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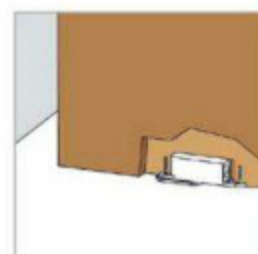
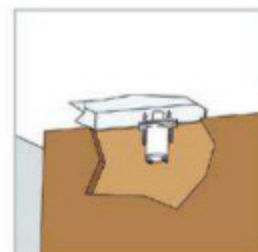


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hinge focuses on architecture and design. The magazine is distributed to industry professionals, academics and VIPs, and eagerly snapped up by the public every month from leading bookshops.

We take a dynamic and innovative approach to the disciplines of architecture and design, juxtaposing bold graphics and striking visuals with lively and informative editorial. *hinge* brings you the design world – the global picture, in full technicolour features.

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Words From the Editor

This issue was driven largely by an interest in design education in Hong Kong, as it currently stands. At the centre: two relatively new heads of the city's architecture degree programmes, Chris Webster at The University of Hong Kong and Nelson Chen at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Our in depth conversations with each of them get to the heart of the matter, compare the two programmes, and outline where they are headed – and what students should be thinking about if they are thinking about studying architecture in Hong Kong. We round that out with other education-related pieces, as well as the usual intentionally eclectic selection of design and architecture worldwide. If buildings sort of begin at school, where future architects and designers begin to grapple with the complexity and hurdles (and joys) of these professions, then they end up as concrete objects gracing our cities and landscapes. The latter of the future will be created by the former of the present.

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Wallflower

Bec Brittain's SHY light – named after her grandmother, Sarah Hitchcock Yerkes – is a unique chandelier comprising a triangulated network of LED tubes. The form, inspired by crystalline structures, is achieved using custom modular piping and hardware. The pendant allows for a number of configurations such as ceiling light, floor lamp or even a sconce. SHY is available in Hong Kong through Deem. www.deemlimited.com www.becbrittain.com

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Fair Trade

The latest edition of the most prestigious annual event in China design kicked off last month in Beijing. Backed by all kinds of Chinese government ministries and municipal bodies, Beijing Design Week (BJDW) is the only design event of such a scale in the country. BJDW 2014 was divided into seven key sections: Opening Ceremony, Design Awards, Design Market, Smart City, Design Talent, Guest City and Design Hop. The programme also saw some new events, including a Design Film Festival, which took place within a special architectural installation designed by Chiasmus Architects. BJDW additionally hosted the international 'Maker Carnival', a large arts-and-crafts expo that brought together more than 150 designers from around the globe to present their artistic creations. www.beijingdesignweek.org



Swedish Common Sense

Business of Design Week (BODW) – Asia's leading annual design event – returns for the 13th year, from 1 to 6 December at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. With Sweden as this year's partner country, the event will bring in a group of reputable Scandinavian designers, educators and influential business leaders to share their design philosophy and thoughts on innovation. Design experts will rub shoulders with young talents at BODW's various discussion forums on topics as diverse as living design, brand management, game development, product design, architecture, fashion, cutting-edge innovations, designing business, communication and marketing, as well as sustainable design. "Swedes' design focuses on more than just aesthetics: it's a way of living life," says Jorgen Halldin, Swedish Consul-General to Hong Kong and Macau. "Many of our most iconic products, such as those from Volvo, IKEA, Electrolux, Ericsson and Scania, embody all that is best about Swedish design – with clean, simple lines and a strong emphasis on functionality and sustainability. These products have been designed to overcome many of the day-to-day challenges in a practical yet stylish manner, and are sold in virtually every corner of the world." www.bodw.com



Like A Rock

Eponymous British design company Terence Woodgate's Solid Collection comprises sixteen different pendant lamps and surface-mounted downlights. The lamps are each cast in geometrical forms – simple columns and sawn-off cones – and are executed in Carrara marble and walnut wood. Designed for use with Megaman LEDs, the shades connect via Bluetooth to a smartphone- and tablet-compatible app. A remote control provides wireless on, off and dimmer functions, conserving both time and energy. www.terencewoodgate.com

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Bling Fling

Designer Giovanni Cagnato has fashioned a series of luxury home furnishings for Italian manufacturer Turri. Star consists of a couch, armchair and chaise longue upholstered in leather and adorned with an intricate woven pattern on the back of the seats. The collection incorporates dark brown hues and softly contoured corners, with a compact design. A majestic headboard decorated with gold studs defines the Stardust bed. The studs add a sparkly touch, complementing the rich colours of the bed's linen. www.turri.com



Bright Lights At Tiffany's

New York-based gallery Lillian Nassau LLC has brought to Hong Kong Louis Comfort Tiffany's Tiffany Studios lamps. Son of jeweler Charles Tiffany, Louis Comfort Tiffany began his career as a painter, then shifted his focus to design and the decorative arts. He began producing lamps in the late 1890s, at about the same time incandescent lightbulbs were coming into use. According to managing director of Lillian Nassau LLC Arlie Sulka, the legendary stained-glass lamps are a "signature cultural representation of the Art Nouveau period, and a most precious artistic heritage of the United States". They fetch prices from about USD10,000 at the low end to several hundred thousand dollars or more at the high end. The extraordinary vintage pieces are currently on display at the Fine Art Asia exhibition. www.lilliannassau.com www.fineartasia.com



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Studio Central

Studio by Tequila Kola, located in Hong Kong's Central district, is a new store that stocks a huge array of contemporary furniture and homeware, all designed in-house. Among the items are chairs upholstered in silk brocade; travelling trunks decorated with brass locks; armchairs sporting butterflies against colourful backgrounds; studded leather sofas; fancy clocks; and candlesticks, napkin rings and coasters. Best of all, the store also offers an international shipping service. www.tequilakola.com



Great Dane

Danish design brand Muuto has released the Airy Table. Conceived by Cecilie Manz, Airy consists of a polished plywood tabletop and a metal frame welded and soldered together to create a light and skinny silhouette. "The idea behind Airy was to create a table that did not scream but still was not afraid to speak. The result is a table series that masters the balance between light and airy, and at the same time has plenty of personality and individuality," says Manz. Airy comes in large and small sizes, and a variety of subtle hues. www.muuto.com



AeList

Two projects by international architectural firm Aedas have been awarded top prizes in a competition run by the Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design. The Guangzhou Commercial Showcase Complex, designed by Andrew Bromberg, houses a retail exhibition area in the podium with an office showroom building sitting on top. Center 66, designed by Christine Lam and David Clayton, is a mixed-use development in Wuxi, China. It consists of two historical theatre stages and a hall dating from the Ming dynasty. These have been preserved and integrated into a large public plaza that encompasses two office towers and the city's largest shopping mall. "We are thrilled to receive two awards from the Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design with our high-density mixed-use projects," says Aedas chairman Keith Griffiths. "Aedas' global platform for creative excellence in design enables some of the world's most talented designers to plug into the latest information and delivery systems they need to produce truly world-class design solutions." www.aedas.com



Forestry

Chic furniture boutique TREE has launched two collections in oak. Mr Marius comprises a range of desks, book racks and chests, which come in a choice of yellow, blue or green. The Tango range is handcrafted from reclaimed timber and adds black metal detailing to its writing desks, creating a contemporary look. The hardwood used for these items is sustainably sourced from "well-managed forests in Europe". www.tree.com.hk



Sit On It

Working in collaboration with London-based furniture designer Michael Sodeau, carbon fibre brand Hypetex recently introduced an exclusive lounge chair that was displayed at London's designjunction show last month. Dubbed 'Halo', the lightweight chair is the first piece of furniture to be created entirely from the high-tech composite material by Hypetex engineers, who also work on parts for Formula 1 racing cars at their UK manufacturing facility using a unique patented process. Halo features a thin wing-shaped seat on three legs and a large disc-shaped back that completely eclipses the seat when viewed from behind. "Hypetex is different from other materials that I've worked with in the sense that it offers a lot of freedom from a design point of view," says Sodeau. "Its strength, lightness and vibrant colour options make it an exciting new material for the design industry." www.hypetex.com www.michaelsodeau.com



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The tenth DesignEd Asia Conference is a two-day programme featuring presentations, panel discussions, workshops, and paper presentations. Jointly organised by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University School of Design and Hong Kong Design Institute, it is a key programme under the Business of Design Week (BODW), Asia's leading annual event on design, innovation, and brands.

Speakers include:

Tony Fry

Visiting Scholar, University of Cincinnati/ the United States &
Adjunct Professor, Queensland College of Art/ Australia

Demian Horst

Programme Director, MA Transportation Design Education,
Umeå Institute of Design/ Sweden

Lou Yongqi

Dean & Professor, College of Design and Innovation, Tongji University/ P.R. China
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Thomas Magnanti

President, Singapore University of Technology and Design/ Singapore

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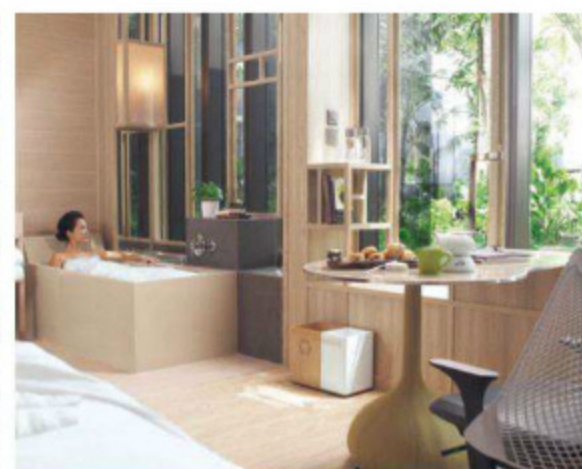
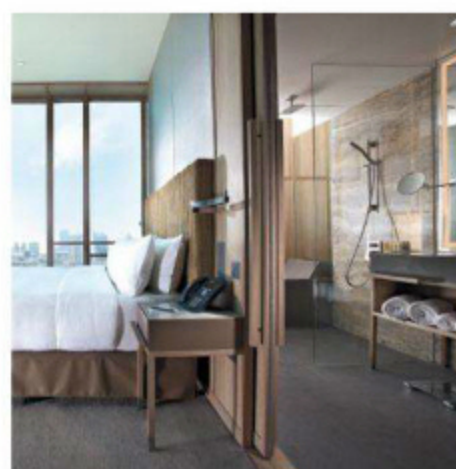
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Waterworks

Winner of last year's World Architecture News Awards, Parkroyal on Pickering in Singapore incorporates several energy-saving elements throughout the property, and features prolific designer Patricia Urquiola's bathroom series for Hansgrohe. Located opposite the city-state's first public garden, Hong Lim Park, the WOHA-designed 'hotel-in-a-garden' includes infinity pools, small cabanas, waterfalls and an impressive range of tropical plants. The luxury hotel's nature-inspired feel pervades the entire establishment, including its 367 rooms. "When we learnt of the hotel's architectural theme, we knew that Axor Urquiola would make a perfect fit, hence it was the first thing we proposed," according to KC Lee, managing director of Hansgrohe Pte Ltd. "Even so, we are still amazed at how well the mixer conforms with its environment." The Axor Urquiola mixer has an organic shape, with an expansive handle emerging from the main body, making it convenient and easy to use. The mixer comes at a flow rate of only 5 litres per minute, whereas the standard flow rate is 7 litres per minute. Notes Lee, "Hansgrohe is a great complement to the hotel's theme and philosophy of being green and environment-friendly." www.hansgrohe.com



Tall Tales

Architecture students and professionals alike can take a most fascinating, and rewarding, walk to remember, between 30 October and 26 November. The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) is mounting a retrospective exhibition at The Practice Space of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in London, entitled Tall Storeys - Evolution of Hong Kong Architecture - 1965 to 2014. On display will be photographs, renderings and drawings delineating Hong Kong's architectural transformation from a colonial backwater into an economic powerhouse, against one of the world's most breathtaking natural backdrops, over the past half century. The projects were selected through HKIA's annual awards process commemorating the best work produced each year since 1965. The territory's Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying will officiate at the by-invitation-only opening reception on 31 October. Other opening day events include a lunch lecture featuring leading Hong Kong architect Rocco Yim and Toby Denham of TFP Farrells, as well as a 'high-density cities' forum with Wong Ouyang's Lam Wo-hei, Ronald Lu's Bryant Lu and Aedas' Keith Griffiths on the panel. www.hkiaarchitecture.com



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The No Colors

William Lim

Hatje Cantz, Colour

391 pages

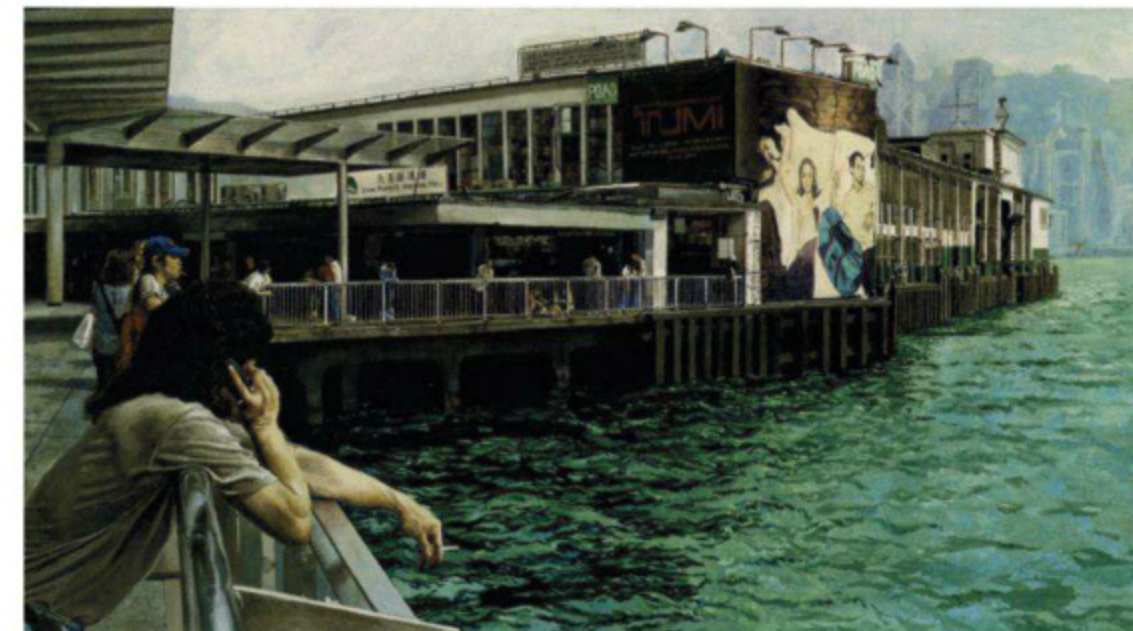
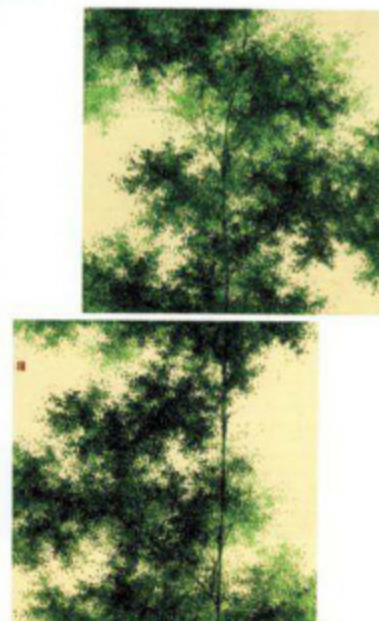
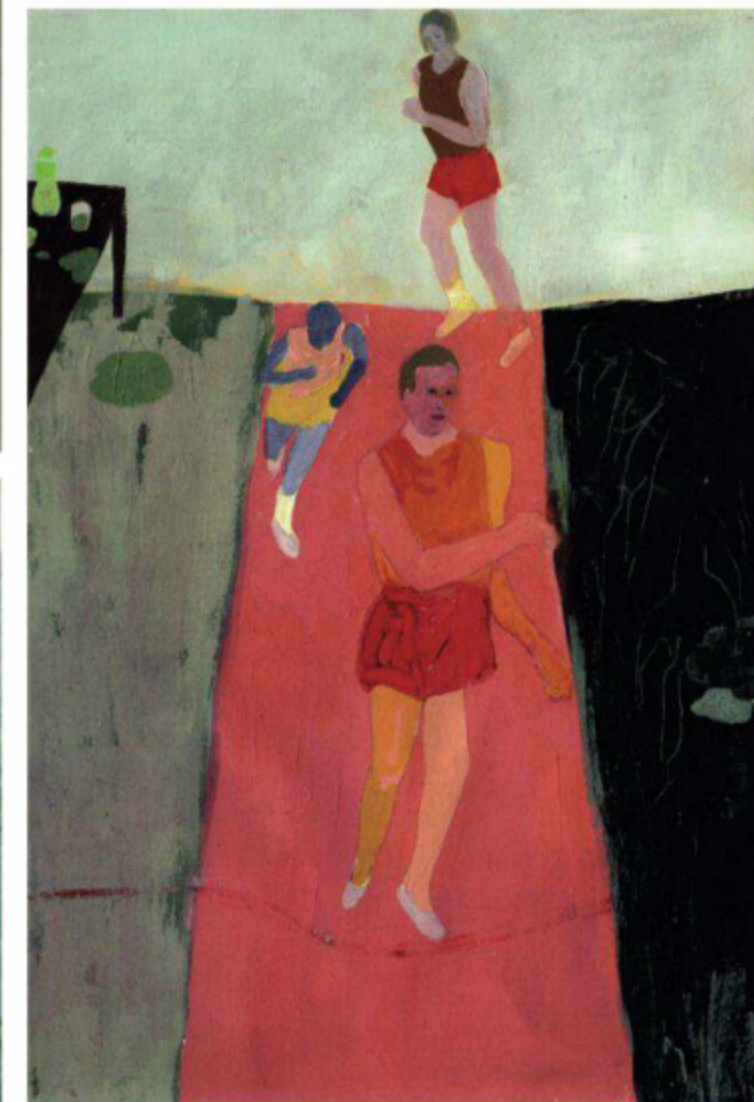
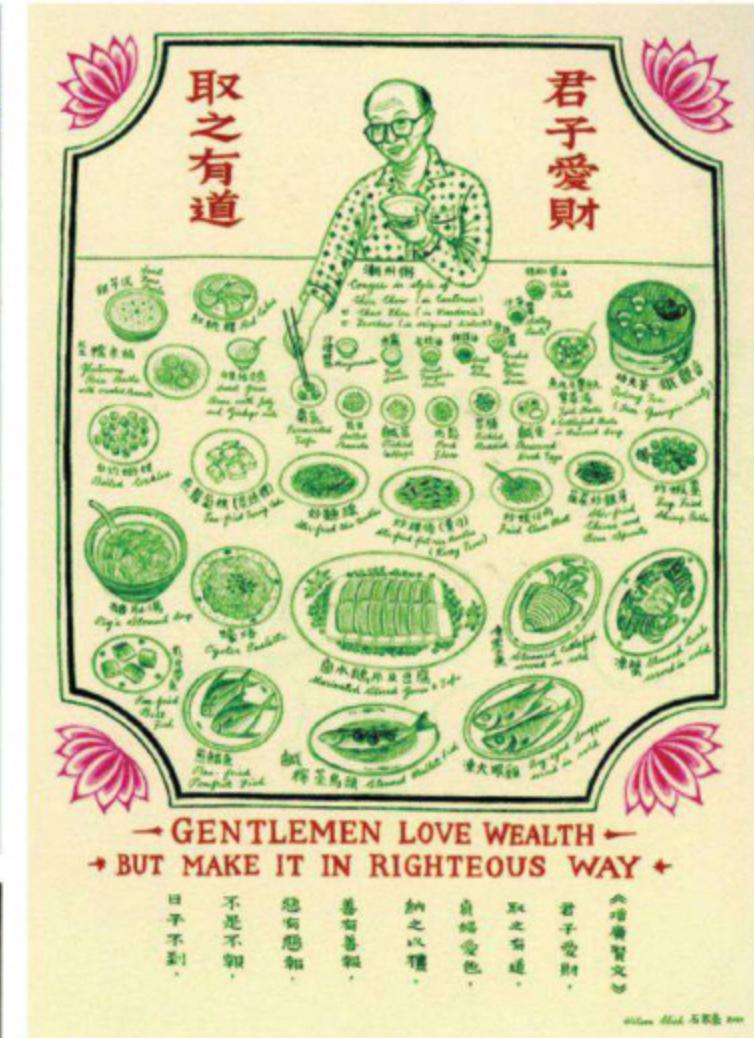
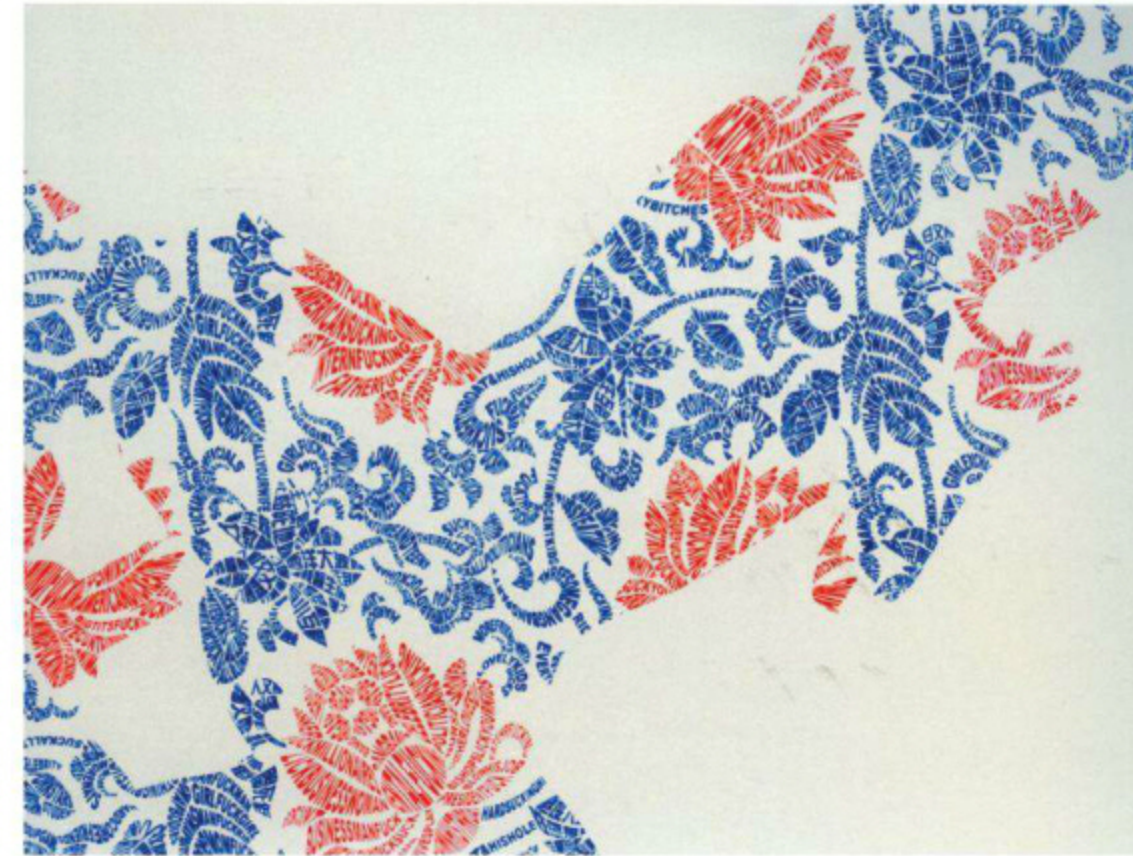
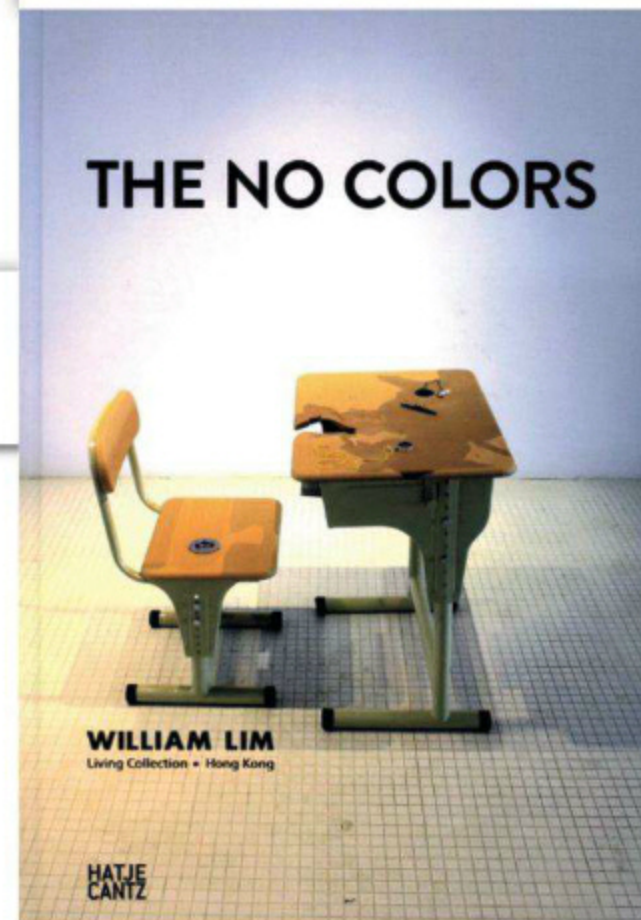


The sometimes prescient, oft thankless, task of the private art collector is to amass what he or she deems a body of art work that exhibits cohesion, or logic, or beauty, as defined by that same collector. Great ones turn out to be 'ahead of their time' and wait for the public, or at least the cognoscenti, to catch up. Of course, when that happens, financial rewards generally follow. Others remain in the wilderness of autonomy, perhaps lonely, perhaps content, accompanied by their paintings, sculptures, videos and photographs as aesthetic compensation.

