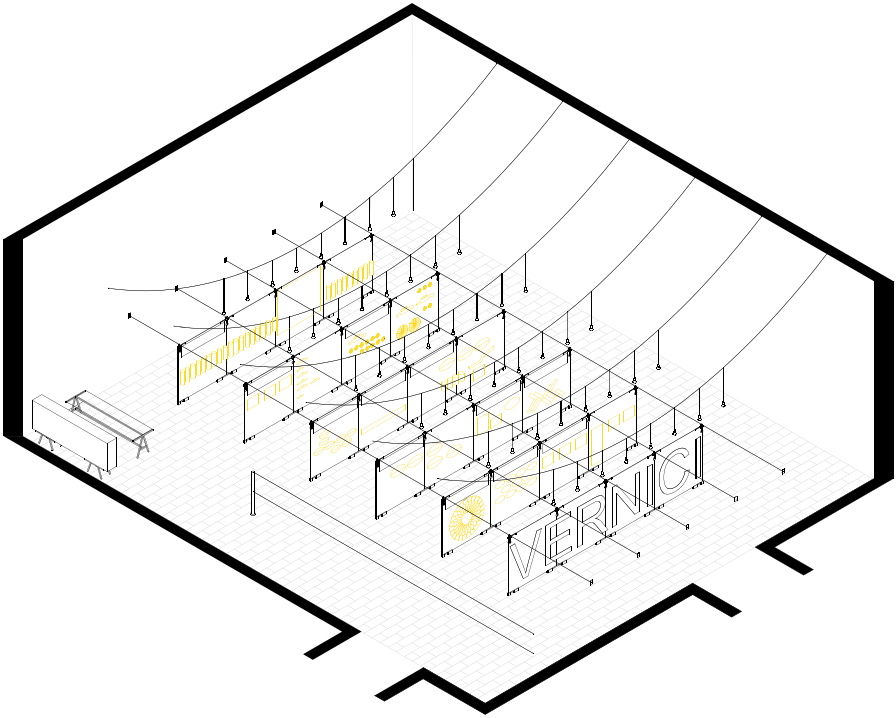
sheet

Montecatini Pavilion, Paint Hall
37th Milan Fair, Milan



Achille & Pier Giacomo Castiglioni
1959

Transparency, color and technical precision

In 1959, for the XXXVII edition of the Fiera Campionaria di Milano, Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni were commissioned by Montecatini to design an exhibition space dedicated to Duco, the company's innovative line of paints. The resulting Sala delle Vernici (Paint Hall) was not just a commercial showcase—it was a spatial manifesto. With its radical transparency, meticulous construction, and thoughtful integration of graphic design, the installation represented a milestone in temporary exhibition design, demonstrating how technical precision and visual clarity could be merged to extraordinary effect.

Conceived as a minimal and immersive environment, the installation revolved around six large display panels composed of tempered glass plates, each measuring 2×2 meters with a thickness of 10–12 mm. These panels were mounted vertically on a light and discreet structural system, composed of elegant bases anchored to the floor and a network of steel cables suspended from the ceiling and connected to the walls using precision-engineered metal tensioners and fixing plates.

This subtle structural choreography created a spatial rhythm of weightless glass planes, through which vibrant painted samples appeared to float. The visual focus of the exhibition was entirely on color—saturated, luminous, and omnipresent—enhanced by six lines of 500-watt catenary lamps strung diagonally across the space. The lighting was meticulously calibrated to amplify the brilliance and depth of the Duco finishes, transforming the display into a chromatic spectacle.

Max Huber, one of Italy's most influential graphic designers, collaborated on the project, developing a graphic language that communicated both the versatility and the modern appeal of Duco paints. His compositions—bold, geometric, and color-intensive—matched the spirit of the space, contributing to its overall dynamism.

The design of the space itself was immaterial and silent. White walls and a white ceiling reflected and diffused light, reinforcing the perception of an ethereal, nearly dematerialized environment. In this controlled abstraction, color became

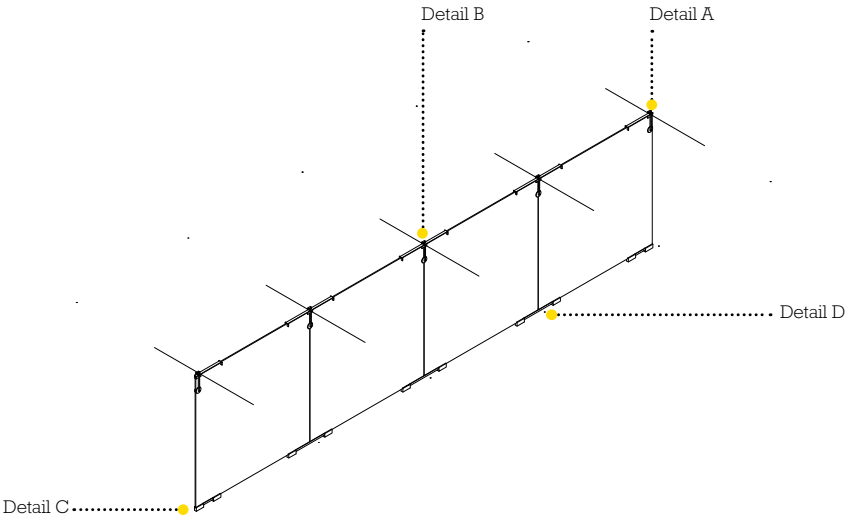


Fig. 30. Construction detail - Exhibition wall of the exhibit | Axonometric view.

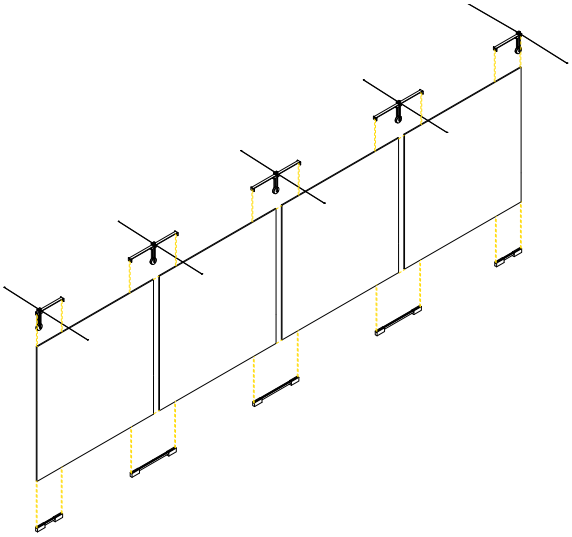


Fig. 31. Construction detail - Exhibit wall of the exhibit | Axonometric exploded view.

not only the content but the very atmosphere of the exhibition. The layout encouraged a continuous flow of visitors, subtly guided by a low, linear partition toward the exit. This small but strategic architectural gesture ensured a coherent experience without the need for explicit signage.

A key aspect of the project lies in its structural detailing. The Castiglioni brothers did not seek to conceal the technical elements of the installation. On the contrary, they celebrated them. The junctions, brackets, and cables were not hidden but exposed and integrated into the aesthetic language of the exhibition, reinforcing its honesty and technical sophistication.

The tempered glass panels were securely fastened to metal plates with engineered tensioners to ensure both stability and visual delicacy. The load-bearing system was designed to withstand vibrations and dynamic stresses while maintaining an appearance of effortlessness. The tensioned cable network bore the structural loads invisibly, creating an optical illusion of floating elements in space. These details exemplify the Castiglionis' philosophy: every component, no matter how utilitarian, had to contribute both functionally and formally to the architectural whole.

Additionally, the Sala delle Vernici included an informational area for staff to interact with visitors, enriching the exhibition with an educational and dialogical dimension. It provided a tactile and intellectual complement to the visual experience, underlining the materiality and technical innovation of Duco products while allowing for direct engagement with the public.

This project is a prime example of how architecture and exhibition design can transcend mere display, becoming a sensory and intellectual exploration of space and material. The Sala delle Vernici demonstrated how temporary exhibitions could function as laboratories for architectural experimentation, where lightness, order, and color converge in a language that is as rigorous as it is poetic.

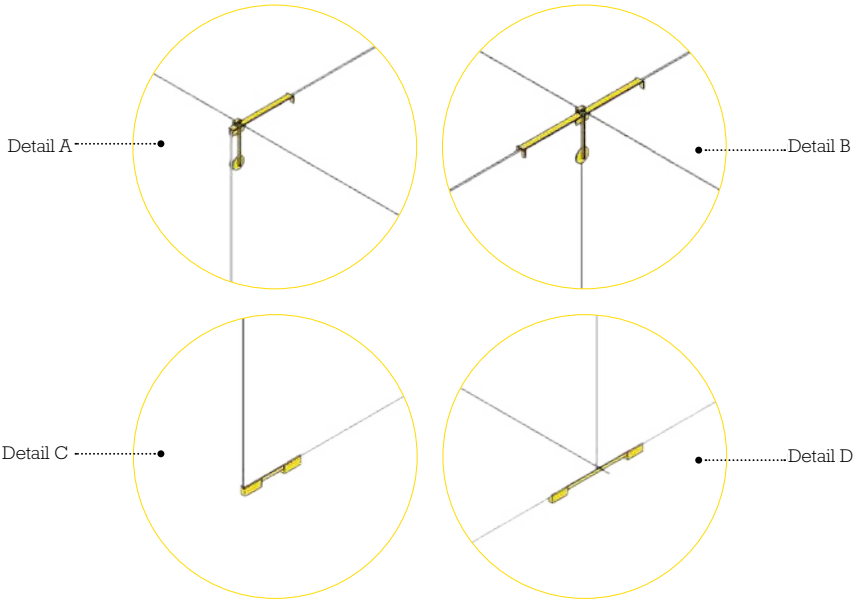


Fig. 32. Construction detail - Wall joints | Axonometric views.

QR code for 3D model

Link for 3D model

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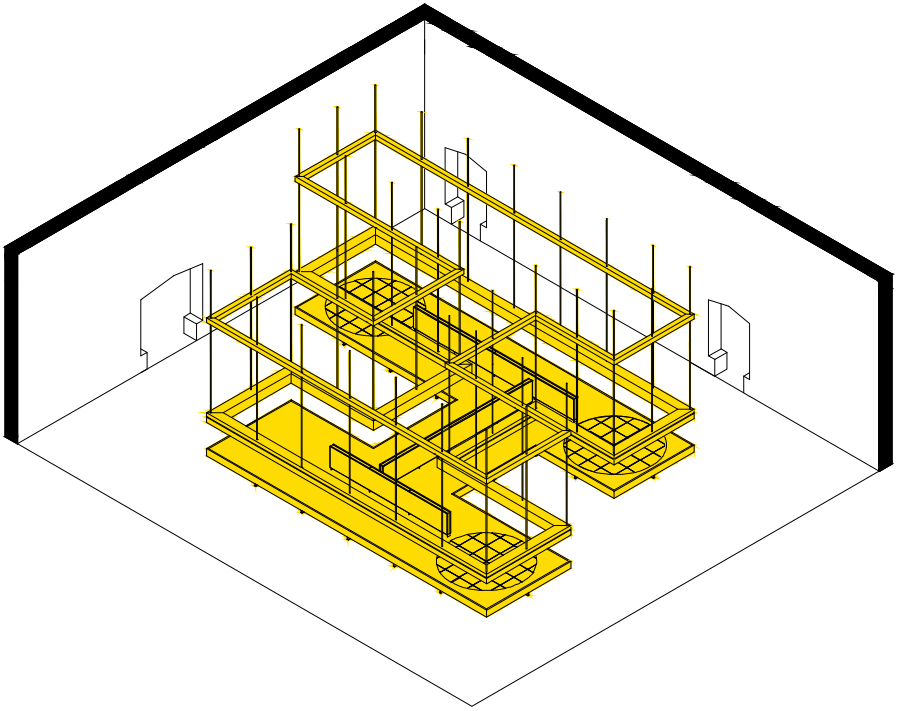
sheet

Montecatini in Southern Italy
Montecatini Pavilion, Milan Fair, Milan



Franco Albini, Franca Helg
1961

Order and fluidity for an open system

In 1961, at the Fiera Campionaria di Milano, architects Franco Albini and Franca Helg designed the exhibition La Montecatini nel sud d'Italia, a landmark example of industrial exhibition design that merged rationalist principles with expressive spatial choreography. Hosted within the Montecatini pavilion, the installation aimed to communicate the industrial expansion and infrastructural efforts of Montecatini—one of Italy's largest chemical and engineering firms—through a language that was both technical and accessible.

The exhibition introduced a refined modular system based on the repetition of an "H" form, deployed horizontally and articulated across three levels. This structural rhythm created a coherent spatial matrix that guided the display of materials while dissolving any notion of a fixed or privileged viewpoint. Visitors were invited to engage with the space through a fluid, non-hierarchical experience that enabled a multiplicity of perspectives.

At the ground level, the lower arms of the "H" supported industrial models, illuminated plexiglass graphics, and photographic panels. These elements highlighted the scope and specificity of Montecatini's operations in Southern Italy, providing both technical and territorial narratives. The central level featured a horizontal black metal band containing spot lighting systems—functioning as both lighting infrastructure and spatial demarcation. The top level consisted of another metal band used to bounce diffused light off the white ceiling, creating an ambient, indirect illumination that unified the space with a sense of airiness and balance.

One of the most distinctive aspects of the installation was the use of red steel tension rods that suspended the metal bands with surgical precision. These thin structural elements not only provided stability but also introduced a strong graphic character into the space. The sharp contrast between the black bands, red rods, and white ceiling amplified the visual clarity and formal rigor of the installation.

The material palette—metal profiles, plexiglass, and backlit photographs—was

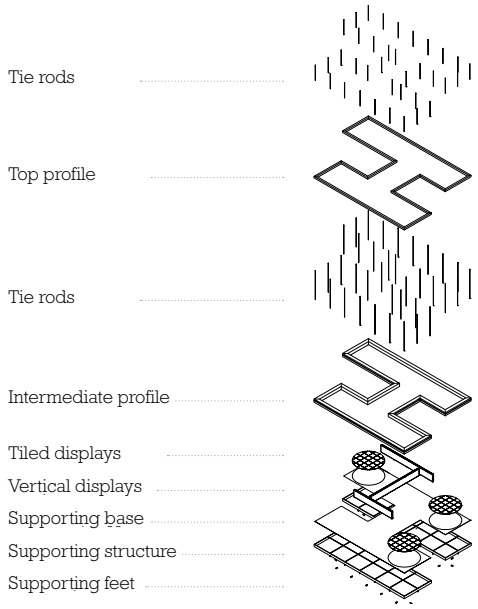


Fig. 33. Main structure of the layout | Axonometric exploded view.

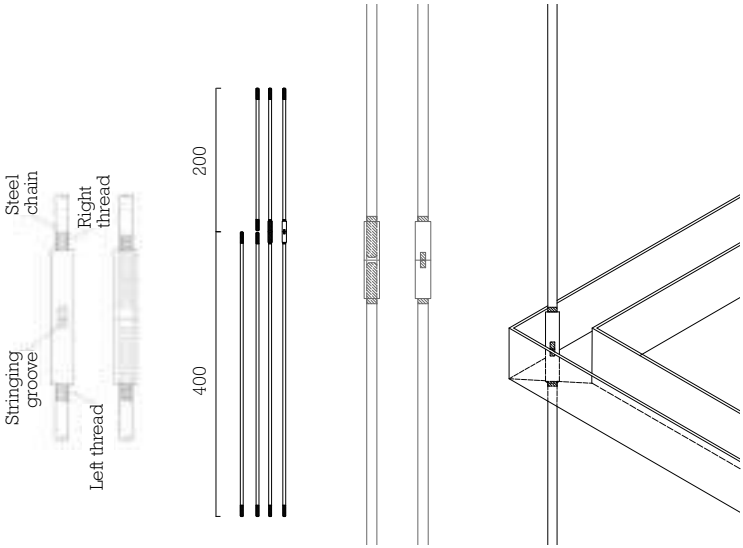


Fig. 34. Construction detail - Tie rods of the structure| Axonometric view and dimensioned elevations.

chosen to resonate with the industrial identity of Montecatini. However, Albini and Helg did not merely stage an industrial showcase. They orchestrated a democratic and elegant environment, where each exhibit component—whether a machine model or a diagram—was treated with equal visual dignity. The strict horizontal logic of the spatial layout reinforced this equality, enabling a balanced and legible presentation of information.

The technical sophistication of the display was underscored by the simplicity of its modular construction: C-section steel profiles, threaded rods with couplers and locknuts, and prefabricated paneling elements. These ensured both structural stability and ease of assembly, reflecting Albini and Helg's commitment to efficient yet expressive construction. A gridded ceiling design further contributed to visual order, housing lighting fixtures and hiding mechanical components without interrupting the spatial language of the exhibit.

This exhibition was more than a communication platform for an industrial giant—it was a manifesto for a new kind of spatial narrative, one that prioritized clarity, inclusiveness, and elegance. The architectural solution combined functionality, aesthetics, and logic in ways that continue to inspire contemporary exhibition design.

Studying La Montecatini nel sud d'Italia offers valuable insights into the architectural strategies that make exhibitions not just containers of content, but active, participatory experiences. The exhibition foregrounded the importance of structural legibility, visual equilibrium, and strategic use of light, all of which were guided by Albini and Helg's broader design ethics—rooted in modernism, but sensitive to the sensory and symbolic dimension of space.

The project reminds us that even in corporate or industrial contexts, architecture can speak a refined, democratic language—transforming technical content into spatial poetry.

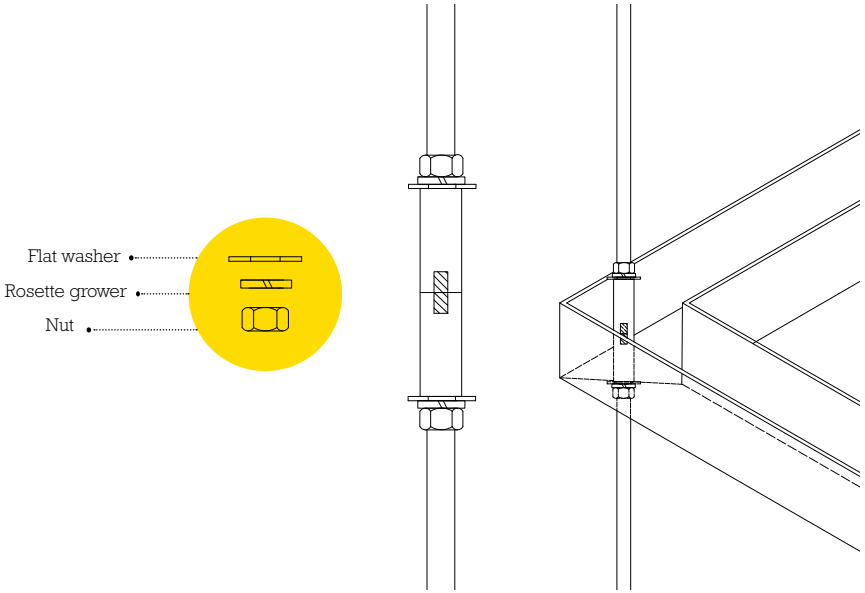


Fig. 35. Construction detail - Joints and components of the tie rods | Axonometric and elevation views.

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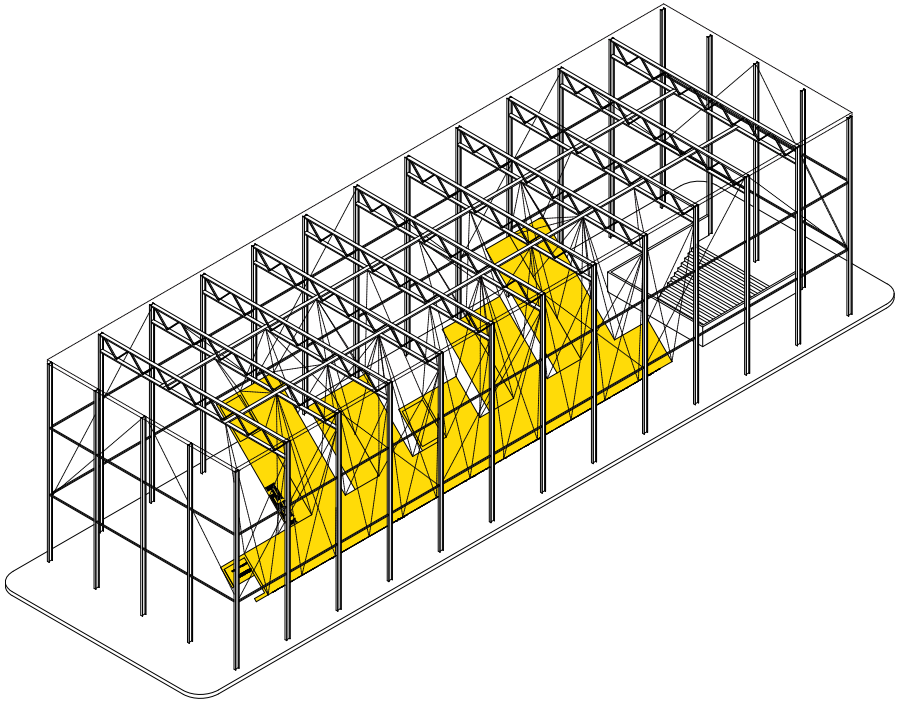
RAI Pavilion
43rd Milan Fair, Milan



Achille & Pier Giacomo Castiglioni
1965

An immersive architecture

In 1965, Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni collaborated with Enzo Mari to create an iconic exhibition structure for RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana) at the XLIII Fiera Campionaria di Milano. The pavilion, titled "Collegamenti perfetti e complessi mezzi tecnici portano in casa gli avvenimenti di ogni giorno" ("Perfect Connections and Complex Technical Means Bring Daily Events into the Home"), was conceived as an immersive, modular, and flexible system. It is a landmark example of how spatial narrative, structural intelligence, and visitor engagement could converge in a single architectural gesture.

