

# surface

*The Radiant  
Reboot of Kenzo*

*Chinese Design  
Takes Off*

*Lladró Welcomes  
a Special Guest*

## RISK & REWARD

*American Furniture  
Fades to Black*

FEBRUARY 2012  
DISPLAY UNTIL FEBRUARY 20



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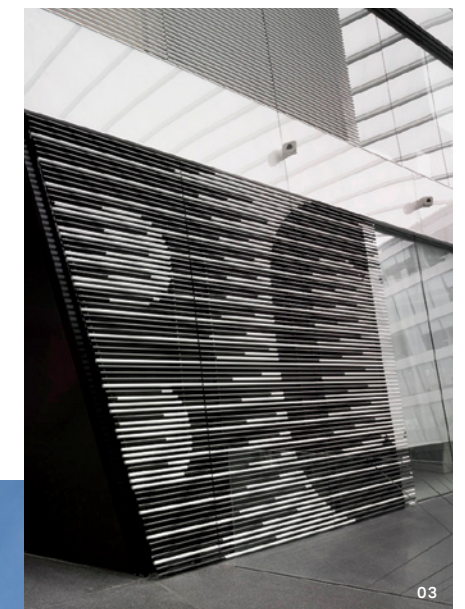
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01 The atrium's crisscrossing, 30-centimeter-thick steel bridges—or "laces"—create "an urban situation," Zweering says. "It's like a park."

02 Along with 69 workstation areas, Laces includes a biomechanical lab, an archive, and an athlete-services area (pictured) for visiting sports stars.



03 A sports-inspired signage system, designed by Stuttgart-based agency Büro Uebele, organizes the building into easy-to-find zones.



# Tying It Together

**KADA WITTFELD ARCHITECTURE** OUTFITS AN OFFICE COMPLEX WITH BRIDGES.

PHOTOS **WERNER HUTHMACHER**

When developing Laces, a 667,000-square-foot, mall-like research-and-development building at Adidas's main campus in Herzogenaurach, Germany, near Nuremberg, Kada Wittfeld Architecture sought to build an inconspicuous structure that opens up

to its surroundings. To that end, the firm hoisted its entrance up two floors via steel supports, implemented a flat, mirrored facade, and covered its six-story exterior with windows. Of the Aachen-based firm's black-and-white striped design, project manager Dirk Zweering says, "The surfaces and contour lines are simple, straight, sporty, and tight. There was nothing overly architectural added."

Located on a 346-acre site that was once a World War I airbase, Adidas's rural headquarters is now the sportswear giant's nerve center, home to, among other things, playing fields, a gym, an exhibition hall, a hotel, 600 residential units for roughly 2,000 employees, and even a McDonald's. While that may sound like a small town, much of the surrounding Bavarian landscape has been kept intact, and Kada Wittfeld set out to preserve that. "The concept was that a clear, precise volume should erase the building, because it's a big building in an area where buildings

like this don't normally exist," Zweering says. "We wanted a flat facade that mirrors the area."

The resulting looped structure—Zweering calls it "a squeezed parallelogram"—achieves these goals. From each of its 1,700 seamlessly integrated, powder-coated MDF workstations, custom-designed by Berlin-based firm Kinzo and manufactured by Planmöbel, views open up to both the outside and an interior atrium. Kinzo's Chris Middleton, who likens the building to "a super big spaceship," describes its design this way: "You get a feeling for community. You don't need to write e-mails to your colleagues; you can wave them over. The whole idea is about transparency and communication." Adds Zweering: "We can't force people to communicate, but this building does offer them that opportunity." Central to this communication credo are interior bridges—walkways that both connect offices easily and subtly reference the building's namesake: Adidas's legendary black shoelaces.—SPENCER BAILEY

PHOTOS: 1, 4, 6, WERNER HUTHMACHER; 2, 3, CHRISTIAN RICHTERS; 5, VOLKER BUELTMANN



04 Laces's exterior is a counterpart to Adidas's nearby low-lying Brand Center, an exhibition hall built by Austrian architects Querkraft in 2006.

05 Kinzo intended for the modular workstations, each featuring an eight-degree angle, to function "like Russian nesting dolls," Middleton says.

06 Kada Wittfeld's architecture influenced Kinzo's office design and vice versa. Says Middleton: "We tried to transport the idea of transparency,"