

# THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

## 04\_04.28.2010

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NISHIZAWA AND SEJIMA SHARE THIS YEAR'S PRITZKER PRIZE

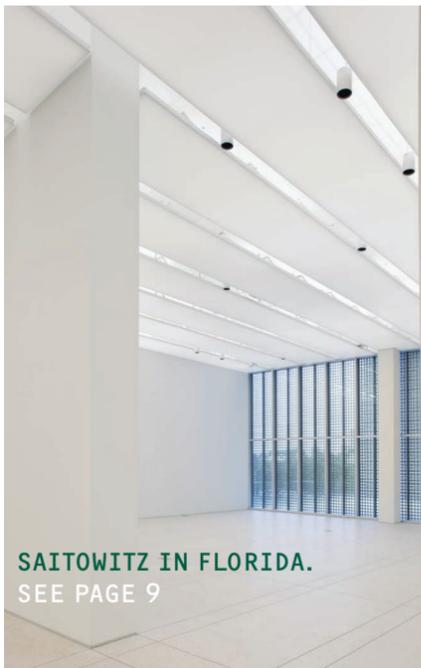


TAKASHI OKAMOTO

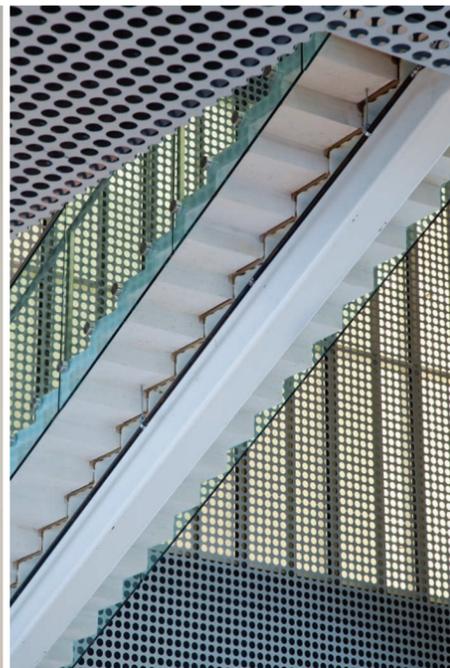
## Salute to SANAA

On March 28, when Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA were named the 2010 Pritzker Prize Laureates, architecture's highest honor, it was a vote for clarity and precision in architecture. Partners for more than 15 years, the pair have designed a body of work including houses, museums, and

educational buildings—both in their native Japan and around the world—of singular refinement. Among their best-known works are the O-Museum in Nagano, Japan; the Toledo Museum of Art's Glass Pavilion in Ohio; the New Museum in New York; and the new Rolex Learning **continued on page 2**



SAITOWITZ IN FLORIDA. SEE PAGE 9



RICHARD BARNES

GEHRY'S EISENHOWER MEMORIAL UNVEILED



COURTESY EISENHOWER MEMORIAL COMMISSION

## FRANK LIKES IKE

Dwight D. "Ike" Eisenhower—U.S. president, commander of Allied Forces in Europe during World War II, and architect of the nation's interstate highway system in the 1950s—is finally getting his due. On March 25, the Eisenhower Memorial Commission (EMC) unveiled the design by Frank Gehry of the 34<sup>th</sup> president's monument, an open green space in the heart of **continued on page 2**



ALISSA WALKER

RIDING THE FUNICULAR OF THE PAST IN THE FUTURE

## HELLO, ANGELS

On March 15 the 109-year-old, 289-foot funicular, Angels Flight, reopened on LA's Bunker Hill, and I wondered if anyone actually used it. Not just rode it—in fact, the Flight counted 30,000 boardings within the first two weeks of reopening—but actually *used* it. Downtown is now full of seemingly **continued on page 7**

LA CUTS COULD MEAN HEADACHES FOR ARCHITECTS

## SLOW CITY

Simon Pastucha used to be one-half of the City of Los Angeles' urban design studio. But since his co-worker Emily Gabel-Luddy recently retired early under a municipal austerity program, he is now the head and sole employee of a bureau that seeks to improve the aesthetic **continued on page 11**

CONTENTS

04 NEW RFQ

12 WATER WARES

13 GOING PUBLIC

18 COOK AND THE ART OF DRAWING

04 EAVESDROP  
10 STUDIO VISIT  
17 DIARY  
20 MARKETPLACE



COURTESY METABOLIC STUDIO

ANNENBERG FOUNDATION BUYS A. QUINCY JONES BARN IN LA

## CENTURY CITY PASTORAL

Architecture enthusiasts in LA can breathe a sigh of relief now that the Annenberg Foundation has purchased A. Quincy Jones' much-beloved barn, the architect's home and studio. The barn had been on the market for over two years, and many worried it might fall into the wrong hands.

The foundation bought the property last November and this month began a renovation, which is being undertaken by Frederick Fisher, who also designed the foundation's Annenberg Community Beach House in Santa Monica. Chora, an Annenberg-sponsored arts incubator, will occupy the home and **continued on page 6**

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## MAKE NEW FRIENDS

Spring is in the air, even for architects. U.S. housing starts in March were up 1.1 percent, the third straight month of increases. And the AIA's On The Boards survey showed that index up two points in February, a welcome change.

Are architects ready to take advantage when things bounce back? After attending a screening of the new documentary *William Krisel, Architect* at the Getty on April 13, I was struck by how far removed most architects are from the kind of mainstream construction Krisel did, and did well. Midcentury architects like Krisel, along with developers like Bob Alexander and Joseph Eichler, made successful careers out of "quality work for the masses." Today, too much of the best work is reserved for esoteric academic ideas and ultra high-end houses. The business of designing living, shopping, and working spaces for average people is the job of mediocre, corporate-controlled "building," not architecture.

Why can't architects once again work closely with the developers who are building most of the country? The top ten homebuilders in the U.S. are Centex, D.R. Horton, Pulte Homes, Lennar, NVR, K. Hovnanian Homes, Toll Brothers, KB Home, Beazer Homes, and Ryland Homes. How many of these guys have you heard of or heard from? Without meeting them, how else are they going to learn that there might be another way, that there might be people who want housing that's more up-to-date and appropriate than a faux-Tuscan McMansion?

As Krisel told me in a recent interview, architects need to convince developers that they can do things faster and cheaper, and that the results will pay off. Despite an often-accurate perception that developers are stuck in tradition, Victor Mirontschuk, Chairman at EDI Architecture, a national home architect, told me that many homebuilders are actively looking for innovative designs that will help them stand out from their competitors. "We're seeing a demographic shift, where builders are trying to cater to the new generation of homeowners," he said. "This is the Ikea generation. They want simple, modern stuff."

Mirontschuk shares the worry of many developers that architects are strangers to doing things cheaply and realistically, and that they don't recognize that their aesthetic stubbornness is a turn-off to clients. On the other side of the equation, architects need to reach out to developers; they are not the enemy, banality and joblessness are. Hop a ride to a trade show and enter homebuilders' competitions like the Best American Living (BALA) and Gold Nugget awards.

There are a few architects dabbling in homebuilding. Michelle Kaufmann has partnered with modular homemaker Blu Homes. Office of Mobile Design and Marmol Radziner have reputations for both designing and trying to sell prefab models to large audiences. But prefab as a niche product isn't practical enough. As the wheels start grinding again, we need the next generation of Eichlers and Krisels to take up arms *with* developers, not in opposition to them. Just imagine the possibilities. **SAM LUBELL**

**FRANK LIKES IKE** continued from front page  
Washington, D.C., next door to the National Air and Space Museum.

In April 2009, the EMC and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) selected Gehry Partners' concept after a three-stage competition conducted under the GSA's Design Excellence program. Other firms to submit schemes included Krueck & Sexton of Chicago, Rogers Marvel Architects of New York, and PWP Landscape Architecture of Berkeley, California.

Located on four acres at the base of Capitol Hill on Independence Avenue between 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> streets SW, Gehry's design establishes a contemplative space that nods to traditional monument design while at the same time breaking new ground. Thirteen massive limestone columns enclose the site, an homage to the neoclassical Jefferson and Lincoln memorials. At the center of these stands a grove of oak trees through which visitors will walk to view presentations on Eisenhower's many accomplishments. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the design is a series of massive woven stainless-steel tapestries that hang from the colonnade. The tapestries will depict scenes from Ike's life on a grand scale. Gehry Partners also carefully arranged the memorial's elements to preserve the view corridor along Maryland Avenue to the Capitol.

"The approach to the design was to create a cohesive and important civic space and urban monument in the heart of the capitol region that provides a quiet and contemplative space for learning about the vast accomplishments of President Eisenhower," Gehry said in a statement. "He was a masterful but modest leader. My aim was to capture that spirit with the design."

The Eisenhower Memorial will be the first presidential tribute constructed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and only the seventh in U.S. history. The last such monument was built in honor of Franklin D. Roosevelt and opened in 1997. EMC was formed by Congress in 1999 and includes Eisenhower's grandson David Eisenhower among its 12 commissioners.

Last October, President Obama signed a congressional appropriations bill that included \$19 million for the project, securing funding for the completion of the design. In January, Gehry and the Gilbane Building Company signed a design contract with the GSA. In all, the project is expected to cost between \$90 million and \$120 million, and completion is expected within five years.

**AARON SEWARD****WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM****Rolex Learning Center**

HISAO SUZUKI

**SALUTE TO SANAA** continued from front page  
Center in Lausanne, Switzerland.

"They explore like few others the phenom-

enal properties of continuous space, lightness, transparency, and materiality to create a subtle synthesis. Sejima and Nishizawa's architecture stands in direct contrast with the bombastic and rhetorical," the jury said in its citation. "Instead, they seek the essential qualities of architecture that result in a much-appreciated straightforwardness, economy of means, and restraint in their work." Jury chairman Lord Palumbo went even further in noting that the jury found their work "ingenious but not overly or overtly clever."

Soon after it opened last year, *New Yorker* critic Paul Goldberger wrote that the New Museum "is original, but doesn't strain to reinvent the idea of a museum. Sejima and Nishizawa have a way of combining intensity

with understatement." In each of their projects, SANAA seems to start from scratch, investigating new forms and materials, and employing innovative spatial, surface, and programmatic elements.

