

5 minutes with Victoria Maddocks

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Pinciple and creative director of **Victoria Maddocks Agency** and former vp creative director at Kiehl's, Victoria is passionate about driving innovation in advertising, packaging, merchandising and retail store design. She talks to GDR's Jo Allison about making Brit brands global, window displays and the importance of staff uniforms

How do you approach a new project? Each has its own signature personality which needs to be discovered. Some clients are great at articulating it, others need help in finding the right words and imagery. Those creating a brand from scratch might want help in defining that personality. I also use various techniques from workshops to field trips, where we visit stores and debate the good and bad of what's on the market today.

In the digital age, how can retailers keep customers in the bricks-and-mortar store? Merchandising, windows, visuals and music must be engaging and constantly evolving. After all, if a store has a great feeling, people will stay longer and attract others to come in. One area where online can't compete is customer service, and great service creates customer loyalty. Staff are brand ambassadors and should behave and be presented as such. Details such as uniforms must come into the retail concept, it's as vital as any other aspect of store design.

Where do you like to shop? In London, Dover Street Market. It has theatrical windows, whimsical displays and, importantly, it's beautifully curated. That's also true of Colette in Paris, particularly for music – I always buy a CD. In New York, Eataly combines two of my passions, shopping and cooking. I spend hours there as it's great people watching. Williams-Sonoma, has merchandising that never fails to seduce me into buying, but in Tokyo, I get lost, literally. There are so many great shops, particularly denim stores like the Army Gym and Denham.

Which artists or designers would you love to work with?

I began my career as a textile designer, so I love the idea of working with Ghada Amer – an extraordinary artist who integrates embroidery to create exquisite pieces. Ulf Nordfjell, one of the world's leading modern landscape designers, is another designer I'd like to collaborate with. He mixes Swedish modernity with English romanticism to create out-of-this-world gardens. And Paul Smith – everything he designs has wit and personality. I admire how he has stayed true to himself.

Which brands are getting you thinking right now?

With the world's focus on London and the United Kingdom, it's an interesting time to work on brands with a British provenance.



That's especially true in the beauty industry, where the idea of English beauty is understood across cultures and languages. In July this year, Burberry – a brand with a lucrative mix of British attitude and heritage – bought out its fragrance and beauty licence, and I think there's real scope to explore more integration of technology because few beauty companies do it in a compelling way. After being acquired by Avon in 2010, Liz Earle is British brand surely poised to grow globally. There's something about Liz Earle – both the person and the brand – women relate to, and it will be interesting to see how they translate that to an international consumer. We took Kiehl's into 35 countries successfully because the message was tailored to key markets where necessary. This adds a layer of complexity because maintaining a consistent image is also key.

Do you use shopping apps? Fresh Direct for groceries and Fandango for going to the cinema (I like its simple interface). I prefer buying clothes and beauty products in real, beautiful spaces, but occasionally use Gilt and Net-A-Porter's app.

Aside from retail spaces, which other commercial spaces inspire you? The Gramercy Park Hotel in Manhattan. Because of my work, I can't help but look for clever details, which they're great at. The female staff uniform, for example, is a red dress by Sophie Theallet, it typifies the hotel's theatrical aesthetic. In Paris, you can't beat the Hotel Raphael for its quintessentially French opulence, which feels real and not in the least staged.

Tell us about three projects you're particularly proud of, explaining why they worked...

1. Kiehl's global retail concept

We wanted the new concept to embody the essence of Kiehl's, and to me it's a brand that's comfortable with contradiction – a serious approach to skincare and an irreverent approach to life. We translated that with a quirky combination of pharmaceutical fixtures, motorbikes and photographs of adventures. With over 330 SKUs, a key objective was to break up the fixtures to create more digestible modular units so product categories were clearly separated. We also wanted the new fixtures to allow for easier monthly merchandising changes and call outs to best-sellers.

Creative director: Victoria Maddocks; **prototype architecture and design:** Pompei AD; **Store-specific architecture and merchandising:** Kiehl's internal team (Victoria Maddocks, Catherine Wei, Matthew Llewellyn and Jiyoung Hwang)



2. Kiehl's Kaws Holiday campaign and packaging

Kaws is a New York-based artist with a vibrant and optimistic style, so we felt his work would be refreshing given the global economic situation when the campaign ran in 2009. From a technical standpoint, the bright colours, scale of the artwork in the windows and the boldness of the graphics on the packaging made it stand out and added contemporary edge to the brand. Importantly, it made people smile, which enticed them to walk into the store. It was very successful at driving product sell-thru, both in freestanding stores and department store channels.

Creative director: Victoria Maddocks; **art director:** Travis Cain; **artist:** Kaws

3. Gucci Jewellery collateral

If you are wavering on the belief that sex sells, then this is proof. The art direction is a simple idea with immaculate photographic execution. The model shots are softly lit with interesting body crops and styling. The still-life shots, meanwhile, are more dramatically lit with strong shadows and bright highlights that make the product look undeniably seductive.

Art director: Victoria Maddocks; **photographer:** John Akehurst; **stylist:** Charlotte Stockdale