If you were wise or lucky enough to be collecting contemporary Chinese art ten or twenty years ago, for instance, and did so with a modicum of knowledge (or again, luck), you might now be sitting on a small fortune in monetary value, whether or not you were willing to part with the canvases. But in Hong Kong, the art scene has followed a slightly less direct path, with many young and middle-aged artists producing work outside the spotlight, bravely soldiering on amid a general indifference to their plight and their products (the 'No Colors' of the title here refers to this).

William Lim, the architect, artist and collector, is something of a maverick in this regard. A lifelong aficionado of art and antiques, he shifted his focus to work produced locally (his hometown) years ago, and therefore has followed in tandem the evolution of the art scene in this city. Not many of the artists he has been collecting here have reached the pinnacles of the now world-famous names across the border. And the composition of his private collection, newly published in this handsome and readable book, is uneven, to say the least, which is probably how he'd describe it – proudly – himself. After all, collecting at the forward edge of new art seems to necessitate embracing a wider variety of actual art, and to require a certain fearlessness in doing so.

Lim's passion for the subject, and his unflagging support of the local art scene, is as infectious as it is admirable, and this book is a lovely introduction to many of the principal figures in Hong Kong art. Copiously presented in full colour, the book also boasts a series of transcribed conversations between Lim and artists, gallerists and intellectuals, that are informative and intriguing. To his credit, he hasn't simply put together a self-congratulatory catalogue of his own possessions and taste; he's made a very real attempt to look at, and talk about, the state of new art in Hong Kong. Thus *The No Colors* joins a growing discussion on art here, from the small (private collectors and galleries) to the huge (M+, the auctions and Art Basel)... which is collectively contributing to the city what art should do: a central ingredient of the cultural recipe.



One city/two schools of architecture/two relatively new heads... hinge sits down at HKU and CUHK to hear what's been happening, and what is to come.

hinge CW Welcome to Hong Kong. When did you start your post here?
I started in May, 2013.

h CW Can you tell us a little about yourself and your background?
First, I want to point out that I'm not an architect; I'm an urban planner who has been working for a long time at the boundaries of planning, urban design and urban economics. I think that this background is good for the faculty at this juncture. I have been an urban scholar for 30 years, and my niche is marrying design, urban economics and spatial analysis. I am a well-published researcher, which was why I was picked for this job and given the task of helping raise the research profile of the faculty.

I have spent the majority of my career in Wales at Cardiff University's city and regional planning department - for 25 years this was the leading planning school in the U.K. As an urban theorist, I have written 10 books and 200 published articles, a number of them award-winning. I give three or four keynote talks around the world each year in a great variety of disciplinary contexts including architecture, planning, geography, political science, law, real estate, construction and medicine.

And I have been connected with Asia for my entire career, specifically China and Southeast Asia. I worked on several UNESCAP and UNESCO projects in Asia in the 1990s and 2000s, on urban training, management and capacity building.

h CW Were you working in a research and planning capacity for the government and NGOs or were you working in design?
I'm not a practising urban designer, although urban design is the focus of much of my work at the moment. In the past, my focus has been urban economics, land policy and other things. I am principally a scientific urban researcher and urbanist teacher. I have sometimes provided consultancy covering master planning issues and urban design issues lately has been through the modelling of the United Nations and national governments. My main input into physical planning and urban design issues has been through the modelling of urban accessibility using network analysis tools such as Space Syntax and sDNA. I still enjoy taking on challenging land policy jobs. Not so long ago, the King of Saudi Arabia invited me to write a law for him that temporarily stopped the land market around the holy environs of Mecca and addressed crowding issues without compromising religious space.

h CW Were you headhunted for your current job?
Yes. I originally said no! Cardiff is one of the nicest cities to live in and the university is in the ascendancy. But thankfully I was persuaded. My relationship with HKU goes back to the late 80s with the Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning (then Centre of Urban Studies and Environmental Management, or CUPEM). I gave my first ever international conference talk in the main building at HKU in 1987. Anthony Yeh (currently Chair Professor, Urban Planning and Geographical Information Systems), was the organiser and has been a good friend of mine since. Later, I was appointed to be honorary professor in the Department of Real Estate and Construction (REC). I published a well-received book on planning and property rights with REC's Professor Lawrence Lai in 2003.

h When you were at Cardiff, what proportion of your time was spent on academic administration in comparison to teaching and publishing papers?
CW Probably about 80 percent of my working week. I was head of a school that is about two-thirds the size of HKU's Faculty of Architecture and the U.K.'s top urban planning school for almost a quarter of a century. We had 800 students and almost 100 teaching, research and administrative staff. I led it under a very decentralised financial and management regime - much like HKU's faculty. I also taught.

h What changed your mind about HKU?
CW The potential of HKU's Faculty of Architecture. For me, it's a dream job. I had always worked in Asia and my links in China were rapidly expanding. There are few faculties with this mix of subjects under one roof. It was such a great opportunity to develop something new and strong in the most exciting place in the world to study and influence urbanisation.

There are only 10 faculties at HKU. Each is powerful with autonomous Deans and high budgets versus European universities. The staff includes some of the most able urban scholars in the world. Our students are increasingly top class; they are just as good as students from the top international institutes. But the department was ready for change.

h Do you see HKU as a local university or a Chinese one?
CW We are simultaneously both. It would be disingenuous to ignore our natural advantage. HKU is regarded as the best English language higher educational institute in greater China (along with National University of Singapore) and we can easily compete within the top rank of mainland Chinese universities. Increasingly we get people who come here for a masters or PhD instead of Harvard or UCLA.

Internationally, there is no reason why HKU should not succeed in its ambition to be the Harvard of the East. We compete with Tokyo and NUS in this and we have an outward-facing strategy. We have a huge number of international collaborations in teaching and research. We are welcoming more Europeans, Americans and Australians to our Masters programme. One trump card that HKU has is its large number of returning high calibre Chinese academics, especially from the US. We have more than our fair share of top candidates for jobs from this group. Top-class academics attract top-class graduate students. We're in a virtuous cycle.

CHRIS WEBSTER

h CW Can you be local, regional and internationally focused? That's something for everyone. Are you interested in nourishing local talent?
This balance remains a healthy tension in the faculty. We have a very loyal and active local alumni population with strong historical links to their alma mater. It comes with HK's compact size, which reminds me of the City of London, where it's easy to quickly arrange professional meetings over lunch. We have a fantastic partnership with the local professions and I want to foster this. However strong our international ambitions, our ambitions have to be rooted locally. To unhinge the two does a great disservice to everyone. Architecture, planning and the other subjects can all become overly abstract if too distant from local practice.

On the other hand, abstraction is important for the development of creative thinking, knowledge and interdisciplinary exploration. I believe that we should and can have both in our curricula. I inherited something slightly out of balance in this respect I think.

h It is always the tricky part of being Dean: how to project a balanced faculty to an international student body with no long term interest in HK. How do you feel they perceive the university?
CW International students, even very sophisticated ones, don't want pure abstraction. There is no such thing as general globalised abstraction in our field. Overseas students are interested in how buildings get designed and shaped in a high density city. They pick Hong Kong because we are a well regarded international centre of expertise. We have to give them cutting edge theory, models, abstractions and other thinking tools and practise-focused case material and problems to solve; otherwise, they won't come back. We train our students to think outside the box and beyond locally regulated building envelopes. We aim to create new conversations between designers, engineers and those who design and implement building codes and planning regulations.

Having a very international

student body and staff helps this. My task is to make sure all the good ideas flowing through the faculty have purchase on, and are influenced by, the very best of local practice.

h Were you hired as a peacemaker?

CW That's interesting! I am a very different person than the previous Dean. I am naturally interdisciplinary and naturally conciliatory. I believe in social science and artistic scholarship. I believe in unity, professionally and academically. I was brought in for that purpose I think. Also to improve the research culture. I see research and the associated process of knowledge creation and formalisation as an essential task for those set apart to work in universities, and I think that a focus on creating new and useful insights can overcome many differences.

h As you have inherited hires from abroad, what is your vision for new faculty hires?

CW Not all architectural graduates from elite international universities will make good, well-rounded HKU academics able to excel at teaching and research. But I hope that many of my predecessor's hires will make the grade. I am looking to hire people with evidenced excellence in design, social science, building science, the arts, landscape, ecology and so on. Candidates must be able to teach, form and profess intellectual ideas and communicate them. Their ideas have to be useful to scholars and practitioners, and they have to communicate them well through teaching and publication.

h Your system will take a few years to see through.

CW I sit in on all departmental appointment panels. My experience so far shows that there are plenty of people out there who fit the bill. The prospects for hiring in the next few years are very exciting. At the same time I am working closely with tenure track colleagues hired by the previous Dean.

Granting tenure is an investment that shapes the faculty long term. I make it clear to newcomers that if they want to focus on design in their teaching and research, then the way to get tenure is to win competitions with credible jurors: to be practising registered architects or moving towards it; to be professing something intellectually distinctive and defensible; and to be communicating their ideas formally through scholarly articles. They must turn design practise into new knowledge and demonstrate the intellectual credentials of that knowledge.

In the long term, I expect to have about half a dozen people who are fundamentally design architects forming the core of a very strong practice-focused culture here. They would ideally be drawn from schools around the world.

People from the history and theory tradition in architecture, researching and teaching on the boundaries of urban planning, urban design and architecture theory, face a better understood route to tenure through publication of quality books and journal papers.

h There has always been tension between success in the practical world and meeting academic standards. A successful practitioner is already difficult to find, and they usually have no time to focus on being a good professor.

Yes, there is a tension. But the intensity of intellectual pursuits for designers is not quite that of those doing scientific or humanities research. The presumption is that if a teacher is making it as a rising international design star, there isn't any reason why he or she cannot write one monograph and a couple of journal papers in the five years running up to tenure. They should be able to articulate their work in an intellectually coherent way. If you want to become part of the elite intellectual community, you have to tell others what's special about your work.

Successful design academics must have a dual passion for both practise and knowledge creation. Those who don't have this should move out into practise. If they are good teachers they can work as part-time lecturers.

h What are your immediate plans for the faculty?

CW There are a number of strategic projects in preparation or started. An overarching one is to relaunch the image of the entire faculty as HKUrban Lab.

h Was this a natural outcome of your background or an opportunity that you saw after arrival in Hong Kong?

CW Both. Many of the most exciting, vibrant and energetic urban research centers around the world have been operating as laboratories of one description or other. The new name, which will co-exist with the formal Faculty of Architecture name, signals that our work is embedded in the city, that we are discoverers and inventors and that we have a common purpose across the disciplines and departments.

h Does this new umbrella mean new positions or taking the same cake dough and reshaping it?

CW It's about branding, focusing, projecting and networking - being clearer and bolder about what we do. It is also a platform for better cross-department and cross-faculty work.

I'm also excited about the headlining projects that we have underway within HKUrban lab. Project Myanmar is initially a three-year project, giving our students the chance of being exposed to a developing country at the earliest stage of economic take-off and urbanisation. We are running three or four studios in Yangon each year, covering landscape, planning, architecture, urban design and conservation. These are working collaboratively with each other and with local counterparts.

Another example of a strategic project is the iLab. We are making a HK\$10 million investment in an urban informatics lab on the seventh floor of Knowles Building as a focus for BIM, GIS and computational architecture research and teaching. Early projects in the iLab include a BIM project in collaboration with the Hong Kong Housing Authority and looking at supply chain management between Hong Kong and Pearl River Delta manufacturers. A Walkable Hong Kong project is a two year investment aimed at creating a digital 3D pedestrian network model for the whole of the territory. This will be used for measuring walkability as an input to the Green Building Council BEAM+ neighbourhood evaluation tool, for example; and exploring the walkability impact of large new developments, elevated walkway proposals and so on.

We have set up collaborations between HKU's Faculties of Architecture and Medicine. Our Healthy Cities project currently has two research projects in the UK, measuring the effects of built environment configuration on individual obesity, cardio-vascular and mental health. We are planning to extend this to the large medical research cohorts managed by HKU's Faculty of Medicine.

The Shanghai Study Centre will be revitalised with an exciting new and expanded program of teaching, networking, outreach and collaboration with Shanghai universities, professionals and BIM technology providers. We intend for the Shanghai Study Centre to become a club for our partner architecture schools around the world, who will use it for their China-focused teaching. It will also be an industry-focused club that links these visiting students and academics with some of the biggest construction clients in China and around world.

Another project is our planned HKU gallery. We have a gallery in the Shanghai Study Centre and I have secured university and outside money for its twin at HKU. Actually, it will be larger than the boutique gallery space in Shanghai. It will host international designers, our own teachers' work, student work from HKU and our partners around the world.

h Were any of these projects in your suitcase upon arrival?

CW I came with nothing except my clothes and books! I presented no firm strategic ideas during my interview; only the promise that I would listen, identify an exciting strategic future for the Faculty, secure the necessary funds to implement it and give the necessary leadership. The projects are a mix of my own vision and the seeds from the imaginations of my HKU colleagues.

h How do you see city's various schools and how HKUrban Lab fits into it?

CW HKU has a responsibility to form the future professional leaders of Hong Kong and the wider region. I am interested in collaboration with other universities in Hong Kong, not pretending that they do not exist. I see competition as healthy, and believe that collaboration and competition both have a place. We can work together to put architecture and urban scholarship in Hong Kong more firmly on the international map. Since I have taken office, CUHK and HKU have collaborated on a global smart geometry conference; the Healthy Cities initiative, and are about to have collaborative talks about conservation, urban climate modeling and urban design.

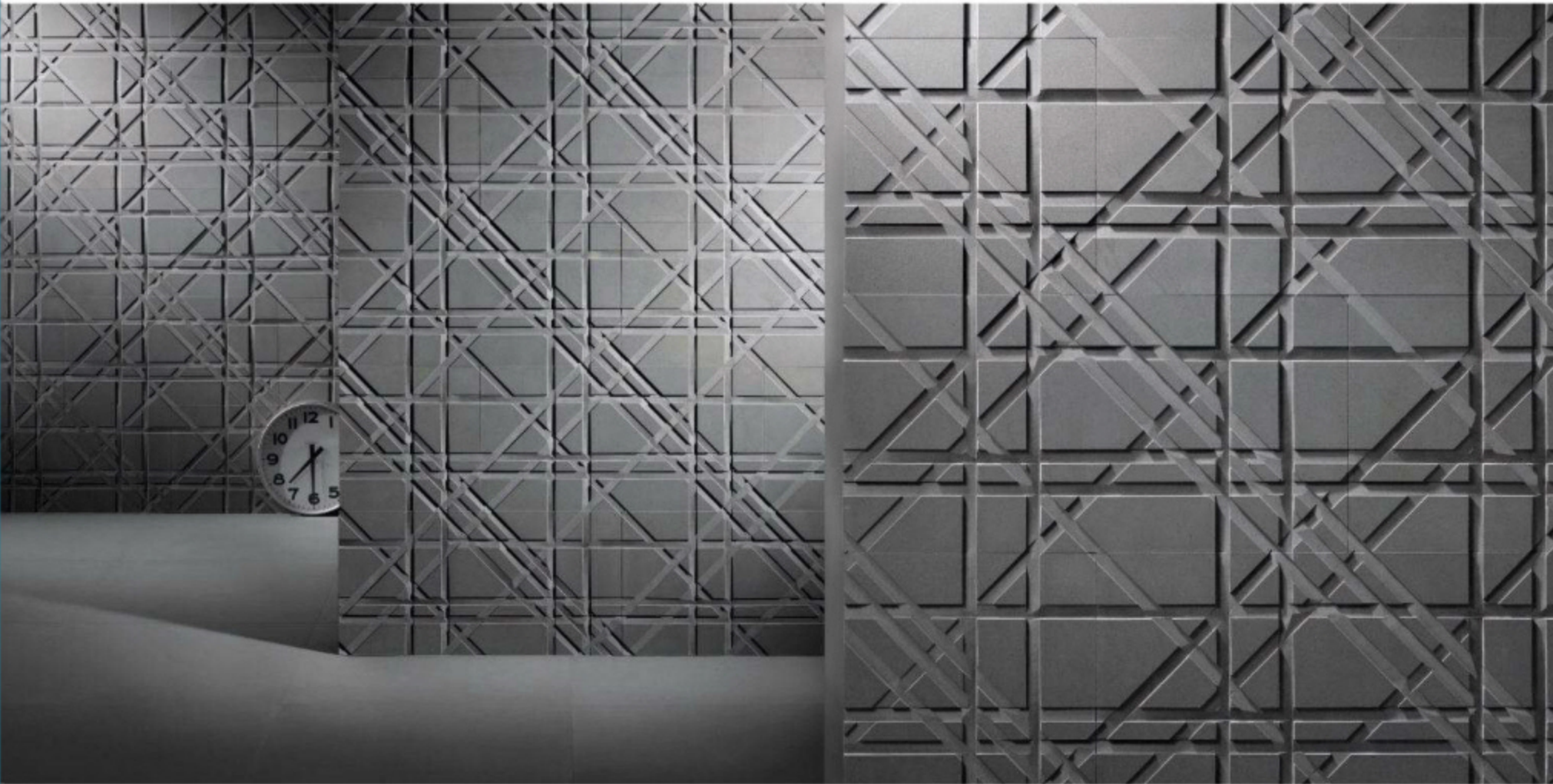
h Tell us how you've adjusted to Hong Kong so far.

CW I moved here in May 2013 and live in Sheung Wan. I have a 17 year old son completing his last year of high school in the UK and a 21 year old daughter in her final year of university in London. Both are budding bio-scientists. My wife is continuing her physiotherapy work in Cardiff while my son is still at school and plans to move to Hong Kong after that. They all love visiting and the kids love exploring the region. I once took them to Fujian's mountains to buy new-harvest Tieguanyin, which we are all addicted to.

Hong Kong is a wonderful city to live in. It's generally a 10 to 15 minute taxi ride wherever you want to go. I don't have a car here. People are healthier in high-rise cities: density and hills reduce obesity. The food's second to none of course although I must admit I miss the refined Indian cuisine of the UK. My favorite place to eat here so far is an unpretentious seafood restaurant in Happy Valley where they serve lobster in a cheese sauce and where the razor clams in black-bean sauce are exquisite.

h Thanks and best of luck.

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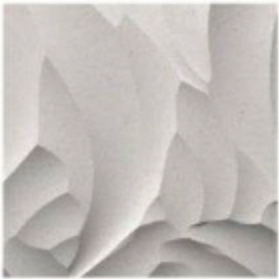
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panels, mentoring students, etc. In exchange, our students get to understand better the eventual roles and responsibilities of practising architecture. Once students graduate, it's no longer all about them, they are designing for others. So they can understand that when you design for yourself, you can call yourself an artist. But once you design for others – clients, communities, society – then you can start calling yourself an architect. Architecture in many ways is the art of spatial problem solving. So I think building up that understanding early on is important.

When you were first approached for this position, what was your initial reaction?

h NC Fear, denial, shock-and-awe (laughing). Honestly, the job requirements are impossible to fulfil: no one can be all things to all people. In fact, I had recommended to the Search Committee a number of excellent candidates from China, Singapore and Japan...but they are all sort of at mid-career, so it's difficult for them to make that commitment. But now, I'm getting old! So maybe I am realising at this late stage in my professional career, you know, how many more buildings are I going to knock out? Perhaps this is one way to have a scaleable influence with the next generation of graduating students.

In truth, I was actually thinking more how to wind down my career, not ramp it up. I had already promised my wife that I would. So, when this offer came up, my first reaction was to go home to her and say, 'you know, the craziest thing happened today', and no way was I going to consider it seriously. But she was the one who told me, 'This seems kind of important, maybe you should consider it carefully.' So, I have her blessing and support... otherwise, no way.

The other great support comes from my practice – we have reached the point where all my senior associates have been with me for 20–25 years or so – my staff are all capable and mature, and we have a great amount of mutual trust. I see them at the beginning and end of each day, and I need to catch up more on weekends. I sense that our best design projects are still ahead.

So you're having a career surge!

h NC You know, Prof Tunney Lee (CUHK's founding chair) once said to me, years ago, that the best experience for heading a school of architecture was leading a small design practice. The faculty is about the same size as my office, about 20 people. Of course, there is far more bureaucracy in university administration. And, it is never ending. Fortunately, we have hardly any politics among faculty members within our school and it's pretty much always been that way.

That's rare.

h NC It is very rare. I think that we enjoy a sense of shared values and mission. Maybe it's a kind of 'we try harder' attitude as the relative newcomer among the two schools of architecture in Hong Kong. Having said that, our graduates do exceedingly well in terms of HKIA qualifying exam results as well as eventually in the profession.

**Professor of Practice in Architecture
Director, School of Architecture
The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

NELSON CHEN

Photography by Cheung Wai-lok @ Hiro Graphics

How did your appointment (as director of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) School of Architecture) come about?

h NC Well, it was never in my plans, but I've been affiliated with the school in teaching and advisory capacities for over 20 years, so there was a sense of service... I had been approached in the past, but, with my practice, never had the time. When I used to teach in the late 90s as an adjunct professor, even that was never easy. I often felt caught between office and school demands. So, I retired from teaching around the time when Professor Essy Baniassad arrived as the head. He asked if I might help out with external exams, and I ended up doing it once or twice a year for 12 to 13 years. Which is pretty gruelling, but also enjoyable and a way to know what's going in with the school. Eventually, duty called with this new position. So, I had to put those golf clubs away!

It's a big commitment.

h NC It is, especially since my practice is very busy.

Not to make this a comparison with The University of Hong Kong's Faculty of Architecture (HKU), but it is a natural one, to some extent.

h NC I think Chris (Webster, HKU's Dean and Chair Professor) has the harder job, because he came into a situation of post-revolution, while mine is more a situation of evolution. I knew (the late) Ralph Lerner (former Dean at HKU) a very long time, he was a couple years ahead of me at the GSD in the mid 70s. To use building terminology, Ralph came to HKU with a view to do demolition and redevelopment of the existing curriculum, whereas I am perhaps just building extensions on existing foundations and superstructure. Anyway, we have always had a very good programme at CUHK. We don't have a long history – the school started in 1991 – it has established itself well. We've just had our 18th graduating class this past spring.

How challenging is it to combine your new academic responsibility with your ongoing professional practice?

h NC I won't lie, it is a daily challenge, and I find myself burning the candle at both ends. Whenever I am awake, I am at work. But it might have been even more onerous for some of my academic predecessors. For a fulltime academic, it's not a good gig – it is a significant time commitment that takes them away from teaching or research, etc. Whereas for me, my life is quite simple. I have my professional practice, of course, but I'm not applying for research grants, publishing in journals, or teaching lecture courses and all of that.

Was there a preference for an internal candidate?

h NC I understand the search was initially for an external candidate. But, it wasn't easy to identify someone well-informed in practice as well as in academics, and who comes from an international educational background yet also has familiarity with Asia, China, and Hong Kong. While I have over 38 years of professional practise, I don't hold a PhD, so I call myself an 'accidental academic'. On the other hand, it is a professional school, with professional accreditation from HKIA, so I think that one of the essential goals for our programme is to build stronger bridges with the architectural profession, and I can certainly do that. For the profession not to just look at our school as a job fair, but to have more practitioners involved with design reviews, external

h As the leader of the school, do you see yourself coming in and stirring things up, or rather more as 'steady as she goes', making refinements and polishing?

NC Well, it's not just keeping a seat warm or being a caretaker. That wouldn't interest me. There are, in an evolutionary not revolutionary way, some significant changes that I'm introducing to the programme, collectively with our strong team of professors. One example is the alignment of design and research, which are often seen as parallel but separate activities. But one thing we're doing very consciously is to align them and consolidate them together. So that research helps drive the meaningful content in the design studios, and the outcome of those design studios help to reinforce the research. After looking at the streams of research being conducted by the faculty now, we identified five areas: design methodology and practice; building technology and sustainable design; digital technology and computational design; history, culture and conservation; and urban design and landscape urbanism. Each of the design studios, especially in the masters degree, is identified with a Design Research Unit. So you have a community of professors within a group, and when students take a design studio, not only are they working with a tutor, but they are also able to gain access to people who have shared design and research interests. So it helps to sharpen our focus in design studio.

At the same time, we are becoming more rigorous about the expectations and requirements in the studio teaching and learning. So, in our master's programme, which is just a two-year sequence, the majority are from our undergraduate programme at CUHK, and they have a good foundation. But, we also attract several new students from other schools, and we welcome that diversity, but they don't all arrive with the same design background and capability, so we need to reintroduce that common foundation in first semester. By the thesis year, however, we can expect more speculative design exploration, but based on a firm foundation of core competence.

