CLAD mag

2018 ISSUE 1
CLADGLOBAL.COM
@CLADGLOBAL

FOR LEISURE ARCHITECTS, DESIGNERS, INVESTORS & DEVELOPERS

Odile Decq

On diversity and freedom in architecture

INSIGHT

Ed Ng

Why designers need to be fortune tellers

PROFILE

Steven Holl

"I'll tell you what makes me angry..."

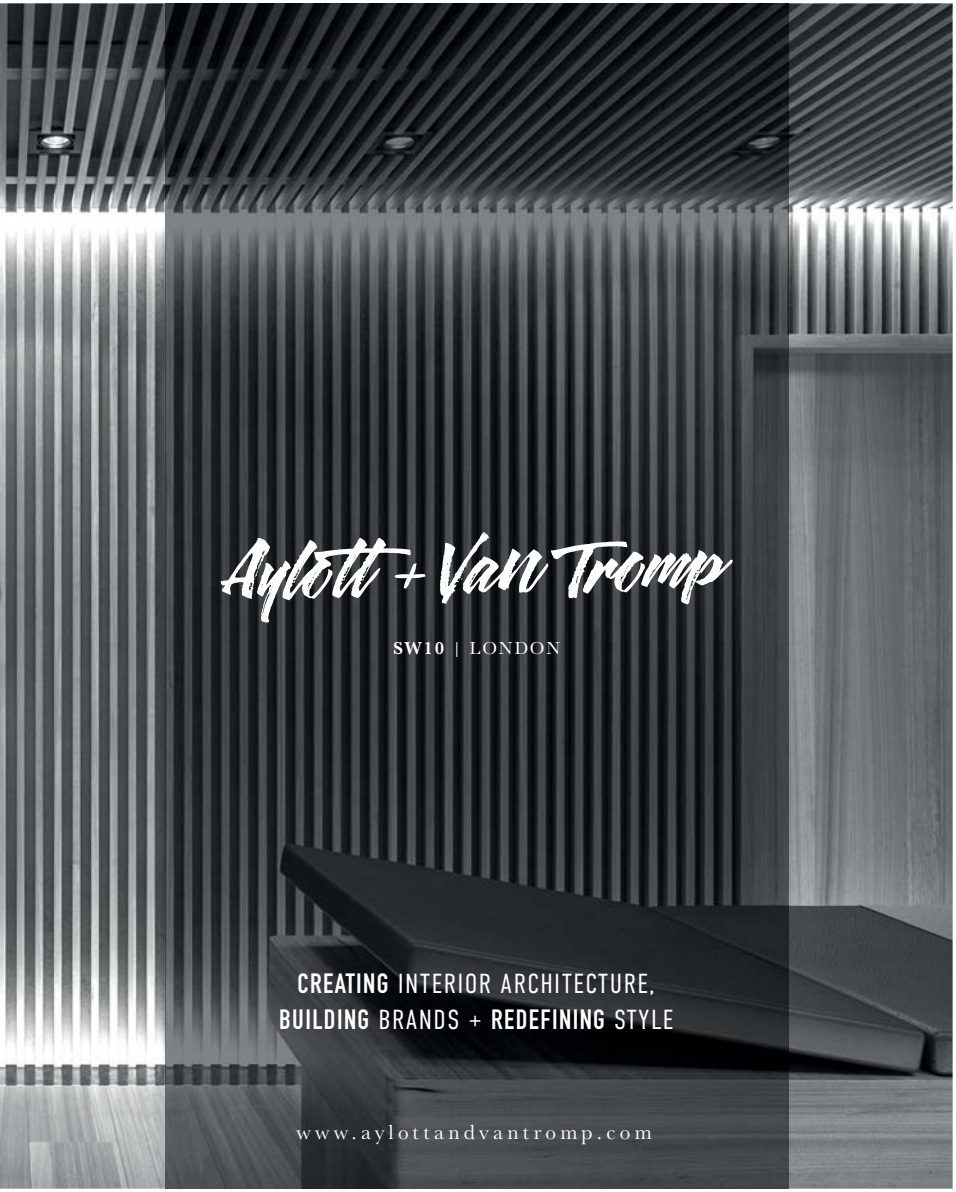
Adriaan Geuze

The healing power of nature

Alison Brooks

'We fight hard and take big risks'

Aesop.


Aylott + Van Tromp
SW10 | LONDON
CREATING INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE,
BUILDING BRANDS + REDEFINING STYLE
www.aylottandvantromp.com

DORN
BRACHT
Dornbracht
VAIA
Create a new
balance
dornbracht.com/vaia #createanewbalance

> People value places they can go to spend high-quality, 'unstructured time'

Putting a value on experience design

New research from Gensler has examined the impact of design on the quality of experiences. The new Gensler Experience Index examined people's intentions in using space, as well as their expectations, interactions and the quality of the space

Attributing values to buildings is a fairly straightforward process when it comes to well-established sectors such as office and residential, where the building type has become a commodity. However, leisure buildings don't follow the same rules, and valuing them is far more complicated because of what goes on inside them: how do you value an experience?

This issue we look at work done by Gensler, who set out to tackle this question by doing research to find evidence of the importance and design in creating experiences (see page 110).

The practice has created the Gensler Experience Index, a matrix which describes best practice in experience design.

Gensler carried out a multi-year, mixed-methods investigation that combined qualitative and ethnographic research – such as 30 two-hour interviews with people in five markets across the US – with quantitative research, including a nationwide, panel-based survey of over 4,000 respondents.

PHOTO: GENSLER

Gensler suggest that every space should be designed as social space

Gensler's Tom Lindblom told *CLAD*, "Previous studies have evaluated human experience and its impact on business, but this is the first time design has been measured.

"We already knew the importance of product, brand, and service quality in creating a great experience. However, no single piece of research to date has combined the known drivers of creating a human experience with design factors.

"We're now able to prove that design is the X factor that takes a good experience and makes it great."

> **No single piece of research to date has combined the known drivers of creating a human experience with design factors**

Gensler found that the quality of experiences at the 'best-designed' spaces was rated nearly twice as highly as those at the 'worst-designed' spaces, with places which are considered 'beautiful, unique, authentic, inspirational, intuitive, and welcoming' offering the best overall experience.

Among many findings, the research found people value places they can go to spend high-quality, 'unstructured time', such as public spaces which offer the chance for "reflection, inspiration, and unplugging, as well as fun and socialising."

Gensler said: "Our findings suggest every space should be designed as a social space. The data showed that places designed to support community, connection and belonging offer better experiences and that people actively seek out places to connect."

Liz Terry, editor, CLAD @elizterry

+44 (0)1462 431385 CLADGLOBAL.COM @CLADGLOBAL FACEBOOK.COM/CLADGLOBAL

CONTENTS CLAD mag 2018 ISSUE 1

Steven Holl speaks his mind

Adriaan Geuze on the power of landscape design

Chicago Midtown Athletic Club

The Ned designer Alice Lund 84

5 **Editor's letter**
Liz Terry explores the link between great design and great experiences in the world of leisure architecture

12 CLAD people
Odile Decq on women in architecture, Rossana Hu, Theoni Xanthi's New Cyprus Museum designs and Veronica Schreibeis on wellness architecture

22 **CLAD news**
Architecture and design news from around the world

36 **Queen Elizabeth Hall**
SimsponHaugh's latest project

40 **Steven Holl**
The acclaimed architect speaks to *CLAD* about Donald Trump, Zaha Hadid and not being obedient

52 **Alison Brooks**
We need to help the public understand that architects are on their side, argues The Smile designer

58 **Sportcampus Zuiderpark**
FaulknerBrowns' Dutch sports facility

62 **Adriaan Geuze**
How the West 8 founder is using the healing power of nature on a Korean site with a turbulent history

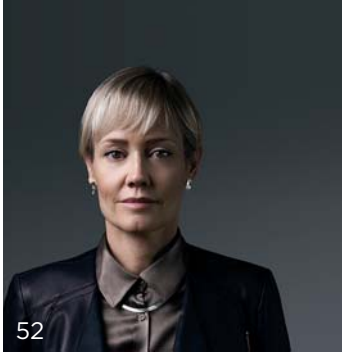
72 **A fitting tribute**
The architects behind the Yves Saint Laurent Museum in Marrakech reveal the inspiration for their striking design

76 **Fit for anything**
The newly renovated Chicago Midtown Athletic Club features a boutique hotel, a pool-come-ice rink and spaces designed by Venus Williams

84 **Alice Lund**
On the challenges of creating The Ned

90 **Body beautiful**
We check out some of the world's most gorgeous gyms

Terrence Ngan and Ed Ng



Alison Brooks on creating The Smile

RIBA scours the globe for its best new building

The world of teamLab

The designers and architects building on water

96 **Ed Ng**
When AB Concept's co-founder got the brief for the Four Seasons' Mei Ume restaurant, he jumped straight on the plane to London. He tells us why

102 **Water world**
Rising sea levels and a shortage of land are leading to increased interest in floating buildings. We take a look at some fascinating projects

110 **The role of design**
At last: concrete proof that design is the critical factor that turns good experiences into great ones, says Gensler's Tom Lindblom

114 **Light fantastic**
Tokyo-based digital art collective teamLab is on a mission to change the way we interact with art. We hear more

118 **Myths of monsters and men**
An Icelandic spa retreat inspired by surrealist folk tales

122 **The RIBA longlist**
A wide range of leisure projects are being celebrated in RIBA's list of the world's best buildings

127 **CLADkit**
The latest products on the market

CLAD

Community of Leisure Architects & Designers

About CLAD

The Community of Leisure Architects & Designers unites people who contribute to the success of leisure and the built environment, to enable them to do business. CLADglobal, the organisation behind CLAD, is a media business creating magazines, books, websites and digital feeds to enable CLAD professionals to share news, opinions and best practice. Find out more about the CLAD portfolio at CLADglobal.com

Leisure – a definition

CLAD's definition of leisure includes all aspects of out-of-home activity: arts & culture, museums & heritage, hotels & hospitality, bars & restaurants, sport & recreation, spa & wellness, health & fitness, attractions, theme parks & entertainment, greenspace, regeneration and retail. It's the biggest area of consumer expenditure in the developed world and the biggest driver of growth in the developing world.

CLADmag is published four times a year by The Leisure Media Co Ltd, Portmill House, Portmill Lane, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1DJ, UK. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the publisher The Leisure Media Co Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright holder, Cybertrek Ltd 2017. Printed by The Manson Group Limited. Distributed by Total Mail Ltd globally and Royal Mail Group Ltd and Whistl Ltd in the UK. ©Cybertrek Ltd 2017 ISSN print edition 2058-3338, online edition 2058-3346. To subscribe to CLADmag visit www.leisuresubs.com or email: subs@leisuremedia.com or call +44 1462 471930. Annual subscription rate is £100.

The **CLADmag** team

EDITOR
Liz Terry
+44 (0)1462 431385
lizterry@CLADglobal.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Magali Robathan
+44 (0)117 9723101
magalirobathan@CLADglobal.com

DEPUTY EDITOR
Kim Megson
+44 (0)1462 471915
kimmegson@CLADglobal.com

PUBLISHER
Julie Badrick
+44 (0)1462 471919
juliebadrick@CLADglobal.com

For email, use contact's fullname@CLADglobal.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Denise Adams
+44 (0)1462 471930
www.leisuresubs.com

CIRCULATION
Michael Emmerson
+44 (0)1462 471932

NEWSDESK
Rob Gibson
+44 (0)1462 471902
Tom Anstey
+44 (0)1462 471916
Jane Kitchen
+44 (0)1462 471929

PRODUCT NEWS
Lauren Heath-Jones
+44 (0)1462 471927

ADVERTISING SALES
Jan Williams
+44 (0)1462 471909
John Challinor
+44 (0)1202 742968
Astrid Ros
+44 (0)1462 471911

CONTRIBUTORS
Alice Davis
+44 (0)1462 471918
Kathryn Hudson
Christopher DeWolf
Christian Lachel

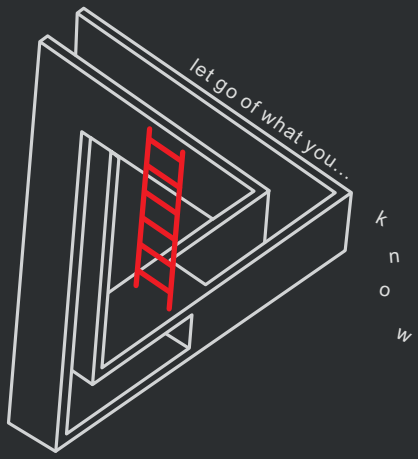
WEB TEAM
Michael Paramore
+44 (0)1462 471926
Tim Nash
+44 (0)1462 471917
Emma Harris
+44 (0)1462 471921
Dean Fox
+44 (0)1462 471900

DESIGN
Andy Bundy
+44 (0)1462 471924

ADVERTISING & ARTWORK
Ed Gallagher
+44 (0)1905 20198

FINANCE
Denise Adams
+44 (0)1462 471930

CREDIT CONTROL
Rebekah Wilkinson
+44 (0)1462 733477



AWLAKE

thinking the UNTHINKABLE

awlakewellness.com awlakedesign.com uber-well.com

Choose how you read CLADmag

PRINT

CLADmag is available in print on subscription. Sign up at leisuresubs.com

DIGITAL

Read CLADmag on Digital Turning Pages and enjoy extra links and searchability

PDF

The magazine is also available as a PDF edition for readers who want to read offline or on tablet

ONLINE

Read CLADmag online at CLADglobal.com and get access to the entire back catalogue

More from CLAD...

CLADmag

CLADmag is the glossy magazine which talks to the people making things happen in leisure architecture and design, investment and development. CLADmag uses storytelling and photography to bring the content alive. It's available on subscription in print and free of charge on Digital Turning Pages and PDF.

CLADbook

The annual CLADbook celebrates the best of CLAD. Contents include the CLAD Foresight™ trends report, Development Pipeline, Movers & Shakers, research and analysis. CLADbook is available in print, on Digital Turning Pages and as a PDF and is distributed to all CLADmag subscribers.

CLADweek

CLADweek is the news magazine for architects, designers, investors and developers working in the CLAD community. The magazine contains the latest news from CLAD with bonus photography to create a weekly review of the headlines. CLADweek is available on ezine, Digital Turning Pages, Flipboard and PDF.

CLADglobal.com

CLADglobal.com is updated around the clock with the latest news. From here you can access all CLAD's print and digital publications and news feeds free of charge and subscribe to print editions.

Go to the profile section to set up personal and company profiles to showcase your work.

CLADzine

The CLADzine digital news bulletin is available twice weekly for readers who enjoy getting the latest news delivered to their inbox in easy-to-read ezine format.

From the latest developments to breaking news about deals and awards, the CLAD team tracks the industry globally and across all sectors to keep you up to date.

CLAD-kit.net

CLAD-kit.net is CLAD's search engine for products. It gives access to the latest product launches, as well as contact details for suppliers.

If you're a supplier, your new product details are welcome – contact CLAD's Product Editor, Jason Holland, jasonholland@CLADglobal.com

GLOBAL WELLNESS
SUMMIT 2018

WELLNESS ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Don't miss renowned architect Antonio Citterio's keynote on the intersection of wellness and architecture

TECHNOGYM VILLAGE, WELLNESS VALLEY, ITALY | OCT. 6-8, 2018

GLOBALWELLNESSSUMMIT.COM

CLAD People

Things have improved, but not enough

Odile Decq founder **Studio Odile Decq**

PHOTO: ©FRANCE JIREV

Decq has been recognised for raising the profile of women in architecture

French architect and urban planner Odile Decq has spoken to *CLAD* about the role of women in architecture and her concerns about the "narrow" way architecture is being taught.

In 2016, Decq won the Jane Drew Prize – part of the Women in Architecture Awards – for raising the profile of women within the profession. Recent projects include the Museum of Contemporary Art in Rome, Italy; FRAC Bretagne in Rennes, France; and the Tangshan Fangshan Geopark National Museum in Nanjing, China.

"Things have improved a little bit for women in architecture since I started out, but not enough," she told *CLAD*, during an interview arranged as part of RIBA's International Week. "There are more and more women studying architecture, but there are very few actually working in the field of architecture, particularly as leaders of architectural practices.

"It's such an important issue. When you think about the question of creating public space, women have to use it, to feel comfortable in it. A wide range of people need to be designing spaces, because a wide range of people use spaces."

Decq also spoke about her views on the need for more freedom in the way architecture is taught.

In 2014, Decq opened an international architecture school in Lyon, France, mixing architectural teachings with other disciplines including physics, sociology, neuroscience and the visual arts. The Confluence Institute for Innovation and Creative Strategies in Architecture is based in a 2,200sq m Odile Decq-designed building in Lyon's former docking area.

"I believe in teaching architecture alongside lots of other disciplines, because that's how it was taught 100 years ago – a wide open mind was encouraged," said Decq. "Today architectural teaching has become narrower, more professional, and ill-adapted to change.

"This has led to architects who are trained to think about buildings as products. A building is not a product, it's a place for people, for living, for society, for 'leisuring'.

"Architecture is a way of thinking and acting in the world. We need to integrate many disciplines, to propose solutions for the world."

PHOTO: GUIDO BARBIERI

Decq opened the Confluence Institute architectural school in 2014 (above)

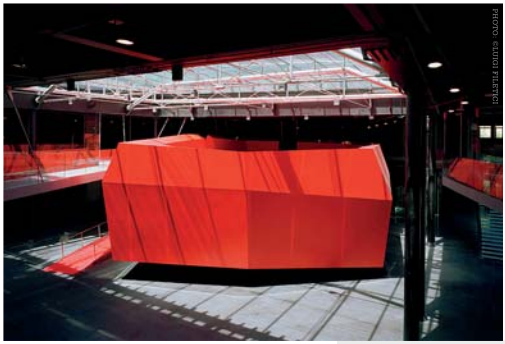


PHOTO: GUIDO BARBIERI

The MACRO contemporary art museum, Rome (above). The Fangshan Tangshan Museum (right)

PHOTO: SETH WATKINS

PROJECT
Tsingpu Yangzhou Retreat, China

Interior projects carried out by architects have a depth that's generally lacking today

Rosanna Hu founding partner **Neri & Hu**

Rossana Hu studied at the University of California at Berkeley, where she met Lyndon Neri

The Tsingpu Yangzhou Retreat has 20 guest rooms

"As architects, we're often asked why we'd want to work on interior projects, and we sometimes find ourselves apologetic about doing so," said Rossana Hu, co-founder of Neri and Hu, speaking at the World Architecture Festival in Berlin, and then exclusively to *CLAD*.

"Nowadays, the specialisation of the profession has brought us to a point where the two disciplines are cut off from one another. There's a very clear line between what the architect should do and what the interior designer should do. Because of that, we often think of the interior as just decoration."

This, argued Hu, is a mistake.

"Interior projects treated by architects have a certain depth that is generally lacking today; the kind of intellectual discourse that's very much needed," she said.

"When an architect takes on an interior project, their training means they can conceptualise the space in a way that adds much more richness to the experience. They can take out a wall or puncture a ceiling to create that exceptional quality within the interior that an interior designer wouldn't be equipped to do."

Neri & Hu, which was founded in Shanghai in 2004, has an interior practice and architectural department, allowing the firm to take on both aspects of a project. This is something they fight hard for, said Hu.

"We've had many people asking us to do an interior for them, and we've refused unless they'll also allow us to do the architecture. At Le Meridien in Zhengzhou, for example, they asked us to design the interiors for the hotel. It was a very ugly building. We said

we didn't want to do the interior of a building that looked like that, and would only get involved if we could also do the façade."

Neri & Hu's design for Le Meridien in Zhengzhou saw them create a series of frames around the façades of the tower, creating a distinctive exterior. They were also responsible for the hotel's interiors, which include a dramatic, five storey atrium inspired by nearby caves.

At the Tsingpu Yangzhou Retreat, reclaimed brick walls create multiple courtyard enclosures

TSINGPU YANGZHOU RETREAT

The practice recently completed a 20 bedroom boutique hotel in Yangzhou, China. The architects were responsible for both the architecture and the interiors for the Tsingpu Yangzhou Retreat.

The site was a challenging one, according to the architects, as it was dotted with small lakes and a handful of existing structures. The design brief called for the reuse of several of the old buildings, while adding new buildings to accommodate the hotel facilities. The architects' strategy to unify these scattered elements was to overlay a grid of walls and paths onto the site to tie the entire project together.

"We were able to bring the history back to this plot of land by creating these walls that used to be the sightlines of the original village," said Hu.

"We did the interior as well as the architecture, and we customised a lot of the lighting and furniture for this project, which makes it so much richer. It's a beautiful hotel, and the architecture is very interesting"

Upcoming projects for Neri and Hu include the Edition Shanghai, with Ian Schrager, and Sukothai hotel, also in Shanghai.

PROJECT
New Cyprus Museum

The design concept is to create a museum that evokes a transition in time, in space, in memory

Theoni Xanthi Partner **XZA Architects**

Architect Theoni Xanthi has told *CLAD* how her team's vision for the national archaeology museum in Cyprus was inspired by "the materials that gave birth to Cypriot and Mediterranean culture".

The partner at Greek studio XZA Architects is leading the design of the New Cyprus Museum – a project the firm won in a two-stage international competition held last year.

Housing the nation's treasures, the €49m (US$58.7m, £43.6m) building will replace the country's current archaeological institution in Nicosia, which was established in the late 1800s and now lacks enough space to house the museum's growing collection of antiquities.

Three raised white-stone volumes resting above clear glass boxes will be constructed on the riverside site, currently occupied by the closed and soon-to-be relocated Nicosia General Hospital. Each structure will house permanent and temporary galleries dedicated, consecutively, to the conceptual and museological themes of 'Topos, Cosmos and Sea'.

A terraced garden with trees and waterways will surround the building and an open-air atrium will be created around a sunken public plaza that can host outdoor performances.

According to Xanthi, "pure light, deep relieving shadows, open horizons and a strong relationship between the landscape and the built environment" will be created in the public areas to evoke the squares, atriums and promenades where the people of Cyprus traditionally gathered, socialised and built their culture.

Three raised white stone volumes will be constructed

Construction on the museum is scheduled to begin later this year

"The design concept is to create a museum that, when visited and experienced, evokes a transition in time, in space, in memory," she said. "The building will be much more than a stylistic exercise or an architectural statement.

"We want to create a new environment for the archaeological finds that will be exhibited here. They will emerge in light after their long stay in darkness and oblivion.

"Our feeling that the historical and cultural past is a symbolic weight – a meteoric cloud hovering above every place – has inspired us to raise the exhibition volumes from the ground in order to free the open space and let the living city pass through below.

"The intention is to create a cultural building that refers both to the past and the everyday life of the city."

The two-year construction period will begin this year, with the first phase including galleries, administration offices, storage areas for antiquities and food, beverage and retail facilities.

A library, auditorium and underground parking will follow in the second phase.

XZA Architects have previously been shortlisted in design competitions for a Recreation Park and Rural Heritage Museum in Eptagonia, Cyprus and a Museum for the Promotion of the ancient Greek city of Argos.

IMAGES: XZA ARCHITECTS

Archaeological relics will be stored and exhibited at the museum

> Wellness is essentially an insurance policy to promote physical and mental long term health

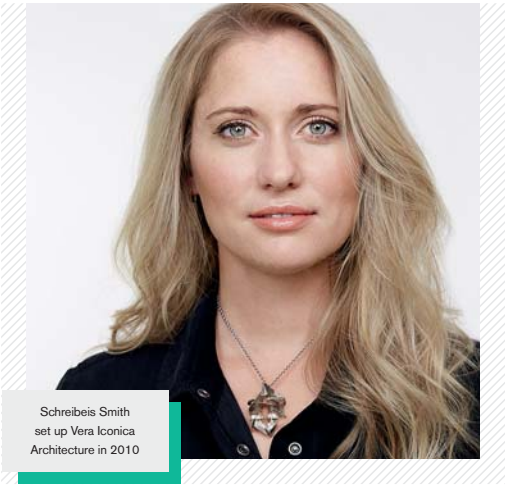
Veronica Schreibeis Smith Founder Vera Iconica Architecture

Veronica Schreibeis Smith, CEO and founding principal of Vera Iconica Architecture, has spoken to *CLAD* about her mission to get wellness architecture on the agenda of the wider architecture community.

Schreibeis Smith will be moderating a Wellness Architecture Forum and Global Wellness Institute Roundtable on the topic in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in September 2018.

Making the case for an urgent need to improve on the "typically toxic and wasteful conventions standard in the building industry", Schreibeis Smith said: "The population has never been sicker than it is today. Our bodies are constantly surrounded by chemicals and toxins in our foods and environments. Our ability to remain healthy is like a rain barrel...we can handle a lot, but when our exposure gets too high, we overflow and start seeing environmental stressors manifest as illness or disease.

"From an economic standpoint [wellness architecture] makes sense. Well building developers are assuming a 10 to15 per cent cost increase for healthier building materials and systems. This is recouped by charging a premium for the real estate, as the end users justify this by valuing their health and wellbeing."



Schreibeis Smith set up Vera Iconica Architecture in 2010

Schreibeis Smith defined wellness architecture as: "The art and science of designing the built environment to empower people to thrive across all dimensions of wellbeing (physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, social and environmental)."

Asked how architects can sell the idea of wellness architecture to their clients, Schreibeis Smith said: "Wellness architecture is essentially an insurance policy to help empower clients to live the lifestyle they aspire to and promote physical and mental long term health. Lifestyle is influenced through 'nudge architecture', a practice that uses environmental psychology to help shift behaviour patterns.

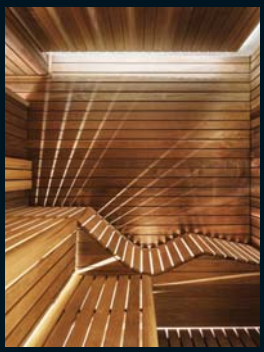
"Physical and mental health is influenced by designing with materials that purify the air, or designs with appropriate daylighting to nourish circadian rhythms which leads to healthy hormone production that can assist in the prevention of disease and illness."

Vera Iconica Architecture was set up by Veronica Schreibeis Smith in 2010 in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, with a focus on 'how environments impact human wellbeing and planet earth'. The practice recently merged with Peruvian firm Luis Longhi Architecture. Ongoing projects include the Hotel Valle Sagrado in Cuzco, Peru. ●

Work is due to start on the Hotel Valle Sagrado in Cuzco, Peru

Vera Iconica recently merged with Longhi Architects, launched by Luis Longhi (above)

Designs for the Museo Nacional del Peru by Luis Longhi



BARR + WRAY

CREATORS OF WELLBEING AND RELAXATION

Interior Design | Engineering Design | Pool + Thermal Installation | Maintenance

Middle East + Asia
Barr + Wray Dubai
T: + 971 4320 6440
E: sales@barrandwray.com

UK + Europe
Barr + Wray
T: + 44 141 882 9991
E: sales@barrandwray.com

Asia Pacific
Barr + Wray Hong Kong
T: + 852 2214 9990
E: sales@barrandwray.com

www.barrandwray.com

CLAD News

Arthur Casas has designed the interiors of the Emiliano Rio

‘Architects have the ability to balance the poetry and the proficiency of buildings, the fantasy as well as the functionality’

Chad Oppenheim

Chad Oppenheim and Arthur Casas create shape-shifting hotel on Rio’s Copacabana beach

A pool and sky deck top the building, providing panoramic views of the beach

Architects Chad Oppenheim and Arthur Casas have collaborated to create a dynamic hotel nestled between dilapidated 1950s apartment buildings on Rio de Janeiro’s Copacabana beach.

