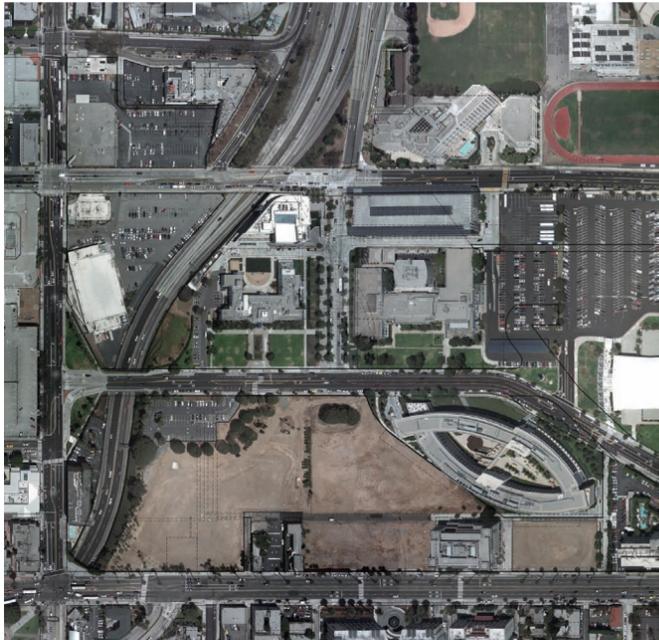


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COURTESY CITY OF SANTA MONICA

FIELD OPERATIONS TO DESIGN MAJOR CIVIC PARK IN SANTA MONICA

Notions of Green

James Corner and Field Operations have beaten out formidable competitors, including Gehry Partners and Peter Walker, to design Santa Monica's new Palisades Garden Walk and Town Square. The high-profile project will **continued on page 5**



COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN LA GET BOOST THROUGH BUILDING

LA Trade Tech's new administration building.

BENNY CHAN/FOTOWORX

ALL TOGETHER NOW

The opening of two new buildings at the Los Angeles Trade Technical College earlier this year marked the emergence of a thoroughly improved and enlarged campus in downtown LA. For 40 years, not a single new structure had been built at the first school in the 80-year-old Los Angeles Community College District. But the new Student Services/Administration Building and the Technology Classroom Building, **continued on page 4**

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PORT OF SF

BIG PLANS FOR SF'S PIER 70

SHIPPING NEWS

In April, the Port Commission of San Francisco will issue a request for qualifications to redevelop Pier 70, one of the city's last major pieces of waterfront. The plan for the 65-acre site south of Mission Bay is to restore its historic buildings but maintain its working industrial shipyard, the oldest in continuous operation in the U.S. "Once upon a time, there were 30,000 workers here banging out ships," said David Beaupre, the Port's senior waterfront planner. "We want to reactivate this area at that level."

It's the second time in **continued on page 3**



HOW THE RITZ AT L.A. LIVE STACKS UP. SEE PAGE 6

RYAN GOBUTY

CA'S GENERAL PLANS GET MORE PRESCRIPTIVE

SPECIFICALLY SPEAKING

In California, general plans define where growth should happen and what types of land use should be permitted in cities. But despite the "general" in their name, the plans are assuming an increasing amount of prescriptive detail, especially in terms of urban design. Cities like Los Angeles, Long Beach, Santa Monica, and Sacramento are taking **continued on page 10**



COURTESY BCJ/PIXELCRAFT

BOLD STATEMENT CHOSEN FOR NEWPORT BEACH CIVIC CENTER

SWEPT AWAY

Orange County's Newport Beach is a resort town known for its marinas and its political conservatism. But when it held an open competition for its new civic center, city leaders ended up picking an unconventional design by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson.

"We were the only out-of-town firm on the shortlist, and we guessed that they might prefer something a bit more conservative, so we thought it was a long shot," said Greg Mottola, a principal in the **continued on page 4**

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THE LIST

In mid-March, the website Curbed SF revealed a list that purportedly named six of the eight architecture firms shortlisted for SFMOMA's planned 225,000-square-foot expansion. The roundup included well-known players like David Adjaye, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Steven Holl, OMA, Snøhetta, and Renzo Piano. As we point out in Eavesdrop this month, the list may not even be accurate. But whether or not it is (the official shortlist isn't due until late this spring), it has provoked serious discussion about who should be considered for such a major cultural commission.

The opportunity to design a museum addition in one of the world's great cities does not come along often. And the importance of the project means that focused attention on the selection process is merited. That said, the first criterion for any competition should be architectural excellence and the capability to skillfully execute a complicated, high-profile task. All the architects on this list could pull the project off effectively. But there are other factors to take into consideration if the goal is to draw attention to the city's cultural strengths and status. And this list does not accomplish that.

To begin with, why not include at least a few local firms? Despite San Francisco's reputation for architectural conservatism, the city does have more than its share of talented and groundbreaking architects. This commission would be the perfect chance to showcase one of them. My SF colleague Lydia Lee pointed out several likely firms on our blog (including some very talented women, another group largely missing from the would-be shortlist), among them Ogrydziak/Prillinger, Anne Fougeron, Stanley Saitowitz, IwamotoScott, and Aidlin Darling. These architects, along with others in the area, are creating fantastic new work, yet remain relatively unknown beyond the West Coast.

Equally problematic is how the shortlists for major projects have become so predictable. Often enough, such work feels unrelated to the particularities of place. Piano, OMA, and others are part of a roving band of (admittedly extremely talented) architectural conquerors that almost inevitably trump lesser-known talent. Even if they partner with local firms, the design vision is all theirs. And it isn't about place; it's about their own process and their brand. This is the new international style: elegant, trademarked, and generic.

We understand that SFMOMA wants to draw attention to its new addition, and a big-name firm is an excellent way to do that. But a stunning design from a local firm can do so just as well, and can provide a freshness that these architects' now-familiar designs cannot. Local firms can also bring a deeper understanding of the city and a deeper sense of cultural awareness and values. No matter what SFMOMA decides, we hope it will choose a talented architect. But wouldn't it be great if it chose a firm that also brought something new to the table and helped showcase San Francisco's thriving architectural and cultural prowess? It's a prowess that so few, including San Franciscans themselves, seem to know about.

SAM LUBELL

LATEST BILLINGS STILL PUT
RECOVERY OUT OF REACHAround the
Bend Again

The new year continues to look like a bad one for architects, and while 2010 may not be as dire for the industry as 2009, new data released on February 24 suggest another contraction could be on the horizon. After essentially holding steady during the fourth quarter, the AIA Architecture Billings Index saw its first major drop since last June.

Scott Frank, director of media relations for the AIA, said he does not expect the plight of architects to get considerably worse, suggesting that these latest moves are simply a result of continued uncertainty within the economy. Frank told *AN*, "Hopefully we've seen the worst, which was January 2009, but I also don't have the sense that we've turned the corner. There's nothing picking up the slack."

Still, the latest numbers could give architects pause. January billings fell 2.9 points to 42.5 from 45.4 in December, the first negative shift of more than a point in seven months. Granted, that 4.8-point drop in June, when billings reached a low of 37.1, was followed by a 5.2-point gain in July. January's dip could then be a similar fluctuation in an otherwise steadily mediocre climate. (A measure above 50 means billings are rising, and below 50 they are falling; the greater the range, the faster the change.)

But unlike in June, when inquiries stayed relatively steady—they took a similar one-month dip in July—January's billings decline was matched with an even steeper fall in inquiries, a 7.2-point slide to 52.5 from 59.7. Inquiries have not fallen so quickly since October 2008, after the economy went into its tailspin following the collapse of Lehman Brothers. Moreover, the results by sector suggested that while residential business may finally be bottoming out, the commercial/industrial and institutional sectors are still headed downhill. And regionally, billings dropped for firms in all parts of the country.

In a statement, AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker placed the blame for the January numbers on—who else?—the banks. "Projects are being delayed or cancelled because lending institutions are placing unusually stringent equity requirements on new developments," Baker said, though this was not his only concern. "This serious situation is being compounded by a skittish bond market, decreased tax revenues for publicly financed projects, and declining property values—which all serve as deterrents for construction activity," Baker added.

It is difficult to predict whether the billings index will return to the mid-40s—still far from ideal—or continue to slide in the coming months. At press time, with February results a week away from release, an AIA spokesperson said that billings had largely recovered from the January slide, though inquiries did not. While this could point to continued stability, it is not the kind of news architects are hoping to see. The January shock indicates that the industry is not as close to recovery as recent billings stability had led many to hope.

MATT CHABAN

LETTERS

TALKING TRANSAMERICA

Your recent article ("Pyramid Scheme," *CAN* 02_02.24.2010) strikes a rather one-sided tone in attacking opposition to the proposed residential tower adjacent to the Transamerica Pyramid. While much of the opposition may be NIMBYs, the article does not even mention what is possibly the most controversial issue surrounding the proposed scheme: The developers propose to purchase a portion of the adjacent alleyway and use that area to enlarge Redwood Park.

However, as I understand it, they also are using that increased area to count toward the allowed FAR (the requested variance would need to be even greater without counting the additional property). I believe that could set a terrible precedent. It is not hard to envision a future where cash-strapped cities start selling off public right-of-way. Is that worth one high-end condo tower?

LARRY MAYERS
 MAYERS ARCHITECTURE
 OAKLAND

CORRECTIONS

Our annual best sources feature ("Sourced Up," *CAN* 02_02.24.2010) gave an incorrect photo credit for Swatt Miers Architects' Tea House. The photographer was Tim Griffith.

A Q&A with William Krisel (*CAN* 02_02.24.2010) misstated the name of one of the architect's tract housing projects in California. It is Corbin Palms, not Gordon Palms.

EAVESDROP > THE EDITORS

DRAMA AT SFMOMA

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SCARLET LETTER IS BLUE

New social networking/architecture site Architizer hosted its LA launch party at the new A+D Museum space on March 18. The usual suspects all showed up in their best duds, but far and away the best-dressed was KCRW radio host **Frances Anderton's** daughter **Summer**. Looking stunning in an eclectic and colorful boho-chic ensemble, Summer, 7, wore sparkling shoes, embedded not with the usual lame single blinking red LED light, but a whole kaleidoscope of dazzling bright white wonders. Oh, and Architizer founders **Marc Kushner** and **Benjamin Prosky** weren't too shabby either, working the monochrome dark suit, Mad Men thin-tie look that added a touch of class to the event where the site's omnipresent "A" logo was emblazoned on everything from t-shirts and lapels to a stack of chairs arranged in a rickety A formation.

FIRMING UP

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The Port of San Francisco masterplan.

COURTESY PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO

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masterplan states, "the financial complexities of the project—developing 65 acres of infrastructure, three million square feet of new buildings, 700,000 square feet of rehabilitation of historic buildings, associated parking, and 20 acres of open space—require a sophisticated real estate development partner to fashion a development program acceptable to the real estate and capital markets."

Because of the working shipyard, the plan for the rest of the site calls for commercial and light industrial uses, but no residential. The port also hopes to create a destination attraction. Among the 20 historic buildings in

this adaptive reuse project, the architectural jewel is the 1886 Union Iron Works Machine Shop (see front page). Built before steel framing, the brick-and-concrete building is 70 feet high and longer than a football field, with arched windows and no internal columns. "It's like a cathedral," said Beaupre. "We really think the public should be able to enjoy the grandeur of it, so we're looking for a cultural use." A few potential partners—including the Exploratorium and the National Maritime Museum—considered moving here but decided not to go forward.

