

# Retail

The layout of Joos Fitting Room replicates the way that online retail sites categorize clothes. The store is divided into four departments, each of which accommodates a certain fashion style.

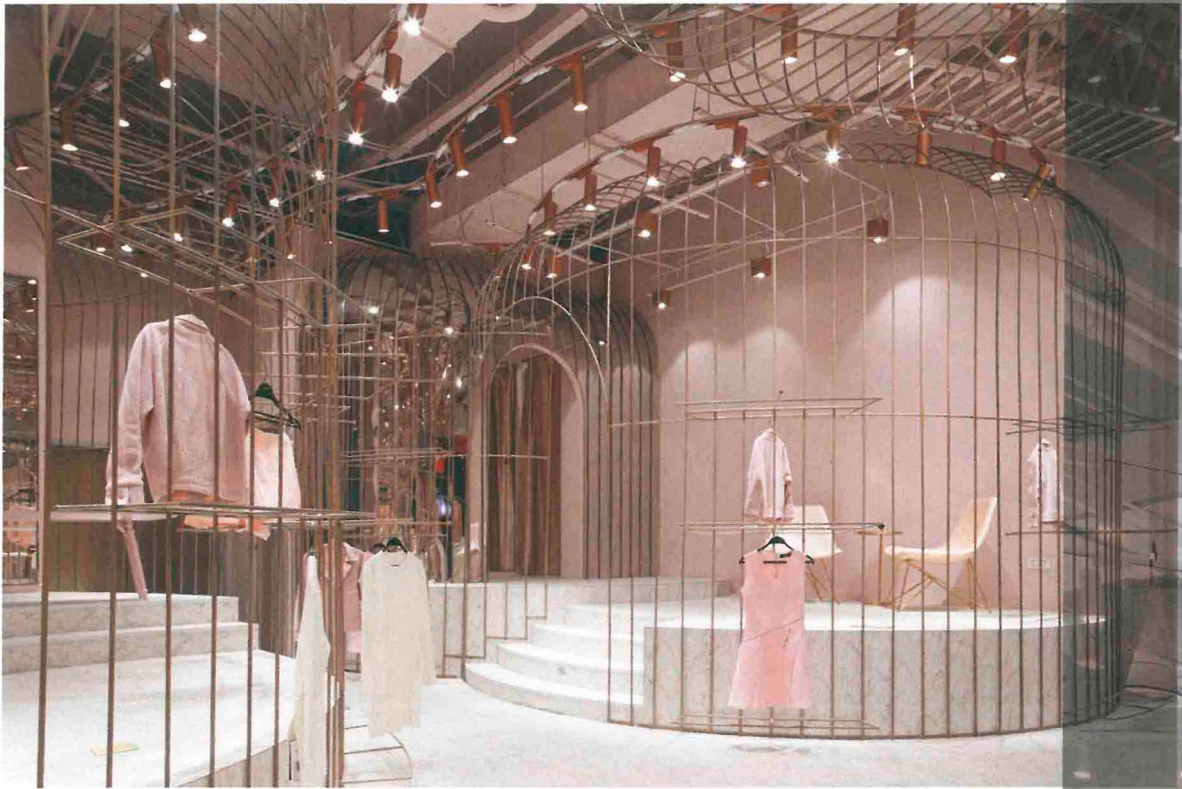


# Royale

The blended retail experience offered by JOOOS FITTING ROOM combines the multisensory benefits of a physical location with the ease and immediacy of e-commerce.

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Golden cages function as display units in the department labelled Celebrity. Both collection and space are elegantly decorative.

**THE CHALLENGE FACED** by retail designers is to find a clever way to merge the sensory elements of the physical store with the convenient, fast-paced, 'no brainer' ease of the online purchase. Li Xiang of X+Living seized the opportunity with both hands when asked to design the interior of Joos Fitting Room, a fashion store that features the top 100 brands found on e-commerce site tmall.com. She aimed for a blended retail experience that would have the multisensory benefits of a physical location, as well as the ease and immediacy of online retail. Located in Hangzhou, the space combats what Xiang describes as the 'emptiness of online shopping'. Although more time-saving and affordable, online shopping doesn't allow clients to 'try before they buy', she says, citing 'a mass return of purchases that don't live up to the buyers' expectations, being very different from what they saw on the website'.

Armed with this knowledge, Xiang designed a phygital flagship that offers experiences available only in real life. Especially intriguing is the way in which her design enables each space to operate as a call to action. Through a canny use of visual cues, she replicated the online retail method for categorizing clothes – in this case, according to consumer type. Each of the store's four main departments – interconnected by a loop – has a unique aesthetic and appeals to visitors interested in one of 'four womenswear types'.

Because of the difference in the design language 'spoken' in each area, shoppers feel as though they're browsing four completely different stores. Marking each space is an artistic touch and a storytelling element that lend texture and depth to the basic fit-out. In the first department, Mori Girl, tall tripods made from bamboo poles accommodate a collection of largely unadorned fashions. The next area, Celebrity, focuses on decoration, which is echoed by display units in the form of golden cages. Department three targets 'office ladies'. Designated OL, the space draws on 21<sup>st</sup>-century cues – including the strategic use of materials, such as reinforced concrete – to communicate with women 'no longer »





White surfaces and bamboo poles characterize the store's Mori Girl department, which showcases a collection of largely unadorned fashions.







Colourful metal-mesh cubes and traffic mirrors that reflect the floor pattern define the Fashionable Girl department, where shoppers find a selection of highly expressive apparel.







A more industrially designed department with dark-grey floors and concrete walls in shades of grey is home to the OL ('office girls') collection.

staying at home to take care of their husbands' but fulfilling 'various positions in society'. This segues into Fashionable Girl, where Xiang's colourful, protean design creates a world free of gender distinction. 'Women in this era pay more attention to their own preferences and personalities,' she says. 'They're partial to the neutral look.'

Xiang hopes to overcome the static nature of physical retail through function and detailing. The store's flexible design invites changes in layout and presentation. Consideration for navigation and user experience manifests through the height of the clothing displays, which correspond to the sightlines of people moving through the space.

Integrated technology – perhaps the most challenging facet of contemporary retail design – is addressed through Xiang's three-screen solution. 'We generated a tech-related experience that's derived from the selfie,' she says. 'A study shows that chatting, making and viewing videos, and posting selfies are the favourite online activities of up to 95 per cent of female consumers. Of all the photos uploaded to the web, about a third – nearly 5 billion during the period covered by the study – were selfies. In China, more than 90 per cent of young women who take selfies also share them online.' Hence the middle-sized screens at the fitting-room doors, which are meant to encourage shoppers to take selfies. Elsewhere, a modest selection of large LED screens advertise brands, while the

smallest and third of Xiang's screens is the smartphone app, which allows Joos members to share their 'wear concept'. The same app records and preserves user data for the retailer. By cleverly concentrating technology around fitting-room areas, Xiang brings focus to the place where real purchasing decisions are made. ●

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