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Trimming Sails

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Maltzan to Design Art Center Expansion in Pasadena

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SF Scales Down America’s Cup Ambitions for Piers

The $470 million Smith Center for the Performing Arts currently stands as a lonely building on the outskirts of Las Vegas. Opened to the public on March 10 in the middle of 61 acres of undeveloped land, the complex rests on the site of an abandoned rail yard a few blocks west of Downtown Las Vegas and was intended as the centerpiece of former mayor Oscar Goodman’s scheme to build a new civic

A Talk with Pritzker Winner

Wang Shu. See Page 16

UNFULFILLED PLANS LEAVE NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER ISOLATED IN THE LAS VEGAS DESERT

ACCIDENTAL OASIS

VISITORS CENTER OPENS AT A RENEWED PALM SPRINGS ICON

CHALLENGING MODERNISM

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CHALLENGING MODERNISM

DOWNTOWN DOUBLETAKE

THE CONVERSION OF RUNDOWN PROPERTIES INTO HIP RESTAURANTS AND RETAIL IS AT A TIPPING POINT IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES. SEE PAGES 11–13

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You know something is a worthwhile topic when every time you bring it up people grab on and start talking as if they’d been waiting forever for you to ask them. Of all the subjects I’ve brought up lately, the one that elicits this response most often is the divide between architectural education and architectural practice.

The more I have these conversations and the more I attend architecture reviews and lectures, read interviews with architects, and peruse educational journals the more I understand that architectural education has moved further and further away from the realities of actually working in architecture. Bluntly, architecture courses out of school are not well enough prepared to practice architecture. Certainly schools have become increasingly sophisticated laboratories for theoretical and technical discourse. Students I’ve encountered develop a firm grasp on design strategies—addressing program, site, form, massing, environment, urban scale and other essential issues—and are more adept with technology than any generation before. But those skills are not sufficient to getting architects ready for the issues, challenges and constraints of the real world.

Among students, familiarity with the building process outside of computer modeling is rare; familiarity with commercial and client issues is rarer still; learning about running a business is almost nonexistent; and history and even the basics of architectural terminology and building skills are less and less integrated into curricula.

I have witnessed many critiques where discussion of the client, of budget, of material restraints and of any limitation whatsoever is brushed off. Schools argue that limitations are for the real world, but that’s exactly the point. Students need to at least have some familiarity with this reality. These are not things that can be left to two years of apprenticeship in an office crammed for licensing exams. Even small doses in school will give them much better facility with these issues when they’re making designs of their own.

Another problem is the lack of focus on careers once students get out. IDP (Intern Development Program), an internship requirement of NCARB is usually considered a joke. So are career placement programs, which in many schools are almost non-existent. Students often wind up taking free internships with their professors, hardly a sound career placement path. Most students consider business training (teaching valuable expertise in starting a company and in navigating the rough waters of the trade and of the development process) in their schools a joke as well. Funny since all architecture offices are, in fact, businesses. Imagine this being the case at law schools or medical schools?

Of course architecture programs shouldn’t become trade schools, and it’s one of the strengths of our architectural education. But that freedom needs to be balanced with constraint and real world expertise that will help future architects invaluable down the line. Of course it’s easy to complain about the shortcomings of architectural education, but it’s a lot harder to decide how to fit all these necessary pieces into the mix. The question is how much architectural education needs to be balanced with constraint and real world expertise that will help future architects invaluable down the line. Of course it’s easy to complain about the shortcomings of architectural education, but it’s a lot harder to decide how to fit all these necessary pieces into the mix. The question is how can we integrate all of these essential elements into the existing framework, and where can that framework be better balanced.

The Architect’s Newspaper, UCLA and the A+D Museum will soon host a forum on this topic to be held at the A+D Museum in Los Angeles. I encourage you to weigh in on that topic prior to the event by sending us a letter or email.

