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ORA ITO
DESIGNS NEW STAND
AND FURNISHINGS
FOR PREMIÈRE VISION

As the world’s leading organizer of events and trade shows for the creative fashion industry, Première Vision has been turning to some of the world’s biggest names in design to create the stands, furniture and fittings for its shows since 2002.

The most recent stands and furnishings were designed by Jean-Michel WILLMOTTE in 2002, and by Eric JOURDAN and Francesca AVOSSA in 2010.

This February 2018, Première Vision Paris* is inaugurating a new stand for Première Vision Fabrics, its textile show, and Première Vision Yarns, its yarn show.

The new showcase has been created by designer Ora Ito, winner of an international competition organized by the TETRO agency, which was commissioned by Première Vision to select new designers and coordinate the competition to redesign the ‘city’ of Première Vision Paris.

The proposal by Ora Ito is an exclusive stand and furniture concept, which particularly highlights the creativity of exhibitors, especially in terms of lighting the collections and the ambient full-LED lighting. It also includes new options, such as video screens built into the stand walls.

“I worked to create a virtuous and homogeneous microcosm, a fresh, reinvented showcase where each element is eco-friendly and thought-out all along the manufacturing process,” explains Ora Ito. His design brings together the strong values of Première Vision: aesthetic research, access to new technologies and environmental awareness.

The development and prototype of the new stand and furniture were undertaken by GL EVENTS, a world-class provider of integrated solutions and services for events (a 49% shareholder in Première Vision SA), which also managed the production of 35,000 m² to equip and ensure installation at the Parc des Expositions Paris Nord Villepinte at each session of the show.

www.gl-events.com
Ora Ito, you won the competition to create the new stand and furniture concept at Première Vision Paris. What was your view of this trade show, this international meeting for the textile industry?

Actually I’ve been familiar with the show for a long time, especially because of the big revival of French fashion creativity in the late 90s. Première Vision is the show that accompanied that new generation of designers who emerged in the late 90s.

Personally, that’s when I discovered Première Vision. I came to observe, to clarify my future playing field.

So the show reminded me of my childhood, my teenage years. I was attending the show when I was 18, and at that time I didn’t know in which creative field I’d find my own expression. Today textiles are used in design, fashion and architecture, so as a material it has become very important in the creative domain. So right away the show reminded me of that, the start of adulthood.

Would you say it’s a show that offers a vision of creativity and the stimulation of designers’ thought processes?

This is the show where you go shopping for your collections. Clearly. You come to find inspiration, you come to see all the new innovations, and you get a very instinctive glimpse of the colours and materials that will be dominant in the future. It’s a very good catalyst for everything that is going on in terms of textile and creative environments.

So how did you address that? It’s easy to say, but how can you translate that, concretely?

I approached it the same way that Jean Prouvé approached his chairs, furniture or mobile architecture: from a very engineering point of view. In the end, the system is always beautiful. A well-made system works well. Fine engineering, fine mechanics - it’s always beautiful and timeless. When we look at a Jean Prouvé project there is something timeless about it precisely because it doesn’t match any style, but is actually a response to the structure. I really got into that idea of structure, frame... a framework that actually became a system in the end. We’re past that stand where you just put a wall on both sides, a partitioned space. We create a system, and that is why even 20 years from now the project will still work.

So it’s a modular system, a technique and an assembly that welcomes other materials. That was one of the points that made your project different from the very beginning, the fact that this metallic system can also call on other materials.

Exactly. There’s also this versatility, it’s ability to change, to welcome another material as part of the frame that clothes the walls. But in addition to clothing the walls, it is also structural, it has a real function. There is nothing gratuitous, superfluous, too much or too little of any element. It’s all just the right amount. With outstanding work from GL and their partners for the section manufacturing...
and executive production.

It seems a very technical approach with an innovative dimension, a deliberate desire to break with established codes.

Not necessarily breaking any codes. I wanted to think up something new that resembled me, but that was mainly serving a function - and therefore the best possible system for the people who will be taking these stands. They will have a modular system, they can use it as an extension of their identity while remaining in a very defined framework. They have neutral furniture, which can, in effect, easily blend with their own identity. It takes a whole set of things to succeed in creating a project that is timeless, intelligent, functional, mobile, easy to assemble and dismount, easy to store ... The idea of stacking them is part of the beauty of the object. There is a certain logic.

