Ideas made possible.

South Korean—

Retail innovation.

Part two.

WHY SOUTH KOREA IS **STILL** A LEADER IN RETAIL INNOVATION.

In this report, we explore a tangible toolkit, illustrating *how*, South Korean retail brands are building world class retail experiences. *Discover* some of the key design directions influencing the aesthetic movements and visual trends from the region.

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K—RETAIL

Experience Toolkit.

ACTIVITY FORMULA

K—RETAIL

Experience Toolkit – 1/3.



Brand Anchors

Leverage the power of brand anchors, bold moments that are a condensed expression of the brand, a mascot or a core recognisable brand asset brought to life.

These serve as beacons for the brand, creating attraction and content creation opportunities for shoppers.



Hyper-Physicality

Hyper-physical spaces give reasons to visit bricks & mortar stores. They offer an engaging environment to shop and explore, adding to the overall experience beyond the purely transactional. Narratives told through the environment, build affinity for the brand and drive inspiration and viral attention.



Content creation

K—Retail spaces are some of the best in the world for providing shoppers and brand loyal fans the space & tools to create content. Korean influencers demand spaces that allow them to get close to their favourite brands, connecting to exciting experiences, and showing up at culture hot-spots.



Dwell spaces

Almost all popular flagship retail spaces in S.Korea, feature a branded Café offer or space to hang out and be immersed into the brand world. It is these monetisable yet product light spaces, that build brand affinity beyond the collection or campaign, building a space for brand communities to come together.

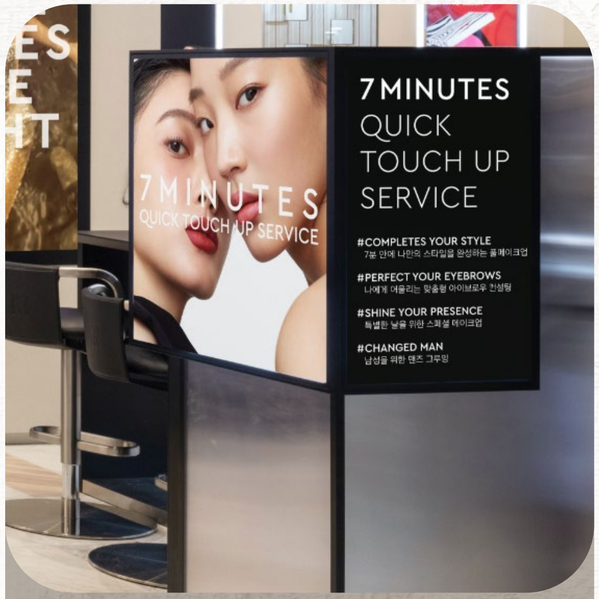
K—RETAIL

Experience Toolkit — 2/3.



Product activation

Activate products in a way that promotes, *test & play*, delivering products in a uniquely novel way. Whether product is mixed and delivered by a robotic system or presented via a theatrical process, create pathways to shop beyond convenience. With speed offered best online, connect to sensory curiosity for heightened engagement.



Customer service

Remember to offer services that can't be found online, or that are locally specific to the site. Often staff knowledge and expertise is the tipping point that gets shoppers buying. From how your staff are dressed to the expert knowledge they can offer, dial into the rapport and connection staff can build with shoppers, new and loyal.



Incentivisation

Create incentives to encourage engagement. Offering extra value to the shopper can come in many forms; such as discounts, gifts with purchase and more. However, many K—Retail brands are offering the opportunity to find something out about yourself, building shopper journeys that make selection suggestions in a seamless way.



Space for art

K—Retail spaces often have to compete with the challenge of space being at a premium, however, they understand and make room for artful moments. Negative and punctuating spaces offer a break from volumes of product. Artistic spaces can signal a brands values, create intrigue and even activate the senses, building long lasting memories for shoppers.

K—RETAIL Experience Toolkit — 3/3.



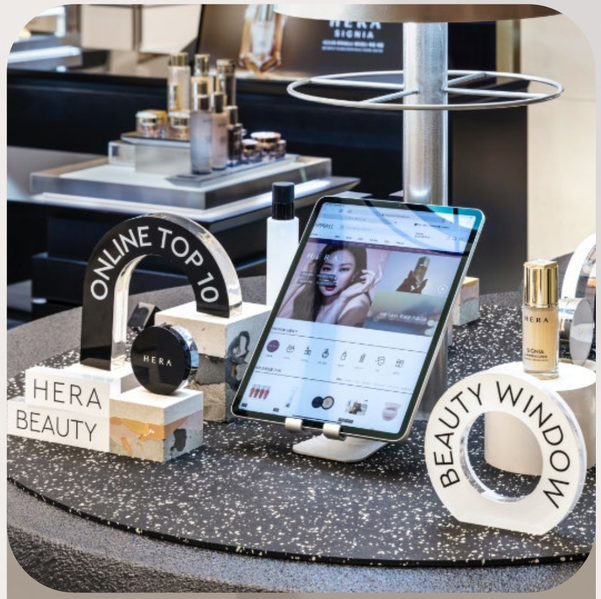
Event take-overs

K-Retail brands understand the power of the pop-up. Wherever possible they appear in a way that takes over the retail environment in a big way. The key is both visual and experiential commitment. More than just visual disruption these events seek to immerse and drive engagement.



Zones of discovery

Many Korean stores employ a customer journey that rewards the customer as they explore. With brand narratives told across multiple floors, or through pockets of activity. By utilising a customer journey focussed on immersion and higher dwell times, stores are grown into must-visit destinations.



Discernment

Customer-centric product discernment helps shoppers to find and navigate product in an ergonomic and convenient way. The power of a great choice architecture is universal, helping shoppers to find what they are looking for and introduce them to products they didn't know they wanted or needed.



Onward journeys

Communities build loyalty with brands that support and enable them beyond the purely transactional.

From re-fillable collectible gifts that keep shoppers coming back to inclusive events that open brand spaces as platforms for communities to create and dwell within.

K—RETAIL

Design directions.

TREND OVERVIEW

"As 24 hour exposure to bad news takes it's toll on *all* demographics, consumers are craving *escapist experiences* to uplift, inspire and share."

Giga-realism.

Giga-realism is the next stage of development for the hyper-physical environment. As brands realise the power of hyper-physical spaces, competition to be the most engaging is the driving force behind some of the most visually and narratively tactile retail spaces we have seen.

Globally, creatives are tapping into the impossible, through imaginative hyper-realistic ideas, thanks to AI aided visualisation and design. Brands are expanding their horizons and encouraging greater creative risk-taking, empowered by the permission granted by pioneering brands like Gentle Monster, which is leading the way in the redefinition of what a shop should look like and be.

UNEXPECTED, DISRUPTIVE, SURREAL, HYPER-REAL, ARTFUL.











"Anti-work; Corpcore aesthetics have *transcended* fashion, moving into a celebration of *distressed* metropolitan architecture as K-Retail enters it's *'Wabi Sabi' era*."

NOUN

Wabi-sabi (侘び寂び)
A concept originating in Japan, 'Wabi-sabi' is an aesthetic or world view characterised by finding beauty in imperfection, impermanence, or simplicity, centred on the acceptance of transience and imperfection.

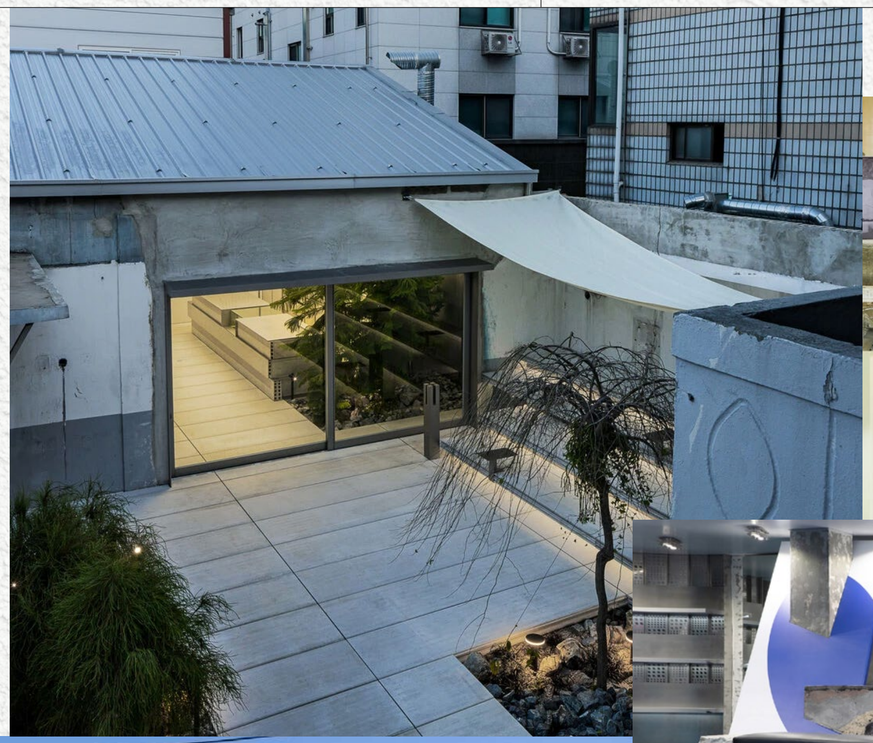
Metro-*atrophy.*

Across the cities of South Korea, we are seeing a consistent appreciation for distressed urban textures.

