

[Original Article]

## Heterotopia images of fashion space represented on Instagram - Focusing on the case of Ader Space in Korea -

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the concepts of heterotopic image and fashion space, and the characteristics of fashion space and images from the perspective of fashion brands and users. This study examines the evolution of fashion space and consumers with it, based on Foucault's theory of heterotopia, which refers to spaces that blend contradictory features not typically found within a single physical structure. This is accomplished by employing a single case study of Ader Error's Ader Space, a Seoul-based brand known for its unique approach to presenting and communicating fashion. Based on an analysis of Instagram posts of Ader Error along with the hashtag searches "aderspace" and "adererror", this study categorizes heterotopia from the perspective of fashion brands into three properties: fashion space as a medium for selling fashion products; fashion space as getaway to hybrid fashion practices; and fashion space as an illusionary place to experience fashion. From the user perspective, the heterotopic image of Ader Space portrayed on Instagram is characterized by the image of fashion products in an extraordinary fashion space, the image of a fashion space beyond space and time, and the image of exposing the hidden and the illusion-compensation of fashion space. This study contributes to a heightened understanding of the evolutionary concept of the fashion space.

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## I. Introduction

At present, consumers desire a physical store experience rather than a simple shopping experience. They seek entertainment, leisure, social media interaction, and inspiration (Siregar & Kent, 2019). Specifically, after the COVID-19 pandemic, young consumers desire extraordinary and 'grammable' experiences that they can share on social media. Consequently, many fashion brands are rethinking and improving their customer-engagement approaches, one of the most prevalent being fashion spaces. Instead of focusing on product sales, fashion spaces offer a vibrant

and engaging atmosphere. Cha, Son, and Lee (2018) showed that providing elements of direct experience using smell and taste at offline fashion stores can offer pleasure to consumers. Using beyond-physical space, brands communicate their identity and values with visually appealing elements, which offer visitors a unique impression and atmosphere that takes them into an ‘other’ physical world.

These characteristics of fashion space are identified in Michael Foucault’s concept of heterotopia (1986) referring to contradictory places that bring together features that might not usually be available in another physical structure (Coëffé & Morice, 2020). In the fashion sector, designers or brands use a setting for runway shows that is different and ‘other’ from the usual one, producing a heterotopia which is used as an approach to present products or collections. In an increasingly competitive and oversaturated post-media environment, magnificent venues can boost the viral impact of fashion brands by enhancing their aesthetic value (Mendes, 2021). Heterotopia is also found in contemporary settings, such as the transformation of the Parisian department store into a tourism and cultural place. Parisian businesses leverage on the perception of Paris as a destination linking shopping with culture by promoting its department stores as urban symbols (Coëffé & Morice, 2020). Social media platforms, such as Instagram, allow people to bring their physical experience and personal portrayals of fashion space into an online setting, resulting in various heterotopic images of the fashion space. Thus, in the present study, heterotopic images can be defined as ideal space-image sharing, where physical space is shared by fashion brands and experimental images are shared by consumers.

In a study on fashion retail journeys and the connection of social media (Siregar, Kent, Peirson-Smith, & Guan, 2023), Gen-Z consumers searched for satisfaction based on social connection, entertainment, and knowledge. The findings confirmed the significance of visual imagery on social media in evoking emotio-

nal satisfaction among Gen Z. A recent study by Henkel and Toporowski (2022) demonstrated how word-of-mouth, both in real and social media spheres, provides positive outcomes for both brands and customers in response to the current trend for experiential or pop-up stores; however, it suggests there is a need for further investigation into the relationship between escapism and experiential stores. Therefore, the present study focuses on the image of the physical fashion space shared on social media and investigates its escapism features, such as fantasy and illusion, which influence today’s consumer experience.

This study expands understanding of the fashion space by analysing the changes within it and the way consumers enjoy fashion space through Foucault’s theory of heterotopia and also the changes in fashion stores (which have recently become known as fashion spaces), along with how they influence consumer experience. Correspondingly, the investigation also contributes to the establishment of strategies for constructing fashion space based on an understanding of heterotopia in the digital era, by observing how media, such as Instagram, can make the physical experience influence the online experience and vice versa.

Accordingly, this study considers the characteristics of fashion spaces through the lens of heterotopia. The research questions of this study are as follows. What are the concepts of heterotopic image and fashion space? What are the characteristics of the fashion space and images? This study examines the heterotopic properties in fashion space images using the case of Ader Space. The Korean-based brand Ader Error was selected because it pursues cultural communication and provides a multi-sensory experience along with future-oriented and aesthetic objects in its store to connect with customers from Ader Space. Among numerous contemporary brands in Korea, Ader Error has consistently spread its presence in different locations to inspire and activate people’s creativity in addition to producing clothing collections. Ader Error challenges the conventional technique of

developing and delivering fashion statements (Maoui, 2018). Through a number of experience pop-ups and spaces, Ader Error transmitted its ground-breaking retail strategy as part of advancing the Korean fashion sector. This study also selects Ader Error because, despite having a strong digital presence and story-telling capacities, it also offers a real and immersive experience which can be enjoyed directly in the real world. Online observations were performed on Instagram by focusing on images of Ader Space's Hongdae, Seongsu, and Sinsa stores in Seoul, and Seomyeon in Busan, along with the hashtags #adererror, #aderspace, and #adershowroom. Fashion professionals selected 22 photographs for further analysis.

## II. Literature Review

### 1. Fashion space and changes in social media

Following the challenging period caused by COVID-19 pandemic, various brands implemented sensory elements into their spaces, which were recently known as hyperphysical stores or spaces, in an effort to attract customers back to the physical space. Luxury brands perceive this phenomenon as an opportunity to reposition themselves in the public's eyes. It is an opportunity for brands to express their vision and stories in a personal, exciting, and alluring manner. For instance, Balenciaga set up a space in which fluffy pink faux fur covered the floors, walls, and shelves, showing leather bags of various hues and sizes. The viral leather bag was inspired by a Balenciaga motorcycle bag. The atmosphere enabled visitors to feel as though they had entered another realm by entering a pink world. Customers could feel real products that maximized touch as well as visual senses (Wallace, 2022). Hermès offers an interactive gymnasium space in which customers can participate in several workout activities. The space is split into two areas, with an outdoor area containing a running track and a ping-pong table, and inside portions housing a climbing wall, yoga studio, and boxing ring. This space is

centred on introducing Hermès' signature clothing and accessories, such as silk scarves, belts, shoes, and hats that can be worn while exercising. Hermès also makes the most of the audio environment at their special event, which features a live dance performance and lively background music to enhance the athletic atmosphere (Kim, 2022).