So you have a very functional, very practical approach for stand users, whether they are visitors or exhibitors. A very practical approach for the show itself.

The material is also showcased with these frames. We really created the perfect setting for a material to come and create the streets. It's like a city!

The scale of the project is huge. What was your approach to the PREMIERE VISION city, which occupies the whole PARIS EXPO VILLEPINTE?

It is a micro-city, a kind of medina, built on the same principle as New York in fact with its perpendicular streets. What's interesting about a good project is that there isn't in fact much to say. The more you have to say, the more you start layering ideas on top of each other and in the end the less you have. This is about simplicity

How is this simplicity translated visually, from an overall point of view?

In the most neutral way possible, the most textured way possible, because the light reflects the material and creates something slightly random, slightly uncontrolled. As the project is something that is very controlled, it's important to inject some poetry into it. The poetry comes from this uncontrolled aspect, from the reflection of light on the materials, etc.

Light reflection on the materials was nonetheless a complex issue, since it had to be both aesthetically appealing and also meet certain specifications.

It evolved in fact because there arose various requirements as to maintenance, neutrality ... All these things are important. We have to feel the quality. That's what is showcased. It's a quality object; it's not the preconceived idea of a stand.

This project also includes a global design line of furniture and lighting.

What was your design approach for this new collection? What interested me in the furniture was, again, the idea of reusing the materials.

Cela a contribué à donner un plus à ta réponse et à dessiner ton mobilier puisque tu es parti d’un postulat de feuille en fait.

Oui bien sûr, de feuille pliée qui donne en fait leurs lignes à tout le mobilier et toute l’identité des chaises, des tables, des armoires... toute la ligne.

Yes, and just to put that in focus, the Jourdan Avossa show had a Corian covering that was miles long, and this was truly one of the strengths of your project: to say you were going to recycle the Corian, to give it a new life.

Exactly, and that's really part of all the renewal found in my work. And I really liked the idea a lot, because at a given moment in the presentation there was a diagram with the process of recuperating the old stands, bringing them back to the atelier, folding them, transforming them, and bringing them back. And yes, this is one of the points that the jury really appreciated. Beyond the very functional, very timeless, very modern aspect of my proposal, there was also this recycling aspect, which is almost obvious in the end. You might not think about it, but in the end it seems obvious.
This gave something extra to your solution and to the design of your furniture, as you started with the premise of a sheet.
Yes, true - folded sheets that inspire the lines of all the furnishings, and the whole identity of the chairs, tables, cabinets ... the entire line.

Light was essential as well. As fabrics are being exhibited, how they are revealed by the light is very important.
Yes, and the light has to be integrated, because it underpins and even caresses the whole space. I tried to make sure that there is as little 'object' as possible and everything is unitary to avoid any confusion. You can't have any confusion because there are so many elements that participants want to a focus on - their brand, their product, their textiles, fabrics, colours...

The design of the lamp itself is also very powerful.
The lamp is beautiful. It's in the spirit of the lamp I designed for ARTEMINE, which won me several prizes. That was the «One Line», a lamp that's been copied quite a bit. The idea is to punctuate space with a line that will curve and signify space.

So it's a global line with an approach to light that's very architectural and very integrated into the general system. Maximum simplification for the benefit of use.
At a certain point, competing with so many talented people.... I took this competition very personally. There were all the greatest names currently working in architecture and design. So for me the angle was not to say, we're taking part in a design competition where we are going to impose our identity, but instead, to try to understand what the challenges are for a show like this - how can it be of use for 7 years, how can we provide an assembly process that's a pleasure instead of a pain? How can we have a system that can be broken down in other forms, be mobile, adapt to any configuration? How do we integrate all the functions as much as possible, so brands can exist in this space, without imposing our own identity?
And - and this is what's hard - how to simultaneously create a skilful balance between a strong, identifying product with a personality, while also remaining fairly transparent and minimalist?
How would you briefly summarise your overall approach?
As a system, actually. And there’s also the modularity, the timelessness and especially the integration. It’s a little like a car, where everything is integrated, the same object integrates a dashboard, an engine ... that was more or less the idea of the project.
And also, as I was saying, I was making a reference to Jean Prouvé. I think he’s a good reference because when we look at his work, it’s devoid of any style or flourish, leaving only the appearance of the system. It’s all the beauty of the intelligence of how these systems function.

