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AARON NEUBERT, AIA and MIKE JACOBS, AIA, founding partners of Los Angeles based Orenj, began their collaboration upon earning degrees from Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture. Prior to the formation of their own office, both practiced in New York City, realizing many residential and institutional projects throughout the tri-state area. Their individual and collaborative work has been featured in numerous publications, including Architecture, Architectural Record, Art in America, A+U, Concept, Dwell, Interior Design, LA Architect, Metropolis, The New York Times, and Quaderns. Both Jacobs and Neubert have contributed to various cross-disciplinary works in fields such as public art, industrial design, furniture design, digital animation, film and theatre. In addition to their professional practice, both principals maintain a link to academia through a history of teaching appointments at Otis College of Art and Design, SCI-ARC, Woodbury University, Cal-Poly Pomona and Columbia University.

PETER SLATIN is the founder and editor of The Slatin Report, a Web-based commercial real estate news service launched in 2003. theslatinreport.com reaches 10,000 readers a week across the U.S. He also writes about real estate for Barron’s and is a regular contributor to The Architect’s Newspaper. He was previously the co-founder and editor-in-chief of GRID, an award-winning real estate business magazine. Mr. Slatin has 15 years’ experience covering the commercial real estate industry for a variety of publications, including Barron’s, Urban Land, The New York Times, The New York Post and Architectural Record, and has won several awards for editorial excellence. He is a director of the Van Alen Institute, a New York-based nonprofit focusing on the development and design of public spaces, and of Lighthouse International, the nation’s leading provider of rehabilitation services for the visually impaired.

MICHAEL WEBB was born in London and has lived in Los Angeles for 27 years. He is the author of more than 20 books on architecture and design, including Art/Invention/House, and Building for Bacchus: The New Wine Architecture (both due in September), Brave New Houses: Adventures in Southern California Living and Modernism Reborn: Mid Century American Houses. Besides reviewing books and exhibitions for LA Architect, Michael is a regular contributor to Architectural Digest, Architectural Review and Frame.

CORRECTIONS: In the last issue, we failed to credit the Engs Architects team for their Tool-Up Shed. The team consisted of: Ned Engs, AIA, Principal, Audrey McEwen and Jon Gaiser. Additionally, the firm has since changed its name and web address: www.E4arch.com. We also failed to make several corrections to the final draft of Cindy Olnick’s “Neglect: The Silent Killer (of Buildings)”. Please note that the reference to the Office of Historic Preservation should read, Office of Historic Resources.
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In the great East vs. West Pritzker Smackdown, the numbers may be even, but the odds decidedly favor Los Angeles. Thom Mayne has reach and Gehry stamina—and brawlers both—far out matching the doctrinaire Pei and easily winded Meier.

Outside the realm of starchitecture, the matchup is a bit more ambiguous. The standard trope is one of buildings versus books. Certainly, there is much more architecture getting built in Los Angeles, and probably more treatises being penned by frustrated designers in Manhattan. But when you compare our random sampling of projects from both cities, the similarities, design-wise, are more striking than the differences.

The urban problems facing the two cities, or at least their downtowns, are also remarkably the same. Peter Slatin, a correspondent equally comfortable on both coasts, shows how they share goals, successes and frustrations. Thom Mayne himself, in an interview with our publisher Ann Gray, alternately dismisses and highlights the ways in which New York and Los Angeles differ. We close, then, with a photographic essay that will allow you to compare and contrast them for yourselves.

The greatest difference uncovered in the course of putting this issue together is a matter of quality of life. Everyone agreed that it is so much easier to do architecture in Los Angeles. And the weather's not half bad, either.

Your editor,

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Los Angeles vs. New York

Here’s the idea: about half of the projects that follow are in Los Angeles, but done by New York Architects, and half are in New York, by Los Angeles architects. We asked a few of the designers to compare the opposite coasts:

“In LA the impulse seems to be to create an oasis in the city—to close the city out. In New York it’s different; they want to open the space up to the city.” –PATRICK TIGHE

“Architects on the east coast are pretty up-tight, always looking over their shoulders. People here will die for a little interiors project.” –MARGARET HELFAND

“New York has bodies of review and unions for everything. The permitting for this space was not bad, but the coordination of trades was complicated.” –PAUL FREISSNER
Maharam Showroom
LOCATION: Los Angeles, CA
ARCHITECT: Fernlund + Logan Architects
WEBSITE: www.fernlundlogan.com

The new Maharam showroom on the corner of Melrose and Westmont is simply the latest of many done for the company by Fernlund + Logan. The structure was built in the 1960s, with concrete walls, odd openings and rooftop parking hidden behind a parapet. To transform the exterior, the architects replaced the stucco with a galvanized steel cladding. The choice of metal, says Neil Logan, was inspired by the ever-present metal-clad automobile. They also replaced all the windows and pushed the entrance out towards the street. They cleared the 4,000-square-foot interior to create one large room, arranging the necessary functions along the periphery. The open space is meant to integrate the 12 workstations so everyone has a large space. Experience at previous showrooms has demonstrated that this improves the interaction between the sales people, creating a more collaborative environment. There is also a private office for an executive and an enclosed back of house for storage and the like.

B/ NY Showroom
LOCATION: Santa Monica, CA
ARCHITECT: Helfand Architecture, pc
WEBSITE: www.helfandarch.com

This shop for avant-garde apparel was designed and built in about six months, on a limited budget. "Unfortunately," says architect Margaret Helfand, "We have a lot of experience in such minimal means undertakings." To create a space that was unique, cheap and flexible, the architect developed a dynamic system of cables and pylons. Tension cables for hanging clothing crisscross along the perimeter of the space, supported by moveable pylons constructed from bent steel plate. These, in combination with planes of cherry paneling, divide and define the functional areas of this shop.

The ceiling is simply undulating drywall, folded in and around inconveniences such as roof drains. The floor treatment consists of bronze and steel dust suspended in polyurethane. Whenever possible, they added small details—such as custom doorknobs—to accent the more rough-and-ready elements. To save time, and money, they designed all the components to be fabricated off-site, but nevertheless locally.
25 Central Park West
LOCATION: New York, NY
ARCHITECT: Tighe Architecture
WEBSITE: www.tighearchitecture.com

This residential loft sits high atop a grand Art Deco apartment building, in a space that previously housed water storage tanks. Those small compartments and an adjoining 1980s loft were stripped to create large, bare space. Some of what was exposed was maintained in the final design. From inside the loft space, you can see “the back of the architecture” intruding in the form of steel framing and concrete.

You enter into a sixty-foot-long axis with a plywood-slatted ceiling that leads you through the loft and also serves to hide the mechanical systems. The vast space is broken up by sliding partitions created from fifteen-foot-tall sheets of glass. To add a little warmth, the floors are maplewood. The kitchen is simple, but modern.

Massive Impact
LOCATION: New York, NY
ARCHITECT: Assembledge
WEBSITE: www.assembledge.com

Architect David Thompson characterizes this office for a special effects company as a sort of ship’s model in a bottle. “You have all these relatively delicate pieces inserted into the container of New York City.” The clients, who were from the West coast, chose Thompson to build their ‘model’ because they liked his eclectic material usage, such as a large rubber bar he had designed.

They were looking for something that would set off a relatively simple office program and provide them with an “LA vibe”. The plastic channel cladding on the facade does both. Glowing from within, like a monitor, it creates a sense of motion pictures as the channels offer passersby a flickering view of the interior. The main element of that interior is an angled partition, made of backlit polycarbonate. It glows, as well, and serves to funnel people into the space. The angle also anticipates the flow of traffic once the office breaks through the wall into an adjoining space.
SBR Multisport Showroom
LOCATION: New York, NY
ARCHITECT: Quavirarch
WEBSITE: www.quavirarch.com

The directive for this project was to create a boutique and informal hangout spot for New York's tri-athletes. To create the necessary space, and soft-sell feel, the merchandise is kept largely to the sides. All displays are suspended off the ground for a greater sense of space. The disparate wares are gathered together into “regions” with their own identities. “We did this rather than trying to unify the space (and products),” says architect Paul Preissner, “to avoid the typical retail ‘slat-wall syndrome.’”

A long run of open space cuts through the center of the store, from front to back. In the back there is a gathering area, as well as an endless pool (it seems pools are hard to find in NYC). At the front, they can drop a scrim for projections to enliven the façade when the store is closed, showing things like the Hawaii Ironman, which occurs in an inconvenient timezone.

