

Shop Signs :

Documentation and survey of the Shop Facades

Special Project : Shop Signs - Documentation and survey of the Shop Facades

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Design in Visual Communication.

by Somesh Sharma
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Approval Sheet

This special project entitled " Shop Signs : Documentation and survey of the Shop Facades " done by Somesh Sharma (92625008) is approved in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Design in Visual Communication.

Manisha
23 JUNE '94

Guide : Ms. Manisha Phadke

Examiner : Prof. S. Nadkarni

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A shop is fundamentally a simple thing. It has always consisted in a shelter with an entrance front used to advertise and display the business within, a sales room where customers inspect and buy the goods stored there by the merchant, and a service entrance for incoming and outgoing merchandise. The test of its functional fitness is how well it integrates these three basic requirement.

Here we discuss the various aspects of shop-front, dealing with the shop signs and the window display of the shop. As a designer what are the factors which are taken into consideration while designing a shop-facade is briefly covered in this report, which is mainly a photo-documentation of shop-signs covering shops from various areas of Bombay and Pune.

Organization of Shop front.

The entrance front of a store can provide ideal on-the-spot contact between the customers and the shop inside. A shop front must be planned according to the surrounding area. Shop facade in a crowded city shopping area will be very different in character from the fronts of, say, highway shops appealing to the automobile owners. In either location, shops treated on an individual basis will again be quite different from those which are planned as integrated units of some shopping centre.

Function

Whatever form it takes, the shop facade has a definite, clear - cut job to do:

First, it must catch the eye. Attracting public attention on a street crowded with competition is not the easiest job in the world. Only a well organised shop front has a good chance to succeed.

Second, it must identify the store. The general impression it gives should spell out the character of the goods he offers.

Third, as a medium for displaying merchandise, the shop facade acts as a stage set. The displays it dramatizes will create the urge to buy.

Fourth, the shop front should pull customers into the shop. From customer's angle, selling begins on the side walk. Shop front displays should draw approaching pedestrians to the entrance door and on into the shop.

Shop facades are essentially three-dimensional posters. Each one can be as wide and high as the shop behind it and as deep or shallow as its designer chooses.

To act as an effective advertising poster, the shop front must have individual character, good balance and composition, distinctive, timely illustrations in the form of displays,

and a brief, easily read message expressed by shop sign. The materials and the equipment used in its construction should boldly express the character of the store. Very different materials, signage and facade will be chosen for garments shop than for restaurants. Again, we do find a subtle difference in treatment between a kids shop and a men's wear shop.

Timing :

The first impression created by any shop may come from a fleeting glimpse as one drives by in a car, while passing in a bus, or else from a closer view while walking along the footpath. A typical pedestrian may take few seconds to pass an average show window and the fast moving motor traffic may take even less time. It is therefore obvious that within this time, every principle that will attract attention to the shop facade and retain it, must be put to work.

Since bold, easily read signs and a quick general impression of colorful merchandise will be enough to attract fast moving cars, the principle problem in designing a shop front is to successfully appeal to the slower pace of pedestrians. Entrance fronts must always be planned for moving crowds. Intelligent planing is vitally necessary in order to turn the visual appeal of signs and displays into effective pull-in power.

These basic principles are based on the value of simplicity. The passing crowd has little time and attention to spare for even the best of store fronts. Brief, easily read signs and simple, well organised displays have a better chance to capture and hold attention than some busy, and confused shop facade.

Shop signs, Displays, Entrances.

The most important functional element of a store front are displays, entrances and signs. Shop front displays are found in the form of show windows, tabletop show cases, glass walled entrance fronts or any combination of these different units. Entrances are the integrated part of both the shop front display and the sales space inside. Shop signs and sign backgrounds are mostly used as trademark identification for the entire shop.

Display Windows:

It is observed that show windows for any type of shop facades are mostly designed with the average human eye level in mind. Hence the standard eye level and the extent of line of vision determine the height and depth of the display window platform in relation to the observer's eye.

Shop Signs:

Most of the shops had two types of signs - one or more large signs placed above the shop entrances for distant identification and others, smaller in size, placed at eye level or below eye level for pedestrians to read at close range. Those treated as integral part of the shop front and not carelessly applied as an afterthought, stand out. They are one of the designer's best opportunities to create interest.

As in display design contrast values are important. Sign lettering that are different in value of colour and texture from its background, yet in harmony, attract much attention than a drab sign.

At many places it was found that lighting was considered an important aspect of shop sign. As not only it is essential during night, but it also adds day time brilliance to the

shop's appeal. There are several lighting methods used by the shop keepers, very unique to each areas and different parts of the city - neon lightings, illuminated light box, direct illumination, indirect illumination, or by flood lighting the sign background from a concealed source.

At the places where the lane was too narrow it was observed that few shopkeepers made use of the sign boards which were projecting out of the wall i.e. perpendicular to the shop. This helped in the identification of the shop even from the side and from a distance.

Few factors that affect the design of shop sign and facade.

Every shop needs some form of sign for identification. Generally shop signs indicate the name of the firm owning the property, some add a textual message to identify the trade, some include a graphic image such as the firm's logo.

Shopkeeper's requirement :

The shopkeeper may have a pre-established image or may be trying to establish a new one. Branches of multiple stores require design, colour, and size to conform to their corporate image.

Local characteristics :

The type of locality viz. major shopping area, secondary street, residential etc. determine the shop design and also the brightness of the illuminated signs.

Site Characteristics :

The width and height of the front decides the size and position of the signs.

Goods to be sold :

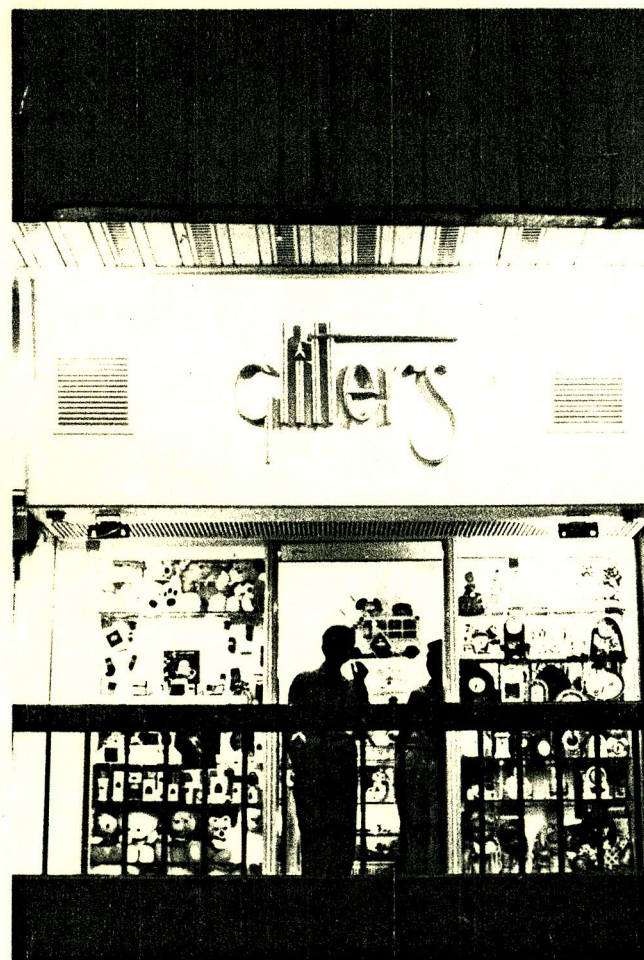
The type of goods sold influence the style of lettering used eg. traditional or modern, ordinary or unusual.

These were the observations while documenting the shop facades and talking to the owners about their ideas behind the design. Following are the selected photographs of different areas of Bombay and Pune city which would illustrate the above discussion.

The shopkeeper's first thought is frequently "The bigger, the better" - an idea with which the designer may not quite agree. A designer's job of course is to achieve a harmonious shop facade, including the sign. Originality can be as attention arresting as huge size. There is a middle way of good taste between announcing the visual shriek or a

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VARELI
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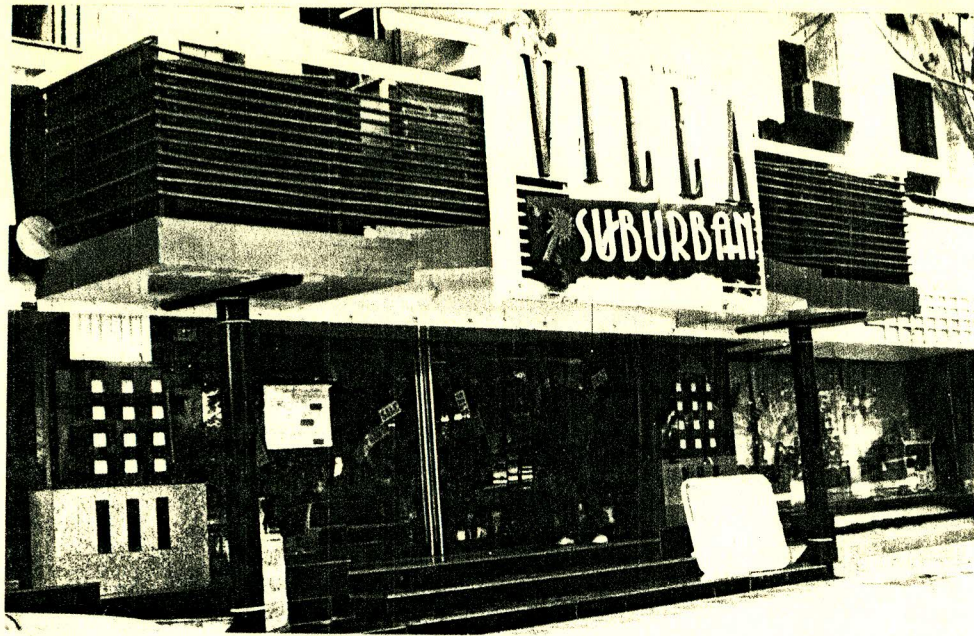
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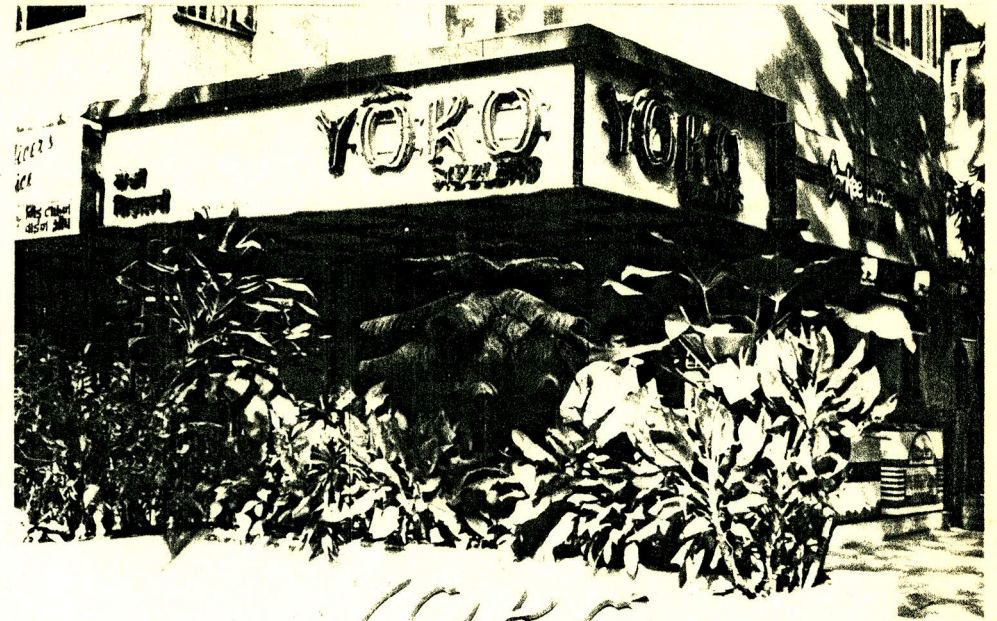




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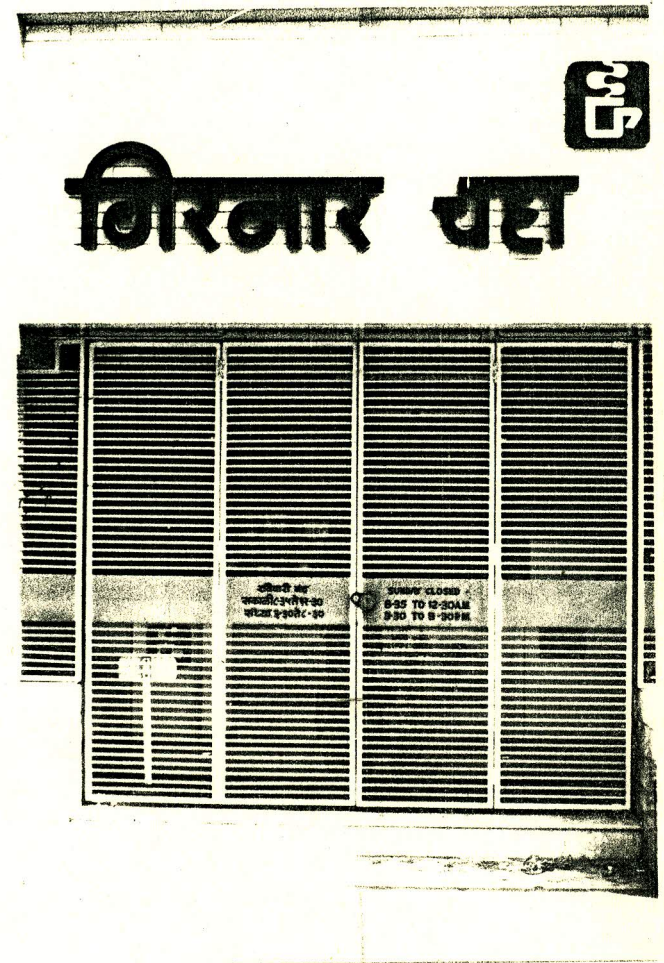
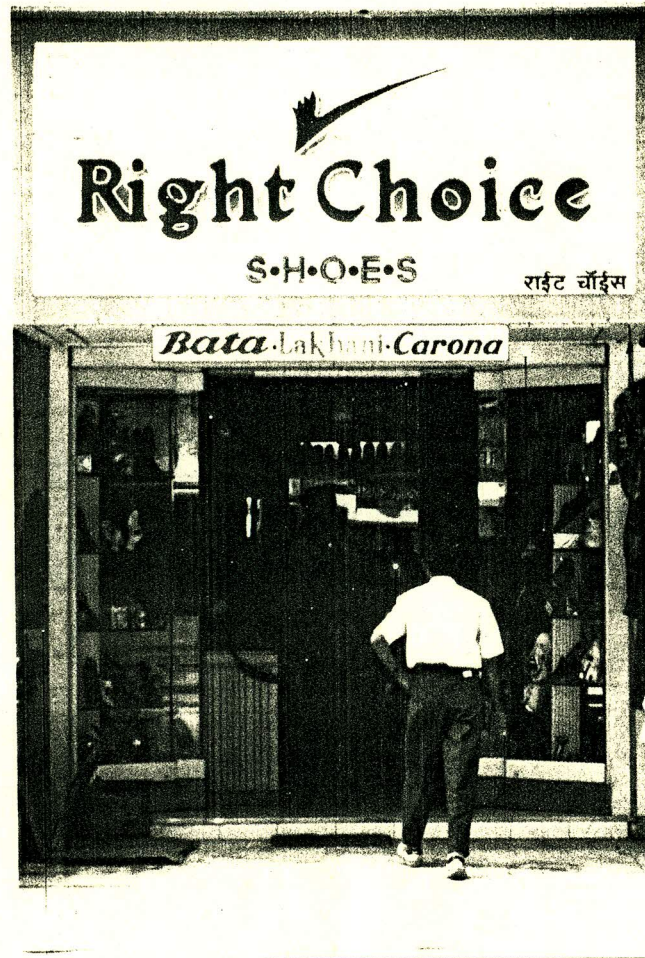






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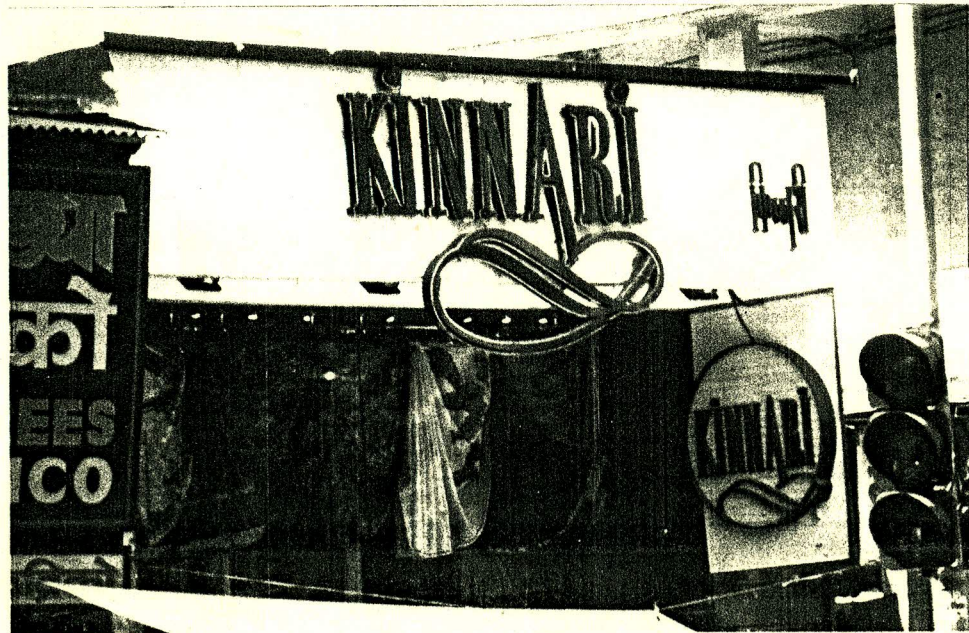
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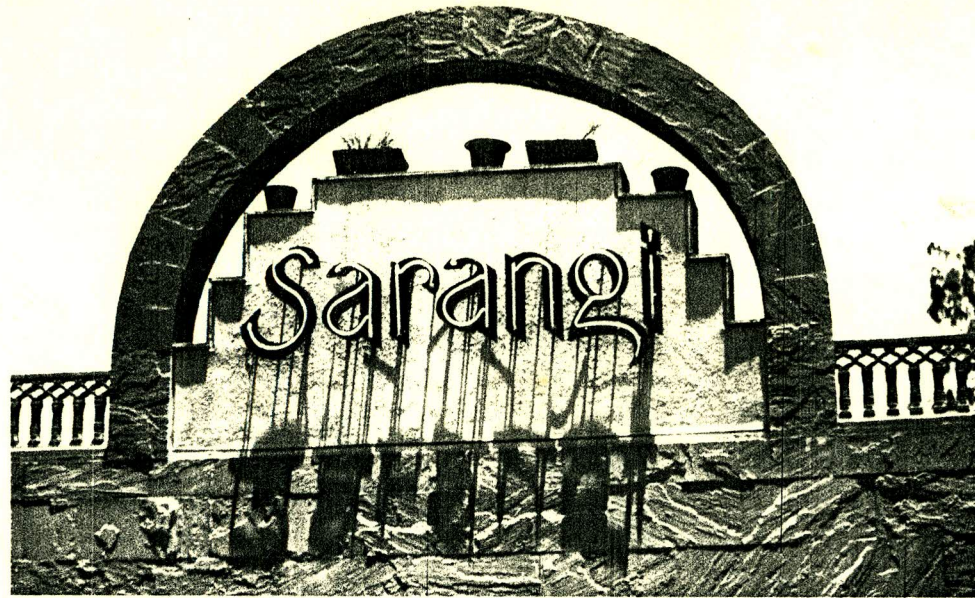
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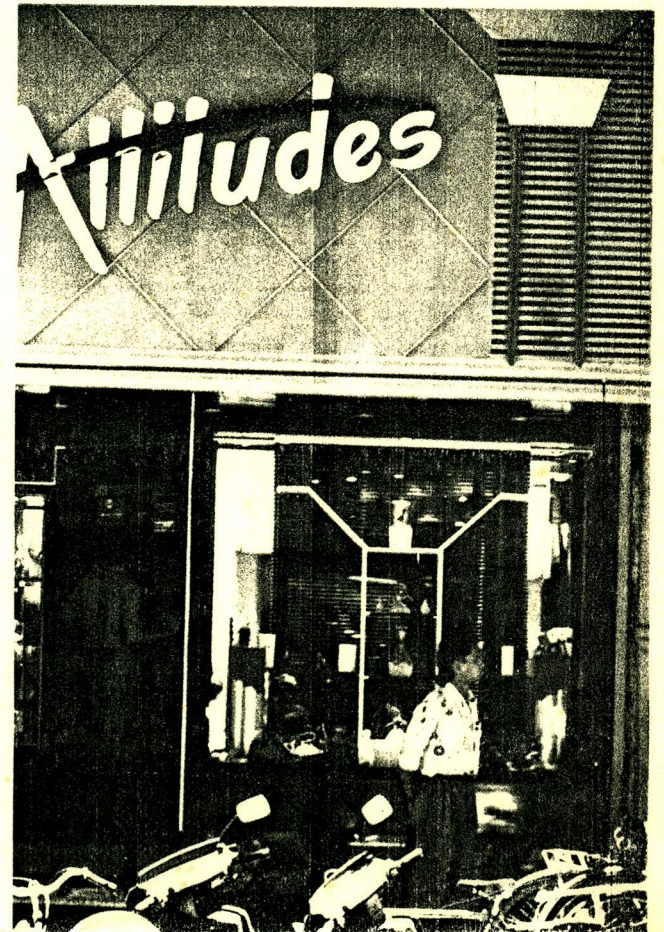
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