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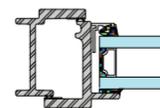
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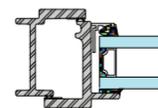
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TUCSON MUSEUM MAKES A HOME IN A BRUTALIST FIRE STATION

ARTS ON FIRE

For Tucson's Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), homelessness has long been a kind of calling card. A band of DIY artists founded the museum in 1999 as a vehicle for the production and distribution of experimental work, appropriating empty downtown storefronts and warehouses as their venues.

That's about to change. Since becoming MOCA's director in 2002, Anne-Marie Russell's mission has been to find a home for this iconoclastic museum. Beyond the constraints of a shoestring budget and diverse programmatic needs, MOCA wanted an exceptional work of architecture. No small task in a town whose main street is one of the ugliest in America.

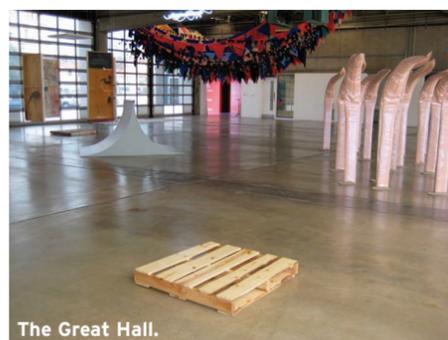
The tenacity and patience of a decade's wait and the scouting of nearly 40 buildings led MOCA to its new home—William Wilde's 1973 Brutalist Central Fire Station, a symphony of smooth poured-in-place concrete framing, a "wide wale corduroy" stair tower, and a crown of golden, rough, ribbed exposed-aggregate panels. In spite of the building's evident machismo, firemen at the time of its construction are said to have found the orange interiors to be "sissy." Little could they foresee that it would later be deemed a hip palette and a perfect match for MOCA's identity.

Wilde's Fire Station is a significant work within Tucson's network of Brutalist civic buildings. Unlike steel-and-glass desert modernism, its concrete shell is akin to the adobe brick and rammed earth structures indigenous to the region, exemplifying a desert ethic with its high thermal mass and passive solar orientation. But the lack of warm and fuzzy qualities did not win it fans over the years. Before sealing the deal with MOCA, the Fire Department's planned move to a larger facility put Wilde's concrete fortress in jeopardy of demolition and replacement with one more of Tucson's many surface parking lots. Russell's research and intuition convinced her, and ultimately the city, that the transformation

from firehouse to art-house would be turn-key. Indeed it was; in six weeks, working round the clock from possession of the building to MOCA's gala event in February, the dream became a reality.

Architect Bill Mackey, one of MOCA's Artists-in-Residence, facilitated the re-fitting of the building, and MOCA staff, friends, interns, and local craftspeople carried out the job. The structure remains virtually unchanged (although fire poles were removed), said Russell, whose mantra was "roll out the fire trucks, roll in the art." The administrative wing, stripped of cubicles and freshened up with paint, now houses six white-box galleries and a video installation space. Above these is the design wing—an interdisciplinary incubator for design professionals working with MOCA. Art studios sit behind the slit windows of the crowning floor. Twelve glazed roll-up garage doors open the "Great Hall" (a 6,000-square-foot, column-free "apparatus bay") onto what will become a 24/7 art and performance plaza. The un-conditioned hall will be programmed mornings and after dark to accommodate the harsh climate.

Russell maintains that "space and time are the most precious commodities for an artist," and since the museum can't offer big budgets, MOCA will be "where art is made." Given MOCA's history of tenacity and diverse programming, we can anticipate it becoming an even brighter (orange) beacon of design in the desert. **BETH WEINSTEIN**



The Great Hall.

COURTESY MOCA

ALL TOGETHER NOW

continued from front page designed by MDA Johnson Favaro Architecture and Urban Design, are the beginning of an explosion of new construction both here and at other LA Community Colleges.

The buildings, both five stories tall and measuring a total of 125,000 square feet, begin a transition for the 23-acre college from a loose grouping of buildings south of the 10 Freeway into a more traditional campus environment. As the nearly symmetrical buildings address Grand Avenue with sweeping curves on their facades, they draw students and the community into the new quad and the entire south campus.

"This is the opportunity to give the college the identity it needed," remarked Steven Johnson, principal at MDA Johnson Favaro.

The Student Services/Administration Building maximizes space by employing web-based enrollment technology, eliminating the need for waiting rooms, while the Technology Classroom Building's brace frame structural system allows for a flexible floor plan

MDA Johnson Favaro's LA Trade Tech buildings.



BENNY CHAN/FOTOWORKS

and optimal lighting and views. Both buildings will receive LEED Gold certification. They will add classrooms and labs, two 100-seat lecture halls, a student services center, a learning and conference center, as well as faculty and administration offices.

With a combined cost of \$125 million, the buildings mark the beginning of LA Trade Tech's nearly \$240 million renovation and expansion plan. This includes additional open space and sports facilities, a new Child Development Center, gallery space, parking garage, and facilities management and operations headquarters, as well as the renovation of vir-

tually every existing building on campus to maximize space, efficiency, and environmental performance.

The intense activity is part of a \$6 billion voter-approved proposition and bond initiative (Proposition A in 2001, Proposition AA in 2003, and Bond Measure J in 2008) that seeks to transform all nine of the City's Community Colleges into green campuses, including 85 new structures. Trade Tech's new buildings were completed just in time for the school to host the 2010 California Higher Education Sustainability Conference to be held from June 20 to 23.

GUNNAR HAND

A sail-like scrim wraps the double-height council chambers.



COURTESY BCJ/PIXELCRAFT

SWEPT AWAY continued from front page firm's San Francisco office. "We were flabbergasted when we won."

Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, which is best known for creating a luminous cube for Apple's most prominent store in New York City, presented a compelling case for contemporary design, unfettered by references to Spanish tile or pink stucco: a silhouette clearly inspired by the ocean. The main building has a roof that undulates like a wave, and the adjoining double-height council chambers feature a curved fabric "sail," a decorative scrim of Teflon-coated fiberglass mesh over a steel frame. The zinc cladding of the council chambers will create a shimmering effect through the sheer material. "It's a poetic move that becomes their iconic front-door image," said Mottola.

The structure itself is also Southern California climate-friendly. To bring in the bright sun without gaining too much heat, a series of north-facing clerestory windows draws in indirect light. The roof extends on either end in the shape of a broad overhang to shade outdoor gathering areas. Inside, six large bays are designed to be open,

flexible spaces that can be modified as city departments grow and shrink over time.

As is often the case with coastal sites, there are severe height limitations in order to preserve views of the ocean and harbor for the neighborhood on the surrounding bluffs. Much thought was devoted to staggering the two-story building down the slope. And since it is in Southern California, parking requirements were also steep, with 450 on-site spaces required. To save costs rather than excavate for below-grade parking, a straightforward, two-story parking garage runs parallel to the city hall. The plan is to cover it with a large hedge, so the garage will appear as the landscaped edge of a park that lies between it and the civic building.

The project also includes a 15-acre park with wetlands restoration to the east of the civic center, which is being designed by Berkeley's Peter Walker and Partners. An addition to the existing library rounds out all the components of the \$100 million project, which is scheduled to be completed by fall 2012.

LL

NOTIONS OF GREEN continued from front page include seven acres of park space between Santa Monica City Hall and the Santa Monica Pier that will connect the area's Civic Center to the rest of the city. Land for the project was made available when the RAND Corporation relocated its headquarters to the southernmost location of its 15-acre site back in 2004.

Out of the 24 teams that submitted for the RFQ, the six shortlisted teams included Field Operations, Peter Walker and Partners, Gehry Partners, Studio Works, Gustafson Guthrie Nichol, and SWA Group. The selection panel for the project included Qingyun Ma, dean of the USC School of Architecture; landscape architect Ken Smith; and Marc Fisher, campus architect at UCSB. The panel coordinated with staff from the city's Community and Cultural Services, Planning, and Public Works/Architecture Services departments.

Teams presented qualifications, not concept designs, in their interviews. And Field Operations, best known for its work on New York's High Line, was hailed by Barbara Stinchfield, Santa Monica's director of Community and Cultural Services, for its "commitment to making places for people."

Stinchfield also stressed that the team was selected for more than their impressive resume. "It wasn't just this one really high-profile project [the High Line]. It's their dedication to sustainability and public art and engaging the community," she said.

Lisa Switkin, associate principal at Field Operations, agrees that her firm excels at involving the public. "We are good listeners," she said. Switkin added that while a design is far from being developed, the firm is interested in exploring the site's historic significance, its local plant life, its bluffs and dunes, its grade changes, and even its nearby freeway interchange. "We'd like to amplify the site's existing characteristics," she explained.

According to the project's RFQ, the Town Square is set to be a space for cultural and civic events, while the Palisades Garden Walk, to its south, will include a botanical element and water features. Streetscape improvements, as well as pedestrian and bicycle paths, will connect the parks to the city. "We're pretty built-up at this point, so it's definitely one of the last open spaces that we may have to develop for a long time," said Miriam Mulder, from Santa Monica's Architectural Services department.

Passing over Gehry Partners was not easy, said Mulder. But the selection committee decided it was best to choose a team that focused on landscape architecture. "This particular piece doesn't really have much architecture associated with it," she said. "It's nice to imagine there might be more architectural pieces that come up."

The project is being paid for through \$25 million in redevelopment agency funds, and the city hopes to tap into additional design department money. Santa Monica's Stinchfield said that her department anticipated finalizing the team's contract and making a recommendation to the City Council at its last meeting in March. Mulder added that the city would like to finalize the design by late 2011 or early 2012. **SL**



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Sculpture: Gyre, Thomas H. Sayre, N.C. Museum of Art



Despite an epic meltdown that's dashed so many projects in California, L.A. Live, the mixed-use downtown mega-complex, is actually finished. Hovering above everything, the 55-story JW Marriott/Ritz Carlton Hotel and Residences at its eastern end opened this month. Designed by Gensler, the \$1 billion project includes 877 Marriott guest rooms, 124 Ritz hotel rooms, 224 condos, and an 80,000-square-foot conference center.

While the two-million-square-foot building's irregular, tapering shape is impossible to miss from anywhere within eyeshot of downtown, what's perhaps most interesting about this project are the construction and planning techniques that helped create the form, streamline the process, and fit a monster of a program neatly into one complex building.

The tower's bulging profile was brought about by the need to make the Ritz Carlton suites and condos larger than the JW Marriott rooms below. Marriott rooms are all 10 feet tall and 30 feet long, while Ritz Carlton rooms and residences above them vary from 10 feet 6 inches to 14 feet tall and 38 to 42 feet long. The move was made possible

through curved steel columns installed near the top of the building, making it easier to hang the building's giant glass curtain wall and support the main structure. This curtain wall was installed from the outside in via a massive crane, a more efficient technique than installing from the inside, as is usually done in such buildings.

To keep these many height differentials from cluttering the facade, Gensler unified it with a mosaic of colored glass. This skin, or "veil," is composed of alternating transparent, translucent, colored (blue, silver, and gray), and fritted glass, and accented with metal panels. The veil's glass becomes more transparent as it rises vertically, providing more transparency for the condominiums while meeting Title 24's new 60-percent-glass skin transparency requirements. Because all the glass has the same light transmission values, the different colors appear the same from inside.

