

NEW GENERATION CONCEPT STORES

Jana Melkumova-Reynolds

FASHION CAPITALS ACROSS THE WORLD ARE SEEING A NEW WAVE OF CONCEPT STORES WHERE NON-APPAREL CATEGORIES ARE NO LESS IMPORTANT, AND OFTEN MORE EXPENSIVE, THAN CLOTHES.

Archive 18-20, a 400-m² fashion store-cum-art gallery-cum-restaurant, opened in the Parisian district of Marais last autumn. Custom-made rails run along the walls featuring refined clothes by **Marni**, **Alexander Wang**, **Antonio Marras** and the store's own menswear label, **Ly Adams**. The center of the store, however, is occupied by other items: electric bikes, designer condoms, unique furniture pieces and works of art. "The proportion is 60% apparel and 40% non-apparel," says founder Séverine Lahyani.

The idea of mixing designer collections and non-wearables is nothing new. But if the first generation of concept stores, such as **Colette** and **10 Corso Como**, tended to go for very high-end clothes and complement them with inexpensive but cool gifts, today's stores do the opposite: their non-apparel selection is more exclusive than their ready-to-wear items.

In **M Collective**, Milan's newest concept store, dresses that retail at €60 sit next to €180 perfumes and gadgets in excess of €500. "In terms of quantities, non-apparel represents 1/6 of all sales, but in terms of value, the sales split 50/50," explains general manager Anna Casiraghi. And the bestselling non-apparel categories? "Hi-tech and mobile accessories, cosmetics and food: designer cupcakes, chocolate and candies." Indeed, the importance of 'edibles' (and drinkables) is growing within fashion retail: **Manifesto**, Singapore's latest concept store that sells brands such as **Christophe Lemaire**, **Costume National** and **YMC**, recently launched its own blend of tea in collaboration with Ette tea company.

This approach is likely to become more mainstream in the coming years as shopping patterns change. Today's young people spend less on clothes than their predecessors: according to consultancy firm

Piper Jaffray, from 2005 to 2015 fashion purchases dropped from 45% to 38% of teenage spend; compare that with expenditure on gadgets, which has doubled over the same period, and food spending is on the rise with those who are under twenty, too. As Generation Z grows up and acquires higher spending power, retailers will need to fundamentally rethink their product mix, adding non-apparel categories to their fashion offer; hats off to today's concept stores for being there first.

www.archive1820.com
www.manifestoshop.com
www.mcollective.it

