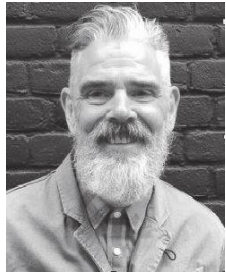


Welcome



Hello and welcome to this edition of Spotlight. It's the season of exciting events and changes. The VM & Display Awards in March, The Visual Merchandising and Display Show on 9-10 April, the evenings are lighter, and the weather is (hopefully!) starting to get warmer.

I promised you in the last edition that the BDS was changing too, and am delighted to reveal that, after months of consultation with various industry professionals and student forums, we're changing our name!

We felt that although the 'British Display Society' has served us well for many years, it seemed no longer relevant to our industry and the immense varied and creative talented people that we're here to support.

I'm delighted to announce that our new name will be the '**British Creative Retail Association**'.

Over the next few months, our graphics will be updated and all the other legal 'behind the scenes' work completed, but we feel that the **British Creative Retail Association** will serve us well for many years to come.

Changing our name (evidently!) isn't as simple as just thinking of a good one. There has been much debate, voting and consultation and it wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and passion of the entire Leadership Team, so a huge thank you to them and our administrator Elaine for keeping us all up to date and legal.

The retail industry thrives on our creativity, we embrace it, nurture it and deliver it constantly without fail, season after season, year after year. Our industry is always inventive, always exciting and our new name, **British Creative Retail Association**, sums up all our individual talents and professional skills perfectly.

Have a great spring season,

Paul

Paul Symes Hons.FBDS

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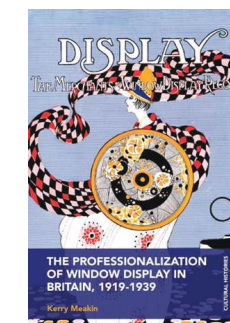
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Cover image:

Book cover of the Book Launch:
The Professionalisation of Window Display
in Britain 1919 - 1939.

By Dr. Kerry Meakin Hons. FBDS

See pages 8 - 13 for full details.

Disclaimer

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Newsletter Editor

Please contact Elaine Fisher for details regarding articles and advertisements for future issues

Email: admin@britishdisplaysociety.co.uk

Chair: Paul Symes

**Copy deadline
for June 2025 edition
5th May**

Email: admin@britishdisplaysociety.co.uk

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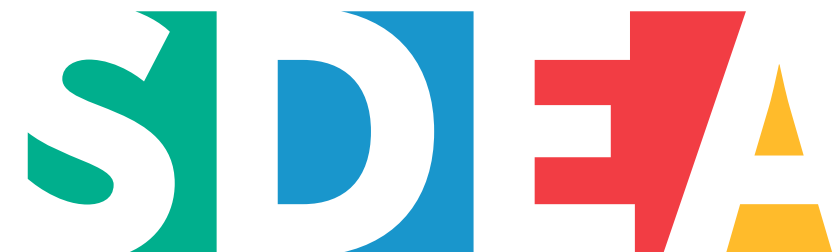


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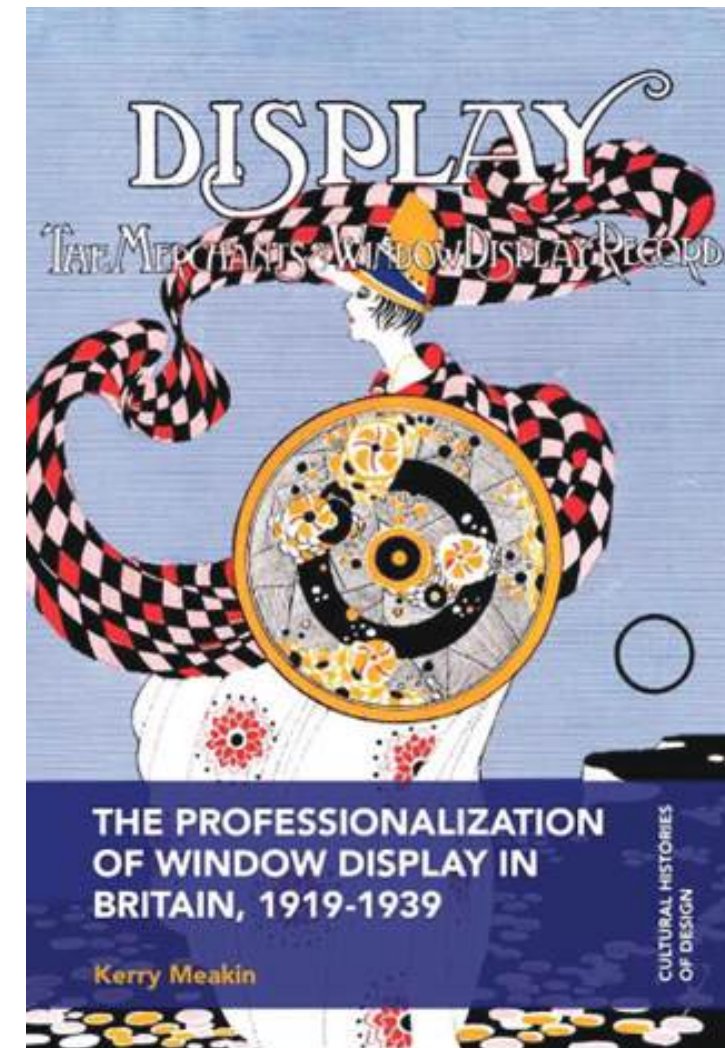
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Book Launch

