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Asymptote Architecture Designs 1st Alessi Flagship Store in New York City

Asymptote's Fluid, Dynamic Design Creates New Graphic Identity for the Alessi Brand

New York, NY—Asymptote Architecture recently completed a new flagship store for Alessi, the famed, family-owned Italian design factory, in a 2,750-square-foot space at 130 Greene Street in the heart of SoHo. It is Alessi's first flagship store in New York City. Alberto Alessi, the director of the company responsible for transforming Alessi into a trendsetting design company beginning in the 1970s, personally engaged Asymptote principals Hani Rashid and Lise Anne Couture to develop a new store concept and graphic identity for the Alessi brand in the New York location.

"Alessi is a world-recognized brand that set a new standard for design objects in the 1980s with the production of iconic work from critical, postmodern architects ranging from Aldo Rossi to Michael Graves. In subsequent years, a highly unique and respected image for the company evolved from the creativity and insight of Alessandro Mendini and his strong relationship with Alberto Alessi. We set out to expand upon the Alessi brand's terrific legacy and find a way to put it on a new trajectory going forward," explains Rashid.

To engender this new identity for the Alessi brand, Asymptote envisioned the store as a light-saturated, sculptural, dreamlike environment that takes its cue from fluid and dynamic movement, a radical shift away from the postmodern staples of graphic motif, vivid coloration and iconographic and symbolic form. Asymptote's design approach was to produce a space that reads as infinitely deep and transforming, effectively metamorphosing the narrow, asymmetrical space that was secured as a prime location for the new SoHo flagship store.

To create this effect, Asymptote worked with New York-based lighting designers Tillotson Design Associates to accentuate the continuity of the space. This result was achieved by introducing a system of nine successive bands of white light that run vertically up the north wall of the store and continue horizontally across the ceiling within suspended geometrical boxes of varying shapes and sizes. The design also incorporates mirrors on the store's east wall and a long espresso bar, the first in any Alessi store worldwide, at the entrance that visually extends the space inwards and draws attention to the shopping areas.

The result is an intimate space that feels open and generous and employs a powerful visual coherence throughout. This sense of order and elegance stems from Asymptote having designed every aspect of the store, including the bent-steel display systems, a co-production between Alessi and Visplay (a subsidiary of Vitra), as well as the wall graphics, packaging design and internal and graphic design elements.

About Alessi

Founded in the 1920s, Alessi is one of the most important factories of Italian design. Based in Crusinallo, on Lake Orca, in a region of Italy with a long tradition of the production of household goods, Alessi has specialized in stainless steel manufacturing since the 1950s. Today Alessi employs more than 500 people who are directly involved in the development, production, sales and distribution of its products. The company exports its products to over sixty countries and owns fourteen showrooms and flagship stores worldwide.

About Asymptote: Hani Rashid + Lise Anne Couture

Hani Rashid and Lise Anne Couture are leading architectural practitioners of their generation whose innovative work and academic contributions have received international acclaim. Since Asymptote's founding in 1989, the firm has been at the forefront of technological innovation in the field of architecture and design and garnered praise for visionary building designs, large-scale master plans, innovative interiors, art installations, virtual reality environments and object design.

In addition to the Azzano-San Paolo Master Plan Asymptote is currently working on a broad range of commissions at sites in the United States, Europe and Asia including the World Business Center Solomon Tower in Busan, South Korea, a skyscraper that will be among the tallest in Asia at 560m; a luxury residential building in New York city that is near completion; two contemporary art pavilions commissioned by The Guggenheim Foundation for the Cultural District of Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi; and The Yas



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Hotel, a luxury hotel integral to the new Formula 1 raceway circuit in Abu Dhabi that opened October 2009. In 2000 Hani Rashid represented the United States at the Venice Biennale of Architecture and in 2004 Hani Rashid and Lise Anne Couture were awarded the Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts given in recognition of exceptional contributions to the progress and merging of the fields and disciplines of art and architecture.

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