Designers speak about the 9/11 Memorial Museum at the World Trade Center

"The pavilion takes a bold stance in order to reframe adjacent spaces, highlighting diverse conditions and complex emotions. It's intended to provide equal parts insight, comfort, and hope."

—Aaron Dorf of Snøhetta
"Our tools as architects are typically space-planning, form-making, and material specification. The museum reminded me that, when we see our palette as including light, sound, and ephemera, we have the ability to create even more powerful, evocative, and transcendent experiences."
—Margaret Sullivan of Margot Sullivan Studio

"Descending into the foundations of the old towers is unforgettable. It seems to capture all the sadness and pain of being a New Yorker that day. Yet the hope and optimism return when you rise back to the plaza's daylight."
—Shawn Sullivan of the Rockwell Group

"Procession is an integral part of memorials, and here the whole story is told on the ramp going down, through still images, narratives, and objects, contrasting the many with the one."
—Tom Hennes of Thinc

All New Yorkers, perhaps all Americans, already walk around with a personal museum of September 11, 2001, in their heads. So how do you design a physical space that can embody, for everyone who visits, the emotional, political, and factual aspects of the terrorist attacks that killed 2,977 people at ground zero, in the destruction of the original World Trade Center, as well as 224 in Washington and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania? The four-firm answers to that question have taken shape as the 9/11 Memorial Museum. To serve its 6-acre underground entry, the cantilevered foundation was cantilevered by the footprints of the twin towers. The 13,000 square feet descending all the way to the bedrock is the work of Davis Brody Bond's Steven M. Davis, Thinc principal Tom Hennes and local Projects principal Jake Barton collaborated on the exhibition design. Together, the Space, the artifacts, and the digital interpretations tell the story.

Photosynthesis: Huge columns recycled from the World Trade Center stand in Sundekett & Associates retail for the 9/11 Memorial Museum, otherwise designed by Davis Brody Bond. The pavilion is flanked by the footprints of the memorial, completed by Michael Maltzan with the firm now known as MPMB Landscape Architecture, and surrounded by the pebbles of the financial district. Photography: Jin Lee.

A visitor's interactive tables allow visitors to pull up additional information about the victims pictured on the screens. Photography: Jin Lee.

Suspended over the museum's basement level, a piece of structural steel beam witnesses to the place's impact between the 82nd and 98th stories of the north tower. Photography: James Gwing Otto.
"A museum doesn’t need to be finished. It can be a platform for a changing set of experiences."
—Jake Barton of Local Projects

"The plaza has become the life thing, the museum the death thing. The balance is what makes it successful."
—Peter Walker of PWP Landscape Architecture

"The museum does what architecture and design should do—make something real, palpable, and visceral."
—Andre Kikoski of Andre Kikoski Architect
“Our four big concerns were authenticity, memory, emotion, and scale.”
—Steven M. Davis of Davis Brody Bond

“The integration of architecture, exhibits, and immersive experiences clearly sets a new bar.”
—Todd DeGarmo of Studios Architecture
"The memorial is more abstract, the museum more didactic. But I've always seen them as one entity, conceived together. One can't exist without the other."

—Michael Arad of Handel Architects

"As a member of the jury for the memorial, I also followed the museum closely from the beginning, with visits to the construction site. But it's different when you see the space with the lighting and the collection, creating a relationship between the artifacts and the volumes. It's thoughtful and strong."

—Enrique Noroin of TEN Arquitectos