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BEYOND TOPIARY



Chicago's Merchandise Mart Plaza is Redesigned as a True Riverfront Destination

Following an innovative Social Spaces built environment at the Merchandise Mart's expansive Urban Boardwalk for NeoCon 2019, a dedicated design team of Gensler, Confluence, Olin and Haworth once again revitalized the famed riverfront, this time with a permanent installation.

The newly redesigned plaza celebrates the river as a second shoreline, anchoring Chicago's Merchandise Mart, the largest commercial building in the world, with a relaxed, multi-use park outfitted with versatile, design-driven luxury outdoor furniture. To create welcoming environments, the group imagined the area as rooms, each with a different vision and purpose from stylish dining and lounging to pop-up workspaces.

Through unparalleled views of the city's architecture and ample recreational opportunities for kayaking and fishing as well as outdoor performances, the waterfront offers a cultural connection for residents and visitors alike. The thoughtful balance of greenery and openly spaced seating areas positions the boardwalk as a unique retreat that simultaneously pays tribute to Chicago's lively Riverwalk experience.

[Click here to see the JANUS et Cie furnishings used in this installation.](#)
Videography by Ten12 Productions, courtesy of Haworth.

The team that worked on this installation includes:

Gensler:

Eric Gannon
Benjy Ward
Nolan Loh
Stephen Miller
Todd Heiser
Jessica Gracey

Confluence:

Ted Wolff, PLA, Senior Principal
Craig A. Soncrant, PLA, ASLA, SCUP, Principal
Kevin Stewart, PLA, ASLA, Senior Project Manager
Jie Dai, ASLA, Landscape Designer

Olin:
Susan Weiler and Ryan Buckley