

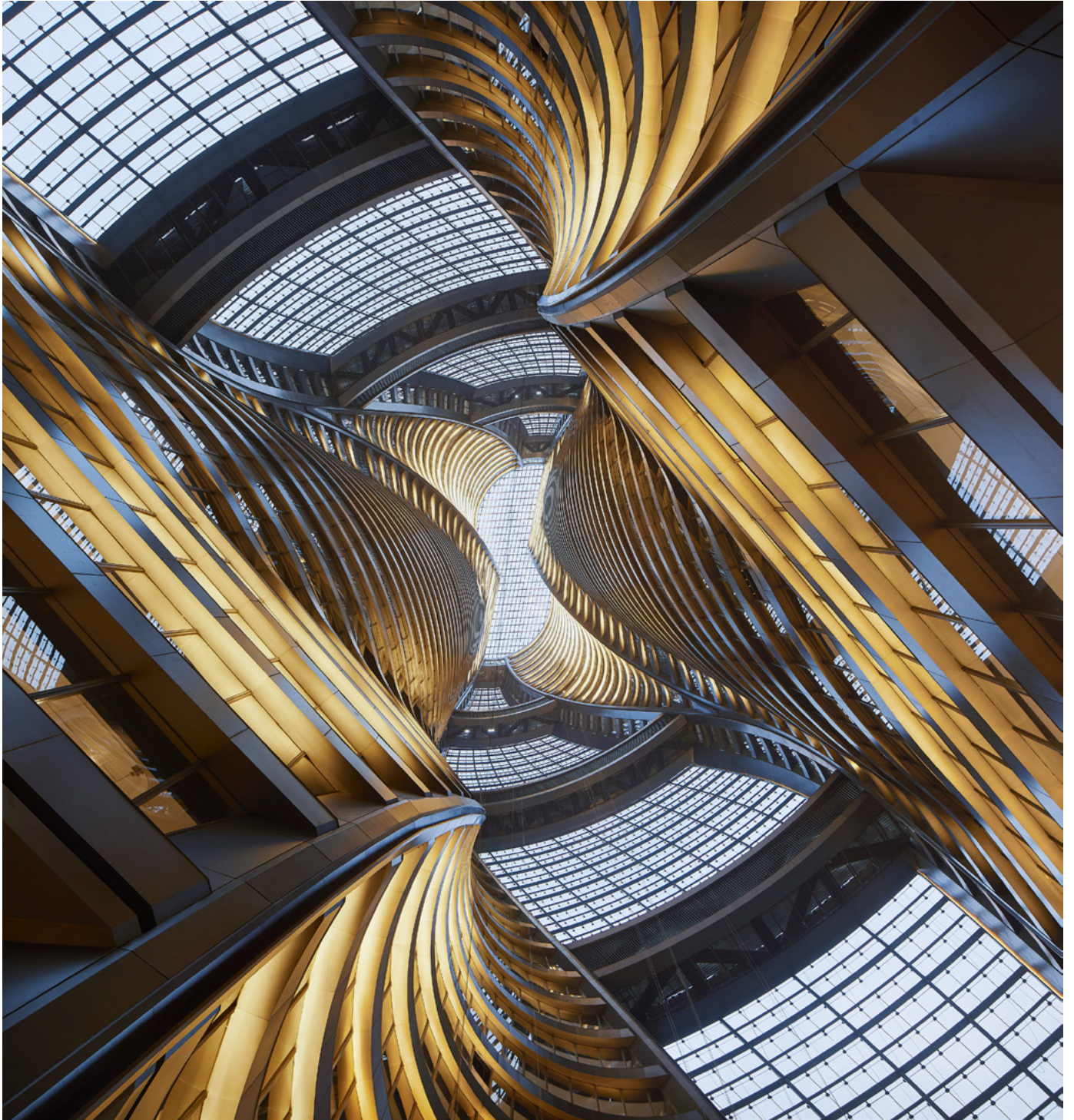
Curved

Bending architecture

AGATA TOROMANOFF

Lannoo









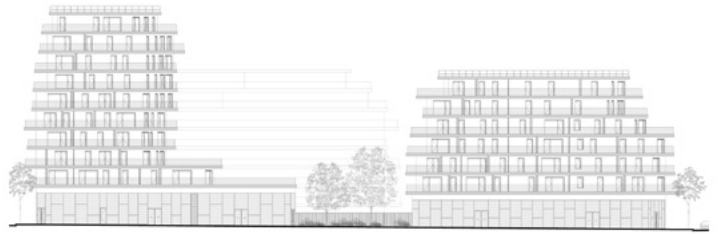
Courbes Residential Building

PARIS-COLOMBES , FRANCE

2019

CHRISTOPHE ROUSSELLE ARCHITECTE





The shifting shape of this residential building enriched the revitalisation of one of the districts of Colombes in the north of Paris. Comprising two multi-family houses of different heights, they are set on a base encompassing double-floor retail spaces. The wavy floor spans, perfectly visible thanks to glass balustrades encircling each level, create a dynamic illusion of movement. The curvaceous silhouette as well as the use of glass, add lightness to the extensive complex that includes 134 apartments. Its unusual shape allowed for variations in floor plan arrangements, which were carefully planned. "Each floor has been designed in accordance to its specific location, whilst complying with the orientation, the neighboring structures and the volumes of the floors above and below," explain the architects. Courbes is thus a great example of how high-density architecture can provide high-quality living conditions, ensuring intimacy and comfort for its residents while not compromising on the aesthetic aspect of architecture. The sinusoid lines also playfully reflect light throughout the day, at the same time the building also plays with transparency. Balancing these two aspects creates an interesting effect and enhances the dynamism of the volumes.

Another advantage of the curvaceous shape is the provision of generous outdoor terraces with spaces of 22 m² on average for each flat. Numerous floor-to-ceiling windows, supported

by curved glass balustrades (the architects mention that more than two kilometres of curved glazing was used to complete them), provide natural light and unobstructed views. Another important element of this project is the vegetation, for example more than thirty pines were planted along the pedestrian alley connecting both volumes of the complex.



The Exchange

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
2019
KENGO KUMA

The Exchange, the first Australian project for Kengo Kuma, is a 7-storey multi-use civic building combining functions of a public library, childcare as well as commercial uses including a fresh food market and restaurants. Sitting in an actively developed area of Darling Harbor in Sydney its dynamic circular outer shell is striking. The choice of a circular shape is meant to reflect the vibrant character of the neighbourhood. "The urban design strategy for The Exchange is to create an architectural form in harmony with the square which can merge with the landscape and preserve a human scale using natural materials to produce a tangible and comfortable building," comments the architect.

The expressive envelope encircling the volume's dynamic floor arrangement is made of timber. The wood's natural texture and colour create an intriguing contrast within the urban context. It is also a demonstration of Kuma's signature approach to architecture as a reference to

forms derived from the natural world, such as a nest in this case. Its distinctive wrapping creates a cocoon effect, and also functions as a screen filtering the access of natural light into the interiors. Only the ground floor remains fully transparent and accessible, from all directions with a key role of linking this dramatic building with the street flow. The dynamic geometry of the upper levels was envisioned to highlight the diverse character of the building and the many uses it combines. Shifting floor planes add dynamism to the expressive and sculptural timber wrapping. They also provide numerous outdoor spaces on each level that can be used in a way to suit each space's function.



RACV Cape Schanck Resort

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

2019

WOOD MARSH ARCHITECTURE



Smoothly merging into the site's terrain Cape Schanck Resort's sinusoid loop was inspired by the spectacular coastal landscape. "The soft, rolling dune-like quality of the topography calls for an architecture that is fluid and sculptural," explains the Wood Marsh Architecture studio. The fluid volume sits on a solid base (made up of a plinth of locally sourced stone and a structurally glazed podium that reflects the landscape) and stretches in three directions to take advantage of the scenic 360-degree views. The architects remark that the cellular

grid of the curvaceous upper level is a reminiscent of pockmarked sea cliffs, while the hand-built plinth symbolizes their focus on craftsmanship in this design.

