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## UNStudio Revives Retail Store In Eindhoven With Light-Filled Glass Façade Elements

By : George HUSTON April 05, 2020 Viewed 345

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Dutch architecture firm UNStudio has completed the refurbishment of a retail store in Eindhoven, The Netherlands by adding light-filled glass 3D elements to the façade. Called 18 Septemberplein, the project was renovated as part of Pan-European retail real estate investment manager Redevco's redevelopment plans for the 9,000-square-metre and four-storey 18 Septemberplein C&A building which is a significant piece of protected post-war architecture. UNStudio was invited to restore and connect this historical building to its existing urban context. The C&A building was designed by Jan van der Laan and opened to the public with great fanfare in 1952; the building was long held in high regard.

However numerous alterations were made during its lifespan and the building is no longer considered dominant today. The modern addition of large, eye-catching entrances to underground bicycle parking facilities have also obstructed views to the building, with the result that it can no longer adequately express its identity, nor display a clear and recognisable storefront.

For this central refurbishment project, UNStudio therefore imagined a rebranding and a modernisation of the precinct. A cultural historical analysis of the building was carried out and design interventions were proposed based on the building's historic values and the rhythm and ideas of the original architect.

The philosophy of reducing material use to create lightweight structures formed the starting point for investigating the use of structural glass in the refurbishment.

RESET

Photo by XXX YYY

UNStudio's interventions include the repositioning of an entire floor in order to create better floor to ceiling heights and the return to a transparent glass plinth, as originally designed by Van der Laan. During the building's lifetime, an extension was added to the roof.

In UNStudio's refurbishment, the roof is returned to the strong modernist aesthetic of the original design, while large illuminating glass motifs are installed on the facade, to celebrate Eindhoven's design heritage, alongside its contemporary reputation as a centre of tech innovation.

"As 'the City of Light', Eindhoven is the perfect place for innovation. The use of glass in the C&A building not only creates a light construction, but it adds variation of depth to the otherwise flush plane of this historic facade," said Ben van Berkel, founding partner of UNStudio.

"During daytime, the glass boxes act as 'eyes' to the public square, allowing the building to interact and communicate with the public, while at night the animated light installations suggest that the building is breathing as it illuminates the square."

Photo by XXX YYY

UNStudio added these large glass partitions taking the form of a series of light-filled installations, which celebrate and complement the existing extruding windows on the north facade, whilst also serving to draw the gaze of passers-by towards the building.

Reflectivity and sheen are added to the facade through the ambitious construction of four large glass structures. At 5.5 meters wide, 7 meters high and weighing 3000kg each, these illuminated windows appear to float on the surface of the monumental facade.

This effect was achieved through a close collaboration between ABT, Si-X and UNStudio, which resulted in the creation of interlocking and glued connections that form an 'invisible' support and mounting system.

This type and scale of glass facade construction has never before been realised in the Netherlands. In order to make the glued construction possible at such a large scale, the team undertook one a half years of extensive research - and of trial and error - before finally finding a solution that could provide the level of craftsmanship and engineering precision required.

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