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Bernard Tschumi's Blue tower opens

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Blue, a residential tower by architect Bernard Tschumi, has opened on New York's Lower East Side.

The seventeen-storey tower is clad in blue glass.

Full details from the architect follows:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BLUE by Bernard Tschumi opens on Manhattan's Lower East Side

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, November 7, 2007 - After two and a half years of planning, design, and construction, Bernard Tschumi's BLUE Residential Tower is now open on the Lower East Side. The seventeen-story tower contains thirty-two apartments and rises to a height of 181 feet. This is Tschumi's first high-rise structure, and his second in New York City, where his main office is located. BLUE also marks Tschumi's first residential structure.

Despite the constraints of New York City zoning law and market-driven commercial requirements, Tschumi devised an original envelope pattern and distinctive shape in order to simultaneously conform to a strict building code and differentiate the building from similar high-rise structures. The strategy also creates a highly specific architectural statement that responds to the eclecticism of the historic Lower East Side neighborhood. The building's signature pixelated façade reflects a mosaic of the diverse community around it while simultaneously blending into the sky, in a way that both echoes and defers to the vibrant dynamism of downtown New York City.

Faced with a series of contradictions - a high-end building with a modest budget, a neighborhood-specific building that would also be visually striking, and a contemporary building for a historically rich part of Manhattan - Tschumi's scheme balances the many competing project requirements with thoughtful attention to every facet of the design, from an entrance court at the pedestrian scale of narrow Norfolk Street to the Penthouse terrace placed so as to appreciate sunsets over the Hudson River.

Interiors are fitted with bamboo or palm floors, stone counters and tiles, and stainless steel cabinets and appliances, defining simple but elegant spaces, many of which are distinguished by the sloping walls that give the building its dramatic shape. Nearly all of the units were occupied before the building's official completion. A third floor commercial space that is part of the development, but was not designed by Tschumi, remains under construction and will be completed sometime next

year. The project was developed by Angelo Cosentini and John Carson. Kim Starr directed the project at Bernard Tschumi Architects. Executive Architects were SLCE, of New York.

This is Bernard Tschumi's second building in New York, where he has lived, worked, and taught since 1976. He designed Alfred Lerner Hall at Columbia University, where he served as Dean of the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation from 1988 to 2003.

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BLUE RESIDENTIAL TOWER
New York City
Description of the building by Bernard Tschumi

This residential mid-rise in New York's Lower East Side presented a major design challenge: how to create an original architectural statement while simultaneously responding to the constraints of New York zoning code and to the developer's commercial requirements? In our solution, the building's base occupies a lot zoned for residential use and cantilevers over an existing building designated for commercial use. The slightly angled walls facing the street and rear yard artfully negotiate the varying setback rules, crossing the line between the commercial and residential zoning districts. The sloped top of the building integrates the zoning district's two sky exposure plane requirements.

The cantilever over the commercial space on the southern portion of the building is also angled from base to top, thus enlarging the size of the units located on the upper floors, which have stunning views of Lower Manhattan from river to river. This strategy also maximizes the amount of allowable residential square footage. The pixelated facades reflect both the internal arrangement of spaces and the multi-faceted character of the neighborhood below.

BLUE does not start with a theory or a formal gesture but takes the character of the site as its source, parlaying intricate zoning into angulated form, and form into a pixelated envelope that both projects an architectural statement but also blends into the sky at the same time, simultaneously respecting and embracing the dynamism of the neighborhood.

The building consists of 32 residences ranging from one and two-bedroom units near the base to full-floor units with large terraces higher up, crowned by a duplex penthouse. The sloped window wall is a feature of many units. All units have full-height windows in the living and dining rooms. The apartments are fitted out with sustainable materials, including bamboo floors and wall panels, palm flooring, and river-pebble bathroom tiles.

BLUE also recycles unused space on top of a neighboring commercial structure as an urban garden, which provides communal space for residents and guests with broad views of the Williamsburg Bridge.

