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Manuelle Gautrand

ON THE POWER
OF CULTURE

Molitor designer

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*‘Historic projects
can be more creative’*

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Why are
people with
disabilities
still being let
down by poor
design?

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CREATING SPACES FOR ALL

Why are people with disabilities still being let down by poorly designed spaces? Ensuring spaces are accessible for all shouldn't be an afterthought, it should be part of the creative design process, says Magali Robathan

In 2017, artist Christopher Samuels was made technically homeless and forced to accept emergency accommodation in an inaccessible hotel room. "I couldn't navigate around the bed in my wheelchair," he told CLAD (see page 76). "I couldn't get into the bed, I couldn't use the dressing table. I couldn't shut the bathroom door, or use the toilet or shower."

This experience stayed with Samuels, and when art commissioning programme Unlimited put out a call for submissions to design a guestroom for an innovative arts-led hotel in Blackpool, UK, he knew what he wanted to do.

Art Bnb features 19 guestrooms-come-art installations, designed by different artists to get guests thinking.

Samuels' room has been designed to be deliberately frustrating to use - the bed is surrounded by a high 'lip' that guests have to climb over, the bathroom door doesn't shut, the television can only be viewed in the mirror and the shower gel dispenser is upside down.

"I wanted to make people experience the reality of what it's like to be disabled: the frustrations of having to navigate a space which isn't designed for them," explains Samuels.

Unfortunately, Samuels' experience is far from unusual. Twenty years on from the introduction of the Americans with Disabilities Act in the US and 15 years on from the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act in the UK, poorly designed spaces are still a reality for many.

Recently, a lawsuit was filed against the new Stephen Holl-designed Hunters Point Library in New York, with disability rights advocates arguing that the building was "designed and built with a total disregard for adults and children with mobility disabilities".



AART's Musholm holiday sports and conference centre in Denmark



Heatherwick's Vessel also attracted protests and a complaint by the United States

Department for Justice alleging that much of the structure was not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Accessibility has now been improved at Vessel, and changes have been made to Hunters Point Library, but the question remains - why aren't all users being considered at the design stage?

The Musholm holiday sports and conference centre in Korsor, Denmark, has won a host of awards for the 2015 redesign of the original site. The AART-designed venue features 24 fully accessible hotel rooms, a climbing wall suitable for wheelchair users, a relaxation room for people with difficulty concentrating, and a 100m athletics and wheelchair racing track leading up to a sky lounge.

Making spaces accessible shouldn't be an add-on or an afterthought; it should be an integral part of the design process. It's about the relationship between people and space; about engaging with how different bodies will use a space. Most of all, it's about creativity, and that, after all, is what designers and architects are good at.

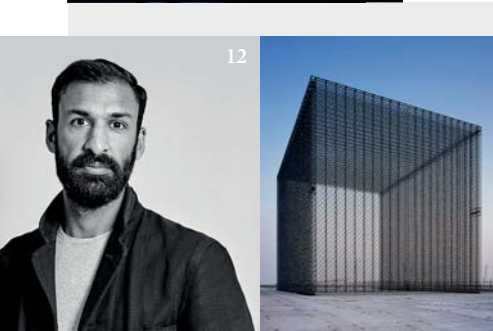
Magali Robathan, managing editor, CLAD



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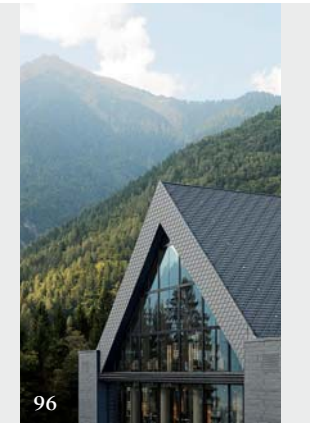
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For architects,
designers, investors
and developers

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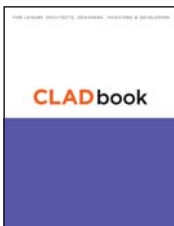
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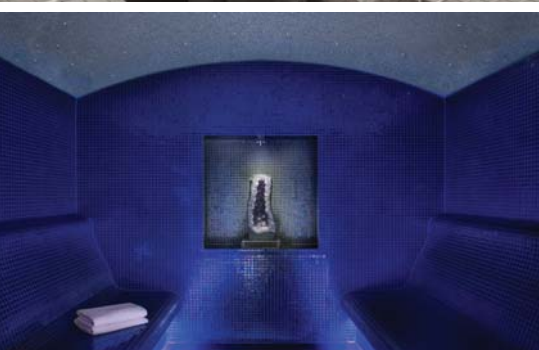


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CLAD PEOPLE



I want to create a museum that can synthesize southern China's rich diverse cultures

Tadao Ando Architect

PROJECT He Art Museum, China

Tadao Ando has released images of the He Art Museum in Shunde, southern China.

The museum, which was due to launch in March but has had its opening postponed due to the coronavirus, was founded by local entrepreneur He Jianfeng. It is dedicated to China's regional Lingnan culture, and will showcase a range of modern Chinese artworks and contemporary international artworks.

Before coming up with his design, Ando researched China's ancient philosophies and history, and Lingnan's architecture. Taking inspiration from the ancient Chinese philosophy that the sky is round and divine and therefore many civic and religious buildings should reflect the idea of the 'round sky' in their design, Ando has created a circular



"The stark changes of light will create emotional atmospheres" in the building, according to Ando



The circular shape was inspired by ancient Chinese philosophy that the sky is round

building. The museum features a central 'skywell' that floods the exhibition spaces with natural light and takes visitors from the ground floor to the fourth via two double helix staircases at its centre.

At the base of the four stacked circular galleries is a square ground floor volume housing a cafe, bookshop and additional gallery space.

A pond is wrapped around the building which, according to the architects: "Mimics Lingnan's heritage of waterside pavilions and acts as a symbol that subtly gestures its geographic location on the Pearl River estuary."

"I want to create a museum that can synthesize southern China's rich diverse cultures that stretch many millennia, and the influences that birthed Lingnan architecture," said Ando.

"I imagined HEM as an energetic central anchor point to artistic and regional customs, the climate, landscape and civilisation in Lingnan. I look forward to seeing the artworks and programmes activate the building, stimulating provoking thoughts with high quality spaces and art."



PHOTO: OF THE ARCHITECTURE © SHIMAM



Hardy worked for Donna Karan in New York before returning to Bali to launch Ibuku in 2010



I look forward to getting to know this wondrously talented group

Elora Hardy Founder, Ibuku

Elora Hardy has been made an Honorary Royal Designer for Industry by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) for her pioneering work in architectural design, in particular for the design and build of bamboo structures.

Hardy was born in Bali and spent 14 years of her life growing up in the US, where she received a degree in fine arts and went on to work in the fashion industry. In 2010, she left fashion and moved back to Bali, where she founded the design firm Ibuku, which creates sustainable bamboo homes, hospitality venues and furniture.

In 2018, Elora and her father John Hardy spoke to CLAD about how their nature-inspired homes are changing the way we view the places we live (*CLADmag Issue 3 2018*).

The Royal Designer for Industry title is a prestigious award that celebrates individuals who have made a "substantial contribution to design for positive social, economic and environmental change".

"Building on a decade of dreams from our jungle studio, we've been invited into the company of extraordinary designers," said Hardy of the appointment. "With



PHOTO: JAMES WILSON

Ananda House was built by Ibuku as part of the pioneering Green Village on Bali

my team, I look forward to getting to know this wondrously talented group. I'm thrilled at the prospect of collaborating to design more of our world."

Discussing its recognition of Hardy, the RSA said: "She has worked alongside Balinese artisans, innovative designers and architects with the goal of making Bali a global centre for sustainable design."

This year's other winners were Kim Avella for work with textiles, Paule Constable for lighting, Tom Gauld for cartoons, Johanna Gibbons for landscape architecture, Adam Lowe for the design of art and Michael Marriott for product and furniture design.

Current Ibuku projects include a yoga pavilion for Four Seasons Sayan Bali, two new homes at the Green Village on Bali and a riverside spa at the Permata Ayung Private Estate, also on Bali.



Khan is also working on the new Museum of London and Tselinny Centre of Contemporary Culture in Almaty



The portals capture this transcendental moment

Asif Khan Architect

PROJECT Expo Entry Gateways, Dubai

Three huge entry gateways for Expo 2020 Dubai, designed by Asif Khan, will welcome visitors onto the site from 20 October, with a futuristic exploration of the traditional mashrabiya.

Mashrabiya is a type of decorative, projecting window often used to control light and airflow that are typically found in Arabic residences.

Khan's Expo Entry Portals, which are part of his wider work on the Expo's public realm, are said to be inspired by the aesthetic of the region and are the result of a three-year iterative design process working with a specialist manufacturer.

The self-supporting portals are woven entirely from strands of ultra-lightweight carbon fibre composite, the strength of which allows for dimensions of 21m (69ft) high and 30m (98ft) long.

The woven composition of the structures only becomes apparent in close proximity, while from further away it is suggested they appear to be composed of translucent panels.

Its geometric pattern provides not only structural strength but also material efficiency, wind permeability, shading and also speed of manufacturing.

The portals feature two large doors each measuring 21m (69ft) high and 10m (34ft) wide that will open every morning



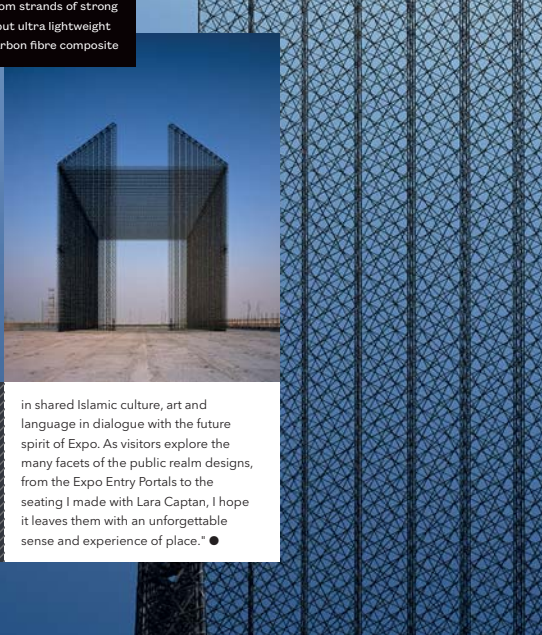
The portals are woven from strands of strong but ultra lightweight carbon fibre composite

of the 173 days of Expo 2020 Dubai "in a symbolic act of welcoming the world."

Khan's work on the wider public realm will see the creation of a 6km (4mi) linear park alongside a running track, walking paths of soft and hard materials and places to rest.

Khan said: "The portals will be the first and last encountering moment for all who make the journey to Expo 2020 Dubai, and these capture the very transcendent moment the region is experiencing as it hosts its first World Expo - the celebration not only of UAE's heritage, but also the future.

"Designing the public realm for Expo 2020 Dubai is a seminal moment for my practice; each aspect of the design invites visitors to immerse themselves



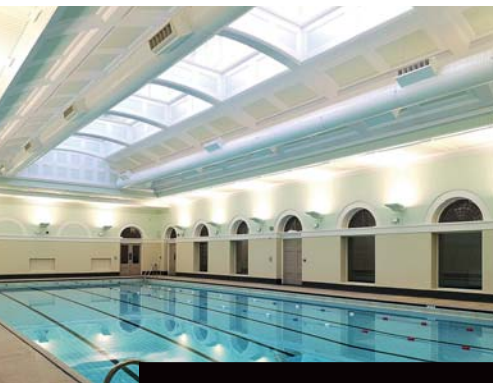
in shared Islamic culture, art and language in dialogue with the future spirit of Expo. As visitors explore the many facets of the public realm designs, from the Expo Entry Portals to the seating I made with Lara Caplan, I hope it leaves them with an unforgettable sense and experience of place." ●

“

It's an amazing piece of engineering and a stunning sight for anyone walking in

Bringing back the baths

The iconic City Baths in Newcastle have reopened to the public following a complete restoration by Createability



Focusing on history

The City Baths are one of only 11 Turkish baths in operation across the UK. Originally designed by architects Nicholas & Dixon-Spain, the Art Deco facility first opened in 1928. “The focus of the project has very much been on bringing a historic building back to life and securing its future by reconfiguring it to ensure it can generate income and becomes sustainable,” says Createability MD Ian Cotgrave.

Design and construction specialist Createability has finished work on the iconic City Baths in Newcastle, UK. Working together with Napper Architects, the firm has overseen a £7.5m redevelopment of the historic Turkish baths for client Fusion Lifestyle, which manages the facility on behalf of Newcastle City Council. The three-year project has brought the once-neglected Grade II-listed building – which had sat closed since 2013 – back to life.

Planning the works

Fusion Lifestyle won the tender to restore the baths in 2016. Anthony Cawley, Fusion's Operations Director, says the project's focus from the very start was to keep the building's original features and retain its history – but also to add a modern fitness and wellness element.

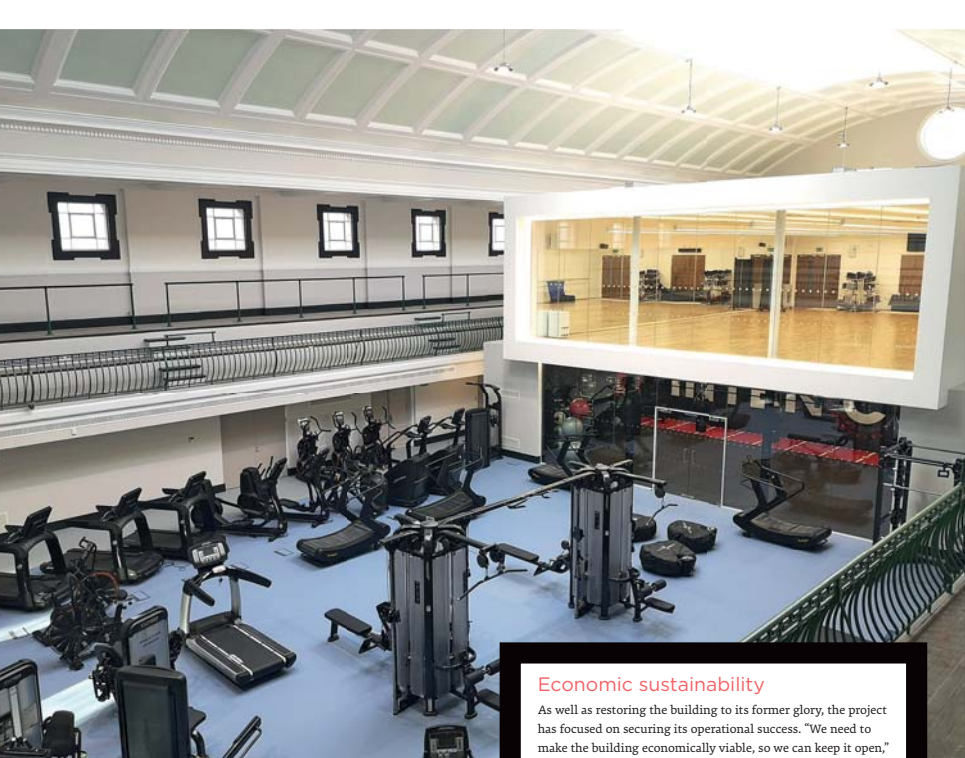
“We've managed to restore a building of outstanding beauty to what it had always been – and that's what makes it such a special project,” Cawley says.

After initial work with Napper Architects, Fusion brought in Createability to help plan the construction process and add detail to the plans.

Work included the restoration of the 25m 'ladies' swimming pool and transforming the 'men's' 25m pool into a gym space and fitness studios. The historic Turkish bathing areas – featuring six separate areas – have also been restored, while a day spa has been added to create a modern wellness offering.

“Once we came on board, we went through what was needed and value engineered the project,” says Ian Cotgrave, Createability MD. “We were responsible for every aspect of the works inside the building – the restoration and all construction work. The great thing is that we managed to deliver the project to the price we initially calculated.

“It has been a unique project – not least because there aren't many Turkish Baths left in the UK.”



A mix of old and new

At the heart of the project have been the Turkish bathing areas and the two swimming pools.

"The 25 metre former ladies' pool is now back to its former glory," Cotgrave says. "We managed to retain all of its original architectural features – even the tiling, which we painfully restored. Some of the features would be hard to repeat using modern methods, so it would've been a shame to lose that heritage."

The building's Grade II-listed status meant there were limits to how much the project team could change structurally. This resulted in innovative planning work to provide the building with the modern facilities it needed.

These included an entire gym and group exercise studios being created inside another swimming pool, which had originally acted as the men's pool. "The former ladies pool is now for swimming, while the men's pool has been completely filled in and decked over to create a fitness area and the two-level studios," Cotgrave says. He names

Economic sustainability

As well as restoring the building to its former glory, the project has focused on securing its operational success. "We need to make the building economically viable, so we can keep it open," Cawley says. "The reason it closed down in the first place was because it wasn't sustainable. The work Createability has done to create fantastic, modern facilities will help with that – the more people we can get to use the facility, the better."

the gym space as one of his favourite design aspects of the project. "When you look down at the gym space from the balcony, the studio looks like it's floating in mid air," he says.

Retaining history

Cawley says the partnership between the three companies has ensured the project has been delivered on time and on budget. "Createability and Napper Architects have been unbelievable," Cawley says. "We told them what we wanted, they took it all on board, designed it and built it all." ●

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An eco friendly floating hotel pod, a Starck chair built using artificial intelligence and a flatpack housing system designing to highlight the climate crisis



Jean-Michel Ducancelle launches solar-powered floating pods

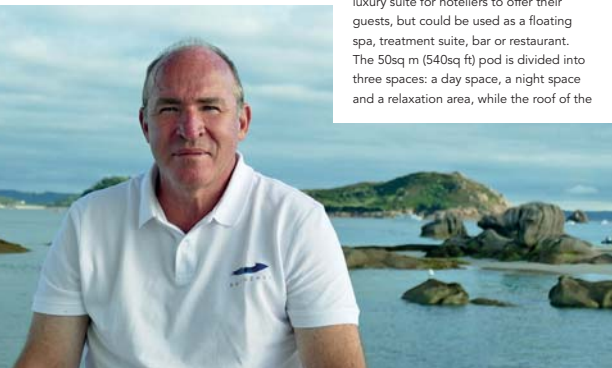
Naval architect Jean-Michel Ducancelle has designed a solar-powered floating hotel suite aimed at offering an eco-friendly and nomadic place for travellers to stay. The Anthénea pod was conceived as a luxury suite for hoteliers to offer their guests, but could be used as a floating spa, treatment suite, bar or restaurant. The 50sq m (540sq ft) pod is divided into three spaces: a day space, a night space and a relaxation area, while the roof of the

I am passionate about the idea that tomorrow's habitat will absolutely have to be eco-friendly
Jean-Michel Ducancelle

relaxation area can be opened to reveal a solarium. All interior features are said to be made entirely from sustainable materials. Speaking about the pod's eco credentials, Ducancelle said: "I am passionate about the idea that tomorrow's habitat will be put at the heart of our natural environment and immersion with the marine and sub-marine world." The pod is priced from \$535,00 (€490,000, £434,000).

