

# the Architect

The official journal of the Kamra tal-Periti



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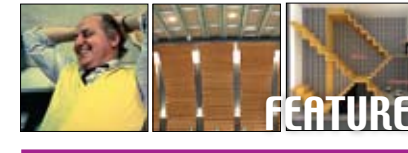
KAMRA TAL - PERITI

NEWSPAPER POST

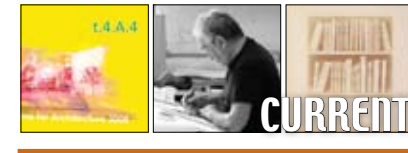
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**"I do believe that for an architect it is a learning process to be able to exercise yourself to frame a picture, choose a viewing point and to understand light; that magical and mysterious abstract gift we have been endowed with and which we so often neglect or misuse."**

**Alexandros N. Tombazis**

See page 22

Reform is the latest buzz-word. Since the March national election, Government has embarked on a number of consultation processes with the general public and civil society in order to address various issues where it feels that important change is required. Foremost among these are the reform of the rent legislation, the reform of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority, and a vision for an overhaul of the public transport system. Other major changes that affect the construction and building industry are also underway. Certainly the most important of these is the full implementation of the Energy Directive and the vast implications it will have on the local sector.

My previous editorial (July 2008) discussed the implications of this Directive and looked at what is happening locally in response to its implementation. I had made reference to draft legislation regarding this issue which had been presented to government for endorsement but which to date still has not been enacted.

That apart, the requirement for all new buildings, all building sale and rental agreements, and all buildings undergoing major renovation to have an energy certificate that declares the energy performance rating of such building is set to come into force as of the 01 January 2009. Less than three months to go, yet there still is no approved methodology on how such certification is to be provided, who can provide such certification and on what parameters such certification will be based. Government recently issued a call for tenders for the provision of such methodology. Up to the date of writing this editorial, the tender had not as yet been awarded. Similarly no information is yet available on the training opportunities that will be made available to persons wishing to act in this capacity.

Another disquieting situation is the fact that while Document F (Minimum Requirements for the Energy Performance of Buildings) has been in force for nearly two years, and clearly states the parameters, such as U-values, to be achieved within a building, local manufacturers and suppliers do not seem to be even aware of the existence of these Requirements. Furthermore, performance data on the construction products being marketed, and particularly those produced, locally such as blockwork and stone, is not available, since testing is not being carried out. In the absence of such data it is difficult to understand how the architect can design with the aim of achieving certain targets, but cannot do so since the information to be able to design in such a way is absent. Hopefully, the answers to these issues will be provided in the coming weeks.

A Eurobarometer survey published last September indicates that

64% of Maltese think that global warming and climate change are the most serious problems currently facing the world. This indicates that awareness is certainly increasing on the need to address these issues. It is up to us all to actively work towards achieving changes that can have a positive effect in this regard, and the way we construct our buildings is certainly an important challenge to be addressed.

...

This issue of tA is being published during a two week long series of events being organised by the Kamra tal-Periti on the occasion of World Architecture Day. Months of preparation, tens of meetings and a number of sleepless nights down the line, the Events Standing Committee presents these various activities that are intended to suit every palate and to open up the discussion on Architecture to a wider audience. Time for Architecture is in fact an opportunity to reach out to various sectors of the population, and to provide a space for exploring, experimenting and savouring the many facets of the architectural realm.

This issue also comes at a time when the Council of the Kamra is working on wrapping up the various discussions on amendments to the legal and regulatory framework within which it and the members of the profession operate. The Council is in fact actively liaising with the various authorities responsible for the implementation of such changes and hopes to be able to present a positive report at the upcoming Annual General Meeting to be held in December.

...

“the Architect” today takes a look at some recent, and not so recent, additions to the local scene in terms of the design of commercial spaces. From a small, intimate, shoe shop in Valletta, to a large furniture showroom in Qormi, each project presented its own particular challenges. The Editorial Team also looked at some examples of shop design executed by Hans Hollein. The design of commercial outlets offers the opportunity of creativity, extravagance and flair that is sometimes restrained in other projects and highly dependent on budgetary constraints.

**Simone Vella Lenicker**  
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KAMRA TAL-PERITI

To support members of the profession in achieving excellence in their practice of architecture and engineering in the interest of the community

The Council of the Kamra Tal-Periti for the year 2007 consists of David Felice (President), Vincent Cassar (Vice President), Simone Vella Lenicker (Honorary Secretary) and Council members Keith Cole, Philip Grech, Frank Giordmaina Medici, Anthony Fenech Vella, Etienne Micallef Grimaud, Alberto Miceli Farrugia, Danica Mifsud, and Damian Vella Lenicker.

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## A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION OF MALTESE 20C ARCHITECTURE

The KTP is currently working on the organisation of an exhibition of Maltese 20C Architecture, which is to be held next January. This will be a photographic exhibition depicting the history of modern architecture in Malta, the social aspect and the protagonists of the Modern Movement, as well as possibly a section on modern art.

## DOCOMOMO MALTA

Perit Jevon Vella attended the 10th International Docomomo Conference that took place from 13-20 September in the Van Nelle Ontwerpfabriek in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The anniversary edition of this conference was visited by more than 300 enthusiastic participants from 65 different countries. In the meantime, a meeting will be held soon for all current local members of Docomomo to get the local chapter of Docomomo Malta going.

## THE URBAN CHALLENGE FOR CHILDREN

The KTP Built Environment Standing Committee is currently working on the preparation of a version of The Urban Challenge for children. The Urban Challenge argues for a more sustainable approach to the built (and unbuilt) environment, as an essential basis for a better quality of life, and highlights the need for a more informed debate on key urban issues in the Maltese Islands. It is believed that this awareness must be instilled in society from a very young age in order to achieve a global change in mentality.

## BICC

Following the national general elections, the members of the Building Institute Consultative Council (BICC) tendered their resignation as is customary. Perit John Ebejer has been appointed Chairman and Chief Executive of the BICC. Meanwhile, the KTP was asked to nominate a representative and a substitute representative. It was agreed to re-nominate Perit Philip Grech who held this role until the Council's resignation, while Perit David Felice will acting as stand-in when required.

## RICS

A meeting was held between the KTP and the local representatives of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors on the 31 July. Possible collaboration between the two organisations was discussed. Discussions will continue in the coming months on how the two organisations can assist each other and collaborate at various levels.

## MEETING WITH MINISTER GEORGE PULLICINO

Following the approval of documents and position papers at the Kamra's last Extraordinary General Meeting, the Council is in discussion with Minister George Pullicino. Besides the EGM documents, the Kamra is also discussing its plans for an Architecture Centre, the Building Regulations, and the Energy Directive, amongst others.

## AIR MALTA

The KTP has this month closed off a deal with Air Malta, which will be the KTP's first Corporate Sponsors for the period September 2008 – September 2009. A list of benefits have been offered by Airmalta which will render attendance to various international conferences more possible for KTP Council members and their representatives, as well as help fund cost of flights for the various foreign speakers invited by the KTP for a number of events, including Architecture Nights and other conferences and seminars. Discounts on all flight fares will also be offered to KTP members. More information will be available on the KTP website soon.

## LAND REGISTRY

Periti Vincent Cassar and Damian Vella Lenicker met with representatives of the Land Registry Department. Discussions centred around the standards to be adopted when submitting Land Registry documentation, and the responsibility that such plans carry with them. The Department informed that it is currently in the process of updating its survey sheets. Meanwhile the KTP Education Standing Committee is planning to organise a CPD seminar on this topic.

## MMA TENDERS

Following the issue of two tenders for the services of Periti by the Malta Maritime Authority, a Directive to all Periti advising them to comply with the rates prescribed in Tariff K for services covered by such Tariff was issued on the 28 August and copied to the MMA and to Minister Austin Gatt. In addition, a letter was sent to the Ministry of Finance referring to their previous assurance that government entities were to be advised on how to issue tenders for such works. This directive may be downloaded from www.ktpmalta.com. Periti are reminded that while this directive was issued in relation to a particular tender, it is to be respected at all times.

## MEMO REGARDING VALUATIONS

A memo was sent out on the 16 September regarding the preparation of property valuation reports in accordance with the Kamra's guidelines as well as regarding fees to be charged for such. It also referred

to the 'Valuations Standards for Accredited Valuers' published by the Kamra tal-Periti in 2004. Further to this memo, a number of periti have requested a copy of the these Valuations Standards. The Kamra would like to inform that a limited number of copies is available, and the document will be issued on a first come first served basis. More information may be obtained from the KTP office via email on info@ktpmalta.com

## ECCE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The European Council for Civil Engineers will be holding its Council elections in October and has sent out a request for nominations. Perit Vincent Cassar, Vice President of the KTP, shall be contesting these elections and will be present for the ECCE General Assembly to be held in Cyprus this month.

## KTP REPRESENTATION ON AN MSA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Perit Danica Mifsud has been nominated to form part of a Malta Standards Authority technical committee to develop a national standard on recycled building material. The first meeting, which will be held on the 15 October, is being organised so as determine the standardisation process, establish and explain the role of members of the technical committee, to discuss and agree on the terms of reference of the technical committee and to establish a working program of this technical committee.

## MIES VAN DER ROHE AWARD

The Kamra tal-Periti, together with all the ACE-member architectural associations and the other European national architects' associations, was invited to submit nomination for five projects to be considered for the Mies van der Rohe Awards. Following a call to all its members, requesting them to submit projects for consideration, the Kamra received three submissions. A jury composed of Periti Vincent Cassar, Conrad Thake and David Pace reviewed the submissions and determined that all three were worthy of nomination. These were the Garden of Apollo (Richard England), Two twenty-two (Chris Briffa Architects) and the Malta Maritime Authority Trade Centre (Architecture Project). The results will be announced next year.

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International Standing Committee  
**Education Standing Committee**  
Events Standing Committee  
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**NEW WARRANTS**

Congratulations to Mark Abela, Karys Caruana, Charlene Chircop, Daphne Marie Fenech, Melanie Galea, Noel Gauci, Jason Gellel, Melissa Sue Giordmaina, Michelle Micallef, Maria Mifsud, Miriam Muscat, Rebecca Spiteri and Andrew Sultana who were recently awarded the warrant to practice as Periti. On behalf of the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti and its members, the Editorial Team congratulates them and wishes them the very best in their careers.

**AIA HEALTHCARE AWARDS 2008**

In this inaugural awards cycle, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Academy of Architecture for Health recognised four healthcare facilities for exemplary design in addressing concerns of program, aesthetics, and context. Extensive daylighting is common to all the buildings, primarily for patient and staff benefit.

One award went to the CHA Women & Children's Hospital near Seoul, where a softness of natural light, organic elements, and curving forms tempers a sleek building of glass, aluminum, and stainless steel. KMD Architects designed the facility, with associate architect yo2 Architects, to provide uncluttered respite from the surrounding neighborhood's visual noise.

The Shenzhen Third People's Hospital, currently under construction in Shenzhen, China, also received an award. It combines traditional Chinese elements with Western technology to provide a medically effective, culturally appropriate facility for the critical task of managing infectious diseases. TRO Jung Brannen designed the 83,000sqm complex with AHS International Architectural Design Consulting of Beijing and Shenzhen General Institute of Architectural Design and Research.

The desert landscape surrounding the University of Arizona's new cancer centre in Tucson became a guiding theme of its design. CO Architects designed this 7,600 sqm Peter and Paula Fasseas Cancer Clinic at University Medical Center North to maximise exposure of patients and staff to the natural world, though trellised terraces, mountain vistas, courtyard gardens, and abundant daylight. The facility, which was one of the hospitals to receive an award, reflects both "evidence-based design" and extensive interviews with the client's representatives, including patients, nurses, and physicians.

The fourth award went to the Weill



An undulating screen wall composed of steel ribs and wood slats extends through the CHA Women's Hospital. Photo Jong O Kim

Greenberg Center, designed by a joint venture of Polshek Partnership Architects and healthcare architect Ballinger, which expands the clinical facilities of the Joan and Sanford I Weill Medical College of Cornell University within New York City. The older New York Hospital complex represents an amalgamation of architectural styles developed over time. In contrast, the new 15-storey building provides a singular identity for ambulatory care, medical education, and clinical research services. All-over glazing presents an elegant yet welcoming face to the street.

**REHABILITATION COMMITTEES**

Perit Marie Louise Musumeci has recently been appointed Chairperson of the Valletta, Mdina and Cottonera Rehabilitation Committees. The three Rehabilitation Committees have been restructured so that a seven-strong core committee forms part of each of them. Other members, including representatives of the respective local councils, will be sitting on each committee. In an interview in The Times, she described the change as important, and that the homogeneity should bring about better results. "In the past, the committees worked individually, and although on a local level they worked well, the lack of communication was having an effect on a national level," she said. On behalf of the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti and its members, the Editorial Team extends its congratulations Marie Louise.

