

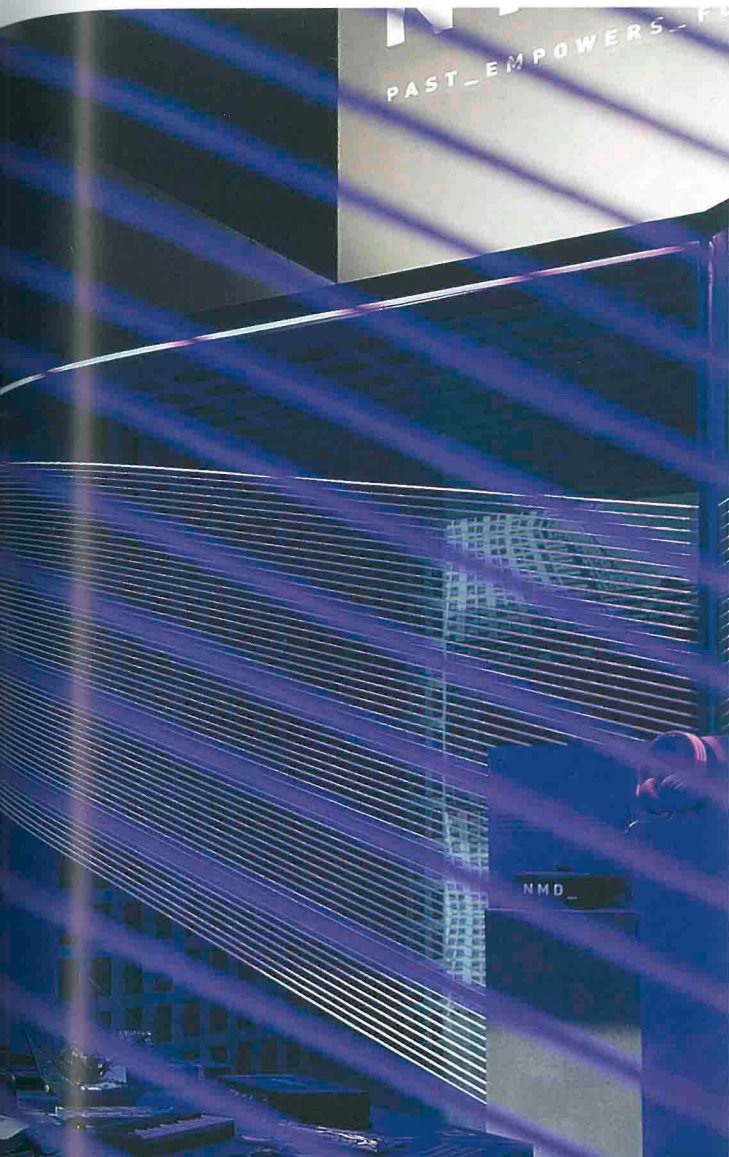


SHOW

## 12 — Ambassadors explore DIFFERENT AVENUES for brands

Urbantainer orchestrates installations by eight artists to make a powerful brand statement for Adidas.





Young Kim

**SEOUL** – In the age of the brand ambassador, designers need to take care in mixing personalities with products. So says Jinyoung Yoon of Urbantainer, the office responsible for Past Empowers Future, an Adidas pop-up exhibition in South Korea. The exhibition was for the official Korean launch of NMD, Adidas's iconic line of urban trainers, so we had to keep a balance between the brand ambassadors and the products themselves,' she says. 'In this case, Adidas hand-picked eight young artists to participate, some of whom are major celebrities here in South Korea. Their personalities *could* have overwhelmed the message of the exhibition.'

Past Empowers Future explored the artists' stories of innovative creativity inspired by the street and urban environment and expressed by new technologies or tools. Their eight 'journeys' formed the heart of the exhibition. Urbantainer designed a separate space for each artist, 'plus transition spaces in between,' says Yoon, creative director of the project. 'At the entrance to the separate installations, we placed a large octagonal display that summarized each creative's »







contribution and linked them with NMD shoes. In accordance with the storyline of our exhibition, this display marked the beginning of their inspirational urban journeys. We added a 360° VR system to present their processes as a visually immersive experience. Preceding the installations, a history and archive section, as well as an NMD display featuring 14 shoe designs in a dramatic cityscape, fixed the visitor's eye firmly on the product. From the main presentation area, stairs led to a stage that offered live performances and an observation platform that afforded overviews of the entire space.

The exhibition occupied a total of 1,330 m<sup>2</sup> in Zaha Hadid's parametrically designed Dongdaemun Design Plaza in Seoul.

'Our large-scale scheme gave the artists plenty of space and allowed us to shape a really big brand story,' says Yoon. She adds that the complexity of the project was managed by constant communication that kept every ambassador on theme. 'We focused on sharing and cooperating at each and every step, and we managed to deliver a single message throughout the space, thanks to lengthy discussions during the creative process.' The effort was worth it: 'Brand ambassadors can provide more direct and varied experiences, enriching the brand story with their own characteristics. Enabling visitors to respond to a brand on different levels increases their understanding of its values.' — JS

[urbantainer.com](http://urbantainer.com)

Photographer Dahahm Choi (left) and artist Joithedogfather of Visualozik (below) were among the eight young creatives to participate in an exhibition that celebrated the launch of Adidas's NMD trainers.

*'Brand ambassadors can provide more direct and varied experiences'*

