UNVEILED

For Whom is it Built?

The tower unites a diverse range of tenants under a single roofing system. It is mass timber wood vault construction, a building system that mimics the strength and efficiency of steel and concrete, but with the added benefits of reduced carbon emissions and a lighter environmental footprint. This project is recognized by a fundamental architectural element—the arch. The vaulted structure is inspired by this element, a structural system that has been utilized in various forms for centuries. The vaults are not only a means of structural support but also a way to create a sense of enclosure and fluidity within the building.

Programmatically, the building is organized to encourage a gradient of interaction, with public spaces including retail, an auditorium, cafés, and galleries, affording the best views and experiences to all who encounter the building. The sculpted form of the building is shrouded by a terracotta veil, alluding to the nuanced historical and cultural significance of Chicago's architectural landscape.

The school is organized into design studios in which the pedagogy extends beyond the arts. Assignments are project based, fostering creative thinking and informal collaboration amongst students. Conference rooms, technology labs and maker spaces are arranged opposite the studios, affording direct visual contact to the activity going on in each. The terraced structure and communicative stairs create a landscape of chance encounter and privacy.

The tower tapers up and down from the central hub to more intimate vaults that compose the building are diverse in size and organization, providing unique experiences to those who encounter it. This project is structured by a fundamental architectural element—the arch. The vaulted structure is inspired by this element, a structural system that has been utilized in various forms for centuries. The vaults are not only a means of structural support but also a way to create a sense of enclosure and fluidity within the building.

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When lit from the exterior, the terracotta veil mimics its neighbors and predecessors in material, proportion, and rhythm. Robotically wire cut tiles are finished with varied color and texture. When lit from within, the Center for Architecture, Design and Education exposes its atmosphere is significantly improved from acoustical ceiling tiles, forced air, and fluorescent tube lighting. Climate control remain exposed and up lit with integral lighting. Climate control systems and structure integration are modulated with radiant floors and chilled vaults. The resulting environment is one of comfort and energy efficiency, a key aspect of the project's sustainability goals.

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The terracotta veil is a shrouded exterior, concealing the underlying structure and allowing for an array of different materials and textures. The veil is composed of a series of overlapping layers, each with its own unique aesthetic and functional properties. When lit from within, the veil reveals itself as a series of horizontal bands that give the façade physical depth and nuanced reflections. The veil is not only a protective element but also a way to create a sense of enclosure and fluidity within the building.

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