Hollywood Facelift
LOCATION: Hollywood, CA
ARCHITECT: MESH Architectures
WEBSITE: www.mesh-arc.com

The client, an old friend of the architect, had recently moved to this house on the Hollywood hills and wanted to erase its strongly 1980s styling (upper photo). The era showed quite clearly in the forms (curves, bumpy ceilings) and materials (glass brick). The architect was intrigued by the hillside program, which to him seemed like a New York townhouse turned around and upside down; the broad sides are exposed and fenestrated, not the ends, and the public space on the top.

What the architect created is very open and loft-like. They opened up the ceilings and installed skylights throughout. They also opened up between the kitchen and the dining room. In the master bedroom, they removed the curves and added transparency to give light to the hall. They replaced all the carpeting with wood. When compared to what was there before, it is an interesting illustration of the contrasting tastes of the two eras.
Harris Lieberman Gallery

LOCATION: New York, NY
ARCHITECT: Zellner / Design Planning Research
(with SLAB Architecture LLC)

Only in space-starved New York could you convert a loading dock into a high-end art gallery without irony. For the architect, the form of a gallery is very clearly defined—minimalism in response to the program. His own investigations into form then appear more in the offices and furniture (which he typically designs). At the same time that he was working on this project, he also had a gallery under way in Culver City. Both began at more or less the same time, with similar scope, but the California space was completed in September, while the New York gallery has only recently opened. "Working in New York changes how you design because everyone has to be so fastidious about legislation," says Zellner. "The code issues, unions and neighbors are a significant part of doing a project in New York. Also, in LA you can mix your trades and generally operate in a more informal/ad hoc spirit."

The Higher Line

LOCATION: New York, NY
ARCHITECT: Touraine+Richmond Architects

Along the western edge of the isle of Manhattan runs a disused elevated rail line known locally as the "High Line". Though decrepit, its 1.5 mile run has come to serve as a sort of park for the local community, which rallied to save it when demolition was slated, a few years ago. An organization, The Friends of the High Line, then sponsored a competition for renovation schemes. This entry engages not only the line itself, but also the paths that it traces on the ground below, and in the sky above. Touraine+Richmond saw the ground-level "Low Line" continuing to grow as a retail procession. Meanwhile, they spruced up the park-like High Line for recreation, dog walking and a green respite from the concrete below. Finally, at select points, they proposed raising a "Higher Line" that aspires to a higher plane. These nodes are meant to be more exalted, "a philosophical or religious plane," according to Touraine. Or, simply "good for yoga," adds Richmond.
The scheme shown here was awarded first alternate for the now-troubled Queens Museum of Art renovation. The architects' intention was to avoid the typical museum-as-sculpture and instead create a building that was distinctive yet extremely flexible. They sought not only to reflect the history of the site, but also accommodate the unknown future of museology. The creation of flexible spaces addresses the need for providing this type of venue and the opportunity for further developments.

The floating roof plane unifies the structure and performs as both a media surface and an overturned, publicly accessible plaza. Its framework is comprised of the existing trusses, with some open and others closed to create articulation in the roof plane. The volumes inserted as galleries below allow both horizontal and vertical movement through exhibit space, as well as circulation. Their simple forms support the complex content of the museum exhibits.
Fine Living Loft

LOCATION: Los Angeles, CA
ARCHITECT: Shimoda Design Group
WEBSITE: www.shimodadesign.com

Here's a bonus project for you, admittedly done by a Los Angeles architect in Los Angeles, but it's certainly a New York "type". This loft was an investigation of modern urban living conceived and orchestrated by LA Architect and our sister publication, LA Inside, as part of NeoCon West. Joey Shimoda and his team imagined a client who was edgy and a bit transient, then took that idea to the extreme. Thus, everything can be easily taken out—even the flooring and the sink—and moved to another space. There are no enclosures, such as bedrooms or bath. In the choice of materials and appliances, the designers sought to exploit the growing convergence of contract and residential design. They had only a few months to design and one month—February at that—to build, but Warner Constructors and Sharpe Interiors came through.
Kengo Kuma: Selected Works

Kengo Kuma is the poet of translucency, employing plastic and glass, concrete louvers and wood slats, washi and bamboo to filter and diffuse the light within his varied buildings. In his hands, simple forms become magical labyrinths of layered spaces, mediating between enclosure and landscape as do the shoji screens and grilles of traditional Japanese architecture. In museums, houses and even a parking structure, in Japan, and recently in China, Kuma explores the potential of simple materials and forms with the rigor and invention of his contemporary, Shigeru Ban. This handsomely illustrated volume is an ideal compendium of his first 15 years, and it builds anticipation for what is to come.

The High Cost of Free Parking

Looking out over downtown Tulsa from Bruce Goff's church tower, as I did last week, one sees a bleak expanse of surface parking, a paucity of surviving buildings, and almost no street life. What was once a dense, vibrant city is now a hollow shell. We have become unhealthily dependent on the automobile, and urban planning is shaped by the preferences of airheads toting cell phones and lattes in their trophy SUVs. Shoup argues that our addiction is devastating our cities as surely as heroin poisons the body. In this hard-hitting polemic, buttressed with 25 years of research, the bike-riding UCLA professor estimates the annual subsidy for off-street parking to be as great as the bill for Medicare or defense. It's a depressing tale of greed and waste, but Shoup cites a few cities—including London and Pasadena—that have used graduated pricing to tame traffic and generate revenue that can improve the quality of life.

Theory and Practice

Form Follows Libido:
Architecture and Richard Neutra in a Psychoanalytic Culture

Much as I love my Neutra apartment and the many houses of his that I've visited, I never thought of them as "erotic, affective environments." That's Sylvia Lavin's surprising conclusion as she explores the legacy of Freud and the vogue for psychoanalysis in postwar America and how these currents shaped the thinking of the Viennese modernist who settled in LA in 1925 and built here until his death in 1970. Provocative and readable, her study offers a fresh approach to architectural criticism and it may change the way you view these familiar white volumes.

The Terragni Atlas: Built Architecture

Brief essays and a dazzling photo documentation of Giuseppe Terragni, the Italian rationalist who enjoyed a brilliant 14-year career in his native Como, and died tragically young. Happily, his genius has been recognized, and several of his finest works have been restored and can be visited. It's a pleasure to browse this elegant volume and savor the beauty of humane public buildings that entirely avoided the bombast of fascism—even the iconic Casa del Fascio, which is now well maintained by a decidedly non-militant police squad. Thanks to Terragni, Como is an obligatory stop on the modernist grand tour of Europe.

Proceed and be Bold:
Rural Studio after Samuel Mockbee

"Everyone, rich or poor, deserves a shelter for the soul," declared the late Samuel Mockbee. "Make it warm, dry, and noble." Under his direction, students built inspiring houses and community buildings for desperately poor people in rural Alabama, often using scavenged waste materials. There's more to lift the heart of an architect in this backwater than in all the affluent suburbs of American cities. Since Mockbee's death, the Yorkshire born Andrew Freear has maintained the momentum, designing the 17 buildings that are explored here in words and in pictures that include beaming owners.

10 X 10.2

Once again, ten critics from around the world each select ten emerging firms. It's a great concept but, like so many such mega productions, it feels unmanageably huge and intimidating, and the designer has contrived to make it almost unreadable. Pictures are jammed together and miniscule shreds of type struggle for survival, like weeds on a rocky slope. The titles are barely legible. The choice of firms is eccentric, the disconnect between blue-sky projects and sober built work is extreme, and there are fewer exciting discoveries than in the preceding volume. By contrast, The Phaidon Atlas of Contemporary World Architecture, newly reissued in a compact format, shows how well one can distill a vast amount of material without giving the reader visual indigestion.

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Demystifying what the AIA does for you

I HATE TO ADMIT IT BUT UP TO JUST ABOUT a month ago—25 years into my professional career, and as your 2005 President—I had little idea of what AIA did for us. I asked my board of directors what they knew and the majority agreed that the letters AIA after our names help to brand us professionally—a fairly vague benefit. We use AIA contracts, win AIA awards and participate in AIA tours and committees. But what else does AIA do for your $700 a year?

A lot of this work is not particularly “sexy”—it’s not design oriented. However, it is the kind of stuff that protects our interests.