So the expectation is a design programme that is much more rigorous, better defined, more unified. And in the Masters thesis year, where it used to be conceived as one semester of research followed by one semester of design, it will now become much more integrated. I think the design has to be introduced very early in the first semester, and in the second semester you have to revisit the research, to test whether you're fulfilling that initial mandate or not. So both years of the master's programme are being restructured in subtle but significant ways. I hope it works. And, if it doesn't, we're going to keep on trying until it does!

h The key is the faculty, because you can lay out the vision, and the students will trust what the school sets out for them. But the faculty have to sign on intellectually and then effect it.

NC In fact, it does not change what our faculty have been doing all along, other than to offer more clarity and purpose. A professor who is in a Design Research Unit but has diverse interests can certainly teach one Unit for one year, and another the next year. In fact, I would encourage that, because at the end of the day you really unite all these positions in a comprehensive project. But, the Design Research Unit helps address the question: what is your critical position? In fact, at some interim reviews, you have to ask the students, what is actually your thesis? What is your position on this particular issue, to give it that intense focus? That goes back to developing critical thinking.

There is a real tendency in our profession to give preconceived answers to the wrong questions. Nowadays, there is so much stylistic branding to architecture. When we were in school there was not this repulsive word 'starchitects'...

h But there were star architects, to be sure.

NC Outstanding architects like Louis Kahn and I.M. Pei, but not promoted like fashion designers, for 'branding' and PR, which I find so horrifying. In schools if you just follow fashions, you create graduating classes of future 'design-osours', because they'll become extinct! So, I do sincerely hope by the time my term is completed, this word 'starchitecture' will have disappeared from our lexicon, and we can return back to design fundamentals.

h Where is the student body from, mostly?

NC Still mostly local students from Hong Kong are admitted, whether via local schools and DSE (known as JUPAS) or via international schools or returning from overseas (non-JUPAS). Perhaps 10% come from mainland China. We also have exchange students, for example, from Europe, and we are trying to encourage more exchanges among our students. In fact, one of the things I'd really like to do is for every one of our students who goes through the full BSc and MArch sequence to have the opportunity for some overseas study and travel experience.

h On their own, or as study-abroad programmes, or as internships?

NC All the above, including study tours, with our projects based at international sites, as well as summer or semester long academic exchanges. Students who do that come back with more maturity and a broader vision.

h And what is CUHK's connection to the mainland?

NC A number of our professors have close collaborations with their counterparts in Mainland schools including Tsinghua, Tongji and several at Dongnan (Southeast University in Nanjing). And, as mentioned, we have a number of Mainland students.

h Is that rising?

NC They have much more presence in our teaching postgraduate programmes, viz., Master of Science in Sustainable and Environmental Design, Urban Design, and Architectural Conservation and Design. These are one year programmes, what the university calls self-financed programmes. Also, a majority of our PhD candidates are from Mainland.

h Does the proportion of untenured positions allow you to affect the school through new hiring, or is it pretty stable?

NC Good question. Yes and no - I have just hired three new fulltime professors, which is a fairly big percentage for a faculty of our size, now reaching 23 to 24 fulltime teachers. In fact, over the past two years we have gained nearly one-third new faculty, who represent great additions to bolster our design teaching efforts.

h How do you see the school's relationship to the city, the region, and the world? Are we in an era when the learning and teaching of architecture is per force international?

NC Well, the tradition of architectural education in Hong Kong for many years was really training graduates for local practice. When CUHK architecture was started, the real premise of it was that we needed more graduates to fill the needs of the profession. So it doubled that number. But under the founding leadership of Prof Tunney Lee, it was very international from its origin. So, perhaps at that time, HKU was focused on preparing grads to practise in Hong Kong, whereas CU was focused on educating them to practise anywhere in the world. Nowadays, of course, I think both schools do a very good job of preparing students to practice both locally and worldwide. And we do encourage our graduates, if they have the opportunity, to practice on the Mainland and abroad. For example, we have a wonderful internship programme generously sponsored by Wharf, where they can intern anywhere with full financial support, with leading architects such as Herzog + deMeuron, Christian Kerez, Jean Nouvel, among others.

I would venture to say, without any hyperbole, that our top 5% students would compare favourably with the top 5% from any school. Of course, our median isn't the same as Harvard or Princeton, and the aim of any good educational institution is how you raise that median. But, our stars set a high bar, and that encourages their classmates to see what is possible, thus, elevating everyone's game. And when you see that happening, it's really exciting. I really hope we can create more of those opportunities in our design studios.

h Is there anything the university set as your mandate?

NC Architecture schools worldwide are generally not well understood in a traditional academic sense by university administrations. What we consider to constitute research may not be understood as traditional research by the institutions. Which is a real issue, because your RAE (research assessment results) ultimately dictate how much of the grants are allocated to the department. So funding will be reduced unless you meet the quota, which means your faculty will be reduced. We face this pressure and challenge all the time. We have to achieve stronger results in the research field, but in architecture that research manifests itself in other forms such as

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innovative designs for buildings and installations, not simply journal articles. Another strong argument for realigning the research/studio system is that it also benefits the research side. I have to confess that I have focused on the studio teaching side, because I am not a researcher to begin with. But, my faculty colleagues all jumped on it and said that it is going to help us with our research direction as well. So, in addition to inviting external reviewers and visiting critics to design studios, I am also actively seeking visiting professors and scholars that I know are coming to Hong Kong to spend an extra day or two with us to conduct external reviews for our PhD students and to build up that important exchange.

h Not everyone sees the benefits of integrating theory and research, and practise and design.

NC Which seems odd, because architecture is founded on integration. Perhaps it reflects how society views us – architects are normally portrayed as soloists. Whereas architects are not soloists, and actually never have been, but are more like conductors. There are many players in that orchestra, and the conductor has to know about all those instruments, or at least a good conceptual understanding of them. This is similar to how we practise in real life, since the architect should be the lead consultant in the design and construction process, where we rely on engineering consultants, building contractors, et al, but are ultimately responsible to integrate their several contributions. In so doing, we need to be truly knowledgeable – not just superficially – about structural framing, building services, lighting, acoustics, construction process,....the whole nine yards.

h Which goes to the original definition of 'architect'.

NC Yes, not only the building designer but also the master builder originally.

h Do you think that the world has changed that idea of the architect as soloist? Perhaps it's only with experience that we learn the collaborative reality of architecture.

NC If architects begin to feel disenfranchised from the building process – maybe we have only ourselves to blame. In present times, the project manager is often the lead consultant. So we have another intermediary between the architect and the client. And that PM is often times an unsuccessful or frustrated architect or engineer in the first place! The PM's concerns are schedule and budget; by nature, he will be risk-averse to anything that potentially puts schedule and budget in jeopardy. But, everything we do in architecture is by intrinsic nature a risk-taking activity. Isn't it? Even at a small scale, you begin with a blank piece of paper and turn an abstract idea or notion into built reality. In order to recapture our original responsibility as the leader of the entire building process, you have to bring more to the table. You cannot just be the pretty picture guy, but really need to know your craft inside and out, and answer the right questions. So, if the architect is just one of ten consultants around a table instructed by the PM, and viewed just as the guy who makes the facades pretty, then that's not good enough. We have a responsibility to take up the lead, not in an arrogant way but leading by doing, and integrating the consultants and contractors. Sure, it's even more hard work. Architecture is not an attractive career. It takes so long and also takes a special kind of personality – it helps to be a little bit crazy.

h Getting back to HKU... it's one town. Inevitably the two schools have a relationship. Do you consider them in any way comparatively? Or is it a red herring? In other words, is this city big enough to have two distinct schools?

NC At a personal level, there are a lot of close relationships between professors. We co-visit each other's schools for studio reviews. There is a lot of mutual respect and cooperation. Though I think we can do even more, maybe formalise the collaboration or conduct joint design and research projects. Perhaps the ones not quite onboard with it are the students! They might see it more as a rivalry.

h If a high school student asked you what the difference is between the two programmes, what would you say?

NC They are both excellent programmes. You just find one that has the right fit for you. It's looking at the nature of the projects in studio, the interests of the teachers, and where your interests and the schools' align. For example, our school is known for its commitment to social concerns and community design projects, as well as to sustainable design. CUHK has the disadvantage of being far away from town, but the advantage of having its own purpose-designed building. And CUHK as a university is largely a residential university, which means our students fully enjoy that collegiate experience since all undergrads have the opportunity to live in one of the colleges on campus. That might be attractive to some students in learning how to be independent away from home.

h If you think of substantial cities, London or New York or Boston, that have the ability to support two (or more) schools of architecture, often the resulting schools are quite different, even if both are excellent. One thinks of Harvard and MIT, or Columbia and Cooper Union, or the AA and the Bartlett...

NC True, but when that occurs, I think it does so organically, not by design or pre-conceived intentions. As stated before, the architecture programme at CUHK has always been characterised as having a focus on social issues where community projects are emphasised. And, we have an emphasis on craft, even with computers. Digital design alongside handcrafted models are still very much compatible activities. You know, you can't keep computers out of the studio. We used to say no computers in first year, but invariably they creep in earlier and earlier simply because the students are all very well-versed. I am still old-school, and feel it is important to be able to print like an architect! I always carry a small scale in my pocket, and multiple pens of different thicknesses – different pens for sketching vs. writing. Now it's all click, click, click on a mouse.

h Well, if you can get your students to sketch again, that would be impressive!

NC Not to forget model building. You know the process of making the model helps you understand a building and how it's assembled. In my practice, we say model building is a dress rehearsal, because the questions a model builder will ask you are the same questions a contractor will ask you. At each stage, it's so essential not just to fulfil the basic requirements, but to make it represent your best efforts at that stage. Every stage of the process should be able to stand alone as a piece that communicates your intent with integrity. And for the students to be faithful to the process and also to document it, not just think of the final presentation drawings. I'm perfectly happy if a project isn't that 'finished' but shows that process. That's something I hope we can further develop in our teaching: a whole culture of design being at the centre of everything, and making a difference. Even things like attending presentations by visiting lecturers, it's easy for our students to skip because they're so busy in studio. But, it is so important to attend them, and become exposed to new insights.

h You've got a deep connection to this city. Will you take advantage of that, pulling in friends and colleagues to come in and contribute?

NC Yes, definitely. I have been inviting not just architects, but also engineers, contractors, consultants to participate – not just at final reviews, but also helping to be mentors to our students. Not only architects talking to architects, but developing that wider awareness. Of course, in Hong Kong everyone is so busy, but in fact they are also very generous. I've never had anyone say no.

h Will you have time to also do any teaching?

NC In fact, I will resume teaching thesis students this year. And I hope in a year or so, there is an introductory lecture course I would like to teach as well. So I will get to know students from beginning to end of the entire education sequence. Besides the enjoyment and stimulation, teaching enables me not just to "talk the talk but also to walk the walk", as that saying goes. I have to deliver the goods, too, just like my faculty colleagues.

Outside of studio, I try to spend some time with students each day. They know my door is always open, and they can see me for any issue. They are my first priority. Then, I also hope to have more time with faculty members, especially to encourage them on their research and grant applications so they will attain tenure when the time comes.

As for any major decision-making, the guiding principle is to follow the sequence of what is good for (in this order) 1. Students, 2. Staff, 3. myself. If we follow that sequence – 1,2,3 – and not any other order, it should end up as a sound decision. Everyone has bought into this "School First" philosophy. Of course, there are healthy differences of opinion, but you can kick the tires without kicking each other. In that respect, I am very blessed to have their full support, so we can all focus our energies together on what matters most – our students.

h Best of luck with it all. And we'll come back in a year or so to see how you're getting on. Thank you.



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LET THEM HAVE BETTER DESIGN



Eve Mercier is determined to transform Hong Kong's 'internal landscapes' through the "little soldiers" she is training at the institute she founded; Insight School of Interior Design. And she has plenty of inspiration for her mission...

In 2010, Japanese artist Takashi Murakami filled the Palace of Versailles with his works, marking the first of a series of collaborations between contemporary artists and the royal chateau that was once the centre of political power in France. While the exhibition generated renewed interest in the grand dame, it also sparked a flurry of controversy. Many protested that more is less, and that the regular art shows detract from the relevance of both the featured artist and the historic venue. Eve Mercier, a native of Versailles who grew up near the Petit Trianon (a small chateau located on the grounds of the Palace of Versailles), feels this is exactly the type of exercise that fosters critical thinking in her students.

"Saying no is just as important as saying yes," stresses Mercier. "When we interview potential students, it isn't necessary for them to have a portfolio. I ask them to bring in one image that they love, and one that they feel is badly composed or designed, and we assess their critical thinking. It's also a way for potential students to assess their own abilities."

Mercier first called Hong Kong home 14 years ago, when she lived in the city for three years. An interior designer by training – she is a graduate of the KLC School of Design in London and La Sorbonne in Paris – she returned to Hong Kong in 2012. The idea for Insight came about after she heard comments by a motley crew of professionals who all complained that Hong Kong does not know how to design interiors.

"A lot of schools here teach general design," she explains. "But interior design requires specific skills that take time to develop. It's a hands-on job, with training in client

management, art history, budgeting and contracting required. Through my research, I heard from many recruitment, architectural and interior design firms that Hong Kong interior designers are not properly trained. For example, one fresh grad from a local university specified door handles to be installed at 700mm height instead of 900mm. Another had no clue how to plan a washer-and-dryer for a client, because he lived at home and had never done laundry before. There are not enough people fit to help architects, and most interior design students here graduate with little knowledge of art history or furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E). A lot simply replicate what they see in magazines. If designers do that, it means they don't care – they don't attach value to their own designs. So how can they convince clients that their designs are indeed of value? My school aims to train not just designers; we aim to train good designers."

Situated on the top floor of a Chai Wan mixed-use building with expansive sea and mountain views, Insight's premises alone are inspiring. The facilities include a dedicated CAD lab, a library, a lighting studio where students can study the effect of different light temperatures on materials, a lecture room, administrative offices and a large pantry. "I am very French!" Mercier guffaws. "Our pantry allows students to enjoy good food and drink while sharing their experiences."

"Many of our students are mature; they may be looking for a change in career, and come from backgrounds such as marketing, law and banking, but always had an interest in interior design. They don't want a four-year degree. Our programme is intensive and we offer part- and full-time courses to give them all the tools they need."

Since opening in February, Insight has seen 220 students go through its still-developing curriculum. This fall, the school is offering one-year diplomas covering seven projects, as well as residential and commercial design certificates. "I am very ambitious," admits Mercier. "My aim is to train little soldiers with the necessary tools to spread the good news and make a real difference in the local interior design arena. I like Hong Kong; setting up the school here was a deliberate choice. It's a very positive place, with some of the world's most dramatic landscape. If Hong Kong paid attention to what it builds, I'd be happy."



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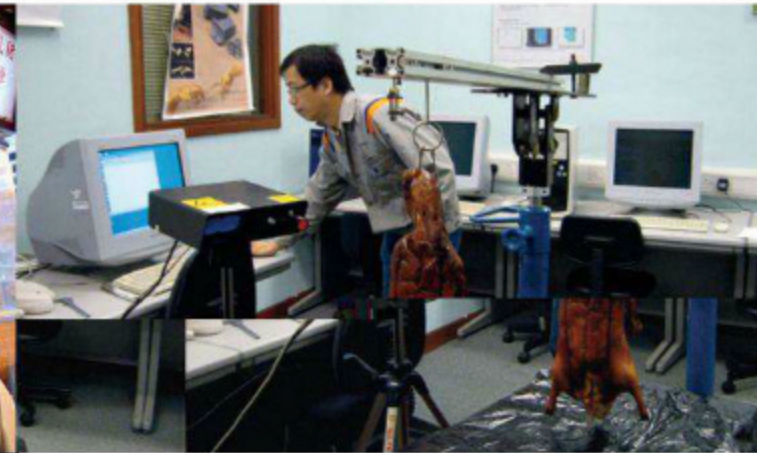
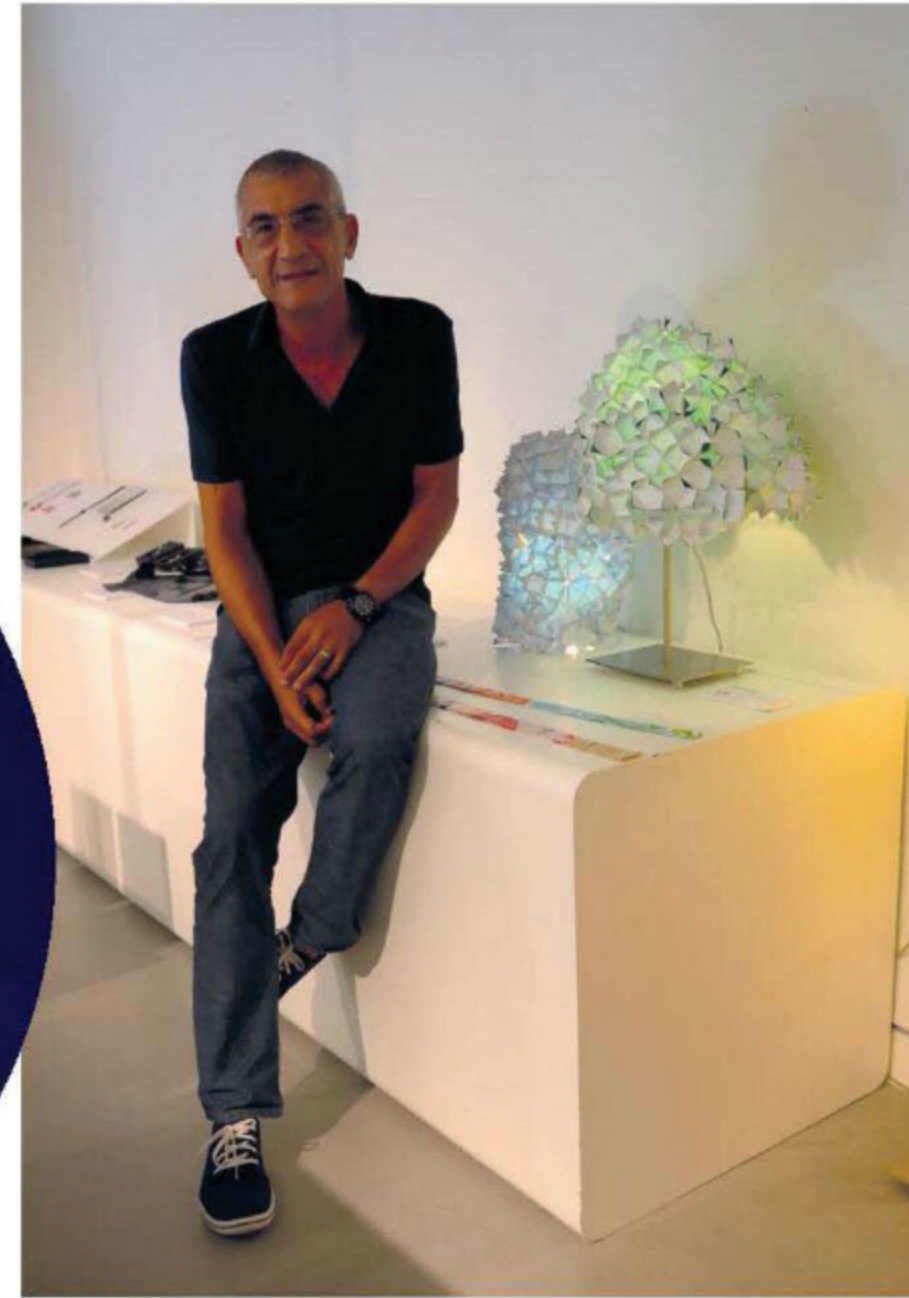
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WORKIN' IT

SD Works, School of Design,
Hong Kong Polytechnic University





onto SD Works' mass production process – or we may select 100. The course requires students to come up with a design that they have to present as a full marketing campaign, and encompasses prototype sample, print advertising, branding and concept statement. If they are able to take that into a startup venture, it's great. We help them where we can while letting them fly beyond PolyU."

SD's new 'home', designed by Zaha Hadid, has further helped inspire more students to push the boundaries of creativity. The facilities include a spacious theatre, a car lab and 3D printers. Yet Spicciolato is quick to point out that not all of his grads wish to pursue an entrepreneurial career, despite their success through SD Works. Cindy Yu, for example, an SD student who developed the Duck Necklace in 2006, originally considered various other iconic Hong Kong delicacies before finally settling on roast duck as the theme for her jewellery creation. A real roast duck was then purchased, scanned and prototyped, eventually becoming a necklace available in gold and silver plate, and that still sells like hotcakes seven years after it was launched. Instead of capitalising on that enviable start to a design career, Yu preferred to work on the runway, and is now a professional model. SD Works sells Duck Necklace through its website, and Yu is happy receiving royalties.

"The most important component of SD Works is to allow a platform for our students to come up with the craziest ideas possible," says Spicciolato. "We don't tell them what to do."

WHAT

Barnyard, a restaurant that takes its clients on a trip to the countryside.



Charlotte Street, London, surrounded by the Madding Crowd.

WHERE

WHO

London design consultancy Brinkworth, which took care of everything from the branding to the architecture; lightbulbs to menu fonts.

HOW

To help realise the restaurant's concept of an authentic agricultural experience (and great British food), materials were sourced from lightweight farm buildings. These include corrugated metal sheets and reclaimed timber boarding, retro light fixtures, and furniture and accessories that seem to have arrived that morning with the milk and eggs. Food and drink are served on enamel plates and old milk bottles. A real (live) tree occupies pride of place near a central staircase, which leads to a mezzanine.



Photography by Louise Melchior

Just because you live in a throbbing metropolis, together with millions of strangers (Hong Kongers take note), doesn't mean you can't enjoy a bit of the unique character of rural farms: the fresh, untainted air, the warm sunshine, the scent of grains and grasses, the sounds of cows and hogs, the special urge to get up early and trek the back forty... we should all be so lucky to grow up around a barnyard. Now at least, we can chow down as if we did.

WHY

 ZAZZERI



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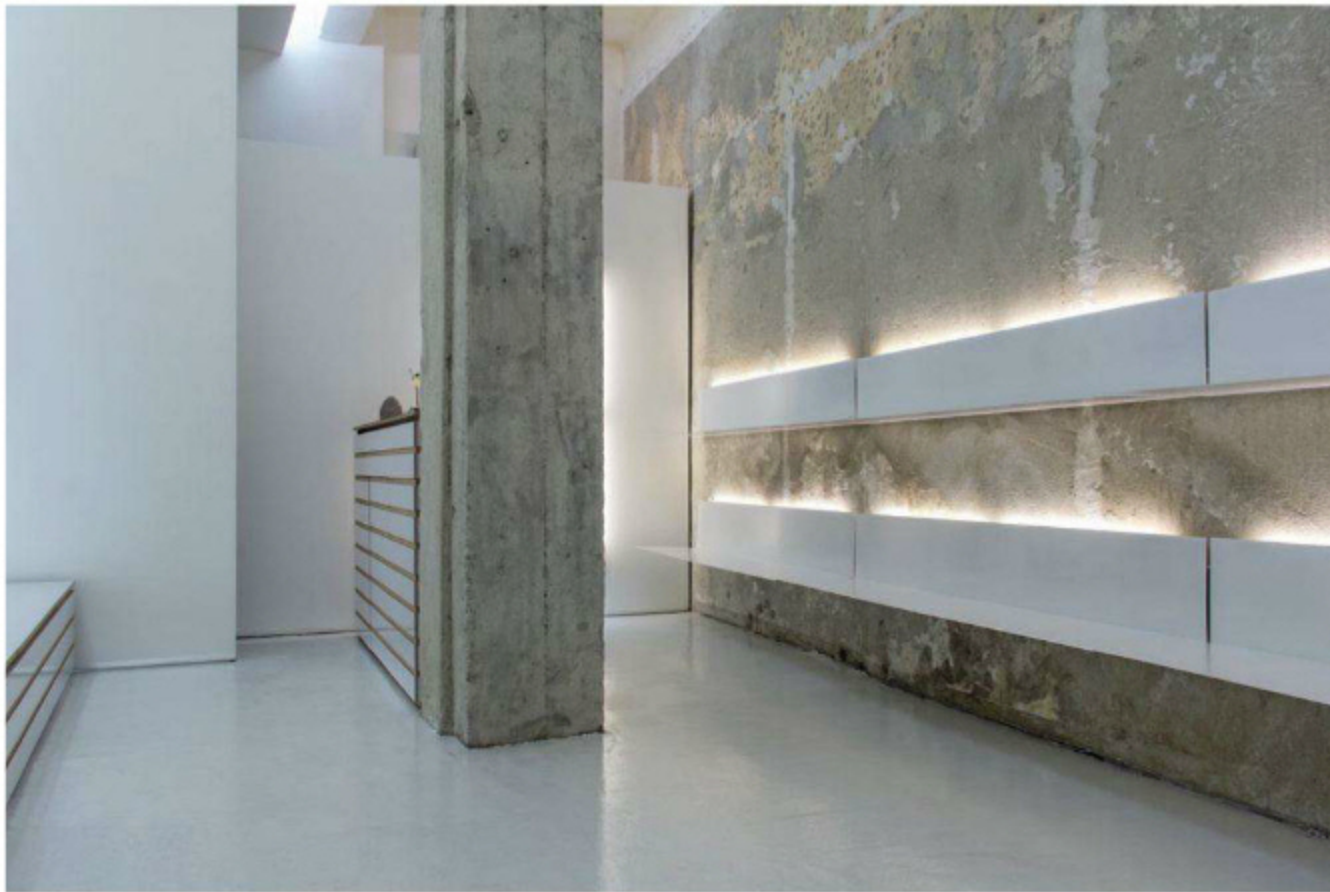
WHAT

La Scarpa, a new shoe venue situated within an older structure from the 1960s.