Within the Korean fashion industry, contemporary brands, such as Gentle Monster, muddled the boundaries between reality and the digital world through its hyperphysical stores. A collaboration with Moncler was conceptually presented inside its store in Haus Dosan, Seoul, displaying remarkable installation and providing a physical and digital presence (Andreas, 2022). Another outstanding example is the Minjukim flagship store, which is located in the oldest neighbourhood in Seoul, Bukchon. This space was designed to represent the Minjukim mind and heart as well as Minjukim's aesthetic of clothes. Inside its contemporary Hanok architecture, the space allows visitors to experience the co-existence of or shift between actual and fictitious spaces delivered by Minjukim (Archdaily, 2023).

In addition to hyperphysical stores, other space formats, such as flagship stores, pop-up stores, concept stores, fashion exhibition spaces, and fashion shows, also serve the purpose of developing an engaging connection between brands and customers. Olson (1999) mentioned that fashion retailing takes place in a more entertainment-oriented space; flagship stores replace conventional retail stores and are seen as special spaces. The spatial element of retailing remains significant, as retailers realize that branding is a magical process in which reality and dreams are combined (Kozinets et al., 2002). In the luxury market, a flagship store is defined as a larger-than-average specialized retail format in a prominent location that offers the broadest and deepest selection of products in the best possible shop atmosphere, and serves to highlight the position, image, and value of the brand (Nobbs, Moore, & Sheridan, 2012). Unlike flagship stores, pop-up

stores are temporary retail stores that offer experiences and provide a welcoming and engaging setting that people find appealing and pleasant (Klein, Falk, Esch, & Gloukhovtsev, 2016; Henkel, Jahn, & Toporowski, 2022). In the case of fashion exhibitions, the involvement of commercialization is unclear, as there is a boundary between the museum, which serves as a space for demonstrating and informing practices, and the fashion industry, which frequently contributes financially to fashion exhibitions (Wallenberg, 2020).

The discourse related to space and the construction of fashion is also displayed in a fashion show by Demna Gvasalia, who employed Foucault's obsession with space by planning a show for his collective label Vetements in unconventional, subversive, or culturally undervalued places, such as gay cruising clubs and Chinese restaurants (Mendes, 2021). Gvasalia made the best of heterotopic space to exhibit his freedom to create 'other' and ephemeral space with heterotopias to develop a realistic atmosphere of the world that does not actually exist. According to Foucault's spatial formula, heterotopia can function as an idealized or perfect space in and of itself, or it can play an illusory role in connection to other spaces (Mendes, 2021). When it comes to fashion shows, an area or setting has been turned into a 'grammable' space (Coëffé & Morice, 2020, p. 4), but still is considered as a powerful communication instrument for brands.

With all the terms that exist, fashion space is defined as a representation in 2D or 3D form that employs imagination and fantasy and can draw nostalgic and future memories. The fashion space is both restricted and unrestricted, giving both producers and consumers the opportunity to create and feel an exploration in reality and fictional settings. Fashion spaces are found in the physical environment and the digital world. Currently, digital media blur the boundaries between physical and virtual spaces. This kind of concept is known as 'phygital', an approach to creating a consumer journey that effortlessly integrates physical and digital interactions (Johnson & Barlow,

2021). New digital technologies and associated design methodologies enable this integration in retail stores, and the value of socialization and interaction enhance the in-store shopping experience beyond the conventional (Iannilli & Spagnoli, 2021). Media and technology provide a mechanism for recording experiences, making visual representation an area of experiential practice that has become more significant (Arts, Fischer, Duckett, & van Der Wal, 2021). Social media platforms, especially Instagram, which focuses on sharing photos and videos, have made it easier for people to take and share photos using mobile phones and provide personal perspectives and stories behind their fashion experiences.

In addition, fashion should not be viewed as a passive industry that has been unaffected by the ongoing digital transition; rather, it is a dynamic industry that is constantly evolving and impacting people's daily lives. It assists in the growth of commercial ventures, relationships between people, and a variety of other pursuits in the arts, music, literature, culture, and beauty (Noris, SanMiguel, & Cantoni, 2020). According to Kalbaska, Sádaba, and Cantoni (2019), this is part of communication. On a more intimate level, fashion aids individuals in expressing their own identities – who they are and who they aspire to be – while on a larger scale, it brings together a variety of communication and marketing experts from diverse professional backgrounds. Thus, fashion spaces are expected to become an outlet for brands to explore all possibilities in the creative area that they can offer customers, apart from focusing only on sales-related activities.

## 2. Heterotopia

Heterotopia is a concept introduced by Foucault. The term 'heterotopia' is used in medicine to describe when an organ or bodily part is moved from its natural environment. The well-known term 'utopia', which Foucault identifies as the theoretical opposite of heterotopia, is etymologically related to heterotopia

(Sudrajat, 2012). In other words, utopia is an outstanding, unreal, idealized space, whereas heterotopia is an actual place that functions as a defence site for utopia. For instance, Foucault uses the metaphor of a mirror to explain the reality of heterotopia and the unreality of utopia. This is because the image one sees does not exist, but it is also a heterotopia, because the mirror is a real object that determines how one reacts to one's own image. According to Foucault, humans no longer live in a world of moving time, but rather in a system of interconnected locations that cannot be reduced to or added upon one another. Foucault also describes heterotopia as a place that pulls humans away from themselves, where lives, time, and history are all diminished, and where humans would feel troubled and consumed (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986; Seo, 2011).

