

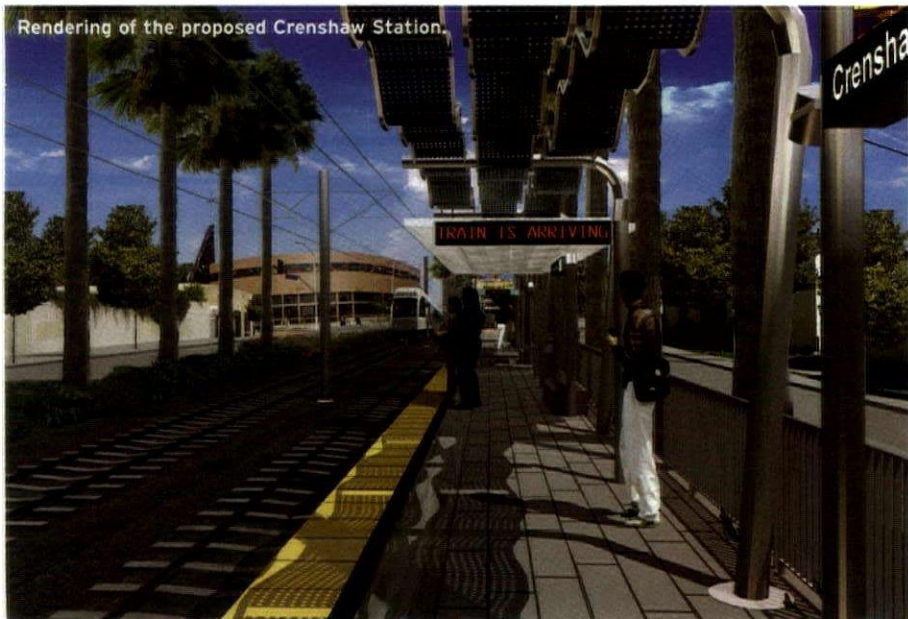
THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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Rendering of the proposed Crenshaw Station.



GRUEN ASSOCIATES

LA'S NEW LIGHT RAIL LINE MOVES FORWARD

HEADING WEST

No public transportation project in Los Angeles has been more mythologized than the so-called Subway to the Sea, the nickname that's been affixed to every west-heading transit line proposed over the past few decades. But it appears that the first train to connect downtown to the Pacific Ocean will not be a subway, but a light rail train.

In May the design of the first portion of the Expo Line, a transit project that will make use of much of the former Exposition Passenger Rail right-of-way (which dates from the early 20th century) received final approval from LA County's Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro).

The eight-and-a-half- continued on page 7

TRINITY PLAZA
FINALLY APPROVED



ARQUITECTONICA

WAIT IS OVER IN SAN FRANCISCO

In San Francisco, there are two types of new buildings: those that get approved in a flash, and others that sit in the queue, their owners and architects miserably permitless for years. Miami-based Arquitectonica's proposal for Trinity Plaza, a 1,900-unit apartment complex that would be the largest single addition to the city's rental market since World War II, has been a longstanding member of the second group.

But in April, after four years of haggling, deal making, and design revision, the city finally gave developer Trinity Properties the official go-ahead. Construction on continued on page 9

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KOHN PEDERSEN FOX

KPF RESIDENTIAL BUILDING TO BE TALLEST IN WEST

New Heights

Depending on how you see it, the May unveiling of Park Fifth, a 76-story residential and hotel tower designed by the New York office of Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF) on downtown LA's Pershing Square, represents either the triumph of downtown's real estate market or a harbinger of a bubble that is about to burst. If approved the 850-foot tower, developed by local businessman David Houk, would be the tallest residential building west of Chicago.

The project will be connected, via a glass-clad horizontal section, to a 41-story tower, which will contain more condos as well as a 200-room hotel, restaurants, convention facilities, and shops.

KPF principal continued on page 8

THE COLOR OF GLASS

A LOOK AT INNOVATIVE GLAZING IN RETAIL, THEATER, AND PARKING PAGES 14-18

CONTENTS

10
HOUSE OF
THE ISSUE:
STANLEY
SAITOWITZ

11
SEATTLE ART
MUSEUM

05 EAVESDROP
20 DIARY
21 REVIEWS

PIPING HOT MOVIE THEATER

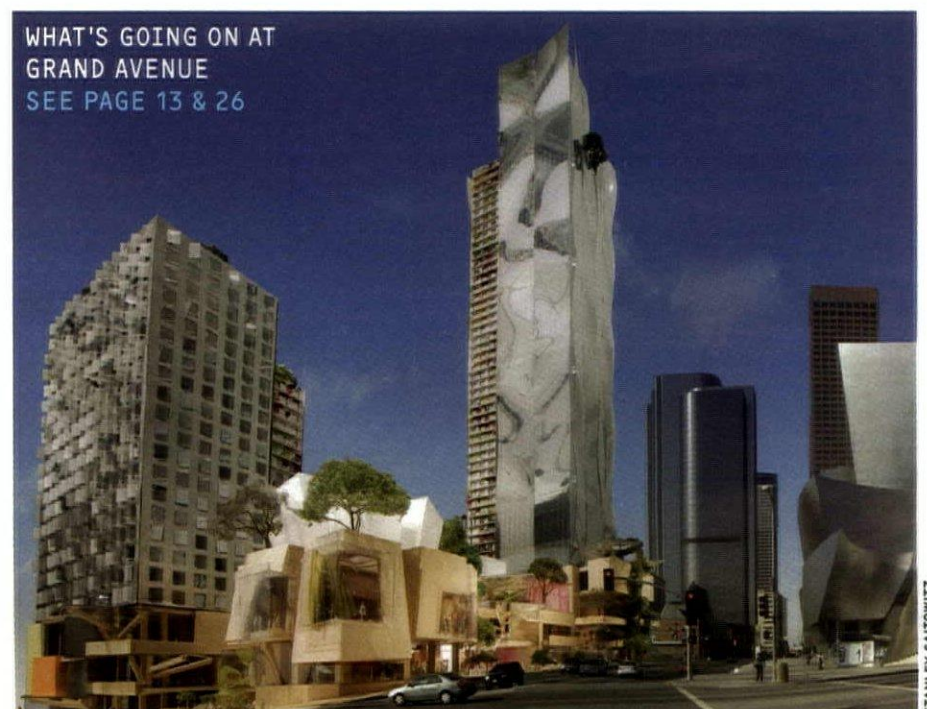


UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD

EYE-POPPER

In a world of TiVos, Netflix, and iPhones, where can a film buff have a truly cinematic experience these days? With an eye-popping design for Universal CityWalk, Culver City designers Sussman/Prejza continued on page 6

WHAT'S GOING ON AT
GRAND AVENUE
SEE PAGE 13 & 26



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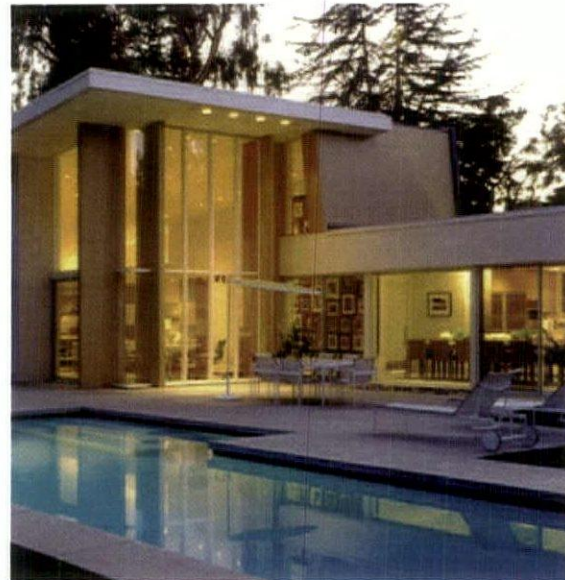




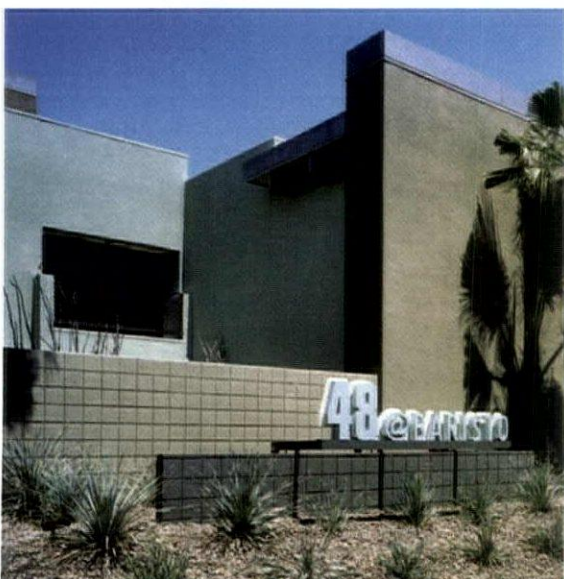
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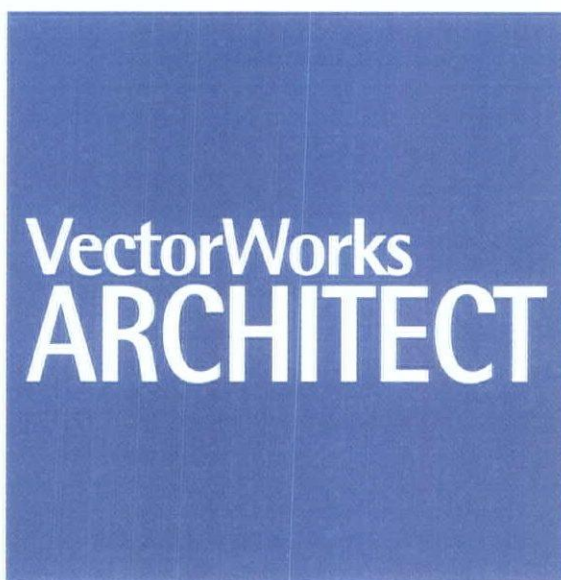


RIOS CLEMENTI HALE STUDIOS, CALIFORNIA

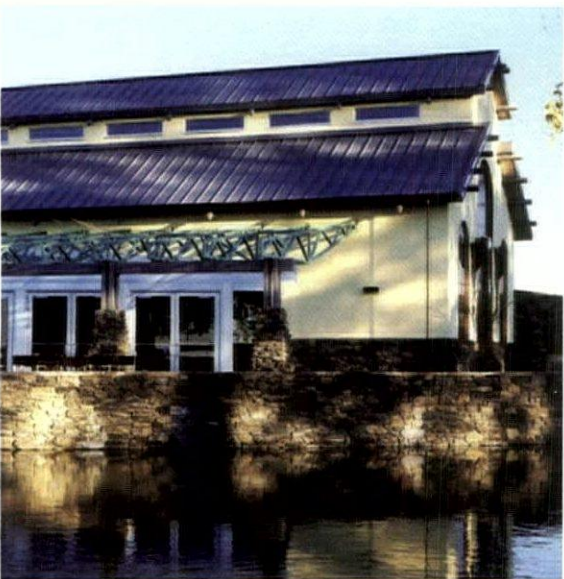


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CORRECTIONS

In a Q+A with new UCLA dean, Hitoshi Abe
(AN 1_02.21.2007, p. 22), we incorrectly stated
that Abe led Coop Himmelblau's LA office.
Abe worked with the office, but was never its
director.

In a story about the Walter Cronkite School of
Journalism (AN 2_05.02.2007, p. 07), we neg-
lected to name HDR, Inc., as the executive
architect/architect of record for the project which
is being designed by Steven Ehrlich Architects.
We regret the omission.

"Wow, welcome to California!" I thought to myself, as I watched from my balcony in May as hundreds of acres of LA's Griffith Park went up in smoke.

For awhile it looked like the surreal blaze would never be put out, reminding me of the fragility, and perhaps the folly, of living in California. But more than that it made me think about what life would be like without places like Griffith Park. Already the park has become my home-away-from-home; a base for hikes, tennis, golf, and picnics. But I remembered that for many in LA, life without nearby parks is already a reality.

While Griffith, despite controversy over its redevelopment (some think it should be more devoted to active uses, others think it should be left to nature), is still one of the largest urban parks in America, it's the exception, not the rule, in LA. According to the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, a non-profit that helps create small park spaces, LA ranks last among major cities in per capita open space, with 1.107 acres per 1,000 residents. And in a recent study, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) found that only 34 percent of LA's children were within one-quarter of a mile of a park.

More depressing still, many LA parks are poorly maintained, strewn with trash, and littered with failing support systems (water fountains, bathrooms, sprinklers). This is indicative of an under-funded department in sore need of better staff development, more effective fund-raising, and upgraded infrastructure, among other improvements. The department has a meager public budget. A 2004 TPL report showed that Los Angeles, with its \$144 million parks budget, ranked 53rd among major U.S. cities in spending per resident, shelling out only \$38 per person. San Francisco, incidentally, ranked first in that report, spending \$276 per resident. The parks also enjoy little private support, unlike cities such as New York, where groups like the Central Park Conservancy and the City Parks Foundation have secured millions in donations for improvements and programming (the Central Park Conservancy has raised over \$350 million alone since being established in the 1980s).

Plus there seems to be little coordination for monitoring and improving the parks. There is no park system masterplan; no document taking stock of parkland and investigating use and potential. Amazingly, unlike San Francisco, which is full of landscape architects and landscape programs, the only landscape architecture degree available in LA is at USC. The closest other program is at Cal Poly Pomona, hardly convenient for Angelinos.

It's time for this all to change. LA needs to evaluate its parks, it needs to find more funding (perhaps through an effective parks foundation), it needs to improve its parks department structure, and it needs to nurture architects to help create its future park spaces.

There is some positive movement. The city has hired Mia Lehrer Landscape Architects and Pros Consulting to conduct a long-overdue, 14-month-long needs assessment for the Department of Recreation and Parks, evaluating park facilities, growth opportunities, and the department's structure. Plans are underway for new parks. The city is also pursuing its LA River revitalization plan (AN 02_05.02.2007), which would bring miles of new parks along long-neglected LA River's banks. Other parks are being planned in San Pedro, at the site of the Port of LA's former shipping yards, and in Baldwin Hills. The state parks department is chipping in with new city parks like Taylor Yards (p. 6) and the Cornfields (AN 01_02.21.2007). Meanwhile the disaster at Griffith Park has brought more focus on environmentalism and steered the public eye more toward the parks. So now it's time for the public, and for our representatives, to step up. Stay tuned.

LA PLANNING COMMISSION SETS
NEW PLANNING PRINCIPLESJUST DO IT,
ALREADY!

In April, the Los Angeles Planning Commission released a list of 14 planning principles for the city called, "Do Real Planning" (available at <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/>). The bluntly-titled list is expected to serve as a blueprint for improving how city officials manage development.

Most members of city council applauded the effort. "When I read the list I thought it sounded like a conversation with myself," said Council President, Eric Garcetti, whose 13th Council District is comprised of the area between Hollywood and Downtown. "This is exactly what we've been trying to do in Hollywood."

The list advocates green building requirements, more landscaping, and pedestrian-friendly streets, as well as creating density around transit stops and smarter parking requirements. It also promotes better design standards to "eliminate the sea of stucco boxes, blank walls, street-front parking lots, and other inhospitable streetscapes."