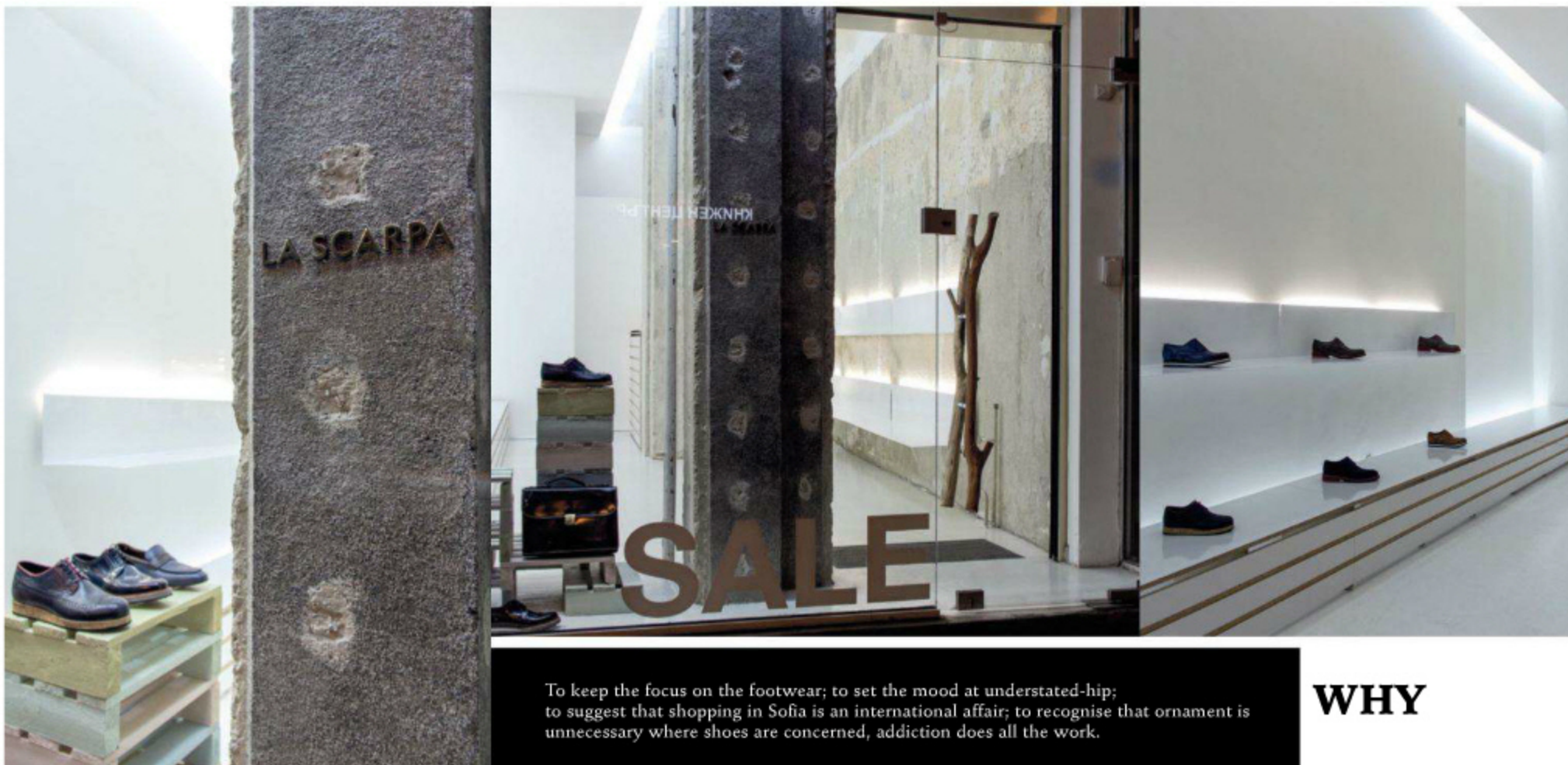
Sofia, Bulgaria

WHERE

Elia Nedkov

WHO

In retaining clear remnants of the old building, primarily through exposed, damaged concrete walls and structural members, the designer has set up a nice backdrop to the ultra-minimalist interior, providing the shoes with a potent juxtaposition of retro to modern. An axis organises the space, emphasized by the subtle lighting design, and a series of paper thin, floating metal shelves – backlit for effect – heighten the sleek-versus-rustic scheme.

HOW

To keep the focus on the footwear; to set the mood at understated-hip; to suggest that shopping in Sofia is an international affair; to recognise that ornament is unnecessary where shoes are concerned, addiction does all the work.

WHY

Olympia®



HMVdeal, a superstore that marks the local retail music scene's latest phase following the digital download evolution.

WHAT



WHO

anothermountainman aka 84000 Communications founder aka Stanley Wong acting as brand consultant and chief designer

WHERE

The third level of Entertainment Building, just steps from the bar and club precinct of Hong Kong's Lan Kwai Fong



With a chandelier made out of CD cases, a feature wall of iPhones and Android charger docks in the café, and an antique piano suspended from the ceiling. With a dedicated outdoor space lit at night by glowing white discs imbedded into balustrades that would jazz up any live gig. With Louis XIV inspired chairs upholstered with the black and white imprints of classic album artwork and audio graphics.

HOW

HMV has always prided itself as the leader in bringing new and cutting edge entertainment to consumers upon demand. Wong pays tribute to the golden age of entertainment by instilling numerous retro touches that seamlessly merge with avant garde elements. It is a step forward as well as a step back in time, and aims to reach new audiences without alienating old ones.

WHY

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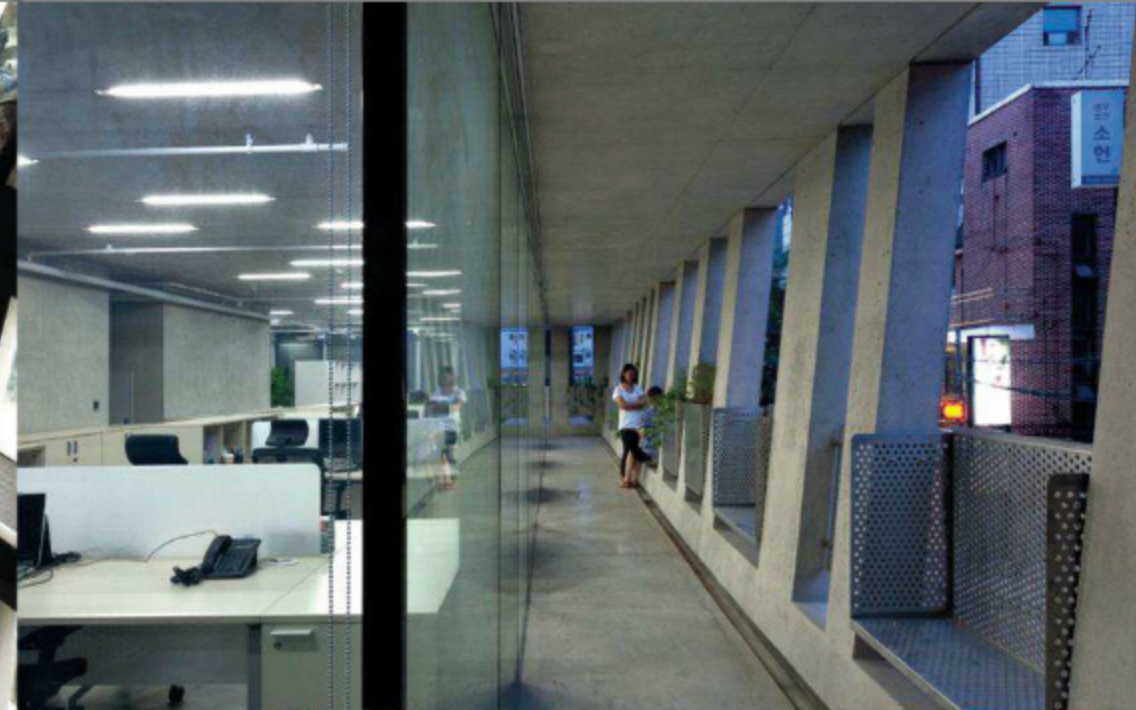
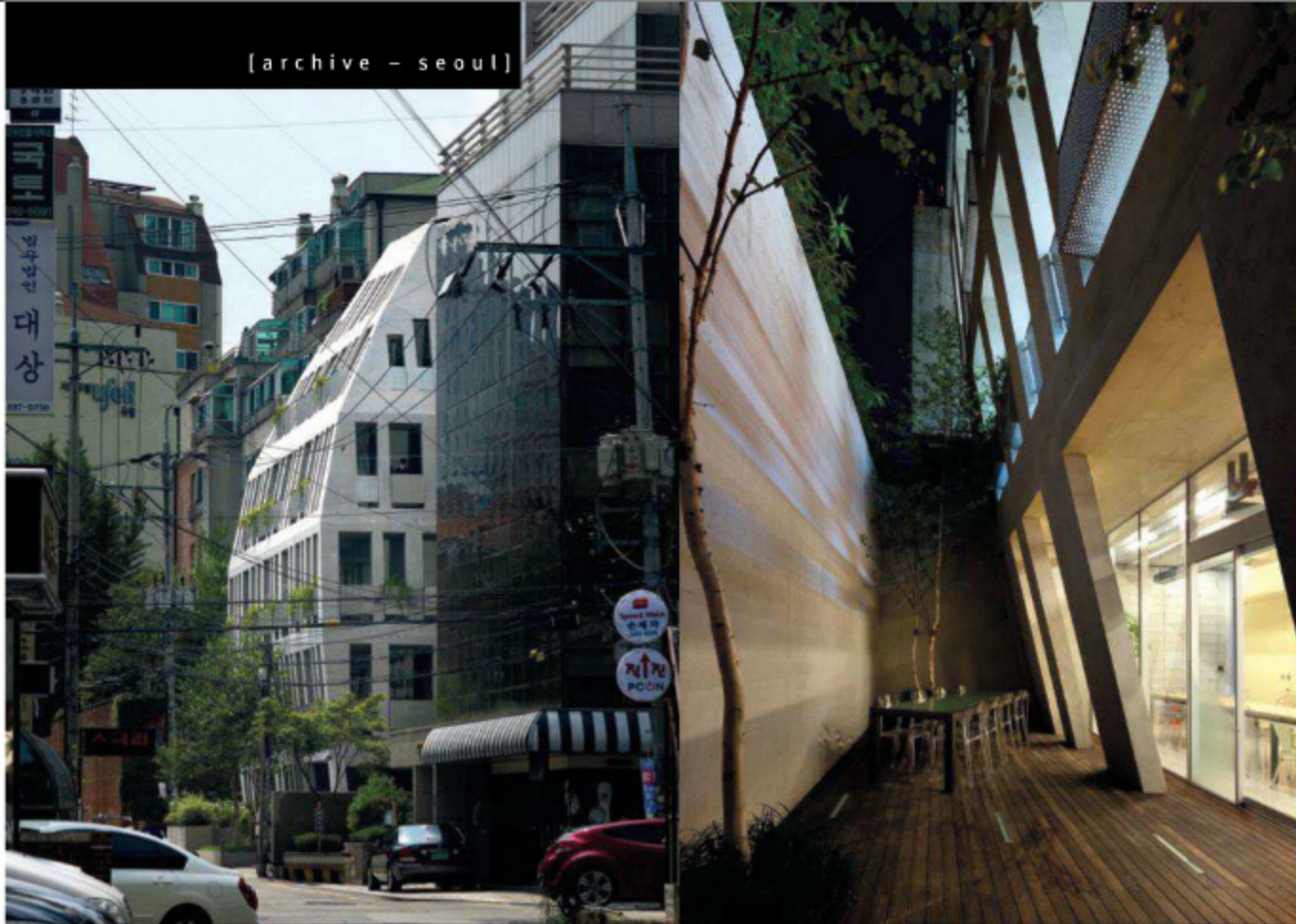
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GAS Chair

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York

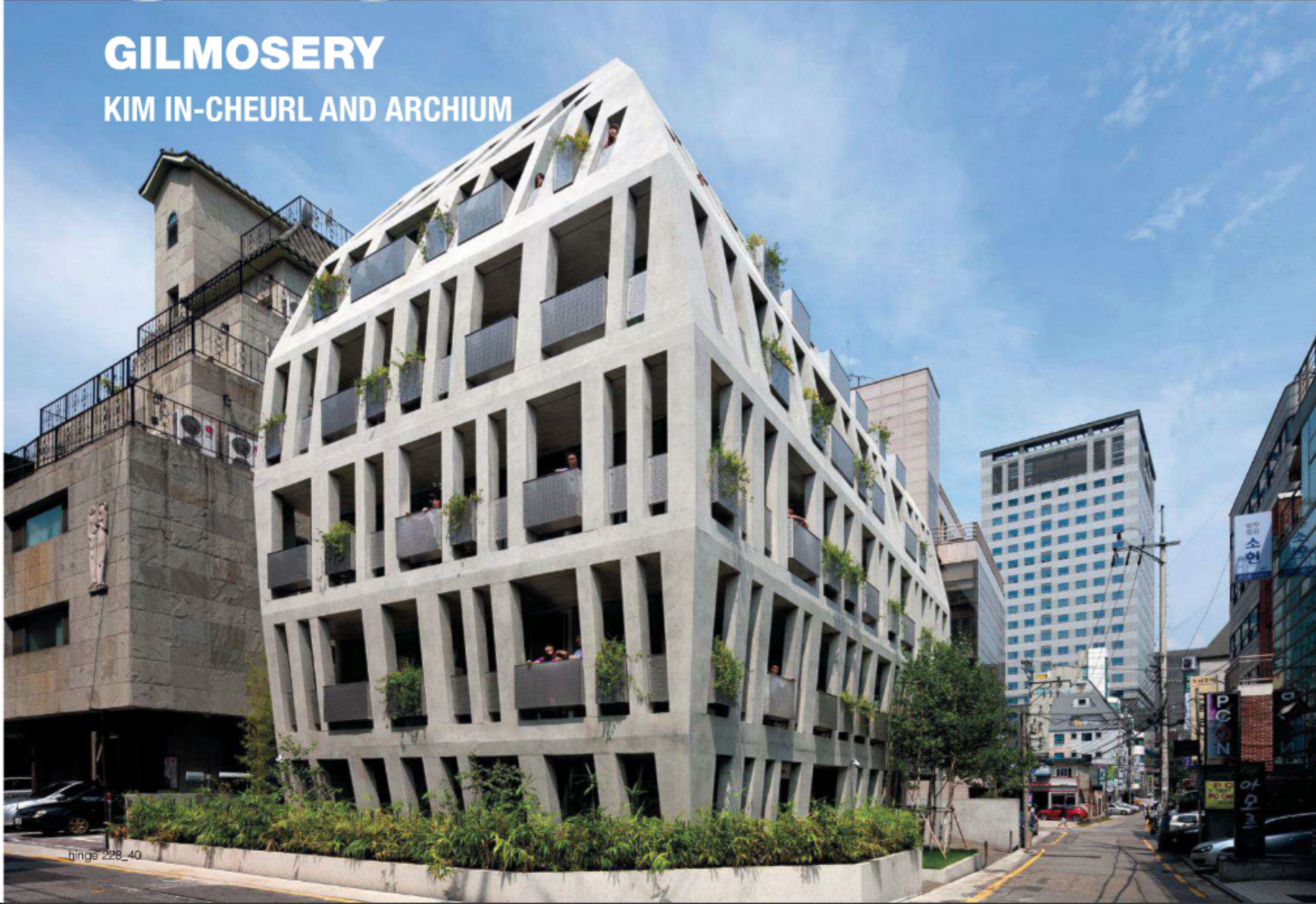
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SWOLLEN

GILMOSERY
KIM IN-CHEURL AND ARCHIUM



The most noticeable characteristic of this 108sq m office building for Settle Bank, a company that develops software for Internet banking, came about because of a clash with the existing building code, and the desire to maximise useable floor area within height restrictions. The building's bulging profile is based on a careful study of the building regulations, which allowed balconies as part of the land ratio rather than floor area ratio. This resulted in a gain of 20% in spatial terms, though of exterior balcony type, which was distributed imaginatively across the primary outer elevations – more to the central floors, less to the upper and lower ones. Together with the somewhat opaque patterning of the facades – creating balconies more like loggias than add-on appendages – and an irregular patterning of the outermost apertures, the elevations gained their originality.

Behind this outer facade, conventional glass curtain walls effectively claim the balcony space as perceptual interiors, extending the offices behind them toward the city beyond, while providing a useful and pleasant zone that sports vegetation in planters. The tactic overall is a success, and is not unintelligent in terms of sustainability as the wraparound loggia-balconies provide a layer of shade, lowering the costs of mechanically cooling the spaces inside. Because the concrete walls of the balcony are angled variously, there is also a lively diversity to the quality of natural light that penetrates the building. All in all, the facade strategy, for a relatively modest investment, repays the building both externally and internally, and gives it a very strong urban identity – a definite plus for corporate digs.

The interior spaces carry the bare concrete finishes through from the outside, and this too seems appropriate; it adds up to a handsome and unifying atmosphere throughout the spaces, helping to drive home the company ethos – mildly suggestive of its modernity as part of the Internet realm, yet also seeming a bit more substantial (and permanent) than a Web startup. After all, this outfit deals in money. And we are pleased it eschewed the usual kindergarten colours, oversized graphics and adult playground accoutrements of so many digital and virtual-realm companies. Settle Bank puts its originality right out front, in a form that some might interpret as a metaphor for bulging with lucre... or at least success. Yet it's done so without losing its maturity and savoir faire. In terms of striking the right balance in a fast-moving sector, Archium seems to have hit the bull's-eye.



DEAD SERIOUS

DESIGNING ARCHITECTURE FOR THE DEAD AND THE LIVING IN HONG KONG

Crematoria and Columbaria
Architectural Services Department, HKSAR

Particularly in Europe, designing architecture and spaces for remembering the dead has a long and vivid history. The tradition of great cemeteries, monuments, crematoria and the like is a fundamental part of the European cultural experience. Visiting passed relatives, especially for the religious populace, is a regular and emotional ritual. The buildings and spaces created to serve those rituals, and simply to accommodate the dead, have contributed some of the most meaningful and influential architecture anywhere. For architects in Italy, or Spain, or France, or Greece, an invitation to design a cemetery or crematorium is a high honour.

Less so in Asia. Here in Hong Kong, where pondering the dead, or even coming into contact with anything signifying death (specific colours, numbers, symbols), is considered through a visor of superstition, cemeteries are not exactly high on the list of admired places. People visit them when expected to, on particular dates, but rarely otherwise. And architects have not traditionally looked toward this typology for either inspiration or opportunity. Indeed, real estate within view of a cemetery suffers a lower valuation here; people do not want to live under the gaze of the dead.

But Hong Kong has a very simple problem: it lacks land. Finding places for the deceased has become an issue with no easy solution. The public expects the government to find one, yet doesn't want cemeteries and columbaria near their own residential neighbourhoods. As with the landfill and incinerator issues in the city, the Not In My Backyard [NIMBY] syndrome is in full force here. Traditional cemeteries are full up, or nearly so, yet people uncooperatively continue to die. Where will they all be placed?

The government's Architectural Services Department has taken on the task, and in doing so, has made something of a break with tradition. Whereas in the past these facilities were designed and constructed with a decidedly pragmatic philosophy, it has now been acknowledged that it is no longer adequate to simply find accommodation for a maximum number of deceased – it is also important to attend to the spiritual, emotional and social needs of those in mourning. To this end, a new direction has driven the design of recent columbaria and crematoria, and here we examine two examples of each.

As the ASD's own mission statement on the subject shows, it has been recognised that architecture itself has a crucial role to play in how society views and experiences death: "Columbaria and crematoria gave people an image of coldness, fear and sadness. Nobody liked to see or visit these

premises... But in reality, as described by most religions, death is not a termination to a place of darkness, fear and pain. Instead [it is] described as something bright, open, rebirth, ascension, sublimation and returning to peace." The new facilities designed by the ASD at Diamond Hill and Wo Hop Shek would attempt to express this more uplifting spiritual meaning through architecture and landscape, allowing "families and friends to say their final goodbyes and pay respect to their loved ones in a dignified, contemplative and peaceful environment. The architecture is people-oriented, designed for the new generation."

Perhaps architecture 'for the dead' has always really been for the living. After all, what possible use can the departed make of fancy tombstones, grand monuments, or beautiful vistas over rolling parklands? We choose to rest for eternity in places that give us comfort to contemplate while we are still alive and, if chosen by others, places which they feel symbolise respect and tranquillity. And this is certainly important; generally speaking, when we visit the resting places of loved ones, we want to be able to remember them, and it is much easier to do so in a context of serenity and beauty... even in a city where the definition of 'private space' or 'peaceful' is considered satisfied by being able to sit on a stool at a shared table in a noodle bar.

For thousands of years in Chinese culture, the tradition of *pai shan* stipulated that twice a year relatives of deceased family members trudged to the latter's graves [often on rural hillsides] to pay respect, bringing food offerings and burning joss and incense to send the departed good wishes (and sustenance) in the afterworld. Then a group picnic would ensue, not unlike a repeated wake. Since extra-urban land in Hong Kong is now a precious scarcity, this tradition is under pressure. Festival days dedicated to the dead become crowded with traffic, choked with joss smoke (and dangerous with fires) and occasions of stress or even family arguments. It is not ideal, to say the least.

The new columbarium at Diamond Hill set out to reinvigorate this tradition, deal with its practicalities, and make *pai shan* a pleasant experience once again. In the process, the public image of columbaria would be improved. If necessity – a shortage of appropriate land sites – is the principal rationale behind the new facilities, there are secondary benefits made possible by them; these include less air and noise pollution, less disturbance to neighbours, more efficient use of land, better ability to control crowds and circulation, enhanced safety, and so on. An expansive ground-floor 'covered garden' welcomes visitors and helps to organise them. The space is a pragmatic shelter from rain or hot sun, and acts as a kind of 'lobby' to the facility, particularly during busy festival days. The building is configured as something like a giant staircase, with the roofs of the levels below acting as landings for those above. A primary outdoor staircase runs up the elevation, with multiple egress points onto Po Kong Village Road. Other staircases as well as a pair of lifts can also be used to circulate up through the building. Above, the passageways between the grave niches are wide and airy, with good cross-ventilation to assist in dispersing the smoke from burning incense. Indeed, even the structural system was designed with smoke dissipation and air movement in mind, to avoid trapping smoke at the ceilings. A water filter system scrubs joss paper smoke before it is expelled through chimneys. Such focus on handling the smoke gives an idea of the scale of the problem on grave-sweeping festival days.

All the burial niches are arranged perpendicular to the adjacent streets, so that residents of those areas don't have direct views to the dead; green screening also helps edit the impression of the facility from without. The image of the building externally is meant to evoke a 'mountain' rising from the urban context, with plenty of white-flower plants bestrewn the ascent. The symbolism of visitors 'climbing' upward to visit the dead is obvious. A small garden space occupies the highest point in the building – a space for quiet contemplation, with rows of Buddhist Pine and a black granite slab facing true south.

Materials include fair-faced concrete, stone and timber. There is little decoration other than a sculptural flock of birds which seem to soar through the lobby space. Even the planting has been well planned to bloom during festival periods. Indigenous species predominate. Creeper vines were planted on every level in order to gradually cover the surfaces of external walls, further melding the building into nature. Trees that preexisted the construction have been moved and replanted onsite wherever possible. The emphasis on maximising greenery is a central characteristic of the strategy to humanise the facility.



