



# THE BEST OF & DESIGN & INNOVATION

EMERGING TRENDS ACROSS VARIOUS SECTORS,  
SPANNING CULTURE, TECH, BEAUTY AND MORE.

QUARTERLY PACK

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# LUSH - DUBAI

In April, this year, Lush launched an immersive new concept store at Dubai Hills Mall. It offers sustainable beauty retail, interactive experiences, custom consultations, and sensory exploration.

The new concept store brings the brand's values of ethical, handmade beauty to life in new and exciting ways; delivering a hands-on, sensory-rich shopping experience designed to surprise and delight at every turn.

Visitors can enjoy personalised skincare consultations in a private room, take part in live product-making or even host their own in-store party, creating fresh face masks, bath bombs, or bubble bars. The space also includes Lush's signature Perfume Library, where guests can explore the brand's fine fragrance collection, each scent rooted in storytelling, memory, and emotion.

From materials to layout, the store was designed with sustainability in mind. Features include Greecast acrylics made from 100% recycled materials, neutral Marmoleum flooring, and energy-efficient LED lighting.

*“Dubai Hills felt like the perfect home for our next retail concept,” said Alex Scott, Construction Project Manager at Lush. “Emaar is setting the standard for sustainable, future-focused malls in the region which is an ideal fit for Lush. With spaces like the Perfume Library, consultation rooms, and party areas, this store represents a real evolution in how we connect with customers. Every detail was carefully considered, using environmentally responsible materials throughout.”*





## THOUGHTS & INSPIRATION

- This transforms shopping into a hands-on, social experience—through product-making, skincare consults, and general customer participation—showing how retail stores can become a space for people to play, create, and connect.
- Lush's Perfume Library offers a bespoke service and uses scent as a storytelling tool, proving that sensory experiences can deepen emotional connection and turn everyday products into personal journeys.
- With recycled materials, carbon-neutral flooring, and low-energy lighting throughout, the store demonstrates how sustainability doesn't have to be a feature, it can be the foundation of modern, beautiful retail.

# SCHUH X CROCS IN-STORE AR EXPERIENCE

In collaboration with high-street retailer schuh, Crocs embraced augmented reality (AR) to revolutionize the in-store experience for their 'Mega Crush' shoe campaign.

The goal was to create an engaging, interactive environment that highlighted Crocs as a forward-thinking, tech-savvy brand. Leveraging AR technology allowed shoppers to use their smartphones to unlock digital content seamlessly throughout the store. This provided an accessible and instant way for customers to interact with the brand using devices they already own.

By scanning specific images and illustrations linked to the campaign, customers could trigger vibrant 3D animations that brought Crocs "Mega Crush City" to life.

This immersive digital layer enriched the physical retail space, offering users a unique, playful world to explore and share on social media.

Complementing the digital experience, physical elements like a 360-degree selfie booth were integrated into the store, allowing customers to capture and share their interaction within the AR environment. This blend of immersive technology and real world engagement exemplified how AR can transform retail spaces into dynamic, memorable experiences.



## THOUGHTS & INSPIRATION

- Using smartphone-based AR instead of VR creates an easy and accessible experience, proving that if tech is fast, familiar and easy to join, people will naturally engage.
- Tapping into this technology appealed directly to a younger, digitally native audience. Meeting them on their terms with playful, shareable content designed for social media.
- By tracking user interaction within the AR activation, the campaign demonstrated how data and creativity can work hand-in-hand to measure impact and guide future innovation.

[Click HERE for video content](#)

## SEPHORA - QUIET HOURS

Sephora has introduced 'Quiet Hours' in selected UK stores to support customers with sensory sensitivities. Running as a 12-week pilot from Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April to Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July, these sessions take place every Tuesday and Thursday from 10am to 12pm at Westfield White City, Birmingham and Manchester Trafford locations.

