

# Buy

**Opening Ceremony Tokyo**  
Commune and Opening Ceremony  
2-1-1 Udagawa-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo  
[www.openingceremony.us](http://www.openingceremony.us)

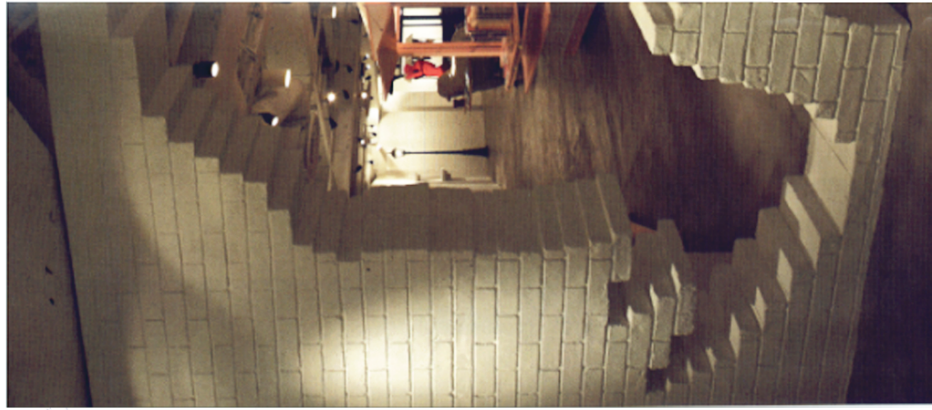


**WHEN HUMBERTO LEON** and Carol Lim founded their New York boutique, Opening Ceremony, in 2002, their mission was to introduce American shoppers to progressive designers from abroad—hence the Olympian name. They've since introduced their own clothing line, launched collaborations with noteworthy American brands (Pendleton) and celebrities (Chloé Sevigny), and added a Los Angeles satellite location in a space that was once Charlie Chaplin's dance studio.

Despite all that, the pair hasn't lost its passion for far-flung fashion, regularly highlighting groups of designers from countries such as Brazil, Sweden, and Germany. In 2008, the store showcased Japan, and at a celebrity-laden fête in late August this year, Tokyo's Shibuya neighborhood gave frenzied welcome to the first overseas Opening Ceremony location.

Leon and Lim built out their stores in New York and Los Angeles mostly by themselves, but for their Japanese venture, they tapped Commune, a five-year-old Los Angeles

design studio known for employing skilled artisans and reviving old-time details for clients like Ace Hotel, Heath Ceramics, and Juicy Couture. The store occupies a building whose eight 1,500-square-foot floors once housed Japan's massive Seibu department-store chain, but Commune partner Roman Alonso says Opening Ceremony bears no resemblance to its predecessor: "A Japanese department store is really a bunch of brands with separate identities. Carol and Humberto have created an environment that ties into an attitude that's not precious."



To tease out a design direction, Commune asked the entrepreneurs to fill a binder with inspirational imagery. They responded with photos of animals and furniture, folded paper, and other seemingly unrelated material that evokes their extensive trip-taking. Commune translated the disparate picture essay into an equally polyglot interior: Within the raw building envelope, a replica Victorian row house contains jewelry, exotic animals prancing through a fake urban park serve as display fixtures, Pendleton merchandise fills the backyard of a *Howdy*

*Doody*-obsessed kid, and Sevigny's collection takes the form of a Memphis-inspired vignette. "We didn't want it to be like Disney," Alonso notes. "But you get a sense of travel by experiencing the style that was injected into each area of the store."

The scenes are freestanding, allowing Leon and Lim to alter the interior as often as the merchandise changes. Regardless of the configuration, "It's almost like you went through the rabbit hole," Alonso says. —DAVID SOKOL