Without a smoother transition to practice academia will become a revolving door in which students are trained only to become teachers or perhaps frustrated visionaries and not to practice successfully on their own. Sounds like graduates in poetry or philosophy. But not this poetry. It is architecture. Let’s keep it that way.
As gentrification continues to move into LA’s working-class neighborhoods, next up appears to be Highland Park, full of vintage houses and located just east of Downtown. And the de facto architect of the area is Freeland Buck, which has designed several spaces on York Boulevard, the neighborhood’s main drag. The firm’s most recent creation is Maximiliano, an Italian restaurant located in an intimate which has designed several spaces on York Boulevard, the neighborhood’s main drag. The firm’s most recent creation is Maximiliano, an Italian restaurant located in an intimate

As at the main house, many of these spaces extend outward from this arrangement. The 20,000-square-foot house, with only one bedroom for the owners, focuses on the universal space for a very high-powered couple. (Most famously, this area was transformed for New Year’s Eve galas, which President and Mrs. Reagan and other luminaries attended.) There are long, lava-stone walls, an unusual background for a staggering collection of impressionist and postimpressionist paintings. But even Jones’ bold moves were challenged by Mrs. Annenberg’s color, furniture, and decorative preferences. When Mrs. Annenberg saw Jones’ red steel columns with punched holes holding up the concrete roof, she had the vertical members painted celadon and the holes plugged with wood dowels.

EAVESDROP> THE EDITORS

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CHALLENGING MODERNISM continued from front page

NO FLIGHT ZONE?

Fentress Architects’ ambitious design for the new Bradley West satellite terminal at LAX recalls ocean waves or maybe even airplane wings. But rather than just sticking to design and schematics, we hear the firm is trying to bite off more than it can chew with construction documents. In this economy, who can blame them for trying to do more work, but sources say that the client and HNTB—the firm hired to do the construction heavy lifting—think it’s a stretch.

CLICKS BEAT BRICKS

Publisher and bookseller William Stout opened up a gem of an architectural bookstore three years ago on Mission Street in San Francisco’s SOMA neighborhood. But Stout has officially closed up shop. According to our sources, the lease had come up, and flagging in-store sales didn’t justify keeping the space. No surprise—apparently much of Stout’s business is transacted online.

A LESS CROWDED POPULOUS

Stadium design specialists Populous made a splash in 2010 when they took on stadium guru Dan Meis, who became a senior principal at the firm. Now it appears that after just two years Meis is leaving to again re-start his firm, Meis Architects. No confirmation from either party, but we’re confident the gossip mill has this right.

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The latest addition to UCLA’s aggressive off-campus healthcare expansion in Santa Monica is the UCLA Outpatient Surgery and Oncology Center: a crisp concrete block by Michael W. Folonis Architects. Humanely scaled, full of natural light, and forward-looking in every way, this exemplary facility contrasts sharply with the UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center, Robert A. M. Stern’s turdigious pile of red-brick Romanesque across 19th Street. “It was a miracle we got this project, which is far and away the most ambitious we’ve done to date,” said Folonis. “I asked the developer, Randy Miller, why he picked us and he said, ‘I thought architects ought to be able to design all kinds of buildings.’” Miller is a third-generation contractor with a red-brick Romanesque across 16th Street.

The building; the “backstage” service and medical areas are cantilevered forward and shaded by horizontal baffles from the westerly sun. The atrium opens to a public terrace and serves as a heat chimney to vent hot air; while the polished concrete provides thermal mass, eliminating the need for heating or air-conditioning. As in a theater, patients see only half the building; the “backstage” service and mechanical areas flow easily out of the public spaces but are restricted to doctors and staff. To the left, massive vaults house two linear accelerators for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. A self-supporting steel staircase provides direct access to the eight operating theaters, to prep and recovery areas on the second floor, and to clinics and offices on the third.

“For me, the prospect of surgery is scary,” said Folonis, “so we wanted to make the place as friendly as possible for patients, doctors, and staff.” Nearly all the workspaces are naturally lit (often through translucent glass to assure privacy) and the second-floor ceilings are angled to draw light from the street facade. Folonis softened the raw concrete—board-marked at ground level, and smooth above—with bamboo wall paneling, floors, and stair treads. Color is sparingly used, and pale blue was adopted after the head nurse vetoed yellow because it would give patients a jaundiced look. Working within a tight budget, Folonis designed custom benches and economized rest room tiles in order to specify high-quality waiting-room furniture from Vitra and Herman Miller. The 45,000-square-foot building came in at $23 million, and UCLA installed $22 million worth of equipment. The fully equipped garage cost two-thirds that of conventional underground parking—by halving the footprint, reducing ceiling heights, and eliminating elevators and ventilation. It is likely to be the first such facility to achieve a Gold LEED rating.

