

RETAIL, HOSPITALITY, SHOW

# The resurrection of disco-inspired spaces incites a 'night fever' epidemic





Courtesy of Miu Miu

## MIU MIU DISCO, HONG KONG

Housed in the Lane Crawford department store at Hong Kong's IFC shopping mall, Miu Miu Disco features a bar that 'serves' bags from the Autumn/Winter 2019 accessories collection. Neon signs, disco balls and pink tables strengthen the allusion to nightlife. [miumiu.com](http://miumiu.com)

**DISCO WAS A FLASH** in time, albeit a bright one. The neon lights and polyester pantsuits ripped through the seventies and – like glitter that just won't come off – left an influence on contemporary design. In recent years, however, examples of disco are showing up with a fervour that suggests the movement's resurgence is more than just nostalgia.

Consider Fiorucci, an Italian clothing label founded in 1967 that became synonymous with the youth movement. Its New York City store was even dubbed the 'daytime Studio 54'. But with the end of the eighties came the end of Fiorucci. Until now, that is. Last year the brand triumphantly opened a Brinkworth-designed store in London's Soho district. Teeming with neon lights, toxic-yellow curtains, a round bed – and hosting an occasional roller-disco event – the space harkens to the past while making 21<sup>st</sup>-century waves. Why is now the right time for Fiorucci to bloom again? Because of 'the optimism', according to Stephen and Janie Schaffer, the brand's new owners, as reported in *The Guardian*. 'When you look at the news you think: God, we need it ... There's a desire for escapism.'

Fashion was a first responder to the disco trend, as exemplified by Bob Mackie's psychedelic-hustler costumes for Elton John. The sartorial memorialization of two highly prolific maximalists, David Bowie and Prince, appeared in Spring/Summer 2018 collections from the likes of Gucci and Dolce&Gabbana, who showed apparel rich in Lycra and sequins.

Following the current trend is *Night Fever: Designing Club Culture 1960-Today*, an exhibition introduced at the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany, and now at ADAM (Art Design Atomium Museum) in Brussels. *Night Fever* reviews the identity and architecture of nightclubs, from those immersed in Italy's radical design of the 1960s to OMA's 2015 proposal for London's Ministry of Sound. During the heyday of disco, music and architecture symbolized an exploration of spatial performance. The exhibition makes clear that clubs of the era were more like interpretations of set design: interior worlds that invited visitors to disconnect from a reality beyond the bouncer. It draws a link between music of the seventies and eighties, illustrates the filtration of disco into current pop culture and spotlights the popularization of drag culture. Audiences worldwide are entranced by the riotous pink and purple neon set of television series *RuPaul's Drag Race*, not to mention the 2018 releases of documentaries dedicated to Studio 54 and Grace Jones. The anti-Establishment, anti-taste character of the period involves more than our screens, however. »



## DIMOND LILI, CHONGQING

For noodle bar Dimond Lili, Hangzhou-based studio Yu Designs channelled the 1980s. Neon lights, transparent acrylic-resin bar stools, a reflective stainless-steel canopy and a wall of glass bricks provide guests with a perfect Instagram opportunity.  
yudesigns.cn





Mark Niedermann

## NIGHT FEVER, WEIL AM RHEIN

Night Fever: Designing Club Culture 1960-Today is an exhibition that reviews the identity and architecture of nightclubs. Konstantin Grcic and lighting designer Matthias Singer created a multidisciplinary piece that distils the sensory impact of nightclub design through a grid of infinite light and sound. First shown at Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Night Fever is now on display at ADAM in Brussels (until 5 May 2019).

konstantin-grcic.com  
design-museum.de  
adamuseum.be

Night Fever also plays to the ambitions of today's retail and hospitality sectors – and their efforts to satisfy the 'experience economy'. An example of what disco-like settings can achieve is apparent in an installation by Konstantin Grcic, who designed the exhibition, and lighting designer Matthias Singer. Their multidisciplinary piece distils the sensory impact of nightclub design through a grid of infinite light and sound, hence confirming the power of such immersive environments – with their outrageous interiors and sense of community – to provide rich ground for designers.

The audacious trend rears its head in Asia as well, where Italian fashion house Miu Miu's pop-up boutique – Miu Miu Disco – travelled from Singapore to South Korea to China. Tucked into the Lane Crawford department store at Hong Kong's IFC shopping mall, the interior is bathed in pink and

accentuated by mirrored tiles that cover the back wall and bar, which 'serves' bags from Miu Miu's Autumn/Winter 2019 accessories collection. Completing the design are neon signs and disco balls suspended above pink tables that resemble the bottle-service tables in clubs. Even the speakers bellow out tracks from the 1970s and '80s, borrowing the excitement of a runway show.

The allure of shine illuminated Milan Design Week in the form of Disco Gufram, an exhibition presented by Italian brand Gufram. The collection brought together furniture and rugs by Atelier Biagetti, Rotganzen and GGSV in a surreal *mise en scène*.

The bold cosmic glamour of the seventies mocks those afraid to push the boundaries of taste. The contemporary spaces described here make amazing Instagram backdrops, a fact that Chongqing restaurant Dimond Lili uses to good advantage. Created

by Hangzhou-based studio Yu Designs, the noodle bar buzzes with neon lights that frame the entrance and reflect in the surface of a stainless-steel bar. Every material inside Dimond Lili reflects light, from bar stools made of transparent acrylic resin to a stainless-steel canopy and a wall of glass bricks.

In a world too long saturated with Scandinavian minimalism, it was only a matter of time before designers broke out the colours and the lights. Although we're bound to swing back from the bright influence of spaces built for late-night entertainment, the return of fearless design is fantastic for the spirit and the selfie. – KG



## FIORUCCI, LONDON

The bulk of Fiorucci's stores closed in the late 1980s, but in 2017 the brand opened a bricks-and-mortar outlet in London's Soho neighbourhood. The interior, by Brinkworth Design, is a simultaneous celebration of Fiorucci's heritage and its future.  
brinkworth.com  
fiorucci.com