Michael Maltzan Architecture has won an international competition to redesign St. Petersburg, Florida’s iconic pier. The firm beat out other finalists West 8 and BIG with The Lens, a project composed of a group of interconnected bridges, pathways, and structures arranged on a figure-eight plan. The project will frame the city through its sweeping, looped built form, forge a connection between downtown St. Petersburg and its waterfront, and create several new recreational opportunities, including the chance for visitors to get much closer to the water than they had in the past.

In 2010 St. Petersburg voted to demolish the current pier, a 1970s inverted-pyramid structure that the local government’s website refers to as “the most visible landmark in the history of the city.” But the pier’s “festival market” had fallen on hard financial times and the structure itself—battered by the elements over decades—was in dire straits, with repairs deemed by engineers to be virtually impossible.
Collaboration

Annenberg Center at Sunnylands
Architect: Fredrick Fisher and Partners

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In February and March AIA/LA is hosting a series of forums with five of Los Angeles’ mayoral candidates. The forums will help voters learn more about each candidate’s urban planning and design priorities and overall vision for the city. We asked Hon. AIA/LA Director of Government & Public Affairs Will Wright to outline the issue that he would most like to see addressed.

One question I’d like to ask each candidate is whether or not they’d support structuring their office to include a Deputy Mayor of Architecture and Urban Design. This position would work with the Deputy Mayor of Economic and Business Policy to optimize investments in infrastructure and capital improvement, improve citywide and ensure design excellence on all projects that influence the public realm. LA has an opportunity to transform itself into a healthier and more delightful place to live, work and play. But these investments need to be coordinated more holistically.

That includes coordinating and overseeing projects by the city’s sprawling bureaucracies: LA Community College District (LACCD), the LA Unified School District (LAUSD), Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), the LA Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and the Port of Los Angeles, and the LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (METRO).

Short of charter reform, one way to restructure the decision-making hierarchy of these huge organizations when it comes to buildings is to enable a team within the Mayor’s office to create a more integrated system of project delivery and facility operations with a greater emphasis on design and performance.

That way a tree doesn’t get uprooted by LADWP just months after streetscape improvements are made by the Bureau of Street Services. Or a park doesn’t get designed and built simply to be torn down a year later by LAUSD for school construction (as recently reported in The Los Angeles Times). We see it all the time, unfortunately, because we’re such a vast and expansive place and there are too many departments working on overlapping elements to different projects.

If there were an individual, or team, analyzing all of these moving parts, then their execution would be more efficiently coordinated. Those cost savings could then be invested in the projects themselves to make each facility look and feel better and operate more efficiently.

Another responsibility of the Deputy Mayor of Architecture and Urban Design would be to ensure implementation of the highest design standards. They could coordinate a Design Excellence Program modeled after what New York City has done under the leadership of Department of Design and Construction Commissioner David Burney. Or perhaps they could implement a peer-review selection process similar to the Federal GSA Design Excellence Program, which “includes a streamlined two-step architect/engineer selection process and the use of private-sector peers to provide feedback to the architect/engineer of record.” These types of programs can help elevate the value of design and provide more metrics like a design-quotient index to help defend up-front investments that will save vast sums of money on design, operations and maintenance down the road.

Granted, we are seeing more examples of design excellence under the Bureau of Engineering (such as the LAPD Headquarters Building or the Hollenbeck Replacement Police Station). Also, the Department of City Planning’s Urban Design Studio often helps enhance the overall design and integration of both public and private-sector projects. This type of leadership and commitment needs to be celebrated more often to re-emphasize that we are moving in the right direction. However, I think elevating the citywide roles performed by our design thinkers will help result in even faster and more substantial return on investment.

The cost of a project isn’t simply measured in what we spend on it, but also by what we fail to gain from it. Imagine a future when LA can capture greater value on its investments by attracting more people and business. We’re close to making that happen. Public facilities and overlapping networks of infrastructure make up a large portion of the city. They form our bones, organs, and muscles. We need a Deputy Mayor of Architecture and Urban Design to ensure that all these moving parts are performing optimally to maximize the health and functionality of LA as the world-class destination that it is.

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ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

It appears that AIA/LA is serious about opening a new architecture center. According to a post on Idealist.org, they’re looking for (and rumored to have already hired) a new fulltime “Campaign Director” for a $8-$15 million dollar capital campaign to “support the acquisition and renovation of an existing building for the new Center for Architecture and Urban Design Los Angeles,” and “create an endowment to maintain this new property.” There’s a brick with your name on it...

AND THE NOMINEES ARE...

A new museum for Academy of Motion Picture Sciences, to be housed inside the former May Company building in Miracle Mile right next to LACMA, may soon be getting an architect. Our rumor mill has produced three shortlisted names for the project: Morphosis, WHY Architecture, and spf:K. The last on the list, spf:K, had developed LACMA’s plan for the building back when it was still going to contain its art galleries. A chance for redemption?