Planning commission member and former councilman Michael Woo said the list is a way to send a clear message to the public. "It reveals a new direction in urban policy in LA," said Woo, who is also an adjunct professor at the University of Southern California School of Policy, Planning, and Development. But not everyone thinks the list will be beneficial to the planning process.

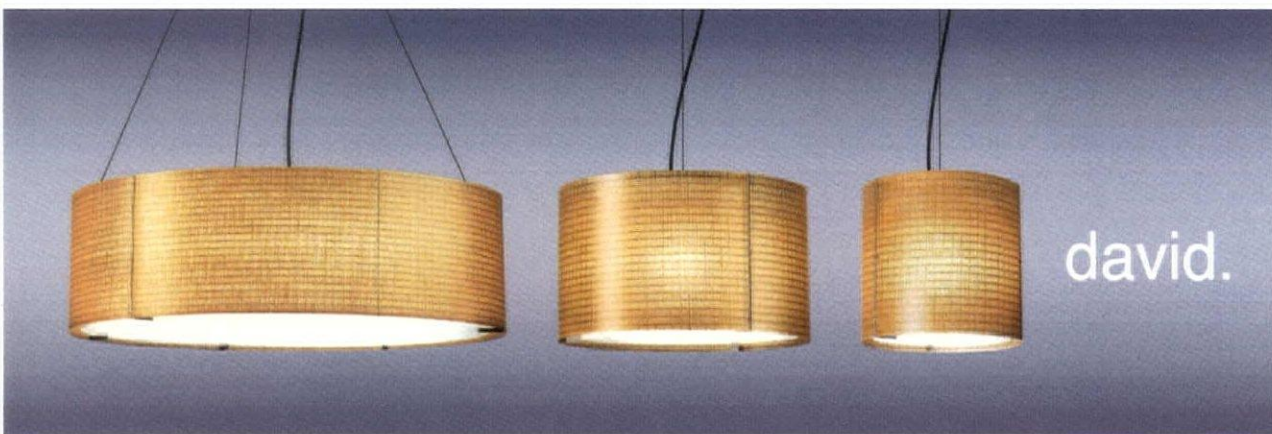
"Conceptually, I support the ideas, like the green building, for example. But how would these principles actually be applied? Are they just going to inform us by providing hand outs or directing us to their website?" said a local architect who asked to remain anonymous. "The department is already inefficient. It's hard enough to get a project through."

Woo said the commission doesn't have the legal authority to enforce the principles, but hopes to establish a consistent approach that will eventually be adopted by everyone developing, designing, or building in LA.

Garcetti cites the success of Hollywood's redevelopment as an example of how "Do Real Planning" can work if applied on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. "In the past, LA has had a failure of execution. Now there's momentum and it's shifting the way we think about the city."

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STARCHITECT ROUNDUP

Santiago Calatrava dropped out of San Francisco's Transbay Terminal and Tower competition in mid-May because his firm had questions about the project's economic feasibility. However, we also heard that the folks at developer Boston Properties weren't able to get Calatrava's design to pencil.... If you ever forget what **Daniel Libeskind** looks like, just head to Sacramento, where his 15-foot headshot is plastered on Danny-designed luxury condo Epic Tower... When **Frank Gehry**'s not pumping iron at Gold's Gym, he's being sued over silver. Circa Publishing Enterprises of Culver City said Gehry reneged on his deal to produce Gehry-trademarked jewelry. Last spring, the Frank Gehry Collection showed up at Tiffany & Co.

LET'S GET NAKED!

UC-Berkeley's Memorial Stadium is ground zero for a battle of epic proportions, but this ain't no football game. Protesters have been living in a grove of oak trees next to the stadium since December to prevent developers from cutting down trees to build a student athletic center, designed by **HNTB Architecture**. A 78-person nude photo shoot/protest was held in March in support of the cause. Meanwhile UC-Berkeley maintains that new trees will replace all the removed ones, and that the building's design will create new public spaces near the stadium.

A DOUBLE DESIGN "I DO"

After 20 years of kicking around the LA design world more-or-less solo, radio host **Frances Anderton** (of KCRW's DnA, Design and Architecture) and West Hollywood urban designer **John Chase** were both recently married, and wanted to celebrate their coinciding unions. Their mutual friends gathered on a recent breezy afternoon for a double wedding reception at the home of landscape designer **Katherine Spitz**. Chase and partner Jonathan Cowan were croquet-ready in seersucker suits and matching Chuck Taylors, and Anderton was stunning in a red, laser-cut masterpiece by architect and designer **Elena Manferdini**, who was also in attendance.

RAISING THE ROOF

Inflatable kangaroos bounced among the waterbed pods of the Standard Downtown's rooftop as the LA Forum honored **Hank Koning** and **Julie Eizenberg** at the 20th annual ForumFest. A sharp-looking **Aaron Betsky** revealed in a speech that the real motivation for starting the Forum was because founders believed LA was "dumb." But the remark that garnered the biggest gasp was when Betsky admitted he had included the Forum as a beneficiary in his will.

BROWER CENTER TO HOUSE MANY OF BAY AREA'S ECO-FRIENDLY ESTABLISHMENTS

GREEN CENTRAL

As its new home begins to grow on the site of a former public parking lot just west of the University of California, Berkeley, the story of the \$53 million David Brower Center continues to unfold. Seven years in the making, the mixed-use complex, envisioned as a home base for many of the area's scattered ecological and social justice non-profits, broke ground this spring.

The saga began when Peter Buckley (co-founder of the Center for Ecoliteracy, and former CEO of Esprit International), was inspired by his friend, the activist and early Sierra Club director David Brower, to establish a headquarters for the environmental movement. Using green materials and methods, Daniel Solomon and his San Francisco firm Solomon E.T.C., a part of Wallace Roberts & Todd, is designing the Brower Center's building systems to promote affordable sustainability.

Buckley, the Center's founding chair, weathered a lengthy building design and review process. According to Solomon, the Landmarks Committee rejected plans twice, and design review sent schemes back for revision four times before accepting the current plan.

Anchor tenants will include the Center for Ecoliteracy and Earth Island Institute. Build It Green, California League of Conservation Voters, and the International Rivers Network are also in the running to lease space. According to Amy Tobin, Executive Director of the Brower Center,

more organizations than can be accommodated have expressed interest in renting.

When completed in early 2009, the four-story, 44,000 square-foot building will include a conference center, a 175-seat auditorium, a combined restaurant and gallery, a green roof terrace, and 30,000-square-feet of office space. The building will likely be clad with a zinc-titanium alloy that will oxidize over time.

Aspiring to the LEED Platinum certification, the Center will include a rack system housing photovoltaic cells projecting from the facade, providing a portion of the building's electricity. Other features will include a narrow floor plate to allow natural light to penetrate the office spaces, and a radiant heating and cooling system that works using a low temperature gradient. Building materials throughout were selected based on the criteria that they heat up and cool down relatively slowly.

The concrete floor/ceiling slab will use 50 percent slag, a steel industry byproduct that replaces cement and makes concrete stronger, more reflective, and less permeable while minimizing carbon emissions. The reflectivity of the floors and flat ceilings will further diminish the need for artificial lighting.

Grants, loans, and private donations comprise the funding. The Center invested \$9.2 million to start construction, while New Market tax credits account for 25 percent of the financing. **LAURI PUCHALL**

OPEN > RESTAURANT



> **GEORGE'S AT THE COVE**
1250 Prospect Street, La Jolla
Tel: 858-454-4244
Designer: Jennifer Luce

La Jolla's venerable George's at the Cove, with its panoramic views of the Pacific, has long been a popular dining and drinking destination in this posh beach town, north of San Diego. But its upscale sea shanty ambience has always seemed a tad outdated... until now.

In February, Jennifer Luce of the San Diego-based Luce et Studio, completed an ambitious overhaul of George's dining room on the restaurant's lower floor. (For those who are nostalgic, George's Bar and top-floor Ocean Terrace remain their old selves). The 125-seat restaurant, renamed George's California Modern, is dominated by a simple but sophisticated layering of spaces, and by a gentle glow echoing the ocean light that was missing in the original design.

To break up and enliven the restaurant's spaces, Luce employed bleached and green-colored oak panels, cool steel columns and beams, and stainless steel mesh ceilings. Movable glass panels can create private dining areas. Natural light, which enters directly through large clear windows on the restaurant's west side, is channeled throughout the restaurant via a series of large acrylic and glass panels. The panels are layered with several textures, lit from different directions with natural and artificial light, and dominated by dark green, the color of ocean moss. The large bar area near the entrance is lined with an impressive glass and wood-enclosed wine cellar.



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 RIO DE LOS ANGELES STATE PARK IS JUST ONE IN A LINE OF
 URBAN PARKS NOW UNDERWAY IN THE CITY

URBAN PARK RENAISSANCE

The \$15 million, 40-acre Rio de Los Angeles State Park, on the former site of a Union Pacific maintenance facility known as Taylor Yards, opened to the public on April 21, Earth Day. The park, just north of downtown LA, is the first in a series of state land acquisitions near downtown—including the Cornfields, in Chinatown and a 68-acre parcel in Baldwin Hills—that are transforming the park poor city and putting the California State Parks Department in the fore of the urban park debate in California.

With over \$250 million and 10,000 acres of new urban parkland acquisitions across the state from Proposition 12, the 2000 Parks Bond Act, the State Parks is doing what many cities are reluctant or unable to do; developing urban parkland. The acquisitions began in 2000, when then-governor Gray Davis directed the department to develop a new urban park strategy. As a result, they purchased the land for the three parks (the Cornfield site and Taylor Yards in 2001 and Baldwin Hills in 2000).

The Rio de Los Angeles State Park, between San Fernando Road and the Los Angeles River, is the culmination of a 38-member coalition of community groups that formed in 2000, called the Coalition for a State Park at Taylor Yards. Melanie Winter, founder and director of The River Project, the group that organized the community

Once a rail yard, Rio de Los Angeles State Park is now a park with trails and playing fields.

coalition and facilitated the site plan for the Taylor Yards, said, "This was one of the most convoluted park projects ever, but we [the community] ended up getting everything that we wanted in the end."

Half of the Rio de Los Angeles State Park is leased by the city for 25 years, and this is where the active park uses, including five soccer fields, two baseball fields, four basketball courts, two tennis courts, and playgrounds have a standard urban park feel. The other half, designed by parks department staff, is a more rural open space and trail system type park. Closer to the train tracks and the river, the site makes a transition from urban park to wetland habitat restoration, featuring pedestrian and bicycle paths, and picnic areas. The entire project includes features intended to maximize sustainability, such as a water retention basin, the use of native vegetation, and parking lots built with permeable surfaces.

The State Parks Department plans to acquire a second plot of land adjacent to a parcel bought in 2003, to create a connection between Rio de Los Angeles and the Los Angeles River. The combined parcels would increase the park to a total of 127 acres. **GUNNAR HAND**

EYE-POPPER continued from front page have put some drama back into going to the movies.

The 19-screen theater, which includes an IMAX screen, had long served the teenagers, tourists, and families who were lured by the theatrics of CityWalk. But the two-story, 156,806 square-foot theater was in dire need of a makeover (its last overhaul was in 2000), and budget and time constraints made significant architectural remodeling impossible. When Sussman/Prejza began the job in August 2006, they realized they needed one big—no, make that huge—graphic idea.

"I asked the team, 'What's the first thing you think of when you think of going to the movies?'" said firm principle Deborah Sussman. That answer, of course, was popcorn.

Digitally-printed vinyl panels make up an

exterior mural in which puffy golden kernels dot a Los Angeles sunset. But inside is where the popcorn truly pops. Stepping through the doors, audiences are greeted by a 50-foot life-sized mural of a cornfield that spans the balcony, with 25-pound kernels suspended on stainless steel posts exploding into the lobby.

The bold colors inside and out echo an exaggerated Southern California-inspired palette. Hot rod-red restrooms nod to LA's car culture, and neon stripes mimic freeway taillights racing along the custom flooring.

The response from Universal has been overwhelmingly positive. The theater has become so iconic that Universal employees have taken to calling it the "Popcorn Theater" and President and COO Ron Meyer praises the job as "spectacular"—of all people, he'd certainly know a hit when he sees one. **ALISSA WALKER**



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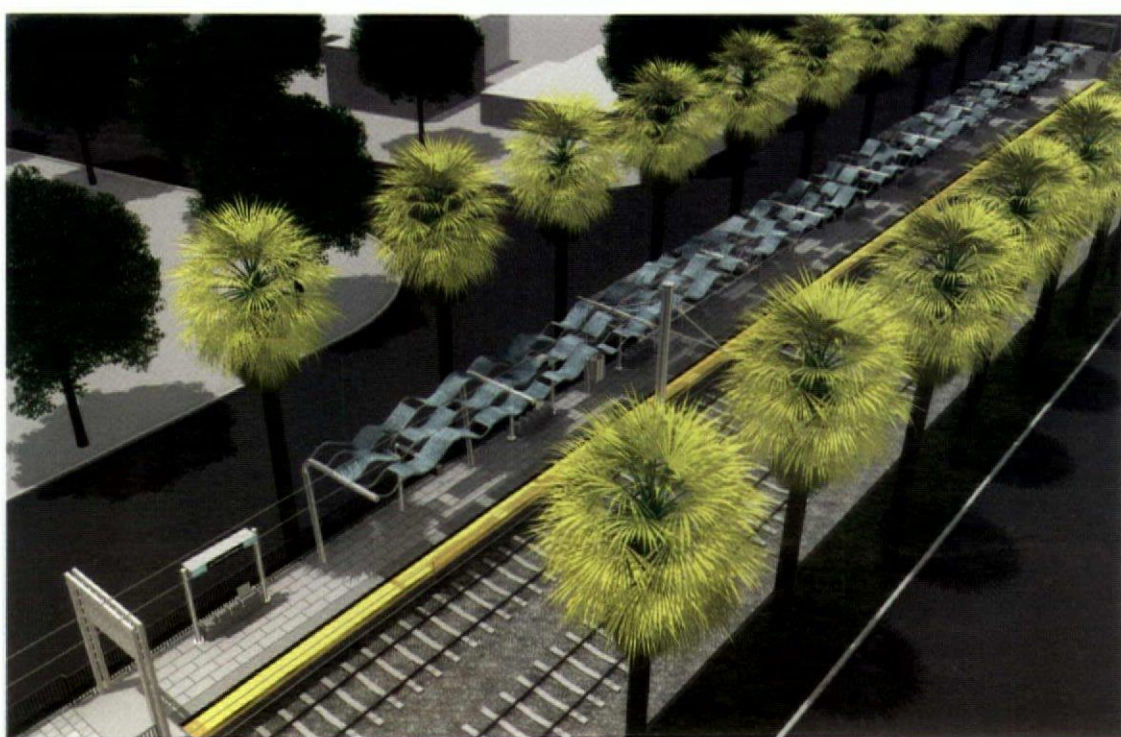
HEADING WEST continued from front page mile, \$640 million first phase, running from downtown's 7th & Metro station to Culver City, is expected to be in operation by 2010. A second phase continuing to Santa Monica is in the environmental planning stage. A team from LA-based Gruen Associates is handling urban design, architecture, and landscape architecture for the project. The Exposition Construction Authority—a state agency that works with the Metro—will manage the project. Most of the funding—\$560 million—will come from state Transportation Congestion Relief Program and Transportation Improvement Plan monies.