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Search: ANTHENEA



AI chair opens up unlimited possibilities, says Philippe Starck



PHOTO: JB MONDINO

A.I. is the first chair designed outside of our brain, outside of our habits of thought

Philippe Starck

French designer Philippe Starck has teamed up with Kartell, an Italian furniture manufacturer, and design software firm Autodesk to create the AI chair, one of the first pieces of furniture to be manufactured using artificial intelligence.

Billed as a 'collaboration between artificial intelligence and human intelligence', the A.I. chair is made from 100 per cent recycled materials and was created using a software programme called Generative Design.

Described as 'a design exploration technology', Generative Design was developed by Autodesk and enables designers and engineers to input their design goals, preferred materials, manufacturing methods and cost constraints. The software then generates design ideas based on these parameters.



• The chair was created with AI

The software is also capable of testing each design, learning what works and what doesn't, before applying that information to the next design. The software prototype used by Starck also included a number of capabilities, such as AI-assisted design techniques, that are still being tested by the Autodesk Research team.

"Kartell, Autodesk and I asked AI a question: how can you support our body with the least amount of material and energy possible? AI - without culture, without memory, without influence - replied simply with intelligence, its artificial intelligence," said Starck. "A.I. is the first chair designed outside of our brain, outside of our habits of thought."

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Search: **PHILIPPE STARCK**

Jakob Lange introduces new Kegen lighting series

BIG Ideas, the technology arm of the Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), has partnered with Danish lighting manufacturer Louis Poulsen to create the Kegen lighting collection.

Characterised by a distinctive design, the collection features four pendants that each provide their own diffusion of light thanks to a curved glass insert which is built in, and adapted, to each of the different shade styles.

The collection began as the Tirpitz Pendant, an industrial-style pendant

designed for the Tirpitz Museum in Blåvand, Denmark by the two brands in 2017.

"It started with a building - as is the case with many of our product designs. We were in the process of designing the Tirpitz Museum and we needed a lamp that could do a range of different things," said Jakob Lange, partner at BIG Ideas.

"We needed a lamp in the cafe and shop areas, but we also needed more general lamps for the museum. This is where we came up with the idea of a cone that was cut at one end and had this industrial, galvanised steel look.

"The main feature of the lamp is the organic shaped glass that sits perfectly beneath the cone as a small water droplet, shaped by physics and cohesive forces in nature," Lange added.

The lamps are available in black and white with energy-saving LED lights.

• BIG Ideas partner Jakob Lange with one of the lamps



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Search: **BIG IDEAS**





Multiply structure addresses climate crisis, says Andrew Waugh

Architecture firm Waugh Thistleton Architects has partnered with the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) and ARUP to develop Multiply, a new flatpack structure that is designed to showcase the potential of wood in architecture.

Designed to highlight the urgency of both the climate and housing crises, the 9-m (30ft) high structure offers a solution in the form of a modular system and sustainable construction materials.

Made from carbon-neutral cross-laminated American tulipwood, Multiply features a series of maze-like overlapping and interconnected spaces. It encourages visitors to examine the way our homes and cities are built.

We are at a point of crisis in terms of CO2 emissions

Andrew Waugh



• Multiply is made from cross-laminated American tulipwood

"The main objective of this project is to publicly discuss how environmental challenges can be addressed through innovative and affordable construction," said Andrew Waugh, co-founder of Waugh Thistleton Architects.

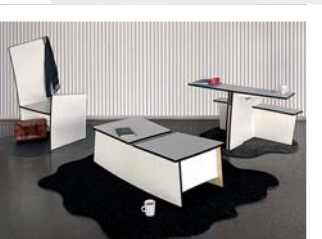
"We are at a point of crisis in terms of CO2 emissions and we believe that building with a versatile and sustainable material such as tulipwood is an important way to address this," he added.

The installation, which usually resides in London, was recently moved to Madrid to commemorate Madrid Design Week.

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Search: **WAUGH THISTLETON**

Daniel Svahn creates furniture collection using repurposed table tops



• The pieces were made from repurposed tables

Daniel Svahn, a Stockholm-based furniture designer, has created a new range of sustainable furnishings, made from recycled MDF tabletops.

Svahn, who is studying an MFA in Interior Architecture and Furniture Design at Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, debuted the collection, called The New Goodies But Oldies collection, during the Stockholm Furniture Fair in February.

It was created for Nacka Town Hall in Stockholm following its refurbishment and forms part of Svahn's studies.

We really need to teach and emphasise the difference of cost versus value

Daniel Svahn

The new collection consists of three pieces – an individual seat with an elongated side for privacy and two sets of co-working seats – made from 14 repurposed tabletops, taken from one of the conference rooms at Nacka's town hall that were destined to be thrown away.

"The public sector is a huge material waste contributor because there are not enough rules, regulations or guidelines when it comes to tending to furniture that is considered to be old, obsolete or broken," said Svahn. "Even if the costs of buying new or upcycling and reusing are the same in the end, the value of doing the latter is greater because it saves material and emissions and other extraction and production footprints," he added.

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Search: **DANIEL SVAHN**



Metalline transforms London hotel with bespoke aluminium fins

Metalline, an architectural metalwork specialist based in the UK, has created a range of bespoke 3D twisted metal fins for the upcoming Minorities Hotel in Aldgate, London.

The aluminium fins will form the façade of the hotel and will clad the existing precast frame, creating a bridge between the frame and the unitised glazing.

They were designed by project architect ACME architects in collaboration with The Murphy Façade Studio to create shading for the hotel's occupants, as well as create an iconic architectural landmark. They were developed by Metalline in partnership with façade contractor Colorminium.



• The fins will form the facade of the London hotel

Measuring 42m (138ft) in height, the fins were created at Metalline's production facility in Cannock, and, due to the height, had to be manufactured in 3.5 m (11 ft) lengths, with a depth of 0.8 m (3ft), assembled using a combination of aluminium stud welding

and bonding techniques developed by Metalline. They were finished in dark and light bronze PPC to create an anodised effect.

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Search: METALLINE

Chocolate box decadence inspires Hedonist collection, say Huzefa Rangwala and Jasem Pirani



• A series of chairs and tables make up the collection



MuseLAB, a Mumbai-based design studio, has launched Hedonist, a new furniture collection that was inspired by the 'sensorial experience' of opening a box of chocolates.

The 13-piece collection consists of a series of chairs and tables, as well as a single mirror, primarily made from wood, glass and metal. It aims to show the ways in which these materials can be used and reused to create completely different pieces.

Highlights from the collection include the Cane Crush lounger, described as a combination of a lounge chair and a pouffe, the Nougat 1 chair, which features crossed back legs, and the Disc table, which features hand-hammered metal sheets in the shape of a double helix.



• The collection is 'non-contextual'

"The idea was to create the same sensory experience as opening a box of chocolates. It was about indulging in furniture of high-aesthetic value without restricting the appeal of the collection to any particular geographical context or design language. In that sense, the furniture is non-conformist and non-contextual," said MuseLAB founders Huzefa Rangwala and Jasem Pirani.

"The collection invites one to indulge in an experience where aesthetics meets function. This collection is high on aesthetic value without compromising on functionality.

"It was essential to have pieces that worked together and stood on their own." •

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Search: MUSELAB



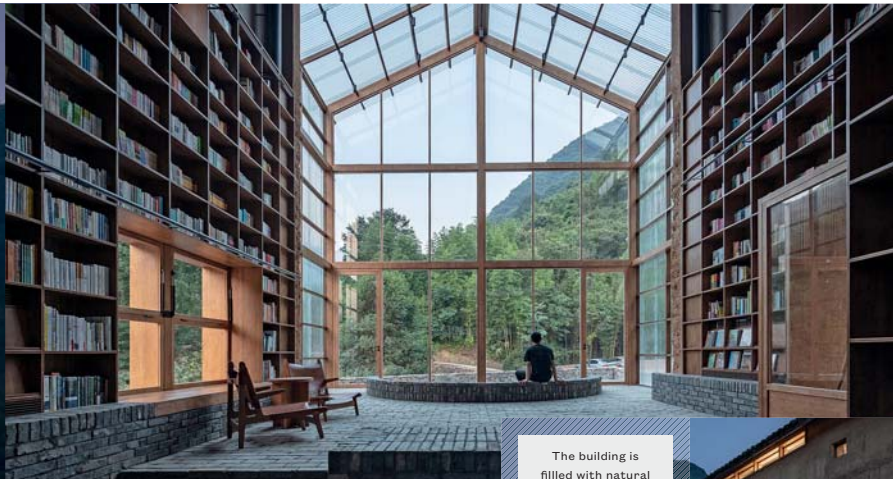
This collection is high on aesthetic value without compromising on functionality

Huzefa Rangwala and Jasem Pirani

Atelier Tao+C create stunning
capsule hotel and library
in old Chinese building



A transparent
gable end provides
a striking feature



Atelier Tao+C have renovated an old building in the Chinese town of Tonglu to create a capsule hotel and library with floating floors, bamboo bookshelves and a fully glazed gable end that provides views of the surrounding forest.

The original floors and partition walls were removed from the 232sq m (2,500sq ft) structure and three staggered floating levels installed and linked with zigzagging metal staircases.

On two of the levels – one for men and one for women – there are 10 capsules each in which guests can stay, with an accompanying bathroom on both floors.

The capsule spaces have been designed with a uniform size and the areas are shielded by bookshelves to provide privacy.

Discussing the pod accommodation sections, Atelier Tao+C said: “The idea of ‘buildings inside the building’ blurs the boundaries of various spaces and formed a balance between the privacy of the ‘floating’ accommodation area and the openness of the public space on the ground floor.”

The building is filled with natural light during the day

“Together with the fragrance of bamboos and books, the building has a power of cohesion that brings together the villagers.”

Atelier Tao+C

Elsewhere, bamboo bookshelves rise up the building’s interior walls and are interspersed with windows to provide natural light.

One of the building’s full gable ends was removed and replaced with a transparent structure of wooden frames and corrugated polycarbonate panels.

In addition to taking advantage of the views, this allows much more natural light into the building.

Tiering built into the brickwork floor allows guests to take advantage of this impressive feature, while there are a wealth of other spaces inside and outside the building where people can sit and read.

Atelier Tao+C said: “Together with the fragrance of bamboos and books, the building has a power of cohesion that brings together the villagers. It becomes part of their feelings and memories, and will further inspire a new future of life to the village.”



The theatre's flowing shape echoes the movement of dance and music



“Our goal is to create a new cultural landmark and an international destination for Perm and Russia, with a space that reflects the dynamism and creativity of the performances held within.”

Andrija Stojic

Glazed wooden Tchaikovsky Academic Opera and Ballet Theater will be a monument to the arts

WHY Architecture are to build a monolithic but welcoming glazed, wooden theatre in a new park on the Kama River as a beacon for the emerging arts district in Perm, Russia.

Located on an outcrop where the city meets the valley, the Tchaikovsky Academic Opera and Ballet Theater is intended to be a focal point for the city and the signature piece of its cultural revitalisation.

The design strategy is aimed at reintegrating the river and the site into the city's cultural identity – and the theatre's raised position and the surrounding open parkland will contribute to this by helping to ensure its visibility.

The theatre's flowing elliptical shape was conceived to echo the movement of dance and music, while its palette of materials references the region's geology and copper mining heritage.

Its body will be locally crafted with timber sourced through Russian forestry, while huge glazed

expanses will wrap its entirety.

Not only will the high-performance glass and curtain wall system provide 360-degree views of the surroundings and allow passersby to see what is going on inside, but it will also help to moderate the interior temperature.

Unlike with typical theatres or concert halls, the building's setting means a curved plaza will run all the way around it, allowing visitors to approach from all angles and integrating it with the rest of the park's winding paths and terraced landscaping.

There is a continuation of the paths inside the theatre, with ramps and walkways intended to create a sense of flow through the building.

“Our goal is to create a new cultural landmark and an international destination for Perm and Russia, with a space that reflects the dynamism and creativity of the performances held within,” said Andrija Stojic, WHY's New York director. “Our design will embrace the history and local culture of Perm.”

Huge new Third Space fitness centre features training arena, cycling amphitheatre and kids' area



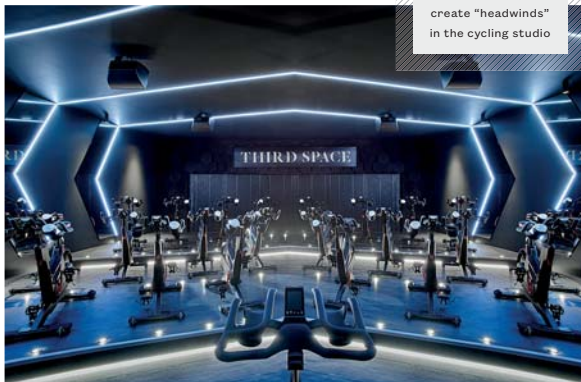
Third Space's new £10m (\$13m, €12m), 47,000sq ft (4,400sq m) full-service club in Islington, London, is said to be the largest health club to open in the UK's capital for more than 10 years.

At the heart of the club is a 7,000sq ft (650sq m) "arena space" for flexible training, featuring a custom-built running track, dedicated strength training area, a bespoke functional training rig and performance cardio areas.

The facility, which was designed by Universal Design Studio, houses an indoor cycling amphitheatre, with unique light displays and soundtracks designed for each class, bikes organised in tiered rows to give every rider a good view and industrial turbines to create "headwinds".

Studio spaces will accommodate group classes, with a hot yoga studio that is claimed to be the first in Europe to use infrared-mirrored panels for creating different temperatures.

There is also a lounge designed for pre- or post-workout focus, while purpose-built 'Quiet Rooms' have been equipped with guided



Industrial turbines create "headwinds" in the cycling studio

“When designing a new space, we have a very specific vision of how we want a club to look”

Rob Beale

meditation for mind and body.

Wet areas include a six-lane, 20m (66ft) swimming pool, saunas and steam rooms.

As well as premium club facilities for adults, Third Space Islington Square will incorporate the Little Space – a separate, dedicated kids' club.

Little Space will have its own training pool, sports hall, crèche, dance studio, climbing area, athletic rig and restaurant, and will offer children's exercise classes and play sessions.

Rob Beale, fitness director for Third Space, said: "When designing a new space, we have a very specific vision of how we want a club to look. It needs to have its own unique identity while staying in keeping with the aesthetic of the Third Space family."



There are studios for 100+ classes a week



🌿 Natural wonders are amplified by art, design and architecture, meant to bring you closer to nature in new and surprising ways 🌿

Igor Philtjens

Cyclists in Belgium's Limburg province are being brought closer to nature in a variety of innovative and unusual ways. "25 years ago Belgian Limburg was the first region worldwide to develop a cycle node network, where you cycle from junction to junction," explained Igor Philtjens, Minister for Regional Tourism and chairman of Visit Limburg and the driving force behind the projects.

"We were a pioneer in recreational cycling tourism, but over the years, other regions and countries started

copying the Limburg cycle node network. So to maintain our pole position, we needed to keep innovating. Not necessarily by creating more miles, but by creating even better ones."

Inspired by Norway's Scenic Routes, a number of interventions were conceived that would allow cyclists to experience the natural beauty of Limburg in ways that would not otherwise be possible.

The first project, Cycling through Water, was launched in 2016 and takes the form of a sunken cycle path run through a lake. Designed

by Lens*ass architects, the path is integrated into the landscape and allows cyclists to see, smell and even reach out to touch the water.

The Cycling through the Trees pathway, which was designed by BuroLandschap and opened in June 2019, gradually lifts cyclists up to a height of 10m (33ft) until they are within the canopy with 360-degree views.

A third intervention called Cycling through the Heathland is under construction in the Hoge Kempen National Park, having been designed by Maat Ontwerpers in collaboration with Witteveen+Bos. Due to open this year, it will feature a 300m (984ft) long bridge in spectacular surroundings.

And a fourth, the design of which is currently being finalised by ipv Delft and will be called Cycling Underground, will take cyclists into the marl caves in the south of Limburg.

"Natural wonders are amplified by art, design and architecture, meant to bring you closer to nature in new and surprising ways," explained Philtjens. "For this project they carried out interventions in certain landscapes, to ensure that visitors can enjoy the landscape even more, without damaging or devaluing it."



Cyclists can see, smell and even touch the water

Limburg is taking its cyclists into water, through treetops and underground



There is a bridge through the trees





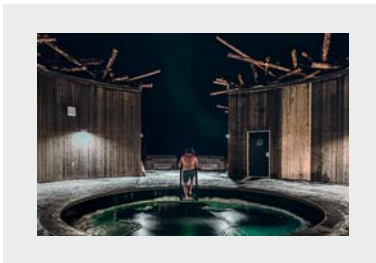
“We worked with colours and natural materials that could help our guests connect with the surrounding nature”

Annkathrin Lundqvist



The design is reminiscent of a log jam

Arctic Bath floating spa hotel opens in Sweden



The Arctic Bath Hotel and Spa, designed by Bertil Harström, Johan Krauppi and Annkathrin Lundqvist, has opened on the Lule River near the small village of Harads in Swedish Lapland.

Conceived to be a year-round Arctic wellness destination, it will float on the water during the summer and be frozen into the ice during the winter.

The 12-room hotel is inspired by the era of floating felled trees downriver for processing.

Its circular, wooden structure is

finished with logs at varying vertical angles around its side and a tangle of logs on its roof, reminiscent of the log jams that would occur.

