

THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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The Academy's eight-acre site south of Sunset Boulevard.

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PORTZAMPARC TO DESIGN ACADEMY'S FILM MUSEUM

LEADING MAN

On November 8 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced its selection of Paris-based Christian de Portzamparc to design its new movie museum in Hollywood.

The museum, described by the Academy as "a place for watching and learning about film and filmmaking, for exploring film's relationship with the greater world, and for listening to stories told by filmmakers," will be located just north of its existing Pickford

Center for Motion Picture Study, south of Sunset Boulevard. Designs have not yet been developed, but Bruce Davis, the Academy's Executive Director, said that the museum will sit on an 8-acre campus that will likely be divided among different buildings.

Davis said the Academy, which hosts the Academy Awards and has a membership of about 6,500 filmmakers, began thinking about the museum five years ago, and that it began the search for **continued on page 3**

MIT SUES GEHRY BUT ARCHITECTS HAVE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE



PETER AARON/ISTO

SHOCKED, SHOCKED ABOUT LEAKS

Officials from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology went to Boston's Suffolk County Courthouse on October 31 to file a lawsuit against architect Frank Gehry and contractor Skanska. The claim: Gehry's design—for which he was paid \$15 million—of the Ray and Maria Stata Center was defective and caused the university considerable damage.

The building, which opened in the spring of 2004, featured Gehry's characteristic flourishes and unconventional angles, and was meant to support **continued on page 6**



©JOHN EDWARD LINDEN

THEATER IS FIRST BUILDING COMPLETED AT L.A. LIVE

NOKIA CALLING

No matter where you were in Los Angeles on the night of October 18, it was difficult to miss the opening of the Nokia Theatre. Not only did the building glow brighter than every other building in downtown, but dozens of lights spun deliriously into the sky, putting any klieg-lit premiere in Hollywood to shame. The sleek building is the first completed building at L.A. Live, the massive residential and entertainment corridor taking shape in the blocks adjacent to the Staples Center, in the South Park neighborhood.

When completed in 2010, the 4-million-square-foot L.A. Live will also include the 2,400-seat Club Nokia venue, corporate office space for **continued on page 6**

GREENING GRACEFULLY

ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES BECOMING MORE COMPLEX PAGES 16-20

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TWO OF THREE BY MORPHOSIS AT LA DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

HEARST CASTLES

On November 6, Los Angeles City Council upheld the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the redevelopment of the 1913 Herald Examiner building on the southern end of downtown. **continued on page 5**

IMAGE BUILDING: MURALS GET A NEW LOOK IN L.A. SEE PAGE 10



April Greiman's mural in Koreatown.

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EDITOR

It seems that every green building these days claims to be a first: The first multi-family, mixed-use, south-facing LEED Silver skyscraper; the first LEED-rated cafeteria in the northern two-thirds of California; the first green bathroom in the country that is not an outhouse.

And while it is of course admirable for a building to aspire to being green, this unending barrage of firsts has gotten out of control. Obviously LEED and other green rating measurements have become much more than tools to measure sustainability. They have become tools for marketing.

Granted, the marketing is necessary for most buildings to secure funding, tenants, and recognition. The problem comes when the hyping of a building's green credentials begins to overshadow the importance of overall design quality. Already otherwise unremarkable buildings are getting praise thanks to the United States Green Building Council's (USGBC) stamp of approval. Too often the standards of design seem to lag behind. Aesthetics, occupant experience, programmatic innovation, all come second to the all-important green checklists. And, as one architect recently told me, this stampede for ratings, which he called a "point hunt," is not always in the best interest of the particular building. "We can design something that's important for the quality of the building and the occupants, but that doesn't always get any LEED credit. But if we put in a bike rack we get three points," the same architect complained.

I think you may well want to question the sincerity of a company that so aggressively uses green as a tool for obtaining higher profits and getting more exposure. Sure, it's a good problem to have. At least the buildings are green. But you wonder, for instance, about the amount of trees they've cut down to print the press releases letting everyone know how sustainable they are. Just because a building is green doesn't mean it's free from sin.

New green condos are kicking out existing populations with their high price tags. A new green BP gas station in Los Angeles serves good old-fashioned unleaded, instead of bio-diesel. And then there's the biggest question of all: How green can a building be if it's built from scratch? The greenest building employs the existing building fabric, rather than exploiting new materials and resources, no matter how green they are.

In the end green building shouldn't be a marketing coup. It shouldn't even be a big deal. Everybody should build green. It should be the starting point for every project, not the crowning achievement.

LEADING MAN continued from front page

a new architect two years ago. The Academy's original list of candidates included 154 architects, a number they whittled down to 32, and then to five finalists.

While some Los Angeles architects have grumbled that a local architect should have won the commission, Davis said the choice came down to a combination of aesthetics, practicality, and Portzamparc's alluring intangibles. "We certainly had no prejudice against local people," he said. "He seduced those of us who went to Paris and then he came here and re-seduced the committee. You can tell you're dealing with a visionary; a sort of poet of architecture. He has a very unusual and artistic approach to his craft."

Portzamparc, 1994 winner of the Pritzker Prize, is best known for his design of the French Embassy in Berlin (2003), his LVMH Tower in New York (1999), and his Cité de la Musique in Paris (1995).

The Academy, which plans to raise \$300 million to build the museum, is in final negotiations to secure the last parcel of land it needs for the site.

Davis said that he hopes to have renderings of the new museum by this summer. For now, he says, the museum will not focus on artifacts, but on how movies are made and the impact of cinema. It has named Maryland-based Gallagher & Associates to design the museum's exhibition spaces.

SAM LUBELL

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LETTERS

MORE UPGRADES NEEDED

Regarding "Smart Thinking" (CAN 05_10.24.2007), it should come as no surprise that the largest school district in California would find it more expedient to accrue to standardization in the design of its new schools rather than approach each

as the unique proposition that they no doubt are. The problem is quite a bit greater than LAUSD admits, the absence of design excellence in school design is redolent throughout the state. You need look no further than the primary lobbying/advocacy group for K-12 schools based in

Sacramento—the Coalition for Adequate School Housing to understand the forces at work. While we expect excellence from our students, apparently adequacy is all we aspire to in our places of education.

CHARLES A. HIGUERAS, AIA
OAKLAND, CA

CORRECTIONS

In Eavesdrop (CAN 05_10.24.2007), we incorrectly stated that Jennifer Caterino was leaving FORM magazine two months after it launched. She left six months after it launched, and prior to that had been involved with Balcony Press, its parent company, for two years.



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LIFE'S NOT SO GRAND

Well, October came and went and despite earlier announcements, if our keen Eavesdrop eyesight serves us correctly, the Grand Avenue project in downtown Los Angeles has still not broken ground. Where, oh where to place the blame now? Some say civic bureaucracy, some say steel costs, but we don't buy either of those excuses since AEG's L.A. Live seems to be progressing quite nicely just down the street. We do know that the designers are starting to feel the pinch. Our top-level informants tell us that Gehry Partners have put a freeze on hiring, a first in at least the last decade at the firm. And that was *before* the whole lawsuit from MIT citing "design flaws" in his Stata Center building. Meanwhile, Gehry himself was shilling for Audi's new Cross Cabriolet Quattro at the L.A. Auto Show. We hear you can pick up some serious cash in those spokesman gigs.

SCI-ARC TENT CITY

No, those people sleeping in SCI-Arc's parking lot in early November weren't students down on their luck, they were actually four artists recruited to inhabit experimental structures built by instructor Stephanie Smith's design studio. Iana Quesnell, Alex Neroulas, Jelani Haywood, and Aaron Garber-Maikovska occupied the scaffold-like aluminum shelters for ten days, and were challenged to manipulate their dwellings to explore the architecture of temporary living situations. Quesnell, a Tijuana-based artist, spent all ten nights in the downtown parking lot foraging in the SCI-Arc trash for bedding materials, bathing in a bucket shower of her own design, and using discarded sawblades to keep rats from climbing into her living room. Although her past work has included living in her truck and a stint in a tent in Bosnia, Quesnell described the situation as intense. "The first five days were a blast," she said, "but by the sixth day I was finished." The structures will remain up until November 30.

LONELY, LONELY LAUTNER

World-famous mid-century modern structure. Seminal work by leading architect. Reduced to \$495,000. That's the reality in Desert Hot Springs, where a 1947 John Lautner motel can't sell to save its life. Sure, the four-unit property, which went on the market after former owner Steve Lowe died suddenly in January, could use some work, but what gives? Tony Merchell, who managed the motel as recently as 2005, and now manages April Greiman and Michael Rotundi's Miracle Manor nearby, says it's actually because the neighborhood is just really...unattractive. "This neighborhood is basically no better or worse than other Desert Hot Springs neighborhoods, it's just kinda ugly," he said, describing the immediate area as speculative development, infill houses, vacant lots, and trailer parks. He says people who are familiar with the Julius Shulman photos showing the motel surrounded by 160 empty acres are scared away when they come to see the property. But once you get inside, says Merchell—who has slept in all four rooms—none of that matters. "All the windows and views are to the sky. It's like looking into another world."

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HEARST CASTLES continued from front page
The move effectively pushed forward the long-delayed scheme, which is being developed by Hearst Communications and—very significantly—includes construction of two nearby condominium towers by Morphosis.

The original EIR had been adopted in October 2006, but was appealed by Conquest Student Housing, a company that provides student housing at nearby USC. The November 6 council measure denied that appeal.

The Mission Revival-style Herald Examiner building, at 1111 South Broadway, has been closed since 1989, when the Hearst-owned newspaper folded. According to the EIR, the renovated building will include 40,000 square feet of office space and 20,000 square feet of retail space. Preservation architect Brenda Levin, who has helped refurbish City Hall, the Wilmette Theater, and Grand Central Market, among other buildings, will oversee the building's rehab.

Morphosis' new towers, located on

1108 South Hill Street and 1201 South Main Street, will include a 24-story, 268-unit building on the site of the old Herald Examiner Press Building and a 37-story, 319-unit building, which will be built at the site of a former parking lot. Hearst would not release renderings, but according to the EIR both buildings will draw on the heavy structural grid of the Herald Examiner building for inspiration. For example, the Hill Street building will have a concrete wall structural system, continuous concrete balconies, and exterior materials that could include terra cotta, red cement fiberboard, pre-finished sheet metal, or glass fiber reinforced concrete. The towers are expected to be completed by 2009 and 2010.

The project is also set to include a 50-foot-wide landscaped courtyard between the Herald Examiner Building and the new Hill Street building, and streetscape improvements including tree plantings, new sidewalks, and a possible new landscape median along Broadway. **SL**



> BISAZZA

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Looking right at home alongside the Marc Jacobs and Diane von Furstenberg boutiques, and with nods to fellow design newbie Moss Los Angeles just across the street, Italian tile and mosaic company Bisazza's new showroom is the latest retail space to bridge and blur the relationship between design and fashion on this now-notable strip of Melrose. Bisazza Design Studio, a group of around 18 young designers headed by Italian architect Carlo Dal Bianco, designed the space, as well as Bisazza's products and accessories, which are also sold at the store. Dal Bianco's choice of appointments and furnishings take design cues from throughout the 20th century, resulting in a modern setting. Mirrored tiles encircle pillars like classy disco balls, a black-and-white graphic inspired by British optical patterns runs the length of the floor, while silver tiles arranged into florals in the living room create a look evocative of flocked wallpaper. Ten Marie Antoinette chandeliers, made from Bisazza glass tiles, sink low into the rooms, tossing even more glitter against the walls. "We like to be seen as a luxury item," said Dal Bianco. "And we know that our customers are some of the same ladies who shop at Marc Jacobs and Diane von Furstenberg." **ALISSA WALKER**



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Photo Credit: Michael Fiedler/The Hearst Group

SHOCKED, SHOCKED ABOUT LEAKS continued from front page interactions among faculty and students in computing, information science, artificial intelligence, linguistics, and philosophy. What critics called "daring" and "bold" at the time, MIT eventually found to be nothing short of problematic. The lawsuit alleges "persistent leaks at various locations throughout the building," along with "masonry cracking, efflorescence, and poor drainage" in the amphitheater, and "mold growth" on the exterior elevations.

Calling the lawsuit a "great surprise and disappointment," Gehry said, "I fully stand behind the center's design and have no reason to believe that it contributed in any way to the problems, which are relatively minor and easily addressed."

In a 2004 *Architectural Record* interview about the Stata Center's budget, which ran approximately \$85 million over its original \$200 million estimate, Gehry said, "we value-engineered, cut things, bit bullets." He is now suggesting that the "cut things" include devices that should have prevented leaking. The leaks—at least 38 of them—were first reported in the *Boston Globe* in October, just six months after the official opening on May 1.

In repairs done in 2006 and 2007, MIT ripped up the brick amphitheater to install a drainage mat beneath the brick at a cost of \$1.5 million. The university is now seeking an unspecified amount for that procedure and for other necessary repairs.

Chicago-based Dennis Bolazina, who is licensed both in architecture and law, and who is a member of the AIA documents committee, which monitors these issues, said "this is really not that unusual."

"Frank Gehry does a lot of buildings, and

a lot of them are successful," he said. "The problem for architects," he continued, "is that they have to rely on other people like structural engineers and with many projects, architects are relieved of their duties during construction."

Bolazina stressed that "architects need to be very closely involved in the construction phase of the project, maintaining communication and attention throughout it.... More than 90 percent of these cases," he added, "will be settled before they go to court, since most building professionals would rather negotiate in arbitration, where they can deal with people who have knowledge of what the realities of construction are, and not a judge, who would have to determine a standard of care."

This situation is by no means unique. No sooner had the opening festivities ended at Daniel Libeskind's Denver Art Museum than construction crews were on its roof repairing the building's many leaks. And Frank Lloyd Wright's legacy is famously subject to routine patchwork.

Signifying the issue's longstanding importance, one of the earliest written legal documents, Hammurabi's Code from ancient Babylon, specifically addresses the issue—but with higher stakes. It specifies that "if a builder build a house ... and this house which he has built collapses and causes the death of the owner of the house, that builder should be put to death." It also says that if an architect "does not make its construction meet the requirements and a wall fall in, that builder shall strengthen that wall at his own expense." Thirty-eight hundred years later, this is what MIT and Gehry must sort through. **JOHN GENDALL**



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NOKIA CALLING continued from front page Herbalife, studios for ESPN, a Grammy museum, and a flurry of dining and entertainment tenants. A 54-story tower will serve as the anchor hotel for the convention center, including residential units, a 123-room Ritz-Carlton and an 878-room J. W. Marriott.

AEG, the sports and entertainment corporation that also owns Staples Center, is serving as developer for the project, which is estimated at \$2.5 billion. Berkeley-based ELS Architecture designed the 260,000-square-foot, 7,100-seat Nokia Theatre. The 40,000-square-foot plaza surrounding the theater was designed by Rios Clementi Hale Studio of Los Angeles.

