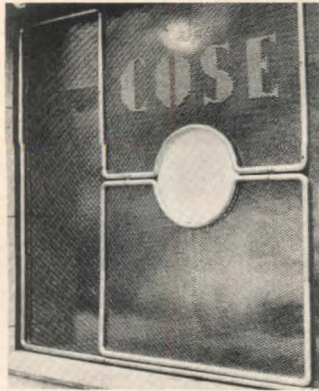


kinetic boutiques AND CAMPPOP shops

Retailing is holding out a welcoming hand to the effects of Supermannerism, following the lead of drafting rooms, homes, and architects' offices. In increasing numbers, shops are appearing with ambiguous environments and with a permissive attitude toward customer involvement that make them Retail Happenings. Some are kinetic boutiques that offer electrically changing devices to bring the customer closer to the merchandise. Often, this closeness is presented in the guise of television or of space travel, which, paradoxically, have distance as their premise. Other stores shout for attention with Supergraphics and other boldly painted devices, some of which make them Camppop Shops. A third direction in store design evidences an interest in systems and construction kits. All these directions attempt to catch the prospective customer's attention with imagery and involvement, to make them participate in the Retail Happening.—CRS

ALTRE COSE



"Altre Cose" in Milan is a couple of other things altogether. It brings an image of space travel to retailing, adding kinetics to that imagery, and it brings the participation of the customer to the selling procedure, making him an active performer in the retail happening.

Designed by Ugo La Pietra, Aldo Jacober, and Paola Rizzatto, the sales area of the shop consists of two small rooms on the ground floor (two adjacent rooms in isometric) with some fitting rooms upstairs (not shown).

One can enter in either of two ways: first, from the street ("e" in diagram) into the larger main room, where 30 transparent plastic cylinders on the ceiling can be lowered by the customer at the push of a button on the control board (below and facing page, bottom). Each cylinder contains merchandise—hangers for dresses or shelves for smaller items—accessible through long ovate openings in the cylinder. It is "the teleselection of this or that dress," as Tommaso Trini has written in *Domus*, which makes the customer a performer.

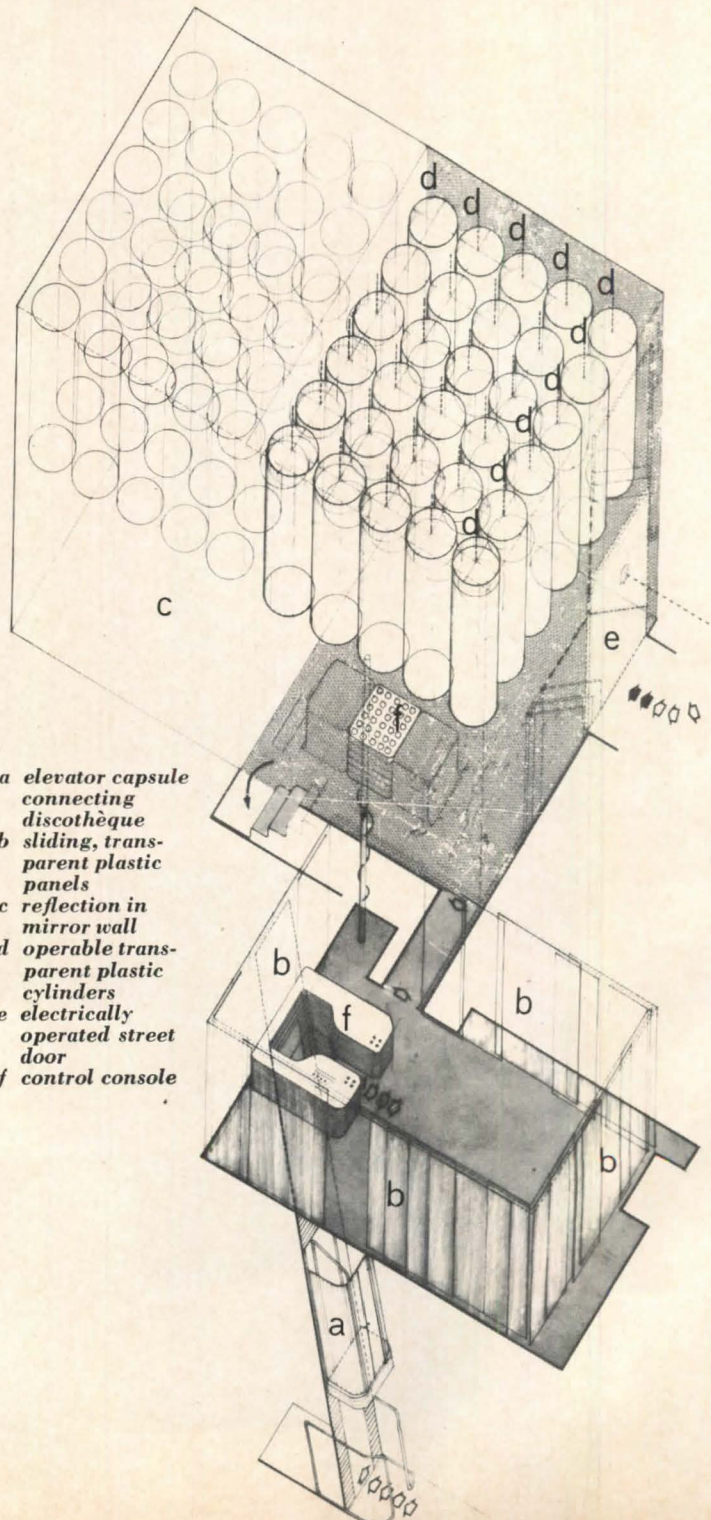
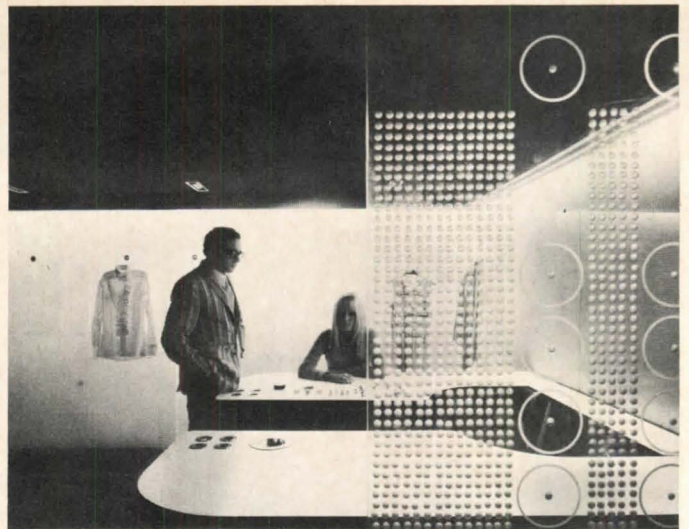
Second, one can enter the smaller, second room by means of

