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€7.50

£ 6.50 / CHF 12.50 / DKK 65.00 / KRW 20,000

Start

- Health centre, Kiev
- Pavilion, Meudon
- Civil registry office, Madrid
- Residential and retail development, Druskininkai
- Conference centre, Cracow

Ready

- Bus and administrative centre, Thiais
- Community centre, Mannheim
- House, Majorca
- Rotermann Complex, Tallinn
- School extension, Zurich
- Science building, Nicosia
- Theatre, Copenhagen
- Student residences, Azores
- Residential building, Belgrade
- Warehouse conversion, Rotterdam

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Conference centre, Cracow

Ingarden & Ewy have designed a smoothly modern building.

POLAND — TEXT: ROMAN RUTKOWSKI & LUKASZ WOJCIECHOWSKI

Cracow's Ingarden & Ewy studio is one of the most celebrated and mature practices in Poland. They owe their fame to the Polish pavilion designed for the 2005 Expo in Aichi as well as the Japanese Manggha Art Centre in Cracow, designed in co-operation with Arata Isozaki. The common denominator of their works is the search for modern means of expression, attention to detail and a creative interpretation of tradition. One could say that the winning project in the competition for the conference centre, announced last November, is a perfect example of what they stand for.

The building is located near the Japanese Manggha Art Centre on the Vistula riverside. The plot, which is also close to the historical city centre, offered a variety of possibilities. On the one hand the location required some connection with its historical and spatial context, on the other it offered the opportunity to take a fresh approach to creating a riverside panorama. Quite apart from its functional programme, the project is also of strategic importance for the development of this city district.

The most representative part of the building is its continuous foyer. The foyer's glass walls open the perspective to the river, the old city centre and Wawel Castle – the city's most iconic building and a must-see for tourists. The internal layout and the functional programming of the building obey a single idea: to open up its interior towards the north-east, in the direction of the most impressive view of Cracow. Thus, the entrance plaza slopes down away from the building to allow a view of the unique exterior. Guiding visitors into the building, the main entrances are set back in recesses in the curved facade.

The curved contours and downward tilt in the direction of the river serve to reduce the bulk of the building. The similarity of the materials used for both elevations and roof creates a clear, uniform image as seen from the old-town. The architec-

tural form corresponds closely to that of the nearby Manggha Centre. The curved elevations are mostly finished with glass and titanium-zinc sheeting, complemented by ceramic and stone slabs (granite, limestone and sandstone), creating a colourful mosaic. The designers declare that these elements correspond to the historical materials used in Wawel Castle.

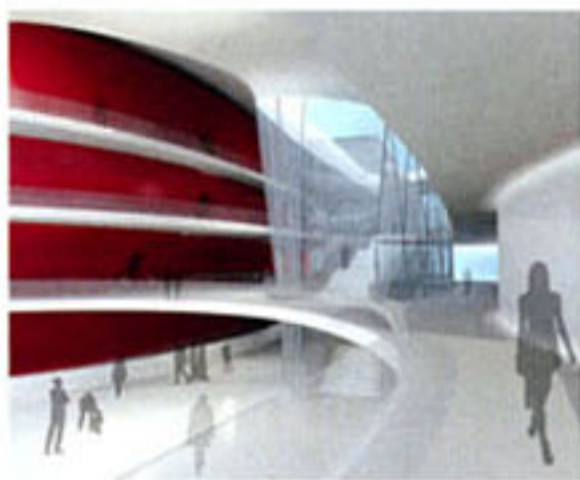
The basic functional programme consists of the 2000-seat theatre hall and the rectangular grand hall. The theatre hall is designed to host major events like musical productions, concerts, ballet performances as well as film shows. The foyer is multi-functional and flexible and, depending on the demand, can serve as a representative public space or be transformed into exhibition space with the possibility of arranging stands during fairs. The building is expected to be finished in 2012, the magical date for architecture and infrastructure right now, as this is the year Poland will host Euro 2012.