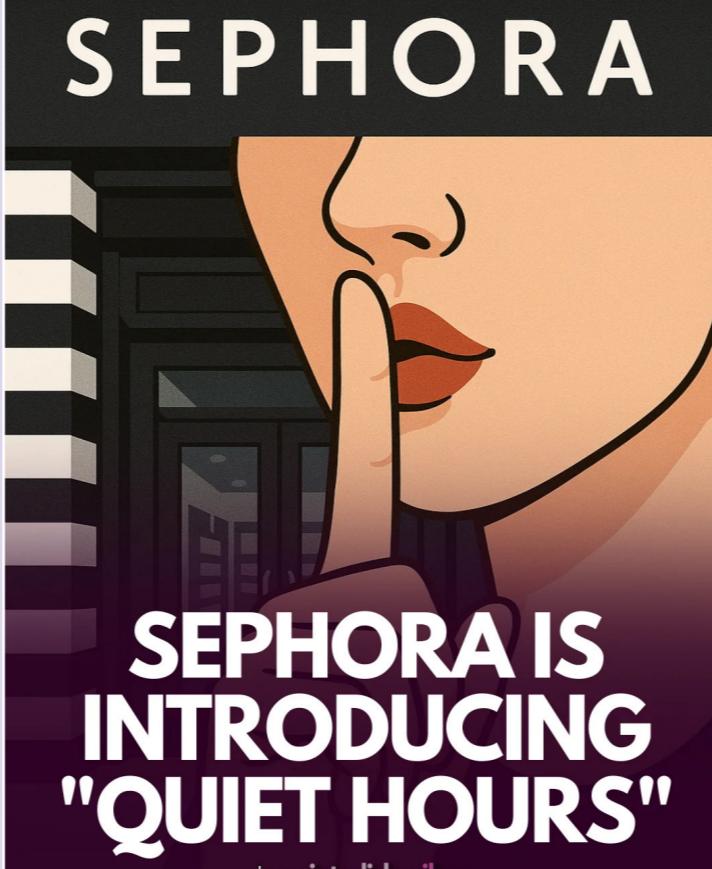
The initiative is part of Sephora's wider commitment to creating a more inclusive and accessible shopping environment. During 'Quiet Hours,' the stores will make subtle but impactful adjustments such as dimmed lighting, reduced or muted music, limited use of digital screens, and a generally calmer atmosphere.

In a statement, Sephora called the programme "a meaningful step toward creating a more inclusive and welcoming shopping experience for all customers particularly those who may benefit from a calmer and less sensory-stimulating environment."

  
MANCHESTER  
SEPHORA TRAFFORD CENTRE

  
BIRMINGHAM  
SEPHORA BULLRING

  
LONDON  
SEPHORA WESTFIELD  
WHITE CITY



## QUIET HOURS

Tuesday and Thursday  
10am - 12pm



The reality of everyday retail experiences can feel overwhelming and lead to sensory overload

### THOUGHTS & INSPIRATION

- Sensory-friendly environments are essential for many neurodiverse individuals including those with autism, ADHD, or sensory processing differences, as they help minimise overwhelming stimuli like bright lights, loud sounds, strong scents, and crowded spaces.
- These adjustments support emotional regulation, lower anxiety, and make everyday tasks like shopping feel more manageable and comfortable.
- Quiet, low-stimulation periods offer a more inclusive retail experience and may encourage visits from people who might otherwise avoid busy high street settings.
- Independent retailers can enhance accessibility by scheduling designated quiet hours, reducing strong fragrances, and training staff in neurodiversity awareness.
- Additional features like simple icon-based signage, clearly marked quiet zones and rest areas, can further improve the in-store experience for neurodiverse shoppers.

## IKEA - OXFORD STREET

In May 2025, IKEA officially opened its long-anticipated flagship store on Oxford Street, marking a major milestone as the brand brings its retail concept into the heart of London.

This inner-city location represents a fresh chapter for the Swedish retailer, featuring a new 'Live Studio' and IKEA's evolving "curated shops" format; product collections assembled by local artists, employees, and families.

While the signature IKEA ranges and a Swedish Deli offer something familiar for all shoppers, the space has been carefully designed with Londoners in mind. The showroom features bespoke room sets curated by local designers and residents, tailored to reflect the diverse and compact living arrangements found across the capital.

