

# Retail for the *senses*.

POSSIBLE • IDEAS  
MADE

## Retail *highlights*.

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Le Labo, Kyoto.





# Retail *highlights*.

Unique *sensory* narratives  
and immersive moments that  
customers can *feel*.

This report dives into the world of sensory activation—how brands are using sight, sound, smell, touch, and even taste to evoke emotions for deeper storytelling.

In this report we look at;  
→ Olfactory storytelling  
→ The power of placemaking  
→ Tactility for connection  
→ Understanding the senses







D4R VIEW

# Being *sensorial*.

BUILDING RICHER BRAND WORLDS

CRAFTING CONNECTION

Innovation in sensory engagement can transcend the clichés of immersive retail to deliver **exciting and engaging experiences**.

In-store sensory activation isn’t an additional layer to a retail strategy, it should be intrinsic to a storytelling arc. Customer expectation is that brands will provide them with multi-sensory experiences, with 82% expecting as many of their senses as possible to be engaged when experiencing something new (Wunderman Thompson).

As digital convenience accelerates, when physical retail uses sensory immersion as a medium and mechanic for **connecting product and people**, it becomes unforgettable. In the right hands, physical retail can be transformative.

Strategic use of sensory activation has emerged as a powerful tool to influence shopper behaviour, **enhance emotional connection**, and drive purchasing decisions. This report explores the growing role of the senses as part of the customer experience, examining how retail design can leverage multi-sensory strategies to create immersive spaces that resonate with consumers to leave authentic, lasting positive impression.

“In a digital-first world, what differentiates is an experience with sensory richness.”

ANDREA ROBINETT,  
DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE & STRATEGY





01

# A timeless garden.

LOEWE PERFUMES AT THE SELFRIDGES CORNER SHOP



## REDEFINING OLFACTORY STORYTELLING

Loewe transforms the iconic Corner Shop into a scent-drenched garden maze, subverting the concept of retail presentation. The takeover irresistibly pulls passers-by into a space defined by botanical and heritage cues and immersive scents, all enveloped in elegant and unexpected architectural forms.

Towering tomato vines and whimsical floral and vegetable arrangements signpost the unexpected olfactory delights that lie within.

This is a richly layered and tactile expression of the signature Loewe fragrance and the brand's intrinsic and highly unexpected link to heritage fruit and vegetables.

“A functional maze of paper-thin, sculptural corridors that recall Renaissance garden paths, all soaked in the vegetal green aroma of Loewe’s Tomato Leaves.”

