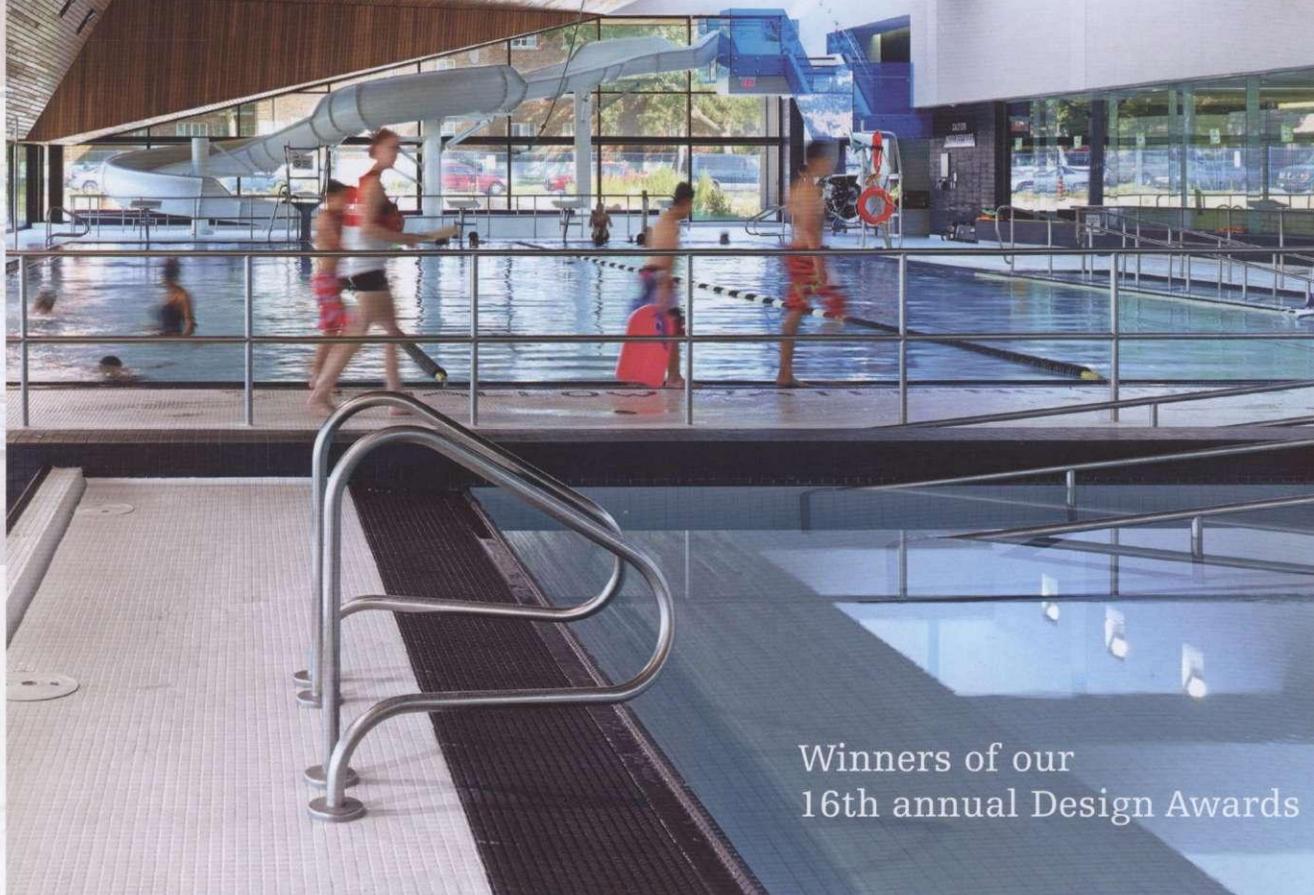


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RETAIL

World Kids Books, Vancouver

Red Box ID, Vancouver



With online competition killing small bookstores across North America, Red Box ID did a fundamental rethink of the genre on behalf of its client, World Kids Books in Vancouver. The firm felt that mass-market bookstores tend to be dull while online stores eliminate the fun of dealing with a human being. There was a place, the designers felt, for a store promising an enhanced interactive showroom experience.

A more specific challenge was that of showcasing 10,000 books in a 460-square-foot space. The client wanted to avoid the easy solution of junking up the display with stacks of books and lengthy perimeter shelves filled to bursting.

The sales floor accommodates 2,400 books at a time, with arches breaking up the potential monotony of linear shelving; the other books rotate from the stockroom every few weeks. This solution meets the client's need for inventory and the customer's need to experience a fresh selection.

The rhythm and bold contrast of black walls and white arches, the room's mirror-image symmetry, and the pops of colour in the seating ottomans draw in passersby. Then, there is the use of false perspective. The width of the store tapers from 19 feet at the front to 14 feet at the rear, and the arches in the colonnade shrink proportionately. Here, Red Box ID exploited a favourite trick of stage designers made famous by Borromini's Galleria Spada in Rome, a Baroque masterpiece of optical illusion powered by diminishing rows of columns that makes the space seem five times longer.

Design team: Maria Drugoveiko and Simon Spacewalker

"There's a strong idea here"—MT

"A simple idea well executed. The store doesn't talk down to the kids"—MP

"Clean and simple"—AW