AOL'S OFFICE ENERGY
MILAN 2012
JOHN FRANE AT HOME AND WORK
ETHEREAL WHITES BY SO-IL
Gleaming plans for LA’s Union Station were presented last month at the unveiling of Metro’s six “vision plans.” The schemes are full of public spaces, downtown connections, and landscape integration from the likes of stars like UN Studio, Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Foster and Partners and Ingenhoven Architects.

The problem: none of the plans will ever be realized. This was just a design exercise that had no weight on the selection of the master plan, a development comprising some 42 acres that Metro owns around the station. That selection will be made on the basis of qualifications, interviews, and implementation plans.

Metro is now the richest and most powerful public agency in Los Angeles, largely thanks to more than $40 billion from local ballot measure R. And there is no greater example than this that Metro is largely deaf to the needs of the design community and in turn to the community at large. On the surface, this pseudo design competition seems to be a cynical ploy to raise public (or perhaps more accurately, potential developers’) ‘excitement,’ which it most resoundingly did not. Let’s give LA citizens some credit. They can smell a cop out.

It’s nothing new for LA County’s transit agency to attract criticism for its design policies and design efforts. Just look at their headquarters, designed by Orange County firm McLarand Vasquez. This banal beige building beat out none other than Frank Gehry’s inspired design. And what about the Los Angeles Times derided Metro’s new Expo light rail design for being “aggressively banal.” After riding on the line, I actually found the work much better than I expected. I particularly liked the still developing landscaping and the well executed, somberly calming stations. (Perhaps, I was just responding to the lack of riders.) But I would not call the design sophisticated. The wavy canopies and blue columns, suggesting the ocean, have a hint of corniness, especially because so much of the line is located in gritty parts of the city; not by the ocean. Urban sophistication is something that’s sorely lacking throughout the city’s transit system.

But it’s not only a lack of elegant design that hampers Metro. It’s that the bureaucracy is organized to promote engineering and the bottom line over design at every turn. The jurors selecting the master plan designer include no architects or anybody with significant design expertise. It does include Cal Hollis, a planner who came from the world of redevelopment; Jenna Hornstock, also involved with planning and development at CRA; and Roger Meier, a legal and real estate expert who engineered Metro’s Joint Development Program (the creators of its TODs).

While the Union Station Master Plan will no doubt provide helpful guidelines, development at Union Station will at the end of the day be determined by the developer leasing property on the site. How much input will design advocates—or the public—have on the design? They’ve had little say in Metro’s previous developments. Will this be any different?

Signs aren’t promising, in spite of the appeals from one of Metro’s few design advocates, Martha Welborne, executive director of Countywide Planning. And here’s a very bad sign; with its upcoming Purple Line extension along Wilshire Boulevard, Metro is planning to demolish the current Architecture and Design Museum, a promoter of architecture, design and, incidentally, public transit, along with several other galleries and art spaces, for a station that could easily go elsewhere. Next door, the Peterson Automotive Museum will not be touched. Need I say more?

Sunner Outlook

Sunshine is obviously an abundant resource in Los Angeles, but it’s been woefully underutilized. Compared to other major U.S. utilities, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) ranks last in solar capacity per capita and still gets 45 percent of its energy from coal. In April, LA City Council approved a measure that paves the way for a 10-megawatt demonstration program—an enough to power 10,000 households—that reboots residents for the solar energy age.

The program prioritizes building types with large rooftops such as condominiums, parking structures, and warehouses that yield more solar power for less cost and create another source of revenue, a plus particularly in low-income neighborhoods.

“We have to make sure that’s a good geographic distribution and different types of buildings,” said Mary Leslie of the Los Angeles Business Council (LABC), a lead advocate of the program. “Solar programs have tended to cluster in affluent areas. We want to be sure that this isn’t the case.”

The program also helps LADWP determine an optimal amount that residents will be reimbursed for creating solar energy through a bidding process.

The demo is just the tip of the iceberg. LA rooftops have the potential to generate as much as 5.5 gigawatts of energy—enough for the needs of half a million LA households, according to a study by the Lusk Center for Innovation at UCLA. LADWP plans to add 65 megawatts to the program later this year. An additional 75 megawatts is expected by 2016, for a total of 150 megawatts, enough to power 34,000 homes.

Still, environmental economist J.R. DeShazo, who heads the Lusk Center, said LADWP has to take bigger steps. Commissioned by the LABC, the center designed a program that would, in the long run, produce solar energy as efficiently as gas, and found that the sweet spot is a 600-megawatt program, which prioritizes large rooftops, phased in over ten years. The larger program would power 136,000 homes.

Not that this initial step isn’t good news. The LABC has forecast that the 150-megawatt program has the potential to create 4,500 jobs, generate $500 million in economic activity, and offset 2.25 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions by 2016. Carren Jao
Upscale grooming boutique Malin+Goetz has just opened its first store on the West Coast. Located in LA's cozy Larchmont Village, next to main street shops and traditional buildings, the modern store stands out, ironically, for its minimalism.

The “modern apothecary,” as the company describes itself, has a dark gray boxlike facade fronted by a single glass door that was created out of a former bay window. The store’s restrained logo sits over the entry.

Inside, New York architect Andrew Bernheimer riffed on the brand’s elegant, understated product packaging. He designed a narrow space highlighted by two complementary flanks. The left side has a white, floor-to-ceiling gridded shelf system that reads like a single piece of cabinetry, despite being made with eight units. The design, notes Bernheimer, is a loose reference to the street grid in the company’s hometown, New York, and to the designs of Piet Mondrian and Charlotte Perriand. The other wall is solid gray, etched with an etched grid of milled MDF that echoes the motif.

There is one cozy, rustic element to balance out all this minimalism: a long wood table that the owners found in an antique shop in upstate New York. It is an apothecary, after all.

**GOLDEN MOMENT**

Along some of San Francisco’s most stunning coastline, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy has just completed two new visitor centers, the Lands End Lookout Visitor Center and the Golden Gate Bridge Pavilion.

The Lands End Lookout, designed by EHDD, is a thoughtful gem of concrete, wood, and glass that’s completely at home perched above the rugged coastline that once was home to the Victorian-era Sutro Baths. The sitting completes, in Delphic fashion, the progression of man-made structures from the ruins of the baths to the Cliff House, past venerable Louis’ Restaurant, and culminating along some of the bridge's stunning natural beauty and the bridge’s stunning engineering are free for the looking, this building has an inward focus. The interpretive exhibits housed in the Bridge Pavilion, telling the story of the 75-year-old bridge, are well done. A magnificent scale model of one of the bridge towers is housed in the pavilion. It was used for structural testing during the construction of the bridge.