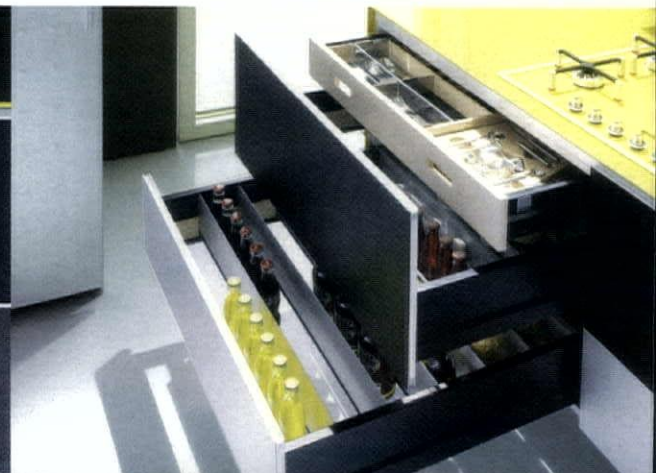
Designed to complement the Staples Center, the Nokia's exterior uses a similar palette of materials, including metal panels, concrete, and glass, which will in turn be referenced in other elements at L.A. Live. Beyond the drama of a three-story glass-fronted

lobby buzzing with LED panels, the interior of the theater itself is understated, almost unfinished, meant to be a neutral backdrop for the performers (it's described by the designers as the "biggest black box in the country"). The theater blends the raw energy and high-end production capabilities of larger venues—the stage measures 14,000 square feet, one of the largest in the U.S.—with the intimacy of a concert hall. "No seat is further than 220 feet from the stage," says ELS principal Kurt Schindler. "Seating is designed with a comfort level that exceeds an arena and approaches a performance theater."

More important to the exterior are the throbbing LED panels that plaster the building, giving it that healthy glow. These had to be distinctive from the air, as the Nokia-Staples complex will serve as the centerpiece of the "blimp shot" for broadcasting events. A similar consideration had to be made for the plaza, where an elegant graphic paving pattern lends richness for television

cameras and familiarity on a human scale, said Bob Hale, partner at Rios Clementi Hale, alluding to more than 15 residential towers completed or under construction within walking distance of the plaza.

"For certain events it will be the center of LA, but on a day-to-day basis it's the town square for that part of South Park," remarked Hale, who also said that developers would like to bring a green-market to the plaza as just one of its many uses, from red carpet arrivals to cultural festivals. For special events, the plaza itself can convert into an entertainment venue, aided by an electronic infrastructure that allows "plug and play" audio-visual capabilities, and the six towers which can further support filming, projection, or performance space. The plaza is flanked by landscaped, including planters that provide places to sit and gather while shaded by canopies of plane trees. Rios Clementi Hale's design will continue to be implemented to visually unite the entire L.A. Live complex. **AW**



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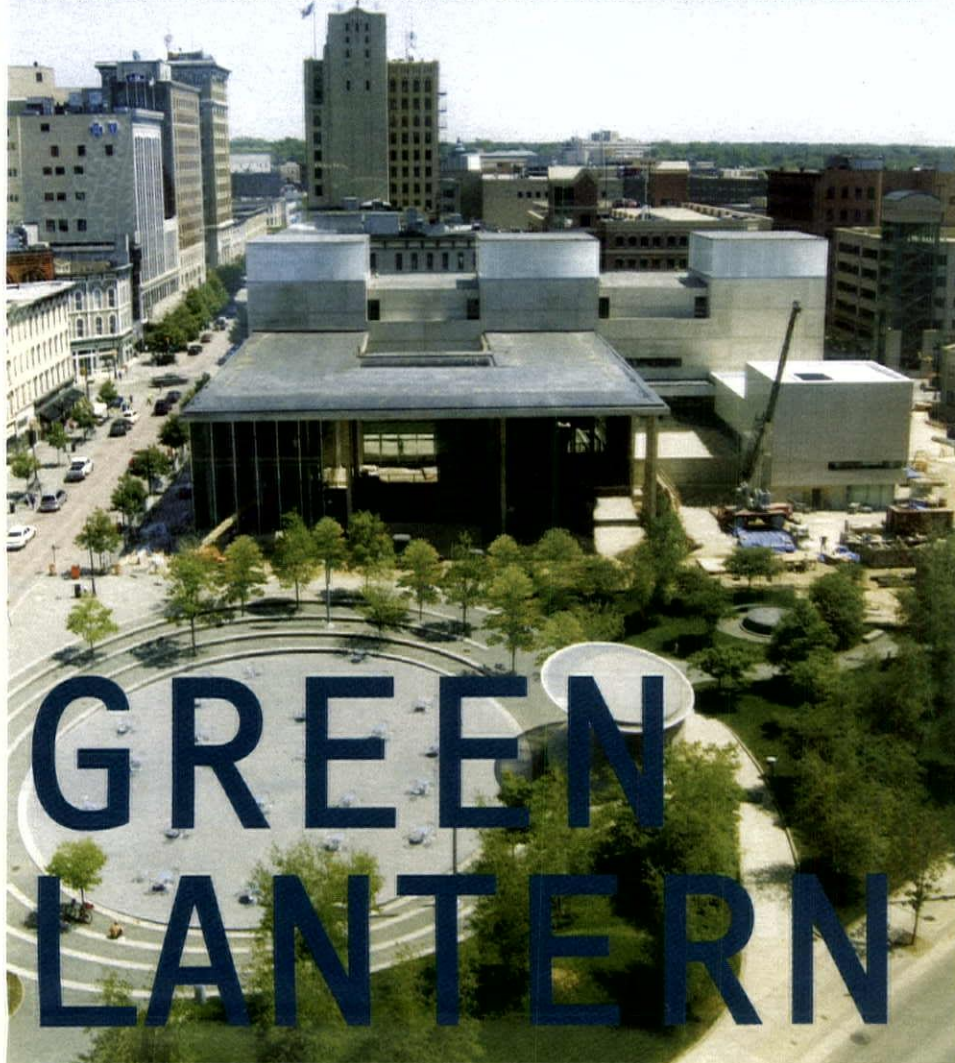
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CULVER CITY-BASED WHY ARCHITECTURE'S GRAND RAPIDS ART MUSEUM



In contrast to art museums in Milwaukee, Akron, and other depressed midwestern cities that commissioned starchitects to create eye-catching structures in the hope of achieving the Bilbao effect, Grand Rapids selected an emerging Culver City firm to design a sober—and sustainable—showcase for art. The new Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) opened in October. Built by Workshop Hakomori Yantrasast Architecture (WHY), it is an airy, light-filled cluster of poured concrete and glass boxes, tied together with a boldly jutting canopy and crowned with a trio of glass lanterns. The project is just one of many for a firm that seems destined to be future starchitects themselves.

Kulapat Yantrasast, who founded WHY in 2003, was project architect for Tadao Ando's highly acclaimed Fort Worth Art Museum, and there are obvious affinities between the two buildings. What's remarkable is how quickly Yantrasast, who worked with Ando for seven years and continues to collaborate with the Japanese master, has found his own

distinctive forms of expression.

The museum is set at an angle to a main downtown artery and is partially obscured by the silver birches and grassy knolls of Maya Lin's adjacent elliptical park. Fingers of the museum extend into the greenery, and a reflecting pool and dry garden provide additional exposure for the administrative wing, axial lobby, and restaurant. These open and green spaces mediate between the bustle of the city and the serenity of the galleries, which open off the lofty skylit lobby and extended flights of stairs to two upper levels. Each gallery is harmoniously proportioned and lit in a different way—most dramatically on the third floor, where visitors look up into the softly glowing lanterns as though they were James Turrell sky spaces. The cool light is warmed by the white oak floors, upper-level stairs, and cabinetry.

Peter Wege, the former CEO of Steelcase, gave the lead grant of \$20 million for the new building on condition that it be green. The quest for a Gold LEED rating

helped shape the design, though Yantrasast insists that sustainability is largely a matter of common sense. Wherever possible, the building is constructed of locally sourced, recycled, and recyclable materials. Seventy percent of the building is naturally lit, but the light is baffled and filtered to reduce heat gain and protect the art works. Aluminum louvers, optimally angled to open up views and block sun, cover the extensive glazing.

Back in Los Angeles, WHY is designing a house in Hollywood that is wrapped in a continuous band, like a strip of film; converting a mid-century Culver City warehouse into a photo studio; building a spa in Santa Monica; and creating the "Art Bridge," a footbridge over the Los Angeles River that will double as a viewing platform for the Great Wall of Los Angeles mural (the longest mural in the world). WHY is also redesigning existing galleries at the Chicago Art Institute, in conjunction with Renzo Piano's addition.

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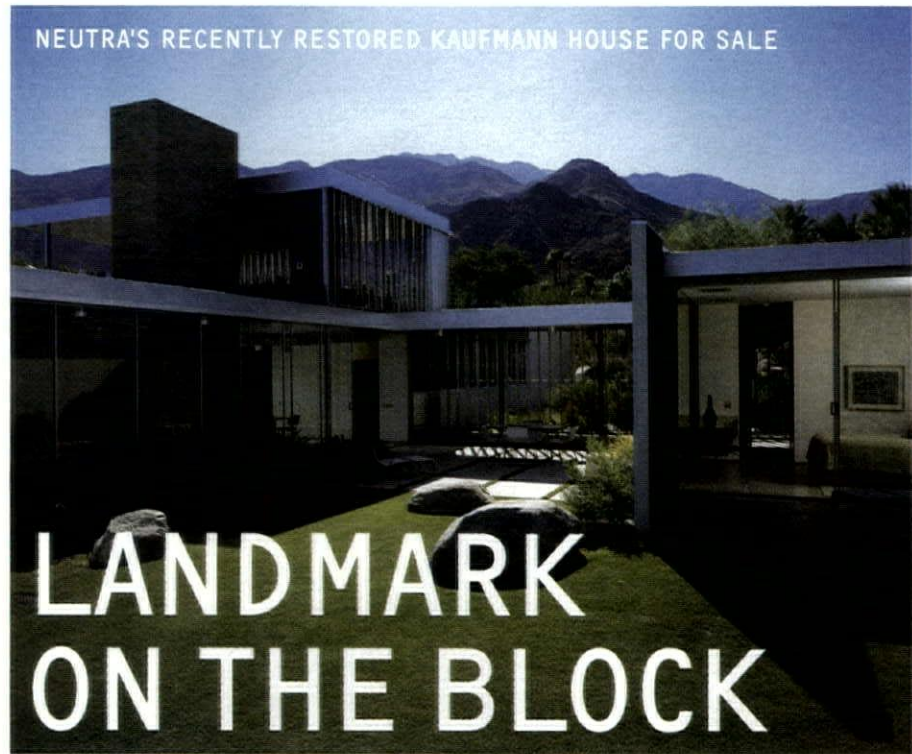
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NEUTRA'S RECENTLY RESTORED KAUFMANN HOUSE FOR SALE



JULIUS SHULMAN AND JUDEN NOGA

On Halloween, Christie's announced that one of Richard Neutra's best known buildings would be the next high profile house to hit the auction block. The Kaufmann House, built for department store magnate Edward Kaufmann in 1946, will be auctioned on May 13 as part of a sale of postwar and contemporary art. The current owners, Brent and Beth Edwards Harris, bought the house in 1993 for \$1.5 million and went about restoring it to its original design, obscured by several additions over the years. The couple are in the process of getting a divorce and selling off assets.

Ron Radziner, a principal at Marmol Radziner and Associates, the firm that restored the Kaufmann House for the Harris, recalls doing a full year of research before any physical work began. The architects worked with Beth Harris, who earned her PhD in architecture history from UCLA, to come up with what Radziner calls "restoration methodologies for various components of the house," including everything from the crimped sheet metal to the white concrete floors. He likened the job to working on an archaeological site: Over the years, the house had been doubled in size with various additions that needed to be removed before the architects could see the original contours. But when they got there, Radziner says, "All that was left was a carcass, a skeleton, but you could tell how beautiful it was, you could feel the shape again."

Julius Shulman immortalized the house—and Southern California modernist chic—in a 1947 photograph that featured Mrs. Kaufmann lounging at the pool. Arguably, it set off a craze for SoCal style that culminated—and crashed—in sitcom heaven. Is it any surprise that the Brady Bunch patriarch was an architect?

After seeing the restoration by Radziner and his partner, Leo Marmol, Shulman pronounced the current house an improvement on the original. He takes some credit for the job: "My photos were instrumental in recreating the house." Though the architects didn't have access to the original plans, they pieced together the design by studying Shulman's photographs and correspondence between Neutra and the Kaufmanns. Letters revealed critical information like where in Utah the stone Neutra used for the

house came from.

Though a house comprised largely of glass might not seem ideal for a desert setting, Radziner defends Neutra's design, pointing out that the house was meant only as a winter residence. The rest of the year, the Kaufmanns lived outside of Pittsburgh in the house designed for them by Frank Lloyd Wright, Falling Water.

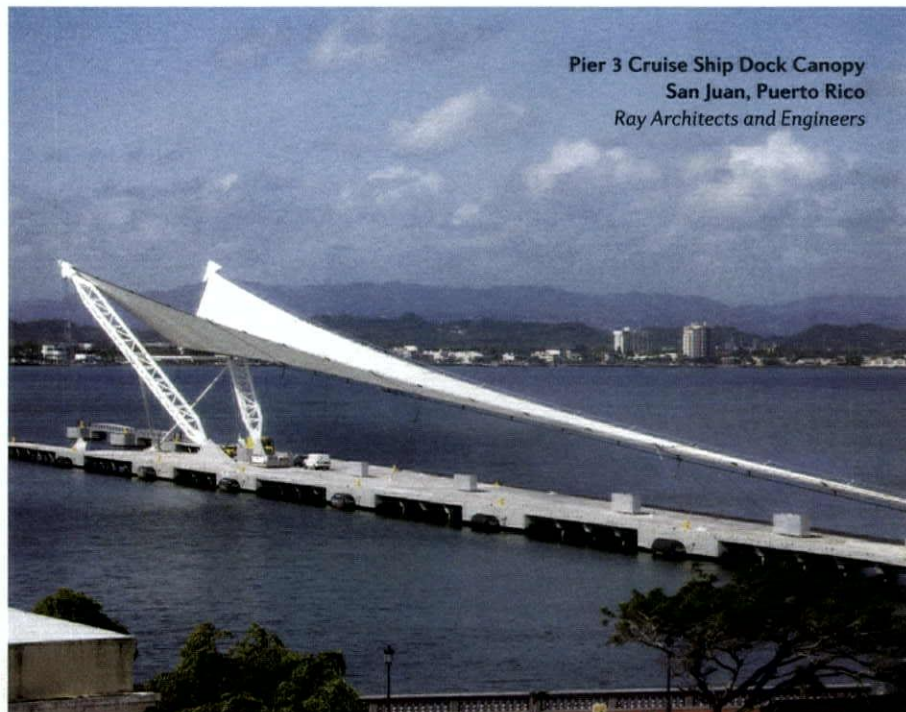
Christie's, which assigned the Kaufmann House a sale estimate of \$15–25 million, has auctioned other landmark buildings, most notably Pierre Koenig's Case Study House No. 21, which sold for \$11.1 million in 2006. Sotheby's sold Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House, located an hour southwest of Chicago, to the National Trust for Historic Preservation for \$7.5 million in 2003. Radziner notes that location works in the favor of the Kaufmann House. "I do think this is very different from the Farnsworth House sale, which is in a location that a lot of people don't want to live in, whereas this house is in the most beautiful part of Palm Springs."

