



URBAN ICEBERG

Creating a sense of depth at its entrance, Inverse Lighting Design's illumination of the Ports 1961 Shanghai glass block façade has become a sparkling urban statement.

Founded in 1961 in Toronto as a silk importing business, Ports 1961 has evolved into an international 327-store chain. In Shanghai, its high-fashion point-of-view was expressed in its initial store, which opened three years ago on The Bund - the city's historic and fashionable thoroughfare. After outgrowing its original space, the store relocated to a new location as a free-standing, sculptural, sparkling urban statement. This adaptive reuse of a former office building takes full advantage of a high-visibility site with a dimensional façade of LED-illuminated glass blocks. The now 12,325sqft faceted glass structure has taken on a dramatic new life as a three-level retail store, set like a jewel amidst steel and glass high-rise towers. The façade was designed was UUFie, Toronto, store interiors and merchandise fixtures created by Yabu Pushelberg, Toronto and New York,

and lighting by Inverse Lighting, London and Bangkok.

Principal architect Eiri Ota of UUFie further compared the store to a free-floating iceberg: "During the day, the faceted glass façade reflects the sunlight. In the evening, it generates an overall glow by means of LEDs embedded in the joints of the masonry behind the glass block skin."

Two types of glass block with a satin finish were used: the standard twelve-inch square block and a custom-mitred block of the same dimensions used for the corners, creating the three-dimensional façade. The blocks rest on shot-blasted stainless steel plates of the same dimension which extend to a steel frame. The underside of the exposed steel plates has a soft matte finish. Strips of this metal divide the glass blocks into groups of 64. An elaborate ornamental stepping canopy fashioned of

glass blocks frames changing fashion images that extend outward from the planar glass block surface.

According to Inverse Lighting director Filip Vermeiren, LED's placed behind the exterior glass blocks are aimed towards the wall:

"They light the façade indirectly to give a sense of depth and to smooth out any imperfections in the lighting to achieve a homogenous lighting effect," he explained.

www.inverselighting.co.uk

PROJECT DETAILS

Ports 1961 Shanghai Flagship Store, Shanghai, China

Client: Ports 1961

Architect: UUFie, Canada

Additional Design: Yabu Pushelberg, Canada; Eightsixthree

Architects, China

Lighting Design: Inverse Lighting Design, UK

Lighting Suppliers: Local suppliers