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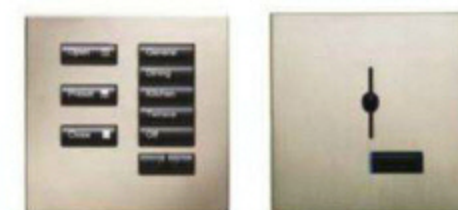
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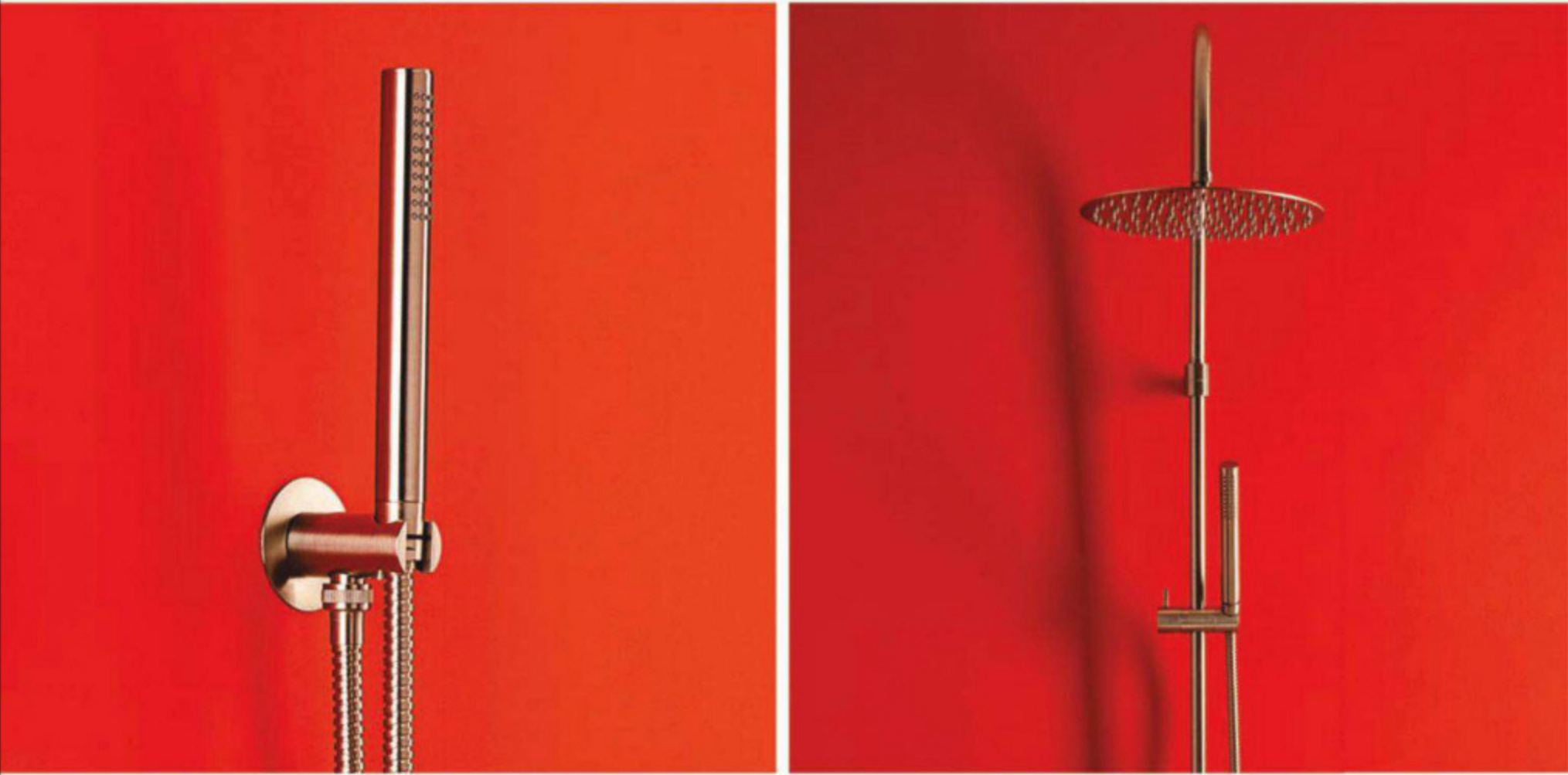
Words From the Editor

In this, our annual roundup of new office design, we take a world tour of good and great spaces to work. We can't prove that a company with cool offices is also a good employer, but it's logical that there's some link between caring about your workers and caring about the environment you provide for them. At least we hope so. In an age of increased awareness of staff contentment and retention strategies, workplace design is obviously of central importance, and companies, institutions, governments who don't get this, will suffer the indirect consequences over the long haul. But that's rather obvious. What is more intriguing is the varied definitions of good office design, as this newest collection proves. Oh, beyond this piece, we help celebrate Shigeru Ban's Pritzker win, chat with Moshe Safdie, and take close-ups of houses, shops, hotels, museums, and products. Chock full for your enlightenment.

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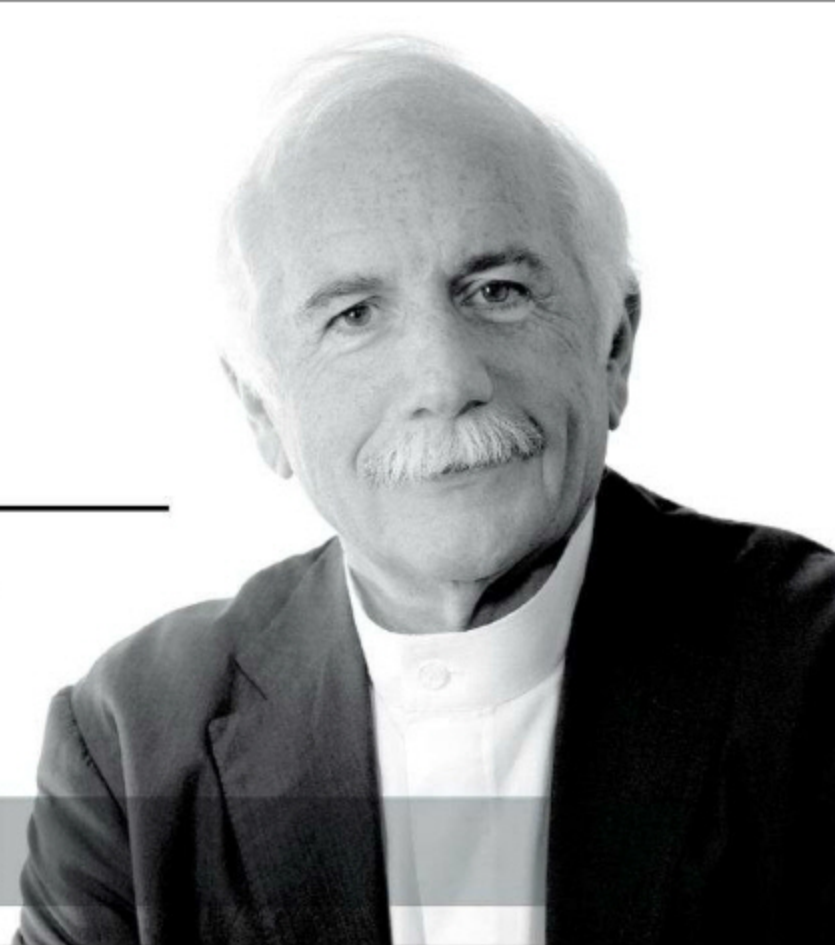
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MOSHE SAFDIE

Architecture, by its very nature, is not a young person's profession. Education and practice traditionally take years of dedicated hard work before anyone can rightly own the title of architect. It also takes a fair amount of talent and luck—being at the right place at the right time for that big break.

Israeli-Canadian-American architect Moshe Safdie broke the mode of patiently paying dues when, at the age of 29, his Habitat 67 was unveiled for the World Expo in Montreal. A utopian housing complex premised on prefabricated units arranged in clusters to maximise light, air and views, it was based on his McGill University thesis, designed when he was 21. Five decades later and with countless landmarks under his belt, Safdie remains true to his humanitarian ideals. He shares his views on China, how he runs his studio, and what place utopian architecture has in a world dominated by bottom line commerce with Rebecca Lo.

What brings you to Hong Kong this time?

Moshe Safdie: I spoke at a Goldman Sachs investor conference, and also at the Asia Society. And AIA Hong Kong got involved, too. We are launching a book on Marina Bay Sands, titled Reaching for the Sky. Then I head to Singapore for some meetings.

Two years ago, we opened an office in Shanghai. We have a lot of work in China and we need to stay on top of it. Regrettably, we are not doing any work in Hong Kong at the moment. We participated in the Xiqu Centre competition for West Kowloon Cultural District a few years ago, but we were not successful. We are working with Kerry Properties on a project near Beijing, on the coast. Qinhuangdao is a high-density coastal development of villas and high-rise terraced units that's very permeable. The idea is not to create a wall blocking the sea. We get high marks for feng shui, and the design includes a lot of terraces.

Let's step back in time. What was Montreal like in the 1960s? And how has it changed over the years since Habitat 67?

The 60s was Montreal at its peak. It was good time to be there. Coming from Israel, it was naturally a cultural and climatic shock for me. When I graduated from McGill, we had the World's Fair. I was given an extraordinary opportunity. I was working for Louis Kahn at the time and one of my McGill thesis advisors asked me to return and build my thesis. Expo was a major partnership between the Quebec provincial and Montreal municipal governments. The year was Canada's centennial. Everyone had great hopes of Montreal becoming a big-time world city. Expo preceded the turmoil of

separatism. It was a different time: crime was low and French Canadian filmmaking was flowering. It was exciting. Expo was extraordinary because of that. Then things got dicey. Businesses were concerned with the language laws and many companies left.

Habitat 67 is a 50 year old building but today it is still conceptually fresh and of the moment. I find it refreshing to go there. I wouldn't do anything different today. The solutions there are still relevant. And I still have an apartment there. I want to gift it to an institution for the public to experience. Many people want to visit the interiors of an apartment but they are chased away by the security guards. Habitat 67 is a high-end residence today and a heritage building. I loved living there and enjoy it just like any other resident: its outdoor elements, views, air and sense of being in a house. I'm aware of nature all around me. It's a spectacular site.

So many of those utopian projects built in the 20th century didn't work out. Le Corbusier's Unite d'Habitation has been gentrified. But I feel that it isn't as successful: its dark corridors make people feel locked in. Of all those utopian propositions, Habitat 67 has really caught the public mind. Every interview with its residents is about how it uplifts them. I am hopeful that one of the institutions in Canada would open my apartment to visiting architectural scholars.

You relocated to the United States after Expo 67?

I began teaching at Harvard after stints at McGill, Ben Gurion and Yale, and moved my office to the Boston area in 1978. For the 15 years following Expo, we had no work in Canada. After we moved to the U.S., we got five major Canadian institutional projects including Quebec Museum of Civilisation, National Gallery of Canada, Vancouver Library Square, and Ottawa's former City Hall. We revamped Pearson International Airport with SOM. We are currently working on a condominium development along Toronto's east harbourfront. We did the master plan and it's under construction now. We had a wave of Canadian projects then a major wave of American ones. There were five or six major institutions in the U.S.: the United States Institute of Peace Headquarters in Washington, D.C., among others.

Today, most of our work is in Asia. We also have a fair amount of work in Israel. We have restructured our office to allow

our principals there to start their own practices. I wanted to be selective about the work we do there, and therefore encouraged them to do their own work. We are working on master plans for the city of Modi'in and for a new tourist area on the Dead Sea. We are also working on the National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel, which is currently under construction in Jerusalem.

Are you actively involved in every one of your projects?

Yes, for better or worse! I work hard. Today, communication between our offices is much easier. I have a wonderful team. We have over a hundred people in total across all our offices, with about 90 of them in Boston.

Our studio is not a corporate office. Other studios have a lot of young people who come and go. We have staff that has been there for 10 to 40 years. We work together to build up a great deal of shortcuts to make it possible for local offices to function. All the design occurs in Boston, where we have infrastructure experts and a model shop. The local offices oversee a project's construction. We work closely with local firms. For example, our Chongqing project with Capitaland involves Hong Kong's P&T as the executive architects. Arup Hong Kong and Shanghai are the engineers. We involve them in the design and construction phases to control the final product. We don't just put our stamp on drawings. And we turn down a lot of work.

Tell me more about the Chongqing project.

It is the largest and most complex project we have ever undertaken. The site is the confluence point of the two rivers where the city was first established. We are building 10 million square feet of mixed-use development there. The project includes eight towers and a podium, with residential, office, hotel, shopping and transportation facilities. The metro, bus terminal and shipping terminal are all within the project. We have completed design development and have submitted for the final building permit. It is slated for completion in 2018.

It has been intense dealing with so many agencies: municipal, metro authority, Yangtze River authority. The site is on a peninsula, and the entire podium is a public park. The theme is sailing. We included planted terraces for the southern facing residences. Streets are covered for shopping. At the top connecting the towers is a conservatory and club. The

towers are slender, at 77 and 52 storeys, and curve towards the north.

Do you work on many master plans?

We master plan when we anticipate eventually designing a lot of the architecture in the plan. We've done a city in Israel for a quarter of a million people. We are currently doing a plan for Istanbul across from Hagia Sophia along the Golden Horn. But I'm reluctant to take on pure city planning at this point.

How has your work evolved over the years?

I see several recurring and evolving themes. In the late 60s and 70s, it was mostly housing. The first and post-Habitat projects in my practice involved mixed use, but generally it was residential. The following decades saw very little of that: most of the work was for cultural institutions. I had to deal with a lot of different geographical settings and cultures. I developed architecture that was rooted in place, such as the Sikh museum in Punjab, or projects in historic cities in the U.S.

I first came to China in 1973. There wasn't a single high rise building in Beijing then and very few cars. We started working on small-scale residences in Singapore before Marina Bay Sands. Marina Bay Sands was our first major breakthrough in Asia. It instantly became a hit. Everyone was aware of it. We became very involved in Asian projects afterwards. We began doing mixed-use projects for private sector developers again in a big way. It's exciting to see what's happening in Asia and these mega-scale projects. It's a great opportunity to deal with the issues of the moment. While it's nice to do discrete museums and libraries, what do you do with the mess outside of them? That's the issue of the day. Density, congestion, optimisation and how to humanise spaces. People don't want to walk into yet another mall and not remember which city they are in. Enough is enough. Our work is much more open.

At my Goldman Sachs talk, I discussed the privatisation of the public realm. This can be found mostly in malls and it's not for the better. Malls turn their back to the surrounding city. But they can be designed to connect and reach out to the public, even if they are privately owned and maintained. It's really one continuum from Habitat 67—the shared public realm.

What is your favourite building?

I get ask this question often! My standard response is to say they are all like my children: I can't pick a favourite because I love them all. A better answer would be to say that I can't single one out because every building's agenda is different. Habitat 67 was radical and my first building. The National Gallery of Canada was my first major public institution and dealt with issues of ceremony. Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum in Jerusalem was the most symbolically charged and emotional for me. Marina Bay Sands was the biggest spectacle. So it's hard to pick one as they each deal with such different matters. I would have to say that there are projects that are seminal and projects that are iconic. For me, the ones that are both are my favourites. And there is more than one.

What is the dream project that you have yet to undertake?

I used to answer a major urban mixed use. Now, I'd say a mixed use, high density urban project where we can stretch the envelope beyond what we've done previously. It allows all my theories of the public realm, high-rise construction and design to coalesce together. I would like to do the density of Chongqing with the statement of Habitat 67. For that to happen, we need a combination of factors: it can only occur when there is public and private collaboration.

For Marina Bay Sands, the Singapore government played a big role in setting up the project's guidelines. A major developer and the government have to decide they both want to go forward.

What are the biggest challenges and joys of working in China?

The permit and approval process. The country has a certain conservatism that stems from bad experiences. Its fire and safety codes may be premised on not quite sound engineering. China is building more than in other jurisdictions and it affects flexibility. In some cases, we are dealing with multiple regulatory agencies. Then there is the language barrier. We have to delegate our negotiations and sometimes things can get lost in translation. That makes it difficult.

The joy comes from the scale of opportunities there. How many cities in world are doing what Chongqing is doing? How many are transforming their skyline like Singapore did

with Marina Bay Sands? The scope and sense of adventure; the solutions sought by agencies and the public—that's the exciting part.

What do you do when you are not working?

I travel a lot. Often the travel is related to the regions I'm working in, but they are also places I want to get to know. Recently, I've been to Cambodia, Bhutan and am planning a trip to Myanmar. It's a relief to not be connected during travels. We are all too connected now.

My daily routine consists of my love for music and films. I believe that film is a great art form. I still read books on paper. I also swim, when I travel abroad as well as when I am at home. And I have four children; they are still quite demanding in spite of their mature ages.

Do you do any teaching?

I haven't taught full-time since I left Harvard. I give maybe a dozen lectures per year in different schools and I'll go to studio reviews. But I can't commit more than that with my travel schedule.

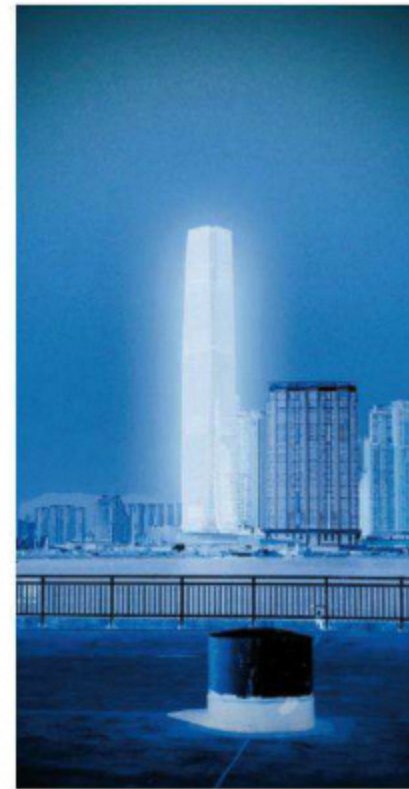
We have the good fortune to attract good talent. Our studio is very international. People come in with a lot of excitement and enthusiasm about the profession. We train and teach them from scratch. Schools today have a different emphasis: they lean towards the art of building and design as theory. There is a tendency towards formalism in school. Our office explores forms and geometry, but always rooted in making buildings really work and sing. Architects get reorientation when they arrive. It's like a school.

Although we conceive of landscapes and structures, we are not landscape architects or engineers. I believe the best results come from working with the best. We could never have those skills in-house. Everything has become so specialized. The architect's role has changed. He now has to effectively orchestrate specialists. It's just as important as a conductor in an orchestra: he is responsible for everything that makes up the sound. If he screws up one aspect, he screws up the opera. Architects today have to be composer, choral master and conductor.



Art for Everyone

Record numbers attended Hong Kong's Affordable Art Fair last month. The three-day event was, according to the event organisers, "the best-attended Affordable Art Fair globally in the company's 15-year history", with a total of over 29,000 visitors. Featuring thousands of artworks from more than 120 local and international galleries, the Fair attracted aspiring collectors as well as veterans. All tastes were catered to, with works ranging from classical paintings, photography and calligraphy to sculptures, street art and screen prints. Visitors also took part in panel discussions, special exhibitions and interactive activities. www.affordableartfair.com/hongkong/



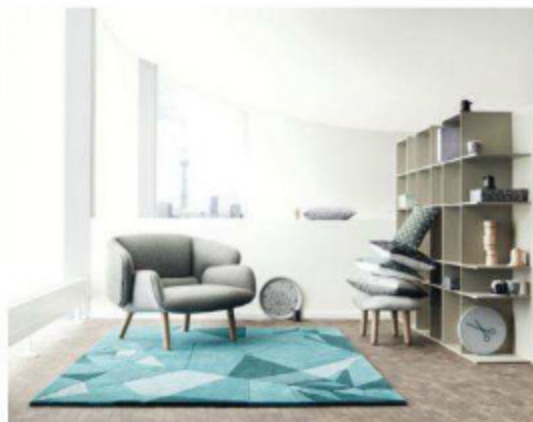
Beacon of Talent

An ambitious audio-visual work by renowned Berlin-based artist Carsten Nicolai has been commissioned to illuminate the Hong Kong skyline during the second edition of Art Basel's annual show here. Titled 'a (alpha) pulse', the installation will beam a 'synchronised' light pattern across the entire facade of Hong Kong's tallest building, the International Commerce Centre, each night from May 15 through 17. According to Nicolai, 'a (alpha) pulse' will feature a "series of light patterns intended to play on one's mood and various other subconscious metrics". A corresponding mobile phone app will provide sound to accompany the light show. Nicolai's work is influenced by scientific reference systems and mathematical patterns, and has been presented at MoMA and Tate Modern. www.artbasel.com/hongkong/special-event



Franco-American Luxury

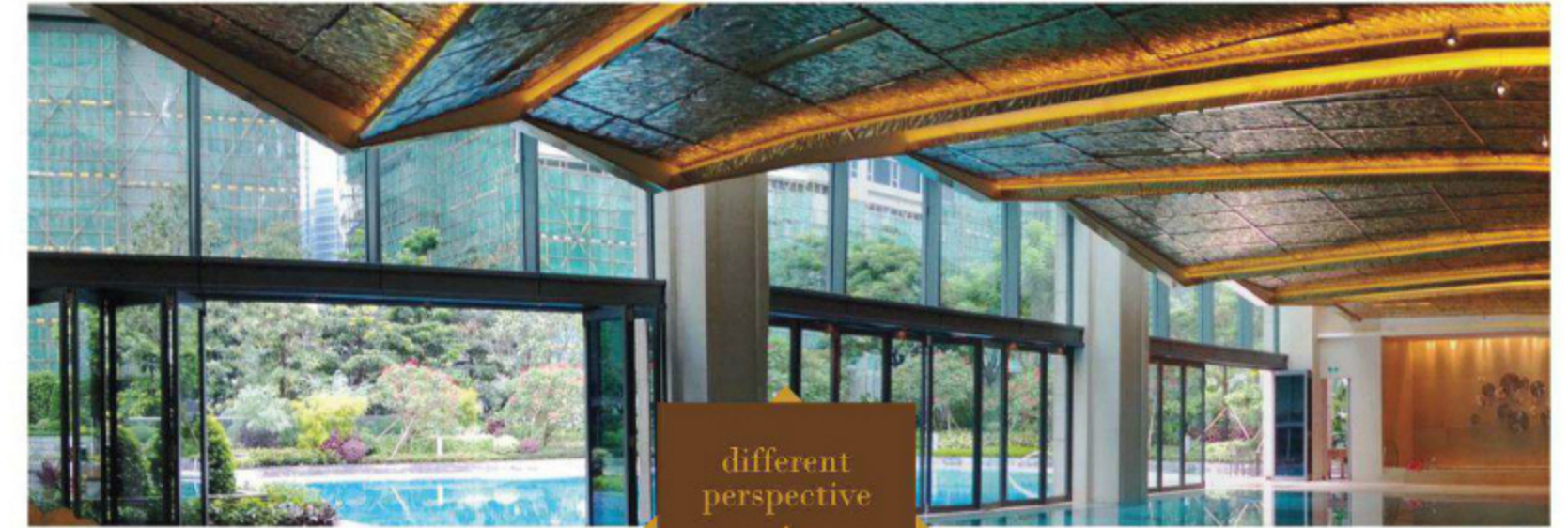
Baker Furniture recently launched a new line by French interior designer Jacques Garcia. Renowned in elite circles for his opulent style, Garcia is deeply inspired by traditional French culture, to which he applies his contemporary vision. "There has always been a certain duality between the past and present in me," says the tastemaker, who is also known for his work as an architect and garden designer. "It is this confrontation that I wanted to express in this new collection for Baker." Perhaps the most iconic pieces in the Atrium series are the Atrium Chaise and Chair. Modelled on the ancient Greek klismos but with a modern touch, these articles boast delicate sabre legs and striking curves. An integral part of the collection is what Garcia refers to as 'industrial couture', including pieces that incorporate hand-forged iron and steel elements. Available as a console or cocktail table, Ciceron features X-shaped wrought iron legs, brought to life by the artisanal metalwork of an accomplished blacksmith in North Carolina near the Baker factory. To view the complete collection, visit www.bakerfurniture.com



In the Fold

The Fusion collection, designed by Japanese design studio Nendo for Danish furniture retailer BoConcept, is due to hit Hong Kong this month. The collection is inspired by the Japanese art of origami. "It is really interesting how much we have in common," says Nendo founder Oki Sato of the Japanese and the Danes, two heavyweights in the design world. "Especially our love for natural materials such as wood and leather... We try not to work on the materials too much, and to be as honest and true to them as possible." Fusion is modern, clean and functional, and includes sofa, armchair, wall system, coffee table, and a broad range of home accessories. www.boconcept.com www.nendo.jp/en

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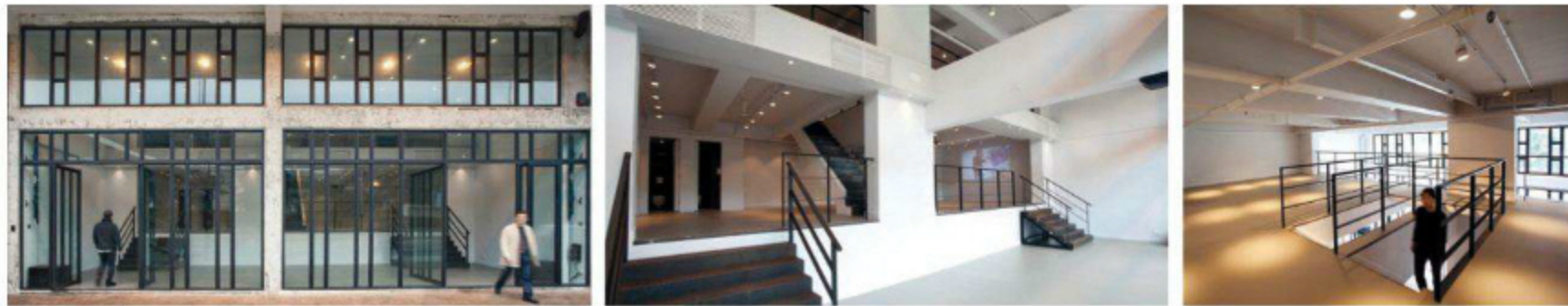
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London Calling

This year, the London Festival of Architecture (LFA) will take "Capital" as its central theme, and explore its various manifestations, from London's role as a cultural capital, to the ways in which human, natural, social and digital capital shape London architecture and its public spaces. The festival, now in its 10th year, features debates, exhibitions, film screenings, open studios, and family events which focus on the importance of architecture and design in London today. LFA also offers an international focus with the International Architectural Showcase, organised by the British Council, highlighting innovative work from architectural practices around the world. The festival will take place from 1 to 30 June. www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org



Lofty Creations

A ground-floor multifunctional space called Eight & Nine has opened in Hong Kong's Western District. The new venue spans 3,200sq ft over three levels of a former coffee warehouse. It was discovered by The Loft Division, a firm that seeks out overlooked properties and repurposes them into creative offices and lifestyle destinations. In designing Eight & Nine, The Loft Division has created an open loft-style floorplan encompassing 6m-high ceilings, a glass facade entrance, a full commercial kitchen and a state-of-the-art sound system. Eight & Nine will provide local artists, designers and multinational companies a versatile venue for hosting corporate events, exhibitions and private gatherings. www.theloftdivision.com/eightandnine