The L-shaped building's demanding program, which features well over 1,000 rooms, was also complicated because Marriott wanted to separate the Ritz rooms and amenities from

those of the Marriott. They loaded both intersecting wings of the first segment with Marriott rooms, and then stacked the Ritz portions above, creating an intimate Ritz entry on the 26th floor. The Marriott's cavernous 50-foot-tall lobby is located on the ground floor. That podium space has an effective visual connection to L.A. Live and to downtown through glass facades that cantilever from the building frame to create point-supported "floating" walls. Each entity also has its own pool deck and private bar—the Marriott's on the 4th floor and the Ritz's on the 26th floor.

The earthquake-proofing is sophisticated. The building's system used a thin, steel-plate shear wall system instead of the usual thick concrete shear walls in order to speed construction, avoid concrete settling, increase the square footage inside the building, and maximize views. The steel plates range from one-quarter inch to one-half inch in width, instead of the usual three-foot-thick shear wall. In all, the process saved four months of concrete work and thousands of pounds of concrete, and allowed the building to rise four stories

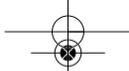


higher. The building is further braced horizontally with outrigger trusses at the 26th and 53rd floors, an alternative to a thick concrete core.

The thin steel system also required fewer building materials, a green component joined by water-efficient fixtures and landscaping and solar reflecting materials on the roof. It's not a groundbreaking list of green features, and the aesthetics of the building, while certainly

Top: The tower's tapering profile stands out against the sky. **Above:** A mosaic glass veil helps break up the project's bulk while unifying the facade.

dynamic and effective, are not especially elegant or inspiring. But overall the tower is a major step forward for L.A. Live, an urban project that has been sorely lacking in innovative design and urbanism. **SL**



Gemeindezentrum Oberalm, Oberalm, Austria | Architect: Gerner & Gerner, Vienna, Austria | Photo: Bruno Klomfar

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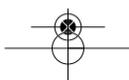
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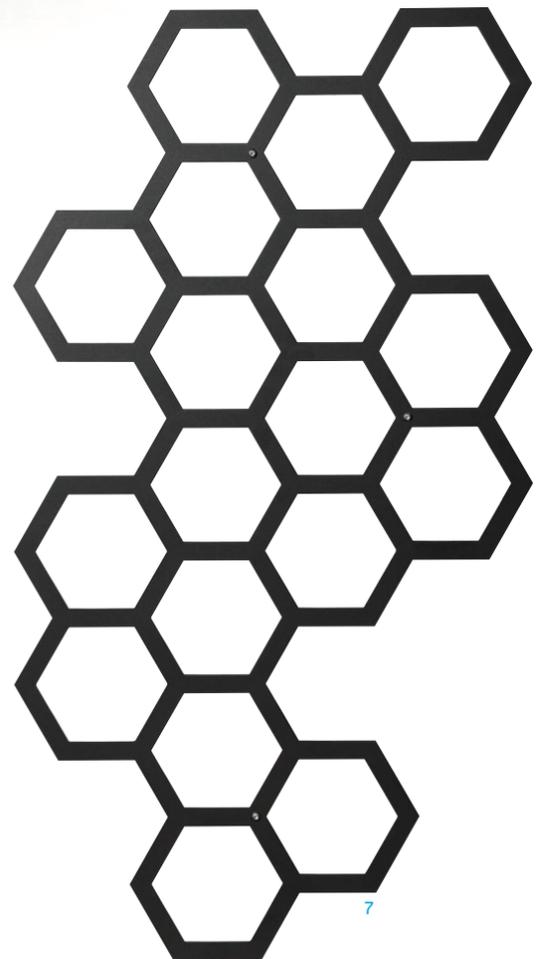
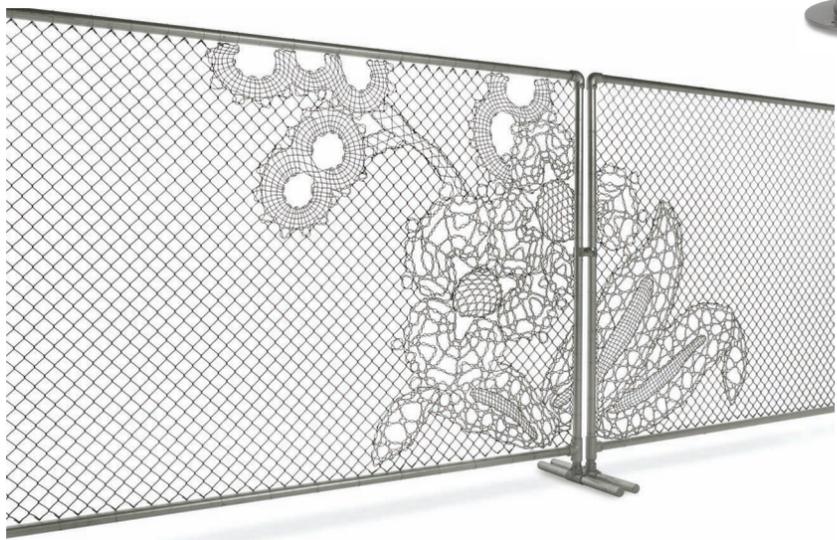
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER MARCH 31, 2010



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BY JENNIFER K. GORSCHÉ

SITE SPECIFICS

- 1 **VASES AMBIENTE**
VONDOM
- 2 **OLIVIO BOLLARD**
SE'LUX
- 3 **LO-GLO**
LANDSCAPE FORMS
- 4 **BIKE GARDEN**
FORMS+ SURFACES
- 5 **LACE FENCE**
DROOG
- 6 **BRANCH PARASOL**
CORO ITALIA
- 7 **COMB-INATION TRELLIS**
FLORA
- 8 **ROMEO&JULIET BENCH**
EXTREMIS
- 9 **TITIKAKA BENCH**
B&B ITALIA

Vondom's Vases series, designed by JM Ferrero, are made of recycled plastic doing double duty as a pot-and-bench combination. The collection includes self-watering pots with bench seating that can be lacquered or illuminated with LEDs in a range of colors.
www.vondom.com

The Olivio Bollard accommodates two lamp-head sizes with a 180-degree rotation that can be adjusted on site. Supplied with LEDs, the fixtures can be customized with surveillance and multimedia technology, and are certified by the International Dark-Sky Association for reduced light pollution.
www.selux.com

Landscape Forms and BMW Group DesignworksUSA collaborated to create the Metro40 line of furnishings. The Mobius strip-shaped Lo-Glo lamp is a 3-foot-tall LED pathway light (a 12-foot-tall Hi-Glo model is also available) with replaceable diode cartridges.
www.landscapeforms.com

The Bike Garden's organic bike racks provide multiple locking points with "stems" that can be installed individually or in pre-configured layouts. The corrosion-resistant metal components contain up to 76 percent recycled content and can be surface-mounted or cast-in-place.
www.forms-surfaces.com

The Lace Fence from Dutch design house Demakersvan is available in galvanized iron or white PVC-coated wire, both suitable for indoor or outdoor use. Patterns are customizable, and frameless panels can be designed to hide or embellish a space, prevent climbing, or withstand extreme weather.
www.droogusa.com

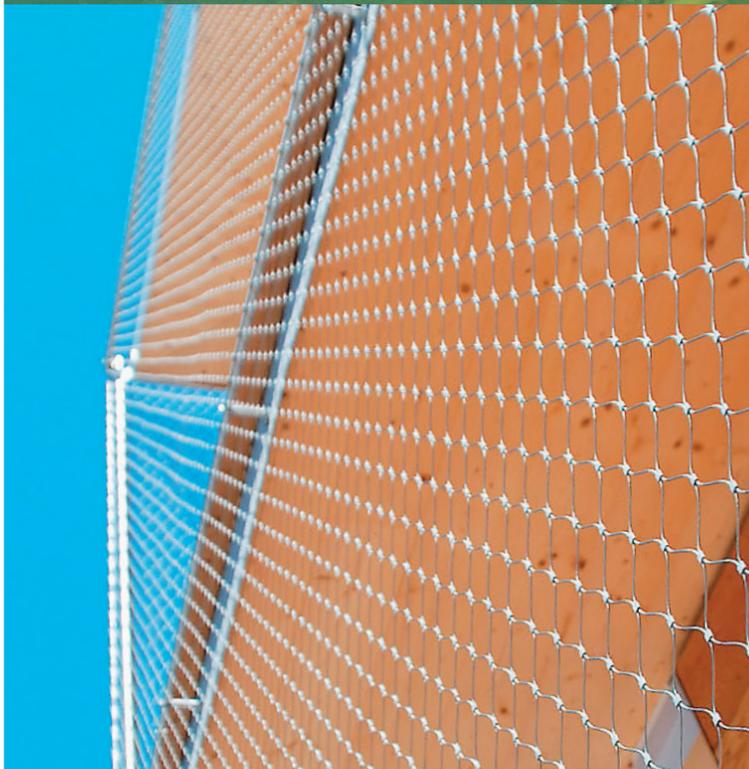
The Branch outdoor collection of seven complementary pieces includes a sunshade inspired by a tree. Atop a three-branched epoxy-coated steel frame, the fixed shade is a solid disk made of heatstop material that blocks UV rays.
www.coroitalia.it

Arik Levy's honeycomb-inspired trellis comes in three sizes, allowing the system to be configured in a range of shapes. The powder-coated, zinc-plated sheet metal adds a modern graphic pattern to walls while plant growth matures.
www.flora-online.de

Belgian firm Vyvey & Partners designed the Romeo & Juliet bench with large and small spaces in mind. The 10.5-foot-long Jatoba wood seats can be installed end-to-end to create a line of evenly spaced seating and trees, which are planted within fiberglass pots.
www.extremis.be

Designed by Naoto Fukasawa, the Titikaka outdoor bench has a curvilinear form that is sculptural as well as ergonomic. Eight-foot-long teak lathes over an aluminum frame reach the ground in the front and back, but the sides are open, creating a wave when used in multiples.
www.bebitalia.it

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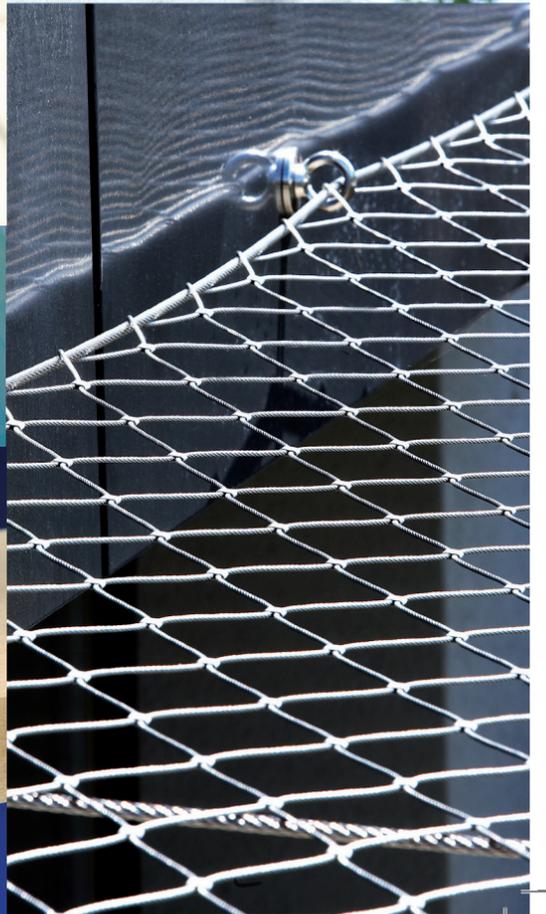
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Major California Fault Lines
 1 S. San Andreas
 2 Hayward-Rodgers Creek
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 4 N. San Andreas
 5 Elsinore
 6 Calaveras
 7 Garlock

This year is shaping up to be a busy one for Mary Comerio, former architecture department chair and a professor at University of California, Berkeley. When the magnitude-8.8 earthquake hit Chile on February 27, the architect and disaster-recovery expert was in Haiti. As a consultant to the post-disaster branch of the United Nations' Environment Program, Comerio was brought in to identify and strategize recovery issues. She also assisted the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) in collecting scientific data. Comerio's research over the past two decades has focused on the costs and benefits of seismic rehabilitation for existing buildings, post-disaster recovery and reconstruction, and loss modeling. Comerio spoke with *AN's* Jennifer Caterino on February 22.

