



Sky dining at the Olympics

Where's the best view of London this summer? The London Eye wheel? New Shard building? Not necessarily. It could be the vista over the Olympic Stadium from a restaurant in the sky.

Perched on the roof of a construction site overlooking the 2012 Olympic Park, Studio East Dining is London's most exclusive rooftop dining experience. The 800 square-metre temporary restaurant gives diners stunning views of London landmarks, from Crystal Palace and Canary Wharf to the Gherkin and the City.

More than 47 metres high, it has a commanding presence on London's skyline and also provides the first views over London's Olympic Stadium and Zaha Hadid's 2012 Aquatics Centre.

The 70-ton structure designed by London architectures Carmody Groarke is built from 2,000 scaffolding boards, 3,500 scaffolding poles and reclaimed timber from the construction site, covered in recyclable plastic sheeting. The restaurant's design playfully and cleverly intensifies the spectacular setting with a series of dramatically framed views. The cladding material which encases the roof is a semi-trans-

lucent membrane, using industrial grade heat-retractable PVC which is 100% recyclable. As with the other materials, the PVC will be recycled without any waste when the "pop-up" restaurant closes.

By night, the whole structure glows, throwing out shadows and silhouettes of the action inside. A compelling jewel on London's sunset skyline! Tempted? ...Unfortunately, bookings are already closed.

Project: Studio East Dining

Architects: Carmody Groarke, UK

Location: London, UK

Technical info: PVC

Picture credits: Courtesy Luke Hayes, Egi News, Carmody Groarke





Science of sound

Why noise-absorbing PVC is used in Europe's newest opera house.

More than a million people passed through the magnificent lobby of the new Oslo Opera House in the year after its opening in 2008. Up to 32 metres tall and with 15-metre windows looking out onto the water, the huge foyer greets visitors with a calming stillness, thanks in part to more than 4,000 square metres of sound-absorbing PVC sheets. The low noise level provides a comfortable, relaxing environment next to the auditoriums, in a space featuring oak and simple materials with minimum detail.

The roof of the Operahuset angles down to the ground in a dramatic expression, creating a large plaza which invites pedestrians to enjoy panoramic views of Oslo. Much of the building is covered in white granite and Italian marble, making it appear to rise up out of the water.

Unsurprisingly, the Oslo Opera House won the Culture Award at the World Architecture Festival in 2008, as well as the Mies van der Rohe award (EU prize for contemporary architecture) the following year.

Project: Oslo Opera House, Norway

Architects: Tarald Lundevall for Snøhetta, Norway

Technical info: PVC Roofing & Wallcovering

Picture credits: Courtesy Carlos Bryant, Celesteh, Claumoho, Moliteau





Artificial and natural, at the same time

A new structure snaking through Liege in Belgium attracts 5 million visitors a year and is revitalizing the city centre.

Once the world's foremost centre of steel production, Liege in eastern Belgium has been in economic decline for some time. Now the audacious downtown Médiacité development – grouping shops, leisure, culture, media and economic activities – is helping to turn things around. The 350m-long complex weaves through the fabric of the refurbished old market centre at one end, through a two-storey building, and connects to the new Belgian national television centre at the other end.

The design of the free-spanning roof unites these elements with a complex network of steel roof ribs and PVC covers that undulate through the mall. The lattice of steel sculpts the volume of the mall beneath it in varying heights, forming a variety of different spaces and experiences. These steel ribs overhead, mirrored in the floor pattern, draw a sinuous pathway – pulling you towards and through each of the zones, revealing diverse and surprising vistas on the way. The special PVC ceiling revitalizes the movements of this path along its entire length and dresses the centre section with dynamic rhombus shapes.

But Médiacité is more than a daring architectural statement; it is also a triumph in sustainable construction. It is the first BREEAM-certified* building in Belgium and the first shopping and leisure centre in Europe to receive the “Very Good” rating in the new BREEAM Retail 2008 protocol, specifically developed to assess the environmental impact of commercial projects.

Project: Médiacité shopping & leisure centre

Location: Liege, Belgium

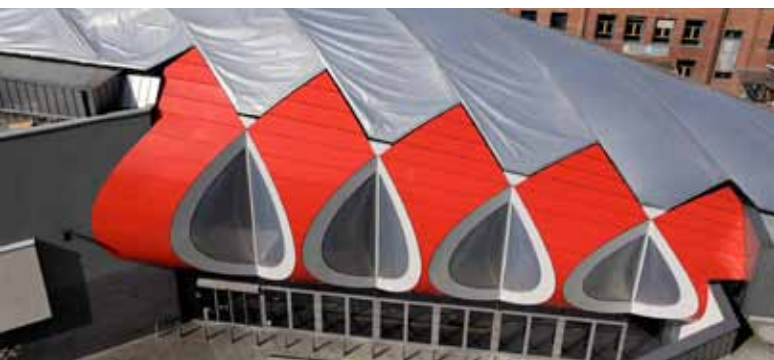
Architects: Ron Arad Architects, UK

Technical ref: PVC Barrisol ceiling

Picture credits: Marc Detiffe

Atom Berg

*BREEAM: the world's leading design and assessment method for non-domestic sustainable buildings.