In an interview with Victoria Newhouse for *Architectural Digest*, Sejima said the Glass Pavilion's structural glass walls "show a different kind of relationship between spaces. Everyone can see the relationship between different functions and different spaces."

In terms of Pritzker politics, the recognition of SANAA's two partners somewhat blunts two criticisms that have trailed the prize: the absence of female laureates—with the exception of Zaha Hadid in 2004—and the omission of co-recognition for Denise Scott

Brown along with her husband and collaborator Robert Venturi in 1991. Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, laureates in 2001, are the only other partnership in which both principals have been honored.

The members of the jury, in addition to Lord Palumbo, include Alejandro Aravena, Rolf Fehlbaum, Carlos Jimenez, Juhani Pallasmaa, Renzo Piano, Karen Stein, and Executive Director Martha Thorne. Sponsored by the Chicago-based Hyatt Foundation, the Pritzker Prize comes with \$100,000 and a medal based on a design by Louis Sullivan. This year, for the first time since 1983, the award ceremony will be held in New York, on Ellis Island on May 17.

**ALAN G. BRAKE**



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

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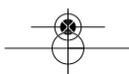
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COURTESY PROJECT FROG

Last year's announcement that San Francisco's Presidio Parkway relocation would force the Crissy Field Center to find a temporary home left officials scrambling. They had less than a year to find a space for the center, a joint educational venture between the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and the National Park Service. Enter Project Frog, a San Francisco-based manufacturer of smart and sustainable buildings that is the brainchild of architect Mark Miller. The firm created a 7,500-square-foot facility composed of four FROGs (Flexible Response to Ongoing Growth), structural steel and glass modules, which, with walls made of pre-engineered 4-by-8-foot panels, could be quickly assembled. With their 12-to-19-foot sloped ceilings and clerestory windows, the FROGs are light and airy, and intelligently house their infrastructure underfoot, freeing up ceilings and walls from heating, cooling, and electrical systems and making future add-ons easy. The project broke ground in July, and the center recently hopped into its new home, a picturesque waterfront location with the Golden Gate Bridge as backdrop. The center will remain in its new location for five to seven years. In addition to the center, with its ecological programs that serve urban youth, the facility also houses the Beach Hut Café, which serves coffee and muffins. LEED Gold certification is pending. **JOANNE FURIO**

## WAY TO GO, CLIVE

The unofficial mayor of Silver Lake, **Barbara Bestor**, once again transformed local Mexican restaurant Casita del Campo into a sweaty mosh pit for architects and other designers at the end of March. Among those dancing like teenagers were **Clive Wilkinson** and his beautiful, young (miaow alert!) girlfriend **Cheryl Lee Scott**, a local real estate agent. Back when we reported on his fantastic new house in West Hollywood, we couldn't help but notice that it seemed an empty place for a bachelor.

## SEPARATED AT BIRTH

Of the two Johns involved with San Francisco's Public Architecture—that's **John Cary**, who was the executive director, and **John Peterson**, the founder—the former has announced his departure from the nonprofit organization, without any other immediate plans. Peterson, who has been the public face of the pro-bono, 1-percent work program, will continue as president. Said Cary: "I got the organization up and running, and we've been able to build a great staff and attract incredible firms to our cause." With Peterson having come on board full-time in 2008 as president, however, Cary's 100-percent commitment didn't seem to cut it. He can at least go out on a high note, that being *The Power of Pro Bono*, his magnum opus due out from Metropolis Books/Distributed Art Publishers this fall.

## WHO KNEW?

Looks like it takes a massive slowdown to discover that architects know how to do something other than solve design problems. Design collective **De Lab** (Design East of La Brea) took advantage of the moment and invited a gaggle of creative LA architects and designers to sell their artistic and non-architectural products at their pop-up store at a manic and crowded LA Artwalk on April 8. This included the irresistibly mischievous dolls of **Debi Van Zyl**, the live air plants of **Kara Bartelt/toHOLD**, the vintage and classy stationery of **Cartoules Letterpress**, the hip accessories of **Poketo**, the always-trendy **Peri Lamps**, and many more. Oh, and speaking of hidden talents, we just learned that LA architects **David Martin** and **Glen Irani** are both motorcycle racers. Really? When did these folks pick up these skills? Have architects in fact been living, and not just working all this time?

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## RFQ ALERT

There are high hopes for this adaptive-reuse project in San Francisco's Hunters Point neighborhood, which is gearing up to be a model business center of the future and underpin the area's economic growth. The building at Crisp Road and Spear Avenue will contain the local offices for the UN Global Compact, devoted to promoting sustainable business practices worldwide. The rest of the space is conceived as an incubator for clean-tech

startups. Appropriately, the winning bid will have to be very green, with LEED Platinum (for core and shell, since this is a remodel) as the goal. There's plenty to work with: The 1948 Navy warehouse has 260,000 square feet of space and was built to last with a sturdy steel frame. The project is being managed by the city's Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) in partnership with the San Francisco Redevelopment

Agency. The federal government has chipped in \$7.25 million to come up with a plan and do some initial renovation in a first phase. The overall budget is estimated at \$35 million. "We're really excited to see what people come up with," said Kelly Pretzer, a project manager at the OEWD. The RFQ is seeking a project management team that will include architecture, engineering, and construction, as well as financial analysis and marketing expertise. Find more RFQ information at [sfdevelopment.org](http://sfdevelopment.org), issued April 9. **LYDIA LEE**

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 28, 2010



The barn includes a lofted central room (left) and more compact office and storage space (right).

COURTESY METABOLIC STUDIO

**CENTURY CITY PASTORAL** continued from front page use it for offices and for its artist-in-residence program.

The structure, located in LA's Century City, is Jones' redesign of an old barn, completed in 1965. The large, open space has 35-foot ceilings, large sliding doors, a pitched-roof, redwood paneling, elegant built-in cabinetry, and carefully-oriented windows that allow rich natural light to flow in from several angles. Annenberg would not disclose the price paid for the house. The previous owner was Jones' widow Elaine Sewell Jones, who stayed there until the end of 2009.

The renovation will not change the barn

structurally or aesthetically, but will provide for a cleanup and stabilization. "We're using a very light touch," stressed Fisher, whose own office is located in a Jones building just down the street. Work includes updated lighting fixtures, window upgrades for sound and thermal insulation, and new ventilation systems. Fisher wants to leave much of it feeling the way it always has. "The place really felt like you had stepped back in time," he said.

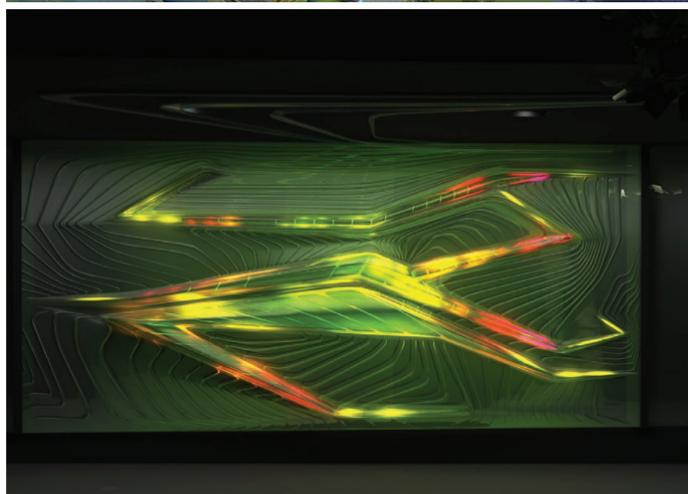
Chora, a part of Lauren Bon's Metabolic Studio (well-known for its *Not a Cornfield* project, which converted a former industrial site just outside of downtown LA into a plant-rich public park), will move its offices to the

barn's small studio later this year and hopes to have its first artist-in-residence move in by the fall. The organization also plans to use the space for lectures and events, said Chora director Carolyne Aycaguer. In addition to its new artist-in-residence program, Chora provides grants and an annual prize to artists.

The barn, said Bridget Kelly, program associate at the Annenberg Foundation, was chosen in large part to lend inspiration to visiting artists.

"You walk in and you just are in awe of every detail," she said. Another reason for the choice, said Kelly, was Jones' long history with the Annenberg family. Jones

designed Sunnylands, Annenberg's Palm Springs Estate (Metabolic Studio's Bon is Walter Annenberg's granddaughter and grew up visiting Sunnylands), as well as the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Southern California. The foundation, added Kelly, has made historic preservation a top priority. In addition to renovating the barn and transforming the recently-acquired Marion Davies pool and guesthouse into the Annenberg Community Beach House, the foundation is converting the landmark Beverly Hills Post Office into the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. **SL**



On April 5 at SCI-Arc, the winners of AIA/LA's Arch Is award were celebrated for their youth and talent: Oyler Wu Collaborative and Tom Wiscombe/Emergent. Both are pushing the envelope in terms of design, engineering, and program, and are even starting to build things.

Oyler Wu is known for its aluminum-tube installations like *Pendulum Plane*, a movable armature for exhibitions at the LA Forum's new gallery space in Hollywood, and *Density Fields*, a daringly angular installation at the M&A Gallery in Silver Lake. But with a new commission to build one of 100 houses at the Ordos development in Inner Mongolia, the firm is now creating architecture. The house (top, right) is around 10,000 square feet, and features faceted concrete geometries wrapped around an internal void illuminated by light wells. The firm is also hoping to get approval for a new housing tower in Taipei (bottom, right) that uses dynamic stainless steel sun screens and flowing balconies to mask the simple, repetitive units behind.

