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# ARMANI DEFINED

THE ELEGANCE IS IN

THE DETAIL OF GIORGIO ARMANI'S NEW TOKYO STORE

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PHOTOGRAPHY GIORGIO  
ARMANI JAPAN

ARCHITECT RICCARDO TOSSANI  
ARCHITECTURE  
LOCATION TOKYO | JAPAN  
PROJECT GIORGIO ARMANI STORE



Giorgio Armani can discern the slightest difference in colour or shade, as well as light levels. "He can easily see the difference between 200 and 400 degrees Kelvin," says architect, Riccardo Tossani, who worked closely with his life and business partner, interior architect Atsuko Itoda, to design the newly opened Armani store in Roppongi Hills, Tokyo.

The 700m<sup>2</sup> Roppongi Hills store is located in one of the centre's sandstone buildings, and was originally two designer clothing stores. While the existing designer fit-outs (including one by Ron Arad) made a statement, they were not appropriate to display Armani's more subtle contemporary clothing. "Our brief wasn't to detract from Armani's designs. There had to be a synergy between fit-out and clothing which required absolute precision," says Tossani.

One of the first challenges facing Tossani was to create one seamless façade from what had originally been two stores. Black glass, combined with large picture windows, allowed a sharp focus on Armani's men's and women's collections. And to provide a unique Asian ambience, stainless steel inserted into the shop windows was graphically treated to resemble bamboo. "We wanted to create a Japanese aesthetic, but still maintain a strong contemporary design," says Itoda, who continued the bamboo theme into the store's interior.

As the interior was designed to complement Armani's collections, rather than overpower them, Tossani and Itoda created a pared-back interior, using a minimal palette of materials. The flooring throughout the store is predominantly black granite, with the walls in grey *stucco lustro* (polished plaster). And to delineate the men's and women's areas of the store, the architects used aluminium stencilled 'bamboo' columns, some vertical, others angled, as found in nature. "The design appears quite minimal, but there are considerable services (lighting, air conditioning, audio systems) concealed in the ceilings," says Tossani, pointing out the lacquered silver ceilings.

One of the most ingenious innovations in the store is a 30 metre-long catwalk that extends across the front of the building. While this dramatic space functions as a display area for Armani's accessories during the day, it can be cleverly transformed into a catwalk



LEFT Blinds block out street activity and double as a screen onto which current season Armani images can be projected

ABOVE The fit-out complements rather than detracts from the clothing



*“There had to be a synergy between fit-out and clothing, which required absolute precision”*

RICCARDO TOSSANI

at night. The cabinets and shelving (also designed by Tossani and Itoda) can be removed to accommodate an audience, automatic blinds remove street activity and complex lighting systems come into play. “The blinds also provide a blank screen to project Armani’s images for a particular season,” says Tossani.

As with Armani’s clothing, this fit-out finds its elegance in its detail. The weighty 19 millimetre glass shelves appear to float above the granite floor, and free-standing mirrors are embedded in the floor. “Apart from a few pieces, our brief was to allow for furniture to be moved around. The store had to be flexible,” says Itoda, who was keen to create a unique environment that related to its specific context. “There is that fusion of east and west. But it’s quite subtle.”

Tossani’s fit-out for the Armani store in Roppongi Hills doesn’t overwhelm as you enter the salubrious environment. The rich textures of the fit-out, which reflect those of the clothing, as well as the carefully orchestrated lighting, ensure there is an appropriate Armani ambience. “We wanted to showcase Armani’s designs rather than simply create an architectural statement,” Tossani reiterates.

*Stephen Craft is Indesign’s Melbourne correspondent.*

**LEFT** Black glass and stainless steel ‘bamboo’ elements work to unite the façade of the corner-site store, which was previously two spaces

## GIORGIO ARMANI STORE

**CLIENT** Giorgio Armani Japan

**CONCEPT** Giorgio Armani Japan

**ARCHITECT** Riccardo Tossani Architecture

**PROJECT DIRECTOR** Riccardo Tossani

**PROJECT LEADER** Atsuko Itoda

**PROJECT MANAGER** Alessandro Trambagolo

**PROJECT DESIGNERS** Atsuko Itoda,

Takeshi Hoshina, Saeko Yamaguchi

**LIGHTING** Studio Balestreri, Milan

**CONSTRUCTION & FINISHING** Ishimaru

**ELECTRICAL** Kent Shomei

**MECHANICAL** Takasago Setsubi Koji

**JOINERY** Bussola & Ralph, China

**AUDIO VISUAL** Sound Ceilings UK

**TIME TO COMPLETE** 3 months

**TOTAL FLOOR AREA** 700.2m<sup>2</sup>

**RICCARDO TOSSANI ARCHITECTURE**

(81 3) 5457 1032 [tossani.com](http://tossani.com)

**FURNITURE** Sofas, chairs, lamps, ottomans, stools and accessories by Armani Casa. Display cases, hanging racks and shelves custom designed by Giorgio Armani with Riccardo Tossani Architecture.

**FINISHES** Glazing system by Permasteelisa. Tempered glass by Saint-Gobain Marmorino (waxed plaster), black granite, wool carpet and black coconut mat by Giorgio Armani. Teak door by Bussola & Ralph Shanghai.

**LIGHTING** Lighting throughout by Barbara Balestreri at Studio Balestreri with MAXRAY, Daiko, Endo and ERCO.

**FIXED & FITTED** Door handles, stair rails and switch housings custom designed by Giorgio Armani Technical Department with Riccardo Tossani Architecture. Faucets from Vola, available in Japan from Cera Trading.

Armani Casa (81 3) 6274 7003 [armanicasa.com](http://armanicasa.com) Balestreri Studio (39 2) 3652 4443 [studiobalestreri.it](http://studiobalestreri.it) Bussola & Ralph Shanghai (86 21) 6769 0222 [bussola-ralph-international.it](http://bussola-ralph-international.it) Cera Trading (81 3) 3796 6151 [cera.co.jp](http://cera.co.jp) Daiko lighting-daiko.co.jp Endo (81 6) 6267 7056 [endo-lighting.com](http://endo-lighting.com) ERCO (39 2) 3658 7284 [erco.com](http://erco.com) MAXRAY [oversea\\_info@maxray.co.jp](mailto:oversea_info@maxray.co.jp) [maxray.co.jp](http://maxray.co.jp) Permasteelisa (81 3) 5312 9460 [permasteelisa.com](http://permasteelisa.com) Saint-Gobain (81 3) 3259 7685 [saint-gobain.com](http://saint-gobain.com) Vola (89) 5999 590 [vola.com](http://vola.com)