DIVERGING VOICES

We hear from a good source that LA firm Daly Genik is breaking up. Best known for houses and schools, the duo landed on the national radar in 1999 when the firm was selected as one of the Architectural League of New York’s Emerging Voices. Word is that it’s an amicable split, and that principal Chris Genik has also left his job as the Dean of NewSchool of Architecture and Design in San Diego, looking far afield for a new post, while Kevin Daly will continue leading his own practice in LA.

SEND CASH ENVELOPES, CRITERION DVDS, AND RECYCLED LETTERHEAD EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM

TORI TORI, a new Japanese restaurant in Mexico City’s upscale Polanco district, inhabits a former house. Due to changes in the area’s zoning, many residences have been converted into commercial spaces but none with a facade as striking as Tori Tori’s. Taking cues from the natural ivy that climbs the walls around the site, two layers of lattice-like grilles seem to emerge from the ground and climb up and around the two floors of the eatery. The two self-supporting CNC-cut steel-plate layers filter light and shadow through glass walls, creating a constantly changing ambiance. The former home’s interior also underwent a complete restructuring: wood clads most of the interior surfaces, and over eight months custom-made furniture was completed. The eclectic mix of spaces—a main dining room, a sake bar, terraces, and even a small temple—are all surrounded by vegetation, blurring the line between inside and out...

Left: The structure creates calmer waters inside its boundaries. Below: Its figure-eight plan will create a diverse walking experience leading back to parkland near shore.

include a new tidal reef, a civic green, raised walking paths, an amphitheater, a water park, and other leisure activities.

“His take really redefined what a pier is in the 21st century.” Indeed, The Lens’ shape and siting help rethink a typology that has long become outdated.

With the old pier, said Maltzan, “you walk out in a straight line, you get to the end of the pier, and you turn around to come back. You’re just retracing your steps.” The figure-eight plan creates a “more complex and complete experience,” a circuit that introduces visitors to new elements throughout. The project’s shape will also allow for water-based activities like kayaking and boating in the interior of the loop, a new element in an area where waters are generally very rough. The project will also...
CONVENTIONAL WISDOM continued from front page presence in the city, it would also substantially expand LA’s convention space and unite the center’s two wings. AEG already owns the Staples Center and the adjacent LA Live mixed-use complex, and it’s hoping to build a new football stadium, the Gensler-designed Farmers Field, just north of LACOEX. Both the convention and stadium projects need the city to attract a new NFL team to move forward.

“We are, from an image standpoint, the most important city in the world,” AEG president Tim Leiweke has said of LA in the past. “Yet if you look at our ability to capture tourism and conventions, we’re not there yet.” The convention center represents the chance to transform downtown to a place that, as he added, “you won’t recognize 20 years from now.”

Populous senior principal Todd Voht said the firm is about halfway through schematic design. The current West Hall, designed in 1971 by Charles Luckman and renovated several times over the years, has long been outdated and undersized. The new hall would be built on the same site and bridge over Pico Boulevard, connecting on multiple levels with both Farmers Field and with the South Hall, which was designed by Pei Cobb Freed in 1993. The South and West halls are now connected via a narrow passageway and have little connection to surrounding streets. The new facility would in essence become one contiguous convention center, instead of two wings, with convention events able to spill into the stadium, as well.

While materials have not been finalized, said Voht, LACOEX’s glassy green-and-white exterior will take its chromatic cues from the South Hall. The project would also emulate Pei Cobb Freed’s large glass lobby with a giant “grand hall,” a multilevel glass atrium serving as the focal point for the convention center at large.

The building’s other elements will include a huge multi-use space; connections to the street, including the Pico Passage leading people in from Pico Boulevard; and the expansion of the center’s Gilbert Lindsay Plaza from a narrow, un-programmed strip into a multipurpose space accommodating up to 1,000 people.

The new facility will include 195,000 square feet of “A-class” exhibit space, and 48,000 square feet of multi-use space, increasing the convention center’s total size to about 1.1 million square feet. The center now holds a little over 700,000 square feet.

In designing the new facility, Voht said his team brainstormed words that describe Los Angeles, zeroing in on a few, including “iconic,” “dynamic,” “glamorous,” “influential,” and even “immortal.”

“We’re trying to put LA more on a global platform,” said Voht. Schematics will be completed by March. After that AEG must finish an EIR, and LA will have to play the waiting game to see if, having (practically) set aside by local residents and developers for public improvements) from Council District 9, Enter Spring Street Park, designed by Boe and LA-based design firm Lehrer Architects LA.

At the northern end of the site, a grassy ellipse is oriented askew to Spring Street, while to the south a plaza with permeable pavement anchors the L-shaped parcel. Benches and walls are strategically placed among the park’s overlapping, curved surfaces, creating zones that will allow visitors to “be a part of a large public space while still having a private and intimate experience,” according to Michael Lehrer, founder and principal of Lehrer Architects LA.