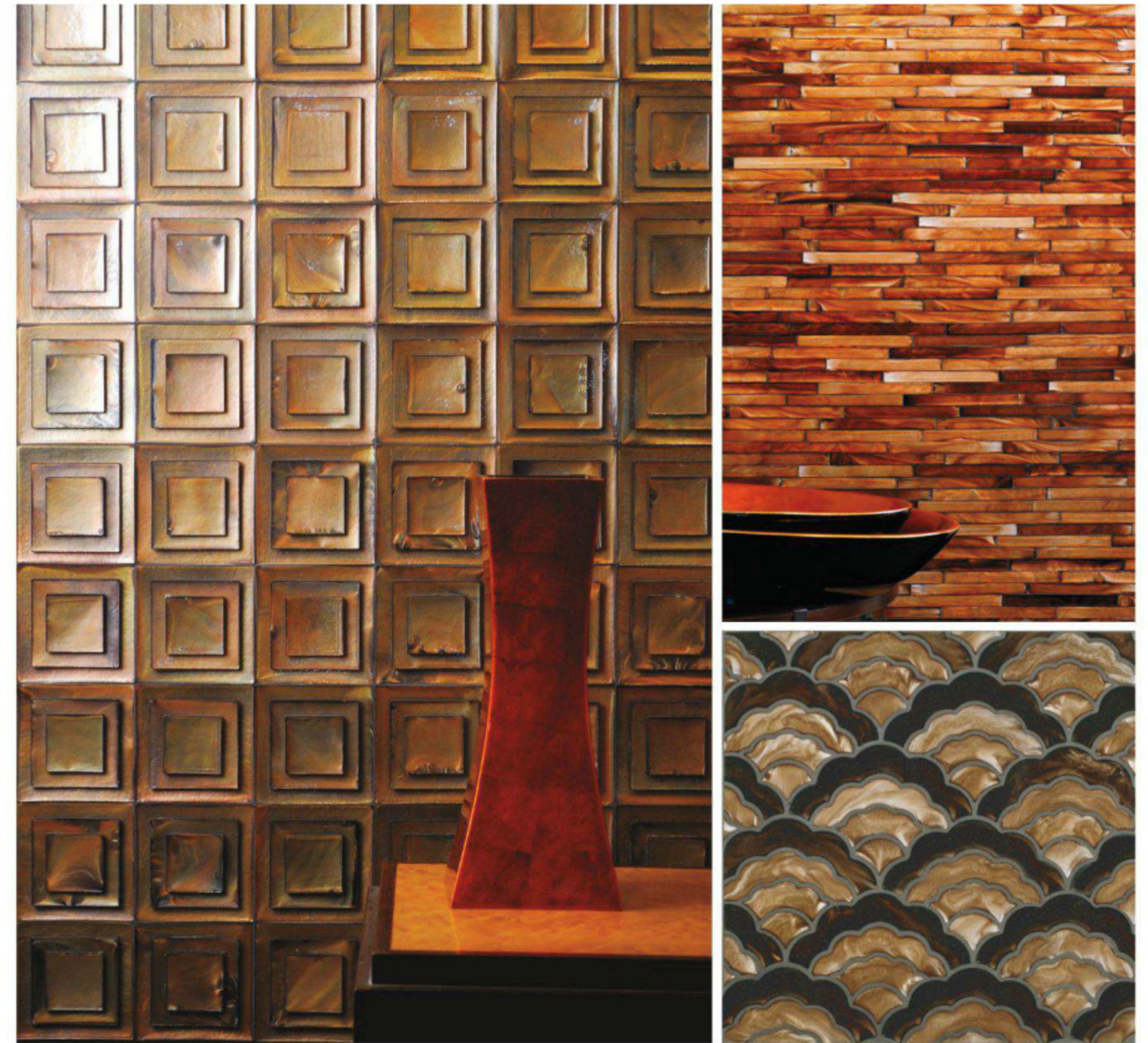
Double Dip

Victoria and Albert Baths presented a selection of its best bathroom designs at this year's Milan Design Week. The stand was an impressive display of the British brand's freestanding baths and basins. Made from QUARRYCAST®, a naturally white material rich in volcanic limestone, the baths included the contemporary Cabrits and the classically styled Drayton and Radford collections. The exhibition also provided the perfect opportunity for Victoria and Albert to launch its Amiata bath range, alongside new products such as the Elwick tub, Maru 42 basin and the wall-mounted Staffordshire 15 bath mixer. www.vandabaths.com



In Retrospect

The Hong Kong Design Institute is hosting an exhibition of works by eminent architect and designer George Nelson (1908-1996), most famous for his contributions to mid-century modern designs in America. "George Nelson: Architect, Writer, Designer, Teacher" showcases Nelson's most iconic works, including the Marshmallow Sofa, the Pretzel Chair, colourful wall clocks, as well as his experimental designs for the home. The exhibition runs until 2 June. www.hkdi.edu.hk/hkdi_gallery/



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Old Is Gold

Kraemer Gallery has brought to Hong Kong a special selection of French antiques created during the reigns of King Louis XIV (1643-1715), King Louis XV (1720-1774) and King Louis XVI (1774-1793). Run by the illustrious Kraemer family, the Parisian gallery counts among its patrons many distinguished names, from the Rothschild family to fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld. "Asians who visit France or the United States have no idea that what they see in major museums like the Louvre, Versailles or the Metropolitan Museum actually have twins that exist in private hands, and these objects could probably exist in their own possession one day in Hong Kong, Macau, Beijing or Shanghai," says Mikael Kramer, international ambassador for the gallery. The latest Kraemer collection includes, among other things, an exceptionally large carved mirror, gilt-bronze candelabras and a longcase clock. Titled 'Golden Time of Kings', the exhibition is being held at Hullett House in 1881 Heritage Hong Kong until the end of this month. www.kraemer.fr



Funky Meets Functional

Scandinavian design emporium Normann Copenhagen has expanded the Washing-up Bowl and Brush range designed for it by Ole Jensen in 2002. The classic design is now available in grey and mint. It epitomises core concepts of Danish design with its clean aesthetic, innovative use of material, and extreme functionality. Jensen came up with the original idea when he realised that a conventional kitchen sink with its hard surfaces was not at all suitable for cleaning fine china and glassware in. The rubber bowl Jensen created in response to his dilemma has since evolved into a versatile accessory that can also be used as a vase, fruit bowl, or fancy container. www.normann-copenhagen.com

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Hong Kong-based wallpaper supplier Tat Ming is offering a vibrant range by Dutch manufacturer Eijffinger. The Raval collection combines lasting quality with timeless prints. Diverse colour combinations and playful patterns such as paisley, stripes and abstract shapes are used so that the wallcoverings can complement almost any interior decor. www.tatming.com

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City Farm

Global real estate firm Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) has teamed up with local social enterprises Time to Grow and Sowers Exchange to cultivate a rooftop farm in Hong Kong's Central district. The 300sq m vegetable farm is situated on the rooftop of the Bank of America Tower. Currently, different types of lettuce and pak choi are growing away, planted two months ago as seedlings from organic farms in the New Territories. Not only does JLL's urban farming scheme encourage healthy eating and sustainable living, but also, it benefits the wider community, with many of the vegetables grown there subsequently donated to local food charities. Says Time to Grow co-founder Poi Fabrega, "We are thrilled to partner with JLL to bring organic farming to the heart of Hong Kong. Our shared goal in this project is to bring the community together, promote employee engagement and raise awareness about some of Hong Kong's most important environmental and social issues." www.joneslanglasalle.com www.timetogrow.hk www.sowers-exchange.com



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SHIGERU BAN

2014 PRITZKER LAUREATE

For anyone who has heard Shigeru Ban speak publicly about his work, the enthusiasm and attention he lavishes on his paper buildings easily outshines that of his other 'regular' architectural work. It is very clear that it is in these disaster-relief structures, by now applied to numerous situations across the globe, that Ban finds his highest rewards. And it is not unlikely that this year's Pritzker Prize jury gave considerable weight to this aspect of his oeuvre. Their appealing political correctness and genuine social value aside, these structures built of cardboard tubes are some of the architect's finest, most interesting formal accomplishments. Even in his very early, smaller works – private houses – Shigeru Ban was primarily focussed on end-users. While his buildings can be highly original in their approach, their most innovative concepts seem always to have derived from a consideration of use. One of his most widely recognised houses, the wonderful 'Naked House', essentially a translucent rectangular box with four mobile smaller boxes inside it, was invented in response to the client's request that no family member be secluded.

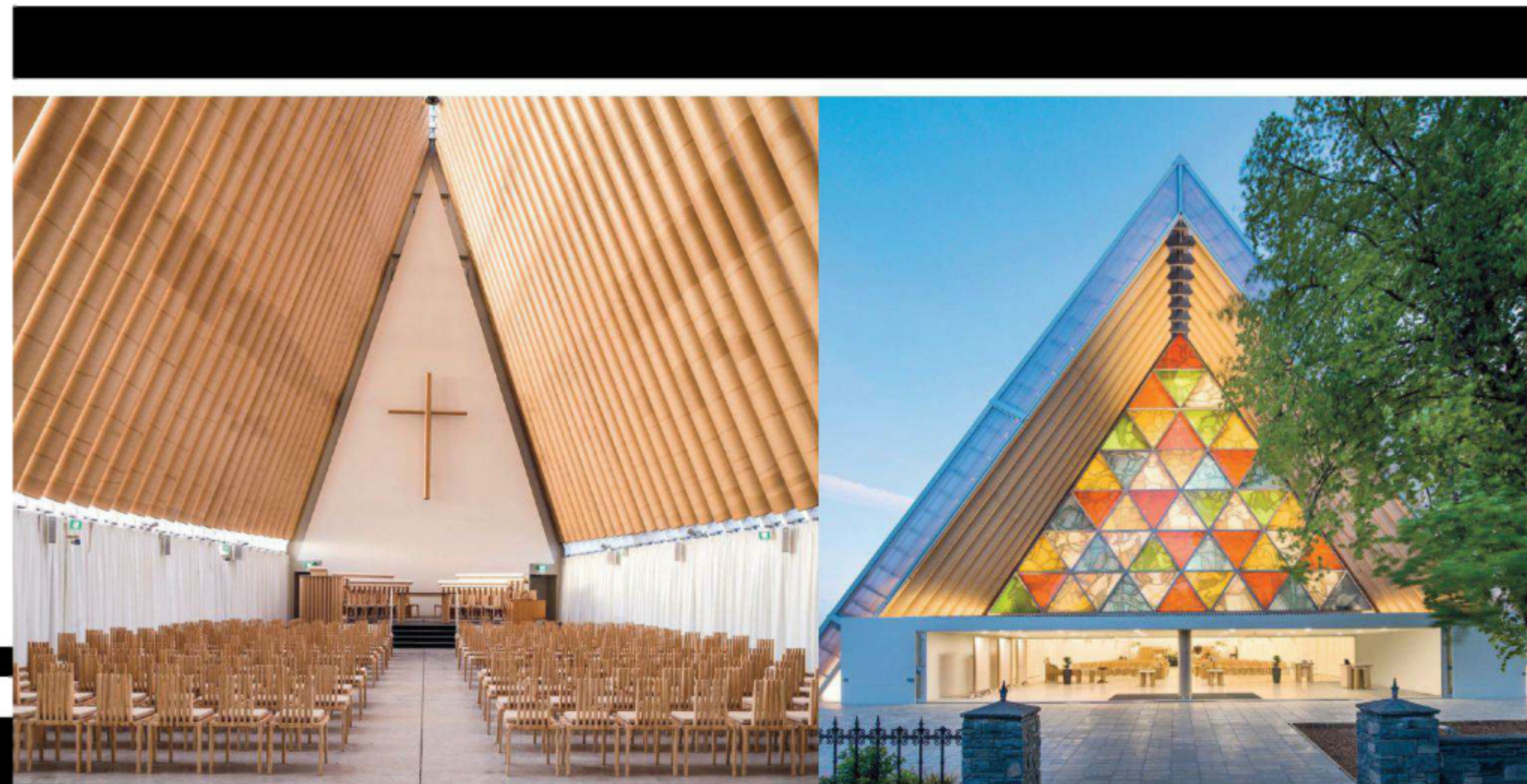
Simplicity is another Ban hallmark. In materials and construction, and in spatial form. He seems to enjoy paring architecture down to some of its essentials, in order to reach for a kind of honesty. This gives his buildings accessibility; you see what it is in totality upon first or second glance. You understand them right away, then get on with deciding whether you like them or not... whether you agree with

his viewpoint. He can make lovely objects, but also ungainly ones – no one could accuse the Pompidou Metz of elegance – yet never do they seem to be other than themselves. There is no cunning or pretension to Ban's architecture. Sometimes, they are like laboratory experiments that seem to have reached corporeality merely as a result of the investigation of an idea, rather than as envisioned formal images.

Shigeru Ban studied architecture in the US, initially at Sci-Arc and then at the Cooper Union. He opened his own practice at a young age, first in Tokyo and later with offices in New York and Paris. He also teaches regularly both in Japan and abroad, and lectures widely. His work for disaster relief began early as well, during the Rwanda tragedy, when he petitioned the UN with ideas for temporary shelter for the displaced, and was invited to consult. The quantity of time he devotes (often with students and volunteers) to the 'charitable' side of his work is almost remarkable, given the demands of modern professional practice. He set up his NGO in 1995 and called it VAN: Voluntary Architects' Network. When making the announcement of Ban's win, Tom Pritzker said: "Shigeru Ban's commitment to humanitarian causes through his disaster relief work is an example for all. Innovation is not limited by building type and compassion is not limited by budget. Shigeru has made our world a better place."

Ban is Japan's seventh Pritzker winner, coming immediately after Toyo Ito last year. We wrote then that the country's outsized Pritzker haul established it (as if

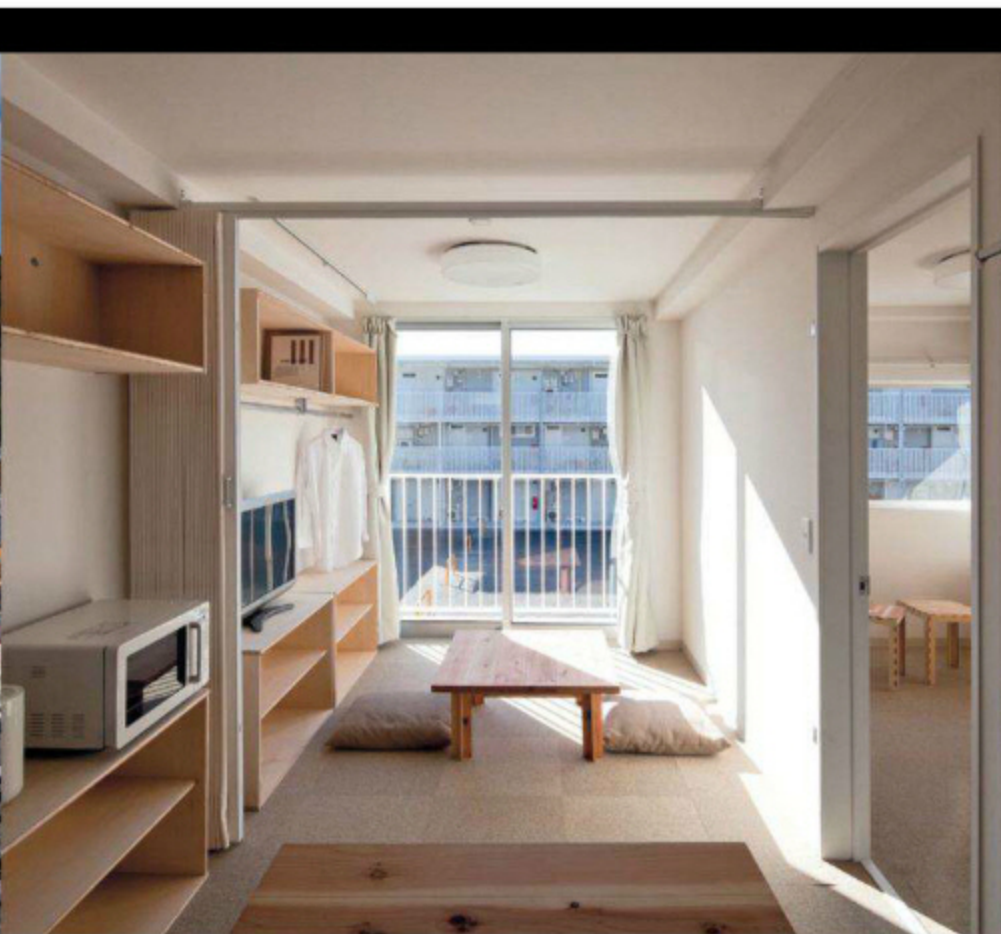
proof were needed) as an architectural powerhouse. But it is hard to imagine now, who might follow, other than Kengo Kuma, until the current generation of very young, many very talented, architects has a few more years to prove themselves. Like Ito's, Ban's work is uneven, though we'd argue it more consistently adheres to a limited set of principles and holds together as a body. Ito's dominant coherence was eclecticism; Ban's work more succinctly follows a path, veering left and right, but generally toward the same direction. Eyes that yearn for beauty, or at least aesthetic coherence, can become excited by the early houses, or separately by the larger of the paper tube structures, only to be disappointed by apparent missed beats. But perhaps the architect is to be lauded for disallowing the evolution of a personal vocabulary of form, detail and proportion into an ever tighter, more fluid linguistic character. He treats each new commission as a fresh slate, as if his career were moving two steps forward, one step back. Many other great offices do likewise (Herzog & de Meuron comes to mind) and do better buildings while they're at it, but Shigeru Ban has eked out his own position in current practice: balanced somewhere between 'quirky/experimental' and 'edgy/pretty'. He seems to do best with smaller buildings, non-extravagant budgets and out-of-the-limelight celebrity. This prize may push him closer to the centre of the spotlight – or it may not – but wherever he heads now, it's sure to be because he wants to go there.



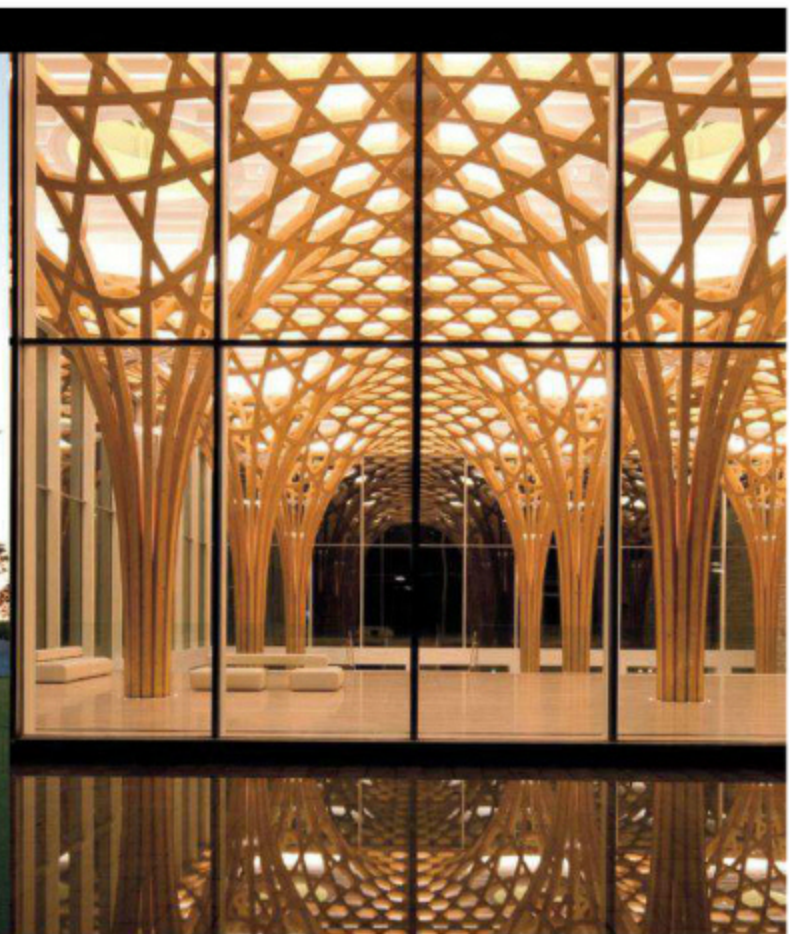
CARDBOARD CATHEDRAL, CHRISTCHURCH, 2013



CENTRE POMPIDOU-METZ, METZ, 2010



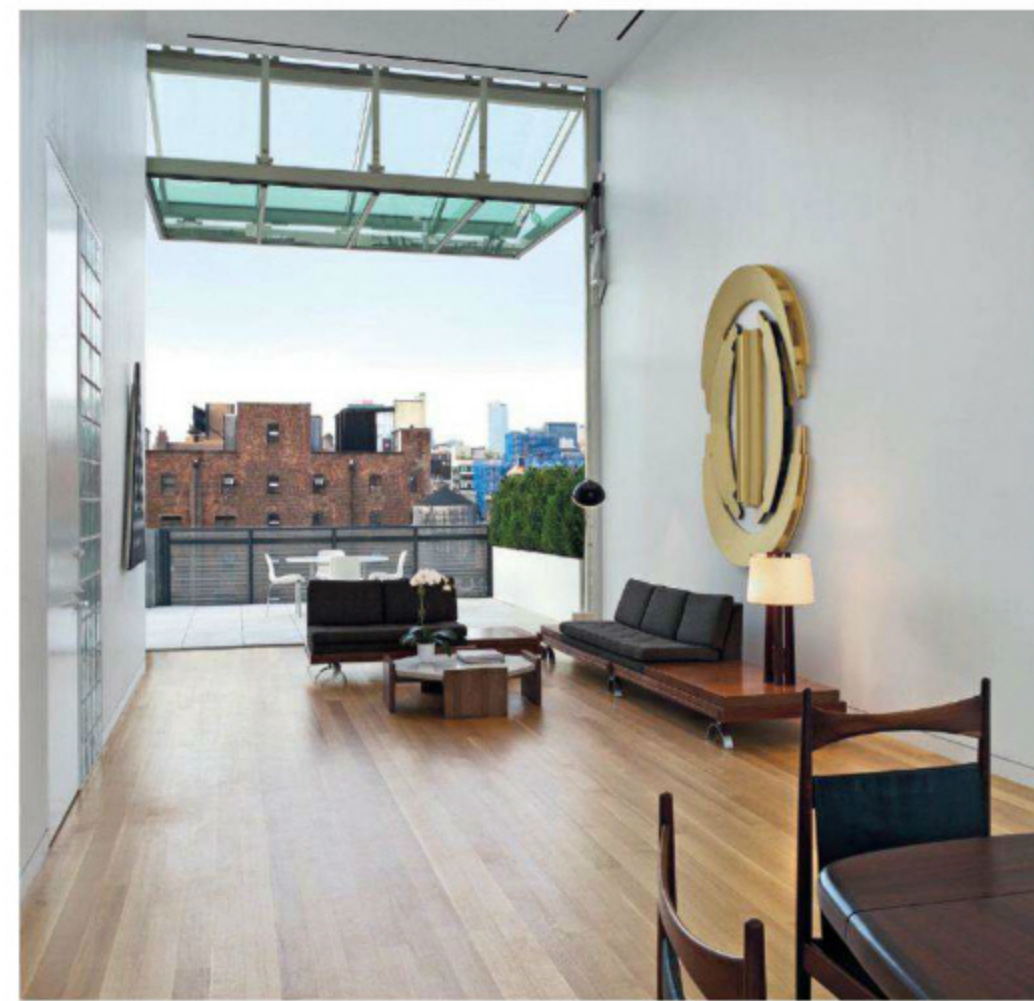
CONTAINER TEMPORARY HOUSING, ONAGAWA, 2011



HAESLEY NINE BRIDGES GOLF CLUB HOUSE, YEOJU, 2010



CURTAIN WALL HOUSE, TOKYO, 1995



METAL SHUTTER HOUSE, NEW YORK, 2010



NAKED HOUSE, SAITAMA, 2000



PAPER CHURCH, KOBE, 1995

[promotion]

Photography by Takuji Shimamura

Photography by Takuji Shimamura



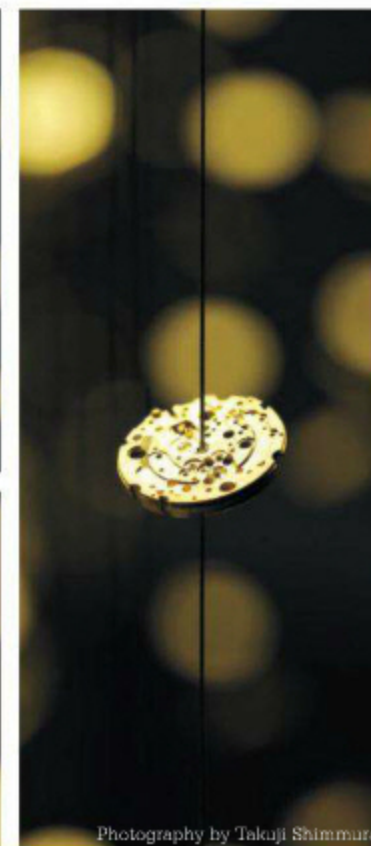
CITIZEN: LIGHT IS TIME



Photography by Takuji Shimamura



Photography by Takuji Shimamura



Photography by Takuji Shimamura

World-renowned Japanese watch maker CITIZEN made a stunning debut at the 2014 edition of the MILAN DESIGN WEEK with 'LIGHT IS TIME', an inspiring art installation developed by Paris-based architect Tsuyoshi Tane of DGT Architects together with CITIZEN's in-house design team.

Founded in 1930, CITIZEN focuses on pushing forward the boundaries of technology and leveraging experience toward exploring new possibilities. One pivotal technological breakthrough was the development of a light-driven watch in 1976. Utilising electrical power converted from virtually any light source, Eco-Drive changed the way watches could be powered. The extraordinary technology eliminated the need to ever replace batteries, levelling the field for citizens of virtually any country to experience the joy of using a CITIZEN watch.

"When we considered what the essence of CITIZEN is, the phrase 'Time is Light, Light is Time' came to mind," says Tane. "The essence of time in its earliest concept was light. Without the shadow in contrast to light on a sundial, for example, early people would not have been able to read time. Time exists in darkness, but its measure was born in light."

This theme is reflected in the installation, which comprised 80,000 main plates suspended in the air. The main plate is the structural device that forms the foundation of all watches. Moving lights hover over the plates as visitors walk around the space. Among other highlights, a pocket watch from the 1920s and the latest model was also on display. Combined with a selection of the best watches and the installation, the entire exhibition allowed visitors to better understand CITIZEN's allure and the unique watchmaking craftsmanship that fosters excellence and creativity. To know more, please visit: www.citizenwatch-global.com/milansalone/2014/en.html



PAPER LOG HOUSE, BHUJ, 2001



PAPER TEMPORARY STUDIO, PARIS, 2004

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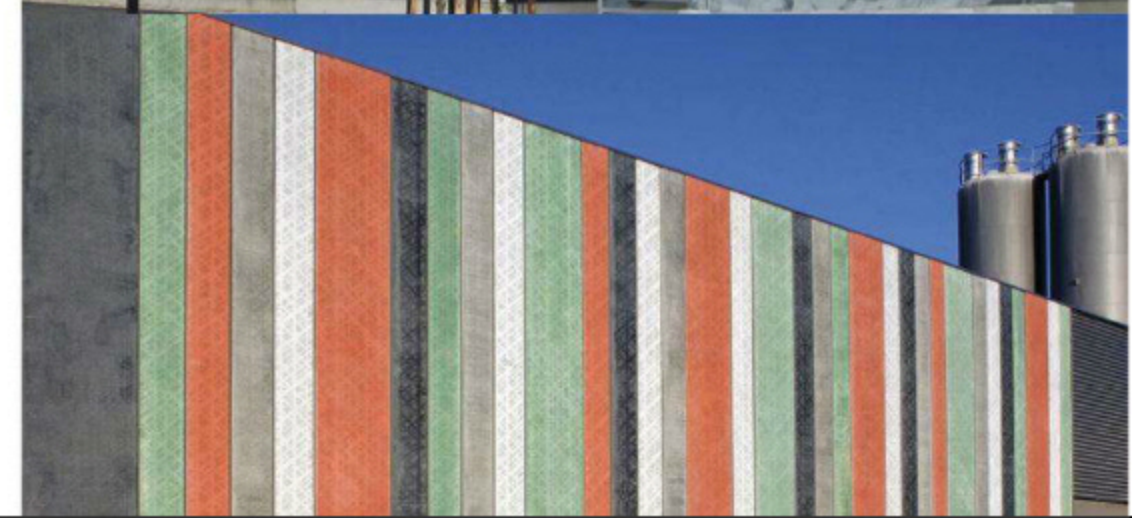
Our end product is a membrane used in the prefabrication process of concrete. The desired image is printed on the membrane with a surface retarder, after which the membrane is sent to the local concrete prefabrication company. Concrete is cast on the membrane and when the retarder is washed away the image is revealed. The image results from the contrast between the fair face and the exposed aggregate surface.



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DANISH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY – NUUK



Image courtesy of schmidt hammer lassen architects

Cold, harsh environments are popular locations for correctional facilities... for escape-detering reasons, of course. The Russians have Siberia, and the Danes have Greenland. But the harshness of the natural landscape is where the comparison ends, as the sleek, modern prison soon to be built near Nuuk has little in common with the Siberian labour camps of yore. (We say "of yore" because we don't wish to get on the wrong side of a certain Mr Putin.) Designing the new 8,000sq m facility for the Danish Ministry of Justice are Viking architectural practices Schmidt Hammer Lassen and Friis & Moltke, together with landscape architects Moller & Gronborg. The project will consist of five low-rise, contour-hugging residential blocks, containing rooms for 76 inmates, as well as work and recreation facilities, a lounge for visitors, and a common area with panoramic views of the rugged, forbidding countryside.