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Bernard Tschumi Architects, based in New York and Paris, is currently putting the finishing touches on the New Acropolis Museum in Athens, where installation of the collection has already begun. Recently inaugurated projects include the ECAL School of Art in Lausanne, Switzerland; a concert hall in Limoges, France; and the Richard E. Lindner Athletics Center at the University of Cincinnati. Current projects include a museum and archaeological park in Alésia, France, a cultural center in Bordeaux-Cenon, and a department store and cultural center in The Hague. The firm has also recently completed the master plan for the Independent Financial Centre of the Americas in the Dominican Republic, and is designing the initial phase. Bernard Tschumi has both French and Swiss nationalities and lives in New York and Paris.

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abyssinian • 6 years ago
nice
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il.balan • 6 years ago
I don't know if this is a building that I would like to see every morning across the street...
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okaydee • 6 years ago
does anyone else think this is a terrible building? a building that will age terribly? a building whose blue pixel-pattern motif is already out of date? a building whose slightly skewy form does nothing at all?

what a shame... this is how architects make a "funky" building in the lower east side....
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not important • 6 years ago
I walked by this monstrosity early in April. This must count as an all-time low for Tschumi. It ruined an interesting and as yet untouched corner of the LES.
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JOAQUIN • 6 years ago
Unfortunately I go by the building on my bike everyday after crossing the Williamsburg bridge and everytime i find it a poorer architecture, a nonsense pattern of windows and a color that make me think that was the cheapest cladding waiting in storage for years.
Reply • Share ›

rodger • 6 years ago
the interior says it all. what a piece of rubbish. i realized how fallible nicolai ouroussoff was as a critic when i read his flattering article of this building.
tschumi should stay in academia because even julian schnabel can create a way better example of contextually appropriate design than this educated architect can.

contextually precise is the premise on which ouroussoff flattery (ny times) hangs. give me a break

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yooo • 6 years ago
uohhh uohhh,
I'm sorry to say it but this bldg is horrible. It looks really bad. I'm surprised the city of NY allowed it to go like this through the permitting process..

• Reply • Share ›

roadkill • 6 years ago
don't know much about it but from this image it looks pretty awful....

• Reply • Share ›

jeniffer • 6 years ago
i think its really interesting

• Reply • Share ›

F • 6 years ago
simply horrid .

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar
Bernardo • 6 years ago
I think this is a good building for this "event":
-Where do you live?
-I live at the blue building.
-Ah, yeah

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar
JoJo • 6 years ago
So ugly, it's cool! I think it's great, actually. It preserves the hodgepodge character of the weird slice that is the neighborhood and loses any pretense of high-end 'refinement'! Take that! Compare this to the off-putting fortress that Nouvel's condos on Grand/Broadway and maybe you'll see where I'm coming from.

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar
Monk • 6 years ago
RUBBISH

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar
((((0)))) • 6 years ago
How wonderful should've been a pretty nurbs ribbon, maybe just a rendering with a stunning sunset light...
Instead we get this real building that kills that wonderful sourroundings, bah...

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar
harrie • 6 years ago
- too bad you can see the floors in the pixels
- on the second picture you see a nice 'pixelation' of the reflections of the surroundings; thats nice with the blue sky. I don't no if you experience this in reality.

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar
srich • 6 years ago
UGLY! geesus.

If anything, digital technology has given us the ability to really build fluid beauty- what the hell is this chunky-duck? and Tschumi was the father of bringing digital thinking to architecture- this is what it give us?? This whole "its so ugly, its cool, man!" is getting tired- basicallly its a cover up for people who have no 'elegant touch'. It is very hard to make sensual things...

I think this says it all: Tschumi's office describes it as a "high-end building with a modest budget," That is what it looks like- Cheap windows, ugly flooring, 1980s coloured glass panel- sold as "Luxury Condo". tacky dude.

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar tommi • 6 years ago

it only looks good with d' sky. itz really horrible with its context```

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar wowowowo • 6 years ago

Tschumi!
waaaazup bro???!!!
You're going down man! This looks horrible!

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar DanArch • 6 years ago

Too much fondling with this one. I can understand the attempt, but it lacks refinement. After all, some design ideas simply cost a lot of money to become convincing. This one is such. Too much money is spent on the form and the so called random panelling, the variation in both is lost making it look clumsy and really eighties-like. Could've better designed a clear rectangular, more opaque building, would be more contextual and cheaper in basics, leaving money for the details.