From High end luxury fashion, to cafés and beauty stores, we see a celebration of 'brutalist' architecture, damage and patina. Accompanied by paired back branding and interior minimalism, this design direction is both esoteric and impactful.

It reminds us of the corporate aesthetic of the metropolitan world as it ages and the bones of which form the aesthetic of the future.

PATINA,
DISTRESSED,
DAMAGED,
WABI SABI,
POST-DYSTOPIA.













"As a rebuttal to the *relentless reality* of perma-crises, K-brands are crafting aesthetics that are innocent, imperfect and *relatably humanistic*."

Naïvety-maxxing.

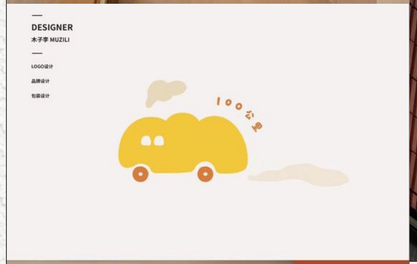
On the other-side of the coin we are seeing continued growth of naive design, where a soft, cuddly aesthetic juxtaposes the cold hard seriousness of our global situation.

Many brands are actively working to create spaces that tap into trends of wellness, comfort and simple joy. The aesthetic speaks to both the inner child and the curated self, inspiring a look and feel that reminds us to have fun whilst appreciating each day.

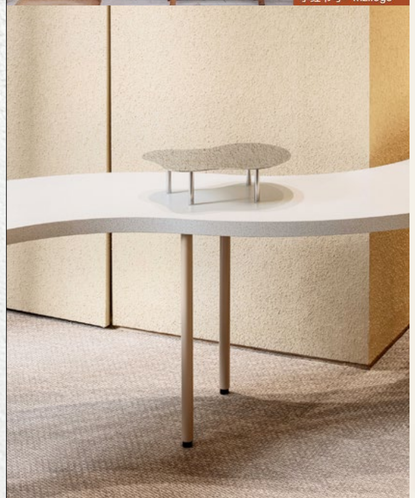
Characterful elements inject joy, whilst soft forms and calming palettes work to reduce anxiety and encourage dwell time.

HAND RENDERED, CHARACTERFUL, CHARMING, CHUBBY DESIGN, UNIQUE.



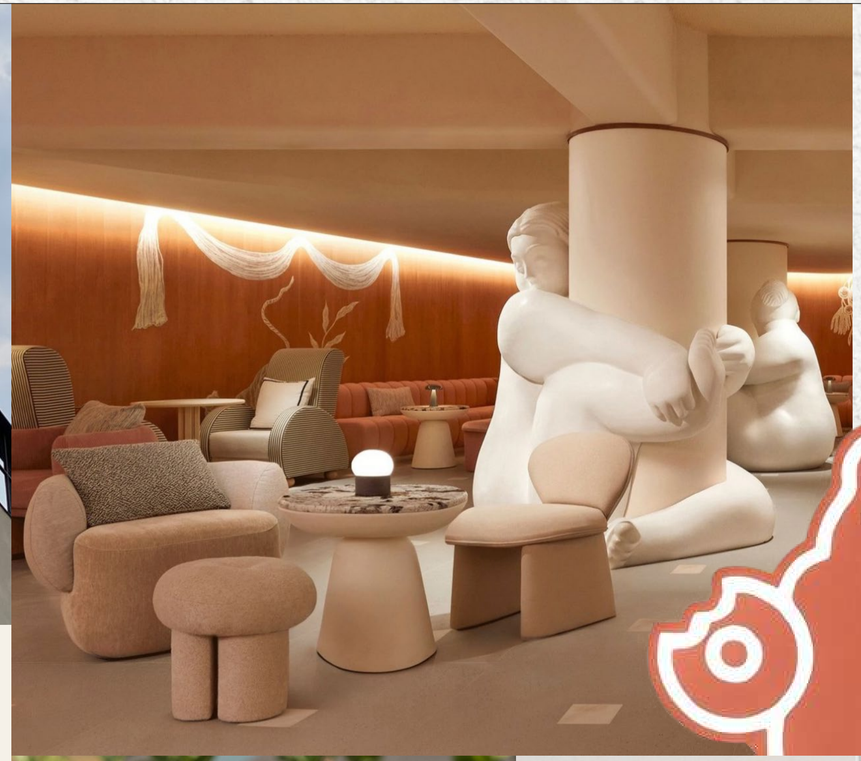
















DESIGN4RETAIL • DESIGN4RETAIL •

OUR EXPERIENCE

South Korea x D4R.

D4R K—RETAIL PRJOECTS

01

The home of K-Beauty.

PURESEOUL, WHITE CITY

pureseoul



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From South Korea... to the UK.

DESIGNING A PLAYFUL AND INVITING STORE FOR PURESEOUL

pureseoul looked to D4R to create a store that established them as the go to destination for everything K-Beauty; a hub of expertise and knowledge that celebrates an extensive range of Korean brands.

The beauty retailer challenged D4R to create an accessible space for skincare enthusiasts and makeup junkies to fall in love with Korean cosmetics.

The store needed to be calm and inviting, welcoming in existing K-Beauty fans as well as introducing the K-Beauty world to new shoppers.

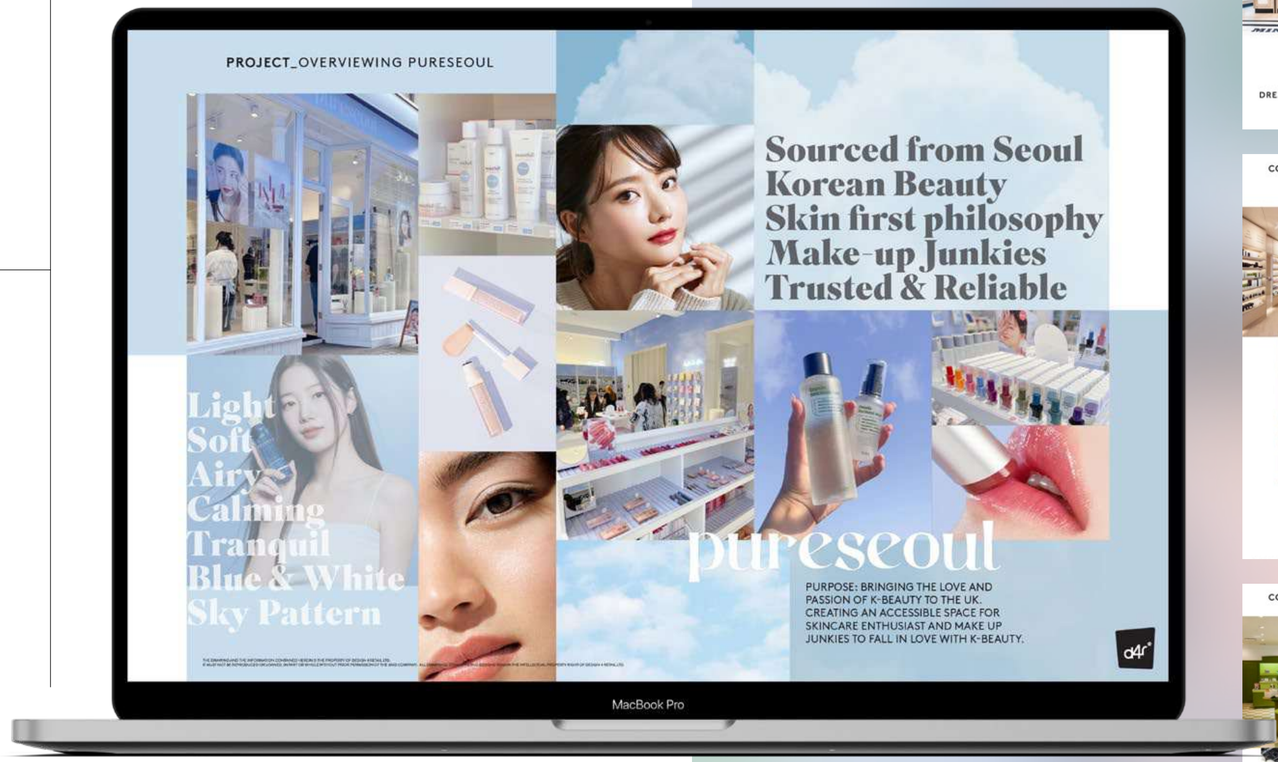
A key focus on the retail concept was that the store design had to include a display framework which was fully customisable for changing stock levels, new emerging brands, and products that are hot on socials.

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Research & insight.

In this stage of delivering the project we read, researched and explored every aspect of the potential project to fully understand the brand and vendor objectives, the customer and the specific and current market sector.

