

NASFM RETAIL DESIGN AWARDS FOCUS ON FIXTURES

by Karen Doodeman

NASFM celebrated the 30th anniversary of its Retail Design Awards program on March 22, announcing 26 Outstanding Merits, 13 Grand Prizes, 13 Special Merits for Outstanding Store Fixtures, one overall Fixture of the Year (new award this year) and an overall Store of the Year.

The association recognized two fixturing projects in its newest awards program offspring, the Focused Fixture Awards, a category judged solely on the quality and innovation of the fixturing, regardless of overall store design. The Fixture of the Year award, also new this year, was presented to the Outstanding Store Fixture rated highest among all Special Merit winners. Retailers, designers, and fixture manufacturers were on hand for the awards ceremony, which took place in Chicago in conjunction with GlobalShop.

Winners were selected from projects completed between January and December 2000. Canadian entries fared well, capturing 21% of the awards. International entries from Hong Kong, Australia, and South Africa also took home crystal awards. The remaining 28 projects were located in the U.S., with Las Vegas and the Northeast leading the way.

Display & Design Ideas was the Presenting Sponsor of the awards program and will publish a comprehensive magazine supplement in May featuring the winning projects. This issue of *NASFM Magazine* spotlights fixturing design. A complete list of Retail Design Award winners and photos is available online at www.nasfm.org.

Fixturing Design Trends

This year's winners successfully integrated technology, service, and comfort into well-branded store designs. The judges saw a renewed interest in colors and authentic materials, and continued application of curves and luminescence. The five biggest trends in fixturing spotted among the award-winning projects were:

• **Integrated Technology**
Although the use of technology has grown over the past five years, this year the emphasis was on incorporating technology into the overall design concept and ensuring that it supported the brand and involved the customer by offering a "real service." The Athlete's Foot for Her store and Skechers aptly demonstrate how exciting technology can be when it permeates the overall store design and provides benefits above and beyond the boundaries of a physical store.

• **Luminescence**
Shimmery, reflective materials continue to be the rage. Stainless and brushed steels, like those found in Dickson CyberExpress and Candies Concept Shop, and mirrored surfaces, like those found in Bergdorf Goodman's Fine Jewelry Department, maintain their popularity with consumers and designers alike. Specialty lighting, used in conjunction with unique surfaces like the frosted glass in H2O+, adds a mesmerizing iridescence to many new stores.

• **Flexibility**
With product lines switching rapidly in response to the changing needs of customers, the demand for flexibility in fixturing is growing. In the SUE Store, the structural frame and truss-work enable easy repositioning of shelving and restocking of

merchandise. BGS' oversized table display and Canyon Ranch's display tower both demonstrate fixtures that accommodate various quantities and types of merchandise easily and effectively. Eagle Creek Travel Gear is an example of an entire fixturing system dedicated to flexible merchandising.

• **Authentic Naturalism**
Winning fixtures were frequently asked to support nostalgic themes, such as "America's Market" in Sentry Foods and Warner Brothers' memorabilia in the WB Stage 16 Restaurant. Home and comfort are popular trends in stores such as Electronic Interiors and Pottery Barn Kids. Authentic materials were used in many stores to recapture the flavor of suggested regions or themes. Consider Canyon Ranch's southwestern desert ambiance, Pusateri's Gourmet Market's European charm, and BVG's artist's motif aptly detailed into every fixture. Evidently, the more real it feels, the better.

• **Fixtures on Stage**
As the trend shifts toward greater use of color in overall store design, fixtures are stepping forward. More and more fixtures are being asked to convey brand and/or theme, enhance customer accessibility and service, and support changing merchandise promotions. Although many fixtures are still neutral in color, their subtle integration into the overall message of the store is what sells product and image.

For photos and descriptions of all winning projects, visit www.nasfm.org and click on the retailfix.com icon.

Karen Doodeman is NASFM's director of retail marketing.



