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THE WEST
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LAUSD PULLS FUNDING FOR PROTOTYPE PROGRAM

SCHOOL DAZE



Prototype by Gonzalez Goodale.

COURTESY GONZALEZ GOODALE ARCHITECTS

Early last year the LA Unified School District (LAUSD) announced an innovative program to design contemporary, prefabricated prototype buildings that could serve as new school facilities or as temporary classrooms.

Winning designs, produced by LA firms Hodgetts+Fung, Swift Lee Office, and Gonzalez Goodale, ranged from 6,000 to 30,000 square feet and were to be clad in a variety of materials, **continued on page 2**

GEHRY'S AIR AND SPACE GALLERY IN LIMBO AT CALIFORNIA SCIENCE CENTER



LAURA O'NEILL

PERISHABLE!

All of Los Angeles seems excited about the space shuttle *Endeavor* touching down at its new home, the California Science Center, which is making room for the iconic flyer by the end of this year with a temporary home.

But one building in the Science Center complex in Exposition Park is getting much less attention. In fact, **continued on page 7**



The May Company

TED VAN CLEAVE

PIANO AND PALI TO DESIGN ACADEMY MUSEUM INSIDE LA ICON

MAY DAY

With its Streamline Moderne facade and bright gold corner detail resembling, some say, a giant AA battery, LA's May Company building, on the corner of Wilshire and Fairfax, is one of the city's most recognizable landmarks. Now, thanks to Renzo Piano **continued on page 9**

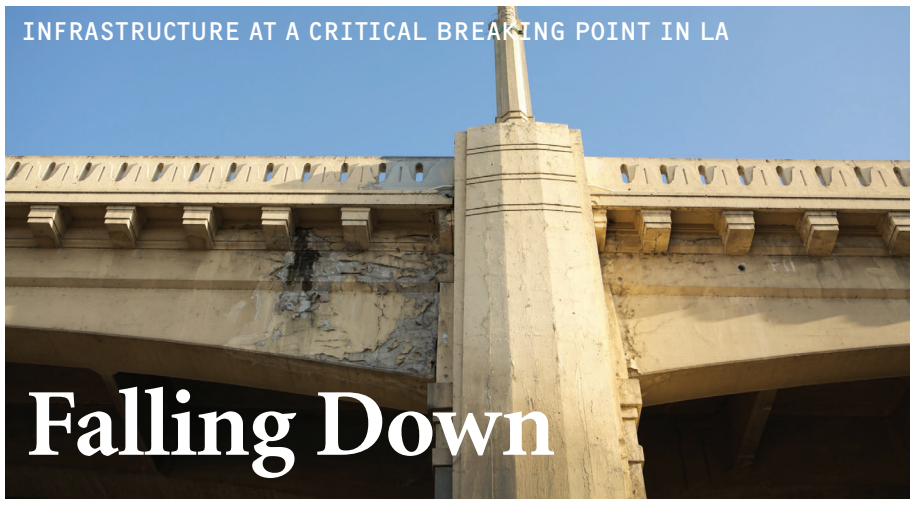
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INFRASTRUCTURE AT A CRITICAL BREAKING POINT IN LA

Falling Down



YAN WANG

Above: 6th Street Bridge.

Although Los Angeles recently launched a competition to redesign the troubled 6th Street Bridge, the city has a much larger infrastructure problem on its hands.

In a study released in 2011 by the non-profit Transportation for America coalition, many of the bridges supporting the city's automobile network **continued on page 9**



DAVID IMANAKA

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THE INTERN CATCH-22

It's the ultimate driver of architectural competitions and, these days, architectural work. The unpaid (or underpaid) internship.

It's become a staple of architecture. A rite of passage, despite the debt burden from an education that usually costs more than $30,000 a year. And it's not just small struggling firms. Even top architects get their work done by interns.

Never mind that offering unpaid internships excludes those not wealthy enough to go without pay, or just the fact that they are generally not legal. Not offering money lowers the bar all the way down the line. Soon unpaid positions become expected. The value of architecture is lowered even further.

Will Wright, director of government and public affairs at AIA/LA lays out the dilemma: "Sure, some of the more compelling and innovative architecture firms may not have the budget, nor the clients, to support the financial needs of their interns, but if emerging talent isn't valued at the onset then the profession will continue to weaken its value."

Architect Alvin Huang of LA firm Synthesis explained how not paying young architects feeds an ongoing cycle: "We'll draw it and revise a thousand times because it is part of our process. And part of our process is enabled by exploitation. It becomes a cyclical burden that is packaged as a rite of passage, and that institutionalizes exploitation in the culture of design." He added, "I think there is a clear metaphor that relates to figuratively living beyond your means."

Of course, times are indeed tough and work is often nonexistent. And without interns (who we have to admit are hungry for any type of work) already-decimated staffs will be pushed that much harder. So what are the other options? How can you remain competitive when other companies are getting free work and money is so hard to come by? And what if the other option is to close down?

Kevin Fitzgerald, director of the AIA's Center for Emerging Professionals, feels for such firms, but said, "I worry for them if they can't pay something. Surely if interns are of value there and you are making money off of them you should pay them," he said.

Fitzgerald notes that some internship duties can be ethically performed for free if they are for college credit (and if handled correctly these can be as valuable, or more valuable, than some college courses). But he encourages firms to help students get credit through other means, like mentorships that also help fulfill academic credit, short of providing free labor.

Both the AIA and NCARB (which oversees the profession's Internship Development Program) oppose unpaid internships, said Fitzgerald. The AIA, for example, won't allow people to become fellows if they have unpaid interns in their offices.

Disclosure: we at the newspaper have been up against similar circumstances, and we do offer unpaid internships, although we do provide a travel stipend. The painful part is that without the unpaid help of interns, we can't get out there. So we do get it and we do sympathize.

But we have to wonder about the state of a profession—as architects and as architectural journalists—where unpaid work is so prevalent. Can you imagine banks using unpaid labor? Even professions in similar fields like building and engineering rarely use unpaid work.

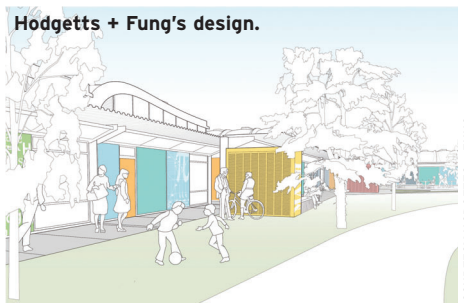
It's just the tip of the iceberg in a profession that seems intent on continuously lowering the bar, from allowing others to call themselves architects to loosening requirements on the need for registered architects (this, of course is another story, and begs the question as to whether or not the AIA offers enough value to those who do become registered.)

Many claim that unpaid internships are just an unfortunate economic reality. But is exploitation worth it? Can't we just pay someone a little? As AIA's Fitzgerald put it, "I can't tell people what they should pay, but the idea is if you are making money off of them, some compensation is reasonable." **SAM LUBELL**



Swift Lee Office's prototype.

COURTESY SLO



Hodgetts + Fung's design.

COURTESY HODGETTS + FUNG

SCHOOL DAZE continued from front page

from steel-mesh panels to fiberglass. The goal: structures that would be easy to build and maintain, and also be affordable and flexible. Design and construction was to begin immediately.

By this spring most projects had made it through design development, and the search was on to find test sites. But recently the district's board voted to reroute the program's funds to pay for wireless connectivity at existing schools, putting the program on hold.

"It's incredibly frustrating," said Craig Hodgetts of Hodgetts+Fung. "We could put these together so quickly, and now here we are waiting."

In order to continue with the initiativ which means completing designs, finding test sites for building prototypes, the district's planning department is scrambling to find a new funding source. Funds could come from unused monies in the district's current building program, but the only clear source on the horizon, said LAUSD's deputy director of planning and development Richard Luke, is Bond Measure Q, a $7 billion school modernization measure. Those funds will likely not be accessible until 2014 at the earliest, he said.

In the meantime the district is hoping to encourage its charter schools which have their own budgets to purchase some of the prototypes. In late May, the district sponsored a presentation of the schemes to charter school leaders, who, according to Hodgetts, were thrilled.

"They asked us point-blank when they could buy these," said Hodgetts. "They said we need this!"

"It has always been our intention to allow interested third parties access to the schemes as well," added LAUSD's Luke. **SL**

GRIMSHAW AND GRUEN TAKE UNION STATION MASTER PLAN

TRAINSPOTTING

First it was gossip, now it's official.

UK firm Grimshaw and LA-based Gruen Associates have won the commission to master plan the six million square feet of entitlements at Union Station in Los Angeles.

Grimshaw has made a name for itself designing infrastructure and transit stations around the world, including Lower Manhattan's upcoming Fulton Street Transit Center, now under construction, and London's Waterloo Station (1993). Gruen recently completed design on phase one of the Expo Line and has served as executive architect on several recent projects, including the Pacific Design Center expansion.

The team's contract, according to a document posted by Metro on Friday, calls for "an amount not to exceed $4,150,000." Gruen is subcontracting the architectural design lead tasks to Grimshaw. Other members of the team include engineers Buro Happold and landscape architects Mia Lehrer + Associates.

The site around Union Station, which Metro envisions as a "model for TOD (Transit Oriented Development) in the region," encompasses about 38 acres. In addition to containing subway, light rail, and bus lines, it will likely include offices, residences, retail, entertainment, parks, and potentially a high-speed rail station. The budget for the project in its fiscal year, 2013, is currently $1,520,000, but Metro has requested that the budget be increased by its board by $990,000.

At press time Metro's board still had to ratify the selection on June 20. None of the teams would comment on their selection until that time. According to METRO, completion of the master plan is scheduled for August 2013.

Other shortlisted teams for the project had included EE&K with UN Studio; NBBJ with Ingenhoven Architects; Renzo Piano with Parsons Transportation Group; Foster and Partners with IBI; and Moore Ruble Yudell with Ten Arquitectos and West 8. **SL**

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OPEN> MUSEUM



COURTESY CHIHULY GARDEN

> CHIHULY GARDEN AND GLASS MUSEUM
305 Harrison St., Seattle
Tel: 407-956-3527
Architects:
Owen Richards Architects

A new exhibition pavilion and garden on 1.5 acres beneath Seattle's Space Needle brings together the largest collection of artist Dale Chihuly's glass installations and sculptures in the world. Owen Richards Architects repurposed a warehouse, previously housing the much-beloved but aging Fun Forest arcade, into a 12,000-square-foot hall with eight galleries, a theater, cafe, and bookstore. *Persian Ceiling*, a 36-by-40 foot backlit glass "mural" of marine-inspired sculptures, hangs above one gallery space. In darkened rooms, Chihuly's pieces glow brightly under spotlights, while shadow box tables and spruce plank walls in the cafe are lined with Chihuly's eclectic personal collections, ranging from bottle openers to vintage radios.

The architectural highlight of the $20 million privately funded complex is the 4,500-square-foot glass house, an addition inspired by historical conservatories like the Crystal Palace erected for London's Great Exhibition of 1851. Forty-foot-high white metal beams support five connected red and yellow chandeliers that span 100 feet and are made from more than 1,000 pieces of glass. The adjacent plaza and surrounding garden, designed by AHBL, weave whimsical, Dr. Seuss–like floral sculptures amid dogwoods, camellias, black mondo grass, and a green wall on the east facade. **ARIEL ROSENSTOCK**

EAVESDROP> THE EDITORS

DESIGN SUBMISSION

David Hecht of San Francisco firm Tannerhecht recently presented the plans for a mid-rise condo in the city's SoMa district in a community meeting held on site at an S&M Club. No, the architects are not into bondage. In fact Hecht had originally been told the site was vacant, but it turned out that the longstanding club was still around, so instead of presenting in a community hall the plans were displayed, we hear, among leather costumes and lots of Purell bottles.

BUCKY ON FILM

There's something about **Buckminster Fuller**. Already there have been a spate of documentaries about the eccentric, geodesic dome-loving designer. They include *The World of Buckminster Fuller*, by **Robert Snyder**; *Buckminster Fuller: Thinking Out Loud*, by **Karen Goodman** and **Kirk Simon**; and *A Necessary Ruin*, by **Evan Mather**. But now we hear a rumor that filmmaker **Steve Reiss** is working on a full-length feature about Fuller called "Bucky," based on a screenplay by **Ron Bass**. Stay tuned as we get more details. And hold on to your domes.

