

## MOLD

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Mold multiplies on existing structures where abortive mimicry takes the form of routine contrivance: carpets unrolled from shop entrances onto sidewalks, trash cans provided for customer convenience, ATMs installed in the front wall of a shop, banners, chained down sandwich boards, umbrellas, potted trees, public clocks, plastic flags on a string, Xmas lights, merchandise racks, menu boards, awnings. Mold, like airborne litter, feels redundant, spatially indifferent, and highly absorptive. As a mode of spatial indecisiveness, it spreads noise, flutter, and static in its path: shelf-talkers under vodka bottles, TV monitors above selling floors, fall-out litter in magazines, seasonal cardboard display stands in grocery store aisles, canned music, or even people—who work as greeters, survey takers, Ronald McDonald clowns, or seasonal Santa Clauses. Ironically, indoor Mold replicates Nature or items imported from peripheral geographies: as with survey takers and Santa Clauses mentioned above, but more obviously with engineered fake palm trees/flowers, fountains, vendors' carts, or the ubiquitous “park” benches found inside shopping malls. Similarly, outdoor Mold imitates man-made structures, as with the McDonalds on 42nd Street in New York, where the golden arches are replaced by a theatre marquee in order to blend in with the neighborhood. Mold is an oscillating parameter. The shopping mall is a suburban foliage “exchanged” for something it is not: a park enclosed by a street whose cars have been removed.

The oldest forms of seasonal Mold are the display windows in large department stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue and Marshall Fields, where panoramic display windows proxy for nature and even fluctuate, like real windows, with the seasons. Such windows are non-functional, i.e., they cannot be opened. Thus, the shopper's eye is mystified between looking in (at nature) at Christmas time and looking out (at culture) at other times of the year. Such greenhouse effects are paradoxically considered art rather than commerce. In places where browsing and tourism take place, advertisers and artists alike understand that mold in the form of serial images [photography in particular] impedes foot traffic and amplifies sales. Not surprisingly, Warhol dressed windows for Bonwit Teller. Earlier forms of mechanical mold were the flashing billboard or the slow-motion escalators in a department store, both of which retard time and create the delay that is the mirrored interior space of all commodities