

Curatorial Thinking in Interior Architecture: An Analysis of Store and Window Display Designs From an Arts Management Perspective

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Abstract

The intersection of interior architecture and art management through curatorial thinking is analyzed with a focus on thematic narratives, target audience analysis, and creative collaborations. Spaces evolve beyond mere aesthetic physical structures to become meaningful and experiential environments. Contemporary retail and storefront designs increasingly function as public narrative platforms, fostering emotional and aesthetic connections with users. International case studies, including COS, Hermès, and Louis Vuitton, reveal strategies transforming commercial spaces into cultural and artistic experiences. Local examples such as Vakko Fashion Center, Beymen Zorlu, and Vitra Innovation Center illustrate curatorial practices within the Turkish context. Emphasis is placed on interior architecture not only as physical arrangement but also as a discipline constructing cultural narratives and generating experiential value. This approach has a transformative effect on brand identity and user perception, providing a multidisciplinary and experiential perspective to spatial design. Ultimately, the integration of interior architecture and art management uncovers social, cultural, and emotional dimensions of space, laying the groundwork for emerging narrative-driven approaches in design practice.

1. Introduction

Today, interior architecture has evolved beyond the confines of aesthetics and functional spatial design to become a medium of expression through which cultural narratives and experience-oriented constructs are conveyed. Within this transformation, arts management and curatorial thinking are assuming increasingly prominent roles. Interior architectural practice is

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transitioning into a multi-layered strategy of representation, aiming to imbue space with meaning and establish emotional and intellectual connections with the viewer. In particular, store and window display design—domains that constitute the aesthetic face of consumer culture—employ curatorial narrative strategies to both construct brand identity and transform space into an experiential interface. In this context, the interior architect is not merely a designer, but also a spatial storyteller and cultural mediator.

Arts management is a multidisciplinary field that encompasses not only the production and exhibition of art but also the conceptual, administrative, and aesthetic planning of its representation in the public sphere. Curatorship, positioned at the heart of this representational process, involves narrative construction, contextual association, and the shaping of audience experience. Today, these two disciplines extend far beyond the traditional confines of museums, galleries, biennials, and art fairs, making their presence increasingly visible in creative industries such as fashion, performing arts, event design, and interior architecture.

As a field that aims to engage viewers and visitors through spatial narratives and experiential design, interior architecture has become a vehicle for curatorial thinking. In this context, interior architects operate not only as designers of the physical environment but also as curators who build narratives, establish conceptual frameworks, and strive to form emotional and intellectual connections with the audience.

This study approaches store and window display designs as both aesthetic and communicative interfaces, examining how these visual narrative spaces of consumer culture are shaped by curatorial approaches. Within this scope, the research analyzes case studies to investigate how interior architects, by adopting a curatorial mindset, structure the relationship between space, object, and viewer. In doing so, the study explores the relationship between interior architecture and arts management within the framework of contemporary design practices and curatorial strategies.

The most pronounced manifestation of arts management in store and window display design is the construction of narrative—a key element that highlights the role of the interior architect within curatorial spatial design. The interior architect does not merely arrange objects; they infuse space with rhythm, direction, and atmosphere. As a result, the viewer (or customer) does not simply observe the space but engages with it. This approach echoes Jacques Rancière's notion of the "aesthetic regime," wherein aesthetics is defined as the distribution of the sensible (Rancière, 2004). In this sense, the interior architect acts as the physical agent of this distribution. Curatorial

thinking contributes to interior architecture in three key dimensions: narrative construction, temporality, and interaction.

In narrative construction, the interior architect designs spatial experiences around a specific theme or concept. In terms of temporality, the space—much like an exhibition—is presented within a dynamic between continuity and transience. On the level of interaction, the aim is to establish an emotional connection between the viewer or user and the space. In this regard, the interior architect is not merely a designer concerned with physical arrangements, but a “spatial curator” responsible for shaping the narrative of space.