Encouraging users to move between private and public realms, stands of bamboo and subtle fences blur the boundaries between the park, surrounding residential buildings, and the street. Meanwhile a long, diagonal walkway bisects the park, connecting Spring Street on one side and an alley leading to Main Street on the other. The park will be managed by a partnership between the city’s Department of Recreation and Parks and a group of local residents called the Friends of the Old Bank District Gardens. The project is expected to open in fall of 2013.
Angeles CRA for helping to never forgive the Los Angeles firm Field Paoli, a principal at San Francisco Planning and Research Association, in an interview last year. Metcalf noted that often redevelopment projects that they were never intended to support, like stadiums and big-box stores. Still Metcalf said that redevelopment was vital for directing projects to dense urban areas—as opposed to encouraging sprawl—and helping rebuild once-crippled inner cities.

According to CRA interim director Jim Kennedy, redevelopment has generated over $5 billion a year in revenue flow and about 300,000 jobs a year through its investments. Sixty percent of those jobs have been in construction, and about 40 percent in related fields including, of course, urban planning and architecture. Kennedy added that every $1 in redevelopment spending has generated $13 in total economic services each year, "so you're talking $35 to $40 billion a year disappearing from the California economy on an annual basis." He also pointed out the loss of hundreds of important projects, like infrastructure, parks, and affordable housing, to name just a few.

There were about 400 redevelopment agencies in the state, all pushing for architecture and urban development. Architects, planners, and developers across the state worry that their work will now dry up. Right now there seems to be little to assuage that fear.

"There are an awful lot of projects that aren't going to go forward because of this," said Field Paoli's Fuller. He notes that his firm's San Bruno Gateway, a dramatic city entryway located adjacent to the local train station, will likely be severely scaled down due to lack of redevelopment support.

The end of redevelopment came through a drawn-out process. After years of taking money from the agencies to help fill its budget shortfalls, the state went even further this year as Governor Brown proposed abandoning redevelopment support. The associated legislation, ABX1 26, was tempered by a partner bill, ABX1 27, which allowed agencies to remain in operation through payments to their local municipalities (redevelopment proponents labeled this a "ransom payment"). But the CRA challenged the ruling, sending it to the California Supreme Court, which last month upheld ABX1 26, the "elimination" bill, but struck down ABX1 27, which would have kept the agencies alive.

Kennedy stresses that this is not the end of redevelopment. It will, he said, re-emerge in a new form, and with a new name. In fact, the association is already discussing suggestions with members of the legislature. But he acknowledges that, "in the best of circumstances it's going to be a downsized tool."
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EMERGES AGAIN AS ARCHITECTURAL MANUFACTURING CENTER

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

You probably assume that every architectural product you specify, from glass to lighting to metal, is produced in China or India. After all, that’s where all products are made nowadays, right? Wrong. In fact Southern California, which has a long history of industrial clout, is holding its own as a center for architectural production. There’s even growth in some areas as manufacturers recognize what Southern California has to offer: higher-skilled labor, lower shipping costs, and quicker turnarounds.

“The tide has shifted and people who build domestically may win in the long run,” said Steve Nadell, president at Troy-CSL Lighting, which opened a new factory in the City of Industry about a year ago. The 200,000-square-foot facility, which is leaps and bounds cleaner than what you might imagine, produces recessed lighting, LED fixtures, and landscape lighting, among other things. The factory uses cutting-edge equipment like CNC lathes and robotic welders to help offset the higher price of labor. “We just banged out a custom job of 1,100 pieces and it took two hours. It would have been days upon days doing it manually,” explained Nadell.

The facility has numerous advantages over the company’s other factory in the Philippines: it allows the outfit to produce large products that just can’t fit in shipping crates; it produces custom fixtures that the company can’t engineer effectively overseas; it allows for production and delivery in a matter of days, not weeks or months; and it creates the highest-quality components of all of its operations.

“We think that great product basically always wins. We’re very focused on design and engineering,” said Nadell. While other companies, said Nadell, are “100 percent at the mercy of vendors and of countries with volatile currency rates, laws, and politics, we’re taking control of our own destiny.”

Troy is not the only one. A 2011 study by Boston Consultant Group shows that investment in U.S. manufacturing investment is beginning to accelerate as the country becomes one of the cheapest locations for manufacturing in the developed world.

And while there has been a steep drop-off in manufacturing in the past two decades, the U.S. is still the largest manufacturing economy in the world, making up 21 percent of all globally manufactured products.

While traditional manufacturing is still in decline, recent growth, points out Kim Ritter-Martiner, an economist with the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), comes from higher-skilled jobs and more sophisticated products. “We have to be that much more productive and concentrate on more high-tech innovative industries,” she said. That’s the case in recession-battered California, which nonetheless is still the number one state in the U.S. for manufacturing employment, providing over 1.2 million jobs, or more than 10 percent of the jobs in the country, according to the LAEDC.

