After months—make that years—of speculation, philanthropist and art collector Eli Broad has confirmed the selection of Diller

continued on page 5

Balloon Proposal Threatens California’s Green Cred

Scary Proposition

Most of the controversy over California Proposition 23, set for this November’s ballot, has centered on its supporters: oil giants Valero Energy, Occidental Petroleum, and Tesoro, all based outside California. Yet it is the initiative’s potential consequences for energy-efficient initiatives that have many in the architecture community worried.

At the heart of the continued on page 4

Neutra’s Strathmore to Face Unwelcome Neighbor

At a raucous and disjointed meeting of the West Los Angeles Area Planning Commission on September 15, neighbors, architects, and others failed in a final effort to halt a large student housing development across the street from Richard Neutra’s famed Strathmore Apartments in Westwood. Opponents have been trying to stop the project for over a year.

The scheme, called Grandmarc Westwood, would be located on the corner of Strathmore Drive and Levering Avenue, next to the UCLA campus. Developed by Dallas-based PPC Landventures and designed by LA-based Togawa Smith Martin, the rectilinear project will contain 31 multi-room residential units on six floors, arranged in a triangular plan.

Despite being rejected six times by the Westwood Design Review Board (DRB) on the grounds that its bulk, massing, and character were incompatible with the continued on page 9

Renzo’s Resnick Fulfills LACMA’s Potential

The Resnick Pavilion, which opens to the public on October 2, is the second major structure that Renzo Piano has created for the LA County Museum of Art. It employs roof louvers and travertine cladding similar to his 2008 Broad Contemporary Art Museum (BCAM), but on a single level. Its horizontality plays off the verticality of BCAM, as do its scarlet extrusions—sensually rounded mechanical casings along the sidewalks. In contrast to BCAM, the Resnick offers a single space, unbroken except for two rows of slender columns, bathed in natural light from above and from the glass wall to the north.

That singular luminosity fulfills Piano’s promise of “calm, serenity, and even a voluptuous quality linked continued on page 7

Last Stand

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Despite being rejected six times by the Westwood Design Review Board (DRB) on the grounds that its bulk, massing, and character were incompatible with the continued on page 9
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Like any crime, the worst architectural malfeasance is usually committed when nobody is watching. And so it is particularly disturbing to see the public process subverted in such overt ways in recent days in Los Angeles.

Take for example LA Billionaire Eli Broad, who is building his own museum in downtown LA. This, it should be said, is a great coup for the city. But despite getting a deal from the city on one of its most valuable pieces of real estate, Broad still hasn’t shared designs for the new museum with the public. His only gesture in that direction was allowing LA Times critic Christopher Hawthorne a peek at the containing models, which the Broad Foundation doesn’t plan to otherwise share until after ground is broken, at which point it will likely be too late to make changes. The foundation staff is meanwhile impossible to reach, and has basically never returned a phone call in my experience.

Another low blow: We’ve just reported on the approval of the imposing new development next to Neutra’s Strathmore Apartments in Westwood, called the GrandMarc Westwood. Despite being rejected six times by the local design review board, the plan was passed by the City Planning Commission, a move that ignored the emphatic advice of many architects and planners. At the public meeting about the project, the voice of the people may as well have been bought by the developer: Every person against the project seemed to be from nearby Westwood Village, while those supporting it appeared to hail from the Valley, the OC, and the Inland Empire.

In both cases, it seems to me as though city officials were willing to look the other way and ignore the needs of the public in order to usher in projects they believed could be beneficial, either financially or culturally. Apart from any boons to the city, such decisions can’t be made at the expense of public taste.

Los Angeles is stunningly uninterested in including the public in design decisions. When do we see major design competitions in Los Angeles? And when do public officials actually reach out to the public when proposing a big project? This culture needs to change so that policy-makers and stakeholders are held accountable. This also means that the public needs to be better informed about architecture and design. A NIMBY reaction any time a new project comes along is equally benighted.

It doesn’t have to be this way: Try to put up a monstrosity in New York or San Francisco and community members mobilize instantly to tear out the offender’s eyeballs—until a compromise is reached. Here it’s a collective shrug, easy to ignore.

The greatest architecture reflects its community, but how can it be great if its creators turn a deaf ear to the public, and the public doesn’t bat an eye in return?

SAM LUBELL

SCARY PROPOSITION continued from front

NEWS

SASKI HOTEL TO EXPAND INTO MIXED-USE COMPLEX

Century Saved

In August, Next Century Associates, the owners of LA’s Century Plaza Hotel, unveiled plans for the building and its environs that include preserving the structure and surrounding it with a five-acre, billion-dollar mixed-use development. The new scheme came as a result of severe public outcry against razing the 726-room hotel, designed by World Trade Center architect Minoru Yamasaki, and once considered all but doomed.

The preservation community appears pleased. “Next Century and its design team have been very receptive,” said Linda Dishman, executive director of the Los Angeles Conservancy. “They are proposing a project that sets the historic hotel as the centerpiece.” JAKE TOWNSEND
COOTIES ALERT
It's official. Since taking over William Morris and merging it into William Morris Endeavor Entertainment, Ari Emanuel, Rahm's brother, has decided he won't move into the Gensler-designed William Morris Headquarters in Beverly Hills. Apparently he wouldn't deign to locate himself in anything associated with the firm he took over. That leaves the building, whose shell will be done any day now, without a tenant. So the question remains: Who, if anyone, will move in?

