

AL_A

INTRODUCING AL_A

AL_A is the award-winning architecture and design studio founded in 2009 by the RIBA Stirling Prize-winning architect Amanda Levete with Directors Ho-Yin Ng, Alice Dietsch and Maximiliano Arrocet.

AL_A's approach to design balances the intuitive with the strategic, drawing on a foundation of rigorous research, innovation, collaboration and painstaking attention to detail.

The practice won the competition to design and implement the highly anticipated expansion of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. On completion in 2017 the V&A project will see AL_A realise a new entrance for the V&A, with the world's first porcelain courtyard above a new underground gallery housing spaces for headline exhibitions. The project will be the V&A's largest expansion in over 100 years and will be completed while the museum remains open to the public.

Ongoing commissions around the world include Central Embassy, a 1.5 million sq ft mixed-use development on the former grounds of the British embassy in Bangkok, Thailand; The Lisbon Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology in Portugal, commissioned by EDP, one of the world's foremost energy companies; the 2015/16 MPavilion, a public pavilion for the Naomi Milgrom Foundation in the Queen Victoria Gardens, Melbourne, Australia and a new centre for the cancer care charity Maggie's in Southampton in the UK.

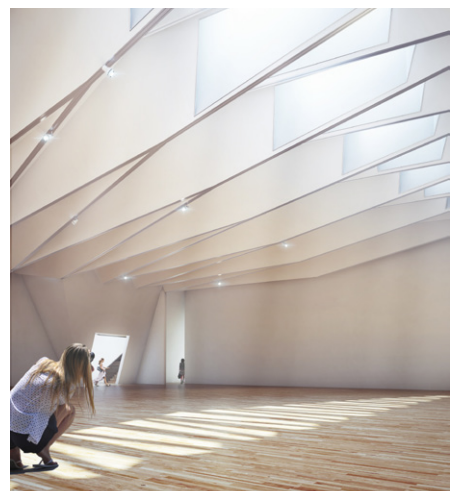
Past clients include Sky, News Corporation, Condé Nast, Goldman Sachs, the City of Naples Subway, Dublin Docklands, Selfridges, and the Marylebone Cricket Club.

AL_A is engaged in long-running research into the application of new materials and techniques in architecture and design. In 2015 the practice's ceramic table, made using technologies adapted from the space industry, was selected by Edmund de Waal for inclusion in his white exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

AL_A sees self-generated projects as an essential element of its creative output. In 2014, the practice opened tincan, an acclaimed pop-up restaurant in London's Soho that served only the best tinned seafood.

The practice is currently working on two shortlisted competitions to design pedestrian and cycle bridges: one across the Thames between Nine Elms and Pimlico in central London, and the second across the Avon for the city of Bath.

Each and every project gives an insight into AL_A's way of thinking, combining a strategic and intuitive approach with an attention to detail.



HOW WE WORK

Ambition shapes our work. We are at our best with clients whose ambition reaches beyond physicality, functionality and budget; those who want to move the game on, to transform themselves and create significant and positive impact beyond the building, on the community and city context.

WORKING THROUGH COMPLEXITY AND INTUITION DRIVES OUR STRATEGIC THINKING

Working through the complex demands of projects rigorously and rationally we interrogate complexity to add depth and intention to our work. Using our years of experience we cut through the layers and give clear strategic direction to our projects.

COLLABORATION AMPLIFIES THE POTENTIAL OF PROJECTS

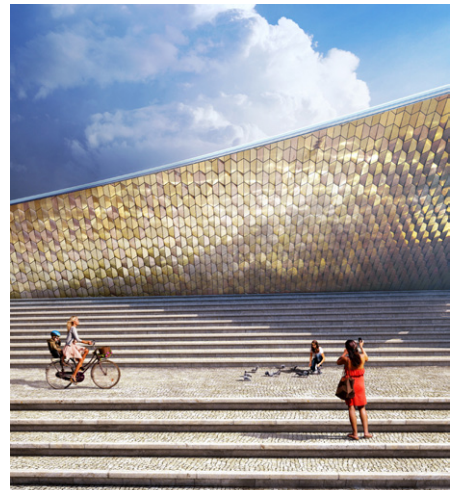
We are natural collaborators. Four directors representing three continents work on all our projects bringing a richness of possibility. This spirit of collaboration runs across the office and beyond it to the expertise and experience offered by our sophisticated network of trusted specialists.

TECHNICAL AND CONCEPTUAL INVENTIVENESS MAKE OUR BUILDINGS SPECIAL

Technical and conceptual inventiveness sit hand in hand at the heart of our work, integral to each, operating as one. Together, inseparably they create the space, structure, form and aesthetic of our work.

RESEARCH AND CONVICTION CREATES TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT

Research underpins everything we do. Research to explore the history, context, circumstance, sustainability and conceptual viability of each project, research into technical possibility and constraints, materials, structures and techniques. Carrying out research with the conviction and tenacity to see it through, maximising the potential of every aspect, is fundamental to everything we do.