Emergent is fusing biology and architecture, with structures that conduct heat, air, and water like natural organisms. Its proposal for the Garak Fish Market in Korea (top, left) has a kaleidoscopic roof with colorful gardens and pleats that carve out niches for program elements. Another project, the Flower Street Bioreactor (bottom, left)—for downtown LA but recently scuttled—would have been a backlit, molded acrylic aquarium inserted into the facade of a building, containing algae colonies producing oil through photosynthesis. **SL**

COURTESY OYLER WU COLLABORATIVE, EMERGENT

**HELLO, ANGELS** continued from front page throwback rail projects: A proposal for a streetcar just received \$250,000 in funding, and the new Gold Line extension swings through an old right-of-way to East LA. At any other moment, Angels Flight would be a ride, an urban folly. But the fact that it's reopening right now made me wonder if it might just be emblematic of our resurgent rail movement, a transportation link that people actually boarded to get from A to B, just like they did in 1901.

The self-proclaimed "shortest railway in the world" has had its own ups and downs. It was the vision of Colonel James Ward Eddy—engineer and, so we hear, friend of Abraham Lincoln—to service the residents who lived in Victorian houses at its top, a steep hike for those in petticoats and button-up boots shuttling their goods from the Grand Central Market for a penny each way. But declining ridership ground it to a halt around 1969, when it was disassembled and stored in a CRA warehouse. When resurrected as part of the California Plaza redevelopment, it was moved a half-block to the south, since a series of stacked residences

around the 3rd Street tunnel had taken its place. The non-profit Angels Flight Railway Foundation raised money for the renovation and began operating it again in 1996. Then it was shut down after a 2001 accident where one of the trains plummeted to the bottom of the hill, smashing into the other. One person was killed, and the founder of the engineering firm responsible supposedly fled to Mexico. Plagued with funding issues and safety inspections for the last nine years, Angels Flight has been closed for so long that most people might have dismissed it as an abandoned Steampunk installation.

Tickets are a quarter each (or five rides for a dollar, which will get you an old-fashioned book of tickets), purchased from the operator wearing era-appropriate attire in the ticket booth. You board a wood-paneled streetcar lined with faux-vintage ads from local businesses. In 45 seconds, you've gone from the glass towers of California Plaza to the Beaux-Arts buildings on Hill Street and the smell of rotisserie chickens wafting from the Grand Central Market. Angels Flight could be the most on-time, overall-pleasant transit experience in Southern California. The

twin trains, named Sinai and Olivet, trade places every few minutes, from 6:45 a.m. to 10 p.m., like two caterpillars inching up and down a bougainvillea-covered hillside of Angels Knoll park.

On a sunny April morning I rode Sinai three times, up and down its jingly, wooden diagonal, enjoying the view and the time-traveling aspects. But I encountered only joyriders like myself. On my last round trip, Sinai paused at Hill Street and a woman with a camouflage backpack appeared on the seat in front of me. As we started the ascent, I looked closer and realized she had a familiar flush to her cheeks. "Do you work up at California Plaza?" I asked. She nodded. "Do you ride this to work?" She grinned. "I do sometimes," she said. "Especially when I'm late. It's nice not walking up the stairs anymore." Score one for the rail renaissance. **ALISSA WALKER**



ALISSA WALKER



EHRlich ARCHITECTS

## UNVEILED

### ABUJA GATEWAY

During his years in the Peace Corps, Steven Ehrlich absorbed the lessons and imagery of African vernacular architecture and then designed an open-air university theater workshop in Nigeria while he was teaching there in the mid 1970s. Now he has returned to the source with a competition-winning design for a symbolic gateway to Abuja, the new capital of Nigeria. In contrast to the village-like character of his theater workshop, the new project is a soaring abstract form inspired by the

traditional bow harp and the looms on which Nigerians weave colorful fabrics. Its centerpiece is a footbridge over the expressway that links the city to the airport, oriented north-south to symbolize national unity.

Working with project architect Patricia Rhee and Nigerian firm Triad Associates, Ehrlich sketched elements that would sit lightly on the land and provide a forum for arts and recreation, as well as a ceremonial reception hall for visiting heads of state. Flags will be strung along the tensile cables supporting the walkway, while a bowed canopy of photovoltaic panels will shade the 800-seat

amphitheater. The concrete structure with its canted pylon will be stained dark red, the color of the native clay. Sinuous walkways and ramps will tie the complex together and carry people over a water cascade. The 98-acre site will include a marketplace, playing fields, a gymnasium, and a children's zoo to make it a year-round destination easily reached by bus from the city center six miles away.

**MICHAEL WEBB**

Architect: Ehrlich Architects  
Client: Government of Nigeria  
Location: Abuja, Nigeria  
Completion: To Be Determined

# Inset Sliders



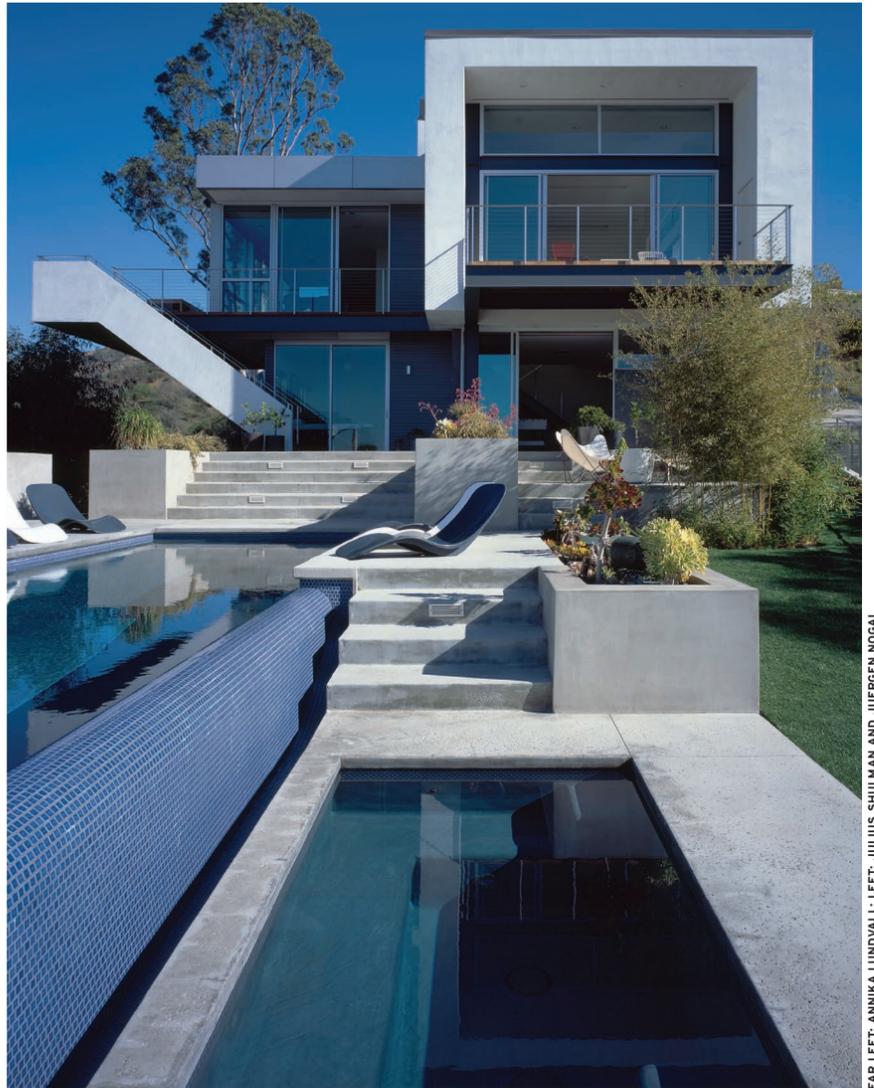
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While common in some places, it is rare for an LA firm to build its own projects. One of the great exceptions is the small downtown firm LeanArch, founded in 2000, which has its own general contractor license and loves to get involved with the construction side of things. Their co-founder, James Meyer,

lights up at words like site, location, construction, or boots. "It's all about getting your hands dirty," he said.

LeanArch has built a number of LA houses in this manner, including three in the Hollywood Hills alone. Perhaps the most dramatic is the Wild Oak House, perched in a tranquil spot in Griffith

Park, with views to the horizon, not to mention toward the Hollywood Sign. (They've also built houses nearby on Green Oak and Park Oak drives.)

The home was first made possible through an immense effort to level out a very steep hill and create a huge deck for the cantilevered pool and party area. The owner, music businessman Tony Yanow, throws legendary parties here. The firm went through five sets of permits stretching over six years to accomplish this and to build a 20-foot perimeter retaining wall that now disappears under this plinth, which includes not only the blue-tiled infinity pool but a small pool house as well.

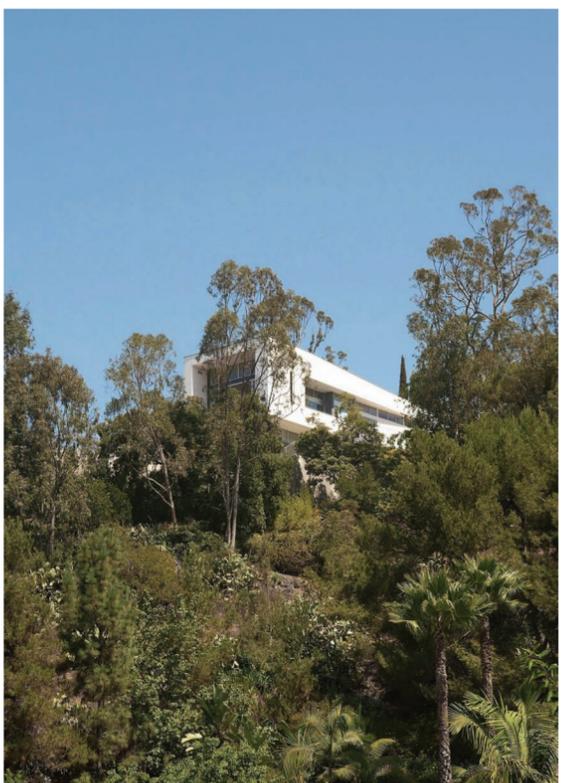
The project itself is a fairly simple rectilinear design—somewhat reminiscent of a Case Study House with a contemporary twist—that juts over the hillside with multiple steel cantilevers and large glass walls, spreading itself over the scenery "like a bird," as Meyer puts it. A darkly colored aluminum underbelly maximizes the steel frame structure's floating aspect by allowing the white stucco walls to

dominate above. These walls shade the house's large windows beneath elements that fold out like modernist origami.

