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Singapore: a city-state with a creative agenda

Kevin Li

In the end of 2001, a high-level Economic Review Committee (ERC) was set up by the Prime Minister to promote the further growth and development of the Singapore economy. The report was published in 2003 outlining its recommendations to remake Singapore into a creative and entrepreneurial nation. It also recognized the importance to ensure that as many Singaporeans as possible are equipped with the know-how and skills for a knowledge economy. Among other measures, the rich cultural and sports programmes are necessary to create a conducive environment that can provide a competitive edge over other urban centres in attracting and retaining global talent.¹

Architectural design is one of eleven creative industries that has economic impacts to Singapore. The target is to double the GDP contribution of the creative cluster from an estimated 3% in 2000 to 6% in 2012.² On an institutional level, the Singapore Institute of Architect, too, has set its vision to make Singapore an architectural capital to compete with the world in its 2007-08 Manifesto.

Speaking on the prize-giving ceremony of the first International public housing competition

in Singapore in 2002, the Minister for National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan, said that the new housing will serve a different crowd in the future, a knowledge-based workforce fuelling Singapore's economy. He added, in the last 30 years, the planning focus for the city was on building it into a business and financial centre. The future of our city has to go beyond meeting the functional needs of the business community. We need to build vibrant quality places. Singaporeans today want a more attractive and liveable city.³

Two years later, he spoke about his personal experience witnessing the transformation of Manchester, a city suffering from terrorist's bombing in 1996, into a vibrant city through many new and innovative architectural and urban redevelopment projects. Like London, New York and Rotterdam, the development of quality buildings and public space does not rest on industry players alone. There is a need to nurture among the wider population a design-conscious culture that appreciates, desires and demands quality design for our built environment.⁴

It was against this backdrop and context that LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts held a two-

stage competition for the new campus. Four architects out of 68 entries were selected for the second stage. RSP Architects Planners & Engineers was adjudged the winner in February 2003. LASALLE is a 23-year-old institution with over 2,000 students from 35 countries. Situated in the newly designated zone for the arts, culture, learning and entertainment hub, the open and transparent 36,000 sq.m. development reflects the school's emphasis in creativity. Once the school is fully occupied, not only students are encouraged to see each other's work through the multi-facet façade, any member of the public can walk inside the building and witness a wide range of activities held at different levels. Indeed, the unorthodox campus becomes a melting pot for the diverse art forms and culture exchange between the students and the general public.

The recognition of good learning environment begun in the 1990s when the late James Stirling was appointed to design a new campus for Temasek Polytechnic, this was followed by an international architectural competition for Singapore's third university - Singapore Management University, the international



The Republic Polytechnic, officially opened in 2007, has courtyards that bring natural lighting into the lower deck.

competition was won by KNTA and British architect Edward Cullinan in 2000.⁵ Though the project was criticized for damaging existing plantation in the urban environment, a large portion of the 239,000 sq.m. facilities was

hidden below ground forming a well-connected concourse freely accessible to the public in the city centre.

The recently inaugurated Republic Polytechnic

is also the result of an international architectural competition held in 2002. The winning team, consisted of Maki & Associates and DP Architects, introduces an elliptical nucleus master planning concept. It comprises



Temasek Polytechnic, completed in 1995, has a horseshoe-shaped main building which branches off to peripheral buildings in a 20-hectares site.



The Natural Museum building was closed between 2003 and 2006 for adding a new extension designed by CPG Consultants Pte Ltd in collaboration with W Architects Pte Ltd. The low rise rectangular block and a glass-clad rotunda form a new entrance from Fort Canning Park yet respect the character of the original building.



SMU is a 4.5 hectares new development in the Bras Basah district. The overall design adopts 'a campus in the park' concept where part of the building façade is equipped with built-in planters.

two decks, situated on ground level and an elevated sloping lawn, creating a large, non-hierarchical semi-public domains for staff and students. Eleven identical buildings for learning are connected with this nucleus. Another main feature is that the campus is connected with the adjacent regional park. Its own cultural centre, with a 1,200-seat theatre, a 400-seat auditorium, is also open for the community use.⁶

The latest educational establishment with a focus on a creative curriculum is a new campus for the School of the Arts Singapore. WOHA won an open tender selection exercise in 2005⁷. The school aims to be a laboratory where research is done, creative work made and the results of the work communicated to a wider community. The architect creates two visually connected horizontal strata, an upper

one for secure, controlled interaction for the school and a covered plaza for public communication below. The lower stratum consists of a concert hall, drama theatre and several small performing spaces. The interpretation of openness is obviously different from that of LASALLE College, this should make stimulating comparisons once it is completed in 2009.

To give generous support to the inquisitive citizen, a new National Library and an extension to National Museum of Singapore are also completed in 2005 and 2006 respectively. They provide excellent infrastructure to serve the public. The Singaporean government was fully aware that hardware alone would not be adequate, a series of creative initiatives under the names of Renaissance City 2.0; Design Singapore

and Media 21, are implemented to create a creative economy. Despite criticisms on the limits of social and political expressions in Singapore, it is yet to be proven that such control will stifle the creative movement.⁸ Meanwhile, Singaporeans begin to experience physical environment so endowed with architectural sensitivity and beauty.

In the early 1960s, a green Singapore was considered to be a key competitive factor in attracting foreign investment.⁹ It took forty years of concerted efforts to transform Singapore in a luxuriant greenery. Would the creative rush steer Singapore towards a global city attracting talent from around the world in shorter time? The Singaporeans would probably stand a better chance to meet her targets.



The Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts is tasked to implement ERC's Creative Industries Development Strategy. Its headquarters is in the former Old Hill Street Police Station, a national monument with rainbow colour windows. Art galleries, café'8e, sculpture and exhibition spaces are occupied on ground floor to promote the arts.



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A working model of School of the Arts, Singapore by WOHA



Dr Ken Yeang of TR Hamzah & Yeang was responsible for the 16-storey National Library Building which incorporates some state-of-the-art ecologically features in building design.

Footnotes

1. Report of the Economic Review Committee, 'New Challenges, Fresh Goals – Towards a dynamic global city', February 2003, P.176
2. Report of the ERC Services Subcommittee Workgroup on Creative Industries, 'Creative industries development strategy', September 2002
3. Speech delivered on 30 April 2002 at the URA Centre
4. Speech delivered on 26 March 2004 at the "20 under 45" exhibition
5. Information published in: http://www.smu.edu.sg/news_room/press_releases/2000/20001212.asp
6. Angelene Chan, 'Sustainable Design Case Study: The Republic Polytechnic', Singapore Architect, October/November 2007, pp.84-89,
7. Information published in: http://www.sota.sg/development/dev_history.asp
8. Ooi Can Seng, Bounded creativity and the push for creative economy in Singapore, a paper presented in the 16th Biennial conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, June 2006
9. Information published in <http://www.nparks.gov.sg/gardencity.asp>

Art of Architecture, Architecture of Art

Perception of Architecture through Photography

W.M. Fung

Photography provides an alternative way to appreciate Architecture, by framing it, abstracting it, re-interpreting it and sublimating it into a 2-dimensional art. Through the lens of camera, we analyze the art of architecture by geometry, composition, colour, texture and shadow. And through the use of Architecture as a subject, photographic art is expressed and amplified.

Most of time, the appreciation of architecture and photography can be an art because of the subject matter, once displayed, is subjected to the viewers interpretation based on their own experience, background and understanding.