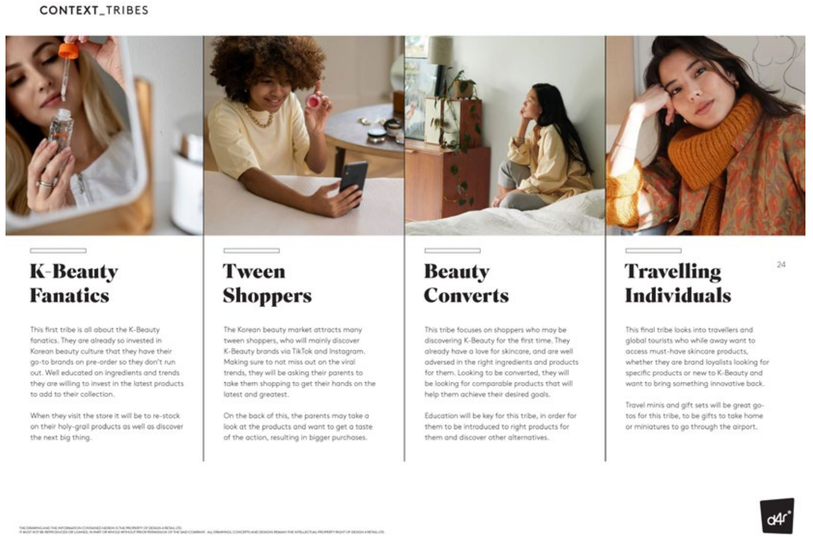
Through this we built the valuable inspiration that helped us to introduce K-Beauty to the UK market in a way like never before.

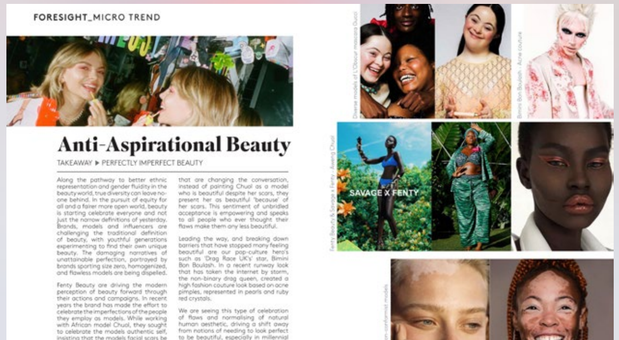












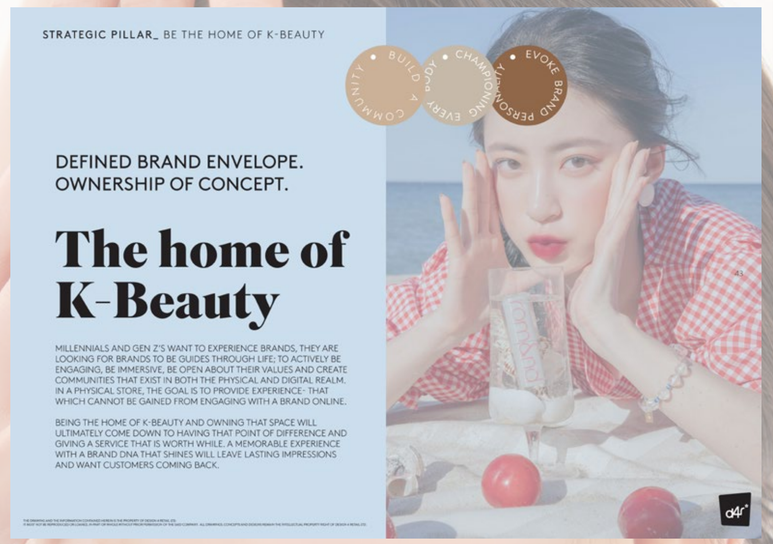
Overviewing PURESEOUL
Marketplace landscape
Comparable landscape
Consumer tribes
Established behaviours
Macro trends
Micro trends

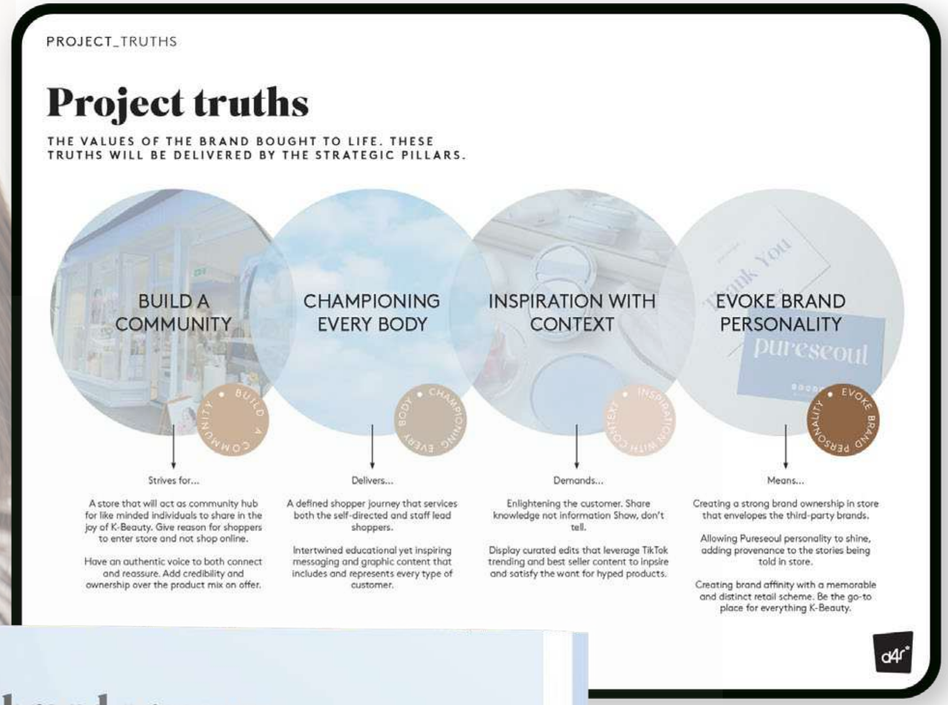
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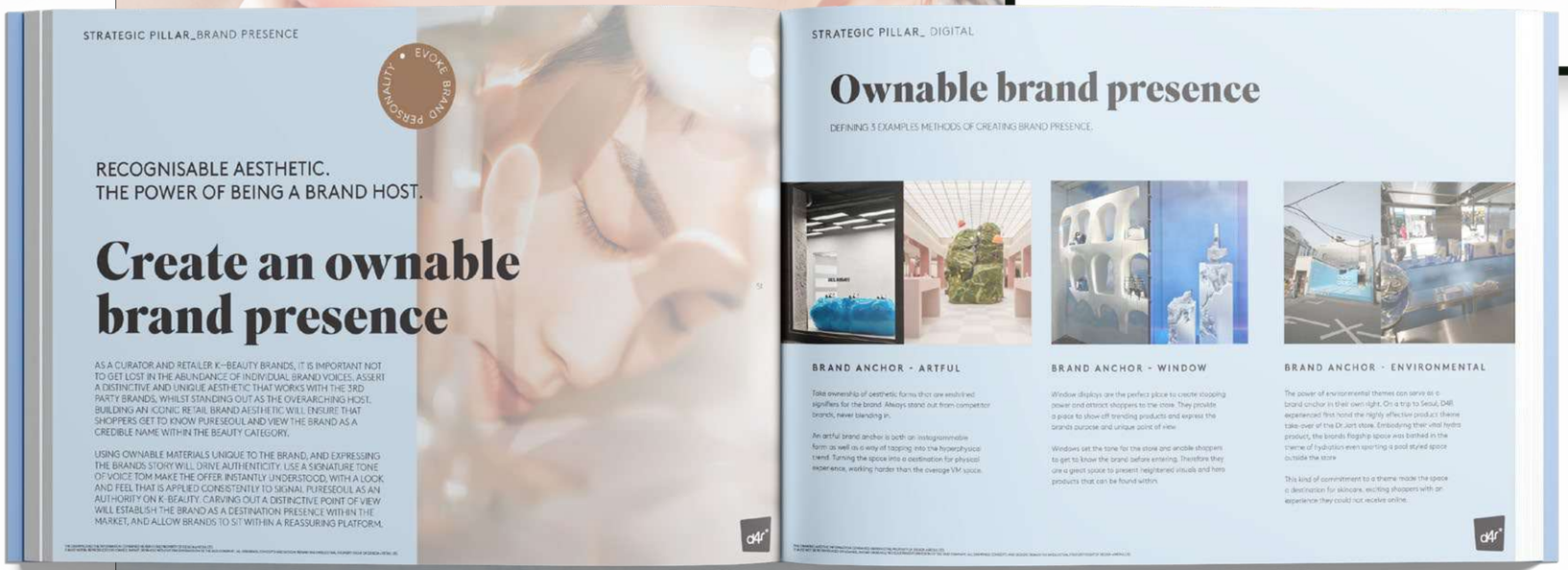
Retail strategy.