MUSEUM OF THE HUMAN BODY – MONTPELLIER



Danish architects Bjarke Ingels Group is to design a new museum in the south of France. The Museum of the Human Body will host cultural activities, interactive exhibitions, and performances and workshops that explore the human form from artistic, scientific and societal perspectives. The 7,800sq m institution will comprise eight interlocking, organically shaped, single-level volumes. "Like the mixture of two incompatible substances – oil and vinegar – the urban pavement and the park's turf flow together in a mutual embrace, forming terraced pockets overlooking the park and elevating islands of nature above the city," says Bjarke Ingels. "A series of seemingly singular pavilions that weave together to form a unified institution – like individual fingers united together in a mutual grip." The museum will have roof gardens and transparent facades. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2016, with the museum opening its doors to the public two years thereafter.

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ROSEWOOD SANYA AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCE FORUM – HAINAN



China's southernmost resort island is to get a new hotel-and-convention complex. The centrepiece of the seaside development, designed by Chicago architects Goettsch Partners, will be a 233m-high "lighthouse" tower comprising a 229-room Rosewood hotel across the first 45 floors, and 500 serviced apartments occupying the upper levels. Atop the tower will be clubhouse amenities for residents of the serviced apartments. All hotel rooms will be east-facing, with private terraces and ocean views. Adjacent to the tower will be a five-storey, 28,000sq m convention centre containing a 3,000sq m exhibition hall, a 1,500sq m ballroom and a rooftop garden. The site will also accommodate 62 "corporate villas". First-phase completion is scheduled for 2015, with the hotel opening a couple of years later.

V BY CROWN – SYDNEY

Jointly designed by homegrown practices Allen Jack and Cottier Architects and Koichi Takada Architects, V by Crown will be a 29-storey residential building comprising 519 luxury apartments and resort-style facilities such as a pool, gym, conference facilities, a music room, mini-theatre and library. The project, by Sydney developers Crown International Holdings Group, is located in Parramatta, a business district in Australia's largest city. The structure has been elevated at grade by V-shaped piloti so as to preserve the remains of an 1840s-era house buried on the site. Excavated artefacts will be displayed in "a state-of-the-art interpretation centre". "V by Crown looks very much to the future but also celebrates Parramatta's past," says Allen Jack and Cottier Architects design principal Michael Heenan. "It was very important that the design acknowledged the unique heritage of the site." Completion is expected by mid-2016.



HONEYCOMB – NEW PROVIDENCE



Bahamian resort Albany is to get more upmarket accommodation. When completed, The Honeycomb will be the tallest structure in this uber-luxe enclave, which features, among other high-end treats, an Ernie Els-designed golf course, a "state-of-the-art mega-marina", a movie theatre, racquet club, gym, spa, an equestrian centre, water sports facilities, and more fine-dining establishments than you can shake a Platinum Amex card at. Designed by Bjarke Ingels Group, The Honeycomb will have a glass facade, allowing residents to enjoy unrestricted vistas of the marina and the sea beyond. Each unit will have a large hexagonal-shaped balcony deep enough to provide shade from the Caribbean sun, while accommodating a dining area, an outdoor kitchen and a sunken swimming pool. "We were challenged to create one-of-a-kind, luxury residences with breathtaking views and terrace pools," says Bjarke Ingels. "Our honeycomb facade functionally supports the pools, making them sink into the terrace floor, and provides spectacular sight lines while maintaining privacy for each residence. Drawing inspiration from its coastal setting, the hexagonal design evokes the natural geometries you find in certain coral formations or honeycombs."

NEW LIBRARY – NINGBO



Image courtesy of schmidt hammer lassen architects

China's northeastern port is to get a new book repository. Danish architects Schmidt Hammer Lassen will design the city's latest civic building, which will house over two million volumes. At the centre of the 32,000sq m open-plan scheme will be a 28m-high atrium. There will be an 8,000sq m "marketplace" – a kind of indoor piazza – at grade. Popular collections will be stored on the lower floors; historical books in the upper levels. There will be 3,000 study spaces comprising work desks, reading booths and Internet stations. Skylights and a plethora of floor-to-ceiling windows will allow in plenty of natural light, as well as providing views of the surrounding wetlands. The library, which will form part of a new cultural hub, expects to attract up to 8,000 visitors a day, and is scheduled to start lending activities in 2016.



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IN SEARCH OF CONNECTIONS - NEW OFFICE DESIGN

"Work is a necessary evil to be avoided," Mark Twain once said. Whether you are one of the lucky few who either love their jobs or need not work, or one of the many who can't avoid work because they have bills to pay and children to feed, the truth is we spend much of our adult life in the workplace. And the environment in which we work clearly plays a role in determining how we view our jobs, and, to some degree, how productive we are. Little surprise then that despite these being times of fiscal belt-tightening, companies are still prepared to invest in workspace makeovers, believing that the right kind of scheme can be good for business.

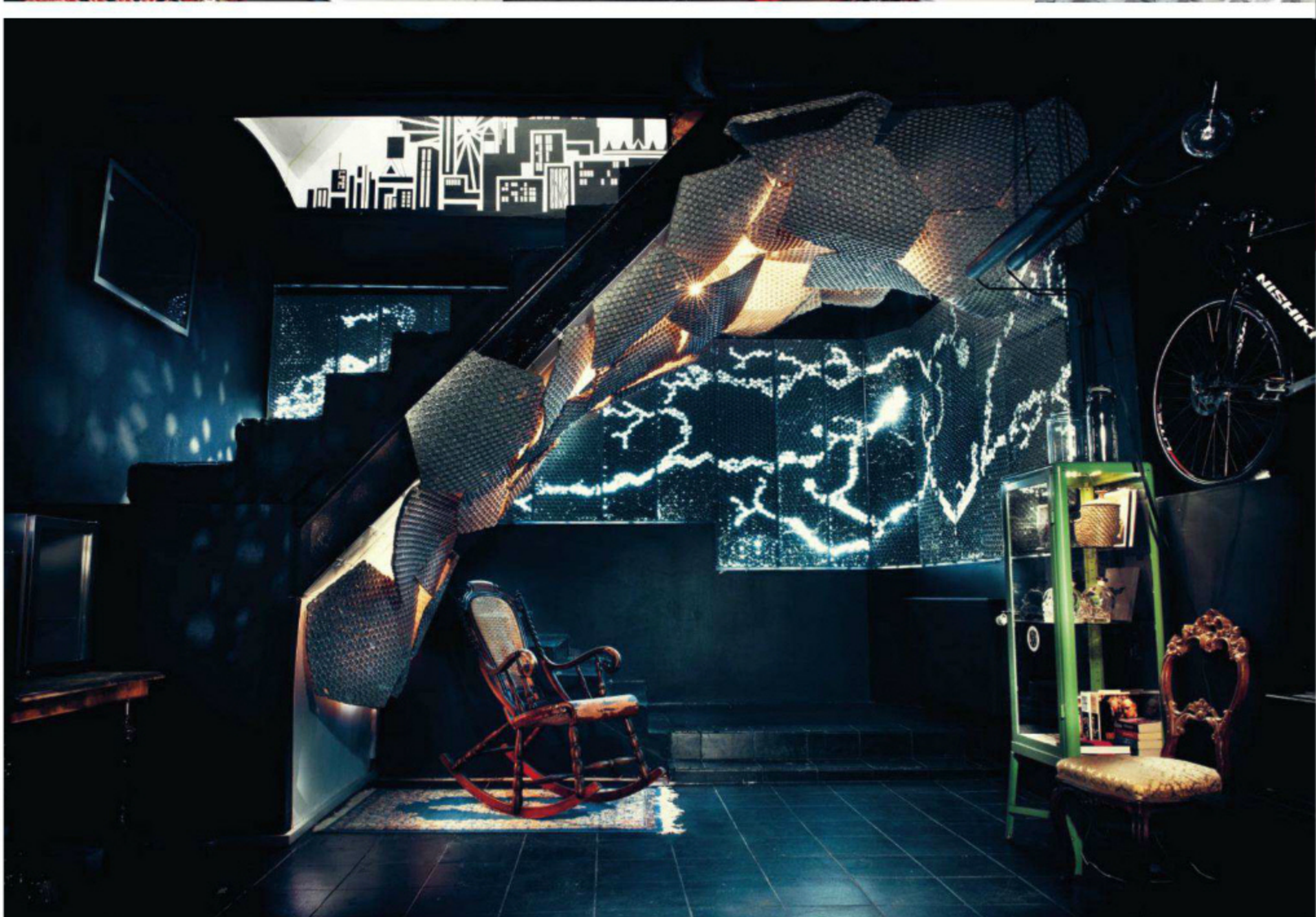
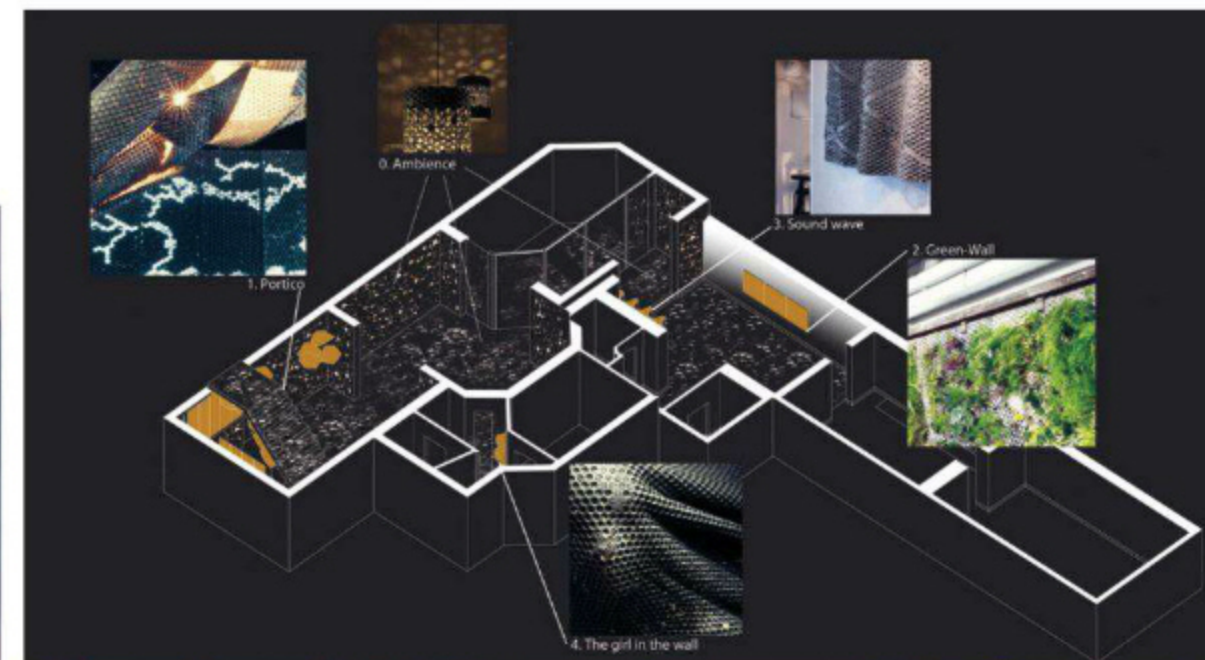
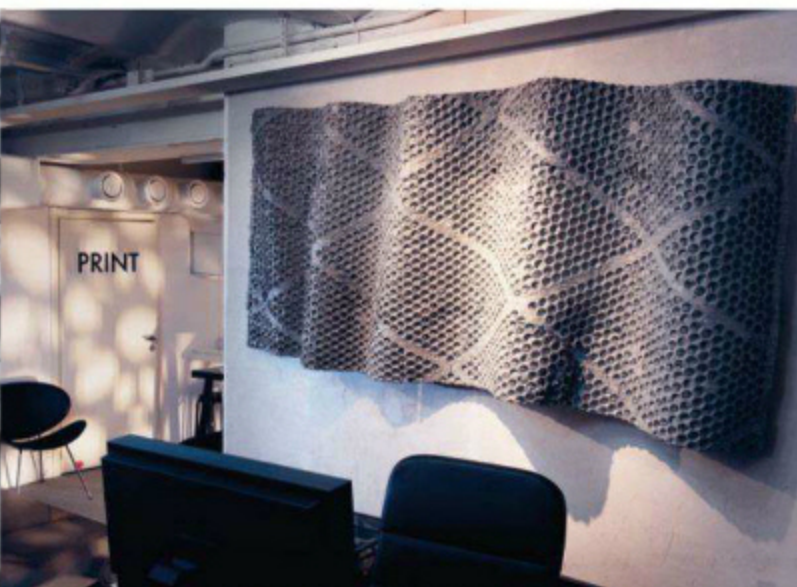
"Opportunity is missed by most people because it dresses in overalls and looks like work," believed Thomas Edison. Well, one office-design trend doing the rounds these days seems predicated on precisely that view, delivering spaces that in no way look like places of work. Indeed, some schemes look like they belong on the glossy pages of a luxury home magazine. Out are the formal layouts, business furniture and staid, sober colours; in are soft furnishings, textiles, pillows (yes, pillows) and vibrant hues. Of course, whether people would be less or more inclined to fritter away the workday updating their Facebook page when occupying a space that looks more like a designer home than an office, remains to be seen.

The rise of the leisure zone is another recent feature of corporate interiors. It used to be that an office was a dour, frill-free place, clouded in cigarette smoke and scented with the musty odours of eau de damn carpet and parfum d'takeaway chow mein (or that's how it was in London, anyway). But times have changed. In California, an office isn't an office unless it has a plethora of onsite recreational facilities – ping pong, table football, mini golf, to name the staples – as well as a resident barista to keep employees refreshed and full of caffeine-powered pep. And if the barista doubles as a shiatsu masseuse, so much the better. At least that's how they roll in Silicon Valley... and Madrid, now that Google has brought its West Coast-chic to the Iberian peninsula. Naturally, companies don't fork out on fun, game-peppered workspaces because they want their staff to have a blast at the office; rather, they do it in the belief that employees will return to their desks rejuvenated and champing at the bit after spending their lunch break imbibing liquid marching powder and whacking a small white sphere. Boost employee morale and you boost productivity.

In a parallel vein, interactivity is the new black. Perhaps because office life has become a little too technology-driven, too impersonal, a silent world where colleagues sitting cheek by jowl communicate with each other in clipped business-speak email messages, the in-vogue buzzphrase in the

client-architect lexicon is "interactive zones." So, goodbye, rigid, inflexible workstations; hello, fluid schemes, where boundaries and partitions have been removed to make open-plan, egalitarian workspaces. At travel accommodation company Airbnb, for example, staff members don't have assigned desks; instead they roam the open plains of the office like techno-savvy Kwai Chang Caines, with laptops instead of bamboo flutes in hand, searching for human connections and shared nuggets of wisdom. "At the core of Airbnb is the connection between people and spaces," says Brian Chesky, the company's co-founder and CEO. "In designing [our new headquarters in San Francisco] we asked ourselves how we could use the space to encourage connections between people. All too often, office design doesn't consider collaboration, creativity or spontaneity. At Airbnb we wanted to create a space that encourages our employees to move around, interact across disciplines, and see movement and activity."

The modern office is all about putting the 'face-to-face' back into communication, be it over the ping pong table, at a communal desk, or in some designated interpersonal zone. No longer is the water cooler the lone hub of employee interaction... and the de facto heart of a company.



STUDIOOVERKET – STOCKHOLM

**TOKI DROBNJAKOVIC, PER SUNDBERG,
NOA ERICSSON, ERIK LISS, AND BUTONG**

Photography by Per Lundstrom

In times of economic hardship, adaptability is a key attribute. Job seekers need to be versatile, able to change, reinvent themselves, in order to grab opportunity; buildings, too. In Stockholm, a seedy basement strip-club-cum-porn-shop has cleaned up its act and started a new life as office space for a chic design collective. The erstwhile den of iniquity, formerly named Blue Star and currently going by the moniker Studiooverket, is now a quirky subterranean world of contrasting zones, artistic displays, pockmarked concrete and green walls. "Studiooverket is a shared co-working space where [only] strictly creative industries are permitted as members," says the Swedish firm. "We offer entrepreneurs, startups, small businesses and consultants a space to work from. We designed the entire office to provide creative inspiration to all [the] people we currently house."

The scheme has a bit of everything. It has industrial

design features, with exposed pipes and ducts, black tiled floors, and plenty of concrete. It has artistic touches: there is a wall display called Girl in the Wall – a creation by film producer Erik Liss. And it has an abundance of areas that are all quite different from each other. There is a purely white room inside a glass box; there is an alcove with vintage seats and an antique cabinet, with arty photos on the walls and a red patterned rug on the floor; there is a "vertical garden" with plants growing through a thin layer of wall-mounted "air bubble" concrete; and then, amid all this psychedelic tomfoolery, there is a recording suite that's business-like in the conventional sense, furnished with sober executive-lounge furniture.

Good lighting is perhaps not crucial for a strip club, where punters might appreciate a little anonymity, but designers like to be able to see what they are doing. "Since we are underground, [artificial] light is

very important," says Studiooverket. "We tried to incorporate good lighting in every design aspect of the office. We use the same spectrum of light as the sun provides. This gives a relaxed and very comfortable working environment." Large shaded lamps dangle from, and precision spotlights are fixed to, industrial-design ceilings throughout the studio.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the scheme is its predominant material, specially created by Swedish concrete producer Butong using a "sealed-air bubble" casting process that leaves the stuff looking like the inside of an Aero chocolate bar. The concrete covers some wall sections like a giant honeycomb; it has even been used to make shades for the lamps that hang from the studio's low ceilings. "When walking downstairs into a basement you might find yourself feeling a bit uncomfortable," says Studiooverket. "Instead of trying to remove this feeling, we wanted to encourage it and turn it into a positive and cool thing." Cool, for sure, and maybe retaining a touch of strip-club edge. Not that we'd know anything about the latter.

TOLLESON CORPORATE OFFICE – SAN FRANCISCO

HUNTSMAN ARCHITECTURAL GROUP

Photography by David Wakely

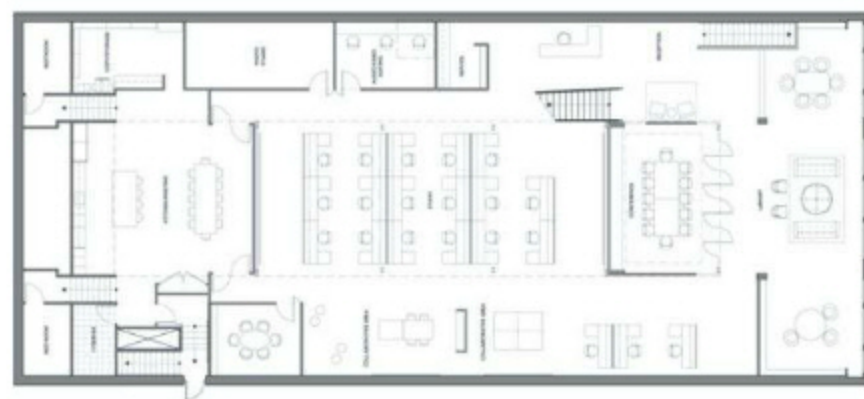
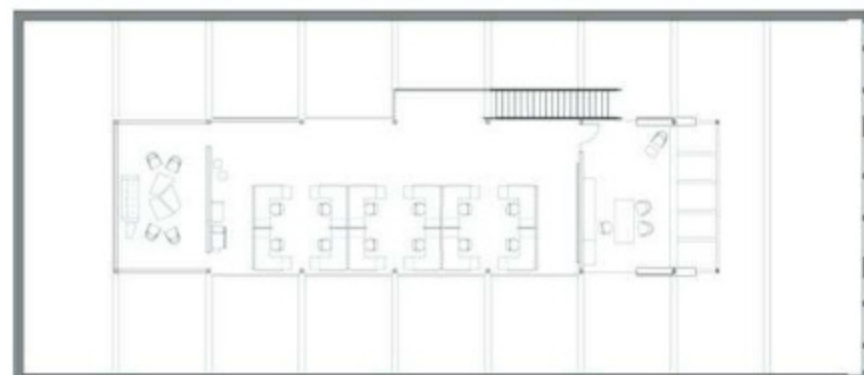
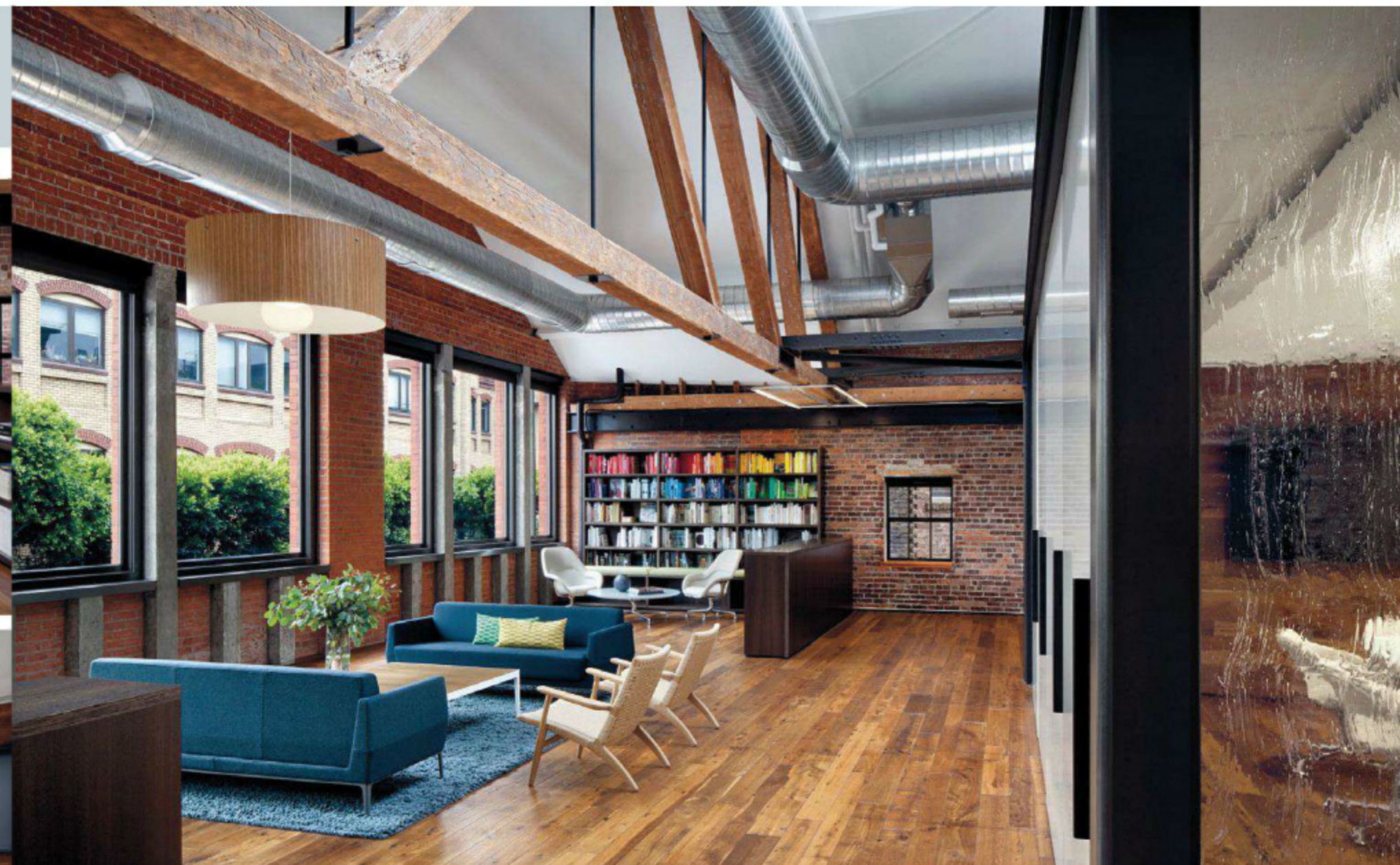
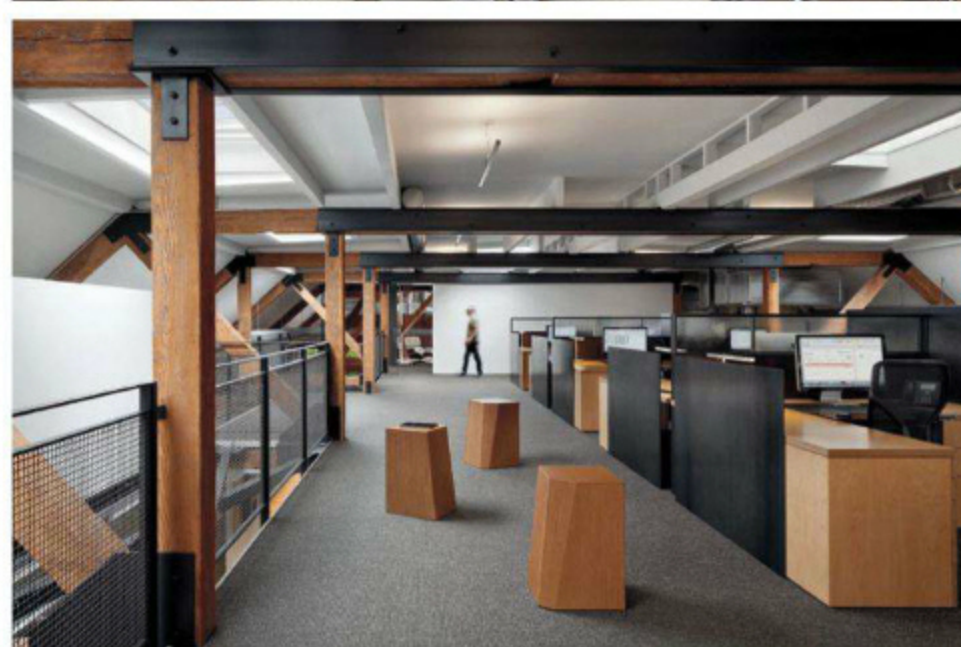
On San Francisco's Barbary Coast an early twentieth-century warehouse, which more recently saw use as a flooring company showroom, has been turned into a studio for creative agency Tolleson. Huntsman Architectural Group, together with Design Workshops and the building owners Birmingham Development, was tasked with turning the timber-and-masonry structure into Tolleson's new two-level premises.

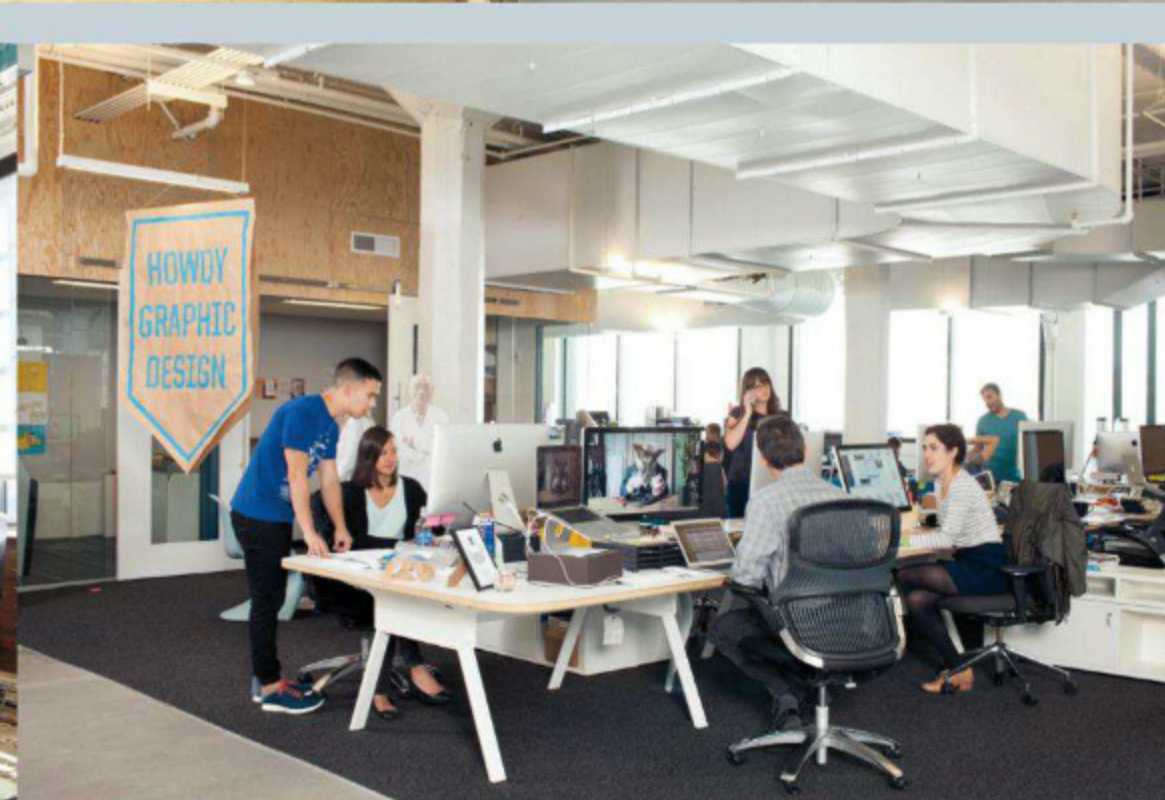
Many of the old building's features – exposed brickwork, wood trusses and floors, skylights – were retained, and integrated into the new scheme. Reclaimed wood, taken from old barns, was used in the construction of the mezzanine level, and to clad the walls of semi-enclosed rooms created in the otherwise open-plan space. New steel beams have been added, providing a contrast to the warm timber of the original infrastructure.