The conceptual heart of the installation was a long, suspended horizontal channel—essentially a giant truss—measuring approximately 36 by 11 meters. From this channel, five vertical cylindrical volumes or "cannocchiali" (telescopes) rose at different heights, each representing a stage in the process of television broadcasting: from production to transmission, reception, and public fruition. Visitors entered the structure and followed a mandatory linear path, experiencing a choreographed journey through sound, light, and form. The natural light filtering from the open tops of the "cannocchiali" added a sensorial, almost sacred quality to the progression. A continuous audio backdrop reinforced the immersive dimension of the exhibit.

Structurally, the pavilion rested on a trilitic modular steel frame system with a corrugated metal roof, reaching heights of up to 10 meters. The frame allowed for optional enclosing panels to be installed, although the original 1965 edition remained partially open. The truss was suspended using steel cables anchored to the pavilion's frame, creating a floating sensation that emphasized its lightweight and adaptable construction. The installation was fabricated by Ferroedil Moraschina and Impresa Mari with a reported budget of 20 million lire.

The use of modularity and repetition in the truss and telescopic units embodied the Castiglioni brothers' commitment to rational, reconfigurable design. The structure was not only visually compelling but also demonstrated a sophistica-

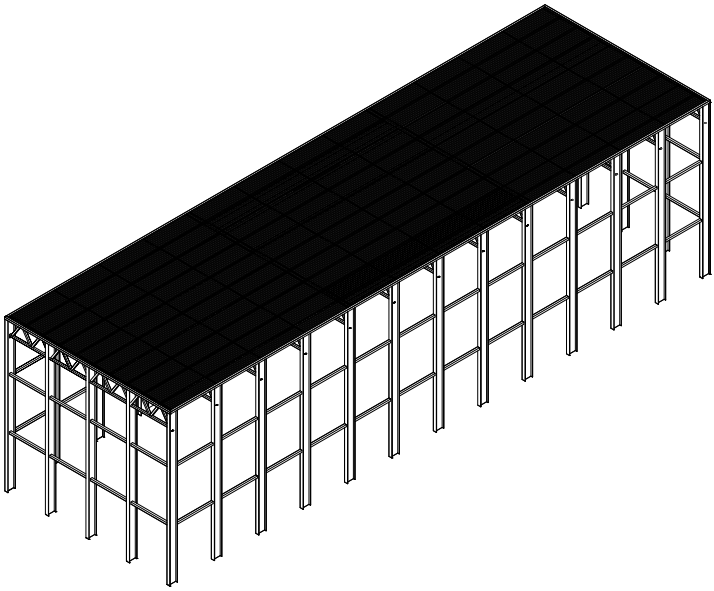


Fig. 36. Supporting structure of the exhibit | Axonometric view.

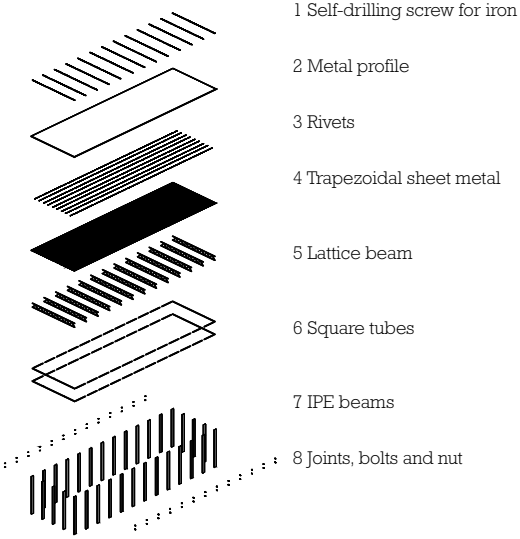


Fig. 37. Supporting structure of the exhibit | Axonometric exploded view.

ted understanding of temporary architecture's demands—ease of assembly, disassembly, and reuse. These traits remain essential for contemporary sustainable exhibition design.

The design invited the audience to become an integral part of the space: as they walked through, their presence altered the visual and acoustic dynamics of the environment. This inversion of the traditional spectator role made the pavilion not just a container for content but an active, performative space—what Achille Castiglioni once referred to as a "millepiedi" (millipede), referencing the procession-like flow of bodies through the suspended tunnel.

Enzo Mari's graphic contributions—especially typographic treatments and signage—provided a conceptual and visual coherence to the narrative, bridging the architectural and communicative elements. His role, though less often discussed than that of the Castiglioni brothers, was vital to the success of the project, reinforcing the idea that exhibition design is a collaborative, interdisciplinary endeavor.

The RAI Pavilion at the 1965 Milan Fair stands as a significant precursor to contemporary interactive and experiential exhibitions. Its innovation lies not in technological spectacle but in its ability to use basic architectural elements—steel frames, cable suspension, controlled pathways, and natural light—to produce a meaningful, democratic, and educational space. In a time before digital media and immersive projections, this installation managed to communicate complexity through clarity, and interactivity through structure.

Ultimately, the RAI Pavilion remains a masterclass in temporary architecture. It demonstrates how thoughtful spatial design can turn abstract content into embodied experience, and how modular systems can elevate functional requirements into poetic, lasting impressions.

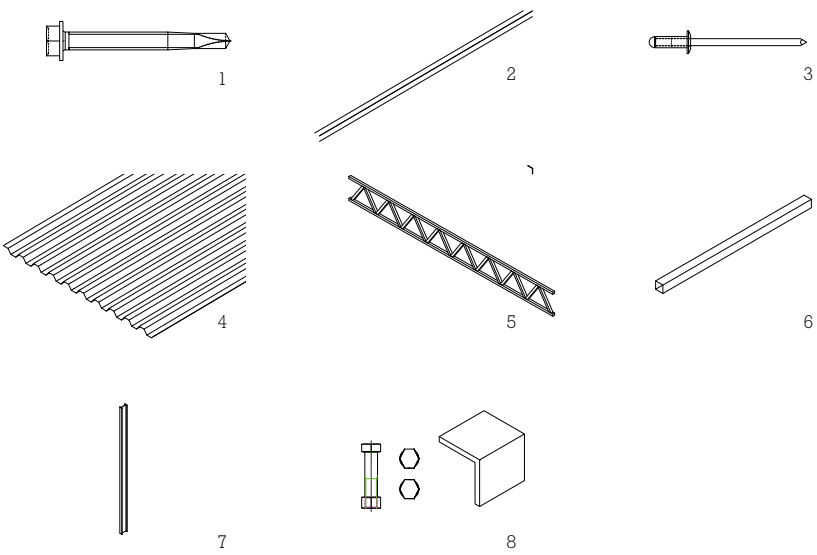


Fig. 38. Construction detail - Joints and components of the structure | Elevations and axonometric views.

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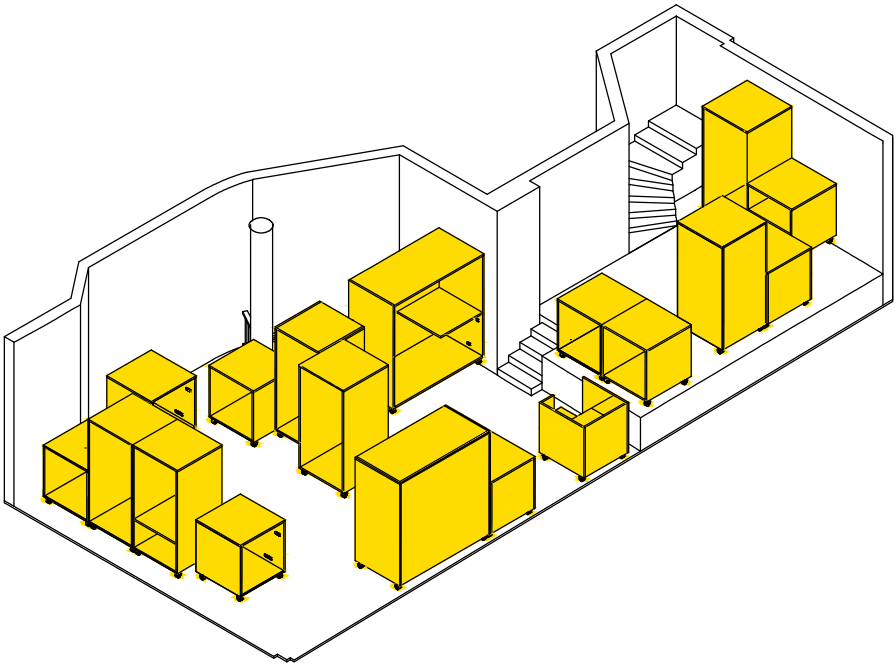
sheet 1 0

Showroom Flos
Milan



Achille & Pier Giacomo Castiglioni
1968

Space and light in motion

Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni stand as two of the most influential figures in 20th-century Italian design, not only for their iconic products but also for their groundbreaking contributions to exhibition and showroom design. Their work in the field of lighting display, in particular, offers a masterful example of how a space can be conceived as an active medium to enhance the perception of an object, transforming the act of observation into an immersive, dynamic experience.

One of their most significant innovations in exhibition design was the elimination of traditional display cases, which often isolated the object and limited the viewer's ability to engage with it fully. In their place, the Castiglioni brothers introduced independent modular structures that emphasized the sculptural qualities of lighting objects while allowing the light itself to become an active protagonist in the space.

The heart of their design strategy lay in the creation of an environment defined by soft penumbra: walls and ceilings were covered in dark brown fabric, a chromatic and textural backdrop designed to mute spatial distractions and focus the visitor's attention entirely on the objects on display. Against this subdued architectural setting, mobile white display volumes, crafted in durable plastic laminate, emerged as luminous islands within the space. Mounted on wheels and wired directly to the ceiling grid, these modular display units could be arranged singly or in flexible groupings, isolating each lamp as a freestanding visual event.

This scenographic approach did more than merely enhance the aesthetic appeal of the lamps — it allowed the viewer to engage with each object both as a functional product and as a sculptural artifact, under real lighting conditions. The mobile nature of the display units encouraged curators and visitors alike to reconsider the spatial relationships between the objects, opening the door to endless reconfigurations and eliminating the rigidity that usually characterizes conventional exhibitions.

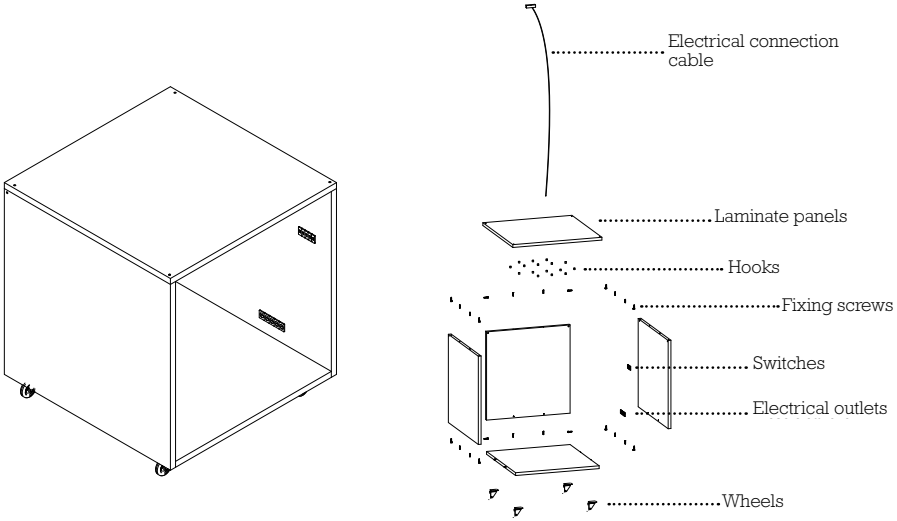


Fig. 39. Construction detail - Supporting structure of the display stand | Axonometry and axonometric exploded view.

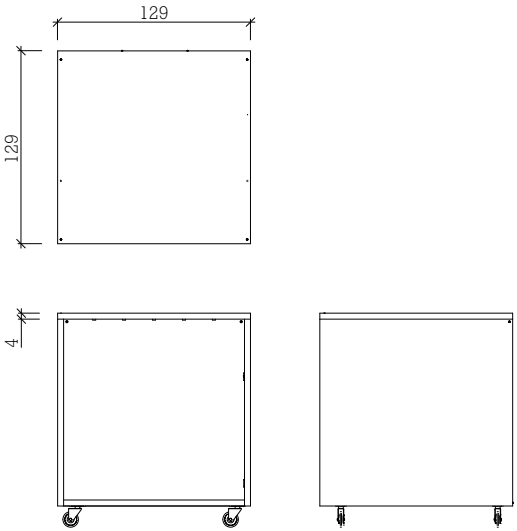


Fig. 40. Construction detail - Supporting structure of the display unit | Floor plan and dimensioned elevations.

The showroom environment designed by the Castiglionis functioned much like a theatrical stage, where light became both the subject and the medium of the display. The movable "display boxes" operated like small, self-contained theaters, where light could be manipulated and tested in real time, echoing the dynamics of a live performance. This fluid system enabled curators to create a continuously evolving geometric landscape, tailored to the specific narrative or functional qualities of the lamps on display.

Beyond its visual and experiential strengths, this flexible system also offered practical advantages. The precise control over lighting conditions, combined with the capacity to isolate and test each lamp in real-world scenarios, enabled visitors to assess the products not just as aesthetic objects but as functional solutions. At the same time, the reconfigurable nature of the setup minimized the need for extensive structural interventions, reducing waste and encouraging the reuse of materials, foreshadowing concerns around sustainability long before these became central to contemporary design discourse.

By seamlessly integrating technical precision, spatial innovation, and an acute sensitivity to the role of light in shaping perception, the Castiglionis' lighting display installations stand as enduring models of exhibition design. Their work reveals how thoughtful staging can transform commercial display into an experience of discovery, where the boundaries between product, architecture, and user begin to dissolve, and light itself is elevated from functional necessity to design language.

Display Stand A	Display B	Display C	Display D
129x129 cm 1 pc.	129x129 cm 6 pcs.	258×129 cm 10 pcs.	258×258 cm 10 pcs.

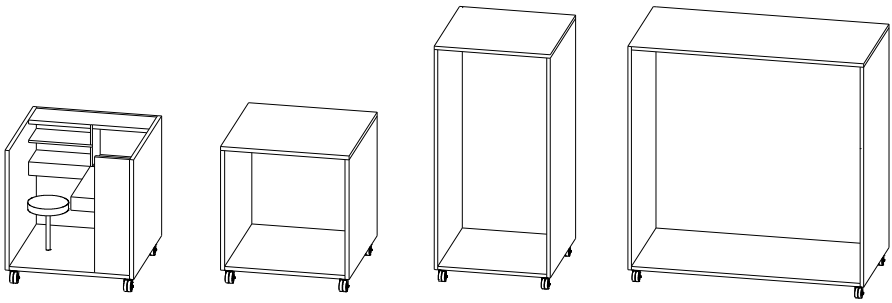


Fig. 41. Construction detail - Abacus of display units | Axonometric views

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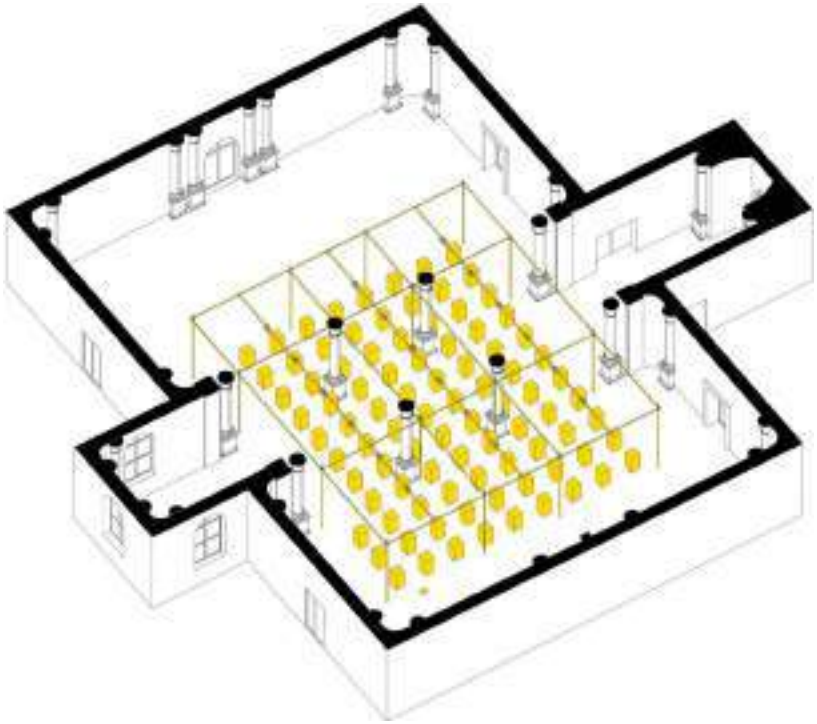
sheet 1 1

Concrete Poetry Exhibition
Ca' Giustinian, Venice



AG Fronzoni
1969

The structural lightness in the setting up

In 1969, the historic Sala delle Colonne at Ca' Giustinian — now home to the Venice Biennale headquarters — hosted the exhibition Concrete Poetry, an international survey dedicated to one of the most radical linguistic and artistic experiments of the 20th century. Curated by Dietrich Malhow and Arrigo Lora-Totino, the exhibition mapped the evolving landscape of concrete, visual, and phonetic poetry, offering visitors a glimpse into a creative field where the form, arrangement, and visual force of words outweighed their traditional semantic function.
In contrast to the ornate classical architecture of Ca' Giustinian, the exhibition layout, designed by Italian designer and theorist A.G. Fronzoni, embraced an extreme formal essentiality. The project offered a masterful example of how rational design can coexist with a highly decorative architectural context without either element overshadowing the other. Fronzoni's approach was not merely about minimalism for its own sake but rather about cultivating clarity, allowing the works themselves — 145 visual plates displayed across 91 modular stands — to fully capture the viewer's attention.
The exhibition layout encouraged an immersive reading of the visual compositions, drawing attention to their geometric rigor, typographical experimentation, and the tension between silence and sound embedded in their graphic design. Fronzoni's subtle design strategy thus worked in perfect synergy with the poetic themes on display: reduction, rhythm, abstraction.
At the technical heart of this sophisticated yet understated spatial composition was the use of the Innocenti tube-joint system, a modular scaffolding framework originally designed in the 1930s by Italian engineer Ferdinando Innocenti. Commonly employed in construction sites for temporary scaffolding structures, this system was reinterpreted by Fronzoni as an exhibition exoskeleton — an elegant and economical skeleton capable of supporting the visual content without visual interference.
The core of the system consists of cylindrical steel tubes joined through a me-

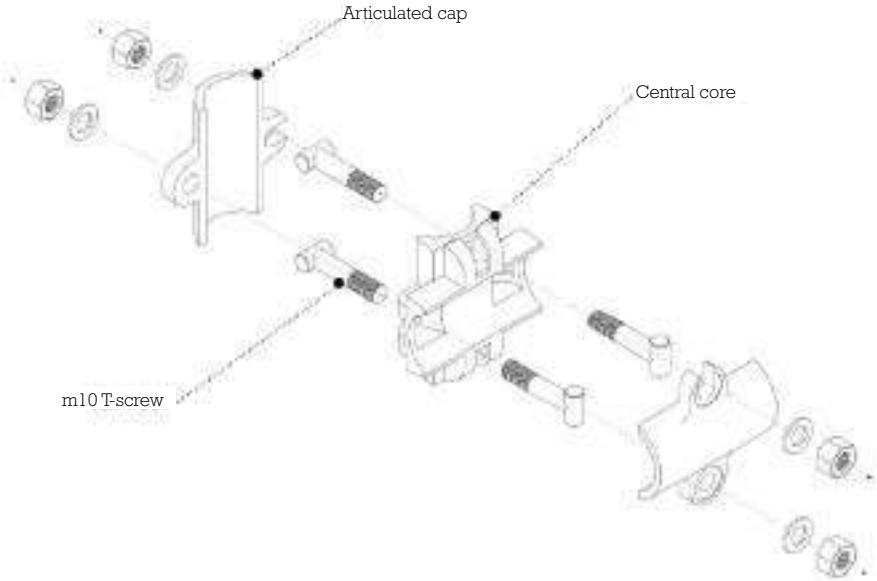


Fig. 42. Construction detail - Orthogonal joint Dalmine Innocenti | Axonometric exploded view.

