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THE FUTURE, Now



A Sci-fi cinema in Shanghai explores the nature of science, reality and the universe.

Shanghai has long been an epicentre of culture on the Chinese mainland, recognised for both its seminal status in the pantheon of Chinese cinema and its reimagining of Western beliefs and ideals in a vividly eastern, Chinese context. There is thus nowhere more fitting for 'White Futura', the second of two cinema theatres opened by China Film Cinema in 2016, to be unveiled.

Alexander Wong Architects, the creative minds behind the project, have created odes to science-fiction and the extra-terrestrial with both 'White Futura' and its sister cinema 'Beyond Future'. Each exemplify contrasting aspects of the same shared design philosophy. Designers took inspiration from the world of classic and contemporary film, exploring themes found similarly in The X-Files, The Matrix and Eyes Wide Shut, as well as theories from science and philosophy and existentialist questions surrounding outer space, nature, mythology and the genesis of the universe.

Built earlier this year in Wuhan, China, 'Beyond Future' is based conceptually on outer space, as suspended structures adorn the walls and ceiling, representing the absence of gravity outside the confines of our atmosphere. The colour scheme is a deep black punctuated with dark hues, representing the infinite darkness or 'dark matter' of outer space.



'White Futura', in light of this, is designed to be the very opposite; the Tabula Rasa, the Ground Zero, with the dominance of its stark white colour scheme symbolising the void at the origin of our universe. The smooth curves of the walls and seating boast that iconic sci-fi sleekness, whilst the hanging light structures are inspired by white magnolias, the city flower of Shanghai as symbols of a pioneering spirit. These magnolia-like installations have however been morphed, abstracted and deconstructed to resemble spacecrafts at the exact moment of their explosion. This harsh dichotomy between the natural and the synthetic takes its inspiration from the opening of the 2004 Olympic Games, when a Minoan sculpture from Ancient Greece was shown erupting into fragments revealing greater treasures within; a metaphor for the origin and evolution of western civilisation.

Tunnel structures connect central corridors to theatre screens, representing time tunnels which it is believed can be used to traverse the universe. Herein lies a central theoretical inspiration for 'White Futura'; the space-time continuum. An enhanced understanding of the nature of this continuum may be key to unlocking our greater understanding of our universe's origin. This in turn is related to String Theory and the Butterfly Effect, which contends that everything throughout space-time is intimately related and occurs as a consequence of each other. The folded spiralling surfaces and curved white lighting of the String Box Office within White Futura exemplify these ideas.

White Futura's striking design aesthetic and the transcendent philosophy behind it have combined to create an ambitious avant-garde space that is truly out of this world.



未来就是现在

上海科幻概念影城，
探索科学、真实及宇宙本相

上海早已是中国大陆的中心城市，在中国电影行业中举足轻重的地位，同时也是西方景仰中国及东方传统时自然想起的模范都市，因此作为中国电影集团于2016年开设的第二所电影城「白玉科幻电影城」(White Futura)之落脚点，实在是适合不过。

为项目操刀的王士维建筑师事务所，以创意借着「白玉科幻电影城」及其姊妹影城「超越未来电影城」(Beyond Future)，向科幻及外星等题材致敬，两所电影城承接同一设计哲学之余却各有特色相互辉映。设计团队从经典及当代电影中汲取灵感，探索在《X档案》、《黑客帝国》和《大开眼戒》等电影中的主题，以及外太空、大自然、神话及宇宙起源等涉及科学、哲学和存在主义的理论。

今年早前于中国武汉落成的「超越未来电影城」，概念源自外太空，墙上及天花皆设有悬浮架空的装饰，以表达大气层范围以外的无重状态，色调以深沉的黑色再以暗色调穿插，代表着外太空“暗物质”的无限黑暗。

「白玉科幻电影城」在设计上则一反其道；洁白无瑕的大堂带有零点地带的氛围，以鲜明的白色主调象征着宇宙起源时空无一物的太初世界；具平滑曲线的墙壁及座位增添了科幻感觉，而挂灯的灵感则来自上海市市花白玉兰，象征着「开路先锋、奋发向上」的精神。犹如白玉兰形态的装置经过蜕变、抽象化和解构，犹如即将爆炸的宇宙飞船。天然和合成的明确对立，设计灵感来自2004年雅典奥运会开幕表演中，古希腊米诺斯雕塑裂开的碎片中揭示更多珍宝的经典场面，亦隐喻着西方文明的起源及进化。

隧道般的结构连接着中央走廊及不同的个别影院，就像可以穿越宇宙的时间隧道，这也是「白玉科幻电影城」的理论核心灵感：时空连续体。对这连续体的了解或许就是人类解开宇宙起源之谜的关键，这理论又与声称一切事物于时空中互相紧扣、互相牵引的弦理论及蝴蝶效应有关，在「白玉科幻电影城」内的售票区中，以折迭及回转形态的台面以及弯曲的白光照明表达。

「白玉科幻电影城」背后的设计美学引人入胜，加上超然的哲学理念，糅合成一个宏大及走出世外的前卫空间。



Text: Joe Wyatt 翻译: Richard Lee
Images: Alexander Wong Architects

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