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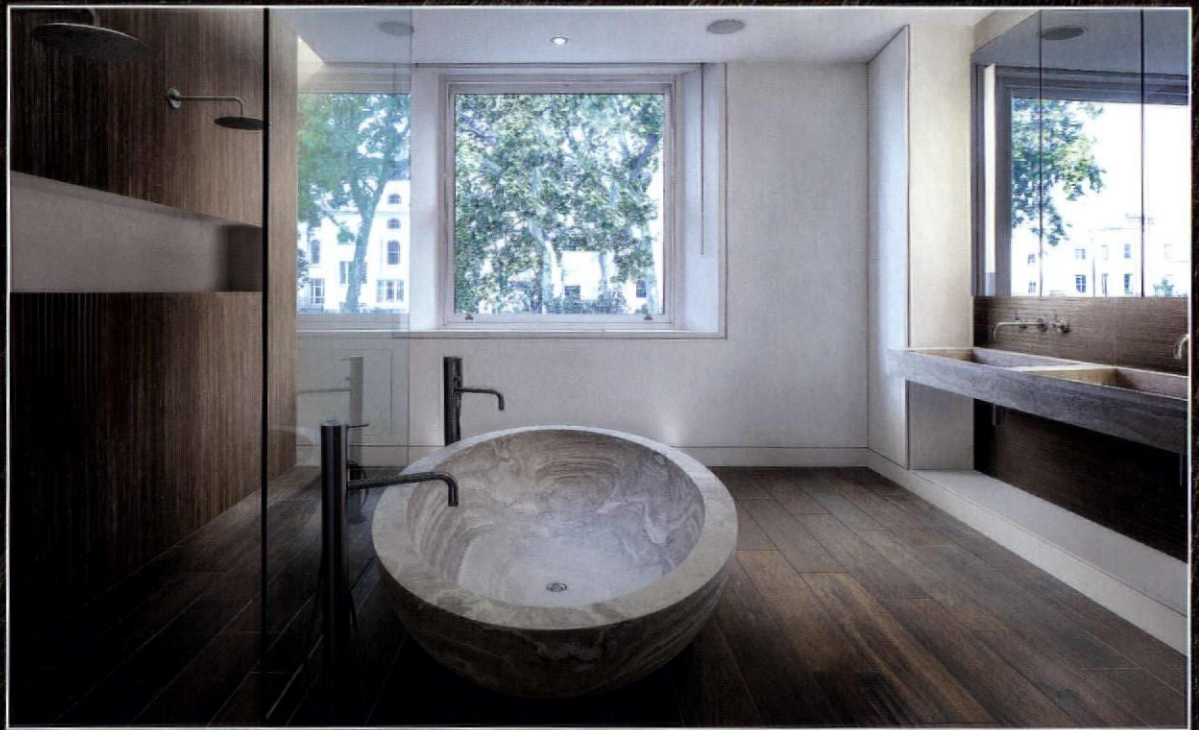
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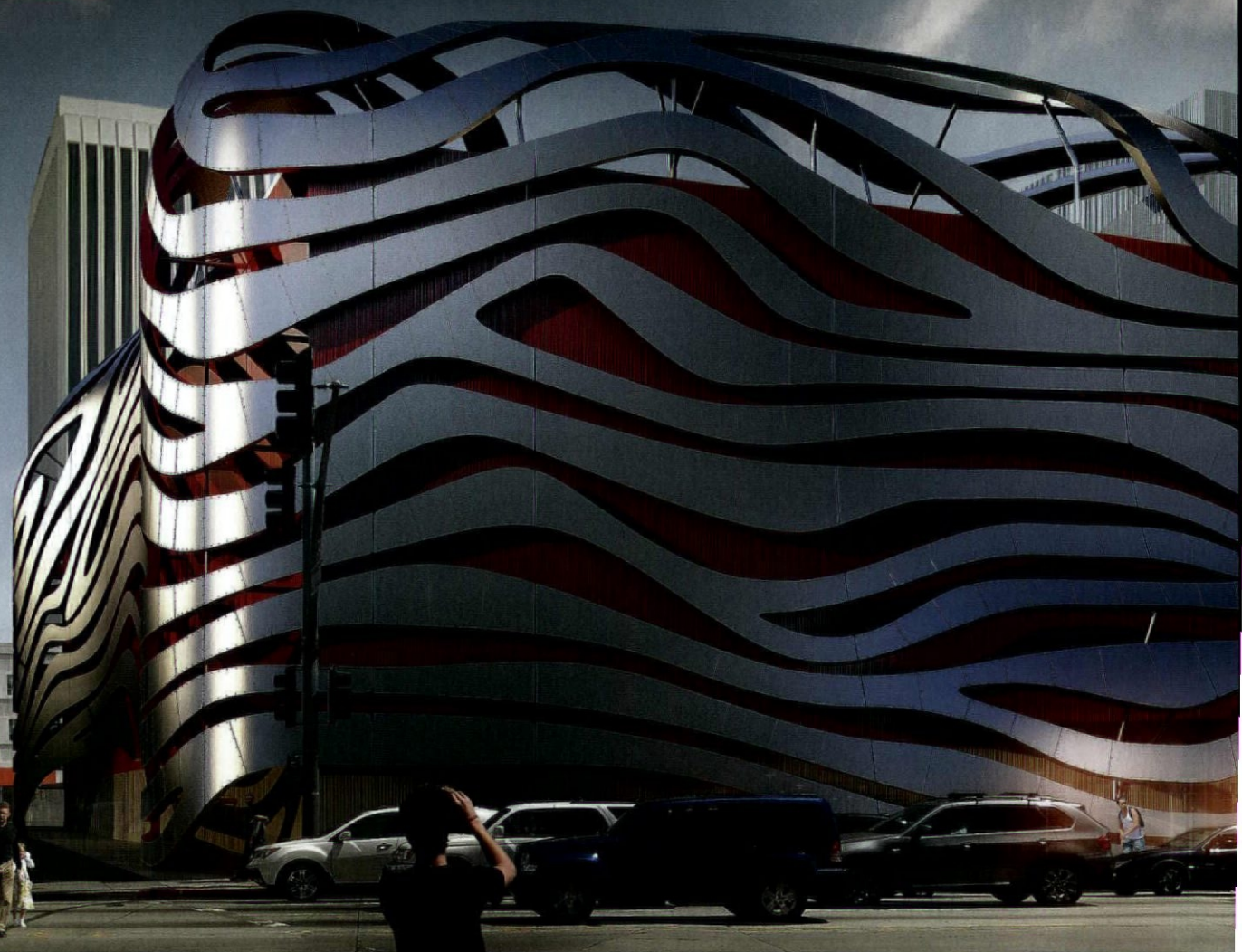
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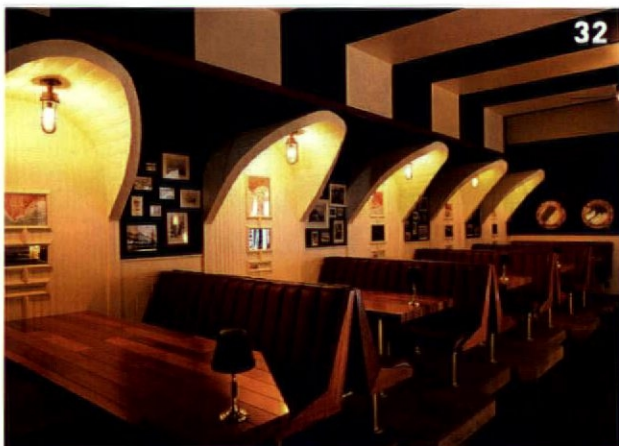
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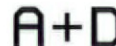
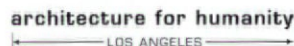
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COVER: "Tide" Chandelier by Stuart Haygarth. Photo by Stuart Haygarth