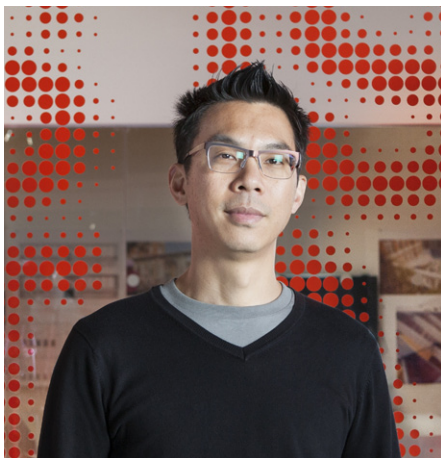
DIRECTORS



AMANDA LEVETE

Amanda Levete is a Stirling Prize winning architect and founder and principal of AL_A. She trained at the Architectural Association and worked for Richard Rogers before joining Future Systems as a partner in 1989, where she realised ground-breaking buildings including the Media Centre at Lord's Cricket Ground and Selfridges department store in Birmingham.

Amanda is a trustee of leading social innovation centre the Young Foundation and has served as a trustee of influential arts organisation Artangel for over a decade. She is a regular radio and TV broadcaster, writes for a number of publications, including the New Statesman and Prospect, and lectures worldwide.



HO-YIN NG

Ho-Yin Ng was made a director of AL_A in 2009 having joined the office in 2006. He has led the teams developing the master plans and building designs for the BSkyB Media Campus.

Ho-Yin is passionate about incorporating emerging technologies that extend efficiency and enhance the design, construction and delivery process. His current research includes the integration of advanced construction techniques with sophisticated parametric 3D models that he has developed in the office. This work is driving the design methodology of AL_A.



ALICE DIETSCH

Alice Dietsch was made a director of AL_A in 2012 having joined the office in 2006. She has led the much anticipated V&A Exhibition Road project, since it was won through an international competition, to design the new entrance, gallery and courtyard for the Museum.

Alice also coordinates the competition group in the office and is fluent in developing innovative concepts within budgetary and technical constraints. Her working methods are driven by extensive research, experimentation and intellectual challenge. She moved to the UK after studying and working in Paris and Stockholm.



MAX ARROCET

Max Arrochet was made a director of AL_A in 2012 having joined the office in 2007. He is leading the design of the EDP Arts & Technology Centre in Lisbon and the Maggie's Centre in Southampton. Max also leads a number of private residential projects and has an expertise in bespoke contemporary and historic detailing.

Max's brings a technical expertise from his background in engineering as well as architecture, reflected in projects at all scales, from complex building schemes to ground breaking installations.

V&A EXHIBITION ROAD

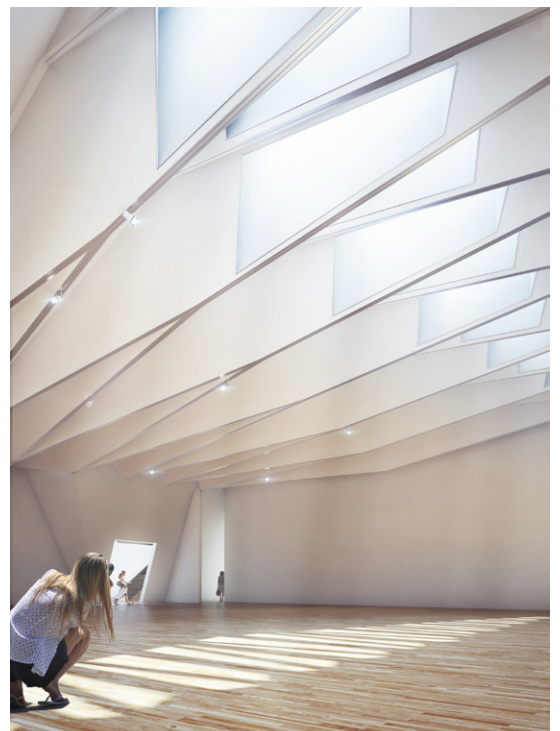


The Victoria and Albert Museum is one of the world's greatest museums of art and design. It provides for the public unparalleled knowledge and understanding of the designed world.

AL_A's project will unlock the potential to bring new audiences into the V&A, breaking down the separation between street and museum, and taking the V&A onto Exhibition Road and Exhibition Road into the V&A. The changes to Exhibition Road have already significantly increased the number of pedestrians who use it but this is just the beginning of a more ambitious intention: to make Exhibition Road a place where culture and learning are accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds.

At the heart of the brief is the new exhibition space to accommodate the V&A's headline exhibitions. It will feel both of the moment of its creation, providing twenty-first century standards, and a natural part of the continuing development of the museum.

Client	Victoria & Albert Museum
Location	London, UK
Programme	Gallery for temporary exhibitions, public courtyard and new museum entrance
Area	6,360 m ²
Construction Value	£33m
Status	Under construction
Commencement	2011
Completion	2017
Architect	AL_A



MUSEUM OF ART, ARCHITECTURE & TECHNOLOGY



The EDP Foundation’s Museum of Art, Architecture & Technology is a new public building located on the Belém waterfront in Lisbon, renewing access to the Tagus River from the city and consolidating the wider publicly-funded urban regeneration of the quarter.

Incorporating over 7,000m² of new public space, the Museum will explore the convergence of architecture, technology and contemporary art as a field of cultural practice. It will accommodate a trans-disciplinary programme of exhibitions, public events and community engagement. A new discursive space for the city, it will lead the conversation about the evolution of Lisbon and Portugal.