I found part of the answer at a meeting in Washington, D.C., where I observed experienced members lobbying various congressional offices. They sought help to fund and promote sustainability, to provide incentives for restoring historic resources, and they created awareness of AIA’s willingness to assist in all sorts of matters that affect the physical environment. I was impressed how many members joined this effort. Before this year I had no idea that this event existed.

So I asked Nicci Solomons to set up a meeting for our board with top National, California Council, and local AIA leaders to brief our board on all activities that occur within a typical year.

At the meeting we were honored in that Norman Koonce, Executive Vice President of AIA National, and Elizabeth Stewart, Esq., Team Vice President of AIA Public Advocacy, flew in from Washington, D.C. Paul Welch, Executive Vice President of AIA/CC, also flew in from Sacramento. Local members Carl Meyer, Regional Director, John Dale, Past President of AIA/LA, and Michael Hricak, FAIA, Past Regional Director, also presented. It was a long evening filled with an abundance of information. Afterward I think our board realized that AIA does an impressive amount of important work that goes mostly unrecognized.

A lot of this work is not particularly “sexy”—it’s not design oriented. However, it is the kind of stuff that protects our interests. Behind the scenes there are hundreds and hundreds of AIA board members working to produce conventions, improve our health insurance and create more awareness about how architects create value for clients through a growing advertising campaign. They also try to ensure our right to do our work. Eventually we may be able do condominium projects without the horrible kind of exposure that so many of us have been facing.

The problem is that we—the members—are not provided with an information delivery system that is compelling. We need a product that tells us what our AIA dollars are doing for us in a much more interesting way.

So...how about some re-branding?

We at AIA/LA aim to turn this into a creative project, the product of which could be a model for all chapters. I’m sure we are not alone in our perceptions that a clearer, more graphic product, both in a print and digital format, could become an essential tool for servicing and helping to grow our membership.

We are retaining the services of Jeff Morris of Studio Morris, an incredibly talented designer and branding expert, to help us with this project. Because there are no dollars in our budget for this, Jeff is starting on a pro-bono basis. I’m sure we are not alone in our perceptions that a clearer, more graphic product, both in a print and digital format, could become an essential tool for servicing and helping to grow our membership.

At yearend we should have a draft of this project, but it could take longer than that to create a final version...then we will put it to the test and will look for your comments so it can be refined and continually improved.

—Stephen H. Kanner, FAIA
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Operating within the dense infrastructure of New York City, one quickly learns to read the existing buildings carefully before embarking on the long and arduous path of design. The network of twisted plumbing, coupled with the accretion of construction that has transformed this rock into one of the most densely populated places on earth, is overwhelming at first. In time, one begins to anticipate the history, however tortured, that hides behind the walls. That interior history, together with the obvious external relationships formed by the city's evolution, became the language in which we labored when designing in Manhattan.

These strict criteria encouraged a thoughtful and complete understanding of the possibilities inherent in shaping space primarily from an interior perspective. For example, many of these projects were designed to be flexible, in the sense that rooms may be easily reconfigured or altered to take on various use. It is precisely the quantitative lack of space that encouraged, often through non-conventional methods and relationships, the qualitative possibilities of those spaces.

Having labored under these conditions for a combined 15 years either in graduate school at Columbia University or various small offices, we committed to open an office. The question was whether to establish a practice in our beloved environs of New York City, where we would face the frustrations of an interiors-centric practice, or relocate to a less constraining environment. Our individual relationships with the West Coast, coupled with its rich history of innovation, proved inspiring enough to drag each of us—and our families—across the country with the intent to build within the Southern California landscape.

In Los Angeles, we are presented with varying degrees of open space where design parameters are found in the more elusive edicts of building and zoning codes, coastal commission bureaucracy and seismic and geologic realities, seen or un-seen. "Site" in Los Angeles is often not visible and is constantly in flux. Unlike in New York, "site" is emphatically unconstrained by any single relationship, either interior or exterior. Hence, with each new project, we struggle to re-define it.

In the end, the prescribed conditions of Los Angeles, however ephemeral, define a clear understanding of "site" in its physical sense. Form, volume, orientation and, to a lesser degree, structural opportunities, are subtly mandated. In addition, physical and biological influences (adjacent structures, trees, views, ecology) inform this preliminary definition of "site." In a process that parallels the intensive review of the constructed histories we employed in New York, here we must extract each of these latent site conditions. It is only after these exigent limitations are made visible that a conceptual proposal may be developed.

Following this methodology, we see the potential to capture the complexity of the Southern California urban landscape through the definition of "site" as a complex matrix of natural site phenomenon, interior program relationships, and various institutional forces. Within our practice, site exists less as an invention and more an interpretation of various inherent data. As a result, the architecture emerges from a dialogue between these in-situ conditions associated with building in Los Angeles, and the imported concepts of complex and flexible interior relationships as developed in New York City.

Ultimately, we find our biggest challenges and potential rewards of practicing in Los Angeles to be linked with the inherent lack of specificity that the city offers. As designers, looking to articulate place through our work, we are caught in a conundrum of time in Los Angeles, where any notion of site resists permanence. While New York City is an intensely dense and organized metropolis, with its rich history and the limitations that come with it, Los Angeles lacks any conventional density or any real sense of openness. And the ambivalence towards history that proliferates in this city leaves us lost in a desert of dead end definitions, again where anything is possible, under certain conditions.

—AARON NEUBERT AND MIKE JACOBS
"We want a very interactive space open all day with interactive kiosks and drinks and food." "The kids don't know that it's on a higher level. They're watching from a hidden level." Rachel Guest suffers a bloody paper cut as she prepares the boards. "What are we having a hard time showing, or don't we know?" [She whispers and draws] "It is a cloaked environment that is obvious, but not obvious - not trying to hide that it's intelligence... a combined retail space and entertainment." "Spatially, the concept is like a labyrinth." "I'm going to leave [the colors] up to you, Leah. You're really good at that." CSULB brought tons of drawing tools and crackers. "In the design world we tend to work backwards - we start with the end use and develop the idea from it." They have a biology textbook open to a cross-section of skin. "It's five minute epoxy." "I don't have five minutes!" "[It's] reverse psychology: the beginning you would expect to be easy, but it's hard." They are drawing a "secret basement" and working out a 15-element program. "I kinda want to move the juice bar so we can have a flying counter." They are very aware of being watched and engage the observer. Ollin Trujillo draws color-coded plans while muttering, "Camera to alley, two-way mirror. "There's no such thing as finishing; design can go on forever." "Where's the X-acto." "I don't even know anymore." "That's what's going to kill us." "I know; we just lost 30 seconds." "We are the worst team." "Let's get it drawn, and then play with it." "Okay, it's 10:15, you want to move this [concept] into architecture," A note on a sketch reads, "Light is the focal point." "Don't get too tied up; remember it's big concept." "To realize this idea [of progression] in form, maybe we create a path or a ramp." "You need someone who can handle the physical part." They have a large photocopy of a seedpod. Maya writes, "Mind Games" at the top of a sheet of paper. "Are they testing and recruiting?" "I think all these [stages] are tests... I wish I knew more about code building." "The first test is curiosity." "And awareness." "I think the bar should be a big element - dynamic shapes." "The reason we're doing this trendy space is that one target audience is 21-28." Both team members are shoe-less and face a large desk clock they've brought. "So we need something that fits in and any random dude will walk in." "Even if they don't have any money." "How would that go... clothes and Internet café?" "You are busting at the seams with ideas." They have a diagram labeled, "Aggressive" "Attacking" "Possession" "What about tiling including code - if you use it everywhere it doesn't seem too much, it fades away." "It should be open. There should be greeters and hosts." "Stand on a spot and your terminal pops up." "We want more excuses for interactions." "It holds your preferences from when you were last there." "So, it's like the Tower of Terror." "Everything askew is good." "You have 2 1/2 hours." "That's enough." "I want to see it out there'. A judge looks at this and it's just a plan. I want to see 'out there'." They have popcorn. "Okay, if it's constantly changing, what's the entertainment?" "The space changes to be constantly testing, like a puzzle." They've disassembled their program booklet. They're highlighting passages in various colors and making notes on blue Post its. "So, you have the cipher - how is it formed... you don't want it to be like an old tattoo." "We still don't have a daytime activity." "What about office uses?" "But a lot of people pass through during the day." "A hookah bar?" "Irina Batkina is sketching curved spaces; she is very fast and loose with her lines. Irina Batkina has a sketch of a double-horned object. "It's crazy." "It is. Is that bad?" "You have a good idea, you just have to figure out how to communicate it." "You gain access to the mezzanine by passing through the challenges." "Everyone can access the restaurant, but you need to pass to get further. How did he get that; how did she get that?" Jim is gathering sketches of fabulous interiors while Carlos sketches a mezzanine bar to scale. Jim Butterly cuts furniture from magazines. "Alright, we've got all the images. "The scheme is an interactive cyber-café where you move up by winning chits. "Our brains are mush, right Carlos." "Mmm." "It should be sophisticated, but it's got to attract kids." "I think it's time to break out the National Geographic." "Are you observing behavior under high-tension circumstances?" "Here's your plan, missy." "Thank you, dear." They are quiet, now. Hilary Hayes draws while Janice Lopez builds a model. Their pens are all in little pots, cases and bags. "This round things is quickly getting squiddy." "The sphere is an observation deck, with images projected onto it as though it were a decorative element." They are stuck in a corner behind a folding screen. They draw in tandem: Ryan on elevations, Ashley on plans. "I think we should have windows into here." "The computer room?" "Yeah."
With Moxie™, all your ideas will see the light of day.

