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In 1997, our editor-at-large Aaron Betsky published Queer Space, a book about the relationship between architecture and homosexuality. Not surprisingly, neither the book nor its general subject matter stirred significant professional debate. Sexuality, particularly homosexuality, is a topic few architects believe falls within the concerns of their practice. But last month, the Cee/Pfau Collaborative’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community Center opened on a prominent site in San Francisco (page 72) with its owners and architects insisting they’ve built the world’s first “queer” building. That claim demands attention: It’s not every day someone invents a building type. Moreover, what is it, exactly, that makes a building queer?

For most, the question first requires a reappraisal of nomenclature. Long marginalized by mainstream culture, the homosexual community has, over the past few decades, appropriated the terminology once used to deride it. Just as African-Americans reclaimed the pejorative “nigger,” neutralizing its power to inflict pain, many homosexuals now defiantly refer to the trappings of their culture—as well as each other—as “queer.” But queer has always had less obviously negative shadings than nigger. Queer originally meant, and still can mean, different, distinct, something other than the norm. Thus in this country, one could say Native Americans are queer, Mormons are queer, socialists are queer. In a manner of speaking, we are a nation of queers. Architecture is certainly a queer profession: Neither art nor business nor science, yet all three at once, architecture is indeterminate, something in-between.

So too, says Betsky, is queer space, which makes it difficult to catalogue. He attempts to nonetheless, beginning with a race through history to identify queer architectural archetypes. Betsky “outs” a number of architects, designers, and clients along the way—from Mad King Ludwig II of Bavaria to mildly distracted Charles Moore of California, but he fails to identify a queer canon.

That’s unfortunate for would-be queer architects. Precedent makes the difficult task of architectural signification—explaining a building’s symbolic or practical purpose—much easier: People recognize a church because it resembles buildings they have known to be churches in the past. But if no precedent exists (if there are no previous “queer” buildings), then how to explain a new building’s purpose?

Modernism was supposed to answer that, with a new language for new building types. Some remarkable successes aside, what it offered instead was (often breathtaking) formal and structural novelty. Cee/Pfau’s center employs the modernist trope of transparency to telegraph messages about opening closet doors, and one could, at a stretch, interpret the building’s folded front façade as “bent” (another word for queer). But there’s nothing proprietarily queer in transparency. And these days, buildings get folded by architects of every theoretical and social stripe. In many ways, the center is simply a handsome new office building in a city that gets very few of those—an important achievement in its own right.

So, have the center’s architects failed to create queer space? Not necessarily. Though Betsky doesn’t provide a convincing taxonomy of queer architectural iconography, he argues more persuasively that homosexuals “queer” space through use. He details the furtive lifestyle forced on homosexuals over the centuries, and the way they have consequently adapted urban spaces to their own clandestine purposes. Queer spaces, for Betsky, are those unclaimed spaces—the narrow passage, the industrial loft, the abandoned pier—that architects also love. Homosexuals (and architects) queer them, Betsky argues, by giving them new, different lives as places of assignation, as nightclubs, as homes. In some instances, the results are ephemeral—a nightclub may be gay one month and straight the next. But as the distasteful old real estate adage—“follow the fags”—attests, queer space is legible, and desirable.

Queers charge space socially, and in the case of San Francisco’s Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center, they co-opt it politically as well. Thus the process of queering doesn’t end with building’s opening. It begins.
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SITE's "Ghost Parking Lot" Threatened

*PRESERVATION* James Wines's Ghost Parking Lot faces imminent demolition. Conceived and built in 1978 by Wines's firm, SITE Environmental Design, the work is located at the Hamden Plaza strip mall in Hamden, Connecticut (above). Commissioned (along with several other less-celebrated sculptures) by David Bermont, the original owner, Ghost Parking Lot included 20 concrete-filled cars submerged in the ground at varying depths and covered with a thin layer of asphalt. Today they are severely deteriorated: Only 15 cars remain, due to an earlier parking lot expansion; and Bermont resurfaced the cars in an ad hoc restoration (which Wines did not oversee) that smothered much of the original detail. Wines was saddened by a recent visit to the lot. "There is no art left there," Wines says. "To restore it you must start over and have them completely resurfaced."

Wines's work cross-pollinates art and architecture and has been claimed by the pop art, land art, postmodernist, and conceptual art movements. "Ghost Parking Lot is among his most important works," says Joseph Rosa, curator of architecture and design at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. "He will be recognized in 20 years by those more sensitive to urban regeneration—much in the same way that Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown are being revived by a younger generation." Some are already paying attention: A major retrospective exhibition of Wines's work will open at the prestigious Archilab conference in Orleans, France, next year.

Restoration estimates have been placed at around $150,000—a figure too high for the owners to absorb, maintains Andrew Bermont (David Bermont's son, and one of Hamden Plaza's present owners). While Bermont "loves the piece," he says that "its time-sensitive qualities and its compromised state would allow for its removal." Bermont adds that the owners would consider leasing or selling the land, including the site-specific work, to a foundation or trust, should such a group come forward.

Mimsie Coleman, coordinator of the Hamden Arts Commission, has led the preservation charge. "It was scheduled to be removed a year ago," says Coleman. "The owners have been very patient with me, but only national attention will save it." ALAN G. BRAKE
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Landmark Residential Accessibility Ordinances Pass in Illinois and Arizona

CODE On February 5, Pima County, Arizona, a suburb of Tucson, passed the first comprehensive ordinance mandating accessibility for nearly all new houses in the county. On the same day, the Chicago suburb of Naperville, Illinois, passed a similar ordinance.

While the Federal Fair Housing Act mandates strict accessibility standards for most multifamily dwellings, the single-family house has remained largely unregulated until recently. These ordinances—the result of the 15-year-old Visitability Movement—share five key provisions: one no-step entry; a level route through the main floor; 2-foot, 10-inch minimum-width doors with lever hardware; accessible wall outlets; and reinforced bathroom walls to allow for the installation of grab bars.

With less comprehensive laws already passed in four states (Georgia, Texas, Florida, and Vermont), the Visitability Movement has met stiff opposition from the housing industry. However, despite the opposition, the laws have not been successfully challenged in court. Developers argue that these provisions could add more than a thousand dollars to the cost of a house (Visitability advocates argue that the requirements amount to a few hundred dollars at most). Others are ideologically opposed to the new ordinances, calling them an intrusion on the personal freedom of homeowners. Jeffrey Inks, a code expert with the National Association of Home Builders, is careful to point out his organization’s support for accessible housing: “There is already tremendous noncompliance with Federal Fair Housing standards,” he warns. “It is one thing to prescribe standards, but another thing entirely to implement and enforce them.” The NAHB would rather see the marketplace meet the needs of the disabled.

Santa Monica will likely be the next battleground for accessible single-family housing. Not only is that city government considering similar provisions to Naperville and Pima County, it may extend the rules to cover minor renovations as well as new construction. Even without any new legislation, however, architects could do an enormous amount to improve visitability, says the movement’s founder Eleanor Smith, who has been lobbying for accessibility for 15 years. Smith pleads, “Never, never again draw a door narrower than 2 feet, 10 inches.”

ANDREW COCKE
The National Association of Home Builders Research Center begins tours this month of two MADE homes at the NAHB National Research Home Park in Bowie, Maryland. With construction costs of $55 to $60 per square foot, the "marketable, affordable, durable, and entry-level" demonstration project is intended to provide an alternative to multi-section manufactured housing, which has an average fabrication cost of $32.18 per square foot, according to the Manufactured Housing Institute. It should benefit builders and consumers, but won't necessarily draw more architects into the business.

The NAHBRC commissioned Lisa Holmes, principal of LD Holmes Architects, to design the prototypes (above) to the standards published in the group's 1998 MADE manual. The manual was contracted and funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Policy and Development Research branch, which had issued a task order for the project. Among the guidelines, the manual recommends substituting pantries for more expensive kitchen cabinetry and installing Energy Star appliances and low-e glazing.

To further reduce barriers to purchase, the MADE demonstration homes measure only 1,800 square feet. The average detached single-family house now exceeds 2,300 square feet. NAHBRC president Lisa Bowles says that interest in the MADE homes has been "overwhelming." Project manager Chad Garner adds that the MADE homes' small size was "the only place where we varied with what consumers want." Holmes's building plans should be available for sale in June through the NAHB as well as HUD.

MADE homes' potential success may be a boon to the construction industry, but architects won't benefit. The availability of preexisting plans could mean that a home developer no longer needs to turn to professional designers. However, according to Garner, architects will be asked to adapt prototypes to individual sites and municipalities. And although he concedes that more builders than architects have purchased the MADE manual, Garner foresees that an architect commissioned to draw one or two plans for a subdivision will "read the MADE manual and change the way it's built." DAVID SOKOL
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EXHIBITIONS

> BALTIMORE
European Abstraction from the Collection, 1912–1948: paintings, sculpture, and works on paper that exemplify cubist, geometric, and biomorphic abstractionism, at the Baltimore Museum of Art, through December 2 (410) 396-6310

> BOSTON
Artists Imagine Architecture 18 artists whose work oscillates between architectural model-making and sculpture, in an exhibit designed by Office DA, at the Institute of Contemporary Art, opens May 22 (617) 266-5152

> CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA
American Modern, 1925–1940: Design for a New Age surveys the development of an American industrial design aesthetic between the two World Wars, at the Mint Museum of Craft & Design, opens May 3 (704) 337-2000

> CHICAGO
Ruins: Architecture of Time etchings, drawings, and photographs from the 18th century to the present that document both ancient and modern ruins, at ArchiTech Gallery of Architectural Art, through June 1 (312) 475-1290

> DALLAS
Thomas Struth: the first major U.S. retrospective of the German photographer's work, at the Dallas Museum of Art, opens May 12 (214) 922-1200

> DENVER
Art & Home: Dutch Interiors in the Age of Rembrandt paintings depicting merchants' homes along with domestic objects from the Dutch Golden Age, at the Denver Art Museum, through May 26 (720) 865-5000

> LOS ANGELES
The Sacred Spaces of Pieter Saenredam paintings and drawings of Utrecht churches by the 17th-century Dutch artist, at the Getty Center, opens April 16 (310) 440-7300

> MONTREAL
Laboratories installations by six Montreal architecture firms that reflect on the events of September 11, at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, opens April 18 (514) 939-7000

> NEW YORK CITY
Beyond the Box: Mid-Century Modern Architecture in Miami and New York at the Municipal Art Society, through May 8 (212) 935-3960

> PORTLAND, OREGON
Walk Ways paintings, drawings, and video works that address the pedestrian in urban and rural spaces, at the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, opens April 3 (503) 242-1419

> SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO
Thomas Demand: large-scale photographs depicting interiors that are actually small-scale paper models created by the artist, at SITE Santa Fe, through June 2 (505) 989-1199

> SAVANNAH, GEORGIA
The Lamps of Tiffany: Highlights from the Neustadt Collection stained glass lamps and leaded glass windows by Louis Comfort Tiffany, and Tiffany Silver Flatware, 1845–1905: When Dining Was an Art over 500 utensils crafted by Tiffany & Co., both at the Telfair Museum of Art, through June 9 (912) 232-1177

> ST. LOUIS
Terr Incognita: Contemporary Artists' Maps and Other Visual Organizing Systems at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, opens May 17 (314) 535-4680

> WASHINGTON, D.C.
An American Museum: Henry Francis du Pont's Winterthur Museum American furniture, ceramics, textiles, and other artifacts from the late collector's Delaware country estate, at the National Gallery of Art, opens May 5 (202) 842-6353

CONFERENCES

2002 Seniors Housing Symposium, Building for Boomers and Beyond: Redefining Youth, Redesigning Housing at the Caribe Royale, Orlando, Florida May 1–3 www.cncsh.com/education/build-forboomers.asp


4th Annual Great Chicago Places and Spaces an architecture festival featuring tours of the city's landmarks May 18–19 www.cityofchicago.org/specialevents

CNU XI: Reinventing the Suburbs the 10th Congress for the New Urbanism, Miami Beach, Florida June 13–16 www.cnu.org

COMPETITIONS

2002 ACADIA (Association for Computer Aided Design in Architecture) Traveling Digital Design Exhibition call for submissions of architectural projects that use new technologies in innovative ways from both students and design professionals. Winners will be exhibited at the ACADIA 2002 conference in October. Submission deadline April 29 www.csupomona.edu/-acadia2002/dde.htm

The AIA's Houston chapter will host its 16th Annual AIA Sandcastle Competition on East Beach, Galveston, Texas, on June 1 (713) 520-0155

Architecture and Metropolitan Home announce a new competition for House of the Year. Submission deadline July 15. Look for the ad in this issue.

Pamphlet Architecture is sponsoring the second round of the Pamphlet Architecture Competition; the winning project will be published as volume #24 in the series. Submission deadline September 1 www.pamphletarchitecture.org
View of the new building with the bowl-shaped BMW Museum, center, and headquarters, right

East-west section  120'

> COOP HIMMELBLAU
BMW EVENT AND DELIVERY CENTER, MUNICH

One would think that the BMW brand wouldn't need any burnishing—the cars and motorcycles have a reputation for being well-designed and good looking, neither too staid nor too flashy—but the company must think otherwise. Two years ago, BMW embarked on an exhaustive five-tiered design competition for a new event and vehicle-delivery center near their headquarters and main plant on the outskirts of Munich. The Viennese firm Coop Himmelblau beat out 274 competitors, notably Sauerbruch Hutton, Morphosis, and Zaha Hadid. Their design, a 500,000-square-foot, glass-and-steel structure with a billowing roof form, will turn more heads than a caravan of 28 convertibles. When complete in 2004, the building will be the place where new BMW owners in Germany will go to pick up their previously purchased vehicle, and where buffs can go to enjoy what the company calls "the fascination of BMW.

As its name suggests, the event and delivery center has several functions. The most straightforward one is the storage and then handover of as many as 250 vehicles each day. Two underground levels act as holding bays for the cars; a ramp leads up from the garage into the center of the building. A 600-seat auditorium, a restaurant, and several lounge areas serve
visitors who have come to ogle rather than shop. The exterior shell of the auditorium, which is a freestanding element within a vast clear-span space, doubles as bleachers from which visitors can watch the goings-on of the delivery floor.

The roof (if one can accurately call it that) is what transforms the building from showroom into spectacle. It is made out of two separate load-bearing grids, one of which warps downward, and the other up; sandwiched between the two is a series of lounge areas. These are accessible via escalators that seem to disappear into the curvy ceiling. A-shaped struts along the perimeter of the roof support the grids, while at the southeast end, the ceiling actually curves down to the ground. The $100 million building, which breaks ground this August, will certainly add to the BMW fascination, though astonishment may be a term that more aptly applies. ANNE GUINEY
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Eastern Block

Being an architect in capitalist Russia can be harder than it was under Soviet rule.

BY JOHN VAROLI / PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BLAKELY

> PRACTICE A cold snap has left St. Petersburg, Russia's former imperial capital, in a deep freeze. Knee-high snowfall blankets the city, and on this 20-degree-zero day, architect Boris Podolsky—head of the architectural design bureau of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the nation's most prestigious academic association—sits in his spacious downtown office, a stone's throw from the gold-domed, 19th-century St. Isaac's Cathedral. The office is neat and spartan. Architectural designs and plans hang on the wall.

Looking across the plans, one can see the breadth of Podolsky's 30-year career as an architect. The work begins with the collective monotony of the Soviet era, when prefabricated structures were the norm, and continues through to the design opportunities made possible by Russia's new, chaotic capitalism. On one end are plans for a Soviet-era astronomical observatory and housing for scientists. On the other is the latest and largest project of Podolsky's career: an international diplomatic center at the Konstantin Palace in St. Petersburg's southern suburbs. The $150 million center is one of the city's most ambitious undertakings since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, and comes to Podolsky directly from President Vladimir Putin. Podolsky must renovate the existing 18th- and 19th-century palace and adjacent historical buildings, and design a new Congress Hall, yacht club, diplomatic village, and two luxury hotels. As part of the city's reconstruction leading up to its 300th anniversary in 2003, the Konstantin Palace is only one of dozens of projects currently under way. Over the next three years, the government plans to spend $1.7 billion rebuilding Russia's "Window on the West."

In a country burdened by billions of dollars of foreign debt, the scale of the Konstantin Palace project makes many skeptical. The financing is uncertain, and the project could easily drag on for more than a decade. In addition, directly serving the interests of the Russian president puts a terrible burden on Podolsky: Failing Putin has ended many careers.

Architect Boris Podolsky in front of the 18th-century Konstantin Palace, where he must please President Vladimir Putin with an immense $150 million renovation and expansion.
"This," Podolsky says grimly, "is a very big project.

Built in 1757, the palace overlooks the Gulf of Finland. It suffered greatly during World War II, was partially rebuilt in the 1950s, and housed a school for Russia's merchant marines until 1990. Its shell is intact, but stripped of its once luxurious interiors. The building's stone foundation is in a disastrous state, and experts say this is where the most work needs to be done.

For all his anxiety, however, Podolsky manages to be optimistic. "This project, since it is sponsored by the office of the president, has a number of advantages over private work," he says brightly. "State regulatory committees move faster granting permission, and without the usual hassles."

It's difficult to build in Russia, even now. The country's red tape alone—the need for approval from dozens of state regulatory organizations ranging from fire to health boards and historical preservation committees—hinders real estate development in an already weak investment economy.

In some ways, Russian architects miss the old days of Communism. Podolsky points out that while in Soviet times the licensing and standards enforced by state regulatory boards were rigid, the system was at least uniform throughout the country. Today, each Russian region has different standards, and often establishes rules that bureaucrats interpret to best serve their interests.

"What we have in Russia is 'chinnovnichestvo' [a Russian term that denotes arbitrary rule by petty officials] and not bureaucracy," says Lev Savukin, senior analyst at the Leontief Center for Economic and Social Research in St. Petersburg. "In a well-ordered bureaucracy, the rules are clear to everyone and the state official follows them. But
in our Russian chиновничества, the state official interprets the rules of the game as he wants."

Developers say that besides being vexed by long lists of required approvals, they must coddle officials who often intentionally withhold permission, usually to necessitate a bribe. "The worst as far as corruption are the fire protection and health agencies," says one British developer who has restored several buildings in the city center. "Our company has had to pay bribes of almost $5,000 each to a number of officials."

Vladimir Lemekhov, a St. Petersburg architect with his own firm, is all too familiar with the situation. Several years ago, he and three other architects were hired to put up a 25,000-square-meter apartment block in downtown St. Petersburg.

Before working on the design, Lemekhov had to run a yearlong bureaucratic rat race. First up was permission from the provincial governor's office stating the site was fit to be built on; next was permission from the standard potpourri of regulatory agencies, such as fire and health, as well as yet another permission from the City Architecture Committee saying—again—that the land was fit for building and, additionally, that the city needed the building.

Once the building was complete, says Lemekhov, he needed inspection from the same regulatory agencies once again before the structure could be classified as "sound and operational."

Translation: bribes.

Another prominent regulatory agency in St. Petersburg, KGIOP (the State Committee for Historical Preservation), has become more influential in the past decade. It often demands, for instance, that builders limit projects to the renovation of the original façade and interior. This may seem like good preservation, but often it's not economically feasible when a developer is trying to adapt an old building to modern needs—and once again bribery enters the picture. Lemekhov's apartment building was nearly derailed in this way. "We originally had something more modern in mind, but the prevailing taste in City Hall is for something more historical," he explains.

"Strict control is actually ineffective because in the end people just pay bribes to get around the rules," comments Podolsky sadly.

Growing up amid the czarist architecture of Leningrad (St. Petersburg's Soviet-era name), Podolsky entered the Academy of Arts while still a teenager. When it came to a higher education, he chose to study at the Moscow Architectural Institute, the city's leading architectural school, known for its constructivist teachings.

Today, the remnants of the old guard of Soviet architects, such as Naom Matsuyevich, 80, defend their legacy. Sitting in his steam-heated office in an art nouveau building, a congenial and slightly hunchbacked Matsuyevich shrugs off criticism that his generation created a blight on the nation's architectural legacy.

"You have to understand the times we lived in," says Matsuyevich, a project director at Lenni-Proyekt, the city's largest architecture design company. "After World War II, we needed to build up the country, to provide housing for people, and these [prefabricated] structures were the fastest and cheapest. Certainly with hindsight we can say it's not beautiful, but at the time, the country needed it."

Matsuyevich's was an era of standardized design; Soviet architects didn't know life could be otherwise. The state ministries, led by the ideological dictates of the Communist Party, told architects and construction companies what, where, and how to build. While private architecture firms developed in free countries, the Soviet Union built itself a vast network of state design and architecture institutes where architects were hand-fed work, and didn't have to compete.

Original projects were rare, and most architects were forced to build from standardized, prefabricated parts. Theirs was the role of executor, not creator. A huge, centralized construction industry, based at four giant factories, produced building materials. Podolsky remembers having only five to 10 types of exterior prefabricated panels to choose from. The profession was marked by such servitude to state ideology that many eventually abandoned architecture altogether.