**LIVING STEEL 2008**

For its third annual steel housing competition, Living Steel challenged architects to design affordable, energy-efficient housing prototypes for Cherepovets, Russia, where temperatures can climb to 34 degrees

Celsius (93 degrees Fahrenheit) in the summer and dive as low as -49 degrees Celsius (-56 degrees Fahrenheit) in the winter.

Peter Stutchbury Architecture of Sydney, Australia, won the top prize with its design for a wedge-shaped home built into the landscape. Two firms received honorable mentions in the 2008 International Architecture Competition for Sustainable Housing: Bligh Voller Nield, also of Australia, and RVTR of Toronto, Canada.

Sponsored by a consortium of steel companies, the competition called for innovative use of steel in the design of detached



The Peter Stutchbury Architecture entry addresses harsh winter conditions by surrounding the house with a berm on three sides. Photo: Peter Stutchbury Architecture.

single-family houses of one or two storeys, with usable floor areas of 120 to 150 sqm including two or more bedrooms. The target construction cost per house was €80,000. The program suggested that energy consumption be kept to under 100 kilowatt-hours per square meter per year. The architects were asked to design multiple housing styles based on a single construction technology, using a readily adaptable building methodology

**ARTS COUNCIL**

Perit Adrian Mamo has been reappointed chairman of the Maltese Council for Culture and the Arts by Minister for Education, Culture, Sport and Youth Dolores Cristina. Josef Camilleri, Peter Serracino Inglott, Kevin Sciberras, Jeannine Giglio, Martina Caruana, Nicole Bugeja, Italo Ellul and Sandra Dingli have been appointed members of the board. The Editorial Board extends its congratulations on behalf of the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti and its members.



**CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS REGULATION**

Earlier this year, the EU Commission adopted a Proposal for a Regulation laying down harmonised conditions for the marketing of construction products, with the aim "to better define the objectives of Community legislation and make its implementation easier by providing some simplified mechanisms especially addressed to alleviate the administrative burden" for enterprises. The objective of the proposal is to ensure free circulation and use of construction products in the Internal Market. The scope encompasses the following sectors, (provided a relevant harmonised standard has been published): components for the building industry, including civil engineering; materials for the building industry; manufacturers of apertures and fixtures; building fire protection and related products; products related to electrical and gas installations; products related to water supply, sewage and its treatment.

Locally, the Malta Standards Authority has initiated a consultation process on the Directive. The text of the proposal can be viewed at <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/construction/cpdrevision/CPRproposal-com2008-311.pdf>

**TOWER BY HERZOG & DE MEURON**

Construction commenced in September on Herzog & de Meuron's first residential skyscraper in the heart of Manhattan's busy Tribeca District. Residents can expect to pay anything between \$3.5 - \$33 million



for the 145 residences within this glass and steel tower. With custom-sculpted white enamel fireplaces, private outdoor spaces for every apartment and integrated technology, the design aims to account for the hefty price-tag. Each apartment has an individual floorplan, the building's shape lending itself to this almost bespoke choice of living quarters. Included in the design are 1,850 sq ft of retail, a 9,700 ft fitness centre, a screening room and Tribeca Tot room designed by Architots among other features. With a footprint of 12,500 sq ft and a gross floor area of 425,000 sq ft, the design is set to make a lasting and unavoidable impression in the Manhattan district.



**MEPA BOARD MEETINGS**

As of the beginning of October, MEPA Board public meetings are being held at the Robert Samut Hall in Floriana.

This decision comes as the Authority seeks to improve and upgrade its levels of customer service.

**LIVING ARCHITECTURE**

After nearly a decade in the making and \$500 million spent, Renzo Piano's California Academy of Sciences opened its doors at the end of September. Taking sustainable architecture to an unprecedented level, the Academy will house 38,000 live animals and is currently the only institution in the world to feature an aquarium, a natural history museum, a living rainforest, a planetarium, and world-class research and education programs, all housed under a 2.5 acre green roof. Its rolling series of hills and valleys are modelled upon San Francisco's natural landscape, and the roof's native



plants absorb 90-98% of the building's rainfall. All around the roof's edges runs an encircling halo of photovoltaic cells, providing 60kW of electricity, enough to supply 5-10% of the structure's energy needs.

In designing the revitalised Academy, Piano sought to distance it from traditional museums, which he saw as "kingdoms of darkness". This effort is immediately evident upon entering the Academy's doors, where one is presented with an immense inner courtyard that floods the entire structure with light. An undulating skylight ceiling boasts complex concavities and hanging panels that distribute daylight, while an extremely efficient natural ventilation system effectively balances the entire structure's disparate climate zones.

Some state: 90% of all the demolition materials were recycled; 95% of all the steel

comes from recycled sources; 68% of the insulation comes from recycled blue jeans; 90% of the office space will have natural light and ventilation.

More information about the Academy, its architecture and, certainly not less important, its contents, can be found at [www.calacademy.org](http://www.calacademy.org). (Images copyright: Tim Griffith)

**HAL-FERH DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

MEPA recently published a Development Brief for Hal Ferh, seeking to provide guidance on the future use and redevelopment of the area. The Brief includes detailed guidance on on the areas available for



Former church built in 1916

development and their broad layouts, uses and building design, areas to be protected from development and buildings to be conserved. The Development Brief area is located within the Pwales Valley, with terrain that is predominantly flat. The area is mostly taken up by a disused holiday complex and contains a number of barracks dating from 1939, some other military buildings and a church/cinema built in 1916 in the neoclassical style. Several modern buildings were added to the complex in the 1970s/1980s, which occupy the north-eastern part of the site. There are also a number of ancillary facilities within this complex, such as tennis courts, swimming pools, internal roads and landscaped

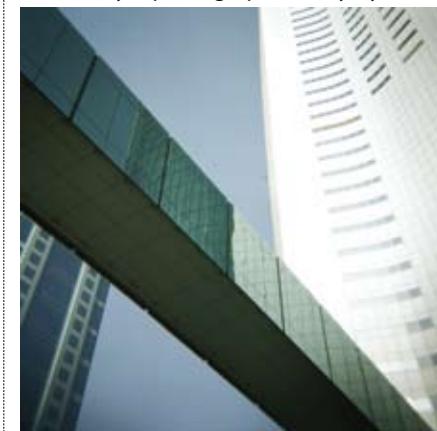


View towards the Military Barracks

areas. Just outside the boundary wall of the tourist complex but still within the Development Brief site, there are a horse-riding facility and a degraded open space which is used as an informal parking and recreational area. The Brief is available on [www.mepa.org.mt](http://www.mepa.org.mt) and submissions from the public are welcome up to the end of October.

**FUTURE CITY - DUBAI 2008**

Future City a photographic essay by David



Pisani on the architecture and urbanism of Dubai. The collection of photographs portray a city which is rising from the desert at a rate never experienced before, still incomplete and challenging many preconceptions of what a city is. The collection has been acquired by Emirates Airlines and will be exhibited in Malta in December. The exhibition is curated by SO Galerie. Further details are forthcoming.

**RIBA STIRLING PRIZE 2008**

A shortlist of six buildings has been chosen



Bijlmer Arena Station



Manchester Civil Justice Centre

from winners of 2008 RIBA National Awards and RIBA European Awards. These projects will be visited in September by members of the RIBA Stirling Prize jury, the results of which will be announced on the 11 October. The shortlist includes Accordia by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios/Alison Brooks Architects/Maccreanor Lavington, a high density housing project; Amsterdam Bijlmer ArenA Station by Grimshaw/Arcadis; Manchester Civil Justice Centre by Denton Corker Marshall, the largest court building to be built in the UK since the Royal Courts of Justice; Nordpark Cable Railway by Zaha Hadid with Patrik Schumacher; Royal Festival Hall by Allies and Morrison; and Westminster Academy by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris.

## WORLD ARCHITECTURE DAY

World Architecture Day was celebrated on the 06 October. Following the Union of International Architects' Assembly earlier this year, the day was dedicated to the memory of Giancarlo Lus, former Vice President of the UIA who passed away last July. The theme for the day will be "Child Be the Architect of a Better Future" in honour of the song, for which he composed the lyrics. The audio-visual presentation created for this day can be viewed on [www.ktpmalta.com](http://www.ktpmalta.com). Locally, this day is being celebrated through a two week long series of events under the Time for Architecture umbrella (see page 20).

### CHILD BE THE ARCHITECT OF A BETTER FUTURE

*Architect do you hear me calling  
I do not ask for much, better environment,  
planning and landscape*

*Architect help me save the Planet  
I seek, only kindness, sweet water,  
and clean air fit to breathe*

*Architect help me transform the space  
Use your knowledge with care, make  
my environment a friendly place*



*Architect I want a safe home  
Use technology with discretion,  
improve my quality of life*

*Architect help me save our memory  
Preserve our historical link, respect  
the good things of the past*

*Architect let your plans cherish  
our democracy  
Allow me to participate – let me play,  
turn my city into a magnet of hope*

*Architect lets respect each  
other and diversity*

*Come forward and use your skill, I want  
to call my neighbours my friends*

*Architect protect cultural differences  
Let your work promote human  
values, be equitable and under-  
standing in your designs*

*Architect I am the future,  
let me be your friend  
Let me walk tall in your new environs  
Sustain my dreams, be there for me  
Globalisation yes, especially for peace  
Be the architect of this future*

## REFORM

Following the March General Elections, Government embarked on a number of processes with the aim of causing reform to various sectors of the local legislative, social and economic scene. The Kamra tal-Periti felt that two of these processes were of particular relevance, namely the so called MEPA Reform and the Rent Reform, and participated actively in the consultation processes initiated by Government.

### MEPA REFORM

A Council delegation met with Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi on the 31 July 2008, and presented him with the Kamra's views on the reform of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority. The Council officially welcomed Government's commitment to undertake this necessary and much desired reform of the MEPA and confirmed its agreement with the decision to give the reform process the importance it deserves by placing it under the direct stewardship of the Prime Minister.

The whole scope of the reform at MEPA should be driven by an ingrained desire and a steadfast commitment to ensure that the nation achieves quality and sustainability in the built and unbuilt environment. The reform process should, therefore, form part of an overall process of institutional renewal based on a clear vision for the economic and social development of the nation. The Kamra's position paper on this matter states that any proposals should be designed to deliver tangible and sustained results on three main objectives. The first regards major improvements in the quality of the built and unbuilt (urban and rural) environment measured in terms of the social and environmental benefits that development provides to society and not merely the economic growth of particular sectors. The second deals with a qualitative improvement in the level of service provided by the Authority, measured not merely in terms of cases processed, but in terms of consistency, transparency and fairness. The third proposal concerns the ability of the authority to enhance its human resources by attracting



Council members in discussion with the Prime Minister on the reform of MEPA

and retaining enough personnel of the right calibre and qualifications capable of providing a service of impartiality and excellence for the benefit of society as a whole. MEPA's raison d'être is the creation of a better environment, built and unbuilt, to serve the citizens of this generation and those to come. Yet, what will this "better environment" be like? If we do not develop a vision for that environment, if we do not allow ourselves the opportunity to imagine what that environment could (and should) be like, we risk undertaking a perhaps costly and certainly laborious process of reform, without a clear direction and without achieving a better quality, and more sustainable, environment. This is all the more so given the particularly contentious milieu within which MEPA operates and the often conflicting concerns of the various social categories with their diverse demands to which it needs to respond.

The position paper touches upon a number of topics, including the role of government, the role of the MEPA Auditor, procedures of the Development Control Commissions, public participation, scheduling, the consultation process and the issue of interference in the workings of the Authority, among others. The paper also reiterates the Kamra's position already expressed in the policy document "The Urban Challenge: Our Quality of Life and the Built Environment" published

in 2007, regarding the need for a Design Review Commission to assess the quality of all development and infrastructure projects of significant scale or importance.

Another topic addressed is that of good governance. There is a need for the strict implementation of good governance throughout the organisation, firstly in national planning and procurement processes, and later, in all sections of the body. A number of proposals on how this could be achieved are presented, including the strengthening and empowering of public participation and public consultation, the convening and reconstitution of the Planning Consultative Committee (PCC), and the need to clamp down on unethical conduct by MEPA professional staff and management, among others. The document was met positively by both the Prime Minister and the MEPA Chairman, and it is hoped that a number of the Kamra's recommendations are taken on board.

