

RF
P

Property, buildings & design

RETAIL SPACE

Issue 50 February 2009 www.rfpmagazine.com

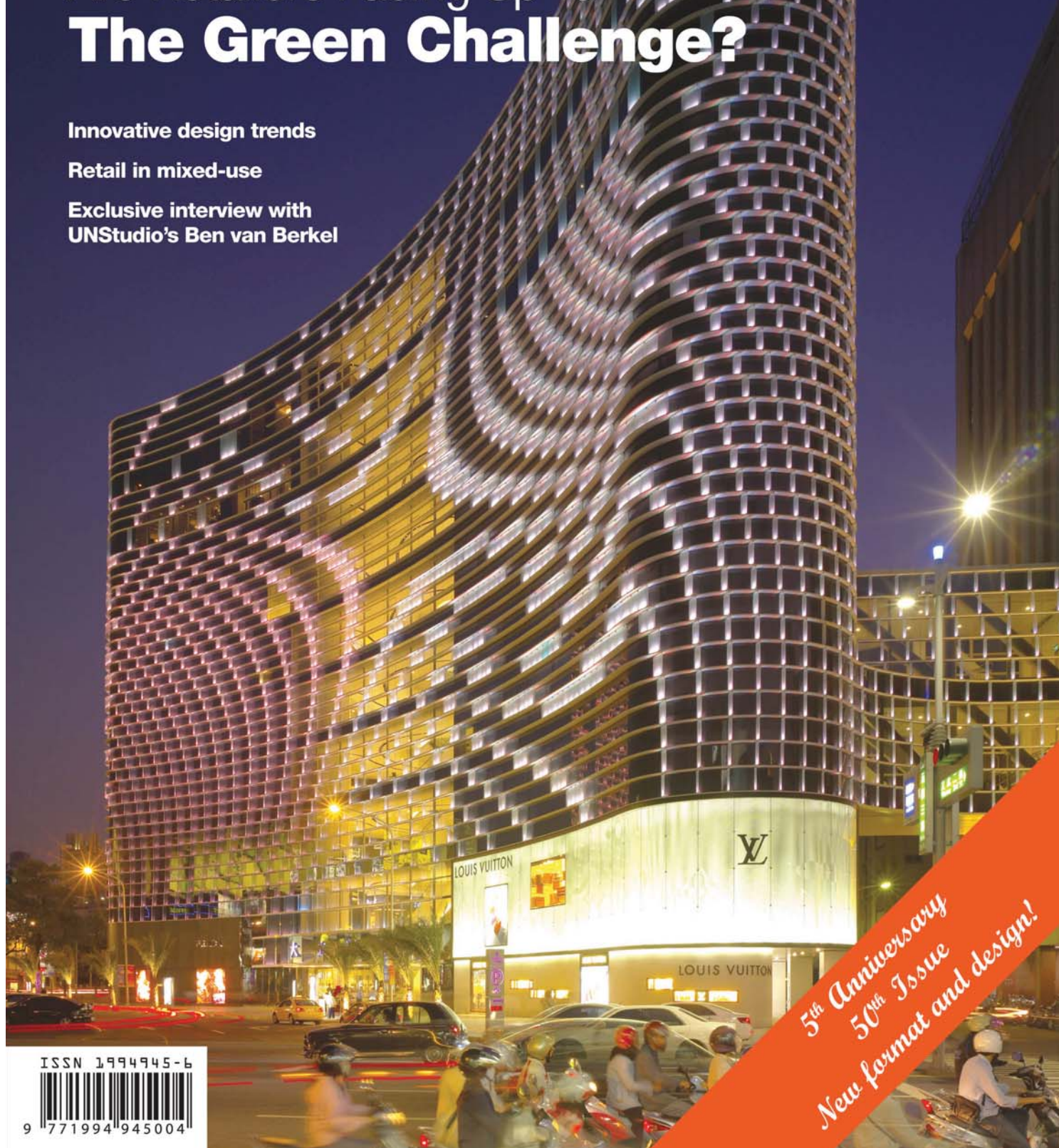
HK\$45 / SG\$10 / US\$6

Are Retailers Facing Up To **The Green Challenge?**

Innovative design trends

Retail in mixed-use

**Exclusive interview with
UNStudio's Ben van Berkel**



ISSN 1994945-6



9 771994 945004

*5th Anniversary
50th Issue
New format and design!*



Lead Features

18 Retail Hypocrisy

While retailers are rushing to promote environmentally friendly products, many accuse them of not putting green into practice in their own built environments. Claire Saeki wonders if retailers and developers can work together to go green.