This is a public project with private money. It is a building for the people of Lisbon, for cultural visitors and for tourists that defies distinction between public space and building. The building itself is reimagined as a landscape for encounters between people, between visitors and ideas, and between the city and its citizens.

We are making a new connectivity between the waterfront and the old city. Acting as the gateway to Belém, the building will be a magnet, drawing people from the heart of the city and the currently neglected riverfront.

A new public space is formed on the roof of the building. By day, the roof is a place to meet, with views over the river and across to the old city. By night, it becomes an outdoor cinema framed by the romantic panorama of historic Lisbon.

It is the product of the relationship between context (river), circumstance (high tides) and building (museum). We make explicit the relationship between the building and the water, taking the steps down into the river which are immersed at high tide.

Client	Fundação Energias de Portugal (EDP)
Location	Lisbon, Portugal
Programme	Museum including exhibition spaces, auditorium, cafe, public spaces
Area	6,400 m ²
Construction Value	£20.9m
Status	Under construction
Commencement	2011
Completion	2016
Architect	AL_A



CENTRAL EMBASSY



Located within the former gardens of the British Embassy along Ploenchit Road, Bangkok's primary commercial artery, the 1.5 million sq ft project merges a seven storey luxury retail podium and a 30 storey 5 star hotel tower into a cohesive and sinuously twisting shape.

The elevated form that rises from the podium wraps around two vertical light wells, opening up internal spaces to reveal stepped terraces, and dividing hotel functions: private guest-related programmes face the gardens of Lai Nert Park, while the hotel bar, reception lounge and sky terrace face the city centre.

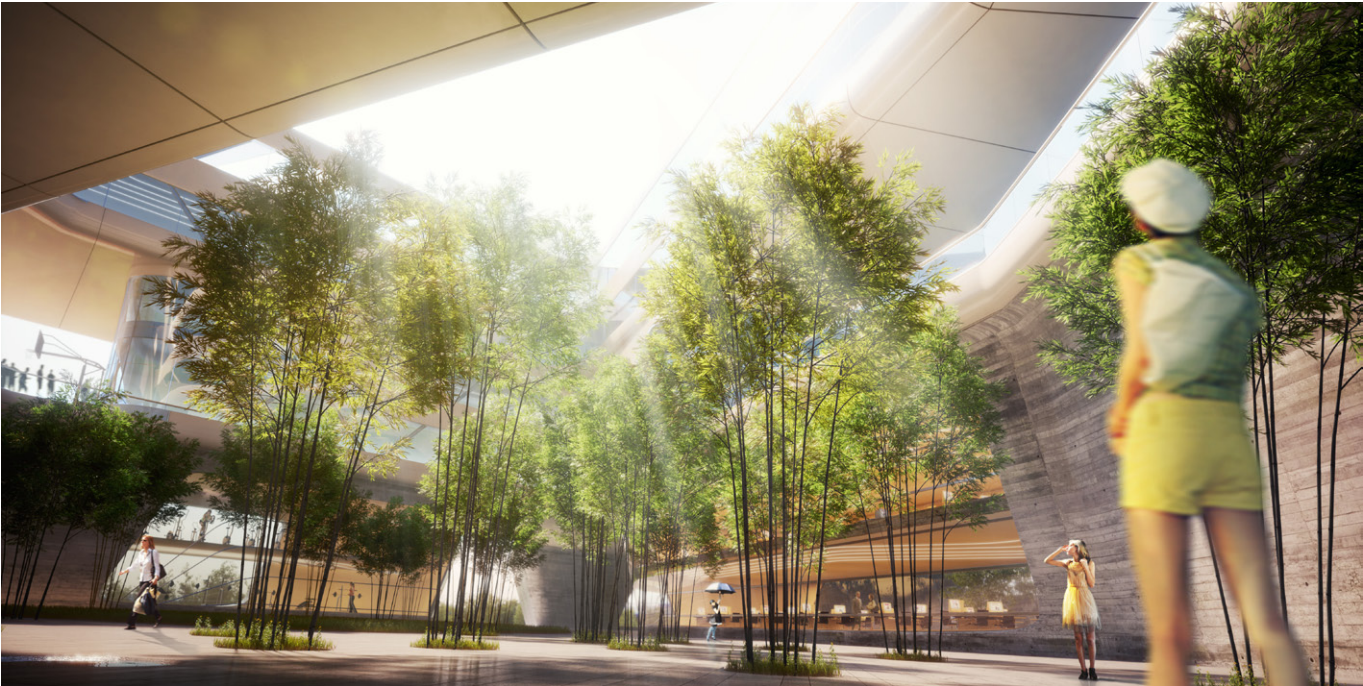
A 30 storey hotel and seven storey shopping mall are bound using the notion of a continual looped form to give a more intuitive merging between plinth and tower, and programmatic functions. The continuity of the tower line appears to break down the volume of the mass of the plinth. Challenging the conventional plinth and tower typology was the catalyst for mixing the functions of the hotel and shopping mall programmes.

The mall requires very few windows, so we developed an envelope that would be affordable to the developer and speak of the context of Thailand. The socio-economic condition in Asia is the inverse of Europe and North America: labour is cheap, but technology is expensive. Uniting traditional craftsmanship with digital design technologies, the facade design builds on Thailand's tradition of intricate pattern making. We designed a system of aluminium shingles, each with two surfaces, to reflect both the chaos of the city and the sky itself.