IN MEMORIAM MENSWEAR
When West Hollywood Urban Designer John Chase died tragically in August of a heart attack, his inspiring sense of style lived on. At his memorial in West Hollywood on August 24, friends and colleagues celebrated his much-admired sartorial quirkiness by wearing what he would have wanted them to wear. That meant fedora, panama, and red cowboy hats, Hawaiian shirts, floral suits, rain-bow-pattern pants, and pink ties, for starters. Family and friends spent the night staring at the parquetun LED tribute to Chase at 8410 West Sunset Avenue, across from the Andaz hotel on the Sunset Strip. We’ll miss you John, always, but we’ll always have the wardrobe and a party in your honor to remember.

VENICE, L.A. VERSUS VENICE, ITALY
One of the biggest storylines at this year’s Venice Biennale was the invasion of the LA Architects, led by Eric Owen Moss, who was chosen to lead the Austrian Pavilion, despite not actually being Austrian. Moss corralled Hernan Diaz Alonso, Craig Hodgetts, Ming Fung, and others for an installation about Austrian architectural exports and imports that reputedly cost in excess of $800,000. That’s a lot of schlagobers for installations that usually operate within a $400,000 budget.

THAT'S SOME PIG
At press time, the new L+M gallery in Venice, designed by wHY Architects, was just getting set to open on September 24. The project is a beautiful renovation of an old power station with a lofty new diamond-shaped brick addition. The gallery may be cool, but the art inside could be too hot for many to handle: 2,000-piece collection, including works by Broad’s informal advisors, who hired the firm earlier this year himself to design a pop-up pavilion that would literally balloon out of the Hirshhorn’s donut-hole center. Others counseling Broad on architecture have included journalist Joseph Giovannini, consultant Marcy Goodwin, and even Frank Gehry. DS+R has been busy in California recently, having been selected to design the new Berkeley Art Museum and the Pacific Film Archive, and having made the shortlist for the SFMOMA expansion, which was then awarded to Snhetta. In fact, some believed that when the firm won the Berkeley commission early this summer, Broad might lose interest.

In recent years, DS+R has completed a number of significant cultural projects, including the Lincoln Center redevelopment with Alice Tully Hall in New York and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. The Hirshhorn project is in development. Speculation over the project has been ongoing since Broad first raised the possibility in 2008 of a museum near Santa Monica Boulevard in Beverly Hills. Periodically, the collector also strongly hinted that he might locate the project in Santa Monica, between the Santa Monica Courthouse and Civic Auditorium.

The likely selection of a downtown location, which AN revealed in March, became even clearer in mid-August as the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved the lease of the 2.5-acre site—which was to be part of the now-stalled Grand Avenue Project—to Broad for $7.7 million over the course of a 99-year-lease. Broad will also set up a $200 million endowment to run the museum. Calls to the Broad Foundation have thus far not been returned. The foundation says it won’t release renderings of the project until groundbreaking later this fall, essentially sidestepping public review.

While the multi-billion dollar Grand Avenue Project remains in limbo, Grand Avenue itself has become something of an architectural spectacle, with works by Coop Himmelb(l)au, Gehry, Arata Isozaki, Rafael Moneo, and others.

EAVESDROP> THE EDITORS
05
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San Francisco neighborhoods are famous for their eclectic variety of styles, histories, and energies. Taking full advantage of this is Atelier KS, designers of Local: Mission Eatery. Inserting the restaurant into the first floor of a 19th-century Victorian building and using a palette of salvaged historical materials, the craft of local artisans, and high-tech new architectural products, they have created an astutely modern space. The salvaged materials make sense in a restaurant that focuses on locally sourced foods. The storefront and a communal dining table inside feature salvaged Douglas fir found on site. Suspended wood ceilings were constructed with material discovered during demolition. The restaurant’s tile wall was made from local artist John Fischer’s screen prints pressed onto the wood of various neighborhood locations. Steel signage was created by local fabricator Matthew Granelli. For a touch of modern tech, the kitchen includes sleek zinc countertops and a cantilevered shelving system supported by custom steel straps.
This summer, RailLA—a collaboration between the LA Chapter of the AIA and the American Planning Association—sponsored a call for entries seeking fresh ideas for local and national high-speed rail systems. Almost 100 entries came in from around the world, from famous firms to unknowns. The five top schemes, as selected by RailLA’s board, included:

- **Re-Envisioning Los Angeles** by Mark Chan, a proposed transformation of Los Angeles’ Union Station that would connect the existing station with the Los Angeles River, greening the area and stimulating new development downtown. The scheme’s proposed structural skeleton would contain concealed water inlets and outlets, distributing recycled gray water to vegetate the structure. The New Union Station by students from the Industrial Design department at California State University Long Beach made Union Station a destination all its own.

- **Ample seating, places to relax, and outdoor facilities combined with high-tech, comfortable new trains would radically upgrade if not revolutionize high-speed rail.**

**Daily Life with and without trains** by Sierra Morris, Isabel Mccarthy, Zayda Lopez, and Clara Glassman was perhaps the simplest proposal: a video that illustrates the frantic experience of driving cars as opposed to the laid-back, relaxed lifestyle of train travel.

Another victorious entry looked outside of LA. **Union Station Bicycle Transit Station** by KGP Design Studio is a sleek, glowing peripheral extension to Union Station in Washington, D.C., offering protected bike storage, lockers, and changing space for bike-to-rail commuters. Finally, **masTransit** by Joshua G. Stein, Aaron Whelton, Jaclyn Thomforde, and Jacob M. Brostoff promoted dense, organic development, making travel actually less necessary at any speed. A loop around the city on raised infrastructure would link up to local and inter-regional commuting and the California High Speed Rail network. Incidentally, masTransit was also a winner of AN and SCI-Arc’s New Infrastructure competition, held last summer. SL
The new school echoes the Ambassador Hotel’s massing and scale.

