GENSLER / LOS ANGELES, CA

CORNELL TECH / NEW YORK, NY

CULTURAL VILLAGE / PORTLAND, OR

MASDAR UNIVERSITY / MASDAR CITY, ABU DABHI

HUDSON YARDS / NEW YORK, NY
Gensler is the largest architectural and design firm in the world, having 5,000 employees in 47 hubs in 114 different countries, and Gensler’s Los Angeles office is the largest of these with around 500 employees. Because of their size, some may think it would be difficult to execute projects that are architecturally related to its context on a cultural manner, however Gensler hires mostly local people in order to personally be engaged with their community, and takes pride in its internal communication, and relationship with the city it is established in. The Gensler Los Angeles office’s designers had a strong commitment to Downtown Los Angeles, and had created an increased level of civil awareness to help them realize the impact they can have on the urban environment. This interest of them had created many community-led research projects that utilize design to solve urban challenges right in their neighborhood, these include the Pershing Square Town Square initiative, homeless shelters, and major urban planning projects.

In the need for and expansion to the Los Angeles office, last year Gensler introduced the very first vertical urban creative campus in the downtown area. Because they wanted to respect the human scale to the office context, Gensler build their vertical campus addition in the adjacent tower, by connecting the two with a pedestrian bridge. Gensler’s new workplace serves as a creative laboratory for architects, designers, planners and the community by being connected directly with the City National Plaza in their back street entrance. The campus features flexible workspaces, a model shop, an outdoor meeting patio, a family room with a bar for coffee and food, and a special events space. The flexibility of these spaces allows room for interaction of ideas to happen, by either being specially designed for it (fixed) or allowing the designer to utilize the space however they desire (flexible). The design then inspires innovation and maximizes creativity.
Gensler vertical campus is located in the Financial District at the heart of Los Angeles. Gensler’s designers were deeply influenced by their community, specifically by its building courtyard typology. The benefits of utilizing this typology for an office type building is that it allows for natural daylight, as programs are centrally arranged based on diurnal use. This typology also allows for circulation to be interactive, since the courtyard acts as the main circulation space, this intentionally acts as an interactive area within the users. Most importantly this typology allows for a central heart, acting as a connection zone that run both existing (Main office) and the new space (the new vertical campus at the tower). Along the courtyard the designers have chosen to emphasize the importance of craft and exploration by creating a new model shop and gallery in the main office, with a variety of large conference rooms, smaller meeting cabins and nooks, and flexible team review areas. Thus, the campus, comprised of a three-level courtyard building connected via a custom-designed bridge to an adjacent tower, is deeply committed to the vibrancy of their community and incites creativity and innovation from within. The identity of Gensler’s Los Angeles office then, is derived from their community typology, and intentionally includes them as part of their design.
DRIVING FORCE AND IDENTITY

typical urban courtyard typology

Jewel Box [primary courtyard] at Main Building

gensler’s courtyard typology

Family Room [second courtyard] - at addition in Tower
Gensler was very aware of human scale as they designed their office between two 60 story towers and decided to stay at 3 floors maximum allowing for a close relationship between their community and the building.

Gensler’s transparency through their facades allows for a community connection between the main street on 5th street and City National Plaza on 6th Street.
Genlser is composed of different studios, and administrations. In a typical floor plan one would be able to find the Human resources department’s desk next to the Aviation’s studio desk. The openness, and transparency and mixology of their floor plan lay out allows for an increase in human interaction.
the flexibility of the Jewel Box is composed by an open space design. The transparency of the space allows for natural daylighting. In this space there are also flexible walls that open the room allowing for a maximum people capacity.

the Family Room. Meetings here happen 4 days a week. This flexible screen allows for presentations and the flexible seating around completes a multi-pupose room.

stairs leading to Jewel Box, a flexible space for meetings or work areas. The stairs and seating are incorporated in the design as one.