### RENT REFORM

The Kamra also presented a report to the Rent Reform Working Group (RRWG) as part of the Consultation Process launched by Government regarding the Reform of the Rent Laws. This report aims to support the findings of the RRWG and to present recommendations which would expedite the rent reform process. In principal, the Kamra's position is in

agreement with the draft rent reform report. However, the draft is deemed lacking in addressing matters which are critical in the implementation of the rent reform process, in particular with respect to details of the social support mechanisms, the restructuring of the Rent Regulations Board, the indexing or database of fair market value for rental property, the establishment of a fair market rental value and establishing mechanisms to release property subject to post-1995 legislation onto the rental market. Furthermore, the proposed recommendations are deemed to be ambiguous with regards to leases to individuals for residential purposes and commercial leases. It is felt that this may give rise to misinterpretation and misuse.

The recommendations of the Kamra aim to address these issues, taking a professional approach rather than one interested mainly in social alleviation, and are intended to work within the existing framework of the present draft rent reform. Mechanisms are suggested within the Kamra's contributory document to relieve problem situations when they arise.

The Kamra commented on the fact that, while it is confident that the RRWG executed its findings with utmost diligence, none of the working group appears to have qualifications from a technical background, and that no Periti formed part of the working group. This would have given a positive contribution to the draft document published by Government.

In its statement, the Kamra also noted with satisfaction the ongoing consultation process that is being carried out by Government with regard to the proposals being put forward, and assured Government of its continued support and commitment to be available for such discussions.

The Kamra's position papers on both the MEPA Reform and the Rent Reform may be downloaded from [www.ktpmalta.com](http://www.ktpmalta.com). Both position papers were put together by the Kamra's Built Environment Standing Committee.

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# Architecture and Quality of Life

## ACE Declaration on Architecture and Sustainability

During the UIA Congress held last July in Turin, the Architects' Council of Europe presented a declaration on Architecture and Sustainability. As a member of the ACE, and signatory of the declaration, the Kamra tal-Periti will be striving to achieve the ideals set out therein. The text of the declaration is reproduced here:

We, leaders and representatives of the architectural profession believe that the design of the built environment has a profound role to play in ensuring the survival of humans and thousands of other living species, the integrity of the earth and its biodiversity, and the heritage of future generations currently threatened by climate change and unsustainable development.

We are conscious that buildings account for half of the energy use in the western world, and if we add to that the impact of spatial planning on the movement of people and goods our responsibility as built environment professionals extends even further. Inequitable and unsustainable production and consumption patterns exacerbate environmental changes and aggravate poverty in many regions of the world. Can we find the collective wisdom to choose a

more sustainable path of development? Sustainable architectural design integrates consideration of resource conservation and energy efficiency, healthy buildings and materials, ecologically and socially sensitive land-use, protection and enhancement of biodiversity, and an aesthetic sensitivity that inspires, affirms, and ennobles. Sustainable design significantly reduces adverse human impacts on the natural environment while improving quality of life and economic well-being. Market forces alone cannot ensure sustainable development; indeed climate change has been famously described as the "greatest market failure ever". We urge



governments to rapidly come to a binding, science-based and equitable agreement to arrest the increasing concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This will enable nations and regions to institute the right financial measures and regulatory regimes and will allow carbon trading and technology transfer that will enable the innovation and development that we need and to which we are ready to commit. We strongly believe that sustainability and whole life value analysis of buildings are inseparable and together shift focus away from the short-sighted initial cost based approaches that have proved so destructive. Construction is a cultural act which always has a collective impact and which

should fulfil human, social and technical functions. The present environmental and energy crisis and the need for sustainable urban development demands an approach to architecture and planning that addresses both the city and the individual building as complex interactive systems which have symbiotic relationships with their wider natural surroundings. It is essential that quality of life is de-coupled from the irresponsible use of non-renewable resources. We believe that urgent actions are needed to address these fundamental problems and reverse current trends.

Taking account of the Declaration of Interdependence for a Sustainable Future of the UIA/AIA World Congress of Architects in Chicago, June 1993; the 2006 policy on Sustainable Development of the Union of Mediterranean Architects; the policy statement on Architecture and Sustainability of the Architects' Council of Europe agreed by the General Assembly in Brussels, April 2007;

and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities adopted in May 2007 by the EU Ministers for Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion:

Therefore, for our part, we commit to take the following actions:

### 1. Change our individual Professional Practices

Place sustainability at the core of our practices and professional responsibilities, promote and foster appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies and develop and continually improve practices, procedures, products, curricula, services, technology and standards that will enable the implementation of sustainable design; work

to bring all existing and future elements of the built environment - in their design, production, use, and eventual reuse - up to sustainable design standards, working towards the achievement of a zero emission built environment.

### 2. Promote Sustainable Design

Include energy and environmental performance information in all architectural competitions, public architectural awards and competitive selection processes, where appropriate as an assessment criterion, and encourage similar information to accompany all published architectural reviews

### 3. Foster Environmental Literacy and Competence

Support the creation of programmes to teach sustainable design skills to all undergraduate and graduate students of urban design and architecture, and encourage continuing professional education and research in relevant areas.

### 4. Practice Institutional Leadership

Set an example of environmental corporate responsibility by establishing policies and practices of resource conservation, recycling, waste reduction, and environmentally sound operations in the professions' institutions and organisations.

### 5. Collaborate for Interdisciplinary Approaches

Convene sister professions and industry interests to develop interdisciplinary approaches to curricula, research initiatives, and industry practices that support an environmentally sustainable future; and seek to establish policies, regulations, and practices in government and business that ensure sustainable design becomes normal practice.

### 6. Broaden Service and Outreach Nationally and Internationally

Work with national and international organizations to promote a worldwide effort toward a sustainable future.

# SACES update



## A Great Escape

As the warm summer months fade into a blissful memory, it is now time to welcome all of our new first years and old students to the new scholastic year!

This SACES article is being dispatched from the Canadian city of Halifax where, as is now customary, a few of us are spending our fourth year's first semester on exchange. Other students are participating in the exchange program in places like Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and on the closer side of the Atlantic, in Milan and Bologna.

It is indeed very heartening to see that practically all of the available spaces in this year's exchange program have been filled. It is so important that as students, we gain a more worldly view of architecture and the different aspects of it that foreign cultures appear to focus on. In this way, the future members of the profession will be both well informed and diverse in their outlook. Rachelle Spiteri, Noella Farrugia and Patty Grech are in the Architecture stream in Tennessee. Rachelle enthusiastically spoke about the way that the three of them were received by the faculty of architecture. "Since we spend much of our time in the design studio, we really got to know everybody here. The students, lecturers and tutors all seem so eager to make all of us feel at home here and it is this environment which encourages us to make the most of our exchange." Rachelle also spoke about the great sense of school spirit exhibited at a multitude of events held by the university such as football games, association events as well as cultural activities like exhibitions and lectures.

Jessica Sammut who, along with Sarah Cassar, Samaria Bezzina and myself is spending the semester at Dalhousie



Image by Debbie Crockford and WHAT\_architects

University, Canada also found the community spirit here overwhelming. She remarked, "The thing that surprised me most here is that the students are very involved in university life. There are loads of societies which students can join and many activities throughout the whole scholastic year." Jessica was also very keen to elaborate on her daily life here. "Every day I feel more proud to be Maltese since the people here think that Europe is a haven of culture on the other side of the globe! The city of Halifax is very student-based and since everything is within walking distance from the university it is very easy to familiarise and orientate yourself in the city. University life here is very different from the one that I am used to in Malta because the system is so different! Since the assessments are mainly assignment-

based, with little weight given to examination grades, working throughout the semester feels a lot more rewarding and part of the pressure at the end is lifted. After only 3 weeks at Dalhousie University I am happy that I chose the exchange program and that this experience will help me learn more about my study area and life in general!" Meanwhile, fifth year student Debbie Crockford has just completed a three month internship at London Architectural firm WHAT\_architecture. When asked about the nature of the work that she was involved in, she explained, "The main project I'm involved in is the design of a children's centre connecting a nursery to its primary school. The main difference I've experienced here is the design approach taken. Design possibilities seem endless.

In fact, we've clad the 40m long façade completely in Lego imagery, designed by the children, for the children."

Debbie was also very keen to elaborate on the concept of this project. "Instead of using it in its traditional 3-D way, Lego was used to create A3 flat panels which will then be attached to dimensionally-stable boards to clad the building. This forms an exterior shell to the building, which, if removed, can perform perfectly well without them." "This experience has been great at teaching me how to approach projects with a different attitude and I would definitely recommend students make a go of similar opportunities. The design world is there, so exploit it!"

Hopefully more opportunities like the exchange program and work internships (which one should note, Debbie found on her own initiative by contacting individual firms and hoping for the best) will be made available to students. More importantly, one hopes that all forthcoming students will have the good sense and proper guidance to take full advantage of any opportunities that might come their way.

On the local front, following our very successful Sand Sculptures event at Ghadira Bay, be sure to keep an eye out for the annual SACES workshop. This year, SACES is building upon the success of last year's theme, which involved small interventions about a common locality. The workshop will be held in Valletta and Floriana and the public is always more than welcome to come by and participate! Until then, we would like to take the opportunity to wish everybody a challenging and successful academic year!

James Muscat

# A new home for Joinwell

One of the more recent projects to grace the local scene is the completion of the new Joinwell showroom in Qormi. A break from the more mundane, and dare one say traditional, approach to the design of commercial and industrial buildings, this showroom employs innovative technologies and approaches in its design and promises to stand out as an iconic building for years to come. 'the Architect' got in touch with the team at De Micoli and Associates and explored the various aspects of the project.

The origins of the well-established company of Joinwell can be traced back to just after the Second World War when in 1947, with the amount of reconstruction work needed in the aftermath, the late George Galea saw a business opportunity and set up a small company producing fixtures, being joined later on by four of his brothers, Albert, Joe, Vincent and Louis, as well as Maurice De Giorgio. The company grew rapidly and prospered in the economic expansion soon after, ambitiously undertaking the production of the then pioneering range of furniture following the G-Plan designs of the UK company E.Gomme Ltd of High Wycombe as well as an increasing number of in-house designs. This necessitated the construction of the factory and offices in Mill Street, Qormi, designed by Perit Edwin England Sant Fournier, which when completed in the 1950s stood on a grand total of 23,000 square metres and was

huge by the standards of the time. Soon enough this development in turn called for a more centrally located showroom space in which to display the company's products besides their furniture. Joinwell was the first company to produce mattresses locally and also delved into the production of the steel frame window fixtures so commonly used at the time. Joinwell this time commissioned Edwin England Sant Fournier's son Perit Richard England to design what is now the iconic building in Tower Road, Sliema which was completed in the 1960s, and as Vincent Galea often reminisces with a smile, opened for "business as usual" without much fuss on an ordinary Monday morning, helped by a splash of holy water from the local parish priest. The two buildings complemented each other and made complete business sense then, evidenced by the company's steady growth

in the next three decades of operation. Aided by the construction boom and admittedly also by the legislation protecting the local industry at the time, Joinwell was fitting out some of the island's top hotels single-handedly and had taken a firm grip locally, becoming a household name and employing more than three hundred skilled workers at its peak. However, the subsequent relaxation of importation legislation, changes in market trends as well as a global shift of production techniques towards mass production and increased automation all contributed to a cut down in Joinwell's workforce in the 1990s and early 2000s combined with a staggering increase in imported goods. These forces simultaneously led to a decrease in the space needed for local production and an increase in that needed for the display of merchandise. Suddenly, the showroom in Sliema was

becoming more and more inadequate for its purpose whilst at the same time more of the factory floor space in Qormi became unutilised. It was at this point that Joinwell, now led by Vincent's son Martin Galea, decided to appoint the architectural firm, De Micoli and Associates, entrusting the team to find a solution for this growing imbalance in spatial needs. Initially, a different site to the one chosen was considered and studied to make



Sun path analysis. Day: 15 August. Time (from top): 9am, 11am, 1pm, 3pm



way for a larger showroom; however, it soon became increasingly obvious that it made more sense to actually make use of part of the existing factory. What started off as a simple, quick and cost effective idea from the clients to merely partition off the space required from the part of the factory closest to the main roads in order to accommodate the showroom space led to Perit Ray De Micoli typically taking things to a new level and eventually convincing the clients to increase the height of the front part of the new showroom to the three storey building height limitation imposed by the area's Local Plan. In his mind, the new

intervention had to appear as lightweight and transparent as possible, with the passer-by being able to practically look up through and across the floor plans into the open sky behind the upper floors during the day and at night have an ethereal internal glow that would highlight the products on show. The first part of the design exercise concentrated on orienting the display elevation for maximum visual exposure to people travelling up and down Mill Street as well as others driving past at an elevated level on the bridge leading to and from the Mriehel Bypass nearby. After numerous drive-bys across the bridge taking countless photo-

graphs of the site and its surroundings it was decided that, instead of pasting the new structure onto the front of the existing structure, it was imperative, albeit at the expense of valuable developable land, to maintain the present setback. This could only be made possible by demolishing the front two bays of the factory but allowed a visual depth to the main façade and maintained a sense of openness at the foot of Mill Street. Ray De Micoli also strategically decided to give the main display façade a gentle curve in plan so as to further embrace the view of those passing by and also because he felt that it just felt right in relation to the focal point set by the windmill located in front. This curved façade would then join up and round off visually with a geometrically simple glass circular tower at its end partly housing the new administration offices. With the extent of glass envisaged and the orientation of the main façade pointing south east, a shading device in the form of a huge cantilever canopy was introduced into the architectural design. The overhang created was not just aesthetic but also dictated by studies using sun paths simulated through computer-generated renders. This ensured proper shading of the glass but not at the expense of detracting from the building's transparency made possible by the use of a structural glass curtain wall. On the other hand, translucent recycled U-glass was used in the tower section due

to its use allowing a more elegant handling of smaller radii without appreciable visible segmenting and also due to total transparency in the tower not being a requisite. In addition, the U-glass outperformed clear laminated glass in terms of thermal performance by virtue of its translucence and the creation of an air cavity between its inner and outer skin by its method of installation thus eliminating the need for shading. The requirement for a slim structure, as well as the urgency to finish the main showroom space in a very tight timeframe, led to an early decision to go for a steel frame structure with bolted connections which could be easily fabricated off-site and assembled on site. Pre-cast concrete floor panels with a power-floated structural topping were put in place later in preparation for the final floor finish. Structural masonry walls were kept to a minimum both internally and externally in order to maintain a high degree of transparency with most of the internal space being kept open plan in accordance to the designs of Perit Chris Briffa who was separately commissioned by Joinwell to execute the interior design of the project.

