

ish

LIFESTYLE NEWS



CINEMATIC DREAMSCAPES: UA CINEMA (TUEN MUN)

TEXT BY TAN UJ JEN IMAGE COURTESY OF ASIACITY ARCHITECTS

After hotels came designer hotels, so it was a matter of time, really, before the idea of designer cinemas took root and where else in this part of the world than in Hong Kong – touted by some as Asia's Hollywood. Conceived around the theme of fairy tales and dreamscapes, Hong Kong's first designer movie theatre was unveiled recently by UA Cinema in Tuen Mun in the New Territories. It was designed by renowned architect Alexander Wong for whom cinema is "a world of imagination, fantasies, dreams and super-realities".

Lamenting "the increasingly one-dimensional style of contemporary cinemas", Wong sought to introduce the element of post-structuralism to his design by creating multiple layers of meaning within the entertainment space. At UA Tuen Mun, movie-goers are invited to gaze into a giant metallic eye-ball for a glimpse of the latest movie trailers before stepping through the main entrance – an abstract Rabbit Hole structure inspired by a perennial fairytale favourite, *Alice in Wonderland*.

Inside the main lobby and box office area, a fluid expanse of space is created by a series of free-flowing vertical and horizontal timber strips cascading across the floor, ceiling, ticket counters and columns. The snack counter, named the Liquid Bar, is a curvilinear dreamscape painted ocean blue, with giant neon-lit UA logos on the wall.

And then there are the individual screening theatres. Each theatre has a different theme, but the general layout does not deviate much from that of the usual movie theatres. The *Inferno*, where the walls and seats are a fiery shade of red, brings to mind Dante's epic poem *Divine Comedy*. The *Magic Forest* is decked out in earthy brown tones, and the abstract diagonal strips on the wall panels are supposed to be an allusion to tree patterns. The inside of *The Cave* is covered in shades of beige, caramel, and hints of grey, while the theatre of *Golden Dreams* uses colours as counterpoints, where ultramarine violet seats are offset by large yellow-gold discs on the walls.

Expressing his confidence in the cinema, Wong asserts, "people always love the latest excitement, iconic symbols, colourful stimuli, and even bolder re-interpretations of their realities [...] cinema is all about imagination." If what he says is anything to go by, it might not be long before designer cinemas make their way here.

UA Tuen Mun is located at 3/F, Tuen Mun Town Plaza, Tuen Mun, New Territories, Hong Kong. Tel: (852) 3516 8811. For more information, visit www.uacinemas.com.hk

