COLOUR AS A NARRATIVE

An architectural project by Antonino Cardillo

Photo © Antonino Cardillo

ILLUMINUM FRAGRANCE

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Behind a portal on a Georgian street in London,
lives a small grey grotto.

Its rugged walls, imprinted with gestures of the mason's
trowel reveal the eroticism which was conveyed in
the act of construction by the ancients.

The pozzolanic ash echoes the volcanic topography
from where it was quarried.

As 'chambers of light' the three tall openings facing
the street orchestrate the light and shadow.

Onto a rough wall: the backdrop for a sweeping
semi-circle of thirty-seven irregular glass forms
each suspended by a black thread.

Enclosed are colours.

Invisible colours revealed only by the nose.

– Antonino Cardillo

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Illuminum London recognises the role and value of respectful collaboration in creating shared human experiences that are meaningful and rewarding. ‘Colour as a Narrative’ will bring to life the link between scent, colour and texture as a trigger for imaginative self-expression.

“Theories on vision imply that our sense of perception and space is learnt from experience. We believe that our sense of smell is learnt from deeply embedded associations with colour and texture. What happens when we soften and unlearn our logic for interpreting scents.

By blurring identifications and triggers for the way the human mind categorises, at the Illuminum London Gallery our impressions become less linear and more intuitive. Continued curves give way to irregularity. The environment in which we experience shapes the encounter where each fragrance is encapsulated within its own miniature world, each unique and independently discoverable.”

– Asakala Geraghty, Creative Director at Illuminum London.

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Apollonian and Dionysian grotto. This architectural work conveys a dualistic quality. The metrics which structure the cavities of the grotto portray the idea of the rational (Apollonian). All around roughly textured surfaces investigate the idea of the irrational (Dionysian).

Eroticism from ancient architecture. Before the modern era, architecture bridged eroticism. As paintings and sculptures were permanently unified with the space, architecture was a human narrative. The small grey grotto of Dover Street celebrates the eroticism concealed in the act of the construction. Unveiled by the act of the wildly plaster casted walls and the vault created by the masons' trowel, they suggest a sensual dominance of the void.

Nymphaeum. Beyond three windows of the road the room appears semi-concealed as a nymph-house of a renaissance garden or a picturesque garden. Nymphs are generally regarded as divine spirits who animate nature. Thus nymph-house conveys the idea of the unfolding of the senses. It symbolises the place where human feelings are more connected to the earth and where the sense of smell is more amplified.

Chambers of light. Interstitial spaces in front of the windows are derived from the superimposition of the two perimeters of the new boundary and the existing walls of the building. They combine two diverse ratios: the 1:2 of the existing windows to the 1:4 of the new gaps which interrupt the ephemeral room perimeter. They represent the place where light is interpreted before being introduced into the main room. They are painted in a mutable green colour which adapts itself to the hue the sky light. Inside tiny mirrors beside the windows.

Dialogue with the weather. Each textured surface interprets the light dispersed from the three chambers of light. Surfaces are mutable since they are in constant dialogue with the weather. Thus the architectural void resonates with the waves of light, as does the void of a sound box of musical instrument with sound waves.

Pozzolanic Ash. Delivered from the volcano Vesuvius (Naples) to London, this mineral dust was widely used in ancient Roman for building the largest constructions of the late ancient era. The most famous one is the dome of the Pantheon in Rome. Colour as a Narrative project uses exposed pozzolanic ashes and putty lime following the ancient ratio of 6:4.

Fragrances as invisible colours. Once inside, one is surrounded by grey since the narrative of the colour inhabits the olfactory plane of perception. Stripping away learnt associations built around graphics, names, ingredients encourages a more physical and intuitive experience of scent; the components of which (fragrance oils) are originally sourced from the earth. Closer to the earth within the grotto, visitors are invited to experience a rite: exploring their personal narrative, their personal journey among the thirty-seven invisible and concealed odorous places. Once fleeting and volatile each scent now inhabits its own chamber.

Theatre of the 'Scent Suspended'. Inside the room Antonino Cardillo has arranged a half-circled path for the layout of 'Scent Suspended': the olfactive glass bowls designed by Asakala Geraghty and mouth blown by glass artist Elliot Walker. Exploring the cohesion among the each parts, the layout of this new organism suggests architectural references: exedra, as nymphaeum ought to be, Ottoman chandelier (where the candle has evolved into fragrance), stringed musical instrument or colonnade from the architectural hemicycles of ancient Rome and circus facades in Bath and Regent's Park by John Nash.

