

Paris's new **Cinema Etoile** by **Hardel + LeBihan** is ready to show its stuff, reports *Herbert Wright*

Right: The new Parisian cinema is a layer cake, featuring three auditoria stacked on top of each other

The first cinema to be built in Paris in a decade has opened. Cinéma Étoile Lilas, by local practice Hardel + LeBihan, sets out to be a 'cinema city' in two connected volumes, with seven screens and seats for 1,499 film-goers.

There is an element of stack architecture in the vertical volume's external form, within which three auditoria are literally stacked on each other, their size increasing with height. Public circulation areas cantilever from the onyx-black painted concrete, crossed by diagonals of glass-enclosed escalators. A 700 sq m terrace covers shops in the smaller volume, where stairs again characterise a facade diagonally.

The cinema's external kinetics faintly echo the Centre Pompidou's, but the new building has a different agenda – to bridge the disconnect between classical Paris proper and its surrounding modern banlieues. The Étoile Lilas is actually built over the boulevard périphérique which divides them, and each side is scaled to relate to the adjacent urban contexts.



COURTESY HARDEL + LEBIHAN

OPERA HOUSE NEARS CRESCENDO

Two London-based practices – Stanton Williams and Witherford Watson Mann – have been selected as the finalists for the Royal Opera House's 'Open Up' competition.

The august institution launched an invited competition in mid 2011, in an almost literal bid to open itself, and the art of Opera, up to the public – the brief was to make the public spaces, entrances and surrounding areas of the Royal Opera House more accessible.

The competition winner will also be required to develop existing spaces within the Covent Garden site in order to increase visibility and awareness of

the Royal Opera House's creative and educational programmes. Stanton Williams and Witherford Watson Mann beat off strong competition from among others, Amanda Levet Architects, Jamie Fobert Architects, Heatherwick Studios, Caruso St John and Diller Scofidio + Renfro.

Both Stanton Williams and Witherford Watson Mann are deeply embedded in the concerns of the capital. Talking with Blueprint, Liz Diller emphasised the importance and benefits of working in or for the city where one belongs. More from her in next month's Blueprint.



COURTESY PASEL.KUENZEL

COME AND MEET US AT MIPIM

Are you coming to MIPIM in March? If so, have a drink and chat with us. Blueprint, along with our sister magazine FX, is hosting a drinks networking event on the beach for architects, designers, clients and developers. The event, sponsored by lighting specialist FutureDesigns (futuredesigns.co.uk) is on Tuesday 12

March, 4pm–6pm. It's free to come along, but for security reasons we need to know who is attending. So if you'd like to meet Blueprint editor, Johnny Tucker and FX editor, Theresa Dowling, as well as colleagues and potential clients, please send Theresa an email to tdowling@fxmagazine.co.uk, with Party as the subject. See you there.

HOUSING WITH A LIGHT DUTCH TOUCH

In the Zees housing project, Rotterdam-based [pasel.kuenzel](http://pasel.kuenzel.com) architect brings a contemporary twist to the Dutch vernacular and reanimate the half-abandoned streetscape of the former port area in the town of Goes. The 34 terraced houses of dark clay brick conform to the local housing typology, with flat facades, pitched roofs and tall, recessed windows. In addition, the high-density development references the crochet patterning of traditional hats worn by Zeeland women, with laser-cut perforations in the anodised aluminium spandrels below windows – an embellishment that gives the back-to-basics units a delicate touch.