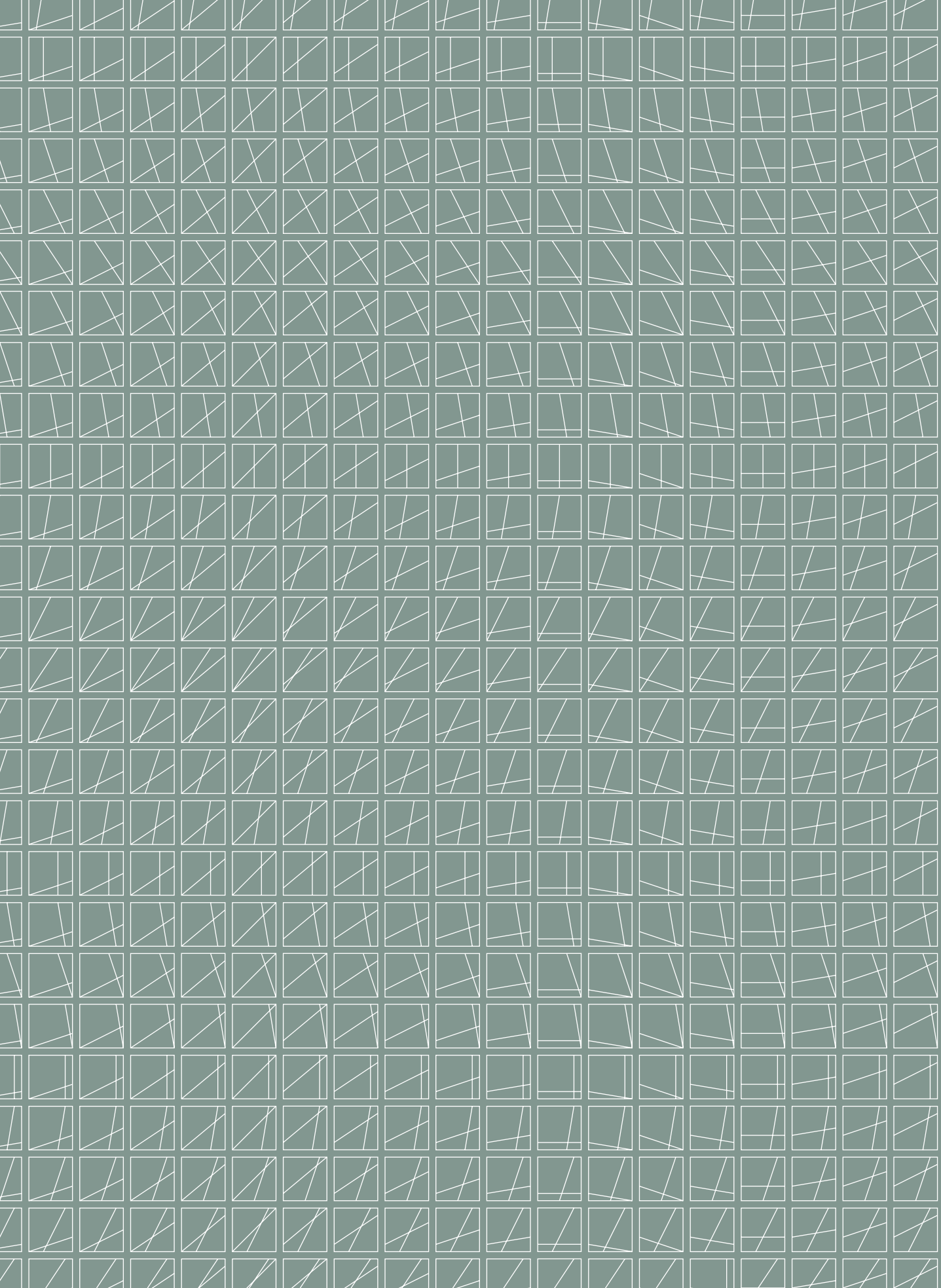




**Tenoha Milano**



# Tenoha Milano

## by Park Associati

Client  
SAYU Milano Srl

Address  
Via Vigevano 18, Milan

Year  
Project: 2016-2017  
Onsite: 2017-2018  
Completion: 2018

Area  
sqm 2.500

Professional Service  
Concept  
Architectural Project and Interior Design  
Site Supervision  
Artistic Supervision

Lighting Design  
In-visible Lab (Silvia Perego), Milano

General Contractor  
Merotto Milani Srl, Dosson di Casier (TV)



# Today's life

The project encompasses the beauty and the difficulties of a meeting of two cultures that, while remaining quite distinct, love and respect each other. This new project combines objects, food and work, and manages to maintain the environments' different identities, at the same time wrapping them in an aesthetic and material 'fabric' that conveys a feeling of being in a 'shared home'.