Thanks to years of controversy and a price tag rising into the hundreds of millions of dollars ($578 million to be exact, which includes giant legal bills to assuage opponents), most Angelinos know that on September 13, a sprawling educational campus finally opened on the former site of the Ambassador Hotel. The name of the mega-complex is the Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools: it includes six pilot schools on the 544,000-square-foot site.

The Ambassador, of course, was one of the great LA icons. Designed by Myron Hunt and opened in 1921, its hybrid art deco–cumb-Mediterranean aesthetic—together with its tropical-themed Coconut Grove Night Club—attracted the likes of the Rat Pack, Nat King Cole, the Oscars, and several U.S. presidents. But the hotel fell into disrepair, and was razed in 2006 by its new owner, the LA Unified School District. There were years of debate as to whether the building was salvageable or could be transformed for another use; but at some point, there was no going back.

The new school complex is a compromise in many ways. Conflicting forces wanted different things: Many wanted an exact replica of the old Ambassador. Others, including the architects, Pasadena–based Gonzalez Goodale, wanted a contemporary building. The result falls somewhere in the middle. It takes on the scale, massing, and siting of the old hotel, as well as some former details, like its sloped roof and giant lawn, with a contemporary palette in between.

A recent tour of the building began at the expansive lawns leading up to the school, which is raised and set back from the street almost exactly where the old hotel stood. Grassly swaths provide a welcome respite from the noise of Wilshire Boulevard in LA’s Koreatown. A linear memorial park to Robert F. Kennedy, who was killed in a kitchen corridor (no longer extant) of the Ambassador, is temporarily closed off from Wilshire and the public by an ugly chain link fence. With an attractive mix of contributions by local artists, the park could be the welcome mat to this lawn.

The northernmost structure features a gridded glass facade that exposes the classrooms inside. Flanking this six-story building are vertical, perforated screens over the outdoor stairs, featuring green, white, gray, black, and other colored squares. In front sits an exact exterior replica of the white, boxy Coconut Grove. The buildings to the south are long, linear bars clad in metallic panels that lead the eye to the southernmost building, a colorful composition that meets the street at storefront scale.

From a planning perspective, the school manages the chaos of this impossibly complex program with intelligence. The lawn softens the thousands of pounds of concrete, the thoroughfare in the center is an effective connector; the site’s varying grades break down the overall scale, and the long view corridors provide much-needed orientation. Also, the outdoor eating and play areas take advantage, to an extent, of the California climate. It remains to be seen how many schools will interact without conflict, but it seems at first inspection it will work.

Hamstrung by district regulations, the school interiors are institutional. There is plenty of natural light, especially in generously wide hallways, and flowing in through floor-to-ceiling windows in many classrooms. Interior highlights include the reconstituted Middle Eastern motif of the Coconut Grove—hokey, but fun— as an assembly space; the old Paul Williams coffee shop as a fabulous, over-the-top teachers’ lounge; and the gently vaulted library inside the old ballroom, now, with its lovely murals and hypnotic volume, one of the most gracious spaces in the whole project.

Overall, the architecture is a strange, even campy hybrid of futurism and historicism. The pitched roofs are an approximated Mediterranean element tacked onto a contemporary shell. Repeating zinc-clad lintels and colorful vertical fins feel more sci-fi than historic. The aluminum stair grid, while an effective tool for promoting outdoor circulation, seems jarringly out of context. The glass facade feels heavy and inelegant, more suitable to an office building.

Respecting the past translates here into something closer to loosely mimicking it. Effective historical architecture involves painstaking investigation and attention to detail. Effective contemporary architecture is rooted in solving the problems of site and in offering a fresh vision. This complex has neither, and for a staggering price. The students, and the city of LA, should be getting something better.
Click 329 outside by daylight, inside it is the ultimate example, he wrote: “While Caesar’s looks sentence crackled. Of Caesar’s Palace, for Juggernaut.”

things together: the “John-and-Frances-John loved to use when we were bungling head, and our faltering efforts birthed a term ideal for anyone, least of all a balding red-to do our research in the middle of August; was peaking (1997). Foolishly, we chose ture at the moment its themed casino mania me. We wrote a guide to Las Vegas architec-tial, usually preservationist, and with great of small architectural jobs (mostly residen-tial, often preservationist, and with great Shim, and kept on calling, until almost the end of my trip when he finally gave up on the Imagineering pitch but offered instead to take me on a tour of LA. Boredly I set eyes on the dandified, twinkly-eyed John when I realized what an idiot I’d been not to meet him sooner. He took me on a tour that only he could give, of offbeat buildings as well as classics, hidden gardens, and endearing, shabby, roadside architecture, all accompa-nied by a hilarious and perceptive running narration. These were followed by headphone-inducing drinks at the Polynesian-themed Tiki Bar in Silver Lake. I boarded the plane the next day having fallen in love with John Chase and his Los Angeles.

From then on, we were firm friends, at long distance during the four years before I moved here in 1991. When I arrived in LA, however, John was no longer working at Imagineering. He was a superb writer, very witty, as well as a completely original and serious thinker. In 1982 he wrote Exterior Decoration: Hollywood’s Inside-Out Houses, a revelatory examination of modest houses decorated on the outside by their interior designers and set designer occupants. After that, in 1985, he spent a brief time as architec-ture critic for The San Francisco Examiner.

Another important publication was a book he wrote with Margaret Crawford and John Kaliski called Everyday Urbanism (1999; reissued 2008). In this book and in his wonderful book of essays Glitter-Stucco & Dumpster Diving: Reflections on Building Production in the Vernacular City, John laid out his personal philosophy of architecture and the lived environment. It was a philoso-phy that would come to flavor his work at the City of West Hollywood.