As anyone in LA—especially those stuck on the crosstown 10 Freeway, with a daily ridership of 150,000 cars—will attest, the Expo Line comes at a crucial moment for the car-choked city. The project will run parallel to the 10, along surface streets and existing rail rights of way through Downtown, Exposition Park, Mid-City, and Culver City. Designers hope to create a legitimate transit parkway, where rail stations, bike paths, and lush landscaping will combine into one linear park that crosses the LA basin. Where older Metro station designs may have been handed over to individual artists or cities to create custom designs, each station of the Expo Line will possess a singular

identity. Rippling canopies will be fitted with panels of perforated stainless steel that provide shade, with flat translucent panels layered below certain portions for rain protection. Extensive native plantings will use color as an identifier for each station, and public art will be integrated into the design as customizable panels and seating. "We knew the design would have to be something you'd be comfortable looking at for generations," said Urban Design Lead Roland Genick. "We were striving for something that has a simple, timeless elegance."

The undulating curves hint at the ocean waves at the end of the line, but they also symbolize a literal "weaving" of LA's urban fabric. The route, doomed in the 1950s by various auto-related interests (the Metro bought the right of way in the 1990s to preserve it for future use), will eventually serve riders from both affluent and low-income neighborhoods from downtown to Santa Monica.

In addition to the eight station area plans, improvements will include lighting, textured crosswalks, ADA-compliant curbs, and two elevated stations that will also serve as neighborhood gateways spanning La Cienega and La Brea Boulevards. Park and ride facilities are planned in Culver City, potentially at the Crenshaw station, and at La Cienega, in a four-story



GRUEN ASSOCIATES

garage with ground floor retail.

In light of the NIMBYism that has plagued other LA transit projects, extensive community outreach has helped make the Expo Line more palatable to local residents. Efforts were made to hire workers who lived within a five-mile radius, and the team worked to connect them with local trade organizations. Most important was the establishment of the Expo Line Urban Design Committee. For other lines, com-

mittees have commented on specific decisions within their particular city, but the Expo Line's Urban Design Committee was the first project-wide group.

Although standardization across the line was one cost-effective measure, the Expo Authority is also using a negotiated design-build model to cut costs. Construction work is broken down into multiple packages, and the Authority waits to negotiate construction prices

Perforated steel sunshades mimic the shape of waves.

with the design-builder until the design for a package is approved.

Projected ridership for 2020 is 43,600. Of course, not all commuters will wind up ditching their cars for the light rail, but even they, Genick points out, will benefit from more housing and retail options in their neighborhoods, and from "the general improvements to the quality of life." **ALISSA WALKER**

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NEW HEIGHTS continued

from front page James Von Klemperer says the project will bring LA's outdoor lifestyle inside a skyscraper. All apartments will have large balconies jutting out from the concrete building's floor slabs; some will be double-height to accommodate full gardens that will add interest to the facade. A planted podium just above ground level will be "a garden extension of Pershing Square," says Von Klemperer, while a roof garden on top of the building's bridge will also provide green space and a pool.

Von Klemperer says the square viewing corridor between the attached towers will frame vistas of downtown and break up the building mass, "allowing for a sense of light and air." The lower building's roofline will correspond to the heights of the surrounding buildings on the Square.

City councilwoman Jan Perry has praised the \$1 billion project as a symbol of downtown's renaissance; but Peter Slatin, editor of



Park Fifth at the planted podium level.

the *Slatin Report*, an online newsletter serving the commercial real estate industry, called it "one of a number of red flags in LA's overheated real estate market." He added, "It's too soon to tell, but this is certainly another indication that things could get funky. I tend to think this is reaching a little bit."

Houk has been develop-

ing the design for almost a year. Funding is set, say the developers, and groundbreaking will take place in October. Public comment is set to finish in November, with the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) set to vote on the design shortly afterward.

SAM LUBELL



ECOSHACK'S PRE-FAB "NOMAD" SHELTER BASED ON MONGOLIAN YURT

BACK TO BASICS

This May marked the launch of the Nomad, the first product in a line of sustainable, small-scale, prefabricated structures by Los Angeles-based startup Ecoshack. The 12-foot diameter shelter is based on the traditional Mongolian yurt, a lattice-walled structure used by nomadic herders for thousands of years. The Nomad uses an updated bamboo frame, whose C-section structure eliminates the need for the upper compression ring. An optional waterproof polyester cover and plyboo (a sustainable laminated bamboo plywood material) flooring system are also available. Stephanie Smith,

founder of Ecoshack explained that once tested the overall design of the Nomad deviated little from the original concept. A model with accessories and cover will sell for about \$8,300.

In addition to the Nomad 2.0, an aluminum and industrial plastic version of the original to be launched this fall, Ecoshack plans to continue the development of other small, green structures that could be manufactured at a large scale for both temporary and longer term use. For more information visit www.thenomadyurt.com.

ASHLEY ZARELLA

WAIT IS OVER IN SAN

FRANCISCO continued from front page the 26-story, 440-unit first phase will begin this fall, with completion expected by 2010. Depending on market conditions, the three-phase, two-million-square-foot project (which also includes retail and underground parking) could take an estimated 15 to 20 years to build.

Located on the southeast corner of the 8th and Market Street intersection, the new complex, made up of three massive buildings arranged around 63,000 square feet of open public space, will replace the existing Trinity Plaza, a drab 1950s apartment building surrounded on three sides by a U-shaped parking lot.

Each of the new buildings, a Tetris-like composition of stone masses seemingly suspended atop one- and two-story glass podiums, will hug the sidewalks of surrounding streets—while blocky voids, including an 80-foot “monumental gateway” on Market Street, will announce major and minor entry points into landscaped courtyards.

Additional cut-outs will

accommodate terraces for residential units, and allow sunlight across the site. But otherwise, the masses are solid, the facades uniformly dotted with thousands of six-by-six-foot windows. There's no arguing that Trinity Plaza, at a whopping 475 units per acre, will be extraordinarily dense—and by that measure alone, one of the most efficient buildings in San Francisco. But will it be livable?

“That's all I do is livable,” said Trinity Properties founder Angelo Sangiacomo. “Not an inch is wasted, and I put a walk-in closet in each and every unit. If there's one thing I know, it's that renters aren't stupid.”

The final development agreement addresses

demands made by the Trinity Plaza Tenants Commission, which represents the 360 tenants of the existing building. Although tenants were initially opposed to the project—for fear of being displaced—they voiced their support in December 2004, when Sangiacomo agreed to transfer their rent-controlled leases into one of the three new buildings on completion. Supervisor Chris Daly is credited with brokering the deal, in addition to persuading Sangiacomo to lease 15 percent of the units at below-market rate rents.

JULIE KIM

The so-called monumental gateway on Market Street.



ARCHITECTONICA



COURTESY GENSLE

UNVEILED

LA LIVE'S ANCHOR HOTEL

On June 1, Santa Monica-based Gensler architects and AEG developers broke ground on the first skyscraper to win approval in Los Angeles in almost 20 years. (The last tower built here was SOM's 52-story Gas Company Tower of 1991.)

The \$900 million, 54-story Hotel & Residences at LA Live—which will take up more than half of the 4 million-square-foot mixed-use development next to the Staples Center—will include a JW Marriott hotel; a Ritz-Carlton boutique hotel; and a 224-unit Residences at the Ritz Carlton. The firm is also designing an 80,000 square-foot conference center behind the building.

To adapt to California's new Title 24 Energy requirements, the east and west facades of the hotel and residences will be composed of three skins: a monolithic, slightly-reflective glass curtain wall, a clear glass curtain wall, and a variegated glass curtain. This skin, or “veil,” will be composed of alternating transparent, translucent, colored, and fritted glass, and will be accented with metal panels. The veil's glass will become more transparent as the building rises, to provide more light for the condominiums while meeting Title 24's new 60 percent glass transparency requirements.

SL

Architect: Gensler
Client: Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG)
Location: Downtown Los Angeles
Completion: 2010



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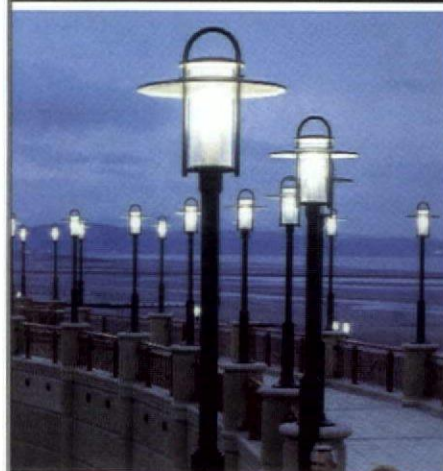
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JULY 16, 2007



From the inspiring peak of Mount Tamalpais to the rugged coastline, to bucolic rolling hills, Marin County is almost too picturesque. This is the setting in which architect Stanley Saitowitz, founder of the San Francisco firm Natoma Architects, has chosen to center much of his work on the idea of "interrupting the land as little as possible." One of his most recent projects, the Bridge House, is an ideal example.

Saitowitz has become well known for his "bar houses," such as his Byron Meyer residence in Sonoma and the Lieff Guest House in Napa. Long, lean rectangles, the structures are built to optimize views and contrast perfectly with their surroundings, highlighting the landscape with their smooth forms. Saitowitz calls them "houses of constructed emptiness." "The bars are almost like using a ruler or barometer: They help develop a straight line in an undulating landscape," explained Saitowitz.

The Bridge House sits on 15 acres of wooded, sloping grasslands containing a ravine. There's very little level land, so Saitowitz created his own flat plane, a 22-foot-wide bar that bridges the span of the ravine from east to west.

Although the size may seem somewhat excessive for a family of four at 7,000 square feet—"the grandparents visit a lot," Saitowitz says defensively—the house feels extremely light, floating above a dry creek bed.

And just as the house floats in the landscape, objects float within the house. Everything seems separate from its moorings: the fireplace is elevated above the floor, walls don't quite meet the ceilings, and built-in cabinetry is fitted into walls.

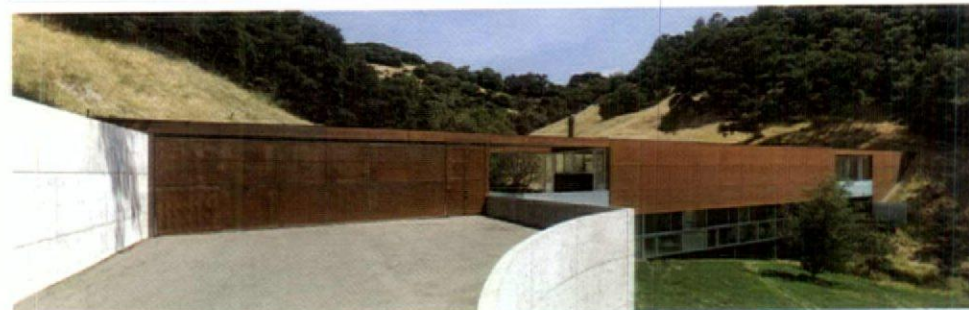
Above: The 22-foot-wide house bridges a ravine. Below, left: the dining room faces south. Below, right: the swimming pool is built against a retaining wall on the hillside.

To enhance the visual interest of the home, the structure isn't an unbroken line. Instead, it's a series of three spaces—garage, family areas, and guesthouse—separated by courtyards. The effect of greenery between the spaces helps maximize an awareness of the landscape, as do the expansive floor to ceiling walls of glass stretching the length of the house and providing different vistas from each of the home's two stories.

The first floor of the family area contains the bedrooms. Tucked deep into the crevice of the ravine, a wall of windows provides an intimate view of the grasslands surrounding the house from the bedrooms. Upstairs, the living and dining areas and family room have sweeping vistas of the 50-acre reserve beyond. It's a nice juxtaposition of public versus private, defined by the contrasting scenery outside the windows.

The exterior of the house is clad in rust-orange Cor-ten steel to further highlight a distinction with the greenish-yellow hillsides. "It weathers and develops a patina. It has its own natural cycle," says the architect. Solar panels sit atop the home as a nod to responsible sustainability. All in all, the house eloquently bridges the gap between the natural environment and architectural minimalism.

AMARA HOLSTEIN





BRAD CLOEPFIL DESIGNS A VERTICAL MUSEUM INSIDE A BANK'S HEADQUARTERS

ART AND COMMERCE

Portland, Oregon-based architect Brad Cloepfil's addition and renovation of the Seattle Art Museum (SAM), which opened May 5, marks the second substantial cultural project completed in the Emerald City this year, and adds to his firm's growing portfolio of museum designs. In January, the Olympic Sculpture Park, designed by New York-based Weiss/Manfredi and Charles Anderson Landscape Architecture, opened to glowing reviews.

The \$86 million project also represents an unusual relationship between the museum and Washington Mutual Bank (WaMu), which jointly developed the new museum and the bank's new world headquarters, on the same site.

Venturi Scott Brown & Associates designed the original museum in 1991. The 150,000-square-foot building, clad in brown limestone with post-modern ornamentation, became a downtown fixture despite its cramped gallery spaces. In 2001, with no room in the facility to accommodate a rapidly growing collection and visitorship, SAM entered into a relationship with WaMu. By jointly developing the lot adjacent to the existing museum, (purchased by SAM in 1980), the

Museum could afford to expand with a sleek new 16-floor, 300,000-square-foot glass and steel tower, while WaMu would get a 42-story tower, designed by NBBJ Seattle, on prime downtown real estate.

The WaMu tower rises on the eastern portion of the site, and SAM's addition takes up much of the western edge. WaMu owns and occupies the top four floors of the addition and leases eight others with the understanding that SAM, now on the first four floors, will expand upward.

Early in the design phase Cloepfil recognized that the relationship between SAM and WaMu would be complex. "We had to design a building that would change over time, a building with a cross section and facade that could be modified from office to exhibition space," he said.

Because the museum floors had to match up with the office tower, heights were set at about 11 feet, a challenge for the display of larger objects, said Cloepfil. His solution was to increase some galleries to double-height and then interlock them with single-height spaces. This not only connected floors to the tower, but created a distinct experience: Rather than accessing each floor in a vertical motion, visitors

zigzag through spaces, always able to see what is above and below.

The museum building's facade, a steel and glass curtain wall system, was conceived by Cloepfil as four articulated L-shaped "shells." These segments rise from street to parapet, and pinwheel around the corners of the building's floor plates. Gaps between the shells provide narrow views of the bay, mountains, and surrounding city. An operable brise-soleil system of stainless steel shutters shades the southwest facing galleries and offices, while the north facing spaces are awash in natural light from the floor-to-ceiling glazing. Interior galleries benefit from a system that directs light in and then bounces it around the interior space.

Cloepfil said, "This is the kind of work I like to do. I like to be fully engaged, to try to come to an understanding about the city, the collection, and the quality of light."

ALLISON MILONIS

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Profiles of Selected Architects



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Left: The Wilshire Boulevard facade. Above, top: The north facade. Below, Exposed trusses are part of an elaborate roofing system.

The first and most noticeable feature of the Broad Contemporary Art Museum (BCAM), being built next to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in Miracle Mile, is how quickly the three-level, 100,000 square-foot gallery space has gone up. In less than a year, an existing parking structure was demolished, an underground parking lot excavated and completed, and the twin 120-foot by 80-foot BCAM buildings erected and nearly completely clad.