Now, with the rise of a free market, thousands of building materials from Europe and America are available, and Podolsky and other architects are generally thankful to have left the Soviet era behind. "We've seen radical changes in what it means to be an architect in Russia," says Podolsky. "We see this in the amount of freedom an architect now has, as well as in the technology and building materials at his disposal. Overall, we are seeing an improvement in quality [of construction]."

But the free market has introduced unfamiliar challenges as well. After the U.S.S.R.'s collapse, many institutes closed when state financing dried up. Architects' lives changed radically. Forced to suddenly compete for business, many simply left the profession. Some, however, were able to adapt to the free market thanks to experience obtained in the peculiar economy of Soviet Russia.

Vladimir Lemekhov was one of the architects who left the profession in Soviet times. He became a freelance museum exhibit designer. There he learned to manage a client's expectations, and that experience prepared him for capitalist Russia. "Since I already knew what it meant to go out and find"
Just for a minute, imagine a roof as form and light. Think graceful, luminescent curves or bold angular shapes. Efficient with structure as with energy. It can happen with a lightweight roof system. We've been teaming up with architects and their clients for decades to construct dramatic airport terminals, sports venues, amphitheaters, hotels, malls and convention centers. Tell us about your ideas. We can help make them work.
work, to please the client, I was miles ahead of other architects once the Soviet Union fell," he says.

A decade ago, Podolsky and Lemekhov’s clients were the new class of robber barons—former Communist officials and mafia bosses—who were looting the ruins of the Soviet Union and building country mansions. Today, the client base is the new middle class, building modest country homes. Lemekhov says that about half his time is spent designing houses. These jobs are the most sought after since they promise good money for relatively easy work, as opposed to the uncertain and grandiose plans of the state—such as the Konstantin Palace project.

Private-sector commissions allow architects to earn a living. Under the Soviet policy of equality, an architect made the same $100 a month as the janitor in Podolsky’s office. Today, an architect may make between $300 and $1,000 a month. (A janitor earns roughly $50.)

In Soviet times, Podolsky was fortunate to work for the Academy of Sciences, which designed high-priority, sometimes top-secret, individual projects for Russia’s vast and powerful scientific community. Such work allowed individual creativity. His 30 or so completed structures range from observatories and research labs to family housing.

Since Podolsky’s architectural bureau operated with more freedom and creativity than others in Soviet times, it is able to use that experience to compete successfully as a company today. Though still state-owned, Podolsky’s bureau has as much freedom as a private company, and must earn money to cover its costs. Its name and management structure are more or less the same, but to survive in a capitalist system, it cut personnel by about 70 percent. The computer is responsible for sending many into early retirement. Computers, once prohibited by Soviet authorities, became available about five years ago. Though all skilled drafters, Podolsky’s staff has learned that more can be done in less time with computers, even though the office has only one computer per 20 architects. Still, the digital world doesn’t sit well with the analog sensibilities of architects who grew up under Communism.

“The computer allows us to do things quicker, but it can adversely affect an architect’s sense of aesthetic and taste,” cautions Podolsky.

Freedom also has its down side. “Today, one must make a name for oneself, build a reputation to attract clients, while before most architects just sat in their office and waited for the state to hand-feed them work,” says Podolsky.

“We were raised not to aim to make money, but to be happy that we had work to do, and especially interesting work,” says Lemekhov. “We used to see the West as a rat race where one had to work all the time to survive. Well, this has now come to Russia.”

JOHN VAROLI IS A ST. PETERSBURG STRINGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, BLOOMBERG NEWS, AND THE ART NEWSPAPER.
Resistance is Futile

By acquiring Revit, software giant Autodesk is rounding out its portfolio, and wiping out a competitor.

BY JACOB WARD / ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANNABEL WRIGHT

> BUSINESS Autodesk, king of CAD, has long been confident about its market position. The last time a challenger even began to threaten the company's market share was 1997, when Visio, a small software company, bought Boomerang Technology, a developer of CAD software that directly competed with Autodesk's world-beating AutoCAD. Observers wondered whether Autodesk would soon be reeling.

But Autodesk CEO Carol Bartz wasn't concerned. In an interview with Red Herring magazine shortly after Visio made its move, she dismissed its newly acquired software—called IntelliCAD—as "a little $6 million piece of technology: peanuts." Asked about IntelliCAD's low price tag (arguably its greatest selling point at the time), she was unfazed. "Our customers are using AutoCAD to build the tallest buildings in the world, to build bridges,
to build Boeing 777s,” she said. “I don't think $3,750 is too much to ask of the typical AutoCAD customer, who spends some 35 hours a week using it.”

Now the company has even less reason for concern. It's been solidifying its position of late, with a string of strategic acquisitions, and in February it assimilated one of its most interesting competitors: Revit Technology.

Founded in 1997 at the height of start-up-crazed venture capital, Revit had a nice product, and proclaimed it loudly. But in a field so dominated by Autodesk, perhaps Revit's investors decided it was no longer feasible to go it alone (Revit doesn't reveal sales numbers to the press). Its CEO, Dave Lemont, who is staying on as head of a yet-to-be-named Autodesk division, put a telling spin on the acquisition the day it was announced. “We know we have fabulous technology, and we want as many people as possible to use it,” Lemont said. “This is a faster path for getting our technology into the hands of people who have our vision.”

Revit's software allows architects to design quickly in three dimensions, rather than two. Instead of dealing in only lines and curves (the way most of Autodesk's products do), an architect can add planes and spheres wholesale to a design, and the software converts the shapes into stable forms. It even monitors feasibility, pointing out the unbuildable.

But the greatest technological hallmark of Revit's software is called parametric modeling. The term refers generally to the idea of looking at a structure and all of its components and processes in an interrelated, three-dimensional way. The most obvious manifestation of this is that the software links objects within a design, such that if a designer alters the characteristics of one door which is repeated throughout the building, the rest of the doors automatically change as well. Revit's product keeps active and detailed track of the properties of each component.

For Autodesk, which has some three-dimensional modeling and rendering technology for designers (in the form of VIZ, a product made possible by Autodesk's 1999 acquisition of Discreet Logic) and an impressive closet full of two-dimensional drafting and designing tools (such as its AutoCAD 2002 product), Revit's holistic way of modeling buildings in three dimensions holds great promise.

Initially, Autodesk felt that Revit's technology was too difficult to use, and too devoted to the parametric modeling idea. But that changed as Revit refined its product. “Revit's paradigm has evolved during its development over the past couple of years, and we liked what we saw,” says Phil Bernstein, vice president of Autodesk's Architecture, Engineering, and Construction Market Group.

Bernstein came to the company in 2000, and, charged with bringing his group into new markets within the AEC industry, quickly took stock of what Autodesk had, and what it needed. “We had maybe one-and-a-half solutions when I came on,” he says, “and now we're up to six.”

Bernstein sees Revit's software as more than just a way of saving time. Revit makes it possible to "represent the entire building phenomenon in one single location," he says. Revit's technology could theoretically be applied to keeping detailed, active track of everything from structure to systems to materials. The technology sets the stage for a number of new Autodesk applications.

### If You Can't Beat 'Em...
Autodesk's key acquisitions

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<td>Softdesk for $90 million in stock</td>
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<td>Discreet Logic for $520 million in stock</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Buzzsaw for a final payment of $15 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Revit Technology for $133 million in cash</td>
<td>Great parametric modeling technology in search of customers</td>
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Softdesk created and sold a bunch of interesting software products designed for use with Autodesk's all-pervasive AutoCAD system. When Autodesk bought the company, however, Softdesk was within months of the intended release of IntelliCAD, a CAD system meant to rival Autodesk's own. The FTC, fearing that Autodesk was about to wipe out competition in the CAD market, forced Softdesk to divest itself of IntelliCAD, much to Autodesk's chagrin. Autodesk got what was left: Softdesk's software projects, which Autodesk could bundle with its own.

Discreet was an independent visual-effects company that competed with Autodesk's Kinetix division. By acquiring the company, Autodesk plugged itself into the entertainment industry. Discreet now creates special visual effects in network television, feature films, and video games. In addition, Autodesk has worked Discreet's technology into 3D imaging products for designers, such as VIZ 4.

This online collaboration company, founded by a handful of Autodesk executives with Autodesk seed money in 1999, creates digital plan rooms for architects, engineers, and their partners. The CAD giant kept a close eye on its kin, and finally purchased them outright in 2001. Buzzsaw's CEO, Carl Bass, is now head of Autodesk's Design Solutions Division, and Buzzsaw is providing AutoCAD with not only online collaboration technology, but a very profitable chunk of the digital printing market as well.

Revit was a 3D design alternative to Autodesk's own ADT system. Although it's a strong product—Revit's software creates a three-dimensional, interconnected model of a design, and when one element is changed, all linked elements change with it—it was difficult for the non-technologically minded to adopt, and sales may have been sluggish. The acquisition is part of Autodesk's push to build new tools for the industry—the deal has not yet closed, and a competitor could bid for Revit as well.
LOT/EK's unbuilt 1998 design for a Chicago skatepark sets a landscape of ramps and half-pipes within a municipal water tank. Shifting imagery is projected onto the white epoxy interior.

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adding leftover concrete from other jobs to its pylons. Over time, he and his collaborators worked up from simple ramps to an organic structure that seems to grow from the supports of the overpass, known by skaters around the world as Burnside. Red now runs a small design-build firm, Dreamland Skateparks, making a chain of parks in the small towns of Oregon along Interstate 5.

Now serious architects and artists like LOT/EK, Accoconi Studio, and Dan Graham are being drawn to skateboarding, and a tension between the desires of architects and the needs of skateboarders—between form and function—has become apparent. Vito Accoconi, the performance artist turned designer of public spaces (including early work on San Francisco’s Promenade Ribbon), spent a year and a half trying and failing to design a park for Avignon, France. “We felt constantly lost, more I think than in any project we’ve ever done,” he says. The studio worked through some half-dozen approaches, sticking with the interesting job even after they realized no funding was available to build it. Their more pragmatic attempts left Accoconi unsatisfied. “What are we doing that any skatepark designer couldn’t do?” he’d ask himself. But their more elaborate designs, like the current version that folds triangles into a crystalline composition sprawling over a warehouse roof, drew admonitions from skaters who saw it: “That’s impossible,” one told him. “Skateboarders are crazy, they’ll try it and kill themselves.”

But as the sport draws skaters to architecture, the disconnect between designers and users may disappear. The boom in skatepark construction, and skaters’ frustration at the quality of work performed by landscape architects and contractors, has led some, like Red, into construction, and others into architecture school, says Zachary Wormhoudt, a skater who took over his father’s landscape-design firm and has designed almost 50 parks across the country (including the skateboarding areas of Saltowitz’s Louisville project). “I get five or six e-mails a week from students who are doing skate park design projects for their thesis,” he reports. The architecture of blobs and folded planes, and the expansive possibilities of computer-assisted design, deployed on purely functionalist exercises? As Thatcher might say, that’s pretty cool.