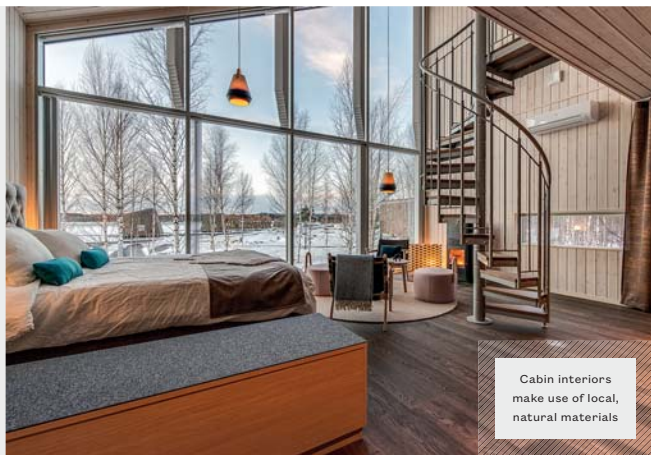
Also housed within the floating structure is a spa with saunas, a hot tub, hot baths and a treatment room, while in the central, outdoor space there is an Arctic plunge-pool.

Additional accommodation is provided by six floating cabins for couples near the water's edge and six larger cabins and suites on the shore.

The cabin interiors, designed – along with the rest of the hotel interiors – by Lundqvist and Input Interior, make use of natural materials from the local area, including wood, stone, leather and luxurious textiles.

Lundqvist told CLAD: “At Arctic Bath, each room has been thoughtfully designed with a high level of comfort and luxury in mind, while keeping with our overall wellness focus. We worked with colours and natural materials that could help our guests connect with the surrounding nature.”

“The land cabins were designed to incorporate the surrounding nature, to blur the borders between the interior and exterior. Natural, sustainable materials with a rich history such as wood, stone, leather and luxurious textiles harmonise together with Scandinavian design.”



Cabin interiors make use of local, natural materials



Plans for the stadium were unveiled in 2015

“World’s greenest stadium”, designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, gets go-ahead

The planned new stadium for Forest Green Rovers FC, which was designed by Zaha Hadid Architects and has been dubbed the “greenest football venue in the world”, has been given the go-ahead.

The stadium is intended to form part of a £100m (\$131m, €118m), 100ac (40ha) sports and green technology business park development, owned by club chairman Dale Vince’s Ecotricity green energy group, and to be carbon neutral or positive.

It will be built entirely out of sustainably sourced timber, will generate renewable energy on-site and will

include the creation of a nature reserve. Planning permission was initially rejected due to concerns about noise, traffic and the impact on the landscape.

But a revised proposal was submitted in August 2019, with Forest Green Rovers telling CLAD: “We have turned one of the grass training pitches into an all-weather, artificial pitch that will be available for local sports clubs to use.

“We submitted detailed plans showing how our neighbours will be screened from the stadium by an earth bund and extensive tree planting. These plans also show how techniques used by the National

Trust will ensure that the car parking blends into the landscape.”

The fresh proposal also included additional matchday transport, legal assurance and impact study updates.

Plans for the development were first unveiled in 2015. Vince said it will now take at least three years for the stadium to be constructed.

“The stadium’s been on the drawing board for five years and before that we were looking for a site for three, so it’s been a long time. It’s passed every hurdle and been recommended twice by officers. It was a surprise last time when it was turned down.”

A nature reserve will be created as part of the plans





A family-focused area will feature waterslides

Therme Group gets go-ahead for £250m wellbeing resort

Wellbeing developer Therme Group has been given the go-ahead to build a £250m (\$325m, €287m) wellbeing resort in Manchester, UK, aimed at addressing the need for physical and mental wellbeing for all.

Expected to open in 2023, Therme Manchester will cover an area of 28ac (11ha), with a 65,000sq m (700,000sq ft) main building that will house wellbeing facilities, a waterpark and botanical gardens. It will be designed by Therme Arc, the in-house architecture department that has delivered all Therme Group schemes around the world to date.

Stelian Iacob, senior vice president of Therme Group Worldwide and CEO of Therme Group UK, told CLAD: "Therme Group recognises that to deliver next-generation wellbeing resorts, an interdisciplinary approach to planning and design is vital, embodied by Therme Group's proprietary BIOTRUE system of development.

"The principles of this approach are founded in material and structural biomimicry and bring together specialists from botany, materials science, engineering, philosophy and psychology."

The development, on the site of EventCity in Trafford, will feature a natural environment with thousands of plants and trees.

A wellbeing garden will provide a biodiverse year-round space for socialising, learning and discovery, with terraces, pools and water features.

There will be a family-focussed area with waterslides, a wave pool, indoor and outdoor pools, steam rooms, exotic palm tree relaxation areas and a variety of other activities.

A dedicated adults' area will provide



Therme Group recognises that to deliver next-generation wellbeing resorts, an interdisciplinary approach to planning and design is vital

Stelian Iacob

a space to relax with warm-water lagoons, botanical gardens, swim-up bars, therapeutic mineral baths, steam rooms, saunas and studio spaces.

Additional bars, cafés and restaurants will be located throughout the resort.

Iacob said: "This will transform life for city residents and people further afield, creating a fun and accessible experience with profound health and wellbeing benefits for all."



Therme Manchester will cover 28ac (11ha)



“We wanted to be subtle and to nod at the way people in these countries experience thermotherapy.”

Patrick Rake



There is an outdoor relaxation area for guests to enjoy

Canada's huge new thermal spa lets you bathe around the world

SKYSPA management group Groupe SKYSPA has opened an expansive thermal spa in Quebec, Canada, that will be designed by Blouin Tardiff and will offer bathing experiences from around the world.

Surrounded by forest, the 60,000sq m (646,000sq ft), CA\$12m (US\$9m, €8.3m, £7m) Förena Cité Thermale includes three thermotherapy circuits individually themed on Russian, Icelandic and German bathing traditions, along with three pavilions, outdoor bathing facilities and a restaurant.

“The idea of opening a spa complex in Quebec was forged during my travels,” said Patrick Rake, president of the SKYSPA Group and creator of Förena. “I discovered unique thermotherapy rituals that I wanted Quebecers to discover.

“We wanted our concept to be subtle and contemporary, and to nod at the way people in these countries experience thermotherapy. The aim is to make people feel that there is an authenticity and respect for other countries’ culture and customs.”

The Russian-inspired Buran

thermotherapy circuit is located in an individual pavilion and includes a steam bath, sauna, relaxation area and showers. The Piterak experience consists of three outdoor Icelandic thermal pools which range in temperature from temperate, to hot, and very hot, and feature lava-lacquered standing stones, or menhirs.

Foehn – the German thermotherapy routine – cycles guests through an Aufguss sauna, an outdoor cold pool and finishes with a period of relaxation.

Guests can also visit an outdoor area that includes cold waterfall showers, a firepit and relaxation areas.

Spa director Anne Bouchard said:

“Our goal has never been to create just another spa, but to develop something much more than that.

“Our inspirations come from places around the world where thermotherapy has lived throughout the ages. The authenticity behind these traditions and rituals comes to life at Förena and this is what makes us really stand out.”

The thermal spa has 18 treatment rooms with a menu offering massages, body treatments, facials, scrubs, wraps and nail services. Phytomer has been selected as product house, with its Holistic Sea treatment chosen as Förena’s signature offering.



There are three thermotherapy circuits

Nature has been
deeply integrated
into the design



Henning Larsen to create all timber neighbourhood in Copenhagen



“With the rural village as an archetype, we’re creating a city where biodiversity and active recreation define a sustainable pact between people and nature”

Signe Kongebro

Henning Larsen Architects have been chosen to create an all-timber neighbourhood just outside the city centre of Copenhagen, Denmark, with nature deeply integrated and built with active lifestyles in mind.

Fælledby will transform a former dumping ground and has been designed to accommodate 7,000 residents.

In addition to providing a model for how new developments can combine sustainable architecture and environmentalist principles, it is hoped that the design will foster a close-knit community and an intimate connection to nature for residents.

Around 40 per cent of the 18ha (44ac) district will be left undeveloped for nature to thrive and buildings will have birdhouses and animal habitats integrated into their structures.

Locally-sourced timber was chosen as the construction material as the most sustainable of the options available, but also to help integrate the development with nature.

A minimum of 25 per cent of the homes will be designated public housing, with homes designed for seniors, students and young families too.

There will also be a range of commercial amenities in the neighbourhood, such as small local businesses, grocery stores, restaurants and community venues.

Signe Kongebro, partner at Henning Larsen, said: “Deciding to build in the natural landscape around Fælledby comes with a commitment to balance people with nature. Specifically, this means that our new district will be Copenhagen’s first built fully in wood, and incorporating natural habitats that encourage richer growth for plants and animals.

“With the rural village as an archetype, we’re creating a city where biodiversity and active recreation define a sustainable pact between people and nature.”

The project is pending planning approval, but work is expected to begin in late 2020 or early 2021.



There will be desert and water elements for people to explore

OF Studio design undulating desert landscape to explore at Dubai Creek Harbour

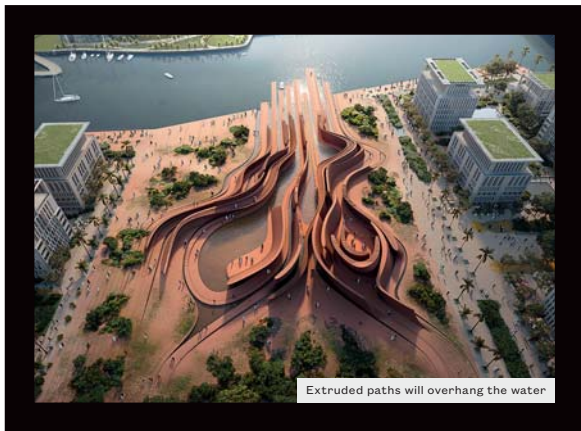
OF Studio have won a competition run by Emaar to create a new "landmark structure" on a 6,300sq m (67,800sq ft) plot within the 5.6 million sq m (60.3 million sq ft) Dubai Creek Harbour waterfront development.

Participants were briefed to submit proposals that would respect the culture and climate of Dubai, but also expose children and families to new worldviews.

OF Studio's LAND-MARK proposal was conceived to be a public and social environment for pedestrians, with desert and water elements to explore.

Undulating, winding seams in the landscape have been designed to appear as though shaped naturally, with a network of paths and walls that recalls the horizontal properties of the desert.

There are spaces for recreational activities and gathering, a shaded area with views of the Dubai skyline and extruded paths that overhang the harbour, while pockets of vegetation provide shade and soften the stark landscape.



Extruded paths will overhang the water

Kengo Kuma-designed Tokyo 2020 main stadium inaugurated during first official event



The new National Stadium in Tokyo, built for the 2020 Olympic Games, was officially inaugurated in January.

The venue, which is due to host the opening and closing ceremonies at Tokyo 2020, held the final of the Emperor's Cup – seen as the country's flagship football match – on 1 January 2020.

Completely rebuilt for the 2020 Games, the 68,000-seat capacity stadium is a symbol of great pride in Japan, as it was used as the main stadium for the Olympic Games Tokyo 1964.

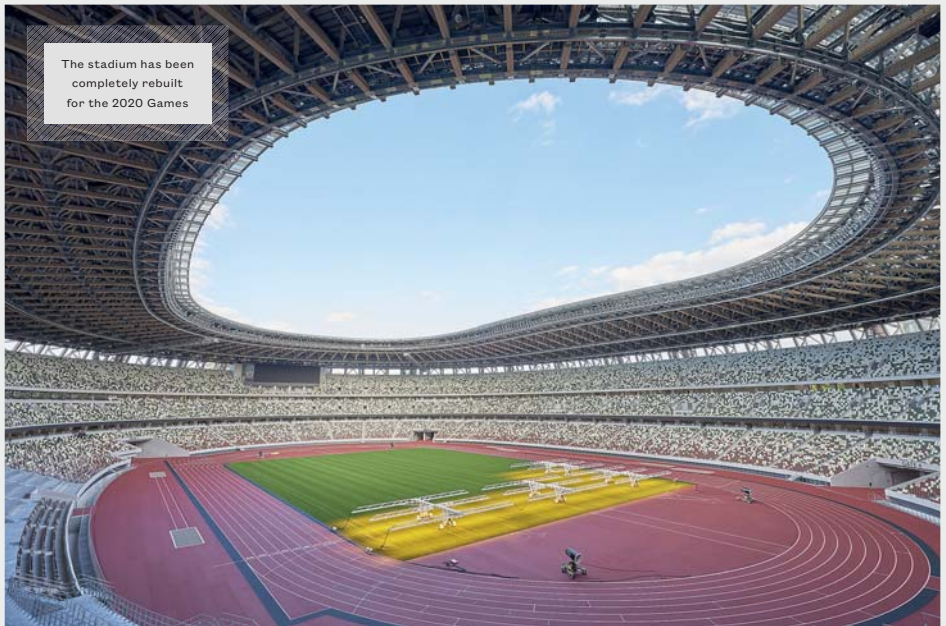
Designed by architect Kengo

Kuma, the stadium complements the surrounding area, which includes a large green space known as the Outer Garden of Meiji Jingu Shrine.

Envisioned to be a "living tree", the exterior of the stadium consists of multi-layered eaves made of wood from each of the 47 prefectures in Japan.

"We believe the stadium will become an irreplaceable legacy – a place that will allow people to spend healthy and fulfilling days enjoying sport for another 50 years or even longer," said Tokyo 2020 CEO Toshirō Muto.

The Japanese government chose Kuma to design the stadium in 2015.





“On the one hand, we adhere to a rather orthodox restoration, based on preservation; on the other hand, we embrace a more experimental – and unusual – approach which fully rethinks the initial structure.”

Ondřej Chybík

Chybík + Kristof create wine bar in restored and reimagined 19th-century brewery buildings

Chybík + Kristof have created a wine bar and tasting room in a converted 19th-century brewery and its adjacent 1970s technical space.

House of Wine is located in Znojmo, Czech Republic, and comprises the two spaces with very different heritages.

The original brewery building has been treated as a heritage site, with its fabric restored and preserved, but little in the way of architectural changes made.

The interior of the more recent technical building, meanwhile, has been filled with curved wooden volumes that divide the space vertically and horizontally into new areas for people to sit. Windows have also been added in different places to provide views of the

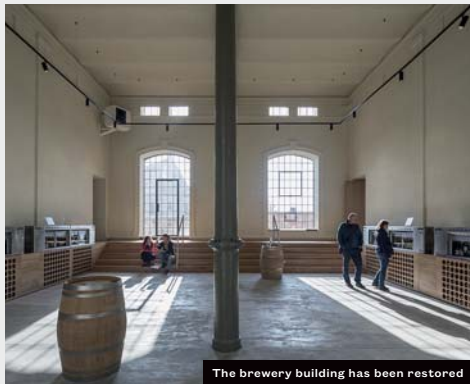
nearby churches, town and river valley.

Ondřej Chybík, co-founder of Chybík + Kristof, said: “The House of Wine challenges traditional notions of restoration of historical buildings. The presence of two distinct structures, each with its own history and original function, inspired us to adopt likewise distinct approaches to renovation.

“On the one hand, we adhere to a rather orthodox restoration, based on preservation; on the other hand, we embrace a more experimental – and unusual – approach which fully rethinks the initial structure. In doing so, we immerse ourselves in the town’s heritage and landscape, while establishing the House of Wine as a part, a reconciliation and a continuation of its architectural history.” ●



Curved wooden volumes have been used to divide the space



The brewery building has been restored



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MANUELLE GAUTRAND

The first female winner of the European Prize for Architecture specialises in cultural and public buildings that aim to surprise their users. **Magali Robathan** finds out more



PHOTO: NICOLAS KEMPF



Architecture should provoke unexpected emotion



says Manuelle Gautrand, as we sit chatting in her light-filled office in Paris' La Bastille. "It is very important to surprise people when you welcome them into a building."

Gautrand – who won the European Prize for Architecture in 2017 – has made a name for herself by celebrating ordinary urban life with bold, striking buildings that often feature an element of the unexpected.

At the Gaité Lyrique theatre in Paris, for example, a grand, conservative 19th century facade contains an ultra contemporary museum of digital culture, with factory-like walls, pulsing lights and splashes of vibrant colour. Gautrand's ability to surprise can also be seen in her green pixelated Hipark Hotel, the blocky, rust coloured Forum sports and events complex in Saint Louis, France and in her radical extension to Lille's Museum of Modern Art, where perforated concrete 'fingers' seem to reach around the eastern edge of Roland Simounet's original building.

"It's important to me that when people spend time in my buildings, they don't just experience comfort and functionality," says Gautrand, who sits surrounded by books and architectural models. "They have to be infused with beauty and they should be surprised. It's sometimes better not to know too much in advance what you will discover in a building."

Gautrand gives the example of Citroën's flagship showroom which she designed and which brought her work to widespread attention when it opened on Paris's Champs-Élysées in 2007. The showroom is open to the public and features a huge, six storey glass-walled atrium featuring a vertical column of eight Citroën

Gautrand's Hipark Hotel
Paris La Villette fades
from a bold green to white

The cities where you have good cultural buildings and facilities – it's a way for people to mix, to share the city in a much deeper way

vehicles which can be seen by visitors ascending a spiralling staircase. "With Citroen, I wanted the verticality of the atrium to surprise people," she says. "I wanted them to feel a kind of vertigo when they walked between the different levels. It's important to feel architecture in 3D – to feel something strongly."

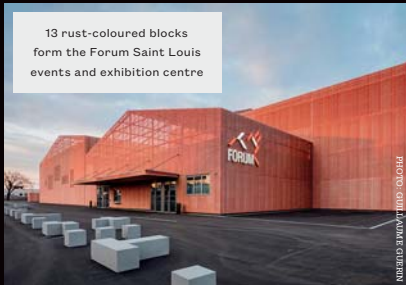
When Gautrand won the European Prize for Architecture in 2017, Christian Narkiewicz-Laine, president of The Chicago Athenaeum and initiator of the prize, described her work as "bold, refreshing, and provocative," and applauded her for "re inventing, renewing, and innovating a pluralistic design path full of unexpected answers, risk-taking and surprises."

"This boldness is deliberate," Gautrand tells me. "It's not always appropriate – sometimes I might do a housing project which is quite delicate – but when I'm designing a cultural or mixed use project, it's important for the project to be well known in the city. It should become a kind of signature that stays in the memory of the people who see it."

