



A Dutch One-Off

Walking down Leidsestraat – a bustling Amsterdam shopping street teeming with cyclists, pedestrians, trams and garish fast-food restaurants – I catch sight of something new. Before me lies an array of smart footwear labelled Gucci, Prada and Costume National in a variety of materials and colours, backed by an interior that by Dutch standards is extraordinarily luxurious and exquisitely detailed. I've discovered the newest branch of Shoebaloo, one of the few Dutch shops that deals exclusively in shoes and accessories created by well-known designers for big-name manufacturers. Responsible for the interior is Kees Spanjers of Zaanen Spanjers Architects, a Dutch outfit. Harry Streim, owner of Shoebaloo, met Spanjers through a friend whose house had been renovated by the architect. As Streim explains, 'Boris Sipak, who designed the interiors of two previous branches, couldn't take on this new project at short notice. Asking Zaanen Spanjers to do the job was quite a gamble, but Kees and I hit it off immediately. And the result is fantastic.' The new shop envelops customers in a sea of space. Products are presented in exuberantly coloured display cases illuminated from all sides and positioned at different angles to create a rhythmic effect. The shoes are not grouped but introduced as individual objects in separate compartments: attractive to the eye, inviting to the hand, irresistible to the foot. Colour schemes, a variety of materials, monitors presenting fashion shows and lifestyle programmes, and the ubiquitous presence of gleaming glass all contribute to the trendy, fashion-conscious environment. Shoebaloo is more than just a place to go for a pair of gorgeous designer shoes. Zaanen Spanjers has also provided Dutch retail design with a one-off that's definitely worth seeing.

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