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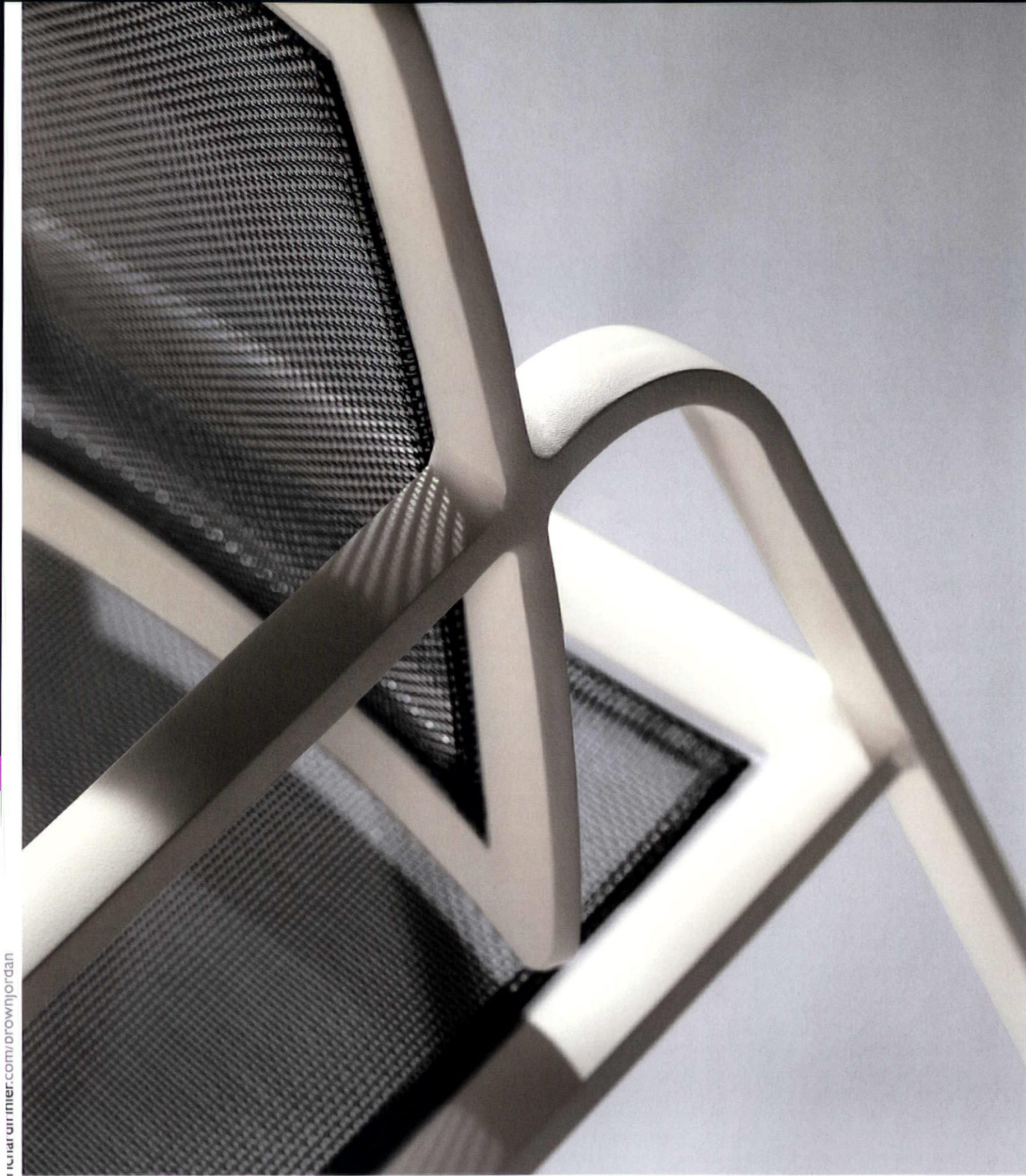
A lot of ink has been written to discuss sustainability, eco-conscious solutions, and green initiatives. And, I think most people would agree that we should waste less, source locally and find new more energy-efficient solutions for our daily needs. But is it enough?

My dad was the king of repurposing before it became popular. Growing up in a communist country, he was taught to value everything and anything. At home, he would painstakingly remove nails from old boards so he could reuse them. Beautiful broken glass was repurposed into poured concrete walkways. Today, the designers featured in our Workbook section (p.14) are repurposing and upcycling products into fresh expressions. Inspired by their surroundings, many use materials discarded in their neighborhoods. Neighborhoods also are a source of inspiration for the architects behind *Design, Bitches* (p. 28), and the distinct Venice, CA-flavor of the Superba Snack Bar garnered them an AIA Restaurant Design Award. Restaurants can reduce their carbon footprint by sourcing produce locally, and our feature "Cultivating the City" (p. 24) explores the future of urban agriculture. New regulations are moving towards more sustainable cities, but there is still much work to be done. Which brings us to a question posed by AIA President Scott Johnson (p. 8): **Does LEED go far enough to promote a comprehensive culture of sustainability? Let us know your thoughts at www.facebook.com/FormMagazinePioneeringDesign.**



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexi Drosu". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Alexi Drosu
Editor in Chief



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6 QUESTIONS



IS BEING GREEN OUR EXTREME MAKEOVER?

That familiar bliss of consumption which lies at the heart of our dependence on energy is embodied in the words of Jack Gladney, protagonist in Don DeLillo's novel, *White Noise* (1985), as he shops with his family in the mall: "When I could not decide between two shirts, they encouraged me to buy both. When I said I was hungry, they fed me pretzels, beer, souvlaki...They were my guides to endless well-being...I shopped with reckless abandon. I shopped for immediate needs and distant contingencies. I shopped for its own sake...I began to grow in value and self-regard...Brightness settled around me."

QUESTION 5.

IN 1973, THE ARAB OIL EMBARGO DOUBLED THE PRICE of crude oil worldwide in a matter of weeks, triggering financial crises throughout all oil-importing countries. By the 1980s, climatologists were measuring the effects of carbon emissions on the destruction of the earth's protective ozone layer. During that same period, in the former USSR, a nuclear plant at Chernobyl underwent a meltdown while in the pristine waters of Prince William Sound, the Exxon Valdez ran aground, spilling 11 million gallons of crude oil. As if in a tragic replay, 2010 saw the Deep Horizon blowout in the Gulf of Mexico, which lasted three months and became the largest spill ever. The following year in Fukushima, Japan, an earthquake and tsunami triggered the nuclear plant meltdown that affected the entire power grid of the country.

The Department of Energy attributes 40 percent of energy used in the U.S. to the building sector. Environmental conditioning, lighting and miscellaneous electrical loads are the chief contributors. Much progress is yet to be made in both the delivery of heating, ventilating and air conditioning and the public's acceptance of a wider comfort zone. While lighting is becoming more efficient due to more advanced sources, on-demand zoning and an emphasis on daylighting, the profusion of computers and electronic tools in every aspect of our lives assures continued dependence on electrical energy. Highly mechanized and motivated to consume,

Americans today use 10 times more energy than the average person globally.

But as one of the world's most modernized cultures, will America undergo an extreme energy makeover? Our modest record of energy awareness is recent. Little over a decade ago, the U.S. Green Building Council created the pilot Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program (LEED). States and cities have adopted their own green building legislation; however, LEED remains the dominant system in the commercial building sector. Does it go far enough to promote a comprehensive culture of sustainability, or does it, in a familiarly American way, assign value to energy-saving commodities and measures, which can be purchased, consumed and used in the promotion of these buildings? Is it possible for the public to understand that the initial costs in dollars, or the initial savings in energy, of a new building are minuscule compared to the savings of that same building over a 20 to 50 year lifespan?

Europeans have historically approached building energy in a more comprehensive way. A resident of Copenhagen, for example, consumes a ninth of the energy a resident of Detroit consumes, even though the two cities are in the same climate zone. Stefan Behling of Foster + Partners says: "Consumption is a question of demand, and demand is dependent on design. Your demand for petrol depends on the design of your car, and your demand for a car depends on how the city you live in is designed."

Studies show that gasoline consumption is directly dependent on the density of cities. Many western cities, like much of Los Angeles, have been designed with lower densities, minimal public transportation and greater distances that support private automobiles and discourage walking. Designing a city for low densities and automobile dependence takes a toll on the quality of our street-life. While a quarter of our urban landscape is comprised of streets and highways, an additional quarter is comprised of parking lots and parking structures. With so much land dedicated to the automobile, our street frontages are discontinuous, impermeable and unfriendly to pedestrians. In Los Angeles, a network of beneficiaries supports this condition as parking operators collect \$850 million per year in revenues. Each of the city's almost 40,000 parking meters earns an average of a thousand dollars a year while last year's parking fines totaled \$167 million.