It's what today's life is like: you look for something beautiful, a gift for yourself or others, you eat good food of a great culture, indoors or outside, and you work, either on your own or with others.

In its former life, the structure that now houses the Tenoha space had many identities: workshop, design and then fashion showroom, temporary shop of an international furnishing brand; thanks to its good architectural structure, this space has never lost its strength and lends itself well to transformation. The most recent of which seems to be a success, as good architecture requires good architects who are able to assess it and project it forward, insert new technologies in the knowledge that some are destined to age before long and, at the same time, preserve the traces of time and the existing knowledge.

In the co-working space, an almost theatrical platform seems to be part of the restaurant; in the friendly atmosphere of the garden, the sophisticated tableware evokes the displayed goods; in the shop, the wooden display structures are at once a reminder of the Alps and Mount Fuji, while the slender neon light frames are reminiscent of both twentieth-century European industry and Oriental hanging lanterns.

Such space did not exist before. Yet, if you look up from the garden's greenery you find the horizontal grid of the original window frames in which you can perceive the world of ninety years ago, and looking at the bar's counter you know that Junichiro Tanizaki would have liked it, because the Venetian ceramics' geometries know how to reflect the light and respect the shadow – silently merging the aesthetics of the two worlds.

*Text by Virginio Briatore  
Design Philosopher*



# Via Vigevano and the Navigli

On Milan's map, Via Vigevano is a straight line running from Porta Ticinese and the Darsena parallel to the Navigli to the Porta Genova station, which separates it from the Tortona and Savona area. It encompasses all the city's well-known night life and entertainment venues. Yet, unlike other more recent points of reference of the swinging Milan, this area has had – and in part still has – a full and fascinating life linked to the city's history and culture, as well as more contemporary lifestyle.



When commercial navigation on the Navigli stopped and the Darsena (basin) – in those times the fourteenth biggest port in Italy – was no longer used as a port, for years the neighbourhood housed artisan activities of all kinds, particularly blacksmiths and tanners who needed to be close to water to work. Between the nineteenth and twentieth century, some major factories opened in the neighbourhood and this led to the construction of housing for workers. The area's architecture still maintains the neighbourhood's working-class character; less sober and serious than other areas, the district is graced by the Navigli 'riviera' that makes it one of the most charming places of the city. Behind the façades that highlight their somewhat unkempt charm, all dwellings are 'case di ringhiera' (a type of popular housing characterised by several flats sharing the same open gallery on each floor). Filled with redeveloped industrial buildings, this area now houses numerous activities associated with design and the tertiary sector. Although on the outside it could appear similar to other examples of industrial buildings in this area, Tenoha represents an exception within Via Vigevano's urban fabric and is therefore highly recognisable. A former wallpaper factory, the building – dating back to 1931 – features large windows and moulding that enhance its geometric pattern and make it stand out from the homogeneous façades of the residential buildings lining the street.



**Tenoha Milano's space elegantly integrates a succession of restaurants, bars and premises of different types in an uninterrupted thread overlooking the street that makes it a destination for any time of day until after dinner.**



# Hybrid space

Tenoha Milano is one of a kind. The Japanese company Sayu opened the Tenoha brand in Tokyo to introduce Italian cuisine to its customers. Wishing to do the same with Japanese cuisine in Italy, they found a space in Milan that could contain much more than just a restaurant and a bar.



**The route created by Park Associati winds among the different functions that coexist in this place 'like in a bento box'.**

**This solution also helps to create a continuum that characterises all the interior design.**

One of the classic features that distinguishes an architectural project is its intended use: residential, office, headquarters, commercial space, hospitality and several others.

