3D TRENDS REPORT 2023

RETAIL IN FOCUS

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CONTENTS

Adobe 3D Trends 2023

INTRODUCTION

Adobe 3D Trends Report 2023

Welcome to this mini report on the impact of 3D design tools on the retail industry. As technology continues to advance, 3D has become an increasingly valuable tool for businesses looking to stand out in their market; the retail sector is the perfect example.

This snapshot explores the latest trends in 3D, focusing on how businesses are using 3D to transform their retail offerings with more engaging shopping experiences for consumers. Whilst 3D renders have been used by some online retailers for decades, that's just the tip of the iceberg. The use of 3D in design is changing physical and digital retail entirely. It's shopping, but not as you've known it...

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01 REIMAGINING RETAIL

From unassuming product renders in eCommerce to virtual try-ons and AR/VR experiences, 3D's role within retail is widespread and evolving rapidly.

The baseline for integrating 3D within retail is its use within eCommerce, which some sectors have adopted more quickly than others. As Bastiaan Geluk, Head of Digital Fashion at INDG said, "No person in the last 15 to 20 years has bought a car or electronic device where they were looking at a photograph. In those industries, 3D renders have been the standard for many years – fashion is just catching up."

The benefits of using 3D product images over traditional photographs within eCommerce are clear, especially considering the sheer volume of images (estimated to be in the thousands) and content required for effective eCommerce.

Jan Philipp Wintjes, the Senior Vice President for Omnichannel at Hugo Boss, summarises it perfectly: "It's great to see how we are able to use 3D renders in our online store. This gives consumers the option to zoom in and zoom out, to look at a product from all directions, and play with it." When producing images in 3D can meet the volume and function required, its role within eCommerce is clear.

But 3D design can do so much more than simply improve the experience of browsing through products online; it can completely transform the retail experience.

Credit: Hugo Boss

Retailers are undergoing a significant transformation, thanks to 3D design and the introduction of virtual stores and shopping experiences. Virtual stores offer a unique experience for customers to browse and shop from the comfort of their homes. 35% of respondents believe that virtual retail spaces will be more important this year than last.

Already, 3D is being used to create immersive experiences, including rich product stories and in-situ displays, allowing retailers to offer a true omnichannel experience, seamlessly merging online and physical retail experiences.

The benefits of virtual stores are not reserved for retailers. They also offer a new level of interactivity and engagement for consumers, leading to increased sales and brand loyalty. So, it's unsurprising that 33% of those surveyed believe that their organisation could benefit from using 3D design within their online retail, with 20% currently using it.

Adding to the Basket –
The Benefits of 3D Design in eCommerce

Based on data from Shopify, one of the world's largest eCommerce platforms, retailers adding 3D renders to their online retail offering experience:

// An increase of over 40% in shoppers adding an item to their basket

// An increase of over 25% in shoppers purchasing an item

// 40% fewer returns

Credit: Anna Natter, Adobe

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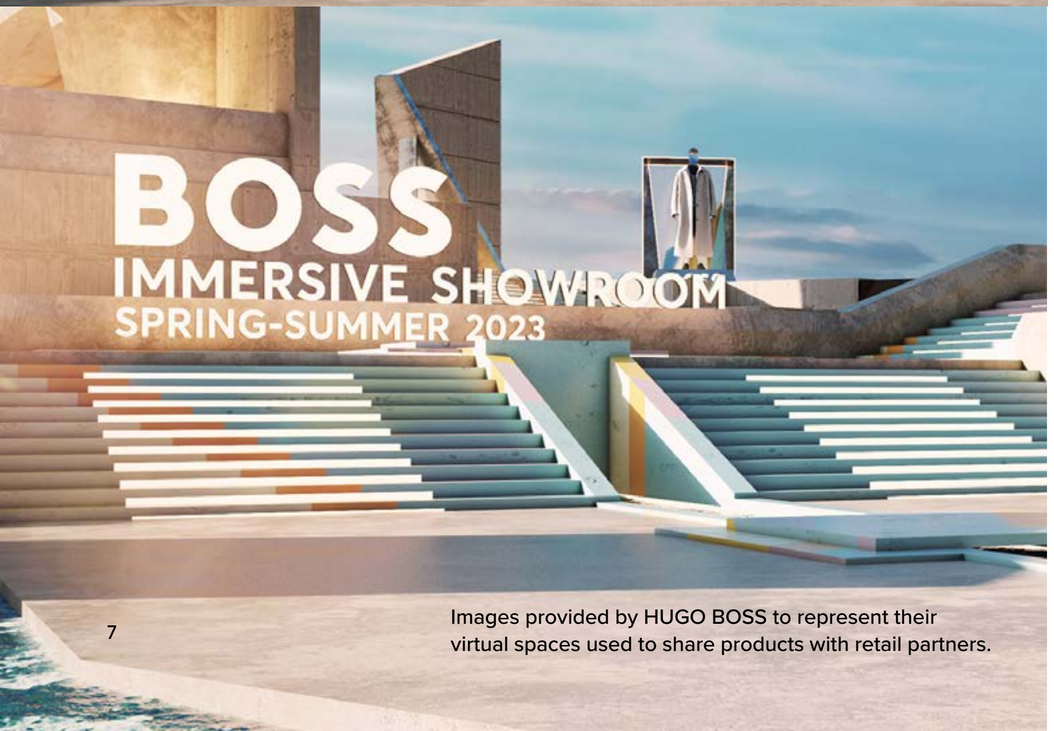
Innovative companies are taking advantage.