Densities in Los Angeles must be increased, new mixed-use building types must be encouraged, existing structures must be repurposed and updated public transit must be made widely available. The mayor and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority are attempting to accelerate this last item, as well they should. Once all this is underway, an energy certification system such as LEED will take its place as only one part of a much larger revolution.

Scott Johnson, FAIA, founder and design partner at Johnson Fain, is president of the AIA/LA.



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A Hue to Remember

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Russ Diamond President of Snyder Diamond

"We look at ourselves as problem solvers," says Russ Diamond. "It might be a design quandary or a unique plumbing issue." The family-owned business prides itself on customer service and staying on top of the latest trends. And, in order to do this, Diamond travels the world in search of new products. "I'm looking for a nice design esthetic, clean lines, and technology that has a pragmatic functionality that will make lives better," he says. Here, Diamond shares some of what he's learned on the road.

Why do you feel it's important to travel?

When I go to places I've never been to, I like to walk the city, look into the local stores, and see how people are merchandising. A lot of time it inspires what I do, it might be fashion or furniture, if I see a good idea I'll write it down.

What city inspires you most?

Paris. I look at the architecture, at the couture. What is their lighting like? Are there color trends? We might not see some of the trends—colors in faucets, white and black, laminate wood grains—for three to four years in the U.S.

What are some new trends in kitchen appliances?

Everybody has been looking for the next big statement outside of stainless steel. White and black have always been prevalent but not necessarily in high design. Miele



just introduced white. Viking was one of the first to customize ranges with color. But there are other companies now like BlueStar that will match colors. It makes a fashion statement. Sometimes you don't see these trends taking off for a year or two, if ever. The jury is still out.

Tell me more about the Top Brewer.

When I was in Europe in April, we took a side trip to Scandinavia to visit Scanomat. About two to three years ago they developed this coffee maker for commercial [use] but they then manufactured it [for residential]. It's a minimalist design where you only see a looping spout coming out of the countertop. You control everything right off your smart phone or tablet [with] an app called Top Brewer.



What else can we expect to see more of?

On surface cooking, we have induction. It's not new but it's evolving. Thermador and Gaggenau have developed a top where you are not limited by the area. The whole top is a cooking surface. You can have up to four

vessels but they can be of any size. That's the latest to hit the market and it's been extremely popular. It's also very energy efficient.

Is energy efficiency driving the market?

Energy is driving a lot of things in the kitchen and bath industry. Everybody's paying attention, not just on the manufacturing process but the end of life process. Products can be biodegradable. In showers, it's water consumption. Sometimes that's the politics of things; sometimes these things are adopted all over the U.S. and the world.

Tell me more about speed cooking.

Speed cooking usually gets developed for commercial use, like Turbochef. But it will come to the forefront. You can take a 17lb turkey and cook it in an hour. You can program a recipe so the consistency is mindboggling. We wrapped sea bass in a banana leaf and cooked it for a few minutes; everyone was impressed with how good it was.

Are you a good cook?

I wish I was. At some point I want to learn five languages and I want to be able to cook, but I'm never at home.

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WORKBOOK



Reused, Recycled, Resplendent

Re-appropriating the past into the future of design



Stuart Haygarth

Location: London, UK

Designer/Artist: Stuart Haygarth

Website: www.stuarthaygarth.com



Whether he's using discarded spectacles, empty bottles of Tide or smashed car mirrors, Stuart Haygarth imaginatively repurposes objects into striking chandeliers. He created "Urchin", a shaggy, organic-

looking fixture from the arms of glasses. While riding his bicycle around the city, Haygarth noticed the lenses covering car lights and saw them as intricate lampshades, transforming them into elegant pendant lights. And, just imagine what he can do with the bottoms of plastic water bottles collected from Stansted Airport — a beautiful chandelier in the shape of a water drop.

What drew you to re-appropriating materials into lighting?

I work with existing objects, which have a history or story. My collecting of objects started [when I] was an illustrator, when my work was collage based. In a similar way to the artist Joseph Cornell, I created environments or assemblages using found objects and materials. Over the years, I built up an archive of objects and was an avid collector, finding materials from flea markets, charity shops, beaches and streets. After 15 years of working as an illustrator, I decided to combine my interest in sculpture and lighting [with] my passion for collecting.

What inspires you to start a new project?

Projects tend to start from finding or noticing a single object that interests me, both from a visual standpoint and from its narrative. The object or objects will gestate in my studio for some time, while over the following months, I will think about possible ideas surrounding the object. The idea may come almost immediately or take several years or not [happen] at all.

Where do you get your materials?

I find my working materials from various places such as flea markets, car boot sales, beaches, urban streets and Ebay, but an idea may be triggered from something I see while cycling or on a train. The objects don't necessarily have to be found they can also be purchased new.

What are you currently working on?

I am currently working on a suspended artwork for the new [headquarters] of Coca Cola in London, preparing a body of new work for a solo show at Carpenters Workshop Gallery in Paris, and designing some jewelry for the Louisa Guinness Gallery in London.

Product: Photos by Stuart Haygarth

Portrait by Melanie Manchot



Kyle Bean

Location: London, UK

Designer/Artist: Kyle Bean

Website: www.kylebean.co.uk



When designer Kyle Bean asked the question, "What came first?", a clever construction of eggshells was born. It's this playful, imaginative quality that punctuates his work,

pleasing the eye while making you think. And, though not all his work uses recycled products, much of it incorporates everyday items and re-appropriated materials.

How did your journey into this type of art begin?

When I was studying illustration at university, we did not have access to big workshops [with] specialist materials and equipment, so I looked to basic materials that I could find around me. I work with paper a lot because it is so versatile. On occasion, I have looked to re-appropriating waste materials into my work—pencil shavings, matchsticks, leaves and even eggshells.

How do you begin a new project?

I approach an idea with specific materials in mind. For example, when I was asked to illustrate an article about the threat of the bird flu virus, my instant reaction was to create a piece using feathers. I sculpted an atomic bomb from white feathers. I use the same kind of approach for much of my work, where literally the medium is the message.

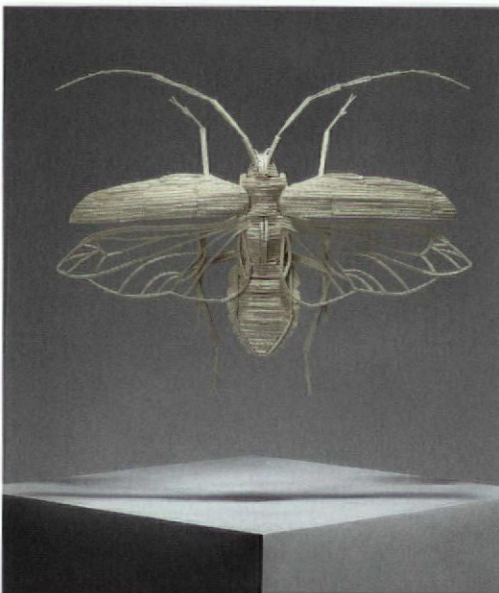
Can you tell us about the inspiration behind your project, *Union*?

I teamed up with studio RED in Brighton to design a window display for a small jewelry shop called Union. We wanted to create a display that captured the vibrant, distinctive colors of the jewelry, but also reference the [Autumn] season. Our approach was to use fallen leaves and paint them bright colors. We then fashioned the leaves into a flowing dress, upon which we could display the various items.


What about the *Pencil Shaving Portraits*?

Wallpaper* magazine approached me to illustrate the contributors page for their Handmade Issue in 2011. My approach was to produce a twist on the traditional pencil drawn portrait and so I decided to use colored pencils but in an unusual way. I used the left over shavings to create stencil-like portraits.

'What came First?' - Photo: Kyle Bean
'Union' Window - Photo: Ivan Jones
'Pencil Shaving Portraits' - Photo: Victoria Ling
'Stick Insects' - Photo: Owen Silverwood
Portrait by Jean-Luc Brouard



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BRC Designs

Location: Inman, SC

Designer/Artist: Benjamin Caldwell

Website: www.brcdesigns.com



Benjamin Caldwell feels recycled materials have a story to tell: an abandoned piano that once inspired a child to play music or old cotton mill floors where thousands of employees worked to make

an honest dollar. "Every object has a limited life cycle," he says. "But what if these spent objects were transformed into new useable objects." Though he's not alone in this endeavor, Caldwell's striking work sets him apart.