Keeping in line with the overall high finish of the structure a cladding system composed of painted galvanised steel panels was both fabricated in-house and installed by the same contractor responsible for all the steel and glazing works, and was used to treat the solid parts of the new façade that framed in and accentuated the glass entities of the showroom curtain wall and the tower. Immediately after moving the plant and machinery located in the part of the factory to be demolished and the additional area immediately behind this which was to be absorbed into the showroom space at ground level, internal partition walls cutting off the production floor were erected and the demolition of the existing structure started on the 01 October 2007. After nine often hectic but highly rewarding months, the showroom doors were then opened to the public in the first week of July 2008.

**Project Location:** Joinwell Showroom, Qormi  
**Client:** Joinwell  
**Architect:** De Micoli & Associates  
**Design Team:** Ray De Micoli, Andrew Vinci, Annett Lakatsch, Karl Micallef, Anne Marie Pisani  
**Interior Design:** Chris Briffa  
**Photography:** Alan Carville  
**Steel and Glazing Works:** JS Dimech Ltd  
**Other Construction:** Tarcisio Galea Ltd



# Designing Shops - some projects by Hans Hollein

By Dr Conrad Thake

Hans Hollein has had a long and distinguished career not only as an architect but also as an artist, teacher, designer of exhibition pavilions, furniture and silverware. Hollein's early architectural career and his subsequent rise to international fame is characterised by a number of high-profile designs for shops and retail outlets, all situated within the historic centre of Vienna. Although modest in terms of physical scale, the designs of these shops were considered at their time to be highly innovative and creative. The prestigious American journal *Progressive Architecture* had headlined an article about one of Hollein's shops, as 'Architectural Faberge'. It commended the "architect's sense of space with a goldsmith's sense of craft to produce exquisite ambience for art."

After having graduated from the School of Architecture in Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in 1956, Hollein pursued his



Hans Hollein

graduate studies at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago and at the University of California at Berkeley. During his time in North America, he had the opportunity to come into close contact with the work of the great masters - Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies Van der Rohe and Richard Neutra. After briefly

working in architectural firms in the United States and Sweden, in 1965 he returned to his home town Vienna.

His first project in Vienna was the design of the Retti Candleshop (1965-1966). It was very modest in size, and was what the *Architectural Forum* magazine described as "even smaller than most first commissions: a shop and showroom 12 feet wide for a candle maker." Hollein's design for the shop-front was audacious with the shimmering polished aluminium sheeting standing out in sharp contrast to the rest of the overlying sombre masonry constituting a classical façade. The entrance to the shop took the form of a cut-out in the form of an inverted candle flanked on each side by a smaller obliquely-set square cut-out serving as a display unit. The Retti Candleshop although a relatively minor project immediately brought Hollein's accomplishment to the attention of the international architectural

community. It also earned him the Reynolds Memorial Award where the prize money of \$25,000 was more than the actual cost of the project.

The Retti Candleshop, in spite of its size became one of the prime architectural icons within Vienna's fashionable shopping districts. It also brought Hollein more commissions to design similar outlets. Almost contemporary with the candleshop, Hollein designed the Christa Metek Boutique (1966-1967) with its small shop-front distinguished by a colourful spiral motif that immediately attracts the attention of any passer-by. However, the two projects which truly stand out and affirmed Hollein's international reputation were the design for two jewellery shops in Vienna's historic centre.

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The first one, the Juwelier Schullin I (1972-1974) with its prominent location along the Graben, has a frontage even smaller than that of the Retti Candleshop. The façade is an exquisitely crafted object made of diverse materials ranging from granite, to gold-plated chrome and glass. The irregular fracture running freely through the granite slabs and converging onto the recessed

entrance is analogous to the free flow of volcanic lava. It could be interpreted as a liberating act of artistic defiance, smack in the face of conformity and sterile modernism. The design was soon after adopted by prominent architectural critics such as Charles Jencks as one of the iconic examples of Post-Modern architecture. The Schullin shop celebrated the fusion of elegant materials and craftsmanship, with the end artistic product unashamedly effusing an aura of Viennese elegance and sophistication.

Almost a decade later, he was commissioned to design Juwelier Schullin II (1981-1982) situated within close walking distance to the first Schullin shop. Hollein adopted a more dramatic and scenographic approach. The shop-front is dominated by a large segmental arched metal blade supported on a pair of slender iroko columns. The sense of spatial drama is heightened as one proceeds to enter the shop by passing under the arched blade element through a doorway of very restricted width and being more of a cut-out in the wall. The perfectly symmetrical disposition is maintained with a large shop-window display on either side of the entrance. The design for the two Schullin jewelry shops in Vienna brought Hollein more international acclaim. Shortly afterwards in 1985 he was awarded the Pritzker Prize for Architecture.

In his acceptance speech Hollein made the following statement that reveals insights as to his design philosophy: 'I have always considered architecture as an art. To me architecture is not primarily the solution of a problem, but the making of a statement..... Similarly I have tried to expand the scope and range of artistic and architectural intervention. Therefore my interests dwell not only on the sizeable building proper, but on utterances you can make on a small scale as well, especially in relation



Schullin II



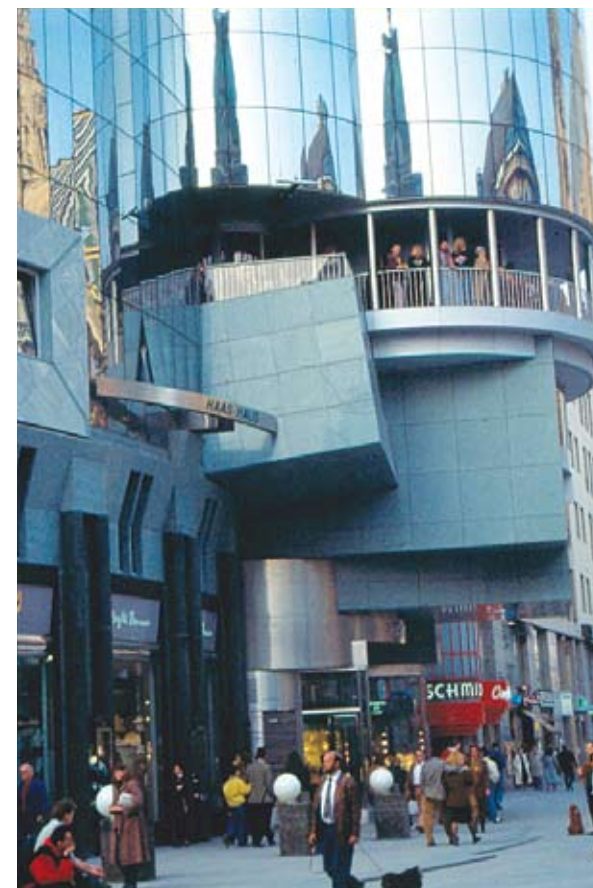
Christa Metek Boutique



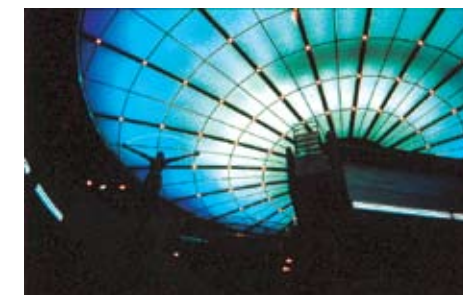
Schullin I



Schullin III



Haas Haus



Haas Haus Interior



Retti Candleshop

to the needs daily life carries with it - the room, the object you feel and touch. Not only do I deal with eternity, with the permanent but also with the ephemeral and the temporary.'

In 1987, Hollein was commissioned to design a large retail office complex right in the historic centre of Vienna. Haas Haus (1987-1990) was highly controversial from its inception. The intrusion of a modern glass-and-concrete building right in the heart of the city dominated by St Stephen's Cathedral was met by a public outcry. The exterior skin of Haas Haus comprises mainly mirrored glass reflecting the mighty Stephansdom just opposite the site. Instead of stark rows of stone, the lower floors are asymmetrical with blocks of marble projecting from the building at different angles. The end-product is a modern building housing offices, restaurants and shops all housed in one building envelope. Hollein succeeded in nurturing a creative tension between Haas Haus and the surrounding centuries-old-architectural landmarks. The project with all its controversies is a testimony of his audacious creativity and ranks as one of his artistic tour-de-force.

In the later 1980s, Hollein consolidated his international reputation with the design of two high-profile museums, the Municipal Museum Abteiberg, in Monchengladbach and the Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt, Germany. In the annals of architectural history, Hans Hollein has been widely acclaimed as one of the leading

protagonists of Post Modern architecture. However, his earlier small retail projects, irrespective of their modest scale, serve as shining manifestations of the principle of gesamtkunstwerk or the unified totality of the arts. To any student of architecture, they serve as timeless lessons that architecture is a supreme art form.



# SHU

The design of commercial spaces presents a number of very different challenges, depending largely on the location, products, clientele and client that one is dealing with. The Architect spoke to Perit Chris Briffa about two such spaces, each having an entirely different approach yet both achieving the aim of presenting an innovative shopping experience to their visitors.

## What was your brief for the design of this store, and do you think you have achieved the requirements?

The client's brief demanded a display of 75 items and to store around 600 shoes; inside a unique shoe shop evoking exclusivity. Mainly aimed to attract young, stylish women to medium to high-end brands the interior needed to be fashionable but with a lifetime of at least seven to ten years, which meant that the design approach needed to be flexible in its shifting its ephemeral colours while permanent in its contemporary detailing. According to the client, the shop does very well; the salesgirls say it's the smallest shop of the company with the largest storage, newcomers always seem pleasantly surprised upon entering, and MEPA liked the way we concealed the AC units on the façade; so for the moment we are very pleased!

## What were your main sources of inspiration?

At first, I was genuinely preoccupied with your standard experience of buying shoes,

which, to me, leaves a lot to be desired. I thought of how unhappy shoes look when put on a shelf, or even worse in a glass display unit. So in an attempt to blur the edge between consumer and product, we concluded that the shoe shop itself should feel like a display window; something between a doll-house and a small amphitheatre where it is important to see, be seen and be in close contact with whatever surrounds you.

We formulated a very restricted palette of materials - mainly glass, steel and timber - and devised a large, interconnecting wall which could easily change its wallpaper in order to accommodate future variations. Being in Valletta, we felt the shop also needed a sense of place, and a series of wrought iron patterns inspired by a gate in the Grand Master's Palace was meticulously fitted to structurally aid the cantilevering steps and provide safety to the patrons. Other areas of great inspiration was traditional Gozo lace, used in the more sensuous lower level, and the fact that traditionally the staircase has always been exploited as the main sculptural element within an interior.

## The store is quite restricted in space. How did you try to maximise the volumes within?

The site presented a very limited volume (a 7x3m room at street level with an underlying basement) and given the client's ambitious brief, we had to adopt a vertical approach rather than a horizontal one, where space was conceived purely as access and consequently fragmented into one, giant staircase combining display, seating, storage and all services into one element.

## What sort of shopping experience can one expect at SHU?

We imagined clients walking up, down and around the stairs, picking their favourite shoe, sitting next to it and trying it on. The experience of being surrounded by the products, together with the constantly changing vistas while exploring the shop enhances both the shopper and the shopped in a surreal, stepped space.