The primary objective of this study is to explore spatial design practices situated at the intersection of interior architecture and arts management, with a specific focus on analyzing how curatorial thinking functions within store and window display designs. Within this framework, the research examines how arts management competencies are reflected in interior design practices, and how these competencies transform spaces into meaningful and experiential narrative platforms beyond their aesthetic functions. Furthermore, the study investigates how user-oriented and thematic spatial configurations are integrated with experiential design strategies.

The research encompasses contemporary examples of store and window display designs from both international and Turkish contexts. Through an analysis of prominent projects by global brands such as COS, Hermès, and Louis Vuitton—alongside selected Turkish examples including Vakko, Beymen, Souq Karaköy, and Vitra—the study focuses on points of intersection between interior architecture and arts management. These include the construction of spatial narratives, the shaping of user experience, and the use of sensory and interactive design elements.

With the rise of the experience economy, the transformation of spatial design into a medium that establishes emotional and intellectual connections with users—beyond merely serving functional and aesthetic purposes—has become increasingly significant. By systematically revealing the role of curatorial thinking and the arts management perspective in this transformation, the study offers an interdisciplinary approach to spatial design. As such, it emphasizes that stores and displays function not only as platforms for product presentation but also as carriers of cultural identity and narrative.

Although the study is enriched by case analyses, the number and variety of these examples remain limited. The lack of quantitative analysis

concerning user experience and commercial performance is among the research's limitations. Moreover, no in-depth fieldwork has been conducted regarding the spatial and emotional impact of temporary and permanent display applications. Future research is recommended to address these gaps and examine the concrete effects of spatial design on user perception and brand success.

The interdisciplinary integration of interior architecture and arts management brings new meaning and functionality to spatial design, particularly within today's consumer culture, where digitalization and experience are foregrounded. Spaces are no longer passive visual environments; instead, they are transforming into sensory, cultural, and intellectual experience platforms—critical in shaping brand identity and fostering customer loyalty. This shift not only expands the aesthetic and functional boundaries of interior architecture but also necessitates the internalization of arts management strategies.

In conclusion, adopting curatorial approaches enables spatial designers to transform spaces into platforms of narrative—offering a forward-looking and sustainable strategy in both design and brand communication. In this context, collaboration and interdisciplinary perspectives between interior architects and arts managers will enrich spatial experiences and enhance the socio-cultural value of design.

This study will examine the development of curatorial thinking within the discipline of interior architecture and its relationship with the principles of arts management. Focusing particularly on the use of art and curatorial narratives in store and window display design, the research will discuss the roles of interior architects within arts management processes. Through case studies, the curatorial potential of interior architecture will be evaluated in relation to brand identity, experience design, and cultural narrative, within the broader framework of the relationship between design, presentation, and perception.

2. Curating Space: Arts Management and Narrative Design in Interior Architecture

Today, space is no longer conceived merely as a void defined by physical boundaries; rather, it is reimagined as a dynamic surface where multilayered meanings, sensory experiences, and cultural narratives converge. This reconceptualization pushes the boundaries of interior architecture beyond aesthetic arrangement and functional problem-solving, prompting questions about how space is narrated, inhabited, and felt. At this juncture, curatorial

thinking becomes a powerful narrative tool integrated into the creative processes of interior design. Once associated exclusively with museums and galleries, curatorship now intersects with a wide range of creative disciplines—including fashion, architecture, graphic design, and, notably, interior architecture—through an interdisciplinary approach.

Today's interior architect is no longer merely a designer who arranges objects; they are also a curator of emotions, memory, and intellectual engagement—crafting spatial narratives that guide and transform the user experience. In this sense, spaces become storyscapes, and users are not passive observers but active participants within these narratives. Arts management offers a strategic framework that supports this mindset, as it is a discipline that not only organizes cultural production but also contextualizes it within society, manages layers of meaning, and shapes audience engagement. Branded environments, exhibition spaces, and thematic interior setups are among the most concrete manifestations of this conceptual convergence.

