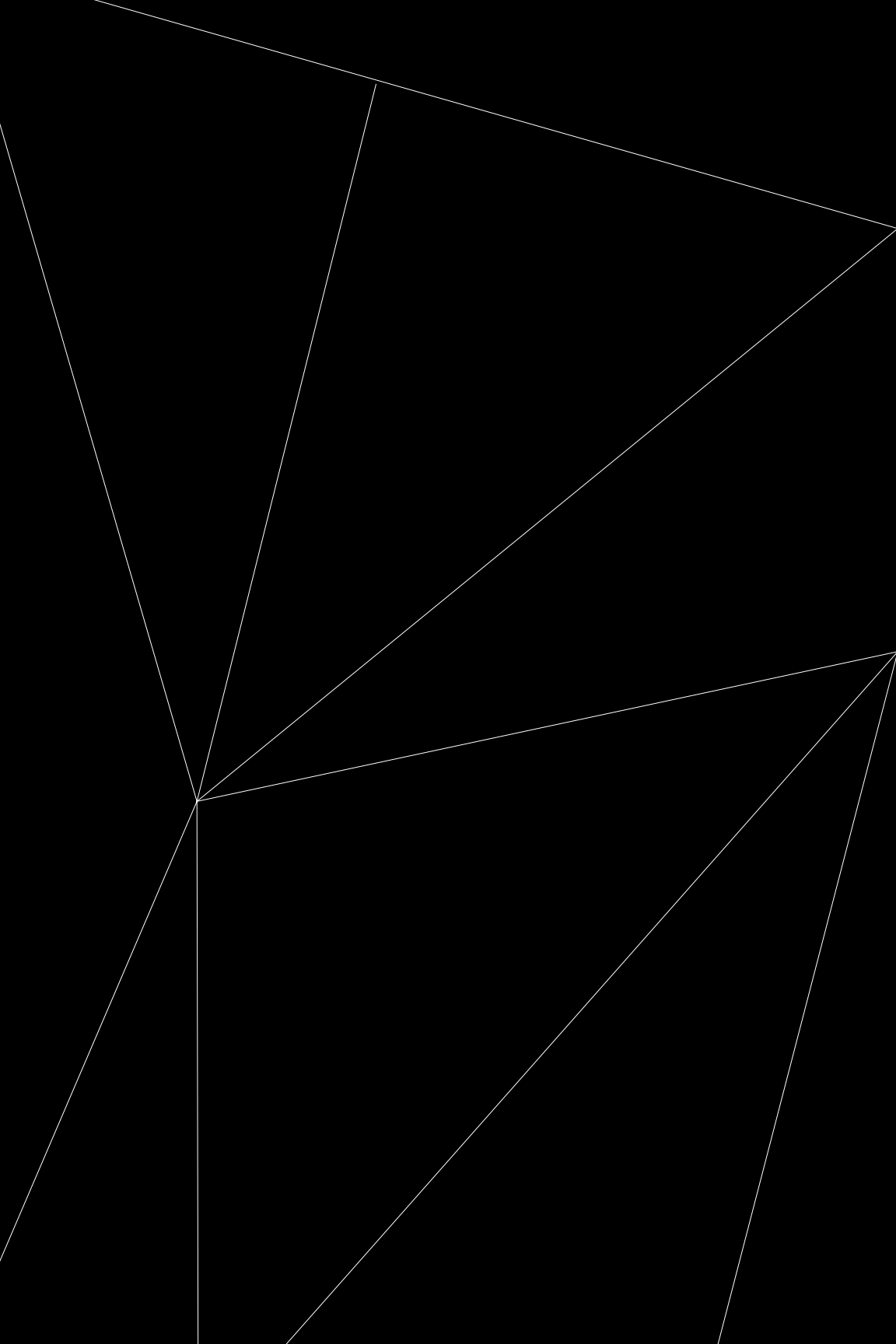


SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL
DIFFA - DINING BY DESIGN

MARCH 30 - APRIL 1, 2008
SKYLIGHT | 275 HUDSON ST. NYC



Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP is one of the world's leading architecture, urban design, engineering, and interior architecture firms. SOM's sophistication in building technology applications and commitment to design quality has resulted in a portfolio that features some of the most important architectural accomplishments of the 20th century.

