

My opinion on Under Armour First European Flagship Store

A few months ago, Under Armour finally opened its first “Brand House” in Europe last December 2017 in one of the busiest pedestrian street of Amsterdam. The location is no surprise since Under Armour has established its European headquarters in The Netherlands, following in the footsteps of Nike which already picked up the country in 1999.



In its Brand House, Under Armour can fully showcase its brand DNA. Unfortunately, these flagship stores are unlikely to proliferate quickly in Europe as they already did in the U.S where the brand has achieved a robust market share. Only a few stores are planned in the years to come in European main capital cities. Therefore, this Amsterdam first iteration is a good opportunity to figure out how Under Armour intends to compete seriously with Nike and Adidas over the continent.



The store comprises 1,000 square meters over two stories. The brand has made sure that visitors can walk around comfortably among the displays to discover the products line-ups.

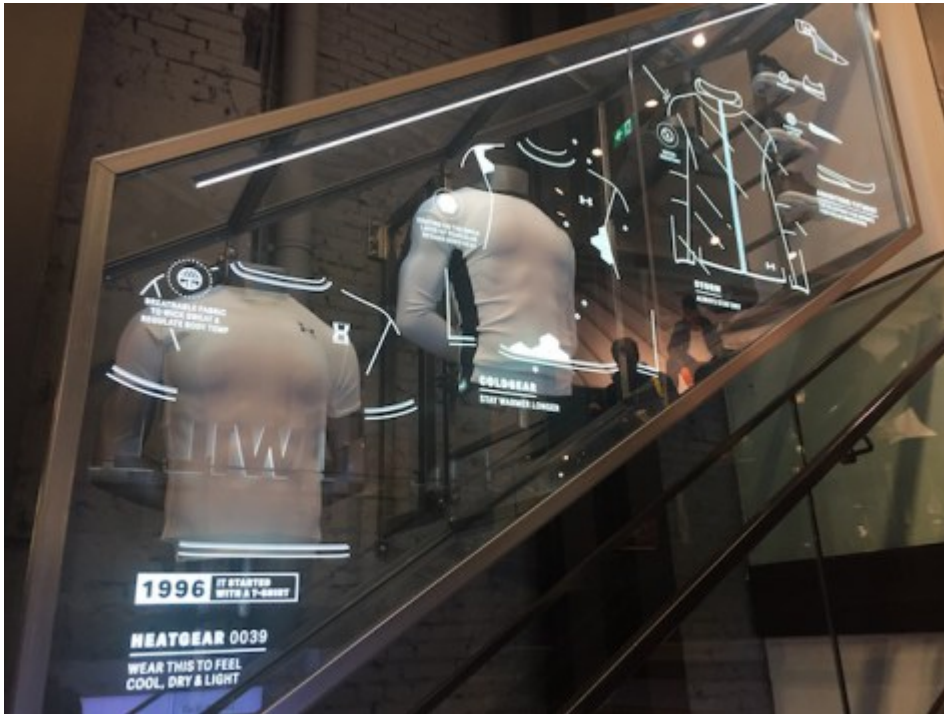




Like the vast majority of brands in this industry, Under Armour has adopted a rough and urban store design. Clearly no risks have been taken here but the final outcome is pleasant and exciting at first sight.



Under Armour Brand Houses are here to help visitors to get in touch closely with the brand and its roots. As we can see walking up the central staircase, everything started with technical and breathable T-shirts back in 1996. And the least we can say is that Under Armour has gone a long way since then.



Basically, Under Armour is less lifestyle oriented than Nike and Adidas. The brand mainly focuses on sport performance and hard training. In addition, the brand is only targeting a few disciplines such as fitness and football to achieve great results faster in Europe.





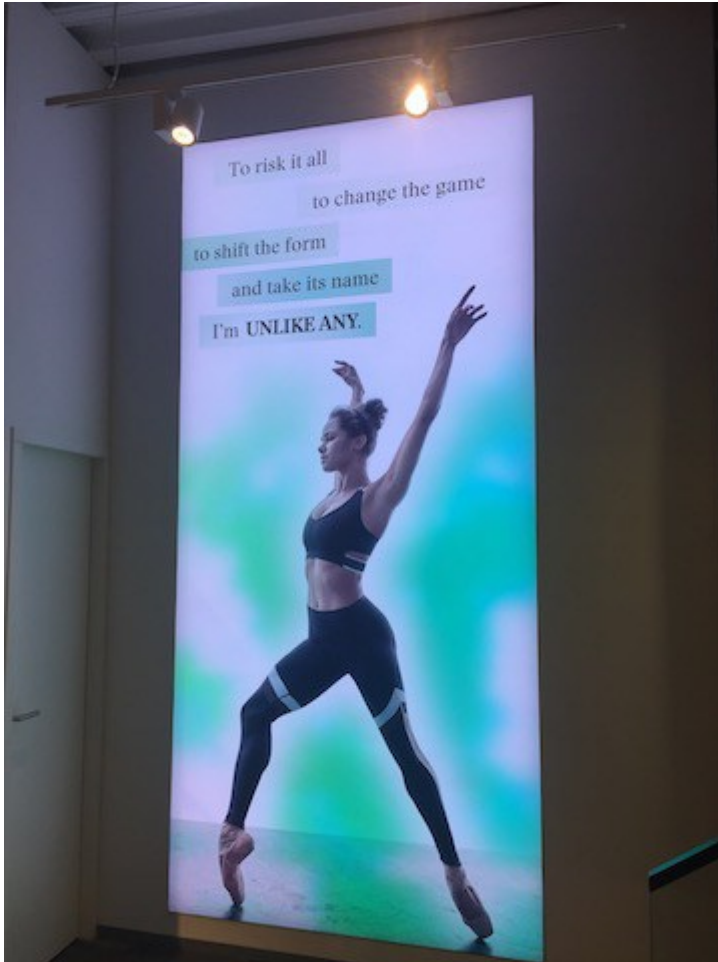
Under Armour is also trying to get traction in the highly competitive shoe market focusing on basketball and running through a limited number of models.



Kids are also targeted through a dedicated display.



Under Armour has become popular with its brand ambassadors at a time when global leaders in the sport industry had chosen to increasingly focus on anonymous role models. Among the sport stars who are closely partnering with the brand, the store showcases female ballet dancer Mitsy Copeland, several time gold medalist swimmer Micheal Phelps and basketball superstar Stephen Curry.





These icons are prominently and creatively displayed throughout the store.



As a conclusion, my opinion is that the first Under Armour European Brand House is definitely a very well controlled retail concept. Even though it is neither particularly spectacular nor really immersive. A basketball playground or a fitness area where visitors could test the products on the spot with brand associates would have been highly appreciated. Especially since Under Armour sport performance items come with a pretty expensive price that European consumers need to feel comfortable with.

The relatively restricted size of the store might have prevented the brand to provide visitors with a more immersive and mind blowing experience. We will have to wait for the next brand houses to open in European capitals to figure out if the brand is able to go the extra mile with retail experience.

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