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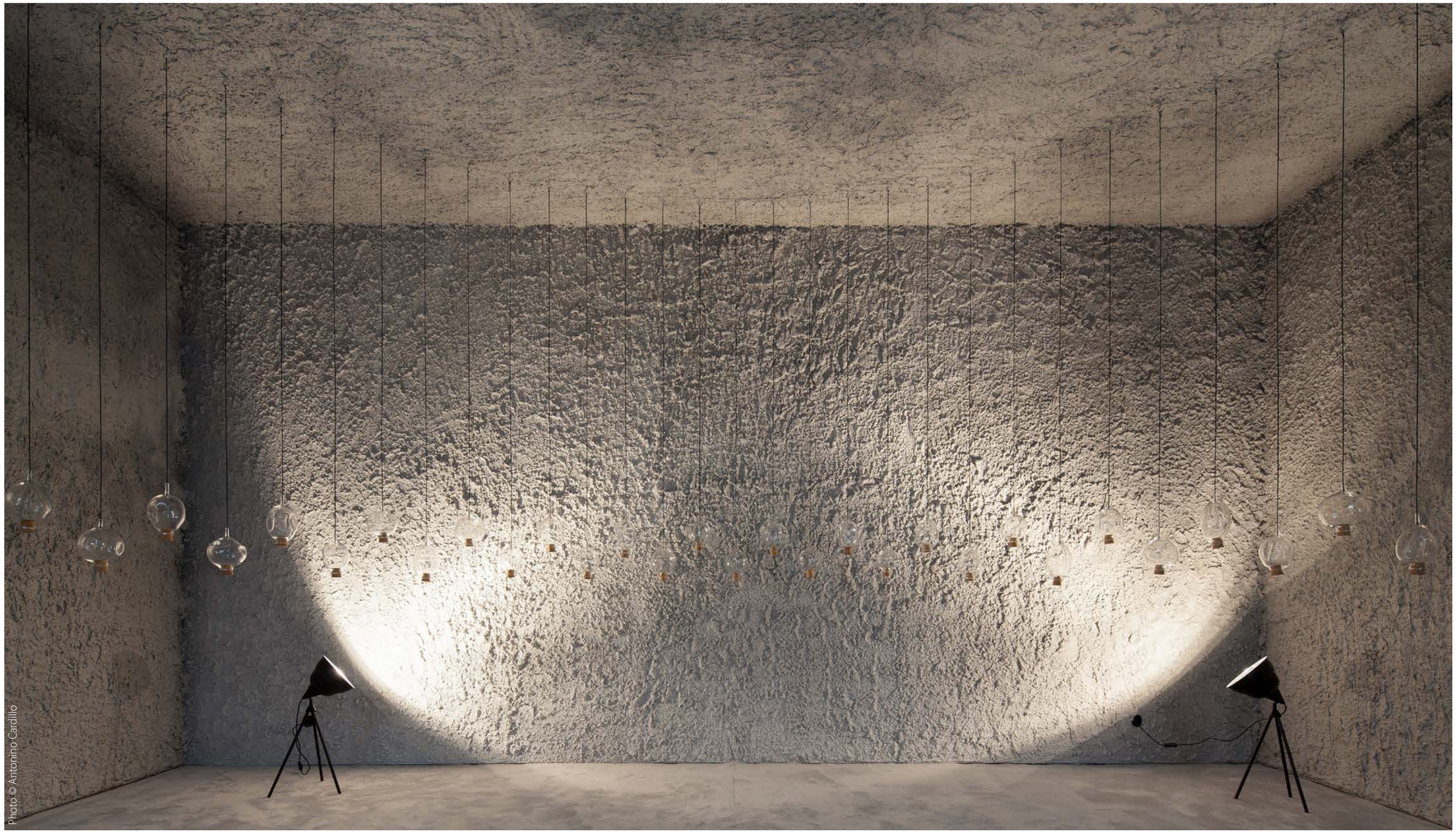

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CREDITS

Architect Antonino Cardillo (www.antoninocardillo.com)

Client Illuminum London (www.illuminumfragrance.com)

Olfactive glass bowls designed by Illuminum creative director Asakala Geraghty and mouth blown by glass artist Elliot Walker

Construction company Italian Art Design Ltd.

Masons Adrian Paiunui Mihai, Fabio Di Monte, Gianmarco Di Monte

Carpet Natural Elements Flooring

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Special Thanks in alphabetical order to

Ana Araujo, Paolo Bedetti, Asakala Geraghty, Anna Marra, Andrea Paolo Massara, Paula O'Brien, Suzanne Trocmé.

VENUE

Illuminum London

41 Dover Street London W1S 4NS

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PRESS CONTACTS

info@antoninocardillo.com

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