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The center's east entrance.

CRISTINA SALVADOR-KLENZ

LONG BEACH'S RANCHO LOS ALAMITOS REOPENS WITH RESTORED GARDENS AND NEW VISITOR CENTER

HIDDEN HISTORY

Driving through the gated community of Bixby Hill Estates in Long Beach, one passes a collection of unremarkable 1960s and 1970s tract homes sitting atop a mesa. But tucked inside this suburban sprawl is an oasis called Ranchos Los Alamitos. In seven and a half acres it captures the history of the region, from its indigenous peoples to the early Spanish and Mexican settlers and on to the ranching and farming eras. Added to over four acres of restored gardens from the early 20th century, the new exhibition center is surrounded by the original renovated barns.

The new incarnation of the historic site, which celebrated a rededication this month, began when Rancho Los Alamitos executive director Pamela Seager instituted a new master plan in 1986. Since then, traditional gardens created by renowned designers like the Olmsted Brothers, a geranium walk by Florence Yoch and Lucille Council, and a California native garden from Paul Howard all have been restored to their original splendor. Explaining that the idea was to keep the property as it was when the prominent Bixby family lived there in an original 1800 adobe, built long before they made their fortune in oil, Seager added, "These gardens were never meant to be a big showplace but a real place where people lived."

Keeping the integrity of the site also informed San Francisco–based Stephen J. Farneth, the project architect of the new Rancho Center. His design is integrated with the original barn structures, using glass, metal, and wood as the palette. He stated, "We didn't want an assertively modern structure, because often on historic sites the new becomes the foreground and the historic becomes the background."

But the building is far from a reproduction. With sleek rooflines, plenty of natural light from skylights, and a geothermal heating and cooling system, the updated exhibition center brings Rancho Los Alamitos into the future in the most intimate way. "This place never feels like a public park to me," Farneth said. "It has such a personal character. This is not a place you come to be entertained. You can have your own way of getting to know it, and that is rare."

STACIE STUKIN

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then someone isn't thinking.
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DAVID IMANAKA

Top of the Line Garage

Driving through Tacoma, a city 30 miles south of Seattle, you might get lost on your way to the LeMay America's Car Museum. But once you get there, you can't miss its aerodynamic, curved metal-clad shell, as long as a football field, rising from the ground—a nod to the chrome plating that has adorned many an automobile. The museum is located on a 9-acre campus with a 3.5-acre show field, across the street from the Tacoma Dome, a sports and concert arena. The museum, which opened on June 2, hosts the largest collection of antique and vintage cars in the world.

The planning, design, and construction of the 165,000-square-foot museum has taken a decade, at a cost of $60 million. The late Harold LeMay, the owner of a waste-management business, acquired over 3,000 cars during his lifetime. Along with his wife Nancy, they established a nonprofit organization in 1998 to create a museum to display his collection. The city of Tacoma then donated over $10 million in land, and secured a $1 million planning grant. Los Angeles–based Grant Price Architects (GPA) were hired to lead the design.

Entering the museum is like approaching the mouth of a cave. The entrance, a simple glass wall beneath the corrugated metal roof, hides the immense depth of what lies behind—a pavilion with three levels buried underground that can hold up to 500 cars. The entry, explained architect Alan Grant, executive director of GPA, was inspired by a Victorian train entrance he saw in Europe when he was younger: its deceptively unassuming front disguises a grand interior.

Beyond the ticket lobby, the museum begins in the expansive main gallery—over 300 feet long and 100 feet wide—featuring highlights from LeMay's collection, including a white, red, and brass 1906 Cadillac Model M, a 1930 Duesenberg Model J, and a 1954 Pontiac Chieftain Deluxe Eight. Floors are a dark gray concrete and the ceiling resembles the skeleton of a ship's hull, wrapped in laminated Oregon spruce timbers, a material selected for practical concerns as much as aesthetic ones. GPA originally considered using steel, but fireproofing was too expensive.

With cost closely shaping the design, repetition was paramount. The LeMay construction budget was close to $100 per square foot, a feat that seemed nearly impossible since the average museum usually costs around $400 per square foot.

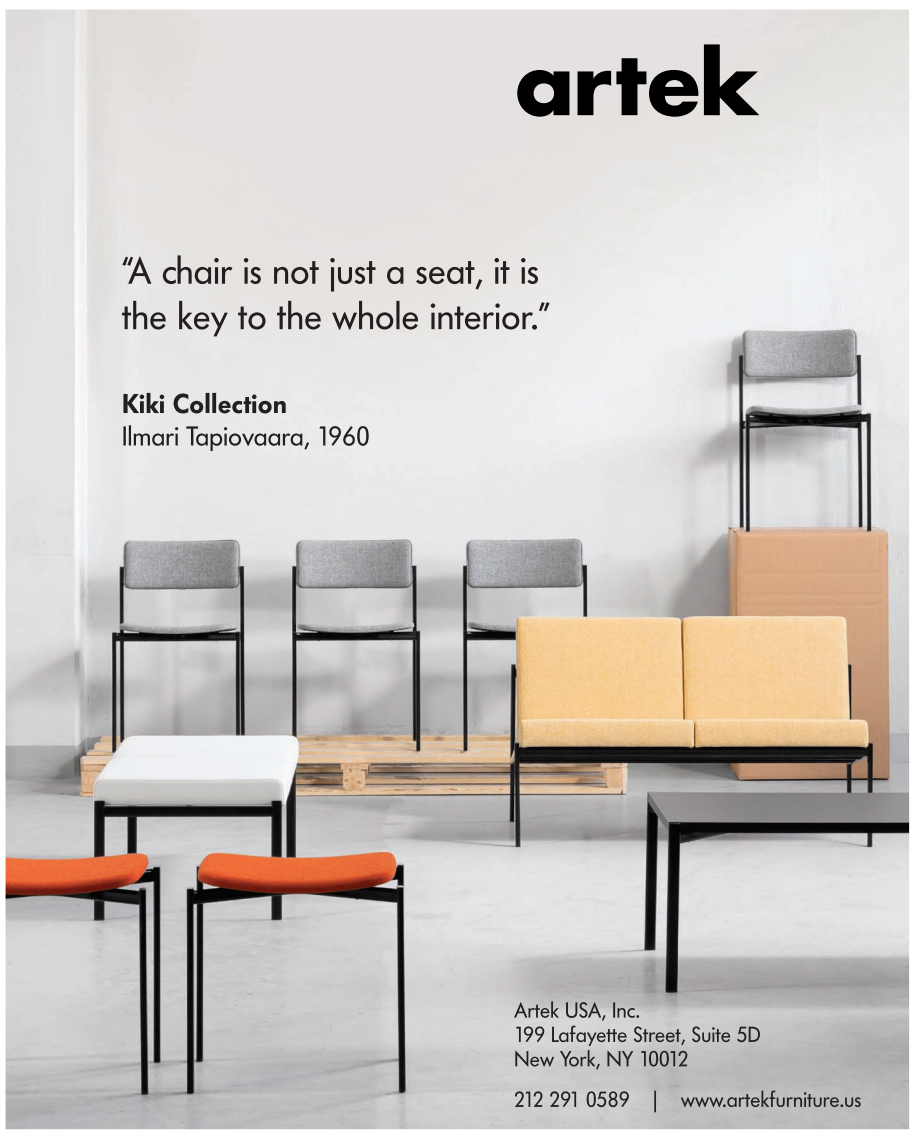
In their research, GPA found that the only structures that fit within that budget were parking garages. So they turned to the garage for their design foundation. Pragmatically and thematically it works—the three underground levels each contain bays connected by gently sloping ramps that rise about 10 feet over 300 feet. Instead of requiring an expensive elevator, cars can be easily driven from floor to floor. And visitors have more choices: they can progress through displays by targeting one side of the building, or traversing each bay and ramp. Automobiles are arranged on ramps and bays in long, neatly ordered rows carefully lit to minimize glare on reflective finishes and grouped both chronologically and geographically.

"Museums should be simple, fun, and inexpensive," said Grant.

Even as cities slowly shift away from the car as the preferred transportation mode, the museum is a reminder that the automobile still remains an indelible part of our culture, a pioneer in merging technology with design. With vibrant colors and an abundance of glass and mirrored surfaces, LeMay's cars still recall the words of philosopher Roland Barthes, from his 1957 essay on the Citroen DS: "I think that cars today are almost the exact equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals…conceived with passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object."

AR





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COURTESY DISNEY

Left: Reincarnated Carthay Circle Theatre.

DISNEY REVAMPS CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE PARK WITH CITY-INSPIRED ARCHITECTURE

CALIFORNIA DRAFTING

In 1969 Los Angeles' Carthay Circle Theatre was demolished, and its grand Spanish Colonial Revival tower collapsed into a swirl of vaporous architectural memories. But this month you'll be able to have dinner inside, or rather inside its very close approximation, as part of a five-year-in-the-making expansion of Disneyland's California Adventure, 26 miles southeast of LA.

On June 14, the California Adventure park, which is adjacent to the original Disneyland, revealed the additions of Buena Vista Street and the Carthay Circle Theatre, both featuring close facsimiles to 1920s-era LA landmarks. A third new exhibit area, Cars Land, will not feature Los Angeles architecture, but instead the Pixar town of Radiator Springs.

Buena Vista Street replaces the park's original entryway, Sunshine Plaza, which featured references to California but didn't have a unified concept, said Coulter Winn, Imagineer and architect for the project.

"Although the previous entry was unique, it didn't resonate with our guests because they didn't feel like they were transported to a place and time," said Winn. The Imagineers redesigned the LA-inspired entrance to have the same transformative effect of Disneyland's Main Street, modeled in part after Disney's hometown of Marceline, Missouri, at the turn of last century. "We wanted to create the spirit of Los Angeles that Disney saw when he arrived in 1923 with $40 and a suitcase."

As guests enter the park, varied architectural styles work together to create a convincing 1920s-era environment. Retail spaces like Los Feliz Five and Dime and Atwater Ink are meant to feel like the mom-and-pop storefronts in the neighborhoods where Disney lived and worked. Turnstiles have been reimagined to echo the Pan Pacific Auditorium, the Streamline Moderne theater in the Fairfax district that was destroyed in a fire in 1978.

A large bridge spanning the entrance (previously the Golden Gate Bridge) has been converted to the Hyperion Bridge, over which Disney himself often drove as he traveled from the Disney studios in Silver Lake to his favorite restaurant, the Tam O'Shanter, in Atwater Village.

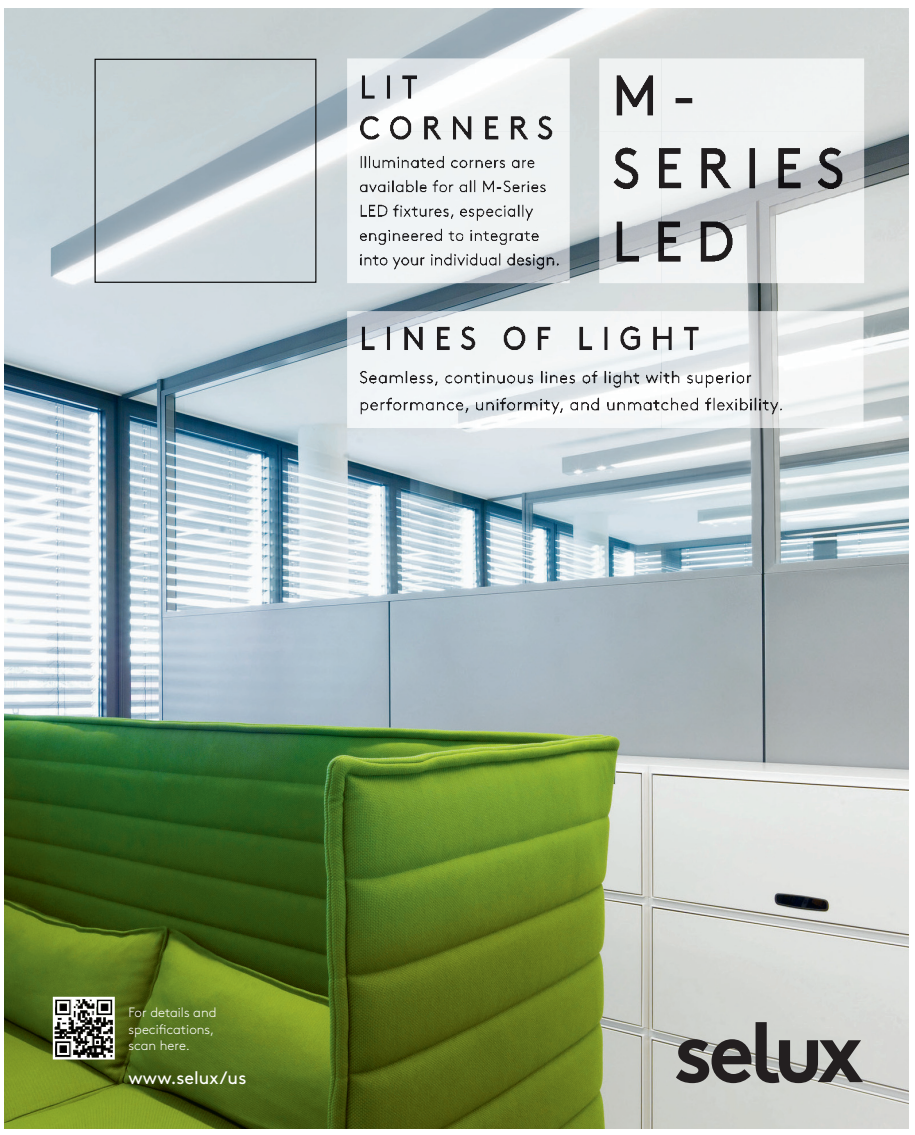
The centerpiece of the plaza is a compelling rendition of the Carthay Circle Theatre, the mid-Wilshire Avenue movie palace constructed in 1926. It was here that Disney premiered his first film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, in 1937. Inside the theater will be a restaurant and lounge.