22 Retail Design in Asia

Retail development is following two contrasting paths, as these cutting edge projects demonstrate. By Deborah Erwin.

26 A Use Apart

The golden age of mixed-use developments has arrived. Retail, as a programme element is increasingly relied upon for projects' overall real estate success, reports Deborah Erwin.

31 Exclusive Interview: Ben van Berkel

The principal behind trail-blazing design house UNStudio, shares some insight into what makes great design work.

Upfront

8 News

12 RFP Outstanding Individuals 2009: The shortlist

13 Institute news

14 Regional round-ups

15 A month in numbers

17 Product pages

People

32 Interview: Winy Mass

34 Interview: Wong Mun Sum

52 Events

53 Appointments

54 Business travel: New York

56 The last word: The death of the star architect

Projects, Architecture & Design

36 Markthal, Rotterdam

38 Alfred Dunhill, Shanghai

40 Frasier Suites, Hong Kong

41 Slowly, Hong Kong

Buildings & Facilities

42 Green pages

44 Workplace: Indoor air quality

46 FM Forum: Life-cycle costing

RE Intelligence

48 Awarded projects

48 On the move

50 Snapshots



Cover:

Star Place in Kaohsiung, Taiwan is a perfect example of the changing shape of retail development in Asia. Read about it on p20, or flip to our exclusive interview with its lead designer, Ben van Berkel, p29.



Retail Design in Asia

Retail development is following two contrasting paths, as these cutting edge projects demonstrate. By Deborah Erwin.

Compared with North America's mammoth retail landscape – boasting expansive tracts of strip malls and gigantic shopping centres – traditional commercial development in Asia has seemed somewhat stunted. However, in the last 10 years real estate and development opportunities, particularly in India and China, have mushroomed enabling growth at extreme velocities. Today the retail sector is accruing more and more land in the region.

While massive multi-level complexes crop up in population saturated districts, there are also low-profile annexes that support industry-specific businesses hidden away in urban pockets. These two development types, although disparate, coexist and set the bar for retail design. The former entertains the masses with glitzy, round-the-clock shopping, dining and leisure activities, while the latter caters to the artsy crowd interested in acquiring one-of-a-kind and specialised products.

Big design ideas

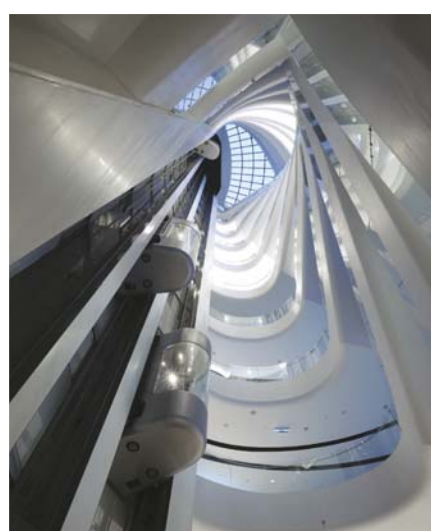
In design, the large-scale commercial properties materialise as recreation hubs, often donning garish, sensory-rich envelopes that imitate casino resorts. Their

interiors, consisting of wide corridors, glass balustrades, compact units and several means of circulation are often white, bright and heavily fenestrated. Small-scale retail annexes, however, are leased to creative entrepreneurs who prefer low-rise, open-planned and quiet studios away from busy interchanges. Therefore, such vendors often occupy converted factories and historical buildings. Most of these outlets resemble galleries and workshops and retain ceiling heights, floor laths and columns, in appreciation of the building's original flavour.