Client	Central Retail Corporation
Location	Bangkok, Thailand
Programme	Mixed use luxury retail, entertainment and hotel complex
Area	145,000 m ²
Construction Value	£131m
Status	Under construction
Commencement	2010
Completion	2015
Architect	AL_A



SKY MEDIA CAMPUS



Sky asked AL_A to create a vision for the new Campus that reflects the workings of the organisation and is connected by the assets that drive the business forward: creativity and people.

The layout is designed to welcome Sky’s visitors and audiences, revealing the culture and spaces of the business. Food, landscape, amenities and meeting spaces all become intuitive ways of bringing people together, promoting chance encounters across the workforce and the collision of talent across every strata of the business. Extensive landscaping will surround the buildings, alongside cafes, restaurants, convenience stores, allotments and sports facilities to bring these spaces to life.

This transparency is mirrored in a building typology where all the functions of the business are gathered under a single roof, with Production and Entertainment placed at the heart of the buildings and made explicit to everyone. These open and flexible spaces are designed in clusters of neighbourhoods to accommodate a new type of creative industry, where the traditional distinctions between creative, technical, production and corporate have been broken down.

Client	BSkyB
Location	London, UK
Programme	New media campus headquarters for 12,000 employees
Area	13ha
Construction Value	Confidential
Status	Completed (masterplan)
Commencement	2010
Completion	2012
Architect	AL_A



SKY MEETING CENTRE



This is the first building to be completed as part of AL_A's masterplan for BSkyB's media campus.

The Meeting Centre creates a spectacular working environment for 400 people in 65,000 sq. ft. with exceptional daylight from north facing roof lights.

Inspired by Sky's values of transparency and collaboration, the open and flexible spaces are designed in clusters of neighbourhoods to accommodate a new type of creative industry. Traditional distinctions between creative, technical, production and corporate have are broken down by the architectural design.

The architectural design allows and encourages the Sky vision by providing spaces that reflect the dynamism and opportunities that Sky wish to produce. This new environment promotes flexibility, openness, ease of access and communication supporting the core values that underpin the vision.

Construction was completed on time and on budget in little over a year.

Client	BSkyB
Location	London, UK
Programme	Offices, conference rooms and restaurant
Area	7,095 m ²
Construction Value	£25m
Status	Completed
Commencement	2012
Completion	2014
Architect	AL_A



HILLS PLACE



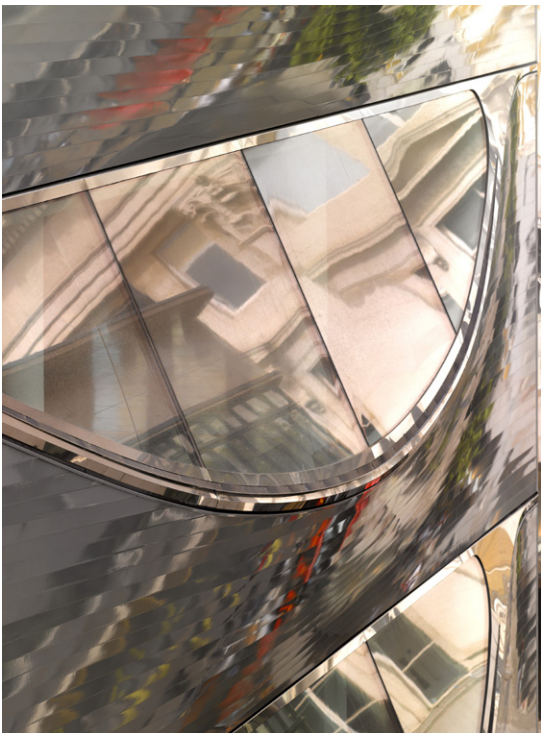
Many narrow streets and alleyways off Oxford Street, London are currently misused and underdeveloped. These under regarded areas are ideal not only for improvement, but also for relatively unconventional design opportunities.

Our proposal acknowledges this by providing an architectural intervention that subtly draws attention to the building through the intrigue of a sculptural façade. Inspired by the art work of Lucio Fontana large glazed areas orientated towards the sky are slashed into the façade, maximising the natural light available in this narrow street. The supposed site constraints were leveraged to become opportunities and drivers behind the design.

The ground floor is fronted by a bespoke laminated glass in which is sandwiched a stainless steel mesh and semi opaque interlayer over a dichromatic film. This is lit from behind, using fibre optics to generate a coloured moiré pattern providing dynamic visual interest and a feeling of depth to what would otherwise be a blank wall.

We developed relationships with manufacturers to push boundaries that resulted in the generation of bespoke designs delivered both on time and within budget. This sculptural form is achieved using a system of aluminium profiles used in the production of high quality, ship hulls.

Client	Clarendon Properties
Location	London, UK
Programme	Offices: addition of 3 floors above existing 2 storey brick retail building, and a new façade.
Area	1,320 m ²
Construction Value	£4.6m
Status	Completed
Commencement	2004
Completion	2009
Architect	AL_A



OXFORD STREET



The brief was to transform the quality and appearance of a tired 1960s building at the undeveloped end of Oxford Street. Our proposal removes the brick and glass façade and replaces it with a subtle yet vibrant jewel-like glass frontage that delicately unifies the lower ground and first floor retail units with the office space above.