Perhaps the most innovative feature is the fully automated parking system, which Miller helped develop with two firms in Minnesota. Visitors drive down a ramp from the street and leave their cars in one of six transfer stations. Each car is scanned and then lowered by crane to one of six subterranean bays; a car can be retrieved and be ready to drive away in as little as two minutes. The building was privately developed for lease to UCLA, quickly and at a competitive price. Its neighbor, by Stern, took the university seven years to build and overran its cost estimates. The moral? UCLA should get out of the development business and select firms with the taste and skill to do a better job.

MICHAEL WEBB
May 19-22, 2012

The 24th annual International Contemporary Furniture Fair
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The illusion of the 1930s is not a "series of quotes"—rather it's an homage to a rich history of architectural and civic intentions. In the interior, marble and terrazzo finishes surround visitors in good civic aspirations. The donors and politicians who envisioned the project challenged David M. Schwartz Architects (DMSAS) to design a building both indigenous to Las Vegas and timeless. In response to that problematic assignment (what architecture could possibly be considered indigenous to Las Vegas?), DMSAS found inspiration from the Hoover Dam, located 45 minutes east of the city. "The Hoover Dam is the most singular piece of architecture in this neighborhood," said DMSAS principal David Schwarz, adding that the Smith Center's references to the dam do not reach the level of imitation. According to Schwartz, the Smith Center is not a "series of quotes"—rather it's an homage to a rich history of architectural and civic intentions. Workers building the dam in the 1930s came to Las Vegas with money to spend and impulses to satiate, quickly establishing the city as the entertainment destination it remains today.

The Smith Center's art deco styling—although a sticking point for those with modernist design sensibilities—is confidently executed by Schwartz's firm. A 170-foot carillon tower rising above the center provides a picturesque scale of good civic intentions. In the interior, marble and terrazzo finishes surround visitors in retro luxury. The illusion of the 1930s is never fully complete, however, given the prominent use of stucco, not stone, for exterior details.

The center includes three performance spaces in two buildings: Reynolds Hall, a 2,050-seat multi-purpose space; Boman Pavilion, which houses a 900-seat cabaret and jazz venue; and the 250-seat Troesh Studio Theater. The Smith Center's two buildings and central courtyard also offer a full program of reconfigurable spaces for banquets and community gatherings.

As Schwartz notes, the room's acoustics were a primary concern: "No one cares how it looks, but they care how it sounds," he said. The floor beneath each row of seats in the upper balcony is uniquely bulged or sloped to maintain sight lines from every seat in the room. The contours of the ceiling, manipulated to trap certain pitches while repelling others, fan out in patterns befitting the art deco motif.

The Smith Center opens with a full performance schedule including Broadway shows, the Las Vegas Philharmonic, and the Nevada Ballet Theatre. A children's museum on-site has also recently opened. But despite the project's successes, too much of the story is now told by the massive empty lots that surround it on every side—the remainder of the city's unrealized development plan was scratched in 2009. That plan had originally called for a number of new buildings and central courtyard, which was scaled down, before it was cancelled following student protest.

The post office property is expected to pay for much of the work with proceeds from a recent bond issue, and will be launching a major capital campaign to pay off that debt. Nearly $56 million of the $7 million cost to purchase the post office building came from alumni donations, added Buchman.

Buchman was sure to add that "whatever we do building-wise is serving the school's educational mission." Buchman's predecessor Richard Koshailek was reportedly pushed out after factions within the school felt he was focusing more on architecture than on education. Koshailek hired Frank Gehry to design a $45 million design research complex on the hillside campus until that plan was scrapped in 2009. That plan had originally called for a number of new buildings by Gehry and Álvaro Siza, but was scaled down, before it was cancelled following student protest.