Indeed, the interior is marked by many contrasts. Colourful artworks have been juxtaposed with plain brick and timber backgrounds. In one meeting room, pale wood LCW lounge chairs surround a white oak table, above which hang designer lights with hand-dimpled copper shades. The kitchen, by Design Workshops, features rustic timber cabinets and clean white worktops – a wood-and-white, new-and-old theme runs through this space. Also by Design Workshops is the custom-made reception desk, with its "hot rolled steel" statement facade.

In the 11,000sq ft open-plan space, distinct zones have been established through the placement of colour-coordinated rugs or by using furniture to create a physical barrier: One waiting area, for example, has two blue sofas on a matching blue rug, while a wide waist-high bookcase cordons off the reading 'room'. Located on the mezzanine floor are pale wood workstations divided by frosted glass partitions; also on this level is the president's private office, which overlooks the main conference room below.

The office has a bit of everything. It has open-plan areas, as well as a few private rooms and partitioned workstations. The scheme feels fresh and contemporary, yet respects the architecture of the Barbary Coast area.





AIRBNB HQ – GENSLER SAN FRANCISCO

Photography by Carlos Chavarria, except where stated

In case you haven't heard, Airbnb is an online portal connecting people who are looking for accommodation somewhere in the world with people who have property to rent out. The Internet outfit's new workspace in San Francisco is housed in a 1917 building that was formerly a manufacturing facility. Architectural practice Gensler was given the task of converting the old edifice into Airbnb's new headquarters.

The brief was "to create a home for Airbnb that would express the company's unique culture, values and brand." Lisa Bottom, who led the Gensler team, embedded herself in Airbnb for a couple of months, in order to better understand the firm's needs. "The entire team, including myself, was able to spend hours sketching ideas along with [Airbnb founders] Brian [Chesky] and Joe [Gebbia]," says Bottom. "As a result, what was built is the dreamscape of the founders. For us, this is immensely gratifying."

The open-plan scheme has been designed to provide

flexible workspaces, allowing workers the freedom to choose where they want to work. There are no private offices, even for the firm's founders; instead there are "collaboration zones," creating a kind of fluid, egalitarian workplace. There are also various discrete places where a wandering employee can lay down his or her laptop for a spell of refined productivity. There are functional project rooms – bright, open-plan spaces with skylights and exposed ductwork; there's a library room for "quiet focus work"; and there are rooms named after places.

"One exceptional aspect of the new space is the ability to experience travel without leaving the building," says Airbnb's Chesky. "We asked ourselves, 'How can we create the sense of travel in an office?' Simply having photos of listings and far-off places was not enough. It is not just about recalling the memories, but about feeling that you're there. We replicated some of the most unique places at Airbnb to create this feeling. Each room, from Milan to Reykjavik, Bali to Amsterdam, not only celebrates our global community, but also lets everyone who visits

them truly experience a different place."

Even the toilets have been given a sense of adventure. In the men's water closet a mountain scene has been painted onto one of the walls, in front of which is a display comprising a sculpture of a grizzly bear, a pair of hiking boots and some fishing gear. The top of the building houses the "All Hands Space," which comprises a full-service kitchen, a pantry and a large dining room with views of the Frisco skyline. One dining room wall has been festooned with graphics and illustrations by New York-based artist Timothy Goodman.

The dominant feature of the office's cavernous atrium is the Versa Wall. Installed by GSKy Plant Systems, a 1,226sq ft green wall snakes geometrically up one elevation. Its pattern consists of "flowing curvilinear lines," which GSKy director of horticultural designs Debbie Kotalic used an array of potted plants to create. "The design inspiration came from the famous San Francisco hills that make up the city's urban landscape, [creating] an iconic feature

that truly captures the spirit of San Francisco," says Kotalic. "I'm very proud of how the living wall turned out. I feel as though we came up with a well-balanced union of nature, art and history." The wall also performs an air-purifying role by removing carbon dioxide from the air and attracting dust particles. Adds GSKy Plant Systems president Chad Sichello: "As we spend less time outdoors, we become more disconnected from the natural world that is essential for our emotional, physical, and mental well-being. A green wall is a great example of bringing nature back into our lives, as well as [bringing] life and harmony to human-made structures."

As you might expect from a Californian IT firm, the Airbnb headquarters is a fresh and humanistic space, which, since we spend a fair chunk of our lives in offices, is obviously no bad thing. "A lot of companies under-invest in their office space, and therefore under-invest in their employees and their growth," says Chesky. "We believe that if our team is working in an inspirational and creative space, they will be inspired to create a better product and service for our hosts and guests." Said the gander to the goose: "What's good for the employee is good for the employer..."



Photography by Leslie Williamson

GOOGLE – MADRID OFFICE

JUMP STUDIOS

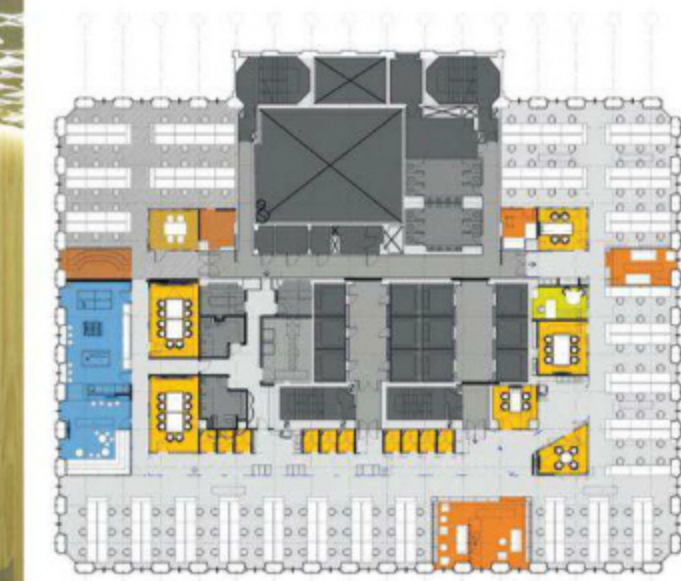
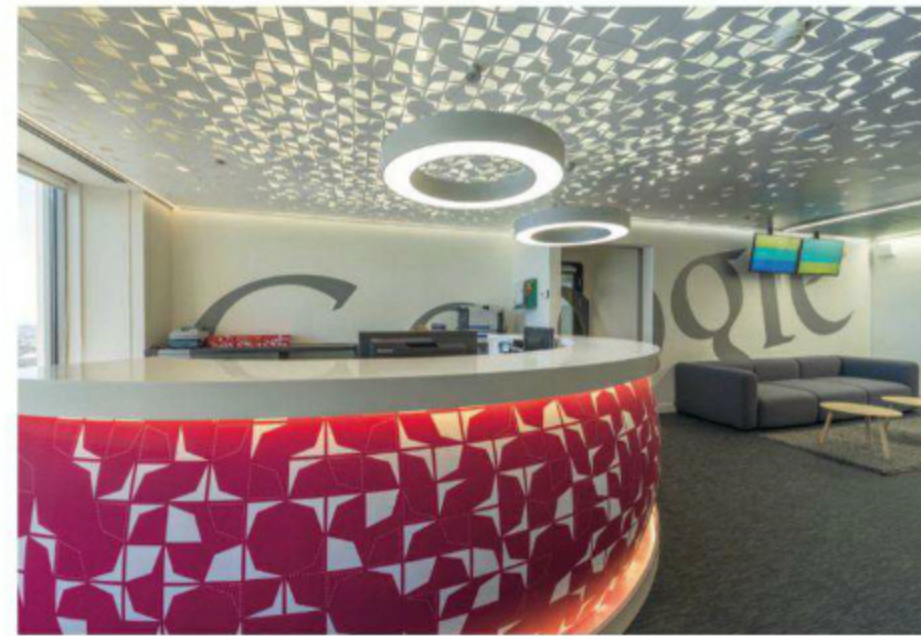
Photography by Daniel Malhao

Search engine giant Google is known for its colourful, informal offices, exemplified by its flagship headquarters in California. The firm's new office in the Spanish capital is no exception. The two-level space, located in the Minoru Yamasaki-designed Torre Picasso tower, was fitted out by London practice Jump Studios.

On the lower floor is a reception area, where the walls, ceiling and reception desk are decorated with graphic patterns. The word 'Google', so ubiquitous that it has become a verb in the Oxford English dictionary, is emblazoned across one wall in a large font. Also on this level are a lecture theatre holding rows of lime green chairs and featuring walls covered with soft panels in blue and shades of green; a staff canteen with comfy orange-and-yellow leather dining booths; and a kitchen separated from dining areas by a curved cork-clad storage unit with built-in shelves and cabinets. The colour scheme in the entire office is based on Google's brand colours.

The main workspace is on the floor above. Here, timber arches, a design element reminiscent of traditional Spanish architecture, are used to frame entrances to meeting rooms, as well as to partition common work areas from private cubicles. These arches, which somehow seem playful, cartoonish even, also frame little geek-chic alcoves that house pale wood bookcases and desks, over which hang pendant lights. Elsewhere, a stack of cubes in shades of blue cordons off a workstation from a less formal meeting area. Much of the material used was sustainably sourced, helping garner the project its LEED Gold rating.

"The office spaces [...] boast a higher degree of flexibility and functionality, which fulfil the aspirations of the client, who wanted a unique and friendly workplace with local character," says a Jump Studios spokesman. And because the client was Google, the designers needed to accommodate trademark Silicon-Valley fun zones, such as a games room, a massage room, hammock area, shower facilities, and a ping pong table. These all combine to create a bright, fun workspace with an easy charm. Either the Google top brass really care about the well-being of their staff, or they work them so hard that their employees would all go nuts without a massage here and forty winks in the hammock there. Whichever it is, working at a Google office certainly comes with an upside... or two.



IN SEARCH OF CONNECTIONS - NEW OFFICE DESIGN

"Work is a necessary evil to be avoided," Mark Twain once said. Whether you are one of the lucky few who either love their jobs or need not work, or one of the many who can't avoid work because they have bills to pay and children to feed, the truth is we spend much of our adult life in the workplace. And the environment in which we work clearly plays a role in determining how we view our jobs, and, to some degree, how productive we are. Little surprise then that despite these being times of fiscal belt-tightening, companies are still prepared to invest in workspace makeovers, believing that the right kind of scheme can be good for business.

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it dresses in overalls and looks like work," believed Thomas Edison. Well, one office-design trend doing the rounds these days seems predicated on precisely that view, delivering spaces that in no way look like places of work. Indeed, some schemes look like they belong on the glossy pages of a luxury home magazine. Out are the formal layouts, business furniture and staid, sober colours; in are soft furnishings, textiles, pillows (yes, pillows) and vibrant hues. Of course, whether people would be less or more inclined to fritter away the workday updating their Facebook page when occupying a space that looks more like a designer home than an office, remains to be seen.

The rise of the leisure zone is another recent feature of corporate interiors. It used to be that an office was a dour, frill-free place, clouded in cigarette smoke and scented with the musty odours of eau de damn carpet and parfum d'takeaway chow mein (or that's how it was in London, anyway). But times have changed. In California, an office isn't an office unless it has a plethora of onsite recreational facilities – ping pong, table football, mini golf, to name the staples – as well as a resident barista to keep employees refreshed and full of caffeine-powered pep. And if the barista doubles as a shiatsu masseuse, so much the better. At least that's how they roll in Silicon Valley... and Madrid, now that Google has brought its West Coast-chic to the Iberian peninsula. Naturally, companies don't fork out on fun, game-peppered workspaces because they want their staff to have a blast at the office; rather, they do it in the belief that employees will return to their desks rejuvenated and champing at the bit after spending their lunch break imbibing liquid marching powder and whacking a small white sphere. Boost employee morale and you boost productivity.

In a parallel vein, interactivity is the new black. Perhaps because office life has become a little too technology-driven, too impersonal, a silent world where colleagues sitting cheek by jowl communicate with each other in clipped business-speak email messages, the in-vogue buzzphrase in the

client-architect lexicon is "interactive zones." So, goodbye, rigid, inflexible workstations; hello, fluid schemes, where boundaries and partitions have been removed to make open-plan, egalitarian workspaces. At travel accommodation company Airbnb, for example, staff members don't have assigned desks; instead they roam the open plains of the office like techno-savvy Kwai Chang Caines, with laptops instead of bamboo flutes in hand, searching for human connections and shared nuggets of wisdom. "At the core of Airbnb is the connection between people and spaces," says Brian Chesky, the company's co-founder and CEO. "In designing [our new headquarters in San Francisco] we asked ourselves how we could use the space to encourage connections between people. All too often, office design doesn't consider collaboration, creativity or spontaneity. At Airbnb we wanted to create a space that encourages our employees to move around, interact across disciplines, and see movement and activity."

The modern office is all about putting the 'face-to-face' back into communication, be it over the ping pong table, at a communal desk, or in some designated interpersonal zone. No longer is the water cooler the lone hub of employee interaction... and the de facto heart of a company.

ASOS HQ – LONDON

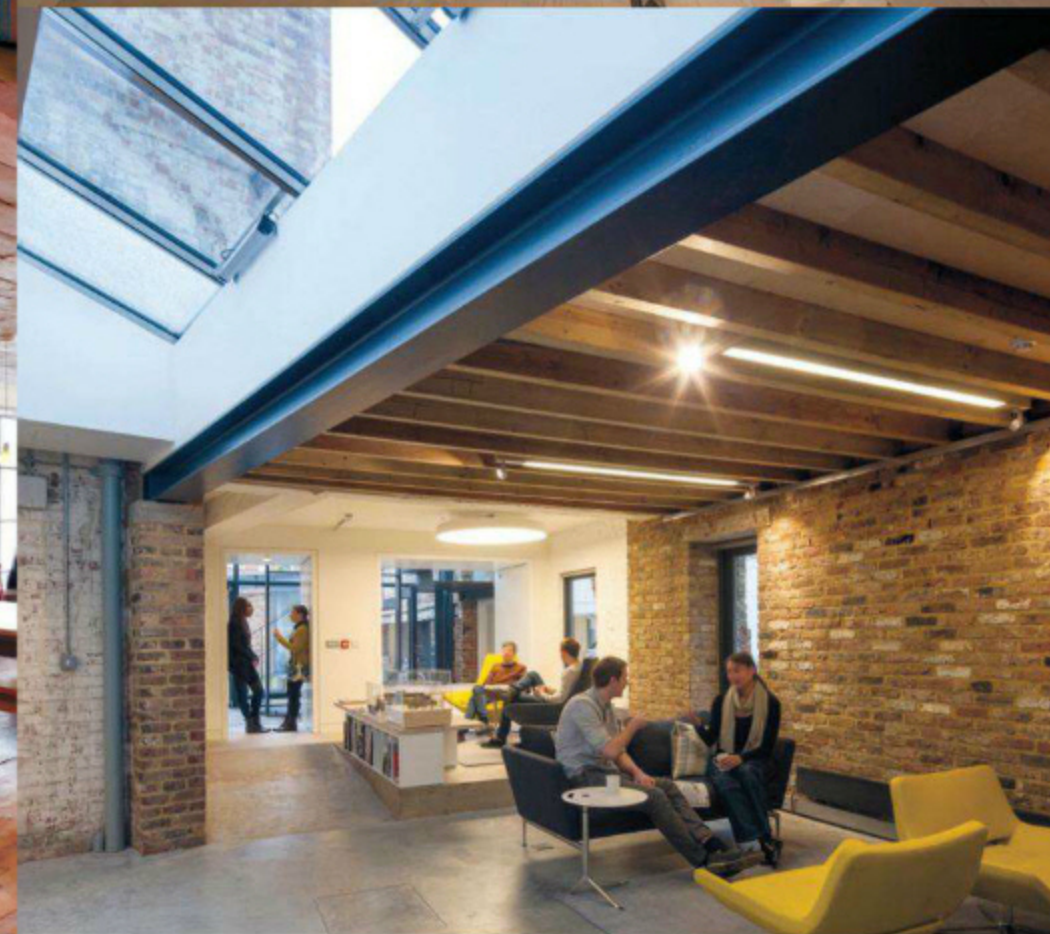
MOREYSMITH

Photography by Jamie Smith

Basically defining the category called 'It's not fair these people get to work there (and I don't)' is this new headquarters for online fashion purveyor ASOS, in the British capital's Greater London House, by MoreySmith. Involving an intensive, 100,000sq ft refurbishment and a 100% enlargement of the company's previous digs, the new space is like a wishlist come true of the kinds of amenities and visual pleasures currently demanded by hip, youngish personnel in a range of businesses. We've all seen samples aplenty of new media-, fashion-, arts-oriented workplaces in recent years, and many of them follow by-now-established trends, with funky furniture groupings, bright colour splashes, slide tubes, espresso bars and so on. Although playful, 'creative' workplaces still present an attractive model, it's all become rather repetitive.

So to see one done particularly well is a pleasure, and ASOS sure beats working at a bank. The programme includes a space geared toward events that can morph to accommodate various uses, a press and showcase area, meeting rooms themed on fashion ideas, ample open-plan office areas, and the incorporation of a 'tour route' that guides visitors along the process of garment-making, from inception to finished artefact. MoreySmith cut new staircases to link the three levels, through the centre of the office, and here located the reception area, a cafe and meeting rooms. This zone acts as a central hub for the company's 1,200 staff, and serves as an ideal breakout, open-plan overflow workplace as well.

The cleverness of the design is in the subtle way the designers linked it to ASOS' purpose, but avoided hitting you over the head with it. Fashion is a volatile, high-octane world of necessarily constant change; architecture isn't. There are quiet inclusions of colour and textures, and varied materials and tones are integrated into the wall or floor surfaces, furniture and lighting, without ever trying too hard to grab attention. By turning down the volume a tad, MoreySmith has managed to bring unity to diverse components... sort of what good clothing does.



BENNETTS ASSOCIATES – LONDON

BENNETTS ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS

Photography by Peter Cook or Morley von Sternberg, as noted

This firm has been situated on its Clerkenwell site for a decade, but finally got hold of an adjacent restaurant to expand with a small new studio space for working, meeting, model-making, crits and events. Labelled 326 Downstairs, after the former restaurant's name, the space slips into a key circulation spot in the overall plan of the office, helping to link other workspaces to its sides. Some of the rustic character of the existing masonry structure is kept visible in the new design, to which has been added contemporary soft furniture and some sexy new detailing, while skylights deliver abundant natural light.

The original uses of the various buildings forming Bennetts' offices included printworks and an 18th-century barn. Flanked by Georgian and Victorian terrace houses, the site is irregular and encompasses an inner courtyard in cobblestones. Over time, and with considerable care, the different structures have been knitted together into a spatially eclectic 'village' inhabited by the architects, and where gaps existed – or an edifice couldn't be saved – small, new, modern insertions have been eased into the mix, like pavilions. As the firm undertakes many commissions involving regenerative reuse, the office is like a test or showcase for both staff and potential clients. Energy efficiency and sustainability, another company interest, is also demonstrated here first-hand. Most of all, the offices prove that being architectural good neighbours is a viable, preferable approach to urban architecture.

Within the spaces, an overall casualness pervades, with intriguing memories of the hotchpotch of former enclosures constantly present. Mismatched bits of brick or stone masonry twist and turn, forming welcoming nooks to meet in, pin up drawings, or mount digital displays. The variety in lighting, from natural to artificial, helps immensely to produce spots one wants to nestle in to work or think.

This was a 'knitting' project, completed (for now) patiently over many years, and probably still in evolution. Architectural lessons for its staff are replete here, and astute clients can learn, too. One can do big, bold and brilliant, or one can do things quietly, carefully, consummately.

COTTRELL HOUSE – WEMBLEY CITY, UK

MEANWHILE SPACE

Photography by Dosfotos

In the shadow of the giant Wembley Stadium sits this cross between entrepreneurial business concept and social nonprofit exercise. Built by volunteers in exchange for usage time, this former retail space has been converted into an affordable work centre where individuals or startups can rent desk space to get their ideas off the ground. There is a small cafe (naturally), eight fixed desks that function like work pods, and a large meeting table designed in the round shape of Wembley Stadium itself, just in case anyone forgot where they were.

In contrast to the many large-scale structures nearby, Cottrell House is an intimate exception, and it's easy to imagine actual work being done here. The cleverly designed desks, offering layers of semi-privacy, can also be moved outdoors to the plaza area in front during game days or festivals, becoming instant stalls from which to propagandise or sell. Materials were kept simple and low-cost/low-maintenance, as befits their multivariant usage – things needed to stay sturdy and straightforward. The ample daylight pouring through the glazed front walls is welcome, and the overall scale of the place – small – helps retain an air of busy activity, which is always positive for work environments. Nothing radical here; just very useful space, elemental amenities, and the sense that things can get done.



PDM INTERNATIONAL – SYDNEY OFFICE

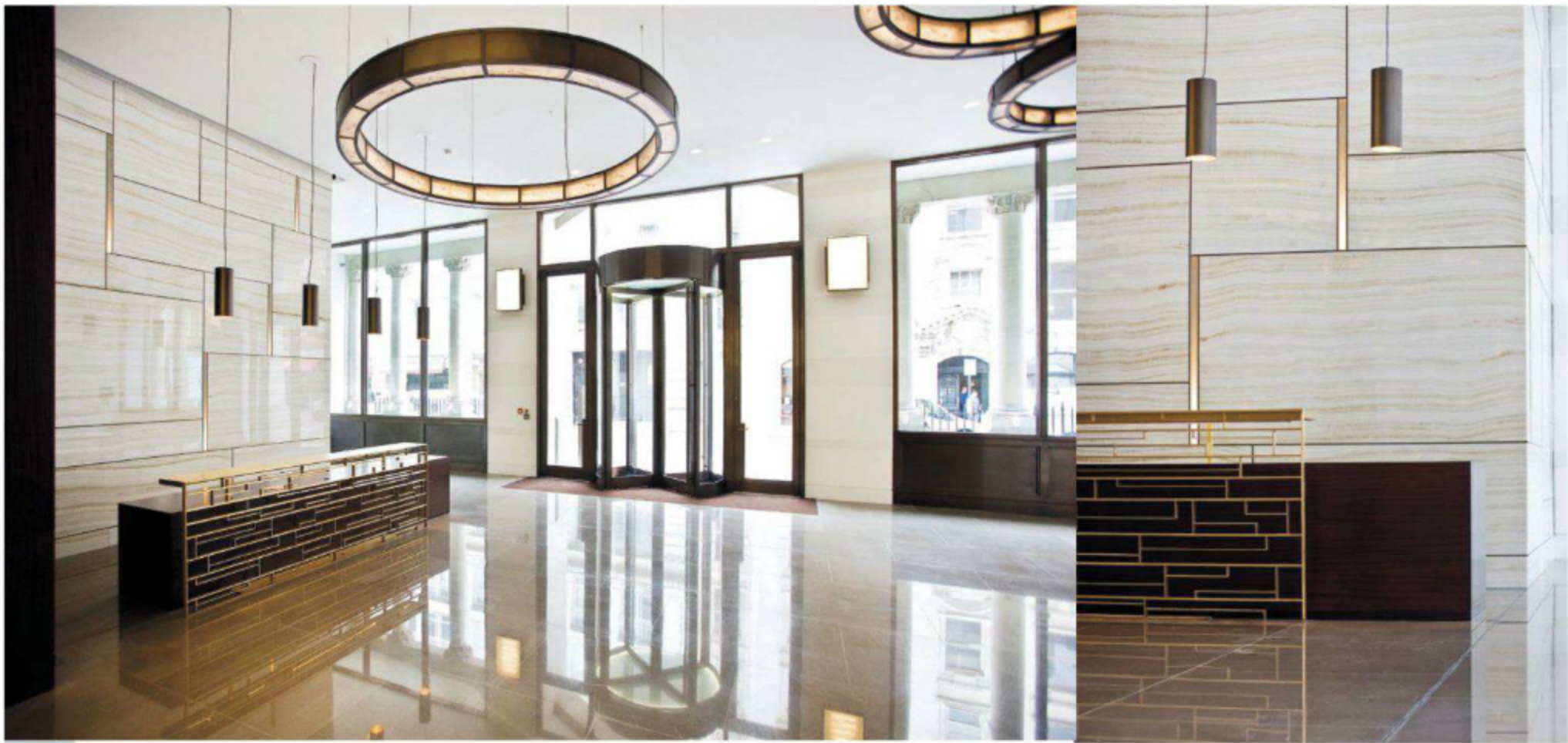
PDM INTERNATIONAL

Photography by Adam Crews Panoramic Imagery

This design firm recently moved its Sydney base into a heritage building in the heart of the city on Kent Street. The formerly industrial space retains some of its historical character, with salvaged timber, steel-mullioned windows and open planning. The atmosphere is casual and cosy, with an almost domestic personality. Contemporary open workstations fit nicely into the daylit spaces, with planters running along them in a friendly touch. Large murals of yesteryear are included in a nod to the past, and vintage lighting hangs over the desks and meeting tables. Other materials, including copper and velvet, round out the nostalgic picture. Feature furniture pieces in leather, oak and steel tilt things toward industrial chic, while good old-fashioned bookshelves or a display of framed photographs make certain no one mistakes the place for corporate.

The interior is definitely geared to its employees, with an explicit acknowledgement that, nowadays, staff retention depends on staff contentment. And since designers tend to spend a lot of time where they work, that fact is even more crucial. PDM Sydney is something like a personal loft space, where it just so happens a group of creative types show up every day.





WIMPOLE STREET LOBBY – LONDON

RIENTS BRUINSMA

In business, as in life generally (we are told), first impressions are paramount. Therefore one could argue that the reception zone of a corporate office space is possibly even more vital to its success than the boardroom or water cooler area. The titans who breathe the rarefied air of the highflying world of top corporate affairs are quite familiar with posh environments, unsurpassed service, and getting what they want, as and when they want it. This reception area in the West End of London (apparently, this year's HQ for stellar office interiors) was redesigned by interiors architect Rients Bruinsma, who had previously worked on a private residential apartment for the same client. Pleased with what he'd done there, the gentleman hired Bruinsma again to upgrade his company's street-level reception lobby. A small job, you say? Only in physical size.

This area of London, once home to affluent private residences, is now thoroughly corporate, but the architecture retains the unique, posh grandeur of great London domestic traditions. The lobby had to speak "success" but didn't need to shout it, and bling was not on the wishlist. It is a space virtually entirely clad in handmade details and bespoke materials, which include marble, polished wood veneers, onyx and bronze. Light fixtures were custom-designed and handcrafted, lift doors are compositions in metal, and the copious marble and onyx used for the wall panels were personally selected by Bruinsma himself, so that the veining would match at the joints and turn the corners in alignment.

A half-height screen in polished brass sits in front of the mahogany reception desk, under the glow cast from the round rock-crystal-and-LED chandeliers hanging above. The lift wall glows as an onyx lantern near the deepest part of the space, away from the street. It acts as a seductive beacon promising access to the power chambers upstairs. There is a distinct absence of corporate logos or otherwise distracting signage; when you've made it, you know the way.

The whole nudges close to sweetness without going over the line. While leaving no doubt that this is the introductory space of a very successful enterprise, it holds together and sets a mood, rather than making a statement. The warmer tones, such as in the gold brass or the backlit onyx, are checked by cooler tones and the sparer sections of materials, so that they can stand out without effort. The message of this reception space is conveyed, un-loud and clear.



