

i4design

the final frontier

RETAIL SPACE:

In retail design, **the architectural signature** is more important than ever.



breaking ground
the it list
taking the lead
neocon focus



Above: Coop Himmelbau's futuristic JVC urban entertainment center in Guadalajara, Mexico uses this sculptural element, the hanging triangle, to house a bar and restaurant. PHOTO BY ARMIN NESS

Inset: The Al-Ostura luxury department store in Kuwait City uses floating mannequins in its Atrium.

When it comes to retail design, the architectural signature is more important than ever.

CLOUDS, PATHWAYS, HUMOUR, spontaneity and theatre all play their part in the new retail architectural experience. As on-line shopping allegedly allows us to get the essentials out of the way, we are left with more time to spend on shopping for those all-important luxuries. And the luxury brand sector has grasped the idea that the space within which they sell their product is a vital ingredient to capturing the potential customer's attention and converting that into sales.

Such were the topics under discussion at the recent "Shopping Miles and More" symposium on retail architecture held in Lucerne, Switzerland. The annual event is organized by Architectural Talks, headed by Frank Joss, owner of a Zurich based communications agency. Each year a different aspect of the built environment is debated. The symposium, refreshingly free from sales pitches, is an archi-

tectural event for architects and by architects.

Jerde Partnership created some of the first and most successful malls and as David Rogers explains "The centre of the city was taken to the suburbs, fine tuned to be taken back into the city". Such experience is being applied to the Zlote complex in Warsaw and the Getz project in Holland. Both retail areas have a strong local component with the master plan influenced by natural elements, particularly daylight. In Zlote, a "pocket park" or "living room for the city" was created with the roof covering mimicking the tree canopy – all that was left in the area after the devastation of the Second World War. At Getz





Top Left: The JVC urban entertainment centre by Coop Himmelbau includes a "snake alley" linking the bazaar-like shops, cinemas and lake promenade. PHOTO BY ARMIN HESS

Left: The interior of the Doha Souks shopping mall in Qatar by NG Architecture & Planning attracts consumers with an artificial cloud. PHOTO COURTESY OF NGARCHITECTURE.COM

on either side of the walkway reflects the transparent "landscape" of the canopy roof whilst also reflecting the stainless steel facades of the exhibition spaces.

At the sharp end of the experiential scale, Nabil Gholan of NG Architecture & Planning in Beirut is completing a small mall complex with its own rain. Set in Qatar, the Doha Souks development includes a process that allows the warm humid air that builds up inside during the day to be brought into contact with cold air to create a "cloud" over a central garden. Quite a draw for a population that rarely sees rain or even clouds.

PATHWAYS

There is nothing new in attempting to draw your customer into your store but the ways of doing it are. The Armani store in Hong Kong has a red fibreglass ribbon included in the design concept of Studio Fuksas. The ribbon spirals to become a tunnel that not only serves to guide shoppers to the rear of the store but also becomes the café's bar counter. Also from Studio Fuksas are the pathways of the hanging rails in another Armani store, this time in Shanghai. By not showing all