

# The Far Pavilions

The Little Mermaid, Cirque du Soleil, masterpieces from the Musee d'Orsay - we look at how some of the participating Expo countries will showcase their best assets.

By Paris Franz

**M**ANY EXPO PARTICIPANTS will rent a standard pavilion for the duration of the 2010 Expo, a sizeable number of have chosen to build their own pavilions. The prospect of 70 million visitors over the course of the Expo has been incentive enough to call on the talents of the world's top architects and most imaginative designers. *SBR* takes a look at a variety of participating countries' pavilions, their designs, and chosen events scheduled over the Expo's six-month extravaganza.

## China

China's pavilion is anything but shy and retiring. At 63m high, it will tower over the Expo site. Covering a total area of 6.52 hectares, the pavilion is dominated by the distinctive Chinese roof of the main structure, dubbed "The Crown of the East". Painted seven shades of red with 56 traditional wooden *dougong* interlocking brackets to symbolise the 56 minority groups in China, the 30-metre-high roof will house the pavilion's main exhibition area.

Below the main structure, a 45,000sqm joint pavilion will feature the provinces and cities of China, along with separate pavilions for Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. The "Crown of the East" may have some competition from Macau's Rabbit Lantern pavilion in the eye-catching design stakes.

China's pavilion will be converted into a museum for Chinese history and culture after the Expo closes.

## Denmark

The statue of the Little Mermaid, which has graced Copenhagen's harbour since 1913, will take centre stage in Denmark's winding white pavilion. Visitors will be able to sample Dan-

ish city life – they can have a picnic, jump on a bike, listen to jazz and dip their toes in the water by the Little Mermaid. The pavilion's theme, headlined "*Welfairytales*" in homage to famous Danish writer Hans Christian Anderson, focuses on what can be achieved with a combination of wealth, welfare and imagination.

Designed by architects from Denmark's Bjarke Ingels Group, the pavilion will tell the tale of Denmark in three installments, focusing on cities, people and ways to improve urban life. The 3000sqm pavilion can be dismantled at the end of the Expo, with the possibility of moving it to another location in Shanghai to act as a transfer point for the city's bicycles.

## United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The sand dunes of the Arabian Desert inspire the UAE's pavilion. Designed by Foster + Partners, in partnership with the East China Architectural Design Institute, the sinuous pavilion will occupy 6,000sqm with a capacity for 450 people. It will highlight the UAE's ambitious approach to sustainability, with projects such as the Masdar Initiative, a six million square metre carbon neutral, zero-waste community in Abu Dhabi.

After the event, the pavilion will be converted into a cultural centre and stand alongside the new branches of the Guggenheim and Louvre museums on Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi.

## Australia

The Australian pavilion, with an over-arching theme of "Imagination", will be an undulating building made of self-sealing steel, its colour increasingly deepening over the months to an ochre-red, reminiscent of Australia's iconic Outback and for many a reminder of Ayer's Rock. Exhibitions and

The Danish Pavilion



an audio-visual experience in a 1,000-person-capacity theatre will showcase Australia's urban landscape and how it deals with the challenges of climate and sustainability. Australian food and wine will also be on offer, along with daily cultural performances from a resident theatrical company.