IKEA's integration of 3D has evolved from using 3D to design products in their catalogues and in their online stores to full AR/VR experiences that place their products in shoppers' homes. The Place App, first launched in 2017, allows shoppers to use AR to place furniture items into their homes to visualise how they will look in-situ. From furniture to fashion, the use of Augmented Reality to trial/try-on new products has grown significantly (with new examples happening throughout the creation of this report).

Brands like Hugo Boss, Tommy Hilfiger and Nike are using AR in their physical stores to enable virtual try-on experiences. Hugo Boss' Jan-Philipp describes the use and benefit: "For example, we find that some people don't like to try on trousers in-store. So, if we enable virtual try-ons in-store, customers can see how they look in the pieces they're interested in, and the whole process becomes much simpler for them. They can see themselves in the garments they like most and then try on only those. It also makes it easier for customers to mix and match products more effortlessly."

Another example of how AR is being used within retail to deliver new ways of telling stories to customers is UNIT9's 'Move to Zero' work with Nike, providing customers with the ability to scan a shoebox to learn about their sustainability mission. The increased expectations of consumers for brands and products to represent values and address societal issues requires additional information to be conveyed around a product, with it not always possible or effective to do so within a physical retail space or on product packaging. Nike's use of AR, to use product packaging as a gateway to further information, is a practical example of how new technologies alongside the use of 3D can help brands tell these stories and enrich the physical retail experience.

Credit: INDG



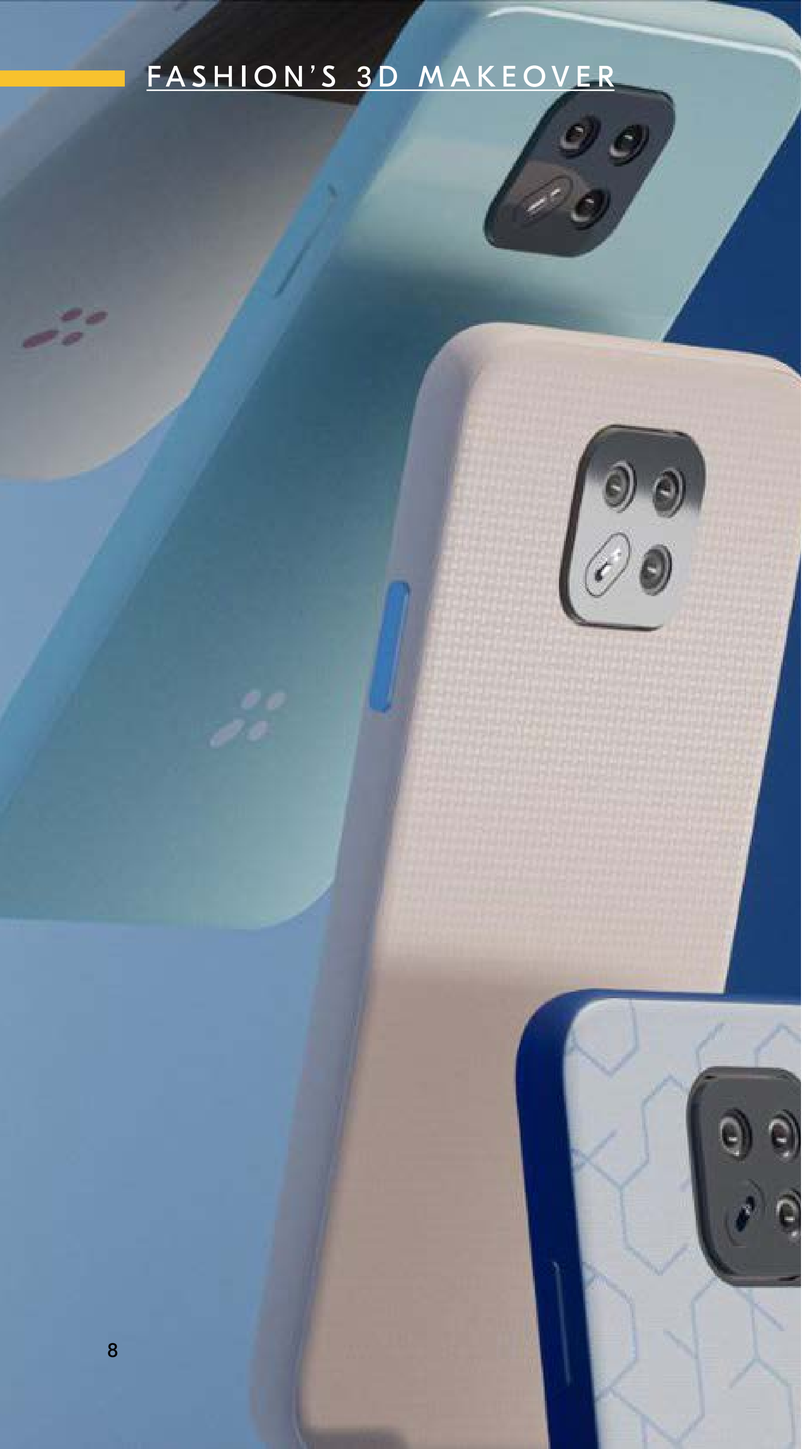
Images provided by HUGO BOSS to represent their virtual spaces used to share products with retail partners.