The Imagineers spent months exploring photos from the Los Angeles Public Library and Metro's Transportation Library and Archives, while also drawing references from existing buildings in Silver Lake, Atwater Village, and Westwood. In a bid for authenticity, they used locally sourced materials from Southern California artisans. Winn estimates they used 430 different kinds of tile, working with East LA ceramic shop California Pottery and Tile Works to create accurate historical reinterpretations of the original designs.

They also took care to bring LA's dismantled transportation system back to life. Red Cars of the Pacific Electric Railway run through the park, and besides the decoy catenary wires (they're battery powered, not electric), Winn said the gleaming trolleys are probably about as authentic as it gets. "It's basically a real Red Car system in here," he noted. It especially works because Buena Vista Street is adjacent to the existing Hollywood Land, which already features some excellent interpretations of Hollywood Boulevard architecture. A ride on the Red Car includes a seamless transition between the two old LAs. Yes, confirmed Winn, "you can take the Red Car to Hollywood."

Winn is careful to note that these buildings are not replicas but "narrative-driven architecture." Still, he's inspired by the fact that they might trigger real nostalgia. During D23, an expo for Disney fans, Winn gave a presentation on the project and was inundated by questions from historic architecture fans. "These individuals could remember riding the Red Cars," said Winn. "They said they couldn't wait to take their grandchildren on them." **ALISSA WALKER**





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PERISHABLE! continued from front page

some think it's doomed. And so preservationists are pushing to get Frank Gehry's Air and Space Gallery—once a major part of the Science Center, but now shuttered—on the California Register of Historical Resources.

"There are many rumors, but the best I can tell is that the future of the building is unknown at this time," said Kelly Sutherlin McLeod, a preservation architect who is leading the effort to get the building listed. The nomination, put together by McLeod and Galvin Preservation Associates (with help from Gehry's firm), was sent to the state office of historic preservation on June 1. The process could take a number of months, said McLeod, and the matter has been placed on the state office's November agenda.

Originally known as the California Aerospace Hall, the building went up in 1984 to coincide with the Los Angeles Olympics. To its east the structure's elevation has a rectangular stucco facade, but to its west it morphs into an angular seven-sided polygon with sheet-metal cladding. It is known as Gehry's first major public work.

"Gehry is a master architect and this is a pivotal work in his career," said McLeod, who is a partner at Kelly Sutherlin McLeod Architecture in Long Beach.

According to the listing: "After completing the Aerospace Museum, he was commissioned to design high-profile museums and public projects all over the world. As such, the museum marked a critical turning point in Frank Gehry's career and helped make him the household name he is today."

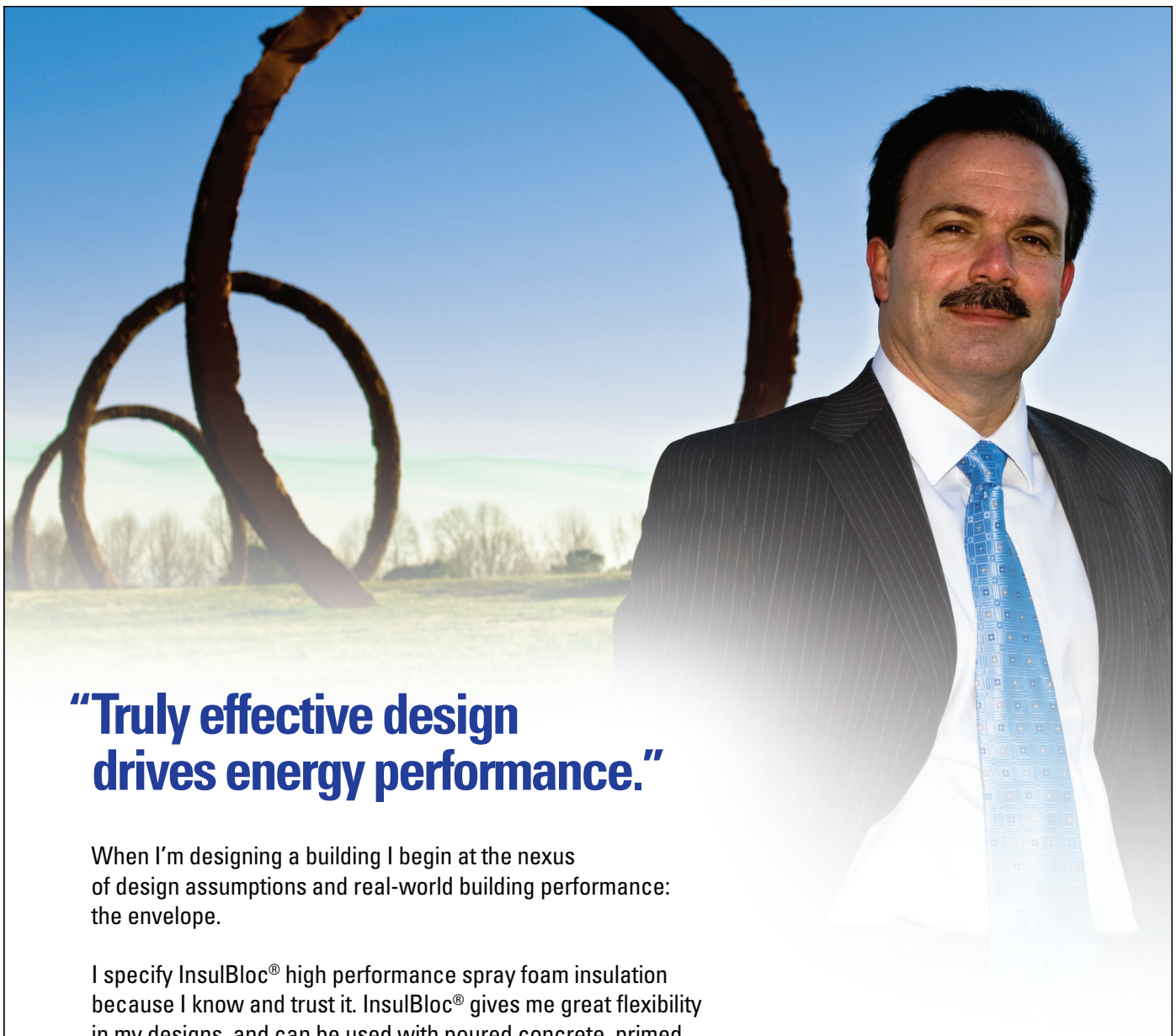
The building was closed last July—its collection was moved into the Science Center's main building to "provide greater visibility of the artifacts and enhance the guest experience," according to Science Center spokesperson Paula Wagner. The building's future, said Wagner, "has not been worked out yet. There are currently no plans for it to reopen." She added that the Center takes no position, pro or con, on register listing. Laura O'Neill, associate architectural historian with Galvin Preservation Associates, confirms that the museum was not opposed to a listing on the state register.

But with the Science Center planning an update to its main building, some in the preservation community have speculated that the building could be significantly altered, said McLeod. If the building were placed on the state register, it would force the museum to "review the impact," said O'Neill, possibly through an Environmental Impact Report, if it chose to alter or demolish the building.

McLeod, who noted that several Gehry buildings have already been torn down, was sure to mention that even if the building is listed, that will not completely protect it from alteration.

"It's really so it can be on the radar screen so that if changes are proposed, they can be reviewed," said McLeod. SL

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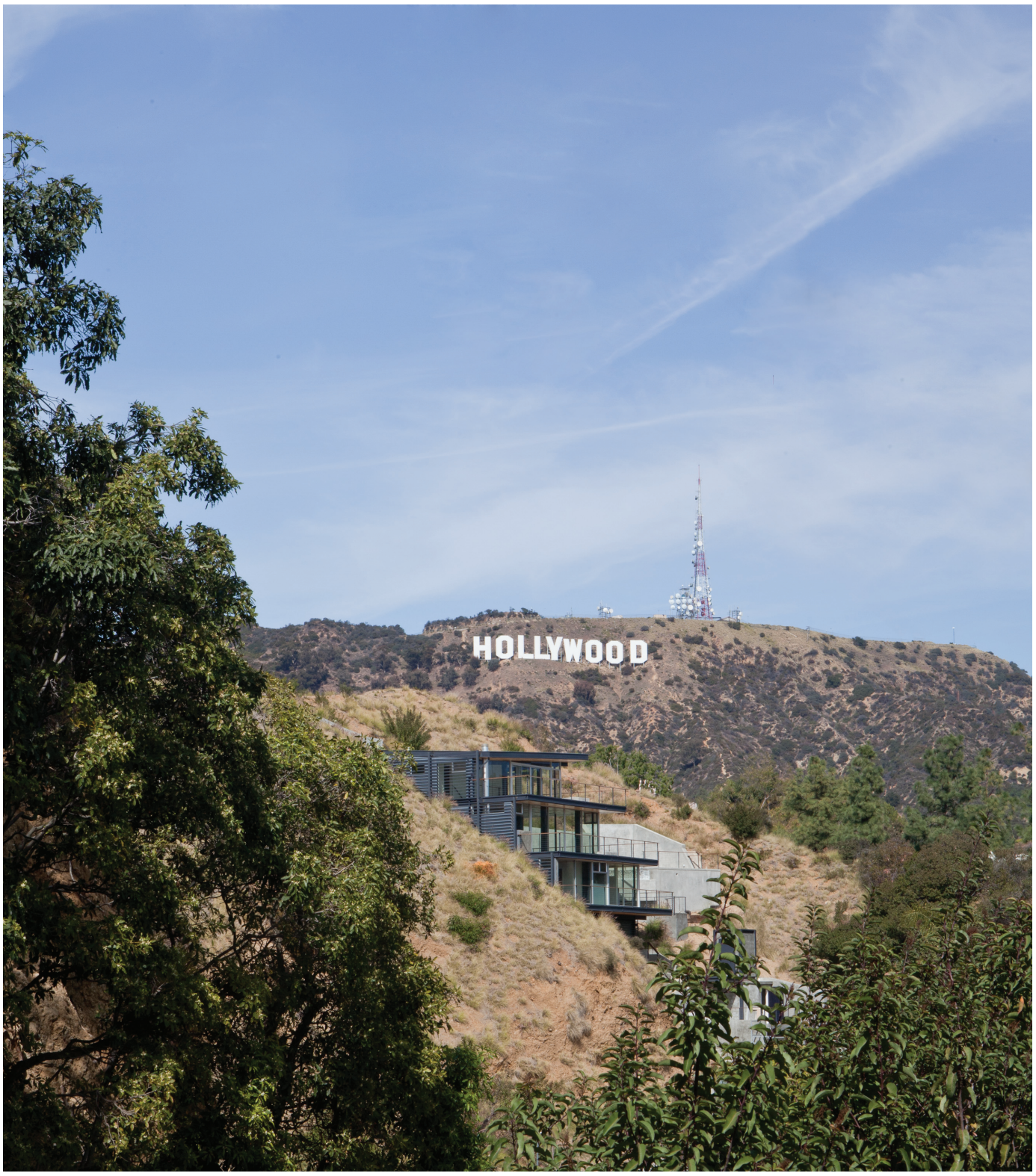
ENERGY STAR

Sustainable Buildings Industry Council

Sculpture: Gyre, Thomas H. Sayre, N.C. Museum of Art

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HOUSE OF THE ISSUE> FRANCOIS PERRIN







MICHAEL WELLS

Left: The Hollywood sign looms in the background. Below, left: Open staircase creates a chimney effect to draw heat out; Below, right: Stacked levels shade one another.