The Emiliano Rio has a distinctive façade of sculptural weatherproof panels which can be opened and closed from the bedroom balconies, resulting in a constantly shifting elevation.

“Through these simple yet powerful spatial manipulations, the hotel optimises its beneficial attributes while subverting its negative forces,” explained the architects in a design statement.

The property has 90 rooms across 11 floors, with amenities including a gym, spa, sauna, restaurant and private lounge that open up to separate courtyards filled with tropical vegetation. A pool and sky deck top the building, providing panoramic views of the beach and the Rio skyline.

Casas has designed the interiors, which are inspired by the work of the Brazilian artist and landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, designer of the Copacabana beach promenade.

Furniture from the late Sergio Rodrigues is integrated into the hotel, along with the work of contemporary designers such as Paola Lenti.

The work of Burle Marx previously inspired the design of the 436-bedroom Grand Hyatt Rio de Janeiro, which opened in 2016. Created by interior designers Yabu Pushelberg with assistance from Brazilian design firm Anastassiadis Arquitetos, it features 17 vertical gardens and mosaic floors which evoke the work of the famed designer.

One of his landscapes also surrounds the nearby Gran Melia Nacional, Oscar Niemeyer’s landmark hotel that was re-opened last year after a long period of abandonment.

Weatherproof panels can be opened from the bedroom balconies

IMAGES: FERNANDO GUERRA

The design celebrates the couple's famous anti-war protest

IMAGE: FAIRMONT LE REINE ELIZABETH

IMAGE: FAIRMONT LE REINE ELIZABETH

John Lennon and Yoko Ono's Montreal hotel suite redesigned to celebrate iconic Bed-In for Peace

Martin Leblanc and Jean Pelland led the project

Visitors can don virtual reality headsets to revisit the Bed-In

PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS/PA IMAGES

The Montreal hotel suite where John Lennon and Yoko Ono held their iconic Bed-In protest in May 1969 has been redesigned by Sid Lee Architecture.

The pair famously spent seven days of their honeymoon in the bed of Suite 1742 at the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth hotel, in an unconventional push for peace. The bed was also the recording location for Lennon's first solo single, 'Give Peace a Chance'.

Local arts collective MASSIVart collaborated with Sid Lee on the newly re-christened John Lennon and Yoko Ono Suite, as part of the latter's year-long renovation of the hotel and all its guest rooms.

The furniture in the historic suite has been arranged to recreate the layout organised by the Lennon and Ono, with the bed placed against the main window. Their famous handwritten 'Hair Peace' and 'Bed Peace' cutouts have also been reproduced and adorn the window.

But rather than recreate the hotel's period décor, the design team has been inspired by the places the couple lived and visited during their anti-war campaigns.

Design touches reference London, New York, Tokyo and New Delhi, while the lyrics to 'Give Peace a Chance' are inscribed repeatedly on the walls in the style of a war memorial. The suite also includes an archival cabinet containing photos, videos and historical items; and interactive art pieces.

Visitors can don virtual reality headsets placed on the nightstands either side of the bed "to sense the unique energy of the bed-in from the point of view of John or Yoko."

The wider redevelopment of Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth was overseen by real estate firm Ivanhoé Cambridge, which commissioned Sid Lee to create new public spaces such as bars and performance spaces.

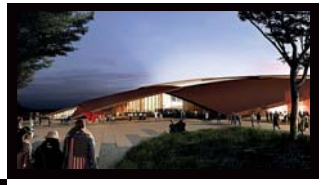
As part of a "holistic vision," the firm have reconnected the hotel with the street, added new entrances, opened up the kitchen areas, enhanced vertical connections through new sculptural stairways and created a series of new interior light sources.

Bjarke Ingels Group unveil design for new type of sports and leisure district under one enormous roof

‘Part architecture, part urbanism, part landscape – the East Austin District is the architectural manifestation of collective intimacy’

Bjarke Ingels

ALL IMAGES: BJARKE INGELS GROUP



Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) are designing a sports and neighbourhood in Texas, beneath a dramatic chequered roofscape.

Ambitious plans for the 1.3 million sq ft (121,000sq m) East Austin District have been revealed by developer Austin Sports & Entertainment, which wants to create “a world of worlds for sports fans, music festival-goers and adventurists to take the pilgrimage for the quintessential Austin experience” at the city’s home of rodeo.

Underneath the distinctive latticed roof – inspired by Thomas Jefferson’s grid system for dividing America’s fields, forests and towns into square-mile sections – there will be a 40,000-seat stadium for soccer and rugby matches, music festivals and other major events.

There will also be a 15,000-seat multi-purpose arena for Rodeo, concerts, basketball and hockey.

A 190,000sq ft (17,600sq m) area for hospitality and support functions will also feature, conjoining the two arenas and providing space for medical facilities and youth programmes.

The project has been conceived as a series of ‘courtyards and canopies’

The individual elements will be unified by all-wooden interiors based on the local barn and porch vernacular, while the rooftop will be covered in red photovoltaic panels.

Sandwiched between the buildings and connecting the district will be eight courtyards, conceived as outdoor ‘living rooms’ for public life where people can meet for communal gatherings.

“Like a collective campus rather than a monolithic stadium, the East Austin District unifies all the elements of rodeo and soccer into a village of courtyards and canopies,” explained BIG founder Bjarke Ingels.

“Embracing Austin’s local character and culture, it is a single destination composed of many smaller structures under one roof. It is capable of making tens of thousands of fans come together to enjoy the best Austin has to offer.”

BIG are collaborating on the project with Austin architects STG Design

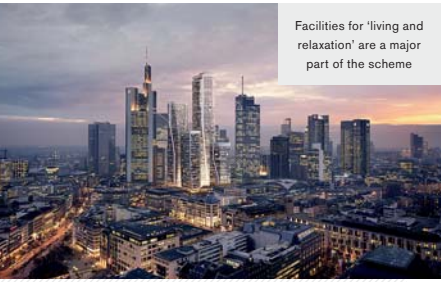
‘FOUR Frankfurt will be built, first and foremost, for the people of Frankfurt. It will add to the liveliness of the city as a whole’

Ben van Berkel

Accessible rooftops will connect spaces across the quarter

ALL IMAGES: UNS+HPP

UNStudio and HPP Architects collaborate for futuristic Frankfurt urban quarter



Facilities for ‘living and relaxation’ are a major part of the scheme

The tallest tower will be 228m (748ft) tall

Dutch designers UNStudio and German practice HPP Architects have joined forces to deliver four skyscrapers and a new urban leisure quarter in the heart of Frankfurt, Germany.

In 2015, development firm Groß & Partner acquired a 16,000sq m (172,200sq ft) plot on Junghofstraße, which had been inaccessible for nearly half a century. UNStudio won the architecture competition for the mixed-use project, called FOUR Frankfurt, the following year.

HPP have now been added to the design team as part of a new joint venture, UNS + HPP, that has established an office in the city.

Together, the firms will develop plans for two office towers and two residential towers, reaching heights of 228m (748ft). The quartet will sit atop a vast plinth housing hotels, restaurants, bars, shops, open public spaces and other amenities.

New renderings have been released illustrating how the project will bring together “a mix of work, living, relaxation and recreation”, with pathways, passages and accessible rooftops connecting spaces across the quarter, and the heritage-listed facades of existing buildings incorporated into the otherwise futuristic design.

“FOUR Frankfurt will be built, first and foremost, for the people of Frankfurt,” said UNStudio founder and principal Ben van Berkel.

“It will not only add to the city’s skyline, but also to the liveliness of Frankfurt as a whole.

“A development with this level of urban effect is particularly timely, as Frankfurt is currently taking up an even bigger role on the European stage. To play a part in this urban transition is a fantastic opportunity for UNStudio and our new consortium partners HPP.”

Werner Sübai, responsible partner at HPP, added: “UNStudio and HPP bring to the scheme many years of experience working on major projects, as well as a combined expertise in design, BIM-based planning processes and complex execution.”

Four Frankfurt is expected to be completed in 2023, with construction already in the early stages.

Duo of biomes at centre of Oman Botanic Garden

IMAGES: ARUP/GRIMSHAW

Construction on the project willl begin imminently

Plans for a botanic garden sheltered beneath a duo of biomes in the Omani desert have been unveiled by Arup, Grimshaw Architects and Haley Sharpe Design (hsd).

The Oman Botanic Garden spans 420 hectares (1,037 acres) on the Arabian Peninsula and consists of two boomerang-shaped glass biomes, a visitor centre and education and research facilities.

Located in the north of the country, 35km (22m) from Muscat at the foot of the Al Hajar Mountains, the biomes represent two very different sides of the local climate and environment and will house a large number of endemic and endangered plant species.

The Northern Biome will immerse visitors in the mountainous terrain to the north of the site, while the Southern Biome will recreate the lush green vegetation created by the khareef (a monsoon season unique to southern Oman and surrounding region). The moist atmosphere created by the khareef supports a special ecosystem known as the Arabian Peninsula coastal fog desert, with a wide variety of plant life unique to the area.

"The Oman Botanic Garden is an astonishing project with many layers of interwoven cultural and environmental significance. Its scale and diversity is truly world-leading," said Grimshaw partner Keith Brewis.

Oman's Ministry of Tourism recently launched its National Strategy for Tourism 2040, targeting a 6 per cent rise in tourism contributions and a near doubling of visitor numbers to five million annually.

"We are honoured to work as the architects for a project that has the conservation of bio-diversity as a core design driver"

Keith Brewis

The design makes use of shading, natural light and irrigation

The campus will have a flowing layout open to the Aarhus public

ALL IMAGES: SCHMIDT HAMMER LASSEN

The complex will feature a community 'activity house'

Schmidt Hammer Lassen design 'welcoming' Sports and Culture Campus for Aarhus

> When designing the campus, our intention was to create a welcoming place that's open and relevant for the local community
>
> Trine Berthold

Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects (SHL) have been commissioned to design a sports and culture campus in Aarhus, Denmark

The multi-use community project is a core component of the of the city's western Gellerup district, with local leaders committed to delivering "an inspiring, welcoming and open destination" for 600,000 visitors annually.

The sprawling Gellerup Sports and Culture Campus will include an 'activity house' for football; climbing and circus performances; a library; community facilities for local residents; and, potentially, a large public swimming pool.

Aarhus commune and the Brabrand Boligforening homeowners' association ran a design competition for the project, with SHL's entry developed in collaboration with local designers Loop Architects, landscape specialists MASU Planning and engineers COWI A/S. They have envisioned "an inviting building structure that breaks up the city's existing boxy grid with an open, flowing layout that strengthens community ties, neighbourhood democracy and cohesion".

Overlapping buildings and spaces will create communal areas for people to meet and socialise over the 10,000sq m (107,600sq ft) site.

"When designing the campus, our intention was to create a welcoming place that's open and relevant for the local community, while also appealing to residents from across Aarhus and the world," said Trine Berthold, SHL associate partner.

"In a community as diverse as Gellerup, it's important the new campus be a democratic place that is friendly, unpretentious and easy to move through so that it encourages use by every member of the district and interaction between people of all walks of life."

The winning team, selected ahead of Danish architectural firms 3XN and CEBRA, will now develop a detailed design. Construction will begin in early 2018.

The project is being built for residents and visitors alike

‘Our focus is to create an experience in the form of landscape, art and architecture that are unified and defined by water’

Kengo Kuma

Skylights will create dramatic plays of light and shadow

IMAGES: KENGO KUMA AND LIXIGON

Kengo Kuma wins competition for Danish Water Culture Center as Cop enhagen’s cultural masterplan takes shape

Kengo Kuma’s extensive pipeline of public projects just got even longer, with his firm winning an international competition to design an aquatics centre on an artificial quay in Copenhagen’s harbour.

The municipality has selected Kengo Kuma Associates to create the 5,000sq m (53,800sq ft) Danish Water Culture Center, ahead of four other shortlisted teams – BIG, 3XN Architects, AART Architects and ALA Architects.

The project will be built on Christiansholm Island, one of the last undeveloped areas along the city’s waterfront. It has been used over the past 50 years by the Danish press for newspaper storage, inspiring the nickname ‘Paper Island’.

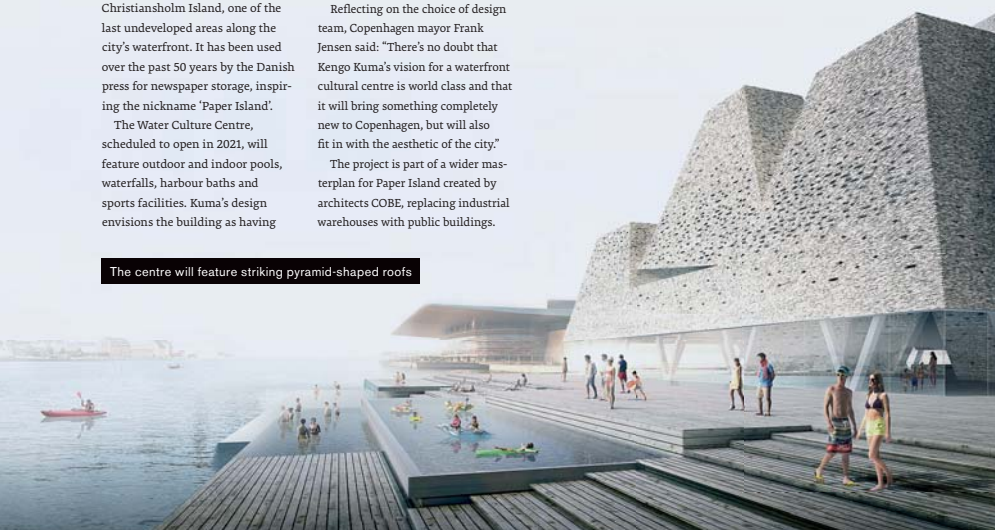
The Water Culture Centre, scheduled to open in 2021, will feature outdoor and indoor pools, waterfalls, harbour baths and sports facilities. Kuma’s design envisions the building as having a series of pyramid-shaped roofs, with an open-air pool passing through the gaps between them. Skylights will create dramatic plays of light and shadow reflecting off the water below.

The complex will be largely built with brick, and earthy tones will be used to evoke traditional Danish craftsmanship.

Associate architects Cornelius + Vöge Aps, engineering firm Søren Jensen and consulting architect Niels Sigsgaard are collaborating on the project.

Reflecting on the choice of design team, Copenhagen mayor Frank Jensen said: “There’s no doubt that Kengo Kuma’s vision for a waterfront cultural centre is world class and that it will bring something completely new to Copenhagen, but will also fit in with the aesthetic of the city.”

The project is part of a wider masterplan for Paper Island created by architects COBE, replacing industrial warehouses with public buildings.



The centre will feature striking pyramid-shaped roofs

Barack Obama reveals revised plans for Presidential Center

Former US president Barack Obama has provided an update on his Presidential Center, promising to "create a campus for active citizenship in the heart of Chicago's South Side".

The design, which was unveiled in May last year, has been created by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects in partnership with Interactive Design Architects (IDEA).

According to Obama and his wife, Michelle, the US$350m (€283m, £250.3m) Presidential Center – which is now taller and sleeker in appearance – will act as part of a living, working campus.

"While this centre may have my name on it, it will be a place open to everybody dedicated to informing and inspiring the leaders of tomorrow," said Obama.

"Michelle and I want this to be more than just a building. We want to create an economic engine for Chicago – a cultural attraction that showcases the southside to the rest of the world.

"We want it to be a gathering place – somewhere for all kinds of people to come together and learn."

> "We want to create an economic engine for Chicago – a cultural attraction that showcases the southside to the rest of the world"
>
> Barack Obama

The centre's campus – which sits on the banks of Lake Michigan – is intended to "energise" the Jackson Park site, with a proposed promenade running along the site's east side, leading to the Museum Building and the Museum of Science Industry .

"We want this to be a place that helps all of us to build our collective futures," said Obama. "This centre, most importantly, is for the leaders of tomorrow.

"We want this place to inspire them, to lift them up, to give them the tools they need to succeed."

Ground is expected to be broken on the project later this year, with its doors officially opening in 2021.

The centre is expected to draw 760,000 visitors a year, generating US$3.1bn (€2.5bn, £2.2bn) for the local economy in its first 10 years.

IMAGES: THE OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

The landscape firm of Michael Van Valkenburg is working on the project

Tod Williams and Billie Tsien have designed the Center

The Center's design has been revised to make it taller

Adjaye Associates collaborate with former spy chiefs to design New York museum dedicated to espionage

IMAGES: SPYSCAPE

SPYSCAPE features interactive experiential 'Spy Challenges'

An interactive museum dedicated to the art of spycraft, designed by the studio of David Adjaye, has opened in New York.

Guests enter the enigmatic world of code-breakers, spycatchers, hackers and undercover agents at SPYSCAPE, which has been developed in collaboration with former directors of intelligence agencies and station chiefs.

The three-level museum is located in a 60,000sq ft (5,500sq m) building in Midtown Manhattan, two blocks west of the Museum of Modern Art. Visitors are guided into a 350sq ft (32sq m) multimedia briefing elevator – one of the largest in the world – that orients them to the experience before transporting them to the first exhibition level. Galleries are housed across seven bespoke pavilions. To evoke the world of espionage through the design, architectural flourishes include the use of smoked glass, bespoke fibre cement, dark grey acoustic panelling, black linoleum, mirror polished steel and a dramatic vaulted LED light canopy. According to Adjaye Associates, "spaces continually shift the visitor's vantage point and prioritise the experiences of discovery and observation."

The attraction has been masterminded by 'fast-growth' private investment group Archimedia.

David Adjaye's practice designed the museum

Do design and colour impact your workout? Architect Rabih Geha aims to find out with Beirut gym

A boutique health club exploring how lighting and design impact the effectiveness of your workout has opened in Beirut, Lebanon.

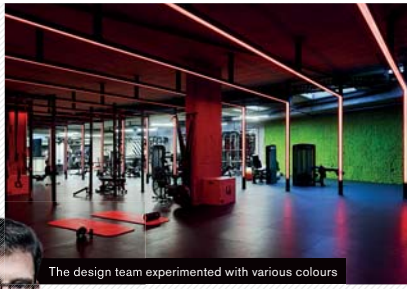
Health club brand U Energy commissioned local practice Rabih Geha Architects to design the 1,200sq m (12,900sq ft) underground project as "a place to provide respite from the hectic nature of daily life" in the city.

In order to encourage connection and interaction, the gym has been designed as an almost completely open space, divided only by structural concrete pillars, thick black cords and the industrial-style equipment within it. Monochrome-striped walls add to the geometric nature of the environment.

The design team has carefully illuminated the space, installing skylights to allow natural light to enter and adding parallel neon lighting strips that create invisible dividers that subtly highlight the different zones.

Geha was particularly inspired by the work of neuropsychologist Kurt Goldstein, who wrote in his book *The Organism* that green has a healing effect and boosts satisfaction, red has an invigorating effect and tranquil shades of blue produce calming chemicals in the body.

To test the theory, in the gym green is used to facilitate more enjoyable workouts, red is used in keep-fit sessions to add a feeling of zest and energy, and blue is used in the weightlifting areas.



The design team experimented with various colours

IMAGES: U STUDIO

U Energy is raw and industrial in its style

Light Earth Designs complete Rwandan cricket stadium inspired by bouncing ball

An international cricket stadium built using local materials and sustainable building practices has opened in Rwanda, with a design inspired by a bouncing ball and the country's rolling hills.

Cricket is Rwanda's fastest growing sport and has been used as a tool to bring people together in the country, which was torn apart by genocide in 1994.

To accommodate the growing demand and counter the lack of purpose-built facilities, the Rwanda Cricket Stadium Foundation was established to create a dedicated home for the sport on a 4.5 hectare plot on the outskirts of Kigali.

Light Earth Designs' Michael Ramage worked on the project

Architects Light Earth Designs planned the facility using local labour and construction techniques to build skills, avoid imports and lower carbon levels.

Facilities include dressing rooms, a press viewing area, a restaurant and a clubhouse offering free HIV testing for the local community.

Three vaulted self-supporting structures with parabolic roofs were created using recycled ceramic tiling and compressed earth blocks formed of 95 per cent soil.

The design forms an infinity loop towards Shishan Lake

IMAGES: PERKINS+WILL

Perkins+Will create science hub to anchor Suzhou culture district

A science museum in Suzhou, China, is to act as the centrepiece of a new cultural district in the city, with the design celebrating nature while highlighting the role of industrial development.

Taking inspiration from its surroundings, the 600,000sq ft (56,000sq m) Suzhou Science & Technology Museum is inspired by the Chinese expression of "shan sui", which means "union of mountain and lake". Forming an infinity loop, the Perkins+Will-designed building emerges from the nearby 'Lion Mountain', twisting back on itself at its apex to extend over Shishan Lake. Within the lake will be several man-made teardrop-shaped islands.

The museum will feature a 66,700sq ft (6,200sq m) gallery highlighting the role of industrial development in the country.

"Our design recognises the importance of Suzhou in China's commercial history and underscores its role at the forefront of China's emergence as a technology leader and innovator," said Ralph Johnson, global design director of Perkins+Will. "The museum also draws inspiration from the natural environment surrounding it."

The wider Suzhou Shishan Cultural District has been developed by urban designers and masterplanners Sasaki Associates, and includes a performance centre, sculpture garden and Mediatheque culture hub.

SPARCSTUDIO
DESIGN CONSULTANTS

Sparcstudio create inspiring, innovative & award winning spa, wellness & hotel environments with a real attention to detail. Our bespoke design approach, experience and understanding of technical & operational issues enable us to deliver long lasting, unique and award-winning projects that continue to excite year after year.

Sopwell House Spa

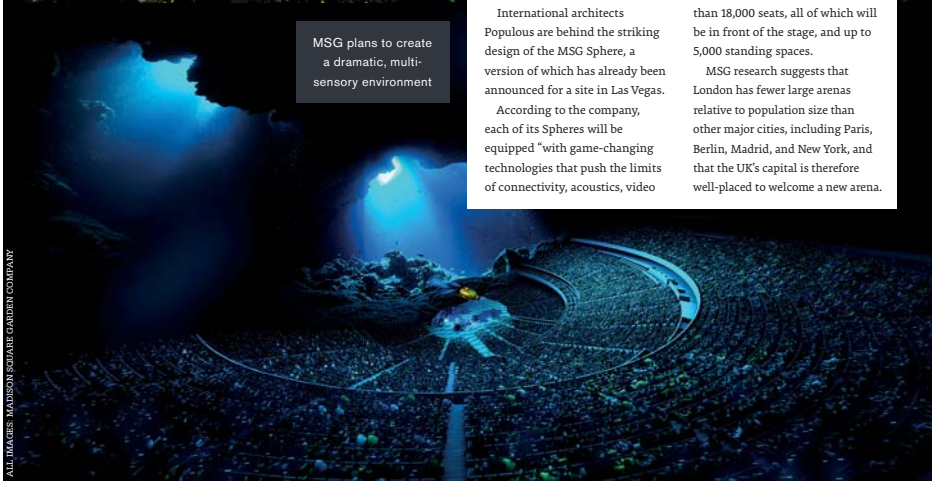
Third Space

Aqua Sana, Forest Spa

Southlodge Spa

OUR CLIENTS INCLUDE:
AB HOTELS, ASPRIA, CALCOT MANOR, CENTER PARCS, DISNEY, DORMY HOUSE, EXCLUSIVE HOTELS, INSPIRED VILLAGES, MARRIOT, ROCKCLIFFE HALL, SOFITEL, THIRD SPACE

CONTACT US
EMAIL beverley@sparcstudio.co.uk TELEPHONE +44(0)203 637 5997
www.sparcstudio.co.uk



MSG plans to create a dramatic, multi-sensory environment

Madison Square Garden Company reveals dramatic plans for 'the future of live entertainment' in London

The Madison Square Garden Company (MSG) has announced ambitious plans to bring a vast, spherical music and entertainment venue to London, and claims it will "change the nature of live events."

MSG's executive chair and CEO, James L. Dolan, confirmed the company intends to make the UK capital the home of its first international property, and has completed the purchase of land totalling nearly five acres in Stratford, east London.

International architects Populous are behind the striking design of the MSG Sphere, a version of which has already been announced for a site in Las Vegas.

According to the company, each of its Spheres will be equipped "with game-changing technologies that push the limits of connectivity, acoustics, video and content distribution to create powerful, immersive, multi-sensory environments that will transport audiences." A programmable exterior and an interior bowl with the largest and highest resolution media display on Earth are planned.

Designs for MSG Sphere London, including seating capacity, are still in the early stages and will be announced in the coming months, with the final plans subject to consultation. However, preliminary plans for the Las Vegas Sphere outline a scalable capacity of more than 18,000 seats, all of which will be in front of the stage, and up to 5,000 standing spaces.

MSG research suggests that London has fewer large arenas relative to population size than other major cities, including Paris, Berlin, Madrid, and New York, and that the UK's capital is therefore well-placed to welcome a new arena.

ALL IMAGES: MADISON SQUARE GARDEN COMPANY

IMAGES: SNØHETTA / FLOATPACKERS

Materials with low embodied energy, such as timber, will be used to reach the Powerhouse standard

‘Building an energy positive and low-impact hotel is an essential factor to create a sustainable tourist destination’

Kjetil Trædal Thorsen

Snøhetta unveil Arctic Circle’s first energy-positive hotel concept

International architects Snøhetta have unveiled a concept design for the Arctic Circle’s first ever energy-positive hotel.

Situated at the foot of the Svartisen glacier that runs through Meløy, northern Norway, the project, called Svart, will consume around 85 per cent less energy than a modern Norwegian hotel.

The design has been developed by Snøhetta in collaboration with sustainable tourism agency Arctic Adventure of Norway; engineering firm Asplan Viak; construction company Skanska; and developer Entra. Together, the consortium has built several ‘plus’ houses and a school that meet their ‘Powerhouse’ standard. In the course of a 60 year period, these buildings will generate more renewable energy than the total amount of energy required to sustain daily operations and to build, produce materials and demolish the building.

Svart is the first Powerhouse hotel, and the northernmost Powerhouse site. Meløy experiences the midnight sun in summer and polar nights in winter, illuminated by the Northern Lights.

The hotel’s design has been informed by extensive mapping of how solar radiation behaves in relation to mountainous context throughout the year. The roof will be clad with solar panels and the building will have a circular form that strategically places rooms, restaurants and amenities where the sun’s energy can be best exploited throughout the day and the changing seasons. According to a design statement: “The building’s façades will protect against insolation from the sun in the summer when the sun is high in the sky, removing the need for artificial cooling. During the winter, when the sun is low in the sky, the large windows of the façade allow for a maximum of insulation to exploit the sun’s natural thermal energy.”

Snøhetta founding partner Kjetil Trædal Thorsen said: “Building in such a precious environment comes with some clear obligations in terms of preserving the natural beauty and the fauna and flora of the site.” ●

Svart means ‘blue’ in Old Norse and evokes the surrounding nature

SimpsonHaugh's restored Antwerp concert hall opens next to city zoo

"It's a privilege to have completed a scheme of such importance to the cultural identity of Antwerp
Stuart Mills

Architecture studio SimpsonHaugh have completed a renovation of one of Belgium's most important cultural landmarks, the Queen Elisabeth Hall in Antwerp

The Belgian concert venue had its soft launch over a year ago – and has since picked up a nomination for Cultural Building of the Year – but has only just officially opened. It is located within the Elisabeth Centre, a 19th-century Art Nouveau cultural complex that includes Antwerp Zoo, one of Europe's oldest attractions.