*"What is super unique to the Oxford Street shop is what we call 'culture clusters',*" explains IKEA Market Manager Matt Gould. *"Every room set has been designed by someone who lives in London. We wanted to be true to the spaces people actually have small, often unconventional and connect authentically with our customers."*

The showroom experience is enhanced by immersive "video tunnels" that separate the room sets. As visitors walk through, they can hear personal stories from Londoners about life in the city, their challenges, what they love, and how IKEA fits into their homes. Scent also plays a role in creating atmosphere, with areas like the kitchen filled with the smell of fresh baking to evoke the feeling of real homes.

Beyond the localised product range, the store offers an omni-channel experience to serve the modern urban shopper. But, as Gould notes, the purpose of the store extends beyond immediate sales. *"Being on Oxford Street, we do expect international visitors as well. People don't necessarily have to shop here, we want to inspire them, wherever they live."*



### FUN LINK

[SUBWAY POKES FUN AT IKEA'S OXFORD STREET STORE WITH 'BATTLE OF THE BALLS'](#)

# IKEA - OXFORD STREET



## THOUGHTS & INSPIRATION

- Room sets curated by actual Londoners demonstrates a powerful move toward location-based retail. By reflecting real living conditions (smaller living spaces), the brand offers relevance, reliability, and a sense of emotional connection.
- From video tunnels that share real stories to homey scents in the kitchen area, IKEA uses sights, sounds, and smells to make the store feel like real life. It's not just a showroom, it's an experience that feels personal and familiar.
- IKEA have built a flagship space that provides a series of unique brand experiences, not just point of sale. This highlights IKEA's shift toward brand inspiration over hard-selling. The store acts as a showcase, a content engine, and a brand beacon, designed to inspire purchases anywhere, not just on-site.



## THE EXPLOSION OF POP-UP STORES

Pop-ups used to be a side project, a short-term way to launch a product, test an idea, or drive quick sales. But things have changed. Now, almost everything feels like a pop-up. This shift isn't random. It's a response to how people shop, what they value, and the world we live in today.

Right now, people are spending more carefully. Prices are rising, and there's pressure to buy less and buy smarter. Cheaper copies of popular products are everywhere. But one thing you can't replicate is an experience. Brands know this. That's why they're focusing on what people can feel and take part in, not just what they can buy.

Luxury is no longer about owning expensive things. It's about having access, being part of something, and being able to share the moment. Often now referred to as the 'experience economy,' and pop-ups are a key part of it.

Modern pop-ups aren't just about selling products. They're about creating moments, being exciting, playful, social and memorable. The best pop-ups bring a brand's story to life. People want to understand the products, meet the makers, and feel a connection. Pop-ups give brands a chance to have real conversations and make lasting impressions.

Many pop-ups now run for months, acting as creative spaces, local hubs, or flexible parts of a brand's bigger picture. They catch your eye, invite you in, offer something to do or feel and give you something to talk about.

The most forward-thinking brands understand that success isn't just about sales, it's about crafting moments people want to be part of. And that's why pop-ups are the perfect platform.

Leading the way in standout pop-up activations: SpaceNK, L'Occitane, and Chanel.



# SPACE NK 'THE FRAGRANCE LIBRARY' POP-UP

Space NK's Fragrance Library Pop-Up: A Sensory Triumph.

Opened for the last two weeks of April 2025, Space NK launched their innovative Fragrance Library pop-up, and it truly set a new standard for immersive retail experiences. Featuring 18 diverse fragrance brands, this captivating campaign invited over 3,000 fragrance lovers to step inside rich, sensory worlds.

From a 60's-inspired jazz club and a Miami-themed diner to a Parisian café, each space offered a unique story that perfectly matched the brand it showcased. Interactive elements like an aura reader, a mirror maze, and hands-in-the-wall installations added playful, unforgettable touches.

*"More than a retail space, the pop-up format brings visitors together in an immersive space where they can discover new scents for the first time through unique experiences and shareable moments. Each visitor leaves with a selection of fragrances to start their own fragrance story."* Leanne Rouse, Marketing Director at Space NK.

Space NK has demonstrated how pop-ups can be far more than simple sales drivers; they can create genuine connection and excitement around fragrance. This ambitious, creative approach has set the bar high, and it's interesting to see what the future holds for Space NK's brand engagement.