LA architect Francois Perrin grew up in France watching James Bond movies and dreaming of someday building one of the villains' epic modernist houses. It would be perched on a mountaintop or in some other seemingly impossible-to-reach location.

His dream finally came true, minus the villain part, when Perrin was commissioned to build a 3,000-square-foot glass house on an extraordinarily steep site just around the corner from the Hollywood sign.

In fact, when you look at the precarious landscape around the house, it's impossible not to wonder just how the architect was able to pull it off. Perrin said it was pretty simple and akin to building a gigantic staircase, actually a giant concrete retaining wall, and then stacking the house—a series of terraced glass boxes—on top of it.

Perrin actually embedded the retaining wall and the floor-to-ceiling glass-clad boxes into the earth, keeping the house remarkably temperate. The dug-in aspect also helps block the harsh sunrays that a house perched on top of a cliff usually suffers from. In addition, the stacking of the cantilevered roofs creates shading for each successive level, like a pagoda.

Such delightfully low-tech sustainability also includes a great deal of cross ventilation, made possible through huge sliding glass doors on multiple frontages, and by smaller windows embedded into the glass panels that can be left open even after the sliders are closed. Stacked stairways create a chimney effect, forcing hot air up and out.

But the house is also quite high-tech. Louvers along the side are filled with rainwater—collected from the roof—which help warm the home's water when heated by the sun. Water-filled tubes under the concrete floors and even under the cement patio keep surfaces cool while also heating the water in the pool. Many of these elements were produced by the home's owner, Yves Lefay, owner of Eliosolar, which specializes in "architectural hybrid shades."

On the construction side, building a behemoth staircase was not so easy. To support the perched home, 30 to 40 builders at a time dug 41 caissons; often the builders were supported as they worked only by ropes.

As a result, the house, with its bermed siting and three large glass boxes—a studio below; guest rooms, kids rooms, and an entrance above; and master bedroom and living room on top—feels like a cave that quickly opens up and extends outward. Large decks hanging off each box create more square footage and make the outdoor space almost as plentiful as the indoor.

From the outside, its dark steel frame and reflective glass give the house what Perrin describes as "a tendency to disappear" into the surrounding vegetation, a goal of the architect, who hopes to add still more vegetation and can't wait for what is already there to eventually envelop the house. It's a refreshingly sensitive approach in a landscape of often ego-driven hillside houses. Besides, if you're going to defeat James Bond, you don't want to stand out, do you? **SL**

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COURTESY ABF-LAB

Paris-based ABF-Lab's winning scheme.

WINNERS OF SEATTLE URBAN INTERVENTION COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

PUBLIC AWAKENING

When it comes to public space, linear paths and waterfronts have been generating a lot of attention—like the Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, the High Line in New York, and the upcoming Bloomingdale Trail in Chicago. But it's also important to rethink how traditional urban park space can thrive in the next century.

In May, the three finalists of the Seattle Urban Intervention: Howard S. Wright Design Ideas Competition for Public Space met at the Intiman Playhouse to present proposals for redesigning a 9-acre site that is currently home to Memorial Stadium at the Seattle Center. The goal of the competition was to generate dialogue and innovative ideas for the Seattle Center based upon the Center's 2008 Century 21 master plan, a 20-year scheme for unifying its cultural, civic, architectural, and commercial spaces.

The winning project, *In-Closure*, by Paris-based ABF-lab (Paul Azzopardi, urban engineer; Noé Basch, climate engineer; Etienne Feher, architect) emphasized the notion of protecting and preserving the landscape through a flexible and adaptable human-scaled approach.

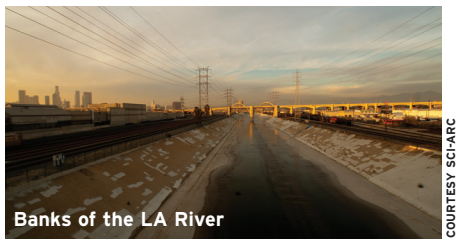
"We began with the most basic and ancient forms of human connectivity—gathering around a campfire," ABF-lab explained at the public presentations. Their project encourages simple, organic design solutions for a city that can be weighed down by its notoriously slow political procedures. "Traditional urban planning methods are reaching the limit," said the firm in their design statement. "You can plan an urban project; it will be obsolete even before seeing the light. How can we thus produce such a dematerialized urbanism?"

Their design quite literally brought the wilderness back to the city, centering on foresting the existing playing field and enclosing the 9-acre site with 33-by-13-foot movable event "boxes" that could house market stalls, cafes, greenhouses, micro theaters, and even mini libraries.

Materials used to create the scheme's modular structures would include stacked local timber, mirrored facades, and a running track made from panels that would generate electricity through movement. The team loosely drew their inspiration from Seattle's vibrant stalls at Pike Place Market. While imagining that these boxes could find new homes in other public spaces in Seattle, ABF-lab also incorporated spaces at the Seattle Center that would encourage treetop climbing, performances, and even campfires—simple solutions, where the human is at the middle of the process

The runners-up included KoningEizenberg Architecture + ARUP of Los Angeles for *Park*, a plan that included various programs: a pool, a pavilion area, a pole forest, cantilevered stadium seating, and a space for a farmer's market. And Boston firm PRAUD for *Seattle Jelly Bean*, which incorporated terraces, courtyards, and a playing field with a giant blimp-like interactive "jelly bean" that would be both a micro-climate control device and a display screen.

The finalists' schemes will be on display through June 30 in the lobby of the Intiman Playhouse at the Seattle Center. **AR**



Banks of the LA River

COURTESY SCI-ARC

FALLING DOWN continued from front page

are on the verge of unsound. The survey, originating with the federal government's 2010 National Bridge Inventory, finds that in Los Angeles County alone, over 60 bridges have been deemed "structurally deficient," with at least one of the three parts of each bridge identified by engineers as having a "major defect." The defects indicated the necessity for general seismic upgrades, complete bridge replacements, and more, leaving many with an uneasy feeling about driving through the auto-centric metropolis.

The report's grimmest news is not the sheer quantity of bridges under duress but the critical bridge locations at risk. The study's geo-location graphic bleeds red at the most used sections of the Los Angeles freeway system. For instance two of the most traveled bridges near the downtown corridor are in dire condition: one at the 10 freeway and Normandie Avenue, and the other at the 10 freeway and South Central Avenue. Both bridges carry well over 300,000 people daily and are critical transportation links within the knot of downtown Los Angeles. Other key structurally deficient nodes include the bridge at the 101 freeway near the LA River and the 5 freeway and the 110 freeway intersection.

Angelenos bought into the dream of the automobile earlier than most of the nation, with a local freeway plan implemented in the 1930s. The plan grew to into a full-blown car addiction when the comprehensive freeway plan of 1947 created the modern highway network. With an average lifespan of 50 years, it is easy to see why its bridges are crumbling after such use. This obsession with the automobile has led to the region's current hangover of constant upkeep, rehabilitation, and replacement of its bridges and highways.

Understandably, given the 2011 Transportation for America report's doomsday attitude, cynics might view the message as slightly exaggerated for the purpose of procuring funding for the cause. But other studies such as the recent ULI Infrastructure 2012 report back up the urgency for transportation funding, citing the global recession as the main culprit of declining infrastructural funds at local and national levels.

Compounded with the seismic vulnerability of the area, Los Angeles could be sitting on a ticking time bomb. After an earthquake all major intersections of the 10, the 5, the 405, and the 710 freeways could be closed due to seismic damage.

Meanwhile, Los Angeles has been focusing its attention on new, iconic landmark bridges and large-scale transportation issues like the 6th Street Bridge and the just-opened Exposition Line. But the most pressing issue seems to be the decrepit and neglected commonplace landmarks that we traverse daily. **JESSICA VARNER**



COURTESY GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS

WARRIORS PROPOSE NEW SF ARENA AT THE FOOT OF THE BAY BRIDGE

NICE SETUP

In a surprise public announcement, the Golden State Warriors NBA team recently announced their intention to move from the Oakland Coliseum into a proposed new arena at Piers 30-32 on the San Francisco waterfront. In addition to housing the Warriors, the arena would be a concert, entertainment, and convention venue on one of the most prominent sites on the San Francisco Bay.

"Building a world-class, state-of-the-art sports and entertainment facility will create thousands of new jobs for local residents," said Warriors co-owner and CEO Joe Lacob.

The redevelopment of Piers 30-32, which are currently used as surface parking just south of the Bay Bridge, has had a checkered past. As recently as ten years ago, developers proposed a cruise ship terminal; that project later foundered during entitlements. More recently, the America's Cup planned to use the piers but scaled back those plans for financial reasons. That change opened up the possibility for the Warriors' new arena.

Warrior's co-owners Peter Guber and Lacob have set forth an aggressive redevelopment schedule. Envisioning two years to permit and entitle the project and another three to build it, they plan to open the new facility in time for the 2017 NBA season. Given San Francisco's penchant for lengthy reviews and extensive public comment periods, even supporters are questioning that schedule.

Private financing is seen as crucial; the San Francisco electorate would be highly unlikely to approve any type of public funding. According to Warriors spokesperson P.J. Johnston, "The team will build the arena with 100 percent private financing with no impact to the general fund and without reliance on any new taxes."

Further complicating the project are seismic issues facing Piers 30–32, which have been deteriorating for decades. Estimates for seismic repair to the piers are in the $100 million range and will also be funded by the Warriors.

Highlighting the labyrinthine entitlement process is a multitude of overlapping agencies and commissions including the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Planning Department, Port of San Francisco, Bay Conservation and Development Commission, State Lands Trust, and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Although conceptual renderings of the arena were released, very few details about the arena are in place. According to Johnston, an architect has not yet been selected; sources indicate that Ellerbe Becket (now part of AECOM) is in the running. Presumably, other sports architecture firms such as Populous (the former HOK Sport) or NBBJ are also being considered. **GEORGE CALYS**

MAY DAY continued from front page

and Zoltan Pali, it will become one of the city's most important museums.

On May 30 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences officially named the duo as designers of their new museum inside the May Company. The five-story building will contain movie archives, exhibit spaces, screening rooms, education labs, offices, and several other still to be determined elements.

"The Academy museum will take the visitor through the back door of cinema, behind the curtain, and into moviemaking magic," Piano said in a statement.

Piano has designed much of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's (LACMA) campus—the May Company building sits on LACMA's west edge—including the Broad Contemporary Art Museum (BCAM) and the adjacent Resnick Pavilion. So this commission solidifies Piano as architect of LACMA's western edge.

Pali, principal at SPF:architects, has worked on several renovation projects, including the Greek Theatre, the Gibson Amphitheatre, the Pantages Theatre, and the Getty Villa. Earlier SPF:a had been chosen to transform the May Company into a major exhibit space for LACMA, but those plans were replaced by the Academy's new museum last fall.

