

MAGAZINE ON THE DRIVE

Shinkenchiku Central Glass Co., Ltd.: A Town Landmark

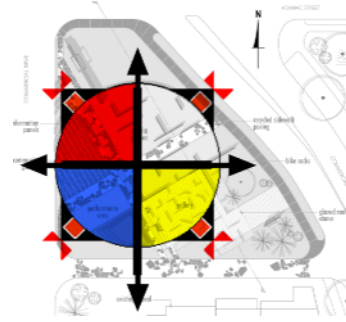
Located at the intersection between a thriving commercial district and an industrial park, "Magazine on the Drive is a Landmark that displays the work of an eclectic community whose cultural diversity is evident in every part of the Commercial Drive district. Exterior blank 'canvas' space encourages community ownership and respect for the site while allowing for creative expression. The site also provides space for those who enjoy gardening, and an open-air theatre of outdoor performances. "Magazine on the Drive" acts as an archive for the Commercial Drive area, logging the thoughts and emotions of a vibrant neighbourhood, for generations to come.



Landmark or monumental architecture can take on a wide variety of diverse forms and shapes. The theme of this competition, as the name suggests, is the design of a landmark for a location of choice, the scale ranging anywhere from a metropolis, a regional city core, a small town, or simply part of a single streetscape. The proposed design steps away from the 'typical' monumental landmark and combines, a garden, a community center and an outdoor exhibition space. The proposed landmark is titled "Magazine on the Drive" and sits in a diverse area in Vancouver, east of the downtown core. Although it sits at the mouth of a dynamic cultural strip, the site is neglected and abandoned. The goal of the proposed design is to create a space that serves as both an entry gateway onto Commercial Drive from the city and adjacent industrial area, as well as a common place of gathering for the unique and highly multi-cultural population living and using the amenities of the area. Due to the fact that the landmark is not simply a single sculptural element, but rather a series of active spaces, the main inspirations of the design range from native symbolism to research centers and burial grounds. The projects that held the most influence on the design can be broken up into four major different scales of design; the project and site's relationship with the city, the program and event ideas, the journey and experience of the

visitor, and lastly the elements which help contribute and create the desired spaces.

The attempt to bridge the gap between this unique area and the rest of the city, as well as the diverse social and cultural circles in the area, is based on a circular plan divided into four major sections, each a fragment that represents a different aspect of the area, yet lending and giving to each other to create a unique cohesive experience. There is a strong native influence in the area, especially



apparent in the artwork at the nearby community centre, and in various murals and paintings along the street façade. The circular configuration of the site and program is based upon the native 4 directions symbolⁱ. There are various versions of this symbol, but in general, it is representative of the world where a cross within it that unites all four sides and/or directions. Each quarter is reflects



some form of spiritual and/or physical significance and is located opposite its contradicting condition. It is therefore a symbol of both balance and unity between similar, and yet conflicting elementsⁱⁱ. Although the final configuration of the programme within the circle is less obvious, the idea is very similar. Two major axes divide the space up into four main areas. The top left portion is dedicated as a community

garden. Below this is the open-air theatre. Running North-South is a path with a series of concrete panels at various heights displaying information on events happening within the commercial drive area. The graffiti garden overlaps into the south east portion so that visitors entering along the East-West path walk directly through this portion and get a glimpse of the area of free expression and graffiti art. The gallery located at the south east corner is partially covered and houses pivoting panels that display works by local artists. The

'monumental' portion of the site is a large blank concrete



wall at the north end of the site, highly visible to visitors approaching from the north end of Commercial Drive, the industrial North end of Commercial Drive, and a main street running from downtown Vancouver. The wall is broken into two portions to reveal a vertical panel of graffiti illuminated by a steel framed light fixture, and also consists of a large steel panel protruding from within the concrete wall. These are intended to pull together the highly industrial ship ports north of the site, with the cultural strip of Commercial Drive running south of the site.

