

Manitou a bi Bii daziigae opens at RRC Polytech

<https://dsai.ca/news/manitou-a-bi-bii-daziigae-opens-at-rrc-polytech/>

Manitou a bi Bii daziigae (formerly known as the Innovation Centre Project) will add a new hearth to the Exchange District of Winnipeg designed to inspire students, create a sense of wonder, and encourage collaboration between students, staff, and industry.

Winnipeg, MB, Canada, November 10, 2021– Red River College Polytechnic’s Manitou a bi Bii daziigae, a 21st-century learning environment targeting net-zero energy use in Winnipeg, has officially opened today.

Designed by Diamond Schmitt and Number TEN Architectural Group in joint venture, the Centre will bring together students with education and industry professionals in new ways that facilitate social innovation, enterprise and innovative research.

The new 100,000 sf facility unites a repurposed downtown concrete framed heritage building and new construction to create an engaging crossroads in Winnipeg’s historic Exchange District. The Centre will house a unique combination of Indigenous and international student spaces, long distance teaching equipped classrooms, digital media labs and special events spaces and faculty offices.

The form of the building interprets the principal features of the district with a strong relationship to ground floor and articulations that acknowledge the scale, band courses and parapet of the heritage building. The form also identifies program areas where a curvature signals the importance of the Roundhouse. The cornice provides sun control, implies a connection to the wider cityscape and provides an opportunity for Indigenous art.

The facade of the building is unexpected – made of dynamic Kromatix Building Integrated Photovoltaic (BIPV) panels that change colour depending on the angle of view and the weather. This innovative concept – a first in Canada – conceals the solar cells behind nano-coated glass panels. The shape-shifting appearance that animates this glass-clad building conveys a sense of wonder and delight that in itself is an outward expression of the path of learning and innovation.

The heart of Manitou a bi Bii daziigae is the agora, conceived as a place for campus-wide events as well as for group and quiet study. All programs overlook and experience the agora; diagonal circulation invites its crossing supported by the collaboration areas that surround it. The sky-lit atrium above the agora brings diffuse light to the centre of the plan and as a two-storey space accented with balconies on all four sides, it is a theatre-in-the-round with study spaces on the edges. The design introduces a collaboration zone a front porch between classroom and the agora and atrium. This porch can be used by the classrooms, as a breakout room or project room, or independently booked by students for study groups.

The Roundhouse auditorium anchors the west corner of the new building. This 210-seat auditorium has a high degree of flexibility, with an acoustically isolated space for ceremonial events, instruction, or celebration and a main entrance at due cardinal east in keeping with Indigenous custom. The Roundhouse features an artwork floor by nêhiyaw/Anishinaabe/British artist KC Adams.

At roof level, the City Room is a beacon enveloped in a canvas of colour representing traditional Indigenous teachings and local history. The painting, created by Anishinaabe artist Jackie Traverse, is visible both on the ceiling of this fully glazed space and across the cladding and soffit. It is conceived as an aspirational space at the high point of the Centre.

The Centre’s new Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe) name, Manitou a bi Bii daziigae, translates to where creator sits

(Manitou a bi) and brings light (Bii daziigae). RRC Polytech Elders-in-Residence, Paul Guimond, Okonace (Little Eagle Bone) from Sagkeeng First Nation, and Miss Una Swan, Black Eagle Woman, from Fisher River Cree Nation utilized their own traditional ceremonial protocols for the naming process as their teachings instruct, given to them by their Elders and Spiritual Guides. They were also given tours of the building to help them inform an appropriate name. Learn more about the meaning behind and process of naming the Centre at rrc.ca/edc/manitou-a-bi-bii-daziigae/

“Manitou a bi Bii daziigae at RRC Polytechnic is a true milestone: with a flowing design for the agora, celebrates a community of learners and innovators; through dialogue and artistic expression, connects with Indigenous ancestry; and with courageously championed applied research, creates a Canadian first: a beautifully integrated rain-screen wall that creates energy.” – Michael Leckman, Principal, Diamond Schmitt

“The RRC Polytechnic’s Manitou a bi Bii daziigae building tells an impressive story of local, national, and international collaboration – involving 145 architectural & engineering personnel, over 626 construction personnel, and nearly 400 RRC Polytechnic staff that were consulted – and what takes to transform a project from vision to reality.” – Doug Hanna, Principal, Number TEN Architectural Group

“The artwork in Manitou a bi Bii daziigae has required incredible collaboration between artists, architects, construction management, and client to develop new ways of integrating art into building elements. We worked with Jackie Traverse to scale her site-specific painting using a new type of cladding to show her work from the exterior and interior of the building at a completely different scale. Our design team collaborated with KC Adams on new material techniques to translate her artwork of digital imagery and bitten birchbark into a terrazzo and cast bronze emblem in the floor in of the Roundhouse auditorium. This project has been a terrific partnership and that is what innovation is built upon.” – Sydney Browne, Principal, Diamond Schmitt

“RRC Polytech is proud to open this space, which embodies the commitments we have made to transform our learning models, deepen our partnerships and create more opportunities for Indigenous learners. For more than 80 years, RRC Polytech has been helping Manitoba’s leading industries get in front of what’s ahead – and that continues with Manitou a bi Bii daziigae. We’re pleased that our partners at Diamond Schmitt Architects and Number TEN Architectural Group were able to bring our ideas to life – creating spaces for collaboration, advanced technology and celebration. We’re excited to welcome our students and community members into the space, and look forward to seeing the incredible projects that come out of it.” – Fred Meier, President and CEO, RRC Polytech

About Diamond Schmitt

Diamond Schmitt is a global architecture firm that designs transformative, purpose-driven, and highly sustainable buildings across sectors. Delivering innovative architecture that empowers people, communities, and organizations to harness change for the greater public good, Diamond Schmitt employs a collaborative research process to create bold designs renowned for their exceptional performance and meticulous craftsmanship. With offices in New York, Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary, Diamond Schmitt has designed academic and sustainable projects, including the LEED Platinum Certified and Net Zero target Trades Renewal and Project at Okanagan College in Kelowna, LEED Gold Certified Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning at the University of Calgary, the LEED Platinum Centre for Green Cities at Evergreen Brick Works in Toronto, the LEED Gold targeted Manitou a bi Bii daziigae building at RRC Polytech, and the net zero carbon ?dis?ke Library in Ottawa. For more information please visit: www.dsai.ca

About Number TEN Architectural Group

Number TEN Architectural Group is an award-winning integrated architecture and interior design firm specializing in design innovation, project delivery, planning, advisory services, and visual communications.

With over 70 architects, interior designers, technologists, contract administrators and administrative staff in Winnipeg and Victoria, and strategic alliances with national and international firms and providers, Number TEN has the resources and experience to handle projects of every size.

We are committed to continuous learning, sustainable design and best practices in management and production – remaining current with the latest design technology to create buildings and interior environments that are equally inspiring, well-built, easy to use and maintain, and kind to the environment.

With 18 LEED-accredited staff, Number TEN is committed to a sustainable design practice. Number TEN has a legacy of iconic and sustainable projects. They include the award-winning Ducks Unlimited Interpretive Centre at Oak Hammock Marsh, the Assiniboine Park Qualico Family Centre, the University of Winnipeg Science Complex and Richardson College for the Environment, the RRC Polytech Skilled Trades and Technology Centre and the RRC Polytech Manitou a bi Bii daziigae building. For more information please visit: www.numberten.com

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