Part of LACMA's make-over, which will include a new marquee—a locomotive engine dangling from a crane by Jeff Koons—BCAM replaces an earlier scheme by Rem Koolhaas to raze the museum and replace it with a roof floating on air. When museum trustees couldn't find the money for Koolhaas's building, LA's biggest philanthropist, Eli Broad, announced he would fund a new separate modern art building to house his personal collection. Renzo Piano, known for his deft touch, designed twin rectangles linked by an out-sized elevator, an H-plan building that is as massive as it is elegant. Spidery metal-work staircases and papery scrims will hang from the taupe-colored travertine exterior, creating a dialogue of stone and

steel, soft and hard.

On average, Piano's many museum projects take about six years from design to completion, yet BCAM is moving at breakneck speed. "Chicago began in 1999," says project architect Alexander Knapp, referring to the expansion of the Art Institute of Chicago. "We're a year-and-a-half ahead of them. We've whipped through this. Eli Broad doesn't care about the details. Once the schematics were done he didn't understand why we weren't starting to build."

Considering Piano's tireless dedication to detail—the building's escalator and skylights make up roughly 40 percent of the BCAM construction documents and were mocked-up at full-scale in Genoa—getting from start to finish in under four years is fast.

Although the twin wings of the building appear to be simple structures, the project contains a couple of design and engineering feats that bear the clear, concise, and elegant hand of Piano. For starters, the symmetrical towers are joined at the middle in a deep recess occupied by the 21-foot-wide glass elevator. As the cab rises, the Hollywood Hills come into view, and suddenly the museum embraces the panorama of Los Angeles. The ride is a

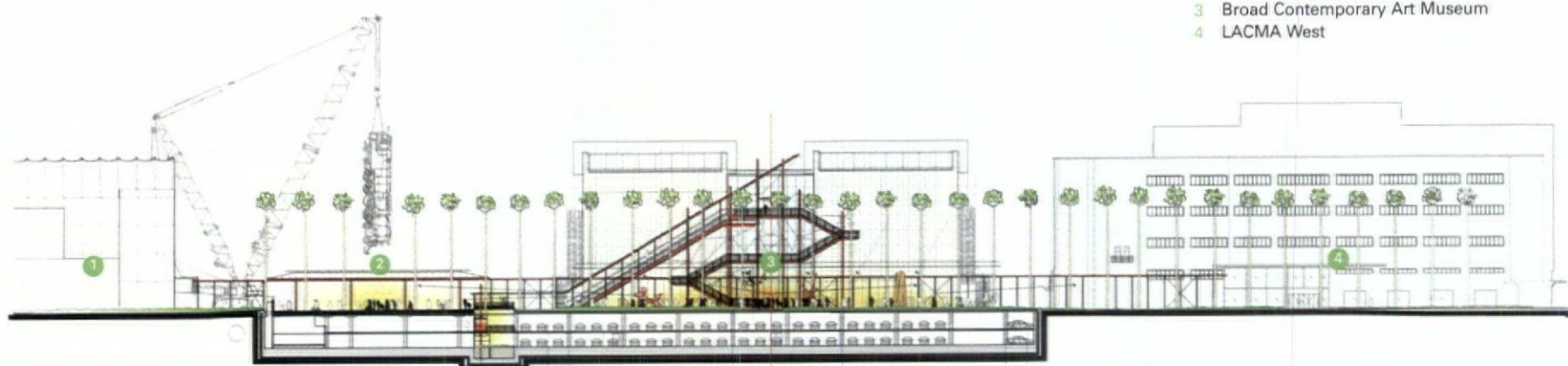
subtle nod to the indoor-outdoor architecture pioneered by LA's early modernists.

There are other reasons why it is remarkable that the building is going up so swiftly. BCAM is in the La Brea Tar Pits, a 23-acre park with large pools of oil seeping to the surface. The area also contains one of the world's largest deposits of Ice Age animals, and once the decision was made to put the parking underground, the project literally became a gooey archeological dig. Not only did they find an entire woolly mammoth—which took weeks to pry out of the thick tar—but also a layer of trapped sulfur dioxide, a deadly gas that forced construction workers to wear respirators throughout eight weeks of excavation. In the end, they had to pour a 4½-foot-thick floating slab, a giant lid to keep toxic gases from wafting up into the parking lot and museum. As a result, the project's most intensely engineered aspect is totally invisible.

Another highly worked part of the building is, oddly, hidden in plain view. The ceilings of the 3rd story galleries are made entirely of glass, as part of an elaborate system of exposed trusses, "sunshades," and roller screens that filter and direct sunlight throughout the seasons.

Three hundred and eighty-eight 1½-inch-thick frit glass panels are suspended from cambered aluminum trusses. Rising from the trusses are south-facing, 17-foot-tall, S-shaped sunshades spaced ten feet apart. These block direct sunlight, allowing light to drift down to the gallery below. At the welded junctions of the trusses are daisy plates that look as if they were part of NASA's Mars Rover. So many components converge and interweave at the plates that they were impossible to accurately depict in a drawing, so a model was constructed as the guide for manufacture. The 80-foot-long trusses were then manufactured in Salt Lake City, by German fabricator Pohl. To keep them as light as possible, they were tensioned on site until the trusses came into square. The members are so thin, Knapp says, that they are like strands of spaghetti yanked into place.

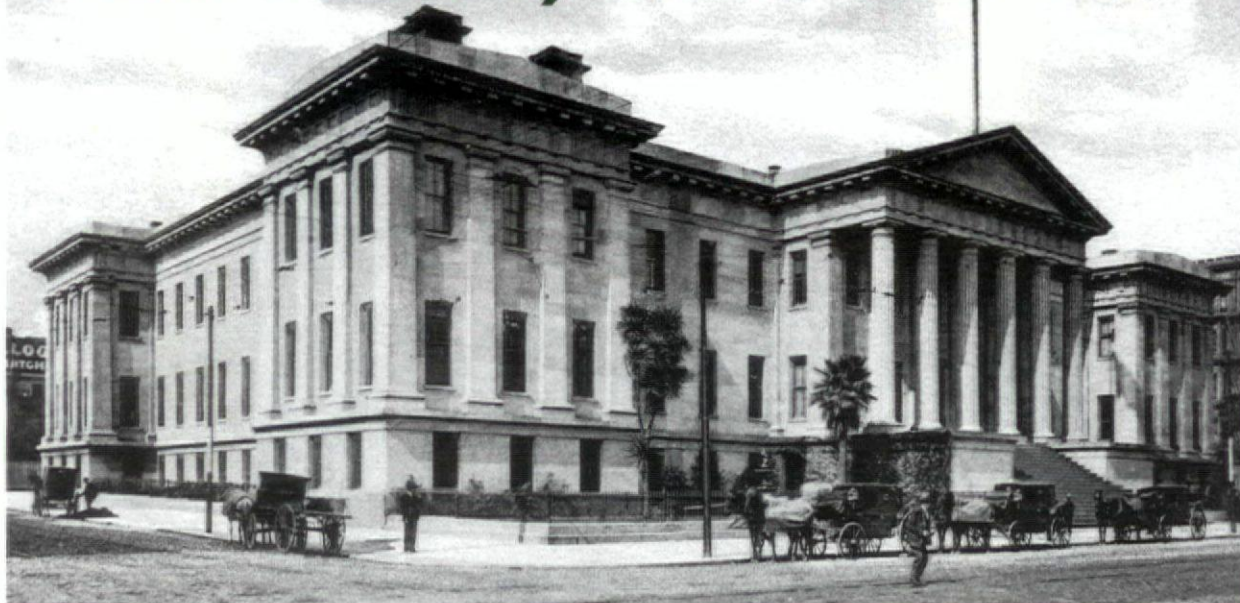
When BCAM opens in late 2008, it is likely that the elaborate trusses will all but disappear from view. People will be drawn to the bright red entrance escalator, which makes an uninterrupted 50-foot run from the ground to the 3rd floor. Still, if anyone looks up, the designers' and engineers' solutions will be there for all to see, and marvel at. **GREG GOLDIN**



- 1 The Ahmanson Building
- 2 Entrance Pavilion
- 3 Broad Contemporary Art Museum
- 4 LACMA West

HISTORIC BUILDING TO BE LINCHPIN IN NEW CULTURAL CORRIDOR

OLD MINT, NEW LIFE



San Francisco's Old Mint—the Granite Lady—on the corner of Fifth and Mission—finally has a new destiny. The 1874 neoclassical building, which has been sitting vacant since 1994, is slated to undergo an \$89.7 million restoration and renovation that will turn it into the city's first museum of local history and culture.

The renovated building will join a group of new cultural and retail institutions, including the Museum of the African Diaspora, the Contemporary Jewish Museum (currently under construction), and the expansion of the Westfield San Francisco Centre, that have begun to revitalize the area, turning Mission Street into the thriving pedestrian corridor that Market Street never became.

The renovation team is led by San Francisco-based Patri Merker Architects, whose portfolio includes the restoration of Hills Plaza and the Ritz Carlton Hotel. They teamed up with the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society (SFMHS) in 2002, after the General Services Administration

had passed ownership of the Old Mint, a National Historic Landmark, onto the city, who then issued an RFP. In 2003 the city effectively donated the site to the SFMHS, drawing up a \$1 per year, 66-year lease. Patri Merker completed plans for the project last summer, and the city Board of Supervisors approved the project last fall.

In addition to the 32,000 square feet to be occupied by the SFMHS, the restored building will include the American Money and Gold Rush Museum, a new home for the Convention and Visitors Bureau (currently located north of Market Street in Hallidie Plaza), and restaurants and shops featuring local cuisine and products.

Originally designed by Alfred B. Mullett, chief architect for the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the Old Mint was one of few buildings south of Market Street to survive the 1906 earthquake and fire. Its indestructibility now poses challenges in transforming it into an inviting public place. Patri Merker plans to add glass arcades to the building on its Mission and



Left: The 1874 neoclassical building in mint condition days. Above: A transformed courtyard with skylight will admit daylight and air.

Jessie Street sides to help scale down the building's imposing fifteen-foot plinth; the arcades will house rest areas, billboards, and kiosks for street vendors.

Most visitors will enter the Old Mint by climbing twenty-one stairs, and proceeding through a fifteen-foot doorway into a ceremonial foyer, where Patri Merker will work with Page and Turnbull, a local historic preservation firm, to restore ornate moldings, lamp fixtures, and wrought iron-work detailing.

Patri Merker will make bolder interventions in the building's interior courtyard, inserting a round glass elevator, transparent balconies, and riggings for a multimedia installation designed by Boston-based consultants Christopher Chadbourne & Associates. Capped by a skylight, the courtyard will also provide daylight and natural ventilation. Dana Merker, a principal at Patri Merker, said that his firm hopes the building will become the first LEED-certified National Historic Landmark in California.

That could be a selling point for local philanthropists as the SFMHS works to raise some \$60 million (the city isn't chipping in). According to Erik Christofferson, executive director of the SFMHS, construction won't begin for at least 18 months.

Preservationists can rest assured that the Granite Lady will remain relatively unchanged. "Wherever we do make a change, there will be a clear distinction between the old and the new," Merker said. "This contrast will only help in drawing attention to the building's original grandeur." **JULIE KIM**

AT DEADLINE

GO WEST, ILA BERMAN

Starting next January, Ila Berman will take over as chair of the undergraduate and graduate programs in architecture at the California College of Art (CCA), CCA provost Stephen Beal announced in May. Berman comes to CCA from Tulane University, where she has served as assistant dean of the School of Architecture since 2004. A graduate in history, theory, and criticism from Harvard's GSD, Berman founded URBANbuild, which seeks to provide urban design and sustainable housing prototypes for New Orleans' historically blighted neighborhoods. The program earned Berman a \$300,000 grant from HUD. Berman has also taught at the GSD, Cooper Union, and IIT.

FARE HIKE UPHELD

Despite the best efforts of a coalition of transit and environmental groups, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority will go ahead with across-the-board rate hikes on its buses starting July 1. On June 26, the Natural Resource Defense Council, the Bus Riders Union, and the Labor/Community Strategy Center, a think tank, filed suit against Metro calling for an injunction on the rate hikes, which are meant to cover a \$1.8 billion operating shortfall. The following day, a judge refused to hear the case.

SCI-ARC'S NEW NEW MEDIA

Citing the need for architects to respond not only rapidly but also critically to new media and technological advances, the avant-educators at Los Angeles' SCI-Arc rolled out another postgraduate program entitled MediaSCAPES. A sibling to the existing, urban-oriented SCIFI, the one-year course offers students a non-professional Master of Architecture degree and is directed by aJum Studio's Ed Keller. Influenced by the worlds of software, film, and gaming, the program promises a think-tank curriculum of architectural design remixed with multidisciplinary theory.

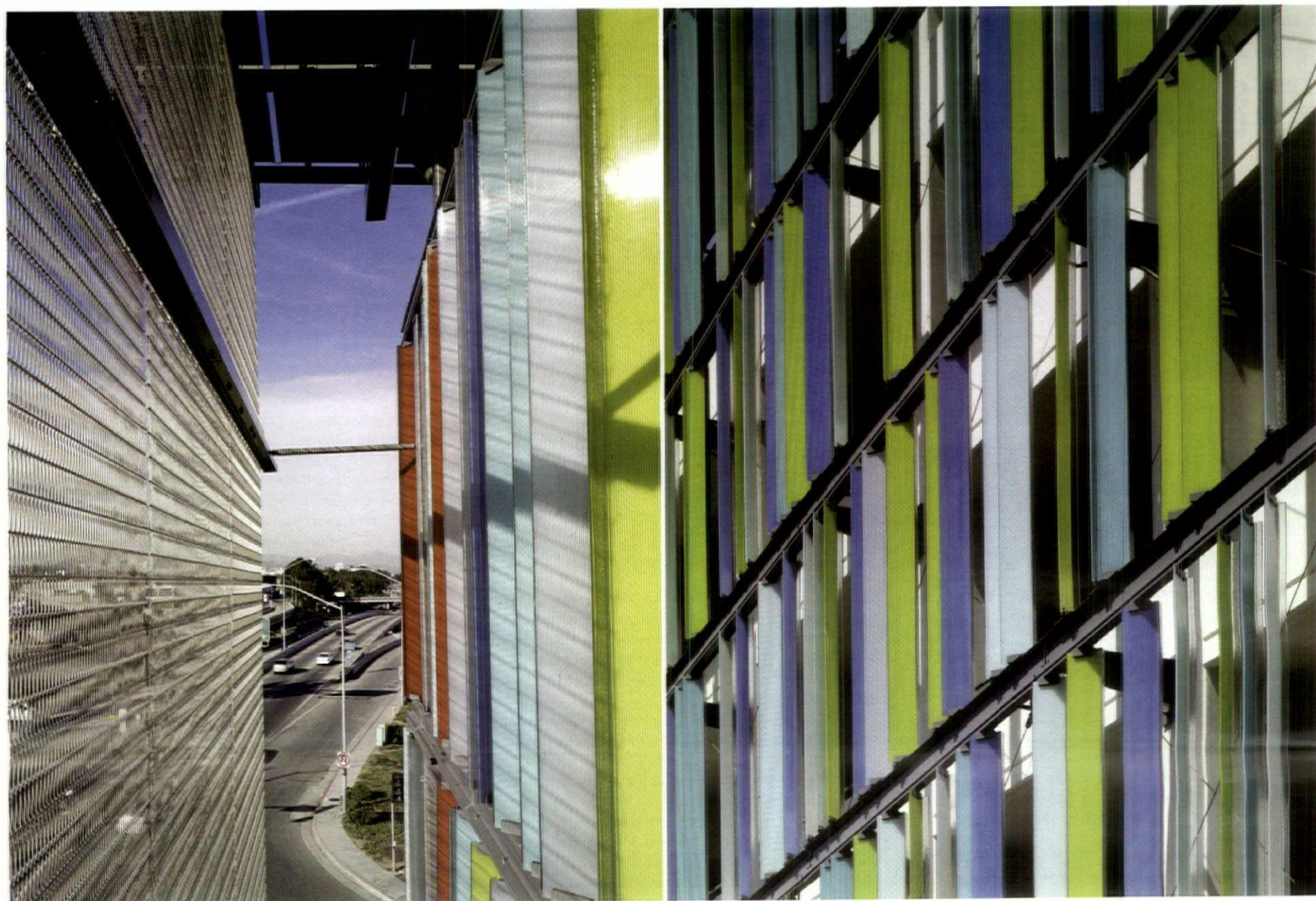
BROAD MUSEUM CONCEIVED

LA businessman, philanthropist, and art collector Eli Broad announced on June 1 a gift of \$26 million to his alma mater, Michigan State University, for an art museum. The museum will be named after Broad and his wife, Edythe. "A great university needs a great museum, since the arts stimulate learning and creativity throughout the entire campus," Broad said in a release. The museum will house the school's holdings, including antiquities, but will focus primarily on modern and contemporary art.

