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Library as Stoa

Public Space and Academic Mission in Snohetta's Charles Library

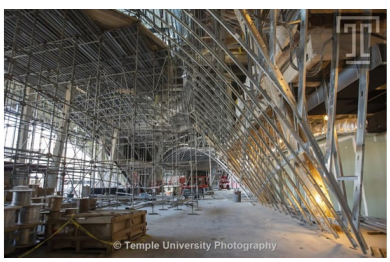
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- Architecture of libraries
- Evolving urban campus
- Academic library as aspirational space: innovation, community and identity
- Why libraries matter in a changing academic research landscape

Library as Stoa is a reflection on the building design and construction in essays and photographs of Snøhetta's Charles Library at Temple University. The library demonstrates the role of public space and innovation in architecture. By using an Automated Storage and Retrieval System (ASRS) for the storage of Temple's entire collection which includes two million books on site, the Charles Library was designed to balance the amount of space for books vs. people, and significantly increase the social spaces to accommodate student and faculty research and collaboration. Using the models of library as studio and creative commons, it is a place for discovery, creation, preservation, and sharing of knowledge. The library includes university partners and important library functions in strategic locations for improved support services for the university community. University Special Collections, an important institutional asset for the university and the city of Philadelphia, is visible and accessible for visitors from the city community. Snøhetta's design approach took into account the diversity of the university community, the site conditions and the university's aspirations. The design process included collaboration with the campus community to fully understand the social aspects and future needs of the university. Sited in a prime location on the university's campus, the library is an inspirational destination for the campus and city communities and serves as a change agent, reflective of the future direction of the university.

Kate Wingert-Playdon is Associate Dean and Director of Architecture and Environmental Design at Temple University's Tyler School of Art. Her work addresses the cultural dimension of architecture as exhibited through construction and design histories.







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