Renders vs. Reality, Projects From Renowned Architects: Before and After

By Hana Abdel   July 18, 2020

Presented by **ENSCAPE™**

Save this picture!
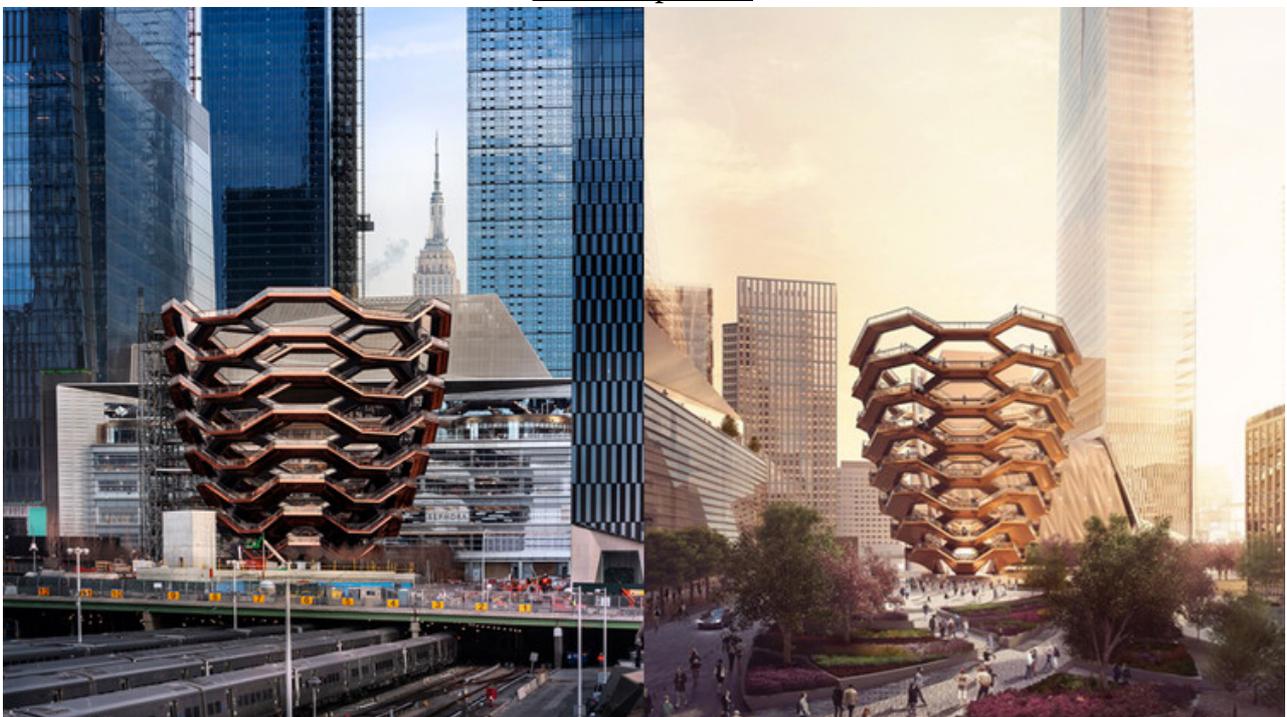
Courtesy of Getty Images / Forbes Massie

It is nearly impossible nowadays not to present accompanying renders when proposing a new project. No matter the method, software or style that is used, it is a valuable reference that bares more practical weight than one might think. Not only can it be one of the closest possible representations of the architect's vision, if approved, it can also become a promise to clients, investors, and the general public.

[+ 15](#)

When it comes to works from renowned architects, the render becomes a critical reference to the project participants and to the entire architectural community. A lot of details can be developed and considered when creating the images. In most cases, special attention is brought to the lighting, materials, and context in order to make the most accurate representation possible.

Render accuracy is extremely important, particularly in the early design phases, since detailed and well-executed visuals can denote issues and allow designers, engineers, and builders to anticipate potential complications that would otherwise require project compromises. A quality render can become a tool to getting the desired result at completion.

Renowned architects and their teams share a range of examples of how meticulous consideration of visualizations can help achieving inspiring works of architecture.

Musée Atelier Audemars Piguet / BIG + ATELIER BRÜCKNER + CCHE

Courtesy of BIG

For the Musée Atelier Audemars Piguet, the renders clearly highlight the spiraling form which proved to be one of the main technical difficulties of the project.

© Iwan Baan

The Musée Atelier's spiral-shaped pavilion, designed by BIG and realized by the Swiss architecture office CCHE, seamlessly rises on walls of structural curved glass. A feat of engineering and design, it is the first construction of its kind to be built at such altitude.

Beirut Terraces / Herzog & de Meuron

Courtesy of Benchmark

In this case, the design principles are directly seen through the early renders. The composition and openings would have been important to visualize, particularly since the levels overlap.

