



The building type to which the design is related is the shopping mall, which is considered to be one of, if not the most significant, factor contributing to dying urban activities.

Due to this issue, there have been made major attempts universally to reverse the trend of retail businesses moving from the city's center to the peripheries. One of the most recent and seemingly-surreal strategies is to neutralize this disturbing effect by bringing the evil—the shopping mall itself— back to the urban core of the cities.

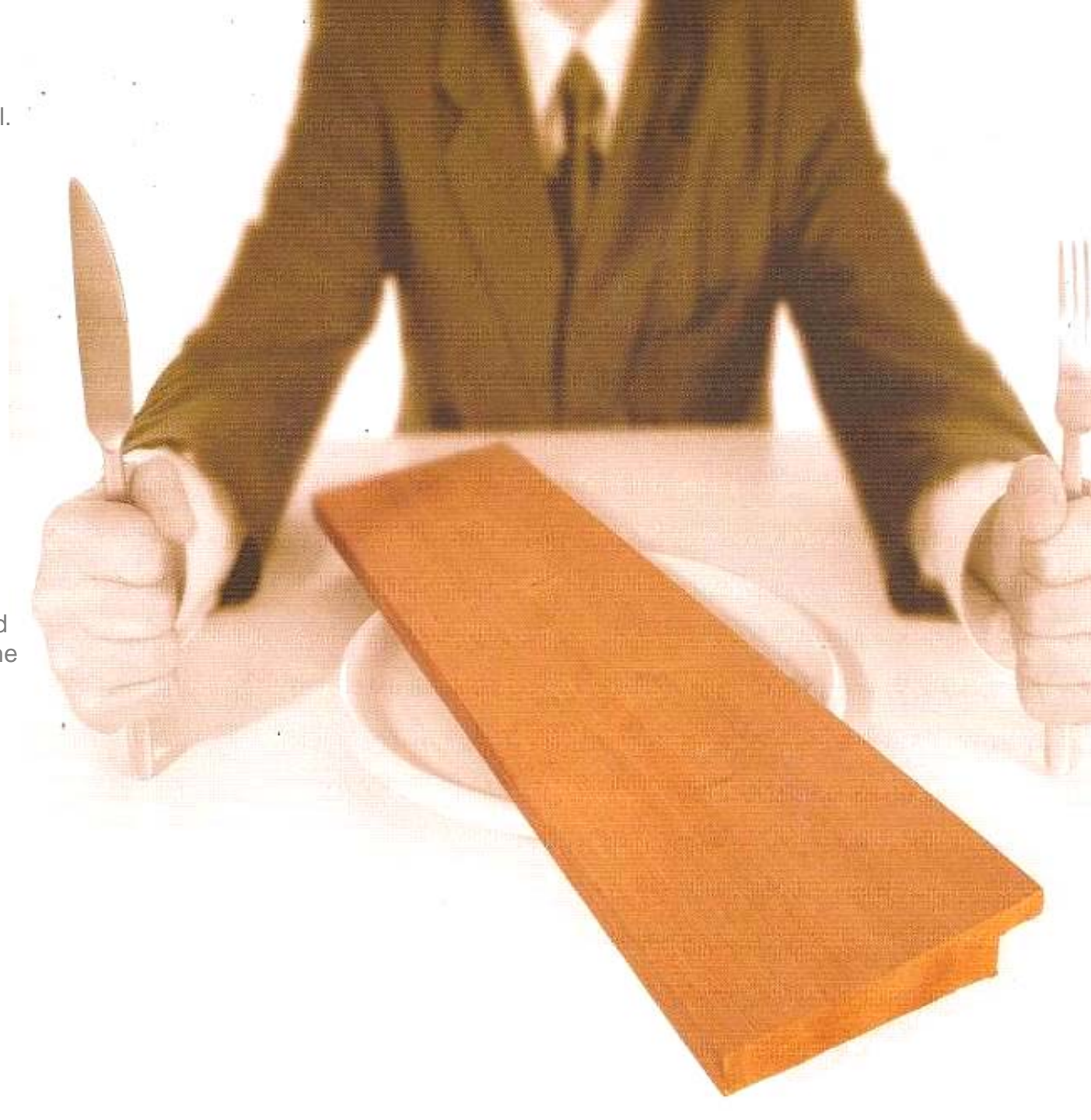
Such an enterprise and setting was the motivation for one of the most traditional coffee roasting companies in the country to, for the first time, present itself to its customers in the form of the first flagship store in the companies hometown.