The Architect's Newspaper: Recent events have us wondering if the U.S. Geological Survey's prediction of a magnitude-6.7 or larger earthquake in California during the next 30 years will be borne out sooner than later. How would you assess our state's overall preparedness for a major seismic event?

Mary Comerio: California is probably the best-prepared place in the world. With that said, we certainly have things to worry about. We have very good

building codes, so many of our modern buildings will do fine. But we still have older concrete buildings that are vulnerable. Particularly, we happen to have a lot that were built in the 1920s, and again in the 1960s, before the building codes really changed. We also have what are known as "soft-story" buildings—the office and residential buildings that have a big open ground for either parking garages or commercial spaces. Those buildings are vulnerable to damage. It won't be as dramatic or widespread as something in Haiti, but we will have lots of people displaced, and pockets of more severe damage, and deaths depending on the time of day.

What do you see as the relationship between green and seismic right now, where there is so much emphasis on retrofitting existing buildings?

There is an important opportunity for working in tandem with the green movement and renovations of existing buildings. Your building isn't going to be very sustainable if it falls down. If you do this renovation in year one, and in year three it collapses in an earthquake, you haven't done much for sustainability.

Typically, people operate in silos. The architects don't always talk to the structural engineers; the mechanical engineers kind of live in their own world. The green movement helped

bring some of those groups together, and the next step is to start to bring some of the seismic safety components into that.

Who is promoting better dialogue between different disciplines?

That's certainly a goal of an organization like EERI, which is a multi-disciplinary organization. Its members include sociologists, planners, architects, psychologists, and geotechnical engineers. But one organization isn't enough. I think civic groups are actually really important. The San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) has been incredibly important in bringing together developers, architects, building owners and tenants to talk about the soft-story issue. It really needs to be in the civic realm—because that's where many of the players are. The owners and the tenants don't come to our technical meetings.

What do you see happening next in seismic-related legislation?

I think the next legislation will involve performance-based design. We're not ready to go there yet, but there is a lot of research on this. We're starting to see changes from absolute prescriptions in the building code to really understanding how buildings perform and designing for those performance levels.

How long do you think it will take before this gets introduced into the codes?

Anytime you've got new innovative ideas, there's a timeline of about 20 years before they are really adopted. We're probably ten years into the early adopters of different performance-based concepts, and so we're just starting to see architects and engineers working with these ideas. I think it has another decade before we really start to see changes at the code level, but it's definitely coming.

SPECIFICALLY SPEAKING continued from front page their general plans along a design-heavy path, well beyond the traditional zoning and land use-based requirements. Santa Monica, for instance, is now updating its Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) with a major focus on urban form, zeroing in on place-making, boulevards, and specific districts. It also aims to ensure that new and remodeled buildings are compatible in scale with their surroundings, and contribute to neighborhood pedestrian character.

Some think increased focus on design will pay dividends for planners and architects, while others find the more visual guidelines too constrictive, even unrealistic.

Sacramento passed its 2030 General Plan last March, mapping out its physical design goals for the next 20 years. The image-heavy document makes it easier to see the types of neighborhoods and places the city wants to create. It's written in terms that are easy to understand, not "plannish," said Woodie Tescher, a principal at PBS&J, an engineering, architecture, and planning firm that consulted on the update. The plan won the Comprehensive Planning Award of Excellence from the California chapter of the American Planning Association in 2009.

Not all are enamored. Kris Barkley, a principal at Sacramento-based Dreyfuss and Blackford Architects who has watched Sacramento planners take more control over the design process, said, "It's like an idealized, theme park attitude rather than coming up with interesting pieces that come together into a whole that's interesting in itself. It can be very difficult from a design perspective."

PBS&J's Tescher noted that the city's attention to design is part of a growing trend.

"Most municipalities are conscious of the need to think seriously about infill and intensified development," he said. "There is a tendency to ask, how do we make projects acceptable to our community groups? How do we design projects to make more livable places, rather than just the traditional zoning we used to rely on to implement our general plans?"

But simply throwing more prescriptive guidelines at designers and architects could be disastrous, according to Tescher. He suggests inviting architects into the guideline-writing process as early as possible.

"Bring in architects who are really doing exciting projects and get them to do prototypes for you," Tescher said. "And then bring in a developer economist and run a pro forma. See if it really works."

Another way to maximize impact is to focus on subsections of the city through specific area plans. A good example is the Downtown Design Guide adopted by LA in April 2009. Simon Pastucha of the city's Urban Design Studio said creating a similar plan for the whole city wouldn't be appropriate in all parts of town. "It's really hard to come up with these city-wide guidelines that allow for flexibility or really apply in every different context, because you don't really know until you start looking at specific sites," said Pastucha.

Indeed, the most effective plans appear to balance prescriptiveness and flexibility. "What I want is an urban plan that's clear about what planners want," said architect Wade Killefer, founder and partner at Killefer Flammang Architects in Santa Monica. "The key is to find out the limitations, and then do what you want to do within those limitations."

NATE BERG

AT DEADLINE

BROAD'S DOWNTOWN DETOUR

First he was eyeing Santa Monica, then Beverly Hills, and now Martha Welborne, managing director of the Grand Avenue Committee, which advises on the development of the Grand mixed-use project in Downtown LA, has told *AN* that philanthropist Eli Broad wants to locate his new art museum there. The proposed museum would be located on the site of two parking lots just south of the Walt Disney Concert Hall and across the street from the LA Museum of Contemporary Art and the Colburn School. The site is currently slated for retail development within phase two of the now-stalled 3.5 million-square-foot development, also known as the Grand Avenue Project, by the Related Companies. According to Welborne, the economic downturn has convinced Related that it might be a good idea to replace some retail (of the over 100,000 square feet planned) with a cultural component. The Broad Foundation maintains it is still considering all three options for the project.

BARN SAVERS

Architecture enthusiasts in LA can breathe a sigh of relief now that A. Quincy Jones' much-beloved barn, which the architect once used as his home and studio, has been purchased by the Metabolic Studio, an arts program affiliated with the Annenberg Foundation. The barn had been on the market for over two years. The studio purchased the property last November, and this month began a renovation, undertaken by Frederick Fisher, who also designed the foundation's Annenberg Community Beach House in Santa Monica. The home will be occupied by Chora, an Annenberg-sponsored arts incubator that will use it for offices and for its artist-in-residence program.

AFTER BATTLE, THE REWARD

Eric Owen Moss' 9040 Sunset Doheny Hotel was officially approved by the West Hollywood City Council on March 15. The 11-story, 270,000-square-foot mixed-use project will have a glazed curtain wall set with floating steel panels, while its smaller residential block will wrap around public and private courtyards. The hotel had gained tacit approval last fall, but only received the final go-ahead after one of the project's development partners, Ezri Namvar, gave up management control of the project amid a fraud investigation and bankruptcy proceedings.

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER MARCH 31, 2010

The coffee shop has undergone an evolution. Out are the generic designs of chains like Starbucks and Peet's, which first introduced designer coffee years back. In is a new type of cafe more rooted in location, authenticity, and—luckily for architects—design. These new shops—even those owned by growing chains like Intelligentsia, Lamill, Blue Bottle, Four Barrel, and Stumptown, some of which are fast expanding to places like New York—celebrate their environs over a corporate formula. Designs are eclectic: Some have a cavernous, raw, modern feel more indicative of an artists' space than a coffee shop; some use high-quality materials and meticulous lighting to create an ambiance similar to a wine store; and some use DIY and simple details such as vintage tiles and strange brewing apparatuses to create a quirky, bohemian environment. Many, keeping up with our current obsession with craft, present a tactile character that includes rough finishes, open storefront spaces (including communal tables), and exposed brick, steel, and wood. The new Intelligentsia in Venice rethinks the experience of buying coffee altogether, removing separation between barista and customer.

Old is new again, as the latest coffee shops become community magnets, drawing tightly-packed crowds that rival any retail establishment. Perhaps the need to congregate is a natural reaction to the social distance imposed by technology. To keep up with the shift in zeitgeist, even Starbucks is trying to recast its shopworn image with two new stores in Seattle—15th Avenue Coffee & Tea and Roy Street Coffee & Tea—employing reused materials and a raw aesthetic in a bid to recapture the just-us-devotees spirit their own early coffee houses once embodied. A most welcome objective will be achieved should customers become as addicted to the pleasures of interesting design as they already are to coffee highs.

By Sam Lubell and Lydia Lee

The New Brew

CAFE ARCHITECTURE GETS THE BUZZ

FOUR BARREL COFFEE SAN FRANCISCO BOOR BRIDGES ARCHITECTURE

With boars' heads mounted on the wall and a glittering chandelier in the bathroom, Four Barrel has a vibe all its own. Owner Jeremy Tooker (formerly of SF's Ritual Roasters, a major coffee cult in town) brought various found objects for the architects to incorporate into the design. A road trip yielded immense glue-lam beams from a salvage yard, which were turned into coffee tables. The Mission District space also showcases the building's original wood trusses. "We were thinking in terms of the Industrial Revolution, a time when new materials like steel were being introduced, and using them in a primal way," said Seth Boor. It's also never too late to revive the glam of the past: The bathroom is covered in baroque wallpaper. In back sits the actual roaster, making the line between the production of coffee and its consumption excitingly thin.

BLUE BOTTLE COFFEE SAN FRANCISCO SAGAN PIECHOTA ARCHITECTURE

Coffee-lovers in San Francisco have James Freeman of Blue Bottle to thank in part for kicking off the artisanal coffee movement in the Bay Area, but also for pioneering the garage coffee stand. Back in 2004, Freeman and architect Loring Sagan of Sagan Piechota came up with the idea of setting up a coffee stand in the firm's garage. Soon there were lines down Linden Alley, leading up to a DIY kiosk of scrap Polygal and lumber. Last fall, Blue Bottle opened up a fancier kiosk in the SF Ferry Building, also designed by Sagan Piechota. To match the grandeur of the monumental terminal, this upgrade has walnut cabinetry and a bar clad in stainless steel and topped with black marble. But it's still mobile—on wheels, it can roll out six feet beyond the official storefront and engage with the public, but then be tucked away for the night. Meanwhile, a host of other garage stands—which as kiosks can circumvent a morass of building permits—have sprung up to bring good coffee to more byways of San Francisco. And Blue Bottle has gone bi-coastal, with a new branch in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood.

BARISTA PORTLAND BEN KING / STEM ARCHITECTURE

Barista architect Ben King is arguably the king of Portland coffee design (no small feat in this coffee-crazed town), putting together over 12 shops in the city, most of them in Portland's hip northwest. To hone his craft, he even trained as a barista. One of his latest projects, called (of course) Barista, is located in the lobby of a former warehouse in the Pearl District. He incorporated the giant hemlock beams that were part of the space and used mild steel for the gritty counter-tops, both "industrial and capable of rusting." Wisely, he focused attention on the unusual glass brewing devices, which resemble a mad scientist's lab more than a coffee brewery. King has taught himself as well how to "hot-rod" the store's espresso machines for quick fixes. "I never have to pay for coffee," he noted, one of the many perks of undertaking coffee shop design.



