

THE WEST ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER

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AEG AND POPULOUS UNVEIL LA CONVENTION CENTER PLANS

Conventional Wisdom

On February 2, sports and entertainment behemoth AEG shared plans for yet another piece of downtown LA's South Park neighborhood: replacing the LA Convention Center West Hall with LACOEX (Los Angeles Convention and Exhibit Hall). The unveiling

took place at a meeting of the city's Ad Hoc Committee on the Proposed Downtown Stadium and Events Center.

The \$275 million project, designed by Populous with Gruen Associates, would not only be a flashy new

continued on page 6

LA FEDERAL COURTHOUSE TO FINALLY MOVE AHEAD

Back from the Dead

One of Los Angeles' most unsightly holes in the ground is finally ready to be filled.

The General Service Administration (GSA) in late January revealed plans to move forward with its long-awaited federal building downtown, announcing the solicitation of a design-build contract for a new federal courthouse at the corner of 1st Street and Broadway. The pit, across the street from the

continued on page 9



Perkins+Will's original courthouse design was scrapped.

SHOT DOWN BY CA SUPREME COURT, DISSOLVED BY GUV

CALIFORNIA REDEVELOPMENT: 1945–2012

What many deemed impossible has become reality. As of February 1, California's redevelopment agencies have ceased to exist. Legislation demanding an extension of their court-ordered dissolution to April 15 was not passed, and the agencies ran out of options. Governor Jerry Brown has formed a three-member board responsible for their termination, and agencies have already started laying off employees.

Founded in 1945,

continued on page 7



CRA-controversy Bunker Hill in the 1960s.

FORMER AECOM ARCHITECTS TO OPEN LOS ANGELES SOM STUDIO **PRODIGAL SOMS**

In the midst of the real estate meltdown of the mid-1990s, Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill (SOM) packed up its bags and closed its Los Angeles office, consolidating its West Coast operations in San Francisco. Now LA SOM is back.

In February the firm will open a Los Angeles studio led by three former AECOM architects: Michael Mann, Paul Danna, and Jose Palacios. The three, who will each carry the title "Practice Leader," had all worked at SOM prior to joining AECOM. Conversations with the SOM leadership started last summer, they said.

Danna, Mann, and Palacio listed several reasons for returning, including, said Danna, SOM's "consistent regard for excellence and craft and technology and design."

"It was an

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nection 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.

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MALTZAN TAKES ST. PETERSBURG COMPETITION

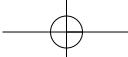
PIER WON

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 con-

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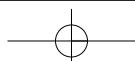


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PRODIGAL SONS continued from front page
opportunity we couldn't pass up," added Mann.

The studio will open with between 10 and 40 staff. While it will start in a small interim space, it will eventually settle in a downtown location with a "strong street presence," said SOM managing partner Gene Schnair.

The return to LA, pointed out Schnair and design partner Craig Hartman, makes sense now, considering LA's market size, its cultural influence, its wealth of architectural talent, its diversity of built fabric, and a number of commissions that the firm has recently

GET IT TOGETHER, LA

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 single out 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 person would work with the Deputy Mayor of Economic and Business Policy to optimize investments in infrastructure and capital improvement citywide and ensure design excellence all on 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) 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 building 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 and perform 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 current design-thinkers will help result in an 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.

WILL WRIGHT, HON. AIA, IS DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS FOR AIA LOS ANGELES.

began in the area. Those projects include a new medical education building at UCLA, the San Joaquin student housing complex at UCSB, and the new Superior Courthouse in San Diego.

"We've become a much more diverse practice since we left Los Angeles," said Hartman, who noted that the firm was heavily invested in commercial buildings during its first stint in the city. "Los Angeles represents that diversity."

The office will look at opportunities in Latin America and Asia as well, but LA and Southern California will be the first order

of focus, according to Schnair and Hartman.

"If you're going to practice architecture as a high design firm you need to be in New York and LA," added Mann.

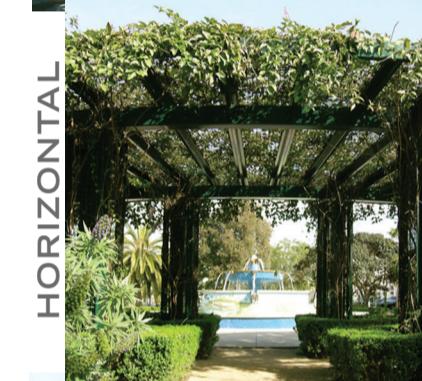
In spite of the downturn, the firm is optimistic, which seems to be a good omen for a speedy recovery in LA.

"One has to have a strong will and a strong stomach to be able to navigate the economic uncertainties," said Schnair. "More recently it became apparent there was a lot of energy down in LA, and it was time to take the next step." **SL**

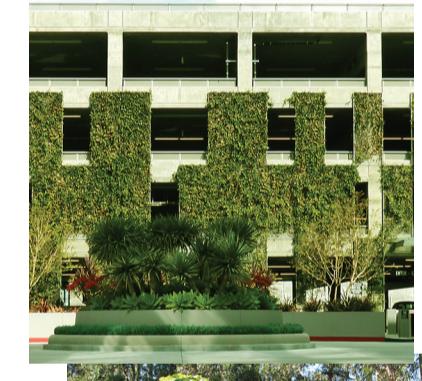
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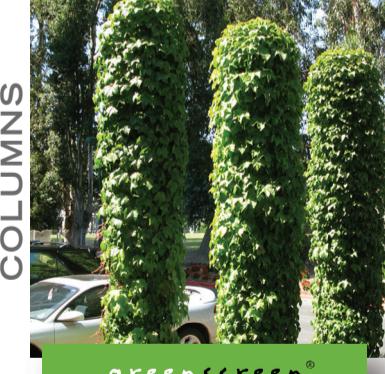
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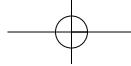
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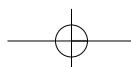
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 22, 2012

EAVESDROP > THE EDITORS

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:A**. The last on the list, **spf:A**, 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.

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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.