FIXTURE OF THE YEAR

**Skechers USA:
Futuristic Display,
Universal City Walk,
Universal City, CA**

Design:
ME Productions Inc.,
Marina del Rey, CA
Fixtures:
Premier Displays & Exhibits,
Cypress, CA
Retailer: Skechers USA,
Manhattan Beach, CA

This fixture wowed the judges with its effective integration of shelving, technology, branding, and product presentation. Positioned near the front window, it conveys high-tech fashion that appeals to kids and teens. Monitors are integrated into the fixture, facing into the space and outward, making the store itself an entertainment venue. Undulating backlit walls dematerialize the boundaries of space, turning the store into a glowing entity visible from afar. What a great way to

make this low, deep space under an overhang stand out, especially at night, in an environment full of large-scale visual stimuli!

The multimedia and interactive displays capture, entertain, and involve Skechers' core audience. The cool palette of metal finishes and backlit panels, in combination with "floating" and suspended volumes, enhance the futuristic tech look of the store. This exciting store fixture goes a long way in helping Skechers evolve its image from that of "industrial street" to "high-tech with street credibility."

NASFM MEMBER WINNERS

View their winning projects online at www.nasfm.org.

- B&N Industries Inc.
- Chute Gerdeman
- Columbia Showcase & Cabinet Co. Inc.
- Crafted Cabinets Inc.
- Custom Surroundings Inc.
- Design Fabricators Inc.
- Designamite Inc.
- Dillmeier Group
- Environments Inc.
- EPS Specialties Ltd. Inc.
- Excell Store Fixtures
- Fetzers' Inc.
- Fitch Inc.
- Fleetwood Industries Inc.
- Hamilton Fixture
- Miller Multiplex
- Moon Custom Woodwork Inc.
- National Mallfront & Design
- Newwood Display Fixture Manufacturing Co.
- Nomus Seattle
- Otema Store Interiors Ltd.
- Pacific Coast Showcase Inc.
- Panigas Group of Companies
- Plessi Commercial Interiors Inc.
- Ramvek Pty. Ltd.
- RDI/Robelan Displays Inc.
- Reeve Store Equipment Co.
- seven continents
- Southern Store Fixtures Inc.
- Twenty Four Seven Marketing Bloc Inc.
- Twenty Four Seven Marketing Bloc Inc.
- Unique Store Fixtures Ltd.
- Vira Manufacturing Inc.

As the trend shifts toward greater use of color in overall store design, fixtures are stepping forward.



OUTSTANDING STORE FIXTURE—SPECIAL MERITS

Bergdorf Goodman Fine Jewelry Department: Antique Mirror Jewelry Showcase, Fifth Avenue, New York, NY ①

Design: Yabu Pushelburg,
Toronto, ON, Canada
Fixtures: Unique Store Fixtures
Ltd., Concord, ON, Canada

In an effort to create a fixture that maximizes the jewelry case line and maintains high-end impact, the designer hit on a beautiful solution—the antique mirror jewelry showcase. But this fixture is more than a pretty case. It features a built-in hydraulic safe—no small feat to install and mask. The designer had to insulate the hydraulic display on platforms that descend into the base of each casing. Each built-in light fixture had to be bent and curved in order to light the jewelry within.

BVG, Walt Disney Parks & Resorts: Oversize Table, Walt Disney ② Parks & Resorts: Watch Fixture, Walt Disney ③ Contemporary Resort, Lake Buena Vista, FL **Design:** Walt Disney Parks & Resorts, Lake Buena Vista, FL **Fixtures:** seven continents, Toronto, ON, Canada

This award-winning display table in BVG is indicative of much of the overall store design—oversized. It uses multiple levels to maximize merchandise presentation, with pullout drawers and glass inserts, and can easily be shopped from all sides. Its flexible design conveniently

supports and accentuates multiple cross-merchandising strategies. This oversized fixture is reminiscent of metal, glass, and veneers, and includes lockable storage.