SHOP DROP DAILY



02

# Submerge yourself.

## AMOUAGE FRAGRANCE FLAGSHIP

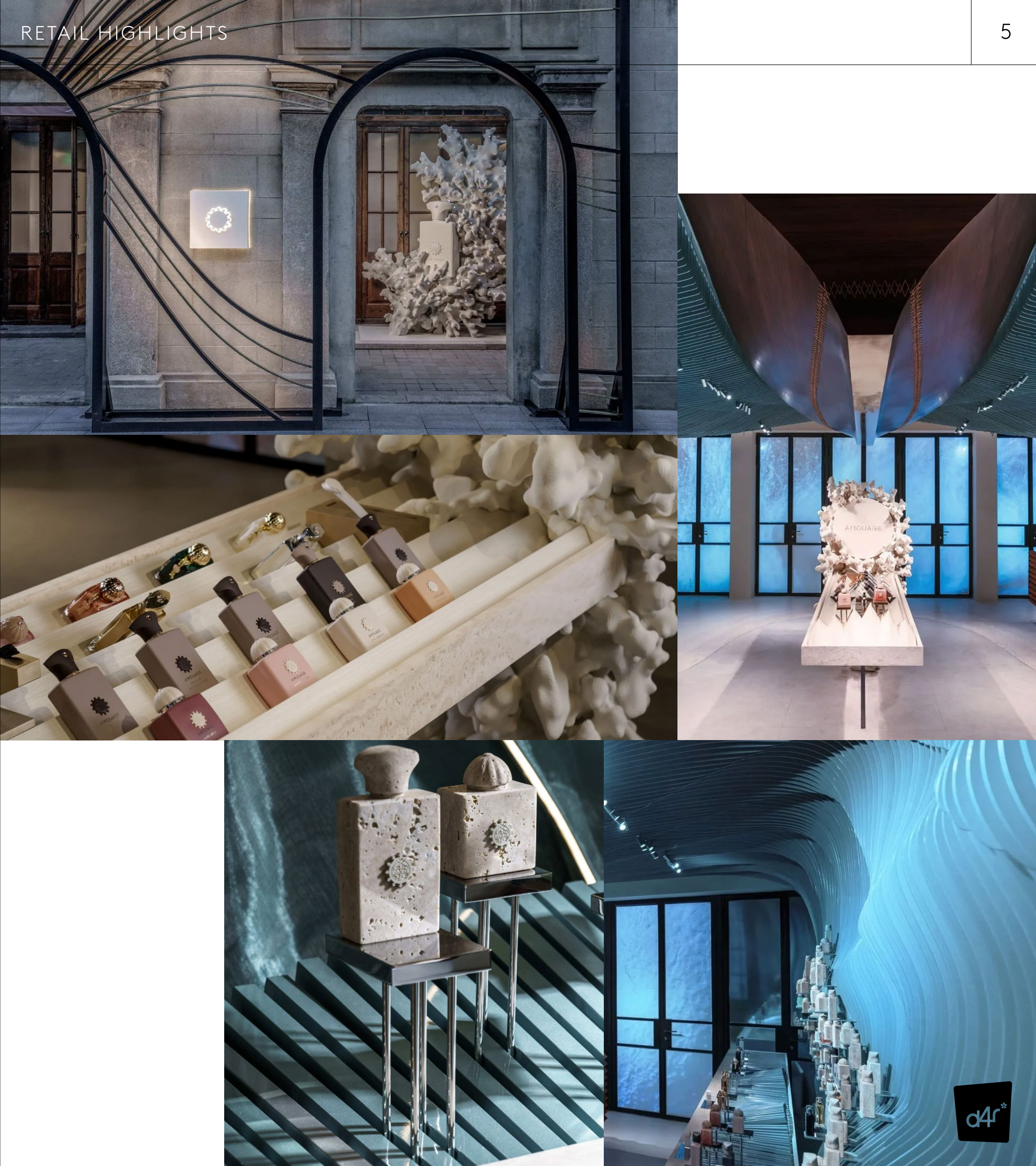
“A timeless olfactory odyssey through the deep sea; re-imagining the millennium-old dialogue between Oman and China through the lens of the Maritime Silk Road”

AMOUAGE

### BETWEEN BOUTIQUE AND GALLERY

Amouage stores globally are modern and luxurious **interpretations of the brand's Arabian heritage**, each one viewed through the lens of the locality in which they sit. Their Shanghai store- The Sillage- delivers a **layered story arc** that combines a powerful narrative and reflections of the brand's Omani cultural roots that meets expectations of local clientele seeking immersive, memorable experiences.

The boutique invites visitors under the sea, showcasing Oman's tales through Sindbad the sailor. At the entrance, two-meter corals invite and intrigue. Inside, the ceiling features a dhow's hull guiding visitors through treasures, product is nestled into the **natural forms** of reef-inspired tables and presented on an ingenious mechanical merchandising system that mimics the **perpetual motion of waves** and tides. The whole enveloped within sandbank-like terrazzo floors, and softly lapping waves projected on the glass façade.





“A place of sensory revelation and brand *desire*. Deeply inspiring, capable of taking every visitor on a sensory *odyssey*.”

HEROINE  
STORE ARCHITECTS



03

# Spirit of the desert.

## GODAWAN WHISKEY LAUNCH EVENT.

Artisanal Indian Whisky brand Godawan launched in Dubai with an evocative launch that paid homage to Indo-Aryan / Rajasthani culture and **intrinsically links the product to place** it is made and the people who will enjoy it.

Expertly representing indigenous narrative and artisanal processes celebrated within the land. Live hand-loom weaving to kinetic sand art installations create positive links with culture and craft of the local region that shapes the identity of the drink.

A strong **sense of provenance** is formed through the adherence to the golden thread running through the concept; the Rajasthani ethos of 'beauty in scarcity'. This mantra seems to run through the crafted process, the passage of time to create the product and the sustainable, conscious attitude the brand embodies.



“Guests at the event followed in the footsteps of the emblematic and rare Godawan bird to discover the brand’s origins in this uniquely arid landscape.”

BOMPAS AND PARR





04

# Source of *pleasure.*

LAVAZZA, MILAN.



