

Groundbreaking New Headquarters and Creative Studio for Fast Retailing Designed by Allied Works Architecture Catalyzes Cultural Shift in How Global Company Lives and Works

**“Uniqlo City” Creates Innovative New Model for Progressive Workspace
On International Level Fostering Dialogue, Exchange, and Collaboration**



Exterior view of Uniqlo City's reading room. Photo by Nacasa & Partners.

May 24, 2017 – New York, NY – A new, global paradigm for workspace has been launched in Japan with the design and completion of Uniqlo City, the groundbreaking new headquarters and flagship creative studio for Fast Retailing, one of the world's leading apparel companies. Designed by Allied Works Architecture (AWA), Uniqlo City is a creative catalyst for the brand, inspiring a new way of working for Fast Retailing's staff of over 1,000 employees. The 200,000-square-foot project—spanning more than four acres of continuous interior space—was planned as a “city” of dynamic and interlaced neighborhoods, with flexible work lofts and communal spaces including libraries, plazas, lounges, and digital information hubs. The first progressive workspace of its kind in Japan, the “mini-city” fosters collaboration and exchange among employees and supports a dynamic interplay between product development, operations, and distribution around the globe, setting a new standard for an international headquarters working across cultures.

Located in the Ariake District, on the shore of Tokyo Bay, Uniqlo City is AWA's first project in Asia, and follows the firm's commission in 2013 to create Fast Retailing's creative studio and fabrication facility in New York for the brand's subsidiary labels Theory and Helmut Lang.

“Given Allied Work's expertise creating innovative and bespoke workspaces for a variety of companies, the firm was a clear choice to create our new global headquarters,” said John Jay, President of Fast Retailing Global Creative. “The design for Uniqlo City sets a precedent for creative workspaces on an international scale, promotes internal exchange of ideas in a way not previously seen in Japan, and enhances the community in Ariake, a growing district on Tokyo's waterfront. Our new headquarters will foster both individual creativity and group productivity. It empowers our employees to do their best work so that we can

better serve the needs of a diversifying global marketplace and ultimately create a brand with greater value and meaning in the lives of our customers.”

“Our collaboration with Fast Retailing has resulted in the creation of a new design paradigm for what a workspace can be: one that opens the company to new methods of working, enhances employee experience, and inspires creativity,” said Brad Cloepfil, AWA founding principal. “Grounded in the ideas of exchange and community, Uniqlo City bridges cultural values and working practices of the East and the West to foster connections between individuals, departments, disciplines, and cultures. The design enables Fast Retailing to stay ahead of emerging trends and technologies and supports the company’s continued growth to become the world’s fashion leader.”

AWA’s design for Uniqlo City takes inspiration from the energy and organizational structure of a city. Located on the top level of an existing six-story building, the project brings distinction and human scale to the building’s massive four-acre floor plate that is proportioned to the needs of warehousing and distribution functions located below. Staff enter the reception area, which serves as a bridge from Ariake to Uniqlo City, and access the floor’s amenities through a meandering interior street that runs throughout the length of the floor, punctuated by social spaces and interior courts. A reading room, filled with international texts on business, retail, design, and style, and cutting-edge digital resources available in a space called the Answer Lab support research on industry trends and realization of new ideas and innovations.

Work lofts provide space for focus, dialogue, and creative development for employees and encourage transparency between departments. The lofts are connected back to the central street by porches, areas where informal meetings can take place, and to a suite of design and production studios for focused group work. Lounges, located within and between different work lofts, give employees an area to recharge and reflect.

A Great Hall in the southwest corner of the building serves as a sort of “village green” or gathering space for all staff, allowing the company, for the first time in its history, to have one space where all employees can come together for office-wide presentations and product reviews. This flexible space can be divided to support smaller work sessions on a day-to-day basis. Staff meals are held at the opposite corner of the building at the Daily Special, which provides tranquil views of the surrounding cityscape.

About Allied Works Architecture

Allied Works Architecture is a 40-person practice led by Brad Cloepfil from offices in Portland, Oregon, and New York City. Guided by principles of craft and innovation, Allied Works creates designs that resonate with their specificity of place and purpose. The firm’s practice is grounded in the belief that architecture provides meaningful new insight into its surrounding physical and ideological landscapes. Using a research-based approach, Allied Works distills the elemental principles that drive each of their projects and transforms these into material, shape, and structure—architectural designs that engage public imagination and amplify a city’s cultural legacy.

Founded in 1994, Allied Works is widely recognized for its cultural projects, among them: Studio Bell, home of the National Music Centre of Canada, in Calgary, Alberta; the Clyfford Still Museum in Denver, Colorado; the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis; the Museum of Arts and Design in New York; Seattle Art Museum; the University of Michigan Museum of Art; Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in the Dallas Arts District; and the Schnitzer Center for Art and Design at the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon.

Allied Works has also designed and completed private residences, offices, and creative workspaces, such as its design for Wieden + Kennedy Agency, which radically transformed a historic warehouse in Portland’s Pearl District into a world headquarters that has become a benchmark for adaptive reuse and workplace architecture; the Dutchess County Estate in Stanfordville, New York; and Pixar Animation Studios in Emeryville, California.

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Major current projects include the renovation of Eleven Madison Park in New York City; the new National Veterans Memorial Museum in Columbus, Ohio; and a U.S. Embassy compound in Maputo, Mozambique.

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