



Exhibition Design

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"The time I spent working in Barcelona was a **shining**

Mies van der Rohe

Letter to *Arquitectura* magazine, Madrid, 1957



moment in my life.”

Introduction

Ephemeral architecture, conceived to accommodate temporary events, has served as a testing ground throughout the twentieth century. The most vanguard innovations and ideas, as of yet untried, have appeared in international events; this historical line can be seen as much in the art exhibition pavilion of J.M. Olbrich in Darmstadt, 1901, as it can in MVRDV's Dutch pavilion in the Hannover trade fair, 2000.

During their short-lived existences, these installations are visited by a large number of people, allowing the architect to evaluate how well the proposal functions and whether or not it is accepted by the general public. Their temporary quality also means that they can be easily forgotten if unsuccessful.

Today, this type of construction has become a model to follow when it comes to projecting permanent buildings: solutions, which adapt to a low budget, a quick construction process, and even the need to be transportable, have been used by many architects in the conception of perennial buildings. The Tomihiro Museum is a good example, since the simplicity of the assembly process draws on an ephemeral construction.

Despite the fact that today's triumphant architecture is spectacular, solid, and monumental, innovation and vanguard ideas continue to be a focus of investigation, as shown by architects like Cirugeda, Exyzt, or The Next Enterprise. The innovative spirit apparent in Bruno Taut's Glass Pavilion (Cologne, 1914), Mies Van der Rohe's German Pavilion (Barcelona, 1929), Alvar Aalto's Finnish Pavilion (Venice, 1957), and Buckminster Fuller's American Pavilion (Montreal, 1967) lives on in these architects. They all share the experience of taking on ephemeral architecture as unexplored territory; and while they have done so with diverse perspectives, it has always been with the same pioneering spirit.

The architecture developed for international trade fairs, although given little recognition, is some of the most complicated: the pavilions and stands need to be designed and assembled in a very short time period, and they must house complex programs within a small area. A stand has to fulfill the role of exhibitor, since it must present the product, but it must also be a pleasant space that inspires confidence, and where the customer feels comfortable. Furthermore, it should be clear that the company responsible for the financing is in control. Architects, therefore, are confronted with a difficult challenge, to which they must apply the most varied solutions, materials and typologies, and of course, the field's heritage.

Pavilion O₂

Architect: Klaus Schmidhuber

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Fair: CeBIT 2005, Hannover, Germany