COURTESY MICHAEL MALTZAN ARCHITECTURE

PIER WON continued from front page The city was ready to redefine both the pier itself and the city at large.

"We saw this as an unusual, once-in-a-lifetime sort of thing," said Raul Quintana, city architect of St. Petersburg. "It's something that cities the size of St. Petersburg don't normally do. It's very risky and forward thinking."

A jury of three design experts (including San Francisco architect Stanley Saitowitz) and two local officials selected Maltzan's concept after studying the entries for more than a month. The competition began in June with 30 registered teams and was narrowed down to 3 at the end of last year.

"Michael Maltzan just

nailed it," said Quintana. "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

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

"It's not a traditional architecture project. It's not a traditional landscape project. It's really a hybrid," said Maltzan, echoing what has been said about others in a new generation of urban scaled projects, like New York's High Line.

The first phase of the project is budgeted at about \$50 million. St. Petersburg city council approved the project in early February (despite loud protests in this conservative city). The project will be supported with funds gained from a county-approved tax increment financing plan, although some council members wondered if the budget was realistic. The first phase could be completed within three years.

The pier is among several new projects helping revamp the city. Others include a new Salvador Dalí museum, a Dale Chihuly museum, an expansion of the fine arts museum, a vital public art program, and the development of a new arts district.

"[The pier] really fit what St. Petersburg is becoming. Not what St. Petersburg used to be," said Quintana.

SL

OPEN > RESTAURANT



PAUL RIVERA

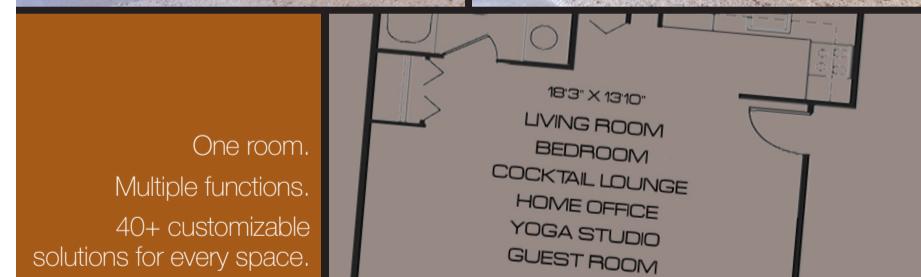
Tori Tori, a new Japanese restaurant in Mexico City's upscale Polanco district, inhabits a former house. Due to changes in the area's zoning, many residences have been converted into commercial spaces but none with a facade as striking as Tori Tori's. Taking a cue from the natural ivy that climbs the 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. **VERONICA ALIF**

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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 Voth 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 Voth, 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, Voth 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 Voth. 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) built it, a new NFL team will come. **SL**

Plan for new Spring Street Park.



Weintraub, chief engineer of LA's Bureau of Engineering (BoE), which is leading the project.

Downtown added 15,000 residents between 2000 and 2010, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, all while bereft of a functional public park. In 2009, the city made a surprise decision to purchase the site using \$5.1 million in Quimby funds (money 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. **JAMES BRASUELL**

GREEN CARPET

While Pershing Square, a hardscaped wasteland populated by painfully dated public art, seems to be a lost cause, a small but promising public park is well underway in the middle of Downtown Los Angeles, setting up what many see as a tipping point for a growing residential community.

Construction of the 0.7-acre lot that will become the Spring Street Park has been underway since October in Downtown's Historic Core, a neighborhood full of Beaux Arts and art deco buildings that has become the city's unofficial residential center. "This park will announce the maturity of the re-population of this area," said Deborah

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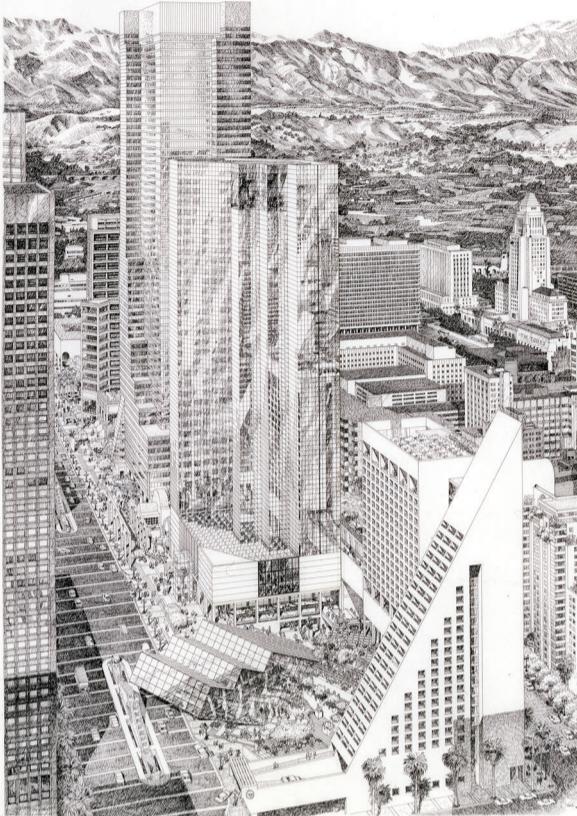
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Maguire Properties' CRA-sponsored vision for Grand Avenue in the 1980s. The plan was never built.



COURTESY MAGUIRE PROPERTIES

CALIFORNIA REDEVELOPMENT: 1945-2012

continued from front page
the agencies were designed to "enable local governments to revitalize deteriorated and blighted areas," according to the California Redevelopment Association (CRA), through encouraging private sector investment that otherwise would never occur. Their most noted incentive tool was tax increment financing, a method of using projected gains in taxes to subsidize improvements.

Over the years CRA-supported success stories included the redevelopment of downtown LA and Hollywood, the reemergence of Culver City's downtown, and the turnarounds of Old Pasadena, San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter, Mission Bay in San Francisco, and Bay Street in Emeryville.

"We haven't got many tools like this to fix complex city problems," said Frank Fuller, a principal at San Francisco firm Field Paoli, who praised redevelopment's ability to help developers take risks in challenging urban areas.