March 22nd – April 26th, 2012 A+D MUSEUM

Drylands Design will feature work by architects, landscape architects, engineers, and urban designers responding to the challenges of water scarcity in the face of climate change. With a focus on the US West, the exhibition will presents a portfolio of adaptive strategies large and small, rural and urban, high tech and low-carbon.

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The new Nature Précieuse line from Élitis combines tried-and-true wall-covering manufacturing processes with new materials like straw, horsehair, cork, and bamboo. Pictured are woven bamboo and stainless-steel wire on a paper base (RM 635 04) (top) and 100 percent cork on paper base in white (RM 631 94) (bottom). Available in the United States through Donghia.

www.elitis.fr/en/home.php

PUF STRING CORQUE DESIGN

Portuguese design studio Corque Design debuted its line of eco-friendly furniture and home accessories in New York last fall. New items designed by co-founder Ana Mestre include the Puf String, a seat constructed of rubber cork. The natural composite is cut from industrial rolls, allowing the seat to be constructed with a continuous piece, greatly reducing manufacturing waste.

www.corquedesign.com

STEPPING WOOD GRAIN CHAIR THINK FABRICATE

Co-founded by Susan Doban and Jason Gorsline as a multidisciplinary design studio affiliated with Doban Architecture, Think Fabricate has introduced the Stepping Wood Grain Chair. Curved corner pieces of solid walnut are joined by bamboo plywood and walnut boards of varying widths. End caps are lacquered MDF with or without storage cutouts. Corresponding ottomans are also available.

www.thinkfabricate.com

WINDFALL KIREI

In partnership with reclaimed lumber company Windfall Lumber, Kirei now offers a line of engineered panels made with reclaimed materials. Manufactured locally with wood from deconstructed buildings in the Pacific Northwest, the panels are ideal for any surface in commercial and residential design. Panels are available in unfinished, clear, leather, and (shown, top to bottom) anthracite, ivory, mocha.

www.kireiusa.com

ECOCLAD XP KLIPTech

KlipTech has added two new recycled paper and bamboo-fiber cladding products to its EcoClad line. The new EcoClad XP exterior cladding is available in 600 different finishes, patterns, and textures, in addition to custom-printing with any image; EcoClad Raw is unfinished cladding that can be painted by the client.

www.kliptech.com

OSSO CHAIR MATTIAZZI

Designed by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec for Mattiazzi, the Osso chair is made of oak, maple, or ash sourced near the company’s factory in Udine, Italy. Manufactured with solar-powered CNC equipment, the chair’s precise joinery creates a structure as smooth as bone—osso in Italian. The collection includes an armchair and stools in a range of colors. Available in the United States through Herman Miller.

www.mattiazzi.eu

CORK, BAMBOO, AND LUMBER TAKE NEW SHAPES BUT HAVE THE SAME SUSTAINABLE STAYING POWER. JENNIFER K. GORSCHE
In Downtown Los Angeles, everything old is new again. After more than a decade of redevelopment, spurred largely by the 1999 Adaptive Reuse Ordinance, which created thousands of new residential units by making it easier and cheaper to convert rundown offices into housing, the neighborhood is entering another phase of development. This time, the makeovers are focused on restaurants and retail.

According to the Downtown Center Business Improvement District, the community has more than doubled from about 18,000 residents prior to the ordinance to 46,400 in 2011. Likewise, since 2008 over 400 new restaurant and retail shops have opened in Downtown LA, with another 50 expected to open this year. With an abundance of largely intact historical buildings, architects and designers have paid homage to the past by restoring or re-creating many of classic features while adding a modern sensibility.