Modern houses have sold at auction at considerably higher prices than they would have yielded if sold on the real estate market. But deeming a house "art" doesn't always work: In 2005, the owners of the Umbrella House by Paul Rudolph asked Sheldon Good & Company to auction the 1953 house and considered an important example of mid-century modern in Sarasota, Florida, where today many Rudolph buildings face demolition. There were no buyers to meet the \$1.2 million opening bid. It eventually sold to exhibition designers Vincent and Julie Ciulla, who purchased it through a realtor. That house is now open to the public. "As long as we're dressed," Vincent Ciulla says, "we let them in."

Whether or not the Kaufmann House will be available for public viewing remains a question, but Radziner agrees with Beth Harris, who believes that the likely buyer will love the house specifically because it is a Neutra design and will likely preserve it.

And if one blog, Radar, has it right, the craze for mid-century modern has shed its sitcom tackiness forever—they report that there are rumors Brad Pitt might be eyeing the Palm Springs landmark. His agent had no comment. **ANGELA STARITA**

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COURTESY RETHINK DEVELOPMENT

UNVEILED

CHEROKEE LOFTS

Santa Monica-based architects Pugh + Scarpa broke ground in early December on Cherokee Lofts, at the intersection of Fairfax and Melrose avenues in Los Angeles. The project, which is seeking a LEED Gold rating, is being developed by Rethink Development—a Los Angeles-based green development and consulting company begun by Santa Monica's former green building advisor, Greg Reitz, and by Los Angeles real estate developer Steve Edwards.

Slated for a 2009 completion, the project will be built on the site of the former Cherokee Recording studios, where artists like Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, David Bowie, and Dave Matthews have all recorded. Two of the units will feature dedicated space for in-home recording, which will use wood paneling from the original studios.

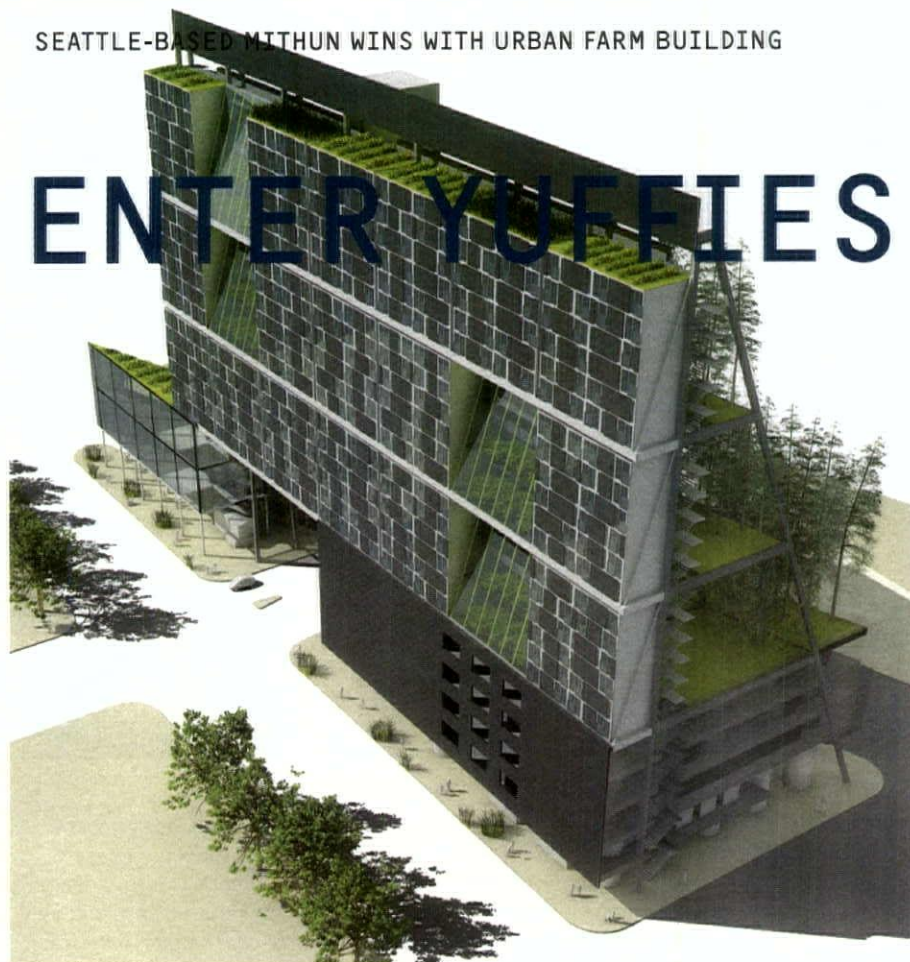
The 12-unit building, which will include 2,800 square feet of commercial space and 12 loft-style condos, will be organized around a central, landscaped courtyard, while its facade will be clad in perforated metal panels with varied openings and designs to create a kinetic pattern. Windows will open accordion-style to create still more patterns based on occupants' preferences. Sustainable elements will include photovoltaic panels on the roof, advanced heating and cooling, LED lighting, Forest Stewardship Council-certified wood, and a green roof.

Ranging in size from 1,000 to 2,000 square feet, the lofts will have varied floor plans with most sitting 30 to 50 feet above street level to maximize views and daylight. Three will have 17-foot-tall ceilings with mezzanines that open into the courtyard. **SL**

Architect: Pugh + Scarpa
Developer: Rethink Development
Location: 351 N. Fairfax Avenue, LA
Completion: 2009

SEATTLE-BASED MITHUN WINS WITH URBAN FARM BUILDING

ENTER YUFFIES



COURTESY MITHUN

In today's urban housing market, the draw of parking, views, and walk-in closets can be matched—if not outdone—by sustainable building features like living roofs, bamboo flooring, and solar-powered appliances. Now, as the Seattle-based firm Mithun has shown, it could be time to expand the marketability of green living by yet another item: chicken coops.

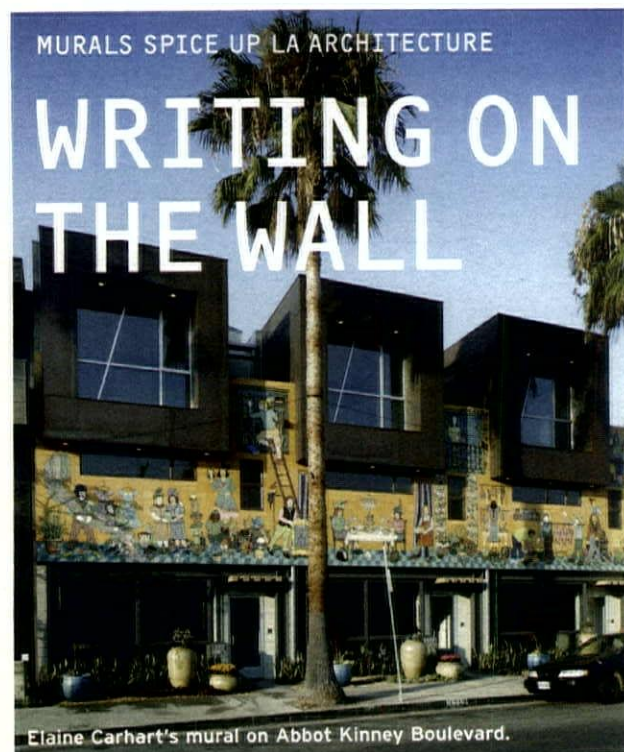
In October, Mithun's proposal for a 23-story, 318-unit apartment building in downtown Seattle won best in show at this year's Living Building Challenge, an annual competition sponsored by the Cascadia Regional Green Building Council. Squeezed onto a triangular .72-acre site, the design includes 34,000 square feet of south-facing solar panels, over an acre of flora, fauna, and vegetable gardens—and, yes, a terrace entirely devoted to raising chickens.

Mithun named their live/farm project the Building for Urban Agriculture to highlight the building's ability to produce enough food for 450 people. In sync with local farming movements, Mithun hopes to reduce the number of food miles consumed by urbanites. "About 40 percent of each person's carbon footprint comes from food production and transport," said Debra Guenther, a senior associate with Mithun. "The idea here is to link eating and lifestyle to closed-loop resource flows."

More common acts of conserving materials and energy also figure into the proposal, which, for now, remains conceptual. Mithun used recycled shipping containers. Mithun used recycled modules, while an underground hydrogen gas storage and conversion system provides both the power and water needed to run the entire building. **JULIE KIM**

MURALS SPICE UP LA ARCHITECTURE

WRITING ON THE WALL



COURTESY VENICE COLLABORATIVE

Elaine Carhart's mural on Abbot Kinney Boulevard.

Art and architecture dance around each other in subtle ways all the time in Los Angeles, but lately, a few new architectural projects have brought art to the forefront.

Venice developer Frank Murphy recently opened three artist lofts by Culver City-based Equinox Architecture at 1212 Abbot Kinney Boulevard, in the midst of the street's trendy retail area. The most notable detail is a striking mural by artist Elaine Carhart that spans the 60-foot facade of the building.

Carhart's colorful mural, with its orange background and celebratory images, depicts "the pastimes that make for the material good life." Her influences include traditional Portuguese and Turkish tilework along with Japanese Ukiyo-e prints, which tell stories. Equinox's Jim Gelfat designed the 3,500-square-foot modern boxes with a nod to raw materials. The steel and glass exterior mirrors the interior space, which includes industrial steel staircases, second-floor catwalks made of steel

grates, and polished concrete floors. The upper levels have bamboo flooring, a gas fireplace, and solar panels. On the street level, giant glass windows were designed to pivot horizontally and open onto the street, creating a relationship with life on the buzzing sidewalk.

According to Murphy, who has commissioned artists for many buildings, the art has caused more of a stir than usual. "I got more calls about this mural—people either loving it or hating it," he admitted. "I like to create that sort of tension between the art and the architecture. And I love it when the community weighs in. It means we've done something right." Murphy's buildings are unusual in an era where committees and boards often qualify art that is incorporated into new buildings. Both the architect and artist sign a contract, which makes them mutually exclusive. "I'm the builder and it feels good to make a canvas where someone can create art with complete creative freedom.

The architect has no say, and vice versa," he added.

Across town, in the heart of bustling Koreatown, April Greiman's oil painted video image covers 8,200 square feet on two sides of Arquitectonica's newly completed six-story mixed-use building on Wilshire Boulevard. The piece is a Percent for Art project through LA's Department of Cultural Affairs. The image was derived from video footage shot in the surrounding neighborhood. From a distance the geometrical orange, red, green, and blue work spans across two buildings and subtly reveals itself as a bowl of rice. Unlike the mural in Venice, the piece was a collaboration. "April was fabulous. We're very pleased with her concept and technical execution," said Dan Rosenfeld of Urban Partners. "All the ingredients, the artist, the architect, our business requirements, and the Koreatown community made for a fascinating process."

KIMBERLY STEVENS



COURTESY TWBTA ARCHITECTS/UC BERKELEY

BERKELEY GETS A NEW EAST ASIAN STUDIES LIBRARY

EAST MEETS WEST

The University of California at Berkeley sits directly across San Francisco Bay from the narrow passage to the Pacific Ocean. This "Golden Gate" is a threshold between worlds: the Americas, the West, and the cultures of Asia and the Pacific. Frederick Law Olmsted recommended an axis that pointed directly to this gateway in his early study of the former College of California in 1866. Later, in deference to Olmsted, campus planner John Galen Howard placed a second axis parallel to Olmsted's, through what has become today's historic campus core.

Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects (TWBTA), whose office sits across from one of Olmsted's greatest projects, New York's Central Park, have now entered this legacy with a recently completed building along Howard's axis on the Berkeley campus. The building will look to the east in another way: The free-standing C. V. Starr East Asian Library also houses the broader interdisciplinary Chang-Lin Tien Center for East Asian Studies, of which the library is part.

The building is named for the late philanthropist Cornelius Vander Starr, a UC Berkeley undergraduate (Chang-Lin Tien was a former Berkeley chancellor who passed away in 2002). Scheduled to officially open its doors in March 2008, the facility was erected on a prominent slope adjacent to Memorial Glade, an open green space, and faces the all-important Doe Library, the

main university stacks. The total budget, including site clearing, was \$46.4 million. The McCarthy Building Companies were the main project contractors.

The 68,000-square-foot, concrete-framed building is partially clad in granite—imported from China—that extends down to cover the base on the right side of the south facade. Glazing on this south side, like on the east and west sides, is shaded by monumental bronze screens cast in China. The screens vaguely allude to traditions of Asian etchings and woodcarvings, said the architects, with staggered rectangles and branching patterns that evoke cracked ice.

TWBTA respected a certain sense of order regarding the campus' neo-classical core, "engaging it and being part of the Glade, not dominating it," according to Tod Williams. For example, the firm was required to incorporate a California colonial-style clay roof. The architects harmonized this and other constraints into their design. "From a distance, you can see it as part of the neo-classical context but from up close that roof disappears due to the cornice and it becomes much more abstract. Then, as you begin to engage it inside, it's visceral," said Williams.

Because of the site's hilly topography, he continued, "the interior becomes a part of the landscape of the hill, or the hill becomes a part of the interior of the building." Many external forces are resolved in the interior of the building. Once you're moving around inside, a slight turn reveals a dramatic sky-lighted staircase of cantilevered stone treads traveling the entire height of an atrium. The central axis of the building gets treated as an in-between zone that organizes foot traffic to the north and south sides. It also acts as a podium from which to experience both the glade and the slope on either side. A reading room on the north of this axis is clad with a vast expanse of glass that receives cool north light, while at night Nelson lamps in assorted ovoid shapes render the space in a warm glow. The floors in this room are bamboo and the circulation desk, designed by TWBTA, is fabricated from a single 2-inch-thick piece of Claro walnut.

JAVIER ARBONA

CHOICE DOCUMENTS

It's that time of the decade again: The American Institute of Architects has just released the latest edition of the A201 contract documents. Available since November 5, the biggest changes to the decennially updated documents concern conflict resolution, where binding arbitration has become increasingly unpopular. Instead, non-binding mediation has taken its place, and the new documents call for either arbitration or litigation—now the default—to solve binding issues, though the parties may also decide on a third option of their choosing. To learn more, visit www.aiacontractdocuments.org.

