SF REDRAWS TERMINAL PLANS IN HOPES OF STIMULUS FUNDS

Transbay Gamble

Most cities wouldn’t delay a project likely to attract jobs and money to their area during a recession, but not San Francisco. The city voted on June 11 to postpone for more than a year the Transbay Transit Terminal, the new station to station.

The game’s not over, but on June 3 the San Francisco 49ers struck a deal to build their new stadium in Silicon Valley. After more than two years of discussions, Santa Clara’s city council approved the terms of a new $937 million facility to be designed by Kansas City–based HNTB.

The 49ers have been itching to get out of their dilapidated digs at San Francisco’s Candlestick Point for some time. Last year, San Francisco voters signed off on a sweeping redevelopment plan for the Hunters Point neighborhood, which includes the stadium. Developer Lennar agreed to chip in $100 million toward a new facility. But by that time the 49ers were already deep into talks about moving 40 miles south, where its headquarters and training fields (and more parking) are currently located.

In an intricate investment and revenue-sharing deal, Santa Clara will contribute an amount similar to San Francisco’s proposal: $79 million from redevelopment funds and another $35 million from...
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PARK POLITICS

To help cut California’s yawning $24 billion-plus budget deficit, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed closing 220 state parks, saving a potential $70 million. Among the parks closed would be Lake Tahoe’s Emerald Bay, Will Rogers’ Southern California ranch, and even the Governor’s Mansion in Sacramento.

The plan is a disaster. Of course our state is in dire straits financially, and programs do need to be trimmed to stave off collapse. But the $70 million saved on this plan is a pittance compared to the overall deficit. What’s worse, it will cost the state millions of dollars in lost tourism and business revenue; it could result in the layoffs of close to 2,000 state park employees; and it will cost California millions in possible federal grants. Of course, it will also deprive residents of much-needed respite in these difficult times. Such a plan—desperately thrown together despite substantial long-term costs to the state offsetting any small initial savings—represents the kind of narrow thinking that got us into this mess in the first place.

The list of sites that Schwarzenegger has proposed closing is a reminder of the invaluable public resources that California still does provide. By shuttering places like William Randolph Hearst Memorial State Beach, the Portola Redwoods State Park, or the Sutter’s Fort Historic Park, the state would be reneging on its duty to provide recreation, education, and culture to citizens of all backgrounds. And by closing these parks, over 60 of them would stop receiving federal funds currently provided by the National Park Service. A few of the parks—including the iconic Angel Island Lighthouse at Point Sur—could even be reppossessed by the federal government, which donated them to the state under the Federal Lands and Parks Program, granting surplus lands provided that they stay open to the public.

But beyond the recreational value of these places, their economic and civic value is even greater. According to a recent report by the Trust for Public Land, parks increase the values of nearby properties (and so the esoteric, and parade hous-

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NEW ROLES continued from front page

One important strategy is the diversification of services, stretching practices beyond hard-hit areas like housing. For a firm like Thomas P. Cox: Architects, a specialist in condominium development, this has meant pursuing work in areas like student, senior, and affordable housing. It has also required stepping-up business development efforts. “We have to use to decline work if it didn’t meet a certain cyclical. When one market is down, another

“Real estate development is counter-cyclical. When one market is down, another is up,” said Scott Hunter, corporate commer-
cial practice director at NBBJ. Some firms are expanding into completely new practice areas. For instance, Silver Lake-based architect Barbara Bestor is acting as creative director on a number of brand identity projects, working on graphics, logos, and web presence for clients that include Fuse Entertainment, Pithfire Pizza, and several start-

up restaurants. Another architect, LA-based Debi Van Zyl, is finding some success at sell-
ing at Etsy.com. One doll, named Bradley, looks like a cross between a hammerhead shark, a lizard, and an alien; none wear black-rimmed glasses.

Architecture firms are also keeping a close eye on where and how federal stimulus money is being disbursed, hoping to capital-
ize on better funding in the public sector. While most firms admit these areas have slowed as well, institutional and civic mar-
kets are still faring better. Firms that pur-
sued projects in sectors such as healthcare, education, and public infrastructure prior to the downturn are better positioned to ride out the recession. For instance, HMC archi-
tects began a strategic planning initiative five years ago to expand the firm’s position in the healthcare and higher education mar-
kets. As a result, according to Hal Sibley, managing principal, “We’re fairly busy.”

While global architects and larger firms encroach on the employment of many local firms here, architects in LA are looking abroad.

Many point to the burgeoning middle classes in Asia and South America, and the relative wealth of Middle Eastern countries as contin-
uous sources of work. Additionally, local firms argue that Los Angeles’ legacy as a city of innovation in architecture can position them

best. But many are reducing executive salaries and bonuses as well, and some have taken more drastic measures, including tak-
ing on projects at-cost to retain employees.

Bester is renting out her well-regarded home in Silver Lake this summer to reduce her overhead. Some architects are walking away from the instability of large-firm employment altogether, finding that the recession allows the freedom to work independently. Bo Sundias, a founder and principal at Bunch Design, believes that “if you’re going to start up, start up now.” Sundias said that with very low overhead and tight financial control of his expenses, his firm can consistently underbid competitors.

Several architects believe there are other silver linings in a dire economy. Less expen-
sive materials, reduced construction costs, and cheaper long term leases were repeatedly cited as some of the advantages to building

now. And while no one believes the recession has ended, there are indications the worst may be over. The American Institute of Architects’ Architecture Billings Index, after several quarters of steep declines, reports that April’s index of 42.8 was less than a point below March’s 43.7, suggesting the industry may be turning a new corner.
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UCLA UNVEILS PLANS FOR PAULEY PAVILION

OFF TO THE RACES continued from front page with 3,000 residential units ranging from market-rate, single-family residences to multi-level apartments. Commercial, retail, and entertainment components are also planned, as well as 25 acres of open space, highlighted by a lake now located in the center of the racetrack. An existing casino would be updated and joined with a new 300-room hotel. Affordable housing isn’t currently incorporated into the masterplan, but architect Kevin Tyrrell sees the idea as uncoordinated with the existing structure, and inconsistent with the goals of the modernization.) The main entrance, marked by an expanse of glass and a large new plaza, will be located to the north. A smaller entrance and plaza will be located to the southeast. Hunter said special attention was paid to preserving the arena’s existing V-truss roof structure, whose iconic members will remain intact. Echoes of those trusses will be visible through the transparent sections of the facade. Approximately 30,000 square feet of new concourse space will be created between the new cladding and the original shell, including three times as many toilets (a mention that got loud applause at the press conference) and about 25 more concession stands.

The firm plans to gut the arena’s existing interior spaces, adding new mechanical and electrical systems. To preserve Pauley’s feel, the seating bowl will remain open for much of the renovation, with the exception of the 2011–2012 season, when teams will play elsewhere.

But architect Kevin Tyrrell sees the development as urban infill stitching together neighborhoods that are separated by the expansive grounds and a parking lot. He is a principal at Quatro Design Group, one of the firms that worked on the plan, along with Cooper Robertson & Partners of New York, and San Francisco’s Baldauf Catton Von Eckartsberg.