The Tadao Ando restoration and addition to Fabbrica, the Benetton Research and Development Centre in Villa Pastega Merera (1992-2000) is a place where carefully selected



young people are given studio space and support to develop their creative ideas and projects. Located in Treviso, Italy, the complex houses young people from all over the world who work in 'production groups' to develop communication projects within a variety of design and art related fields. "Through different roles and training in each project, the participants, who come from various countries with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and sensibilities, gain an understanding of other cultures." ⁱⁱⁱ Applying this idea to the park design, *Magazine on the Drive* acts to unify the different cultural and artistic groups in the area within a place where freedom of creativity is both



welcome and encourage. Architecturally, Ando uses his distinct style to create a new world that remains faithful to the original building materials and techniques of the Villa. "Ando, known for his sensitivity to the natural context of his architecture and ability to enhance its abstraction and spirituality, approaches the theme in a non-invasive manner,

letting his project "dig" a monumental underground city, visible on the level of the parklands only in the quiet solemnity of the paths." ^{iv} Although the goal is very different in the two projects, the similarity lies in the fact that the proposed park design also attempts to create a monument that respects the existing fabric of the area. The location of it in an abandoned site, bridging



Commercial Drive and the rest of the city works to be simultaneously visible and hold an impact, without disagreeing with the existing conditions. Fabrice's plan consists of an exterior elliptical piazza of an "whose sombre, non-mimetic form appears simple and stereometric in comparison with the ancient forms of the villa, with which it does not seek to compete" ^v Fabrice, which means "workshop" is a place where creativity is encouraged, similarly the proposed landmark is intended to acts as a sketchbook for creative minds to express themselves upon. The graffiti garden adjacent to the large wall, at the North West portion of the circular configuration takes up the largest area of the 4 different programs. It is intended as a series of blank canvases for local graffiti artists and community schools and children to be able to draw, and have their work adjacent to the other talent in the area. The walls are intended to be added throughout the years as necessary. *Magazine on the Drive* is intended as both a landmark for the rest of the city, as well as a place of gathering and coming together, where the inhabitants and users of the area can feel at home and free to express themselves, and grow together as a community.

Despite the fact that the underlying idea behind the Brion Family Tomb (1970-1972) by Carlo Scarpa is very different from the goal of *Magazine on the Drive*, many similar elements are used to achieve distinct experiences of space and journey. The site in San Vito d'Altivole, Italy is a



quiet area where the tombs and graves of many Italian families of the area lie. The Brion Family commissioned Scarpa to build a monument dedicated to their family on approximately 2200 square meters of land, with a grand entrance coming directly off of the rest of the cemetery area, as well as its own entrance off the adjacent street.

I would like to explain the Tomba Brion...I consider this work, if you permit me, to be rather good and which will get better over time. I have tried to put some poetic imagination into it, though not in order to create poetic architecture but to make a certain kind of architecture that could emanate a sense of formal poetry....The place for the dead is a garden....I wanted to show some ways in which you could approach death in a social and civic way; and further what meaning there was in death, in the ephemerality of life—other than these shoe-boxes. ^{vi}

The site of the tomb/memorial is organized with a series of exterior garden spaces, and exterior covered spaces, as well as a chapel near the street entrance. Visitors to the family tomb are able to move through series of spaces



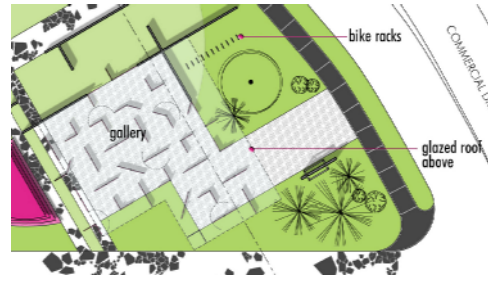
ranging in various levels of intimacy and reflection. Entering from the cemetery entrance, visitors are greeted with a brief glimpse of the main exterior garden area that cannot be accessed yet. This move immediately lures the visitor further into the site; *Magazine on the Drive* attempts to achieve this same effect by bringing visitors first into the covered entrance gallery area, and offering them filtered views of the graffiti garden and the rest of the site without allowing a direct path to it. The main street façade carries the language that the rest of the site carries and is representative in form and materiality, but does not give away the full extent of the contents behind the wall. Coming from the North, passer-bys experience a similar effect where the contents behind the main circular wall are read, and hinted at, but in order to fully appreciate the artwork



