Photos Gemano Borrelli

Vincent Van Duysen channels **Bauhaus rationality** into a Light + Building *stand* for Flos

FRANKFURT — Thick monochrome walls rose from the Messe fairgrounds during the biennial Light + Building trade show. Occupying the 'fortress' was Italian lighting brand Flos, with its latest product lines. The 700-m² industrial-style structure was the work of Belgian architect Vincent Van Duysen, the man responsible for the space itself, as well as for two new collections on show, marking his first alliance with a lighting firm.

'The exhibition design — developed in close collaboration with the CEO of Flos, Piero Gandini — emerged from ideas of rational architecture advanced by the Bauhaus, but also from Italian rationalism,' Van Duysen told us. 'I guess you could call it "neo-industrial". Extremely pragmatic, monolithic, monochrome and rather indifferent to ornament. These qualities became our point of departure for both the stand and the lighting collections on display. My designs, Infra-Structure and Casting, are part of the Flos Architectural range.' Mounted on the ceiling of the stand, Infra-Structure formed a stark grid of black tubing and T-bulbs, a 24V network that supported pendants and directional spotlights, thanks to Flos's magnetic technology. Ambient light from the grid illuminated the entire interior.

Throughout the Flos stand, a subtle transition in structure, colour and material emphasized the various functions of Van Duysen's collections. 'Cemented grey walls merge into more mineral-like planes of colour, which suggest outdoor areas,' he said. 'We also removed parts of the ceilings to create effective divisions — based on the organizational sequence of the internal walls — that suddenly appeared outside as monumental freestanding walls.' It was there, on what Van Duysen called 'mineral flooring', that his outdoor collection, Casting (see page 40), first saw the light of day. — FK

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FRAM3 The digital magazine guides you through Flos's 'fortress'