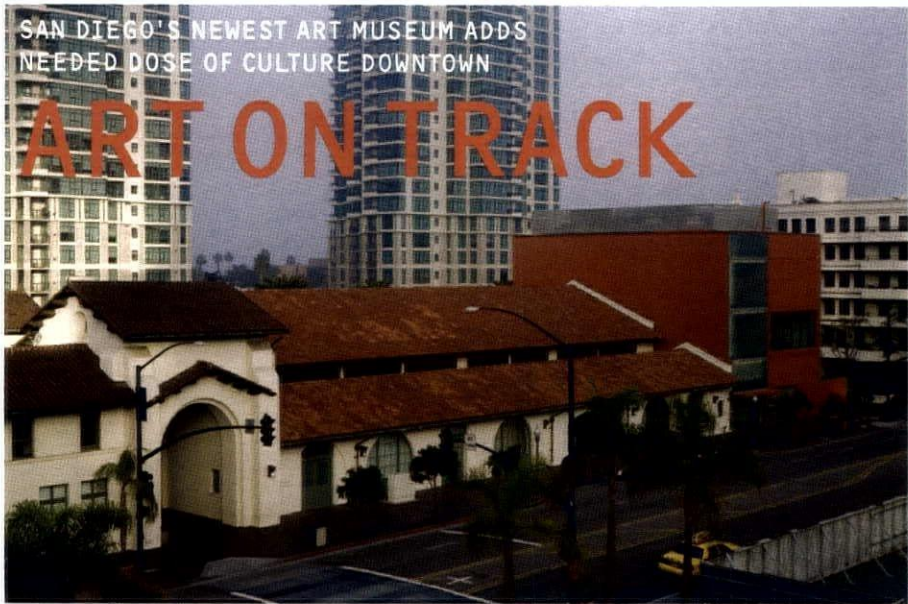


# THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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SAN DIEGO'S NEWEST ART MUSEUM ADDS NEEDED DOSE OF CULTURE DOWNTOWN

## ART ON TRACK

Let's be honest. Downtown San Diego isn't known for culture. Perhaps the biggest problem is that Balboa Park—which houses the San Diego Zoo, beautiful Mission architecture, and 15 museums—long ago consumed most of the city's resources.

The La Jolla-based Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD) is taking one of the first steps to change that, with a new downtown space inside the 1915 Mission-style Santa Fe train depot. What could be more urban than that?

The new 30,000-square-foot facility, which

opened on January 21, is located inside the station's old baggage depot (now the Jacobs Building) and includes a new three-story structure, the Copley Building, to its north. The project was designed by New York architect Richard Gluckman, known for his work on arts-related projects like the Dia Art Foundation in New York City, the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, and the Picasso Museum in Málaga, Spain. The associate architect was M. Wayne Donaldson, who is now California's state historic preservation officer. **continued on page 8**

## NEW PARK GIVES LIFE TO DOWNTOWN AND LA RIVER



Crossing paths in the plaza area mimic the site's history as a railyard.

the first ever held by the CDPR—out of a field of 33 firms last November. The other finalists were LA firm Mia Lehrer + Associates and New York-based Field Operations with Thom Mayne of Morphosis.

The 32-acre site, dubbed the cornfield because wild corn once grew there, was a Union Pacific railyard until 1991. During the late 1990s, the site was set to become a redevelopment project, but a coalition of citizens and environmental activists banded together to defeat the project. In September 2001 the Trust for Public Land **continued on page 8**

## Cornfield Revival

Earlier this month, the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) finalized its contract with San Francisco-based Hargreaves Associates and Los Angeles-based Michael Maltzan

Architecture to design the Los Angeles State Historic Park on a downtown site commonly referred to as the "cornfield."

The team won a competition to design the project—

## BOLD TOWER DESIGNS ON SAN FRANCISCO'S HORIZON

## SKYLINE ON THE RISE

After more than ten years of talks and proposals, plans to rebuild San Francisco's aging Transbay Terminal have finally gained traction. In November by the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) issued an RFQ for the design of a new transit terminal to replace the existing one at First and Mission streets, and an adjacent mixed-use tower. Five architect-developer teams responded: Richard Rogers Partnership and Forest City Enterprises with MacFarlane Partners; Santiago Calatrava and Boston Properties; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and Rockefeller Group Development Corporation; and Foster and Partners and The Related Companies with TMG Partners. In late January, the teams were interviewed and on February 9, the jury, which includes design and transit professionals, recommended that all but Foster's team advance to the second stage of the competition. The TJPA board will vote to approve this list on February 15, after which a six-month period for concept design will begin.

Competition manager Donald Stastny hopes the \$1 billion **continued on page 3**

The Transbay Terminal (center, rectangular slab) will be replaced with a new center.



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## WASHINGTON BOULEVARD TO BECOME PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY SHOPPING DISTRICT

## Downtown LA Gets Boost

On January 10 the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) issued an RFP for the next frontier in the city's downtown rehab: the Washington Boulevard Opportunity Area. The 75-acre project will be located south of downtown LA, bound by the I-10 Freeway, San Pedro, Figueroa, and 21<sup>st</sup> streets. The site is near the 33-acre LA Live!, a mixed-use sports and entertainment development now underway close to the Staples Arena.

The CRA/LA is calling for the redevelopment of 22 blocks, **continued on page 7**

CRIT: HENRY URBACH

## MORPHOSIS' SAN FRANCISCO FEDERAL BUILDING SEE PAGE 15



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Welcome to the first issue of *The Architect's Newspaper's* California edition. I feel a little funny welcoming you, since I'm new to California myself. For me, trying to understand California in the two months that I've been here has been a little like trying to take the I-405 in LA at rush hour. But there are some advantages to being a new Californian. For one, I can see the place with fresh eyes.

Since I'm still trying to wrap my head around the place, let me for now discuss what I've seen in my new home, Los Angeles. Forgive me San Francisco, San Diego, Sacramento, Santa Barbara, Oakland, Silicon Valley, Fresno, San Bernardino. We'll branch out, we promise.

It might sound like a cliché, but from my point of view I see a place with a world of possibilities. Unlike New York (my old home), in LA, there is room to build and less pressure to fit into a preexisting grid and aesthetic (for the simple reason that both barely exist). Also, perhaps because of the city's prolonged disregard for public architecture and public spaces, both seem to be ripe with potential, whether for the underdeveloped downtown, the storm drain known as the LA River, or the mixed-use redevelopment projects in between. As we've seen time and again, in cities from New York to Miami to London to Berlin, the places with the greatest chances for cutting-edge architecture are those that have been ignored or destroyed. LA has plenty of areas that fit this bill. As LA County's chief planner, Bruce McLendon, recently pointed out to me, the city's masterplan is almost 30 years old and is just beginning to undergo revision. A masterplan study for the LA River has just been completed. And areas like Grand Avenue and South Park are beginning to come alive.

Architects, planners, and interested citizens should take a role in these kinds of developments, not just let them happen. As it stands, the discussion about architecture in Los Angeles is unfocused, largely because there are few outlets to clarify it. *The Architect's Newspaper* hopes to provide a platform for debate, providing news and encouraging a more active dialogue among building professionals, clients, politicians, academics, artists, cultural commentators, and others who play a role in how our physical environment takes shape. We'll give space to both the "major" stories of the profession and the smaller, subtler but often more interesting stories that wouldn't necessarily make it into national architecture publications (or the local newspaper for that matter). We want to focus on what you're doing, saying, and imagining. We want to turn you on to new opportunities. Also, importantly, we want to turn non-architects into architecture advocates.

I look forward to working with you to make this happen. And I look forward to your input and your inspiration. (Don't hesitate to send us news about your projects, at [editor@archpaper.com](mailto:editor@archpaper.com). And subscribe! Registered architects in California qualify for a free subscription, but you still have to sign up for it; go to [www.archpaper.com](http://www.archpaper.com).) Lastly, I look forward to figuring out how to avoid the 405. **SAM LUBELL**

## TOYO ITO'S DESIGN TO BE UNVEILED THIS SUMMER

## BERKELEY MUSEUM TAKES SHAPE

Toyo Ito's schematic design for the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA) will be unveiled this summer, according to museum director Kevin E. Consey. The architect's first United States commission will rise four stories in the museum's new location west of campus in the heart of Berkeley's downtown at Oxford and Center streets. The museum's old home, a 1970 concrete creation by Mario Campi, was damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. It received a partial retrofit in 2001 to keep it operational until the museum moves into a new home. If the university decides to continue to use the building, it must get a full seismic upgrade.

Consey explained that Ito's proposal shows promise in its "approach to the challenge of integrating our broad collections—Asian art, modern and contemporary art, and film and moving image—into one seamless programmatic whole." The museum would not release details about the design, though Consey described the plan as being a distorted grid with gardens on its rooftop.

The project advanced last month when Consey, the architect of record EHDD of San Francisco, and structural engineer Forell/Elsesser Engineers of San Francisco met with Ito in Tokyo to help guide the design process. "The result is impressive," said Harrison Fraker, dean of UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design and member of the BAM/PFA building subcommittee. "It is an interesting evolution of [Ito's] body of work, a synthesis with a twist."

Some members of the design subcommittee have voiced reservations, not about the design, but about the project's feasibility. "One challenge is matching Ito's designs to American building practices," said Rod Macneil, the museum's audience development deputy director. To produce a building that meets Ito's standard of finish would cost more here than in Japan, because labor costs are higher in the United States, he explained. Fraker also hinted it may be difficult to translate Ito's poetry into built form. "If they can pull it off, it will be cool," he remarked.

The new location, which was once a site of the University of California Press, is set to be the anchor for planned downtown redevelopment. Groundbreaking could begin in 2009 depending on how the design and fundraising efforts progress. The project is estimated to cost \$80 to \$100 million. **LAURI PUCHALL**

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## SKYLINE ON THE RISE continued

from front page project will be "the Grand Central of the West—a timeless, iconic building." The new terminal will connect eight regional and state transit systems and accommodate a future high-speed rail, and will provide access to the new tower.

In May 2006, city planning director Dean Macris announced the results of a study that supports building heights in the

Transbay area of 1,000 feet or more—more than 150 feet higher than the 35-year-old Transamerica Pyramid. "There is an opportunity to create a new urban area and a magnificent public gathering place South of Market as significant as Union Square," said Macris. Revenue gained from the sale or lease of the tower property to the winning development team will partially fund the overall project.

The development is part of

a city plan unveiled in 2003, called the Transbay Design for Development, which outlines strategies to revitalize the area. The first application to build in the area was filed in December by developers for a site on the northwest corner of First and Mission, catercorner to the Transbay Tower. A team of developers assembled by commercial mortgage lender California Mortgage and Realty selected Renzo Piano as its

architect last summer, and in December presented the city with a preliminary design of a cluster of four towers, two of them 1,200 feet high.

"We are concerned that all the towers work together," Macris said. "There's a fine line between congestion and the amount of activity that makes an area exciting. We will evaluate everything to see that we're not crossing the line."

**SAMANTHA TOPOL**



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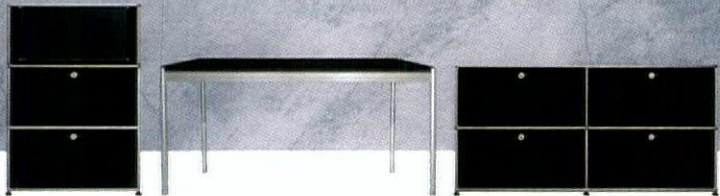
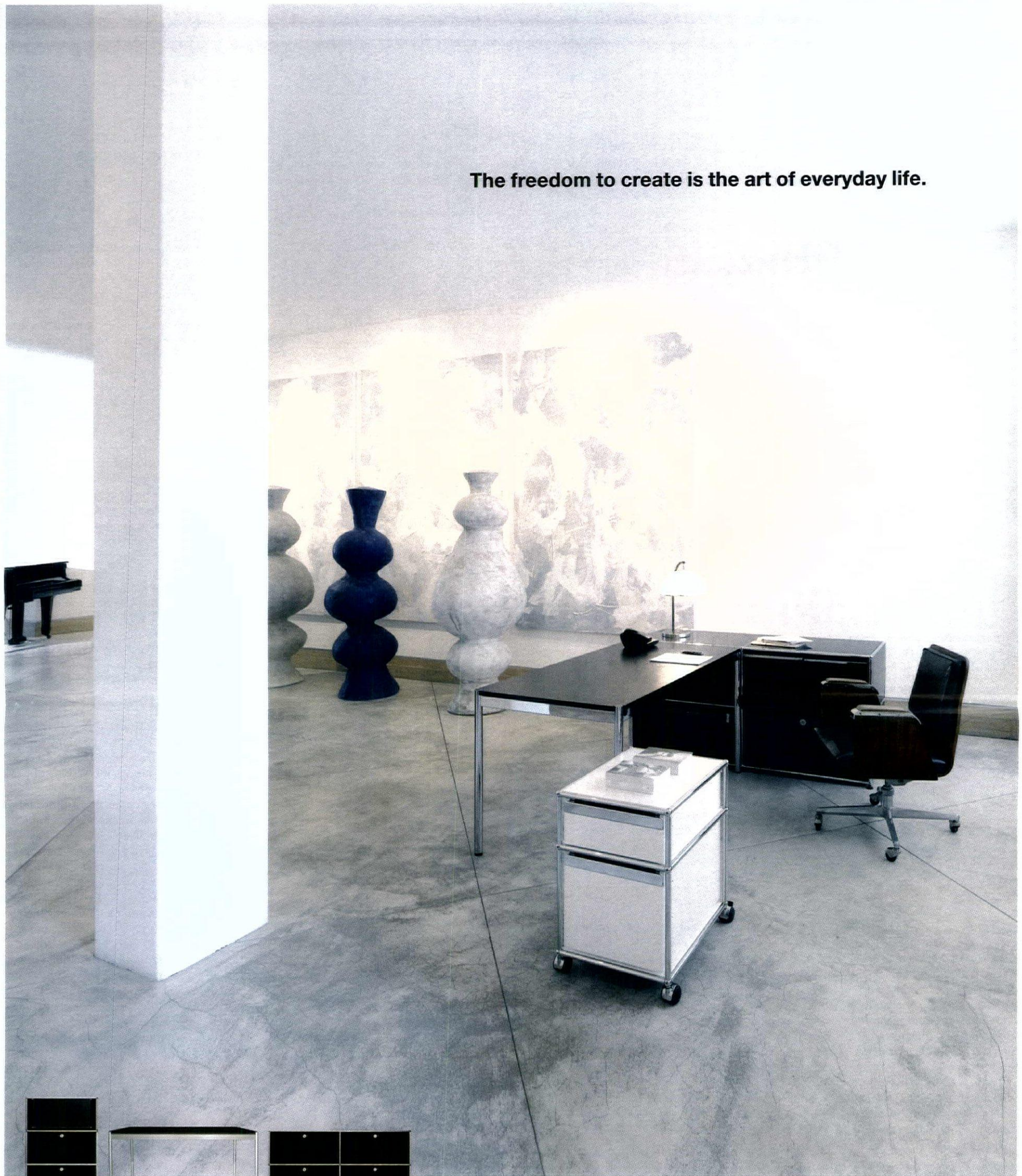
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## A NEW ARCHITECT IN TOWN

While *Dwell*'s new editor-in-chief **Sam Grawe** has stabilized the suddenly superglam shelter mag (did you hear they sponsored a lounge at Sundance?), another California architecture publication now has expansive aspirations: AIA-underwritten *LA Architect* will be relaunched as a national magazine. The new pumped-up bimonthly is rumored to be called *Form* and will retain the same editor, **Jennifer Caterino**. Balcony Media will continue to publish the magazine, with the first issue expected in June 2007. AIA-LA members will still receive the magazine for free, but the chapter will publish an online newsletter about its events and news. It all seems so impeccably timed with the growth of another regional architecture publication, but we can't quite put our finger on it...

## PLANNING IN PRIVATE

We'd sure love to welcome LA City Planning Director **Gail Goldberg** to town—if only she'd return our calls. After numerous unrequited requests from this publication, an assistant told us via email it would be "impossible" to speak with her and that Goldberg's calendar is "booked for weeks in advance." Fair enough—we're pretty busy ourselves, you know—but after weeks of stalking, we've been granted 15 minutes on the phone. That's hardly enough time to say, "Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan!"