SHOW LA THE MONEY

The building boom has meant many things for Los Angeles, including a windfall of Quimby fees, a \$3,000 to \$10,000 payment made by developers for each new residential unit they build. The money, resulting from a 1975 law, is meant to provide for parkland in the city, but a report issued by the city's Department of Recreation and Parks in October has angered both the developers who pay the fees and the advocates who would like to see the fund put to use. It turns out that over \$77.5 million have accumulated with no clear plan on how to spend it.

STORMING THE CASTLE

Of the 22 buildings destroyed by the Canyon fire two months ago, perhaps none was more memorable than Castle Kashan, the 10,500-square foot turreted complex overlooking Malibu. Falling somewhere between an Arthurian fantasy and a Medieval Times theme park, the house was owned by socialite and philanthropist Lilly Lawrence, who bought the fortress in 1998 from its original owner for \$3 million and reportedly lost her collection of Faberge eggs and Elvis paraphernalia.



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SUNSET PLAZA RESIDENCE (2008)



THE RESERVE (2009)



Assembledge+, founded in 1998 by Hollywood-born, Tulane-trained architect David Thompson, combines minimal but warm, edgy, and sophisticated architecture, with a nose for real estate that's rare in the business.

That shrewdness came rather by accident, thanks to one very interesting project. Back in 2005, Thompson's wife, Jamie, a real estate broker at Prudential, tipped him off that one of her clients was going to sell a house in Larchmont Village, where the Thompsons live. They wondered if they should buy it and try to develop a multi-family

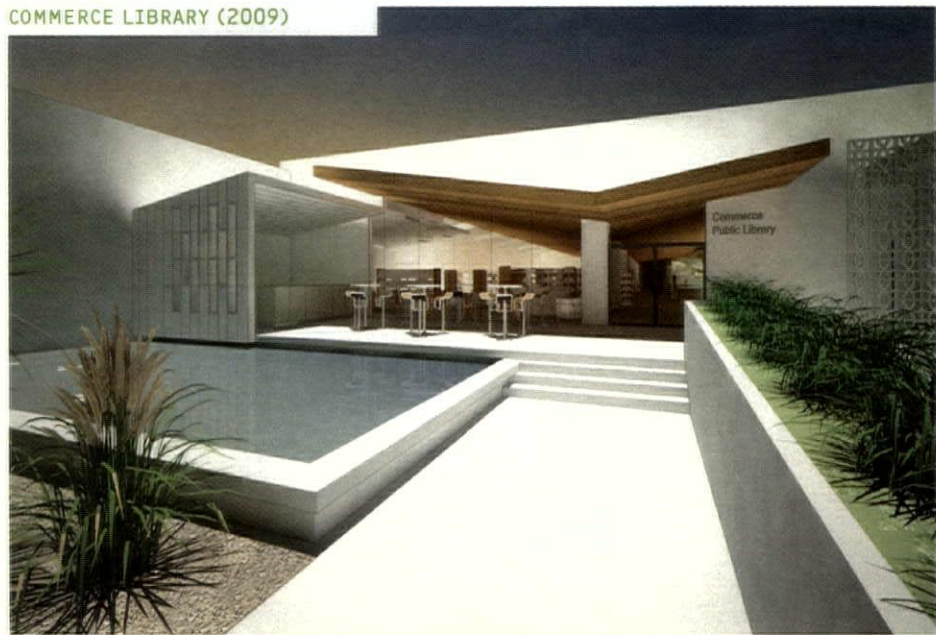
condominium on the site. They did just that, with their friend Thomas Harp, an MBA at Wharton who was vice president of principal investments for Buchanan Street Partners, a California-based real estate investment bank. They are now developing a seven-unit building in Larchmont Village that should be completed by next summer. Meanwhile Harp now works with the firm as a partner, finding properties throughout California for the firm to turn around or build from scratch, and Thompson remains committed to having at least one major development project in process at

any given time. "It's definitely become a big part of our office," said Thompson. "We don't have a ton of time to look for projects. It takes a lot to be a developer and a lot to be an architect. Having Tommy as a partner makes it doable."

Meanwhile the firm is assembling an impressive architectural portfolio that includes condo buildings, single-family houses, a library, and even a resort in Costa Rica. "It's been like wildfire," said Thompson of the firm's success. "Really amazing."

SL

COMMERCE LIBRARY (2009)



RIDGEWOOD RESIDENCE (2006)



SUNSET PLAZA RESIDENCE (2008)

Located on a flat site above the Sunset Strip in the Hollywood Hills, this 5,000-square-foot house opens up to the landscape, with spacious balconies, large glass walls, and impressive views of Hollywood. The house's simple, interlocking forms, L-shaped plan (arranged around a long pool), and warm material palette evoke a clean, rational approach reminiscent of the early modernist homes in the area by Schindler, Neutra, and other architectural legends. Most of the first floor is glazed, making the timber and concrete-clad upper floor appear light, as if it were afloat.

THE RESERVE (2009)

The Reserve is an eco-friendly development of 24 single-family units within the lush jungle overlooking the Pacific Ocean in the small town of Santa Teresa, Costa Rica. The developer is Los Angeles-based Dan Nathanson. The development will use natural, local materials for building and pervious materials for surfacing. Low-lying and dug into the ground, the building will "try to make a minimal impact on the landscape," says Thompson. The community will likely rely on electric vehicles, says Thompson. Like the Ridgewood house, the open floorplan along with the full wall of sliding glass will allow the jungle terrain and the inside living spaces to blend together.

COMMERCE LIBRARY (2009)

In renovating the City of Commerce's Central Library, situated in a 1960s warehouse, the firm uncovered a series of three north-facing sawtooth skylights that had been covered up and left unused. The firm's design exposes and highlights these apertures, using their form, as well as that of the warehouse's trusses, for inspiration. The minimal design will maximize natural light and open space, celebrating the form of the original building. "We want to keep it pretty simple and pretty clean," says Thompson of the library, on which the firm is working with Dallas-based Providence Architecture. The scheme will play with color and art and will be open and flooded with light.

RIDGEWOOD RESIDENCE (2006)

The Ridgewood Residence, in Larchmont, somehow fits perfectly into a block full of Craftsman houses. The modernist-inspired house was built using an interesting combination of natural, local materials, dynamic patterning, a blur in the distinction between outside and inside, and creative space-maximizing. Materials include sustainably-harvested cedar and smooth plaster, while the garage is made of a combination of colorful, medium density overlay panels, creating a sense of movement. Large glass doors slide past solid walls to allow the interior spaces to transition to the outside. A second-floor deck stretches out over the garage and spills into the yard, and other decks project out from the master bedroom and a bedroom for the couple's daughter.

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER DECEMBER 12, 2007



Clockwise from top left: The roof-top penthouse sits on a converted concrete warehouse in San Francisco; the angular structure is clad in Cor-ten steel; clear glass wraps the master bedroom suite; on the level below, an interior courtyard opens to the sky; the kitchen; the living room with a view of the dense pattern of a wooden joist ceiling.

Amy Shimer and Jason Shelton, a young professional couple with two children, used to live in a single-family home in Granada, California, about 40 minutes south of San Francisco. They loved having lots of space, but were sick of the suburbs. So they asked San Francisco architect Anne Fougerson to build them a huge loft in the city. Really huge.

But finding a loft of the size they required wasn't easy. In fact they never found anything big enough, so they added a rooftop structure to a two-story concrete-framed warehouse space in San Francisco's South of Market area. Their total new space is a whopping 4,800 square feet.

The new rooftop penthouse gives the

apartment its name: the Grasshopper, because, as Fougerson pronounced, it's "like a grasshopper that landed on the roof." The steel-framed structure contains the couple's elegant master bedroom, shower, and bathroom. Its angular shape flares out dramatically, making it somewhat reminiscent of the rooftop stairway enclosures found on top of many San Francisco buildings; except it's clad in Cor-ten steel and crystal-clear glass, providing the rooms with fantastic vistas, but also making them visible from all around.

"They have their own ideas about what it means to live in an urban environment where they don't feel a need for privacy. If they're comfortable with it, I'm comfortable with it," said Fougerson, of the clients.

"I probably wouldn't have made that decision if it were my house," she continued.

On the second floor, which contains the kitchen, living room, children's, and guest rooms, Fougerson made the most of the airy space, with its 8-foot-tall ceilings and huge bank of north-facing windows, creating an open-planned living room divided only by existing concrete columns. In the kitchen, rough concrete walls and floors contrast with shiny resin floors, sleek Carrara marble countertops, and tall resin varnished cabinets. To eliminate dark recesses in the loft, Fougerson cut through the ceiling and inserted a glass-enclosed, pebble-floored inner courtyard that opens to the sky, affording plenty of natural light, ventilation, and interior

views. From here you can see the penthouse, and those in the penthouse can see you. Fougerson says the clients plan to add landscaping to this space, which already has a drainage system. A black sculptural stairway made of angled steel fins that cantilever from a central steel beam seems to float between floors.

Meanwhile, on the ground level, Fougerson built her own office, moving there about a year ago, well before the apartment was finished. Now she can visit the new masterpiece whenever she wants (or at least whenever the clients let her), and reflect on what she's done: "It's got familiar elements, but we really updated the loft typology," said Fougerson. **SL**



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THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF BUILDING GREEN

BY SAM LUBELL

With all the hype surrounding sustainable building techniques, the decision to go green seems like a no-brainer. But the decision is more complicated than most realize. Each new green element, from daylight maximization to passive cooling, can affect other systems, often forcing changes that were never anticipated. As more green elements are added, more time and money must be spent on making adjustments, and more potential conflicts can arise. Light baffles and vents can cause headaches for acousticians; operable windows can cause headaches for fire experts, and so on.

AN sat down to discuss this issue with six architects and engineers from a firm with plenty of experience in the field: ARUP. The employees of the firm's San Francisco office shared their enthusiasm for sustainability, but were honest about its realities, which often mean difficult compromises between members of a building team, whether lighting experts, acoustics experts, architects, or engineers. In building green, they pointed out, not everyone can be made happy.

"Before you could just fix a problem by throwing money at it," said associate Pam Brandon. "With green that's not the case. You've got to fit it within certain parameters." She noted that there have always been issues between various building experts, but that energy and environmental design has forced everyone to "learn a new language."

PASSIVE HEATING AND NATURAL LIGHT: GOOD IDEA, RIGHT?

One of the firm's most-publicized projects, the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, is a good example. The soon-to-be completed project, designed in collaboration with Renzo Piano Building Workshop, is aiming for a LEED Platinum rating. But achieving this standard imposes challenges, especially when designing for a museum where exhibition spaces need to be painstakingly regulated. One of the biggest challenges was trying to naturally condition the building with chilled and heated slabs, and keep as much of the building as possible lit by natural light. This is normally a simple procedure, but not so easy when dealing with an atrium space full of trees that need to

be lit by incredibly hot lights in order to survive.

"Normally we could just throw cold air at it with fans and air conditioning," pointed out Brandon. "But not if we wanted LEED Platinum."

In order to keep the space from overheating, the firm developed an electronic lighting and ventilation system that will control mechanical blinds and lower the tree-related lights during the day and blast them with light when occupants leave at night. The system will then automatically "flush the hot air out" in the morning before visitors arrive. The firm also had to limit the size of skylights to minimize natural light, which went against the grain for Piano. He was also not pleased with the fact that all windows could not be crystal clear low-e glass. Semi-tinted glass was necessary to keep the space from overheating as well. The team finally did reach a compromise with a combination of clear and non-clear windows.

GREEN=TOO QUIET?

Happiness doesn't always come first. Green does.

"People won't get everything they want. They'll get enough," said Chris Fields, an acoustician who is working on another ARUP project, the Stanford Graduate School of Business, which the firm developed with architects Bohlin Cywinski Jackson. That project again sought passive heating and cooling, but this time in the form of chilled and heated beams in its ceilings as well as a system of vents. It was almost more trouble than it was worth.

The use of passive cooling posed two major problems with sound. First, the absence of traditional HVAC systems can make the space too quiet, Fields points out, removing what is usually a barely-audible white noise that helps you concentrate when others are gabbing on the phone or crumpling paper. The firm will likely install a noise generator in the building to provide what is called "acoustic masking."

The use of chilled and heated beams poses another problem. The subsequent exposed concrete ceilings decrease acoustic absorption, so that sound can travel from one end of the room to another producing a "whispering wall" effect. The firm will likely install metallic fins along the ceiling to break up this sound,



COURTESY ARUP

or work with lighting designers to produce lights that can perform the same function, said Fields.

NATURAL LIGHT? NOT SO FAST.

Another challenging building at Stanford was the Department of Energy Resources Engineering, designed with BOORA Architects of Portland. It has four atria fitted with large rooftop vents that bring in natural light and cool air, creating an airy, pleasant environment.

But all that natural splendor had a cost, this time for fire experts and acousticians. The problem, said Armin Wolski, an Arup Fire Safety Engineer, was that the large vents threw the smoke management system—large fans above these vents—out of whack by allowing their loud whir to be clearly heard inside the atria. Placing sound barriers over the vents caused problems by impeding airflow. The eventual solution was to

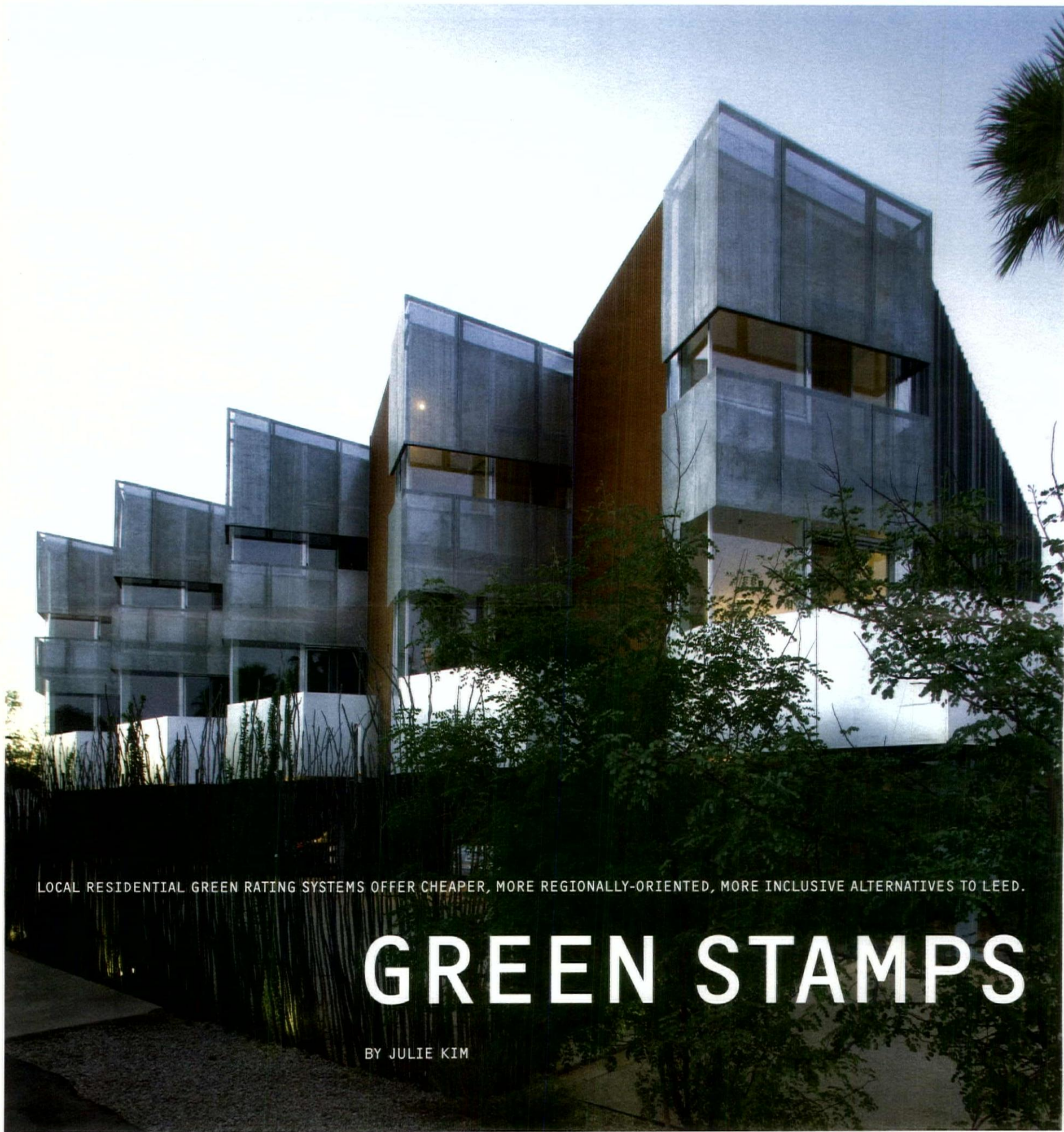
install quieter fans, as well as a system of silencers on the fans' intake systems.