Another outstanding oversized fixture in BVG features Disney watches. Its large frame supports the artistic motif conveyed throughout the store. On a practical note, it's extremely user-friendly. The open-sell concept enables guests to easily try on the watches, which are inventoried and integrated into the fixture for easy service. The Watch Fixture is constructed of metal, fabric, wall covering, and veneers.

Canyon Ranch Living Essentials: The Display Tower, Grand Canal Shoppes at the Venetian ④ **Design:** MOVK, New York, NY **Fixtures:** Collings Inc., Las Vegas, NV

Retailer: Canyon Ranch, Tucson, AZ
The Display Tower is composed of an open vertical frame, housing a series of trays that can be pulled out in various directions for optimal display flexibility. Taking cues from Japanese joinery, the tray sides are grooved and use no mechanical hardware. Fabricated with dark stained walnut veneer and hardwood, the Display Tower stands 46-in. high and is 24-in. square. A series of five pull-out trays offer multiple display options on each side of the fixture, while the top and bottom trays are fixed for lateral support. With trays fully extended, the fixture is nearly 48-in. square. With trays

extended on all sides, the play among levels is reminiscent of the varied plateaus of desert mesas, while adding a sense of discovery for consumers exploring its layered product presentation.

Dickson CyberExpress: Fashion World—Dress Me Up Interactive, Kowloon Station, Hong Kong ⑤ **Architect:** Gensler International, Hong Kong **Design:** Di: 5, Ferndale, MI, Electrosonic, Hong Kong Illuminating Concepts, Farmington Hills, MI JGA, Southfield, MI Light Directions Limited, Hong Kong Media Projects International, London, England View Studio, Royal Oak, MI **Retailer:** The Dickson Group of Companies, Tsimshatsui East, Hong Kong

Located on the fashion runway, the “Dress Me Up” interactive fixture beckons shoppers into Dickson's CyberExpress Fashion World. Echoing the “Dickson Connects the World” globe theme, the fixture's base is fabricated of brushed stainless steel. Built around a communication path, the globe supports a stainless mast on which the touch screen monitor rests.

The high-tech computer kiosk offers consumers the opportunity to match apparel, shoes, and accessories. Touch screens enable shoppers to try apparel styles on virtual models to get a “first look” at fashion ensembles.

Dickson CyberExpress: iCosmetic World— Color Me/Manga/ The Look Interactive Kowloon Station, Hong Kong ⑥ **Architect:** Gensler International, Hong Kong **Design:** Di: 5, Ferndale, MI Electrosonic, Hong Kong Illuminating Concepts, Farmington Hills, MI JGA, Southfield, MI Light Directions Limited, Hong Kong Media Projects International, London, England View Studio, Royal Oak, MI **Retailer:** The Dickson Group of Companies, Tsimshatsui East, Hong Kong

A fanciful interpretation of a dressing room vanity table is placed in the iCosmetics World cybergarden. The computer monitor and camera seem to float over the vanity's oval back panel “mirror” fabricated of glass, stainless steel, and backlit translucent glass tiles. The integrated stainless steel keyboard is embedded in the glass vanity top.

Three different interactives are housed in the unit. “The Color Me” interactive allows customers to copy their faces onto a computer screen and create cosmetic makeovers. Results can be e-mailed to friends or printed on keepsake magazine covers. Manga enables shoppers to transform their faces into animated cartoon characters. Users click on the screen to create a digital photo; next they select from eye shapes,



hairstyles, and colors to create a cartoon-like Manga image. “The Look” provides information on the latest in cosmetic products and brands.

H2O+ Backlit Merchandise Pedestals, Vancouver, BC, Canada ⑦ **Design:** Architectura Planning Architecture Interiors Inc., Vancouver, BC, Canada **Fixtures:** Acuglass Edging Ltd., Richmond, BC, Canada Heron Construction & Millwork Ltd., Richmond, BC, Canada Joel Berman Glass Studios Ltd., Vancouver, BC, Canada **Retailer:** H2O Plus, Chicago, IL

In support of its product lines—spa products, skin care, and fragrances—and the store's overall theme, “an oasis in the chaos,” the backlit merchandise pedestals beautifully enhance the serene, minimalist environment of H2O+.