These achievements, of course, were partnered with allegations of corruption, inefficiency, misuse of eminent domain, and waste in times of economic hardship. Many in Los Angeles never forgave the Los Angeles CRA for helping to gut the residential neighborhoods of Bunker Hill and

Chavez Ravine in the 1950s and 1960s to build a new downtown center and a new baseball stadium. Others accused the agencies of handing out "corporate welfare" to undeserving developers. Discussing the agencies prior to their dissolution, Governor Brown's spokesperson Evan Westrup told AN, "Now is not the time to be subsidizing private developers while our public services are being bulldozed."

"It's a very expensive program with some incredible success stories, but with a huge number of unsuccessful stories," said Gabriel Metcalf, director of SPUR (San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association), in an interview last year. Metcalf noted that often redevelopment payouts failed to achieve desired results due to poor targeting and lack of oversight. Fuller added that agencies had begun funding 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 the agencies altogether in his 2011–12 state budget. 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." **SL**



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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-Martinez, 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.

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

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.

Enclos, a curtain wall manufacturer that still out-sources 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.

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 out-sources 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.

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.

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 customization 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



COURTESY TROY-CSL ENCLOS, C.R. LAURENCE

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. **JB**



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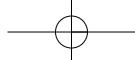


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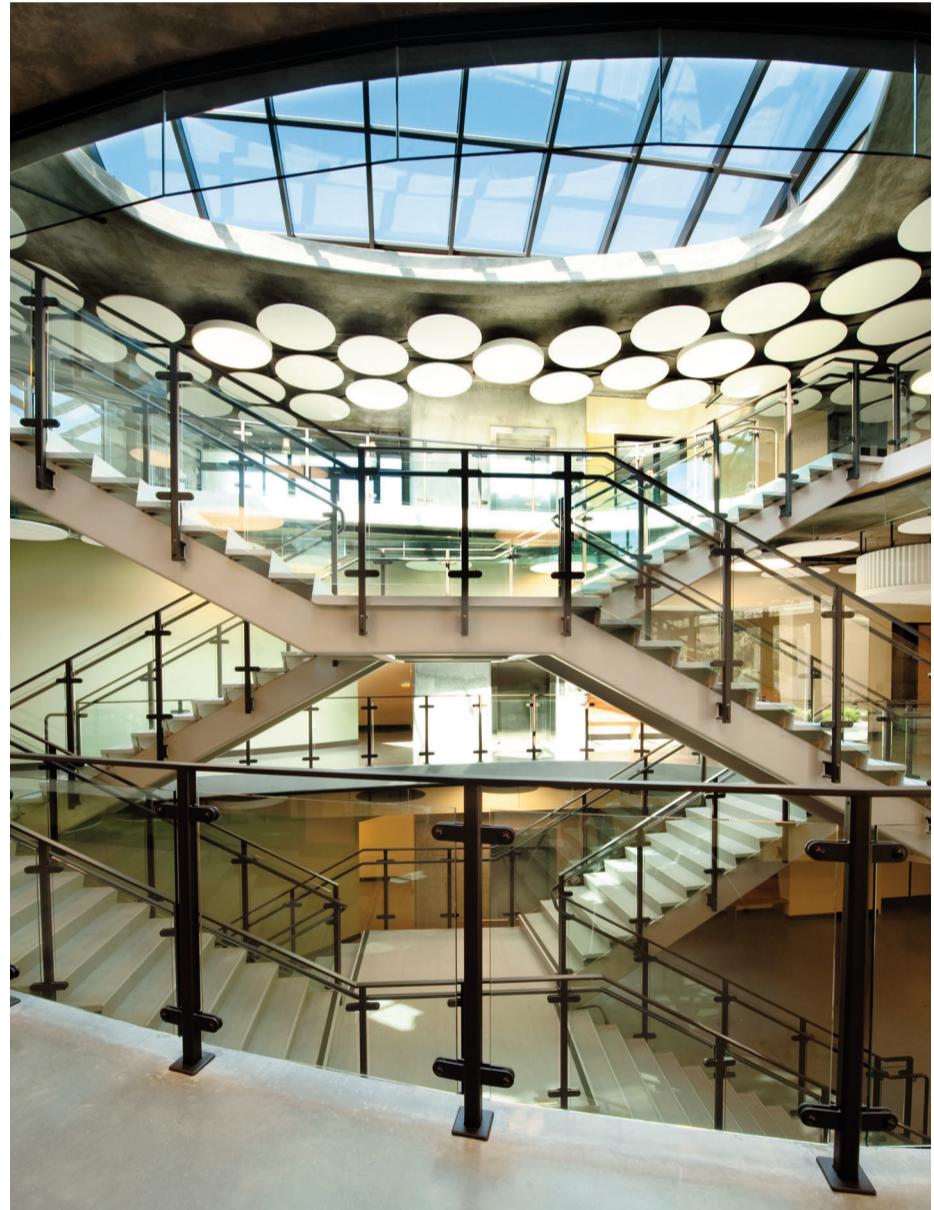
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Once again we've worked tirelessly to collect your favorite West Coast sources, from contractors to lighting to sustainability consultants. The extensive list highlights some of our favorite projects from the last year, showing off the value of picking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

Compiled by
Sam Lubell with
Stephanie Jones



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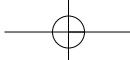
"We were fortunate enough to work with the team at **Hathaway Dinwiddie**, who were extremely communicative, collaborative, and passionate about building the best project possible." Steven Ehrlich, Ehrlich Architects

"Robbie Vairo at **Robert Vairo Construction** is the opposite of every contractor stereotype. He is a master builder who cherishes relationships, has a deep understanding of his craft and respect for schedules. Building with Robbie is a true pleasure." Nerin Kadribegovic, Lehrer Architects