Before its transformation, the hall had become known for its poor sound quality and separation from the zoo – a result of a previous conversion in the 1950s repairing damage inflicted during the Second World War.

In 2009, the society that owns both the zoo and the wider complex announced plans to breathe new life into the site, creating a concert hall "to rival the best in the world".

Complex constraints

Architectural practice SimpsonHaugh were commissioned to improve comfort levels and acoustic quality, bring in more natural light and forge a more harmonious relationship with the historic adjoining buildings.

The constraints facing the architectural team were complex: the site is a historic monument, there are important interfaces with other cultural activities, and a fixed budget and tight construction programme were set.

The studio collaborated with acoustic specialists Kirkegaard Associates to alter the layout of the interiors, improving sound quality and circulation.

"While the overall boundaries of the hall were defined by its location at the heart of the existing historic buildings, the design team explored various configurations for the new room within this envelope," said Anthony McCreery, collaborating consultant at Kirkegaard.

"We employed a variety of techniques, including physical and computer modelling to optimise and refine the room geometry and finishes."

Stuart Mills, partner at SimpsonHaugh, added: "We chose a 'shoebox' configuration, as that allowed us to insert a dramatic atrium between the new and existing structures.

"An innovative concrete frame reconciles the very high acoustic mass necessary for the hall with the need for column-free space below. By

PHOTO: JESSE WILLEMS

The renovation has restored links with adjoining buildings, and with Antwerp Zoo

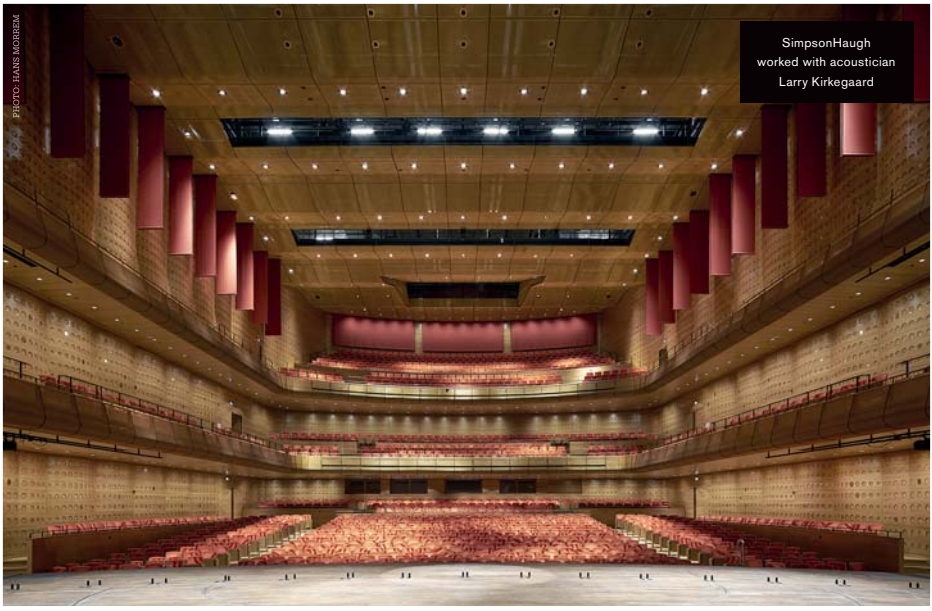


PHOTO: HANS MORISEM

SimpsonHaugh worked with acoustician Larry Kirkegaard

contrast, a lightweight steel structure spans between the auditorium and a carefully restored Art Nouveau façade, allowing sunlight to flood the foyers."

A focus on the sound

To improve the acoustics of the space, an acoustically transparent bronze mesh has been installed across the ceiling and balconies.

Rather than being reflected, sound energy is allowed to pass through the mesh to reach the hall's walls, engaging with the full volume of the space. The mesh also forms a cladding for the reflectors, which can be adjusted to fine-tune the room's acoustics, and is complemented by retractable fabric banners that can be deployed to vary the reverberation time in the room. Visually, it serves as a shimmering backdrop to the orchestra, with its appearance changing according to the lighting conditions.

PHOTO: JESSE WILLEMS

PHOTO: JESSE WILLEMS

A bronze mesh allows sound energy to reach the hall's walls, improving the acoustics

In the rest of the building, a new public space has been created on the ground floor that connects the site's different cultural activities, restoring the lost link with the zoo. Original 19th-century murals have been restored, and the new-look foyers have been designed to complement the hall's aesthetics with natural finishes such as timber, travertine and bronze.

The Queen Elisabeth concert hall now provides a home for the resident Antwerp Symphony Orchestra and visiting international orchestras.

SimpsonHaugh have worked on numerous residential and cultural projects across Europe, most notably on the one million sq ft first phase of London's Battersea Power Station. ●

BRC Imagination Arts

THE ORIGINAL EXPERIENTIAL AGENCY™

CHINA MOBILE + CHINA TELECOM PAVILION
SHANGHAI EXPO 2010 | SHANGHAI, CHINA

For nearly four decades, BRC Imagination Arts has collaborated with clients and architects to create transformative brand destinations, expo pavilions and cultural attractions all over the world.

At nearly every World Expo since 1986, our clients' pavilions have consistently enjoyed record attendance, top-tier awards and commendations, outstanding audience reviews, and lasting good will.

www.brcweb.com

Follow us on

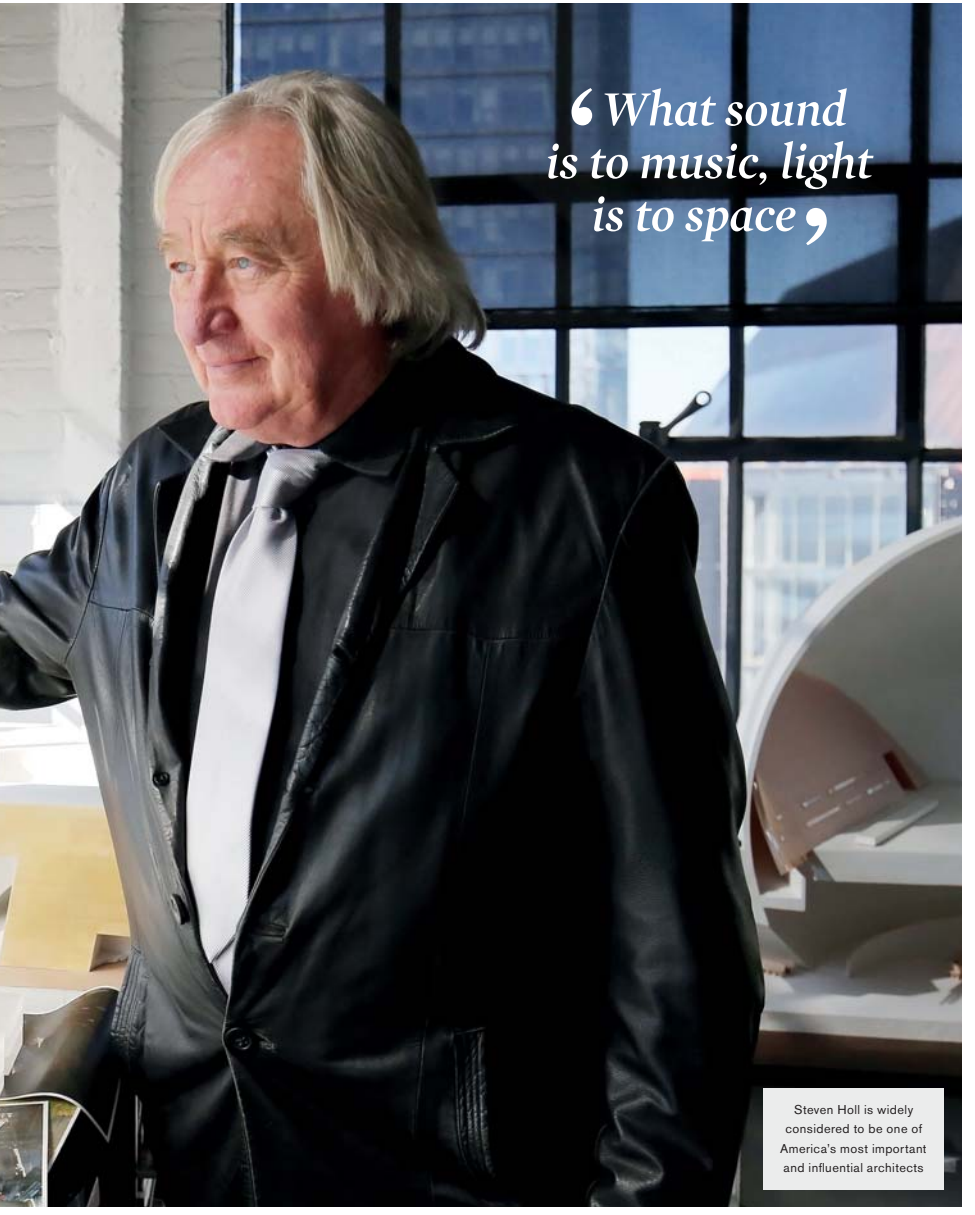
STEVEN HOLL

The acclaimed architect talks to **Kim Megson** about designing with light, his friendship with Zaha Hadid and why he wants to see Trump impeached

"I'll tell you what makes me angry," says Steven Holl, his voice crackling with indignation. "Endless glass condominium towers. They're everywhere: piled up, repetitive, rent-collecting expressions of nothing. It makes me very sad. That's not what architecture is."

The question of what architecture could and should be dominates the rest of my interview with a man widely considered to be one of America's most important architects. As Holl's anger subsides he shares anecdotes and experiences from a career spanning nearly five decades. He's always philosophical, often hopeful and occasionally horrified about the development of our buildings and cities in the 21st century.

Listening back to the recording, I'm amazed by the unexpected detours the conversation takes. One moment Holl's offering a brief history of medieval music notation, the next he's reminiscing about his early opposition to post-modernism ("No.1 Poultry is the worst building that James Stirling ever did!") before somehow into a story about going flamenco dancing with an elderly Berthold Lubetkin. At times, it's hard to keep up with him.



‘What sound is to music, light is to space’

Steven Holl is widely considered to be one of America’s most important and influential architects

My relationship with Zaha went back forty years. She was a genius. It's a tragic loss

Amidst the digressions, there's one topic he returns to again and again: The need for architects to remember "the art of architecture".

"There's more to what we do than obediently following orders from people who only care about making money," he says. "I'm not interested in real estate corp, I'm not a businessman and I'm not trying to build a big organisation, so I don't have to be obedient. I do only what I think is right and I do only what I think is interesting."

A history of Holl

In 1977, Holl founded Steven Holl Architects – the firm of 40 people he now leads alongside partners Chris McVoy and Noah Yaffe. Since then, he has worked across the full spectrum of scales and typologies. Shops, houses, hotels and university buildings pepper his CV, alongside museums, libraries, sports arenas and sprawling city masterplans.

Unlike many of his fellow 'starchitects' – to use that dreaded term – he doesn't have an easily identifiable style. It's hard to conceive, for example, that the tiny Chapel of St. Ignatius at Seattle University and Shenzhen's 1.3 million sq ft Horizontal Skyscraper – a building as long as the Empire State Building is tall – were designed by the same hand, just over a decade apart. What unites his projects is a fascination with the physicality of spaces; their materiality, their texture and the way people interact with them. It is this dimension to his work that led the architecture critic Robert McCarter to write: "Holl has done more than any other contemporary architect to re-engage modern architecture in the experience of the inhabitant."

Holl himself tells me that architects shouldn't carry a design language from one building to the next. "Instead," he argues, "they need to respond to the site, the circumstance, the climate and the culture, and try to make meaning from that."

It's a philosophy he developed as a student at the University of Washington in the late 1960s and as a postgraduate at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London, where he was taught by Elia Zenghelis and his contemporaries included Rem Koolhaas and Zaha Hadid.

The latter became a particularly close friend – so much so that at one stage they even contemplated forming a practice together – and she visited him and his family in New York on 16 March 2016, just two weeks before her death in Miami.

"She came to give my daughter a little Issey Miyake dress," Holl remembers sadly.

"I have the last photographs of Zaha in my apartment. It was a relationship that went back forty years. It's a tragic loss. She was a genius."

PHOTO: MCARTER PHOTOGRAPH

The materiality and physicality of spaces fascinate Holl

Holl was a close friend of Zaha Hadid (left). With Robbie Coltrane at the opening of the Glasgow School of Art's new building in 2014 (above)

PHOTO: COURTESY STEVEN HOLL ARCHITECTS

PHOTO: IWAN BAAN

Among the cultural buildings designed by Steven Holl Architects – the Glasgow School of Art

Holl describes arts buildings as 'the most important programme you can do as an architect'

Designing for the public

Holl has always started work on new projects in the same way: "Me, alone, my little watercolour pad in front of me, at five thirty in the morning, trying to come up with some concepts." It's a creative process he describes as "always a struggle and a mystery", with his team helping him transform his sometimes abstract ideas on paper into detailed, large-scale models.

His interest in art and the creative process has led to a particular fascination with arts buildings, which he describes as "the most important programme you can do as an architect." It has become common to see his firm's name on the shortlist when a competition is held for a new art museum, and his most acclaimed completed projects include the semi-translucent Reid Building at the Glasgow School of Art, the curving Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki and the interconnected glowing volumes of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City – described by *The New York TImes* as "a work of haunting power."

"I feel, in a certain sense, that religion and philosophy cannot provide the meaning that we need in our lives today, whereas art can give us a window into our human needs," he says, with conviction. "The art museum has become a social condenser, a place of gathering, a kind of 21st century cathedral."

His latest foray into this world is two new facilities for the The Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and a broader masterplan for the institution's 14-acre public campus. Holl has designed a 164,000sq ft (15,200sq m) extension for the museum, due to open in late 2019, and a new 80,000sq ft (7,400sq m) building for the Glassell School of Art, opening in May 2018. Both will link to the site's existing facilities, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Rafael Moneo, and offer numerous access points to the landmark sculpture garden created by landscape architect Isamu Noguchi.

The museum extension was originally set to be built on the site of a parking lot owned by the church across the street, with the competition brief calling for the

The art museum has become a social condenser, a place of gathering, a kind of 21st century cathedral

PHOTO: IWAN BAAN

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City has been called 'a work of haunting power'

Holl is expanding the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston

Two new buildings are being created for the cultural complex

PHOTO: IWAN BAAN

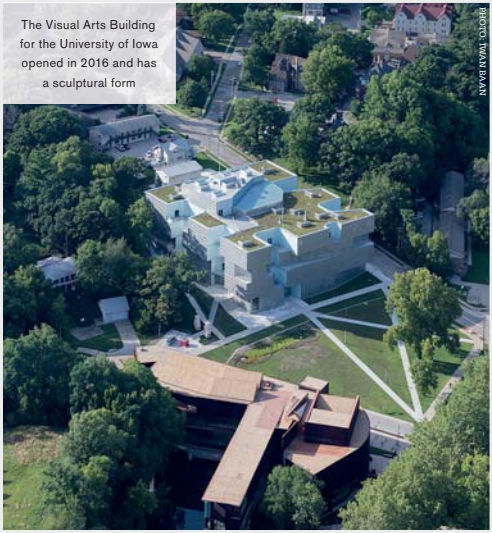


PHOTO: IWAN BAAN

The Visual Arts Building for the University of Iowa opened in 2016 and has a sculptural form

Movement is absolutely key to the human experience, and all the best museum experiences are horizontal

addition of a new seven-storey car park. The Glassell School building was to remain exactly as it was.

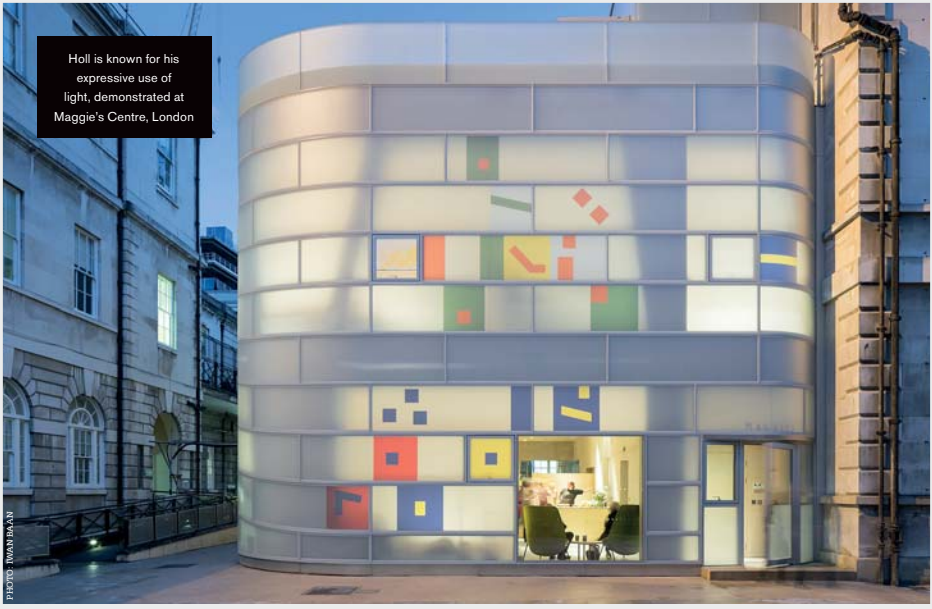
Holl, though, had other ideas.

"I studied the site, and I decided they shouldn't be building a car park there, they should just put a layer of parking underground to free up more space. But in order to do that, they would have to tear down the Glassell School. We figured out we could do them a new school building about twice the size. So I took a radical decision in the competition, and I told them, 'This is how I would do it. It's not what you asked for, but this way you can double the size of your sculpture garden and it will be bigger than the one in Dallas.' In the end that's what got them."

So convincing was his case that he won the design competition with a unanimous vote from the jury.

"Can you imagine?" he asks me, incredulously. "Suddenly we were designing two major buildings, not one. When something like that happens you really have to step up to the plate. It's like a freight train going down the track, you just make a little turn and you have a different destination, so you have to deliver."

Several years on, and he's proud of how things are taking shape. "The great thing about a place like Houston is there's enough space to spread out," he says. "That creates the right kind of circulation. Every time you're moving around these buildings, you understand where you are, you never get lost and you can regularly see Noguchi's gardens and the great white oaks outside. Movement is absolutely key to the human experience, and all the best museum



Holl is known for his expressive use of light, demonstrated at Maggie's Centre, London

PHOTO: IWAN BAAN

experiences are horizontal. In vertical museums, everybody's always standing by a stupid elevator and there's something irritating about it because moving through the galleries is not so commodious. With these buildings we had space to breathe, and more opportunities to let the daylight flood in."

Let there be light

Holl is widely celebrated for the relationships he strikes between structure, material and light. In 2016 he was awarded the Daylight Award in Architecture in recognition of his work to use light "for the benefit of human health, well-being and the environment", and his approach is clearly illustrated by his most recently-completed projects: a Visual Arts Building for the University of Iowa, the zinc-clad concrete form of which features seven terraced 'cutout' light courts, and his little Maggie's Centre in London for people with cancer and their families, which glows like a lantern at night through its translucent white glass façade.

"I'm often asked what my favourite material is, and I tend to say light because it's what makes everything else work," he explains. "What sound is to music, light is to space. It's been in my blood since I was born. In

We need a new, brighter future where every energy source is renewable

Puget Sound, where I grew up, when the sun rises you get this incredible glow in the sky. As it emerges over the mountains behind Seattle, the ripples on the waves start to sparkle and gleam. It's magical. My very earliest memories are all to do with light."

In 1970, the young Steven Holl took his father on a road trip to Oregon to visit the Mount Angel Abbey Library, designed by Alvar Aalto.

"We were overwhelmed by the way the glowing natural light filled that fan-shaped space, illuminating the monks walking around carrying their books," Holl remembers. "My father said, 'Now I understand why you love architecture so much.'"

Two years later, Holl was living in Rome in an apartment just behind the Pantheon. He visited the former temple every morning, desperate to witness the multitude of differing types of light shining through its dramatic 30ft diameter oculus.

These days, Holl's team work closely with L'Observatoire International, the lighting design firm established by his friend Hervé Descottes, to run their designs through sophisticated lighting modelling software. Then, for greater accuracy, they build enormous physical models ("the size of my drawing

Architecture changes the way we live, and your own work as an architect can help bring about positive change

All projects begin with Holl painting a watercolour of his vision for the building

table!") of individual rooms and place them outside to see how real light floods in.

Going green

Increasingly, Holl is championing solar power, and he claims that "much like with computers, green technology is advancing every six months."

He has always taken a strongly environmental approach to his built projects, and developments in the pipeline include a library in Malawi for the Miracle of Africa Foundation that will be entirely powered by solar energy captured by PV panels on its roof.

"We have to get free from our dependence on non-renewable fuels," Holl says. "We need a new, brighter future where every energy source is renewable. We could have been there already if it wasn't for corruption in power. We're facing a crisis of ignorance in high places and we need articulate, intelligent leadership more than ever before."

Which brings us to the 45th president of the United States, a man Holl has publicly criticised for his environmental and immigration policies, and whose name he refuses to utter during our conversation.

"He's undoing every positive thing Obama ever did, and that's really disgusting," he says, with some vehemence. "Have we ever seen a president do that in history? I think he's going to be impeached, personally. I don't think America agrees with what he's doing. The nature of democracy is being damaged and manipulated. It's a very fragile thing."

A pause. "But please don't make this article all about him. I hate even seeing his name in print."

The isolationism and America First ideology of Trump infuriates Holl, a self-confessed global citizen, who has an office in Beijing and has designed projects as far afield as France, Finland, South Korea and India.

"I do manage to stay optimistic about the future," he concedes, "because the Earth is our planet and environmental issues affect us all. There are a lot of intelligent people on the globe. So I'm sure we'll get through this."

Later, he adds, "architecture changes the way we live, and your own work as an architect can help bring about positive change in the world."

He elaborates. "People said to me when I first started to work in China, 'How can you work there because of the human rights?' And I said, 'Change is happening, and what I'm doing is building a gift to future generations. How can you foresee what the government's going to be 10 years from now?' You have to look beyond the one-year cycle. It can take eight years from the first sketch until you open the building, at least that's my average after practising for 40 years. Our stupid president will be long gone when the buildings I am trying to start right now are finished."

PHOTOS: STEVEN HOLL ARCHITECTS

Future projects include The Shanghai Cofco Cultural & Health Center, inspired by concepts of clouds and time

For the Tushino project, amenities will be housed in separate volumes called 'Parachute Hybrids'

IMAGE: STEVEN HOLL ARCHITECTS/ART GROUP KAMEN

Looking to the future

Holl has a number of projects in development, including a cultural and health centre in Shanghai; an expansion of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C.; a new wing for Mumbai City Museum; a transformation of the Gare Du Nord in Paris; and a library at Hunter's Point, New York. And the commissions keep rolling in.

He's just won a competition to design a 2 million (200,000sq m) mixed-use development in Moscow on the site of the Tushino air base.

While he can't say too much about the project at the time of our interview, he reveals that the design concept began with memories of his father.

"He was a captain in the paratroopers, he taught people how to jump and he jumped himself 65 times. So I imagined parachutes coming in the sky, causing circular openings that contain the different programmes, like the library, the spa and the bar.

"I really wasn't sure whether to enter this competition or not, and I was discussing it in the kitchen with my wife when my daughter, who had yoghurt all over her face, shouted: 'just do it!'. So I decided to take her advice." He chuckles at the memory.

Holl's father, Myran, was a paratrooper and this inspired elements of the Tushino design

The next generation of architects has to feel that it's an open language

Ultimately, Holl says, it is the children of today and tomorrow he is designing for.

"I get so excited when I remember that we are creating buildings for future generations. That's what inspires me to work. Giorgio Grassi once wrote a book called *Architettura: Lingua Morta* – 'architecture is a dead language.' That's completely the opposite of what I believe. I think it's alive, and new inspiration can come from anything, literature, music, paintings, sculptures, film, you name it.

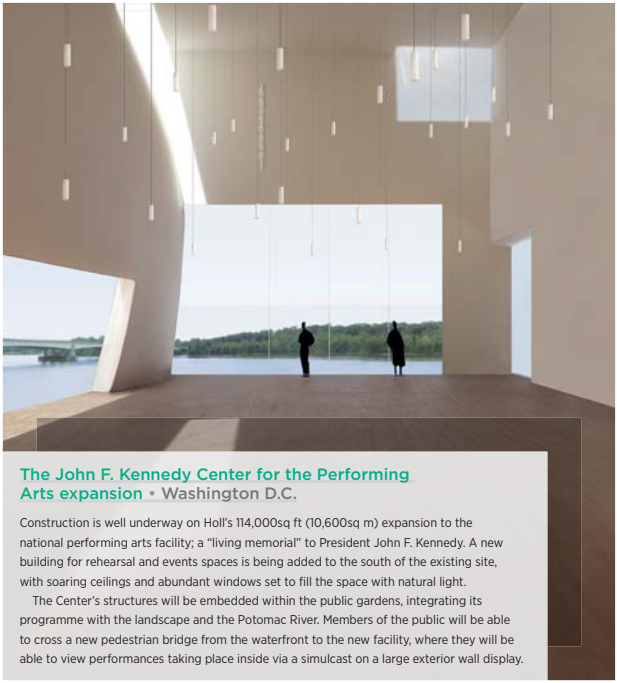
"The next generation of architects has to feel that it's an open language. I want to see them apply the same great intensity that we had in the work of Le Corbusier, Carlo Scarpa or Pierre Chareau. We have to keep fighting in the spirit of all the great buildings we have made in the past and the great buildings we could still build in the future.

"The importance of this was summed up best by Winston Churchill in one simple sentence: 'First, we shape our buildings, and then they shape us.'" ●

In the Pipeline

Five of Steven Holl's forthcoming cultural projects

ALL IMAGES COURTESY STEVEN HOLL ARCHITECTS



The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts expansion • Washington D.C.

Construction is well underway on Holl's 114,000sq ft (10,600sq m) expansion to the national performing arts facility; a "living memorial" to President John F. Kennedy. A new building for rehearsal and events spaces is being added to the south of the existing site, with soaring ceilings and abundant windows set to fill the space with natural light.

The Center's structures will be embedded within the public gardens, integrating its programme with the landscape and the Potomac River. Members of the public will be able to cross a new pedestrian bridge from the waterfront to the new facility, where they will be able to view performances taking place inside via a simulcast on a large exterior wall display.

Mumbai City Museum North Wing • Mumbai

Holl has designed a 125,000sq ft (11,600sq m) new wing for the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum, the city's oldest. While the hotly-anticipated project is currently on hold, Holl is optimistic it will be completed.

