

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN MATTER & TRANSPARENCY



Photos Luciano Busari (www.myspace.com/busariluciano). Architects Valentina Pandolfi, Cristina Parisi, Antonio Pizzola (Spazimultipli Studio Associato - www.multipli.it). Distributor Profili di Luce (www.profilidiluce.com). Surfaces Ceramica Fioranese (www.fioranese.it)

In its new location on the outskirts of Rome, Enterprise receives customers in well-organised and brightly lit spaces that exploit the essential qualities of glass, steel and porcelain tile.

by Maria Giulia Zurino

The first player in this project is Enterprise, a company that in the space of just over ten years has established a strong position in the finance and banking sectors through continuous research and investment in products and services for the organisation and automation of banks.

The other is Spazimultipli, a young Rome-based architectural practice headquartered in Testaccio – the twentieth-century working-class neighbourhood built on the site of the ancient Tiber river port – which has already built a reputation for its incisive and effective proposals.

The project itself centres on an existing building without any special aesthetic qualities but with two aspects of unquestionable merit: the fact that it can easily be reached by public transport from the centre of Rome (it is situated just 1 km from the EUR-Magliana underground rail station) while lying outside the urban chaos; and above all its location on a 3,000 square metre site that slopes down towards the Tiber via a sequence of green terraces.

These advantages have been fully exploited in a project that clearly defines "space, form and material, the fundamental aspects of any work of architecture because they contextualise it, define its character and relate it to users", as architects Valentina Pandolfi, Cristina Parisi and Antonio Pizzola, founders of Spazimultipli Studio Associato, explain in their programme. "The challenge we face is to create high-quality projects free from prejudice, combining time-honoured and innovative materials and traditional and advanced technologies. Our language is based on superimpositions and contrasts,"



Above, the existing building stands on a terraced site and has been equipped with an underground garage connected by a large panoramic staircase, which enhances the complex visually and serves as a pleasant and unusual outdoor meeting space for employees. **Right**, attention to workplace quality is even greater inside the building, where there is a preference for natural lighting.

the architects continue. Their approach is clearly demonstrated in this project where the lightness of the interior stands in marked contrast to the material qualities of the exterior.

From the street the new Enterprise headquarters building acquires greater visibility and importance due to the choice of emphasising the materials of the existing facades. The tuff and travertine used on the facades are reproduced in the new monumental staircase, a strong presence within the landscape. As the building entrance has been shifted to the side of the building, the stairway rising spectacularly up the hillside enhances the natural environment, and is connected to the new underground garages by a lift. It also serves as a pleasant place where employees can meet and relax outdoors.

The interior of the building is entirely different, creating equally distinctive working and reception spaces but in a more contemporary style that is more suited to the quality of life of the people working here.

The contemporary and meaningful use of



graphic design was chosen in this project not just for its intrinsic function as a communication tool but also as an essential element for the quality of the working space. Aesthetically enhanced by a sanding process, the geometric motifs featuring on the glass partitions ensure a minimum of workplace privacy but without significantly diminishing or interrupting the flow of natural light. Because it is natural light, together with



Left, the glass inserts in the stairwell floor allow light to filter through from above. On the stairs, the artificial light emitted by the sculptural volumes created with backlit Barrisol stretch fabric complements the natural lighting. **Below**, the floor covering consists of black glazed porcelain.

he metallic structure and vertical tinted glass panels create reflection effects, giving way an unusual sensation of

located at the darkest point of the building, the stairwell does not block the flow of natural light.

Technical details

Wall surfaces: Ceramica Fioranese, Nu_Marble series
Tile type and sizes: glazed porcelain tile, size 45x90 cm, Nero Marquina

Technical specifications:
 Acoustic absorption (ISO 10545-9): 1.0%
 Abrasion resistance (UNI EN ISO 10545-13): GLA
 Impact resistance (UNI EN ISO 10545-7): PB 4
 Stain resistance (ISO 10545-14): compliant
 Scratch resistance (ISO 10545-12): compliant
 Resistance to rupture and breaking strength (ISO 10545-4): 41 N/mm²
 Shock resistance (ISO 10545-9): compliant
 Frost resistance (ISO 10545-11): compliant
 Coefficient of linear thermal expansion (ISO 10545-8): compliant



transparency, that is the real protagonist of the interior spaces. It penetrates deep inside the building via the new central stairwell and lift shaft, which are delimited vertically by glass walls and horizontally by the glass inserts in the stairwell floor. Under the control of sensors, it blends with artificial illumination to back-light the large Barrisol stretch ceiling surfaces that enhance the architecture of the space. It diffuses into the offices, where the glass partitions with screen-printed geometric designs lighten the wall structure and create continual plays of perspective. And it reflects on the white walls and Marquina black floors consisting

of porcelain tile from Ceramica Fioranese's Nu_Marble collection. The choice of a hi-tech material that combines the aesthetic appeal and nobility of marble with the technical characteristics of porcelain, in an essential black colour and a single large size (45x90 cm) to reduce the number of joints, has enabled the designers to achieve a seamless surface that enhances the almost rarefied overall impact.

Maria Giudia Zanino, Abitare

Top, the choice of a single tile size for all the spaces, from the bar to the large working areas and the bathrooms, accentuates the sense of spatial continuity. **Above**, the various patterns differentiate the spaces but above all alter the transparency of the vertical surfaces to ensure a minimum of privacy.