Curatorial thinking is not limited to the selection and display of artworks; it also encompasses practices of meaning-making, contextualization, and the creation of interactive experiences with the audience (O'Neill, 2012). Accordingly, interior architectural practice is increasingly recognized as a form of curatorial activity. Since the mid-20th century, curatorial thought has extended beyond the confines of museum and gallery practices to intersect with creative fields such as architecture, fashion, graphic design, and interior architecture (Smith, 2015). As a result of this expansion, the curator has transformed into a narrative constructor and a director of spatial meaning. According to Paul O'Neill, curatorship is a method of generating multilayered public experiences, focusing on the relationship between exhibition and narrative. In this context, the “curatorial narrative” should not be interpreted as a written text but as a spatial organization—a choreography of experience. Within interior architecture, curatorial strategies similarly regard the user as an active participant, not a passive viewer.

Arts management is an interdisciplinary field that strategically and conceptually organizes the processes of artistic production and presentation. Today, its applications extend across various domains, from cultural institutions and public art projects to brand identity development and experiential marketing (Kwon, 2002). In this framework, interior architecture is not limited to creating physical comfort and visual aesthetics; it also takes on roles in meaning-making, cultural narrative building, and sensory/emotional experience design. Brand spaces and display windows are among the most visible examples of this intersection. Here, the interior architect utilizes the

conceptual tools of arts management to translate brand value and identity into an experiential form. The logic of display aims not merely to present a product but to evoke an emotion, a lifestyle, or an ideology.

Interior architectural practice has thus evolved into a narrative discipline—one that tells stories, constructs cultural meanings, and establishes sensory contexts through spatial design. The influence of curatorial thinking in this transformation is undeniable. Today, the role of the interior architect merges the vision of an arts manager and the narrative power of a curator, aiming to offer audiences a multidimensional experience rather than a purely spatial environment. When integrated with arts management, this design of narrative and experience becomes even more strategic, goal-oriented, and attuned to cultural contexts. Therefore, the concept of “curating space” should be understood in interior architecture as both a creative process and a form of communication—requiring interdisciplinary redefinition.

In this regard, the creative practices that emerge at the intersection of interior architecture and curatorial thinking redefine space not merely as something to be seen but as something to be felt, experienced, and narrated. Supported by the conceptual framework of arts management, this perspective transforms the role of the interior architect and repositions space as a narrative object. As a result, spatial design becomes a multilayered field of expression where art, culture, strategy, and experience converge, and interior architecture, endowed with the capacity for storytelling, is reestablished at the heart of contemporary creative industries.

3. The Conceptual Dimension of Interior Architecture: Curatorial Spatial Construction

The theoretical framework of this research is grounded in thinkers who approach space not merely as a physical environment but as a site of social, cultural, and ideological production. Central to this framework are Henri Lefebvre’s theory of the social production of space, Jacques Rancière’s concept of the aesthetic regime, Nicholas Mirzoeff’s definition of visual culture, Michel de Certeau’s perspectives on spatial practices, and Paul O’Neill’s approaches to curatorial positions. These thinkers demonstrate that curatorial spatial constructs in interior architecture offer not only formal but also political, aesthetic, and social narrative frameworks.

Henri Lefebvre, alongside political philosophy and visual culture theorists, provides critical insights into space. Lefebvre defines space as a social product, emphasizing that it is not a passive backdrop but a dynamic process continuously shaped by social and economic forces. Jacques Rancière,

with his notion of the distribution of the sensible, highlights how aesthetic arrangements determine who perceives and experiences what. According to Rancière, design and architecture shape how people perceive the world and thus mediate the reproduction of existing power relations; breaking this cycle requires redistributing the sensible. Nicholas Mirzoeff describes visual culture as an activist practice, a process of “making visible” that involves both doing and seeing. Finally, as Paul O’Neill stresses, while art curatorship historically focused on collection preservation, contemporary curators act as agents who produce cultural context and meaning. In this respect, architects and interior architects also demonstrate a curatorial sensitivity in spatial design by planning and narratively structuring the viewer’s experience.

Jacques Rancière’s aesthetic regime serves as a fundamental theoretical reference for translating curatorial content into interior design. According to Rancière, aesthetics involves not only the creation of beauty but also the political organization of perception, attention, and meaning production (Rancière, 2004). Similarly, window and store designs function as temporary stage settings within everyday life that attract attention, guide it, and attempt to produce meaning alongside consumption. Therefore, the interior architect functions not only as a creator of visual aesthetics but also as a curator who generates emotional orientation, narrative, and ritual.