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar Manuel • 6 years ago

That building looks like someonelse's hand, not bernard's, looks cheap and vague

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar jane • 6 years ago

"The building's signature pixelated façade reflects a mosaic of the diverse community around it" - until other horrendous eye-sores such as this go up and nothing more is reflected than the cold alienation of gentrification...

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Avatar Cheri • 6 years ago

The Lower East Side is ruined FOREVER. Too bad.

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Avatar James • 6 years ago

This building is a perfect example of a poorly executed, purely formalist idea that fails to move past a diagram and become a design. The verbiage that accompanies the design clearly attempts to compensate for everything the building is not - contextual, original, elegant. To call it cumbersome would be complementary. I am continuously disappointed by Tschumi's inability to attract real talent. For another example of the same problem (and perhaps the same designer) take a look at the University of Cincinnati Athletic Center, also by Tschumi. It looks particularly awful in the shadow of Thom Mayne's Recreation Center.

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Avatar openminds • 6 years ago

after all the form/image discussions in architecture lately... is this the answer of bernard tschumi?
well... its neither a identity-generating "big" form nor a contextual building...

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Avatar Alan • 6 years ago

Wow -I'd love to live in this building - the spaces are amazing.
I don't think it's awful at all - it's time for the lower ea0st side to start growing upward!

• Reply • Share ›

Avatar Anabel • 5 years ago

Finally!!

And answer that's good.
It's a wonderful building. I'll love to live there to.
The windows in differnt colors give it an special personality.
It's a shame, that those who call themselves open minded, can't see the beauty of this contemporary construction.

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Avatar Merkwurdichliebe • 5 years ago

No, it's not the most profound project around, but it is also not a developer's building. Tschumi attempts to formalize a project--high-rise residential--that normally wouldn't allow for much design. It is unique and iconic and as a marketing item, successfl. There is a sense of design / architecture rather than a facile attempt at constructing a building. I was able to view the twoolevel penthouse in "Blue" and it is fairly well done. I love all of you who are so quick to criticize; everyone is so clever these days. How many unique--and designed--buildings do we see in Manhattan? Would you rather a Jersey City-style high-rise by SLCE perhaps? I'm just curious to know what would be acceptable?

1 ▲ | ▼ • Reply • Share ›

Avatar

marie t. d. • 2 years ago

Is this the blue glass bldg. visible heading north on FDR Drive? If so, it caught my eye with the sun shining on it and I never forgot the quick vision of glorious blue glass. Is there another blue glass bldg. visible from the east side and FDR Drive.
The view between bldgs. is very brief, but breathtaking.

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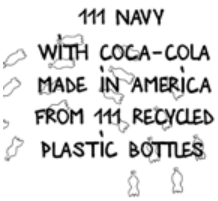

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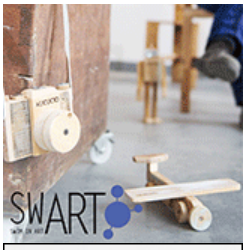

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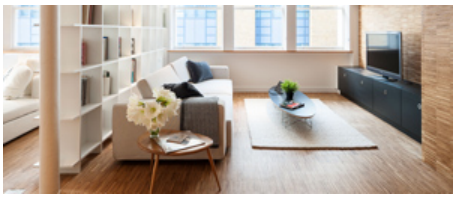

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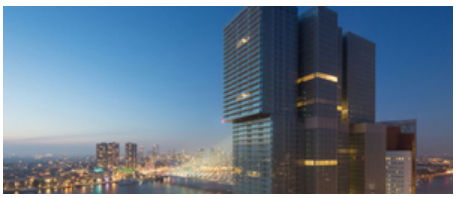

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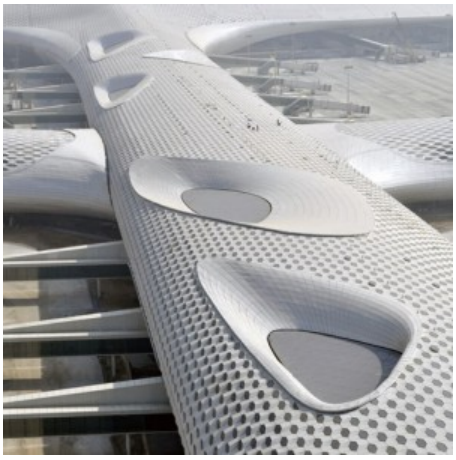