SPENCER OGDEN – HONG KONG

BONITA SPENCER-PERCIVAL

Hong Kong may be the business capital of Asia (yes, Shanghai and Singapore, it's still true), but it's not generally a feast of great office environments. For all the deal-signing and money-making that takes place here every day, most of its famously diligent workforce go about their tasks in spaces less inspiring than your average hospital cafeteria. So when Spencer Ogden went about opening its local outpost, it decided to be anti-contextual and not do what the locals do, but what it itself had done elsewhere, in cities like London, Houston and Dubai: create a fun, casual space with a startup feel to it.

Interiors designer Bonita Spencer-Percival had designed a number of the company's other offices (she is married to the CEO), bringing her unusual background experience in the art and entertainment worlds to the task. Although the company is focussed on recruitment for the oil and gas industries – hardly what one assumes is a trendy field – its offices have helped it gain a reputation as a cool, collaborative, non-hierarchical place to be employed in. The designed result is as intentionally eclectic as can be, with everything from retro Chinese furniture and artwork to Astroturf, meeting rooms right out of a London gentlemen's club (with fireplace, no less) to a staff canteen nodding to fifties mid-America.

Private offices are nowhere to be seen – management shares large work surfaces with lowly peons – and bright daylight bathes everything. Street signs, chalkboards and industrial light fixtures complement cheeky references to corporate brands (not the firm's clients, though) and a general mood of cheery informality hides the more serious sides of the actual work going on here, no doubt to the pleasure of staff. If you wandered into the space by accident, without a clue what this company did, you'd hardly guess it was involved with oil, gas, energy, combustibles and commodities... you'd wager instead on media, digital gaming, or maybe fashion. It surely is a measure of our current times, that certain sectors of the corporate planet prefer to break type, and act like other ones. How long till we find an online retailer or adolescent mobile app creator with offices that look like 1950s IBM?



OIL+GAS
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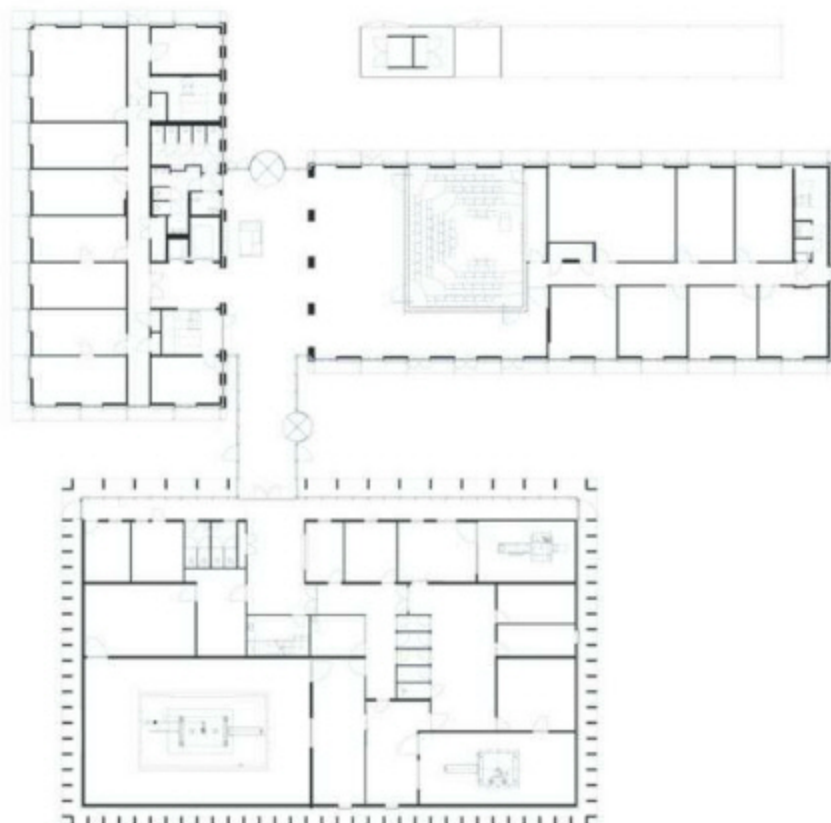
Brains Unlimited, Maastricht University Maastricht, The Netherlands Wiegerinck architectuur stedenbouw

Photography by Leon Abraas, except where stated



Photography by Kim Zwarts

Kim Zwarts



With the intent of broadening its name, reputation and capabilities in the area of brain science, the Cognitive Neuroscience department of Maastricht University decided in 2008 to establish this facility, dubbed Brains Unlimited. The centre would accommodate work by scientists, clinicians, even entrepreneurs, in a collaborative, mutually informative setting under one roof. Research into brain science could be conducted, evaluated and monetised, in a fairly direct routing that could streamline the process and potentially benefit companies, the university, and humankind. Potential progress might affect the understanding and treatment of such diseases as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, epilepsy, schizophrenia and multiple sclerosis. Research

space would share the centre with startup companies geared toward commercialising research results. These latter could rent space right inside the building, share common services and spaces, and mingle with the 'brains' behind the medical side of things. The programme included laboratories, educational auditoria and classrooms, offices and support space. Brains Unlimited would also house an fMRI, an ultra-powerful brain scanner at the cutting edge of the field – and one of only four in the world. Overlap between foundational research and the medical industry is fundamental to the project, so the architecture had to embody it, while not interfering with the actual requirements of the former.

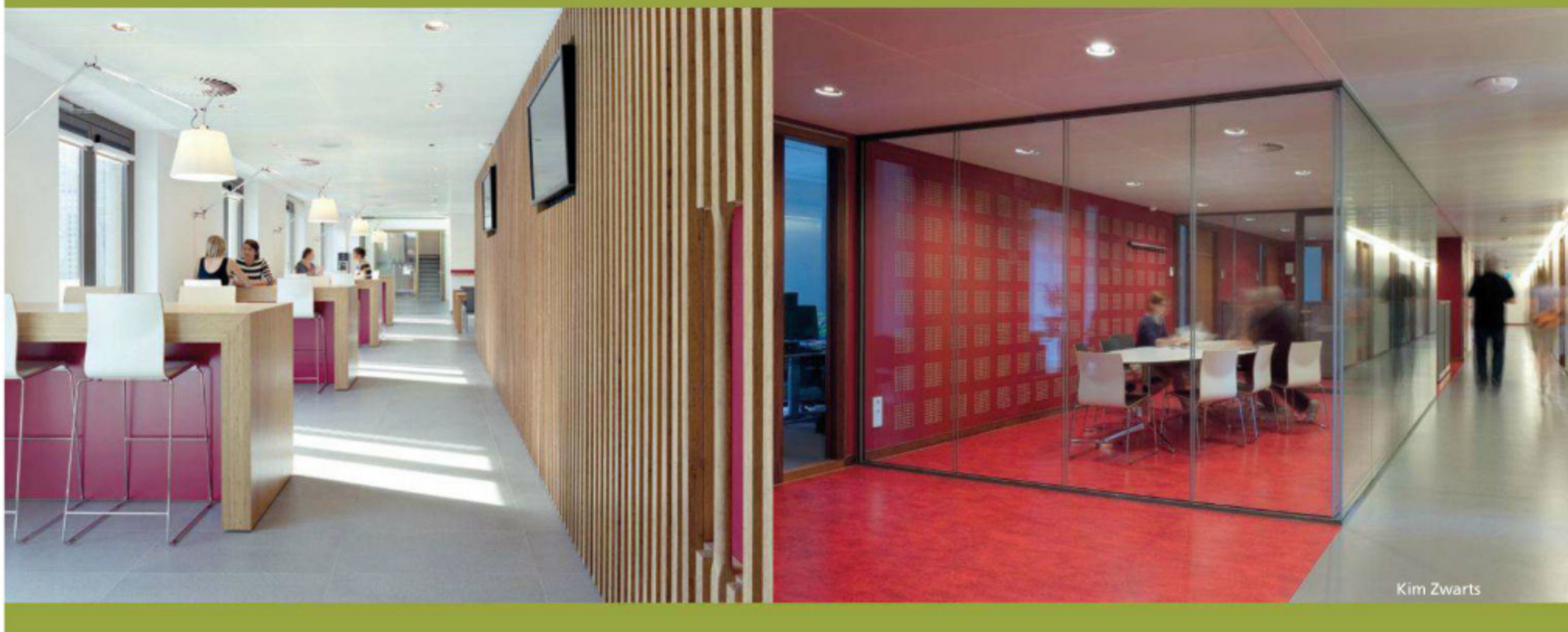


Kim Zwarts



As part of a 'campus' that will grow in future to include other facilities with different programmes, the building had to be both connected and separate, thanks to the nature of its own internal purpose. Thus the parti establishes three connected, low-rise boxes of slightly different heights, sharing a similar facade strategy of gridiron linearity, not unlike the work of David Chipperfield elsewhere. It is rationalist, crisply handsome, and suggests an almost corporate efficiency – in good proportions. Vertical fins shade inset closure walls that are largely glazed. It could be a corporate HQ or a small regional art museum. There is a vague pinwheel siting of the three boxes, which are linked by a central atrium space. The primary building material is prefabricated concrete, with infill panels in enamelled glass or oiled Accoya wood. These infill panels help differentiate the three blocks in a 'similar but different' method, but more importantly, do much to humanise the otherwise clinical regularity of the facades. Random (or obscure?) patterns are suggested by the relationship of the opaque panels with the glass openings, both set back from the vertical concrete frames. This strategy has been used many other times and places, but here it is controlled quite expertly, to pleasing visual effect.

The interiors are what might be expected: efficient, bright, inviting but not over-designed. It is made consistently obvious this is a place in which to get on with important work, not gawk at clever architecture. As the venture is a functional experiment, it is a bit early to know whether Brains Unlimited has found medical or commercial success. But the brains occupying and using it at least have a strong, positive environment in which to search.



Kim Zwarts

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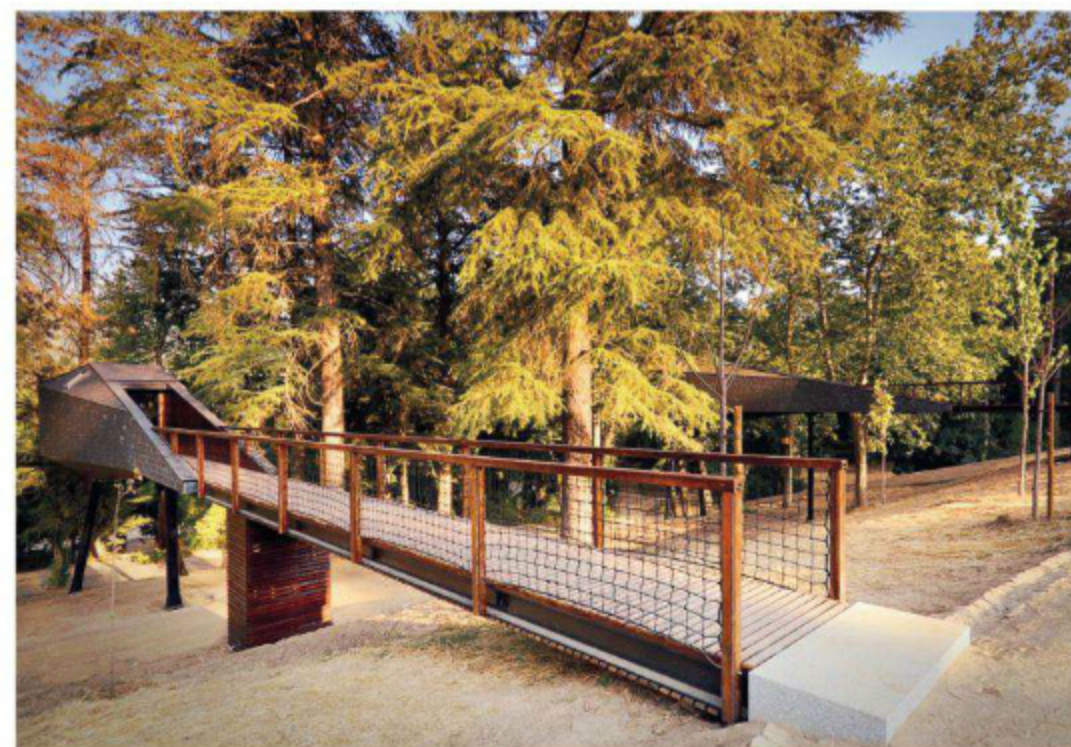
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SLINKY

Tree Snake Houses

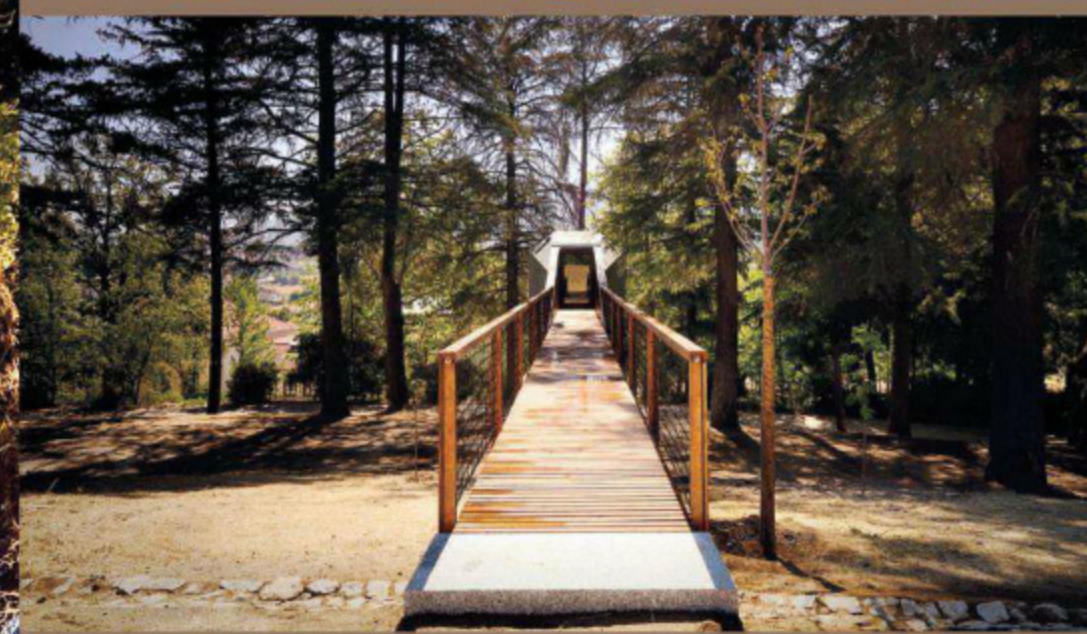
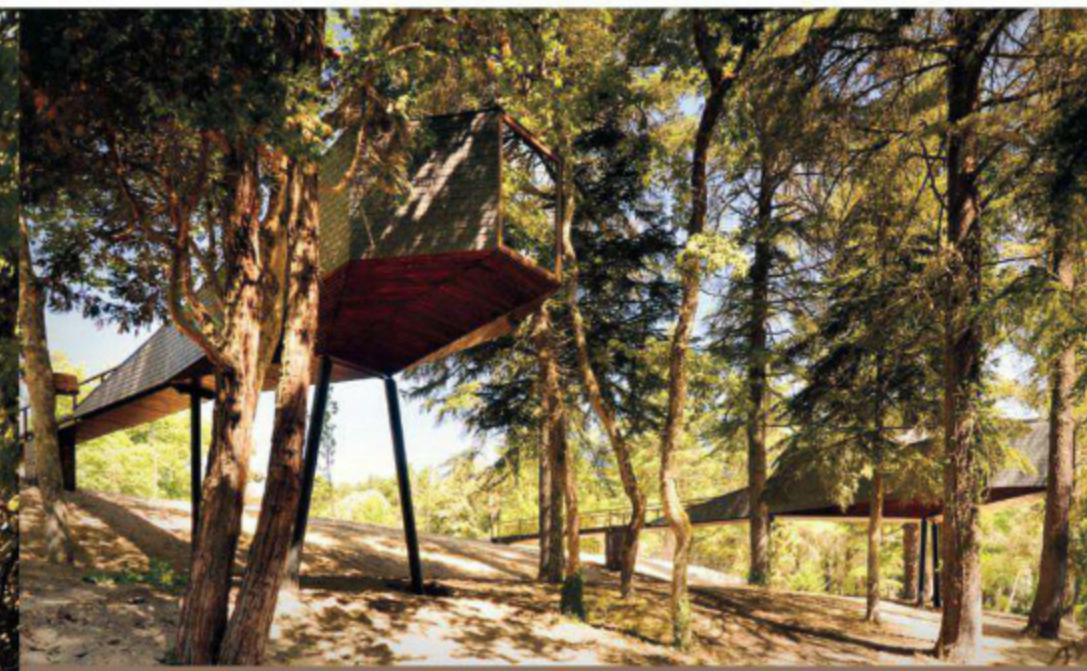
Luis Rebelo de Andrade & Tiago Rebelo de Andrade

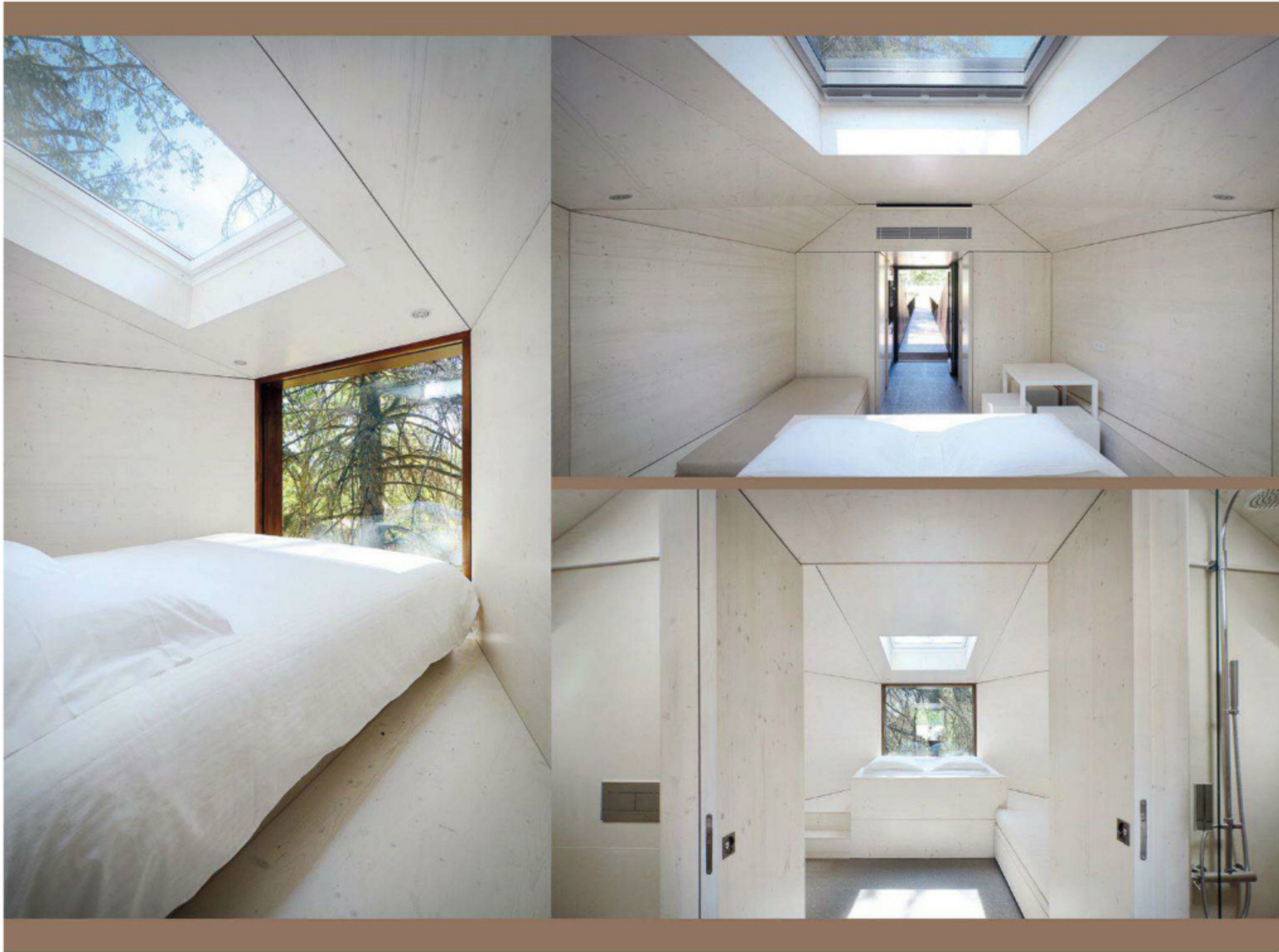
Photography by Ricardo Oliveira Alves



If the project's name wasn't sufficient to scare off prospective buyers, perhaps the fact that it was developed in partnership with a company that specialises in modular systems would be. Regardless, the results defied both expectations and fear of snakes to present an original, even playful, take on domestic living, with plenty of architectural juice to keep anyone intrigued. Architects Luis and Tiago set out to dash preconceptions about modular construction (if not serpents), and to break through the square-edged predictability of standard, orthogonal design. These modest-sized buildings tiptoe through their well-treed landscape as if meaning to harm no one at all. Clad in slate and wood shingles – hence the reference to snakes (or at least, their skins) – they appear suddenly, out of nowhere, confronting visitors not with a hiss, but with plenty of charm instead.

As everyone on Earth loves the idea of occupying a tree house, the premise wasn't as outlandish as it might have seemed. And the context, amid the beauty of a national park – Pedras Salgadas – called for heightened sensitivity. The buildings had to demonstrate their ecological credentials pretty obviously.





These included insulation, water reuse, solar panels for water-heating, low-consumption LED lighting systems, and so on. That the houses are small certainly helps: just a studio, bathroom and kitchen. But as models for possible adaptation, they could easily be reinterpreted as slightly larger residential units... or, indeed, clustered in groups to form a villa arrangement. The sloping site affords the bridge approaches their role, which of course is catmint to the design; after all, what's a snake without a long body?

The faint abstraction of the forms, in relation to their site, is what gives the Tree Snake Houses their impact. Yet one can also visualise them in quite different physical settings, perhaps moulting their shingle skins for something else. Desert sites, for instance, or along the rocky edge of a watercourse. The idea of a minimal shelter to hide in, work in, or meditate in, lifted just off the ground by legs, and slinking into its immediate environment with the slightest of interruptions, is seductively appealing. These two architects have made it very real as well.



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COASTAL

House V2

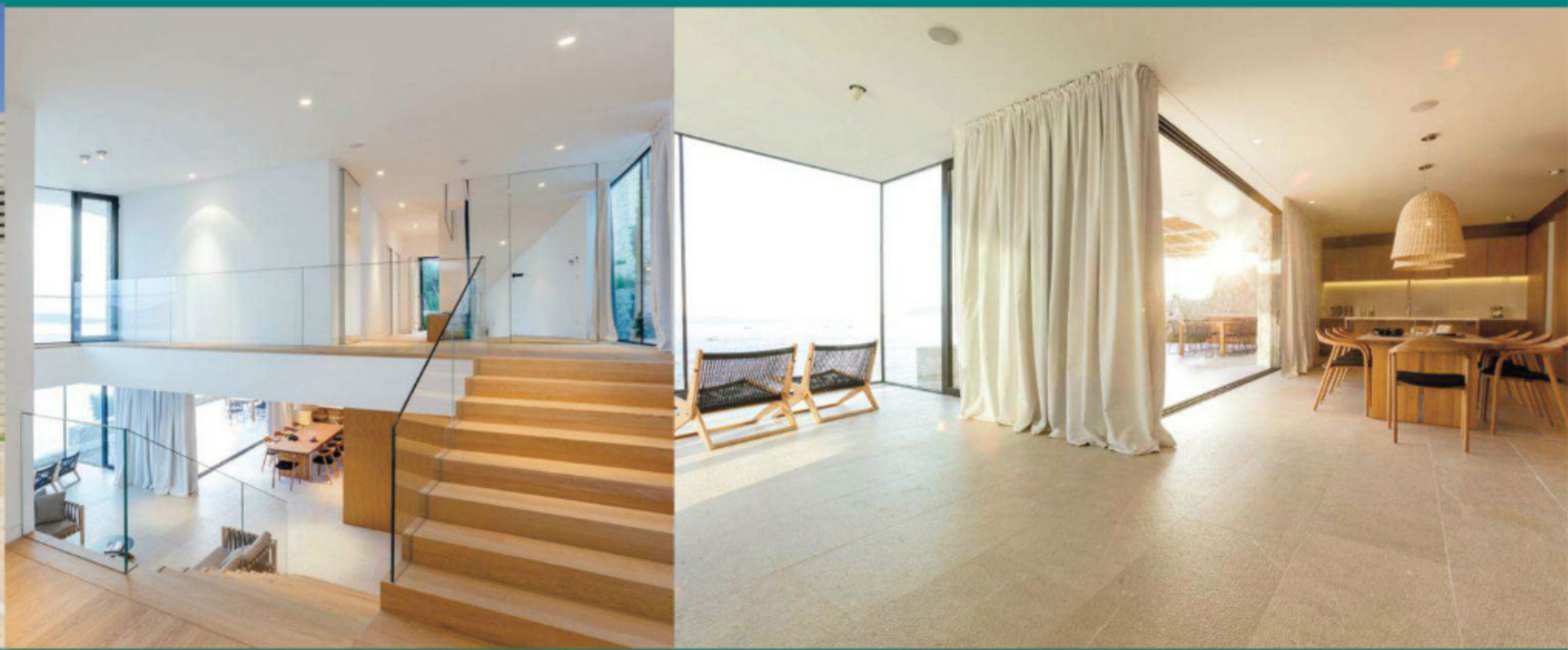
Lozice, Dubrovnik, Croatia
3LHD

This generously sized residence overlooking the sea near Dubrovnik replaced an earlier building here, and is designed to maximise views and to take advantage of its strongly sloped site. A series of retaining walls and terraces manipulates the land, allowing for many of the spaces to bleed outside, thus reducing the distinction between internal and external. Where closure is necessary (the weather isn't always perfect), large expanses of glass intervene to gasp at the views.

Entry occurs at the top of the site, with a parking area near the street access. The living levels are split as one descends through the property. Off the living/dining area is a partially covered terrace and swimming pool. The exterior is clad in white stone, which fits nicely into the natural context and makes the most of bright Mediterranean light. Although House V2 contrasts with many of its close neighbours in style, thanks to its orthogonal, flat-roofed and monochromatic approach, it is quietly modern, and seems almost as much a part of its place as those do. After all, there is a rich tradition of cubic white villas all over the coastlines of this sea. House V2 chooses its precedents, and then updates them.

On the interior, the spaces are large and flow into one another. Ample use of warm-toned wood finishes helps to domesticate the residence as well as to underline its family programme. In section, some of the spaces are double-height, which creates interesting spatial relationships in the main living zone. A wide, timber-clad staircase represents the heart of the house, linking the different landings, which might recall the exterior site terracing. It is clear that the architects approached interior and exterior spaces and site in tandem.

House V2 does nothing to rock any boats too vigorously, but provides a calmly contemporary living environment with a permanently recreational mood. One could argue that with a setting and views like this dwelling has, it's pretty hard to mess up. But there is plenty of evidence to the contrary nearby.