Henri Lefebvre’s theory of the social production of space underscores that space is not just a physical structure but an ideological and cultural mode of production (Lefebvre, 1974). This perspective clarifies why curatorial thinking is crucial in interior architecture: window and store interior designs are not merely sales areas but stages that contain social representations, cultural identities, and symbolic discourses. Michel de Certeau’s approach to spatial practices centers the user experience. Curatorial thinking in interior architecture positions the user not as a passive consumer but as an agent who establishes meaningful relationships with space. This becomes particularly evident in temporary spatial narratives such as window displays. According to Nicholas Mirzoeff, visual culture is concerned not only with what is seen but also with how seeing is organized. This perspective reveals that window displays offer not just product presentation but a mode of seeing (Mirzoeff, 1999). Curatorial thinking provides a strategic narrative framework that plans and manages this mode of seeing. In interior architecture, these strategies are realized through material selection, lighting design, spatial rhythm, visual hierarchy, and color theory.

For many years, the interior architecture discourse has centered around the duality of aesthetics and functionality; however, a new concept has

quietly taken root in today's creative industries: curatorial thinking. This approach is no longer confined to museum or gallery walls but transforms a broad range of fields—from store and window design to brand identity. When looking at a store window today, one does not simply see a product arrangement; instead, one encounters a carefully curated story—a staged experience that captivates the viewer. This is precisely where the interior architect's emerging curatorial role comes into play. Interior architects have evolved from mere space designers into narrative creators who build contexts and aim to establish emotional connections with the viewer.

In the past, arts management and curatorship were primarily associated with the presentation and exhibition of artworks. Today, these concepts have firmly established themselves in fields such as fashion, performing arts, event design, and especially interior architecture. This is because spaces, like exhibitions, have the potential to immerse viewers in a story.

Curatorial thinking in interior architecture manifests itself on three fundamental levels:

- Narrative Construction — Building a spatial story around a specific theme or concept
- Temporality — Designing space within a relationship of continuity and transience
- Interaction — Establishing not only a visual but also an emotional and intellectual connection with the visitor

Store windows are typical examples of how narrative construction through arts management is reflected in space. The goal here is not merely to display products but to present a lifestyle, a mood, or even a cultural identity. The interior architect arranges this scene like a curator: every element—from material choice and lighting setup to spatial rhythm and visual hierarchy—is part of the narrative.

Jacques Rancière's concept of the aesthetic regime provides a powerful key at this point. According to Rancière, aesthetics is not only about creating beauty but about organizing perception and meaning production (Rancière, 2004). The interior architect establishes this aesthetic regime by giving space rhythm, atmosphere, and direction. The viewer no longer merely looks at the space but forms a relationship with it. Interior architects, through these scenes, reconstruct the visual narrative of consumer culture with curatorial strategies. What is presented is less a product and more a lifestyle, mood, or ideology. All this indicates that interior architecture is no longer just about "designing" but about curating. Interior architecture is redefined as a

curatorial practice that goes beyond formal spatial arrangements to include meaning-making and narrative construction. Spaces become “works,” and visitors become active participants in these works. This demonstrates that interior architecture has evolved from a design practice into a multifaceted discipline encompassing curatorial approaches. Today, interior architecture is considered not only an aesthetic production but also a curatorial practice that manages narrative and experience design and establishes emotional and intellectual bonds with the viewer. In the new era, interior architecture is positioned not only as an aesthetic creative process but also as a curatorial practice of narrative and experience design. The physical shaping of space is simultaneously regarded as an act that directs the emotional and intellectual interaction with the viewer.

4.Perception and Strategy: Practices of Art Management in Interior Architecture

Art management is an interdisciplinary field that encompasses the conceptual, organizational, and strategic planning of creative projects. At the intersection of this field with interior architecture, the adaptation of curatorial thinking to space can be seen as a direct reflection of art management skills. In particular, thematic storytelling, target audience analysis, and creative collaborations demonstrate the use of an art management perspective within interior architecture practice.