PHASE ONE TWEAKING AT GRAND AVENUE

On June 12 Related Companies' Grand Avenue Development received schematic design approval from the LA City Board of Supervisors. The Frank Gehry design for phase one of the project, submitted to the Board, includes wrapping about half of the facade of the development's 48-story tower—which will include a 275-room Mandarin Oriental Hotel and 250 condo units—in an undulating glass surface. South-facing facades will not feature the glass wrapping, but may instead be dotted with colored tiles. The new design also adds metallic window-boxes to the exterior of the project's 24-story apartment tower, lending that elevation a greater sense of articulation. Also, said Bill Witte, president of Related California, the look of the 250,000 square feet of retail and commercial on the site is now more "resolved," arranged in a series of overlapping cubes and terraces.

Answering speculation about whether Gehry would stay on the project for the later phases, Witte said there have been no discussions yet. "We've been too consumed with getting this to work," said Witte. "There's certainly been a lot of back and forth [with Gehry]. He isn't used to working in a constrained environment; but some of his best work has come out of this kind of give and take." **SL**



JOHN EDWARD LINDEN

Today's most popular catchwords are light, transparency, and energy efficiency, and glass manufacturers keep abreast of the trends by producing sophisticated new glazing materials that make the material clearer, more efficient, and more lustrous.

The projects shown here stand out for their use of glass in innovative, artistic ways that make buildings both spectacular and resourceful. Architects create new patterns, textures, and colors. They even work with glassmakers to create entirely new products and uses.

"Innovations can't be tackled by an architectural office alone," said Ruben Suarez, a principle at 3Form's design department. "It's a whole new area we want to explore," added James Mary O'Connor, principle at Moore Ruble Yudell, who stresses that while the product isn't new, the manipulation of it can be. "There are no new things; just new ways of doing things," he says.

Sam Lubell

Amazing Glazing

**SANTA MONICA CIVIC CENTER
PARKING STRUCTURE**
SANTA MONICA

MOORE RUBLE YUDELL, LA

To help add intricacy and lightness to a six-story, 882-space, pre-cast concrete parking lot at the Santa Monica Civic Center, Santa Monica-based Moore Ruble Yudell decided to install a series of one foot-wide, U-shaped channel glass fins with colors baked in. The glass, which sits behind a chain link screen, is held in place via steel outriggers, and angled at 45 degrees, to maintain proper ventilation inside. Yet from a distance, the surface seems flush, since most onlookers see the building from an angle.

Colors range from blue-ish toward the west to reflect the ocean, to orange and red to the east to reflect the sunrise. Neon lights were installed behind every tenth plank to create a glowing facade at night. Cantilevered glass canopies near the lower level project colors onto the ground surface. Photovoltaic roof panels help power the building and provide shading for rooftop parkers. Remarks principle James Mary O'Connor: "Glass can extend architecture into ordinary utilitarian buildings."



JOHN EDWARD LINDEN

Facing page, left and right: Channel glass fins behind a chain link screen at the Santa Monica Civic Center parking garage; The 12"-wide fins are set at angles to enhance ventilation within. Above: At night, neon sets the structure on Main Street aglow.



At the California Endowment headquarters, irregular patterns of white, blue, and clear laminated glass animate the façade.

CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT
LOS ANGELES

RIOS CLEMENTI HALE STUDIOS, LA

When Rios Clementi Hale developed a new headquarters for the California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation, they wanted to create a contemporary building that felt both rooted in its area and in the foundation's goals.

The glasswork played a large part. The Endowment's front, four-level administrative and operational space, which faces the street, is clad in a lively arrangement of panels of white, clear, and blue laminated glass.

The irregularly placed narrow vertical

cut-outs in the building's curtain wall, facilitated through recessed Z-channel mullions, are a reference both to the area's punched window masonry buildings, and to the individual expression that the foundation espouses, said principle Frank Clementi.

The two-tones of blue glass, he added, sample the gradient of colors of the California sky, and help the building appear far less imposing. During the day the blue light is projected onto the floor of the offices inside, while at night the colors emanate outward.



TOM BONNER



ELIZABETH FELICELLA



Above: The Dos Lagos Anthropologie store features a patterned screen that will someday be overgrown with jasmine vines. Left: Channel glass softens light as it enters the mostly white interiors.

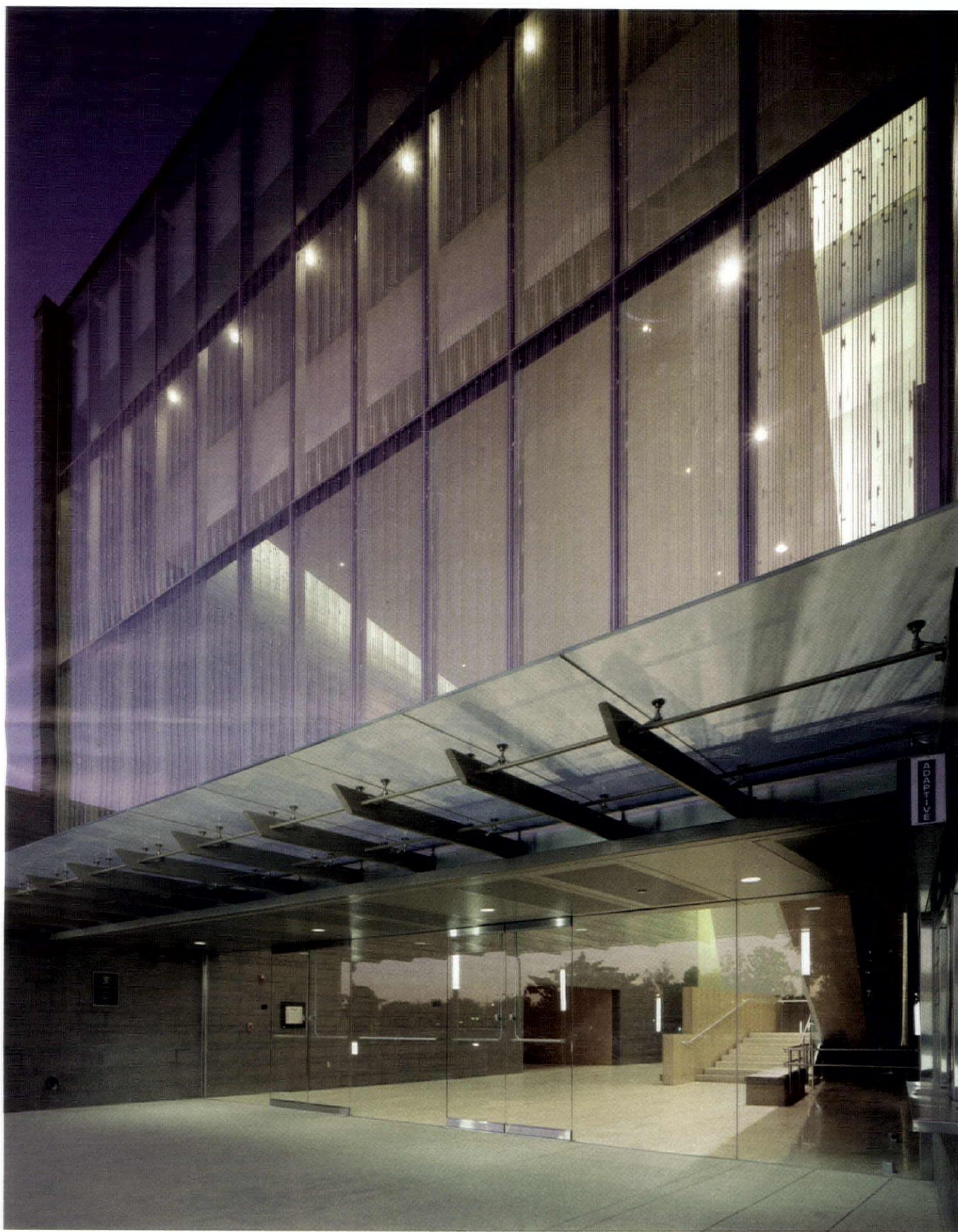
ANTHROPOLOGIE
CORONA
WORK AC, NYC

This Anthropologie store at the Dos Lagos shopping center in Corona, CA, uses glass to create a highly varied facade that is in turn translucent, opaque, and multi-colored.

"We were looking for variety and mystery," says partner Dan Wood, whose firm was tasked with animating a 110-foot long facade along a typical strip mall parking lot.

The glazed curtain wall uses three textures of narrow vertical channel glass. These include Linit's "Clarissimo," a low-E coating that has no texture and is iridescent; "Sandblasted Solar," frosted planks with a fine mesh pattern; and "Piccolo," a fine ribbed glass.

Above this composition sits a "green screen" with a series of holes in a gradient pattern that gets denser over the entrance. The screen will eventually be covered with jasmine vines. The store's awning is formed by a large aluminum folding door that closes off the store after hours.

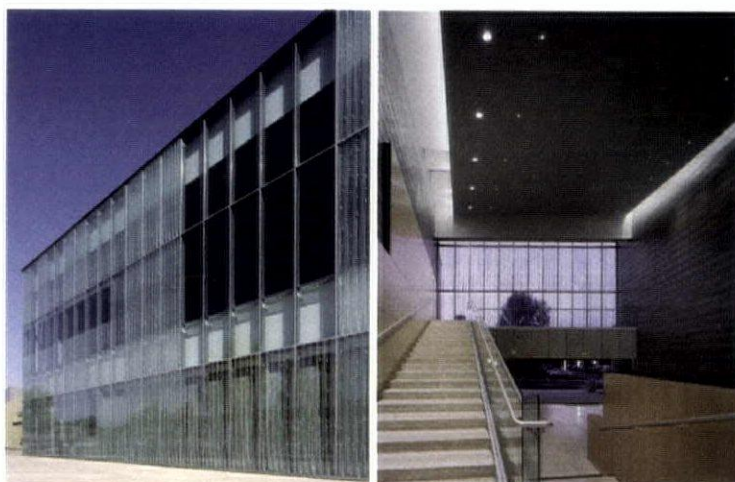


WESTMINSTER THEATER & CULTURAL CENTER
WESTMINSTER
CO ARCHITECTS, LA

The 35,000 square-foot center, which now serves as the city's cultural hub, includes a 420-seat theater, a large lobby, office facilities, a banquet hall, and an outdoor gathering space. The west facing facade—which fronts the upper lobby and the center's offices, is sheathed in a giant, smooth silicon-glazed low-e glass curtain wall with an intricate combination of ceramic frit, sandblasted frit, and clear glass that drew its inspiration from Vietnamese design in a nod to the town's large Vietnamese population. The pattern is based on 8-foot-tall abstracted white bamboo plants formed in a repetitive pattern. The designs were developed by the firm in CAD, and then fabricated off-site.

"It's a new experiment," says Paul Zafjen, a firm principal, of the project, which he says is effective in making the theater—across the street from city hall—a beacon. "It gives it new readings, new layers, and new transparencies. It's so interesting how it changes throughout the day, and at night."

Above: The ceramic and sandblasted frit on the glass facade of the Westminster Cultural Center suggest a bamboo pattern. Right and far right: The cultural center's facade in daylight; the lobby and grand stair within.



BENNY CHAN/ FOTOWORKS



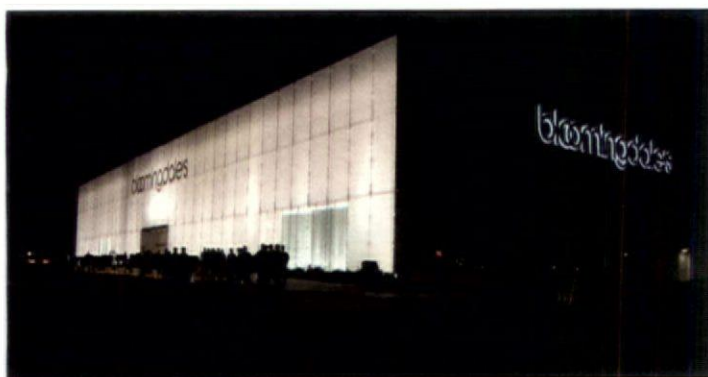
**BLOOMINGDALES
COSTA MESA**

KEVIN KENNON, NYC

In this 290,000 square foot conversion in the South Coast Plaza Mall in Costa Mesa, New York-based architect Kevin Kennon took advantage of the huge scale and big box shape of the building to create a 230 foot-long, 38 foot-high surface projecting toward the 405 freeway. The surface, says Kennon, becomes a giant billboard for the store. But it stands out because it is minimal and "cool," not the "typical blinking billboard or funny shape that you see along the freeway here," says Kennon.