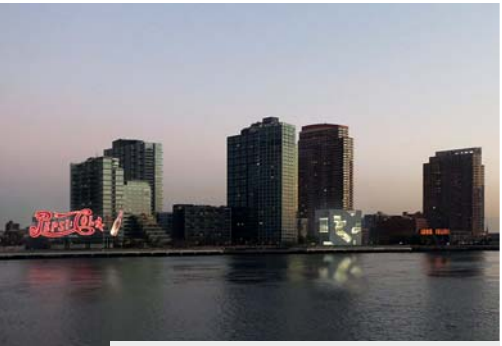
The competition jury responsible for selecting the scheme in 2014 praised the "sculptural and calligraphic qualities" of Holl's masterplan. The design proposes a simple volume enlivened by deep subtracting cuts, creating dramatic effects of light and shade and bringing in exactly twenty-five lumens of natural light to each gallery. A reflecting pool in a new garden courtyard between the old and new buildings will lie at the heart of the site.

Shanghai Cofco Cultural & Health Center • Shanghai

The design concept for this two-building complex is described by the studio as a merging of "clouds and time," in reference to philosopher Karl Popper's 1965 lecture on the evolutionary model of free will, which was titled "Of Clouds and Clocks."

The buildings will be set in a public landscape, organised in large clock-like circles forming a central public space. A quarter circle pool and fountain will provide rainwater recycling for the complex.

The Cultural Center, built out of white concrete, will hover over a transparent glass base which reveals a café, game and recreation rooms inside. An exhibition area, library and gym will also feature. The Health Center, inspired by the curves of the landscape, will house a pharmacy, consultation and examination rooms, a nursery area and lounges.



Hunters Point Library • New York

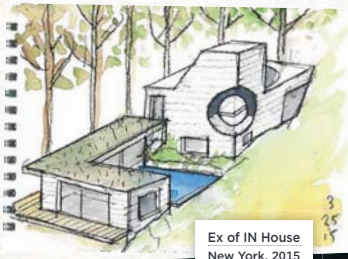
Located on a prominent site along the East River against the backdrop of recently built skyscraper condominiums, the design for the 22,000sq ft Queens Library at Hunters Point will stand as a public building and park, bringing community-devoted space to the increasingly privatised Long Island City waterfront.

The concrete structure of the building will be exposed and aluminum painted, giving the exterior a subtle sparkle. Glazed cuts in the façade will create views toward the city, which change as visitors move up a series of bookshelf flanked stairs.

Malawi Library • Lilongwe

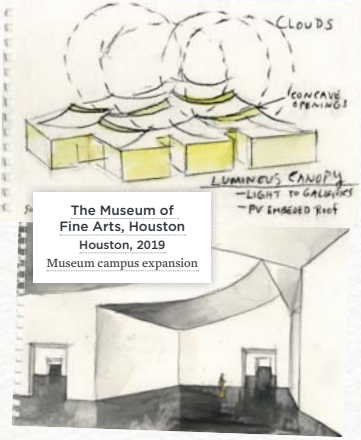
This 66,000sq ft (6,100sq m) institution is being funded and developed by the The Miracle for Africa Foundation to provide social and study spaces in Malawi's capital, Lilongwe.

The building, which will be created using local stone, bamboo and concrete, will have a wave-like roof fitted with photovoltaic solar panels that power the whole net-zero complex. Inside, the free plan library will have meeting rooms and archives encased in glass for sound isolation and humidity control. A central rain collecting pool will reflect the roof geometry "like a wave field in cloud-like light." Construction is expected to begin this year. ●



Ex of IN House
New York, 2015
Experimental guest house

Hunters Point Community Library
New York, 2018



The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Houston, 2019
Museum campus expansion

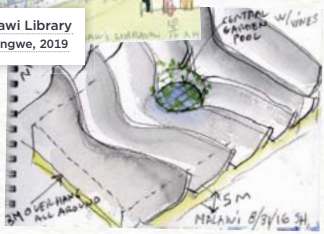
Art & Architecture

STEVEN HOLL'S CREATIVE PROCESS

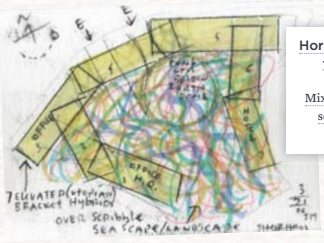
When starting work on a new building or masterplan design, Steven Holl begins by sketching and painting, usually with watercolours.

Every one of his completed buildings started as an idea brought to life in his sketchbook.

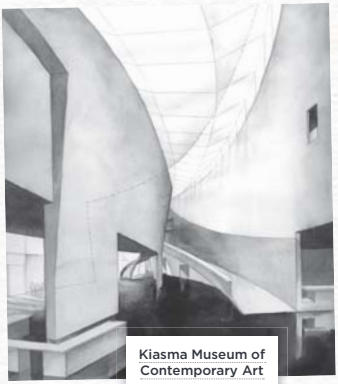
Sometimes highly detailed, but often ambiguous and abstract, Holl's art provides an illuminating insight into his design journey



Malawi Library
Lilongwe, 2019

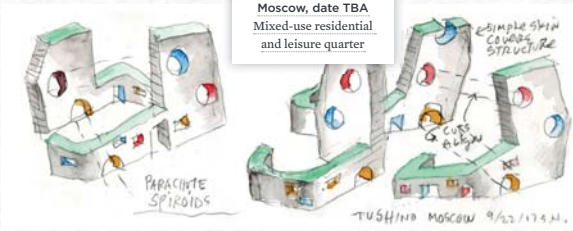


Horizontal Skyscraper – Vanke Center
Shenzhen, 2009
Mixed-use: hotel, offices, serviced apartments and public park



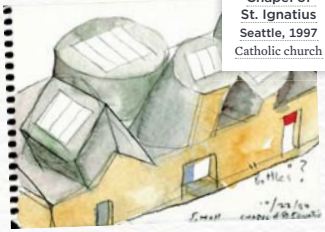
Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art
Helsinki, 1998

Tushino district
Moscow, date TBA
Mixed-use residential and leisure quarter



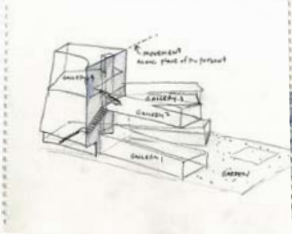
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art
Kansas City, 2007

Chapel of St. Ignatius
Seattle, 1997
Catholic church



Maggie's Centre Barts
London, 2017
Drop-in centre

Institute for Contemporary Art
Richmond, 2018
Virginia Commonwealth University arts building



{ The profession is changing }

The Smile aimed to showcase the possibilities of timber construction

PHOTO: PAUL RIDDLE

ALISON BROOKS

The designer of the award-winning Smile installation talks to Magali Robathan about timber building, protecting the public realm and the unsung role of architects

"One of the things we have to address in the profession is a lack of public understanding that architects are on their side," says Alison Brooks, founder of Alison Brooks Architects, RIBA Stirling prize winner, designer of the Smile, the Quarterhouse Performing Arts Centre in Folkestone UK and a range of award-winning housing projects.

"Architects have a responsibility to protect the public realm. It's a role we provide, that's not generally acknowledged.

"Most architects spend inordinate amounts of time fighting for improvement to civic space, introducing new squares and gardens, to open our projects to a more public audience. We also fight very hard and take big risks to try to deliver designs that satisfy a need for identity, for beauty and for meaning.

"We never get a brief that says 'we require a beautiful, meaningful, characterful building that delivers the highest quality of space for a 300 year future', but that's what we're all fighting for. It's just not what's understood by the public and society at large."

I'm interviewing Brooks in Berlin, at the World Architecture Festival, where her latest project, the hardwood cross laminated timber structure the Smile, won in the Display – Completed Buildings category.

The 34m-long installation was developed in collaboration with Arup, the American Hardwood Export Council and the London Design Festival, and was described as the "first project in the world to use large hardwood CLT panels" (as opposed to the more commonly used softwood CLT).

It's a project Brooks is very proud of; which she saw as an opportunity to make experimental design accessible to the general public and perhaps break down a little of the barrier between architects and the public.

"The Smile was in a public space; it was open, it was free," she says. "It was designed with the thought in mind that many, many people would pass through the space who weren't necessarily coming for the London Design Festival. They could visit it and enjoy it and maybe have their eyes opened as to what design can bring to a traditional urban space, and how daring a timber structure can actually be."

2017 was a great year for Brooks, which culminated with her being given Royal Designer for Industry status in December,

It was radical in terms of its material, and it had to operate as a public event

when she was recognised for design excellence and innovation in urban regeneration and masterplanning, and public for the arts, higher education and housing.

Now Brooks is working on a range of projects, including a cluster of four residential towers with leisure space for the Greenwich Peninsula scheme in south east London; a high rise urban block in King's Cross, London; a Maggie's Center in Taunton, Somerset; and a range of housing projects in Oxford, Cambridge and London.

In June 2017, Sadiq Khan appointed Brooks as a design advocate for London, along with 49 other architects. The group, which also includes White Arkitekter's Monica von Schmalensee and David Adjaye, was asked to work with local councils to improve the quality of the built environment across the capital as part of the Good Growth by Design programme.

STARTING OUT

After graduating from the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, Brooks moved to London in 1988 armed with her portfolio and £500 in her bank account. She joined Ron Arad Associates, working on a range of projects including the Belgo Noord and Belgo Centraal restaurants in London and the Tel Aviv Opera Foyer, before launching her practice in London in 1996.

PHOTO: PAUL RIDDLE

The Folkestone Quarterhouse opened in 2009

PHOTO: DENNIS GILBERT

Brooks' star rose fast. In 1999 she came third in the Young Architect of the Year competition. Her first large scale commission, the Atoll Spa Hotel in Helgoland, Germany, opened in 2000 and won several industry awards including Best Interior Design and Best Guestroom Design at the European Hotel Design & Development Awards the same year. In 2008, ABA were joint winners of the RIBA Stirling Prize for their role in the design of the high density housing project Accordia in Cambridge, and in 2013, Brooks was awarded AJ Woman Architect of the Year, with one of the judges, Paul Monaghan, saying: "Her mixture of sculpture, architecture and detail is what has made her such a powerful force in British architecture."

Brooks' first major cultural project, the Quarterhouse Performing Arts Centre in Folkestone, opened in 2009. It houses a multipurpose auditorium for dance, theatre and film performances, a ground floor foyer and exhibition space, a cafe and a business enterprise centre.

Arup engineer Andrew Lawrence described the Smile as "the most complex CLT structure ever built"

The centre's distinctive cladding is made from a metal mesh which is bent into curved pillars, and is illuminated from behind at night. "The building glows at night," says Brooks. "It's literally a beacon of the arts in one of the roughest parts of Folkestone. It completes an urban block in a modest way, but its cladding is very animated, so it signals an important change in Folkestone.

"We've been asked to look at expanding the Quarterhouse; building on the roof and extending onto the back," she adds. "It's not an active project at the moment, but we're in dialogue with the Creative Foundation about the next step for that building."

THE SMILE

"The Smile represented an opportunity that comes very rarely in the life of an architect, to design something very experimental," says Brooks. "It was radical in terms of its material, and it had to operate as a public event, a phenomenon that would attract people to come out and visit the various installations and exhibitions of the London Design Festival.

The installation used hardwood cross laminated timber, and was engineered by Arup. It was described by Arup engineer Andrew Lawrence, who worked on the project, as "the most complex CLT structure that has ever been built." As well as being an interesting installation for the public to visit, the project aimed to showcase the possibilities of building with hardwood CLT, and to change the way architects and engineers approach timber construction.

So what are Brooks' thoughts on the future for hardwood and CLT? "It still needs certification and to go through a whole series of testing, but timber has huge potential as a building material," she says. "It's practically the only way to build in a zero carbon way, to reduce our carbon footprint and to make construction more precise and quicker on site. There are almost no down sides to building with timber CLT.

PHOTO: PAUL RUDOLF

The Smile represented an opportunity to make experimental design accessible, says Brooks

PHOTO: BEN BLOSSOM

ALISON BROOKS *in her own words*

You've spoken about how spaces are becoming more flexible. What does this mean for architects?

The way we use space and technology and the way we engage with each other is shifting massively. I think and hope that boundaries will be broken and blurred between different building uses, and that the distinctive and personal way architects express their art will become more important.

If you're producing work that can operate in many different ways, then you really have to think about what you can add to make it meaningful and identifiable and remarkable in its place and in its time. That's where our mysterious creative instincts come in.

What unites all of your projects?

We always search for a specific response to a place, not only relating to the physical site, but also to the social and cultural conditions surrounding that place. We try to draw on all of the specifics to create a dialogue with the communities and the audiences who'll use that building.

> I'm interested in reducing the number of materials to as few as possible, so you have a sense of essentialness to everything

At the same time, we strive for a kind of purism. I'm interested in reducing the number of materials that you have to work with to as few as possible, so you have a sense of essentialness to everything.

Finally, we try to treat every work of architecture that we produce as a piece of civic building. We try to build generosity, adaptability and resilience into our projects, so that they have a life and an impact beyond the building itself.

Which other architects do you admire?

I admire any architect doing good work today, because producing quality architecture is a very, very hard thing to do.

Looking back, I admire Louis Sullivan and Hans Scharoun. They came from different cultures, but they both stood up for what they believed in, in the face of immense criticism.

Neither of them ended their career with fireworks, but their work has proven to be incredibly groundbreaking, not just in terms of form, technology and technique, but also in terms of artistic expression and craftsmanship.

What would be your dream future project?

I'd love to do a museum or a library; a civic building that's completely public, that's about creating that kind of cultural infrastructure that's very open, democratic and inclusive.

ABA have designed four residential towers with leisure space for the Greenwich Peninsula scheme

"Timber buildings are always well loved by their users. When you complete a CLT building everybody enjoys the authenticity of the material. People connect to timber emotionally, spiritually and intellectually in a different way from how they do to a high intensity manufactured material like concrete."

GREENWICH PENINSULA

Brooks has designed a cluster of four residential towers with leisure and co-working space at the ground floor and podium levels for Greenwich Peninsula in south east London.

The 150 acre, £8.4bn Greenwich Peninsula scheme is one of the UK's largest regeneration projects. It has been masterplanned by Allies and Morrison and is being overseen by developer Knight Dragon. It will feature seven new neighbourhoods, with a £1bn mixed use development designed by Santiago Calatrava featuring new tube and bus stations, a new leisure hub and a winter gardens surrounded by three towers, unified by swooping curves.

"Allies and Morrison and Knight Dragon have put together a really good, very interesting masterplan," says Brooks. "The density of the scheme is quite extreme, and there are very tough economic demands on the projects to make them cost-effective, so we tried to work within those constraints, but also to draw on the history of the place.

ABA's residential towers house 400 units and sit along the eastern edge of the site's Central Park. Their design was inspired by the industrial history of Greenwich, says Brooks.

"We were inspired by the slightly sombre monumentality of the power station, the brick chimneys and the black cast iron structures," she says. "There's a kind of seriousness to that infrastructure that I wanted to reflect in our buildings."

Brooks acknowledges that the scheme's residential buildings are "the workhorses that have to pay for the Design District," which is at the heart of the Greenwich Peninsula development."

The Design District will include buildings by eight architecture studios, including David Kohn Architects, SelgasCano and 6a Architects. Each practice was asked to design their buildings 'blind', without knowing what the others were doing, with the aim of creating a "provocative diversity of colour and form."

"It's a brave, open-minded approach," says Brooks.

We were inspired by the slightly sombre monumentality of the power station

A CHANGING PROFESSION

At the end of the interview, we return to the question of the public's perception of architects.

"It's a lot to do with the media," says Brooks. "The media needs to talk less about the image of a building and more about how a project is so much bigger than what you see at the end.

"It's a hard story to tell, the complexity around delivering architecture. It spans helping the client write the brief and raise money for the project, working with user groups and engineers, responding to iconography and history and culture and instincts. It's a kind of giant tangle of inputs that we have to untangle to create something that helps people identify with a place."

It's a huge task, admits Brooks, but she is optimistic about the ability of architects to rise to the challenge.

"As architects, we're driven to respond to it," she says.

"The profession is changing; we're no longer imposing our narrative of modernism, or some kind of an authoritarian aesthetic vision onto populations. We're now much more empathetic and open and responsive as a profession than we were."

This openness is also changing the way architects relate to one another, Brooks continues.

"Architects today are much more mutually supportive of each other than they used to be," she says. "There's not such aggressive competitiveness – we see ourselves as a collaborative profession and we're friends with the people we design for and the architects we compete with.

"It's a much kinder profession." ●

PHOTO: HUFTON + CROW

The aim is to promote sport via learning and engagement

FaulknerBrowns create dynamic sports campus in the Hague's historic Zuiderpark

Creating a sense of movement was at the heart of the design concept for the building, which is wrapped in a twisting metallic ribbon

The facility is for the community, students and elite athletes

PHOTOS UNLESS OTHERWISE CREDITED: SCAGLIOLA BRAKKE

The building will house a range of events and activities

> Whenever you're looking at it, the elevation is running away from you, so it never looks quite as big as it really is

Architecture firm FaulknerBrowns have completed a dynamic €50m (US$61m, £44.4m) sports campus in the Hague's historic Zuiderpark.

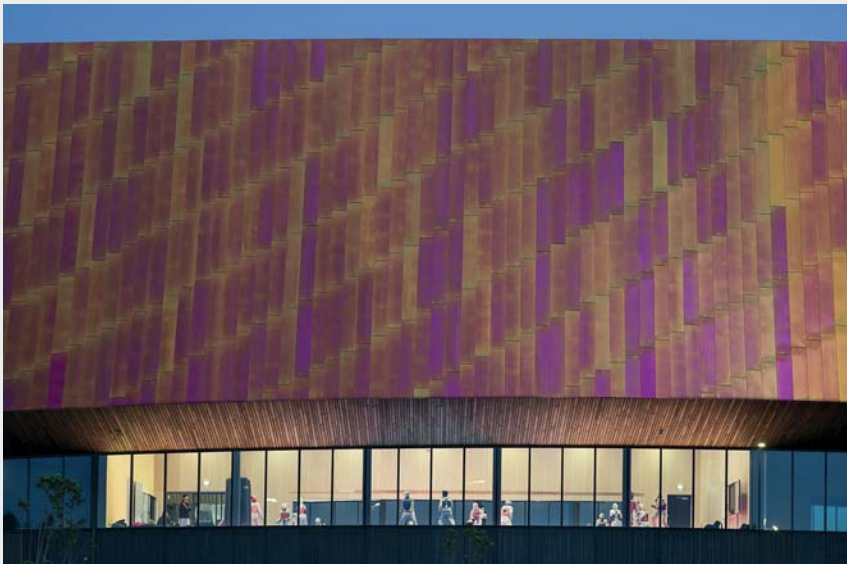
Open to amateur and elite athletes and community users, the 34,000sq m (366,000sq ft) facility includes a gymnastics hall, beach sports venue, 3,500 capacity arena and a multi-purpose sports hall, as well as a variety of sports science and education spaces, including a public library. Outside, there are a series of multi-use pitches, while an animated entrance courtyard acts as an extension to the park, which is listed as a national monument.

FaulkerBrowns' Russ Davenport has worked on the project since 2012

The building, called Sportcampus Zuiderpark, occupies a site that was once home to the stadium of Dutch football club Den Haag FC. That ground was demolished in 2007 when the team moved to the larger Kyocera Stadium, designed by Zwarts & Jansma Architects.

Backing for the new campus has come from the city municipality, the Hague University of Applied Sciences and the ROC Mondriaan vocational school – with the trio stating the need for the city to have a modern, well-equipped home to train and develop sporting talent.

FaulknerBrowns – who have designed large-scale facilities across the UK and Europe



– overcame five other bids to win the project in an international design competition held in 2012.

"Back when we won the project, the Netherlands and the other Benelux countries were considering a bid for the 2028 Olympics and their plans were focused on health, wellbeing and youth," says FaulknerBrowns partner Russ Davenport.

"The clients wanted to reflect that by building something much broader than just a facility for sport. They wanted to emphasise the importance of sport and exercise through learning and engagement. Our design had to support that kind of aspirational ethos."

To achieve this, the team were tasked with capturing a sense of movement.

"Movement was a fundamental concept for the project, but it was a very difficult thing to create internally, because a lot of the volumes are square boxes," says Davenport. "Externally, though, we felt that a curving form would fulfil that ambition. Conceptually, we came up with this idea of having a cluster of boxes that are tied together by a ribbon that twists and changes in height. At the rear, the high-sided elevation responds to the urban element of the site, while the lower front elevation responds at a human scale to the public parkland.

"We angled the façades in the vertical plane as well as the horizontal. It allows air in and out and provides sun shading to parts of the building, so it's functional and not just decorative. It also has the effect of diminishing the size of the building in the park. Whenever you're looking at it, the elevation is running away from you, so it never looks quite as big as it really is. It's like the Tardis."

According to Davenport, the brightly polished stainless steel façade was selected to create a sense of materiality and dynamism.

"We were wowed by the material. As you walk around the building, the light constantly shifts, reflecting the sky and the trees. It changes as lighting conditions and cloud patterns alter throughout the day.

"I've heard a few nicknames for it already – the UFO and the Pebble – but we've been amazed by the positive response. Usually buildings of this type get a split reaction and we've not had any bad press whatsoever. No one has come out and said they don't think it's the right building, and for me that speaks volumes.

It was really important for us to get the right feel and image for this site," concludes Davenport. "That was our biggest challenge." ●

The stainless steel façade reflects the changing lighting conditions

> I've heard a few nicknames for it already – the UFO and the Pebble

The building was designed to minimise energy loss

The sports campus includes a range of education spaces and a library

PHOTO: HUFTON + CROW

SUSTAINABILITY AT ZUIDERPARK

Russ Davenport on mixing sport and sustainability

"The municipality of The Hague has the ambition to be climate neutral by 2040. This informed the client's desire for a sustainable campus.

"The building is designed to be as compact as possible whilst providing the necessary space for the range of sport and education facilities. This, combined with a well-insulated shell, minimises energy loss. The 20,000sq m (215,200sq ft) roof is covered with over 15,000 (161,400sq ft) of heat-regulating green sedum, as well as photovoltaic solar panels to generate energy for the building, and solar collectors to produce hot water for the showers.

"The energy generated by the roof is supplemented by a ground water heating and cooling system which utilises two wells excavated to different depths. In the summer when there is a demand for cooling, groundwater is pumped from the shallower 'cold' water well and fed through a heat exchanger to provide cooling for the building. Due to this energy transfer the water returns warmed and is fed back into the deeper 'warm' water well. In the winter the system is reversed to provide heating for the building."

ADRIAAN GEUZE

The masterplan for the Yongsan National Park explores the healing power of nature in a place with a turbulent history. The founder of West 8 talks to Kath Hudson

Conjuring up prestigious national parks and gardens from derelict and contaminated land around the globe, Dutch landscape architecture and urban planning firm West 8 has been involved in a range of landmark projects, including Schouwburgplein (Theatre Square) in Rotterdam; the award-winning Madrid Río linear park in Spain and Jubilee Gardens in London.

The firm was co-founded in Rotterdam in 1987 by Adriaan Geuze, who now runs it with partners Edzo Bindels and Martin Biewenga, liaison Daniel Vasini and principal of the New York office Claire Agre.

West 8 employs a team of 70 architects, urban designers, landscape architects and industrial engineers across offices in Rotterdam, New York and Belgium. The New York office was set up after winning an international design competition in 2006 for Governors Island Park in the New York Harbor.

The firm is working on a range of projects including Yongsan National Park in Seoul, South Korea, where a US Garrison is being transformed into a public park.

PHOTO: ©CAREL VAN HEES

> The profile of landscape architecture has been raised by international cities competing with one another

West 8 has masterplanned a new botanical garden for Houston, with a range of gardens and amenities

When did you decide you wanted to be a landscape architect?

I can't remember ever wanting to be anything else. When I graduated, in the mid-1980s, the Dutch economy was in serious recession. As there were no jobs, we started up our own practice, and won some small projects.

During our first five years we won several awards – the Borneo-Sporenburg urban design project in Amsterdam was particularly successful – and these boosted the business. Now we have a staff of 70, and our work combines architecture, infrastructure, urban planning and landscape design.

How has the industry changed over the years?

Within landscape architecture there has been an urban renaissance internationally. Public spaces, waterfronts and urban parks have become the motor for revitalising cities. The profile of landscape architecture has been driven by international cities seriously competing with one another. High quality public spaces have become part of city branding.

What skills do you need to be a successful landscape architect?

Much of it is to do with engineering, but it requires a poetic approach to take it to the next step.

How would you describe your style?

We change our approach according to the context of each project, so West 8's style isn't easy to recognise. We like to include humour and irony. Our work should not be predictable.

I have been described as romantic, and I won't deny that. In the Netherlands we're accustomed to artificial nature, linear wildlife, a manmade landscape and no topography. I believe the Dutch are culturally fixated on the surreal concept of ecology and nature as product engineering.

How do you ensure that each project reflects the locality?

It's important to us that our work relates to the context of a site, so we start off by really trying to understand the area. In addition to this, we work with local firms to ground our work.

Governors Island and The Hills completed in New York in 2016. What did this project involve?

It was Mayor Bloomberg's vision to situate a new public park for New York in the middle of the harbour on an island which used to be a base for the US Coast Guard.

Its landscape was as flat as a pancake. We envisioned the transformation of the island through its topography in order to manipulate the eye and explore the horizon. The mayor's vision

The final phase of the Governors Island park project opened in July 2016, with sloping landscapes offering views of New York Harbor

GOVERNORSISLAND.COM

The Yongsan Park project will see a military installation replaced by a public park

> The real future in today's debate about sustainability lies in actively creating new ecologies

The West 8 leadership team from left to right: Edzo Bindels, Martin Biewenga, Daniel Vasini, Claire Agre and Adriaan Geuze

PHOTO: ©CAREL VAN HEES

THE WEST 8 APPROACH

West 8 approaches the production of nature in two different – but characteristically Dutch – ways. First, we take a classic civil engineering approach for creating landscape; a logic based on utility and necessity. Second, we are part of a landscape tradition that confers identity and so we understand the need to create symbols in the production of landscape. This method envisions a new nature, a 'second nature' of constructed landscapes that respond to pragmatic demands (water management, population growth, traffic congestion) and that also reinforce the culture to which they belong (identity, symbols, expression).

In a departure from the old 'demolish and install' engineering methodology, or the current 'preserve and protect' model', we are adding and expressing new natures. The real future in today's debate about sustainability lies not in a political or philosophical dialogue about what we are going to 'sustain' it, but rather in how to actively create new ecologies.

was to build the park as a magnet for all the people of New York, and to catalyse future development.

How would you sum up your work there?

The idea of sharing was at the heart of the mission statement; we were charged with creating a park which would enable multiple experiences. A place that would welcome play, experimentation, installations, local food, sports and festivals.

People arrive by ferry, they have access to free bikes, and they have the opportunity to escape their New York neuroses and experience the feeling of being on holiday. We want people to relax and use the park however they wish: play games, have a picnic, enjoy the sculptures, cycle or stroll around.

Did you achieve what you set out to achieve with the Governors Hill project?

Absolutely. I'm thrilled with the outcome, particularly with the granite blocks of the former sea wall, which have been recycled into seating elements. The client team had a very clear vision for this park – to create a new standard of democratic public space – and they succeeded. Other than having to sacrifice some ornamentation due to budget, we were able to realise our full design.

You created the masterplan for the Yongsan National Park in Seoul. What is the aim of this project?

