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Despite challenging retail conditions, the beauty industry is booming with a growing number of brands opening standalone stores.

The global cosmetics or beauty products industry is one sector which remains impervious to the ups and downs of the economy, according to Orbis Research. In 2017, the market was valued at USD 532.43 billion, and by 2023 it is expected to reach USD 805.61 billion, driven in part by the ageing population. The industry is booming, with more and more brands opening standalone stores where they can tell their story.

EXPERIENCE- AND SERVICE-LED STORES

In the last 12 months alone, Tom Ford has launched his inaugural standalone beauty store, in London, complete with interactive mirrors and digital scenting table. Lush has opened its first Naked shop, in Milan, which stocks products totally free of packaging. L'Occitane has unveiled a 600 sq m flagship on Regent Street that is packed full of sensorial experiences, and enhanced personalisation and customisation opportunities, and NYX Professional Make Up has expanded its UK presence with a store at the Bullring in Birmingham.

'A large proportion of high street retailers have struggled to transition from the mindset that a store is only a selling platform, when in fact we're seeing service-led and a softer sell becoming key strategies to success,' says Stefanie Dorfer, retail editor at innovation research and advisory company, Stylus. 'This is where

beauty is really coming to the fore. Standalone retail spaces enable brands to deliver multiple, full spectrum beauty services that straddle cosmetics and wellbeing under one roof, offering education, experimentation and fully immersive experiences that will not only build loyalty, but ultimately deliver sales.'

Dorfer argues that beauty is no longer just about cosmetics or skincare but a holistic approach. 'Consumers are increasingly concerned about the ingredients in the products they buy, how they are made and the broader benefits they offer.'

Natural ingredients will be a key influence driving the beauty and personal care market in 2018, according to a report by market intelligence agency, Mintel, along with personalisation, social responsibility and digital technology.

'Mintel predicts that the beauty and personal care market will experience a fundamental shift during 2018,' says Sarah Jindal.

Left: 'Shiseido The Store' opened in Ginza earlier this year, embodying 'knowledge, technology, brand value and cultural value'.

Middle: Il Makiage is a new cosmetics label with a pavilion in New York designed by Zaha Hadid Architects.

Right: NIOD (meaning 'non-invasive options in dermal science') opened its first UK store in Seven Dials in June. It shares the space with parent company, DECIEM.

AUTUMN STORES

Text: Gemma Balmford



Photography by Paul Warchol



senior innovation and insights analyst, beauty and personal care at Mintel. 'In the coming year and beyond, the beauty industry will navigate the conflicting demands of the "naturals-hungry" consumer with shrinking natural resources and it will be through harnessing biotech advantages that a new generation of enhanced natural products is created. Meanwhile, personalisation is set to reach new heights as brands strive to embrace total inclusivity. When it comes to ethics, it will be imperative for brands to have a personality that is genuine and a viewpoint that clearly communicates their positioning. Finally, developments in biometric monitoring will see brands drive unprecedented customization of the shopping experience.'

Steve James-Royle, founder of design agency The Yard Creative, believes that brands that hack into nature for new, innovative ingredients and use techniques that support the move towards clean living, will be best placed to rid the consumer of any emotional baggage that might be attached to a beauty purchase.

In June, skincare brand NIOD opened its first UK store on Monmouth Street in London's Seven Dials, which it shares with parent company DECIEM. The brand, which stands for 'non-invasive options in dermal science', is located close to Le Labo's flagship store and male beauty retailer, Beast, as well as the Charlotte Tilbury Beauty Boudoir on nearby James Street. The Charlotte Tilbury Store opened towards the end of 2015 and has a technology first approach, offering the customer two ways to shop: fast (upstairs) and fabulous (downstairs).

'The best stores offer experiential touchpoints to help beauty shoppers decipher the vast levels of information they consume online on their own, as well as catering to their desire for personalisation,' argues Dorfer. 'Beauty is incredibly personal, as such, we're seeing a trend towards self-steered learning and exploration in store. This is where technology has real value.'