How do you get inspired for a project?

I spend hours [at] thrift stores, antique stores and abandoned warehouses looking for materials. Unlike most designers, I do not sketch or make a CAD drawing but just start working with the material and let the material guide the process.

How are you reinterpreting materials?

I used the keys from 33 defunct pianos to make the *Korobeiniki* chair. The hammers from the same pianos were used to make hammer chairs. The wood from the back end of the piano keys (inside the piano) were used to make the *Wingin' It Collection*. I am currently working on a collection [using] the harps of the pianos for tables and chairs, so hopefully little to no waste will remain.

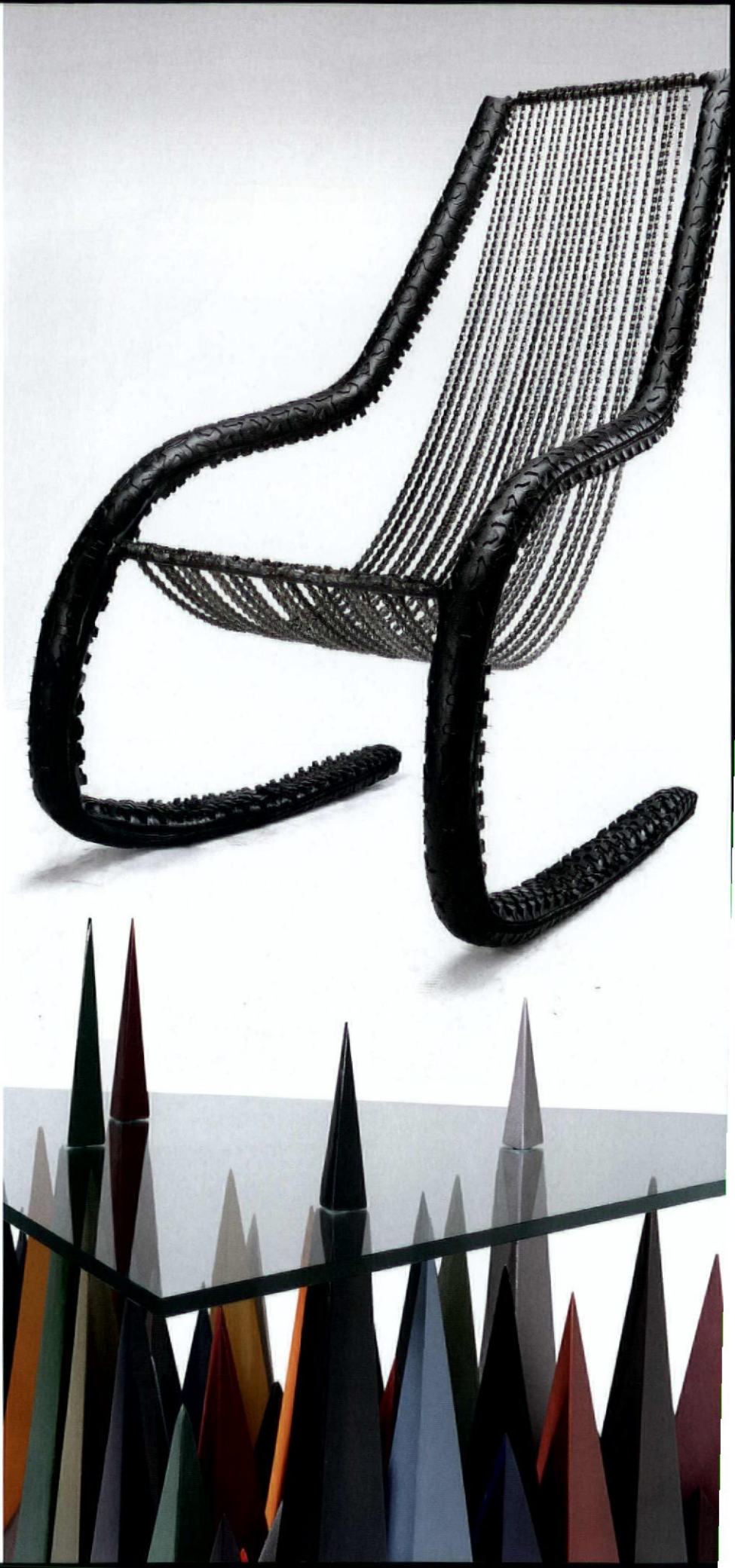
You also reduce materials to a raw form and then reinvent them.

The *Protrusion Low Table* is composed of 98 percent recycled content steel, which has been welded together into 64 pyramids of varying height. I use recycled materials as much as possible, but sometimes it's not possible to remain completely upcycled, such as in this design, where new glass is used.

Can you tell us about the inspiration behind the rocker chair?

Many people have tried to make chairs out of bicycle parts, but the overall result tends to still resemble the original bicycle. I challenged [myself] to make a chair out of bicycle components, but with an end goal to completely transform the parts into something new. I wanted to use what would seem to be the least likely material for the seat—the bicycle chain. I then covered the rockers in the tires from the bicycles. Not only does the chain rocker not resemble a bicycle, it uses the two objects that are replaced during a bicycle's scheduled maintenance.

Photos courtesy of BRC Designs.
Portrait by Hot Eye Photography





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Re Rag Rug

Location: Hägersten, Sweden
Designer/Artist: Katarina Brieditis
& Katarina Evans
Website: www.reragrug.blogspot.se



When the Katarinas embarked on this project they sought to create 12 unique rag rugs in 12 different techniques in 12 months. Using only recycled materials or industrial waste, the designers have showed that reclaimed materials can inspire new creations that eschew shabby chic trends. The completed works are currently on exhibit in Sweden.

How did you come up with the idea?

In 2003, we worked with a project called *Do Redo*. We wanted to show how to make clothes [with] craft techniques [using] discarded woolen sweaters. Some ideas from *Do Redo* made us start up Re Rag Rug. The use of craft techniques in combination with recycled materials has become a method for us [to] develop new designs for rugs.

Talk about the process.

There is an ongoing trend in the world of interiors, where a reused and shabby look is popular. But trends come and go. It's of a great importance that design made of recycled and waste materials keeps developing into fresh expressions. This task is a creative challenge—by using excess materials we want to develop [high quality] products with a timeless design.

Can you give us a few examples of ways you have reinterpreted materials?

Milky Way is made out of woolen sweaters, all different in quality and texture. The hexagonal shape is common as a patchwork design. We cut the shape out of the sweaters, folded them and used woodblocks and clamps to [traditional Japanese] shibori dye each piece before we patched them together. This rug is a meeting between two totally different textile expressions in an east-meets-west kind of way. *Nomad* is made out of industrial waste, wool selvage that is automatically cut on the loom when weaving. We wanted to use its fuzziness, and made a rug in a simple technique where it stands in contrast to a completely smooth surface.

How do you imagine the future of Re Rag Rug?

We have a vision of reproducing designs with waste from the industry. As the case with *Kasuri*, the blue braided rug, we have already started a process with women in India. They live in a town where T-shirts are manufactured. If we can find a way to create our rugs by using waste and at the same time create work that develops culture and crafts we will be very happy.

Photos courtesy of reragrug.blogspot.se.
Portrait by Maria Annas





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Atelier Hapax

Location: Paris, France
Designer/Artist: Sinan Sigic
Website: www.atelierhapax.com



For Sinan Sigic working with reclaimed materials is a very personal process, and objects brought in by his clients inspire his projects. "I need his story, his aspirations—all different for each object," says

Sigic. "The person explains in what way the object is important to them. It's often an old family memento or the symbol of a happy event; sometimes it's just a beautiful object that's lost its usefulness."

How did you begin this work?

What interests me is transformation, and I look on the finished object as a material in itself. Objects have a history and an end purpose that a material alone doesn't have. They're also more complex as they're almost always made with a number of materials, with different assembly methods, and they bear the marks of wear and tear. Transforming an object is not just about what you do with the various materials, but also about how you reinterpret this story. The objects – meaning the recycled materials – and what they represent, were the starting point for my work when I set up Atelier Hapax, in 2010. But if I look back, I can see that it's what's always inspired me.

