

2A

Architecture & Art

ISSN 1735-5192 Winter 2009 Quarterly ISSUE No. 10

AED 40 / U.K 17 £ / USA 25 \$ / GCC 17.5 \$

Boutique city: designing for sale

The 3rd annual 2A International Conference

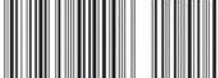


NAKHEEL

Retail Shopping Malls

ISSN 1735-519-2

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Contemporary Retail Projects

PROTOTYPE N [ON]

Temporary architecture serves as the experimental and theoretical base of many of past and future projects of Collaborative Architecture. They are crucibles, where seminal ideas are tested, modified and re-structured for large scale adaptation / implementation in future. **PROTOTYPE N[ON]** is the latest of the experimental installations designed by Lalita and Mujib.

The project was part of a design showcase by Universal Expo and Index Media as a part of their 2008 Trade expo in Mumbai, India. 10 prominent practices in the country were given a space of 5m X 5m to come up with conceptual and space making ideas.

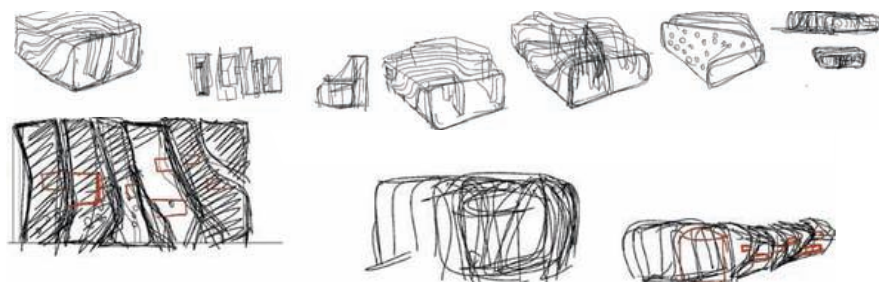
PROTOTYPE N[ON] as the name indicates is a prototypical installation devoid of any imminent / obvious functional connotation.- a pure spatial exercise to test new strategies for conceiving and evolving 'new spaces'. At Index it worked as a concept retail space for the Italian furniture brand MOROSO.

This is one of the seminal *digital projects* from the studio, which explores the potentials of 'construction tectonics' in giving unique character to the space generated. The panels are the building blocks of **PROTOTYPE N[ON]** and they are weaved instead of stacked to form the architectural space.

The thematic spaces of **PROTOTYPE N[ON]**, Concept Pavilion -1, Concept pavilion -2 & Wrap-4 are attempts to delve and question the age old rhetoric of 'Architecture Vs Objects' and probably define this philosophical tenet in a new direction.

The boundary that segregates the two, which was a 'water tight' demarcation in the classical modern architecture, has become more and more porous and almost non-existent. These projects are architecture and 'spatial objects' at the same time, switching roles depending the way one encounters / interprets it.

The project is notable for its extremely simple detail and construction. The panels are made of MDF boards with mild steel frameworks, which were pre-fabricated and erected at site. The whole pavilion is finished with acrylic emulsion paint.



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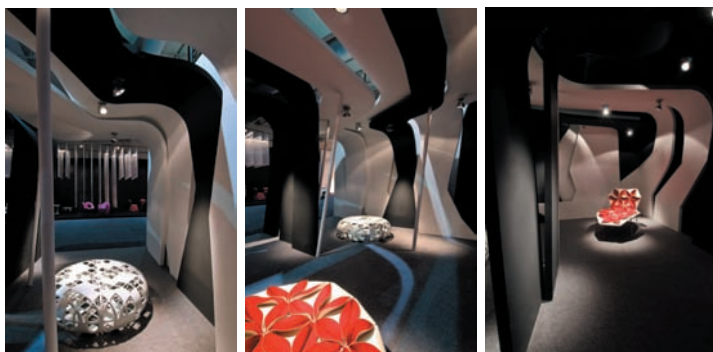
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Client
Completion Year
Area