Other projects have posed similar challenges. An office the firm is developing in San Francisco has experienced problems adhering to IBCC fire code, because its operable window system doesn't allow smoke to be contained on a single floor. The firm is vexed by an attempt to develop clear cubicle dividers to enhance light; they need to somehow ensure that these are as sound absorptive as cloth walls. In the end the best way to cope, pointed out Kurt Graffy, an ARUP acoustician, is to think of buildings more holistically from the start. "The old process of working with blinders on just won't do it anymore," he said.

SAM LUBELL IS AN'S CALIFORNIA EDITOR.

The swelling green roof (previous page) at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco is nearing completion. Once it has grown in, nine native plant species will cover much of the roof (above). The Jerry Yang and Akiko Yamazaki Environment and Energy Building at Stanford (below) will feature an eco-roof system, plus passive ventilation, solar collection, and storm water management.





LOCAL RESIDENTIAL GREEN RATING SYSTEMS OFFER CHEAPER, MORE REGIONALLY-ORIENTED, MORE INCLUSIVE ALTERNATIVES TO LEED.

GREEN STAMPS

BY JULIE KIM

In Scottsdale, Arizona, the Green Building Program awarded points to Will Bruder + Partners' live-work project, Loloma 5 (above) for its perforated aluminum shades and living ocotillo fence, among other contextually and environmentally sensitive features. Built Green awarded David Vandervort Architects a four-star rating for a single family home (facing page) in Seattle—the firm's hometown.

By now, you're probably familiar with puns like LEED leads the way or, better yet, LEEDing the Way. But just how true are they anymore when there are so many other systems besides the LEED rating to determine a building's green credentials? The fact that the United States Green Building Council has taken over two years to roll out LEED for Homes (LEED-H), a program for measuring the environmental friendliness of new single- and multi-family houses, has left the ratings market wide open for dozens of other smaller, more regionally focused groups to draft their own versions of residential green building standards. On its own website, the USGBC reports that there are more than 70 local and regional green homebuilding programs nationwide.

Most of these groups are, like the USGBC, non-profit organizations seeking to guide the for-profit building industry down greener paths. Many of them also follow in the USGBC's footsteps by centering the evaluation and rating process around a proprietary checklist, a long and highly technical ledger of things designers, developers, and homeowners can do and buy to minimize their carbon footprints.

A non-LEED checklist generally lowers the threshold for calling a building "green." This may seem counterintuitive, but some argue that LEED standards are too rigorous—and the USGBC's rating process too complicated and costly—to affect widespread change.

According to Tenaya Asan, the program manager for GreenPoint Rated, an offshoot of the Berkeley-based organization Build It Green, only the top 25 percent of homebuilders have the right combination of wherewithal and resources to attain LEED certification, which

leaves the remaining 75 percent without any guidance or incentives.

This inclusive point of view forms a major difference between local green building programs and the USGBC's approach, which aims to position LEED-certified buildings as exemplars of environmental efficiency. It's also the reason why the City of San Francisco chose GreenPoint Rated over LEED-H standards last spring, when a taskforce convened to draft a mandatory green building policy for all new private residential development. (LEED standards will still be used to measure commercial projects.)

Some designers familiar with LEED's process are skeptical of the city's choice. "As far as I can tell, GreenPoint [Rated] looks really watered down compared to LEED for Homes," said Mark Hogan, a designer at David Bakers and Partners in San Francisco who has worked on housing projects seeking both GPR and LEED-H ratings.

Yet these regional green building programs suggest that the USGBC may have set the bar too high. Many offer ways to certify green building newbies as well as incentives for those who have been at it for a while. They also account for the fact that "green" is itself a relative term whose definition changes with geography and climate. Which begs the question: What is the purpose of a nationwide program when the attention to details—regional differences in climate, market conditions, and proximity to resources—that forms such a crucial part of what makes a building sustainable is lacking? Below are five West Coast rating alternatives to LEED-H.

JULIE KIM IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

GREENPOINT RATED BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Devised by Build It Green, a statewide non-profit membership organization, GreenPoint Rated (GPR) grew out of green building guidelines first developed by Alameda County in 2000. Now in the form of a user-friendly checklist that awards points in five categories—energy, water, indoor air quality, and community—the guidelines are revised every few years to reflect changes in Title 24, the state of California's energy code. Unlike the LEED rating system, which awards silver, gold, and platinum labels for every 15 points above their minimum point requirement for basic certification, GPR doesn't go to extra lengths to provide tiered ratings. Instead, the strength of a particular project's GPR rating is simply communicated through its score, which can range anywhere from 50 to 251 points.

As of October, eleven cities in the Bay Area had adopted GPR standards as the required benchmark for new residential construction. Another seven, including San Francisco, Monterey, and Palo Alto, have mandatory GPR programs in development.

CALIFORNIA GREEN BUILDERS SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

An off-shoot of the Building Industry Institute, the California Green Builder (CGB) program is geared toward developers of 150- to 200-house subdivisions in Sacramento, Bakersfield, and the Central Valley. A CGB certification—this program has no points or levels—calls for 15 percent better energy efficiency than the state's residential standard, and a cut in water usage of 20,000 gallons. According to Justin Dunning, the Green Builder program coordinator, more than 1,700 homes have been CGB-certified, and another 6,400 are in the pipeline. "We see our program as a win-win marketing tool tailored to California's unique environmental and market conditions," Dunning said.

Guidelines are grouped into five categories—higher energy standards, water conservation, wood conservation, advanced ventilation, and construction waste diversion. It costs \$400 for a developer to apply for CGB certification, and \$50 for every lot thereafter.

BUILT GREEN BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON

Built Green is affiliated with the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties, a professional group that has been working with local and state governments since 1909 to build affordable housing while also protecting the environment. This program's aim is accessibility; it only costs between \$50 and \$150 to shepherd a single- or multi-family project through the certification process.

It also requires builders or developers to follow a set of criteria to attain the "Built Green" stamp of approval. Built Green allows builders seeking a one-, two-, or three-star rating to self-certify their projects by completing the MBA's checklist and signing an accompanying code of ethics. Four- and five-star ratings require verification by a third party. This can include such criteria as using small machines for excavation as at a single-family home designed by David Vandervort Architects.

AUSTIN ENERGY RESIDENTIAL GREEN BUILDING PROGRAM AUSTIN, TEXAS

Many of this program's requirements are aimed at incorporating efficient ways to cool buildings in Austin's hot and humid climate. For new homes, this means awarding points for reducing square footage, installing ceiling fans or fluorescent lights, and avoiding oversized air-conditioning systems.

Points can also be gained for installing a drainage and plumbing system to recycle the estimated 45,000 gallons of rainwater that fall on an average-sized roof each year. Austin Energy also awards bonuses for planting buffalo grass, a slow-growing variety native to Central Texas, in lieu of the more commonly used turfgrass—and for meeting the city's "visibility" requirements by locating a new residence within a quarter-mile of a public transit stop, or within a half-mile of a grocery store or park.

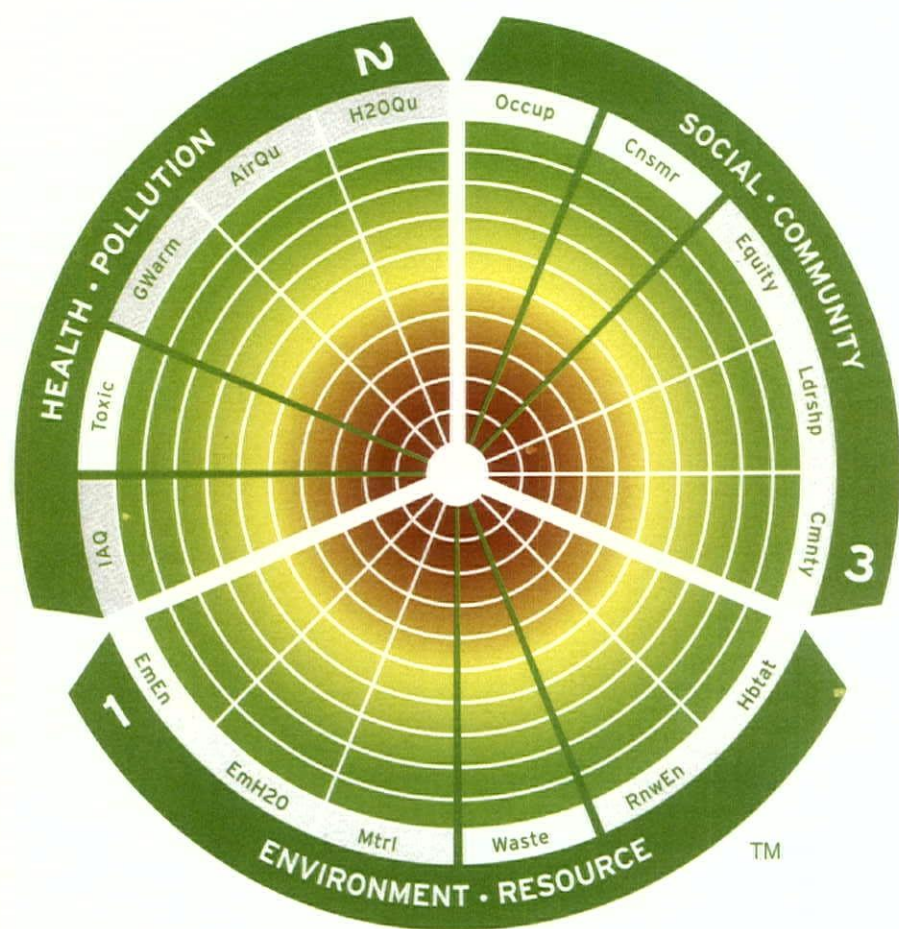
SCOTTSDALE GREEN BUILDING PROGRAM SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA

As the authors of Arizona's first green building program, the City of Scottsdale has issued nearly 1,000 residential green building permits since 1998. Like San Francisco, the city is using LEED standards to evaluate new commercial projects, but has chosen to institute a locally grown checklist to guide the development of new single and multi-family housing.

The city's rating program offers both entry-level and more advanced certifications, and encourages a "not-too-big" home approach by awarding points for houses smaller than 3,000 square feet, while subtracting points for houses that are bigger. Also, to keep interiors cool in Arizona's desert climate, the checklist recommends that windows comprise no more than 20 percent of the building envelope. Will Bruder + Partners achieved this by adding shade screens to its Loloma 5 project in downtown Scottsdale.



COURTESY BUILT GREEN



CONCERNED ARCHITECTS, SCIENTISTS, AND POLICY MAKERS ARE DETERMINED TO MAKE SURE THAT GREEN MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS REALLY CONTRIBUTE TO SUSTAINABILITY.

GREEN DETECTIVES

BY LAURI PUCHALL

The Pharos Lens is a graphic wheel for measuring the environmental and social performance of green materials. It is part of the Pharos Project, which is attempting to reshape the principles that drive green building. A user-generated wiki is in development at www.pharosproject.net.

It is no wonder that what constitutes "green" is so hotly debated in architectural circles when healthy building experts tell us that some practices and products that pass for green are, quite frankly, greenwash. Even worse, some are harmful.

In search of clarity, an investigative corps of scientists, architects, policy makers, and building specialists are paying closer attention to the relationships among material culture, social justice, toxicity, and health—both environmental and human. These "green detectives" are developing sophisticated tools and researching new materials to help architects address the full spectrum of issues surrounding materials selection. Further, they are creating ways to ensure that green is also safe, healthy, and in all ways sustainable.

Jack Geibig, a research chemist with degrees in both environmental and chemical engineering, directs the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Center for Clean Products and Technologies. He received a \$300,000 grant this summer from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to analyze materials used in modular and prefabricated homes. In partnership with the Healthy Building Network (HBN), a Washington D.C.-based environmental watchdog organization, he will look at environmental and health impacts, tracking materials from production through disposal. The goal is to develop a list of ecologically sound construction materials for the manufactured home industry.

The interest in the environmental health of prefabricated homes comes in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. There was public outcry when unsafe levels of formaldehyde were found in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) trailers used as emergency housing after the disaster. The Sierra Club conducted indoor air quality tests that established a connection between the formaldehyde in 44 trailers with chronic health complaints from their occupants.

Indeed, green detectives often take their lead from environmental activists. A decade ago, Greenpeace recognized the connection between PVC, dioxin emissions, and cancer. Energy-efficient, vinyl-clad windows and wood-conserving vinyl flooring are often touted as green products. With three-quarters of all PVC used in building applications, accounting for 30 million tons a year worldwide, their safety is no small issue. The United States Green Building Council (USGBC) has declared PVC toxic, and the HBN is calling for phasing out the ubiquitous material found in everything from furniture to wiring. Meanwhile environmentalists cite a long laundry list of reasons to banish what they call the "most deadly plastic." Scientists link PVCs' phthalates to asthma, endocrine disruption, and cancer.

It is not the first time that a popular green chemical has been blasted. Recently the HBN led a successful campaign against arsenic-treated wood, typically found in the pressure-treated wood used in playgrounds, decks, and other outdoor applications. Because of HBN's efforts, the EPA has restricted the use of arsenic-treated wood. And as of 2004 pressure-treated wood containing arsenic has been banned from U.S. residential construction.