## A DISMAL FUTURE

It was supposed to give us a glimpse of tomorrow, but the LA portion of the History Channel's *City of the Future* competition left many griping about the past. Like similar qualifying rounds held in New York and Chicago, the network asked eight teams to imagine Los Angeles in 2106, with the winner going head-to-head against the other cities' top picks in online voting hosted by **Daniel Libeskind**. But with LA jurors given only five minutes to reach a decision and PR reps more concerned about the subsequent photo op with **Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa**, it seems LA hasn't put its best future forward. According to informants behind closed doors, juror **Thom Mayne** quickly assumed the position of alpha architect, bullying the other jurors into voting for his buddy **Eric Owen Moss**. Meanwhile, former *Dwell* editor **Allison Arieff** naturally gravitated toward her prefabulous pal **Jennifer Siegal**. Loyola Marymount's **Mara Marks** quietly followed Mayne's lead, while auto designer **Bryan Thompson** sided with Arieff until they were forced into submission by Mayne. (Moss' proposal was deemed a resounding *booooooring* by several in attendance.) What many thought was the most inventive proposal—a short film about intelligent vegetation reclaiming Los Angeles after "The Big One"—left collaborators at **Hernan Diaz Alonso's** Xefirotarch and Imaginary Forces with the equivalent of a pat on the back. The one juror who should have had the strongest opinion about LA's future said virtually nothing at all. That's right: **Gail Goldberg**.

## THE SEXIEST DESIGNERS ALIVE

It's the battle of the sustainability heartthrobs! Hot on the heels of **Brad Pitt's** narration gig on the PBS show *Design e2*, **Leonardo DiCaprio** is architecture's latest drool-worthy poster child. The Prius-driving Oscar nominee is billed as co-creator and executive producer of the reality show *E-Topia*, which covers the eco-friendly reconstruction of an American town as it's transformed into a "green utopia of tomorrow." If there's one thing that gets our pulse racing, it's design-savvy celebs promoting green building practices. With their shirts off.

## AND SPEAKING OF NO SHIRTS

Which LA architect is truly unafraid of letting it all hang out? At his holiday party, one of his "friends" was seen showing partygoers a photo of the architect and several other men channeling that famous **Red Hot Chili Peppers** album... you know, the one with socks on their rhymes-with-rocks? This same architect was also seen at the notoriously nude Burning Man festival last year and cleans up in a revealing indoor/outdoor shower of his own design.

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MEIER AND OLIN CREATE  
NEW SCULPTURE GARDENS

## GETTY'S GROUNDS BECOME GALLERIES

In mid-May, the Getty Center in Los Angeles will unveil 28 modern and contemporary outdoor sculptures on its surrounding grounds. The late film producer Ray Stark and his wife Fran recently donated the works through the Ray Stark Revocable Trust.

The Getty is working with Richard Meier & Partners and Olin Partnership to prepare the areas for installation. The sculptures will be dispersed throughout the Getty's public

areas and gardens, but will be concentrated mostly in two new outdoor spaces: The Ray Stark Sculpture Garden at the Getty's tram departure area, which will contain mostly British sculpture; and the Fran and Ray Stark Sculpture Terrace, located outside the museum's new terrace level Center for Photographs, which will contain sculptures that exemplify the shift from representational to abstract sculpture.

Other sculptors whose work will be shown will include Robert Adams, Alexander Calder, Alberto Giacometti, Roy Lichtenstein, Rene Magritte, Joan Miro, Henry Moore, Isamu Noguchi, and William Turnbull.

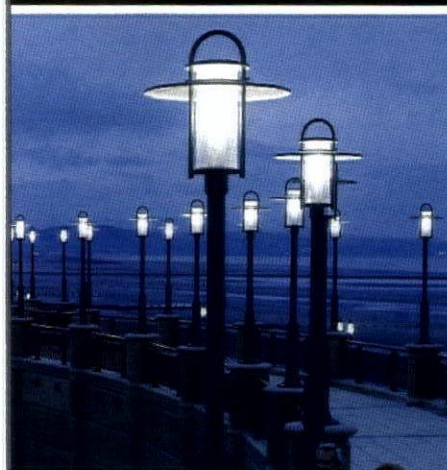
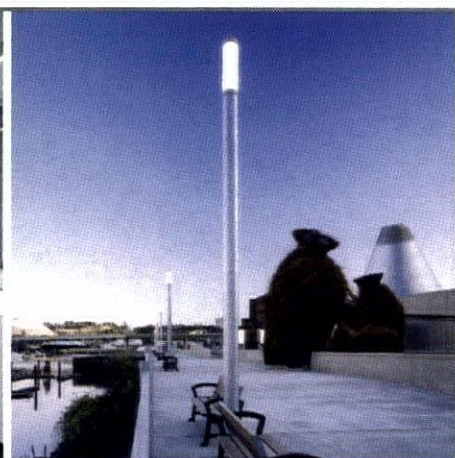
**SAM LUBELL**



> **BILLY WILDER THEATER**

UCLA Hammer Museum  
10804 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles  
Tel. 310-443-7000  
Designer: Michael Maltzan Architecture

The Billy Wilder Theater opened in Westwood in late December as both a physical centerpiece to UCLA's Hammer Museum and a public screening room for the UCLA Film & Television Archive. The museum was made possible by a \$5 million gift from Audrey Wilder to honor her late husband, the famed Hollywood writer, director, and producer. The 295-seat theater's utterly cinematic design borrows heavily from the language of Wilder's films, said architect Michael Maltzan. "Like Wilder's films, we used light and color and movement to make something abstract and contemporary, and also accessible." Appropriately, everything in here says "action." Giant pixelated photographs of Billy and Audrey Wilder pulse in the lobby. A wavering lenticular mural depicting Wilder's most famous film, *Sunset Boulevard*, ushers theatergoers inside. Overhead, thin LED beams rush toward the screen, like the entire room is making the jump to hyperspace. But all anyone can seem to talk about is the pink. A luscious, deep hue wraps around the upholstery seating, spills down onto the carpeting and up the curtains. "I liked how few architectural associations pink had," says Maltzan. "It feels open and possible." The one exception to this palette is made for the director himself: A brown leather chair situated midtheater, the best seat in the house, is permanently reserved for Wilder. **ALISSA WALKER**



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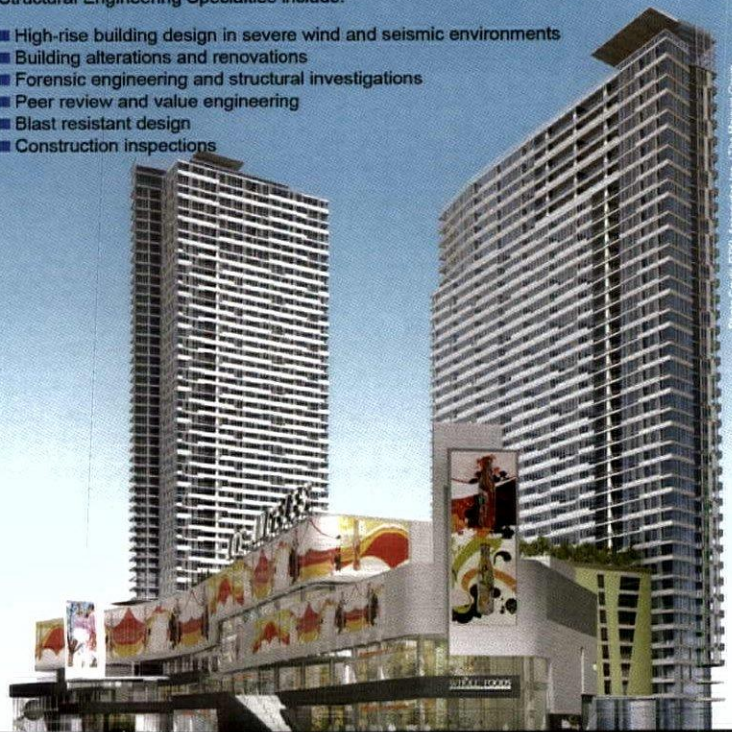


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## SEATTLE'S NEW PARK RECLAIMS WATERFRONT



## OLYMPIC PARK A WINNER

For more than 30 years, Seattle has been quietly redefining our ideas about public space. In 1973, the city created a preservation and development authority to save the hundred-year-old Pike's Place Market. Above the food stalls, the authority created apartments that are reserved for low-income tenants, though they could easily be rented to a gentrifying population eager to live on the waterfront. In 2004 Seattle opened its main public library, a brilliant design by Rem Koolhaas that reinvigorates the heart of the city. And now, the Seattle Art Museum (SAM), together with the Trust for Public Land (and with considerable financial help from several Microsoft executives) has created the Olympic Sculpture Park, which spans transportation infrastructure and reconnects the city to its shoreline, which has long dominated by industry.

The New York architecture firm Weiss/Manfredi won a competition in 2000 to transform a brownfield—a fuel oil station and trolley garage had occupied the site—into a 9-acre park. A bit like Chicago's Millennium Park, the park is a plinth that sits atop infrastructure, in this case, a busy four-lane street, Elliot Avenue, and active train tracks. The site slopes down over 40 feet, ultimately reaching a newly created rocky beach that serves as a habitat for salmon in Puget Sound.

On its upland side, bordering a new residential neighborhood, a stainless steel and glass pavilion housing a café, information booth, and art gallery serves as the park's formal entranceway. The glazed pavilion, which sits above a parking garage, is a simple and elegantly detailed barnlike backdrop for art, glowing at night and in gray rainy weather. A terrace under the pavilion's expansive steel roof spills into the sculpture garden, which leads into the park.

Visitors traverse the multilevel park via a walkway that zigzags back and forth and up and down across the sloping, rectangular site. Triangles of terraced grass between the paths provide elevated settings for the museum's sculpture, some of which were already owned by SAM and several pieces that were commissioned for the park. At the point where the park crosses over the train tracks is Miami-born artist Teresita Fernández's colorful laminated glass bridge canopy. The site-specific commission has a seating area that looks towards Puget

Sound and down along the tracks. Weiss/Manfredi made the strategic decision not to bury the road and tracks entirely, and instead created partial cuts that make the existing infrastructure visible from the park above, without impacting the quiet and solitary pathway through the park.

The art is sometimes lost against its spectacular backdrop, but in a few places, it clearly comes before nature. The most prominent example of this is where a path of steps leads from the entrance to a landing below. The steps double as amphitheater seating, framing a view of Richard Serra's immense Cor-Ten steel sculpture *Wake* (2004).

Another of the park's best art-viewing spaces is a valley discreetly hidden by the terraces that slope down from the walking path to meet Elliot Avenue. One side contains Mark Dion's *Neukom Vivarium* (2004–06), a greenhouse commissioned by SAM covering a 60-foot-long decaying nurse log that was pulled from the floor of a local forest. Across the avenue another terrace doubles as a ramp for Claus Oldenburg's iconic rolling *Type Writer Eraser Scale 10* (1998) and a newly planted forest with two Tony Smith steel pieces called *Wandering Rocks* (1967–74) and *Stringer* (1967–1968 and 1999).

Recently, many architectural works have been described as merging with landscape, evoked by terms like "landarchitecture" or as collected in Aaron Betsky's book *Landscapers: Building with the Land* (Thames & Hudson, 2002). In projects like the Museum of the Earth in Ithaca, New York (2004), Weiss/Manfredi has proven their deftness with working with the land. The Olympic Sculpture Park is an example of how small set pieces can change an entire city's relationship to the land and sea.

**WILLIAM MENKING**

The park bridges the edge of the city and the waterfront, which has been cut off by a busy roadway and train tracks (above). The information center, café, and art gallery, near the entrance, picks up the zigzag motif that defines movement through the park (below).



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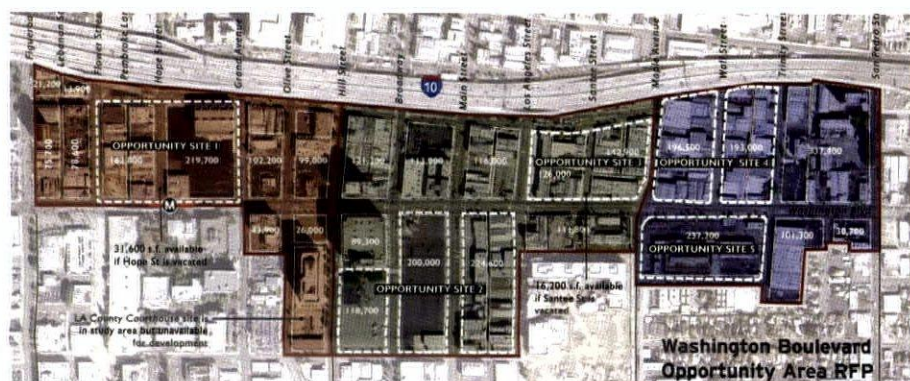
**DOWNTOWN LA GETS BOOST** continued from front page each about 170,000 square feet, in an area serving as a bridge between South Los Angeles, one of the city's oldest suburban neighborhoods, and downtown. Anchored by the Blue Line metro, the area is dominated by mom-and-pop businesses, and contains LA Mart, LA Trade Tech, and the county's traffic court.

The CRA/LA is hoping to transform the neighborhood from a postindustrial wasteland of parking lots and vacant sidewalks to a more vibrant pedestrian-friendly commercial area for both commuters and residents. The area is divided into three zones, each with different use requirements and development sizes. The agency hopes to select four or five projects in lieu of a single master development scheme because, according to Josh Rohmer of the CRA/LA, they fear that a single developer would result in large, international retail clients that might overlook the local character of the neighborhood and existing commercial activity. The deadline for RFPs is March 16.

"At this point we are asking for proposals that won't be allowed by city planning," said Rohmer. He added that the CRA/LA is committed to working with the city to change the industrial zoning of the area and to help with site acquisition and obtaining the necessary entitlements and other resources. The CRA/LA cannot provide any funding but will assist developers by negotiating back-end incentives such as tax breaks and long-term refunds.

The Washington Boulevard Opportunity Area has in part spurred the Los Angeles Department of City Planning's review of the Southeast Community Plan that began in fall 2006. The review includes a detailed analysis of the current zoning and neighborhood character, and a series of 120 community meetings, with the goal of introducing a new community plan that deals more specifically with the neighborhood by 2009. In the interim, no urban design guidelines exist for Washington Boulevard so its new look will be established by the design of the proposal approved by the CRA/LA.

**ASHLEY ZARELLA**



## OTHER MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

### Los Angeles

On February 13 the Los Angeles City Council and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors officially approved the \$2.05 billion, 9-acre **Grand Avenue** redevelopment in downtown. The 1.2-million-square-foot first phase of the project, masterplanned by Frank Gehry, will include two Gehry towers, a 16-acre park, streetscape improvements, retail, restaurants, a hotel, and housing. The developer, The Related Companies, said construction of the initial phase could start this October and finish by 2011. Despite opposition from local businesses and residents relating to government subsidies, and apprehension about changes to local zoning, the council and board approved \$95 million in public funds. This includes \$66 million in hotel and parking tax rebates from the city, \$4.6 million from the county, and \$24.4 million from the Community Redevelopment Agency. On January 25, the Mandarin Hotel Group agreed to manage the hotel component of the plan, which will occupy the first 20 floors of a 48-story tower designed by Gehry. This will be the first major project on the site and is scheduled to open in 2010.

### San Diego

The San Diego Redevelopment Agency is

currently reviewing submissions for two development sites totaling 1.6 acres in the **Linda Vista Redevelopment Project Area**. The sites are located near the corners of Linda Vista Road and Ulric Street. The area was first designated by the agency in 1972 to redevelop the Linda Vista Shopping Center. The city owns the two parcels, which will be developed for commercial use.

### San Francisco

Robin Chiang & Company has been selected for a \$72,000 contract to develop a conceptual streetscape plan for a segment of the **San Francisco Bay Trail**. The San Francisco-based architecture firm will be partnering with Livable City, CHS Consulting Group, KCA Engineers, and Merrill Morris Partners to design a portion of Cargo Way, part of the India Basin Industrial Park Redevelopment Project, and address issues of access, landscaping, stormwater management, and an improved entrance to Heron's Head Park, the Cargo Way, and Third Street Gateway.