In the case of a space like Tenoha Milano, under 'intended use' there are several lines of text, as this project encompasses retail space, a bar, a restaurant, a co-working space and an event area. The adjective 'hybrid' was recently added to the lexicon of design, following an ever-growing number of multi-container spaces which, after 2020, will see a further increase. The path through the Tenoha world meanders from the store where visitors can purchase Japanese design objects, to the bar where they can have breakfast but also enjoy a Japanese cocktail at aperitif time, the restaurant, the co-working space adjoining the dining hall, through to the large space where one or more desks or even a whole office can be temporarily rented. An inner courtyard accommodating the bar's open-air tables leads to the event space, a 1,000-square-metre hall punctuated by columns, perfect for hosting events of all kinds – from fashion shows to environmental art. The interior design solution avoids marking off the crossings from one area to the next and creates in each one an environment that is linked to the others through the choice of materials, colours and style, all the while welcoming customers to an environment perfectly suited to its specific function. The spaces that accommodate Tenoha used to belong to an industrial building dating back to the '30s, and the project has in fact left the premises' original heights unaltered, emphasising its character by keeping the ventilation and heating systems in sight.







# Japanese Taste, Italian Design



**The Japanese word Tenoha combines two meanings: 'hand' and 'leaf'. It is a reference to generosity and collaboration and, at the same time, a metaphor for the closeness of man and nature.**

On the surface, Italian and Japanese history and culture could not seem more distant, yet they find points of contact in material culture and design.

Both countries boast an ancient culinary tradition tied to their territories, characterised by different ingredients but with the same attention to quality and imaginative combinations.

For both countries, art and design – intended as aesthetic expressions – are equally important: Japan has transposed its immense artistic tradition, characterised by elegance and balance, to the present day by either maintaining or completely negating the aesthetic canons, while always bearing them in mind. Italy, heir to the great Renaissance artistic tradition, gave rise in the second half of the twentieth century to an avant-garde design that revolutionised the sector and influenced new trends. Given the very rich cultural heritage of both countries, creating a Japanese environment in an Italian former industrial space from the 1930s was a particularly exciting challenge. As ever, research was the first step: from the spaces of traditional Japanese homes to the colours of ancient pottery and the stylised shapes of accessories

and furnishings (such as a fan or a screen), everything was carefully studied in order to achieve the right balance between Japanese taste and contemporary Italian design.

So the store's bookcase is made of cherry wood, its shape reminiscent of the screens that were much loved by European interior design between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the last century. The lines drawn by the neon lighting bring to mind Daido Moriyama's photographs. The bar's counter is covered in white tiles handcrafted in Italy that, having been glazed, are a reminder of raku pottery. Lighting has specifically been devised to lower the dizzy heights of the industrial premises and create cosier environments that are more similar to Japanese convivial spaces. From the colours chosen to evoke a natural environment to the explicit reference to Japanese homes in the two private of the restaurant, every detail of Tenoha Milano is the result of a lucky encounter – a land where visitors can discover the signs that denote the harmonious coexistence in interior design of two great cultures.





# Interacting Lighting System

*Text by Silvia Perego*

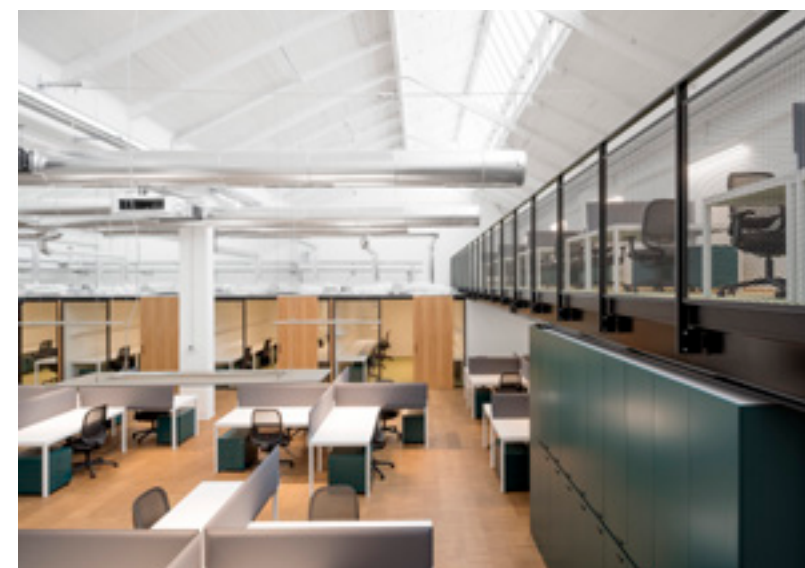
**The lighting design for the four specific areas that make up the spaces of Tenoha Milano required considerable detail and called for specific attention to the different functions of the space. Due to the inherent lack of a false ceiling, with the exception of the service areas, the entire project called for the use of suspended or integrated lighting fixtures.**



