



HIGH SPOT

THE ITALIA B&B SHOWROOM IN TEL AVIV, ISRAEL, MAY APPEAR UNASSUMING ON THE OUTSIDE BUT REVEALS A scaled-up interior, with designer furniture playing host to the large expanse. The design team was sensitive to the display, letting it take centrestage in an industrial setting



P itsou Kedem Architects breathed new life into an abandoned and dilapidated building in the Tel Aviv harbour area of Israel and created a 600sqm showroom for furniture company Italia B & B that is both powerful and restrained at the same time. The 11m-high structure with its unique facade was used by the designers as a base for the entire outer shell. The architect chose to retain the pillars and beams, leaving only a rectangular, silicate western wall, specially treated to preserve its original and historic look.

In the interiors, the architect expressed his own interpretation of the display space with a continuous space achieved through light, sight and movement. The use of unprocessed materials in their natural and original form (such as concrete panels and rusted iron) echoes the industrial look of the outer shell. The aim was to create a display space that was both impressive and powerful but without detracting from the importance of the furniture on display.

The central idea was to create a shell that would stand

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The architect chose to retain the pillars, beams, and a rectangular, silicate wall, to preserve the original, historic look

as an architectural element in its own right whilst still respecting the contents of the structure. The external structure was sheathed in industrial, concrete-looking panels. Despite the building's height, the architect Pitsou Kedem designed a low, metal entrance to emphasise the scale and power of the space once inside the building.

Outside, the facade is almost anonymous and, for the most part, sealed. It was a deliberate choice to not adorn the building with huge signs, as is usually the case with showrooms, but rather preserve a minimalistic and restrained look. The company's logo was positioned on the walls of the entrance 'tunnel' highlighting the contents within—furniture.

The designers were aware of the importance of the furniture collection on display. Therefore, there was a sincere attempt to toe the fragile and delicate dividing line, and design a showroom that is impressive and eternal without imposing the architecture on the contents.

Design Team: Pitsou Kedem, Irene Goldberg, and Raz Melamed