Thematic storytelling in interior architecture refers to the spatial design being organized around a specific brand message or narrative, much like an exhibition design. In this context, narrative structures that guide user experience are created; moving beyond aesthetic elements, spaces are designed to be meaningful and layered. Target audience analysis reveals the user-centered aspect of interior design. For example, when designing a retail space, experiential scenarios suited to the visitor profile are developed to establish an emotional and perceptual connection with the user.

In recent years, storytelling has become an important means of expression not only in traditional narrative disciplines such as literature and cinema but also in visual arts, design, and architecture. Walter Benjamin (1968) emphasized the need to comprehend the fragmented nature of modern experience through a holistic story, while contemporary art theorist Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) redefined the relationship between contemporary art and the audience in a social context; Claire Bishop (2012) highlighted the political and social dimensions of participatory art practices. Accordingly, storytelling is increasingly significant in interior architecture, facilitating

the transformation of spaces from mere physical structures into narrative environments that produce meaning and engage users interactively.

In this context, the storytelling process is shaped around a theme determined by the space's historical background, cultural context, or function. The interior architect aims to offer a sequential experience within the space based on this theme. Similar to a museum gallery, users follow a thematic or chronological route through the space, with each area conveying a coherent meaning in succession. To support this narrative structure, sensory cues such as lighting, sound, texture, and scent are employed to deepen the atmosphere. Moreover, interactive elements like digital screens, projections, or kinetic installations aim to transform the visitor from a passive observer into an active participant. Thus, the space becomes a multi-layered narrative experience that leaves a more lasting impression on users.

These strategies are products of a deliberate design approach intended to evoke certain emotions or perceptions in the user. As noted by ArchDaily (2022), immersive spaces create intense sensory atmospheres that engage users by harmonizing architectural elements with lighting, sound, and visual components. Such spatial designs particularly respond to the needs of the digital age, aiming to transform shopping from a mere act of consumption into a social and cultural experience.

In conclusion, the relationship between art management and interior architecture enables a multidisciplinary and holistic design approach, allowing spaces to be designed not only physically but also intellectually and emotionally. In this regard, interior architecture is seen not merely as a field of aesthetic intervention but as a platform where narrative, cultural production, and experience are staged.

Today, many brands adopt a curatorial approach in their in-store and window designs, positioning these spaces not only as product display areas but also as interactive platforms that present narratives within the public realm. This approach reflects the interdisciplinary intersection between interior architecture and art management.

5.Window and Store Design: A Curatorial Interface in the Public Sphere

Window and store design today goes beyond merely displaying products within commercial and cultural contexts. This new approach, which embraces design with a curatorial understanding aimed at offering the viewer an aesthetic, emotional, and cultural experience, allows the space to be shaped within a broader narrative framework. Under this heading, selected examples

of international window and store designs will be examined to explore the cultural and aesthetic functions of interior design and window displays in the public realm.

5.1 Case Study Analyses of International Window and Store Examples

COS's Chicago Oak Street store (Figure 1) is a significant example reflecting the brand's architectural heritage. The use of natural materials such as concrete and marble in a simple atmosphere is deeply integrated into both the aesthetic and environmental context of the space. The staircase gallery positioned at the center of the store functions almost like an exhibition area, creating a dynamic circulation within the space. COS's design approach frames the store not only as a commercial space but also as a cultural and inspiring experience. This design, with its minimalist interior structure, engages the viewer not only with the products but also with the brand's cultural identity.



Figure 1: COS Chicago Oak Street Store, (ArchDaily, 2018)

As seen in Figure 2, Hermès' flagship store in Amsterdam is an important example where contextual design is emphasized. In the interior of the store, region-specific bricks are used to highlight the transparency between inside and outside, and the space is designed to establish a direct visual dialogue with the street. The preference for local colors and materials is balanced harmoniously with Hermès' iconic motifs; elements such as horse harness

details and mosaic floors complete the aesthetic unity of the space. In this project, the display windows are considered a continuation of the interior; transparency and openness principles provide a holistic experience. The window functions not only as a space for showcasing products but also as a narrative platform where the brand's cultural values are shared with the viewer (Retail Design Blog).