Inside, the open plan allows spaces to flow into each other, with attention focused on the marvelous views. The overall 3,200-square-foot size is relatively small, but effective in this setting. No space is wasted: A hallway in the center of the house doubles as the owner's library. Simple but low-key and elegant material choices include Montauk Black Slate, polished concrete floors, stainless steel guardrails, and white oak cabinetry. Strategic cantilevers over the pool and on the sides of the house, as well as glass walls on the north and west elevations, allow one to move out to the exterior immediately. The roof is covered with solar thermal panels, which heat the pool.

For Meyer, the greatest validation came when photographer Julius Shulman came to shoot the project, spent the day, and gushed about how much he liked the house. "That afternoon was a life changer for me," said Meyer. **SL**

**Clockwise from top left: An outdoor stairway projects off the side of the house; the pool area is built on leveled ground that was once very steep; wall-sized windows allow light and views deep into the living room; the kitchen is compact but beautiful; the house seems to project off the side of the hill.**





RICHARD BARNES

SF ARCHITECT DESIGNS AN ART MUSEUM IN FLORIDA

# TRUE GRIT

While Stanley Saitowitz has been given the brush-off by his hometown art museum, SFMOMA (he does not appear to be on the short-list for its upcoming expansion), his newly completed Tampa Art Museum (TAM) shows his ability to deliver bang for the buck.

Saitowitz's design was not the first considered by the museum, whose collection had long outgrown its size. In 2001, TAM hired Rafael

Viñoly, whose \$76 million proposal ended up being too costly. The Saitowitz design cost a mere \$26 million, meaning that the 66,000-square-foot structure went for about \$400 a square foot in hard costs. The architect describes his priorities as a virtue of the project: "It was driven first and foremost to display art, instead of conceived as an independent artwork," said Saitowitz, adding, "It makes a

statement in its reticence rather than in its singularity."

The design's spare orthogonality is classically modernist, with no curving lines or jagged angles. The entry level is clear glass, and the two stories above, which contain all the art (raised safely above flood levels), are contained in a metal box that cantilevers over the first floor. The shimmering cladding is made of two layers of perforated anodized aluminum, separated by a gap and slightly offset to create interesting moire effects. Within, the galleries are completely white, with concrete floors to better show off the artwork. Two big cutouts—one is a covered sculpture terrace,

the other an open-air void with a bridge across it—hint at the modular nature of the design.

The museum has a very regular floor plan, consisting of two square units, each containing nine blocks. One unit contains the public galleries, the other the museum offices. "One of the realities about museums is that they are about collecting, and always have to expand," said Saitowitz. "So rather than design this as a closed object, the museum was designed with the idea that they could double their gallery space in the future."

At night, the side of the museum that faces the water is awash in color, thanks to LED lighting. The

Naturally lit galleries are lofty and warm; a large cutout in the aluminum facade; the open lobby is pierced by a sculptural stair.

other sides have been wired to do the same, and await funding to be turned on. "It's the first real work of architecture in Tampa in a decade, and has exceeded our expectations immensely," said the museum's executive director, Todd Smith. One presumes that in this case, the architect will be invited back to do any future expansion. LL

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Chester Elton spoke to rave reviews at the 2008 Commercial Construction Show.

### SHOW SCHEDULE

#### Tuesday, June 8<sup>th</sup>

8:00 AM - 7:00 PM Attendee & Exhibitor Registration Open

#### Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup>

8:00 AM - 7:00 PM Attendee & Exhibitor Registration Open  
 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM Seminar Track 1  
 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM Seminar Track 2  
 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM Exhibit Hall Open  
 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM Industry Executive Reception - End-Users Only  
 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Gala Casino Night - Open to All Attendees

#### Thursday, June 10<sup>th</sup>

8:00 AM - 2:00 PM Attendee Registration Open  
 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Keynote Speaker - Chester Elton  
 11:00 PM - 2:00 PM Exhibit Hall Open  
 2:00 PM Show Closes - See you next year in Orlando!

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 28, 2010

MUSÉE NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS DU QUÉBEC



CANTOS MUSIC FOUNDATION'S NATIONAL MUSIC CENTRE



PIXAR STUDIO SPACE



HUDSON STREET LOFT



Inside the offices of Portland-based Allied Works Architecture (AWA), there are mock-ups of textured concrete tiles, plaster models, inspirational pin-ups, quick sketches, and even more models. Many are used to explore material and the connectivity of spaces, a telling example of the firm's design approach that is less about form-making, more about space-making.

Principal Brad Cloepfil founded the firm in 1994. He's a protégé of Swiss architect Mario Botta, whose geometry and play with light is a clear influence. The firm's style can also be

likened to the experiential minimalism of architect Tadao Ando. There is an emphasis on exposing new uses of concrete, wood, glass, and the emotive qualities of materials. Much of the firm's work exploits different qualities of light and transparency to provide richness and complexity, along with new thresholds connecting interior and exterior.

In the past five years, AWA has increasingly focused on cultural and educational buildings within urban centers, arts districts, and academic campuses. The firm recently added Alice Wiewel, former director of capital

planning for the Oregon University system, as new managing principal. Her addition brings the firm more expertise in higher education, urban development, and space planning.

Cloepfil's decision to stay in the Portland region of his childhood shows that an architect can make big waves without being in one of the major five cities. Furthermore, the Northwest's dramatic settings continue to serve Cloepfil well, who points to "the power of the landscape" as his biggest inspiration.

MARTINA DOLEJSOVA

#### MUSÉE NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS DU QUÉBEC QUÉBEC, CANADA

In association with Fichten Soiferman et Associés, the firm was one of five finalists in a competition that included OMA and David Chipperfield to design a new 110,000-square-foot pavilion. (OMA was selected.) Their entry would have been formed in concrete and clad with warm materials such as a local stone. Located on the city's Grand Allée, the transparent facade of glass and a perforated shield would have opened up the heart of the museum to the city and the street, allowing soft light to filter into the gallery spaces, and affording glimpses out to the neighborhood. An adjacent park would have extended through the building and connected to the courtyard, containing a grove of Yellow Birch stands.

#### PIXAR STUDIO SPACE EMERYVILLE, CALIFORNIA

The firm is designing a new feature animation facility for Pixar Animation Studios in Emeryville, California. The 160,000-square-foot, three-story building is scheduled to open in early 2011. The flexible project is set to provide workspace for a wide range of personnel, accommodate the shifting demands of the production process, and foster a sense of creative collaboration through informal lounges, small group workspaces, and building-wide amenities like an atrium, cafe, open-air porch, screening rooms, and theater. The firm also developed a masterplan for the entire 21-acre campus that addressed issues of building size, budget, and core design aspirations.

#### CANTOS MUSIC FOUNDATION'S NATIONAL MUSIC CENTRE CALGARY, CANADA

Working with local architectural firm BKDI, AWA is designing this \$75 million complex to include an education research center, a museum, a collection of instruments, recording studios, a radio station, and a live music facility. The 88,000-square-foot building will stand next to the renovated King Eddy Hotel, a local landmark that will be transformed into a new music venue. The complex includes eight 96-foot-tall towers, each perforated with elliptical voids meant to engage the surrounding landscape. Copper and wood will dominate the interior, used to bounce light and sound and to provide warmth to the space. The lobby will include an informal amphitheater, while a performance space will be located on the floor above.

#### HUDSON STREET LOFT NEW YORK

Located in a historic building in the heart of Tribeca, the Hudson Street Loft is a 13,000-square-foot private residence for a prominent New York family. The loft, completed last fall, comprises the top three levels of the building and adds a completely redesigned roof garden and penthouse. The carving of numerous voids and interior courts into the body of the building unites the formerly disconnected spaces into an open, fluid and cohesive whole. A continuous cast-aluminum surface creates a rich interior landscape that weaves together the living spaces of the residence. The experience of the loft balances a clear sense of order and calm with a sense of discovery, as volumes unfold, intersect, and overlap in new and unexpected ways.

**SLOW CITY** continued from front page quality of new developments and streetscapes. Pastucha is worried that the staffing reduction could interfere with new projects referred to his office, especially once the economy picks up. Delays in city reviews could also postpone groundbreakings. "Approval of a project means there are jobs and there is investment," he said. "If you are slowing the construction industry, that could slow any recovery."

Concerns are rumbling through City Hall and the architecture community as the deficit-plagued city takes steps to reduce its payroll through early retirements, furloughs, and layoffs. The Planning and Building and Safety departments are taking hits expected to make it more time-consuming for designers and developers to get the zoning variances, plan checks, inspections, and certificates they need.

The actual size of the reductions is still in flux, depending on political decisions and negotiations with city unions. The Building and Safety Department so far has seen 110 employees, or 11 percent, leave mainly through early retirements, with more than half of them inspectors, according to department spokesman Bob Steinbach. The Planning Department has lost 44 employees, or about 15 percent, mainly to early retirements, including principal planner Jane Blumenfeld. It also instituted furlough days and eliminated overtime. Meanwhile, by increasing fees and reducing its general revenue dependence, the department has supported its funding future, according to Planning Director S. Gail Goldberg.

Donnie Schmidt, a senior associate at Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects, was upset recently to learn that a city plan-check official was taking early retirement in the middle of reviewing one of the firm's residential projects. "It definitely slowed us down. And we accrued additional costs," Schmidt said.

Since the construction industry is relatively slow, Building and Safety has kept up with plan checks and most inspections. But mechanical and electrical plan checks are showing delays, stretching from the usual 12 days to 18 days, said Steinbach. And with many inspectors working just four days a week because of furloughs, some inspections take 48 hours after the request, not the 24-hour turnaround the city has prided itself on. Most of the department's funding comes from fees, not the city's hard-pressed general revenue pot, so if construction and fees pick up, there's a good chance demand will be met.