Looking beyond the use of AR, and further into the future, Bastiaan, envisions when customers might be able to visit virtual shops and be transported into a story where they can experience products in a completely different way: "They can be transported to a winter landscape to see how outdoor clothing performs in the snow, or to a beach to test out swimwear. This level of immersion can provide customers with a unique and personalised experience that encourages them to purchase." This might not be as fanciful as it sounds, with our study showing that 22% of organisations are currently designing virtual spaces, and 40% of businesses recognise that 3D can be a valuable tool in engaging customers, with virtual spaces being an integral part of the process.

Whether it's storytelling or "story-living" (a phrase from UNIT9's Sofia Papadopoulou), by incorporating 3D design and AR/VR technologies into the retail experience, companies can engage with their customers in new and exciting ways, providing a unique experience that will help them succeed in the present, and constantly changing, future world of retail.

"What eCommerce looks like in the future will need to change. Too many brands are stuck in the early Internet experience of just scrolling through a catalogue. Using 3D, eCommerce can feel much more like an exploration or a game. And we know that dwell times in 3D experiences in eCommerce are much longer."

Matthew Drinkwater & Costas Kazantzis
Head of Agency & Lead Creative Technologist, Fashion Innovation Agency, London College of Fashion



WHY NOW?

With advancements in software, designers are now able to use 3D to achieve levels of realism that were once unattainable. Replicating reality within design has already been widely adopted in the architecture, engineering, and automotive industries where 3D models have provided accurate representations of buildings, structures, and cars before assembly. However, over the past year, designers and businesses across the board have realised that these same tools can be used to create lifelike and detailed prototypes and final versions of their products.

For a long time, there was resistance to 3D renders being equivalent to images taken of the physical product. Those days are no longer acceptable; no one should be thinking it doesn't look the same. It looks better in most cases.

Bastiaan Geluk
Head of Digital Fashion, INDG,
The Netherlands

02 NEW RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES

As physical objects are recreated digitally, the sale of digital twins reveals an additional revenue stream for the retail industry. The fashion industry is one of the first to truly embrace this change, powered by their adoption of AR and VR technologies alongside collaborating with the gaming industry to explore new ways their products can be consumed. The concept of a digital wardrobe is poised to shake up the industry even further. “It’s an exciting time for fashion,” says Bastiaan, “the possibilities of a digital wardrobe are endless, and we’re already seeing its impact on the industry.”

As recently as March 2023, PUMA and INDG, released a product range inspired by iconic gaming franchise Final Fantasy. While the physical products were extremely popular (almost all sold out at the time of writing), it was interesting to observe the consumer expectation that these products would be available in digital form also. Users of Reddit reacted to the product announcements stating, “I would rather have the collab be for in-game shoes,” and “if nothing else there should be digital versions of what you can buy in real life.”