Figure 2: Exterior View of Hermès Amsterdam Store, (Frameweb, 2025)



Figure 3: Selfridges London Louis Vuitton Store Installation, (Anothermag, 2025)

The window display of the Lululemon store designed by StudioXAG (Figure 4) stands out with three vibrant orange backdrops created for the performance-focused men's collection. Product features are emphasized through texts such as "Stretch," "Comfort," and "Resistant." The graphics and compositions in the display are intended to capture attention and guide the viewer into the space. This design has been approached with a curatorial mindset, with each element in the display carefully positioned to strengthen the narrative structure of the space (StudioXAG).



Figure 4: The ABC Collection Store Window Display, (Studio XAG, 2025)

As seen in the examples above, window and store design serves not only the purpose of product presentation but also aims to construct a spatial narrative and establish emotional and aesthetic engagement with the viewer. This holistic approach between interior and display design allows the space to be experienced like an art gallery, while simultaneously revealing the brand's cultural identity and history. COS's *New Spring* installation, created in collaboration with Studio Swine during the 2017 Milan Design Week, is a compelling example of curatorial interior design. Centered around a tree-like structure that produces mist-filled bubbles, the installation invited direct interaction from visitors, transforming the retail space into a temporary art gallery. Such projects exemplify how stores evolve from purely commercial venues into cultural and artistic experience environments.

In the earlier examples, window and store design were discussed in the context of permanent physical space strategies that reflect a brand's corporate identity and cultural values. These examples largely focus on influencing the user through a carefully curated balance of aesthetics and functionality. However, in contemporary practice, some brands are moving beyond this traditional framework by designing experiential spaces that incorporate temporary artistic interventions, aiming for more direct and sensorial interaction with the audience. In such projects, the window and store become not just product display zones but multilayered stages of experience where art, performance, and narrative converge.

Within this context, certain brands distinguish themselves by positioning not only as commercial entities but as lifestyle and cultural actors—developing more curatorial forms of expression through artistic collaborations. This approach clearly illustrates that interior design is not merely about spatial arrangement but about engaging the audience and constructing narrative. COS's *New Spring* installation (Figure 5), created in collaboration with Studio Swine during the 2017 Milan Design Week, stands as a notable example of this narrative and experiential shift. By temporarily transforming the retail space into an art gallery, the project enabled the brand to communicate its cultural posture not only through its products but through spatial experience itself.



Figure 5: “New Spring” Installation, Milan Design Week 2017, (Dezeen, 2017)

Peter Marino's projects for luxury brands such as Chanel, Dior, and Louis Vuitton have created spaces that combine contemporary art elements with references to the brands' histories. These types of projects demonstrate that interior design is not merely about spatial arrangement, but also a discipline that constructs narrative. Storefronts present a curatorial narrative that merges art and design, offering viewers a unique experience. Such displays should be considered significant cultural tools that bring art and design into the public realm.

5.2 Storefront and Retail Examples in Turkey

Today, store and window displays have gone beyond being mere product exhibition areas; they have transformed into stagings that convey the values, identities, and stories of brands. This transformation is directly linked to the adoption of curatorial approaches that treat the store as an experiential space. The shift from traditional display concepts to thematic and narrative setups has especially strengthened the emotional and intellectual connection between brands and their visitors. In Turkey, there are also various interior design projects that adopt and implement these approaches in accordance with international standards.

One of the most striking examples among these projects is the Vakko Fashion Center (Figure 7). Designed through a collaboration between Powerhouse Company and TEGET, this building is not merely a store; it also features an interior layout that references a fashion archive and a cultural memory. The architectural language of the space is blended with the core components of the brand identity, creating a "spatial narrative" that goes beyond shopping. The transparent display window at the building's entrance façade is not just a surface for showcasing products, but functions as a permeable membrane that opens the interior to the exterior and draws the viewer into the space. This design choice removes the visitor from the position of a passive observer and transforms them into an active participant in the spatial experience. The circulation ramp designed within the interior is more than a route that carries users upward; with its runway-like form, it alludes to the theatrical nature of fashion. All these elements form a powerful example of how architecture can transform content into narrative.



