The form of the 700sqm Chanel Pavilion is a celebration of the iconic work of Chanel, unmistakable for its smooth layering of exquisite details that together create an elegant, cohesive whole. The resulting functional, and versatile architectural structure of the Pavilion is a series of continuous arch-shaped elements, with a courtyard in its central space. Artificial light behind the translucent ceiling washes the walls to emphasize the “arched” structure, and assists in the creation of a new artificial landscape for art installations. A large roof light opening dramatically floods the entrance in daylight to blur the relationship between interior and exterior. In addition to the lighting and colour effects, the spatial rhythm created by the seams of each segment gives strong perspective views throughout the interior.

The 65sqm central courtyard has large transparent openings to the sky above and is designed to host events as well as provide an area for reflection after visiting the exhibition. The courtyard serves as an intermediate space between the exhibition and public area of the Pavilion. In light of the extensive shipping between cities, the steel structure has been designed to be built in under one week, which is essential for an ephemeral pavilion. With a direct visual connection to the courtyard, the 128sqm terrace continues the dialogue between the Pavilion’s exterior and interior. During an event, the two spaces can be linked to become one large event zone.
Reflective materials allow the exterior skin to be illuminated with varying colours which can be tailored to the differing programmes of special events in each city. The dichotomy between the powerful sculptural mass of the Chanel Pavilion’s structure and the lightness of its envelope create a bold and enigmatic element. The Pavilion’s exterior develops into a rich variety of interior spaces that maximize the potential to reuse and rethink space due to the innate flexibility of its plan. The total fluidity of the Chanel Pavilion’s curvilinear geometries is an obvious continuation of Hadid’s 30-years of exploration and research into systems of continuous transformations and smooth transitions. With this repertoire of morphology, Zaha Hadid is able to translate the ephemeral typology of a pavilion into the sensual forms required for this celebration of Chanel’s cultural importance.