The Catellus Development Group has been approved to move forward with the development of **Alameda Landing**, an 81-acre waterfront site that was formerly a U.S. Navy supply depot. The project will include 300,000 square feet of new retail, 400,000 square feet of office space, and 300 single-family homes and townhouses. Selected as master developer of the site in 1997, Catellus has also been active in the city's Mission Bay development. **AZ**

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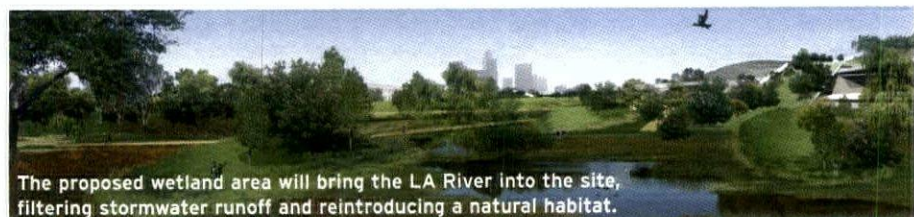


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The proposed wetland area will bring the LA River into the site, filtering stormwater runoff and reintroducing a natural habitat.

**CORNFIELD REVIVAL** continued from front page bought the property for \$30 million and then transferred ownership to the CDPR after undertaking remediation work. In 2005, the Annenberg Foundation commissioned artist Lauren Bon to produce a temporary public art project for the site. Evoking the site's history, Bon planted rows of corn as a symbol of its potential regeneration.

The winning design was "a truly collaborative effort," according to George Hargreaves, design director of Hargreaves Associates. His firm was responsible for the overall site plan and landscape design. Michael Maltzan concentrated on the park's architectural features, including four bridges that connect the site to the surrounding neighborhood, two to Broadway, one to Elysian Park, and one to Spring Street; and several buildings including a media center, café, environmental history center, and administrative building. The overall design adheres to the linear nature of the park by breaking it into three major components. The central portion consists of a large open space, the southern tip includes an urban plaza with a water fountain, and the northern tip seeks to integrate the park with the Los Angeles River by introducing a series of stepped storm water gardens. The park's adjacency to the river makes it significant to

the ongoing river revitalization project. "The ecological dialogue starts by bringing people in contact with the river, then bringing the river into the park," Hargreaves said.

The competition, overseen by the non-profit California State Parks Foundation, was funded by a \$200,000 grant from the Annenberg Foundation, which covered the \$25,000 stipend each finalist received.

Competition organizers insist that they selected a winning team, not a winning design. Funding for the site has not yet been secured, but a bond measure that passed in November, Proposition 84, could leverage \$400 million for river revitalization projects across the state. Hargreaves and Maltzan's proposal included a feasibility study that estimates the cost of building their proposal at \$50 million. Sara Feldman, Southern California director of the California State Park Foundation, said, "The foundation is currently evaluating whether or not to we want develop a fundraising campaign for the park."

A final design is expected to be released in fall 2007, and a tentative opening date is set for 2010. An 18-acre interim park, which includes recreation facilities and an amphitheatre, was completed on site last October and will close as soon as construction begins for the final park plan.

GUNNAR HAND

#### ART ON TRACK continued from front page

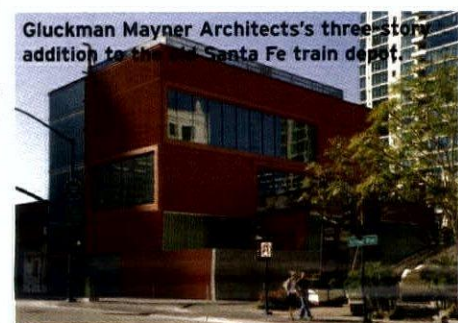
For the Jacobs Building, which houses the art, Gluckman did what he does best: simplicity. He preserved the former baggage building's cavernous heights, masonry walls, steel columns and beams, and arched and clerestory windows. He quietly inserted mechanical systems, seismic steel supports, and a new raw (but now level) concrete floor. The space is perfect for large-scale site-specific works, which are exactly what the museum has put inside. These include a series of rough steel cubes by Richard Serra, an elaborate elastic hanging sculpture (filled with various spices) by Brazilian artist Ernesto Neto, an outdoor vertical LED light sculpture by Jenny Holzer, and bright-colored works affixed to the building's walls and windows by Scottish artist Richard Wright. The small Wertz Gallery holds the museum's collection of masterpieces by the likes of Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, and Frank Stella.

For the Copley Building, which contains administrative offices, educational facilities, and curatorial offices, Gluckman built a cube-shaped structure clad in alternating horizontal window bands (made of clear and channel glass), and burnt-orange corrugated metal. The latter is an homage to the industrial materials used to build the Santa Fe Depot, as well as to the colors and shapes of its Spanish tile roof. By installing mechanical systems for the whole facility above this building, Gluckman was able to maximize art space in the Jacobs Building. The Copley's exposed concrete stairways contain a mesmerizing light sculpture called *Utility Filigree* by local artist Roman de Salvo, a composition of electrical conduits,

boxes, and connectors that was commissioned for the space.

Catellus Corporation, the Santa Fe Railway Company's real estate branch, donated the baggage depot and the land for the Copley Building to the city. The city's Centre City Development Corporation transferred the baggage depot to the museum in 1999 and the land for the Copley Building in 2001. Gluckman was named architect in 2000.

The new space complements the museum's original La Jolla location, a 1916 Irving Gill residence that became a museum in 1941 and that Venturi Scott Brown expanded in 1996. The new MCASD sits across the street from the museum's other downtown location, inside a Helmut Jahn-designed office building. Artists Robert Irwin and Richard Fleischner with San Diego architect David Raphael Singer designed that space in 1993. So now visitors can take the train—yes the train! in California!—to both of these art destinations. As MCASD director Hugh Davies told Amtrak (which shares a loading dock with the museum) early in the process, "It's the best waiting room in the country." SL



Gluckman Mayner Architects' three-story addition to the Santa Fe train depot.

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Any press is good press—just ask Culver City-based Lorcan O'Herlihy. His firm, Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects (LOHA), has long been one of the better outfits in Los Angeles. But its profile was raised following the outcry over its commission to design a new multifamily condo building, called Habitat 825, next to the 1922 Rudolph Schindler Studio and House in West Hollywood. Many Schindler fans hated the idea, fearing it would undermine the historic building's presence. LA's MAK Center, which is housed in the Schindler House, even went so far as to hold a competition in 2003 to suggest alternatives. But when LOHA's design was unveiled later that year, it was well received. The renderings showed a well-detailed project that was less bulky than many had anticipated it would be, and its lower north profile avoided casting shadows on the Schindler House.

Developers took notice and have since flooded the office with commissions. Most of the new work is

multifamily residences, which is a significant jump in scale from the single-family houses LOHA specialized in before. And most are in West Hollywood, where since 1996, planning commissioner John Chase has taken dramatic steps to promote good architecture, including intensive design reviews.

According to O'Herlihy, the projects are rooted in spatial rather than formal complexity. Most are rectilinear and on the surface quite rational. But in plan and program they are more complex than they seem at first. Room plans shift throughout a building, taking on varying configurations and orientations to maximize light and spatial variety. Outdoor spaces are carved out in the midst of indoor ones, providing unique settings that bring nature directly into the building. Dividing walls between units are shifted to blur the usually straight lines between tenants. "It is possible to merge spatial inventiveness with formal restraint," said O'Herlihy. **SL**

#### 1 Habitat 825

The building draws on the clean modernist forms of the Schindler House next door and the elegant way in which Schindler connected discrete fragments into a unified whole. In plan, the steel- and wood-frame structure is divided in two by a courtyard, which creates a white-colored north section and a black-colored south section. Inside, the 19 units face different directions and have varied layouts, so they resemble mismatched puzzle pieces. This allows light to enter the apartments at many angles and help add variety to the building.

Horizontal bands of wood and cement board on the facade emphasize the building's horizontality and make another oblique connection to the Schindler House. Habitat's south side is cut away at its uppermost points to allow more sunlight to reach its north side, which O'Herlihy kept lower in deference to its neighbor. A large cut-out in the white volume keeps the wall from seeming

monolithic. In the courtyard between the two volumes, there is a small reflecting pool with thin off-center columns O'Herlihy included to suggest a bamboo forest, which in turn is a reference to bamboo plantings at the Schindler House. Habitat will open this March.

#### 2 Willoughby Lofts

In this West Hollywood project, which will be complete in 2008, O'Herlihy chose not to stack the mezzanines over one end of a narrow double-height space, as is often the case with lofts. Instead, each mezzanine was pushed into the adjacent space. This created a series of rooms that indent into and protrude from the party walls.

Because future development around projects like this one can be unpredictable, O'Herlihy brought the exterior open spaces inside the individual units, with a private open space surrounded on all sides by the rest of the interior. These "outdoor rooms" funnel daylight inside and can be

used as extensions of adjacent living spaces, private gardens, or outdoor patios.

#### 3 Gardner 1050

Located just below Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood, this was the first of O'Herlihy's multifamily projects. It consists of eight units of varying configurations organized around a rectangular courtyard. Each unit has about 125 square feet of private patio space. O'Herlihy treated the horizontal cedar plank cladding as a rain screen, so it is pulled out slightly from the walls' waterproofing. An exterior staircase is enclosed in translucent channel glass, which allows soft light into the complex's central courtyard. It opened last winter.

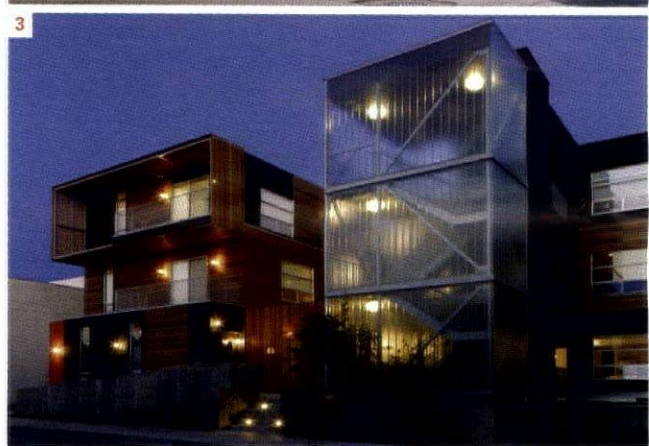
#### 4 Norton Lofts

When it is complete later this year, the eight-unit Norton Lofts in West Hollywood will take O'Herlihy's penchant for interlocking spaces to a new level. Each of the units is L-shaped and has private patio and roof access, as

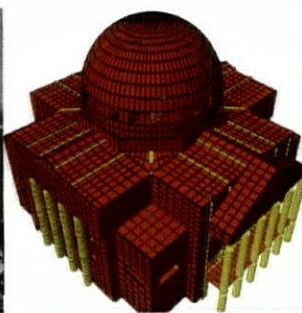
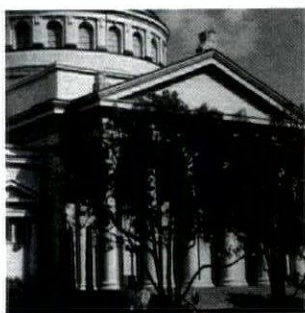
well as double-height ceilings. Where stacked units touch, O'Herlihy shifted the volumes to create openings for green spaces and a skylight. The architect's creative stacking and shaping allow light and views to be admitted on at least three sides of each unit.

#### 5 SMB 28

SMB 28 is just down Santa Monica Boulevard from the Gardner project, and when it's complete in June 2008, it will add some interesting twists to the traditional mixed-use development. Each of its 28 residential units is located along a series of landscaped courtyards, one level up from the street-level commercial spaces, which frees them from the need for lobbies and long hallways. The facades are made of a ½-to-1-inch-thick cast aluminum foam called Alusion, which has many small openings that let filtered light into the building. On the roof, a series of metal mesh volumes will be the support structures for climbing vines and other plants.

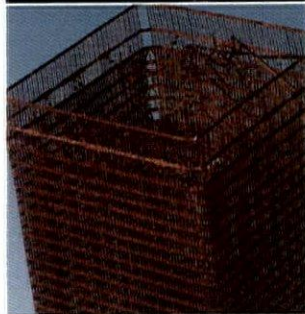






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## AT DEADLINE

# ANGELS FLIGHT TAKES OFF AGAIN

LA officials announced on January 23 that "the world's shortest railway," the Angels Flight in downtown LA, will reopen this summer. (It closed in 2001 following a collision that killed one passenger.) The landmark funicular recently received \$2.6 million from the city for its restoration, which will include enhanced safety measures. The original line was built in 1901 to connect downtown with the residential neighborhood at the top of Bunker Hill, but was dismantled in 1969 as the area's residential population declined. It was rebuilt in 1996, one block from its original site.

# LA RIVER CLEANS UP

On February 2, the LA City Council's Ad Hoc Committee on the Los Angeles River released a draft plan to revitalize a 32-mile stretch of the river from Canoga Park through downtown. The plan outlines strategies to support economic development for communities adjacent to the river, improve public access, and provide recreation and open space without endangering LA's flood protection. The committee hopes to have a finalized plan ratified by Earth Day (April 22), after a period of public review and redesign.

# NEW HOSPITAL FOR UCSF

Healthcare design experts Anshen + Allen have entered into contract negotiations with UCSF to design a \$1.3 billion children's, women's, and cancer hospital complex at UCSF Mission Bay campus. The complex will be the first ground-up hospital built in San Francisco in several decades, according to UCSF. William McDonough + Partners will provide "green" design consultation on the project. Groundbreaking is scheduled for 2011 with completion in 2014.

# WAVE OF THE FUTURE

National online voting for the History Channel's *City of the Future* design competition closed February 3, and Chicago's UrbanLab was pronounced the winner and recipient of a \$10,000 grand prize on February 8. ARO's plan for New York came in second, and the scheme for LA by Eric Owen Moss in third. Led by Sarah Dunn and Martin Felsen, UrbanLab's team designed a series of "eco-boulevards" that passively clean and recycle water drawn from nearby Lake Michigan.

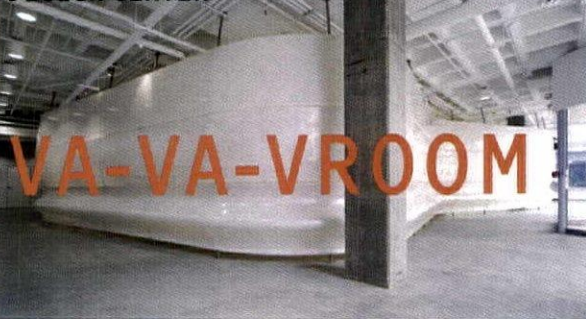
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## GEORGE YU ARCHITECTS TAKES A CUE FROM CAR DESIGN WITH HONDA'S ADVANCED DESIGN CENTER



It's smooth, aerodynamic, and designed for Honda. But it's not a Civic or an Accord. It's George Yu Architects' Honda Advanced Design Center, which opened in December in Pasadena.

The center is in a storefront space inside a historic commercial building in the city's Old Town (the building's upper floors were recently converted to condos). Honda R&D Americas now designs most of its concept cars inside the space. There's a good reason why the 5,700-square-foot design lab—bordered by curving white acrylic panels reaching almost to the ceiling—is reminiscent of a car. The firm designed it using Honda's own fabricating tools, usually made to produce wood and

fiberglass prototype cars. First Yu designed the space in Rhino, then specs were sent directly to Honda's (and its vendor Aircraft Windshield's) milling machines. The translucent panels are attached via vertical and horizontal butt joints, curving around the lab like a cocoon and folding in and out like a prototype car. The pearl acrylic, imported from Germany, glows and changes colors in different light. At different angles, it goes from white to yellow to green to purple to blue. Outside the acrylic walls the space also contains a slick glass-walled conference room, a kitchen, and storage spaces.

The lab is top secret, but there is a small exhibition space between the acrylic

walls and the building's windows. Right now the space has prototypes of Honda's "gravity" racer cars (which run without engines), as well as some of its newer prototypes, all beautiful models made with the company's machines.

"There's a lot of artistry that architects can learn from car people," said Yu, who admitted he's envious of the facilities car designers have at their disposal. "It's pure economics. We could never afford anything like this." Yu has made a niche out of producing design spaces for major corporations. He also designed Sony Design Centers in Santa Monica and Shanghai, and a number of IBM e-business centers—great commissions, Yu said, because of the creative freedom given by those company's higher ups, who see the spaces as good investments.

