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M&A



Deep space "Schell"

A vortex-shaped outdoor installation at Materials & Applications (M&A) in Los Angeles by architects Benjamin Ball and Gaston Nougues warps the flow of space with a featherweight rendition of a celestial "black hole." Hovering over M&A's courtyard, "Maximilian's Schell" is a spectacle the size of an apartment building and has been stopping traffic in front of the gallery since its unveiling in early July.

Constructed with tinted Mylar™ resembling stained glass, the vortex functions as a shade structure, swirling above the outdoor gallery. The interior of this immersive experimental installation creates an environment for enhanced social interaction and contemplation by changing the space, color, and sound of the M&A gallery courtyard. During the day, as the sun passes overhead, the canopy casts colored fractal light patterns onto the ground while underfoot, a tranquil subsonic drone

emanates from an integrated ambient sound installation by composer James Lamb entitled "Resonant Amplified Vortex Emitter."

Ball and Nougues manipulated the Mylar—internally reinforced with bundled nylon and Kevlar™ fibers—with a sophisticated computer-controlled cutting machine (CNC). The transparent amber-colored film offers UV resistance through a golden metallic finish. The result is not a tent-type structure à la Frei Otto, but a unique tensile matrix comprised of 504 different instances of a parametric component, each cut using the CNC system. The extreme intricacy and repetitiveness of the assembly pay homage to actor Maximilian Schell's character Dr. Reinhardt in Disney Studios' classic science fiction thriller *The Black Hole*.

The installation—up until November 26—will accompany a series of open-air discussions on design, technology and culture throughout the summer at M&A.

For more information, visit www.emanate.org.