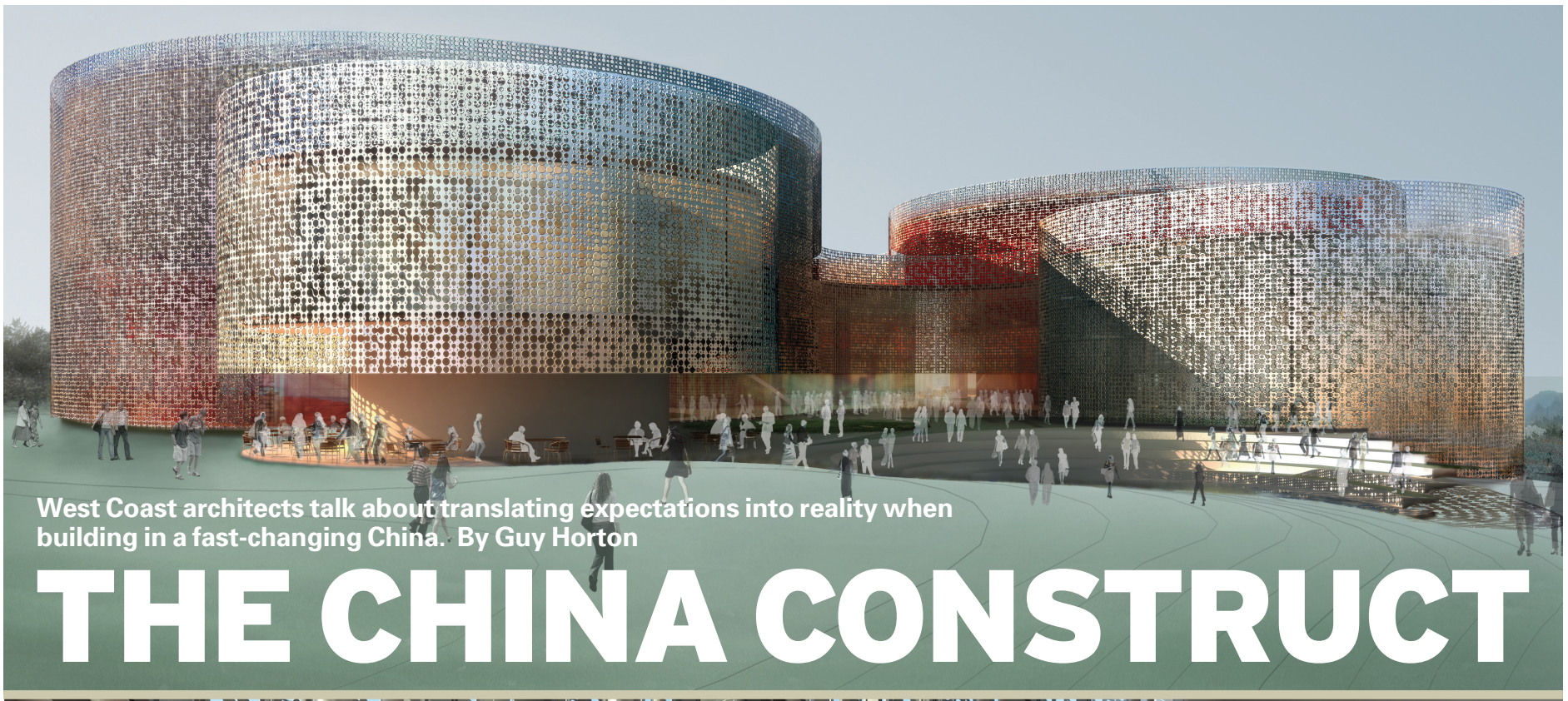
"The goal is to create magic, wonderment and poetry," said Pali, who added that due to the size of the Academy's film-related collection, "the challenge will more than likely be the editing process."

Among other things, the academy possesses 42,000 movie posters and ten million movie stills, as well as archives, trailers, and press clippings, many of which haven't been easily accessible to the public.

The organization had, in 2007, named French architect Christian de Portzamparc to design its new museum, sitting on an 8-acre campus near Vine Street in Hollywood. But according to Academy president Tom Sherak, that project's $400 million price tag was simply too high in the present economic climate. Furthermore, the May Company space will provide the academy with 300,000 square feet of space, about double what they would have gotten from the Portzamparc building.

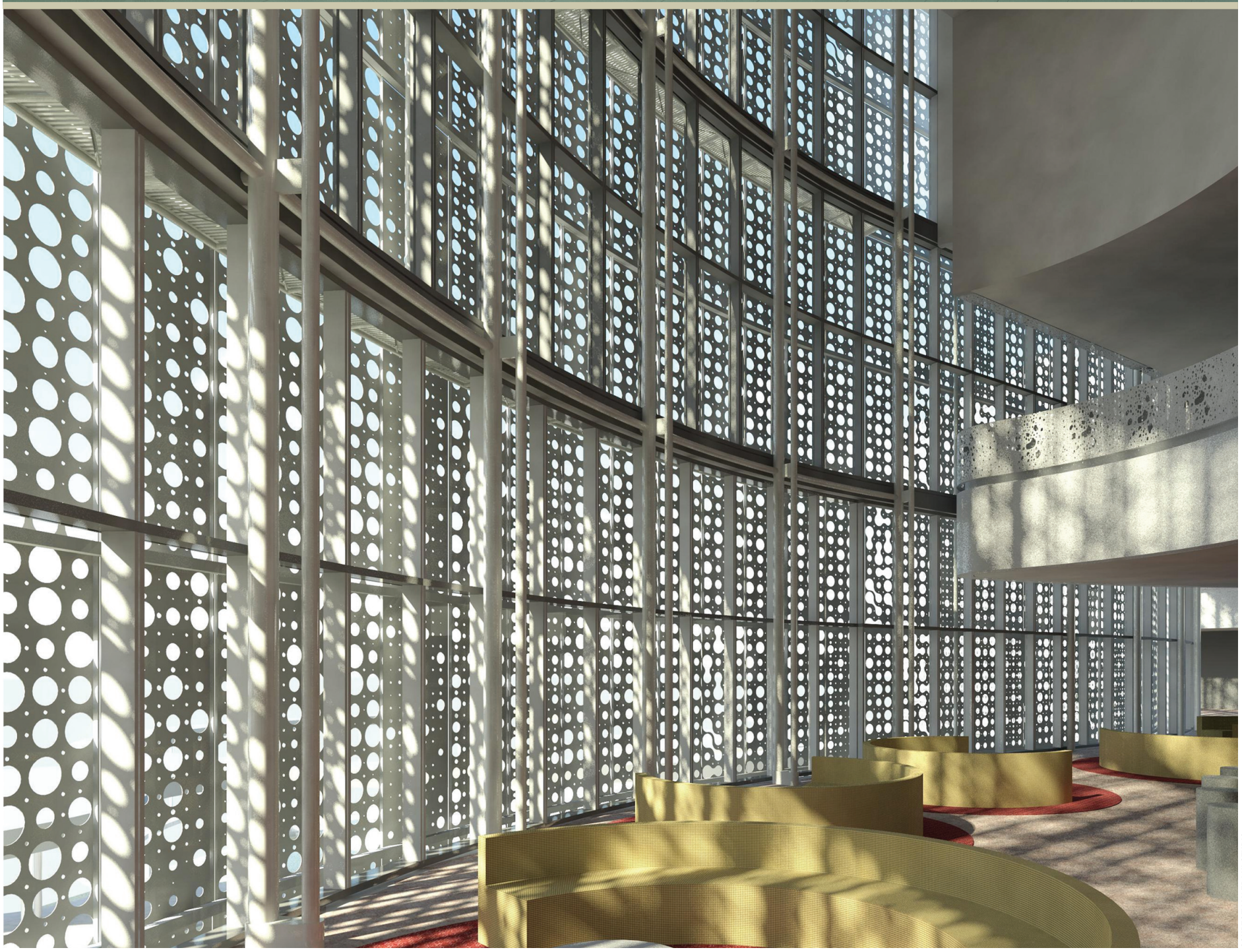
The Academy is now using the 2.5 acres of land set aside for the Portzamparc museum to show public movies. Piano and Pali's museum is expected to open in late 2015 or early 2016, according to Heather Cochran, the museum project's managing director. **SL**

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West Coast architects talk about translating expectations into reality when building in a fast-changing China. By Guy Horton

THE CHINA CONSTRUCT



COURTSEY YAZDANI STUDIO

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COURTSEY YAZDANI STUDIO

Facing page: Reality and rendering of Yazdani Studio of Cannon Design's theater in Ordos, Inner Mongolia.

This page: The architect's restaurant is nearing compeltion. **Below:** rendering of the restaurant reveals the blank slate that is still Ordos.

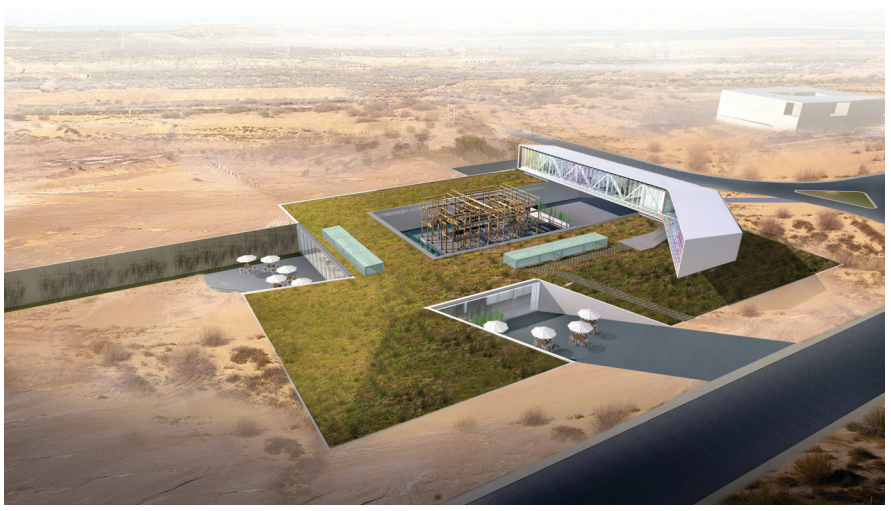
Given the cooling of its once red-hot economy, is China the right place for western architects?

Do ambitious firms have a choice? The United States has been nearly paralyzed by the foreclosure crisis and two major wars. The euro has been showing signs that it may collapse. Brazil has been faltering. The once breakneck pace of development in the Middle East has significantly fallen off. With its strong bureaucracy and centrally controlled market economy—somehow not a contradiction—China still beckons, despite these known risks.

But whether or not China is the right place for architects depends upon whom you ask.

Once thing is certain: China is not an easy place in which to work. Since the 1980s foreign architects have traveled there, wide-eyed and full of optimism, to realize projects they generally would be unable to do in their home countries.

Recalling the empire-spreading colonials of the past, some architects seem to do quite well at taking on China. Steven Holl, for example, has built some of his fantastic watercolor sketches. Chinese developers and government officials (often one and the same) seem willing to let OMA do whatever it wants. Young architects just a few years out of internships, like Beijing-based MAD's Ma Yansong, have landed huge commissions, including iconic high rises, while their counterparts in the U.S. are lucky to receive jobs designing a downtown loft renovation.



But the promise of success in China can come with a price. As architect Neil Denari put it, "There is that knowing wince when you mention China." The wince apparently means, "Have you made every effort to understand the world you are operating in?"

At a recent LA Forum Pecha Kucha night devoted to working in China, a certain darkly humorous tone permeated the stories told by veterans of building overseas. There were many moments when the shared "wince" emerged as a collective groan or sigh, often ending with sympathetic laughter about compromises made: "Here's another podium with icon tower"; "There was no program"; "They wanted it blue so we made it blue."

One presenter summed it up by declaring, "China is about time, process, and metaphors. There is no time, no process, and everything is about the metaphor." Like many, the speaker, who did not wish to be identified because he would like to continue working in China, is still trying to make sense of his China experience.

To get to the truth about the horror stories from China is not easy—even at an open-bar Pecha Kucha. Speculation and vague rumors are rife. Have you heard that so-and-so had a project built from renderings? Did you know that so-and-so had his designs stolen and he might need to close his office? Did you hear about the firm that lost the competition only to have their idea built elsewhere? Did you hear about the competition that was cancelled after all the submissions were handed in? These are the sorts of unspoken stories that go into The Wince.

Yet the fundamental drive to work in China remains, despite the risks. And architects are developing different ways to navigate these complexities with business savvy.

As Denari observed, "Everybody working there knows about the things that can happen. It's about gathering intelligence to reduce risk and doubt." In fact, in the six years his firm has been engaged with China, Denari hasn't built anything. He figures that 95 percent of the inquiries he receives don't even get to the discussion stage. "We don't treat it differently from anywhere else," he said. "We don't work with doubt." He added, "When the visions don't sync, then the project can't achieve its highest good."

