



Image #: 12527078 Barneys New York unveils their "Have a Foodie Holiday" themed windows in partnership with Food Network, by Creative Director Simon Doonan in New York City, November 16, 2010.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Retail Store Display: Windows

Material adapted from Morgan, T. 2008.
Visual Merchandising: Window and in-store displays for retail. Laurence King Publishing. London

If Selfridges was a magazine, the windows would be the front cover.” Alannah Weston,
Creative Director, Selfridges

Introduction

- There is no doubt that windows can be used to sell if they are eye-catching and innovative.
- They are the only major marketing tool that you do not have to pay for because they are part of the store's architecture.
- So it is worth making the most of them.
- Many retailers still spend a vast amount of their marketing budget creating works of art.
- Others present their products simply, yet effectively.
- Some, however, never use their windows to their full capacity.

Introduction

- Whether a window is large (like in a department store), or simply a modest-sized one looking into a store, each needs to be carefully planned.
- A well dressed window display not only attracts shoppers into the store, it also enforces the retailer's brand image.
- It can act as an advertising tool and also give insight into what is available in store.
- Depending on the type of store, different factors will drive the make-up of the window display at different times.



Introduction

- A large department store (or even a small retail outlet) may wish to attract attention to its store by creating a display with a noteworthy theme intended to cause a reaction.
- This type of window is less likely to be driven by product alone.
- And so is steered instead by the marketing or buying department.
- They might want to promote a particular product or trend into which they have bought heavily or want to front an advertising campaign.
- A product driven window is usually found in multiple chain stores where the need to reach a mass market is vital.
- Considerations: type of window, best way to group products, them and props, lighting, graphics, signage.

Getting to know your windows

- Before dressing a window, it is best to understand the space and depth of the window.
- As well as its practical features which will affect what you can put into the window and how.
- Closed windows: DS. Resemble a room. Need considerable planning. Usually large. Will require lots of merchandise. Props big. Only seen from front.

Getting to know your windows

- Open back windows: No back wall. Make interior of shop visible from outside. More diff to dress – viewed from outside and inside.
- No Window: Shopping arcades. Store exposed to public. Encourages people to walk in and browse. Only a steel grill separating store at night. Display bases can be placed at the entrance with presentations to attract customers.
- Other windows include angled windows, corner windows, arcade windows, and showcase windows (jewellery).