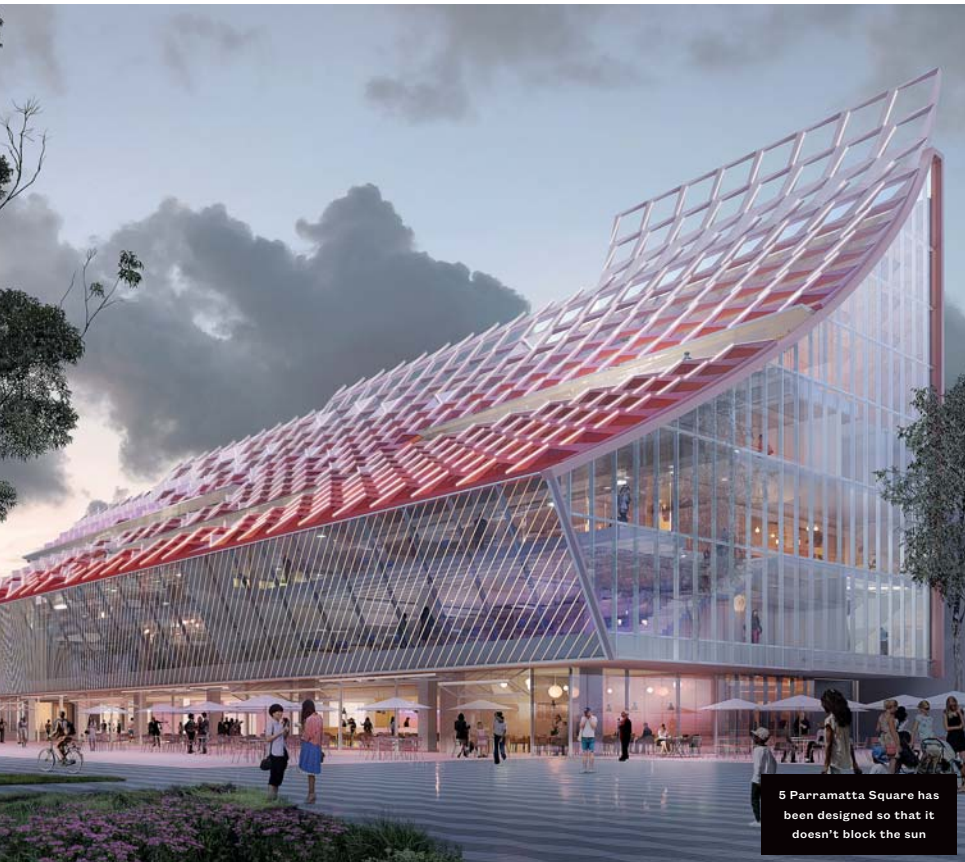
Gautrand is a passionate believer in the power of culture and leisure. "Politicians have to be courageous," she says. "Cities can't be just dedicated to private and commercial buildings. We must create places for inhabitants to share their lives. The cities where you have good cultural buildings and facilities; it's a way for people to mix, to share the city in a much deeper way. It's very important for everyone to dedicate part of their time to cultural and leisure activities."



13 rust-coloured blocks form the Forum Saint Louis events and exhibition centre



In Parramatta, Australia, Gautrand is working on a new civic and cultural centre on a public square that aims to bring together the public and government officials. The wave-shaped building has been designed to adapt to the curve of the sun and respect the brief that specified that the square must not be thrown into shade by the structure except for 20 minutes on the shortest day of the year. Gautrand's solution was to design a 'giant stair of crystalline blocks' that allows the sun to penetrate and houses a public library, a civic centre, council chambers, an innovation centre and a cafe and restaurant. "It was a very interesting constraint," says Gautrand. "The result



5 Parramatta Square has been designed so that it doesn't block the sun

is beautiful, it's like a huge wave. The programming of the building also responds to the constraint, so that we have put the large public areas full of animation and life on the ground floor – the noisy part of the library, the welcoming spaces, the cafe and so on. As you ascend through the building, the rooms become progressively smaller, calmer and more private, so you have reading spaces in the library, meeting rooms, then private spaces dedicated to the councillors and their offices. It finishes with a beautiful council chamber." Five Parramatta Square is being constructed by Australian firm Built and is the final addition to the new Parramatta Square mixed use area.

THE ROLE OF EMOTION

In my discussions with Gautrand about architecture and her philosophy, the word emotion comes up a lot.

"I always think about the emotions of the people who will use my buildings," she tells me.

"The programme of a building is about functionality, but there's also something which is not written in the programme. It's about the emotion that you need to have when you're living or using a building. People who spend time in your architecture should experience an emotional reaction, and that emotion should stay with them after they leave."



It's like a huge living room where everyone can come, have a drink, have lunch or just rest

The first building that really had an emotional impact on Gautrand, she says, was the Sydney Opera House.

"I'd just begun my architecture studies and I decided to do a big trip," she says. "When I was standing in front of the Sydney Opera House, I felt hugely emotional.

"That project was so monumental, but at the same time totally contextual. It's on the same scale as the harbour, and there are so many links between the shape of the Opera House and the boats. I was impressed with the monumentality and large scale – from far away – but also by the sophistication of the details. The building evoked emotion both at a large scale but also close up, when you were faced with the pattern of the skin and the interior design."

Ensuring that her buildings work from a distance and up close is something Gautrand actively strives for in her work. "I like to work on different scales," she says. "You must be able to admire the building from a distance, but up close you must be able to discover something else – the skin, the pattern, the materiality. It should provoke a second emotion."

A EUROPEAN ARCHITECT

In 2017, when Manuelle Gautrand was awarded the European Prize for Architecture, much was made of the fact that she was the first woman architect to win it. While that was "a bit relevant," according to Gautrand, she was most proud of the fact that she had won a European prize.

"I am deeply European," she says. "Of course the richness of Europe is the diversity within it, but I travel all over the world and more and more, I get the feeling that we have a very strong common root.

"When I travel outside Europe I say that I am European before I say that I am French. I'm very proud to be European."



By stacking different parts of the facility, space is maximised at Belaróia



Beloroia

MONTPELLIER, FRANCE

Manuelle Gautrand's most recent major project is the Beloroia mixed use complex in Montpellier, southern France. Located opposite Montpellier's central Gare Saint Roch train station, the project consists of two hotels, apartments, a restaurant, a business centre and a public terrace that looks out across the city.

The small, triangular site led Gautrand to stack the different facilities on top of one another, with the public terrace and cafe set back into an area created by the stacking of the various volumes.

"The main aim with this project was to create a very dense piece of architecture which could mix several programmes," says Gautrand. "I wanted to create a space that all the building's users could share – the generous, beautiful terrace – which is the heart of the whole project. It's like a huge living room, where everyone can come, have a drink, have lunch or just rest – it's orientated so it faces the south and it is protected from the wind."

Manuelle Gautrand Architecture

Marseille-born Manuelle Gautrand graduated with a diploma in architecture from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Montpellier in France in 1985 and worked for several architecture studios before founding Manuelle Gautrand Architecture in 1991 in Lyon. She later moved the practice to Paris, where she has lived and worked since 1994.

Manuelle Gautrand is the principal architect and director of the practice, which employs 15 architects in a two-level office in the Bastille neighbourhood of Paris. Marc Blaising, partner, financial and administrative director, has been involved in the general management of the agency since 1992.

Gautrand specialises in cultural and leisure facilities, including theatres, museums, cultural centres and hotels, and also designs housing, office buildings and other commercial facilities.

"This prize is awarded to architects 'who have made a commitment to forward the principles of European humanism and the art of architecture'. Since the beginning of my career I have tried to express and emphasise such a commitment, to use my – or I would rather say our – European roots to re-enchant architecture and our cities."

From here, the conversation naturally turns to Brexit. Gautrand doesn't say too much on the subject, except that "I am deeply sad, and it is hugely sad for Europe."

LOOKING AHEAD

As well as the cultural and civic centre in Parramatta, Gautrand is working on a number of other projects, including the refurbishment and extension of the W Paris Opera hotel.

Set in a former bank close to the Palais Garnier opera house, the hotel currently occupies around half of the building. Gautrand and her team are extending the hotel, moving the lobby and the bar/restaurant, carrying out a "deep refurb" of the existing guest rooms and creating a rooftop space.

"It's a very interesting project for me because I'm both the architect and the interior designer," says Gautrand. "My aim is to reinterpret the W roots while adding in a Parisian feel. I am adding a touch of impertinence using colour, the furniture and some of the details."

Gautrand shows me the architectural model of the hotel, pointing out the rooftop space complete with mini parasols. "We have designed two sets of umbrellas," she says. "The winter set, which will be transparent and which will give a beautiful luminance at the same time as protecting from the rain, and the summer set will be a pearly green and will protect from the sun."



Gautrand is working on the W Paris Opera hotel, which will feature a new rooftop terrace

"The rooftop will be amazing because it faces the Opera Garnier and it offers wonderful views across Paris.

"For this project, I studied the history of the building and the Haussmann-era architecture," she continues. "It was important to respect the historical building while adding my personality and creating a powerful contemporary addition with a kind of freedom to it. It's a very delicate challenge."

When I ask Gautrand what her dream commission would be, she cites the kind of projects which she's well known for.

"I'm always drawn to cultural projects, whether they are museums, concert halls or cinemas," she says. "Those are my dream projects. I also love historical projects – the challenge of touching a historical building and giving it a kind of renewal is something I'm very interested in."

In other words, Gautrand's dream is to continue doing what she's doing: creating bold, interesting buildings that celebrate the role of leisure and culture in our cities and our lives. ●



The Gautrand-designed extension to the Lille Museum of Modern Art



PHOTO BY MARISSA LUD

Jean-Philippe Nuel leads a team of 30 based in Paris and New York. He is best known for luxury hotel interiors

Jean Philippe Nuel

His projects include the sensitive transformations of Paris' iconic Piscine Molitor and an 800-year-old Lyonnaise hospital into award-winning hotels.

Magali Robathan meets architect and interior designer Jean-Philippe Nuel



PHOTO: M. L. F. T. P. A. N. G.

Nuel was part of the team that restored and transformed Paris' Piscine Molitor complex



Nuel designed the interiors at the InterContinental Lyon - Hotel Dieu

PHOTO: MICHELLE MATHIEUX

A

s a teenager, my Parisian mother used to go to Molitor on hot days to swim, sunbathe and eye up the other teenagers. Like many Parisians, the iconic Art Deco pool held a special place in her heart, which is why I was excited to visit it in its latest incarnation and interview Jean-Philippe Nuel, the interior designer behind the transformation of Molitor and several other exciting hospitality projects.

"The place already had a soul that had to be preserved," says Nuel, who has made his name designing hospitality projects including the 5 Codet in Paris and the InterContinental Hotel Dieu Marseille. His most recent project, the Intercontinental Lyon - Hotel Dieu, also sees a much loved historic building - a famous hospital dating back eight centuries - sensitively restored to become a contemporary boutique hotel that has already won several awards for its design.

"Paradoxically, historic buildings often result in more creative projects than new builds because the constraints mean certain situations are unavoidable and this allows us to break the usual standards," Nuel tells me. ▶



The restoration of the outdoor pool was faithful to the original design



The project becomes a story that we already have the introduction to, and that takes us and guides us towards a new path



DUPY FILMS STUDIO, COURTESY

A graffitied Rolls Royce
in the lobby references
Molitor's street art period

► "In Molitor we don't have guestrooms on both sides of the corridor like a conventional new build hotel would have. The result is that the flow becomes magical because it's entirely glazed on one side and therefore suspended above the Roland Garros and Jean-Bouin stadiums with superb views of Paris."

The pool complex was designed by architect Lucien Pollet and inaugurated in 1929 by Olympic swimming champion Johnny Weissmuller (who later starred as Tarzan in the Hollywood movies of the 1930s and 1940s). Pollet employed the finest craftspeople to create the ironwork, terrazzo floors, mosaics, portholes and white railings that contributed to its cruise liner feel. During the summer it was packed with swimmers; during the winter it was used as a skating rink. The swimming club hosted fashion shows and attracted celebrities, but also acted as a respite from the city for ordinary Parisians like my mother.

In the 1970s and 1980s though, the pool began to need more and more expensive renovation work; eventually Paris' City Council decided enough was enough and refused Molitor's management's request to extend the leasehold. In 1989 the keys were returned to the council and the complex was closed.

Over the next two decades, the abandoned buildings were taken over by graffiti artists. The complex became a kind of urban mecca, attracting artists and skateboarders, and hosting concerts, raves and parties.

Then, in 2007, a tender process was announced by the Paris City Council for the restoration and operation of the building. This was awarded to Colony Capital, associated with Bouygues Construction and Accorhotels, who teamed up with Alain Derbesse, Perrot et Richard, Jacques Rougerie Architectes and Jean-Philippe Nuel to create a hotel that would respect its history.

"I visited well before I started work on Molitor and took lots of pictures," says Nuel. "These visits greatly influenced the decorative bias. I also gathered testimonies from people who'd known Molitor at different times. The oldest people had known the pool or the skating rink; the youngest knew it as a place where rave parties were held. These testimonies convinced me to see the project as a journey through the history of the building."

The design team made the decision to rebuild parts of the building with original elements remaining as they were when Pollet designed the complex.

The new spaces, and areas where no original elements remained, would be designed in a contemporary style, with a nod to Molitor's street art period. It was important, says Nuel, not to just create a pastiche of the original building.

In 2014, the Hotel Molitor Paris reopened under Accor's MGallery brand as a 124 room hotel with a restaurant, a rooftop bar, a fitness club and a 1,700sq m Clarins spa. The state of the foundations and concrete meant the indoor and



In the spa treatment rooms, the design highlights Molitor's Art Deco bathing history



The interiors are a mix of original features and contemporary design



PHOTOS THIS PAGE: GUILLES THILLIAUD



The restaurant and lobby feature raw concrete, exposed ducts and pops of colour



The 32m-high Le Dôme bar is at the heart of the InterContinental Lyon - Hotel Dieu



PHOTO BY MICHAEL SCHWABER

The guestrooms offer views of the river Rhône and of listed historic courtyards

It was important to fully understand the architecture and its history to nourish its rebirth

- ▶ outdoor pools had to be demolished, but they were rebuilt following the original designs, with the colours, mosaics and balustrades all faithfully re-rendered. The original 'tango yellow' building facade has been brought back, and other original elements have been restored including leaded glass windows, mosaics and lamps. The glass-enclosed ticket booth is no longer needed but has been kept as a historical artefact and a reminder of the days when queues would have snaked out of the building and around the block.

The hotel lobby houses a graffiti'd Rolls Royce convertible, raw concrete walls and bold contemporary artworks, while a muted colour palette has been used in the guestrooms to create a tranquil feel. The spa and club feature bold, graphic design – lots of navy with flashes of tango yellow in the furnishings and porthole-style windows looking out onto the famous pool. The indoor 'winter pool' celebrates Molitor's more recent past with the changing cabins transformed into an art exhibition, with various contemporary artists invited to use them as canvases for their work. It's an exhilarating mash up of styles that combine to create something entirely unique.

"I find historic buildings inspiring," says Nuel. "The project becomes a story that we already have the introduction to, and that takes us and guides us towards a new path."

INTERCONTINENTAL LYON – HOTEL DIEU

Summer 2019 saw the opening of another interesting historic building remake – Lyon's Grand Hotel Dieu. Built starting in the 12th century, it was one of France's most important hospitals for centuries, welcoming pilgrims and travellers, treating European monarchs and birthing generations of Lyonnais people in its maternity ward.

In the 18th century, architect Jacques-Germain Soufflot – best known for designing the Pantheon in Paris – replaced the original building with the current one, which features an imposing facade and a soaring 32m high dome.

In 2010, the building ceased to operate as a hospital and has now reopened as a commercial centre with shops, restaurants, offices and a food museum. In June 2019, the InterContinental Hotel Dieu de Lyon opened, following a 10 year renovation project, with interiors by Nuel and his team. ▶

Renovating a building of this size is a cultural and social issue for the city

"To approach the project, I researched and discussed it with the heritage architect Didier Repellin who was part of the project management team," says Nuel.

"It was important to fully understand the architecture and its history to nourish its rebirth.

"Renovating a building of this size is a cultural and social issue for the city," he adds. "There's a very strong connection between this type of iconic building and the inhabitants of the city who grew up with its presence. They each have a personal story with this architecture and the renovation involves writing a new story. This is what's happening in Paris with Notre Dame Cathedral, and that is why there are passionate debates on how to rebuild the spire."

As with Molitor, Nuel was determined to respect the history of the building while creating something new.

"This renovation was done around some strong ideas," he says. "We wanted a contemporary approach to avoid any pastiche. Our aim was to reinterpret the original dichotomy of the building – that it was a luxurious palace to treat the poorest. We also wanted to achieve a sense of 'humble luxury' that corresponds to the history of the place but also to our time and to my sensitivity.

"The fact that it was a hospital was important, but I never wanted to express it through anecdotal references."

The hotel has 144 rooms and suites, a large conference centre, a restaurant and a bar. Le Dôme Bar is a probably the standout feature of the hotel; a huge, stunning space to sit and drink a cocktail in, set in Soufflot's soaring 18th century dome, formerly the hospital's chapel.

"The bar was an extraordinary challenge," says Nuel. "It was necessary to be consistent with the history of the place and to correctly understand the scale, which is why we custom designed all the furniture for that space. It was also necessary to solve many technical problems, such as the lighting, scaffolding and acoustics.

"I'm very proud of Le Dôme Bar. A hotel bar like this is probably unique in the world."

PHOTO: BERG COWILLER



The Grand Hôtel-Dieu Lyon, France

This much loved building has a long and fascinating history, starting with the construction of its predecessor, the Pont du Rhône Hospital, at the end of the 12 century. In 1478, the municipality bought the building in order to enlarge it, and it became the Grand Hôtel-Dieu. In 1532, while the Plague and famine were raging in Lyon, French writer, physician and scholar François Rabelais was appointed chief physician at the hospital.

Between 1741 and 1761 the present building was constructed according to the designs of Jacques-Germain Soufflot, architect of the Pantheon in Paris. During the 19th century, the hospital became a renowned

surgical centre in Europe and Etienne Destot practiced the first radiography there. In 1914 the hospital was requisitioned by the French Army as a military hospital.

