

Laban Dance Centre - London, England

Located in Deptford, London, the Laban Dance Center originally started off as the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance, until 1997 when Herzog and de Meuron won a design contest for the new headquarters which would become the Centre we now know today. The dance school has become one of the most prestigious in the world for its renowned education quality. The architecture of the center is also equally as impressive. Its main qualities include the use of a double skin and a sustainable brown roof.

Color was very important when creating the design for this new headquarters, so artist, Michael Craig-Martin, was brought along the project. The color scheme is evident when looking at the facade. The facade of the building is composed of a double skin, the outer being both translucent and transparent polycarbonate panels and the inner being glass, both serving a purpose. The outer polycarbonate panels are colored, thanks to Craig-Martin, and change colors depending on the sun's intensity and brightness, creating different shades of pink, yellow, and greens. These translucent panels serve as protection against the sun's powerful solar glare as well as radiation, helping to keep the temperature regulated. The inner skin is composed of both transparent and translucent glass that serves as a barrier to the outside world. Additionally, the use of glass allows the dancers' shadows to fall on the colored panels and create different shapes and figures on the outer facade that captures the artistic nature of the dance center.

Additionally, another architectural point of interest the Laban Dance Centre has is that it also contains a brown roof at the top. Unlike a greenhouse roof that grows vegetation and other plants, a brown roof focuses on urban recovery. As the surrounding area and the very spot the center is located on goes through construction and development nature is lost, including local

plants, insects and small animals. In particular, the brown roof atop the Laban Dance Center aims at helping an endangered bird, the Black Redstart. It measures 400 meters squared and is built out of concrete from prior construction sites that were demolished. The use of a brown roof, the first one specifically for Black Redstarts, helps to make the center a more “green” building.

Lastly, the double-skin facade helps regulate the thermal and acoustic insulation through natural ventilation. An air curtain is created as air from the outside environment is brought in from the bottom between the two skins and is released at the top through an opening. This “curtain” provides both the thermal and acoustic insulation the dance center needs.