Denari, it appears, manages the risks by saying no. Then there is Alvin Huang, a young Los Angeles architect. For him the China market has been a place to dive in and start building a reputation for his LA firm, Synthesis Design + Architecture.

Huang, a Chinese American, started with an unbuilt project that led to a commission for a beach resort in Quanzhou. Everything seemed to be going according to plan until he noticed that the clients kept coming back

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COURTESY NEIL DENARI



COURTSEY SOM/GERRY RATTO

for more and more changes and development beyond the concept deadline. "It's not a horror story, yet, and I hope it doesn't turn into one," Mr. Huang said. "I was trying to be cooperative, but at some point I just had to let them know we weren't doing any more work." There was "radio silence" for weeks. Mr. Huang started contacting other people to see if they could find out what was going on.

"It's not like I could go over and pull a Tony Soprano," he said, noting that there is little opportunity for recourse, even with a contract. Finally the client emailed to apologize for the delay in payment, promising to move forward. From his prior experience he was used to delays, but he had never had someone simply disappear. If the project does go to the next phase, he said he's going to require 50 percent of the fee in advance. "This isn't a loss yet, but it's definitely a learning experience," he said.

"You can count on them to take the shirt off your back," said William H. Fain, Jr., partner and director of urban design and planning at Johnson Fain in Los Angeles. "They have a 'take no prisoners' attitude when it comes to business." He's speaking from fourteen years of engagement with China, a journey that began when his firm was asked to develop the master plan for Beijing's Central Business District in 1998. OMA's CCTV and other high-profile projects now sit within the plan.

Still, Fain said, "We've never lost anything significant." This is one reason they concentrate on city planning. "The outcomes for buildings are too hard to control," he said. Planning is a different market with a different species of client. Fain notes how government officials are inclined to follow signed contracts because they are too high up and vulnerable to being investigated if anything goes wrong. Moreover, he added, one of their rules is that they get paid upfront. "It's a frontier out there, kind of like cowboy-land. You have to stay on top of the whole thing."

Craig Hartman, a partner at SOM in San Francisco, points to his deep relationships with "well-connected individuals" as the best way to reduce risks. His advice for architects just starting out on their China adventures? "Learn Mandarin, be culturally attuned, and don't be a carpetbagger." (Hartman himself does not speak Mandarin: "Happily, that's one

Above, left and right: Neil Denari's unbuilt commercial building in Ningbo; SOM's Beitan Master Plan.

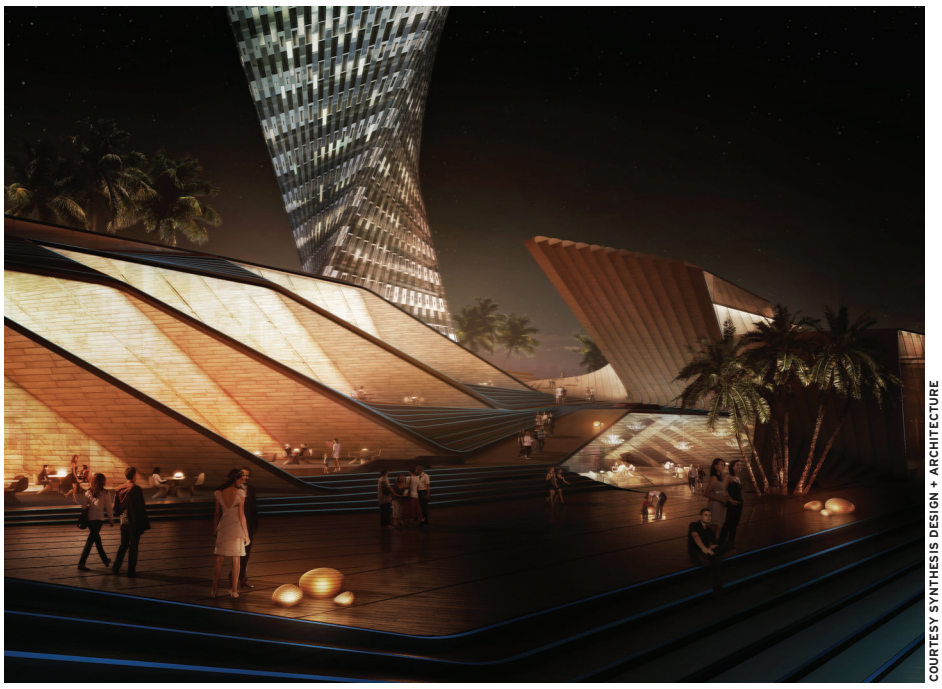
Right: SOM's Poly Real Estate headquarters in Guangzhou;

Opposite page, top left and right: Synthesis' unbuilt beach club in Xiamen; Johnson Fain's master plan for Gulin, in western China; **Below:** SOM's ICBC headquarters in Beijing.



TIM GRIFFITH

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COURTESY SYNTHESIS DESIGN + ARCHITECTURE



COURTESY JOHNSON FAIN

of the things I delegate," he said.)

Indeed in the popular imagination of the West there exists the tendency to define China as catching up, as being part of the developing world. In the recent past, China has often been cast as inferior, especially when it comes to such so-called borrowed forms of culture as capitalism and even modernity. Such false historical assumptions can factor in to why some firms lose their China campaigns early on. It is easy to get burned if preparations were not thorough. Or if they underestimate the complexity and sophistication of their Chinese counterparts.

"Parachute architects." That is what Michael Tunkey, who opened Cannon Design's Shanghai office in 2007, calls architects who just drop in without preparation. These are the ambitious practitioners who don't know the context. "They don't understand where they are and when projects fall apart it seems totally surreal," he said. Tunkey has seen and heard it all over the years. Foreign architects who lack on-the-ground experience maintain false assumptions and are quick to generalize. "I've heard people say they just assumed they would work for free. I always wonder, did they lose their minds on the flight over? Then they get burned and that's their China," he said.



TIM GRIFFITH

For culture clash and sheer loss there may be no better example in China than Ordos, a mostly unrealized city in Inner Mongolia. The BBC recently called Ordos, a coal town built on China's insatiable hunger for resources, "the biggest ghost town in China."

Riding the success of their collaboration on the Bird's Nest stadium for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Herzog & de Meuron and local artist-architect-dissident Ai Weiwei formed a partnership with developers to build 100 1,000-square-meter villas in a remote area of Inner Mongolia. They selected 100 architects from 27 countries (China was not included) to design unique villas as a way to attract more tourists. The list of architects involved included MOS, IwamottoScott, Preston Scott Cohen, and Toshiko Mori.

Ai Weiwei's resulting documentary, titled *Ordos 100*, is currently making the rounds at international film festivals. What comes across most clearly is that no one knows how to work together, communications are convoluted and misinterpreted, and expectations are not in sync, to borrow Denari's term. The 100 architects—many from small firms with relatively little building experience— all have their own ideas. As one said, "I don't know anything about the client or the people who will use the villa, so I'm simply designing it for myself."

The film ends with the architects counting their money and then departing for their home countries with no clear understanding of what happened or what the future will hold. Not one of them has been back and there may never be any opening.

Mehrdad Yazdani, who runs his own design studio as part of Cannon Design, is one of the lucky ones. He has completed two of three planned projects, all in Ordos but outside of the Ordos 100. For Yazdani, the experience was about developing a method of working that goes beyond any one project. "We've reduced the unknown by tapping local talent," he said.

He mentioned how they even use Cannon's China staff on U.S. projects. "We can work seamlessly, twenty-four hours a day," he added. For both Yazdani and Cannon, China factors into a broader business strategy of outsourced labor and talent. Christopher Whitcomb, Cannon spokesman, describes this as their "SIFMO" methodology (Single International Firm, Multi-Office).

Proving that there is no silver bullet, Los Angeles–based Jerde Partnership, which has built several maxi-sized, mixed-use developments in China, takes the opposite tack, keeping its designers together in LA after their research in China is complete in order to ensure what Jerde vice president David Rogers calls "quality control."

"Communication is hard enough when you're brainstorming ideas in creative teams in one place rather than having it spread out all over the world. It just doesn't work," Rogers said.

But while strategies may differ, one thing unites these firms: the recession made China even more important. Fain sees this continuing, but not forever. When asked if he thinks China will always need the expertise of U.S. firms, he describes how once clients would just say, "It's great. Let's do it." Today, there is more questioning and more issues of local identity arise. Chinese clients are more critical. "They are learning our methods and it's just a matter of time before they eclipse us," he said.

With this in mind, western firms will remain relevant in China only by having something different to offer. Being different is not always easy to define. All have their own approaches and experiences. They know they are not bringing some architectural light to a supposedly mysterious or menacing China. There can be as many Chinas as there are firms and clients, each a series of relationships producing different results within a larger framework of complexity and change. As Fain says, "It's about listening, luck, skill, and figuring it out."

And it's about accepting the limitations of what you can know. With the insight of someone who has known China for a long time, Tunkey summed it up this way: "People who visit China for a week can write a book. Those who go for a month, write an essay. If you live there, there's nothing to say."

GUY HORTON, WHO HAS BEEN VISITING CHINA SINCE 1988, SPENT TWO YEARS STUDYING ADVANCED MANDARIN AT BEIJING UNIVERSITY BEFORE TRAINING TO BECOME AN ARCHITECT.

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JUNE/JULY 2012

JUNE

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A Conversation with *The New Yorker*'s David Owen
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THURSDAY 28
LECTURE
Robert Barry
Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974
7:00 p.m.
The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA
152 North Central Ave.
Los Angeles
moca.org

SYMPOSIUM
Designing Silicon Valley
Connie Martinez, John Marx, et al.
6:00 p.m.
San Jose Museum of Art
110 South Market St.
San Jose, CA
spur.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Counterpoint: Lisa Levine and Peter Tonningsen
Oakland Museum of California
1000 Oak St., Oakland, CA
museumca.org

EVENTS
FACADE TECTONICS 8
8:00 a.m.
USC School of Architecture
850 West 37th St.
Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

AIA Summer Boat Tour
6:00 p.m.
Parker's Lighthouse
429 Shoreline Village Dr.
Long Beach, CA
aialb-sb.org

Architecture of the London 2012 Olympics
6:30 p.m.
Academy of Art University
601 Brannan St.
San Francisco, CA
aiasf.org

FRIDAY 29
THEATER
DEEPER: Architectural Meditations
8:00 p.m.
CounterPULSE
1310 Mission St.
San Francisco, CA
aiasf.org

EVENTS
An Olympic Sized Effort – Planning and Designing Sustainable Games
8:30–10:30 a.m.
1100 West Capitol Ave.
West Sacramento, CA
calapa.org

inCONVERSATION
Andrew Byrom: Typography + Experimentation
6:00 p.m.
The A+D Museum
6032 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
aplusd.org

SATURDAY 30
SYMPOSIUM
Historic Preservation and the Portland Plan
Chet Orloff, Linda Nettekoven
10:00 a.m.
Architectural Heritage Center
701 SE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR
vistahc.org

EVENT
Natural Building
10:00 a.m.
Wild Willow Farm
2550 Sunset Ave.
San Diego, CA
wildwillowfarm.
sandiegoroots.org

JULY

TUESDAY 3
LECTURE
Paul Waddell
The Immersive Cities Lab
12:30 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St.
San Francosco, CA
spur.org

THURSDAY 5
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
20th Century Minimalist Prints: From The Bauhaus to Broadway
5:30 p.m.
Augen Gallery
716 N.W. Davis
Portland, OR
augengallery.com

75 Reasons Why We Are the Bridge
5:00 p.m.
Thoreau Center for Sustainability
Presidio Building #1014
Lincoln Blvd. & Torney Ave.
San Francisco, CA
goldengatebridge75.org

SATURDAY 7
EVENTS
Free Urban Composting Workshop
10:00 a.m.
7th Ave. at Lawton St.
San Francisco, CA
sfenvironment.org

Preservation in Practice: Bronze Cleaning and Restoration
10:00 a.m.
The Presidio
San Francisco, CA
presidio.gov

TUESDAY 10
LECTURE
Ozzie Zehner
6:00 p.m.
AIA East Bay
1405 Clay St., Oakland, CA
aiaeb.org

SYMPOSIA
IT Roundtable II: Smart Cities
Gordon Feller, Jay Primus, et al.
6:00 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St.
San Francisco, CA
spur.org