The charming historic Roundhouse, situated closer to the bridge and on higher ground, affords visitors some great photo opportunities. Restored by EHDD, the Roundhouse has been returned to its original configuration. Its circular plan, surrounded by glass, affords sweeping views. The Golden Gate National Park Conservancy has done an admirable job in getting both the Lands End and Golden Gate projects funded ($4.5 million and $4 million, respectively), designed, and built. Without the efforts of this private organization, neither project would have been realized.

**WTF WI-FI**

That didn’t take long. We hear that the funds promised for the LA Unified School District’s innovative prefabricated prototype schools by the likes of Craig Hodgetts, Swift Lee and Gonzalez Goodale have been routed instead to updating LAUSD schools’ wifi systems. We know that getting on the Internet without a cord is cool, but more important than shelter from the storm?

Say it ain’t so! Now that the program is on hold there is one silver lining. It appears that LA’s charter schools are jumping over themselves to get a prefab prototype. Stay tuned.

**GOING LOCAL**

We hear from a source that the mighty Pritzker family from Chicago (namely Anthony Pritzker) has built an ultra-large estate in Beverly Hills. A 49,000 square foot chateau, to be exact. We haven’t been able to identify who the architect is, but it’s apparently a firm “from Paris.” We’re a little disturbed that the Pritzkers would want to create a French Renaissance-style home instead of the modernist designs they promote with their awards—not to mention hiring locally. But maybe this means a sop to a West Coast architect for the next Pritzker?

**SEND NEW ROOFS AND CURLYCUES TO EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM**

**ARCHITECTS’ NIGHT OUT**

*September 18, 2012* — Los Angeles. New York’s Cornelia Street Café is bringing its popular night out series to Los Angeles at The Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel.

**ART DECO**

*September 7, 2012* — San Francisco, CA. New York's MoMA PS1 is bringing its long-running traveling exhibition to San Francisco in a new edition that will explore the art forms of the 1920s and 30s.

**ARTS**

*September 26, 2012* — Washington, DC. The National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian American Art Museum are presenting an exhibition celebrating the arts, culture, and politics of the past three decades.

**THE OCCASION**

*September 15, 2012* — San Diego, CA. The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego is hosting a benefit dinner and auction to support its mission of collecting, presenting, and preserving contemporary art.

**THE ARTISTS’ NIGHT OUT**

*September 21, 2012* — Chicago, IL. The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is bringing its popular Artists’ Night Out series to its Midwest location.

**ARTS**

*September 23, 2012* — New York, NY. The Whitney Museum of American Art is hosting a special evening featuring a talk by one of its most beloved curators.

**ART DECO**

*September 24, 2012* — Detroit, MI. The Detroit Institute of Arts is presenting an exhibition on the art and architecture of the 1920s and 30s.

**THE OCCASION**

*September 27, 2012* — San Francisco, CA. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art is hosting a benefit event to support its ongoing exhibitions and educational programs.

**ARTS**

*September 28, 2012* — Los Angeles, CA. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art is presenting an exhibition on the art and architecture of the 1920s and 30s.
Sanitaryware, bathroom furniture, bathtubs, shower trays, wellness products and accessories: Duravit has everything you need to make life in the bathroom a little more beautiful. New for the pro - pro.duravit.us. More info at Duravit, Phone 888-DURAVIT, info@us.duravit.com, www.duravit.us

Join us for the launch of DELOS
Friday, May 18 | 6-9PM
Duravit NYC | 105 Madison
LA'S TRANSIT DREAMS COMING TRUE?

Believe it or not, Los Angeles is on its way to becoming a world-class transit city, and a pivotal new light rail line just opened to prove it.

On April 28, the opening of the Expo Line ushered the city into a new transit era. This 8.6-mile route from downtown to Culver City not only serves a traffic-weary swath of the city, but gives Angelenos the rail line that will metaphorically make the city whole again, traveling the width of the LA Basin to reach Santa Monica as early as 2016. The line has been funded by Measure R, the half-cent sales tax that is funneling an estimated $40 billion into local transportation projects over the next 30 years.

Unlike some recent additions to the system, like the Gold Line Eastside Extension, it should be heavily used: Metro expects 27,000 boardings per day. When the line is complete to Santa Monica, ridership could be as high as 67,000 per day.

If everyone is thinking alike, then someone isn’t thinking.

George S. Patton

An art installation on the Expo line.

Designed by Los Angeles-based Parsons, with support from Gruen Associates and Miyamoto International, the Expo Line has been in the works basically since Southern Pacific offered the right-of-way for sale in 1988. Yet the completion of the $940 million project was delayed over a year, particularly by community groups concerned with at-grade crossings. It’s a shame, since the stations that are the most effective (and attractive) are those that are on street level, not hovering above the busier streets on concrete pylons.

Unlike the themed stations on the Gold or Red Lines, the Expo Line has a unified design. “This is a contemporary project,” said Jorge J. Pardo, Metro’s director of creative services, who oversees both station design and public art. He says the line-wide design is better for the customer, who needs to see the stations as landmarks. “There’s a reason this design can continue all the way to 4th and Colorado,” he said, referring to the intersection in Santa Monica where the line will terminate.

The stations are unassuming and largely indistinct. Perforated metal sunshades undulate over simple steel tubing painted in a cool blue, which on most days is exactly the color of the LA sky. On the platforms, the canopies cast constantly changing shade patterns. Yet besides the digitized waves traced in the air, the infrastructure almost seems to disappear, allowing the framed views into the adjacent neighborhoods to become the visual focus of the stations.

Roland Genick, lead designer for architecture and urban design at Parsons, said he hopes that the design for the line is somewhat subconscious for riders. “I think with a system that people use on a daily basis, it is very important that there are bits of interest and surprises that one discovers over time, leading to a more layered understanding and appreciation.”

As a ride, the Expo Line delivers visual punch as you sail down the tracks: the gorgeous new “front yard” garden of the Natural History Museum, USC’s stately towers, rusted-out Exposition Boulevard auto-body shops, expansive views of the Baldwin Hills, and Culver City’s bubbling downtown (for now the line terminates at La Cienega and Jefferson). Neighborhoods along the way have already been preparing for the line’s arrival, with transit-oriented developments dotting the route all the way to Santa Monica. The line could pave the way for high-quality urban development becoming a model for the city and the region. But the train cars themselves put us at the back of the pack. Unlike the shiny silver Breda cars of the Gold Line, the Expo Line uses the boring, boxy white cars that are also found on the Blue Line because they share the same track for two stations.

However, a recent announcement that Metro is buying 200 sleek rail cars from Japanese manufacturer Kinkisharyo International might improve the look of the line considerably. (Now if only we could bring that rail car manufacturing to Southern California.)