Index Media
Sep 2008
25 sqm



CONCEPT PAVILION-1

BRIEF

The client was one of the largest lumber wood panel manufacturers in the country and wanted to have a few sleek, knock-down, easily assembled furniture pieces designed as a part of the exhibit in major trade fairs in the country. The design should explore the possibilities of the product in the furniture and interior segment, should be able to communicate to the target audience – professionals, in a powerful way.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project had a potential to be employed as a tool for visual merchandizing and corporate positioning, if only we jettison the client's brief and create a completely new agenda for the same. Hence the furniture design idea was shelved, instead we set out to explore the possibilities 'space' and 'materiality' as a medium for visual merchandizing – quite a lateral step, contrary to the chaotic world dictated by 'Point of Purchase' visual clutter.

A 'mobile' installation was proposed, which would occupy the given spatial limits of a typical exhibit space of 3m x 3m x 2.4m. The sophisticatedly detailed assembly could be assembled and dismantled in one hour and could be stacked easily for long distant transportation.

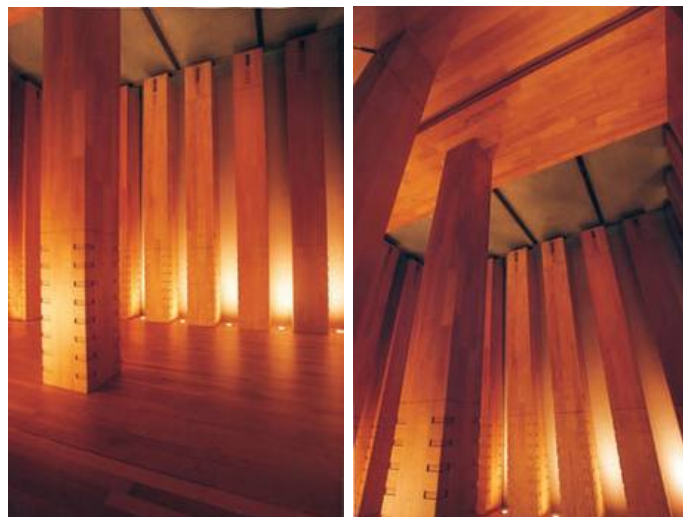
The project delves on the duality of architectural spaces in certain 'time-space' continuum. The idea was to create a spatial situation subjected to 'dual reading', where it dwells in the realms of architectural space and the world of physical objects - a 'Space' to be experienced from within, with its specific material and evocative qualities and as a 'Object' with its tectonic purity and visual interest.

Call it '**OBJECT- SPACE GESTALT**'

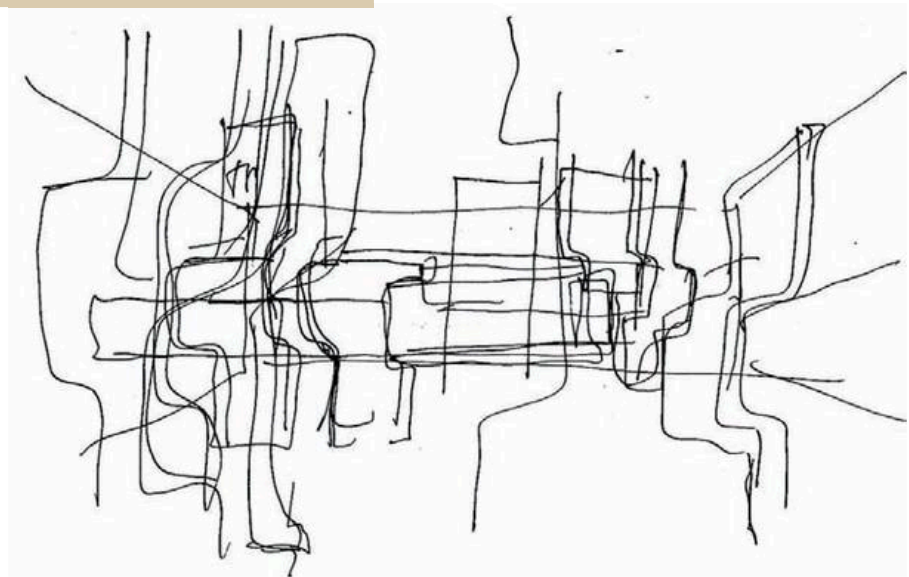
PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT

'Subverting' the brief, is a theme that we have been employing successfully to elevate the projects to un chartered realms of architecture. This project was a bench mark where the highest levels of synergy between the formal architectural idiom and corporate goals were achieved.