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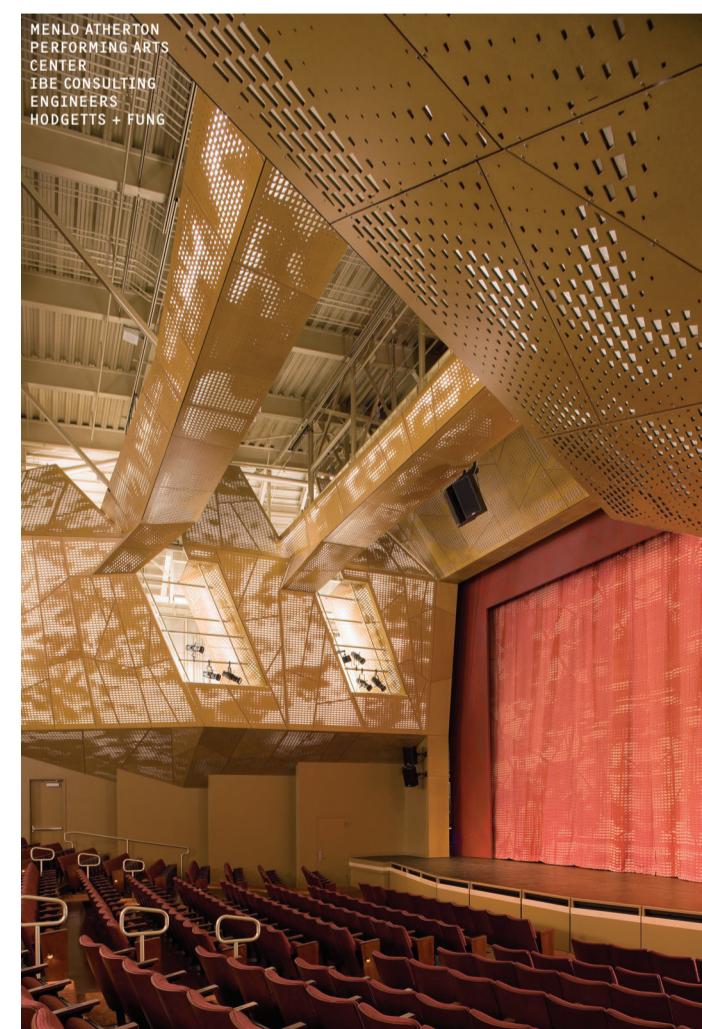


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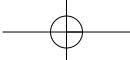
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Corradini Corp.
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Fountain Valley, CA;
800-782-9252
www.corradinincorp.com

Daltile
www.daltile.com
Heath Ceramics
7525 Beverly Blvd.,
Los Angeles;
323-965-0800
www.heathceramics.com

NBK Ceramic Ratcliff
74 Atlantic Ave.,
Marblehead, MA;
781-639-2662
www.nbkusa.com

Shildan Teracotta Baguettes
2047 Briggs Rd.,
Mount Laurel, NJ;
215-525-4510
www.shildan.com

Scofield
6533 Bandini Blvd.,
Los Angeles;
323-720-3000
www.scofield.com

Sonoma Cast Stone
133 Copeland St.,
Petaluma, CA;
707-283-1888
www.sonomastone.com

Spec Ceramics

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Fullerton, CA;
800-449-7732
www.specceramics.com

Stone Source
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Culver City, CA;
213-880-1155
www.stonesource.com

Superlite
4150 West Turney,
Phoenix, AZ;
800-366-7877
www.superliteblock.com

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www.thermomass.com

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818-252-4045
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www.alpolic-usa.com

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916-991-3333

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www.centria.com

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412-434-3131
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1001 Lund Blvd., Anoka, MN;
800-426-7737
www.firestonemetals.com

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3345 La Cienega Plaza,
Los Angeles;
310-202-0186
www.machineous.com

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619-671-9700
www.mcmahonsteel.com

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Fontana, CA;
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415-824-3116

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www.weavingideas.com

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Kansas City, MO;
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Kalamazoo, MI;
800-430-6209
www.landscapeforms.com



COURTESY IWAMOTO SCOTT

OBSCURA DIGITAL
PLYBOO
IWAMOTO SCOTT

"We selected **Plyboo** because of its renewable aspect, for its material quality, 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

"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 **Shildan Terracotta Baguettes** 'plank' shapes having a 2-inch-high by 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."

Steven Ehrlich,
Ehrlich Architects

"The insulated **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 building, which had to address the City's need for low cost and low maintenance, while satisfying our design criteria to create a clean industrial look."

Clarence Mamuyac, ELS

"**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 multiple colors and patterns, the minimalist in me really loves the beauty of the product in a single color."

Bill Puetz,
Huntsman
Architectural Group

"**Walker Zanger's** Ecotech is recycled content, sustainable, affordable and the material is consistent throughout the core so when the tile is damaged is still looks really good."

Lawrence Scarpa,
Brooks+Scarpa

SUSTAINABILITY

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Los Angeles;
310-578-4182
www.arup.com

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Santa Rosa, CA;
707-528-7318
www.gilleranenergy.com

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1721 2nd St.,
Sacramento, CA;
916-448-3072
www.greenbuildingservices.com

Michael Heacock Architects, LEED Consultant
43 Loring Ave.,
Mill Valley, CA;
415-845-5326
www.michaelheacock.com

Transsolar

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212-219-2255
www.transsolar.com

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528 21st Place,
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310-319-1131
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 22, 2012

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415-348-8273
www.hlblighting.com

Kaplan Gehring McCarroll
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310-552-2191
www.kgmlighting.com

Lighting Design Alliance
2830 Temple Ave.,
Long Beach, CA;
562-989-3843
www.lightingdesignalliance.com

Silverman & Light
1201 Park Ave.,
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510-655-1200
www.silvermanlight.com

FIXTURES

Architectural Lighting Design
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415-495-4085

Artemide
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Borden Lighting
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Santa Ana, CA;
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Zumtobel Lighting

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212-243-0460
www.zumtobel.com



COURTESY CSUN

"Kaplan Gehring

McCarroll has worked with CO Architects for many years on many projects. They have consistently provided thoughtful and creative lighting design work. They understand what we are trying to achieve and always help elevate our work."