The quibbling continues over another route, and the Purple Line, known as the “Subway to the Sea, is now estimated not to reach Westwood until at least 2025.

Still, one thing has become clear: Angelenos can’t wait for subways to network our neighborhoods. We need more light rail routes, more dedicated busways, and more bike paths, and we need them now. The Expo Line has proved to the city that we not only deserve world-class transit, we can also demand it.

ALISSA WALKER
Clean lines. Clean look. Clean conscience. It’s a lot to expect from an ordinary piece of glass. Then again, Solarban® R100 solar control, low-e glass is about as far from ordinary as you get – thanks to a Solar Heat Gain Coefficient of .23 and a neutral-reflective appearance that lets your building put its best face forward. And you’ll really be surprised by the extraordinary energy savings you can expect with Solarban R100 glass. To get your copy of the white paper, go to ppgideascapes.com/SBr100.
She added, for emphasis: “These are not.

bureaucratic and engineering-driven agency
to be fighting an uphill battle to get the
Planning, of the vision boards. She appears
Metro’s executive director of Countywide
of qualifications, interviews, data collection,
June, on the much more nuts-and-bolts basis
weight in the selection of the master planner.

It’s about fun and inspiration and the
The boards, presented in front of a packed
house at the station on April 25, will hold no
neighborhood as it might look in the year 2050.
shortlisted to masterplan the 42-acre area
agency, Metro, asked the six teams they’ve
been no design competition, Metro’s
process is set to begin by July and be
winner by June 28, and the master-planning
have already completed their interviews.

As usual, LA is different,” she added. sl
UNVEILED

BROAD STAGE EXPANSION

Elia Broad is getting a new neighbor. Well, at least his namesake building, the Eli and Edythe Broad Stage, is.

The Santa Monica theater in April unveiled a $12.3 million addition to its Renzo Zecchetto-designed Broad Stage performing arts center, which opened in 2008. This time the architects will be DLR Group WWCOT.

Located just east of the existing theater, the new building will, combined with the Broad and an existing administrative building to the north, carve out a new plaza space for Santa Monica College, the building’s owner.

The project, paid for with a 2008 public bond issue, will feature a multi-use, 165-seat music hall and a rehearsal room, music lab, and storage above.

The chief design challenge for the architects, pointed out DLR Group WWCOT principal Andrea Cohen Gehring, was “How do you add a building to an iconic structure like the Broad?” The goal, she said, was to complement, not mimic or overpower that structure.

The firm started with the Broad Stage’s “beautifully composed series of materials,” which come together, said Gehring, “like music.”

Set back slightly from the Broad, the minimal building will, like its neighbor, have a glazed facade and a large composite-wood panel cantilevered canopy. But unlike that building, which is inward facing, much of the new building will reveal its inner workings, particularly the movement of people on its upper levels. The rest of the palette will include fiber cement board, precast board-formed concrete, corrugated metal paneling, and structural glazing.

Inside, a double-height lobby will contain a large aluminum art wall, inspired, said project architect Juan Pedro Alvarez, by how light enters the building. Accordion-style sliding glass doors will allow the building to open up completely to the plaza outside.

The building is aiming for LEED Silver. Its resurfaced courtyard will contain native plants and swales to retain storm water runoff. Stage two of the project includes a new masterplan calling for, among other things, burying the theater’s existing surface parking and replacing it with another plaza. That plan will also include another building containing a gallery, offices, and classrooms.

Other firms in the running for the project—chosen via Request for Proposals—were Brooks & Scarpa Architects and Moore Ruble Yudell Architects and Planners.

Architect: DLR Group WWCOT
Client: Santa Monica College
Location: Santa Monica, CA
Completion: 2014

Runway Takes Off

Runway, the final component of the long-debated and litigated Playa Vista project, will finally break ground in August, delivering a much-needed commercial and civic center on the site of an airport once owned by Howard Hughes. Often derided for its suburban character, Playa Vista is continuing to evolve after 30 years on the drawing board, with the forthcoming addition slated for 11 acres adjacent to the Ballona Creek Wetlands and the Pacific Ocean.

Designed by Los Angeles-based architecture and planning firm Johnson Fain, the $260 million project, developed by master developer Playa Capital Company and Runway site owner Lincoln Property Company, will be located at the site’s former runway (hence the name).

Design lead Scott Johnson and his team spent three years designing before the project cleared the California Supreme Court. With a targeted opening date of 2014, Runway will add 200,000 square feet of retail, including a movie theater, shops, and restaurants, 420 apartments, and 25,000 square feet of creative office space.

“In theory, it’s an exceptional location,” said Johnson. “It’s hard to build near the ocean today. And it’s the newest part of the city.”

Since its earliest conception, developed by local firm Mose & Polyzoides, Playa Vista has been an experiment in New Urbanism, though much of the original master plan was abandoned after numerous lawsuits and market cycles.

Runway retains the original concept’s ambitions, especially regarding pedestrian scale, landscaping, and what Johnson calls a “heightening of the public realm.”

The most prominent element will be a five-story, lantern-shaped vertical circulation structure that does extra duty as a people mover, social gathering place, and public art. The design team also called on traditional urban place-making concepts by breaking the Runway site’s 11 acres into smaller blocks. Rios Clementi Hale led the landscape design work. To activate the streetscape, the design team placed residential units above the commercial and retail uses in a mixed-use arrangement that tops out at a height of four stories.

The project diverges from Playa Vista’s New Urbanist progenitors in a strict adherence to contemporary architecture style. Johnson describes Runway as “beach industrial.” He is careful to point out, however, that Runway will not be a thematic environment. Only contemporary materials will be used, such as steel, tile, and self-rusting Corten steel—materials, Johnson said, “that will gain quality with weathering.”

JAMES BRASUELL

THE WORLD'S SLIMMEST SIGHTLINES.

The 3/4” profile Vitrocsa sliding glass wall system. Absolutely nothing else compares. Proven and tested since 1993, with over 25,000 Vitrocsa units installed in over 20 countries.

GOLDBRECHT USA INC.
5741 BUCKINGHAM PARKWAY UNIT A
CULVER CITY, CA 90230
PHONE: 310 988 4455
WWW.VITROCASAUSA.COM
LA ARCHITECTURE FEEDER BUILDS DIVERSITY FOR THE PROFESSION

LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

Take a look around most architecture offices and you’ll notice a sea of white, upper-middle-class faces. There are so many reasons, from cultural divides to architects’ meager salaries and job prospects, but perhaps the most important is the lack of access to affordable architectural education. After all, most top-tier architecture schools cost well over $30,000 a year.