John started working as Urban Designer for West Hollywood in 1996, and while at times he complained about the constraints of bureaucracy, this position fitted him perfectly. There he was able to apply all his passions: his fascination with the entire urban fabric; his concern with preservation, as well as his embrace of really interesting new architecture; and his preoccupation, unique among architecture critics, with “building production.” He defined this in Glitter Stucco as “the sum total of the built response to human needs”—by which he meant the dominant built environment of “developer housing, blank faced speculative office buildings, shopping malls, parking structures, and warehouses” that were generally ignored or demeaned by the high-art architecture world.

In West Hollywood, he had a hand in shap-ing the streetscape, notably Santa Monica Boulevard (which he declared would be his legacy), its signage, parks, and buildings. He urged developers to aim for high quality; among John’s favorite new WeHo buildings were the Formosa 1140 condo building designed by Lorcan O’Herlihy, and the Sierra Bonita apartments for low-income people with special needs, designed by Patrick Tighe. When I last spoke to John, he was full of excitement about the next stage of his life. He had announced his retirement from WeHo and was anticipating a return to writ-ing and consulting, in the company of the man who brought incredible joy and stability to John’s life, Jonathan Cowan. (We jointly celebrated our respective marriages in a foursome wedding reception three years ago; and John was my daughter Summer’s godfather. The addition of Jonathan meant she got to enjoy two highly indulgent “godfathers.”) It is a mean trick of fate that he was taken away in his prime; I just hope that wherever he is he knows how much he contributed to LA and its understanding of itself, as well as to me and so many others personally as the most entertaining, supportive, and beloved friend.

FRANCES ANDERTON IS THE HOST OF DNA: DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE, BROADCAST ON KCRW IN LOS ANGELES.
OFF THE TOP

Thirty years ago, a barely famous architect named Frank Gehry, working with Gruen Associates, designed a three-story indoor mall near the beach in Santa Monica. It was a far cry from the sumptuous buildings he creates today, but the use of metal, glass, and expressive forms was still there, in its infancy.

Little of the original Santa Monica Place now remains, reconfigured into an outdoor luxury shopping center by Los Angeles-based Jerde Partnership and Dallas-based Omniplan. Save for some chain link signage, it is an entirely different place, less jazzy and more natural, less claustrophobic and more connected; a classy joint—at least by mall standards—that the developer hopes will attract the crowds that never flocked to the mall in 1999, first planned a ten-acre mixed-use complex of condominium towers, offices, and shopping, but neighbor- hord opposition scuttled that proposal. In 2007, the plan morphed into a $265 million, 9,000-square-foot dining deck sits atop the new roof.

Perhaps the most dramatic change is that there are no longer any gates, doors, or fences separating the shops from the street. Instead, there are four pedestrian access points connecting to the surrounding neighborhood and to local street life. According to the architects, each entrance references its adjacent neighborhood. For instance, the 2nd Street entry, closest to the beach, features a wide, curving eave reminiscent of a wave’s crest.

The architects have also incorporated sustainable elements. In addition to the reduced need for air conditioning and heating as a result of its outdoor conversion, the landscaping consists of drought-resistant plants and a green roof above the concierge stand. There is also solar roofing, sustainably sourced wood, and various products using recycled materials. The developer is aiming for LEED Silver certification.

Another significant shift is the tenant mix, abandoning many of the mid-priced stores for more high-end tenants. The third leg in the mall’s tenant mix is a focus on food, with sit-down restaurants and an outdoor wine bar, an upscale food court, and an upcoming gourmet market place inspired by San Francisco’s Ferry Building.

Rising in the midst of the ovoid plaza is the 60-foot-tall Silver sculpture by Christian Moeller, part of Santa Monica’s Percent for Art program, showing constantly changing “slivers” of news media such as CNN. Other pieces include Ball Nogues Studio’s Cradle, 335 mirror-polished stainless steel spheres suspended from the wall of the Pugh – Scarpa–designed parking structure. Anne Marie Karlsson’s Wheels sits on an opposite parking structure, a tile mural inspired by the old Ferris wheel on the Santa Monica Pier. 

The Grandmarc (above) and Strathmore Apartments (below).
Anthony Coscia designed his Skywave House in Venice as a place to live, work, and explore ideas. A curved sheet of steel provides shade and protection, and walls of glass open up to dense plantings on the 40-by-120-foot lot. Step inside, and you can take in the 90-foot-long interior at a glance, with its open stairs leading to floating platforms, glass-walled rooms, and sliding doors. There’s a palpable sense of openness, and the abundant natural light, reflections, and green vistas obliterate the divide between inside and out.

Coscia Day Architecture + Design have spent two decades designing inventive houses, smart commercial spaces, and restaurants like Natalee Thai, Azia, and Xi’an in Venice and Beverly Hills. In each of these projects, the architects started with a simple model before using computer software to model a sculptural enclosure that wraps around its occupants as fluidly as a robe embracing a body. Indeed, one inspiration for the Skywave House was an exhibition of Issey Miyake’s A-POC garments made from a single, laser-cut piece of cloth. The immediate point of departure was a small model of a desk the architects were working on: a floating wing atop a glass shape.

Following these investigations of surface and space, Coscia folded a single sheet of paper, like origami, but with a more fluid form. “That first model had more creases in it than the final design,” he recalled. The soft curvilinear forms came after living on the site, a short walk from the rounded waves of the ocean, and from both the smoothly curved furniture of the past decade and the bent plywood work of Eames, he added.

The steel is cut away to pull light into the center of the house and to vent hot air in summer. Living this close to the ocean, there is no need for air conditioning, and the house is designed to achieve a high level of sustainability. The standing-seam roof and upper wall cladding are painted white to diffuse the sun, while scoop skylights and motorized windows on the west side draw in ocean breezes. Concrete floors absorb the winter sun and incorporate radiant heating that can be powered from solar panels. The kitchen-dining space floats over a raised thermal base filled with the excavated dirt of the concrete grade beams, and this cools the house in summer.

