

Retail Desire

Design, Display and Visual Merchandising

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Finding a better way to display books has been a key element of [in]side out Systems (IOS)'s work with art and graphics bookseller Magma. The titles Magma tends to stock will all have carefully considered cover design. The main aim was to find a way to present the books facing forward, to let them sell themselves.

After the success of the initial Magma store in Covent Garden, London, two more sites were identified, both in fashionable, creative areas—the first in Clerkenwell, London and the second in Oldham Street, Manchester.

"Challenged by this opportunity to reassess the original concept, our team worked on a built-in shelving structure spanning between basement and ground floor," says IOS founder Julie Blum about the Clerkenwell project.

"Penetrating the floors' perimeter, this internal structure creates a series of light wells along the internal shell, whilst stretching a glowing translucent membrane within the space. Gradually, the shelving system transforms the shop into a gallery and interactive work space."

On the Manchester branch: "Seduced by the Northern Quarter's creative impulse, Magma asked IOS to respond to Manchester's city tempo. To emphasize Magma's organic growth, our design organizes a series of curved planes wrapping around the space from horizontal to vertical. A 'bar' waving along the wall faces an uplifting metal structure illuminated from behind.

"Our curved planes are an invitation to lean while surfing images. Visual yet physical, those fluid shapes are hoped to provide a pleasurable sense of vertigo." The shelving work and experimentation has been a success, and has spawned a new shelving system called Montse, in production and now widely available to other retailers as a system in its own right.

Its key factor is that it can be adjusted up and down to accommodate the wildly differing sizes of books, without any part of it having to be removed. It is just adjusted with a pull-push action and the system is also "completely independent from the wall and floor," giving it a floating effect.

(Opposite top) Plan of the book display wall units and curved shelving, meant as an interpretation of the organic growth and tempo of the host city—Manchester. (Opposite bottom) How Manchester finally looked. (Below) In Clerkenwell, built-in shelving stretches between two floors.