The redesign will encase the arena’s existing concrete shell with new composite panels of steel, terra cotta, clear glass, and channel glass. (A previous design proposed brick for this surface in order to match the campus’ material palette, but officials scrapped the idea as uncoordinated with the existing structure, and inconsistent with the goals of the modernization.) The project will cost $185 million, about $85 million of which will come from UCLA, and about $100 million of which will come from a private fundraising campaign. That campaign has thus far taken in about $50 million. The arena will remain open for much of the renovation, with the exception of the 2011–2012 season, when teams will play elsewhere.

That’s what worries opponents of the Hollywood Park development. The housing market in Inglewood has bottomed out in the past year; and there are already more than 800 homes in foreclosure in the same zip code as the proposed development. Diane Becker, founder of the website savehollywoodpark.com, said she doesn’t understand how the city could allow the destruction of the landmark racetrack in light of what’s happened at Bay Meadows, contending that the mixed-use development will only add to urban sprawl. Becker and other supporters have been lobbying city hall, insisting that the destruction of the 71-year-old track will be an economic and cultural loss for Inglewood. Becker said she did not rule out future lawsuits.

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A few zoning issues remain for the Inglewood City Council, as well as proposed general land-use amendments. A final public hearing on July 8, after AN goes to press, is expected to resolve matters. Once finalize, Hollywood Park will remain open at least another year, or until construction on the development can actually begin.

COURTESY NBBJ
**Sod It All**

**Salt Fix**

This spring, plans were unveiled for the last major bayfront development along the San Francisco Peninsula in the last 50 years. Scottsdale-based developer DMB is successful in satisfying local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, a site currently covered by glittering salt ponds in Redwood City, could become a residential community of as many as 12,000 units.

But the 1,400-acre parcel of open land, a rarity in the narrow belt between San Francisco and San Jose, is also coveted by environmentalists, who dream of restoring it to tidal wetlands. The next few years will show how this struggle between opposing interests—contributing to a healthy bay or adding much-needed housing—plays out.

These two square miles of ponds next to the historic port of Redwood City have been used for salt evaporation since the turn of the last century. The surreal landscape is sandwiched between a gleaming office park at its bayside edge and one of the peninsula’s two major freeways. DMB, whose luxury projects include Tejon Mountain Village, a huge development north of Los Angeles, is proposing to transform the land in a joint venture with Cargill, an agricultural and industrial conglomerate that owns it.

The current DMB Redwood City Saltworks proposal calls for half of the property to be developed, about a third to be restored, and the remaining 20 percent designated for sports fields and open space. The plan calls for 8,000 to 12,000 townhouses and apartments (15 percent devoted to affordable housing), one million square feet of office space, retail shops, and community services that will include five schools and a fire station. The development will connect to public transportation via a ferry terminal, linking it with San Francisco and the East Bay, and a streetcar line to a Caltrain station about a mile away.

“It will repair a damaged landscape. The problem here, as in many places, is that the waterfront was turned over to industrial use. This will reconnect the city to the bay in a positive, ecological way,” said Peter Calhoun, a major proponent of New Urbanism, and known for designing a mixed-use community from the brownfield at Denver’s Stapleton Airport. The Redwood City project is the masterplan for the Redwood City project, and cites San Francisco’s Marina District as an example of the “walkable” community he envisions. The other two firms on the project are ROMA Design of San Francisco, which has worked on several urban waterfronts, and Baltimore-based Biohabitats, wetlands restoration specialists. The C-shaped development will connect with 460 acres of restored wetlands, using an approach that gradually transitions from the built to the natural environment. A levee running along the curve is designed to act as a shell with a tidal-fed lagoon between it and the mainland. On top of the levee, a three-mile trail will overlook the wetlands. With the closest two counties gaining an estimated 680,000 jobs by 2035, proponents say that the area’s notorious housing shortage will only worsen without this type of major development. But environmentalists criticize the site’s lack of infrastructure and its distance from downtown, as well as the wisdom of building on a low-lying tidal plain when sea levels are expected to rise dramatically.

“It’s not a transit-oriented site,” said Melissa Hppard, director of the local chapter of the Sierra Club. “And this is a huge opportunity to return the Bay to maximum health. We’re at the end of a trajectory that was started in the 1960s to reclaim as much of the bayfront as possible.” In fact, the state considered purchasing the land from Cargill in 2003 when it bought 16,500 acres of salt ponds for the largest wetlands restoration project on the West Coast, but its price tag was too high. Hoping to break ground in 2013, the developers kicked off the formal process by presenting the plan to the city council on May 12. They need rezoning approval, along with permits from state and federal agencies, who include the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) and the Army Corps of Engineers. Local residents, who have stopped other city-approved bay-side developments at the ballot box, may also weigh in. In the 1980s, voters rejected plans for Bair Island, now a national wildlife refuge; and in 2004, sent the Marina Shores project back to the drawing board.

The last major bayfront communities, Foster City and Redwood Shores, date back to the 1950s and ‘60s. They were not only massive landfill projects, but extensions of the low-density, car-centric suburbia on the peninsula. If the Redwood City proposal moves forward, it could give the area a new model to contemplate.

“We’re as conservative here as any small town in Kansas when it comes to anything near the shoreline,” said Will Travis, executive director of the BCDC. “But the lack of housing is our Achilles heel—we need to consider all options.”

**MARTINA DOLEJSOVA**

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Seattle-based LMN Architects working with Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership and DA Architects & Planners, the building has become an instant icon for the city. Right at the city’s waterfront edge but also overlooking nearby mountains, the convention center is unusual, said Warren Buckley, CEO and president of BC Pavilion Corporation, the group that owns the convention center: “It has the ability for someone to walk out of a meeting room and access the ocean.”

The steel-and-concrete structure is fronted by a giant glass curtain wall that captures these views.

The convention center was originally built as the Canada Pavilion for the 1986 World’s Fair. Now called the east wing, the sail-like, roofed structure connects to the new west wing via a pedestrian bridge. The VCC facilitates a total of 471,000 square feet of meeting halls and rooms, exhibit spaces, and ballrooms.

Both wings will become hosts for the broadcast and media center for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, providing the home base for announcers, scorekeepers, and journalists.

The space’s sustainability features are part of the building’s target for LEED Gold certification. Most visible is the green roof. Aside from being a visual centerpiece, it also acts as a natural habitat and insulator for sound and weather. Inside functions were like a “choreographed series of spaces shaped by the roof,” noted LMN Architects design partner Mark Reddington, revealing glimpses of the exterior surfaces from within. The geometry of the roof was created so portions that slope can align with the interior floors, added Reddington.

At the foundation of the building, a five-tiered concrete structure resembling bleachers, which dips into the ocean, was designed to provide a habitat for the marine life and ecology found along the shoreline, merging the building with the environment. A seawater heat pump system will be used to produce cooling for the building during the warmer season and heating during the cooler season, while keeping a backup heater based on steam for additional needs. About 80 percent of the building’s water (for toilet flushing and irrigation of the green roof will be recycled from treated sewage water produced by the building. Water from the harbor processed in an onsite desalination plant can also be used to make up for additional non-potable needs.