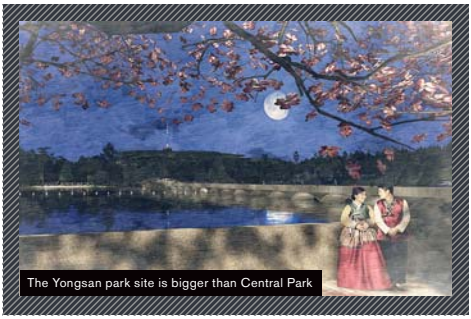
This is likely to be one of the most extensive projects West 8 will ever undertake. The park will be located on a site which is currently a US Army base, and which symbolises an extremely turbulent history of war and occupation in Korea. It's in downtown Seoul, which has a population of about 20 million.

The site is about one and a half times the size of New York's Central Park and, from a cultural standpoint, it's sacred land. It is situated exactly between Nam Sang Mountain and the Han River, a place where the Emperor went and prayed for rain. It has a soft undulating topography with a beautiful ridgeline connecting to the mountain.

Because of its importance, the site was seized by the Japanese to create a military base, and has since been used by the US as an American/Korean Army HQ. Once the military relocates to new headquarters, it will be transformed into an public park. It's an honour for us to work on this project.

What challenges does the site present?

The political situation is very challenging, because we can't start work until the American Army has relocated, and this move is very caught up in the complex international context,



The Yongsan park site is bigger than Central Park

IMAGE COURTESY OF WEST KOWLOON CULTURAL DISTRICT AUTHORITY

> As a result of the chequered history of the site in Korea, we've chosen to base the design on the concept of healing

which we hear about on the news all the time. The site and soil have also been seriously contaminated by its military use, with oil, chemicals and gunpowder.

As Europeans, it can be tough working in Asia, to understand the complex layers of culture built up over 3,500 years of civilization. We work with a team of Korean colleagues, together with Iroje architects from Seoul. As such, we better understand and appreciate the archaeology, history, botany and narratives of the site.

How will you bring the concept of healing into the design?

As a result of the chequered history of the site, we have chosen to base the design on the concept of healing.

The act of healing is a process that transforms the existing site through an awareness of its history into a world-class park.

By creating a central lake and restoring the authentic topography of the site, the park will be anchored in the continuous mountain geology of Seoul. The park will reconnect the foothills of the South Mountain Nam Sang.

All over the park the design introduces 'madangs' (an ancient Korean word for an open plaza). These are the 'footprints' of the military buildings which dominate the site, and will take the form of simple granite stone platforms in the undulating park landscape.

What stage are you at with this project?

We've been working on it for five years, and are currently at the schematic design phase: synthesising a layered design, naturalistic topography and developing the site narratives.

Adriaan Geuze cofounded West 8 in the Netherlands in 1987

PHOTO: ©CAREL VAN HEES

West 8 helped to design an 'Art Park' for the West Kowloon Cultural District in Hong Kong

Tell us about the Houston Botanic Gardens project. How is it progressing?

This is still at the schematic design stage, with the design development starting in early 2018. Led by a client team of civic leaders who happen to be gardeners, the aim is to deliver a world-class botanic collection for display, conservation and research purposes, including an edible garden, a large international garden and an aquatic garden geared towards children. Our garden will be reimagined as a multi-user space for all, on the site of an old golf course, situated on a bayou, which creates an island apart from the city.

What are the main challenges?

A major challenge was dealing with the hot, humid Houston climate, which requires a lot of shade for both people and plants, so we have invested in trees, shade and trellises. Plus there is the consideration of hurricanes and flooding. Gardens of this sort take a long time to mature – London's Kew Gardens has developed over ten generations, for example.

We will soon be introducing a tree nursery to start establishing workhouse species along with rare specimens. The peripheral area will be built from native species, which grow quickly, and once mature will form a shelter in the core for more precious international collections.

What appealed to you about this project?

Houston is the most diverse city in America, and one of the most dynamic, rapidly growing, and optimistic. When matched with the warm climate, we saw this as a chance to build an incredibly diverse and globally-reaching botanic garden.

Botanic gardens are more important than ever right now, as they are conservators of plant DNA from the world over, and have an incredibly important role in shaping a love and knowledge of plants for all generations.

New Holland Island Park, St Petersburg, Russia

West 8 worked on the $90m revitalisation of Longwood's Main Fountain Garden in Pennsylvania

You helped develop the landscape design plans for the West Kowloon Cultural District park in Hong Kong. What will this offer?

This is a dramatic 23 hectare site on the Victoria Harbor, with a panoramic view of Hong Kong. The West Kowloon Peninsula will house a new cultural district. It will include many cultural icons, a park, green avenues and waterfront promenades. Hong Kong lacks public space, so this will be a wonderful resource for future generations. We're halfway through construction.

What was appealing about this project?

Creating a cultural district for Hong Kong, with facilities for exhibitions and cultural events, is very exciting; this is one of the largest cultural developments worldwide. The first phase opened in 2016 and has attracted more than 700,000 visitors.

One of the key design features is a seaborn promenade around the site, with shaded alcove seating. Above that is the upper level, housing the rest of the undulating park.

It has been designed so that even if a ticketed cultural event is happening, there's still space for people to come and enjoy the park. It is a romantic space, with shaded areas for people to sit and take in the stunning views across the water.

What were the challenges?

The constraints of the site were a big challenge. We envisioned a park filled with trees with intimate green spaces. Part of the site wasn't ready for this; it was landfill, with derelict land on top of tunnels. Another area used to be a typhoon shelter. The loadbearing constraint was also a complex challenge. On top of that, the park needs to serve multiple and diverse programmes at the same time.

Are you working on any other cultural/leisure projects?

Since 2014, West 8 partner Edzo Bindels and I have been working on the New Holland Island Park project, a wharf island in the centre of Saint Petersburg, Russia. The project will continue until 2025, but its first phase, the park and public space, opened in 2016.

In 2011, the non profit organisation IRIS Foundation started hosting a summer programme on New Holland Island to help activate historic spaces, bringing in gallery-organised temporary exhibitions. The masterplan by West 8 envisioned a combination of cultural village and a festival park. It covers 2.2 hectares (5,4

acres) and features more than 200 mature trees, as well as a central basin and herb garden, a children's playground shaped like the hull of a ship, and temporary pavilions.

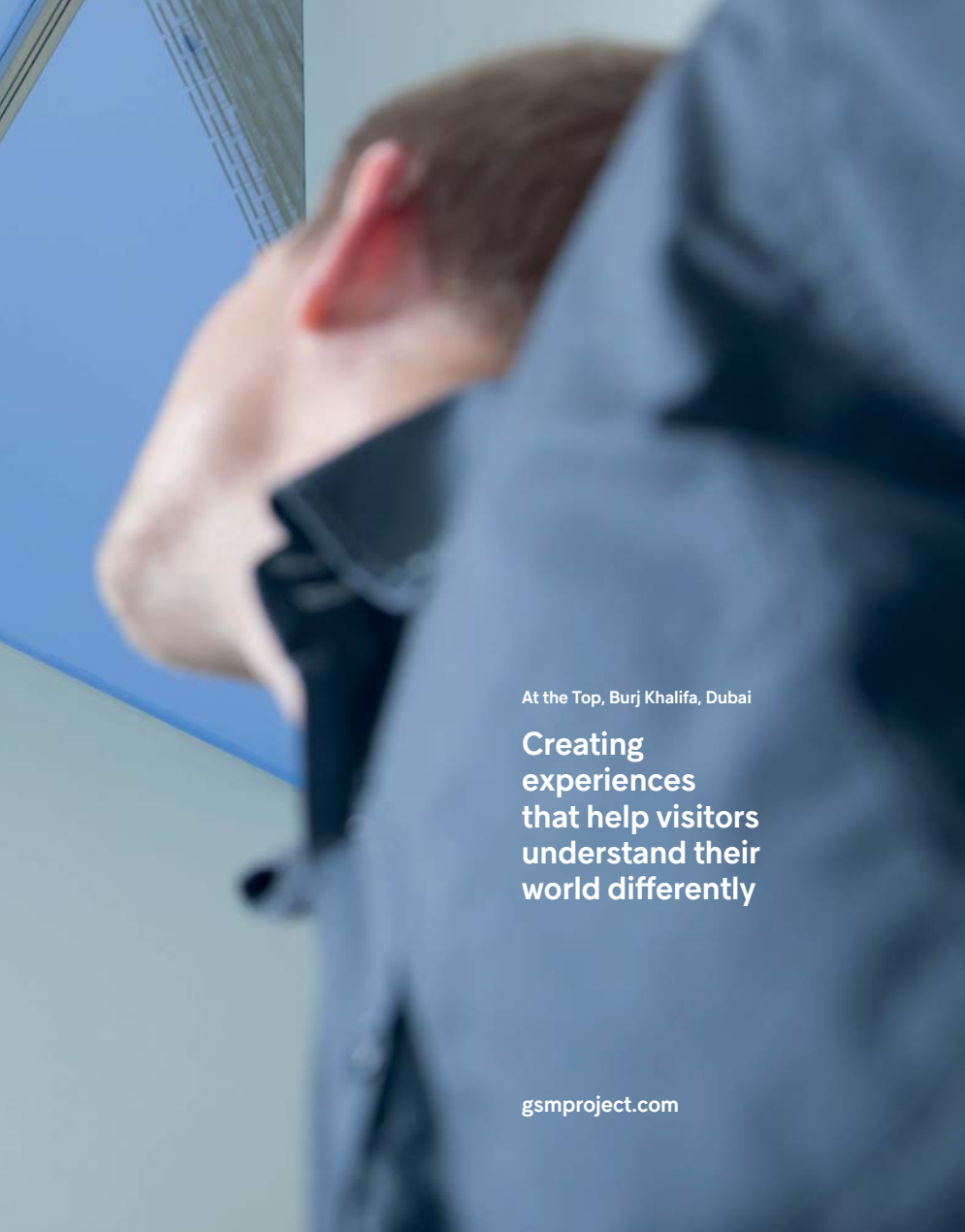
In winter, the central basin holds an ice skating rink. Three restored historic buildings have been converted into a variety of facilities including shops, a bookstore, cafés, exercise studios and children's creative studios.

In the US, we've also been working on Longwood's Main Fountain Garden revitalisation project in Pennsylvania. The Main Fountain Garden renovation project, a collaboration between West 8, New York architects Beyer Blinder Belle and water feature consultant Fluidity, was completed in May 2017. It replaces the 83-year-old fountains' infrastructure with the latest technology, improves guest access to the garden, and adds innovative new elements which honour the original design by Longwood Gardens founder Pierre S. du Pont.

What are the biggest trends in landscape architecture?

Mass culture cultivates instant illusion. Commercial exploitation creates a sense of almost permanent excitement. I believe landscape architecture should be the antidote. It can offer seasonality, play, authenticity and honest human interaction. ●

Let's create something that changes someone.
gsm°
Montréal / Dubai / Singapore



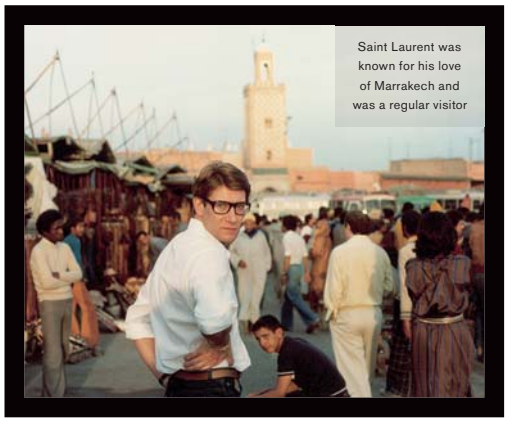
At the Top, Burj Khalifa, Dubai

Creating experiences that help visitors understand their world differently

gsmproject.com

A FITTING LEGACY

Since opening late last year, the Yves Saint Laurent Museum in Marrakech has won awards for its design. We take a look



Saint Laurent was known for his love of Marrakech and was a regular visitor

PHOTO: © REGINALD GRAY

Studio KO founders Karl Fournier and Olivier Marty

Last October saw the opening of a striking new museum dedicated to the life and work of French fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent in Marrakech, Morocco. French architecture firm Studio KO designed the 4,000sq m (43,000sq ft) terracotta brick home of the Musée Yves Saint Laurent, which is situated next to the city's Jardin Majorelle, a garden the designer acquired himself to save it from being destroyed by developers.

Saint Laurent was known for his love of Marrakech and visited regularly from 1966 until his death in 2008.

The museum celebrates his legacy with a collection of haute couture, accessories, sketches, collection boards, photographs and objects he collected between 1962 and 2002. The exhibits have been lent by the Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent, which protects the designer's legacy and work.

THE INSPIRATION

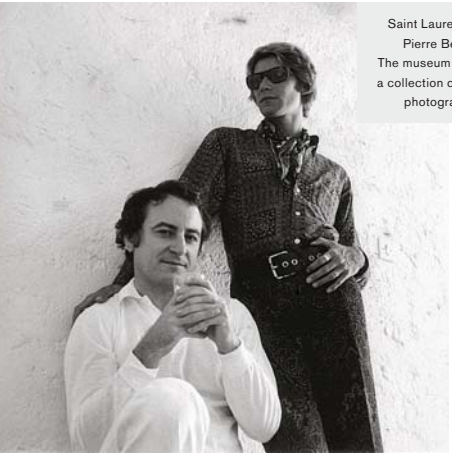
Studio KO had access to the collection when designing the museum. They took inspiration from Saint Laurent's "delicate and bold forms" and his use of curved and straight lines in combination, interpreting this in the architecture of the building. The façade appears as an intersection of cubes with a lace-like covering of handmade bricks, which creates patterns evoking "the weft and warp of fabric", while celebrating the vibrant colour of the Red City.

The building's façade appears as an intersection of cubes with a lace-like covering of bricks

Saint Laurent at Dar El Hanch, the house he bought with Pierre Bergé in Marrakech

PHOTO © PIERRE BERGÉ

The museum celebrates the life and work of Yves Saint Laurent



Saint Laurent with Pierre Bergé. The museum features a collection of archive photography

The interiors have been designed in stark contrast, with the architects creating "velvety, smooth and radiant space, like the lining of a couture jacket".

"The museum combines two worlds that we are very familiar with and that are dear to our hearts: fashion and Morocco," said Studio KO founders Olivier Marty and Karl Fournier, who have had an office in Marrakech for over a decade.

"Since the founding of our architectural firm, we have worked in this country that so inspired Yves Saint Laurent. It is with great joy that we've worked on this ambitious project, and contributed in our way to the history and prestige of the most influential fashion designer of the 20th century."

The museum is home to a permanent exhibition space, designed by scenographer Christophe Martin, showcasing 50 rarely seen pieces from the foundation's collection; alongside a research library with 6,000 volumes about both design and Morocco; a 150-seat auditorium; a bookstore; and a terrace cafe, designed by architect Yves Taralon. Temporary galleries also feature, dedicated to fashion, contemporary art and design, anthropology and botany.

Audiovisual elements – including screens showing sketches, photographs, runway shows, films, voices and music – are placed throughout the building to reveal Saint Laurent's creative process.

"It's not a retrospective, but rather a voyage to the heart of his work," said Martin. "The garments are displayed in an understated environment, one without affectation, which accompanies and underscores the work. These are enveloped by an immense, luminous and radiating portrait of Yves Saint Laurent."

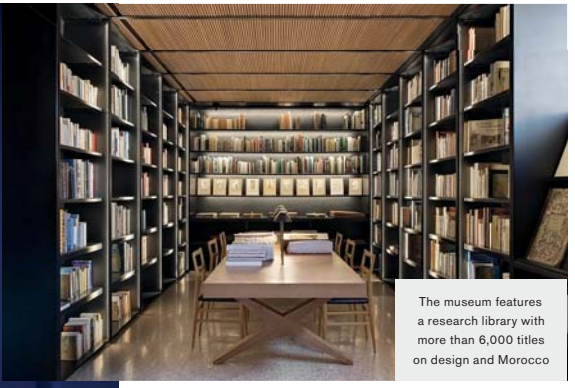
It's not a retrospective, but rather a voyage to the heart of his work

MUSEE YVES SAINT LAURENT PARIS

The opening of the Marrakech museum coincided with the inauguration of the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris, located at the former fashion house and current headquarters of The Fondation Pierre Bergé - Yves Saint Laurent at 5 Avenue Marceau – the studio where Saint Laurent designed and created his work for almost 30 years.

Stage designer Nathalie Crinière and interior designer Jacques Grange rethought the available exhibition space, doubling it in size and refurbishing the interiors in the style of the designer's original couture house. Objects on display include a tuxedo, Sahara jacket, jumpsuit and trench coat designed by Saint Laurent, while an exhibition explores the inspiration he drew from China, India, Spain and Russia. ●

Exhibitons cover fashion, contemporary art and design, botany and anthropology



The museum features a research library with more than 6,000 titles on design and Morocco

PHOTO: FONDATION JARDIN MAJORELLE © NICOLAS MATTHEUS

The exterior was inspired by the "weft and warp" of fabric

Fit *for* anything

Chicago's Midtown Athletic Club has reopened, following a renovation that sees the iconic tennis centre relaunched as a premium athletic club with a fitness-focused hotel, spaces designed by Venus Williams and a pool that becomes an ice rink during the winter. DMAC's **Dwayne MacEwen** talks Magali Robathan through the project

The footprint of the building was defined by the triangular shape of the site, says MacEwen

V Starr Interiors, Venus Williams' practice, designed a tennis lounge for the club and one of the hotel's suites

Opened in 1970 by tennis enthusiast Alan Schwartz and his father Kevie Schwartz, Chicago's Midtown Tennis Club (as it was originally called) quickly built a name for itself within the sport. From 1983 to 2002, it was the home court of Billie Jean King, Andre Agassiz won his first national junior tournament there, and John McEnroe won his first national championship at the club.

While the club offered excellent tennis facilities, the gym was a small add on, and Midtown Athletic Club decided changing times meant it was time to diversify. Chicago architectural and interiors practice DMAC Architecture were brought on board, and the team started working on a major $85m renovation and expansion project with the aim of turning the tennis club into 'the largest premier health-and-fitness property in the US'.

Located off Midtown's industrial corridor, it was important for the client and the designers to create a 'human scale facility in a big box retailer area' and to create a place for local residents to socialise as well as to work out in.

The club now features 16 indoor tennis courts; studios for a range of activities including yoga, pilates, cycling and boxing; an indoor pool; an outdoor pool, which serves as an ice rink during the winter; a fitness centre; a full service spa; a restaurant; a retail complex; and a two storey 55 room boutique hotel.

> The hotel concept came late in the game, but it was an inspired idea

The hotel wasn't part of the original renovation plans. Just as construction was about to start, Midtown president CEO Steven Schwartz reportedly had a 'lightbulb moment', realising that the neighbourhood had a dearth of decent places to stay, and that they could create a hotel where the fitness facilities were absolutely central, rather than being an add on.

"The hotel concept came late in the game, but it was an inspired idea," says Dwayne MacEwen, founder of DMAC Architecture. "Differing from your typical hotel facility where a small portion of the property is dedicated to amenities, Midtown is 96 percent amenity and only four percent hotel."

DMAC proposed putting the two storey hotel on top of the gym, and quickly set about altering the design plans.

The hotel appears as a floating volume, with a glass-covered exterior. Inside, it features contemporary design with extensive use of glass, granite and wood, and one of the four suites is designed by Venus Williams, who played on Midtown's courts as a junior tennis player.

DMAC founder Dwayne MacEwen has worked with Midtown Athletic Club for more than a decade

This is a complete game changer for the hotel and fitness club experience

Here DMAC's Dwayne MacEwen talks us through the highs and lows of the challenging project

What makes this project unique?

The Midtown Athletic Club is composed of several typologies bundled into one massive building.

There's the health club component that, within itself, encompasses several typologies, a fitness centre being just one of them. It also features individual studios including yoga, pilates, group fitness and cycling; as well as a restaurant, indoor and outdoor pools, a full-service salon/spa, an outdoor workout area, a boxing rink, and golf simulator area. As well as the health club, there's also a 55-room hotel and conference centre. The health club occupies the first three floors and the hotel is housed on the fourth and fifth floors.

How did this fit with the existing facility?

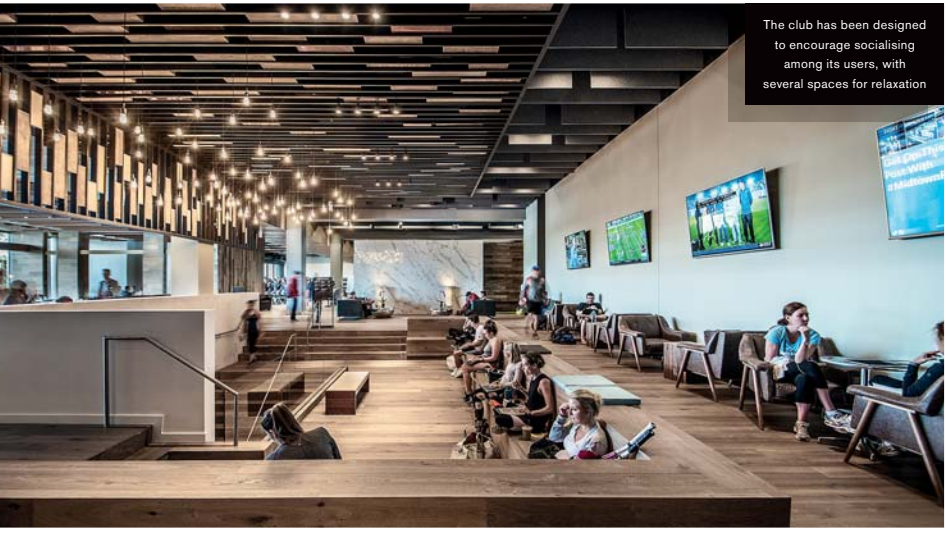
All of this is nested adjacent to the original 87,000 square foot brick structure that houses 14 tennis courts, built in 1970. The two structures are physically connected by the Tennis Lounge, which blurs the boundaries between old and new. The new development is built around and above the electrical room that is the linchpin of the original tennis courts.

Midtown Athletic Club is a new urban hub that exemplifies the trend of the decentralisation of Chicago, exploring the new wave of high quality hospitality offerings popping up beyond Chicago's core downtown. Smart cities now need to include mixed-use sites in the neighbourhoods that improve the livability of cities, such as the neighbourhood housing Midtown – once considered an industrial district.

The intersection of Damen, Elston and Fullerton was formerly underutilised, and the new design sought to revitalise the intersection by creating a campus. We have not only created a project in itself with integrity, but have activated the site and the neighbourhood in the sense of place making. ▸

PHOTO: ANTHONY FALLER

The third floor features the interval training space and acts as a buffer between the noisy club and quiet hotel



The club has been designed to encourage socialising among its users, with several spaces for relaxation

PHOTO: ANTHONY TAHLER

Can you sum up the aims of the project?

We aimed to make sure there was an emotional connection as the user moved through the space. We wanted to create a collection of functions and programs, versus a collection of programmatic elements, similar to Chicago's collection of neighbourhoods. Architecturally, the ultimate goal was to create a sense of space, to unify the various programs of the club into a seamless, cohesive whole, while providing a distinct identity for each of these programs.

We sought for the new design to be an interface between the club and its members. Working closely with the client, we built a new brand, with architecture serving as a medium to exercise this brand building – engaging guests, and also paving the path to expanding this brand to other Midtown clubs.

What have been the biggest challenges of working on this project?

The project was originally designed to be a two-and-a-half storey building to accommodate the health club. We were 'design complete', both architecturally and structurally, when we decided to add an additional two floors to accommodate the hotel, in collaboration with the client. A programmatic change like this coming late in the project posed a challenge, requiring modifications to the structural design and circulation, with minimal changes to the already designed health club.

We welcomed the challenge with open arms, as it greatly ignited the design possibilities. We stayed agile as the design evolved, resulting in what we consider to be a very successful outcome.

The geometry of the site of the club posed another challenge for us – it is flanked by three streets creating a triangular footprint. This influenced the design; we leveraged the shape to create a one-of-a-kind property.

How did the location inform the design?

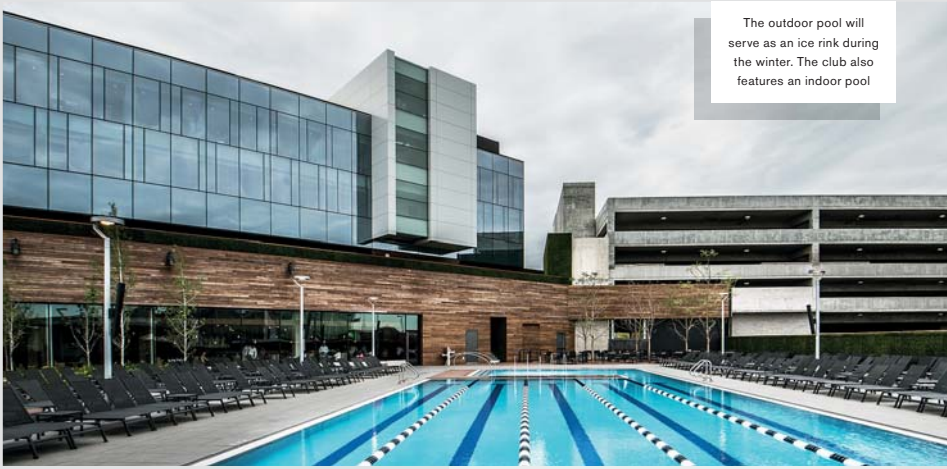
The new design for the club had a very site-specific outcome that was defined by the triangular shape of the site. The challenging geometry of the site somewhat defined the footprint of the building, which the design emphasises.

While the original 'Elston Corridor' was predominantly industrial, there was a need for more sophisticated mixed-use

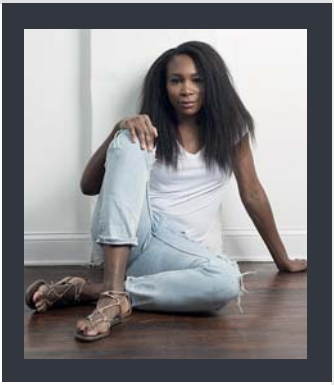
DMAC Architecture

DMAC is a full-service architecture firm based in Evanston, IL, specialising in hospitality projects. Founded in 1995 by Dwayne MacEwen, past clients include Midtown Athletic Club, Michael Jordan's Steak House, Lamborghini, Doc B's Fresh Kitchen, Rivers Casino and Resort, Mario Tricoci Hair Salon & Day Spa, and Lamborghini Gold Coast.

According to the firm, 'DMAC is known for its extensive knowledge of current fabrication methods, designing and developing interior elements in addition to traditional architecture.'



The outdoor pool will serve as an ice rink during the winter. The club also features an indoor pool



Venus Williams and Midtown Athletic Club

Venus and Serena Williams have had a long relationship with Midtown Athletic Club, having competed there as junior tennis stars. In 2002, Venus Williams launched her interior design practice, V Starr Interiors, and when Midtown Athletic Clubs CEO and president Steven Schwartz decided to renovate the club, he was keen to get her on board.

"It's been special to follow Venus' career as an international tennis icon, and more recently, as she launched V Starr," said Schwartz. "Midtown Athletic Club and The Hotel at Midtown has been a dream of ours for more than a decade, and giving Venus and her team the opportunity to leave their mark on our dream project was really fortunate."

V Starr Interiors designed the Tennis Lounge at Midtown Athletic Club and the V Suite for the Hotel at Midtown.

