

METROPOLIS



ARCHITECTURE AND
DESIGN AT ALL SCALES
June 2015

A to Z: Big ideas
changing the way
we work

Three decades of
Emerging Voices in
architecture

Susana Torre
reviews *Latin
America: In
Construction*

A workplace
for everyone?

COLLABORATION Rio Bravo

Named for its riverlike curves, Janus et Cie's new collection, Rio, flows well with the ethos of a company known for uniting style and durability with a playful attitude. The line of seven powder-coated aluminum benches marks the company's second collaboration with Los Angeles-based Rios Clementi Hale Studios (RCHS), following the success of *Civic*, a 2012 custom-designed installation of bubblegum-pink chairs, benches, and café tables in L.A.'s Grand Park.

Rio, too, began as a custom project. Originally installed in the plaza of Tysons Corner Center, a mixed-use shopping center in Virginia, Rio integrated itself into the fabric of the area. "The benches can accommodate the busy foot traffic," says Janice Feldman, president and CEO of Janus et Cie, "but also elevate a standard seating arrangement to a space evocative of a modern art installation."

The immediate success of Rio led the company to include it in its new collection. And while Rio was developed to highlight a unique shopping experience, its main strength lies in

its easy adaptability to a broad range of configurations. "It can be used as a continuous, large sculptural element in an urban plaza, like Tysons, but the pieces can also be used as repeated elements in smaller seating groups," says Mark Rios, a founding principal of RCHS and the designer behind Rio. "The benches also work at a small scale as individual pieces in a residential landscape or intimate garden."

The light aluminum construction of the modules allows for easy changes in layout, while making them impervious to the elements. And though the orange hue of the Tysons Corner benches is a nod to the area's peach-orchard-filled history, the new collection will be available in more subdued finishes such as white, bronze, and metallic gray. Launching at this month's NeoCon fair, it will be relevant for a wide range of applications—shopping centers, parks, streetscapes. Rio will "weave seamlessly into the natural surroundings of any public space," Feldman says, "while remaining complementary to the constant motion of public environments."

—Dora Sapunar

The Rio system (top) is made up of backless, backed, concave, and convex elements that combine to form sinuous shapes. At the Tysons Corner Center, people can use Rio in a variety of postures (right).



TOP TO BOTTOM:
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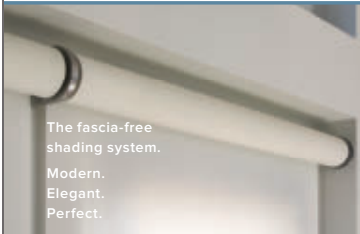
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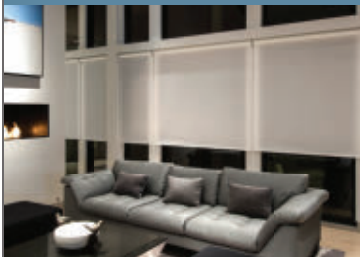
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