

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture
Honors theses

Tokyo_Fashion_Museum

by Federica Gomiero and Roberta Musso

Tutor: Chiara Aghemo

Co-tutors: Cesare Griffa, Giovanni La Varra

The thesis is about the project for a fashion museum situated in Tokyo and is the outcome of a period of research that was carried out both in Turin and in Japan. The topic derives from a competition sponsored by Arquitectum in 2010 with the support of the Waseda University of Tokyo. The challenge consisted in designing a 100 meters high tower located at Omotesando-dori, the main luxury shopping avenue in Tokyo. The tower had to harmonize with contemporary Japanese architecture, but at the same time had to become a symbol of vanguard and daring and serve as a landmark for Tokyo's skyline.



Studying the aesthetic principles of Japanese design and observing the architecturally-relevant buildings in the area, one can immediately notice how the Japanese compositional approach is characterized by the research for a geometric and minimalist language which is connected to the aesthetics of denial. Our personal interpretation of these considerations has led to an approach that avoids any kind of excess and tends to keep the building's shape as simple and linear as possible.

The adopted solution is based on a vertical circulation system, located in the structural central core, with staggered volumes containing the exhibition rooms placed around it. This double system is then contained inside a smooth outer skin, obtained extruding the perimeter of the covered area of the site. This process restores the volume of an ideal tower developed from a standard storey plan and puts it in contrast with the irregular volumes of the exhibition blocks. Beside their functional role, the blocks are a reference to the volumes of the surrounding buildings, mirrored in a "vertical Omotesando". Furthermore, the flat roofs of the blocks double as terraces, allowing to meet the requirement for urban balconies as expressed in the competition guidelines.

The curtain wall is conceived as a semi-transparent surface formed by four panel types, sometimes hiding and sometimes revealing the building behind it and letting the two project languages interact with each other. In this way, in accordance with the *Miegakure* technique, a sense of depth is created and the observer's curiosity is stimulated by interrupting some visuals, by hiding the real dimensions of the building and by preventing a complete perception of the volumes. The space created between the outer skin and the internal blocks system can be categorized as a filter area connected to the concept of *en*: much like the *engawa* of the traditional Japanese house, this filter area is an intermediate space that is perceived as internal if observed from the outside of the building, and as external if observed from the inside, creating a perceptive ambiguity that effectively belongs to the Japanese spatial conception and compositional language.



The fashion collections, organized by decade, are placed in light-controlled rooms with no windows, to ensure the preservation of the fabrics and the total control over the exposition lighting.

The external lighting is designed to highlight the tower from a distance, and also to reveal the architectural complexity which lies behind the curtain wall. The panels of the outer skin are lit by RGB colored LEDs: this configuration allows to change dynamically the lighting's color, creating optical effects with a strong scenographic appeal and making the tower easily recognizable in Tokyo's night skyline.



For further information, e-mail:
Federica Gomiero: gomiero.federica@gmail.com
Roberta Musso: apocalisse@gmail.com