Ensuring that pureseoul's brand values were brought to life, we identified four strategic pillars that provided the building blocks for the new retail concept.

The concept took cues from pureseoul's existing Soho store but magnified key elements to create a playful and thematic experience.





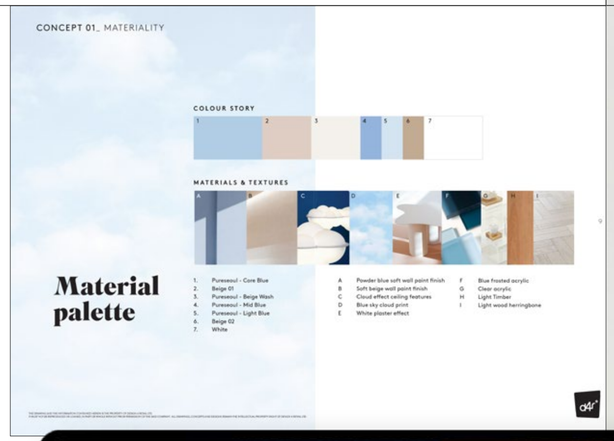


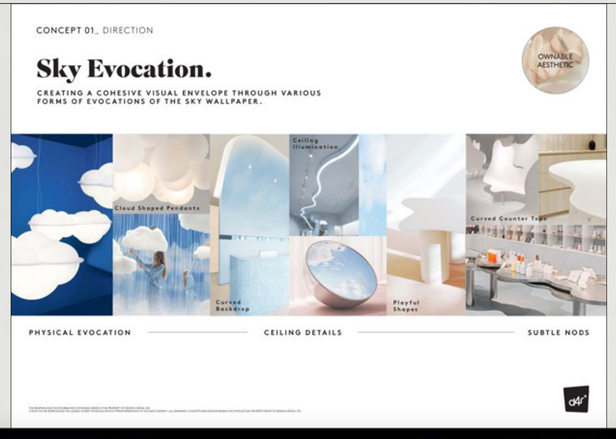
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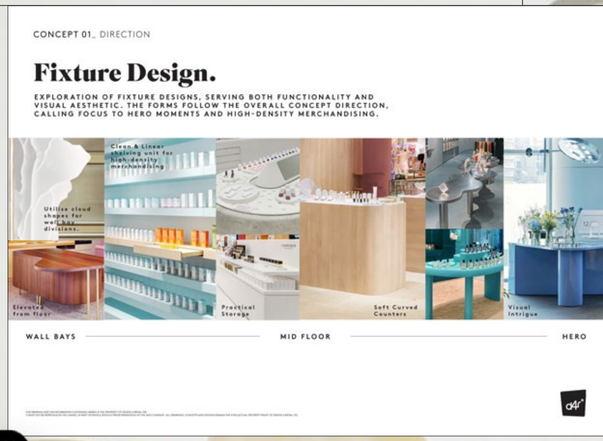
Creative vision.

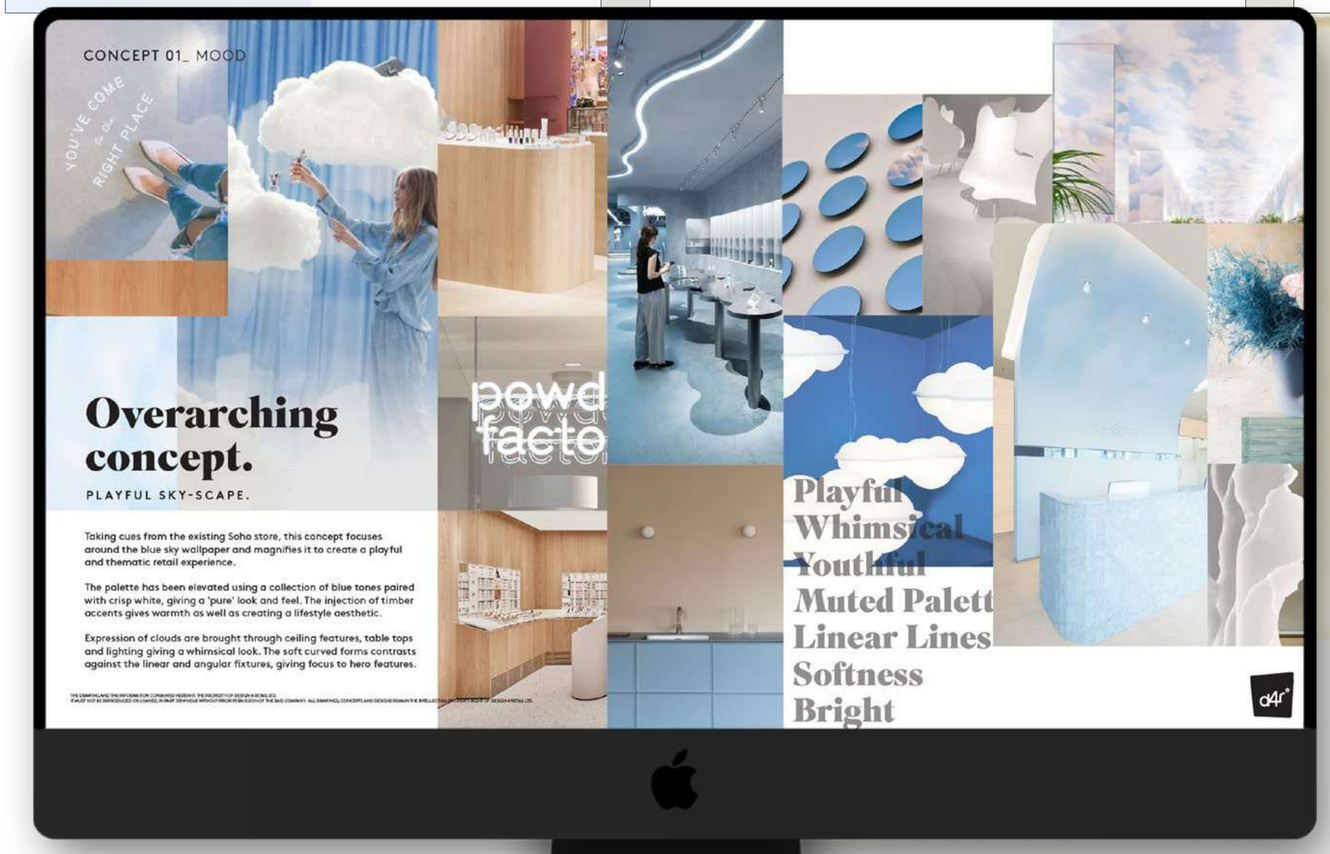
The palette was elevated using a collection of blue tones paired with off white and nudes, giving a 'pure' look and feel - a contrast to the typical K-Beauty aesthetic within the industry.

Expressions of clouds were brought through curved tabletops, playful wall alcoves and fluid lighting, giving the store a whimsical look.









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Customer journey.

Three distinctive zones of activity and product consideration were curated to build a cohesive, intuitive journey for customer exploration that services both self-directed and staff-led shoppers.

Two focal areas for pureseoul were the 'Masks & Mini's' zone and 'New Brand Launch' zone.

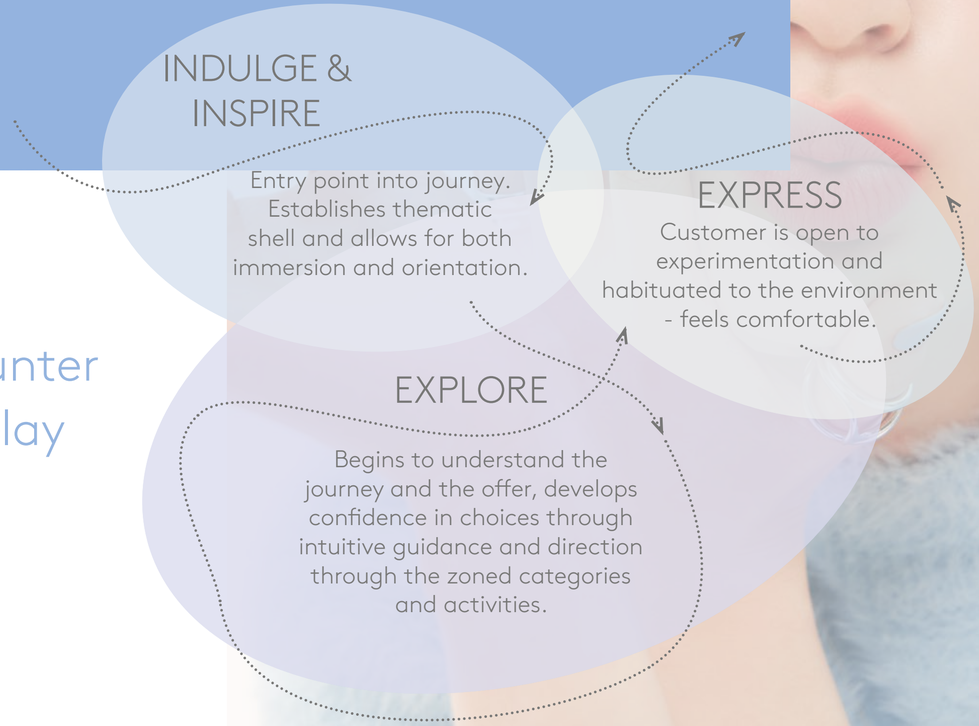
The 'Mini's' were to target those younger demographics which were looking to take home a piece of pureseoul without paying the premium price tag.