"It's fair to say we are not getting things done more quickly. We obviously don't have as many people working on it as we should," said Goldberg. But the real concern seems to be that the cuts are causing the city to lose a skilled workforce it may have trouble replacing when the economy rebounds. "The city is losing a vast amount of expertise and human knowledge," said Will Wright, AIA/Los Angeles' director of government and public affairs. The AIA wants to work with the city to help preserve such know-how, possibly through volunteer efforts. Wright hopes the budget crisis pushes the city to proceed with proposals to streamline a daunting review process. Budget shrinkage, he said, could result in "a culture to expedite projects so time and money are saved." **L.J. GORDON**



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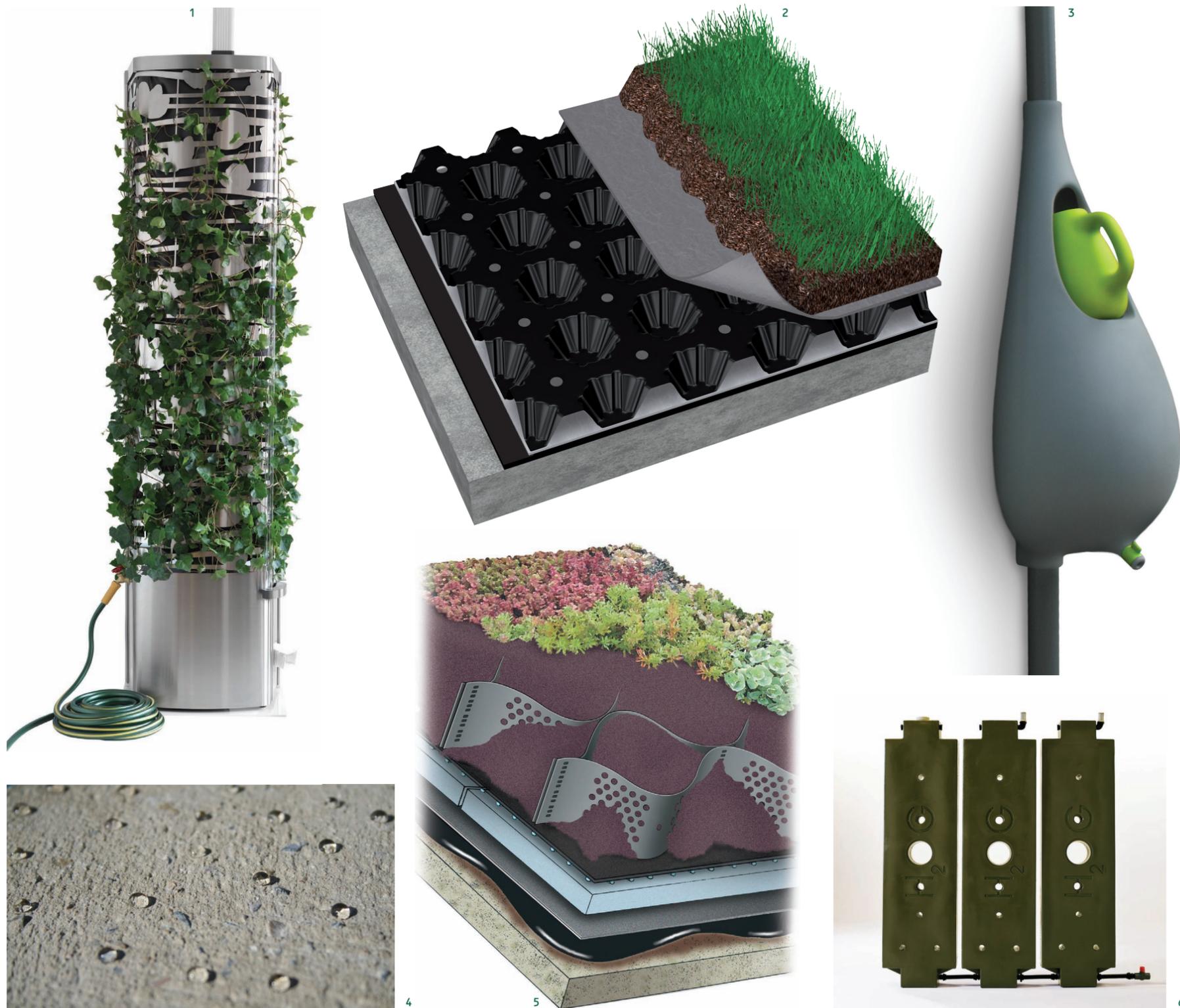
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Sculpture: Gyre, Thomas H. Sayre, N.C. Museum of Art



HIGH TIME TO GET SMART ABOUT SAVVY RAINWATER MANAGEMENT. BY JENNIFER K. GORSCHÉ

# WATERSHED MOMENT

**1 CISTA**  
MOSS SUND ARCHITECTS  
AND FIGFORTHY

Born out of a collaboration between Toronto-based architecture firm MOSS SUND and industrial designers figforth, the CISTA is an 8-foot-high stainless-steel cistern that holds up to 100 gallons of rainwater. Its vertical arrangement and raised tank create the water pressure needed to operate an attached hose, and a compartment in the base conceals space for a climbing plant that can be trained up the exterior trellis. The system, still a prototype, can expand horizontally or vertically.  
[www.mosssund.com](http://www.mosssund.com)

**2 DELTA-FLORAXX**  
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**3 A DROP OF WATER**  
BAS VAN DER VEER

Young Dutch designer Bas van der Veer designed A Drop of Water as a prototype, but expects to soon put the rainwater collection pod into production. The raindrop-shaped barrel integrates a watering can, which is filled by a drainage pipe attached to any exterior structure. Once the can is filled, surplus water overflows into the rest of the reservoir and can be used to refill the can via a tap in the barrel's base.  
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**5 EXTENSIVE GARDEN ROOFS, SLOPED**  
AMERICAN HYDROTECH

Hydrotech's sloped garden roof soil stabilizer allows a green roof to be installed with a pitch up to 45 degrees, not only permitting vegetation to be installed on a broader range of rooftops, but also increasing visibility of the roof from below. The company's Extensive systems are designed for safe installation where structural capabilities are a concern, incorporating low-maintenance plants in as little as 3 inches of soil.  
[www.hydrotechusa.com](http://www.hydrotechusa.com)

**6 GROUND HOG RAINWATER HOG**

Another use has been found for the award-winning Rainwater HOG. For several years the modular tanks have been used to harvest rainwater for irrigation, household use, and emergency water supplies, reducing a building's city water use up to 50 percent. Now, under the name Ground HOG, the tanks can be used as a thermal mass unit, outperforming concrete of the same area. Individual Ground Hogs, 6 feet tall and 1.5 feet wide, cost \$250 each. For orders of 20 or more, the units can be produced in any color.  
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More West Coast firms are getting involved with public work, but it's easier said than done.

BY SAM LUBELL



# THE PUBLIC OPTION



COURTESY MARK CAVAGNERO ASSOCIATES

With most private markets dried up, the real game in town for architects right now is the public sector. The federal government is shelling out record amounts of money—both federal stimulus-related and otherwise—to get the economy on track, and states are still paying out large bond measures

and other monies promised before their budgets began to crumble. Even cash-strapped cities are still handing out projects, albeit many fewer than several years ago.

And so the rush is on among architects to land government buildings, hospitals, parks, transportation centers, public schools,

and university structures, among others. The amount of work is still encouraging, and most say they enjoy building for the common good, but the competition is fierce, and for many unexperienced in the labyrinthine bureaucracy and strange pecking order of the public realm, it can be close to impossible.

"Firms are chasing whatever projects they're hearing about, and right now that's public work," said Kermit Baker, the AIA's chief economist. "It's the only place that anybody is working," added Veda Solomon, director of business development for HOK's LA office.

For firms like HOK, a mainstay in the public realm, this scenario means there is suddenly more competition for jobs that once fell into their laps. But they still get the lion's share thanks to their experience. The firm has worked in the public sector since its founding in the 1950s. Its California

offices are now working on the U.S. Mint in San Francisco, the new ARTIC high-speed rail and transit center in Anaheim, the Contra Costa Courthouse, the VA Hospital in Long Beach, the Adelanto Correctional Facility in San Bernardino, and the NOAA Pacific Region Headquarters in Hawaii, to name a few.

The firm's LA office has only dropped 15 out of 165 workers since 2008, said Solomon, an incredibly low figure in this economy. There's been such an influx of new public work, she added, that the firm has had to restructure to move more architects into the public sphere.

"Basically the whole firm is looking at public projects," she said.

Another public regular in LA, 83-person CO Architects, is busy as well, with about 70 percent of its work coming from the public realm. "It's been less stressful for us than for others," said principal Scott Kelsey. Work

**Previous page:**

LA Natural History Museum renovation, Los Angeles, CO Architects

**Above:**

Clovis Memorial District Conference Center, Clovis, CA, Mark Cavagnero Associates

**Left:**

LA Valley College's Allied Health & Sciences Center, Van Nuys, CA, CO Architects

**Facing page:**

Big Blue Bus Headquarters Facility, Santa Monica, HOK



ROBERT CANFIELD



COURTESY HOK

currently underway includes courthouses in Porterville and Southeast Los Angeles, an addition for Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center/Orthopedic Hospital, the new Palomar Medical Center outside San Diego, a UC Merced Academic Surge Building, the UC Davis School of Nursing, and projects for the LA Unified School District and LA Valley College, among others. (At press time, they unveiled plans for another public project, a new North Campus at the LA County Museum of Natural History.)

Even smaller design firms are getting into the game. Santa Monica-based Pugh + Scarpa, with its 15-strong staff, has signed a five-year at-will contract with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), which limits fees to \$12 million a year (\$12 million, points out principal Larry Scarpa, would double the firm's usual fees for a year). The firm is also building parking structures for the city of Santa

Monica, a parking garage for UCSD, and is working with Olin Partnership on the new Plummer Park in West Hollywood, which includes a new parking structure and theater. Eight-person San Francisco firm Paulett Taggart Architects is working on two stimulus-related projects, the Turk/ Eddy Affordable Housing development and a portion of the Hunters View revitalization project. San Francisco-based Mark Cavagnero Associates, another small firm, has made a specialty out of quiet but striking institutional work like the Salvo Pool in San Francisco, the Clovis Memorial District Conference Center in Clovis, CA, and the just-completed renovation of the Oakland Museum of California. Other boutique firms going public recently include Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects, which has signed on with the City of Santa Monica to build 360 shelters for the city's Big Blue Bus. The canopies are a kit of parts

that can be reconfigured to maximize shade depending on conditions. Richard Meier and Partners, while hardly small, is still interested in branching into the public realm and is working on the San Diego Federal Courthouse, a design that uses materials like natural stone, terra cotta, and pre-cast concrete. The firm also completed a large new city hall and civic center for the City of San Jose.