Scott P. Kelsey,
CO Architects

LSI Lighting on many projects, and really appreciate the range of finishes and simplicity of the fixture designs. At the Gallery house we used their Graphite 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

Patty Glasow of Auerbach Glasow French 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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www.hansgrohe-usa.com

Poggenpohl

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Sacramento, CA;
916-387-1717
www.poggenpohlusa.com

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8818 Beverly Blvd.,
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310-271-7836
www.poliformusa.com

SieMatic

3 Interplex Dr.,
Feasterville, PA;
215-604-1350
www.siematic.com

Valcucine

9030 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles;
310-246-9790
www.valcucina.com



BENNY CHAN

Chris Tosdevin Design & Consulting has worked with us on a number of projects, from simple to complex, and the result is always a great complement to our designs."

David Montalba,
Montalba Architects

WALNUT HOUSE
DORNBRACHT
MODAL DESIGN

GLASS

3Form
2300 South 2300 West,
Salt Lake City, UT;
801-994-8023
www.3-form.com

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www.glas-pro.com

Glasswerks
8600 Rheem Ave.,
South Gate, CA;
323-789-7810
www.glasswerks.com

Guardian Glass
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800-569-4262
www.guardian.com

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811 Madison Ave., Toledo, OH;
419-247-3731
www.pilkington.com

Polygal
9405 Ducks Ln., Charlotte, NC;
704-588-3800
www.polygal-northamerica.com

PPG Industries
One PPG Place, Pittsburgh, PA;
412-434-3131
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Pulp Studio
3211 South La Cienega Blvd.,
Los Angeles;
310-815-4999
www.pulpstudio.com

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719-392-4220
www.skylites.com

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800 Park Dr., Owatonna, MN;
800-533-2080
www.viracon.com



"Working with **Pulp Studio**, we had the ability to work with a single manufacturer who could produce glass for a number of different applications, from glass floor and wall tile, to large scale glass partitions with custom interlayers. This gave us the opportunity to create a holistic palette that tied together the new architectural insertions into the historic fabric."

Cheryl Norton,
Mark Cavagnero
Associates

LEFT:
MGM PLACE
VIRAON
GENSLER

"We selected **Polygal** for its 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

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866-443-7258
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925-820-8113
www.cserectors.com

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213- 747-4001
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www.gkdmetalfabrics.com

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Oldcastle Glass
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"The **Rollomatic** Skylight system allowed us to envision an outside-in 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

"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. Everytime I think I have a very challenging condition for them, the answer

is always "we can do that."

Julie Dowling,
Dowling Studios

"Our design team worked closely with **Novum Structures** to achieve a seamless appearance between the different glazing systems, entrance doors and sliding glass walls. These materials also scored

very well on several performance fronts: seismic resistance; thermal, optical, and condensation controls; acoustic separation between heavily occupied areas and adjacent quiet reading rooms; and weather resistance to outdoor elements."

Joseph Nicola,
Ratcliff Architecture

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 22, 2012

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2012

FEBRUARY

WEDNESDAY 22

LECTURE

Chris Taylor
CraftPerspectives
6:30 p.m.
The Lab
Museum of Contemporary Craft
724 NW Davis St.
Portland, OR
www.cal.pnca.edu

THURSDAY 23

LECTURES

Stephen Shore: Artist Talk
7:00 p.m.
Phyllis Wattis Theater
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

Christofilis Maggidis
Unearthing
Agamemnon's City:
The Lower Town of Mycenae

7:30 p.m.
Getty Villa, Auditorium
J. Paul Getty Museum
17985 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 Pae 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 Prakas 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 Leader

Groundwork

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

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Cornerstones of a Great Civilization
Portland Art Museum
1219 SW Park Ave.
Portland, OR
www.portlandartmuseum.org

Magdalena Fernández: 2IPM009
Temporary Gallery B
Museum of Latin American Art
628 Alamitos Ave.
Long Beach, CA
www.molaa.org

FILM

Man with a Movie Camera
(dir. Dziga Vertov, 1924),
67 min
7:30 p.m.
Billy Wilder Theater
UCLA Film & Television Archive
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.cinema.ucla.edu

SUNDAY 26

EXHIBITION CLOSING

Doin' 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

MONDAY 27

LECTURE

Jason Kelly Johnson
Live Models

6:30 p.m.
Architecture and Design Museum
6032 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.aplusd.org

MARCH

THURSDAY 1

EXHIBITION OPENING

Adam Fuss: New Work
Fraenkel Gallery
49 Geary St., San Francisco
www.fraenkelgallery.com

FRIDAY 2

LECTURE

William F. Baker
4:00 p.m.
Business Rotunda,
Architecture Dept., California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA
www.arch.calpoly.edu

CONFERENCES

Complete Streets for California
8:30 a.m.
Kyoto Grand Hotel
UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs
120 South Los Angeles St.
Los Angeles
www.luskin.ucla.edu

Visual Knowledge in the Early Modern Americas
9:00 a.m.
The Huntington Library
1151 Oxford Rd.
San Marino, CA
www.huntington.org

MONDAY 5

LECTURES

Peter Eisenman
7:00 p.m.
W.M. Keck Lecture Hall
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St.
Los Angeles
www.sciaarc.edu

Philippe Rahm

7:00 p.m.
Timken Lecture Hall
California College of the Arts
1111 8th St., San Francisco
www.cca.edu

WEDNESDAY 7

SYMPORIUM

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

THURSDAY 8

EXHIBITION OPENING

Architecture in the Expanded Field
6:00 p.m.
Upper Gallery
The Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts
1111 8th St., San Francisco
www.wattis.org

TUESDAY 13

SYMPORIUM

From Inspiration to Realization: The Curatorial Process
Janet Bishop, Gary Garrels, Elise S. Haas, et. al.
12:00 p.m.
The Schwab Room
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

SUNDAY 18

LECTURE

History of the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company
2:00 p.m.
California African American Museum
600 State Dr.
Exposition Park
Los Angeles
www.caamuseum.org

TOUR

Millard Sheets: A Legacy of Art and Architecture
Docent-led tours of six sites
11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Los Angeles Conservancy
Pomona, CA
www.laconservancy.org

WEDNESDAY 21

LECTURE

Anthony Vidler
Crisis of Modernism
7:00 p.m.
W.M. Keck Lecture Hall
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St.
Los Angeles
www.sciaarc.edu