Once, photography was used to record the fine details of architecture because it is more precious than human vision and it is much faster than sketching¹. Nowadays, photographs of architecture on magazines, books and brochures are a media of marketing, of an Architect, of a development, of a "fashion", of a theory and of an ideology. Photography can be an effective tool to establish our view of our city and the built environment around us. By selecting a building, a view, an angle, a perspective and a time of a day to capture the moment, we are expressing our interpretation of the piece of Architecture in the city fabric.

A selection of fifteen photographs taken in Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Austria and Germany will be used to express my reflection on the following topics through the framed views of the lens, namely: **Question of Conservation, Abstraction in Architectural Aesthetics, Light in Architecture, Skyline, and Architecture & Nature.**

Question of Conservation

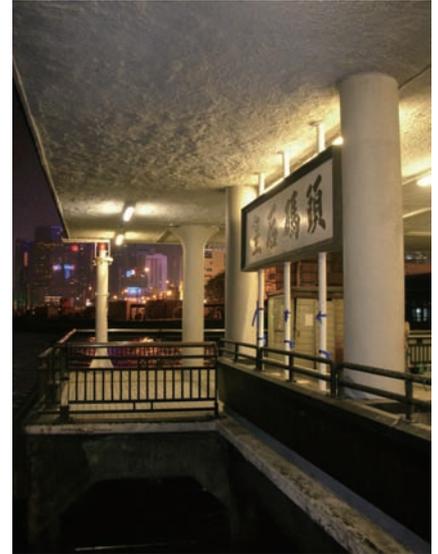
If the heritage of a city is not preserved, architecture not conserved, what remains will only be the 2-dimensional replica of the existed in photographs and plans.

Nowadays, cities are characterized by the architecture of a monoculture, primarily the by-product of the international modern. These have little connection in responding to the local geographical and social factors². In Hong Kong, the old are continuing to be demolished and what is replacing them are the monolithic style of buildings that is regardless of culture and context.



Photograph 1
Question of Conservation - Victoria Prison, Central, Hong Kong

The Victoria Prison in urban Central is a trace, an evident of our history. While we are developing the history of our future, why are we abandoning the history of our past? To conserve is one thing, as the way on how to conserve is yet another issue.

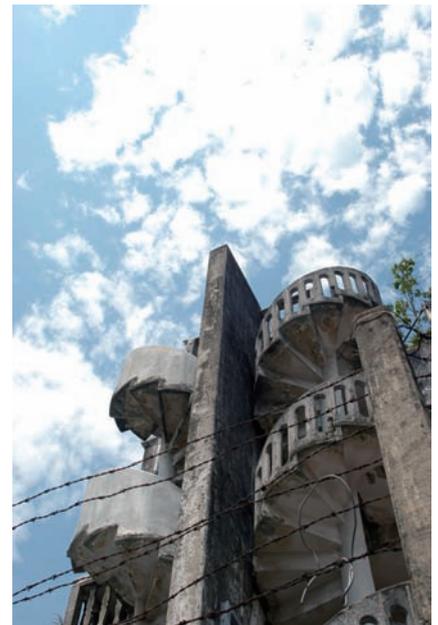


Photograph 2
Question of Conservation - Queen's Pier, Central, Hong Kong

How many of these are demolished before one can be kept? If a hundred of these were demolished, in exchange of a system to conserve; this may still be a deal.



Photograph 3
Question of Conservation - Shum Shui Po, Kowloon
Old urban area in Hong Kong is often described as woven in chaos and needs 'correction'. Yet from the Architectural point of view, they may be a museum for the history of Architecture and the social forces driving behind this previously colonial and now metropolitan city.

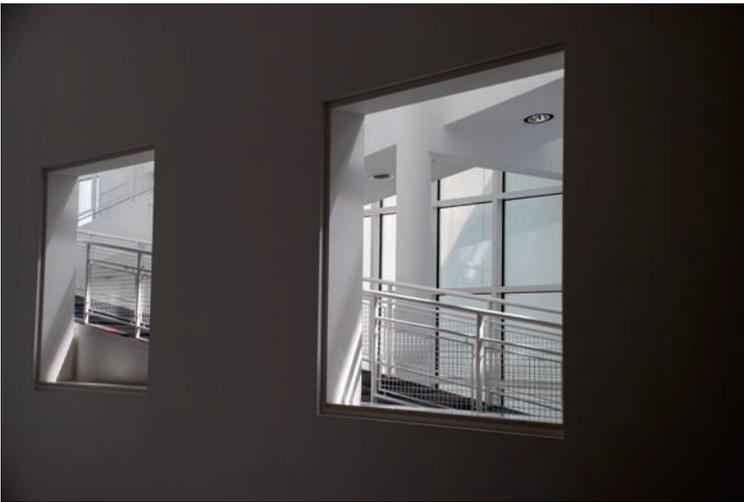


Photograph 4
Question of Conservation - Jalan Besar, Singapore
Once, similar structures are 'living' with us in the neighborhood. Now you can only find it in our neighboring city only. The conservation ideology and methodology in Singapore may not be agreed by all, yet its result is worth referencing.

1. Robert Elwall, *Building with light* (2004) Hugh Merrell.
2. Anthony M. Tung, *Preserving the worlds great cities* (2001) Three Rivers Press



Photograph 5
Question of Conservation - LiLong, Guizhou, China
 Modernization - a trend in China's development. The icon of traditional symbol of luck & fortune in vernacular dwelling is competing with the sign of modern technology & entertainment. And in fact sooner or later, it is not just competing, but replacing them all.



Photograph 6
Abstraction in Architectural Aesthetics - Museum of Applied Art, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
 Architecture when decoded to its simplest - is a series of lines, planes and geometry. The beauty is intensified by the electro-magnetic wave in nature - Light.

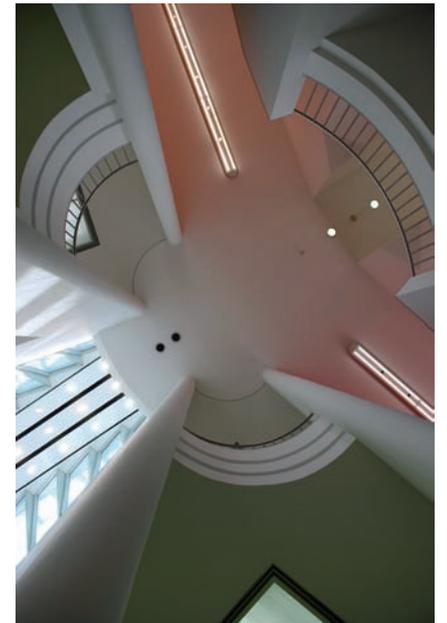


Photograph 7
Abstraction in Architectural Aesthetics - Main Tower, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
 Architecture, when decoded to planes and lines - rely on the order and hierarchy to create the comprehensible logic. And by this logic we perceive and comprehend the hybrid piece of Art and Technology - Architecture.

Abstraction in Architectural Aesthetics

We learnt tectonics when we study Architecture; we see the beauty of buildings beyond the functional space that is created and the activities that is made possible, and we all appreciate the magic of light in Architecture, especially the details. In abstraction, we found the beauty of Architecture.

The beauty of abstractions is expressed through the process of reduction into lines, planes and solids; and the complexity of logic and system of order and hierarchy.



Photograph 8
Abstraction in Architectural Aesthetics - Museum of Fine Art, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
 Space acquires its beauty partly from the spatial object we are experiencing and partly from the abstract geometry we may comprehend with our vision.