The most anticipated retail project is the renovation of the legendary Clifton’s Cafeteria on South Broadway and 7th Street by Kelly Architects, who have also designed several restaurants and bars in the area including Seven Grand, Broadway Bar, Public School 612, and The Falls. The renovation, begun last summer, meant the restaurant was closed Mondays and Tuesdays, but it remained open the rest of the week. The second phase began in the fall with the full renovation expected to be completed in a year and a half. Clifton’s multi-phased renovation will reinvent some of the themed environments that the cafeteria was originally famous for, such as the “Pacific Seas” and the “Redwood Forest,” with plans to invent more. According to owner Andrew Meieran, only 20 percent of the space was utilized prior to his purchase. Last month, the original Beaux Arts brick facade was revealed for the first time in more than 50 years, after being hidden behind aluminum grates. While many of the original windows were filled in with concrete blocks, Meieran and Kelly Architects plan to remove them once seismic upgrades are completed.
Besides refreshing classics like Clifton’s, the area has seen new restaurants settling into repositioned buildings, such as UMAMIcatessen, downtown design firm SO/DA’s multi-concept eatery and bar inside a 1929 art deco building next to the Orpheum Theatre on Broadway. The restaurant has been brought to life with hovering aluminum honeycomb panels, wall-mounted wine barrels, exposed ducts, and reclaimed timber bar, tabletops, and siding.

“People appreciate this kind of work so much more than generic spaces they see every day,” said SO/DA’s Derrick Flynn, of Downtown’s adaptive reuse resurgence, as he calls it. The firm is also working on a makeover of the Winston, a financial building-turned-apartment in the historic Old Bank District that will include a jazz club and a restaurant; and Kitchen Faire, a new cafe on 6th and Olive streets. Another new favorite nearby is the splendidly simple Bäco Mercat on Main Street, which transformed an ordinary cafe by reorganizing with more open space.

Word of change is spreading and attracting new investors. The owners of the Seattle-based Ace Hotel chain have announced they’re opening their latest boutique hotel in the United Artists building on South Broadway and 9th Street. The 13-story 1927 Spanish-Gothic styled building was originally designed by the firm Walker & Eisen and contains a 2,214-seat Spanish Gothic theater. The hotel proprietors, working with LA-based Killefer Flammang Architects, are rumored to be renovating the theater as well as the building.

The bones of old buildings may be solid, but opening businesses in historic buildings still presents myriad challenges to restaurant and retail owners. “[Owners] need to have a special commitment to opening a place Downtown,” said designer Ricki Kline, who is responsible for early Downtown pioneer Cedd Moses’ empire of restaurants and bars in historic buildings, including Seven Grand, a former jewelry store-turned-deco-style whiskey bar; Cole’s, a restaurant that once served as the main terminal for the Pacific Electric railway; speakeasy-style Varnish; and tequila bar Las Perlas. “It’s very complex, time-consuming, and expensive. You have to want to be downtown as a personal aesthetic choice,” added Kline.

Adapting downtown’s ground-floor spaces to restaurant and retail uses requires that owners upgrade to modern building codes, including meeting ADA standards for accessible design. While owners often need to install new fire/life safety measures and upgraded power and plumbing systems, restaurants often face the additional challenges of adding expensive exhaust systems to ventilate their kitchens. According to Meieran, owners often meet with unexpected challenges as they begin renovations. “You don’t know what you’re going to find,” he said.

Architects and owners must also navigate a farrago of city departments for permits and approvals, often causing delays and cost overruns. According to Kelly Architects principal George Kelly, the Edison, a cavernous ode to early 20th-century industrialism in the sub-basement of the Higgins Building, required twenty different department clearances in order to open. “Any one of them could shut it down,” he said.

The Architect’s Newspaper March 28, 2012

Above: Kelly Architects’ Public School gastropub mixes old-school elements like white tile and classic stools with modern fixtures and accents.

Left: Kelly’s Broadway Bar sports elegant chandeliers and ornate prints that give it the feel of a 1940s supper club.

Below: Ricki Kline’s Las Perlas is inspired not only by vintage LA, but by the colors and designs of Oaxaca, Mexico.
Yet some architects have noticed that the approval process is not as cumbersome as it once was. “The city has become more of a partner,” said Kline. “The faster they turn around [approvals], the faster they can collect taxes.”

