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# Note to Norman: That Truth Thing—Go With It!

By Reed Kroloff

A few days before the American Institute of Architects' (AIA) annual meeting in Denver, AIA CEO Norman Koonce sent his membership an unusual letter. In it, he described the organization as plagued with "a host of institutional financial management problems." From decrying a "lack of accountability," to admitting that "the AIA had not operated with a balanced budget since 1996," Koonce blamed "unacceptably weak" management performance for a "steady" deterioration of AIA's viability (page 29).

There was more good cheer to come. On page two, Koonce warned that a "significant event" posed "a new financial challenge for the Institute." It was at this moment that alert readers might have begun to panic: Whenever management resorts to euphemisms like "event" and "challenge," it's time to duck and cover. Firestone described last year's exploding tire trouble as an "event." Diplomats speak of the "challenge" of making peace in the Middle East. Koonce's event was the demise of AEC Direct, the Institute's "for-profit" dot-com venture, barely a year after its heralded launch. His challenge: how to pick up the \$6 million tab ill-fated venture left behind.

AEC Direct, combined with five years of deficit spending, leaves the AIA about \$5.6 million in the red (down from a \$9 million surplus in 1995), just as the economy is tottering. That certainly gives new bite to the phrase "responsibilities of membership."

Norman Koonce deserves more positive credit here than he is likely to receive: He inherited the operating deficits from the CEO-go-round (three in five years) that preceded him, and the management restructuring he initiated last year looked like it

would pull the AIA into the black this year for the first time since 1995. Or it might have, if (ah, if, the biggest little word in the world) Koonce hadn't green-lighted AEC Direct.

Despite all the losses, the issue here is not whether AEC Direct was a good idea (it wasn't). The issue is credibility. From 1996 forward, AIA leadership led members to believe that the Institute was on the road to recovery from the early 1990s recession. Turns out, that wasn't true. Then members were told that at the end of that road lay a new El Dorado, AEC Direct. Again, not true. (Even worse, AEC Direct was sold as an all but risk-free investment, for which the AIA's contribution would be primarily intellectual capital. Obviously, that wasn't true either.)

Abusing members' trust like that is a dangerous business, especially if you're going to lose huge amounts of their money and then ask them to help you replace it. As the saying goes: Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.

Norman Koonce's letter was refreshing in its candor. It needed to be if he hopes to rebuild the faith of the rank-and-file. Let's hope the letter signals a new era at the AIA, one where truth is a consistent policy, not simply a crisis management tool. Given Koonce's commitment to the profession, I believe it does. Or at least I will until the next "event" materializes out of thin air to "challenge" my faith.

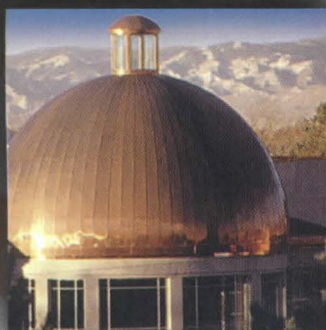
## Farewell to *Interiors*

Credibility was never a problem at *Interiors*, our sister publication. Market conditions, however, were (of late), and in June our parent, Bill Communications, announced the magazine's closing. This was not an easy decision for the company.

*Interiors* had an extraordinary history, with 113 years of continuous publication that highlighted not only the best in interior design and architecture, but ultimately gave birth to the influential industrial design publication *I.D.* as well. In the last few years, under the inspired direction of editor-in-chief Julie Lasky, *Interiors* once again pushed back the parameters of design criticism and analysis.

The closing of *Interiors* is a loss for architects, designers, and anyone else who cares about a better built environment. *Architecture* bids the magazine and its staff a fond and grateful farewell. ■

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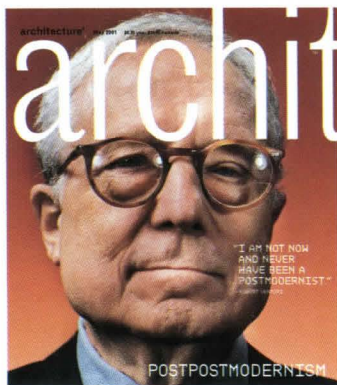
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## Pomo Commotion

Congratulations on your wry dissection of postmodernists in denial; the editorial and Richard Ingersoll reveal why architects are reluctant to admit contamination by the dreaded PM word (May 2001). It is yesterday's tomorrow, and nothing is more dead in a fashion-conscious age. Also, it is a broad-based trend, and is concerned with the shift to issues of a convivial urbanism and an architecture that communicates. Robert Venturi is also right to deny he is a postmodernist since his decorated sheds are to do with "signage," not symbolism. Unambiguous signs tacked onto buildings are one-liners, whereas symbols are ambiguous.

When Venturi urges a single position—"Remember it's not about Space any more, it's about communication"—he is being the quintessential modernist that is promoting an exclusionary zeitgeist, not being an inclusivist (page 154). On one thing postmodernists in all fields agree: The movement is primarily concerned with pluralism; it continues to develop because it confronts the fundamental problem of pluralist, global cultures rooted in different locales.

But Venturi is wrong when he denies he has promoted "any kind of prescription": What else are the constant injunctions regarding the "obligation toward the difficult whole", his "gentle manifesto" in favor of an architecture that is both

"contradictory and complex"? These statements and his brilliant early work remain canonic to early postmodernism. Whether he or any architect is part of a movement remains only a matter of degree. Isozaki, Hollein, Graves, et al. practice in several modes, varying the philosophy and style for the job, and it has often been so. Rare is the architect, such as Richard Meier, that sticks with a single approach. In any case, the most vital part of postmodernism today concerns "complexity and contradiction" part two, that is, complexity theory and its realization by computer. A leading architect of this approach is Daniel Libeskind, as much concerned with issues of space and complexity as he is with the tragedies of modernity.

Venturi's reluctance to be considered part of postmodernism reminds me of Groucho Marx's famous line: "I would never join a club that would have me." Need I add that the most hip club in London is called The Groucho, full of PM's in denial and, as Freud pointed out, denial has many good uses. It makes continual revolution, or at least self-reinvention every 10 years, much easier.

Charles Jencks  
London

Congratulations to *Architecture* (of all magazines!) on being at the forefront of the critical reappraisal of postmodernism, even if it took the AIA (of all organizations!) to lead the way with the award of its Gold Medal to Michael Graves. I am old enough to have witnessed many of the -isms and movements of the last 40 years which are so obsessively catalogued in the diagram by Charles Jencks in May 2001's issue. Surely, after all that has happened, it is hard for any sane, rational person to take the claims of the next great thing too seriously, or believe that the last new great thing is irrevocably evil. Is this the harbinger of a return to sanity in the architectural press in general? Let us hope so.

It remains most puzzling that Robert Venturi continues to disavow all responsibility for postmodernism. Particularly so because he insists so emphatically that his work is not postmodern because his signature approach is defined by the use of obviously applied symbolic elements. Huh? One kind of applied stuff is good and the other is bad. It seems that the label postmodernism has no meaning except as the negation of one's own work: That's not what I do!

As a gifted architect and verifiable historical figure Venturi is due veneration by us all, but insofar as he insists on his pastboard approach he remains his own worst enemy.

Michael R. Ytterberg  
Philadelphia

For perspective, you should solicit and print Mr. Venturi's definition of the word "is". Please...

Richard Nash Gould  
New York City

## Academic Oasis?

In the May 2001 issue, Andres Duany laments the plight of Robert Stern, who "is now in the desert, as Paul Rudolph and Charles Moore were before him" (page 176). Could this parched landscape be found in the vicinity of the Yale Architecture Dean's office?

Michael J. Crosbie  
Essex, Connecticut

### CORRECTION

The principal of ROY should have been listed as Lindy Roy (May 2001, page 45).

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## Endangered Places

**Preservation** Every year for the past 14 years the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) has released its “Eleven Most Endangered Places” list. And every year since then, monumental buildings have dominated the list.

Not this year.

“The definition of value has broadened,” says Peter Brink, NTHP senior vice president. “Today [the NTHP] talks about sprawl, smart growth, community development, rather than just grand architecture and monuments.” The sites chosen this year mostly represent building typologies, individual structures, landscapes, and city and regional planning issues, and are located in communities that reflect the racial, economic, and regional diversity of the United States—not just city centers or affluent suburbs.

To attract attention to the entire list, the trust has picked two timely places: Ford Island at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, subject of this summer’s cinema blockbuster, and the CIGNA Campus in Bloomfield, Connecticut, a threatened seminal work of corporate modernism that has attracted a new brand of preservationist concerned with saving midcentury design.

At Pearl Harbor the Navy is planning housing, a festival marketplace, and a recreational marina—proposals the NTHP considers inappropriate. The trust is seeking a *master plan for the entire island. Piecemeal*

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has chosen Pearl Harbor as one of its “Eleven Most Endangered Places.”



CIGNA Campus



Telluride Valley Floor



Prairie Churches of North Dakota



Los Caminos Del Rio

development will, in the trust's estimation, only sully the mythical legacy of the site of this country's entrance into World War II.

CIGNA (designed in 1957 by SOM's Gordon Bunshaft as the headquarters of the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company), the locale that had become the model for modernist office campuses and garnered acclaim in the popular and architectural press, is slated for demolition. Developers are looking to replace Bunshaft's handiwork with a golf course and retail development.

The trust's efforts to make the list contemporary and relevant by citing pieces of architecture and development neither grand nor monumental actually draws attention to some rather out of the way places, among them Los Caminos Del Rio region. Stretching for 200 miles across the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, the area encompasses dozens of historic sites that reflect Hispanic and Anglo architecture and culture. Alternating between poverty and prosperity, the region includes dusty small towns, newly sprawling cities, ranches, and farms, some of which date from the earliest Spanish settlements of the mid-18th century.

Another place is the pristine Telluride Valley Floor, a historic Rocky Mountain mining town threatened by a planned hotel complex with gondolas, a golf course, and commercial development.

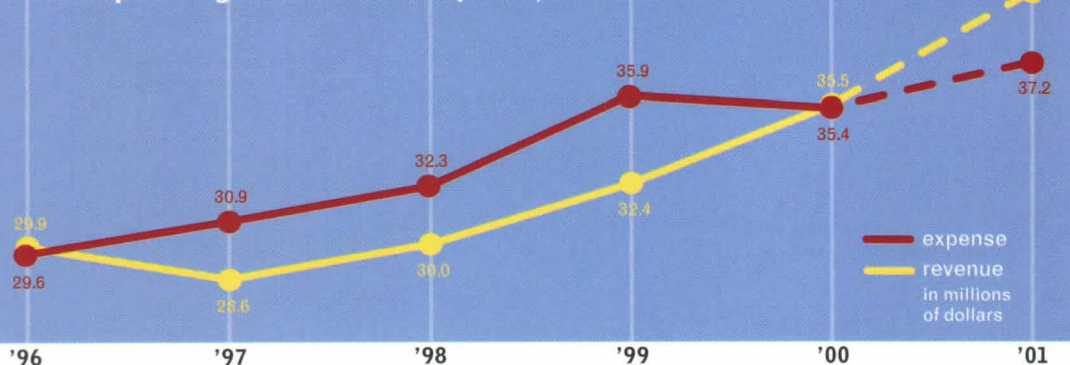
Then there are the Prairie Churches of North Dakota, which were built by the flood of European immigrants who settled the region between the late 19th century and the 1930s, with styles ranging from Greek Revival to Tudor. Today the churches house declining congregations or are abandoned altogether.

The list also includes the Bok Kai Temple in Marysville, California; historic movie palaces nationwide as a building typology; and the Jackson Ward District of Richmond, Virginia, called the "Harlem of the South." Representing the decline of rural architecture is Indiana's Miller-Purdue Barn, as well as the Stevens Creek Settlements outside Lincoln, Nebraska. Finally, there's the Carter G. Woodson Home in Washington, D.C., which was the residence of "the father of black history." For more information on the sites and how to help save them log on to [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org). Alan G. Brake



## Economics

## AIA Operating Revenue and Expense, 1996–2001



## AIA in Debt

At its national convention in May, the American Institute of Architects released its preliminary financial summary for 2000, which showed the organization straining under mounting debt. The statement shows that the Institute incurred successive deficits that brought its net worth down to \$700,000 at the end of 2000, from \$9 million in 1997.

By 1998, a significant AIA revenue source had dried up; the Institute had decided not to collect supplemental dues, which are dues employees of mem-

ber firms pay. Still, with no money coming in, the AIA kept spending. In fact, between the ends of 1999 and 2000, its operating expenditures rose by \$2.5 million as the Institute kept putting off paying its bills.

The AIA had seen the warning signs of financial trouble brought on by the decision to cease collecting supplemental dues, yet it chose not to address them, fueling intense doubts among members about its ability to handle money and manage its way out of the turmoil.

In March, the AIA's executive and finance committees and staff came up with a way to restore the organization's financial health: cost cuts. *Bradford McKee*

## Academia

## Follow the Bouncing Dean

Every architecture school has its own policy about the term length of its administrators. Between all the programs, there are always a few deans and chairpeople entering new positions or leaving old ones. This year, however, it seems as though every school is conducting or has already conducted a dean search.

Both the University of Texas at Austin and Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, will get new deans this summer, and the University of Michigan will have a new chair by fall. City College in New York is looking for a director of graduate studies in architecture, the administration at Florida International University is in the midst of choosing a dean, and Cooper Union's search to replace the late John Hejduk continues to drag on.

The Ivy League has been particularly affected—four out of the six schools will see changes in leadership. Last month, Ralph Lerner stepped down as dean of Princeton. The University of Pennsylvania and Cornell are both searching for department chairs, and Jorge Silvetti will complete his term at the Harvard Graduate School of Design at the end of the next academic year.

Lawrence Speck, who will be leaving the University of Texas at Austin after nine years as dean, thinks the job itself has changed. "Ten years ago a dean mostly administered programs and set directions for where the program was going," Speck explains. Now deans must spend much of their time raising money. "Sometimes architects can be good at that," he says, "and sometimes not." *Sara Moss*

## Buzz

**Pei Cobb Freed** (New York) and **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill** (New York) together have won an invited competition to design the master plan for a 5-million-square-foot mixed-use development along the East River in Manhattan, on the site of a former Consolidated Edison plant.

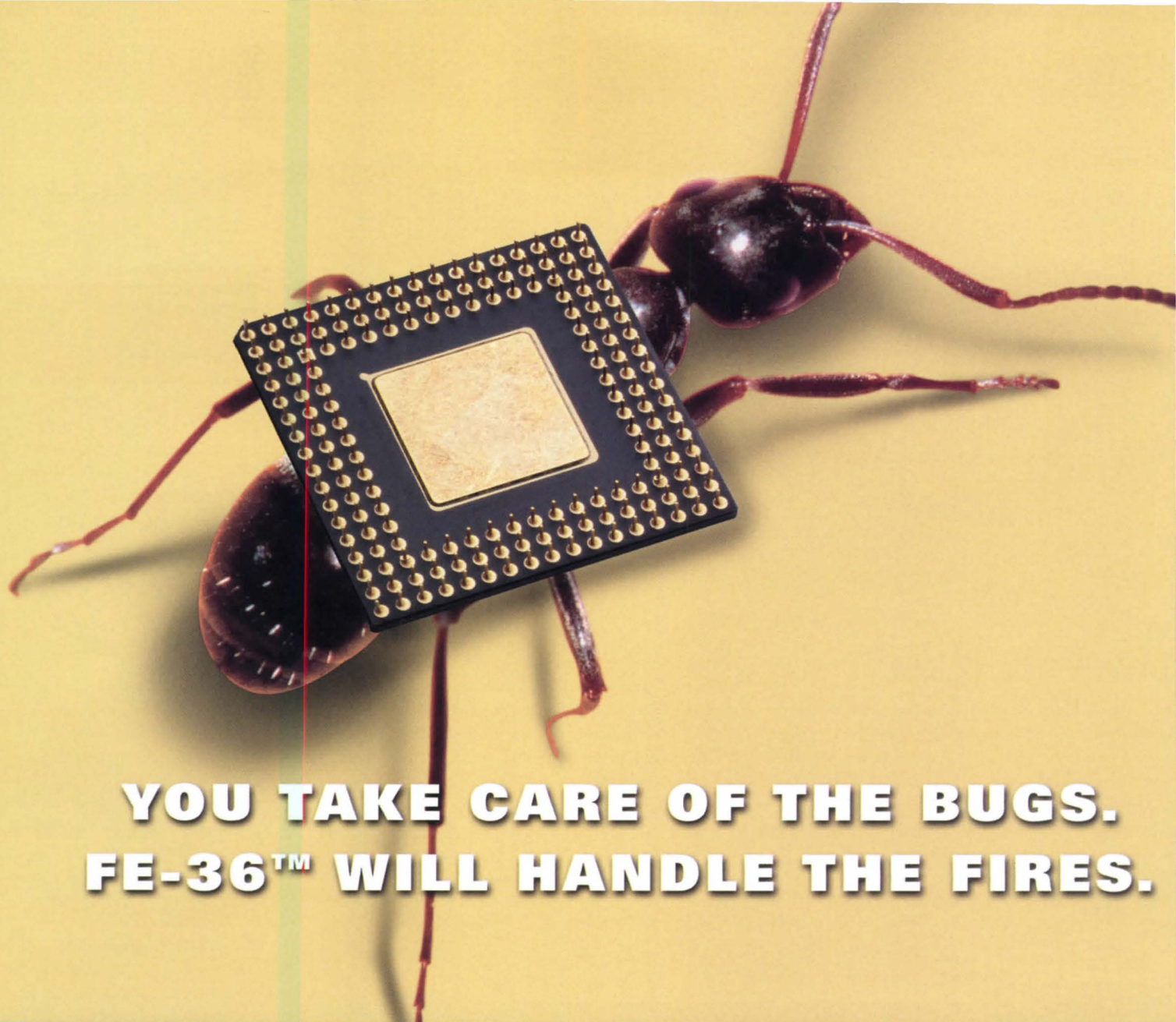
**Field Paoli** (San Francisco) has been selected by the state of Nevada to design the first buildings of the nascent Nevada State College.

**Levit Iwamoto Scott** (Ann Arbor, Michigan) has won a competition sponsored by the Flemington Jewish Community Center and the National Endowment for the Arts to design a new synagogue in Flemington, New Jersey.

The Landmark Committee of the Deerfield Area Historical Society in Illinois has helped save Frank Lloyd Wright's **Allen Friedman House** in Bannockburn, Illinois, from demolition. The house was up for sale last year; the only offer it attracted was from a neighbor who wanted to build a big new house on the 4-acre property. The historical society generated enough publicity to attract a "responsible" buyer. The pristine Allen Friedman House was the last house Wright worked on before he died in 1959.

**A.J. "Jack" Diamond** has won the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada's (RAIC) 2001 Gold Medal for lifetime achievement in Canadian architecture.

**Renzo Piano** (Italy) has been selected by the California Academy

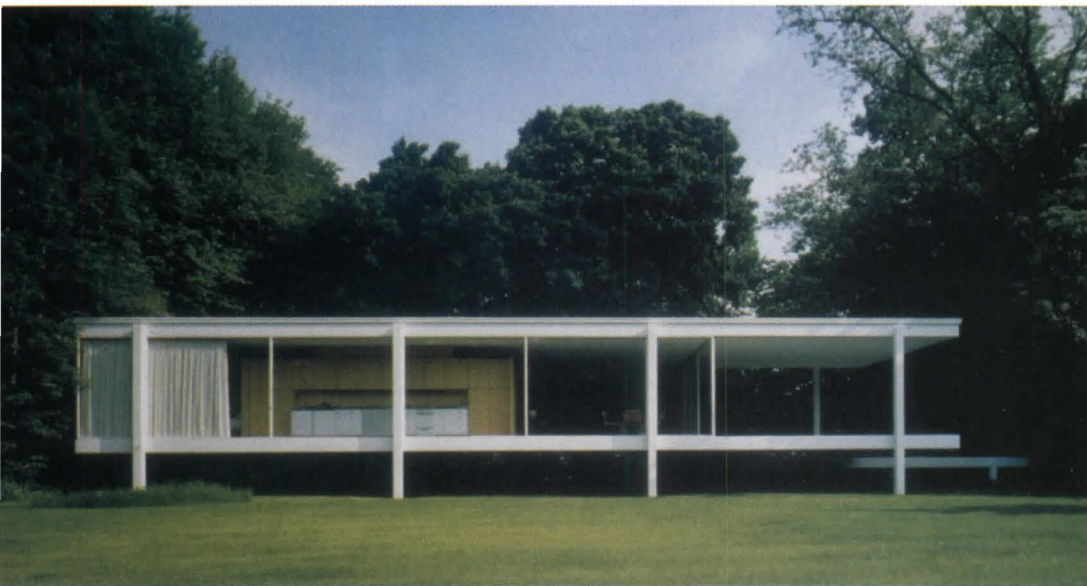


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## Illinois Saves Mies House

**Preservation** The state of Illinois has appropriated \$7 million to purchase the Ludwig Mies van der Rohe–designed Farnsworth House (1951; above) from the dwelling’s owner, architecture aficionado Peter Palumbo, who gave no explanation for the sale. The purchase was approved at the behest of civic leaders including former Governor Jim Thompson, who had led the state’s earlier purchase of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Dana House in Springfield, Illinois. The state will keep the house, located 60 miles west of Chicago in Plano, Illinois, and its wooded 62-acre site on the banks of the Fox River, open to the public. *Edward Keegan*

## Chicago Mayor Hires Local Architecture Critic

**Practice** Not too long ago Chicago mayor Richard M. Daley’s chief of staff, Sheila O’Grady, sat down to watch *Chicago Tonight*, a nightly public television program that features various discussion panels. One of the panelists so impressed O’Grady that the chief of staff soon called a meeting to discuss hiring him for the city. A short while later, *Chicago Sun-Times* architecture critic Lee Bey, 35, had become Daley’s deputy chief of staff, advising the mayor on issues like city planning, preservation, and housing. His appointment has garnered praise from the community, excited that a Chicago native in touch with the city’s architectural culture and not afraid to criticize the mayor is helping shape the city.

“There’s certainly cause for optimism,” says Blair Kamin, architecture critic at the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Sun-Times*’ daily competition. “But the

real test is whether Lee can bring that architectural perspective into policy debate and swim with the sharks as well.”

Bey’s reputation is as a journalist who holds Chicago first—it’s his hometown, after all. He was raised on Chicago’s South Side in the 1960s and graduated from Chicago’s Columbia College. He and his wife, Valencia Bey, live with their four children in Oak Park, the historic Chicago neighborhood full of buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Bey has been the *Sun-Times* architecture critic for the past five years.

“If there’s any guiding principle I followed at the *Sun-Times*,” says Bey, “it’s that people are smarter about architecture than we give them credit for, and, if you have an enlightened readership, you can begin to do all kinds of things.” *Andrew Yang*

of Sciences to design its new facility in San Francisco.

In Las Vegas, a team of builders has designed and built a prototype habitat replicating what space explorers might live in on **Mars**. The builders hope to sell the 29-foot-tall cylinder to NASA.

Austria has announced that it will continue funding the restoration of the **Mackey Apartments** in Los Angeles, California, which housed artists-in-residence at the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, a branch of Vienna’s legendary arts institution. The country will devote \$1 million to the project.