The Professionalisation of Window Display in Britain 1919–1939 by Dr. Kerry Meakin

The first-year TUDublin Visual Merchandising students at the Technological University Dublin were given the project of researching Dr. Kerry Meakin's book, *The Professionalisation of Window Display in Britain, 1919–1939*. They had to produce an academic poster with their research and then make a window display influenced by the book. The students' fantastic window displays showcased techniques featured in the book, forming a wonderful backdrop to Dr Kerry Meakin's Dublin's book launch.



Right: Dr. Kerry Meakin
Left: Dr. Neville Knott

The book launch for Dr Kerry Meakin, *The Professionalisation of Window Display in Britain, 1919–1939: Modern Styles, associations, and Education, a comprehensive Guide to Visual Merchandising Evolution and Modern Techniques*, has been a truly heart-warming experience. The highlight of seeing Visual Merchandising professionals, academics, colleagues, friends, family, and visual merchandising students, past and present, come out in droves to celebrate this fantastic achievement by Dr. Kerry Meakin.

Everyone at the event had a genuinely original immersive experience influenced by traditional Visual Merchandising techniques discussed in the book. Dr Sorchá O'Brien, a design historian, said, "Every book launch should have the Visual Merchandising students do their launch; it was amazing".



Michelle Lalor, Dr Kerry Meakin and Sara O'Sullivan



Maddie Langan, Conor Delaney, Sarah Dawson



Ella Foster, Kellen Rochford, Holly Geraghty



Robert Dunne, Caitlyn Mc Guill



Niamh Gannon , Sara O Sullivan, Andrea Cash



Emily Lawless, Alannah Mullin, Caitlyn Smith

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Why not become a BDS Member?

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- Opportunity to join the BDS Leadership Team.
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- Additional free advertising on BDS social media
- Use of the BDS logo / affix for additional credibility.

Apply for BDS Membership, from only £40 per annum



International Creative Display Conference 2023 What's in a name?

‘What's in a name’ Encouraging Visual Merchandising as a profession - Erika Scharff

Promotion of VM. “As long as there are goods to sell, we need people to present them. “Need to convince retail to do more display. VM is design thinking, customer engagement, problem-solving, offline and online, storytelling and styling, handling products, photography, composition, light, product presentation, diversity and versatility. It is also about creating new from old and reusing. It can make both the on and offline experience.

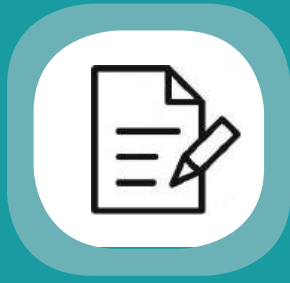
Educational institutions need to see students as ‘customers’. What do they want? Look at things from a different educational experience. VM can also inform. It's more than selling, it can inspire people. Show combinations that they would not have thought of. VM has a purpose to make people think about things, give meaning and back to storytelling.

Does Visual Merchandising as our trade/ brand name quantify the exhaustive list of Visual Merchandising attributes? - Michelle Lalor

Names that resonate with what can define our trade: Retail, Design (domestic, commercial, retail, event, museum), Experience, Image, Creative, Display.

Visual Merchandising and the Retail Environment. What is the Future? - John Abbate

The British Display Society surveyed a range of retail professionals to gain an understanding of how they view the role of a visual merchandiser and the challenges the industry faces. What is the future of this fundamental skill in the ever-changing retail landscape, be that bricks and mortar stores, online channels, or virtual environments? The findings of the survey were shared with the congress who will be participating in the questionnaire so VM Spotlight will be covering this in an upcoming edition soon.



International Creative Display Conference

What's in a name?