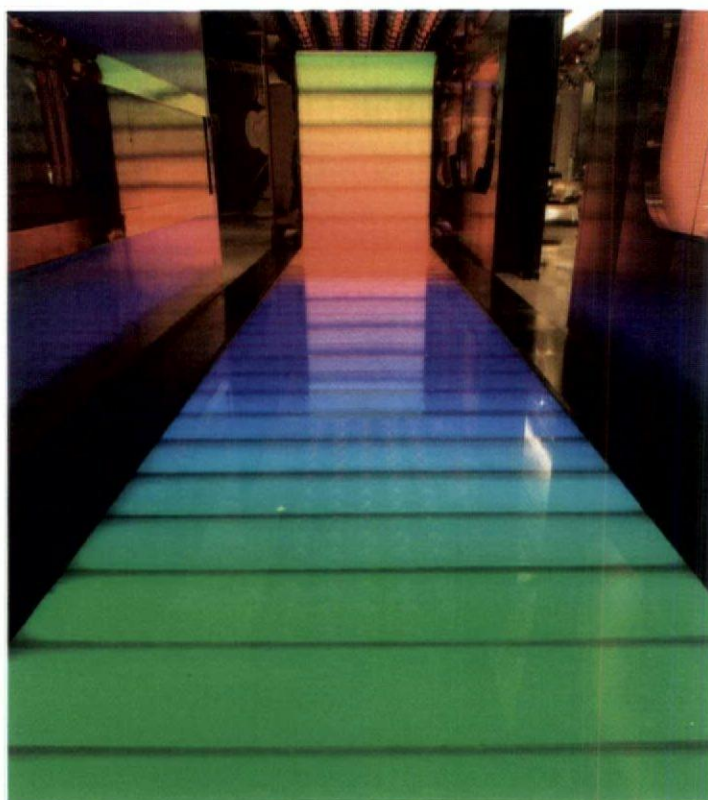
The surface is a laminated translucent glass curtain wall on point-supported stainless steel fittings hung from the building's steel outriggers. The utilization of low iron glass on the facade helps avoid the greenish tint seen in typical curtain walls. Most glass is translucent, but transparent glass is used intermittently in front of the entrance and on cut out boxes to provide "windows" to the ground floor interior. The project is backlit at night to glow. The signage is integrated into the glass as a custom screen pattern in ceramic frit.

The huge glass surface for the three-story, 300,000 square-foot building also acts as "a giant display cabinet" for the interior of the store, allowing for natural light, a rarity in large department stores.



KEVIN KENNON

Above: The translucent glass curtain wall acts like a billboard for Bloomingdale's South Coast Plaza store when lit from within. Left: At night, it becomes a beacon on South Bristol Street.



3FORM

Left: The new technocolored glass entry passage at a new theater at the Mirage Hotel, Las Vegas.

**CIRQUE DE SOLEIL LOVE SHOW
LAS VEGAS**

**MARNELL CORRAO ARCHITECTS,
LAS VEGAS, WITH 3FORM, LA**

Marnell Corrao architects worked closely with 3Form's architectural department to develop a ten-foot-long glass floor that serves as the entry point for all guests of Cirque de Soleil's new theater at the Mirage Hotel.

The two-inch-thick glass floor rests on clear glass and resin beams which support the structure but are not visible. The floor is imbedded with an LED lighting system that projects thousands of cascading colors and patterns. The floor curves up, becoming a wall and then wraps around, becoming a vibrant ceiling.



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JULY

WEDNESDAY 18
EXHIBITION OPENING
Kristin Beeler:
Beauty and Other Monsters
Niki Ulehla: Marionnettes
Velvet da Vinci
2015 Polk St., San Francisco
www.velvetdavinci.com

THURSDAY 19
LECTURE
Vik Muniz: Reflex
6:00 p.m.
Museum of Contemporary Art of San Diego
700 Prospect St., La Jolla
www.mcasd.org

SATURDAY 21
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Alexander Couwenberg
d.e.n. contemporary
6023 Washington Blvd.,
Culver City
www.dencontemporaryart.com

Richard Gate and Carrie Leeb
ZZYX Road
Ruth Bachofner Gallery
2525 Michigan Ave., G-2,
Santa Monica
www.ruthbachofnergallery.com

Kerry James Marshall,
Yuriko Yamaguchi,
David Ligare, et al.
Koplin Del Rio
6031 Washington Blvd.,
Culver City
www.koplindelrio.com

WITH THE KIDS
Physics of Toys:
Motor Mayhem and
Other Magnetic Mishaps
11:00 a.m.
Exploratorium at the
Palace of Fine Arts
3601 Lyon Street,
San Francisco
www.exploratorium.edu

MONDAY 23
EVENT
PLAYSPACE: Joshua Gabriel,
Karie Reinertson, Zachary
Sholz, Gareth Spor, et al.
7:00 p.m.
California College of the Arts
1111 8th St., San Francisco
www.cca.edu

TUESDAY 24
EXHIBITION OPENING
David Amico
ACE Gallery
Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art
5514 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.acegallery.net

EVENTS
Integrated Practice Salon:
Builders-Virtual Rehearsal to
Physical Reality
5:30 p.m.
AIA San Francisco
130 Sutter St., Suite 600,
San Francisco
www.aiaf.org

The Great Park in
Orange County
The Urban Design Committee
7:00 p.m.
AIA Los Angeles
3870 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.aialosangeles.org

WEDNESDAY 25
LECTURE
Peggy Shaw
Menopausal Gentleman
8:00 p.m.
Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

EVENT
How Do Great Streets
Get Made?
6:00 p.m.
570 West Ave.,
Los Angeles
www.aialosangeles.org

THURSDAY 26
EXHIBITION OPENING
Matthew Monahan
Museum of Contemporary Art
250 South Grand Avenue,
Los Angeles
www.moca-la.org

FILM
Dark Passage
(Delmer Daves, 1947),
106 min.
6:00 p.m.
AIA San Francisco
130 Sutter St., Suite 600,
San Francisco
www.aiaf.org

FRIDAY 27
EXHIBITION OPENING
Hodgetts + Fung
SCI-Arc Gallery
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

SATURDAY 28
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Carrie Marill
newfoundland
Six Space
5803 Washington Blvd.,
Culver City
www.sixspace.com

Dark Matters:
Artists See The Impossible
Trevor Paglin, Walid Raad,
Sergio Prego, Alison Sant,
Richard Johnson, et al.
Joachim Schmid:
Photoworks 1982-2007
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
701 Mission St.,
San Francisco
www.ybca.org

Emerging Ceramic Artists
Exhibition
Xiem Clay Center
1563 North Lake Ave.,
Santa Monica
www.xiemclaycenter.com

Turned Wood
del Mano Gallery
11981 San Vicente Blvd.,
West Los Angeles
www.delmano.com

TUESDAY 31
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Edward Weston:
Enduring Vision
The Getty
1200 Getty Center Drive,
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

Linda Graveline
No Diving
Architect and Design
Museum
5900 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.aplusd.org

Luc Delahaye
Recent History
The Getty
1200 Getty Center Drive,
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

AUGUST

WEDNESDAY 1
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Ala Ebtakar, Bull.Miletic
Gallery Paule Anglim
14 Geary St., San Francisco
www.gallerypauleanglim.com

California College of the Art
Alumni and Faculty Show
Rachel Heath, Marc Katano,
George Miyasaki, Raymond
Saunders, Kathryn Van
Dyke, et al.
Stephen Wirtz Gallery
49 Geary St., 3rd Fl.,
San Francisco
www.wirtzgalleries.com

A.R.E. Structures Lab
6:00 p.m.
ARUP
901 Market St., Suite 260,
San Francisco
www.aiaf.org

David Amico
ACE Gallery
Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art
5514 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.acegallery.net

FILM
Inland Empire
(David Lynch, 2006), 172 min.
7:00 p.m.
Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

THURSDAY 2
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Impressions: Contemporary
and Modern Prints
Edward Cella
Art + Architecture
10 East Figueroa St., Ste. 3,
Santa Barbara
www.edwardcella.com

Doug Hansen,
Tina Niswonger
Gallery 25
660 Van Ness Ave., Fresno
www.gallery25.com

FRIDAY 3
SYMPOSIUM
Rocket Science and Region:
The Rise, Fall, and Rise of
the Aerospace Industry in
Southern California
The Huntington
1151 Oxford Rd.,
San Marino
www.usc.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Jack Alvarez
Julie Baker Fine Art Gallery
246 Commercial St.,
Nevada City
www.juliebakerfineart.com

SATURDAY 4
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Ian Francis
Blk/Mrkt Gallery
6009 Washington Blvd.,
Culver City
www.blkmrktgallery.com

Untitled LOVE Project,
Phase 4
Thinkspace Gallery
4210 Santa Monica Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.thinkspacegallery.com

Jon Flack, Shaun Gladwell,
Gustav Helberg
RAID Projects
602 Moulton Ave.,
Los Angeles
www.raidprojects.com

Ann Thornycroft
Jancarg Gallery
3875 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1308,
Los Angeles
www.jancargallery.com

SUNDAY 5
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Chrysanthemums on the
Eastern Hedge: Gardens
and Plants in Chinese Art
The Huntington Library
1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino
www.huntington.org

Kimerlee Curyl
Spirit and Freedom
A Studio Gallery
4260 Lankership Blvd.,
Studio City
www.astudiogallery.com

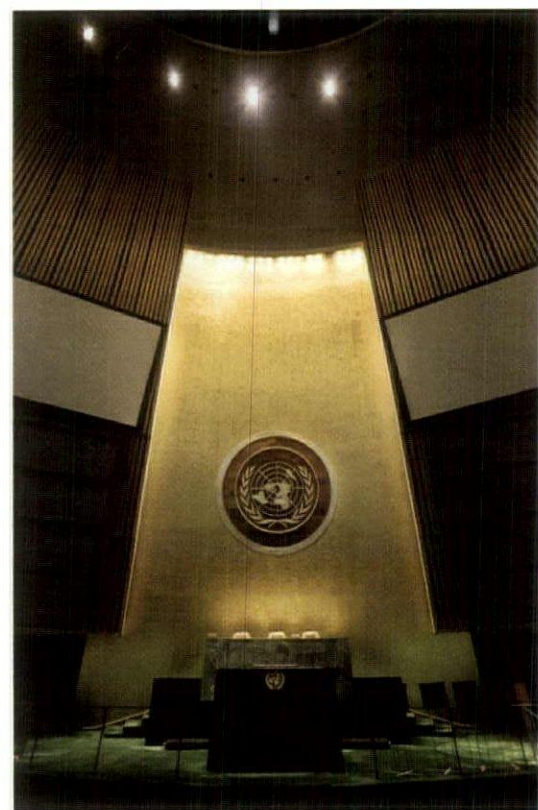
The Arts in Latin America,
1492-1820
Los Angeles County Museum
of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.lacma.org

FRIDAY 10
SYMPOSIUM
American Craft Show
Fort Mason Center
The Herbst and Festival
Pavilions, San Francisco
www.craftcouncil.org

SATURDAY 11
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
The Urban Myth:
Visions of the City
Sullivan Goss Gallery
7 East Anupama St.,
Santa Barbara
www.sullivangoss.com

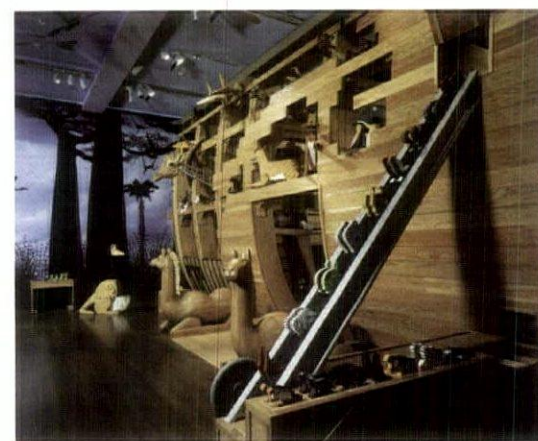
Allan Barnes, Martin Durazo,
Richard Godfrey, Jaime
Scholnick, et al.
Dangerous Curve
500 Molino St., Ste. 101,
Los Angeles
www.dangerouscurve.org

THURSDAY 16
LECTURE
Jean Lowe:
Suburban Sublime
6:00 p.m.
Museum of Contemporary
Art of San Diego
1001 Kettner Blvd.,
San Diego
www.mcasd.org



RICHARD ROSS:
ARCHITECTURE OF AUTHORITY
ACME
6150 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles
June 30 to July 28

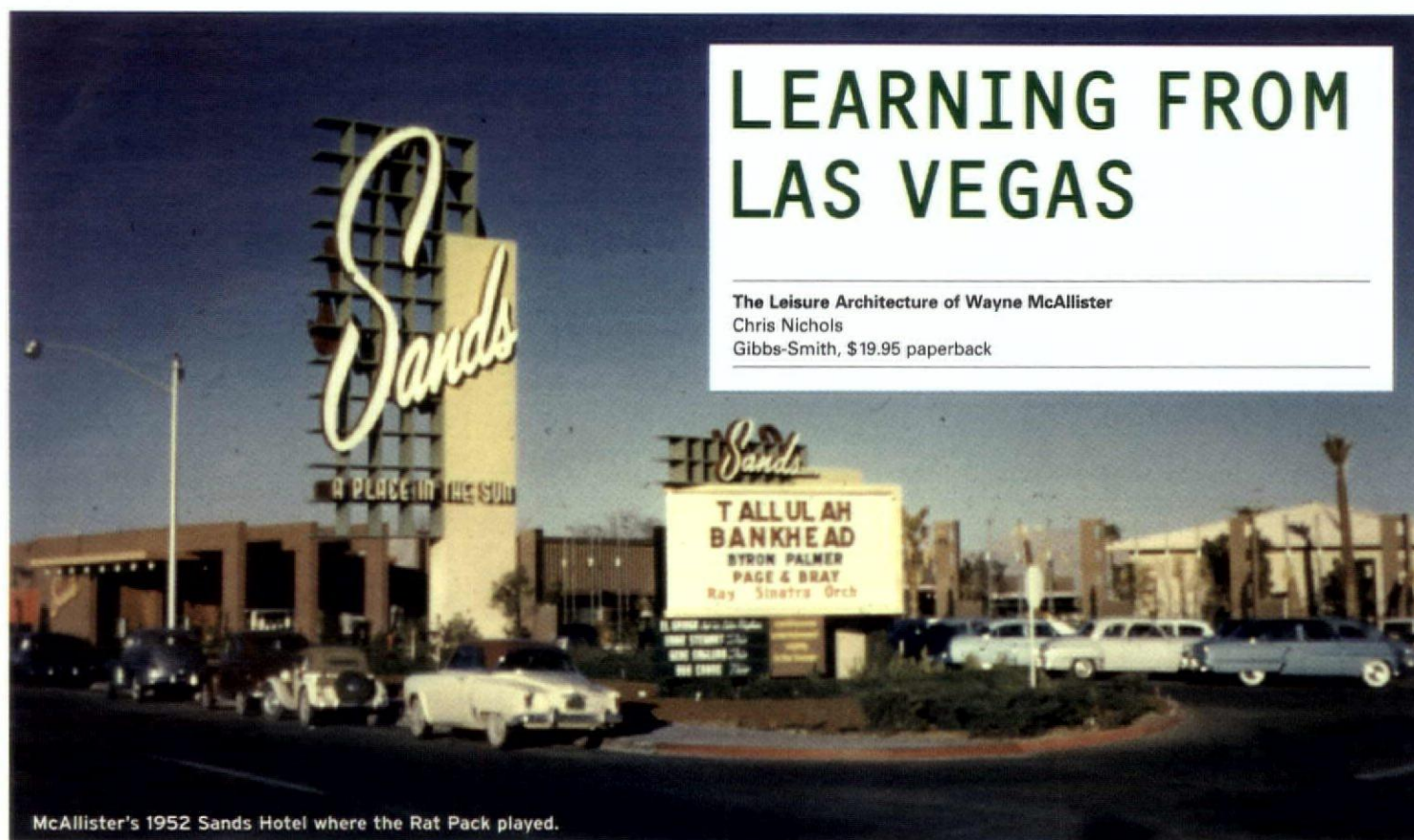
Santa Barbara photographer Richard Ross captures the spaces that contain and constrain us, examining the way structure and form combine to exert power over human will. From the politically charged starkness of the interrogation room at Guantanamo and isolation cells of Abu Ghraib, to light-saturated shots of civic buildings and houses of worship, to the all-too-familiar emotions triggered by an image of a principal's office, Ross' images both provide a peek inside surroundings normally inaccessible to the general public and allow viewers to recognize familiar environments that routinely influence their behavior. Ross' work is a direct response to the post-9/11 world.



