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CHICAGO'S CHINATOWN BRANCH LIBRARY BY SOM IS ANOTHER PIECE OF LIVELY PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE



Reading Rainbow

When Chicago's newest public library branch opened on August 29, neighbors poured through the door like they were carrying overdue books. More than 6,500 people attended the opening day of the new Chicago Public Library building at 2100 South Wentworth Avenue in the city's Chinatown neighborhood—a new record. Crowds have kept up since, attracting about 1,500 visitors per day.

Why all the fuss for a new neighborhood library? This one was unusual, most notably for deviating from the architectural prototype established by the Public Building Commission of Chicago under previous Mayor Richard M. Daley. It's also somewhat of a detour for its designers, Chicago-based Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. In the present oeuvre of SOM's work—from master-planning new cities **continued on page 12**



AN LANDSCAPE ISSUE

AN INVESTIGATES THE WAYS IN WHICH LANDSCAPE DESIGN IS BEING USED TO TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES. WE VISIT DETROIT FOR ITS APPROACH TO GRASS-ROOTS FARMING URBANISM THAT IS REVITALIZING THE CITY AND LOOK AT HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP CONNECT LANDSCAPES TO THE PUBLIC. SEE PAGE 23.

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THREE NEW BUILDINGS JOIN THE EXPANDING DALLAS SKYLINE



COURTESY HARWOOD INTERNATIONAL

Everything is [Getting] Bigger in Texas

As one of the fastest growing cities in the United States this year, Dallas is putting its hard-earned dollars right into the ground with several new buildings: A twisted, seven-story **continued on page 6**

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THE MUSIC CITY GETS A RIVERFRONT AMPHITHEATER WITH
ROCK-AND-ROLL ROOTS

TURN IT UP



MATTHEW CARBONE

Arguably no other American city is as closely linked to music as Nashville. But until recently its downtown had no outdoor concert venue—just an endless string of honky-tonks.

That changed dramatically this summer when the city opened the Ascend Amphitheater on its new 11-acre West Riverfront Park, a former brownfield site on the Cumberland River. **continued on page 8**

DAVID ADJAYE CRAFTS A BRIGHTLY
HUED ART MUSEUM IN SAN ANTONIO
BASED ON A CLIENT'S DREAM

ADJ-YAY

With a slew of new buildings underway, a mid-career survey at the Art Institute of Chicago, and a textile exhibition at Cooper Hewitt, David Adjaye seems to be the architect of the moment. But in 2006, when installation artist Isaac Julien introduced artist, collector, **continued on page 12**



HOUSTON GETS A NEW
BAYOU-SIDE TRAILWAY
SEE PAGE 16

F. CARTER SMITH

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EVERYTHING IS [GETTING] BIGGER IN TEXAS

continued from front page tower by Kengo Kuma for Rolex and two by Pelli Clarke Pelli—the McKinney & Olive tower, a 20-story office and retail uptown, and new South Asian museum downtown—are the latest projects to be released.

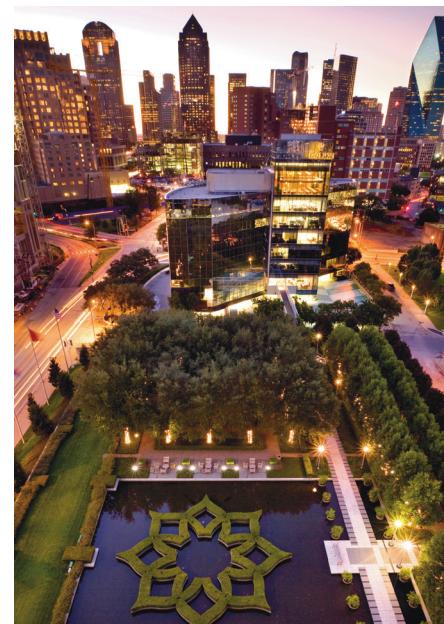
Kengo Kuma's Rolex tower, which broke ground August 11 and opens late next year, will provide new office space for the luxury watchmaker. The building is located next to Rolex's original headquarters at 2651 North Harwood Street and will have 136,857 square feet of interior space. Kuma is working with landscape architect Sadafumi Uchiyama to create a tiered, Japanese-inspired garden

replete with stonewalls, reflecting pools, and fountains.

"Environment is an essential concept for the modern experience, incorporating both natural and urban surroundings," said Kuma. "This landscape-building idea will result in a beautiful urban-organic icon."

According to Gabriel Barbier-Mueller, founder and CEO of developer Harwood International, the Rolex Building will be the first building in Dallas to be designed by a Japanese architect.

Only a few blocks away, the McKinney & Olive tower by Cesar Pelli with executive architects Kendall/Heaton Associates broke ground June 19 of last year. The glass tower



The Dallas skyline (far left) is undergoing some significant changes thanks to its robust economy. In particular, Harwood International is taking on uptown (near left) with Kengo Kuma's Rolex Building and Paris-based architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte's condominium tower.

part of Museum Way.

City officials have been pushing hard to revitalize the downtown area as a destination for arts and culture, with the hope that this museum will help to build momentum, particularly after the Museum Tower fiasco these past couple of years. (The luxury apartment tower has received significant criticism after it was discovered that the light reflecting off of the facade is literally burning the art and plants on Renzo Piano's Nasher Sculpture Center across the street. As of press time, there still isn't an adequate solution to the glare.)

These buildings join major projects both under construction and under consideration. In tandem with the Rolex Tower, Harwood International is also building Bleu Ciel, a 33-story condominium complex uptown. On August 22, Santiago Calatrava's \$113 million Margaret McDermott Bridge over the Trinity River gained the first of its two 350-foot arches, and is expected to be complete in 2017. Meanwhile, in downtown multiuse complex Victory Park, four new proposed towers, including a 20-story tower—the tallest in that complex to date—are being discussed.

No doubt, Dallas is a veritable boomtown. Here's hoping the newest buildings are successes rather than busts, or at least, don't burn up anything. **OLIVIA MARTIN**

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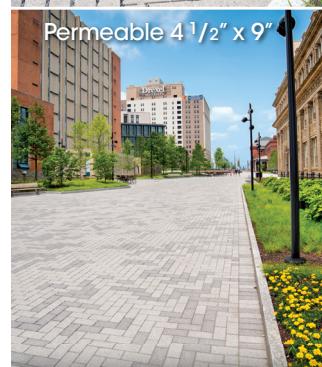
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READING RAINBOW continued from front page in Asia to mocking up the University of Chicago's successful bid to host President Barack Obama's future presidential library—the 16,000-square-foot Chinatown library branch is a small project. But Chicago taxpayers were treated to the same thoughtful design as deep-pocketed developers, if the end product is any indication.

SOM partner and lead designer Brian Lee said the design-build team, which also included suburban Chicago-based Wight & Company, started with a survey of existing buildings in the library system. The citywide prototype, with its clean lines and two-toned brick facade, was an efficient and handsome mold, Lee said, but Chinatown should be different.

"Obviously the idea of a prototype has some merit," said Lee, "[but] buildings take their personality from the site and who's going to be using them, and those specific social factors drive the design."

The Chinatown site is a triangular island amid the high-traffic, northeastern node of the neighborhood, where the Red Line rattles over Cermak Road. Situated between the gate to "Old Chinatown" and the pedestrian mall of "New Chinatown," the new curvilinear building beckons across the thoroughfares that surround it with a glass facade that prizes transparency.

In addition to serving as "a pivot point, a link between the two Chinatowns," Lee said, the new library is also a space for community gatherings. Under an ample ceiling oculus, the building's two-story atrium unfolds like a traditional Chinese courtyard with a curving stair that flows

gently upward to the library's second level. Vertical aluminum fins punctuate the glassy exterior, lowering glare and enabling an open-plan common area to get by with little artificial lighting. Textured ceiling panels and acoustical curtains hush noise without physically isolating library patrons.

At \$19.1 million, the new building is only marginally more expensive than its peers. The tight budget meant the design team compromised clear glass for a tinted variety and scrapped plans for a heat-and-power system that would have burned natural gas to power the building largely off the grid.

Even without those accoutrements, Lee said, it's a smart library. Officials with the Public Building Commission "proposed some pretty innovative features," including a water-based heating and cooling system.

Brian Bannon, commissioner of Chicago Public Libraries, said it could be a harbinger of things to come—although the next projects on their docket are all renovations, not new buildings.

"Looking to the future, I think this was a great learning experience and shows how we can responsibly build a location- and context-focused building while managing cost," said Bannon.

