

RETAIL

OHLAB ensures
a concept store's
own branding
isn't lost among
its offerings





Ohlab tucked seating between the panels of its design for the first US instalment of multi-label store In-Sight.

MIAMI – Crafting a shop interior is all about understanding the message of your client's brand. In the case of In-Sight, the message is 'bold'. 'Being bold is a strategy for maintaining a concept store's singular image within the ocean of different brands, styles and languages that compete against one other in a confined space,' says Jaime Oliver of Spanish design studio Ohlab. 'It's a way to create coherence and clarity.'

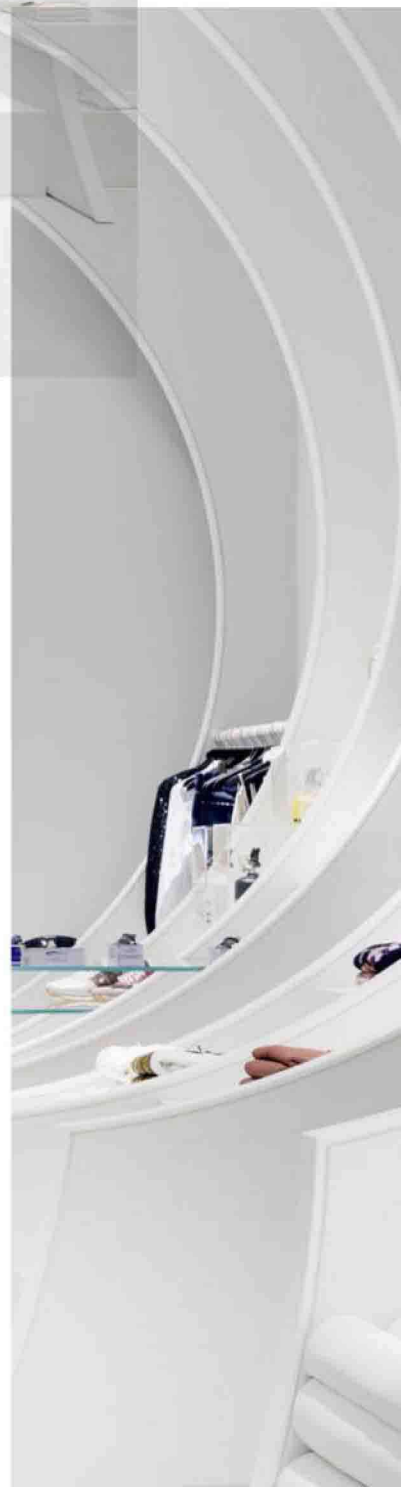
Housed in Miami's Brickell City Centre shopping mall, the 170-m² all-white retail space is the first US-based outlet of a multi-label brand with a number of locations in Spain. A cheeky take on In-Sight's binocular-themed logo, the interior is dominated by a series of intersecting circles that give rise to various display modules on both sides of a wide aisle. Making the most of a tight budget, the designers opted for inexpensive wood panelling. 'We realized the curved edges were going to suffer a lot from the traffic, so we finished the panels with a white Corian rim,' says Oliver. Seats tucked between the curvilinear

panels – 'originally intended for trying on footwear and eventually doubling as comfy lounge elements' – are an integral part of the display walls.

Like a colossal puzzle, the entire interior was made to measure in a Spanish warehouse and shipped to the Brickell City Centre, where it was dismantled and reassembled on site. 'Probably the most challenging part was to design everything with such precision that all pieces would fit perfectly when reinstalled in Miami.'

The design invites customers to inhabit the brand, says Oliver. Does he see interior designers as the brand builders of the 21st century? 'We believe brands are built through experiences. These can happen online and offline, but there's no doubt that *physically* experiencing a particular space has a big impact on customers. You may be able to show a product very well online, but to have people interact with it, you need a physical arena with a performative aspect that makes customers and products the actors.' – AO

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