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Images Twentieth Century Fox

carter & stromberg



produce
holistic
architecture



The highest grossing movie of all time, James Cameron's Avatar has already attained over two billion dollars in box office revenue. Largely buoyed by 3D ticket sales, where stereoscopic glasses provide a spatial tangibility to the moon of Pandora. On this moon, humanity's efforts to garner a valuable superconducting compound are impeded by an indigenous humanoid race, the Na'vi. The encroachment by humans in circa 2154 on their Neolithic society recalls American colonialism.

Pandora was brought to life over a lengthy production schedule rivalling Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey. Two production designers, Rick Carter known for his almost exclusive work on Steven Spielberg and Robert Zemeckis films, and former visual effects designer Robert Stromberg

oversaw a bevy of the industry's most recognizable concept artists aided by botanist Jodie Holt.

The result is a startling world. Mountains more than 16 km across float well above Pandora's surface, kept aloft via strong magnetic fields. Home-trees, towering over 300 m with a 100-plus m base, dwarf Earth's Sequoias and feature a central helical core offering residence to Na'vi clans. This design hints at arguably Avatar's most fascinating concept, a holistic architecture. One exemplified by the Na'vi queue; braid-like neural tendrils that extend from the Na'vi scalp, allowing them to directly connect with other life forms, surrounding flora and the rest of Pandora via its bioluminescent Tree of Souls. This is a literal evocation of the Gaia theory or Buddhism's oneness of self and environment. Despite the Na'vi's

Neolithic culture, they live in a responsive environment that facilitates their general interactions, representing a sensual and intelligent architecture.

It is a notion we have just begun to explore with the fusion of emergent technology and architecture. Personified by Zaha Hadid and Moritz Waldemeyer's collaboration on the Z Island kitchen or more commonly in artistic installations that instigate new ways of interaction, from United Visual Artists Volume to LAB[au]'s Dexia Tower Touch. Something more than just smart architecture, rather a holistic synchronicity between architecture, its surroundings and occupants. Striving towards a more harmonious unity, perhaps the architectural equivalent of Raymond Kurzweil's hypothesis of singularity.