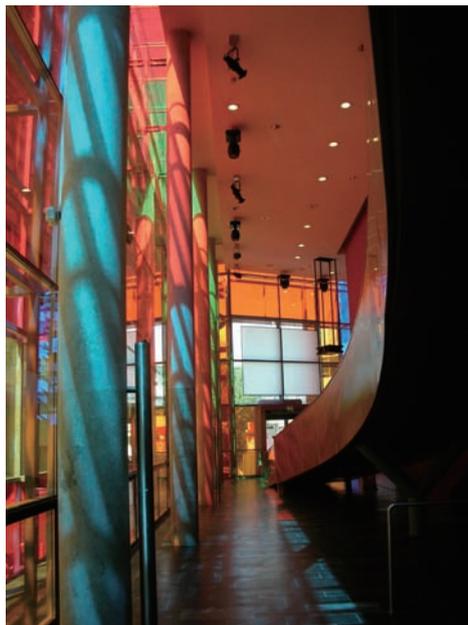
Light in Architecture

A good piece of Architecture glows; whereas a tactful capture of light onto Architecture sparks.

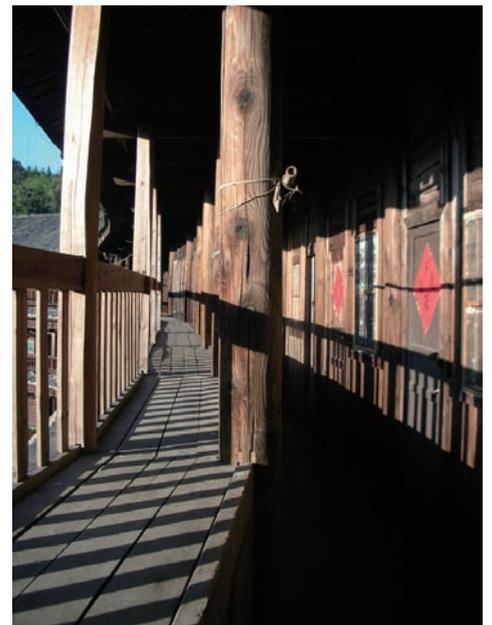
We learnt the use of light in Architecture on the aspect of providing thermal comfort and a balanced solar design, but we excel its function in Architecture through the play of light to touch our soul.



Photograph 9
Light in Architecture - So Uk Estate, Shum Shui Po, Kowloon
 Signage of a place is sometimes deviating from its fundamental needs and is more complicated than its served function. Yet here, the Mother Nature is playing her part to titivate the name of the neighborhood beyond a sign.



Photograph 10
Light in Architecture - Gasometer, shopping complex, Vienna, Austria
 Colour, material and texture are the composers of the Interior. They combine; they disguise to create a palette of joy in space.



Photograph 11
Light in Architecture - TuLou, Fujian, China
 Rhythm of the humble timber railing, mingle with the play of sun, is creating an exhilarating symphony.



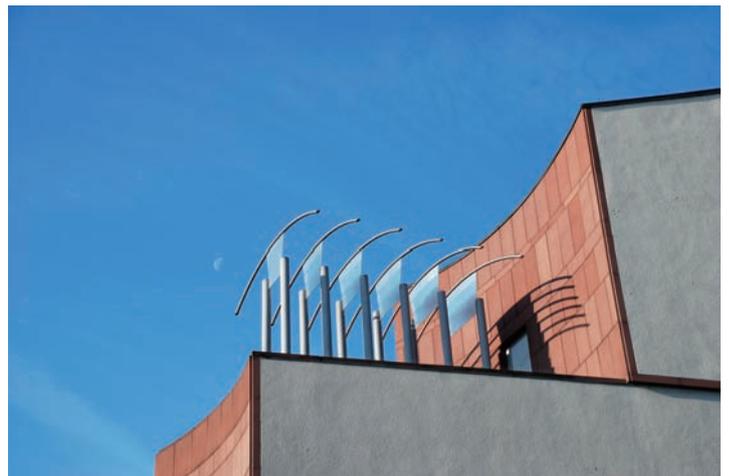
Photography 12
Skyline - Building Dianna, Vienna, Austria
 One lovely aspect of high-rise Architecture in Europe is the skyline so created by the articulation and combination of forms and massing.



Photograph 13
Skyline - DZ Bank Tower, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
 Icon and Architecture works together to create the identity for a branding.



Photograph 14
Skyline Potsdamer Platz, Berlin, Germany
 Telescoped skyline intensifies the work done by our modern prototype - skyscrapers.



Photograph 15
Architecture and Nature - Museum of Fine Art, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
 The charm of Architecture is glorified with the celebration of Nature.

Skyline

The telescoped skyline in Europe differs from that in Hong Kong in its variety; in form, in details, in material, in textures, and in articulations. The boldness in form and contrast composes the skyline in a vibrant manner; where in Hong Kong, we lose the rich spectrum but triumph in density.

Architecture and Nature

Seemingly Architecture in urban context has little to work with the nature, except the carefully man-made ones we have created and inserted into multiple levels of these urban giant the landscape. Yet, it is always a desire for human to establish a relationship with nature, regardless of how delicate and arduous it is.

Acknowledgement: Some of the photographs were taken during study tours organized for students of Associate of Science in Architectural Studies, Division of BST, City University of Hong Kong, to Austria and Italy during 06-07 and Germany and the Netherlands during 07-08 academic years.

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 Division of Building Science and Technology,
 City University of Hong Kong.

Art Centre / Art Gallery in Hong Kong - Bethane

Philip Liao

The Bethanie project converts a Grade II historic building into the new TV & film school for the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts by sensitively integrate the new user requirement with the existing building fabric. The project areas include a Bethanie building originally built in 1875, the surrounding historical gardens and a cowshed building.

The project emphasize on restoration of historical site and buildings to their original beauty, include restoring the original pitched roof form, the stained glass in the chapel, the balustrade, moldings, floor tiles. In the journey of searching the lost stained glass in chapel, 9 of the original have been found and restored. The remaining has to be replaced with replicas of the original designs. In addition of the found altar, statues and chapel doors, the formerly glory of the chapel is then restored.

To give the building a new lease of life for the Academy's use, new elements introduced include a glazed skylight for the pitched roof and a Theatre at the Cowshed. The incompatible roof addition of Bethanie Building was demolished and replaced by a tinted glass roof in the original pitch form to serve multi-purpose studio. The octagonal form cowshed building is also converted into an exhibition area and a performing space with flexible seating for various functions.

The building usage is also upgraded by addition of lift, new building services, fire services and EVA with the wish to retain all the building's historic features. New balustrades according to the original design have to be replaced and some with glazing installed to comply with the safety regulation meanwhile keep minimum intrusion and stay in harmony to the existing fabric.



Research 考研



Fr Charles Edmond Patriat
白德禮神父
1828-1887

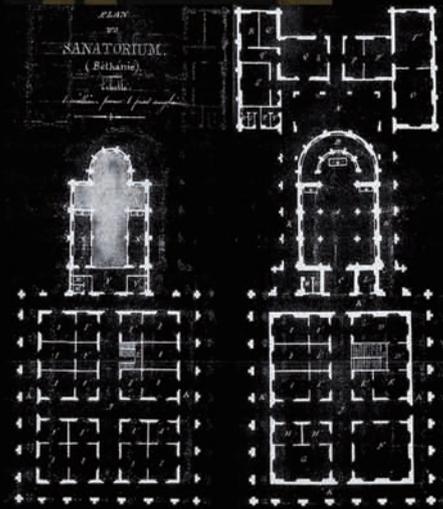
Reconstruct 重建



Location and borrowing of 4 statues and reconstruction based on the original.