The building's identity as a neighborhood hub got a boost from a mural by local artist CJ (Christopher) Hungerman. A vibrant panorama, "Universal Transverse Immigration Proclamation," was inspired by conversations with the Chinatown community. With neon hues and psychedelic strokes, it's an unexpected abstraction of its surroundings and a welcome experimentation—just like the library that it calls home. **CB**



David Adjaye's crimson concrete design for Ruby City, an art museum in San Antonio, Texas

COURTESY LINDA PACE FOUNDATION

of the nearby postmodern San Antonio Public Library by Ricardo Legorreta and the San Antonio Missions.

The resulting 14,000-square-foot museum "has a variety of spaces; each gallery feels like it is its own building and choreographs the viewer's experience through the building," said Kanjo. About 10,000 square feet will be devoted to three exhibition spaces and will house about 5 percent of the foundation's collection, including large sculpture and video installations.

Although roughly rectangular, the faceted roofline feels like a "gathering of forms" and oversize windows look out to the city and San Pedro Creek. Visitors will enter the structure from the west side facing the creek with views of the one acre green space, as well as a sculpture garden on the south side of the property with terraced banks leading down to the water.

Coincidentally, the San Pedro Creek is currently undergoing a major restoration by the city—there are plans to transform the areas along the creek to a public park with pedestrian and bicycle paths.

Ruby City is slated to break ground in 2016 and open in 2018, coinciding with San Antonio's 300th birthday. **OM**



PNC is banking on downtown Pittsburgh with a new building it's billing as the "world's greenest" tower. The financial services giant already has three skyscrapers in its hometown. When it opened its fourth on October 1, the Steel City's newest building, dubbed The Tower at PNC Plaza, became

the tallest built downtown since 1988.

And, according to its builders, it is also the city's most efficient. The 33-story tower features a double-skin glass facade and a solar chimney that whisks fresh air through the building without a heavy-duty air handling system. Gary



The 33-story tower has a double-skin facade and operable "poppers." A terrace and "indoor park" with radiant-heated floors occupy the building's 28th floor (above).



LOWER RIGHT: COURTESY PPG/OTHERS COURTESY PNC

Paulson, PNC's director of corporate real estate, tasked architects and engineers at Gensler, BuroHappold, and Paladino with bringing sustainable design techniques popular in Europe and East Asia back to the U.S.

Early in the project's design, Hao Ko, a principal at Gensler,

joined Paulson for a tour of ultra-efficient high-rises across Europe. They hit seven cities in seven days, Ko said. The double-skin facade that emerged in the final design is a rarity in the States, but is more prevalent overseas. "We had a game of counting how many buildings just in Germany had double

skins," said Ko, who traded blows with Paulson each time they spotted one, adapting the backseat VW Beetle-hunting game "punch buggy."

The resulting design leaves the small space between the building's two facades open and inhabitable, in case employees want to take a phone call in what Paulson calls "no-man's land." Should they want a more expansive breather, however, the building's 28th floor offers a terrace and "indoor park" with greenery and a radiant-heated floor. At those heights the facade switches to a six-story cable wall system to cut down on visual clutter and create a more immediate connection to the outdoors, said Gensler principal Ben Tranel, technical director on the project.

"We realized we created something that's a unique experience," Tranel said: "looking out through a really transparent facade and feeling very connected to nature."

Inside, outside air is encouraged to flow between open windows and the building's central cavity and custom furniture from Haworth leaves the office floor open. Heat accumulates on the building's roof, which is painted black, pulling air through a so-called solar chimney.

To fine-tune that concept, the designers built an inhabitable mock-up of one of the tower's floors in a parking lot in suburban Green Tree, Pennsylvania. That model led to changes in the coloration of the blinds and other details, assuring Ko and other designers that their building would have a light airiness instead of a stack of whirlwinds.

"We wanted people to feel it, and get that benefit, that sensation of cool air coming across your face and your body," said Ko, adding, "That's actually harder to do in a controlled way." The stack effect, which describes how air rushes out from high-rise buildings, worked against the idea of employee comfort.

And according to the client, comfort—not efficiency—was the primary goal. The Tower at PNC Plaza uses about half as much energy as a traditional office building and less than a quarter as much water, according to PNC, but Gary Paulson said the project's ultimate success would hinge on whether employees want to work there.

"You need to put a stake in the ground and try to exceed what anyone has done and what you've done before," said Paulson. "And we're hoping someone else exceeds what we've done." **CB**