The Tennis Lounge features an electric yellow and green colour scheme, teal seating, and a feature wall composed of tennis balls. The V Suite has been designed as a 'calm, rejuvenating space' and features a living area 'composed of sultry, soothing tones complemented by pure whites in the bedroom.'

"I've always respected the Midtown Athletic Club, and it was meaningful to work with them in a new capacity, combining my passion for tennis with design and hospitality," said Williams. "V Starr's design reflects the timeless sophistication of Midtown's beloved establishment, while drawing from my own experiences."

◄ The Venus Williams-designed Tennis Lounge features a bright yellow, green and teal colour scheme

Facilities include a spin studio (left), a cardio fitness floor (below right) and a spa (above)

developments in the area, improving the liveability around the intersection. Midtown is ideally situated, on the cusp of three vibrant neighbourhoods (Lincoln Park, Bucktown and Logan Square), and the aesthetics of the club addresses the needs of the demography.

What have been the highest and lowest points?

The highest and lowest point was a specific moment in the design process – the point when we were nearing the start of construction. The client asked if we could put a hotel on top of the parking garage, and after rethinking the design, it made the most sense to build the hotel on top of the health club. Since we'd already spent so much time on the nearly three-storey project, if we were to add a hotel, it became problematic that we couldn't put it on top of the parking garage without having to completely reconstruct the existing structure.

Although we 'd already started construction, once we were able to redesign parts of the existing club and add on the top three storeys, the low point actually became the high point. Now, we can't imagine the athletic club without The Hotel at Midtown.

Why did the athletic club need to be revamped? What state was it in?

The old club house was a small, two-storey structure that was next to the tennis courts, all built in 1970. Midtown Building II was across the street on Elston, and housed additional tennis courts and a small fitness centre. The club functions were bifurcated with tennis on one side of Elston, and the fitness portion across the street (where the revamp took place).

Midtown Athletic Club facilities

- Outdoor pool deck with athletic pool, hydrotherapy pool and kids' pool, which are converted to an ice skating rink in the winter
- Full-service restaurant with outdoor dining, private dining, and a lounge
- Rooftop sundeck
- 9,700 square foot weight training floor
- 16 indoor tennis courts
- Full-service spa
- Hot yoga studio
- Spin studio
- Pilates studio
- Boxing studio
- Group exercise studio, 'The Theater'
- Cardio fitness floor
- Two golf simulators
- 55 room hotel

Midtown's intention was to upgrade their fitness programming and brand the facility as an athletic club, instead of just a tennis club. This was timely, as it coincided with the city's plans to re-route Elston Avenue, which essentially cut through the fitness club, dislocating the fitness centre for two years, until the new club opened.

We transformed Midtown from the largest tennis club in the country, to the largest fitness facility. The club had its glory days in the 1970s and 1980s, and the fitness component was purely an add on to the tennis clubs. It was still relevant, but needed to be brought up to date.

What were the biggest challenges of creating the hotel?

The hotel concept came late in the game, but it was an inspired idea.

The challenge was to modify the structural design and the circulation with minimal changes to the already-designed health club.

We had to change the structural framing concept from the originally designed concrete structure with spread footings to a steel structure with caisson foundations. We also had to work with the constraints of column spans while maintaining efficiency with the hotel rooms, which had to be worked into the club areas on the lower floors. We were able to accommodate that with cantilevers and diagonal bracing, expressing them architecturally as a floating mass above the club floors.

PHOTO: ANTHONY TAHLER

It offers the chance for hotel guests to mix with Chicagoans in a neighbourhood setting

The club features two studios for boxing, with a range of classes developed by George Foreman III

The facility turns the idea of the hotel gym on its head, with the hotel part of a larger fitness facility. What does it offer that most hotels don't?

For loyal hotel guests, the fitness club offers a community built around shared values of fitness and the opportunity for group activities. It also offers the opportunity for one-time guests to the hotel to mix and mingle with local Chicagoans in a neighbourhood setting.

The athletic club allows guests to prioritise fitness, not only within their own regimen or training program, but within business and leisure travel. The site becomes a reason in itself for travel to Chicago (to be a spectator or to participate in competitions and tournaments). As spas and wellness centres of the late 20th-early 21st century become conceptually and physically dated, Midtown Athletic Club presents a new vision for a wellness-driven trip.

Was the hotel designed with fitness-focused guests in mind? If so, how did this manifest itself in the design?

There are many hotels that cater to fitness-minded travelers, but at Midtown, the hotel is the amenity. Differing from your typical hotel facility where a small portion of the property is dedicated to amenities, Midtown is 96 percent amenity and only four percent hotel. This is a complete game changer for both the hotel and club experience.

In many ways, the hotel was designed with the health-conscious/fitness-focused guest in mind. Rather than offering in-room yoga mats like many hotels do, we offer guests the best yoga studio and fitness classes in the country, as well as state-of-the-art equipment and all the exciting amenities offered at the club. All guest rooms are well appointed, offering a wow-moment on every floor.

The design choreographs movement throughout the spaces. Each space is distinct, accommodating different approaches to exercise, fitness and even relaxation. The club also offers other amenities such as the café and spa and other gathering places that support fitness beyond exercise itself.

How would you sum up the hotel design? And how would you sum up the athletic club revamp?

The new hotel is a dramatic, floating volume inspired by international modernism, but with forms, textures and materials that offer a sense of welcome and comfort for guests with contemporary, healthy lifestyles.

The athletic club is a contemporary, elegant flow of varied but related spaces that nod to the storied history of the tennis club while inviting new, diverse approaches to fitness.

What is your favourite part of the building?

My favourite part of the club is the outdoor pool that transforms into an ice rink come winter. ●

Lund has worked as a designer for Soho House since 2014. She co-led the design of The Ned

PHOTOS: © THE NED

The Grade I listed building housing The Ned was designed by Edwin 'Ned' Lutyens

ALICE LUND

Since opening last April, The Ned has been crowned Europe's best hotel. Soho House designer Alice Lund speaks to Magali Robathan about working on a unique project

The story of the Ned began in 2012, when Soho House owner Nick Jones visited the Grade I listed former Midland Bank building in the City of London. "The property had been empty for nearly eight years but there was something about it – the details and scale of it – that just floored me," says Jones.

The building, which was designed by architect Sir Edwin 'Ned' Lutyens in 1924, still retained many of its original features, including a huge circular door leading into what was the main vault of the bank.

Determined to use the building to create a new club, Jones and Soho House's chairman and investor Ron Burkle teamed up with Andrew Zobler, CEO of New York's Sydell hotel Group.

Soho House designer Alice Lund co-led the project together with architecture practice EPR, transforming the Grade I listed building into a venue with 250 bedrooms, 10 restaurants and a member's club.

Facilities include a rooftop space with a heated pool and outdoor terraces, a gym and Ned's Club Spa, built around a 20m pool with Cowshed treatment rooms, a barbershop and beauty parlour.

Here designer Alice Lund talks us through the project:

What was your aim with this project?

We wanted The Ned to be a bit of a fantasy, a refuge from modern life.

What was your inspiration?

Our starting point for The Ned's interiors was the glamour of a 1930s transatlantic ocean liner. We trawled the Midland Bank's archives to find out what the building looked like in its heyday in the 1930s.

How would you sum up the design?

Faded 1930s-era glamour. We were inspired by the great ships of that time, including the *Normandie*, as well as by the Orient Express.

When did you first visit the building? Can you remember your initial reaction to it?

I first visited in June 2014, and was completely blown away by the scale and grandeur of the space. It felt very special to be able to roam around the building alone, as the property was vacant at the time, aside from the two lovely security guards who'd been working there since it was Midlands Bank. We spent hours pouring over the exquisite craftsmanship, materials and detailing on all the floors – it was incredibly inspiring.

What state was the building and its original features in?

We were lucky to get the building in good nick actually. HSBC had taken great care of it. The building's Grade I-listed status provided challenges, particularly when it came to the ground floor. The bustle of the old bank's reception area has been preserved – now, more than 850 people can eat on the ground floor.

Did you feel a sense of responsibility to the building?

Of course. We wanted the restoration to be as respectful as possible and to retain its character. We were always very mindful. We've taken lots of existing motifs from the building and re-worked them to create a cohesion between the old and new.

The Ned's spa is built around the 20m indoor pool and also features a pink Moroccan hammam

The Nickel Bar occupies part of the lobby, which formerly housed the banking hall

What was the most difficult part of the project?

When Edwin Lutyens designed the bank, he installed 92 green verdite marble columns and hundreds of walnut panelled counters for the bank tellers. The whole lot was protected by the listing, and we had to work out how to fit eight restaurants and bars into the space.

What was the most exciting part of the project?

Seeing the designs take shape was really exciting; spaces like Millie's Bar with its rounded corners, and the infinity pool on the roof. We had been looking at the visuals for so long – to see them finally realised often felt wonderfully surreal! And finally, the opening night was dazzling – going from a building site to a fully occupied hotel felt incredible.

What's your favourite part of the club?

My favourite part of the building is the original bank vault, which is housed in the belly of the building. It is dominated by the bank's original stainless steel safety deposit boxes and its dramatic two-metre-wide door remains a key feature.

The vault once stored gold bullion deposits of £335m – around £15bn in today's money. We balanced out the severe geometry of the space by creating a plush club area that is used by members day and night.

My favourite part of the building is the original bank vault, in the belly of the building. It once stored gold bullion deposits of £335m

How do you want the interiors to make people feel?

We want people to feel transported back to that time but also to feel really comfortable there.

By being true to the era (without creating a pastiche) we're set apart from other more contemporary hotel refurbishment projects. I hope our guests enjoy that.

What are you working on now?

I have just completed a new members area at The Ned – it looks great and I think makes great use of the spaces.

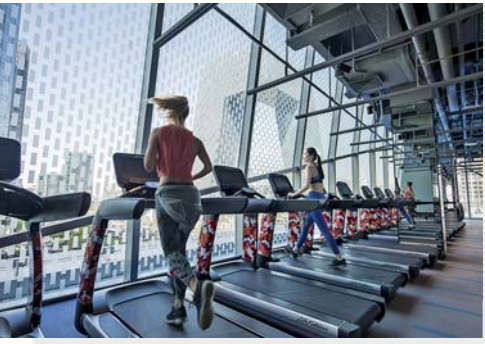
I'm also currently designing Soho House Hong Kong – a really fun challenge as the building is a modern skyscraper so a real departure from The Ned aesthetic! ●

The Vault Door leads to The Ned's members' club, housed in the former bank strongroom

The Vault Bar is lined with 3,000 safety deposit boxes. One of the bedrooms (above)

BODY BEAUTIFUL

With a growing awareness of the link between wellbeing and our surroundings, gym designers are focusing on creating spaces that are inspiring to spend time and exercise in. We check out some good-looking health clubs



Trainyard Gym, Hotel Jen

Beijing, China

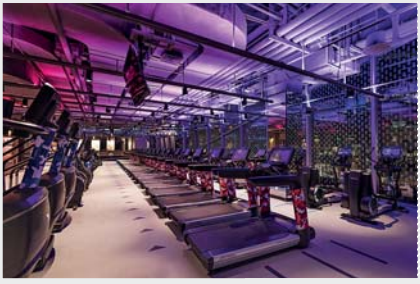
A 3,500sq m (37,600sq ft) Shangri-La health club designed to "inject energy into the heart of Beijing's central business district," opened in the Chinese capital last June.

The 450-bedroom Hotel Jen Beijing – a Shangri-La property – operates the Trainyard Gym, keeping it open 24/7 in a bid to cement the facility as "the city's go-to spot for fitness, recreation and nutrition."

Created by Stickman Design, the club's look is inspired by street art and the area's industrial buildings. The gym is split over two floors, and features graffiti artwork, and floor-to-ceiling windows offering panoramic views of Beijing and of Rem Koolhaas' landmark CCTV Tower opposite.

The gym features 11 dedicated work-out zones, a Mixed Martial Arts area with a boxing ring; a 25m lap swimming pool with skylight; a sauna, steamroom and whirlpools; a juice bar; and a range of studios including a spinning and a Pilates room.

Marcos Cain (right), founder of Stickman Design, who designed the Trainyard Gym



The look was inspired by street art and by the neighbourhood's industrial buildings

IMAGES: HOTEL JEN BEIJING

The Trainyard Gym consists of 3,500sq m of space set across two levels. It is open 24/7

The interiors are clad with beautiful and rare marble, which we have retained

JOYCE WANG

IMAGES: EQUINOX

The former bank building has been refurbished by Woods Bagot and Joyce Wang to house the gym

The original marble cladding was retained, and contemporary features added

E St James's

LONDON, UK

Luxury health club operator Equinox has converted a historic bank building in London's Mayfair into a gym, spa and member's lounge.

The ground floor, basement and mezzanine levels of 12 St James's Street have been transformed by architects Woods Bagot and interior designer Joyce Wang to create "an intimate, science-fuelled environment that awes with beguiling spaces and exceptional details".

External alterations to the building, renamed E St James's, have been kept to a minimum, although new louvres have been added to the basement level façade. Internally, major structural modifications have been made to the mezzanine to accommodate the club's cardio zone and treadmills.

Speaking about her design approach, Wang told *CLAD*: "The interiors are clad with beautiful and rare marble, which we have retained.

"We inherited this amazing architecture, but at the same time we wanted to create an interior design that is characterised by bold modern forms and materials to give the space a new life."

SHoP principal Coren Sharples, whose practice designed the American Copper Buildings

American Copper Buildings

NEW YORK, US

The American Copper Buildings, which opened in New York last year, feature some pretty spectacular fitness facilities, including a 75ft (22.8m) indoor lap pool and a whirlpool hot tub housed in the dramatic 100ft (30.4m)-long suspended skybridge that links the two towers.

The SHoP-Architects-designed buildings also feature a multi level fitness centre managed by La Palestra with a rock climbing wall facing the Empire State Building, a Turkish-style marble hammam with plunge pool, yoga and dynamic movement studios; and a private spa with treatment rooms.

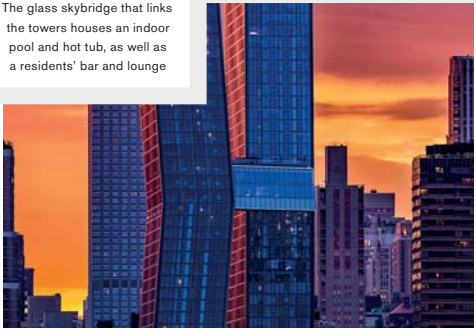
The rooftop of the East Tower features an infinity-edge swimming pool, a landscaped sky bar, an open-air lounge and dining and grilling areas. A new landscaped park surrounds the property.

Coren Sharples, one of the founding principals of SHoP Architects, told *CLAD* that including a wealth of fitness facilities and leisure amenities is the future for private developments.

She argued that the addition of leisure spaces, often publicly accessible, to offices and private residences is "now actually seen as a draw" for developers.

"People come to cities not just to live and work, but also to play, and leisure plays an enormous part in that," she said.

The glass skybridge that links the towers houses an indoor pool and hot tub, as well as a residents' bar and lounge



PHOTOS MAX TOUHEY

WG+P director Phil Waind (left). WG+P also designed Core Collective's Kensington gym (right and below right)

Core Collective

LONDON, UK

Boutique lifestyle gym operator Core Collective has enlisted the help of Waind Gohil + Potter Architects (WG+P) to 'push the boundaries of gym design' with a second gym set to be built in St John's Wood London after Westminster City Council gave the project the go ahead last summer.

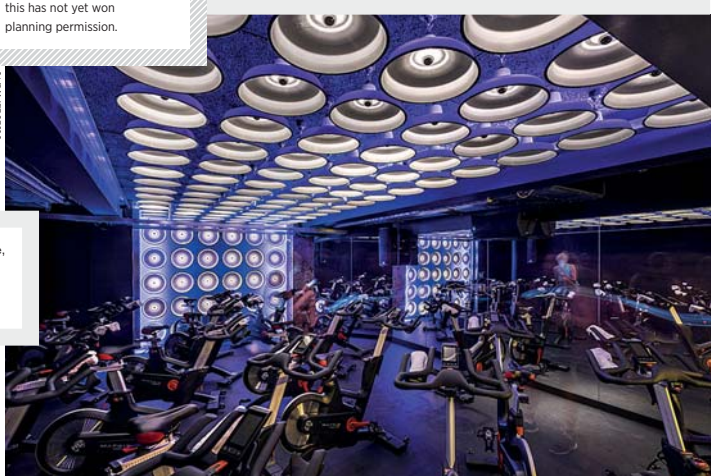
The gym will feature contemporary design, a highly flexible layout and adjustable exercise spaces. A cafe and health-focused bar will be added to make it a sociable and inclusive environment.

This is the second property for Core Collective.

The company's health club in Kensington – also designed by WG+P – opened in 2016. For that project, WG+P transformed the ground floor and basement of an abandoned mansion block using a palette of industrial materials of polished concrete, steel framed glazed screens and exposed services, alongside colour-changing lighting.

A third site is planned for Knightsbridge, although this has not yet won planning permission.

PHOTOS: WG+P



As with the Kensington site, the new gym will feature contemporary design and flexible exercise spaces

RISE PHOTOS: KRIS TAMBURELLO

WeWork's head of interiors Brittney Hart (right) set out to create a playful gym experience. Fake grass adds interest to the workout space

Rise by WeWork

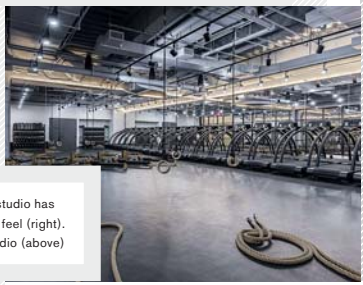
NEW YORK, US

Co-working organisation WeWork has opened its first gym, in New York's financial district.

Designed in house, with head of interiors Brittney Hart leading the project, the gym is divided into several spaces, each with a different feel.

The Fight and Flight studios offer kickboxing, boxing, mixed martial arts classes, and cardiovascular activities, and have a raw, industrial feel, with exposed stone walls and rubber floors. The Turf area features artificial grass flooring and is designed to make members feel as though they are exercising outdoors.

A pilates and yoga studio features pale wood panelling and a dark wooden floor, while natural stone and pale colours create a calming atmosphere in the Superspa spa area.



The Flight studio has an industrial feel (right). The yoga studio (above)

Ed Ng
AB Concept

The interior designer talks to Kim Megson about creating Asian restaurant Mei Ume within a listed building, the joy of F&B design and the art of planning an 'Instagram moment'

When interior designer Ed Ng and architect Terence Ngan received a brief to design a bespoke Asian restaurant in one of London's historic architectural landmarks, they jumped on the first plane to the UK.

Based in Hong Kong, where opportunities to renovate historic buildings are rare, the founders of AB Concept were excited about the chance to create a unique new concept within a listed building with a long and fascinating past.

Two years on, and the duo have finished Mei Ume for the Four Seasons Hotel London at Ten Trinity Square, housed within the former Port of London Authority HQ.

The high-end eatery, which takes its name from the Chinese and Japanese words for 'plum blossom', is AB Concept's first UK project.

Ng and Ngan have collaborated with the likes of Rosewood Hotels, Mandarin Oriental and W Hotels, but this was a challenge like no other. Here Ng reveals the process of fusing Eastern and Western heritage, and the benefits of working in partnership.

What was your starting point when developing the concept for the Mei Ume restaurant?

We got the design brief from Four Seasons, jumped straight on a plane to London and came to look at the site. We were the last consultants on board, so the basic concept for an Asian restaurant serving both Japanese and Chinese food had already been decided. It was our job to develop that idea and bring it to life.

The first thing we did was sit down with the heritage building expert and discover what we could and couldn't do in this amazing space. The next step was to find the right Asian story to bring into this very Western building.

This can be a challenging process, particularly in a very old city where you come across literally hundreds and thousands of storylines. Luckily, we had the history of this building to inspire us. It used to be London's Port of Authority HQ and is a stone's throw away from Tower Bridge, so we immediately began thinking of stories of Anglo-Chinese trading: the merchants and their silk, ceramics and tea, the way trading allowed them to influence each other's cultures. That became a very strong narrative for us.

From there we sought other ways to bring in references to Japanese and Chinese culture, from the artwork to materials such as bamboo. There are references to the plum tree, which has

Mei Ume is one of two restaurants at the Four Seasons Hotel London. It opened last summer

a beautiful poetic meaning in the literature of both countries. It's one of the very few species that blooms in the harsh winter, so it symbolises an idea of achieving against all odds.

How much of a challenge was it to work within the restrictions of this grade II* listed building?

We rarely have the opportunity to renovate historic buildings in Hong Kong; instead we have tonnes of super brand new curtain wall buildings. It was a pleasure working on a project like this, where you really have to understand the building and look around for inspiration – such as a colour scheme and motifs – that you can bring inside. You have to be adaptable of course and there are constraints to what you can do.

For example, in a restaurant, light is very important. No matter how beautiful the design and the cuisine, if the lighting is flat and gloomy it won't stimulate your appetite. Normally you'd use spotlights to get the right type of lighting, but that wasn't possible at Mei Ume because of the beautiful coved ceiling. I didn't want to completely gut that feature, so we had to use our creativity and hide uplighters around the Corinthian column cavities and add halo lights inspired by celestial cloud motifs. These solved the lighting problem, and also created our Instagram moment when guests first enter the restaurant.

How important is it these days that you have those 'Instagram moments'?

It's always been important in design; it's just the terminology that's changed. Now, instead of the very boring 'focal point', we say the 'Instagram moment'. A good designer, or even a good fashion designer like Karl Lagerfeld, has photographic eyes and an understanding of cinematography or videography. It's very important how you frame the space through composition and layering. Everything counts. That's always been true; the difference now is that people pay more attention to your work because of social media. If someone with influence takes a picture of a space, millions of followers will see it almost instantly.

In the old days, you'd take some 'hero shots', send them to a magazine and people might see them a few weeks or months later. Now the next second your design is on someone's iPhone and they're ready with a thumbs up or down! That's something we have to be aware of, but of course you can't forget that you're designing for the people who will actually occupy the space.

How do you want people occupying your restaurants to respond to the space?

We want to create comfortable, tactile spaces. A restaurant is not meant to be a museum. Guests should feel free to touch the walls, feel the materials, explore the space. It's a sensory experience.

We love working closely with chefs to exchange ideas, because there are a lot of similarities in the

Ten Trinity Square is the former headquarters of the Port of London Authority

Ed Ng and Terence Ngan founded AB Concepts in 1999 in Hong Kong. The practice has three offices

> Of all hospitality design, we feel that F&B is the most fun. You can be creative and it's where you get all the limelight

way designers and chefs see things. That's always a fun process. We have to eat all this Michelin-quality food to make sure we fully understand the concept. There's lots of: "Mmm I don't quite have the inspiration yet, can I try another dish!"

I think of all hospitality design, Terence and I feel F&B is the most fun. You can really be creative, and it's where you get all the limelight!

You get a very good budget too, because the hotel restaurant is a very strong profit-generating vehicle that can still be packed when all the other public areas are empty.

What's the working relationship like between you and Terence? Do you take on different roles?

We work on literally every project together. I think it's a very interesting partnership because, while Terence is trained as an architect, he looks at things like materials and tactility in very close detail. That surprised me when we first met. Likewise, I'm an interior designer, but I also look at things in a very bold architectural way, including the form and the space. Terence and I have pretty big overlapping interests and that's why we work so well together.

At the same time, I think one of the most valuable things for a partnership is being able to be really blunt and brutal when there is something you don't feel is right.

Without needing to be diplomatic, you can say something is rubbish, and you're listened to. You can be very to the point in a way you'd never be with a client or with your employees. This kind of candid challenge can be very useful.

At the same time, you have to be responsible, so if I say 'this is not working', I can't just turn away. The ball is back in my court to suggest a solution.

With Terence and I, there's a lot of debate, but eventually we reach a very good conclusion. We never like to say 'compromise', but we definitely move towards commonly reached solutions.

What would you identify as his greatest strength and what do you think he would identify as your greatest strength?

Terence's strength is definitely form and spatial planning. His training actually allows him to plan towns – so he's good at everything from the façade to the big picture or masterplan. With a project like Mei Ume, he can look at a heritage building, see the constraints and find the design solutions that address all the functionalities.

His gift is to consider layouts and all that, but also to make sure it's spatially beautiful. All architects need to be control freaks to some extent, and that's true of Terence. Even I'm not allowed to touch the floor plans!

I think my strength is in talking with clients and being at every single important meeting. It's very important to understand their expectations. We want to be highly bespoke designers, and I think I'm good at delivering that.

We're not the kind of designers that have our own set styles. We're adaptable.

It's that ability that has allowed us to work with W Hotels in Beijing and now in the Algarve, but at the same time work in the Mandarin Oriental the Four Seasons and the Rosewood. If I insist on a singular aesthetic, that's not going to work. Instead, I'm good at using my design methodology and my knowledge to create something that still has our DNA, but also meets the needs of the brand.

Are you seeing an increased demand for unique designs in hotels with well-known brand identities?

It depends on what brand you're working for. Rosewood's slogan is 'A Sense of Place', for example, so of course it needs to be unique. If you're staying with them in the Hotel de Crillon, you want to feel you're right on the Place de la Concorde in Paris. If you're in London, you want to feel like you're in London. So while there are elements that unite hotel properties, you don't want a cookie cutter approach. If you do that, the feeling is 'okay, it's just another nice hotel.' We don't want to create 'just another' anything.

Can you remember the first hotel that you stayed in that wowed you?

Definitely the Park Hyatt in Tokyo. I feel that was a game changer. Everyone still talks about it, even though it opened more than 20 years ago. Back then people were considering luxury for the first time, and their vision was of beautiful materials and a peninsula style. Then this hotel opened and they said 'there are no mouldings or expensive marbles, but it feels so special and so relaxing.' It redefined luxury.

> The duration of projects is very challenging. Designers have to be fortune tellers

What do you think is the biggest challenge facing hospitality designers?

The duration of projects is very, very challenging. We were involved with Mei Ume for three years, but some projects last much longer than that. We have been working on a project for the Conrad Hotel in Hang Cho, China for close to eight years. One of my staff literally started the project when she was single, has since been married and now has a son preparing for primary school, and still the project is ongoing. Eight years is a long, long time in design. Even the specification of some of the fabrics we wanted no longer exist! And of course, your aesthetic changes.

If I were to ever feel that I'd change nothing about my work from eight years ago, there'd be something wrong with me.

As designers, we always need to design for the future because people are always changing the way they live, work and relax. But if it takes years for a project to materialise, and then the finished space must be relevant for years after that, it becomes very hard. It means these days hospitality designers all have to be fortune tellers.

Ten Trinity Square was designed by Edwin Cooper and originally opened in 1922

What are you working on next?

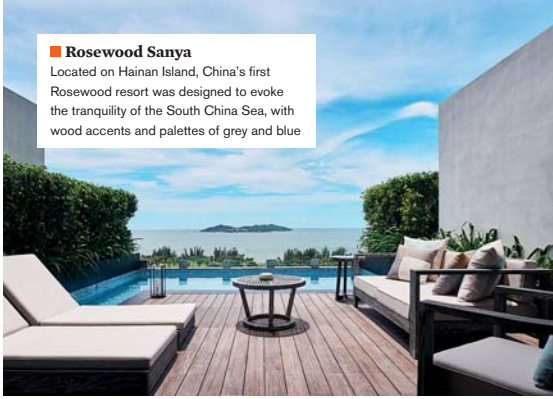
We are currently designing the W Algarve in Portugal and a seafood restaurant, the Paper Moon Giardino, in Milan. Both are very exciting, but perhaps our biggest forthcoming project is the renovation of the Beijing Hotel: a monumental 100-year-old building, right next to the Forbidden City. It used to be a Marriott but their tenancy expired and it's being relaunched to celebrate the 70th birthday of the Chinese Government. We'll be refreshing the F&B spaces for a new brand called Nuo.