One little-known but increasingly appreciated Los Angeles school is doing its part to address the problem: the Los Angeles Institute of Architecture and Design (LAIAD), located in the city’s Koreatown neighborhood. While not on the tip of many tongues, the Institute, founded in 2001 by architects William Taylor and the late Bernard Zimmerman, recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. It teams significant architectural expertise with local West Los Angeles College’s affordable resources (including that school’s non-architecture courses) to serve as a feeder into top schools from around the country.

The idea is not to send students right into the workforce, but to prepare them for top architecture programs—building their expertise and portfolios— at a very affordable price. Taylor, calls it an “alternative portal,” or a “peer school.” Classes take place at night because most students have day jobs.

Tuition costs $3,200 per semester. Annual tuition at Yale School of Architecture, by contrast, costs $38,450. Tuition at Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) costs about $34,000. Once going through LAIAD’s two-year undergraduate program, students enter fully accredited architecture schools in their third year, many with scholarships. Students at the school’s Graduate Preparation program build their portfolios to enter grad programs from the start.

LAIAD does not offer an accredited BArch or MArch, just a certificate. But all classes are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), so students generally don’t have trouble transferring credit, said Taylor. Agreements with SCI-Arc and Otis College of Art and Design make the process even easier, and the school is working on additional deals with California State University-Long Beach and Woodbury University.

Many community colleges offer architecture programs that are also far cheaper than typical architecture schools, said Taylor. But that education is often geared toward a “vocational” and “technical” angle, not aimed at getting kids into more design-oriented programs after graduation.

The school, for now, is located in a nondescript office building in Koreatown, over a bunch of beauty shops and pizza joints. LAIAD grads include former attorneys, CPAs, a rabbi, and a boxer. But the results have been impressive. Students have moved on to SCI-Arc, USC, Woodbury, Harvard, Yale, and other institutions.

“The portfolio is the great equalizer,” said Taylor, who is also a principal at TFO Architecture. Almost anyone who wants to go to LAIAD can get in, and all can get help through financial aid, “even if they’re really, really broke,” said Taylor.

Classes at LAIAD are similar to those at other architecture schools, including seminars, studios, and reviews. But the point, said Taylor, is not to make students experts in formal gymnastics, but to develop a “form language,” to create arrangements based on specific ideas and logical systems.

“The hardest part of architectural design is making decisions.” Students are discouraged from making CNC models at first.

Francisco Palomares, 36, a recent graduate, is now excelling at SCI-Arc, a school where he had been rejected years earlier. The reason was his portfolio, which he beefed up at LAIAD. “It’s definitely prepared me well,” Palomares said. “I know how to approach everything logically, step by step.”

SCI-Arc professor Marcelo Spina says he was impressed with Palomares’ grasp of technology and of architectural principles. “What he did not know, he knew or had the intuition where to find out, which in the culture of specialization that we live today, is an essential quality for progress.”

Judith Kinnard, president of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ASCA), lauds schools like LAIAD for addressing the “concerning” costs of architectural education and the lack of diversity, which she says has only gotten worse as the economy has deteriorated. “We’re all aware and very concerned about the debt issue for our graduates,” she said, adding, “It’s great to give more students the opportunity to engage in architectural education.”

But she does worry about some students graduating with only a certificate, not a full architectural education, and moving into the field underprepared. “I’m a little nervous about encouraging students to take part in non-accredited education. There’s no oversight of that,” she said. “They are perhaps advancing the notion that it’s perfectly appropriate to move into professional licensure without achieving a professional degree.”

Taylor assures critics that 90 percent of students who finish the program move on to a BArch or an MArch program. Besides, “We go through curriculum committees to make sure our courses are in keeping, just like they do,” he added.

And if you take a look around a classroom you’ll see students from every ethnicity and social class. The student body is 60 percent minority, a refreshing change for architectural education.

In one studio students were creating balsa-wood models to reflect architectural systems, with results similar to Sol Lewitt’s permutations. In another studio they were creating balsa-wood models to reflect architectural systems, with results similar to Sol Lewitt’s permutations. Many have stayed up late nights and have the telltale look of any architecture school student. Isn’t opportunity grand? 54.
LA-based Predock_Frane are in the process of transforming a claustrophobic and nondescript stucco residence in the middle of Venice into a luminous white box with a twist, called 4th House. The architects implanted the home and studio with countless other white boxes, creating a textured, spacious, three-dimensional tapestry that takes perfect advantage of its site.

Frane’s 1,500-square-foot home has a simple white face, which floats over a raised concrete slab and copious native vegetation, with three protruding steel cubes: one in front of the doorway, creating an effective delineation between inside and out; and two in front of the windows, creating a sitting bench and a daybed.

Inside, squares are everywhere, conserving space, providing illumination, expanding the envelope’s surface, and even encouraging breezes. In the open-plan kitchen and living room they form a bar, an island, stream-lined cabinetry, and an enormous skylight, supplemented with edgy contemporary art. A large window behind the kitchen leads the eye toward a small side garden. In the bathroom, another huge skylight also connects to the bedroom, providing each room with warm light.

Large, square glass doors at the rear draw your eye to the oasis-like backyard, formerly for parking and storage. This textured yard is divided into squares for a bocce ball court, a pebble garden/dining area, and a Japanese soaking tub. The garage has been turned into the firm’s office, another amply skylit space that is sure to make other architects jealous.
AOL wanted an energetic vibe for its new Palo Alto offices and designers O+A delivered.

As wealthy tech companies continue to descend upon Silicon Valley to complete their tech 2.0 makeovers, one of the biggest surprises has been AOL. Despite its purchase of The Huffington Post and various new ventures, the old-school (at least by tech world standards) company still wasn’t known for innovation or risk. Perhaps that’s why they asked O+A to design an edgy office. The design, points out O+A director of design Denise Cherry, is meant to embody the new mantra of AOL: “transparency, collaboration, creativity, playfulness.” It’s also designed to rekindle the “the energy of a startup.”

Built into an existing office building, the makeover uses unfinished materials, exposed ceilings, and concrete floors to suggest a rough-around-the-edges feeling, contrasted with simple, white walls and punctuated with a high-energy palette of colorful carpeting, modern furniture, sculptural neon lighting, and bright, custom graphics.

“We wanted to play with this idea of stripping back the building to its basics as a parallel to the focus of AOL’s new culture,” said Cherry. Thus, sanded-down and sealed oriented strand board (OSB), typically a construction-grade material, lends walls and benches a finished but still raw finish.

Spaces are casually organized to reflect the current philosophy that “an idea can happen anywhere,” said Cherry. The open plan is dotted by groupings of loud furniture and fiberglass-clad “pods” to allow intense congregation or alone time; a “town hall,” a large, bright space that is the core of the office, makes room for larger groups. More traditional conference rooms are also available for those few times when workers need to have an old-fashioned meeting.