**MARTINA DOLEJSOVA**

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The new west wing of the Vancouver Convention Centre (VCC) not only provides 1.2 million square feet of new function and meeting spaces, but also an angular six-acre green roof, the largest non-commercial roof in North America. Designed by

**Bay Area Divided Over Major New Waterfront Community**

This spring, plans were unveiled for the last major bayfront development along the San Francisco Peninsula in the last 50 years. If Scottsdale-based developer DMB is successful in satisfying local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, a site currently covered by glittering salt ponds in Redwood City could become a residential community of as many as 12,000 units.

But the 1,400-acre parcel of open land, a rarity in the narrow belt between San Francisco Peninsula in the last 50 years. If Scottsdale-based developer DMB is successful in satisfying local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, a site currently covered by glittering salt ponds in Redwood City could become a residential community of as many as 12,000 units.

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MAKE, one of LA’s most ambitious young firms, doesn’t specialize in zoomy computer graphics or paper-architecture. They’re much more interested in structure, comfort, and getting things built.

“If it’s too complicated to understand, it’s probably too complicated to pull off,” said principal Jess Mullen-Carey, referring to the glut of architecture that gets proposed but never built in the area. His firm, on the other hand, has only had one project die on the vine in the past five years. “We don’t weigh our work down with stuff that will make it difficult to create.” He added, “You can tell me how sexy it is after it’s done.”

Lucky for them, their strategy is paying off, allowing them to create original but buildable projects across the city. “I count my blessings every day,” said Mullen-Carey. “If we’re any indicator, the good times might be coming back.” Since December, the firm has gotten more work than any year previously, including Bodega, a wine bar in Hollywood (the firm has also built spaces for Bodega in Pasadena and Santa Monica); a 25,000-square-foot remodel of 8840 Beverly, a significant mixed-use building in West Hollywood; and a 30,000-square-foot assembly hall in Lancaster.

Both from upstate New York, the firm’s partners, Carey and Bill Beutier, met ten years ago while working at Clive Wilkinson Architects in LA. They were both drawn to the area because it represented room for freedom and experimentation. And that sense of freedom has remained a focus, along with bending, folding, and curving steel, plaster, concrete, fiberglass, and, of course, completing as many buildings as possible. SL
**NEWS**

**PRESIDIO MUSEUM RIP**

On July 1 Gap founder Donald Fisher told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that he had decided to abandon his efforts to build a contemporary art museum at the Main Post of San Francisco’s Presidio, a National Historic Landmark. According to the Chronicle, Fisher and his family said they are open to looking outside the city for a site. This decision comes after a year of litigation and planning, during which time the project’s original supporters, including Fisher and his wife, Dr. Stephanie Kwolek, have faced strong opposition from environmentalists and preservationists.

**ENNIS SELLING OUT?**

On June 19 word got out that Frank Lloyd Wright’s famed Ennis House in Los Angeles, constructed in 1924, is on the market for $15 million, potentially removing it from the city’s architectural heritage. The house, located at 1311 College St., was designed by Wright for his brother-in-law, George Ennis, and is considered one of the architect’s most significant works. The sale has sparked a debate about the preservation of historic buildings.

** Мосийчук В.В.**

**LA’S MOCA LAYS OFF CURATOR OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN**

In yet another major set of moves, LA’s struggling Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) has laid off Brooke Hodge, curator of architecture and design. MOCA, struggling with a $15 million deficit, has restructured its financial situation by cutting 25 percent of its staff and eliminating several positions, including that of Brooke Hodge, who has been with the museum for over eight years. Hodge, whose resignation is effective immediately, said the decision was made due to financial difficulties and the need to cut costs. The museum has also announced plans to downsize its operations and reduce its programming.

**TOUGH CUTS**

**Tough Cuts**

MOCA, which has laid off Brooke Hodge, curator of architecture and design, and cancelled the long-awaited Morphosis exhibition, among other moves to help balance its budget.

According to a release on May 22, as part of a restructuring “needed to create a sustainable operation,” the museum has reduced its staff size by 17 positions, including two full-time and two part-time jobs. Along with a round of layoffs earlier in the year, MOCA has now let go of 40 staff members in 2009. These cuts include Hodge, who has been with the museum for over eight years, during which time she curated several major exhibitions. These included "What’s Shakin’ (2001), focusing on new architectural talent in LA; Frank O. Gehry: Work in Progress (2004), documenting the architect’s creative process and his work; and Skin and Bones (2006), exploring the intersection between fashion and architecture. The move has spurred anxiety in the Los Angeles design community, where questions remain about MOCA’s commitment to architecture. It’s a real disappointment,” said Brooks Alexander, curator of architecture and design at the Getty, which, despite cutting 25 percent of its own staff, remains one of precious few institutions with architecture departments in the city. The La County Museum of Art (LACMA), for instance, also does not have an architecture curator. “It seems like these departments are growing in other cities, so it’s a shame that LA will have so few resources,” Alexander said. “The architecture community loses in all of this,” added Winne de Wit, head of the Getty’s Department of Architecture. “Having multiple institutions dealing with modern architecture keeps us more creative.”

MOCA will maintain its MOCA Pacific Design Center space, which features rotating exhibitions on architecture and design—the show Ball Nogues Studio is still set for July—but the layoffs of Hodge leaves the museum with no apparent curator for those shows. MOCA spokesperson Lyn Winter told AN that the museum has no plans to hire a new architecture curator, but that it is “committed to its architecture and design program.” She added: “MOCA has a history of presenting architecture programming, and will continue to do so. With MOCA Pacific Design Center, MOCA will continue to have a more consistent architecture and design program than it did in its first 20 years.”

Other cost-cutting measures at MOCA include across-the-board cuts in salary, hours, and benefits, and the canceling of at least five exhibitions, which will be replaced by exhibitions featuring MOCA’s permanent collection.

The Morphosis show, said Hodge, was to be an update of the firm’s exhibition at the Pompidou Center, with models, videos, flythroughs, and a large installation created by the firm. It was scheduled for next February. According to MOCA, the measures, combined with the cuts made in January, will reduce the museum’s annual expenditures from $20 million to $15.5 million. The museum said the moves will help it end 2009 with a balanced budget, and that it has no plans for any future cuts. Earlier this year, MOCA was saved by an infusion of cash from patron Eli Broad, who promised to match lend-endowment funds up to $15 million. Jeremy Strick, the museum’s former director, stepped down in December. Strick had hired Hodge. MOCA’s new CEO is Charles E. Young, chancellor emeritus at UCLA. Hodge said she is now writing a blog for *The New York Times T* Magazine, writing about design for *Wallpaper* magazine, and pursuing several independent curatorial projects.

**SANTA CLARA 7, SF 0 continued from front page**

a special tax at local hotels. After an environmental impact report is completed in the fall, the plan will go to residents for a vote next spring.

