

## TIFF Lightbox animates downtown Toronto

Consulting engineering firms helped to realize the TIFF Bell Lightbox that opened in time for the Toronto International Film Festival last month.

The five-storey film centre is combined with a 42-storey residential and commercial tower at the northwest corner of King Street West and John Street downtown.

For the director of TIFF, Piers Handing, the project has huge cultural significance: "We're living at a watershed moment in our history. The Word -- dominant in our culture for 500 years -- is now being challenged by the visual universe. The linear style of thought represented by print is being overtaken by the non-linear, multi-channel nature of the moving image.

"That's why we're convinced there is an urgency to teach and cultivate an understanding of the moving image - in all its diversity. We want to show great films from around the world as tools for communication, understanding and change on a global scale," wrote Handing.

The Lightbox provides a new home for the film festival organizers and is intended to be an "incubator" for young film makers. But the complex is also open to the public, with a three-storey public atrium, as well as five cinemas that will show "great films from around the world."

The architects for the project were KPMB. Consulting engineers include Jablonsky, Ast and Partners (structural), SNC-Lavalin-LKM (mechanical/electrical), Leber Rubes (life safety), Aercoustics Engineering (acoustical), RWDI Engineering (wind study), MMM (transportation), Pivotal Lighting Affiliated Engineers (lighting), Mulvey and Banani (security), Ehvert Engineering (IT), NAK Design Group (landscape), Peter Smith Architect (theatre consultant), Helyar & Associates (costing), and National Show Systems and Azcar Technologies (audio visual).

A "super-scaled" Douglas Fir canopy stretches along the building's King Street. The shadows of people moving around inside the building are cast on the building's upper glass "creating a cinematic dimension to the exterior."