**Jean Nouvel** (France) has won the Royal Institute of British Architects Gold Medal for Architecture.

**The Wexner Center** at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, designed in 1989 by **Peter Eisenman** and **Richard Trott**, will be getting a \$10 million, year-long retrofit, beginning this month. As well as facing some physical circulation problems, the 12-year-old structure has leaking curtain walls, and its skylights and windows are letting damaging amounts of sunlight into its galleries. In addition to the maintenance work, the museum will get a state-of-the-art heating and cooling system and new, art-friendly lighting. Renovation work is being handled chiefly by **Schooley Caldwell** with **Bob Loversidge**. During the upgrade, museum exhibitions will take place at other Ohio State facilities.

**Shin Takamatsu** (Japan) has won first prize in a competition to design the National Tianjin Museum in Tianjin City, China.

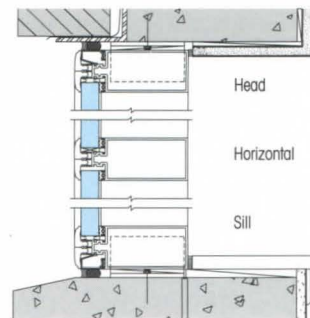


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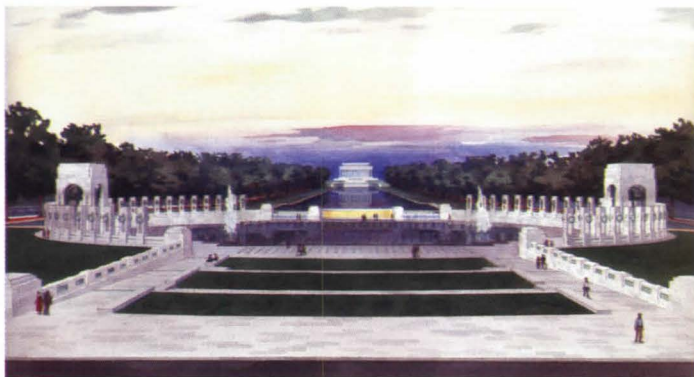


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# WWII Memorial Opponents Still Barking



**Monumental** The fierce debate over the World War II memorial has ended abruptly. In May, Congress passed a bill that will expedite construction of Friedrich St. Florian's scheme (above), sited on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The push to ratify the bill was led by World War II veteran and former senator Robert Dole (R-Kansas), former senate majority leader Trent Lott (R-Mississippi), and several veterans groups. President Bush signed it on Memorial Day.

"Of the 16 million men and women who served, barely five million remain," Bush said. "It is more important than ever that we move quickly to begin construction if those who served are to see the nation's permanent expression of remembrance and thanks."

The bill overrides plans by the National Capital Planning Commission—the federal government's central planning agency for the D.C. area—to reconsider the site and the design, as well as a federal lawsuit to block construction, filed last October by the National Coalition to Save Our Mall (NCSOM).

The coalition, along with such groups as World War II Veterans to Save the Mall and the D.C. Preservation League, continues to challenge the bill. Judy Scott Feldman, cochair of NCSOM, is confident their case remains strong, saying that the National Environmental Policy Act—which charges the memorial's advocates with failing to consider its potential impact on the Mall—is "still alive." *S.M.*

## Law

### Protection From Environmental Harm Hampered

A battle between civil rights and environmental discrimination is raging in California. Residents of a Hispanic neighborhood in Long Beach called El Sereno have filed suit against the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) to block the department's 6.2-mile expansion of the Long Beach Freeway, which runs near the neighborhood. The citizens believe their low socioeconomic status opened them up to environmental discrimination. The citizens' legal brief states: "El Sereno residents will disproportionately bear the environmental and housing burdens that will be imposed by the proposed freeway."

Complicating El Sereno's case is a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that has set a precedent for

discrimination cases: Now, not only do prospective plaintiffs have prove that discrimination has occurred, they have to prove it was intentional—a Herculean task.

Angela Johnson Meszaros of the California League of Conservation Voters, one of the lawyers representing the opponents of the freeway, says that the Supreme Court ruling will have "a significant impact on people's ability to protect themselves and their environment and quality of life."

Arguing for the freeway expansion, Cleve Govan, Senior Environmental Planner for CALTRANS, says that such projects are "essential to accommodate growing population. Those involved with the expansion never intended to hurt any group."

*Darwin Harrison*

**Zaha Hadid** (London) has won an international competition to design a cultural center and public space in Barcelona's Placa de les Arts. Hadid was also announced as master planner for the Science Hub, a multibillion-dollar, 480-acre residential/resort project in Singapore.

Seattle residents and city planners surely don't want anything blocking the view of their beloved **Space Needle**. Seattle City Council is considering proposals to preserve lines of sight from various points within the city. Though this doesn't mean new buildings will be prohibited from occupying nearby air space, it does not bode well for **Bentall**, a developer who is pushing to build two towers between Eighth and Ninth avenues, where folks living or working in Four Columns Park would lose sight of their lean-and-mean landmark.

**Alan Short** (London) has won an invited competition for a new 100,000-square-foot Academic Center at Judson College in Elgin, Illinois, housing the Division of Art, Design, and Architecture, and the Central Library.

Okay, so we all get a little behind in our debt payments. But \$17 million? Well, that's what an arbitrator in California has stated the **Los Angeles Unified School District** must pay the developer, contractor, and architect of the unfinished Belmont Learning Complex in Los Angeles. The board had apparently decided to abandon the project in January 2000. The district had fallen \$153 million in the hole due to a pay increase for teachers.

**Liu Xiang** (China) has won a competition to design a high-tech mixed-use development in Fujian Province, China.

## Calendar

## Exhibitions

**Ann Arbor**

**Albert Kahn: Inspiration for the Modern** at the University of Michigan Museum of Art through October 21 (734) 764-0395

**Atlanta**

**Michelangelo: Drawings and Other Treasures from the Casa Buonarroti, Florence; Art of the Architect; and Paintings from the Age of Michelangelo in the Kress Collection** all at the High Museum of Art through September 2 (404) 733-4437

**Baltimore**

**Scott Ponemone's Baltimore: The Interplay of Art and Architecture** at Evergreen House at Johns Hopkins University through September 30 [www.jhu.edu/~evrgreen/](http://www.jhu.edu/~evrgreen/) (410) 516-0341

**Cambridge**

**Commencement Exhibition** at the Harvard GSD through August 15 [www.gsd.harvard.edu/events](http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/events) (617) 495-4784

**Los Angeles**

**L'Esprit Nouveau: Purism in Paris, 1918–1925** at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art through August 5 (323) 857-6000

**In Between: Art and Architecture** at the MAK Center for Art and Architecture in West Hollywood through September 2 (323) 651-2510

**What's Shakin':**

**New Architecture in LA** at the Museum of Contemporary Art opens September 16 (213) 621-2766

**James Welling: Photographs 1974–1999** at MOCA at California Plaza through August 26 [www.MOCA-LA.org](http://www.MOCA-LA.org) (213) 621-2766

**New York City**

**Lost New York in Old Postcards** at the Museum of the City of New York opens August 11 (212) 426-6891

**Dancing on the Roof: Photography at the Bauhaus (1923–1929)** through August 26, and **A Century of Design, Part IV: 1975–2000** through January 6, 2002, both at the Metropolitan Museum of Art [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)

**Glass of the Avant-Garde: From Vienna Secession to Bauhaus** at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum opens August 21 (212) 849-8400

**Ronnette Riley's miniature buildings** on the ground floor of the Empire State Building through August 29 (212) 594-4015

**Light Screens: The Leaded Glass of Frank Lloyd Wright** at the American Craft Museum through September 2 (212) 956-3535

**Frank O. Gehry Retrospective** at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum through August 26 (212) 423-3500

**Philadelphia**

**Out of the Ordinary: The Architecture and Design of Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Associates** at the Philadelphia Museum of Art through August 5 [www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org) (215) 684-7860

**San Francisco**

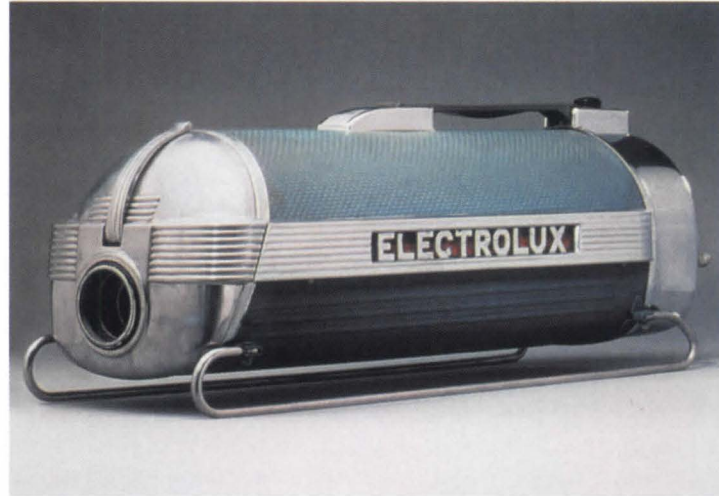
**Martin Venezky: Selections from the Permanent Collection of Architecture and Design** at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art through October 14 (415) 357-4000

**Washington**

**On the Job: Design and the American Office** at the National Building Museum through August 19 [www.ngm.org](http://www.ngm.org) (202) 272-2448

## Conferences

**Urban Waterfronts** at the New York Marriott; September 20–22 [www.waterfrontcenter.org](http://www.waterfrontcenter.org) (202) 337-0356



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**Four Landscape Design Portfolios** Lecture Series by the New York Botanical Garden at the Urban Center in New York City; October 1, 15, 22, and 29 [www.nybg.org/edu/conted](http://www.nybg.org/edu/conted) (718) 817-8743

**Restoration and Renovation** in New Orleans, Louisiana; September 7–8 (800) 982-6247 [show@egjexhib.com](http://show@egjexhib.com) or [www.restorationandrenovation.com](http://www.restorationandrenovation.com)

**Integrating Differences: Theories and Applications of Universal Design by the Fashion Institute of Technology** October 18–October 20 [www.fitnyc.edu/universaldesign](http://www.fitnyc.edu/universaldesign) (212) 217-3241

**The Test of Time: Reflecting on the Past, Planning the Future** in Monterey Peninsula, California; October 3–10 (630) 968-6400

**Design on the (Green) Edge** at the University of Kentucky in Lexington on September 20 (859) 257-8427

## Competitions

**Design 21 Award** by UNESCO and Felissimo; submission deadline is August 15 (212) 956-4438

**Fresh Kills: Landfill to Landscape** New York City and the Municipal Art Society of New York invite submissions via [www.nyc.gov/freshkills](http://www.nyc.gov/freshkills). Selection of teams completed by July, design submissions due in October

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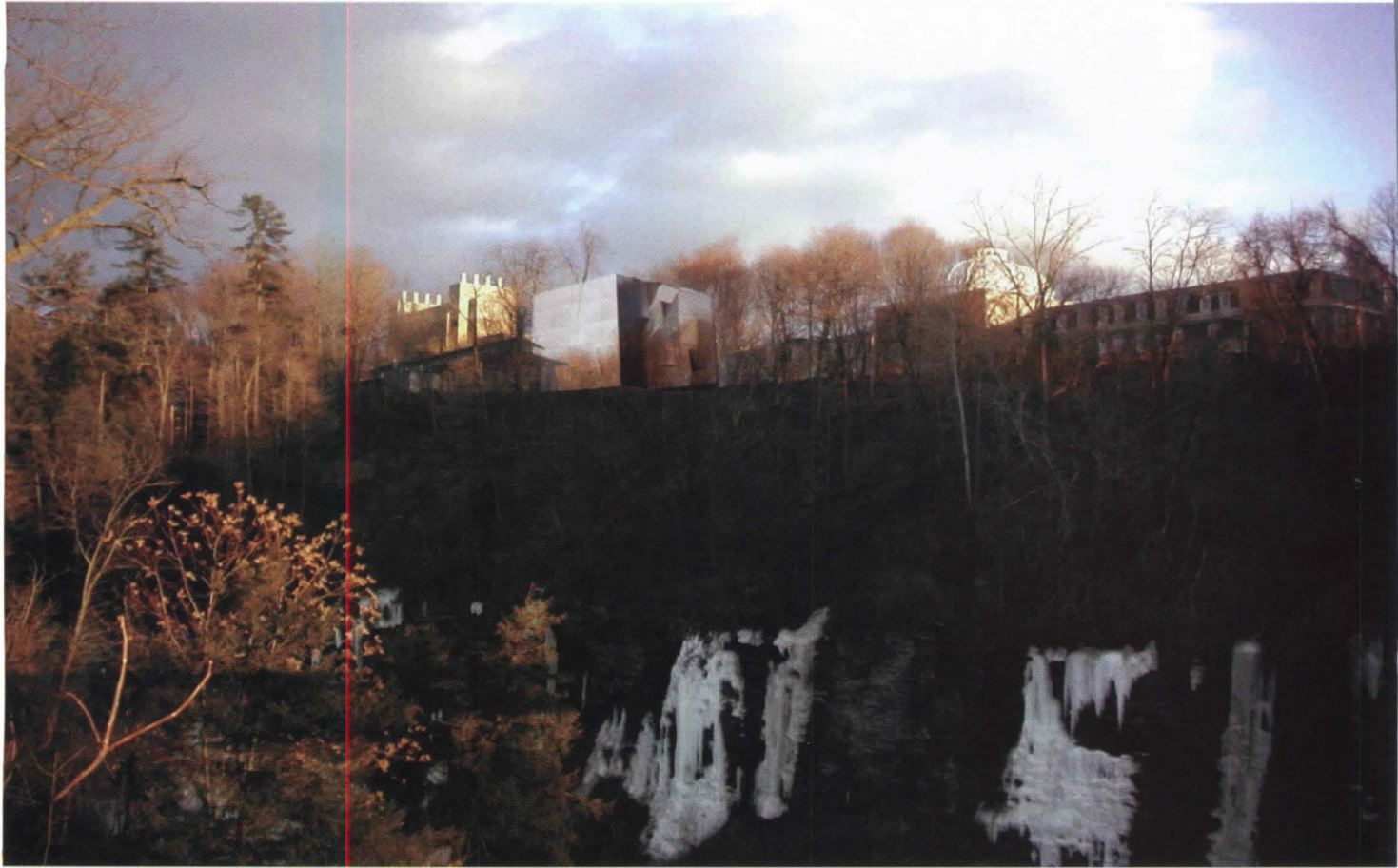
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# On the Boards

## Steven Holl Architects

Cornell University College of Architecture  
Ithaca, New York

Steven Holl's competition-winning design for a major addition to the Cornell University College of Architecture makes more than a brief nod to one of that institution's most famous teachers, Colin Rowe, and a design exercise he popularized, the nine-square grid. Holl's scheme, which was the unanimous choice of a jury of architects who selected it over entries by Morphosis, Peter Zumthor, and Tod Williams Billie Tsien and Associates, seems at first to be a simple cube that sits high above one of the gorges that cut through the Cornell campus.

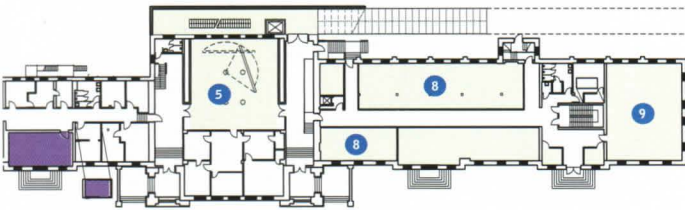
It is no mere formal exercise, though, as Holl pushes the cube further by employing the mathematical construct of the tesseract.

As he explains the idea, it is the addition of a fourth dimension: "A square is to a cube as a cube is to a tesseract." Time is the extra dimension, but in practice, rooms can't spin through space. They can, however, be moved around a floor plate, and this is exactly what Holl has done, shifting three double-height review rooms within a nine-square structural grid. Regular studio space flanks each review room on three sides, and all services and vertical circulation are pulled to the fourth, western side of the building. The three review rooms are not stacked neatly, one above the other, but pushed in different directions. Openings in the floors and ceilings of each review space allow daylight to reach even the deepest one.

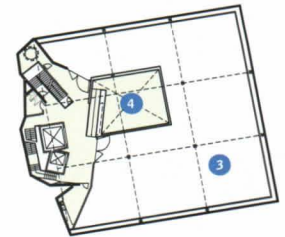
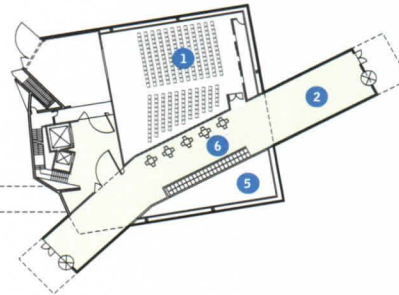
Holl has also tried to express the internal tesseract-generated shifts of the interior on the building's façade. The addition's western face bulges out irregularly to accommodate the stairs and elevators



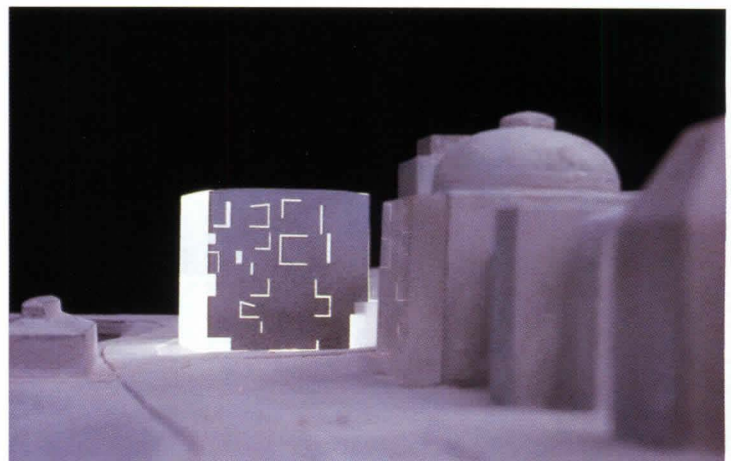
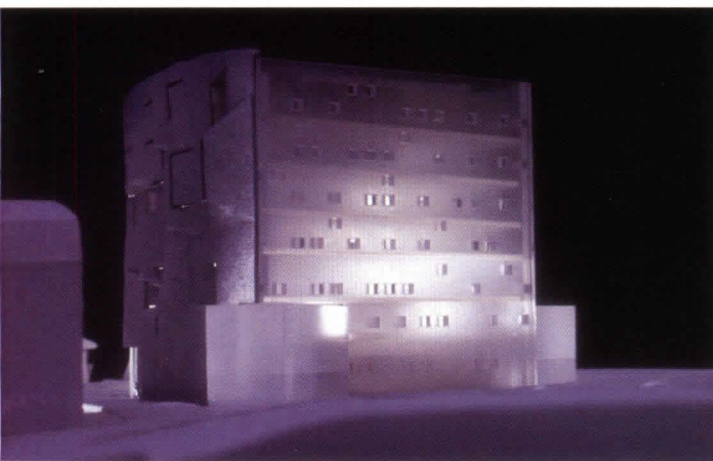
- 1 auditorium
- 2 campus passage
- 3 studio
- 4 review room
- 5 gallery
- 6 exhibition space
- 7 shop
- 8 faculty offices
- 9 lecture hall



Ground-floor plan 34' ^

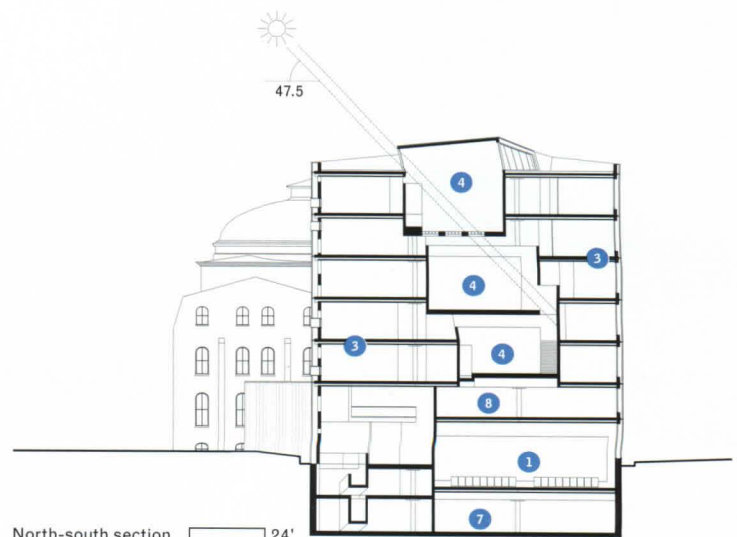


Sixth-floor plan



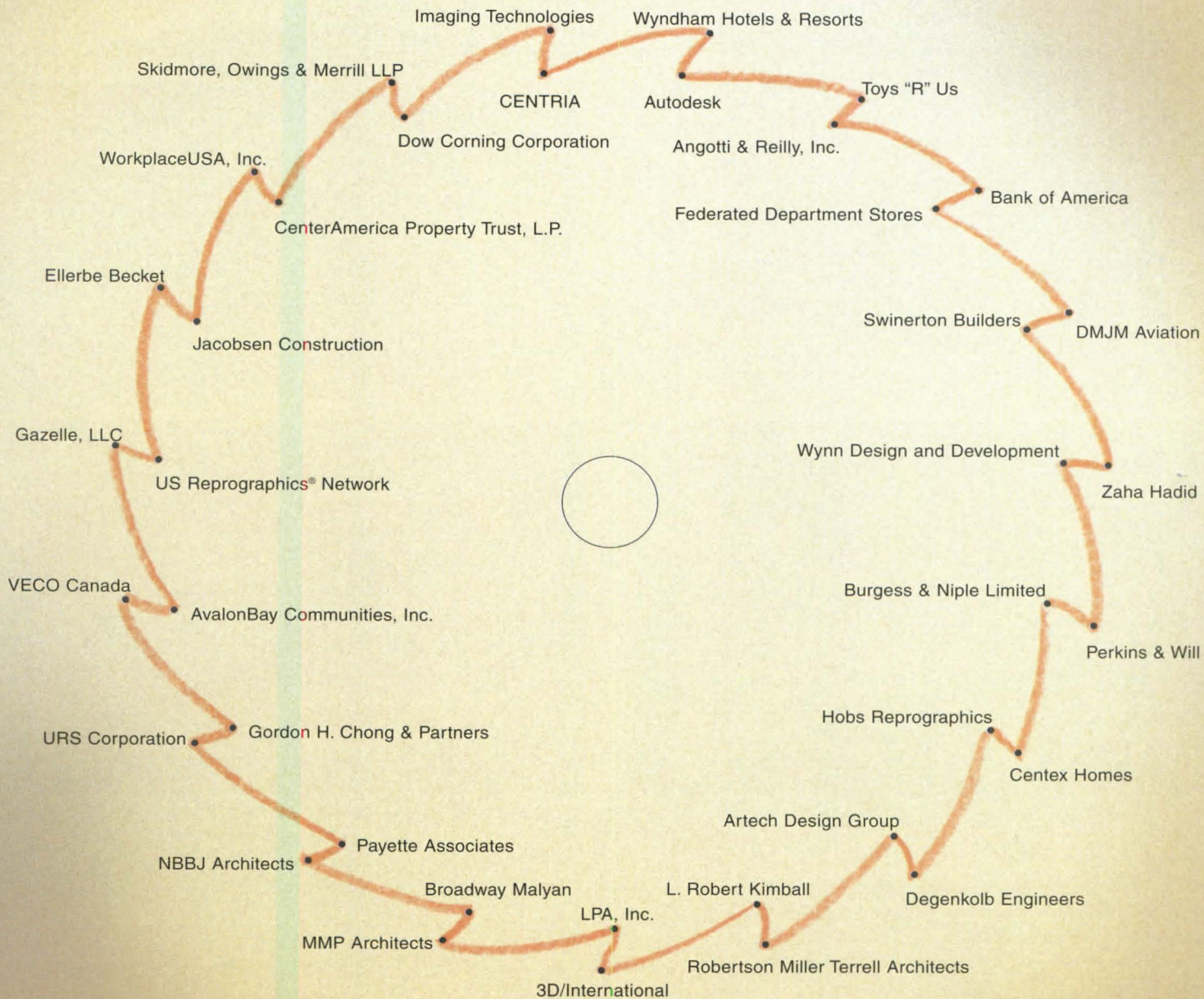
displaced by the shifting review rooms. Its difference from the other three façades is also made clear in its cladding and fenestration: While the walls enclosing studio spaces are channel glass punched with small, square windows, the western "tesseract wall" is clad in different kinds of aluminum panels.