Rebranding Display

Group Session Discussion and Findings

- Concept & Design Visualiser
- Design, Sensory, Display, Retail
- Creative Design Artist
- Field Visual Creative
- Display Artist
- Sensory Merchandising
- Jack of all trades!
- Creative Display
- Experience Design
- Display Design
- Brand/retail & events
- Brand experience
- Creative Retail Design Experience Image Display Sensory
CED Creative Experience Designer
- Visual Marketing Designer
- Thoughts on visual merchandising - perceptions around the role, that it is more than just displays.
- Global / Modern / Universal
- Retail in the name, and connotations with this word
- Creative as part of the description, but also discussed that design might incorporate this
- Instore Marketing – but also the idea that marketing isn't seen by everyone as creative
- Visual Presentation
- Education link, students and recruitment not understanding what visual merchandising mean
- Visual Designer
- How versatile the role is, and again people's perceptions of it. Visual Environment / Environmental / Creative
- Retail Environments Designer, Shop Environmental Designer, Retail Creative Director, Retail Spatial Designer , Creative Display, Visual
- Presentation Designer
- Linking to a sector such as fashion, home, food, or even that 'fashioning' word
- Advertised alongside graphics, interiors and then a visual merchandiser, and more people would be draw towards 'designer'
- Word 'experience'
- Store Experience Manager
- Product Designer 'Wizard'
- Display is a very British word, presentation might be a more global word
- 'Experience' as a word



International Creative Display Conference

What's in a name?

Rebranding Display

Discussion

Visual Display in Dunnes,
too broad people ask what
does it relate to, we need
something more specific,
visual display might be
linked with clothing/
apparel only

Links back to display
meaning different
things in different
areas.

Creative
Display, Visual
Presentation
Designer

Arranging

Visual and
Installation Designer

International Creative
Display, looking at the
name of the conference

Can you use only
the word Creator,
like a doctor, just a
creator who then has
a speciality?

Creative Services

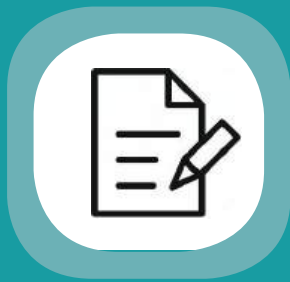
Visual Experience
Responsible

Visual Marketing
Designer

Visual Designer

Styling / Stylist

Inspirational Solutions



International
Creative Display
Conference
What's in a name?

Rebranding display
FINDINGS

Regarding VM in education, which is being threatened, we must bridge the gap between what students are learning and what companies want. It is about imagination and curiosity. Must use universal words that students can use to explain what they are studying and the career that is worthy to them. They questioned the worthiness of using the name 'retail'. If only involving this, why study it? Design is a name that has more value and is in line with other creative trades such as Graphic Design, Interior Design, etc. No one knows what VM is. The name needs to be broad. Marketing, Merchandising, and Fashion are also limiting. Styling is often used to explain VM but we do much more than that. The name should be short. Creative and Design are very similar. Visual and Experience are names that touch on everything.

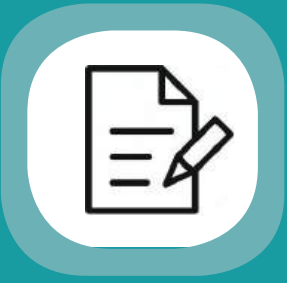
Visual is the old,
experience is the
new, and design is the
speciality at the end

Shortlist

- Designer
- Visual
- Presentation
- Experience
- Concept
- Creative
- Solution
- Immersive

Potential Titles

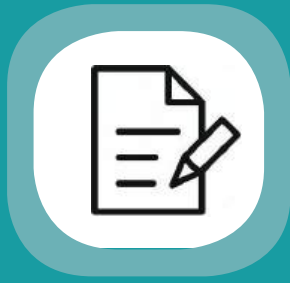
- | | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| • Visual Experience Design/Er | 10 |
| • Creative Experience Design/Er | 9 |
| • Visual Concept Design/Er | 5 |
| • Experience Design/Er | 4 |
| • Immersive Experience Designer | 2 |
| • Visual Design/Er | 2 |
| • Visual Presentation Design/Er | 1 |
| • Creative Immersive Designer | 1 |
| • Creative Visual Design/Er | 0 |
| • Presentation Design/Er | 0 |
| • Immersive Stylist | 0 |