In spite of the obstacles, new projects are announced with increasing frequency. Broadway specifically is experiencing an influx of new retail vendors. Long a destination for Latin American shoppers, the recession increased the number of ground-floor vacancies in the area that are now being snapped up. Jewelry designer Tarina Tarantino has announced plans to transform 908 South Broadway into the Sparkle Factory, a multi-floor, multi-use space that will not only serve as design headquarters for the eponymously named company but will also house an art gallery, production studio, and jewelry boutique.

Meyer & Holler, who are also responsible for Hollywood’s Egyptian Theatre and Grauman’s Chinese Theatre, originally designed the 1920 building. These projects, as well as several more in the vicinity such as the upcoming Two Boots Pizza and Figaro Bistro, may soon change the experience of Broadway’s streetscape, particularly at night when the street can feel sketchy. Figaro’s new space on South Broadway is the former Schaber Cafeteria, designed by Charles F. Plummer in 1928, but severely damaged in the 1992 riots. Interior designer Bertrand Genoist of Black Door Development plans to restore the original marquee, while designing an ode to classic 1930s French design inside.

And while the thoroughfare is often bustling during the day, it can be desolate at night. A plan to reintroduce the streetcar to Broadway would help activate the street and make it more pedestrian friendly at all hours. It’s a welcome change, according to LA Conservancy executive director Linda Dishman. “There wasn’t a lot going on after ‘Last Remaining Seats,’” said Dishman of the Conservancy’s summer movie program in historic theaters. “You could practically lie down in the middle of Broadway. There was no traffic or people there.”

According to Jessica Wethington McLean, executive director of Bringing Back Broadway, a public-private initiative to revitalize the street, there is still work to be done, particularly on the upper floors of these buildings. “Commercial use is critically important for the district,” said Wethington McLean. “Ground-floor retail is supported by the upper floors.” While local residents and visitors sustain many of these businesses, Wethington McLean believes the neighborhood still needs to attract office tenants to provide the “captive audience” these businesses require to thrive. Bringing Back Broadway offers incentives such as three years of tax exemption for new businesses and employer hiring credits that should help.

Change is happening Downtown, and the place is regaining some of its past glamour. However, the demise of the Community Redevelopment Agency, with its public investment incentives, may have dealt a blow to the area’s full recovery. With the economy recovering, albeit slowly, and demand mounting for the kind of singular experience offered by adaptive reuse projects, the resurrection of these gorgeous art deco, Beaux Arts and modernist buildings looks to continue. And the first places that new visitors will invariably go to form an impression will be these smartly transformed restaurants and retail.

LA-BASED MARISSA GLUCK IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.
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MARCH

WEDNESDAY 28
LECTURE
Nicholas de Monchaux
Fashioning Apollo
7:00 p.m.
W. M. Keck Lecture Hall
SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
sciarc.edu

THURSDAY 29
LECTURE
Matt Hieberger
Managing Groundwater as If the Environment Mattered
1:00 p.m.
230 Wurster Hall
College of Environmental Design
UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
arch.berkeley.edu

SATURDAY 31
FILMS
Talitana Bilbao
Talitana Bilbao S.C.
6:30 p.m.
Hilmanson Main Space
Woodbury University School of Architecture
2212 Main St., San Diego, CA
woodbury.edu

APRIL

TUESDAY 3
EXHIBITION OPENING
Portraits of Renown: Sculpture, Photograph and the Cult of Celebrity
West Pavilion
Plaza Level
J. Paul Getty Museum
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
getty.edu

WEDNESDAY 6
LECTURES
Dan Fitterer
CED Lecture Series
6:30 p.m.
College of Environmental Design
University of California, Berkeley
230 Wurster Hall
Berkeley, CA
arch.berkeley.edu

WEDNESDAY 11
LECTURE
Hardf Kara
Binding Architecture and Engineering Today
6:00 p.m.
Harris Hall
USC School of Architecture
Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Sandro Cinto
Escondo das Aguas
PACCAR Pavilion
Olympic Sculpture Park
The Seattle Art Museum
2050 First Ave.
Seattle, WA
seattleartmuseum.org

TUESDAY 17
LECTURE
Jeanne Gang
Studio Gang Architects
6:30 p.m.
Fletcher Jones Auditorium
Woodbury University School of Architecture
7600 Glencoe Blvd.
Burbank, CA
woodbury.edu