Foucault introduced six principles of heterotopia, also known as heterotopology, the first of which is that heterotopias are presumably present in every culture in the world. This was constant among all human groups. However, as heterotopias have many different shapes and sizes, it is possible that there is no universal heterotopia. There are two categories of this principle: a) in crisis, heterotopias, there are exclusive, holy, or otherwise prohibited locations; and b) heterotopias of deviation are groups that contain people whose actions differ from the required mean or norm. The second principle explains that heterotopias can function in different ways depending on the society they are in. Each heterotopic has a specific purpose within a community. The third principle describes heterotopias as real places in which various spaces are juxtaposed. Heterotopia can join numerous locations and sites that are mutually exclusive in one physical location. The fourth principle points out how heterotopias are connected to time slices, which opens up what can be referred to as heterochronies for the purpose of harmony. There are two standpoints of this principle: a) heterotopias when time continues to expand; and b) heterotopias for the most ephemeral,

transitory, and exposed part of time. The fifth principle states that heterotopias have a system of opening and closing characteristics that differ from those of the usual free public space. Although it appears that everyone can access these heterotopic places, this is merely an illusion. In fact, the entrance is restricted. The last or sixth principle of heterotopia serves a function, as it relates to the remaining space. This principle presents two contrasting roles: a) build an illusionary place that reveals every actual space; and b) build a space that is 'other', another real-actual space.

Based on the concept and six principles of heterotopia, this study categorized and interpreted the principles of heterotopia into three concepts. The first concept is close to human life and has a unique purpose. The means of being close to human life is based on Foucault's first principle – that heterotopia can be seen in the social and cultural context of humans. Meanwhile, having a unique purpose is derived from the second principle – that heterotopia has a clear purpose within society (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). Such ideas from the previous research related to heterotopia also covered several different areas, such as production of heterotopia in a Parisian department store (Coëffé & Morice, 2020), the drama room as an 'other place' and moving space (Szatek, 2020) and the exploration of rural Japan as heterotopia (Hansen & Klien, 2022). The second concept is a combination of multiple dimensions. By the third principle that Foucault emphasized, 'The heterotopia can juxtapose numerous areas that are incompatible with one another in a single physical location' (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 25). The fourth principle focused on explaining how space and time intervals are connected (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). From this premise of the third and fourth principles, each equally describes a time period, moment, and interval that are different. By way of illustration, in a study of social media as heterotopia (Lee & Wei, 2020), social media produced a relationship between

virtual and actual spaces, enhanced users' ability to design their own heterotopia, and linked the interaction between time and space. A further instance is the phenomenon of the metaverse, which is an enacted setting that is projected on what is considered the real world; this virtual representation of actual space within virtual reality is another illustration of places that are everywhere yet nowhere at the same time (Van der Merwe, 2021; Augé, 1995). The last concept is a place where illusion exists within production. Foucault explained that heterotopia arises between two opposing viewpoints and these ideas are found in both the fifth and sixth principles. The fifth principle, which explained heterotopia's system of opening and closing, is derived from Foucault's idea that space production of heterotopia is unlike what is typically thought of as a more openly accessible public space. Meanwhile, the sixth principle mentioned how two extreme poles exist in the function of heterotopia and play a part in creating a realm of illusion that portrays all real spaces and locations where humans live, or their role is to create a different space or another real space (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). From these two principles, similar ideas are acknowledged, which are the implementation of illusion to create opposing perspectives, such as real and unreal, to compensate for real space and an 'other' real place.

### 3. Heterotopic images and fashion space

In a discourse between image and space by Julian Reid in his study on the living space of the image, he points out the significance of 'space-image' in developing imagination (Reid, 2018). From his perspective, the ship that Foucault refers to in his concept of heterotopia is considered a space-image – a space that serves as an image, carries imagination, and nurtures it (Reid, 2018). The ships are a mixture of real and fictitious places; it is both space and image—an image that offers a place where the imagination can genuinely live and position itself. Referring to this illustration, this study discovered that a hetero-

topic image is a space and an image of a real or physical place that coexists alongside the imagination shared by fashion brands and consumers.

In one of his principles, Foucault explains the mirror metaphor found in theatre and cinema (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). Like a mirror through an image, one can see something that is unreal and real simultaneously, and it has features that can represent the real world as well as a world that only exists in imagination. In addition, there is a space contained within the images themselves: a physical image of a real place and person, as well as a virtual representation of a different time, place, and person. In a virtual space, such as social media, fashion image plays a role in representing the user's own self-image and public image (Kim, 2021). Nevertheless, the concept of heterotopia, which includes imagination as one of its aspects, has also been debated. Brown (2021), in a study of heterophotography, indicates that the production of images seeks to create idealized images of oneself-as-another and avoid contemplation on the 'others' demonstrated or stereotypes that are played out in the fantasy world of the image. The image becomes the heterotopia that consists of difference and is bound apart from the rest of the 'normal' society, including the fashion space, which at the same time is closely linked to it (Foucault, 2008). Heterotopic images of the fashion space in social media serve as 'other space'.

## III. Method

To explain the concept of heterotopic images and fashion spaces as well as their properties, a literature review related to heterotopia and space in the fashion industry was carried out. The detailed method used in this study was completed in several steps. First, heterotopia in fashion space is divided into three categories: close to human life and has a unique purpose; combination of multiple dimensions; and the place where illusion exists within production. Second, to

determine the characteristics of fashion spaces and images, a case study was implemented. A case study can assist in generating findings or evaluating the relevance of each illustration or case, and is considered appropriate for analysing a particular phenomenon (Fidel, 1984). The case study contains flexible elements that enable the researcher to deal with unexpected findings while also considering numerous connections among the specific phenomena studied (Becker, 1976).