Moxie gives you more functional choices than you’ve ever had before. More ways to configure within a given space. More structural options on which to build. More ways to adapt to changing personnel needs and fluid business strategies. Moxie’s broad array of alternatives lets you meet a wide range of functional, aesthetic and budget requirements using a single kit of parts. Moxie works outside the box, so you’ll never find yourself stuck in one.
They arrived in pairs, from all across Southern California, ignorant of their mission, but determined to succeed. At 08:30, these 36 design students from 18 area schools were handed their orders: Design a clandestine recruitment station for America's intelligence services. For the next six and a half hours they designed, as we watched. What follows is the report of our surveillance, from the first glimmering of a scheme to the ultimate success of six winners. Here we present the 13th Annual 1:2 Student Charette.
Creative thinking is often the source of improved results in any industry, and especially one with lives and national interests on the line. For the American Intelligence Community, innovative thinking is more critical than ever. The cliché notion of “thinking outside the box” could never be more important. To this end, the Department of Defense has created a splinter organization led by independent ex-operatives from the various intelligence agencies. Their code name is CIPHER.

CIPHER’s mandate is to recruit and enlist the best and brightest young talent (ages 21-28) that our country has to offer. The organization’s first task is to create a venue to filter prospective recruits. Although college graduates are a great source for future intelligence officers, CIPHER fully recognizes and respects a “street smart” education, and does not discriminate between college and street educated men and women. It has been determined that entertainment is the best mechanism to entice the target age group. The type of entertainment venue is to be determined by the design teams.

The organization wants to emphasize that the overall design should accommodate both the entertainment and recruitment objective equally. Code breaking is key to the security of our national interests and recruitment of potential code writers and breakers is paramount for the future of the various intelligence agencies such as the CIA, NSA and FBI. But the design objective is not about translating the meaning of the word “cipher” or its practice, cryptography, but about interpreting its methodology through form, space, aesthetic, and experience. The search for the right type of entertainment use is equally as important as how the interior spatial relationships best augment CIPHER’s mission.

This year’s AIA/IAC Student Competition will focus on designing a new prototype 6,000 sq. ft. entertainment venue for CIPHER, with its primary purpose to engage and entice the best and brightest young talent the Los Angeles area has to offer with cleverly conceived spaces and themes.

The venue should meet the following parameters:

- The venue acts as a recruitment center for future employees of the various American Intelligence Agencies.

- The venue also provides some form or forms of entertainment, operating on a public level with private interests. (*The type/s of entertainment are to be determined by the design teams.*)

- The type of venue can be a restaurant, café, bar, club, diner, coffee shop, cyber café or any other use that best strengthens the design concept.

- The venue’s true mission needs to maintain a cloak of secrecy, not readily apparent by the public at large.

The design presentations should include:

- Schematic design drawings such as plans, sections and/or elevations, as required to convey design intent.

- Students are encouraged to include three-dimensional studies of their ideas, such as axonometric or isometric projections, perspective sketches, models, images, etc.

- (2) 40”x30” foam core boards oriented horizontally. The final presentation must be exclusively on and within the boards provided.

- All areas/spaces listed in the Program Requirements must be identified, including furniture.
**Site**
The location for this project has been chosen for its comfortable urban setting. The venue's outward public impression is critical to the success of CIPHER's mission. To that end, the prototype venue will open in an easily accessible and very public portion of Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade. Located within Third Street's safe and invigorating context, CIPHER will be perfectly placed within one of Southern California's most successful Retail and Entertainment venues.

The selected building is 60 feet wide by 80 feet deep topped by a barrel vaulted ceiling with wood trusses approximately 20 feet above the finish floor and high enough for a mezzanine level.

**Program**
The program is very dependent on the type of entertainment use selected by the individual design teams. The program is broken into two sections: the Public Realm and the Private Realm. Depending on team concepts, the proportional relationship the Public and Private spaces have with one another may differ from team to team. Included in this section is a rough estimate of potential area allocations to use as a guide. Consult your mentors for further detailed assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Venue</strong> (Public Realm)</th>
<th>4,800 sf</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential Content:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maitre d' Stand (Waiting area)</td>
<td>100-150 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar/Lounge (or similar)</td>
<td>% TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining Area (temporary or fixed seating)</td>
<td>% TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Rooms/Banquet Rooms (or similar)</td>
<td>% TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen/Food Prep</td>
<td>33%-60% of area, TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathrooms (men and women, separate or unisex)</td>
<td>600 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other spaces as determined by the charrette teams</td>
<td>% TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Venue</strong> (Private Realm)</th>
<th>1,500 sf</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential Content:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Space/Office/Cubes</td>
<td>5 @ 100 sf ea., 500 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Mainframe/Cipher Room</td>
<td>300 sf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/Training Room(s)</td>
<td>700 sf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Program Square Footage (Not to Exceed) | 6,300 sf |

**Materials Provided**
Site Plan – scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"
Overall building plan – scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"
Longitudinal Section – scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"
Transverse Section – scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"
Exterior elevation – scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"
Team 1:
American Intercontinental University
Interior Design:
Rachel Guest
Brent Young

Notes: The Interior Design Associate Degree program at American InterContinental University at Los Angeles was created to illustrate how to enhance the function and quality of a space. The program combines the hands-on training students need to succeed with the vital general study courses needed for a quality education. Students have the opportunity to learn how computer-aided design can help them develop their individual interior concepts. Plus, graduates can be confident that they are prepared to meet the needs of their clients.

Team 2:
Art Center College of Design
Environmental Design:
Leah Tadena
John Niero

Notes: Environmental Design at Art Center challenges typical professional and academic definitions and boundaries and seeks to unite normally divided areas of design. It works within a spectrum inclusive of furniture, furnishings, interiors, buildings, landscapes and urbanism, while also engaging art and graphics, and digital, interactive and performance/entertainment environments. Students design spaces and places for living, working and playing; the scale and scope of work ranges from intimate to large, and occurs locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Team 3:
California State University, Long Beach
Interior Architecture Department:
Jamie Di Dio
Perla Gallegos

Notes: The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design at CSULB provides a framework within which students can fully immerse themselves in a critical examination of social, cultural and environmental awareness while giving visual form to their investigations. The program has an international reputation, attracting a substantial number of foreign undergraduate students. It prepares students for employment in the practice of Interior Design, as well as those who are interested in continuing on with a Masters degree. More than 96 percent of graduates are actively at work in the profession.

Team 4:
California State Polytechnic, Pomona
Department of Architecture:
Charlie Fernandez
Ollin Trujillo

Notes: The faculty chose Charlie and Ollin because the two had the skills and enthusiasm necessary for such a tough challenge. They also had previous experience as a team.

The Department is committed to a study of architecture that focuses on the reflection encouraged by scholarly pursuit; a genuine concern for people, culture and environment; and developing the skill of the artisan. They also stress the linkages between learning and the application of knowledge in creative problem solving. The architectural education is enriched by exchange with the Departments of Art, Landscape Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning. They expect students to think critically about personal and professional ethics, social responsibility, environmental sustainability, historic precedents and cultural context.

Team 5:
Citrus College
Architecture Program:
Yukie Hirashima
David Gonzalez

Notes: Their classmates selected Yukie and David by means of a vote. Yukie is highly proficient in computer modeling, and David worked in architecture in his native South America.

