

Futuristic screening



A CINEMA IN ZHONGSHAN, CHINA RECENTLY OPENED WITH AN IMPRESSIVE DESIGN CONSISTING OF A SCI-FI INSPIRED INTERIOR

When Mayflower Cinema City wanted to redesign their brand, they knew to go to Alexander Wong Architects, one of China's leading architecture and design firms that has a taste for futuristic aesthetics.

1 View of The Plaza Futura.

2 Columns inspired by human DNA border the entrance.

"Mayflower Cinema City is owned by Lai Sun Group," explains Alexander Wong, founder and director of Alexander Wong Architects. "And Lai Sun Group is helmed by Mr. Peter Lam Kin Ngok, who is also a well-known film producer. His company is called Media Asia Group and

he has invested in films like Cloud Atlas starring Tom Hanks."

The company's strong connection and tie to the cinema world led them to create one of the world's most awe-inducing film centres, located at the top of the Palm Spring Garden Commercial Centre in the western district of Zhongshan.

The project had a budget of \$3.5m with Mayflower Cinema City hoping to launch a new cinema and re-establish the company as a forward thinking agency. The cinema, known as Cinema Futura, was based on futurism and

inspired by classic sci-fi films like Ridley Scott's 'Alien', James Cameron's 'Avatar', and Disney's 'Tron'.

In an attempt to create the first sci-fi cinema in Zhongshan, China, the 3,240m² project consists of a sleek interior that is out of this world and pioneering a trend toward futurism in design.

The interior of the new cinema contains a complex composition of organic design elements that when combined create new and original forms.

As Wong says: "I would say our approach to Cinema Futura is unique and



quite uncommon. However, going to the cinema is a fantasy experience so one has to create an environment that is truly special and exciting."

Upon entering the cinema, one is immediately transferred to a different time and place marked by bold colours and dynamic lighting. The Plaza Futura welcomes visitors with a surreal atmosphere. The organic ceiling receives support from double layered spiralling columns, known as Chromosome Columns, that display an outer skin inspired by human DNA.

Giving the Plaza Futura an additional level of design are the leaf-shaped patterns that line the floor and match up the metallic pendant lights that float directly above on the ceiling.

The Plaza Futura opens guests up to the box office and concession area, where common materials include white Formica stone, black laminated glass, grey quartz stone and lacquer paint applied in champagne gold, silver, white and black.

Alexander Wong Architects note that the Pandora Box Office and Bar Pandora aid in the transportation of guests into a fantasy world.

The cinema maintains one three-dimensional screen, three additional screens and one VIP house. Guiding cinema goers from the concession stands to their appropriate screenings is the Tron Tunnel, which sees the usage of materials like quartz stone in grey and white, and lacquer paint in white, grey, dark grey, champagne gold and black.

The Tron Tunnel is a fluid space that sees organic shapes moving forward. Creating another dimension for the space is the cyber-blue lighting that further guides cinema goers to the separate film rooms known as 'Blue Whale', 'Red Earth', 'Green Amazon' and 'Purple Rain.'

Along the path is a sunlit 'Solar Gallery' which connects through a grand staircase to a double-height space, where a bridge-like structure known as 'Chromosome X-over' is positioned. The staircase maintains glass siding allowing it to merge completely with its surroundings. Here, a radical transition occurs, as a giant half-X is reflected

3 The Tron Tunnel.



through the mirror wall and creates a visual x-chromosome that leads visitors to the 374-seated three-dimensional cinema screen.

The transition hall is known as the 'Cyber Portal' and applies materials like ceramic tiles with wooden patterns, tempered glass, grey and white lacquer paint, mirrors and stainless steel.

The Cinema Futura's ground-breaking design reaches the bathrooms as well, which are titled 'Dynamic Restrooms'.