To ensure the validity of the cases under investigation, researchers should include a control variable. In this study, three principles of heterotopia were used to analyse this phenomenon. Diesing (2008) points out the importance of having several instances of evidence to recheck and validate interpretations. Thus, this study examined several images from Ader Space of Ader Error as a case study. Ader Error is a Seoul-based brand founded in 2014 that sets it apart from other Korean brands as a diverse combination of backgrounds within Ader teams, such as architecture, interior design, consulting, fashion, advertising, and even food. Providing an unusual way of life and distinctive fashion culture, Ader Space was formed to present extraordinary experiences, including fashion, and exhibitions. While there are plenty of contemporary brands in Korea, Ader Error continually expands its presence in both physical and digital settings to encourage and ignite people's creativity and aesthetic side. The UK city guide magazine *TimeOut* and the official Seoul travel information website *Visitseoul.net* introduce Ader Error's store as a must-visit place in Korea and Seoul (Sung, 2017; *Visitseoul.net*, 2022). Through Ader Space, Ader Error successfully enhanced its retail strategy, allowing Ader Space to function autonomously as a place to establish relationships with contemporary people who have evolving desires and consumer journeys.

This study examined four Ader Space stores located in Hongdae, Seongsu, Sinsa in Seoul, and Seomyeon in Busan. The four spaces have different

concepts and characteristics. Ader Space 1.0, in Hongdae, has an unusual entrance structure and is composed of red bricks. Ader Space 2.0, in Seongsu, features nine distinct rooms that present different stories and experiences, such as sinkhole rooms, archive rooms, and gravity rooms. The rectangular building for Ader Space 3.0 in Sinsa features six floors and interconnecting rooms which are more likely to concentrate on lighting and materials to present Ader Error new media art. For Ader Space in Seomyeon, it serves as an 'artplex', a complex cultural setting that reinterprets fashion and art and offers large-scale digital interactive experiences. Ader Error was selected as it pursues cultural communication and provides a multi-sensory experience along with future-oriented and aesthetic objects in its store to connect with customers and convey the brand's value and identity. To analyse the characteristics of heterotopic images in the fashion space, 962 @adererror posts, 1013 @adererror\_official posts, and images posted by visitors within the hashtag searches "aderspace" and "adererror" were observed. The images selected for examination entailed content related to Ader Space in Hongdae, Sinsa, Seongsu, and Seomyeon. Professionals with fashion and design backgrounds selected 22 images for further analysis.

Instagram was chosen among other social media platforms as it allows us to witness how Ader Error and customers bring the experience of physical space into digital settings through images. Instagram allows users to respond to particular posts (Smith, 2021). In a study of visual practices on Instagram, it was found that motivation for sharing shareable images is influenced by the individual's emotional connection to the subject (Serafinelli & Villi, 2017). In addition, the results indicated that Instagram users, both those who post and view an image, possess the same motivation, which is to deliver feelings, emotions, and stories of the images that will be enjoyed and appreciated by the majority of Instagram users (Serafinelli & Villi, 2017).

This encourages an extensive network of connectivity, which can develop a sense of shared experience because users can see what their friends like and post. Instagram is visually oriented, with images and short videos constituting the majority of its content, enabling users to submit photos, edit them with filters, share them with other Instagram users, and like or comment on others' photos (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015). With the development of media technology, visual representations have become an experiential dimension of growing significance. Instagram has provided access to devices, information, and capacities that were previously only available to professional photographers (Poulsen, 2018). Instagram's popularity serves as an example of the value of visual representation, as in today's society, identity making, communication, and relationships all revolve around images (Ibrahim, 2015).

#### IV. Results and Analysis

The characteristics of heterotopia in fashion spaces are classified into three properties: fashion space as a medium for selling fashion products, gateway to hybrid fashion practices, and an illusionary place to

experience fashion. These properties are derived from the concepts and principles of heterotopia, as listed in <Table 1>.

##### 1. Heterotopia of fashion space in the perspective of fashion brand

###### 1) Fashion space as a medium for selling fashion products

This property illustrates how heterotopia is relevant and close to our lives and plays multiple roles. Heterotopias in daily life may take the form of a risky or forbidden place yet maintain a relationship with the society around them (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). One includes boarding schools, military training facilities for young men, and hotels for honeymoons (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). This property explains how heterotopias function differently depending on the society in which they exist, and how they serve a particular and defined function by connecting with human life within a community. In this sense, heterotopia in the fashion space serves as a medium for product selling. Rocamora (2017) mentioned that current fashion is highly connected to information and communication, owing to the acceptance of digital

<Table 1> Properties of the heterotopia and the image in fashion space

| Principles of heterotopia                       |   | The properties of heterotopia of fashion space              | The properties of heterotopic images of fashion space represented on Instagram |
|---|---|---|--|
| Available in every culture and human aspect     | Close to human life and has a unique purpose      | Fashion space as a medium for selling fashion products      | Image of fashion products in extraordinary fashion space                       |
| Function in different ways and specific purpose |   |   |  |
| Juxtaposed various spaces                       | Combination of multiple dimensions                | Fashion space as gateway to hybrid fashion practices        | Image of a fashion space beyond space and time                                 |
| Crossing between space and time                 |   |   |  |
| An open and closed gate of illusion             | The place where illusion exists within production | Fashion space as an illusionary place to experience fashion | Image of exposing the hidden and the illusion-compensation of fashion space    |
| Illusionary, a space that is 'other'            |   |   |  |



media and the creation of new methods of designing and producing things. However, despite the influence of digital media that affected the enhancement of online purchase activity, the physical store is still considered as a crucial point of contact of consumers. Fashion consumers who switch between online and offline shopping still desire to experience the product directly and absorb it in the store's environment (Rosenblum & Kilcourse, 2013). To satisfy consumers' desires, the existence of a fashion space can help brands convey messages regarding the knowledge of particular products and the brand's identity to a large audience. It also serves the purpose of activating the customer's emotional side through a combination of visually pleasing settings and implemented technology which is expected to stimulate customers' or visitors' intentions to purchase the product.