The Citrus College Architectural Program is designed for students who wish to earn a certificate or transfer to a university and complete a bachelor's degree in architecture. It consists of architectural, drafting and art courses, along with relevant academic instruction in college transferable courses. The school provides training towards career opportunities such as architectural draftsperon or CAD operator. Students can also follow their degree with further training at other schools of architecture.

Team 6:
Design Institute of San Diego
Interior Design Department:
Karen Blackerby
Norman Reyes

Notes: The faculty chose the pair for their creativity and competence. Norman is a talented artist; Karen is very thorough. They had worked as a team before, in a studio class.

Their program is focused on producing talented professionals. The school prepares students to be well-functioning employees upon graduation with no learning curve and no surprises. The faculty seeks to address the artistic, intellectual, technical and practical considerations necessary to provide students with a stable base upon which to begin to practice the art of interior design.

The Student Teams
Team 7:  
East Los Angeles Community College  
Department of Architecture:  
Edwin Linares  
Joe Lopez  

Notes: Edwin Linares and Joe Lopez were chosen for both their design/cognitive abilities and skills as leaders and team players. They are also humble and polite young men. Since 1945, thousands of students have studied architecture at ELAC. Its strengths lie with the diversity and expertise of its faculty, a challenging curriculum, which rivals and is modeled after other Southern California universities and the passion of their diverse student body. The faculty is committed to provide students with the highest level of professional education in the field of architecture and prepare them to the societal, cultural and environmental challenges that they will face in their careers.

Team 8:  
Woodbury University  
Interior Architecture:  
Casilda Sanchez  
Maya Bavineau  

Notes: Casilda and Maya were the winners of an in-school charrette to design a community-sensitive Starbucks. This allowed them to participate in the IAC competition.

Woodbury University's Interior Architecture program is a four-year program offering a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Architecture. It is a studio intensive curriculum addressing a design practice that embraces all aspects of the interior environment as an integrated component of architectural form. Throughout the course work, students explore how the physical and social join to create interior spaces rich in aesthetic and cultural relevance. Program and rituals of inhabiting space inform the design and discernment of spatial form, color, light and materials.

Team 9:  
Interior Designers Institute, Newport Beach  
Department of Architecture:  
Christopher Barlow  
Johanna Lajisto  

Notes: Christopher and Johanna were chosen because they worked well in a team and are competitive. They have strong technical skills and the ability to think outside of the box.

Interior Designers Institute is a private interior design college, which was founded in 1984 in Corona del Mar, California. As a small, progressive college, the Institute has been able to adapt to design changes and trends. The Institute has maintained an atmosphere of personal attention. Studio classes have a maximum of 22 students, with an average of 18, and Lecture classes have a maximum of 49 students. To aid its students and graduates, the school is active in the major interior design professional organizations.

Team 10:  
Long Beach City College  
Interior Design Department:  
Daniel Noble  
Ryosuke Nils  

Notes: From among the more senior students (who have gathered the most skills), Daniel and Ryosuke were selected for the quality of their projects and their teamwork.

The Long Beach City College Interior Design Program provides a career-oriented approach to learning. Practicing Interior Designers and Architects direct the educational process with relevant Interior Design projects, field trips, guest speakers and the opportunity for student competition. The program has a faculty base that currently works in the interiors industry and therefore brings project relevance to the classroom. They actively seek competition opportunities so that students are compelled to produce top caliber design work.

Team 11:  
Orange Coast College  
Architecture Department:  
Teigan Annasant  
Christine Geronga  

Notes: Teigan and Christine are both mature designers who the faculty thought would be able to conceptualize and realize a design scheme quickly, as well as benefit from the experience.

The chair of the OCC Architecture department describes it as "a two headed fiery dragon". The two heads would be their strong technical line of classes and their equally robust design sequence, which focuses on critical thinking and conceptualization. In addition, the program has high transfer rates, with advanced placement, and an excellent rapport with the universities and local practitioners, as well as connections to industry.

Team 12:  
Otis School of Art + Design  
Environmental Design Department:  
Arum Kim  
Sunny Lee  

Notes: Each semester the department schedules an in-house charrette at which the students win points based on their performance. Arum and Sunny had the most points.

The Architecture/Landscape/Interiors department offers a synthetic curriculum of the spatial design fields: architecture (buildings), landscape (including parks, gardens and recreational surfaces) and interiors (spaces within buildings). In their numerous manifestations, these fields organize and shape the spaces and contexts for all our activities and relations. The program promotes critical reflection on these fields while creating opportunities for inventive design solutions. The program's focus is on design, rather than craft, in order to train future designers for communication and collaboration with builders, craftsmen and artisans working in any scale, material or technique.

The Student Teams
Team 13:
Pasadena City College
Architecture Department:
Barbara Leon
Harold Porillo

Notes: Barbara and Harold won a practice charrette held in conjunction with Otis a few weeks before the 1:2 competition, thus achieving the honor of representing their school here.

The PCC program prepares students for transfer to four- and five-year professional architectural degree programs, as well as programs in Landscape Architecture, Environmental Design and Interiors Architecture. The faculty provides two years of comprehensive architectural education developed around four fundamental components: architectural drawing, structures, history and design. In this way they will be prepared for a profession that requires a comprehensive background of creative design, engineering and critical problem-solving skills.

Team 14:
San Diego State University
School of Art, Design and Art History:
Jill Braxmeyer
Irina Batkina

Notes: Jill and Irina were chosen because they were the top two designers in their program.

The faculty of the Interior Design program believes that the interior designer must respond to all of the needs of human beings: aesthetic, spiritual, physical, social and cultural. The focus of the design student must always be the human condition and its context. They are committed to the idea that interior design is essentially an expressive art form applied to the solution of human problems in three-dimensional space and form. Their curriculum, therefore, is based within the applied arts and the liberal arts.

Team 15:
Santa Monica College
Interior Design:
Jim Butzeyer
Carlos Munoz

Notes: The head of the department approaching Jim to participate, and he then invited Carlos to join him, based on previous experience they had working together.

The program at Santa Monica College combines small class sizes with "very good teachers who know what they are doing and how to teach." These teachers, and the department heads, have also fought to keep the program going despite threats of cancellation and budget cuts. Students applaud the certificate program that allows them to enter the architectural workforce with credentials and gain experience before having to complete a four or five year program.

Team 16:
SCI-Arc
Undergraduate Architecture:
Terri Moore
Carlos Pinelo

Notes: Terri and Carlos were selected by the faculty based on their excellent overall academic records as well as on the strength of their portfolios.

To paraphrase the Director, Eric Owen Moss: The environment at SCI-Arc enables faculty, students and everyone associated with the school to have enough confidence in what they know and what they do to be able to distinguish the importance of those things from all the noise and promotion. It is important for SCI-Arc students to have a sense of critical durability that enables them to make real contributions that resonate over a long period of time in artistically, poetically, intellectually meaningful ways.

Team 17:
UCLA Extension
Arts Department:
Janice Lopez
Hilary Hayes

Notes: Janice and Hilary were chosen from among a group of candidates all of whom had been recommended by their studio instructors.

The UCLA Extension Interior Design Program provides a comprehensive curriculum for individuals seeking to become professional interior designers. The program offers a unique fusion of theoretical exploration and practical skills training aimed at preparing their graduates to work at top interior design and architecture firms.

Team 18:
University of Southern California
School of Architecture:
Ryan Childers
Ashley Merchant

Notes: Students were invited to team up and submit proposals to attend 1:2. Ryan and Ashley had strong support from faculty, impressive work and excellent academic records.

The USC School of Architecture sees its relationship to the community of practicing architects as one of its major strengths. The school, which was the first accredited school of architecture in southern California, has 3000 graduates, many of whom practice in southern California. The School enjoys relationships with a range of architectural firms through its highly regarded internship program.

The Student Teams
Ronald Frink, AIA, SARA
Principal / Ronald Frink Architects

Ronald Frink founded his team practice, Ronald Frink Architects, in 1994, after more than 25 years with such firms as Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, as Associate Partner and Senior Designer, and AC Martin Partners, as Director of Design. Ron offers a broad range of experience in the design, planning and execution of significant corporate, institutional, commercial, residential and urban planning projects. Current projects include a new auto dealership for Pacific BMW, the Geffen Playhouse and a new master plan and design of a mixed use commercial project in Rancho Cucamonga.