Though the house is set back from the boundary line on all four sides, it seems to fill the site, and that gives it a visceral immediacy. Step through the gate and it fills your field of vision, swelling and stretching like a living creature. Canted, tilted, and curved planes impart a sense of movement. The interior is treated like a transparent loft, with a monochromatic palette and spare organic furnishings. Each space flows into the next, carrying one through the multi-level interior from the terrace and living room at the front, and a glass-walled office below, to the lofty central area for eating and entertaining and on to the upper-level master suite in back. “The house has changed us and the way we live,” said Coscia. “Though I’ve known it from the moment of conception, I’m constantly making fresh discoveries.”
Livinglass has partnered with hand-pounded bark manufacturer Caba Company to create a new line of decorative glass with a Barkskin interlayer made of the bark of fallen trees. The impact-resistant laminated safety glass panels contain 100 percent recycled glass and resin and are UV, water, and chemical resistant with a Class A, Class 1 fire rating. Panels can be as thin as ½ inch and are available in custom lengths up to 144 inches or custom widths up to 36 inches. www.livinglass.com

Schott's Pyran Platinum glazing is a transparent glass-ceramic material made without wires or the hazardous heavy metals antimony, arsenic, or barium, which are present in other fire-rated glass-ceramics. At just 3/16 inch thick, it is appropriate for non-impact, safety-rated locations including transoms and windows, while meeting fire-rating requirements, including a hose stream test, for up to 90 minutes. Finished with a nearly invisible microstructure, the glass can be tempered or laminated for a full range of interior applications. www.us.schott.com

Winner of a silver Best of NeoCon architectural products award this year, the Print technique developed by Joel Berman’s graphics division allows high-resolution photographs and designs to be printed directly on glass using ceramic frit ink. Images are printed with a minimum resolution of 300 dpi on standard, low-iron, or Berman textured glass up to 59 by 126 inches. Translucent and opaque finishes are available, and glass can be tempered or laminated for a full range of interior applications. www.jbermanglass.com

Krystal Klear is a new family of low-e glass from AGC that has the strength of heavy glass but without the greenish tint visible in some high-iron content panels. Though it can be used as a solar glass, Krystal Klear offers 91 percent light transmission, making it an ideal choice for interior applications. Laminating is available when more strength is needed, and the glass can also be tempered, curved, silkscreened, or insulated. www.agcglass.com

Architectural glass fabricator JE Berkowitz’s new Renovate division offers a system that allows single-pane windows to be retrofitted with an interior double-glazed attachment. The system includes iDea Seal weather seals, custom beauty caps, and setting blocks from Lauren Manufacturing and Plastics, as well as a customized Super Spacer TriSeal from Edgetech, which provides a seal between window units. Tests conducted by the company indicate that up to 65 percent energy savings and 7 to 31 LEED points are possible with the system. www.jeberkowitz.com

Part of Nathan Allan’s Josiah J collection, Sphere is a line of glass shapes that can be affixed to one or both sides of clear and textured cast sheets of glass. The company’s artists work with architects and designers to develop the size and layout of the spheres before fabrication begins. Eight colors, seven shapes, and three standard diameters up to 3 inches are available, but the company will also fabricate custom spheres up to 24 inches. www.nathanallan.com
When asked to design the new headquarters for Vakko, a Turkish fashion and media company, the architects at REX were presented with an old, partially constructed concrete shell and an aggressive timeline to complete the project. Rather than concealing the building shell—derelict structures like this are common in Turkey, where concrete construction is fast and inexpensive—the architects grew interested in revealing it through the thinnest sheets of glass possible.

“We didn’t want to hide the adaptive reuse,” said REX principal Joshua Prince-Ramus. “This kind of adaptive reuse, of an abandoned, incomplete structure, is really at the forefront of sustainability.”

The architects turned to the technique known as slumped glass, by which glass is repeatedly heated and cooled until it falls into a mold and assumes the mold’s form. Slumping is typically used to create decorative effects, but REX decided to use it for structural purposes: The glass panels feature an X-shaped impression that gives them vertical and lateral stiffness and strength.

At 5 by 10 feet, the 134 panels that wrap the building are a wafer-like 3/16 of an inch thick. They are held in place by four simple pins at the corners.

Before the glass could be heated, however, molds had to be made. Wood composite forms were cut from jigs, and then ceramic molds were made from the impression of the wooden forms. The glass was then heated and cooled over the ceramic molds, using the same techniques used to heat-strengthen glass. The process would have been
Ascending the escalators that spiral up Antwerp’s newly-completed Museum aan de Stroom, galleries displaying artifacts of the city’s past alternate with 18-foot-high views out to the city and waterfront. A competition-winning design by Dutch architecture firm Neutelings Riedijk, it comprises ten floors cantilevered from a central core, each one rotated 90 degrees from the one below. Because many of the exhibitions’ contents will be sensitive to the sun, the galleries themselves have no windows, providing a stark contrast to the expansive panoramas on every other floor.

Those views are especially striking through the museum’s undulating glass enclosures. After winning the commission ten years ago, Neutelings Riedijk teamed up with glass engineer Rob Nijsse to devise a way of making their oversize panes thin enough to maintain clarity but without resorting to metal supports. Their solution was to corrugate the panes, placing float glass in a wavy mold and baking it until it melted into shape.