FreeBasin, by the art group SIMPARC, perfects the form of the kidney-shaped pool—always popular for guerilla skateboarding—and exposes its underside as a sculptural object. It is on view through April 14 at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio.

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New Design Rhythms

The trend to expose the aesthetic of block and brick — inside the home, at the workplace, and as the interior signature for creative learning environments — continues to amplify.

Relatively low construction costs and minimal maintenance are some obvious drivers behind this trend. But architects also cite excellent design versatility and classic beauty as being among masonry's most appealing qualities for both interior and exterior use.

Architecture recently interviewed architects from all over the U.S. to discuss masonry trends.

New color processes, glazing, and myriad facings for concrete masonry units (CMUs) allow architects to experiment with an infinite number of design possibilities, making masonry increasingly popular for community projects.

Leading architects also are varying patterns and mortar colors, curving walls in unexpected places, and adding banding and reflective glass accents to give cutting-edge attitudes to otherwise traditional brick exteriors.

In long-established communities, even contemporary masonry uses can be nuanced to blend well with traditional brick and stone buildings. And because masonry makes sense for projects big and small, there is an even greater opportunity to assure community design continuity.

Ultimately, our panel of architects agrees that masonry, with its ability to appeal to the modern eye while fitting into traditional cityscapes and natural settings, offers invaluable aesthetic properties.

Creating a sense of permanence in unsettled times is another reason architects look to masonry to balance their design equations, as a material choice for either a solid base or an entire building.

Looking beyond the versatility of its aesthetic, masonry construction — which dates back to 3,000 B.C. — offers architects an opportunity to provide maximum resistance to fire, tornadoes, earthquakes, and hurricanes.

At Work

Big Company on Campus

The new Sprint World Headquarters in Overland Park, Kansas—encompassing four million square feet, and built
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with seven million bricks—is perhaps the largest single office construction project in the U.S. It exceeds even that of Chicago’s Sears Tower. About 14,000 employees are already working on site, and another 400 will join them when the project it is finished later this year.

“A chief design consideration was to make Sprint’s World Headquarters feel like a traditional academic campus,” says project architect Phil Dordai, AIA of Hillier. “Brick, with its vocabulary of stability and permanence, was part of the original concept.”

Another objective was to introduce variety, a challenge for a project resembling a small city and being built all at once out of the same material. Located just southwest of Kansas City in Overland Park, the 190-acre site is made up of 18 low-rise traditional brick buildings.

“We created a vocabulary of forms and repeated them, but we chose to change the design of the corners and entrances,” explains Dordai. “The project grade actually drops 80 feet, so much of the variety comes from the topography and the landscape.”

He also says the bases of the buildings have a rustication: For every six courses of red brick there is a course of darker brick setback. Cast stone lintels and sills give further definition. The prairie landmark is a 175-foot-tall brick clock tower, which can be seen two miles away.

More than 700,000 square feet are devoted to amenities designed to recruit and support employees, including restaurants and shops, a 44,000-square-foot child care center, and a 70,000-square-foot fitness center with basketball courts, a track, and winter garden.

It takes about 10 minutes to walk from one end of the campus to the other. The center of the campus is pedestrian friendly, says Dordai: “The cars just stop.” The main courtyard is made from brick recycled from the Kansas City stockyards, representing a symbolic passing of the torch—from the city’s past economic foundation to its new driving economic force.

Dordai, who is usually based in Princeton, New Jersey, spent the last few years working in Kansas with design professionals from five local design firms: Berkebile Nelson Immenschuh McDowell; Devine deFlon & Yaeger; Rafael Architects; Group One Architects, Inc.; and BY DESIGN/Kansas City, P.C. Estimated cost for the project is $700 million.

Out of the Ashes

Serving this New England mill town for nearly 100 years, the Fitchburg Fire Headquarters had reached the end of its useful life. Meanwhile, a half mile away, fire had swept across the land once occupied by the Simond Saw Company. Building the new firehouse on this vacant site was key in redeveloping the area as a link between the hub of the city and Fitchburg State University.

Meg Kundert of Donham and Sweeney Architects (D&S), Boston, knew from the start that concrete masonry would be the right material for the job. Her firm was comfortable with the material, having used it to design a number of fire stations and municipal buildings throughout New England, and a full range of pigmented architectural CMUs was locally available.

Primarily fashioned out of a combination of standard eight-inch-high CMUs and a banding of four-inch CMUs in red and beige, the firehouse, with its fully functional training tower, serves as a local architectural landmark.

Another driving force in choosing masonry came from the fire station’s most important constituents: the fire fighters themselves, who made a strong case for masonry because of its low maintenance. The interior concrete masonry walls have proven to be exceptionally durable, taking the daily rigors of fire station drills and emergency calls. The CMUs also provide an acceptable level of sound dampening for administrative areas within and for local residents in the neighborhood.

At School
Kicking It Up a Notch

Steeped in history and close to the Mississippi River and the French Quarter, the Bywater Area in New Orleans struck a chord with the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts when they went searching for relocation options.
NOCCA found three of the city's oldest warehouses, renovated them, and added two new buildings to expand its 124,000-square-foot pre-professional training school. The New Orleans firms of Mathes Brierre Architects and Billes/Manning Architects designed the project as a joint venture.

One design constraint: the renovation of the old cotton press warehouses had to conform to historic restoration codes. The solid brick walls were three and four wythes thick, built on brick pyramid footings six- to eight-feet deep.

Project manager Peter Priola, AIA, of Mathes Brierre, says another challenge was that, ironically, the New Orleans area did not have enough New Orleans red brick available at construction time, so Georgia red bricks were used, providing a close match.

Masonry work accounted for about 10 percent of the $17 million budget. The project took about a year and a half to complete.

**A Touch of Class**

Oakwood School in North Hollywood, California, was founded by parents in the entertainment industry in the 1950s, including the late actor Robert Ryan. Levin & Associates, Architects, of Los Angeles was brought in during the early 1990s to create a master plan for the school’s expansion, because it had outgrown the series of bungalows where it originated.

Principal Brenda A. Levin, FAIA, and project manager Bob Knight focused on the upper school campus — grades 7 through 12 — beginning with the design of a 20,000-square-foot Math/Science building. In 1999 the firm completed the 55,000-square-foot Music, Dance, Athletic Center building. They are now beginning Phase III.

“In conceptualizing the new buildings for this campus, I thought it was important to remember that it was founded in the 1950s — deep roots for the West Coast,” quips Levin. “I also went back to my own East Coast background of the traditional brick campus and translated those patterns to L.A.” Sound attenuation was also a consideration, since the campus is on a busy street and near the off ramp of a freeway.

The Math/Science building is grounded in patterns of concrete brick, as is the entrance to the Music, Dance, Athletic Center building.

Choosing two tones of cinnamon split-face concrete brick and deep burgundy glazed concrete brick, Levin marked the second story of the Math/Science building by orienting the block 45 degrees.

“What’s wonderful about using concrete brick material is the way it reads inside the building with lots of color and texture,” Levin says. The masonry and exposed duct work inside also assure the buildings themselves are, as she says, “Laboratories for learning about construction.”

**At University**

**A New Take on Traditional**

The four-story Science Classroom Building II at Florida Atlantic University in Davie, Florida, is a traditional red brick university building with a contemporary Florida twist. White architectural banding out of concrete stucco and reflective glass in a variety of colors give it a forward thinking focus.
The building houses classrooms, research, and teaching laboratories as well as private offices.

In designing the $10 million project, STH Architectural Group Inc., West Palm Beach, Florida, had to stay within the integrity of the existing campus architecture. President William Hanser, AIA, also had to site the building in the context of other planned—but not yet started—structures in the same area of campus. Sensitivity to campus massing resulted in a stepped facade with a continuous arcade to bring the 76,000-square-foot building into scale with the rest of the campus. The arcade also serves as a covered walkway around the building, with an adjoining outdoor plaza.

The project was built under the Construction Manager at Risk Delivery System, which allowed the school to pre-qualify the general contractor, Centex Rooney, and have them work as part of the design team during drawings development. This assured that the designs were within budget, and Hanser says the system worked remarkably well: The project came in on time and within budget.

Set in Stone

University of the South stopped using its on-campus stone quarry about four decades ago. But when Malcolm Holzman, FAIA, of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, New York, was charged with designing the new dining hall, the University started up the quarry again.

The 150-year-old university, fondly known as “Sewanee,” is 30 miles from Chattanooga, Tennessee, sitting on a high plateau. Since students and the administration wanted to revive the old tradition of communal dining, HHPA designed the 43,000-square-foot McClurc Hall to serve all undergraduates. A 450-seat refectory is used for formal dining while an informal dining hall seats about 250. The kitchen, servery, meeting rooms, and administrative spaces occupy the remaining space.
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For over 100 years, architects have created a Gothic character through the use of quarried stone, for everything from fireplaces to the ashlar walls on campus. "The regents wanted a Gothic style for the dining hall too," says Holzman. "So we used Gothic design elements of the vertical as opposed to the horizontal, the play of light, and the stone masonry. Then we aspired to bring them forward in time. The finished building is actually more Gothic than I initially would have thought."

The new stone and mortar dining hall used 750 tons of sandstone from the campus quarry and 1,500 tons from a nearby source. Stone with split and cut faces was cut eight inches and 16 inches by eight inches thick, and of varying lengths. The refectory features 13 39-foot-high sandstone "buttresses" capped by nine-foot-high saw-cut limestone finials, separated by a floor-to-ceiling, metal-finned glass curtain wall and terminating in a semi-circular, glazed "apse." The stone extends to the interior spaces. Large custom-designed chandeliers feature colored glass and incorporate an abstraction of the school seal. The informal dining room features massive stone walls with bay windows. Construction costs are pegged at $16 million, and it took four years to design and complete.

Holzman has written a coffee table book with 220 color illustrations that includes the details of this project, Stone Work: Designing with Stone, which is due out this month.

At Home
A Study in Contrasts

Blending beautifully with its natural surroundings, Joe Crump's personal residence juxtaposes concrete brick and block against wood and metal. Lots of glazing and open areas maximize views of Long Lake in Minnesota.

"The ashlar-patterned concrete masonry on this home projects an image of stability and permanence," explains architect Crump, AIA, principal of DLR Group, about the home he designed for his family. "The central element of smooth block acts as an anchor to allow for the transparency of the connecting spine without a loss of perceived stability."