Transportation Planning in LA: Jeffrey Tumlin, Aidan Hughes, et al.
12:30 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St.
San Francisco, CA
spur.org

WEDNESDAY 11
LECTURE
Keep Green with Untapped Water
10:00 a.m.
The Building Education Center
812 Page St., Berkeley, CA
bldgeductr.org

Catharina Manchanda
Robert Morris: Box with the Sound of Its Own Making
7:00 p.m.
Plestcheeff Auditorium
Seattle Art Museum
1300 First Ave.
Seattle, WA
seattleartmuseum.org

EXHIBITION
Gather Up the Fragments: The Andrews Shaker Collection
Bellevue Arts Museum
510 Bellevue Way NE
Bellevue, WA
bellevuearts.org

THURSDAY 12
LECTURES
Deborah Burnett
Designing with LIGHT&SOUND
6:00 p.m.
Da Vinci Marble
1480 Industrial Rd.
San Carlos, CA
aiasf.org

Sandra Vivanco
Women in Architecture
6:00 p.m.
AIA East Bay
1405 Clay St., Oakland, CA
aiaeb.org

SYMPOSIUM
Old Buildings, New Designs: The Secretary's Standards Revisited
Charles Bloszies, Alexa Arena et al.
5:30 p.m.
1 Kearny St.
San Francisco, CA
sfheritage.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
COME IN! les femmes
6:00 p.m.
The A+D Museum
6032 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
aplusd.org

FRIDAY 13
SYMPOSIUM
PRACTICAL BIM
Michael LeFevre, Marcello Sgambelluri, et al.
8:00 a.m.
USC School of Architecture
850 West 37th St., Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Unfinished Business
Time TBA
WUHO Gallery
6518 Hollywood Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA
laforum.org

Venice Beach Biennial
11:00 a.m.
19th Ave. & Ocean Front Walk
Venice, CA
madeinla2012.org

SATURDAY 14
EXHIBITION OPENING
The Zodiac of Wit
Art, Design & Architecture Museum
128 East Canon Perdido St.
Santa Barbara, CA
wam.ucsb.edu

EVENT
Los Angeles Conservancy Weekly Art Deco Walking Tour
10:00 am
Pershing Square
Olive St. and 6th St.
Los Angeles
laconservancy.org

SUNDAY 15
EXHIBITION
Now Boarding: Fentress Airports + the Architecture of Flight
Denver Art Museum
100 West 14th Ave. Pkwy
Denver, CO
denverartmuseum.org

EVENT
AIA Seattle/Northwest Home Open House Tour
12:00 p.m.
Larsen Residence by Castanes Architects
951 22nd Ave. E
Seattle, WA
architectureweek.com

MONDAY 16
EVENT
Design Thinking for Business Innovation
Art Center College of Design
1700 Lida St.
Pasadena, CA
artcenter.edu

WITH THE KIDS
ARTivities: Paper Sculpture
1:30 p.m.
San Diego Museum of Art, The Studio
1450 El Prado
Balboa Park
San Diego, CA
sdmart.org

TUESDAY 17
SYMPOSIUM
New Rental Housing for San Francisco
Meg Spriggs, Eric Tao, et al.
12:30 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St.
San Francisco, CA
spur.org

WEDNESDAY 18
SYMPOSIUM
Enlightened Spaces Summer Salon
Christine Marie, Steve Diller, et al.
5:00 p.m.
Intersection for the Arts
925 Mission St.
San Francisco, CA
aiasf.org

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COURTESY MAK CENTER

OUT SPOKEN
MAK Center
835 North Kings Road
West Hollywood, CA
Through August 12

The SCI-Arc Media Archive, comprising four decades of lectures, symposia, and events from many of the most creative contemporary architects and thinkers, is scheduled to go online this fall. In anticipation of this resource becoming publicly accessible, the MAK Center (above) presents selected material from the archive curated by architects and architectural historians, each composing a singular argument out of their selections. Focusing on Peter Cook's record 11 talks, architect Roger Sherman presents "Cook Off," portraying the architect as a SCI-Arc "doppelganger" and lens through which the school may consider its "alternative" status. Scholar Dr. Paulette Singley offers "Teasers, Ticklers, and Twizzlers," a look at interdisciplinary performance and architectural research. The architect, historian, and curator Anthony Fontenot presents "City Talk," reflecting on the evolving dialogue on cities at SCI-Arc with a monitor dedicated to excerpts from each decade. Architect Marcelyn Gow investigates the role of drawing in architectural practice with "Drawn Out," focusing on its evolution in our era of computational design.



KRISTINA CAMBELL

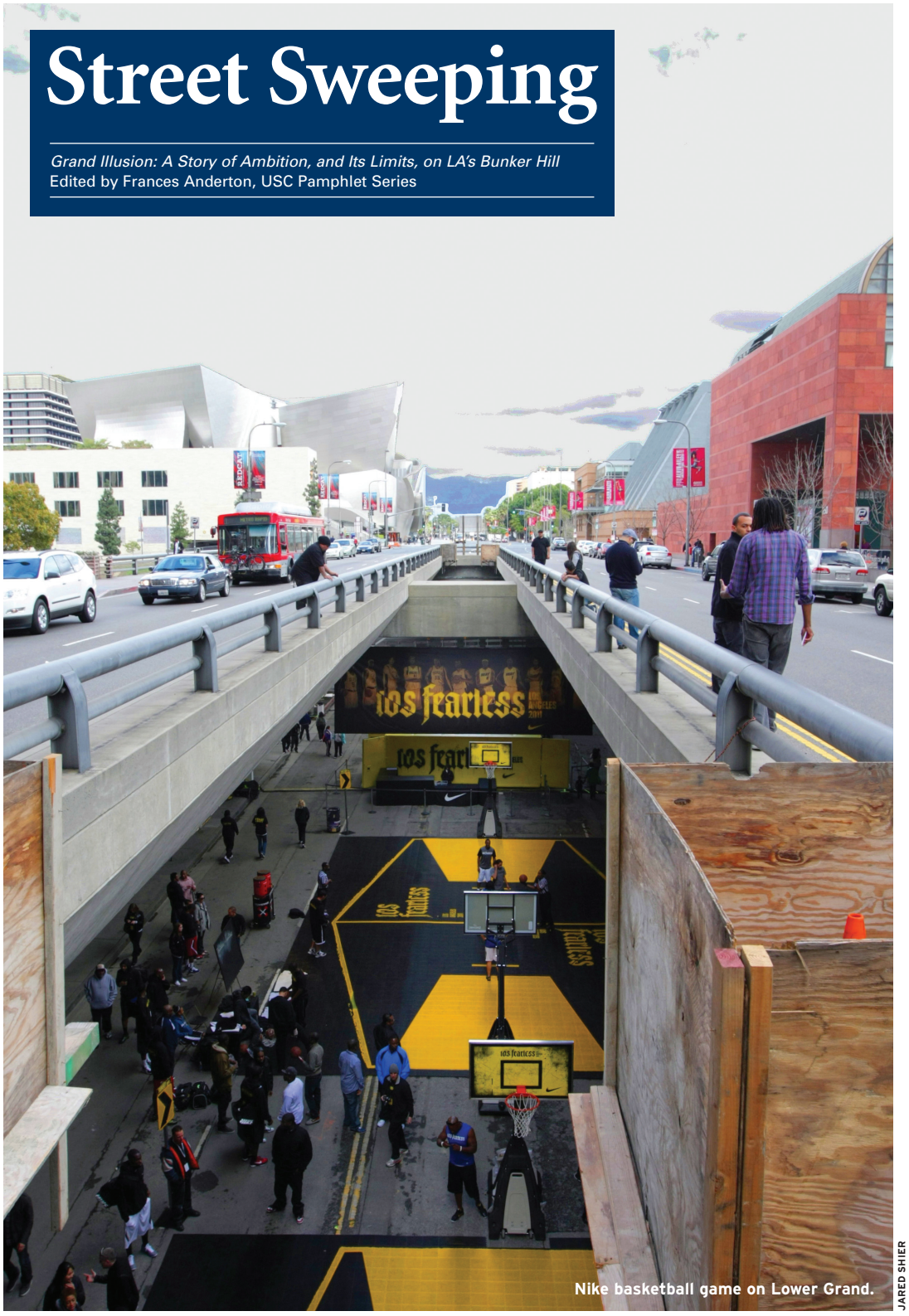
ARTISTS X ARCHITECTS
Joe's Restaurant
1023 Abbot Kinney Boulevard, Venice
Through July 31

As technology progresses and information expands, the line between art and architecture blurs. LA journalist Tibby Rothman knew this well when she put together the new exhibition *Artists X Architects*, presented by arts group V-SCAPE at Joe's Restaurant in Venice. The event paired 11 local architects with 11 local artists. The conceit was simple: the designers met and selected existing work that revealed the similarities in their approaches. The result is more powerful than you might think, exposing two professions that have a lot to learn from each other. Some similarities are uncanny, revealing the fields' parallels in research, material, form, and feeling. Kulapat Yantrasast's building blocks for a bridge over the LA River, embedded with debris (including scrunched underwear), evoke the raw loneliness of Laddie John Dill's excavated carvings out of textured stone. A resin-coated block of soda cans made for a Santa Monica housing project by architect Lawrence Scarpa was accompanied by a woven artwork (above) of soda cans by Alexis Smith. Smith's artwork looks like mosaic tile while the block looks like a piece of sculpture. The three-dimensional sketches of architect Duane Oyler look like art while the precise graphite sketches of a cut diamond by artist Jennifer Wolf look like architecture. Pieces of Mark Mack's sketches appear to be extracted from the colorful, amorphous art of Huguette Caland.

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Street Sweeping

Grand Illusion: A Story of Ambition, and Its Limits, on LA's Bunker Hill
Edited by Frances Anderton, USC Pamphlet Series



Nike basketball game on Lower Grand. JARED SHIER

Frances Anderton may be a reincarnation of Reyner Banham: an irreverent and curious Brit, who gravitated to LA with a mix of infatuation and horrified fascination. As a fellow countryman, I understand the ambivalence and cherish her monthly interviews for *Design and Architecture* (*DnA*), Santa Monica radio station KCRW's lively syndicated program. There, she brings architecture and design to life in words; in contrast, this slim paperback is primarily visual. It chronicles and comments upon a studio that Anderton and Frank Gehry (along with his colleagues Craig Webb, Edwin Chan, and Aaron Neubert) taught at USC. Gehry challenged his students to propose ways of animating Grand Avenue and integrating Bunker Hill into the fabric of downtown, a task that has defeated a long succession of urban planners. As on *DnA*, Anderton introduces many voices—of residents, visitors, students, and professionals—weaving a dense tapestry of history, opinions, and visions.

Nobody is better qualified to guide this enterprise than Gehry, who got his start as a planner with Victor Gruen and has long had a deep involvement with downtown, culminating in the Walt Disney Concert Hall and the unrealized promise of his mixed-use complex across the street, now on indefinite hold. *A Grand Avenue*, the Maguire Partners proposal of 1980 that drew on the talents of Gehry and a dozen other architects, would have been far livelier than the sterile towers and corporate plazas of California Plaza, the (now-defunct) Community Redevelopment Agency's mis-guided selection. Private greed and bureaucratic fumbling have corrupted every master plan, from the ruthless leveling of Bunker Hill in the 1960s to the present lifeless grid. More attention was paid to the automobile than to the human experience. Grand Avenue has yet to take off, despite its accumulation of landmark arts buildings, which include Disney Hall, the Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts, the Colburn School, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), and the upcoming Broad Museum. Fifty years after the opening of the Music Center, there is almost no pedestrian activity, even as blocks to the east have surged to life.

Having recapped this depressing history, Anderton contrasts the vibrant, unstructured Downtown Art Walk **continued on page 19**

ONLY CONNECT

The City as Campus: Urbanism and Higher Education in Chicago
Sharon Haar, University of Minnesota Press, $82.50; $27.50 paper

It is the right time to read architect and historian Sharon Haar's book on the rich, fraught relationship of universities and the cities they live in. We are in one of the great eras of university expansion. Whether it is the new Yale in Singapore, New York University in its own backyard, or the burgeoning institutions in China, the university is as close to the heart of our current cultural and economic aspirations as it has ever been and the buildings are there to prove it. As financial analysts put it about the economy, a correction is possible—the ranks of dissatisfied, underemployed university graduates are legion across continents. Yet short of a new, harsher recession, the build program will go on, the better for select universities to stand out in a crowded field.

