

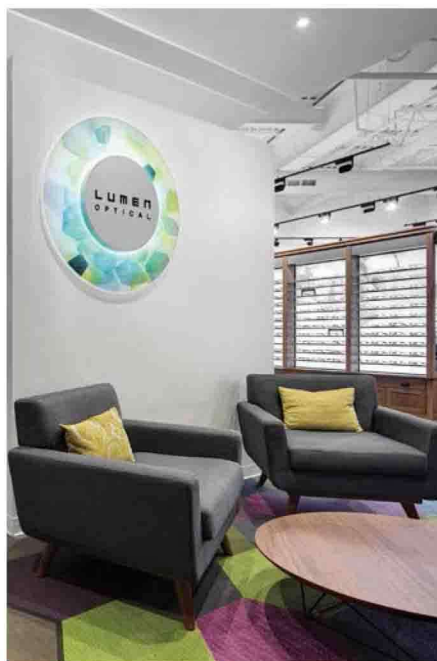


PORTFOLIO: Lumen Optical, Kildeer, Ill.

SINCE ITS FOUNDING THIS PAST YEAR, Lumen Optical (Kildeer, Ill.) sought to redefine the conventional eye care environment. Presented with only a watercolor of a bespectacled woman – who the designers nicknamed “Lumen” – as inspiration from its branding agency, the retailer engaged design firm Bergmeyer Associates Inc. (Boston) to develop a customer journey and translate it into interior, fixture, graphic and merchandising concepts for its first retail outpost.

“We worked closely with Lumen Optical to integrate equally strong patient-doctor, retail and social experiences,” explains Rachel Zsembery, vp, Bergmeyer. “Our vision was to break down the usual barriers in optometry, blurring art with science and prioritizing clients in every interaction.”

In conceptualizing the space, the designers envisioned open navigation, and an informal and approachable store with an atmosphere that aligns with the brand’s DNA of service, efficiency and transparency. Starting with the 3500-square-foot Kildeer, Ill., prototype that debuted March 2016, the first of four Chicago-area stores opened to date, it features a hospitality-inspired ambience and customer-centric amenities woven throughout.



Clients are welcomed at a reception desk, where they’re also offered water and snacks. iPads are provided for registration while customers wait in a spacious lounge. Typically relegated to a back corner, exam rooms are located prominently behind the reception desk. The first area is open to encourage spa-

tial fluidity, and the second has a frosted glass entry to comply with U.S. patient privacy regulations. The journey continues at the central “style bar” – inspired by the designers’ visit to a tea bar – where customers perch on barstools to charge their phones, socialize and share opinions, while a “stylist” offers personalized suggestions, similar to a makeup counter or a hair salon. The back bar displays curated collections and a straightforward price list. Frames are organized by shape rather than brand for ease of comparison.

Mare Weiss, senior associate, Bergmeyer, elaborates, “We wanted the store to feel like our muse Lumen’s art studio, so we carefully layered an eclectic yet harmonious mix of styles and materials.”

Polished concrete floors, subway tiles, painted white bricks, raw steel and exposed ductwork suggest an industrial loft, while light and dark oak cabinetry with traditional bail handles, and a vintage-style globe, handmade pottery and a carbon filament lightbulb hint at “old-fashioned pharmacy” meets “artist’s toolbox.” Soft upholstery and rugs balance harder elements, and a children’s area provides a playful zone for trying on real or toy eyeglasses.

–Alicia Sheber