

NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY

Libraries are places that connect people, knowledge and society. NCL is uniquely positioned—both literally and figuratively—to connect Calgarians. In this issue, meet the team that helped bring NCL to life.

FROM PAGE- TURNING DREAM TO REALITY



Artist's Rendering

Spring/Summer 2018

CREATURE CREATIONS: NCL ANNOUNCES PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

Like architecture, public art installations can become an iconic symbol of a city's character, and in doing so they can incite pride among locals and interest from visitors. Public art is a communal activity that can stimulate thought and conversation. Public art, and outdoor sculpture in particular, has the power to transform our parks, our plazas, our neighbourhoods.

“His colourful, captivating concepts bring a playfulness to the library experience—a delightful sense of arrival and wonder for all visitors to enjoy, especially children.”

The search for an artist whose work would add to the dynamic New Central Library began in 2014. “More than 200 artists and artist teams from all over the world responded to the Request for Qualifications—an emphatic testament to the significance of the opportunity,” says Susan Veres, CMLC Senior Vice President of Strategy and Business Development. Over the course of 18 months, the selection process narrowed the list down to 35 submissions. Then a volunteer art committee selected finalists with impressive national/international careers, artists who work in a variety of media and have experience with public art projects. To ensure a thorough understanding of the NCL vision, site and building design, the finalists went through a detailed orientation with members of the NCL project team, representatives from Calgary Public Library, a local historian, and the design team. Each artist then developed and presented concepts to the volunteer art committee.

The winner was Christian Moeller for his proposal to create an iconic outdoor three-piece sculpture suite and an interior installation made of canvas covered books. “His colourful, captivating concepts bring a playfulness to the library experience—a delightful sense of arrival and wonder for all visitors to enjoy, especially children,” says Veres.

Christian Moeller's works will reinforce the identity of the New Central Library by bringing a captivating and whimsical experience. His outdoor sculpture, called TRIO, is reminiscent of a cross between a hockey player and a drinking bird. It's represented by three tall, mildly anthropomorphic figures or “sisters” engaged in an endless back and forth motion. Grouped as a couple, two of the sisters will be located on the west side of the library, while the third will stand on the east side. Rocking their tall upper bodies like upside-down pendulums swinging through the open sky, the sisters will perform an endless visual choreography.

The artist's carefully framed portrait of a goldfish will transform an enormous bookshelf into an aquarium. Entitled FISH, Moeller's piece is made of 11,000 books in 12 different colours. Step up close and it looks like an abstract composition of colourful barcode. But from a distance, the coloured spines of the books materialize into a beautiful image: a close-up of a fish's face endlessly watching the library's visitors—a silent and friendly companion during hours of contemplation.

Turn to the back cover of this newsletter to find out how you can apply to be part of the team that installs FISH this August at the NCL.



Christian Moeller (far right) at the unveiling of the NCL public art program



A LOOK BACK, A LIBRARY FOR THE FUTURE

It takes a village to raise a library. With the grand opening of the New Central Library coming in November 1, 2018, we take the opportunity to chat with members of the project team—Rob Adamson of DIALOG, Paul Polson of Stuart Olson, Brock Schroder and Ian Washbrook of Entuitive, and Simon Rainsbury of Colliers—as they look back at the challenges, the teamwork, and the proud moments of a library in the making.

THE MAKING OF A LIBRARY, THE SHAPING OF A CITY

Since time immemorial, libraries have played a critical role in cities and communities. Libraries are places that connect people, knowledge and society. The New Central Library is uniquely positioned—both literally and figuratively—to connect Calgarians.

“Libraries are some of the few lasting spaces available to the public,” says Simon Rainsbury of Colliers. “This building shows that the city is proud and wants to invest in interesting architecture and creative public spaces.” Brock Schroeder of Entuitive agrees. “Any time you think about a great city or a city that’s a destination, you think about architecture. Architecture can define a city, and it’s important to bring people into the city.” Rob Adamson, Principal and Architect at DIALOG (the Calgary firm that collaborated with award-winning firm Snøhetta on the

design of the library) thinks that the NCL is the most important civic building built in Calgary in the last 25 years. “It might also be the most important civic building for the next 25 years,” he adds. The building is also a portal from the vibrant residential neighbourhood of East Village to all the action of the downtown central core. The design of the building, Adamson says, is fully intended to be that bridge between those two parts of the city. Calgarians will be able to walk through the building any time of the day, any time of the year to go from one part of the city to the other.

“The building is designed in such a way that it is not only for people to come to use the library or the programs of the library,” says Adamson. There’s an animated street level with public outdoor space and coffee shops, and there’s the public forum where the main theatre features a big glass wall that opens to the streets. “It’s quite transparent so you can see what’s going on inside,” says Adamson.

