

The leading retail business magazine

new zealand

retail



DECEMBER 08
ISSUE 669
\$7.50

MOSCHINO

capricious but captivating design



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FASHION WITH FUN



The transformation of an old meatpacking building into the new Moschino New York flagship store writes a new chapter in the history of contemporary adaptive reuse.



Left Moschino's New York flagship store is all heart – with a sleek and quirky attitude.

Right Once a dated building in a meatpacking district, Moschino is a great hit with trendy New Yorkers.

Moschino's New York flagship store is all heart – with a sleek and quirky attitude. A ground-floor space in a formerly dated building, this sprawling food market-place with a sawdust-covered floor in the walk-in frozen meat section has emerged as an Alice-in-Wonderland retail destination for Gotham fashionistas.

Located at 401 West Fourteenth Street at the corner of Eighth Avenue in the city's lively Chelsea section, the 232m² Moschino store is positioned between an Apple unit and a just-opened Hugo Boss shop. It has fanciful accents with just enough arty quirkiness to extend

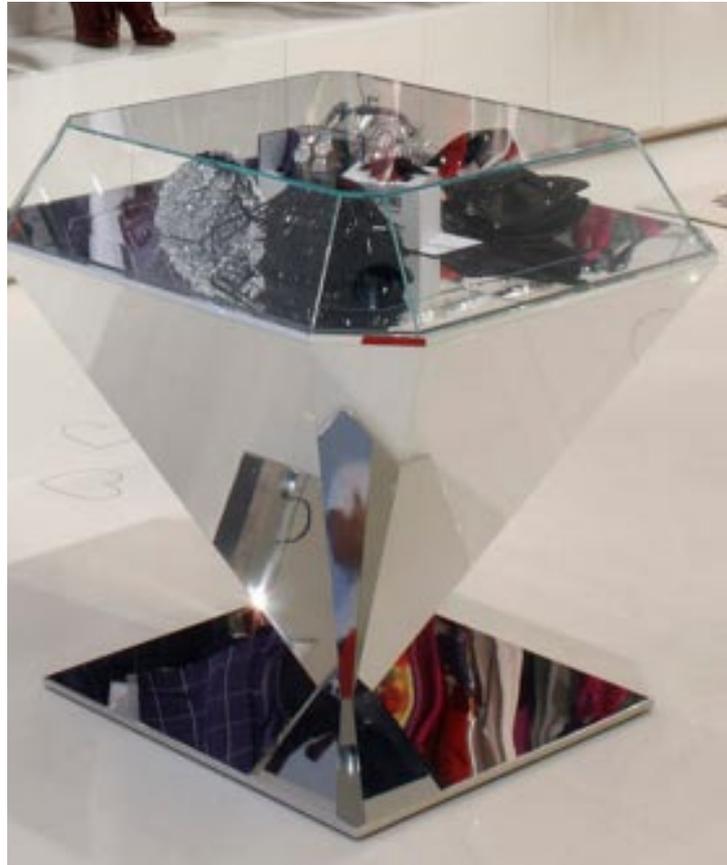
the brand's irreverently upscale image. Pouffy red slipper chairs covered in fat fabric hearts are a seating experience. An overhead shower of illuminated hearts adds a touch of the surreal. Free-standing display fixtures assume the shapes of oversize rings or faceted gemstones.

For decades the area was the city's meatpacking district with low masonry buildings extending for several blocks to the west and south. The transformation of the neighbourhood from gritty industrial to upscale boutique was begun in 1999 by Jeffrey Kalinsky. A former Barney's shoe buyer, he opened Jeffrey, a high-fashion designer



Above At the time of the store opening, Moschino's windows featured a towering astronaut being approached by a diminutive mannequin in a short coat and neck scarf.

Right A display cabinet shaped like a solitaire diamond – this piece could qualify for a museum retrospective on the twentieth-century art movement.



apparel and accessories store down the block from what is now Moschino. It became an instant hit with trendy New Yorkers. As the neighbourhood filled up with designer boutiques and high-profile restaurants and cafés, the meatpackers found themselves out of their element and departed for less-pricey outlying areas.

Moschino's former New York presence was in a five-storey townhouse on upper Madison Avenue. It was closed in 2002 as the company shifted its strategy to appeal to a younger clientele in a more trafficked area, with the ability to display all its categories on one floor. Its brands include Moschino for women and men, Moschino Cheap and Chic, and Love Moschino, the jeans line, and accessories.

PLAYFUL BEGINNINGS

Founder Franco Moschino established

the company's point-of-view in 1983 in Milan. His original collections were high style with a twist – designs that are both sophisticated and playful. In 1994, the year of his untimely death, he established Ecouture for the purpose of using only environmentally friendly dyes and fabrics.

TOP TEAMS

Rosella Jardini, formerly Moschino's chief designer, continues the company's on-going pattern of success. For the New York store, Moschino management commissioned a team of specialists experienced in the design and construction of designer boutiques worldwide to instill new life into the vintage food outlet. Vudafieri Partners of Milan, the architects for retail operations for such labels as Jimmy Choo, Pucci, Tods, and Roger Vivier, collaborated with Mariotti Studio.