You can't talk about beauty retail without looking at Asia, asserts Dorfer. 'Brands like Shiseido, Aritaum and Etudes House are not only redefining beauty retail but retailing as a whole. These spaces offer brand "quality" time, exploration and education, often facilitated by digital technology.'

In January, Shiseido opened 'Shiseido The Store' in Ginza, designed in collaboration with Nendo. Spread across four floors, the store offers everything from photo studios and hair and makeup salon to personal beauty sessions and cafe and event space. '[Shiseido] has created a tiered retailing ecosystem that reinforces brand loyalty, fuels curiosity and feeds consumer appetite for customisation,' notes Dorfer.

More recently, in New York, Il Makiage launched as a prestige DTC online makeup brand, supported by a temporary pavilion designed by Zaha Hadid Architects. The pop-up boutique is informed by the label's characteristically bold graphic identity, with alternating gloss and matt surfaces and structural ribbons that interlace to provide a sheltered interior for visitors to experience the 800-piece makeup collection. 'We wanted to create an environment defined by the women celebrated by Il Makiage.'



says Kar-Hwa Ho, head of interiors at Zaha Hadid Architects. 'A personal space that's all about her, to select and apply her makeup.' According to the Il Makiage website, the boutique is staffed with makeup pros, ready to customise the ideal mix of luxe products and shades for even the highest maintenance shoppers.

THE CHANGING FACE OF BEAUTY HALLS

With beauty brands now recognising that they are strong enough to have a standalone presence, Andrew Phipps, head of retail research at CBRE, wonders what effect it will have on department stores, whose beauty hall concessions were large drivers of footfall. In an article for the *The Times*, Phipps says: 'There is a question about what role department stores will play [for beauty brands] going forward if, over time, footfall to department stores falls'.

Saks Fifth Avenue in New York has recently relocated its beauty department to the second floor, with a significant focus on experiences. 'The bold decision to move beauty to the second floor, from the traditional main floor model, allowed us to build a one-of-a-kind destination enabling Saks to create the epitome of an experiential beauty floor,' explains Marc Metrick, president, Saks Fifth Avenue. 'We continue to apply the principles of what we call The New Luxury to everything we do. What we've done with beauty gives the customer a warmer environment, differentiated from what they can get anywhere else and creates a reason to come to Saks



and experience our brand.'

The 2.973 sq m beauty space houses more than 120 colour cosmetics, skincare, fragrance and wellness brands as well as 15 spa rooms along with services such as facials, massages and a flower shop.

'The Saks beauty floor is designed much more around premium services, so it makes sense that it's moved to a more discreet, lower footfall location,' says John O'Sullivan, production editor of London-based trends and retail consultancy GDR Creative Intelligence. 'As we see physical stores shift more towards services and experiences, making sure they're set in the right place is really important, so I wouldn't be surprised to see others follow suit.'

From a retail design perspective, Brittany Reid of Design4Retail, which counts Charlotte Tilbury, Clarins and Too Faced among its clients, has noticed the wellness trend impact the healthy beauty sector greatly. 'As consumers have begun to put more emphasis on the concept of feeling good, as well as looking good, we see retailers jumping to respond with their physical retail design,' she says. 'No longer is the beauty store just a store, it is a space for sleep therapy workshops, a small event for skincare tutorials, a platform for education on becoming health conscious and more. No longer is the beauty retail atmosphere based on vanity, it is beauty wellness and this concept will grow exponentially in coming years.' **RF**

Top: NYX Professional Make Up at The Bullring in Birmingham.

Above: The Too Faced flagship store on Carnaby Street, London, designed by Design4Retail.

Top left: 'Shiseido The Store' in Ginza.

Bottom left: The new Lush Naked shop in Milan stocks products totally free of packaging.