

Red Dot Award: Design Concept



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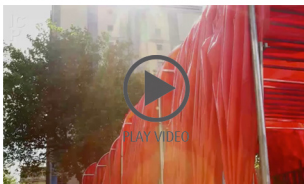
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People's Canopy

The People's Canopy are mobile structures that, when powered by bicycles, can be parked through the city. When parked, the canopies expand like accordions to cover entire streets, turning spaces for automobiles into spaces for people.



The People's Canopy is a concept for retractable canopies that are mobile when powered by bicycles. As citizens work together to pedal the bicycles, the canopy expands through the city and extends over the length of entire streets, linking disconnected public space. The People's Canopy is a two-story-high expandable roof structure on bicycle wheels that can accommodate up to ten cyclists. It is designed to collapse to the size of a double-decker bus so that it can be pedalled from one location to another. When parked, a canopy opens up like an accordion measuring up to 12 metres in length and 10 metres in span to cover entire streets. Spaces for automobiles are turned into spaces for pedestrians and events.

This design was first commissioned by the city of Preston in the United Kingdom and part of an art programme for urban intervention and events. The aim of the programme is to connect underused public spaces and re-energise Preston's grand but declining historic centre. Urban sprawl and air-conditioned shopping malls have driven residents away from the open streets and public spaces of the rainy city. The design references expandable canopies that are popular in Southern China. These are typically used by small businesses, such as restaurants and bars, to temporarily and informally expand their spaces into parking lots and public sidewalks.

Over a dozen canopies were designed and fabricated in Beijing, then assembled in Preston. A series of events were organised around the People's Canopy, which were paraded through the city. The canopies were also installed in various locations around the city, linking public squares and markets. These canopied streets housed a myriad of cultural events, including the Lancashire Encounters Festival with musical performances, a street theatre, Preston Pride, and Burlesque. As a mobile cultural venue, the People's Canopy will remain a fixture in the city of Preston for years to come.

Following its debut in Preston, the People's Canopy were featured in the 2015 Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture in Hong Kong. Installed in Kowloon Park they were continually relocated, expanded and contracted to support various public activities. Events were planned for the canopies but the public was also encouraged to engage in unexpected ways.

Design

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