

PRESS INFORMATION

ART MEETS SCIENCE AT THE DAVID ROCKWELL DESIGNED HOTEL EMC2 IN CHICAGO *NEW 21-STOREY HOTEL IS INSPIRED BY EINSTEIN'S THEORY OF RELATIVITY*



David Rockwell and his team at New York-based Rockwell Group have designed a new 195-room hotel in Chicago that merges science and art in a new 21-storey building designed by Koo & Associates. Part of the Autograph Collection, Hotel EMC2 is named after Einstein's famous equation establishing the theory of relativity.

DESIGN CONCEPT

Rockwell Group Partner and Studio Leader on the Hotel EMC2 project, Greg Keffer says: "Through Hotel EMC2, Rockwell Group wanted to capture a moment produced by the intersecting worlds of art and science. The design concept we have created celebrates and brings to life their sense of discovery, creativity, and innovation and invites visitors to explore."

DESIGN DETAILS

Exterior and Lobby



Working in collaboration with David Rockwell and his team, Koo & Associates created the dramatic façade for the hotel which is located close to Northwestern University and the city's main tech hub.

On entering the hotel, visitors are met with a two-story volume centerpiece, a freestanding assemblage of bookcases piled on top of each other which creates a first place of exploration for the guest. Inspired by Einstein's interest in collecting, it conveys a sense of discovery and wonder, like an unexplored attic or a modern day cabinet of curiosities.

The design details lead guests into the hotel inviting them to explore and to discover, while a bookcase wall extends further into the lobby, enveloping the reception area and creating a series curious nooks and crannies.

A curated collection of original artwork by local and international artists is featured throughout the hotel's public areas adding personality to the lobby and restaurant.



Guests can explore the area, sit within the smaller spaces, and immerse themselves in the quirky jumble of art, objects and books surrounding them.



Small groupings of eclectic furniture and overdyeed rugs create a series of small lounge areas or snugs where guests can relax; this adds to the lobby's residential feel.



A folding fabric screen depicting a dream state of cloud formations serves as a backdrop for the reception desk, a custom design by Rockwell Group in a bright polished rose gold and glass.

The elevator lobby holds further surprising elements, with two-way mirrors above and inside the elevators with concealed video screens. These create a seamless digital art installation of ink dropping from above, into the elevators as the doors open.

Archive lounge and conference room

An interior staircase in the bookcase leads guests to the second-floor Archive Lounge and event space. The lounge is a comfortable, playful space with plush seating and modern furnishings in rich hues of rose gold and shades of brown, and green.

A custom oversized vintage steamer trunk opens to reveal a breakfast nook in the morning and a cocktail bar at night. Off to the side, a glass-walled multi-purpose room overlooks the restaurant's communal kitchen below. Designed to be a flexible space, the room can serve as a private dining room, while the lounge can be reconfigured as a VIP area or pre-function space for business meetings and events

The Albert Restaurant



Next to the lobby, an airy double-height 120-seat restaurant serves globally-inspired cuisine and handcrafted cocktails.



Designed to create a lively casual neighbourhood atmosphere, Albert also has cosy grouped seating to enable smaller and more intimate-scale dining experiences within the restaurant.

Chef's tables inside a large expo kitchen are partially concealed from the dining area by ribbed glass panels, offering diners a theatrical culinary experience.

A bottle-green glass tile wall, wood and bronze dining tables, and a chandelier of copper pots add warmth and whimsy to the clean white space.



In the morning, the expo kitchen will be closed off to serve as a breakfast room for hotel guests who can enter the space through a 'secret' entrance via the bookcase wall. Just outside the expo kitchen, a long curved banquette set in front of a surrealist mural by local cartoon Artist, Jonathan Plotkin creates another unique seating option for diners.

The Bar



Continuing an exploration of the cross-pollination of science and art, a custom chandelier comprised of glass cylinders filled with house-made infused liquors is suspended over a copper and enamel-clad bar, while artwork in different stages – sketches, watercolors, and oil paintings in an ombre finish, line the back wall.



Guestrooms

Located on floors 4-21, the 195 guestrooms celebrate Einstein's interests in discovery, invention, and creativity. The corridors leading to the rooms feature custom carpet inspired by images of molecules magnified under a microscope, which create vibrant, abstracted patterns. Room numbers next to each door are revealed through an illuminated looking glass.

Custom video art installations revealing the processes of painting and drawing are projected onto a canvas panel in a metal frame hung directly across from the elevator banks on each of the guestroom floors.



The simple yet refined residential aesthetic of the rooms is balanced with imaginative, custom touches. An oversized channel-tufted leather headboard frames the bed and a copper frame sits above to display artwork on a canvas stretched across the frame with leather straps. An over-scale perforated metal lantern set atop a wooden base cleverly conceals a minibar and casts a luminous glow from within.



A copper pole next to the desk supports a brass phonograph-style speaker, adjustable lamps, and rotating wooden desk drawers.



A mosaic tile lined bathroom lies behind a sliding door and curtain concealing a ribbed glass shower wall.



Copper details are continued in the bathroom design, including a vanity made from metal tubing; a curvilinear utility pole outfitted with lighting, mirrors, and a towel rack; and a showerhead with exposed copper pipes.

A playful graphic on the ceiling of each bathroom engages the guest and livens the space with a sense of humor.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Rockwell Group

Based in New York with offices in Madrid and Shanghai, Rockwell Group is an interdisciplinary architecture and design firm that emphasizes innovation and thought leadership in every project. The firm merges architecture, theatre, craftsmanship, and technology to create unique narratives for their work, including hospitality, cultural institutions, offices, transportation, residential, set design, products, exhibitions and festivals.

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Photography: Images by Michael Kleinberg

PRESS INFORMATION

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