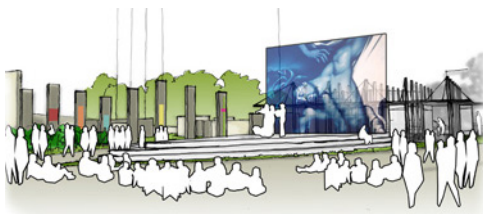
Atelier Big City is a Montreal based design firm whose portfolio includes a multitude of projects that pushes the limits of design. Through their use of material and detailing, they portray ideas that reflect the site and the building purpose. Their work is bold and colourful, but the execution of their ideas and themes make their designs timeless. The Centre D'Interpretation du Bourg de Pabos in Pabos Mills, Quebec received le grand prix d'architecture from Quebec Order of Architects, as well as Le Prix du guveneur Général from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada in 1994. The experience that they create is one of a kind; it is a complete fusion of the new contemporary architecture, and the history and character of the existing site. "Prepare yourself to live an experience unique in its kind. Our interpretation center will surprise you in lots of ways. Forget the typical museum, it is nothing like it. Here, you see through the walls and you are walking on the same soil from which we removed the artifacts shown in our exhibit. History is explained and illustrated on pivoting panels." ^{vii} The idea of the pivoting panels was derived from this project. The idea of information displayed on walls that could be

adjusted to create various types of spaces, to cater to the specific type of exhibition and/or the crowd

seemed appropriate in the 'landmark park' that is intended to be flexible to all situations. The pivoting panels and mobile walls are used in the gallery area, the first space a visitor encounters upon entering the site. Visitors are encouraged to move through the non-traditional gallery space freely to view the works of local artists displayed on the panels. Then, rather than being strictly guided in one direction as is the case with many gallery and museums, they are free to move onto either the performance area, the graffiti garden or into the more intimate garden space. The freedom of expression, movement and creativity are intended to be a direct reflection of the free-spirited nature of the people in the area, and the integration of the many diverse cultures and societies.



The creation of a landmark for such a distinct and unique area in Vancouver was a challenge that the park and gallery design attempted to resolve. Not a traditional sculpted or statuary landmark, the proposal was intended to create a series of functional spaces that the people of the area could share and grow with over the years. Inspiration for this project was derived from a variety of different projects who each offered a new perspective and edge to a design intended to lend itself to a wide variation of people and cultures. The native four direction symbol begins the transformation process by loosely dividing the site up in a circular configuration, intended to represent unity and harmony among the different parts and areas of the site. Tadeo Ando's design of Fabrica is a perfect fusion between the existing site and villa, as well as the contemporary new Architectural elements he put into his design. The specific spatial organization and movement throughout the site is derived strongly from the Brion Family Tomb by Carlo Scarpa. Here, he allows the visitor to move freely throughout the site, yet controls it in a way that specific views are framed and the visitors see what he intended for their own interpretation and use. Last but not least, the method(s) of execution of the aforementioned ideas behind the design were inspired by Le Centre d'Interpretation du Bourge de Pabos by Atelier Big City. Their use of materiality, and flexible elements in bold and daring colours and designs makes their work stand out from the crowd, while



still holding the capability to grow with a city, or a group of people and maintain a level of permanence. *Magazine on the Drive* places a similar methodology into the design as the aforementioned projects by ensuring

that all the groups participating along this dynamic cultural spine have a place in the park that they can relate to and be proud of while feeling a part of a greater whole. The movement and orientation of visitors throughout the site are free and flowing, and yet controlled in some senses where specific views and/or paths are encouraged and framed for the visitors. This is to encourage the intermingling and association of all parties with all other parts of the site, and thusly all other people within the area sharing the space. Although may seem to be a bit of an oasis within an area that is beginning to become slightly run down, Commercial Drive is a thriving cultural spine that is in many ways a hidden gem within the other beautiful areas of Vancouver. It attempts to revive the main entry, and thusly the city's first impression, to a dynamic group of talented people whose multi-



cultural and wide range of interests and abilities often go unheard. While this proposed park design steps away from the traditional monumental statuary concept, the group in which it is meant for, and meant to represent is a group that is unlike any others, in life, spirit and

energy.

ⁱ <http://community.gospelcom.net/Brix?pageID=3748>

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ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.dnp.co.jp/gallery/ggg/gki/g204/g204ki_e.html

^{iv} <http://www.floornature.com/worldaround/articolo.php/art240/3/en/arch>

^v <http://www.floornature.com/worldaround/articolo.php/art240/3/en/arch>

^{vi} Scarpa

^{vii} <http://www.bourgdepabos.com/Anglais/portail.html>

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