
The temporary design festival and expo has long provided opportunity for architects, designers and engineers to flex their mental and material muscle free from the constraints of larger and more functional commissions. In favour of experimentation and creative freedom, Marsh van der Rohe’s pavilion for the 20th International Exposition in Barcelona had no need to worry about the location of the plant room whilst developing its ideal of free flowing space. Likewise, where best to fit the roof did not trouble Zaha Hadid when she conceived The Banham Pavilion for Millennium Park, Chicago in 2008.

For the London Design Festival 2011 three architects were each brought together with a material with the freedom and opportunity to engage in the spirit of research and experimentation resulting in experimental temporary structures: Al_A’s Timber Wave, Timothy Hatton’s Pavilion At The Dock and David Chipperfield’s Two Liners.

Amanda Levete
Architects Timber Wave is a lattice spiral of American red oak. On view for 29 days until 15th October outside the main entrance to the V&A, where AL_A have been awarded the commission for a new courtyard and underground extension to the museum. The three-storey high solid responds to the highly ornamental museum facade and its contents. "Reception of motif is very much part of the didactic tradition of the V&A," observes the architect, "and this structure is born from that tradition." The up-scaling of tannin techniques more often used in furniture has made the design possible, with structural engineering expertise provided by Arup. Al_A’s and past LDF commissions, by Established and Sons and David Adjaye, were supported by The American Hardwood Export Council.

David Chipperfield’s Two Liners is in situ until 15th October at the Southbank Centre as part of "Gear + Matter", a regular commission within the festival, which invites a designer to "explore the dynamic between their own creativity and the material or process". Chipperfield and Selgas' collection of glass-paned pavilions joins the ghost of festival past at the south side of the Royal Festival Hall, a legacy from the 1951 Festival of Britain. Each panel has been constructed with an internal layer of Selgas Architectural Fabric, a metal coated hasp mesh, with additional technical support by Zep. The installation changes appearance with transparent panels becoming opaque and vice versa. As one moves and shift viewpoint the panels appear to be fragile but are then cast over with rust coloured monumental and sturdy looking panels give way to fragile sheets.

Le Corbusier’s experimentation with hyperbolic paraboloids at the 1958 Brussels Expo may or may not have influenced the fabulous roof forms of Little Chef restaurants (See "Scissor Screw: Motorway Service" at Muthesius). The pavilion’s architectural design by Timothy Hatton Associates’ contribution to this year’s festival, Pavilion At The Dock, hopes to create a legacy beyond the temporary festival. This uses Concrete Canvas, a cement impregnated fabric that solidifies within two hours after water has been added. Much like the strips of fabric used in hospitals to build plaster casts. Whilst the pavilion itself aimed to test the versatility of the material through creative application, the interior has an exhibition of structural designs by staff from Timothy Hatton suggesting ways that the material may be used in public build structures for deployment in disaster areas.

John Pawson’s Perspectives, at the base of the Geometric Staircase, in the South Tower of St Paul’s Cathedral is an installation with a concave Dwowski crystal matrix – the largest commissioned lens. This sits on a much larger reflective surface – the upper plane of a specially fabricated metal hemisphere (120mm in diameter and 075in height in height). A2m wide spherical convex mirror was suspended in the lower sconce, directly over the hemispheres. The optical devices create a composite image of the view up through the lower and an elevated downward perspective when looking down.
The temporary design festival and expo has long provided opportunity for architects, designers and engineers to flex their mental and material muscle free from the constraints of larger and more functional commissions in favour of experimentation and creative freedom. Mies van der Rohe’s pavilion for the 1929 International Exposition in Barcelona had no need to worry about the location of the plant room whilst developing his ideal of free flowing space. Likewise, where best to fit the loo did not trouble Zaha Hadid when she conceived The Burnham Pavilion for Millennium Park, Chicago in 2009.

For the London Design Festival 2011 three architects were each brought together with a material with the freedom and opportunity to engage in the spirit of research and experimentation resulting in experimental temporary structures: AL_A’s Timber Wave, Timothy Hatton’s Pavilion At The Dock and David Chipperfield’s Two Lines.

