



**MODERN** DESIGN  
ARCHITECTURE & ART

CREATED BY DISEÑO EARLE | MAY 2008 FREE MAG No.11

**BLOODY ART**

JORDAN EAGLES' BLOODWORKS

**Chanel & Zaha**

ART ON THE MOVE

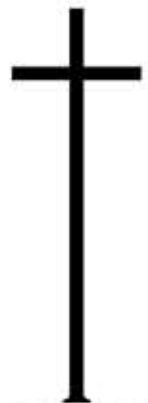
**Ron Arad**

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE DESIGNER

DINING IN THE DARK | ERIC OWEN MOSS | PRAISE THE LORD: CHURCH RENOVATIONS | LEXUS IS-F



**Selexyz bookstore**  
Perhaps if more bookstores looked like this, we'd be more inclined to get stuck into a good book every now and then. Like the Bible, for instance. Located in the Netherlands and designed by Merckx + Girod, the revamp respects the church's original classical architecture while introducing a modern flare ♦



# DESIGN INTERVENTION

COME ALL YE FAITHFUL; WORSHIP WITH US AT THE ALTAR OF MODERN DESIGN

# IMMACULATE RENOVATIONS

Unless you like cold stone, classic arches, stained glass, eerie relics and musty smells, then you probably won't appreciate the beauty of churches. In a bid to make them more aesthetically-pleasing to the mainstream congregation, an architectural trend has arisen in design that sees the traditional place of worship transformed into places even the sexy, stylish and sophisticated would worship. We can't work out whether there's something sacrilegious about the whole thing, but we're fascinated by it, nevertheless. So much so that we've cleverly coined our own term for the movement; *divine design*.

Text: Nick Clarke    Photos: Courtesy of mentioned churches

Converting churches into homes, shops, restaurants and nightclubs, there's seemingly no end to the possibilities when it comes to outing the old and introducing the new. Call us a stick in the mud, but we do imagine we'd feel a little uncomfortable downing tequila shots and revelling like rock stars under the watchful eye of the Virgin Mary or the looming shadow of a crucifix. But the innovative reuse of churches is bringing people back through their heavy wooden doors, even if it is to a Sunday booze-up rather than a Sunday mass.



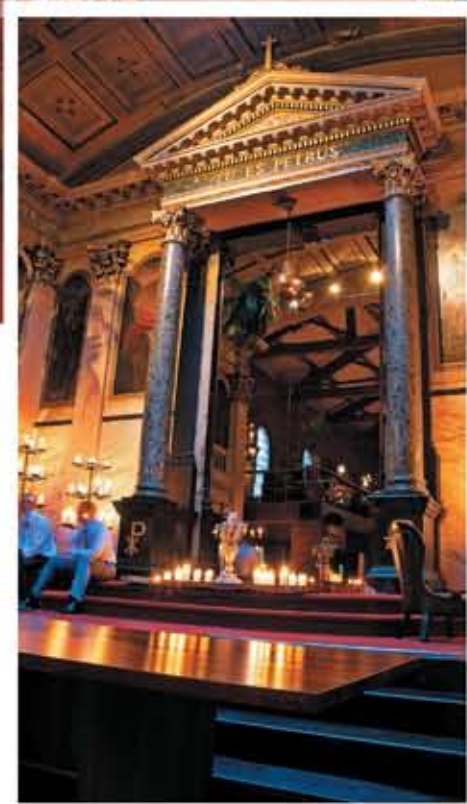
### Alma De Cuba

The Lord provides... You'll get to enjoy more than wine and bread if you take your communion here. Built inside St Peter's Catholic Church, Alma de Cuba is one of Liverpool's most lavish venues ♦



We're particularly devoted to Chapel Utrecht (right page), which sees a simple church building converted into a minimalist, city-slicker pad by Marnix Van De Meer and Rolf Bruggink's Utrecht-based architecture studio, Zecc. The redesign incorporates many of the church's original features, such as the gothic-style stained glass windows, stone crucifixes and original choir organ, while simultaneously implementing super-modern aspects, such as whitewashed spaces and abstract shapes. The organ, which sits on the balcony, acts as both a focal point and room divider, successfully section-

to think the sacrifice would be worth making. Using an 800-year-old Dominican church as its latest branch, upscale Netherlands bookstore Selexyz has found home is where the holy water is in Maastricht, a bible's throw from the Belgian border. Just 100 miles from the aforementioned Chapel Utrecht, this conversion is courtesy of Amsterdam-based architects Merx + Girod and makes the best use of minimal floor space by building upwards rather than outwards. A temple to literature, the Boekhandel Selexyz Dominicanen overlays a sleek, minimalist design onto the framework of