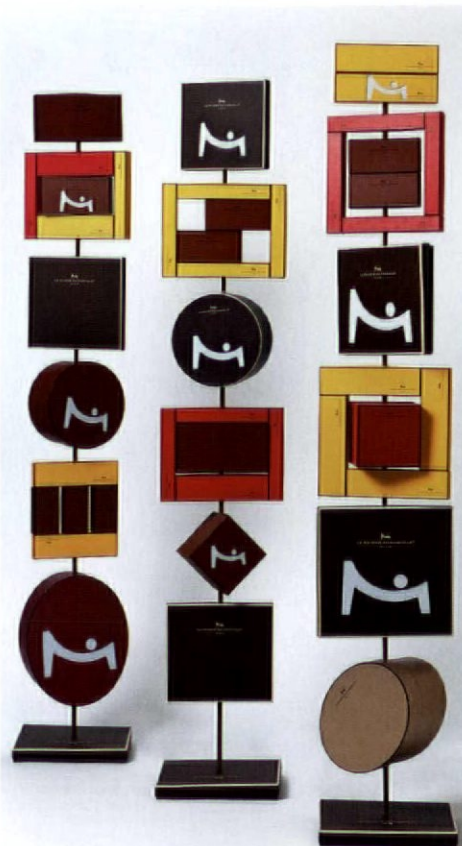
Your work is made by special order, can you describe the process with a client?

A client came to see me one day with a set of luggage and leather goods that he'd held on to from a deceased parent. During our conversation, I came to understand that the client was a fairly sedentary person, whereas the parent had been an enthusiastic traveler. I created a desk writing pad in a marquetry of the different leathers I'd recovered from the luggage set.

What are ways you have reinterpreted materials?

I [have] clients who come with packaging items, such as ribbon or shopping bags, from big houses that they don't want to throw away. I've made lamps of all kinds with cardboard boxes. I perforate the boxes using laser to create different motifs, sometimes simple dots, often more figurative designs. There was a wall lamp made of chocolate boxes with its own in-case-of-emergency-break-glass compartment containing two chocolates, for a client who happens to be a serious chocolate addict. For this same client, I created a chess game with pieces made from cutout circles of chocolate boxes alternating with beads made from shopping bags, the whole mounted on hatpins.

Photos courtesy of Atelier Hapax





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CULTIVATING THE CITY

BY LISA BINGHAM DEWART



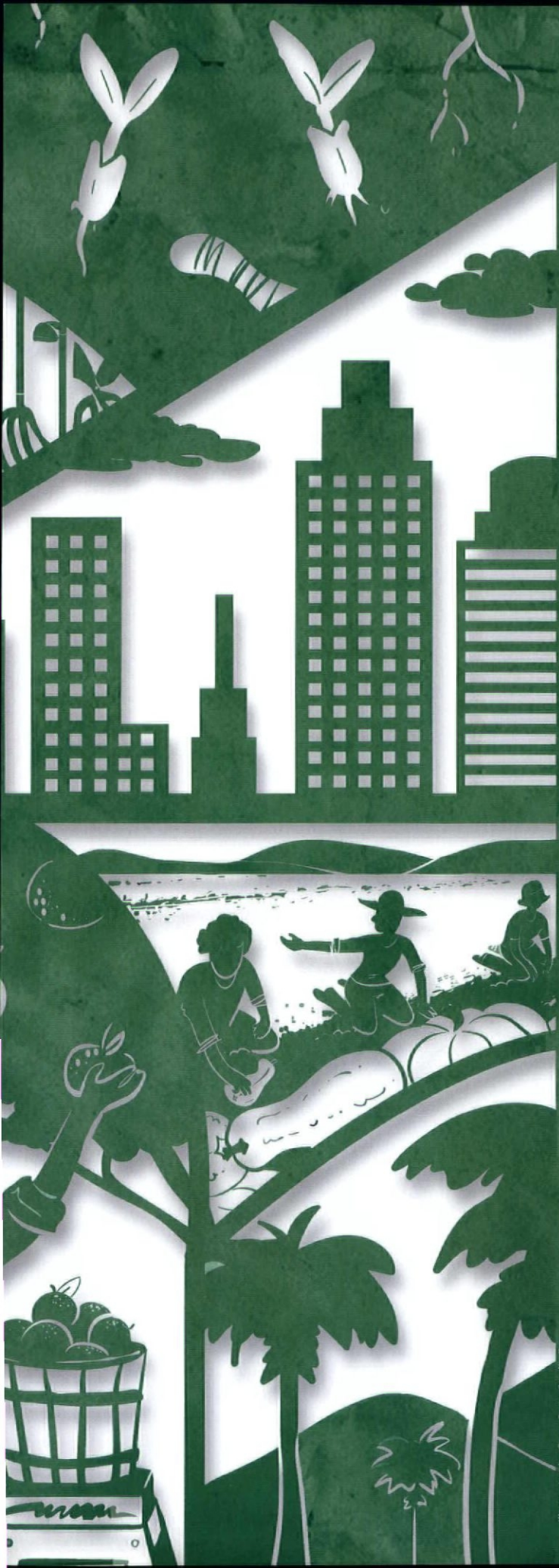


Illustration by Grace Betts, Studio Fuse.

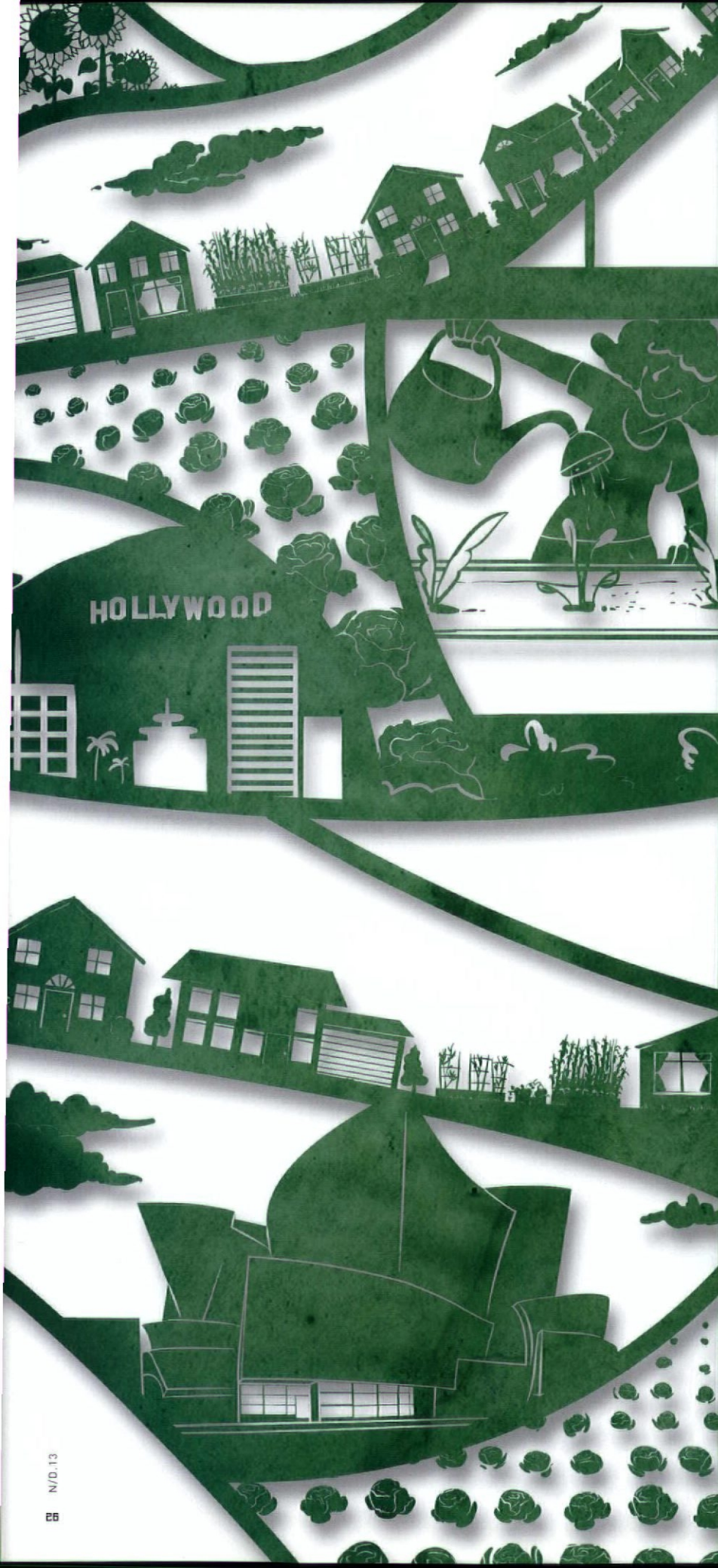
For much of its history, the city and county of Los Angeles were distinctly agrarian. Times change, though, and by the 1940s agriculture was largely pushed out of more populated areas into rural pockets through changes in zoning to create a suburban ideal. Fast-forward seven decades; the way the city functions and its citizens live has changed dramatically. The old model seems less relevant as the focus shifts on how to make Los Angeles a more livable and sustainable city.