Meanwhile, thousands of untested new products and chemicals are unleashed each year. According to Kenneth Geiser, an expert on environmental law and policy and

Director of Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) in Lowell, Massachusetts, in order to move toward a sustainable world economy we need to use fewer industrial materials by a factor of ten. His book *Materials Matter: Toward a Sustainable Materials Policy* calls for the elimination of "bioaccumulative, persistent, and toxic materials" within the next 50 years.

And lest we think it possible to offset output through current recycling practices, architect William McDonough tells us to think again. He and co-author Michael Braungart, a chemist, write about reformulating building materials to make them safer in their book *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*. They tell us that today's recycled content products, like flooring made from old rubber tires or structural steel that can be melted and reformed, create toxic byproducts via material degradation over time, or "down-cycling," or via dioxin emissions, "an odd side effect for a supposedly environmental process," they say.

The solution, according to McDonough, Braungart, and Geiser, is to redesign industry to use less toxic materials from the start. Green detectives are making headway in this department, but scrutiny of new building materials is not in the purview of most design professionals. To address this problem, Tom Lent and Julie Silas of the HBN, in partnership with the Cascadia Green Building Council and the University of Tennessee Center for Clean Products, are working to create a new tool, the Pharos Project, whose format is similar to the widely used online encyclopedia Wikipedia. It is expected to launch in summer 2008.

According to Lent, Policy Director of the HBN, the Pharos Project will "help architects search for the best products with the lowest impacts across environmental, health, and social justice issues." Pharos will assist in evaluating manufacturers' claims and provide a forum for discussing products, he says. For starters, the Pharos website will include a database of over five hundred products prescreened by Geibig and his colleagues at the University of Tennessee Center for Clean Products. While Pharos is different from certification, it will evaluate existing certification programs, like Greenguard and FloorScore, using a numerical ratings system. Most of these programs are limited in scope, claims Lent. "The wide range of issues aren't all captured by existing certification," he says. For example, the Green Label Plus program measures only VOC (volatile organic compounds) emissions. Other chemicals, like controversial phthalates (semi-volatile organic compounds or SVOCs), are excluded. Pharos will rate materials based on 16 different categories or criteria, explains Geibig.

In broadcasting a product's ranking on multiple fronts like air quality, life cycle assessment, and energy efficiency, other green detectives are steering industry in the direction of ecological products and fair practices. Geiser, through TURI, researches, tests, and promotes alternatives to toxic chemicals used in Massachusetts industries and communities. McDonough has his own "Cradle to Cradle" rating system. With only a handful of products—from eco-flooring to sustainable surfboard wax—to date, its stringent requirements all speak to the dictum, "less is more."

LAURI PUCHALL IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

DECEMBER

SATURDAY 15

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Greg Rose

New Landscapes

Hosfelt Gallery
460 Clementina St.,
San Francisco
www.hosfeltgallery.com

Gee Vaucher

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

Cory Arcangel, Michael
Bell-Smith, Joe Bradley, et al.
Bitten!

Lightbox/Kim Light Gallery
2656 South La Cienega Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.kimlightgallery.com

Amy Sarkisian

Sister
437 Gin Ling Way,
Los Angeles
www.sisterla.com

Jeana Sohn

My Hands are Crispy

Taylor De Cordoba
2660 South La Cienega Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.taylordecordoba.com

Helen Altman, Ed Blackburn,
Bill Burns, et al.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder
Walter Maciel
2642 South La Cienega Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.waltermacielgallery.com

FOR THE KIDS

Physics of Toys: On Top and
Bottom of the World

11:00 a.m.
Exploratorium
3601 Lyon St., San Francisco
www.exploratorium.edu

Family Albums Re-Mixed

1:00 p.m.
California African American
Museum
600 State Dr., Los Angeles
www.caamuseum.org

SUNDAY 16

SYMPOSIUM

Shibori Workshop with
Yoshiko Akane

1:00 p.m.
The Japanese American
National Museum
369 East 1st St., Los Angeles
www.janm.org

TUESDAY 18

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

André Kertész

Seven Decades

Graciela Iturbide

The Goat's Dance

Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Dr.,
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

FILM

Being There

(Hal Ashby, 1979), 130 min.
1:00 p.m.
Los Angeles County
Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.lacma.org

WEDNESDAY 19

EXHIBITION OPENING

Visual Griots of Mali

Fowler Museum of Art
308 Charles East Young Dr.,
Los Angeles
www.fowler.ucla.edu

JANUARY

WEDNESDAY 2

EXHIBITION OPENING

Mind

Exploratorium
3601 Lyon St., San Francisco
www.exploratorium.edu

THURSDAY 3

EXHIBITION OPENING

Kofi Cole, Peter Cole,
Ethan Turpin,
Franco Mondini-Ruiz, et al.

Curiosities
Edward Cella
Art+Architecture
East Figueroa St.,
Santa Barbara
www.edwardcella.com

FRIDAY 4

EXHIBITION OPENING

Modern American Sculpture

Forum Gallery
8069 Beverly Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.forumgallery.com

SATURDAY 5

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Donald Urquhart

Jack Hanley Gallery
945 Sun Mun Way,
Los Angeles
www.jackhanley.com

Kelsey Brooks, Shepard
Fahey, Cleon Peterson, et al.
Poster Renaissance 2

7:00 p.m.
New Image Art Gallery
7908 Santa Monica Blvd.,
West Hollywood
www.newimageartgallery.com

Karen Liebowitz

Rosamund Felsen Gallery
2525 Michigan Ave.,
Santa Monica
www.rosamundfelsen.com

SUNDAY 6

EXHIBITION OPENING

8 Under 28

Gallery C
1225 Hermosa Ave.,
Hermosa Beach
www.galleryc.com

FOR THE KIDS

© MURAKAMI tour

Museum of
Contemporary Art
The Geffen Contemporary
152 North Central Ave.,
Los Angeles
www.moca-la.org

TUESDAY 8

LECTURE

Graciela Iturbide,

Roberto Tejada

Graciela Iturbide in

Conversation

7:00 p.m.
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr.,
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

WEDNESDAY 9

FILM

Sympathy for the Devil

(Jean-Luc Godard, 1968),
200 min.
7:00 p.m.
Bill Wilder Theater
10899 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

THURSDAY 10

LECTURE

Lawrence Weschler

Robert Irwin

7:00 p.m.
Museum of Contemporary
Art of San Diego
Copley Building
1100 & 1001 Kettner Blvd.,
San Diego
www.mcasd.org

Greywater Guerillas

7:00 p.m.
Flora Grubb Gardens
1634 Jerrold Ave.,
San Francisco
www.aiaf.org

SATURDAY 12

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Miles Coolidge

ACME.
6150 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.acmelosangeles.com

Ian Cooper, Anna Craycroft

Fiction Friction

John White Cerasulo
Sandroni.Rey
2762 South La Cienega Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.sandronirey.com

Neal Tait

ACME.
6150 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.acmelosangeles.com

Ruby Osorio and

Yuh-Shioh Wong

Cherry and Martin
12611 Venice Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.cherryandmartin.com

David Sandlin

In Gallery II: Helen Garber

7:00 p.m.
Billy Shire Fine Arts
5790 Washington Blvd.,
Culver City
www.billyshirefinearts.com

Diane Landry

Ecole d'aviation

Solway Jones Gallery
5377 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.solwayjonesgallery.com

Einar and Jamex de la Torre

Koplin Del Rio Gallery

6031 Washington Blvd.,
Culver City
www.koplindelrio.com

FOR THE KIDS

In the Hands of Babes

1:15 p.m.
California African American
Museum
600 State Dr., Los Angeles
www.caamuseum.org

SUNDAY 13

LECTURE

Mika Yoshitake

Murakami

3:00 p.m.
Museum of
Contemporary Art
250 South Grand Ave.,
Los Angeles
www.moca.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

Liza Botkin

4260 Lankershim Blvd.,
Studio City
www.astudiogallery.com

WEDNESDAY 16

LECTURE

Margaret Russell

So Chic: Glamorous Lives,
Stylish Spaces

11:00 a.m.
Pacific Design Center
8687 Melrose Ave.,
West Hollywood
www.pacificdesigncenter.com

EXHIBITION OPENING

Martin Hoener

Anna Helwing Gallery
2766 S. La Cienega Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.annahelwing.com

THURSDAY 17

LECTURE

Roy Arden

7:00 p.m.
Billy Wilder Theater
10899 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING

2007 Small Firms,

Great Projects

San Francisco Design Center
Galleria
101 Henry Adams St.,
San Francisco
www.aiaf.org

SATURDAY 19

LECTURE

Erwin Redl

7:00 p.m.
Museum of Contemporary
Art of San Diego
700 Prospect St., La Jolla
www.mcasd.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Victor Man

Blum & Poe Gallery
2754 South La Cienega Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.blumandpoe.com

Anthony Hernandez

Christopher Grimes Gallery
916 Colorado Ave.,
Santa Monica
www.cgrimes.com

Amie Dicke

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

Margo Bistis, Norman Klein,

Andreas Kratky

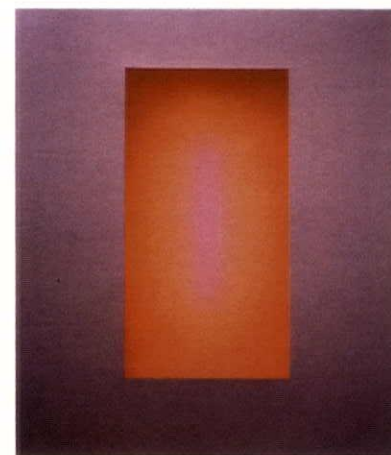
The Imaginary 20th Century
South Coast Plaza
3333 Bear St., Costa Mesta
www.ocma.net



OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN ALL THE WORLD:
THE AMERICAS

Skirball Cultural Center
2701 North Sepulveda Boulevard, Los Angeles
Through December 30

In our information-saturated age, we're bombarded with statistics, but they can be awfully abstract. Rice and theater enliven the numbers in the hands of Stan's Cafe, a Birmingham, England-based theater troupe currently performing in the Skirball Cultural Center. Six lab coat-clad performers measure rice onto scales, forming piles large and small, each grain symbolizing one of the 900 million people in North and South America. Juxtaposing statistics such as the number of prisoners worldwide and the number of Americans residing in gated communities gives the show a delicate balance of humor and pathos. Having toured internationally from Copenhagen to Budapest, the troupe sprinkles in statistics relevant to the show's current geographical demographic. For LA audiences, comparisons range from the number of drivers on Interstate 405 to that of celebrities whose stars have been stolen from the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Other factoids range further afield; unlike a 2006 show at the same venue, which focused on the United States, this one also covers South America. The actors thrive on audience participation—if there's a statistic you're dying to know, actors verify it using onstage computers and incorporate the figures into the show. Stan's Cafe next brings its unique brand of data visualization to New York in January, as part of the Under the Radar festival.



JAMES TURRELL AT POMONA COLLEGE

Pomona College Museum of Art
Montgomery Art Center
333 North College Way, Claremont
Through May 17, 2008

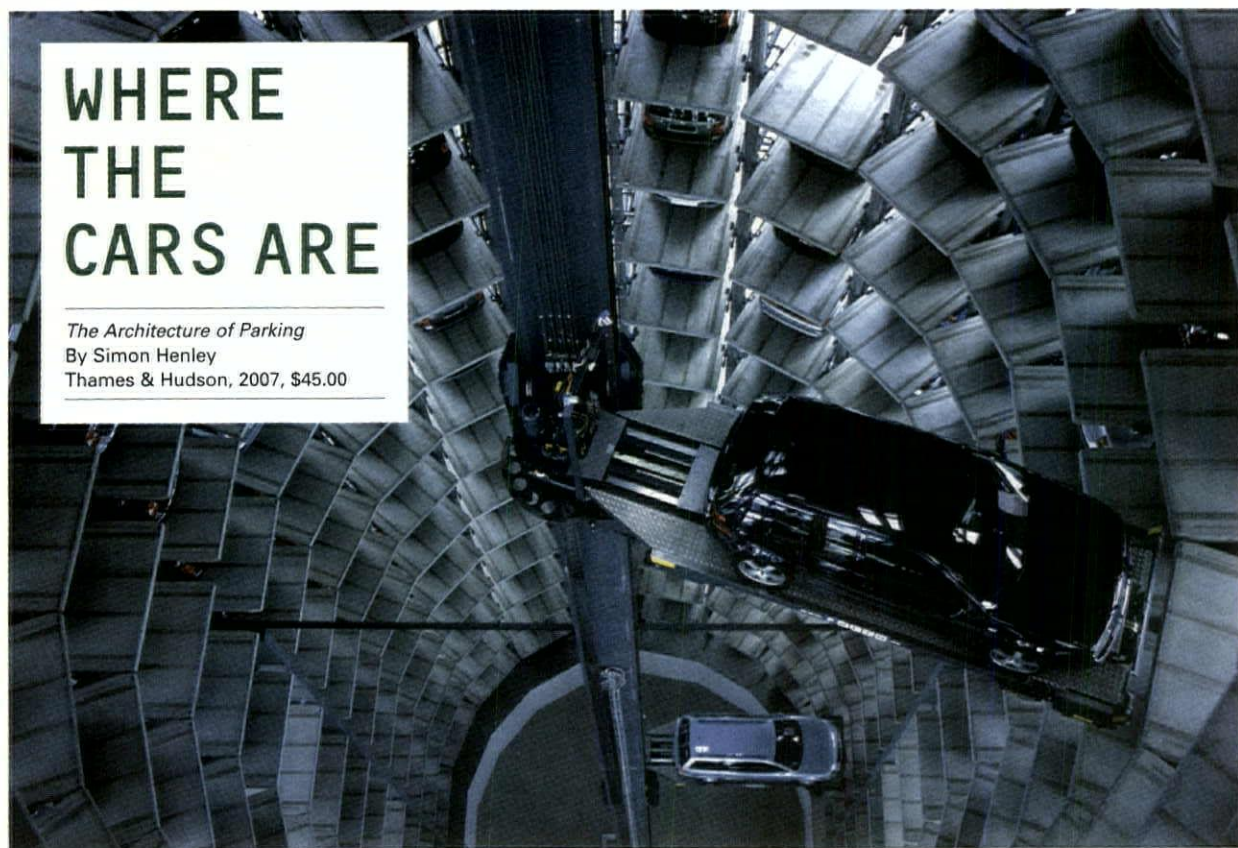
A rectangular wall glows faintly in the distance of a limitless blue space seemingly lacking a ceiling and walls; it is an experience so disorienting that a museum attendant accompanies visitors for safety. In *End Around*—part of James Turrell's *Ganzfeld* series of light installations that play with sensory deprivation—what appears to be a glowing blue screen is, in fact, a depth of dense blue light emanating from multiple light sources in a hidden alcove. Reflecting his deep spirituality and studies in psychology, Turrell's manipulations of illumination and space are about the transcendent art of perception and the sublime quality of light for light's sake. In *Gathered Light* and *Silent Leading* (above), programmed wall-mounted LED lights behind 4-foot-by-7-foot sheets of glass create color changes so gradual as to be almost imperceptible; visitors often pass the displays at first unaware of their transformation, only later to become seduced into a transfixed, meditative gaze. Also encompassing drawings and models, the exhibition is timed to complement the Pomona College alum's new *Skyspace* elsewhere on campus, an architectural space designed for the profound experience of viewing the sky.

