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Our industry isn't bewitched: New concepts and retailers hitting brick & mortar - by Diana Perry

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Many are at a loss around recent large department store closings (aka Sears) but in my experience it's mostly just consumers thinking our industry is a-fright. However, those of us that are living and breathing CRE on a daily basis know it's actually an exciting time in our industry. Yes, some stores are closing but look at what's happening...retailers are being challenged to be better by offering more services, engaging on social media, being tied to a cause, include an experience component, and have stellar customer service.

Exploring social media by searching hashtags has been an unbelievable resource in learning about new retailers. We've already heard about Warby Parker, Bonobos and the like for years but finally there are some other players in the click to bricks realm along with brand new concepts to our industry by those we never expected. Even the type of space is changing. These new retailers and concepts seem to have a knack for funkier spaces including old auto-body shops, former theatre space, old houses and others. Below are some examples to freshly hit the pavement.

Modern Nomad Home – Denver, CO, 5,500 s/f – A new delightfully creative and artsy design hall carrying new and vintage furniture, eco-friendly home goods, apothecary products, clothing, jewelry, plants, and sustainable goods. The products are from a range of permanent vendors and pop-ups, all of which are women-owned. This shop is housed in a former auto-body shop and theatre with 16' tall drive-in doors.

Huckberry – San Francisco-based store opening 1,450 s/f in NYC West Village – A courageous team of friends that ditched their day job to start a business they were passionate about based around adventure...hence, Huckberry. The menswear/storytelling company offers curated products (though many are exclusive to Huckberry) including: clothing, footwear, watches, home items, bags, tools, grooming, camping and fitness gear. Their new clicks to bricks location will roll out this fall and be based on seven adventure itineraries including garb and gear for the seven trips but also encompasses fireside chats and Q&A with professional photographers, book signings and product demos.

Camp – NYC Flatiron District, 11,000 s/f – Internet media and news company BuzzFeed surprised us all by announcing a brick and mortar toy store to open this fall in NYC. The store comes shortly after the fall of Toys “R” Us and is based around the Macy’s-acquired Story store where the concept changes monthly and could range from Jungle theme to Ocean theme etc., according to the New York Post.

One King’s Lane – NYC SoHo, 3,500 s/f – Another successful clicks to bricks story. One King’s Lane is a home and vintage furnishings and accessories store. The brand opened it’s first location in Southampton, N.Y. just last year and now has signed on for a flagship location in the popular SoHo market, according to Elle Decor. The new store is located in a 200-year-old house (fitting) and has the most fabulous façade coming soon signage I’ve ever seen.

ThredUP – San Marcos, TX, 2,600 s/f – This originally digitally-based consignment shop is definitely on the up and up with a goal to open 100 brick and mortar stores according to Phillips Edison’s Instagram. The brand currently has two locations and has received more than \$131 million in funding according to Fashionista Magazine. The brand is passionate about living life in a more collective, sharing economy. ThredUP is headquartered in San Francisco, CA but was founded in Cambridge, Mass. which makes total sense.

Wherever you’re doing your research, whether it’s on social media, publications, Google Maps, or the old fashioned market tour, I think we can all agree there are great things to come in 2019. No tricks, just treats.

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