

# FRAME

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN > MAY/JUN 2003

## stand scapes




**exhibiting  
perfume  
and the past**

**shopping for  
hot fashion  
and cool  
furniture**

**clubbing  
in london,  
new york  
and tokyo**



# Young at Heart

A photograph of a room with a red carpet, a white pillar, and a white curtain tied with a decorative ring. The title 'Young at Heart' is overlaid in large white letters.

**At Miss Sixty  
in New York,  
Studio 63 samples  
seventies  
glamour to create  
a world of human  
proportions.**

**Text by Shonquis Moreno  
Photography by Yael Pincus**



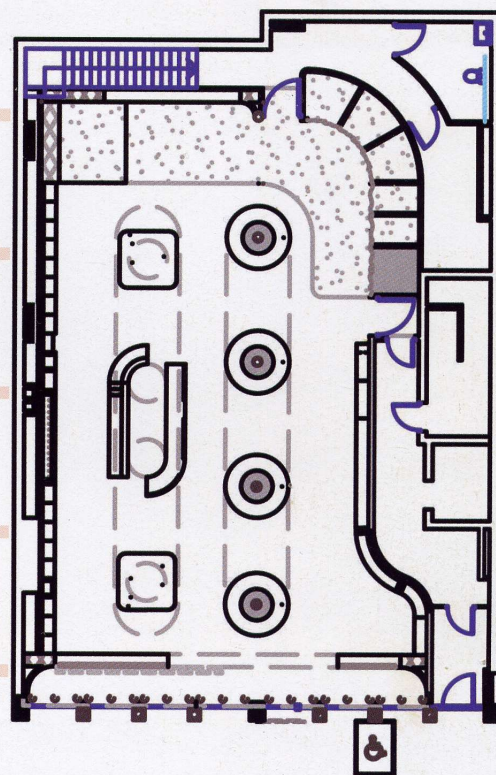
Florence-based Studio 63 is designing all 60 of the new Miss Sixty shops worldwide, three of which are scheduled to open in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago this year. The two design studios – one devoted to fashion, the other to architecture – have more in common than names featuring numbers; they also share a fascination for the 1970s. (The story goes that when Wichy Hassan, founder of Miss Sixty, tried to incorporate as Miss Seventy, the name had already been registered, so he had to settle for the preceding decade.) The latest opening, in the autumn of 2002, involved a New York boutique with the brilliant white modernism of a Stanley Kubrick film. At first glance, the 300-square-metre shop in SoHo, with its curved, edgeless walls, references something organic, but the materials used are wholly synthetic. The apparent contradiction conveys a clear message: This is a place where customers are free to reinvent themselves and to revel in surface as a luxurious fiction.

A bank of glass doors greets visitors who climb shallow stairs to the entrance of the store. Here a vitrine featuring a tinny, bubble-embossed silver shield allows them to take in the entire retail space. Though the entrance feels almost sterile, it is intended as a receding backdrop for the clothes – fashions that are sexy, colourful, heavily textured and youthful. The cold white palette that marks the front of the space is lit with occasional accents of poppy-painted swatches of wall. With their winding, continuous contours, shelves on the right-hand side relieve the hard, dominating whiteness of the entrance by creating a monochrome, cursive embroidery against the surface. Influenced by graphic design popular three decades ago, the shelves offer a welcome addition of texture to which the clothes themselves contribute as well. Fashionable apparel, shown to advantage by the hygienic neutrality of the entrance, is the protagonist in this retail narrative; that is, until the shopper slips into the garment of her choice at the back of the store, another carefully staged space, and becomes the protagonist herself.

Not far from the doors, four luminous, wasp-waisted columns line the floor, leading farther back into the space. Tapering as if corseted, they are skirted by a gleaming bench of orange vinyl. The space between column and bench is filled with a moat of girlish pink light and a froth of white feathers. It is the contrast in materials – coarse and smooth, flushed and icy, hard and soft – that drives the eye and sweeps the senses through the store. Glossy walls and the sheer flanks of resinous columns flirt with denim jackets roughly patched together, crudely plaited leather handbags and the precipitous bell sleeves of polyester dresses. 'The materials are typical of the 1970s,' says Tami Eyal, translating for the three Studio 63 principals – Massimo Dei, Piero Angelo Orecchioni, and Pina Castiglia – all in their early 40s. 'We've combined the plastic compounds explored at that time with sensuous, feminine materials ideal for soft, amorphous volumes and curved lines. The materials and colours that we've used create a balance between warm and cold.

You can see this balance in the contrasts: purple velvet curtains and white lacquered shelves, a light blue resin and a shaggy orange carpet, fluffy feathers and a vinyl bench.'

Frivolous, kitschy feathers are a reminder that no one at Miss Sixty takes life too seriously. The designers, perfectly aware of the irony involved in play-acting, are more than willing to play the game. 'It's a very theatrical environment,' says Massimo Dei. 'It's like David Bowie's performance as Ziggy Stardust. The shop in New York may tell the tale of Verner Panton and Bowie – every shop will have something different to say – but the important thing is to tell the story.'



Above: Floor plan of the 300-square-metre Miss Sixty shop in SoHo, New York. Opposite: Drapes of light-blue velvet screen the fitting rooms. Hangers of brushed stainless steel adorn the walls of the cubicles.