Demolition of **incompatible roof addition** and replace original **pitched** roof in form of tinted glass to serve multi-purpose studio
斜型玻璃屋頂



Original plan of Bethanie with H-shaped service wing
伯大尼於1875年時平面圖原稿



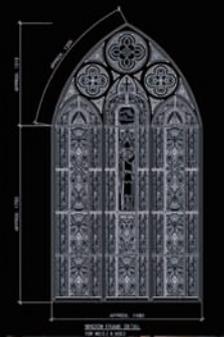
Bethanie

12





Windows lost and opening brick up



9 of the original windows have been found and restored and 10 replced with replicas of the original designs
 彩繪玻璃



Searching and locating original chapel doors and reinstalling



Reinstated chapel doors
 教堂門



Converting the cowsheds into Wellcome Theatre and exhibition hall



Wellcome theatre
 惠康劇院(牛棚改建)



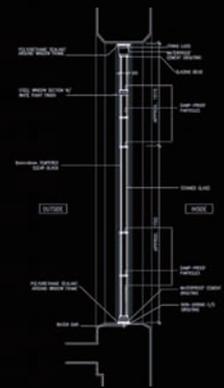
Hunting for Artifacts and replacing stained glass windows in chapel



The Chapel
 教堂



Mock up of new balustrades to fullfil building regulation standards
 欄杆樣板



Before
 After





Locating and reinstating
lost doors
訪尋及重設大門

Preservation and repair
of the existing
復修原貌

Conversion of cow shed into Wellcome Theatre
惠康劇院(牛棚改建)



Preseving one original cow shed custom
design cow foot print carpet
保留原有牛棚及地毯織上牛腳印



It has also been selected as one of the Historic Buildings in the First Batch of buildings of Development Bureau's recently launched Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (RHBTB Scheme).

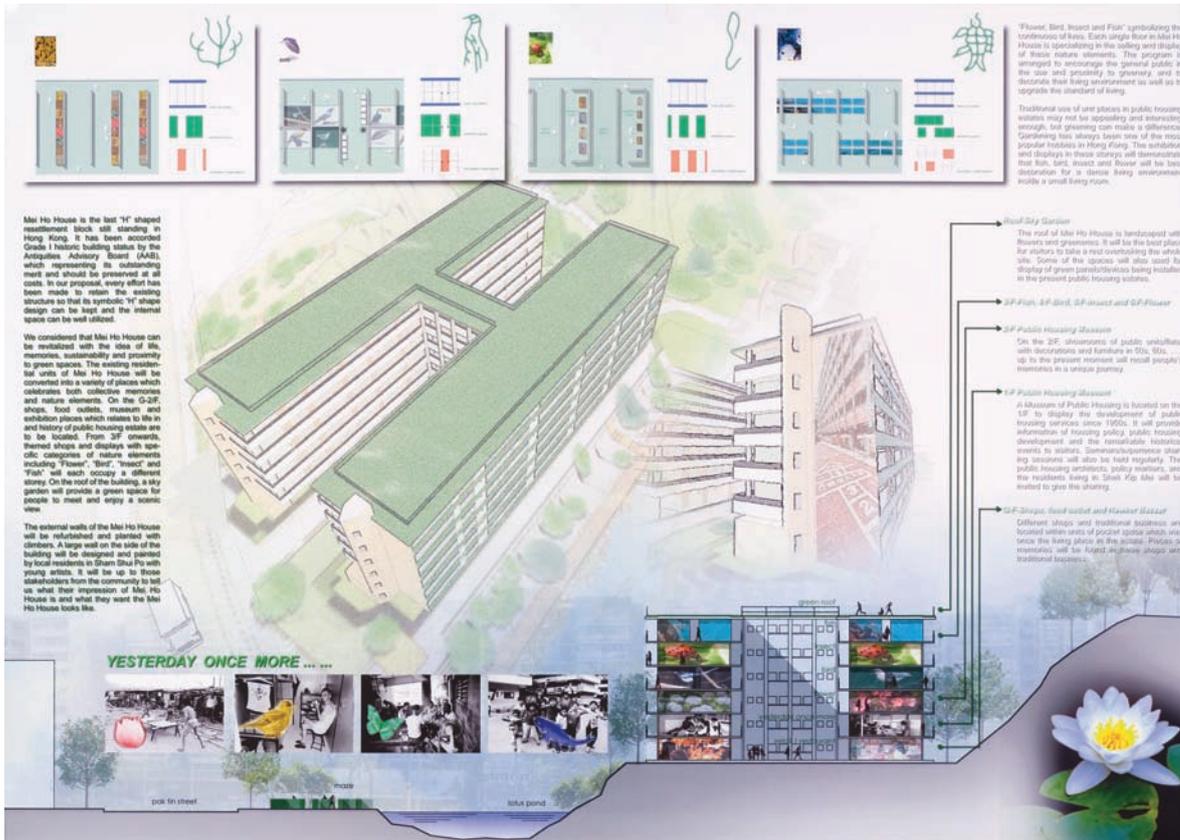
The competition was divided into Professional Group and Open Group. The competition has aroused widespread attention of the public. A total of 46 entries were received with more than 30 entries were from the Open Group representing the strong enthusiasm from the public on heritage conservation. The competition entries were judged by a 7-member jury in 2 rounds based on three major aspects : creativity, heritage conservation and harmony with the neighbourhood. Emphasis was especially placed on how Mei Ho House could be conserved and what would be the new function of Mei Ho House that would demonstrate creativity and harmony.

2 entries from the Professional Group were awarded winning commendations. For the Open Group, 3 winning entries and 2 merit entries were selected.



A Garden of Memories

Name of participants:
 WONG Wing Tak, William
 CHEUNG Kuo Yue, Sam
 AU Pui Yu, Roberta
 CHAN Tak Yan



C.Y Tung Maritime Museum Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Nelson Chen Architects

Heritage Significance

Jiao Tong University was founded in 1896 and is renowned for its academic tradition in science and technology, as well as distinguished alumni (including former president Zhang Zemin). The University has an established programme in maritime and naval engineering, so it was deemed appropriate to establish a museum of China maritime history within the old campus. The proposed museum was to include a permanent exhibit to commemorate the late Tung Hao-Yung (better known as C.Y. Tung), visionary co-founder of OOCL, the first international merchant fleet of Chinese origin.

The old campus is characterised by distinctive grey brick buildings with orange brick accent strips and traditional clay roof tiles. The campus building selected for the museum is a former two-storey student dormitory, built in 1909, and featuring an open central courtyard. The roof was constructed from a timber truss supported on a timber structural frame and load-bearing masonry walls with clay brick cladding.

Need for Conservation

The former student dormitory was in need of extensive refurbishment to comply with current building regulations. In particular, the timber truss and structural frame needed to be stabilised by adding reinforced concrete columns and beams and the external brick cladding needed to be completely repaired and repointed. Utilities and interior furnishings also had to be extensively upgraded to accommodate the proposed change of use from student dormitory to museum.

Design commenced in early 2002, followed by construction of Phase I (building restoration) from May to July 2002 and Stage 2 (interior renovations) from August to October 2002. Exhibits were installed during November to December 2002, and the new museum was formally opened and dedicated on 18 January 2003.

