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Experimental pavilion to bridge culture and science at EPFL

A public-private partnership brings science and art together “Under One Roof”

The Japanese architectural firm Kengo Kuma & Associates, together with Holzer Kobler Architekturen from Zurich, won the architectural design competition launched in 2012 to develop Cosandey Square at EPFL. Their project, “Under One Roof,” will unite an experimental Art & Sciences space and a demonstration pavilion under a single, long stone roof at the Montreux Jazz Lab. The Swiss federal government will finance half of the 30-million-franc project, with the remainder coming from private partners including the Gandur Foundation for Art.

“We are very pleased to participate in the creation of this interaction laboratory,” said Jean Claude Gandur, who established the Gandur Foundation in 2010. “Art museums of the future should be able to invest more in interfaces, experience, and education than in the quantity of their exhibits.”

To connect science and culture at EPFL, the university’s campus will boast a novel “backbone” that stretches the length of Cosandey Square. This roof was designed by Kengo Kuma & Associates in conjunction with Holzer Kobler Architekturen. Kengo Kuma won the open competition launched by EPFL in early 2012 that included entries from 12 leading international architects specializing in pavilion design. He has designed numerous museum projects in Japan and China, including a museum for the Fonds régional d’art contemporain (Frac) in Marseille, France. The idea was to design a set of three pavilions on Cosandey Square. One building will be a space for the presentation of EPFL’s work. Another is to be dedicated to the development of futuristic scenography for art museums, and the third will house the Montreux Jazz Lab, a new kind of multimedia space.

“Our proposal was to bring these three pavilions together under one roof – hence the name of our project, ‘Under One Roof,’” explained Kengo Kuma. The simplicity of this structure together with its openness amidst EPFL’s central square, secured unanimous support from the members of the jury. The winning design places great emphasis on the use of wood and is also inspired by traditional architecture, as evidenced by the flat stones that will cover the roof.

Built with a purpose

Each pavilion will have a distinct identity based on its function.

- **The Montreux Jazz Lab**, with an area of 1,400 square meters, is located in the southern part of Cosandey Square and will accommodate a Montreux Jazz Café and a theater/concert hall with a stage. These spaces can be separated or combined depending on the area needed. Innovative experimental devices developed by the EPFL MetaMedia Center together with the EPFL+ECAL Lab will also allow visitors to relive 50 years of concerts recorded at the renowned Montreux Jazz Festival.

- **The Art & Sciences Pavilion**, with its 1,100-square-meter area, is a new experimental laboratory conceived for the design of futuristic scenography. Intelligent lights, augmented reality, and eye-

tracking devices will offer visitors unprecedented museum experiences. This pavilion will host two annual scenography exhibitions to educationally showcase the artistic assets of the Gandur Foundation for Art, as well as those of other Swiss and international collections. It will also house “artists-in-residence.”

- **The demonstration pavilion**, with an area of 550 square meters, will provide space for the presentation of technologies and inventions developed by EPFL since its founding in 1969. Also, this pavilion will include a meeting room to receive the Swiss and international delegations that visit the school throughout the year.

Roots in the Montreux Jazz Festival

The same collaborative spirit prevailed in the creation of the Montreux Jazz Lab and the Montreux Jazz Café. “Under One Roof” will combine essential aspects of the Montreux Jazz Festival’s DNA. First, the amazing set of archives of the festival was digitized, thanks to a partnership between EPFL and Montreux Sounds with support from Audemars Piguet and the Ernst Göner Foundation. Second, the Montreux Jazz Café – a concept created in 2008 to extend worldwide the experience of the Montreux Jazz Festival – combines music, design, and food in an intimate space. “The magic of this new Café lies in its creation of an atmosphere and an experimental environment that make us live through the concerts’ great moments of music and images, as well as to be able to export such experiences to other cafés around the world,” says Claude Nobs, founder of the Montreux Jazz Festival.

The construction of the pavilion will be carried out by the general contractor Marti S.A. and will begin in the spring of 2013, and its doors are scheduled to open in the autumn of 2014.

More information

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