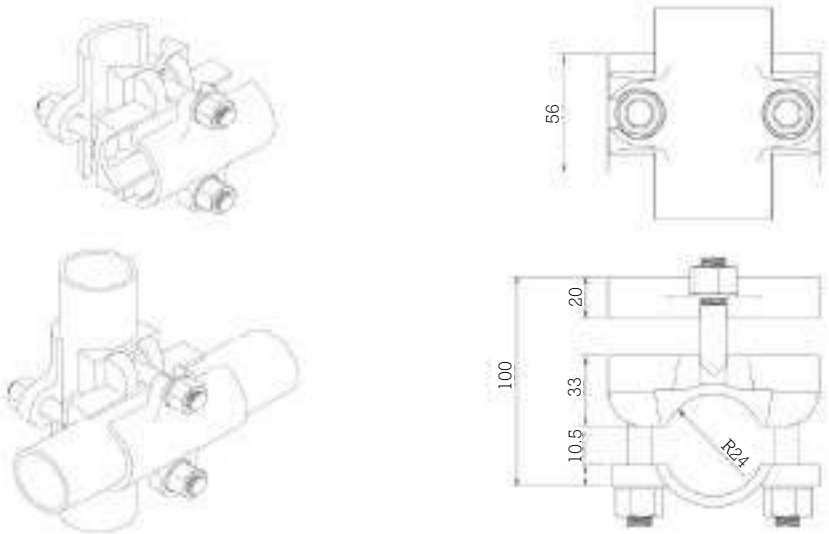


Fig. 43. Construction detail - Orthogonal joint Dalmine Innocenti | Axonometric views and quoted projections.

chanical connector known as the "Innocenti joint," composed of two rotatable "caps" and a central clamping body. When tightened, this connection locks the orthogonal tubes together via friction, ensuring both stability and flexibility. The system's intuitive assembly and disassembly processes allowed for an extremely efficient setup, and more importantly, ensured that the structure could be reused indefinitely — an approach deeply aligned with both economic restraint and environmental awareness, well ahead of its time.

The adaptability of the Innocenti system extended beyond the exhibition world, finding applications across diverse sectors including architecture, industrial production, and even DIY construction. Today, similar modular systems remain widely available in the hardware market, from large retail chains like Leroy Merlin, Tecnomat, and Brico, to specialist producers such as Casotti, Socome, IBE Group, and Gruppo Sif — evidence of the enduring relevance of this versatile structural logic.

Fronzoni's use of the Innocenti system at Ca' Giustinian stands as a textbook example of how technical ingenuity and creative vision can intersect to produce an installation that is at once economical, sustainable, and poetically aligned with its content. The resulting spatial arrangement was not merely a container for the artworks but part of the narrative experience, reinforcing the fundamental design principle that true innovation often lies in rethinking ordinary materials and methods.

Beyond its visual restraint, the Concrete Poetry exhibition — both in its curatorial content and its spatial articulation — offered visitors an exploration of language stripped to its core components: shape, rhythm, and space. Fronzoni's scenography, much like the concrete poems it housed, emphasized the power of reduction, turning the exhibition space into an active partner in the viewer's aesthetic experience.

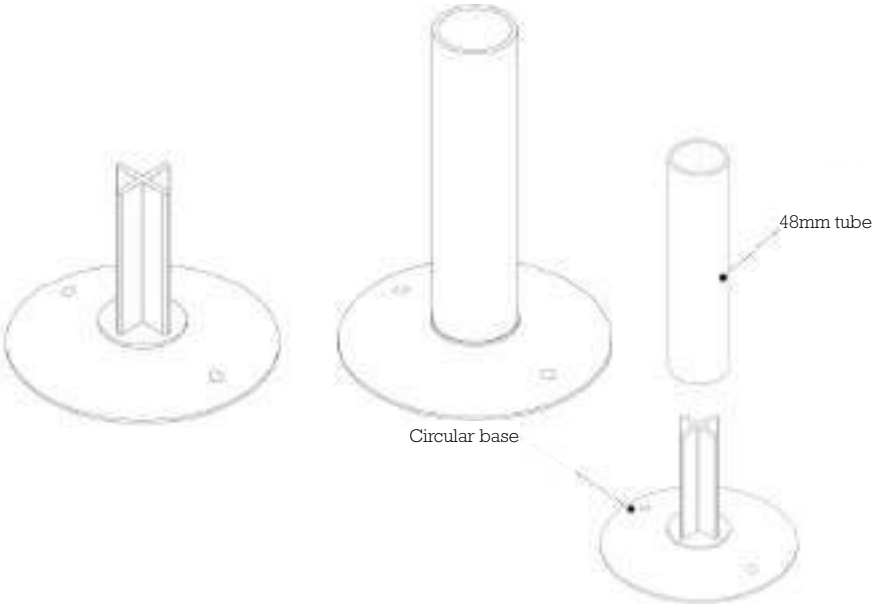


Fig. 44. Construction detail - Circular base Dalmine Innocenti | Axonometric views and exploded views.

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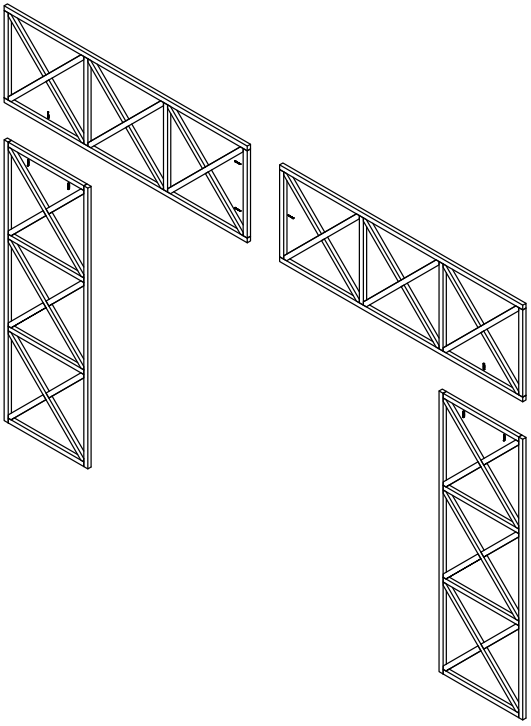
sheet 12

Theatre in the Weimar Republic
Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome



Maurizio Di Puolo
1978

Reuse as a design tool

The exhibition Theatre in the Weimar Republic offered not only an exploration of the aesthetic and political dimensions of German theatre during the interwar years but also an inspiring example of how exhibition design can be employed to echo and enhance curatorial narratives. Staged as part of a broader cultural program dedicated to 20th-century European avant-garde movements, the exhibition was conceived to highlight the tensions, innovations, and radical artistic experiments that shaped the theatrical landscape of the Weimar period.

One of the most distinctive aspects of this exhibition was its scenographic approach, which masterfully balanced economy of means with strong visual symbolism. Even before crossing the exhibition threshold, visitors were confronted by a striking and evocative gesture: a large red flag, visible from outside the venue, unfurled across the entrance. Far from being a neutral decorative element, the flag embodied the utopian ideals, political struggles, and collective aspirations that defined the era under investigation. Once inside, the fabric's saturated color bathed the space in a warm, diffuse light, creating an immersive atmosphere that invited reflection on the social and cultural ferment of the Weimar years. The choice of this single, charged symbol demonstrated the power of scenographic design to establish an emotional and intellectual context for an exhibition.

The technical heart of the installation lay, however, in the innovative use of modular wooden barriers, originally designed as crowd-control fences and recovered from the municipal storage yards of Rome. Rather than commissioning custom display walls, the design team repurposed these humble, utilitarian objects into an adaptable spatial system capable of organizing the exhibition's content in a clear and economical way. The wooden modules, assembled using simple mechanical joints, could be easily repositioned and reconfigured according to the specific needs of each section, ensuring both flexibility and consistency throughout the display.

This design strategy not only reduced material waste and production costs but

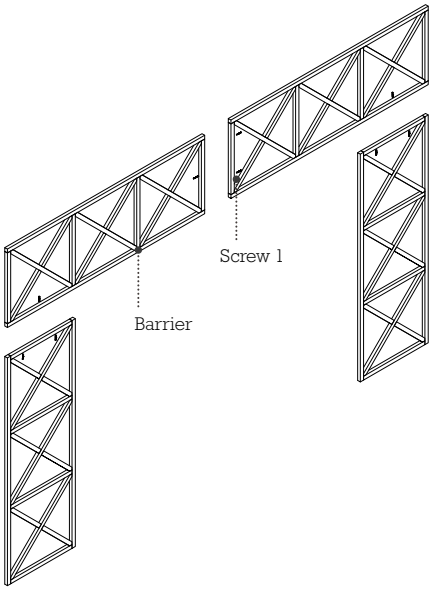


Fig. 45. Construction detail - Outfitting structure | Axonometric view.

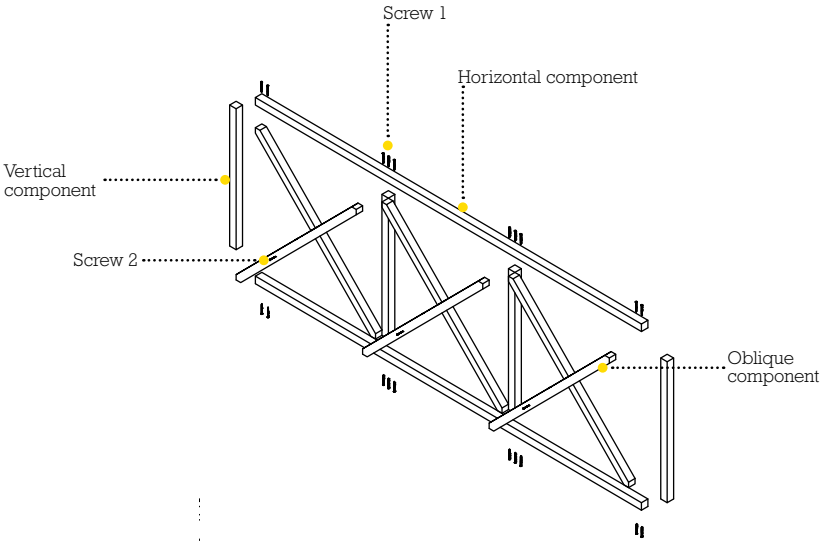


Fig. 46. Construction detail - Main components of the outfitting structure | Axonometric exploded view.

also embodied a conscious reflection on the ethics of reuse and the life cycle of design objects. The choice to incorporate repurposed materials echoed the exhibition's intellectual core, which was deeply concerned with questions of cultural reconstruction, ideological transformation, and the social role of theatre in moments of crisis.

Beyond the exhibition displays, the project expanded its scope with a complementary film series devoted to German Expressionist cinema—a multidisciplinary addition that enriched the narrative and provided visitors with multiple points of entry into the Weimar cultural imagination. This combination of visual, spatial, and cinematic media transformed the exhibition into a dynamic learning environment, demonstrating the value of integrated design and curatorial thinking.

A close analysis of this project also underscored the importance of technical detailing in exhibition design. The wooden barriers, though simple in form, relied on intelligent joint systems that balanced structural stability with ease of assembly and disassembly. This experience illustrated the transformative potential of approaching materials not as fixed entities, but as elements open to redefinition and reinterpretation through design. In doing so, the exhibition offered an important lesson in how sustainable practices can emerge not only from material choices but also from strategic thinking about systems, connections, and reuse.

Ultimately, Theatre in the Weimar Republic succeeded in aligning its scenography and technical solutions with the broader themes of the exhibition: political engagement, aesthetic experimentation, and the ongoing negotiation between past and future. It stands as an example of how a pragmatic, experimental, and ethically attentive design approach can produce spaces that are both visually compelling and intellectually resonant.

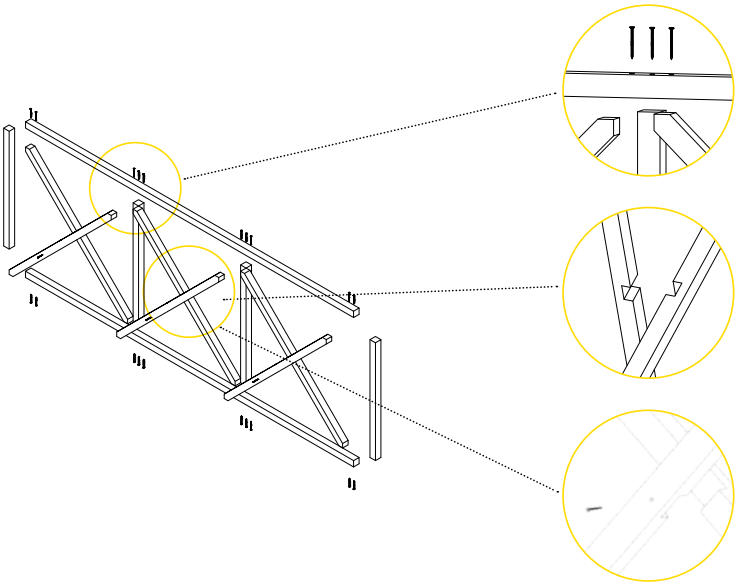


Fig. 47. Construction detail - Main joints constituting the module of the structure | Axonometric Exploded views.

QR code for 3D model

Link for 3D model

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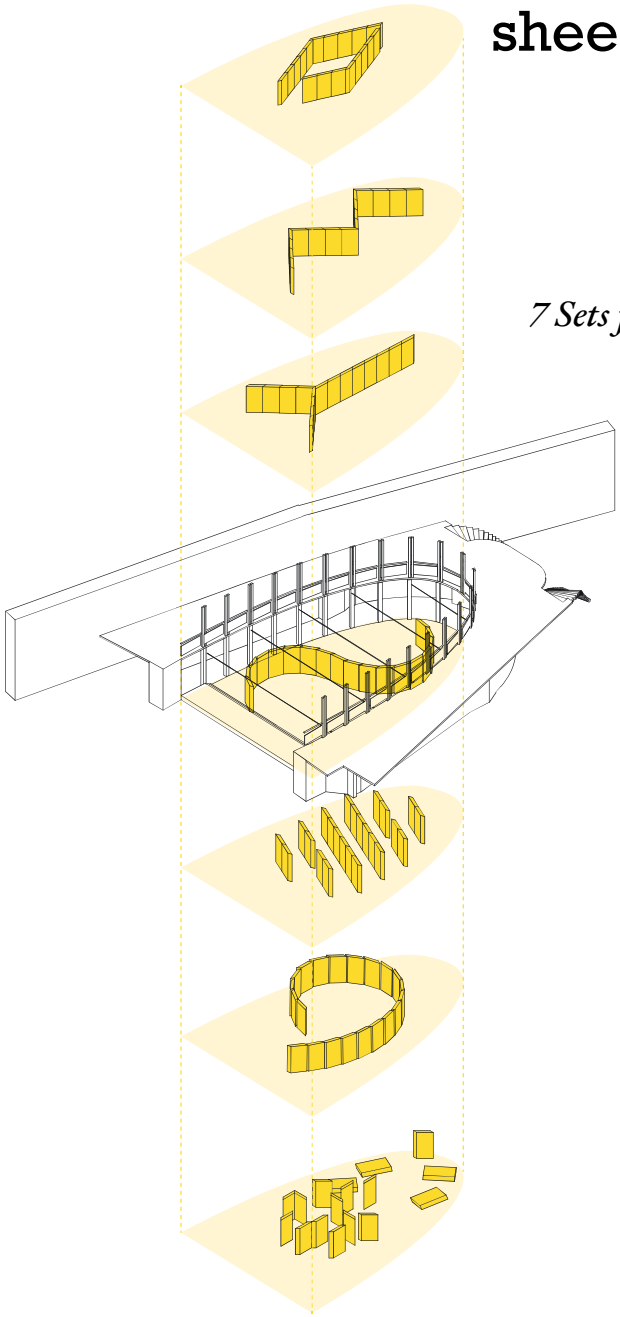
sheet 13

7 Sets for Teatro del Falcone
Genoa



AG Fronzoni
1979

sustainable modularity

Between 1979 and 1981, Italian designer AG Fronzoni left a lasting imprint on exhibition design with a series of installations at the Teatro del Falcone, a historical space housed within Genoa's Palazzo Reale. These exhibitions, commissioned under tight financial constraints, stand today as masterful demonstrations of how architectural intelligence, formal discipline, and resource-conscious thinking can converge into an essential and highly flexible exhibition system.

Fronzoni, a major figure in Italian rationalist design, approached each project at the Teatro del Falcone with a rigorously minimalist attitude, rooted in the belief that design should strip away the superfluous in favor of clarity, coherence, and meaning. In this context, he devised an innovative system based on modular trapezoidal panels, capable of redefining the exhibition space with remarkable adaptability.

These modular elements were designed for maximum versatility. The panels could be arranged both vertically and horizontally, either as independent display supports or in combinations that created partitions, backdrops, or sculptural compositions, depending on the narrative and spatial demands of the exhibition. This approach allowed Fronzoni to deliver unique spatial experiences for each show, without the need for designing new structures from scratch, thus significantly reducing waste and promoting longevity in the use of materials.

What distinguished Fronzoni's methodology was his commitment to a design process that was as intellectually sustainable as it was materially efficient. Far beyond temporary decoration, his system offered a structural logic that ensured elements could be disassembled, reconfigured, and reused across multiple exhibitions. This strategy of adaptability prefigured many of the sustainability principles that have since become central to contemporary exhibit design discourse.

Fronzoni's design extended beyond spatial organization to include graphic identity. For each exhibition, he developed posters and promotional materials, which were characterized by the same formal rigor and typographic clarity that defined

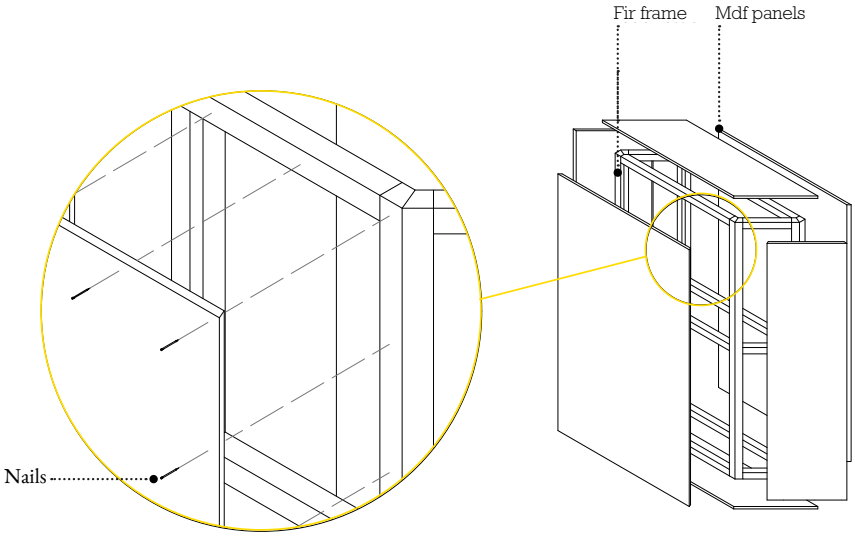


Fig. 48. Construction detail - MDF panels forming a box structure attached to the inner frame by nails | Axonometric exploded view.

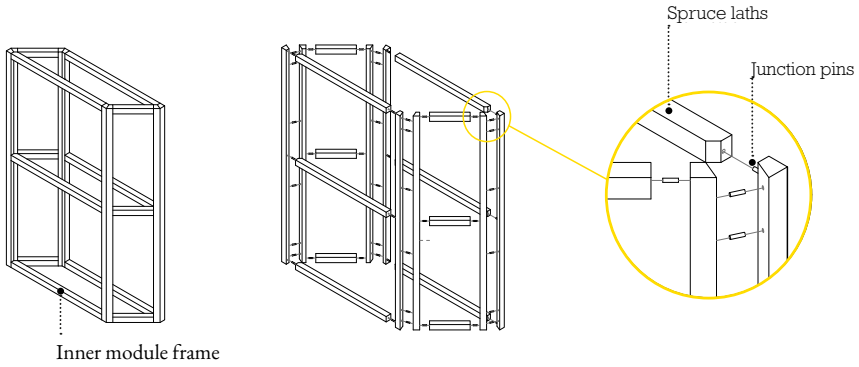


Fig. 49. Construction detail - Inner frame held firmly in place by dowel pins and wood glue | Axonometry and axonometric exploded view.

his spatial compositions. These works, now considered icons of 20th-century Italian graphic design, reveal how his minimalist sensibility operated across scales—from room layouts to printed surfaces.