124 > **shop** > Studio 63 > New York

Frame 32 &gt; 2003

Even if the clientele is too young to understand the cultural reference directly, he adds, the reference is already woven into the culture and is recognisable in the ambience it generates. It communicates an identity of place.

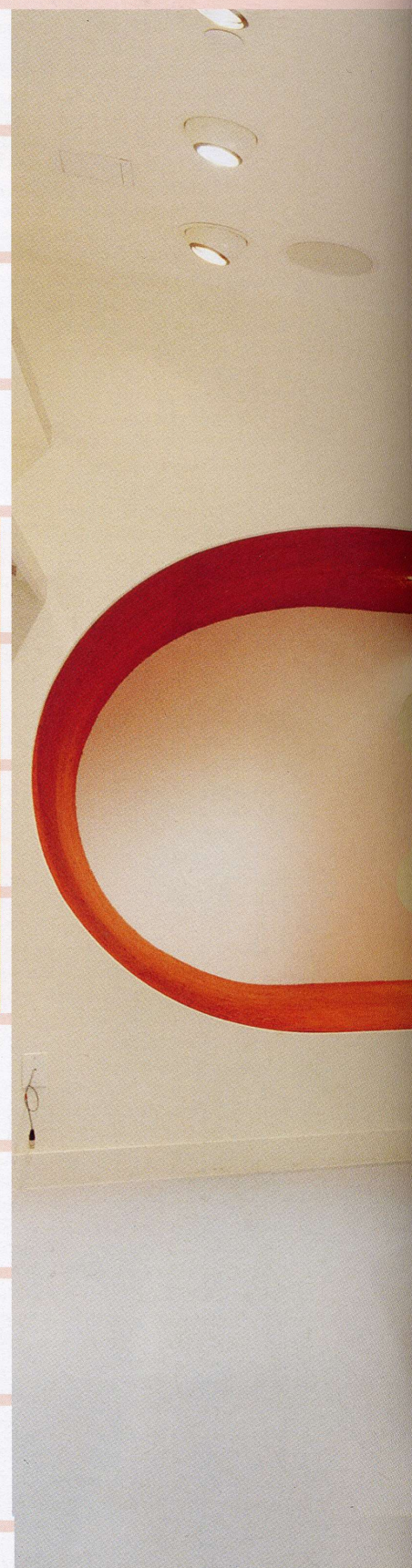
The heart of the store, says Piero Angelo Orecchioni, is the space at the rear. 'It's here that shoppers make important decisions – to buy or not to buy. We wanted to create something intimate and relaxing, a womblike atmosphere. It's a space within a space.' Fitting rooms are dressed with heavy mega-curtains of lavender velvet. 'Womblike' isn't the first word that comes to mind, but the area *is* tactile, and though not elegant, it is sensuous and engaging, a well-designed and very public living room. In it, a vivid orange, deep-pile moquette 'evolves' from the floor to form a bench, a wall and, finally, the ceiling. Though the shag says 'rug-burn' more than 'feminine', the orange surface carves a visual niche out of the back wall. It is a single, multipurpose piece of furniture that can serve as display platform or chaise longue.

Miss Sixty of SoHo has the alternately chilly and sensuous, worldly but shallow, glamour of the '70s. It has the cool seductive appeal – slightly melodramatic and icy when



experienced from afar – of a vain woman. On closer examination, it proves to be conscious of its own irony and vanity and not at all reluctant to camp it up. Indeed, the new shop is a larger-than-life boudoir for young-at-heart women and the little girls they once were – children dressing up in their mothers' clothing. The fitting rooms, in particular, are an integral part of a personal space for play-acting, a place designed to make customers feel beautiful, beloved and endlessly transformable. It is one part fashion designer's atelier, indulging the shopper in a personal fitting, and one part theatre. 'This is an intimate space,' says Eyal, 'a kind of stage that offers the customer the starring role. A lot of the newly designed shops in this part of SoHo try to convey the same feeling that Gothic churches conveyed centuries ago. They invite you to enter a space so great that it's almost divine – an elite, prestigious club that would never accept an ordinary person like you. In this sense, Miss Sixty is very different. It's a space with human proportions.'

Above: Towards the back of the shop are four luminous, organically shaped columns wrapped in white Barrisol textile. Built-in fluorescent lighting gives the fabric a warm glow. A bench of shiny white vinyl encircles the base of each column.





125 > Frame 32 > 2003





**The shop is a larger-than-life boudoir for young-at-heart women and the little girls they once were**



Previous page: All shelves, display units and counters sport a gleaming coat of white paint. Cuts in the ceiling and niches in the walls are emphasised with fluorescent lighting.

Above and right: At the rear, a wide band of bright orange moquette rises to cover a seductive sofa before curving up the wall and across the ceiling. Soft shapes, cheerful colours and shiny surfaces combine to give the shop a look of 70s glam.



127 > Frame 32 > 2003









129 > Frame 32 > 2003

**It is the contrast in materials – coarse and smooth, flushed and icy, hard and soft – that drives the eye and sweeps the senses through the store**



Above: View of the shop entrance from West Broadway.

Left: A row of fitting rooms sweeps around the rear wall to form the heart of the shop.