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VISIT WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM FOR COMPETITION LISTINGS

WHERE THE CARS ARE

The Architecture of Parking
By Simon Henley
Thames & Hudson, 2007, \$45.00



The Volkswagen Autostadt in Wolfsburg, Germany, is a car dealership *cum* amusement park, complete with two silos full of cars for sale.

tural floors, were highlights of the era. In the 1970s, interest in the parking structure waned and individual design was replaced by mass-production. But in the last few years, he shows, the appeal of continuous space, exposed concrete, and expressed structure has renewed interest in the humble car park.

The book is divided into chapters that explore Matter (looking at concrete frame-work and the plasticity of the parking structure form), Elevation (which includes the fascinating repetition of forms expressed in many garages), and Light (which explores the many ways that light can penetrate garages, including louvers, light wells, and intricately-expressed structural facades). Some of my favorite examples include Holl's Nelson Atkins Museum underground parking garage in Kansas City, which is lit from above via round oculi built into a reflecting pool; Albert Kahn's Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, with its enclosing hyperbolic paraboloid concrete panels; and Stanley Tigerman's 60 East

Lake Street in Chicago, whose colorful facade looks like the front hood of a car.

Such large-scale work has had a pervasive influence on architecture at large from the beginning, points out Henley. His examples include Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum, whose spiraling concrete design is as close to a parking garage as a museum will likely ever get; David Chipperfield's Edificio Vele e Vents for the America's Cup in Valencia, with its stacked, cantilevered concrete decks; and UN Studio's Mercedes Benz Museum in Stuttgart, with its concrete double helix spiraling ramps. Other projects that come to mind are Zaha Hadid's BMW Plant in Leipzig, with its continuous concrete form and Herzog and De Meuron's upcoming Beijing Olympic stadium, with its intricate expressed facade.

The only major drawback to this eye-opening book is that it is difficult to find the work of particular architects. An index, or a more-detailed contents page would have helped. But that is all outweighed by an impressive amount of scholarship, making the book an authoritative and mind-expanding study of a place that few of us have ever appreciated.

SAM LUBELL

While Louis Khan, Zaha Hadid, Richard Neutra, and Steven Holl may have all brought their considerable talents to bear on parking, the car garage is still disliked by many, and considered by most to be a purely utilitarian structure. But Simon Henley has proven in his thorough, enjoyable book, *The Architecture of Parking*, that

it is actually one of the most influential, and most overlooked, building types of the last century. The book is painstakingly illustrated with photos by Sue Barr.

Henley begins by giving a brief history of the parking garage, a building type that had a slow start at the turn of the century, took off in the 1920s, and exploded after

World War II, when the car became a fixture of society, and when efficiency and science were paramount fascinations. While early designs, he points out, were often derivative of existing building designs, the architecture in this mid-century "golden age" of parking became more imaginative; the type becoming the perfect zone

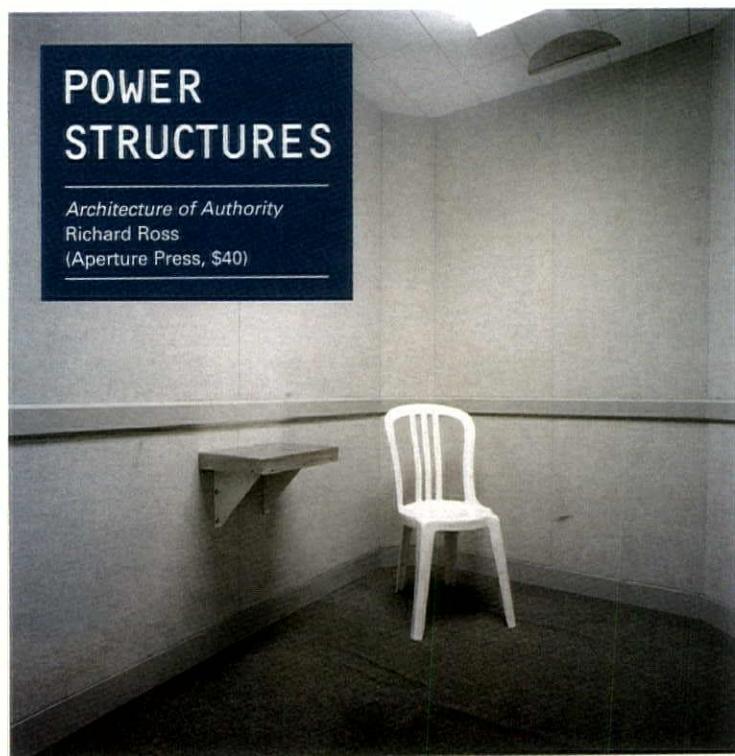
for structural and formal experimentation.

Structures like Bertrand Goldberg's Marina City in Chicago (1962)—futurist, "corn-cob"-shaped residential towers with parking visibly integrated into their base (united via a helical ramp), and Rudolph's Temple Street lot in New Haven, with its dramatic cantilevered struc-

COURTESY THAMES & HUDSON

POWER STRUCTURES

Architecture of Authority
Richard Ross
(Aperture Press, \$40)



The interview room at the Santa Barbara Police Department, certainly not.

Ross uses contrast to create meaning and juxtaposes related images as a form of commentary. For example, on one page, he contrasts the portrait of a male worshipping below the soaring interior of Istanbul's Blue Mosque with a claustrophobic segregated women's prayer area in Syria. The conclusion is obvious.

In other cases, Ross makes compositional comparisons to suggest that different types of authority can strike a similar visual pose: the hallways of the Santa Barbara High School and the United States' detainee camp in Guantanamo Bay; a Catholic confessional and a communication area for inmates at a prison; the row of bunk beds at a Marine Corps recruiting depot and a dormitory at a mental institution in Havana.

In these images, the presence of people—whether they are judge, jury, or defendant—is the most noticeable absence. Yet, it is the same approach used by most architects who today routinely photograph their completed works of architecture without people who might distract from the design. Here, the omniscient, universal voice of authority whispers from the corner

of the room. With the human element removed, architecture is complicit in the representation of control. The vocabulary of authority is spoken everywhere.

Or maybe it is not. In these photographs, architecture simply provides a staging area for the production of control. The Department of Motor Vehicles in Santa Barbara has the drab gray sameness as the tony Mary Boone Gallery, minus the two Le Corbusier-designed black leather armchairs. In other cases, authority is present only by virtue of small but prominent clues. Handcuffs dangle from a bench. A chain link fence casts a shadow on the ground. Portraits of President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney hang on a wall.

Still, these are all forms of civic architecture, whether they inhabit our local sphere or, like Abu Ghraib, they are secreted across the globe. Just as the public courthouse stands for the representation of justice, prisons are below-the-radar warning signs that inhabit our psyches. No one would really want to be found guilty of a crime just to see the inside of a jail or a detainee camp, and yet the design of such facilities illustrates how our society incriminates humanity, and how we view our world.

Exposure of these public struc-

tures and spaces is part of their shock value. Built by and for our democratic society, they are normally off-limits to the population at large. The design press rarely shows them, despite the fact that the American justice system is a multi-billion industry, and the United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world. Do design journals regularly overlook these projects for flashier and more aesthetically-pleasing works of architecture because they are more emotionally neutral as well?

But we should also be aware that concrete and steel are not the only ways to build boundaries, to impose forms of control. Ross also takes us to places where authority is conveyed simply by technological device. The Chalk Farm tube station on London's Underground reminds us that public space can be monitored only by closed circuit television (mind your head and no smoking, please). "We are neither in the amphitheatre, nor on the stage, but in the panoptic machine, invested by its effects of power, which we bring to ourselves since we are part of the mechanism," said Michel Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*. "Our society is not one of spectacle, but of surveillance."

TAMI HAUSMAN IS A WRITER WORKING IN PUBLIC RELATIONS IN NEW YORK.

What do a Montessori preschool, a London Underground station, and the United Nations Headquarters, not to mention a mosque, a corporate skyscraper, and a hotel, have in common? According to photographer Richard Ross, these are all sites of authority—places where governments, religions, corporations, and other institutions display power

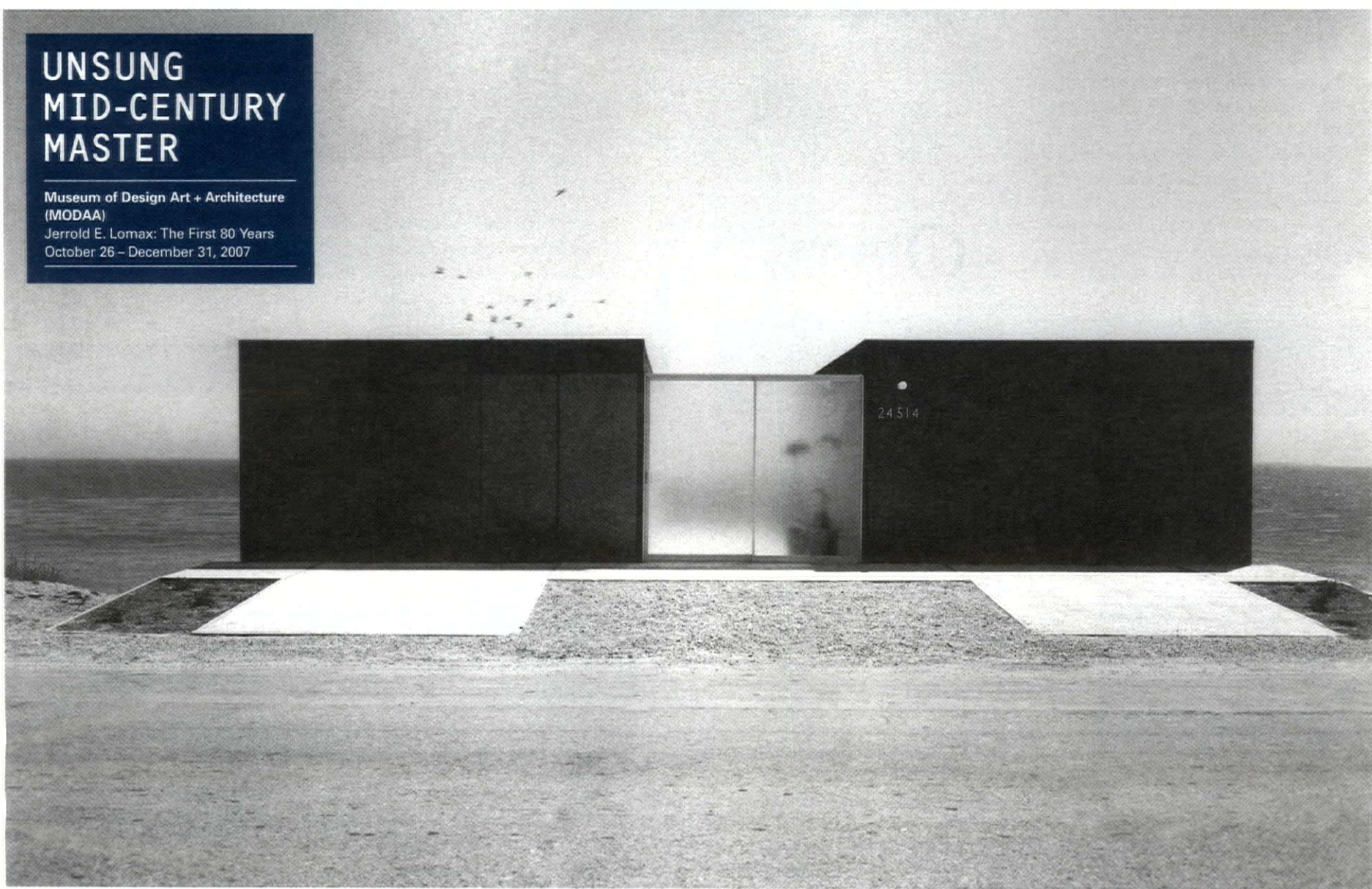
and also command it.

In his new book, *Architecture of Authority*, Ross confronts us with a bizarre travelogue of architectural sound bites from locations as far-flung as Ho Chi Minh City and as nearby as Philadelphia. Although some of these buildings are beautiful, others are intentionally bland. In any case, tourist traps they are

RICHARD ROSS

UNSUNG MID-CENTURY MASTER

Museum of Design Art + Architecture
(MODAA)
Jerrold E. Lomax: The First 80 Years
October 26 – December 31, 2007



MARVIN RAND

This well-deserved and overdue exhibition features highlights of Northern California architect Jerrold E. Lomax's career in photographs. The influence of this modest and precise man's work is visible throughout California. Unfortunately, awareness and acknowledgement of his profound problem-solving abilities remains understated even in the architectural world. For more than a generation he has resolved structural challenges, like hillside development and oddly shaped building lots, while maintaining his modernist aesthetic; no doubt his designs have subconsciously entered the minds of numerous architects working in his milieu of glass, steel, and cement.

Lomax was the Associate in Charge of Design on several of Craig Ellwood's signature buildings, such as the Rosen House, Case Study House #18, and Kuderna House, among others. After a long tenure with Ellwood, Lomax brought his Miesian approach to his own practice, based in Sand City, near Monterey, which continues today. The exhibit focuses on the work of Lomax's office, but his years with Ellwood are illustrated with enlarged color prints of the latter's 15 Houses and poster-size prints of the masterful Hunt House (1957), a series of elegant cubes in Malibu, photographed by Marvin Rand. For this early project, Lomax built with an H-shaped plan that prefigured his design of interior courtyard spaces.

SPF:a recently created the lofty, 1,800-square-foot gallery space at MODAA within its new offices in Culver City to promote new architecture and design. Curated by Judit Meda Fekete, an SPF:a principal, the show does not present the material or projects in chronolog-

ical order. This non-linear approach reinforces the classic features of Lomax's designs which remain current, whether the Pierson House (1955) or the Hawthorne Gallery Project, now on the boards. As SPF:a principal, Zoltan Pali commented, "It is a testament to Jerry's consistency and commitment to a real and honest modernist architecture." Pali, who worked for and then collaborated with Lomax, continues to acknowledge the senior architect's influence on his own practice, and describes the exhibit as "the most personal in MODAA's five year history."