Interior design was directed by Paris-based Lara Pessos of DeuxL, who created interiors for Louis Vuitton, Kinzo, and Bruno Magli among others. The challenge of physically turning the sturdy but long-neglected building into a showcase for the international luxury brand, was given to Shawmut Design and Construction – builders of New York flagships including Chanel, Dolce & Gabbana, Nokia, Tom Ford, and Juicy Couture.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

To get the space ready for a fourth quarter 2008 opening, Shawmut's first challenge was dealing with the floor. "After years of heavy use, the floor was so uneven it was totally unusable," says Les Hiscoe, vice-president of Boston-based Shawmut's Retail Group. "It had to be entirely reconstructed. We had to build an entire new subfloor before we could install the

white composite stone throughout the selling area," Hiscoe points out. A tan and chocolate area rug in an updated classic floral pattern adds subtle contrast underfoot. Woven with iridescent Lurex yarns, it reflects soft highlights from the overhead illumination.

“The heart shape is Moschino's brand icon.”

Strong geometric shapes were employed for display and lighting fixtures. The heart shape is Moschino's brand icon. It appears first as a front door handle. Then visitors see it exploded into a multi-pendant, layered central chandelier featuring dozens of Plexiglas hearts.

The architects created a deep, rectangular coved ceiling treatment



Above A classic handbag design becomes a double-sided love seat in Moschino's New York store.

Right The architects created a rectangular, coved ceiling with concealed lighting and a floating panel with flush downlights to visually balance the store.

that serves to visually balance the cascade of heart-shaped pendants. Concealed lighting rims the inside of the cove. Inside is a floating panel fitted with flush downlights and an illuminated rim.

Flanking a mirrored column is a pair of dramatic armless slipper chairs, fully upholstered – seat and back – in puffy red felt hearts. Chair legs are painted red to match the fabric. Between the chairs is a side table shaped like a solitaire with a mirror base and clear top. The effect is almost Dada-esque; the pieces could qualify for a museum retrospective on the twentieth-century art movement when artists created works that were whimsical take-offs of commonly used products.

In another section of the store, the designers were inspired by a classic 'handbag-style' for a chair featuring a metal top frame and slim carrying

handle. Glamorous and fun, it was scaled up to the proportions of a double-sided love seat. Fully upholstered, it makes a singularly grand statement in its placement on the patterned area carpet.

Slim, gracefully-proportioned display stands for hanging merchandise are fabricated in polished stainless steel. White cubes and rectangles are placed underneath to display coordinating footwear and accessories.

Moschino's collection of jewelry is presented in a free-standing, ring-shaped display stand. Its mirrored base reflects the white flooring stone and the patterned carpet. On top is a faceted clear plastic case, mimicking a cut gemstone. Another display case with a square polished base is beneath the ceiling cove. Shaped like a solitaire, it also has a mirror base and clear top.

Eyewear is shown in a wall-mounted

MOSCHINO'S MOTIVATION

There's no fashion label more playful, quirky or irreverent than Moschino, says *New York Fashion*. The fun started in 1983 when the brand's late founder, Franco Moschino, adorned his saucy, whimsical fashions with messages – literally words on the clothes, including statements such as 'Who's to say what's in good taste?' The brand name was often emblazoned in large letters.

He went on to spoof high-fashion lines, mocking such classics as the Chanel jacket by adding garish trimmings and details.

In addition to the Moschino label, there's also a less expensive Cheap and Chic line – and a menswear collection that also displays a sense of humour. All are consistent with the original designer's penchant for a colourful, sexy, tongue-in-cheek approach.

But current designer Rosella Jardini, who worked closely with Moschino for more than a decade before his death in 1994, has lately been moving away from over-the-top gimmicks in the women's collections to a slightly softer, more feminine aesthetic – that is still no less fun!

Decorative, whimsical and sexy – all at the same time, Moschino is worn by the likes of Gwyneth Paltrow, Alicia Silverstone, Anna Friel and Julia Louis-Dreyfus.



Above Slim display stands for hanging merchandise (shown here in the menswear department) are made of polished stainless steel and white cubes and rectangles are placed underneath to display coordinating footwear and accessories.

Right Dozens of Plexiglass hearts make up the multi-pendant, layered central chandelier. The heart-shape is the brand icon for Moschino.



case shaped with a residential-like peaked top. Individual pieces are placed in their own back-lit slots. Beneath is a red, heart-shaped stool.

Other accessories are shown in small groupings in a variety of wall-mounted configurations. Some are staggered on open shelves. Select footwear styles are displayed in a mirror-framed recessed unit.

Shawmut provided an expert metal fabricator to coordinate the installation of stainless steel heart outlines that were inlaid into floor tiles made in Italy. They were then shipped to the site for installation in a random pattern.

WINNING WINDOWS

Hiscoe points out that the store's 12m-long façade facing cobblestoned Fourteenth Street have front windows that present a variety of images to the streetscape. "Both windows are full-height, extending from the sidewalk-level base to the building's overhanging extension," he explains. "They have the same proportions:

two-thirds for the larger section and one-third for the other section. On one window, an expanse of clear glass that looks directly into the store is fitted with the entrance door," Hiscoe indicates. "The second window's larger portion will have rotating scenes, some representational, some not," he says.

At the time of the store opening, the window displayed an astronaut standing on a moon-surface-like base, being approached by a diminutive mannequin dressed in a short dark coat and a neck scarf lit from above by grid-covered downlights. In the smaller window was a pair of mannequins in fashionable Maschino garb.

Moschino currently has 76 company-owned and franchised stores worldwide. The firm is operated by Aeffe S.p.a., based in Rimini, Italy. ■

By **Vilma Barr**, a freelance writer based in Philadelphia and a regular contributor to *NZRetail*.

Right An extraordinary – but very Moschinoesque – pouffy-heart red slipper chair is accompanied by a diamond-shaped side table.