SL



BENNY CHAN / FOTOWORKS

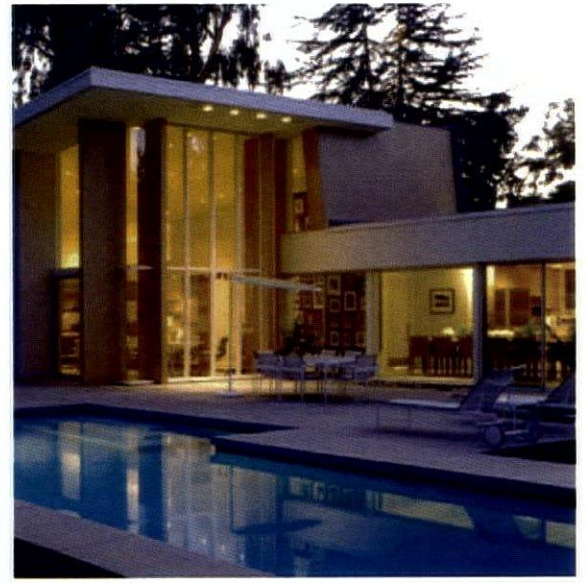




TOBY LONG DESIGN, CALIFORNIA



WILLIAM HEFNER ARCHITECTS, CALIFORNIA

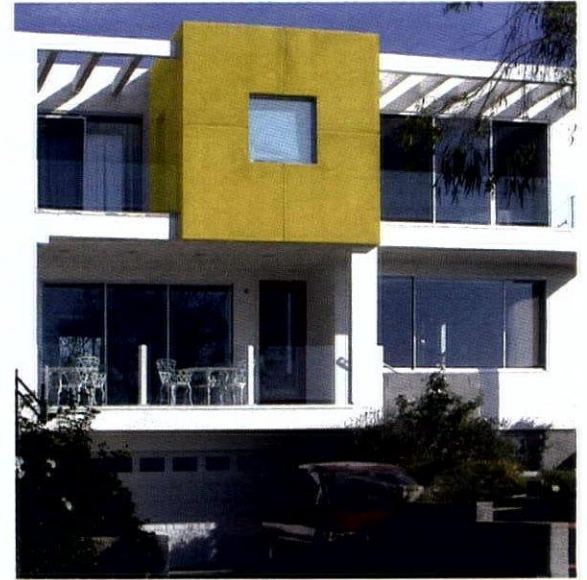
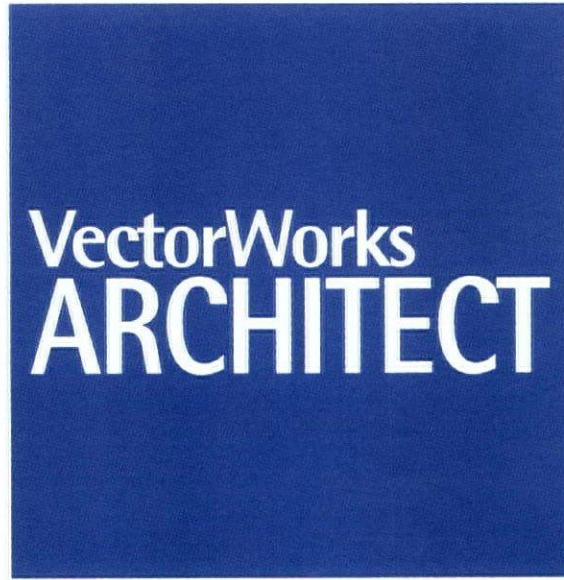


RIOS CLEMENTI HALE STUDIOS, CALIFORNIA

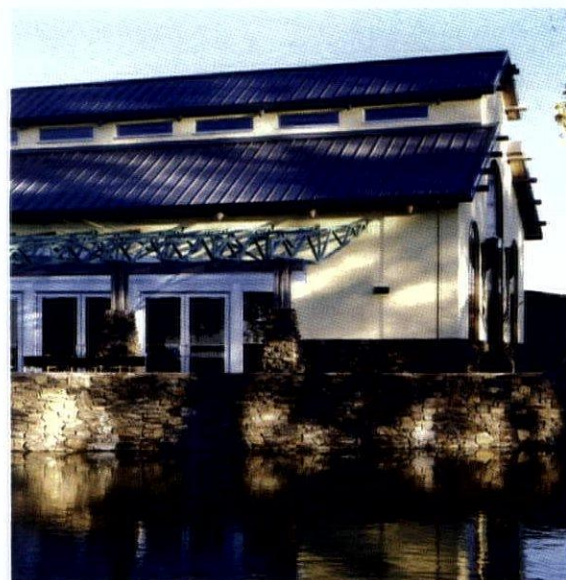


DESIGNARC (LA), CALIFORNIA

PHOTOS BY BENNY CHAN FOTOWORKS



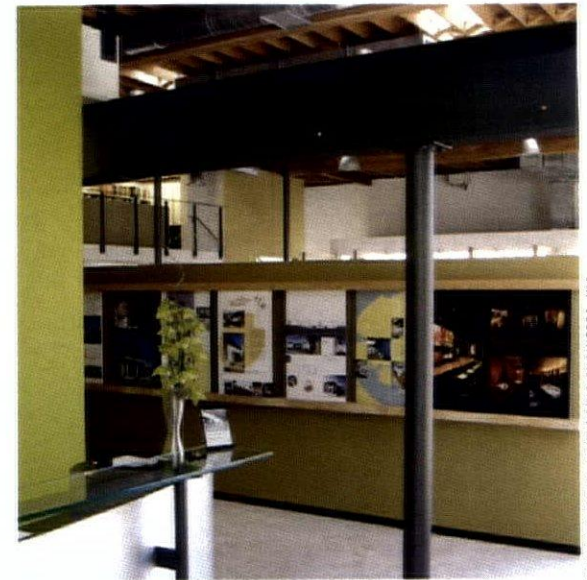
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## THE BIRTH OF COOL

The power of art districts to revitalize downtrodden urban quarters has been proven time and again. Here's a look at some of California's newest art districts, what effect they're having on cities, and how architects and urban planners have helped them emerge.

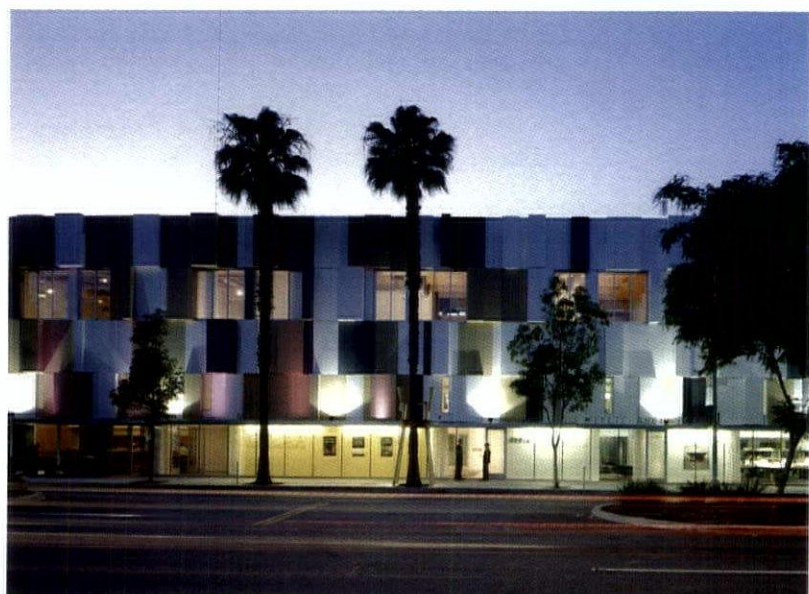
Art galleries usually hop around cities like ping pong balls, following low rents, large spaces, and hip zip codes. Once they've landed they can do much more than raise the coolness factor of a neighborhood. They often usher in economic regeneration—which can admittedly turn into gentrification—and inspire improvements to neighborhood streetscapes and urban fabric, not to mention providing a lot of work for architects. As one gallery owner recently commented, artists are the shock troops for redevelopment. So how do cities attract galleries and help harness their power for development while not alienating existing residents? We look at some of the newest emerging arts districts in California to find out.

Most of the six case studies featured here have used the requisite development tools of zoning and building code to bring in galleries, which have in turn helped these districts consolidate a new image. But some, like Frogtown near the LA River, seem to have popped up all by themselves. That neighborhood is more popular for artist studios and lofts than for galleries, but that is changing, a common progression for arts districts. Gallery Row in downtown LA, simply used a neighborhood name change to draw galleries. Some are in beautiful historic quarters, but most are located in former industrial zones, tough neighborhoods, or abandoned commercial districts that are magnets for artists and galleries because of their low rents and grand spaces. And let's face it, most artists are turned on by grit and edge.

This is just a small sample of arts districts. Emerging areas like NOHO (North Hollywood) and Highland Park in LA, Little Italy in San Diego, and Jingtowntown in the Oakland area, are other examples of the potent impact that art is having on redevelopment in California and across the country.

**SAM LUBELL IS AN'S CALIFORNIA EDITOR.**

The MODAA Building designed by SPF is housed the firm's own studio as well as an art gallery and live/work lofts (below). Two galleries by architect Peter Zellner, LAXART on La Cienega Boulevard and Project Gallery on Venice Boulevard (right).



JOHN EDWARD LINDON / COURTESY SPF-A

## CULVER CITY ARTS DISTRICT CULVER CITY

Over 20 new galleries have popped up in Culver City over the last two and a half years, prompting the city to formally designate the area around the intersection of Washington and La Cienega boulevards as the Culver City Art District in 2006. Until recently, the stretch, on the eastern edge of Culver City, had been lined with gritty auto body shops, machine buildings, and furniture and upholstery stores. The shift toward art began with the relocation of highly acclaimed gallery Blum and Poe a few years ago. After its success the floodgates opened, according to Christine Byers of Culver City Cultural Affairs, and galleries began gobbling up the area's cavernous and cheap defunct manufacturing spaces. Culver City helped things along by allowing quicker permit approvals than the city of LA, and by funding streetscape and facade improvements on Washington (La Cienega is actually part of LA), and phasing out the chop

shops. With banners and signs, a city-sponsored website that features a detailed gallery map ([www.ccgalleryguide.com](http://www.ccgalleryguide.com)), and a well-attended art night last June, the district is one of the fastest growing in the country, rivaling nearby Bergamot in Santa Monica in terms of the county's highest concentration of galleries.

Architects have played a role in designing the new galleries, including Peter Zellner (Project Gallery, Walter Maciel Gallery, LAXART, Kinkead Gallery), David Jeno of Perez Design Group (Koplin Del Rio), and Ned Engs of Culver City-based E4 (Corey Helford Gallery). Most have preserved the brick walls, wood beams, truss ceilings, and other features of the cavernous industrial spaces, allowing them to contrast with the slick white walls that most galleries require.

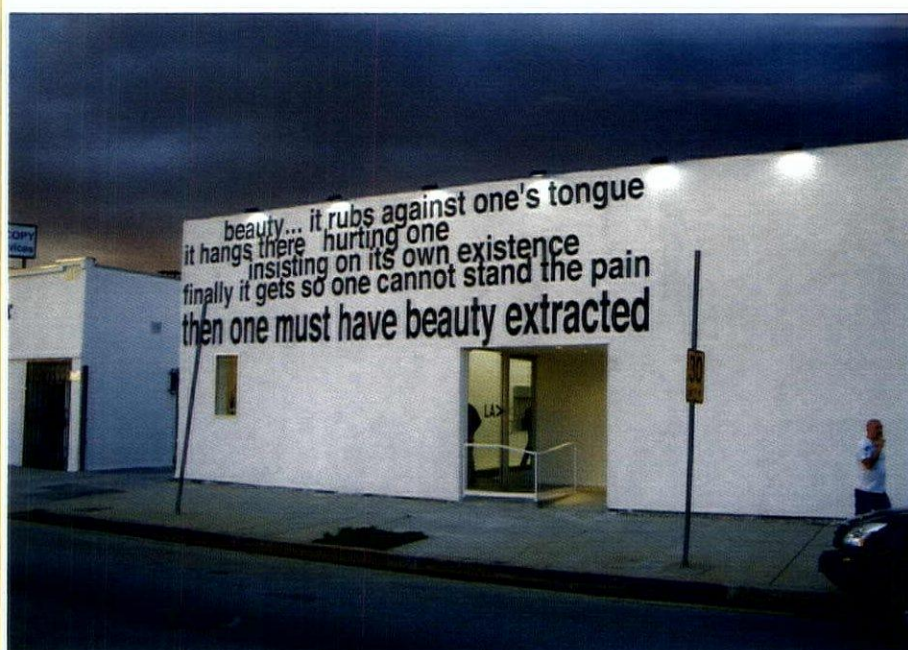
One completely new project is a 28,000-square-foot building, located on Washington Boulevard, the first development project of the LA architecture firm SPF:a. The project houses the firm's own sizeable studio, seven live/work studios, and the Museum of Design, Art, and Architecture (MODAA), a venue that showcases a wide range of art, curated by the architects at SPF:a. The building features an inventive cement fiberboard facade composed of multicolored, multitextured, and multi-sized squares that also vary in relief. Completed in 2005, the

building also contains a hip eatery called Wilson, owned by Brian Wilson's son Michael.

More is coming soon. Johnson Fain is helping the city's planning department assemble a planning document, due out in June, said Susan Yun, senior planner for Culver City. The document will likely zone for continued artisan spaces near the art district, especially on back streets, and encourage less intensive commercial development near residential neighborhoods. "We've talked to shops and the community, and they say they like the artisan uses in their area," said Yun. The only problem with the area's newfound popularity, she pointed out, is traffic on gallery nights, which the department is addressing.

The plan will also call for three new "catalytic" developments further west, on 40 acres near the intersection of Washington and National boulevards. The projects, still very conceptual at this point, will be developed by Urban Partners, Edward Zucker, and Fairfield and Brentwood Capital. Yun said the city is sensitive about not pricing out its residents with all this new development.

"We are working on a plan that does not drive real estate values too high," said Yun. "We don't want developers to build townhouses in these industrial buildings either. After all, this isn't suburbia." **SL**



ZELLNERPLUS



## RIVERSIDE ARTS DISTRICT RIVERSIDE

Much of Riverside, California's downtown looks like a 1960s streetscape frozen in time. No wonder. In the '60s the planners decided to "improve" the city by making its once-bustling Main Street a pedestrian promenade for several blocks. The result: Urban vibrancy was replaced with a closed-off, even less successful retail environment.

But a block-long stretch is becoming an arts sanctuary, and much of the city is getting a cultural makeover, thanks to the efforts of the University of California at Riverside (UCR) and the city of Riverside. Located about 2 miles from downtown, the university—encouraged by city officials—decided to move many of its arts exhibition facilities downtown. The school's California Museum of Photography had already moved to Main Street in 1990. Last fall UCR opened the Sweeney Gallery (designed by Peter Zellner) next to the museum, on what's now called the UCR Arts Block, and it

is now planning an entirely new facility, the Culver Arts Center, set to open in 2009. This will join more than ten art galleries already in the area and the Riverside Art Museum.

The city chipped in \$2 million for the Culver Arts Center and has invested \$10 million in improving the pedestrian mall's infrastructure and appearance. (Local landscape architect Ian Davidson was behind the mall overhaul.) The city has supplied much more in arts and culture funding throughout the city. It spent \$30 million to renovate the old Fox Theater nearby (designed by LA firm Richard McCann, to be completed 2008), contributed funds to Riverside Community College's School for the Arts (by the Phoenix office of Gould Evans; no schedule set), and has hired the LA-based Historic Resources Group to plan the rehabilitation of other culturally significant buildings in the area. For the past few years, the city has earned about \$150,000 yearly from a hotel tax, which supports arts marketing and coordination. Mayor Ron Loveridge has dubbed Riverside the City of the Arts, and in January, the city appointed its first cultural manager, Jonathan Yorba. The Riverside Arts Council has developed a web site dedicated to the region's art ([www.inlandarts.com](http://www.inlandarts.com)).