Amanda Levete Architects’ Timber Wave is a lattice spiral of American red oak. On view for 29 days until 15th October outside the main entrance to the V&A, where AL_A have been awarded the commission for a new courtyard and underground extension to the museum. The three-storey high coil responds to the highly ornamental museum façade and its contents. “Repetition of motif is very much part of the didactic tradition of the V&A” observes the architect, “and this structure is born from that tradition”. The up-scaling of lamination techniques more often used in furniture has made the design possible, with structural engineering expertise provided by Arup. AL_A’s and past LDF commissions, by Established and Sons and David Adjaye, were supported by The American Hardwood Export Council.
David Chipperfield’s *Two Lines* is in situ until 16th October at the Southbank Centre as part of ‘Size + Matter’, a regular commission within the festival, which invites a designer to “explore the dynamic between their own creativity and the material or process”. Chipperfield and Sefar’s collection of vertical glass panels join the ghosts of festival past at the south side of the Royal Festival Hall, a legacy from the 1951 Festival of Britain. Each panel has been constructed with an internal layer of Sefar Architectural Fabric, a metal coated fabric mesh, with additional technical support by Arup. The installation changes appearance, with transparent panes becoming opaque and vice versa. As one moves and shifts viewpoint the panels appear to be fragile but are then cast over with a rust-coloured monumentality, and sturdy looking panels give way to fragile sheets.

Le Corbusier’s experimentation with hyperbolic paraboloids at the 1958 Brussels Expo may or may not have influenced the fabulous roof forms on Little Chef restaurants (See Sam Scorer’s motorway services at Markham Moor, Nottinghamshire). But Timothy Hatton Architects’ contribution to this year’s festival, *Pavilion At The Dock*, hopes to create a legacy beyond the temporary festival. This uses Concrete Canvas, a cement impregnated fabric that solidifies within two hours after water has been added. Much like the strips of fabric used in hospitals to build plaster casts. Whilst the pavilion itself aimed to test the versatility of the material through creative application, the interior has an exhibition of structural designs by staff from Timothy Hatton suggesting ways that the material may be used in quick build structures for deployment in disaster areas.

John Pawson’s *Perspectives*, at the base of the Geometric Staircase, in the South West Tower of St Paul’s Cathedral is an installation with a concave Swarovski crystal meniscus – the largest commissionable lens. This sits on a much larger reflective surface – the upper plane of a specially fabricated metal hemisphere (1200mm in diameter and 675mm in height). A 2m
wide spherical convex mirror was suspended in the tower’s cupola, directly over the hemisphere. These optical devices created a composite image of the view up through the tower and an elevated downward perspective when looking down.

“Test Bed: implicitly a place for testing. For testing... what exactly? A wisp of a thought, a nugget of an idea, the beginning of a dream.” Testbed1 is a creative, experimental arts “space with no agenda”, in the architecturally distressed undercroft of a warehouse / office building in an ex-dairy in Battersea. Tenants include Will Alsop, Vivienne Westwood and Squint Opera and Testbed1 is managed by Nancy Alsop. The exhibition, Will Alsop ‘A Few Friends Friends’ was a group show of work by over 50 participants.


www.amandalevetearchitects.com/
www.davidchipperfield.co.uk/
www.thal.co.uk/
www.arup.com/
www.testbed1.com
www.johnpawson.com
www.londondesignfestival.com/
I am an artist and writer living in London. I studied Fine Art at Goldsmiths College and received a Master's degree in Architectural History from The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL. My current research is concerned with mutability in the fabric of the built environment and a consideration of issues of decay and restoration within architecture. Currently I am coordinator of the Diploma in Buildings Conservation at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, where I have also been involved with the development of the Graduate Diploma in Spatial Performance and Design.

About Danielle Hewitt

Discussion

No comments yet.

Leave a Reply

Enter your comment here...

Fill in your details below or click an icon to log in

Email (required)  (Not published)
Name (required)
Website

Notify me of follow-up comments via email.

Post Comment

Art & Public Space

- Art & Public Space

Architecture & Design

Posted by Danielle Hewitt · September 26, 2011 · Leave a Comment
Filed Under John Pawson, London Design Festival, david chipperfield, amanda levete, will alsop, timothy hutton
Architecture & Design

Commissions & Projects

Exhibitions & Events

New Books

aajpress

Email Subscription

Enter your email address to subscribe to this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

Join 239 other followers

Sign me up!

Links

Art & Architecture
Art-Public
artconnexion
Bienal del Chaco
Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto
CultureCritic
Cultureshock Media
Find us on facebook
Forecast Public Art
Guimaraes 2012-Art & Architecture
Haring Woods Studio
Kaldor Art Projects (Aus)
New Patrons / Fondation de France
Public Art Dialogue
Public Art Directory
Public Art Network Blog (US)
Public Art Online
Public Art Scotland
Scott Burnham – Urban Play
Sculpture Network
Shrapnel Contemporary
SKOR-Foundation Art & Public Spaces (nl)
Strange Harvest
Urban Guide for Alternate Use