Some think that the New Central Library will do for Calgary what the Guggenheim Museum did for Bilbao. Designed by architect Frank Gehry, the Guggenheim put the sleepy

Spanish city on the map for tourists and architecture lovers around the globe. “I went to Bilbao to see Gehry’s building—it has the wow factor and I think the New Central Library has it, too,” says Paul Polson, Senior Vice President Business Development & Community Engagement at Stuart Olson, the company that managed the NCL’s construction. Pick up a past issue of Travel Alberta magazine and if you open it to the Calgary page, the picture you’ll see is probably the Saddledome or the Calgary Tower. “Soon, it’s going to be the library building,” says Polson. “People will see it in a magazine and go, ‘Oh that’s Calgary’. People are going to want to come see it and touch it and be up against it. It’s just one of those buildings.”

“The library is our chance to really make a difference

“The library is our chance to really make a difference to the architectural landscape of the city.”

to the architectural landscape of the city,” says Adamson. “It really shaped my perspective of why libraries are spaces where people come together to share ideas,” adds Schroeder. Cities are about that. And the NCL in particular encapsulates that idea into one space. “This building has been a huge part of my life,” says Polson. “The NCL will be a place I’ll take visiting friends or families. It’s that kind of place.”



The prow of the NCL building rises above the LRT encapsulation

A ‘PROBLERTUNITY’

The site of the New Central Library is as inspiring as it is challenging. Fourteen years in the making, the project has brought together individuals and teams of people that are experts in their fields—from city planners to architects, engineers, designers, and hundreds of others. It’s safe to say that along the way, most everyone who worked on the NCL faced a challenge—and with it the chance to come up with a solution.

“The biggest challenge on this project was the site itself with the LRT running underneath. That’s what we call a ‘problertunity’: a problem and an opportunity,” says Rob Adamson, Principal, DIALOG. The ‘problertunity’ in this case was a train system that comes from the south and heads to the north, rising 17 feet and bisecting the building site in a curving geometry. The New Central Library had to be built on top of that. But the challenging setting came to define the NCL. You could say the site was in itself a key driver of the form, the curving and the shape of the building. “The building is an alignment of the LRT system that runs underneath it,” says Adamson.

“The challenge of building over an active rail line meant coming up with an encapsulation design that limited the downtime for one of the busiest LRT lines in the city.”

“This was a large project, but in a way it was no different than a smaller one,” adds Simon Rainsbury, Senior Vice President at Colliers, the company responsible for ensuring the work was carried out on time and on budget (hint: it was!). No novella, the NCL project was more like a thick Russian novel: a page-turner with many chapters, lots of colourful characters, a few plot twists along the



Construction of the future cafe space inside the NCL

way, but certainly one you could not wait to see what happens at the end. “As a project manager or leader you have to break it down,” says Rainsbury. “The longevity and length of the project was a challenge, so making sure we had the right time that would work over the long haul was key.”

Brock Schroeder and Ian Washbrook of Entuitive, the company that provided structural engineering services, agree. “The challenge of building over an active rail line meant coming up with an encapsulation design that limited the downtime for one of the busiest LRT lines in the city,” says Schroeder. “It took a lot of coordination between architecture and structure,” adds Washbrook. Because much of the structure is exposed, there is a higher level of finish. “It was a fun opportunity to work closely with the architecture team. What the building needed to be was supported by the structure we were designing,” he says.

THE TEAM BEHIND THE LIBRARY

DIALOG

ROLE: ARCHITECTURE

Along with Snøhetta, DIALOG is the architecture firm responsible for the design of the NCL. The Calgary-based firm made its mark on Canadian architecture with projects in arts and culture, education, wellness, urbanism, and other sectors. Led by architect Rob Adamson, the firm’s multi-dimensional expertise and knowledge of the local environment served the NCL design well.

STUART OLSON

ROLE: CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Construction management for the New Central Library was handled by Stuart Olson, one of the largest construction companies in Canada. We chatted with Paul Polson, Senior Vice President Business Development & Community Engagement, whose team managed the library site and the more than 200 tradespeople who worked there every day.

COLLIERS

ROLE: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

As project managers on the New Central Library, Colliers ensured that work was carried out on time and on budget. The company’s Senior Vice President, Simon Rainsbury, and his team also oversaw quality control on the entire NCL project.

ENTUITIVE

ROLE: STRUCTURAL
ENGINEERING CONSULTANT

We also talked with Brock Schroeder, Managing Principal, and Senior Associate Ian Washbrook of Entuitive, structural engineering consultants who made encapsulating the active LRT line possible by developing complex steel truss systems to enable the unique building design.



Artist's Rendering

Christian Moeller's FISH is made of 11,000 books in 12 colours

WANT TO HELP INSTALL AN ART PIECE INSIDE THE NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY?

Now in the finishing stages of construction, under budget and right on schedule for its November 1, 2018 Grand Opening, the New Central Library's dramatic and dynamic architecture and design will be enhanced by the work of artist Christian Moeller, whose installations will include an exterior three-piece sculpture and an interior "book wall" made up of nearly 11,000 books whose spines, in 12 different colours, create the image of a fish. Prior to the installation in August, volunteers will be invited to apply to be part of the team that pieces together the colourful books to create FISH.

Watch the New Central Library social channels to find out how.

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For more information, contact Calgary Municipal Land Corporation at 403.718.0300 or yycnewcentrallibrary.com