“Rogue in my pool”

The ordinary presented in an extraordinary way.

American artist Lynn Aldrich focuses her art on the representation of ideas, especially about contemporary life, reality and humanity. In her conceptual approach she makes use of objects and materials from everyday life, such as PVC, rubber and metal, which become metaphors for the ideas she seeks to express.

“What I am thinking about is complex or paradoxical, but when it comes to putting this into form through images or materials, I am naturally attracted to simplicity” explains Lynn, who lives and works in Los Angeles. “I am interested in the accumulation, repetition and presentation of ordinary objects, materials and images.”

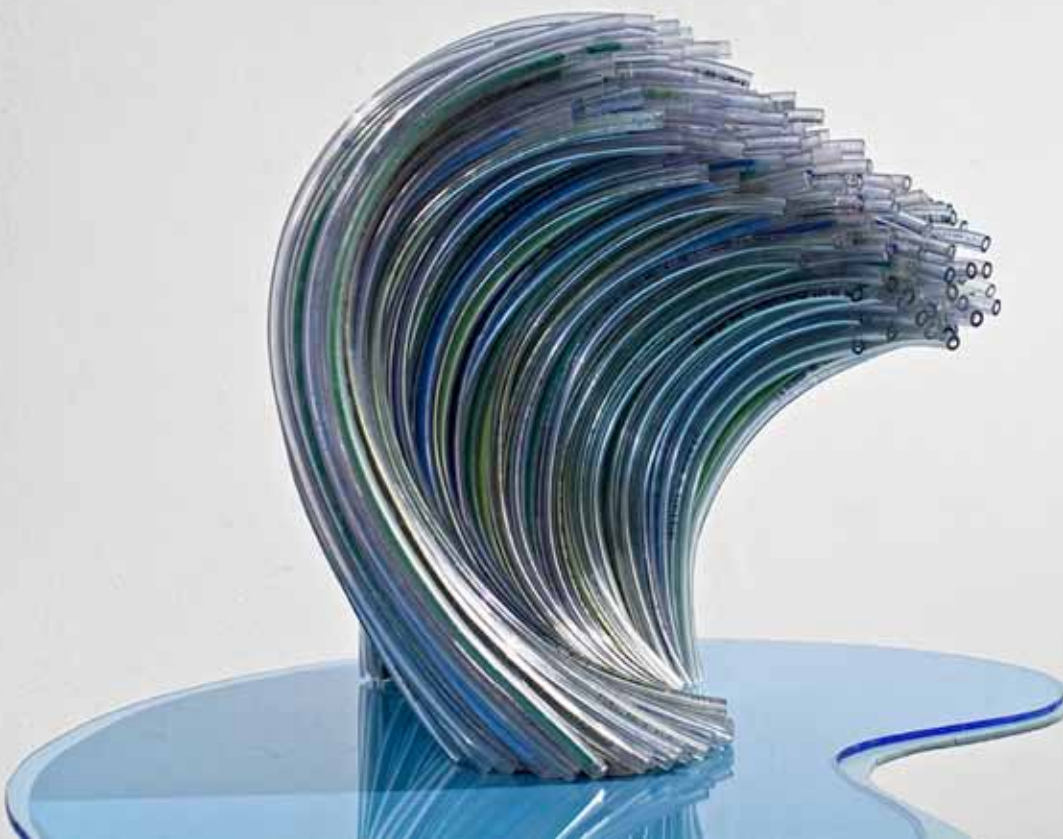
Lynn Aldrich’s work has immediate appeal. Her colourful collections of PVC and rubber tubes play a cartoon note against the seriously innovative designs that they inhabit. Familiar elements are treated in unexpected ways, and the titling of the work gives room for its maker’s deft sense of wordplay.

Title: Death and Life of an Object

Artist: Lynn Aldrich, USA

Technical info: PVC cables

Picture credits: Courtesy Lynn Aldrich





Speedy PVC

Amazing PVC sculptures from the Korean artist Kang Duck-Bong give an awesome aspect of movement.

Called Disguise, the sculptures exhibited in the 4walls gallery in Seoul in December 2011 feature PVC pipes glued together and coated with urethane paint. The work gives a dynamic sense of motion, harnessing multiple colours to create a unique, dynamic blur effect.

Looking closer, the figures in Kang's sculptures are an exploration of human relationships and communication. According to Kang – a graduate of the sculpture faculty of Seoul University – holes ignite curiosity in people because, regardless of age or gender, one always wonders what is on the other side of them. Kang believes that we should be just as curious about what is on another person's mind. In his opinion, the rise of social networks has reduced the amount of concrete personal conversation.

The holes also represent the void within ourselves that we helplessly try to fill. As he explains, "When we care too much about how we are seen through other people's eyes, rather than focusing on who we really are, we start to feel a sense of self-betrayal. The existential void may lead us to cry out, with the weight of depression caused by this in-authenticity."

Title: Disguise

Artist: Kang Duck-Bong, Korea

Location: 4walls gallery, Seoul

Technical info: PVC pipes

Picture credits: Courtesy Gallery 4Walls

