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The Venice International Architecture Biennale

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STUDIO505

WINTERGARDEN FAÇADE

architectural+interior review

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ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE

studio505

PROJECT

Wintergarden Façade

PRACTICE PROFILE

studio505 is an architecture and design studio based in Melbourne and working around the world. The studio team and network of makers, thinkers and consultants bring together a vast and intriguing selection of possibilities. They are committed to delivering exemplary innovation, elegant integration and sophisticated responses within the complex maelstrom of the design world. studio505 work with complex briefs that they consider at all levels, from aesthetics and community through to constructability and signature identities.

FAÇADE ARCHITECT

studio505

SPECIALIST ENGINEER

Tensys

CONTRACTOR

Urban Art Projects

ARTISTIC CONSULTANT

John Warwicker

INTERIOR AND RETAIL DESIGN

The Buchan Group

PHOTOGRAPHER

John Gollings & studio505



URBAN JUNGLE

Movement and vitality meets with the bustling inner CBD of Brisbane to create a spectacular melding of urban and natural environments.

Part abstract, part illustrative, the new façade for the Wintergarden shopping complex in Brisbane toes the lines between the two in what architects from studio505 call an "irresolvable ambiguity." A complex representation of nature and geometry, this imagistic artwork spans three street frontages with a pastille palette and soft organic lines. studio505 drew inspiration partly from the culture of Brisbane and partly from the concept of a 'winter-

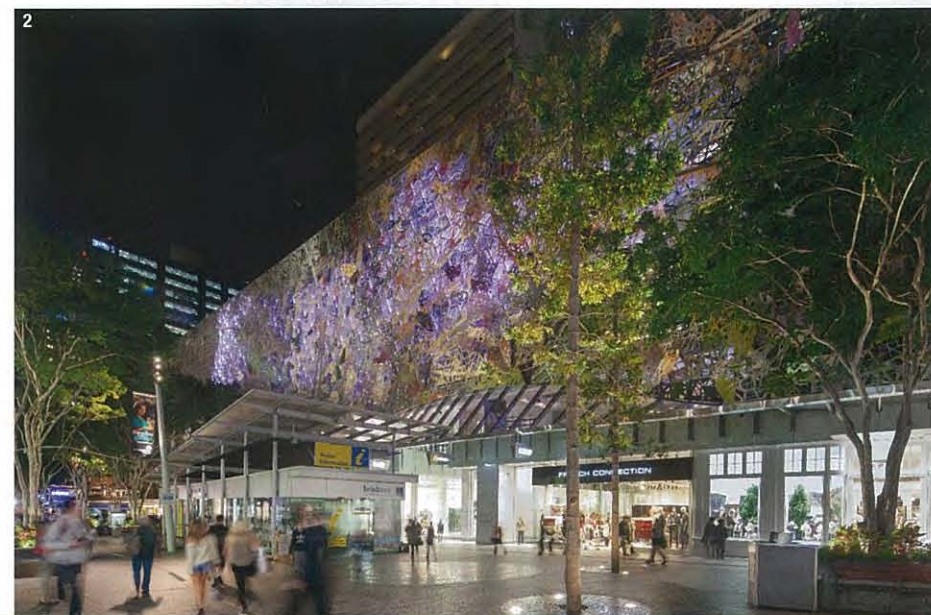
garden' in order to "create a radically experimental composition" that "communicates the rich diversity of life."

The brief for the Wintergarden façade came to studio505 as a part of a multi-million dollar revamp of the Wintergarden shopping centre in Brisbane's CBD. Surprisingly, given the fact that the building sits in the middle of a bustling metropolis, the main visual structure for this façade actually comes from the trees surrounding the building. Walking past

the shopping centre, one encounters these large trees almost as if they were standing outside a forest, looking in. The façade sits behind the trees to reward those who look further. At first glance, the façade is complex, dense and difficult to penetrate. However, patterns begin to emerge upon looking. The interplay of shapes and colours creates a rhythm that imitates the life of a forest. Far from being a mere motionless copy of the natural world, the façade embodies the



1. Butterflies pop out to greet visitors, while also contributing to the complex interplay of light and shadow that continually animates the façade.
2. At night, light shows brighten up this urban thoroughfare.





3. As light streams through the unusual patterns of the façade, shadows dance across the walls of the shopping centre.



4. The texture of the façade creates depth and the illusion of movement.

Opposite above: Sprawling and abstract, the façade nevertheless manages to create an imagistic representation of the natural world.

Opposite below: Surrounding trees frame the façade, inviting onlookers to gaze on the dense array of colours and shapes that lay beyond them.

movement and vibrancy of the natural world. Some concrete images become visible upon closer inspection of the composition. Large butterflies are scattered across its surface, again representing movement and life.

The overall concept for the Wintergarden shopping complex was to create an entertaining and engaging retail experience. In renovating the building, studio505's clients were also looking to reposition Wintergarden as one of Brisbane's "must go to" destinations. True to age-old wisdom, it was decided that the best way to do this was to create a space that was not only functional but also beautiful and, most

importantly, very impressive. At 4000m², the façade is certainly hard to miss. It is also composed of three levels of cladding, each more intricate than the last. In the composition of each screen, architects from studio505 had to become experts in screen geometry, cutting, folding and panelising. Creative ingenuity paved the way for practical excellence in the Wintergarden project, and the hard work has been rewarded by the sheer beauty of the façade.

The façade is dynamic in more ways than one. It is comprised of three separate layers, each of which represents different techniques and use of materials. The first layer uses a

stainless steel sheet and is hand folded. The second and third are comprised of a water jet cut aluminium panel and perforated/composite aluminium panel respectively, both with a powder coat finish. The effect of this is that certain parts of the façade pop out at the passer by while others fade into the background. Thus, the façade is dynamic along both vertical and horizontal axes. The positioning of the sun at various times of day and in various seasons generates new patterns of highlights and shadows within the folds, cuts and textures of the façade.

As night falls, intricate light systems create a variety of different effects,

moving through the colourscape of various seasons and climates in the space of one Brisbane night.

Ever changing, studio505's design is perpetually engaging to shoppers passing by. The new face of the Wintergarden Shopping Centre is "similar and different but never the same." This idea of rapid movement creates a sense of continuity between the Wintergarden building and the relentless activity and bustle of the surrounding CBD, and will help establish the building as the "living heart" of this urban thoroughfare, adding to Brisbane's ever-growing list of architectural icons.+