Through the repetition of crystal-like glass bays, a sense of scale and rhythm is created that reflects the grain of the adjacent properties as well as giving the offices panoramic views along Oxford Street. At night the façade will be illuminated from inside giving off a subtle coloured glow. The scope of this scheme includes the addition of 1 floor and 2 new façades.

Client	Private investor
Location	London, UK
Programme	Additional floor to building and store façade.
Construction Value	£5m
Status	Completed
Commencement	2006
Completion	2008
Architect	Future Systems



MUMBAI CITY MUSEUM



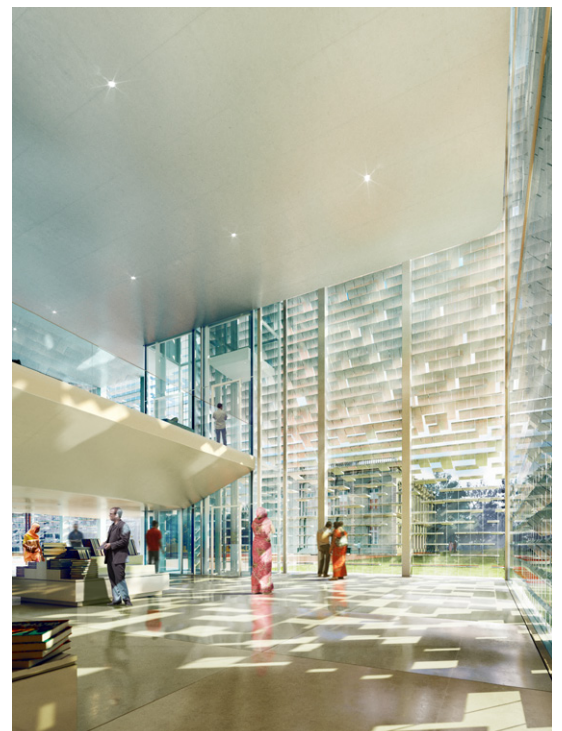
Using the power of absence to create connections between history and the future, a sunken courtyard is embedded between the existing Museum building and the new North Wing. The courtyard is a metaphor for the cycle of the seasons, capturing the dramatic contrasts of the climate. It creates a place for contemplation and reflection and a place for community.

Encircling the courtyard is Mumbai Modern, a gallery that forms the beating heart of the Museum, mediating between the old and the new, while the new wing is a silent art container clad in a veil of red stone that speaks of the history of Indian craftsmanship.

We use the power of absence to create connections to mediate between the existing Museum building and the North Wing, between the old and the new. Born out of a deep regard, the North Wing sits at a respectful distance, allowing both buildings to have their own identities and room to breathe.

The courtyard is a place of tranquillity and quiet, a space for orientation and contemplation. It is a spectacular stage in design and scale, bounded by an area of cloistered shade.

Client	Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum Trust
Location	Mumbai, India
Programme	Masterplan & new galleries for permanent and temporary exhibitions
Area	15,700 m ²
Construction Value	£20.2m
Status	Invited competition — 2nd place prize
Commencement	2014
Architect	AL_A



GLOBE ACADEMY



This city academy, sited within a socially deprived area has the potential, not just to create new beginnings for pupils, but also to act as a motivator for learning and a catalyst for welcoming and engaging with the wider community of Southwark.

We believe the qualities of the environment in which you learn, and in particular light, space, colour and sound, make a real difference to how quickly you learn and how much you enjoy learning. We aspire to making the learning spaces beautiful and inspirational and to create a positive experience for all those involved in the learning process.

ARK's brief for 'schools within schools' demands that each school has a separate identity while at the same time working within the concept of a campus that will nurture and educate from infant to teenager. Their brief is aspirational both for education and for environment.

The Academy's purpose is to develop high aspirations, high motivation and high achievement in and for all its students, irrespective of their start in life. In particular, its aim is to ensure that every student makes enough progress by age 18 to have real options: to move into higher education or into the career path of their choice. The specialism for the Academy will be Performing Arts along with developing the core skills of numeracy and English.

Client	DCFS/ARK Education
Location	London, UK
Programme	'All-through' academy for 1500 students
Area	13,700 m ²
Construction Value	£38m
Status	Completed
Commencement	2007
Completion	2012
Architect	AL_A



LORD'S MEDIA CENTRE



The objective of the design was to respect and savour the essential nature of Lord's while bringing to it a building that heralded the coming millennium and provided the most elegant and state-of-the-art media centre in the world.

It captured the public imagination with its form and function, transforming a generic brief into an elegant solution, made possible by the marriage of conceptual with technical inventiveness.

The Media Centre at Lord's is one of the most innovative buildings of the twentieth century. The first all-aluminium, semi-monocoque building in the world, it represents a breakthrough, not just in the creation of a new three-dimensional aesthetic, but in its method of construction. This building was built and fitted out not by the construction industry but a boatyard, using the very latest advances in boat building technology.

The building is designed to house 250 of the world's media during international cricket matches. It is the place from which the media broadcast their message while images of the building itself are then seen on millions of televisions around the world.

It is both the medium and the message.