His installations at Teatro del Falcone underscore a powerful design lesson: exhibition design is not merely the background for displayed objects, but rather a dynamic system that actively shapes the visitor's experience. Fronzoni's minimalist language, paired with his pioneering use of modularity and flexibility, offered an intelligent and sustainable answer to the common constraints of exhibition-making: limited budgets, changing contents, and the need for aesthetic coherence.

By relying on simple, reusable modules and focusing on the fundamental qualities of space—proportion, rhythm, light, and material—Fronzoni created exhibitions that were at once understated and deeply effective. His work at Teatro del Falcone remains a reference point for designers interested in balancing functional demands with formal precision, while also advocating for an environmentally responsible approach to temporary architecture.

Ultimately, Fronzoni's exhibitions were not static arrangements, but living systems: adaptable, rational, and profoundly modern.

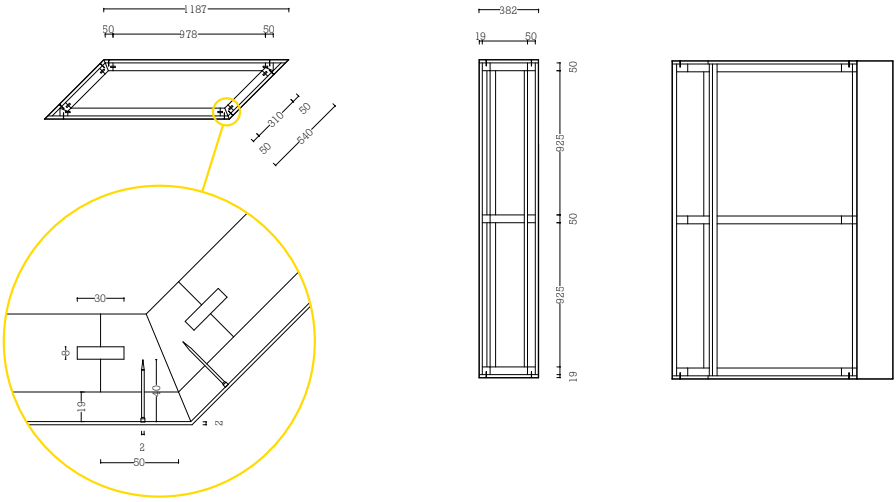


Fig. 50. Construction detail - Internal panel joints | Axonometric view and dimensioned sections.

QR code for 3D model

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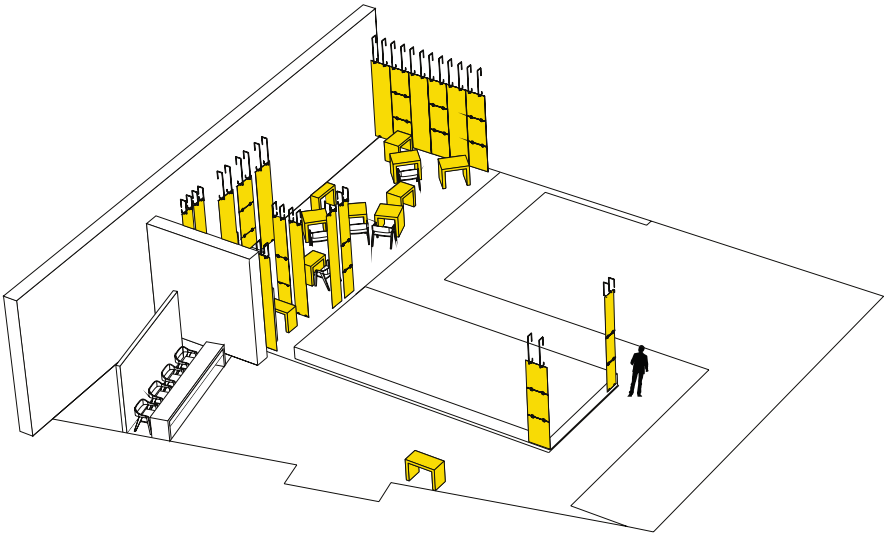
sheet 14

Italian Pavilion - TELECOM
Geneva



Achille Castiglioni
1979

Modular design and functionality

In 1979, Italy took part in the Telecom exhibition in Geneva, one of the leading European platforms for the telecommunications industry, designed to foster dialogue and innovation between public and private enterprises. For this occasion, the Italian pavilion was entrusted to Achille Castiglioni, a master of design known for his sharp wit and structural elegance. Castiglioni's approach to the project was a lucid and precise response to a complex set of demands: the need for a unified yet flexible environment capable of representing the diversity of 33 Italian companies, while addressing strict technical constraints.

The pavilion's spatial solution was based on a suspended modular system, a grid of square modules (2 x 2 meters) that became the backbone of both the architectural logic and the visitor experience. Positioned 4.1 meters above the floor, the grid was composed of BTicino electrical conduits, and anchored to the building's ceiling via a lightweight tensile structure. This structural framework was not only a technical infrastructure—integrating electrical and telephone networks—but also an active spatial organizer. It supported the exhibits, lighting systems, educational panels, and even the signage, producing an image of floating and coordinated harmony.

Visitors entered the pavilion through a striking triangular portal, cut into a vibrant, polychrome metal wall. From the main atrium of the fair, this entrance immediately conveyed a sense of both rational order and playful formal invention, setting the tone for what awaited inside. Upon entering, visitors were welcomed by a large backlit panel designed by the renowned graphic designer Max Huber, which visualized Italy's international telecommunications network—a clear statement of the country's strategic positioning in global communication flows.

The suspended grid system allowed for a variety of spatial configurations within a single architectural logic. Light, fireproof fabric partitions hung from the structure to define semi-private exhibition areas without blocking the visual continuity of the space. Meanwhile, other panels, constructed from anodized aluminum

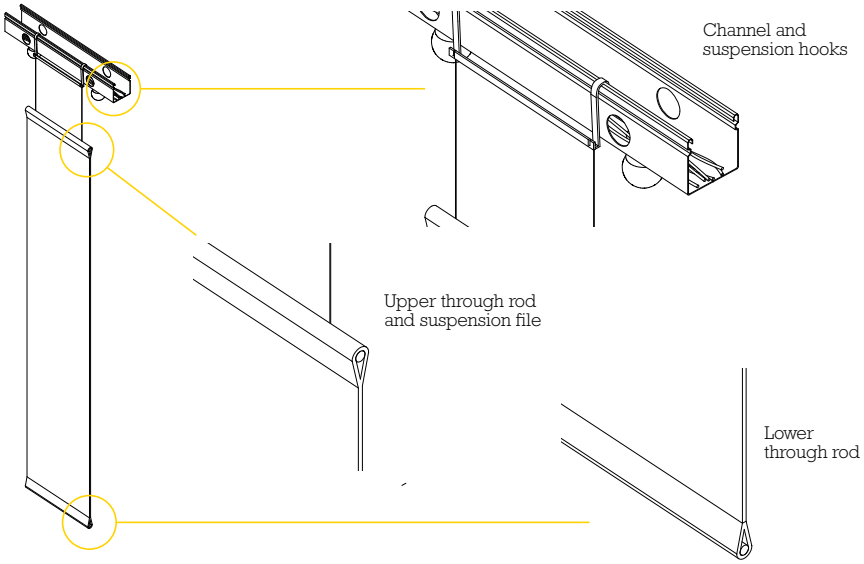


Fig. 51. Construction detail - Single display element and hanging systems | Axonometric views.

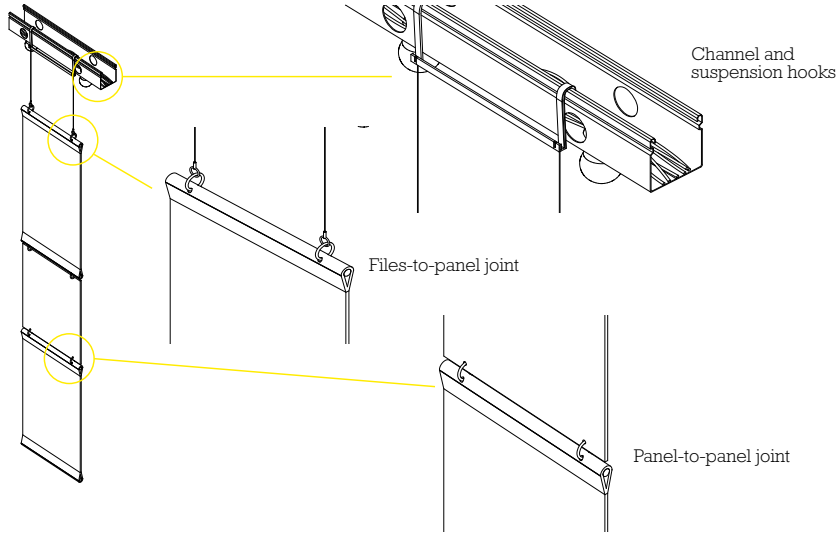


Fig. 52. Construction detail - Modular display element and hanging systems | Axonometric views.

sheets, served both as didactic displays and as support surfaces for photographic documentation. Company names, screen-printed on transparent mesh panels, seemed to hover weightlessly in mid-air, reinforcing the sensation of lightness and clarity.

The rigor of the modular system offered significant advantages: quick assembly and disassembly, maximum spatial flexibility, and a visual coherence that turned potential technical chaos into a legible, unified experience. Castiglioni's solution transcended mere functionalism; it elegantly demonstrated how technical constraints could act as creative catalysts, giving rise to a design that remains timelessly modern.

The Telecom 1979 pavilion stands out not only as an example of advanced exhibition design but also as a manifesto of Castiglioni's design philosophy: the idea that intelligent systems, when paired with aesthetic precision, can create environments that are both functional and poetic. The project succeeded in its primary mission—to allow Italian companies to present their technological advancements within a coherent and stimulating setting—while also offering visitors a clear and engaging spatial narrative. The modular structure, with its emphasis on suspension and lightness, not only optimized the exhibition's technical and logistical management but also created an inviting space for exploration, dialogue, and discovery.

In essence, the Italian Pavilion at Telecom 1979 exemplified a visionary approach to exhibition design, where structural elegance met technical necessity, and where the architecture itself became an active player in communicating innovation.

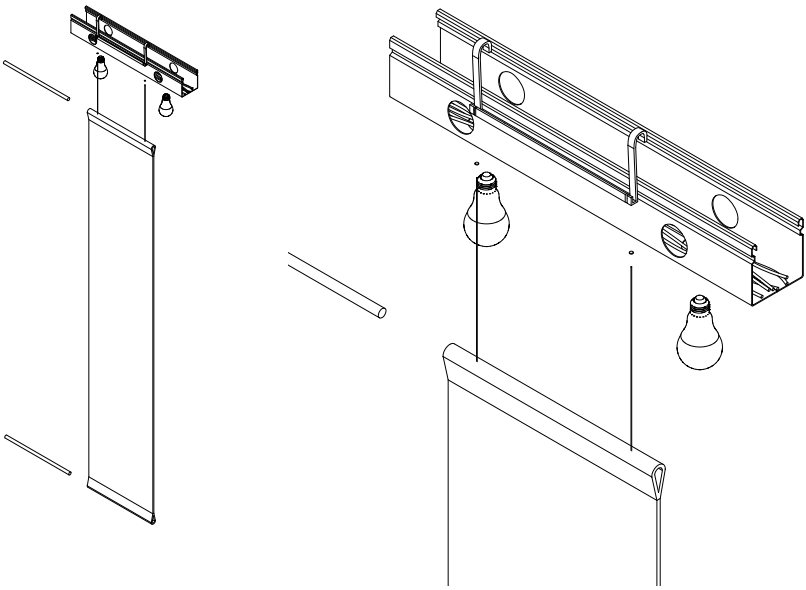


Fig. 53. Construction detail - Illuminated display element and hanging systems | Axonometric views.

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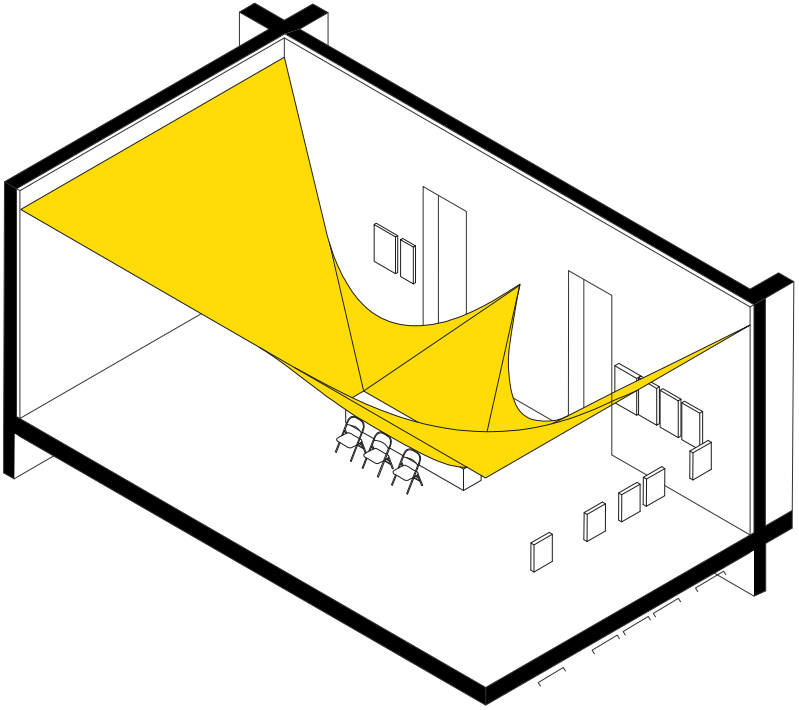
sheet 15

The Other Half of the Avant-garde
Palazzo Reale, Milan



Achille Castiglioni
1980

Rigor, functionality and visual poetry

In 1980, the halls of Palazzo Reale in Milan hosted The Other Half of the Avant-Garde, an exhibition curated by art critic Lea Vergine and designed by renowned Italian architect and designer Achille Castiglioni. This groundbreaking show marked a pivotal moment in the reexamination of early 20th-century art history, shedding light on 111 female artists who had long been overlooked in the dominant narratives of the avant-garde movements. The exhibition was not only an act of historical recovery but also a masterclass in exhibition design, where spatial clarity, democratic display, and visual harmony combined to deliver an experience as powerful as the content it revealed.

Castiglioni's approach to the exhibition was rooted in both intellectual rigor and understated elegance. Every artist, regardless of renown or medium, was granted an identical amount of visual space through the uniform design of showcases and display structures. This choice was an explicit rejection of hierarchies and a conscious attempt to offer an equitable narrative framework for the rediscovered artists.

One of the most distinctive features of the exhibition was the use of white sail-like veils, stretched between floor and ceiling using metal profiles and adjustable screw joints. These elements did more than subdivide the exhibition halls: they softened and reflected both natural and artificial light, generating a calm and luminous atmosphere. Their presence transformed the war-damaged spaces of Palazzo Reale—still bearing traces of World War II bombings—into an orderly, almost weightless sequence of rooms, where visitors were invited to focus on the art without distraction.

To ensure a clear and intuitive flow through the exhibition, Castiglioni introduced taut cords suspended between the rows of display cases. These linear guides subtly oriented visitor movement, fostering an instinctive path through the artworks. In some rooms, large triangular partitions, built from light white-clad honeycomb panels, added further spatial dynamism, breaking the monotony of

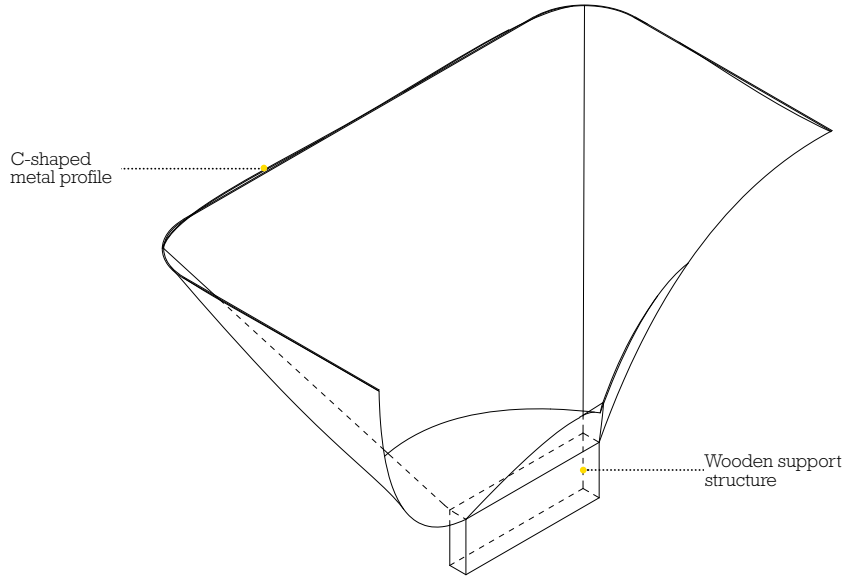


Fig. 54. Construction detail - Central outfitting element | Axonometric view.

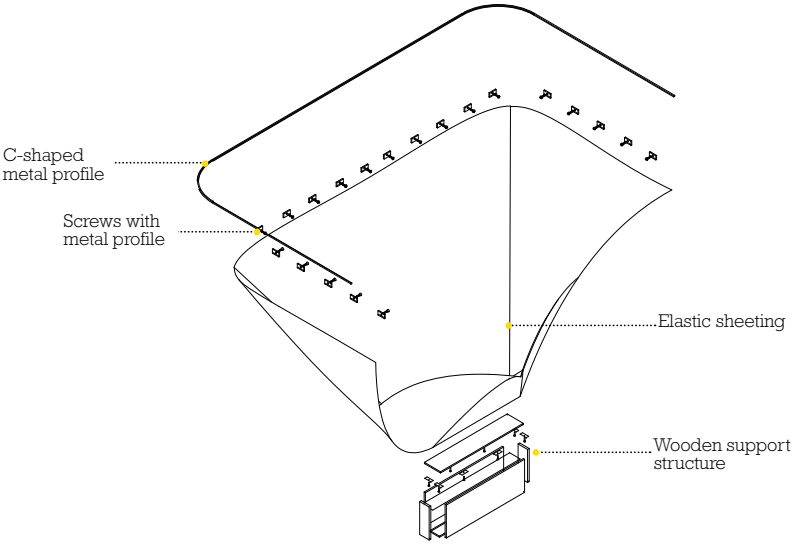


Fig. 55. Construction detail - Main components of the central outfitting element | Axonometric exploded view.

the traditional room layout without overwhelming the delicate scale of the works on display.

Equally pragmatic was Castiglioni's decision to work with the existing conditions of the building rather than imposing radical interventions. The gray carpet already present on the 1,500 square meters of flooring was seamlessly integrated into the design concept, and damaged ceilings and walls were masked using temporary plasterboard shells and large neutral-colored tarps, rather than fully concealed. This approach revealed the designer's sensitivity not only to the architectural context but also to the economical and practical realities of exhibition-making.

The structural system used for the suspended panels, supported by elastically tensioned cables, offered both visual lightness and practical stability, subtly subdividing the space without creating barriers. Even the graphic communication was carefully balanced: round signage mounted on slender stands and elegantly tilted labels allowed visitors to engage with contextual information without disrupting the visual rhythm of the display.

In its simplicity, Castiglioni's design achieved an extraordinary synthesis of functionality, narrative clarity, and understated beauty. His ability to resolve complex spatial problems with light, adaptable solutions demonstrated the kind of intelligence and restraint that defines excellent exhibition design. The Other Half of the Avant-Garde was, and remains, a brilliant example of how design can honor both the artworks and their historical context—without excess, but with great depth.

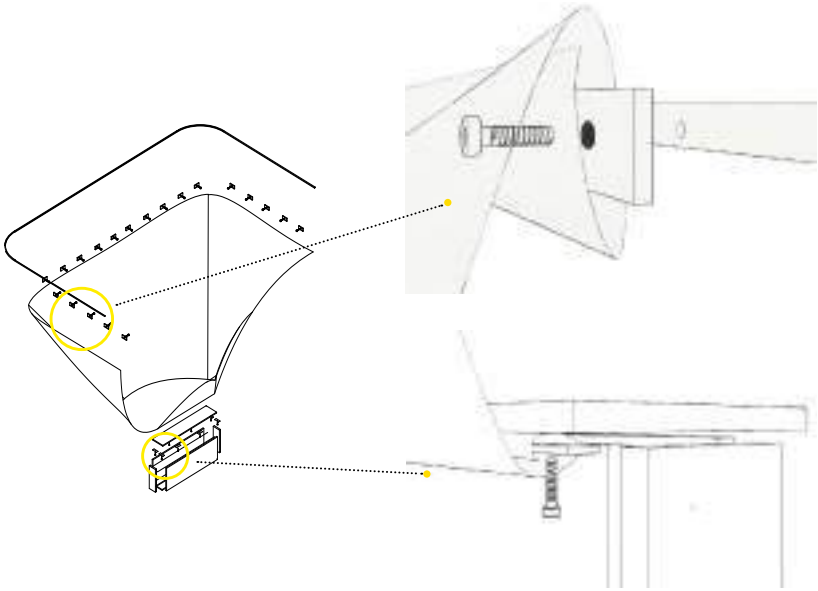


Fig. 56. Constructive detail - Joints for attachment of the outfitting curtains | Axonometric views.