a raked elevator capsule (right and facing page, top), which ascends from the discothèque "Bang-Bang" beneath the shop. The control-board entryway and the clear capsule of this elevator make this access a space trip for each visitor.

In the larger cylinder room, circle-perforated aluminum panels—like those used on the street entry (above, left)—line three walls; a mirrored fourth wall doubles the room's size visually. The ambiguity of this environment—reflective, silver, mirrored, transparent, and reiterative in its circle motif—seems a visual interpretation of the element of motion throughout the space.

Lining the smaller room that connects with the discothèque below are panels of textured transparent plastic (facing page, top), patterned in La Pietra's two-scale reiteration (inverted) of the circle-perforated aluminum panels in the other room. They are luminously lighted from behind, making the space an appropriate floating landing pad for the orbiting elevator capsule.

What has "grabbed" Italian critics about the shop is the interchange between fashion and environment that is achieved by the emphasis placed on the active presence and participation of the customer. But what may be an even more important contribution of this design is the environmental expression of several degrees of motion in space—from visual motion by means of the reiterated patterns and textures to the actual motions, at various speeds, of the elevator capsule, of ascending and descending cylinders, and of the syncopated activity as customers suspend action, trance-like, to wait for the movement of these mechanically operated objects. This dreamlike superimposition of speeds and kinetics brings another thing altogether to shop design.



- a elevator capsule connecting discothèque
- b sliding, transparent plastic panels
- c reflection in mirror wall
- d operable transparent plastic cylinders
- e electrically operated street door
- f control console

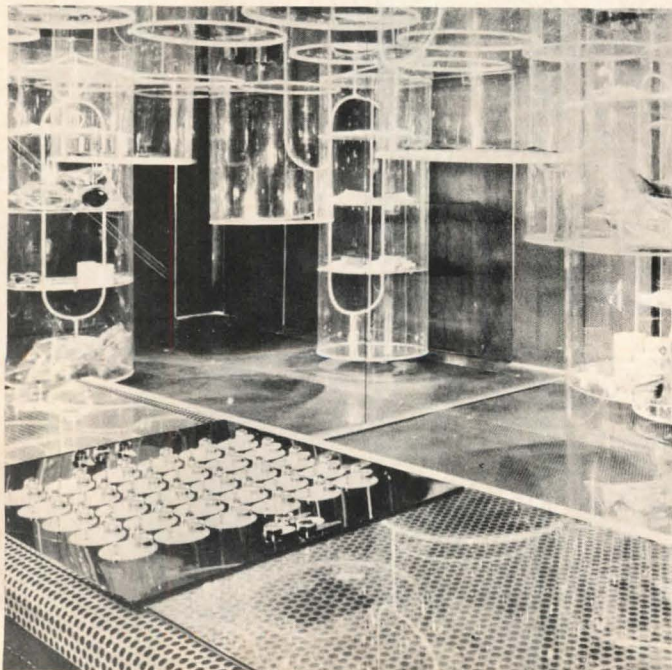


Photo: Ugo Mulas; Courtesy, "Architectural Review"



Milan's "Altre Cose" dress shop has two sales rooms: The larger displays merchandise in ceiling-suspended transparent cylinders that are electrically lowered or raised when customers push buttons on the control board (facing page, bottom; right, and following pages). The smaller sales room (above and facing page, top right) is entered from below by way of a raked elevator with a transparent capsule, which is controlled at a console-gateway. The street entry (facing page, top left) also is electrically operated and opens in unequal parts, one sliding laterally and the other sliding upwards.