Crump also appreciated concrete masonry's design flexibility: The all-masonry construction below the first level (with truss floor joists) allowed for a greater span, eliminating some interior bearing and permitting a cantilever floor design.

"I found concrete masonry to be of high value when comparing image and durability to cost. The variety of available textures encourages exploration of forms and bonding patterns that enhance the image of the project," Crump concludes.

Safety First

"On January 14, 1998, my family's worst nightmare became a reality. My wife, two children, and I awoke to a fire," explains Thomas Crowder, AIA, president of Architektur, PA. "Although the fire department responded immediately, the wood frame home was destroyed within 15 minutes."

Crowder wanted his new home in Raleigh, North Carolina, to be maintenance-free and fireproof. So, he says, "Masonry was the obvious choice. The challenge was to build a new home while blending in with the 1950s style ranch houses in the neighborhood."

The one-story wing (bedroom, study, and baths) sits on the existing foundation facing the street. Constructed of light gauge steel framing with brick veneer facade, flat roof, and punched industrial steel windows, this section blends well with the surrounding homes.

Around back, a more minimalist approach evolved. The new story-and-a-half high area joins to the rest of the home by intersecting near the midpoint of the private quarters. "The new section is constructed of architectural concrete masonry units, portland cement stucco, and diffused lighting panels," says Crowder.

For the CMU walls, the warm gray color is carried over to the mortar to provide a monochromatic appearance. Raked joints, which were given special attention for proper filling (especially at the corners) help express the individual masonry units.
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### SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION

### Air Supported Fabric Structures/Cable Systems

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The 1st Annual ACE Awards — Architects Choice for Excellence
Recognizing Excellence in Products + Manufacturers
A few years back, Blair, an online magazine, ran an article titled “Lesbian, or German Lady?” It challenged readers to vote on the identities of nine women, judging from their appearance in a single photograph. The subjects’ consistently ample physiognomies and comfortable shoes made answering the question surprisingly difficult. “Set your gaydars to extrasensitive,” the introduction quipped.

Homosexuals themselves have long had ways of spotting each other in a crowd, based on discrete peculiarities of dress, grooming, and comportment: a pocket square, an obsessively studied hair style, a glance held a half-second longer than usual. This habit began early in the century, when it was especially detrimental to be identified as homosexual, and today liberally parades in drag and bondage gear. What began as a survival tactic, a sort of sartorial mannerism recognizable only to the initiated, has become an open game of “mistaken” identity.

What does all this have to do with architecture? Plenty, when the client is the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center, and the architect must adapt what is essentially an office building to the needs—and the self-perceptions—of more than 20 “queer” special-interest groups. Anyone from a closeted businessman to an out-and-proud bull dyke can use fashion to express themselves. Architects, on the other hand, while old pros at mannerism, have never before addressed so publicly the polymorphous field of modern sexuality. Anyone for a game of “Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center, or Office Building?”

While not many cowboys attended a March 4th square dance at the new San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center (page 72), a surprising number of nuns showed up—initiates of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a farcical gay and lesbian order dedicated to “the promulgation of universal joy and the expiation of stigmatic guilt.” His Holiness would undoubtedly not be amused.
WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

MEET CEE/PFAU COLLABORATIVE'S LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY CENTER, AND SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO USE IT. BY JACOB WARD. PHOTOGRAPHY BY LIVIA CORONA
Standing on Market Street, San Francisco's main thoroughfare, Jane Cee looked across the traffic at the largest project of her career: the city's Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center. The building is an unprecedented mix of political, community, and sexual identity, all rolled into one 40,000-square-foot structure, and Cee had recently experienced a personal implication of being associated with it.

"A woman at the planning office was helping me with a different project," Cee recalled, "when she looked at me and said, 'Hey, I know you—I saw you from my car, up on the gay community center building!'" Cee realized she had been on the balcony of the building the day before, giving a tour to a group of women, and that her sexual identity had been spotlight as a result. "At that moment," she said, "I realized I'd been outed by my own building."

The San Francisco LGBT Community Center—known simply as "the center" by its occupants—is the world's first building built from the ground up by gay money, political influence, and organizational strength. In that sense, it's the first gay building in existence.

San Francisco's gay community (the phrase is narrow for such a diverse group, but it will have to suffice here) has a long and tempestuous history, and milestones of its struggles and victories are everywhere. The Twin Peaks bar was the first gay bar in the country to feature clear glass windows on the ground floor, rather than obscuring itself for protection from police raids. The AIDS Grove in Golden Gate Park is a sober commemoration of the thousands who were cut down within the city. And over time segments of the gay community have adopted certain neighborhoods as their own. The Castro is associated with gay men; the Mission District with the lesbian community; the Tenderloin with the transgendered. The center's site, at the corner of Octavia and Market Streets, is at the intersection of all of those neighborhoods, and it will soon frame a new doorway to the city: a boulevard carrying highway traffic down to grade just south of the center, planned for 2005, which will make the building visible to thousands entering San Francisco each day.

According to board Vice President Dana Van Gorder, the center is an alternative to the era "when the gay community's activism took place in clubs and bars." Its mission is to provide a central resource for the community—from counseling to adult education—and to provide office space to fledgling nonprofits.

San Francisco's gay community has changed tremendously over time. After a difficult road toward civil rights—from the arrival of the Mattachine Society, a small but groundbreaking parlor group of gay activists, in 1953, to the assassination of the city's first openly gay district supervisor, Harvey Milk, in 1978, to the galvanizing crisis of the AIDS epidemic—it has risen to tremendous prominence in the city. It has also diversified politically and culturally within its ranks.

The political landscape reflects this. City leaders recognize the tremendous voting strength of the community, and must work to keep abreast of its diversification. The center offered a rare opportunity for city hall to show support for the community as a whole, and after city leaders watched a string of fundraisers draw overflow crowds of several hundred people at as much as $1,000 a head, it leapt in. Mark Leno, the Castro's openly gay supervisor, helped to secure $6 million in city funding. (His current campaign for state assembly is headquartered next to the center.) Federal and state authorities provided $1.5 million. The rest of the estimated $15 million total budget came from private donations—some of them enormous.

The center counts among its donors some of San Francisco's most progressive and powerful citizens. Entrepreneurs like George Rosenfeld, a mortgage broker, and his partner Chris Hoover, a business consultant, were among the several who gave $10,000 or more. James C. Hormel, President Bill Clinton's ambassador to Luxembourg, donated $100,000. But the real coup came in the form of a $1 million donation from the estate of Charles Holmes, aaron porn czar and activist, for whom the building will be named. The center masterfully shrugged off any controversy about its benefactor's past, and held opening festivities in March. Approximately 2,000 people attended.

The center was first conceived in 1992, when a focus group of gay men led by Van Gorder and then-District Supervisor Carole Migden revealed that the men had little sense of their personal future, and a growing sense of isolation. At that time (when AIDS was ravaging the country), there seemed to be an obvious, unified need for a central building. The center's design and construction took place during a shift in the identity of the city's gay community, however. By the time an architect was chosen—
LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY CENTER; SAN FRANCISCO

CLIENT: The Community Center Project, San Francisco—Patricia Martel (board president); Dana Van Gorder (board vice president); David Latina, Randi Gerson (building committee co-chairs)  ARCHITECT: Cee/Pfau Collaborative, San Francisco—S. Jane Cee (managing/design principal); Peter W. Pfau (collaborating principal); Karen Mar, Bryan Young, John Winkler, Cheryl Snodgrass, Christopher Ross; Billy Feuerman, Bryan Fox, Brett Kelley, George Klumb, Dwight Long, Steven Lea, Casper Mark-Ulmes, Benjamin Nycum, Cisco Ponce, Inderbir Riar, Antoine Santiard, Mallory Shure, Keri Spiller, Brad Sugarman, Romell Taylor, Chris Tymoff, Eric Wendt (design team)  ENGINEERS: Structural Design Engineers (structural); Rabinovich Engineering (mechanical/electrical/plumbing); Polytech Associates (civil)  CONSULTANTS: Page and Turnbull (consulting preservation architect); Nigel Breitz Acoustics (acoustics); H. E. Banks & Associates (lighting); Auerbach + Associates (theater)  COST: Withheld at owner's request


Cee/Pfau Collaborative’s Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center adds 3,000 square feet of new construction to the landmarked 1896 Fallen Building (at right) originally built for the granddaughter of General Joaquin Castro, a governor of Mexican California for whom the neighborhood is named. The Queen Anne-style building houses staff offices and a senior center, while the multicolored curtain wall encloses a café, multipurpose conference rooms, and a gallery. Behind the tilted glass plane are atriums.
Cee and Peter Pfau, who formed a partnership, Cee/Pfau Collaborative, for the project—the community was growing more diverse, and its members' needs more complicated.

"Our community struggles more and more with issues like diversity, race, and class," Van Gorder says. "There are so many emerging needs out there, so we wanted to nurture new organizations." Twenty-three tenants rent space in the center, and to walk past their offices is to see the future of the gay community in America. Far-reaching organizations such as the Black Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits (a Native American cultural activities group), and groups for the deaf, adolescents, and new gay parents all have offices here. The center expects at least 4,000 people to use the building per month. Perhaps the most striking and hopeful sign of times to come is the fact that the center does not include an AIDS clinic—something which at the height of the epidemic would have been a foregone conclusion.

Cee/Pfau Collaborative's design had to not only embody the community's complicated and shifting identity, but also adapt to a daunting list of physical complications as well: the renovation and incorporation of a landmarked Victorian house within the design, a triangular site with a 12-foot rise, and a diverse and fluid program.

Physically, the center is made up of three parts. A red stucco façade wraps around from behind the building to touch an angled, tinted-glass curtain wall at the front, and the two meet at the Victorian.

Known as the Fallon Building, the Victorian is the last Queen Anne-style house remaining on Market Street. The building was in shambles when it was purchased, and the center planned to tear it down. But preservationists—mostly drawn from within the gay community—fought to save the structure, and only after a year and a half of vicious argument was a compromise reached: The empty lot would be developed, the Victorian restored. "It was the designer/architecture queers versus the
political/establishment queers—an internal blood feud,” recalls Tim Kingston, news editor of San Francisco Frontiers magazine, a biweekly for the gay community. “It was no small success that they got through it.”

Cee/Pfau converted the Victorian’s interior for use as staff offices, and created distinct meeting spaces within it—among them is one for youth organizations and another shared by a senior center and art gallery. New and old meet throughout. At the back end of the building, for instance, the façade of the blue-green Victorian overlaps with the rear façade of the new structure. (Even now, some preservationists shudder at the curtain wall. Its slope exposes a party wall of the Fallon building, a view that no Victorian architect meant anyone to have.)