While the 'new brands' launch zone at the store front was to showcase curated edits that leverage Tik Tok trending and best seller content, to inspire and satisfy the want for hype products.



Wall bays
Brand statement
Till & storage
Mask wall
Mini fixture

Hero
Mid floor
Make-up counter
Window display



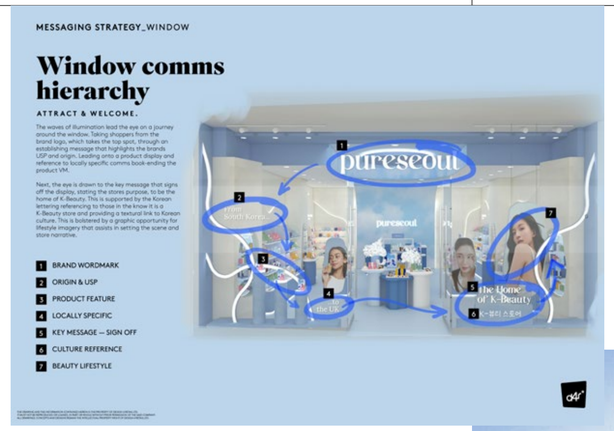
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Graphic communication.

Intertwined throughout the zones were educational yet inspiring messages and graphic content that includes and represents every type of customer. This was achieved through a show, don't tell approach to comms.

To aid the customer without overwhelming them, we adopted a friendly iconographic approach by creating hand-drawn icons that can both make it easy to separate tertiary product types as well as reference Korean style graphic devices.

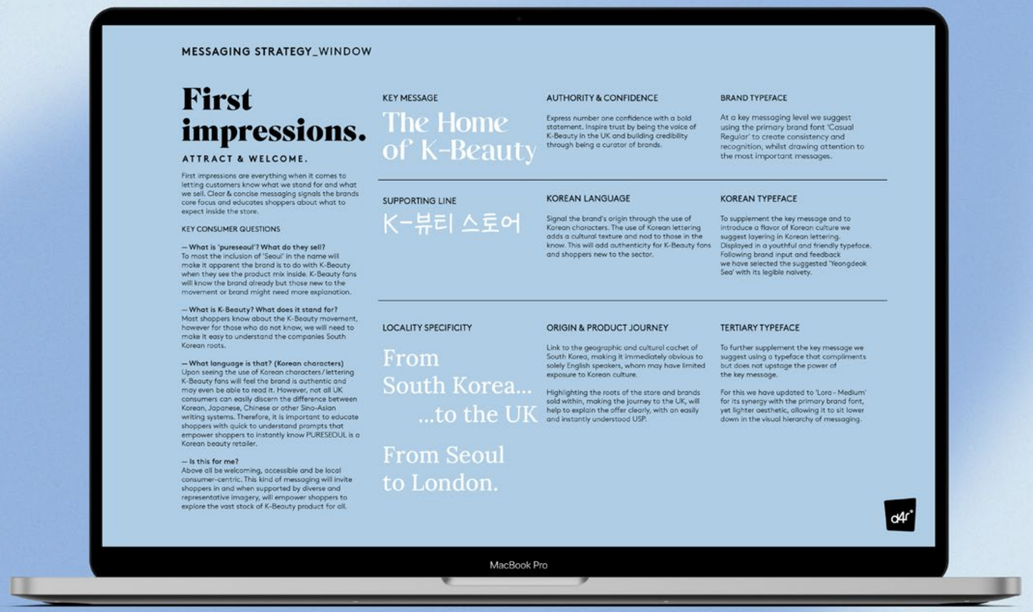
But the most notable feature of the store is that every fixture design element is 'free-dress' meaning that pureseoul can continue to customise and mix & match the layout of the store as the brands needs change - future proofing the store.





Inspire shoppers with tone of voice





Trend led messaging
Newness navigators
Talking conversationally

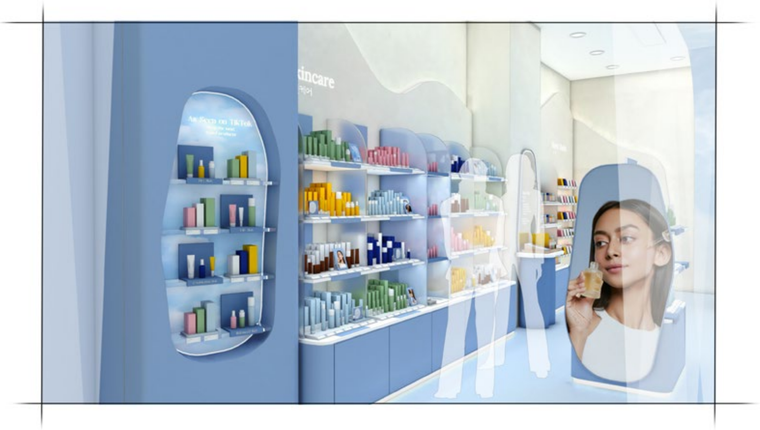
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Concept visualisation.

Our concept realisation phase entailed full and detailed renders of the environment, showcasing how all of the details come together as a functional, shoppable journey.

These high resolution visualisation served as the culmination of months of creative work and allowed us to accurately share the expansive vision.









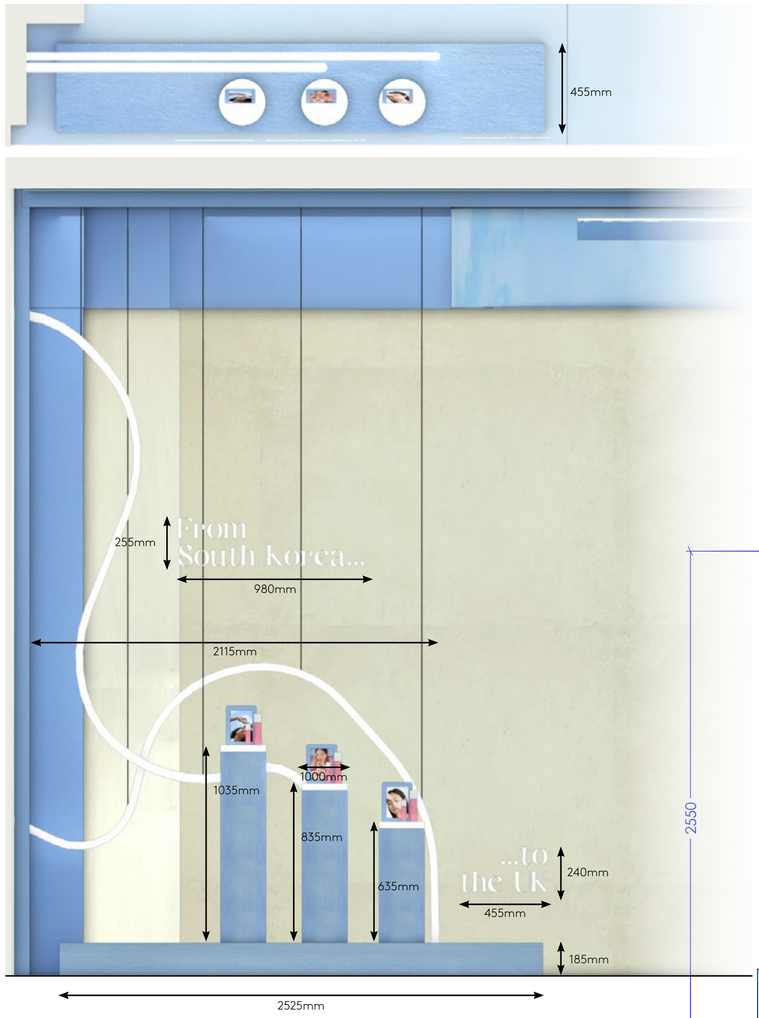


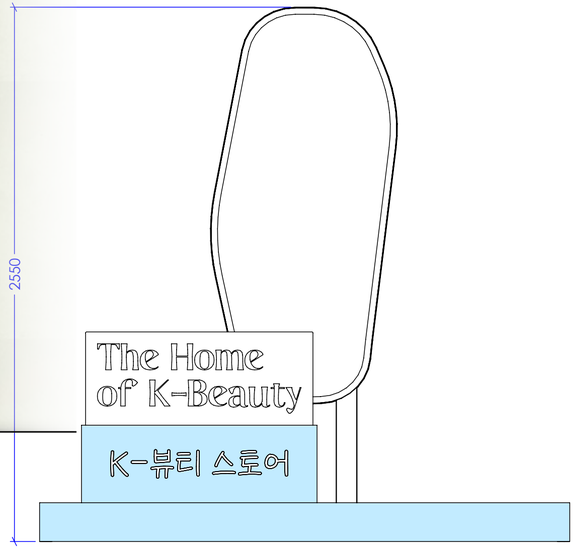
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Technical development.