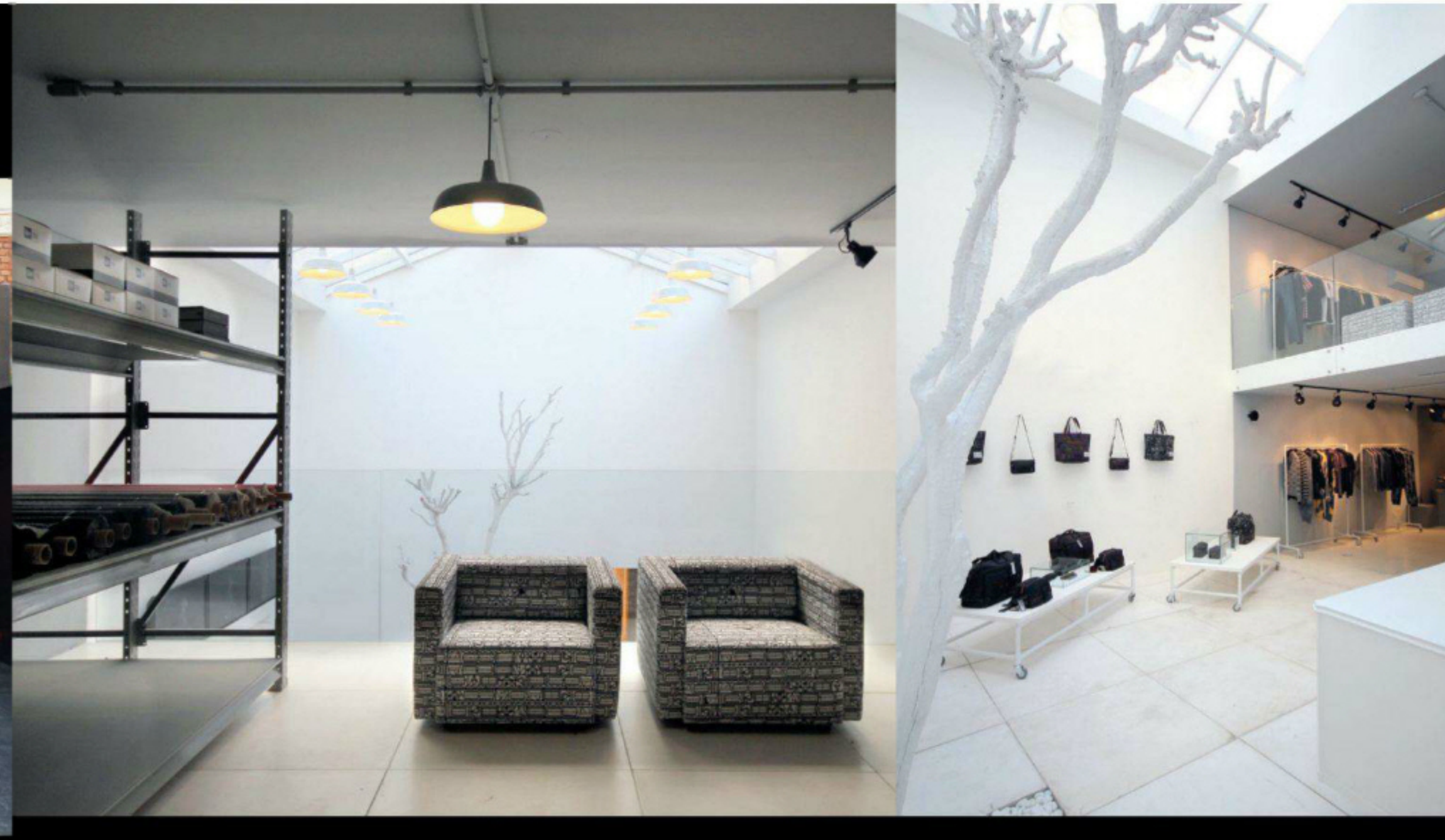
CONTRAST

Alex Herchovitch Flagship Store Arkitito

This inviting retail design on a main shopping avenue of Sao Paulo presents a minimally luxurious environment that commences with a ramp that descends from the street frontage. Resembling a cultural space as much as a commercial one – think small art gallery – Alexandre Herchovitch's flagship store sets the mood early on: calm, unhurried, focussed. Two of its floors are deliberately dimly lit in order to enhance the drama of its core 'white room', a space doused in natural light via a skylit roof, and in which everything is painted white, even a decorative tree that occupies its centrepiece. The idea is to set off the brand's black offerings (handbags, jackets, accessories, etcetera), and it works; the room is theatrical without being loud. Because the brand hews to blacks and whites in its products, the space makes sense, but more than that, it works as an architectural envelope, blanking out the bustling city with a cocoon of easy-on-the-eye surfaces and visual tranquillity.

The rest of the spaces and the front facade of the store involve other materials such as concrete, steel and glass, which work up a faintly industrialist aesthetic backdrop for the strong designs on sale. Lighting fixtures are exposed and simple; metal racks and furniture utilitarian-chic; and a near-invisible glass balustrade lets a mezzanine overlook the double-height white room beyond, that acts like a beacon climaxing the spatial route.

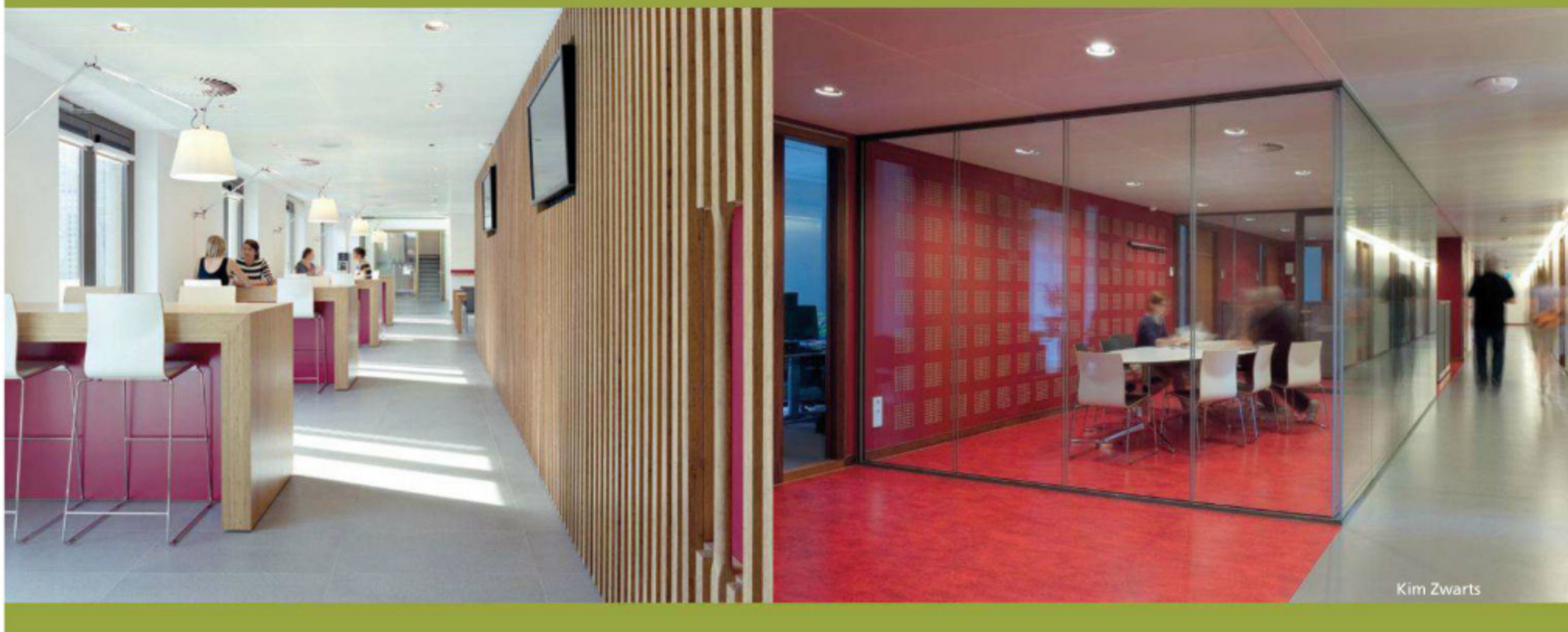
Arkitito has produced a retail design that is sharp and precise, but not without warmth. Above all, the clothes are given the starring role; the architecture steps back in a supporting role, expertly played.





As part of a 'campus' that will grow in future to include other facilities with different programmes, the building had to be both connected and separate, thanks to the nature of its own internal purpose. Thus the parti establishes three connected, low-rise boxes of slightly different heights, sharing a similar facade strategy of gridiron linearity, not unlike the work of David Chipperfield elsewhere. It is rationalist, crisply handsome, and suggests an almost corporate efficiency – in good proportions. Vertical fins shade inset closure walls that are largely glazed. It could be a corporate HQ or a small regional art museum. There is a vague pinwheel siting of the three boxes, which are linked by a central atrium space. The primary building material is prefabricated concrete, with infill panels in enamelled glass or oiled Accoya wood. These infill panels help differentiate the three blocks in a 'similar but different' method, but more importantly, do much to humanise the otherwise clinical regularity of the facades. Random (or obscure?) patterns are suggested by the relationship of the opaque panels with the glass openings, both set back from the vertical concrete frames. This strategy has been used many other times and places, but here it is controlled quite expertly, to pleasing visual effect.

The interiors are what might be expected: efficient, bright, inviting but not over-designed. It is made consistently obvious this is a place in which to get on with important work, not gawk at clever architecture. As the venture is a functional experiment, it is a bit early to know whether Brains Unlimited has found medical or commercial success. But the brains occupying and using it at least have a strong, positive environment in which to search.



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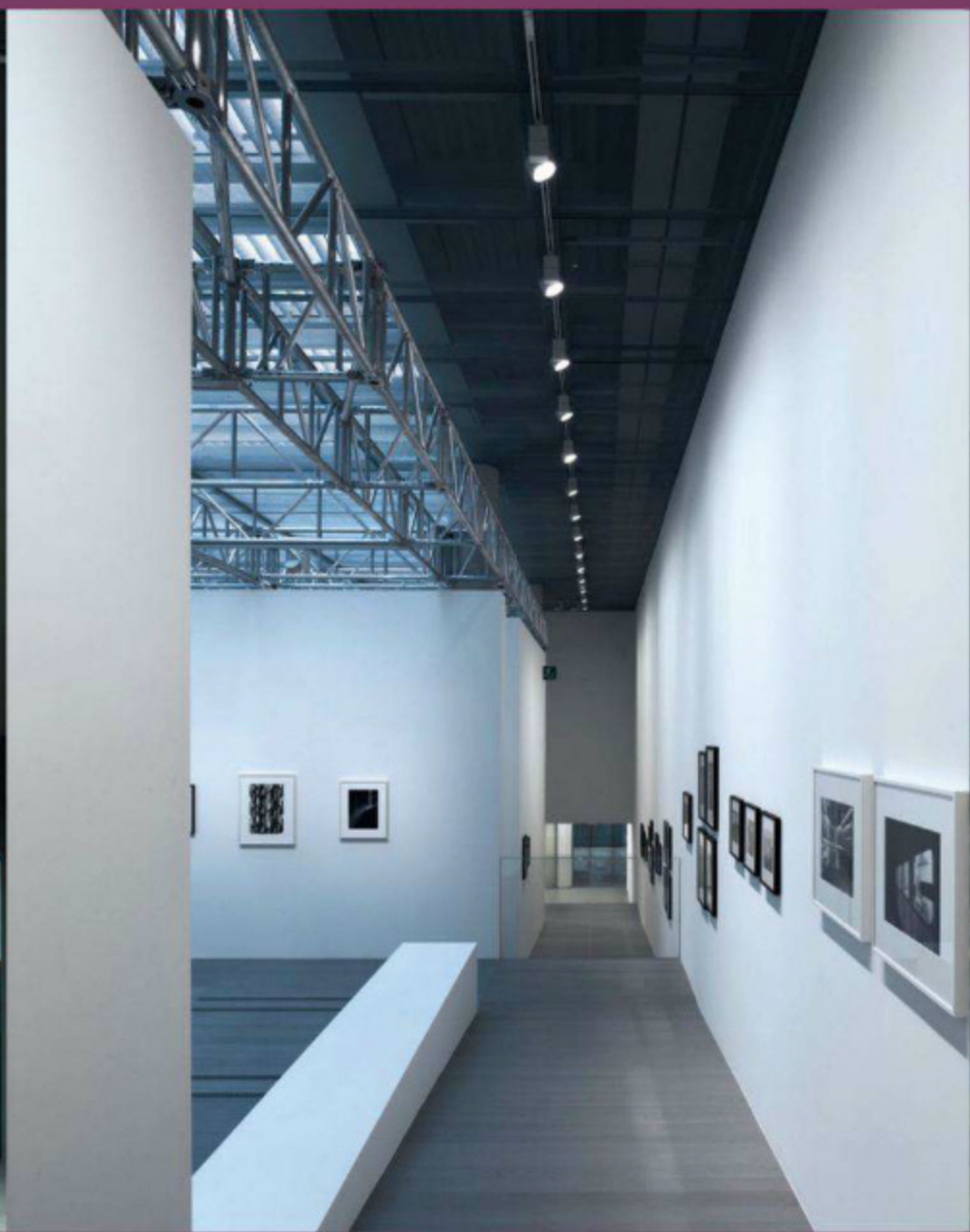
THONET



Stefan Diez | 404 Chair

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activity spaces and becoming an active spine of the institution. Long ramps extend from the building toward the more private company environs behind it, and the more public park area in front of it.

The external elevations of MAST are clad in glass curtain walls in two distinct layers: either transparent glass or glass screen-printed with pixellated designs. After dark, the building's masses turn into large lightboxes that hover on the site. A lower portion of the facades are striped with coloured vertical mullions, which present an enlivened segment juxtaposed against the cool ice-toned glass boxes. Extensive cantilevers produce deep pockets of shadow that distinguish certain forms and help break down the overall scale into separate, interlocking pavilions. One of these, the auditorium, reaches out over a reflecting pool and rests on a grouping of slender columns.

MAST Institute could be taken for either a large corporate HQ [of a very successful operation] or, conversely, a well-appointed public cultural complex [museum, performing arts], and this ambiguity serves it well. In fact it is a place that overlaps both worlds, and so its character of strict professionalism and accomplished execution is entirely appropriate. It seems a place of ambition and success, expressed through its architecture. This is not a building to be underestimated.



COOL

Clement Restaurant & Bar

New York City
Yabu Pushelberg

Photography by Evan Dion and Garrett Rowland

In fast-paced New York City, when one restaurant's doors close, another restaurant's doors open. The storied Peninsula New York recently launched a new dining concept, Clement, set on the site of the former Fives eatery on the hotel's mezzanine level. Overlooking Fifth Avenue, the 3,300sq ft contemporary American restaurant designed by Toronto-based interiors firm Yabu Pushelberg was conceived to resemble a quintessential Manhattan apartment.

"The restaurant is a series of intimate rooms that are all visually interconnected, yet slightly different in feeling and mood," says Yabu Pushelberg co-founder Glenn Pushelberg. "Our desire was to create a more personal and residential-feeling restaurant." The interiors feature warm, soft finishes juxtaposed with natural, earthy hues, custom art, and rich textures. Wood panelling embedded with brushed metals and mirrors create a glamorous style, while the linen fabrics and rich leathers infuse a relaxed, homey ambience.

Clement is divided into six rooms, including a spacious bar area, a breakfast nook and an intimate private dining chamber. Each has a distinctive look and feel. The restaurant's entrance is flanked by a dramatic installation of 900 handthrown ceramic bowls and vases by artist Pascale Girardin. One dining room is designed to evoke the stateliness of hotel libraries of bygone days. Yabu Pushelberg called on Toronto-based



design studio Moss and Lam to produce linen rag paper of varying tones, weights and textures to fill the bookshelves that line this space. Moss and Lam's creativity was also tapped for the Colour Room, in which the studio's 60ft-long wall etching of a jungle-inspired New York scene glows above dark red leather banquettes. The Mirror Room is home to handmade reflective artwork, and the private dining room features a warm palette of grey, gold and lavender, with painted silk panels. The whimsical style of the restaurant as a whole is offset by the bar area, which comprises a long, black stone counter, a low communal couch in leather, and diminutive duet tables. Here, dark tones of tobacco and cognac dominate the colour scheme.

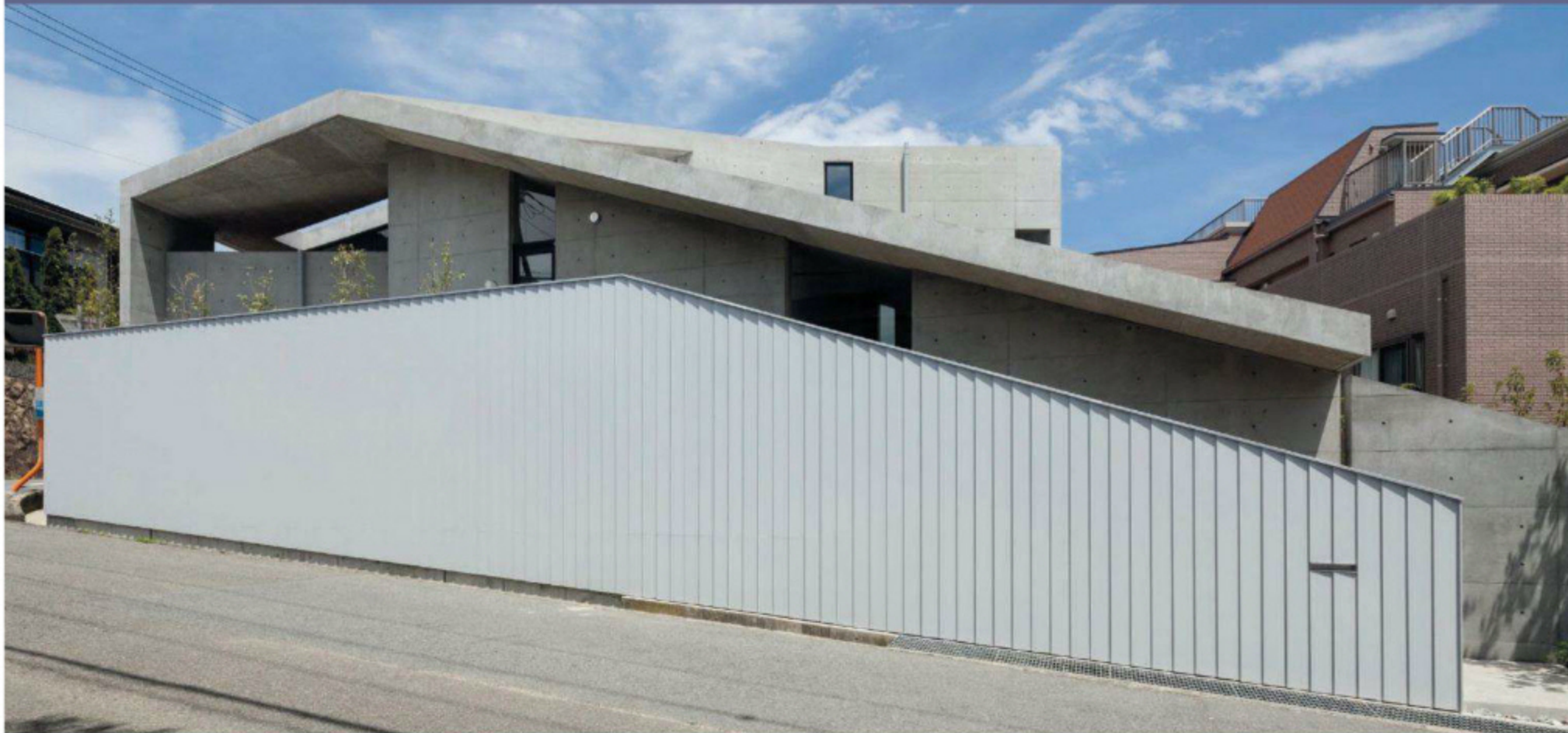
As in a modern uptown penthouse, Clement's carefully planned rooms scale gracefully from an intimate lounge to larger dining areas, catering to a range of desires and occasions. Notes Pushelberg, "The design responds to how people enjoy dining out by accommodating areas to drink and eat (in) a little more causally, and also creating beautiful dining rooms that feel comfortable and familiar." In a city with no shortage of upscale dining venues, Clement's unique touches and eclectic atmosphere take the experience to the next level.

ON-RAMP

House in Hyogo

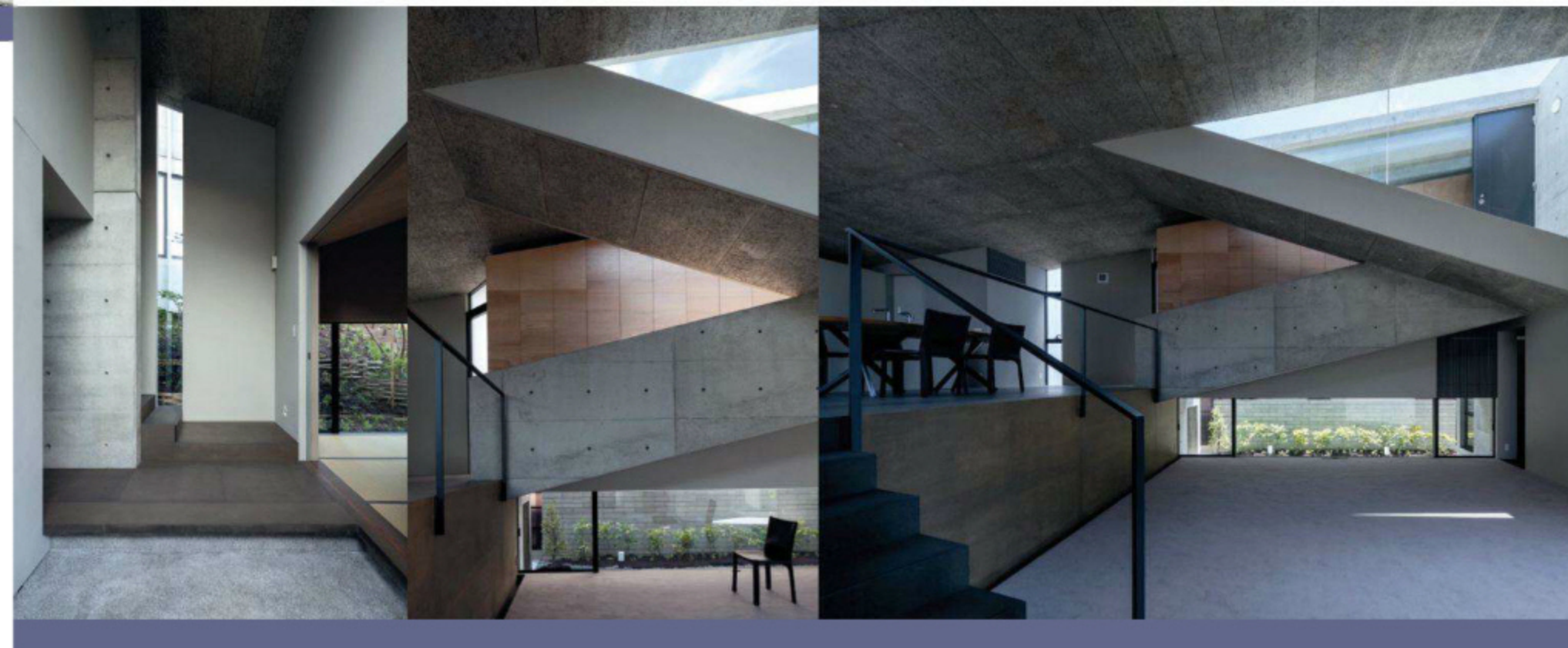
Shogo Aratani Architect & Associates

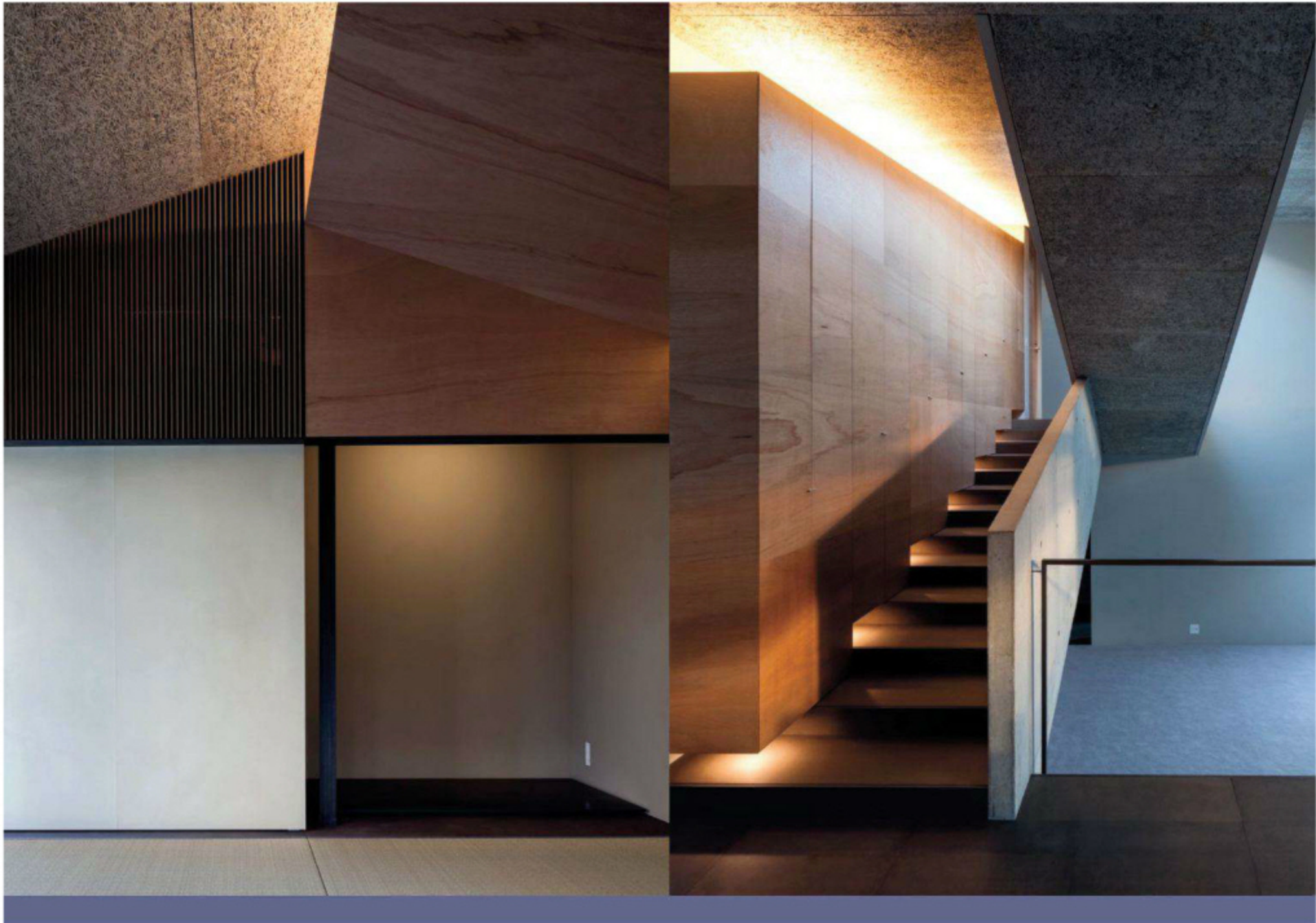
Photography by Shigeo Ogawa



This angular residence on a corner lot in an upscale, sloping neighbourhood reveals a surprisingly expansive interior hidden behind its dramatic but apparently modest-sized exterior. From the streets it flanks on its north and west sides, the building is hardened but humble in aspect, presenting sloping concrete roofs, deeply shaded glazing and a dull grey metal border fence. Behind the front volume is a taller, more orthogonal concrete box, with vertical slit openings but not many clues as to the internal organisation of the house. The massing certainly makes references to the nearby houses (a typical hotchpotch of mundane Japanese domestic architecture), primarily in scale and the pitched roofs, but that's where the contextualism ends. Or perhaps more accurately, it's where House in Hyogo breaks free and takes off.

Past the somewhat mysterious fence, a small world of angular spaces (in both plan and section) is encountered, with imaginative relationships between inside and outside, and between adjacent, overlapping internal spaces. What from the streets hints at 'heavy' concrete forms and perhaps dimly lit, gloomy rooms instead turns out to be enchantingly doused in daylight, and generous dimensions for living. Yes, the exposed concrete used for many of the surfaces is very present, but thanks to its juxtaposition with other finishes such as plywood veneer and plaster, it comes off as handsomely compositional. The lively diversity of ceiling





heights, not to mention the ample glazing looking onto the enclosed garden, contributes greatly to this feeling.

At one side of the main living space, which features a raised dining/cooking platform on one flank, is a short concrete ramp that seems to ascend and switch back onto a diagonal concrete beam going in the other direction. In fact it leads to another part of the house, but the zigzag produced by the ramp, beam and sloped roof above is attractive and rules the room. There is a pleasing variety of light conditions through the building, with areas of shadow complementing brighter zones nearer the glass.

The house has a feeling of spatial hierarchy not unlike a small village, with a central 'public' space that organises secondary rooms and areas off itself, reached at different levels via the ramps and steps. The use of half-levels may have been necessitated – or inspired – by the slope of the site, but the architects have turned this into the principal advantage of the design.