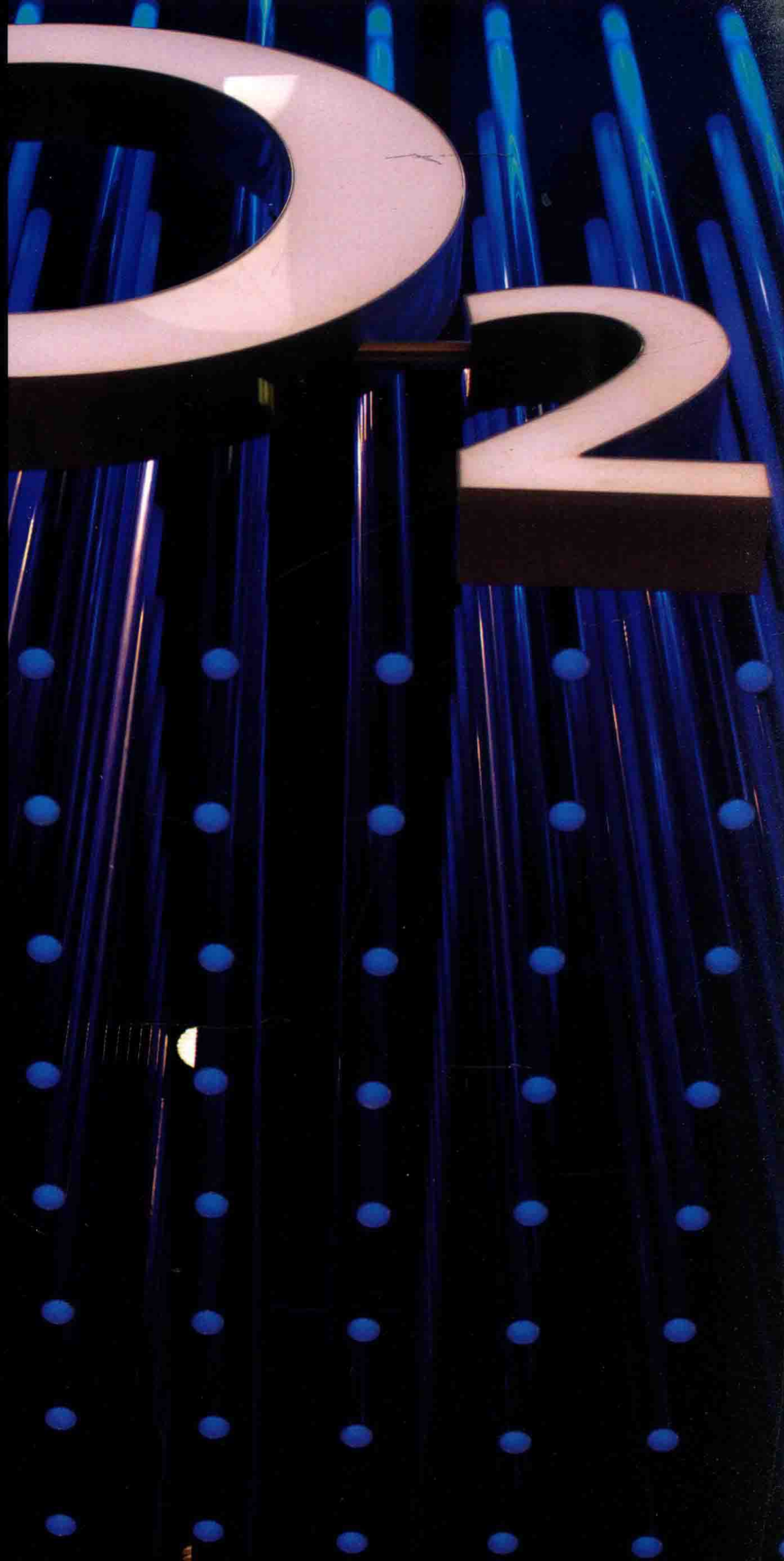
Other cities: No

Primary material: Plastic

Photos: © Wolfgang Oberle

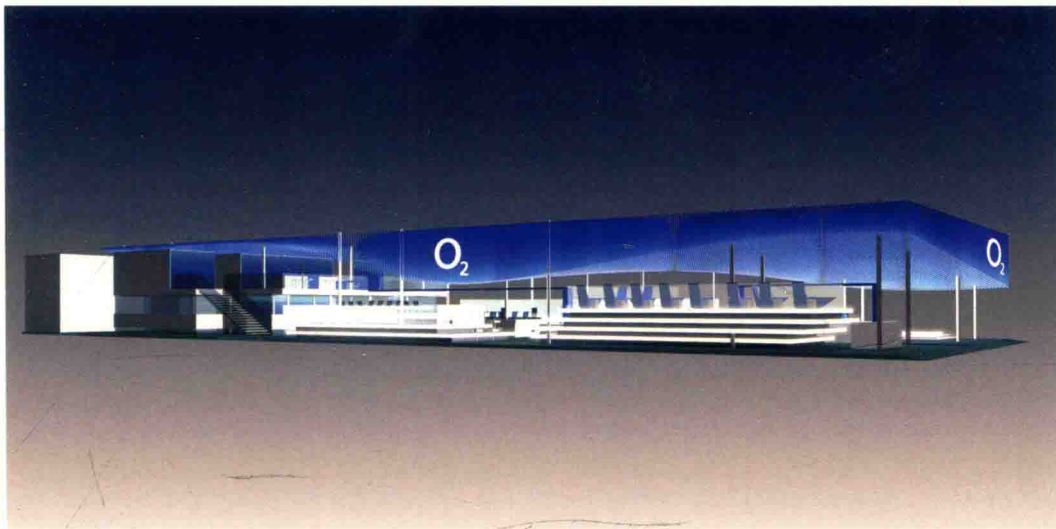
This company pavilion had to house different spaces, such as areas for computers, meeting rooms, and a bar. The architects decided on a diaphanous space where the different uses would be separated by small platforms set at different heights. This way very different spaces could be created without the need for walls. The staggered layout of the spaces allowed the integration of the VIP room with the rest of the space, although it was situated on the second floor, where it was possible to view the entire pavilion while maintaining its intimacy.

The ceiling is the feature that unifies the project and also acts as an advertising board. The methacrylate rods are reminiscent of the sea's rolling waves or a large moving cloud of gas, combined with the name of the brand, that can be interpreted as a chemical formula, represented as a molecule composed of two oxygen atoms. On the blue surface created by the rods, it is also possible to write slogans, thanks to the points of light incorporated in each rod.



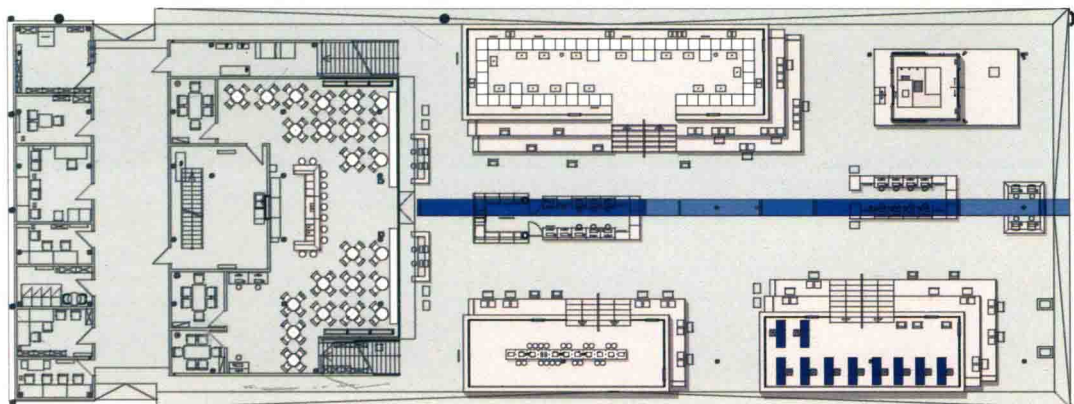






General view

The undulating lines on the ceiling are reminiscent of the waves of the sea, which, apart from making this space unique within the fair, generated a sensation of well-being and comfort.



Plan



The second floor overlooks the entire stand, and offers a much closer view of the ceiling, satisfying those clients who wanted to know how the pavilion was designed.