Frosted and custom-cast glass fixtures and new LED lighting technology help promote a cool, watery atmosphere. Gels and color kinetics accent the predominantly white fixturing with glowing blue lighting. A proprietary custom concrete finish completes the counter tops. This unique combination of fixturing materials and lighting places the focus on the merchandise and helped this store lead its chain in sales volume one month after opening.

Jose Cuervo Tequileria: Snake Tables, Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport ⑧ **Design:** AAD, Scottsdale, AZ **Fixtures:** National Mallfront & Design, Peoria, AZ

The snake tabletops are 3-in. MDF, which were hand-painted in a custom design and then coated with resin for durability. The base is 3-in. tube steel, with a black wrinkle-powder coat finish. All of the base supports are mounted at one angle so they appear free-spirited and fun. The design intent for the snakes was a two-sided fun center, where people could fill in the gaps and get together. The niches in the tabletop invite many different users, in various group sizes. The large version of the snake top is approximately 14-ft. long by 18-in. to 24-in. deep. The smaller version is 9-ft., 6-in. long. The idea for the snake came from the “Cuervo Critters” ad campaign.

Skechers USA: Illuminated Cash & Wrap Game Station ⑨ **Universal City Walk, Universal City, CA **Design:** ME Productions Inc., Marina del Rey, CA **Fixtures:** Premier Displays & Exhibits, Cypress, CA **Retailer:** Skechers USA, Manhattan Beach, CA**

The cashwrap counters on their inset terrazzo island are cantilevered from flanking metal elements that project blue light upward. The monitor-studded globe features Skechers videos and enhances the “control station” look of the cashwrap. This mesmerizing fixture integrates product display

directly from the exhibit without creating a bottleneck. The framework, a fixture unto itself, and the walls of the store are fabricated out of extruded aluminum rails. The rails provide a structural framing system for the exterior walls of the store and an open grid ceiling to mount lighting, graphic panels, and an abstract mobile of dinosaur bones overhead. Merchandise panels are shelved or hung on metal grid backs for versatility.

UPS: Cashwrap Fixture Alpharetta, GA ⑩ **Design:** Retail Planning Associates, Columbus, OH **Fixtures:** Miller Multiplex, Richmond, VA

This cashwrap is intended as the final destination of the retail experience. The open counter system (modules vs. full counter) allows employees to access the customer for greater ease of service.

The materials used for this fixture are complementary to the entire store design. Steel is an extremely durable finish and is used throughout the entire interior palette of UPS. Sprayed with clear coat, this is a distinguishing material. Plastic corrugated roofing material, backed with a solid warm tone, is used for its suggestive relationship to the typical corrugated cardboard packing. It adds soft curves into the space to balance the hard-edged metal components. As a softening effect, the entire front edge of this fixture is curved to allow the customer to remain close to the sales associate. ▲

In conjunction with the launch of an exhibit of the largest and most complete Tyrannosaurus Rex ever discovered (named Sue for its discoverer, Sue Hendrickson) the Field Museum wanted a unique setting for a variety of dinosaur-inspired and Sue-branded merchandise. The display is located at the conclusion of the dinosaur exhibit and is only 850 sq. ft.

Inspired by the materials and techniques found on an archaeological site, the designers created a merchandising framework that would accommodate peak traffic flow

directly from the exhibit without creating a bottleneck. The framework, a fixture unto itself, and the walls of the store are fabricated out of extruded aluminum rails. The rails provide a structural framing system for the exterior walls of the store and an open grid ceiling to mount lighting, graphic panels, and an abstract mobile of dinosaur bones overhead. Merchandise panels are shelved or hung on metal grid backs for versatility.

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