Reimagining the Future of VM

Notes

- The role is much more than VM - Less creative and more commercial/strategy. Train students more on commercial /strategy side of the business?
- Less about window dressing and more about display
- More involvement in retail strategy
- Possible name – Creative Retail Strategist
- VM involvement in the marketing/retail strategy should increase
- Floor managers challenge the VM daily – train VM teams to collaborate and communicate
- Job Specification - ‘Field Visual Merchandiser’
- Needs a balance between creativity and commerciality for student learning
- Dutch educational model – 2 year – commercial with creative; 4 year – more in depth, related to running the business
- Should work experience be in a block? 6 weeks – Monday to Friday
- Umbrella projects with other courses in the university – South Africa
- Briefs could question the ability of the brand to be showcased in physical and digital format - Bigger picture; Industry led brief; Commercial/Innovative and creative solutions are necessary - not just ‘pretty pictures’
- Upskill VM’s in practice – photography, exhibition stand design, fashion, styling, marketing, television, set design
- Lack of prop makers in Ireland
- Industry placement is vital in the course
- Graduates could make contact with creative directors where possible - phone, social media, in person
- Use AI to benefit your design process – the words inputted can be key – Know your enemy! Lean in to the new technology
- 30 years from now – lifestyle orientated, sensory, experiential? Still all about retail and the bottom line?

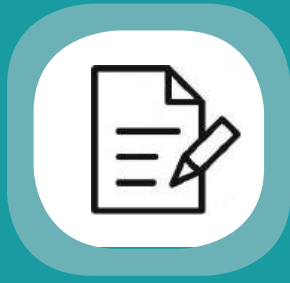


Reimagining the Future of VM

FINDINGS

Findings

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- Graduates could make contact with creative directors where possible - phone, social media, in person
- Use AI to benefit your design process – the words inputted can be key – Know your enemy! Lean in to the new technology
- 130 years from now? Already happening! – lifestyle orientated, sensory, experiential? Still all about retail and the bottom line?
- Sustainability



Innovations in Visual Merchandising

FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSION

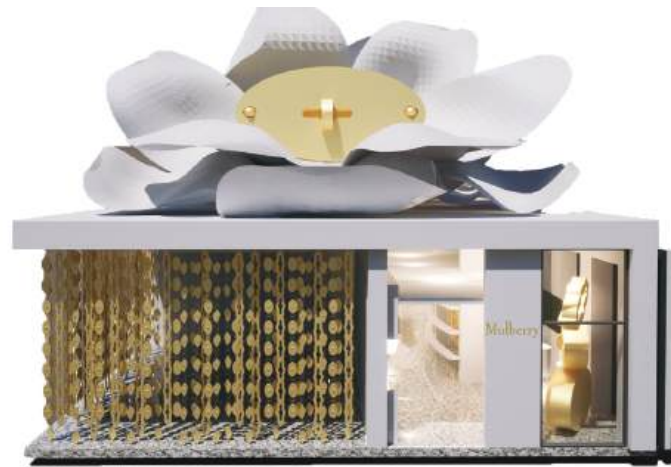
Education and Industry Innovations: what can we do differently and what do students want from their future careers?

- “Not just about VM, we can do so much more”.
 - Teaching core principles and building on the application is key.
 - People don’t know about VM – **“We have to explain what we do!”**
 - Industry doesn’t understand the full capabilities or capabilities of a VM specialist.
 - Retail needs to be perceived as a desirable profession (current stigma).
 - Courses need to deliver more opportunity (Unit/module range and scope) to support awareness and application of VM innovations.
 - Digital needs to be more prominent in VM and the role regarding content needs to be defined.
 - Recognise Multi-channel capabilities and solutions (Omni Channel projects).
 - Awareness of AI implications (Use of Images/word prompts – physical product not required and how this will affect the design process.
 - Profitability of the VM Specialism is still important and needs to be quantified (ROI – Increase in revenue).
 - Sustainability is now built in (embedded) and evident in VM practise.
 - We keep coming back to technology – these are the Game Changers.
 - Brand experience is of the highest importance.
 - Immersive Brand Discovery within a physical or Digital environment
- To Note :Everyone can engage with a virtual environment which can be used to support and benefit the brands within the physical space environment*

STUDENT PROFILE Molly Mason

ual: london college
of fashion

B fashion
business
school



Qualifications:

Currently in my final year at London College of Fashion studying BA (Hons) Fashion Visual Merchandising and Branding.

Experience to date:

September 2024: London Fashion Week intern - Assisted at Richard Quinn, Tolu Coker, Mark Fast
February-March 2024: Visual Merchandising intern at Mulberry
August-September 2024: Fashion PR intern at Purple PR
July 2023: Fashion desk intern at The Times

I have a strong interest in spatial design and retail experiences, my ideal role is working in a retail design agency. I am also open to visual merchandising roles. Ideally located in London.

