





JULIE SOHN BOUTIQUE

Diputació street 299.
Barcelona, Spain
Promoter : Julie Sohn
2004.

REF Nº 7654321

The project is for premises located in the heart of Barcelona's Ensanche, in the proximity of a shopping area of extraordinary vitality, the Paseo de Gràcia. The premises occupy the ground floor of the building in which it is located and adopt a u-shape with two openings to the street, resulting from the general vestibule of the building being fitted into its rectangular floor plan. The premises also have a very reduced mezzanine and a basement of barely 1.60 meters of headroom.

This new space operates as a shop, a showroom and a studio for the designer Julie Sohn.

The compositional and architectural criteria applied and the project strategies used on the premises were as follows:

Cleaning up the place

Demolishing partitions and false ceilings to leave exposed the structure, beams, shutters, cast pillars, ceramic floor-supporting beams, period paintings, load bearing walls in solid brick with their 'wounds' and the original floor in pressed concrete.

Opening up of the basement

The premises have a basement of reduced height that can only be used as a storeroom. The project opens up the floor forgings in the area of the shop window and entrance to achieve greater spatial height, so that the entrance is formed by a gangway over a pond with a transparent backdrop from which the lighting issues.

Display of products

For displaying the garments wooden soffits lacquered in white have been built and hung from the walls like pictures, featuring hangers and shelving that configure different compositions, soffits issuing indirect light that illuminates the entire space. Several display units have been built to configure the routes in the premises.

A diffusing false ceiling

The false ceiling is formed by inverted pyramids with a rhomboid and trapezoid base, hanging to form unitary folded surfaces that do not quite reach the walls and conceal all the air conditioning, sound and light-installation. It is also used as a reflecting surface, painted in a white color in the manner of a great 'starched cloth' that brings unity to the space and leads the flow of people operating as a great lamp in the shop.

A subtle selection of new materials and textures

White-lacquered wood with hangers in matte stainless steel in the soffits, american walnut veneer or corten steel in units and transparent or reflecting glass in the panes.

The Julie Sohn space has been developed as a succession of small scale subspaces.

The entrances is a first space that welcomes the client through a gangway encompassing the entire width of the façade opening, enveloping and situating it in the geometric axis of the entrance.

This gangway framed on each side by a sheet of water in movement, marks through its waves the entrance and exit flow. In order to give movement to this sheet of water, a drip system that impacts on its surface has been installed. The lighting in this space is achieved through projecting light on its liquid surface, so that the impact of the drops on the sheet of water and the waves they form reflects its movement on the walls. This first space is accessed after opening the façade door, composed of a metallic tubular structure and a stainless steel mesh that pivots on an axis. The pivoting system consists of an electric motor operating a variable counterweight and a system of pulleys to. At the end of the gangway, a glass sliding door opens into the private space of the shop: a first showcase space displaying mannequins.

In a second space a corten steel unit affixed to the floor formalizes a display space while dividing it up and organizing it into two routes, bringing the client to the display zone marked by neutral colored panels on the walls. Before the end of this route, the client has already been shown all the garments on display and is lead into the square, the meeting place.

This space is a continuity of the display, the walls are shaped by the varied exhibition units: for accessories such as jewellery, foot-wear, ceramics and leather goods. At the back of the premises are the fitting rooms, with generous door-less spaces, constituting elements that levitate through-out the space due to their minimal height and their base not reaching the floor.

In this part of the shop, the agora, is where the dealing with the client takes place. The client tries on the article in a more intimate space, the fitting rooms, or in the square where a space has been fitted out with facing mirrors and where interaction can occur in a more relaxed way. Here also is the administration area of the shop, a unit that has been designed to house all the devices required for this purpose. The fitting rooms adjacent to an internal court-yard, with a glass rooftop, allow natural light into the premises and provide additional light for the client to view the garments.

Annexed to this square is a service space with a storage room, lavatory, kitchen and access to the studio located in the mezzanine, and the showroom. The showroom again recovers the full height of the premises. Here the false ceiling that has been installed in the rest of the shop has been left out and the entire structure is left bare. The display of the different collections occurs on tubular hangers standing on the floor making it unnecessary to have soffits as a backdrop. This space has an entrance from the general neighbours' staircase, which is used by the staff and service as well as showroom clients.

Furthermore it does not reach the façade, instead it stops before making the most of the great window to the street by leaving a space of exhibition, which is enhanced by the creation of a double-height. This last module conceived as a show case is separated from the show room by a large mirror-lined partition that duplicates the perception of the space, widening the perspective in the show room.

All the elements contribute in creating the spirit of the space. The ceiling made from inverted pyramids, the conserved mortar floor found during the refurbishment and the recovered brick walls permit unifying the different spaces that articulate different uses and ambiances in the shop.

The image we sought to express was that of starched wrinkled cloth floating on the ceiling of the shop.