Walking Tour: Omote-sandō Architecture

Omote-sandō, a broad, tree-lined boulevard running through Harajuku, is known for its parade of upmarket boutiques designed by the who’s who of (mostly) Japanese contemporary architects.

Start  Tokyu Plaza
Distance 1.2km
Duration One hour

1 Tokyu Plaza (2012; 4-30-3 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku), is a castle-like structure by up-and-coming architect Nakamura Hiroshi. There’s a spacious roof garden on top.

2 Andō Tadao’s deceptively deep Omotesandō Hills (2003: 4-12-10 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku) is a high-end shopping mall spiralling around a sunken central atrium.

4 Meant to evoke a stack of clothes trunks, Aoki Jun’s design for Louis Vuitton (2002; 5-7-5 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku) features offset panels of tinted glass behind sheets of metal mesh of varying patterns. Gallery Espace Louis Vuitton Tokyo is on the top floor.

5 The criss-crossing strips of concrete on Itō Toyō’s construction for Tod’s (2004; 5-1-15 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku) take their inspiration from the zelkova trees below.

6 Herzog and de Meuron designed this convex glass fish bowl for Prada (2003; 5-2-6 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku).

7 Kengo Kuma’s design for Taiwanese pineapple cake shop Sunny-Hills (2014; 3-10-20 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku) uses 3D-modelled latticework.

Take a Break... Anniversaire Café (http://cafe.anniversaire.co.jp; 3-5-30 Kita-Aoyama, Minato-ku; 11am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm Sat & Sun) has an attractive patio for people watching.

3 The flagship boutique for Dior (2003; 5-9-11 Jingūmae, Shibuya-ku), designed by SANAA (composed of Seijima Kazuyo and Nishizawa Ryūe), has a filmy, white exterior that seems to hang like a dress.

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Classic Photo Close-up of the bubbly facade of the Prada building.