Claire S. Thompson, IIDA, CID
Principal / the thompson collaborative

Claire Thompson brings over 25 years of design and management experience to interior design projects. She has held senior positions with various prestigious firms focusing on design for interior spaces and products. Claire earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Design from Purdue University. As an active member of the design community, she serves on various committees with IIDA and AIA Interiors. She currently serves on the Advisory Council for Woodbury University's Interior Architecture program.

Joey N. Shimoda, AIA
Principal / Shimoda Design Group

Joey Shimoda earned a Bachelor of Architecture degree from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo in 1988. He has worked in a series of notable firms, including Morphosis, Superstudio, Marmol & Radziner Architects and DMJM. In 1999, he founded Shimoda Design Group, a studio founded on a multi-disciplined platform that seeks to bring quality design, innovation and technical excellence in projects of every scale. In addition to his professional activities, Mr. Shimoda has taught at SCI-Arc and participates in symposia and student reviews around the region.

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The Winners

First Place

Team 15:
Jim Butterly
Carlos Munoz
Santa Monica College

Second Place

Team 3:
Jamie Di Dio
Perla Gallegos
California State University, Long Beach

Third Place

Team 16:
Terri Moore
Carlos Pineo
SCI-Arc
The 1:2 Student Competition proved to be an excellent opportunity to observe and assess burgeoning designers from in and around the Los Angeles area. It could well serve as a means by which to pinpoint future talent. The rigors of the challenging program and time constraints caused participants to unwittingly show their “true colors” and the stuff that they are made of. All of the students displayed earnestness and energy, and many were able to channel those towards the realization of innovative ideas.

The competition proves to be a good litmus of skill, and one that is made particularly valuable by the wide range of participants involved. Nearly twenty regional programs sent a student pair to compete. These institutions, as the preceding, more detailed material shows, cross a wide range from two-year programs to the graduate level. This inclusiveness resulted in a diversity of students from which to draw the best. The involvement of the educators reflected, in large part, their esteem for the competition.

The jurors, who worked without any knowledge of who had created the projects they were considering, took their responsibility quite seriously. They demonstrated, as have those in the past, imperviousness to style and a strict set of criteria for “good work” that sought potential in the ideas, but also skill and clarity in their realization and presentation. They challenged the finalists to explain their work and explore their own successes and failures in such a way that the winners learned from winning.

The 1:2 has been building a reputation for seriousness for more than a decade. The professionalism and dedication of the organizing committee members and event volunteers were evident in the smoothness with which the 14-hour-long day unfolded. What is more, their fundraising efforts throughout the year have made this a very lucrative competition, capable of providing the winning students with significant scholarship funds. The combination of respectability and generousness is a fine model for effective competition.

The program director from Citrus College, Dr. Richard Fernandez, summed up the enthusiasm of many involved in the competition in this way, “Everything that can be right about a competition is right about this one.” This investigator agrees with his assessment and recommends this program as a possible means for future recruitment.

Signature of Investigator
The Los Angeles Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Interior Architecture Committee, is pleased to sponsor the 13th Annual Design Competition (2004-2005 School Year). The purpose of this competition is to nurture student awareness of Interior Architecture within existing structures. The focus of the competition is to develop interior spaces with a strong three-dimensional architectural character.

**1:8 Committee**

The event would not be possible without the passion and talents provided by all who committed to making this year’s competition a success.

**Co-chairs**

Carrie Wetsch – Klawitter and Associates  
Tina Forrestel – Johnson Fain

**Committee Members**

Stephanie Batesco – WWcott  
Dwight Bond – RSA  
Ken Dandrea – TRI-KES Wallcoverings  
Mary Davis – Luna Textiles  
Rosalind Doty – Shook Kelley  
Steve Fenton – Shook Kelley  
Tricia Jurovic – Allsteel  
Angela King – Mannington  
Edel Legaspi – RSA  
Kim McCready – DesignTex  
Erica Robles – Klawitter and Associates  
Darcy Royalty – HOK  
Danette Vigil – Creative Energy Design  
Brian Wetsch – Ronald Frink Architects

**Design meets Los Angeles**

The eighth annual Design Meets Los Angeles (DMLA) black tie gala will take place on Friday, September 16, 2006 at the California Science Center at Exposition Park. Our venue, the historic Wallis Annenberg Building, will provide the ideal backdrop for this year’s theme: Mardi Gras Madness.

The evening will commence with a private VIP cocktail reception and dinner thanking our sponsors, current and past Design Co-Chairs, and other Committee Members. The main event will be a celebration of design in our community while recognizing our Student Charrette Competition winners. As in previous years, there will be a silent auction of art pieces created by some of the top designers/architects in our industry. Hors d’oeuvres, dancing and some special surprises will truly make this year’s event an evening to remember.

Please plan on joining the LAIAC for what will prove to be the biggest and best event of the year.

Tickets will be available beginning in June/July by contacting interiors@aialosangeles.org
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...one great contractor
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WHAT'S UP WITH DOWNTOWNS?
AN LA/NY QUESTION
BY PETER SLATIN
Los Angeles has always known how to sell itself, and a large part of knowing how to sell is choosing where to sell.

So, when business groups go east to booster for downtown Los Angeles development, they head for midtown Manhattan. For boosting a downtown requires heavy lifting and, with few exceptions, most of New York City's heavy lifters are in midtown, having moved out of the Financial District some time in the past century. Despite some real successes, both downtowns are places that are desperately seeking to attract and retain a strikingly similar mix of businesses (corporate and start-up), residents and tourists. Each city has vast redevelopment plans underway for its downtown.

The Los Angeles mucky-mucks' most recent program of promotion, which took place last year, was both well attended and well received. Billionaire developer-philanthropist Eli Broad, John C. Cushman III, Bobby Turner of the Canyon-Johnson Urban Fund and even Mayor James Hahn extolled the growth prospects of Southern California in general and downtown Los Angeles in particular (residential, commercial and tourist development). Speaking of the rehabilitation of older office buildings as apartments and condominiums, and of the anchoring influence of Staples Center, the new Cathedral of Los Angeles and of Disney Hall, they made a compelling case for the potential inherent in the ongoing turnaround of Los Angeles's downtown central business district, from what was a pedestrian-averse 9-to-5 white-collar area full of has-been buildings barely five years ago, to a residential community and hip tourist destination. For this famously there-free there, it seems, actual there-ness is at hand.

Even as downtown Los Angeles has seen a resurgence, fueled as much by market forces as by government giveaways, lower Manhattan has struggled hard to hold its own against an array of forces from the ebb and flow of markets to the killing strike of September 11, 2001. Many of the problems predate the devastation, but have become far larger and more scrutinized than ever before. The district was already struggling before the towers fell; since then, the city's planning department has taken heed of the need for a more comprehensive review of what is and should be taking place there.
In the mid-1990s, New York City had embarked upon an ambitious incentives program aimed at attracting small and large companies, as well as residential developers, to the area around Wall Street. The Financial District may be regarded as the third largest central business district in the United States—behind midtown Manhattan and Chicago's Loop—but its office market had suffered severely following the market crash of the late 1980s and early 90s. Vacancy rates were over 20%; the World Trade Center had acres of vacancy; older, landmarked office buildings were unsuited to financial firms seeking large trading floors and tenants were moving to newer office buildings that were cheaper to build and rent just across the Hudson River in New Jersey; tourists hewed to the perimeter of the island—the South Street much that 25 Broad Street, a 500,000-square-foot historic building that had been the headquarters of PaineWebber, was sold for $5 million and converted to rental units. The speculator who took advantage of the rising market and engineered a turnaround was Donald Trump, who acquired rights to the 1.3 million-square-foot building for less than $3 million (and a reconfigured ground lease). Whatever one’s opinion of The Donald, he walked the walk of downtown preservation and resurrection, even buying an option on 55 Wall, a McKim Mead & White landmark across the street. That building became a Regent Hotel in 2000 and the Cipriani restaurant group ran its huge banking hall as a banquet center. Demand for the hotel’s expensive rooms never caught on, and it closed in 2004.

...lower Manhattan has struggled hard to hold its own against an array of forces...

Seaport and Battery Park—and rarely ventured inland to roam the narrow streets of old New Amsterdam.