**The main challenge was to provide a sense of continuity in spite of the evident functional changes, along with an uninterrupted perception of neighbouring spaces. As well as opting for a uniform colour temperature (3000K), this was achieved by establishing a strong interaction with the space and the dedicated furnishings.**



For the retail area, in addition to a traditional track spotlight system, a custom chandelier with suspended neon tubes was created to identify the sales room's desk areas and to underline a visual lighting scheme, also replicated in the other areas, albeit with a different configuration. In the passageway between retail area and restaurant, two custom-made orange vertical elements with indirect reflected light seem to emphasise the spatial change with a different light intensity. The restaurant's lighting integrates linear elements featuring an orange protective covering within a metal mesh and spotlights for accent lighting, as well as some decorative suspended elements recalling Japanese lanterns, albeit with a more European feel. The particular design of the mesh, also featured in the bar area, identifies a graphic layer that is lower than the existing ceiling.



In the co-working area, the two large chandeliers designed by Park Associati for Driade represent another new lighting scheme, like the previous neon lights and metal weave. The staircase featuring informal seats is instead characterised by soft lighting hidden within the structure of the large steps. The more conventional co-working area is lit with sound-absorbing suspension lights and linear elements. Finally, the basic lighting of the exhibition space, which is an empty area, comprises simple under beam spotlights mounted on an electrified track.



# Interview with Hiroshi Sato, chairman of SAYU Group



**Q:** How did the idea for the Tenoha space originate? What was the commercial concept behind it?

**R:** The Tokyo Tenoha Daikanyama was created to bring a European-style moment of relaxation to Japan's frenzied capital. It was designed as a functional space where people can relax, refresh, work and shop, all around a large planted garden, which was common in the old world but is difficult to find in contemporary Tokyo. The basic concept was therefore coexistence of different spaces and intended uses that allowed visitors to enjoy an immersive experience with a European touch, away from the stress of traffic and the rush of a metropolis.

**Q:** Why did Sayu choose Milan to open its first space?

**R:** Sato's long-standing love of Italy dates back to when, aged 23, he started to import Italian early produce to Japan. Italy is Sato's adopted country, and he has always wanted to have a base in Italy to promote cultural exchange between the two nations. At the moment, Italy's more open-minded main centre is undoubtedly Milan. The main difference between Tenoha Daikanyama and Tenoha Milano is that in Tokyo it brings Italian culture to Japan, whereas in Milan it brings Japan to Italy. This exchange is the backbone of SAYU's philosophy.

**Q:** The interior design of Tenoha Milano's spaces is the result of careful research aimed at finding a point of contact between Japanese style and contemporary Italian/European design. Do you think the outcome meets these expectations?

**R:** Interior design definitely plays a significant role in Tenoha's spaces. Park Associati's success came from their ability to interpret a clean-lined contemporary Japanese design without ever falling into traditional Japanese clichés. They kept these lines clean and managed to create spaces that are so distinctive in terms of materials and styles that they evoke the essence of modern Japan that we love so much.

**Q:** Tenoha Milano is an innovative space both in terms of design and function. It's a space that can be enjoyed all day, for both work and leisure. Are you thinking of repeating this experiment elsewhere, either in Italy or in Europe? And if so, where?

**R:** Tenoha Milano is the first of a series of European openings that have already been planned. Even though the usual European concept is to build a bridge among the main cities in Western Europe (Milan, Paris, Berlin), Tenoha's idea of expansion after Italy is to turn northward. Copenhagen, Stockholm and London. This is due to the reciprocal affinity that Japan and Northern Europe have for design and simplicity; the Japanese love the products from Northern Europe as much as in the north they love Japanese products. We still don't know when, but one day in the not-too-distant future there will be another Tenoha.





