



Innovative three-dimensional logo

A unique stainless steel construction doubles as both a reception counter and depiction of a company logo in the Avex building in Tokyo.

Text & image by Kikukawa

The new corporate office building of Avex, a Japanese entertainment conglomerate, was established in Aoyama, Tokyo in 2017. Upon entering the building, a three-dimensional a-shaped effigy comes into view. Designed by Daikei Mills, this stainless steel structure is both the reception counter and the corporate logo of Avex. Kikukawa created the logo counter, from the fabrication and construction methodology to the implementation.

Twisting into 'a' counter

The counter is 3.5m in height, 4.8m in width, 4.3m in depth. Much like the corporate logo, a square tube twists into the shape of the letter 'a'. Forty uniquely shaped dual-curved panels were installed with a thin 3mm joint to create a seamless design. The vibration-finished stainless steel counter creates a metallic, futuristic and playful space. This project required Kikukawa's designing technology in 3D-CAD. The details and the shapes were carefully discussed and established through various design consultations and

verified by 3D printed models. Upon the confirmation of the design, each panel, frame, and sub-structure were designed in 3D. The fabrication and installation dimensions were measured from the 3D models. For the sub-structure, a truss shaped 3D model was drawn and used to validate its structural strength.

A work of art and technology

The fabrication of the three-dimensional counter was a challenge due to its complex shape. Each panel and frame was uniquely shaped and dual-curved, thus requiring different fabrication methodologies. To optimise the quality cost delivery (QCD), Kikukawa put a lot of thought in the implementation. The assembling frames were minimised by designing a single structure with adjustable fixing points, or dimensions. PHL (vibration) finished materials were metal worked, instead of finishing a dual-curved piece. This also meant that Kikukawa needed to dual curve the metal sheets without damaging it, which presented its own challenges.

Difficult installation

The a-shaped three-dimensional counter was one of the most challenging dual-curved projects in Kikukawa's history, in terms of detailed design and installation. The final installation proved very difficult. While Kikukawa typically conducts an installation quality test within the factory prior to shipment, this was the first project in which Kikukawa's team brought the frame on-site to understand the outline of the product. The details of the dimension and shape were checked carefully by Kikukawa's detail designer and the 3D-CAD model he brought on-site. Even after taking these extraordinary measures, the implementation of 3mm joints was a challenge and required various on-site adjustments. Fabrication and installation craftsmen were brought on-site for any final adjustments. The project is an example of Kikukawa's designers, fabrication and installation craftsmen coming together to realise a high-quality product and installation.