FOUR BARREL COFFEE

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SILVER LAKE
RUBBISH STUDIO
AND BKARC

When gourmet roasters Lamill decided to open a Silver Lake location, they first assumed it would be sleek and modern. Over time, however, they embraced the area's vibe: ironic, intricate, and retro—but still modern. The shop, said Rubbish designer Nick Bianco, now resembles what he describes as a midcentury country club with a contemporary edge. The rich and “antique-y” material palette includes crocodile vinyl for chairs, animal skins for upholstery, vinyl red banquettes, faux shagreen bar stools, faux ostrich chairs, Monteverdi-Young vintage swivel chairs, and hand-painted wallpaper that mimics a blue sky in one place and a pastoral Renaissance drawing in another. The large window in front not only exposes coffee drinkers to the street, but shows off the shop to walkers and—perhaps more importantly—drivers along Silver Lake Boulevard.

INTELLIGENTSIA
SILVER LAKE
BARBARA BESTOR

After opening three successful stores in Chicago, deluxe coffeemakers Intelligentsia have transformed the coffee culture of Los Angeles with two extraordinary locations and another on the way. The first, Barbara Bestor's cafe in Silver Lake, has become that neighborhood's unofficial town center, with crowds spilling into the street day and night. The store broke the mold by putting most of its seating outdoors, with a smaller area for sipping inside (a counter keeps drinkers close to baristas) and tables that are both semi-enclosed and completely al fresco. “I wanted it to feel like a living room in the city,” said Bestor, who also focused on creating a space that was at the same time modern, authentic, and irreverent. This eclectic combination, which fits what some have called her “bohemian modern” aesthetic, includes patterned blue tiled floors, plywood ceilings, vinyl “tattoos” on the walls, and porcelain bulbs hanging from strings.

INTELLIGENTSIA
VENICE
MASS

Intelligentsia's second location is less bohemian and more like “a lab: stark and modern,” said Kyle Glanville, who coordinates all of the company's California locations. Designed by LA firm MASS, the space is full of stainless steel and a combination of light and dark woods. The biggest experiment here was breaking the barrier between barista and customer, giving each server a sort of working desk where they can walk out to join the fray, rather than be stuck behind a counter. “We didn't want to have a wall that divided people up,” said MASS principal Ana Henton. The main seating areas are informal: concrete stairs in the back and a new ramped courtyard in front that fits more drinkers than tables would, creating a frenetic, urban atmosphere. Intelligentsia is also opening a store in Pasadena to be designed by MASS this summer. That location's design is a closely guarded secret, but Glanville did let slip that it would be inside a historic building and that its aesthetic would be “more of a throwback.” This includes a 50-foot-long bar of reclaimed wood and extensive seating to create the impression of a modern-tinged speakeasy.

COFFEE BAR
SAN FRANCISCO
JONES | HAYDU

In a neighborhood of industrial warehouses already in turnaround, Coffee Bar shows how you can put a corner loading dock to good use. The split-level space in San Francisco's Media Gulch features a warm-hued swath of Douglas fir that first forms the bar, then travels up the wall and forms a shelf, then continues across the room to create the upper-level railing and seating area, where patrons can peer over their laptops to see who's just come in. “It's one long ribbon that ties everything together,” said Hulett Jones of Jones | Haydu. “We were intent on seeing how we could unify the space and create a communal feeling, while sticking to a strict budget.” The largish, 1,700-square-foot cafe has been very popular in the community, and the owners have embarked on a new venture—offering sommelier-led wine tastings. And for the connoisseur, there are gourmet dinners created by “nomadic kitchens,” including one of Ryan Farr's first whole-pig feasts.

STARBUCKS 15TH AVENUE
ROY STREET COFFEE
& TEA
SEATTLE
THE STARBUCKS TEAM

In an effort to freshen its ubiquitous brand, Starbucks has jumped on the “authenticity” wagon, creating two stores in Seattle that, ironically, draw inspiration from the chain's original location: a real coffee house built specifically for its own neighborhood. The shops are full of exposed materials, many sourced from existing Starbucks locations. Recycled elements include a bar top, chairs, and doors from a nearby store, a community table whose wood comes from an old ship, and timber cladding from an old barn. Even a chalkboard, which lists coffee in a much friendlier way than usual, came from Starbucks' corporate “Support Center,” also located in Seattle. The 15th Avenue location has a 20-foot-wide mural created by a local artist, who also fashioned the store's metalwork. In addition to this intensive re-design, the stores offer more varieties of coffee than the chain's other venues, and even serve beer and wine.

CAFÉ DE LECHE
HIGHLAND PARK
FREELAND BUCK

Creating a neighborhood hub wasn't just a happy coincidence for architect David Freeland; it was the point. His 1,000-square-foot Café de Leche, located on a pedestrian-heavy portion of Highland Park's busy York Boulevard, is an architectural tribute to his community. Its most noticeable element is a large mural that he designed, a colorful interpretation of a photo taken from Freeland's house with “layers of color corresponding to the layering of space in the community's hills.” The store embraces textures from reddish concrete to exposed brick, adding low-key but fresh touches like bright green Caesar Stone counters, hanging fluorescents, and built-in cabinets. The cafe also includes a kid's area in back (nicknamed the Kid Corral), with toys hand-designed by the architect.



BLUE BOTTLE COFFEE



BARISTA



LAMILL

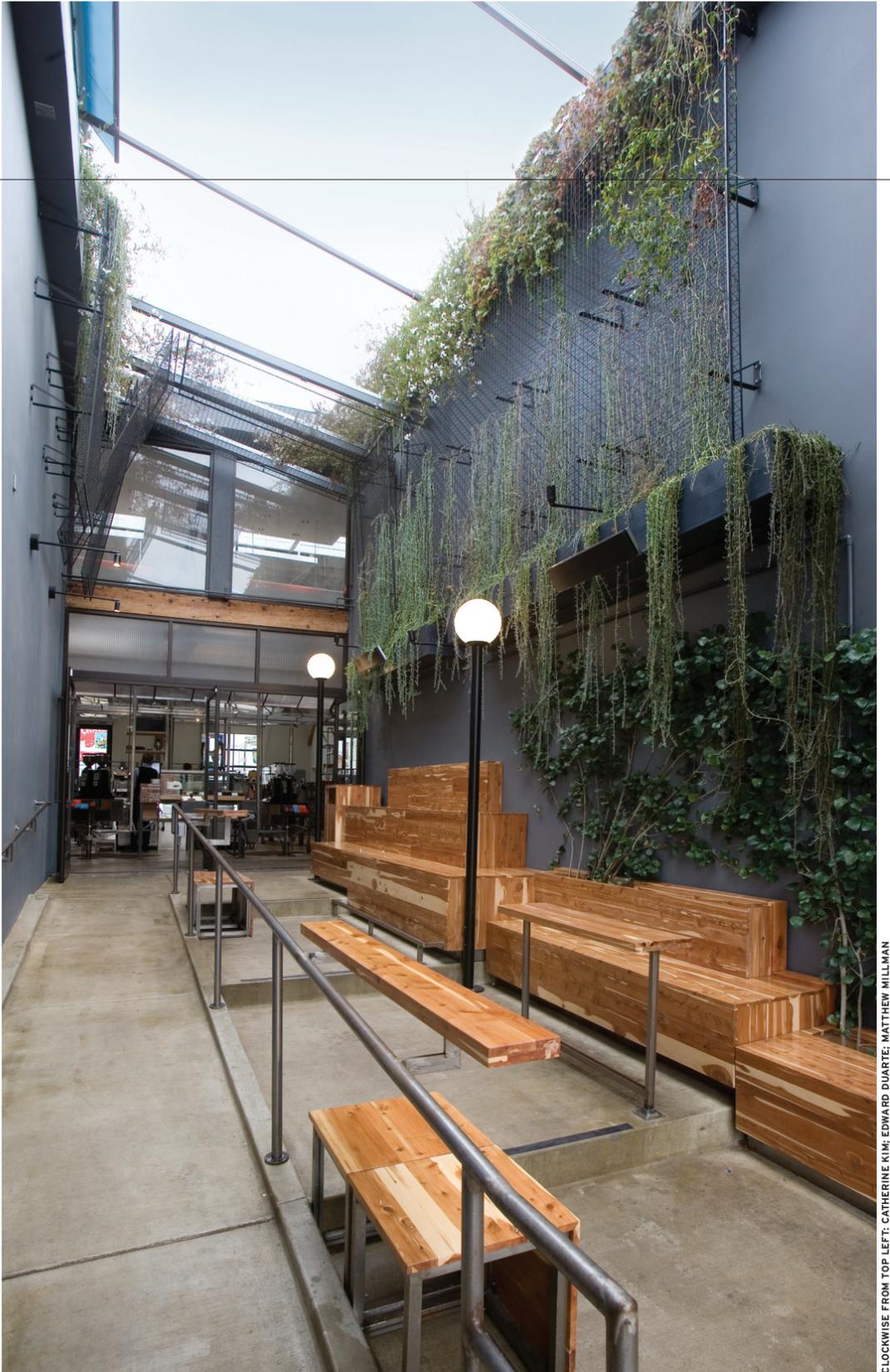
FACING PAGE: BRUCE DAMONTE; CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SHARON RISEBORPH; COURTESY LAMILL; BEN KING