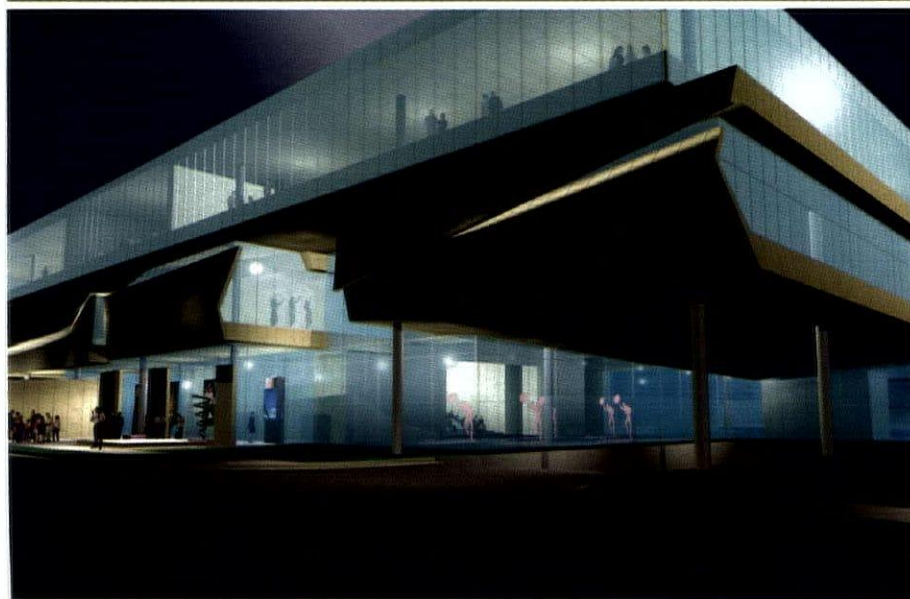
"When we looked at how we could compete with other cities

and the new lifestyle centers, we thought our two greatest assets were our architecture and our arts and cultural institutions," said Dom Betro, Riverside councilmember in charge of downtown.

On the UCR Arts Block, the Sweeney Gallery is a modern space built inside an old bank building with lofty ceilings. The Culver Arts Center will occupy the 1920s Rouse Department Store, which is being renovated by LA firms Chu + Gooding Architects and Harley Ellis Devereaux. It will contain spaces for music, dance, and visual arts, education, as well as research and office spaces. The Rouse building's facade, with its double French doors, wrought-iron balconies, and Spanish tilework, will be preserved, while most of the open-plan interior will be updated with industrial materials like aluminum and raw steel, as well as walnut wood. A central atrium will contain a multipurpose exhibition venue.

Lastly, Beverly Hills developer Alan Mruvka has broken ground on a slew of live/work artists spaces along Market Street, a few blocks from the UCR block. This is a first for the city. And since there are barely any downtown residents, all this action won't price neighbors out. **SL**

*Chu + Gooding's sketch of the Culver Arts Center (below) and Gould Evans' Riverside Arts Center (bottom).*



COURTESY CHU + GOODING (TOP) AND GOULD EVANS (BOTTOM)

## FROGTOWN LOS ANGELES

When Elysian Valley was sheared off nearby Silver Lake by the soaring interchange of the 2 and 5 freeways, it rendered the neighborhood along the LA River almost literally an island. This thin wedge of Los Angeles, known colloquially as Frogtown after a legendary population explosion of amphibians in the 1960s, has become home to a small but thriving community of artists, designers, and architects who enjoy the feeling of perceived isolation.

For almost a hundred years, Elysian Valley's working-class community has been clustered densely in a grid of bungalows. (Locals aren't fond of the appellation Frogtown, which refers to a local gang.) "These are long-term residents," said architect Tracy Stone, who moved into a live/work space there three years ago. "Most have been in the same houses for decades, and many used to work in the neighborhood." The relationship between residential and industrial uses is still evident in the swath of warehouses that sits between the houses and the river, housing businesses as diverse as an FAA engine testing facility and the Dolly Madison Bakery.

Slowly, some of the warehouses and factories have given way to creative spaces, but when Stone and members of her

office began to organize the first Frogtown Art Walk for November 17, 2006, they only knew of a handful. "We weren't even sure how many artists were in the area," said Stone. "People heard of [the Art Walk] by word of mouth and kept coming out of the woodwork." Seventeen studios opened their doors that night, among them, residents of the Blake Art Lofts (a mix of painters, sculptors and photographers), the Lil' Frogtown Gallery, the only true gallery in the area (though more are being planned), as well as architects, builders, and local business owners. "The turnout was remarkable," said Stone, who noted that many people who came had never even heard of the neighborhood before.

"The area has always been attractive to artists because it has industrial zoning," said Patricia Dieffenderfer, who has served as the community's city planner since 2000. "While this is happening organically, it's not the official plan." The land-use plan she implemented in 2000 for Elysian Valley, Silver Lake, and Echo Park determined that a designated arts district did not best serve the residents in the area.

What Frogtown does have, however, is proximity to the LA

River. Renewed interest in the waterfront makes it ripe for residential development, and one of the first new projects along the river—a three story, 56-unit condominium complex called River Lofts, designed by Culver City-based Richard Berliner—has been proposed for the neighborhood's far north corner. But equal attention has also been devoted to Frogtown's public space; perched on the edge of the reforested "soft-bottom" corridor of the LA River, and dotted with Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy projects including the Elysian Valley Gateway Park and Marsh Street Park, recreational destinations continue to nibble at Frogtown's corners.

For the moment, however, the anonymous factor that lures creatives to Frogtown's quiet streets remains intact. "I think people who like Frogtown like to be on the edge, out of sight," said John Conneely, a design-builder. "You can access civilization while not having to be a part of it."

**ALISSA WALKER LIVES IN HOLLYWOOD AND IS EDITOR OF THE DESIGN BLOG UNBEIGE.**

*Tracy Stone's architecture firm, T&S Studio, features installations like this (see page 12) by Andrew Weiss.*



COURTESY TAS STUDIO

## LOWER TELEGRAPH OAKLAND

The area around Telegraph and 23rd Street in Oakland began changing a few years ago, following the well-established pattern of cheap-rent-seeking artists and developers taking over neglected buildings. The once-thriving city center suffered typical late-20th-century white flight but is eager to have its downtown repopulated. Since 2002, Alameda County has been offering cash incentives to those who restore and remodel blighted buildings, and the Oakland Community and Economic Development Agency has been working to stimulate investment in nine redevelopment areas. The Lower Telegraph art corridor falls within one of these areas.

Artists have long colonized the city's industrial western edge, fashioning live/work studios from a rich industrial building

stock. Now a new constellation of galleries is taking advantage of existing storefronts in the city's former commercial center.

Gallery owner, artist, and contractor Kevin Slagle opened the Ego Park Gallery on 23rd Street in 2001, in a space that had been used for storage for the previous 25 years. Property owner Haig Mardikian received a grant through the Community and Economic Development Agency's Facade Improvement Program, which paid for half of the exterior renovations to Slagle's gallery. Three neighboring galleries received similar financial support. Many newcomers to the area have also taken advantage of the Downtown Oakland Tenant Improvement Program, which offers \$10 per square foot toward the cost of interior renovations to commercial spaces. The city also provides an additional \$5,000 toward design assistance if businesses use architects who are preapproved by the city.

Streets once deserted after dark come to life the first Friday of each month when galleries stay open late. The new scene, which can draw up to 500 gallerygoers, is called Art Murmur and has gained the attention of the City of Oakland Arts

Commission. The commission is considering designating the area south of Art Murmur—which encompasses an old Sears department store and the 1928 Fox Theatre, now undergoing renovation to become the Oakland School of the Arts—as an arts and entertainment district, called Art Walk. The goal is to bring even more art to the area, including public art and lighting schemes.

Berkeley resident Brian Laczo, a consultant on the effort, envisions light projections that outline public spaces and enliven streets.

"The creative energy is coming from the artists themselves," said Laczo. "[With Art Murmur], they created something out of nothing."

**LAURI PUCHALL WRITES AN ARCHITECTURE COLUMN FOR THE EAST BAY MONTHLY.**

*The Ego Park Gallery was among the first in the area.*



TURK KAUFMAN



## GALLERY ROW LOS ANGELES

In 2003, downtown Los Angeles' historic core was experiencing a resurgence of urban activity when artists Nic Cha Kim and Kjell Hagen approached their neighborhood council with an unusual request: that the area between 2nd and 9th streets and Spring and Main be designated Gallery Row. "This wouldn't have been remarkable if there were art galleries in the area. But, there were none. We saw the potential," recounted Hagen.

And they weren't the only ones. The LA City Council championed the proposal and within a year street signs were installed at the four corners of the newly designated Gallery Row.

Filled with abandoned and underutilized early-20th-century buildings, the new gallery district offered ample ground-floor spaces prime for conversion. And the price was right. Even while developers were converting the upper floors to live/work lofts, there didn't seem to be a clear plan for the storefronts.

"There was an availability of good spaces in these old Beaux

Arts buildings," said Bert Green, owner and gallery director of Bert Green Fine Art, one of the first galleries to open in the area. "You could draw parallels between the emergence of this district and Soho in the 1970s. The impulse is similar: access to premier spaces." Green was lucky to get a corner space with high concrete ceilings, an exposed concrete floor, and storefront windows.

Across the street from Green's gallery, in a space formally occupied by a Chinese restaurant, a group of artists opened Pharmaka, a nonprofit gallery. Rather than create a typical white box, the founding artists hired architect Christoph Kapeller to design something more akin to a stage, with original exposed floor and ceiling and a striking, curvilinear exhibition wall.

One of Pharmaka's founding artists and board members Shane Guffogg said when he first started working on the space, gangs ruled the adjacent street corner and junkies would drop their dirty needles on him from the upper floors of the building. A local who stopped in to see what all the construction was about scoffed when Guffogg told him they were going to install art.

But within a year of designation, Gallery Row had attracted 15 new art galleries, many of them raw, experimental spaces that are open by appointment only. Green organized the first self-guided Art Walk in 2004, and the event attracted not only art lovers but also hordes of new downtown

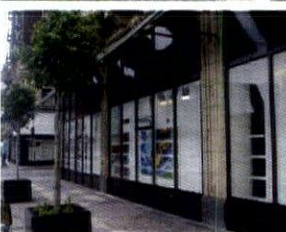
renters and home buyers. Their presence has paved the way for retail businesses and restaurants.

Gallery Row now touts nearly 30 art galleries representing a wide range of artists, while the demographics of the historic core have dramatically changed. Gangs no longer control the corner and young professionals and students from nearby SCI-Arc and the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising occupy new sidewalk cafés.

Green's Art Walks have become a monthly event that attracts Angelenos from all corners of the city. For many, it's their first introduction to downtown. "Now, architecture is one of the biggest draws for visitors who come down here," said Green. "It's becoming a center for the city again."

**ALLISON MILONIS LIVES IN DOWNTOWN LA AND WRITES ABOUT ARCHITECTURE, URBAN ISSUES, AND POLITICS.**

Pharmaka Gallery, designed by Christoph Kapeller.



COURTESY SHANE GUFFOGG

## CHUNG KING ROAD LOS ANGELES

A world away from Gallery Row, Chung King Road was hot before LA art collectors knew the city had a downtown. The modest, 500-foot pedestrian street in the heart of Chinatown has matured into one of the most interesting art scenes in the city.

In 1998, artists Roger Herman, Chris Sievernich, and Hubert Schmalix were looking for a creative space outside of their respective homes and studios when they stumbled upon Chung King Road. Like the rest of the once-thriving Chinatown, the street had fallen into decline and nearly half the storefronts were for rent.

Within a few months the three opened the Black Dragon Society, paying a mere \$500 a month in rent. The informal space was used for events like concerts, art exhibits, and fashion shows, and revelers usually spilled out into the street, which is strung with red glowing lanterns. "It's a magical place," said Herman. "It has this real character and feels very urban."

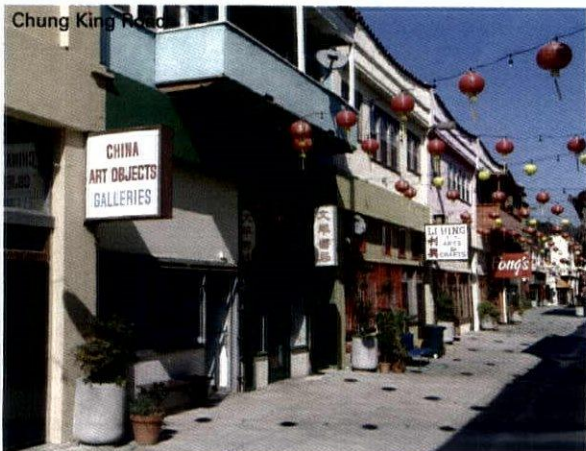
At the same time the Black Dragon Society was experimenting with their space, China Art Objects, a commercial gallery, opened two doors down. At first, local shop owners and residents of upstairs apartments were skeptical of these creative endeavors but within a year the little side street was drawing sizable crowds. Somewhat organically, Chung King Road morphed into a vital art scene.

Eleven spare, white galleries now line the street; their presence has improved business for adjacent shops selling Chinese porcelain and other trinkets. Unlike Gallery Row, the area is not being gentrified—at least not yet. "The Gallery Row scene is tougher, a bit more extreme," he said. "It's either expensive lofts or the homeless. Chinatown

seems more normal and is still underdeveloped."

Also unlike Gallery Row, Chung King Road doesn't have the same architectural allure, but what it lacks in midrise Beaux Arts buildings it gains in street-level charm. On nearby Gin Ling Way, another pedestrian-only street between Hill and Broadway, hip cafes and shops have opened alongside the Mountain Bar, a popular nightclub owned by artist Jorge Pardo, architect Mark McManus, and gallerist Steve Hanson. Pardo and McManus designed the interior, including the propeller-like paper lamps and textured walls. The bar plays host to a remarkable line up of events, including Forum Night at the Mountain, a monthly event sponsored by LA Forum for Architecture and Urban Design.

AM



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MORPHOSIS' SAN FRANCISCO  
FEDERAL BUILDING REINVENTS  
THE OFFICE TOWER

# SCREENS, FINS, AND FOLDS

If the elevator, as Rem Koolhaas wrote in *Delirious New York*, liberated horizontal space above the ground, it also encouraged the vertical repetition of floor plans and banal sectional articulation one finds in nearly every tall building made today. With office towers in particular, the arrangement has become so universal as to seem inevitable, defined by a low pancake section that houses mechanical systems between floors, row upon row of cubicles in an open plan, and private offices disposed around a sealed perimeter.

Enter the new San Francisco Federal Office Building by Morphosis, a masterful reinvention of the type. It is a project that aims for—and achieves—a new and more gracious equilibrium among human, natural, and spatial resources. Designed under the auspices of the General Services Administration to house an array of federal agencies such as the Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration, it occupies a large block along Mission Street, just west of the 1905 U.S. 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals.

Morphosis organized the form to create an animate street-level plaza that creates a new forecourt for the neoclassical courthouse next door. A number of low-rise buildings give structure to the plaza, including a freestanding cafeteria pavilion and a daycare center, while the far northern edge of the block is defined by a slender 18-story slab that is the first office building in the United States to forego mechanical cooling in favor of natural ventilation.

The Federal Building is a moment of frozen urban energy, visible from distant points in the city as a huge blade; up close, its glass fins, perforated stainless steel sunscreens, cascading trusses, and undulating canopies read as a kind of landslide. It is an urban intervention no less gutsy than Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano's Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, and its courage follows from the intelligence with which it interprets and provokes its context. Both are great buildings that seem to have come from another planet, but in their unsentimental embrace of the modern city, are mak-

ing life better on this one.

The San Francisco Federal Building's lean, tall lobby has been designed, along with the other common spaces in the building, to foster casual social interaction. There is amphitheater seating along the lobby steps, a central coffee bar, and a rough and ready material palette. On the 11<sup>th</sup> floor, a sky garden showcases a new light installation by James Turrell, and provides another area for office workers to gather or relax. Elevators skip floors, opening to triple-height landings with bridges and stairs that connect the various levels.

At each elevator landing, an enormous projecting window offers sweeping views across the southern part of the city. From the outside, these eye-like windows, distributed in a line down the building's center, evoke an extruded Cyclops as much as they do Marcel Breuer's Whitney Museum of American Art. They also evoke the federal government's bureaucratic, panoptic gaze over the city's still-dodgy South of Market district.

The tower's narrow floor plate, which is 60 feet wide by 320 feet long, allows a lot of daylight to penetrate, while operable windows provide cross-ventilation for the entire floor. Perforated sunscreen shades veil the south facing glass window wall and automated panels adjust to daily and seasonal climate fluctuations. Open workstations are situated along the perimeter, while private enclosed offices occupy the center of the floor. The wavy concrete ceiling adds a playful and expressive feeling to the overhead plane—this is a kinder, gentler neo-Brutalism—while also serving to channel fresh air across the floor.

