

THE GOODS

edited by
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PORTFOLIO: Givenchy, Seoul, South Korea

AS THE GANGNAM-GU SHOPPING district of Seoul, South Korea, becomes increasingly fashionable, international retail brands are realizing stores have to be more distinctive – especially outside.

When Givenchy, the 63-year-old house of Hubert de Givenchy, now owned by LVMH (Paris), decided to open a new flagship on a corner of the fashion avenue, its first design decision was to create a dramatic, brand-appropriate exterior that

could be readily seen and identified.

Riccardo Tisci, the Givenchy fashion director whose hand is in every creative aspect of the house, enlisted the Milanese architecture studio Piuarch to design a cladding that would reference the brand.

The result is a corrugated iron skin, distinctive by day for its rippling surfaces, and by night for the light that shines through apertures in the cladding.

“It was designed as a sort of enclosure, a second embossed skin as an expression

of an urban identity,” says Piuarch founder Francesco Fresa. “The ashlar surface, made of electro-polished steel plates, creates reflective effects that interact with the surrounding landscape and change depending on the light.”

Specifically, Fresa says, the skin is inspired by optical art, which was the driving force behind the most recent collection Tisci designed for Givenchy.

“Piuarch searched for references on the Italian Op art movements of the '60s, specif-



ically artists Lucio Fontana and Enrico Castellani,” says Fresa. “The point of contact between Italian Op art and the Givenchy style is through the work of Tisci, whose designs are pervaded by continual reference to the artistic movements.”

Generally, the façade is meant to evoke the distinctive tailoring that has long characterized the Givenchy brand.

“A cut at the upper corner of the building is a direct reference to the famous “T”-cut style of Givenchy,” Fresa says. “The corrugated iron has irregular holes that, in the evening light, interact to continuously modify the image of the building, generating kinetic effects that make the whole building a dynamic structure and street landmark.”

The hyper-minimalist interior, with its blending of Calacatta marble, basalt stone and Sahara Noir marble, epitomizes the brand’s elegant, contemporary spirit. But the three-story, corrugated iron exterior, bending reflections by day and shooting spots of light by night, is this store’s brand beacon. —*Steve Kaufman*