Holl's 77,000-square-foot building, which is scheduled to be completed in 2004 with a budget of \$25 million, is just off Cornell's Arts Quad, along a path to a footbridge over Fall Creek Gorge that leads to a residential part of the campus. A public gallery on the ground level encompasses the path, so there will always be students passing through. This siting exploits the well-known habit of architecture school students working in hermetic isolation well into the night. As the first-years upstairs work on their nine-square grid exercises, the light from their studios will make the translucent glass walls glow, and the building's cubic form will guide their fellow students walking across the bridge and through the passageway below. *Anne Guiney*



North-south section 24'

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# practice

“Amazon appears to be here to stay, and its facilities strategy is a model for a new type of placeless company.”  
**Business, page 44**

“Some of us are still learning to describe these buildings as ‘historically significant’ without cringing.”  
**Preservation, page 46**



A series on reinventing practice:

## The Business of Creativity

Part 1: **William McDonough + Partners** combines evangelism and technology to convert its clients into environmentalists. **By Peter Hall**

**The Alchemist** By the third day of my visit to his Charlottesville offices, William McDonough hit his stride. With a scruffy-looking camera crew in tow, McDonough marched up the stairs to a conference room. “What happens with these articles is people think I do all this stuff,” he explained. “The idea of the film crew is to show the collaborative process. It’s not a one-trick dog and pony...” he struggled for the phrase. “You know what I mean,” he concluded, and swept into the conference room.

In the perfunctory but well-ventilated meeting space, waiting employees had lined the walls with drawings and renderings of a summer house renovation and addition for the Woods Hole Research Center

Professor and salesman: William McDonough meets with representatives from American Hydrotech, a roofing company, and ZinCo, a green-roof developer.

in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. A turn-of-the-century wood structure in an area famed for its historic buildings, the Woods Hole house was a potential demonstration project for both the client and McDonough's firm, which had set the "absurd goal," as he put it, of having the building power itself. "We see the building as a photosynthetic event," said McDonough, "like a flower, or a leaf in the forest."

To achieve this kind of artificial photosynthesis, the house needed photovoltaic roof panels, and an energy-efficient heating and cooling system. Insulating the walls, however, was proving troublesome. The most common and effective air barrier for renovations is a self-expanding polyurethane foam that is pumped into the walls, which, for McDonough's sensibilities, was an unwelcome chemical addition to the scheme. "We see it as the last thing standing when all the wood has rotted away," noted Mark Rylander, the associate partner leading the design, with a grimace.

McDonough leaped in: "We need to move urethane sealants into MBDC," he announced. McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry—MBDC—is the materials research consultancy that McDonough founded in 1995 with chemical engineer Michael Braungart.

One of the project designers, Carl Crawford, was skeptical. "We're going through a large effort and expense not to use foam," he said.

"If this project creates a new foam in the world, we've done our job," insisted McDonough. He added grandly, "Our job is to change the industry!" Revolutionary exhortations seem to be so commonplace in the office that the response from the assembled throng was not congregational shouts of approval but a sort of business-as-usual murmur.

An inimitable combination of architect and environmental proponent, lytizer to industry, McDonough has fashioned a rather unique conglomerate around himself. His activities are threefold—an architecture firm (William McDonough + Partners), an industrial-product consultancy (MBDC), and a public-speaking business. MBDC and the architecture firm provide each other with mutual research platforms: The architect defines the need—a biological insulant, for instance—and the chemist analyzes existing industrial products and develops new ones. McDonough, the public speaker and environmental advocate, in turn serves as a figurehead and a one-man marketing machine for the entire operation.

Projects on the drawing board include a 1.5 million-square-foot headquarters for Palm Computer, phase two of a \$65 million headquarters for Nike in the Netherlands, and a poignant \$2 billion project to rebuild Ford Motor Company's manufacturing plant (once an icon of poisonous industry) on the Rouge River in Dearborn, Michigan. MBDC's ongoing projects include an online database that enables a giant manufacturer to vet suppliers for environmentally undesirable ingredients.

Behind the figurehead is a midsized firm experiencing rather unusual growing pains. Just eight years ago, McDonough was running a seven-person boutique in New York. The firm moved to Virginia in 1994 when McDonough became dean of the University of Virginia School of Architecture, and design partner Christopher Hays describes the five years that followed as a "trial by fire." McDonough's academic responsibilities took him out of the office four days a week.





**An atmosphere of shared values and a belief in the company's cause, if not its methods, unites employees past and present.**

A management triumvirate, which includes design partner Chris Hays (above right, at right) and partner Kevin Burke (facing page, left), is charged with organizing the firm's vision of sustainability into an efficient practice. Associate partner Mark Rylander (facing page, right, white shirt), and architect Carl Crawford (blue shirt) work on the Woods Hole Research Center. Associate partner Allison Ewing (above left) discusses a residential development in Banff, Canada.

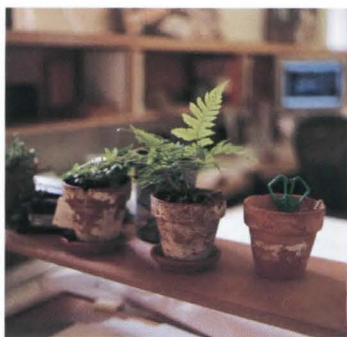
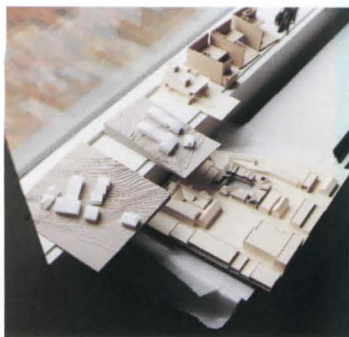
and Hays, who had previously worked with Renzo Piano and Cesar Pelli, was initially running the show. McDonough learned to delegate during this period, and says that "without Chris, we couldn't have moved." However, former employee Robert Winstead recalls an often exasperating design process with McDonough and Hays. "You'd get a few minutes of their time and they'd come in with a napkin sketch and you would be instructed to make the project work," says Winstead. Inevitably, he adds, the lack of daily contact would lead to differences between the developed design and the original sketch.

With McDonough's resignation from the dean's position in 1999 and increased presence in the firm, the firm's management triumvirate of Hays, Kevin Burke, and Russell Perry agrees that the previous problems of absentee leadership have diminished. But the resulting influx of work and growth in size (from 30 employees to 45 in the last year and a half) may have also magnified the organizational flaws in the firm.

One former employee, Jane Morley, spent three weeks as McDonough's director of new business development last summer before acrimoniously parting company with the firm. She says that during her brief tenure, management and internal communication seemed poorly organized. "Nothing was really well planned," she says, adding that McDonough's presence as a manager reminded her of "a seagull—the kind that flies in, squawks a lot, craps over everything, and leaves."

McDonough's contributions, however, are also the fertilizer that sustains and fuels the practice, and an idiosyncratic—and not unworkable—office culture has developed around him. Projects are distributed to one of four loosely organized studios at the firm: residential, community design, commercial, and institutional, all of which McDonough oversees on a "broad basis," according to Burke. One of the three partners acts as McDonough's delegate, and one of six associate partners manages each project. Design reviews are relatively free-form: Designers explain their progress and project managers offer suggestions by scribbling on tracing paper pinned over each plan. McDonough shifts erratically from drawing possible design innovations to *delivering jokes and poetic analogies*.

Sometimes during my visit to the office the partners' suggestions reflected a lack of familiarity with the project at hand. At the Woods Hole meeting, for example, McDonough's triumphant call to send foam



over to MBDC was somewhat deflated of its cinematic impact when Rylander advised him that MBDC had been working on it for three weeks already. But for every digression and wayward analogy, McDonough had a unique perspective on design and materials. At a design review meeting for a model residential development in the Canadian town of Banff, McDonough marched in waving a lightweight square of silica aerogel that would offer insulating properties several times that of glass. Such was his enthusiasm that at one point it seemed the entire roof would be made of the stuff. In the sober light of the next afternoon, however, project architect Katherine Grove pointed out that the material's cost and availability might make it less feasible. But she added that daylight is a precious commodity in the chilly climate of Alberta, and this new product could provide an innovative solution: "It's a boost to the manufacturer and gets everyone thinking about what's possible."

McDonough's organization is perhaps most progressive in its research capacities, which provide the underpinnings of its green ambitions. Though financially independent, MBDC works in close collaboration with the architecture firm's in-house research department, gathering climate data, checking available local resources and helping evaluate where the firm's "green" goals are best applied.

The end result is not awe-inspiring architecture in any traditional sense. McDonough's trademarks are good ventilation, energy-efficient heating and cooling, and roofs covered with 6 inches of dirt, grass, and wildflowers. But McDonough's dream of sustainability attracts young architects. According to Perry, more than half the current staff comes from outside Charlottesville, and was attracted to the firm for its environmentalist agenda. Grove, who had her pristine first model for the Banff project cut to pieces by McDonough and managers at a design review, seemed enthusiastic nonetheless. "It really is a team effort," she said breezily.

In some respects, the makeup of William McDonough + Partners resembles a much more old-fashioned firm than its output would suggest. The organizational structure is by necessity "top heavy," as Perry puts it: A large proportion of the staff is comprised of midlevel architects with distinct areas of expertise, because the firm is awarded a diverse array of project types on the basis of its environmental expertise, rather

than specializing in a building type. As a result, young staffers seem to find it difficult to speak up in design reviews. Morley says that there is "a strong undercurrent of sexism in the office." No women in the firm hold a position more senior than associate partner.

But an atmosphere of shared values and a belief in the company's cause, if not its methods, unites employees past and present. Hays likens the inspirational effect to that of his former employer, Renzo Piano. "Empty gestures didn't go very far with Piano," he says. "Bill believes that architecture has to be about ideas first, and our job is to find a way to put form to those ideas."

McDonough's organization has attained distinction by marrying a traditional architecture practice with a persuasive line of environmental salesmanship, backed by a formidable technical research arm. The professorial front man manages to package both of his firms' complex ideas about sustainability in a form that is not just palatable, but inspiring to both clients and employees—something unique in the U.S.

The effectiveness of McDonough's operation is ultimately borne out in the testimonials of his clients. Returning to New York, I telephoned Fred Kriebel, who works in the facilities department at the Gap's headquarters, to find out how the building is faring amid California's energy crisis. Kriebel informed me that after some tests, energy use at the headquarters came out at about 30 percent better than that of a neighboring Gap-owned structure, possibly due to more efficient equipment, the amount of daylight (reduced artificial light), the grass roof, and relatively low air-conditioning load (cool night air is stored for daytime cooling).

Kriebel said working with McDonough's firm had been an eye-opening experience, and his early suspicions during the design development swiftly dissipated when he saw that the idealism was economically viable. "I consider myself a green construction convert as a result," he said, adding, "I wish everyone would build that way." ■

*Peter Hall is a Brooklyn-based writer who contributes to Metropolis, The Guardian, One, and Men's Journal.*

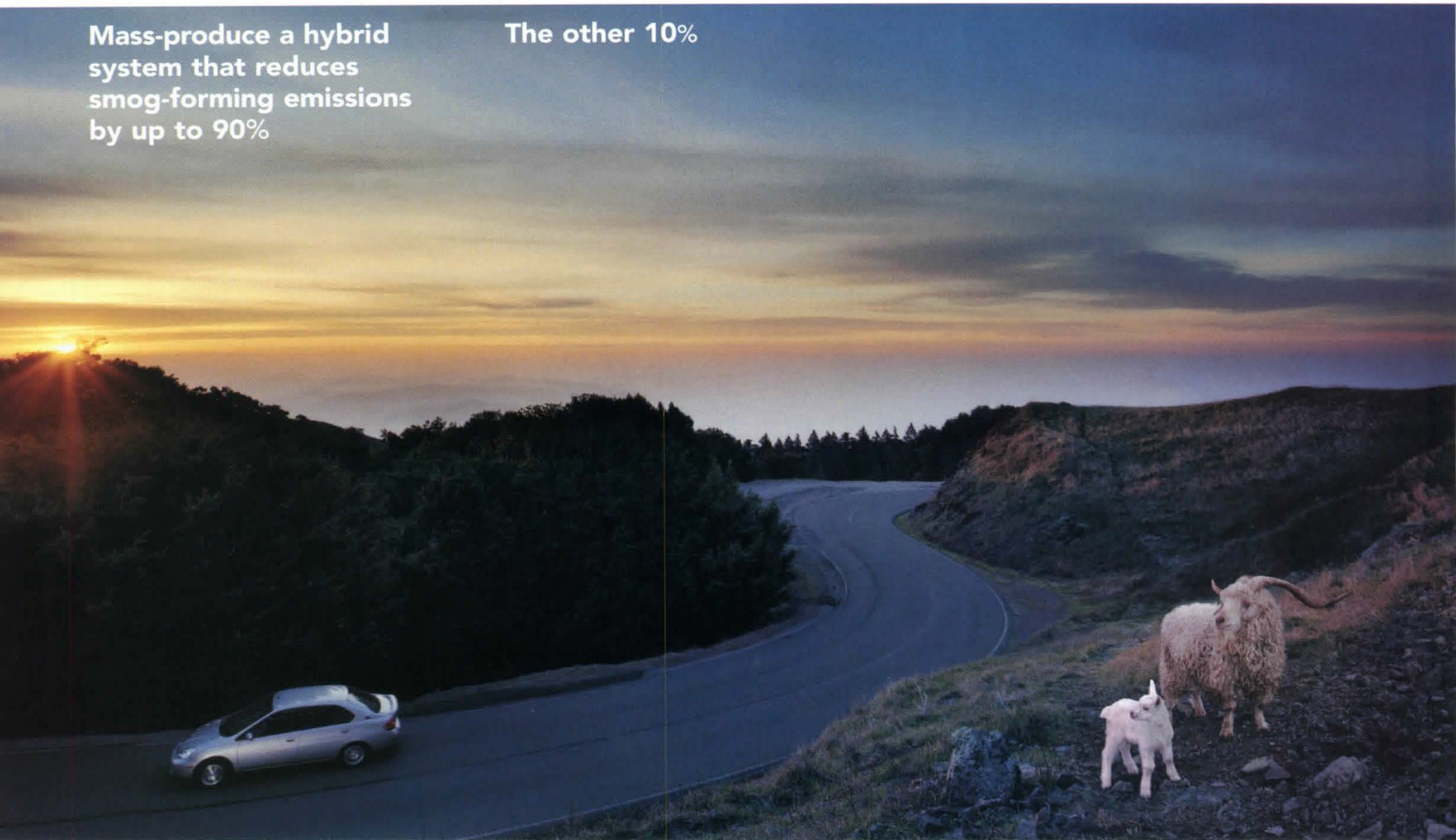
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# The Anywhere Company

If Amazon.com is the future of corporate America, **Daniel Cohen** discovers it may spell the end of iconic commercial architecture.

**Business** In 1998, an ambitious Internet company convened a meeting of 24 professionals, ranging from engineers to college professors, to develop a facilities strategy. Its advice helped start a trend that could radically change the development of corporate architecture.

The group decided that the aspiring e-tailer needed a national warehouse network that could accommodate an ever-shifting volume of sales. The strategy placed more priority on the adaptability of company buildings than on the type of branded design exemplified by industrial icons like Matte Trucco's Fiat factory in Turin, Italy.

The company, Amazon.com, owns no property. It instead leases its 4.5 million square feet of warehouse and 900,000 square feet of office. During its build-out phase in 1999, Amazon rented existing warehouses and redesigned them, and now that it has slowed its expansion, the company is adjusting its holdings according to plan.

Last year, the company generated almost \$2.7 billion in revenue, and in June, it announced that it expects to show a profit for 2002. Amazon appears to be here to stay, and its facilities strategy is a model for a new type of placeless company.

A fleet of architects designs the firm's warehouse spaces for maximum efficiency and tries to make them attractive to potential subletters. Extensive computer and electrical wiring and large truck courts are some of the company's primary concerns when designing a space, and owners are usually amenable to the modifications. "When an Amazon comes and knocks on somebody's door, they'll bend over backwards to make the deal," says Jeff Turnipseed, an architect at Blakely Johnson & Ghusn, which designed Amazon's 625,000-square-foot Nevada warehouse.

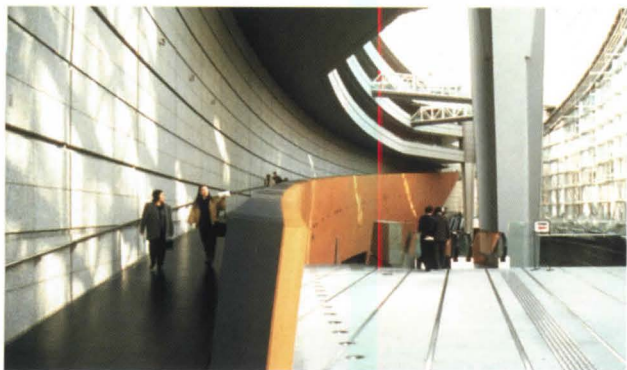
The company's adaptability was put to the test this year, when, without a moment's nostalgia, Amazon said it would cease operations at a massive warehouse in McDonough, Georgia, and use its original Seattle warehouse only seasonally. Julie Benezet, Amazon's director of global real estate, believes adaptable warehouse space "is a very large market" for architects. This is great news for architects' bank accounts, but it also heralds a time when the substantive elements of good design may become irrelevant in the minds of corporate clients. ■

This Amazon fulfillment center, off Route 29 in Grand Forks, North Dakota, is active from 6 a.m. to midnight, processing orders, taking calls, and shipping packages. The building is part of the company's sprawling national network of warehouses, which can be expanded—or abandoned—at a moment's notice.









## Disability

### Too Little, Too Late

Rafael Viñoly's Tokyo International Forum (above), a performing arts center, is known among Tokyo youth as a premiere cruising spot. And for eager teens in wheelchairs, the futuristic building's spiraling ramp with skyline views might seem an oasis. But, sadly, it's a mirage—the Forum's ramp is too steep for wheelchairs.

With the elderly population growing, the government is beginning to address Japan's lack of disability-access laws, but disability advocates have long believed a crisis is at hand. In August 1991, a young girl spent 14 hours trapped in a train station elevator reserved for the handicapped; her disability prevented her from reaching the buttons. And in April of this year, a man in a wheelchair was killed by a train when he became trapped on a crosswalk and was unable to push an emergency button placed out of his reach.

The designers of Japan's postwar reconstruction put

greatest priority on the efficient movement of corporate workers, with little consideration for the country's disabled population. Disabled Japanese have long been relegated to separate schools. The result, advocates say, is that this population, which grew from 4.9 percent in 1950 to nearly 19.2 percent in 2000, remains largely invisible.

Few accessibility laws exist in Japan that affect private buildings. In November 2000, the "Barrier-Free Transportation Law" took effect, requiring public transit systems to be more accessible, and by 2010 the government hopes to make all transportation hubs with more than 5,000 daily users accessible. But Michiko Kikuchi, appointed to form disability policy for Tokyo's metropolitan government, believes a barrier-free Japan is a long way off. "It is impossible to close all the vertical gaps in town," she lamented to the *Japan Times* last year. What the handicapped need, she said, "is a helping hand." *Jacob Ward*

# Mission of Mercy

More than 100 Park Service visitor centers, designed by some of the country's best midcentury architects, are in danger of being torn down. **Fred Bernstein** asks: Should they be saved?

**Preservation** At the Salt Pond Visitor Center—a jaunty modernist building at the Cape Cod National Seashore—metal window frames are pitted; ceilings show signs of steady leaks. And while the bathrooms are far too small for the summer throngs, a spacious theater, designed in an era when a ranger might draw large crowds to a nature talk, stands empty. To Seashore officials, the building is obsolete. But to preservationists, it's an important example of midcentury modernism, one of more than 100 such buildings commissioned by the National Park Service in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

"Quite a few of the buildings are in danger," says Randy Biallis, chief historical architect with the National Park Service (NPS) in Washington. "They're 40 to 50 years old, and were built to serve a much smaller visitor population." Biallis believes the recent increase in the popularity of national parks has overtaken the capacity of the centers. "There are a lot of proposals to remove these buildings, or to do major rehabs," he says. One such rehab, at Bryce Canyon in Utah, will turn a 1958 visitor center by Cannon & Mullen into an ersatz wilderness lodge, reminiscent of a style popular in the national parks before World War II.

It was an increase in park attendance—and funding—that prompted the midcentury boom in visitor centers. The NPS's 50th anniversary in 1966 was the unofficial construction deadline, and the buildings (along with their style, an unprecedented attempt to bring modernism into proximity with nature) were dubbed "Mission 66."

The current push by NPS directors to replace or rusticate these buildings is a result of similar circumstances to the ones that created the Mission 66 program. "I can see the cycle starting all over," says Christine Madrid, a Charlottesville, Virginia, preservationist and former NPS employee who wrote her University of Virginia master's thesis on the Mission 66 buildings. Money started rolling into the NPS during the Clinton years, when user fees were raised and public-private partnerships encouraged. Even the architect of the \$4 million Bryce Canyon renovation, Wally Cooper, has misgivings about the project. "Certainly, there are people who will not be happy about it," he says. The NPS and the private group that has helped pay for the renovation "have this vision of what a park building should be and, boy, they pushed it hard." President Bush has recently pledged \$1 billion for park maintenance, which will probably doom more buildings.

"It's an extremely important moment," says Madrid, who has been trying to visit and document all 114 visitor centers while there's still time.



Modernism in the wild: Midcentury visitor centers like these are being outmoded and destroyed. Clockwise from top left: Glen Canyon National Recreation Area Visitor Center, Arizona (Cecil Doty, Western Office of Design and Construction, NPS, 1963–66); Gettysburg Cyclorama Building, Pennsylvania (Neutra & Alexander, 1961); Dinosaur National Monument Visitor Center, Utah (Anshen and Allen, 1957); Mesa Verde Far View Visitor Center, Colorado (Western Office of Design and Construction, NPS, with Joseph & Louise Marlowe, 1964–68).

Already, the Mt. Rushmore Visitor Center, seen in the Hitchcock classic *North by Northwest*, has been torn down. At Bryce Canyon, Madrid photographed the building's walls being ripped off.

According to the Cape Cod National Seashore's historian, William Burke, park officials "think in terms of accessibility and safety"—not style. Burke notes that for many Park Service employees, it's hard to think of saving these buildings. "Some of us are still learning to describe them as 'historically significant' without cringing," he says.

At the same time, preservationists have won some significant victories. Three Mission 66 buildings—visitor centers at Dinosaur National Monument in Utah (bottom right); Wright Brothers National Memorial in North Carolina; and an administration building at Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado, by Taliesen Associated Architects—were named National Historic Landmarks earlier this year.