FEATURE
14

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER MARCH 31, 2010



INTELLIGENTSIA, SILVER LAKE



INTELLIGENTSIA, VENICE

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CATHERINE KIM; EDUARDO DUARTE; MATTHEW MILLMAN



COFFEE BAR

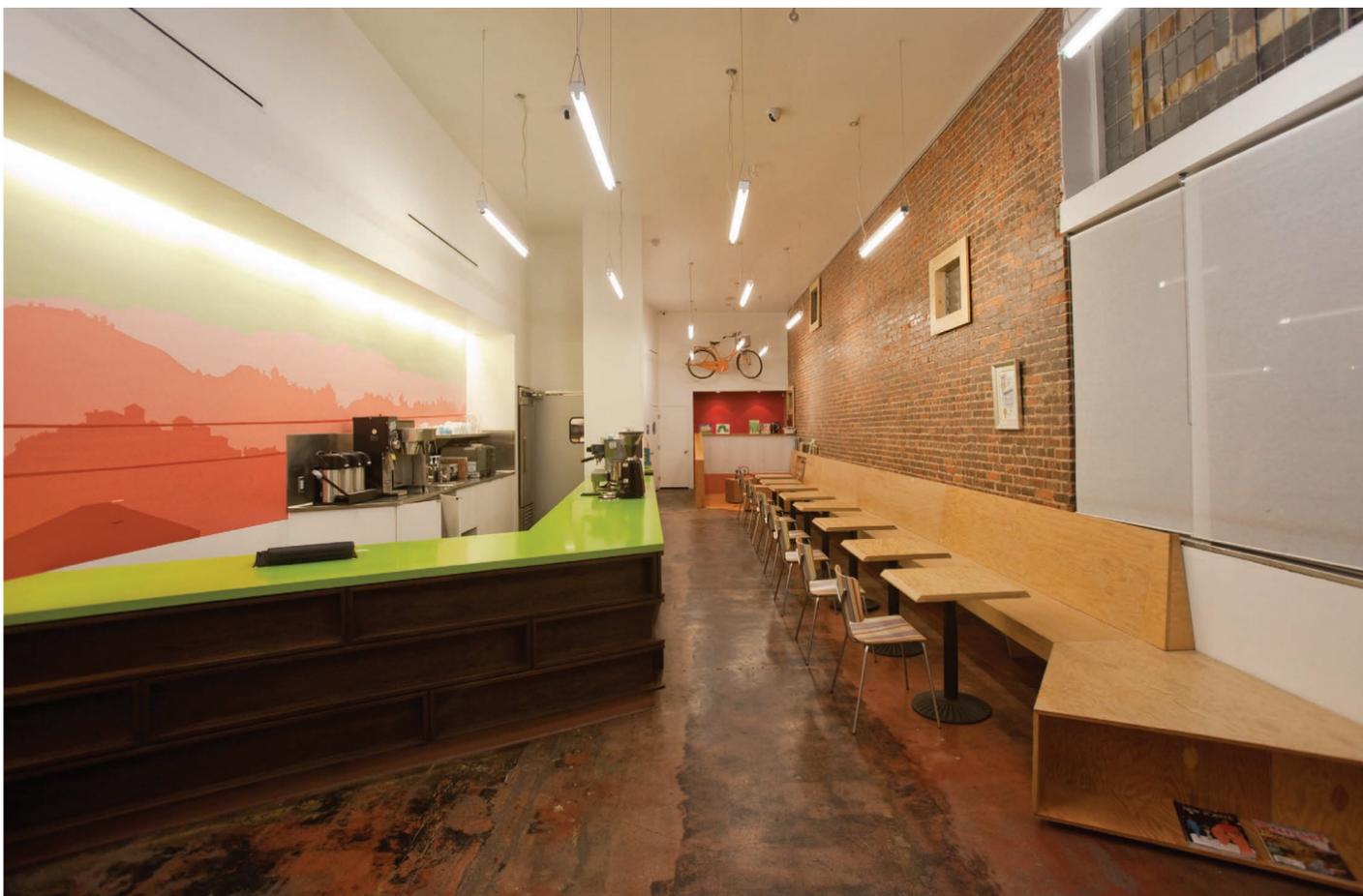
FEATURE
15



INTELLIGENTSIA, VENICE



STARBUCKS ROY STREET COFFEE & TEA



CAFÉ DE LECHE

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: EDWARD DUARTE; COURTESY STARBUCKS; MATT SCHODORF

MARCH

WEDNESDAY 31

LECTURES

Gail Peter Borden
Matter as the Substance of Everything that Exists
6:00 p.m.
University of Southern California
Wong Conference Center
823-29 Exposition Blvd.
Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

Eric Avila
The Center Cannot Hold
7:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

Robbert Flick
7:00 p.m.
University of California Berkeley
112 Wurster Hall, Berkeley
www.ced.berkeley.edu

APRIL

FRIDAY 2

LECTURE

John Bohn
So far...so what?
1:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

MONDAY 5

LECTURE

Martin Rein-Cano
6:30 p.m.
University of California Los Angeles
Perloff Hall
405 Hilgard Ave.
www.aud.ucla.edu

FILM

Light Echoes Dark: The Films of Julie Murray
8:30 p.m.
CalArts Theater
631 West 2nd St., Los Angeles
www.redcat.org

TUESDAY 6
SYMPOSIUM

Sustainability Summit: Building a Green Economy
7:30 a.m.
J. Paul Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.labusinesscouncil.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
In Focus: Tasteful Pictures
J. Paul Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

WEDNESDAY 7
LECTURES

Andrea Ponsi
1:00 p.m.
University of California Berkeley
112 Wurster Hall, Berkeley
www.ced.berkeley.edu

Adriaan Geuze
Recent Work
6:00 p.m.
University of Southern California
Wong Conference Center
823-29 Exposition Blvd.
Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

David Erdman
amass
7:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St.
Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

Warren Byrd
7:00 p.m.
University of California Berkeley
112 Wurster Hall, Berkeley
www.ced.berkeley.edu

THURSDAY 8
LECTURE

Evan Kleiman, Darra Goldstein, et al.
Picturing Food
7:00 p.m.
J. Paul Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

FILM

How Many Billboards? Film and Video Screenings
6:30 p.m.
Museum of Contemporary Art
250 South Grand Ave.
Los Angeles
www.moca.org

FRIDAY 9
EXHIBITION OPENING

Carroll Dunham
Blum & Poe
2727 South La Cienega Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.blumandpoe.com

SATURDAY 10
EXHIBITION OPENING

Daria Martin: Minotaur
Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

EVENT

Spring Green Festival
10:00 a.m.
SF Concourse
Exhibition Center
635 8th St.
San Francisco
www.aiaasf.org

SUNDAY 11
SYMPOSIUM

Las Vegas Studio
3:00 p.m.
MOCA Pacific Design Center
8687 Melrose Ave.
West Hollywood
www.moca.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

The Red Book of C.G. Jung
Creation of a New Cosmology
Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

Charles Long: 100 Pounds of Clay
Orange County Museum of Art
850 San Clemente Dr.
Newport Beach
www.ocma.net

EVENTS

AIA Los Angeles Spring Home Tours
11:00 a.m.
Various locations
www.aialosangeles.org

LA Heritage Day

11:00 a.m.
Heritage Square Museum
3800 Homer St.
Los Angeles
www.heritagesquare.org

MONDAY 12
LECTURE

Hernan Diaz-Alonso + Jason Payne
6:30 p.m.
University of California Los Angeles
Broad Art Center Auditorium
240 Charles E. Young Dr.
www.aud.ucla.edu

TUESDAY 13
LECTURE

Anger and Amusement: Etgar Keret and Harvey Pekar in Conversation
6:30 p.m.
Contemporary Jewish Museum
726 Mission St.
San Francisco
www.thejcm.org

FILM

William Krisel, Architect
(Jake Gorst, 2010), 86 min.
7:00 p.m.
J. Paul Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

WEDNESDAY 14
LECTURES

Mia Lehrer
Recalibrating Urban Infrastructure
6:00 p.m.
University of Southern California
Wong Conference Center
823-29 Exposition Blvd.
Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

Jeanne Marie Teutonico
Finishing Touches: Conserving Wall Paintings and Other Architectural Surfaces
7:00 p.m.
J. Paul Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

Jan Horn
Sixties Residential Architecture Exploration
8:00 p.m.
Sinai Temple
10400 Wilshire Blvd.
Westwood
www.laconservancy.org

THURSDAY 15
LECTURES

James R. Kincaid, Leo B. Braudy, et al.
From Nietzsche to Star Wars: The Wagnerian Power of "The Ring"
7:00 p.m.
Museum of Contemporary Art
250 South Grand Ave.
Los Angeles
www.moca.org

Suzanne Ekerling, Hamid Behdad, et al.
Revitalizing Historic Corridors
6:00 p.m.
The Alexandria Hotel
501 South Spring St.
Los Angeles
www.uli-la.org

SUNDAY 18

EVENT

Home Sixties Home Tour
10:00 a.m.
Various locations
Los Angeles
www.laconservancy.org

LECTURE

Jonathan Pevsner
Leonardo da Vinci's Science, Technology, and Art
3:00 p.m.
J. Paul Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

WEDNESDAY 21
EVENT

30 Years of Art in LA: Exhibitions and Institutions in LA
6:30 p.m.
Creative Artists Agency
Ray Kurtzman Theater
2000 Ave. of the Stars
Los Angeles
www.moca.org

THURSDAY 22
SYMPOSIUM

Is Photography Over?
7:00 p.m.
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

Reinventing Ritual: Contemporary Art and Design for Jewish Life
Contemporary Jewish Museum
736 Mission St., San Francisco
www.thejcm.org

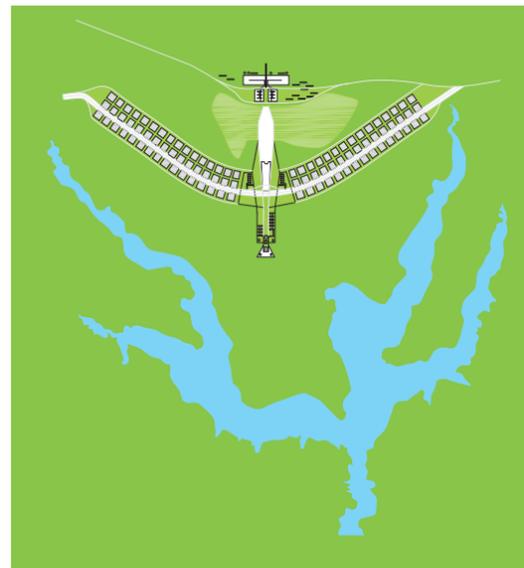
FRIDAY 23
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Plants, Flowers, and Fruit: Ellsworth Kelly Lithographs
Norton Simon Museum
411 West Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena
www.nortonsimon.org

All School Exhibition & Undergraduate Thesis
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

SATURDAY 24
EXHIBITION OPENING
Frederick Fisher: Thinking By Hand
Edward Cella Art + Architecture
6018 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.edwardcella.com

MONDAY 26
LECTURE
Steve Goldbeck
San Francisco Bay Area Regional Climate Strategy
7:00 p.m.
California Academy of Sciences
55 Music Concourse Dr.
San Francisco
www.calacademy.org

TUESDAY 27
EXHIBITION OPENING
Celebrate 2010: Grand Opening Exhibit
6:00 p.m.
A+D Museum
6032 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.aplusd.org



COURTESY WORK AC

49 CITIES

SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission Street, San Francisco
Through May 28

To create *49 Cities*, New York-based architects Work AC selected 49 urban schemes, ranging from Le Corbusier's *Radiant City* to Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's plan for Brasilia (1957, above). Originally exhibited at New York's Storefront for Art and Architecture, the show illustrates each plan with a map and metrics such as floor-area ratio (FAR) and population density. Alongside works like Ebenezer Howard's *Garden City* are satires such as Rem Koolhaas' *Exodus*, which envisioned a division between old, "bad" London and a new "zone of architectural and social perfections." Work AC sticks ribbons next to various plans—"Best All-Around: FAR" or "Winner: Density"—teasing out the tension in these schemes between vision and delusion.