THURSDAY 22

SYMPORIUM

Drylands Design Conference
6:00 p.m.
Ahmanson Main Space
Woodbury University School of Architecture
7500 Glenoaks Blvd.
Burbank, CA
www.aridlands.woodbury.edu

FILM

The Unstable Object
(Daniel Eisenberg, 2011),
69 min.
8:30 p.m.
Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater in Walt Disney Concert Hall
California Institute of the Arts
631 West 2nd St.
Los Angeles
www.redcat.org

SATURDAY 24

FILM

The Clock
(Christian Marclay, 2010),
24 hrs.
12:00 p.m.
Bing Theater
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.lacma.org

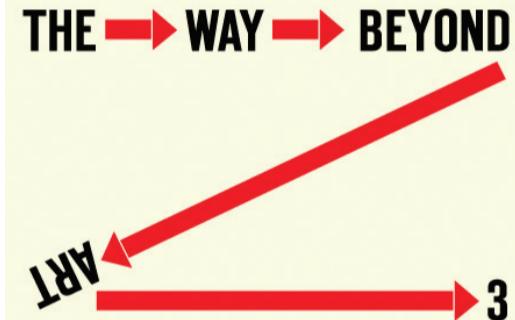


JULIUS SHULMAN

BREAKING GROUND: CHINESE AMERICAN ARCHITECTS IN LOS ANGELES (1945–1980)

The Chinese American Museum
425 North Los Angeles St., Los Angeles
Through June 3

As part of the Pacific Standard Time initiative, the Chinese American Museum presents *Breaking Ground* to showcase the pioneering contributions made by four Southern California-based Chinese American architects. These architects, Eugene K. Choy, Gilbert Leong, Helen Liu Fong, and Gin Wong, all made contributions to the development of postwar California architecture, from Choy and Leong's playful Chinatown Modernism to Wong's radical masterplan for LAX and Fong's development of the Googie style (think neon signage and cantilevered boomerang-shaped roofs). Original and reproduced photographs, blueprints, renderings, and drawings of works by the architects are on display, including original photographs by architectural photographer Julius Shulman (above, *The Choy House*).



COURTESY CCA WATTIS INSTITUTE

ARCHITECTURE IN THE EXPANDED FIELD

CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts
1111 8th St., San Francisco
March 8–April 7

Theorist 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.

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February 2 - 27, 2012

Reception: February 9 6:00-8:00pm

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Deborah Freedman *Good Night Irene 5*



COURTESY SYD MEAD

THE FUTURE ACCORDING TO MEAD

Syd Mead: Progressions
Forest Lawn Museum
Through April 15

In the beginning there was pulp sci-fi. Lurid cartoons of future cities riddled with aerial tramways and flying cars, and throbbing 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 one 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 car "thug" to visualize Rick Deckard's hovering cop car, he couldn't resist plunging the auto, in true Mead fashion, into 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 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 are images 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 willow-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 interplanetary 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 exalt a now-banished monarchy, and yes, the bejeweled courtiers do embody the appalling, 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, spurts, and eddies in mercurial pools, restlessly articulating 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**



COURTESY 20TH EAMES OFFICE LLC

ture school dropout who never got his license; the other, a painter trained by Hans Hofmann who used objects or any other surface as her canvases. They shunned the term "artist" as pompous.

"Charles and Ray Eames wanted to bring the most magnificent experience that you could have with your eyes to the largest number of people," said the art critic Jed Perl. "I don't think there's anything more important for an artist to want to do."

In *Eames: The Architect and the Painter*, in which Perl and others weigh in, directors Jason Cohn and Bill Jersey aim at a similar goal, an overview of the Eames duo as creators and personalities. More affection than investigation, the film, narrated by James Franco, still avoids the spoon-fed pedagogy of PBS's dutifully dull *American Masters* series (which aired it on December 19).

The upbeat documentary taps a near-infinite visual archive, as Eames observers refresh a much-examined history. This is Eames 101, but it draws from some of the best voices, from architect Kevin Roche to curator Donald Albrecht to filmmaker Paul Schrader.

Everyone called Charles Eames

(1907–1978) a charismatic charmer. This documentary's charm is its anatomy of a start-up, before the term existed, which took root in a Los Angeles apartment and relocated to a Venice, California, workshop packed with odd forms and imaginative people. The Eames lab was fun for decades and still enormously productive. How many people can say that about their lives?

The Eameses' prodigious imaginations would eventually take flight in a surging postwar economy, although they failed in early attempts to produce a chair. World War II gave the office its first break. Struggling to design a chair with Eero Saarinen—and to make money—the Eameses devised leg splints for wounded soldiers in 1942, in which open holes enabled plywood to bend without splitting or splintering. Charles and Ray adapted the technique to molding plywood for chairs, which became the office's identity. Variations and buyers multiplied.

"Eventually everything connects" was an Eames nostrum. So was "We wanted to make the best for the most for the least," and "Take your pleasure seriously." Not everyone

got their inside jokes at the Eameses' Case Study House 7 in Pacific Palisades (1949). A hungry Kevin Roche was miffed when the two aesthetes served him a "visual dessert" of pretty flowers. "I was really fucked-off with that," Roche recalled (it's bleeped out in the PBS version).

Business was serious at the studio, too, as a prosperous country emerging from depression and war created a huge consumer base that manufacturers like Herman Miller coveted.

The Eameses turned to information design, which evolved from their films that blended innocence and visual wonder. Paul Schrader, who wrote *Taxi Driver*, broke ranks with LA cinema snobs who scorned the Eames films, and visited the office. In the film he marvels at the refinement of little movies that he calls a mix of "self-expression and vanity"—and poetry, epitomized by the Eameses' 1969 ode to the spinning top. Yet just what led Charles Eames to cinema is never discussed. Nor do we hear from young filmmakers on the Eames legacy. Is it because so few know about them?

The perspective of today's designers on **continued on page 18**

Design Buddies

Eames: The Architect and the Painter
Directed by Jason Cohn and Bill Jersey. Narrated by James Franco.
American Masters, PBS series

Charles and Ray Eames brought a quirky playfulness to the American heartland, creating efficient and affordable designs and convincing American corporations and

consumers to adopt them. Today, even the rapper Ice Cube is a fan.