Over the past 3 years I have come to realise that my main interest is designing spaces, I love coming up with ideas and creating engaging spaces. I am continuing to focus on improving my digital skills to help me visualise these clearer in 3D on Sketchup and Twinmotion. I am hard working and put my all into my projects and am grateful for every opportunity. Over my time at university, I have put time into gaining experience in a variety of areas through internships within the fashion industry.



STUDENT PROFILE Xinjing Hu

ual: london college
of fashion

B fashion
business
school



Experiences:

- Visual Merchandising Intern | Authentic Brands Group (ABG): Supported visual merchandising for industry leading brands including Juicy Couture, Hunter, Brooks Brothers, Ted Baker, Reebok, etc. through 3D layout modeling, VM manual development, and seasonal display execution. Styled mannequins, managed inventory, and ensured brand consistency across showrooms.
- Visual Merchandiser (Freelance) | Atomic Field: Planned and executed online/offline festival visual campaigns, designing brand-aligned store displays and overseeing production and installation of display fixtures and installations. Ensuring cost-effective and timely execution.

Preferred Work & Locations:

- Preferred Roles: Visual Merchandiser, Assistant Visual Merchandiser, Brand Strategist, Experience Designer, etc.
- Preferred Locations: London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, etc.

Self-Introduction:

I am a final-year student of BA (Hons) Fashion Visual Merchandising and Branding at the University of the Arts London. Through academic projects and practical experiences, I have developed a solid foundation in visual merchandising, spatial planning and design, brand campaigns and strategy development. My past work includes designing window displays, assisting with store layout planning, showroom concept design and closely collaborating with cross-functional teams to produce VM guidelines for leading brands in the industry.

In addition to refining my visual merchandising techniques, I have also ventured into digital media interaction design and creative programming. These experiences have allowed me to explore how technology-driven brand storytelling can be effectively combined with market insights and visually translated into retail environments. Proficiency in Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, SketchUp, Shapr3D, and rendering software such as Enscape and Twinmotion enables me to transform creative concepts into feasible design solutions quickly and efficiently.

I am deeply interested in retail innovation, particularly focusing on consumer-brand interactive experience design and brand storytelling strategies. I look forward to contributing my skills and creativity to a dynamic team, using collaboration and strategic thinking to create more meaningful experiences for brands.



First impressions count when it comes to business facade!



They say don't judge a book by its cover, but did you know that when it comes to signage and business facade, consumers are hugely judgy!

79% of shoppers believe that signage quality is indicative of the product and service quality within.

Whilst 76% of people have been drawn into stores by appealing signs that caught their eye, a staggering 75% of those polled admitted that a compelling sign has prompted them to make an impulse buy. [#Signage=sales!](#)



These stats from Custom Neon demonstrate the powerful influence that well-thought-out signage can have on sales, reinforcing that a visually appealing storefront can significantly increase foot traffic and the opportunity to sell your goods and services.

Retail signage, more than ever, isn't simply about making your business name known, it's a vital part of the customer experience, and so should entice, invite, and intrigue.

How your physical business is presented significantly shapes how consumers interact with and perceive a business.



As consumer preferences evolve and technology advances, understanding and implementing the latest signage and visual display trends is crucial for retailers looking to stay competitive in a visually-driven marketplace.

For businesses that choose not to invest in signage, the outlook isn't great. 77% of consumers have found themselves unable to locate a business due to inadequate signage. And 70.5% of consumers say they're less likely to enter a business that doesn't have a sign.

So the question isn't can you afford a sign? Can you afford not to?



Integrating advanced technologies such as digital displays, augmented reality, Data-driven signage for delivering personalized shopping experiences and interactive signs all go some way in enhancing the customer experience promoting loyalty and advocacy.

Retailers that harness the power of high-quality, innovative signage not only boost their curb appeal but also strengthen customer engagement, ultimately enhancing their overall business success.

Petter Pharmacy Crouch End, London

For Valentines 2025, we wanted to install a fun and quirky concept into this independent pharmacy store in Crouch End, London.

Moving away from the traditional love hearts, we developed this concept using props such as wine glasses, plates and saucepans.

We did use artificial rose heads poked into wine glasses and added burgundy hearts on the exterior of the window.

It's great to work with an independent retailer who appreciates the commercial benefits of having their windows dressed by professionally trained Visual Merchandisers.

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VISUAL MERCHANDISING CONSULTANCY



H. H. Dickman Chemist Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire

Once again, we wanted to move away from the traditional Valentines, so we developed a fun Road Sign concept.

Using props such as the road bollards and traffic lights, we developed signage which was printed on to foamboard.

This window is more about the concept rather than a using a large quantity of merchandise.

The window display has been kept low so that customers can see through into the store and marvel at the traditional fixtures and fittings. They certainly don't make chemist shops like this anymore!





