

The Fluid Shopping Mall

INTERNET SHOPPING, same-day delivery, and new channels of retail distribution require the complete rethinking of shopping center designs by architects, retailers, and developers.

In response we must re-conceive the built marketplace through a different way of thinking—one that challenges the very notion of a fixed brick-and-mortar place. We must envision something that is adaptable, varied, flexible, dynamic, and fluid—something that can accommodate a far more dynamic mix of shops. This cannot be achieved by building more space that requires a sledgehammer to change it.

A smarter, long-term strategy would be to re-engineer the mall's DNA to create a fluid space that can accommodate a constant rotation of merchants, goods, and consumers. This would require creating a highly flexible envelope to allow for a rapid change of stores and merchandise, morphing displays, theatrical lighting and sound, flexible to-the-point data-transmission lines, and better connections to supply-chain delivery systems to accommodate stores with intentionally short lifespans, temporary brand showcases, and customized merchandising events. Such a dynamic place would cater to an ever-changing story line, unlike the modern mall with its tired tenant mix operating under long-term leases, accessed by corridors cluttered with parasitic kiosks and temporary tenants operating in the shells of failed chain stores, along with their stained carpets, sagging ceiling tiles, and scuffed walls—now called pop-up shops by mall marketing directors.

“PLUG-AND-PLAY” SHOPS

With their fly spaces, trap rooms, turntables, orchestra pits, and back-of-house staging areas, Broadway theaters have long been designed to allow for shows and their sets to change quickly within the fixed structure. Retail spaces in the mall should be perceived in the same manner to become similarly adaptable for quick scene changes, almost on the fly. In figurative terms, imagine a Rubik's cube: turntables, sliding walls, and elevators to allow “plug-and-play shops” with easily and quickly adaptable proportions to accommodate different presentations of merchandise for a changing audience of consumers—according to time of day, day of week, season, and citywide events.

A real example is the newly announced Cultural Shed, planned to hold temporary events such as Fashion Week at Hudson Yards. The Island Maison Pavilion by Moshe Safdie and the interior



RICK HILL
founder of
J. Richard Hill & Co.

“Re-engineer the mall's DNA to create a fluid space that can accommodate a constant rotation of merchants, goods, and consumers.”

designs by Peter Marino for Louis Vuitton at Marina Bay Sands, Singapore, is another model of a varied and flexible structure that could accommodate retail change. Safdie's 35-foot-high main pavilion is essentially a glass box, which surrounds Peter Marino's smaller modular retail cubes that showcase the luxury goods of Louis Vuitton. The glass box is long term, but the modular cubes within the overall pavilion can be changed overnight.

NEW RIBBONS OF COMMERCE

Successful marketplaces of the future will be designed on a foundation of the senses, not on blocks of mortar or on data streams. Malls will become places of sensory magic—whole and complete places that are alive, vital, and culturally relevant. In addition to providing fashionable goods, dining, and entertainment, malls will showcase design, art, and architecture. The result will be adaptable and flexible public and private spaces layered with retail inner sanctums, intimate retreats, community gathering places, event spaces, theaters, showcases, galleries, and museums. All will be interconnected by landscaped vistas with lush gardens, dramatic atriums, sky bridges, grand staircases, and new forms of pedestrian streets and sidewalks.

Hospitality, recreation, fashion, dining, lifestyle demonstrations, personal care, education, entertainment, and cultural production will be woven into a highly textured marketplace. New materials, innovative lighting, water, fire, music, and art will be the elements of a multi-layered and organic marketplace. Free of rigid urban grids, new ribbons of commerce will form horizontally, diagonally, and vertically to connect with new retail stepping-stones and floating cubes of commerce.

Most importantly, future malls will restore and preserve something fundamental to society: face-to-face interaction, socializing, creative expression, collective learning, and the open exchange of ideas. This vision is based on a simple premise: As more components of the digital consumer age become hardwired into the brain, the mall will respond in part to become somewhat of a consumer sanctuary for data detoxification, providing a more subtle nourishing of our senses and enhancing our experience of being human. 🌍

Rick Hill is founder of J. Richard Hill & Co., a real estate consultancy, and a 30-plus-year veteran in the shopping center and retail marketplace industry. Contact him at 502-417-4361, e-mail rick.hill@jrichardhill.com, or through the website, www.jrichardhill.com.



Mistral Wine Store
São Paulo, Brazil
2012 Store of the Year

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Retail Design Institute 2013 International Store Design Awards

Contract design firms and retail in-house design teams from the global community are invited to submit projects for the 43rd annual International Store Design Competition. Eligible projects are those completed between 1 November 2012 and 31 October 2013.

The Institute's competition celebrates exceptional retail design & experience projects. From full-line department stores to quick-serve restaurants, a full spectrum of global environments are represented through the 20-competition categories.

The Institute's prestigious awards are recognized for:

- ❑ Quality- The only peer reviewed competition
- ❑ Marketing Impact- Winners showcased on 5 continents
- ❑ Exposure- Awards held during NRF Show week when global brand & design community are assembled in New York

Deadline is 1 November 2013 at Midnight Eastern Time USA

For complete information including entry instructions, forms and pricing please visit:

www.retaildesigninstitute.org/designcompetition13

You will also find forms in Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese and Mandarin.



Retail Design Institute®

retaildesigninstitute.org
info@retaildesigninstitute.org
Phone: 954-241-4841
Fax: 954-893-8375

Are You Connected to A.R.E.?



A.R.E. is now available on all of your social networks! Follow us at twitter.com/A_RE to receive "twitter-only" discounts and links to valuable business intelligence and design inspiration.



On Facebook, 'Like' our fan page **Association for Retail Environments** and search the group **Retail Environments Network** on LinkedIn.



Now you can find A.R.E. on Pinterest. We've selected the most inspiring and innovative retail environments' products and projects to showcase. pinterest.com/retailenviro



Now Accepting
Nominations for



RISING
STAR
2013

Who will receive this year's honor?

Do you know a young, talented, visionary who has a passion for their work and a drive to be an innovative leader in the retail environments industry?

Retailers, designers, and industry suppliers are invited to make nominations for this year's PAVE Rising Star award.

PAVE is looking for individuals who are:

- ★ proven visionaries
- ★ uniquely innovative
- ★ respected among peers
- ★ 40 years or younger

Nominations are free and they can motivate a nominee to do even more great things.

All finalists will be recognized during the PAVE Gala on December 4, 2013 in New York City, where the winner will be announced.

For complete details and nomination form, visit www.paveinfo.org.

Deadline for nominations: October 9, 2013



4651 Sheridan St., Suite 470
Hollywood, FL 33021

954-893-7225 • fax 954-893-8375

pave@paveinfo.org • www.paveinfo.org

PAVE is a 501(c)(3) educational foundation administered by A.R.E.

elevations inc.

© 2013 Elevations Inc.





One display - multiple configurations

Get more for your money!

We excel at creative problem solving. Have multiple store formats, but want a display that will work with all of them? No problem!

We can create a custom solution that ships in a small kit, but expands to a variety of display options depending on the particular needs in each retail space.

Put our 50 plus years of experience to work for you in creating the perfect custom display or fixture solution.

Custom Displays from Southern Imperial!



MEMBER OF **A·R·E**
 Association for
 Retail Environments



Providing quality display products and services for over 50 years.

800.747.4665 or 815.877.7041 • www.southernimperial.com