Architectural products are following the national trend, especially because architecture and other building trades often depend on customized products that can be produced on order and changed equally quickly. Near LA, product makers gravitate to places where land prices, zoning, location, and tax structures favor production. Plus they like the company of their own.

“I think most people don’t think anything gets made in Los Angeles. But Vernon, industry, and Commerce are all very vibrant manufacturing centers,” said Lloyd Talbert, president and COO of C.R. Laurence, a hardware specialist that has been located in LA since the 1960s and started to focus on custom architectural products—like handrail systems, perforated panels, and aluminum storefront systems—in the past few years. Their new 310,000-square-foot facility, which opened last July, is among five the company owns in Vernon. The size of the new plant—which fits plant workers, engineers, drafters, and even sales staff in the same facility—allows for ease of interaction among all players. “Communication should be frictionless,” said Talbert, who points out that building sites constantly have questions and problems and can now talk to the “brainpower,” aka the engineers, on the plant floor nearby, not in another country. His company is able to get its products to building and architectural firms almost instantly and deliver fixes just as fast. Technology in the company’s new facility includes CNC lathes, brake presses and routers, laser cutters, water-jet cutters, and robotic welders, most of which are preprogrammed by on-site engineers, meaning that workers basically have to just set things up and press a button.

The company still produces about 20 percent of its products overseas. But none of that work can be shipped or distributed as quickly in the U.S. Indeed, location is everything in the highly customized world of architecture and construction, especially when the products are a lot bigger than a trinket from Target. Enclos, a curtain wall manufacturer that still outsources much of its materials, assembles all of its West Coast curtain wall units at its factory in Pomona, including the entire curtain wall for Gensler’s Ritz-Carlton JW Marriott tower at LA Live. They only had to ship it a few miles.

“IT’s not uncommon for people to ship parts to China, where they’re assembled and then shipped all the way back. It’s crazy,” said Mic Patterson, director of strategic development for Enclos.

Patterson dreams of the day when manufacturing will be carried out on-site through a group of trailers that contain their own factories inside. The trailers would be assembled using “auto-assemble robotic technology” to produce units faster.

Of course, that vision is still a ways off. Closer to home, some dreams of manufacturing have come true. “You have to find that niche that works,” said C.R. Laurence’s Talbert. “For us it was the rapid customizaton and last mile of distribution. It’s a tremendous investment. We look at it as a big competitive advantage that’s hard to match.”

NINA RAPPAPORT

Above left: Working with glass and steel at Enclos’ Pomona factory; Above right: one of C.R. Laurence’s several manufacturing facilities in Vernon. Below, left to right: Computer-controlled fabrication at Troy-CSL Lighting’s factory in City of Industry; curtain wall assembly at the Enclos facility in Pomona; welding at C.R. Laurence’s Vernon facility.
Back from the Dead  continued from front page
LA Times building and City Hall, has been unoccupied since 2007, and plans for a new courthouse—including since-abandoned designs by Perkins+Will—have been in the works since 2000, when a judicial conference projected growth in the number of federal judges needed in Los Angeles. The new solicitation, whose Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was launched on February 6, dramatically reduces the scale of earlier designs for the building.

The project’s new life came in spite of staunch opposition from key congressional leaders and years of neglect. In 2011, Congressman Jeff Denham, who represents California’s 19th Congressional District surrounding Fresno, introduced HR 1734 (also known as the Civilian Property Realignment Act, or CPRA), which would have required the sale of the property. Calling the project an unnecessary waste, Denham cited reports that the increase in federal judges in LA had failed to materialize.

At a November congressional hearing spearheaded by Denham, several members of Congress suggested that advancing the project would require reauthorization from Congress. But according to a GSA spokesperson, 19 members of the California congressional delegation wrote the GSA after the hearing to express strong support for the project. Subsequently, GSA’s general counsel and other congressional and Obama administration leaders decided that the project could move forward with only a “notification of the significant changes to the project.” Although the CPRA passed the House in early February, the courthouse site’s sale had by then been stripped from the bill.

Ruth Cox, a GSA regional administrator said, “Throughout this process GSA and the courts worked closely together and have achieved a solution that is advantageous for all parties, while keeping within the existing appropriated funds.”

The project has already teased the public and architects alike with the potential for a new architectural amenity for the city. In 2005, Perkins+Will presented a conceptual design for a sustainably designed 17-story building with a curving facade and a large atrium. Rising costs (estimates reached $1.1 billion) killed that plan, and the GSA re-solicited design proposals in March 2006. The GSA cancelled that solicitation, according to a GSA spokesperson, due to “lack of competition.”

