

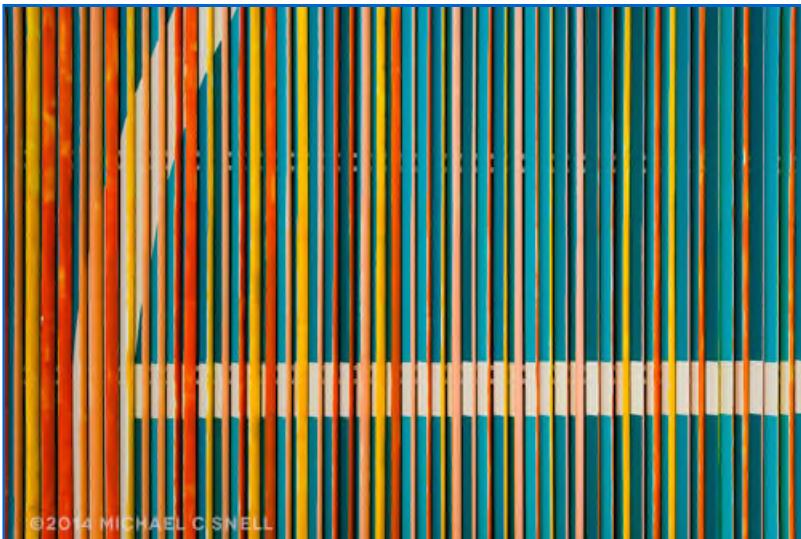
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## [A huge surprise in Cartagena, Spain](#)

25Nov14



I'll be honest. Sometimes, when traveling on a press trip and I'm told that we'll be doing a site inspection of a convention center, I'm sure my eyes roll back a bit. But sometimes things surprise you and Cartagena had one more card up its sleeve. [El Batel](#), the new conference center in Cartagena, Spain, was a huge — and welcome — surprise. A shock, even. I'm honestly trying to think of some kind of event I could attend here.

The outside didn't give much hint as to what was waiting inside, although I did dig the crazy optic-nerve-bending mural (above) that covered one side of the building and acted as signage when viewed from a certain angle. That should have given me a clue, but I was still shocked upon entering.



White and orange – what a brave choice. I usually think of convention centers as being a blank canvas for the events to make into something of their own but El Batel was a statement all its own. A very bold statement, and one I liked. A lot.



Walking down the white ramp, we passed several break-out rooms, also in vibrant colors. But, truthfully, I was distracted. Because it felt like I was walking into the future. Or, at least, some vision of the future that I'd only seen in science fiction movies.

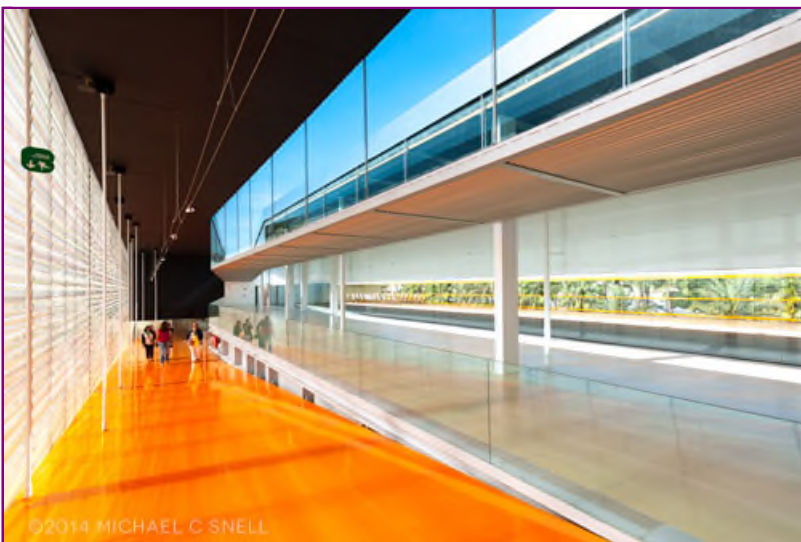


Auditorium number one. El Batel sits right on the waterfront but we're still above sea level at this point. Keep that in mind for when we get to the second auditorium.

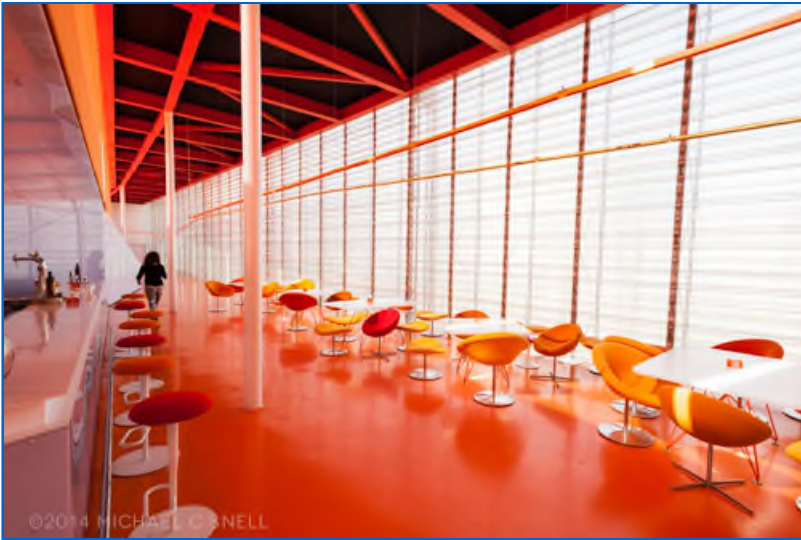




By the time we reached the lower auditorium, we were under the sea level of the adjacent Mediterranean. The colors of this space reflected that, although it was purely through the materials used and the lighting. You felt you were underwater, but it was all by design.



Heading back up the orange ramp, past the ground floor, we were bound for lunch at the rooftop-level restaurant and lounge.





I'll reserve judgement for all property inspections in the future. I loved El Batel and could have spent hours photographing it. It would be amazing to see the space transform itself at night, and to see it alive with some event. Anyone want to invite me to present at a photo workshop in Cartagena? I know just the place.

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