So far there's been no such luck at two Richard Neutra–designed

buildings: the visitor centers at Petrified Forest National Monument, in Arizona, and in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (top right). At Gettysburg, Park Service officials are planning to destroy the Cyclorama Building (designed by Neutra and Robert Alexander—see January 2000, page 27). In one of many letters to the advisory committee, architect Kevin Roche protested "there are enough fields in Gettysburg."

Madrid argues that the Park Service, which she feels has treated the buildings as some kind of anomaly—a "postwar mistake," in her words—should realize that Mission 66 was suited to its time. She believes in the need for compromise: Artful renovation can solve the buildings' functional deficiencies without resorting to wholesale destruction. Indeed, in Cape Cod, it appears the *visitor center will be renovated in a way that preserves its soaring roof and giant windows*. That's fine with Burke, who believes that "some of the buildings from that period should be saved. They shaped how people saw the parks for decades." ■



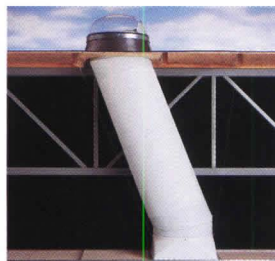
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## Modern Master

L.A MoCA argues for architect R.M. Schindler's place in the modernist pantheon, but **Joseph Giovannini** thinks the curators missed the point.

**Review** The promise of *The Architecture of R.M. Schindler* is redemptive: that a big, monographic exhibition will introduce the designer and his ideas to a wide public and finally redress the infamous omission of Schindler from the Museum of Modern Art's benchmark 1932 show *Modern Architecture*, curated by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, and catalogued in their seminal book *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922*. This new exhibition holds out the hope of elevating an underappreciated master and even placing him in the pantheon of first generation modernists alongside Mies, Le Corbusier, and Gropius.

The show comprises 100 gorgeous original renderings and drawings, 90 photographs, 15 scale models, 12 pieces of furniture, and even a full-size re-creation of a beach bungalow. A lavish, beautifully designed Abrams catalogue accompanies the show, which is currently

R. M. Schindler plays with his son Mark at the Kings Road House, West Hollywood, in the summer of 1923, one year after it was built.



on view at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., and will travel to the Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) in Vienna.

Given the effort and resources, this show should be a cause for jubilation. MoCA has devoted the premier galleries in its Arata Isozaki-designed building to the cause. The chronologically organized show starts with Schindler's early work in Vienna, where he studied with Wagner and Loos, segues to his Chicago and Los Angeles periods with Frank Lloyd Wright, and then to his own independent career. Exhibition designers Chu + Gooding Architects boldly and successfully abstract Schindler's principles of interlocking space and form to break up and scale down Isozaki's monumental chambers.

Twirling his engineer's drafting machine, Schindler was a Mozart on the boards—a highly inventive master of composition and improvisation. From his first solo buildings, his genius has been incontestable. His own house on Kings Road (1921–22), the Pueblo Ribera Courts in La

Raised up on concrete piers to maximize its ocean views, the Lovell Beach House's double-height rooms and wide, cantilevered balconies (above) suited its naturopath owner's commitment to outdoor-oriented living.

Jolla (1923–25), and the Lovell Beach House (1925–26) have the originality, integrity, and dates to be considered alongside the Bauhaus at Dessau (1925–26), the Villa Savoie (1928–31), and the Barcelona Pavilion (1929). Schindler was the first European modernist to come to the U.S., and his portfolio justified his criticism of Le Corbusier's Villa Savoie as “infantile.”

What eluded the intellectually prim curators of the 1932 *Modern Architecture* show was the robustness of Schindler's inclusionary vision. Schindler's Kings Road House, pinwheeling into a yard conceived as outdoor rooms, was a structural hybrid of poured concrete and wood. The Lovell Beach House was a spatial and material weave cradled by concrete piers. In the hands of this design-build architect who was also

ained as an engineer, the structural system created exceptional moments instead of regularity—the singularities that captured a view, an interior overlook, a pocket of interior space.

Like Frank Gehry, Schindler was a hands-on architect, though he shaped his buildings on site rather than sculpting models in the studio. Schindler looked for unique responses to landscape, blurring the boundaries between inside and out. “The essence of life is variation, not standardization,” he noted, critiquing architecture based on the industrial paradigm.

Schindler’s clay was space itself, liberated from the mass—and box—passed down from masonry architecture. What was regrettable about his omission from *Modern Architecture* was that the vertical dimension dropped out of the debates. Mies, despite the de Stijl plans, was a flat architect dealing pancakes, and even Frank Lloyd Wright with his mezzanine sections remained dominantly horizontal. Wright, of course, was building on and for the prairie, while his employee Schindler (to

## Schindler found a voice characterized by freedom tinged with wildness. His designs invited accident, unpredictability, and singularity.

Whom Wright entrusted the engineering of the Imperial Hotel and the supervision of La Miniatura) was building on and for Los Angeles’ hill-sides, conceiving houses as step-ladders up and down the site.

Coming out of Vienna, Chicago, and Taliesin, Schindler had a unique pedigree, but he survived his lineage to find a voice characterized by freedom tinged with wildness. His geometries were not single-minded and controlling; the designs invited accident, unpredictability, and singularity into what he called the “spaceform.”

“Schindler tolerated inconsistency and awkwardness because, above all, he was interested in space and in space molding form rather than in materials, workmanship, detailing, or structure per se,” wrote Barbara Giella, perhaps Schindler’s preeminent scholar, in her 1987 dissertation on the architect’s 1930s style. “Inconsistency, conflict, ambiguity, and contradiction, when they occurred, were the by-product either of practical necessity or of a value system which did not hold consistency as an absolute.” What the New York establishment—critics, curators, scholars—has not been able to understand about Los Angeles (until Gehry and a concomitant paradigm shift in critical criteria) is its seeming variation and heterogeneity in opposition to tamped-down regularity and homogeneity.

Strangely, the current MoCA show is also uncomfortable with the profane nature of Schindler’s talent. The strength of *The Architecture of M. Schindler* is the generous display of original material that is allowed to speak for itself. But the chronological sequence, the smooth treatment of all the projects, and even the installation design (which is visually continuous throughout) manage to smooth

*continued on page 102*



### In Process

**Frank Gehry, Architect**  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York City, through August 26

On a sunny Tuesday, over two weeks after the May 18 opening of *Frank Gehry, Architect* at the Guggenheim, visiting tourists found themselves negotiating a series of detours, from the canvas curtains closing off the floor of Frank Lloyd Wright’s famous rotunda, to the yellow caution tape barring visitors from several segments of the ramp, including the show’s Bilbao finale. Behind the tape, squads of preparators busied themselves setting the guylines for an installation that is to serve as the exhibition’s centerpiece. A fine weave of white chain-link fencing will cascade in narrow strips like curtains from the glass roof, torquing

as they descend to create a complex enclosure (left).

Seeing the messy process by which this elegant effect is to be achieved unexpectedly resonated with one of the exhibition’s goals: to show the creative process that leads to Gehry’s virtuosic completed buildings. It’s not tidy, at least as shown here. Gehry’s major works are shown individually, each allotted one or two bays of Wright’s spiral. Cleaned-up presentation models dominate the ramp’s floor, while shelves along the canted outer wall overflow with study models, sketches, and bound books of construction documents. The study models are astonishingly crude, covered in tape, tissue paper, aluminum foil, and anything else that might be quickly draped over a volumetric model to suggest a roof form. Unfortunately, the show adds very little in the way of explanatory notes, not to mention dates, basically showing us ingredients without a recipe. We see piles of Kleenex-on-cardboard, and we see the final building, but the path from one to the other remains obscure.

*Eric Fredericksen*



Screenshots show the work of one team of students for an online charrette to master plan St. Simone, a squatter-built settlement in South Beirut. Students working in Ankara, Beirut, Ahmedabad, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, together proposed a large-scale framework to organize the neighborhood without constraining organic change and growth at the level of individual houses. In one version (top, center and left), they proposed a linear organization of row houses joined at their backs by common service areas or courts and set back from the street to allow their fronts to grow in response to their residents’ changing needs. An alternative plan (bottom left) achieves a similar goal by pinwheeling private houses around a central common service core.

Exploiting its most novel capability—interactivity—Archnet provides users with online workspaces where they are encouraged to post their academic and professional work. The idea is to build an online community where individuals can receive feedback on their work, get advice, and collaborate with fellow Archnet users. To test the possibilities of these collaborative workspaces, MIT coordinated a joint online studio last October, spearheaded by Chares Correa. This 10-day charrette involved faculty and students from MIT, the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, American University of Beirut (AUB), and the Center for Environmental Planning and Technology in Ahmedabad, India. Students were divided into 10 teams and given a choice of problems proposed by faculty from each school.

One problem, posed by the AUB’s Marwan Ghandour and Hiba Abu Akl, focused on a contested urban locale in South Beirut, the illegal settlements of Saint Simone. Students found themselves addressing complex political and social issues related to the spatial claims on

these properties made by squatting populations. Nonlocal students relied on their Beirut partners as visual experts and social interpreters; chat rooms served as shared studio space; and work throughout the design process was uploaded to the Web, allowing for ongoing commentary and criticism by teachers and students alike. The charrette culminated in an online final review, a virtual free-for-all in which everyone could critique the resulting projects.

There are plans to eventually upload the complete catalogue and backlist of the MIT Press, but this brings up another potential problem: Just how much information can be posted and how many of Archnet’s interests can be represented without undermining the site’s Islamic focus? With its capacity to show, listen, and respond to all “others,” Archnet must be careful not to lose the sound of its own distinctive voice. ■

*Richard Becherer is an associate professor of architecture at the American University of Beirut.*



Review

Dancing on the Roof

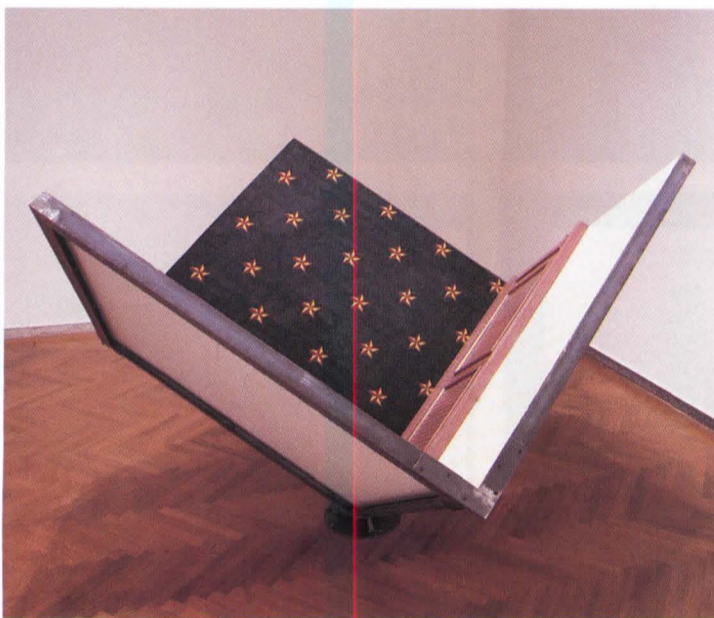
work and play at the Bauhaus through the extracurricular photography of the students, faculty, and spouses.

With works assembled largely from private collections and seen publicly for the first time, *Dancing on the Roof* convincingly demonstrates how informal instruction across generations and disciplines contributed to the genius of the Bauhaus. Residents working in a variety of media took photography in new directions, reflecting

culture

## Out of Context

Artists James Casebere and Glen Seator nudge architecture's boundaries. **Branden Hookway** crosses the border with them.



Review

For architects, architecture can easily become a solely intradisciplinary affair. They understandably tend to compare one building to others rather than seek out comparisons across a broader range of cultural production. Yet, behind stylistic comparisons lies the brute fact of the building itself and the social mechanisms that the mere presence of architecture implies.

*The Architectural Unconscious*, an exhibit currently running at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, brings together the work of two artists, James Casebere and Glen Seator, who use techniques of architectural visualization and production to explore those underlying mechanisms that connect architecture to society. Organized at the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, Massachusetts, under the curatorship of Adam Weinberg, *The Architectural Unconscious* takes place in that precarious territory between concept and built reality, between art and architecture.

James Casebere's large-scale photographic work begins with the documentation of existing institutional spaces, particularly prisons and military structures. These spaces become the basis for models of Styrofoam, foam board, plaster, and paint that are photographed from the perspective of a fictional inhabitant of their interior spaces.

## The West-East Web Site

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture creates an online exchange with roots in the Islamic world and strong ties to the American academy. **Richard Becherer** points and clicks.

**Online** In Goethe's 1815 poem "The West-East Divan," interlocutors from both sides of the imaginary East-West divide politely share an afternoon while exchanging their world perspectives. Cultural criti-

In a two-person show at the Addison Gallery in Andover, Massachusetts, Glen Seator replicates one corner of a Friendly's restaurant (left) as modernist sculpture. James Casebere's *Pink Hallway #3* (2000), a photograph of a model, imagines a postdiluvian corridor at nearby Phillips Academy (facing page).

Casebere's goal is not to conceal the artifice of the model with graphic slight-of-hand. Through lighting, textures, a minimal use of detail, and, in this series, "flooding" the models to create distorted reflections, Casebere suspends us eerily between the abstraction of a model and the connotation of an almost-real space. In this exhibition he documents the Eastern State Penitentiary, a hallway from Phillips Academy, and a World War II-era German bunker system. Space, for Casebere, is always man-made, interior, and confining.

Glen Seator's work likewise takes place on a middle ground between architectural concept and realization, but this time the critical boundary lies between the freestanding sculptural object and the site-specificity of architecture. *Places for Balanced Sculptures* was created for installation at the Addison Gallery, and refers to three sites: the Addison Gallery itself, a nearby Friendly's restaurant in Andover, and a terminal at Logan Airport in Boston. Each of the three sculptures consists of two walls and a floor, meticulously re-creating the materials and finishes of the three sites. The surfaces are held in identical 6-foot-square steel frames and bolted together to make corners. When balanced on these corners, they refer to a trope of late-modernist sculpture: The cube balanced on one of its points.

Each of these spaces has been transformed into surface treatments: the grand neoclassical solidity of the Addison's plaster on lath walls and oak floor; the homyness of the wallpaper, bead board, and carpet at Friendly's; and the clean modernity of the Logan terminal, with its glass walls and terrazzo floor. More than creating a sense of specific places, these surfaces reveal how social behavior is encoded in architecture. The most superficial of instruments—wallpaper, carpet, veneers—can demand certain attitudes, dress, tone of voice, or posture. For Seator, the modernist axiom of honesty in materials is rendered just one more stylistic effect. Conceptually and formally, both Casebere's and Seator's work suspends for a moment the cause-effect relationship between design intent and spatial effect. ■

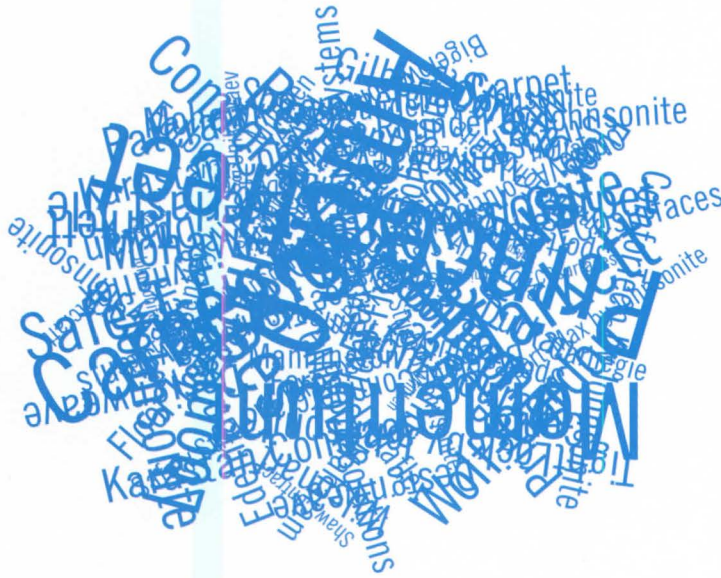
**The Architectural Unconscious: James Casebere and Glen Seator**, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, May 12 through July 29

*Branden Hookway is the author of Pandemonium: The Rise of Predatory Locales in the Post-War World (Princeton Architectural Press, 1999).*





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## Employees of the Revolution

Do you like the place where you work? Is it comfortable? Convenient? Attractive? Knoll, the legendary furniture manufacturer, is betting that the typical answer to each of these questions is “no.” The design of the cubicle has changed little since the glory days of the 1960s, when designers like Florence Knoll Bassett, Gordon Bunshaft, and Charles and Ray Eames dictated the way Americans occupied their offices. In the meantime, the way America does business has changed radically: The dot-com bubble may have burst, but the New Economy brought with it an informality that’s here to stay.

Knoll is gambling on a new furniture system, A3, to bring office design in line with the revolution in office etiquette. Architects Lise Anne Couture and Hani Rashid of Asymptote, the designers of A3, run a practice that is as thoroughly progressive as the target audience for their new product. Like a digitized Eames studio, their definition of architecture is expansive, and encompasses product and Web design as comfortably as conventional interior and architectural projects. They are, in a sense, their own ideal customer.

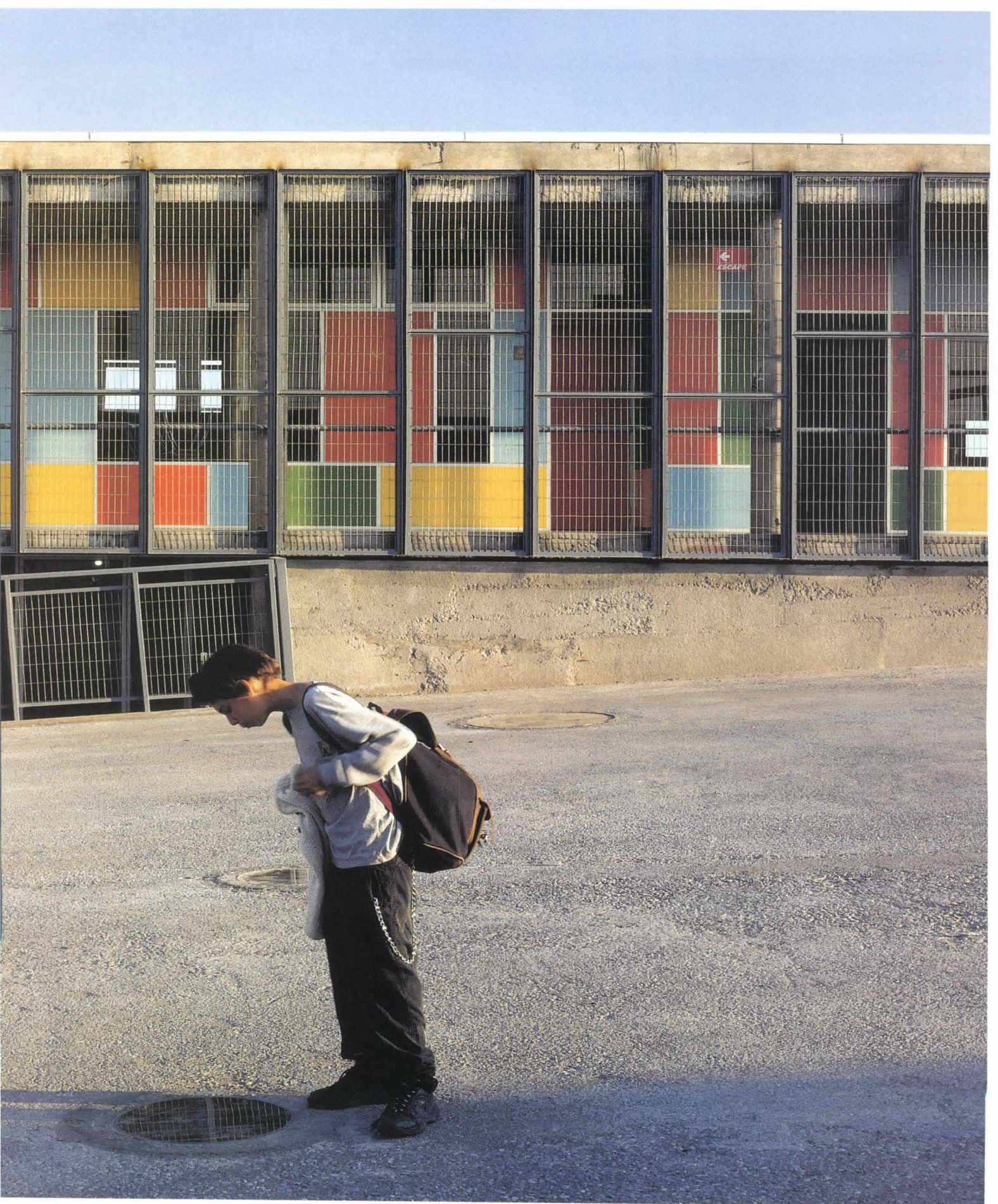
The other architects whose work is featured in this issue would feel equally at home in an office filled with A3 furniture. Even though they have a more traditional definition of architectural practice—just buildings, thank you—that doesn’t make their work any less exceptional. From Stanley Tigerman’s transplantation of small-town aesthetics to inner-city Chicago to Mathias Klotz’s urbane school in a suburb of Santiago, Chile; from Dominique Perrault’s underground athletic center in Berlin to Bernard Tschumi’s weblike transit interchange in Lausanne, Switzerland, they are all, in their own ways, revolutionary.

**Furniture manufacturer Knoll and New York City firm Asymptote Architecture introduced the new A3 office system in June, unveiling a prototype (above) at the Neocon trade show in Chicago.**



# Unsentimental Education

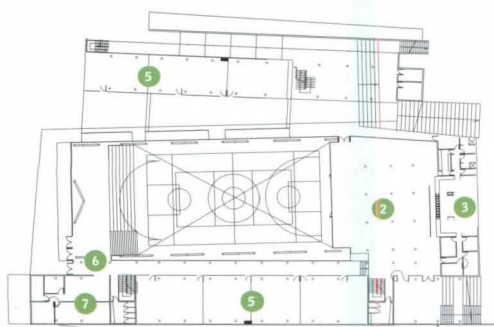
A new school by Chilean architect Mathias Klotz doesn't talk down to the students. By Anne Guiney



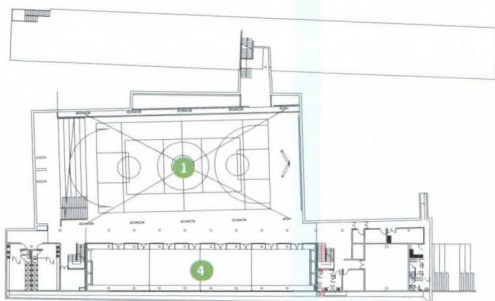
- 1 gymnasium
- 2 cafeteria
- 3 kitchen
- 4 practice rooms
- 5 classrooms
- 6 main entrance
- 7 administration
- 8 staff rooms
- 9 playground



First-floor plan



Ground-floor plan



Basement plan | 137' ^

In 1541, the Spanish conquistador Pedro de Valdivia marked out a grid of 126 blocks on a plain high in the Andes and named it *Santiago del Nuevo Extremo*. That act, more one of optimism than a reflection of the needs of the settlers (a ragtag band that would be decimated the next year by local Incas), set the pattern of development for the next several centuries. The center of contemporary Santiago—the capital of Chile—still adheres to its 16th-century plan. Today’s downtown is a pleasing catalogue of every architectural vogue that passed through: arcaded buildings reflecting the late 19th-century fad for *afrancasimiento* (loosely, “Frenchifying”) now shelter rows of empanada stands; a 16th-century colonial church’s rough-hewn stone walls are background for a stern neoclassical altarpiece. The result is a textured and elegant (if a bit shabby) downtown that reflects the long growth of an old and sophisticated city. Over the last century though, the city has expanded tenfold, to 4.5 million people, and Valdivia’s tight order has given way to a series of sprawling new developments on the outskirts of the old town.

