

## ARCHITECTURE

# Biennial brings intrigue on design front

BY BLAIR KAMIN  
Chicago Tribune

It's an architecture biennial year, so get ready for an explosion of provocative exhibits and new buildings that are the byproduct of Chicago's construction boom.

The main event, the second **Chicago Architecture Biennial**, carries the aspirational title "Make New History" and is billed as North America's largest architecture and design exhibition. It will feature installations and immersive environments created by more than 140 participants from over 20 countries, including Pritzker Architecture Prize winners SANAA from Tokyo.

Curated by Los Angeles architects Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee, the biennial will open to the public Sept. 16 at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St., and at museums and other institutions throughout the city (more at [www.chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org/venue-map/](http://www.chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org/venue-map/)). For the first time, the event is timed to coincide with Expo Chicago, the art festival being held Sept. 13-17 at Navy Pier.

Featured exhibitions will include a room of large-scale models that show new conceptual proposals for the Chicago Tribune Tower. The models will be displayed 95 years after the newspaper held an international architecture competition that led to the construction of its neo-Gothic skyscraper at 435 N. Michigan Ave.

The biennial runs through Jan. 7.

Such is the biennial's drawing power that other Chicago architecture institutions will unveil new exhibitions of their own at the same time. On Sept. 12, the **Art Institute of Chicago**, 111 S. Michigan Ave., will open its new permanent collection of modern and contemporary architecture and design. The installation, called "**Past Forward**," will be shown in the museum's Renzo Piano-designed Modern Wing.

The Chicago Architecture Foundation, 224 S. Michigan Ave., will feature an exhibition that will provide a Chicago-focused supplement to the biennial, which is not devoting a separate gallery to design ideas for the city as it did in its first iteration in 2015. Titled "**Between States**," the foundation's show will highlight 50 designs that the CAF says could "transform underappreciated and underperforming spaces in Chicago's neighborhoods into rejuvenated civic anchors." The show runs from Sept. 19 to Jan. 7.

On the new building front, the **Wintrust Arena**, designed by New Haven, Conn.-based Pelli Clarke Pelli, will open its doors as part of the effort to make the moribund area around the McCormick Place convention center more lively. DePaul University's men's basketball team is scheduled to play its first game in the arena, which has a seating capacity of more than 10,000 and a dramatically curving roof, on Nov. 5. The arena is at 200 E. Cermak Road.

Like the arena, the **Marriott Marquis Chicago**, 2121 S. Prairie

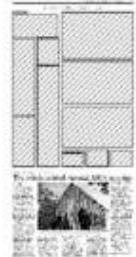
Ave., will expand McCormick Place in addition to providing conventioners with adjacent hotel space. Designed by the Chicago office of Gensler and the architect of record, Chicago-based Goettsch Partners, the glass-sheathed, 40-story hotel is set to make its debut in September.

Another widely-anticipated structure, the new **Apple store** in the plaza at 401 N. Michigan Ave., is expected to open this fall; we just don't know when. A spokesman for the ever-secretive Cupertino, Calif.-based computer giant won't reveal the date. The two-story riverfront building, by London-based Foster + Partners, features curving glass walls, tiered outdoor seats and an overhanging metal roof that some observers have likened to a laptop lid.

**Chicago Shakespeare Theater** on Sept. 19 will present *The Yard* at Chicago Shakespeare, a new indoor theater at Navy Pier that adapts and reuses parts of the pier's open-air Skyline Stage. The new facility, designed by Chicago's Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture and located next to the theater's existing stages at the pier, will have nine moveable seating tiers that can be arranged in multiple configurations.

The Chicago Transit Authority will open its new **Wilson Avenue elevated station**, complete with platforms protected from the rain and snow by a curving translucent canopy. The station includes a restoration of the Beaux Arts Gerber building, a portion of which will serve as an auxiliary entrance to the station. Designed by infrastructure firm HNTB, the project is expected to open at the end of September, according to a CTA spokesman.

There are sure to be new developments in the high-profile south lakefront plans for the **Obama Presidential Center** and a proposed Tiger Woods-designed golf course. The Chicago Park District, which has held community meetings on the plans, will hold more meetings Sept. 21 and Sept. 25 at the South Shore Cultural



Center. In addition, the Obama Foundation, the nonprofit that is developing the presidential center, will need separate approval for the center from the Chicago Plan Commission. Foundation officials have said they seek to break ground in 2018 and open

the center in 2021.

As Chicago's construction boom rolls on, several new residential structures will open their doors. Among them is **640 North Wells**, which replaces the old Ed Debevic's restaurant in River North. Designed by Hartshorne Plunkard Architecture and backed by JDL Development,

both of Chicago, the 23-story apartment high-rise consists of a series of cantilevered glass boxes that resemble a Jenga game in midstream.

*Blair Kamin is a Tribune critic.*

[bkamin@chicagotribune.com](mailto:bkamin@chicagotribune.com)  
[Twitter @BlairKamin](https://twitter.com/BlairKamin)



JOSE M. OSORIO/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The renovated CTA elevated station at Wilson Avenue is expected to open at the end of September.