© Iwan Baan

Five principles define the project: layers and terraces, inside and outside, vegetation, views and privacy, light and identity. The result is a vertically layered building; slabs of varying sizes allow for interplay between openness and privacy that fosters flexible living between inside and outside.

Vessel Public Landmark / Heatherwick Studio
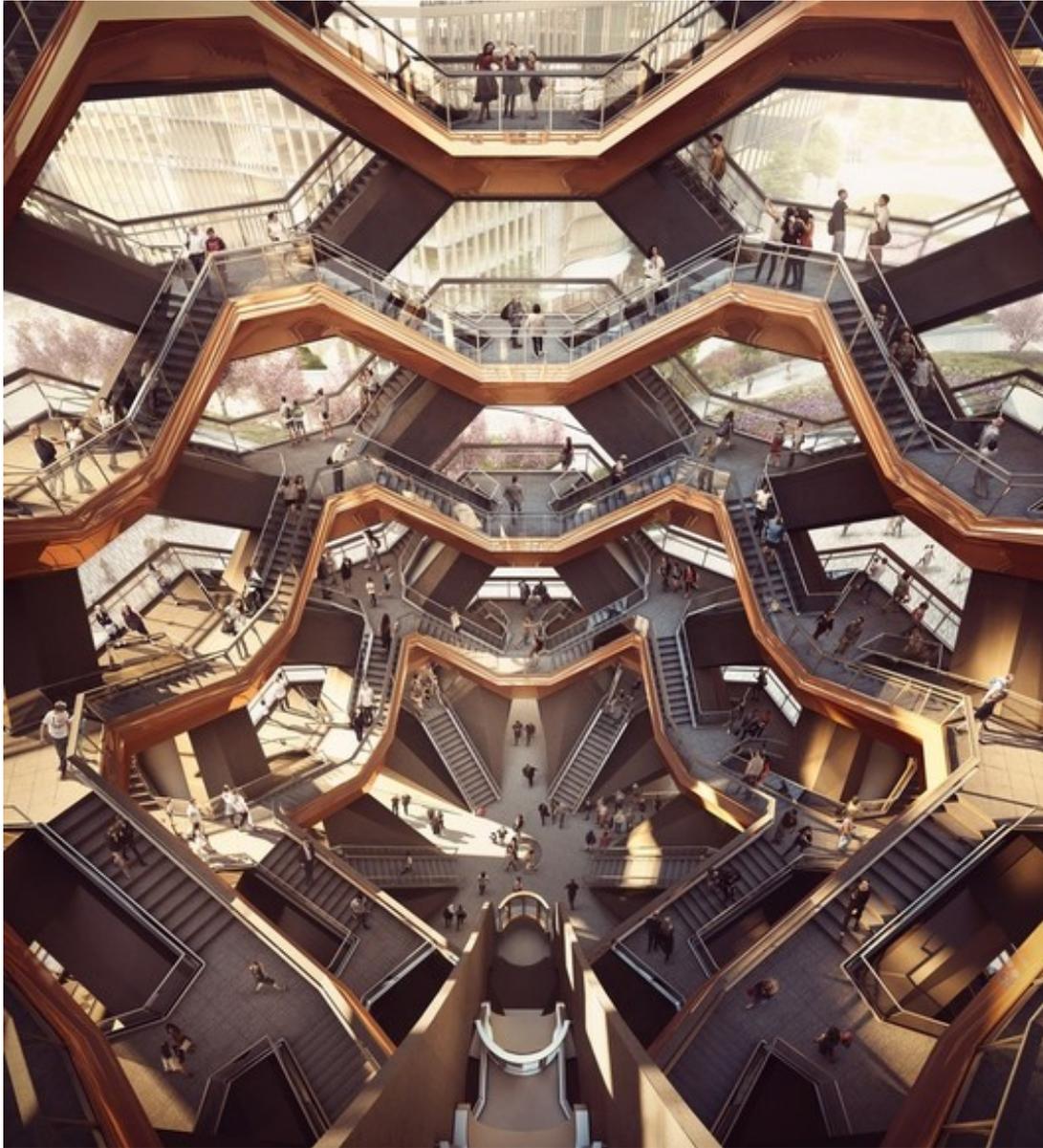
Courtesy of Forbes Massie_Heatherwick Studio

Renders can also be useful in understanding a project's relation to its surroundings and the way it will be used.

Courtesy of Getty Images

> Part of the challenge was to create something memorable that would not be overwhelmed by the surrounding cluster of towers, or the scale of the new public space above the train platform.

Grace Farms / SANAA

Courtesy of Grace Farms and SANAA

Here is another example of a project working in relationship to its surroundings. In fact, a render can encourage an architect to scale back their work, depending on the context.

In this case, the images also transmit the beautiful flow and fine aesthetics of the center.

© Dean Kaufman

> SANAA's goal was to make the architecture of the River become part of the landscape without drawing attention to itself, or even feeling like a building, with the hope that those who are on the property will have a greater enjoyment of the beautiful environment and changing seasons through the spaces and experience created by the River.