QR code for 3D model

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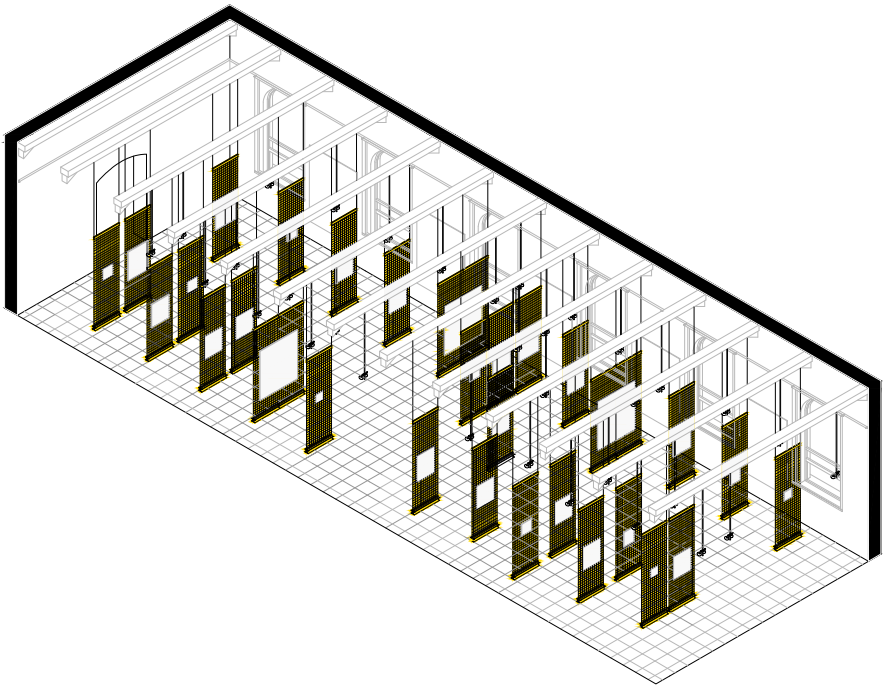
sheet 16

Temporary Exhibitions Hall
Castello Sforzesco Art Gallery, Milan



Franco Albini, Franca Helg
1980

Lightness as a method

In 1972, the City of Milan launched an ambitious renovation plan for the Pinacoteca del Castello Sforzesco, aiming to redefine the museum's spatial and exhibition strategies ahead of its reopening in 1980. The project was entrusted to architects Marco Albini, Franca Helg, and Antonio Piva, whose approach masterfully balanced respect for the historic architecture with the need for a contemporary and versatile display system. The resulting design created an environment where conservation, flexibility, and visitor engagement could seamlessly coexist.

At the heart of the exhibition design was an innovative system of welded wire mesh panels, suspended from ceiling-mounted rails. This technical solution allowed the museum's layout to remain in constant transformation, accommodating the rotation of artworks and the creation of new exhibition narratives without requiring invasive or permanent structural changes. The lightweight, semi-transparent panels were designed to divide and shape the space without interrupting its visual continuity, allowing visitors to fully perceive the depth of the rooms and the grandeur of the castle's original architecture.

This spatial transparency not only preserved the dialogue between the artworks and their architectural setting but also maintained visual connections with the exterior landscape, visible through the large windows of the Castello Sforzesco. The modular panels could be easily repositioned or rotated along the ceiling tracks, offering an adaptable framework that evolved with each new curatorial approach.

From a technical standpoint, the wire mesh system represented an intelligent balance between robustness and visual discretion. The grid-like structure allowed for secure and precise mounting of artworks while providing enough distance from the masonry walls to ensure proper air circulation — a critical factor for the conservation of paintings and delicate materials. The system also facilitated precise alignment, allowing artworks to be oriented in relation to both natural and artificial lighting, which could be adjusted according to conservation requirements and curatorial intentions.

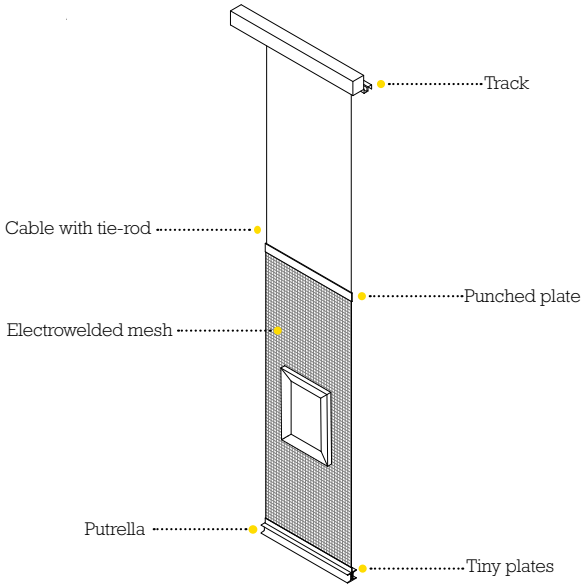


Fig. 57. Construction detail - Suspended display of the exhibit | Axonometric view.

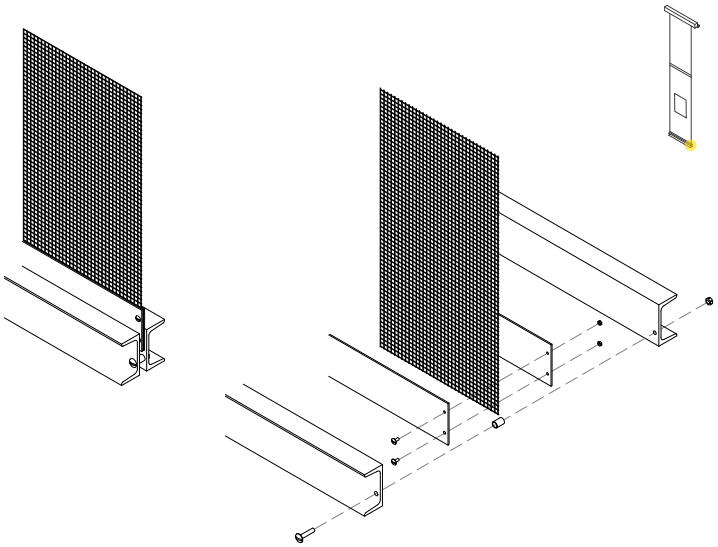


Fig. 58. Construction detail - Suspended display of the exhibit: bottom stop | Exploded and axonometric view.

A particularly notable application of this design strategy was in the museum's Sala XXV, a space dedicated to temporary exhibitions. Here, the wire mesh panels, running parallel to the original wooden ceiling beams, created a highly flexible and responsive environment. The panels acted not only as structural supports for the artworks but also as spatial modulators, enabling curators to adjust the configuration of the gallery in accordance with the demands of each exhibition.
The lighting design further complemented this flexibility: artificial lights were carefully calibrated to harmonize with natural daylight, which entered the room through large windows softened by fiberglass curtains designed to modulate light intensity. This interplay between artificial and natural illumination created an evocative and immersive atmosphere, enhancing the visual and emotional impact of the artworks on display.
At the time of the reopening, the Pinacoteca featured an impressive display of 180 paintings from the Flemish and Dutch schools of the 17th and 18th centuries, curated under the direction of Mercedes Garberi. This collection, among the most prestigious in Italy for this genre, found an ideal setting within the newly designed spaces, where the synergy between architectural integrity, technical innovation, and curatorial vision shaped a unique and enriching visitor experience.
The project by Albini, Helg, and Piva stands as a pioneering example of how exhibition design can respect historical contexts while providing modern museums with the adaptability required to respond to evolving conservation standards and display needs. The suspended mesh system not only offered technical efficiency and spatial flexibility but also subtly reinforced the dialogue between art and architecture — a timeless conversation at the heart of the museum experience.

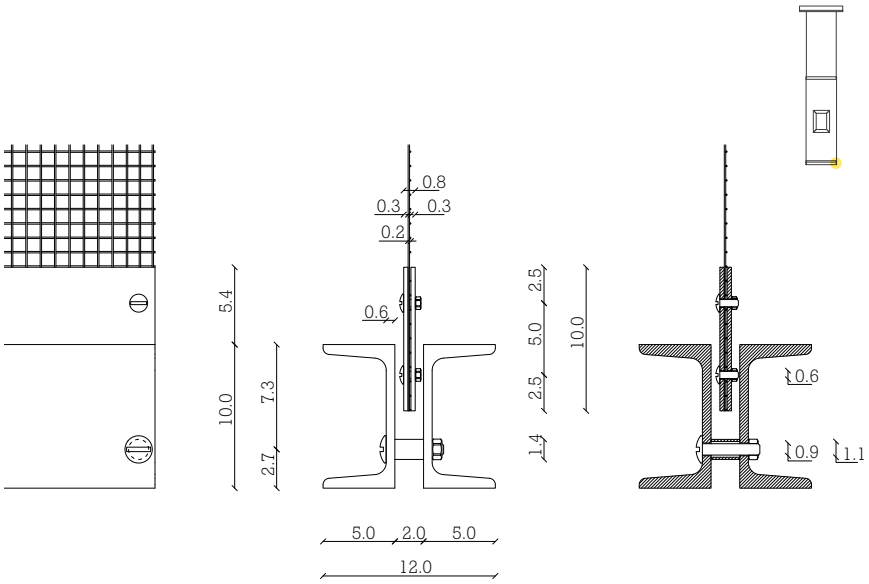


Fig. 59. Construction detail - Structural joint of the display unit | Quoted elevations and section.

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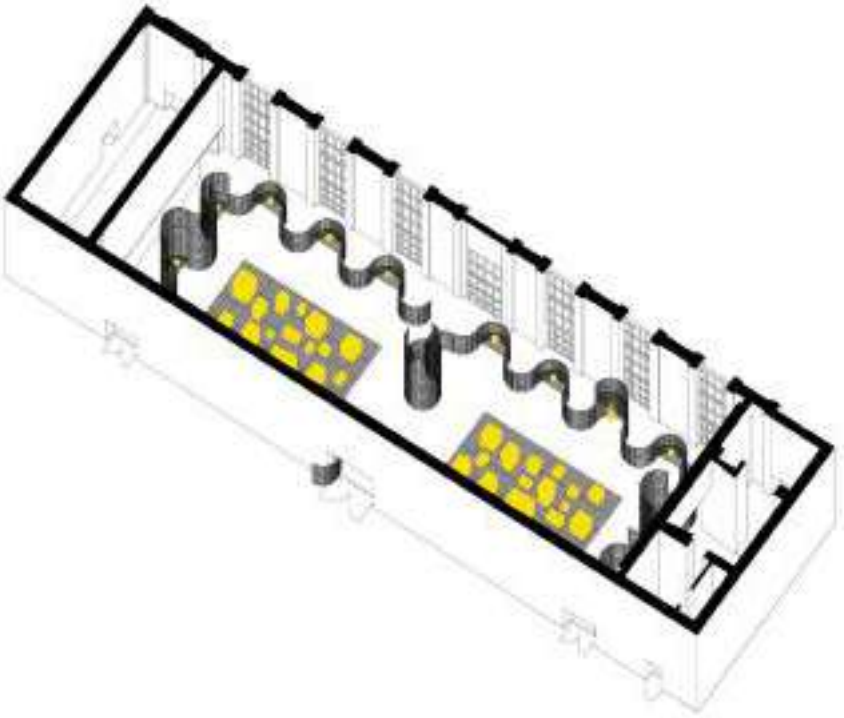
sheet 17

100 Objects of Italian Design
Triennale di Milano, Milan



Piero Polato
1999

Modularity, functionality and new possibilities

The traveling exhibition 100 Objects of Italian Design, presented between 1999 and 2000, stands as a significant cultural event dedicated to celebrating the excellence, creativity, and identity of Italian design. Organized by the Triennale di Milano and curated by Piero Polato, the exhibition offered a meticulous selection of iconic objects from the institution's permanent collection. These artifacts not only traced the evolution of Italian industrial design over the 20th century but also reflected its capacity to blend everyday functionality with aesthetic and emotional resonance.

In its inaugural setting within the Salone d'Onore of the Palazzo dell'Arte, the exhibition was distinguished by a scenographic concept that combined simplicity, modularity, and spatial clarity. Polato's design sought to establish a coherent visual language capable of guiding visitors through a fluid and intuitive narrative, while at the same time offering robust technical solutions for object display. The goal was to create a space where the objects themselves could emerge as protagonists, framed by a neutral but technically expressive structural system.

At the core of the exhibition's design was the Systempiù Orsogril—a modular construction system developed in collaboration with the renowned Italian manufacturer specializing in electro-welded steel grids. The installation combined curved and linear grid panels, assembled using bolts and grid locks, which defined the physical and visual rhythm of the space. This alternation of geometric forms allowed for the creation of suspended surfaces, offering a wide range of display solutions suitable for objects of varying dimensions and typologies.

The choice of galvanized steel as the primary material not only guaranteed strength and durability but also established a visual coherence with the exhibition's industrial and minimalist aesthetic. The sinuous curvature of the grid panels softened the material's innate rigidity, producing a dynamic and inviting pathway through the exhibition. Visitors were naturally led through the objects on display, with the curved surfaces subtly encouraging circulation and engagement.

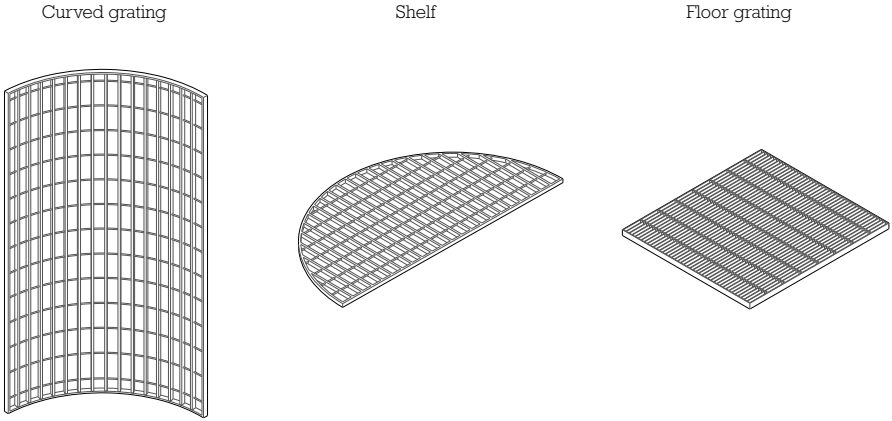


Fig. 60. Construction detail - Modules of the display structures | Axonometric views.

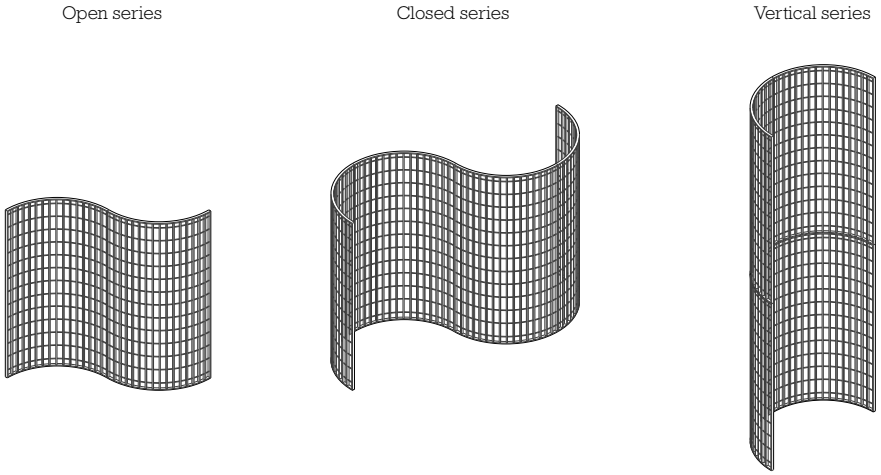


Fig. 61. Construction detail - Compositions of exhibition structure modules | Axonometric views.

From a technical and functional standpoint, the Systempiù Orsogril demonstrated a high degree of flexibility. Its modular nature allowed for the adaptation of the structure to different architectural contexts across the various cities where the exhibition traveled, highlighting its scalability and potential for reuse. However, the design was not without its limitations. The extensive use of mechanical fastenings such as bolts and locks, although ensuring structural stability, limited the speed and ease of assembly and disassembly, reducing the system's overall efficiency in terms of reconfiguration and sustainability.

Furthermore, the exhibition highlighted the potential for future development of the Orsogril system beyond its initial application. The curved steel modules, if reinterpreted or reoriented—by rotating along the vertical axis or combining into new sequences—could serve as multi-directional supports, enabling alternative ways to suspend or display objects. Such an evolution would enhance the system's versatility and adaptability, aligning more closely with contemporary principles of circular design and sustainability.

Ultimately, Polato's exhibition design for 100 Objects of Italian Design achieved an elegant synthesis of form and function. It offered a structural metaphor for the continuous dialogue between the industrial and the artisanal, the technical and the poetic, which has long defined the Italian design identity. The architectural clarity of the system reinforced the narrative of the exhibition itself: that design is not simply about objects, but about the spaces and systems that give them meaning.

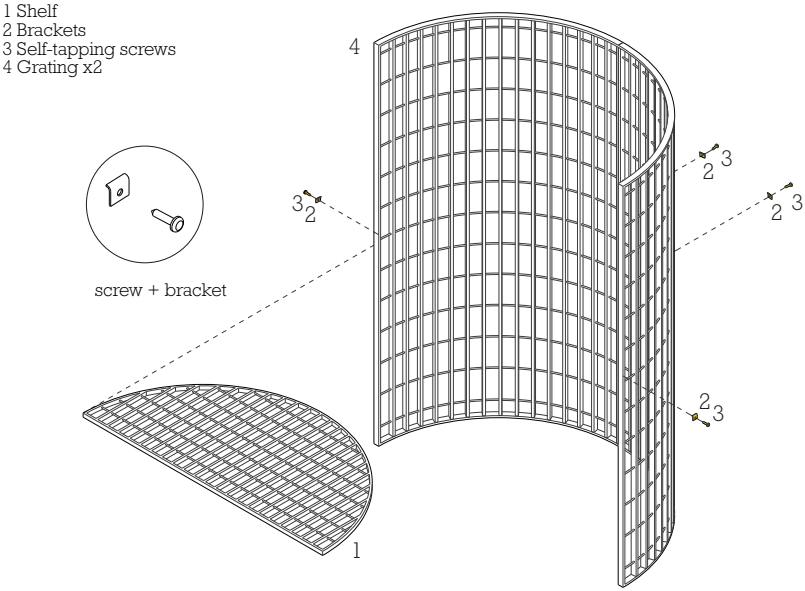


Fig. 62. Construction detail - Main components of the exhibition modules | Axonometric exploded view.

QR code for 3D model

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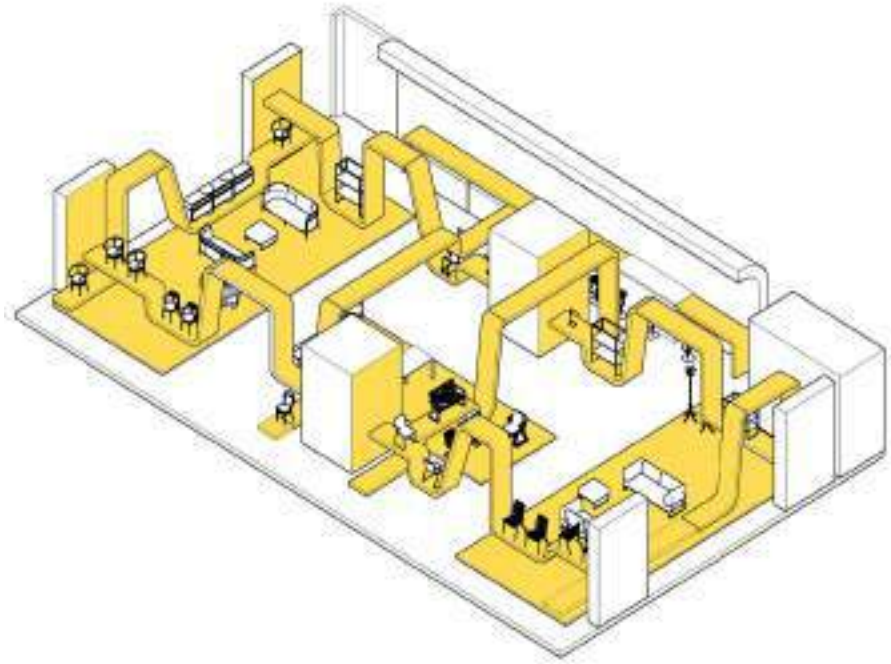
sheet 46

Stand Thonet '04
Salone del Mobile, Milan



Migliore+Servetto
2004

The white exhibition tape

In 2004, the renowned Italian design studio Migliore+Servetto conceived an exhibition installation for Gebrüder Thonet Vienna that masterfully balanced visual impact with the brand's long-standing heritage of craftsmanship and innovation. The installation, presented at the Salone del Mobile in Milan — the world's leading stage for contemporary furniture and design — was both a spatial narrative and a material manifesto, showcasing how exhibition design can elevate the experience of a product while expressing corporate identity.