RACV Cape Schanck's outer skin, defined by the regular pattern of recessed terraces and primarily glass facade is uniform on all sides, which highlights the feeling of continuity. The topography of the coastline informed not only the sculptural shape, but also the materiality of the building. In selecting the materials, a main



objective was their ability to age well over time. Corten, used in the three-level flowing main body, would gradually adjust to the palette of the local natural textures, like the rocky plinth does. The resort housing 120 hotel rooms, a gym, luxury day spa, restaurants as well as a golf club, sits within the dune system so it was necessary to minimise its impact on the natural context. Its monolithic curvaceous silhouette is visible from afar, but does not dominate the landscape. Robust yet gracefully meandering, the interiors are oriented

towards key views, which can be admired thanks to the elevated position plus the glazed walls and balconies' balustrades.

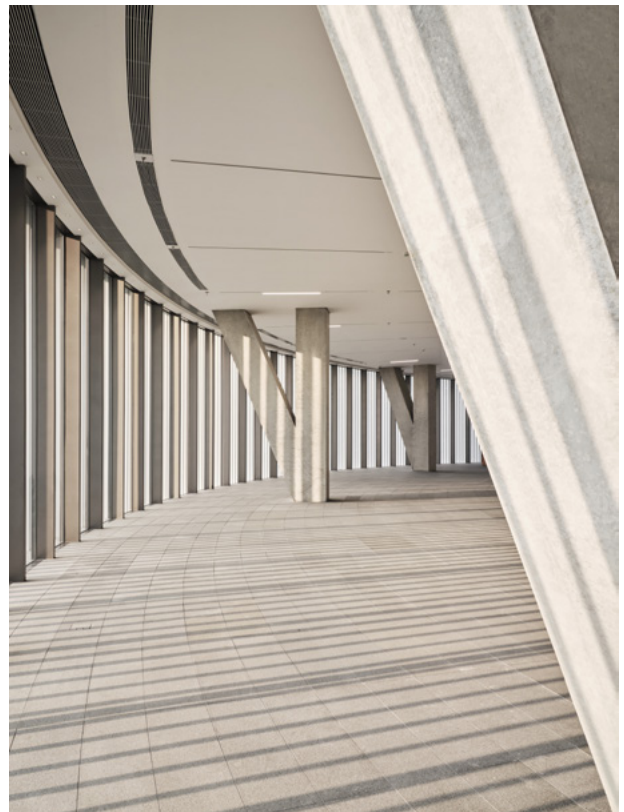
He Art Museum

GUANGDONG, CHINA
2020
TADA0 ANDO

A home to the He family's private art collection, He Art Museum has striking curvilinear lines and an intriguing juxtaposition of concrete and the vertically slatted louver façades. To envision this building, Tadao Ando drew from ancient Chinese cosmology and philosophy, in addition the western manner of working with light as well the character of the Lingnan's region terrain provided other sources of inspiration. Characteristically for the architect, the concrete structure is exposed along the walls of the building, yet this time circular forms dominate the structure of the pure geometry.

The subtly shifted disks across all four levels create rounded flexible display spaces that envelope the central open space with two helical staircases reminiscent of the famous Bramante Staircase in the Vatican Museum. Ascending in a curvilinear rhythm, they connect all levels and are lit by the top skylight. This central oculus becomes a symbolic source of light that interplays with the spiraling silhouette of the stairs creating a very atmospheric effect.

The spectacular monolithic staircase within a cylindrical volume demonstrates the plasticity of exposed concrete and its expressive power. The raw materials, neutral colour palette and minimal decoration direct the aesthetic focus to the artworks, creating a distinctive yet minimalistic environment. For the exhibition spaces, the light is generously distributed and filtered through the regularly slatted façade. Interestingly, the museum's name, He, stands for harmony, balance and union, qualities that are demonstrated in this timelessly elegant building, which also includes a café and a bookshop for visitors.





Musée Atelier Audemars Piguet

LE BRASSUS, SWITZERLAND
2020
BIG



The new museum building sits in the heart of the historical complex of workshops and factories of Audemars Piguet in Swiss Le Brassus. The architects, BIG studio, were driven by several factors during the design process – the building had to demonstrate the independent spirit of the company’s founding family and be rooted in the heritage of watchmaking. The spiral shape is smoothly integrated into the terrain, and with its green roof, becomes a natural part of the local landscape (the roof also regulates temperature and absorbs water). The structural curved glass walls blur the boundary between the interiors and surrounding buildings. To filter the light and reduce the sun’s heat, the outer shell has been partly covered with a brass mesh, the complex texture creating a visual contrast with the glazed surfaces.

The curving flow of the building emerging from the ground and adapting to the sloping site, creates a fluid storyline for the museum’s visitors exploring the art and science of watchmaking. “The exhibition sequence is stretched into a linear spatial experience, then bends to form a continuous spiral,”

state the architects. Experiencing this continuous dynamic volume, visitors not only see the exhibitions but also the watchmakers at work in their workshops behind transparent partitions. The interiors are navigated through the circular flow of the building. Despite its purely contemporary forms, the new addition to the complex works well with the pre-existing buildings. “Musée Atelier Audemars Piguet is conceived as an oxymoron,” note the architects. “Striking yet subtle. Contemporary yet timeless. Functional yet sculptural. Floating yet rooted,” they explain.

Bumpers Oast

KENT, UNITED KINGDOM
2020
ACME

Bumpers Oast is a contemporary interpretation of typical oast house. Locally, these vernacular houses were used to dry hops for the beer-brewing process. Drawing from the shape of historic Kentish examples, the architects, ACME, introduced innovative solutions. The key decision was to replace the traditional brick turrets and single-clad timber roof cones with an all timber structure. With its highly-insulated timber, the result is very low-energy consumption in the house. The construction had several essential stages; from the assembly of ground floor timber frame to the construction of the central cone to the installation of the clay tile façade. The multi-coloured external shell ranges from dark red at the bottom to orange in the center and blue toward the top. The architects call the transition between the rectangular tiles for the cylinders to the increasingly tapering tiles for the cones as one of the most challenging tasks.

The house consists of five towers that are clad with shingle and are based on traditional proportions, but the architects decided to set the volumes slightly apart from each other.

This arrangement created views inwards and outwards with a central triple-height interconnecting space that has a distinct character. The common spaces are located on the ground floor, shared areas on the first floor and private interiors on the top, with bedrooms located in roof cones and span two levels. To maximize the curvilinear character of the walls, many pieces of furniture are also curved and built into the rooms. Plywood was one of the main materials as it is easy to bend. “The curvatures of each room have necessitated the use of finishes able to deal with that,” explain the architects.





Cloudscape of Haikou

HAIKOU, HAINAN PROVINCE, CHINA
2020
MAD ARCHITECTS

A port city of Haikou, in the past a part of the Maritime Silk Road, focuses on developing public spaces especially those devoted to culture. The Cloudspace of Haikou designed by MAD Architects is the first of sixteen pavilions commissioned to world-renowned architects with the aim of rejuvenating the city's coastline. This ambitious project starts boldly with organic building of the Cloudscape encompassing a library, a reading space and multi-functional audio-visual space that is entirely open to the public plus a café, restrooms, a nursery room and a roof garden.

The architects compare the experience of this sculptural architecture made in concrete to reading a book, as it provides an adventure into the unknown and a gentle escape from everyday reality. Sitting on a plot at the very edge of the land, it overlooks the sea.

The free-form design provided an excellent opportunity to create imaginative interiors. These take on a cave-like shape devoid of straight lines or sharp angles. The curving walls across the building embrace protectively and blend fluidly with the surfaces of the floors as well as the ceilings. Circular openings of various sizes are often located in unusual spots to deliver indirect sources of light that interact with the sculptural body. They are also a reference to holes created by wildlife or the sea and as such blur the boundaries between architecture and nature. Visitors can observe the sky or the sea and experience the passage of time throughout the day as if being a part of nature. Additionally, the organic forms maximally smooth the relationship between indoor and outdoor.





