

Stylus 20 December 2011

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A.R.E. Retail Design Collective
 Location: New York
 Dates: December 7 - 9, 2011
 Frequency: Annual
 Exhibitors: 36
 Visitors: 1,000
retaildesigncollective.com

A.R.E. Retail Design Collective

The Association for Retail Environments (ARE) hosted its annual **Retail Design Collective** in December with 36 showrooms showing new merchandising product for some 1,000 attendees from the worlds of retailing and commercial design – from the US and beyond.

The energy at this year's show was positive, with suppliers excited about their new introductions and ready to impress retailers looking to refresh their brands.

Heritage, already a success in the fashion and design industries, was a key theme of the event. Mixed use of metal and wood on fixtures and mannequins, and the use of vintage touches and imperfect details shook off the confines of uniformity and offered a more accessible approach to visual merchandising. The key directions are:

Heritage

Having saturated the worlds of fashion and design, it is no wonder that elements of heritage are in high demand in for VM. Distressed wood, vintage fabric and industrial-style fixtures are used to create a lyrical sense of history and comfort.

California-based **B&N Industries** launched Infused Veneer, a line of panels and fixtures that infuse imagery and graphics onto various wood veneers including maple, cherry, and walnut. Patterns range from Americana and chinoiserie to plays on silhouettes and historical maps, set against the warmth of wood and with a knowing wink at vintage style. In the same vein, New York-based **Architectural Systems** launched a Fusion Wood line for its What's Next collection, featuring rough reclaimed wood.

Montreal's **JPMA Global** rolled out a comprehensive Industrial collection using metal and wood that, according to its director of global business development Jim Nelson, satisfies the interest in creating heritage-inspired retail spaces. "We've included industrial elements in the metal fixtures, incorporating distressed Carolina pine, that we can customise in colour and texture to suit a client's exact needs" he said.

The Netherlands-based mannequin-maker **Hans Boodt**, represented by Manex in the US, introduced the Casual Vintage Collection. Offered in both male and female versions, the torso and head are covered with vintage fabric with arms and legs in either natural wood or a matte black finish.

A.R.E. RETAIL DESIGN COLLECTIVE
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The Thread



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B&N Industries



Architectural Systems



JPMA Global



Hans Boodt



Hans Boodt



Hans Boodt

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Use Your Head

Gone are the days of abstract, headless mannequins, said Kelly Ramsey of Los Angeles-based **Silvestri California**. "Retailers want to add personality, and heads are a key way of doing that," she says. "I have a major client in the south, a department store chain, that just ordered 1,500 full mannequins – and they want them as different as possible: different faces, different skin tones, different hair, as many options as they can get. I think we'll be seeing a lot more of that."

Other suppliers echoed this sentiment, with companies like New York-based **DK Display** and **Greneker** and **Patina-V** – both headquartered in California – adding life-like, detailed heads with distinct faces to their collections. Hans Boodt took it to another level, with female faces resembling English model Agyness Deyn. Male mannequins were more geek chic than classically handsome.



Patina-V



Greneker



Patina-V



DK Display



Hans Boodt



Hans Boodt

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A Study in Androgyny

As a continuation of the movement toward diverse mannequins, the industry seems to be moving away from traditional female and male forms, meeting somewhere in the grey area of androgyny. “We used to be known for our really muscular, buff male forms,” says Christopher Willey of Patina-V. “But new for us is a slighter male body, more lean and closer in size to the female form. It’s a more accessible shape for many men, and it gives retailers more options to suit their style.”

Following the look of high fashion today – think models-of-the-moment Andrej Pejic and Saskia de Brauw – manufacturers, including Hans Boodt, **Manex** and Italy’s **Almax**, showed faces that were less overtly feminine or masculine. Females had thinner lips, slightly more pronounced brow lines, and smaller, more closely set eyes – a boyish look. Men had less square jaw lines as well as noses that were more button-like than aquiline.



Patina-V



Patina-V



DK Display



Patina-V



Manex



Patina-V

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Solid Primary

Taking a cue from the bright colours saturating interiors at the moment, mannequins and retail displays followed suit going bold with primary hues that livened up familiar objects from shelving at B&N Industries to wooden hands, mannequins, and dress forms at Greneker, **Bernstein Display** and Canadian company **RHO**. The display at B&N made use of a formed laminate finish making it seamless and incredibly durable with bold colours.



RHO



Bernstein Display



Greneker



B&N Industries



Bernstein Display

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Fade to Gray

In finding an alternative to white mannequins without going to black or full-colour finish some suppliers settled on grey with some very appealing results. Christopher Willey of Patina-V said: "We're getting a fabulous response to the new charcoal-grey option, which we're doing in a powder finish that mimics the look of slate." As a clever way to add oomph without straying from this sophisticated colour, the company added high-gloss varnish to just the lips of some mannequins.

Kelly Ramsey of Silvestri California also said grey was popular, although it made the look flashier. "We're using grey with some great metallic finishes that really stand out." Cut out, modular-style display towers were finished in a power-coated metallic grey, that stand out regardless of the wall colour or space.



Silvestri California



Patina-V



Silvestri California



Silvestri California



Patina-V

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Supernatural Motion

Stances that signify standing, walking and running have evolved into mannequins that closely capture the way real people carry themselves, even if the results are exaggerated. There was some fun at Patina-V, says Willey, with its new Workout collection of vibrant, jumping-for-joy male and female mannequins that broach the gap between traditional dolls and the real motion of the runway. "We decided to really go for it, using these expressive shapes for the mannequins that show how clothing would wear in real life."

Mannequins at Almax, Greneker and **RHO** were also posed in positions that did more to show off the natural movement of clothing. At Hans Boodt the mannequins stood more awkwardly, inspired by youthful street-style with a coy pigeon-toed stance.



Hans Boodt



RHO



Patina-V



Manex



Manex

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Stylus Summary

The annual Retail Design Collective was bolstered by the attitude that retailers are looking to spend on their stores, to gain consumer confidence.

Heritage: Echoing the worlds of fashion and design, elements of heritage are in high demand.

Heads: Retailers looking for personality and individuality. There is also a move to an androgynous look.

Colour: Solid bright colour livens up familiar objects and grey has appeared as an alternative to standard white mannequins without going to black or full-colour.

Supernatural Motion: Mannequins now closely capture reality – ranging from dynamic motion to more awkward stances.

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