



AGORA THEATRE Lelystad, the Netherlands

Sculptural Ceiling Merges Arts and Architecture

CHALLENGE: At the new Agora Theatre in Lelystad, the Netherlands, architecture is the opening act for a stunning facility that integrates theatrical arts and sculptural form. The dynamic multifaceted building envelope has sharp planes and jutting angles covered in metal panels and glass, creating a kaleidoscope effect. Inside, a grand spiral staircase and soaring foyer illuminated by skylights

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and high-intensity lighting cut through the center of the building to guide visitors to auditoriums and meet-

ing halls on different floors. All views lead to the ceiling, which required the aesthetic presence to command center stage while accommodating the building's challenging acoustical requirements.

CRITERIA: "At Agora, theatrical drama and performance are not restricted to the stage and to the evening. The



The deep-box linear ceiling panels and white walls contrast with the foyer's kinetic forms and crimson pink color scheme.

party should start in the foyer," says architect and specifier Ben van Berkel of Amsterdam-based UNStudio. The design team's intent was to integrate the dramatic arts and new media with architecture by intertwining the interior performance hall with the sculptural exterior form.

INFLUENCES: Commissioned by the town of Lelystad, the 7,000-sq.-meter Agora Theatre opened in late 2006 and was one of the main projects undertaken by the city to revitalize its cultural presence. Among the cluster of cultural and social spaces housed in the facility are two interconnected performance halls, a multifunctional space, a restaurant and bar for theatergoers, dressing rooms and rehearsal halls. The off-kilter façade is clad in vividly colored metal panels in an overlapping array of orange, yellow and red shades that evoke the sky above Lelystad at sunset. The color intensity continues indoors, with the use of red, violet and crimson pink.

SOLUTION: Van Berkel selected Luxalon metal ceilings by Hunter Douglas as much for their linear and sculptural qualities as for the clean detailing and acoustical performance. The Luxalon deep-box linear ceiling panels and white walls contrast dramatically with the foyer's kinetic forms and crimson pink color scheme. Van Berkel, who has said that architecture can "at least partly be understood as an endless live performance," draws audience attention to the ceiling with a pink handrail that winds a ribbon of color around the open foyer and spirals up the main staircase in a dramatic crescendo. Surrounding the colorful spiral of the stairs are serene, quiet corridors with metal ceilings. To help meet the acoustical control and fire-safety requirements of this event-filled theatrical venue, the ceiling panels offer a noise reduction coefficient of 0.70 or greater, and meet ASTM E-84 Class A flame-spread standards. Visit www.hunterdouglascontract.com or Circle 334.





Furniture Adds Sophistication to Office Environment

CHALLENGE: Skanska, a large general contractor, wanted its new Pacific Northwest headquarters to reflect its heritage as a construction firm, yet evoke a sophisticated and elegant environment to attract a new generation of clients.

CRITERIA: The new space called for 90 workstations and conference areas that offered a sleek, integrated look throughout all of the spaces.

INFLUENCES: Skanska was relocating with the architecture and design firm that was retained to design the office space. It was important to the client, Skanska, and design firm, NBBJ—who planned to be tenants in the new facility—that a wide variety of design options be available to

allow each company to express its own unique brand while providing an integrated look between the two.

SOLUTION: Skanska places a high value on collaboration, and the headquarter's design focused on this goal. The office furniture within the space had to reinforce the idea of team work. Align products from Allsteel fit the bill for both companies. Using a color palette of tan and stone tones, Align offered myriad material and color choices for the designer—from fibers to metals to wood veneers. Additionally, the sleek lines and versatility of the materials used in the project combined to create the cohesive environment. Relying on NBBJ's design expertise, Skanska combined Align panels and desking to create an open work

environment that not only complements the space by delivering coherent structure throughout, but also fosters essential teamwork and collaboration among employees. Visit www.allsteeloffice.com or Circle 333.

Office furniture from Allsteel's Align products reflects the company's heritage as a construction firm while adding elegance and sophistication to the mix.



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Sensó seating by Figueras Intl., helped architect Ricardo Bofill create an elegant, but minimalist environment.

Acoustic Seating's Theatrical Debut



CHALLENGE: Provide seating for 2,000-show-goers at an auditorium to be used for musical and theatrical performances.

CRITERIA: The Miguel Delibes Cultural Centre performing arts center in Valladolid, Spain, created a unified backdrop in which the colors and textures meld together to form an unbroken plane. According to the architect, Ricardo Bofill, "it's a new model: theatre, dance and music come together in one place—and teachers, students and audiences mix in the spaces that have been created."

INFLUENCES: Bofill wanted to incorporate, "an object in harmony with the building, with a design that is functional, comfortable and minimalist."

SOLUTION: Sensó seating by Figueras Intl. Seating was designed especially for this project. The seating is fully upholstered in natural leather without wooden components. Apart from its elegant design, the seating features excellent acoustic properties. Specifically, with the aid of a built-in resonator, the chair's acoustic behavior is identical whether or not the chair is occupied. The chair's acoustical characteristics were designed based on a range of tests to achieve the best possible acoustic qualities. Visit www.figueras.com or Circle 332.