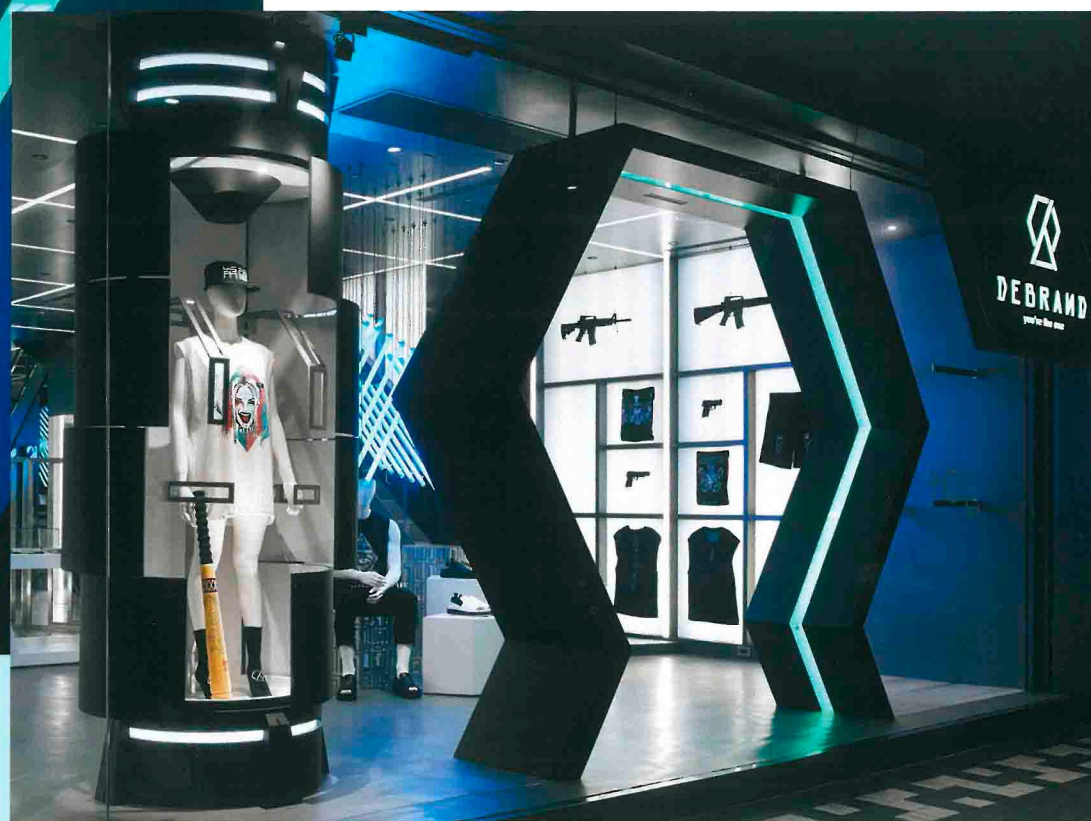




MW Design translates Debrand's logo into a walk-through experience at the fashion label's Taipei store.

RETAIL

# DEBRAND feeds off the sci-fi frenzy with a spacecraft-inspired boutique





**TAIPEI** — The release of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* roused even sleeping sci-fi fans. The aptly titled movie topped the 2015 box-office charts, paving the way for subsequent spin-offs and reconnecting audiences with their inner Jedis. Perhaps capitalizing on the hype, Debrand touched down in Ximending — a fashion and culture hub that's been dubbed the 'Harujuku of Taipei' — with a boutique that turns shoppers into players on a simulated sci-fi film set.

The 200-m<sup>2</sup> interior of Debrand — the brainchild of Taiwanese singer and pop-culture icon Kenji Wu — was assigned to MW Design. 'The owner is a big fan of sci-fi movies,' says the studio's design director, Michelle Wei. 'He wanted to incorporate the concept into the store design as well as the clothing. It's also *the* trend in Taiwan right now.' Wu isn't the first to make the connection. Looking for links opens up a wormhole into film-to-fashion sci-fi references from titles old and new. Parallels can clearly be drawn, for example, between aspects of Alexander Wang's Fall 2015 collection and Ava's look in Academy Award-winning *Ex Machina*, released the same year.

For the physical store, MW initiates brand engagement from the street with an archway in the shape of Debrand's logo,

turning the trademark into a walk-through experience. Perhaps taking *Star Wars* references a tad too literally, colour-changing lighting accompanies a futuristic voice that welcomes shoppers. While MW may be stretching it to claim that 'from the moment guests enter Debrand, they're transformed from ordinary people into superheroes', the premise generates hype in an industry that feeds off it.

Immersion reigns supreme, leading customers from a figurative spaceship base to its core on the second floor. En-route encounters include a backlit arsenal, seemingly prompting preparation for a mission. Adding an extra dimension to the experience — and further catering to the owner's sci-fi infatuation — the store hosts art exhibitions related to the genre. — TI

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Figure x Lee Kuo-Min Studio



*Debrand's boutique turns shoppers into players on a simulated sci-fi film set*