The proposed site is a 15-acre overflow parking lot for the area’s amusement park, Great America. “The city plans for an entertainment center right in a county park, so a stadium fits very nicely into that concept,” said Ron Garratt, assistant city manager. He anticipates that the project, due for completion in 2014, will attract new hotel development on seven open acres near the stadium. The plans by HNTB, which envision the stadium as more of a multipurpose space, will go through a public design review in the next few months. They reflect the latest thinking in stadium design, replacing a section of the traditional tiered bowl with a stack of suites and club spaces. Instead of ringing the mezzanine level, the suites are all on one side. Four levels of club space beneath are designed to double as extra meeting space for the convention center across the street or for other events. On either side of the block of suites, large plazas open to surrounding views. The plazas can also be outfitted with temporary seating to expand capacity from 50,000 to 68,000.

With the clubhouse forming its facade, from a distance the stadium will resemble one of the area’s office complexes. The structure’s lack of distinction may work to its advantage in Santa Clara. Meanwhile, San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom has been sowing dissent, publicly remarking that Santa Clarans should be putting public money into schools rather than stadiums. In the game to get the 49ers, it’s now half-time, as Santa Clara prepares for its spring election.

**WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM**
In 1994, the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) adopted a masterplan for its Mission Bay campus that mandated simple, box-like volumes; articulation into base, body, and top; sand colors; and wiry screens around penthouse exhaust stacks. These are the strictures that Rafael Viñoly faced in his design for the school’s new Helen Diller Family Cancer Research Center. The test for the 163,000-square-foot structure wasn’t how to avoid gratuitous sculpture, but rather, how to come up with a winning design despite constraints that elsewhere on campus have led to a look that would characterize as postmodern Beaux Arts.

Viñoly’s understanding of architecture is “how to shape program with form, and not impose form on program.” His approach for this, his first building in Northern California, was to work from inside out, crafting its spaces as a research investigation. In the past, the systems-rich laboratory buildings of medical research buildings have been sealed, operating like expanded private offices. Of late, thinking in the field has acknowledged the benefits of both interdisciplinary collaboration and incidental encounters. While a cancer research building must include fixed laboratories, Viñoly carved most of its volume into a spatial flow. On the four floors of laboratories, practically the only rooms that don’t participate in the movement of people and material are the offices along the eastern wall. Circulation takes up the large central atrium. Staircases cascade up and down the five-story space, leading to wrap-around corridors. From below, the monochrome staircases resemble the floating hulls of ships. Laterally, the grid-like, filled volume drew my eyes to a three-story sheet of glass and its panorama of the San Francisco skyline. The color-coded, wrap-around corridors open onto exterior terraces and internal gathering spaces, and access elevator shafts and meeting rooms. They morph into cogged paths that lead past refrigerators, high-aspect ratio vessels, and rotating-wall bioreactors into the main event: the promenade through the laboratories, housed in one of the building’s two L-shaped wings.

On the window side off the promenade, the laboratory alcoves swell into a continuous corridor, with row upon row of white-coated researchers, microscopes, centrifuges, racks of pipettes, and computer terminals. The transparency between work areas is marked by extending the curved ceiling higher into a clerestory, and dissolving partitions by routing conduits for electricity, gases, liquids, and other utilities through the same posts and beams that shape the alcoves and provide support for their shelves and tables. Fascinated with the cancer researchers and test environments, Viñoly seems to have interpreted the laboratory spaces as the architectural expression of the dishes and tubes in which cancer research takes place.

Unfortunately, the center is not open to the public, and most of us must satisfy ourselves with the skin of the stone, metal, and glass in which it rests. Here elsewhere in Mission Bay, design guidelines have obstructed the possibility of architecture communicating what takes place inside. Instead we’re presented with facades differentiated for the sake of differentiation. Mandated setbacks on the north-ern side, the campus’ gateway from downtown San Francisco, force a bit of variety out of the stolid mass, and result in a momentarily arresting sequence of projecting and receding planes of glass, travertine, and painted steel and aluminum. At ground level, because Mission Bay promotes nonmotorized services and their vents and blank walls block connectivity between street and building. The gateway gesture is hardly noticeable at the northeast corner, where the letters “UCSF” have been carved out of the travertine; it’s that uninspiring.

Above, we’re treated to more travertine walls and more strip windows with sunshades, more thick-chested facade expression that reflects the university’s quixotic and failed belief that design guidelines can ele-vate anonymous, bulky buildings into the realm of significant architecture.
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WHERE THE INDUSTRY MEETS
For These New Interiors, Right Angles Are a No Go

TO CATCH A CURVE

BY SAM LUBELL

In their interiors work, many California architects, rebelling against the purity and rectilinear lines brought on by modernism's return to the mainstream, are instead throwing curves. This isn’t merely a stylistic change. It’s also a result of new materials, new construction techniques, and the maturation of computer technologies (many of them pioneered by West Coast architects like Greg Lynn) that allow for more adventurous milling, glass fabrication, and steel work.

As one of the practitioners, Thom Faulders, points out, the technology has matured to the point that just using it is no longer enough to impress.

Not that it’s simple to create these sophisticated, loopy forms. For his Deformhouse in San Francisco, Faulders had to work with a separate firm that specialized in computer milling, and other firms run up against other challenges.

“It’s expensive,” said Alice Kimm of John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects, who recently completed a curvy renovation of the Graduate Aerospace labs at Caltech. “You have to mix the computer-created forms with some traditional techniques,” such as “tweaked” drywall and conventional framing and carpentry.

But according to architect Patrick Tighe, the price has come down significantly in recent years, and the number of contractors who can carry off more freeform work has risen dramatically. Kimm agrees, pointing out that while contractors used to run from such projects, they rushed to outbid each other for her complicated Caltech job.

Here, then, are some of the grooviest and curviest explorations into this new freeform frontier.
LA firm John Friedman Alice Kimm were able to expand what was originally intended to be a seismic renovation of Caltech’s Graduate Aerospace Laboratories (right, top and bottom) into a transformative project, with a sense of invention that matches the spirit of a department all about exploration and movement. The project includes a new lobby, new labs and classrooms, meeting spaces, and new exhibition areas, covered with brightly-colored walls and ceilings with energizing angles, curves, and glass openings.

The firm created powerful new graphics and curving surfaces out of computer-milled and laser jet-cut materials like 3-form resin, drywall with steel framing, felt over laser-cut wood, and perforated steel. These weave in and out of the three-story, early-1900s building’s exposed concrete frame. The warped surfaces define spaces and generate a sense of movement. The lobby’s ceiling ribbon twists and turns like a mysterious pathway. And a large conference room on the second floor features a ceiling of curved, sound-absorbing felt shaped to mimic the Karman Vortex, a pattern of swirling vortices discovered by Caltech professor Theodore von Karman. The firm also designed the glass, acrylic, and steel conference table, with its visible compartments to house many of the department’s treasures.

