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The Visionair

THIS INSTALLATION IN MILAN IMMERSES VIEWERS IN A “REVERSE POINT OF VIEW”

BY MARIEL ABANES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARCO CAPPELLETTI



The team behind Visionair: Labics' Maria Claudia Clemente and Francesco Isidori

DURING THE RECENTLY concluded Fuorisalone at the Milan Design Week 2018, Rome-based architectural and urban planning firm Labics presented Visionair, an installation that ushers one to a “reverse point of view.”

Experiential concept

The Visionair isn't just a visual pleaser but also aims to dig deeper. The Labics team describes the installation as an experiential concept: “We wanted to design not only an object but a space, an unusual space that invites the visitor to enter a surreal

and upside-down dimension of reality. It is not something to see but to experience.”

The project's idea originated from a reflection on the theme of the reversal of the point of view, a concept used by Elica, the world's leading manufacturer of cooker hoods for household use and the company Labics have collaborated with for the project, to describe the paradigm shift underlying the recent experiments conducted on aspiring hob.

They added, “The act of crossing a threshold, of entering an interior space, alludes to the image of a home, which welcomes and protects. But it is also a

metaphor for a large door through which it is possible to access the Elica universe.”

One enters Visionair and sees an abstract image from the outside and immersive from the inside, due to the choice of mirroring materials. The result is a view that generates a mix of images – broken down, overturned, and recomposed in new forms. As your eyes take it in, the metaphor of a new point of view is presented before you.

Inception

The team took on two operations for this project.

“On one side, we looked for a relation with the Ca Granda (or the University of Milan): the installation, completely independent of the context in terms of language and materials. Then, a strong dialectic relationship with the existing through a close dialogue with the neighboring portico, finding in it its own geometric and spatial matrix. The basic model is generated starting from the rhythm of the portico, a square matrix of 1.17 m—one-third of the intercolumninio—and consists of the intersection of three families of vertical surfaces: two oriented parallel to the porticoes, one inclined at 45°. Starting from this simple geometry, three cutting operations were carried out: the first generates the internal space, the second accommodates the existing tree, making it part of the composition, and the third finally defines the diagonal section that tends towards the sky.”

For the second, they worked a structure. “It’s read as a prototype, a part of a research

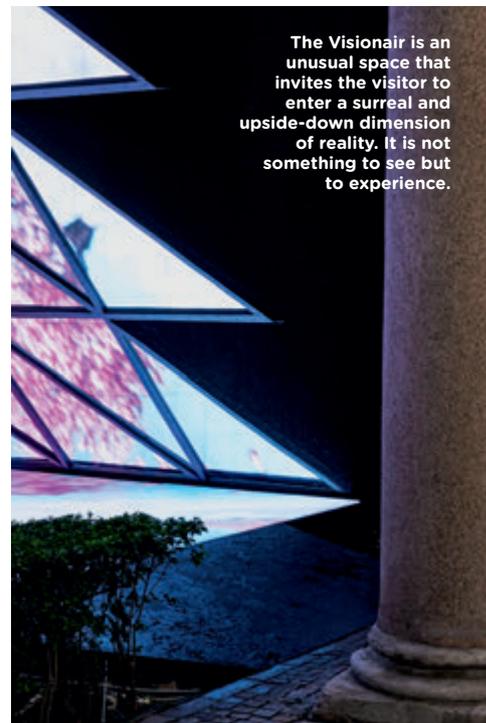


path that Labics has been carrying out for years on the relationship between structure and space and on the idea of the supporting structure as an element of maximum reduction of the architecture.”

The project and construction was finished in 45 days, and everything on their blueprint turned out as they thought it would. Of course, small changes have oc-

curred during construction, but the image worked out as originally planned.

Considering its magnificence, Labics was able to produce the installation using affordable materials. According to the team, “The idea was to use a rough but resistant material like the OBS, a material used for construction, painted black together with a shiny surface like the mirror.” ■



The Visionair is an unusual space that invites the visitor to enter a surreal and upside-down dimension of reality. It is not something to see but to experience.