But although firms large and small have made an entry, getting a strong foothold in this realm has become increasingly difficult. The cutthroat competition means that even the most seasoned public veterans have to work harder than ever to get in the game.

"I've noticed a lot of big firms are going after smaller projects," said HOK's Solomon, who noted that cash-strapped governments have taken advantage of this situation by paying much less for projects than similar work in the private

sector. CO's Kelsey points to the competition for the new academic building it is now designing at UC Merced, which saw 49 submittals. In better economic times, he pointed out, a project like that would have about 20 submittals.

And for those trying to get into the loop, the march to public work can be infuriating. Small firms say they are often shut out of the process because of their lack of experience and connections. Many point out that often, public agencies value the ability to check off the right boxes and propose low fees over talent and design expertise. The AIA/LA has suggested a new city Architecture Department that would, among other things, help get more firms involved in the public selection process through competitions, design review, and community outreach. The AIA has also called for changing public project delivery from design-bid-build—which favors well-

connected firms that know the right contractors and engineers, or those that simply charge the least regardless of quality or competence—to more egalitarian and well-organized methods like integrated project delivery, public private partnerships, or a more equitable version of design-build.

The challenge of getting into the public realm even pertains to megafirms like Gensler, now wishing it had jumped into public projects sooner. Its 195-person LA office is working on a number of public projects—including the new Port of Long Beach Headquarters building, security upgrades for Los Angeles World Airports, and a new data center for the County of Los Angeles—but that is only about a third of its overall work.

"Honestly, it's been somewhat challenging," admitted Rob Jernigan, a Gensler principal. "We were heavily focused on work and lifestyle, and not as heavily on civic. We've been work-

ing with the public sector for more than ten years, which sounds like a long time, but it's really not."

Even for firms like HOK that have the experience and connections, working in the public realm brings new bureaucratic challenges that can stymie even the most stalwart. "You wouldn't believe the bureaucratic hoops you have to jump through just to get your name on the list," said Christopher Roe, HOK's strategic director of marketing and business development. "Hundred-page forms that require signed affidavits from 20 references of previous clients and have to be notarized at the state, county, and federal level. It's a paperwork nightmare of epic proportions."

Public agencies themselves are struggling, and with their own budgets faltering, they are doing their best—like everyone else—to get as much work for as little as possible. Roe said that architecture and planning fees



COURTESY PUGH+SCARPA

are down about 20 percent for federal projects from just a few years back. "We're being squeezed on many levels," he said.

For smaller firms doing public work, the inevitable starts and stops of public projects can be disastrous. Scarpa mentions that every time a project is halted for an EIR review, he has to lay off staff. Steven Ehrlich faced similar problems working on a new project for UC Irvine, one of well over 30 projects halted for some time in the university system, many of them because of budget issues.

But Scarpa knows he is still one of the lucky ones because he got started before the boom. "My friends ask me how to get involved and I tell them it's not gonna happen instantly. We've been doing it for five years." Already he is looking ahead to new kinds of work in universities, museums, and overseas commissions.

So the question remains: will firms get too entrenched

in public work just as they got too involved in commercial and residential before? What happens when the economy changes and the public sector becomes less sexy? Already, public institutions like universities are running out of funds and slowing down expenditures.

The public sector will always provide work, pointed out the ALA's Baker, so getting caught flat-footed is more difficult. Nor does the sector provide the dizzying profits available in the private market. Persistent adaptation, as always, is the key to preserving the long-term health of architecture firms.

"We've realized that the only constant in the world is change," said Gensler's Jernigan. "In today's world, this notion of getting into one niche and staying in that niche is over. We're constantly asking, how do we broaden ourselves and diversify our offerings so we can stabilize things?"

**SAM LUBELL IS AN'S  
WEST COAST EDITOR.**

**Above:**  
Santa Monica Parking Garage,  
Pugh + Scarpa  
**Right:**  
San Diego Federal Courthouse,  
Richard Meier & Partners



COURTESY RICHARD MEIER &amp; PARTNERS

## APRIL

WEDNESDAY 28

## LECTURES

Peter Yanév

**We Are Not Ready: Lessons from the Chile Earthquake**

5:30 p.m.

AIA San Francisco

130 Sutter St.

San Francisco

www.aiaf.org

Cathy Garrett

**Cultural Landscapes:****What We Value and Why**

1:00 p.m.

UC Berkeley College of

Environmental Design

315A Wurster Hall, Berkeley

www.ced.berkeley.edu

Christine Sciacca

**When Buildings Become****Symbols: Images of****Architecture in Illuminated****Manuscripts**

7:00 p.m.

The J. Paul Getty Center

1200 Getty Center Dr.

Los Angeles

www.getty.edu

THURSDAY 29

## LECTURES

**On Topic: Contemporary****Sculpture with Ruben Ochoa**

7:00 p.m.

Museum of Contemporary

Art San Diego

1001 Kettner Blvd.

San Diego

www.mcasd.org

Renzo Piano

7:00 p.m.

Leo S. Bing Theater

5905 Wilshire Blvd.

Los Angeles

www.lacma.org

Victoria Sancho Lobis

**Spanish-Language Art in****the Afternoon**

12:30 p.m.

Timken Museum of Art

1500 El Prado, Balboa Park

San Diego

www.timkenmuseum.org

## EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Art Alive 2010**

San Diego Museum of Art

1450 El Prado, Balboa Park

San Diego

www.sdmart.org

**Never Very Far Apart**

Roy and Edna Disney/

CalArts Theater

631 West 2nd St.

Los Angeles

www.redcat.org

FRIDAY 30

## LECTURE

Jeanine Centuori,

Paulette Singley, and

Woodbury University

**Students: Guerrilla Urbanism**

12:00 p.m.

Farmlab

1745 North Spring St.

Los Angeles

www.farmlab.org

## SYMPOSIA

**Spaces of History/****Histories of Space**

8:30 a.m.

UC Berkeley College of

Environmental Design

112 Wurster Hall, Berkeley

www.ced.berkeley.edu

## High Performance Building

**Enclosures Practical****Sustainability Symposium**

8:00 a.m.

Kellogg West

Conference Center

3801 West Temple Ave.

Pomona

www.sgh.com/bess2010

Altera Roma:

**Art and Empire from the****Aztecs to New Spain**

10:30 a.m.

The J. Paul Getty Villa

17985 Pacific Coast Hwy.

Pacific Palisades

www.getty.edu

## EVENT

**Cosmic Dance of Shiva:****Art, Science, and Dance****Perspectives on Nataraja**

7:00 p.m.

Norton Simon Museum of Art

411 West Colorado Blvd.

Pasadena

www.nortonsimon.org

## MAY

SATURDAY 1

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Bernard Venelouis****The Idea of Detroit**

Kristi Engle Gallery

5002 York Blvd.

Los Angeles

www.kristienglegallery.com

## WITH THE KIDS

**Family Workshop:****An Awesome Earful of****an Eye-ful!**

11:00 a.m.

Fowler Museum of Art

308 Charles East Young Dr.

Los Angeles

www.fowler.ucla.edu

SUNDAY 2

## LECTURE

**Rabbi David Wolpe and****Lionel Corbett****Red Book Dialogues**

2:00 p.m.

The Hammer Museum

10899 Wilshire Blvd.

Los Angeles

www.hammer.ucla.edu

## EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**New Art for a****New Century:****Contemporary****Acquisitions 2000–2010****15 Minutes of Fame:****Portraits From Ansel Adams****to Andy Warhol**

Orange County

Museum of Art

850 San Clemente Dr.

Newport Beach

www.ocma.net

Brent Green

**Perceptual and Furious****Refrain/MATRIX 232**

Berkeley Art Museum and

Pacific Film Archive

2621 Durant Ave.

Berkeley

www.bampfa.berkeley.edu

## WITH THE KIDS

**Andell Family Sundays:****Drawing Off the Wall**

12:30 p.m.

Los Angeles County Museum

of Art

5905 Wilshire Blvd.

Los Angeles

www.lacma.org

## Big Family Day

1:00 p.m.

Museum of

Contemporary Art

250 South Grand Ave.

Los Angeles

www.moca.org

MONDAY 3

## LECTURE

Dan Sapp

**Career Strategy Roundtable:****Differentiation for the AEC****Professional**

12:00 p.m.

AIA San Francisco

130 Sutter St., San Francisco

www.aiaf.org

TUESDAY 4

## LECTURE

Greg Tate

**The Spiritual Crisis in****Contemporary Black Art,****Politics, and Psychoanalysis**

8:30 p.m.

Roy and Edna Disney/

CalArts Theater

631 West 2nd St., Los Angeles

www.redcat.org

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Japan's Early Ambassadors****to San Francisco, 1860–1927**

Asian Art Museum

200 Larkin St., San Francisco

www.asianart.org

WEDNESDAY 5

## LECTURE

Claudi Mitchell-Kernan

**Culture Fix:****Art, Activism, Access**

Fowler Museum of Art

308 Charles East Young Dr.

Los Angeles

www.fowler.ucla.edu

THURSDAY 6

## LECTURES

Jim Goldberg

7:00 p.m.

The Hammer Museum

10899 Wilshire Blvd.

Los Angeles

www.hammer.ucla.edu

Jennifer Siegal

**Generation Mobile:****The Death of Distance**

7:00 p.m.

Goethe-Institut LA

5750 Wilshire Blvd.

Los Angeles

www.goethe.de/ins/us/los

## SYMPOSIUM

**Orientalist Photography**

1:00 p.m.

The J. Paul Getty Center

1200 Getty Center Dr.

Los Angeles

www.getty.edu

## EVENT

AIA San Francisco

**Design Awards Gala**

6:00 p.m.

