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Reaching the impossible

A completely new building has emerged alongside the Jardin d'Acclimatation on the edge of the Bois de Boulogne in the 16th arrondissement of Paris. The building, a new museum of modern art paid for and sponsored by the Louis Vuitton Foundation, is run as a separate not for profit entity. It was completed last October, with the exhibits being added throughout the year.

Architect Frank Gehry clearly gave little consideration to the problem of cleaning or maintenance of the 3,584 laminated curved glass panels - every one of them unique - that form the roof, and more than 19,000 fibre-reinforced concrete panels that make up the façade. However, by the time the design was completed detailed consideration had been given to work at height equipment in the 11 galleries and terraces. The Foundation worked closely with spider lift manufacturer TCA to find a solution to the access challenges in the 4,000 square metre two storey structure.

The manufacturer began with its standard 33 metre Falcon F330Z heavy duty articulated spider lift, from which developed three

very special units, one of which is visually close to the standard model. This unit works from the open areas on the walkways that are suspended over the many waterways that run through the building. It has also been designed to travel in the pools and work from them. In order to do this the track mechanism has been modified, both to sustain long periods of submersion, but also with the use of special environmentally-friendly marine lubricants, bearings and filters. The building has a gold standard rating for sustainability - achieving the 'Très Performant' classification within its Haute Qualité Environnementale (HQE) certification - so being clean and non-polluting was absolutely essential.

The other two platforms have a

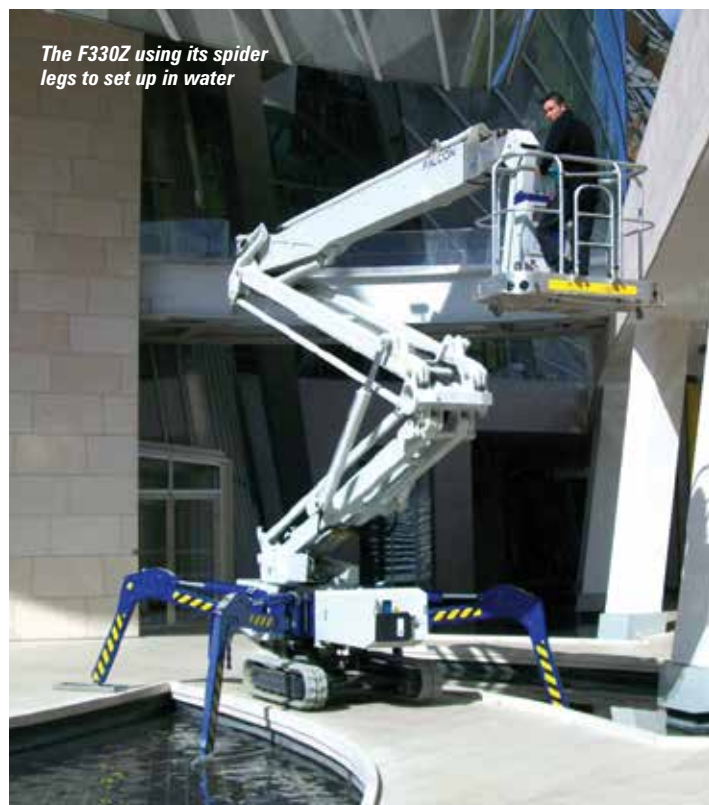


Two machines have heavy beam and jack outriggers tied into the floor

specially designed chassis, with heavy beam and jack outriggers replacing the standard spider legs. The reason for the design is that some areas of the building require more outreach than is possible from the maximum working footprint or maximum overall weight permitted within those parts of the building. So a number of special 'tie-down' points have been designed and built into the floor. The machine then positions itself over those points and the outrigger feet are attached to the tie-down points, allowing the boom to

telescope out to its full extent with the capacity required. In order to achieve this the beams are designed to take forces in both vertical planes, while normal beam and jack outriggers are only designed to accept a downward force.

In addition to the special chassis designs of these two units, they were 'built into' the building and have their own storage rooms on the terraces/gallery levels from which they are used. No plans have been developed for a way to remove them.



The F330Z using its spider legs to set up in water



Nearly 3,600 laminated curved glass panels need to be cleaned and maintained