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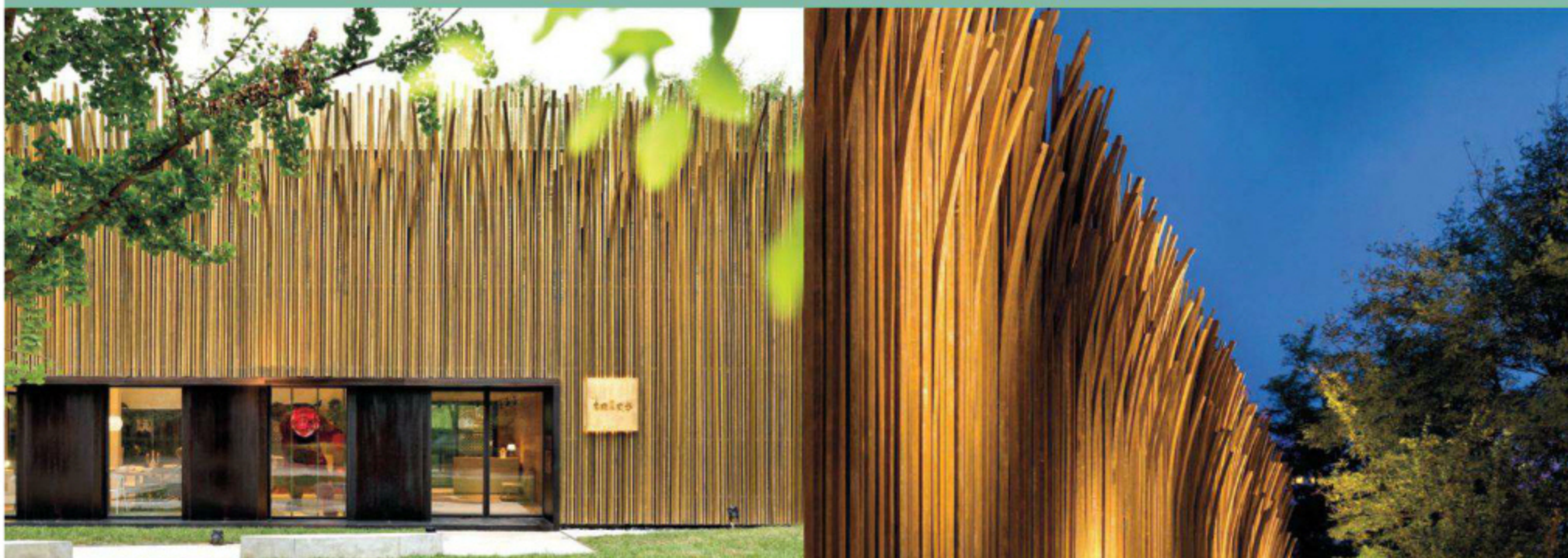
LUSH

Tales Pavilion

Beijing, China

Luca Nichetto Design Studio

Photography by Jonathan Leijonhufvud



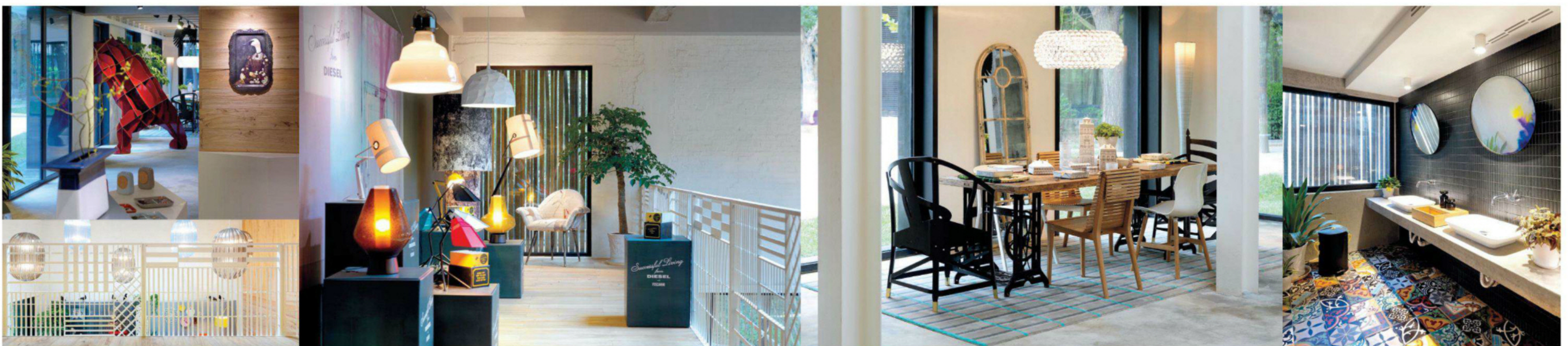
If any proof of China's potential as a cradle of architectural talent were needed, Luca Nichetto has clearly delivered it. Hitherto better known for his industrial design work, the Italian designer recently unveiled his first foray into architecture – a retail showroom for a Beijing-based design brand, smack-bang in the Chinese capital's Lido Garden.

The 500sq m venue boasts an eye-catching aesthetic featuring untreated brass tubing that lines the entire exterior of the building. Over 1,200 different rods have been used to represent blades of grass, not only echoing the natural landscape of the surrounding garden, but also, according to Nichetto, alluding to his fledgeling client, Tales Enterprise. "The pavilion's location is inside a park and Tales is a young company that is growing quite quickly. So I mixed the idea of growing with the surrounding environment," he says.

Another striking feature one finds, after travelling the length of a non-linear concrete promenade, is an interior divided into six different volumes; each of these spaces is defined by specific colours and materials. The reception and business area, situated at the heart of the showroom, is covered in elm wood reclaimed from demolished houses in Hebei Province. The mezzanine is lit by a large skylight and has railings decorated with gridded lattice work. The same pattern is used on the windows in the reception area and on the rugs. On the first floor, white plaster partitions and concrete floors provide a neutral backdrop for the products on sale in the showroom.

A sense of curiosity is aroused as one ascends the staircase to the second floor and is met with a dimly lit space clad in grey stone. Another staircase leads visitors to a panoramic rooftop terrace that has wood floors and is covered by the brass pipes of the facade. Even the bathroom in this building is spectacular, custom-designed as it is using brightly coloured, handmade Moroccan tiles.

The Tales Pavilion was conceived as a venue dedicated to international design. It showcases products by Foscarni, Diesel, Diamantini and Petite Friture, alongside unique creations such as the famous bear-shaped bookcase by Ibide. Nichetto has given 'life' to the building in a manner that speaks to China's ability to appreciate avant-garde design, while also advancing his own design credentials.

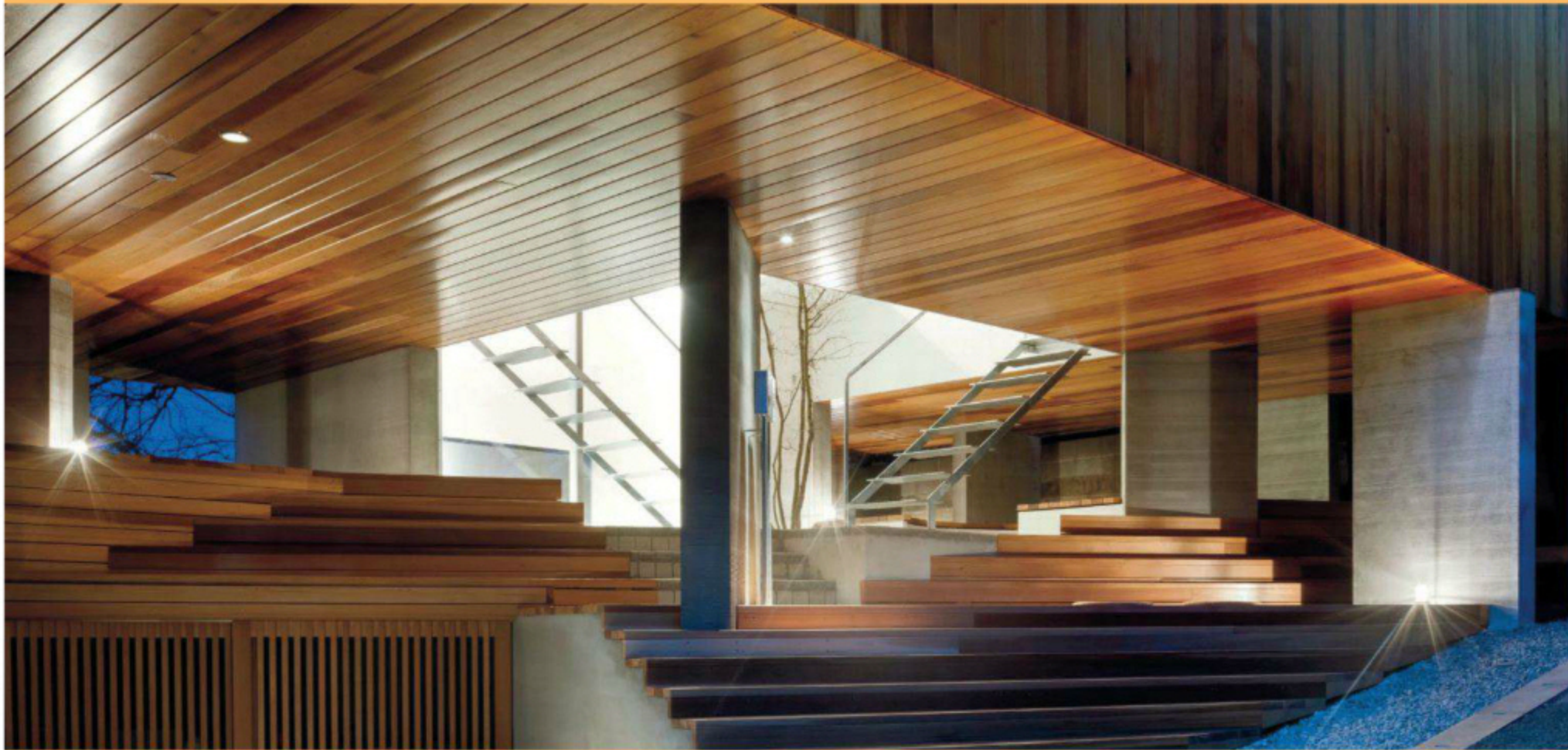


LITTLE BIG HOUSE

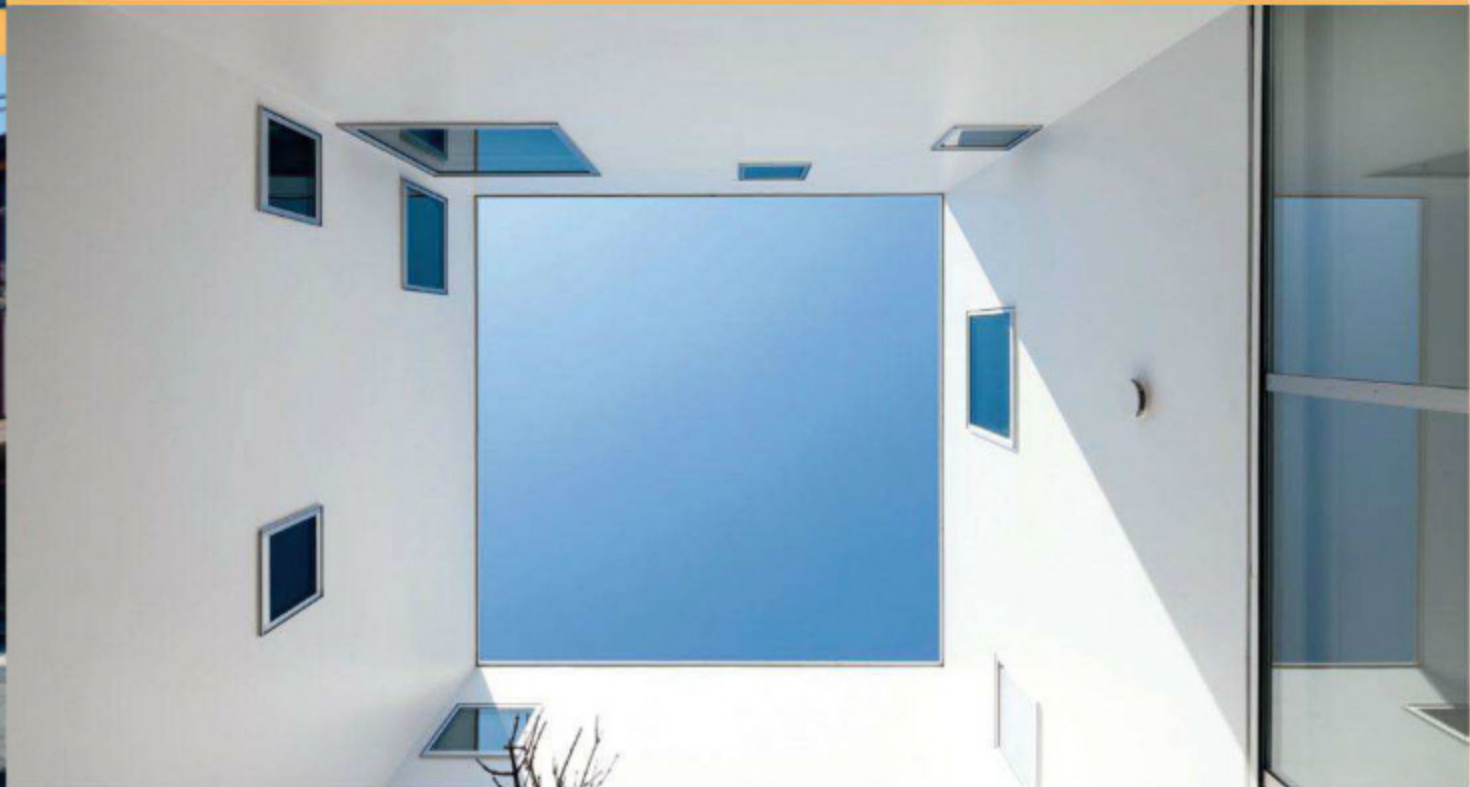
Beyond The Hill House

Kazuhiko Kishimoto / acaa

Photography by Hiroshi Ueda



This intriguing and clever building packs a lot of programme – and imagination. Primarily a residence, but also a gallery and office, the building is set upon a sloping site across the street from a small woods. The client wanted a strong relationship to the local community and thus requested that the house be literally open toward it, leading the architect to decide to ‘lift’ the residence off grade, leaving only a gallery space touching earth. This he surrounded with a wood deck raised one metre, and planned for ample sunlight to pour down it during the day. Essentially, the space is a semi-open courtyard, accessible actually and visually from the street, but implicitly withdrawn from it by the overhanging remainder of the house above. The timber decking gradually steps up toward the gallery courtyard, which is revealed as a cubic, white space capped by a perfect square of blue sky [at least on clear days].

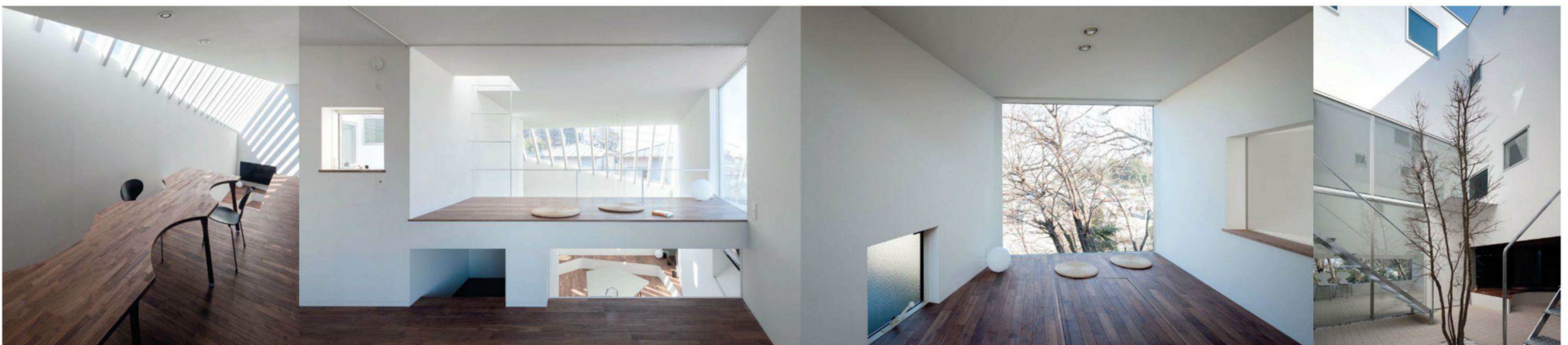
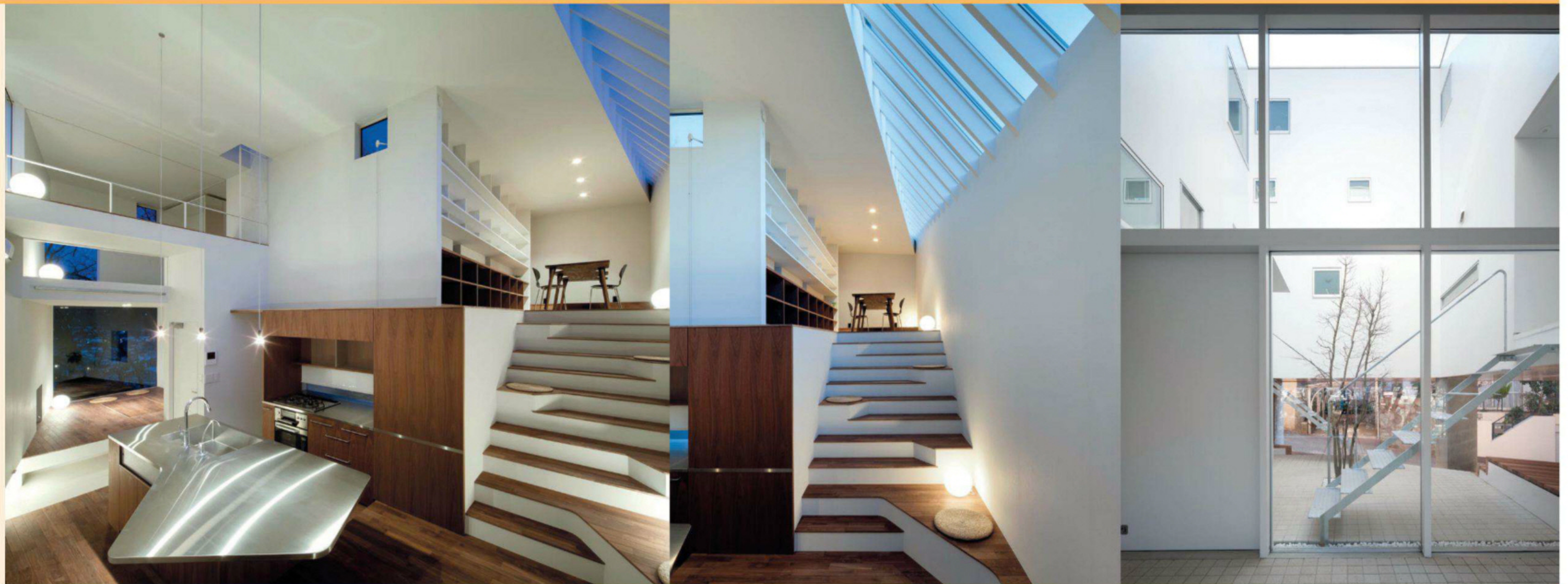


The contrast between the low-soffited, shadowy deck area and the bright white courtyard is wonderful. There are suggested seating areas, including wood benches, that offer views around the space as well as across to the forest trees. A distinct mood of separation and repose is produced within a very short, physical distance. The residence proper, and the office, can be accessed via separate metal staircases, adding a note of clarity that plays well against the deliberate ambiguity of the covered deck and open courtyard.

The internal spaces of the house are essentially treated as a thematic continuation of the previous

'promenade' through the site: they spiral gently upward, through a large open kitchen toward a raised dining space and overlooking mezzanine. These interiors are kept in white tones, and the skill brought to placing, sizing and grouping window openings is impressive – and essential to the success of the spaces. Although the building is not large, there are moments, such as when confronted by a grand square opening directly facing trees, that catch the breath; architecture suddenly provides art, in a minimal, idealised frame.

Beyond The Hill House takes a very original approach to its site, programme and client brief, and suggests a fresh definition of the boundaries between private and public space – especially surprising in such a small-scale, domestic context. It makes of a modest building something much larger in spirit. Bravo.



FLEXING

Ardmore Residence UNStudio

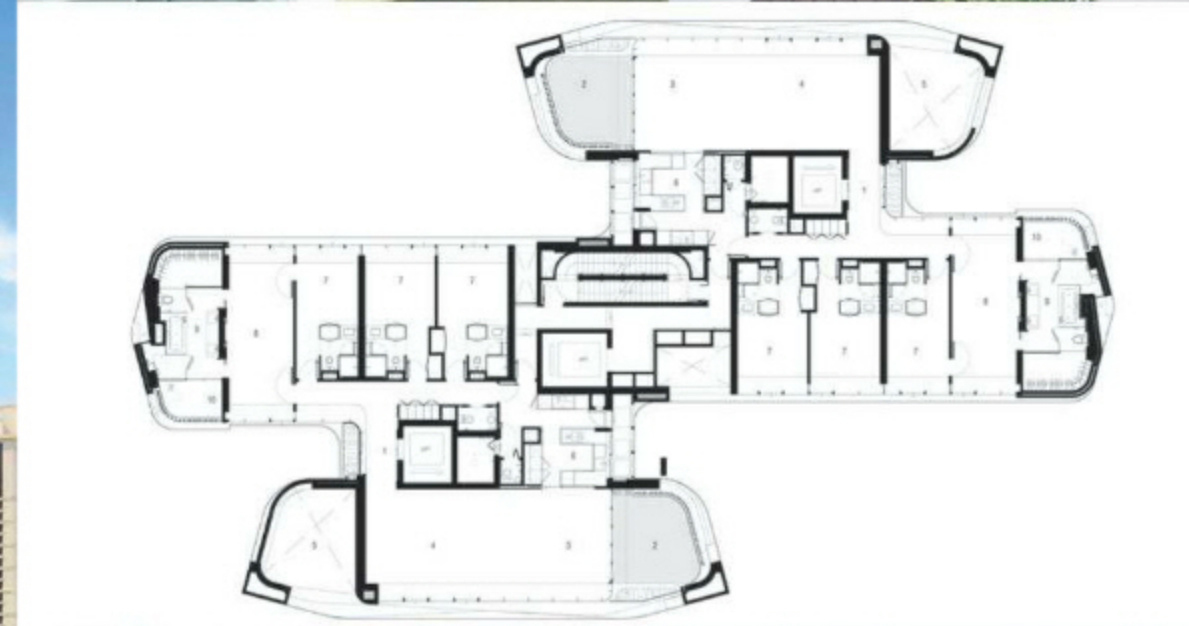
Photography by Ewan Baan

This new 36-storey residential tower near Singapore's Orchard Road is UNStudio principal Ben van Berkel's conceptual interpretation of the city's lush 'garden city' environment. It is immediately clear that this building is not your run-of-the-mill developer product: its slender, organic forms and details stand out emphatically. The architectural strategy of interpreting nature through the built form of a vertical tower is fourfold: the organic shaping and detailing of the facades; exploitation of views through large spans of glass; the introduction of interior 'living landscape' spaces in two of the apartment types; and a transparent and openly connected ground-level garden produced by raising the tower on legs.

The first of these strategies is perhaps the most obvious, and the one that most characterises Ardmore Residence. The external walls seem to twist and swirl, involving openings, gaps, balconies and opaque surfaces in a continuous looped composition, bending around corners, curling around windows, striated with bands of white stucco lineaments and mouldings. The pattern is actually repeated every four storeys, running bottom to top. From afar, the building appears more complicated than it really is, and does in fact seem somewhat analogous to a natural form, rendered in concrete panels. It is a risky method – it might easily have come across as cake icing dolloped atop a banal mass. But UNStudio managed to knot it all together pretty tightly, so that the sculptural outer layers enliven, rather than cheapen, the building.

The living balconies introduced on many of the flats are double-height loggias meant to take good advantage of Singapore's tropical climate. Soaring above the city's rooftops and green gardens, these spaces definitely invite a mood of urban reverie; one can imagine either leisure or creative use of the spaces, which are often shaded by sunscreens. Even when not occupied directly, they amplify the interior spaces of the flats, providing a realm of sky garden suspended between air-conditioned interior rooms and the sticky city spread out widely below. If not a new invention, these terraces are done quite well here, and will certainly be seen as a substantial amenity by owners.

In the detailing of the building, particularly the shared common spaces down at the ground level, the impetus to continue the 'organic' language used at the large scale on the elevations at times nears overstatement. The repetition of the strategy, particularly in groups of running bands and rounded corners, no matter the material or function, threatens to become tiresome, or lack subtlety. But it is undoubtedly consistent and imaginative. Certain pieces, from certain angles, seem to recall biological components, almost like bones or muscles, lending the building a vivacity that works well with its generally slender proportions. Ardmore Residence is a 'lively' take on modern urban domesticity.



CORKED

Ekork Hotel

Evora, Portugal

Jose Carlos Cruz Arquitecto

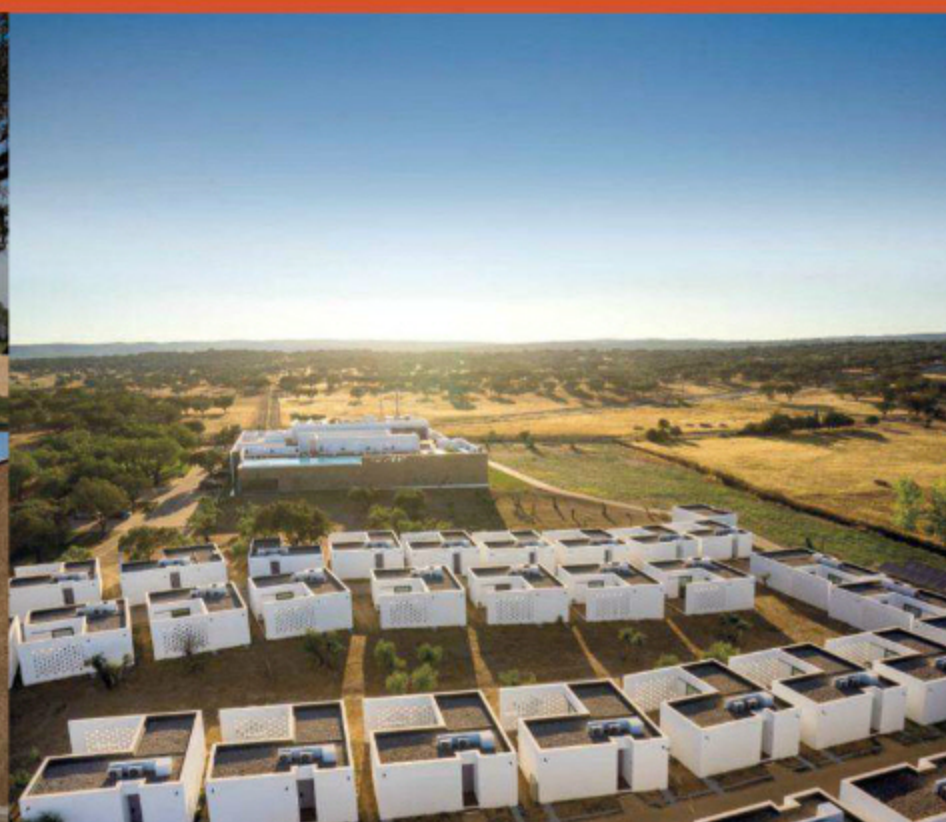
Photography by FG+SG Fotografia de arquitectura



This rather evocative small hotel in the ever-more-trendy Portuguese countryside plays on various local building traditions, updating and abstracting them in a number of ways. Surrounded by indigenous cork and olive trees in an arid landscape, the principal masterplan took its cues from the medieval villages of the Alentejo, where a main building complex oversaw outbuildings in white tones. In the case of Ekork, the main structure is a monolithic mass clad in recyclable cork panels with small exterior window openings. This building holds all the major public facilities and services, including restaurant, lobby, administrative offices, and so forth, while the clustered white bungalows nearby house the guests in individual suites that emphasise privacy and serenity. The cork, beyond its apparent hip factor, actually does help insulate the building, providing a thermal layer against the often hot sun. This volume is organised around a central courtyard, with openings that take advantage of crosswinds to enhance natural ventilation. A generous swimming pool and adjacent bar are placed on the roof of this main building, to further minimise land usage as well as exploit breezes and views.

The 56 outlying bungalows are guest suites, and are furnished in the same quite minimal style as the lobby and common spaces, with light tones and quiet details. The bungalows are nestled among the beautiful olive trees, with pathways leading here and there, giving the overall impression that one has wandered into a large private hacienda, during siesta.

The Ekork Hotel is more sophisticated than its name would imply, a thoroughly modern yet understated entry into the now-crowded field of boutique designer hotels... and a further reason to put this lovely area of Portugal on the next itinerary.