## EVOKING RITUALS

For Milan Design Week, Lavazza presented Source of Pleasure, a large-scale installation that explores coffee through spatial and sensory cues. The experience engages by not presenting coffee as simply a drink, instead building an encompassing **evocation of the daily rituals**, emotional cues, and memories it activates.

Within its large circular form, a rich palette of tactile materials echo the colour of roasted coffee, the structure reflecting both the raw material and the ritual that surrounds it. The scent of coffee permeates the space, enriching the visual minimalism with an unmistakable sensory reference.

Though monumental in scale, the experience is far from obviously theatrical. Instead, visitors are immersed into an intentionally sparse environment that invites pause, smell, touch, and a sense of stillness that makes **space for contemplation**. The enveloping nature of both structure and atmosphere disconnects from the bustle of the Salon environment allowing for focus on the abstract and deeply emotionally resonant cues presented within.

“Rather than replicate the... café or showroom, Source of Pleasure uses abstraction to connect with its material origin.”

ARCHISCENE





05

# Infusing *cultural* spirit.

DOCUMENTS 'LONG TEMPLE' STORE, SHANGHAI.



## A CONTEMPORARY REINTERPRETATION

Documents fragrance's 'Bold Zen' position is a combination of traditional and new Chinese culture, aesthetics, and philosophy that markets to young, artistic-minded champions of traditional Chinese heritage. Their stores look to capture the ephemeral; both the intangible nature of the product itself, but on a deeper level also the cultural heritage, collective memory, and nuanced taste level of their guochao customer.

The brand does this at retail with a symphony of sensorial cues. Layering tactile materiality, scent landscapes, and referential cues that evoke specific time and place. Their contemporary reinterpretation of heritage and elegance infuses cultural spirit and artistic sensibility into modern design.

“This visual motif evokes a larger universe- a world shaped by the aesthetics, philosophy, and embodied language of Chinese cultural heritage.”

DAO INSIGHTS





“  
As the name suggests,  
the *Long Temple*  
takes inspiration from  
Chinese traditions...  
with craftsmanship  
such as wood carving  
and mortise and tenon  
techniques, both inspired  
by intangible cultural  
heritages.

”

DAO INSIGHTS



06

# Guided by *wabi-sabi*.

LE LABO FLAGSHIP,  
KYOTO.

A sense of place isn't simply geographical. Our understanding, our memories of a place and time are emotional, cultural, and atmospheric. Utilising this is especially powerful where brands root their identity in origin and authenticity. Steeped in historic and cultural beauty, Kyoto- the artisan capital of Japan- is the perfect choice for Le Labo.

A reverence for handmade processes and the wonder that can be found in subtle, evanescent details are intrinsic to the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi; a guiding principle for Le Labo and a mindset that informed the meticulous renovation of a wooden town-house (machiya) as a flagship brand environment. The history of the building has been revered and exposed, celebrating the detail and nuance of Japanese craft. With scent as a primary sensory theme, the brand layer visual, tactile, and olfactory cues to inform a deeply emotional and cultural experience.



“The space is a fully realised evocation of place, time, and emotion that connects centuries-old machiya architecture with Le Labo’s raw, minimalist aesthetic.”







07

# Antidote to overload.

POINTTWOFOVE SECOND STORE, TOKYO



춤을 추는 아이들을 따라가자...  
Let's follow the dancing children...

고향에서 떠난 그녀는 어디로도 가지 못한다.  
She left her hometown and can never go anywhere.

## A FOCUS ON THE DETAIL

Since its inception, Seoul-based fragrance brand POINTTWOFOVE · SECOND has been making waves with not only its niche brand philosophy, but also through engaging, design-led retail spaces. Similar to the brand philosophy, the interior design aims to express ‘time’ and ‘story’ through the concept of ‘memory’. Spatially, the design is based on the concept of a ‘memory’-evoking cabinets for precious items, but which happen double as a fragrance counters. The concept invites shoppers to explore and sample the products without distraction.

The sparse interiors allow for the richly detailed and evocative scents and their accompanying video and written descriptors to shine.

“The aim is to allow its clientele to transcend the boundary of ‘time’ and create a ‘time zone’ of one’s own through scent.”

