



DESIGNEX 2008

× **designEX 2008**
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1+2/ ORANGE ORGANZA ZIGZAGGED ACROSS THE ARCHITECTURE MEDIA STAND.

3/ IDIOM DESIGN CRAFTED RUSTED METAL INTO A STYLIZED GARDEN PAVILION FOR AXOLOTL GROUP.

4/ FORBO'S STAND SAW SUSTAINABLE FLOORING FASHIONED INTO A CANDY-COLOURED PLAYGROUND.

5/ THE DISTINCTIVE RED-AND-WHITE HÄFELE STAND BY EXPONENTIAL DESIGN NESTLED BENEATH AN OVERSIZED PLUS SIGN.

6/ GREG NATALE'S INTERIOR DESIGN AWARDS STAND REIMAGINED THE 2008 AWARDS IDENTITY USING WALLPAPER AND CARPET TILES.

PHOTOGRAPHY: IMAGES 1, 2, 4 + 5: DAMIEN SHAW IMAGE 3: ELIOT COHEN IMAGE 6: SHARRIN REES

It is a curious beast, the exhibition stand. It needs to feel sturdy and complete, but is undeniably temporary. It must be resolutely experiential, but is nonetheless a product of commerce. It should welcome the showbag-laden hordes, but not feel cavernous when unpeopled.

And herein lies the multi-pronged challenge of the exhibition designer.

Neatly arrayed in rows and avenues, the exhibition stands at designEX 2008 clustered together in the sprawling halls of the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre. Various designers, charged with distilling each brand into something dynamic and recognizable within tight confines, produced some impressive feats of ingenuity.

A dazzling arbour of rusted plantlife, stylized and abundant, curled above the Axolotl Group stand. Working with the company's range of architectural finishes, Idiom Design crafted glass and metal into

intriguing configurations – pillars of translucent glass, for example, or the laminated glass floor festooned with oversized clover leaves.

Behind an angled swathe of shimmering orange organza, the Architecture Media stand boasted a mural by design duo Pandarosa. The flatness of the mural – a beguiling collage of magazine cuttings, carefully assembled and intriguingly disoriented – became a counterpoint to the manic swoops and three-dimensional angularity of the fabric suspended afore.

At the Forbo stand, a candy-coloured playground decked out in sustainable flooring housed a whimsical tree and picnic setting. Like the Architecture Media stand, Forbo's offering was created by Exponential Design's Daniel Dalla Riva. Evoking nostalgic seventies-era summers, the stand presented the alluring hues of Forbo's Dutch Design Marmoleum collection by the Netherlands' latest crop of design celebrities.

A colossal plus sign arced dramatically over the Häfele stand. In the hollow beneath, the stand's palette of red and white reinforced the company's branding, enticing visitors with the lure of fresh coffee and architectural fittings.

Spruiking the competition's shortlisted entries, the Interior Design Awards stand was a long and lean vision of moody black. Greg Natale's design reimagined the concentric-circle 2008 awards identity using a noirish gloss-and-matt Florence Broadhurst wallpaper from Signature Prints and modular Ontera carpet tiles. A spherical light from Inlite was suspended above.

The stands at designEX varied from the pragmatic and practical to the fantastically embellished, all keen to balance the demands of business with a distinctive aesthetic. In their collective, they offered vigour and spark, a glimpse – however fleeting – of branding, products and design right now. PETER DAVIES