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Photo **Timothy Hursley**

# moshe safdie rides the sky

'Humanizing the megascale' tops Moshe Safdie's architectural to-do list, so I imagine this megaproject was a particular doozy: Marina Bay Sands resort, which opened 23 June in Singapore, clocks in at 929,000 m<sup>2</sup>, reaches 57 storeys skyward, and is comprised of 2,560 luxury hotel rooms, a four-level casino complete with 7-ton chandelier in the atrium, restaurants and retail-therapy zones, an events plaza and an expo & convention center. The Museum of ArtScience and performance theaters are scheduled to go live shortly.

For the soul, the \$5-billion integrated 'urban district' offers a series of layered gardens and site-specific works of art by mega-names such as Antony Gromley and the late Sol LeWitt, hand-picked by Safdie for their associations with natural elements like light, water and wind 'to highlight the resort's close connection to the natural world', Safdie tells me. (Well, he tells a principal at Safdie Architects, who is simultaneously e-mailing me and conference-calling Safdie, who is en route from Jerusalem to Singapore. How's that for multitasking?)

I broach the topic of the flying ship.

'My philosophy is that I don't necessarily design structures that are reminiscent of specific objects,' says Safdie. 'I didn't intend for the SkyPark to resemble anything in particular, it evolved that way, and some people say it's evocative of a ship.'

200 m above sea-level, the 1-hectare SkyPark docks on the heads of the three hotel towers, unifying the buildings and playing host to a public observation deck (cantilevered 65 m), more gardens, greenery and celebrity-chef joints, a pool with a vanishing edge and jogging paths. Safdie says he originally positioned SkyPark symmetrically on the towers, then played with the design and found that asymmetry equals dynamism.

Adds Safdie: 'We also consulted with a Feng Shui master – this was important to the people of Singapore. The master said symmetry was bad Feng Shui. So, the asymmetry led to SkyPark resembling a ship, and though unintentional, it does seem appropriate for the location at the Marina.'

In other words, we have a bingo.