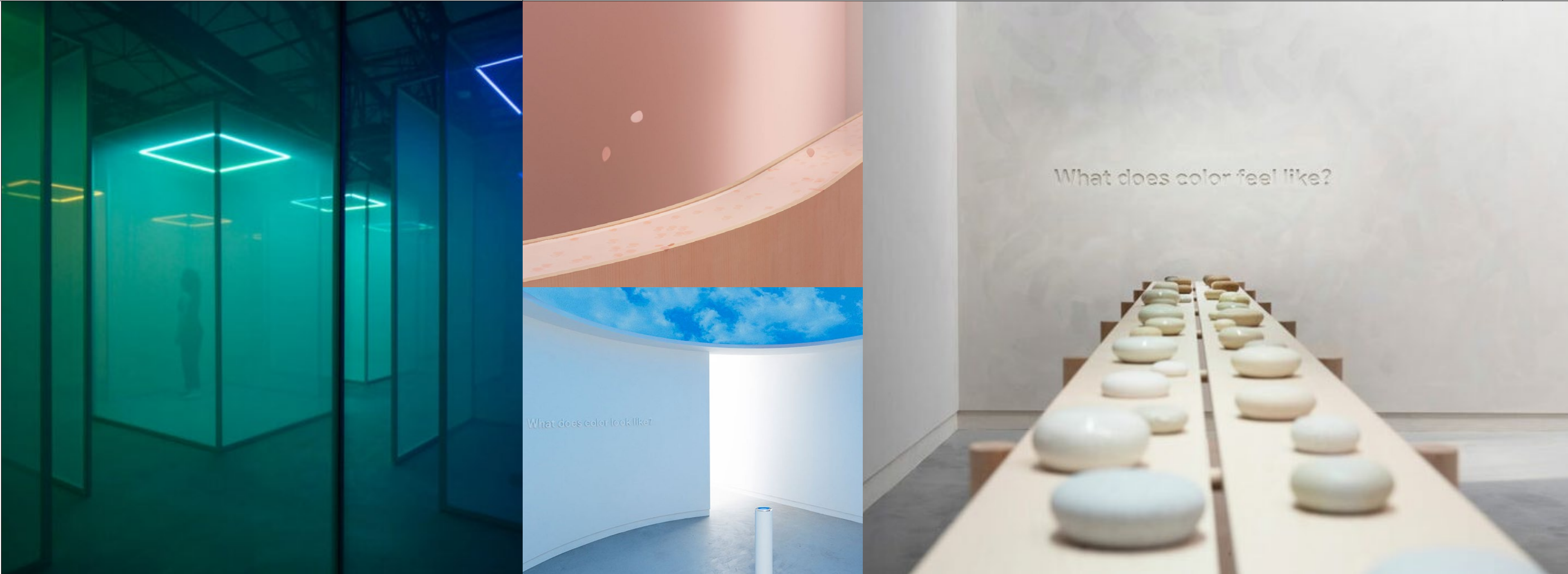
SUPERFUTURE



08

Synaesthesia explored.

GOOGLE, MILAN DESIGN WEEK



EVOKING RITUALS

Google continues its exploration of neuroaesthetics with an exhibition where colour takes the lead, bolstered by the other senses. Sprawling across roughly 6,500 square feet inside a redeveloped industrial building near Porta Venezia- the five-room, multi-layered installation completely immerses.

In the first space 21 nodes comprising semi-transparent enclosures illuminated coloured light are filled with audible frequencies equivalent to the light’s wavelength. From the low rumbles of red moving through yellow then green to blue, sound-waves change in progressive tonality, challenging listeners to hear colour.

The exhibit experience shifts from the intangible and ethereal to the tangible and physical as visitors make their way through a series of four adjacent spaces dedicated to a particular colour inspired and informed by a specific sensation.

Sight is isolate as an elliptical portal of blue sky where onlookers are made to see through refraction and the multiplication of image as rendered in water pooling on the surface of a central silver-plated pole. Flavour and scent are evoked with falling rose petals and a 'bright' dinner that recalls the sweet memories of orange juice and lemon tea.

“Synaesthesia- cross-sensory perceptions- offers fascinating insight into the brain’s interconnectedness and is often associated with heightened creativity and memory.”



# Backed by insight, the D4R *difference*.

## HELLO, WE'RE DESIGN4RETAIL

Our strategy teams stay up to date and tapped into culture, always keeping an eye on what's happening. That way, we can create more meaningful experiences by using strategic insights to guide every step of the project.

## OUR DISCIPLINES

- Brand storytelling
- Customer experience
- Pop-ups & activations
- Retail identity
- Store design & fit out







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