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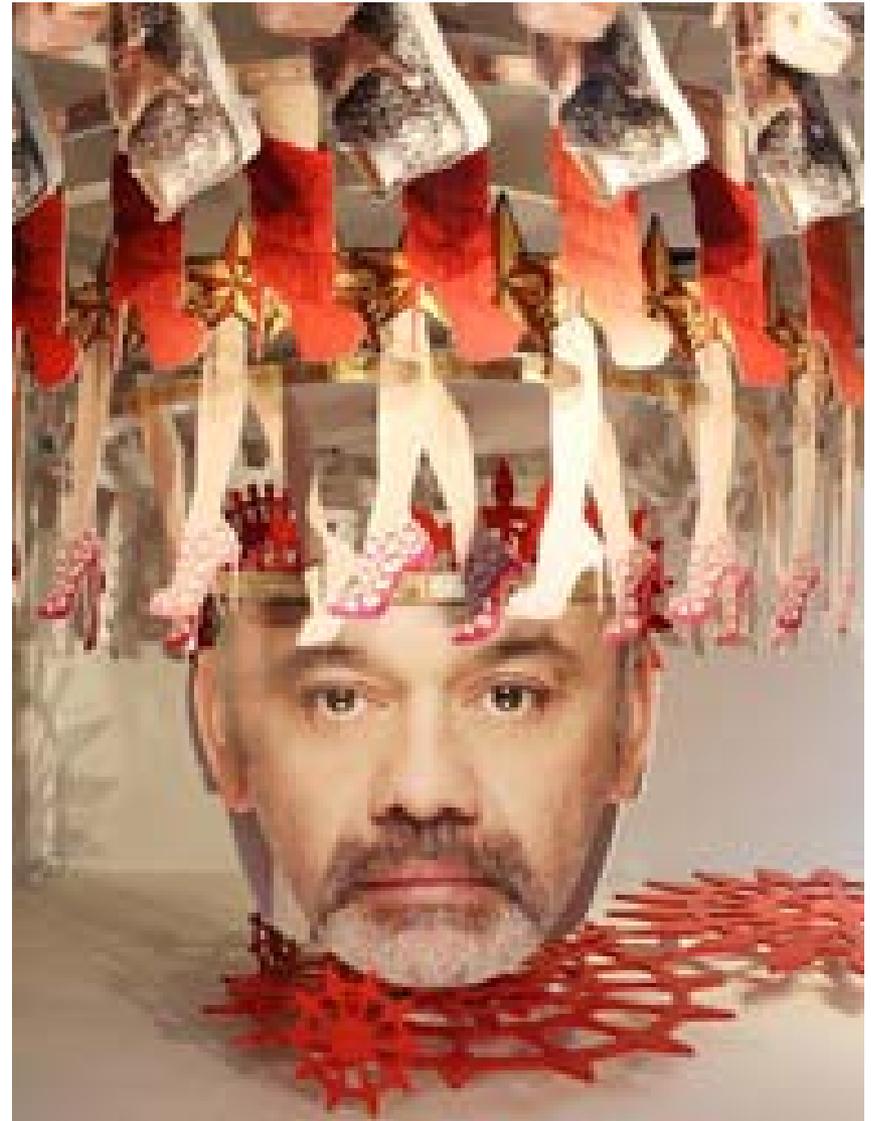
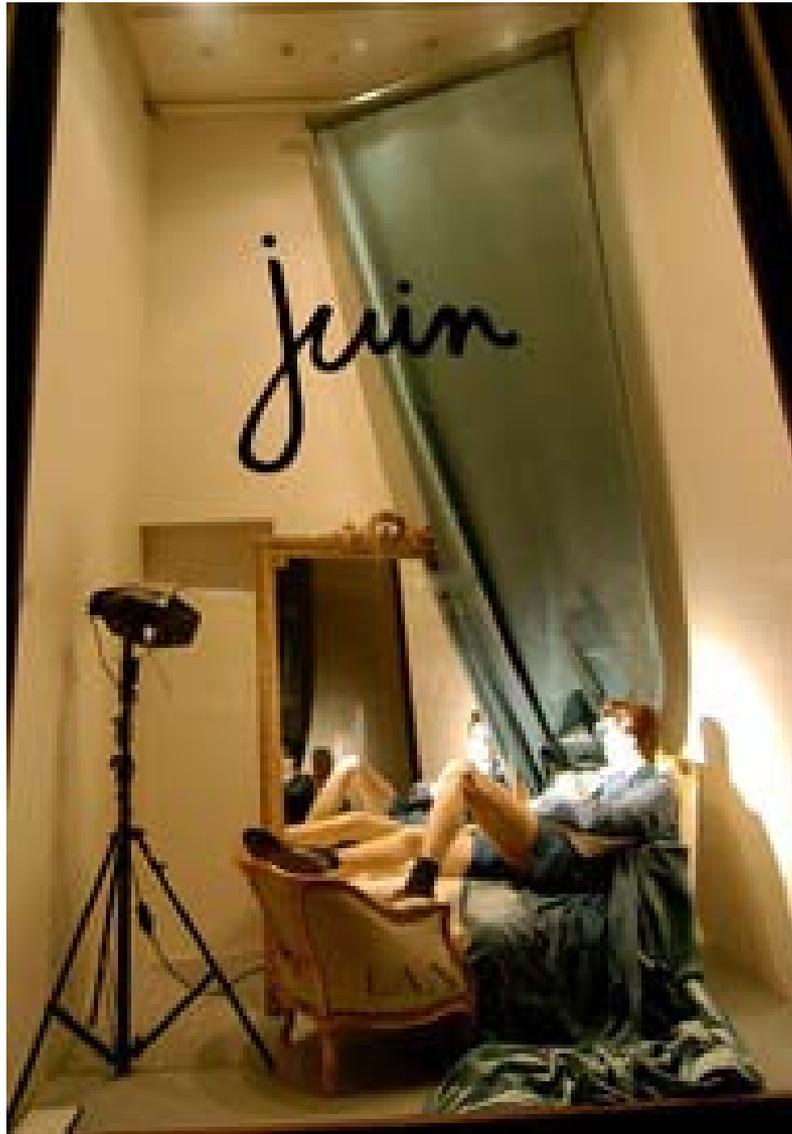
Planning a window display