ANTALIS LAUNCHES PRIPLAK® R30: THE SUSTAINABLE PLASTIC SOLUTION FOR VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS

New Priplak R30 from Antalis has a 30% post-industrial waste content, further strengthening its environmental credentials.

Antalis introduces Priplak R30, a new addition to its sustainable product range, offering enhanced environmental benefits for the visual communications sector. Made from polypropylene and containing 30% post-industrial recycled content, Priplak R30 strengthens its credentials as a sustainable and versatile material for applications such as POS displays, signage, packaging, and more.

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Priplak is crafted from polypropylene, recognised as one of the most sustainable plastics available. Its ecological nature and responsible manufacturing practices make it a top choice for environmentally conscious professionals. Compared to other plastics, polypropylene offers key environmental advantages that align with modern sustainability goals.

Key Features and Benefits of Priplak R30

Priplak R30 delivers exceptional performance while minimising environmental impact. Its standout features include:

- Chemically Inert: Safe and non-reactive, reducing potential harm to the environment or health.
- Halogen-Free: Free from chlorine, which is harmful to wildlife, plants, and human health.
- Phthalate-Free: Avoids plasticisers, which can negatively affect public health and ecosystems.
- Safe Disposal: Can be burned without releasing toxic emissions.
- Lightweight: 35% lighter than PVC, reducing raw material usage.
- Durable: Tear-resistant, long-lasting, and reusable.
- Fully Recyclable: 100% recyclable and capable of being recycled multiple times without loss of quality or strength.
- Closed-Loop Content: Made with 30% post-industrial recycled polypropylene for a more sustainable lifecycle.

Versatile Applications

Available in a white finish in 450 and 750 mic thicknesses, with a sheet size of 650 x 1100mm, Priplak R30 is suitable for a wide range of uses, including:

- POS displays
- Signage
- Packaging
- Tags and labelling
- Folders and stationery

Driving Sustainable Progress

Paul Neale, Product Manager at Antalis, highlights the growing significance of sustainable materials like Priplak R30:

“The versatility and sustainable benefits of products like Priplak made of polypropylene have resulted in it



being one of the most rapidly growing sustainable polymers produced worldwide in recent years, with this trend set to continue. Introducing superior sustainable products such as the new Priplak R30 will increase its popularity.”

About Antalis

Antalis is committed to delivering innovative and sustainable solutions that meet the needs of the modern visual communications industry. Priplak R30 is the latest addition to its portfolio, showcasing its dedication to environmental responsibility without compromising quality or performance.

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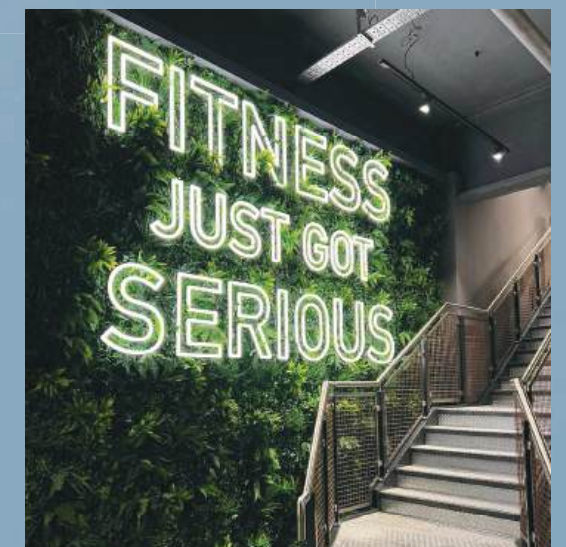
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PW\$HOP.LONDON

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This streamlined platform facilitates efficient project inquiries through integrated forms, departing from the one-size-fits-all model. PW Shop empowers B2B clients to align their briefs with project goals, incorporating pricing examples for informed decision-making. It reflects Projectworks London's commitment to redefining B2B enquiry processes, delivering exceptional, sustainable, handcrafted solutions with a modern, interactive web experience.

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projectworks.london/why-we-created-pw-shop

Sustainable Mannequins Mothercare Riyadh



Railston Mannequins are proud to be part of the growing emphasis on sustainable retail environments. These eco-mannequins were supplied to the Mothercare store in Riyadh as part of the global brands' decision to replace conventional fibre-glass mannequins across all of its stores.



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www.railstonmannequins.com/sustainability

To find out more about our range of eco-mannequins.

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It's a really, really good course throughout, I've been enjoying it and impressed with it. (online)

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020 7580 4405

Retail Experience & VM Day

Visit multiple retail stores in a small group under the guidance of expert Visual Merchiser Michelle De Neys and learn how retailers influence and inspire customers to purchase their goods and to get the customers coming back for more!

