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KDA:
20 YEARS IN JAPAN

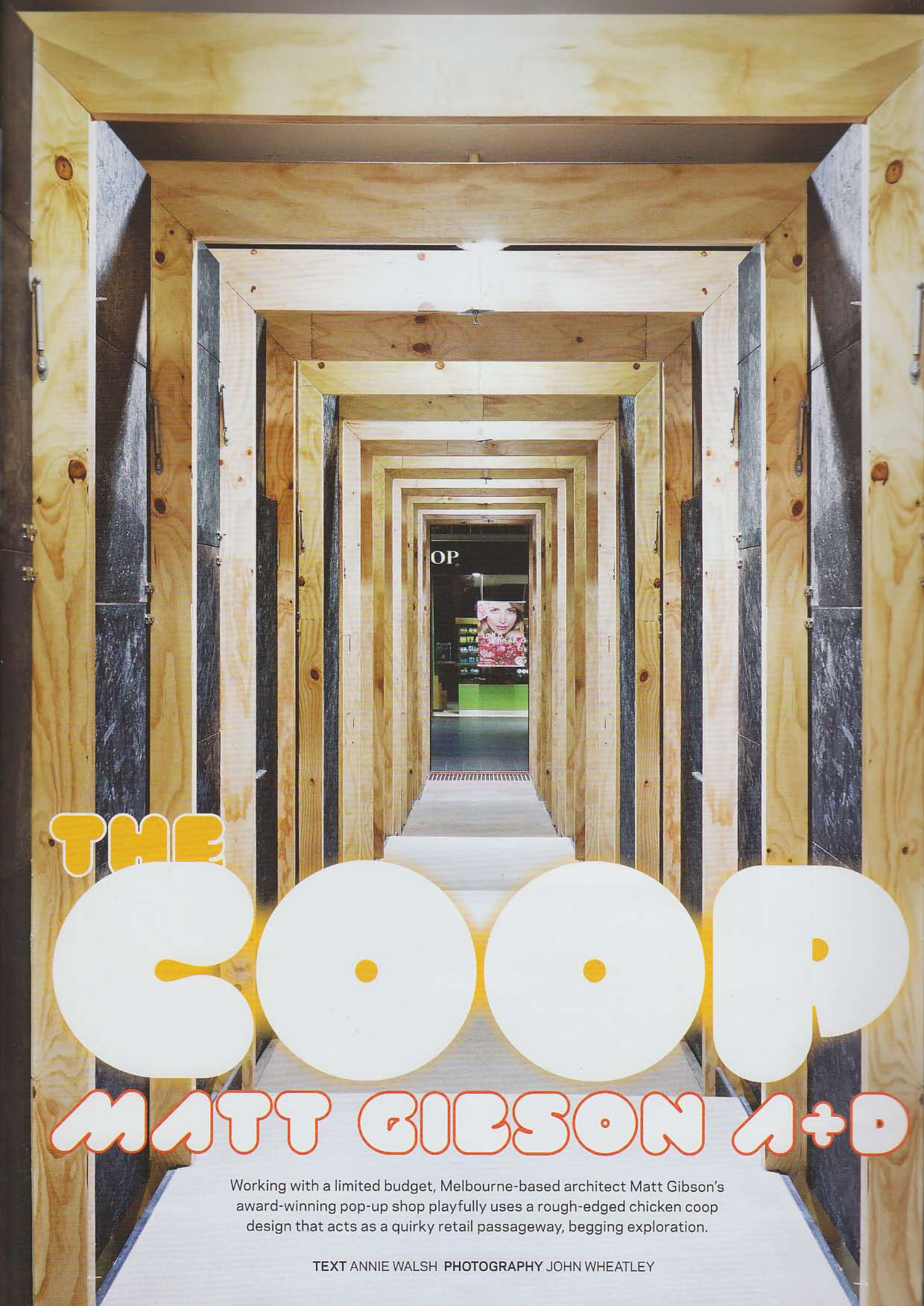
ELENBERG FRASER:
VUE DE MONDE'S NEW CAFE

FUKSAS:
ARMANI'S FIFTH AVENUE FLAGSHIP

BATES SMART, NHA, SJB:
THE MAKING OF CBW

the coop





THE GOOP MATT GIBSON A+D

Working with a limited budget, Melbourne-based architect Matt Gibson's award-winning pop-up shop playfully uses a rough-edged chicken coop design that acts as a quirky retail passageway, begging exploration.

TEXT ANNIE WALSH PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN WHEATLEY



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TOP

'Pop-up' retailing is an emerging global phenomenon that has definitely taken hold in the city of Melbourne: temporary shopfronts regularly appear only to vanish within weeks. From reclaimed shipping containers to modular cardboard enclosures, 'temporary' is the new trend for retail design and code word for a retail experience that is subversive, authentic and unique. A benchmark example in the past year was the popular Penthouse Mouse project, staged during the Motorola Spring Fashion Festival. Local collective Moth Design transformed a derelict fun parlour into an exhibition and retail space for independent fashion labels for a fortnight. Earlier in the year, Melburnians flocked to The Greenhouse by Joost, an impeccably designed steel and hay bale pop-up bar and event space installed for a summer residency in Federation Square.