SL
Facing page, clockwise: Lobby lights “Mod” pendants from Lite Control; Custom conference pods with acoustics by Auralex; Lounge seating by Blu Dot, Coalesse, Haworth, and De La Espada; and conference tables by Mash Studios.

This page, clockwise: Glassed-in conference rooms, kick-back spaces, and white-board walls for writing ideas; Informal seating in reception; Workstations by Inscape with Herman Miller seating.
DOODLE SOFA
BY FRONT MOROSO
The pattern quilted into this leather sofa is based on accumulated doodles the design team sketched during design meetings.
moroso.it

DALA STOOL AND OTTOMAN
BY STEPHEN BURKS DEDON
A mesh frame of powder-coated aluminum provides a structural shell, which is interwoven with an eco-friendly synthetic fabric to create a colorful family of outdoor seating.
dedon.de

Doodle Sofa
BY FRONT MOROSO
The pattern quilted into this leather sofa is based on accumulated doodles the design team sketched during design meetings.
moroso.it

PILA CHAIR
BY RONAN AND ERWAN BOUROULLEC MAGIS
Solid ash legs combined with plywood back and seat create a chair that is light but structurally strong.
magisdesign.com

LUMINOUS TABLE
BY TOKUJIN YOSHIOKA GLAS ITALIA
Inspired by light’s relationship with the material world, Tokujin Yoshioka designed a table completely of clear glass whose sand-blasted legs add an element of contrasting opacity.
glasitalia.com

MIA STACKABLE CHAIRS
BY JEAN NOUVEL EMU
Defined by its hieroglyphic profile, the aluminum and steel MIA chair now in production by Emu was originally designed for a restaurant at the Nouvel-designed RBC Design Centre in Montpellier, France.
me.emu.it

ROPERO WARDROBE
BY ALEJANDRO VILLAREAL HIERVE
This glass and oak modular wardrobe or shelving unit displays rather than conceals allowing users to select candy-colored backdrops of drawers and shelving.
hierve.com

WORK HARD, PLAY HARDER
The practical and durable meet the whimsical and experimental at this year’s international furniture fair in Milan. By Molly Heintz
SO-IL DESIGNS
A MINIMALIST OFFICE
AERIE IN NEW YORK

A plane of light, translucent scrims, and monumental desks define the ethereal new offices for media-production company LOGAN. It’s a space where the work is the focus and all clutter and distraction have been stripped away.

“We wanted to avoid doing the standard loft renovation,” said Ilias Papageorgiou, an associate principal at SO-IL, the architects for the project. Most of the employees of this film and video company work on a contract basis, so the office serves as a touchdown space for a variety of collaborators. “The space can accommodate people as the company expands and contracts,” he said. The ceiling is a backlit, stretched PVC membrane that creates an even light throughout. “It’s nearly shadowless,” he said. Two custom tables extend the length of the two side-by-side spaces. A clear glass wall divides the space to create a conference and two private offices. Nylon scrims cocoon the entire space, including the windows, to varying degrees of opacity when viewed at different angles. “We wanted to show traces of the old building,” he said.

A series of soundproof rooms arranged to an L shape frame the space. The rooms are lined with custom pleated felt walls, prefabricated by Toronto-based FELT Studio. While informality reigns at most media companies, SO-IL makes the case that serenity boosts productivity.

ALAN C. BRACE
PRODUCT

1. SILVERBACK
   KIBISI AND LOUIS POUlsen
   Founded in Copenhagen by Lars Larsen, Bjarke Ingels Group, and Jens Martin Skibsted, KIBISI has teamed up with Louis Poulsen Lighting to launch Silverback, a minimal silver fixture with a white diffuser. An LED version will be launched in fall 2012.
   louispoulsen.com

2. MANTA RHEI
   SE’LUX
   Light fixture manufacturer Se’lux and media installation design firm Art + Com have released a new collaboration called Manta Rhei. The kinetic light sculpture is made with paper-thin OLED modules and in future iterations will be scalable to clients’ needs.
   selux.us

3. PLASS
   FOSCARINI
   Pllass—the name combines “plastic” and “glass”—is inspired by traditional Murano glassmaking techniques but instead uses rotational molded transparent polycarbonate to achieve a radius and curve that could not be produced with glass.
   foscarini.com

4. EYES E4 PENDANT
   SENSES
   Slated for release in fall 2012, the Eyes collection from Senses has been remade with handcrafted glass shades and will include a new pendant version. Each of the cube’s six touch-sensitive sides can be switched on and off.
   spirit-of-senses.ch

5. POTENCE PIVOTANTE
   NEMO
   The result of a rediscovery project with Charlotte Perriand’s daughter, Nemo put the Potence Pivotante lamp into industrial production last year and is now extending the range with double-length.
   nemo.cassina.it

6. PIANI TABLE LAMP
   FLOS
   Available in black, white, red, and green, the Piani table lamp by the French Bouroullec brothers seems a throwback to the library lighting of yore, but with an LED light source and a catch-all base for small items, the piece is thoroughly modern.
   flosusa.com

7. CSYS LED TASK LIGHT
   JAKE DYsON
   Industrial designer Jake Dyson has introduced his CSYS LED Task Light, which uses heat pipe technology to divert heat from LEDs. The lower temperature increases the light’s lifetime, allowing more than 160,000 hours of continual use.
   jakedyson.com

BRIGHT SPOTS
THE TREND IN LIGHTING IS IN CRAFTED TECHNOLOGY WITH AN EMPHASIS IN SUSTAINABLE SMARTS. BY JENNIFER K. GORSCHÉ
The world’s highest performance buildings use Lutron® shades

Lutron offers the most advanced shading solutions for commercial spaces.

- From individually controllable roller shades to automated, intelligent façade control
- The right shading system with the right fabric, for any application
- Only Lutron offers complete systems integrating lights and shades for optimal performance and energy savings

To learn more, visit www.lutron.com/shade

Conference room in Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania

Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania
Winner of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 2011 Energy Star Challenge—utilizes Lutron shades.

Architect: Spillman Farmer Architects
TRENDS: New technologies expand options for finishes, hardware & more
PRODUCTS: Cooktops, refrigerators, ovens, appliances
Last month, Siematic’s BeauxArts.02 kitchen collection made its New England debut at the company’s Back Bay showroom in Boston, just a few months after its first U.S. introduction in New York. To create the second interpretation of the BeauxArts line, the company continued its successful partnership with Chicago-based designer Mick Di Giulio. The redefined design includes lighter, more linear components and proportions in addition to new finishes and modern elements, like steel- and glass-fronted cabinets.

“The BeauxArts.02 provides our designers with new freedom,” said Walter Banta, marketing manager of Siematic Möbelwerke USA. “The new elements can be combined to create both transitional and contemporary kitchen designs.”