Conservation Approach

The proposed change of use from former student dormitory to museum presented a major challenge, particularly since the historic building is an integral part of the old campus.

Although it was acknowledged that building modifications would be inevitable to accommodate the functional requirements of the museum, the end product had to blend visually with its original setting.

As noted above, reinforced concrete columns and beams were required to stabilise the original timber structural frame, including the timber columns supporting the external balconies. In these visually sensitive external areas, the replacement concrete columns were precast with timber pattern from the formwork to resemble the original material. Similarly, the brick cladding was repaired and, where necessary, replaced with extruded mortar joints to match the original pointing detail.

To help retain the architectural proportions of the exterior as well as the internal facades, the existing balcony doors were restored and now open into the museum galleries.

Internally, the most significant modification is the creation of an atrium by covering the central courtyard with a glass skylight. The skylight provides valuable additional space for the museum without having to remove or modify existing internal walls. It maintains natural light levels and makes it more cost effective to provide the necessary air-conditioning and humidity controls for exhibits. The skylight cannot be seen from outside the building.

Conclusion

This conservation project involved three different levels of intervention, namely:

- Restoration of existing building components using traditional materials that matched the original design.
- Reconstruction of building components using modern compatible materials when justified by improved function and harmonious appearance.
- Adaptive reuse to convert the former student dormitory into a museum including addition of a new glass skylight enclosure to the central courtyard.

In addition to its primary purpose as a museum, the newly renovated building extends the maritime tradition of Shanghai Jiao Tong University and adds an important cultural centre in an institution defined largely by its achievements in science and technology.

Summary of repairs and refurbishment works

Exterior

New roof truss and roof tiling
Concrete structural frame
External brick wall finishes
Doors and windows

Interior

Skylighted atrium
Interior fitting out: gallery spaces, built in display cases and freestanding exhibits, timber flooring (black stained walnut).
New staircase, lavatories and building services (air-conditioning, electrical re-wiring, plumbing, drainage and fire services).

Building restoration and interior renovation works totaled HK\$5.5 million (US\$700,000) for a floor area of 1,200 sq.m (13,000 sq.ft.).

Professional recognition

- HKIA Design Award for Work Outside of Hong Kong, 2003

Project Credits

Architect:

Nelson Chen Architects Ltd. (Nelson Chen, principal architect; Eric Sau, Pinky Lie, project architects)

Consultants:

Daniel Chan & Associates Ltd. (building services engineer); Orient Overseas Real Estate Group (construction management); Davis Langdon & Seah (quantity surveyor).

Contractors:

Shanghai Fortune Building Decoration Co. (interior); East Asia United Construction Co. (building).

Client:

Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Tung Foundation, Hong Kong (Mrs. Alice King, director).

Photography:

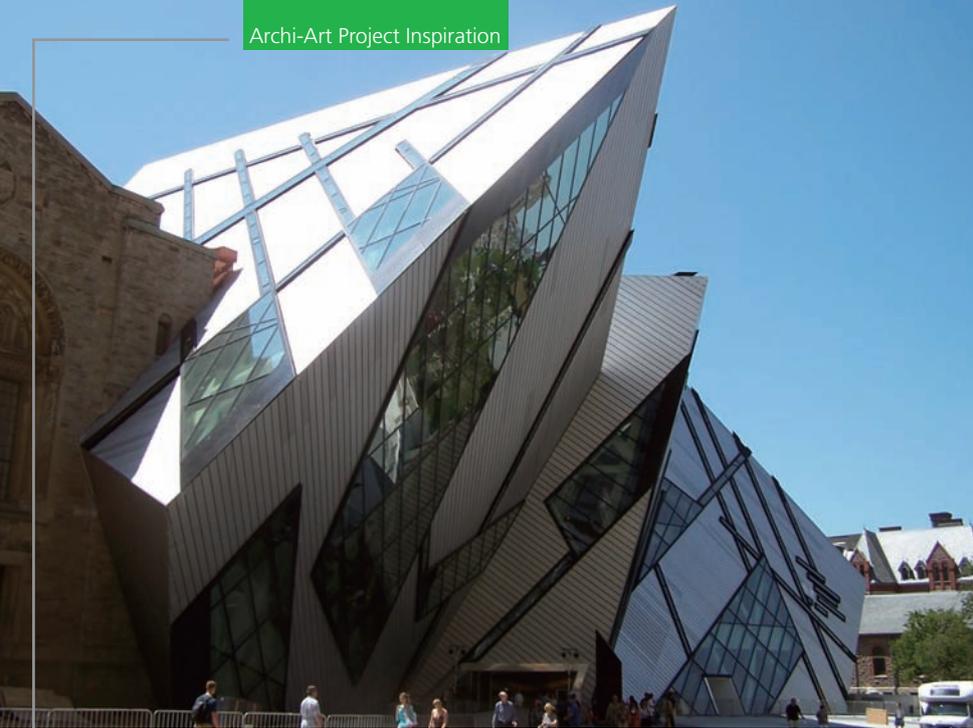
SW Photography

Text:

Dr. Ken Nicolson







From ROM Archive



The Art of Marketing Architecture v.s. The Art of Architecture Marketing Art The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) Renaissance Expansion Project, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Heman Shih

The opening of Frank Gehry's iconic Guggenheim Museum in the once struggling obscure Spanish Basque industrial port city in 1997 officially launched the 'Bilbao Effect'. Its phenomenal financial success has 'triggered a civic pandemic infecting cities with a belief they can resurrect themselves via a single building or artwork ... and/or by affiliating themselves with an acknowledged cultural luminary.'¹

In May 2001, the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), the fifth-largest North American museum, joined the Bilbao bandwagon by embarking on its own "Renaissance ROM project". An international design competition was organized. The mission statement was ambitious:

"To fully restore the ROM heritage buildings and galleries, add a remarkable landmark building to our vibrant cityscape, and spark a wider cultural renaissance in Toronto."² It would generate 30,000 m² new and renovated spaces, almost doubling the amount of collections on display, making it possible to showcase many treasures hitherto left in the dark.

Libeskind's competition submission is the epitome of a pure genius marketing scheme; he faxed in his "The Crystal" concept sketch penciled on a paper napkin taken from the ROM restaurant during his attendance of a family wedding³. He said he was 'inspired' by the crystalline forms in the ROM's extensive mineralogy galleries.

Could there be a better sales pitch?

When the three finalists presented their schemes, it was apparent that the musician-protégé-turned-architecture-theorist-turned-star-architect with a flair in public speaking and a flamboyant presence would be ROM's ideal marketing partner.

When the 'interlocking prismatic forms composed of transparent, translucent and opaque glass panels' were subsequently replaced with 75% of solid anodized aluminum cladding, he was confronted with the very same question at a public forum in Toronto. He flatly refused to respond. Anyone remotely knowledgeable about museum design should know exhibits' worst enemy is direct sunlight.

How successful is the architecture design in marketing the new expansion?

Out of the US\$270M projected construction costs, private donations (mainly from the super-rich) already reached US\$157.4M and public US\$72M. And the money keeps coming.