The conference centre consists of a very traditional functional programme, encased in a sophisticated and modern architectural form, designed and built with the use of advanced technologies. The smoothly moulded shape of the building fits comfortably into the surroundings. Which suggests that this 'safe modernity' might be a good way of introducing gradual change into the architecture of conservative Cracow. ←

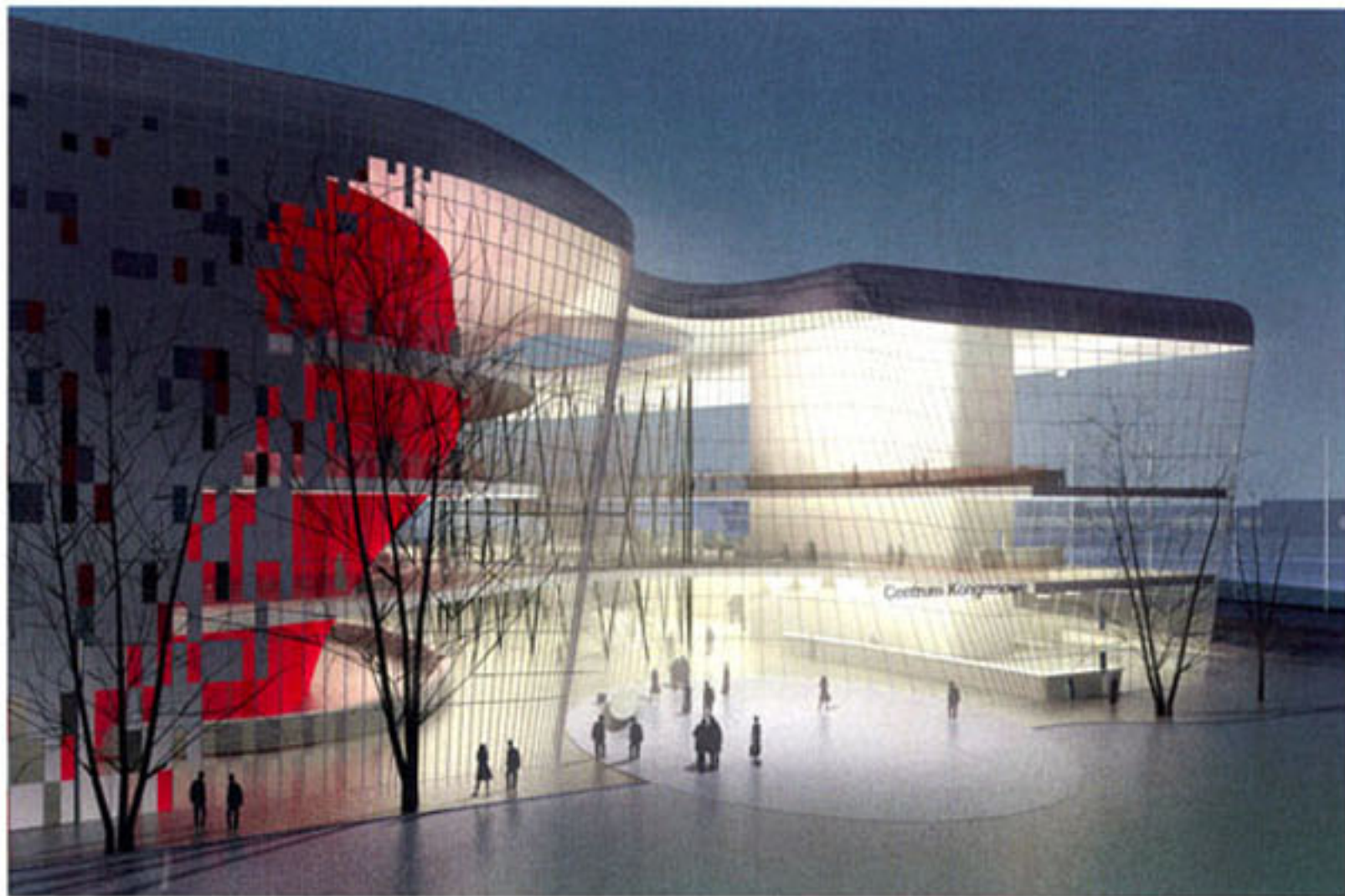


CONFERENCE CENTRE, 2007–2012

Architects: Ingarden & Ewy Architects, Arata Isozaki & Associates (consultant)
Client: Urząd Miasta Krakowa
Address: Cracow, Al. Konopnickiej
Info: www.ingarden-ewy.com.pl



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View from the entrance of the main auditorium



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At the entrance, the facade folds inward, guiding visitors inside.