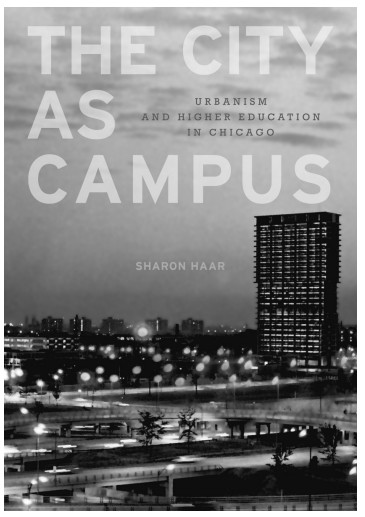
And that crowded field is urban, because whether they still have a big green lawn or not, the majority of new and expanding campuses are in cities, and to Haar, it is time to demonstrate that the "urban campus" is a rich opportunity, not the poor relation of the bucolic tradition of colleges in the country. She sees value in this—believing that the university and the city have the capacity to be profoundly and productively connected, but that while the physical form matters, it has to be understood as a larger history of place. Today's debates on the future of campuses in American cities—take New York University (NYU) in Greenwich Village, for example, where community opposition has been bitter—are informed by history, yet they often lack a framework for understanding the full complexity of what cities and universities have to offer each other. How much does it matter if a campus is "porous" or not? How can we align the priorities of the university—research, teaching, and service, in that order—with the values of a city? These questions have a history, and we'd do well not to repeat it.

Haar grounds her work in the close study of her subtitle, "Urbanism and Higher Education in Chicago," but also frames it in terms of larger American patterns. An architect by training, she analyzes the evolution of a very specific site, the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), a paradigmatic 1960s urban campus (first built as the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle Campus). She reviews both the evolution of the formal character of that design by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's (SOM) Walter Netsch, who came to the commission fresh off his triumph at the United States Air Force Academy, and the tense backstory of the release of the original master plan and the political protests that ensued. Her core research begins with the program and form of the turn-of-the-century Hull-House Social Settlement, most of which was knocked down or relocated to make way for the new university. She then moves on to the recent era when SOM's distinctive skywalks and rooftop forum, were, in their turn, demolished as outmoded relics.

Her deep "section" of the campus' blocks, super and normal, is a compelling approach to uncovering the complexities of how we occupy cities, in which one generation has college-educated women living side by side with an impoverished immigrant community in Hull-House as an exercise in urban reform and social work. Two generations later a new generation aims squarely at providing another idealistic, if imperfect, reform, by expanding university education to a broad swath of the city's population.

Haar includes a welcome review of thinking about campus design, from Paul Venable Turner's estimable *Campus: An American Planning Tradition* (1987) to Thomas Bender's inspiring notion of a dynamic give-and-take between university and city (in the same vein as his enthusiasm for the public intellectual as described in *New York Intellect* [1988]). Haar's thesis is that the urban campus should not model itself as an enclave, but should be "imbricated" with the city, with forms and programs overlapping. Beyond UIC, she draws attention to the range of new campus types in Chicago, from downtown's compact and vertical "Loop U" of recycled office buildings and new construction to OMA's elevated-train-line-wrapping McCormick Tribune Campus Center (2003) at Illinois Institute of Technology.

In writing about Chicago as a living museum of university design, the burden of the task Haar has set for herself is sometimes evident. You can't, she argues, fully understand Chicago's campuses unless you understand, for example, how Chicago's universities developed the very concept and practice of urban ecology. Haar is not just writing about campus-



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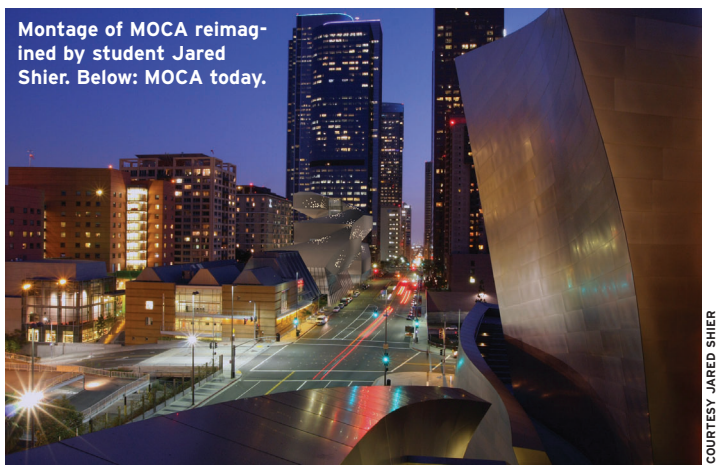
es, but about the whole way that universities engage the city. She writes, "Higher education is not in the United States, commonly understood as an urban spatial practice." She aims to change that understanding, through her own approach to theory and fieldwork, and it is not a task for the meek of purpose.

Neither is building a new urban campus. Most city administrations actively support university expansion, seeing it as critical to their municipality's prestige and competiveness. Neighbors, however, often protest, finding little common purpose with the institution in their midst in terms of scale and activities, programmatic differences detailed by Jane Jacobs with a vision still potent 50 years after it was articulated. Campuses are also, in some communities, challenging due to a fundamental socioeconomic asymmetry. University education is vastly more democratic than before, but it is not universal.

There are opportunities for a common mission, however, and Haar's volume contributes mightily to our knowledge of what has been and might be. She ends the book with a chapter on the implications of the largely still unbuilt proposals by Harvard, Columbia, and NYU. While she holds off on directly critiquing those proposals (quoting adamant critics such as Columbia's Mark C. Taylor instead), she proposes unequivocally that "this is the moment to reconceive the campus not as a discrete community set apart from others but as an urbanity capable of engaging both new forms of cities and city living brought about in physical and virtual space." But, she avers, this is a case for what should be, not necessarily what will be. In looking at urban campuses in the United States and abroad, it is clear that universities, and the administration, staff, faculty, and student body that occupy them, are still powerfully drawn to the symbolism of the enclave, and to the formation of the "discrete community" that goes with it. It is time for further research, and no doubt Haar is already on it. For the future of the campus, knowledge is a two-way street. Don't expect it to be an easy drive.

RAY GASTIL IS THE CHAIR IN DESIGN INNOVATION AT PENN STATE'S STUCKEMAN SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE.

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Montage of MOCA reimagined by student Jared Shier. Below: MOCA today.

COURTESY JARED SHIER



LOUISE MUNSON

STREET SWEEPING continued from page 18 that draws crowds on the second Thursday of each month with the unwelcoming facade of Arata Isozaki's MOCA. She asks if we really need another art museum on Grand Avenue and cites Jane Jacob's critique of "a decontaminated cultural district of paternalistic institutions disconnected from the urban fabric." A pity the CRA didn't ask those questions in 1980. It's easy to make incremental improvements on Spring and Main, turning abandoned shops into bars and restaurants, and converting the upper floors to residential lofts. That creates a residential neighborhood and an organic growth of activity.

The schematic efforts of students to remedy the shortcomings of California Plaza and MOCA, while full of energy, are nonetheless unconvincing. Building over MOCA or across upper Grand is implausible, as is an extension that would serve as a bridge over the two and a half blocks to Broadway. The notion of rebuilding MOCA as a vertical stack of galleries "to compete visually with the adjacent corporate towers" is nonsense, as is the idea of adding shop windows "to solve the 'loneliness' of Grand Avenue." And, of course, there is the familiar cliché of turning a major artery into a pedestrian precinct with food trucks, a knee-jerk strategy that has destroyed the distinctive character of once noble streets in major European cities. On the evidence of these proposals, the students seem as disconnected from the real world as the planners they are challenging. It's a disappointing conclusion to an otherwise informative and provocative urban study. To obtain a copy contact suzanne.wu@usc.edu

MICHAEL WEBB IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO *AN*.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
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Unfinished Business has been made possible thanks to the National Endowment for the Arts; the City of Angeles Arts Development Fee Program, Department of Cultural Affairs; the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Art; the Woodbury University School of Architecture; John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects; Pamela Burton & Company; Warren Techentin Architecture

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7/15 Related exhibition events
7/26 Pecha Kucha Femmes Fatales VI
8/24 Closing weekend
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PROTEST> DAVID HERD

THE FUTURE RIDES ON HIGH SPEED RAIL



Rendering of HOK and Buro Happold's ARTIC Station in Anaheim.

COURTESY BURO HAPPOLD

California's High-Speed Rail (HSR) project has been back in the news recently, with the state's High Speed Rail Authority approving the project's final plan, supporters and opponents at each others' throats over costs, environmentalists worrying over habitat disruption, and Congress threatening to cut off much of the endeavor's federal funds. While any project of this scale deserves scrutiny, we must keep our eyes on the prize: high-speed rail presents a critical opportunity for California, one that will catalyze an economically, socially, and ecologically vital future for the state.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) estimates that the price of expanding the state's aviation and automobile infrastructure to meet future demand would be nearly twice HSR's $98 billion price tag. Yet even this revealing figure belies the breadth of HSR's economic and environmental benefits. If job creation, population growth, economic stagnation, and climate change are the state's greatest challenges, then HSR offers a compelling answer. Its advantages can reverberate at every scale, benefiting California as well as providing a national model for development that creates robust communities, a healthier environment, and a more resilient, interconnected economy.

Existing high-speed rail systems already demonstrate clear ecological advantages. A Eurostar trip between London and Paris generates 49 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions per passenger, compared to 538 pounds per passenger for the equivalent airplane trip. That's a 90 percent reduction. In California, it's anticipated that HSR, powered in part by electricity from renewable resources, will reduce carbon emissions by 12 billion pounds per year and save 12.7 million barrels of oil per year as a result of reduced auto and airline trips.

Air travel has other downsides beyond its carbon emissions and vulnerability to rising fuel costs. Airports tend to be located far from urban centers, disconnecting these key transit nodes from a city's densest areas and making airport transfers a time- and energy-consuming endeavor. In contrast, most of the 24 proposed HSR stations will be located in the hearts of their respective cities, spurring more sustainable and denser infill development and accelerating improvements to municipal rail, bus, and bicycle transportation networks. The integration of HSR, local public transit, and urban density is the crux of HSR's real value for California.

In order to absorb the state's anticipated population growth of more than 20 million people by 2050, we need a rail system that bolsters efficient regional mass transit with better local public transit and high-density, mixed-use development. A true statewide initiative, the proposed 800-mile system will not only link the state's key urban centers, such as San Francisco, Sacramento, Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego, it will also provide underserved areas such as Fresno, Bakersfield, Palmdale, and Riverside with improved access for commuters, increased opportunities for knowledge sharing and business growth, and revitalization of their commercial cores.

Refocusing on our urban centers will invigorate our economy, efficiently moving people, ideas, and services through mixed-use, downtown transit hubs that further promote urban regeneration. Already, high-profile projects such as San Francisco's Transbay Transit Center, the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center, and Los Angeles's Union Station Master Plan competition all anticipate HSR's arrival. But Bakersfield, Fresno, and other Central Valley cities also are rethinking their central districts, proposing denser, transit-oriented development that counters the region's destructive legacy of sprawl.

By making it easier and faster to travel between cities, HSR taps into the broader factors driving our state's sustainability. Communities become closer, spurring new business and job opportunities that in turn strengthen our social fabric. A more interconnected economy will temper the regional isolation that makes some communities less able to weather economic downturns. Equally important, the compact, transit-centered cities that HSR engenders would get people out of their cars, improving air quality, bettering public health by encouraging walking, and fostering greater connectivity among communities.

HSR will create an embedded transportation infrastructure that will serve as a backbone for California's social, economic, and environmental health and resiliency for decades to come. It's time to boldly embrace the demonstrated success of high-speed rail systems around the world, and meet the state's challenges head on. Investing in HSR makes sense at both the regional and local scales. I anticipate the day when I can travel from our Culver City office via light rail to Union Station, jump aboard the high-speed rail to San Francisco, and stroll to our San Francisco office on Grant Avenue, experiencing the inspirational quality of the California landscape and her vibrant cities—all in just over three and a half hours.



Conceptual rendering of California's HSR in action.

COURTESY CHSRA

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