Of the original $400 million intended for the project, $366.45 million remains available (the GSA has already spent $16.9 million acquiring the site and $16.3 million on now-defunct designs for the new courthouse). The new, scaled-back proposal, as described by the GSA solicitation, calls for a 600,000-square-foot building, including 110 on-site parking spaces, 24 courtrooms, and 32 judges’ chambers, with a budget for the project set at $322 million. The solicitation also explains that the new courthouse “must express solemnity, integrity, rigor and fairness” and be occupied no later than March 2016. After its RFQ process is complete, the GSA plans to shortlist three teams and launch a Request for Proposals to choose the winner.

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Sculpture: Gyre, Thomas H. Sayre, N.C. Museum of Art
Once again we’ve worked tirelessly to collect your favorite West Coast sources, from contractors to lighting to sustainability consultants. The extensive list highlights some of our favorite projects from the last year, showing off the value of picking good partners. Read carefully: you might just learn a thing or two.

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  - 415-255-9140
  - San Rafael, CA; RLS/Diversified Systems

### HARDWARE

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  - 760-944-5640
  - Carlsbad, CA; 7668 El Camino Real, FSB
- **Häfele**
  - 415-92-7528
  - San Francisco; 225 Green St., Auerbach Pollock Friedlander
- **Hivemodern**
  - 714-480-0272
  - Orange, CA; 180 South Cypress St., Cibola Systems
- **Omnia**
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  - Cedar Grove, NJ; 930-390-0330
  - www.veneklasen-assoc.com
- **Polska**
  - 310-222-3550
  - 107 Sierra St., El Segundo, CA; Model Works
- **Prototyp**
  - 415-956-4100
  - San Francisco; 400 Montgomery St., Shalleck Collaborative
- **Softline**
  - 415-986-2327
  - San Francisco; 235 Montgomery St., Knapp Preservation Architects

### THEATER DESIGN

- **Theater Design**
  - 415-255-9140
  - San Francisco; 130 Sutter St., Charles M Salter Associates

“To shade exterior storefront glazing from solar heat gain & glare and make contextual reference to the campus’ red tile roof aesthetic, we designed custom sunscreens with extruded Shidlan Terracotta Baguettes ‘plank’ shapes having 8-inch-long cross-sectional profile. The extruded terra cotta includes an interior aluminum support rod as well as end gaskets and metal brackets to attach to the vertical members of a surrounding extruded anodized aluminum frame.” Craig Scott, Iwamoto Scott

“Sustainable Centria metal panels were fun to work with and provided an interesting texture contrast to the corrugated steel panels. Overall, this was the perfect material for multiple functions.” Steven Ehrlich, Ehrlich Architects

“Forbo’s Marmoleum has always been on my list of finish materials for many reasons, including its sustainable attributes. Although it’s often used with colorful and patterns, the minimalist in me really loves the beauty of the product in a single color.” Bill Puotz, Huntsman Architectural Group

“I selected Plyboo because of its renewability, but also because it was one of the few materials that would work on the floor, walls, and ceiling that was also able to be CNC-milled to accommodate perforation patterns for acoustic, A/V and HVAC functions.” Craig Scott, Iwamoto Scott
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Scott P. Kelsey, CO Architects

**“LSI Lighting has worked on many projects, and really appreciate the range of finishes and simplicity of the fixture designs. At the Gallery house we used their Graphite fixture finish to match the unfinished structural steel used throughout the project. The result was a tight integration of the lighting with the overall design concept.”**

Luke Ogrydziak, Ogrydziak Prillinger Architects

**“Auerbach Glasow is a highly valued lighting designer who has helped us for many years. Her work is fully enmeshed in the architectural goals of making space as beautiful as we can.”**

Mark Cavagnero, Mark Cavagnero Associates

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Mark Cavagnero, Mark Cavagnero Associates
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insertions into the
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Mark Cavagnero
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material quality,
diffusion of light,
and filtration of view,
as well as for the
material’s workability
in terms of ease of
drilling and cutting,
and its ability to
adapt to the curved
geometries of the
office walls where it
was used.”
Craig Scott,
Iwamoto Scott

“ ‘I love Fleetwood
because they can
produce massive
high efficiency
window walls, pivot
doors, and exterior
pocket door systems
in custom sizes. They
also have a wide
range of hardware
to choose from.
’
Julie Dowling,
Dowling Studios

“We selected Polygal
for its material quali-
ity, diffusion of light,
and filtration of view,
as well as for the
material’s workability
in terms of ease of
drilling and cutting,
and its ability to
adapt to the curved
geometries of the
office walls where it
was used.”
Craig Scott,
Iwamoto Scott

“We designed our
project closely with
Novum Structures
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appearance between
the different glazing
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Joseph Nicola,
Ratcliff Architecture