Figure 6: Vakko Fashion and Power Media Center, (Arkitektuel, 2019)

A similar narrative intensity can be observed in the Beymen Zorlu store. Designed by Zeynep Fadilloğlu Design (Figure 8), this interior aims to present luxury consumption not merely as an aesthetic perception but as a sensory experience. The lighting scenarios and material palette create a cinematic atmosphere within the space, transforming the shopping experience into a dramatic staging. This project emphasizes that retail is not solely about the transaction of goods but also a process of conveying emotions and narratives. Each brand section within the store is designed as an independent “gallery” unit with its own unique theme. This approach offers visitors not only access to products but also the opportunity to establish a personal connection with each brand and encounter a distinct narrative in every section. As a result, users become spectators of multiple curatorial narratives as they move through the store.



Figure 7: Beymen Zorlu Center Store, (L'Officiel Turkey, 2022)

Another reflection of the curatorial approach to retail in Turkey can be seen in concept stores such as Souq Karaköy. These types of temporary or seasonal spaces go beyond traditional retail models and are designed as experiential environments. Especially featuring products by independent designers, these spaces transform the act of shopping into a practice of discovery. Through thematically categorized product displays, exhibition-like layouts supported by architectural details, and layered narratives, the user is positioned not merely as a customer but also as a visitor or explorer. This approach, while making the store a temporary yet memorable experiential space, also invites a rethinking of window display design through the principles of curatorial arrangement.

One of the most striking projects where interior architecture and curatorial approach intertwine is the Innovation Center designed by Autoban for Vitra (Figure 9). This center redefines the bathroom not simply as a space for hygiene, but as an art object that merges aesthetic and mechanical elements. Rather than merely showcasing products, the entire space is designed to offer an intellectual experience through a narrative exhibition format. The material diversity that creates a tactile richness, the dramatic lighting language, and the sculptural positioning of objects give the visitor the impression of moving through a contemporary art gallery. In this context, the project reveals that curatorial practice does not belong solely to the field of art, but can also be powerfully expressed through interior architecture.



Figure 8: Vitra Innovation Center, (Yapi.com.tr, 2025)

In conclusion, these recent showcase and store projects in Turkey highlight the experiential and narrative-driven aspects of interior design. From the Vakko Fashion Center to Beymen Zorlu, and from Souq Karaköy to the Vitra Innovation Center, these examples reveal that space is not merely a functional area, but also an environment that carries a narrative, evokes emotions, and transforms the visitor. This creative domain, where interior design intersects with curatorial thinking, offers strong insights into the spatial constructions of the future.

6.Conclusion and Evaluation

Curatorial thinking in interior design goes beyond mere aesthetics, approaching space as more than just a visual arrangement. This mindset not only shapes the viewer's perception through spatial compositions but also contributes to the process of meaning-making within cultural and social contexts. The influence of art direction in interior design becomes particularly evident in store and window display designs. These spaces offer not only commercial but also aesthetic and cultural expressions, inviting the viewer into a narrative.

In store windows, interior designers act like curators, presenting not just products but also stories or cultural narratives. In this context, interior design transforms into a practice of art direction that seeks to build an emotional

connection with the consumer beyond spatial design. In-store designs create visual stories that reflect a brand's identity and values, allowing visitors to engage not merely as physical presences in a space, but as participants in an experience.

The fusion of curatorial thinking with interior design transforms space beyond aesthetics and functionality into a field of cultural narrative. Interior designers craft the space as an “experience choreography,” where every detail—light, color, material, and form—carries meaning and conveys a message to the viewer. In this design approach, the viewer is expected not only to look at the space but also to touch, feel, and experience it. Curatorial thinking establishes a balance between the continuity and temporality of the space. Elements such as changing window displays, seasonal collections, or themes create the dynamic nature of the space. Interior designers manage these elements with the aim of continually refreshing the visual identity of the space and offering the viewer a new experience.

In conclusion, curatorial thinking in interior design ensures that space becomes not just a place but also a narrative, a culture, and an experiential environment. Store and window designs incorporate the aesthetic and strategic aspects of art direction, inviting the viewer to form an emotional and intellectual connection. This understanding demonstrates that interior design, merged with art direction, has become a creative and cultural force.