SOM Studios is a hybrid atelier within the partnership where researchers, industrial designers, media and interactive media designers, and architects work closely to explore every dimension of the contemporary environment. SOM Studios' charge is to weave architectural methodologies into the ideation and realization of the systems, products, and spatial and social environments we craft, generating new vocabularies for their material manifestation.

SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL
DIFFA - DINING BY DESIGN
 2008



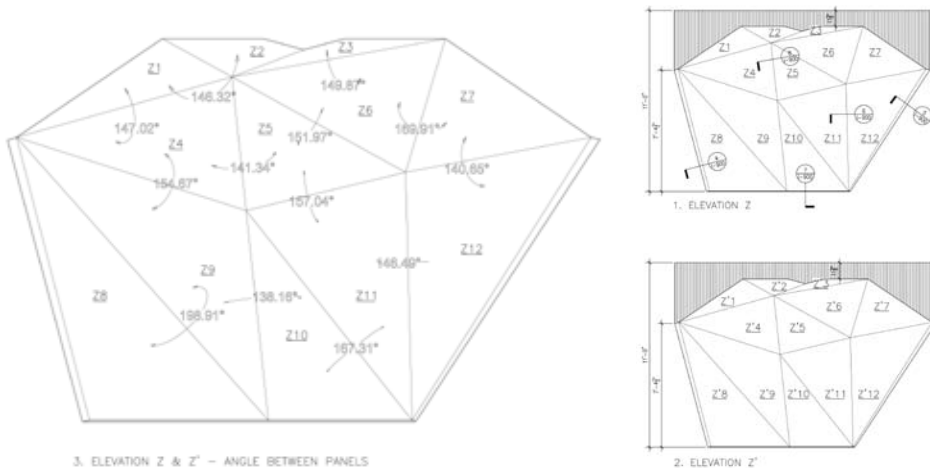
Conceptual rendering

Each year, Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS calls on major designers to create spectacular dining installations for fund-raising receptions and glamorous sit-down dinners. For years, SOM's New York office has participated under the direction of Interior Design Partner Stephen Apking, conceiving not only tables but total dining environments. This year's design is no exception, with SOM once again producing a spectacular pavilion that shows off the firm's vision and innovation.

SOM's 2008 design is like a geode, a quiet object concealing something precious. From the outside, the pavilion is a matte black cube, its surfaces fragmented into triangles but otherwise unadorned, creating a sense of anticipation for what's hidden within. Triangular corner openings lead to a faceted, kaleidoscopic interior, whose shiny black surfaces and Baroque flourishes create an atmosphere of surreal decadence and evoke bejeweled environments of centuries past. Simple furnishings, an opulent chandelier, and postmodern place settings provide the finishing touches. The goal was to conceive a holistic environment rather than just a table.