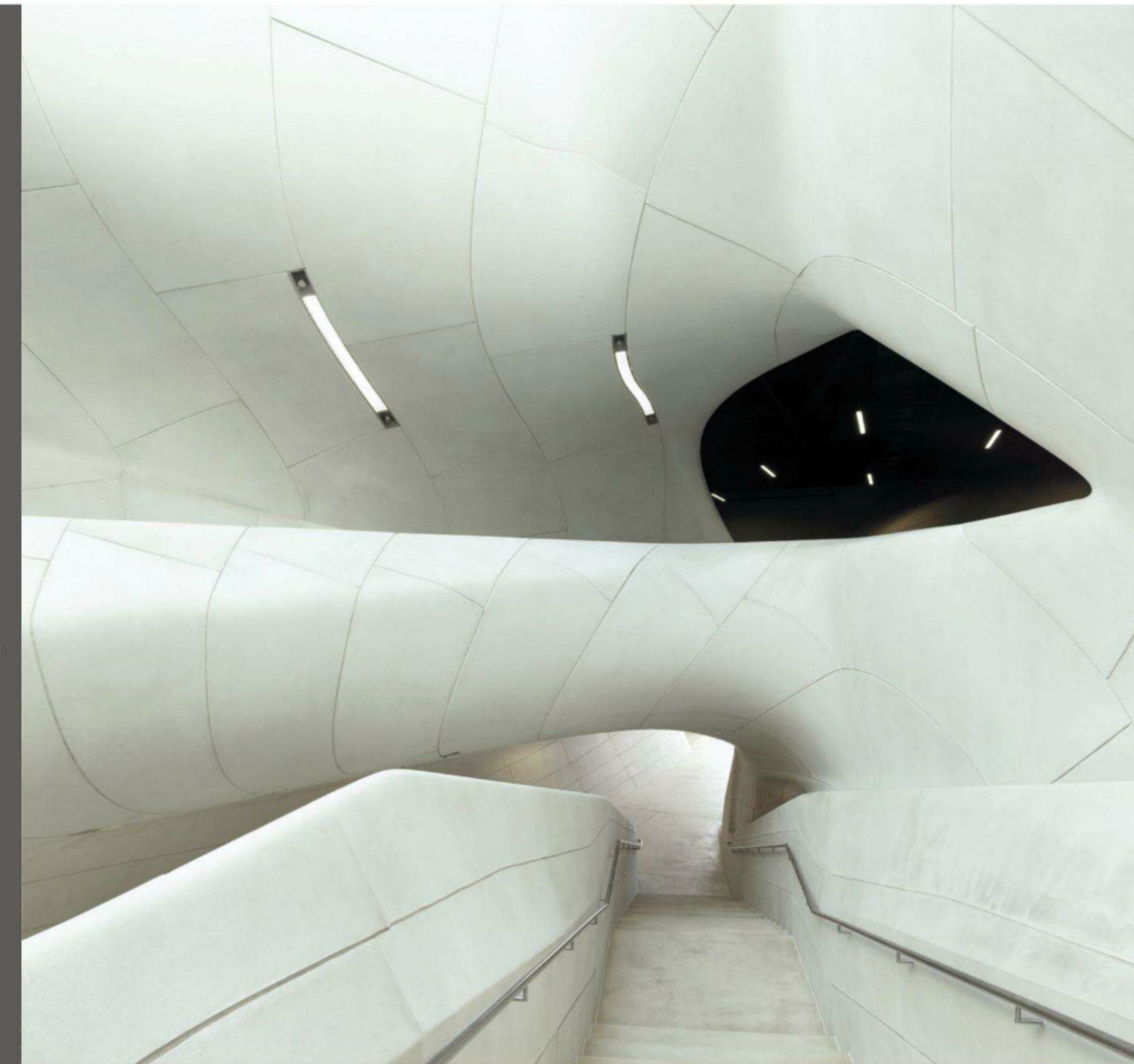


LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM AND SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Natchitoches, Louisiana, USA

Trahan Architects

Photography by Tim Hursley

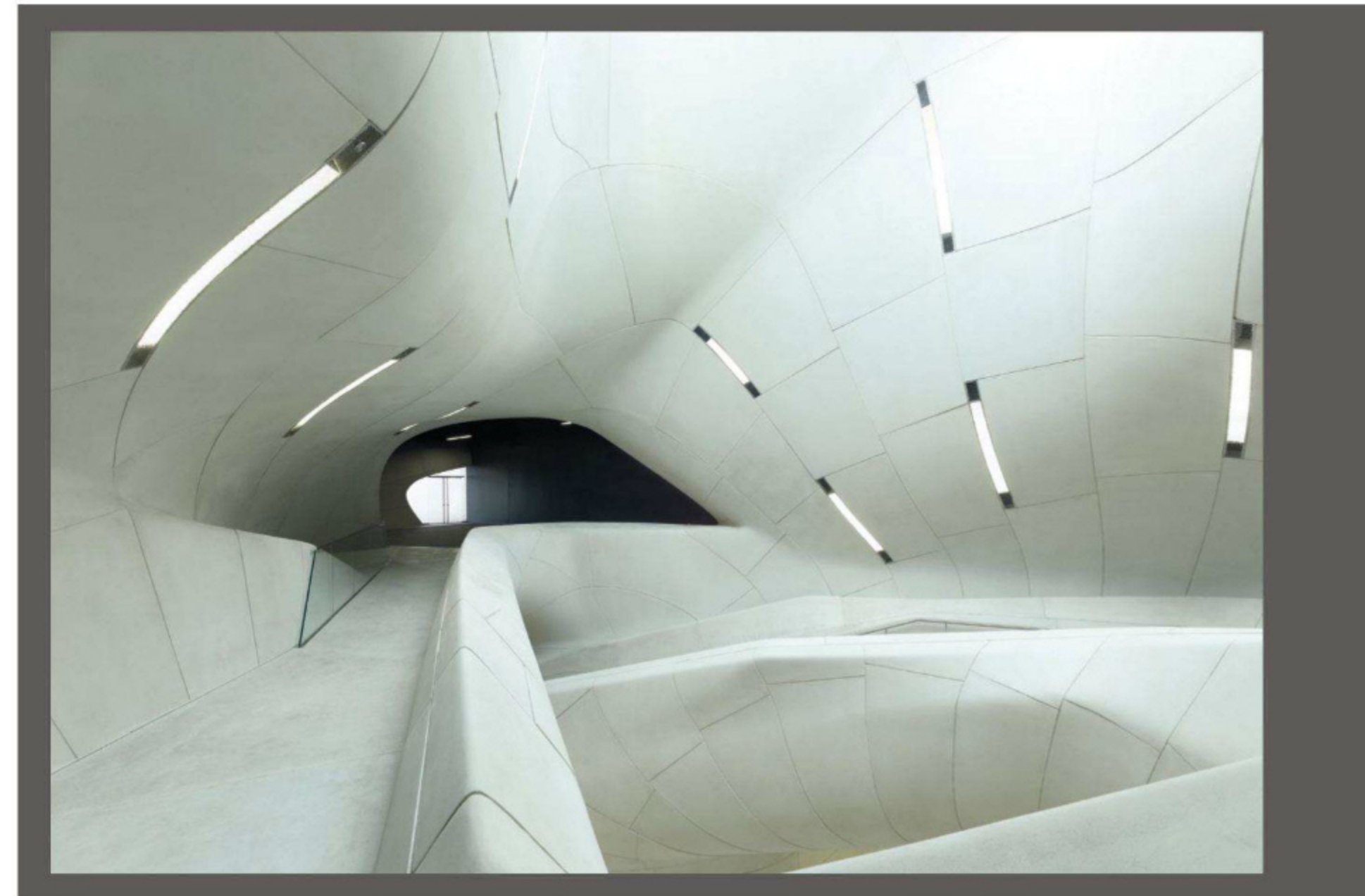


This dense, small building is set in Natchitoches, in the southern US state of Louisiana, on the banks of the Cane River Lake, an area replete with historical significance for the American deep south, and an important focal point for the present. The programme includes two distinct collections: that of the Louisiana State Museum and that of the Sports Hall of Fame. Previously these were housed in separate locations with no apparent logic, but have now found a more permanent shared home. Thus the new building is intended to embody "a dialogue between sports and history, past and future, container and contained", according to its designers.

The architectural result presents a visible dichotomy: an amorphous form contained within a rigorous orthogonal box. The idea was to present athletics as a component of cultural history, rather than a recreational exception to it. Visitors may decide for themselves whether to view exhibits and installations separately by theme, or to meander between them in a blend. Internally, there are no rigid demarcations between the two subjects. The spatial organisation presents a wandering, non-linear route surfaced with 1,100 sculpted panels of cast stone. The external box is clad in pleated copper panels that reference the nearby shutters and clapboards on traditional plantation architecture. This louvred epidermis allows

ventilation in and views out, while shading much of the building from sunlight. At the entrance, the two surface languages meet up, where the inner organic membrane presses outward to surround an aperture that is the front doorway.

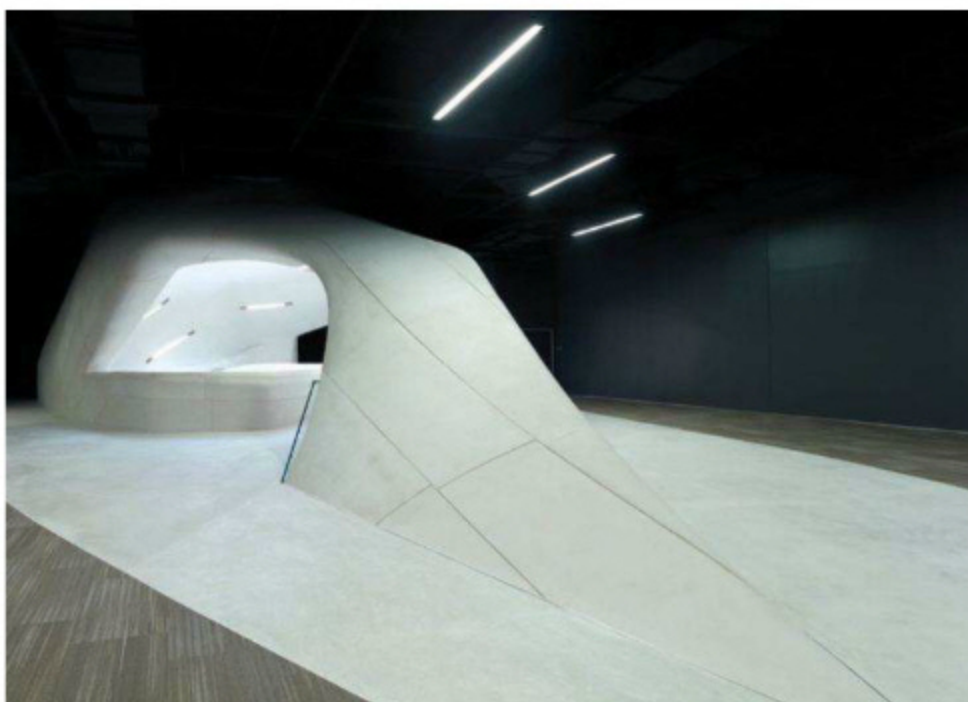
Much of the interior cast stone surfaces are devoted to articulating the route up through the building, especially around a primary staircase. The spatial effects are undoubtedly dramatic, as all services such as lighting and vents are integrated into the panels, which wrap under the feet and over the head as if one had entered a sleek cave. This is the kind of approach familiar



in Zaha Hadid's work, but it also reminds of Gaudi. Were it not executed so carefully here, and ultimately restrained by the modest size of the building, it might overstay its welcome. Yet, although the proportion of the organic space to the overall square footage seems rather high, given its limited use as primarily circulation space, it does deliver an impact. And at times its smooth pale surface becomes a backdrop for visual projections and the like.

The building's external skin of copper is at least as pleasing as its chalky interior. With this very simple method, Trahan Architects has made a small urban building that smartly takes its place among the petite structures nearby, and invites the curious to explore it. The contrast between the orthogonality of the rational exterior envelope and the curvaceous sensuality of the interior works up the intended quotient of surprise and formal interest. But, if anything, the skill attended upon both demonstrates the possibility of other equally

interesting approaches. Trahan Architects has enough ability in either vein not to need both together, even if the juxtaposition was conceptually primary.





Shine Bright

The 6th edition of the Hong Kong International Lighting Fair was held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre last month, with more than 1,000 exhibitors from over 12 countries. The fair was divided into a number of product zones, such as the World of Chandeliers, Display World, Commercial Lighting, Technical & Outdoor Lighting, Decorative Lighting, etc. Both exhibitors and buyers greatly appreciated the opportunities generated by the fair. Said Roger Tang, sales manager of IPW Europe, "We have met with many new buyers from Europe, South America and Southeast Asia. This fair is a great place for us to establish business connections with international buyers and also to exchange market information with industry players."



New Beginnings

Italian-based Porro is the latest furniture brand to set up its first showroom ever in Hong Kong and Asia. The official opening, which was held in February, featured a spectacular fashion show by Dorian Ho. The two-storey showroom, located in Hong Kong's posh Happy Valley neighbourhood, is a fluid space in which various furniture collections are combined to create complete settings for the living area, dining room, bedroom and study. The event was attended by numerous local celebrities, members of the press, and representatives from Porro's Italian headquarters.



The Best of British

BAGNODESIGN London recently opened their flagship Architect and Design (A&D) showroom in Hong Kong's Wanchai district. At the opening, guests were treated to a taste of British style and innovation. The 4000sq ft showroom displays a range of European manufactured and designed bathroom solutions. According to Simon Davis, Sales Director of BAGNODESIGN Asia-Pacific, the showroom was designed so that products can be experienced first-hand. "Our aim is for design and construction professionals to fully utilise the social space – touch, feel and select materials in a relaxed environment where all the specialised facilities you would expect to find are available. These include workspaces, private meeting areas with video-conferencing facilities, refreshments and free Wifi access," he said.



Dynamic Duo

Hong Kong Arts Centre recently hosted a duo solo exhibition by local artists Man Fung-yi and Mok Yat-san. Titled 'Falling Into A Trance', the show featured sculptures and installations based on themes such as family, memories and gender roles. Officiating guests at the opening included Mrs Cissy Pao Watari, Honorary President and Chairman of the Arts Programme Committee, Hong Kong Arts Centre; Ms Florence Hui, Under Secretary for Home Affairs; Mrs Nancy Lee, Chairman of The Friends of the Hong Kong Museum of Art and Ms Candy Chuang, Chairman of Treasure Auctioneer Limited.

Next in hinge

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Venecia Park by Hector Fernandez Elorza & Manuel Fernandez Ramirez

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hinge takes a look at Venecia Park

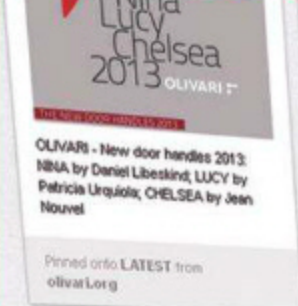
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OLIVARI - New door handles 2013: NINA by Daniel Libeskind; LUCY by Patricia Urquiola; CHELSEA by Jean Nouvel

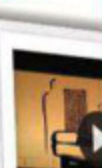
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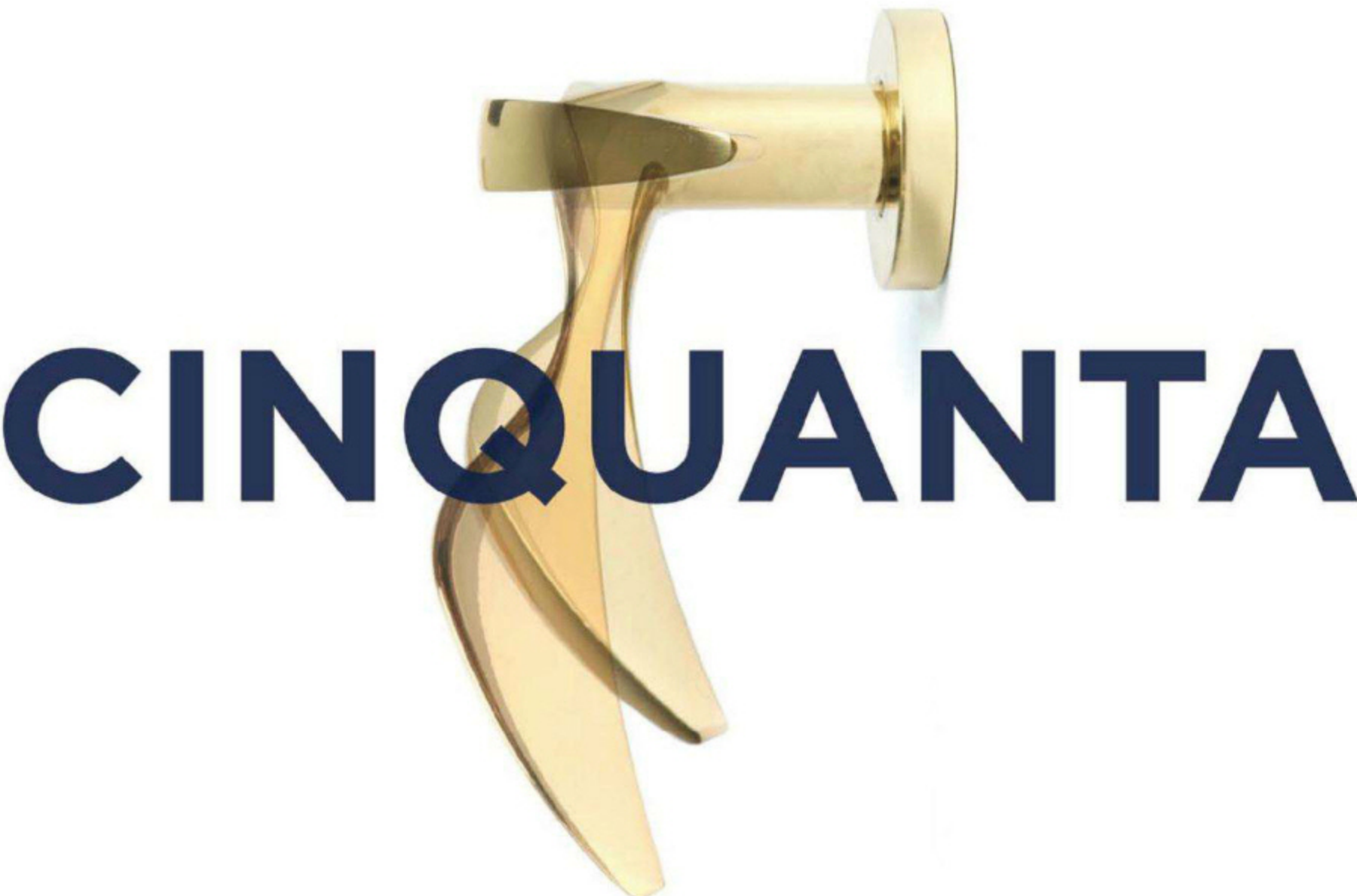
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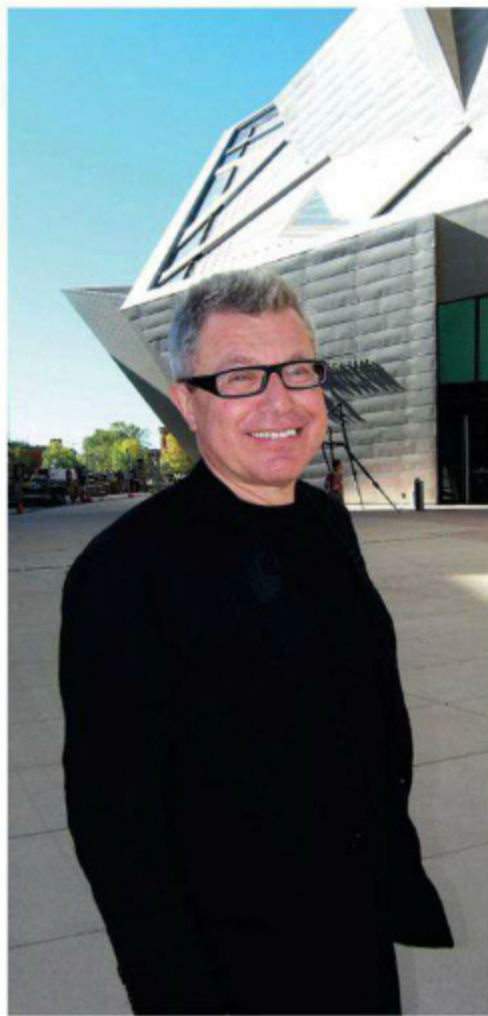


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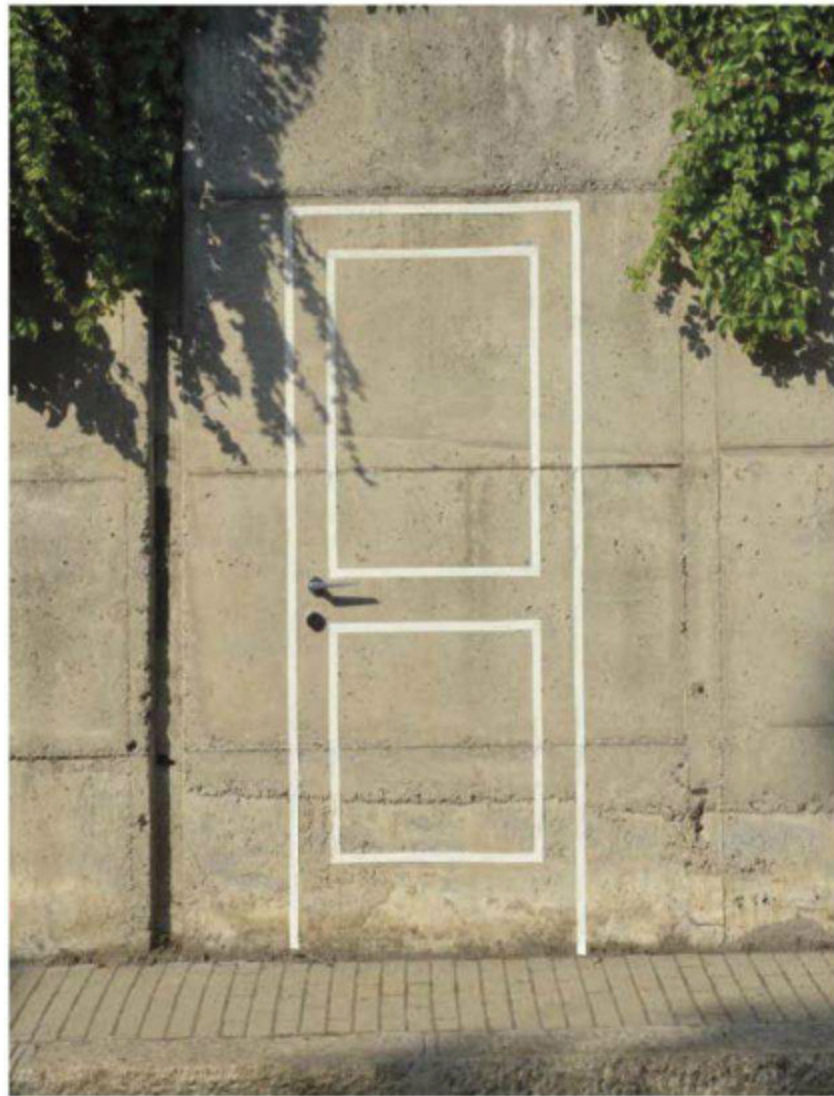
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OLIVARI 
design, taken by the hand



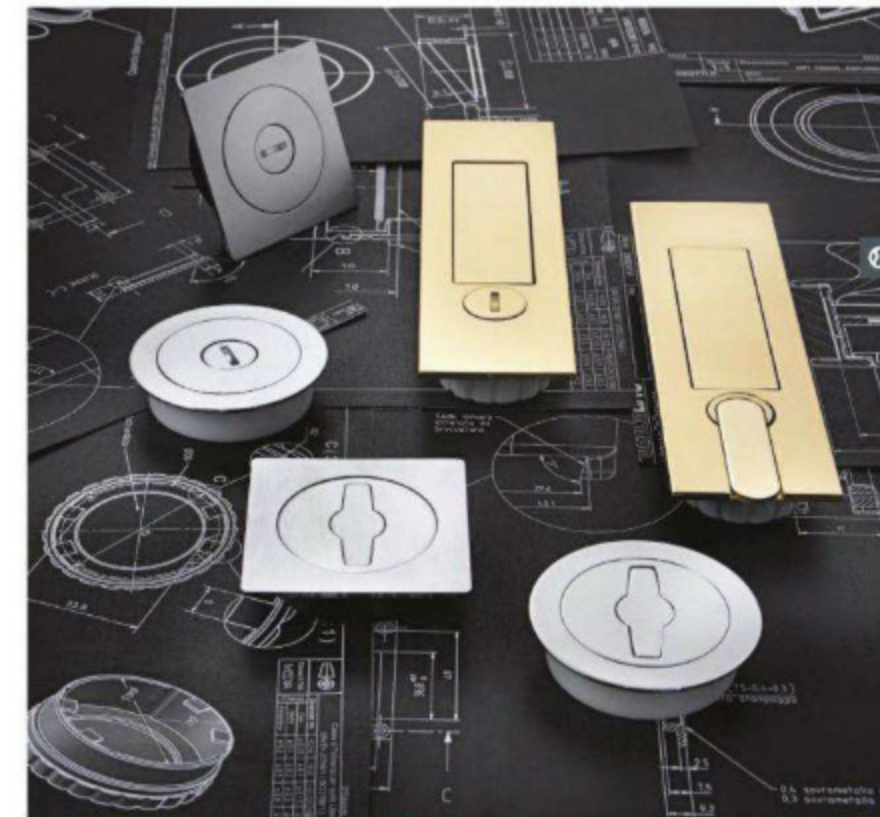
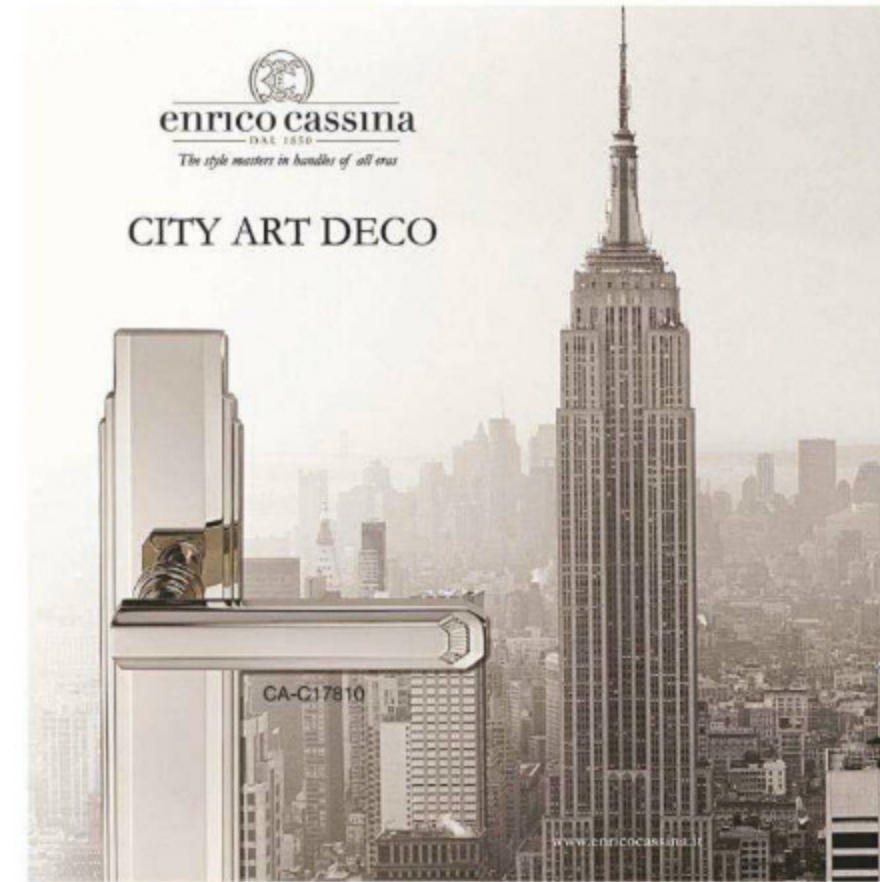
Nina OL-M234
design by Daniel Libeskind



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Combination Composite - Goose Neck - Ringtail
(Shown in Silver Bronze & Polished Nickel)



Silver Bronze Texture Examples



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Shagreen, Polished Nickel Finish



Ringtail, Dark Bronze Finish



Rough Cut, Polished Nickel Finish

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