“The Rollamatic
Skylight system
allowed us to
envision an outside-
room! The monolithic
ceiling, made entirely of
glass, simply slides
away creating an
oasis of light and air
at the very center of
the house.”
Andrew Dunbar,
Interstice Architects

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Andrew Dunbar,
Interstice Architects
**FEBRUARY/MARCH 2012**

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**

**Wednesday 22**

**Lecture**

Chris Taylor
CraftPerspectives
6:30 p.m.
Phyllis Wattis Theater
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

Christofilis Maggdis Unearthing Agamemnon’s City: The Lower Town of Mycenae
7:30 p.m.
Getty Villa, Auditorium
J. Paul Getty Museum
17986 Pacific Coast Hwy.
Malibu, CA
www.getty.edu

**Friday 24**

**Symposium**

Living in a Modern Way: California Design at Mid-Century
Jim Isermann, Jorge Pardo, and Pax White
10:00 a.m.
Bing Theater
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.lacma.org

**Saturday 25**

**Lectures**

Vikram Prakash and Anany Roy
The Future of Asia’s Cities: Design, Environment, Health
9:30 a.m.
Stimson Auditorium
Seattle Art Museum
1400 East Prospect St.
Seattle, WA
www.seattleartmuseum.org

Tom Lender
Groundwork
6:30 p.m.
208 Gould Hall
Department of Architecture
University of Washington
Seattle, WA
www.arch.washington.edu

**EXHIBITIONS**

**Wednesday 22**

**Exhibition Opens**

Cornerstones of a Great Civilization
Portland Art Museum
809 SW Park Ave.
Portland, OR
www.portlandartmuseum.org

**Exhibition Opens**

Magdalena Fernández: 20MP99
Temporary Gallery B
Museum of Latin American Art
628 Alameda Ave.
Long Beach, CA
www.molaa.org

**FEBRUARY 26**

**Exhibition Closes**

Do it in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman’s Building
3:00 p.m.
Ben Maltz Gallery
Otis College of Art and Design
9045 Lincoln Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.otis.edu

**MARCH 11**

**Exhibition Opens**

Adam Fuss: New Work
Framed Gallery
49 Geary St., San Francisco
www.framedgallery.com

**FILM**

Man with a Movie Camera
(dir. Dziga Vertov, 1924), 67 min.
Billy Wilder Theater
UCLA Film & Television Archive
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.cinema.ucla.edu

**Symposium**

The Buildings: Perspectives on Frank Lloyd Wright
7:00 p.m.
Phoenix Art Museum
1625 North Central Ave.
Phoenix, AZ
www.phxart.org

**FILM**

The Unstable Object
69 min.
California Institute of the Arts
Concert Hall
Theater in Walt Disney Concert Hall
1111 8th St., San Francisco
www.caic.edu

**Symposium**

From Inspiration to Realization: The Curatorial Process
12:00 p.m.
The Schwab Room
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

**FILM**

Man with a Movie Camera
69 min.
UCLA Film & Television Archive
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
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**Symposium**

From Inspiration to Realization: The Curatorial Process
12:00 p.m.
The Schwab Room
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
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**Symposium**

ARCHITECTURE IN THE EXPANDED FIELD
1111 8th St., San Francisco
March 18–April 7

Therapist and critic Rosalind Krauss’s 1979 text “Sculpture in the Expanded Field” attempts to identify the scope of sculpture in a time when artists were redefining its traditional limits to include considerations of architecture, landscape, and space. The Wattis attempts a similar redefinition of the field of architecture; installations explore material, spatial, and perceptual concerns with emerging experimental technologies outside the limits of traditional architectural practice. A full-scale installation within and outside of the gallery transports visitors into the immersive environment, while a surface component presents the mapped expanded field of architectural installation.
In the beginning there was pulp sci-fi. Lucid cartoons of future cities riddled with aerial tramways and flying cars, and thrashing with atomic power. For the most part they populated the covers of newsstand offerings like Popular Science and Amazing Tales. But all that was before Syd. He changed all that. He was a futurist. He invented the term. He created a new genre.

One can forgive the nearly a thousand visitors at the opening exhibition of Syd Mead: Progressions if they missed the irony: there was the acclaimed futurist himself, dressed all in white, receiving friends in the faux-medieval courtyard of the Forest Lawn Mortuary and Museum. Joining the throngs of the faithful as they jostled for a better view of his paintings, and searching in vain for even one fellow architect, one could not help wondering why the place was not swarmed by young designers. And one was reminded once again of just how insular the architects of the “Me Generation” had become.

On display were images depicting cityscapes and buildings that might have been snatched from the most recent international competitions. Lustrous metallic surfaces, twisting towers, parametric volumes, all hauntingly beautiful, and all bearing dates—wait for it—from the early 1970s and ’80s! That’s right! Before most of the maestros of Rhino and Maya had been potty trained. Yet from the depths of the postmodern era, like a latter-day Jules Verne, or a reincarnated Piranesi, Mead had anticipated the seamless, gestural designs that are multiplying on screens around the world.