WHILE URBAN AGRICULTURE NEVER FULLY DISAPPEARED IN LOS ANGELES (think the school gardens that continue to be bright spots), a new wave of civic thinking has sprouted, with an increasing number of farmers, restaurateurs, community activists, city planners and leaders leading the charge, looking at ways to bring agriculture back in ways large and small. Recently, community momentum has encouraged City officials to re-think zoning regulations. In 2010, the Fruit and Flower Freedom Act amended the City's Truck Gardening ordinance. Since 1946, it had been interpreted as allowing the growing and off-site sale of vegetables in home gardens but not that of fruit, berries, seeds, nuts and flowers. The 2010 act rectifies this issue.

There are hopes that urban agriculture will also figure into the upcoming overhaul of the City's zoning codes, which is slated to take shape over the next several years. Re:code LA, as the project is known, will update the current code, an unwieldy 600-plus page document of sometimes conflicting ordinances. The plan is to tap into stakeholders' priorities to create a livable, sustainable city going forward.

Roadblocks still stand in the way of broader success. Access to land would go a long way in encouraging urban farms. At the moment, "there's not a lot available for large-scale growing. It's expensive and there are development pressures," says Clare Fox, of the Los Angeles Food Policy Council. "It's challenging to pencil out a justification for growing food when there are other things that can be done with it." However, a state-level movement is taking hold to address this issue. California Governor Jerry Brown just signed legislation allowing municipalities to lower the assessed value and property taxes on plots of land, less than three acres in area, if the owners commit to growing food on them for five years.

In the meantime, Fox and her group want to make the most of the spaces that are available. One avenue would be to allow gardens in parkways—something until this summer was illegal. With a moratorium in place on city-issued citations, there is a motion before the city council to amend the guidelines for planting in parkways and to review the permitting process for gardening in those spaces, making it easier for more citizens to participate.



Included in the same motion is a directive for City agencies, including the Department of Water and Power to report back on unused properties that might be strangely shaped or otherwise difficult to sell to developers with an eye toward opening up that land to community gardens. Two non-profits, the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust and Community Health Councils, have received grants to vet the sites, investigating their ultimate feasibility as sites for urban farming, ultimately creating an online searchable database. It's a first step in allowing easier, more affordable access to farmland within the city.

With a complex and occasionally conflicting set of rules from the City and County, it makes bringing urban farm products to market a challenge. As Nicolas Efron, one of the authors of a recent UCLA study on the state of urban agriculture in Los Angeles, points out, the city has some 10,000 brick-and-mortar markets and restaurants; however, there's a disconnect between these entities and the local farmers growing food. Economies of scale and a lack of coordination between individual growers are cited as two factors limiting the linking of Los Angeles's urban farmers with restaurants and markets.

Eugene Ahn, of Forage, a restaurant in the city's Silver Lake neighborhood knows it well. When the place opened in 2010, the business model included sourcing produce from backyard farmers. After a few months, the restaurant was forced by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to end the program, because the farmers providing produce were unlicensed. Forage revived the program, opening it up to licensed growers only. To make it easier for interested farmers to participate and navigate the county's regulations, Ahn and his team created a roadmap to licensure.

Los Angeles is working on creating ways to make agricultural products grown within its limits more accessible. Currently under review by the City Attorney's office, a proposed ordinance would make it easier to bring farmers' markets to single family neighborhoods. If passed, it would be a boon to small growers and also to areas underserved with fresh produce but with an abundance of vacant single-family lots.

With an energized group of supporters from all sides of the issue, Los Angeles is poised to be a leader in urban agriculture, and the opportunities are not just limited to small-scale growing operations. With the continued support of civic leaders, changes to the Municipal Code could mean a future where its food needs could be met within its own limits. ■



Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Daniels at L.A. Eater



ALMA RESTAURANT'S ROOFTOP FARM

Ari Taymor and Ashleigh Parsons, the co-owners (chef and general manager, respectively) of Alma, a downtown Los Angeles restaurant that opened last year, are part of the next wave of urban agriculture pioneers and the pair has partnered with Courtney Guerra, a Culinary Institute of America, Greystone, graduate.

Inspired by her time at The Restaurant at Meadowood in Napa, Guerra came to Los Angeles and began her own farm—in the front and backyards of a Venice bungalow. At the moment, 10 percent of the produce for the restaurant's tasting menu comes from Guerra's tiny plot (it has around 1000-square feet available to plant).

The trio has bigger plans; they have secured space on a rooftop in the Fashion District downtown, about a mile away from Alma,

where they hope to grow close to 100 percent of the tasting menu's produce. Not only will the new location give them twice the planting space, it will reduce their carbon footprint since multiple weekly trips to Venice will be eliminated.

Taymor, Parsons and Guerra's approach offers a new frontier in urban agriculture—and a critical one that has the potential to connect developers, building owners growers and consumers in more meaningful and potentially profitable ways.

"We believe that restaurants, big or small, should be thinking about urban farming, even if on a small scale," says Parsons. "While a rooftop garden may not be feasible for all restaurants, every[one] can be thinking about how to develop some sort of urban farming or gardening platform."

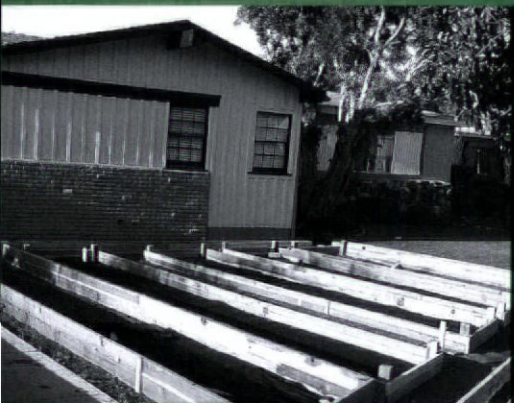


Photo courtesy of Courtney Guerra

URBAN AGRICULTURES TAKES ROOT ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

DETROIT: In April 2013, the city passed an urban agriculture ordinance that allows community gardens and small-scale farming within city limits. Until the ordinance's passage, the gardens that dotted the city's vacant lots—a consequence of the steep population decline—were illegal.

SAN FRANCISCO: The zoning code allows farms less than an acre to exist anywhere in the city, and allows them to sell their produce on-site. In 2012, the city also adopted a local ordinance to establish an urban agriculture program, including: provisions to audit rooftops to determine agricultural use feasibility; to reduce the waitlist for community garden plots; and to provide incentives for temporary agriculture projects.

CHICAGO: Changes to the city's zoning code clarify and define the differences between community garden and urban farm uses, and permits aquaponics and rooftop gardening in certain zoning districts. Up to five honey bee hives are also permitted.

AUSTIN: Since a 2011 ordinance permitted urban farms and community gardens in every zone, further recommendations are being made to update the farm code. Among them, creating four distinct urban agricultural uses, increasing the number of employees allowed on urban farms, and permitting rabbits, fowl and fish.