Although the basic technique for curving glass dates to the 19th century, the unprecedented size of these panes raised a host of new problems. Only one other building had incorporated similar corrugated windows, to Neutelings’ knowledge: the 2005 Casa da Musica in Porto, by Rem Koolhaas, who worked with Nijsse as well. But the 18-foot panes in the Museum aan de Stroom were far larger, too large for most ovens to accommodate. The team solved that problem by renting Europe’s largest oven, a 20-footer in Italy, but other difficulties remained. The hardest, according to principal partner Willem van Neutelings, was how to achieve enough precision in the dimensions of the panes to allow them to align perfectly and connect with silicone joints. “It took a lot of calculations and work with the glass industry to make it suitable,” Neutelings said.

The thin panes, unmarred by any metal reinforcement, seem to disappear when the museum is glimpsed from far away. When viewed from within the building, the corrugation is obvious. Standing inside the radius of one of the curves appears to create a private viewing chamber, with a much wider panorama than that of a flat window. Alternately, seen from a slant, the glass takes on a greenish tint, turning the window into more of a curtain and making the room feel enclosed. “What you see in the glass depends on your position,” Neutelings said.

ALAN G. BRAKE

prohibitively expensive in many other places. “Turkey is at that sweet spot in their development where they have all the technology, but labor costs are low and they retain a large and highly skilled class of craftsmen,” Prince-Ramus said.

The effect, according to the architects, is something akin to Saran Wrap, with the glass appearing to pucker as if pulled taut. Startlingly clear when viewed straight on, the panes catch light and reflections when viewed from an angle. The facade is distinctive without resorting to heavy-handed branding or the overt decoration common in many prominent buildings for fashion companies. “Our client didn’t want a logo on the building,” Prince-Ramus said. “But they wanted something memorable.”

JULIA GALEF
The Pacific Northwest is known for many things, among them salmon, pine trees, and grunge rock. Sunshine does not often make the list. When designing an expansion of the Whatcom Museum, a showcase of regional art in Bellingham, Washington, Seattle-based Olson Kundig Architects knew that to attract a crowd, a luminescent structure would be essential.

The new, 42,000-square-foot museum is known as the Lightcatcher, for the 180-foot-long, 37-foot-high swooping wall of glass that is the project’s signature, a shining concavity that lures visitors into a nexus of art and activity. “It really came from the idea of light and a lack thereof—that this would be a focal point to gather light and gather people,” said Olivier Landa, the project manager at Olson Kundig.

On typically overcast days, the glass wall takes on a silver hue, reflecting the clouds; during the summer, it radiates warmth, shining like a peak of the Northern Cascades. As with most of Olson Kundig’s work, the project draws heavily on its surroundings.

To achieve this effect, Olson Kundig employed a complex system of frits and laminates on the two walls of glass that comprise the Lightcatcher. They began with an acid-etched product made by Montreal-based Walker Glass with a translucency that shifts from a nearly transparent ghostliness to an opaque veil. “It’s almost like it’s alive,” principal Jim Olson said, adding that it took a year of mock-ups to create the desired appearance. The etching serves a dual purpose, protecting art from direct light as well as transforming the wall into a canvas, allowing for art installations and films.

Where the glass meets the museum, an agate-tinged frit is employed, which gets progressively denser as visitors travel toward the galleries, allowing their eyes to adjust and shielding the art within. The frit helps the museum glow, both by day and night, when interior lights telegraph activity inside. To create even more of a beacon, white, golden, and salmon-colored lights have been installed within the wall.

The most unique thing about the Lightcatcher, though, is not the way it looks but the way it works, as an integral part of the museum’s HVAC system. The two sets of window panes create a 2-foot chimney that traps heat, insulating the building in winter and cooling it in summer, when vents at the top and portholes at the base are opened.
DIARY

SEPTEMBER

WEDNESDAY 29
Lecture
David Benjamin
Proof
7:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc
W. M. Keck Lecture Hall
960 East 3rd St.
Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

THURSDAY 30
LECTURES
Kurt W. Forster
UCSD by Design
7:00 p.m.
Museum of Contemporary Art
San Diego
700 Prospect St.
La Jolla
www.mcasd.org

Edwin McCann
Ideas on Trial
6:30 p.m.
Museum of Contemporary Art
Los Angeles
250 South Grand Ave.
Los Angeles
www.moca.org

Will Fleisig, Andy Thomley, et al.
A 21st Century Transportation System
12:30 p.m.
SPUR
654 Mission St.
San Francisco
www.sur.org

EVENT
Get on Board!
Reception for the Downtown L.A.
Streetcar
5:30 p.m.
Target Terrace @ L.A. LIVE
800 West Olympic Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.aiasf.org

OCTOBER

FRIDAY 1
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Karen Haas
Between the Surfaces
Matt Wood: Mom’s in Jail
Christine Wu
Romancing the Lucky Loos
La Luz De Jesus Gallery
4637 Hollywood Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.laluzdejesus.com

SATURDAY 2
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Brian M. Viveros
The Dirt Devil
Thinkspace Art Gallery
6029 Washington Blvd.
Culver City
www.thinkspacegallery.com

Takako Yamaguchi
Nude, Akt, Nu
Cardwell Jimmerson
Contemporary Art
8568 Washington Blvd.
Culver City
www.cardwelljimmerson.com

Make/Craft
Otis College of Art and Design
9045 Lincoln Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.otis.edu/
benmaltzgallery

EVENT
Pickpocket Almanack
7:00 p.m.
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
www.pickpocketalmanack.org

FRIDAY 8
LECTURE
Cole Roberts
Workplace of the Future and Slim Cities
12:30 p.m.
UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design
112 Wurster Hall, Berkeley
www.berkeley.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Molten Color:
Glassmaking in Antiquity
J. Paul Getty Villa
17985 Pacific Coast Hwy.
Pacific Palisades
www.getty.edu