Los Angeles’ mega mixed-use downtown development LA Live recently opened its second phase—including a glitzy new plaza hemmed by retail—to mixed reviews in the design community. But amid the chain restaurants and flashing signs, there’s one sure architectural hit: the Conga Room (facing page and above, left and right), a salsa club once located in Hollywood, that draws hundreds of sweaty dancers and partygoers every night. In fact the place is so crowded that its design, focusing on the ceiling, is really the only thing you can see. Made of triangular fiberglass panels (inspired by the triangular salsa step diagram and created completely by computer), the glowing creation curves and floats its way around the space, starting on the bottom level and tunnelling its way through a hole linking the floors. In some places, the triangles cluster in contained bits, resembling little pyramids or flowers; in others they’re larger and more sinuous, resembling rippling water. The entire project measures 14,000 square feet, including a glassed-in restaurant, three different bars—one has a wall cut out with stylized butterflies, another looks like a split-open papaya—patio seating, and a swank VIP lounge. Surreal/graffiti-style paintings and sculptures by local artist Sergio Arau are another highlight.

BELZBERG ARCHITECTS
CONGA ROOM
LOS ANGELES
Santa Monica–based Moving Picture Company (MPC) creates incredible visual effects and animations for feature films, TV, and advertising (including such recent films as Angels & Demons, Night at The Museum 2, Watchmen, and Slumdog Millionaire).

The edgy company chose equally edgy LA architect Patrick Tighe to design their new 8,100-square-foot post-production facility, located in an office building in Santa Monica. The project (right) explores MPC's expertise in color and light manipulation, combining undulating plaster walls (created in Maya, formed over a steel frame) along with abstract patterns (water-jet cut into aluminum panels) derived from computer-manipulated animations of the space.

“We tried to tell a story with the architecture,” said Tighe. The curving walls, hovering above the floors, are often embedded with colorful metallic LED light portals that change color via computer program. This sinuous spine weaves its way through the entire project, which includes editing facilities, conference rooms, and offices, while its soffit serves as an armature for electrical and cable systems.

The top floor's ceiling and walls are composed of wavy, computer-milled MDF panels cut into individual pieces fitted together. The process was fairly simple: Faulders instituted a set of rules for the pieces (which are all unique), and one of his assistants created the forms in Vector Works. “It’s like an algorithm carried out by humans,” said Faulders, describing the process. The house’s backyard patio is formed from hundreds of Marine Plywood pieces set onto a fiberglass grating, designed to resemble a vortex in which all of the space’s energy appears to be sucked into one spot, containing the only tree. Faulders’ team gave their 2D designs to a production team from Studio Under Manufacture (SUM), which translated them into 3D parts in Rhino. While these mind-bending compositions are computer driven, it still takes old-fashioned and time-consuming handcraft to place and cement into the puzzle.
kitchen

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Once it was possible to look at a kitchen—the knotty pine cabinets and avocado-colored appliances, or stainless steel counters and chef’s eight-burner stove—and get an instant read on the inhabitant’s origins and aspirations. Today, kitchen design options are far more sophisticated and varied, but certain traits persist, especially between American and European brands. And even though the working parts of both are made to the same high standards, European—and especially Italian—styling still tends toward the sleekly modern. But domestic designs are fast trying to satisfy a growing market in America. JENNIFER KRICHELS grills manufacturers on whose kitchens are the hottest.

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| **1** | **DWR**  
San Francisco–based designer Nilus de Matran created the new modular and portable kitchen system from Design Within Reach. It comes in three finishes.  
[www.dwr.com](http://www.dwr.com) |
| **2** | **HENRYBUILT**  
Henrybuilt's Workspace Component Group is a backsplash system that maximizes usable space between the base, counter, and wall-mounted elements of its designs.  
[www.henrybuilt.com](http://www.henrybuilt.com) |
| **3** | **PUREKITCHEN**  
Purekitchen works with architects and designers to create kitchens using a range of sustainable materials. Founded in 2004, the company specializes in LEED-eligible designs in the New York City area.  
[www.purekitchen.com](http://www.purekitchen.com) |
| **4** | **BAZZÉO**  
Sustainable cabinet manufacturer Bazzéo is creating the first internet-enabled kitchen with hardware and network applications by diginet developer Fugoo in partnership with Microsoft.  
[www.bazzeo.com](http://www.bazzeo.com) |
| **5** | **EUNEOS**  
Based in Reston, Virginia, and soon opening a location in New York, Euneos was founded by German-American architect Roland Broll to bring custom European-style cabinet designs to the domestic market.  
[www.euneos.com](http://www.euneos.com) |
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<td>1. <strong>BOFFI</strong></td>
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<td>Italian manufacturer Boffi has added the larger K1 single-block kitchen island—with a sliding top to hide cooking components—to its line of consolidated kitchens designed by Norbert Wangen.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.boffi.com">www.boffi.com</a></td>
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<td>2. <strong>VALCUCINE</strong></td>
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<td>The newest Valcucine Artematica recyclable glass kitchen features customizable inlaid art with the original model’s recyclable aluminum frame, which reduces cabinet weight, and wear on hinges.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.valcucina.com">www.valcucina.com</a></td>
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<td>3. <strong>ARCLINEA</strong></td>
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<td>Antonio Citterio designed Italian manufacturer Arclinea’s stone, larch, and stainless steel kitchen with ceiling-mounted shelving that can be fitted with lighting, an indoor miniature greenhouse, and food warmer.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.arclinea.com">www.arclinea.com</a></td>
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<td>4. <strong>BULTHAUP</strong></td>
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<td>The b3 kitchen by Germany-based Bulthaup is inspired by Donald Judd’s designs and features new tall wall units with sideways-sliding doors and a seamless finish.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bulthaup.com">www.bulthaup.com</a></td>
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<td>5. <strong>IKEA</strong></td>
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<td>Orange and yellow are the newest door color options in Ikea’s RUBRIK APPLÅUD line, which fits with its AKURUM built-in kitchens.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ikea.com">www.ikea.com</a></td>
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<td>6. <strong>SCHIFFINI</strong></td>
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<td>Italy’s first industrial producer of modular kitchens, Schiffini recently released Giuliano Giaroli’s new G.One kitchen, made with 100-percent-recycled, waterproof wood fiber panels.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.schiffini.com">www.schiffini.com</a></td>
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<td>7. <strong>LEICHT</strong></td>
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<td>German manufacturer Leicht’s Paneele 40 system adds a design element to kitchen walls while concealing cupboard space, outlets, and lighting when not in use.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.leicht.com">www.leicht.com</a></td>
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<td>8. <strong>SCAVOLINI</strong></td>
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<td>For their first-ever kitchen design, Perry King and Santiago Miranda created the Scenery program for Italian manufacturer Scavolini, which distributes its products worldwide.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.scavolini.com">www.scavolini.com</a></td>
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<td>9. <strong>ARMANI</strong></td>
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<td>Created in collaboration with Dada, Armani/Casa’s Calyx is its second kitchen system, featuring black stone countertops and interior surfaces clad in silver fabric and glass.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.armanicasa.com">www.armanicasa.com</a></td>
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Kevin Henry spent much of his 25-year career bringing European cabinetry to the United States, but now his job is promoting one of this country’s youngest cabinetry manufacturers, Bazzèo. The Secaucus, N.J., company bills itself as the first eco-centric U.S. manufacturer of contemporary cabinetry, producing kitchens with wood from managed and sustainable forests and non-toxic paints, lacquers, and veneers.