The center’s design most directly embodies the complications of sexual identity in its two new façades: the curtain wall of tinted glass along Market Street, and the vivid red stucco wall along Waller Street, with its recessed windows. The curtain wall makes those who choose to enter through its doors visible to an outside observer as they wend their way through the building. Visitors will be identified, as Cee was, with the center and its purpose, and must be reconciled to that identity as a result. The red façade allows a sequential entry, invisible and private, to those who wish to visit the center but don’t wish to make their presence an evident part of the building’s symbolism.

Visibility is also a symbolic theme inside the structure. From a balcony at the rear of the double-height lobby, occupants can watch one another as they come and go through the doors below. A long second-floor bench just inside the curtain wall allows visitors to sit and watch the pedestrian traffic of Market Street bob past along the incline—passing several feet below the bench at one end, and just underfoot at the other. The closer one sits to the west, the better chance one has of being visible to passersby. More than one grid meets at the triangular site, and, because Cee/Pfau was designing a center intended to serve all neighborhoods, they worked

Though fiery red in color, the center’s Waller Street façade is purposefully more opaque and private than the one on Market Street, so visitors have the option of making a discreet entrance. Waller Street’s not always quiet, however: The loading dock was designed to double as a stage for bands during block parties. Colored lights in the atrium on Market Street signal a party inside the center (facing page, top left). The center’s largest meeting space, the Rainbow Room (facing page, top right), can accommodate 350 people. The fourth-floor lounge overlooking the atrium has a view out to Market Street (facing page, bottom right). A hallway on the third floor overlooks a Baptist church on Waller Street (facing page, bottom left).
to incorporate them all. Two sides of the building are oriented to the grid of the Tenderloin and Hayes Valley to the north, while the Market Street face is oriented to the grid of the South of Market neighborhood. Meanwhile, hallways on the first and second floors are aligned with Pearl Street, which terminates at Market Street opposite the center. As a result, the building’s interior is anchored to the grid of the Mission and Castro neighborhoods and a visitor standing on the far side of the building can look through the interior and down the distant lane.

The third floor is almost entirely meeting rooms for the center’s various organizations and programs. Ninety percent of the rooms are multi-use, and Cee and Pfau worked to capitalize on the relationship between these functional areas and the unassigned open spaces around them. The result is an overall fluidity to the layout within a constrained shell, gathering together people from different parts of the community. "Your A-gays aren't normally going to see eye to eye with your Tenderloin trannies," says Frontiers' Kingston. "So having those folks fetching coffee and bumping into each other in the halls is good for the community."

There is a story that many of the people involved with the center like to tell. Sometime in the 1990s, the story goes, a young man, living near Sacramento, decided to reveal his sexual identity to his parents. They disowned him, and, not knowing what else to do, dropped the boy off in the Castro. Whether the story is fact or legend (no one seems to know the boy’s name), it reveals that the center has a very powerful symbolic place in the community imagination, no matter who one speaks to. A young person, sexually open for the first time, could only have wandered between bars or churches a few years ago. Now that the building is complete, however, one can imagine the young man in the story (no matter his race, orientation, or background) standing in front of the center, knowing that he wants to go inside, but trying to decide whether he will march through the glass doors, or make his way around back.
True or False

David Salmela uses plain-spoken forms to address complex issues in a house in Minnesota. By Thomas Fisher

When Aristotle said "there is nothing between asserting and denying"—that everything is either true or false and that nothing lies between them—he called it "the principle of the excluded middle." David Salmela's Albrecht house in Red Wing, Minnesota, offers a spatial equivalent—and more importantly, a critique—of that idea. Its central grass court, framed by the brick-clad, L-shaped house, also has a low, bluestone wall around it, making the courtyard visible but inaccessible to visitors—an "excluded middle" that visually puns on the Aristotelian concept.

At every turn, Salmela presents you with a series of choices, none of which is obviously correct, and in the process, encourages your active engagement.

The first such choice occurs the moment you approach the house. Two widely separated garages face the street, each with the same gabled roof, the same outward appearance. Which is the real garage? Salmela and his landscape architect, Shane Coen, provide a hint with a paved drive up to one and a grass-strip drive to the other, but only by looking inside do you find out that the one serves as the main garage and the other as storage for an extra vehicle. When we seek the truth, different things sometimes look the same.

Up the paved drive, however, another garage—this one with a flat roof—angles off from the gabled one. Is one the real garage and the other something else? Salmela plays with the language he has just established, and reverses it: These two garages have the same function and a different look, as if to say that to find the truth, we also have to get past appearances.

The choices continue as you walk around the court, under a trellis, to two different front doors in the back wing of the house. The first door you come to is solid wood, painted white; the second is a pair of glass doors, set back slightly. Which is the "true" entrance? Does the solid door suggest "privacy," as a service entrance perhaps, or "formality" as the front door? Or do the recessed glass doors suggest "openness" as the main entrance, or "informality" as the back door? In this case, it doesn't matter, since both doors lead to a hall that runs the length of the house, connecting the main living and sleeping rooms.
entry
2 living and dining room
3 kitchen
4 master suite
5 bedroom with loft
6 garage
7 garden house
8 front court
9 library
10 screened-in porch
The primary entrance to the Albrecht house is not immediately apparent from the street. Only after passing the garages (facing page, top) does one find the enclosed courtyard beyond which one enters the house (facing page bottom). The north façade (this page, both photos) overlooks Lake Pepin, which feeds into the Mississippi.
ALBRECHT RESIDENCE, RED WING, MINNESOTA
CLIENT: Arlin and Marilyn Albrecht, Red Wing, Minnesota
ARCHITECT: Salmela Architect, Duluth, Minnesota—David Salmela (principal), Souliyahn Keobounpheng
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Cohn + Stumpf + Associates
ENGINEER: Carroll Franck & Associates (structural)
CONSULTANTS: Janey Elizabeth Sawyer (furniture); Carol Stumpf Design (colorist)
GENERAL CONTRACTORS: Aims Construction, River City Builders
COST: Withheld at owner's request
PHOTOGRAPHER: Peter Bastianelli Kerze

SPECIFICATIONS
SLIDING DOORS: Loewen
LOCK SETS: Columbo
CABINET HARDWARE: Hafele
PAINTS AND STAINS: Pratt & Lambert
INTERIOR AMBIENT LIGHTING: Luce UPLIGHTS/TASK LIGHTING: Tech Lighting
DOWNLIGHTS: Con-Tech Lighting
SPECIALTY LIGHTING: Prisma
ELEVATORS/ESCALATORS: Dover
PLUMBING FIXTURES: Grohe; Kohler
The primary living area on the first floor is bounded on one end by a fireplace, and on the other by the kitchen and stairs to the second floor (above left). A thin scrim of painted wooden slats acts as a railing for the stairs (above center) and passes up into the second-floor work area and library (above right). Salmela used eight different types of wood in the Albrecht house, including basswood strips on the second floor around the opening that overlooks the living room (below), fir ceiling timbers, maple casework, and recycled redwood paneling. The short run of steps (below, at left) leads outside to a small, screened-in porch (facing page).
The staircase’s wooden scrim keeps the kitchen essentially out of sight from the living room (these pages). The massive fir columns were salvaged from an industrial building in California, and though Salmela admits that they are a bit larger than they need to be for structural purposes, he didn’t have the heart to trim them down.

All of those main spaces—kitchen, dining area, living room, and master bedroom—overlook the Mississippi River behind the house. In plan, the daytime and nighttime rooms interlock, with the prowlike solid of the master bathroom and closets sliding past the prowlike void of the living room. Public/private, figure/ground, solid/void—Salmela plays his game of choice not only in elevation, but in plan.

He does so in section as well. In an intentional (if tweaked) homage to Alvar Aalto’s Villa Mairea, Salmela uses painted wooden slats of the same dimension throughout the house for very different functions. One set of these divides the kitchen from the living and dining areas, enclosing the stair up to the second-floor office, wrapping around the upstairs balcony, and turning into a rail for the stair that leads to a screened-in porch on the roof of the house. The same-size slats also provide some privacy over the large office window on the front of the house and some protection on the underside of the trellis around the court.

The house also employs different forms for different purposes. A slate-clad box, enclosing the owner’s office, sits on top of the brick-clad first floor of the main house. Salmela keeps the living and working activities distinct, but by making the office visually dominant, he also raises questions as to the function of the house. Is it meant for domestic life or as a base for working? In this age of the home/office, the answer may be either or both.

Truth can also be a fiction. The office, with its uncertain scale and large end window divided by crossed mullions, looks from the front of the house like a church. The adjacent screened porch, which looks like a narthex, and a campanile-like chimney reinforce this impression. You find yourself wondering: What is this small-scale religious compound on the roof? Is it a deliberate comment on our worship of work, or on the sacredness of the home? The false theological character of structures suggests larger truths about ourselves.

For all of its creative play around the idea of the excluded middle, the Albrecht house is anything but middling. Just the opposite. Challenging our assumptions, forcing us to make choices, asking us to look more closely—such are things that this house shares with all great creative work. And that will always be true.
INTO THAT HIDDEN PASSAGE MY GUIDE AND I ENTERED, TO FIND AGAIN THE WORLD OF LIGHT, AND, WITHOUT THINKING OF A MOMENT'S REST,

WE CLIMBED UP, HE FIRST AND I BEHIND HIM, FAR ENOUGH TO SEE, THROUGH A ROUND OPENING, A FEW OF THOSE FAIR THINGS THE HEAVENS BEAR. THEN WE CAME FORTH, TO SEE AGAIN THE STARS.

DANTE ALIGHIERI, THE INFERNO, CANTO XXXIV
In the high desert of northern Arizona, along the southern edge of the Colorado Plateau, lie the 600-some craters of the San Francisco Volcanic Field. Around six million years ago, the first of these erupted: A blast of molten basalt cinders shot straight up out of the ground, cooling as they flew and forming a gravelly conical mountain as they landed; then a burst of lava poured out of the mountain’s side, a hot, flowing stream that hardened into a frozen cartoon of a river running across the arid plain. The most recent volcano emerged around A.D. 1064. More will come. The land, hard put upon, is desolate and rocky, a plain of wild black grama and Indian rice grasses with stunted, gnarled piñon junipers and ponderosa pines.

This blasted place does not seem to enjoy the gods’ favor. But it is here that artist James Turrell has spent the last 25 years trying to turn one volcano into a modern version of the temples of the ancient world, a secular cathedral dedicated to the heavens and their light.

“I’m building a ruin,” he says of his magnum opus, which is fittingly sited amid ruins of all orders: geologic, organic, and human. Roden Crater rises 600 feet above the plain, at the eastern edge of the San Francisco field. From its rim, views extend a hundred miles or more over the Painted Desert, with its mesas and thousand-year-old pueblos, and over the Petrified Forest, a ruin in its own way.