Client	Marylebone Cricket Club
Location	London, UK
Programme	Media centre at Lord's Cricket Ground
Area	600 m ²
Construction Value	£5m
Status	Completed
Commencement	1994
Completion	1999
Architect	Future Systems
Awards (selected)	RIBA Stirling Prize World Architecture Award



SELFRIDGES



Our ambitious brief was not only to design a state of the art department store but also to create an architectural landmark for Birmingham so that the building itself would become a genuine catalyst for urban regeneration.

We have re-interpreted the notion of a department store, not just in its form and appearance but also in the social function such a building now plays in our society.

Its relationship to the church is significant, representing the religious and commercial life of the city that have evolved side by side over hundreds of years. The building provides an ethereal backdrop to the gothic architecture of St Martin's and its closeness creates a powerful visual tension between church and department store.

Glimpsed from the train entering Birmingham from the south, it promises mystery and excitement in a city undergoing a 21st century renaissance.

Finding a means of cladding this curvaceous volume on a developers' budget, we took inspiration from fashion and history. The skin is made up of thousands of aluminium discs, creating a fine, lustrous grain. In sunlight it shimmers, reflecting minute changes in weather conditions and taking on the colours, light and shapes of people and things passing by - an animate and breathing form.

Client	Selfridges & Co
Location	Birmingham, UK
Programme	Department store
Area	25,000 m ²
Construction Value	£66m
Status	Completed
Commencement	1997
Completion	2003
Architect	Future Systems
Awards (selected)	RIBA Award for Architecture: Midlands Civic Trust Award



MONTE ST ANGELO SUBWAY STATIONS



The brief from the City of Naples, to create a fully-functioning tube station that is in itself a work of art, demanded a synthesis of purpose and beauty that was fundamental to our creative process. A second primary point of inspiration was the site. At the surface the station will be the central element in the urban and cultural regeneration of the Traiano district that has suffered in its recent history from infrastructural isolation and neglect.

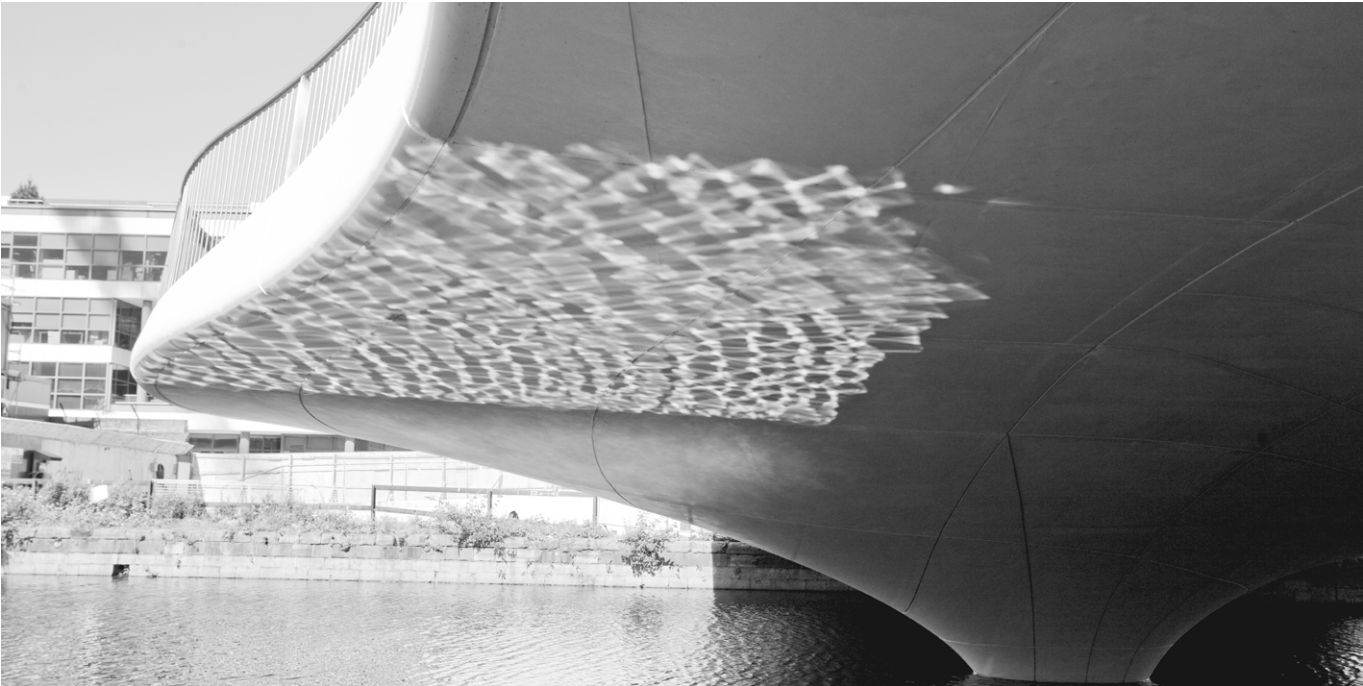
Simultaneously the network of tunnels and vaults designed and subsequently abandoned midway through a previous tube station project, describes an underworld barely tangible in the gleaming and sanitary underground spaces of contemporary subway projects.