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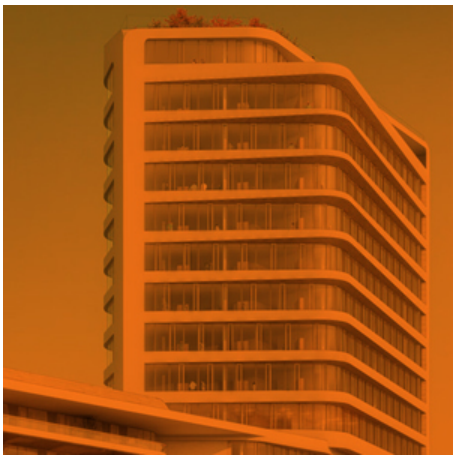

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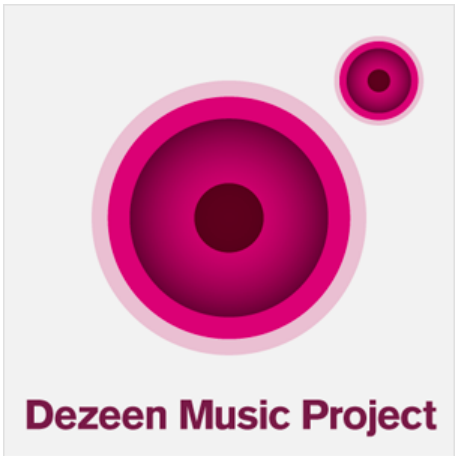

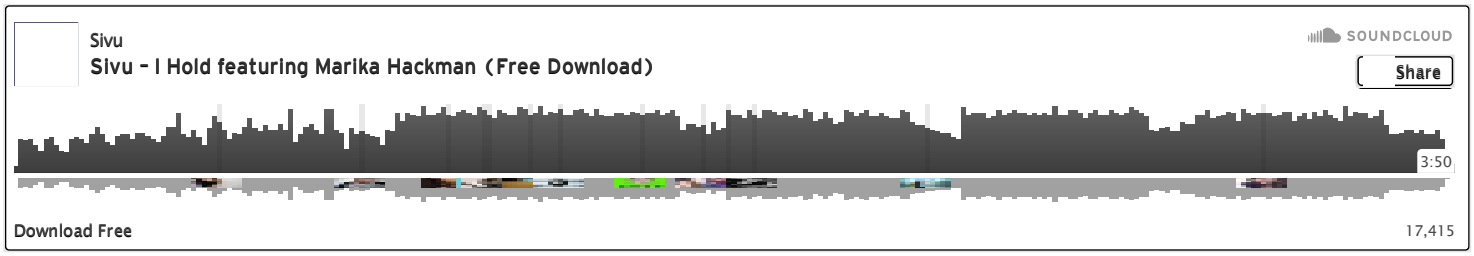

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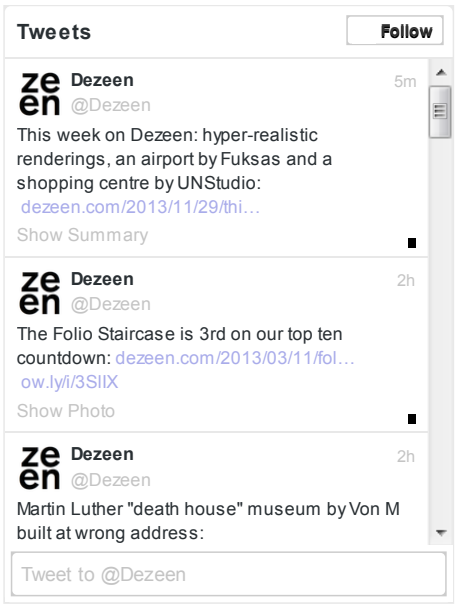

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- 2013 «
  - January 2013
  - February 2013
  - March 2013
  - April 2013
  - May 2013
  - June 2013
  - July 2013
  - August 2013
  - September 2013
  - October 2013
  - November 2013
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