WEDNESDAY 18
LECTURES
Elizabeth Diller
CED Lecture Series
6:30 p.m.
2050 Life Sciences Building
College of Environmental Design
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, CA
arch.berkeley.edu

Xu Weiguo
Dynamic Response
XWD works
6:00 p.m.
Gin D. Wing, FAIA
Conference Center
Harris Hall
USC School of Architecture
Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

THURSDAY 19
EXHIBITION OPENING
California College of the Arts
On Apology
Upper and Lower Galleries
The Watts Institute for Contemporary Arts
1111 8th St.
San Francisco
watts.org

FRIDAY 20
LECTURE
Tridib Benjeree and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris
Hearst Lecture
4:00 p.m.
Business Rotunda,
Architecture Department
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA
arch.calpoly.edu

SATURDAY 21
LECTURE
Gatheres Herbst
The Power of 100
9:30 a.m.
NewSchool of Architecture & Design
320 P St.
San Diego, CA
friendsofSDarch.com

APPROACHING

MARCH

SATURDAY 31
EXHIBITION OPENING
The Utopian Impulse: Buckminster Fuller and the Bay Area
The Schwebel Room
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St.
San Francisco
sfmoma.org

Parra
Weirded Out
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St.
San Francisco
sfmoma.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
The Bathtub and the Hair Dryer
230 Wurster Hall
UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
arch.berkeley.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
A Retrospective
WUHO Gallery
6518 Hollywood Blvd.
Los Angeles
woodbury.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Encontro das Águas
Sandro Cinto
Saturday April 14
The Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts
Upper and Lower Galleries
855 Hayes Street
San Francisco
wattis.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
If the Environment Mattered
Managing Groundwater as If the Environment Mattered
Matt Heberger
230 Wurster Hall
College of Environmental Design
UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
arch.berkeley.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Robert Adams: The Place We Live
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
lacma.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Karol Bakiewicz
Science and Fiction
Museo del Prado
Museo del Prado
Paseo del Prado
Madrid
spain.us

LEXICON

Robert Adams: The Place We Live
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
Through June 3

In his 46 years photographing the American West, Robert Adams has documented the evolution of landscape and our relationship to it. In response to the rapid development of his surroundings in Colorado Springs and Denver, Adams began photographing a landscape marked by tract housing, highways, and gas stations. His photographs, Adams says, “document a separation from ourselves, and in turn from the natural world that we professed to love.” Nearly 300 prints showcase Adams’ career, from his early shots of Colorado’s desolate terrain to his recent works documenting migrating birds in the Pacific Northwest, with special focus on his portrayal of the Los Angeles region.
Beautiful but imperfect craftsmanship.

Emphasizes regional culture and astonishingly architectural history, and ties his research to discuss his “way” of design.

Louie Shu sat down with AN contributor himself as an artist as well as an architect, architecture and urban design at UCLA. Describing to give a lecture to the department of architecture and urban design at UCLA. Describing to give a lecture to the department of architecture and urban design at UCLA. Describing to give a lecture to the department of architecture and urban design at UCLA. Describing to give a lecture to the department of architecture and urban design at UCLA. Describing to give a lecture to the department of architecture and urban design at UCLA.

In school, I did some independent work very early on. For example, as a student, I worked on my first building, which was finished in 1981, and I designed my first independent project in 1989 (a youth center for a small town in Haining). In this way, I received professional architectural experience. Although I could do good architecture, it wasn’t really what I wanted. I realized that it’s not just about good architecture but about the best way to design and to construct. It was a more basic question. So the 1990s were a very important time. It was a turning point. I completely took myself out of the professional system and took time...
RANCH DRESSING

Carefree California: Cliff May and the Romance of the Ranch House
Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UC Santa Barbara
Through June 17

Critics have no idea what to do with architect Cliff May. He’s hard to fit into any of the usual midcentury modern categories. He’s often called the father of the ranch house, but many critics don’t think ranches are modern. He designed hundreds of houses, but he never even trained as an architect. Critics have no idea what to do with him.