In the shadow of Vesuvius and embedded in layers of early civilisation, these dark and brutal concrete shells have been inspirational to our formal and material approach. We began the process by stretching and moulding plasticine forms, synthesising the primary access requirements within and around the existing negative volumes. As layers of programme were introduced, the eternal tension between form and function was worked through while preserving the singular purpose and integrity of the forms.

Client	SEPSA
Location	Naples, Italy
Programme	Subway stations entrances and platforms
Area	8,000 m ²
Construction Value	£93m
Status	Under construction (on hold)
Commencement	2003
Completion	2016
Architect	AL_A, in collaboration with Anish Kapoor



SPENCER DOCK BRIDGE



The 40 metre span bridge with its fluid lines and undulating concrete surface takes trams, traffic and pedestrians across the Royal Canal. The edges of the deck peel down to reveal a space for pedestrians to pause and take in views of the dock and Linear Park which is currently under construction.

The underside of the bridge merges with the piers in a single movement with joint lines in the concrete designed to accentuate the geometry of the form. The finish of the concrete provides high visibility against the dark water of the canal and at night the structure is vibrantly lit from below, underlining its fluid form. The proportions of the bridge are unusual and the design exploits these by treating the bridge as a piece of landscape. The soft geometry and asymmetry create a piece of infrastructure that resolves the tension between form and function.

The bridge has been constructed from an innovative combination of insitu and precast reinforced concrete, using formwork milled from high density expanded polystyrene coated in resin for a smooth surface finish. Fabricating directly from our 3D parametric models provided a high degree of control over the geometry. This innovative use of CNC cut polystyrene is to date the largest application of the material to be used in this way.

Client	Dublin Docklands Development Authority & Railway Procurement Agency
Location	Dublin, Ireland
Programme	Bridge for vehicles, trams and pedestrians
Span	40m
Construction Value	£3.6m
Status	Completed
Commencement	2006
Completion	2009
Architect	AL_A



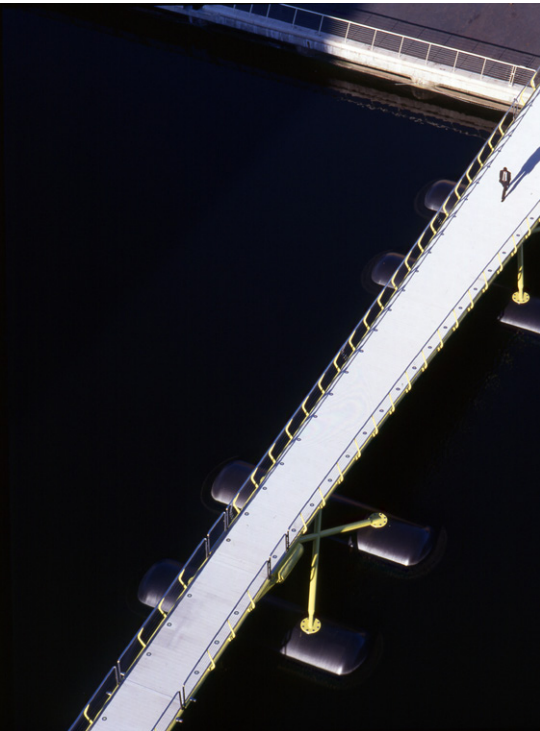
FLOATING BRIDGE



The bridge links two areas of very different scale. On the one side a vast commercial development and on the other the more delicate proportions of 19th century warehouses and a quayside piazza. By creating a low floating structure emphasis is placed on the horizontal stretch of water rather than the vertical dominance of Canary Wharf.

The slender form of the bridge is evocative of a brightly coloured insect touching the water as lightly as a water skater, offering pedestrians a sense of freedom as they cross. Colour is central to the concept – like a laser beam of light the bridge skims the dock with a piercing lime green line, the sense of perspective exaggerated by the tapering plan of the deck.

Client	London Docklands Development Corporation
Location	London, UK
Programme	Footbridge across a basin in Canary Wharf, London's business district
Span	94m
Construction Value	£1.6m
Status	Completed
Commencement	1994
Completion	1996
Architect	Future Systems



METROPOLIS



44 luxury apartments sited on a peninsula in the Port of Copenhagen. In order to create a slender profile to this 11 storey high building, the plan of the apartments is conceived as 3 towers linked in a petal formation.

The structure is a single pre-cast concrete frame with blue pigmented render as a facing material. Future Systems worked closely with the developer client and the contractor as a design consultant during outline and detailed design stages.

Client	Nordkranen
Location	Copenhagen, Denmark
Programme	Luxury residential
Area	14,000 m ²
Construction Value	£11.2m
Status	Completed
Commencement	2004
Completion	2008
Architect	Future Systems
Awards (selected)	City of Copenhagen Good & Beautiful Buildings Award



THONG LO



Thong Lo sets a new benchmark for eating and drinking destinations in Bangkok. This project seeks to redefine the typology of community malls creating a distinct identity for the district that connects with the community.

A large cut is carved out of the mall to make space for a park that gives a serene character to the development. This quiet pocket of green is connected to the busy street scene encircled by 12 restaurants and an exclusive nightclub at the back of the site.

The street front elevation is solid and maintains a dignified presence, and the cut in the middle invites people in. The ground floor is seen as a continuation of the street, blurring the threshold between the pavement and the outdoor seating area. Within the development, the identity of the individual restaurants is maintained.

