



## EAT. DRINK. SHOP THE NEW URBAN RETAIL RENAISSANCE

**Urban International Studios' Practice** - is focused on creating authentic urban experience. Today the retail world has changed. We are seeing that in locations as diverse as Asia, Europe, the Middle-East, and in the US. Consumer culture is evolving, reflecting new aspirations and cultural zeitgeist. It has been pushed by the triple threat of discount commodity retail; the internet's infinite reach, availability, and selection; and of course millennials. Our love affair with the mall is over. We are entering a new era of ubiquitous availability of goods, and the need for authentic-experience drives the new retail renaissance. The challenge of new retail is now how to elevate it to become a compelling social experience. The new retail renaissance is about creating shared environments for the communal ritual called urbanism.

**Customer Expectations** for the urban place have evolved faster than the pace of design and development thinking. Even new retail centers are seeming somehow out of date. Many designers have been talking to themselves, and perhaps not enough to their customers. In the ever-changing retail landscape, understanding the changes in the tastes, psychology, and motivations of consumers is critical for survival. Shifts in consumer behavior will have a dramatic effect on the choices about where we shop to what we buy to how we identify with the places we want to be. These tectonic shifts are motivated as much by psychographic changes as by fundamental economic motivations of how people want to buy, shop, and socialize.

**Back to Historic Centers** - The current movement back to historic cities is a longing for an authentic social experience. Successful social shopping experiences will be anchored by successful urban places, rather than vice versa. This will be true of new ground-up retail and mixed-use centers. These will become complex urban places that become authentic urban

destinations. They will be based on a sense of history and memory of place. They will also bring a sense of invention, creative tension between new and old – between memory and invention. The new retail renaissance is at the heart of a new urbanism. The new retail renaissance is about manufacturing powerful destination urbanism – creating authentic urban experiences that people truly enjoy and return to, again and again.