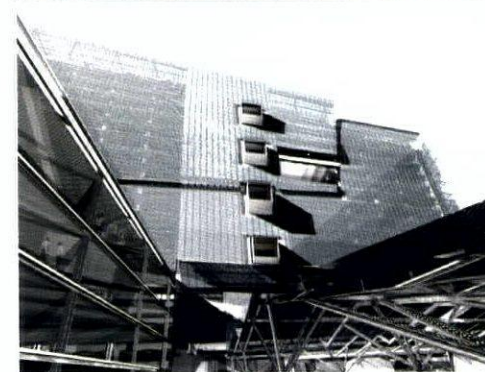
It is heartening to see an American office building so unambivalent about its intentions across a range of urban, architectural, and interior scales. However one may react to specific aspects of the design, it remains clear that the San Francisco Federal Building will point the way towards more sustainable office building practices, and will help us to assess the consequences of such a shift in thinking.

With this building, Morphosis set out to reimagine and invigorate daily life in a bureaucratic organization by intensifying the relationship that people have with their work environment and with each other. Rather than presenting itself as an object or, worse, an object for spectacular consumption and entertainment, it makes visible the connection between its formal strategies and the social, technical, and spatial conditions it mediates.

**HENRY URBACH IS THE HELEN HILTON RAISER  
CURATOR OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN AT THE  
SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF MODERN ART.**

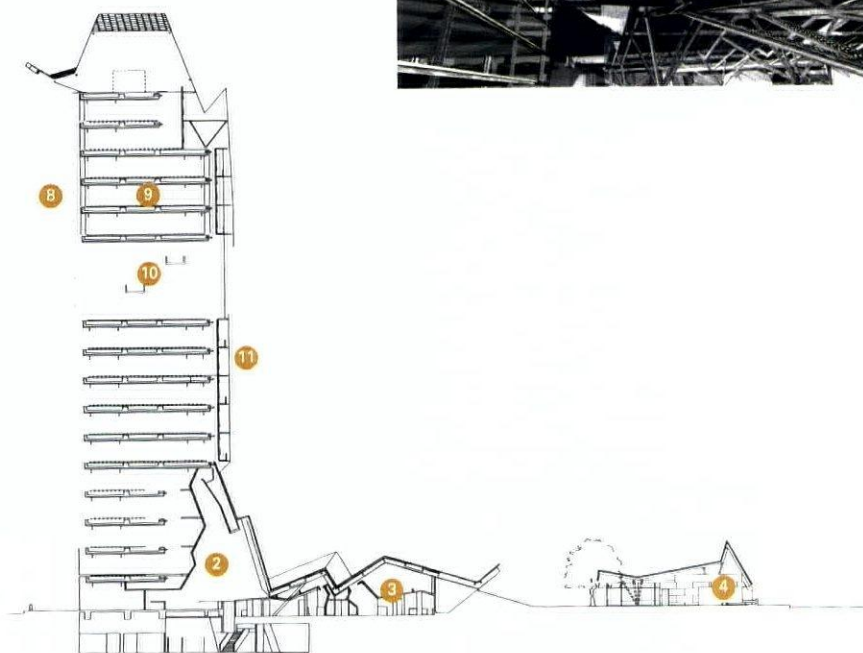
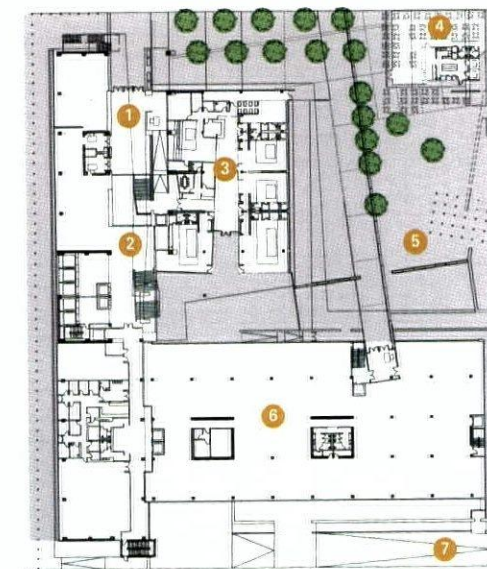


The combination of a narrow floor plate and innovative surface treatments like a stainless steel screen (right) on the south facade, fixed glass fins on the north facade (top and below right), and operable windows allow the San Francisco Federal Building to be naturally ventilated. The four eye-like windows (landings) on the north facade work as view platforms for the elevator landing inside.



Right: Site plan  
Far right: Section through sky garden

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Lobby
- 3 Daycare center
- 4 Cafeteria pavilion
- 5 Plaza
- 6 Access
- 7 Auto ramp entrance
- 8 Glass fins
- 9 Offices
- 10 Sky garden
- 11 Perforated metal shades



TIM GRIFFITH (TOP); BRANDON WELLING (CENTER, DETAILS) / COURTESY MORPHOSIS



## FEBRUARY

WEDNESDAY 21

## LECTURE

**Alex Schweder**  
**Edifice Event**  
7:00 p.m.  
SCI-Arc  
960 East 3rd St.,  
Los Angeles  
www.sciarc.edu

THURSDAY 22

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Damien Hirst**  
**Superstition**  
Gagosian Gallery  
456 North Camden Dr.,  
Los Angeles  
www.gagosian.com

## LECTURES

**Dave Weinstein**  
**Signature Architects of the**  
**San Francisco Bay Area**  
5:30 p.m.  
AIA San Francisco  
130 Sutter St.,  
San Francisco  
www.aiaf.org

**Thom Mayne,**  
**Eric Owen Moss**  
6:30 p.m.  
Los Angeles County  
Museum of Art  
Leo S. Bing Theater  
5905 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.aiaf.org

**Peter Testa, Devyn Weiser**  
6:30 p.m.  
Museum of  
Contemporary Art  
250 South Grand Ave.,  
Los Angeles  
www.moca.org

**Hirsch Perlman**  
7:00 p.m.  
Armand Hammer Museum  
10899 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.hammer.ucla.edu

FRIDAY 23

## EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Brice Marden**  
San Francisco  
Museum of Modern Art  
151 3rd St.,  
San Francisco  
www.sfmoma.org

**Eisenman Architects:**  
**Grounded**  
**Zaha Hadid, Eric Owen Moss:**  
**Adventures in Kazakhstan**  
SCI-Arc  
960 East 3rd St.,  
Los Angeles  
www.sciarc.edu

**Pulse New York**  
**(IMPULSE section)**  
Sixspace  
5803 Washington Blvd.,  
Culver City  
www.sixspace.com

SATURDAY 24

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Robert Wilson**  
**Voom Portraits**  
ACE Gallery  
Los Angeles Institute of  
Contemporary Art  
5514 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.acegallery.net

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SUNDAY 25

## LECTURE

**Victoria Newhouse**  
**The de Young and the Future**  
**of Museum Architecture**  
3:00 p.m.  
The de Young Museum  
50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Dr.,  
San Francisco  
www.thinker.org

TUESDAY 27

## LECTURE

**David Grahame Shane**  
12:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m.  
UCLA College of Architecture  
and Urban Design  
Perloff Hall  
Wyton Dr. and Hilgard Ave.,  
Los Angeles  
www.aud.ucla.edu

WEDNESDAY 28

## LECTURE

**Ed Soja**  
**Putting Cities First:**  
**Thoughts on the Stimulus**  
**of Urban Agglomeration**  
7:00 p.m.  
SCI-Arc  
960 East 3rd St.,  
Los Angeles  
www.sciarc.edu

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Some Assembly Required:**  
**Contemporary**  
**Prefabricated Houses**  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
Pacific Design Center  
8687 Melrose Ave.,  
West Hollywood  
www.moca.org

## MARCH

SATURDAY 3

## EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Adrian Ghenie**  
Chung King Project  
936 Chung King Rd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.chungkingproject.com

**Ben Tour**  
BLK/MRKT Gallery  
6009 Washington Blvd.,  
Culver City  
www.blkmrktgallery.com

**Carlos Estrada-Vega**  
d.e.n. Contemporary Art  
6023 Washington Blvd.,  
Culver City  
www.dencontemporary  
art.com

**Joe Bradley**  
Peres Projects  
969 Chung King Rd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.peresprojects.com

**Sam Durant**  
Blum & Poe  
2754 South La Cienega Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.blumandpoe.com

**Tim Berresheim, Albert**  
**Oehlen, Matthias Schaufler**  
**Leg Show**  
Patrick Painter  
2525 Michigan Ave. #B2,  
Santa Monica  
www.patrickpainter.com

**William Pope.L**  
**The Void Show**  
MCKunst  
6086 Comey Ave.,  
Los Angeles  
www.mckunst.com

SUNDAY 4

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Andrea Zittel: Critical Space**  
**WACK! Art and the**  
**Feminist Revolution**  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
The Geffen Contemporary  
152 North Central Ave.,  
Los Angeles  
www.moca.org

MONDAY 5

## LECTURE

**Teddy Cruz**  
6:30 p.m.  
UCLA College of Architecture  
and Urban Design  
Perloff Hall  
Wyton Dr. and Hilgard Ave.,  
Los Angeles  
www.aud.ucla.edu

TUESDAY 6

## LECTURE

**Teddy Cruz**  
12:00 p.m.  
UCLA College of Architecture  
and Urban Design  
Perloff Hall  
Wyton Dr. and Hilgard Ave.,  
Los Angeles  
www.aud.ucla.edu

WEDNESDAY 7

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Michael Bauer**  
Jack Hanley Gallery  
395-389 Valencia St.,  
San Francisco  
www.jackhanley.com

THURSDAY 8

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Out From Under:**  
**Australian Architecture Now**  
AIA San Francisco  
130 Sutter St.,  
San Francisco  
www.aiaf.org

SATURDAY 10

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Enlightened Development**  
Architecture and Design  
Museum  
5900 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.aplud.org

SUNDAY 11

## LECTURE

**Smadar Sheffi**  
2:00 p.m.  
Otis College of Art and Design  
Ahmanson Hall  
9045 Lincoln Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.otis.edu

MONDAY 12

## LECTURE

**Francisco Costa:**  
**Inside the Designer's Studio**  
5:00 p.m.  
Pacific Design Center  
8687 Melrose Ave.,  
West Hollywood  
www.pacificdesigncenter.com

WEDNESDAY 14

## LECTURE

**William Fain, Scott Johnson**  
**Collusion or Consensus:**  
**Recent Works**  
7:00 p.m.  
SCI-Arc  
960 East 3rd St.,  
Los Angeles  
www.sciarc.edu

THURSDAY 15

## LECTURE

**Elias Torres**  
7:00 p.m.  
Otis College of Art and Design  
Ahmanson Hall  
9045 Lincoln Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.otis.edu

SATURDAY 17

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Jim Campbell**  
Hosfelt Gallery  
430 Clementina St.,  
San Francisco  
www.hosfeltgallery.com

WEDNESDAY 21

## LECTURE

**George Ranalli**  
**Iconic Form**  
7:00 p.m.  
SCI-Arc  
960 East 3rd St.,  
Los Angeles  
www.sciarc.edu

FRIDAY 23

## LECTURE

**Daniel Gregory**  
**California in a Container:**  
**Cliff May and the**  
**Modern Ranch House**  
7:30 p.m.  
The Gamble House  
4 Westmoreland Pl.,  
Pasadena  
www.gamblehouse.org

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**California College of the Arts**  
**at 100: Innovation by Design**  
**California College of the Arts**  
**at 100: Fertile Ground**  
San Francisco Museum of  
Modern Art  
151 3rd St.,  
San Francisco  
www.sfmoma.org

SATURDAY 24

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Channa Horowitz**  
**In-Variance, Co-Variance**  
**and Variance**  
Solway Jones Gallery  
5377 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.solwayjonesgallery.com

WEDNESDAY 28

## LECTURES

**Cesar Pelli**  
2:00 p.m.  
USC School of Architecture  
Bing Auditorium  
University Park,  
Los Angeles  
www.arch.usc.edu

**Steve Roden**  
**In Between Noise**  
7:00 p.m.  
SCI-Arc  
960 East 3rd St.,  
Los Angeles  
www.sciarc.edu

THURSDAY 29

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**2007 AIA Los Angeles 2X8:**  
**Vert**  
Pacific Design Center  
8687 Melrose Ave.,  
West Hollywood  
www.aiaf.org



**SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED:**  
**CONTEMPORARY PREFABRICATED HOUSES**  
Museum of Contemporary Art Pacific Design Center  
8687 Melrose Avenue  
February 28 to May 20

Examining both the technological innovations that have made the prefab revolution possible and the growing cultural acceptance of modular structures, *Some Assembly Required* showcases the most accomplished architects working in the prefabricated field today. The eight homes on display range from the extremely eco-aware *Sunset Breeze* by Michelle Kaufmann to the eclecticism of Lazor Office's *FlatPak House* (pictured), and Marmol Radziner's *Desert House*.

Organized by Andrew Blauvelt, design director at the Walker Art Center, where the show originated in 2005, the show also explores the viability of prefab as an industry. "Today there are literally hundreds of prefab concepts, which exist as readily as computer renderings are producible," he said. "Is it realistic to expect a competitive number of prefab units, much less from modern-style prefab?" Video, photographs, drawings, renderings, material samples, and scale models portray the variety of materials used in contemporary prefabricated practices, as well as the different methods of assembly. On Sunday, March 18, Leo Marmol of Marmol Radziner will discuss the exhibition at the Pacific Design Center.



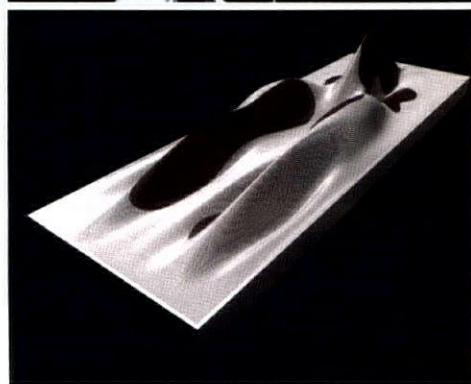
**EISENMAN ARCHITECTS:**  
**GROUNDING**  
**ZAHA HADID ARCHITECTS AND**  
**ERIC OWEN MOSS ARCHITECTS:**  
**ADVENTURES IN KAZAKHSTAN**  
Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc)  
960 East 3rd Street  
February 23 to April 22

Two exhibitions opening concurrently at SCI-Arc are part of a spring program focusing on architects' personal relationships to their projects. *Eisenman Grounded* explores the architect's career-encompassing quest to "figure the ground," or blur the distinction between a structure and its site. The exhibition is an abstraction of three important projects: Cannaregio Town Square in Venice, Italy (1978), the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio (1989), and the City of Culture of Galicia (pictured), in Santiago de Compostela, Spain (expected completion 2009). Three walls built in the gallery act as the ground plan, as if the site models had been turned on their sides, and each building's form is carved into foam-core.

In the library gallery, *Adventures in Kazakhstan* chronicles an invited competition for the Republic Square site, a multi-use complex in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The exhibition features proposals from London firm Zaha Hadid Architects and Los Angeles-based Eric Owen Moss Architects, including a five-star hotel, luxury residences, and office spaces in a prestigious area of the otherwise highly industrial capital.

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## CAN ARCHITECTS MAKE ART?

**Entropy: The Art in Architects**  
Koplin Del Rio Gallery  
6031 Washington Boulevard, Culver City  
Through February 24

When architects attempt to create art, the results are often gimmicky and disappointing, revealing why they decided to become architects in the first place. The work in *Entropy: The Art in Architects* is different. Dynamic and sometimes even moving, the best of the work draws on architects' tectonic vision, their ability to create order from chaos, and their skill with 3D computer rendering to produce, in some cases, something unique. Still, it's not all perfect: For architecture followers, some of it has the familiar feel of renderings tacked up on a wall.

Curators Javier Gomez Alvarez-Tostado and David Jenö, architects themselves, managed to pull in some of the most talented practitioners in the region. The list includes Thom Mayne, Eric Owen Moss, Greg Lynn, Lorcan O'Herlihy, Rob Quigley, Teddy Cruz, and George Yu, to name a few.

The curators set a clear focus, centering on the concept in physics of systems passing from "a state of instability into a higher stationary order," according to the show's literature. It sounds esoteric but it's actually what architects do best. While artists often embrace disorder with works intended to unsettle and disturb, architects must harness their far-out ideas into habitable spaces. The strongest pieces in this show skirt the line between order and disorder, freezing the essence of confusion into comprehensible, architectural form. It shows that the disorderly side of architects' personalities hasn't gone away, and the embrace of it here creates rambunctious art that few artists would have the spatial or even computer skill to create.