“The first step when designing a window is to define a theme and the spirit in which you want to put things forward. Then, you have to find the BIG idea: that very special idea which will make the difference visually.” Franck Banchet, Creative Director, Printemps

Planning a window display

- Question: What are you aiming to achieve? What is the goal of the window display?
- Are you aiming to shock, attract or cause a buzz.
- First, the window theme must reflect or be sympathetic to the product being sold in-store.
- Window displays will often take the form of a story, incorporating other elements or props that have something in common with the merchandise.
- Some retailers like to treat their customers with windows that show no merchandise, yet sell the image of the store or an event occurring in-store, pieces of art, live performances and animated sets have also been used.
- During the sale times it is not uncommon to use merchandise alone to create a window display.





Planning a window display

- Alannah Weston from Selfridges in London says:
- Brilliant execution is at the heart of good window display.
- Not having too many ideas, having great composition and really being able to tell a story are so important when designing a window display.
- It is about developing a language to speak within the windows.
- The language could be a series of colours, shapes or textures.
- You do not have much time to grab the attention of the public.
- You need to grab them straight away while they pass, but at the same time there should be details that want to make the customers stay there longer if they want to.
- Also, the windows need to be somewhat informative.











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Planning a window display

- Alannah is also keen to enlist the help of artists and other noted creative individuals to design their windows. She says:
- One of our creative strategies is to collaborate with others, whether that means working with a fashion designer to create an exclusive window or bring in either unknown or famous artists to design a complete scheme.
- I find they all bring such a huge talent to the store.

Themes and Schemes

- Both themes and schemes are familiar words to Vm's.
- They refer to the creative element that will be used to support the product.
- They are both related, giving the window or windows a thread that will pull the overall look together.
- A theme or scheme should be well planned and thought through.
- VM's use them to create drama, to tell a story and to inspire.
- They can be seasonal or a commentary upon social, political or economic trends.

Themes and Schemes

- A theme is the topic of the window presentation.
- It should include colour, the props and relevant merchandise that will make the overall idea come to life.
- A swimwear theme may include sand, palm trees and a blue wall, thus giving the feel of a beach.
- Even a store with one window should have a window theme.

Themes and Schemes

- Schemes suit stores with many windows, like department stores.
- A scheme takes on the theme but may be adapted so that each window is different, yet tells the same message.
- A beach window may have another next to it with a yacht and blue floors; the next may have a hotel balcony as its main feature.
- It's important that the scheme is cohesive and consistent.



Themes and Schemes

- In many instances, window themes and schemes will be carried into the store and used in the in-store displays as well.
- When used properly, such displays will project a stronger message to the customer.
- Print-work such as graphics or signage reflecting the window message is the most effective and economical way of carrying the themes in-store.
- A theme or scheme can also be replicated in the form of in-store displays at designated areas within the store to carry the window theme inside.
- It is always worth considering where to place the in-store displays to gain maximum exposure.