For Henry, Bazzèo’s executive vice president, the biggest difference between American kitchen companies and their European counterparts is a matter of range: fewer styles but complete customization. “Since World War II, factories in Europe have been working off of the production model,” he said. “American manufacturing comes from the shop-built model, where the factory is based on the individual order and not the production order.”

To old-guard European kitchen manufacturers, flexibility lies in the broad range of designs. “The necessity of always having in production not only traditional but also contemporary allows Europeans to be more flexible in manufacturing,” said Francesco Farina, CEO of Scavolini USA. Scavolini, which began as a small workshop in 1962, has been Italy’s largest kitchen manufacturer since 1982. While Americans focus on upgrading existing designs, usually with a traditional bent, “the Italian designer never ceases to consider experimenting,” according to Farina. Italian designs maintain their reputation for pushing boundaries with colors, materials, and shapes, resulting in almost laboratory-like settings that Americans tend to think of as exclusively modern.

Except in cities like New York. Stacey Jattuso, a project manager and interior designer at New York-based BSKK Architects, said that American kitchen programs don’t get much of a reaction from her clients when presented next to European models. She said her New York clientele wants adventurous designs, and American companies are not known to be risk-takers. “It’s not that the demand isn’t there, it’s that the desire isn’t being met with the products. The European kitchen companies typically have nicer designs, in terms of aesthetics, not necessarily in terms of craft.” Jattuso added that big European manufacturers’ reluctance to change the size of their modules does make U.S. fabricators more appealing to her, as does the environmental sustainability of buying regionally. She said that Henrybuilt, founded in 2001 on the premise of bridging a gap between inflexible European designs and the lack of contemporary American kitchens, is one U.S. company that holds its own against Europeans. One of the largest misconceptions about this country’s manufacturers is that they lag behind Europe in the area of craftsmanship, but from handmade cabinets to hinges available at Home Depot, domestic products have a reputation in the design community for equal or better quality, if not for high design.

Contemporary American kitchen manufacturers are less focused on replicating Europe’s styles and more concerned with finding their own niche. Outside of urban centers, manufacturers are still trying to evaluate the market for contemporary kitchens. Though nearly 90 percent of manufacturers still produce traditional designs, more and more are introducing clean lines for a changing audience more attuned to modern styling through the surfeit of shelter magazines and Ikeas over the last decade. American manufacturers know something else about the American buyer: They love gadgets. Bazzèo is currently talking with Microsoft and an iPod docking company about integrating more non-cooking technology into their programs, and the American appliance market is offering more high-tech cookers, washers, and vent hoods that were previously available only in Europe.

Unexpectedly, the current economic downturn may help some American manufacturers to mature and succeed more quickly. Architects and developers have been especially focused on U.S. companies recently as they try to stimulate the economy at home while looking for ways to reduce shipping costs and waiting times.

The national industry’s recognition of a demand for contemporary design is only about 50 years overdue. As an architect recently pointed out to Henry at this year’s ICFF, Europe’s kitchen designs grew out of the Case Study Houses of the 1950s and ’60s in California, while kitchens here took a turn for the traditional. “He said to me, ‘I look at these kitchens and it’s like reclaiming our birthright.’ It’s so great to recapture that system. More than once I’ve had Italians and Germans asking where our product is available.”

Jennifer Krichefs is AN’s Special Projects Editor.
To meet the needs of homeowners wanting to fit a high-tech kitchen range into an existing cabinet opening, Italian appliance manufacturer Bertazzoni has expanded its Dual Fuel line with a 30-inch model. Available in stainless steel and eight automotive-grade colors, the oven has eight cooking functions and a triple-layer door designed to prevent heat loss.

www.bertazzoni-italia.com

Hovering discreetly above the cooking range, Elica’s Wave island hood has three speed levels and remote and touch-sensitive controls. The patented Evolution air-treatment system is integrated into a small steel cylinder, ensuring that a clunky vent hood won’t ever upstage the kitchen cabinets again.

www.elica.com

With a 22.6-cubic-foot capacity, the capacious new Electrolux French Door models also feature freshly designed hardware, lighting, and glass shelving. The Wave-Touch control panel fades to an uncluttered display once selections are made; the IQ-Touch model is available for those who prefer options to be ever visible.

www.electroluxappliances.com

British architect John Pawson’s new line of cookware for Demeyere recently became available in the United States, adding a top-pedigree option for pots and pans. The pans’ 7-PlyMaterial comes in several thicknesses to suit a range of cooking methods, and TriplInduc material allows the cookware to be used on all types of heat sources.

www.demeyere.be

An under-sink, water-filtering faucet from Grohe has separate waterways for filtered and unfiltered water, ensuring that purified water has no contact with the faucet’s metal parts. An LED display built into the handle blinks when the filter cartridge should be replaced.

www.grohe.com

Without any visible display panel when the dishwasher is closed, the DF 260/261 dishwasher from Gaggenau is available in stainless steel or aluminum-backed glass door panels, or can be configured to match custom cabinetry. Its noise level is a mere 40 decibels, so a red light projected onto the floor indicates when it is in use.

www.gaggenau.com
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| 2 | APPALACHIAN TRADITIONS  
COLUMBIA FOREST PRODUCTS | Based on the principles of biomimicry, plank-matched veneers from Columbia Forest Products use soy proteins modified to perform similarly to byssal threads, the proteins secreted by mussels to make them adhere to underwater surfaces. The resulting range of UF-free plywood products has strong adhesion and better waterproofing than UF products. | www.columbiaforestproducts.com |
| 3 | BIO-GLASS COVERINGS ETC | This flooring, counter-top, and decorative surface material is made from durable layers of compressed glass that is 100 percent recyclable. Available in 110-by-49-inch slabs, the material contains no colorants or additives, and can be thrown into the recycling bin with glass bottles when removed. | www.coveringsetc.com |
| 4 | KIREI BOARD KIREI | Millwork panels from Kirei are manufactured from reclaimed sorghum straw, poplar wood bonding layers, and KR Bond, an adhesive with no added urea formaldehyde. Compatible with most commercial finishing materials and fasteners, the lightweight boards are available in 12.0-by-71.7-inch and 35.8-by-71.7-inch panels. | www.kireiusa.com |
| 5 | TREKKING NOVABELL | Tolerant of moisture and extreme temperatures, Trekking is a new floor and wall cladding made with 40 percent recycled ceramic content. The tiles are pressed at more than 6,400 PSI and fired at 2,200 degrees Fahrenheit to create a durable anti-slip surface recommended for use in interior and exterior applications. | www.novabell.com |
| 6 | ECO COSENTINO | The world’s largest manufacturer of natural quartz, Cosentino introduces a new material containing 75 percent post-consumer and post-industrial recycled content and 25 percent quartz and stone scrap bound by corn oil-based resin. Large slabs are available in 63-by-128-inch pieces; tiles are 12, 18, or 24 inches square in three thicknesses. | www.ecobycosentino.com |
| 7 | SUBERRA ECO SUPPLY CENTER | Virginia-based ECO Supply Center recently began importing high-density blocks of leftover cork material from Portugal to be fabricated into naturally antimicrobial and heat- and water-resistant slabs available in 1 ¼-by-25-by-36-inch sections that can be cut, sanded, and seamed with traditional woodworking tools. | www.ecosupplycenter.com |
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JULY

