IARC 4/584 Interior Design Studio
Retail Environments – The Art of Selling

Instructors: Frank Escher and Ravi GuneWardena; Margo Grant Walsh Distinguished Visiting Professors
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Studio will meet at twice per week 12:00-5:50 Wednesday and Friday
This studio is worth 6 credits
This studio is offered on a P/NP basis only

A recent pop-up store designed by Escher GuneWardena for the Hermès Petit h collection was listed as a “Selling Exhibition” revealing how retail merchandise is often presented as art objects. This studio will explore concepts of treating retail spaces as immersive experiential environments.

The project will be the design of a retail space within an existing building in Eugene, Oregon. Beginning with a group of case studies of well-known retail spaces and art installations, students will research, analyze and classify the projects by type (general store, gallery, lounge, shrine, etc.). Students will also research briefly a range of selected retail products and select a group for their project. Following a visit and survey of the intended space for the project, student will develop individual concepts for their product and space.

The range of merchandise may include local products from the Portland or Eugene areas, such as Willamette Valley Wines, baked goods, farm products (cheese, vegetables, flowers) or non-local “fair trade” products, such as coffee, tea, and spices, or books (t.b.d.).

Students will design the entire interior of the space, including the casework and display elements, the façade and signage of the retail space exterior, and possibly a mobile cart unit for the same retail merchandise. Treatment of both the product and the construction material to create a unified conceptual statement will be examined. Students will consider practical concerns (such as storage, or climactic control) as well as aesthetic and atmospheric qualities of the space for their selected product. Floor plans, sections, interior and exterior elevations, details, renderings and models will be required for the final presentation.

Students will research and present a series of case studies, developing a reference image library for the class project. Case studies will include environments created by artists -- Thomas Hirshhorn, Yayoi Kusama, Damien Hirst, Urs Fischer, Barry Mc Gee, Rudolph Stingel, Kai Althoff -- spaces designed by architects and designers -- Erich Hamann Chocolate Shop, Adof Loos’ Knize Men’s Outfitters, Gae Aulenti’s Pucci Penthouse & Olivetti Showrooms, Shigeru Ban’s Hermès Milan Pavilion, David Adjaye’s Idea Stores, Rei Kawakubo’s Comme des Garçons London Flagship & Dover Street Markets, Kitchen Rogers’ Comme des Garçons Paris shop, Studio Toogood’s Hermès Petit h installation, M/M Paris’ Dior Homme store display, Rodney Eggleston’s Aesops Melbourne, and others.
Escher Gunewardena

www.egarch.net

In a city with an extraordinary collection of 20th century architecture and a globally important contemporary art scene, the office of Frank Escher and Ravi Gunewardena occupies a unique position: since 1997 they have routinely worked with artists (Eliasson, Prina, Kelley, Lockhart), as well as with significant buildings (e.g. restoring John Lautner's Chemosphere, and the Eames House, in collaboration with the Getty Conservation Institute). Their work in the public realm includes art galleries (Blum and Poe), a series of tanning salons treated as light installations (Electric Sun), a restaurant (Pho Café), hair salons, and a pop-up store installation for Hermès Petit h collection in 2014.

Frank Escher (ETH, Zurich), is the editor of the first Lautner monograph, was administrator of the Lautner Archive, serves on the boards of the Lautner Foundation, as well as the Julius Shulman Institute; Ravi Gunewardena studied architecture, as well as art history (Cal Poly Pomona and Florence, Italy) and has served on the Hollywood Art Advisory Panel for the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency.