

DESIGN INNOVATIONS FOR PROFESSIONALS

# MONITOR

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## JAKOB MACFARLANE + light special

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*light > spaces and functions: two in one*

PROJECT: «MICHEL BRISSON» MENSWEAR STORE // LOCATION: MONTREAL  
ARCHITECTURE: SAUCIER + FERROTTE ARCHITECTES // PHOTOGRAPHY: MARC CRAMER



Designed by Saucier + Perrotte architects, this new store in Montreal has been conceived as a space that simultaneously reflects the quality of the finely tailored garments as well as the historic context of the century-old building. The ingenious use of reflective surfaces in combination with an interesting lighting solution takes this project beyond a simple opposition of old-world and contemporary ambiances. Starting from the entrance, a reflective black wall extends across the minimalist, pristinely white modern space. The wall is punctured by a window that opens into a 19th century interior. Peering toward this bygone era, customers immediately notice an archaic mirror hanging inside and reflecting both spaces back to the observer to create a dramatic superimposition of epochs. The idea of a window that enables the spatial and temporal exchange between two disparate worlds refers to the canvases by 17th century painter Johannes Vermeer. In parallel with this effect, the long black reflective boundary mirrors «the new» into «the old» — the game of visual interaction between periods continues, rendering the space subtly out of focus while offering visitors a glimpse of themselves and the clothing from an alternative perspective. The appearance of the store from the street is equally evocative. Looking past the old stone facade, passers-by will catch sight of the immaculate, bright, newly designed space juxtaposed with its darker, antiquated counterpart.

Lighting fixtures, custom designed by Saucier + Perrotte, double as a system of suspended clothing racks. A flexible ceiling grid makes it possible to change spatial and lighting arrangements and adapt the setting to a variety of special events or collections. Fluorescent tubes incorporated in the structure of the racks are used to directly light up the clothing, while general illumination comes from a system of exposed ceiling-mounted tubes, forming a regular pattern of luminous dashes multiplied by the reflective wall. The «old-world» compartment features a floor standing version of clothing racks with built-in lighting. Further ideas like hidden light sources accentuating items displayed on a low slung secondary shelf add to the carefully thought out lighting program.

Another important ingredient of the design concept is the sculptural shelving that stretches along the south wall. The sections of this carved display structure can be moved along a track, opening up glimpses of «visible storage» behind them: here the architects resort to the principle of semi-display that becomes increasingly popular in major international museums.

