

Doublespace Photography




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## Headfoneshop

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Toronto

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**Batay-Csorba Architects**

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Toronto

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*Meg Graham:* **The Headfoneshop is graphically and spatially arresting. Its succinct and layered design was beautifully executed. The visual ‘noise’ of the powder-coated plates evokes the flutter and movement of sound; as a plane, the plates fold over the wall and ceiling in contrast to the rich, velvety and warm finishes on the floor and millwork.**

Headfoneshop is a 300-sq.-ft. retail space for headphones, earphones, amplifiers and related accessories. The stated design objective was “to celebrate the ritual of listening to music and the process of testing.” Sure enough, the fittings convey that this is high-end gear for serious music lovers and audiophiles. Instead of the typical retail scenario with product being displayed on separate stands, the display system here comprises 255 powder-coated folded metal panels, secured with 765 patinaed brass screws. The panels merge with the architecture to wrap walls and ceiling. This visually immersive aspect will evoke in knowledgeable customers the projecting sound-absorbing foam wedges bristling from every surface in an anechoic chamber, where the very headphones on sale went for testing before going into production, and the acoustic panels over the stage in a concert hall that project out over the heads of audience members in the front rows, such as the shell inside the Tanglewood Music Shed, the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s summer home.



At Headfoneshop, the endless repetition of the white blades playing off against the dark smoked-oak millwork and herringbone flooring, velvet-upholstered seating and soft amber lighting, has a calming, mesmerizing effect that enhances concentration for the task at hand: comparing and evaluating the sound of different devices playing the same selection. Think of it as the aural analogue of wine tasting. Besides acting as display stands for the demonstrator headphones, the bent metal plates conceal wiring, eliminating their clutter as a distraction. They also serve as diffusers that block glare from light sources behind the panels.

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*Kelly Cray:* **It's an impressive "box." For a small space, it packs a lot of punch. I was captivated by the repetition of material, shape and texture, which defines the volume. The dichotomy of classic and modern elements gives the project an approachable quality while strengthening the retail experience.**

*Anna Stranks:* **The interrelationship between architectural design and object is thoughtfully fused together to create a dynamic yet intimate environment. The dramatic, seamless application of form, scale, materiality and the powerful texture of metal plates on the ceiling and walls are beautifully choreographed to enhance the sensory experience within the space.**

*Bennett Lo:* **A simple detail that creates volume.**