Marcos Novak created various ethereal, computer animation-inspired prints and sculptures resembling asteroids, molten



Clockwise from top left: Hernan Diaz Alonzo's colorful, computer-generated *BCA Ripley* triptych; Marcos Novak's paintings and sculptures derived from 3D computer animations; and Greg Lynn's abstract sculpture/furniture design, *Shanghai Bench*.

metals, and blobs. Hernan Diaz Alonzo's *BCA Ripley* triptych (2006) uses liquidlike, highly organic computer graphics in front of a stark black background to create an otherworldly motif. Greg Lynn's two-dimensional work looks like organic architectural forms set in moody sci-fi environments. His *Shanghai Bench* prototype (2002), a sculpture that looks like a cross between a bench, a table, and a car, is a powerful, tactile expression of a sleek and rapid-moving future. Lorcan O'Herlihy goes low-tech to create a similar sensation with abstract paintings in both color and black and white (2006), while George Yu explores new tactile technologies with his *Primitive* (2002) light sculpture made from a Flatlite electroluminescent lamp.

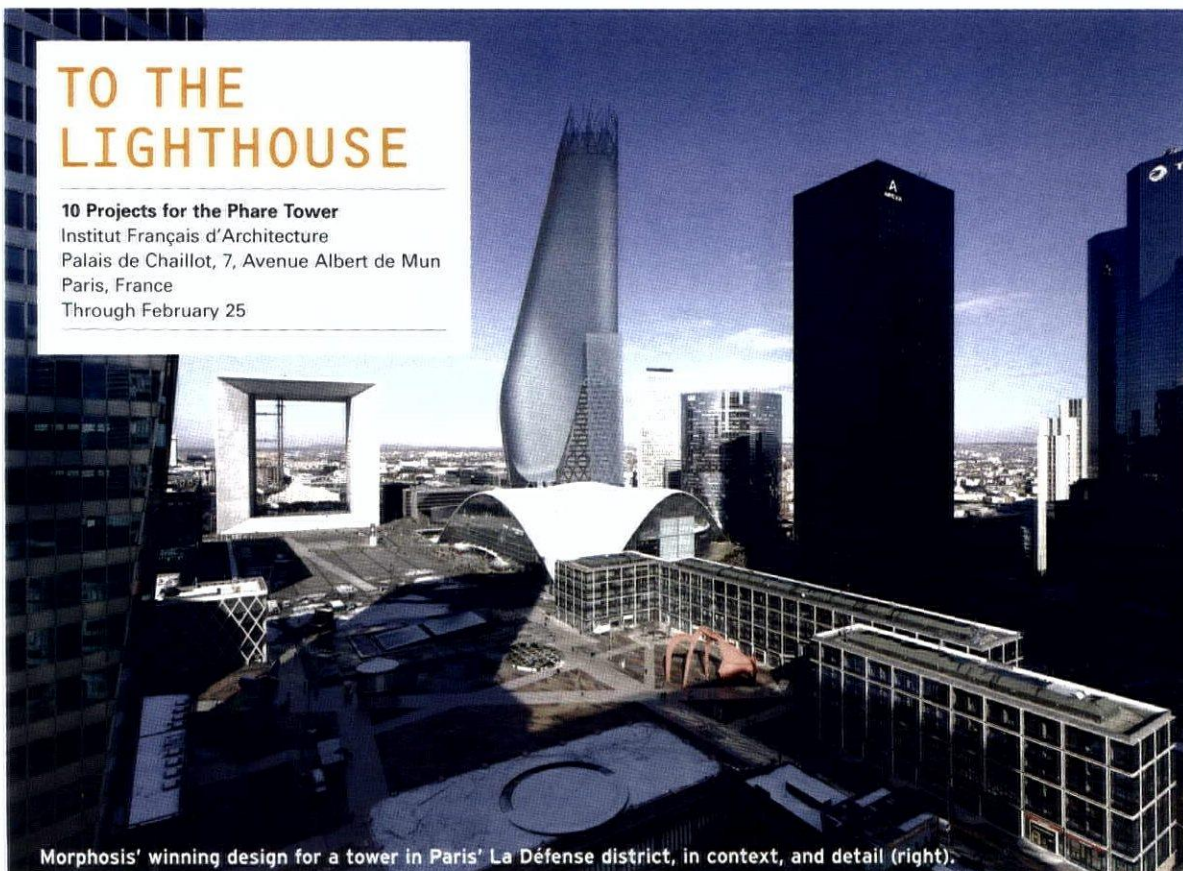
One of the most powerful projects in the show is also the most simple. Downtown-

based Eric Kahn produced small mixed-media collages in red, yellow, and blue. They create disorder in only two dimensions, rearranging letters, and tearing normal paintings into different components. By contrast, the least successful pieces were the ones that looked too much like architecture. The most famous of the architects in the show, Mayne and Moss, seemed to reach into their old bag of tricks rather than displaying something different. This includes a deconstructed painting of Mayne's Phare Tower in Paris and a competition rendering for Republic Square in Kazakhstan by Moss. Still, the level of detail in these works is astounding. But given the show's promise of original art, architects jaded by their familiarity with sophisticated renderings may not be impressed.

**SAM LUBELL IS AN'S CALIFORNIA EDITOR.**

## TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

**10 Projects for the Phare Tower**  
Institut Français d'Architecture  
Palais de Chaillot, 7, Avenue Albert de Mun  
Paris, France  
Through February 25



Morphosis' winning design for a tower in Paris' La Défense district, in context, and detail (right).

Normally, the proceedings of design competitions are shrouded in secrecy: What goes on behind closed doors stays there, and the way an architect pitches a project is for the jury's ears alone.

But it doesn't have to be this way. An exhibition at the Institut Français d'Architecture in Paris devoted to the recent competition to design the Phare Tower, which will be the tallest skyscraper in Paris, is a paragon of transparency. The premise of the show is that the workings of the selection process are as interesting as the end result, which in this case is an eye-popping scheme by Morphosis.

The invited competition was sponsored by Unibail, a huge French property developer. The company should be commended for including filmed versions of the presentations by each team to the jury alongside the lavishly constructed models of the ten entries (which reportedly cost between 60,000 and



100,000 euros each). It is an exemplary gesture on the part of the client and hopefully will set a precedent for others. The result is a rare insight into what winning a competition is all about: First, design substance, which is something models, however flashy, are often incapable of conveying alone. This is especially true when the brief is a complicated one, as it was for the Phare Tower. And second, show business. Thom Mayne's presentation continued on page 18



**TO THE LIGHTHOUSE** continued from page 17 makes it clear why Morphosis won: He pressed all the right buttons. Mayne stressed the warm and sunny sensuality of the building he was proposing for the cold and impersonal environment of La Défense. And he coolly compared the spiky, wiry, kinetic building to László Moholy-Nagy's kinetic sculptures, *Light-Space Modulators* (1922-30).

Mayne's showmanship came in to play too: He kept his finger on the California button throughout the presentation. He made a convincing argument for Morphosis' credentials in sustainable design by citing his use of Berkeley Lab's EnergyPlus building simulation program—it is the best around for sustainable cooling and ventilation—on the San Francisco Federal Building. Indeed, those spiky, jiggling oddities on top of the building will function as a wind farm. Its gesticulating turbines and glinting solar panels should be able to heat or cool the building for up to five months a year. The design includes a clear north facade and, facing the sun, a moveable double-hung curtain wall that will allow sunlight to penetrate into the building's core while significantly

cutting down on heat gain.

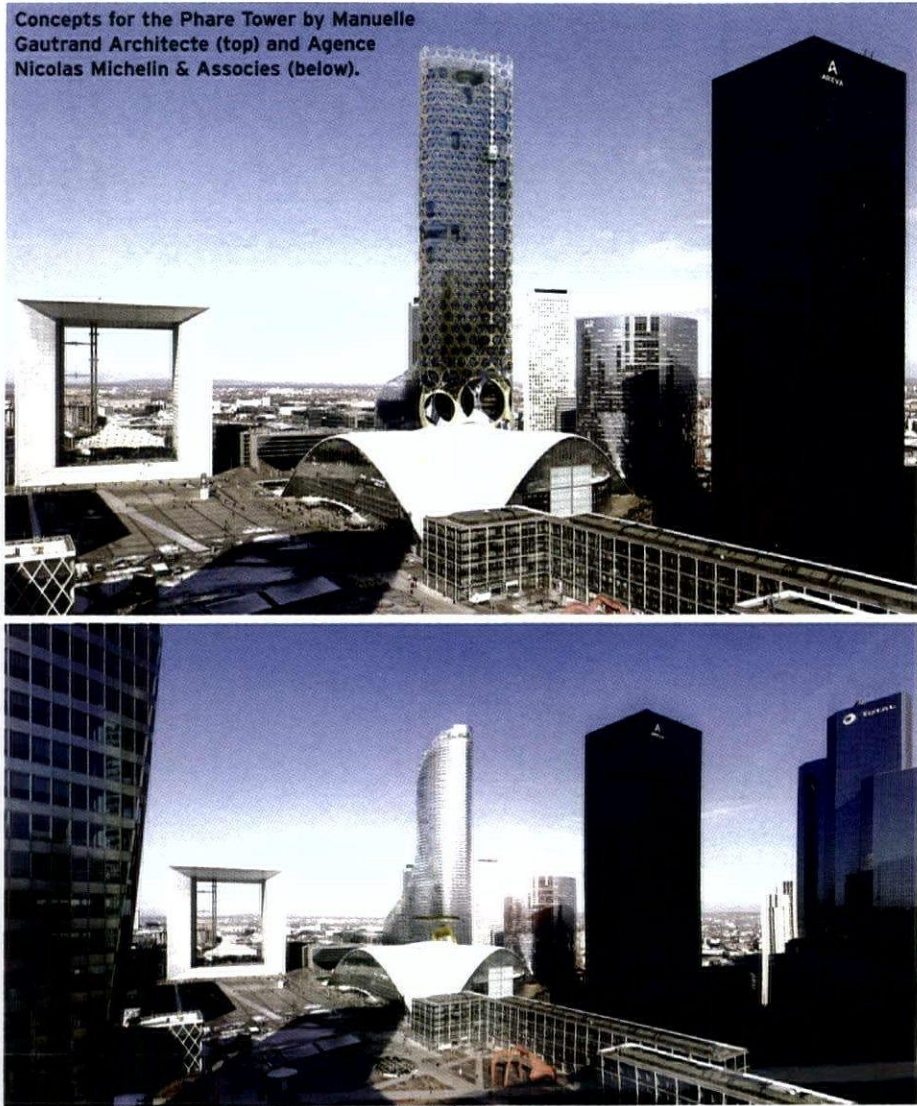
But in his *tour de force*, he proposed something that did not occur to the non-Angeleno competitors—Massimiliano Fuksas, Jean Nouvel, Rem Koolhaas, Norman Foster, Dominique Perrault, and Herzog & de Meuron. Whereas they interpreted the brief of "connectivity at ground level" as public gardens or monumental passages, Mayne compared La Défense's accumulation of disconnected buildings to Los Angeles, and then did what any self-respecting Angeleno would do under the circumstances: He put in a shopping mall. In his scheme, the ground floor of the building and the area between it and the nearest mass transit station is a whopping retail complex, and this probably went a long way toward winning the hearts of the jury. In case the point was lost on Unibail, he referred to the 197-foot-high lobby as a "vertical plaza."

Besides catching Mayne in action, the exhibition is worth a visit in order to see the entries of three promising young French architects. Manuelle Gautrand proposed a strikingly lacy, entirely exoskeletal structure. Nicolas Michelin's entry was shaped like a sail and would aerodynamically capture the natural wind flow inside the building as ventilation. And engineer-architect Jacques Ferrier topped his Hypergreen building with a wind farm and clad it in an elegant metallic screen with solar panels capable of adapting to different environmental conditions to maximize sustainability.

**LIANE LEFAIVRE** A CRITIC AND HISTORIAN WHO CHAIRS THE HISTORY AND THEORY DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED ART IN VIENNA AND IS A FELLOW AT THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY IN DELFT. SHE IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO *AN*.

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Concepts for the Phare Tower by Manuelle Gautrand Architecte (top) and Agence Nicolas Michelin & Associés (below).



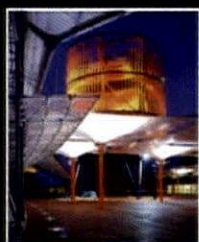
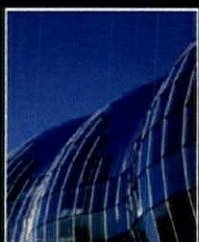
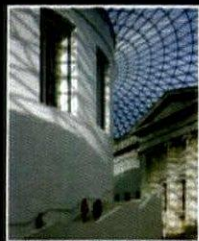
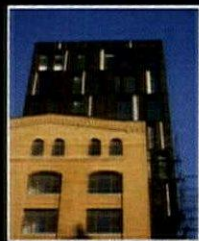
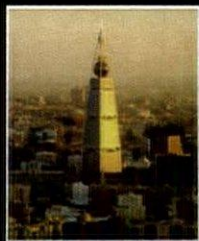
COURTESY MANUELLE GAUTRAND ARCHITECTE (TOP) AND AGENCE NICOLAS MICHELIN & ASSOCIÉS (BELOW)

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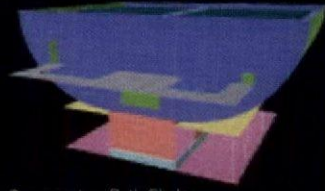
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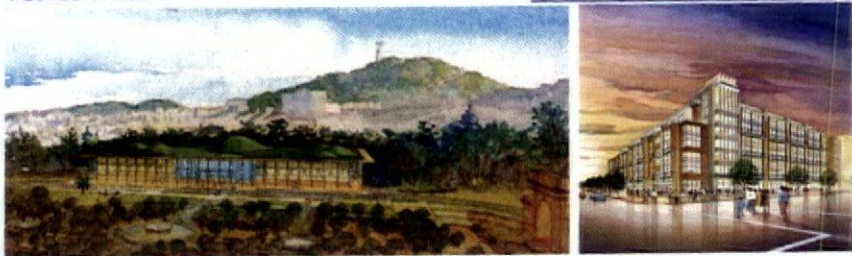
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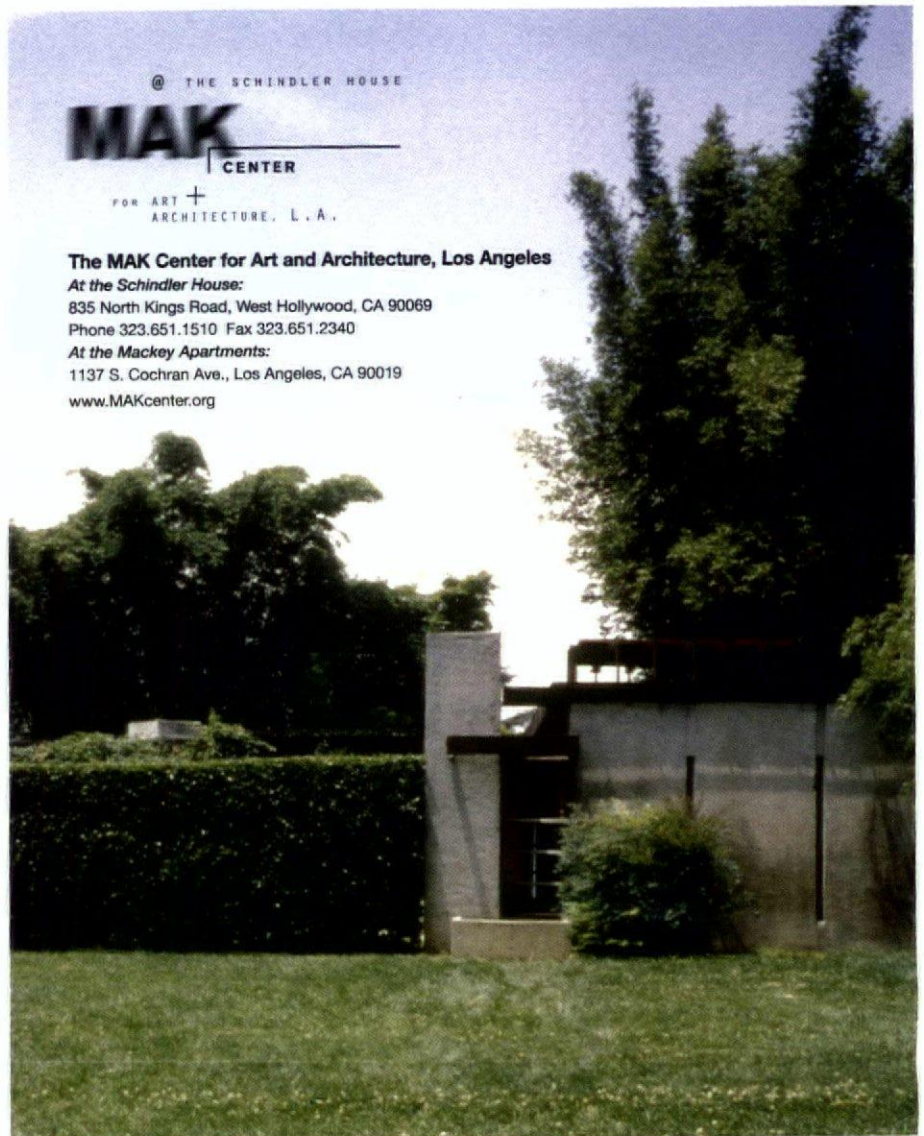
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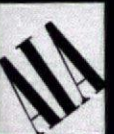
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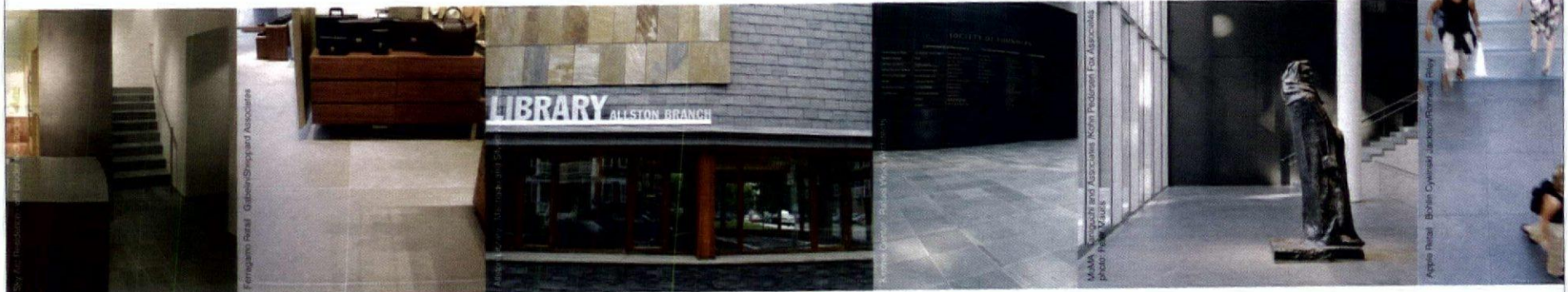
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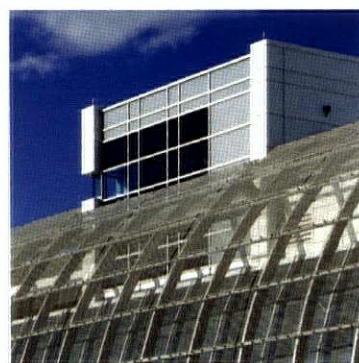
## RESOURCES