Michelle De Neys is managing director of the global VM company MDN Display and Design Ltd. She has been a window dresser/VM for 37 years working with premium brands such as BMW, Porsche, Radley, Mont Blanc, Triumph, Kuoni Travel and Nespresso. Her experience has taken her from in front of the camera giving her experience for VM videos, global VM Manager and retail experience amongst others.

Joining Michelle for this unique day will mean you see and experience retail with a fresh pair of eyes. It will offer you a different perspective on merchandising, observing what works, and what doesn't, what's important and what isn't. We are planning to hold Retail Experience & VM Days at some of the biggest and best retail shopping centres in the UK so there should be a location within easy reach for everyone!

Further details

Costs per person are £250

The day will begin by meeting for coffee and a briefing and will finish at approx 4pm. There will be breaks during the day for group discussion and for refreshments and lunch (and to rest your weary feet!). Costs for travel to / from the event and for food and drink consumed during the day is the responsibility of the attendee.

Register your interest

To register interest in attending a Retail Experience Day with Michelle, please email: michelle.deneys@britishdisplaysociety.co.uk with your contact details and we'll be in touch as soon as we have details of a Retail Experience Day in your area.



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A Retail Experience & VM Day will cover the following topics:

- Window display
- The Customer Journey
- How retail staff interact with customers
- Pricing and sizing
- Outfit combinations
- Promotions and offers
- Display stands & mannequins
- How retailers upsell
- How colours are used
- Changing rooms
- The importance of music and how it effects our shopping



mdn
MICHELLE DE NEYS
VISUAL MERCHANDISING



- MDN can create and then deliver a strong brand identity for our clients through supporting our creative ideas with a professional experienced deliver team.
- Our team utilise core visual merchandising strategies to bring retail spaces to life, drive sales into the buisness and ultimately deliver an outstanding customer experience.
- We provide our clients with a more personal hands on approach whilst being able to maintain standards and consistency across multi national brands.



We are looking for Freelance Visual Merchandisers/display artists to work with premium brands across Europe and the UK.

We are looking for the right people, with the right experience with a passion for their craft.

As a company we deliver a strong brand identity and love what we do, we are looking for like minded people to join the team.

Please contact: Michelle de Neys
michelle@mdn-vm.co.uk

www.mdndisplayanddesign.co.uk



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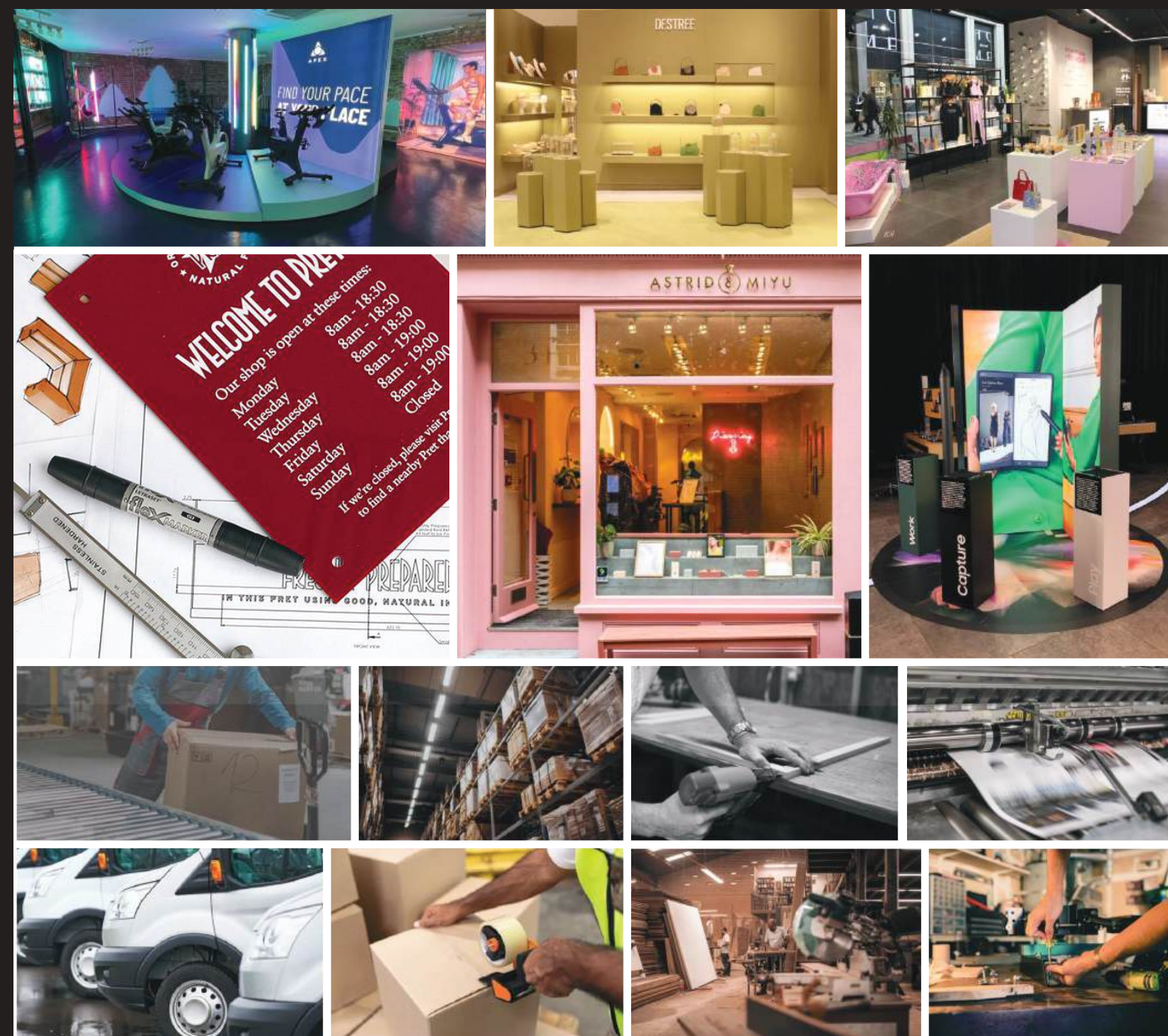




