

Designed by Piero Lissoni within the frame of an international collaborative project which started in Istanbul and will continue in other major European cities

**BENETTON'S REVAMPED OXFORD CIRCUS
STORE IN LONDON LOOKS TO THE FUTURE
AND INTERACTS WITH THE PAST**

Ponzano, August 6, 2010. The Benetton megastore in London reopens next August 19 to reveal a Piero Lissoni-designed new look where innovation goes hand-in-hand with history. Located in a 19th-century building overlooking Oxford Circus – a key crossroad for international shopping – the store rises through four floors. Its design concept successfully blends Benetton's innovation-driven identity, which looks to the future with optimism, with the historical vibe of the British capital.

UNITED COLORS
OF BENETTON.

The renovation of the London store marks a new stage in the Benetton/Lissoni alliance. This international itinerary through style and modernity was launched in Istanbul, in 2009, with a flagship store designed by Lissoni from top to bottom. It will continue with further stores in significant buildings in major European cities, from Frankfurt to Milan and Paris, each expressing the local culture.

The London revamping started with a sensitive restoration of the building's origins, an essential base on which to develop the interiors to best effect so as to highlight the characteristics and complexity of the various brands and collections with supreme elegance. The lower-ground floor houses Sisley, the group's high-fashion brand; the ground floor is for Benetton women's collections: Benetton woman and man are on the first floor; and the second floor is given over to Benetton child.

"For the London store, we wanted a clean and refined design using simple mediums: natural light, plain materials, clean lines and shapes, black, white," said Piero Lissoni. "For me, light is an important structural element of the space, and is further emphasised in a palette that focuses on white, including the pure volumes of the perfectly technical, functional fittings. The materials chosen for the store fittings are deliberately simple yet exude powerful, sober tactile and decorative qualities. The use of sheet-metal boxes is extended to the lighting system, with a series of hanging, suspended or flush-set lamps. The same boxes are also used to house the laser-cut, backlit Benetton logo featured in the store windows."

All designed-to-measure by Lissoni (apart from the Bubble Rock sofa from Living Divani), the fittings take the shape of big metal or wooden boxes, wardrobes on castors, tables in natural shapes. Plus rail, shelf and hanging systems designed as light, sophisticated large, 50s-style bookcases: a group of elements designed to present an orderly arranged showcase of Benetton apparel and accessories, the true features of the interior.

The flooring is beige resin concrete, apart from the lower-ground floor which has a dark grey floor in the same material. This is to differentiate the Sisley area, decorated in a range of grey shades. Colour, which is such an important part of Benetton's identity, accompanies visitors as they move up through the floors: a shaded extension of 40 tones through the full height of the store, on both the pillar next to the escalators and on the stairs, where each step is a different colour.

The area given over to children's collections was the focus of special attention. The three different age groups – 0-1, 1-5 and 6-12 years – are distinguished by strong elements from Benetton's advertising, creating a variety of fantastic, fairytale atmospheres.

Communication and aesthetic language – two of Benetton's distinguishing traits – are an integral part of the installation designed by Piero Lissoni. A famous quotation from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose By any other name would smell as sweet" made of sheet-metal and neon hangs in the air. It is also a visible, subtle and luminous manifestation of the British soul and culture.

The Benetton London megastore revamping and the brand's partnership with Lissoni are part of *Opening Soon...*, a programme of sales network-orientated investments aimed at implementing new architectural and design concepts in the retail spaces of the world's major cities and in a number of cities that are iconic of the world's transformation. The "new frontier" of Benetton stores debuted in 2009 with the Istanbul flagship store.

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