In 2011, French construction firm Eiffage signed a 99 year lease with the Hospices Civils de Lyon and work began on one of largest listed building conversion project undertaken by the private sector in France.

Today, the sites house a commercial centre featuring shops, restaurants, offices, a culinary museum and a luxury hotel, the InterContinental Lyon – Hotel Dieu, with interiors by Jean Philippe Nuel.

Source: lyon.intercontinental.com



The Epona restaurant at the InterContinental Lyon - Hotel Dieu features pale colours

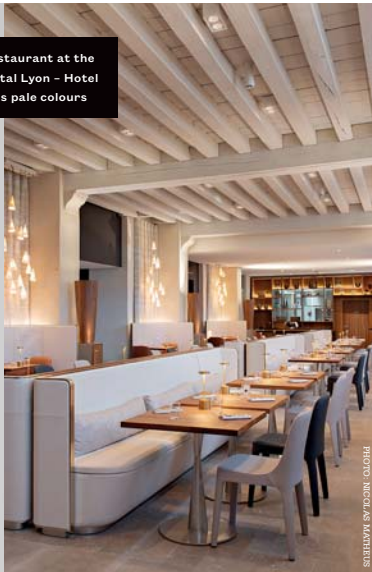


PHOTO: NICOLAS SAUTERUS

▶ ABOUT NUEL

Born in the east of France, Nuel graduated in architecture from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Nuel made a name for himself early on in the world of interior design by winning several competitions, including one presided over by Kenzo Tange. His first built project was a hotel in Paris' St Germain des Prés, which opened in 2000; Nuel was responsible for both the architecture and interior design. Other hotel projects followed, with clients including Accor, Club Med, Hilton, Radisson, Starwood, Marriott and IHG.

"Hotels are interesting because in a small space, they contain the main functions that punctuate our lives: rest, work, relaxation, sport, meetings," Nuel says. "They're like laboratories for our lifestyles, and they quickly reflect evolutions in the way we live our lives."

Today he employs 30 designers in an office just outside Paris, with his second office opened in New York in 2019 in collaboration with US-based interior designer Sandy Despres-Stevens.

As well as hotels, he has designed several product lines, and interiors for homes and cruise ships.

Looking ahead, Nuel is designing the interiors for Radisson's Paris La Defense hotel, which is due to open in 2024 and is located in the new Christian de Portzamparc-designed Sisters Towers. Other hospitality projects include the design of six upscale suites for the Hostellerie de Plaisance luxury hotel

Luxury is about giving depth and meaning to things. A luxurious place or object must enrich us morally and intellectually



The practice is working on an architectural project with a winery in St Emilion, France

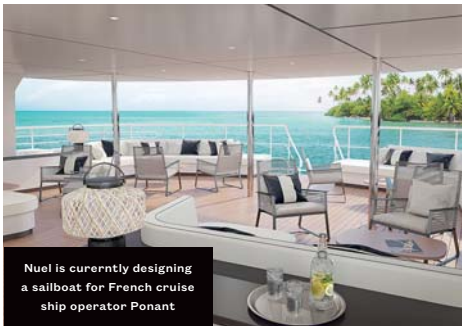
in St-Emilion, France; an architectural project with a winery for Chateau Fonroque, also in St Emilion; and several cruise ship projects including a sailboat with 16 cabins for Ponant.

While Nuel specialises in the design of upscale spaces, he says his idea of real luxury has nothing to do with high end furnishings or luxury goods.

"Luxury for me is a state of mind, the opposite of glitzy and often vulgar things," he says. "Luxury is about giving depth and meaning to things. A luxurious place or object must enrich us morally and intellectually."

What is Nuel's wider philosophy, when it comes to design? "I see design as the expression of our time," he says. "The designer captures the transformations of an era and translates them into objects and spaces. In this context, the designer is a witness of his time and a visionary, if he or she has a lot of talent."

"Spaces must therefore 'speak' – they must be meaningful and resonate deeply with who we are." ●



Nuel is currently designing a sailboat for French cruise ship operator Ponant



Everton FC reveals final Dan Meis designs

Dan Meis has revised his plans for Everton Football Club's new 'historic yet futuristic' riverside stadium following a public consultation



Revised plans for Everton football club's new stadium have been submitted for planning consent

Everton Football Club has revealed the final designs for its planned new stadium on Liverpool's Bramley-Moore Dock.

Initial designs by US architect Dan Meis for the stadium were released last summer, after which a public consultation process was carried out.

The response from fans was overwhelmingly positive, but a number of changes have been made nonetheless.

Most notably, the multi-storey car park will now be integrated into the stadium rather than be a separate structure and additional environmental measures, including wind baffles, have been incorporated into the designs.

The 52,000-capacity stadium is inspired by the historic maritime and warehouse buildings nearby and its design makes use of brick, steel and glass to combine historic and modern elements.

There will be four distinctive stands, including a steep, 13,000-seat stand, and the design will help to retain crowd noise within the stadium.



The history of the iconic setting has influenced the design

"Bramley Moore is a site steeped in Liverpool history. It gives us the opportunity to draw on that context and connect the stadium to the history of Everton in the tradition of many of the historic grounds in English football," said Dan Meis.

"We didn't want a building that looked like a 'spaceship' dropped on the site, but rather a ground that grew out of the historic fabric of the Liverpool docks".

"We were striving for a building that was both familiar and yet awe-inspiring, historic yet futuristic."

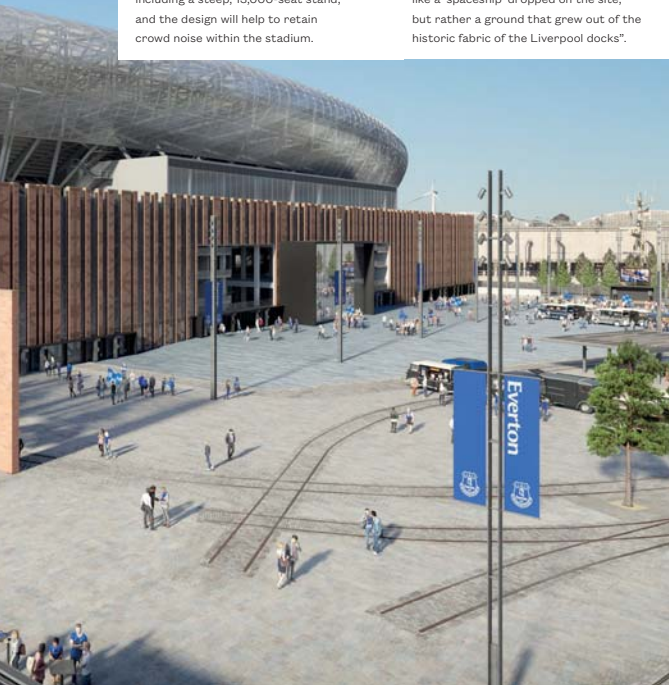
The stadium will help to regenerate the northern docklands, contribute an estimated £1bn (\$1.3bn, €1.2bn) to the city region's economy, create up to 15,000 jobs and attract 1.4 million visitors to the city each year.

Everton's current stadium, Goodison Park, will be redeveloped to provide a number of community assets for the local area, including high-quality, affordable housing, a multi-purpose health centre, community-led retail and leisure spaces and a youth enterprise zone.

Colin Chong, stadium development director at Everton, said: "This project has been designed from the ground up with the site's heritage in mind – getting this right has always been our priority."

"We have invested an enormous amount of resource and effort in creating a design that not only respects and looks at home in a dockland setting but will also restore and preserve the historic features of Bramley-Moore Dock and, importantly, open a currently inaccessible site to the public."

Everton will now await a decision as Liverpool City Council review the planning application. ●



INTO *the* WILD



From warming huts for one of the world's coldest cities to leisure-led flood defence systems, these projects have been designed to accommodate extreme climates and increasingly wild weather. **Christopher DeWolf** investigates

Last January, the temperature in Winnipeg plunged to -39.8 degrees Celsius – colder than Siberia, colder than the North Pole and colder even than Mars, which at the time was basking in a relatively balmy -7.

But Winnipeg isn't a city fazed by cold. That much is obvious when its two rivers freeze over and Winnipeggers strap on their skates for some frosty fun. It's something that inspired Sputnik Architects to launch an annual design competition for warming huts along the river. The first one was held 10 years ago and since then, dozens of temporary pavilions have sprouted from the snow, designed by upstart firms and superstars alike, including Frank Gehry and Anish Kapoor.

"People tend to understand the project within a few seconds of explaining it," says Sputnik principal Peter Hargraves. "The reality in Winnipeg is that we have this weather for six

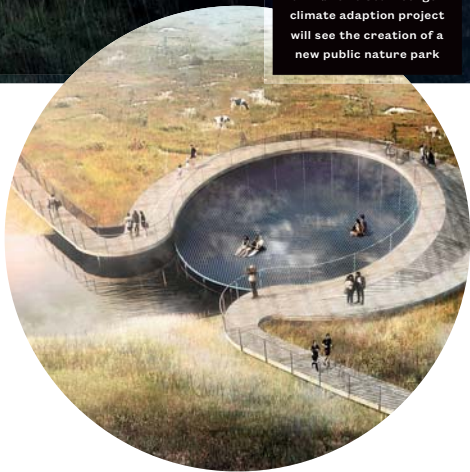


CF Møller's Storkeengen climate adaption project will see the creation of a new public nature park

months out of the year. Places like this can be taxing. But this project has reached a really broad audience. You can have a 92 year old grandmother taking her grandchild for a walk on the trail. It gets people outdoors.”

The concept is simple: when you're faced with an extreme climate, you need to accommodate it. That's especially true as global warming leads to increasingly wild weather, with unpredictable swings in temperature and precipitation, not to mention rising global sea levels and a strain on natural resources. Increasingly, leisure projects around the world are taking a cue from Winnipeg's warming huts and facing the beast of tough climates head on.

In many places, that means tackling environmental changes while also creating imaginative spaces for the public to enjoy. In Denmark, Aarhus-based firm CF Møller has designed the Storkeengen, a plan to protect the nearby town of Randers ▶





McGregor Coxall's Adrian McGregor (left) is leading a project to create a 'bird airport' in Tianjin, China



- ▶ from floods by creating an 83-hectare wetland nature park on existing grasslands.

Randers has been located along the Gudená River for more than a thousand years, but river levels are rising and rainfall is growing increasingly intense. In response, the Storkeengen — "Stork Meadow" — will channel rainwater run-off into the new wetlands, which will naturally filter the water before it flows back into the river.

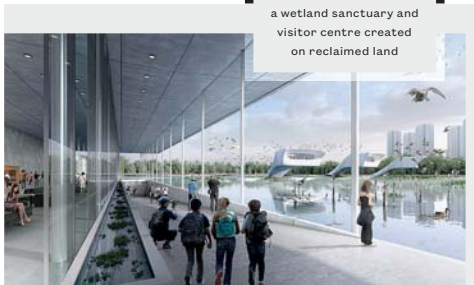
The public will be invited into the space by a raised boardwalk made from larchwood, which will connect nearby residential areas to a jetty where boaters can access the river. In the middle of the meadows, pathways will connect to a circular platform where a rope net will be suspended above a basin of water, where people can enjoy a view over the marshy landscape.

Wetlands are adept at managing water, but they also have other benefits, too. In 2017, Australian architects McGregor Coxall won a competition to design a new 60-hectare wetland sanctuary on freshly reclaimed land in Tianjin, China. Beyond its ability to manage water, the wetlands will serve as a so-called "bird airport" for the 50 million birds that make an annual journey from Siberia to Australia.

In Bangkok, architect Kotchakorn Voraakhom designed the 4.45-hectare Centenary Park on the campus of Chulalongkorn University to cope with the Thai capital's increasingly severe floods. The park is built atop vast containers that can store ▶



The Lingang Bird Airport scheme will see a wetland sanctuary and visitor centre created on reclaimed land



Dandaji Market, Niger

“
*The context
in which I
operate cannot
afford to ignore
climate change*

Mariam Kamara

When Mariam Kamara set out to improve a market in the rural Niger village of Dandaji, she was faced by a challenge. Dandaji is located in the Sahel, a vast belt of arid land immediately to the south of the Sahara Desert, and its sun is merciless – and growing hotter with every passing year.

Kamara, who is often described as the protégée of Sir David Adjaye, said she and her firm Atelier Masomi initially wanted to cap the entire market with a roof. “This proved more complicated to execute locally, so we chopped it off in three round-panel chunks based on the area that needed to be shaded and the maximum leaf size we could have structurally withstand the wind load,” she says.

“We made prototypes and experimented with the different heights and orientations of the canopies with engineers, metal fabricators and contractors, so the



Kamara is working with David Adjaye as part of the Rolex mentorship programme

process was not straightforward. But it ensured that the contractors knew exactly how to put it together.”

The end result has garnered international attention for its sensitive response to the needs of those living in an extreme climate. “The context in which I operate cannot afford to ignore climate change,” she says. “We are the hardest hit by it with already hot temperatures rising higher and droughts putting pressure on cities with the influx of people leaving their villages and barren fields to search for new opportunities.

“This means that as architects we have to think about how to help shape cities that are set to grow astronomical over the next few decades. How do we do our part and make design choices that not only do less harm, but actually help solve problems of water shortage, or energy access? We have tools to do all of this and hopefully we will do so more and more.”



Colourful metal canopies encourage air flow through the market

The Big U aims to protect Lower Manhattan from floods



“

Funding woes and murky timelines are common problems. It can be easier to make a difference one small project at a time



BIG associate Jeremy Siegel (below) is leading the BIG U project in New York

► excess rainwater during the wet season, saving it for the parched months of the dry season. The park opened in 2017. Voraakhom's firm, Land Process, followed it with plans for a similar 14.5-hectare green space on the campus of another Bangkok university.

One of the most ambitious anti-flooding projects underway is the Big U. Designed by Bjarke Ingels' Danish firm, BIG – with associate Jeremy Siegel leading the project – it is meant to deal with the kind of storm surge that left large parts of New York City under water after Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Set to break ground this spring, the first phase of the project includes the Bridging Berm, a 4.8-metre-high levee that rises along the shore of the East River, engulfing an existing park to create a new recreational space high above the water. Low-lying areas next to the water will be landscaped with salt-resistant vegetation that won't be damaged during floods.



THAMES COURTESY OF BIG

PHOTO: GIBBY MELMANN



Zaha Hadid Architects' Hamburg River Promenade scheme

Subsequent phases of the project will call for deployable flood walls decorated by local artists and another berm that will twist through Battery Park, at the southern tip of Manhattan. All told, the Big U calls for a 16-kilometre horseshoe of flood defences and leisure spaces.

Although the first phase has secured US\$330 million in funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), it's unclear who will pay for the remainder of the \$1.45 billion price tag.

BIG's plans for the Big U were developed in response to a competition organised by Rebuild by Design, a non-profit organisation launched by HUD to retrofit American cities in response to climate change. Its Bay Area Challenge has solicited plans to deal with rising sea levels around San Francisco, and BIG won a competition in collaboration with One Architecture

+ Urbanism and Sherwood Design Engineers to reshape the space around Islais Creek. Their plan makes use of artificial hills and wetlands to create recreational areas. But unlike the Big U, it's not clear when the project will move forward.

Funding woes and murky timelines are common problems faced by these kinds of large-scale projects. Sometimes it's easier to make a difference one small project at a time.

In Hamburg, Zaha Hadid Architects recently completed a new promenade along the Niederhafen River in Hamburg. Along with protecting the city from floods, the 625-metre pathway incorporates leisure facilities including street-level shops and restaurant spaces and an amphitheatre-like staircase where the public can enjoy a view over the water.

In Montreal, a new project set for completion this year seeks to tread lightly over the environment while offering a ▶



When people are having conversations about global warming in a place like Winnipeg, where everyone wanted it to get warmer, you know something is going wrong

year-round leisure space adapted to the city's changing climate. Dubbed the Esplanade Tranquille in honour of an influential bookseller that once operated nearby, the 5,000-square-metre space includes a pavilion and a paved area that will serve as a skating rink in the winter and a plaza for summertime concerts.

That may sound straightforward, "but there are more and more extremes in the weather," says architect Éric Gauthier, of FABG, the Montreal firm designing the project. "The first challenge was that, 10 years ago, you could have flooded the plaza to make a skating rink. But there are now more temperature swings in the winter, more days above freezing, so it has to be refrigerated. At the same time, summer is more and more difficult, with more episodes of extreme heat."

The solution was to dig 36 geothermal wells to provide clean energy to refrigerate the skating rink while also heating the surfaces around it, in order to avoid the ice that can build up

during the now-common wintertime cycles of freezes and thaws. Although the rink would normally be a wide open space – the better for it to be used for concerts in the summer – Gauthier and his team insisted on creating an island of trees in the middle of it, in order to shade it from the summer sun and reduce the urban heat island effect.

The adjacent pavilion will contain a restaurant, indoor public space and heated terraces that can be used in both summer and winter. Although a structure like this would normally be made from concrete, FABG opted to use laminated timber instead. "This timber is from the north of Quebec using little pieces of wood that don't have much construction value otherwise," says Gauthier. "For us, this was the biggest way to make the project sustainable, considering the carbon emitted by making concrete."

The pavilion also has a green roof, which serves as insulation while also preventing the building from emitting too much

Montreal's Esplanade Tranquille will feature 36 geothermal wells



heat in the summer. That meant lobbying for an exemption to the local building code, which prohibited green roofs on wood structures. Gauthier says it was worth the effort to pave the way for other timber projects. "It's rare to see a wood structure like this in a downtown area," he says. "It's like an urban chalet."

Winnipeg has put the finishing touches on its own round of urban chalets. The term "warming huts" is a bit of a misnomer, since the tiny pavilions aren't necessarily meant to keep passers-by warm. The second year featured Woodpile, a shelter by Israeli architects Talmon Biran in which a fire pit was encircled by walls made of stacked wood. "As the winter wore on the pile of wood diminished just as the weather was warming up," says Peter Hargraves. "It was very poetic."

But most of the pavilions are meant as points of visual interest that punctuate the snowy landscape. This year, they include The Droombok, a bird-like sculpture made of

recycled materials by the Office for Nomadic Architecture from Strasbourg. S(Hovel), by Modern Office and Sumer Singh from Calgary, transforms metal snow shovels into a cyclone perched atop the river ice. A high point of the festivities came when Winnipeg band Royal Canoe teamed up with Sputnik and Luca Roncoroni, creative director of Icehotel in Sweden, to perform a show with instruments made of ice.