NOAH'S ARK AT THE SKIRBALL
Skirball Cultural Center
2701 North Sepulveda Boulevard, Los Angeles
Starting June 26 (permanent exhibition)

Designed by Seattle-based Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects, *Noah's Ark* provides a child-friendly museum experience that encourages collaboration, teamwork, and discovery through a series of interactive exhibits. Using the story of the Flood and Noah's Ark as a narrative, the 8,000-square-foot gallery houses an enormous wooden ark where children can run amok, navigating rope tunnels, operating giant wind- and rainmakers, tossing food into gaping hippo mouths, and loading animals two by two onto a giant conveyor belt. Three hundred handcrafted animals—186 species in all—invoke a secondary level of thinking beyond the traditional children's exhibition. "We wanted to explore the ability for kids to appreciate levels of abstraction," said designer Alan Maskin. "Many of the animals are rendered from repurposed and found objects. We hoped this would trigger ideas about how objects can be transformed in combination with other parts and pieces."

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McAllister's 1952 Sands Hotel where the Rat Pack played.

LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS

The Leisure Architecture of Wayne McAllister

Chris Nichols

Gibbs-Smith, \$19.95 paperback

After reading *The Leisure Architecture of Wayne McAllister*, you might be forgiven for thinking that this unknown, unsung, and unschooled architect was the inspiration for Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's seminal work, *Learning From Las Vegas*. McAllister, it turns out, was one of the pioneering architects of the gawdy architectural jumble of Las Vegas that we know and (sometimes) love today.

Of course he wasn't Venturi and Scott Brown's inspiration. They looked to ancient Greece and Rome to remind us that the strident architecture of the Strip was nothing new, and that the wild, outsized hotel

signs in the desert town were an update of polychromed temples and triumphal arches of the Caesars. Not that any of this concerned McAllister, whose best-known work, the 1952 Sands Hotel (where the Rat Pack made its name), was imploded in 1996 to make way for the enormous Venetian Hotel. Born in San Diego in 1907, McAllister skipped out on high school to start drafting bungalow plans for an outfit called Ideal Building Company of San Diego. At the age of 19, he was tapped to design Agua Caliente, an opulent \$10 million gambling and boozing resort outside Tijuana, Mexico. For a time, the spa was the Hollywood getaway, just six miles

across the U.S. border, outside the reach of Prohibition.

McAllister went on, as author Chris Nichols notes, to "create some of the most outlandish and sometimes garish spaces in North America." He designed the blueprint for the Vegas strip back in the 1930s, with his plans for El Rancho Vegas—a monumental roadside sign at the edge of Highway 91, backed by a rambling oasis of gardens and low-slung hotel buildings. He invented the iconic drive-in restaurant, a sculpted pylon which served as a beacon, emerging from a disc-shaped overhang that provided a canopy for carhops. He took a small-time burger stand in

Glendale, and through his scripted use of flagstone and glass and a two-story high neon cherub, boosted Bob's Big Boy into a nationwide chain of 750 restaurants.

McAllister's life seems to have been peopled by gamblers and mobsters and high-rolling financiers. He was, in other words, at ease among a by-the-seat-of-your-pants crowd, and he fit in because he had a powerful intuition for the manipulation of symbols. The Sands was, perhaps, his most complete invention. Its signboard, a 56-foot tower supporting dashing lettering that all night long sizzled as "incandescent bulbs started off like a fuse, racing their way up and around the

dynamic...S-A-N-D-S...repeating in red neon and white chasers against a black desert sky." The utterly superfluous flying buttresses disappearing over a boomerang roof added to the sense that pizzazz and splendor await all who enter here.

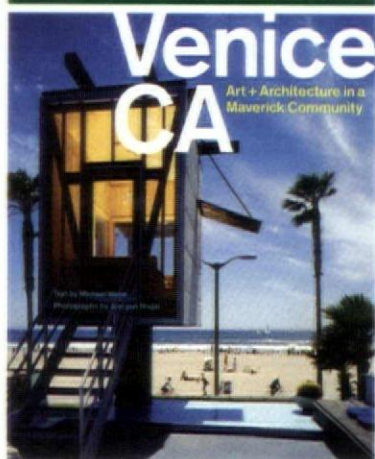
This is pure, decorated shed, if ever there were one. But McAllister was a closet modernist nonetheless. He never decorated a building, nor twisted a rooftop, without an organic, hyper-rational reason. He might not have taken his inspiration from the backsides of early 20th-century midwestern factories, like Mies. He certainly wasn't looking for the pure expression of steel and glass. Instead, he sought a distilled language of commerce, inalterable, undiluted, no-holds-barred. The idea was to get 'em in and keep 'em comin' back.

Leisure Architecture is a comprehensive and authoritative compendium. Nichols pulls together just about every document, rendering, and photograph from McAllister's oeuvre, an impressive bit of research. But amid the thorough catalog of McAllister's work it would have been helpful to know more about the man and his place among his contemporaries. Were the icons he created *sui generis* or did he picture himself working within a particular architectural style? Who and what inspired him? Why did he quit at the height of his success, and simply walk away from architecture? In the end, it would have been useful, too, had Nichols distanced himself from McAllister far enough to weigh the architect's achievements. Were his buildings footnotes—expendable commercial products waiting for the wrecking ball—or monuments worth preserving?

GREG GOLDIN IS THE ARCHITECTURE CRITIC AT LOS ANGELES MAGAZINE.

BEACH CHIC

Venice, CA: Art and Architecture in a Maverick Community
Michael Webb
Abrams, \$40



Once a down-and-out beach town drawing radical artist types, in the last decade Venice, California, has become a showcase of avant-garde homes and businesses, not to mention warp-speed gentrification. Many of the best local and international architects have contributed to the transformation: Frank Gehry, Steven Ehrlich, Lorcan O'Herlihy, Larry Scarpa, Koning Eizenberg, Fred Fisher, Philippe Starck, Wolf Prix, Michele Saee, David Hertz, and Antoine Predock. Some have created futuristic steel and stucco cubes and trapezoids that open to the breezy elements. Others have created strange but cozy spaces that look more like sculptures than buildings.

Michael Webb's new book *Venice, CA*, is a thorough roundup of this new landscape. The work is a testament to Webb's usual tenacity and ability to collect and collate an impressive amount of information. Most of Venice's notable buildings make an appearance in the book, which is a useful tool for newcomers to the area and a good point of reference for others.

The book's architectural chapters are well-organized and subdivided into smaller sections like Canal Houses, Additions and Remodels, Living With Art, and Oceanfront Houses. Some of the fantastic dwellings are familiar, like Gehry's renowned beach cottage for director Bill Norton, featuring a neat renovation and addition to an old bungalow, and highlighted by a cubic, raised study that mimics nearby

lifeguard stations. The book also features Gehry's "three little pigs," large corrugated metal-clad structures that were renovated for actor Dennis Hopper by designer Brian Murphy into cavernous and romantic gallery/living spaces. O'Herlihy's beautiful home, a block from the beach, features a facade grid of charcoal cement boards accented with blue and green panels and clear and colored glass. Ehrlich's home, clad outside with weathered Cor-Ten steel—a nod to Venice's former grittiness—inside is one of the finest examples of indoor/outdoor living in Venice, with its massive sliding doors that completely open up the double-height living room on both sides. Perhaps the most dramatic of all is Prix's home, using "folded planes," "torqued geometries," and "angled walls," to create two memorable connected steel towers. Inside, designer Virginia Moede made the house more habitable, linking the two structures at ground level and installing new surfaces and furnishings.

But the book also exposes the work of lesser-known architects, whose creative designs easily rival that of the big names. These include Argentine architect Bernardo Charca's house, which is enclosed by a fence of plastic lumber strips woven "like basketry" around steel poles. Olivier Touraine and Deborah Richmond's home is an elegant, dynamic cube clad in corrugated metal and cut away at the top and bottom. Gonzalo Duran and

Cheri Pann conducted a psychedelic remodel of a 1940s house into a tile mosaic wonderland.

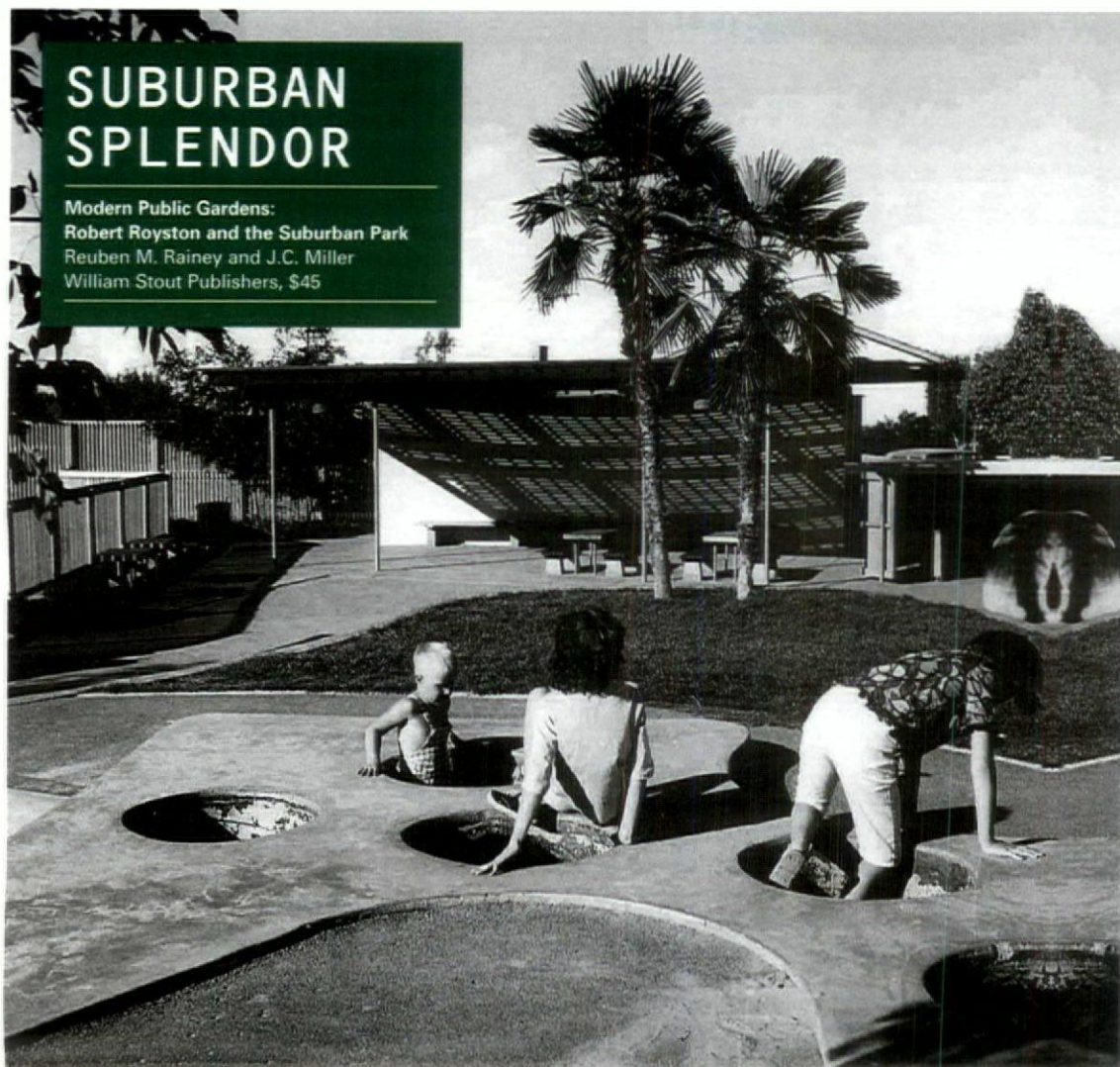
Webb usually breaks out beyond the boilerplate descriptions typically found in architecture publications by providing background information on architects and including pithy, clear observations and quotes. Juergen Nogai's excellent photographs combine architectural beauty and precision with a few unexpected images: a small girl in a stairway, a family eating dinner on the porch, a homeowner sitting at her desk, art supplies in (gasp!) disarray. These are a welcome addition and rare proof that people actually live in these prized homes.

Unfortunately the book doesn't give readers a good sense of time or place, as dates and locations are not specified. Architects' names are not listed in headings or in the Table of Contents, so the book requires some deciphering. The progression and consequences of gentrification are barely addressed either, which, while understandably a tough subject to broach, is a major oversight. There are only a few examples of new stores, restaurants, galleries, or public spaces, while sections on Venice's many artists have interesting descriptions, but manage to barely show their work.

In any case, the book is a dynamic and incredibly useful reference for anyone interested in one of the most dynamic architectural environments, not just in the US, but in the world. **SAM LUBELL**

SUBURBAN SPLENDOR

Modern Public Gardens:
Robert Royston and the Suburban Park
Reuben M. Rainey and J.C. Miller
William Stout Publishers, \$45



Modern Public Gardens: Robert Royston and The Suburban Park uses interviews with Royston and primary sources at the Environmental Design Archives at the University of California, Berkeley to capture the well-known landscape architect's voice and display his efforts to use parks to create varied, interconnected, well conceived community spaces that enhance suburban life in California. He specifically used parks to compensate for the haphazard nature of suburban planning.

At a moment when our current culture overvalues the role of citizens to affect design choices, it is refreshing to read that Royston knew how to balance users' opinions with professional integrity. This passage illustrates that ideology:

"His embrace of citizen participation reveals his faith in the potential of laypersons to contribute important ideas. However he does not believe in design by majority ballot. The designer must evaluate all citizen input and bears the ultimate authority to accept or reject it. The professional responsibility of the landscape architect involves the creation of innovative designs that can transcend the suggestions of even the most gifted layperson."

But at the heart of this book the subject of suburban parks. Royston, following federal suggestions that neighborhoods could be economically served if a park were adjacent to a school, envisioned parks as community hubs. Rainey and

Miller's individual case studies, particularly for Krusi (Alameda, 1954), Mitchell (Palo Alto, 1957), and Santa Clara (beginning in 1960) Parks, offer concrete examples of how Royston effectively carried out the park and school combination.

