HARMONY OF CONTRASTS

Natural/artificial, interior/exterior, geometric/organic: the building designed in Seoul by Mass Studies skillfully amalgamates opposing concepts through harmonious design equilibrium.

A perfect balance. The building that houses the Ann Demeulemeester showroom and was created in Seoul by the Korean-based Mass Studies faithfully reflects the creative approach of the Belgian designer from Antwerp whose collection features a continuous search towards striking a harmonious balance between masculine and feminine elements.

The scheme, which includes the showroom on the ground floor, a multi-brand space underground and a two-floor restaurant with a mezzanine on the top floor, interprets the theme of linguistic duality under many different aspects. The natural/artificial antinomy is without a doubt the image that is captured through a first reading of the structure. The outside building material is a geotextile planted with an herbaceous perennial to form a living façade, a geometric rigor that contrasts with the organic shapes of the interior molded in exposed cement, thereby inverting the habitual morphology of the two elements that become rigorous nature and organic artifice.

The use of greenery is not limited to the building’s decorative elements, but penetrates the structure and is integrated within it to create a continuum between exterior and interior. «This building is not meant to be just another “object” to be experienced externally, but rather as a synthetic organism of nature and artifice», explain the designers, underlining how the equilibration between interior and exterior is a further key to understanding the project. The large glass wall on the ground floor and the material continuity of greenery penetrate the space and accompany the visitor along the stairways and offer an opportunity for dialog between urban space and architectural interior. Underlining dark brown exposed concrete forms an organically shaped ceiling and give the feeling of being inside a natural organism. The formal rigor blends seamlessly with the organic outlines, like the stairway that leading from the ground floor to the basement becomes an architectural, moss-lined element. The skylights and wraparound windows echo the volume of the vertical distribution upward towards the first floor diametrically opposed to the mezzanine on the top floor, interprets the theme of linguistic duality under many different aspects. The natural/artificial antinomy is without a doubt the image that is captured through a first reading of the structure. The outside building material is a geotextile planted with an herbaceous perennial to form a living façade, a geometric rigor that contrasts with the organic shapes of the interior molded in exposed cement, thereby inverting the habitual morphology of the two elements that become rigorous nature and organic artifice.

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