

Icon

design award winner

Zaha's Phaeno Science Centre

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Industrial Facility



Joep
van Lieshout

designing for depravity



plus new work by Marcel Wanders, Miller Maranta, Alison Brooks and De



"an urban-scaled brass tuba"

belching out a drone" is one of the analogies offered by architect Benjamin Ball to describe Maximilian's Schell, a temporary installation and lecture venue in Los Angeles.

The structure, designed by local practice Ball-Nogues, occupies the forecourt of Materials and Applications, an architecture research institute in the city's Silver Lake area.

The installation is made from 504 leaves of gold-tinted reinforced Mylar arranged under tension into the shape of a vortex. Ball and partner Gaston Nogues intended the structure to be a "featherweight rendition of a celestial black hole".

It was named after actor Maximilian Schell, who played Dr Hans Reinhardt in the 1979 Disney sci-fi film, *The Black Hole*. "Reinhardt's obsession was to plunge into a black hole," says Ball. "It reminds me of a classic architect personality."

CNC cutting allowed the piece to be complex, but quick to manufacture and assemble. The finished structure undulates in breezes. "You could also see it as an enormous flower rustling in the wind," says Ball.

The interior of the installation is filled with low frequency sounds created by composer James Lumb. The sounds are emitted from an underground speaker. Concentrated at the centre of the vortex, they are intense enough for visitors to be able to feel their vibrations. The sound is so low that it can be heard above the noise of the city from a quarter of a mile away.

Talks will be held in the space until it is dismantled in November. "We purposefully designed it to disrupt the traditional audience-lecturer-screen relationship," says Ball. "A lecturer will have a hard time using Powerpoint." Alex Wiltshire