A quirk of Santiago’s growth is that the farther one travels from the smoggy center, the more one gains a sense of the city’s defining geographic feature, the mountains. In Peñalolén, a low neighborhood of wide streets and modest houses in small yards (it could be a subdivision in Atlanta, were it not for the dramatic backdrop of the Andean foothills) Chilean architect Mathias Klotz has recently completed his first large-scale project, the Colegio de Altamira. In this elementary and high school building, Klotz has exploited both the extraordinary qualities of the natural landscape and the less dramatic ones of the man-made. Altamira’s context is as much the car-oriented suburb as it is the mountains, and Klotz gives both equal time. In his blending, he has managed to bring some of central Santiago’s urbanity to an otherwise generic setting.

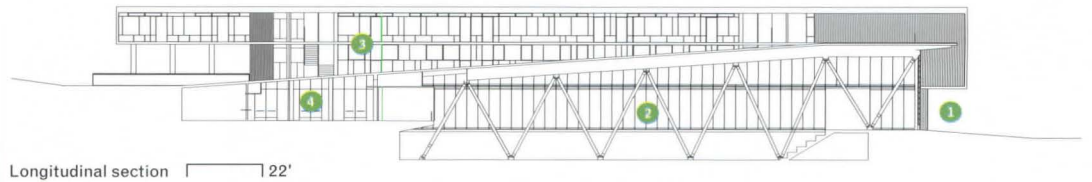
Although it is set into its sloping site for an entirely practical reason—to reduce the bulk necessary to house 1,400 students and thereby reduce potential opposition from neighbors—Altamira emerges from the hillside as if it were a particularly angular outcropping. The 65-foot grade change from the top of the site to the street entrance means that almost half of the building is underground. Two long concrete bars holding classrooms are cut into the hillside, flanking a large glass-clad gymnasium and cafeteria. The crude quality of the concrete work on the short, street-facing ends of the bars is barely relieved: One is punctuated with slot windows, the other with simple aluminum letters spelling out “ALTAMIRA.” As they mass up at the street edge, the two concrete bars give the school the look of an enormous fragment of highway infrastructure, like a public works project left unfinished decades before.



A student at Mathias Klotz's Colegio de Altamira (preceding spread) peers through a skylight in the surface of the playground to a gym below. The two long bars that hold classrooms flank a glazed gymnasium and are clad in vertical strips of pine on their respective southern sides (top). On the northern—and in the southern hemisphere, sunny—side of each of these bars, colorful corridors enclosed only by metal mesh (center) provide access to the classrooms. The gym's roof is also a sloping playground (bottom).



- 1 entrance
- 2 gymnasium
- 3 classrooms
- 4 cafeteria



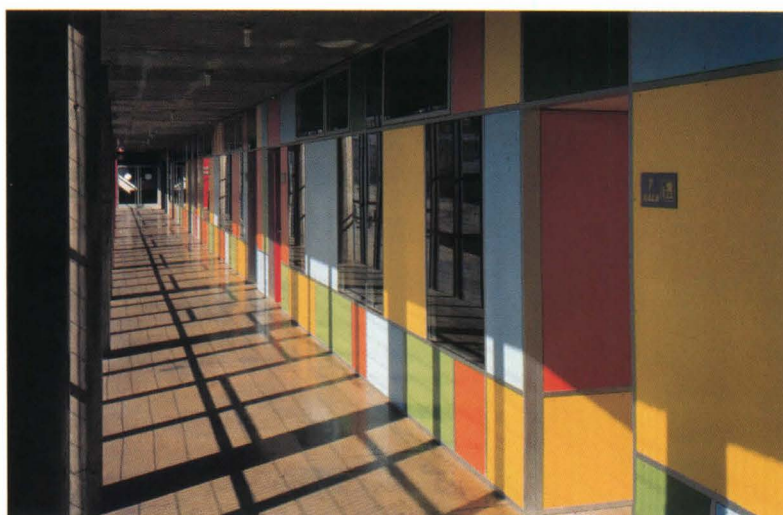
The relationship between the stacked play spaces at Altamira (above)—the patio and the gym—is best understood when seen from an open-air passage between the gym and the northern classroom bar. A section through the gym (drawing, above) demonstrates that fully half of the building is underground.



The center of the school, both physically and functionally, is the gymnasium and the concrete patio atop it. This roof is an extension (and mirror image) of the hillside behind it, creating a basinlike playground surface that rises from the rear of the site upward toward the street edge, almost, but not quite, reaching the height of its bookends. The patio is scattered with round glass skylights set flush into the pavement. On a sunny day, these oculi cast rounds of light onto the orange floor of the gym below, perhaps distracting for basketball players, but a gorgeous demonstration of the architect's delicate touch. Because the glazed gym is, practically speaking, freestanding, one always has access to natural light and a view of the outdoors, and can always find a reference to the original slope of the hillside. Even in rooms that are partially below grade, the datum line of the landscape is painted on the wall. Klotz has stacked the two major public spaces—gym and patio—in such a way that they become a bilevel plaza, the play-oriented heart of Altamira.

Despite its mute façade and simple plan, the school is not monolithic. Klotz has tweaked and refined it sufficiently to provide its occupants with a surprising richness of experience. The classroom bars, though at first glance quite similar, are canted at an angle of 3 degrees, and are different heights. The top level of the southern bar is pulled out slightly on piloti. From the hillside it seems to be a floating rectangle, while its fraternal twin across the playground seems solid and rooted. Access to the classrooms comes through colonnaded corridors that run along the northern side of each bar; the northern bar is further separated from the gym by an open-air passageway leading from the street to the playground and hillside. Colored panels along the northern side of both corridors also enliven and distinguish one from the other: Lively green, yellow, orange, and blue panels overlook the gym, marking the rooms as those of younger children, while a more sophisticated orange, black, and white palette colors the northern bar that houses the older students. The south façade of the block for younger children, which faces a row of houses, is fenestrated in such a way that one cannot read the floors. Some windows are long and low, others high up in the wall, so that neighbors can see only a small leg or head bobbing by instead of a parade of noisy kids.

The Colegio de Altamira is a remarkably sophisticated building for a rather unsophisticated neighborhood. It brings the texture and detail of a traditional downtown into a quarter where neither is found in abundance. Klotz is willing to blend influences but not fetishize them: He invokes the city by using playgrounds like plazas, and hallways like promenades, but not by drawing any direct equivalence. He invokes the landscape, but gives mountains and highway on-ramps equal footing. Altamira does not moralize about the banality of the suburbs or try to ignore them; instead it makes something new out of its given situation. In Santiago proper, there's urbanity without natural grandeur, and in Peñalolén, the opposite. At the Colegio de Altamira, Klotz has managed to find an elegant middle ground. ■



**Klotz distinguishes the classroom bars from each another with color: The corridor of the bar for older students is clad in panels of white, orange, and black (top), and overlooks a gabion retaining wall and parking lot, while rooms for the younger kids are orange, yellow, green, and blue (center), and face the gym. Originally, all walls between classrooms were designed as moveable partitions. In practice, all but a few walls (such as the ones above, in an assembly room) have been made permanent.**



From the spectators' benches at the front of the gym, Klotz's play with interior and exterior space is clear: The corridors at right are open at the lowest level, enclosed on the second, and partially open to the air on the third where the roof slopes. The round skylights set into the surface of the playground cast pools of sunlight on the gym floor.



**ALTAMIRA SCHOOL  
SANTIAGO, CHILE**

**CLIENT:** Fernando Flores, Santiago **ARCHITECT:** Mathias Klotz, Santiago, Chile—Mathias Klotz (principal); Carolina Del Campo, Pilar Calderon, Elodie Fulton, Rodrigo Duque, Rafael Fernandez, Juan Carlos Fernandez (architects) **ENGINEERS:** Enzo Valladares **GENERAL CONTRACTOR:** NDS Builders **COST:** \$3.2 million **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Alberto Piovano, except as noted

# New Cube on the Block

Allied Works demonstrates that modernism, meticulously detailed, makes a good neighbor.

By Lawrence W. Cheek



South façade

When he said that his architectural dream was “to make a 20th-century building in Portland before the end of the 20th century,” architect Brad Cloepfil wasn’t really joking. It was a laugh line, but its underlying seriousness is finally invested in the coolly elegant five-story cube he slipped into the city’s boutique-and-café 23rd Avenue district, a bare six months before the century’s official end.

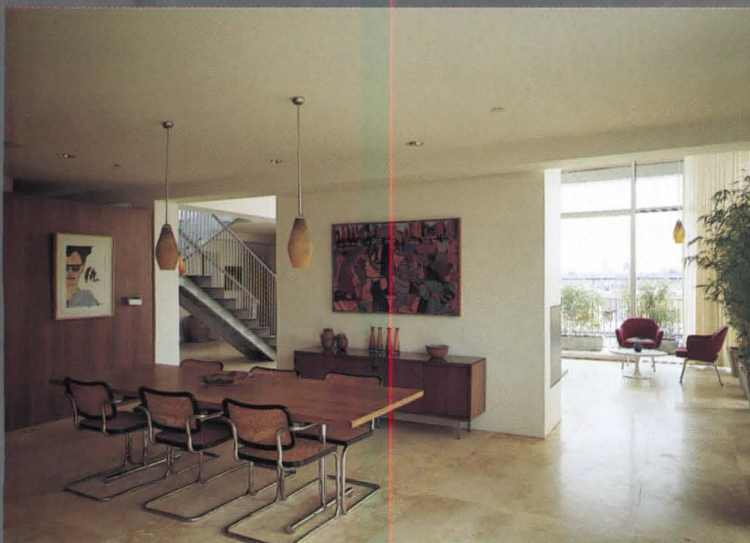
The three lower floors of the building are leased to an Aveda salon and spa, the interiors of which were designed elsewhere. Brad and Robert Sacks, the building’s clients, live on the fourth floor and in the penthouse. They wanted a modernist, urban residence in the spirit of Mies and Neutra that would also be a showcase for her business, Ann Sacks Tile & Stone. There’s nothing like it within a mile, but the building manages to be a good neighbor while not apologizing for its modernist purity. Detailing is meticulously considered, and the transparent façade’s impression of multiple dimensions is a delight.

- 1 salon and spa
- 2 living room
- 3 dining room
- 4 kitchen
- 5 terrace





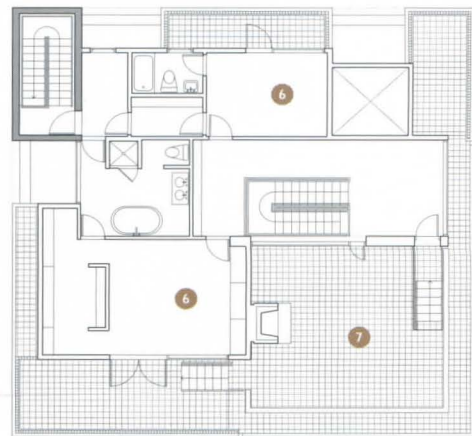
living room



dining room



living room terrace



fifth



fourth



first

floor plans 9' ^

vestibule  
salon and spa  
living room  
dining room  
kitchen  
bedroom  
terrace

### Penthouse apartment

The penthouse residence of Ann and Robert Sacks offers 3,500 square feet of enclosed space and 600 square feet of terrace and deck. Its 14-foot-high south windows admit a rush of light, and there's no sense of canyon dwelling because Portland's downtown high-rises are a mile away. All the interior spaces other than bathrooms and bedrooms are open and expansive; even the "galley" kitchen seems as airy as a gondola. Wall surfaces are pro forma white, but the French limestone and Italian granite that serve as flooring, pavers, countertops, ledges, and even bathroom walls provide counterpoints of texture and color. Various tiles from Ann Sacks's collection set off the bathrooms and west kitchen wall. The fireplace is the living room cynosure, and its authority lies in its purely defined structure. A right-angled steel plate, painted white, supports a cantilevered slab of blue-gray French limestone that forms the hearth. Another plate embraces the walnut mantle.



View from living room into kitchen

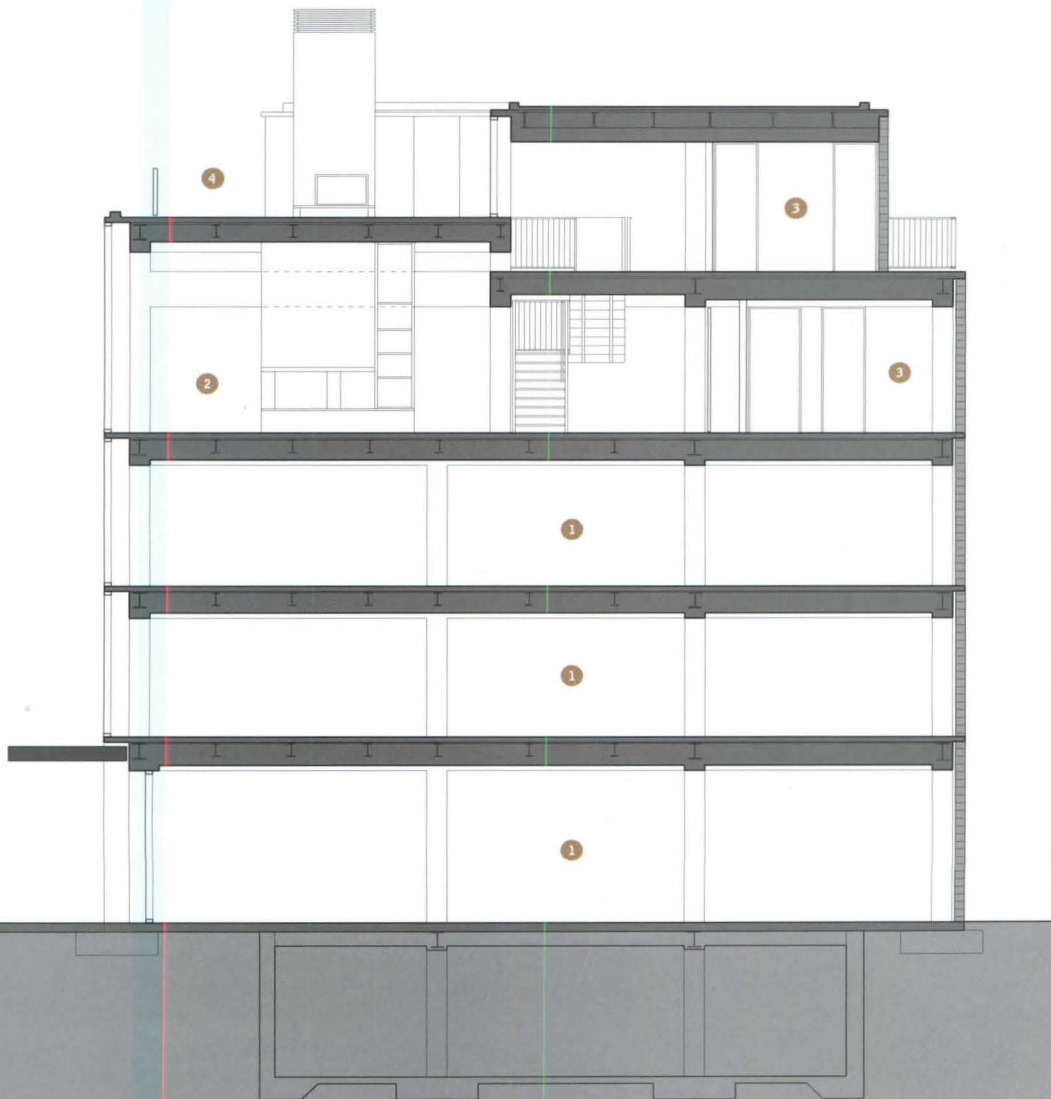


fifth-floor stair hall



rooftop terrace

- 1 salon and spa
- 2 living room
- 3 bedroom
- 4 terrace

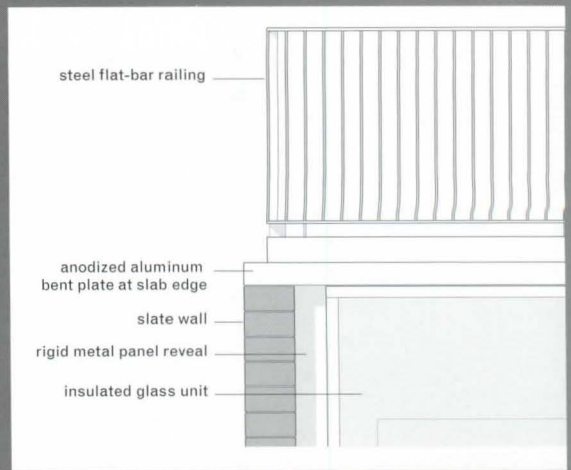


north-south section 4'

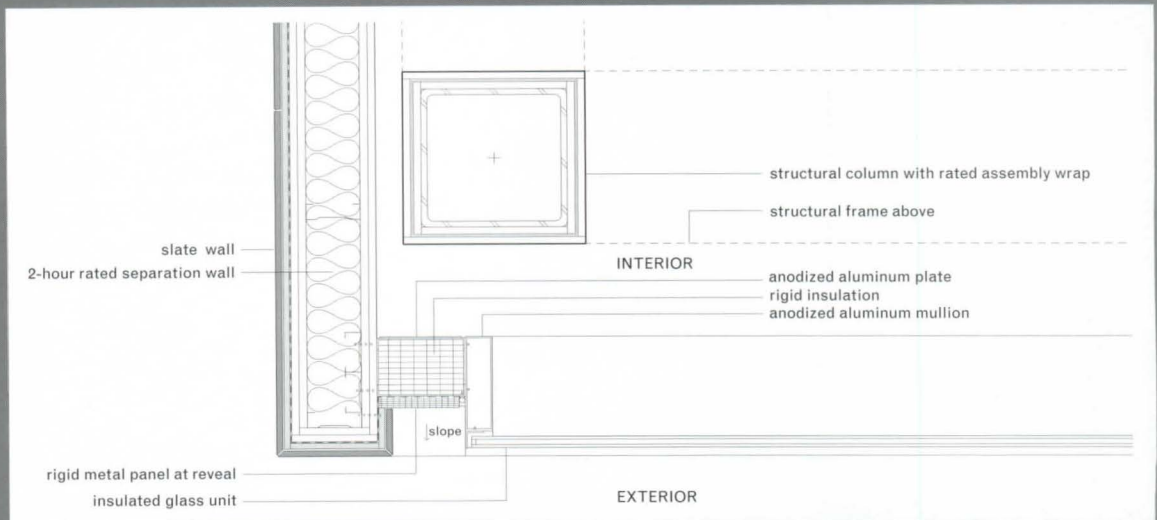


## terrace and rear façade

While the building's street skin is all glass and airy steel mesh, the sides off the street are faced with gray slate from India that echoes the color of an Oregon winter day. Glued directly to fiberboard with a concrete system, the 5-by-30-inch slate pieces are grouted and sealed like tiles, mitered at the corners for crisp edges, and backed by a two-hour fire-rated wall. A cutout slot adjacent to the southwest corner expresses a structural column behind it (which isn't always visible from outside, depending on the light). The rooftop terrace floats on two levels, visually anchored by an outdoor wood-burning fireplace that is at least intermittently practical through Portland's mild but drizzly winters. The custom railing is formed of welded steel bars on 2½-inch centers. Granite pavers are mounted on adjustable steel pedestals separated by plastic spacers and left ungrouted so rainwater can evacuate into a sloped drainage channel under the floor. Decks carved out of the north and east façades of the building pull daylight and air into the interiors.



southwest corner elevation detail



southwest corner plan detail



northeast corner

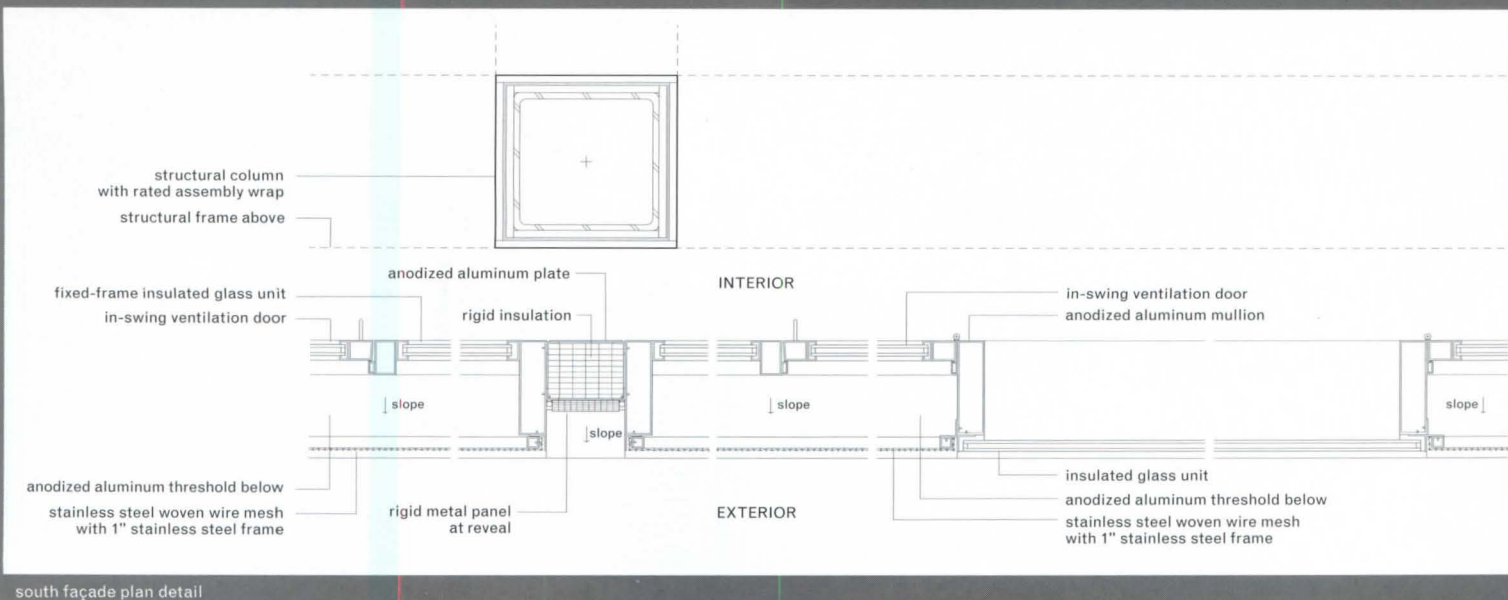
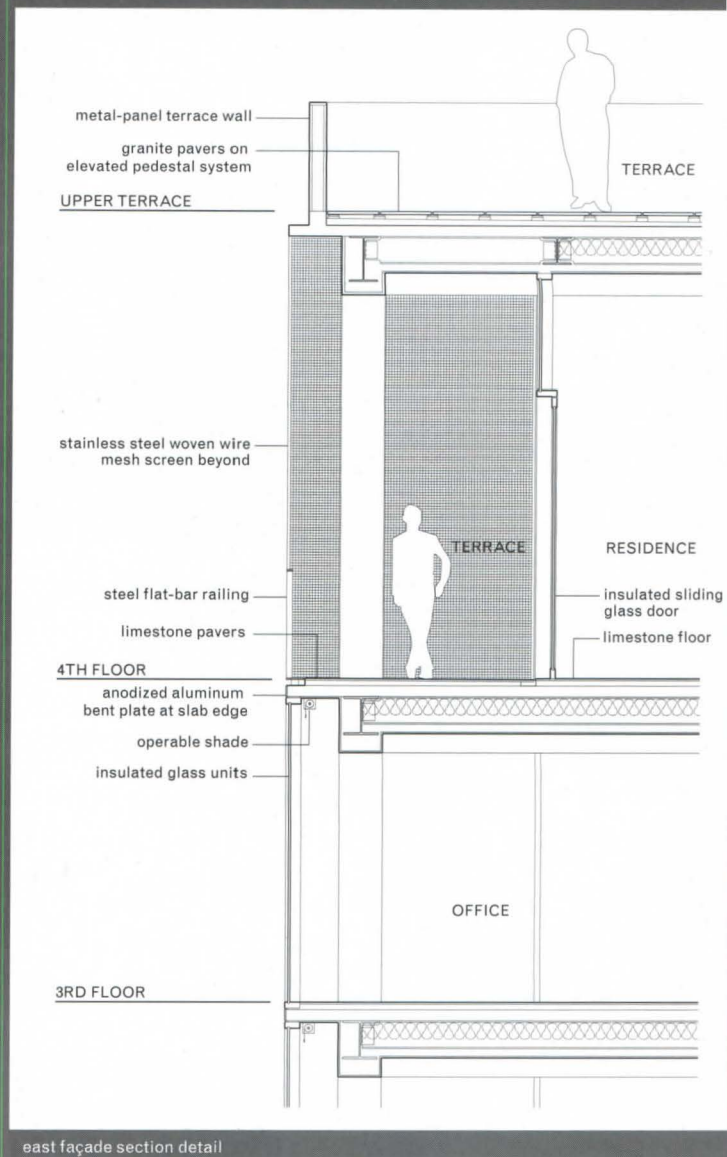


southwest corner

## Glass and metal skin

The knives were out in community design review hearings. Neighbors fingered modernism as an anonymous thug that has mugged sweet old neighborhoods. But this building invests both diversity and character in the street. According to Cloepfil, Allied Works' ethic is to "use the expressive possibilities of what you have" rather than apply ornament, so the glass wall is pulled out 2 feet from the building's steel frame. The vertical frame members then read darkly through the windows, offering the paradoxical impression of depth in a two-dimensional surface. Slabs are cantilevered out to meet the skin, and expressed on the outside wall by anodized aluminum bands.