Long before California’s historicist, modernist, or even modernist architects were considered significant, Gebhard was amassing a tremendous collection.

Was May the father of the ranch house? No. The exhibit shows that May’s work continues California architects’ ongoing adaptation of vernacular and historicist architecture since the turn of the century. We get to compare May’s early work (beginning around 1930) with earlier work by George Washington Smith, Arthur B. Benton, Myron Hunt, Irving J. Gill, Carleton Winslow, Sr., and others. May’s work emerges quite naturally. His work is also held up to that of his contemporaries in the 1930s and 1940s, when it seems that every California architect worth his or her salt could design a decent ranch. We see the evidence in designs by Roland Coate, Edla Muir, John Byers, Lutah Maria Riggs, Paul Laszlo, H. Roy Kelley, Albert Frey, and others. The only major figure not represented is William Wurster, the Northern Californian. These examples are custom homes that define and refine the ranch house we know today: usually one story, casually asymmetrical in design, open in plan, nestled into hills and groves, with board-and-batten or stucco walls and shingled roofs. While the exhibit challenges the notion that midcentury modernism was only about steel and glass boxes, May’s ranch house, though rooted in historical references, was also clearly modern. Over the decades his designs became more abstract; for example, windows turned into aluminum sliders.

Thoroughly modern was May’s skillful use of the levers of mass media (especially House Beautiful and Sunset magazine) to popularize the ranch—the role he played better than anyone. He must be considered as formidable a propagandist in defining and disseminating modern design concepts as Frank Lloyd Wright or Le Corbusier.

His designs met his clients’ desires to live in close contact with nature by opening entire walls to the patios and making patios true outdoor rooms for socializing or private relaxation. Formal dining rooms disappeared as open, multi-use family rooms grew.

But the crowning proof of May’s modernist credibility is his success, with partner Chris Choate, in achieving the Holy Grail of modernism: a buildable, successful low-cost, prefabricated house. May and Choate’s low-cost homes drew on modern design, fabrication, and mass production. They deserve full recognition alongside those of builder Joseph Eichler and architects Palmer & Krisel in applying modular and prefabricated elements to reduce cost and enhance design.

Astonishingly, May and Choate’s tract houses retain the architectural essence of his large, sprawling custom homes. The exhibit presents a series of drawings from 1946 that reveal May’s thinking: one shows the large, splay-winged designs he perfected to grab light, views, and outdoor space in his custom homes on large lots. Then he boils down the essence of those spacious homes into a truly affordable size (as small as 800 square feet) on the tiny, cheek-by-jowl lots of a housing tract. Nonetheless, the homes retain the connection to nature, the usable outdoor rooms. His solutions are nothing short of pure architecture.

Perhaps only May, with his mastery of expansive custom homes as seen earlier in the exhibit, could have accomplished this so effectively.

May’s work clearly challenges the narrow notion that modernism and history are irreconcilable. His use of historical, regional imagery in place of machine portrayals seems not so much demimonde as fully in sync with a diverse, modern world of movies, television, and jet travel.

ARCHITECT AND CRITIC ALAN HESS CONTRIBUTES REGULARLY TO AN.

Rendering of Cliff May Homes, 1956

The evidence here shows that May, despite his heretical historicism, should be considered alongside stalwarts like Richard Neutra, Rudolph M. Schindler, and Pierre Koenig as a major practitioner of California design. Drawn almost entirely from the museum’s own collection, the evidence is broad and deep, thanks largely to the farsighted acquisitions of former museum director David Gebhard.

As House Beautiful editor Elizabeth Gordon once put it, his architecture was “modern without looking it.” A retrospective of May’s career, Carefree California: Cliff May and the Romance of the Ranch House, is showing at the Art, Design & Architecture Museum at UC Santa Barbara. The exhibition, co-curated by museum curator Jocelyn Gibbs and historian Nicholas Olsberg, with a catalog coming in May, lives up to the Pacific Standard Time initiative’s promise to bring us fresh scholarship so that we can reassess the extraordinary midcentury flowering of California art.

Carefree California: Cliff May and the Romance of the Ranch House
April 4th & 5th
Anaheim Convention Center

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