These kinds of things have given people in Winnipeg a new appreciation of their frigid climate. And it has made them aware of just how much that climate is changing. Winnipeg is still cold, but the rivers took longer than usual to freeze this year, leading to a delay in the construction of warming huts.

"People are now having conversations about global warming in a place where everyone wanted it to get warmer," says Hargraves. "If people are having these conversations in a place like Winnipeg, you know something is going wrong." ●



PSBA and INOONI create canoe-shaped sports centre

The design of the green-roofed canoeing centre in Poland was inspired by the building's function, explain the design team. **Stu Roberts** finds out more

The design of the building was inspired by the sport it was built for



PBSA Przemysław Sokołowski Biuro Architektoniczne and INOONI Jakub Zygmunt have completed a canoeing centre in Augustow, Poland, with a wooden angular form that is reminiscent of the canoes it houses.

The studios were awarded the project after winning a design competition in 2016 and were briefed to create the facility itself as well as neighbouring recreational areas including a multifunctional sports field, a bike track, a playground and public spaces.

Jakub Zygmunt explained: "The Canoeing Center was a competition task. First of all, we analysed the place and we had to know what the users would need to create the best space for them. We focused on designing a characteristic form connected with the building's function, both inside and out."

Located on the Netta River, the 770 sq m (8,300sq ft) canoeing centre comprises a hub building, which is set back slightly from the water's edge, and a hangar for storing boats that straddles the river and the riverbank.

"We wanted to create a building that would enter into the surrounding landscape, but also one that would be characteristic of the location. The dynamic form of the centre is inspired by the spirit of sport and



The angular wooden sporting building features a sloped green roof

movement, and its wood elevation refers to the nature of that place by the river."

The hub was designed as a base from which to run training, club meetings, competitions and events, with amenities including a training facility, changing rooms, a gym with views of the river, a club room and a canoe and equipment store.

The hub's edges are folded down along two of its planes, creating covered canopies for its entrances and exits, as well as contributing to its eye-catching angular form.

A green, flat roof, meanwhile, slopes slightly downwards along the building's length.

The hangar structure incorporates garage-like entrances from the river, storage space for motorboats, a jetty and a rooftop observation deck on which visitors can sit and watch activity on the water.

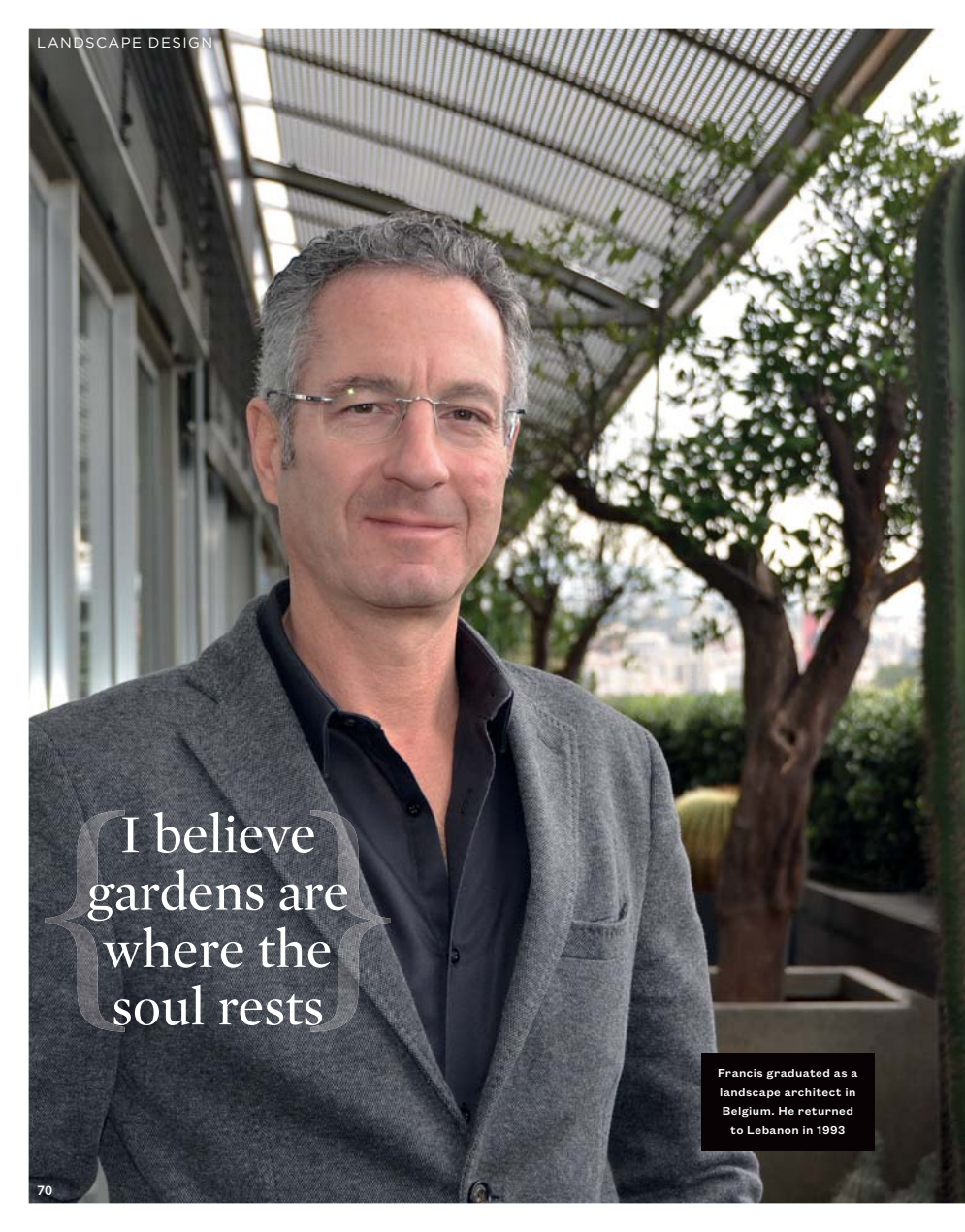
Both buildings are finished with Siberian larch, giving a natural aesthetic that fits with the surrounding landscape, while the interiors have been kept minimalistic and functional. ●

The centre's dynamic form is inspired by the spirit of sport and movement

JAKUB ZYGMUNT



Siberian larch has been used for the exterior



I believe
gardens are
where the
soul rests

Francis graduated as a landscape architect in Belgium. He returned to Lebanon in 1993



Frederic Francis

With collaborators including Zaha Hadid, Jean Nouvel and OMA, the principal of Francis Landscapes works with nature to create green spaces, often in harsh desert climates. Kath Hudson reports

One of the first landscape architecture firms in the Middle East, Lebanon-based Francis Landscapes was established by Irntraut Schoeber Francis in 1987, who inspired a deep love of both the profession and nature in her son, Frederic Francis. Francis is now taking the company forward, with projects in the Middle East, northern Africa and India.

When did you first decide to become a landscape architect?

It's in my veins and my blood. I grew up in both Beirut and Vienna and throughout my childhood, I spent time in the gardens with my mother, which developed a love of nature and planted the desire to be a landscape architect. Although I formally trained in Europe, I have gained much of my knowledge about working in the Middle Eastern environment from my mother.

After training in Europe, why did you come back to the Middle East to work?

I grew up in both Lebanon and Austria; this helped me widen and diversify my cultural knowledge. Since there was no adequate training back then in landscape architecture in the MENA region, I studied in France and Belgium.

After graduating in 1993, I returned to Lebanon and took on the management of the firm with the plan to grow it nationally and internationally.

What are the main challenges of working in the Middle East?

The first one is the harsh climate, which makes things harder to grow than in Europe. Also we frequently build landscapes from scratch, where nothing exists other than barren, desert land.

Although there's an ancient culture of gardening in the Middle East, in more recent times those skills have been lost and people generally have no idea what landscape architecture is.

It was challenging in the early days, as I needed to persuade people that they needed a landscape architect to conceive their outdoor spaces. It felt as though I was setting off on a pilgrimage.

I came back to this part of the world so that I could express myself. I'm constantly having to break new ground and discover new techniques. Each day that presents a new challenge is a happy day for me, because it gives me the chance to educate and inspire people. I like creating spaces where people meet and live and feel good.



KING ABDULLAH II HOUSE OF CULTURE AND ART

JORDAN

Frederic Francis says: "This was my first collaboration with Zaha Hadid Architects – I have worked on around 10 ZHA projects to date – and it was quite a challenging one set in a challenging climate where landscape and architecture blended in gracefully. Our approach was to create bold gestures with over-the-top components.

Designed by Zaha Hadid, this project was inspired by the concept of erosion and the transformational quality of rock and natural substances. Landscaped areas are integrated as melding, moving carpets and treated as bold spaces which acquire a variety of textures and forms. The architecture is curved out from the rock, as though it has been moulded by wind and water.

Existing trees were preserved in addition to the introduction of a new botanical language which is in tune with the proposed design concept and innovative architecture. Low to medium maintenance ground covers and plants with low water requirement were used.

Frederic Francis and his team have worked with Zaha Hadid Architects on several projects



You have worked extensively in northern Africa and India. How does it compare to the Middle East?

The culture of tending the land in India extends back to Mogul times, so generally the people relate to gardening. In Africa, you have to sensibillise people about the topic. In Egypt and Morocco the best hotels and resorts are based around luxury and outdoor living in beautiful gardens, so you have to fight against the climate to create an oasis.

However, even in difficult conditions, if you respect and work with nature, you will succeed. In a desert landscape you need minimum water in the beginning – just some localised water to help the plants stabilise and grow – and after a few years nature takes over. People are amazed by the results we can create.

In a desert landscape you need
minimum water in the beginning –
after a few years nature takes over



THE RITZ-CARLTON ABU DHABI, GRAND CANAL

Built on a 250,000sq m plot of deserted land on the canal, Francis Landscapes conceived a Venetian type luxurious hotel with lush green gardens, man-made hills, sandy beaches and artificial lagoons out of desert, arid land, where the temperatures exceed 40 degrees Celsius. It had to be competitive because there are a lot of five star hotels in the region. Two lagoons were carved into the land to enhance the waterfront experience; a number of the buildings nestle into man-made landscaped hills. Olive trees, palms and bougainvillea were among the plants and trees used.

What is your USP as a landscape architect?

Clients say we are profound in our approach. I do it out of passion and commitment: I believe gardens are where the soul rests and that they should awaken all of the senses. The places we create are strong and have their own personal identity. I would say I tend to have a rather minimalist and pure approach – I listen to nature first as each project needs to be responsive to its environment, as well as the specifics of its location.

How do you approach a new project?

It's very important to create a garden which meets the needs of the client and which has its own identity, philosophy and story.

First, I think about how to introduce a green approach, as landscape architects have a social responsibility to try to solve the environmental challenges presented by each project. I then think about how to connect the garden to its people.

What future plans or ambitions do you have?

I'd like to continue to push the limits of landscape architecture and to try and open more doors with my work. I'd love to have children so that I could pass my passion for gardening on to them, in the way my mother did for me. And I'd like to continue to work in wider geographical areas, such as Iran, which is a very interesting country.



ALJADA CENTRAL HUB

This was another collaboration with Zaha Hadid, creating a new city in Sharjah, near Dubai, for 450,000 people, with all the infrastructure a city needs, as well as leisure, retail, and restaurants.

Francis Landscapes' brief was to create a centrepiece which people would want to spend time in with walking and cycling trails, sports facilities and water attractions.

The architecture is based on the idea of the splash of a droplet of water – this idea is extended throughout the entire site and reproduced in the landscape and architecture.

Francis Landscapes
are working with Zaha
Hadid Architects on
the Aljada Central Hub





Recycled concrete, sand, rubber mulch from tyres and demolition aggregate were used in this project

BEE'AH HEADQUARTERS

Francis says: "This was another project we worked on with Zaha Hadid to create a landscape around a waste management company. For me, this is a one of a kind project which pivots around the idea of creating an architecture and a landscape which really melt into the desert. To recreate and integrate landscape in its natural environment.

"I made it a point to only use the materials needed to build the landscape out of the products recycled by the firm, such as concrete, sand, rubber mulch from tyres and demolition aggregate for the roads and walkways. We created artificial dunes using the existing sand which were shaped as they would be in the desert and used for numerous functions such as energy storage, gathering spaces and shaded areas. Native desert plants which regenerate were used, and encouraged local fauna and flora."



I made it a point to only use products recycled by the firm to build the landscape. We created artificial dunes using existing sand

LUNGS OF THE CITY BEIRUT

Francis says: "Spanning 300,000sq m, this is the main public park in Beirut which was mostly burned in 1982. Originally designed in the seventeenth century, it had been planted with pine trees and was known as the pine forest of Beirut. I was part of the team which won the project in the international competition launched in 1992.

"It's known as the lungs of Beirut as it's right in the middle of the city and the only green space. With its reinvention, we had to accommodate all types of activity



– playgrounds, seating areas, jogging trails, botanical gardens, an amphitheatre and water features. We wanted to create a project which connected the city and the people.

"We used native plants from the Mediterranean and planted 40,000 pine trees among other trees such as olive and eucalyptus. I'm most proud of the fact that I planted the first 100 trees by hand. It's rewarding to see how, coming back several years later, nature has taken over and the park has been resurrected from the ashes. It's good to see how people relate to the garden you have conceived, and how they use it to enhance their daily routines." ●



In Blackpool, UK, a traditional seaside B&B has been reimagined as a series of curated installations that include a guest room designed by a disabled artist to be deliberately inaccessible for able bodied guests. **Kath Hudson** speaks to some of the key players who brought the idea to life





B

Recently opened Art B&B in Blackpool, UK, is a hotel and venue with a difference – a community business that reinvests profits into arts and community projects, and a unique boutique hotel with 19 bedrooms-come-art installations designed to get guests thinking.

The people behind Art B&B have taken a tired hotel on Blackpool's seafront and handed over the décor and design to a range of artists to reimagine. Every room is presented as a piece of art, offering a unique guest experience, as well as reflecting the history and entertainment legacy of the seaside town.

One of the rooms, named Welcome Inn, has been designed by disabled artist Christopher Samuels to be difficult to navigate as a way of giving guests an insight into the access problems faced by many disabled people. The Art Deco Mugonyi Cinema Room, meanwhile, has its own mini cinema and a film licence from the British Film Institute, while the Willy Little Suite celebrates theatrical seaside entertainers.

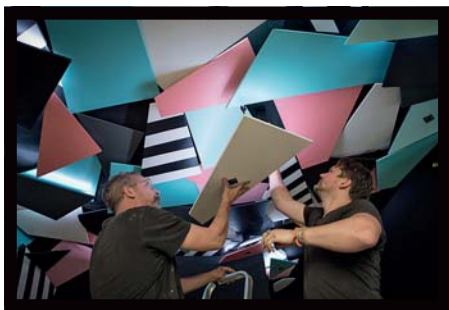
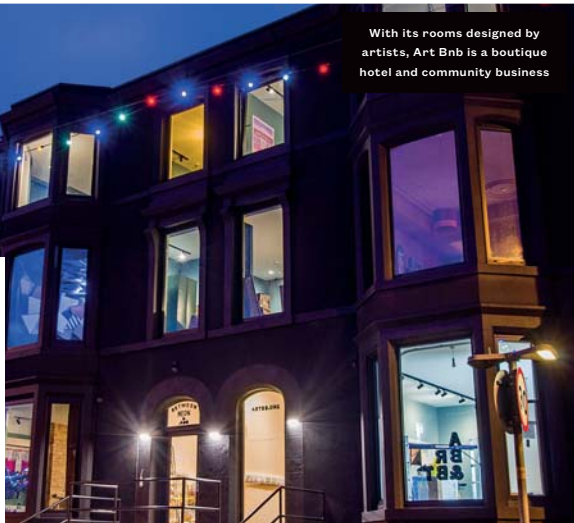
Led by Leftcoast, an organisation which runs a programme of arts, culture and creative activity in the area, the aim of this ambitious project is to promote art in the town through its tourist economy. As well as being a draw for cultural tourists, there is a cocktail bar and event space open to the public.

Michael Trainor, who was the artistic director of Leftcoast, became the creative director of the hotel, selecting the contemporary artists and then overseeing the complicated task of integrating their artistic visions into the refurbishment.

To help bring the project to fruition, Unlimited – an arts commissioning programme which enables work by disabled artists to reach new audiences – was also enlisted, introducing Kristina Veasey and Christopher Samuels. Veasey's design was a modification of her existing touring exhibition, while Samuels' concept, which was based on his personal experience, has garnered a great of press coverage.

Now that the hotel is up and running, it has become a community interest company. Staff are paid, but the board of directors are voluntary and all profits are reinvested in the hotel and art and community projects, so its visitors can support the arts while they sleep.

With its rooms designed by artists, Art Bnb is a boutique hotel and community business



Artist Mark McLure working on his room (above); Tim Echell's neon sculpture (below)



Michael Trainor

Creative director, Art B&B

The idea first came about in 2015, when I was running Leftcoast, an arts and cultural organisation in Blackpool, which has now located to Art B&B. We were looking for ways of sustaining arts and culture in Blackpool, where the main economy is tourism, and thought we could do a clever thing where we create a venue, an art space and a revenue generating business, with art as the main attraction. To my knowledge this has never been done before.

It was a great idea – but also a stupid one – because it was so incredibly difficult to execute! It's hard enough to build a hotel without having to commission 30 artists and integrate art installations into a build! We worked with a local practice, Joseph Boniface Architects, who were really patient with accommodating so many people and so many different needs.

As we're art commissioners first and historians second, it led to some interesting conversations with the builders who initially wanted to "fix" the art, especially with Christopher Samuels' room, but in the end they really tuned into the concept.

A community interest company was set up to run the project, with a voluntary board, and we sourced funding from a mix of art and community funds, including The Arts Council and Power to Change. Without public money, we wouldn't have been able to bring this £1.2m project to fruition. Once the hotel starts to make money, all of the profits will be reinvested or invested into art or community projects.

It has been fantastic to see all of the artistic ideas become a physical reality. It is way more immersive and detailed than people expect it to be. Everybody loves it: they think it will be a few pictures on the wall, but it's much more than that. Every room offers an experience.