An artist commented that SHU has the

scale of Japanese shoe-box architecture held together by detailed, traditional Maltese ornament. Some women were reported to be scared to walk over the glazed entry level and walk on the edge in order to go inside the store!

Whether shoppers are daring enough to explore is not of great concern for me. What concerns me is to instill a lasting, personal experience. In order to do this one needs to present an interior which while pursuing its brief, poises a challenge in terms of perception, recognition and re-examination.

## Project Stats

LOCATION: SHU, St. Lucy Street, Valletta  
 CLIENT: Desmond Vella  
 ARCHITECT: Chris Briffa Architects  
 DESIGN TEAM: Chris Briffa, Marcia Calleja, Bernard Vella  
 PHOTOGRAPHY: David Pisani  
 WOODWORK: Saw Ltd.  
 WROUGHT IRONWORK: MMCS Ltd.  
 LIGHTING: Brilliant  
 FABRICS AND COVERINGS: Camilleri Paris Mode



## What were the client's requirements for the interiors of this store, and what was your approach to the design?

The client wanted to introduce the combination of high-end Audio/Video (AV) equipment with intelligent home systems. He needed his product not only to be understood by potential clients, but to be able to displayed as an easy tool and demonstrate its adaptability inside their homes. He desired to eradicate the James-Bond-Syndrome usually associated with these systems.

We presented a store which would be divided into two main areas; the first, impersonal space greets the customer with your stereo-type AV store, and the second

throws you inside somebody's home and invites you to take a peep and play with its various gadgets. We imagined a studio-flat environment which simulates the real, and with the use of high contrast (from the previous space) presents the visitor with a surprisingly clean slate; capable to take on an ideal order of things.

## This store sells electronic equipment, an essential part of a contemporary lifestyle. How did this affect the concept for the design of this store?

The internal space evolves from product-orientated at the entrance, to user-oriented as one explores deeper into the store. This transition from public to personal space

# DONEO

attempts to be an allegoric parallel to the modern change of perception of these products; not anymore as luxury toys, but as an integral part of contemporary life-style.

## What were the main challenges faced?

The main challenge probably consisted in understanding these intelligent systems not only via the ease of incorporating them within an internal space, but also insofar as they can offer a much broader sense of design. For example: while it is important to plan functional lighting points, these systems allow you to design a different artificial or natural lighting scene for a different domestic situation. I think that this is truly a 4th dimension in interior design, which presents new challenges in the way we look at space and its potentially-endless possibilities.

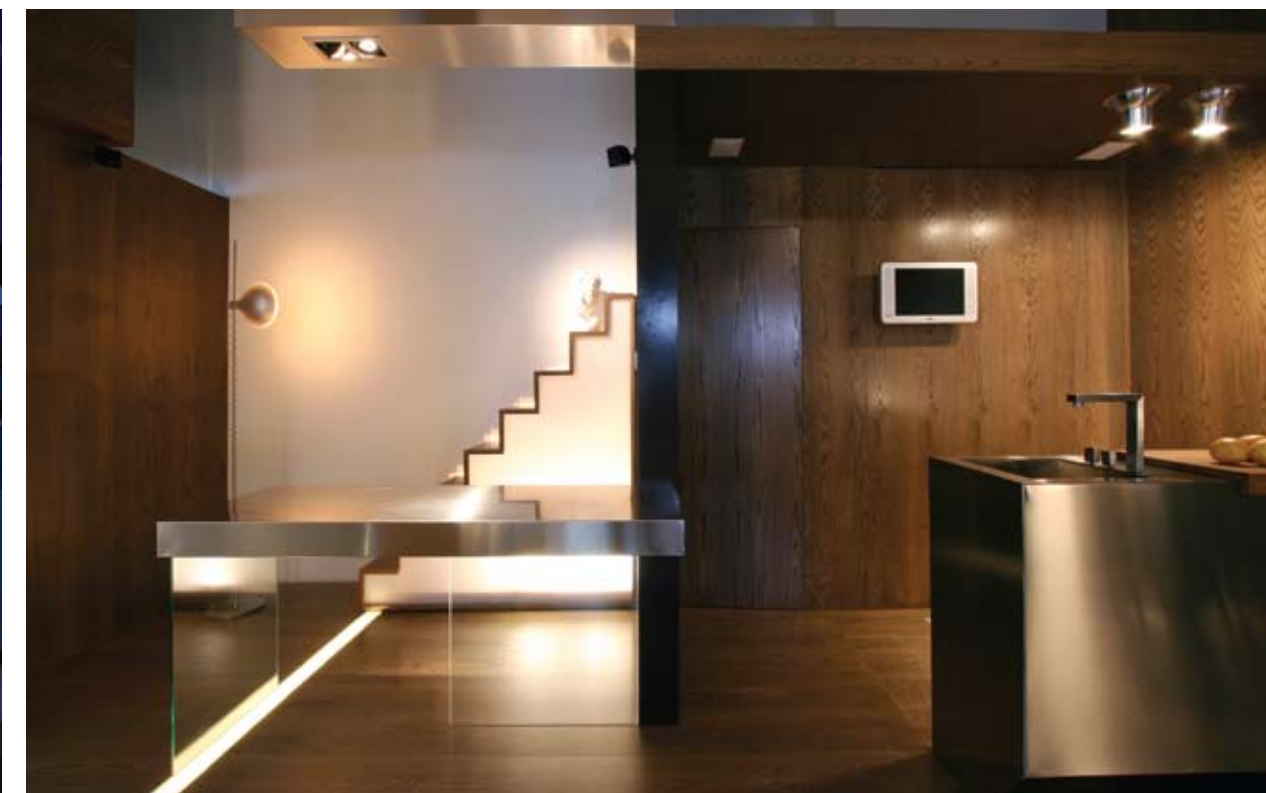
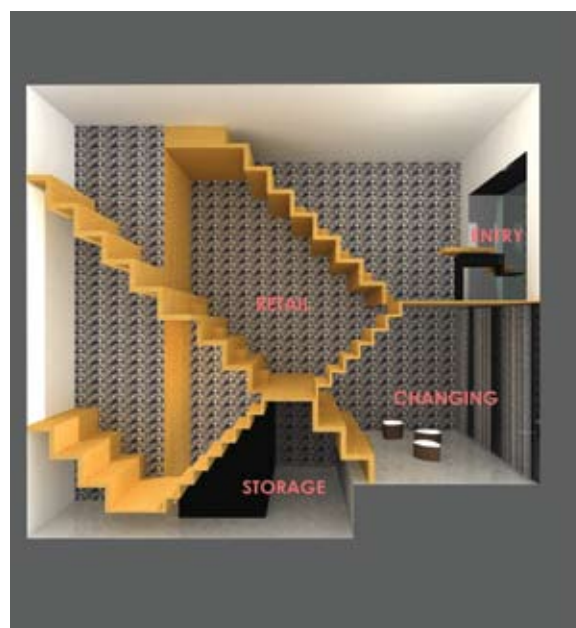
## Project Stats

LOCATION: DONEO, Park Lane Buildings, Pieta  
 CLIENT: Andrew Doneo  
 ARCHITECT: Chris Briffa Architects  
 PHOTOGRAPHY - David Pisani  
 WOODWORK: Charles Saliba  
 GLAZING: Mirya Ltd  
 GYPSUM: Spot-On Ltd  
 FLOORING: Tile Deco  
 LIGHTING: Brilliant

## How are the various spaces within the project treated?

The first space needed to accommodate a large number of products of different brands. The awkward plan of the property presented spaces with more than six walls at times, and this was used to our advantage in order to enlarge the perimeter of the displays. In the second space, a pod-like timber insertion presented a stage for a kitchenette, study and bathroom; overlooking a large living/sleeping space adorned with contemporary furniture and finishes.

AV systems together with electrical and mechanical devices are activated and altered at the touch of a button. A projector descends from the ceiling while a black-out curtain controls natural light and a hidden screen ascends from what looks like a piece of furniture. The exciting thing about these intelligent systems is being able to control anything with a power outlet in an interior, with proper advance planning.



# THE INDUSTRIAL LOOK

In 1907, a group of industrialists, businessmen, artists and architects came together to form the Deutscher Werkbund (German Work Foundation). Their manifesto protested the ugliness of the built environment and demanded the revival of artistic, moral and social ethics in industry. This philosophical direction was to eventually become the founding basis of the Bauhaus, the design school which would influence the development of contemporary industrial design in Europe and elsewhere.

In the United States, the profession of industrial design took a slightly different direction than its European counterpart and began as a method of sales promotion, concerned with product styling and packaging. A consequence of this movement was that the same language and disciplines of product design came to be applied to



Industrial style staircase within an atrium

architecture and even more so to interior design.

In a bid to investigate the origins of the industrial style and its local interpretation, "the Architect" spoke to Perit Ivan Coleiro on the principles that inspire his work, par-

ticularly when aspiring to achieving this style in his interiors. Coleiro explained that the characteristics of this industrial style or look may be seen as any one or combination of the following key elements.

## EXPOSED HARDWARE:

The process of assembling elements is presented as an art form. Welded connections, bolted plates or snap fit joint seams become part of the décor. The actual raw material itself is generally presented in its natural state with no form of processing.

An example of this can be seen in the salon project reproduced here.

## REPETITION OF SIMPLE ELEMENTS:

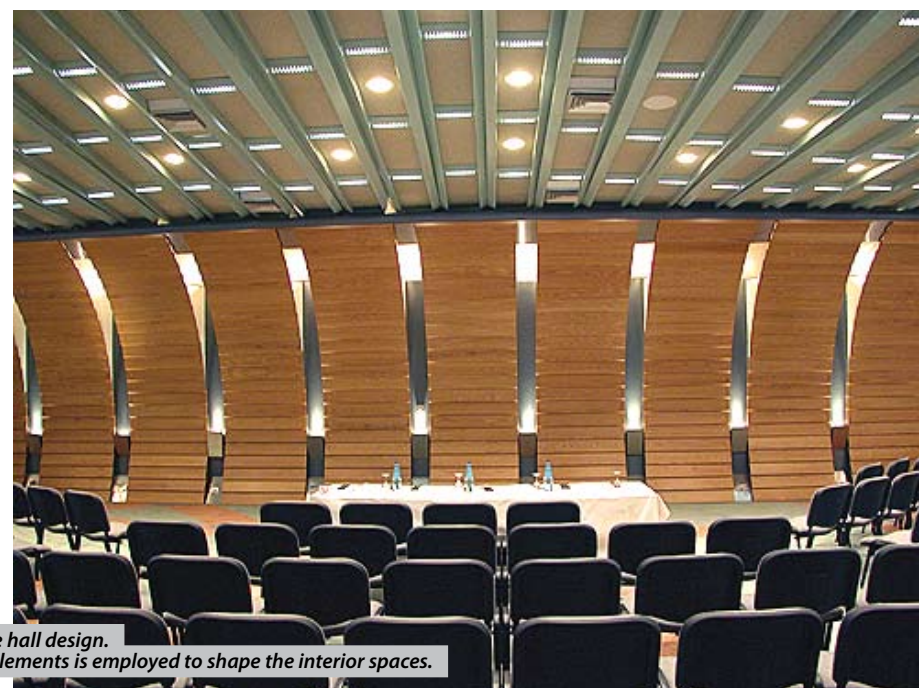
This is the most direct reference to the Industrial Revolution. In place of craftsmanship, mass produced, identical objects are juxtaposed in a manner to create individual spaces. As an example of this principle, one can refer to the press room and conference hall projects.

## BLAND OPEN SPACES:

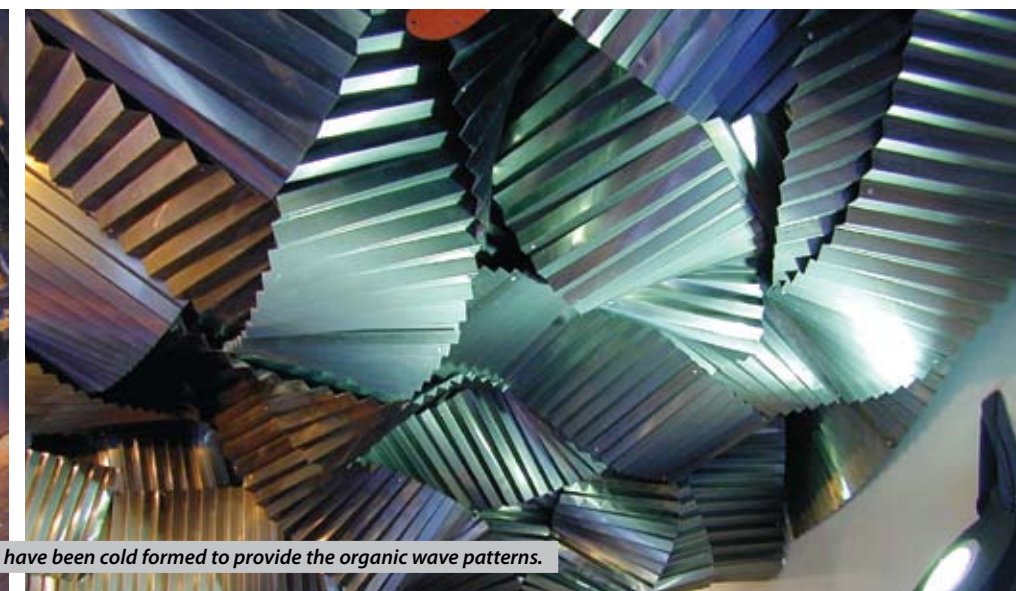
Probably the most over worked word in interior design is the term "loft". The concept of uninterrupted open spaces whether for domestic or commercial use is a direct derivative of the "factory floor logic". These spaces, which were effectively the forerunner



Press room and conference hall design. Here the use of repetitive elements is employed to shape the interior spaces.