Until then, the company, unbeknownst to the public, ennobled the imported coffee beans by means of a sophisticated, perfected method in their traditional and hidden downtown production cellars.

As such, the task became the representation of the exquisite business principles of the company in a shop in the new downtown mall.

The premise to express something rather authentic and pure, as in the process of roasting coffee, in the ultimate incarnation of artificiality and fakeness, perfectly represented in the typology of a mall, became the real challenge.

The space that was to be created must facilitate activities regarding the display, testing, and selling of the aromatic black bean.



This way, the design was about creating an atmospherically culinary space. As the schematic design phase made us well-aware, the epitome of a good (coffee) tasting place is the small café at the corner of the Mediterranean Sea and therefore closest to the sub-Equatorial countries of origin of the coffee—in any case, far enough away from the new artificial shopping mall in the northern half of the Western Hemisphere.



abstract materialization

client [www self-imagery](http://www.self-imagery)

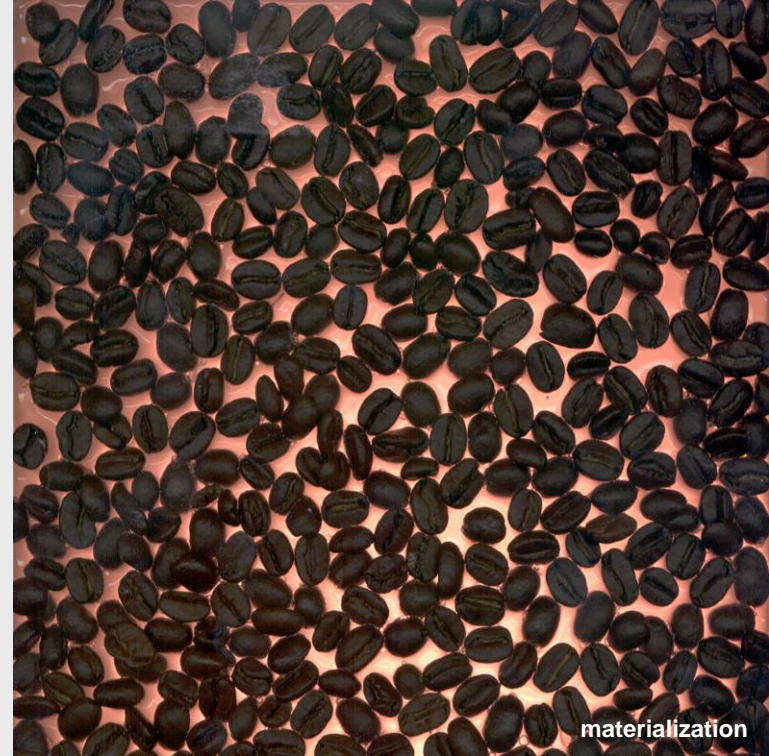


In lack of a real sense of place, mall shops must search for self-formulated identities through the use of the artifice of suggestion. We therefore formulated the goal of developing a visual scent in the cool North for the aromatic beans from the world's exotic coffee-producing countries.

The client's preconceptions of such were limited to the understanding of their own profile as marketed on their website, which was a rather stereotypical use of literal imagery related to the visuality of the coffee bean, spanning from the condition of the red fruit on the green plant, to the harvesting and drying under a glowing sub-tropical sky.



