

NOVARTIS PAVILLON IN BASEL

Flexible architecture that communicates the values of science

The Novartis Pavillon is an architecture that is circular in plan and which houses an education and information center where the company is presented in a way that is innovatory and original. It seeks to go beyond being simply a showcase for the company. It is a flexible architecture for events and exhibitions that in itself becomes a communicative tool thanks to the technological facade. **AMDLCIRCLE has combined the functional needs of the building with the attractive potential of a self-powered art installation. Educational, expository, receptive and dynamic, it is designed to encourage the coming together of people.**

A symbol for a new model for the exploration of scientific research and the well-being it provides. Future-orientated, innovative, open and optimistic. The floor plan of the Novartis Pavillon is inspired by the universal symbolism of the **circle**, considered a powerful field of psychophysical energy, a sort of sacred area where all physical and spiritual forces are concentrated. Because the architecture itself must communicate energy, must inspire and promote connections between different voices and cultures.

The Novartis Pavillon aims to be **a place of welcome, an area where the city of Basel meets the company**, which here expresses its desire to dedicate itself to the health of the community. Locating the building in a public park, just outside the perimeter of the Campus dedicated to biomedical research, is a key feature of the project. It is about creating an interface with clients and visitors that is both open and transparent.

A place that is freely accessible. The architecture integrates into the park designed by Gunther Vogt, which recreates the natural phenomena of the Rhine terraces on a smaller scale, merging them with the vegetation within an evocative landscape. The Pavillon is accessible from several points: from the Campus, from the pedestrian pathway that runs alongside the river and from the parking lot. Its hilltop location not only provides wonderful views of the entire context, but also guarantees that the building does not interrupt the harmony of the park's pathways.

Access to the internal courtyard is through the terracing supporting the Pavillon. **The passage under the architecture is a symbolic representation of the integration between a strongly characterized building and the context into which it is inserted.**

AMDLCIRCLE continues its research into the design of hybrid buildings that are not ascribed to one particular type of construction, but which perform different functions and promote relationships between people. The Novartis Pavillon is an active learning experience and, at the same time, an art installation that has the strength and the task of engaging visitors in a memorable context.

Architecture: a welcoming and reconfigurable ring.

The ring plan is structured on **two levels** with a mezzanine. The ground floor is given over to welcoming and assisting visitors, as well as providing spaces for teaching, meetings and events. Adjacent to the entrance foyer is a bar and a check-in area that includes an informal space for the presentation of publications, scientific and cultural documents associated with Novartis. The area is informal and **flexible**, able to change and adapt to continuous evolutions, and can be easily reconfigured to carry out activities internal to the company - workshops, hackathons, project presentations - but also to welcome visiting groups such as schools and local associations. The use of acoustic curtains to divide the spaces and the wide range of digital technologies make it a **model state-of-the-art information center**. The green-gray color of the textiles has been chosen to recall the natural colors of the park.

In 2017, AMDL CIRCLE studio was appointed to design of the Novartis Pavillon, after having won an international competition between four architectural firms that had been organized by the company under the direction of Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani. The competition brief was to construct a reception and corporate showcase building to communicate the values held by Novartis and its more than 7,000 associates: creativity, collaboration and openness to the public.

On the mezzanine, a multimedia theater with stair seating acts as a link between the ground floor and the upper floor, introducing visitors to the subjects of the “Wonders of Medicine” exhibition, curated by Atelier Brückner.

The exhibition space located on the upper floor is a circular and fluid gallery, with no walls or dividing elements. The tall room soars upwards to the double pitched roof that takes the form of a large ogive, from the top of which artificial light radiates downwards, gently illuminating the gallery and creating an intimate and almost sacred atmosphere, as in an ancient cathedral.

The structure of this level, which has been left visible, was realized using advanced laminated wood processing techniques that made it possible to create **pre-assembled segments** that can be easily positioned on site. The wood was bleached so as to maintain the idea of a natural material but also to make the context more contemporary.

