

## F22 Foto Space

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American University of Sharjah

Located within adjoining floors of an office tower above the bustling streets of the Causeway Bay district in Hong Kong, the F22 Foto Space is a gallery and cultural hub for the exhibition and incubation of photography and design. The gallery is a less formal extension of the F11 Photography Museum, located a few minutes away in the Happy Valley neighborhood of Hong Kong. By comparison to the global scope of the F11 Museum, F22 is meant to promote young, local photographers and artists from the Hong Kong and East Asian region. The brief for the space included a flexible event and gallery space, a small bookshop, office space for curators, a climate controlled photo archive room, a social space for staff and a conference room and lounge for meetings and events. The project is an interior design for the adaptive reuse of a former night club and commercial office space.

The focal points of the design include a circular stair that connects the two floors of gallery space and a rotating entry door in the form of a camera lens. The design team worked closely with engineers to remove a large section of the existing concrete floor plate and translate camera components into structural elements. The stair features a structural balustrade that hangs from a reinforced plate in the ceiling above. The twisting bars of the balustrade create transparency through the staircase and elegantly curve inward to blend into each of the stair treads. The base of stair is inscribed with a pattern that references a camera shutter mechanism and the details and mechanical connections of the stair are also modeled on the parts of a Leica camera body. Inspired by camera aperture, the circular staircase plays with light, shadow and speed. The overall structure creates a play between transparency and opaqueness that evokes the medium of photography and creates a unique backdrop for events.

To create a cinematic entrance, the design team studied camera development and used design elements from various generations of camera lenses to design the door. The aperture in the ceiling above the door is a lighting feature that controls

the amount of light at the entrance space. Like early camera bodies and lenses, the spiral stair and entry door are fabricated from brass and then painted with black. Like vintage cameras, over time the black paint will wear off, revealing the brass underneath.

Other notable features of the space include a sleek bookshop that disappears behind a display wall, display screens and lighting integrated into the ceiling coffers. An espresso bar named Café 22 offers a gathering place for informal visits and a meeting point for cultural activities. The two galleries on upper and lower levels are designed in black and white, forming a dialogue between the two floors.

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**Design Team:**  
 Carlow Architecture & Design  
 LK&B Architects, Hong Kong

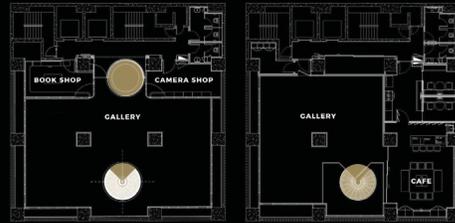
**Structural Engineers:**  
 Befrank and Yasuhiro Kaneda Structure

**f22 Designers & Fabricators:**  
 L&A in collaboration with  
 Hoi Chi Ng and Roy Ng

**Branding and Signage Designer:**  
 Mikisulab

**Contractors and Fabricators:**  
 Made in L&A with AVI, Buddy Concept,  
 Chi Keung Kee, Golden Smart, Linko, Proffit

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