As the concept of combining retail and park is so strong, the architecture of the development retains a simplicity. The massing protects the site from imposing buildings and noise on Thong Lo, as well as creating shade for the park in the afternoons. An opaque façade on the street elevation reflects the city, while glazing fronts the elevations facing onto the parkscape. The materiality of the scheme is driven by a contrast between the outer shell of the massing and the cuts that link it to the street. The outer shell is clad in a polished black precast concrete that forms a counterpart to the white polished precast of the inner surfaces.

Client	RS Public Company Limited
Location	Bangkok, Thailand
Programme	Retail destination with restaurants and night club
Area	4,730 m ²
Construction Value	£3m
Status	Under construction
Commencement	2014
Completion	2015
Architect	AL_A



COMME DES GARÇONS



The brief to create a new kind of space with an atmosphere of experimentation has resulted in three powerful, uncompromising environments, focussing on the threshold between arrival and entry.

New York (right)

Rather than creating an entirely new façade, which was the original brief, the existing nineteenth century fabric with all the old signage and external industrial fire escapes is retained. Grafted behind the central existing brickwork entrance arch is the link: an asymmetric entrance structure made entirely from aluminium that draws the visitor in from the noise of the New York street. The entrance becomes a transition, not entirely inside or outside, but a fissure through an existing building heading to new environment. The skin has been mechanically formed and then finished to reveal the hands of the maker.

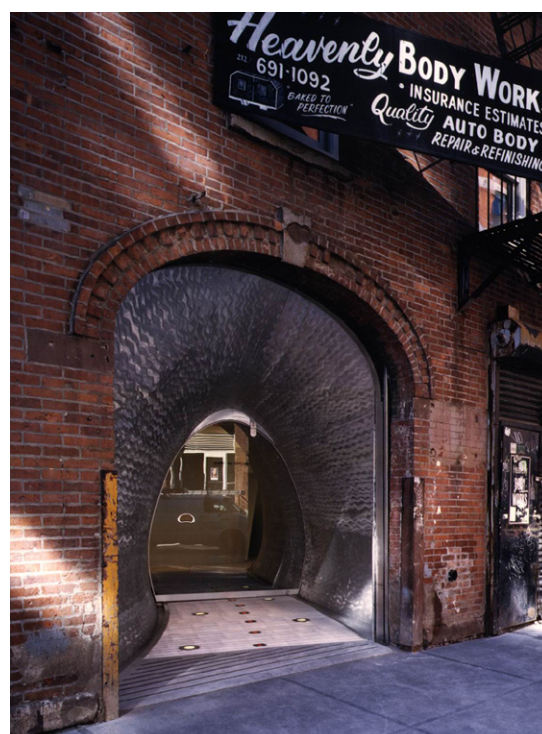
Tokyo (top)

Two horizontal concrete slabs of a dumb existing building are joined with two ribbons of conical-curved, inclined glass offering a simple liquid entrance where they converge. The glass is covered with a layer of translucent blue dots which act as a filter between inside and outside. At night the movement of people within the shop creates a curiosity for the pedestrian passing the façade.

Paris

The historic, worn stone façade is protected and enhanced by a sheer skin of pink glass sliding gracefully in front of it. The colour is intensified at the base, fading to clear, to create visual weight.

Client	Comme des Garçons
Location	New York, USA; Tokyo, Japan; Paris, France
Programme	Flagship stores
Area	100 m ² each
Construction Value	Confidential
Status	Completed
Commencement	1996
Completion	1998
Architect	Future Systems



TIMBERWAVE



Timberwave is the product of its contextual response, yet with no physical interaction with the V&A. It coalesces the expression of material, structure and public engagement into a single beautiful piece. A seamless solution, it does not make distinctions between structure and aesthetic, structure and message, innovation and functionality, social and technological impact.

This project is about taking the Victoria & Albert Museum out onto the street and celebrate the London Design Festival residency at the Museum.

Its Cromwell Road entrance is vast, multilayered and very ornamental. We have responded to this with a single dynamic gesture that exploits wood as a material. The use of wood as a structural material is well documented at the V&A.

We have taken lamination techniques more usually used in furniture making and applied them at a different scale to create a structure some three storeys high, so that when you see the piece from certain vantage points it reflects the grand proportions of the arch.

Repetition of motif is very much part of the didactic tradition of the V&A and this structure is born from that tradition.

The timber entrance is three-dimensional and asymmetric in form, with each timber piece precisely calibrated for optimal structural performance.

Timberwave creates its own balance and is visible from long views as you approach the Museum from along Cromwell Road.

Client	London Design Festival & American Hardwood Export Council
Location	London, UK
Programme	Temporary entrance to the V&A Museum
Area	12m tall
Construction Value	Confidential
Status	Completed
Commencement	2010
Completion	2011
Architect	AL_A



Whenever you go see AL_A you have to leave your shoes at the entrance along with at least 40 other pairs of shoes. AL_A have enabled us to contemplate new possibilities for our future in the V&A, they have challenged our thinking and they continue to bring a freshness which we all relish. Their studio is a think tank, it has a very unusual atmosphere, a lot of brilliant young people and great ideas. AL_A support our work but they challenge us too.



**Martin Roth's Introduction to
the V&A Museum Annual Design
Lecture by Amanda Leveté,
February 2013**



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