## France

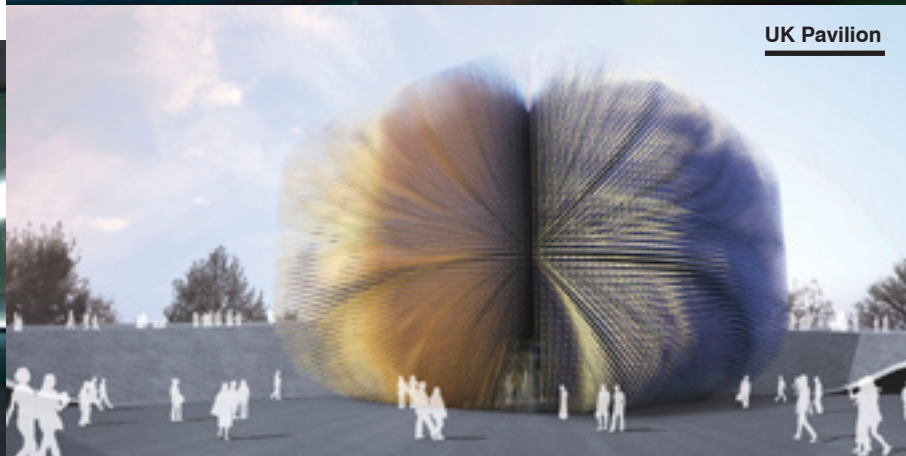
The 6,000sqm French pavilion, designed by architect Jacques Ferrier, promises a feast for the senses. Seven masterpieces from the Musee d'Orsay – including works by Cezanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin and Monet – will be on show, while gourmet restaurant *Sixième Sens* will provide its own brand of culinary art. A sense-of-smell advisor, top French perfumer Jean-Claude Ellena, will ensure that a visit to the pavilion remains a fragrant experience. If all these sensory delights have a particularly romantic effect, there is the possibility of getting married in the pavilion, with a lucky couple winning the chance to honeymoon in the Loire Valley.

## Canada

With Cirque du Soleil setting the tone for the Canadian pavilion, visitors should expect an adventurous and probably a gravity-defying



China Pavilion



UK Pavilion



United Arab Emirates (UAE) Pavilion

experience. Situated on a 6,000sqm lot, the pavilion is centred on a public square, and will focus on the creation of sustainable, inclusive and creative living cities. Although known for its wide open spaces, Canadian society is 80 per cent urban and is constantly exploring ways to ease economic, social and environmental pressures in its cities.

## India

India's pavilion, a 4,000sqm structure, is inspired by the Sanchi Stupa built by Ashoka, the third-century BC Indian king who gave up warring and converted to Buddhism. The dome will house a 360-degree screen that will

tell the story of India's cities as visitors follow the trail from ancient times to the present day. The pavilion will focus on sustainability and energy efficiency, using bamboo as part of the structure, and utilising solar panels and wind power.

## Singapore

Designed by Kay Ngee Tan Architects, the Singapore pavilion aims to present Shanghai with a sophisticated Urban Symphony. The design resembles a music box, supported by four columns of different shapes and sizes to symbolise Singapore's cosmopolitan population living, working and playing in

harmony. Covering an area of 3,000sqm, the structure will be Singapore's largest ever Expo pavilion.

The pavilion will incorporate a range of energy-saving measures, including *façade* slits for air circulation and running chilled water along the ground floor perimeter to reduce energy consumption from air conditioning in the summer, along with the use of recyclable materials like aluminium and steel.

## UN World Meteorological Organisation

An appropriate participant in an event hosted by a city with famously unpredictable weather, the United Nations World Meteorological Organisation will have its own 2,000sqm pavilion. Shaped like a fluffy white cloud surrounded by mist, it will be the first meteorological pavilion in the history of the Expo. A hi-tech weather station will broadcast free weather forecasts, available on all visitors' mobile phones every one to three hours. There will also be weather updates on a large screen in front of the pavilion and on the pavilion's Expo website.

## UK

The UK's pavilion is designed by Thomas Heatherwick Studios. Set in amongst a contoured landscape, an iconic cube structure pierced by thousands of swaying, slender rods will light up and give the impression of hovering above ground. The pavilion is one of the largest at the Expo, covering an area of 6,000sqm. The pavilion will host a range of cultural and other events to all who visit, both in person and on-line.

## Italy

The Italian pavilion is inspired by a traditional Chinese game, known as "Shanghai" in Italy, where 20 to 30 sticks are tossed on a table, leaving players to progressively remove a stick without disturbing the others. The 20 varying geometric shapes of the building form a mosaic of the country's 20 regions, with the slits dividing them depicting the narrow alleys of Italy's ancient cities. The surface of the pavilion will appear transparent with the sides made up of self-cleaning glass. Designed to save energy, the photovoltaic elements in the glass covering guarantee protection from radiation. **SBR**

*See Country Report (page.32) for Norway Pavilion details.*