During the early 1960s there were Hyatts and Hiltons all over the world, because Americans travelled. Now it's the Chinese who travel, so that's why it's time for the Chinese to really start building their own international brand of hospitality.

Our brief is to avoid mimicking what the Beijing Hotel was like in the past, but also to understand the culture of the building and the location. So we have 1.3 billion Chinese people behind us, looking at what we're going to do to this hotel! ●

The world of AB Concept

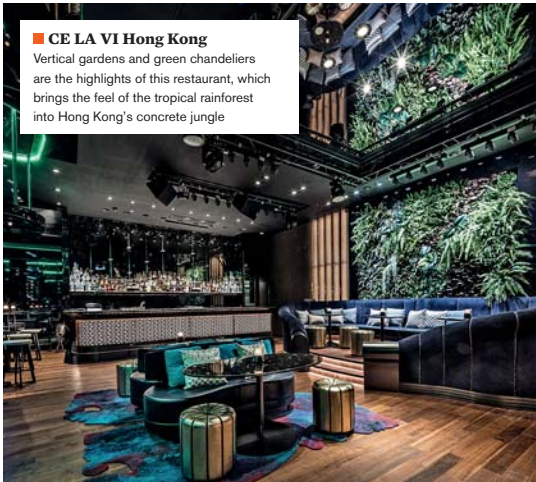
Ed Ng and Terence Ngan began their professional partnership in 1999. Since then they have worked on a huge number of stylish hospitality projects, from hotels and restaurants to bars and spas. Here is a snapshot of some of their completed interior projects



Rosewood Sanya
Located on Hainan Island, China's first Rosewood resort was designed to evoke the tranquility of the South China Sea, with wood accents and palettes of grey and blue

W Beijing
The idea of symmetry and uniformity is referenced throughout this hotel, with Ng and Ngan adopting repeated patterns and overlaid textures

FS Shanghai at Pudong
The design for this hotel restaurant combines the architectural forms of Shanghai's French Concession with traditional Chinese symbols



CE LA VI Hong Kong
Vertical gardens and green chandeliers are the highlights of this restaurant, which brings the feel of the tropical rainforest into Hong Kong's concrete jungle

WATER WORLD

Rising sea levels, overcrowded cities and a desire for freedom are leading some architects to build on water. **Christopher DeWolf** takes a look at a few intriguing projects

When the Arctic Bath opens on the Lule River in Sweden next year, it will offer six cabins, a sauna, spa and restaurant, all of it surrounding an open-air cold bath. The structure will be surrounded by piled logs, a visually spectacular touch envisioned by architects Bertil Harström and Johan Kauppi. But what really sets this Nordic spa resort apart from others is the location: not just next to the river, but directly on top of it. In the summer, the spa will float on the river's surface; in the winter, it will be frozen in place.

Floating structures have been around for a long time. People have been living on houseboats for centuries in cities like Amsterdam, while in Hong Kong, thousands of people lived in massive floating villages as recently as the 1970s. Even today, the flying eaves and sultry neon of that city's Jumbo Floating Restaurant evoke a particular kind of romance. Water has always promised a sort of freedom, too. A libertarian organisation called the Seasteading Institute is currently working on plans for autonomous floating cities that would roam international waters, allowing them to experiment with new forms of governance.

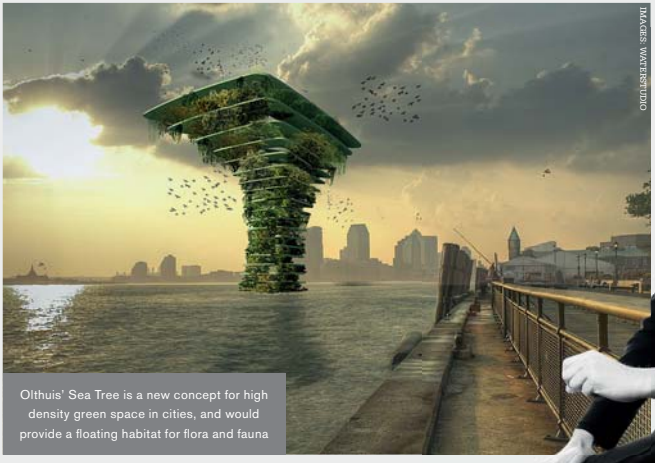
In a world beset by rising sea levels, where technology and human behaviour seems to be changing faster than ever, a growing number of architects believe floating architecture could change the way we live.

IMAGES: © ARCTIC BATH

Above and below: Designs for the Arctic Bath, due to open in Sweden in 2018. Inset: Bertil Harström

THE FUTURE FOR CITIES?

"I think floating architecture is coming to a point where it's an essential element to develop cities," says architect Koen Olthuis, the founder of Dutch architecture practice Waterstudio. Since 2003, Olthuis has worked on floating houses, schools,



IMAGES: WATERSTUDIO

Olthuis' Sea Tree is a new concept for high density green space in cities, and would provide a floating habitat for flora and fauna

You could have cultural events and museums that go from city to city. It's a new way of thinking

resorts, swimming pools and other projects, all of them enabled by a proprietary floating base technology. Waterstudio recently doubled in size to 30 architects after it merged with British 'aquatecture' firm Baca Architects.

Olthuis says cities can become more adaptable by embracing their waterways. "Imagine you're doing the Olympics in Miami," he says. "It costs you a lot of time and money, you're building stadiums for all these European sports, but after the Olympics they aren't being used anymore. There's no soccer in Miami. So instead you could built floating stadiums, floating hotels and just lease them. You could have cultural events and museums that go from city to city. It's a new way of thinking."

For the past few years, Olthuis has been working with the government of the Maldives to design these kinds of flexible floating facilities. Think of them as modular city components that can be shuffled around according to need. The Maldives is a collection of Indian Ocean islands that are slowly being reclaimed by the sea. In the past, its officials have speculated that climate change may require the entire country to be relocated elsewhere, but Olthuis espouses a philosophy of living with water rather than trying to fight against it.

Koen Olthuis (above). His Blue Habitat project is an arficial coral reef aiming to raise awareness

Some of his other projects include floating schools for low-income neighbourhoods in Dhaka, the flood-prone Bangladeshi capital. But in that case, as in many others, Olthuis has run up against restrictive building codes and regulations. "We've built six of these floating schools, but they're still here in the harbour waiting to be taken to Dhaka because we can't get the local authority to give a permit," he says. "Our whole system is based on cities built from static elements."

So for now, floating architecture is still in the vanguard. But there are a growing number of examples around the world. Last year in Switzerland, British architect **Tom Emerson** designed the floating Pavilion of Reflections for the Manifesta 11 biennale, the roving European exhibition of contemporary art. The latticed wood structure served as the biennale's focal point, with an outdoor cinema and event space with steps leading down to a public swimming pool. Bristol's Arnolfini Centre for Contemporary Arts commissioned Brazilian artist Maria Thereza Alves and German designer Gitta Gschwendtner to create a floating garden made from the ballast of historic ships, which can still be found in the city's harbour.

"The fact you're literally disconnected from land has an impact on your perceptions and perspective," says Dutch architect Sikko Valk. "The moment your feet leave shore, you're crossing a bridge over water, and there your break from the everyday routine begins. It's quite symbolic."

The fact you're literally disconnected from land has an impact on your perceptions and perspective

Sikko Valk and Remko Verhaagen (above) created the interiors for the Good Hotel (below)

Together with art director Remko Verhaagen, Valk designed the Good Hotel, which began life as a pop up social enterprise project on the waters of Amsterdam (it employs and trains long term unemployed locals). It is now floating at the Royal Victoria Dock in London.

This wasn't a new build – the hotel was originally a floating jail. "Given its original safeguarding purpose, in many ways this structure is built more robustly than most land-based buildings," says Valk. The rooms are fairly small, because most of the internal walls are load-bearing, so the design team focused on making them inviting, with "warm and tactile" materials like rough carpets and wood panelling, says Valk.

In the lobby and lounge areas, the designers were able to remove some walls in order to create large, open spaces. The effect is a long way from the traditional cloistered environment of a boat. "Where the corridors and rooms are cosy, we created the main public area to be open with sections that can be flexibly set up," says Verhaagen.

After a year in Amsterdam, Good Hotel was hoisted onto a barge and ferried across the English Channel to London. It was a journey that took quite a bit of preparation — the hotel weighs eight million kilograms — but it's an example of the inherent mobility of floating structures.

The timber Pavilion of Reflections featured an open air cinema, seating and a public swimming pool

PHOTOS: STEFAN JAKOB HAYN

Tom Emerson collaborated with students from ETH Zurich to build the Pavilion of Reflections

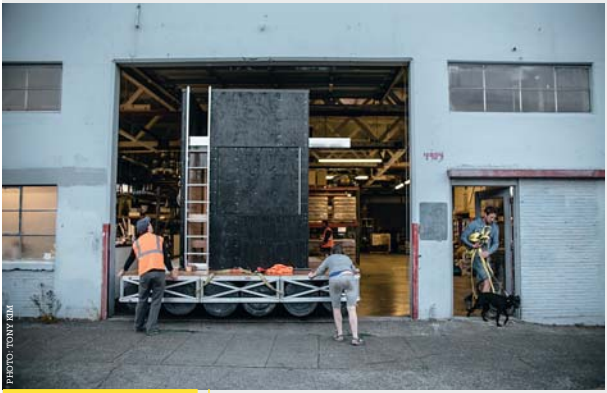


PHOTO: TAYLOR KIRK

The wa_sauna sits on a 23sq m platform fitted with an electric motor. It can hold six people

That's one of the main concepts behind wa_sauna, which plies the many waterways of Seattle. Launched by goCstudio in 2016, the minimalist plywood sauna sits on a 23-square-metre platform fitted with an electric trolling motor. "We licensed [it] as a registered vessel – this was one way we were able to have the structure on the water for use at any time without traditional permits," says designer Aimee O'Carroll.

"It seemed like a great fit for Seattle, a city which is surrounded by water and has a history of Scandinavian culture," she says. Rather than find a client, the designers launched a crowdfunded campaign, and they now use the sauna for events. "It's a respite in the middle of the water while remaining in the heart of the city," says O'Carroll. "The lakes here remain usable throughout the year and provide the perfect cold plunge. Since it's a self propelled vessel, the waterways which surround the city gave us a unique relationship to the urban environment."

A CONNECTION TO THE WATER

Water defines many of the world's major cities – Hong Kong would never have been colonised if not for its harbour, London thrived because of the River Thames and the aquatic ingenuity of Venice once sustained a vast trading network. And yet the average citizen of these cities remains disconnected from their waterways. Like the wa_sauna, a number of floating projects are designed to take advantage of this underutilised resource.

In Florida, a new project by architect and engineer Carlo Ratti aims to create a partially submerged floating plaza along the redeveloped waterfront of West Palm Beach. "Our idea is to offer views that extend over the waterline," says Ratti, who is the founding partner of design firm CRA and the director of the MIT Senseable City Lab. He plans to achieve that by creating a plaza

It's a respite in the middle of the water in the heart of the city

PHOTO: RYAN TEVEBAUGH

goCstudio's Aimee O'Carroll helped to create the wa_sauna, which floats on Seattle's waterways

Ratti's floating plaza will incorporate a range of public facilities

IMAGES: CARLO RATTI ASSOCIATI

Carlo Ratti (below). Ratti's design for the Currie Park floating plaza in Florida, US (above)

based on the double hull of a submarine. A system of water pumps will fill and empty an air-water chamber located below the surface of the water, which allows the platform to move up and down. "Sensors detect variations in height, so that the system responds accordingly. As a result, the platform hovers at the surface of the water – creating space by subtraction and presenting different view perspectives over the waterline."

This isn't the first time Ratti has incorporated water into one of his projects. His design for the Digital Water Pavilion for the 2008 Zaragoza World Expo in Spain used digitally-controlled water walls to define the space. "I think that one of the most interesting aspects is to imagine a 'fluid' architecture that adapts to human need, rather than the other way around – a living, tailored space that is moulded to its inhabitants' needs, characters, and desires," he says. "Water is a reconfigurable material."

It's not only configurable for human life. In the years since he opened Waterstudio, Koen Olthuis has come to realise that floating architecture can be a boon to marine life. "We analyse locations so we know what we can and can't built there," he says. One of his projects is called Blue Habitat. "Those are fantastic artificial coral reefs which we can just connect underneath our structures. Then you are sitting inside your house and you can monitor it and change it."

There is still a curious reticence when it comes to floating architecture. "Even in Holland, where we live mostly under sea level, and water is all around us, large floating structures are still not really common," says Sikko Valk. "It is in a way quite unexplored territory."

Koen Olthuis expects that to change in the future. He has already sensed a shift in the priorities of the architects who come to work for him. "The architects that come to our offices are not like architects 15 years ago, who wanted to build extreme iconic architecture. They are architects who want to make a change," he says. ●

WE ARE DEDICAT TO DESIC EXPERIE

TED

GN

ENCE!

*ALL **Polin Waterparks'** RIDES ARE ENGINEERED FOR MAXIMUM SAFETY WITH THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EXPERTISE AND STATE-OF-THE-ART SOFTWARE.*

*OUR INGENIOUS CREATIVE STAFF WITH THE COLLABORATION OF TALENTED ENGINEERS AND PROFESSIONALS HAVE COMPLETED **3,000** SUCCESSFUL WATERPARK PROJECTS AND MANY SIGNATURE WATER SLIDES IN **103** COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE.*

***WE ARE DEDICATED** TO DESIGN EXCITEMENT, JOY, THRILLS AND ADRENALINE - PUMPING FUN.*

*WE CALL IT AN **EXPERIENCE**.*

*MEET **THE EXPERIENCE** AT **IAAPA** ATTRACTIONS EXPO.*
Polin Waterparks' BOOTH #1378
***14-17 NOVEMBER** 2017*
ORLANDO, FL, USA

follow us on
fb / tw / in / yt / ig
@polinwaterparks
polin.com.tr

PolinWaterparks
World's Leading Waterpark Supplier

THE ROLE OF DESIGN

Gensler's latest research provides hard evidence of the link between good design and our reactions to the spaces we use, says designer and researcher Tom Lindblom

Parks and public spaces are reported as ideal places for reflection and inspiraton

Design officially has a quantifiable impact on human experience.

That, at least, is the verdict of global architecture and planning firm Gensler, who have published a new index they claim proves, once and for all, that design is a critical factor in determining how we feel about the spaces we occupy.

The Gensler Experience Index is the result of a multi-year, mixed-methods investigation that combined qualitative and ethnographic research, such as 30 two-hour interviews with people in five markets across the US, with quantitative research, including a nationwide, panel-based survey of over 4,000 respondents.

The research combined known drivers of creating a human experience – product, brand and service quality – with design factors, which Gensler claim "have not previously been factored into the formula".

The results demonstrate that design is the key differentiating factor "between a good experience and a great one" and offer "a holistic framework for understanding human experience across retail, public spaces and workplaces".

Gensler concluded that a person's intention when visiting a space, combined with their expectations, quality of interactions and quality of the space "together inform how it will be perceived".

"We're now able to prove that design is the X factor that takes a good experience and makes it great," said co-CEO Andy Cohen.

According to the Index, public spaces are the most aspirational space type, with one out of five users visiting specifically for inspiration or to learn something new.

Public spaces support the widest diversity of experiences

"Public spaces support the widest diversity of experiences, offer some of the best experiences overall, and are the most likely to be shared on social media by visitors," said Gensler.

"Why? Their capacity to support unstructured time – providing a platform for reflection, inspiration, and unplugging as well as fun, socialising, and work – is a lesson in variety and adaptability. Their diversity and welcoming nature prove to be key components of success too, a goal toward which every space should aspire."

Gensler Experience Index: the findings

- Places designed to accommodate multiple activities – from working to socialising to exercising and everything in between – are far more likely to result in great experiences.
- Places that are considered "beautiful, unique, authentic, inspirational, intuitive, and welcoming" offer the best overall experiences.
- The quality of experiences at the "best-designed" spaces was rated nearly twice as high as those at the "worst-designed" spaces.
- More than half of consumers go to retail stores for reasons other than shopping, and three out of four who visit retail stores without the intent to buy end up making a purchase.
- People are 10 times more likely to share their in-store experiences on social media if those stores have unique design features. For workplaces, they are six times more likely, and for public places, three times more likely.

PHOTO: ADAM GOBITZ, GENSLER

Inside the FirstEnergy Stadium in Cleveland, designed by Gensler

For the first time, we have hard evidence of the importance of design in creating great experiences
Tom Lindblom

Here we interview Tom Lindblom, Gensler's hospitality practice area leader

What makes this research different?

The connection between great experience and business performance is well documented. We already knew the importance of product, brand, and service quality in creating a great experience. However, no single piece of research to date has combined the known drivers of creating a human experience with design factors.

Our findings show that design is an important factor that can be leveraged to create a great experience. The Gensler Experience Index seeks to fill this gap by examining the multiple drivers of a great experience, and contextualising the impact of physical space among those drivers.

We have hard evidence of the importance of design in creating experiences. Previous studies have evaluated human experience and its impact on business, but this is the first time that design's been measured along with traditional factors.

The Gensler Experience Index is first-of-its-kind research proving that design is the differentiator between good experiences and great ones. This research quantifies what we as designers have always believed to be true: design is just as crucial to providing great experiences as any other factor.

We know great experiences prove the business and social value of physical place – now we can show that design is what helps those places stand out. The human experience must be the driving

force behind every element of a space to achieve this – from the design of the physical space, the qualities of interaction, expectation, and intention.

What were the most surprising results from this piece of research?

The quality of experiences at the best-designed spaces were rated nearly twice as high as those at the worst-designed spaces. Places designed to accommodate multiple activities – from working to socialising to exercising and everything in between – are far more likely to result in great experiences. Everyone is doing everything everywhere: the traditional uses of space are blurring.

What should architects, interior designers and developers take from these results?

Designers have a responsibility to restore humanity and authenticity to design, and move away from design forms driven solely by algorithms and the latest technology. Creating positive experiences depends on it.

The design community needs to focus first on designing for the human experience, moving beyond design explorations focused on using tools to push the boundaries of engineering and form. Designers need to put people back at the centre of design. The design community needs to make design adaptable – it's becoming paramount in the face of constantly changing consumer tastes.

Uniqueness and authenticity are key components of great experiences that require local, contextual, differentiated approaches to design.

Designers must prioritise multi-functional spaces: everyone is doing everything, everywhere.

> To be authentic, a place needs to be part of its local fabric; not a static environment, but one where you can share ideas and work with the community

How do you create authentic spaces?

It's a question about the nature of creativity. We show up to the design process with as few preconceptions as possible. We listen to the client and operator, explore the location and neighbourhood in the search for a meaningful story.

Historically, hotel design – perhaps inadvertently – fostered social isolation. There was little by way of communal infrastructure that encouraged interaction and integration – with hotel bars, lobbies and lounges assuming a functionality rather than a backdrop for inclusivity.

In recent times however, there has been a movement towards creating spaces that are underpinned by the fundamental tenets of socialisation. People are now working to design spaces which invite in the vibrant local culture from outside, reinvigorating communal areas and fostering a socio-cultural exchange of ideas, skills and experiences between guests and locals.

To be authentic a place needs to be part of its local fabric; not a static environment, but one where you can share ideas, experiment and work together with the community.

Can you talk about the importance of creating flexible, multi-use space?

Speak to any hotel operator, and you'll hear that they're always looking for ways to keep spaces active to generate revenue. This also helps create energy and dynamism for the hotel and a buzz

The Hyundai Card Music Library in Seoul was designed by Moongyu Choi and Gensler

PHOTO: ©NACASA & PARTNERS

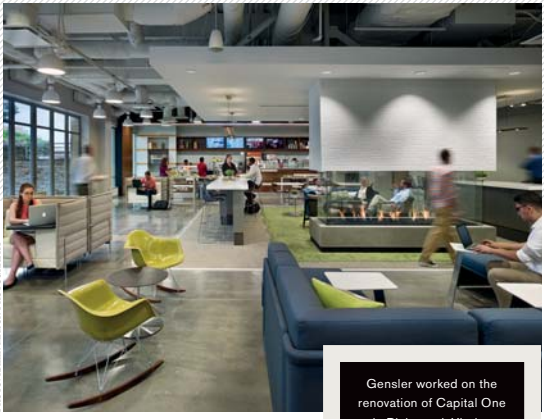


PHOTO: HAKIM MASON PHOTOGRAPHY

Gensler worked on the renovation of Capital One in Richmond, Virgina

for potential guests and visitors. It's important to make the most of all areas – activating the ground floor/reception spaces; designing bars that can be one thing in the morning and transform in the evening for guests and visitors. We need to envision spaces that can meet a variety of needs.

What did you find when asking about how people use public space?

Public spaces are the model that other spaces should learn from to create great experiences as they support the widest diversity of experiences. Public spaces offer some of the best experiences overall, and are the most likely to be shared on social media by visitors. Public spaces have the capacity to support unstructured time, providing a platform for reflection, inspiration, and unplugging as well as fun, socialising, and work.

What were the key findings with relation to people's intentions when visiting public spaces?

Public spaces are the most aspirational space type. One in five users visited public space specifically for inspiration and to learn something new.

The vast majority (85 per cent) of visits to public space include social behaviour and connection. They're reported as ideal places for reflection, inspiration, and unplugging/escaping – all activities associated with a better experience. They're also seen as the place people go to have fun the most, with 58 per cent of respondents reporting this.

Additionally, our findings suggest that every space should be designed as a social space. The data showed that places designed to support community, connection and belonging offer better experiences, and that people are actively seeking out places to connect.

> Our findings suggest that every space should be designed as a social space. People are actively seeking out places to connect

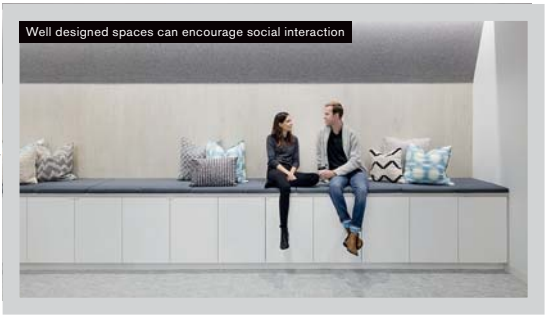
How can designers create public spaces that encourage social behaviour?

Fewer walls and doors, reconfigurable furniture and fittings. Offer a variety of space types that encourage different types of interaction – meetings, events, intimate conversations and learning. There's a lot of evidence that high contrast spaces keep people alert and attention high. Varying lighting levels and ceiling heights – defining volume essentially – is the starting point, before exploring the use of finishes and materials.

What is the role of emotions in our response to public spaces?

The design of a space is directly connected to people's emotional responses, proving that better design can help consumers form a more meaningful connection.

We have proven that there's a direct connection between design and experience through human feelings and emotions, as the look and feel of a place influences positive emotions, which in turn influences positive experiences. ●



Well designed spaces can encourage social interaction

PHOTO: STITCH FIX HEADQUARTERS, CA ©CONNIE ZHOU

LIGHT FANTASTIC

Digital art collective teamLab create jaw dropping installations and are set to open their first museum in Tokyo later this year. Magali Robathan hears their story

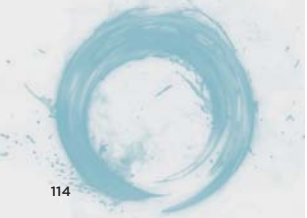
Toshiyuki Inoko founded teamLab with a group of friends in 2001

PHOTO: NOLOGO

Made up of about 500 members that include artists, programmers, architects, designers, CG animators, engineers, and mathematicians, the art collective teamLab uses the latest computer modelling techniques to create installations that involve the viewer in the art.

At a Tokyo restaurant, the walls change and birds appear to fly from diners' plates, while at other shows, viewers see flowers blossom or crumble and die on their bodies and split waterfalls with their feet.

This summer, teamLab will be opening its first museum in Tokyo.



Here we speak to the people behind the artworks.

How and when was teamLab born?

In 2001, Toshiyuki Inoko founded teamLab with several of his friends, as a space of co-creation. It was the year Inoko graduated from university, and most of the initial members of teamLab were programmers and designers.

We were creating art installations from the beginning, but we didn't have the opportunity to present them, nor could we imagine how to economically sustain our teams producing art.

On the other hand, we believed in the power of digital technology and creativity, and we simply loved what we were doing. We just wanted to keep creating new artworks.

While we took part in various projects to maintain teamLab, we increased the number of technologists in the team, with members including architects, CG animators, painters, mathematicians and hardware engineers.

What happened next?

As time went on, we gained a passionate following among young people, but we were still ignored by the Japanese art world.

Our debut finally came in 2011, when the celebrated Japanese artist Takashi Murakami invited us to exhibit at his gallery, the Kaikai Kiki Gallery in Taipei. This was a major turning point for teamLab. In 2013, we took part in the Singapore Biennale, and in 2014, New York PACE Gallery started to help promoting our artworks.

These opportunities allowed us to expand rapidly. And finally in 2015, we were able to hold our own exhibition in Japan.

Since then, we've exhibited our work internationally; in London, Paris, the US, Taiwan, China, Korea, Indonesia, Thailand and more.

This summer, we will open a permanent digital art museum in Tokyo, together with urban developer Mori Building.

Paris' La Villette will host teamLab's Au-Dela des Limites exhibition this year

LED lights created the illusion of crystals in this installation in Toyko

WANDER THROUGH THE CRYSTAL UNIVERSE

This artwork was created using teamLab's interactive 4D vision technology and LED lights hanging from the ceiling, creating the illusion of various patterns moving in space.

Viewers were invited to enter and walk around within three dimensional light space, with the idea that they became the 'centre of the universe' – their movements causing changes to the lights across the entire space.

Viewers could also interact with the work by using their their smartphones to trigger 3D animated light visuals. While Crystal Universe was created by elements selected by the viewers, each action or change affected the other. The viewer's position within the artwork also influenced how the work was created; thus, the artwork was continuously changing.

How would you sum up what you do?
Our aim is to explore a new relationship between humans and nature through art. teamLab is an art collective, an interdisciplinary group of 'ultratechnologists' whose collaborative practice seeks to navigate the confluence of art, science, technology, design and the natural world.

When we started out in 2001 at the rise of the digital age, we were passionate about eliminating boundaries and working beyond existing disciplines. To make that happen, we wanted a place where we could get people from all different specialisations, and decided to make one on our own.

Our name 'teamLab' comes from that idea; we wanted to create a team of specialists and a place like a laboratory for all kinds of creations.

What does digital art offer that traditional art doesn't?
We want to change the relationship between people and art, and we want to make people feel that the presence of others is a positive experience when interacting with our artwork.

Traditional media, such as paintings, doesn't change in relation to the presence of viewers or their behaviour. The artwork is based on a relationship with an individual viewer. For the majority of art up until now, the presence of other people tends to constitute a hindrance. If you happen to find yourself alone at an exhibition, you consider yourself to be very lucky.