Additionally, we gave much thought to the product of desire—the bean itself—and its processing, which exclusively implies a pure natural treatment, preserving the “internal quality” of the delicacy of the product. This component seemed juxtapositional to the character of the mall where, due to the ephemeral conditions, elements exist as a veneer of literal imagery on top of an inexpensive composite core—a micro-shot of coffee beans glued to a particle board poster being the supposed most popular example around the world.



materialization

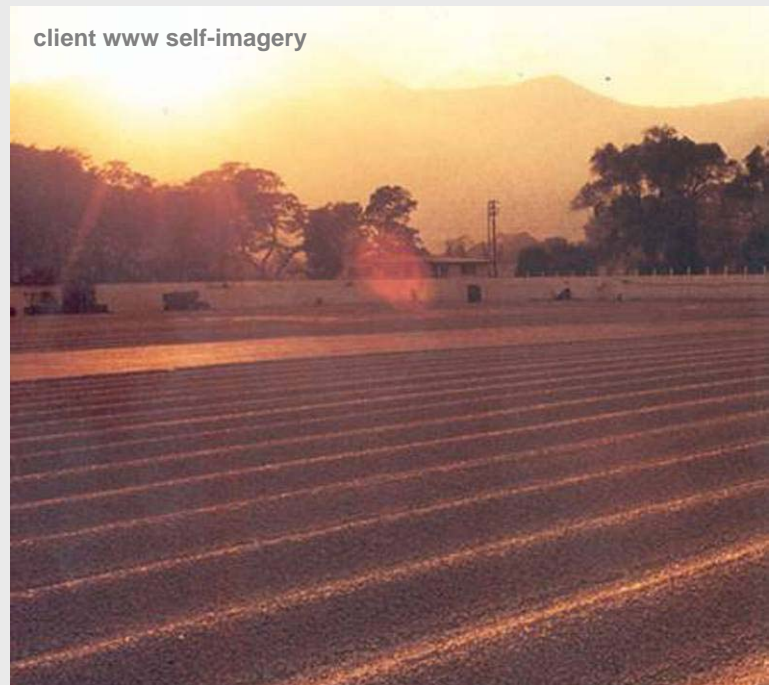


client [www self-imagery](http://www.self-imagery)



abstract materialization

client www self-imagery



The resulting materials were: metaphorically from the roasted beans, “roasted” [thermally modified] timber for the floor and the furniture. The mono-materiality and repetitive arrangement of furniture refers in an abstract way to the compositional quality of “drying mounts.”



As much as we identified the essence of the bean itself as the core value in the company's activity, we approached the materiality aspect of our design solution as the most appropriate and effective way to represent this notion as the primary focus. We extracted the core literal associative images from the client's website and interpreted them in an abstract way by allocating and assigning materialities, the opposite strategy to the common poster-lamination approach. Each materiality itself then had to be of imperforate purity.





The center of the space is dominated by the central counter, which showcases the bean “in real time and space.”



A collaboration with OKALUX led to a custom-made inlay of beans in a silicon bed. The voids allow LED backlighting, oscillating a barely noticeable reference to the blaze of roasting fire.



The entire set is played under a brass mesh produced by GKD, which evokes associations to the opening website image of a sunset in a country of origin or the aroma curve of the company's logo.







The abstract sky descends into the very back of the shop, and one can sit on the "horizon," where the mesh flows down to form a lounge bench.



A thread-curtain serves as a panoramic background and flanks one entire length of the space. Sporadic, randomly-positioned colored backlights play with the illusion of “live” and the aboriginal organic aspect surrounding the bean.



At the opposite end towards the mall, the metaphorical sky sets free “clouds,” which define outside places to stay in the bustling shopping stream of the mall’s circulation.







The weaving density seamlessly transforms from a more closed pattern in the back of the benches to a more open mesh at the tip of the “clouds.”

All of these previously mentioned designer’s considerations are intended to remain his secret. In a non-literal way, the presence of the materiality and their specific tectonic manifestations alone should transcend into the culinary space, and successfully emotionally represent the client’s virtues and sensually communicate them to the customer.