I'm very proud of it, but don't ask me if I want to do a second one! Now we have a hotel manager in place, I'm going back to the art world to make art!

Verrent is senior producer at arts commissioning programme Unlimited



Jo Verrent

Senior producer, Unlimited

Unlimited is the world's largest supporter of disabled artists. Since 2013, it has provided almost £4m to 280 disabled artists, supporting a range of artistic and cultural projects. We are always looking for new opportunities and were delighted when this one came up through Leftcoast, which has a record of genuine support and engagement with disabled artists and were looking to have a broad and diverse range of artists represented at Art B&B.

We had already supported Kristina Veasey's My Dirty Secret exhibition, and immediately thought this would be a natural fit for Art B&B. But we also put a call out inviting artists to send proposals for a room or artwork. Around 20 people applied and we narrowed this down, asking a few to create full concepts.

We chose to support Christopher Samuels' proposal for a room. It was clearly the best application on the table,

but he wasn't the most experienced applicant and it definitely wasn't a risk free option. We didn't think Art B&B would go with it, because it's intensely problematic for them to have a room which is problematic! But from the get go, they did whatever they could to make it work within the legal requirements of building regulations.

It's worked really well as a piece of conceptual art. It can be difficult to break into the conceptual art scene, but hopefully this has helped Christopher's career as well as creating a discussion about accessibility.

It's been a delight to be involved with this project and now Unlimited is talking to a couple of other hotels about our artists designing rooms. Artists are an underused resource for commercial buildings, bringing a fresh approach, as well as creating an immersive environment.



It's hard enough to build a hotel without having to commission 30 artists and integrate art installations into it!

Christopher Samuels' room has been designed to be deliberately frustrating to use



Kristina Veasey

Artist and creator of A Room full of Dirty Secrets, Art B&B

I live with Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, a condition causing chronic fatigue and chronic pain, which can result in me being laid up for days and unable to do any housework.

I found that while I was incapacitated the general household mess was frustrating and impacted my mental state. As my family didn't seem to have a problem with it, I started to take photos to create an evidence file. Very quickly this turned into something else. As an artist, I couldn't help myself getting creative when photographing the scum under the fridge or hair in a plug hole! Seeing familiar landscapes from new perspectives led me to discover the unseen beauty in household dirt. For example, a two-week old piece of banana cake discovered in my son's room looked like snow-capped mountains!

This documentation of household mess turned into a photography exhibition and then was supported by Unlimited to become an interactive touring art installation, My Dirty Secret! which showcases my work as well as presenting other people's experiences about housework.

In 2017, Jo Verrent introduced me to Michael Trainor about adapting My Dirty Secret for a permanent room at Art B&B and I was delighted to be given the opportunity to reach new audiences.

My images have been repeated to form vibrant patterns which are printed onto fabrics and furnishings. Because my prints are bright and overwhelming, some of them needed to be toned down slightly in order for it to be a room which would be restful enough to stay in. In addition to three of the original framed photographs, I created three different wallpapers, curtains, a lightshade and two upholstered chairs. The patterns are made from such messy delights as a pile of shoes, an overflowing laundry basket and a glass of orange juice with mould in it. ●

Christopher Samuels

Artist and creator of The Welcome Inn at Art B&B

This concept was inspired by my own experience, so I already had the idea written down when I saw the call from Unlimited. In 2017 I was technically made homeless while two local authorities argued over who had the responsibility to pay for my care and to rehouse me. During this time, I had to take emergency accommodation in an inaccessible hotel room for three months.

I couldn't navigate around the bed in my wheelchair. I couldn't get into the bed, I couldn't use the dressing table because it was too low. I couldn't shut the bathroom

door, or use the toilet or shower.

With the hotel room design, I wanted to make people experience the reality of what it's like to be disabled: the frustrations of having to navigate a space which isn't designed for them and having to problem solve around simple everyday actions, like turning on a light.

Each feature of the Art B&B room has its own significance: a bathroom door which doesn't close, upside down shower gel, curtains which don't cover the window fully, a tv which can only be viewed in the mirror, and insufficient space to get around the bed.

As an artist interested in identity politics and disabled politics, it has been great to be able to talk about my experience. It's been a therapeutic and enjoyable process. The reactions have been very positive and people say it has been thought provoking. You are more vulnerable when you're asleep, so sleeping in a space changes the dynamics of the experience, and makes it more powerful.

I have had some exciting offers as a result, including addressing architecture students at Loughborough University. I would love the opportunity to expand on this idea and take it to more venues, as well as work with organisations to design properly accessible spaces for disabled people.



the rooms

Kristina Veasey's Dirty Secrets Room is a four person dorm (see interview)

The Now You See It Now You Don't Suite, created by artist and writer Professor Tim Etchells, features a neon installation

Bold coloured patterns and panels adorn the walls and ceiling of The McClure Room, by Mark McClure



The spirit of theatrical seaside entertainers is celebrated in the Willy Little Suite, created by Mel Brimfield

The Reading Room is a fascinating contemporary art library, with its own collection of art books, created by Garth Gratrix and Tom Ireland



Planet-inspired artwork features in The Moon Room, created by Adrian Pritchard

Artist and film festival curator, Catherine Mugonyi, has created the art deco style Mugonyi Cinema Room which has its own film license from the British Film Institute, its own mini cinema and access to a selection of specially curated films

Images and tricks hide behind small velvet curtains and stimulate right brain activity to help you sleep in the Augusto Room, by magician and artist Augusto Corrieri



The Welcome Inn, created by Christopher Samuels, has been designed to give visitors an insight into the frustrations of being disabled in poorly designed spaces

Based on some unrealised 1935 neon signage for Blackpool, the Progress Room, designed by Mark Titchner, reflects the town's aspirations for progress.



Jez Dolan's Queer Room is centred around the concept of LGBT+, and features specially commissioned wallpaper and fabrics and has a rococo vibe

Designed to feel like an art gallery, The Gallery Room is the work of Blackpool's Abingdon Studios and features artwork from eight artists in a changing exhibition programme



A celebration of the show-women of Blackpool's past, The Carnesky Room by Dr Marissa Carnesky, features costumes, artefacts and four telephones relating stories of the town's entertainment

The walls of Helen Stratford's Life Room are decorated with flow charts of daily family routines of Blackpool residents.

DREAMING BIG

Named after the protected amphibians that slowed down work on the UK's hottest new hotel, The Newt in Somerset features one of the most ambitious gardens seen for many years. **Magali Robathan** visits and speaks to owner Karen Roos

The 17th century Georgian estate has been restored to house The Newt hotel

W

hen South African billionaire Koos Bekker and his wife Karen Roos began their search for a Georgian country house to use as a weekend retreat, they knew the gardens were always going to be at the heart of their vision.

The pair are the creators and owners of Babylonstoren, a historic Cape Dutch farm estate that's been converted into a boutique hotel, spa and winery near Cape Town, South Africa. It's a beautiful, painstakingly restored 17th century farmhouse with an eight acre fruit and vegetable garden that Monty Don has described as "one of the most superb in the world".

This is a couple takes gardens very seriously. Which is a good job, because the Somerset estate that Roos spotted for sale while leafing through a copy of Country Life magazine in 2013 is the result of the work of generations of gardeners, including Arthur Hobhouse, one of the founders of the UK's national parks system, and more recently garden designer, writer and presenter Penelope Hobhouse, who lived and worked there until 1979.

"I loved it immediately," says Karen Roos, of Hadspen House – now The Newt in Somerset – and as I arrive on a bright, windblown day, it's easy to see why.

What started as a hunt for a private residence has grown to become one of the UK's most talked about hotel openings, with 23 rooms set across the honey-coloured limestone main house and in converted farm buildings in the old stable yard, a spa and a gym, The Botanical Rooms restaurant in the main hotel and a standalone new-build Garden Cafe that overlooks the gardens from which the food is sourced, its own cider (sorry, cyder) press and bar and an interactive museum about the history of gardening. ▶



THE GARDENS

Although The Newt is one of the UK's most talked about hotel openings, it's the gardens that really take centre stage, and they are where I begin my tour.

Visitors are welcomed in the triple height Threshing Barn – part of a new cluster of buildings designed by Benjamin and Beauchamp which also include the Farm Shop, Cyder Press and Bar, and which have been designed using traditional techniques and local Hadspen stone from a quarry next to the estate to create a historic feel. The Threshing Barn has huge floor-to-ceiling windows and a giant kinetic sculpture inspired by the newt, by Studio Drift.

The formal gardens have been designed by Italian-French landscape architect Patrice Taravella, who also designed the edible and medicinal gardens at Babylonstoren. In February, when I visited, many of the plants were dormant, but the sheer scale and ambition of the outside space is clear.

Highlights include the walled parabola garden, which contains apple trees from each apple growing county of

England, trained to form a maze as they grow. There are also kitchen gardens that supply the restaurants, coloured gardens, a fragrance garden, wildflower meadows which I've been assured look stunning in the spring and summer, and a beautiful Victorian-style greenhouse with a small cafe bar where guests and visitors can drink tea surrounded by tropical plants and ferns.

The estate also features a deer park, orchards with more than 3,000 apple trees that favour traditional apple growing methods over more recent commercial methods (the trees are widely spaced, meaning they are able to grow much taller) and several miles of walks through ancient woodlands and meadows.

A steel and timber elevated treetop walk, the Viper – designed and built by architect-engineer duo Mark Thomas and Henry Fagan – has been shipped from South Africa, and leads visitors above the trees to the newly-opened Story of Gardening, which has been created by Stonewood Design and features rammed concrete and Hadspen stone aggregate walls, a poured resin floor, a glazed, structure-free facade and a green roof. ▶





The walled garden features apple trees from each apple growing county of England

KAREN ROOS

OWNER, THE NEWT

What were your first impressions when you discovered Hadspen House?

For years I'd been looking for a Georgian country house in the UK. I was in the Seychelles, paging through a magazine, when I noticed this one in Somerset: one of the most beautiful I ever saw. Classical proportions; Hadspen limestone the colour of burnt orange. I loved it immediately.

What was your vision and do you think you've achieved it?

Initially the idea was merely to enjoy the house as a weekend retreat. But one thing led to another, and the project ran away with us ...

What were the biggest challenges of this project?

The house itself is Grade II*-listed, so restoring it presented challenges. We had to preserve wood panelling, cosset bats in the ceiling and of course entertain the news! The critters delayed building work by about a year, but in the end we embraced them as dear friends.

How did the location and history of the building influence the design?

I love the Georgian period: symmetrical, restrained, sun-filled. And I now love Somerset immensely: it's about copses and

rolling hills; apple trees and cyder; meadows and cows and cheddar.

Why was it important to use local materials and craftsmanship where possible?

The spirit of the place is everything to us. That runs from hiring staff to working with local craftsmen as well as using designs from British designers such as Tom Dixon. Hadspen limestone and blue lias pops out of the local quarry,

while the skill of local architects, blacksmiths, carpenters and stonemasons sustained us.

What are you proudest of with this project?

That it was fun!

Do you have a personal favourite part of the hotel?

I love the bar. To sip a superb glass of viognier at 7pm: that's my idea of valhalla.

The Newt owner Karen Roos at Babylonstoren, the couple's other property in South Africa

What are you working on now?

We're soon adding a restored Farmyard, so I'm furnishing that. Set to open mid-summer, it will have 17 bedrooms within a former dairy farm on the estate. The tone is laid back, a private experience with a separate swimming pool.





The Georgian granary has been converted into a standalone guest room




Guests are welcomed in the triple height Threshing Barn

► Opened in January 2020, this museum – or ‘immersive experience centre’ – explores and celebrates gardens and their impact on culture through history. A series of multi sensory interactive exhibits, designed by Kossmandejong, explore historic and current gardens from different parts of the world, and the museum culminates in a virtual reality trip to Babylonstoren, Monet’s Garden and Tivoli Gardens Italy.

THE HOTEL

The design of the hotel and gardens was led by Karen Roos, who also oversaw the interiors at Babylonstoren and is a former editor of Elle Decoration South Africa.

The rooms inside the main house are quite classical; the one I visited had a four poster bed with sash windows overlooking the grand sweep of the grounds. The most interesting guestrooms are in the former Stable yard – limestone farm buildings have been beautifully restored, and each of the accommodations are completely unique. The Stable Rooms – previously used as horse boxes – are dark and cozy; they feature wood panelling, wood burning stoves, hay mangers, king size beds and luxurious bathrooms. The Stable Lofts are bright, white and calming, and the standalone Granary building has the feel of a Scandinavian cabin, with a futon bed, exposed stone walls and fur-style throws. ►




► The public spaces mix original features with modern furniture and playful, contemporary touches; I particularly liked the bright, modern woven plastic chairs by German designer Sebastian Herkner for Ames in the bar and croquet room.

The spa is beautiful – housed in the old cow barn – with a roaring fire, exposed limestone walls and a glazed wall in the swimming pool room that looks out onto a medicinal herb garden designed to evoke monastic gardens of the medieval era. As well as the indoor/outdoor hydro pool, the spa also features seven treatment rooms, a sauna, a steam room and a halotherapy room. The high-spec gym is located opposite, and was designed by Invisible Studio as a giant window to minimise the impact on the landscape and give guests views across the vegetable gardens.

The rolling landscape has inspired the hotel's design, with a varied palette of greens used throughout, a Patricia Urquiola-designed chair that resembles 3D flower petals, nature-inspired artworks and illuminated preserved jars of produce acting as decoration in the downstairs cellar room.

For Karen Roos, it was important to celebrate Somerset, in the food, architecture, materials and craftsmanship of the hotel – Hadspen limestone and blue lias quarried nearby can be seen in the buildings and local blacksmiths, carpenters and stonemasons were employed in the project.

As Roos talks to CLADmag, her passion for the land and buildings shines through. This project is clearly a labour of love, and with ongoing plans to create extra accommodation, it's one that's going to keep her busy for some time to come.



The spa features an indoor outdoor pool, steam room and sauna



The main building looks out onto the kitchen gardens



The Hadspen rooms in the main house are classic in style

Gardens

Garden landscaping: Designed by Italian-French architect Patrice Taravella. Actioned by LDC Landscapes working with in-house landscape architect, Katie Lewis.

Water fountains and cascades in the Cascade Gardens: Waterscapes Ltd, based in Wincanton.

Dry-stone walling: Local dry-stone walling expert Tom Trouton.

Ironwork structures and tunnels in the Parabola: Iron Art Bath.

Iron gates in the gardens: Muchelney Forge, based in Langport, Somerset.

Ironwork grilles in the floors, featuring an apple and newt design: Designed by The Newt's in-house landscape architect, Katie Lewis.

Victorian style Greenhouse: Serres et Ferronneries D'Antan.

Egg-shaped 'nests' in the Lower Egg: South-African designer Porky Hefer.

Versailles planters: Jardins do Roi Soleil.

'Flying Newt' installation in the Threshing Barn ceiling: Studio Drift, based in Amsterdam.

Hotel

Vibrant coloured chairs in the Bar and Croquet Room: Sebastian Herkner for Ames.

Light fitting in The Botanical Rooms (Oak Room): Tom Dixon.

Botanical prints in The Botanical Rooms: Dried and pressed from the gardens of Babylonstoren.

Antiques: Some came with the property or belonged to its current owners, others have been sourced over the years from local antiques shops and markets.

Hardware on doors: Peter van Cronenburg.

Tables in The Botanical Rooms: Conran.

Beds in bedrooms 1 & 2: Simon Horn.

Sofas in Farriers bedroom and the Clock House lounge: Diesel with Moroso.

Thinking Man's Chairs on the terrace: Jasper Morrison.

Hanging chair in the Croquet Room: Patricia Urquiola for Moroso.

Construction of lap pool (spa): Barr + Wray.

Construction of indoor/outdoor pool (spa): Barr + Wray. ●



The Botanical Rooms serves food sourced from the estate



The Greenhouse was designed by Serres et Ferronneries D'Antan



SHL managing director
Sanne Wall-Gremstrup
(left) and Perkins+Will
CEO Phil Harrison

BETTER TOGETHER

The merger of Schmidt Hammer Lassen and Perkins+Will enables both firms to work together to create smarter buildings driven by human behaviour, Sanne Wall-Gremstrup and Phil Harrison tell Stu Roberts





When Perkins+Will (PW) bought Schmidt Hammer Lassen (SHL) in early 2018, the US behemoth knew it was getting the Danish firm's expertise in human-centred design. For SHL, it was a chance to develop that expertise further.

"It's always been core to us to take a hard look at human behaviour," SHL's managing director Sanne Wall-Gremstrup tells CLAD. "We are constantly looking for ways to improve our understanding of how people and spaces coexist, as it drives productivity, joy and health."

Tracking and gathering that sort of data has become easier over time, but it's something that Wall-Gremstrup says SHL has been able to accelerate further under PW's ownership. "We're currently involved in projects where we're making use of advanced sensors in our pursuit of learning more about how people use buildings. We used to simulate it, but now sensors empower us to explore things in real-time with real data."

Among the metrics the sensors are being used to track are things like movement,

acoustics, temperature and light. By applying custom algorithms to the data collected and combining it with subjective data from users gathered through surveys, questionnaires, and observations, SHL are able to develop their understanding of how people behave in, perform in and appreciate space. They are then able to modify spaces accordingly.

"As an example, in the common spaces of libraries, we can tell if people are concentrated or stressed," says Wall-Gremstrup. "When stress arrives we can offset this through, say, reshuffling interiors and work processes. Then we validate the prototype, and if it works, we stick with it and capture the learning, and if it doesn't, we'll try something different. It allows us a life more in beta, always dynamically testing and pursuing perfection."

For PW, the acquisition was never simply a matter of asset gathering – in SHL they saw a firm with both a similar philosophy and, as CEO Phil Harrison explains, the ability to render complicated ideas into its space-making with "elegance and beauty".

"A lot of this comes out of the Danish ethos – they've been at it a long time – the

SHL are revitalising Boston's
World Trade Center hotel
and conference facility

ideas of democratic architecture and democratic space, the philosophy that space is for citizenry and that buildings serve a larger purpose than just being for the owner or the person that happens to occupy them at a certain point in time."