SATURDAY 9
EXHIBITION OPENING
Collection Applied Design:
A Kim MacConnel Retrospective
Museum of Contemporary Art
San Diego
700 Prospect St., La Jolla
www.mcasd.org

EVENT
100 Years of Bauhaus
7:00 p.m.
La Luz De Jesus Gallery
4633 Hollywood Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.laluzdejesus.com

Sunday 10
EVENT
MAK Architecture Tour
11:00 a.m.
35 North Kings Rd.
West Hollywood
www.makcenter.org

LECTURES
Geoff Manaugh
Quadrantor and Other Architectural Expansionary Tales
7:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

John Klein
City Design for Positive Change
7:00 p.m.
UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design
112 Wurster Hall, Berkeley
www.berkeley.edu

THURSDAY 14
LECTURE
Walead Beshty
7:00 p.m.
Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
hammer.ucla.edu

SATURDAY 16
LECTURE
Victoria Kastner
William Randolph Heart and J. Paul Getty:
Collectors of Antiques
2-10 p.m.
J. Paul Getty Villa
17985 Pacific Coast Hwy.
Pacific Palisades
www.getty.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Pearl C. Huin
Never Ends
Steve Turner Contemporary
8028 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.steveturnercontemporary.com

THURSDAY 17
EXHIBITION OPENING
Re:Cycle: Bike Culture in Southern California
University of California, Riverside
Sweeney Art Gallery
3834 Main St., Riverside
sweeney.ucr.edu

EVENT
Tiki Farm: 10 Years of Tiki Mugs
La Luz De Jesus Gallery
4833 Hollywood Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.laluzdejesus.com

SUNDAY 17
EVENTS
Fall Homes Tour: Off Sunset,
Brentwood to Palaissades
11:00 a.m.
2101 La Mesa Dr.
Santa Monica
www.aiasf.org

Dylan Bolles and Saasha Hom:
My Ten Thousand Things
3:00 p.m.
Southern Exposure
3030 20th St., San Francisco
soex.org

MONDAY 18
LECTURE
Pierluigi Serraino
Rediscover the City: Northern California Modernism
6:00 p.m.
AIA San Francisco
130 Sutter St., San Francisco
www.aia.sf.org

TUESDAY 19
LECTURE
Donna Petherbridge
The Display of Vit
3:00 p.m.
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

EVENT
California Modernism
6:00 p.m.
Koenigs Atelier
250 South Grand Ave.
Los Angeles
www.koenigsatelier.com

LECTURE
Brad Borevitz
Thinkings: How Computers Change the Way We See by Altering the Way We Think
7:00 p.m.
Southern Exposure
3030 20th St., San Francisco
soex.org

THURSDAY 21
LECTURE
Bobby McNaughton
Home Within Us
11:00 a.m.
Pacific Design Center
8977 Melrose Ave.
West Hollywood
www.pacificdesigncenter.com

FRIDAY 22
SYMPHONIUS
Back to the Future
10:00 a.m.
Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
hammer.ucla.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
R. H. Quaytman: New Work
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St.
San Francisco
www.fmmoma.org

SATURDAY 23
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
31246 Palos Verdes Dr. West
Ensemble A+D
www.getty.edu

Beverly Hills
www.acacgallery.net

DIY URBANISM:
TESTING THE GROUNDS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St., San Francisco
Through October 23

Are stalled construction sites a blight problem? Or are they canvases for the public to use creatively? DIY Urbanism explores bottom-up approaches to urban spaces that are otherwise in limbo. Here, citizens act to take back those problem sites, creating pop-up storefronts, temporary plazas and parks, and even a forest in the heart of the Tenderloin District. The exhibit, produced by SPUR and curated by Ruth Kaffer with exhibit design by Rebar, also looks at how to turn a park into a low-income neighborhood without gentrification, and how to celebrate the culture of an area, including whimsical and thought-provoking urban experiments such as Rebar’s inflatable street furniture (above). PlantP consultation’s permeable landscaping, and Greenhead’s Seedbombs, seed mix to be tossed into vacant lots. Other projects, including Steve Canece’s Outdoor Living Rooms and the Proxy: Octavio Lotes K + L temporary installation by Envelope A+D, challenge us to think boldly about impermanent urban spaces.

DEBORAH ASCHHEIM: NOSTALGIA FOR THE FUTURE
Edward Cella Art + Architecture
6018 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles
Through October 23

Deborah Aschheim’s affinities for the ascetic modernist landmarks of Southern California is evident in the intimate portraits she has created of the iconic Capitol Records building and the Century Plaza Hotel, among other wide-ranging architectural subjects that include Seattle’s Space Needle, 2 Columbus Circle in New York, and Bertrand Goldberg’s Prudential Women’s Hospital in Chicago. Though the structures she draws are essentially public, in the sense that anyone can view them, Aschheim’s experience with those same buildings is at times strikingly intimate. Through her eyes, a viewer can appreciate the nuances and personal- ity of each structure, as in Beckman No. 2 (Strange Ceramic Sculptures) (2010, above), lingering upon the pendants at Edward Durrell Stone’s 1964 Caltech auditorium. Likewise, her almost pointillist sketches of these often forlorn and crumbling buildings—many now demolished or altered— are tinged with tragedy, hinting at some space-age utopia that never came to pass.
As a longtime subscriber to Onex, the special-effects must-have-monthly, I waited for the review copy of Artificial Intelligence with not-too-artfully hidden anticipation. The book was rumored to contain the ultimate revelations about the making of the Kubrick-inspired, Spielberg-written-and-directed science fiction epic.