Maximum light transmission and transparency were needed on the south wall, so the tempered dual-pane windows on the fourth floor run 14 feet high, and their sills are set flush with the stone floor. Portland does enjoy an occasional glimpse of the winter sun, which can be modulated with roller shades. To provide ventilation and preserve the connection to the outdoors—vital to Portlanders—the stainless steel mesh screens on the second- and third-floor skin are backed by swinging glass doors. (The mesh satisfied the code requirement for safety railings without introducing a distraction to the skin.) Inside, says Robert Sacks, "the building is very unforgiving about clutter." But outside, dropping into a chaos of architectural styles and street life, its character is totally cool: not cop, not clown, but the quiet brain of the block.





southeast corner

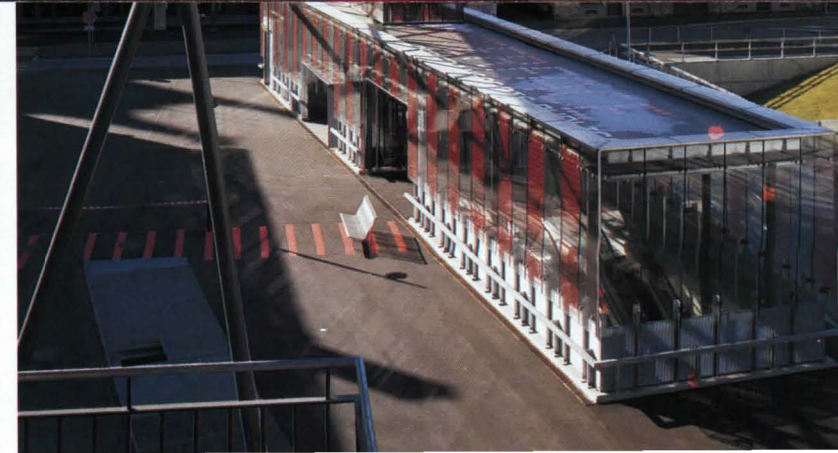
2281 NW GLISAN, PORTLAND, OREGON

**CLIENT:** A & R Development, Portland, Oregon—Robert Sacks, Ann Sacks **ARCHITECT:** Allied Works Architecture, Portland, Oregon—Brad Cloepfil (principal); Daniel Koch, John Carhart (project architects); Nathan Roelofs, Doug Skidmore, Jeff Lee (design team) **ENGINEERS:** AE Group Civil & Structural Engineering (structural); Curate Heating (mechanical, HVAC); Boones Ferry Electric (electrical); KPFF Consulting Engineers (civil) **GENERAL CONTRACTOR:** Algonquin Construction **ARTIST:** Withheld at owner's request **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Sally Schoolmaster

# Lines of Desire



Bernard Tschumi imparts his dynamic sense of order on a multimodal transit interchange in Lausanne, Switzerland. By Joseph Giovannini



links the subway and the street level to a new pedestrian bridge above that spans the valley. The bridge, tower, and box all speak the same architectural language of skeletal frames, glass enclosures, and industrial materials, like structural concrete and steel, metal rails, and wire mesh. Each architectural piece is orthogonal within its own structure, but each behaves independently of the other, conforming to the geometry of its respective function. The bridge connects streets on opposite sides of the valley, and the tower's angle conforms to the curves of the tracks below.

Lausanne's highly structured buildings reflect a highly structured society, but Switzerland's infrastructure has a character beyond the ken of its formal self-image: It's a country of extraordinarily ambitious bridges and tunnels, many of them beautifully engineered. Tschumi's site really exists in the indeterminate space between the transporta-

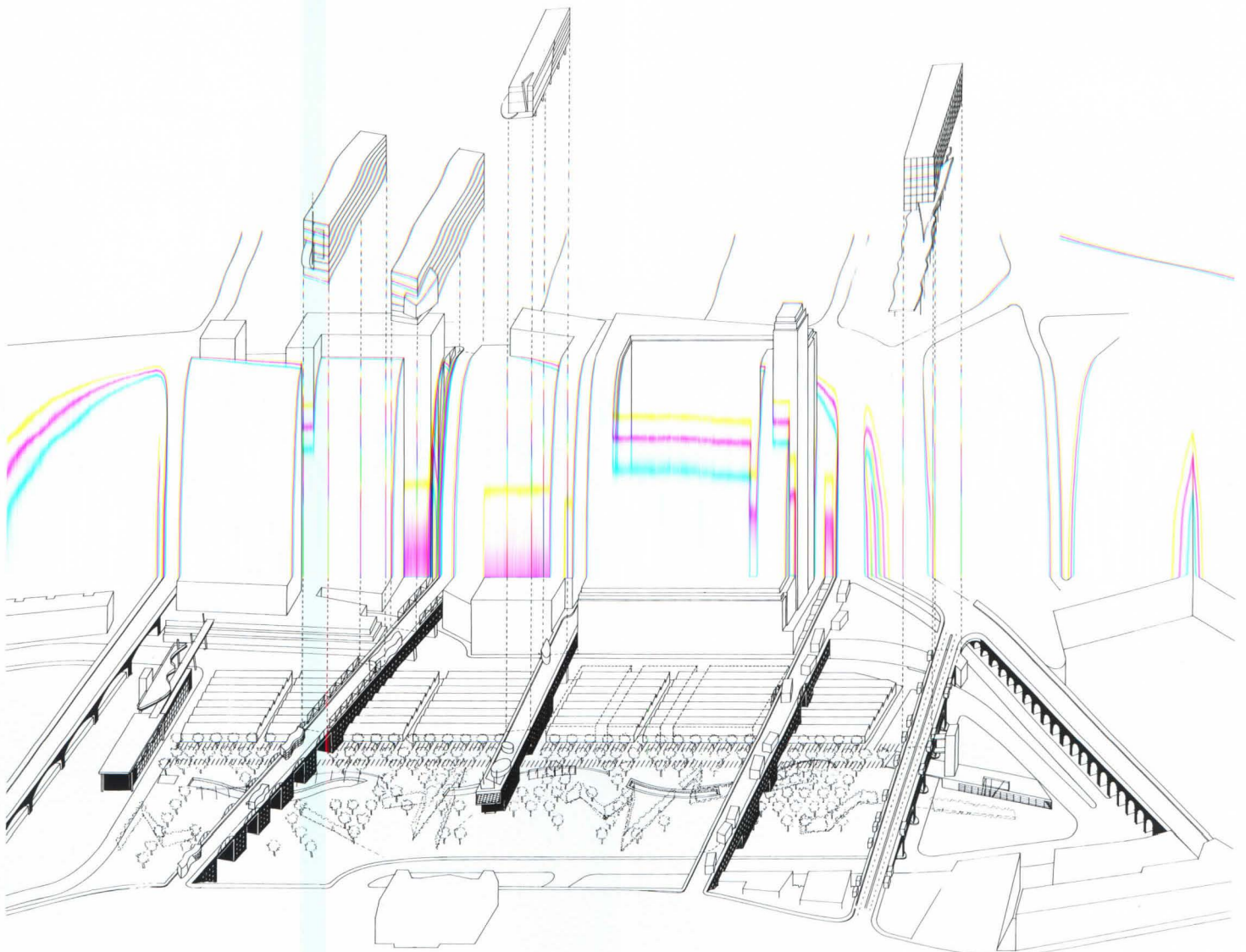
tion infrastructure, the mountainous topography, and the surrounding buildings. Like a water witch sensing the flows, Tschumi has found and concretized the lines of desire crossing the site below, on, and above the ground. "The whole project is about vectors in the X, Y, and Z dimensions," he says, "about taking the movement vectors of pedestrians and passengers and turning them into solids."

The project succeeds primarily because Tschumi has not conformed his design to some geometric ideal but instead has simply conjured and positioned structures where the site demands, making it all coherent if not whole. This is a complex and even conflicted site with several independent road and rail systems, and he has not tried to suppress its planimetric and sectional complexity with an a priori construct. The several pieces simply connect and then go their separate ways.

The topography itself, an angular V in both

plan and section, allows no frontal reading, but a shifting point of view that turns the city into a constantly self-composing collage. Tschumi simply grafts his pieces into the collage, and their industrial aesthetic reads strongly by contrast against the surrounding, which is predominantly masonry construction. While the architectural expression of all the pieces may be industrial, there is an unself-conscious aesthetic refinement when he colors the air by fritting glass railings, and when he applies red strips on the asphalt with Super Graphic punch.

By finding the city's trajectories of movement and giving them form and direction, Tschumi has emerged as an urban choreographer scripting motion across space and time. The building is an apparatus that, like a trapeze, makes the motion possible, and a stage that sets off the everyday dance of people living in Lausanne's Z dimension. ■



Tschumi's winning competition entry



**INTERFACE FLON RAILWAY AND BUS STATION, LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND**

**CLIENT:** Compagnie de Chemin de Fer LEB (Lausanne-Echallens-Bercher), Lausanne, Switzerland

**ARCHITECT:** Bernard Tschumi and Luca Merlini, New York City—Bernard Tschumi, Luca Merlini, Emmanuel Ventura (principals); Emmanuel Ventura, Gregory Merryweather, Kevin Collins, Rhett Russo, Peter Cornell, Robert Holton, Joel Rutten, Marc Bretler, Robert Young, Jim Sullivan, Véronique Descharrières, Christian Biecher, Domenico Caregnato, Didier Castelli, Laure Hofmann, Pierre-Alain Mottier, Fabienne Zanolin (design team) **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Jean-Jacques Borgeaud **ENGINEERS:** Piguët et Associés, Lausanne; CSD and CSD-Monod (structural/civil); Eleco Electro-conseils (electrical); Alvazzi (HVAC) **CONSULTANTS:** Gilbert Monay (acoustical);

**COST:** \$20 million **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Peter Mauss/ESTO

The project started 13 years ago when, in a different political regime, Tschumi designed several inhabited bridges (drawing, facing page), but the project did not survive a change in municipal governments. What got lost in the commission as revived by the state was the Ponte Vecchio concept. “Everything became infrastructure,” says Tschumi. “The bridges lost their program. Only movement was left, and the issue of how to enclose it.” A traffic circle (above) surrounds a wedge of grass indented to reveal the underground train platform.

A photograph of an older man with glasses, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt, a tan utility vest, and tan trousers. He is standing in a room with a grey carpet. The background features three large panels on the wall, each displaying a grid of colorful plastic bags (red, green, yellow, blue) with a small circular logo. In the foreground, there are wooden shelves with colorful blocks and toys, and a red chair is visible on the right. The text "Plays Well With Others" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

**Plays Well With Others**



## How Stanley Tigerman became an ethicist, and other stories. By Eric Fredericksen

I've been sitting at a conference table across from Stanley Tigerman for less than five minutes before something I say spurs him to call one of his assistants, ordering her to get the editor of my magazine on the phone so they can discuss the point of this article. Luckily, the editor is out of town and Tigerman has to return to the interview without having dictated its terms. It's funny, because the article is meant to be about the change that Tigerman and his career have undergone in the past few years, as he transformed himself from aging enfant terrible to socially conscious ethicist. Clearly, the 70-year-old architect has made this transition without much mellowing of his famously obstreperous personality.

"If you've been in architecture over half a century, as I have, what can hold your interest? I would submit that it's ethics. Getting to what is right, the good of the many," Tigerman says. His view of ethics encompasses everything from building durably to "engaging in something for a segment of the population that doesn't normally get good stuff." It's a position that should be at the core of the profession: Vitruvius covered much of it with the first two of his three basic values in architecture, *firmitas* and *utilitas*. "When you make things well, it's an ethical thing," Tigerman says, almost as a gloss on those grand virtues. And the part about doing good work for the poor as well as the rich—it's pure egalitarianism. But when architecture discarded the social radicalism of modernism, the field never found a new ethic to replace it, and neither critical theory on the one hand nor professionalism on the other have filled the gaping hole Tigerman and others are sensing at the core.

At the center of Tigerman's "getting to what is right" is Archeworks, a school devoted entirely to Tigerman's view of ethical design, and which he considers "the most important thing I've ever done." Seven years ago, shortly after he left his post as director of the architecture school at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Tigerman and interior designer Eva Maddox founded Archeworks as a non-accredited school offering a one-year program of study and collaborative work. Twelve

students, predominantly but by no means exclusively architects and designers, come together each year to work on projects for the poor, disabled, sick, and elderly.

"What Archeworks is about is looking at design as a strategic tool, developing methodologies and techniques to address real problems in society," Maddox says. Past and present projects include branding efforts and park renovations for a Chicago neighborhood, an organizer for AIDS medications, a pointer device for cerebral palsy sufferers, and room and corridor designs for Alzheimer's patients. The projects are not theoretical: The students work with real clients and produce real objects.

Archeworks' mission statement explicitly sets the school against the academy from its first Tigerman-penned sentence. "[S]chools of architecture are under fire for not providing an adequate or appropriate education for their students. Social, ecological, and technological developments have shifted the relevance of the traditional curricula with its [sic] emphasis on design and theory, and the schools are exhibiting a reluctance to come to grips with the situation."

The school's critique of education is also meant to critique current architectural practice, and perhaps the first architect to be directly affected by it was Tigerman himself. His practice has always included socially conscious work (mixed in among the expensive vacation houses and condominiums) but Archeworks inspired him to concentrate on "good works" commissions to the near-total exclusion of other projects. In the past couple of years, he's designed the Chicago Children's Advocacy Center, which centralizes Chicago's legal and medical services for victims of child sexual abuse; a guest house for the families of seriously ill patients in Chicago's medical-district hospitals; a Head Start daycare center; and the Illinois Holocaust Museum. Though this kind of work occupies most of his time, his firm still handles corporate and high-end housing commissions, mostly designed by his partner and wife, Margaret McCurry.



**Little schoolhouse on the prairie: The entrance to the Ounce of Prevention Educare Center (above) presents a small-town aesthetic to Chicago's struggling South Side. For children who call high-rises home, Tigerman has designed classrooms that resemble generic freestanding houses (facing page, left) or schoolhouses (facing page, right); the mock clocks on the latter indicate the ages of the students inside.**



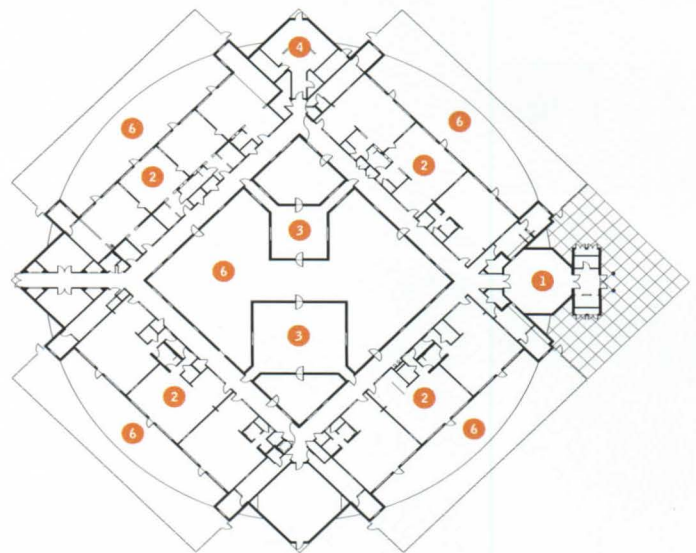
“Whether or not you like [Steven] Holl, [Peter] Eisenman, Wolf Prix, Michael Graves, Robert Stern—whatever the list is—do you know any work they’ve done for the poor? Wouldn’t it be great?” he asks. Robert A. M. Stern, asked to comment for this article, offers a contrary list of architects of his generation, including Robert Venturi, Charles Moore, Charles Gwathmey, Richard Meier, James Stewart Polshek, and Stern himself, who have done such projects. Stern also credits Yale’s venerable Building Project, where first-year students design and build houses for the poor, with serving as an early influence on Tigerman.

Going to see a Tigerman building in Chicago means driving past huge chunks of his resume—at least when he’s behind the wheel. The path from his offices just across the Chicago River from the downtown Loop leads past an earlier “good work” commission Tigerman executed for the Anti-Cruelty Society’s pet shelter and euthanasia center; the home of Archeworks; a recently completed Miesian condominium; and the Chicago Children’s Advocacy Center, just nearing completion.

His route then cuts across the city toward Lake Michigan, before turning down South State Street, that long, straight, wide, and fast thoroughfare whose west side is lined for miles with 1960s housing towers, broken only by the Mies van der Rohe–designed campus of the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Tigerman has a long record as a critic of the towers-in-a-park style of social housing construction—as far back as the early 1960s, as a student at Yale, he showed that you could achieve equivalent housing density with low-rise three-story buildings spread across a site, a theory he was allowed to prove in a nearby commission for retirement housing. “Unless you have money, you can’t raise four children in a tall building,” he says as he drives past, pointing out the smoke stains from burned-out apartments within the towers. Many of the windows are covered in brightly painted squares of plywood, the result of both abandonment and the current move to clear out and demolish many of these towers under HUD’s Hope VI program. The new model for low-income housing tends toward townhouse forms, which will soon rise on these lots like a vindication of Tigerman’s student project.

Near the end of one of the Taylor Homes’ superblocks, Tigerman turns left, away from the towers, into a small parking lot, then walks



- 1 lobby
- 2 classrooms
- 3 multipurpose room
- 4 kitchen
- 5 office
- 6 outdoor play area

Floor plan 1 29' ↗



Educare serves children from just after birth until kindergarten. Older students wake up from nap time in a classroom (right) designed from loft to locker by Tigerman. The classrooms are organized around a cloisterlike corridor (above) which opens onto a protected inner play-court (top).





### Helpers' Chart

- Watering plants
- Feeding fish
- Library

May

MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN

Parents' Ideas and Suggestions are welcome.

- Setting table
- Breakfast
- Lunch

May

MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN



- Shantel
- Kayshaun
- Taylor
- Tyree M
- Ashley
- Marquis
- Destini
- Joshua
- Shalomeck

### House Area

House Area play kitchen area with wooden furniture including a stove, refrigerator, and chairs. A child is sitting on a bench in the foreground, and another child is standing near the kitchen area.



quickly from his Saab to buzz at the rear entrance to the Ounce of Prevention Educare Center, a Head Start daycare center for the children of the Taylor Homes.

A childish color scheme of pastel blues, pinks, greens, oranges, purples, and yellows is used here, as it was in the Chicago Children's Advocacy Center. The continuous elevation of the foursquare courtyard plan is explicitly divided into a series of smaller building forms. Each classroom is expressed on the façade, the square building's sides alternating between cartoon images of generic houses complete with false chimneys and little schoolhouses with mock clock towers. If the Taylor Homes replaced Jacob Riis-style slums with Corbusian towers, Educare replaces Towers in a Park with Houses on a Lawn.

How does design ameliorate tough urban conditions? One early issue for Tigerman was bullets: New construction in the neighborhood is often used for target practice. Tigerman claims the Educare Center hasn't been shot at since the façade's baby colors began to indicate the building's purpose. The center's "stupidly banal, cheerful" design, in Tigerman's words, serves to protect it the way a dog's wagging tail indicates that it's no threat to you. And the point of making the building in the form of a square with a central courtyard has everything to do with giving children a protected space for outdoor play that is "not under the baleful glare of these bastards outside," as he puts it.

In achieving this end, the building's budget grew to a healthy size. Tigerman estimates the cost at about \$200 a square foot, which undercuts the funding organization's claim on its Web site that the building should be a "a promising model for optimizing learning during the vital early years." They may not be a model for cheap, easily replicable daycare centers, but Tigerman gets a kick out of the fact that the poorest

black kids in Chicago have the fanciest daycare center in the city. "I love that this is the best you can do, and it's not Andover or Choate. I like that—it's perverse."

Driving out of the Educare parking lot, Tigerman's attention returns to the towers across the street, which could serve as a reminder of the perils that can await the ethical architect. As the market-built slums of the first part of the 20th century were used as scapegoats for the problems of urban poverty, the towers for which the slums were cleared are now viewed as breeders of pathology. But the architects who designed these towers—a group that included some of the most prominent local firms of the time, including Tigerman's first employer, SOM—had intentions as good as he has now.

Tigerman separates himself from the last generation of architects, but the distinction is not drawn carefully. At one point, he claims Archeworks' works are all about good design, "not the social engineering of the late '60s." An hour later, while driving by Chicago's miles of projects, he says the architects and planners "didn't know the right questions to ask. They had no behavioralists or sociologists available. They designed formalistically, and the deeper issues were not confronted." But the visible work of the '60s seems separate from Tigerman's work of the '90s mostly in terms of form. Both are attempts to make nice things for poor people, hoping to generate some kind of reform, either in the state's approach to the poor—which they can't much affect—or in the poor themselves, which doesn't much happen. And as the builders of '60s towers are now blamed for pathologies they were trying to ameliorate, Tigerman's high-budget good works could seem wasteful or wrongheaded to the succeeding generation—though it's hard to imagine these aggressively endearing buildings being thought of as malign, it could happen. The future's funny that way.