The project went on to give a clear edge for the product and tremendously helped to increase the awareness of the material and its application among the target audience.



ARCHITECTURE & EVENT



CONCEPT PAVILION - 2

‘Architectural Space’ by definition suggests an enduring set of images and axioms. It is precisely these theoretical premises the ‘Expo Pavilion’ tried to question and proposes radically different co-ordinates for spatial definition and appreciation.

The primacy of architectural space with its undisputed purpose of ‘tangible engagement’ is replaced for a metaphorical ‘**event –space**’, which is whole less dependent on conventional space defining parameters for its formal expression.

The pavilion is a complex exploration of spatial conditions, where ‘time’, the fourth dimensional theoretical construct, formed an innate part of the program and a tangible spatial index.

The client had laid out a fairly straight forward brief- a pavilion / installation which would convey the future directions of the company and at the same time showcases the different brands the company

represents under one umbrella. The architects restructured the brief, which called for individual kiosks for different brands, with an entire narrative, which takes the spectator through the event, unraveling the motto, innovations and the future direction of Titan Industries.

The design apart from the architectural and the programmatic agenda had to address, vital issues of construction, transportation and other site related logistics.

The layout is a spatial matrix with a area of 1450 sq ft on raised level, with distinct domains for the different brands Titan represents, which are in turn unified by the powerful spatial the narrative. The pavilion is designed to maximize the interface between the audience and the products, prodding the participants to be the part of the entire narrative, as the pavilion unfolds before them.

The **TIME ZONE** is loosely knit, creating fairly independent ‘Sub Zones’. The ‘**Sub Zones**’ ensure brand autonomy and maximum visibility to each brands present. The modular linear system facilitate to narrate a story about a brand or to highlight remarkable exemptions / achievements in the case of ‘**Hour Roof Zone**’

The displays maim the window shopping (eye level), island (shallow & horizontal), and wall (center) to create varied visual stimuli and display sequence, avoiding the general ‘art gallery effect’ to the participants.

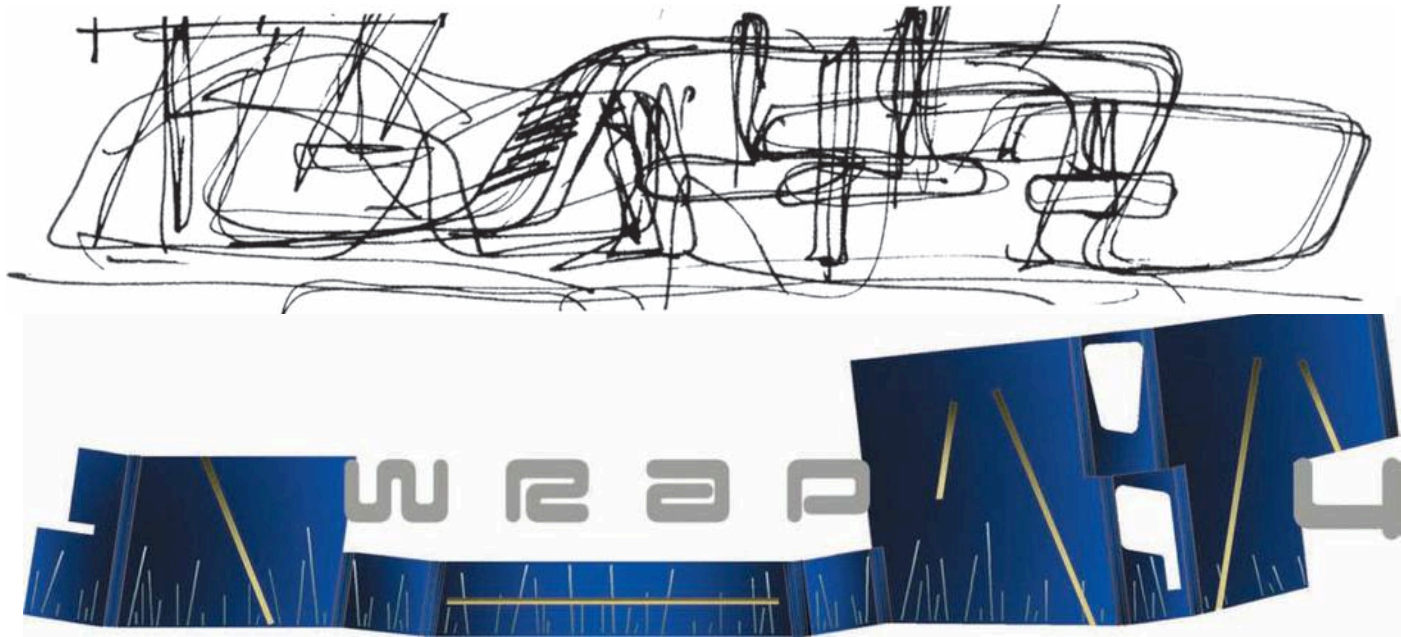
The panels are modular, with standard height of 3000 mm and 2400mm, with modules of 150, 300, 450, 600, 900 & 1200 mm in width. These could be put together in a multitude of ways to create desired display systems.