A commonality among these temporary spaces is their commitment to transforming under-utilised urban spaces through quirky, economical and site-specific interventions using raw and reclaimed materials.

The Coop, an experimental 'incubation' retail space and installation designed by architectural practice Matt Gibson A+D (MGA+D), won the retail design category in the 2009 Interior Design Awards. The Coop was commissioned by the owners of Melbourne Central shopping centre, The GPT Group, as part of an ongoing management strategy to develop in-house concepts that respond to the spirit of pop-up retailing.

Practice Director and Project Architect Matt Gibson was briefed to design an iconic and flexible shell equipped with a basic fit-out, which could be leased on a short-term basis to a series of niche or fringe retailers.

MGA+D's resourceful approach to the low-budget project successfully meets the original concept brief. Focused on using reclaimed materials and rudimentary construction and detailing, the resulting design is a raw textural 'low-tech' installation that references the humble backyard chicken coop. >>

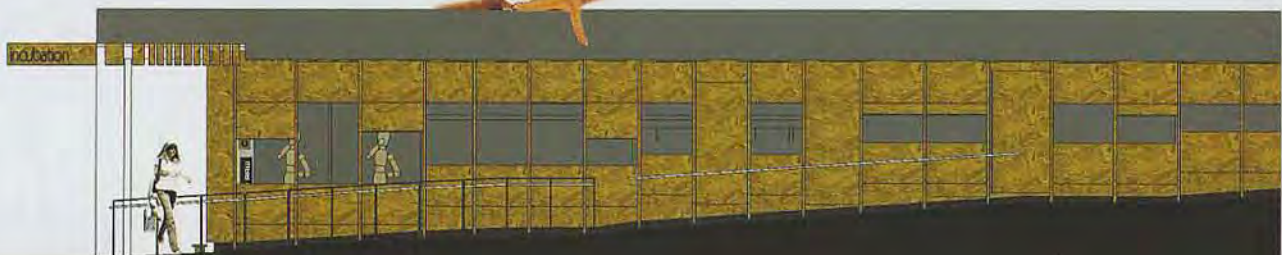


01

p98 The 'chicken coop' whimsically references childhood memories of incubators
 p99 The Coop as 'empty nest' **Opposite page**
 Retail merchandise in situ **01** Randomly placed flaps allow the space to change form
02 Concept elevation



02



ARCHITECT STATEMENT "Part experimental installation, part retail tenancy 'incubator', a pop-up store is a concept intended to spur new business for an existing brand or generate excitement and buzz around a new product. Aesthetically similar to the humble chook shed, The Coop appears as a conceptually clean container expressing a rudimentary constructivist aesthetic that takes a different direction from the slick and flashy conventions of mainstream retail. Budget dictated that a regular glass viewing box was out of the question so instead The Coop presents its brand as hero in a far more interesting combination of the cheapest possible recycled timber products and disused building materials. The enclosed asymmetrical chamber provides an interior and architecture concerned with 'journey', defined by light, rhythm, perspective and material. Along with the rising steps carried over from the former weekend-market stalls, the vortex-like movement and play on perspective renders the container immediately spatially interesting. The seemingly infinite length of The Coop encourages the visitor to enter and embark on a journey of their own. The Coop is experimental and provisional; the tech is low not high. Instead, The Coop offers contradiction, surprise and tangible feel-good honesty." Matt Gibson

ARCHITECT Matt Gibson A+D
PROJECT TEAM Matt Gibson, Erica Tsuda, Kai Lun Chua **MAIN CONTRACTOR** Emac Commercial Interiors P/L **ENGINEERS** David Novak and Associates **CONSULTANT** The GPT Group Carolyn Hughes

See p114 for HIGHLIGHTED MATERIALS & FINISHES



03

03 The infinite length of The Coop invites a 'journey'
04 Pop-in: Merchandise fixed on the internal wall catches the passer-by's eye

>> The location of the pop-up store in a narrow service corridor linking Drewery Place to the Melbourne Central arcade created some challenges. Adapted to the space, The Coop is a 2.4m-wide tubular container attached to one wall of the corridor and uses an existing stepped platform as its base. The main entry is through a full-height glass bi-fold door, and the tube terminates with a large mirrored panel creating a dramatic focal point at its rear.

The interior tunnel-like volume is created by a series of laminated timber ribs that divide the interior chamber into modular bays braced at 900mm intervals by a single skin of OSB (oriented strand board) paneling. Folding partition walls (not currently installed) and multiple entry points along the long facade are designed to allow the interior space to support up to three independent tenancies.

The retailing fixtures and point-of-sale counters are along the back wall, and on the opposite wall hinged shutters between each bay allow the tenant/s to adjust and adapt the facade to their requirements by creating varying interior experiences of solidity and permeability.

Budget restrictions and building regulations have impacted on key features of the original design. Imagining The Coop perched on a bed of artificial grass with additional interior lighting, joinery and flooring illustrates how these deleted elements would have greatly enhanced the spatial experience and visual identity of the project.

Functional issues for The Coop involve problems in maintaining security and the challenges of merchandising in the narrow space. The GPT Group has secured a new tenant suited to the project's spatial and functional quirks for when the current tenancy lease expires. Interestingly, viewing the photographs of The Coop before it was tenanted suggests that the space may have a dual function, equally as compelling as an empty nest as it is as an incubator. **M**



04