There is evidence the profession is refinding the ethical grounding it perhaps lost under the twin assaults of professionalization and postmodern theorizing. *The Ethical Architect*, a book by Tom Spector published this month by Princeton Architectural Press, cross-pollinates thought from the fields of moral philosophy and architecture, using Vitruvius' concepts of *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas* as a touchstone. Sam Mockbee's successes are well documented. And the heads of architecture schools from St. Louis to New Haven happily report the enthusiastic response of students to issues of social change whether working at the scale of a house or a city.

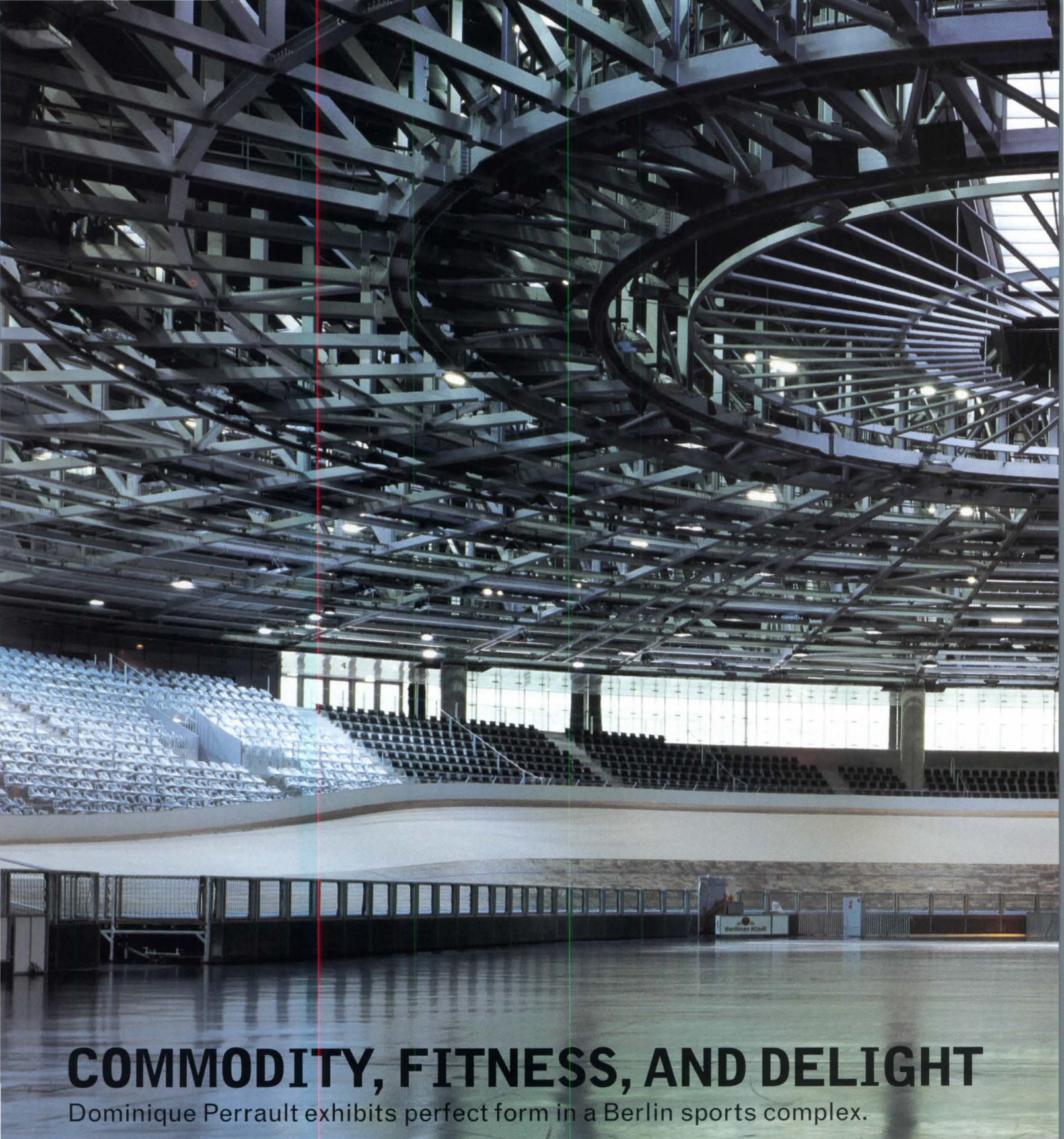
It is important that architects remember that the field has been here before, that these concerns are not new, and that good intentions alone are not enough. But this new strain—as embodied by Tigerman—includes a nascent form of self-criticism, which will be important if the ideas are to survive, and more importantly, succeed in helping those they're meant to help. ■

#### THE EDUCARE CENTER, CHICAGO

**CLIENT:** Ounce of Prevention Fund, Chicago—Harriet Meyer (president)  
**ARCHITECT:** Tigerman McCurry Architects, Chicago—Stanley Tigerman (principal); Melany Yellen, Kevin Stephenson, Michael Schumacher, Earl Brown, Lauren Coburn (project assistants) **ENGINEERS:** The Structural Shop (structural); H.S. Nachman & Associates (mechanical, HVAC) **GENERAL CONTRACTOR:** UBM **CONSULTANTS:** Kirkegard (lighting); A.S.I. (signage)  
**COST:** \$3,960,000 **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Graham MacIndoe

Tigerman takes a time-out in the play court of the Educare Center (facing page), which is lined with benches and awnings for teachers. The Robert Taylor Homes (below) are just visible outside the play-court.





# COMMODITY, FITNESS, AND DELIGHT

Dominique Perrault exhibits perfect form in a Berlin sports complex.

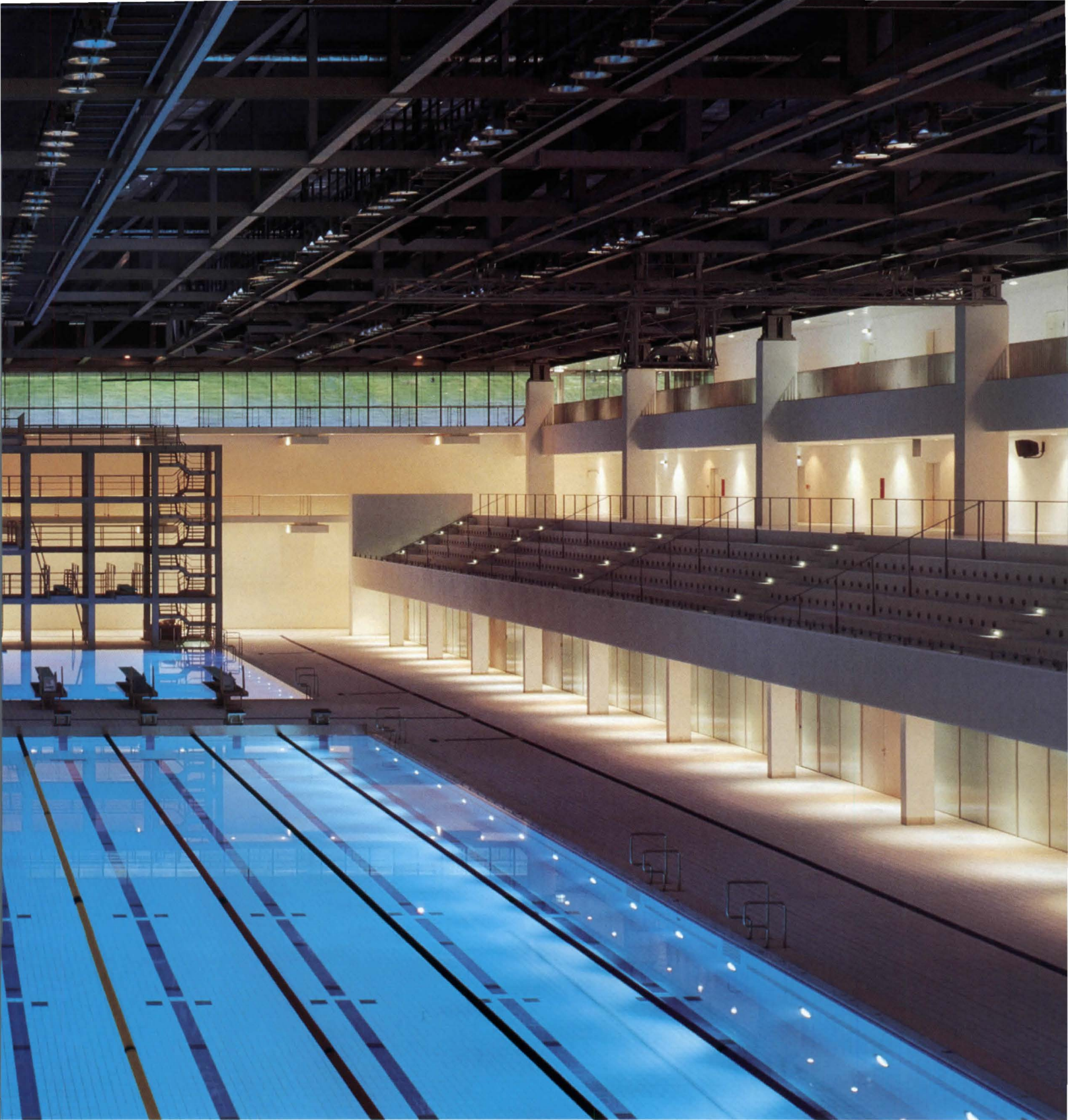
Part of Berlin's unsuccessful bid to host the 2000 Olympics, Dominique Perrault's recently completed 1 million-square-foot sports complex centers on two facilities, a velodrome and a natatorium. In the velodrome (above), a gigantic circular truss system, 466 feet in diameter, has a clear span of 377 feet and stands 44 feet above the floor on a ring of 16 concrete columns. This enormous volume allows the velodrome track to be reconfigured for events other than bike races, such as running and roller-skating, and to accommodate 5,800- to 9,500-person crowds in flexible seating arrangements. A skylight punctures the center of the ceiling.







The natatorium contains two pools, one for swimming (foreground), the other for diving (at rear). A gridded diving tower houses 5- and 10-meter platforms, arranged to allow for synchronized dives. The stands can accommodate up to 4,200 spectators. The facility isn't just for competitive sports, however. A second smaller swimming hall contains three other pools, including one for beginners. There are also 14 group changing rooms, 100 individual changing rooms, and 600 lockers.





**VELODROME AND SWIMMING HALL**

**BERLIN, GERMANY**

**CLIENT:** City of Berlin, Département for Construction and Housing—OSB Olympia Sportstättenbauten **ARCHITECT:** Dominique Perrault Architect, Paris—Dominique Perrault (principal) **ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS:** Rolf Reichert Architect, Berlin; Hans-Jürgen Schmidt-Schicketanz, Berlin **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Landschaft Planen & Bauen, Berlin **ENGINEERS:** Ove Arup & Partners; Stangl (HVAC); L. Weiss & Co., NL Berlin (civil) **COST:** Withheld at owner's request **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Georges Fessy

Perrault imbedded the sports complex within a roughly 650-by-1,600-foot berm planted with 450 apple trees (above). The roofs of the circular velodrome and rectangular natatorium are clad in panels of metal mesh held together with springs; set into deep craters in the berm, they rise only 1 meter higher than the edge of the surrounding embankment. Perrault intends the reflective surfaces to “shimmer in the sunlight and appear, at first sight, to be stretches of water more than buildings, rather like lakes at the center of the orchard.” The complex is located on the eastern edge of central Berlin, alongside the tracks of the S-Bahn suburban railway system; two small gateways (at left) mark the entrances from the station.



# Office Revolution

Knoll's latest furniture system, designed by architects Lise Anne Couture and Hani Rashid of Asymptote, puts a new spin on the cubicle. By Raul A. Barreneche

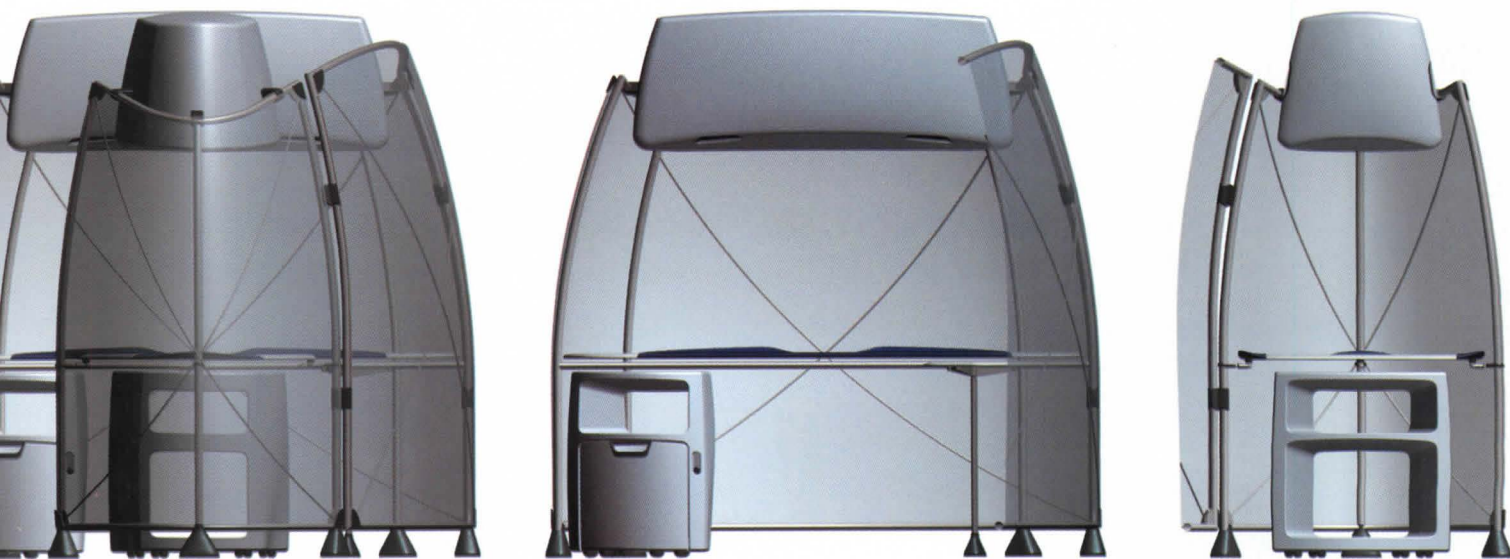


Although the American workplace has changed drastically since Herman Miller invented the cubicle in 1956, the cubicle itself has changed very little. There have been a few attempts to liberate workers from the constricting beige pens that inspired the comic strip “Dilbert.” But most of these efforts have been superficial updates to meet the technological and aesthetic changes brought about by the New Economy’s *Fast Company*-reading, iMac-toting “knowledge workers.” For all their changes, recent products such as Herman Miller’s own Resolve and RED lines only open up the box; they don’t break it down completely. Cubicles may be cubes no longer—and they may not even be beige—but at the end of the workday they’re still composed of desktops, file cabinets, and flat wall dividers.

When Knoll took a turn at reinventing its modular office furniture, they wanted to go one better than Herman Miller, so they hired architects Hani Rashid and Lise Anne Couture of the New York City firm Asymptote Architecture. Tapping

architects to design furniture was certainly an inspired choice (but hardly a first for Knoll), especially given Asymptote’s reputation for challenging the Cartesian confines of conventional architecture with their fluid blob constructions, and for blurring the boundaries of what actually constitutes architecture. Rashid and Couture consider the Web sites they designed for the Guggenheim Museum and the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) to be no less architectural than their real-world projects, including a new trading space for the NYSE completed in 1999. Likewise, they approached the design of Knoll’s new workstations not as assemblages of mass-produced office furniture, but as microscaled spatial environments.

Asymptote’s task was as difficult as any building commission. For starters, Rashid and Couture were charged with completely reinventing the cubicle, a staple of office design, to make it more tolerable for workers without eliminating the aspects that make it so beloved by facilities



managers. Cubicles are simply too flexible and too efficient a compromise between private offices and open workspaces to do away with altogether. As Couture acknowledges, “the rebellious nature of the dot-com environment or the open atelier of the design professions isn’t right for every industry.” Before sitting down to design, she and Rashid visited office workers in a variety of industries, and met with CEOs, facilities managers, office managers, and fellow architects and interior designers to uncover their frustrations with existing systems and learn what they would hope for in a brand-new product. One of Asymptote’s biggest discoveries was that plenty of companies, “even companies that aren’t in the high-tech economy,” as Couture notes, viewed office systems as important tools in recruiting younger talent. (At least this was the scenario when she and Rashid were doing their research, before the dot-com bubble burst.) “They wanted to prove to potential employees that Andersen Consulting is as much fun as a dot-

com,” Couture explains. “Job retention was another big thing we heard about,” continues Rashid. “People want to feel good where they’re working, and a lot of them don’t want to work in a ‘cube world.’”

Starting next March, being forced to work in a “cube world” won’t be grounds for quitting your job. That’s when Knoll will start taking orders on the fruits of Asymptote’s labors, after spending two years and millions of dollars on research, development, and engineering. (The company won’t confirm the exact dollar amount of its investment, other than to say that it is “significant.”) Knoll unveiled 10 prototypes of the system, tentatively titled “A3,” in June at the NeoCon furniture show in Chicago, and will keep samples on view in their Chicago showroom until they’re available online and in more showrooms. No one has spent 40 hours in an A3 yet, so it’s still impossible to rate its performance. Yet A3 promises to change not only the look of the workplace, but also the behavior of the workforce.

# The Candy-Colored Kit-of-Parts

In order to reshape the box, Rashid and Couture looked far outside it—to sporting equipment, airliner interiors, even the diaphanous scrim installations of artist Robert Irwin. “A lot of our clues came from athletic equipment, especially camping tents. They seemed [to convey an] appropriate notion of getting something built, of territorializing space, of somehow making space attuned to the body,” recalls Rashid. He and Couture looked to the idea of padding as a paradigm for much of their design. “We did a series of studies with sporting equipment, looking at how it molds the body in space. We thought that maybe the ideal environment was one that acts like clothing, that suits the body, that could be padded and protective,” he explains.

The interiors of commercial airliners were another unexpected but appropriate source of inspiration. “On a flight once I noticed that everything on an airplane is radial. It’s about bodies moving through space and how we interact with surfaces and edges,” recalls Rashid. “I thought it could be very useful to re-create that womb-like sense of comfort. So we took a lot of clues from that very confined and strange spatiality of being in flight: The way overhead storage bins are structured, the way a window becomes a screen.” “We also thought a lot about the backs of airplane seats, with those pockets,” adds Couture.

Designers can pick and choose standard elements from the colorful kit-of-parts to create not-quite-custom units that fit best with the end-user’s job: twin work surfaces for a techie with two computers, for instance, or more file space for an administrator.



A3 frame



screen



A3 work surface



Surf return



Filez file pedestal



Tript pedestal



Strata tray



Flipp task light



visor





pad



Sett power pole

## STRUCTURE

Among A3's most distinctive design elements are the curving, ovoid scrims that envelop each workstation with womblike protection. These mesh screens, made of stretchy jerseylike fabric that Knoll is currently engineering, attach to the powder-coated tubular steel frames with steel clips, and can be specified in a number of standard or custom patterns and densities. Rubberized, amoebalike floor mats delineate the area of a single workstation; a stylized power pole feeds voice, data, and power lines from the floor or ceiling to the workstations without letting unsightly cables ruin Asymptote's sleek designs.



Slipp work surface



Slipp small table

## WORK SURFACES

With their fluid, parabolic forms and bright, trendy colors, the A3's work surfaces bear more than a passing resemblance to the iBook laptops that will soon grace them. Their curving profiles reflect how the body moves around edges—never in straight lines, but in arcs. Rashid takes it one step further: "The pieces start to mold around the body to make an enclosed space," he says. Everywhere the body comes into contact with the edges of the elliptical desktop, return, small table, or tabletop, the molded plastic tops are finished in a softer material, a compound of polypropylene and rubber.



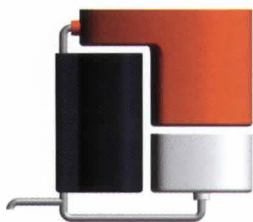
small Aerial overhead



large Aerial overhead

## STORAGE

A3's storage elements, including large and small overhead bins and rolling file cabinets with open and enclosed containers, take obvious cues from the compartments of commercial airliners. Made of lightweight molded plastic and designed to be clipped onto the tubular steel frame, the bins are sturdy enough to hold heavy files, books, or even a pair of rollerblades. "It was important to us that the inside of the cabinets be as nice as the outsides, so we carefully designed the thicknesses," explains Couture. "We wanted them to appear as objects in space," adds Rashid.



Orbit holder



Dish whiteboard

## ADD-ONS

A3 features a series of functional add-on elements that are also accessories to personalize the workspace. All of them are designed in the same formal language as the overall system, and are engineered to fasten easily onto the frame of each unit. A "visor" mounts above the large work surface to create an opaque frontispiece to the less-private translucent scrim and to increase acoustic privacy inside the work area. Other accessories include in/out trays, a task light, and a three-part multipurpose holder for pencils, paper clips, and the like.

## THE DO-IT-YOURSELF WOMB

The ordering and delivery of the A3 system borrows a page from the quick-hit furniture giant IKEA. Customers will be able to purchase workstations from a Knoll showroom or via an Asymptote-designed Web site at [www.knoll.com](http://www.knoll.com), which will allow them to pick and choose individual components or preselected configurations, or to design their own with an interactive *planning program*. The elements that clip onto the tubular frame (shown here, a typical unit with large and small overhead bins, a work surface with return, an open file unit and one with drawer, and a small work surface) will arrive fully assembled. The lightweight frame and scrim enclosure will come flat-packed. If the do-it-yourself approach isn't for you—say, if you need to install 500 workstations in an office—then Knoll will gladly send a rep to install them for you. Total turnaround time from showroom to office floor: three weeks initially, possibly two when Knoll's distribution system is up and running at full speed.





## Behavior Modification

Once assembled, it becomes clear how the double curvature of the fabric screens surrounding each workstation will define a personal space. The scrims' concave geometry creates a greater sense of privacy than traditional fabric partitions, but it also increases a cube-sitter's visibility. Couture explains the apparent dichotomy: "We recognized that you can never remove 100 percent of the sound in an office environment unless you go to full-height enclosures. One of the best ways to attenuate sound is by modifying behavior; part of the problem in cube environments is that people sit below the horizon line and become unaware of people around them. So people speak louder than they might if they were more aware of their neighbors," she says. "There's also a sociological component—the 'Dilbert effect'—'I lock myself in my cube and I don't see you all day.'" Rashid agrees: "People need privacy, but also community. They're much more introspective because of things like e-mail, but they also need to see each other and talk. It's a strange disparity between the self and the group." Workers will thus be able to see their coworkers in adjoining workstations, if through a shadowy, Robert Irwin-esque veil, and make a psychological connection to them. As an added bonus, the translucent scrims will allow daylight to filter through multiple workstations, bringing highly coveted natural light deep into the office floor plate.

