

Dramatic grid

AMSTERDAM (NL) — Hundreds of soft blue-green bars of pine lining the walls and suspended from the ceiling embrace visitors who step inside the new **showroom** of Asian designer brand ZENS Lifestyle, located on one of the oldest canals of Amsterdam. The idea originates from Rotterdam-based Schilder Scholte architects, who wanted to create a fitting backdrop for the minimal aesthetic of the tableware that the shop offers. As the architects explain, 'In response to the refined simplicity of the collection, we wanted to create a space that would seem almost sacred. In addition, the effect of the repetitive bars contributes to an intimate atmosphere, which is synonymous in East Asia for the ceremony surrounding the consumption of tea.'

The bars follow a grid pattern that moves over the ceiling and down the walls, forming a half-rounded display niche at one side. The main challenge faced by the architects was to design a grid that would adhere to the rhomboid-shaped room. In order to fit out the customization, the grid was corrected several times because of new insights that came to light during the

process of emptying the space.

The project's implementation was given over to an interior builder with a background in theatre – something which certainly benefited the intended dramatic effect. Nevertheless, the sheer number of bars and strict grid also presented him with a challenge, both in assembly and during preparation.

'The initial idea was to immerse the wooden beams on a hook in a water-based stain and then assemble them under the monumental ceiling using steel mesh,' explains Schilder. 'However, each beam would then have to be individually suspended from the intersections of the mesh. For 1400 pieces, this is a very labour intensive, and therefore expensive, task.' Ultimately, a more efficient method was chosen: slats topped with several bars mounted on them were spray-painted the right colour in one go and then bolted onto wooden beams beneath the ceiling. (KIM HOEFNAGELS)

ZENS LIFESTYLE SHOWROOM, 2014
Architect SchilderScholte architecten
Client Zens Lifestyle Europe
Rubber floor
Noraplan Light fixtures
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Oudezijds Voorburgwal 306, Amsterdam
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