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Kerstin Thompson Architects creates a calm and restrained store for Aesop at Emporium Melbourne, with extensive use of spotted gum timber.

photography DEREK SWALWELL



AESOP



project

Aesop
Level 1, Emporium Melbourne
287 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
+61 3 9638 0457
aesop.com

design practice

Kerstin Thompson Architects
277 Queensberry Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
+61 3 8662 8800
kerstinthompson.com

project team

Kerstin Thompson, Lynn
Chew, Claire Humphreys

time schedule

Design, documentation:
4 months
Construction: 3 months

builder

YVS Projects

engineer

Extended Enterprises

lighting

PSLAB

esd

EnergyLab

building surveyor

PLP Building Surveyors
& Consultants

design statement

This Aesop store luxuriates in the use of the native Australian hardwood timber, spotted gum. Using this one material as ply – on walls, floors, shelves and the distinctive perforated screens – creates an immersive space that is intimate and visually calm. In the highly reflective and bright mall environment, the Aesop store stands out for its restraint and single-material approach.

The timber's warm hue aptly complements Aesop's product display. The store's simple form is enriched through the timber grain and introduction of additional texture through perforations in the ply.

The entry is defined by the perforated ply screens. During business hours, these fold back to present an open front that invites customers into the space. The screens also filter light to mark a calm retreat for customers. After hours, the apertures, which also operate as doors, act as a veil, partially revealing the store's interior.

Inside, the main testing station celebrates the use of water (central to the Aesop retail experience) and brass, with its soft golden hue subtly highlighting the timber.

Kerstin Thompson Architects