**Art On Track** (p. 1): General contracting for MCASD by Rudolph and Sletten, 10955 Vista Sorrento Pkwy., San Diego, CA 92130, 619-243-3897, www.rsconstruction.com. Sheet metal fabricated by Ehmcke Sheet Metal, 840 West 19th St., National City, CA 91950, 619-477-6484, www.ehmckesheetmetal.com. Glass throughout the museum fabricated by La Mesa Glass, 6691 Federal Blvd., Lemon Grove, CA 91945, 619-286-6411.  
**OPEN: Billy Wilder Theater** (p. 5): Theater lighting design implemented by Lam Partners, 84 Sherman St., Cambridge, MA 02140, 617-354-4502,

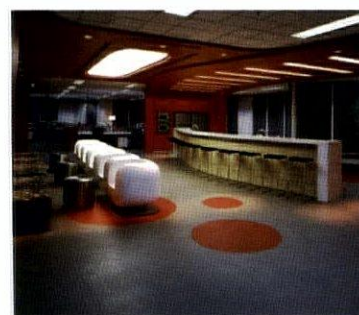
www.lampartners.com. Communication technology consulting by Brooks Fleming Associates, 144 South First St., Burbank, CA 91502, 818-559-2205, www.bfallc.com. Acoustical engineering by Charles M. Salter Associates, 130 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94104, 415-397-0442, www.cmsalter.com.

**STUDIO VISIT: Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects** (p. 9): Structural engineering for Gardner 1050 by David H Lau & Associates, 1945 Euclid St., Santa Monica, CA 90404, 310-392-1961. Interior finishing by Josette Flicker, 1127 Victoria Ave., Venice, CA 90291, 310-650-2735.

## PRODUCTS



**Braid, Rope, and Matte**  
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Cambridge Architectural has announced its partnership with German manufacturer Kufferath to offer three new stainless steel mesh patterns, Braid (pictured), Rope, and Matte. In these cable and rod patterns, the mesh is actually woven around rods, differing in the openness of the weave. They are compatible with the Cambridge Talon attachment system and are unique in their ability to be used in expanses of up to 100 feet. The patterns can also be customized if weaves need to be tighter or looser.



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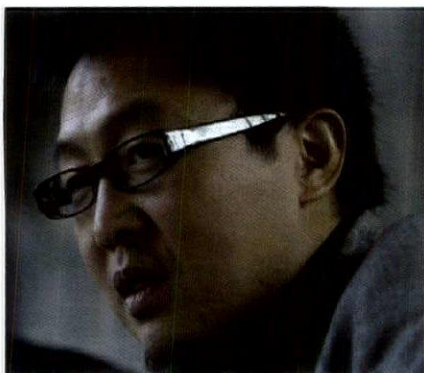
Within months of each other, the USC School of Architecture and the UCLA Department of Architecture and Urban Design announced the appointment of new leaders for their schools. Last October, USC named Shanghai-based practitioner Qingyun Ma as successor to the late Robert Timme. Ma, 41, estab-

lished his firm MADA s.p.a.m., which now has offices in Beijing and Shanghai, after receiving his master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1990 and a brief stint as a designer for KPF in New York. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard University, and assistant chair of the architecture department at

Shenzhen University. He assumed his new post in January. And in December, UCLA officially appointed 44-year-old architect Hitoshi Abe as Sylvia Lavin's successor. He earned his master's degree from SCI-Arc in 1989, and led Coop Himmelb(l)au's Los Angeles office before founding his own firm, Atelier Hitoshi

Abe, in Sendai, Japan, in 1992. Abe starts his new job in April.

They both took time to speak with architect and *AN* contributor Peter Zellner to discuss their respective plans for their schools and their assessments of the state of architecture and urban development in Los Angeles.



### LOS ANGELES AS IN-FRONTIER

**You recently stated that you are interested in opening up the architecture program at USC in order to establish a more global platform for the school. Can you elaborate on this concept?**

I see a school as a bio-entity, which has its own life cycle and ecosystem. Opening up a school means creating an energy flow that courses within and beyond the school. It is a double opening in a sense, within the culture of the school and to the world. However, we also know that the act of opening any entity is dangerous because it can cause leakage and eventual homogenization. So by opening, I also mean the selection of a series of critical exchange points for which USC offers a great base; for example, media, virtual reality, geology, electronic entertainment, fine arts, finance, and so on. In this context, architecture can be a device to integrate other areas of knowledge. I mean to call

this "arch-cross" or an architecture that crosses disciplines, territories, and cultures.

**Los Angeles is invariably described as a city that straddles the first and the third worlds. For instance, while LA ranks as an "alpha" or "full service" world city, it is also a center for the multi-billion dollar drug and illegal immigration trades. How can these sorts of contradictions be addressed by architects and urbanists?**

This collapsing of good and bad is really important not only for LA, but for architects and urbanists in the sense that urbanism must constantly reinvent itself. In the case of LA, it was historically viewed as an American frontier. A frontier is a zone that includes and excludes in the same ratio, offering intense exchange and renewal, almost like a kidney. However, LA's frontier status has been dissolved as a result of two processes: On the one hand, American global power has pushed previous frontiers further away from the homeland, and on the other, its mainland became increasingly normalized. In other words, the frontier moves to a distant place, so far in fact that it reaches back again. In this sense, LA must be seen as a renewed, doubled American frontier on the Pacific Rim. I would like to call this situation "in-frontier," a system of coterminous frontiers organically folded into a mainland. Urbanism is essentially the energy created by polarized intentions and synchronized dialectics. The city, no matter how nice or horrible it may be, is just a frozen moment in that energy exchange. Architects and urbanists are doing two jobs essentially, acting either to concretize/ conquer or to liquidize/flow that energy. Obviously, our traditional teaching has too much knowledge of

building and not enough irrigation of that flow. In Chinese we call it "traces in mud." LA is a perfect laboratory for tracing forces—ecological, economical, emotional. To be an alpha city means not only to have a maximum of stability but also an optimum of flexibility. That is "LA-ness" for architects.

**How do you imagine moving the USC School of Architecture, which has traditionally emphasized a curriculum grounded in a comprehensive "knowledge of building," towards engaging these broader dialectics of urban flows or frontier exchanges?**

The most effective thing would be to move beyond the notion of identities, because claiming an identity inherently implies an action of exclusion. Only when one is not conscious of his or her identity can one be responsive, adaptive, and able to reinvent. Thus, some notions traditionally viewed as intrinsic to USC's identity should be re-examined and reopened. For instance, technology should be viewed not as something specified by a building's needs, but as the specifier for the means to build; urbanism is not caused by an accumulation of buildings but by the mobilization of people; practice as not only a problem solver, but a problem explorer. **Historically, American architecture schools have stayed within the West, looking to Europe or in some cases to Latin America when appointing their deans. In the last five years, several significant schools of architecture appointed leaders who are from Asia or have strong ties to Asia (Yungho Chang is the chair at MIT's School of Architecture and Toshiko Mori is chair of Harvard's Graduate School of Design). What do you think these appointments signal?**

The reasons for these appointments are complex. From a historical point of view, we should imagine a sort of cultural river: In the past, the U.S. has seen Europe as upstream, and Asia and other non-mainstream conditions as downstream with regards to Western notions of modernity. However, this perception is changing. What has not been realized in this flow is that civilization long precedes modernity, which may or may not be the only choice for a civilization. There is a hidden backflow of other forms of civilization. The idea of an Asian dean is perhaps one type of this backflow in the mainstream of modernity, something that carries a cultural ambiguity that fosters competing notions like flexible persistence, temporary permanence, hostile friendliness, et cetera. These ideas can be helpful in defining the "in-frontier."

Another reason why institutions are looking East is clearly driven by global economics. Education as a business also has to global. Today's education must be internationally branded and must be able to function in all climates, all regions. We know there is already a huge exchange of students across the globe from different cultural backgrounds. There should be an exchange of teachers and teachings as well. Long before the Asian dean phenomenon, there was the trend of Western professors in Asia. I have met more Western teachers in China than here in the U.S. So, the Asian dean is only one of these larger currents. The question that remains is whether the phenomenon of the Asian dean is part of a process of homogenization of global education, or will it act as a brake to this process?



### BALANCING DIFFERENCES

**In a recent profile in the *Los Angeles Times*, you mentioned your interest in developing the curriculum at UCLA to examine how design theory can be applied to "actual practice and... the vocabulary of construction." How do you think your experience can help the school achieve these goals?**

Practice and theory in architecture are like the right and left hands of our body. My experience in the worlds of academia and practice in Japan gives me a unique position in both fields—theory being the background of practice and practice being the background of theory. We can try to apply theory in practice just to prove our ideas, but theory doesn't necessarily always need to come first. Sometimes you get theory out of practice. It's hard to say which is the egg and which is the chicken. I really enjoy when an inventive theory comes out of a stupid conversation with a client, and I also like when a very hard-core business plan can emerge from theory.

Right now we are working on the masterplan of the wholesale district where I have my office in Sendai, Japan. We moved into this area because of our necessity to obtain a huge warehouse space for the office. Since the area's zon-

ing is restricted to only wholesale businesses, its potential has been ignored until now, even though it's very close to the city center. It's a kind of Culver City for us. Meanwhile, at school I have been collaborating with a facilities management and IT specialist about ways to develop cities with planning concepts based on new communication technology. It was very natural for us to see the area where we work as a place to test these new ideas. So we are now living in an environment being shaped by our ideas. How much closer can practice and a theory be? **Do you think that there might be another bridge between the academy and practice—namely, through applied research? Research is very different from theory because it combines aspects of academic work with the ambition of the direct application of ideas for professional practice, as opposed to the condition that existed in the U.S. in the 1980s, in which theory became its own form of practice.**

Japanese architecture schools are organized differently from American architecture schools. In Japan, architecture schools are in most cases part of engineering departments. Engineering is very practical, so the situation you have in the U.S., with a division between theory and practice, is not apparent in Japan. During the 1980s in Japan, we were very influenced by American architectural discourse. The bubble economy allowed us to test a lot of ideas and many American architects began to build in Japan. But then the bubble burst, putting an end to those opportunities. Since then, many Japanese architects have become skeptical of theory for theory's sake. Now they just concentrate on building, getting ideas from local circumstances and from within the profession.

But I wouldn't say that theory for theory's sake is necessarily a bad thing. Sometime you enter a totally different world when you are pursuing one direction very hard. We should be open-minded so that a variety of directions can co-exist and bring more vitality to our work.

**You spent a formative period of your life here in Los Angeles as an architect, first as a student and then as a professional working for Coop Himmelb(l)au. In returning to LA, how has your reading of the city changed?**

I hope my answer doesn't insult anybody, but I feel like the city has become tamer, or is getting very close to the sort of city I am familiar with. I still remember the first day I came to LA, in the late 1980s. It felt very raw and powerful. I was very conscious about the environment and myself. I felt like I was naked in the wild. But because of its new development and the strong economy, LA has become, let's say, more civilized and organized. But these days, many cosmopolitan cities are becoming very similar, which means that the same planning concepts or strategies are seemingly at work everywhere under the name of globalization.

I'm more interested in alternative strategies for cities. As you might know, Japanese cities have started shrinking. After the collapse of the bubble economy, the population started to decline. If we don't do anything, by 2050 Japan will have lost about 30 million people, which is a quarter of its current population. Except for cities like Tokyo, most Japanese cities are losing their populations and we have to find a way to let them land softly through different organizational models. I'm curious about how we can do that, about creating strategies for balancing shrinking and growing cities, making them equal.

I don't know what kind of attitude I should have towards LA yet. It's booming and everybody's talking about all the projects they have. When I was here 20 years ago, the situation was totally opposite. I have to spend more time there to be able to say how LA's really changed. Someday again, LA might lose power, or lose money, and that's the cycle of cities, right? I'm curious about how we can create a plan or a strategy to take care of the city over a longer time span.

**American schools of architecture have historically looked inward or to Europe or Latin America when appointing their deans. In the last five years, architecture schools on both coasts have appointed new deans from Asia or who have strong ties there. What do you think these appointments signal?**

When I was named the chair at UCLA, Japanese architects were very surprised. Although Japanese architecture is quite respected, we have never been part of the American discourse. We are like well-respected guests, you know? It's funny. Twenty years ago, Japan was looked at as the country that supposedly thought it was better to steal ideas than to produce new ones. But now, ideas, i.e., designs are our biggest export. We are laughing at this change in a good way. But honestly, I can't see the Japanese or the Chinese being so different from Americans. I could say, "I can bring the wisdom of 2000 years of tradition!" but it would sound like something from a Samurai movie. I don't think that the difference between American and Japanese architecture is any greater than the difference between Thom Mayne's and Frank Gehry's architecture. The differences between individuals are far greater than the differences among the architectural cultures nowadays. I think that's why I'm here.

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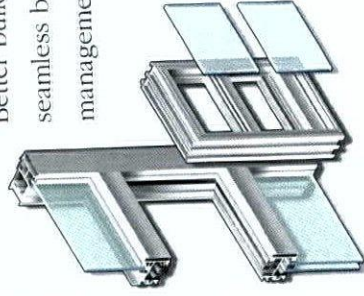
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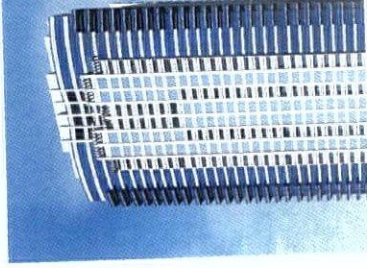
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