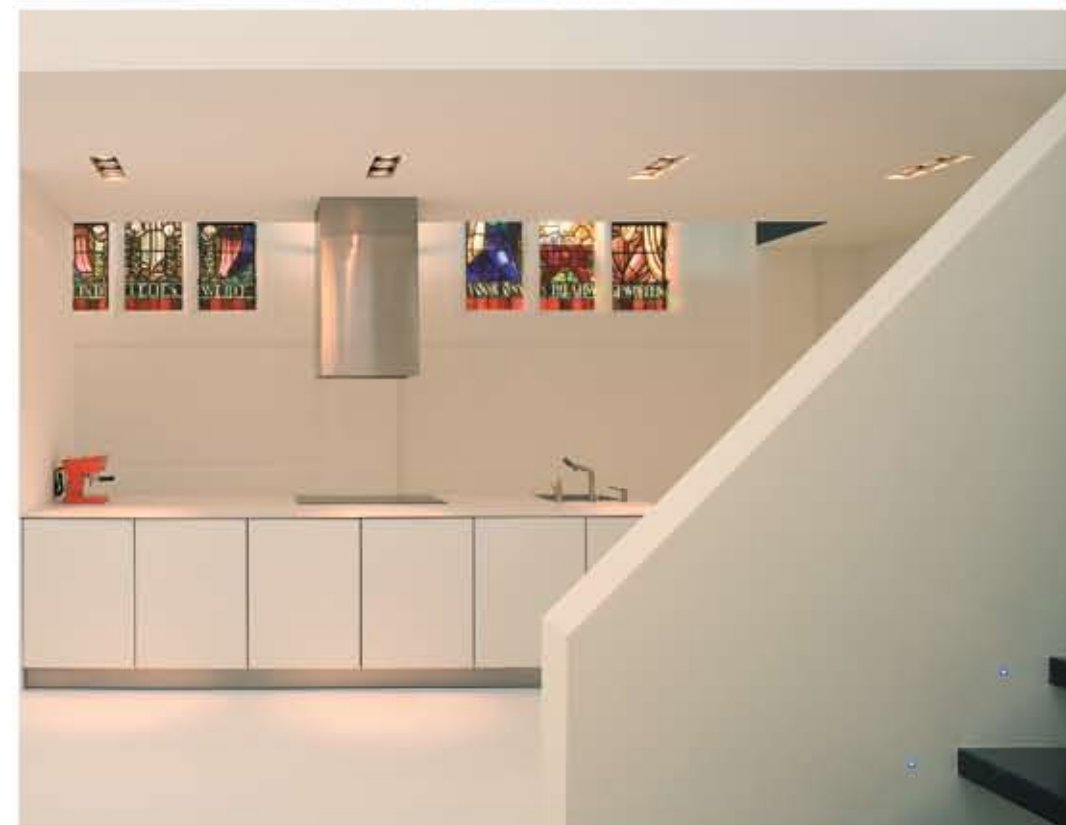


ing off the living room, bedroom, kitchen, dining area and study. The lead of the windows remains, too, creating a striking contrast with the polished white finishes. The design even reuses the church benches as a dining table. New elements include a number of skylights installed in the slanting roof and a completely new window introduced at the front of the building. Indeed, with angelic light shining onto its inhabitants, this could well be the perfect pad for a superstar looking to change their image from wild child to born-again Christian. Perhaps a post-crack Whitney Houston or a recently rehabbed Britney could have a viewing? While it would be a little strange indulging in any sinful activities in this Netherlands nest, we're inclined



### Chapel Utrecht

Going to the chapel... While it may look like a city-slicker-style bachelor pad, this beautiful abode is actually built inside Chapel Utrecht. Stark but stylish, this is one place we wouldn't mind congregating at. Photos courtesy of Cornbread Works ♦



the original classic architecture, clashing dark steel bookcases against intricately carved stone walls. A Coffee Lovers café has been installed near the end, where bookworms can sit against tall pillars and get lost in The New Testament. As with another conversion in the area – The Kruissherenhotel, a former monastery – local authorities insisted that

is also marked by dark wood furniture, chandeliers made from antlers, religious paintings and a mezzanine restaurant that overlooks the ‘pulpit’ below. While it’s still used as a church, that didn’t hold back Finland-based JKMM Architects when they were asked by the Parish of Helsinki to come up with a modern design for the chapel at the Viikki

### **Viikki Urban Centre**

You’ve gotta’ have faith ... With a wooden interior, the church at the Viikki Urban Centre draws is vaguely reminiscent of Noah’s Ark. Minus the animals, of course ♦



Chapel Utrecht Mondrian style windows



the bookstore conversion could be reversed easily and inexpensively in the future. \_\_\_\_\_ Meanwhile, a little closer to home in Liverpool, Alma De Cuba is one of England’s most striking church adaptations. A mecca for peroxide-blond footballers’ wives everywhere, the snazzy Latin restaurant and bar fuses glamorous décor with the original architecture of St Peter’s Catholic Church in Seel Street. With vaulted ceilings, labyrinth-like passageways, authentic church candles flickering in darkened nooks, green palms set against stained glass and Mojitos served on an altar-like bar, this hip hang-out is devilishly decadent. Set against the sound of salsa music rather than a chorus choir, the design

Urban Centre. Characterised by aspen shingles, many of which have turned grey since it was built in 2005, the wooden interior also features a luxurious golden silkscreen behind the altar and dozens of rectangular lights that dangle from the ceiling. Huge glass windows run along one side to allow for sweeping views across the adjoining field, while also shedding light where there was none. Naturally, traditional church elements still remain, and the adjoining congregation hall is like a giant wooden cathedral or the upside-down hull of Noah’s Ark. Filled with light that’s almost blinding at the end of the tunnel-like structure, churchgoers may feel like they’ve already crossed over

to the other side. \_\_\_\_\_ With most resurrected churches being houses of Christianity, it’s only a matter of time before Tom Cruise drives funds into the building of a slick Scientology shrine or Madonna forgoes another adopted child in place of a cool Kabbalah centre. Who knows, perhaps Bin Laden has transformed his local mosque into a Batman-style hideout? Now when you say you’re going to the chapel, you’re not necessarily going to get married. It might be for a bite to eat, a little retail therapy, a boogie on the dance floor or even for a little rest and relaxation in the comfort of your very own home. Whatever it is, this is what we call design intervention.