Large prints of Lomax's work are beautifully mounted and show the architect's combined technical and aesthetic finesse. The exhibit focuses on finished work. Several projects are award-winning, such as the Rice Residence (1992) in Glendale, which has a concrete facade, a glass box central structure, and a steel-framed building in the back. Lomax developed an innovative terracing technique that uses multiple cement pods for support. The set-back, cubic, gray-colored West End Condos (2003) in Sand City is another award-winning project, although there is no reference to the merit it received from the Monterey Bay Chapter of the AIA. Also missing is the process work: sketches, drawings, and ephemera that might reveal more of the architect's hand.

An enlargement of the poster for the 1976 LA 12 architecture exhibit at the Pacific Design Center helps place Lomax in the context of his peers from that era: Gehry, Kappe, Pelli, Lautner, Zimmerman, and others. Lomax became one of the LA 12 for his design of the pure white, tetris-esque Moses House (1972). Glen Allison's photographs of the house are part of the exhibit and appear

next to the architect's Ashton-Casella House (2000), a more textured, landscape-inspired construction in Carmel Valley. Lomax's more curvaceous, silvery Trailer Life Publishing Headquarters (1973) in Agoura, is an early use of aluminum composite siding with the intended effect of mimicking the exterior of an Air Stream trailer.

The focal point of the gallery floor area is a set of four wood models for the Westgate, Ashton-Casella, Rice, and Lomax-Miles houses, all beautifully constructed by the SPF:a "model gang." Across from the models are

Above: The Hunt residence designed by Jerrold Lomax and Craig Ellwood, 1955.
Below: The Moses residence, 1973.

renderings for several of these projects in addition to wall-mounted photographs. This is an example of how MODAA does especially well by showing admiration, respect, and ultimately embodying the architect's vitality. Ideally, however, such a formal exhibition in a museum setting should offer a little more insight. But hopefully the current show will serve as an impetus for further recognition.

JEFFREY HEAD



GLEN ALLISON

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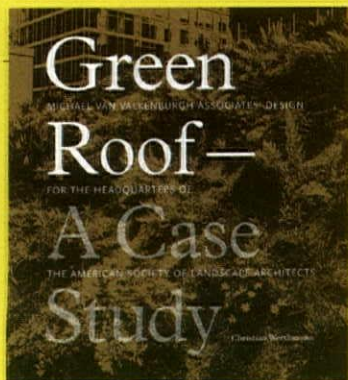
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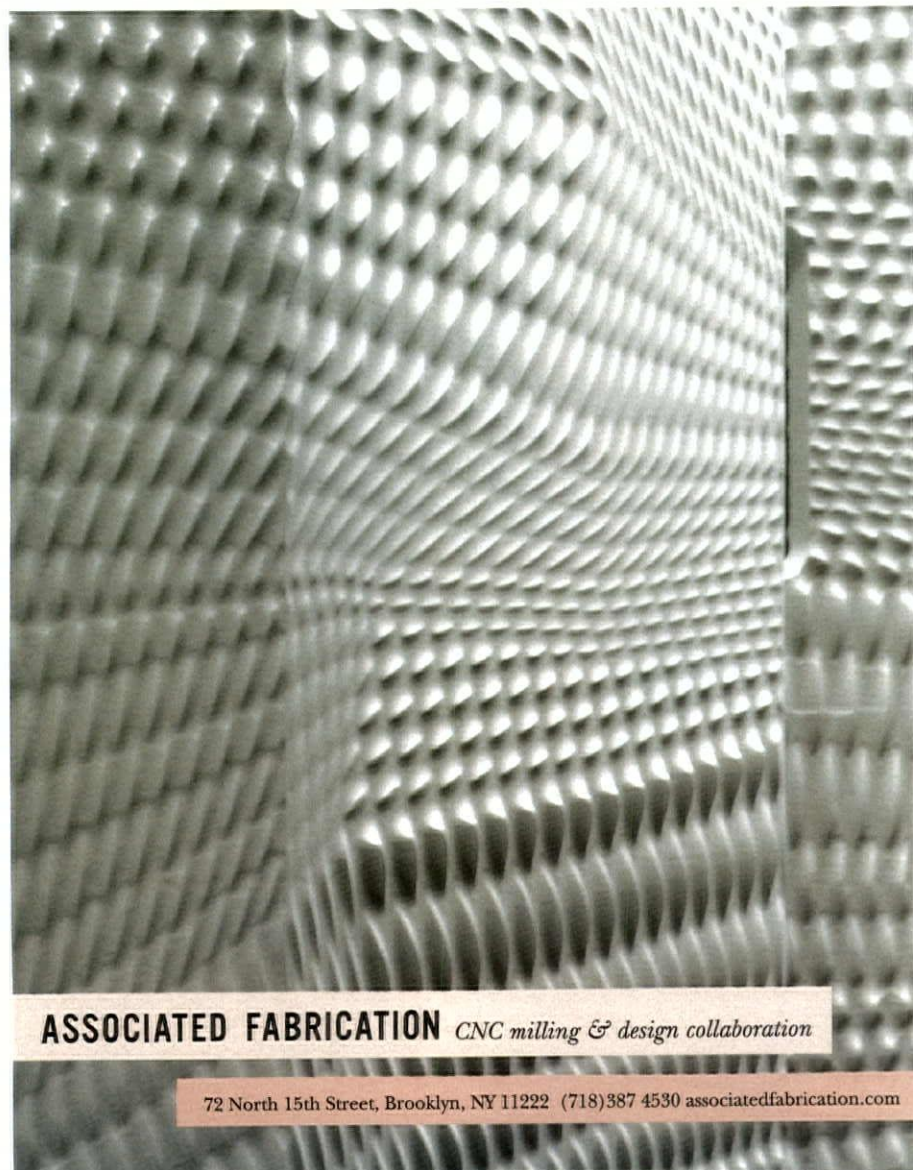
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ABSTRACT

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URBAN CRITIC MIKE DAVIS POINTS OUT HOW NEW CAUSES ARE
CAUSING SEASONAL WILDFIRES



ANDREA BOOHER/FEMA

Every year, sometimes in September, but more classically in October just before Halloween, when California's wild vegetation is driest and most combustible, high-pressure over the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau unleashes an avalanche of cold air toward the Pacific coast. As this huge air mass descends, it heats up through compression. There is little enigma to the physics of these devil winds although their sudden arrival is always disturbing to greenhorns and nervous pets as well as to truck drivers and joggers (sometimes scythed by razor-sharp palm fronds). Technically they are "fohns," after the warm winds that stream down from the leeward side of the Alps, but the Southern California terminology, of course, is a "Santa Ana" (or in the Bay Area, a "Diablo"). For a few days every year, these dry hurricanes blow our world apart or, if a cigarette or a downed powerline is in the path, they ignite it.

They also offer lazy journalists another opportunity to recite famous lines from Raymond Chandler and Joan Didion, in which the Santa Anas drive the natives to homicide and apocalyptic fever. But Didion's LA books are notoriously allergic to the local landscape, while Chandler was a connoisseur of mean streets, not chaparral. To understand the real phenomenology of weather and combustion in Southern California, it would be more worthwhile to read Judy Van der Veer: an unfairly forgotten writer who spent most of her life ranching in the rugged hills near the hamlet of Ramona, 35 miles northeast of downtown San Diego. Despite the media's incurable penchant for portraying Southern California disasters through the lens of celebrity, it wasn't Malibu, but Ramona that was the epicenter of the Witch Creek Fire: the largest and most destructive firestorm of the recent swarm. Like a Barbara Stanwyck cattle queen, Van der Veer rode line and mended her own fences, and from the saddle of her cow-pony she had a much clearer view of chaparral ecology than did Chandler through his gin bottle or Didion through the window of her speeding car.

Brown Hills (1938)—the second in a brace of carefully observed memoir-novels—is the diary of a long drought similar to the current aridity in Southern California. (My twin toddlers, like the

calves in Van der Veer's book, scarcely remember what rain looks like.) "Should a good fairy ask me what I wish, I know what I would say! I wouldn't ask for a golden palace, or Arabian horses, or a handsome lover. I would wish for rain." But instead of rain, an October Santa Ana howls over Black Mountain and blasts her Ramona ranch.

"I could see herds of dust being driven into the eastern end of the valley and hurried down the river, leaving, for a second, clearness behind them. Then another gust and the east was hidden and more yellow clouds came surging through the valley. ... My eyes hurt, my chest felt full of dust, my hair stood stiffly up like the horses' tails. We seemed to be watching a big fire whose flames were yellow instead of red, and it was consuming our land while we looked helplessly down."

Luckily the Santa Ana abates before the lightly inhabited backcountry of the 1930s catches fire, the good fairy finally brings green, and the brown hillsides turn green with clover, deerweed, and alfalfaree. But, as Van der Veer insists, such happy endings are not inevitable. Southern California is a land of risk and natural drama, where the unpredictable cycle of the seasons is as suspenseful as any noir novel. Ramona valley farmers don't so much "settle" the land as they learn to roll with its punches, enjoying luxurious interludes of beauty between disaster. Moreover, in Van der Veer's time, it was truly the "back country," and a broad corridor of avocado and citrus orchards separated the cow ranches and turkey farms from the urbanized coastal strip.

Three generations later, the vast citrus forests have been transformed into pink-stucco death valleys full of bored teenagers and desperate housewives. The edge of the sprawl, especially, is a firefighter's nightmare. East of LA, for example, in the San Geronio Pass above Palm Springs, where 4000 wind turbines harvest the Santa Anas, new subdivisions are being built next to 50-year-old chaparral standing 8 feet tall and yearning to burn. Likewise throughout the foothills, free-range McMansions—often castellated in unconscious self-caricature—occupy rugged ocean-view peaks surrounded by what foresters grimly refer to as "diesel stands" of dying pine and old brush.

A helicopter hovering over the Harris fire.

The loss of more than 90 percent of Southern California's agricultural buffer zone is the principal, if seldom referenced, reason why wildfires incinerate such spectacular swathes of luxury. Certainly, other variables—including La Niña droughts, fire suppression, bark beetle infestations, and probably global warming—contribute to the semi-annual infernos that have become so predictable. But what makes us most vulnerable is the abruptness of what is called the "wildland-urban interface," where real estate collides with fire ecology.

On October 26, day six of the fires, I saw the ruins—perched precariously on a wild mountainside—of what my friend Kozy Amemiya she described as "a Tokugawa fortress, like you see in Kurosawa film." Its twin turrets had been reduced to some twisted girders rising 9-11-like from a smoldering mound of gray ash, but the putting green next to the driveway remained eerily pristine.

Kozy and her husband Tom Royden are Ramona avocado growers, the last of a dying breed in a rapidly suburbanizing landscape. One of their two ranches is located in the same hills east of Ramona where Van der Veer's horses once grazed; the other, larger orchard occupies the side of a boulder-studded mountain overlooking Lake Ramona. Tom's graduate degree is, literally, in avocados—from California State Polytechnic at Pomona.

Tom has Lloyd George eyebrows, always appears in pressed khaki shorts, and is armed with an encyclopedic knowledge of irrigation and semitropical agriculture. He could easily pass for one those planter types who caroused at Raffles and ran vast rubber estates in Malaya, or raised coffee and white mischief in the Kikuyu hills. Indeed, Tom's dad wrote in "merchant adventurer" as his occupation on his passport, and his mother was descended from generations of cherry farmers.

Tom has spent most of his working life advising village cooperatives in Tanzania and digging ditches with Andean farmers in Ecuador. Kozy and Tom are eloquent evangelists about the need to preserve, if not expand, what remains of an agricultural firebreak in Southern California. Their own fire history is instructive. In 2003, the Cedar blaze (which killed 15 people and destroyed 2200 homes) passed south of the larger orchard; this time, 50-foot-high flames charged the mountain twice without success, before returning a third time to scorch trees and incinerate nearby homes.

Still, as Tom points out, his trees put up a "bloody stiff fight," providing a firewall that saved several of his neighbors' large houses. "Except in an extreme conflagration, fire will only penetrate about 10 or 15 meters into orchards when the ground is cleared and well irrigated." He takes a penknife and scrapes at charred bark: the flesh is still green. The tree's burly toughness is reassuring, but there is bad news as well. When we drive along the dirt tracks we leave behind a deep, mushy trail of guacamole. The fire and wind have stripped several hundred thousand fruit from the trees, and Tom estimates that he has lost 70 percent of the crop.

In the wake of the latest firestorms, the future of local horticulture looks bleak.

Soaring land values and increasingly expensive water have conspired to squeeze bottom-lines; while the monopoly power of the supermarket chains has forced growers to substitute alligator-skinned, easily refrigerated Hass avocados for the thin-skinned, anise-flavored Fuertes that connoisseurs prefer. Finally, to close this circle of economic and ecological misery, California's honeybees are dying en masse from a mystery disease (the so-called Colony Collapse Disorder). Kozy sighs: "You have no idea how difficult it is to pollinate avocado flowers."

True, I know as little about the delicate maneuvers of avocado pollination as I do about the mechanics of putting stallions to stud. But I do care deeply about avocados. In the 1930s, my older sister cantered her Indian pony through my parents' small avocado *ranchito* outside Bostonia, about 10 miles south of Ramona, and the little house my father built with its knotty-pine walls and Mexican paint has survived every fire. Otherwise, little of my childhood Bostonia remains. The Barker family's 1880s general store, the irrigation ditches, the country-western dancehall, the gas station that sold 12-year-olds cigarettes, the lemons and pomegranates—all vanished in a whirlwind of "growth." What endures are aging tract homes, a plague of auto body shops, intractable methamphetamine addiction, and long lines of tail lights headed out toward the brave new suburbs.

Kozy thinks my nostalgia is sheer defeatism and tries to cheer me up. "Did you know there are some really magnificent Fuertes still bearing fruit on Chase Avenue? They're probably a century old."

This is not quite the consolation I need. Avocados have always been the icon of the San Diego countryside (which produces most of the U.S. harvest) and if the remaining growers are forced to sell out, the past will become as inaccessible as the future will be combustible. Ramona is also special, at least to old geezers like me, because it preserves some of the wonderful small town eccentricity that elsewhere has yielded to the mass-produced landscape. But I can easily visualize the coming apocalypse: more view homes on the graves of trees, the wonderful art-deco Ramona Theater bulldozed for a Home Depot, the Turkey Inn turned into a Starbucks, a Cineplex where Judy van der Veer's home used to be....

I suppose the realist view is that our problem will be ultimately solved by combination of burning all the fuel and then paving the ashes. In Southern California, catastrophic fire only fertilizes more sprawl.

I pop the big question to Tom. "Can you really get this ranch up and running again, or will some home developer make you an offer you can't refuse?"

Tom furrows his eyebrows for a moment, then smiles.

"Do you know the etymology of the word avocado?"

"*Aguacate* in Spanish," I mumble.

"Yes, but the Nahuatl original is *ahuacatl*: 'balls.'"

THIS ESSAY IS ADAPTED FROM ONE THAT ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE LONDON REVIEW OF BOOKS (WWW.LRB.CO.UK). MIKE DAVIS' LATEST BOOK IS *IN PRAISE OF BARBARIANS* (HAYMARKET, 2007).