The central design element of the installation was the so-called white display ribbon — a fluid and sculptural structure that seamlessly wove through the exhibition space. Functioning as both a scenographic statement and a technical support system, the ribbon shaped the visitor's journey through Thonet's collections, offering a dynamic and immersive encounter with the products.

This continuous architectural gesture was carefully engineered using slender strips of poplar plywood, later finished with a curved multiflex covering. The combination of these materials allowed the ribbon to achieve an elegant lightness and structural strength, while its sinuous shape defined a rhythmic sequence of spaces that alternated between openness and enclosure. Chairs, tables, and other signature Thonet pieces were positioned along this suspended white line, appearing as if levitating in a dialogue between solid forms and negative space.

The exhibition design achieved a fine balance between spatial clarity and sculptural expressiveness. The white display ribbon not only marked the boundaries of the booth but also subtly directed the flow of visitors, inviting them into a curated exploration of the Thonet collections. This approach allowed for a measured and controlled viewing experience, enhancing the perception of each object on display and emphasizing their formal and material qualities.

To enrich the spatial composition, advertising totems were integrated into the installation. These vertical elements punctuated the ribbon's meandering path, offering visual anchors that balanced the horizontal flow of the structure. The

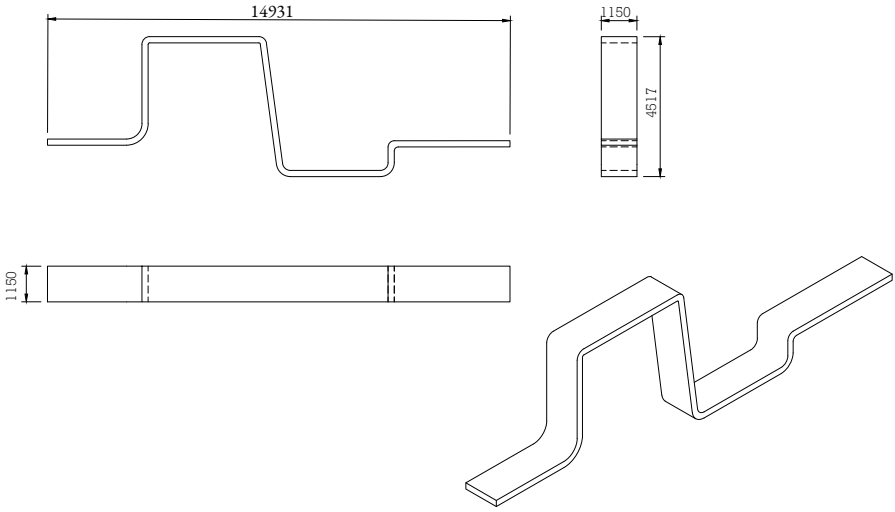


Fig. 63. Constructive detail - Ribbon display of the setup | Axonometric views and dimensioned projections.

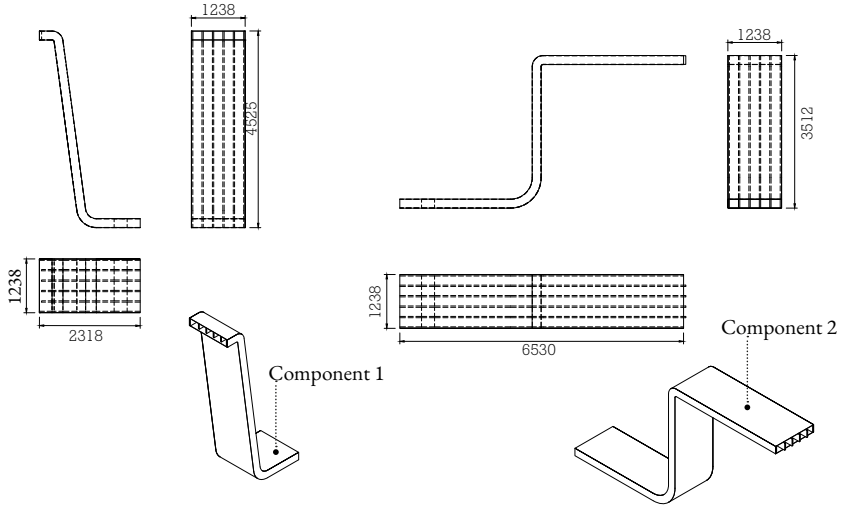


Fig. 64. Constructive detail - Structural display components| Axonometric views and dimensioned projections.

carefully calibrated lighting design played an equally crucial role, accentuating the dialogue between the pristine white surfaces and the warm materiality of the wooden furniture. The result was an environment that conveyed a sense of elegance and hospitality, while placing the focus squarely on Thonet's iconic designs.

Despite the installation's undeniable visual and conceptual strength, its custom-built nature posed a significant sustainability challenge. The structure was designed specifically for the Salone del Mobile, with components tailored to the spatial and functional needs of the event. As a result, the materials were not easily reusable, raising questions about the environmental impact of temporary exhibition designs in the contemporary design industry.

This critical point underscores an ongoing debate within the field of exhibition design: how to balance aesthetic excellence and brand storytelling with the responsibility of reducing material waste. While the installation succeeded in delivering a refined and memorable spatial experience — one that perfectly embodied Thonet's values of quality, lightness, and innovation — it also highlighted the need for adaptable and reusable solutions in future exhibition practices.

Overall, the 2004 Thonet installation by Migliore+Servetto demonstrated how a well-conceived spatial strategy can serve both as a communication tool and as a poetic extension of the brand's identity. Through the use of flexible materials, sculptural form, and light, the designers transformed the exhibition into a dynamic environment, fostering an emotional and intellectual connection between the visitors and the displayed objects.

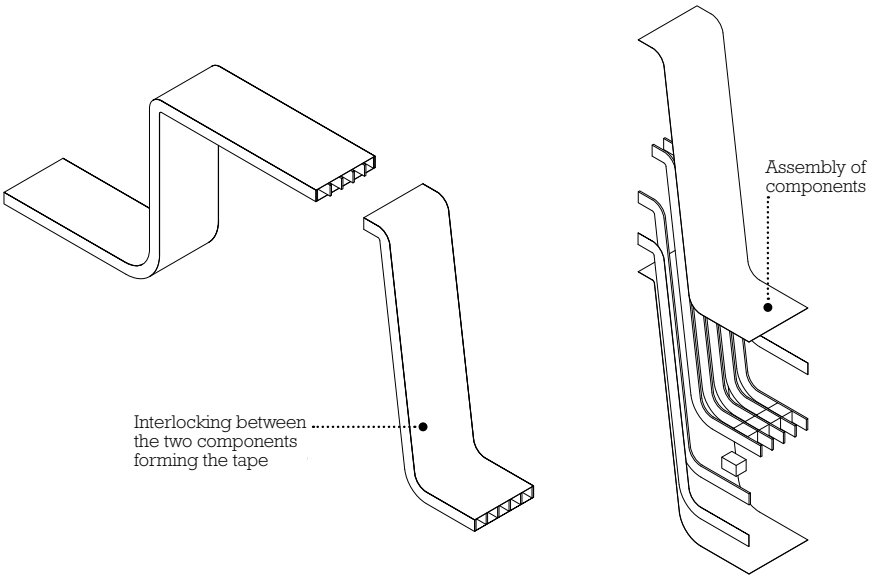


Fig. 65. Construction detail - Display components | Axonometric exploded views.

QR code for 3D model

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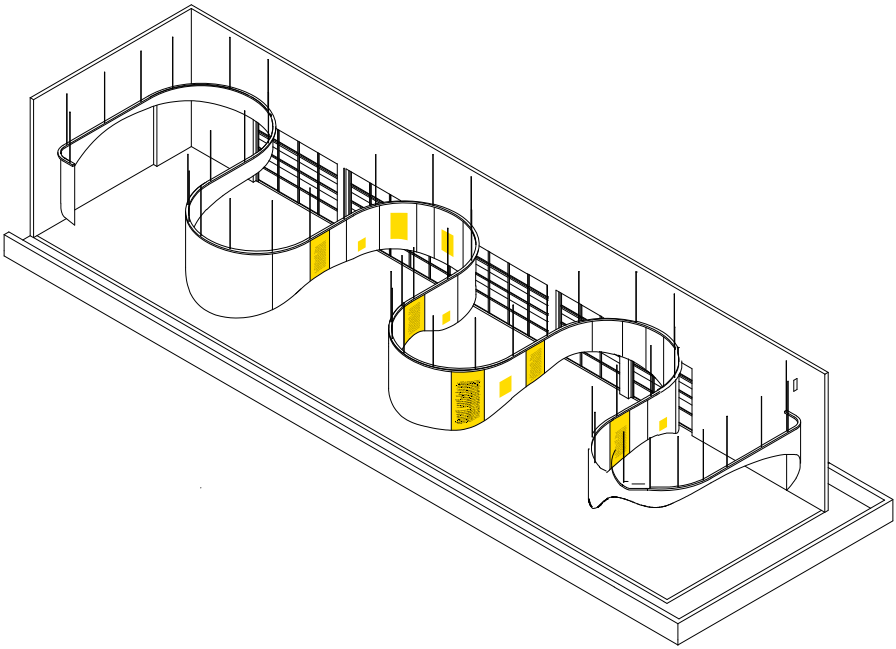
sheet 19

The Good Life: New Public Spaces For Recreation
Pier 40, Hudson River, New York



Amale Andraos, Dan Wood
2006

fluid path between new public spaces

In 2006, the exhibition The Good Life: New Public Spaces for Recreation offered a sharp and timely reflection on the evolving relationship between architecture, urban design, and collective well-being. Curated by Zoë Ryan and designed by the architectural studio WORKac, founded by Amale Andraos and Dan Wood, the show was staged inside the expansive, industrial space of Pier 40 in New York City — a location emblematic of urban reuse and transformation.

The exhibition assembled over 70 projects by architects, designers, landscape architects, and artists from around the globe, each proposing innovative strategies for reimagining urban public spaces to meet the evolving demands of recreation and social interaction in contemporary cities. In a world increasingly aware of the links between health, leisure, and the built environment, The Good Life invited both experts and the general public to reflect on how architecture could foster a more engaging, dynamic, and inclusive urban life.

Organized around five thematic clusters — The Fun City, The Healthy City, The Cultured City, The Connected City, and The 24-Hour City — the exhibition not only presented ideas but also embodied them in its own spatial narrative. It explored public space not as a static or merely aesthetic condition, but as a living, adaptive environment designed to promote collective experiences and improve urban quality of life.

Enhancing this conceptual framework was an ambitious public program featuring roundtables, lectures, urban tours, and playful activities. This parallel agenda activated the exhibition space as both a gallery and a site for recreation itself, further blurring the line between the observed and the lived experience. The curatorial approach highlighted the social dimension of design, while the exhibition design extended that invitation into the physical domain.

At the heart of the exhibition's immersive experience was its distinctive spatial installation — a large-scale, scenographic element that fused simplicity and flexibility. The primary design gesture was a continuous, approximately 90-meter-long

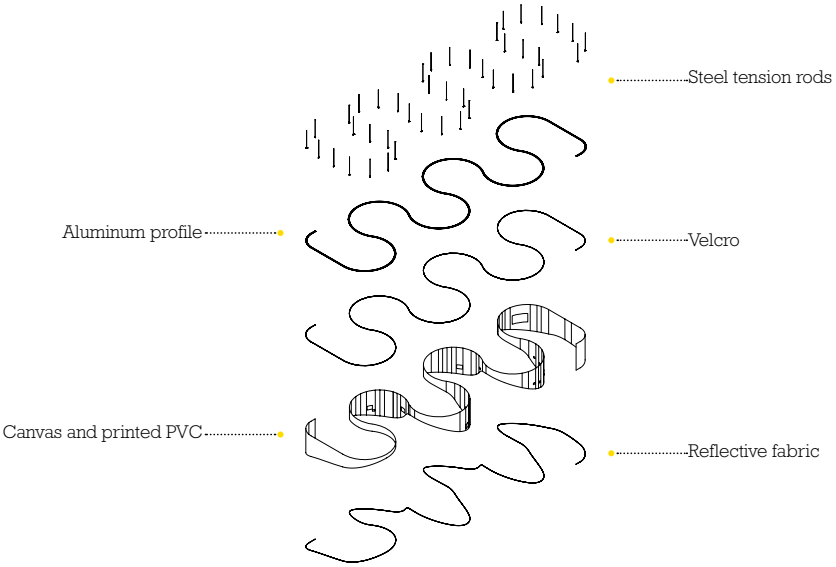


Fig. 66. Construction detail - Main components of the arrangement | Axonometric exploded view.

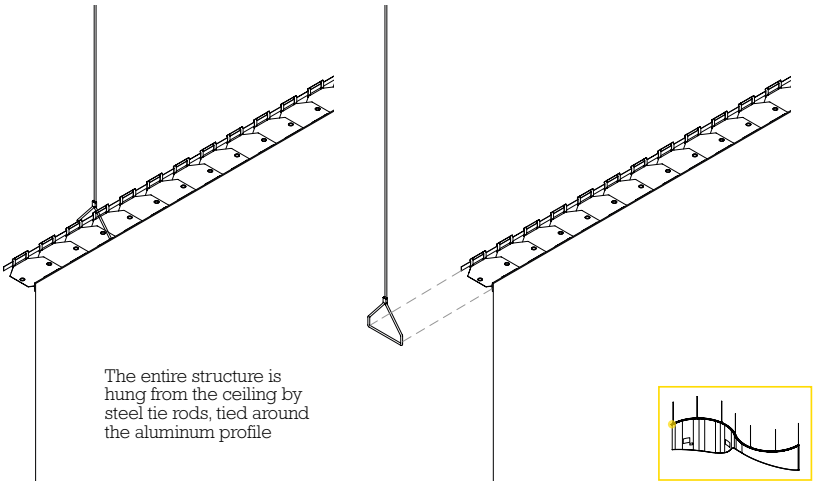


Fig. 67. Construction detail - The supporting structure in hanging | Axonometric view.

band of alternating bright yellow fabric and printed vinyl panels. This undulating ribbon traversed the entire exhibition space, carving out distinct yet interconnected areas corresponding to each thematic section.

The underlying support for this flowing element was a foldable aluminum profile, typically employed in the construction of curved drywall partitions. This construction detail, commonly found in architectural practice, allowed the designers to shape soft and enveloping curves, reinforcing the fluid and immersive quality of the exhibition path. The use of a flexible, modular material not only provided technical ease during assembly but also embodied the central exhibition theme: the adaptable and transformative nature of contemporary urban space.

The fabric and aluminum framework were joined with Velcro fasteners, a solution that enabled rapid assembly and disassembly, making the installation both reversible and efficient — qualities increasingly valued in contemporary exhibition design for their sustainability and practicality. Suspended from the ceiling by steel cables with loops, the structure maintained a sense of lightness and floating stability, subtly guiding visitors along the intended narrative route.

An additional technical refinement lay in the reflective fabric edge, which emphasized the graphic quality of the installation and heightened its visibility throughout the space. This detail was more than a formal gesture; it metaphorically reinforced the exhibition's underlying discourse on urban visibility, connectivity, and movement.

The result was an environment that blurred the distinction between content and container. The large, thermoplastic yellow membrane, arranged in a sinusoidal pattern, encouraged visitors to physically engage with the space, mirroring the conceptual exploration of urban fluidity, adaptability, and continuous transformation. The installation functioned not merely as a backdrop, but as an active spatial device — a soft, yet structurally expressive framework that elevated both the exhibits and the visitor experience.

Through its intelligent use of lightweight materials, modular construction techniques, and a visually stimulating formal language, the installation for The Good Life exemplified how exhibition design can translate architectural ideas into spatial narratives. It turned a raw industrial venue into an accessible and thought-provoking urban microcosm, inviting audiences to reconsider the role of public space in shaping the "good life" in the 21st-century city.

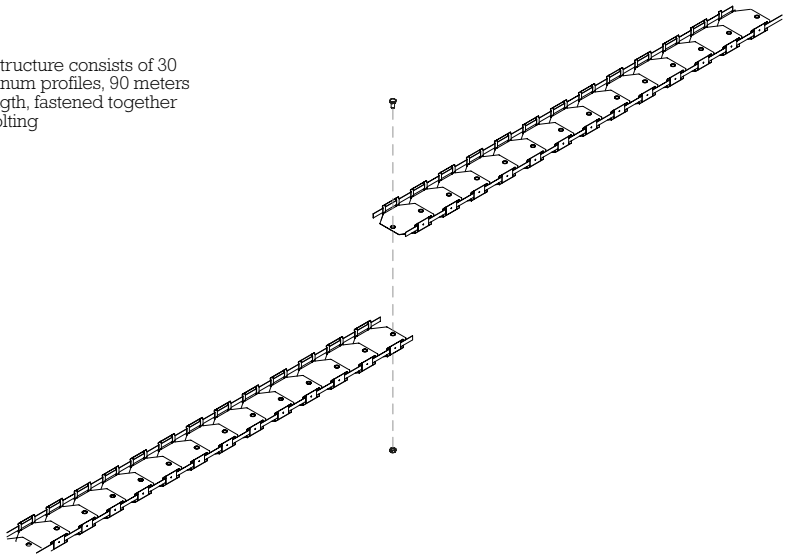


Fig. 68. Construction detail - Joints of the supporting structure | Axonometric view.

QR code for 3D model

Link for 3D model

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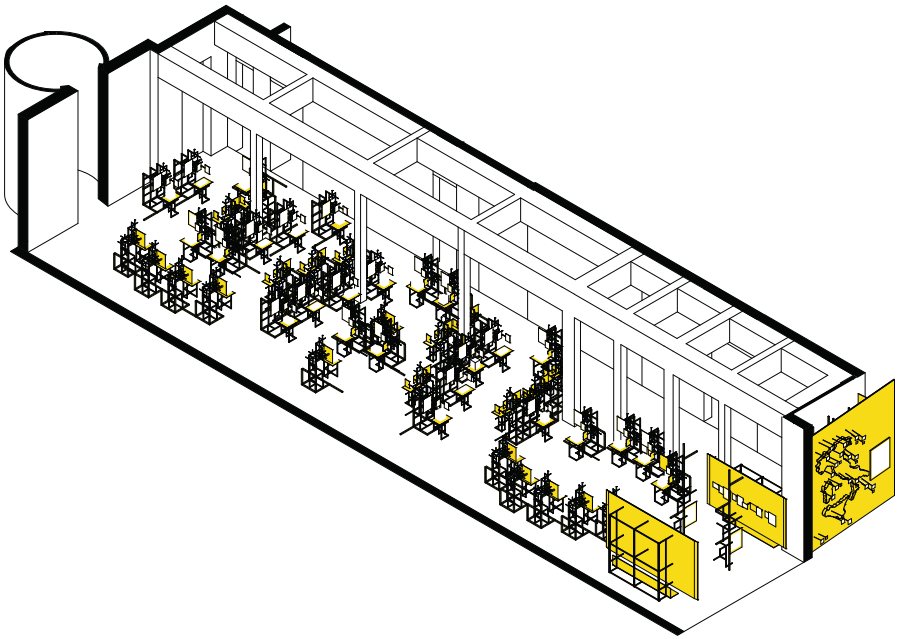
sheet 20

Gold Medal for Italian Architecture
Triennale di Milano, Milan



Alessandro Scandurra
2009

Suspended architecture: the reticular arrangement

In 2009, the Triennale di Milano hosted an exhibition honoring Massimiliano and Doriana Fuksas, curated as part of the Medaglia d'Oro all'Architettura Italiana. The exhibition design, conceived by architect Alessandro Scandurra, went far beyond the typical retrospective display. It transformed the exhibition space into an immersive and poetic environment—an abstract forest of thought, image, and structure. Drawing inspiration from the surrounding nature of Parco Sempione, Scandurra crafted a space that blurred the boundaries between built environment and organic form, projecting an atmosphere of suspended reflection.

The design was neither static nor linear. It was instead envisioned as a spatial narrative—a complex overlay of ideas and visions that paralleled the multifaceted career of the Fuksas duo. Scandurra employed a digital matrix as the generative principle behind the installation: a repeating three-dimensional module, declined in various scales, composed a reticular structure that filled the space while preserving a sense of airiness and lightness. This spatial grid framed and suspended the exhibition content, creating a visual field that was simultaneously structured and immaterial.