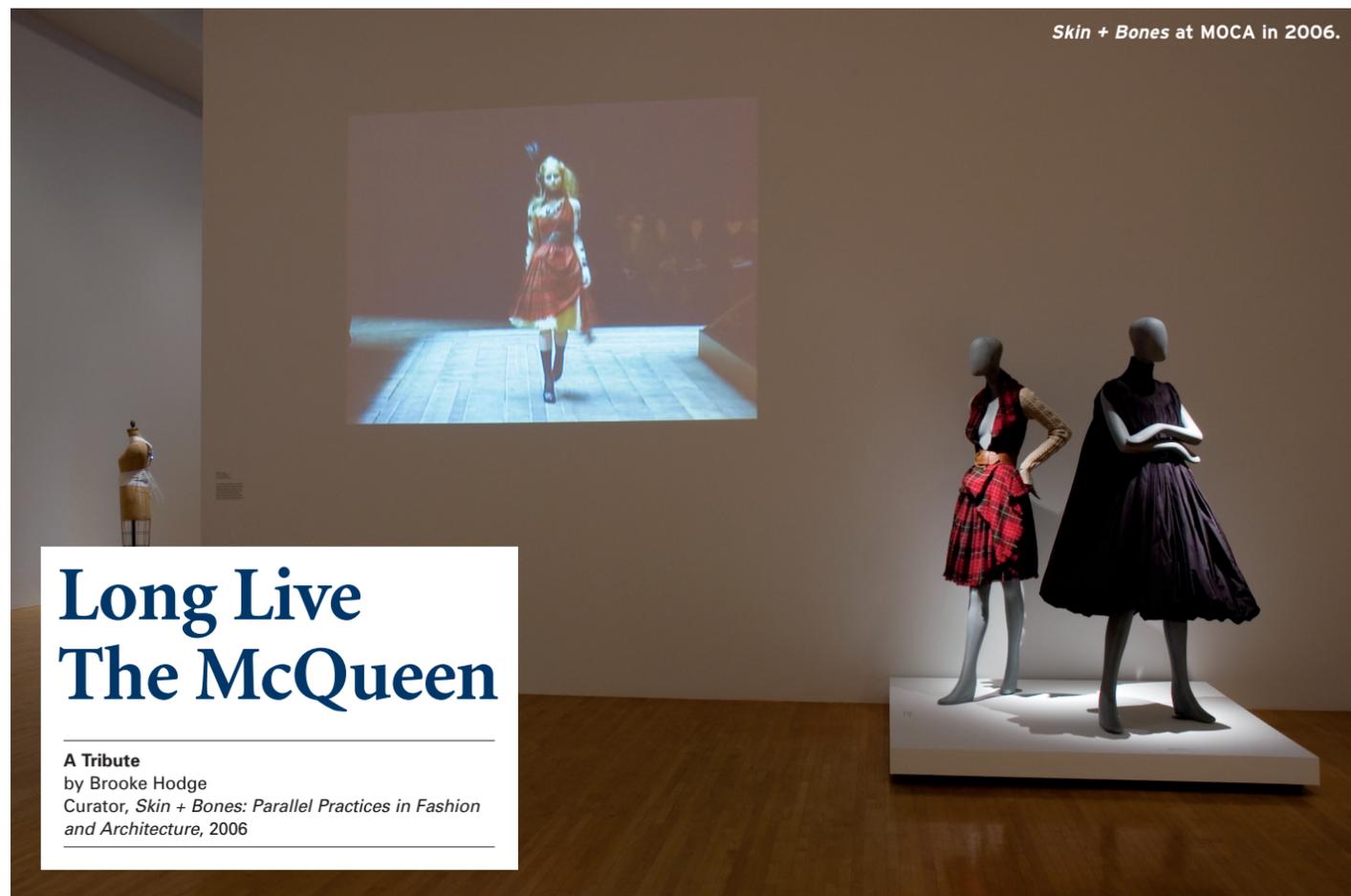


ROLAND HALBE

ECOLOGY.DESIGN.SYNERGY

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Through April 19

At a time when many new buildings are touted as sustainable, the German architecture firm Behnisch Architekten and climate engineers Transsolar have hit the road with *Ecology.Design.Synergy* to "provoke a re-definition of the term 'sustainability,'" according to Christof Jantzen, partner and director of Behnisch's Los Angeles office. The show is illustrated with several of the two firms' collaborations, including the Genzyme Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts and the Norddeutsche Landesbank in Hanover, Germany (2002, above). Subdivided into topics like temperature, sound, and material, the exhibit offers solutions for daylighting and natural ventilation while showing how structures knit into their urban contexts can be socially sustainable, too.



Skin + Bones at MOCA in 2006.

Long Live The McQueen

A Tribute

by Brooke Hodge

Curator, *Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture*, 2006

Much has been written about fashion designer Alexander McQueen since his death by suicide on February 11. Like many, I've been thinking about his work more than ever since hearing the news and am terribly sad and disappointed that such a brilliant designer left us too soon. McQueen's incredible oeuvre has reverberations not only for fashion, but for other creative disciplines as well. Like an architect, he could construct amazing forms from a flat piece of fabric. His fashion shows, which unfolded cinematically but were often over in less than 20 minutes, featured sets and production values that rivaled those of major motion pictures. The fantasy sequences of Terry Gilliam's *The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus* come to mind immediately. With the eye of an artist, an architect, and a filmmaker all rolled into one, McQueen created some of the most breathtaking and inspiring fashion of our time.

While I knew McQueen's work through the pages of *Vogue* or *Harper's Bazaar*, I didn't study it closely until I was developing *Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture*, an exhibition for the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles, which opened in late 2006. The clothes were captivating: beautiful, extravagant, mind-bending, **continued on page 18**

BRIAN FORREST/MOCA, LOS ANGELES

THE DUDE

Ed Ruscha's *Los Angeles*
Alexandra Schwartz
The MIT Press
\$29.95

A Blvd. Called Sunset. Sand in the Vaseline. Dude. I think there is something dangerous going on here. The words and phrases at the center of Ed Ruscha's paintings and drawings consistently evoke the places and ideas, the tropes and attitudes that characterize Los Angeles in the popular imagination. Yet to call him an "LA artist" is to drastically understate the case: Throughout his restless, formally protean career, Ruscha has seized on the banal-sublime commonplaces of the City of Angels—swimming pools, parking lots, gas stations, the word "dude"—not only as the subject matter of his art, but as the foundation of an entire ethos. It is a testament to this highly ambiguous achievement that Ruscha's work—as well as his carefully calculated public image—often inspires the same feelings as the city itself: fascination, perplexity, queasiness, exaltation.

The complex, symbiotic relationship between Ruscha and his star-dusted adoptive city (he grew up in Oklahoma) is the subject of Alexandra Schwartz's new study, *Ed Ruscha's Los Angeles*, which is, shockingly, the first full-length critical treatment of the artist. The

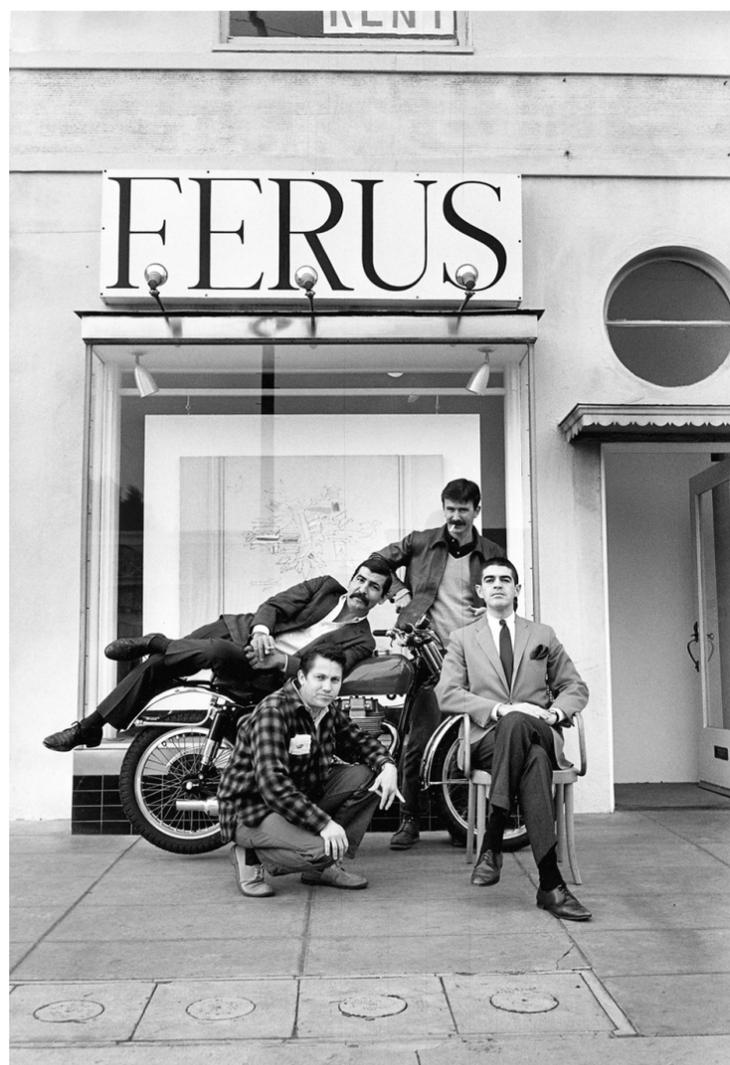
book is loosely organized around four major aspects of Ruscha's career: his role in LA's early avant-garde art community that coalesced around the Ferus Gallery, his ambivalent engagement with Hollywood culture, his ongoing interest in the urban structures and built environment of Los Angeles, and his canny self-promotion in the media. While each of these topics constitutes an original, potentially fruitful approach to Ruscha's life and work, Schwartz has unfortunately spread herself too thin. Few of the book's premises are developed in sufficient depth, and the lack of a substantive overall argument about Ruscha's relationship with LA deprives the study of a coherent narrative. What we are left with mirrors, unintentionally, some of the sprawl and tangle of a freeway interchange.

The book's strongest thread by far deals with Ruscha's strategic adoption of various mythical SoCal personae, such as the classic cowboy, the bohemian avant-gardiste, the Hollywood "bad boy," and the "carefree California funster." As critics and historians have tended to focus more on Ruscha's formal artistic production

Fellow Ferus Studs John Altoon, Billy Al Bengston, Irving Blum, and Ed Moses, taken by William Claxton, 1959.

than on the performative aspects of his career, this shift of focus is both original and overdue. Particularly appealing is a discussion of Ruscha's highly theatrical self-presentation in publicity photographs destined to appear in magazines and exhibition materials; here, the author admirably captures the disconcerting ambiguity of Ruscha's media machinations: Is he a sardonic critic or a cynical exploiter of Hollywood-style mass culture, or both? Overall, Schwartz is circumspect in her treatment of the artist's "sly, self-conscious masquerade." While she approves of its potential as an ironic deconstruction of artistic, sexual, and social identity, she judiciously observes that Ruscha's position as a white, straight, male, critically-sanctioned avant-garde artist allowed him the security to try on various provocative guises without running the risk of being ridiculed or marginalized.

Unfortunately, the problem of identity is the only theme that Schwartz treats with adequate critical and contextual depth. A chapter focusing on Ruscha's social and aesthetic involvement with Hollywood culture, typified by his close relationship with Dennis Hopper, begins promisingly enough but fizzles out in a welter of quotation and anecdote. Further on, Schwartz intriguingly proposes to elucidate the relationship between Ruscha's photographic

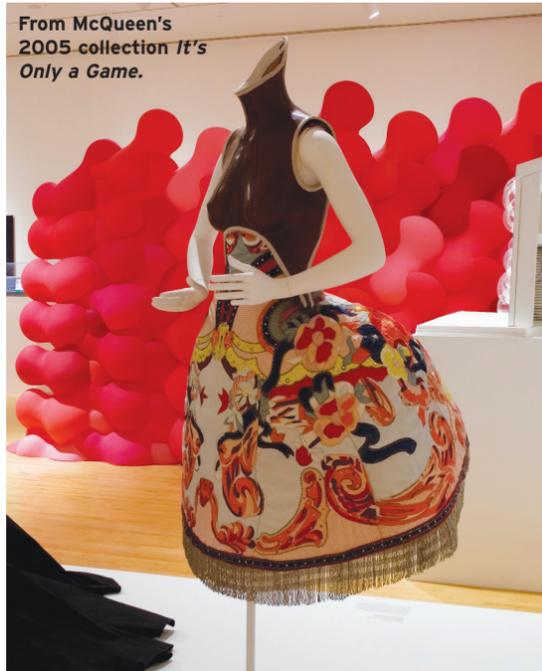


WILLIAM CLAXTON/COURTESY DEMONT PHOTO MANAGEMENT

projects and new developments in contemporary urban theory; yet instead of a coherent account of this relationship, we get summaries of classic texts by Kevin Lynch, Reyner Banham, and Robert

Venturi and Denise Scott Brown interspersed abruptly and almost arbitrarily with descriptions of Ruscha's deadpan architectural taxonomies. Here, as elsewhere, the author **continued on page 18**

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER MARCH 31, 2010



From McQueen's 2005 collection *It's Only a Game*.