It is immediately evident from the ballistic-grade paper, majestic proportions, and Mil-Spec binding that no expense was spared to create a book worthy of the motion picture, and that the authors and publisher prayed that Kubrick’s spirit would favor them with a smile in recognition of their dedication. AI was born of a short story that caught Kubrick’s fancy during the making of Eyes Wide Shut. Clearly a parable, and imbued with a then-preeminent insight into the apocalyptic nature of a global computer network, AI posited a robotic boy yearning to be flesh and blood in a world gradually turning from the organic to biomimicry. The book reveals, through facsimile, sketches, and oral history, the turmoil surrounding Kubrick’s struggle to reconcile his own darker emotional tendencies with what he felt the story deserved. It details with production photographs, interviews, and models the making of the film itself, a more “entertaining” Steven Spielberg at the helm.

Kubrick’s penchant for expanding upon the nooks and crannies of existing genres, particularly those involving technology, is well known. After eviscerating Mission Control’s black box in Dr. Strangelove, and de-romanticizing space travel in 2001, the path from HAL to Artificial Intelligence was, in a sense, preordained. But what began as a potentially corrosive adventure into the underbelly of computer leg-deremain vaulted backwards to another time and market venture when the project was handed off to Steven Spielberg. From then on, the vision established by the master of iconic storytelling was inexplicably diluted with equal parts Back to the Future and E.T., creating a brew that filmmakers hoped would be the futuristic Pinocchio story, but which in reality became an all-too-earwax story of nice guys with chips for brains.

Nor was the film propelled by a disciplined visual aesthetic. In fact, comparing the visual concepts advanced by conceptual artist Chris Baker to the obsessively detailed and technologically advanced images created by Doug Trumbell for 2001, or the comic storyboards drawn by Ken Adam for Strangelove, is a bit like comparing ABBA to U2. Yes, they are drawn with a sure hand, and yes, they faithfully register light and space, but as they ricochet from the maudlin to the soft-core cityscape of a venal emporium, the swooning décolletage of the buildings begins to take on the sagging countenance of an over-the-hill streetwalker. It isn’t until Baker drops the architectural/anthomical references and goes for pure fantasy that his illustrator’s mojo finally kicks in, transporting us with a gift for atmosphere to environments that Lebbeus Woods might have imagined.

Baker’s role, in the parlance of motion picture production, was to provide “visual concepts” that would serve as the basis for the production designer and a staff of art directors and special effects technicians to realize, using models, full-size environments, and then-nascent “Blue Screen” technology. And it is true that new ground was broken, particularly in the expansion of the virtual studio technologies that had enabled Spielberg’s startlingly vivid effects in Jurassic Park.

But in the end, the story bats last. Even the famous “Deep Throat” bridges played only a bit part in the picture’s final cut, leaving those who hungered for Kubrick’s last take wanting more.

CRAIG HODGETTS IS A PRINCIPAL AT HODGETTS + FONG DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE IN CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA.

WHAT’S GOIN’ ON

A5 Los Angeles: Architecture, Interiors, Lifestyle
Edited by Casey C.M. Mathewson. Introduction by Frances Anderton
Oro Editions, $60.00

The new book A5 Los Angeles is a collector’s item—a contemporary architecture “greatest hits” for a city that definitely deserves one. It charts out 22 of the city’s most dynamic firms and vividly displays their most recent projects. And with the help of architectural journalist Frances Anderton, it also conducts a useful exploration of where LA architecture is, and where it’s heading.

In her absorbing introduction, Anderton clarifies some of the wonders and paradoxes of LA architecture. Astounded by its “chutzpah and invention,” and impressed by its “formal abstraction and material experimentation that thumbnail its nose at pallid gestures,” she also wonders about its limitations. While most architects here support small houses and multi-family housing to tame the sprawling metropolis, and most believe that the city needs to put more emphasis on public architecture (as Austin Kelly of Xten says, “LA is remaking itself with greater density and urbanism”), the best new work in the city still consists mostly of extra-large, single-family residences.

A roundtable conversation at the back of the book, compiled by Anderton, dissects the contemporary scene particularly well. The architects discuss the evolution of architecture from the days of early modernism to the present. Kelly, who is evidently a shrewd observer of tectonics and history, put it succinctly: “From Neutra, we learn how to separate a glass wall from a structural element, so that they read independently and slip past one another… From Schindler, we learned about interlocking spaces and the plasticity of surfaces… From Ray and Charles Eames, we learned about a collaborative and open-ended design process.” The major evolution from then to now, Kelly added, is architecture that is more complex, more intricate, and more precisely shaped by and tuned to its specific surroundings. Others mention more attention to detail and structure, and a new “warm modernism.”

Despite its plusses, two troubling aspects of the book are the book’s final project descriptions, most of which sound directly cribbed from official firm statements, and the fact that the book was sponsored by a number of local and national companies, many of whose projects fill its pages. It makes one wonder how selections were actually made. But with money for book publishing so scarce, perhaps we’re lucky that someone was even able to produce a glutinous, useful record of what talented firms are doing here.

SAM LUBELL IS ANGELICA’S WEST COAST EDITOR.
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Mark Sexton, FAIA, Partner, Krueck + Sexton Architects, Chicago, Illinois

The Spertus Institute was a challenging project. It is designed with 726 pieces of glass fabricated in 566 unique shapes, including parallelograms that tilt in two directions. The integrity of the design relied on the absolute flatness of the glass, so we used 50% thicker exterior panels to reduce roller wave. We wanted a very neutral, low-reflective look but with high-performance numbers—especially in UV transmittance. Other companies just can’t fabricate glass with this level of complexity. We worked with Viracon from the very beginning of the concept. When you only have one material to work with, you better be confident about how it’s engineered and fabricated. At the end of the day, Viracon is just as concerned about the quality of the product as they are about the quality of the process. Do you want a turn? Contact us for details. Call 800.533.2080 or visit viracon.com.