‘**Hour Roof Zone**’ is the specialty area, where the very first and the very best are displayed to create a compelling narration of the past, present and future of Titan Industries. The zone gets its name from the unusual canopy, that hovers above it, which changes color as hours pass by, depicting the very essence of time and spatiality. (Unfortunately the LED lights were compromised for fluorescent lights due to budgetary constraints)

Expandability and adaptability are two key issue addressed by the architects in the project. The panels could be arranged to have a number of configurations to fit to the space available and could expand and contract depending on site situations.



WRAP- 4



Urban Flux Vs Pro-active Retailing

The project forms the part of the firm's continuing explorations in spatial syntax by altering the classical space defining co-ordinates / tools through non-hierarchical tectonics and even combing the users / products to that end.

Our explorations on 'wrap' is neither an isolated nor the very first tectonic tool employed to generate new paradigms. Digital architecture has made the seamless space not just a reality but the inevitable 'raison detre'. Shuhei Endo's celebrated toilet blocks is one of the remarkable built works in the early stages of 'Wrap' tectonics. Digital architecture generated a whole new genre of architectonics, but not just that, it also made it a reality beyond the digital world, which fundamentally changed the way architecture is conceived and constructed at present.

Contemporary architecture has been steadfastly trying to acquire tools / theories to shed the classical baggage of 'over played rational and spatial determinacy' of modernism. Post modernism tried it on weak and less convincing premises did precisely little in spite of its hoodwinking heroics. The critical regionalists' -read Barragan, Scarpa, Moneo, Siza, Zumthor, Correa etc., infused the regional nuances to challenge proselytizing rational of classical modernism- the very tenets, it gallantly declared sacrilegious and profane.

The works of critical regionalists did bring in much needed fresh air in the asphyxiating rational march of modernism. Apart from the theoretical variant, this brand of architecture remained as franchisee of individual practices for lack of a universal tool for architects to adopt.

Digital architecture just provided that universal platform. Architecture acquired the 'indeterminate' character it has been seeking unsuccessfully for centuries. Space making became speculative, accidental and at times beyond the limits of conventional reasoning. This is the realm of architecture we have been exploring through 'Wrap' series.

An unusual brief "Car displays, inevitably are 'parking-lots'! Give us a nice back drop for the product display" and a strategic urban location, which smacked the main street of the city became the architectural direction and the determining design parameters.

The brief was to insert the whole gamut of program for a middle-segment brand in a 12,000 sq ft old warehouse. The showroom abuts the main street with no set back, having a 60m long, uninterrupted façade.