WEDNESDAY 15
LECTURE
Peter Cook
7:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Deborah Butterfield
GALLERY PAULA ANGILM
14 Geary St., San Francisco
www.gallerypaulaangilm.com

EVENT
Summer Celebration of Wine, Food and Design
5:30 p.m.
Alno San Francisco by European Kitchen Design
243 Brannan St., San Francisco
www.aiasf.org

THURSDAY 16
EXHIBITION OPENING
The Golden Graves of Ancient Egypt
The Chimae of Arezzo
The J. Paul Getty Villa
1785 Pacific Coast Hwy., Pacific Palisades
www.getty.edu

MontereyTOWN: Kevin Miller
Monterey Museum of Art
568 Pacific Street, Monterey
www.montereyart.org

EVENT
Dreaming of India: A Cultural Block Party
6:30 p.m.
Craft and Folk Art Museum
5814 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.cafam.org

FRIDAY 17
EVENT
Art Explosion Open Studios Body Language: figurative art speaks
7:00 p.m.
Art Explosion Gallery
2425 17th St., San Francisco
www.artexplosionstudios.com

SATURDAY 18
EXHIBITION OPENING
Clayton Brothers
Jumbo Fruit
Patrick Painter
2525 Michigan Ave. #82, Santa Monica
www.patrickpainter.com

SUNDAY 19
EXHIBITION OPENING
Sampedro Studios
The Valentine-Adelson Collection at the Hammer
The Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

EVENT
Art Center Car Classic:
By Air, Land & Sea
10:00 a.m.
Art Center College of Design
1700 Lida St., Pasadena
www.artcenter.edu

WEDNESDAY 22
EXHIBITION OPENING
Material Witness
Berkley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
2625 Durant Ave., Berkeley
www.bampfa.berkeley.edu

THURSDAY 23
EVENT
New Original Works Festival 2009
Through August 8
Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater
631 West 2nd St., Los Angeles
www.redcat.org

FRIDAY 24
EXHIBITION OPENING
Vera Lutter
Gagosian Gallery
456 North Camden Dr., Beverly Hills
www.gagosian.com

SATURDAY 25
LECTURE
Robert Brasier
Nature and Light: The Impressionsists
10:00 a.m.
Palm Springs Art Museum
101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs
www.psmuseum.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Claire Falkenstein
Louis Stern Fine Arts
1002 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood
www.louissternfinearts.com

Not New Work:
Vincent Fecteau Selects from the Collection
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

sound.
At the Schindler House
2009
Mak Center for Art and Architecture
816 North Kings Rd., West Hollywood
www.makcenter.org

SUNDAY 26
EXHIBITION OPENING
Feathered Edge: A New Installation by
Bat-Mousks Studio
Pacific Design Center
8878 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood
www.pacificdesigncenter.com

EXHIBITION OPENING
Capturing Nature’s Beauty: Three Centuries of French Landscapes
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr., Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

WEDNESDAY 29
LECTURE
Eric Owen Moss and Jeffrey Kipnis
7:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc Gallery
980 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

THURSDAY 30
FILM
Art & Copy (Dough Priey, 2008), 86 min.
8:00 p.m.
Orange County Museum of Art
850 San Clemente Dr., Newport Beach
www.ocma.net

FRIDAY 31
EVENT
Car-Free Fridays
Los Angeles area
www.la-bike.org

AUGUST
SATURDAY 1
EXHIBITION OPENING
Claude Collins-Strakowsky
The Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

SUNDAY 2
WITH THE KIDS
International Family Festival
12:00 p.m.
The Bowers Museum
2002 North Main St., Santa Ana
www.bowers.org

WEDNESDAY 5
LECTURE
Anthony Vidler
Schindler/Neutra
5:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc
980 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Francoise Isaly
Inner/Outer Circles
Artemo Gallery
11 West Anapamu St., Santa Barbara
www.artmonogallery.com

THURSDAY 6
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
“From the Spoon to the City”:
Objects by Architects from LACMA’s Collection
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
www.lacma.org

Super Flat | Reloading the Contemporary Print
Braunstein/Quay Gallery
430 Clementina St., San Francisco
www.bpquaygallery.com

FRIDAY 7
EXHIBITION OPENING
Sensate: Bodies and Design
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

SATURDAY 8
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Cathie Block
Don Fritz
Jean Poncea
Billy Shire Fine Arts
5790 Washington Blvd., Culver City
www.billyshirefinearts.com

SUNDAY 9
EXHIBITION OPENING
Vera Lutter
Armony Center for the Arts
145 North Raymond Ave., Pasadena
www.armoryarts.org

EVENT
Tour of the Building and Gardens
11:00 a.m.
Oakland Museum of California
1000 Oak St., Oakland
www.museumca.org

WITH THE KIDS
Sizzling Summer Fun!
11:00 a.m.
Orange County Museum of Art
850 San Clemente Dr., Newport Beach
www.ocma.net

TUESDAY 11
EVENT
Advanced Framing: Architects & Engineers Collaborating for Resource & Energy Efficiency
6:30 p.m.
Art Experience
130 Sutter St., San Francisco
www.aiasf.org

THURSDAY 13
EVENT
Downtown LA Art Walk
12:00 p.m.
Various locations in downtown Los Angeles
www.downtownartwalk.com

SATURDAY 15
EVENT
69th Annual Nisei Week Festival
Through August 23
Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo district
www.niseiweek.org

SUNDAY 16
EXHIBITION OPENING
Stepped in History:
The Art of Tea
10:00 a.m.
Owens Museum of Art
1200 Polk St., San Francisco
www.owensumuseum.org

EVENT
Oakland on Two Wheels
10:00 a.m.
Oakland Museum of California
1000 Oak St., Oakland
www.museumca.org

SATURDAY 22
EXHIBITION OPENING
Roy Nachum
Palm Springs Art Museum
101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs
www.psmuseum.org

Michael Markowsky: The Dynamic Landscape
Armony Center for the Arts
545 N. Raymond Avenue, Pasadena
Through August 30

Pasadena artist Michael Markowsky’s collages of time and space cultivate a decade of work inspired by moving through landscapes—in his case, quite literally. The paint-
ing, drawings, and videos in this solo exhibit reflect the artist’s unusual method of drawing while traveling on trains, boats, or buses, and even strapped to the roof of a moving car. The images here grew out of 90 drawings made during the artist’s recent train trip across Canada, which he then used as the basis for works full of flowing, rippling forms. “While the spaces I create are recognizable, they’re not actually inhabitable,” Markowsky told AN. “They are fantas-tical, combined from different times and places.” Many of the paintings were completed at a public courtyard in Pasadena, where Markowsky turned out one canvas per day over the course of a month. His off-the-cuff conversations with passers-by, Markowsky believes, left an imprint on the work. While earlier scenes conveyed a weighty sense of movement, the paintings here are refined, even joyful snapshots of a world in motion.