Interior design of salon with detail of ceiling. This has been constructed entirely from recycled steel sheets that have been cold formed to provide the organic wave patterns.



to the modernist movement, seek to replicate the turn of the century boom of glass walls and cast iron framed constructions that were intended for light industrial use. This is reflected in the design of the industrial staircase set within an atrium shown here.

## PRIMARY COLOURS:

The colours and graphics employed when aspiring towards achieving the industrial look are very direct and borrow heavily from the factory floor imagery. This can also be seen in the design of the salon interior.

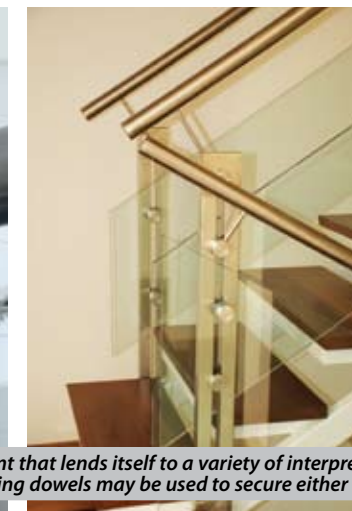
## ONE SHAPE FITS ALL:

This concept is central to the industrial design process. Key elements such as railings are identified and consequently designed and detailed in a manner that may be adapted to a variety of locations.

The success of these elements is generally considered as the ability of one mass produced item to accommodate a range of accessories or fittings. Here, a number of examples of hand rail designs are shown.



Industrial design of a single element that lends itself to a variety of interpretations. The upright elements and connecting dowels may be used to secure either wire rope, glass panels or steel rods. These staircases have been used in a number of showrooms.



After a short summer break, the Kamra tal-Periti is back with a host of events to suit both architects and architecture enthusiasts alike. Many of these events have become regulars on the Kamra's calendar and have proved to be huge successes in past editions. Information on all events can be found on [www.ktpmalta.com](http://www.ktpmalta.com)

## TIME FOR ARCHITECTURE 2008 – T4A4



Time for Architecture is back, with the fourth edition being held this October. T4A4 will run from Monday 6 October, which marks **World Architecture Day**, until Saturday 18 October, with a number of architectural events that should attract both architects and architectural enthusiasts alike.

World Architecture Day is celebrated internationally. The United Nations has designated the first Monday in October each year as World Habitat Day. The idea is to reflect on the state of our towns and cities. It is also intended to remind the

world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat. The United Nations chose the theme of **Harmonious Cities** for 2008 to raise awareness about the problems of rapid urbanisation, its impact on the environment, the growth of slums, and the urbanisation of poverty as more and more people team into towns and cities looking for a better life.

During the last few years, the Kamra tal-Periti has embarked on a mission to increase the national awareness on the value of our quality of life in Malta, especially through the appreciation of

our heritage – the Maltese heritage which also includes buildings of the Modern Movement. In the last decades, the architectural heritage of the modern movement appeared more at risk than during any other period. Many modern masterpieces have already been demolished or have changed beyond recognition. This is mainly due to the fact that many were not considered to be elements of heritage, that their original functions have substantially changed and that their technological innovations have not always endured long-term stresses.

For this reason, the theme for Time for Architecture this year will centre on **20C Architecture** in Malta. Events include a tour around a number of these buildings, namely Balluta Buildings, White Rocks Complex, Mellieha Holiday Complex and the Manikata Church, among others. This guided tour will be hosted by Dr. Conrad Thake and will take place on Sunday 12 October.

The film "The Fountainhead" will be screened at St. James Cavalier on Wednesday 15 October. This film is based on a 1943 novel by Ayn Rand. The Fountainhead's protagonist, Howard Roark, is a young architect who chooses to struggle in obscurity rather than compromise his artistic and personal vision. He refuses to pander to the prevailing "architect by committee" taste in build-

ing design. Roark is a singular force that takes a stand against the establishment, and in his own unique way, prevails.

A yearly appointment is our Children's Workshop which will also take place at St. James Cavalier on Saturday 18 October. The aim is to help the children discover and understand the concept that architectural heritage is not simply our temples, but also modern buildings.

Once again, a Landscape Seminar organised by the Anhalt University of Applied Science, PDCU, MITC and University of Malta in co-operation with Kamra Tal-Periti, Malta Chamber of Planners, Malta Environment and Planning Authority, Marsascala Local Council, Malta Transport Authority, and Malta Maritime Authority, will form part of the T4A programme and take place on Friday 10 October at the Aula Magna in Valletta. A number of international speakers have been invited, including Tancredi Capatti (Landscape Architect, Berlin and Milano), Dr. Christian Tschumi (Landscape Architect, Metron, Switzerland), Prof. Karsten Jørgensen (Landscape Architect, Oslo University, Norway), Prof. Rainer Schmidt (Landscape Architect, TFH Berlin, President German DGGL) and Prof. Erich Buhmann (Landscape Architect, Anhalt University of Applied Sciences).

## THE URBAN CHALLENGE: TALL BUILDINGS CONFERENCE, NOVEMBER 2008

The Kamra tal-Periti is currently involved in a campaign for better quality built environments, as a part of which it launched a document late last year called "The Urban Challenge: Our Quality of Life and the Built Environment". The Urban Challenge argues for a more sustainable approach to the built (and unbuilt) environment as an essential basis for a better quality of life, and highlights the need for a more informed debate on key urban issues in the Maltese Islands.

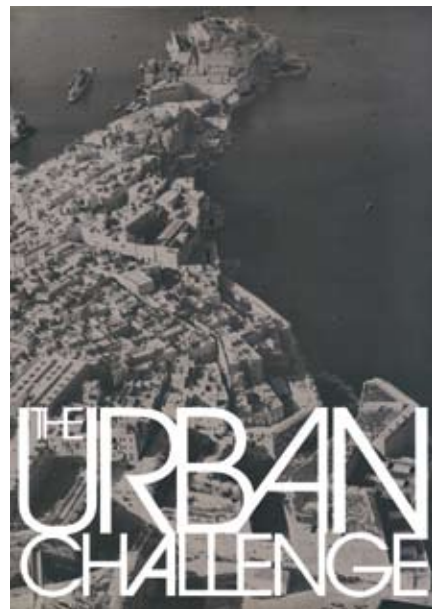
Malta currently has a draft tall building policy (based on the application of a Floor Area Ratio mechanism), which is currently open to public consultation before final approval by Parliament. Recent years have seen a growing interest in

tall building development on the islands and the construction of a number of tall building projects as well as the submission of several planning permission applications for towers, some reaching up to heights of over 30 storeys. There is still, however, little knowledge of the specific urban planning, urban design, construction and environmental aspects of tall buildings, giving rise to growing concerns as to the suitability of eventual developments for Malta's urban situation.

The conference, which is planned for mid-November 2008, is intended to enrich the debate on tall building construction in the Maltese Islands. It will focus on sustainability issues with

a specific reference to small island states and to the Mediterranean region and it is hoped that it will serve to create a means for an exchange of experiences of tall building policy-making and development in restricted territories and in the Mediterranean region. Through its international affiliations the KTP will thus also be extending an invitation to the conference to colleagues in the architectural field in other Mediterranean countries and in territories with a restricted land area.

The KTP is currently in the process of identifying partners for the organisation of the conference as well as the full list of key speakers. Further details will be announced shortly.



Sparkassenplatz-Square at the city centre of Graz

## COMING SOON SZYSZKOWITZ-KOWALSKI

Next month, the Kamra tal-Periti is very happy to present yet another renowned Austrian firm, Szyszkowitz-Kowalski, for the last Architecture Night for this year to be held on the 15 November. This partnership was founded in 1973 by Michael Szyszkowitz and his wife Karla Kowalski. Szyszkowitz-Kowalski were exponents of the Graz school (sometimes called New

Graz Architecture), a tendency established in the 1960s that rejected the perceived sterility of the abstract and conceptual styles of Modernism then current. The work of the firm combines a clear, readable geometry with a



Steiermärkische Sparkasse Headquarters

sculptural, at times expressionistic, playfulness that often borders on fantasy. At Grosslobming Castle (1979-81), a boarding-school near Graz, horizontal expanses of wall are interrupted by projecting windows formed by plunging diagonals. The use of timber and shingles evokes

## ARCHITECTURE NIGHTS 2008

### EDWARD CULLINAN

The third edition of Architecture Nights for 2008, being organised once again by the Kamra tal-Periti, reaches its climax in the fourth debate this month, with the participation of none other than this year's RIBA Gold Medal for Architecture, the British architect Edward Cullinan. The series has in the past months seen the participation of Architect John Bushell, London Director of world-renowned leading international architectural firm Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates, Agnes Couvelas, Greece's most prominent and respected female architect and Francesco Veenstra, partner at Dutch giant firm Mecanoo architecten.

Edward Cullinan CBE, RA, RIBA, HonFRIAS is an inquisitive, inventive and passionate composer and maker of buildings. He is without shadow of doubt one of the greatest contemporary living architects and truly one of the most respected architects of his generation. A brief look at his achievements and international recognition is clear proof of this. He has taught and examined extensively in the UK and abroad, being awarded five Professorships: Banister Fletcher Professor at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London (1978-79), Graham Willis Visiting Professor at Sheffield (1985-87), George Simpson Visiting Professor at Edinburgh (1987-90) and Visiting Professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston (1985).

Edward Cullinan is currently a visiting Professor at the University of Nottingham. He has also been awarded Honorary Doctorates at the Universities of Lincolnshire and Humberside (1996), East London (2000) and Sheffield (2001). In addition, he was awarded a Commander of the British Empire in 1987 for Services to Architecture, elected a Royal Academician in 1989 and elect-



EDWARD CULLINAN

ed an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland in 1995. In 2005 he was awarded a Special Commendation at the Prince Philip Designers Prize, for his outstanding lifetime achievement in design. He has been an active trustee of Sir John Soane's Museum, the Construction Industry for Youth Trust, the Building Experiences Trust and the Koestler Award Trust for art in prisons.

Edward Cullinan has also had a number of interesting publications to date, most notably 'Edward Cullinan Architects', published by RIBA in 1984, 'Edward Cullinan Architects' with Kenneth Powell, published by Academy Editions in 1995 and 'Ends, Middles, Beginnings', by Jonathan Hale, published by Black Dog Publishing in 2005.

On the 09 October 2007, the President of the RIBA announced that it had decided to honour Edward Cullinan, his work, his contribution to architecture and his teaching by awarding him the 2008 Royal Gold Medal for Architecture. Architect Cullinan reacted to this announcement

by saying, 'I've been practicing Architecture for fifty-five years; now you're going to give me the real (gold) thing. Thank you fellow architects for appreciating the value of a general practitioner.' He received the 2008 Royal Gold Medal last February.

Given in recognition of a lifetime's work, the Royal Gold Medal is approved personally by Her Majesty the Queen and is awarded annually to a person or group of people whose influence on architecture has had a truly international effect. The award is for a body of work, rather than for one building or for an architect who is currently fashionable. Previous winners include other giants in the architecture world – Le Corbusier (1953), Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (1925), Frank Gehry (2000), Archigram (2002), Frei Otto (2005), Toyo Ito (2006) and Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron (2007).

Since its foundation in 1965, Edward Cullinan Architects (ECA) has been designing carefully composed, award winning, innovative buildings. The firm is committed to the idea that a successful building is one that responds thoughtfully and gracefully to clients' needs and to its local context; and which is built on time and within cost. ECA are particularly skilled at working with clients to identify their future needs, and then developing the brief and the design together. The firm has adopted a strong interest in changing patterns of use, satisfying the needs of the users, responding to the context, whether urban or rural, and conserving energy. For over 40 years the firm has been involved in a multitude of projects, working with many different clients, and producing very different solutions within commercial, cultural, housing, health, primary and

secondary education sectors, in the University sector and in urban regeneration and master planning.