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What can Paper Lounge supply for use in VM?

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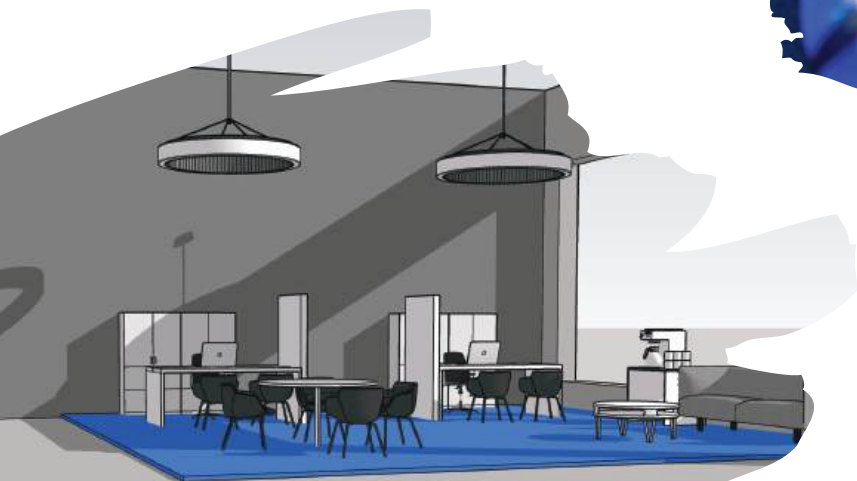
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Krishna Antolin ABDS

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Verve Arvola ABDS

A Visual merchandiser entrepreneur, who feels passionate about retail and sees visual merchandising as a form of art.

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BDS FREELANCER MEMBER DIRECTORY



Liz Johnston FBDS

My 40yrs experience covers styling windows, interiors and venues Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Greater London

liz@strictlyvisualdisplay.co.uk



Iain Kimmins FBDS

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Kat MacLennan FBDS

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Liz Johnston FBDS

Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Greater London

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Meet The BDS Leadership Team

The BDS Leadership Team comprises of experienced Visual Merchandising professionals and experts in the industry, who also volunteer their time to manage the BDS. It is their passion and enthusiasm for VM and Store Presentation that drives the industry to maintain standards and ensure Visual Merchandising is not a dying art.



Chair, Director
Paul Symes FBDS

Design Director at Reynolds/Symes



Director, Vice Chair, and BDS Tutor
Barbara Chapman FBDS

Creative VM Consultant &



Director & Treasurer
Iain Kimmins FBDS

Visual Merchandising Consultant



Director, BDS Tutor and BDS Archivist
John Abbate FBDS

VM & Store Design Consultant



Liz Johnston FBDS
Director

VM Stylist



Helen Goodwin FBDS
Visual Stylist, Creative, and Trainer



Assistant Treasurer
Nigel Fisher FBDS

Freelance IT Consultant



Kat MacLennan FBDS

Visual Merchandising Consultant



Edward Stammers MA, PG Cert

Programme Director – Fashion Marketing, Branding

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SPOTLIGHT

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