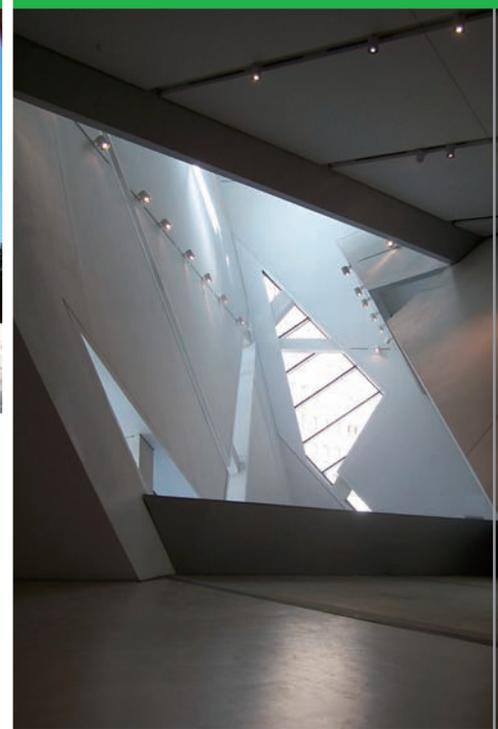
To fully understand 'The Crystal' design, one must examine Libeskind's first built project—the Jewish Museum Berlin. Completed 1999, it lifted him in the world stage as a star architect from a pure architectural theorist.

Nina's role in securing this project for her husband was pivotal: Libeskind's competition entry missed the submission deadline, yet Nina not only fought her way to get his entry accepted, he won.

The angular zigzag form of the building represents a distorted six-pointed Star of David millions of Jews forced to wear during Holocaust. The plan was also derived from lines connecting the locations of the homes of some important Berlin Jews. Such intriguing concept unquestionably markets well to win the jury over. Indeed, the slanted slot windows and the angled walls/volumes create the most evocative and poetic statement to simulate the holocaustic mood.

At ROM Crystal, Libeskind took the same angular vocabulary to a step further to go 3-dimensional. Unfortunately, the same vocabulary that works perfectly well "to integrate physically and spiritually the meaning of the Holocaust into the consciousness and memory of the city of Berlin"⁵ is hardly appropriate for the world's most multicultural, vibrant and diverse city to showcase the wide spectrum of art collection at ROM.

Serendipitously, the complicated form demands a steel support structure that turned into a marvelous real piece of art in itself. The ingenious use of "diagrid" – a system for constructing large buildings from steel using a triangular structure with diagonal bracing that allows for multiple load paths, thus permits flexible location of steel columns independent of the concrete floor slabs⁴ - to realize the complicated scheme is an unparalleled engineering feat. Form Z, a truly 3D-endowed CAD software, was used extensively during the design and bidding processes. It is a pity



that the breath-taking structure has been completely hidden after the project completion.

The “outside-in” design approach gives an exciting impressive face to the museum but create interior spaces inimical to proper art exhibition. The odd angles and sporadic window/skylights dominate the interior spaces rather than serving the function of letting diffuse natural light in. The 3-storey high new entrance hall that is supposed to impress appears to be gloomy even on a sunny day. The only exception will be the elegantly finished exclusive C5 Restaurant that perches at the penthouse level where patrons can enjoy a wonderful view of the city with exquisitely prepared food.

The double skin design of the external envelope tackles the problems of rain water penetration and snow accumulation resulted from the unusual building form well. The outer layer of aluminum cladding channels snow and rain water through the open joints onto the secondary cladding behind. The second skin serves both as a big gutter and the final protection against water penetration. “A typical wall, measured from the exterior skin to the interior drywall, is approximately 1200mm thick.”⁶

Such a sophisticated system understandably consumed the bulk of the construction budget, leaving little for the interior that should have been given the priority to function as a display backdrop. The interior shows numerous premature marks of wear and tear throughout.

Walking through the expanded ROM is like listening to the Bach Goldberg Variations with sporadically juxtaposed passages from Schönberg’s Piano Concerto⁷. The original 1914 and 1933 brown Neo-Romanesque 3-storied stone-clad wings with beautifully carved keystones and cornice details are mercilessly

assaulted and overpowered by the five new crystalline volumes both outside and inside from all directions.

Relocating the main entrance to its northern boundary to abut the busiest street in Toronto does contribute a lot to the urban fabric by re-establishing the long lost connection between the city and the museum. Nonetheless, such requirement in the original design was turned into the justification for Libeskind to free him “from the history of the existing buildings and made it possible to create something new.”⁶ The new ground floor plaza is supposed to connect the new and old by “wrapping itself around both”⁶ – a funny logic that is quite incomprehensible.

ROM’s CEO says it well: “Architecture has many other dimensions.... It exists in a particular context and serves essential practical purposes. While truly great architecture stands as art on its own terms, it is art that resolves, works, and endures. It is a demanding assignment.”⁸

The Crystal definitely stands as “art” on its own terms. It is unquestionably a bold and attention-drawing piece of architecture. The architectural concept markets the museum well to get it realized. The museum markets the architect well. Unfortunately, all the art pieces within are left to endure the architectural terms.

When ROM is fully completed by end-2009, the much anticipated expansion of the nearby Art Gallery of Ontario will also be ready. Maybe then we will see a piece of art-nurturing architecture brought by the Toronto-raised Frank Gehry - the originator of Bilbao Effect in his first homecoming project.

Footnotes

1. “Monumentalities: Public Art and The Culture of Civic Branding” by John Vella, Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS) 2005 Conference paper.
2. Excerpt from “Vision for Architecture” ROM Renaissance Design Competition guideline.
3. Nina Lewis, Daniel Libeskind’s wife and business partner, has extensive family ties in Toronto.
4. “Form Making” by Don Procter. “Building Magazine August/September 2007 issue.
5. Excerpt from Studio Daniel Libeskind Website.
6. According to Stephane Raymond, Project Architect from Studio Daniel Libeskind.
7. Arnold Schönberg (September 13, 1874 - July 13, 1951) an and later . Many of Schoenberg’s works are associated with the movements in early 20th-century German poetry and art, and he was among the first composers to embrace development.Schoenberg is best known as the innovator in the 1920s of the , a compositional technique involving. He was also a painter, an important, and an influential teacher of composition. From “Wikipedia”.
8. ROM Magazine Summer 2007 edition.

Photos

All photos by Heman Shih unless otherwise stated.

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Mixed Development Art Installations at Commercial & Infrastructural Premises

Art + Architecture In MTR (港鐵)

Polly Sun 孫佩麗

My concept of MTR's plan to introduce the "ART" element in the stations and in the connected shopping arcades in Hong Kong can be a most powerful vehicle not only to promote art into the hearts of Hong Kong people but also provide a unprecedented opportunity to bring up the Hong Kong young people in the creative industry (be it painting or sculpture, filming or fashion) to exhibit their works and to foster their talents.

It is very sad that a lot of public bodies in Hong Kong, be it the Design Centre or the MTR Authorities often biases toward US or European Artists, such as allowing the first artwork in the MTR to be a US Artist, Larry Kirkland. Needless to say, Hong Kong is an International City, but do not forget Hong Kong is Hong Kong, one of the greatest cities in China and in the East.

My suggestions are that our MTR "art" management principle should bear in mind the following; if MTR or our SAR government (MTR's largest shareholder) is serious into making our mass transit system not only the longest art gallery but a most "meaningful" gallery.

1. Open up the ART selection process; let it be transparent and invite open design competitions. Set up a Selection Committee consisting of knowledgeable artists and art appreciators.
2. For each station we should consider its local culture context, Wanchai is Wanchai, Kowloon City is Kowloon City (remember our Kowloon KING 九龍皇帝), Central is Central. Involve the local District Boards, and involve the local art community so that we can foster strong local spirits and foster public memories (集體回憶).
3. Propaganda is important. How to dig out and how to discover the young local artists; involve the various local design bodies of the creative industries (total 12), involve the local universities and institutions is also important. Give the young people opportunities, give the young local artists hope. This longest art gallery could be one of the most frequented gallery any

where in the world. It has to be "our people's gallery".