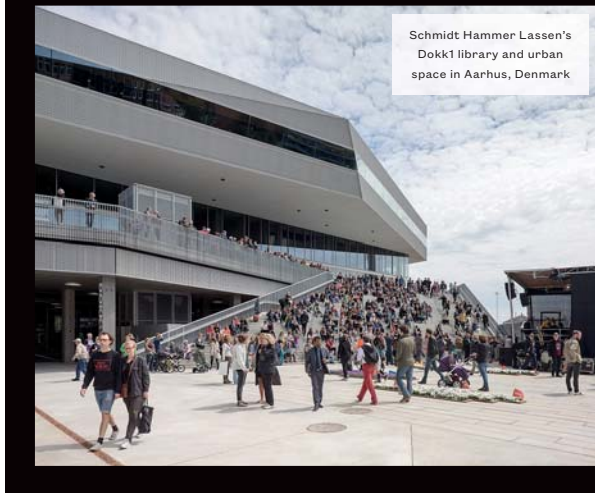
By way of example, Harrison cites SHL's Dokk1 project in Aarhus, Denmark – a library and public square, the place you go to get your passport and driving licence, a pre-school and an arts and culture venue.

"It transforms the idea of what a library can be," says Harrison.

Wall-Gremstrup also cites Dokk1 as a good example of SHL's approach – specifically in exploring the impact of its architecture on the experience of its users.

For the Monroe Blocks masterplan project in Detroit, meanwhile, SHL have been using energy performance, daylight and people-flow simulations to understand potential massing and to inform elements such as the location of entrances and lift capacities.

And, for the Seaport World Trade Center in Boston, SHL have been using



Schmidt Hammer Lassen's Dokk1 library and urban space in Aarhus, Denmark

Most clients are very focused on how buildings are used and experienced as the primary design driver

weather scenario simulations to assess site resiliency and how to adequately protect the building against extreme sea-level rises.

"We're just scratching the surface on all the technology components entering into the design field, says Wall-Gremstrup. "It's tremendously exciting and we're going to learn much more about building materials, upcycling, recycling, intelligent lighting, energy consumption and how to deliver sustainability goals.

"We can use these insights to fuel our essential belief that quality architecture enhances people's lives. Now, it's smarter, faster and comes at a lower cost. It's not that everything becomes scientific, it's more that our creative decisions become better informed."

The innate human-centredness of SHL's design will be something PW can draw upon with the practices now working alongside each other in New York and San Francisco studios – and for Harrison, who has led the company since 2006, it's a timely opportunity.

"Just in the last couple of years, I've seen a notable shift where most clients – or at least the clients we want

to work with – are very focused on how buildings are used and experienced as the primary design driver," says Harrison.

"The qualitative, experiential and environmental aspects of space have become that much more central to most client's missions. It's a fundamental shift."

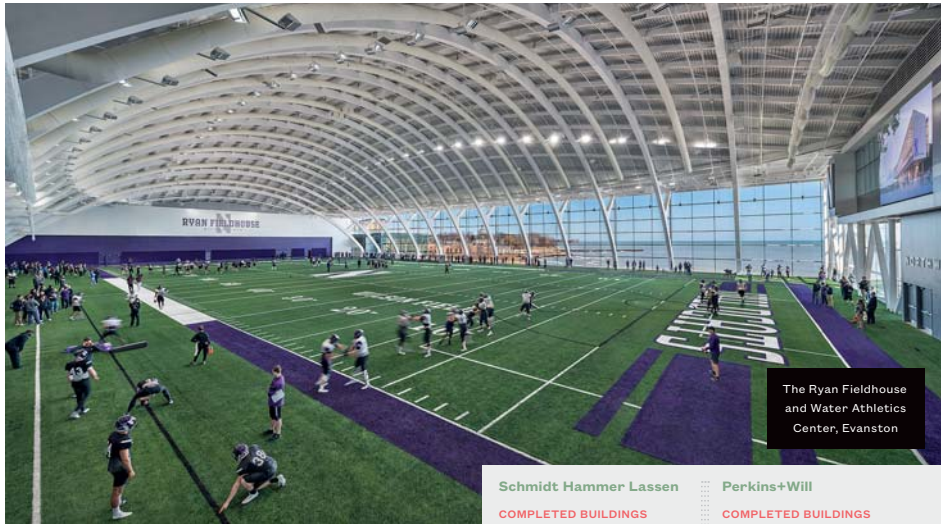
Although PW and SHL will continue to work separately on plenty of projects, they will also work together – with each taking the lead where appropriate – on certain projects, including an upcoming mixed-use development in Toronto and a mixed-use masterplan in Vancouver.

"Our inspiration is not to have a single style or a single methodology across the firm, or even a single voice, but a recognition that we're much richer and that we have greater excellence in our work if we embrace a notion of diversity," says Harrison.

"This goes for the people in our firm, our clients and the places in which we work. And we think having a Danish voice in a diverse organisation in which you share certain core principles that may be put into practice by different people makes for a richer design conversation." ●



SHL's Monroe Blocks mixed development in Detroit, US



The Ryan Fieldhouse and Water Athletics Center, Evanston

Schmidt Hammer Lassen

COMPLETED BUILDINGS

- Skanderborg Town Hall, Denmark (2016)
- Thor Heyerdahl College, Larvik, Norway (2009)
- Vendsyssel Theater, Hjørring, Denmark (2017)
- Malmö Live, Sweden (2015)
- ARoS Museum, Aarhus, Denmark (2004)

ONGOING PROJECTS

- Monroe Blocks, Detroit, US
- Fisketorvet Copenhagen Mall, Denmark
- Sports and Culture Campus Gellerup, Denmark
- Dahlerups Tower – Carlsberg Byen, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Seaport World Trade Center, Boston, US

Perkins+Will

COMPLETED BUILDINGS

- Albion Library, Toronto, Canada (2017)
- Historic Emancipation Park, Houston, US (2017)
- National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, US (2016)
- Northwestern University Ryan Fieldhouse and Walter Athletics Center, Evanston, US (2018)
- Shanghai Natural History Museum, China (2015)

ONGOING PROJECTS

- Destination Crenshaw, Los Angeles, US
- The Meadoway, Toronto, Canada
- The Stage, London, UK
- Suzhou Science and Technology Museum, China



NMAAHC, Washington, US



The SHL-designed Vendsyssel Theater in Denmark



Fisketorvet Copenhagen Mall

mountain MAGIC

Italian wellness hotel brand Lefay has unveiled its second location – a luxury eco-resort in the Dolomites. Jane Kitchen reports

At the newly opened Lefay Resort & Spa Dolomiti in Italy, the family-owned spa hotel brand has sought to create a location that's focused on wellness holistically – both wellness of the body and mind, through the massive 5,000sq m spa, and environmental wellness, with a sustainable design that blends into the landscape.

"At Lefay Properties, wellness embraces the entire holiday experience and can be found everywhere: wide spaces, architectural integration, the natural materials used, the Vital Mediterranean cuisine, and above all the treatments by Lefay Spa, blending together classical Chinese medicine and Western scientific research," says Alcide Leali, managing director of Lefay.

Alcide is the second generation of the Leali family, who made their fortune when they sold regional airline Air Dolomiti to Lufthansa in 2003. They founded Lefay Resorts in 2006, and opened the first location two years later; since then, the original Lefay Resort has become well-known and respected for its unique spa programming and enviable location on the shore of Lake Garda. Indeed, it is one of the hallmarks of the


“
Wellness
embraces
the entire
holiday
experience
”



Alcide Leali Jr.

Lefay brand that the spectacular natural settings are an integral part of the wellness experience, and this is carefully reflected throughout the architecture and design.

The brand's second location in the Dolomites – the Italian side of the Alpine Mountains – nicely complements the Lake Garda location, with outdoor wellness activities focused around skiing and hiking. Plans are also underway for a third Lefay Resort in Tuscany. "We've always said we want three properties

A photograph of a modern A-frame building with a dark grey tiled roof and a large glass window. The building is set against a backdrop of lush green mountains and a clear blue sky with some clouds. The glass window reflects the surrounding forest and mountains. The building has a dark grey stone or concrete base. The overall scene is a beautiful mountain landscape.

Architecture is by Hugo
Demetz, who designed the
property to try and integrate
it into its natural surroundings



Local, natural materials have been used to create an organic, calming feel. Views of the surroundings take centre stage

The design celebrates Lefay's key signature elements: light, space, silence and nature

in Italy: lake, mountains and countryside," says Leali. The Dolomiti property is also home to the first Lefay-branded serviced wellness residences – 22 on-site apartments, starting at €1 million – designed to give guests the privacy of being at home along with access to all of the resort's services, including direct access to the spa.

Mountain landscape

The 88-bedroom Lefay Resort & Spa Dolomiti has been built according to the principles of bio-architecture by Italian architect Hugo Demetz, who worked on the original Lefay resort in Lake Garda as well as other well-known wellness properties in Italy, including the five Adler properties, the Hotel Seeleiten, and the Hotel Terme Merano.

"Lefay Resort & Spa Dolomiti has not been designed as a single huge building, but as a property divided into three units: the resort's main services are located within the central body, which strongly characterises the entire project and represents the iconographic 'diamond' element of the Dolomites; from here the suites spread out towards the side wings, completely coated in fir and larch wood," says Liliانا Leali, CEO of Lefay.



Apostoli emphasises natural materials local to the Dolomites and used for generations

"This design peculiarity has involved a considerable effort in the construction phase, rewarded by a final result consistent with the group's philosophy: the resort is integrated into the surrounding landscape and, thanks to the inclusion in the morphology of the land with southern exposure, it enjoys solar radiation throughout the day. It's inspired by local construction and materials, reinterpreted in a contemporary key."

Inspiration from nature

That emphasis on locality is also key to the interior design, which was carried out by Italian designer Alberto Apostoli, also a specialist in wellness design. Apostoli emphasises natural materials local to the Dolomites and used for generations, including Italian woods, such as oak for the parquet flooring and chestnut for the furnishings; local stones, including tonalite, a granite-like stone historically used for fountains in the mountain pastures; and Italian natural leathers and wools. All the textiles, including the bed linen, are made from natural cotton fibre with no chemical treatment.

Apostoli worked closely with the Leali family and the Lefay Resorts project team on the vision for the look and feel of



Spa and wellness specialist
Alberto Apostoli was
responsible for the interiors





The spa has been designed to blend into the surroundings and reflect Lefay's philosophy of healing through nature



The restaurants serve traditional, regional dishes in contemporary surroundings

Floor-to-ceiling glass takes advantage of the mountain views throughout the resort

the hotel suites, restaurants, common areas, the 5,000sq m spa, and the new Lefay residences. "For each space, a great deal of work has been done to create completely personalised environments, including the design of the furnishings," he says. "The design concept is focused on specific values, including a sense of Italian lifestyle, contemporary luxury, and environmental and energy sustainability."

Both the property's 22 Wellness Residences and the 88 hotel suites feature Lefay's signature elements of light, nature, silence and open spaces, and have been designed to reflect the beauty of the Dolomites within the room, with wide spaces, a neutral palette, natural fabrics and local materials.

The resort features two restaurants and a central cocktail bar and lounge, all of which boast floor-to-ceiling glass and dramatic views that make you feel more like you're standing at the edge of a mountain than sitting in a hotel lounge. Indeed, floor-to-ceiling glass takes advantage of the mountain views throughout the resort, from the spa's relaxation area to the restaurants and even one of the saunas. This is part of Lefay's philosophy of healing through nature – taking advantage of the spectacular natural surroundings and integrating the resort into the landscape.

At the newly opened Gruel restaurant – named for the mountain that provides the backdrop to the property – locally sourced organic cuisine is served, and the menu takes an 'altimetric' approach to dining, with ingredients and dishes divided into three categories according to their altitude: Valley

Wellness is central to the ethos of Lefay,
and as such, the 5,000sq m spa has
been placed at the centre of the resort



The 5,000sq m spa is spread
across four levels. The design
and treatments fuse Eastern
and Western influences



The Royal Pool and Spa Suite has a private bio-sauna, steam sauna and jacuzzi

Floor, Mountain Pasture and High Mountain. Apostoli took inspiration for the restaurant's design from the idea of an enchanted forest, creating metal leaves which hang from the ceiling and trees used as a frame for the room.

Sustainable design

Lefay has positioned itself as a sustainable brand, and the new Lefay Resort & Spa Dolomiti takes advantage of the latest in renewable energy sources. ClimaHotel certified, the resort has been conceived following two guidelines: the containment of energy need, through a high level of insulation of all surfaces, and the use of renewable energy sources with high production systems, such as a biomass furnace and a co-generation plant. Consistent with Lefay Resort & Spa Lake Garda, which has been offsetting its CO2 emissions for the past five years, Lefay Resort & Spa Dolomiti also plans to neutralise its CO2 emissions. Social and environmental responsibility are key in the company's guidelines, and using local suppliers and materials, such as the tonalite stone, does the double-duty of giving the hotel an authentic Alpine feel, employing local workers, and at the same time helping reduce the carbon footprint of the hotel's construction.

"Lefay is extremely forward-thinking and attentive to even the smallest detail," says Apostoli. "The brand has been able to establish itself in a particularly competitive marketplace, giving shape to an idea of contemporary and environmentally



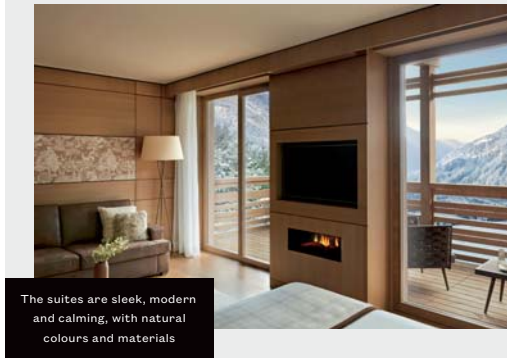
Renewable energy sources include a biomass furnace and co-generation plant

We believe in investing
in the future, creating
something for a select few
that benefits everyone





The architecture features clean lines and a diamond shape designed to represent the Dolomite mountains



The suites are sleek, modern and calming, with natural colours and materials

friendly luxury. This work represents the perfect example of our studio's operating philosophy – that is, extending the idea of wellness to all aspects of the project."

Five zones of wellness

Wellness is central to the ethos of Lefay, and as such, the 5,000sq m spa has been placed at the centre of the resort – both literally and figuratively – and is spread over four levels. A vast 1,700sq m (18,300sq ft) thermal area known as the Energy Therapeutic World includes nine thermal experiences set in five zones, each based on the classical Chinese concept that energy, or Qi, cyclically moves through five phases between the poles of yin and yang, depending on the season or time of day. Five areas – The Green Dragon, The Red Phoenix, The White Tiger, The Black Tortoise and the Centre, which connects all of the zones – are each devoted to a particular season and linked to an organ in the body. Each of the areas – which feature different colours and scent as well as different levels of temperature and humidity – can be reached from the Centre, which is designed as a place of connection and transition between the zones, and includes a hydrotherapy pool with a domed skylight, and relaxation areas with commanding views of the mountains.

In addition to the Energy Therapeutic World, the spa features a floor for treatments and rituals with more than 20 treatment rooms, as well as a level dedicated to fitness. The indoor sports pool uses the local tonalite stone, and has been inspired by mountain streams, while the indoor-outdoor pool includes hydrotherapy circuits, and boasts stunning views.

"Innovation, nature and a unique wellness method are the principles of the Lefay wellness philosophy, blending together East and West to recover inner harmony," says Alcide Leali. "We believe that exclusivity means doing what no one else has yet thought of, investing in the present and in the future, creating something for a select few that benefits everyone." ●

Marianne Shillingford



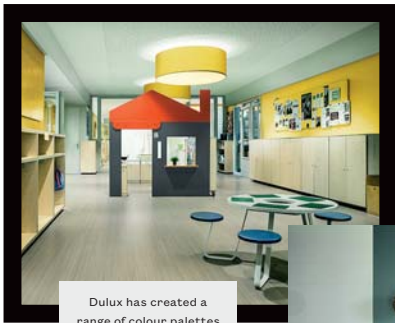
Used cleverly, the right paint can encourage the users of our spaces to relax, socialise, be more active and sleep better, the creative director of Dulux tells Stu Robarts

As the creative director for Dulux in the UK, Marianne Shillingford is an authority on the power of colour, but her focus is often on the way it can make us feel and behave as much as the aesthetic value of different colour schemes.

"A lot of our research is about creating palettes of colours and working with lighting designers, flooring designers and architects on paint design and product design to create palettes of colours that really enhance wellbeing," she says.

"Wellbeing can be about having somewhere where you get a chance to be comfortable and de-stress – so those kinds of colours can be soft and soothing – but it can also be about colours that invite people to get together and chat, or about re-energising colours."

Much of the work carried out by Shillingford and her team at Dulux involves designing palettes and recommending products for different sectors based on what the desired outcome is, rather than just the desired aesthetic.



Dulux has created a range of colour palettes for different sectors

She explains: "In the sports and fitness category, it's key to have durable surfaces for heavy wear and a colour scheme that helps to enhance and promote energy levels in different workout spaces – to motivate and stimulate in the gym and to calm and relax in the yoga studio.

"In a hotel, the needs will be a little different, although durability will be key and the aesthetic will be working much harder to establish a unique look and feel, to stimulate appetite in the restaurant, relaxation in the lounge areas and restful sleep in bedrooms."

Not only are colour palettes and paint properties chosen based on sectors, they are specifically created for them. "Each of our colour ranges has been designed with specific sectors in mind from education to leisure, with a richness of research that can positively affect how people feel

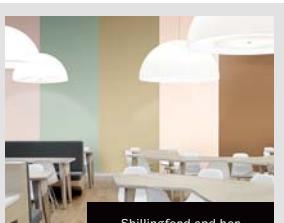
The technology involved in paint is extraordinary



and respond in a space," she says. "This occupant-centred approach to designing colours and products gives professionals a hugely valuable tool in creating spaces that are much more than beautiful and practical.

"Our paints and coatings contain different technologies that suit the demands of specific projects and surfaces. They provide a range of sustainable solutions like super durability that increases the decorating lifecycle and saves costs on maintenance, high light reflectance that saves energy and enhances the appearance of space, and thermal properties that help to reduce heating costs.

"The technology involved in paint is extraordinary. It's a smart product now." ●



Shillingford and her team work closely with designers and architects

TIME TO RELAX



ph. Gela Pairozzo

**SHOWER
& STEAM BATH**

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design Cristiano Mino

STARPOOL

starpool.com

wellness concept

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