San Francisco War Memorial

&amp; Performing Arts Center

401 Van Ness Ave.

San Francisco

www.aiaf.org

SATURDAY 8

## LECTURE

Milton Esterow

**How to Look at Art****Without Feeling Inferior**

4:00 p.m.

Norton Simon Museum of Art

411 West Colorado Blvd.

Pasadena

www.nortonsimon.org

## EVENT

**Art of Dining 2010**

6:00 p.m.

Orange County

Museum of Art

850 San Clemente Dr.

Newport Beach

www.ocma.net

THURSDAY 13

## LECTURE

Hidden Histories

7:00 p.m.

Autry Museum of the

American West

4700 Western Heritage Way

Los Angeles

www.theautry.org

FRIDAY 14

## EVENT

**75th Birthday Party**

6:00 p.m.

San Francisco Museum of

Modern Art

151 3rd St., San Francisco

www.sfmoma.org

SATURDAY 15

## LECTURE

Thomas S. Hines

**Los Angeles Modernism,****1900–1970**

3:00 p.m.

The Hammer Museum

10899 Wilshire Blvd.

Los Angeles

www.hammer.ucla.edu

## EXHIBITION OPENING

Arik Levy

**Luminescence**

Santa Monica Museum of Art

2525 Michigan Ave.

Santa Monica

www.smmoa.org

SUNDAY 16

## WITH THE KIDS

**Kids' Art Museum Project**

10:00 a.m.

The Hammer Museum

10899 Wilshire Blvd.

Los Angeles

www.hammer.ucla.edu

WEDNESDAY 19

## LECTURE

Peter Alexander,

Helen Pashgian, et al.

**Modern Art in Los Angeles:****The Industrialized Gesture**

7:30 p.m.

The J. Paul Getty Center

1200 Getty Center Dr.

Los Angeles

www.getty.edu

THURSDAY 20

## LECTURE

Donna Livingston

**Successful Interiors:****It's All in the Details**

11:00 a.m.

Pacific Design Center

8687 Melrose Ave.

West Hollywood

www.pacificdesigncenter.com

SATURDAY 22

## EXHIBITION OPENING

Mark Licari

Honor Fraser Gallery

2622 South La Cienega Blvd.

Los Angeles

www.honorfraser.com

TUESDAY 25

## SYMPOSIUM

**2010 UrbanSim Conference**

9:00 a.m.

Wurster Hall, University of

California Berkeley

www.urbansim.org



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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 28, 2010

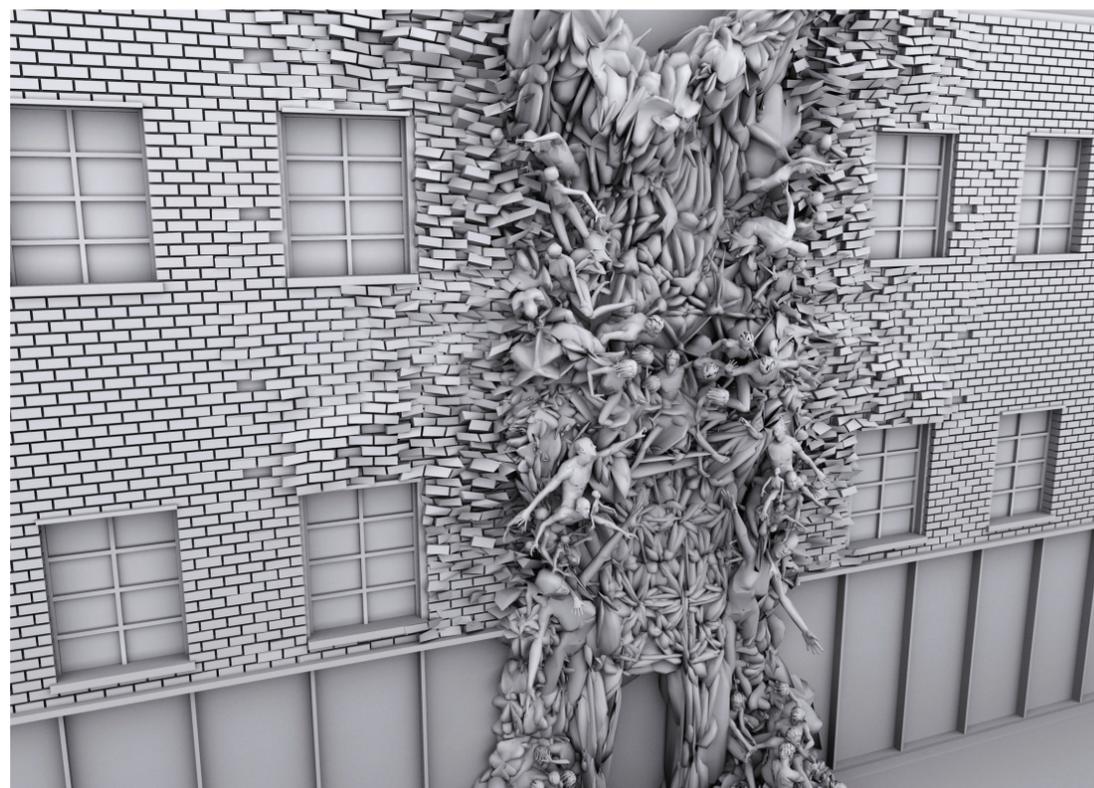


## LOADED TO BARE

**Ruben Ochoa**  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
San Diego, Jacobs Building  
1100 Kettner Boulevard, San Diego  
Through June 20

Ruben Ochoa, *Building on the Fringes of Tomorrow* (2010).

PABLO MASON



**Yousef Al-Mehdari's drawing, *The Monesthetic Shrine*.**

of regulations that limit creative expression, as MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) has for music. He claims it has devoured architectural representation, and welcomes Cook's eight as artisans exploring fruitful alternatives. Cook concurs, arguing that "Modernism never took hold in Britain. We've always been fiddlers, craft-oriented, and that explains the survival of drawing... Certain ideas have a boiling point that can be captured in a drawing but may be lost in the building."

Only two of the eight architects—Laura Allen and Mark Smout—were born in the U.K., but all have absorbed the English love of whimsy and speculation as a complement, rather than an alternative, to serious building. C.J. Lim, a Bartlett professor and head of Studio 8 Architects, exemplifies this duality, veering from inspired fantasy to visionary, and sustainable, city plans that might change the face of China. The exhibit features drawings from Lim's upcoming book *Short Stories: London in Two-and-a-Half Dimensions*. Light-hearted and chaotic, but still graphically precise, they include fantastical imaginings with bizarre names like *Battersea Dogs Home: A Dating Agency*, and *Sky Transport for London: Redevelopment of the*

### *Circle Line.*

Pascal Bronner has collaborated with Lim, but offers his own vision of *New Malacovia—a Portable City Blueprint*, which looks back to extinct civilizations and forward to sustainable communities of the future. The spirit of Italo Calvino hovers over these meticulous delineations of a multi-layered megastructure of flattened windows and fiber optics resting on a bed of corks, and harvesting renewable energy from potatoes impaled on pins. A similar aesthetic is carried further in the three-dimensional drawings of Johan Hybschmann, who was inspired by *The Russian Ark*, a film by Alexander Sokurov that telescopes time and space as the camera moves uninterrupted through the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. Laser-cut constructions that suggest the intricate mechanisms of a watch abstract the rich décor of the palace, drawing us into a delicate labyrinth of cogs and connecting rods.

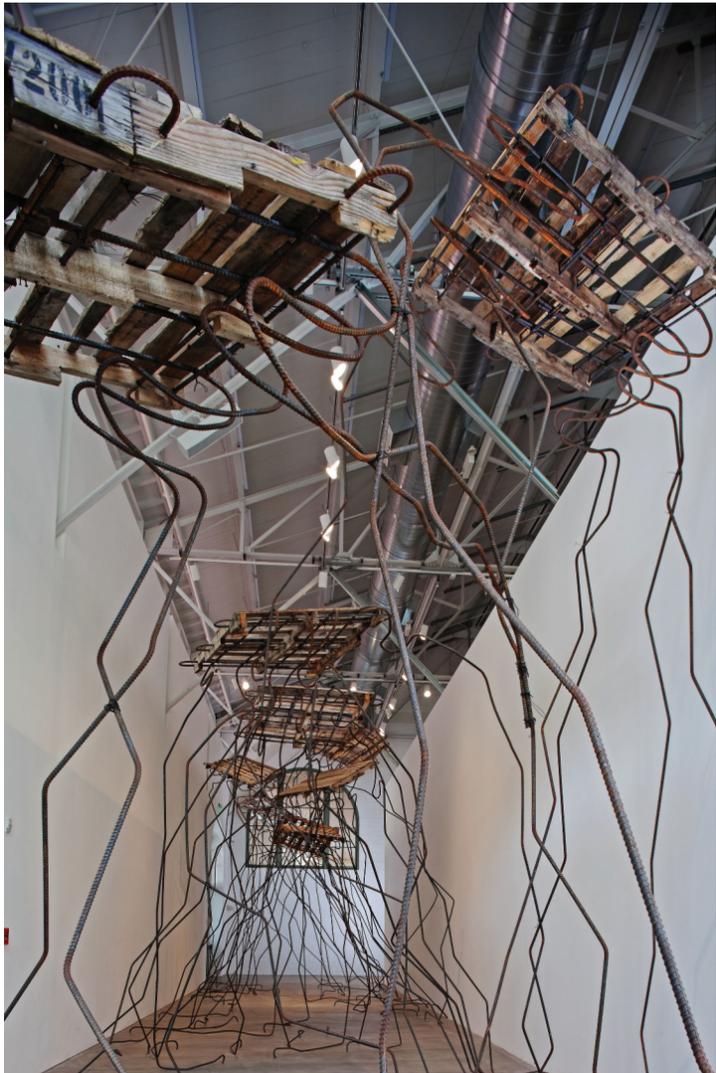
From here it's a leap into the alternative reality of marcosandmarjan, the experimental practice that Marcos Cruz and Marjan Colletti established ten years ago. In that decade, they've explored the links between architecture, biology, and human emotion, drawing imaginary cities while building real expo pavilions. Their research and seductive imagery feed into competition entries **continued on page 19**

## Drawn, Not Digital

**London Eight**  
Southern California Institute of Architecture  
960 East 3rd Street, Los Angeles  
Through May 16

*London Eight*, an exhibition of architectural drawings presented at SCI-Arc, is a dazzling display of inventive draftsmanship by graduates and faculty of the Bartlett, the architecture school of London University, selected by Peter Cook, its former chair. It's a must-see.