The display strategy emphasized both vertical and horizontal elements. Photographs and conceptual images were mounted on upright panels, while physical models were housed in low, horizontal displays. This duality allowed visitors to alternate between immersive visual storytelling and tactile engagement with material forms. The exhibition became an open system where ideas floated within a network of lightweight metal structures—inviting interpretation, exploration, and discovery.

Information panels were designed with usability in mind: white typography on anthracite backgrounds ensured readability, and their lateral positioning encouraged an intuitive, non-obtrusive consultation. The legibility and layout of the didactic materials reflected a broader design intention—one rooted in clarity, accessibility, and a sense of editorial elegance.

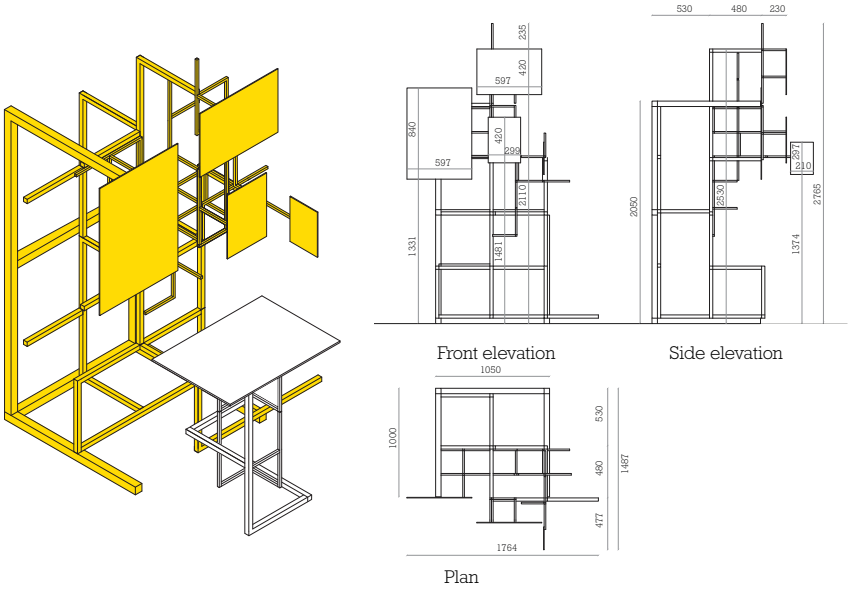


Fig. 69. Construction detail - Main display elements | Axonometric view and dimensioned elevations.

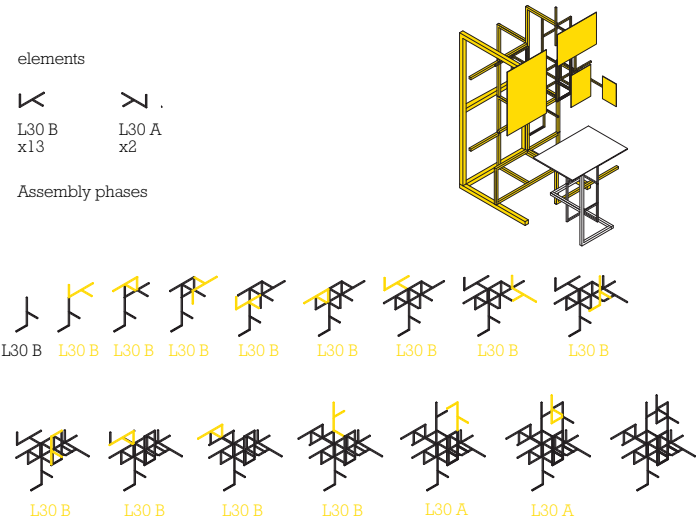


Fig. 70. Construction detail - Abacus of exhibit elements | Axonometric views.

From a technical standpoint, the system was built using hollow steel tubular elements, joined with welded connections and fixed in place using screws and threaded rivets. The result was a robust yet elegant structural skeleton. The use of a single modular element repeated across scales not only contributed to the aesthetic cohesion of the installation but also enabled logistical flexibility. Designed to be transported and reassembled in four different locations, the entire structure was conceived with disassembly, mobility, and sustainability in mind.

The modularity of the system allowed for rapid on-site construction and reduced the environmental footprint associated with producing bespoke display elements for each venue. This approach aligned with contemporary concerns around sustainable design in temporary exhibitions. Moreover, the clarity of the assembly system—enhanced by visually intuitive diagrams akin to IKEA manuals—highlighted the importance of effective communication in design documentation, an often overlooked but critical aspect of curatorial logistics.

Scandurra's design offered not only a spatial translation of the Fuksas studio's architectural ethos but also a broader meditation on how exhibition spaces can be both informative and experiential. The reticular framework made the void visible, inviting visitors to perceive absence as a narrative element. The structural grid did not merely support content—it became a metaphor for thought processes, creative connections, and architectural imagination.

Ultimately, the exhibition stood as an homage not only to the Fuksas' contributions to architecture but also to the very act of designing space. It demonstrated how exhibition design, when treated as a conceptual and technical challenge, can amplify meaning, stimulate engagement, and reinforce the dialogue between form, function, and the ephemeral nature of experience.

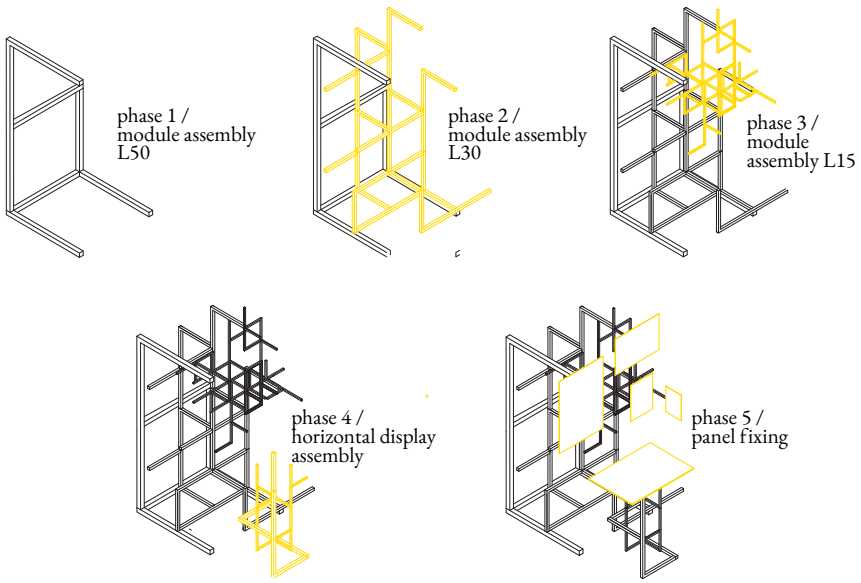


Fig. 71. Construction detail - Phased composition of exhibit elements | Axonometric views.

QR code for 3D model

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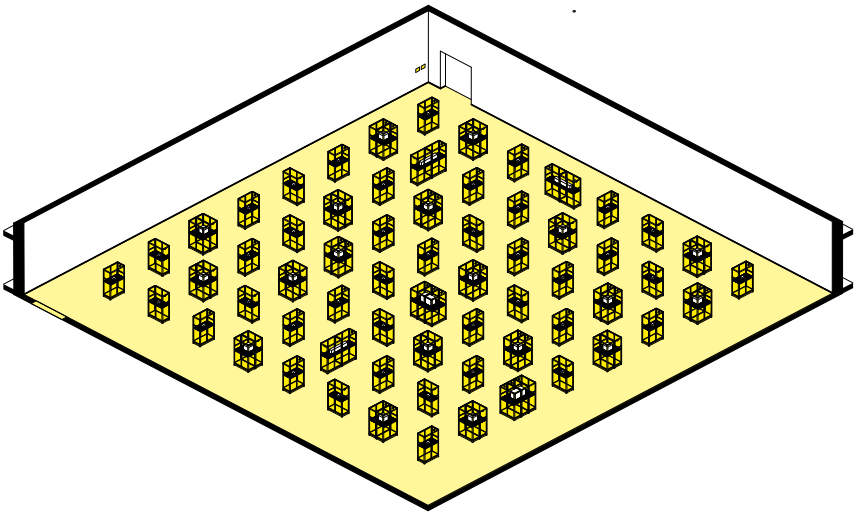
sheet 21

The current state of Kanazawa crafts,
21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa



Nendo
2009

Arts and crafts in Kanazawa

The exhibition "The Current State of Kanazawa Crafts" at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan, presented 62 handmade pieces created by 50 local artisans. Curated as part of the Kanazawa Crafts Triennale and designed by the renowned Japanese studio Nendo, the exhibition aimed to reflect on the state of craftsmanship today — its value, its meaning, and its coexistence with the logic of industrial production. Held in 2006 in the spacious 729 m^2 People's Gallery A, the exhibition avoided theatrical gestures and instead embraced a refined and minimalist aesthetic that placed artisanal work at the center.

The works on display ranged from ceramics and lacquerware to textiles and wood, showcasing both technical skill and cultural memory. The curatorial intent was to highlight the specificity of each object while drawing a line of continuity with the museum's collection. Visitors were invited to observe not only the materials and forms, but also the symbolic and human dimensions of artisanal work, offering a silent critique of mass standardization and the culture of excessive consumption.

A key element of the exhibition's success was its distinctive spatial strategy. Instead of building a traditional layout or creating custom display furniture, Nendo chose an unexpected solution: repurposed domestic greenhouses. These industrially produced glass structures, commonly used for small-scale farming, were adapted into exhibition modules with integrated shelving and pre-installed wiring for lighting. Their transparency and modularity created an open and non-hierarchical layout that allowed visitors to move freely, discovering the objects in an environment that appeared light, respectful of the exhibition content, and highly functional.

The use of greenhouses as display elements demonstrated how pre-existing structures could be reinvented in a design context. Not only did this reduce the environmental impact of the exhibition by minimizing material waste and the need for new constructions, but it also introduced a highly evocative metaphor: the idea of cultivating and preserving the fragile culture of craftsmanship, just like

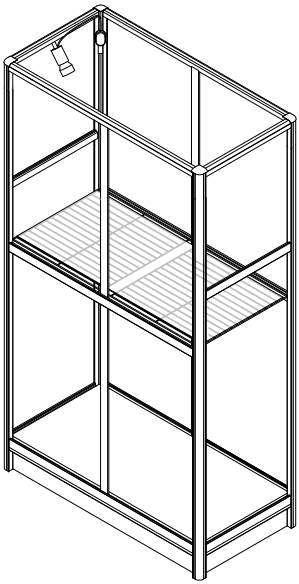


Fig. 72. Construction detail - Display used in the set-up | Axonometric views.

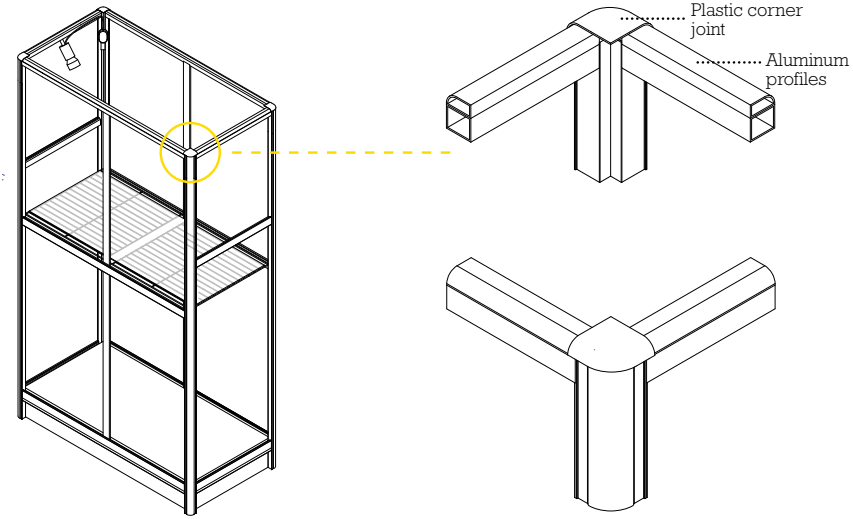


Fig. 73. Construction detail - Corner joints of the display | Axonometric views.

plants in a controlled environment. This parallel between craftsmanship and care added further meaning to the visitor's experience.

The technical solution was resolved through a system of interlocking plastic joints used to assemble the greenhouses. Made of mono-material components, the joints allowed for a simple and reversible construction, without screws, adhesives, or complex tools.

The ability to disassemble and reuse the structure in different contexts reflects a contemporary awareness of sustainable circular practices, rejecting more traditional single-use constructions in favor of adaptable systems that evolve over time.

However, the use of plastic — even if recyclable — raises questions about the durability of the chosen solution. Although lightweight and cost-effective, this material may not offer the necessary resistance for long-term repeated use. Thus, the project highlights a design challenge: how to reconcile sustainability with longevity and mechanical reliability.

Overall, "The Current State of Kanazawa Crafts" stands as an example of exhibition design that is both conceptually rich and materially responsible, demonstrating that aesthetics and ethics need not be in conflict.

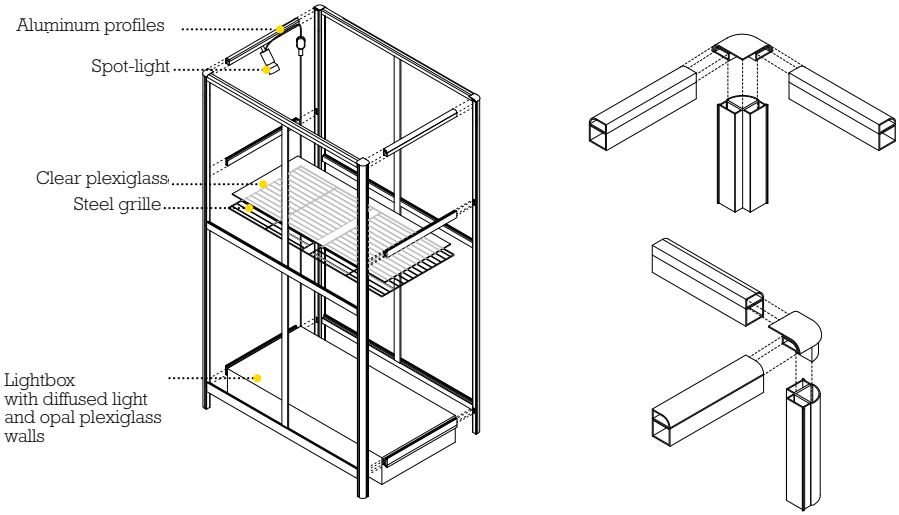


Fig. 74. Construction detail - Main components of the display | Axonometric exploded view.

QR code for 3D model

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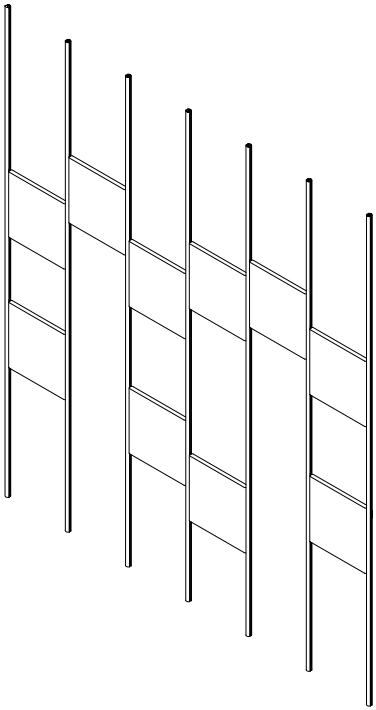
sheet 22

FontanaArte Flagship Store
Milan



Calvi Brambilla
2013

Expose with lightness and flexibility

The Italian lighting brand FontanaArte inaugurated its flagship store in Milan in 2013 with an installation designed by architects Fabio Calvi and Paolo Brambilla. This exhibition space, located in the heart of Italy's design capital, was not conceived solely as a commercial environment, but as a dynamic platform to celebrate and reinterpret the legacy of Italian design. Inspired by the stylistic language of Gio Ponti — one of FontanaArte's most iconic figures — the installation appeared as a contemporary homage to the rationalism popular in the mid-twentieth century.

The display system developed for the store was not only a showcase to enhance the brand's lighting products but also a sophisticated design solution. Calvi and Brambilla's approach was based on modularity, adaptability, and clarity; their work went beyond aesthetics for its own sake, addressing both functional and ethical needs that reflected current discussions on sustainability and the circularity of built artifacts.

At the core of this installation was a system of seven vertical tubular structures with a round section. These tubes, functioning as electrified rails, also served as the supporting and distribution structure of the system. Square display panels — minimalist surfaces that supported the exhibited lighting pieces — were attached to them. The vertical grid became the backbone of the store, transforming a typical wall-mounted display into a flexible and interactive matrix.

The verticality of the system was essential not only for providing the visual identity of the space but also for its functionality: the possibility of repositioning the panels along the tubes allowed for various spatial compositions and different curatorial narratives. Whether hosting wall lamps, flat graphics, small sculptural objects, or framed artworks, the structure easily adapted to the content. This transformability was achieved without compromising the integrity of the system, highlighting a key principle of contemporary design.

Modularity also extended to the aesthetic adaptability of the installation: through

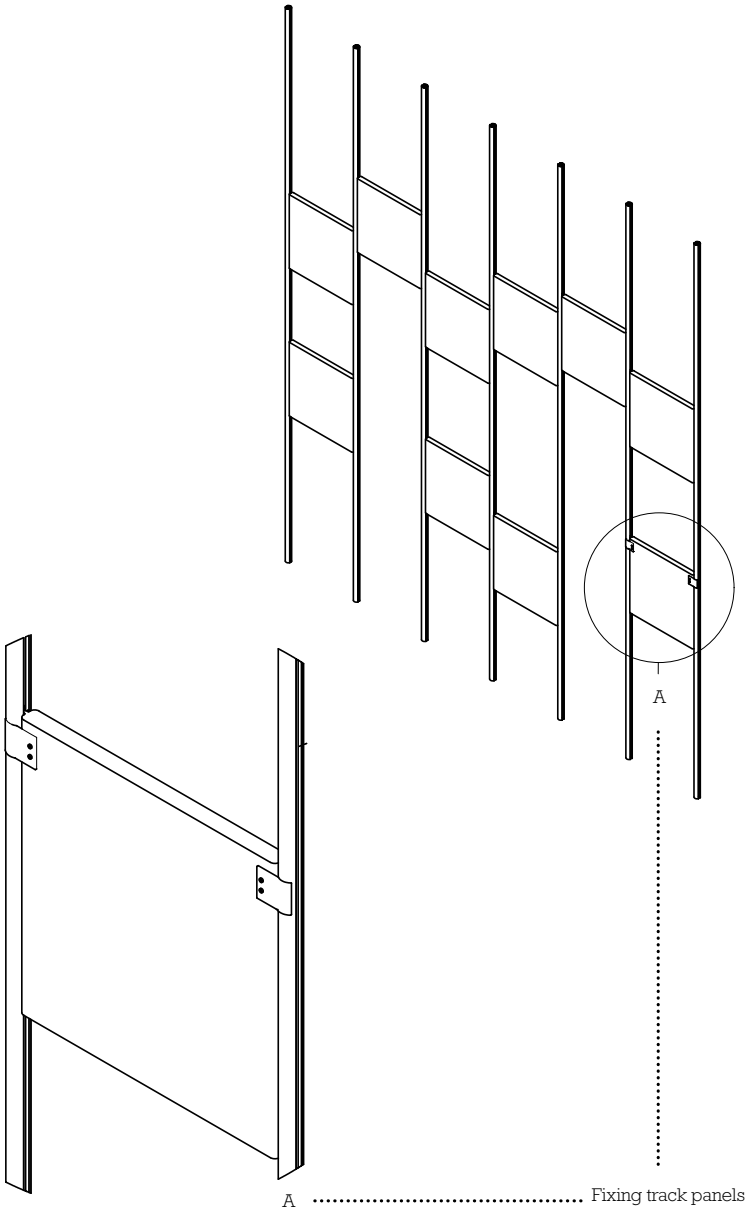


Fig. 75. Construction detail - Modular outfitting system and single component focus | Axonometric views.

various finishes and multiple color treatments of the panels and supports, the appearance of the display could change to suit seasonal themes, specific product lines, or unexpected artistic collaborations. The system thus functioned as a "blank canvas," providing an infrastructural skeleton that welcomed different content from time to time.

The proposed system was reconfigurable, reusable, and durable, extending its life cycle compared to traditional temporary setups. From a sustainability perspective, this approach appears more responsible, as resources are not wasted on single-use structures, and any changes do not produce waste.

The project exemplifies how minimalist design can encompass deep conceptual and technical richness; the simplicity of the components — tubes, panels, and hardware — conceals the sophistication of the system, where each element plays multiple roles: structural, aesthetic, and functional. This multifunctionality is central in contemporary design, especially when space, cost, and environmental impact are significant factors.