The Eames studio—part workshop, part circus—was a partnership of two free spirits: one, an architec-

tural school dropout who never got his license; the other, a painter trained by Hans Hofmann who used objects or any other surface as her canvases. They shunned the term "artist" as pompous.

Everyone called Charles Eames

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 22, 2012

**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 trans-action 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.

LA-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



Ray and Charles Eames with a prototype of the Aluminum Group Lounge Chair, 1957.

COURTESY 2011 EAMES OFFICE, LLC

"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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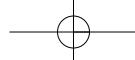
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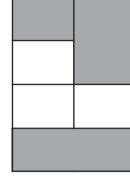
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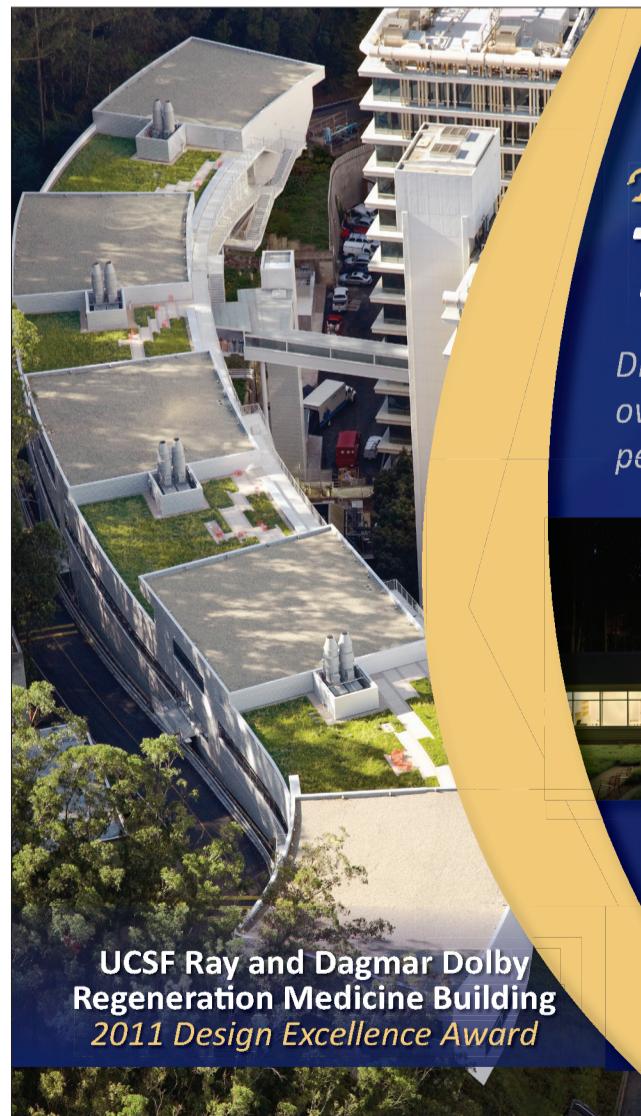
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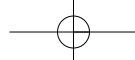
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Left: Slavyanka Kindergarten, Pushkin, Russia (2010); **Left, below:** No Mass House proposal, Palisades, CA (2011).

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, but 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'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 realist 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.

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 Suprastudio class, you're dealing with architecture, which is full

I am now. I would say that also came from one big pretense: what's new? "There must be something else out there." It also came out of asking, "How do you find your own voice?"

If you're not fairly restless, then you're probably not going to contribute. But the "what's new" thing for me is not at all costs. If you're only focused on hyper-novelty, whatever form it might take, then whatever anyone would do would be either untenable or unpalatable—or no one would ever care. Like you wake up and had a dream and everyone says, "I wasn't in your dream so I don't care about it." I think moving the conversation forward is about having the context of relevancy. It's not about going into a cave.

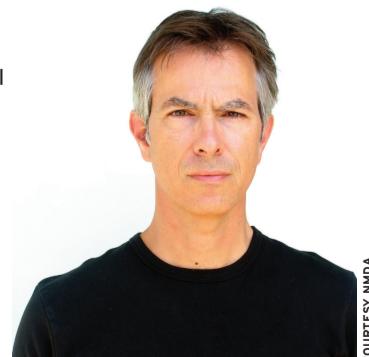
There's a very graphic, abstract element to all your work.

In school, I wanted to know where ideas came from. If architecture is a medium, then I thought I should look at other things to spark the imagination. Maybe that's why people say sometimes my work looks like a building and sometimes it looks like industrial design or graphic design.

The art that I studied most was color field painting. Robert Ryman and Barnett Newman and Rothko—the classic stuff. And I had a voracious appetite for it. Even I couldn't tell myself why I was so interested in work that was so formally reductive. I felt an incredible connection to somebody like Ryman. The work was detail oriented and pure matter. It was never about form.

I think every architect deals with abstraction at one level. Even though my work looks more complicated, it's deeply simple. It's a pretty sophisticated form of simple geometry in a way. I learned to edit and to have the simplicity of color field painting find its way into my work.

There's something deep down that's disciplining about architecture. I like to think abstraction and scale allow you to be rigorous and open-ended at the same time. You can do it with hunches and guesses but at least you're governed by something. I know I have that kind of spirit with how I approach work. I try to be free but I also work within a set of hard and fast rules that are very loose.



COURTESY NMDA

AN West Coast editor Sam Lubell sat down with Neil Denari, who recently took home not only the AIA/LA Gold Medal but also "Best in Show" for both built and unbuilt work. Denari, a professor at UCLA, is now teaching Suprastudio, a graduate class investigating the common ground between architecture and urbanism that has also been led by Thom Mayne and Greg Lynn. Discussing his recent successes and his approach, Denari also speculated on where the architecture profession and architectural education are heading—for better and for worse.

Let's discuss your recent AIA awards and what it means for you and your practice.