When an artwork changes based on the presence or behaviour of people, it blurs the boundaries between artwork and viewer. In this case, the viewer becomes part of the artwork. Similarly, when the artwork changes due to the presence of others, those people also become part of the art. This changes the relationship between an artwork and an individual into a relationship between an artwork and a group of individuals.

Whether a viewer was present five minutes ago, or how the person next to you is behaving now, suddenly becomes important.

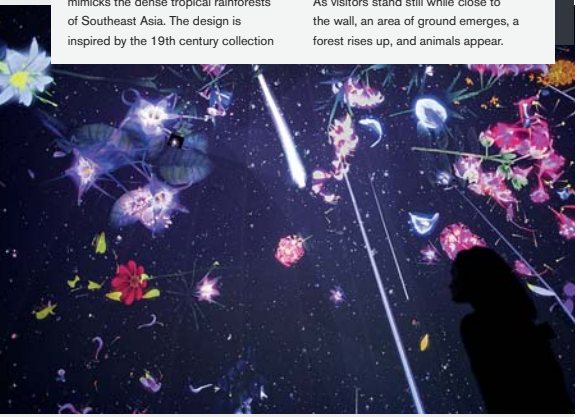
Tell us about the digital art museum you're launching in Tokyo this summer
Currently, there aren't any digital-only art museums. We wanted to create an exhibition that delivers a borderless artwork world, and figured we needed to establish a museum in order to make that happen. Urban developer Mori Building provided us with this chance to realise our ideas.

The museum in Tokyo, teamLab's first permanent exhibition and flagship facility, will boast a massive 10,000 square metres of floor space. It will house a permanent digital art exhibition run by the museum's operating body, created jointly by Mori Building and teamLab.

Mori Building actively works to integrate art in cities, and helps to stage important cultural activities. teamLab aims to explore a new relationship between humans and the world through art. With this collaboration, we're

STORY OF THE FOREST

This permanent installation in the Glass Rotunda at the National Museum of Singapore sees 69 drawings turned into a single giant animated interactive illustration. Titled Story of the Forest, the digital piece, which is 15m (49ft) in height and 170m (558ft) long, is based on the museum's drawings collection and mimicks the dense tropical rainforests of Southeast Asia. The design is inspired by the 19th century collection collected by William Farquhar, the first Commandant of Singapore. Starting at the bridge spanning across the dome, visitors enter through a dark room with falling petals projected onto the ceiling, before walking down a spiral path with animals running through a vast, interactive forest. The exhibition ends in a room raining petals. As visitors stand still while close to the wall, an area of ground emerges, a forest rises up, and animals appear.



This installation sees the Glass Rotunda turned into a digital art piece

teamLab's first permanent museum will open in Toyko this summer

TEAMLAB: BORDERLESS

New permanent digital art museum set to open this summer

This summer, teamLab is set to open a new digital art museum in Tokyo

The project is a collaboration between the Tokyo-based urban developer Mori Building and teamLab. Called the Mori Building Digital Art Museum:teamLab Borderless, the museum will cover 10,000sq feet and will house teamLab's first permanent exhibition. It will be located in the Palette Town shopping and entertainment complex in Tokyo's Odaiba district.

According to teamLab, the word 'borderless' expresses, "the museum's aim to tear down the borders between 'one art and another', 'art and visitors', and 'oneself and others' by allowing visitors to melt into the art and become part of it."

We want to make people feel that the presence of others is a positive experience when interacting with our artwork

aiming to create a unique destination that will enhance the appeal of Tokyo leading up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and beyond.

Tell us about your work with children

teamLab's experimental digital art project, called Learn & Play! teamLab Future Park, focuses on a project that explores the theme of 'co-creative' learning through digital technology.

Children often play by themselves. This project aims to encourage children to become aware of what the child next to them is drawing or creating. They may come to think it would be more fun to build something together and be inspired to create and appreciate their own work in new ways.

Through digital art, children that are inclined to work individually may think more positively about working with other children. This project aspires to transform an individual's creative action into a collaborative creative activity, and help kids realise that playing together might be more fun than playing alone.

Selected exhibitions

Moving Creates Vortices and Vortices Create Movement
Until 15 April, 2018
NGV Triennial, Melbourne, Australia

teamLab : Au-Delà des Limites
4 May – 2 Sep 2018
La Villette, Paris, France

Digital Light Canvas
Permanent
The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands, Singapore

Moving Creates Vortices and Vortices Create Movement (top). Digital Light Canvas

Can you describe your Moving Creates Vortices and Vortices Create Movement installation for the NGV Triennial in Melbourne

In the ocean, complicated terrain such as islands produce flow velocity difference and a huge vortex is generated. Vortices swirl up the carcasses of organisms on the ocean bed, producing nutritious seawater. This becomes a source of nutrition for plankton and nourishes sea life. Vortices therefore contribute to enriching the ocean.

In this artwork, when a person moves, a force is applied in that direction. As a result a flow occurs. When a fast flow occurs, a rotation phenomenon is produced due to the difference in the flow velocity around it, creating a vortex. We wanted to create a work where people's various behaviours would create diverse flow velocity, generating vortices.

What is your focus over the next year?

We want to keep creating. And we want more people to experience what we create.

Who else do you admire?

Anybody who believes in the future. ●

Myths of Monsters & Men

Surrealist folk tales and moss-covered lava fields have inspired an Icelandic spa retreat that promises to take guests on a journey to enlightenment. **Kim Megson** highlights the details

PHOTO: PHILIP GINSBERG

Johannes Torpe is behind the design of the Red Mountain Resort, which will blend into the landscape

IMAGE: BIONICFORM

We want to create the illusion that guests are entering another world when they arrive at the resort

IMAGE: JOHNNO JOHNSON

The resort has been designed so that guests won't be able to see it until the last possible moment

The hotel is created using concrete and glass

Tales of trolls, elves, monsters and invisible men roaming Iceland's majestic volcanic landscape have inspired the design of a proposed spa and wellness retreat located next to a geothermal lagoon.

Architecture practice Johannes Torpe Studio have drawn on the mysterious topography of caves, craters and moss-covered lava fields found in the Snæfellsness peninsula to devise a spa that will be immersed in mythology, storytelling and nature.

The region is home to a 700,000-year-old glacier-capped stratovolcano, which famously starred in Jules Verne's 1864 science fiction classic *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* as the passageway into a subterranean world. It is also known from the Icelandic saga of Baroar Snæfellsas, a half-man–half-troll who left the chaotic world of men behind to live in solitude inside the glacier.

Now the volcano could provide the backdrop for The Red Mountain Resort, an 800sq m (8,600sq ft) spa retreat that will take guests on their own version of Baroar's journey towards enlightenment.

Panoramic mountain and volcano views and vast grassy wetlands flowing with winding rivers will lead guests to the resort. Subtly camouflaged within the landscape, the red-hued hotel will "seem to magically appear just as they arrive." A sense of surrealism familiar from Icelandic folk tales will be expressed through a series of subtle design features merging the earthly and the otherworldly.

Reflecting glass on the exterior of the main building will create a mirror effect, allowing it to disappear into the landscape, while portals and tunnels will be placed throughout the complex to enhance the feeling that guests are following in Baroar's footsteps.

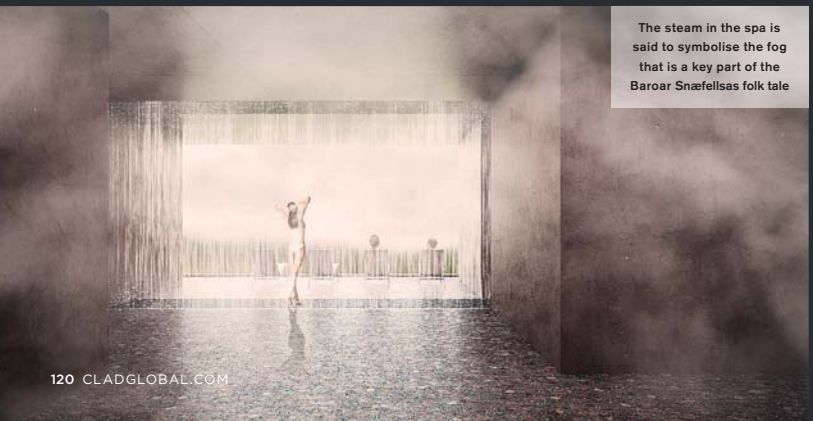
At the heart of the 150-bedroom resort will be an extensive spa, in which guests will voyage through a series of 'emotional stages', each of which will be articulated through different expressions of Icelandic nature, including wind tunnels, fire baths, rain curtains, ice pools and pitch black slides. "We want to create the illusion that guests are entering another world when they arrive at the resort," says studio founder Johannes Torpe. "We have envisioned the Red Mountain Resort as a place that goes beyond traditional wellness and pampering, and dares to invite its guests to confront whatever is troubling them."

A man-made 1,000sq m (10,700sq ft) geothermal lagoon is designed to look like a natural extension of the landscape and will feature shallow passages, rapids and still pools, with the water flowing into the reception of the hotel – blurring the line between outside and inside.

While still at the concept stage, Icelandic company Festir Ehf is currently doing geological checks and testing the nearby geothermal water.

We have envisioned the Red Mountain Resort as a place that goes beyond traditional wellness and pampering

Johannes Torpe has designed the spa so that the views of the landscape dominate throughout



The steam in the spa is said to symbolise the fog that is a key part of the Baroar Snæfellsas folk tale

The **Spa Journey**

Studio founder Johannes Torpe describes the spa experience

LOST

The steamroom's foggy atmosphere represents the sense of being lost, and is a trigger for rediscovering oneself

CONTEMPLATIVE

Clay baths create an intimate, peaceful space for self-reflection and internal stillness in the contemplative area of the spa

EXPOSED

At the volcano fire bath, guests access an inner state of vulnerability and acceptance, stepping outside their comfort zones

CONFRONTED

The contrasting effect between light and dark encourages guests to overcome fear and creates a sense of intrigue and mystery

CLARITY

An open-roofed ice bath uses natural light to create a state of clarity. The contrast of going from hot to cold creates energy

ENLIGHTENED

The highly sensory experience of floating allows guests to lose touch with the physicality of their bodies and have a feeling of transcendence

> This RIBA longlist illustrates the meaningful impact and transformative quality that well-designed buildings can have on communities
>
> Ben Derbyshire, RIBA president

RIBA International Prize

Leisure projects celebrated in RIBA's list of world's best new buildings

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has announced the RIBA International List 2018, a biennial selection of the world's best new buildings.

A number of leisure projects are included in the prestigious longlist, including high-profile museums designed by the likes of Heatherwick Studio, Stanton Williams, AL_A and Bjarke Ingels Group.

Libraries, cultural centres, a hotel and a concert hall are also recognised among the 62 buildings from 28 countries that made the cut.

The longlist was selected from entries to the 2018 RIBA International Prize. It will now be whittled down to create a shortlist, with the Grand Jury – chaired by architect Elizabeth Diller – set to choose the ultimate winner in December 2018.

The prize was established in 2016 to celebrate brilliant global design. It is open to any qualified architect in the world, for a building of any size, type or budget.

In 2016 the Universidad de Ingeniería y Tecnología (UTEC) in Lima, designed by Grafton Architects, became the first ever winner.

RIBA grand jury chair Elizabeth Diller

PHOTO: ABELARDO MORELL

The longlisted leisure projects

PHOTO: IWAN BAAN

Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art

Heatherwick Studio with Van Der Merwe Miszewski Architects, Rick Brown Associates and Jacobs Parker

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Since opening last year, this striking museum, carved into a historic grain silo, has received acclaim from visitors and critics alike.

Kunstmuseum Basel

Christ & Gantenbein

BASEL, SWITZERLAND

Over 3,000sq m of gallery and events space has been added in this monolithic expansion to one of Switzerland's most important art museums

Mulan Weichang Visitor Centre

HDD

WEICHANG, CHINA

For this project, modern materials have been combined with traditional design to create a yurt camouflaged among the surrounding grasslands.

King Fahad National Library

Gerber Architekten

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA

This project, one of the most important cultural buildings in Saudi Arabia, was designed to present "a new architectural image" for the capital, Riyadh.

The Palestinian Museum

heneghan peng architects with Arabtech Jardaneh

BIRZEIT, PALESTINE

The building is sensitively integrated into the landscape, but has also been designed with an assertive form that has a distinctive identity.

Beyazit State Library

Tabanlioglu Architects

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

For their work on Istanbul's oldest library, the architects re-organised the interiors, added an inflatable membrane and restored the historic building.

PHOTO: IWAN BAAN

Structures of Landscape at Tippet Rise Arts Center

Ensamble Studio

YELLOWSTONE PARK, US

Ensamble created an otherworldly series of immense sculptures for an arts venue on a ranch near Yellowstone National Park.

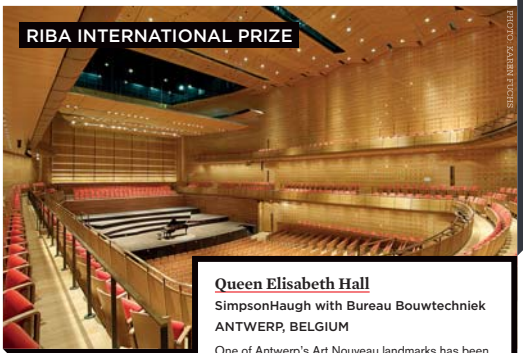


PHOTO: KAREN FUCHS

Queen Elisabeth Hall

SimpsonHaugh with Bureau Bouwtechniek

ANTWERP, BELGIUM

One of Antwerp's Art Nouveau landmarks has been sensitively restored, creating a world-class concert hall and reconnecting the site with the zoo next door

Oasia Hotel Downtown

WOHA Architects

SINGAPORE

The green façade of this 27-storey hotel forms a vertical garden that contrasts with the concrete and glass of the Central Business District.

Wadden Sea Centre

Dorte Mandrup A/S

RIBE, DENMARK

The visitor centre at Denmark's Wadden National Park has been given a modern, scuptural expansion that remains rooted in local architecture traditions.

Audain Art Museum

Patkau Architects

WHISTLER, CANADA

The simple form of the exterior has been designed to recede into the shadows of the surrounding forest in this subtle project in British Columbia.

Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology

AL_A

LISBON, PORTUGAL

Building on a rich tradition of craft and ceramics, 15,000 3D glazed tiles articulate the façade of this undulating riverfront museum.

PHOTO: ©EDP FOUNDATION

Museum Voorlinden

Kraaijvanger Architects

WASSENAAR, NETHERLANDS

Designed with simplicity in mind, the exterior of the museum includes a white colonnade to support the roof and a façade that alternates between sand-coloured stone cladding and thin glass fronts

Msheireb Museums

John McAslan + Partners

DOHA, QATAR

Four historic courtyard houses in Doha have been remodelled and extended to create the city's new Heritage House Museums

PHOTO: HUFTON + CROW

Musee d'arts de Nantes

Stanton Williams

NANTES, FRANCE

Extensions to the museum's original 19th Century Palais and 17th Century Oratory Chapel have created a welcoming contemporary space for art

MILAN GONDA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

Renzo Piano Building Workshop with BETAPLAN

KALLITHEA, GREECE

The new home of the National Library of Greece and the Greek National Opera features a sloping grass roof from which visitors can enjoy panoramic views over Athens and across the Saronic Gulf

Tirpitz

Bjarke Ingels Group

BLÅVAND, DENMARK

Camouflaged among dunes and connected to a former WWII bunker, this museum emerges as a series of intersecting cuts in Blåvand's landscape

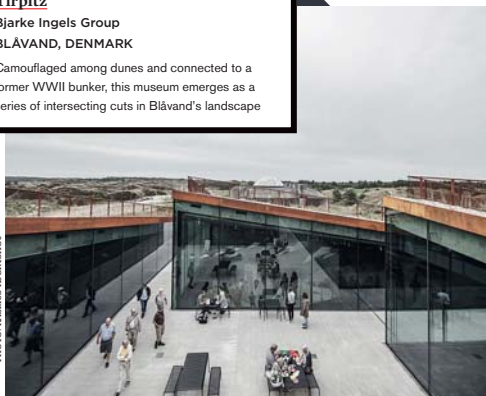
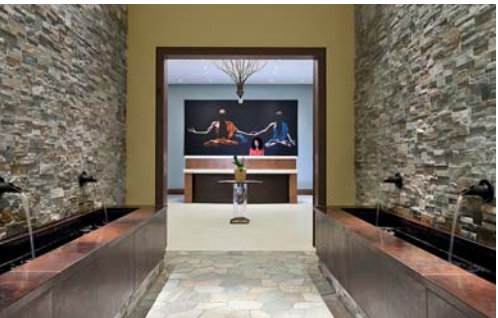


PHOTO: RASMUS HJORTSHØJ

blu spas

global
spa
evolution

www.bluspasinc.com



CLAD kit

The biggest news from the world of product design, from a furniture collection inspired by life on Mars to a lighting range launched by Richard and Ana Meier

For full company and contact details of any of the products and services featured here, please visit www.CLAD-kit.net

Leisure buildings dominate awards for façade design and engineering excellence

A trio of leisure facilities have been honoured for their innovative exteriors at the international Façade awards, hosted by the Society of Façade Engineering (SFE).

Danish engineering consultants Ramboll won Façade of the Year: New Build, for the Blavatnik Building, Switch House Extension of the Tate Modern. Designed by Swiss architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron, the Blavatnik Building was built on three disused oil tanks, and features a twisting, perforated lattice form featuring 336,000 bricks. Ramboll provided structural, geotechnical, civil and façade engineering.

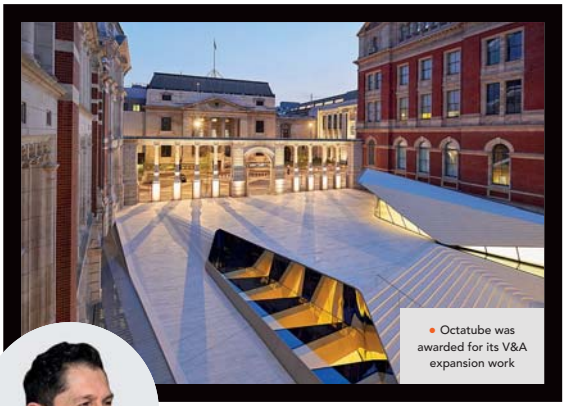
Dutch technical design agency Octatube won the award in the Façade of the Year: Refurbishment category for the new entrance of the Victoria & Albert (V&A) Museum Exhibition Road. Designed by Amanda Levete Architects (AL_A), the project consists of a new main entrance, square, cafe, exhibition space and museum shop. Octatube served as the glass specialist on the project and was responsible for the design, engineering, production and assembly of the glass elements throughout the project.

The Outstanding Façade Innovation Award was jointly presented to Catalunya-based façade specialist Bellapart and Arup Façade Engineering for the new glass canopy at the entrance of the Berkeley Hotel in Knightsbridge, London.

Designed by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners, the canopy is made from specially designed Honeycomb sandwich glass panels and envelops the hotel's entrance area and wings to create "the ultimate sense of arrival" for guests.

Commenting on the awards, which took place in late 2017, Saverio Pasetto, façade technical director at Skanska UK and SFE board member, said: "The purpose is to recognise and reward excellence in façade design and engineering and thereby to draw attention to the importance of façades in modern architecture."

PHOTO: © HUFTON + CROW



• Octatube was awarded for its V&A expansion work

The purpose is to reward excellence in façade design and draw attention to the importance of façades in modern architecture
Saverio Pasetto

PHOTO: JOAS SOUZA

• The new glass canopy at the entrance of London's Berkeley Hotel earned its engineers a Façade Award

MORE ON CLAD-KIT:
Keyword: **Façade**

Waarmakers launch sustainable lamp made from its own packaging

R16 challenges us to reconsider our views on the packaging materials we have around us
Maarten Heijltjes

• Waarmakers founders Simon Akkaya and Maarten Heijltjes

Dutch product design studio Waarmakers has launched the R16 lamp, an innovative and sustainable light fixture made from its own packaging.

The light consists of a LED bulb housed in a laser cut cardboard tube, that serves as both the packaging that the light comes in and the light itself.

To assemble, users simply pull away the pre-cut middle section of the tube, to reveal the LED light inside.

The lamp is suspended by a cord that is threaded through the tube and held in place by corks at either end. A pencil is then used to secure the light bulb.

Inspiration for the R16 came while Waarmakers founders Simon Akkaya and Maarten Heijltjes were working on another project, and found themselves overwhelmed with cardboard packaging for LED bulbs. Not wanting the material to be wasted, they looked at ways of repurposing it.

• The R16 was designed to repurpose cardboard packaging

Maarten Heijtjes, Waarmakers co-founder, said: "Cardboard tubing is a strangely underrated material. Soft to the touch yet structurally strong. Quite distinct, as it is instantly recognisable, yet neutral in tone and form. R16 is our homage to this beautiful and versatile material.

"It challenges us to reconsider our views on the packaging materials we have around us."

MORE ON CLAD-KIT:
Keyword: **Waarmakers**

• The lamp is suspended by a cord that is threaded through the tube

Richard and Ana Meier collaborate on lights inspired by geometry and past buildings

• Geometry inspired the simplicity of the Cycladic Circle Sconce

The designer Ana Meier has joined forces with her father, Pritzker-winning architect Richard Meier, and lighting specialist Hervé Descottes to launch a new 12-piece lighting collection.

The products – which include floor lamps, table lamps and sconces – have been designed to "elevate the art of lighting with simplicity, geometry and lightness."

Produced under the brand Richard Meier Light and available in Corian and glass, each piece blends the architect's vision with the sculptural forms his daughter is known for producing and the technological innovation favoured by Descottes, the founder of design firm L'Observatoire International.

Several of the pieces take direct inspiration from Meier's buildings, such as his 1995 Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art and early homes he designed in the US.

PHOTO: SILJA MAGG

Richard Meier said: "Architecture has the power to inspire, to elevate the spirit, to feed both the mind and the body. With this collection, we have distilled this feeling into objects."

MORE ON CLAD-KIT:
Keyword: **Meier**

• Richard Meier, Ana Meier and Hervé Descottes collaborated on the collection

HawkinsBrown complete timber pool facility for 'swimming among the trees'

Architects HawkinsBrown have completed an elegant timber pool hidden among the trees for a school in the English county of Surrey.

Swimmers using the 25m, six-lane competition pool can view the surrounding woodland through a series of windows integrated into the building's timber frame.

The architects used off-site fabrication methods to create the facility for Freemen's School in the village of Ashtead, which replaces a previous pool building destroyed by a fire in 2014.

"The space is a welcoming retreat that engages with the mature woodland setting through the use of natural materials and colour schemes," said HawkinsBrown partner Adam Cossey.

"The wrap-around glazing affords direct views from the water into the woodland, giving the sense of swimming amongst the trees."

Fit out contractor Gilbert-Ash worked on the project, forming the building's glue-laminated timber portal frame, which is braced with cross-laminated timber panels. According to the design team, the material was chosen in response to the need for a fast, carbon-neutral method of construction and a building that is resilient, insulates and is resistant to corrosion.

• The natural finish of the building's exterior echoes the surrouding woodland

MORE ON CLAD-KIT:
Keyword: **Hawkinsbrown**

• HawkinsBrown partner Adam Cossey (left). The building features an exposed timber frame with windows set into it

They bring texture, energy and that final touch of design to the interior
Francesco Meaolo

Moss Trend's living walls are perfect complement to spas, says Francesco Meaolo

With a long history in creating decorative materials for interior designers and stage scenography, Italian firm Moss Trend has now ventured into public spaces, including restaurants and spas.

The family-run business creates preserved green walls designed to be maintenance-free, with vertical gardens created with moss that lives on the humidity naturally present in the air.

The company recently finished a new project at the Erato Wellness Luxury Spa in Artimino, Italy, using Jungle Moss to create a living wall made of preserved plants that complements the existing décor of the spa. Customers can choose between several types of plants, from reindeer moss in various colours, to preserved leaves and lichen.

"Installation of moss panels is very simple," said Francesco Meaolo, MD of Moss Trend. "A natural preservation process gives the plants long-lasting durability. As our products don't require light, and absorb moisture from the air, spas are convenient spaces for them. We believe in the healing power of nature, reflected in rooms dedicated to meditation, rest and healthy living."

• The moss panels don't require direct sunlight, watering or feeding

Dutch design firm Van De Sant launches sustainable furniture

Our furniture is designed to reduce plastic waste. We've proven that a sustainable vision can lead to design and comfort
Robert Milder

Dutch furniture design company Van De Sant has launched its environmentally friendly outdoor furniture into the hospitality and spa markets.

The company, which is based on the Dutch-Caribbean island of Curacao, uses recycled materials, including plastic waste reclaimed from the ocean, to create sturdy furniture frames. These frames are then covered with foam and upholstered in weather-resistant fabrics to create a range of furniture that is both functional and stylish.

The range consists of chairs, sofas, tables and recliners suitable for both indoor and outdoor use in spas, in nine mini-collections: Maine, Madesimo, Wales, Toronto, Turrialba, Johannesburg, Amsterdam, Munich and Oslo, each inspired by the places they were named for.

Van De Sant founder Robert Milder said: "Our furniture is designed to prevent deforestation and reduce plastic waste. We have proven that a sustainable vision can lead to design and comfort."

• The Amsterdam collection is available in several different colours

MORE ON CLAD-KIT:
Keyword: **Van De Sant**

Ma Yansong on 'out of this world' furniture collection

I want to bring the Earth landscape to Mars, as I imagined it in my room as a child
Ma Yansong

Curation-led design company Gallery ALL has launched the MAD Martian Collection.

The collection, which launched at Design Miami in December, was designed by Ma Yansong, founder and principal partner of MAD Architects. It features seven distinct pieces and was inspired by the prospect of life of Mars. The collection consists of a dining table, a console table, a chaise longue, floor-to-ceiling lights and a candlestick.

The pieces feature contoured forms that are designed to resemble natural elements from an extraterrestrial environment, and are finished in a reflective metallic skin.

The collection forms part of an ongoing series of in-house commissions by Gallery ALL. ●

MORE ON CLAD-KIT:
Keyword: **MAD Architects**

• The pieces are finished in a reflective metallic skin

Holovis®

Transforming Sensory Experiences

www.holovis.com

When you want to future proof your design ideas you need a partner who can create new user experiences that will add real value to a project, leaving your customers excited and amazed...

Holovis IMMERSIVE Holovis ATTRACTIONS Holovis MEDIA

HEATED MARBLE LOUNGE CHAIRS ***By Fabio Alemanno***

Developed for the spa
Perfected for the suite

An exceptional collection of handcrafted marble sculptures for hotel, spa and residential design

Cut from a single block of flawless marble, Fabio Alemanno infra-red heated lounge chairs are ergonomically shaped and unique in their design and structure.

They combine wellness with design and technology offering unparalleled comfort and amazing relaxation experiences while enhancing the state of well-being.

Regenerative warmth will pamper you whether in the Spa, the intimacy of the Suite or the Living room, making your rest unforgettable.

With proven therapeutical benefits of long-wave infrared and advanced technical maturity, our products have become the first choice for discerning clients around the world.

Unlimited choices of marble, exotic wood, leather, and fabrics enable a perfect and seamless integration into any environment, offering architects and interior designers endless possibilities for customisation.

FABIO ALEMANNO DESIGN ⬢ info@fa-design.co.uk ⬢ www.fa-design.co.uk