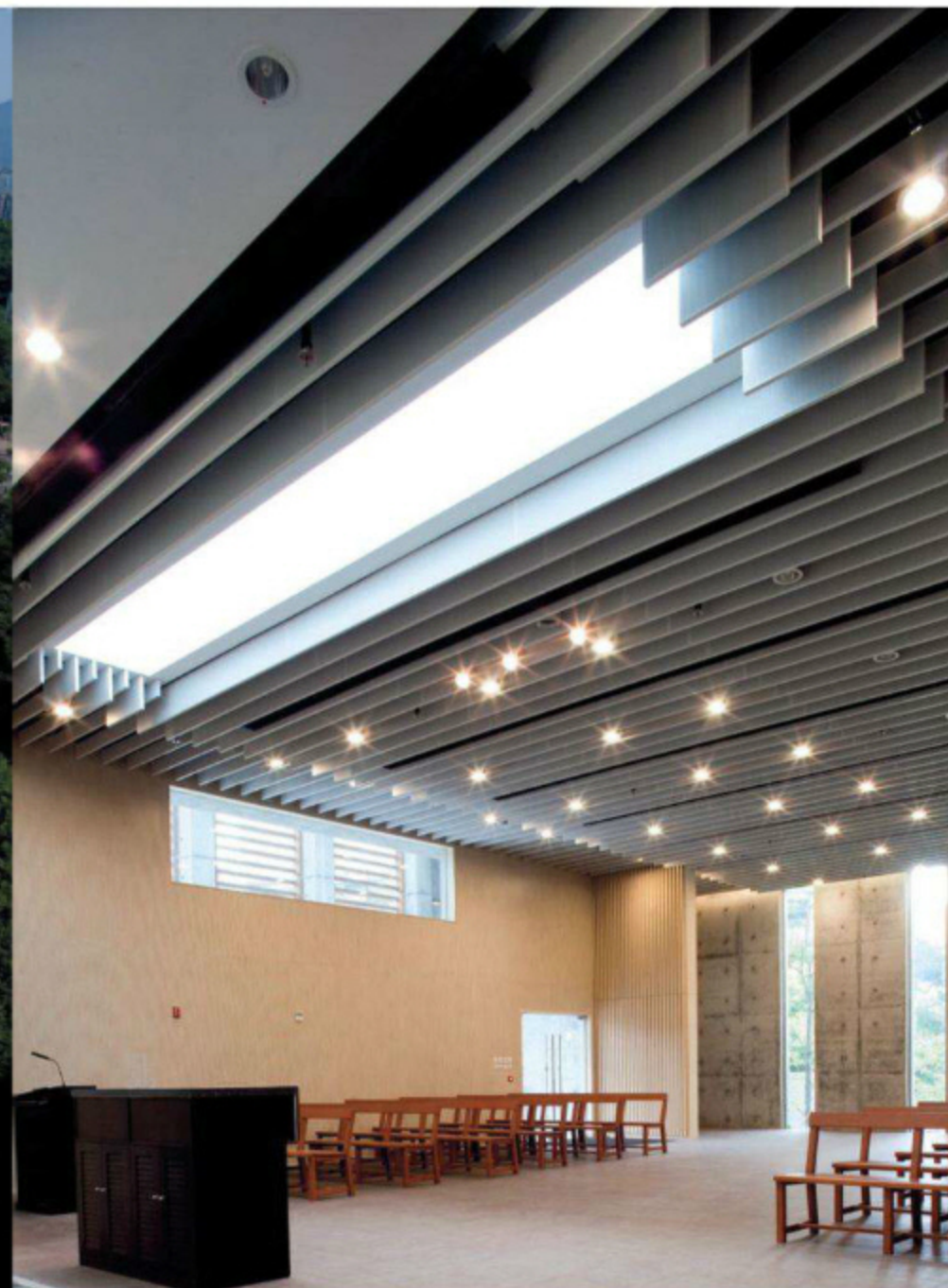


The columbarium at Wo Hop Shek enjoys a less urban setting, and has been elaborated more explicitly as a park. The burial niches themselves are concentrated inside a five-storey rectangular building that burrows into the slope of the site, with some other niches occupying stepped platforms beside it. A wide path meanders past an entrance pond, plantings and various symbolic elements. In deference to the sensibilities of nearby villagers, the building height has been restricted to that of an adjacent road, and the roof of the building designed as a green terraced lawn, which comes in handy during busy festival days. The facade of the niche block is laced with a screen of vertical timber struts in order to filter views of the niches themselves from outside while still allowing in natural light and air circulation. The screen also lends a contemporary character to the building.

Because the site allows for it, there is a more elaborate landscape design than at Diamond Hill. A series of elements such as reflecting pools, geometric lawns, rocks and portals comprise a Thematic Garden of Remembrance. Actually, two. An east garden is Chinese in concept, with plantings of bamboo, plum and willow set out over three tiers. A west garden is designed along western ideas. Grieving families may spread ashes in the gardens, or erect memorial plaques.

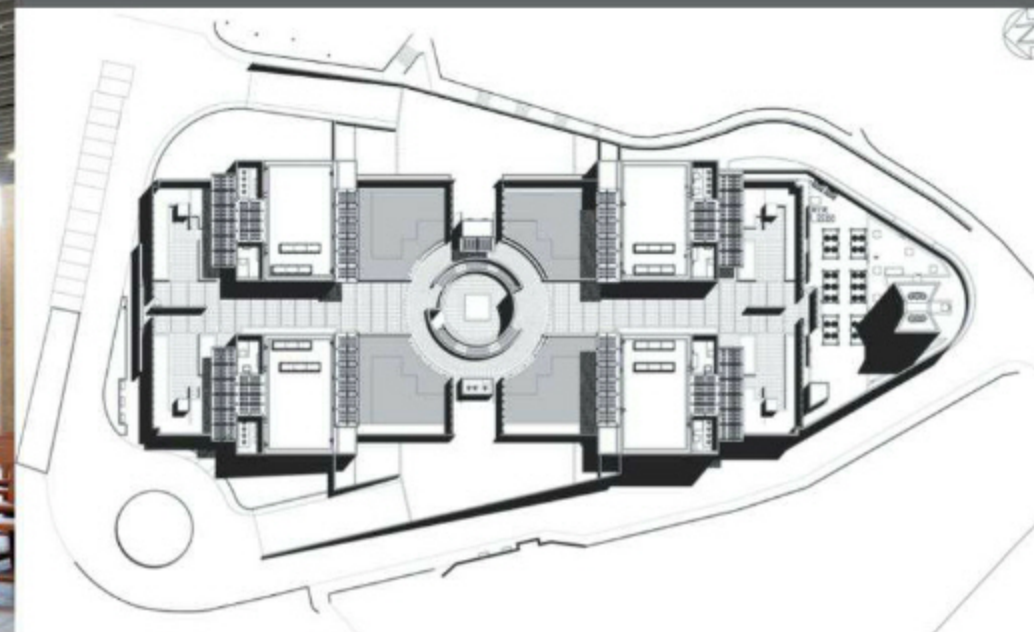
The design of deliberately symbolic elements and spaces is always tricky; they are often overwrought or too obvious, as if one's emotions are expected to respond on cue. And it is here in the gardens that perhaps the ASD has come closest to over-designing, with the symbolism at times obvious. On the other hand, the purpose of the columbarium is to support families during their grieving process, and it is hard to avoid referencing images and symbols we traditionally associate with death and loss. It is likely, therefore, that people will use the facility as their emotions lead them to, and those disinclined to linger and meditate, or interpret the provided symbols, will simply regard them as part of a larger, pleasant entirety.





If a columbarium is to house the ashes of the deceased, crematoria are as important to the traditions of passing away in Hong Kong, and the Architectural Services Department has been equally busy with this typology. The Diamond Hill Crematorium was created as a prototype for the city. If visiting the graves or ashes of loved ones remains always a sombre ritual, the users of crematoria are closer to the event, so emotions usually run lower. The underlying theme of the new crematoria is that death is not the ultimate end, but the beginning of life after death. This is embodied in a number of ways. Symbols from the I-Ching greet visitors at the entrance, reading both 'complete' and 'incomplete'. Rock boulders excavated during construction have been incorporated into the atrium planter as sculptural centrepieces. Recycled water, such as in lily ponds on the site, represents the continuity of life.

Arrival takes place at a sheltered ground-level drop-off in the form of a circular atrium bathed in sunlight. The sky overhead is framed by a round cornice line, forming an image of a spherical Heaven. At the top of a circular staircase leading to the podium, a vista of green hillsides comes into view, with a foreground of lily ponds and foliage. The four service halls, placed symmetrically around the courtyard and each able to hold up to 100 people, are reachable through a sky-lit colonnade, and are placed in relation to each other for maximum privacy. Here again, concrete, stone, wood and generous planting define the palette of materials.





Probably most formally aggressive of the new complexes is the crematorium at Wo Hop Shek. Vigorously contemporary in style, the facility presents a cluster of architectural volumes in an apparently random relationship to each other. It has been designed to allow families to arrive directly at the service chambers assigned to them, separated from other groups. Near the entrance a reflecting pool signifies purity, while a double row of Chinese Fir trees marks a processional approach. Before cremation, caskets are lit by sunlight through a skylight placed above. The visual backdrop behind the casket is a courtyard planted with bamboo, which in Chinese culture symbolises modesty, fineness and uprightness. As in Diamond Hill, a central landscaped area lets families regroup and recover in peace before leaving the facility. The space also organises circulation and provides for different groups to mourn in relative seclusion.

The contrast with Diamond Hill's orthogonal symmetry creates a very different spatial experience, even while many of the building materials are the same. Tilted forms, angled walls, cantilevers and 'random' aperture punctures in some walls are intended to evoke the naturalism of nature itself, while also acknowledging that life contains hardships and the unpredictable.

Individuals will obviously respond differently to the two new models. What is interesting is the ASD's willingness to juxtapose them in the first place, rather than hewing to a new single standard. If the architecture or landscape designs appear to some at times too much – or too little – that is hardly surprising, especially given the inherently loaded brief. Designing for the dead, and the living who have lost, is a particularly delicate ambition. Kudos are due the ASD for making these genuine attempts to contribute to a very long history.



PANDORA MEDIA

NEW YORK, USA

Andrew Bartle Architects

Few entertainment fields have been transformed as fundamentally as the music industry in the last decade. Pandora is a prime mover in the sector of digital streaming music, which in North America has had a major impact on how a growing number of people access, own and enjoy music. The chance to design its new base in Manhattan must therefore have tickled the imaginations of the designers at Andrew Bartle Architects; ponder the potential metaphors and thematic juice! It may be hard to think of architecture as 'frozen music', but the overlap between physical form and musical structure, plus the digital overtake of the analogue world, surely supplied a long playlist of strong inspirational reference points.

The genre of new-media-and-Internet-startup interior design has grown somewhat predictable in recent years – we've seen a few too many primary-toned, adult playpens sporting billiard tables, Segways, complimentary buffets, and slides to remain wide-eyed – yet the basic amenities expected by a youthful, tech-savvy workforce have become as necessary to recruitment and retention as quiet meeting rooms and ergonomic seating. Successful Internet companies compete for talent and they need more than stock options for the fight, so the work environment is the arena of battle. Pandora's offices tick a number of the usual boxes, from a group amphitheatre to splashes of bright colour. And, yes, there's foosball, multiple pantries, yoga and pingpong. But all in all this doesn't so much feel like a kid's sandbox as a quietly serious place to get on with the job at hand, in this case related to subscription-based streaming music. Hence the allusions to music woven through ABA's design, sometimes overtly, other times under the surface. As the company is no longer a startup, but has graduated to the significant ranks of Internet heavyweights, the designers have allowed themselves some mature content in the materials, tones and proportions of the spaces. What is particularly pleasant is that the musical references aren't overly obvious, and a bit of abstraction is used to translate them into form.





The 300-person facility is organised around a collective-individual approach, with numerous and varied places to meet in different numbers, or pull away from the crowds for individual thinking time. Pods of varying transparency serve this purpose, in addition to larger spaces for more conventional group brainstorming. The central, double-height space is obviously the heart of the scheme, a place that feels festive (and can be doused with music) but can also get serious for company announcements. A large screen wall here is made of linked discs, in a nice reference to a mode of listening to music that companies like Pandora have done much to render obsolete. Images of iconic music performers appear on the wall surfaces, in digital renderings and spaced strips of wood – another abstract way of looking backward in form and content.

In fact, throughout the project, ABA has played a subtle game of 'old and new', not least in retaining visibly much evidence of the original 1920s building these offices are located in. Even in the large atrium space, heavy concrete beams cross over as a reminder of the old structural reality of the building. Floors and columns also recall the existing shell, while the newer surfaces tend toward more reflective materials, the better to highlight 'then and now'.

Yet Pandora is not thumbing its nose at what came before. It would be inappropriate, given the circumstances. Yes, it has helped usher out the old ways of listening to music, but that music remains fundamentally the same, and no one, from vinyl enthusiasts to permanently ear-budded teenagers, would argue against enjoying all of it. On the contrary, the digital promise is to bring any of it to any of us (or at least, most of it to most of us) at any time. The implicit democracy of Pandora's new offices, open-faced and informally competent, sums up that promise in physical form. So we can forgive the occasional pingpong table this time.

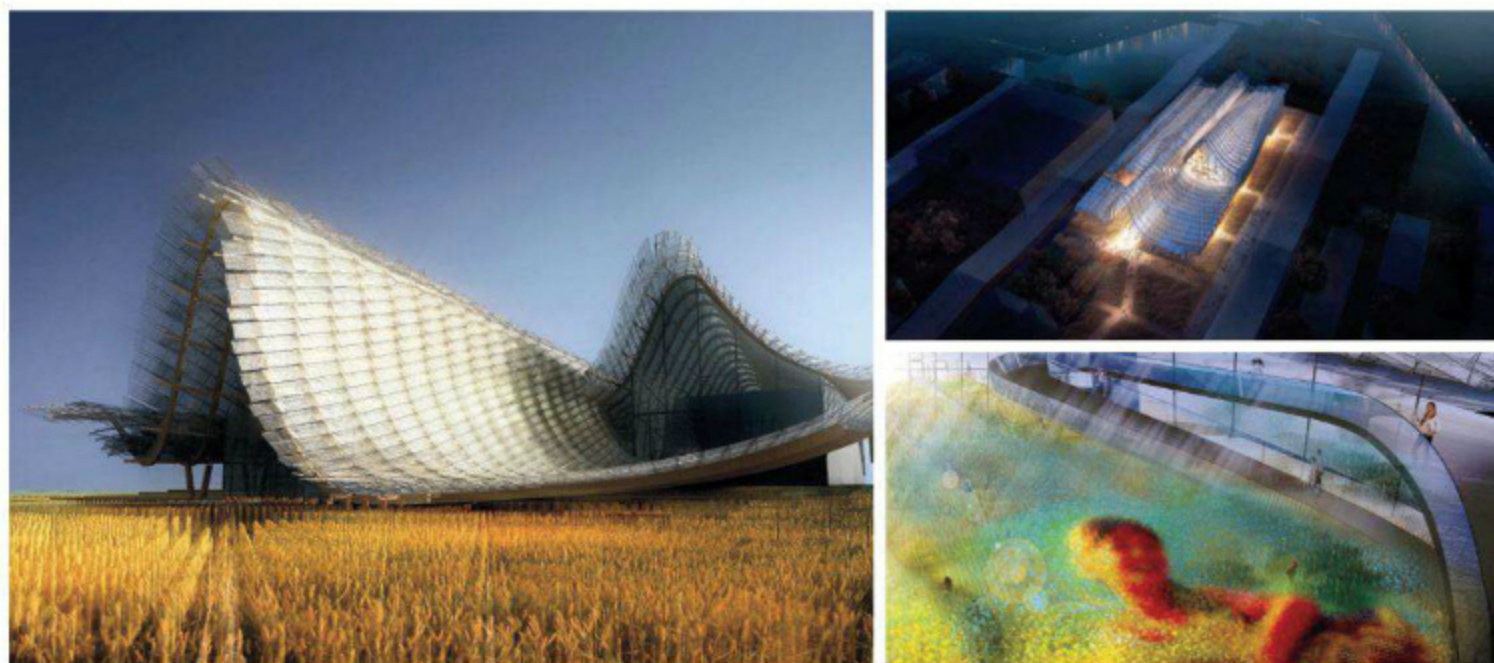


AUDEMARS PIGUET MUSEUM – LE BRASSUS, SWITZERLAND



Family-owned Swiss watchmaker Audemars Piguet is set to build a new modern facility at the firm's home in Le Brassus. In-demand Danish architect Bjarke Ingels Group is to design the low-rise 2,373sq m building that will house the brand's museum as well as three workshops. Maison des Fondateurs (House of the Founders) will be imbedded into the ground and coil-shaped – composed of "intertwined spirals" that overlap, creating internal connections; the roof will be a single surface of metal clad in brass. The volume will resemble the inside of a mechanical watch. "Watchmaking, like architecture, is the art and science of invigorating inanimate matter with intelligence and performance," says Bjarke Ingels. "It is the art of imbuing metals and minerals with energy, movement, intelligence and measure – to bring it to life in the form of telling time." Adds AP president Jasmine Audemars: "We are proud to announce the winning proposal of our new Maison des Fondateurs project, a new flagship for Audemars Piguet and a place for people to enjoy and share the passion of watchmaking."

CHINA PAVILION – MILAN



New York-based architectural practice Studio Link-Arc and a team from Tsinghua University are to design the China pavilion at the 2015 Milan Expo. The scheme will feature an undulating roof composed of large bamboo shingles that resemble terracotta tiles. Beneath the timber structure will be "a landscape of wheat" – a reference to China's agrarian traditions. There will also be a multimedia installation that will be the centrepiece of the exhibition. The theme for the Chinese pavilion will be The Land of Hope... and the volume suggests, through its architecture, that this can be achieved only when nature and the city learn to coexist in harmony. "The Pavilion's full exhibition and cultural offerings are experienced as a sequence of spaces, beginning with an exterior waiting area in the landscape, leading to a themed exhibition space with interactive installations and cultural offerings from forty Chinese provinces," according to a statement from Studio Link-Arc.

NATIONAL HOLOCAUST MONUMENT – OTTAWA



A multidisciplinary team led by museum planner Gail Lord and including architect Daniel Libeskind, Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky, Quebec-based landscape architect Claude Cormier and University of Toronto Holocaust scholar Doris Bergen, will design Canada's new National Holocaust Monument. The facility will be composed of six triangular concrete volumes that form the shape of a Star of David when seen from above. Imbedded into the walls will be enlarged black-and-white images of the Holocaust. Clusters of coniferous trees will surround the buildings. "I am humbled by this opportunity to create a memorial for the people of Canada," says Libeskind. "Through the transformative power of architecture, I believe this monument will become an important place for memory, remembrance and the celebration of the resilience of the human spirit." Opening has been scheduled for next autumn.

NOBEL CENTRE – STOCKHOLM



Images © David Chipperfield Architects

David Chipperfield Architects is to design the new Nobel Centre in the Swedish capital. The 25,700sq m volume will house an auditorium, a museum, conference facilities, offices, a library, a restaurant, a cafe-cum-bar and a shop. The exterior of the waterfront building will feature transparent and opaque glass and stone elements; at various stages of the day the skin will look quite different in accordance with how light hits it. "[The facade] changes its appearance depending on the daylight situation and the activities within," says a spokesman for David Chipperfield Architects. "It seems to oscillate between solidity and lightness, austerity and playfulness, enclosure and openness, thus reflecting the values of the Nobel Prize between tradition and modernity, history and future." Construction of the new centre will be completed in 2018.

AL FARJAN RECREATIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX – AL FARJAN, QATAR



British architectural firm Grimshaw has been commissioned to create a community sports complex in the desert city. Surrounded by sand dunes, the hub will have facilities for football, volleyball, basketball and handball, in addition to housing children's playgrounds, public amenities and social areas. At the centre of the scheme will be an elevated cafe. Fabric canopies styled to resemble native flora will provide shade from the harsh Qatari sun. A greywater recycling system will help irrigate the landscape. "We are delighted to know our design will create highly accessible informal public space that enriches social activities while also developing athletic talent within the local community," says Grimshaw partner Keith Brewis. "This project provides an opportunity for Qatar to encourage all its residents to lead a healthy lifestyle."

ASIA AEROSPACE CITY – SUBANG, MALAYSIA



British design-and-civil-engineering firm Atkins has completed the concept design and masterplan for a new aviation hub on the west coast of Malaysia. Asia Aerospace City (AAC) will house research-and-development facilities, a campus for the Malaysian Institute of Aviation Technology, a professional development centre for 2,000 students, a business hotel and a convention centre. There will also be a restaurant, cafe and sports facilities for visitors and resident engineers and students. Large canopies fitted with photovoltaic panels will provide shade from the tropical sun while generating energy for onsite use. A light rail network will connect the hub to the centre of Kuala Lumpur and to nearby Subang Airport. The design for the complex was inspired by the wings of an aeroplane. It is hoped the project will encourage investment from international aerospace companies, which will help Malaysia become a regional hub for the industry. "This is an important project for Malaysia's Economic Transformation Plan and Atkins is honoured to be working with MARA [a Malaysian government agency responsible for promoting education and entrepreneurship among the country's indigenous people] to deliver an outstanding academic and industry facility for the aerospace sector," says Atkins CEO for Asia Pacific Chris Birdsong. "We believe that it will play an important role in achieving the national vision of a self-sufficient, industrialised Malaysia by 2020."

PRINCIPAL PLACE – LONDON



Come late 2017, the English capital will see Principal Place, a mixed-use development situated between Shoreditch High Street and Liverpool Street tube stations, designed by Foster & Partners. It consists of Principal Tower, a 50-storey luxury residential building with rare, panoramic views of the city; 600,000sq ft of office space; 20,000sq ft of retail space; and a revitalised historic building housing a restaurant.

London-based W1 Developments is developing Principal Tower in conjunction with Toronto-based Brookfield Office Properties and Vancouver-based Concord Pacific. W1 managing director Chris Murray says he believes his property will bring excitement back to the London housing market: "We are creating a new district: a buzzy, vibrant place where people will want to live. We see this part of East London as the next Central. We already have a big anchor tenant signed on for the offices. And the project is not phased: everything is being built at the same time. When it is finished, homeowners can expect that all the offices, shops and restaurants will also be open."

A total of 243 apartments consisting of one-, two- and three-bedroom units will be available, each ranging in size from 500 to 2,500sq ft. "We didn't design two bedrooms that pretend to be three-bedroom apartments," notes lead designer Grant Brooker. "We designed Principal Place for real people: real families with children." The curvilinear plan resembles a four-leaf clover, while its slender form breaks at the shoulders for an elegantly anthropomorphic silhouette.