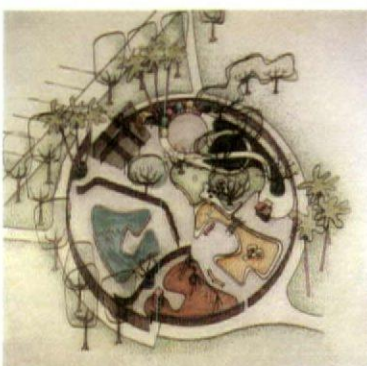
Playgrounds are a big part of each park story. The authors explain how Royston developed his own creative facilities, such as "free-ways," where children could drive mini-cars, or a wire mesh-cube "apartment house" which they could climb, for each playground. His purpose was to permit places for adventure and fantasy within a free-flowing energized space. One of the visual gems in this book is a recent photograph from a project that predates the suburban parks, the Standard Oil Rod and Gun Club (1950). The photograph depicts the high, open corkscrew slide that Royston designed and which is still in use. In the same image, a contemporary "off-the-shelf" version co-exists in the background. The recent example is a single straight chute that is totally enclosed and close to the ground. This is a graphic reminder of how Royston, working in a less litigious era, took advantage of opportunities to create unique, challenging equipment for young baby boomers.

While the authors' analysis of Royston's famous Mitchell Park (Palo Alto, 1957) does seem to lack a strong critical eye toward the recent restoration, they have spent time there and can report on the current users' delight. It's a fitting tribute

Above: The "gopher holes" at Mitchell Park in Palo Alto. Below: The study plan for Mitchell Park's tiny tot playground. Bottom: A climbing structure at Mitchell Park.

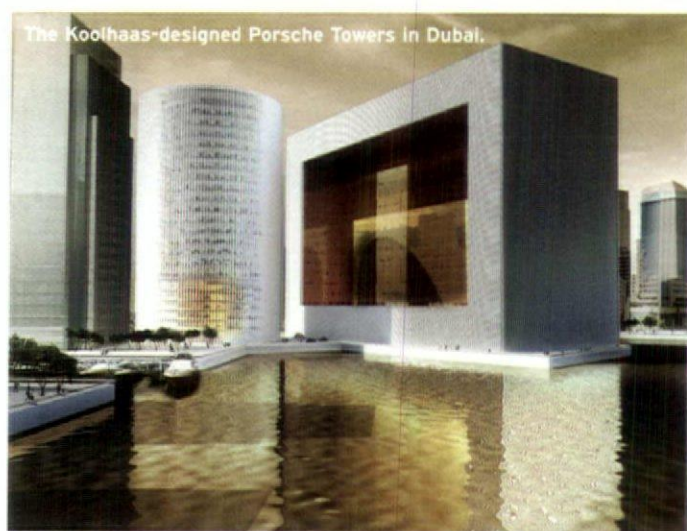
since Royston's greatest concern, made clear by this book, was how users would engage with his designs and experience his thoughtfully conceived spaces. Overall, it is a pleasure to find books like this, that intelligently present an in-depth look at a well-defined topic while capturing the spirit of an artist's passions.

SUSAN G. SOLOMON IS THE AUTHOR OF AMERICAN PLAYGROUNDS: REVITALIZING COMMUNITY SPACE AND LOUIS I. KAHN'S TRENTON JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER.



WILLIAM STOUT PUBLISHERS

The Koolhaas-designed Porsche Towers in Dubai.



COURTESY OMA

REM RAVES

Future Preservation
University of Southern California School of Architecture
March 1

Marked by the wit, vision, and realpolitik for which he is infamous, Rem Koolhaas delivered a lecture at USC this spring addressing the dilemmas facing architects in an increasingly globalized, market-driven vocation. But he also exposed contradictions within his own practice, which both assails and profits from the state of architecture today.

Koolhaas began his talk by almost immediately attacking the state of the profession as defined by the "regime of YES" (the Yen, the Euro, and the Dollar). YES, according to Koolhaas, reduces architecture to mere aesthetic acrobatics for public amusement and capital gain. Architecture, Koolhaas declared, leaves practitioners humiliated and impoverished—creating icons for the market economy with little or no direct benefit to the profession.

Be that as it may, the current economy and the desire for spectacle has provided OMA with ample work across the globe, and it was a challenge to reconcile the image of Koolhaas as provocateur and social critic with his office's mostly-commercial client base and OMA's current range of large-scale projects from Dubai to Jersey City.

Meanwhile Koolhaas dismissed various avant-garde practitioners for glossing over their blatant formalism with weak ideological aspirations, as opposed to OMA's more compelling, programmatically sup-

ple, and rational organizations of stacked, cantilevered, and colliding boxes. But his critique avoided a more political or ideological appraisal of the work within the context of globalized capital and its effects on populations and cultures. This may be because Koolhaas must participate in the very economy he criticizes—one in which practitioners of all stripes now benefit from the reorganizations of capital and its flows (state sanctioned, privately funded, or otherwise). While his attacks on the competition system and project procurement processes were accurate, Koolhaas' risky relationship with the present state of architecture was evidenced by his unwillingness to address his own slippery position within the avant-garde.

For all of his criticisms of the orchestrated, scenographic urbanisms of Gehry et al., Koolhaas' recent projects succumb to a tendency for spectacular, visionary gestures. Undoubtedly, OMA's works in Dubai (a revolving 1,000-foot high building) or Beijing (CCTV Tower) are examples of what has best defined Koolhaas' pioneering career—a combination of effective skepticism and inverted perfectionism, notions that suggest that the architect's romance with modernization will always be defined in equal degrees by cynicism, seduction, and damnation.

PETER ZELLNER IS THE PRINCIPAL OF LA-BASED ZELLNERPLUS AND A FACULTY MEMBER AT SCI-ARC.

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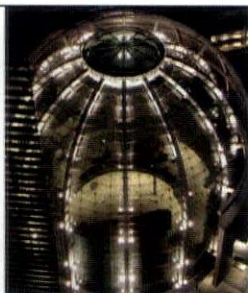
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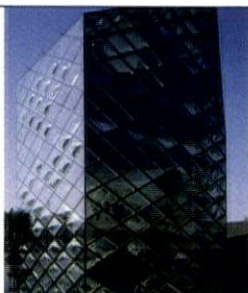
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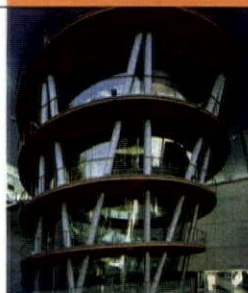
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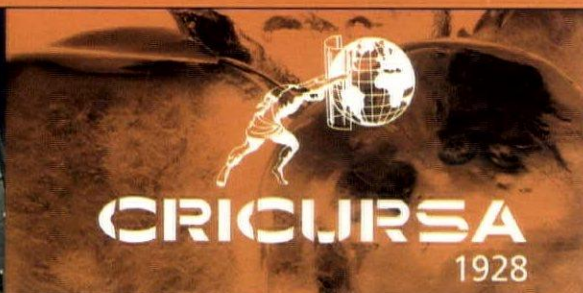
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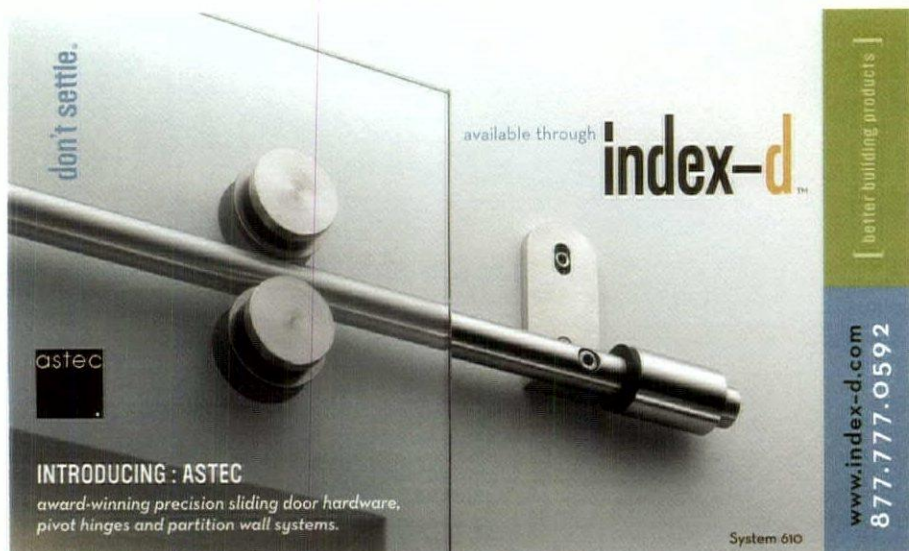


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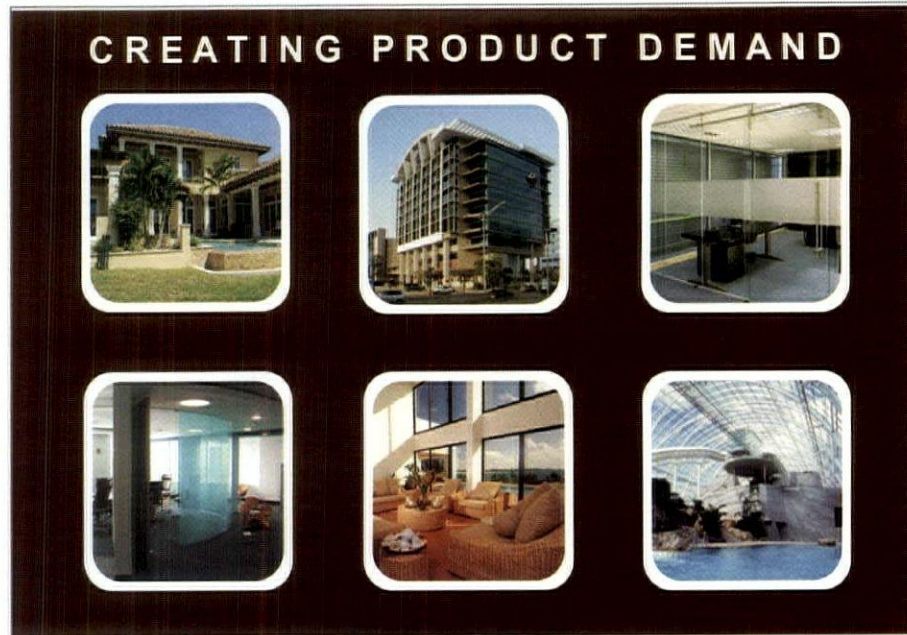
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RESOURCES

Santa Monica Civic Center Parking

Structure (p. 15): The enclosure system for the garage was fabricated by Woodbridge Glass 14321 Myford Rd., Tustin, CA 92780, 714-838-4444, www.woodbridgeglass.com. It was installed by Werner Systems 14321 Myford Rd., Tustin, CA 92780, 714-731-9999, www.wernerengineering.com. The lighting was designed by Francis Krahe & Associates, 304 South Broadway, Ste. 500, Los Angeles, CA 90013, 213-617-0477, www.fkaild.com.

Anthropologie (p. 16): The cast glass for

the facade and courtyard was fabricated by Bendheim Wall System, 61 Willett St., Building J, Passaic, NJ 07055, 973-471-1778, www.bendheim.com. It was installed by D&R Glass, 8687 Utica Ave., Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730, 909-945-0508.

Bloomingdales (p. 18): The exterior glass was manufactured by Eckelt Glas, Resthofstraße 18, A-4400 Steyr, Austria, 43-0-7252-894-0, www.eckelt.at. The lighting was designed by Lighting Workshop, 39 West 29th St., New York, NY 10001, 212-796-6510, www.ltgworkshop.com.

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Although the limelight tends to stay focused on Frank Gehry, Eli Broad, and the Related Companies with regard to the Grand Avenue saga in Downtown LA, the real scene shaper is Martha Welbourne, managing director of the Grand Avenue Committee, the non-profit organization governing the project. The Harvard and MIT-trained architect and planner is responsible for turning the site into what could be a model for public-private partnership in urban development.

With schematic design approval by the LA Board of Supervisors, Grand Avenue reached another milestone in June (See p. 13), so Liane Lefavre took the opportunity to ask Welbourne about her vision for Los Angeles, and beyond.

How did you get involved in the Grand Avenue project?

When I realized I should step away from the Bus Project [initiated in 2000, Welbourne was instrumental in setting up the Rapid Bus program—a new approach to urban transit in LA], it occurred to me that maybe I should keep working as a non-profit. I felt I could get more done that way than through a normal urban design practice. So I created a list of other problems to be solved in Los Angeles. High on the list was creating better pedestrian centers throughout the city.

About the same time, Eli Broad, Jim Thomas, and Dick Riordan (then the Mayor), decided to tackle Grand Avenue. They came to me to help them because I was one of the few (maybe the only) architects who had worked out of the box to get the government to do things. I took on the challenge partly because creating pedestrian centers was already on my list, and partly because I thought it would be good to see if my success with the Rapid Bus was a fluke, or if that way of working could also be successful with more traditional urban design projects.

Is that how you see yourself? As your own non-profit?

Yes, I try to get the government to do what they would not normally do. I operate with a private sector approach, but set up as a non-profit

with funding either from foundations or government sources in order to jump-start public initiatives. With construction on Grand Avenue scheduled to start in October, I guess it works. Of course, it has taken six-and-a-half years to tee things up! But I see this project as trying to create a pedestrian center in Los Angeles as well as creating an economic engine which will bring jobs, tax revenues, and along with them, a basically healthier economy.

So how did you get it all to work? And why did this project have to be undertaken by a private sector person like yourself rather than by the city administration?

It has been complex. All in all, the project involved four parking lots. The two parcels around Disney Hall are owned by the county; the others belong to the city. They are the last remaining undeveloped lots on Bunker Hill. The realization was: "Why don't we create a real gathering place and a real attraction, rather than just another housing tower with a piecemeal collection of retail buildings?"

Normally if the government owned this land, they would have issued an RFP and sold their parcels off to a developer. And the county, most likely, would have just sat on the land; they're not in the redevelopment business. Our idea was to

get the county and the city to work together with us acting as their staff. Also, to do it as if we were the public sector and to do it bigger and better and in a way that would generate more cash dollars.

It took us about two-and-a-half years to convince the two governments to work together. In that time we created a masterplan and a vision. We also talked to a lot of developers to drum up some interest. We finally got them to form what we called a joint powers authority, whereby the county and the city merged for the sole purpose of planning this project. Our open governmental board was in operation as of September 2003. And now we have been hired as their staff.

And now things are under way.

Yes. It took six and a half years to get it through. We had to do full environmental impact reports. We also had to deal with public outrage. As a result of a compromise (that I think was brilliant), there's going to be a 15-acre public park in the project funded through the ground payments by the developer. It's a very complicated business deal in addition to being a very complicated formal urban design.

What impact did your process make on the final product?

Without it, the planning would have been much more piecemeal. First,

to attract an international developer to just one parcel wouldn't have been possible; it's not enough for them. You would have gotten one firm doing the housing; another doing incidental retail space on the ground, etc. What we were trying to do was go beyond just incremental development. Our process created a bigger, more powerful, and more economically viable project.

What's on your list to take on next?

At the top are water and energy. But I will always be involved in transit. Of all the problems in the city, transit is the most critical. It's key to having a cohesive city. To help make LA a place we all want to live in is what made Grand Avenue interesting to me. Now, given that the city is still facing growth, with the population replacing itself at a pretty fast pace, issues of density and growth management are as critical as water and energy. Clearly, we aren't doing a good job at being sustainable, so I'm beginning to think that buildings and cars are using too much energy.

Los Angeles is amazingly open to new people and new ideas. I don't know if this way of working would translate to any other city.

LIANE LEFAIVRE IS THE CHAIR OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AND THEORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED ART IN VIENNA.

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