

HOOFFDORP

Arhitectura contemporana

Maurice Nio - statie autobuze

Cea mai mare structura realizata din materiale sintetice
- langa aeroportul Schipol



Fluid Vehicle: if it were at least made of reinforced concrete, then we would need see, based on what it looks like, just to what extent the design has actually captured and followed the forces in play. And perhaps our suspicions would turn to relief as we managed to trace the work back to other previous designs. But in actual fact this bus canopy is made from top to bottom out of C6 H5 CH:CH2, one of the thousands of different consistencies of a substance universally known by one of its various names: polystyrene.

This means the structure has a full section with no centrings or hidden warping. The artefact is just protected by a large polyester membrane. Made of pieces and assembled in the laboratory as if reconstructing the bony cartilage of some over-sized creature.

The structure, which cost one million Euros, measures 50x10x5 metres and is proudly presented as the world's biggest object made of this kind of material.

Polystyrene: one of those prestigious but vile plastic substances named (despite its synthetic origin) after Greek shepherds (as Roland Barthes pointed out at the beginning of an extremely clever and interesting essay on its first wide-scale application in the early 1950s), is now more widely in use than ever. Strange because, despite all the genuine design enthusiasm surrounding plastics and other similar materials in a fundamentally optimistic, productive and open period like the 1950s/60s, such levels had never been reached until now. Comparing what was being designed or manufactured back then – calling for careful checks, flicking through magazines and catalogues and special research – this canopy built right in the heart of the Netherlands is inspired by much greater hedonism with materials, it is strikingly over-sized and perhaps even excessive. As if in the past, despite the great drive forward, they had somehow been holding back, restrained by sub-conscious ethics (but already betrayed), despite the sudden help arriving from Pop culture, thoughtless standardisation.

On the other hand Maurice Nio's canopy (1959), particularly in indoor views of how it was first worked and then mounted, shows all the properties of a huge object "à réaction poétique".