

Workshop: Rethinking the profession and education of retail design

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Topic We strongly believe retail design is becoming a discipline in its own right. Today, the growth of digital technology asks for new ways of retailing. The intertwining of retail and society makes it challenging for retailers to stay relevant in relation to the consumers changing habits. Fitch believed that 'shopping is the purpose of life' (Fitch, 2012). His belief shifted the way all stakeholders in retail thought about what retail and retail design should be about. By recognising that retail design is more than just designing a store's interior, Fitch set the tone in creating a discipline that crossed over various disciplines, and incorporated retail design and architecture, alongside product and packaging design. Today, the discipline is changing again under the pressure of the digital evolution and changing consumer (Christiaans & Almendra, 2012). Retailers today should extend their business with an omni-channel approach. Retailers are in urge to create seamless brand experiences which transcend the boundaries of online and offline channels (Quartier, 2016). This has repercussions for the field of retail design and the role of the designer in the design process. This short work-shop wants to contribute in rethinking the discipline's and profession of retail design. Therefore, want to bring designers together to think about a holistic interdisciplinary design approach embracing all retailer's channels.

Purpose The retail business has evolved into the design of a customer holistic experience for which specialists from diverse disciplines need to work together (Teufel & Zimmerman, 2015). This merge generates an opportunity to create physical and digital spaces that are consistent, coherent and above all, complementary. However, for this domain to really grow and flourish, the existing gaps between different design disciplines need to disappear. We want to open this discussion (in the hope to find a way to close the gap) to hear what other designers from other disciplines think about what the profession of retail design should be in the near future. The D&E conference offers a great opportunity to bring designers, interested in the topic of retail design, together.

Keywords *Retail design, Retail design education, Inter-disciplinary, Research in retail design, Retail 3.0*