4. To be effective, the "art pieces" have to be very visible, located at strategic location in the railing system.
5. I am not saying we should exclude US or European artists or any other outside artists, but my paramount consideration is on local art & culture and on our local communities' interest and not only filling our railing system with famous foreign art pieces. When you go west, you see western art, when you go India you see Indian Art, when you go Islamic, you see Islamic Art, so when you come to Hong Kong, boy, you see Hong Kong Art, you experience Hong Kong culture, what else should you ask.

Art in Station Architecture (AiSA) Programme is one of the components of the "Art in MTR" initiative where artwork is incorporated into the actual design of station architecture. It was first introduced in 1998 when the Airport Express commenced service and to date, there are 30 pieces of artwork installed in 19 MTR stations. First AiSA artwork in the MTR was "Flight of Fancy" by US artist Larry Kirkland installed in the Hong Kong Station. In addition to local artists, artists coming from various countries, including USA, Japan, Korea, China, New Zealand, Taiwan and Australia, have participated.

Objectives of the AiSA is to

- enhance the traveling environment of the MTR by adding in artist flavour
- to make MTR journeys more pleasurable and interesting
- to provide the public with easier access to art and to promote art appreciation in Hong Kong
- to help promote Hong Kong artist talent by providing an opportunity for local artists to showcase their works in a public place



"Beginning of Journey" by Yoichi Takada (Japan) at Tung Chung Line Concourse, Tsing Yi



"Birds of a Feather" by Nei Dawson (New Zealand) at Tsing Yi Station – Departure Hall



"The Flux" by Ahn Pilyun (South Korea) at Hong Kong Station – IFC2 Roof Garden



"Dancing Ribbons" by Shan Shan Sheng and Mark Dziewulski (USA) at Hong Kong Station – IFC2 Integrated Entrance



"Flight of Fancy" by Larry Kirkland (USA) at Hong Kong Station – In Town Check In Hall



"Link" by Freeman Lau (Hong Kong) at Tung Chung Station – Concourse Level



"Classis Charm of Christmas" by Fanny Wong from Savills showcase Limited at the G/F floor lobby in Two ifc.



"ExoCentric Spirits" by Ralf Gschwend at lift Atrium Elements



Water Zone "Harmony" by Danny Lee at Elements



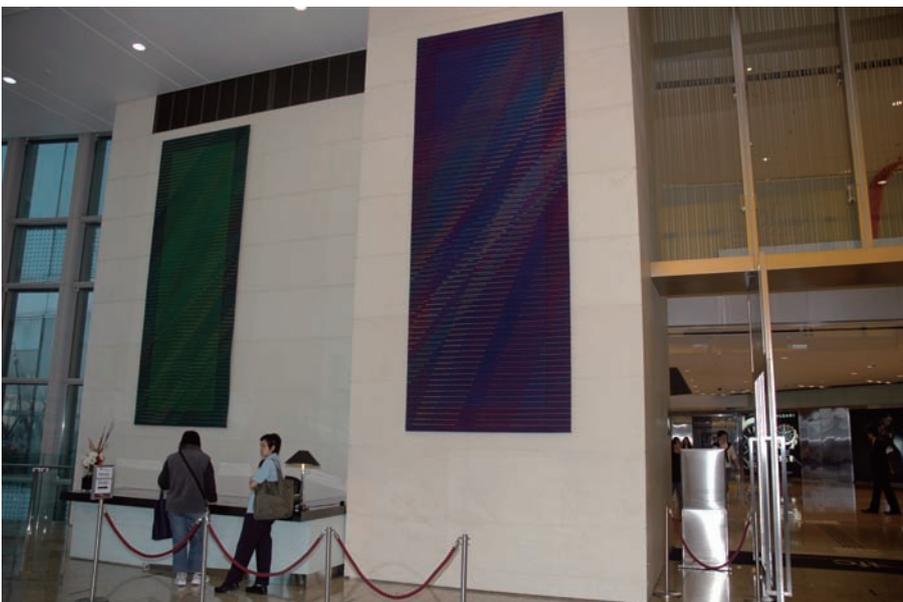
"Glimpse of Time" by Fanny Wong from Savills showcase Limited at the western P1 lobby under the World clock.



Fire Zone "White Heat" by Lincoln Seligman at Elements



Drop Off "Eternity" by Danny Lee at Elements



"Four Seasons" by Tetsuo Kusama (Japan) at Hong Kong Station - IFC 2 office 1/F entrance.



Wood Zone "The Trails by Worms" by Mok Yat San & Man Fung Yi at Elements



Earth Zone "Earth Dragon" by Paul Alexandre Bourieau at Elements

Art and Architecture - Art in Central - Hongkong Land

William Wai-lam WONG

Central-the heart of Hong Kong's business district. Day after day, year after year, thousands upon thousands of people buzz within this home to the world's biggest companies and most sought-after luxury brands.

But Central has an artistic side too. A longer look around the district's major buildings and arteries reveals spaces dotted with sculptures, paintings and performances. At midday, people lounge in the courtyard of Exchange Square sharing lunch with friends and colleagues while taking in large-scale works of art just a stone's throw away. Around the fountain at The Landmark, fashion shows and exhibitions add colour to people's workdays and shopping trips.

As Central's premier developer for over 100 years, Hongkong Land is responsible for much of the artistic, architectural and landscaping texture that can be found throughout the district today. It has introduced a series of sculptures and paintings in and around the company's properties. For example, in 1973 Hongkong Land acquired Henry Moore's "Double Oval" and gave it a home in the open space at the front of Jardine House, at the time Asia's tallest skyscraper. It has since become one of the city's most enduring examples of public art and commerce being brought together for the enjoyment of people living and working in Hong Kong.

Then, in 2001/ 2002, Hongkong Land published "CENTRAL Art", a guide to appreciating the unique convergence of art, architecture and landscape in Central's public areas via the district's network of bridges and walkways. Such works include "Oval with Points" by Henry Moore and "Tai-chi - Single Whip Dip" by Ju Ming and "Water Buffalo I and II" by Dame Elisabeth Frink at the Open Plaza at Exchange Square.

Architectural connoisseurs even regard many of the buildings themselves as sculptures and works of art. Jardine House stood next to Victoria Harbour for more than 30 years, and its trademark circular windows demonstrate modernist outlook. Chater House was the first building in Hong Kong to use a double-height external retail façade, after which many other successful examples appeared such as Louis Vuitton and Gucci at The Landmark.

Hongkong Land later embarked upon a cityscape that would reflect the stature of its properties and enhance the experience of its visitors on a human level. Every detail, including pavement, lighting, greenery and even automobile lay-bys, has been designed to bring people and the city closer together.