WHITE OUT

Cape Yamu House KplusK

Photography by Johnny Kember



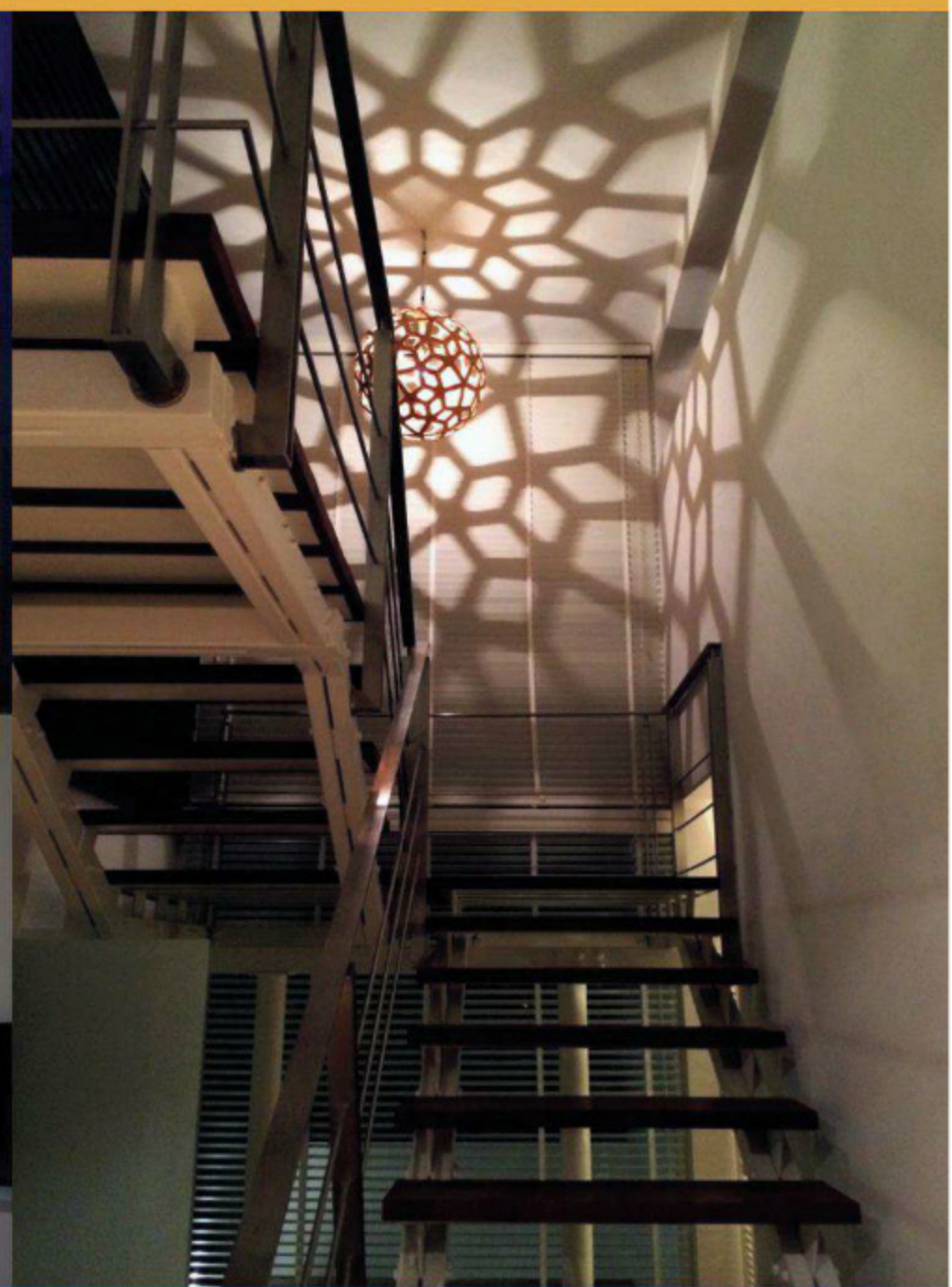
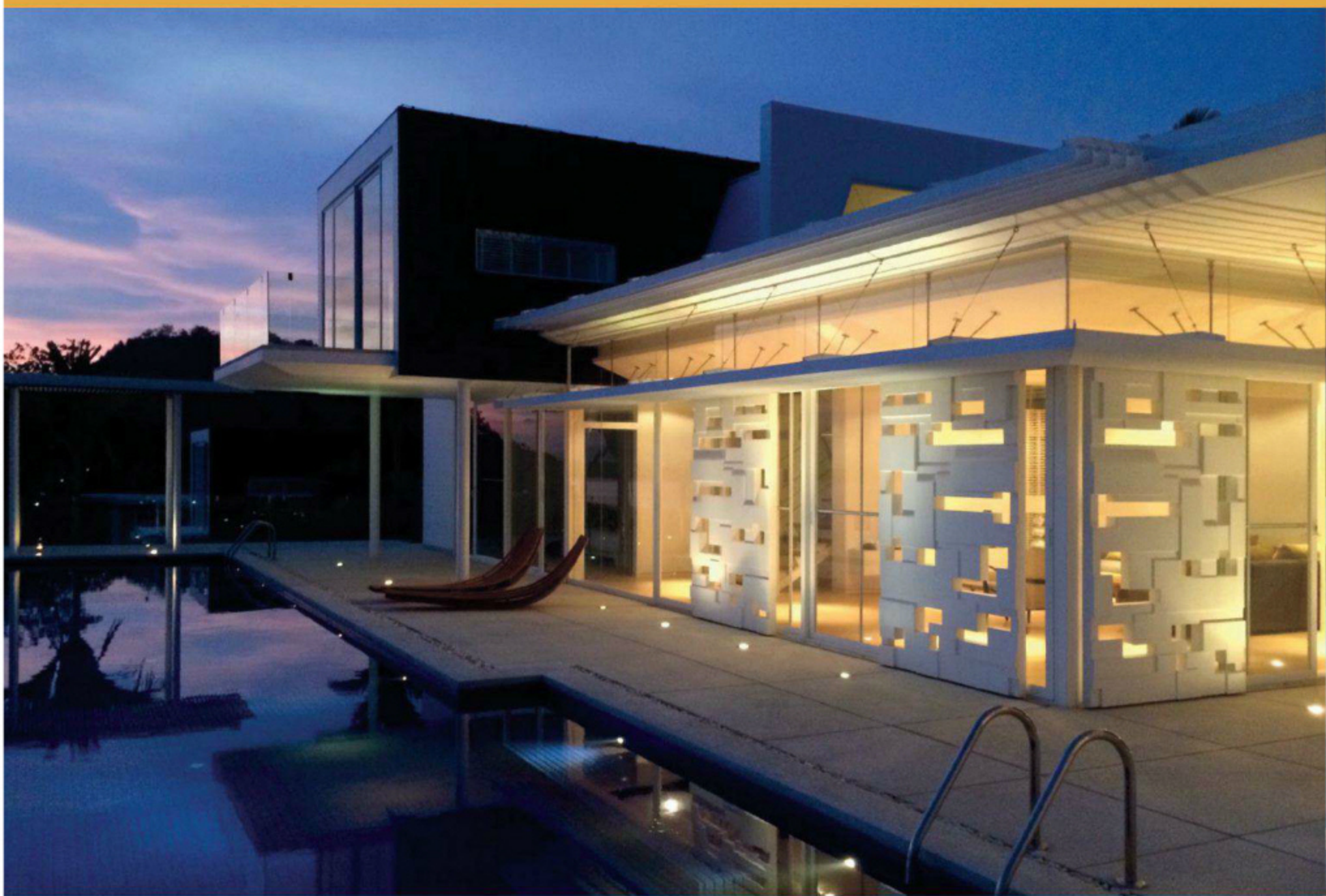
a central staircase leading dramatically down towards the two wings and pool beyond. Care was taken to allow as much access to the pool and deck as possible from almost every part of the home, blurring the line between indoor and outdoor living.

"We intentionally gave the home a nautical look and feel, as it has such a strong relationship to the sea," says Kember. "Moveable sun louvres slide along tracks to allow more or less sun as desired, while sliding mosquito screens allow us to enjoy fresh breezes almost all the time. Above is full clerestory glazing, for as much natural light as possible without glare. The breakfast bar is a long, extended L-shaped counter so that everyone can gather together comfortably. We utilised

A Phuket vacation home is often the dream of many Hong Kong residents shoehorned into teeny apartments and longing for open, fresh air. So, when there is an opportunity to design such a place, and exactly to the user's specifications as the architect is also its owner, that home becomes more just than a house. For KplusK's Paul and Johnny Kember, their new three-storey, five-bedroom abode in Cape Yamu, on the east Phang Nga Bay coast of Thailand's premier resort destination, was a chance to practise what they preached. They also masterplanned the development, which is a virtual showcase for the sense of privacy that is a vital tenet of their design philosophy.

Along with a few other co-owners, including Rob Wall of Jeb, the Kember twins normally spend holidays at this vacation house along with their families and friends. Villa Three is situated next to Point Yamu by Como and is approximately seven metres away from the beach above a side road that leads to the 30-villa residential development. "It's very secluded; the only passing traffic would be people headed for the hotel," notes Paul Kember. Set into the hillside, the home consists of two wings linked by a central T-shaped courtyard that opens onto an 11-metre outdoor infinity-edged swimming pool. The site is approached from the top, with





slender steel columns reminiscent of sailboat rigs to maximise views and avoid beams. The flooring is bleached oak, with a textured granite finish on the walls. We also included limestone edges to prevent the timber flooring from getting too wet; as a result, the floor appears to float. Bedroom windows are narrow horizontal bands that extend the views at eye level."

KplusK's signature flourishes can be seen throughout the home, making it uniquely the Kembers' own. The sliding screens are finished in an abstract geometric textured pattern and continue the white palette found in the greater part of the premises. The white backdrop is occasionally juxtaposed with feature walls such as the one adjacent to the kitchen sink; it is a mini subway tile in silver, giving the space a disco-ball-like shimmer echoed in the dancing waves of the sea. Horizontal slatted overhangs provide shade while reiterating the horizontal timber plank deck flooring, and cast ever-changing shadows as the sun moves across the sky. "All of the furnishings were local purchases," adds Kember. "The quality of Thai furniture is excellent."



SPAWN OF HISTORY

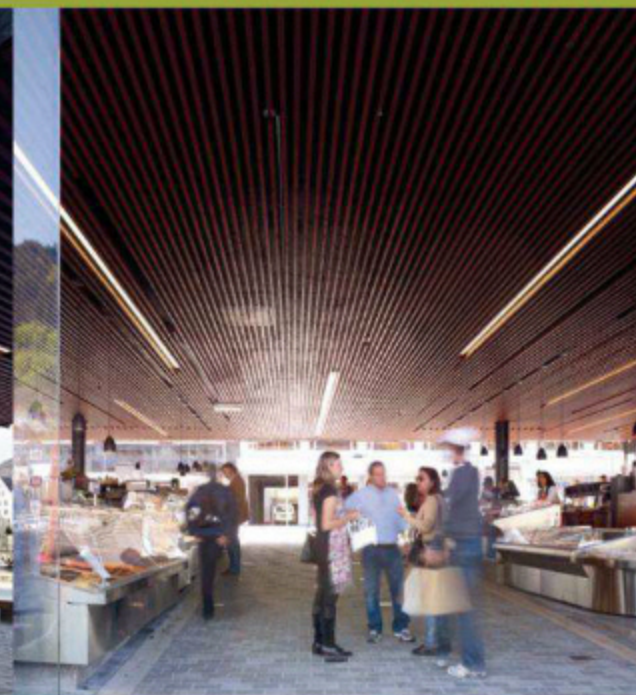
Fish Market

Eder Biesel Arkitekter

Photography by Norbert Miguletz

Norway's second most populous city, Bergen, recently spent the equivalent of about 15 million euros on redeveloping its foremost tourist attraction, the Fish Market. The UNESCO World Heritage site has been given a modern twist by homegrown architectural studio Eder Biesel Arkitekter, with an angular, light-filled 'floating' volume that deftly balances the site's historic heritage with its contemporary use. The 700-year-old marketplace, located in the heart of the city, has naturally changed through the centuries: the first vendors here sold from their boats; later generations held their space with traditional vending stalls; and now, tech-savvy fishmongers ply their trade across the world, from inside the vibrant two-storey building. Oversized backlit pictures placed in the current market hall tell the long and important story of Bergen's Fish Market.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the 2,500sq m mixed-use facility houses not just fish and seafood stalls, but also makeshift souvenir shops, restaurants, cafes, as well as the Bergen Tourism Office. "Bergen's Fish Market has always played an important role in the centre of Bergen and in the hearts of the Bergen people," says EBA's Christine Biesel, who led the renovation project. "It was, however, in need of upgrading to offer comfort and hygiene all year round for both vendors and visitors. This necessitated a building on the open square." The building's moderate height allows

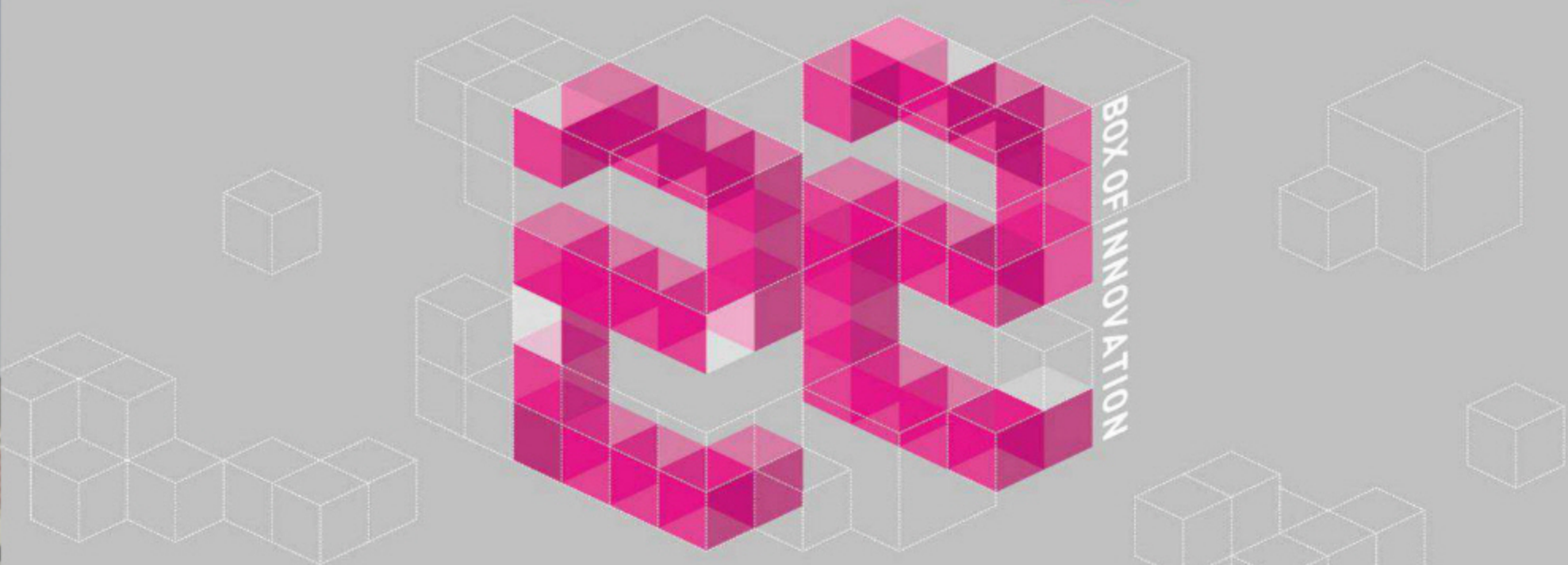




for spectacular views of the city's harbour and landmarks, while its transparent facade connects the activities inside with those occurring outside. Notes Biesel, "The transparency of the market makes it seem like part of a staged scene. The market life of preparing and selling fish is clearly visible, unlike in traditional market halls where market life tends to be hidden." Conveniently, the glass facade also provides shelter from wind and rain, which Bergen gets a lot of.

Despite the building's distinctively modern shape, its colour and materials palettes stem from its ancient roots. The use of granite flooring, for instance, echoes the market's centuries-old design and the exterior wood panels reflect Bergen's traditional colour palette of dark red, brown, white and ochre.

Winner of last year's World Architecture News 'Colour in Architecture Award', Bergen's Fish Market creates a new place in the city where people can meet, eat, drink and do their shopping. The sensitivity and attention to detail with which its renovation has been handled admirably ties the new building into its age-old urban context, with ample regard for history and consistency.



International Judges

- Ms. Cassie Hansen | Australia**
Editor
Artichoke
- Dr. Vaughan Dai Rees | Australia**
Associate Dean International, Art & Design,
University of New South Wales
- Mr. Johannes Torpe | Denmark**
Founder
Johannes Torpe Studio
- Mr. Iijima Naoki | Japan**
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Japan Commercial Environmental Design Association
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Chairman
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Local Judges

- Mr. Kenneth Ko**
Director & Chief Designer
Kenneth Ko Designs Ltd
- Dr. Patrick Leung**
Founder & Principal Designer
PAL Design Consultants Ltd
- Ms. Sarah Khoo**
Chief Interior Designer
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- Mr. Christian Low**
President
AIA Hong Kong Chapter 2014, Asia Pacific Regional
- Mr. Mark Lui**
Director
Mark Lui Design Works



SUNKEN LIVING ROOM

Garden House

De Matos Ryan

Photography by Hulton + Crow

Photography by Peter Marino



In this day and age, we've returned to a previous one... with extended families cohabiting residential space. Call it a symptom of economic constraints, or a newfound appreciation for time with loved ones... (or the importance of babysitters), whatever you want, but more and more families are discovering ways to draw close in physical terms. This new dwelling, occupying the rear corner of a decent-sized garden in Battersea, is hardly a crammed cottage or retrofitted attic – its 180sq m provide a fully functional separate lodging for its own generation of the family tree. In this case, it wasn't the conventional married-with-offspring model, but rather the arrival of an eighth sibling that prompted an idea to let parents and toddlers move to the new digs, and the older kids to stay put in the Victorian original.

The project faced a couple of the usual challenges of its type – neighbour nerves regarding privacy and density and the client's wishes for infinite space, but also one particular to this site: floodproofing. This was thanks to its proximity to the River Thames, which has the annoying habit of bursting its banks now and then. Still, the result is hardly a blushing wallflower, with fully five bedrooms, three baths, study and kitchen/living room. The primary site strategy dug out the garden to create a watertight courtyard space that characterised the

adjacent spaces indoors; it feels like an urban oasis, entirely secluded yet not claustrophobic. In fact, the house seems to partake directly of the garden, and vice versa, so that the general sensibility, at least when it's not pouring rain, is almost Mediterranean. By secluding the lower floor section (the public rooms) behind the enclosing white garden wall, and then glazing most of this level, the architects allowed open living without compromising privacy at all. Plus it yielded a relatively modest building height toward neighbours; the largely opaque upper storey reads as a single-storey bungalow above the garden wall. This level is rendered as white cubic boxes that hover over the transparent base, with windows shyly oriented to the side or rear elevations. Skylights and lightwells supplement the natural illumination for these upper rooms.

The interiors follow the cue of the courtyard, with plenty of white surfaces bouncing light around and through glass. The Garden House is all about the courtyard, however, which offers a unique private space to the heart of the bustling city. Within this private world – which doesn't feel at all 'sunken', anyway – it is almost hard to remember that a thrumming urban megalopolis, not to mention another brood of kids, lurks just metres away. Talk about having your scones and eating them, too.



UNCLOTHED

HQ G-Star RAW OMA

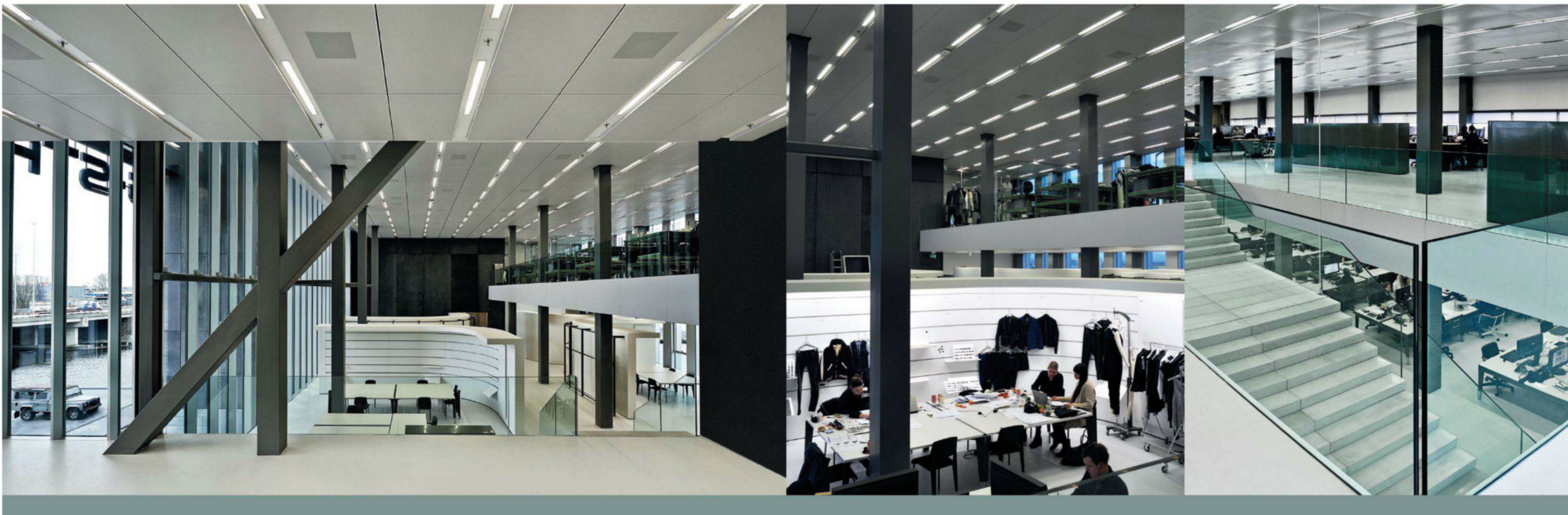
Photography courtesy of OMA and G Star RAW

Designing the HQ of a hot fashion brand might seem to imply translating the company's aesthetic ethos from the ever-evolving ephemera of clothing into the inevitably static permanence of constructed building form. On the surface, there are hardly two creative media more different than apparel and architecture. The new 27,500sq m building for G-Star RAW, an uber-hip young fashion brand, is located in an industrial area of Amsterdam, and unites for the first time the various departments and facilities of the company under a single, long roof.

On one level, OMA's solution is unexpectedly simple: a 'creative core' expressed in a glazed facade surrounded by support facilities clad in black concrete; contrasting materials called upon to announce a hierarchical, interdependent functional relationship. The lower band of the building forms a plinth which provides parking and arrival dropoff, as well as a space for events or installations. A single, dramatic gesture appears in a cantilevered box thrust out from the face of the long facade. This shelters the main entrance below it, and holds G-Star's showrooms within. It is clear that this is the most 'public' point in the scheme, where visitors interact with the company's staff, avoiding the more (necessarily) secretive areas of the complex.

Inside the building, things are both as expected, and more interesting. On the one hand, the spaces deliver a sense of corporate





grandeur expressive of high success: ample scale, excellent detailing, and sexy industrial materials rendered in superb quality. One wonders if one might have entered an aerospace facility or secret biochemical laboratory – or at least a cinematic version of such. Staggered floor plates, atria, transparent partitions, expressive structural systems, all connive to communicate that this is a company of assured success and confident taste. Then there are the more unfinished or 'raw' spaces, such as one literally dubbed "RAW-space": a large, flexible kind of hangar, with doors that can open wide for production uses or major parties or events. Here the HQ hovers between corporate brain trust and prosaic production facility, which is surely the point. The hyper-fast methods of the modern fashion industry virtually demand integration of design and realisation – there is no place for considered reflection and calm refinement in this business. Things happen fast. The one-centre-does-all aspect of the HQ (regardless of whether everything is actually done here) is explicitly conveyed in the form of it, particularly inside.

If there is a surprise here, it's that OMA was involved. This must rate as one of the firm's conceptually quietest projects in years. One has come to expect a certain theoretical aggression from Rem Koolhaas and Co, and in a kind of reversal of sorts, here he is designing for a fashion house, of all things, and he goes seriously sober. Ah, but maybe that's just it. Never one to miss out on the pleasure of irony, he may be once again re-sorting our expectations.



WAY OUT

Nannup House Iredale Pedersen Hook Architects

Following in the rich tradition of houses in the wilder terrains of Australia – particularly Nannup, near Perth – this holiday residence seeks commune with the landscape in all its diversity and wonder. The idea is a pathway or promenade that both represents the natural context and utilises it. Forest, river, rolling hills, greenery, dryness, big skies... all this is taken into the building through its meandering plan, carefully oriented apertures and even sectioning. Some of the building hugs the ground, other parts tiptoe over it on legs. Even fallen trees are left to partake in the visual experience of the house dwellers. Obviously, if people come here to holiday, they are attracted by the landscape to begin with, so a building that 'lives' fully within it was part of the original agenda.

The parti is linear; an extruded extension of the voyage taken just to get here, as if arrival is merely a spot along a continuous experience. What occupants see throughout the internal spaces is important, and so views in all directions (including up and down) consist of internal vistas as well as horizons. The plan mimics the forest, cranking and turning according to views or programme requirements. Spaces are varied in size and proportion, windows shape-shift to frame ideal perspectives. The house oversteps the ground plane, where all manner of Australian-scale creatures roam wild: pigs the size of humans, tiger snakes, emus and kangaroos and things that go bump in the night. Grated steel ramps let people reach the building safely, presumably discouraging other living things from climbing aboard this architectural ark.

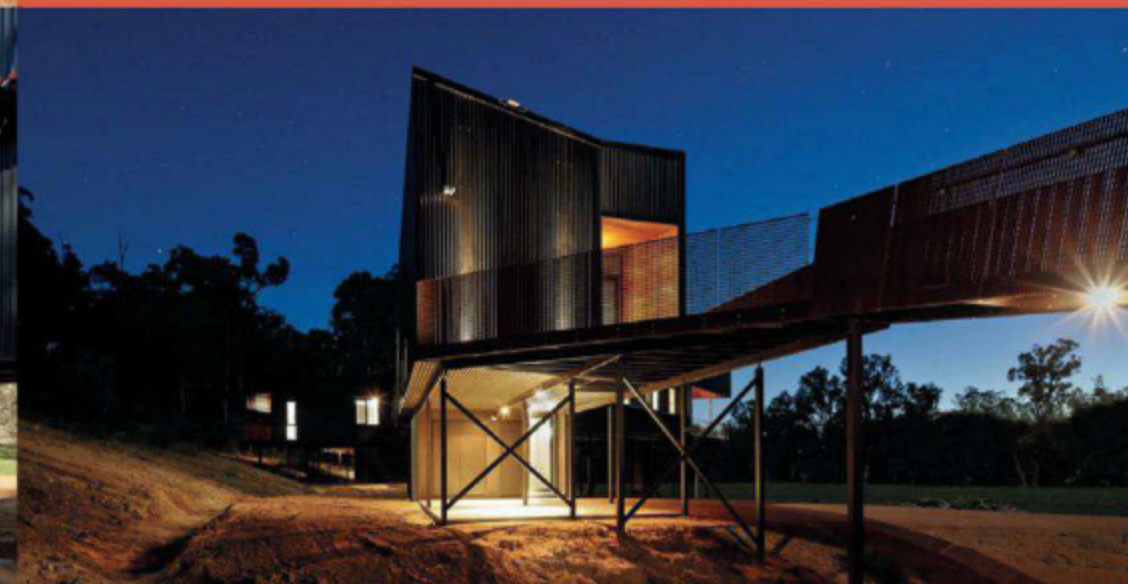
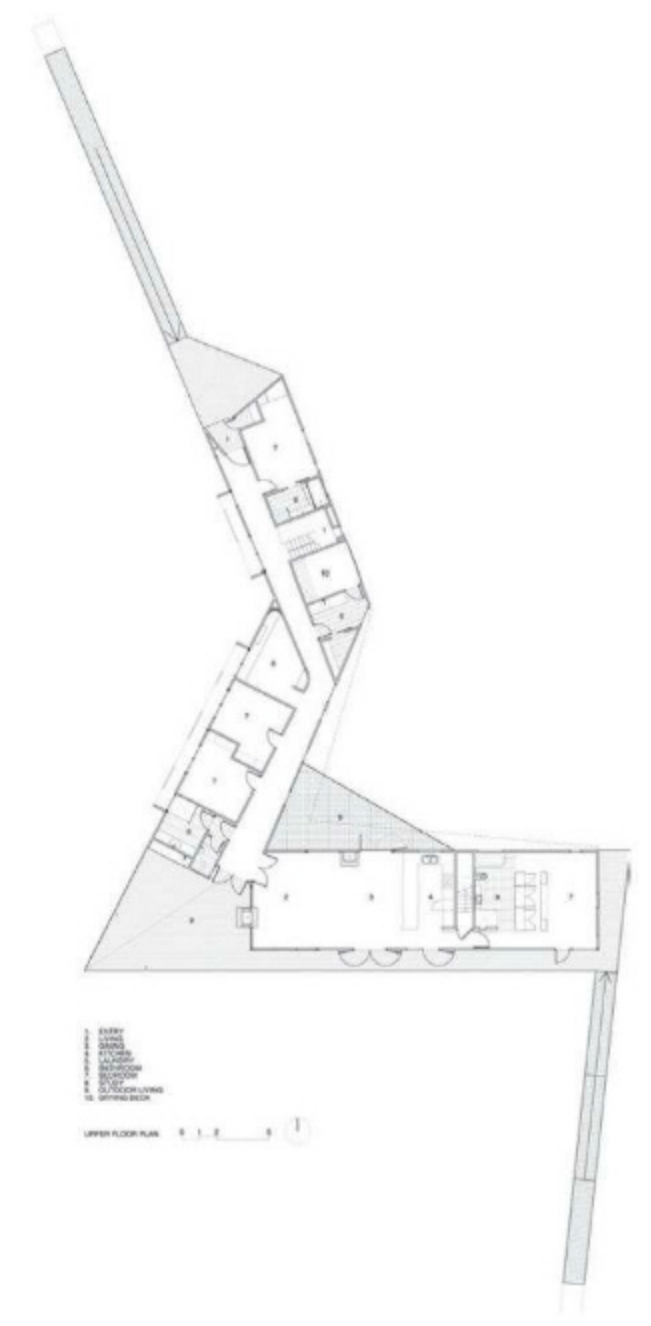
The materials tend to express this frontier character further: steel, rusted metal, recycled wood, things that fade and patinate with time, and rain and sun. In respect of the land, materials are reused, the structure is mostly pine wood, minimal clearing was required, the long roof collects rainwater; greywater is fed back into the earth, photovoltaic power is used, native plant species rule the roost, existing trees were respected, animals allowed access under the building, and so on. This is an ungentle environment, so it was treated gently.

