



Green Building Elements

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<http://greenbuildingelements.com/files/2008/10/academy-of-sciences-indoor-shot.jpg> This post, like the masses of crowds, makes its way inside the just opened [Academy of Sciences Museum \(http://greenbuildingelements.com/2008/09/26/academy-of-sciences-museum-finally-opens-in-san-francisco/\)](http://greenbuildingelements.com/2008/09/26/academy-of-sciences-museum-finally-opens-in-san-francisco/). And why not as the Museum just became the largest LEED Platinum building in the world as well as the world's most sustainable museum building. Take that [Louvre \(http://www.louvre.fr/llv/commun/home.jsp?bmLocale=en\)](http://www.louvre.fr/llv/commun/home.jsp?bmLocale=en).

As a Green building, the designers highlighted the new qualities but the also the previously used materials. What could be more famous then the seahorse railing and the colorful original tiles that surround the old favorite alligator swamp exhibit? Both the unique decorations are back. Okay, we'll get to the bigger stuff.

One of the biggest challenges for this building was to optimize the natural light from the 200 some odd roof skylights to reach the living rainforest and coral reef. Unfortunately no LEED for Aquariums exists so the designers had balance radical ideas with practicality because they could take a chance that the wildlife wouldn't survive.

The new aquariums displays contain twice as much water as the original, however they use less potable water because of filtration and recycling systems that purify water piped in from the Pacific Ocean. They purify the nitrate wastes using natural systems, ensuring that aquarium water can be recycled and reused. We also liked that they used 50% recycled content for the aquarium's concrete.

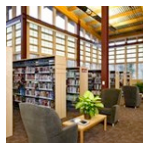
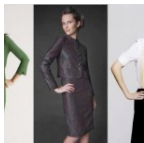
Of course, everything can't be perfectly green in a building. We cornered Water Planet designer [Tom Hennes \(http://www.thincdesign.com/\)](http://www.thincdesign.com/) who (together with [Urban A&O \(http://www.urbanao.com/\)](http://www.urbanao.com/)) designed the exhibit's innovative wall treatments, about things that he would have liked to changed in regard to making the aquariums more green he said, "It's hard to live without fiberglass."

Even with the fiberglass we're happy to be living with the fishes in this extraordinary green icon.

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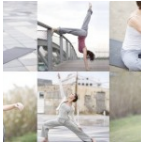
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