In his catalog introduction, SCI-Arc director Eric Owen Moss likens digital software to a set



Wooden pallets usually seen on loading docks are stacked as towers that define room-like spaces. Lengths of rebar, invisible within sidewalks and walls, become a viney forest that filters daylight above a twisting path.

This is the scene from Mexican-American artist Ruben Ochoa's newest installation, which occupies most of the 10,000-square-foot Peter Farrell Gallery at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego's downtown facility. The gallery is a former baggage warehouse at the back of the historical Mission Revival Santa Fe Depot (1915) designed by Bakewell & Brown. The artist employed his family to help with the installation over a two-week period.

The space is divided by a white wall, with the pallet structures on one side and the rebar forms on the other. The gallery walls are mounted with graphite-and-rust paintings of grids of lines, some horizontal and vertical, others slanting in perspective.

Upon entering the gallery, the pallet forms come first. Stacks of them form towers as high as 40 or more, and the towers join together as walls, covered on the entry side with drywall. These white walls conceal intimate spaces behind, wrapped by the exposed edges of pallets. The pallets bear the faded names of their original owners: Fritolay, Shell,

**Left: Ochoa's *Watching, waiting, commiserating* (2010).**

Toma-Tek, Barton, and others.

In the adjacent space, the snaky lengths of rebar angle overhead like spindly tree branches, tied together by twisted wires, anchored into holes drilled in the concrete floor. Slanting pallets rest atop the rebar "trees" like scattered fragments of Dorothy's storm-twirled house. The rebar clusters define a serpentine path beneath them, from one end of the long space to the other.

At first one is struck by such monumental and energized forms from common, utilitarian materials, but time reveals a dialectic: blue collar/fine art, loading dock/gallery, laborer/curator, invisible/spectacular, anonymity/visibility.

According to his introductory note, Ochoa hopes to elevate the everyday and unseen to the level of Richard Serra, Doris Salcedo, Louise Bourgeois, and Gordon Matta-Clark.

The exhibit reminds architects, planners, and others who shape the built environment that materials can have meaning even when they aren't seen, that anonymous laborers are the ones truly responsible for the structures around us, and that common, often-invisible materials can be exposed and combined into thoughtful works of art.

**DIRK SUTRO HAS WRITTEN TWO BOOKS ABOUT ARCHITECTURE: *WEST COAST WAVE* AND *FROM MISSION TO MODERN*.**

**DRAWN, NOT DIGITAL** continued from page 18 for projects in China and the Middle East. Yousef Al-Mehdari is more explicitly concerned with human anatomy. He re-imagines a Byzantine church in Istanbul that was gutted to serve as a museum, transformed into a hammam; bodies exploding from a wall of crumbling bricks; and a disturbing hybrid of bone and human features that evokes Giger's monster in *Alien*. Smout Allen's theme is "Enviographic Architecture," exploring the relationship of nature and technology in specific locations, from the eroding coastline of eastern England to the volcanic island of Lanzarote. Their drawings have a formal beauty that would earn them an honored place in any museum.

It's encouraging to see that the basic tools architects have used for centuries to conceive and represent their work still have validity as an adjunct and alternative to software. The drawings exhibited here remain cutting edge, despite being non-digital—the latest successful manifestation of a long tradition.

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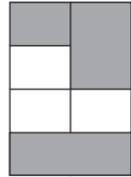
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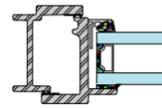
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TIM STREET-PORTER

Desert rider Reyner Banham, one of a bygone generation of candid critical thinkers.

# Hasty Habits of Mind

Intellectuals in architecture form a tiny subculture in which most know most others and thus want to offend none. Architects' careers are precarious and need protecting. We are trying to earn respect for good architecture in a culture that is not all that interested. So we believe that we should stay positive. All this produces a reluctance to be bold and candid when we come across sham and junk.

Negative criticism can seem mean-spirited. It's more pleasant to be post-critical. But the prices we pay are to have too many delusions—especially delusions of grandeur—and to waste too much time foraging dead ends. It took a ferociously demanding critic, F. R. Leavis, to save my generation of English majors from having to spend much time reading mush like Tennyson's poems or bloviation like much of Milton. To whom have we been able to turn for high standards and fearless iconoclasm? Sorkin sometimes. Huxtable back in the day. And within the academy? Sylvia Lavin and Jeff Kipnis are not timid. Some scholars like Barry Bergdoll are not afraid of wielding sharp edges.

We are often intellectually malnourished because we clutch a narrow set of ideas that we perceive, mainly through talk at juries and conferences, to be the only currently legitimate ones. If

we look back 30 years, we see a parade of short-lived must-follows: Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Deleuze. The fold. Datascape. The surface. Patterns and tessellation. Words ending in *-ity*. And a coming-to-acclaim of designers and design modes that are marginalized within two or three years.

With this comes a scorn for passé ideas. OK, Ptolemy was wrong. But was Chaucer "wrong"? Was Paul Rudolph "wrong"? Beyond science, the category doesn't apply. Why are we feeding ourselves tiny bites when history offers us a huge banquet? In *Harvard Design Magazine*, someone said, about Sorkin's position, "It's so '60s." Of course times change, and we must change with them, but *when* something was created doesn't determine its value.

In fetishizing newness, we ensure obsolescence: Issues of *ANY* were exciting in the '90s, but do we turn to them now? And how carefully were they read back then? Robert Somol wrote in the final *Assemblage*: "Out of the 240-odd items published, I read about 12 all the way through. No shit. *Five percent*. Three of those were mine." Many *au courant* ideas we don't really think through, but merely think *about*, or, worse, think that we *should* think about.

Our subculture has a hard time

keeping off the smudges of the adjoining larger cultures of fashion and status-seeking consumerism. Architects reach many more people through the pages of *Elle Decor*, *Icon*, *Architectural Digest*, and *Wallpaper* than they do through *Log*, *Volume*, *Grey Room*, and *Praxis*. The style sections of newspapers breathe down our backs and tempt us to bend our values. Is serious culture always the domain of a tiny elite? Should it bother us that there are over half a million purchasers of *Elle Decor* but only one or two thousand for periodicals like *Grey Room*, *Log*, and *Praxis*? Does intelligence in the latter publications eventually trickle down to the former?

Columbia's Buell Center and its director Reinhold Martin recently posed this question to guide explorations in a 2009 conference: "How is contemporary architecture discussed and evaluated in public?" Here are some possible answers.

For every 200 of "us" there are two million like the person who wrote on Morphosis' new Cooper Union building: "Aliens, please park spacecraft elsewhere." Indeed, within our subculture, there are common modes of "serious" discourse that we should find troubling, and all have to do with a compulsion to move fast while frantically scooping up or tossing out tiny

morsels along our paths. Let me offer a few examples:

Tossed-off tweets are fast food for the mind, no chewing required. We see this in blogs, but increasingly also in academic discourse. Tweets must be short. This doesn't force them to be shallow, but it sure nudges them in that direction.

Increasingly content is composed of sound bites. Conferences are overloaded with speakers who are underloaded with time to develop thoughts and present information. So books become clip binders for conference papers and talk transcripts—loose compendia of qualitatively uneven short essays, prose quips, flashy graphics, and glamorous data presentations. Creating book content becomes merely accumulating.

Information overload induces ignorance. This lazy tossing in of everything that can be grabbed partly explains the publication of a few doorstop architectural books of a thousand pages or more. Can and does anyone read such books? Are they not made just to be flipped through like magazines, with at most five minutes of reading now and then? Putatively serious essays are of bite-sized briefness. Then there are "boogazines," which occasionally present scads of information through complex but

cartoon-like charts—the overall look of the page is dazzling and this very dazzle discourages the patient taking-in of details. Sometimes this can be seen in exhibitions of countless words and images graphically arranged on walls. It would take a viewer many minutes to absorb just what is before the eyes, much less a whole gallery's worth. Overall, there is a reluctance to be discriminating, to decide what is not worth thinking about. Data, data, more data! Magazines mount in piles to be zipped through once a month.

Lastly, we partake in a culture of glib, gnomonic generalizing. Easy yet world-encompassing assertions of meaning reflect the vast influence of Rem Koolhaas, with his profound originality and revelatory perceptions, presented with shards of evidence but still striking one as diagnostically dead on. (See his essays on Atlanta and Singapore in *S,M,L,XL*.) But from *Delirious New York* on, he has also produced plenty of bloated, ungrounded utterance. His followers, lacking his astounding acuity, imitate just his mode of offering huge generalities about "contemporary conditions."

The name of the game seems to be: Assert whatever you can about some special newness in our social/cultural moment. So when you cryptically write, for instance, about "the current crisis," we join you in pretending to know precisely what you are talking about. We nod our heads in jittery conspiratorial intimacy. We suppress acknowledging that we don't really know or understand. This mental smoke screen has recently been most obfuscating among Dutch and American elites; in France it is long familiar. Intellectualism becomes a mental manner. Research—laborious, lengthy, uncompromisingly careful and responsible investigation—slackens into barstool musings. The compulsion to say something new leads to things like this real example from *Volume*: "Treating the [retail] big box as a potential form of high art could lead to an aesthetic breakthrough." Or not.

Carefully cooked slow food for thought is still available for those willing to pull off the main drag. *The New York Review of Books*, for instance, offers lots of solid fare. There is even some on the main drag. Just take the pedal off the metal.

**WILLIAM S. SAUNDERS IS EDITOR OF HARVARD DESIGN MAGAZINE AND HAS WRITTEN SLOWER ESSAYS ON KOOLHAAS AND ON CRITICISM.**



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