



Stainless steel elements are a recurring design feature in Acne Studios stores around the world.

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light at the ceiling. The structure pulls back from the glowing white walls, allowing them, it seems, to hang instead on a framework of diaphanous gray shadow. And so, a cage of light confines the hulking concrete.

Hicks explains that “the shop’s atmosphere is otherworldly, ... cut off from views of Seoul.” The mingled electric and natural light is uniform, omnidirectional, almost without shadow. Muted reflections waver in the burnished floor and on the brushed stainless-steel furniture. Clean, cool air hurries quietly overhead out of diffusers in thin metal wall panels. Music playing discretely has been manipulated,

Hicks says, “to increase the sense of otherworldliness.” High-rise buildings, light poles, electric wires—the ordinary apparatus of the city—hem in the shop, but the low din of urban life seems far away once inside.

At night, the simple lightbox glows behind its enigmatic signboard. In the half dark above the glowing façade, glints of light catch a welter of air intakes, ducts, compressors, and blowers that press forward over the sharply defined roofline. It is a startlingly large and complex breathing apparatus for such a restrained building. “Appearances ... can be deceptive,” Hicks notes, “and so they are in this case.”