

PRESS RELEASE

Reason, emotion and enlightenment - an award-winning design

Contract World in Hannover is a leading international fair that showcases innovative concepts in integrated interior design. At the heart of the event is a global competition, judged by a top-level, international jury; this year's winners included world renowned architects such as Jean Nouvel, Ingo Maurer, and Matteo Thun.

Among the winning projects was an interior by Swiss-Italian designer Marco Mariotta. It foresees a new entrance zone to an administrative/industrial complex for Daetwyler Holding. Mariotta chose an unusual approach: anyone expecting to walk into a showcase of the company's products will be mistaken.

Instead, they enter an unconventional interior landscape with an almost theatrical feel. The effect is enhanced by light sculptures, designed by Mariotta and made of stainless steel and optical fibres, which protrude from the floor, ceiling and walls. According to Mariotta, "light" is a metaphor for energy, signals, illumination and, of course, enlightenment; "waves" a metaphor for dynamics and movement - including that of people and ideas.

"I wanted visitors to be transported to a certain mood," he says. "First of all, there's the surprise of entering a high-tech environment in an Alpine setting - close to one of the major passes. Then, sensing the high-quality nature of the space, visitors get the feeling that something really special is done here." Rather than attempting to inform visitors on a rational level, his design impresses on an emotional one. For Mariotta, then, the project was an opportunity for the company to project its values - through architecture and design.

This isn't the first time that Mariotta has received recognition in Hannover. In 1998 he won an award at the iF Industrie Design Forum Hannover with the mention of "best of category" for machines that he designed for the

cutting-edge technology company Agie. His activities are, by choice, cross-disciplinary. As well as interiors, his work covers industrial design, graphic design and exhibition design. In 1991, on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation, he won the first prize in a competition to create an image for the "Swiss Path", a concept he developed through signage, posters, and sculptures along the long-distance trail.

Other commissions have taken him throughout Europe to the Far East and North America. In 1996 a watch that he designed won a prize for its innovative design at the "JA International Watch and Jewelry Show" in New York.

One of the features of Mariotta's work that has brought him recognition is his refusal to stick with the obvious. This often means digging deeper to find extra levels of meaning. "In the case of creating an image for a client, it's important to remember that a company is not merely the sum of its products. It is much more: its history, its culture, and its people, involved in an endless exchange of knowledge. When designing something, I like to help people become aware - not just of the object or company, but of the role that object, or that group of people, can play in their lives.. In the end, much of the message is about values."

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