BRIAN FORREST/MOCA, LOS ANGELES

LONG LIVE THE MCQUEEN

continued from page 17
futuristic, and ethereal, sometimes all at once.

I was drawn to McQueen's garments as much for their meticulous, often architectonic construction as for their historical allusions, such as those conjured by the slashed tartans of the iconic *Highland Rape* collection (fall/winter 1995–96); for

the strong references to issues of identity seen in the romantic and melancholy *Widows of Culloden* (fall/winter 2006–7); for the extraordinary sculptural silhouettes seen in *It's Only a Game* (spring/summer 2005); and for the sensual, sci-fi combinations of fabrics and prints, seen in *Scanners* (fall/winter 2003–04).

In McQueen's spectacu-

lar presentations, the clothes were truly one with the designer's complex and often fantastical visions. Remarkably, McQueen made the leap from runway to retail quite successfully, but the clothes could never be completely separated from the fantasy.

I selected the pieces for *Skin + Bones* during several visits to the designer's unassuming London studio. Although I didn't meet McQueen himself, I always had the impression that he was there, working on the floor above, and that nothing was done without his tacit approval. Calvin Tsao, who designed the exhibition, wanted something especially strong for the first gallery to signal the intersection of fashion and architecture to viewers immediately. *Widows of Culloden* had just been presented in Paris in a set that consisted of a simple wooden box containing a large glass pyramid around which models walked while a ghostly hologram of Kate Moss (wearing one of the collection's key pieces) materialized. We were awestruck, and

thought the ensemble could bring elements of the two disciplines together in a dynamic, immersive way.

Alas, transplanting McQueen's vision to the exhibition was beyond the capabilities of a museum without the deep pockets of a Gucci Group, where McQueen's label resided. Still, the individual McQueen pieces generously lent by the studio were strong enough to exert a considerable presence in the exhibition. In several cases, their juxtaposition with architectural projects was uncanny. The cupola shape of the embroidered dress with the leather bodice from *It's Only a Game* echoed the glass bubbles of a corner of Greg Lynn's Slavin House, while the structure of both McQueen's laced leather dress from *Scanners* and Lynn's *Blob Wall* was created through the repetition of a single module: a simple shoelace for McQueen and a trilobed plastic blob for Lynn.

McQueen's spring/summer 2010 show *Plato's Atlantis*, presented in Paris in early October 2009, was

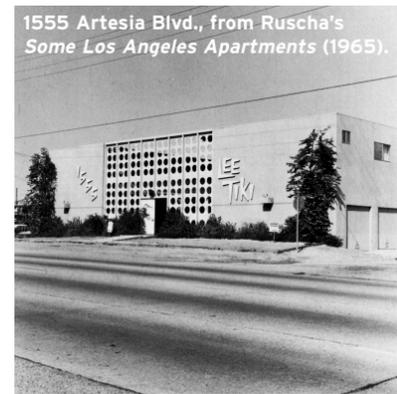
a tour de force. In an interview conducted just before that show, Nick Knight asked McQueen where and when he was happiest, and he answered that it was when he was scuba diving. In *Plato's Atlantis*, which had been, radically, broadcast live from the runway, McQueen succeeded in bringing to life the world that he saw beneath the sea and in his mind's eye. Feet planted firmly on the ground—albeit in outrageous lobster-claw shoes—models walked the runway wearing garments printed with complex, digitally generated images inspired by nature in shapes that at times recalled a crustacean's carapace and at others the gently undulating tentacles of a jellyfish. McQueen, fittingly, described Plato's definition of Atlantis as "a metaphor for a kind of Neverland, where people find sanctuary in bad times."

BROOKE HODGE, CURATOR OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN AT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN LOS ANGELES FROM 2001-2009, IS AN LA-BASED WRITER AND INDEPENDENT CURATOR.

THE DUDE continued from page 17 appears content to remain on the surface of a potentially fascinating topic.

This tendency to substitute description and citation for sustained critical analysis is the major flaw of *Ed Ruscha's Los Angeles*. While Schwartz is often successful in evoking the profound ambiguity of both Ruscha's artistic project and his relationship to Los Angeles, she generally declines to make any sweeping or even modest conclusions about what this ambiguity might mean—either about Angeleno and American culture, or about Ruscha's place within art history. The next critic to tackle this artist's enigmatic, deceptively superficial oeuvre will need to be more aggressive in asking what lies behind the palm trees and parking lots so beloved of American art's coolest dude.

MICHAEL PAULSEN IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.



1555 Artesia Blvd., from Ruscha's *Some Los Angeles Apartments* (1965).

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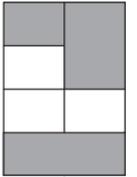




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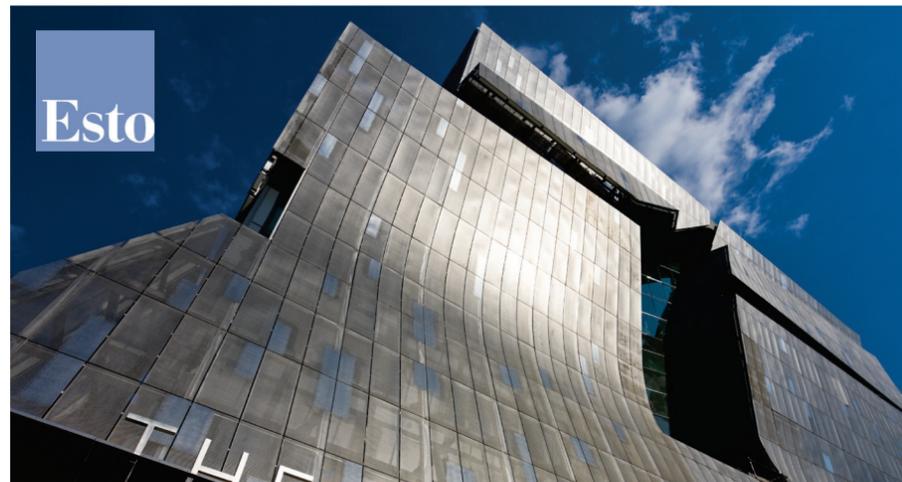


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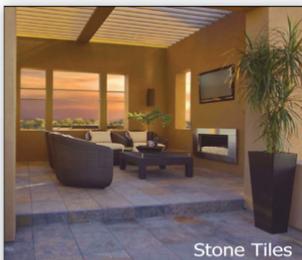
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COURTESY HELLER MANUS

On April 15, the San Francisco Planning Commission will again take up the proposed 38-story 555 Washington Street tower, designed by Heller Manus for AEGON, Lowe Enterprises, and Liberty Hill. At its March 18 meeting, the commission certified the project's EIR. (Because of a public notice problem, the rest of the agenda was held over, but my sense is that the tower already had the votes going in.)

At an earlier hearing on February 11, community activist Sue Hestor asked the commissioners, "Does 'new urbanism' say that we have to fight suburban sprawl by putting 400-foot buildings everywhere in San Francisco?" Hestor has a point. For far too long smart growth has meant density *über alles* on both sides of the Bay. The result is a dog's breakfast, for the most part, much of which has little to do with walkable urbanism and nothing to do with urbanity. It's time to get nuanced about density. As 555 Washington demonstrates, density's context is not just the block itself—the immediate environs—but what is influenced and perhaps threatened by its increase.

The 555 Washington tower disregards current zoning for

the block it shares with William Pereira's 1972 Transamerica Pyramid, still the tallest building in the city. Next to it, the new tower doesn't look so big, of course, and it comes with a package of ground-level amenities. For Heller Manus, best known for political acumen, the design is okay, if cribbed from the late-modern playbook. All of this has won it an endorsement from the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, an important advocacy group.

So far, so good—I can imagine the trail of logic that brought SPUR on board. It all seems fairly harmless, and if it violates the planning code in the process, well, the code's out of date anyway. So why should the Planning Commission hesitate to move ahead with 555 Washington when it takes it up again? There are three good reasons for them to slow the tower down and reconsider its larger context.

First, let's put a halt to case-by-case rezoning. Dropping a housing tower into the Pyramid block continues a sorry tradition of case-by-case rezoning in San Francisco. Back in May 2009, *San Francisco Chronicle* critic John King—addressing the 555 Washington tower specifically—

spoke up for "a re-imagined, focused plan for the financial and retail district." He also noted the price the city pays for not having one: "As long as downtown is up for grabs, in effect, count on the process to grow more strident and cynical." San Francisco's Planning Department may be hobbled by the downturn, King observed, but isn't the real opportunity of a downturn to plan intelligently for the future?

Given the state of the housing market, there's no urgency at all to approve the tower. By delaying it, the commissioners can avoid repeating the travesty of exempting Heller Manus' Folsom/Spear Towers, now the Infinity, from the Rincon Area Plan. (They were approved, and then a new Rincon plan was announced—with a dotted line around the towers that suggested that its eastern boundary had been quickly redrawn.)

Second, add density to the core, not the edge. The Pyramid block is on the northern edge of San Francisco's Financial District, considerably past California Street. To its north, the buildings are much lower, an eclectic mix whose tenants benefit from its current density.

This is where you find two of the region's best bookstores, City Lights and Stout's, and many of its best dealers in the decorative arts. You want urbanity? It starts here, yet the area clearly thrives because of its proximity to the financial district. Shanghai, facing the same dilemma, has opted to preserve similar areas like the Puxi district, recognizing—as Singapore did not—that they are irreplaceable. This is why SF's planning code sought, a generation ago, to preserve the area. Let's give its framers some credit for foresight.

The question 555 Washington raises is not whether it's inappropriate for its site, but what happens next. As UC Berkeley's Peter Bosselmann once pointed out to me, adding density at the edge puts pressure on the lower-density neighborhoods that adjoin it. He was talking about the Rincon area, but the comment is even more applicable to the north end of the central business district, where recent and proposed projects along Kearny Street are also testing the higher-density waters. A generation ago, KPF's building at 600 California had to step down to blend in with lower buildings to the north. That's the power of a planning

code that's actually enforced. If enough exceptions to it like 555 Washington get approved, the current 400-foot "wall" along Washington Street is unlikely to hold.

Third, focus on urbanity, not just density. The question to ask of density is what does it really contribute to the city? This takes in everything: scale and mix, design quality, effect on microclimate, synergy with surrounding uses, transit access, etc. Instead of giving 555 Washington a pass, the Planning Commission still has the opportunity to send a much-needed message to the city and the developer community: No more case-by-case! Now—in the lull before the resumption of business as usual—is the right time to take a comprehensive look at how the district should grow, gaining rather than losing urbanity, and how much added density, if any, the areas north of it should absorb. These are the real and pressing issues that the EIR did not address. The commissioners have one last chance to do so. They should take it.

JOHN PARMAN WRITES FOR AN, ARCADE, AND ARCCA. HE EDITS PRINT AND DIGITAL PUBLICATIONS FOR GENSLER.



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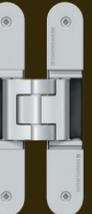
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