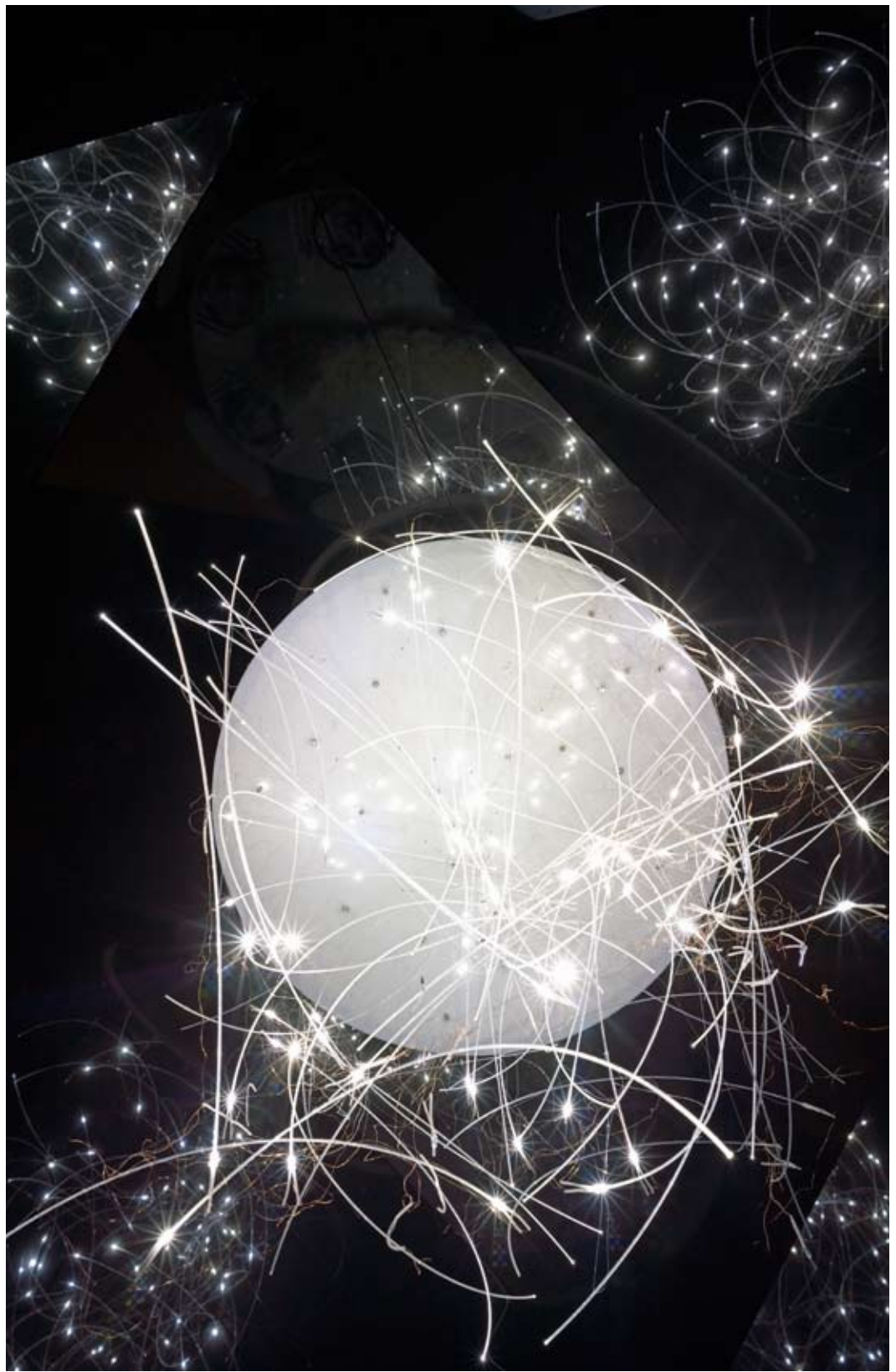
How did the pavilion come about? Instead of adopting a typical top-down design process, SOM saw an opportunity to identify and encourage emerging talent in the firm, and organized the DIFFA project as an internal design charrette. A jury of senior designers considered the submissions of 20 SOM employees and eventually chose the polyhedral design for its striking form and sensitivity to construction, and for the moody glamour suggested in its crystalline renderings populated by characters in Baroque costumes.

After their concept prevailed, the designers were challenged to make it into a buildable, usable dining space. SOM partnered with Newmat Stretch Ceiling Systems, which offers PVC membranes in various colors and finishes, to create the triangular panels that would be attached to the aluminum tube structure. The pavilion's furnishings translate the spatial drama of Baroque architecture into a modern design language: a sumptuous "Brindilles" chandelier by Francois Azambourg, for Ligne Roset; the understated Eolo table by Lievore, Altherr, and Molina; Arne Jacobsen chairs; and a striking collection of plates, designed by Piero Fornasetti and manufactured by Rosenthal, adorned with black-and-white variations on a 19th-century woman's face. Decadent but not overdone, the pavilion is truly a feast for the eyes.



Elevations showing faceted interior



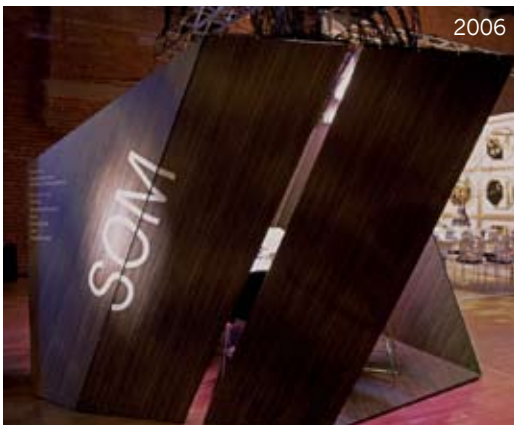


SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL

DIFFA - DINING BY DESIGN

2004 - 2007

SOM has been creating dining installations for DIFFA since 2004, under the leadership of interior design partner Stephen Apking. While decadent tables are plentiful at the event, the firm is known for creating fully spatial environments that compose physical structure, finishes, furniture, and light into coherent expressions of elegance and show off SOM's dedication to cutting-edge technologies, processes, and ideas.



DESIGN

SOM | som.com

INSTALLATION + MATERIAL

NEWMAT | newmatusa.com

FURNISHING

TROY | troy-nyc.com

TABLE WARE

MOSS | mossonline.com

FLOORING

EDELMAN | edelmanleather.com

FLOWERS

OVANDO | ovandony.com

CHANDELIER

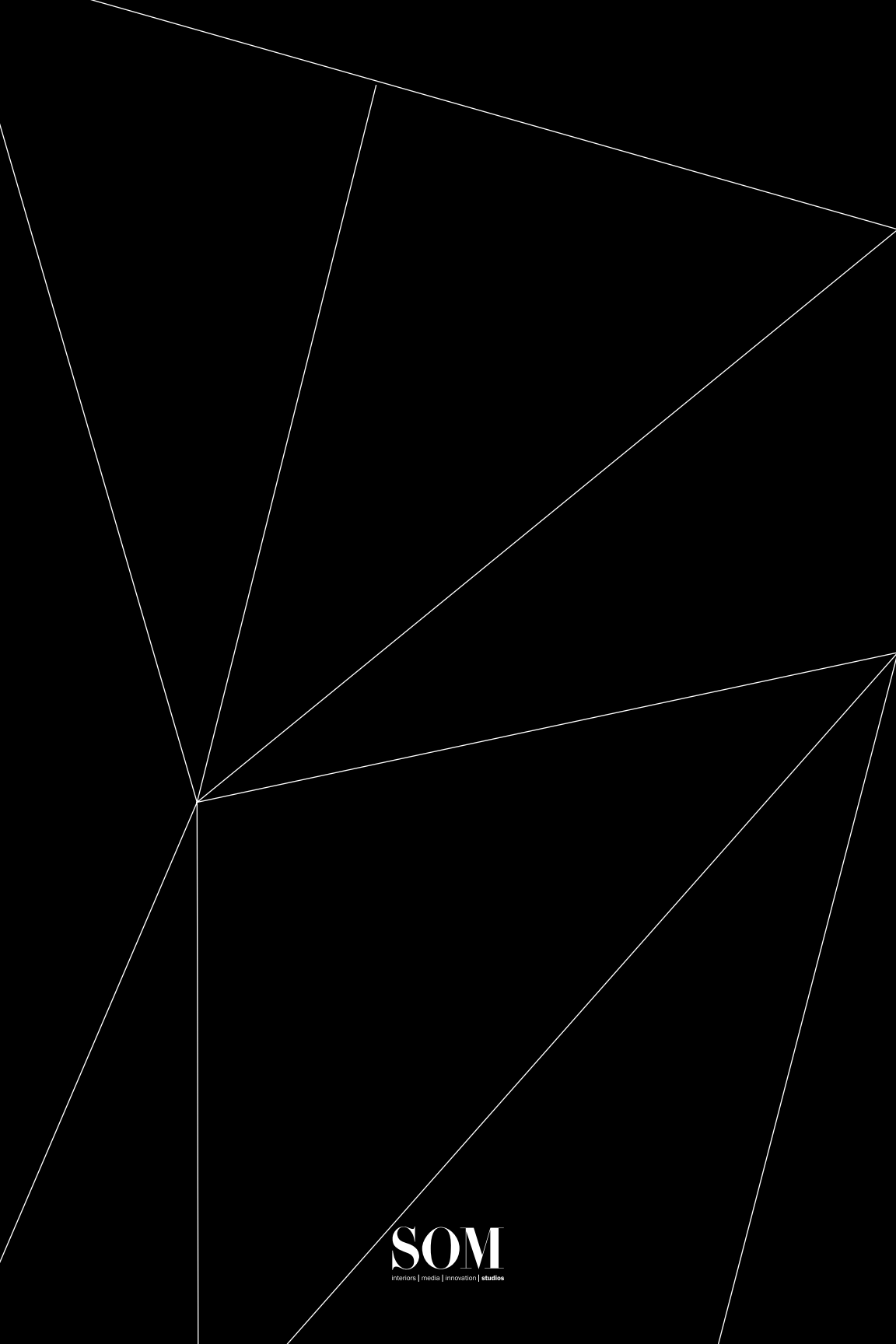
LIGNE ROSET | ligne-roset-usa.com

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