Integration with the company’s S2 designs is one of the unique benefits of BeauxArts.02 (also shown on page 19). “A variety of finishes and style elements come together to create a truly unique kitchen,” said Banta, who added that while white kitchens are still very popular, new color introductions including Sterling Gray and Lotus White tie in with contemporary palettes as well.

Looking to the future, Siematic remains focused on design leadership by integrating the kitchen with other living areas in the home. That’s the idea behind the company’s other recent introduction, FloatingSpaces shelving. “We have offered shelving systems in the past, but the FloatingSpaces panel and shelving system allows architects and designers to seamlessly blend kitchen and living spaces, creating more options than ever before.”

Available in a full range of finishes, the line includes flexible wall configurations and functional elements available in many lengths and materials to further integrate living space into the kitchen. Though Banta won’t give anything away, he hinted that the company plans to release more designs in this vein at the company’s annual in-house products exhibition, HausFair, in September.

JENNIFER K. GORSCHE
SieMatic BeauxArts.02
the latest interpretation

Designed with Mick De Giulio, BeauxArts.02 is everything you want in a kitchen and everything you’d expect from a SieMatic original. See more online and at your nearest SieMatic showroom.
This summer, the New York showroom of GD Cucine will launch Seta, the Italian company’s latest modern kitchen design. Designed with understated details and new storage options, the system offers a clean backdrop for a range of interior styles. Flat doors can be fitted with a variety of hardware profiles, such as a new slim, recessed pull attached to the top or bottom of drawers and cabinets. The line also includes new drawer hardware from German manufacturer Blum, an integrated LED lighting system for cabinet interiors and exteriors, and new storage fittings for trays and cookware.

“People want a more natural finish,” said Simone Biscontin, GD Cucine’s design director. To meet the demand, Seta presents a range of new door finishes including a rough-hewn oak called seghettato, which can be combined with new laminate finishes that replicate stone and with smooth lacquers available in 19 colors.

Another of the company’s 2012 introductions comes from a recent partnership with their Italian neighbor, tile maker Cottoveneto. “We are collaborating with them to create kitchen door fronts covered with micro-mosaic tiles made from stone,” said Biscontin. “It is customisable for the client. If they come in with a drawing we can replicate it.”

Outside the kitchen, GD Cucine is also bringing one of their bathroom designs to the United States for the first time. The inaugural Fontane series designed by Enzo Berti, and part of the Dogi collection, brings wood finishes into the bathroom. Ash and oak are used not only for cabinets and shelving but even for bath and shower enclosures thanks to a special heat-treating process that renders the wood waterproof and stain proof. “It’s a nice transition between a contemporary line and the more traditional,” said Biscontin. “We see a lot of people asking for this.”

JKG
A new generation of appliances designed to satisfy any home chef.

Designed by French architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte, La Cornue’s W line features a cabinet-like oven and matching three-drawer sideboard along with an induction table with matching remote-controlled hood in tempered gray glass and lacquered metal.

Kenmore’s new 31-cubic-foot refrigerator has the most storage space of all the company’s models, efficiently organizing space with an extra Grab-N-Go door compartment accessible from the exterior without opening both doors.

KitchenAid’s Chef Touch sous vide cooking system seeks to bring professional low-temperature cooking technology to the residential market with a three-part system that includes a steam oven, shock freezer, and vacuum machine.

Smeg’s new speed oven is a 30-inch-wide mini oven that can cook meals 10 to 15 times faster than a traditional oven in a fraction of the space. The oven features ten cooking modes including convection, broil, and microwave settings.

Thermador’s new Freedom Induction Cooktop has a 6½-inch color touchscreen display that recognizes the size and shape of pots up to 21 by 13 inches and adjusts the cooktop accordingly while also controlling power settings and cooking times.

Ventilation hood manufacturer Zephyr has introduced a new full-size, one-piece liner insert hood that can duct vertically and horizontally. The system also features new Bloom LED lights, LCD controls, and DCBL noise suppression technology.

Samsung’s new LCD refrigerator features a 8-inch Wi-Fi-enabled LCD screen with kitchen-specific apps that allow the user to upload and share photos, monitor Google calendars, check weather, and access recipes from Epicurious.
SL.6060 sliding ladder with auto-braking casters

NOW, NOTHING CAN STOP YOU FROM REACHING YOUR PERSONAL BOWLS

SLIDING LADDERS
STAINLESS STEEL LADDER SYSTEMS MADE IN GERMANY
available in the US through
1-877-777-0592
www.index-d.com

ALSO AVAILABLE WITH WOOD STEPS
ADJUSTABLE WHEEL FITTINGS FOR VERTICAL STORAGE
sophisticated since 1908

New York, NY
Eggersmann USA
212.688.4910

Huntington Beach, CA
Kitchen En-Counter
714.377.4010

Philadelphia, PA
Eggersmann Studio
215.238.0321

Dania Beach, FL
Eggersmann USA
954.342.4009

Santa Monica, CA
Haefele Design
310.429.3525

Pittsburgh, PA
Splash
724.772.1060

Houston, TX
Eggersmann USA
713.877.8088

Sand City, CA
Classic Kitchens & Designs
831.920.2850

Dallas, TX
Eggersmann Studio
214.741.1998

Los Angeles, CA
Eggersmann USA
818.880.5309

Bradenton, FL
Epoch Solutions
941.761.8855

Bollevue, WA
Villa Cabinetry + Design
425.455.8300
EDWARD BURTONSKY: OIL

One of the most important topics of our time, oil, and its industry serve as the departure point for the work of one of the most admired photographers working today. From 1997 through 2009, Edward Burtynsky traveled the world chronicling oil's life, production, distribution, and use (Top: SOCAR Oil Fields #8, Baku, Azerbaijan, 2008; Above: AMARC #5, Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, Arizona, USA, 2006). Through 50 large-scale photographs, Burtynsky illustrates stories about this vital natural resource, the landscapes altered by its extraction, and the sprawl caused by the development of infrastructure needed to transport it. Behind the awe-inspiring photography is an epic tale about the lifeline of mankind's existence in the 21st century. Curated by the Center for Art + Environment, OGO invites the viewer to ponder the scale and implications of humanity’s addiction to energy.
BUCKY BY THE BAY

The Utopian Impulse: Buckminster Fuller and the Bay Area
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 151 Third Street
Through July 29

A new exhibit at SFMOMA, The Utopian Impulse, considers Buckminster Fuller’s influence on Bay Area designers. As Fuller’s disciple Norman Foster is now hard at work on Apple’s proposed ring, architecture and design curator Jennifer Fletcher raises timely and important questions about the regional legacy of this “anticipatory design scientist.”