Second 1/2 Floor at Tower

Flexible work stations

flexible outdoor work hub

Third Floor at Main Building

flexible library

fixed work hub

fixed model shop

fixed meeting room

flexible work hub

fixed model shop
The campus’s planning was based upon 5 Principles.
1. River to River. – the campus must be open and permeable to allow access to both sides of the river. Classrooms would face out toward the city to connect to the community.
2. Center Pedestrians – People move across the campus through a central spine that connects them with other students or professionals at multiple intersections.
3. Synergy between the outside and interior – public access is permitted on the ground floor of both buildings. These areas house cafes, event spaces, and retail spaces. Intimate outdoor spaces were built adjacent to these areas.
4. Microcosm of the City – The campus must represent the city by housing the same amenities found in Manhattan such as apartments, restaurants, hotels, event spaces, teaching spaces, work places, and research buildings.
5. Sustainability – The wellbeing of the students, staff and the environment must a priority.
The density of New York is counteracted at Cornell Tech by the campus’s large open space. Being surrounded by water gives the user a unique experience while still connecting them to city through views of the skyline. The urban grid is also shifted at an angle to allow for diagonal circulation.
Phase 1 holds the Bloomberg Center, the House, and the Tata Innovation Center. All buildings are at a higher elevation than the main circulation path in order to respond to 100 year and 500 year flood. Phase 2 will hold future campus buildings and a hotel at the southern lot. All private buildings such as housing, will be towers while the educational buildings will promote collaboration and interconnectivity through lateral circulation.
Campus on Display

Former mayor Michael Bloomberg envisioned Cornell Tech as a campus that will push New York’s tech sector to make the city less dependent on Wall Street and the financial-services industry. Companies and innovations from Cornell would compete against those from Silicon Valley to Seoul.
The Cultural Village, designed by architect Kengo Kuma & Associates, is a cultural crossing expansion project which opened in 2017. The expansion has been designed to welcome visitors to the existing Portland Japanese Gardens, which were designed in the late 50’s by Professor Takuma Tono, of Tokyo Agricultural University. Kuma’s philosophy upon designing the village was “The study of place is essential to integrating a project with its surroundings.” His vision was a cultural village that allows further teachings of Japanese arts & culture. The Portland Japanese Garden was the ideal site because it provided a traditional Japanese experience for all visitors. The site is located in an isolated location and surrounded by nature. Nature is sacred in Japanese culture because it represents man's detachment from the struggles of the world. In addition, the design of the village was to imitate the Monzen-machi, better known as the “Gate-Front Town,” which represent gateways to a sacred land. The “Gate-Front Towns” were also seen as the transition from city to tranquility. These gateway towns were also designed to cater travelers by providing restaurants, rest stops, and local product. Instead of 1 overpowering structure, Kengo Kuma’s design featured 3 low-scaled buildings which will balance the harmony with the gardens. He named this approach “Quiet Architecture,” because the structures will blend with it’s surroundings; showing sensitivity to nature.
The existing site of The Portland Japanese Garden was the ideal setting for Kengo Kuma’s vision of The Cultural Village: An isolated location surrounded by nature. In Japanese culture, nature is sacred because it represents man’s detachment from the struggles of the world.
Kengo Kuma wanted his design to feature a human-scaled experience. His intention was to highlight geographical elements from Japan and East Asia: the history of man traveling through the unknown terrain is represented in a meandering path, mountains as hills, and the village surrounded by trees and all that is sacred in nature.

A “Quiet Architecture” was what influenced Kuma to design his structures low to human scale. He desired his architecture to blend in with its surroundings; showing sensitivity to nature. The structures are designed to be horizontal planes because the trees should be the only thing that is on a vertical plane, overpowering the site.
**FIXED VS. FLEXIBLE**

- **Fixed Program**
  - Offices
  - Staff Room
  - Library
  - Roof Terrace
- **Flexible Program**
  - Gallery
  - Workshops
  - Garage
  - Display Area
  - Multipurpose Classroom

