

hint

Shoptart

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We pay attention to retail



A Store Is (almost) Born

Continuing in its mission to revitalize deserted spaces in rundown areas, **Comme des Garçons** has just opened a guerrilla store in downtown Los Angeles, its first in the U.S. The year-long shop, located at the end of an alley in a former bank (125 West 4th St., #106, 213-626-6606), is the latest shot in the arm for a neighborhood recently revived by indie boutiques Welcome Hunters and New High (M)art. Yet, shockingly, except for wallets and fragrances, Comme's newest outpost will remain mostly empty, as the photo here shows, not in some new revolutionary retail concept from the high-minded label (although we wouldn't have been surprised), but because, for reasons unknown, U.S. customs won't unhand the merch. Brett Westfall—L.A. designer, Hint Shop contributor and co-owner of the store—says they expect the clothing in a matter of days, when everyone will be notified. Nothing, however, could stop the launch party, where throngs of happy rioters set off a scramble to temporarily close the gates. After all, in the spirit of guerrilla-ness, everyone was welcome.





Londoners, stay calm. They come in peace with hyper-futuristic, uncompromising visions of dress. **Balenciaga** has landed at 12 Mount Street, joining Marc Jacobs and a soon-to-open Christian Louboutin on the row with a store that pushes sci-fi to its limits. Designed by Nicolas Ghesquière with artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and lighting guru Benoit Lalloz, the interior is more than just an interior. It's a labyrinthine, high-tech, spacecraft-like environment with illuminated metal racks to showcase the women's spring collection and red volcanic rocks for accessory display. There's also a sound-emitting, motion-sensing pylon forest, a tangerine-fog ceiling, padded changing pods and optically jarring carpets—all in reference to Mission From Mars and other space-age films, according to Ghesquière, whose Balenciaga invasion continues with a store in Los Angeles next month. —**Dean Mayo Davies**



Bloodlust

A zebra rug, leather lounge chairs, moody wainscoting, velveteen drapery, iron candelabras, Palomino cowboy hats, creepy taxidermy, a bewitching fireplace. These are the accoutrements of new Los Angeles men's shop **Legion**, which looks a little like the Marlboro Man has taken up residence in Dracula's lair. It's the kind of decadent sanctuary you're slightly nervous to enter, but wouldn't dare pass up. Here's some demystification so you know you want in: Comme des Garçons, A.P.C., Rag and Bone, Surface to Air, Engineered Garments, Mackintosh, Loden Dager and Corpus. —**Liz Armstrong**



Shop-Hopping

Heads up. Following stores in Stockholm and Berlin, **Acne's** first spot in the U.S. (seen here in a rendering) will open next month at 110 Greene St, Soho. Outfitted with classic Gustavian furnishings —Scandinavia-style—the flagship will house the Swedish label's trademark jeans, accessories and men's and women's collections... Seoul, South Korea, said to be the most wired city on earth, will get even more plugged in when Milan's **10 Corso Como** launches there next month

with acres of fashion, a book shop, an art gallery and a restaurant... Russia has a lot going on these days, what with its struggling democracy under siege, but fashion marches on. Both **Jil Sander** and **Stella McCartney** have opened in Moscow, with plans for further expansion in New York and Paris, respectively... Designer Tess Giberson may have left her post as creative director, sadly, but **TSE** is moving ahead with its new New York store at 120 Wooster St. (212-925-2520), making its superfine,

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asymmetrical cashmere available to Soho's huddled and shivering masses... Are you a Londoner with a hankering for a charm bracelet or a painted plastic skull in the price range of a small flat or a year's rent? No, Moss isn't sprouting a store in London. That would be **Damien Hirst**, who's signed a lease on a shop on Marylebone, opening this spring.

Money Where Your Mouse Is

Eco-attentive, trend-allergic designer Rogan Gregory's solo line, **Rogan**, is graphic without looking like a hip-hop video castoff and cozy without participating in homeless lumberjack chic. His pragmatism recently won him a CFDA award and the \$200,000 prize that comes with it, suggesting fashion's higher-ups consider his innovative aesthetic—at once tousled and perfectly composed—a welcome palette cleanser. If you live in New York, you know all about his Franklin Street store, but now even those in the boonies can purchase his exclusive, limited-edition sweatshirts (\$220-\$280) and T-shirts (\$110), some of which he screenprinted himself, at his new [e-shop](#). —**Liz Armstrong**



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