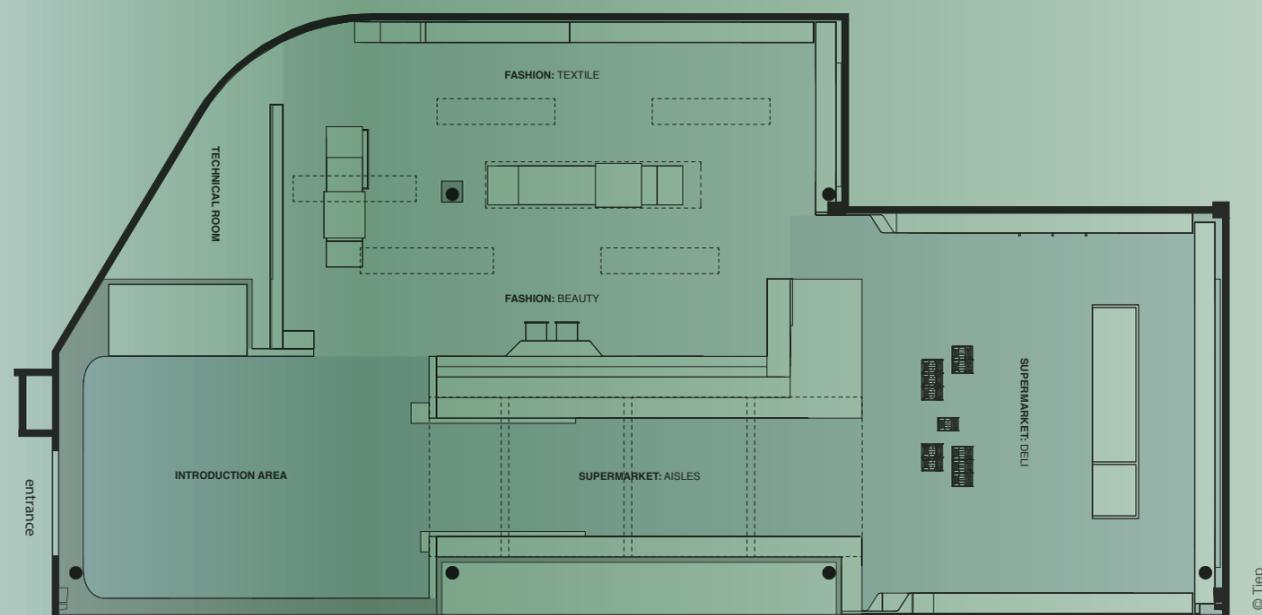


RETAIL AREA

Going shopping

The retail area creates two very different experiences. Visitors first find themselves in a supermarket aisle and later arrive at, and enter, a high-end fashion store.



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Retail space plan



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Retail food area 3D vitalizations

Architect

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Retail is one of the fastest-changing areas of lighting, and one where getting it right is essential. So being able to demonstrate innovative thinking in the area of retail lighting was vital for the lighting application centre. But it was also one of the most difficult areas to design – not least because not all retail is alike. You really can't compare a supermarket with a clothes shop, so for the designer Tjep, based in Amsterdam, there was only one possible solution – to create both.

Frank Tjepkema, the founder of the practice, explained that his design was based on the three crucial phases in retail lighting that Philips has identified: 'attract, engage and convert'. It is typical of the organisation that it defines lighting in terms of its use, rather than the technology used.

Visitors first enter an introductory space, which is very dark and where they can receive information about the basic principles of retail lighting. From there they go to either the food or the fashion section – or of course to both.

In the food section, visitors find themselves in a supermarket aisle. The first question, Tjepkema explained, was 'Do we rebuild an actual supermarket aisle? Or do we do something more abstract?' He opted for the latter. There are rows of shelves with objects on them, but rather than being branded, they are all either white or transparent. The idea is not to distract visitors with views of branded objects, but to let them concentrate on the lighting. There are however panels that can be opened later in the visit to reveal real branded products behind them.

‘It’s a real eye-opener.’ *Frank Tjepkema*

The intention is that the first lighting that visitors will experience will be as neutral as possible. ‘Supermarkets are often lit very poorly,’ Tjepkema said, ‘with a very low-end look and feel.’ The plan is first to reproduce this experience and then to show the ways in which it can be improved. The lighting will cycle through a number of different scenes and eventually, having reached the best option, will return to the original, bad lighting. ‘It’s a real eye-opener,’ Tjepkema said. ‘People are amazed by what is possible. And when you go back to the bad lighting, it is a real shock.’

Appropriate lighting can help retailers encourage people to break out of their routines, attracting them to special offers, to quality produce, or to fresh foods. In addition to the ordinary aisles, the demonstration at the lighting application centre has a ‘deli section’. The lighting there needs to be different for every kind of food, Tjepkema explained. ‘Fresh fish does not need the same lighting as fresh meat,’ he said. ‘With the newest LEDs the colour rendering is very good. It can be defined for different kinds of produce, with different colour temperatures.’

Many supermarkets still have no daylight, and the retail display also demonstrates quite how effective ‘daylight’ lighting can be, particularly when used in panels in the ceiling.

The supermarket section also displays themed areas, such as one concentrating on Asian foods, where it is possible through lighting to create a particular ambiance. Whereas supermarket shopping is generally ‘task-based’ with the lighting forming part of a strategy to try to make the process more appealing, fashion shopping is generally seen as a pleasurable experience. In this case retailers need to draw the customer in

from the shop window onwards, so it is not surprising that Tjep’s fashion display actually starts at that shop window.

‘The window shows again how lighting can engage people to come into the shop,’ Tjepkema explained. He has chosen not to display real fashions. These could be even more distracting than putting real branded foods on the supermarket shelves, with the added disadvantage that in a year or two they would look hopelessly out of date. Instead Tjep has come up with a solution that has much more of the feel of an art installation. Mannequins are contained

within inflatable eggs which, as they deflate, wrap the mannequins, so that effectively they wear a different dress every time. There is all the drama of high fashion, with none of the specifics that can date all too easily.

Inside the ‘fashion store’ there are areas dedicated to different items – to clothes, to shoes and to bags, all represented in an abstract fashion. Shoes and handbags, for example, are represented as half-constructed objects, as if in a workshop. But this display makes it possible to demonstrate the different types of lighting that different products demand.

There are vanity mirrors demonstrating the lighting that is most appropriate for people trying on make-up and a counter area with lighting that is intended to make the waiting process less tedious and to encourage impulse purchases. In short, this is a convincing retail experience, albeit one with nothing to buy.



Retail fashion area photos