The incentive program was aimed in large part at increasing the area’s concentration of housing, and it began to work. Prices for older buildings had been beaten down so much that 25 Broad Street, a 500,000-square-foot historic building that had been the headquarters of PaineWebber, was sold for $5 million and converted to rental units. The speculator who took advantage of the rising market and engineered a turnaround was Donald Trump, who acquired rights to the 1.3 million-square-foot building for less than $3 million (and a reconfigured ground lease). Whatever one’s opinion of The Donald, he walked the walk of downtown preservation and resurrection, even buying an option on 55 Wall, a McKim Mead & White landmark across the street. That building became a Regent Hotel in 2000 and the Cipriani restaurant group ran its huge banking hall as a banquet center. Demand for the hotel’s expensive rooms never caught on, and it closed in 2004.

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vanished by 2002. But the condo conversion craze just picked up where it had left off.

Los Angeles’ push to revive its downtown was engendered by the crushing recession that befell Los Angeles’s big-ticket corporate sector beginning the mid 1990s. Although there has been municipal government support for downtown revitalization, it has not been as organized as the city/state subsidies that New York City enjoyed. On the other hand, powerful institutions—the Los Angeles archdiocese and the variety of forces supporting Disney Hall—have worked to complete long-held visions. Major private interests, most notably, Staples Center developer and owner Anschutz Entertainment, have also played a key role. Even mass transit can’t be counted out, as the new Los Angeles subway has managed to find a place in the lives of working people who need to get to downtown and may play a role in making downtown a place to live in. Meanwhile, at least three large-scale efforts with varying degrees of public sponsorship are muddling along downtown in Los Angeles: the Grand Avenue Development Project (with major New York player the Related Companies); Los Angeles Live, the second phase of development around Staples Center; and the Los Angeles Convention Center.

In downtown Los Angeles, developers have also taken up the conversion method.

The marquis hotel project downtown, Andre Balasz’s Standard, has taken off, in contrast with the Regent New York. As in Manhattan, developers have found older, disused or outmoded commercial properties and converted them into apartments and condos; some new construction has also taken place. And while the downtown Manhattan office market’s performance continues to severely lag that of other districts, Los Angeles’s downtown office market—while not entirely robust—is nonetheless stronger than at any time in a decade.

Neither of these downtowns, however, is likely to achieve the full extent of the ambitious—some might say bloated—goals that they seek. In each place, the politics of real estate development provide a naked invitation to meddling and self-interest, of the kind and magnitude that is almost certain to alter the course of well-planned, civic-minded efforts in some irretrievable way. It’s encouraging that municipal powers recognize, and even promote, efforts to create new life and energy in what many consider to be unappealing neighborhoods. The question of whether either lower Manhattan or downtown Los Angeles will ever really appeal to a larger citizenry and become an urban powerhouse in its own right depends almost entirely on the ingenuity and tenacity of those already deeply engaged in trying to make that happen.
Bridges & Overpasses: A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY
The following images present the connective tissues of two cities for comparison. One, Los Angeles, that is still rapidly growing and expanding and another, New York, which, though full-grown, has yet to completely heal the scars of that growth.
In Los Angeles, John Humble renders the overpasses that connect everything here to everything else. These images are drawn from several series cataloguing Los Angeles that he has been working on for many years. In part, he seeks out the many ironies and juxtapositions that exist within the city. A book of John Humble’s photographs, “Manifest Destiny: Photographs of Los Angeles,” will be published by the Center for American Places in Fall, 2006, and his work is represented by the Jan Kesner Gallery (www.jankesnergallery.com).
Photographer Jonathan Smith has captured the bridges that link New York's boroughs to each other and the greater world. The images shown here are but a part of what he has shot for "Photo Urbanism 2: The Bridge Project," a show sponsored by the Design Trust for Public Space. The Design Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the design, utility and understanding of New York's public spaces. Limited edition prints of the works are available from the Design Trust (www.designtrust.org).
Lugo Park Avenue at Fernwood Avenue, Lynwood, 1993, by John Humble
Thom Mayne has been a man more often spoken about than spoken to. "Oh, that blunt iconoclast and his brutal buildings." Then came the Pritzker, and interview upon interview. What's funny is that the more he talks, the more reasonable he seems. His buildings, though singular, are in his mind quite contextual, not one-off expressions of form. Indeed, he's far more interested in talking about urbanism and infrastructure, à la his "LA Now" series, than aesthetics. So, LA Architect's publisher, Ann Gray, approached him on the topic of this issue, Los Angeles and New York.
LAA I understand congratulations are in order.
TM Yeah. That’s fun.

LAA Instead of posing all the same questions every other journalist has been, we’d like to ask you something else. This issue focuses on Los Angeles and New York, and since you recently have been working in both cities, we’re curious about your impressions of them.

TM I also live in both places now. The really interesting thing is the urban context. There could not be two more different cities in terms of political structure and temperament. In New York there is a strong mayor and a strong planning department. In LA you have a weak mayor and a non-existent planning department. This is not personal. Con Howe is a friend. In New York it is purposeful. [Los Angeles] is a city for developers. Not that New York is not, but the development there has to serve the cultural needs.

Working in both places is fascinating. Grand Avenue is essentially a private-sector project. Jan Perry is the councilperson but she really has her hands tied and she doesn’t get the advice she should from CRA and Planning. It seems odd that you wouldn’t have professionals whispering in the ear of politicians.

At Cooper-Union or 2012 I work with Alex Garvin from the Planning Commission and Amanda Burton, the head of the Planning Department. The department is a young and smart group. Bloomberg is a brilliant man. He talks to these people regularly. You deal with these people and there is an attempt to talk about the work in broader community terms.

LAA In LA over the last 20 years we have developed a movement of no-growth, Neighborhood Councils and there is the NIMBY sector. Don’t they raise the level of conversation to broader community terms?

TM There is always the Armageddon group. But you can’t talk about growth or no-growth in LA. It’s happening. The question is controlling how and where, rather than letting it happen through laissez-faire. LA is the city that represents laissez-faire. Can it continue?

LAA Maybe it’s a logical reaction to the growth. People are responding to the lack of transportation infrastructure and they need housing so it’s a natural phenomenon.

TM Yes. The way to look at a city is as a biological model. Professionals try to anticipate. [The approach] needs to be proactive. To look 5, 10, 20 years from now. If a problem exists in construction, you’ve got a big problem. It should have been solved prior to that. For every 10 cents you spend on design fees you can save 90 cents in construction. It’s the same thing at the macro level.

There is a shift of resources, nationally away from infrastructure and toward Iraq and other things. You should see what’s happening in the rest of the world. They are spending on infrastructure, and you know who is going to control the first half of the 21st century? Not us.

I am shifting as an architect. I originally saw architecture as an art form. I liked its ability to speak bluntly. As a "real" architect you lose that freedom. I realize architecture is a political act. It is complicated. The voice of the architect has to emerge after he or she is dead, and in a more nuanced way.

LAA Getting back to New York and Los Angeles, do you find that the differences in climate and our historic responses to it to affect your work in either place? What about use of space and light?

TM I grew up in Chicago. I was already formed by the time I left there. The climate is mitigated by the urban setting. The sun doesn’t really come up until it comes up over the tops of the buildings. Our buildings will always work from an environmental and performance point of view but the work responds much more to the cultural climate.

LAA Do you find any difference in the institutional state of mind, in your clients in either city?

TM I don’t think you find many geographical differences anymore. It’s much more cultural. It’s the people you work with and less and less about geography. The cities are most different in the intensity and dispersedness but in cultural and economic terms they are similar.

San Francisco is much more different from Los Angeles than New York is. San Francisco is much more provincial. On our project there we strategized how to work there. We focused on the building performance—the environmental, urban and workplace issues. We did not discuss aesthetics. The fact that the building would work was irrefutable. We made it clear that we would align with their values and not get caught up in the aesthetics.

I find that as the work gets larger aesthetics becomes less and less a part of the discussion. Of course, it matters to me but we don’t talk about it as much.

LAA By the time you get the size of commissions you are getting, though, you have already been accepted. People know what they are going to get. Not, aesthetically, necessarily but everyone knows why you are there.

TM Not really. I still have to present to juries. In San Francisco you have the Mayor, City Planning, Nancy Pelosi’s office. As we realize that, we start working strategically. How do we engage the city in a large-scale work and find commonality? It’s a more philosophical problem. You realize aesthetics is a cultural phenomenon. With a pluralistic society you will naturally have a large variation in what people like aesthetically. You can’t have the Beaux-Arts model of taste from a monolithic culture, anymore. It makes sense to argue the project from another level. Finally we can agree that buildings will all look very different.
2012 This proposed Olympic Village for the 2012 Games sits on a site in Queens directly across from the United Nations. The complex manages to be compact and 80 percent open space while housing 16,000 athletes during the event (and as many as 18,000 New Yorkers afterwards). The mostly low-rise buildings are positioned in response to local sun and wind conditions, as well as the excellent views.

