

INTERIORS AWARDS

**Entertainment**  
Gensler

**Client**  
Hyundai Capital

**Location**  
Seoul, South Korea

# hyundai capital convention hall



80

contractdesign.com

JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2018

By Jean Nayar  
Photography by  
Nacasa & Partners

The double-height space captures the sophisticated and contemporary aesthetic of the Hyundai brand while accommodating a wide range of activities, including training sessions, seminars, meetings, performances, and parties.

When Ted Chung, CEO of consumer finance company Hyundai Capital, tasked Gensler's Philippe Paré with redesigning the conference center interiors at the company's headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, his mandate was simple: reinvent what a multipurpose assembly space can do.

"It's always important for the client to set a clear vision and let us do what we do best," says Paré, a design principal at Gensler in London who led the team that created the restrained, rarefied hall. And having successfully collaborated with the firm on several previous projects, Hyundai readily offered Gensler free reign to achieve that mission.

Completing the task, however, was not without challenges. "When a space must accommodate various functions, you need to avoid creating interiors that feel like a compromise because you're trying to do too many things," Paré says. In this case, the 6,250-square-foot double-height setting was to serve an exceptionally wide range of activities, including training sessions, staff meetings, client presentations, guest speakers, video streaming, live performances, and parties.

In addition to addressing the host of functional objectives, the Gensler team aimed to align the design with the visual values of the Hyundai brand. "The client is extremely sophisticated and embraces a contemporary aesthetic," Paré says. "The Hyundai ethos with respect to interiors is timeless, yet always includes something a little bit unexpected that skews toward an artful approach able to stand on its own."

The focal point of Gensler's tripartite concept was "a white canvas or backdrop, like the cycloramas that photographers use to challenge the idea of boundaries," according to Paré. The goal was to transform the once dreary, windowless auditorium into a shimmering white shell with rounded edges that both blur the intersections between the wall and ceiling planes and alter the perception of the hall. "To pull off that trick, you need really even illumination that makes the space feel like it glows," Paré says. The designers seamlessly tucked LED strips—and other infrastructural components—into slots that wrap around the walls and ceilings to keep the shell pristine.

A limited material and color palette defines the setting and brings it to life like "a Joseph Beuys art installation," Paré says. Offset in hand-troweled white acoustical plaster, which both absorbs sound and contributes to the shell's impeccably smooth surface, are charcoal gray needle-punched industrial felt carpet and panels—rigorously fastened with brass buttons—that add contrasting layers of texture and color.

Toward the back of the room, additional contrast comes in the form of a cold-rolled steel structure dubbed "the machine," which contains a control room and retractable motorized system of bleachers, as well as tables, chairs, and a small pantry. On the upper floor, black cerused oak floors and fabric-wrapped panels turn a presentation room into another counterpoint to the ethereal white shell.

"Before the renovation, the space was rarely used, but now it is an eventful place filled with lectures, meetings, and more," says Andy Jung, team manager of Hyundai Capital. "We believe space can change the way people think, and we strive to develop spaces to boost employees' pride." Given its newfound popularity, he says, the new Hyundai Capital Convention Hall does just that. **c**