Grove at Grand Bay / BIG

Courtesy of BIG

> The two towers of the Grove at Grand Bay respond to the surroundings and to each other, to give optimum views at every level. The towers take off from the ground to capture the full breadth of panoramic views from sailboat bays and the marina to the Miami skyline. The dancing motion of the towers creates a new landmark in the community.

© Rasmus Hjortshøj

The Shed, a Center for the Arts / Diller Scofidio + Renfro

Courtesy of Diller Scofidio + Renfro and The Rockwell Group

> The Shed's open infrastructure can be permanently flexible for an unknowable future and responsive to variability in scale, media, technology, and the evolving needs of artists.
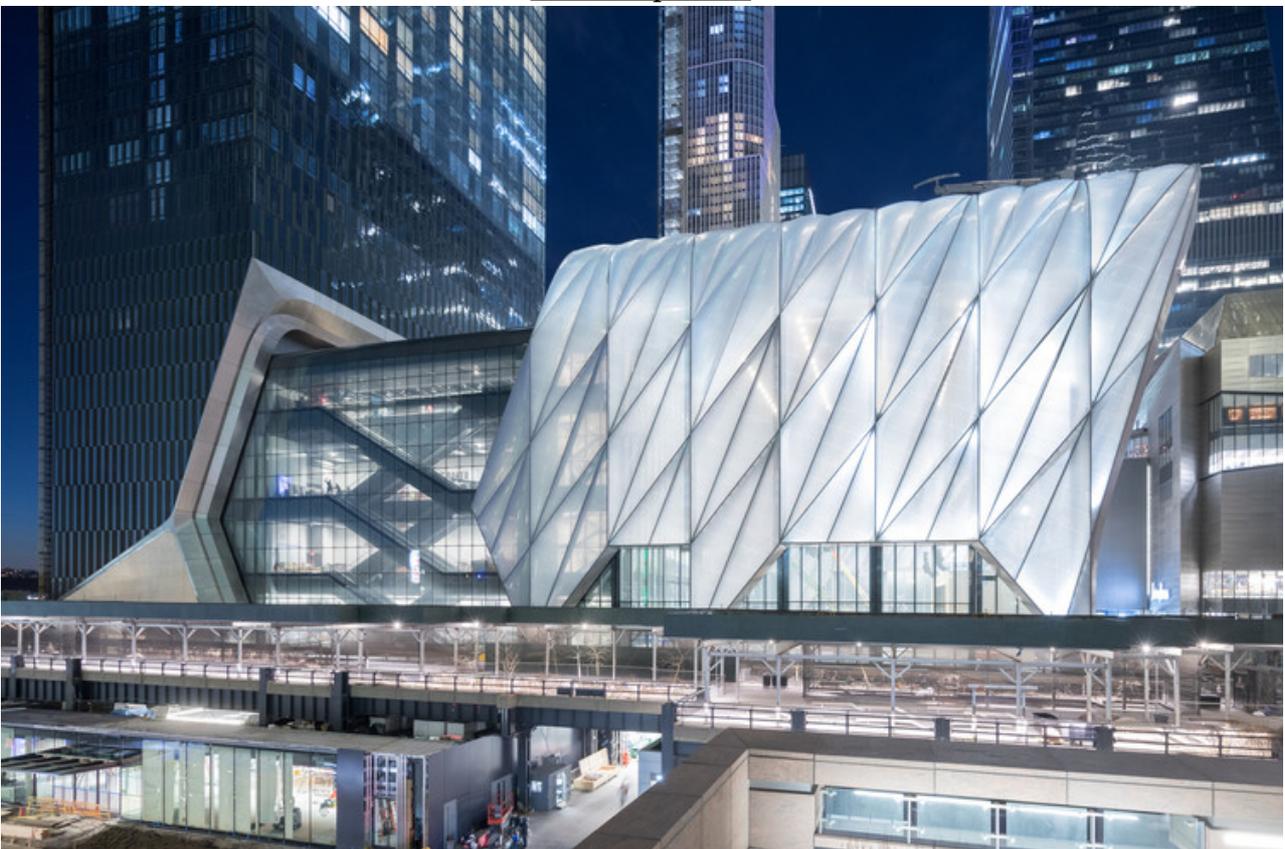
© Iwan Baan

Oasia Hotel Downtown / WOHA

Courtesy of WOHA

The Oasia Hotel renders not only showcase the multitude of design interventions, but they also show how the building can become a beacon in the midst of the city-scape.

© Patrick Bingham-Hall

> Unlike the sleek and sealed skyscrapers that evolved out of the temperate west, this tropical "living tower" offers an alternative image to the sleek technology of the genre.

Note: The quoted texts are excerpts from the archived descriptions of each project, previously sent by the architects. Find more reference projects in this My ArchDaily folder created by the author.

Related Article

[Architects' Diverse Positions on Visualization: From Hyper-Realistic Renderings to Digital Collages](#)