CALTRANS Although apparently monolithic and inert, the Caltrans District 7 Headquarters is in fact varied and dynamic. At its base is ample public space, designed for casual workday and formal evening gatherings. The façade, meanwhile, actively modulates the light and heat entering the building through servo-actuated shade panels.
PROJECT CREDITS

Project | Maharam Showroom
Location | Los Angeles, California
Designer | Morphosis

Project Team
Principal | Thom Mayne
Project Architect | Silvia Kuhle
Project Manager | Pavel Getov
Job Captain | Anthony Mikic

Team | Cyril Lancei, Pierre De Angelis
Engineer | Steve Ratcheye, Arup Los Angeles

Project | SBR_Multisport
Location | New York, New York
Designer | Qua/Virach

Project Team
Principal | Paul Preissner, AIA
Collaborator | Hola (Jeffrey Inaba, Heather Flood)
Mechanical Consultant | Jack Green & Associates
Lighting Consultant | Eclectic Precision (Sepp Spenlinhauer)

Code Consultant | Code LLC

Project | Fine Living Loft
Location | Los Angeles, California
Designer | Assemblage

Project Team
Principal | David Thompson
Team | Brooks Dunn, Nida Lee

Contractor | Vision Building

Project | New York: CCA Competition for the Design of Cities
Location | New York, New York
Designer | Morphosis with Design Office

Project Team
Principal | Thom Mayne, Marta Male, Henriette Bier, Simon Demese, Paola Giacosta, Steve Hegedus, Maia Johnson, Israel Kandarian, Shigeru Kashiwagi, Scott Lee, Marissa Levin, Rose Mender, Katsuhito Ozawa, Janet Pangman, Patrick Tighe, Peter Vircradic, Erin Wengell, with George Yu (Design Office) and Richard Weinstein (UCLA)

Engineers | Ove Arup and Partners
Fabrication | Tom Farrage

Morphosis Team
Principal | Thom Mayne
Project Manager | Silvia Kuhle
Project Architect | Pavel Getov
Job Captain | Anthony Mikic

Team | Chandler Ahrens, Irena Bedenikovic, Tim Christ, Mario Cipresso, Marty Doscher, Paul Gonzales, Salvador Hidalgo, Olivia Jukic, Ted Kade, Dwayne Keith, Kristina Loock, Jean Oei, Axel Schmitzberger, Martin Summers, Daynard Tullis

Associate Architect | Gruen Associates

Structural Engineer | John A. Martin Associates, Inc.
MEP/Fire Safety/Telecom Engineer | Ove Arup & Partners California Ltd.
Acoustics | Schaffer Acoustics, Inc.
Graphics | Folli Design
Sustainable Design | KMI Associates
Specifications | Technical Resources Consultants, Inc.
Hardware Consultant | Ingersoll-Rand Company
Vertical Transportation | Edgett Williams Consulting Group, Inc.
Audio/Visual | Menlo Scientific Acoustics, Inc.
Civil Engineer | Fosco Engineering, Inc.
Code | Rolf Jensen and Associates Inc.
Food Services | Laschuber and Sovich Inc.
Traffic/Parking | MeyerMohaddes Associates
Space Planning | AL
Landscape Architect | Campbell and Campbell
Lighting Designer | Horton Lees Brogden Lighting Design, Inc.
Geotechnical | Leighton and Associates
Mechanical Contractor | Scott Co. of California
Electrical Contractor | Dynalecric
Photovoltaic Contractor | Atlantis
Security | ASSI Security

Project | NYCE08
Location | Queens, New York
Designer | Morphosis

Project Team
Principal | Thom Mayne
Project Manager | Paul Gonzales

Team | Graham Ferrier, Ed Hatcher, Nadine Quirmbach, Chris Warren, Anne Marie Burke, Reinhard Schmoeller with Luis Luz, Masako Saito, Go Woon Seo, Natalia Traverso Caruana

Landscape Architect | Hargreaves Associates
Associate Architect | Gruen Santon, LLP
ME/P Consultant | IBE Consulting Engineers
Transportation Consultant | Arup Engineers
Planning Consultant | Richard Weinstein
Cost Consultant | Davis Langdon Adamson

Project | Caltrans District Headquarters
Location | Los Angeles, California
Designer | Morphosis

Project Team
Principal | Thom Mayne
Project Manager | Silvia Kuhle
Project Architect | Pavel Getov
Job Captain | Anthony Mikic

Team | Chandler Ahrens, Irena Bedenikovic, Tim Christ, Mario Cipresso, Marty Doscher, Paul Gonzales, Salvador Hidalgo, Olivia Jukic, Ted Kade, Dwayne Keith, Kristina Loock, Jean Oei, Axel Schmitzberger, Martin Summers, Daynard Tullis

Associate Architect | Gruen Associates

Structural Engineer | John A. Martin & Associates Inc.
ME/P Engineers | Ove Arup & Partners California Ltd.
Developer | Urban Partners
General Contractor | The Clark Construction Group, Inc.
Photographer | Roland Halibe
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EVENTS

7.16

ARE SEMINAR: PRE-DESIGN with Dean Vlahos, AIA of WWCOT, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. A signup form is available at www.aialosangeles.org/docs/areflier2005.doc. Contact AIA/LA for more information: www.aialosangeles.org or 213-639-0777.

8.13

Head on over to ECHO PARK LAKE for a neighborhood walking tour celebrating the lake's 110th anniversary. The 1-1/2 hour tour visits many notable historic structures, including Angelus Temple, public stairways, Victorian mansions, hillside courtyard housing and Craftsman-style apartments. From 10 am. Reservations required: Contact the Echo Park Historical Society, 323-860-8874.

7.27

Deadline for entering the CENTRAL GLASS INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN COMPETITION. In it's 40th year, this international competition seeks schemes for a civic landmark. They "stipulate that a landmark must be a place about which stories are told, a place with cultural and artistic merit, and a place about which the people of the town can boast." Visit www.cgco.co.jp/english/design_compe.html for entry materials and information.

8.20

ARE SEMINAR: BUILDING PLANNING with Dean Vlahos, AIA, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. A signup form is available at www.aialosangeles.org/docs/areflier2005.doc. Contact AIA/LA for more information: www.aialosangeles.org or 213-639-0777.

7.30

If you missed the 2x8 STUDENT EXHIBIT this spring at the A+D museum, hurry to Pasadena to see the exciting work, now opening at Armory Center for the Arts, 145 N Raymond Ave, Pasadena, 91103. Visit www.armoryarts.org for hours and details.

8.27

ARE SEMINAR: SUPPLEMENTAL EXAM PREP CLASS with William Amor, AIA, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. A signup form is available at www.aialosangeles.org/docs/areflier2005.doc. Contact AIA/LA for more information: www.aialosangeles.org or 213-639-0777.

8.28

Take an afternoon tour of the Garfield Heights district of Pasadena and see two homes by Pasadena architect SYLVANUS MARSTON and three smaller bungalows. From 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Reservations required: Contact the Garfield Heights Neighborhood Association, 626-797-3110.

FOR YOUR TO-DO LIST

Be a Winner Submissions for the 2005 AIA/Los Angeles Design Awards are due July 16. Projects submitted will be exhibited publically for about two weeks in October, and the winners will be announced on Thursday, October 27, at the Awards Gala, to an audience of hundreds. Visit www.aialosangeles.org for submission information and gala tickets or call 213-639-0777.

Volunteer The AIA 2006 National Convention is still nearly a year away, but preparations have already begun. If you'd like to participate in the many tours, events and other activities, contact Susie Kim on 213-639-0777 x18.

Home Tours Architects and firms are invited to submit projects for AIA/LA's popular home tours. All styles are welcome. Contact the Tour Committee at 213-639-0777 or email proposals to tours@aialosangeles.org.

Update Effective January 1, 2005, the California Architects Board began requiring new licensing candidates to complete the Intern Development Program (IDP). AIA/LA is developing new programs designed to facilitate and enhance the IDP/CIDP process. Contact the Chapter for details.
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