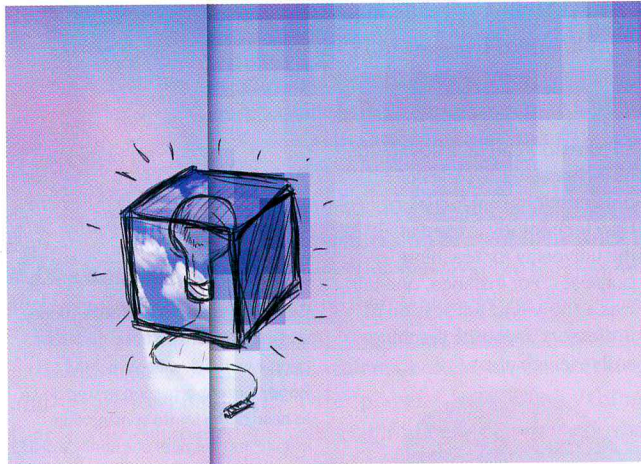


What a Concept!

From a digital artist-in-residence program to futuristic light-rail stations, Ottawa is proving to be on the cutting edge of design. The lowdown on two innovative projects to keep an eye on BY MISA KOBAYASHI



Invest Ottawa Artist-in-Residence Project

The Project

Confederation Line station designs

A digital-media artist is embedded in the business incubation offices of Invest Ottawa (the space where small start-ups operate and exchange ideas). The artist will design and create an interactive digital environment for the main-floor lobby, with the goal of transforming the space and engaging visitors who enter the building.

The Concept

The overall goal for Confederation Line is to make public transit a preferred lifestyle choice for more residents. Along with a safe and reliable system, the plan is to create dynamic urban spaces that are enhanced with public art, landscaping, benches, and other features.

Julie DuPont, coordinator of Ottawa's Public Art Program, and digital-media artists Anthony Scavarelli and Henri Kuschowitz, who were chosen as a team.

The People

Ritchard Brisbin of BBB Architects led the design development as part of the Rideau Transit Group team.

For the Children's Festival, Scavarelli and Kuschowitz created an interactive aquarium piece where they worked with kids to digitize their drawings.

Past Works

Brisbin is the man behind such architectural gems as the Ottawa Convention Centre, the Ottawa Airport Expansion, and the new Lansdowne Stadium.

\$9,000 for the three-month artists' fee.

The Cost

The station design will be part of the \$2.13 billion budgeted for Confederation Line.

The residency began in April and will continue for three months. Once it's finished, the installation will run for six months.

The Timeline

Construction of the overall system begins this spring, with completion of the 13 stations to take place between 2015 and 2017.

The three-person jury was impressed with the collaborative and interactive work the artists had done in the past. The jury also liked the energy the artists brought to the project and how they engage people through their art. No one knows what the final piece will look like because it will evolve through the artists' experience of being in this setting.

Behind the Scenes

All stations will have common elements to make travelling an intuitive experience, but each station will receive its own architectural treatment tailored to its location. For instance, the station at LeBreton Flats will recognize the historical and spiritual significance of the area to the Algonquin people by having Algonquin artists contribute to architectural design, landscape architecture, and public art.

According to DuPont's research, this artist-in-residence program in a business incubator setting is the first of its kind in Canada.

The Fun Fact

Trees damaged by the emerald ash borer are being used for the roofs, walls, and other features. The use of wood also pays tribute to the city's history as a logging town.