The ensuing architectural response did exactly the opposite of brief, by positioning the 'parking-lot' (vehicular display) as the 'raison detre' and the anchoring element in the showroom.



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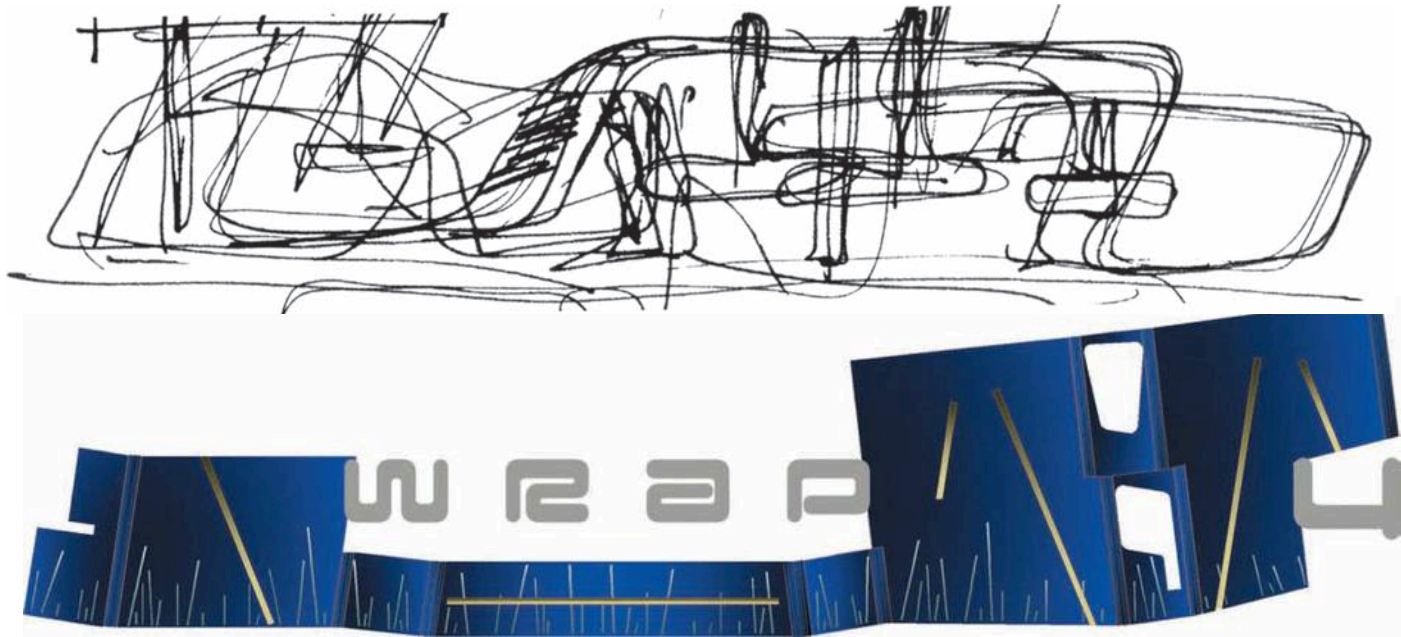
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Mudra Home Decor, Mumbai
Powertech, Calicut
Artic Systems, Cochin
Jan 2007
12,000 Sq ft

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The disposition of the showroom posed a unique architectural challenge to create a 360 degree viewing, as the façade abuts the road and the customers enter from the backside of the showroom. Unlike most of the stores, which are designed for front viewing, here the design has to address the changing experiential views of the spectator.

The wrap, which merges the floor, wall, ceiling and the products into a single, unified entity establishes the vital link between the showroom, the display and the people in the showroom on one hand and the speeding traffic and the passer-bys on the street - a 60 m ‘Billboard’ mimicking the flux of movement on the street.

The ‘hanging counters’ are the customer interfaces in the showroom, which are hung from the ceiling as the name indicates. These could be slid and rotated to a new position to maneuver the vehicles in the space.

The sinusoidal curve separates the private domains-lounges from the public area.

The spiral stair is also equally ‘engineered’ with custom fabricated, 3 dimensionally profiled cantilevered steps.