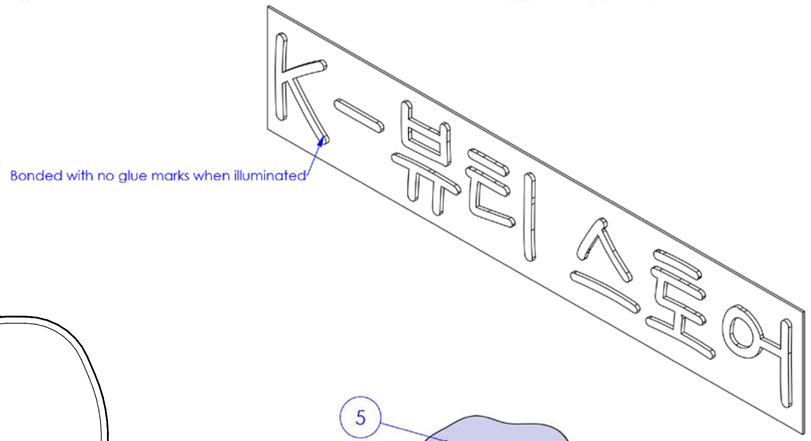
Our technical development team are meticulous in their work and have a deep involvement in the production process.

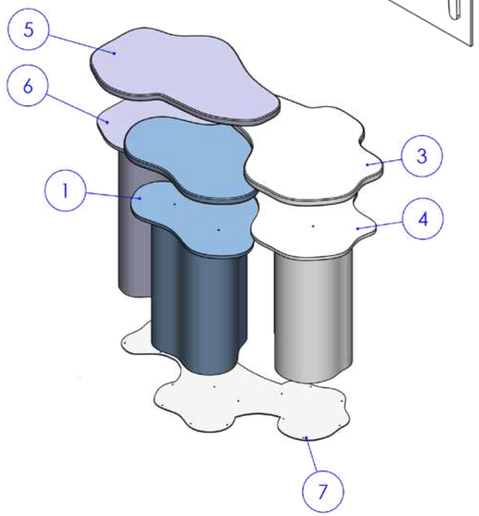
We work hard to deliver on our clients expectations and where possible exceed them; our technical teams do this by adhering to budgets, site stipulations, RAMS backed designs and fit for purpose construction recommendation.











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Realisation.

The playful 'sky-scape' concept gave reason for customers to enter a physical store rather than shopping online.

It allowed pureseoul's personality to shine and adding provenance to the story of the brand and creating affinity through memorable and distinct moments.

The store is a cohesive visual envelope of various evocations of the brand and is now the go-to place for K-Beauty in the UK.

















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02

The house of beauty.

STORE DESIGN

ETUDE

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A playground of cosmetic retail.

CREATING A BEST-IN-CLASS GLOBAL STORE CONCEPT

Following on from the successful House of Colour Play store concept launch in 2017, ETUDE wanted to revisit the sweet and playful aesthetic of the brand's roots with a renewed retail identity.

To appeal to today's more digitally native customers we were asked to transform the retail store environment focusing on the experience and introducing digital content from the brand's online world.

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Research & insight.

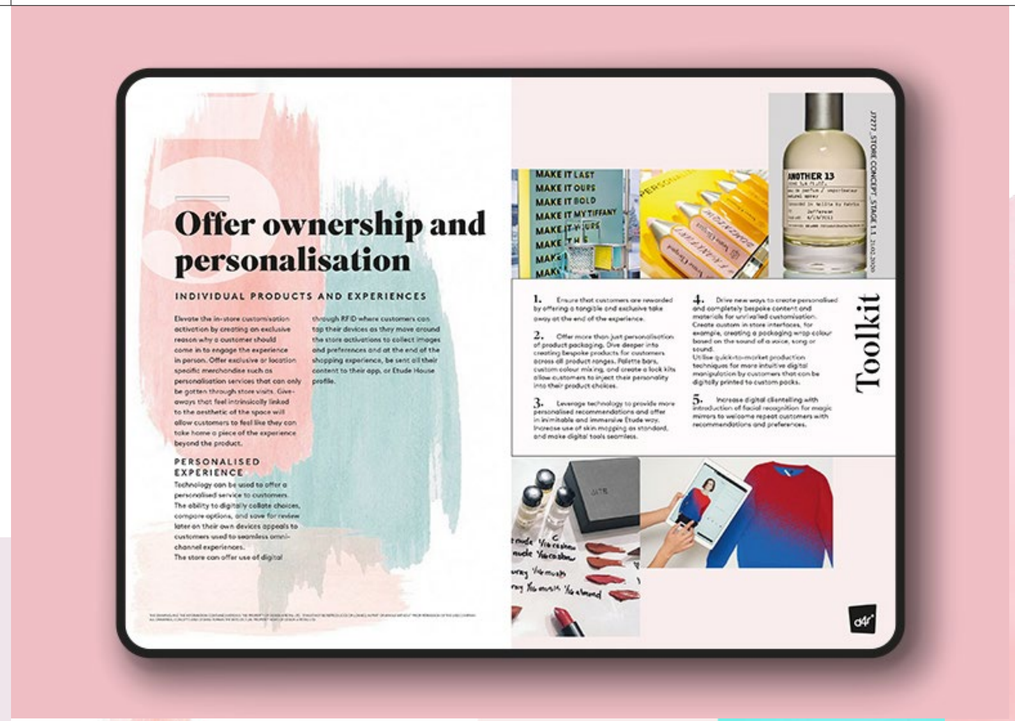
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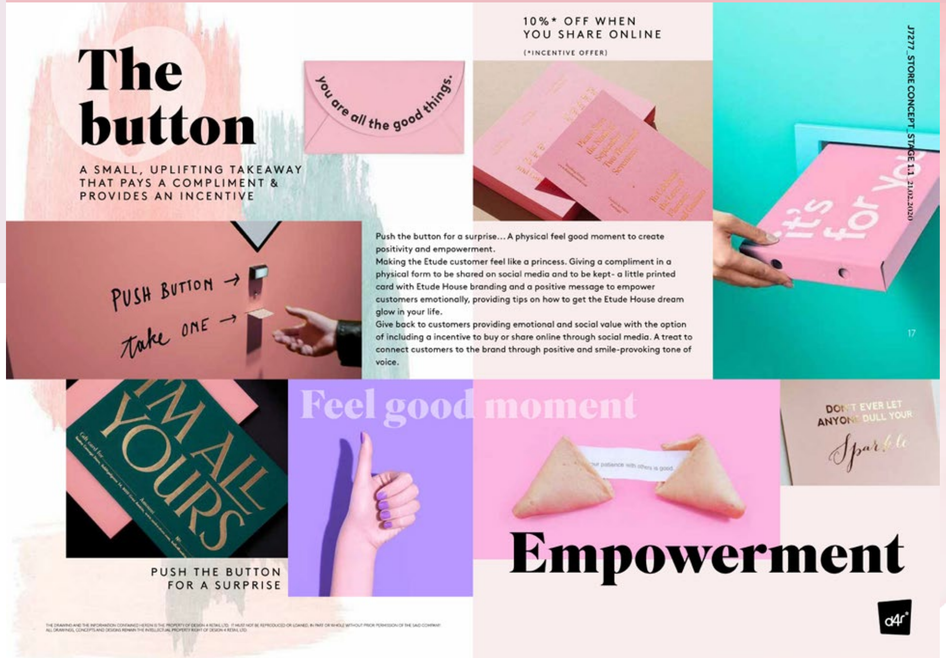
Through this we built a playground of cosmetic retail that layers experiential and interactive elements to redefine the role of physical retail in the beauty sector, whilst amplifying Etude's voice from digital platforms to communicate the brands story and ethos.