Turrell found his crater in 1974, after six months of flying over the West. Decades of planning and fundraising followed, during which the Los Angeles artist became an Arizona cattle rancher in order to claim use of federal lands around the crater (he now has grazing rights to almost 100,000 acres). Long visited by collectors, critics, curators, and students, the crater was closed to almost all visitors last year, allowing Turrell’s team to concentrate on construction. It will remain unseen for five years or more, when Turrell hopes to have finished the bulk of his work.

The building program is now at the end of its first phase. Bulldozers reshaped the crater, moving 1,350,000 cubic yards of rock to make the bowl’s edge a consistent height and its form a more or less regular ellipse—giving the crater’s eye the form of a human eye. By reshaping the rim, Turrell means to “reshape the sky.” Lying down on an angled plinth near the center of the bowl, your head lower than your feet, you see the sky as a dome spanning...
An upward-sloping tunnel connects the Sun and Moon Space to another underground chamber, the East Portal Space. The path first rises more steeply than the arched ceiling as the tunnel’s section changes from a Roman arch to a flat-bottomed cylinder (above left). For most of its length, the path follows the rise of the cylinder. Near its end, it levels off as visitors approach the East Portal Space, where the tunnel takes on a keyhole shape in section. Turning back to look at the Sun and Moon Space from near the end of the tunnel (above right), the transition from cylinder to keyhole is visible.

A small oculus illuminates the Sun and Moon Space, which serves as a provisional entrance while the rest of the complex is under construction. Rebar at the center of the room shows the future location of a white marble monolith, where the sun’s image will be projected once a year on the solstice, and where the moon’s light will be projected once every 16.8 years through the tunnel at the rear of the room.
Looking up the tunnel toward the East Portal Space, the cylindrical shaft appears in the chamber’s ceiling as an oculus (left). As a visitor walks forward, the perceived circular shape of the oculus shifts to its actual elliptical form (right). A cast silicon bronze stair will rise from the floor to the far edge of the ellipse, allowing access to the crater above without blocking the form of the oculus.

the crater. This stunning space seems a literal embodiment of Emerson’s vision of God in *Nature* (1836): “Standing on the bare ground—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.”

A self-described lapsed Quaker, Turrell often quotes as inspiration his grandmother’s direction to “seek the light.” Within the mountain lie a series of light-seeking rooms and passageways whose construction required a massive cut-and-fill operation. The rooms, oval or circular in plan, have oval or circular oculi which the Arizona sky fills like a solid object, as in his Quaker Meeting House in Houston (June 2001, page 84). “The sky and the things that inhabit it are brought down to the space you are in,” Turrell says.

Between two of these “skyspaces,” Turrell has created a space inspired by the Great Temple Ramesses II had built into a cliff face at Abu Simbel in Egypt. There, at summer and winter solstice, the sun penetrates a 200-foot shaft to light statues of Ramesses and the sun gods Amun-Re and Re-Harakhte. At Roden, every 16.8 years, the light of the moon will pass through the crater’s eye and down an 854-foot-long tunnel. A hole in a pair of bronze doors will focus the moon’s image onto a 16-foot-tall, white-marble monolith at the center of a round, basalt-paneled room. Once a year, the sun will pass through a hole in the volcano’s fumarole, where the stream of lava burst out, to light the opposite face of this stone—hence the chamber’s name, the Sun and Moon Space. In place of sun gods, Turrell uses the sun and moon themselves.

The quarter-century Turrell has put into this task is nothing compared to the billion-plus years of geologic activity that built this landscape, let alone the 12 billion years since the Big Bang created his subject, the universe. Turrell has rebuilt Roden Crater with an eye not to the amount of time it would take to construct, nor to the length of his life. His spaces are geared to celestial events that occur daily, yearly, every 16.8 years, and every 24,000 years. For those who might unearth Roden Crater after millennia have passed and Turrell has been forgotten, his crater will remain as a more or less faithful guide to the sky, a place to see anew the stars.
Turrell installed Rosa sandstone-faced pews around the long sides of the elliptical East Portal Space (facing page) where visitors can view the sky through the oculus above. The oval recess in the floor will be filled with white silica sand, filtering rainwater into a drain. A low, curving passage (above, at rear) leads to the only orthogonal space in the crater (below), a sort of antechamber to the crater's eye.
From the antechamber, a spiral ramp leads up to the left and down to the right. Moving clockwise up the spiral, visitors see a strong light (left), and then the ceiling opening up as the spiral passes through the floor of the crater's bowl. Heading down the spiral, visitors are led through total darkness to a round underground chamber, the Crater's Eye Space.
In the Crater’s Eye Space, a round oculus isolates a portion of the sky as a seemingly domed ceiling. Pews surround this circular space (above) as in the east portal. In the crater’s bowl (right), the form of the East Portal Space, the Crater’s Eye Space, and the spiral passage around it are visible aboveground. The elliptical shape of the bowl and continuous changes in its grade make judging distances or shapes a process of continually shifting illusions. From the rim (right), the bowl appears shallow and broad; from the crater’s center, it appears steep and narrow. At the rim, views extend over a hundred miles across the Painted Desert.
NBBJ notched out the corners of Paul Brown Stadium to admit views of downtown Cincinnati—and to cut down on unpopular corner seats.
TOUCHDOWN CINCINNATI

THE BENGALS MAKE A BOLD PLAY WITH THEIR NEW RIVERFRONT STADIUM.
BY STEVEN LITT

Cincinnati, located where the Bible Belt meets the industrial Midwest, is famous for its cultural tensions. The city earned a reputation for intolerance 12 years ago, when museum director Dennis Barrie was tried on obscenity charges for exhibiting homoerotic photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe. (Barrie was later acquitted). Last summer, after a white police officer fatally shot an unarmed black man, long-running tension between blacks and police erupted in three days of riots.

One might think, then, that Cincinnati would have opted for the architectural equivalent of comfort food when it built a new football stadium for the NFL Bengals. Not so. The new Paul Brown Stadium, designed by the Los Angeles office of NBBJ, with a long cast of consultants (including architects Glaser Associates of Cincinnati), attempts to create a progressive new image with jagged planes of glass, concrete, and steel.

Prominently sited on the Ohio River and open since the 2001 season, the stadium announces (in a literal way) that Cincinnati embraces the cutting edge. The sharp steel prow of the Bengals’ office wing seems to spin out of the stadium as if by centrifugal force; other sections of the façades are sliced and angular. Its youthful and stylish aggression is clearly meant to attract the 20-something male audience coveted in turn by television networks and advertisers.

From various angles, the stadium appears to be a building in motion, ready to hurl itself against an opponent’s offensive line. The collage approach to the façades succeeds in breaking down the building’s massive, 67,000-seat bulk. This becomes even more apparent at night, when the stadium changes from a solid object into a series of backlit, semitransparent scrims and overlapping grids. However, that careful profusion of materials and shapes can also look fussy and confusing.

Underneath its edgy exterior, the $310 million stadium is a more or less conventional structure of cast-concrete seating stands, sliced open at the corners to reveal dramatic views of the skyline and the river. Opening the corners of the stadium was both good urban design and good business: Eager to boost revenues, the Bengals were happy to increase the number of skyboxes and premium seats along the sidelines, and to eliminate the less popular corner seats.

The crowning gesture is a pair of translucent fabric canopies cantilevered over the upper tier of sideline seats. Viewed from a distance, the canopies soar across the skyline in graceful arcs. The scoreboards, in contrast, are treated like sculptures; wedges of smooth and corrugated steel intersect as if they have collided in midair.

Although the stadium was built by Hamilton County, the owners of the Bengals had a big say in the design. That the team didn’t ask for a back-to-the-future look came as a pleasant surprise to NBBJ design principal Dan Meis, who headed the stadium project. "Here was a potentially conservative client who was asking us constantly to push this into something new, something contemporary, and that it be forward thinking and not in any way retro," Meis says.
To break down the mass of the 67,000-seat stadium, NBBJ used a collage of glass, perforated steel panels, and concrete on the façade (facing page, top). The scoreboard (facing page, center and bottom right) is a building in and of itself, with room for maintenance and camera positions. A fiberglass canopy on a steel frame (facing page, lower left) cantilevers dramatically out over the seating bowl, sheltering both fans and lighting equipment. The Bengals’ locker room (above left) is at the field level, since players shouldn’t go up and down any more stairs than necessary, while the glazed concourse with stores and food concessions (above right) is on the club, or third level.
More than anything, Paul Brown Stadium is a reminder of the cultural diversity that exists beneath Cincinnati's conservative surface. After all, the Contemporary Art Center, where Barrie showed the Mapplethorpes, has commissioned Zaha Hadid to design its new downtown building. The University of Cincinnati has new buildings by Frank Gehry and Peter Eisenman. Jay Chatterjee, former dean of the university's College of Design, Art, Architecture, and Planning, was a member of the local design review committee that encouraged Meis to give the stadium a contemporary persona.

Adjacent to an 1856 bridge designed by John Roebling, Paul Brown Stadium is part of a 10-year, $2 billion makeover along the Cincinnati riverfront that is now in its initial phase. The city recently narrowed Fort Washington Way, its riverfront highway, to open up new land for parks and development, and to make the water's edge more accessible to pedestrians. Nearby, Cincinnati is building a ballpark for the Reds, designed by HOK Sport in a style that blends modernist and retro elements. When it is finished in 2003, the old Cinergy Field will be torn down, and the surface parking lots between the ballpark and the stadium will be replaced by garages, offices, and parks.