DYNAMIC DUO

TWO OUTSPOKEN ARCHITECTS ARE STARTING SMALL TO DESIGN BEAUTIFUL EXPERIENCES

BY
MICHAEL WEBB

"DON'T CALL US. WE'LL CALL YOU," READS THE CHEEKY BUSINESS CARD BELONGING to Catherine Johnson and Rebecca Rudolph, partners in the Los Angeles firm, Design, Bitches. After graduating from SCI-Arc, the two architects worked together at Barbara Bestor Architecture; then in 2010 they established their own firm. The unorthodox name was their provocative answer when AIA Los Angeles posed the question, "Architecture is...?" Their collaboration continues to explore alternative approaches to design while also using the communities around them as a source of inspiration. We sat down with the duo behind the name to discuss the importance of branding, hashing out ideas, and who deserves all the credit.





THIS SPREAD: The Coolhaus Ice Cream's second location in Pasadena, CA gave the designers an opportunity to interpret the design graphically. "When working with clients on both graphics and architectural design in tandem, we encourage the creation of a cohesive representation of the brand," says Johnson and Rudolph.

You recently won an AIA/LA Restaurant Design Award for the Superba Snack Bar in Venice. What were the key ideas?

Rebecca: It's about Venice, a little freaky, not neat and orderly as it might be in Santa Monica, and we didn't want it to be themed. It's a mash-up of different elements—a bench covered with recycled pool tile, brass detailing on the tables, an axle bushing used as a candleholder, and mirrors. The scale was that of a Parisian café.

Now, you are building Superba Food & Bread, a more ambitious space located in a former auto body shop.

Rebecca: Similar ideas, different materials and references. We took our cues from artists' studios in Venice: unfinished wood-frame walls, a sense of creativity, as in a workshop. It's a neighborhood place with many functions—coffee and pastries in the morning, a place where people meet and bring their laptops, informal lunch that you order at the counter, and dinner with table service and a wine bar.

You've designed several food trucks and cafés—is that a way of making good design accessible to a broad public?

Catherine: With restaurants—as in retail and fashion—there's a constant reinvention, even when they haven't been around that long. That's an opportunity for architects. With a big project, things take a long time, there's often a committee, and the concept gets watered down.

Is space planning and graphics all part of architecture for you?

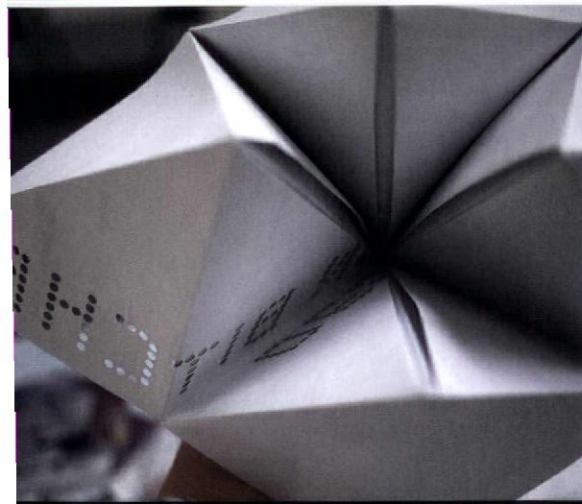
Catherine: Yes, with Superba and Coolhaus we designed everything down to their business cards. Sometimes it starts with architecture and other times with the graphics.

How do you help your clients integrate their space, brand and graphics together?

Rebecca: We encourage the creation of a cohesive representation of the brand—the space, the graphics... [to] help curate how the consumer will ultimately perceive their brand. We approach brand identity creation in the same way that we design the architecture, taking inspiration from the client, context and business model, and collaging them together into something unique.



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM, LEFT: Working on brand identity and signage for Superba Snack Bar; Superba (exterior) won a 2013 AIA Restaurant Design Award; inside Superba; the Waiting Mural; incorporating language into design; the Cootie Catcher with laser-cut text.



Catherine: This can be achieved in many different ways. It doesn't necessarily mean the language is universal or all encompassing. Instead, certain elements may work together to create a more cohesive whole, like a diptych painting. It can be anything from colors to patterns to the time period when the fonts were created. We try to introduce brand elements in unexpected places, adding visual references that may be slightly under the radar but will trigger associative reactions.

What do you find appealing about this holistic approach to design?

Catherine: One of our major design interests is in how architecture affects people in their daily lives. By extending the reach of the project into graphics, menus, and all things visual we are able to extend that interaction beyond the physical experience of the place.

Rebecca: It provides a platform to communicate on variable levels and time frames.

The name of your firm has won you a lot of attention. Did you set out to be provocative?

Rebecca: It was serendipitous. We came up with the phrase in response to an AIA competition: "Architecture is...?" It was tongue in cheek.

Catherine: We thought we'd never hear from them again; instead, they gave us an honorable mention, but left the comma off the certificate. People responded really well so we adopted the name.

Might that asset turn into a liability if you decide to offer your services to the suits?

Rebecca: Talking to restaurants and fashion [industry] people, they don't find it shocking. At this point, we love small-scale insertions. We're not trying to do schools or institutions but maybe, by the time we do, everyone will have accepted the name.

Did SCI-Arc encourage you to be hands-on and reach out to the public?

Rebecca: Definitely. I went there for the experience because I saw I could do different things, from making furni-

ture to photography. I had been studying philosophy so it was a great change.

Catherine: I was there at the last major transition when they were still building the downtown facility. I was encouraged to look everywhere, and that's now a part of our practice. We can be inspired by a pop video. High, low—it doesn't matter.

Architecture should be collaborative, and yet even when it is, buildings are credited to individuals. Does the public crave solitary geniuses or is it just convenient shorthand?

Rebecca: You can't deny the creative input of people who put their names on buildings, but outsiders don't realize how much work goes into a building. With movies a lot of names are up there on the screen, but buildings are still credited to one person. It's all about marketing.

Do you see that changing?

Catherine: Yes. Post-recession it's a different game. Younger firms—and a lot of established offices—are emphasizing team effort.

How do you collaborate with each other?

Catherine: We live at opposite ends of town, but we get together to hash out ideas. It's not the old model of one creative partner, and one for business. We do all of the above. Our best ideas come from talking to each other.

What kind of work would you like to do in the next decade?

Rebecca: More buildings! We have one ground-up house we are working on, and a restaurant in Joshua Tree, if the client can get the financing.

Catherine: I'm a dancer, so I'd love to do a dance studio. We both like designing spaces for the public. We want to break down barriers and develop a language that's intelligible to people outside the profession. As a business model, being less elitist is a good mode of operation. Architects can create beautiful experiences for people. ■

2013

RESTAURANT
DESIGN AWARDS
AIA LOS ANGELES



Belcampo Meat Co.

IN GOOD TASTE

The 2013 AIA Restaurant Design Awards showcase an array of exciting projects both large and small

JURY WINNERS

RESTAURANT CATEGORY

BELCAMPO MEAT CO. (LARKSPUR, CA)

Designed by BCV Architects
Photo by Ed Anderson

NOBU MALIBU (MALIBU, CA)

Designed by Montalba Architects, Inc. &
Studio PCH, LLC
Photo by Ivan de la Luz

SUPERBA SNACK BAR (VENICE, CA)

Designed by Design, Bitches & Reed
Architectural Group
Photo by Ray Katchatorian

CAFÉ / BAR CATEGORY

BEER BELLY (LOS ANGELES, CA)

Designed by MAKE Architecture
Photo by Jory Cordy

NORTHERN LIGHTS BAR (ICELAND)

Designed by Minarc
Photo by Ragnar Th Sigurdsson

LOUNGE / NIGHTCLUB CATEGORY

CHAMBERS EAT + DRINK (SAN FRANCISCO, CA)

Designed by Samonsky + Pometta
Architects, LLP & Mr. Important Design
Photo by Jeff Dow

SHOREBAR (LOS ANGELES, CA)

Designed by Built: a design/build company
Photo by John M. Sofio

BEST NEW CONCEPT AWARD WINNER

BELCAMPO MEAT CO. (LARKSPUR, CA)