This type of exhibition, in the end, encourages respectful and dynamic interaction with the displayed objects; such an approach reflects Gio Ponti's ethic, according to which design must be "functional, beautiful, and durable" (Ponti, 1952). Revisiting the principles of the Milanese master through a contemporary lens, Calvi and Brambilla honor the legacy of both the designer and the brand, proposing a model in which past and present merge in a living dialogue.

This display system shows how good design infrastructure can support the broadest creative freedom: a small set of intelligent components can offer infinite spatial potential. Being inherently reconfigurable and built with durable materials, the system responds to present and future needs, accommodating different users, objects, and narratives.

In conclusion, Calvi and Brambilla's installation for the FontanaArte flagship store is much more than a simple commercial arrangement: it is a lesson in adaptive spatial design. The fusion of technical engineering, aesthetic clarity, and sustainable values makes it a benchmark for future exhibitions, which are increasingly called to question innovation, ecology, and beauty.

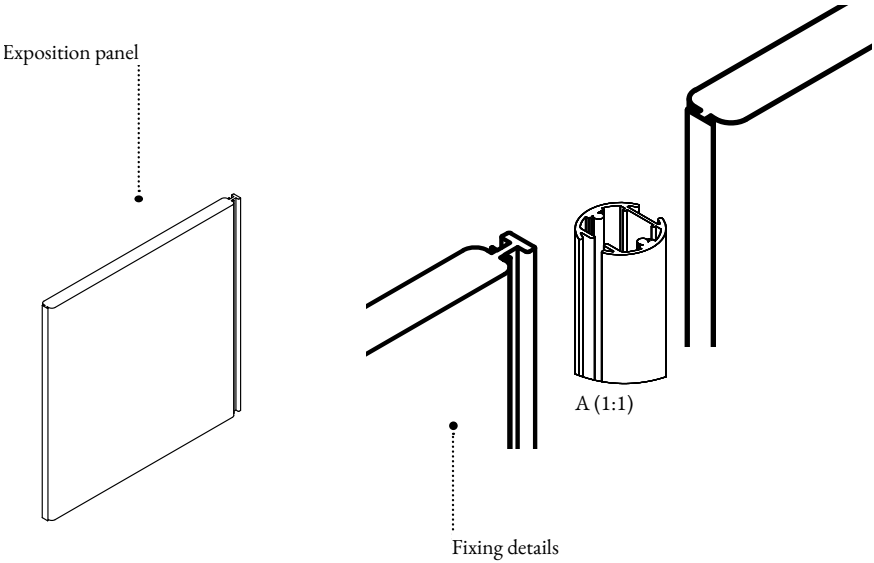


Fig. 76. Construction detail - Joint enabling interlocking between panels |Axonometric views.

QR code for 3D model

Link for 3D model

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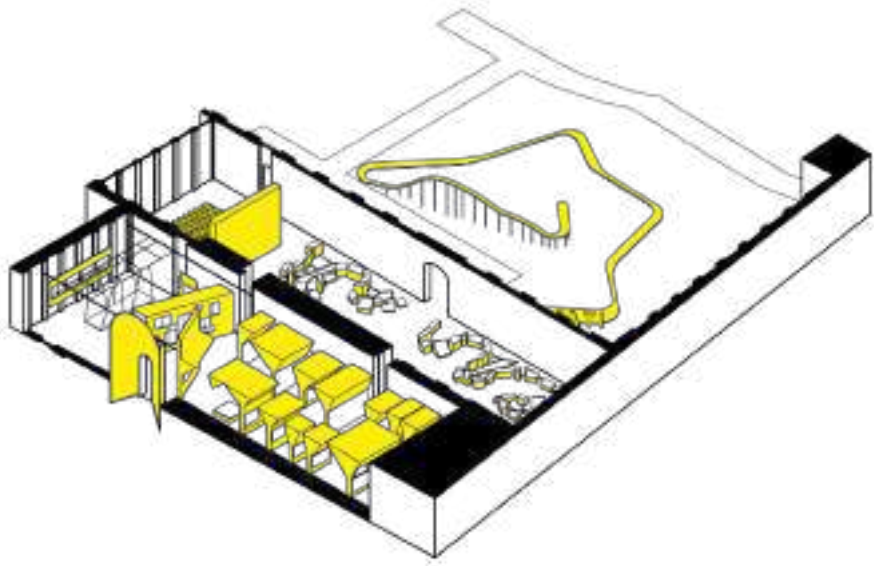
sheet 13

Innesti/Grafting, Italian Pavilion
Venice Biennale, Venice



Cino Zucchi
2014

Designing narrative spaces

At the 14th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale (in 2014), the Italian Pavilion at the Arsenale, curated by architect Cino Zucchi, appeared as a refined installation that combined historical awareness with contemporary architectural language. Entitled "Innesti/Grafting," the pavilion functioned as both a conceptual and physical laboratory, particularly in the section dedicated to Expo Milano 2015, "A Laboratory for the Environment." This part, created in collaboration with the multimedia collective Studio Azzurro, reflected on the role of exhibition architecture as a ground for experimentation in urban innovation and environmental sustainability.

The narrative structure of the exhibition was articulated through a spatial and visual dramaturgy that guided visitors from the monumental metal portal at the entrance through a sequence of thematic environments. These spaces were designed not only to convey content but also to evoke experiences blending physical interaction with intellectual engagement. The luminous installation at the entrance immediately placed the visitor within an evolving environment—a representation of a constantly transforming laboratory, where architecture becomes the medium for interpreting and shaping the changing relationships between people, cities, and environments.

This first luminous element—an immersive and dynamic threshold—set the tone for the exhibition. It symbolized a gateway into a hybrid space, echoing the overarching metaphor of "grafting" adopted by Zucchi. In botanical terms, grafting is the process of joining two different organisms to create a new entity. In architectural terms, it became a metaphor for the overlapping of historical legacy and contemporary intervention, of permanence and temporariness.

A particularly impactful example of this project was the installation that explained the master plan of Expo Milano 2015. Here, the space served as both a visual and conceptual synthesis of environmental concerns, urban planning strategies, and the potential of technological experimentation. Through projections, videos,

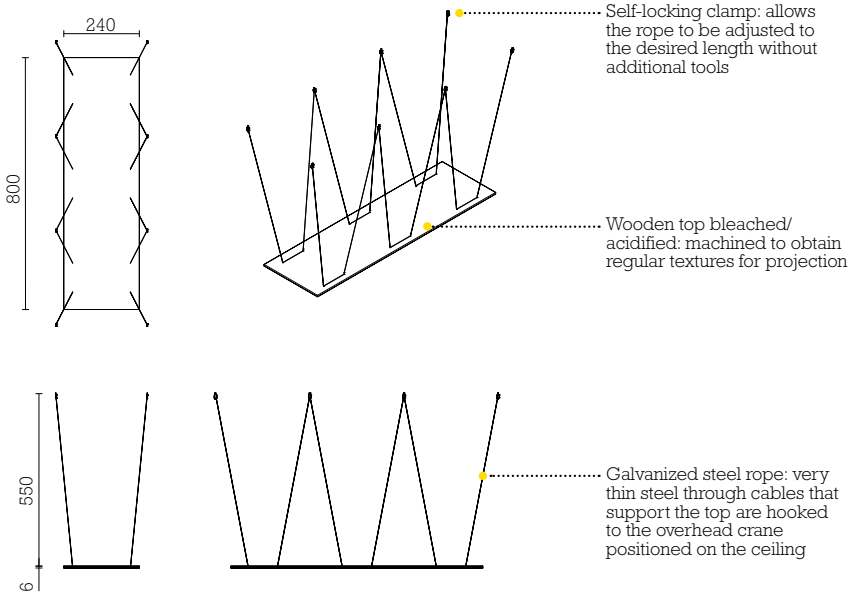


Fig. 77. Construction detail - Central display element | Axonometric views and dimensioned projections.

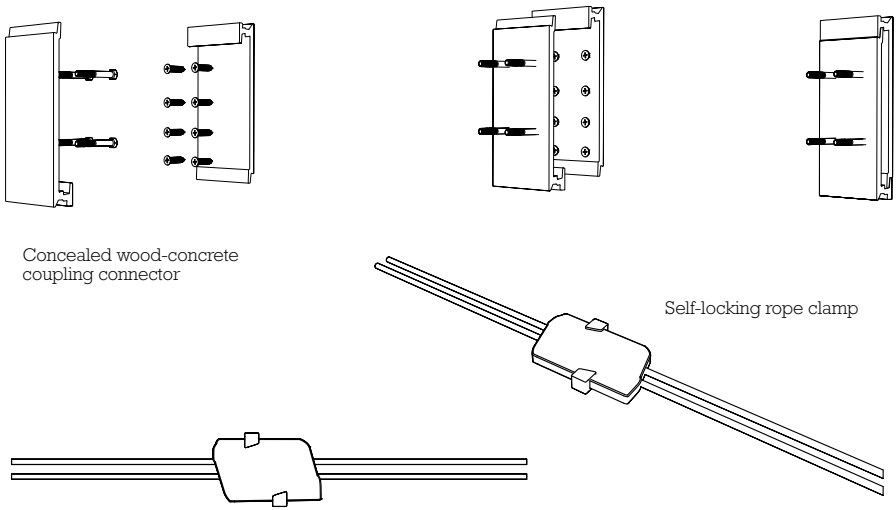


Fig. 78. Construction detail - Shelving joints | Axonometric views and exploded views.

interactive displays, and material samples, the exhibition highlighted the complex design strategies behind the initiative, while also launching a broader reflection on how large events, although temporary, could contribute to long-term urban transformation.

Zucchi's use of exhibition architecture as a narrative device was emphasized by the spatial flexibility of the installation. Modular and lightweight structures were arranged in a way that recalled the work of Italian masters such as Franco Albini and Carlo Scarpa, combining communicative clarity with poetic nuance. Transparency, rhythm, and balance characterized the arrangement of the exhibition elements, while a carefully designed lighting system—mixing natural and artificial sources—accentuated textures and guided the visitor's path.

This hybrid approach created a dialogue between architecture and scenography, between past and future: the installation was not simply an exhibition of objects and models, but a landscape of ideas and materials. Every detail, from the position of the projections to the tactile quality of the surfaces, was part of an orchestrated experience that invited reflection on the environmental, cultural, and aesthetic dimensions of urban design.

At the heart of this immersive experience was the theme of sustainability, understood not only as an ecological concern but as a broader cultural and design ethos. The materials used in the installation were selected for their lightness, modularity, and recyclability, embracing the temporary nature of the pavilion without sacrificing material richness. The use of steel mesh, fabric screens, and corten elements shaped a system that was as infrastructural as it was expressive.

From an architectural point of view, the Italian Pavilion demonstrated the potential of exhibition design which, beyond the function of presenting projects, became a "spatial essay" on the relationship between architecture, city, and environment. The use of architectural "grafts" as both literal and metaphorical interventions allowed for a coherent integration of diverse themes, from the history of Italian modernism to the future of Milan as a metropolitan center. Thus, the pavilion exemplified how curatorship, scenography, and architecture can converge to create experiences that are intellectually active and spatially engaging.

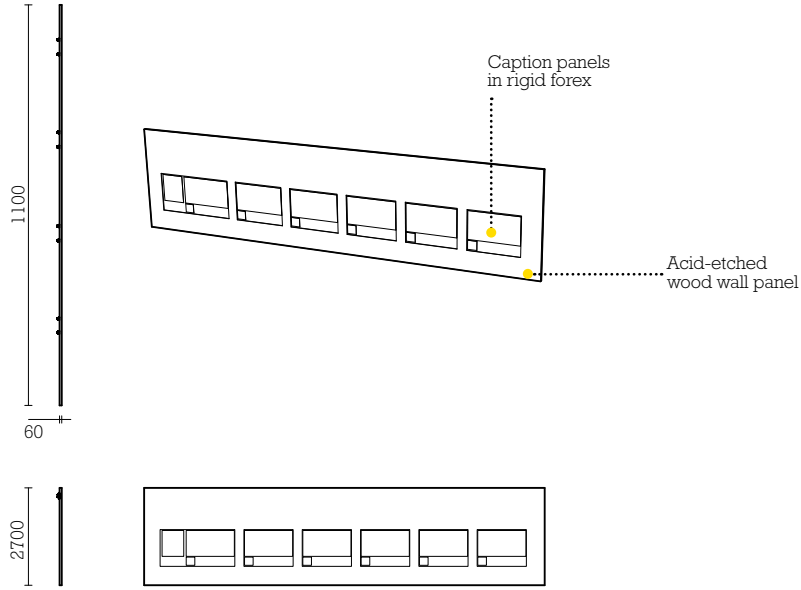


Fig. 79. Construction detail - Wall display panel| Axonometric view and dimensioned elevation.

QR code for 3D model

Link for 3D model

https://formazione.nonsibuttavianiente.it/dxfs/innesti-grafting-zucchi-dUAjKH

Rethinking the exhibition space

In the broader context of the Italian Pavilion at the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale, the architectural narrative did not unfold solely through the organization of content or the thematic divisions of space. One of the exhibition's strengths, curated by Cino Zucchi, was indeed its ability to transform technical components into expressive elements, demonstrating how infrastructure, when carefully designed, can become a storytelling device.

Among the most emblematic details of the installation was the strategic use of bent sheet metal cable trays—commonly known as "cable covers"—which served both as infrastructural supports and scenographic devices. These elements, usually relegated to hidden areas of a building, were brought to the forefront of the pavilion's spatial language: integrated into the exhibition path, they were elevated from passive components to active participants in the architectural composition. The cable trays were made of pre-oxidized corten steel, chosen both for its material expressiveness and for its ability to evoke a sense of raw, industrial honesty. Their branching configuration, installed at different heights and directions, visually suggested the structure of tree canopies or vascular systems. This organic image reinforced the exhibition's central theme: grafting, where layers and disparate systems meet, intertwine, and generate new architectural hybrids.

More than functional devices to hide cables or support lighting, the cable covers thus shaped the spatial rhythm of the pavilion. Their paths guided the movement of the visitor: bending and extending in multiple directions, these metal lines operated as an "abstract cartography" of the space, leading toward key installations or drawing attention to specific visual axes.

This technique underlines a fundamental lesson for exhibition design: when technical constraints are not merely accepted as necessities but are integrated into the conceptual framework of the installation, they can enhance the spatial and narrative quality of an environment. The result is a language in which every element—even the smallest and seemingly insignificant—contributes to the larger

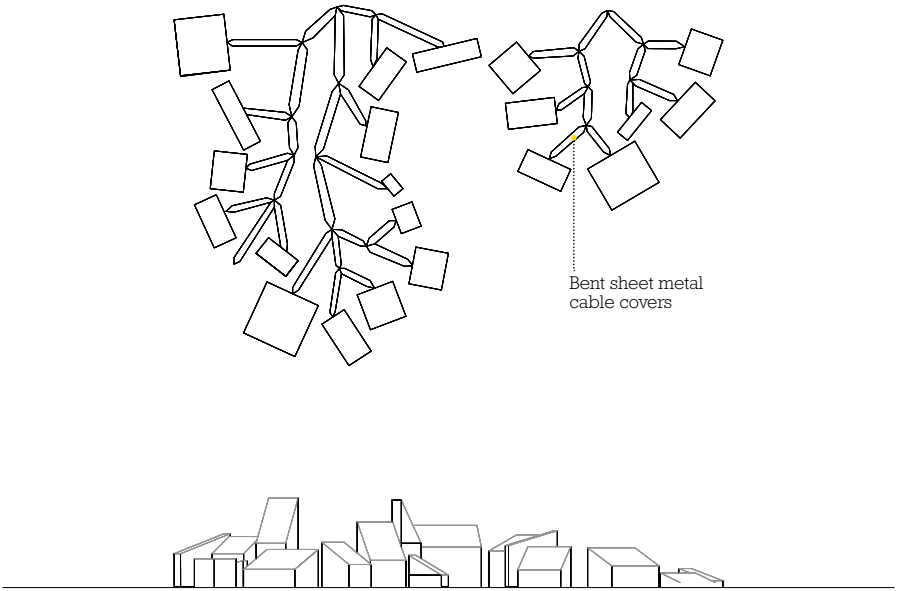


Fig. 80. Construction detail - Display elements| Perspective and plan views.

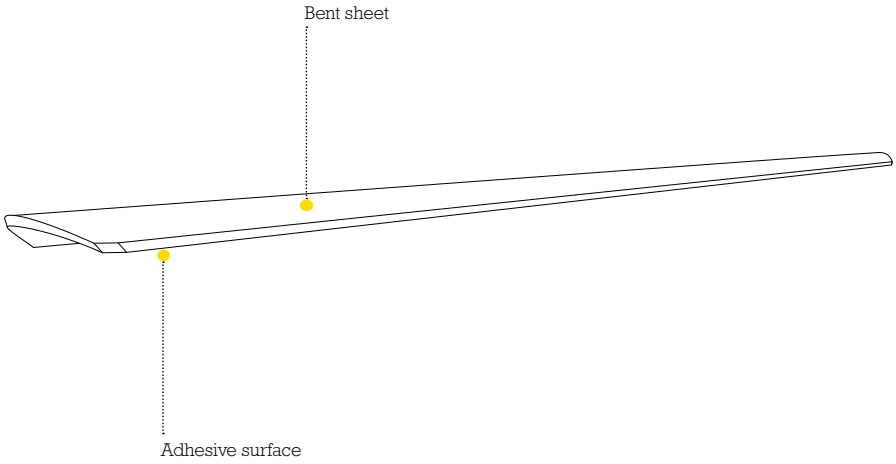


Fig. 81. Construction detail - Structural load-bearing element | Perspective views.

story being told. Here, the choice to reveal (and aestheticize) the bent metal cable trays introduced a form of architectural honesty aligned with contemporary concerns about transparency, materiality, and the ethics of production.

Formally, the cable trays created a visual dialogue with the surrounding structures. Their rust-toned hues echoed the historical textures of the Arsenale, while their geometric profiles contrasted with the irregularity of the existing walls. This contrast between care and decay, between intervention and context, encapsulated the logic of grafting that permeated the entire pavilion.

Moreover, the cable trays established a bridge between architecture and other disciplines: they evoked not only vegetal or biological forms, but also referenced the graphic language of wiring diagrams, electronic boards, and data networks, thus touching on the contemporary condition of digital interconnection. In this way, they became a metaphor for the flow of information and energy that govern cities and cultural systems. Thanks to them, the detail was elevated to narrative: they were neither background nor decoration, but became mediators between concept, function, and experience.

From a curatorial standpoint, their presence challenged the traditional hierarchies of exhibition design because—instead of privileging only models, drawings, or screens—the design highlighted infrastructure as a legitimate site of aesthetic exploration. This shift in meaning broadens the field of what can be considered "worthy of display," offering new perspectives on innovation.

Furthermore, the materiality of corten steel—its patina, its tactility, and its declaration of aging—added a temporal dimension to the installation: unlike polished metals or synthetic materials, corten suggests process, oxidation, and transformation over time. The design of these cable trays also raised critical questions about sustainability: their reusability, modularity, and minimal production impact demonstrated how even the technical components of exhibitions could adhere to ecological principles. Rather than producing wasteful scenographies for a short-term event, the pavilion thus embraced the idea of responsible design even in its most utilitarian parts.

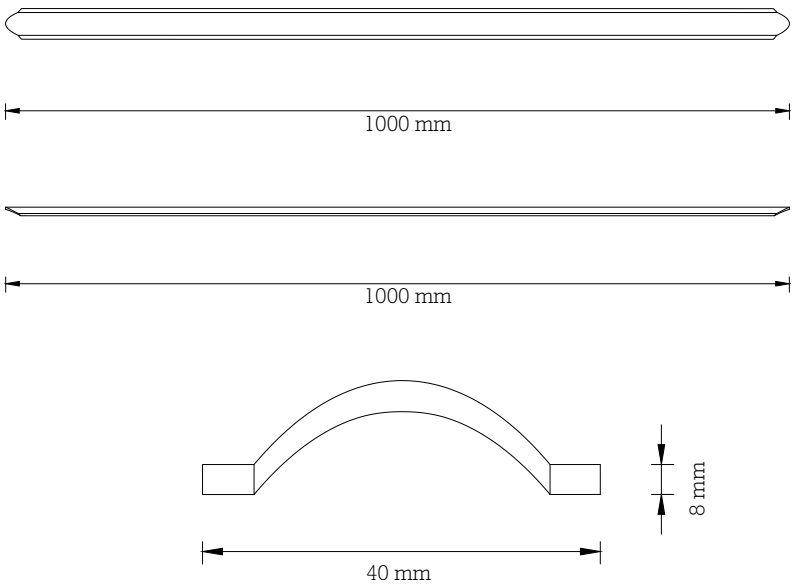


Fig. 82. Construction detail - Structural load-bearing element | Dimensioned elevations.

QR code for 3D model

Link for 3D model

https://formazione.nonsibuttavianiente.it/dxfs/innesti-grafting-zucchi-dUAjKH