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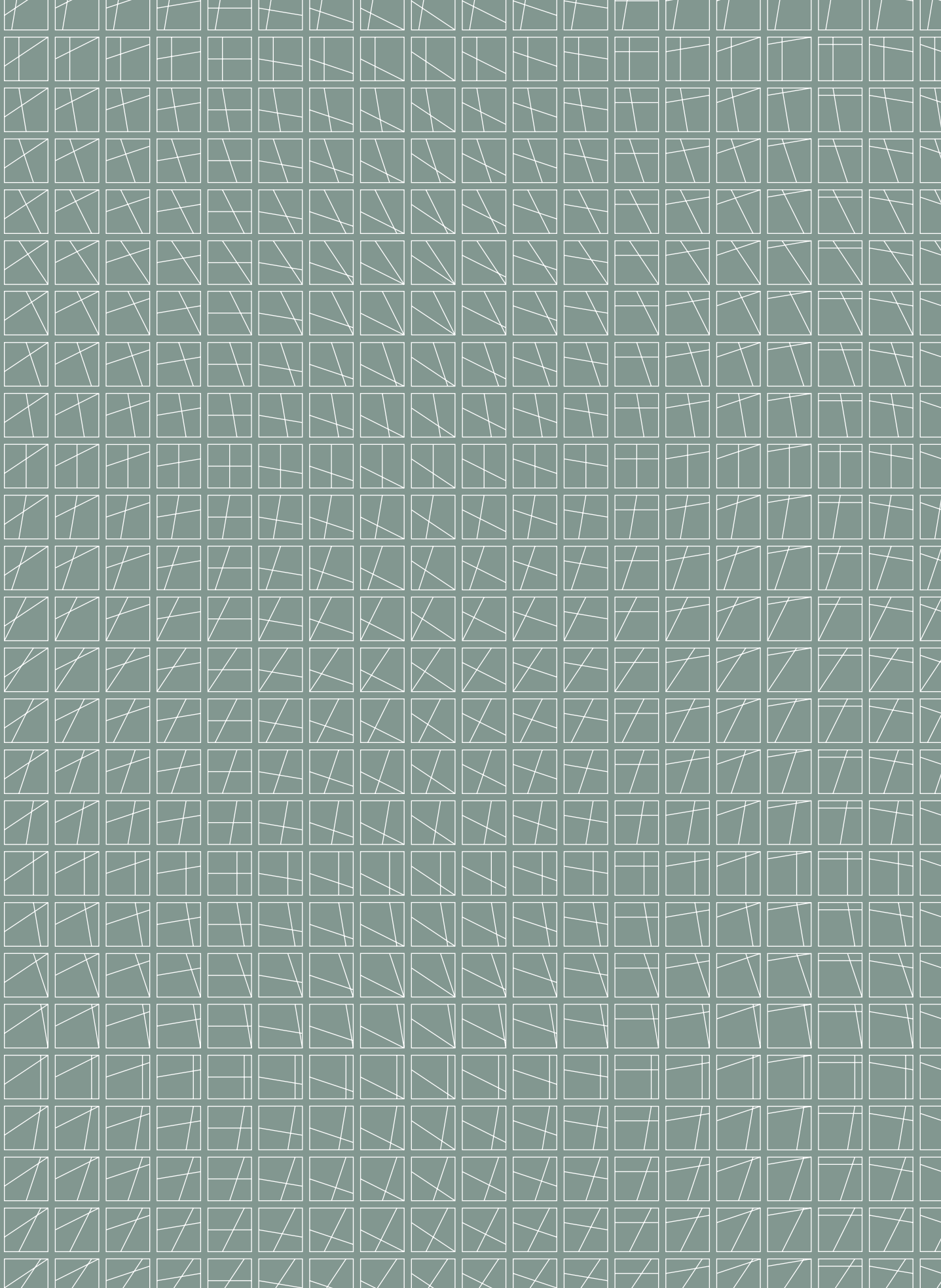
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