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THE ARCHITECT’S NEWSPAPER JULY 15, 2009

DIARY
Expanding Architecture is an upbeat and impressive compendium, its almost 300 pages crowded with texts and images of works dedicated to activist design practices. As described by co-editor Bryan Bell, the emerging public-interest architecture movement seeks “to play an active role in responding to social challenges.” Located in big cities and small towns in North America, Europe, and Asia, the work is animated by the conviction that good design and good deeds are mutually reinforcing.

Expanding Architecture alternates between polemical essays that articulate the need for design activism, to straightforward accounts of design/research projects. In general, the polemics are the least satisfying, with authors too often lapsing into generalized rhetoric. In “An Architecture of Change,” Jose L.S. Gamez and Susan Rogers call for “infiltrating and dismantling academies” to bring about a “radical transformation in education...a new school for a new school of thought.” But they leave this large challenge dangling, with no specifics as to how academies, so resistant to even incremental change, would be dismantled, or what the new schools would teach, how they would be structured, etc. Absent the details—in which shrewd observers have located both God and the devil—this sort of revolutionary stance seems simply too easy, yet another vision of a better, fairer day that’s somehow always tomorrow.

In another chapter, Kathleen Doran and Deane Evans deplore the undeniable fact that low-income housing is often badly designed and argue knowledgeably that funders, developers, and architects could do better, at no extra cost, if at every stage the process were informed by higher aspirations and greater design literacy. Yet the essay relies too comfortably on polarities that feel dated. In recent years, the design gap between affordable (or “workforce,” to use the latest euphemism) and market-rate housing has narrowed, and not only due to exemplary projects by offices like Pugh + Scarpa, Koning Eizenberg, David Baker, Rob Wellington Quigley, and others, but by the logic of the street grid. There, he attempted to establish a central point using a grid of curves. He extruded the exterior walkway, which is defined by the logic of the street grid, into his intentionally bowed columns.

The polemics are the least satisfying, with authors too often lapsing into generalized rhetoric. In “An Architecture of Change,” Jose L.S. Gamez and Susan Rogers call for “infiltrating and dismantling academies” to bring about a “radical transformation in education...a new school for a new school of thought.” But they leave this large challenge dangling, with no specifics as to how academies, so resistant to even incremental change, would be dismantled, or what the new schools would teach, how they would be structured, etc. Absent the details—in which shrewd observers have located both God and the devil—this sort of revolutionary stance seems simply too easy, yet another vision of a better, fairer day that’s somehow always tomorrow.
BATTING ORDER continued from page 25
At the SCI-Arc gallery, Moss’ object returns to the Waxer project and mimics the minimal geometry of that location. The surprise is the piercing curve, breaking that order, and its rather interesting ability to add to the gravitational pull already found in its scale to the room. The curvatures facilitate an exchange of axis, rethinking the concepts of a linear dimensionality.

While intended to re-examine the orthodoxy of the urban and architectural grid, this striking installation doesn’t inherently spur any dialogue. It instead draws the conversation to the work’s skilled exercise in spatial manipulation. It is an installation indicative of Moss’ pursuits within the past decade to form a structure that harvests a centripetal force in a city known for the lack of one. Here he may have found an answer: a structure that harvests a centripetal gravitational pull already found in its location. The surprise is the piercing curve, breaking that order, and its rather interesting ability to add to the gravitational pull already found in its scale to the room. The curvatures facilitate an exchange of axis, rethinking the concepts of a linear dimensionality.

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Why LA Needs a Compelling Showcase for Architecture

When LA’s Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) was founded 30 years ago, it was directed by Richard Koshalek, who had been trained as an architect and wanted to show the work of architects alongside top contemporary artists. Major exhibitions on the Case Study House program, Louis Kahn, Franklin Israel, and late modernism were enthusiastically received, but Koshalek had to struggle constantly with his board, which wanted to focus exclusively on art. Now, years later, it appears that the board has won. Brooke Hodge—the imaginative curator of an exciting Gehry retrospective, as well as the more recent Skin and Bones (on the interplay between the abundance of creative design talent in LA and their work is marginalized or ignored. There is a huge disconnect between the abundance of creative design talent in LA and the timidity or philistinism of the client base. Too often, institutions and public authorities settle for the second-rate. In San Francisco, the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake spurred a dramatic renewal. In LA, the 1994 Northridge earthquake produced little but bureaucratic fumbling. Walt Disney Concert Hall was nearly aborted, taking 14 years to realize, and the public realm has stagnated. Work by major firms, including Morphosis’ Caltrans, Rafael Moneo’s Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, and Coop Himmelblau’s School for the Performing Arts, were seriously compromised. USC is an architecture-free zone for which George Lucas’ Spanish revival film school is a perfect fit. Tepid contextualism is the theme at UCLA, and the fundraising campaign for the $185 million makeover of Pauley Pavilion makes no mention of the original architect, Welton Becket. Frank Gehry and Thom Mayne have won the Pritzker Prize and international acclaim but have secured few commissions on their home base, and other talented firms have had a tough struggle—even before the collapse of the market. Koshalek had the vision to expand the mandate of MOCA to foster enlightened architectural selections behind the scenes, and to bring Art Center out of its ivory tower. For that last achievement he was hounded from his post, and is now directing the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C. The munificence of Eli Broad highlights the lack of philanthropy among other super-rich Angelinos. It’s unhealthy to become dependent on a single patron in the arts. In contrast to other great cities, LA is an archipelago of self-absorbed neighborhoods with little sense of the larger whole. What’s needed is inspiring leadership—of the kind that has spurred a revival of architectural excellence and adventurousness in Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, and even the depressed cities of Ohio. It could be the mayor, the archbishop, university chancellors, CEOs of major companies, or the head of the school board. In every one of those areas, LA falls short. A vibrant showcase, stirring public debate, exhibiting and promoting the best architecture, cannot make up for an absence of civic pride, enlightened clients, and generous patronage. But it can alert the public to what is missing. A+D can set a lead and play the role of catalyst. MOCA director Michael Govan is passionate about architecture, and might be persuaded to make architecture a part of his mandate—as it is at MoMA, SFMOMA, the Chicago Art Institute, and other landmark institutions. The Hammer’s Prouvé exhibit and Lautner retrospective were big hits, and director Ann Philbin has repeatedly demonstrated her commitment to architectural excellence. The Getty now has a department of architecture, acquiring major archives, and its deputy curator Chris Alexander recently convened (with AN) a meeting of 50 curators and activists to encourage them to communicate effectively and form the Southern California Architecture and Design Consortium. All of these initiatives can advance the agenda. The fragmentation of LA could be turned to advantage if its diverse and scattered institutions were to make common cause. MAK, the LA Forum, the Italian Cultural Institute, and a score of others have distinct perspectives that could enrich the public discourse. A provocative exhibition or speaker or an introduction to the visceral experience of a great building can provide a moment of revelation and enrich the culture of a city that badly needs a lift.
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