The digital wardrobe is not a hypothetical hope for the future - it is already an expectation and want right now.

Innovative retail industries won’t just be developing their digital retail channels, or using them to optimise their physical shopping experiences, they can also be selling digital product.

Credit: Hugo Boss

ABOUT ADOBE SUBSTANCE 3D

Substance 3D Collection is a comprehensive suite of interconnected 3D material authoring, texturing, modeling and rendering tools designed to empower creativity and streamline visualisation workflows in 3D design.

It provides a seamless creative experience with a range of task-specific 3D tools so that creative professionals in design can present their work in realistic, real-world context, maintain material consistency throughout creative pipelines, and enjoy a high degree of control over the creation and editing of content created with 3D tools. Substance 3D tools integrate seamlessly with Adobe Creative Cloud applications, the most common 3D software, and real-time rendering engines, enabling efficient 3D workflows and amazing content.

At the heart of Substance 3D are a collection of versatile applications, each designed to cater to different aspects of the 3D design process.

Substance 3D Sampler

Substance 3D Sampler is a versatile and powerful scanning tool that streamlines the process of converting real-life images into photorealistic materials, 3D objects, and HDR environments. Sampler simplifies the creation of high-quality 3D assets for use across various 3D applications. Featuring seamless integration within the Substance 3D Collection and access to an extensive library of professionally crafted 3D assets, users can effortlessly combine and fine-tune materials using parametric filters, enabling a smooth and efficient 3D workflow.

Substance 3D Painter

Substance 3D Painter offers a comprehensive layer-based painting system that allows users to work directly on 3D models, bringing their creations to life with vivid textures and intricate details. With an array of tools, including Smart Materials, Smart Masks, and generators that automatically adapt to the mesh, users can achieve stunning results while painting with regular, dynamic, or Photoshop brushes, as well as tools and physical particles. It's easy to see why Painter is the go-to choice for texturing 3D models.

Substance 3D Stager

Substance 3D Stager is a state-of-the-art virtual rendering studio designed to create breathtaking visualisations by assembling 3D scenes, arranging assets, applying materials, lights, and cameras. With access to thousands of customisable models, lights, and materials from Substance 3D Assets, users can easily integrate content from the entire Substance family of apps into Stager to craft the perfect composition for product visualisations, marketing imagery, and more.

Substance 3D Asset Library

Substance 3D Assets is a comprehensive library of customisable 3D models, lights, and materials, all ready-to-use and included as part of the Substance 3D Collection. Substance 3D Assets are designed to accelerate your 3D project creation process and help deliver stunning photorealistic results. Created by material and modeling specialists and world-class 3D artists, this collection of professional content ensures amazing results and seamless integration with various 3D workflows from product design to games and VFX, to marketing and retail creative.

Substance 3D Designer

Substance 3D Designer is a powerful tool that unlocks near infinite 3D creative possibilities through node-based material design, enabling users to create seamless materials, patterns, image filters, and environment lights. Designed for technical artists seeking to craft complex stylised and photorealistic procedural materials, Designer boasts an extensive node library and seamless integration with other Substance 3D tools.

Substance 3D Modeler

Substance 3D Modeler is an innovative 3D design and sculpting app that streamlines the creation of organic and hard surface forms, as well as complex scenes, without the burden of maintaining “good topology”. It boasts seamless integration with other Substance 3D tools, both VR and desktop interfaces, and a comprehensive set of sculpting tools. It enables users to import and adapt meshes, assemble complex scenes, and experience creating in an immersive VR environment.

So, whether you’re in packaging design, product design, fashion, gaming, visual effects, architecture, or beyond, Substance 3D equips you with the tools needed to create realistic, breath-taking 3D content. By leveraging Substance 3D, you can streamline your workflow, saving time in prototyping and photography shoots, and you can experiment with multiple versions and bring your products to market faster.

Unleash your creative potential and immerse yourself and your business in the limitless possibilities of Adobe Substance 3D. With its intuitive workflows, comprehensive toolset, and seamless integration with Adobe Creative Cloud, Substance 3D is the ultimate 3D solution for any business looking to get ahead of the curve.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To discover more about Substance 3D, please visit our website:

adobe.com/uk/creativecloud

Here you'll find further information about Substance 3D, as well as industry-leading resources and materials about creativity and design in 3D.

Or you can get in touch with the Substance 3D team.

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