In North Asia's large-scale pipeline, three international architects are leading the way with iconic designs for new resplendent entertainment complexes. Star Place, a luxury shopping mall in Kaohsiung, was devised by UNStudio, headed by Ben van Berkel (interview p29); Riverstone in Incheon, Korea was conceived by Daniel Libeskind; and Kengo Kuma has taken on Sanlitun SOHO in Beijing, China. These projects, despite their sizes, are promoting themselves as social hubs rather than commercial enterprises. Their developers have encouraged flashy design, with the intention of transforming these complexes into urban attractions and landmarks.



Delay No Mall, is a new concept retail experience based on Hong Kong's G.O.D and their 'renegade retail' approach.



The vertical experience

Completed last November, Star Place is a prime example of this trend. UNStudio, charged with both the façade and interior design of the project, which encompasses circulation and public areas, created a vertical retail experience: a concave 10-storey edifice that comfortably fits two to seven retail units on each level. Designed as a sun and weather screen, the glazed frontage flaunts a matrix of horizontal lamellas and vertical fins. The building's skin is grafted with a four-pointed star a la mode optical art. Each of the star's corners are given kinetic properties, as if elastic and severely tugged from the centre. LEDs are inserted at the base of the laminated, low-iron glass fins and digitally choreographed so that at night, the entire block becomes a colourful retail beacon.

Internally, the firm sought to provide ease of circulation, clear sight lines of shop fronts, and ample natural light. Vertical mobility is afforded via an elevator and escalator spine. For architectural allure, the sets of escalators twist 10 degrees on each ascending floor. This void which flanks the façade wall also serves as a light well, facilitating the transfer of incoming light from both full-height windows on every level and the above skylight. F&B is housed on the top levels offering magnificent views of the activity below.

Mall as town hall

Developed with Gale International Korea, Riverstone is Daniel Libeskind's sculptural rendition of the shopping centre. Situated at the heart of Songdo City and slated for completion in 2013, this sprawling property will house a boutique mall, department store, hypermart, food court, ice rink and cinema on a 1.5 mil sqf site. The irregular shaped building is constructed of steel and aluminium, and features large crystalline punchouts on the sides and roof.

Inside, mall walkers are afforded clear, wide corridors with glass balustrades so that patrons can peer at shops above and below. Each level's voids are positioned askew to optimise sight lines throughout the project. It seems the development's tactic is to appear as a civic building and to serve as a town hall or community gathering space. This trend of downplaying the commercial aspects of retail centres and promoting their social functions instead is one that has become increasingly prevalent.

Retail as a connector

Beijing's Sanlitun SOHO is one of the seven properties initiated by SOHO China in the city. The developer has also

Top: Sanlitun SOHO, designed by Kenge Kuma & Associates.

Inset: Star Place in Kaoshiang, designed by UNStudio. Photo by Christian Richters.

Some developers are taking a more retro approach.

recently partnered up with Kempinski Hotels to branch out into hospitality, resulting in the establishment of Commune by the Great Wall (Beijing) and Boao Canal Village (Hainan Island). SOHO China delivered approximately 1.7 mil sqm of GFA in 2008 and is currently developing another 1.2 mil sqm of GFA. Totalling a whopping 470,000 sqm, the Sanlitun SOHO complex comprises nine office and apartment blocks, five shopping towers (10,000 sqm), a roller skating rink and an outdoor 'waterscaped' courtyard. Its high rises are configured as a 'village', taking a human approach to the metropolitan environment.

Outside, a paved corridor landscaped with scattered trees in planters and a man-made brook, is to provide public gathering space. In addition to greening the ground floor, Kengo Kuma also capped the podium blocks with gardens. This terrace bridges the five towers, provides public space and reduces the interiors' energy consumption. Inside, the shopping towers are endowed with atriums to invite daylight, while outside the exterior is clad with a mosaic of panels. Here is another example of a commercial complex striving for town-square status.