Mead is perhaps best known among architects as the visionary designer whose work on 1982’s Blade Runner set the stage for the edgy, post-apocalyptic style that shoved postmodernism into oblivion. Originally hired as an Art Center alum “thug” to visualize Rick Deckard’s hovering cop car, he couldn’t resist plunging the auto, in true Mead fashion, into a imaginary street scenes cluttered with a goulash of cryptic signs and symbols and draped with a spaghetti of cables and pipes, as though the whole of Los Angeles was on life support. Those images, now part of our collective subconscious, propelled Mead’s hand into a stratosphere of designers whose vision embraced consumer goods, transportation, and everything else the eye could see, down to the typography on a food cart.

The surprise is that the images in Mead’s luminous gouache paintings from the 1970s and ’80s, while not by any means photo-realistic, create such a powerful sense of being right there, that even the most sophisticated digital renderings seem pallid by comparison. These images are composed with such flair, such lyrical attention to the combined effect of reflections, surfaces, and primary form, that the mind is lost in a space that is simultaneously ecstatic and revelatory.

There is no doubt that Mead’s genre, heavy on willowy thin, armed vixens, shoulder pads, and upturned collars, has sadly consigned his best work to the science-fiction catalogue, especially among those whose aesthetic appreciation is dictated by political correctness. But Mead seems unfazed. True, the products of his imaginings are often situated in star fields and endless interplane-tery space, or in the purple haze of an other-worldly sunset reflected from the spit-polished canopy of an idling coupe. But what’s important is the existence of, indeed the fact of, those reflections, the fact of the sunset, the fact of the coupe in the foreground, framing a distant view of a many-spired city, and the fact of the deeply textured fabric of the driver’s jacket that conjures references to Velázquez and Tintoretto. Yes, the paintings do exact a now-banished monarchy, and yes, the jezuitically inclined would offer the apogee, self-indulgent posture of the aristocracy, but those issues should not displace the astonishing artistry compressed into a few millimeters of paint.

Like the great classical artists, Mead’s primary palette is light. Limpid, hard-edged, violent even, it splashes, spurs, and eddies in mercurial pools, restlessly articulat- ing his subjects. One cannot detect Mead’s hand in this. The brush strokes, yes, he used brushes, young turks/melt into the subject matter, revealing first continued on page 18
THE FUTURE ACCORDING TO MEAD

continued from page 17

the glint of a visor, then the almost imperceptible texture of a darkly shadowed overhang. The overhang, the shadow, and the barely visible activity within might be framed by a highly reflective pool, leading the eye to an off-camera transaction scorched into a jagged rockscape. There is intrigue, a mesmerizing stillness, and a fully realized yet improbable culture framed as carefully as a tourist poster. The geometry, rendered in great, sweeping gestures that bind the composition, would have provided a feeding frenzy for art scholars like Rudolph Arnheim, but for poor mortals, it is the proto-erotic, fetishized imagery itself that lingers in the memory.

Surprisingly, Mead has only occasionally stepped out of the world of fantasy—whether cinematic or graphic—into the world of steel and concrete. His concepts should blend seamlessly into our near-seamless global economy. One thinks of Neil Denari, and Zaha Hadid, and Tom Wiscombe, whose gestures and surfaces have more than a whiff of Syd, or of Marc Newson, whose products, but for their jocular nature, might have a place at the table. But that’s another story.

Right now, I’m planning to dine at Bar Basque, Syd’s first venture into the “real” world. I’m told the food is delicious, but I’m going there for the design.

L.A.-BASED CRAIG HODGETTS ARCHITECT IS A PRINCIPAL OF HODGETTS + FUNG.

DESIGN BUDDIES

continued from page 17

The Eames era is another gap in The Architect and the Painter, yet any designer will envy Charles Eames’s skill at wooing corporate clients, despite his famed verbal awkwardness.

We witness how the Eames charm worked on the U.S. State Department. Glimpses of the USA, a film that they made for the United States Information Agency-sponsored American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959, was an assertion of superior American might, cloaked in a comradely “Family of Man” universalism.

A key Eames client was computer giant IBM, which harnessed the Eames approach in clever cartoons that, in the era of sinister sci-fi robots, made computers seem as unthreatening as a child’s top. Working for straitlaced IBM, the Eameses operated as if they were autonomous, and their whimsical films added warmth to the imposing IBM corporate brand, as did their IBM pavilion at the New York World’s Fair in 1964.

What looks like a sellout today, curator Donald Albrecht opines, really wasn’t, since the Eameses believed in what they were doing—and reaped the profits as corporate work begat other corporate work.