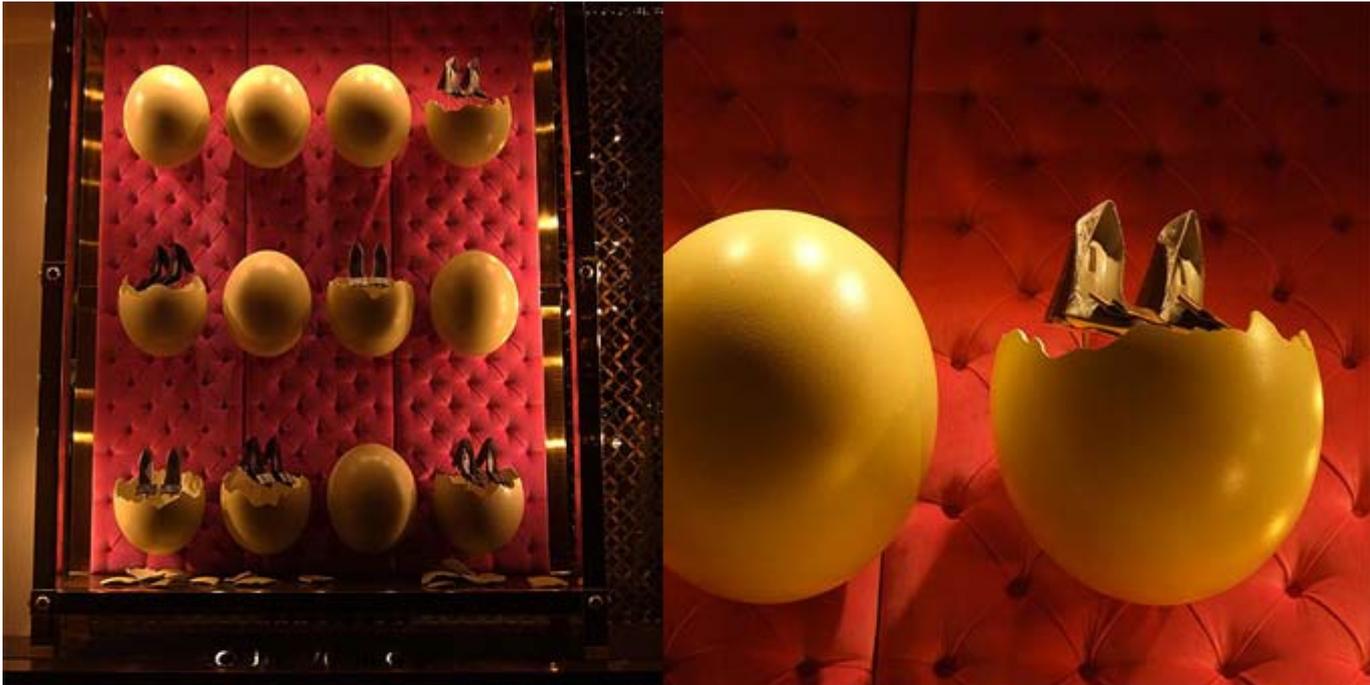


Budgeting

- Retailers will expect big promotions to draw more attention than usual to the store.
- There will be costly, and it is essential to plan and budget for such events.
- An annual window budget should be divided to cover all the costs of the planned window schemes.
- Most retailers will mix expensive and overstated windows with more modestly process schemes during the course of the year.
- The Christmas scheme will always incur the most cost.
- Any seasonal window run will need to be planned early.
- It is always wise to ensure that any extra help required is budgeted for and booked in advance.

Props

- Once you have chosen your theme and scheme and your merchandise, it is then time to consider the props you will need before thinking about the layout of the window itself.
- Props, as the name suggests, are objects that visually support the items for sale.
- A window display can include one prop or a collection.
- A prop can have empathy with the products, or cleverly have nothing in common with the merchandise at all.
- A padded silk box would be a conventional way to support a diamond ring; a roll of barbed wire would be a contemporary (modern, abstract) way of supporting it.
- One stand-alone prop can be as effective as a whole window scheme fashioned from many.



Props

- Props enhance a window or an interior display, as they work in the same way on film sets or a theatrical stage.
- They can be purchased or hired.
- Other merchandise items can also be used as a prop, such as a stock item of furniture used as a backdrop for a fashion scheme.
- Such props are both economical and commercial because one would not need to pay for them to be made, they can display a price ticket and can be sold themselves.
- This can allow two stores with complimenting products to partner together. With some merchandise of both in each of their windows. (Co-Branding & Cross-Selling)



Props

- The general rule for props is that they should not overpower yet still support the product.
- A basic mix of two-thirds props to one-third merchandise is usually best.
- This may seem an odd balance, but the props are there to support the theme and to provide drama, so they need to be bold enough to create an impression.
- Too much merchandise can interfere with the artistic composition – unless that is the intention, such as during a clearance sale, when the aim is to focus on the reduction message.



Props

- There should always be interaction between the props and the product.
- A plant pot placed at the foot of the mannequin will only draw attention for the wrong reasons because it will undoubtedly look out of place and have no relevance to the merchandise it is supporting.
- It is best to avoid props that are personal favourites if they have nothing in common with the window theme.
- Small boutiques with no visual guidance are usually the worst offenders in this common habit.
- Old pieces of furniture, drapes and artificial flowers unthoughtfully placed in a window with no relevance to the merchandise will look dull and out of place.



Props

- Some of the best window displays, are crafted, not with a heavy bank balance, but with an active imagination.
- Bergdorf Goodman in New York, famous for its lavish window displays, once covered the entire back walls of the vast windows with burnt toast graded from light to dark, with stylishly dressed mannequins at the front.
- The windows should have cost no more than the price of a few loaves of bread and a toaster.
- There are a variety of ways to use and source props to achieve stunning window displays.