Designed by BCV Architects
Photo by Ed Anderson

Awards continue on page 35



Nobu Malibu



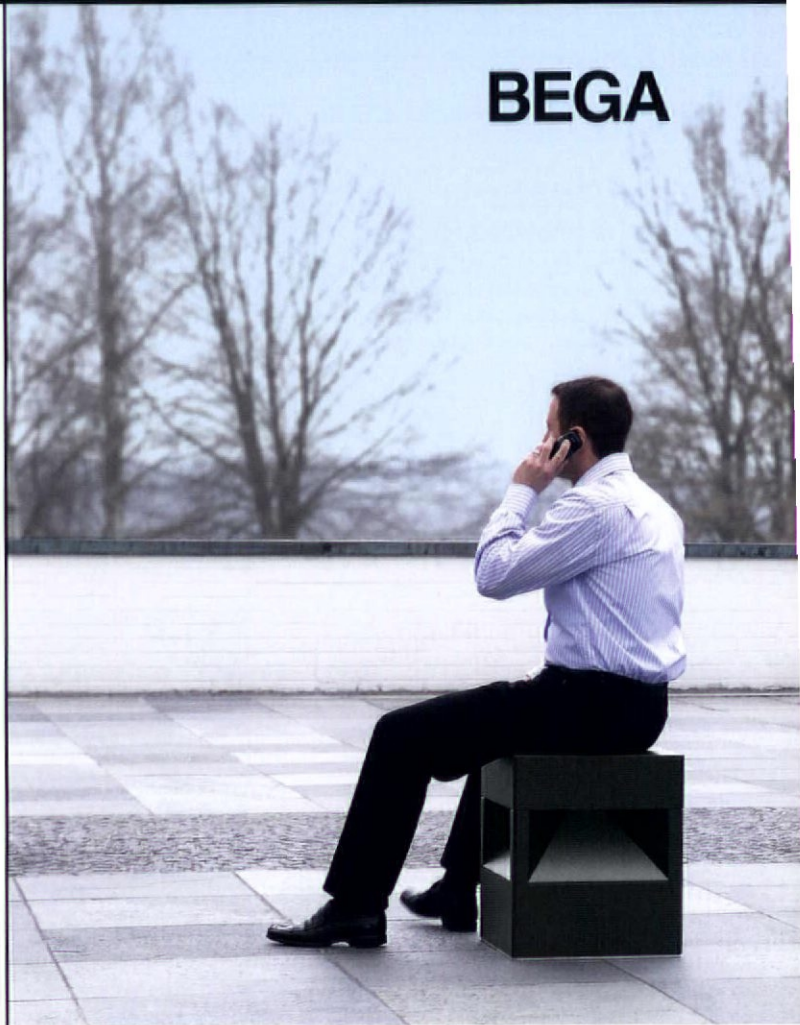
Superba Snack Bar



Beer Belly



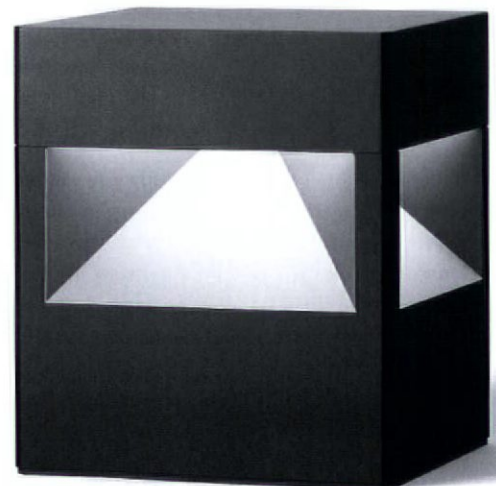
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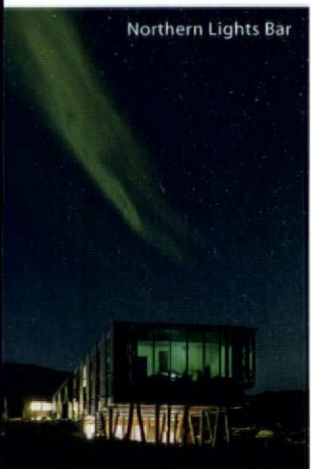
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Corral N. Hilton Foundation Headquarters, Agoura Hills, CA ©Nick Merrick - ZGF

BEGA
LIMBURG Collection



Northern Lights Bar



Outliers Eatery



Shorebar

**PEOPLE'S CHOICE
AWARD WINNERS**

RESTAURANT CATEGORY

OUTLIERS EATERY (PORTLAND, ME)

Designed by Remi Design

Photo by Stephen Davis Phillips

CAFÉ / BAR CATEGORY

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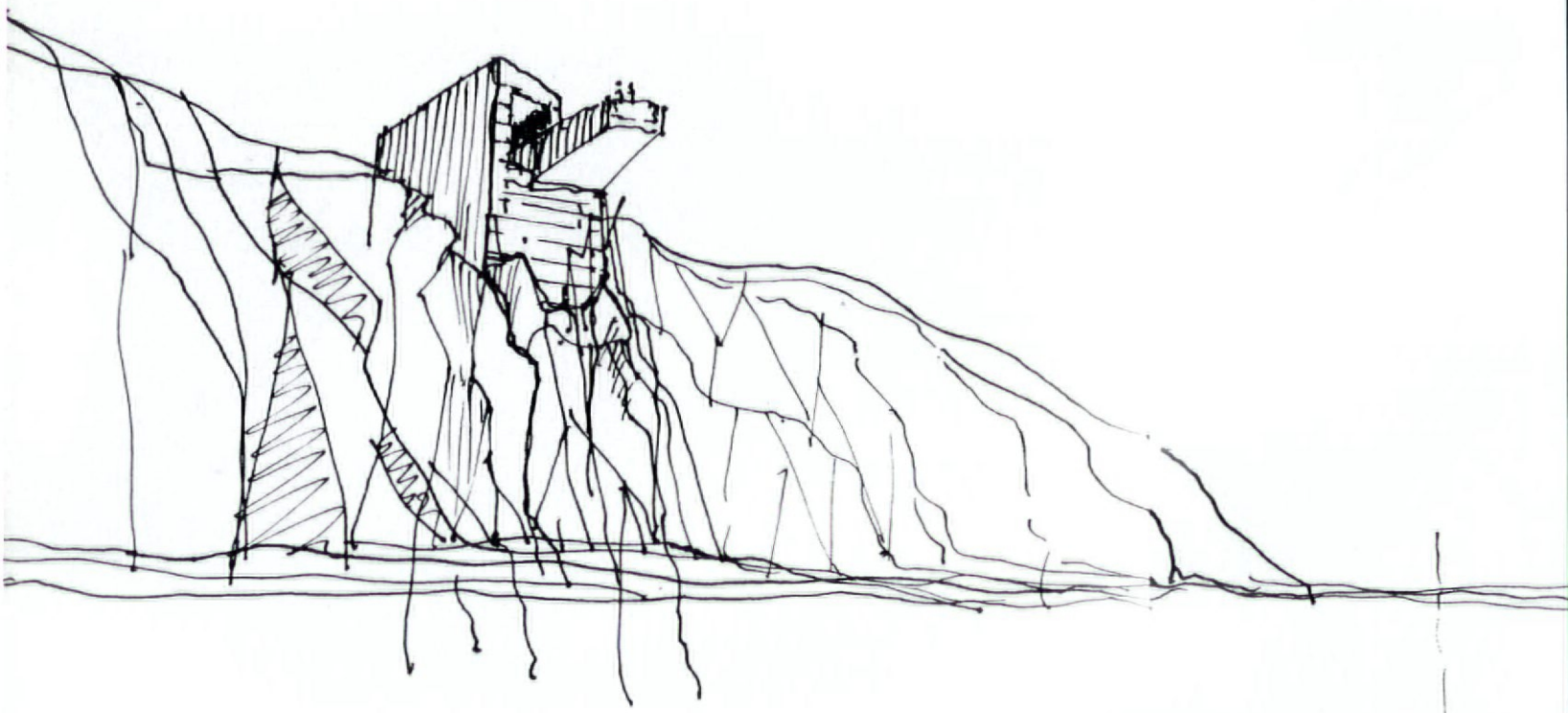
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“In order to do good architecture it is important for me to understand the nature of the site, the nature of the client and the true nature of the circumstances for the design. As nature is perfect and divine, architecture should be an association to it.”

— Luis Longhi



FIRM: Longhi Architects | PROJECT: Beach House Soto Canales LOCATION: Cañete, Peru | DESIGN TOOLS: Ink and paper