The Nannup House may be polite, but it's no pushover; this is a tough kind of place to build, to live in or to visit, and the architecture, though svelte and non-obtrusive, expresses its own kind of durability through sharp angles and lean yet strong linear members. The skinny frame system that holds it above the ground forms a kind of lacework of struts and pins that, not unlike aircraft parts, speak of economic strength. You don't have to be brutal or big to be strong; that's what this dwelling seems to say. Just like some of the sleek animals that survive here.

Photography by Peter Pennetts



Photography by Peter Marino



DOUBLING UP

Two-in-One Villa Clavien Rossier

Photography by Roger Frei



Hugging the edge of a residential precinct near Geneva flanking a forest and farm fields, this villa has a few secrets up its sleeve. Perhaps the site's Janus-like character – on the line between city and country – gave rise to the idea, or maybe it was simple pragmatics, but what appears to be a single residence is in fact two unequal-sized flats. Taking its outward cues from the area vernacular, then conceptualising matters enthusiastically, the house is an exposed concrete box with a steeply pitched roof and large, unevenly spaced rectangular window openings and doors. Yet even here at the large scale, things aren't quite as they first appear; the building cranks to form a kind of angular lozenge shape or diamond in plan. The party wall separating the flats aligns with only one of the bends. A prominent corner in the large flat is cut away to provide a glazed doorway to the garden at grade.

The choice to use integrally toned concrete for the entire exterior including the roof, and then punctuate it with panels of larch wood at the apertures,

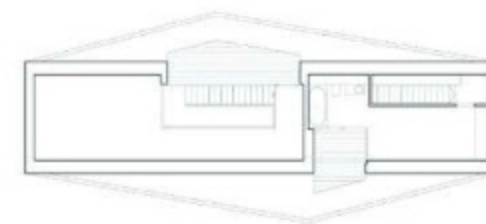
was a smart one, because it helps further abstract the building and disguise its true scale. As there is no surface with a repeated pattern or proportion from the outside, it truly does seem a smaller structure than it is, as well as inviting observation from different viewpoints... like some sort of cubic puzzle.

The idea of bifurcating the interior plans of a smallish house without rendering the split on the exterior in any way is interesting, and would work particularly well if the occupants of both sides were somehow related, such as in-laws. Presumably, the current configuration works very well with one side serving as a rental unit. The interior spaces are bright and minimal and even Scandinavian in character, with timber floors and window frames setting off the otherwise all-white palette. There is a wide variety of sizes in the spaces, and the angled walls and irregular openings bring interest to both units. Pleasing rural views don't hurt matters.

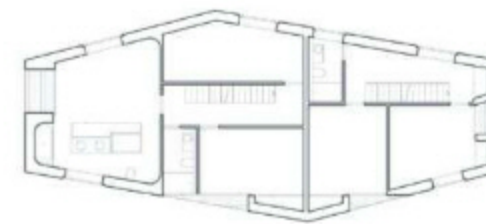
Photography by Peter Marino



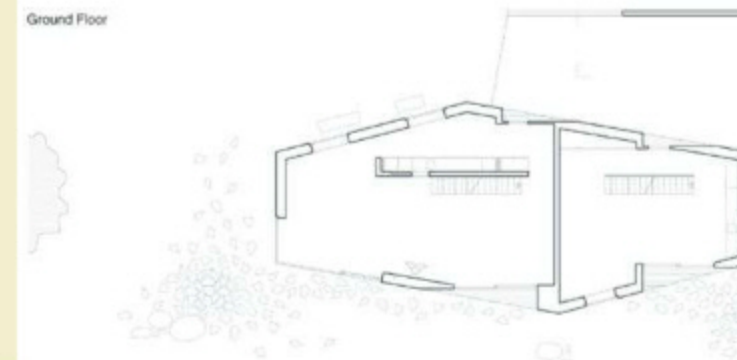
Attic



First Floor



Ground Floor



The house is perhaps most attractive from its narrow ends, where the pitch of the roof shows as a reduced pedimented profile, and deeply recessed vertical balconies play well against the opaque mass of the concrete volume. This is also where the house seems at its smallest, presenting an almost diagrammatic sketch-like presence to the surroundings, thanks to the lack of any mouldings, edge articulation or differentiation of base or cornice. It sits like a pronouncement on the ground.

RUSTICATED

Carmen Martin Gaité
Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
Estudio Beldarrain

Photography by Francisco Berreteaga



This new university edifice strove for environmental achievement, and gained a LEED Platinum rating for its efforts – a first for academic buildings in Spain. Meant to supplement an existing lecture hall on the site, the parti groups two wings around a public open space that links into the campus circulation as a whole. The wings hold a library on one side and new lecture spaces on the other, and connect to each other and the original building at an upper-level, one-storey administration piece.

The interesting facades, articulated in ventilated ceramic panels, are composed along a programme that is meant to evoke both the systemisation of, and innovation within, the process of learning. A distinctive frame is set up, based on a 2.2m structural bay spanned by prestressed concrete slabs that read prominently on the facades. Within this dominant pattern, the window openings follow an apparently random setting that suggests diversity and invention, but actually allows placement to follow internal functional requirements. Thus the primary frame is a repeated system representing stability, coherence and

economy of means, while the varying internal patterns of the windows represent flexibility, possibility and human involvement. Because the individual locations of window and panel within the bays change, the facades gain a depth underscored by the play of shadows, and a subtle dynamism most visible at medium range. It is a simple but quite effective approach for enlivening the building's exteriors, and the uniformity of strong colour tone, thanks to the ceramic material, together with the forceful reading of the horizontal plates, makes it all work quite well without becoming overly fussy or self-conscious. The gentle zigzagging within the planes of the facades is echoed in the angled bends of the building on its site, so that at the large scale there is also interest, not least when it comes to the sharp, flatiron prow. Here again, the white horizontal plates do their work, pushing out beyond the rust-hued surfaces to cast small, incisive triangles of shadow.

The sophisticated patterning of the elevations cloaks the perceptible scale of the building, so that the eye wanders along its surfaces, and enjoys the exercise, rather than fixing on identifiable markers or floor levels. In this, the rationalism of the

method abstracts the building's image, which may or may not also be a metaphor desired by the architects. In any case, this is an exciting yet becalming set of walls to move beside, a fitting backdrop to the come and go of campus life.

The interiors benefit from the liveliness of the external walls, particularly in the larger public areas such as the library reading rooms and lobbies, but otherwise stick to a competently applied academic functionalism. The introduction of blond timber in some areas, such as a central stair atrium, ties in well with the ceramic exterior. But it is certainly the latter that distinguishes the new building.



VILLAGE PEOPLE

CR Chengdu Commercial RAD



This recent office campus in Chengdu comprises 81,000sq m of space displaced across two towers and a low-rise adjacent commercial 'village'. The towers cluster at the west edge of the site, near a lake, while the village claims the eastern side, closer to the majority of pedestrian traffic. The towers are cranked to maximise daylight and airflow while offering better views from within. These high-rises eat up 90% of the programme and GFA. The buildings are handsomely curtain-walled, with a chequerboard patterning of the glazed facades that gives them a crisp, fresh personality, both day and night.

The form of the 'village' structures makes reference to Chengdu's contextual architecture and the traditional house typology, resulting in an exploration of roof and wall as dominant aesthetic elements. It is not the first time that the elemental forms of vernacular architecture inspire contemporary – enlarged – interpretations, but RAD has pushed the exercise farther than one normally sees, particularly in conventional commercial developments, and that helps make CRCC more interesting and distinctive. Visitors cannot fail to notice that the form of the buildings is saying something – and will probably guess what that something is.

A public plaza with a preserved tree provides a hub space linking the village structures with the tower podium, which itself also sports a series of pitched roofs. The architects have likewise taken care to interweave the circulation system of the development with that of the existing streets nearby, the further to integrate CRCC quickly into the neighbourhood.

The decision to raise the towers above the podium, rather than sit them upon it, was a deliberate effort to lighten their visual weight and reduce their footprint at ground level, which was important given the stark scale difference between them and the village structures. This helps make them seem lighter of foot and more delicate, which works well with their somewhat lacy elevations. They are rather like well-clad ladies tiptoeing across on high heels. It is never easy to reconcile the base of large towers with anything approaching the intimate scale of traditional cities (even when much of those cities has been demolished). But RAD's strategy here is intelligent: don't try to conceal the scale mismatch; instead make something out of the juxtaposition. It might have been interesting to see a similarly energetic approach to ending the towers' summit, not that pitched roofs would have been an improvement. But though the standard clean snip is de rigueur for most tall buildings these days, in the case of CRCC the visual interest at the base seems to make the tops seem abrupt. Perhaps just a small horizontal cornice, or even a simple variation in the glazing, would have made the chosen height seem less random. Undoubtedly, the architects would disagree, given the fact that they ran the glazing pattern right up to the top edge, unlike in the bottom edge where it begins above a horizontal base band.

Nevertheless, there's no denying the sharpness of the cluster, and that RAD has given Chengdu a positive addition to its skyline and ground plane. Within the ocean of large commercial developments on the Mainland, swimming out of banality into cooler, cleaner waters, is no mean feat.

HEALTH PAIR

Hospital Clinico Metropolitano

La Florida, Santiago, Chile
BBATS



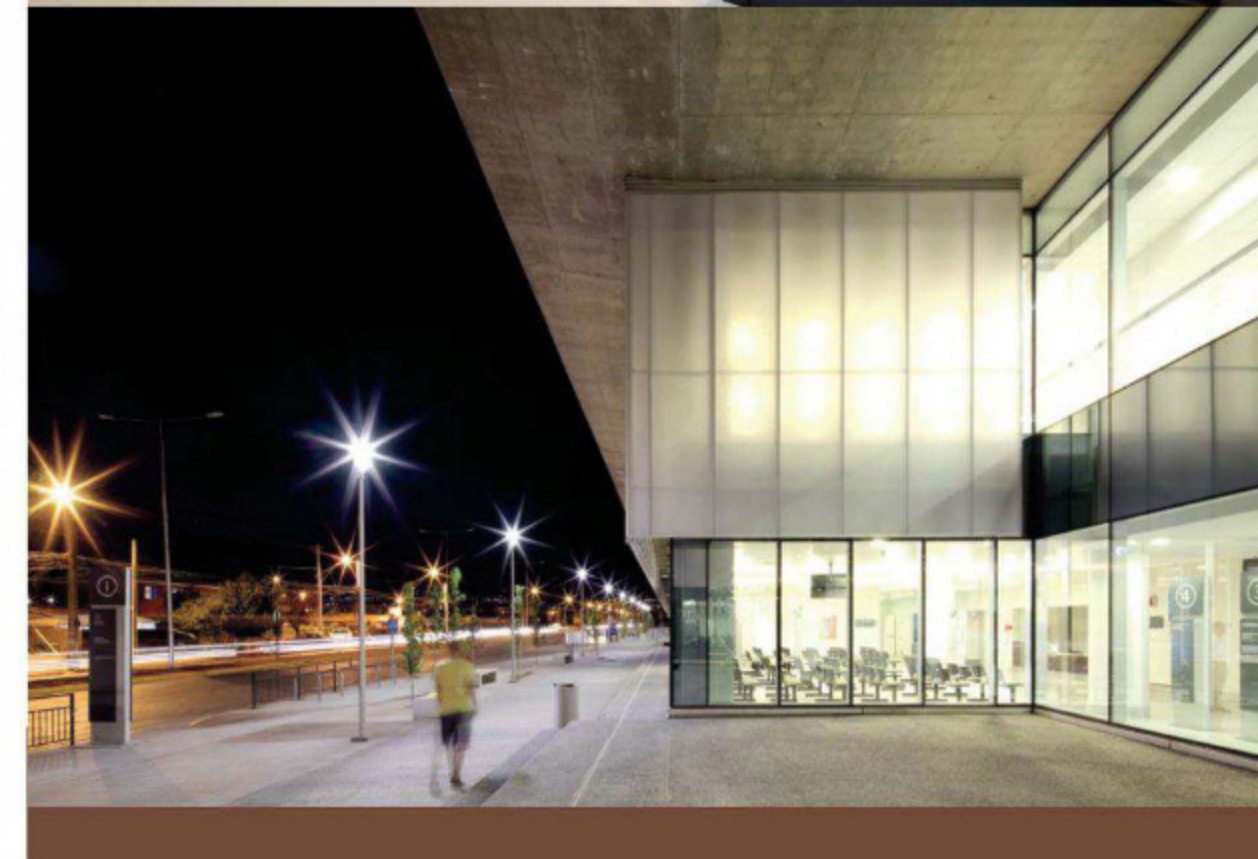
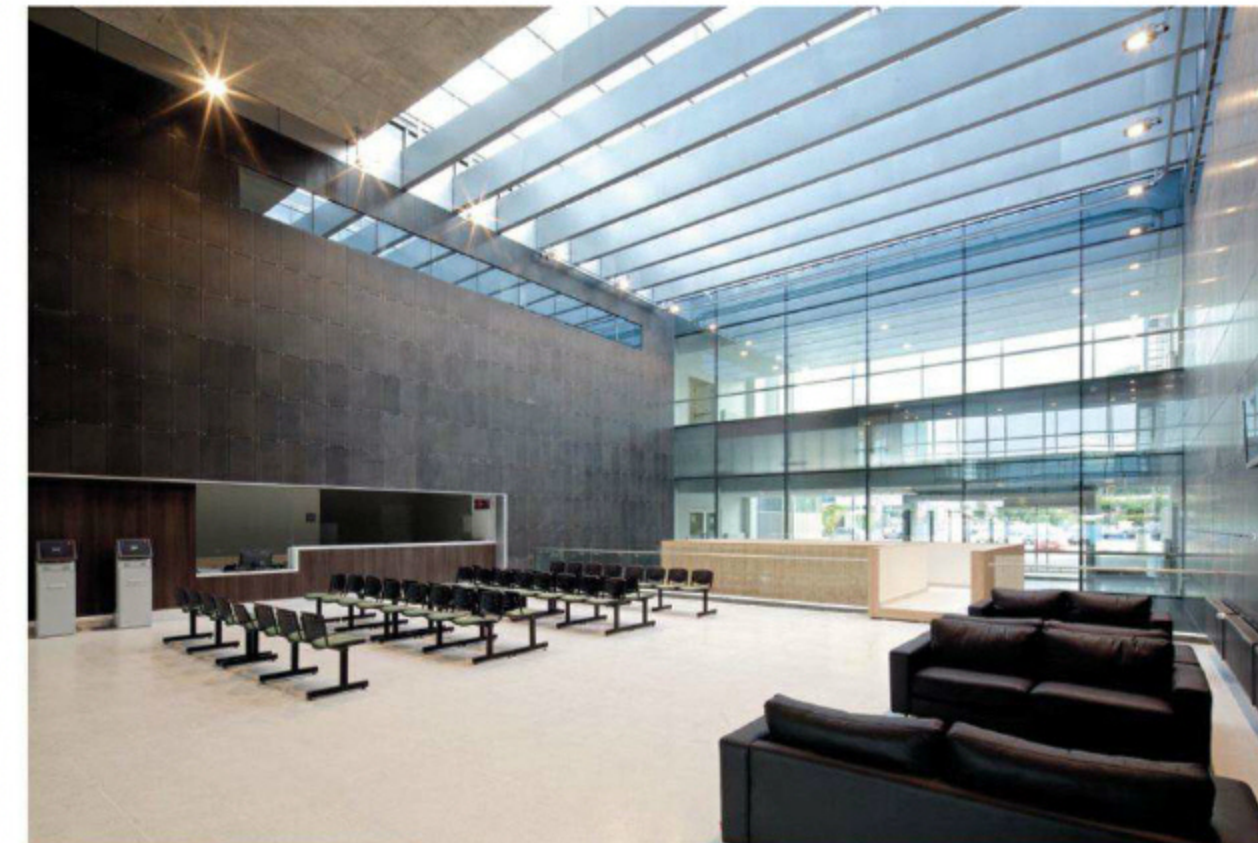
It's not often that you hear hospitals described as sexy or inviting or even architecturally innovative. The conventional feeling toward these institutions is a combination of dread and boredom; we visit them for generally negative reasons, and the architecture seems to have embodied this fact for centuries.

This new project may go some way toward changing that thinking. The Clinico Metropolitano in Santiago, whose gargantuan scale in relation to the small-scale buildings of the neighbouring urban fabric is almost startling, is one of the most visually pleasing and formally exciting healthcare complexes in memory. It comprises 68,000sq m of health facilities, 391 beds, 17 operating rooms, over 100 consultation and procedure rooms and accommodates 1,500 staff. It is 350m long by 50m wide and not very tall (four storeys in all); an architectural whale, which makes its aesthetic achievement only more impressive.

The volumetric parti lines up four programmatic boxes (psychiatry, consultation, imaging and emergency) clad in white translucent polycarbonate panels, with glazed breaks between them marking diverse entry points, then caps this with a continuous box that cantilevers forward to shade a sidewalk promenade running the full length of the site. This upper volume, which is designed to read as a

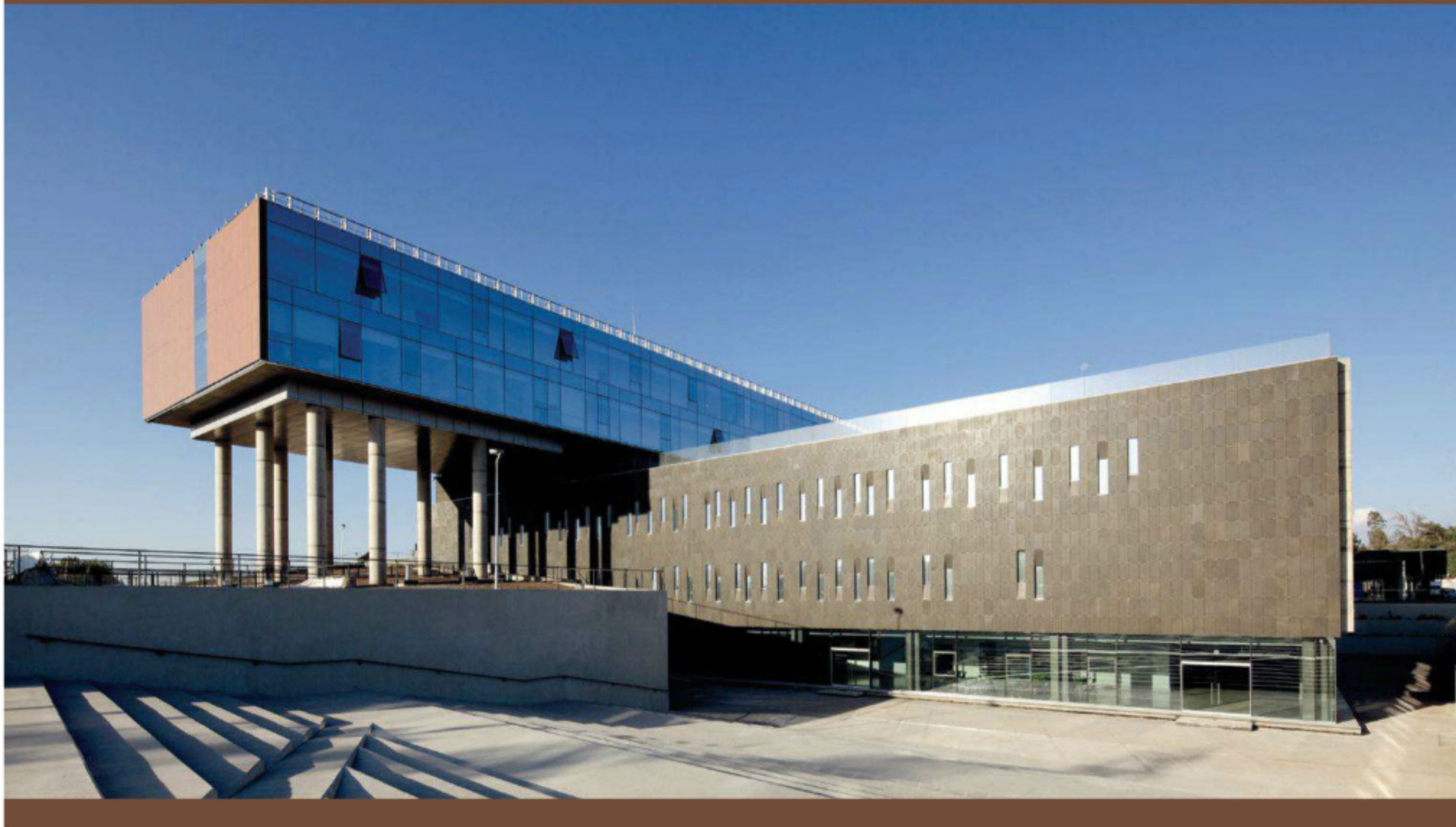
frame surrounding a screen of vertical fins, unifies the building back into one entity. On the non-street side, this upper box feeds onto an ample landscaped roof terrace, with views toward the Andes mountains and Maipo Valley. It is a realm useable by the staff and patients of the hospital; it also acts as a green roof cooling the building below.

The entirety adds up to 67,500sq m and was the winner of a 2009 competition. The project is so much about scale: even the larger interior public spaces have the heft of major cultural lobbies, and working this big has allowed the architects to gain more impact with less fuss, particularly as they have been wise enough to keep things relatively unadorned; they knew the size could work in their favour. The elevations carry the day, however. And, again, reducing major components to a minimum and then letting them really stretch out and perform, has elevated the game significantly. It is no small achievement to resist the temptation, with a programme this huge and complex, to over-design or quilt together too many tricks and treats. BBATS has shown it knew precisely when to do less, and let this gentle giant be so much more.