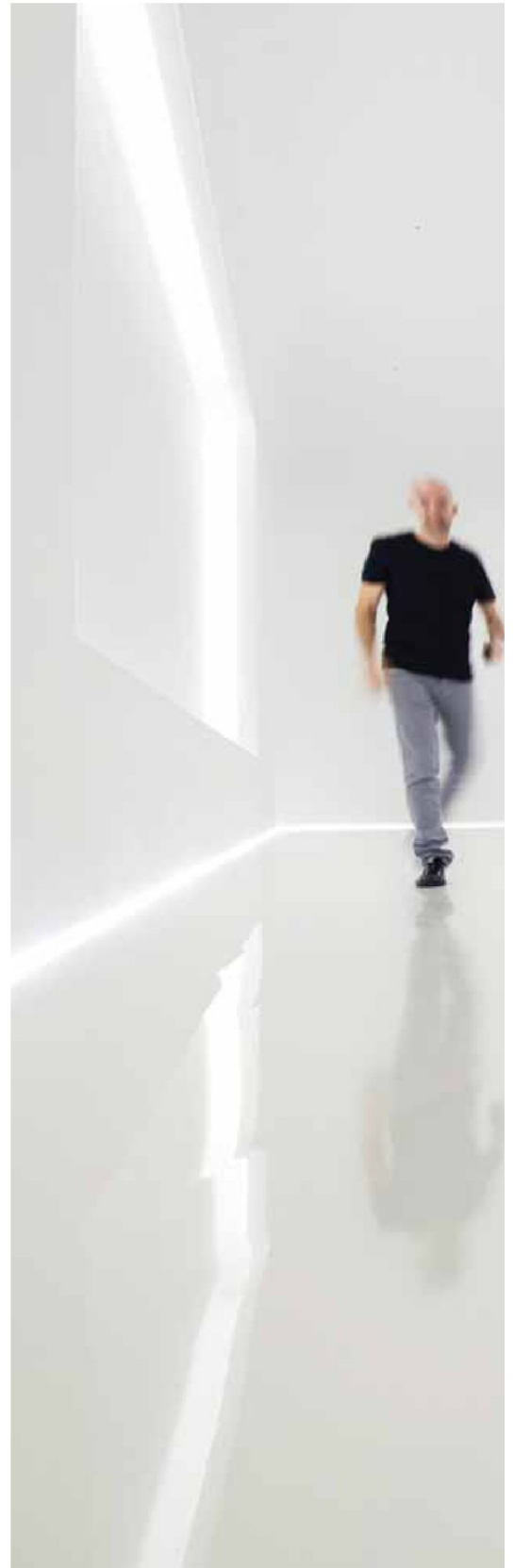


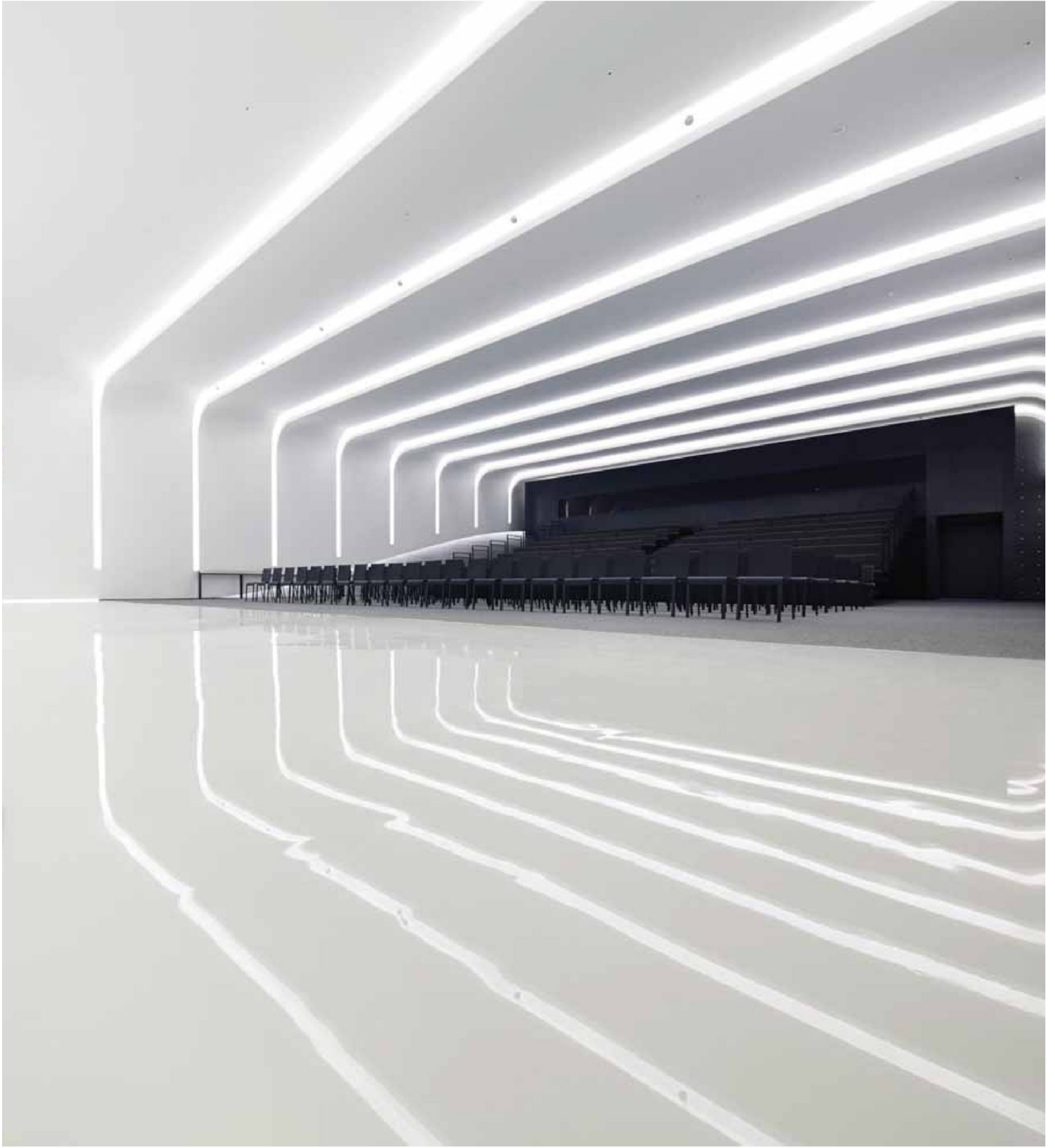
contract

**“The design is really refreshing with an incredible envelope. For a program that is quite complex, they showed amazing restraint. The designers crafted beautiful, consistent detailing, with integrated lighting, through the series of spaces.” —Jury**



Gensler transformed the windowless auditorium into a glowing white shell (opposite) with rounded edges accented by LED strips, which are tucked into slots wrapping the walls and ceilings. The dressing room is furnished with a comfortable, long couch (above). A smaller seminar room (right) has black cerused oak floors and stepped seating.





contract