## L'Occitane x Sephora UK Pop-up

The L'Occitane x Sephora pop-up in Camden this past May was a beautifully executed celebration of immersive brand storytelling, transporting visitors to the sun-drenched landscapes of Provence through golden-hued lighting, swirling almond-scented mist, and sculptural, nature-inspired installations.

Designed as a fully multi-sensory experience, the space invited guests to slow down and truly engage with the brand, blending moments of calm with playful, interactive elements such as a arcade-style claw machine, beauty-themed games, generous goodie bags, free macaroons and hands-on product testing. At its heart was a focus on L'Occitane's beloved 'Almond collection', allowing people to experience the textures, scents, and rituals of the products in a tactile, joyful way.

The pop-up struck the perfect balance between looking beautiful and being fun and welcoming, with lots of people praising how creative and well thought-out it was. It turned a simple product display into an enjoyable and memorable experience that resonated with people, whether they were beauty fans or curious passersby.



# CHANEL'S FRAGRANCE-THEMED SHOREDITCH POP-UP

From 25 April to 5 May, Chanel transformed East London's Chance Street into a whimsical world of lilac, mirrors, and playful discovery with its immersive pop-up celebrating the launch of their new fragrance 'Chance Eau Splendide'.

The exterior alone stopped passersby in their tracks. A striking lilac mural spilled across East London's familiar brickwork, instantly setting the tone for the colourful, dreamlike experience inside. Once through the doors, guests were welcomed into a surreal world of mirrors, glowing lights and interactive touchpoints, all wrapped in Chanel's signature polish and attention to detail.

Rather than focusing solely on the fragrance itself, the pop-up was designed to create an atmosphere. Mirrored corridors, soft lighting, and kaleidoscopic visuals guided guests through a dreamlike space that felt more like an immersive art installation than a typical brand activation.

One highlight was the screening room, where visitors could watch a short film directed by Amélie's Jean-Pierre Jeunet. Starring Belgian artist Angèle, the film mirrored the playful, otherworldly tone of the event and tied beautifully into the world of 'Chance Eau Splendide.'

The energy ramped up in the games room, where visitors played for Chanel-themed prizes, while the fragrance bar encouraged exploration, with plenty of opportunities to spritz and discover. 'Chance Eau Splendide' a soft, fruity-floral scent with notes of raspberry, iris, and cedar was subtly woven into the experience, adding to the sensory atmosphere without overwhelming it.

In the final room, guests could book the 'Chance Beauty Service'. A 75 minute makeover experience inspired by five moods from the Chance collection (Magnetic, Audacious, Fresh, Delicate, and Bright), each with its own palette and styling station.

Chanel also hosted an after-hours event with cocktails, DJs, and immersive installations, offering an elevated experience for those lucky enough to attend.

On their exit, guests were treated to complimentary candy floss. A fun, unexpected detail that perfectly captured the pop-up's dreamy, feel-good energy.



## PURESEOUL FLAGSHIP - CARNABY STREET

Korean beauty brand, Pureseoul, has launched its new flagship store on London's iconic Carnaby Street, a major step forward for the growing K-Beauty scene in the UK. Spread across two floors, the space houses more than 2,000 products from over 60 Korean brands, with 35 stocked exclusively at Pureseoul in the UK.

The store is designed to encourage discovery and learning, appealing to both seasoned K-Beauty fans and curious newcomers. It goes beyond traditional beauty retail with interactive zones, hands-on experiences, and plans for future community events and seasonal programming.

Pureseoul pairs its extensive product offering with personalised advice, as staff are trained to explain Korean skincare techniques and the cultural stories behind them.

The brand selected Carnaby Street for its historic character and strong footfall, an ideal spot to engage both local shoppers and global visitors. With its immersive concept, the store adds to the West End's growing reputation for experiential retail.

*“This flagship represents everything we’ve been working towards because it’s not just a store, but a destination that brings together community, culture, and the very best of Korean beauty,” Gracie Tullio, Creative Director and Co-Founder.*

### THOUGHTS & INSPIRATION

- Pureseoul is aiming to flood the UK market with Korean skincare, tapping into a growing demand with a specialist offering of products, a selection of which is exclusive in the UK. Naming themselves ‘The home of K-Beauty.’
- The addition of a skin analysis tool offering personalised recommendations, paired with routine-themed zones like “glass skin” or hydration-focused steps, made the experience feel both useful and easy to navigate.
- Digital elements like AR mirrors or screens offer a fun interaction, especially for testing makeup or learning how to use a new product.
- The live demos are a great addition. To be able to watch staff show you how to properly apply or layer products feels far more helpful than just reading packaging. Overall, the store is designed to help you genuinely learn about K-Beauty, not just shop it, making the experience more memorable and satisfying.