Hospital el Carmen

Maipu, Santiago, Chile
BBATS

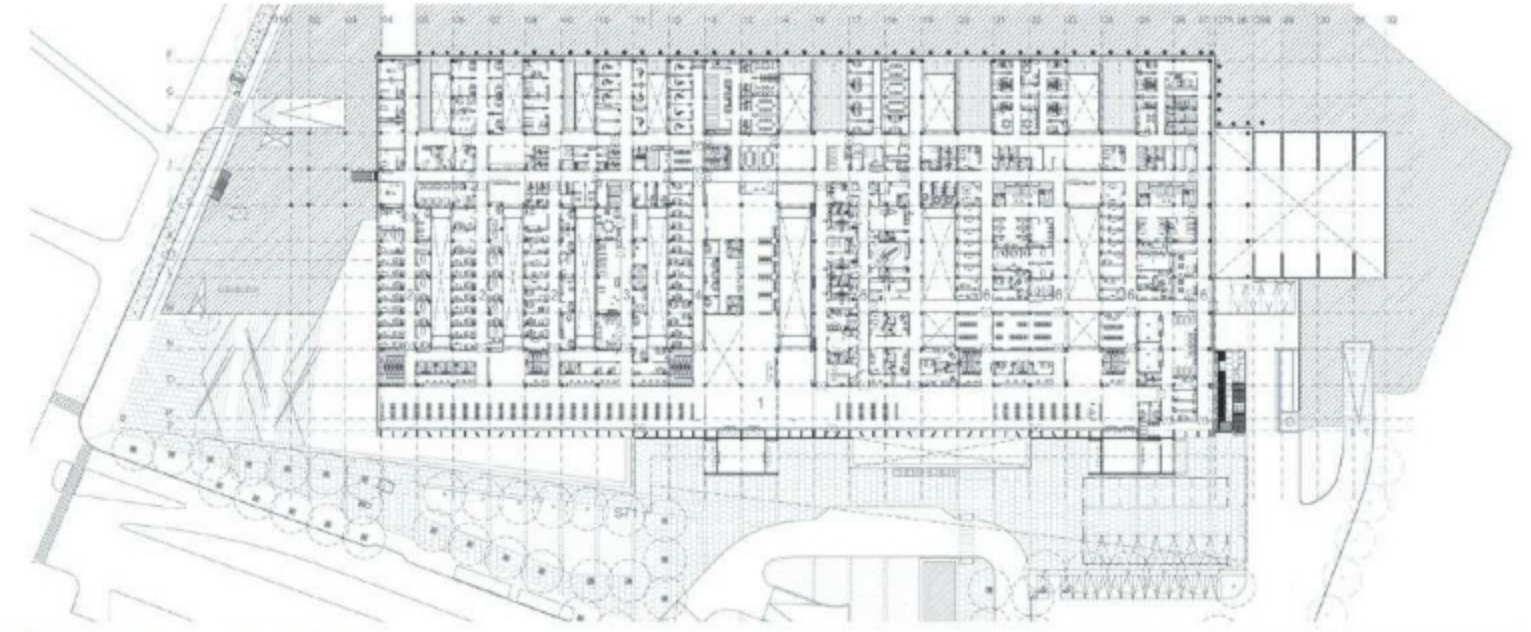


This second hospital by the same firm, also in Santiago, is visibly a sibling in architectural terms. This time the site was square (250m x250m) but sloped a full 10m from south to north. The solution proposed a half-buried plinth that effectively levels the site, overhung with two separate but parallel bars overlooking the landscaped podium roof. The bifurcation of the section into plinth-based programme and that of the floating bars, conveniently lent itself to the disparate functions of a modern hospital, as well as exploited better north-south orientation. Functions such as operating theatres, radiology, emergency, and so forth occupy the plinth base, while the upper bars house hospitalisation rooms for patients, and staff space. Although the hospital spans seven storeys in total, the sensibility is of a horizontally organised facility, deemed preferable for a medical institution... and incidentally more easily integrated into the low-rise urban context.

The facades reveal affinities with the other BBATS hospital as well, favouring once more large-scale volumes of clear proportions and uniformly treated cladding. Again there are lengths of wall shaded by vertical shutters that create a pleasing syncopation, including a wall of tall fins set to different angles on the plinth. The upper box, which extends outward to rest on a small forest of columns, is articulated as a smooth glass object.

The achievement here lies in how BBATS has managed to nestle a sizeable institution down into its site such that from any given vantage point, it seems

smaller than it is. The sloped site has been made to assist in this effort, so that at the upper elevation the building seems not tall, but unlike at the Clinico Metropolitano, there is no flaunting of sheer size or length. It's as if a stretch limousine had skiffily squeezed into a tight parking spot... and it works. That's not to say this is a blushing wallflower or that it lacks moments of drama. On the contrary, there are many places, especially when the juxtaposed boxes play against each other or the horizon, when the building speeds the pulse. But of the two siblings, this one is a tad more shy.



WOVEN...

The Interlace Buro Ole Scheeren

Photography by Iwan Baan



It is likely that Hong Kong beats Singapore hands-down in the drive toward residential mega-developments, with the former's ubiquitous walls of 60-storey banality. But Singapore easily claims the prize for *innovating* with huge housing complexes... something Hong Kong is simply uninterested in. This latest entry, by Ole Scheeren – something of a master at hugeness – plays a cluster of no less than 31 six-storey blocks across each other in a hexagonal pattern that results in eight courtyards. The geometry is dumb-simple, but it produces some undeniably interesting tertiary or 'leftover' spaces that can be used as communal gardens and terraces. And this is the big idea (other than bigness, that is). These 'interlaced' outdoor spaces, often shaded by the enormous buildings massed around and over them, form the outdoor public realm that excites the architect and justifies the whole venture. Per the architect's statement, "The design turns vertical isolation into horizontal connectivity and reinstates the notion of community as a central issue in today's society." Fair enough; the inherently complex structural solutions to the development – with large cantilevers, giant spans and concentrated points of vertical support – do indeed yield a number of compelling places atop and underneath the blocks.

Time will tell if, in Singapore's ruthlessly hot and humid climate, these common terraces actually promote or sustain social activity, or instead become merely prettily greened-up visual anchors to the 1,040 flats in the buildings. But that may not matter in the long run, anyway. The complex, in breaking itself apart, creates its own shade and breezeways that assist in climate moderation. It seems disappointing that the more pronounced communal facilities, such as swimming pools, tennis courts and the like, are relegated to the conventional ground level – it would have been fascinating to see them occupy some of the upper terraces. And given their plenitude, one isn't sure why they didn't. The richly landscaped ground plane, which is elaborated as an extensive and lovely park setting for the inhabitants, threatens to render the upper terraces less populated. A 1km running track weaves through the various courtyards, linking them in a continuous loop that takes maximum advantage of the masterplan.

Another disappointment is the final elaboration of the facades themselves, which end up being rather conventional exterior wall treatments with horizontal emphasis enlivened only by vegetation on balconies. Perhaps it was determined [by the developer,



CapitaLand?) that there was enough excitement already for average Singaporeans, at the planning scale? Except it seems a greater differentiation between quieter surfaces and terraces or openings might have completed The Interlace in the spirit it establishes as a whole.

What is undeniable, nevertheless, is the excitement generated by the unique macro arrangements of solid and void, and the oblique relationships created by the hexagonal pattern. The views from almost anywhere in The Interlace are an exhilarating concert of openings to sky or garden, or windows and terraces housing fellow humans occupied by their daily goings-on. Not unlike Steven

Holl's Linked Hybrid project in Beijing (with which Scheeren, a resident of that city, must be intimately familiar), the prime positions in The Interlace are those with internal views, rather than those on the perimeter.

The ambition of the project is immodest, and rightly so; this kind of experiment could only work at the grand scale. It takes an architect and a client (and a city, for that matter) unfettered by modesty to pull something like this off with anything close to success. The Interlace is poorly named: there is nothing delicate or prim about it. This is an overt tour de force.

LIBRARY AT UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND

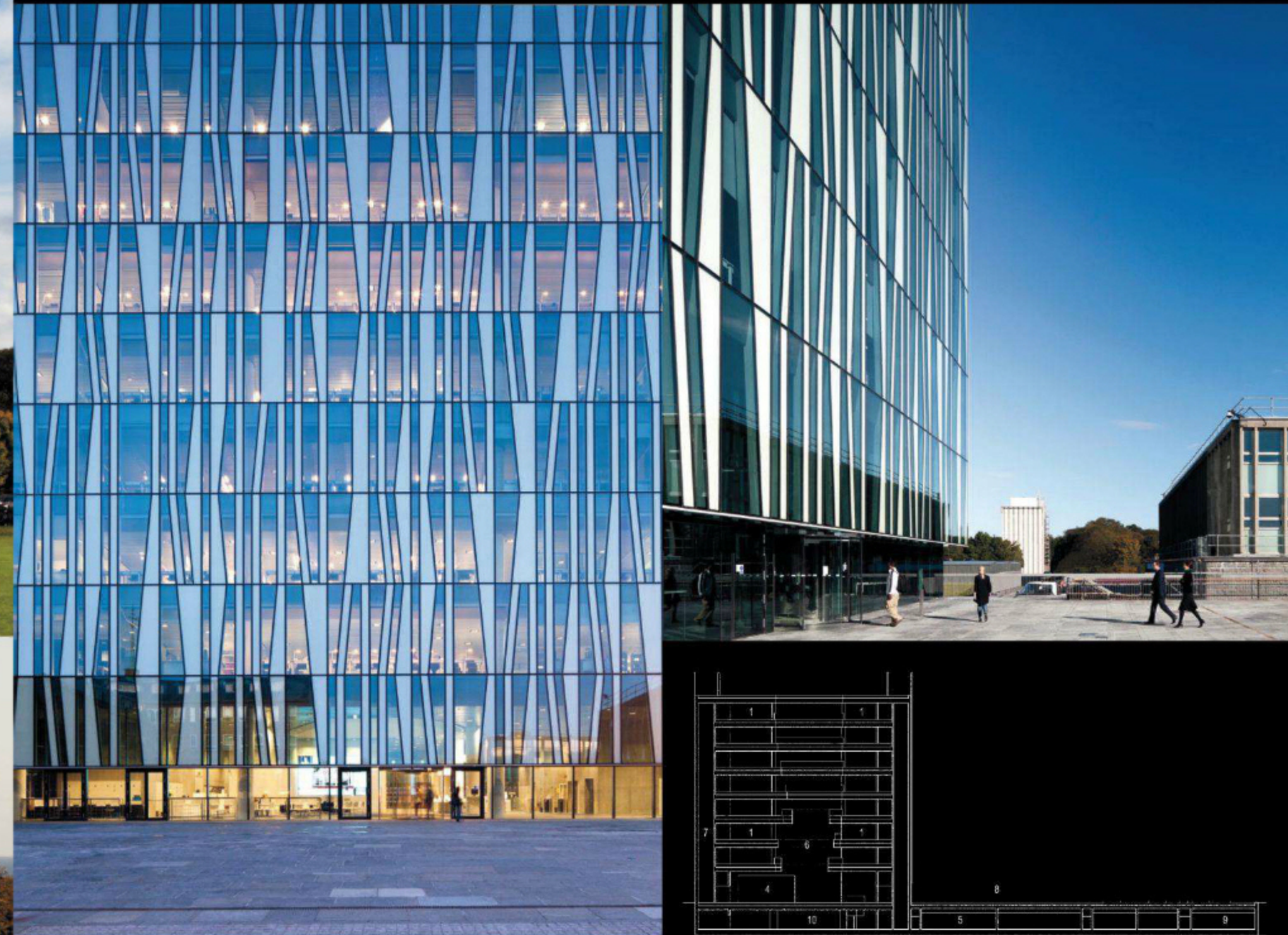
SCHMIDT HAMMER LASSEN ARCHITECTS




Photography by Adam Mork

In an age of 'downloaded' reading material, some may question the need for a new library, or libraries at all. Yet as any scholar will argue – and many of them own at least one Kindle – handling the pages of a book is a visceral experience that cannot ever be duplicated by electronic means. Books, from illuminated manuscripts to contemporary annotations along sidebars, are for keeps; documents read on Kindles are simply lighter, more convenient ways to enjoy them on long-haul flights. For that matter, many an Ivy League university's status is still judged by the size and quality of its library's collection.

Established in 1495, the University of Aberdeen has amassed an impressive collection of more than 250,000 books and manuscripts, with some extremely rare first editions that cannot be found in any other public institution in the world. The library's 15,500sq m service a student body of 14,000. The facility is strategically situated at the junction of a T, with a new public square running from it along the east-west axis toward the existing university campus. To the north and the south of the library, respectively, are a garden and an amphitheatre. The library's massing is conspicuously grounded, proudly positioned on a base of local stone. Rising from it are vertical panes of high-performance glass contrasted against waves of insulated



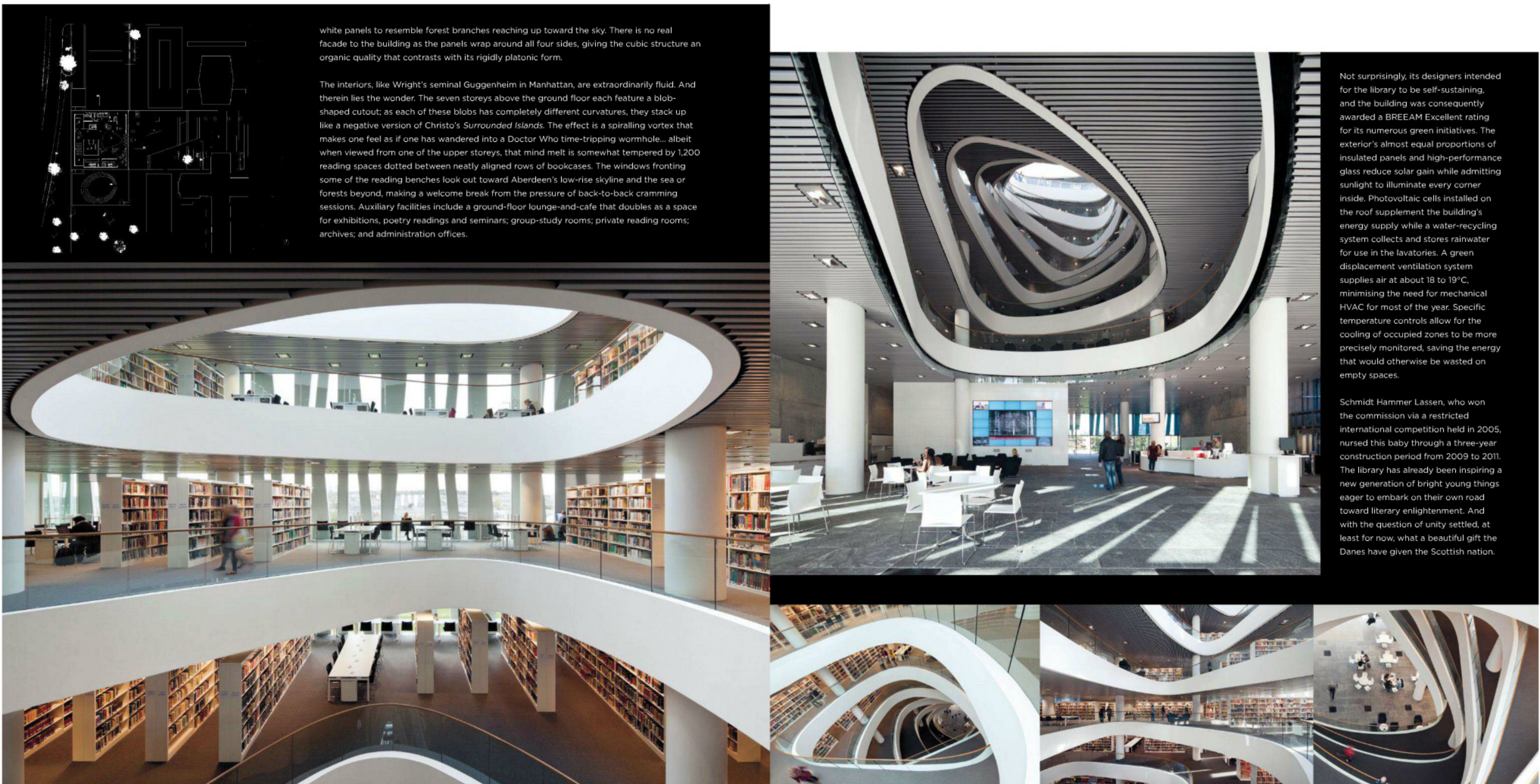


white panels to resemble forest branches reaching up toward the sky. There is no real facade to the building as the panels wrap around all four sides, giving the cubic structure an organic quality that contrasts with its rigidly platonic form.

The interiors, like Wright's seminal Guggenheim in Manhattan, are extraordinarily fluid. And therein lies the wonder. The seven storeys above the ground floor each feature a blob-shaped cutout; as each of these blobs has completely different curvatures, they stack up like a negative version of Christo's *Surrounded Islands*. The effect is a spiralling vortex that makes one feel as if one has wandered into a Doctor Who time-tripping wormhole... albeit when viewed from one of the upper storeys, that mind melt is somewhat tempered by 1,200 reading spaces dotted between neatly aligned rows of bookcases. The windows fronting some of the reading benches look out toward Aberdeen's low-rise skyline and the sea or forests beyond, making a welcome break from the pressure of back-to-back cramming sessions. Auxiliary facilities include a ground-floor lounge-and-cafe that doubles as a space for exhibitions, poetry readings and seminars; group-study rooms; private reading rooms; archives; and administration offices.

Not surprisingly, its designers intended for the library to be self-sustaining, and the building was consequently awarded a BREEAM Excellent rating for its numerous green initiatives. The exterior's almost equal proportions of insulated panels and high-performance glass reduce solar gain while admitting sunlight to illuminate every corner inside. Photovoltaic cells installed on the roof supplement the building's energy supply while a water-recycling system collects and stores rainwater for use in the lavatories. A green displacement ventilation system supplies air at about 18 to 19°C, minimising the need for mechanical HVAC for most of the year. Specific temperature controls allow for the cooling of occupied zones to be more precisely monitored, saving the energy that would otherwise be wasted on empty spaces.

Schmidt Hammer Lassen, who won the commission via a restricted international competition held in 2005, nursed this baby through a three-year construction period from 2009 to 2011. The library has already been inspiring a new generation of bright young things eager to embark on their own road toward literary enlightenment. And with the question of unity settled, at least for now, what a beautiful gift the Danes have given the Scottish nation.





Show and Tell

Hong Kong's art lovers had no problems gussying it up for a 2 Sep cocktail extravaganza when the host is New World Development's Adrian Cheng, Mr. K11 himself. Held in the space that was previously home to sweaty bodies pumping iron at Cosco Tower, the event featured the works of Japanese landscape designer Shunmyo Masuno and Shanghai-born artist Zheng Chongbin. The latter flew in to grace the opening ceremony and enlightened the celebrity-studded crowd with insights into his creative process. The two week long exhibition was part of the sales pitch for New World's The Pavilia Hill luxury residential development on Tin Hau Temple Road.



Eight is Enough

AsiaOne's Chai Wan flagship shop was a flurry of activity on 5 September at the book launch of local photographer Julian Lee's first retrospective. Featuring iconic photos taken over the past 30 years, *Hong Kong/China Photographers Eight – Julian Lee*, with text by director of Fine Art Asia Calvin Hui, chronicles Lee's rise as a celebrity photographer and his subsequent work for *City Magazine*. The 102 photos in the book feature a variety of subjects; including nude males striking sensual poses in gay magazines, meditative landscapes taken after a sobering cancer scare and big haired TVB stars from the 80s. The publication is just as much a celebration of Lee's evolution as it is a celebration of Hong Kong's cultural maturity, and is one in a series of eight volumes featuring the works of greater China's most respected photographers.



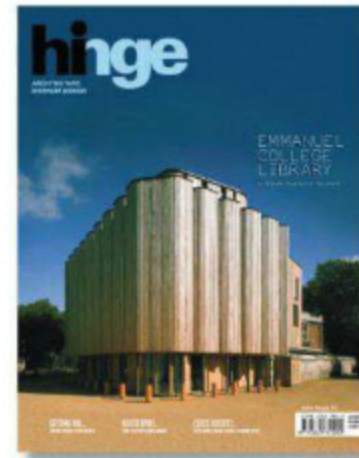
Like a Hurricane

On the evening of 10 September, hygiene hotties hovered around Wanchai to partake in Japanese sanitaryware company Toto's *Bathroom of the Future* Discovery Tour. Toto's East Town Centre Architectural and Design showroom was divided into a series of learning zones, with demonstrations and interactive displays such as the launch of its Laboratory. The highlight of the evening was the unveiling of the new Neorest XH Intelligent Toilet, marking the next generation of self-cleaning bowls. Other innovations include Ewater+, a process that sprays toilets with electrolysed process water for a thorough cleaning; CeFIONtect, a clean coat anti-bacterial material that repels dirt; and Tornado Flush, an environmentally friendly system based on spiraling action to remove stubborn stains. "Tornado Flush is very popular in Japan and can be seen even in casual cafes, but Hong Kong restaurateurs still don't realise that high end design needs to be extended to the washroom facilities," argues Toto distributor VSC's national sales and operations manager Matthew Cheung, as he flushes to demonstrate.



Jungle Out There

The music was blasting, the sparkling wine was flowing, the small talk was invigorating – the evening of 18 Sep stretched out into the wee hours of the morning at Stickman Tribe's fifth anniversary party, held in its Quarry Bay office. Hong Kong-based co-founder Karen Hay welcomed fellow co-founder Marcos Cain and two other colleagues from Dubai to join the festivities along with 80 other industry professionals, fellow interior designers and friendly competitors. Founded in Dubai, Hay relocated to Hong Kong two years ago to concentrate on an increasing number of hospitality projects in Asia, while Cain oversees things across the Middle East.



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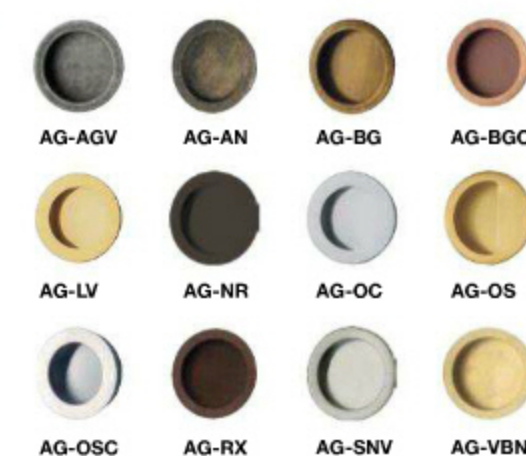


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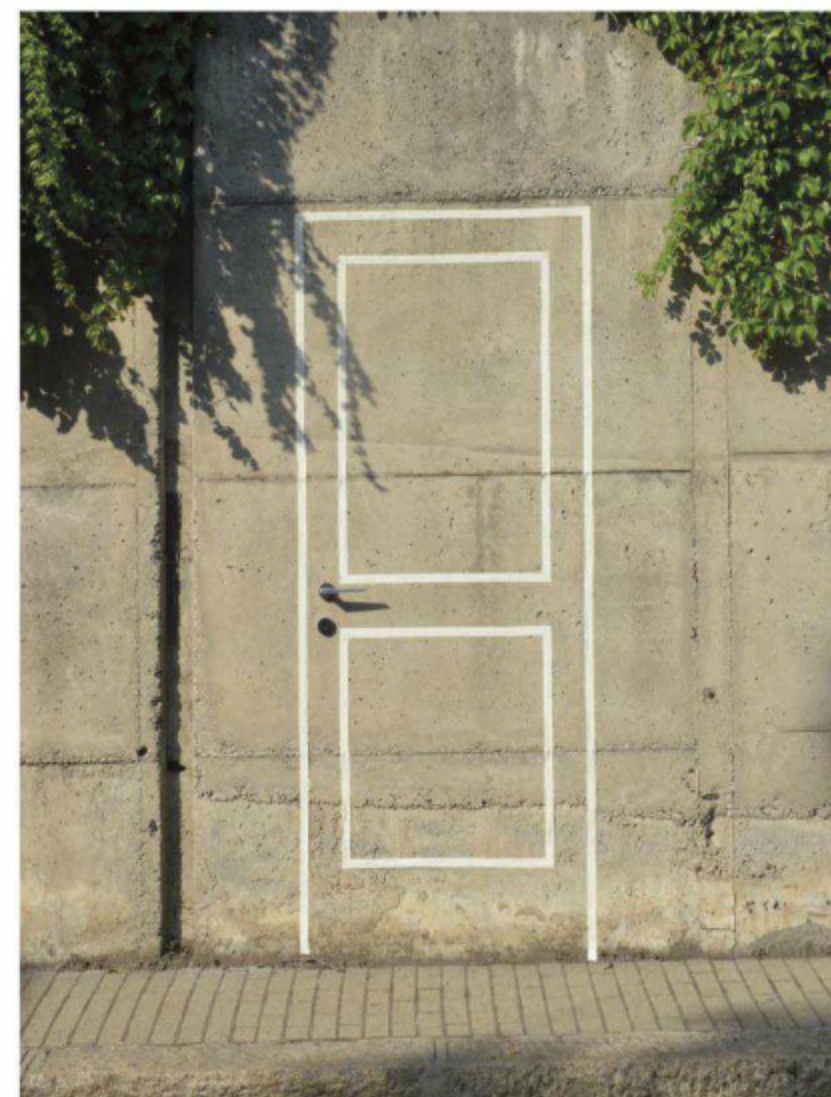


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066



068



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070



079



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Dolce Vita OL-M243
design **Marcel Wanders**



The poetic and visionary design by Marcel Wanders combines intuition, charm and imagination. Able to relight the passion for styles of bygone eras and the taste for extravagance in the world of interior design and furnishings, Wanders has interpreted the theme of the handle with its original style and glamor.

Dolce Vita for its soft and harmonious shape, invite you to be caressed, accompanying the usual gesture of crossing a pass, to the emotion of tactile sensation.

Like a jewel, the detail embellishes the surface of the door handle of the door, becoming a focal point. An element inspired by classic styles and a geometric volume perfectly cylindrical generate a combination of two languages apparently in contrast, a wonderful polarity that for the first time merges into the design for a door handle.



Super Anthracite Satined



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