**IDENTITY**

*Traditional Elements: Monzen Machi “Gate-Front Towns” : Gateway to Sacred Space*
Masdar institute of science and technology is the first part of the wider Masdar city master plan. The university campus represents the main goal of Masdar city, to become a prototype of sustainability and innovation. The drastic climate conditions of the site location determined most of the design decisions, such as buildings orientation and materiality. The separation from residential buildings to learning facilities is approximately 20 to 90 creating a walkable campus suitable for user’s interaction. The courtyards formed in between buildings are main points of congregation for the users who can disperse to other parts of campus by the many shaded pedestrian passageways. Cooling air currents are directed through the public spaces using a contemporary interpretation of the region’s traditional wind towers. The learning facilities and residential accommodation are supported by various social spaces including a gymnasium, canteen, café, knowledge center, majlis – or meeting place. The laboratories have flexible open floor plans that can be arranged differently to promote interdisciplinary research and facilitate cross ventilation. Horizontal and vertical fins shade the laboratories. The laboratory facades are formed from highly insulative inflatable ETFE cushions, which remain cool to the direct sunlight. One, two and three-bedroom apartments are housed in low-rise, high-density blocks. Windows and balconies in the residential buildings are protected by a contemporary reinterpretation of mashrabiya, a type of latticed projecting bay window, constructed with glass-reinforced concrete and colored with local sand to integrate with its desert context and to minimize maintenance. The perforations for light and shade are based on the patterns found in the traditional architecture of Islam.
Climate determined the orientation of the buildings and the majority of the design decisions.

Masdar Institute of Science and Technology is the first part of the wider Masdar city Master plan.
**PERSONAL CONNECTIVITY**

**Program Organization**
- Dorms
- Labs
- 20’ - 90’ Courtyards

**Program Distribution**
- **Learning Facilities**
  - Laboratories
  - Libraries
  - Offices
- **Residential Buildings**
  - Dorms
  - Restaurants
  - Retail Services
- **Courtyards**
  - Circulation Patterns
- **Masdar University Property**

**Ground Level**
The ground floor steps back under colonnades to help accelerate the movement of air and offer efficient and shaded pedestrian passageways.
**FIXED VS. FLEXIBLE**

Shift from individual to collective activities = increase efficiency and tolerance to comfort conditions.

**IDENTITY**

**Vernacular Features**

- Islamic pattern
- Mashrabiya Screen
- Traditional Wind Tower

**Reinterpretation of the region’s traditional Architecture**

- Facade Pattern
- Balconies screen
- Wind Tower at Masdar University
HUDSON YARDS IS THE LARGEST SINGLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES. THOUGH MANY OF THE BUILDINGS WERE DESIGNED BY HIGH PROFILE ARCHITECTS SUCH AS: DILLER SCOFIDIO + RENFRO, KOHN PEDERSON FOX, SOM, AND NORMAN FOSTER, ONE OF THE MAJOR ASPECTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT IS DESIGN OF THE OUTDOOR PUBLIC SQUARE. ITS LOCATION WILL ALLOW IT TO BECOME AN INCREDIBLY POPULATED PUBLIC BEACON; AND ITS DESIGN WILL ALLOW THE MIXTURE OF VARIOUS PROGRAMS AND OCCUPANTS. THE LANDSCAPE DESIGN FIRM, NELSON BYRD WOLTZ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, DESIGNED THE SPACE FOR OPTIMAL FLEXIBILITY AND AS A TIE BETWEEN BUILDINGS. “...USES THE LANDSCAPE TO WEAVE DISTINCT DESIGN VOICES INTO A SINGLE, UNIFYING SPACE.” THE SPACE WILL NOT ONY BE A PLACE FOR TENANTS TO ENJOY AND SPEND TIME, BUT WILL ALSO INVITE THE PUBLIC TO OCCUPY THE PLAZA. THIS LARGE OPEN SPACE FULL OF GARDENS AND GATHERING AREAS WILL HELP THE ENTIRE DEVELOPMENT BECOME A NEW CITY CENTER.
The form driver for this project seems to be the desire to create a sort of new economy hub (in other words, a big money machine). Surrounding the perimeter of the land by skyscrapers, designed by world know architects, attempting to pull people into this new city center, which seems to be what drove the projects form. This project becomes for of its own urban development.
There seems to be an obvious identity through a perimeter if famously designed architecture. Within this gallery of buildings, there is a large green plaza space. The entrances to the plaza become significant as they are the break of the band of buildings.
In diagramming predicted pedestrian circulation (upper), and looking at the landscape architects design intent (right), the idea was to connect people through this central place; where strangers would see each other often enough and no longer be strangers. In addition, the points of entry become exaggerated at the human scale, giving the feeling of walking into a grand space. Walk ways, gardens and gathering areas connect people of all occupations and backgrounds on this plaza.