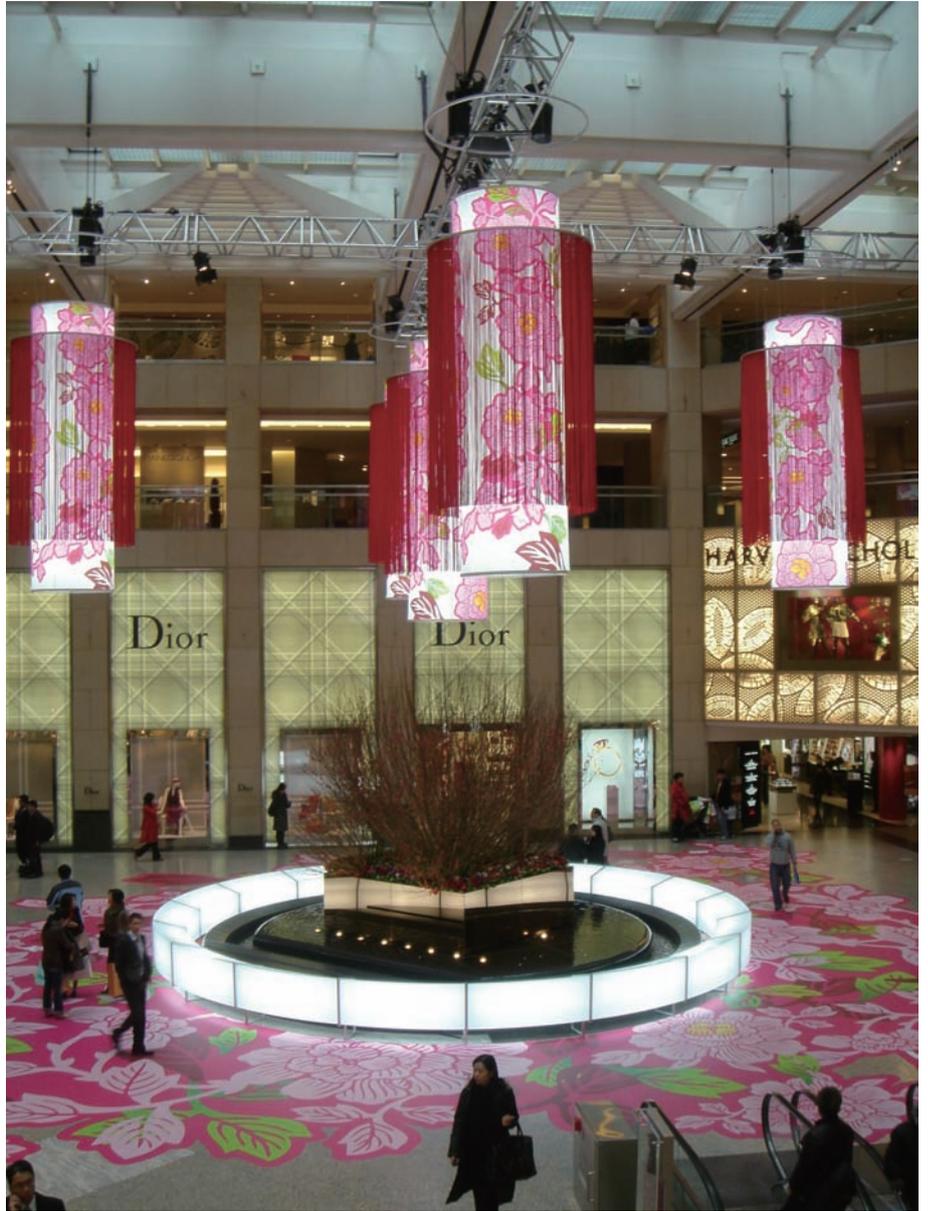
The company has long recognized Hong Kong's potential in culture and the arts. Hongkong Land's passion for bringing art to the people was on display recently when it hosted an exhibition of Salvador Dalí sculptures - valued in excess of US\$60 million - in conjunction with the world-famous Opera Gallery. Soon the two organisations will host another exhibition, this time of famous Modernists such as Fernando Botero, Robert Indiana, Keith Haring, Robert Combas, Niki de Saint Phalle and many more.

Both exhibitions take full advantage of the unique settings of the Open Plaza at Exchange Square and The Landmark Atrium, which visitors have come to see as popular year-round exhibition spaces for fashion shows and exhibitions. In fact, each year residents now look forward to the holiday warmth and cheer Christmas and Chinese New Year performances and decorations at these two locations.

Thirty-five years after "Double Oval" appeared at Jardine House, a stroll around Central reveals artistic delights everywhere. Hongkong Land is helping Central, long known as one of the world's leading business and financial centres, develop a reputation as a hub for the arts as well - and going far to disprove the old adage that one shouldn't mix business with pleasure.

Special thanks to
Mr Raymond Chow, Executive Director,
Commercial Property, Hongkong Land





[Art and Architecture] – Re-thinking Re-positioning

Franky Choi

(Interview of Mr. Martin Tam of Sun Hung Kai)

At the time when the Editorial Board had the idea of seeking insider stories on the policy and vision behind private developers who include art works in their architectural design, there is a chance to meet Sun Hung Kai's Mr. Martin Tam for a discussion. Martin is a person of deep conviction and inspiration, so this was an exceptional opportunity to hear his views. He expressed big ideas and thoughts that touch the fundamental agenda and reflect these thoughts. This article has been re-titled [Re-thinking Re-positioning].

Martin brought out various ways in which art and architecture intermingle:

1. Architecture for Art's sake
2. Art for Architecture's sake
3. Architecture for Architecture's sake
4. Art for Art's sake

These four interpretations will present different results. From the first scenario Architecture for Art's sake, many architects see their ultimate wish as the opportunity to be involved in a museum project once in their life time. The museum or gallery is commonly deemed to provide a magical factor that can turn a city into an international hot spot; the museum can be its showpiece and for the designer, the freedom such a project presents is very tempting!

But when museums or galleries are not offered as everyday projects, what's next? The second scenario, Art for Architecture's sake becomes a common path for most development to raise the profile and inspiration

of the project. Martin shared his experience that Art has become a serious medium of investment with the concern by the developer that the budget on art should be wisely spent. Chosen art pieces represent the project corporation's image. The oil paintings at the Central Plaza are the works of Chinese artists living overseas and they represent a new Chinese culture influenced by the West. In this case, the background of the chosen artists complements the philosophy of the building project, and the purchaser is satisfied that its value will keep pace with inflation.

Apart from the approach of installing artefacts in the built project, what other design options are crucial in the [Art and Architecture] arena during the development process? Martin's opinion is crystal clear: Art and its involvement in architecture should never simply be an after-thought. It should always be integrated from the beginning. Martin quotes one of his favourite works of architecture: Le Corbusier's pilgrimage Chapel de Notre Dame en Haut, Ronchamps in Eastern France (1950-1955). After fifty years, it remains fresh and retains a timeless quality. It demonstrates the essential need for the building to combine function and art into a spiritual whole, so that the project itself is a self-explanatory testimony.

Martin names three most distinctive buildings in Hong Kong with a human atmosphere:

1. St. John's Cathedral in Central
2. St. Andrew Church in Tsim Sha Tsui
3. French Mission Building in Central

All his chosen projects reflect the time they are constructed in their architectural quality. Some have this quality expressed in the adoption of structural design to meet the local material and construction technology, some demonstrate the way the design is made to meet the local climatic condition, and some reflect the collaboration between local and external social culture. All these buildings are complemented and surrounded by external space which contributes to the sense of their importance and adds to and is integral with the quality of the architectural design. Martin questions whether the current building law in Hong Kong is conducive to good architecture.

In conclusion, Martin considers that good architecture is itself a piece of Art that stands in time and space. It has both spiritual and functional qualities, and the integrity of [Art in Architecture] has great importance in the educational context for future generations.