

Up There by Kennedy Nolan

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Words by Bronwyn Marshall • Photography by Sean Fennessy





Kennedy Nolan's design of Up There in Melbourne's CBD challenges the traditional notion of what a retail interaction can be. The space offered an opportunity to create an immersive and creative playground for both the brand and its customers. The Melbourne-based retailer has strong ties to the local and international design community, and the flagship store needed to reflect and capture that spirit.

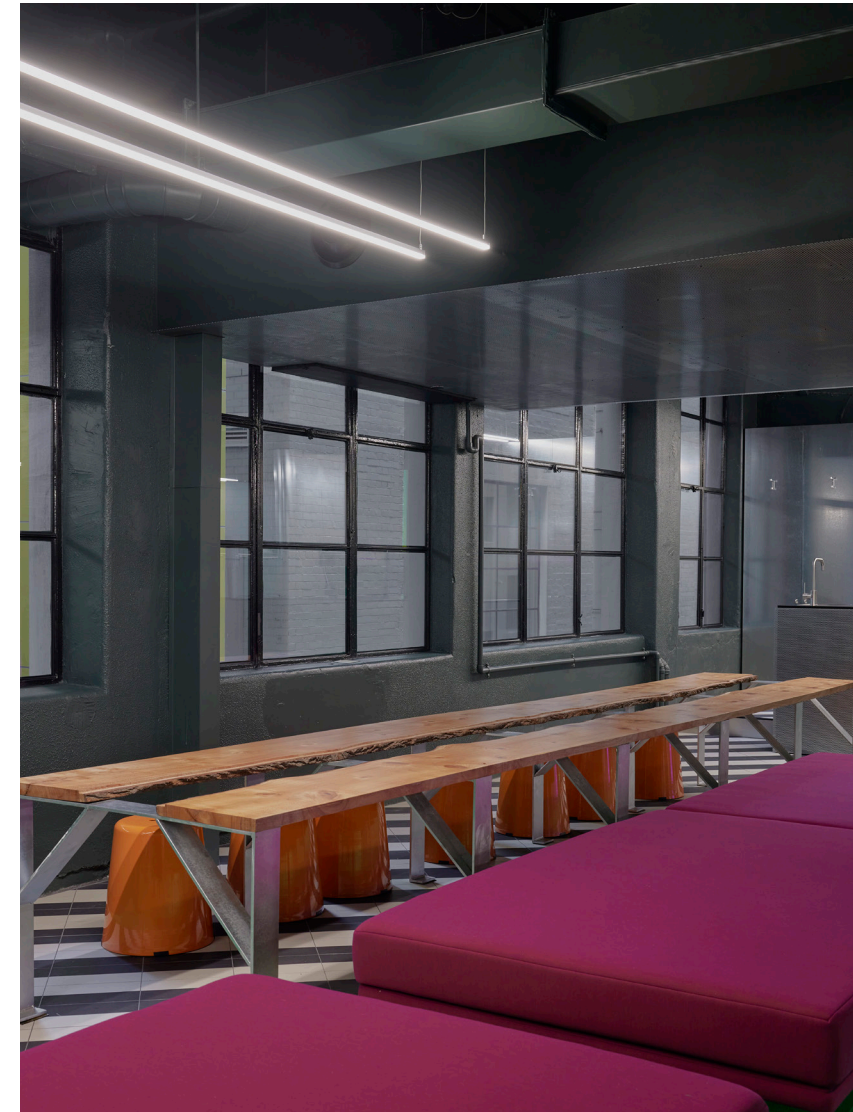
"Up There is quintessentially Melbourne, a curated offering of brands from all over the world, which reflects a very Melbourne connoisseurship: well-made, innovative, eccentric, particular, cool," says Patrick Kennedy, founding partner of Kennedy Nolan. "The store attempts to provide a place for this connoisseurship, not as a neutral backdrop but rather as a theatrical setting that feels distinct, fresh and irreverent."

Set amid the eclectic melting pot of innovation, hospitality and design that is Flinders Lane, the space also needed to reflect its location. "Specific elements of the design signal to the customer a paradigm shift in what they are about to experience as they enter the store," says Patrick. "One of the ways this is achieved is through an emphasis on the threshold." A series of steps directs customers down and into the space, where differing textural and coloured surfaces delineate shifts in function, without the need for defining walls that would lessen the impact of the overall volume. The combination of galvanised steel walls and vibrant colour underfoot and in the custom joinery is unexpected and stirs a sense of curiosity.

Throughout the store, the use of bold colours – green, purple, orange, blue and magenta – is integrated to heighten a sense of playfulness and clearly define the interior from the laneway. "Green is a key colour for Up There, but it's also a colour we feel was oddly grounding – resonant of a grassy field but also complementary to all other colours and considered nature's neutral," says Patrick. "Our practice has always invoked the power of colour as a mnemonic, believing that places, experiences and emotions can be strongly associated with specific colours." The 'temple dogs' at the entrance – each with its own character – act to both guard the space and welcome visitors.

The design needed to create a space to showcase Up There's unique curation of global and Australian brands. Within the evolving retail landscape in Melbourne, it also needed to offer a distinctive customer experience to make it a destination in itself. "We set out a brief for a store interior that was to be theatrical, cinematic, abstract, curated, expansive and memorable in the sense of having a strong visual and experiential association with the brand."

Up There's latest store signals a return to the immersive and physical experience of retail. The space was designed to encourage a sense of discovery and wonder that the shift to online shopping has taken away from consumers. By embedding a creative spirit in the design of the store, Kennedy Nolan has left its own distinct imprint on Melbourne's CBD.



Kennedy Nolan's brief for Up There's Flinders Lane store in Melbourne was "theatrical, cinematic, abstract, curated, expansive and memorable," says founding partner Patrick Kennedy.