## 2) Fashion space as gateway to hybrid fashion practices

This property focuses on the characteristics of heterotopia which are juxtaposed in various places and cross spaces and times. Foucault illustrated these principles in two instances. First, theatre and movie cinema portray heterotopias of many spaces connected into one, when an extensive range of foreign locations come together on both the stage and the screen. Second, the Oriental Garden is the smallest region of the Earth ever made to represent the entire planet (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986; Sudrajat, 2012). These heterotopic properties have been observed in fashion spaces in the digital era. According to Rocamora (2017), the interpretation of physical fashion space highlights the significance of online platforms in the design of physical spaces, as well as the potential for redefining one's use of physical spaces as a result of the influence of digital media. The fashion space, however, in practical terms also serves a variety of purposes. A fashion store is generally known as a place for selling products or for interactions between brands and consumers. These roles

evolved into other cultural purposes, such as exhibitions, art spaces, or cafés, to continue to exist and align with expanding trends within the fashion industry. This means that fashion space is difficult to be compatible with when it is implemented in one place, providing a new experience of space, albeit temporarily. For instance, the current trend of temporal fashion pop-up stores is not only focused on ephemerality, but also provides unique value, entertainment, and attractive environments which include interactive games and live music (Klein et al., 2016; Zogaj, Olk, & Tscheulin, 2019). The luxury brands sector has also adopted various ways of developing their retail purposes and strategies, such as establishing a fashion museum integrated with their retail settings or beyond-installation to introduce new or limited collections. Despite various experiential methods, the purpose of this implementation, as seen in current fashion retail trends, remains the same: presenting products. In the era of contemporary society, fashion space will continue to strive to find a balance between commerce and gaining cultural values as present-day people, specifically young audiences, appear to be devoted to 'experience' things rather than 'have' things (Pinnock, 2019).

## 3) Fashion space as an illusionary place to experience fashion

The last property of heterotopias emphasizes how illusion exists in the production of heterotopias, and it has a system of opening and closing attributes. Heterotopic sites, such as public spaces are generally not available to the public space (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). One must obtain certain permissions and make specific movements for entry. In particular, although it appears as if everyone can enter heterotopic spaces, this is only an illusion because the act of entering that space is limited. Fashion space in this property has a function to provide a space that is 'other', as this is considered as the production of a place that requires illusion yet exists in real life, most individuals are

uninformed of fashion space existence, only those with an interest are aware of it. The fashion space is an isolated space that shows the illusion of a brand disconnected from physical reality, but on the other hand, it is a special space that is open to anyone, which can be entered through permission. Therefore, fashion spaces have the potential to form communities and establish connectivity. This property also interprets fashion spaces as experience-based stores that prioritize building relationships with customers rather than operating as a place to make transactions (Egan-Wyer et al., 2021). The essence of fashion space is immersion which is described as a feeling of being immediately transported to a different universe, making the visitor feel like they are entering an imaginary adventure to an alternate dimension, past era, fantasized future, or a made-up universe (Overdiek, 2017).

## 2. Heterotopic images of fashion space represented on Instagram, Ader Space

### 1) Image of fashion products in extraordinary fashion space

Heterotopic images serve a variety of purposes depending on where and how they are created. Ader Space is the result of the production of heterotopia and is employed as a communication tool. Purchasing places for fashion brands is important, as fashion has always been both sartorial and spatial, giving rise to

the sense that there is a greater dimension, such as an out-of-the-ordinary experience (Quinn, 2003). Currently, the existence of physical stores in the retail industry brings fashion branding to the next level. Fashion brands or retailers started to pay closer attention to aesthetics in which consumers make sense of their physical experience of place (Kozinet et al., 2002), and set a goal to enhance their brand's reputation in addition to making a profit on the sale of products. The analysis of Ader Space revealed that heterotopic images allow Instagram users to know that Ader Space as a fashion space exists in the real physical world, functioning as a place to present things related to product sales.

Ader Error encompasses Ader Space, which is located in several locations in Korea, including Seomyeon, Busan (Fig. 1), and Hongdae in Seoul (Fig. 2). Despite having a significantly different concept, they were constructed under Ader Error. This space is used to its fullest potential as a place to advertise products and attract passers-by near the area, since spaces are known to be both internal and external platforms for brand expression (Din, 2000). Customers' first visual and emotional impressions of a store are provided by its exterior visual communication, which affects their decision to enter. The architecture, shop windows, and storefront work together to form a company's tone and create an impression in the customer's mind (Blessa, 2008). Ader consis-



<Fig. 1> Ader Seomyeon Space  
Adapted from Ader. (2022).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 2> Ader Space 1.0 in Hongdae  
Adapted from Ader. (2021a).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>

tently maintained its style, design, and aesthetic architecture in each Ader Space. As a result of this consistency, users can capture and fully comprehend the characteristics of Ader Space, even merely through images.

Ader Space is viewed as a method for presenting commercial activities of brands with creativity. Rather than revealing all clothes on the usual rack or display, Ader implemented a hybrid shopping experience. Captured by the users shown in <Fig. 3>, the iPad displays the Ader Error website, which means that other users also view Ader Space as a marketplace where people can perform transactional activities like general fashion stores. This kind of experience seen through images encourages customers to interact with products through immersion and communication, and more significantly, to form an emotional connection with the brand without feeling forced to purchase the



<Fig. 3> In-store technology captured by user  
Adapted from Kwan OI. (2022).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>

products (Jones, Comfort, Clarke-Hill, & Hillier, 2010). Presenting images of Ader Space on Instagram and integrating communication in both physical and digital settings will attract potential customers.

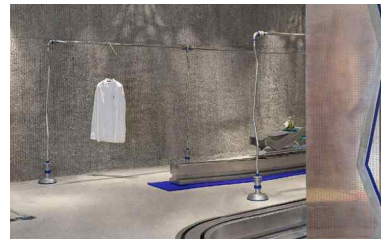
To create a remarkable perception of Ader Space as a beyond-fashion-space, the interior and furniture were also highlighted by blue lights which are known as Ader Error specialized colours (Fig. 4). According to Custers, De Kort, IJsselsteijn, and De Kruiff (2010) and Webber, Sausen, Basso, and Laimer (2018), lighting is crucial for setting the mood and may have an impact on a store's performance. Even though it is not directly related to the product, Ader Space's initiatives to integrate all aspects of the space, including the interior, can influence visitors' and consumers' perceptions of the brand and eventually affect their decision to purchase or not. Ader Error invites people to engage with art and culture in addition to experiencing fashion, <Fig. 5> illustrates how Ader Space uses a variety of artistic components to demonstrate how Ader Error is portrayed in art. Evans and Berman (1995) point out that product displays, graphics, decorations, and signage are examples of items that offer extra and important information that can affect purchases. As seen in <Fig. 6>, Ader Error displayed the product in a unique way, rather than using a simple technique for presenting clothing. The primary objective of this fashion space is not only to engage in sales activities, but also to impact visitors' or users' perceptions of Ader Error as a whole, which can ulti-



<Fig. 4> Ader Space 2.0 in Seongsu  
Adapted from Ader Official. (2020b).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 5> Ader Space 2.0 in Seongsu  
Adapted from Ader Official. (2020b).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 6> Ader Space 2.0 in Seongsu  
Adapted from Ader Official. (2020b).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>

mately contribute to product purchases. Ader stated that Ader Space seasonal and non-seasonal brand collections, objects, narratives about installations, and places unify all of them based on brand identity. This effort to manage a strong brand identity can reduce the cognitive effort that customers must expend to recognize brands in media and retail contexts because of a consistent identity across elements (Ward, Yang, Romaniuk, & Beal, 2020).

## 2) Image of a fashion space beyond space and time

Ader Space is considered as a world within a world; it has dual functions as a place for exhibiting products or sales, but also has the potential for identity branding. Users can experience these two functions of Ader Space virtually through images posted on Instagram without physically visiting the actual site. Ader Space, in this property, is viewed as a two-dimensional communication juxtaposed space that merges the commercial activities of brands with creativity. The Ader Space is a place to purchase products. As shown in <Fig. 7, 8, and 9>, to complement the selling, Ader Space utilises various technologies, such as moving images or videos, that reinforce its atmosphere and tell the story. Overall, ambiance is significantly influenced by a store's creative work. Colour selection is also considered a design factor that consumers notice and contributes to the creation of a suitable selling environment (Bailey & Baker,

2014; Morgan, 2012). In particular, the videos shown in <Fig. 10> are useful for stimulating visitors' visual senses and imaginations such that they can truly be transported into outer space. Ader mentioned on Instagram that the creation of Ader Space is based on how the company is concerned about how to communicate fashion nowadays: 'Ader Space 2.0 is founded based on the endless worries about how a fashion brand can show more. This space is a two-way communication exhibition experience platform' (Ader Official, 2020a).

Second, Ader Space presents identity branding through an art-experience-based space. Communication platforms that connect people, things, and places to the environment offer distinctive experiences. However, this perspective, embedded in and achieved by users, differs according to how an image is captured. For instance, in <Fig. 11>, users capture one specific area of Ader Space which displays the in-store technology implemented by them. Users can see their space as a place that provides an artistic experience, rather than merely a place to sell products. Meanwhile, in an image captured by users, shown in <Fig. 12>, people can see Ader's attempt to put awareness of their identity in various elements, such as pins with blue colour and the letter 'A' in it. Duncan (2002) stated that identity is made up of visual identification signs, such as brand icons and distinctive typography; however, it also includes imagery features, such as colours and shapes (Hartnett,



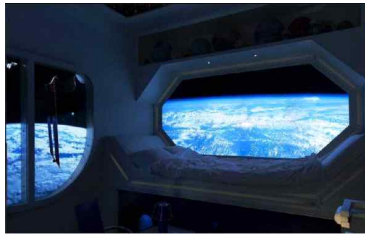
<Fig. 7> Ader Space Hongdae  
Adapted from Ader. (2017).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 8> Ader Space Seomyeon  
Adapted from Ader. (2022).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 9> Ader Space 3.0 in Sinsa  
Adapted from Ader. (2021b).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 10> Ader Space 2.0 in Seongsu  
Adapted from Ader Official. (2020a).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 11> In-store technology captured by user  
Adapted from Yircheft&T. (2021).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 12> Ader Error brand identity  
Adapted from Bbb\_ju\_. (2021).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>

Romaniuk, & Kennedy, 2016; Keller, Aperia, & Georgson, 2008). Identity is the foundation of brand identification and assists customers in recognizing brands and distinguishing them from competitors (Hoek & Gendall, 2010).

### 3) Image of exposing the hidden and the illusion-compensation of fashion space

Heterotopia provokes strong affective and emotional responses from users and viewers. While fantasies are usually produced through images, heterotopic images demonstrate that these fantasies are also available in the real world. In this sense, the store not only serves as a picturesque backdrop, but also actively engages the imagination of the customer and influences their experiences, understanding, and opinions about fashion (De Certeau, Giard, & Mayol, 1998). The space that is physically hidden from public sight can be accessed through images provided by both brands and users. From the image analysed in <Fig. 13>, one of the areas in Ader Space 2.0 in Seongsu is named the ‘Sinkhole room’, which features impressive asphalt fragments and is the first space to draw people’s attention outside the show window. Ader Space provides a unique setting for individuals seeking extraordinary encounters. Ader Error described the room as follows: ‘This space, composed of 9 rooms, provides a differentiated experience as a communication platform that organically mediates people, objects, and space with each other’ (Ader, 2020). At present,



<Fig. 13> Ader Space 2.0 in Seongsu  
Adapted from Ader. (2020).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>

fashion brands are aware that branding intended for fashion spaces requires a special approach in which reality and illusions must coexist.

On Instagram, Ader Space has transformed into a space that is open and accessible to everyone. Instagram users can encounter the image of the illusion produced and shared by Ader Error on Instagram, which was previously available only to customers who physically visited the area. Another purpose of Ader Space is to create space as a new media communication platform through an art experience-based strategy that utilizes multisensory technology and narrative approaches to convey the story. For instance, the front of a rectangular structure has three circular windows that resemble cracks <Fig. 14>, representing a clash of many precise times and dimensions. The material cube above the fountain can be transformed into various colours and graphics (Fig. 15). Mean-



<Fig. 14> Ader Space captured by user  
Adapted from Nowhere\_cd. (2021).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 15> Ader Space 3.0 in Sinsa  
Adapted from Ader. (2021c).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 16> Ader Space captured by user  
Adapted from BeInnie. (2022).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>

while, in <Fig. 16>, Ader Space demonstrates how illusion plays a huge role in creating space by placing flower elements made of metal materials. Although these particular flowers do not exist in the real world, Ader Space includes them as a centerpiece to improve the area and give visitors a sense of what it would be like if they had it in real life.

To awaken the 'in-space' experience of visitors, Ader Space created the Z-Gravity Room as a real room that portrays the moment gravity is calm and the crack disappears with the figure of an astronaut hanging on the ceiling (Fig. 17). In another corner, they placed a fake spaceship, as shown in (Fig. 18). By presenting such an environment on Instagram, people who have less interest in fashion or less knowledge related to Ader Error can experience Ader Space for leisure or entertainment.

Ader Space offers something unimaginable that

makes people escape from their everyday lives in a temporary time, and there is another fictional blue space filled with mirrors for Ader Space located in Sinsa, Seoul. Through the mirrors shown in the image in <Fig. 19>, users will feel as if they are transported into multiple layers of dimensions. Another beyond-space provided in Ader Space 3.0 in Sinsa was the area surrounded by huge windows that displayed pictures of galaxies which presented a dreamy sensation for visitors (Fig. 20). Although this space is not related to clothes, such unique and unusual constructed spaces worked as three-dimensional commercials to advertise the fashion brand (Webb, 2009), and at the same time, it conveyed visuals and offered novel perspectives of retailing in fashion.

In an artificial and virtual environment, such as Instagram, individuals compensate for the physical setting of Ader Space with their own memories,



<Fig. 17> Ader Space 2.0 in Seongsu  
Adapted from Ader. (2020).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 18> Ader Space 2.0 in Seongsu  
Adapted from Ader Official. (2020a).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 19> Ader Space 3.0 in Sinsa  
Adapted from Ader. (2021b).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>

perspectives, or imagination. Additionally, escapism moments are accomplished through creative activities. Artistically, it juxtaposes diverse experiences (Lee & Wei, 2020). However, different users' cultural origins result in varying degrees of interaction with space (Hidayat & Dharmawan, 2021). Despite these structural and geographical limitations, heterotopic images allow people to easily transform and engage with different cultural spaces. It is also possible for the perspective created within the images of space to be unique and varied for each individual. As shown in <Fig. 21 and 22>, users can capture their experiences at Ader Space; however, there are differences in the way they capture and edit images. We can see in <Fig. 21 and 22>, although they were both taken at the same location, the nuances that the two images conveyed were different. On the one hand, as seen in <Fig. 21>, the user takes a close-up angle image and edits it with a warm and pinkish colour that differs from the original condition; on the other hand, as shown in <Fig. 22>, the user captures the image from quite a distance so that almost the entire area can be observed. Even though there are disparities in how users display their experience, on the positive side, activities like these contribute to the creation of Ader Error's online fashion community, as they discovered under the same hashtag #aderspace on Instagram. As Zappavigna (2011) explains, online community users can post various digital items, including images, along

with hashtags. By assigning tags that reflect the community's attention and interests as a whole, users may indirectly contribute to the community (Tonkin et al., 2008). Through these properties, it is evident that ADER Space is capable of forming connectivity by gathering people with mutual interests and activities to encounter each other. In <Fig. 23>, it presents how the overall concept of heterotopia is used to analyse the characteristics of the fashion space.

## V. Conclusion

At present, consumers demand a physical retail experience for reasons other than a purchase. They also desire entertainment, leisure, social media interaction, and inspiration. Therefore, the present study aimed to analyse the social media representation of real fashion spaces and explore the escapism elements—such as fantasy and illusion—that they contain and how they affect modern customers' experiences. This study contributes to the understanding of the evolution of fashion stores, or more recently, fashion spaces, as well as how it affects consumer experience. Additionally, it developed methods for constructing a spatial fashion through the lens of heterotopia.

The case study responding to the first research question concluded that the characteristics of heterotopia in fashion spaces are classified into three properties: fashion space as a medium for selling fashion



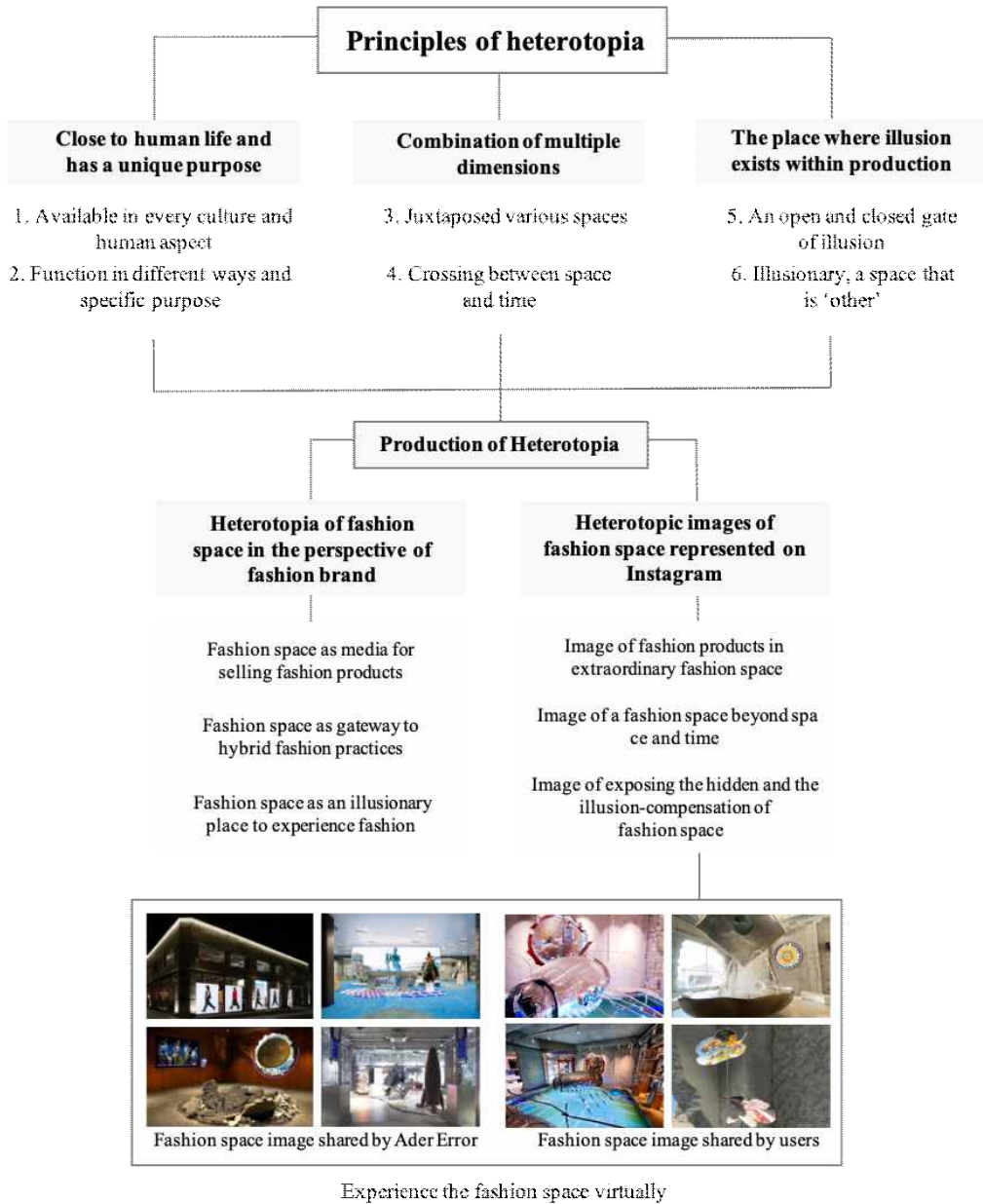
<Fig. 20> Ader Space 3.0  
in Sinsa  
Adapted from Ader. (2021b).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 21> Image of Ader Space  
captured and edited by user  
Adapted from Bae, Y. B. (2022).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 22> Image of Ader Space  
captured and edited by user  
Adapted from Hwang Taeyoun.  
(2020).  
<https://www.instagram.com/>



<Fig. 23> The characteristics of fashion spaces through the lens of heterotopia

products, fashion space as gateway to hybrid fashion practices, and fashion space as an illusionary place to experience fashion. First, the fashion space is a medium for selling fashion products. This characteristic explains how heterotopias act differently depending on the culture in which they are present. Each hete-

rotopia has a specific purpose within a certain community. Accordingly, heterotopia in the fashion space functions as a medium for fashion and product selling. Second, fashion spaces provide a gateway to hybrid fashion practices. Generally, a fashion store serves as a place for the sale of products or as a focal point



for interactions between brands and customers. To thrive and keep up with the evolving fashion industry trends, these roles were expanded to other cultural uses and new media communication, such as exhibitions or art spaces. Third, fashion space is an illusory place to experience fashion. Fashion space is an isolated place that gives the impression that a brand is detached from the world; however, it is also a unique area that people can access with permission. Only people interested in fashion are aware of the existence of fashion spaces.

The second aim was to identify the characteristics of the heterotopic image of fashion space represented on Instagram, emphasized from the perspective of users: fashion products in an extraordinary fashion space, a fashion space beyond space and time, exposing the hidden and the illusion compensation of fashion space. First, fashion products have an extraordinary image. The results showed that Ader Space promoted commercial activity and creativity. Customers can experience Ader Space as a place to purchase products, but at the same time, they can fully understand Ader Space's unusual approach to displaying products through various artistic elements. Second, the image of the fashion space extends beyond space and time. Ader Space is considered as a world within a world. It has two purposes: as a place for sales activity, and at the same time, as a medium for conveying Ader Error's identity branding. The third is the image of exposing the hidden and illusion-compensated fashion space. Ader Space, originally considered a private and hidden place, has transformed into an open place that is accessible to everyone through various images posted by Ader Space. The illusion implemented in Ader Space is also compensated by the user's perspective which is exhibited through images they posted and shared on Instagram. This activity by fashion brands and users has led to connectivity and online communities, as it includes brand-to-customer and customer-to-customer interactions.

Based on previous studies regarding heterotopia (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) and space image (Reid, 2018), heterotopic images in this study were defined as a space and image of a physical place that applied illusion with its production shared by users or customers of particular fashion brands in digital settings. The role of fashion stores has evolved, as demonstrated by the applied strategy, which is more customer-oriented and emphasizes experiences that promote leisure, entertainment, and the emotional aspects of customers. In contemporary times, fashion space serves not only as a marketplace for buying and selling, but also as an intersection for collective culture where people with similar interests can come together and form a community. From a brand perspective, fashion space serves as an effective vehicle for communicating and displaying artistic aspects and ideals that are beyond physical and useful over a long period.

This study is significant, because it offers an unconventional perspective on the fashion space, which is conventionally regarded as only a commercial area from a sociocultural standpoint. In addition, it pictures contemporary retail practices that have evolved to focus more on consumer activities which are connected to creativity and on consumers who appreciated the value of creation. This study also offers valuable insights into the evolution of retail experience, by outlining how both fashion brands and consumers are equally involved in the shift of fashion retail. The contemporary consumers influenced fashion brand's approach in communicating their identity, personality, story, and value as well as how they exist in the physical and digital world.

Finally, this study is limited in that it encompasses only a single brand, Ader Space. Thus, the phenomenon of fashion spaces cannot be fully represented in this study. There were various physical spaces that served 'other' functions, which were not merely focused on selling, such as fashion pop-up stores, fashion installations, fashion museums, fashion exhi-

bitions, and flagship stores. Moreover, this study's objective was to understand the heterotopic images represented on Instagram through the perspective of users, and because of limited consent, the images that included users in the picture could not be used and analysed. The actual user perception of the fashion space that they physically visit and see only through social media platforms, such as Instagram, may vary between individuals.

Future studies should conduct a comparative analysis of different forms of fashion spaces, as they provide different functions and properties. The survey, along with interviews, also recommended an in-depth insight into how this fashion space is perceived by users to determine whether they only view it as a general fashion store or as a hyperstore that meets their desire to escape from everyday life.

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