**FIXED VS. FLEXIBLE**

The layout of this space is spread out through a single ground floor, which allows for optimal human interaction. But, it also optimizes the use of the open areas. Even though there seems to be a barrier of skyscrapers, the large open plaza still occupies the majority of the site. The flexibility of the open spaces allows for regular everyday transit, but also allows for man different types of events, large and small.
COMMUNITY AWARENESS

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Genlser vertical campus is located in the Financial District at the heart of Los Angeles. Genlser’s designers were deeply influenced by their community, specifically by its building courtyard typology, and they heavily incorporated that typology in their design. While incorporating this, Genlser designers were aware of human scale and their surrounding context.

Genlser’s transparency through their facades allows for a community connection between the main street on 5th Street and City National Plaza on 6th Street. By being heavily engaged in their community, Genlser is able to develop a community of its own, and they create this by having flexible programs around their two main central courtyards in which forced activity and unplanned creativity happen.

Genlser’s internal community is also sometimes taken in action in the facilities of their external Plaza by having community events happening in the neighboring City National Plaza that strengthens this dual relationship.
INNER COMMUNITY - The Cornell Tech campus is small and allows interactions between occupants, including staff, residents/students, and workers. The design features a large community room that allows the mixture of all occupants.

OUTER COMMUNITY - The site uses a grid that allows visual penetration from the shore lines on both sides of the site, connecting it to the larger project. In addition, the site floods into the buildings, creating a large public gathering area.
The Cultural Village at the Portland Japanese Gardens is a project that depends on its context to be defined. Because of this, an inner and outer community is created. The nature surrounding the site creates a contextual detachment from the city of Portland that creates an inner community where Japanese arts and culture is communicated to all visitors thru a flexible program. Although the project site may seem as though it is isolated from the city, it still requires that juxtaposition of nature and city which relates back to the project being influenced by Japanese culture; one travels through a journey into a sacred land is communicated in the project through the transition of city into nature.
Inner Community:
The arrangement of the program and the proximity of buildings promotes a strong sense of community. The separation from residential buildings to learning facilities is approximately 20 to 90 feet, creating a walkable campus suitable for user’s interaction. The courtyards formed in between buildings are main points of congregation for the users who can disperse to other parts of campus by the many shaded pedestrian passageways.

Outer Community:
Masdar institute of science and technology is the first part of the wider Masdar city master plan. Even though there are only few projects completed, is it expected to populate the city in following years. The university campus represents the main goal of Masdar city, to become a prototype of sustainability and innovation that will be implemented in future projects. The drastic climate conditions the site location determined the project’s materiality which makes the university campus engage with the site, the users and the culture.

OUTER COMMUNITY - THOUGH THE PROJECT’S SEEMS TO CREATE A HUGE BARRIER BETWEEN THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS BY BUILDING A PROPERTY LINE OF SKYSCRAPERS, IT ALLOWS FOR NUMEROUS GRAND ENTRIES. THE TRANSITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMUNITY INTO THE SITE COME THROUGH BREAKS IN A WALL OF BUILDINGS, THESE BREAKS ALLOW THE PUBLIC TO FILTER INTO THIS GRAND PLAZA THROUGH ALMOST OVERWHELMING POINTS OF ENTRY.
The Cultural Village at the Portland Japanese Gardens is a project that depends on its context to be defined. Because of this, an inner and outer community is created. The nature surrounding the site creates a contextual detachment from the city of Portland that creates an inner community where Japanese arts and culture is communicated to all visitors thru a flexible program. Although the project site may seem as though it is isolated from the city, it still requires that juxtaposition of nature and city which relates back to the project being influenced by Japanese culture; one travels through a journey into a sacred land is communicated in the project through the transition of city into nature.