Two well-funded earlier exhibits—in Zurich in 1999 and in New York in 2008—mined the Fuller archive and resulted in major publications. Fletcher has taken a more modest approach that builds on her department’s collections. In 1981, Fuller and graphic designer Chuck Byrne collaborated to produce a print portfolio, Inventions: Twelve Around One, that was a collage-like mix of patent drawings and photographs of Fuller and his inventions. Fletcher uses the portfolio, a gift from Chuck and Elizabeth Byrne, as the exhibit’s starting point, filling the anteroom with examples of Fuller’s work in different media—Da Vinci-like drawings, handwritten notes, models, magazine articles, and blueprinted manifestos. There’s also a one-hour excerpt from his videotaped oral history.

The adjoining main A-D gallery has a sampling of Bay Area work that either shows Fuller’s direct influence or bears traces of his resonance. There are consciously futurist works like Ant Farm’s 1976 Convention City, which anticipated American Idol and instant voting by想像ing a stadium-like complex where on-site and virtual voters could interact with televised political celebrities; Fuller-inspired publications like Stewart Brand’s late-1960s Whole Earth Catalog, which began partially as a tribute to him; and Bob Gillis’ mid-1970s Oval Intention Tent, which applies Fuller’s tensegrity structure to camping equipment. The current examples include real and conceptual work by Yves Béhar, Nicholas de Monchaux, Lisa Iwamoto and Craig Scott, Future Cities Lab, and Morphosis. My favorite was Future Cities Lab’s HYDRAMAX Port Machines, with a moving, interactive roof that resembles two immense flapping wings. A film by Sam Green and Obscura Digital draws on Fuller’s Dymaxion Chronoflite, a 15-minute-at-a-time record of his daily life over 63 years. After seeing the exhibit, the designer and critic Yuki Bowman said to me that there’s a digital-virtual side to Fuller and his Bay Area followers. Ant Farm’s arena-like riff on Fuller’s interest in global knowledge sharing, for example, evolves into Yves Béhar’s cheap XO laptops—and ultimately to the mobile, cloud-tapping devices we all carry.

Focusing on Fuller’s machine-age side ignores the aspects of his work that were concerned with how information surrounds, supports, and empowers us. The word “Dymaxion,” which Fuller often used, derived its name from his “4D philosophy” which is about his desire to “do the most with the least,” and about time as a potential asset. Time is the ghost in Fuller’s manifestos, in some of the texts that accompany the artifacts, and in the choices of Fuller-influenced work. Fuller’s intuition that our lives might increasingly leave their material moorings, liberating us to organize space and time as we individually desire, is what separates him from his modernist peers and from modern-day followers like Foster. It’s why Fuller is still relevant today. This aspect of his thinking points to the cloud’s urbane lightness and its built implications, potentially more interesting and germane to life in 2012 than Apple’s suburban-style new campus.

Enlarged, Fuller’s interest in global knowledge lowers. Ant Farm’s arena-like riff on Fuller and his Bay Area followers like Foster. It’s why Fuller is still relevant today. This aspect of his thinking points to the cloud’s urbane lightness and its built implications, potentially more interesting and germane to life in 2012 than Apple’s suburban-style new campus.
The Great Communicator

Piecing Together Los Angeles: An Esther McCoy Reader
Edited and with an essay by Susan Morgan, East of Borneo Books, $34.95

Reynier Banham called her “the mother of us all,” and no one did more than Esther McCoy to win respect for Southern California modernism. David Gebhard and Robert Winter, who produced the definitive guide to LA architecture, praised her “one-woman crusade” to raise awareness of the city’s modernist heritage through her books on several generations of talent. Her essays and journalism were equally brilliant and even more influential, and the best of those short pieces are assembled in this anthology.

Don’t try reading it in bed or you may never get to sleep: the temptation to turn every page is too great. Lyrical, impassioned, alive with sharp phrases and insights, McCoy’s writing carries you along as it introduces a wonderful cast of characters: the Greene brothers, Frank Gehry, Irving Gill, Konrad Wachsmann, J.R. Davidson, and Cesar Pelli. There’s no one else like her: no one who approached McCoy in 1965 and then became R. M. Schindler’s sole assistant, having failed to gain admittance to USC’s School of Architecture. “Less to unlearn,” was his comment as he hired her at $1 an hour. Working on Schindler’s drawings in the Kings Road house with a sense of awe and then finding the mastery of Louis Kahn’s Prisbey’s Bottle Village in Simi Valley evokes the quirky spirit of Grandma Shading in obscurity. She always said, “The California sun rather than the hearth is the Kouros of architecture. ‘Less to unlearn,’ was his comment as he hired her at $1 an hour. Working on Schindler’s drawings in the Kings Road house with a sense of awe and then finding


introduced her to the potential of architecture, as an art and a discipline, and launched her on a new career as a critic—though she continued to write fiction. Five California Architects, published in 1960, made her reputation. Her last essay, written a few months before her death in 1988 and reprinted here, was an introduction to the Museum of Contemporary Art’s Case Study Houses exhibition catalog. “California changes everyone,” wrote McCoy. “The messages sent to the East hit the Rockies and bounced back. We were on our own, no one was watching.” That was not literally true—LA was closer in spirit to Europe than New York in the mid-20th century. Its exiles were able to realize their ideas and transmit them worldwide. McCoy called it a “private proving ground” that fostered experimentation. Sadly, that has become much less common as the city has grown and its arteries have hardened. As editor of this anthology, and co-curator of a recent exhibition on McCoy at the MAK Center, Susan Morgan has immersed herself in her subject, culling a mass of material that has become much less common as the city has grown and its arteries have hardened. As editor of this anthology, and co-curator of a recent exhibition on McCoy at the MAK Center, Susan Morgan has immersed herself in her subject, culling a mass of material to select pieces that reinforce each other and contributing graceful introductory texts. Like Banham, who approached McCoy in 1965 with a sense of awe and then found her to be a wonderful companion, you’ll be dazzled by her erudition and imbued with her sense of joy. Nobody has brought architecture to life in words as well as she did for more than four decades.

MICHAEL WEBB IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AA.
COLLABORATION
THE ART AND SCIENCE OF BUILDING FACADES

Registration Open

NEW YORK
SAN FRANCISCO
CHICAGO

Visit www.facade.archpaper.com
for more information

SPONSORED BY
Laurie Olin, recent winner of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Gold Medal, has worked on transforming public spaces around the world with Frank Gehry, Richard Meier, Peter Eisenman, Cesar Pelli, and Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, among many others. He sat down with AW West Coast editor Sam Lubell to discuss his award, his training as an architect, and his thoughts on landscape urbanism and the state of public space on the West Coast.

The Architect’s Newspaper: Describe the role of landscape architects in the development of cities.