The protection of the environment is at the heart of the firm's approach to architectural design. ECA has always sought an architecture in which the environmental design forms a vital part of a holistic approach to building production. The firm is registered to carry out EcoHomes and Code for Sustainable Homes Assessments on all projects, and collaborates with the best environmental engineers to maintain its commitment to sustainable design. But this is a firm that practices what it preaches – the best example of this commitment is in fact the re-development of the firm's own office in Islington, which will exceed the London Mayor's new target of 20% of energy from renewable sources. Among the green measures are five roof-mounted turbines. A single, three metre, horizontal axis turbine will provide 30% of the annual energy consumption for the office and four, two metre vertical axis turbines will provide enough electricity to power all the spaces.

This exciting lecture, organised under the patronage of the British High Commission in Malta, will be held at the Robert Sammut Hall in Floriana, on Saturday 11 October at 1930hrs.

Architecture Nights 08 is sponsored by HSBC and Steel Structures, together with the KTP's Corporate Sponsors AirMalta.

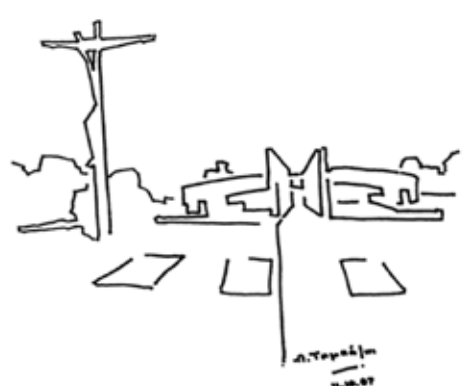
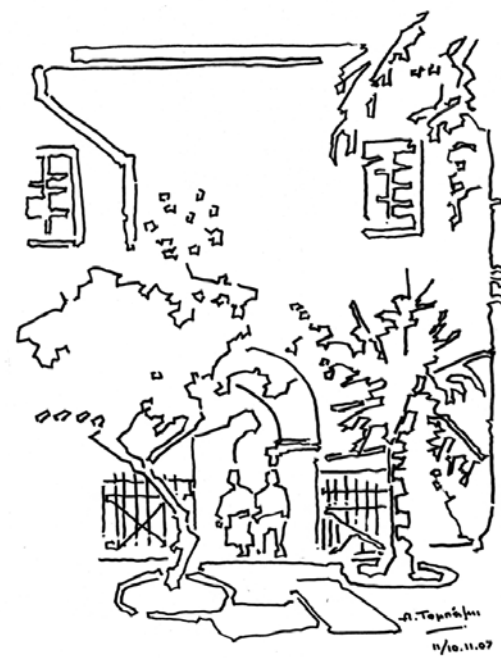


Housing estate Flurgasse

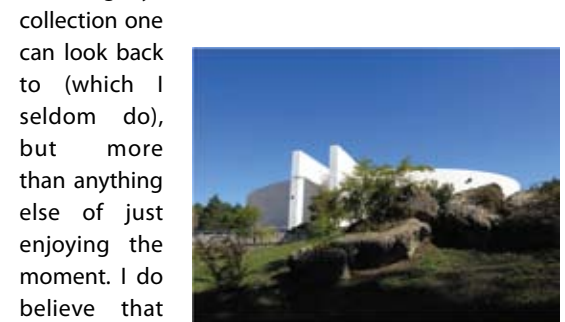
# On travelling and drawing

The Greek architect Alexandros Tombazis studied architecture at the National Technical University of Athens. In 1963 he founded the architectural firm Alexandros N. Tombazis and Associates Architects and has since become one of the pioneer exponents of bioclimatic green architecture. His studio has designed and built a number of exemplary low energy buildings. Perhaps his most outstanding building is the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal, the result of winning the 1998 invited competition. The Sanctuary was inaugurated last year. Further information on this architect and his works can be found at [www.meletitiki.gr](http://www.meletitiki.gr)

Last November, Alexandros Tombazis visited Malta and made a series of drawings of Valletta and Mdina, which are being reproduced here with his kind permission, together with his thoughts on travelling and drawing.



My fingers itch, as indeed do my eyes, they just cannot keep quiet and do nothing. I draw unbounded pleasure and relaxation too, when travelling, of finding time to sketch and taking photographs too. I usually am out at dawn and, depending on other obligations, steal as many of those precious and wonderful hours as possible to be on my own, face to face with whatever has attracted my attention. At those moments I am able to void my mind of all other concerns, the office, commitments, troubles or pleasures; everything! My only preoccupation is of absorbing, interpreting and recording my chosen motive. It is of course a source, a collection one can look back to (which I seldom do), but more than anything else of just enjoying the moment. I do believe that for an architect it is a learning process to be able to exercise yourself to frame a picture, choose a viewing point and to understand light; that magical and mysterious abstract gift we have been endowed with and which we so often neglect or misuse.



So, when I visited Malta in November 2007 for the first and for the moment only time, it was a matter of finding enough time which at the end of the day one never has. Getting out, grabbing a cab to take me where I wanted to go, waiting for me and then dashing off to the airport.

I do enjoy drawing places and objects that I have drawn maybe a hundred times before. Each time it is as if it is the first, it always has something new to tell you.

Alexandros N. Tombazis

# The Changing Design of Modern Buildings

BY PERIT FORTUNATO SAID

The last construction boom before the present one happened in the 1980's. At the time, it was fuelled by government dishing out plots of land for the Home Ownership scheme coupled by semi-legal sprawl of construction in all areas. Generally development was typically two to four storeys high. The only exception at the time was the thirteen-storey Preluna Hotel!

In recent years, the general consensus was that we had raped enough virgin land in Malta, and that areas for development had to be contained. This led to the next issue: if one could not sprawl, to produce the same built up area, one had to go up or down. In effect, we did both; we built higher buildings on a smaller footprint and dug deeper to put our cars in.

In addition to these two factors, the fact that we built vertically, meant the need for more service shafts to house the numerous services. Naturally, building higher meant more lifts and lifts shafts. Because we are not using materials and building types suited to our climate, we require air-conditioning. To further complicate matters, we now demand more and more services: telephone, internet, cable or satellite TV, intruder alarm, video intercom. These latter are more or less standard. Now there is an additional development: smart-homes.

All these services need to be integrated into our buildings, and space must be provided for them. However, we are still unfortunately retro-fitting services resulting in inadequate design and shoddy workmanship.

The design process of modern buildings has to change drastically. Buildings require design by a multidisciplinary team of experts in the various fields of architecture, structural design, mechanical and electrical services design, interior design, landscape design, environmental engineering design and so on. This team needs to be led and managed by a different type of person than the traditional perit, someone who has to acquire experience and skills in the various aspects of complex building design, enough to be able to manage the gaggle of experts to be engaged in order to produce a successful modern building, answering to the needs mentioned above. Furthermore, the constraints of building higher and denser buildings with more flexibility and more complexity requires different types of construction materi-

als to those used in the past and up to now. We used to build predominantly in natural "franka" (globigerina limestone), using concrete only for beams and floor slabs. However, the spread of buildings over land which might have been quarried, coupled with the accelerated use of the existing quarries has depleted our good quality stone reserves and stone is nowadays reserved for decorative features in buildings.

Generally, stone has been replaced by hollow concrete blocks. These started out based on a certain standard which in time has deteriorated as the number of block-making factories increased. The wall thickness of hollow blocks used to be 75mm for double density blocks "tad-Dobblu". There was also in production a thin-skinned block used generally for internal walls with 50mm wall thickness "tas-singlu". These two types of block have given way to a block with a wall thickness of 45mm. This was reputedly done to be able to construct concrete-filled and sometimes also reinforced block walls, but is a very dangerous practice as it is heavily reliant on the workmanship of the so-called mason who builds the wall on piecemeal basis and pretends to fill the blockwork with what the architect hopes is concrete. This folly is exposed as soon as the M&E contractor comes on site and starts chasing the walls to install the services!

It is high time that we started to develop a solid lightweight concrete block that can be easily lifted and produces solid walls that behave better structurally and are not so reliant on workmanship. In addition, the grammar of buildings needs to be revisited so that the structural elements are clearly defined and unobtrusive enough to allow flexibility in design of the interior space. Thus, solid construction, be it concrete or blockwork walls, should ideally only be used to define the common parts of the building, as well as service shafts and wet areas, with the rest of the walls being constructed as stud partition walls with suitable insulation and gypsum layers. Alternatively other materials such as glass fibre, laminate and other drywall construction may be adapted. This will serve to facilitate customisation of the individual interior spaces to the eventual purchaser's wishes.

The building envelope needs to accom-

modate the requirements of allowing the building occupants to enjoy a view, while at the same time taking into consideration the impact on the internal environment caused by exposure to sun, wind and external noise. Hence the use of double glazing and frames fitted with thermal breaks, as well as adequate seals around apertures. Unfortunately, we have forgotten the use of louvres and sunscreens. It is commonplace to see apertures with the louvres placed inside, behind the glazed aluminium aperture; a very bad environmental practice which ought to be discouraged in the interest of lower electricity consumption by air-conditioning systems. Some form of solar shading is a must on south, east and west facing apertures. Nowadays there are various types of such sun protection in various materials from wood to steel and aluminium and from low-tech manual systems to automated power systems that respond to environmental conditions.

External protection can be used to work for the building insofar as it can be clad with special panels that are made up of photovoltaic cells that, when exposed to sunlight, produce electricity. A variety of these which are transparent is also available. On large glazed facades, linked together, these PV systems can be used to offset part of the electric power requirements of the building, or sold back to the utility company.

A further consideration on glazed facades should be the provision for cleaning the facade. I have seen none of the systems one normally expects on glass walled buildings installed locally. The use of self-cleaning glass only works in countries with an abundance of rain to activate the cleaning properties of the glass, definitely not in Malta! Research has shown that the greatest consumption in a domestic environment results from water heating, air-conditioning, and refrigeration. Thus in order to design more energy-efficient buildings we need to start looking at the introducing of solar heating and absorption refrigeration using the sun: solar cooling. Do not laugh! This is perfectly feasible and plants using solar cooling are available on the market.

External walls used to be double-skin stone cavity walls which worked fine for our climate. These have degenerated to a variety of stucco-faced hollow concrete block walls without adequate insulation. If one

had to check the thermal performance of such walls, the likelihood is that they fail. This situation results in higher electricity consumption in winter for heating and in summer for cooling. The technical guidelines for minimum requirements of energy performance of buildings issued in 2006 are currently mandatory on new buildings and it is up to the perit to ensure that these are satisfied; hopefully in the coming years we will start to see a more widespread realisation of energy-efficient buildings.

One must not forget accessibility. There are several new buildings where the design is strongly influenced by pecuniary considerations. Naturally, the developer wants maximum return for his investment and space is at a premium, so the first areas to suffer are vertical circulation spaces and services access. With traditional services and low buildings this might have worked. In buildings up to four floors with a vertical face onto a vehicular access road, it is still possible to have small stairwells and small lift cabins and then get the furniture and appliances up by crane or hoist through the balcony. But with larger developments having communal spaces and pedestrian precincts with vehicular access limited to the lower service floors, then at the design stage provision must be made to solve this problem, possibly by having a service lift which can cope with taking up building components for uncompleted developments and/or taking up appliances and furniture belonging to the purchasers when they move into their property.

Furthermore, complex buildings of this nature ought to have adequate provision for mass evacuation with clear indication of exits and refuges in cases of fire, natural calamities or even terrorist attack. Thus the puny staircases and miniscule lifts are clearly not adequate for these situations. When I see glossy advertising in the property pages of newspapers about this or that development promising a heaven on earth, I hope and pray that the design team has taken all this into consideration, that the developer is aware of his responsibility to the future owners, and that the contractors involved are also aware of their responsibility to the surrounding property and to the purchasers of the property they will build. I think the construction industry still has a lot to learn!

# Precious but unprotected heritage in Gzira

by Perit Edward Said

The recent demolition of Mira Buildings in Gzira was a grave loss, worryingly unsung in the local architectural scene. The structure, built originally as a service station, has been described as "one of the first pioneering examples of a modernist concrete frame building to be built on the Island"(1). This imposing building also had curious stories to tell in connection with Spitfire engines and Queen Elizabeth II. Alas, no effort was made to preserve Mira and in a matter of weeks the site was transformed into a gaping hole. (Incidentally neither did the nearby extensive air-raid complex survive, nor the masonry and concrete bunker hood, apparently one of the last of its kind in Malta).

