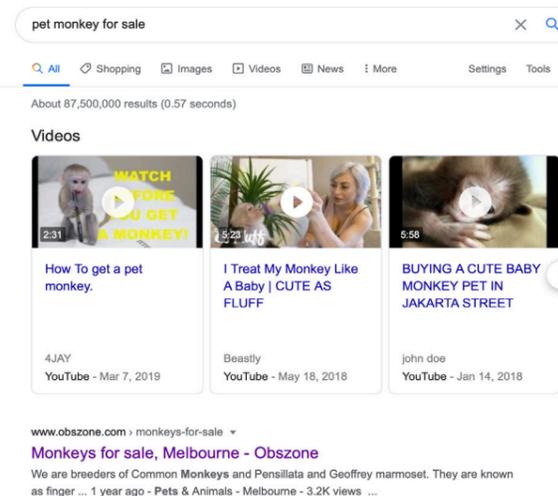
*The Guardian* 2015, *Paris's Galeries de Bois, prototype of the modern shopping centre – a history of cities in 50 buildings, day 6, the Guardian*, viewed 3 August 2020, <<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/mar/30/galeries-de-bois-paris-history-cities-50-buildings>>.

Trufelman, A 2015, *The Gruen Effect - 99% Invisible, 99% Invisible*, viewed 3 August 2020, <<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/the-gruen-effect/>>.



Song Li  
Salesman  
Southern Song Dynasty (13th century)  
The Palace Museum, Beijing

Pet monkey for sale  
screenshot by Yang Yang  
5 Aug 2020, 6:40:25 pm



'Social' in Ikea  
<https://www.inkstonenews.com/business/ikeas-china-head-says-you-can-nap-showroom/article/3024396>



## Complexities of the present

### Characteristic image.

Creating a characteristic image that almost represents a personification to the public is appearing to be a trend for corporations. This strategy might also be a business method to unite those working in it. It also produces a shared identity that strengthens a sense of belonging and expresses potential experience to their audience.

As an example, the character of the Scentre Group is heavily represented in its 2019 Responsible Business report (Scentre Group 2020). Scentre expresses a positive, politically correct personality, as highlighted in their 2019 report: they are a community, support feminism and diversity, help the environment and make our society a better place through collaborating with the Salvation Army and Australia's first nations people, refugees, etc. They also make money for their investors. Helping, respecting, supporting, improving, community, and connecting; these are the words that repeatedly appear in their publications; these are the types of characteristics they have implemented in the brand, and it is also the goal of their design.

This characteristic image also acts as a contextual background which enhances the client's positive experience and journey. Reflecting on the design seen during the presentation by the Scentre Group, they mentioned that their in-house design team ensures that the visual elements of their retailers will align with the message they are sending (Scentre Group 2020b).

### Business operation influences design.

The client's business decisions and how they operate their businesses play an essential role in design across different design fields as well as with the operation of the design. Notably, the design must satisfy government regulations so the design of retail spaces are then required to compromise.

Currently in Melbourne, the Westfield center is facing different situations with the COVID-19 pandemic and government restrictions are based on that. All non-essential retail businesses and areas are closed, and only essential businesses remain, along with food takeaways/delivery. Such a situation forces us to think about the design and operate differently. Like many others, the Westfield center combines virtual applications with actual activities such as 'click and collect' and increased routine cleaning to support their retailers and physical barriers such as face masks and signage (Scentre Group 2020d).

COVID-19 might be a short-term situation that challenges the current retail model and forces us to make a change. Meanwhile however, sustainability is a relatively long-term issue. This concept, the term of sustainability, has become a symbolic representation of a lifestyle and has forced businesses to adopt. Sustainability plays an important part in Westfield's daily operations and it is reflected in the design and branding of the Scentre group.

Upon integrating with the advantage of the virtual environment and technology, it is possible that we could visualise this concept of sustainability. We can even further enhance and express a stronger positive image for the brand to the audience.

### Co-Living.

The social community element becomes increasingly more valued in the retail experience and is reflected in the increased exposure of 'Instagram' interior and innovation in recent shopping mall design, such as the K11 Art mall and the SKP-S Mall.

Retail experiences and activities are moving towards this experience of a living room. What can we do or what are we doing in the shopping mall? We can eat, drink, meet friends, and watch a movie, which is what we do in our living room. Perhaps, we are using this shopping center experience as an alternative to being in our living rooms? Because we live in a studio and can't afford a proper living room so we need privacy, or we can't be bothered to clean, or perhaps we are just too shy to take our new friends to our homes.

In a way, our current retail experience, performs like the living room, and it could be more. With the development of technology and the virtual environment, there is potential for it to become a factory, a workshop, a stage, or even a home. Throughout the history of retail, the social connection element of retail experiences has never changed. It is essentially the foundation that supports our lives, and we will live with it, virtually and actually.

## Bibliography

Hantelmann, von 2014, 'The Experiential Turn', *Living Collections Catalogue*, vol. 1, Walker Art Center, no. 1, viewed 7 January 2020, <<https://walkerart.org/collections/publications/performativity/experiential-turn>>.

K11 Art Mall HK n.d., *MOVIE11*, [hk.k11.com](http://hk.k11.com), viewed 12 August 2020, <<https://hk.k11.com/art-and-culture/movie11/>>.

*Retail Design Blog 2020*, » *SKP-S mall*, [retaildesignblog.net](http://retaildesignblog.net), viewed 12 August 2020, <<https://retaildesignblog.net/2020/01/09/skp-s-mall/>>.

*Scentre group 2019*, *Scentre Group Home*, [Scentregroup.com](http://Scentregroup.com).

*Scentre Group 2020a*, *2019 Responsible Business Report*, *Scentre Group*, 31 March, viewed 10 August 2020, <[https://www.scentregroup.com/getmedia/ea47895e-1155-4f75-bb10-1fcdcb515c19/SCG\\_2019-Responsible-Business-Report](https://www.scentregroup.com/getmedia/ea47895e-1155-4f75-bb10-1fcdcb515c19/SCG_2019-Responsible-Business-Report)>.

— 2020b, 'Scentre Group Presentation'.

— 2020c, *Westfield Australia - Visit Our Centres or Browse Online*, [www.westfield.com.au](http://www.westfield.com.au), viewed 12 August 2020, <<https://www.westfield.com.au>>.

— 2020d, *Westfield: Important information: Coronavirus update*, *Westfield: Important information: Coronavirus update*.

## 2019 Highlights



Scentre Group 2020a, 2019 Responsible Business Report, Scentre Group, 31 March viewed 10 August 2020

Movie11 Event K11 Art Mall Hong Kong  
screenshot by Yang Yang  
K11 Art Mall HK n.d., MOVIE11, [hk.k11.com](http://hk.k11.com), viewed 11 August



SKP-S Mall Beijing  
screenshot by Yang Yang  
Retail Design Blog 2020, » SKP-S mall, [retaildesignblog.net](http://retaildesignblog.net)