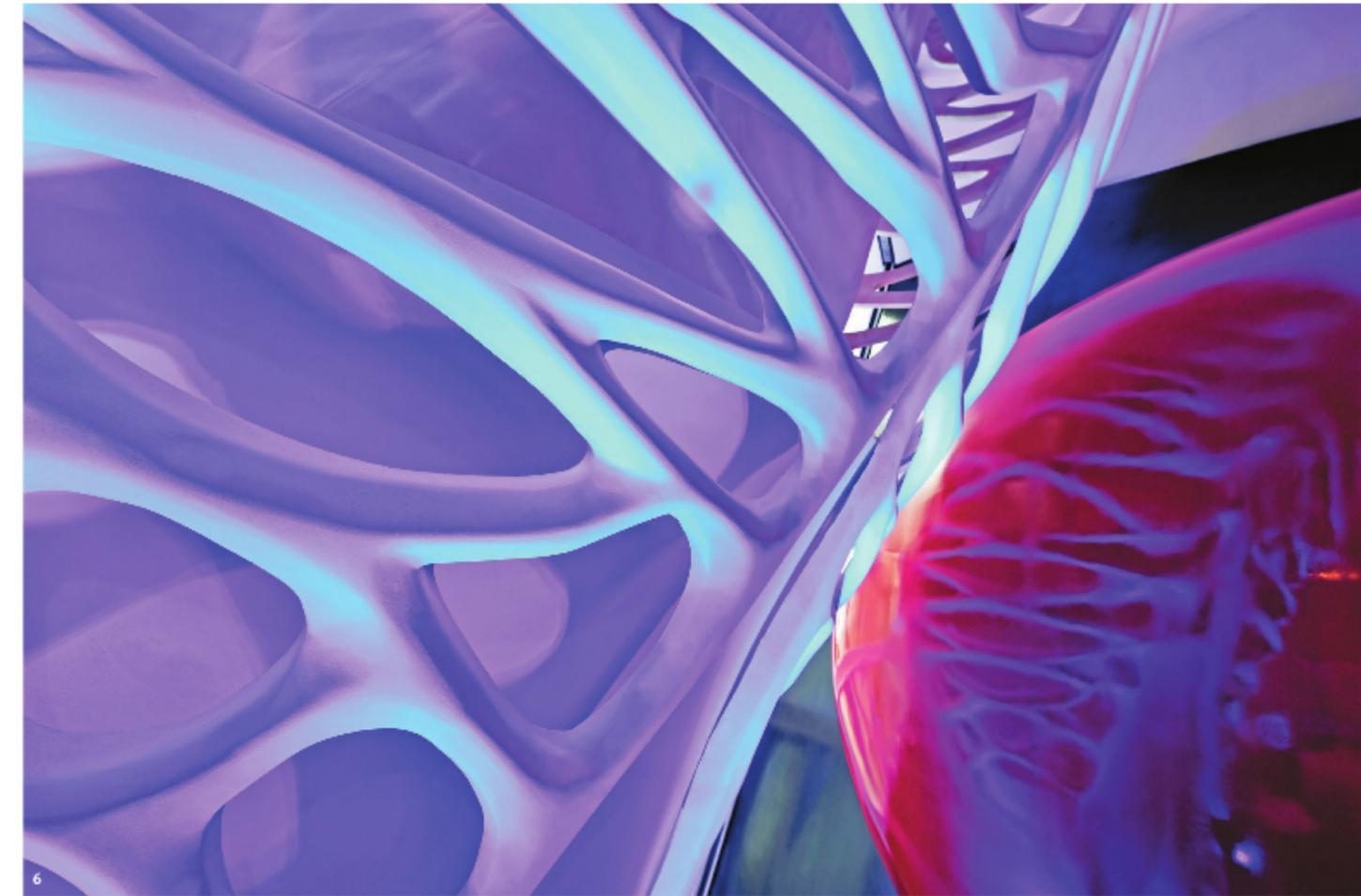
The restrooms apply organic shapes and intimate lighting, with a space-age like feel translated through dominant colours of black, white, silver and dark green. The bubble mirrors and curved bathroom doors evoke a sense of movement as it twists into itself, forming a psychedelic retreat within the cinema.

The individual screening rooms all follow different colour trends and are named respectively. 'Blue Whale' maintains a deep indigo effect and the seating, carpet and walls are coloured in unison. 'Red Earth' appeals to a more fiery character, where the red borders



4 The bathrooms reveal bubble mirrors and curved doors.

5 The Green Amazon screening room.



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on an orange-ish shade. Along the wall of 'Red Earth' is a lighting design that evokes the sight of gathered rocks being thrown from the earth.

The other two rooms include 'Green Amazon' and 'Purple Rain'. In 'Green Amazon', the carpet is a slightly darker shade than the textile that covers the seats and the hue of the wall paint, allowing the term 'amazon' to apply correctly, as the cinema-goer really does feel like certain design aspects can be camouflaged here.

'Purple Rain' sees a vibrant and even electric shade of purple used, with a lighting design in the shape of wings in flight appearing on the walls.

Each cinema room is a space of its own, appealing to the high-strung emotions that can be generated by the human experience of watching film. From fiery romance to calming serenity, each

room enhances the movie-goers experience simply by creating a well-rounded and connected environment.

The VIP Lounge sees the use of red and black leather mixed with red fabric. Additionally, ceramic tiles that display a leather pattern create a high-end fantasy world. White lacquer paint and black stainless steel ground the design.

When asked about his favourite aspect of the Cinema Futura's design, Wong notes: "There are so many favourite parts of the design, but if I had to pick one, it would have to be the double layered 'Chromosome Column' which is by far the most complex and unique design we have ever done for a column.

"Just for [the] research and development [stage] alone, it took several months as we made numerous fibre-glass moulds just to get it right. With the

lighting and special ambient colours, the column has become the iconic feature of Cinema Futura."

As Wong explains, Cinema Futura is a reflection of China's design scene. Though it's a large country and artists locally based are exploring many different aesthetics, futurism and the vision forward is strongly upheld.

About the role of the Cinema Futura in Chinese society, Wong concludes: "In recent years, with China on the space race to the moon, Mars and even beyond, this futuristic look of Cinema Futura will symbolise a shift in China's view of herself as the Middle Kingdom.

"This very first sci-fi cinema in China will not only celebrate the country's new vision towards the future, but also the phenomenal box office success in China with films from China, Europe, Hollywood and beyond." 

6 A close up look at the Chromosome Columns.