Oak for personalized and light furnishings

AMDL CIRCLE curated a **customized furnishings project for the Novartis Pavillon that were realized thanks to Produzione Privata**, the company created by Michele De Lucchi to develop experimental design objects and promote craftsmanship. Particular attention was paid to the choice of wood: oak being a warm, durable and breathable material. Furnishings with this wood were chosen, aiming to convey an idea of comfort that is domestic rather than institutional. The Benedetto tables and the Bacchetta sofas are iconic products from the Produzione Privata catalog. The Possum stools — designed specifically for the Novartis Pavillon — are playful and welcoming seats that visitors can move around at will thanks to the curved perforated shell in the center, allowing people to customize the use of the space according to their own imagination and needs. These stools can be easily combined with each other, moved or stored away when not in use. The lighting of the cafeteria on the same floor is provided through the transparent, handcrafted glass of the Acquatinta light.

The experience of light. The light characterizes the spaces in a refined way. The ground floor has no walls but a 360-degree, all-round glass window: natural light enters the space in perfect continuity with the outside. The ceiling integrates tracks and technical equipment for attaching curtains, projectors and spotlights. On the floor above, the atmosphere is completely different. The artificial lights, whose color and intensity are adjustable, run along the underside of the roof and combine with the luminosity and vibrancy of the video monitors placed along the wall. The result is an **immersive** environment where the visitor has the sensation of being inside the world of science, research and the evolution of knowledge.

The exhibition project. The Novartis Pavillon has the function of **involving visitors in the understanding** of scientific and pharmacological progress. For this reason the upper floor is designed to welcome a popular science exhibition, which is not intended to be a vertical transfer of knowledge but an experience of interaction between visitors and the idea of health. **AMDL CIRCLE has designed the spaces to welcome “Wonders of Medicine”:** interactive walls and a refined range of projection techniques allow an infinite flexibility of layout design, functional to the company’s communication demands. The inclined profile of the roof becomes an integral part of the itinerary, like a large canvas on which to organise ever new stories. The exhibition is experienced along a circular route, passing through four sections that occupy the entire perimeter: *Fragility of Life* which describes how diseases and therapies affect the lives of patients; *From Lab to Patient* which shows the processes involved in medicine development and production; *Steps Through Time* which tells the history of medicine and the emergence of the pharmaceutical industry in Basel; and *The Future of Healthcare* which invites visitors to join virtual discussions with experts on the social and ethical implications of trends shaping the future of healthcare.

Zero Energy Media Facade: a facade that communicates

The external façade plays a symbolic role in the architecture designed for Novartis, and provides the stage to communicate the company’s values and its commitment to the dissemination of scientific knowledge. A multimedia membrane covering the upper part of the Pavillon is technologically equipped to communicate images that are relevant and meaningful. AMDL CIRCLE carried out a series of parametric design studies to define the geometry and graphic design of the facade, which was later engineered by iArt. A sustainable energy system was created: a spatial structure formed of a diagonal mesh positioned 50 cm above the metal roof, which integrates a new generation of double-sided photovoltaic panels and a grid of LED lights. The system is **self-powered** and provides a **huge, continuous and dynamic screen that is visible from every direction**. As a first step in expressing the potential of this innovative facade, Novartis launched a **competition** for digital artists. Daniel Canogar, Esther Hunziker and Semi Conductor were selected and then collaborated with scientists to develop the light installations **inspired by the shapes and colors of cells and molecules, as well as the themes of sustainability and the convergence of art and science**.

About AMDL CIRCLE

AMDL CIRCLE is a multifaceted studio that was founded by Michele De Lucchi. Internationally renowned for its humanistic approach, it works across many sectors providing its clients with expressive and strategic projects that embrace architecture, interiors, products and communication. AMDL's team of architects, designers and craftspeople have worked on projects for public and private organisations, collaborating with large corporations such as Intesa Sanpaolo, Deutsche Bank and UniCredit, and designing buildings and exhibition systems for Neues Museum in Berlin and the Gallerie d'Italia in Milan, Turin and Naples. The Milan based studio has also designed spaces, products and furniture for Alessi, Artemide, Cassina, Hermès, Poltrona Frau and Unifor.

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**Media Facade & Exhibition
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Media Facade & Exhibition
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