Was it an atypical subject for you? In terms of approach: dealing with the show universe as a whole... It’s something I had never done before. There are parts of it that I’m happier with than others...
Essentially, I think it’s an overall approach.

As an exercise was it closer to architecture, urbanism or both?
To me, it was more like elaborating a piece of furniture in a system. Architecture no, because here we’re dealing with lightweight things, nothing is really heavy. We’re still in the object category. More like smart large furniture. Not even large furniture, smart systems. An object alone is nothing. There isn’t a single object to remember in fact. If we must remember something, it’s the system as a whole.
For me everything fits in the same system: you have a system of partitions and integration and different elements - fabric, lighting all that ... And then you have mobile objects that are freer, that have no profile, don’t have all these attaching systems and plugs, and also fulfil the recycling idea and thus not losing what was there ... For me it was unthinkable to say that we would waste kilos or even tonnes of Corian.

There was an awareness of sustainability and also of scale, essentially.
Yes and reduction too. There aren’t any more materials than needed, and that’s interesting. There’s no notion of masonry, we understand we’re in a system. We acknowledge the fact of being mobile. We acknowledge the fact of being in a place that isn’t permanent and immovable, but which has to change and welcome other events. That’s interesting too.

You invented a framework that’s a little like a textile in fact. A bit like a mesh you squared off.

Not really me, that was more or less imposed, but let’s say that we reinforced this frame or matrix aspect.

Yes and if tomorrow PV opens a second department or another area of the show, it can also be displayed in a different ‘skin’. Thanks to this system we can create a neighbourhood in fact.
Just use wood panels instead of metal or concrete ones, and it’s completely different. It’s completely chameleon-like, it can change its look from one second to another.

And finally, your last word?
If you don’t have the angle, you don’t have the right approach.
In the end, for me, the only way to find an interest in doing this project was to see something strong and impactful. To contribute something new. What I mean is, it doesn’t have to be a stand, it’s the same thing for a hotel or a global architecture project.
In 1997, Ora Ito hijacked top brands with his virtual Vuitton and Apple products that instantly became global icons of the digital revolution. A phenomenon in pop culture, he is the youngest designer of his generation to collaborate with the crown jewels of luxury goods and industry, after the huge multi-acclaimed success of his aluminium Heineken bottle. Cassina, Cappellini, Bouygues, Alstom, Laguiole, Zanotta and Accor highly rate his sculptural design that has become a mark of modernity.

The multidisciplinary, transversal Ora Ito studio has since gone from telephone to architecture, from furniture to the hotel industry, from perfume to tramways and from flying saucers to restaurants, manipulating symbols to simplify them. A tenacious methodology for which he has invented a neologism: simplexity, decoding today’s DNA to conceptualise future mutations. His fluid vocabulary materialises movement reinventing streamlining in the digital era and giving shape to the desires of our contemporary society. Ora Ito is a unique player in the international design arena. Wallpaper ranked him amongst the top 40 most influential designers under 40 years old. He was appointed Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres in 2011.

In 2013, he created MAMO, an art centre on the roof terrace of the mythical Cité Radieuse designed by Le Corbusier in Marseille. A historical and contemporary site high in the sky, with a 360° view that summarises his passion for levitation and lightness. ‘Defying the laws of gravity creates feelings that go beyond aesthetics.’ The greatest contemporary artists from Xavier Veilhan to Dan Graham have exhibited here, and Ito also launched an architectural collaboration with Daniel Buren, the master of French conceptual art.

For the past ten years, Ora Ito has divided his time between Paris and Marseille. With MAMO, he hopes to build bridges between delight and new encounters. And we are all invited.
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