Showcasing a wide variety and a colourful imagination



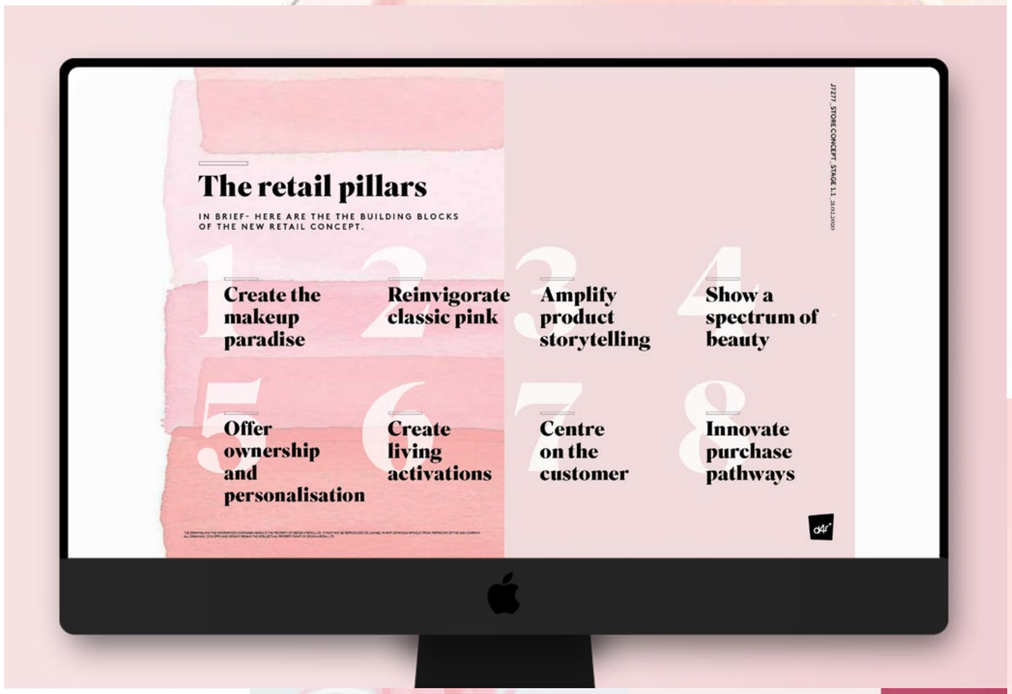


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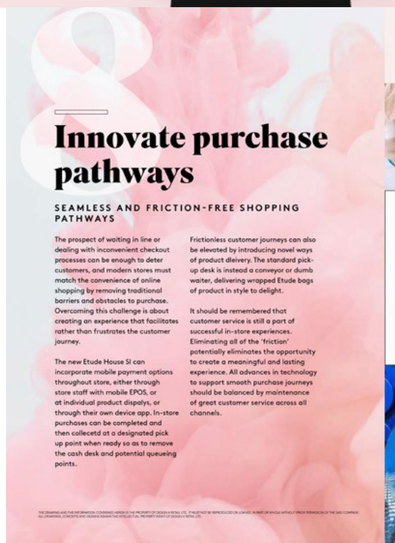
Retail Identity.

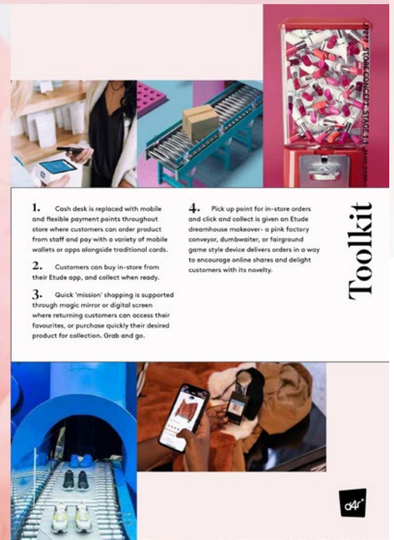
Design4Retail were engaged to provide in depth strategic research to ensure the heart of the concept shone through via a number of strategic retail pillars to help narrate the story of Etude House.

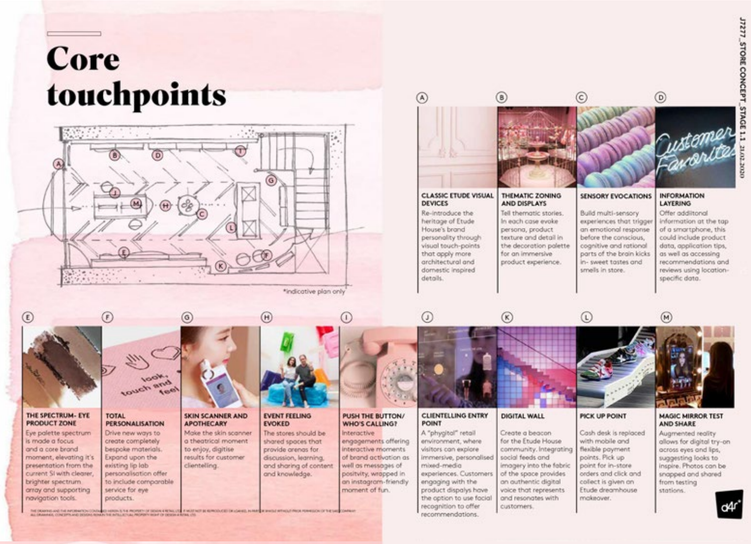
Playful pink, personalisation, digital content, and engaging display tools to help customers discover their perfect colour products were among the findings, informing the design stage of the project.

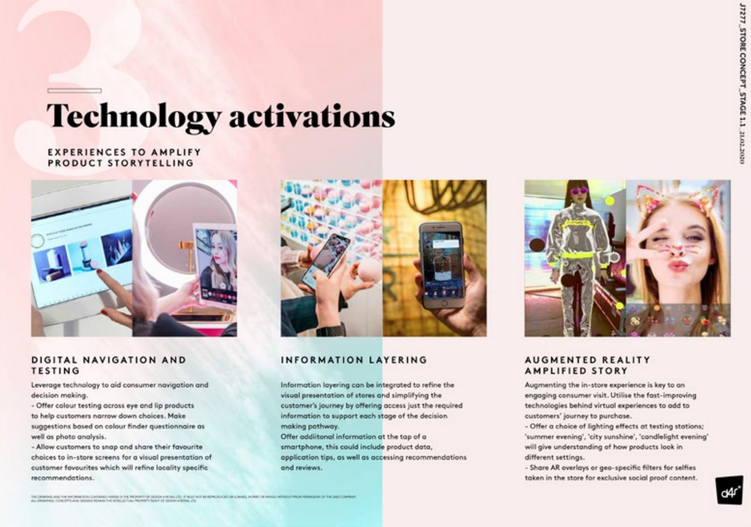


An intuitive pathway for customers









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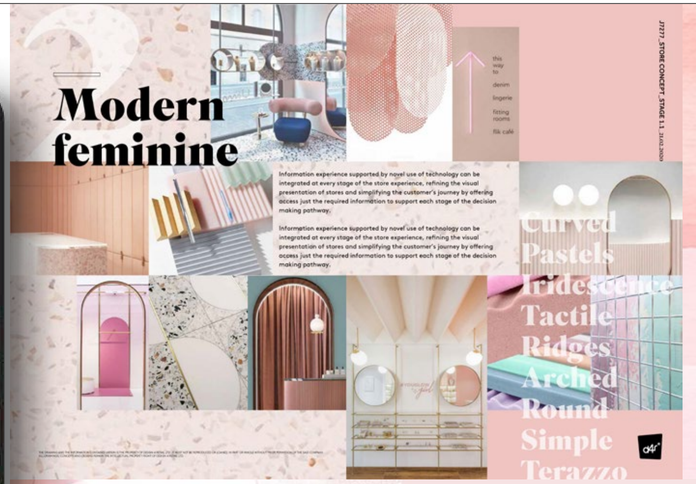
Concept Direction.

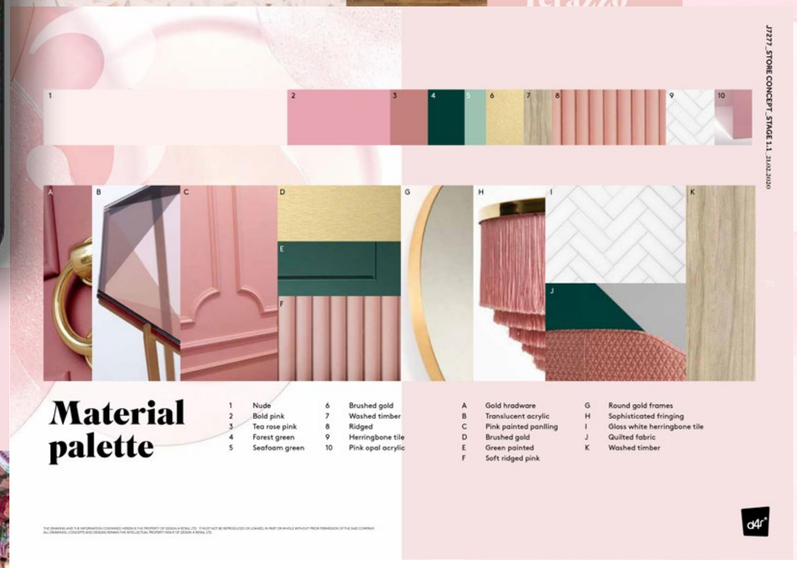
The Etude House brand already had a strong device in their heritage with the use of the colour pink. D4R re-invented this for the new store concept by moving away from the static use of a single tone and created a dynamic environment with a multitude of textures and shades of pink that reflect and amplify the brand's core colour.

By making a statement that leads the marketplace landscape and differentiates Etude's use of pink from competitors, we reintroduced the joy of discover and created a strong focus on the expression of the unique Etude brand qualities.