The progressive look of the stadium, alongside the Roebling Bridge and the relatively conservative ballpark being designed for the Reds, should create a visually compelling mix in a long-underused section of riverfront. Together, they are a vignette of the complex nature of Cincinnati—a city fraught with contradictions, in which neither conservatives nor progressives can get the upper hand. The NBBJ stadium tries to shift the balance in a forward-looking direction. While no single building can change a city's reputation, the stadium represents an aspect of Cincinnati's character that continues to assert itself.
PAUL BROWN STADIUM, CINCINNATI

CLIENT: Hamilton County, Ohio
ARCHITECT: NBBJ, Marina del Rey, California—Dan Meis (design principal); Ron Turner (technical design principal); Friedl Bohm (partner-in-charge); Paul Becker (project manager); Paul Davis (senior project designer); Guy Pachaud (senior interior designer); Ed Michelle (landscape designer); Marc Davidson (project architect); John Truong (technical architect); Taylor Hamblett (construction administration); Mike Amaya, Steve Chung, Patrick Fejer, Jacques Kravtchenko, Greg Lombardi Chris Mullenn, Stacy Nakano, Hugh Nathanson, Tetsuya Ogami, Stephanie Reich, Melissa Schrock, Curtis Simmons, Ed Storer, Ramkumar Subramanian, Tom Walsh, Mahnaz Zahyri (project team)

ASSOCIATE ARCHITECT: Glaser Associates, Cincinnati—Art Hupp (principal); Richard Fohl (project manager); Kevin Morris (construction administration); Gloria Coleman, Larry Cotner, Paul Duffy, Greg Gibson, Bob Stocker, Raffi Tomassian, Quin Wichman (project team)

ASSOCIATE ARCHITECT: Moody/Nolan

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS: NBBJ; Vivian Llambi & Associates

ENGINEERS: Ove Arup & Partners (structural); Flack + Kurtz Consulting Engineers (mechanical/electrical/HVAC); JMA Consultants (civil)

CONSULTANTS: Acoustic Dimensions (acoustics); Flack + Kurtz Consulting Engineers (sports lighting); Birdair (tension roof design); G. J. Thelen Associates (geotechnical)

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Turner/Barton Malow/D.A.G., a joint venture

COST: $310 million

PHOTOGRAPHER: Tim Griffith/Esto
Breaking Open the Box

Hodgetts + Fung’s new student pavilion at Art Center College of Design creates a dynamic counterpoint to its iconic Craig Ellwood building.
By Joseph Giovannini / Photography by Todd Hido

The new student center for the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, by Los Angeles-based Hodgetts + Fung looks innocent and simple enough: A corrugated-metal roof hovers over concrete pads terraced into a grassy slope. But seldom have expectations per square foot been so high for what amounts to an open-air garden pavilion, and rarely have architects packed such density of thought into such a small building, itself only 2,600 square feet.

Academic politics in the United States can make the Balkans look tame, and the student pavilion represents the inaugural move on Art Center’s academic chess board. It’s the first building erected by the school’s new president, Richard Koshalek, who directed Los Angeles’s Museum of Contemporary Art for nearly two decades. For Koshalek, who commissioned the spirited Temporary Contemporary from Frank Gehry and oversaw the construction of Arata Isozaki’s permanent building, architecture is an agent of change that can shape institutions. Art Center, famous for producing graphic artists and car and product designers, has long been captive to its reputation as a trade school. Koshalek tried to expand the school’s academic focus by example, encouraging principals Craig Hodgetts and Ming Fung to create an exercise barre for stretching its curriculum and sensibilities.

The president also wanted to invite students into a room of their own. In a diplomatic overture signaling outreach to the student body, he held a charrette with the students that produced a simple wish list: an indoor-outdoor space with natural ventilation and light; a space wired and otherwise equipped for impromptu performances, coffee talk, and self-curated exhibitions; a space where students could escape the strict confines of the famous ravine-spanning black box that Craig Ellwood designed in the 1960s to house Art Center.

Hodgetts + Fung’s small, tough, galvanized metal-and-concrete structure, walled in cement board and fitted with runs of natural plywood, offers students an interpretation of modernism more akin to ad-hoc industrial sheds than to Ellwood’s classicized, Miesian modernism. “Ellwood’s building is unbelievably rigid and regular,” says Fung. “The students asked us to make [the new one] limber.” Their material choices alone meant the architects were disturbing the dominant aesthetic, creating an architectural “other.” But the overwhelming materiality of the pavilion also challenges the cyber visions now taking over design schools via the computer. “We didn’t want to create an analog, push-button universe with LED screens and electronic paraphernalia that would always be breaking down,” notes Hodgetts. “We wanted to encourage physical interaction and a tactile relationship with the building.”

Planning strategically, the architects positioned the structure between the parking lot and Ellwood’s building in order to capture students in that urban zone so typical of Los Angeles: the high-traffic pedestrian space between the car and the front door. Attaching the pavilion to an existing staircase and switchback ramp on the edge of a hillside overlooking downtown Pasadena, the architects intended to siphon passers-by while using the slope to create terraced spaces.

In another strategic move, the architects placed a cube containing a snack bar and bathroom at the center of the pavilion, to subdivide the space front and back. A forecourt flows from the stair and ramp into a café area sided with plywood panels (which will serve as bulletin and project pin-up boards). The cube also acts as a projection platform for an open-air theater on the other side the café. Rows of concrete seats step down the slope, facing a panorama of hills beyond downtown Pasadena. With computer and power outlets...
The pavilion sits on a hilltop (facing page), with its open-air auditorium in line with a view of downtown Pasadena. The architects imbedded electrical outlets and Internet connections into the concrete seating (above) so that it can be used for casual study as easily as for performances. Along one of the pavilion’s long faces runs an access road (below left, at left); the other opens onto Craig Ellwood’s building (below left, at right). Corrugated metal encloses the auditorium, and a large window frames a café above it (below right).
As a foil to the increasing digitalization of design schools, Hodgetts + Fung incorporated several mechanical moving parts into the design of the pavilion (diagram, above). They include a diagonally pivoted door/canopy for the snack bar that separates the auditorium from a lounge area (facing page); a sliding glass door to protect the interior from the coyote and deer that roam the campus at night (below left); and a rotating wood-sided partition that can be used as a bulletin board and reconfigured to separate the café from the auditorium (below right).
and its built-in seating, the plan is loosely configured rather than overdetermined, and encourages multiple uses: student lounge, theater, meditation zone, study space.

The figural form of the corrugated metal envelope may look sculptural, but it conforms to function rather than any aesthetic or geometric ideal. Blinders folded down from the roof help focus the theater; built-in banquets at the side of the café double as a railing and offer an overlook to the seating below. The building is really a composite of landmark and superstructure, and works as a hybrid of the two, each typology deforming and reforming the other. Formal beauty is not an objective, but a result.

The architects first proposed a building that looked arrested in motion—"like an insect walking across landscape," says Hodgetts, "animated in its posture." After the creation of a conceptual design, Art Center established a budget of $650,000 that required a second scheme. The architects simplified the geometries, creating a framework with moving parts that would close the pavilion. A hand crank rolls an entire window wall that hangs from a cantilevered beam on the pavilion’s northern face; a plywood wall pivots on a post on one side of the café area, allowing students to configure the space for particular activities. But the virtuoso piece is the corner of the snack bar, which pivots up on a hinge set at a diagonal, so that the whole corner rises like the door of a gull-winged Mercedes or Lamborghini. An inventive apparatus ripe for a patent, the building itself serves as a didactic example to students. "We wanted to make an industrial design object, but in an architectural context," says Hodgetts, who once studied automotive design at the GM Institute (he won the Fisher Body Craftsmen’s Award for automotive styling as a teenager). "We felt a building with characteristics of a car would engage product designers."

Through design, the architects have laid the foundations for common intellectual ground on the campus, but they have also created a transformable building that students can tune up and, in a way, perform, like a one-building band that sets the tone for casual social events. Beautiful in its icy perfection, the Ellwood building breeds a hands-off attitude of aesthetic admiration, while Hodgetts + Fung’s pavilion offers itself as a jungle gym of activities—this is an ingenious building of many parts whose movements encourage movement. The building, which teaches as it functions, has the wisdom to be participatory, and students become players rather than passive consumers and spectators. Its greatest success, however, is qualitative. If the classic mission of a garden pavilion is to delight, this building is a wit.

Hodgetts + Fung positioned the pavilion along an existing staircase and switchback ramp (facing page) that link the Art Center parking lot to Craig Ellwood’s school building. Their cantilevered roof form expands on the ramp’s angular geometry.

SINCLAIRE PAVILION AT ART CENTER COLLEGE OF DESIGN, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA
CLIENT: Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, California—Richard Koshalek (president/CEO); Patricia Belton Oliver (senior vice president, architectural planning and special projects) ARCHITECT: Hodgetts + Fung Design Associates, Culver City, California—Craig Hodgetts, Hsin-Ming Fung (principals in charge of design); Michael Knopoff (project designer); David Wick, Greg Stutheit, Andrew Lindley, Chiaki Kanda, Curran Starkey, Neil Silberstein, Rafael Rosas (project team) ENGINEERS: William H. Koh & Associates (structural); Electra Systems & Service (electrical/design-build); KPFF Consulting Engineers (civil) GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Matt Construction COST: $650,000

SPECIFICATIONS
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1 THE SOFT MACHINE
One of the most elegant ballast luminaires available, the Expanded Line Soft from Flos was designed by Perry Allan King and Santiago Miranda. Finished in matte gray, the fixture’s extruded aluminum wings reflect a soft, even light. It is available in approximately 4- and 5-foot lengths in standard ballast or a smart-sensor, self-dimming mode.

2 EAMES MEETS AERON
Combining classic midcentury design with the latest advances in workplace materials, Herman Miller introduces a new Cygnus mesh, similar to that of the award-winning Aeron chair, for the Eames Aluminum seating group. Available in standard black or in white as a special color, Cygnus allows increased airflow, preventing heat from accumulating on the seat throughout the day, while emphasizing the delicate profile of the 1958 Eames design.

3 CHANGELING
PPG introduces Solarban 80, a new energy-efficient glass that combines solar control with generous light admittance. Solarban 80 has a matte finish that turns reflective in direct light and remains transparent in indirect light, maximizing visibility and minimizing heat absorption.

4 ET VOLA!
Vola, the line of bathroom fixtures and accessories designed by Arne Jacobsen in 1968 and is part of the MoMA design collection, is available in its entirety to the U.S. market for the first time. Also new to the U.S. and to the Vola line is Jacobsen’s Thermostatic Mixer, which combines flow and temperature controls into one operating handle.

5 ROOFTOP LOCK
To maximize the public use of rooftops in high-wind areas, Hanover Architectural Products introduces Ventloc, a system of interlocking concrete roof pavers that provide a UV barrier, below-surface drainage, and pedestrian access. Ventloc weighs 17 pounds per square foot and has a spare, natural finish.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS STRUTH

In 1991, Swiss physician Heinrich Huber commissioned Thomas Struth to make photographs for 37 rooms in a new wing of the Lindberg Hospital in Winterthur, Switzerland. Huber felt that since most of the life of the hospital took place in the patients' rooms, the artwork there should be curative and not allow the patients to retreat too far into themselves. Struth's photography would offer the perfect dose of poetic realism.

A combination of various landscape and flower images—photographed in the surrounding Weinland countryside and a nearby abandoned garden—now hangs in every room. The landscapes, placed at the foot of the bed, allow a patient to wander mentally out of the hospital. Visitors, meanwhile, see a photograph of flora above the patient's head: a metaphor of life, lending hope to the sick. **JOELLE BYRER**

THOMAS STRUTH: DANDELION ROOM, ESSAY BY DIETER SCHWARZ (D.A.P., 2001)
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