

Savior of the Stores

has the solution got something to do with Art?



Of-late, retail store spaces have been filled to the brim with “experiences.” The focus isn’t on retail alone but on “experience.” Store spaces need to be well-designed and executed and that high production value is absolutely important.

What could be the primary purpose of this store experience?

maybe to have some fun by getting some great photo ops for social media to boost our own social currency.

The design could partly be inspired by a museum, art show, amusement park, entertainment venue, playground, retail store or a permutation and combination of all or a few. For me, it should be a more intellectual entertainment experience powered by artists. If a store exists, it needs to have a strong raison d'être, and not just function as a mini-warehouse of a product.

The stores of the future need to reinvent the customer experience. Just offering products will not make it in a world where through the metaverse brand experiences will become incredibly immersive and potentially even more impressive than those in a store Art can be such a differentiator, but it has to be done with purpose Just adding art or an artistic installation or a great interior or exterior design to a space won't make it "special," unless a truly remarkable experience comes out of it -"Daniel Langer, CEO of the luxury strategy firm Équité and the executive professor of luxury strategy at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California



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Starting small and in phases the existing stores can explore concepts that can help them leapfrog their competition and increase their bottom lines. For e.g. one such experience could be to invite a small homogenous group of prospective

customers over a cup of tea and showcase a specially curated collection. The objective can be achieved if we understand the following sequence well:

1) Display the products in a easily classified theme to help create experiential zones for customers to interact with the products and also take meaningful pictures or generate shareable content for their social media posts:



2) Reshuffle in-Store Branding

while the customers are busy experiencing the theme and the products the branding that is usually provided by the brands should be repositioned to help generate a connection though:



3) Make and promote the same offers and themes as displayed physically in the store on available Social Media Platforms. but make sure you:

- highlight your customers that can influence others
- request your customers to tag your store in their stories and posts about their experience

We have a great example of a similar experience being showcased by S.R Gopal Rao Opticians and Optometrists, Bengaluru. In the pursuit of knowledge we interviewed Ms Meghana Manay and asked the reason and outcomes by organizing the Luxury Pop-up?

Luxury pop up

18th March, 2022



S.R.Gopal Rao Opticians & Optometrist are heritage luxury opticians located in Bengaluru, India. Built on the principles of trust and commitment to precision driven eye care and eyewear, SRGR has grown from being a single store to having 3 luxury eyewear practices located in the heart of the city, a home brand called Getspexy and an online shop for luxury eyewear called shop-srgopalrao.co. The company has roots dating back to the 19th century but was re-established under the name of S.R.Gopal Rao in 1936. SRGR is now in the sensitive yet progressive care of the family's fourth generation. For more information visit www.srgopalrao.co

Picture Courtesy- S.R.Gopal Rao Opticians and Optometrists

Meghana Manay said “We wanted to attract new customers while also providing new experiences to existing ones. we would also like to highlight brands that most people are unaware exist in the country. We believe that what can be obtained elsewhere can also be obtained in India, and we assist with it. We work hard to raise awareness of a variety of well-known and highly regarded luxury and premium brands, as well as their products”.

What all preparations were required at the store level?

She said “At the store level, various requirements must be met by our team in each department, such as

preparing marketing materials and communicating them to customers through various channels. Information is shared both online and offline; and we are very flexible in this regard because we prioritise our customers' comfort.

Coordination between in-store teams and partners is another key responsibility that we have at the store level. Correspondingly, there is also cost management, planning and training required, which results in fantastic events put together for customers and the newcomers to enjoy”.



Did you integrate the event's happenings with the social media and public communicate - for e.g spreading awareness and matching up the same with the in-store communication

She said "Yes, as a traditional business, we have evolved significantly by using a good balance of print and digital media. However, as a growing business, we put a higher priority on digital media in order to keep up with new trends and changes in the industry. Our team ensures that the designs are qualified for both online and offline marketing and displays, while also considering the potential reach of a larger audience".

Your take on "Will Art Save The Store"?

She said "Creativity more than Art is what is required to

save the retail business. Creativity embodies art. Art as we know may help attract new visitors to a space, but art alone will not always be the best fit for one's business. Will art attract new customers to a departmental store? Will art alone change the quantity or category of shopper visiting the streets of Chickpet in Bangalore or Lajpat Nagar in Delhi? While art works in certain spaces and will definitely add value to some stores, art alone can not save the store. Stores are varied and each has its own personality. Culture, geography and philosophy give meaningful direction to creativity and that is what will save the store. It is important to use creativity in every aspect and vertical of one's business".



Picture Courtesy- S.R.Gopal Rao Opticians and Optometrists



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Picture Courtesy- S.R.Gopal Rao Opticians and Optometrists



Picture Courtesy- R Kumar Opticians

I remember when the store proposition was quite clear and we were all debating what this crazy “world wide web” would look like one day. I think we all got it wrong. Now the tables are turned. For the moment, the internet’s role seems more clear to me than the future of stores. Who knows how long that will last.

I applaud these risk takers, like R. Kumar Opticians, Ahmedabad, who are taking the first steps into a new frontier before the rest of us. These are baby steps that will help us find our way. Steps that might seem superficial on the

surface but are contributing to our understanding of how brands and businesses are collapsing into culture and helping us chase a greater “sense of self.” A role that perhaps the institutions we no longer trust used to play.

So is the easy fun-ness of the store planting the seeds of much-needed change in our world? To embrace variety? To embrace our own creativity, or the unexpected? To see things differently? To help us move forward? Or is it just a good time? A distraction from the real (tense) world? Or all of the above? I guess that’s for each of us to decide.

Welcome India's First Artsy Eyewear Store

As we speak about an ideal Artsy Store there is atleast one eyewear store that was launched in January this year in India - The R Kumar Optician's Bopal Store at Ahmedabad. We interviewed Mr Amman Anup Kumar and asked him what inspired them to execute such a project which takes a lot of courage, time and money & It takes a lot of experimentation too:

He said: "It is built around a theme. The idea was to project a futuristic vision while maintaining the signature warmth of our retail shops."

The UFO inspired display units and liberal use of metal in various forms, rustic textured paint on the walls and ceilings and sleek LED panels give the showroom a refreshing post-modern feel while solid granite floors and vaulted ceilings lit in warm lights preserve the warmth.

He Added: "Withholding the flights of fancy where one can go overboard with an inspiration or theme and make day-to-day retail a little impractical, the essay here was to incorporate artsy installations without

making it too edgy. It's more like projecting our vision of being ready for the future yet ensuring a reassuring and smooth transition for our customers. This evolves into an upgraded customer experience that is unique in the market today. I wouldn't go to the extreme saying "art is the saviour" but I believe, quite strongly, that art infused retail environments can help shift customer perspective. Shopping in such environments turns into a discovery that engages the customers' senses and shifts the mindset beyond the transactional, with which they are used to dealing in a retail shop.

"Project conceptualised, designed and executed by: Aarushi Kalra and Deepak Kalra from I'm D'sign Punam Kalra from I'm the centre for applied arts



Picture Courtesy- R Kumar Opticians



Picture Courtesy- R Kumar Opticians



Picture Courtesy- R Kumar Opticians

These are all experiments and we are learning what's next for the use of the physical space we once called a store.

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"world wide web" would look like one day?

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