Mira was one of a number of landmark buildings grouped around one of the most buzzing junctions in the region that boasted some of the best examples of pre-war industrial architecture in Malta. Mira has gone, but two equally significant edifices still stand close-by, these are Muscat's Showroom (next to the soot-ridden Bieb il-Gzira) and Wembley's Ice-Cream Factory further along Rue d'Argens.

Muscat's Showroom, like Mira was built for the exigencies of the automobile thus



boasting Corbusian sentiments of elegant functionality complete in design with strict adherence to his dictum of "white by law"(2). The lines of the showroom are somewhat reminiscent of Wallis Gilbert's iconic Hoover

Factory in London (1932-35). Streamlined, wide-windowed, it is simply a building moulded around its function: automobiles. Looking at Muscat's Showroom one cannot help but recall the iconic Einstein Tower by Erich Mendelsohn (1887-1953) in Potsdam, perhaps it is the vertical element at the centre and sprawling fenestration that does it. Wembley Ice-Cream Factory was completed in 1937 and designed by Antonio Grech Dimech.(3) Its symmetrical façade has a recognisable domestic countenance with subtle features recalling the much-requested eclectic style in housing at the time. Art Deco language is expressed in pilasters which Grech Dimech introduced to divide the façade all the way

up to the roof parapet wall, giving a sense of haute verticality to the squat two-storey building. Incidentally, these pilasters are evocative of a favourite feature of Gustavo R. Vincenti (1888-1974) a contemporary of

Grech Dimech's. Evidently for what they are and still used for, these two buildings are of high architectural merit and are undoubtedly important pieces of Malta's industrial heritage. Worryingly neither Muscat's nor Wembley's are scheduled by MEPA and can easily suffer Mira Building's fate. Currently this junction, indeed the entire area awaits a new dwarfing development that is promising to radically regenerate this somewhat iffy neighbourhood. One hopes that the sacrifice of Mira Building will not be totally in vain and the designers of this new development will introduce a design that endows characteristics other than optimum density, loftiness and the perennial residential mixed-use concepts. MEPA on the other hand needs to immediately ensure that buildings like Muscat's Showroom and Wembley's Factory are protected for posterity.

#### References:

- (1) Thake, Conrad & Quentin Hughes. *Malta - War & Peace - an Architectural Chronicle 1800-2000*, p. 145 (Malta 2005)
- (2) Zaczek, Iain. *Essential Art Deco*, p. 30 (United Kingdom 2000)
- (3) Thake, op.cit., p. 145



# ARCHITECTURE NOW! 5

BY PHILIP JODIDIO

We are well informed in matters of history, as well as the modern architecture we often mistake for contemporary. We find it hard to ignore the local projects of note which grace our Maltese Isles. This is all very well, however, which worldwide projects currently represent the pulsing veins of progress in design? What is architecture NOW?

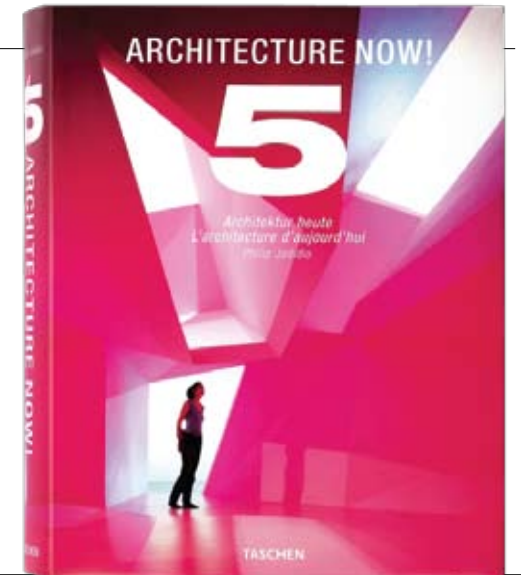
To this end, Taschen presents the newest instalment of "Architecture NOW!" by Philip Jodidio. This review may be slightly redundant to the contemporary architect, it being hard to meet with someone in our line of work not familiar with this series. In this 5th

edition, Jodidio questions whether we are replacing our quest for flexibility with a need to satiate nostalgia. He comments on the current yearning for longevity which may have resulted as a counter balance to our instant lifestyles. "The heavy stones of other eras have already given way to lightness both in form and concept, often obviating the need to last a lifetime or more - the usually unstated hope of any client, to leave a mark for new generations to admire."

Year after year, "Architecture NOW!" takes on the arduous task of presenting zeitgeist, in its more specific archi-

tectural sense. With its predecessors already gracing many an architectural library, this copy features well known design stars and newcomers alike. SANAA's glass pavilion in Ohio, Gehry's Hotel Marques de Riscal and the breezy architecture of Toyo Ito all feature in this latest edition. As always, "Architecture NOW! 5" is jam packed with easy-to-navigate illustrated A-Z entries, biographies, contact information, and website addresses.

Publisher: Taschen  
ISBN: 978-3-8228-1810-7  
Flexicover 19.6 x 24.9 cm, 576 pages



## www.archnewsnow.com



## WEBSITE

The ArchNewsNow (ANN) newsletter was launched in February 2002 and is delivered daily to subscribers, free of charge, via e-mail. It hyperlinks directly to the latest news and commentary gleaned from sources around the world. Articles on the home page and archives offer the first look at international projects by established and up-and-coming architects and designers. In addition, an interesting mix of observations, opinions, and musings on a range of subjects written by industry leaders are presented as INSIGHT. The

calendar includes conferences, competitions, and exhibitions of interest to A&D professionals, with links to the events' websites. A proprietary artificial intelligence-based search engine identifies key stories available from international news sources on the Web almost as quickly as the sources release them. In its first year, ANN was named 2002 Best Site in Architecture by Crain's Detroit Business, and has consistently made PLANetizen's annual Top 50 website list.

## COMPETITION

**This converted farmhouse was the residence of a famous British abstract painter who settled in Malta in the late 1960s. Who was the artist?**



The winner of this competition wins a copy of the book reviewed above: "Architecture NOW! 5". This book is available from Agenda Bookshop, the sponsor of this competition and review page.

Send your entries to: The Editor, The Architect Competition, Kamrat-Periti, The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira, or by email on thearchitect@ktpmalta.com. The first correct entry drawn on the 15 November 2008 will win. Only residents of the Maltese Islands are eligible to participate. Members of the Editorial Board and their families are not eligible to participate.

The architect featured in last issue's competition was Emanuele Luigi Galizia. The winner was Mr Philip Vella.



Agendabookshop

NOW TO 20 OCTOBER 2008; THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, USA

### HOME DELIVERY: FABRICATING THE MODERN DWELLING

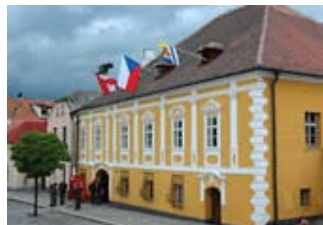
This exhibition will offer the most thorough examination of both the historical and contemporary significance of factory-produced architectures to date. [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)



NOW TO 26 OCTOBER 2008; JOSEF HOFFMANN MUSEUM, BRNICE, CZECH REPUBLIC

### ORNAMENT AND MODERNITY: JOSEF HOFFMANN 1870–1956, ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER FORMLESS FURNITURE

The presentation outlines the life and work of Josef Hoffmann on wall-high panels. Richly illustrated with 200 historical photographs and relying on detailed descriptions, the show documents the biography and production of the architect and designer. [www.mak.at](http://www.mak.at)



NOW TO 26 OCTOBER 2008; MAK FURNITURE STUDY COLLECTION, AUSTRIA

### FORMLESS FURNITURE

Since the 1960s, contemporary artists have transcended and redefined traditional relations between materials and form by means of the experimental, often seemingly formless use of a variety of materials. As a first, the exhibition "Formless Furniture" shows that the rule "form follows material" was also applied – and still is – in the design of everyday objects: to this day, designers playfully oppose the so-called good form and the marketing of conformity in living environments. [www.mak.at](http://www.mak.at)



NOW TO 23 NOVEMBER 2008; THE LIGHTHOUSE, GLASGOW, SCOTLAND

### GILES MILLER

By using waste-free cardboard from sustainably managed forests, Miller's collection shows the potential for diversity, innovation and originality in sustainable design. [www.thelighthouse.co.uk](http://www.thelighthouse.co.uk)



NOW TO 01 DECEMBER 2008; V&A MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

### ARCHITECTURE NOW

Whilst essential human needs stay the same, the design of buildings change with the development of new technologies, the need for more energy efficiency and the changing lifestyles in society. As a result many architects are designing buildings today that seem to question our ideas and expectations of how a school, house or office should look or func-

tion. Discover some innovative examples that may provide us with common models of the future. [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

NOW TO 31 DECEMBER 2008; ARCHITEKTURZENTRUM WIEN, VIENNA, AUSTRIA

### A\_SHOW: AUSTRIAN ARCHITECTURE IN THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY

With the opening of the final 3rd stage of a\_show, the Architekturzentrum Wien is bringing the comprehensive documentation of Austrian architecture of the 20th century up to the present day. [www.azw.at](http://www.azw.at)

NOW TO 04 JANUARY 2009; DESIGN MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

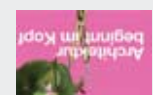
### DESIGN CITIES

Design Cities tells the story of contemporary design through seven key cities at their creative height: London (1851), Vienna (1908), Dessau (1928), Paris (1936), Los Angeles (1949), Milan (1957), Tokyo (1987) and London (2008). The exhibition will feature a full range of objects from textiles and fashion to industrial pieces, furniture and prints. It will include design classics such as chairs by Charles and Ray Eames, as well as work by a spectrum of designers that together will evoke an impacting impression of their era. Key exhibits will include work by William Morris, Christopher Dresser, Adolf Loos, Marcel Breuer, Le Corbusier, Eileen Gray, Achille Castiglioni, Issey Miyake and Ron Arad. Design Cities has been organised by the Design Museum, London in association with Istanbul Modern and is curated by Design Museum Director Deyan Sudjic. [www.designmuseum.org](http://www.designmuseum.org)

NOW TO 18 JANUARY 2009; THE CRYPT, LIVERPOOL METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL, LIVERPOOL, UK

### LE CORBUSIER: THE ART OF ARCHITECTURE

Explore the extraordinary career and enduring legacy of Le Corbusier (1887-1965), iconic architect, designer, writer and artist in the first major exhibition of his life and work seen in Britain for over 20 years. [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)



NOW TO 02 FEBRUARY 2009; ARCHITEKTURZENTRUM WIEN, AUSTRIA

### THE MAKING OF ARCHITECTURE

Whereas in one Parisian architect's studio shots are fired at a clay block, in another orchids are raised. In Zurich an architect reclined in her bed with a wooden set-square, in Hong Kong thoughts are crystallised with pieces of Lego. This exhibition tells about the very different ways in which architects use their various tools, from the pencil to the computer. [www.azw.at](http://www.azw.at)

NOW TO 29 MARCH 2009; V&A MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

### THE OLYMPIC STADIUM PROJECT - LE CORBUSIER AND BAGHDAD

This display examines one of the last projects by Le Corbusier, begun in 1957, his fascinating design for a sports stadium in Baghdad. With specially commissioned models, it gives a sense of what this marvellous structure would have looked like had the project

come to fruition. The stadium was planned around a set of innovative radially arranged ribs or "voiles", the designs for 20 of which also feature in the display. [www.vam.ac.uk/collections](http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections)

NOW TO 30 MARCH 2009; MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, USA

### ATELIERS JEAN PROUVÉ

With all the excitement surrounding today's digital manufacturing technologies, it is interesting to look at an earlier historical moment of workshop mass-production, as practiced by the great French architect and designer Jean Prouvé (1901–1984). This exhibition examines Prouvé's collaborations within his Ateliers Jean Prouvé from idea to finished product. [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)



NOW TO 24 APRIL 2009; V&M MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

### LIBRARIES OF LIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHIC BOOKS FROM THE V&A COLLECTION

Photographic books are almost as old as photography itself. Indeed, one of the inventors of photography, William Henry Fox Talbot, was also author of one of the very first books to include

photographs, *The Pencil of Nature* (1844). The Museum has been collecting photographic books since 1852. The images below represent a small selection from the V&A's holdings. Many more may be seen and handled on request in both the National Art Library and the Prints and Drawings Study Room. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

04 DECEMBER, 2008 TO 01 MARCH, 2009; PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE, MUNICH, GERMANY

### MULTIPLE CITY: CITY CONCEPTS 1908-2008

The exhibition shows current urban developments worldwide as mirrored in central urban concepts of the past 100 years. Their juxtaposition and inter-relationship with leading historical and contemporary ideas illustrates and explains the complex and multi-layered developments of urban development. Original plans and models document historical city concepts, while current changes to urban spaces are presented in artistic-documentary works such as photographs and animated films. [www.pinakothek.de](http://www.pinakothek.de)