Geniuses can be propagandists, and geniuses can have bad days. The Eameses rode waves of praise until their mammoth 1976 bicentennial touring exhibition, The World of Franklin and Jefferson, which went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Charles layered galleries with American objects, documents, and explanatory text. It was an early prefiguration of internet hyperlinking, but it proved that dense stuffing of information as an idea—the embodiment of “eventually everything connects”—was more refined than the installation in physical space. Critics, led by Hilton Kramer of The New York Times, trashed it as unworthy of the Met. Charles Eames died two years later in 1978. Ray died to the day, ten years later.

The film also revisits poignant personal stories. At Cranbrook in 1940–41, when lovestruck Charles abandoned his bride and baby for the gifted Ray Kaiser, he smothered her in love letters that first drove her away and finally won her over. In the 1970s, when Charles fell for young Judith Wechsler at MIT, letters gushed out to her, evidence that the old partnership with Ray was fading.

The film declares that the Eames legacy lives on, but where, beyond the works that came out of the studio? The audience is left to ponder that proposition, which is a task that the Eameses would have liked. After all, one of Charles Eames’s other famous lines was, “If you can think and you can see, and you can prove that to me, then you can work here.”

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Neil Denari: you and your practice.

The architecture profession and urbanism that has also been investigating the common "Best in Show" for both built and the AIA/LA Gold Medal but also recently took home not only sat down with Neil Denari, who I could do would come into play. Somebody's desire for what practice for the time when the I could say would be easy to say. "Yeah, I'm frustrated." But all these things are hard won and hard fought.

Have you been frustrated that you haven't been able to do more ground-up buildings? You could have lots of conversations with architects, and they would say, "Of course it's never enough. It's never the right thing." You've got more ideas than you've got possibilities. Despite HL23 (the firm’s well-received condo tower adjacent to the High Line in New York), the time for our office still hasn't come yet, as far as making a bigger mark and growing with projects that are hopefully public projects. Even expanding the diversity of the things that we’ve been able to build. It would be easy to say, "They’re very unforgiving projects because they have their rules, and the site shapes the building and the envelope, so they turn into projects about the envelopes themselves. It’s three stories, 34,000 square feet. We’re also renovating a contemporary furniture showroom on Beverly Boulevard. You say that the pendulum sometimes swings away from the mainstream at times. Is there any way the pendulum can be pushed?

Sometimes we might feel utterly powerless in the face of markets, where the architect is the last person you call in the process. To be taken seriously—instead of being seen as dilettantes or dabbling in something—that’s a global initiative. It’s much more effective in Europe because of the long-standing general respect for the architect. If architects have to chase jobs, then you have to go where the jobs are, and that leads to places like China. It’s almost like you’ve got a world map in front of you. Now it’s Singapore, now it’s Brazil. But that feels like you’re following rather than inventing or maintaining ideas or markets. With HL23 and with your Superstudio class, you’re dealing with architecture, which is full of detail, and also the scale of the city. Is balancing those aspects of a project something that sets you apart?

I have an interest in material and construction, and I’m also so curious about things that are on the other side of the spectrum—the mystery of urbanism. I’m trying to think about what our urban environment is. So much of it is about the phenomenology of space and everyday life. Yet I don’t subscribe to the nonchalant or the informal form of urbanism. I’m still very much interested in a designed world.

I’ve done projects for a long, long time, but I didn’t get to being accepted in architecture. Some more ideas than enough. It’s never the right thing." Would you say, “Of course it’s never enough. It’s never the right thing.” I could do would come into play. Somebody’s desire for what practice for the time when the I could say would be easy to say. "Yeah, I’m frustrated." But all these things are hard won and hard fought.

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I’m always talking about the human scale as much as possible. That’s the ultimate reference point. It’s not an old-fashioned concept; it’s just a realistic concept for which I am deeply committed. Even in these kinds of fictitious enterprises. The human scale, but really mostly the human point of view. The body in space as deeply felt and deeply experiential—it’s simply the governing modality of experience.

What is the ultimate lesson you’d like to impart to your students in terms of scale? You don’t expect them to become city planners in the end, do you?

At one end the skills are learning to manage projects at any scale. I think the offices that I like are undaunted by any type of scale. At one level this is about having the skills and tools and confidence. The other thing is the idea of design as politics, design as a persuasive medium. We’re trying to grasp something on a much greater level of complexity and scale.

What are your thoughts on the divide between architectural education and professional practice? This idea is outdated, but still European education is technically dominated and American education is conceptually dominated. Over the past ten years my personal project has been trying to bring the technical nature of things together with research. The technical side often gets displaced in America. It’s been a curious split. I don’t think it’s the responsibility of a school is make kids “professional” so they’re ready to go to work. I like to think school is about playing with all the tools in the toolbox, gaining skills to be able to approach what one might be asked to do in an office.

What’s new seems to be a major part of your work. Does your research derive from this? At school I was very interested in the relationship of art to architecture. Even more so than...
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