Jean Nouvel's University building in Cyprus is an 'earthwork' clad with colored fabric

having previously completed a mixed-use tower in the city of Nicosia, French architect Jean Nouvel has returned to the cypriot capital to design a vast university building. envisioned as an ‘object’, the learning resource center — which contains a brand new library — has been conceived as an ‘earthwork’ whose form mimics the region’s undulating terrain. The project was inaugurated in December 2018, and has now been captured in new images by architectural photographer danica o. kus.
the project was made possible thanks to a donation of €8 million from Elli St. Ioannou, with the building named in memory of her late husband — Stelios Ioannou. Conceived as a hybrid between the natural and the man-made, Jean Nouvel clad the structure with layers of overlapping colored fabric in green and blue tones. Meanwhile, on the plateau of the hill, a cupola surrounded by a planted terrace covers the library’s main reading room.
Internally, the design team divided the program between spaces which required normal' light and those which needed more subdued illumination. This and the orientation of the building led to a distribution of spaces where naturally lit areas are oriented to the north, while the remaining rooms offer fewer and more carefully oriented views. The architects say that their primary concern was the building’s thermal comfort as well as its energy efficiency.
According to the university of cyprus, the new building will house 1 million printed volumes, over 30,000 electronic journal titles, and 150 databases. Importantly, all information will be accessible throughout the island country’s scientific community. The project will also provide approximately 900 study seats that will be equipped with modern technology. See other architectural projects in Cyprus on designboom here.
project info:

**location:** Nicosia, Cyprus  
**dates:** 2003-2018  
**name:** Stelios Ioannou’ learning resource center  
**clients:** university of Cyprus – Dakis Ioannou  
**habitable area:** 14,800 sqm (159,306 sqf)  
**surface area:** 17,200 sqm (185,139 sqf)

**team:**  
*ateliers Jean Nouvel – Jean Nouvel*  
*advisors to jean nouvel:* emmanuel blamont, aurélien coulanges, samuel nageotte  
*project leaders:* philippe papy, athina lazaridou, damien faraut, elisabeth kather  
*architects:* sébastien abribat, jean angelini, yves bachmann, thomas dieben, megan feehan, michael herman, laurent pereira, miguel pomares, andres souza  
*interior design:* julien cottier, jennifer kandel, jéremy lebarillec, sabrina
letourneur

**landscape:** emmanuelle blanc, rémy turquin

**light design:** l’observatoire – georges berne (studies), then odile soudant, mathieu gabry

**computer generated images:** artefactory – georges batzios, mizuho kishi

**graphic design / signage:** rafaëlle ishkinazi, eugénie robert, natalie saccu de franchi

**local architects:** J+A philippou

**engineers:** m. ioannis cannas (structure), avel acoustique – m. lamoureux (acoustic), m. kyriacos zinieris, m. ioannis mitsides (building services), ingelux, christophe marty (lighting design)

**consultants:** mandragore – lionel hodier (landscape – studies), MDA – peter zographos (cost consultant)