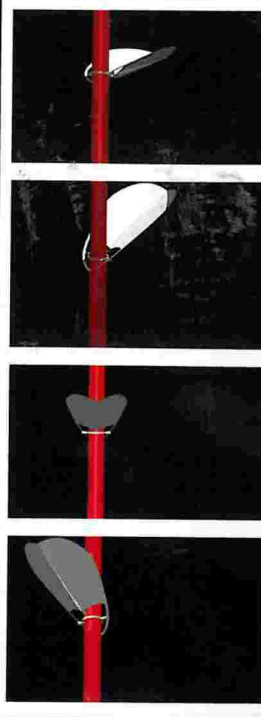




## FINKIN ABOUT ROTUNDA SQUARE



LIKE BIRMINGHAM, PETER FINK IS MULTICULTURAL BORN IN LONDON TO A WELSH MOTHER AND A CZECH FATHER, THE SCULPTOR, WHO HAS SWEDISH AND NORWEGIAN GRANDPARENTS, SPENT MANY YEARS IN THE UNITED STATES. IN 1997, WITH ARCHITECT IGOR MARKO, FINK FORMED ART2ARCHITECTURE TO "EXPLORE THE BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF COLLABORATIVE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY WAYS OF WORKING".

Six years on, with an office in London's Docklands, the duo have been involved in a wide range of activities from lighting installations to landscape and urban designs, large-scale art projects and audience-based events. After winning a competition hosted by The Birmingham Alliance, Art2Architecture was awarded the contract to design a major new art work in Rotunda Square. The brief: to produce a powerful icon. Their answer: The Light Wands, three coloured carbon fibre masts 20, 25 and 30 metres in height.

"We felt that Rotunda Square needed a strong symbol, one that both animates and provides a link to St Martin's Square," says Fink. "The light wands will use the same colours as the water feature cubes in that square [for more on these cubes see *Bullring Magazine* issue two]. The wands will bring a sense of fun and animation to Rotunda Square as well as providing a recognisable beacon where people can meet. The three masts will act as 'three graces' to the Rotunda building mediating the impact of its height." The advanced carbon fibre material

allows the wands to move "like gently swaying trees covered in stainless steel leaves". The stainless steel base of each wand will have soft light shining from it and from LEDs inserted into the surrounding granite paving. This "runway effect" is one of the devices linking Rotunda Square to St Martin's Square.

Art2Architecture is no stranger to prestige projects: it designed the lighting installation atop the landmark Canary Wharf tower in London, visible more than 20 miles away. The company is also busy in the US, developing a public space at gateway feature for the reconstruction of a city block in Pasadena, California. "We are lucky to be involved in so many diverse projects," says Fink. What would he rate as the most exciting? "They are all exciting in their own way. As well as Bullring, I would highlight Northala Fields in Ealing, London, where we are shaping up to one million cubic metres of waste to create new eco-systems and, in terms of sheer challenge, the Steel Wave sculpture in Newport [pictured left]. It is one of the memorable projects I have worked on