Laurie Olin: The great anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss said cities aren’t an architectural problem, they’re a cultural landscape. That might be troubling to some architects. But the aggregate is that this is a problem beyond the individual single project or single structure.

Most people still think of architecture as being about a building. In the mid-20th century we divided everything up into a bunch of different disciplines. So most architects had, through their training, the limitation of being building-centric. So my generation, a bunch of us, had to go find a way to work on something that intrigued us more, which was the ensemble. We didn’t stop liking architecture; we started liking other problems and other pursuits. And so we had to take on systems. Systems aren’t just transportation and social systems, but they’re also natural systems. And, it turned out, for most of my career, landscape architecture has been the only discipline at the table that represents the natural world.

In the last decade or so many architects have become deeply engaged in ecology and energy and systems, the way landscape architects have always been. Which is good and healthy and proper. And so we now realize cities aren’t just architecture. For a long time people tried to solve something called urban design. Some people tried to make urban design a discipline. We in landscape architecture would argue that urban design isn’t a discipline, it’s an activity that lots of disciplines do together. It’s a real work. None of us can control it and none of us can do it all. So if you have a real ecological point of view, if you can do architecture, you can do landscape architecture, you can do planning. But you can’t do it all in your office. It’s one of the things we do when we play together well. I think that’s good for me to work with other people who know more than I do about something else. Together we can do something better than we can do by ourselves.

You think architects are more open to that than they were ten years ago?

All the guys I work with, yes. They’re interested in what I do, but they just can’t do it all themselves. I don’t want to try to do all of the stuff that they’re doing. And I worked in architecture and I was pretty good.

You’re trained as an architect?

I am. I have a BArch from the University of Washington. Then I worked for some of the top architects in Seattle and then moved on to Ed Barnes’ office in New York. But I wandered off. It wasn’t that I was unhappy. It was that I was more in love with something else.

There are a lot of people from my generation who came to landscape architecture because it was seeing the limit of one’s field and seeing the potential of another. It was like when Paul Klee decided not to be a musician when he was a student in Germany. It was because he knew his limitations as a musician and he didn’t know what his limits were in art. It seems like a huge advantage to have that knowledge. You can transform cities.

Cities are very natural formations. And they’re very organic. We can help direct the change. But no one person, no one architect, no one landscape architect, no one planner, no one agency or mayor directs it all. They can get a chunk for a period. It’s like a forest, it’s the big bundle of problems for our time. We’re becoming more urbanized. Around the world, cities are growing everywhere. We like to be together. We need to be together. So how learning to make cities rich and fecund and great places to be so we’re comfortable and healthy and happy is the biggest problem we face. The only way we’ll get crazy is to build beautiful, rich, life-enriching cities. It’s challenging to convince developers and officials that building those spaces that are not buildings equally important if not more important for cities.

It’s what we have in common. The majority of open spaces in cities are streets. That means the street system is too important to leave to transportation engineers. They’re not important to leave to just moving traffic. So I’m interested in cities because they are the design problem for a habitable planet.

You are working on projects all over the world.

Yes, but there are large chunks of the world we’re not in and shouldn’t be in. I think we need to work in places where we can be effective and we actually understand the culture somewhat. A lot. We need to be able to be effective and not just some colonial exploiter that’s mining the place. I think we need to be working on a model that’s a better model than the discredited models of our own culture. At the moment I have a couple of projects in France and one in London and one in Toronto and a few on the West Coast.

What about LA? It is the most

park-poor city in the country right now.

For a long time with West Coast cities, at the end of the street there was the country, there was the ocean, and the mountains. They didn’t pay attention to what they were doing with their cities because they could get out of them so easily. But as they became too big, then the mess they had made became obvious. So now it’s very hard to go back and rip up old parts and do good public and civic space at the right scale.

In LA, I always think of the title of Roger Trancón’s book, Finding Lost Space. I love that phrase. Because there’s so much lost space in cities. A lot of our work has been finding those and transforming them.

What’s a good example?

Columbus Circle in New York City. There never was a social space there until we said it could be done. People thought we were nuts. Who would go out in the middle of a five-way intersection with Central Park right next to it? Well, you go there and it’s full of people. It’s a place that never existed. You can make these places that people need if you make them right. We just did a little park in Portland, Oregon, that’s full of people.

But one of the problems in Los Angeles is there’s this wonderful tradition of lush private space and absolutely public space. With that the limit of one’s field and we didn’t. People thought we were nuts. But you can’t do it all in your office. Architecture, you can do planning. Among all the things we do, a few on the West Coast.

London and one in Toronto and projects in France and one in Los Angeles and one in Mexico. At the moment I am working on a model that’s a better model than the discredited models of our own culture. At the moment I have a couple of projects in France and one in London and one in Toronto and a few on the West Coast.

What about LA? It is the most

ruined city in the world. It’s beautiful. We’ve been working on a master plan for the Santa Monica Park in LA’s Century City (left). Rendering of OLIN’s Constellation Park in LA’s Century City (left).

Can you talk about your new office in LA?

Yes, we have a new office in LA. We’re in Hollywood. So after all these years of resisting the West Coast we’re finally here. We have a little park called Plummer Park under construction now in West Hollywood. We have Constellation Park in Century City. We’re also working on a master plan for the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden.

We’ve worked with a lot of firms in LA. We worked with Richard Meier on the Getty. We worked with Johnson Fain and Rios Clementi Hale. I work with Frank Gehry all the time. I love Frank. We’ve done three plans for Grand Avenue and they’ve all failed miserably. Right now I’m working with him on a new house. He had one going in Venice for a while. He dropped that but now he’s doing a house in Santa Monica.

Los Angeles is one of the great world cities. Everybody knows it. And it has money and it has energy. It needs some direction, something physical. The transience of things gets on your nerves.

It seems like the merger of landscape and architecture is a fascinating new direction, especially when you have open space. I see that a lot of projects that are like what we’ve tried to do all year get rejected. Even in America. When I was working with ZGF on a conference center in Salt Lake City, it’s an enormous space. The roof is six acres. Four acres of which is an alpine meadow, and the sides are like a canyon with native vegetation. It’s beautiful. We’ve been working on structures for over 30 years, but now it’s the new normal.
DWELL ON DESIGN 2012
Modern Beyond Expectations

Join us for a Three Day Celebration of Modern Design

2,000+ PRODUCTS
150+ SPEAKERS ON 3 STAGES
3 DAYS OF MODERN HOME TOURS
5+ FULL-SCALE PREFAB HOMES

JUNE 22-24, 2012
Los Angeles Convention Center

REGISTER EARLY
DwellOnDesign.com/AN

SAVE $5
USE PROMO CODE: ARCHNEWS12

Free For Members of Design Trade
SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS