



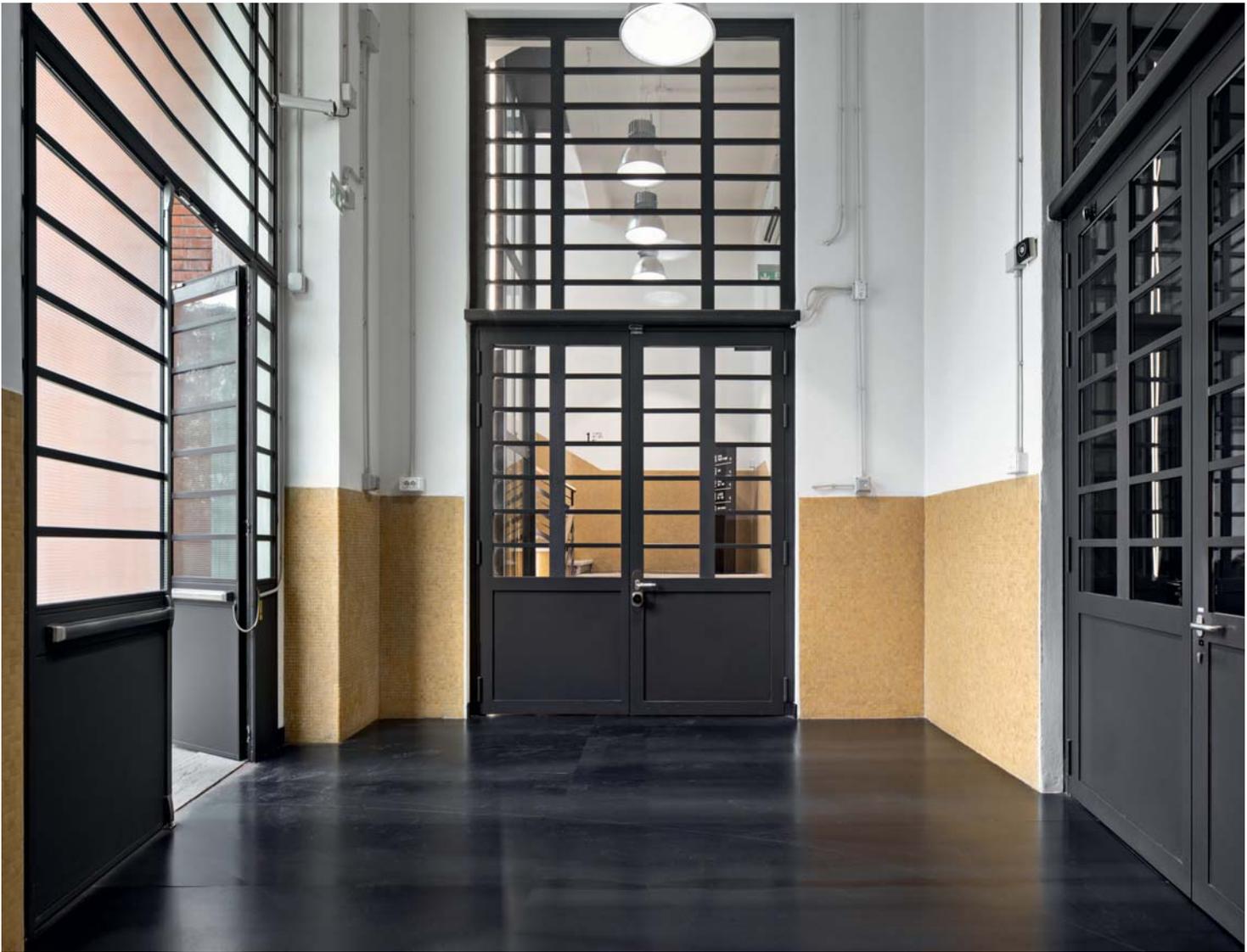
Q-bic

Polimoda Premises The Future of Fashion and 1930s Tradition Florence, Italy

The future of fashion design and art direction has put down roots in the new premises of the Polimoda fashion school in Florence, designed by the Q-bic architecture practice in a setting with iconic cultural and historical links to the 1930s. The school has now indeed opened in a building once housing the administration for State monopolies, in a complex consisting of 16 buildings designed by Pier Luigi Nervi as tobacco factory. The specific building in question is number 6, as it is clearly identified, although it is part of a vast regeneration project for the entire factory complex according to a masterplan originally conceived by Concrete Architectural Associates but then developed by Q-bic, Studio Antonio Perazzi and Piuarch (new constructions) and Patricia Urquiola (residential portion). In redesigning this section for Polimoda, the

project brief expressly sought to preserve and respect the original structural identity, with more freedom to be taken in the redevelopment of internal spaces. The new elements are in a contemporary language, with natural black iron favored for furniture and furnishings against counterpoint white walls. Imbued with a palpable industrial feel, the complex provides the students with over 1,000 sq. m of studios housing approximately 100 new machines, ironing tables, looms and tailor's dummies. There are also photography studios, computer labs, classrooms, an auditorium and a specialist shop. On the outside, the main façade is symmetrically divided into three parts, with a dominant, projecting central section characterized by a ground-floor canopy structure that is higher than the wings and a

top-floor clock. The revamp of this façade required work to secure the plaster using special techniques. For the windows and doors, the choice of materials and the design of the profiles was fundamental. The architects opted for Secco Sistemi solutions in painted galvanized steel as these offer the desired combination of respecting the original esthetics and providing improved insulation, durability and natural light. OS2 40 and OS2 75 were used, respectively, for the internal and external frames in pursuit of purity of line that reproduces the original shapes but with vastly superior performance. The modernist language of the design is also reiterated in the firebreak doors, where the EBE AF system in coated galvanized steel was selected.



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