Small but sweet

In contrast to these huge futuristic creations, some developers and designers are taking a more retro (and environ-

mentally friendly) approach, restoring historical spaces for functional conversion. These boutiques and low-rise malls are often off the main drag and resemble galleries or small museums. Their capacious units are endowed with loft-like dimensions including high ceilings, expansive windows and solid wood flooring. To accentuate their airy plans, interiors are often coated in white or pale shades. Tenants of such spaces often operate specialised businesses, belonging to creative industries or to the high-end retail and design segments.

Goods of Desire (G.O.D)'s latest project is a prime example of this new approach to retail development being seen in Asia. The Delay No Mall (DNM) in Causeway Bay usurps a 30,000 sqf site which was a cinema in the 1950s before being demarcated into several shop units. G.O.D merged and transformed the lot to create a three storey complex with a basement. Although a bona fide mall with multiple tenants, DNM serves as a creative annex for like-minded apparel and lifestyle brands which cater to hip under-30s. Tenants occupying its fluid and dynamic space reflect this "renegade retailer" approach, with brands such as 24 Herbs, Eco Couture, L.A.M.B. (Gwen Stefani) and Tokyoflash Japan taking space in the mall.

Designed by Atelier Pacific as a faux restoration of a vintage movie house, the building's façade features a black and white billboard which is reiterated in the foyer. 'Now Showing' posters of retailers also decorate the exterior. Interior spaces are surfaced with vinyl, hard wood



Decorah needs to combine these pics

flooring and mirrors. The building's unconventional layout is designed sans corridors, instead encouraging shoppers to flow from room to room. To accentuate its edgy, non-conformist identity, the mall also dedicates a substantial proportion of its second floor to exhibition space for local and touring artists.

Refurbishing retail

Highstreet Loft, a congregation of old textile factories which sits on a larger site currently undergoing mass gentrification by Shangtex Group, broadcasts a similar message. The project converts the 12,780 sqm building into a fashion design hub. Its programme is equally meted into fashion design showrooms, design and advertising workshops and bar/restaurant and event spaces. Kokaistudios in Shanghai, helmed by Italian architects Filippo Gabbiani and Andrea Destefanis, was charged with the refurbishment.

Units are faced with full-height glass to brighten interiors and maximise transparency. Lobbies are also endowed with lofty ceilings that span the entire three levels for a less compartmentalised layout. Serving as the project's centrepiece, the designers chose to clad the entrance cube with laminated, back-painted glass panels. In addition to sheathing one of the buildings these squares are repeated for the ambulatory which skirts the structure. In keeping with the industrial roots of the development, a rust-coloured skin was also affixed to other external walls.

While the development as a whole deserves merit for being an architectural retrofit, it goes the extra mile by inserting a 4,000 sqm rooftop garden which offers environmental and social benefits. Similar in kind, 796 Huai Hai Rd is a group of heritage properties in Shanghai creatively restored to house high-end retail boutiques. The site totals 4,200 sqm, is anchored by a pair of historical villas and is managed and occupied by the owner, Richemont Group.

Rebuilding materials

In India, Mumbai's Seahorse Warehouse is another project that adapted an existing structure for contemporary retail space. Falling into disrepair after years of abandonment, this cluster of old cotton mills on Reay Road is now a building materials mall. The designers for this project, Planet 3 Studios, met the challenges of a restrictive budget and dilapidated buildings head on. All major structural elements – the roofs, walls and floors – were in dire need of attention.

Since this project was intended as a restoration, details such as cast iron columns and wood trusses were carefully preserved, while the buildings' mainstays were reinforced for safety. Steel columns planted throughout supply task lighting, electricity and mechanical ventilation. Interiors are kept open and sterile, flaunting lofty ceilings. Such successful refurbishments in retail demonstrate that adaptive reuse is both a feasible and aesthetically attractive alternative to large-scale new builds. [RFP](#)

From left to right: Highstreet Loft in Shanghai (Image courtesy of Charles Xia), Riverstone in Seoul (Image courtesy of Archimation) and Seahorse Warehouse in Mumbai.