Moodboards
Material palettes
Core touch points
Textured
Decorated







Showcase the classic Etude purpose mission, and values

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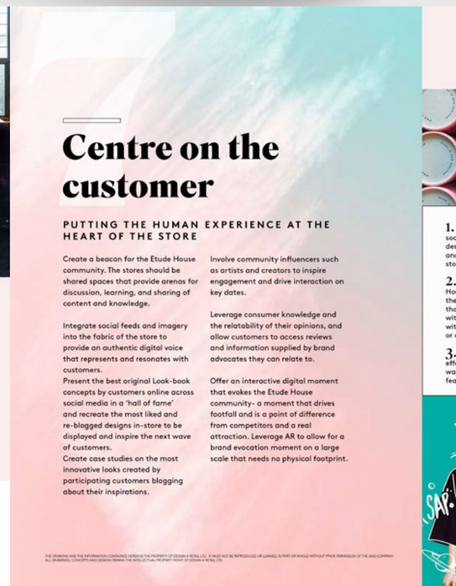
Activation: Personalisation.

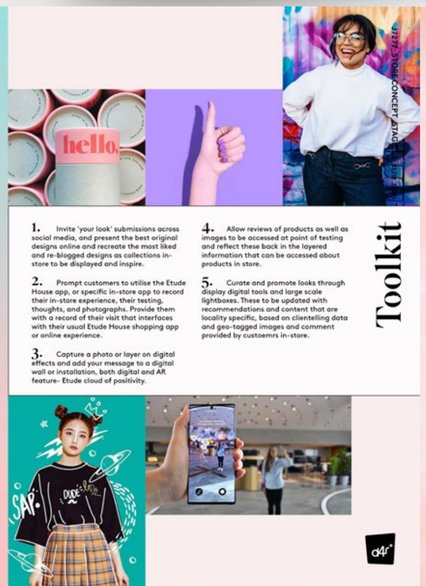
By elevating the in-store customisation activation, it created an exclusive reason why a customer should engage with the brand in person.

Personalisation is offered across a multitude of products, from an interactive skin scan and foundation mixing station where your product is delivered by robot, to play tables where palettes can be built with your own choice of colours and decorative elements, such as stickers and engraving.









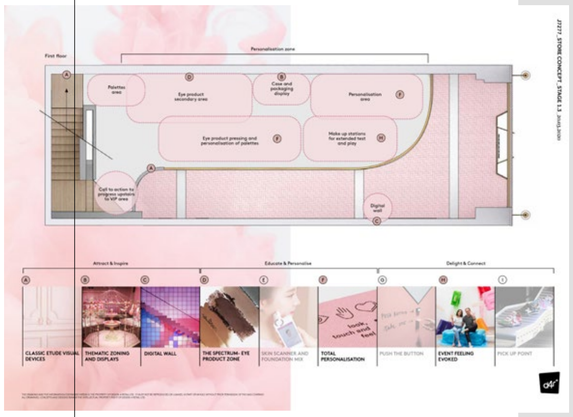
Individual products and experiences

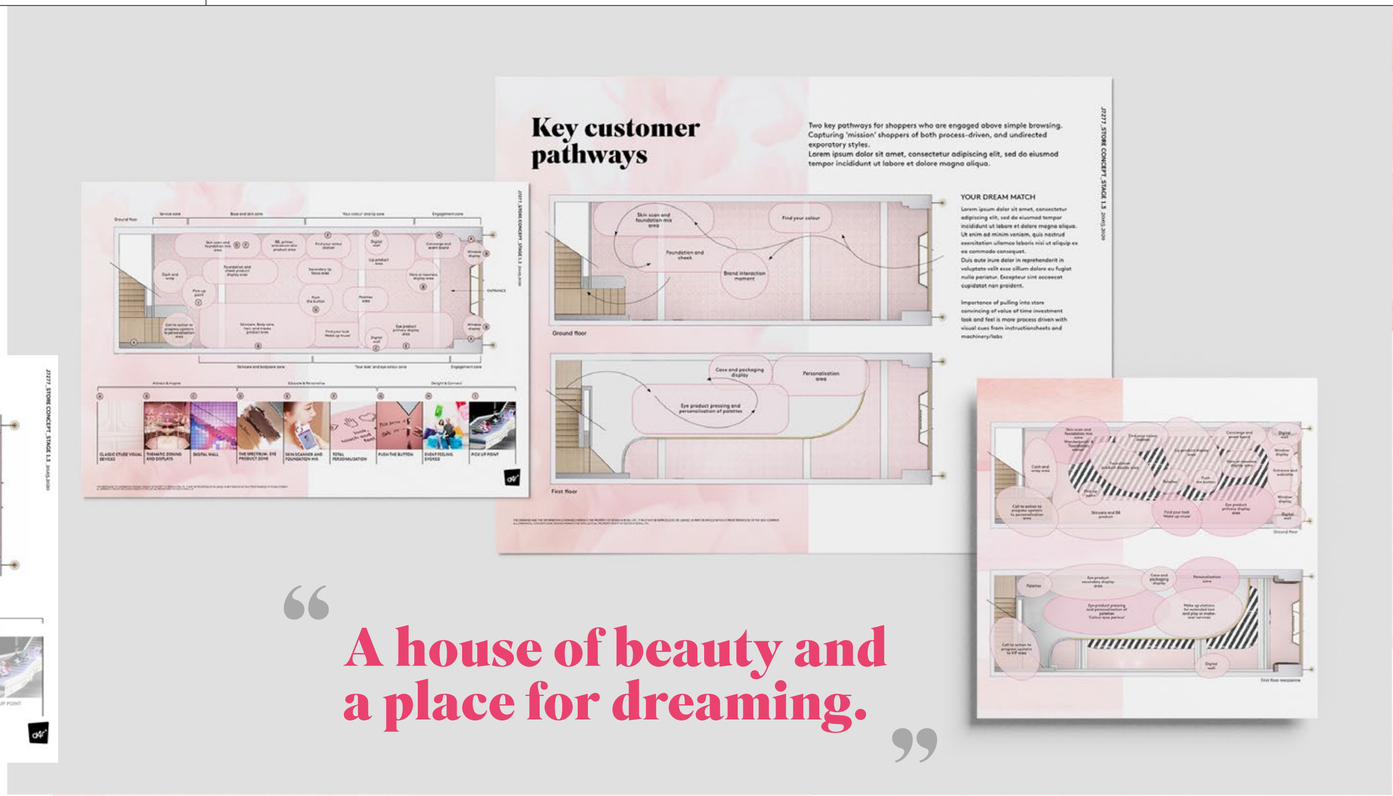
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Store Layout.

The store was divided into distinct activity areas; including service, skincare, lip, body care and engagement zones, reiterating the brand's core touchpoints and moment that built the foundations of Etude. The practical zoning plan was important to ensure the product families were arranged into relevant groupings and the customer flow was defined with an inviting and intuitive route throughout the store.

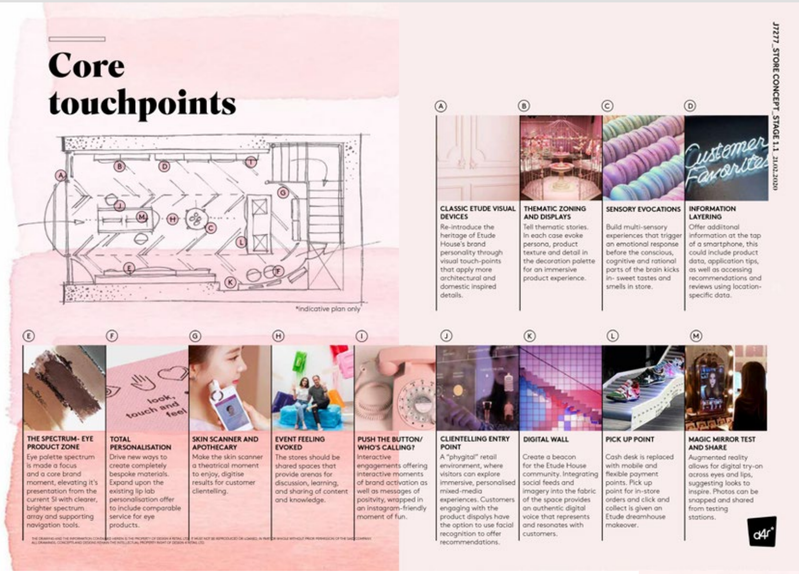
We introduced key customer pathways illustrating how different shopper requirements are fulfilled, from the everyday browser to those who are engaged above simple browsing. By giving consideration to these pathways, we could capture 'mission' shoppers who had both process-driven, and more undirected exploratory styles.





“A house of beauty and a place for dreaming.”

An intuitive pathway for customers



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Realisation.

Our concept creates a home for customers - a house of beauty and a place for the dreaming.

The reinvented store concept direction returns to the classic Etude-owned device of the colour pink. The new store concept reinvents this and moves away from the static use of a single tone and creates a dynamic environment with a multitude of textures and shades of pink that reflect and amplify the brand's core colour, differentiating from competitors in the landscape.

Filled with texture innovative VM, and personalisation opportunities the retail identity is a playground for makeup. Strong thematic zones of product allow for total immersion in each category or product family - products shine in their own display areas and each turn gives new vistas and hidden treasures to explore.



“A completely omni-channel experience.”









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