# BATH & BODY WORKS, OXFORD STREET

In May this year, U.S. beauty and lifestyle retailer Bath & Body opened its seventh standalone store on Oxford Street, London.

It launched with a multi-faceted campaign which really celebrated the idea of quintessential London beauty and fashion. Featuring union jack flags, alongside red telephone boxes. Everything from bold digital takeovers to Gingham-clad double-deckers cruising through the city. Followed by a grand-opening bash to remember with immersive fragrance experience pop-ups, in the surrounding area, directing you to the main store. According to the brand's marketing campaign, "The power of fragrance was felt across London!"

On opening day, they had successfully generated an air of excitement as eager customers, beauty influencers and journalists lined up outside. Indulgent goodie bags were then handed out to the first customers in line, as an exclusive offering.

## THOUGHTS & INSPIRATION

- Bath and Body are utilising social media to create buzz, especially on TikTok and Instagram, with visitors sharing store tours, reveal clips, and scent reactions.
- It leans heavily into sensory engagement, themed décor and hands-on activations encourage shoppers to explore and immerse themselves.
- Opening on Oxford Street isn't just about location, it signals the brand's ambition in one of the world's premier beauty and fragrance markets. Bath & Body Works is clearly leaning into experiential retail, attracting new customers who crave immersion, interaction, and shareability.



## NEW BALANCE - OXFORD STREET



In April 2025, New Balance re-opened its flagship store at 287–291 Oxford Street, unveiling a bold, three-floor space that re-imagines retail for a new era. Rather than just selling products, the store is designed to inspire, connect, and reflect the diverse interests of its community.

Inside, visitors can explore dedicated zones for football, tennis, skateboarding, and the brand's premium 'Made in the UK' collection. Central seating areas and immersive visual displays highlight the craftsmanship and stories behind key products, making the space as educational as it is experiential.

This new flagship also doubles as a cultural hub, hosting collaborations, pop-ups, and activations tied to London's vibrant sporting and lifestyle calendar. To celebrate the reopening, New Balance aligned with the London Marathon, offering a suite of community-focused experiences: a race station for runners, cheer-sign making for spectators, and a post-race recovery zone featuring medal engraving, customisation of running gear, and expert-led hydration and recovery advice.

*"This store is an important part of our global strategy,"* said Marco Alves, General Manager of Retail EMEA. *"It reflects our commitment to building environments that connect and inspire."*

# NEW BALANCE - OXFORD STREET



## THOUGHTS & INSPIRATION

- The first thing that struck me was the warmth of the layout. It feels more like a fashion store than a sports store, especially in the US and UK areas which are differentiated by the rich maroon scheme.
- Too many sports stores go for a loud and harsh environment with concrete finishes and a cold monochrome appearance. This store seems welcoming, warm and cosy.
- By aligning with the London Marathon and offering both practical (gear customisation, advice) and emotional activations (sign making, medal engraving), the flagship successfully becomes a supportive touchpoint in a runner's actual life, blending brand presence with genuine purpose.
- On-line reviews show there's a lack of storytelling. Despite a strong design, there's surprisingly little in-store communication to explain product inspiration, materials, or design ethos, particularly around the US and UK collections.



AND FINALLY . . .



The new Louis Vuitton concept store in Shanghai dubbed “The Louis” is an incredible example of immersive, story-driven luxury retail that truly raises the bar.

Rising approximately 30m and stretching 114m, the flagship store is shaped like a luxury ocean liner, anchored in Shanghai’s bustling Taikoo Hui district. Its metallic Monogram hull reflects both the sea and the city’s maritime history.

[Link to YouTube](#)

[Link to Famous Campaigns](#)

[Link to Design Boom](#)



# Thank you

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International Retail