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Extended Abstract

The interdisciplinary convergence of interior architecture and arts management facilitates the emergence of new and enriched narrative practices within spatial design. In particular, the incorporation of curatorial thinking into interior architectural practice transforms spaces from being mere aesthetic compositions into multilayered narrative platforms that establish meaningful and experiential connections with users. Within this framework, the core components of arts management—such as thematic curation, audience analysis, and creative collaboration—are strategically integrated into the design process of interior architecture.

The notion of storytelling in space has gained increasing significance beyond the realms of traditional literature and cinema, extending its relevance to the fields of visual arts, design, and architecture. Walter Benjamin's concept of the need for a holistic narrative in response to the fragmented nature of modern experience underscores this shift, encouraging spaces to transcend their purely physical functions and to evolve into experiential environments that generate emotional and cultural meaning. This narrative transformation enables interior spaces to guide users through sequential and thematic pathways, shaping their movements and experiences much like a museum gallery.

In spatial design, the deliberate use of sensory elements—such as light, sound, texture, and scent—enables users to transition from passive observers to active participants. Through interactive technologies, including digital screens, projections, and kinetic installations, spaces evolve into multilayered and multisensory environments, thereby enhancing user engagement. As highlighted by ArchDaily (2022), experiential spaces produce immersive atmospheres by holistically integrating architectural, visual, and auditory components.

This study explores the implementation of curatorial thinking and arts management strategies within interior architecture, with a particular focus on store and window display design. It analyzes how this interdisciplinary approach materializes through selected international and Turkish case studies. On the international level, the study examines the store and display designs of COS, Hermès, and Louis Vuitton. The COS Chicago store, with its use of natural materials and minimalist design, transforms a commercial setting into a cultural and artistic experience. Hermès' Amsterdam store employs local materials and the principle of transparency to establish a strong relationship between the space and its urban context, reinforcing its cultural narrative. Similarly, Louis Vuitton's London window, created

in collaboration with artist Yayoi Kusama, invites visitors into a surreal, visually and emotionally immersive environment.

Turkish examples demonstrate how curatorial approaches are employed at varying scales and design typologies. The Vakko Fashion Center, developed in collaboration with Powerhouse Company and TEGET, represents a prominent example of how brand identity can be seamlessly integrated with architectural language through spatial storytelling. The Beymen Zorlu store, designed by Zeynep Fadilloğlu Design, delivers a luxurious, cinematic experience that extends beyond commerce to evoke emotional engagement. Concept stores such as Souq Karaköy reframe shopping as a process of exploration and participation, transforming the user from a passive consumer into an active participant. Moreover, Autoban's design for the Vitra Innovation Center reinterprets the bathroom as an aesthetic and mechanical art object, merging it with the experiential qualities of a contemporary art gallery.

The significance of this study lies in redefining interior architecture not solely as spatial organization but as a field encompassing cultural narrative, experience, and interaction design. By embedding cultural and emotional dimensions into spatial practice, it enables brand identities to be expressed in multidimensional and sustainable ways while fostering deeper relationships between consumers and their environments.

However, the scope of this research is limited to theoretical and visual analyses based on selected examples, without extensive fieldwork or user experience assessments. Future studies could adopt both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to examine user perception, spatial performance, and commercial outcomes, thereby offering more concrete insights into the practical implications of the theoretical framework.

The integration of arts management and curatorial strategies within interior architecture is considered crucial for achieving competitive advantage and user engagement in the contemporary experience economy. Designs that embrace the emotional and cultural dimensions of space not only enrich consumer experience but also strengthen brands' roles as social and cultural agents. Therefore, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration between interior architects and arts managers is essential for generating innovative narrative strategies in spatial design.

In conclusion, approaching interior architecture and arts management as complementary disciplines enables spaces to transcend their functional and aesthetic boundaries, evolving into socially, culturally, and experientially

enriched narrative platforms. This interdisciplinary integration provides a robust foundation for developing new theoretical perspectives and practical methodologies within contemporary design practice.