Neil Denari: First of all, they were deeply unexpected. It lends credence to the idea that experimental work is once again being accepted in architecture. I've done projects for a long, long time, but I didn't get to build anything until I was 40. It would be easy for anyone to say, "Where's your production and where's your practice?" I could answer that I was working on my practice for the time when the perfect storm of money and somebody's desire for what I could do would come into play.

A lot of people don't get solid commissions for a while, but when you do, it becomes about how you use the commissions to continue to experiment.

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, "Yeah, I'm frustrated." But all these things are hard won and hard fought.

Are other built works coming out of HL23?

We have a few new things, starting with a couple of projects in LA and maybe a third one. One is an office building on Wilshire Boulevard. Spec office buildings like this one were a staple in the 1970s, but today they're typically seen as a staple for large offices like Gensler or Gruen, not firms

like us. 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 Suprastudio class, you're dealing with architecture, which is full

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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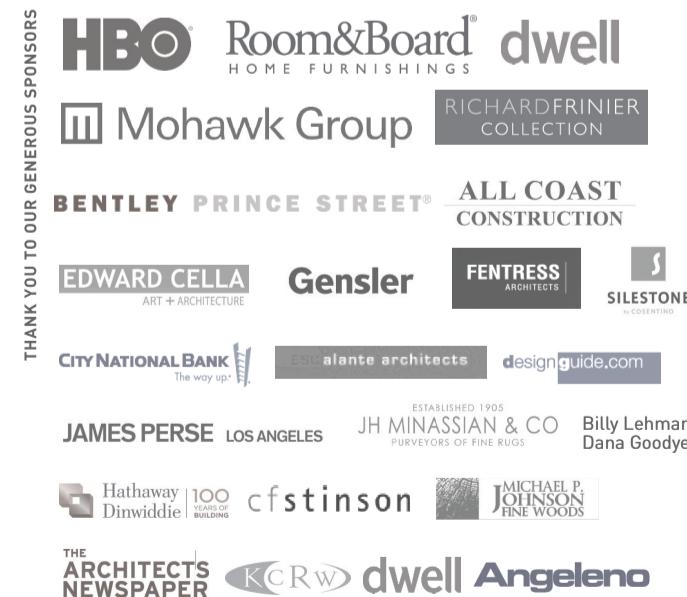
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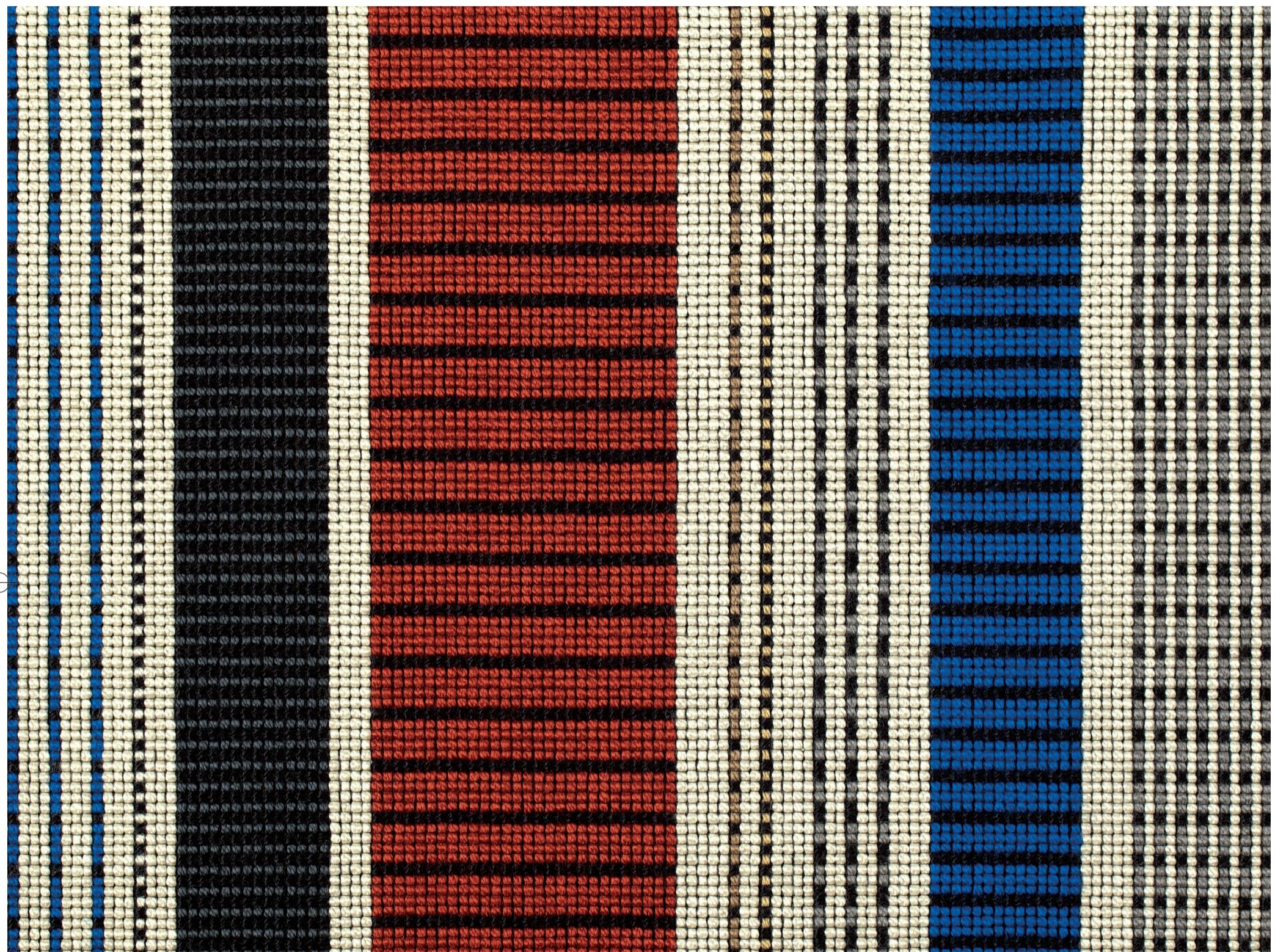
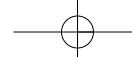


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