## Seashells in an Ice Cube Tray

SINGLE WORKSTATION



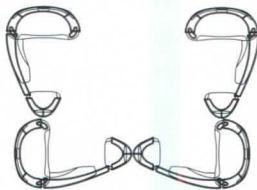
MIRRORED



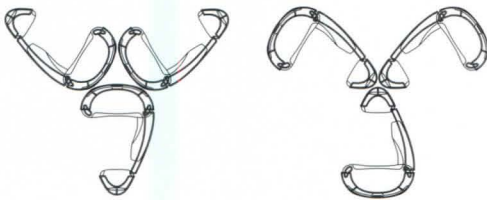
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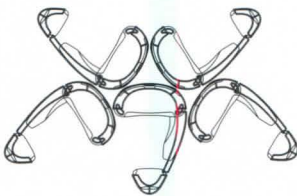
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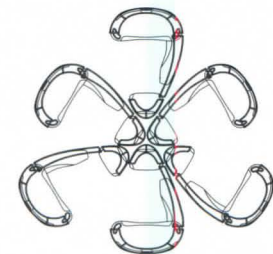
ROTATED 90°



ROTATED 120°



ROTATED 120°



ROTATED 120°

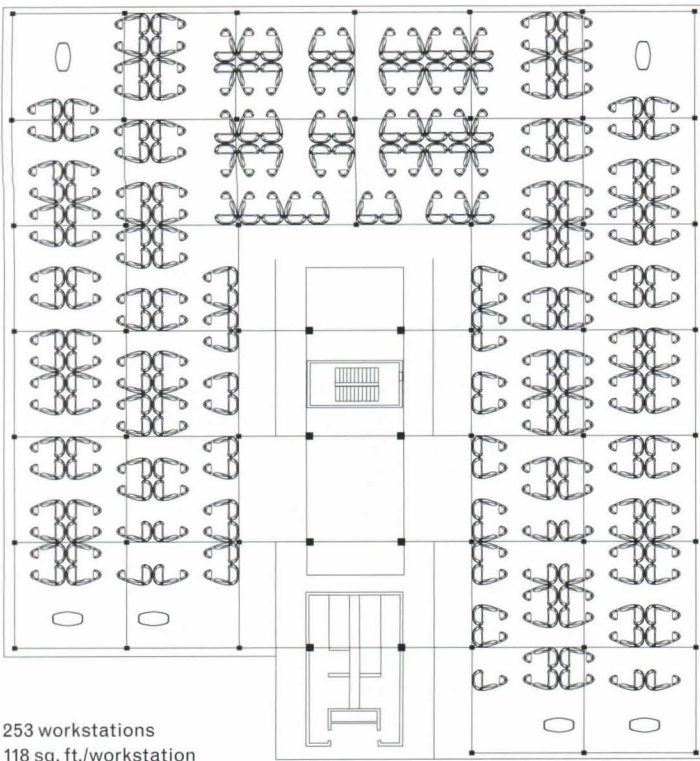
### A3

**CLIENT:** Knoll—Andrew Cogan (CEO) **ARCHITECT:** Asymptote Architecture, New York City—Hani Rashid, Lise Anne Couture (principals); Noburo Ota, Jose Salinas, Birgit Schoenbrodt, Renata Weissenboeck (design team)

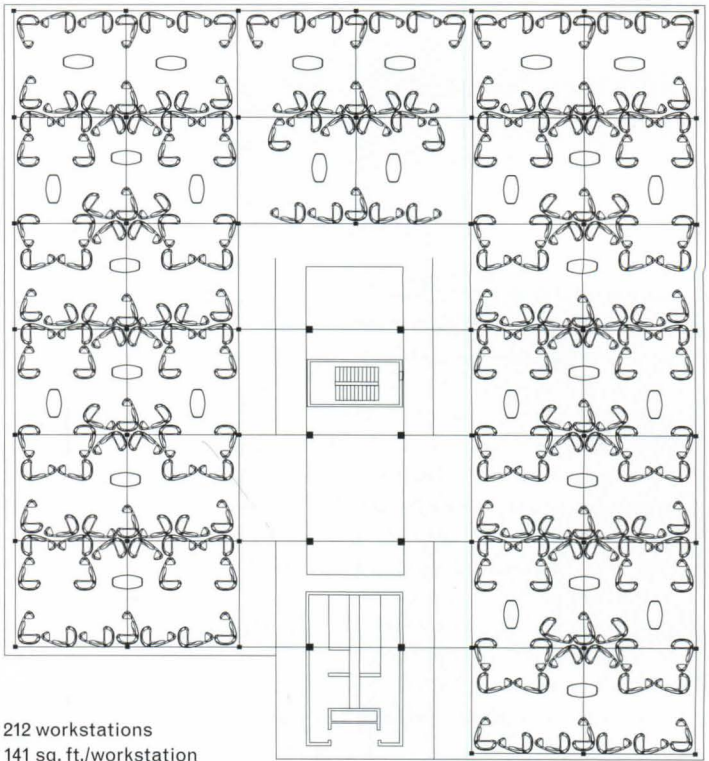
**ENGINEER:** Knoll Product Development **COST:** Withheld at client's request

**DRAWINGS AND RENDERINGS:** Asymptote Architecture

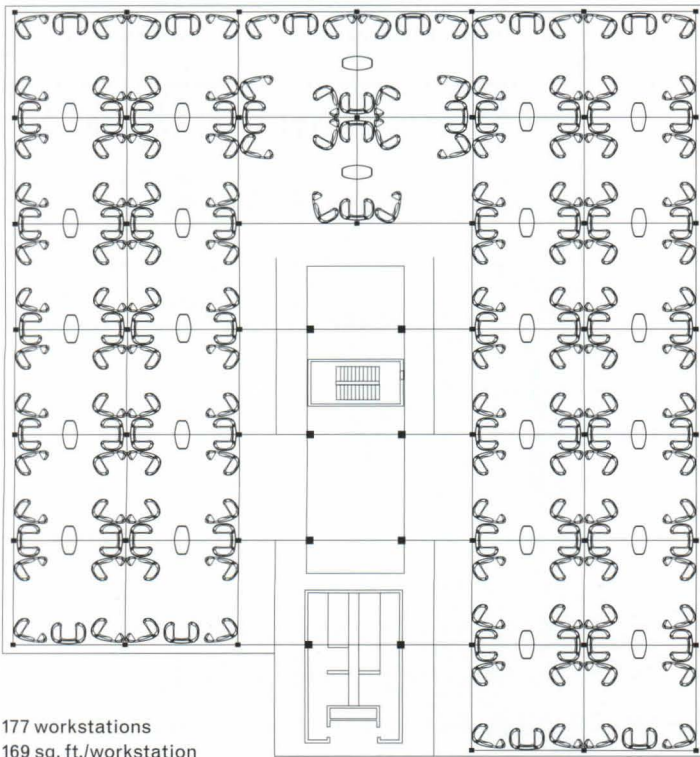
Unlike the partitions of traditional cubicle systems, the walls of the A3 units are structurally self-sufficient; the workstations can be arranged independently from the wall of an adjoining unit. This freedom also allows a number of organically shaped clusters of units, both private and communal (see diagrams, left). Individual workstations can be placed side-by-side to define a semiprivate work area for two, four, or more workers; even more units clustered together can define shared work areas or even small conference spaces. More private one-person work areas can be created by placing units back-to-back. As companies grow and evolve, they can adapt their workstations to reflect those changes—hypothetically, they could instantly create a group workspace for a new marketing team simply by rotating existing workstations and joining them together. With their curving enclosures, the A3 workstations break apart the grid as much as the box. But they can still function efficiently within the traditional column grids of most existing offices. “An organic system could fit in a Cartesian system,” explains Rashid. “We tested our system to see whether or not it could have the same so-called efficiency of a cube environment—and it does.” Instead of ice cubes in a tray, the A3 cubicles are the honeycombs of a beehive, or maybe clusters of seashells. The very notion that an office system based on fluid, organic forms instead of deadening grids could both humanize the workplace and efficiently conform to the orthogonal floor plates of most office buildings is the key to the A3 system's potential success. It could make all the players in corporate offices happy: CEOs, facilities managers, designers, and not least of all, employees.



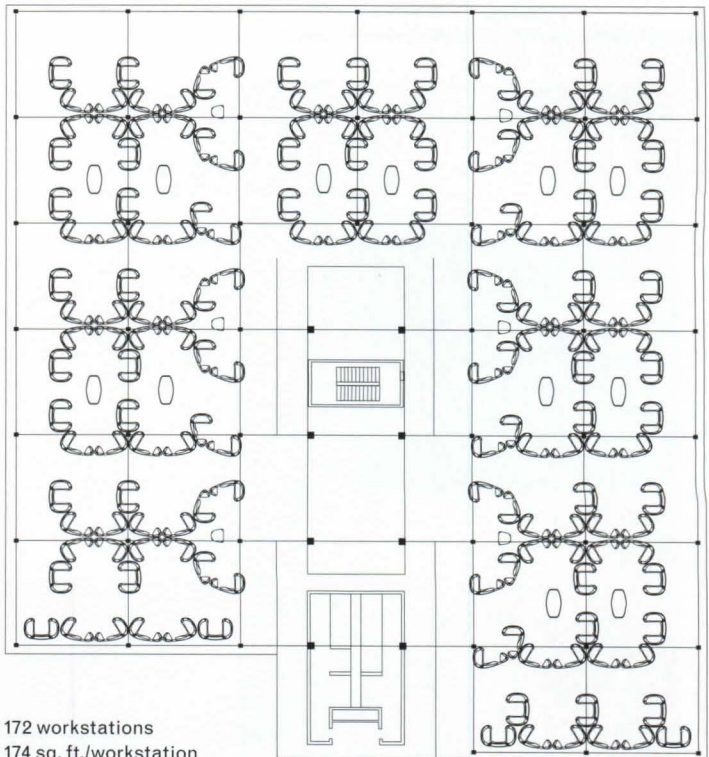
253 workstations  
118 sq. ft./workstation



212 workstations  
141 sq. ft./workstation



177 workstations  
169 sq. ft./workstation



172 workstations  
174 sq. ft./workstation

**THE OFFICE LANDSCAPE**

The plan geometry of A3's units—convex or concave, depending on which side of the scrim you're on—allows them to both envelop and repel space in ways that the rectilinear planes of older cubicle systems could not; grids of old-school cubes had a static, fixed spatial quality. But these membranes have a charged spatiality. Individual workstations can be grouped together to create semiprivate offices, group work areas, or even mini conference "rooms." A3's shallow curves and

translucent enclosures create a gently undulating landscape across a big floor plate. Instead of endless "hallways" created by static parallel rows of upholstered partitions beneath low ceilings, the scrims of the A3 units generate a fluid sense of motion. And the translucent screens create subtle plays of light and shadow, even as you look through multiple workspaces. "It's simple without being boring, and it's not chaotic," says Couture. Everyone thinks their office is chaotic enough already."

## Modern Master

continued from page 51

Schindler into a linear phenomenon, as though he progressed in his career from A to Z.

The linearity defeats Schindler by overwhelming a career of exceptional moments. With individual responses to particular conditions, he created an opus characterized by singularity. Unlike Neutra, with whom he is inevitably compared, Schindler did not dry up, but designed like an unstoppable fission reaction that continued until cancer cut his life short in 1953.

The exhibition design's emphasis on the International Style of overlapping planes especially

disserves Schindler's late work from the 1940s and early 1950s. These buildings, with their dissociated parts and multiple geometries and scale, are exceptional even within Schindler's opus, and can now finally be understood in light of architecture's aversion to normative thinking over the last two decades. Not just eccentric, these are, we know now, prescient works that eluded critics until recently. Alas, the show treats these astounding works—with roofs that fly askew off the walls and houses that shift direction midplan—with implacable regularity, like business as usual. Everything seems to conform to a grand connect-the-dots narrative. But there should be breaks in the story, even eruptions, as Schindler

shifts directions almost violently. This amounts to timidity on the part of curators Elizabeth A. T. Smith (now at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art) and Michael Darling of L.A. MoCA. The lack of insight is deepened, unfortunately, by the texts in the catalogue.

Like the show's, the catalogue's production values are high, but inexplicably the people who know the most about Schindler (Kathryn Smith, Judith Sheine, Lionel March, August Sarnitz, and Barbara Giella) were not asked to contribute. With the exception of Robert Sweeney's essay, which presents new (though collateral) research on Schindler's wife Pauline as a social conscience of the family, the essays offer only warmed-over scholarship.

(Independently, Abrams has published the welcome *Schindler House*, by Kathryn Smith, to coincide with the opening).

The show, then, has performed the valuable service of exhibiting Schindler, and for this, after decades of neglect, we are deeply grateful.

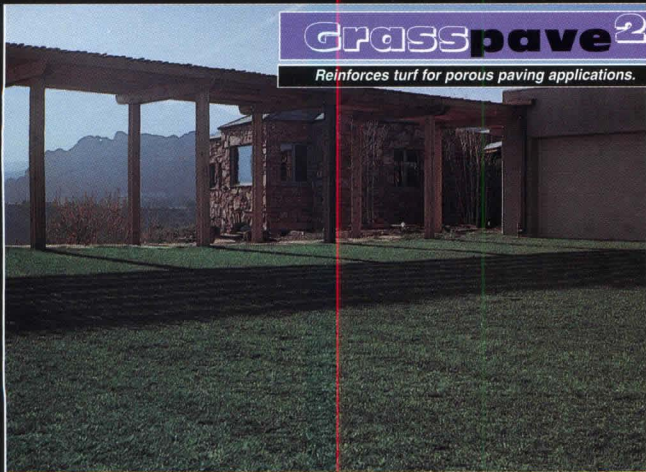
The exhibition's great accomplishment is to exhume the material from the archives and put it on the wall. We are impressed by the work, but not edified by a show that should have at last irrefutably placed Schindler in the modernist pantheon. ■

**The Architecture of R. M. Schindler**, National Building Museum, Washington, D.C., through October 14

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Exterior of mixed-use building in Portland, Oregon, designed by Allied Works

## Queen of Tile's Modern Palace

### HIGHLIGHTED PRODUCTS

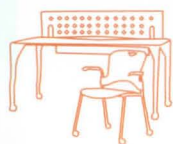
- 1 **Insulated Glazing**—Northwestern Industries, Inc.
- 2 **Anodized Aluminum Window systems**—United States Aluminum Corp.
- 3 **Slate Cladding**—Echeguren Slate, Inc.
- 4 **Steel Canopy and Columns**—Skyline Sheet Metal Inc.
- 5 **Stainless Steel Woven Wire-Mesh Panels**—Western Wire Works
- 6 **Custom Steel Railings**—G & S Welding
- 7 **Granite Pavers**—Ann Sacks

What do the Pacific Northwest craft tradition, a tile magnate, and progressive modern architecture have in common? Ask Brad Cloepfil, principal of Portland, Oregon-based Allied Works, who has become a crusader for contemporary modern architecture in a city better known for craftsman bungalows and its historic Pioneer Square. The key to making modernism relevant and appealing in the region is, in Allied Works' view, the materials they specify. The mixed-use building Allied Works designed for Ann Sacks, the self-styled "queen of tile" and founder of a tile and stone line that bears her name, created a perfect opportunity to both test this hypothesis and showcase Sacks's products.

Sacks knew what she wanted from the outset—a glass box—and she picked Allied Works because of Cloepfil's enthusiasm for the concept. Cloepfil's aspirations took him far beyond the making of an anonymous box, however. Instead, he used transparency to animate the building and thereby the street. The simple exterior is composed of layers of glass manufactured by Northwestern Industries, woven steel panels by Western Wire Works, and slate cladding by Echeguren Slate. The building's structure, encased in steel by Skyline, is expressed through the glass. While the building's complexity is apparent—the slabs, voids,



# Master the office, Grasshopper



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Interior of Ann and Robert Sacks's penthouse apartment

## OTHER SPECIFICATIONS AT THE SACKS BUILDING

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- Custom Steel Auto Gate—Royal Oak Metal Craft, Inc.
- Structural Steel—R.F. Stearns, Inc.
- Mechanical—Accurate Heating, Inc.
- Electrical—Boones Ferry Electric, Inc.
- Plumbing—Scott Anderson Plumbing, Inc.
- Fire Protection—Larsen Fire Protection, Inc.
- Elevator—Otis Elevator

## HIGHLIGHTED PRODUCTS

- 1 **Limestone Slab Floors**—Ann Sacks
- 2 **Walnut Veneer Wall Panels**—Lumber Products
- 3 **Custom Steel Stair**—Royal Oak Metal Craft, Inc.
- 4 **Anodized Aluminum Sliding Door System**—Kawneer Co.
- 5 **Drapes**—Lynnco

structural steel, and multiple uses are all visible from the street—simplicity and clarity remain the overarching characteristics of the façades. This is in part due to the slate on the exterior, supplied by a Sacks distributor, which was reordered several times in order to meet Allied Works' stringent standards. "Initially the edges were too rough," explains Cloepfil.

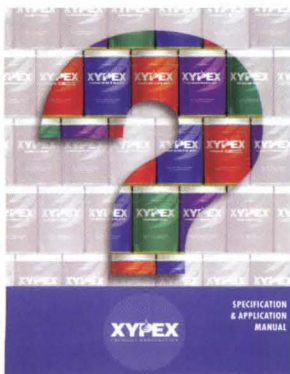
Material refinement carries into the interior of the building's top two floors, which Cloepfil designed as a residence for Sacks and her husband Robert. The limestone floors by Ann Sacks are custom cut into 18-by-18-inch slabs. Most of Sacks's products are for traditional homes, but since she wanted a modern home for herself Allied Works had the stone cut into larger dimensions to give a more abstract, planar look. *With so many windows to cover, Cloepfil even designed the shades and drapes, then had them manufactured by Lynnco. In Cloepfil's view this attention to detail fuses Pacific Northwest craft sensibility with modernist clarity and sophistication. "Materiality and craft are inherent here," he says, "That's why people respond to this building." Alan G. Brake*

# ARCHITECTURE'S PRODUCT REVIEW

The Literature offered on these pages (with rare exception) are free for the asking. Simply fill out one of the postage paid reader service cards located on page 105 in this issue, circle the appropriate numbers and drop it in the mail.

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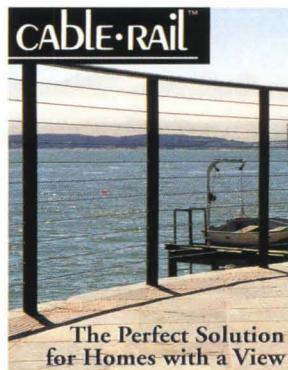
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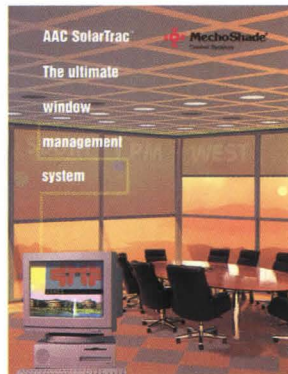
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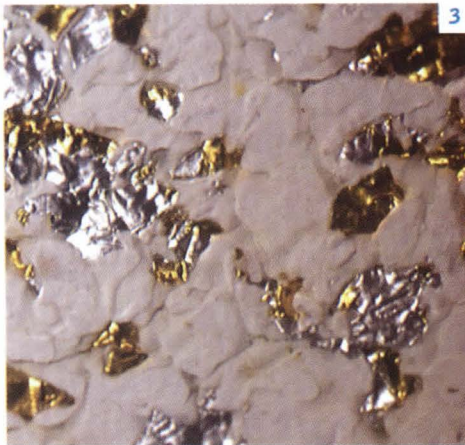


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## 4 SCREEN OF MY DREAMS

Filtered light can make the most straightforward buildings intriguing, as seen in Murphy/Jahn's Cologne/Bonn Airport (February 2001, page 80), where Haver & Boecker's Multi-Barrette stainless steel wire-cloth panels are designed for durability and transparency. Distributed by Tylinter, their architectural wire cloths have both interior and exterior uses, such as visual and sun protection, guardrails, and partitions.

## 5 SACRED VESSELS

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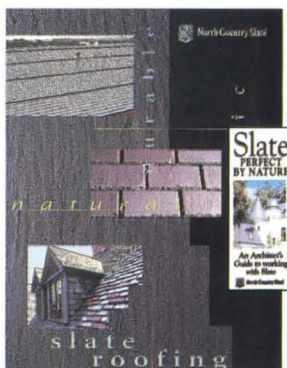
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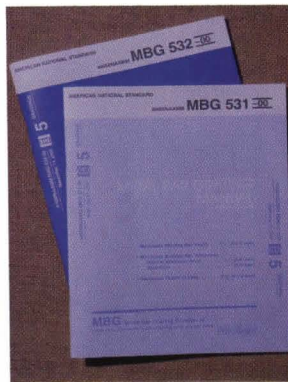
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**Circle 134.**

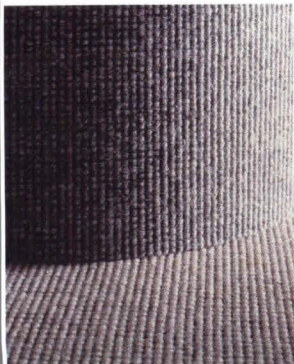
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# Don't Know Much About History

Thumbing its nose at preservation, the East Cleveland School District and the state of Ohio want to erase a landmark. **Steve Litt** asks why.

Even in its poorly maintained condition, with paint peeling off its Ionic columns and auditorium windows boarded up to prevent kids from throwing rocks through them, Kirk Middle School in East Cleveland is still beautiful.

Designed by Cleveland architect Walter McCornack and built in 1930, Kirk resembles a colonial-era palace. It is ornamented with such Georgian Revival finery as hand-carved sandstone cartouches and swags of vines and flower blossoms. Its white bell tower soars above the surrounding neighborhood of East Cleveland, a low-income, predominantly African-American area of bungalows and Tudor houses.

It's hard to find a more historic place in the city. Kirk sits on land donated by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., at the northern entrance to the 280-acre Forest Hill Park, also a legacy of Rockefeller largesse.

Yet, even though Kirk is structurally sound, highly attractive, and historically significant, the East Cleveland School District wants to replace it with a smaller building that would occupy what is now the Kirk athletic field. The land on which the school currently stands would become a new athletic field and parking lot, marring the neighborhood forever and contributing to its further decline.

This project is happening with the full approval of the Ohio School Facilities Commission, an agency that oversees a 12-year, \$23 billion program of state and local spending on schools, now in its fourth year.

Under state guidelines, schools such as Kirk are condemned to architecture's death row because renovating them would cost at least two-thirds of the cost of building a new building. In Kirk's case, a renovation estimated at \$12 million was, suspiciously, exactly two-thirds the cost of the new \$18 million building that would replace it.

The school district argues that the extra expense of building a new school is justified because it would serve children better. This is questionable. It's not far-fetched to believe that Kirk could be renovated to serve as a 21st-century school. The real lesson being taught here is that the school district—and the Ohio School Facilities Commission—are blind to the value of a landmark local building.



East Cleveland's historic Kirk Middle School (top) faces the wrecking ball because its school district wants to construct a new building by Whitley & Whitley/URSG (above) on the same site.

Sadly, such ignorance is typical of school construction policies in many states and school districts, which disregard the crucial role historic neighborhood schools play in maintaining the community fabric. Across the country, schools built more than 50 years ago are being bulldozed in favor of new buildings on greenfield sites, or, as in the case of Kirk, less significant replacements on the same land.

In June, Kirk won a temporary stay of execution when the East Cleveland Board of Zoning Appeals wisely refused to grant a demolition permit until the city government brings in architects to conduct a new study on the feasibility of renovating the school. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, which named Kirk to its list of endangered places in March 2000, has offered to help pay for the study, and Kirk may yet be saved. But policies that threaten such schools—including the rule that renovations should cost no more than two-thirds of building anew—need to be changed. ■

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