OSCAR NIEMEYER, 1907–2012

The revolutionary age of Modern architecture slipped further away on December 5, with the passing of Oscar Niemeyer, who was 104. In the beginning, Modernism was about experimentation and possibility: Niemeyer renewed that spirit in 1940 when he (and other Brazilians) pushed the

Fort Mason Center, a military base-turned-cultural center on the San Francisco Bay, recently announced that West 8, a Rotterdam-based planning and landscape architecture firm, had been selected to design a new master plan for the 13-acre waterfront site. West 8’s scheme focuses on six key strategies: the Fort’s legacy, ecological character, naval heritage, branding, the center’s role as the anchor for the complex, and the upcoming activation of the water’s edge. The scheme includes a proposed new “gateway” building housing the center’s administrative offices. The offices, housed within a sinuous,

End of an Era

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SEATTLE KINGS

Seattle still doesn’t have a basketball team, but it’s betting on acquiring the Sacramento Kings, a move rumored to be imminent. To usher in this acquisition, the Seattle City Council and Metropolitan King County last fall approved a $490 million basketball and hockey arena. Funding will consist of $290 million, to come from a private investment group helmed by Christopher

WHO’S ON YOUR TEAM?

AN IS BACK WITH ITS ANNUAL BEST OF ISSUE. FIND OUT WHO WORKED ON SOME OF THE BEST COMPLETED ARCHITECTURE OF 2012: CONTRACTORS, ENGINEERS, CUSTOM FABRICATORS, AND MORE, ALL DRAWN FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH ARCHITECTS. PAGES 11–16

Nashville House, 2009

KANNER ARCHITECTS CLOSES; ARCHIVES TO UC SANTA BARBARA

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Fixing the Fort

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An IS Back with its annual Best of Issue. Find out who worked on some of the best completed architecture of 2012: Contractors, Engineers, Custom Fabricators, and more, all drawn from conversations with architects. Pages 11–16

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Having lived in New York and Los Angeles for more than six years apiece, I’ve learned that while they have plenty in common—they’re obviously both huge cities with a level of cultural dynamism and diversity that dwarfs most American metropolises—they’re also utterly different places.

In the design world perhaps the most important division is this: New York has a number of important, powerful, and effective design champions, among them mayor Michael Bloomberg, planning director Amanda Burden, and transportation commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan. The results have been, by all measures, impressive. The city has transformed itself through design, creating an elite new collection of parks, buildings, and master plans, including the High Line, Brooklyn Bridge Park, dedicated bike lanes, and iconic buildings by most of the world’s most celebrated architects, including Frank Gehry, Jean Nouvel, Renzo Piano, BIG, DS+R, and so many more.

Los Angeles is sorely lacking any such unifying galvanizers. Mayor Antonio Villaragosa, while a stunningly effective promoter of transit, and leader of a recent triumph (despite heavy lobbying) on the Sixth Street Bridge, is still often subservient by legislative design to warring city council members and various agency heads. The planning director, Michael LoGrande, appears to have a rather tepid vision for long term, proactive planning. And few in the community seem to have taken the lead to fill the created vacuum. Instead of true design champions we have Eli Broad, who builds with little regard for public input or (despite hiring the best) even the input of his architects. Another is Metro, which has been enriched through recent measure R. But despite the valiant work of planning director Martha Welborne, the agency has shown little design savvy in its recent transit projects and transit oriented developments.

So who will step up for Los Angeles? For a long time we thought it would be city planning director Gail Graber, but she left after a string of losses battling with the developers that really run the city and maintain the status quo. Richard Kosheck seemed a major champion for a while before that, but he skipped town after Art Center gave him the heave for, of all things, being too ambitious.

Now we have the perfect time to find out who’s next. LA mayoral candidates Eric Garcetti, Wendy Greuel, Jan Perry, and Kevin James are all vying to lead the city. All have taken part in a stimulating series of architectural forums sponsored by AIA/LA, and all espoused their usual talking points of pedestrian friendliness, design excellence, affordable housing, and neighborhood planning. But it still remains to be seen if any will take the proactive architectural stance exhibited by Bloomberg and his colleagues. It’s one thing to support the usual steps. It’s another to take unusual steps to transform the city. We need a design agenda that is clear and, above all, ambitious. Design needs to be seen if any will take the proactive architectural stance exhibited by Bloomberg and his colleagues. It’s one thing to support the usual steps. It’s another to take unusual steps to transform the city. We need a design agenda that is clear and, above all, ambitious. Design needs to be a priority from the top, despite the struggles that might entail. There should be architects and design professionals at all levels of the administration. That includes a deputy mayor for architecture to oversee all city design; a planning department that continues to improve efficiency and actually enact citywide planning; streets that are designed for more than much cars; and a procurement process that doesn’t just favor big, well-connected firms. The improvements will be hard fought, but they can, like they have in New York, lift the quality of life.

If New York can do it so can Los Angeles. It’s that simple. It just takes a few good people who can really sway the debate.

SAM LUBELL

News

New development will be phased into the existing historic fabric.

FIXING THE FORT continued from front page

LA VOTERS APPROVE TAX TO PAY FOR DOWNTOWN STREETCAR

Red Car Return

A downtown streetcar for Los Angeles, which could begin running as early as 2016, was approved in December by Los Angeles voters opting for a local tax on downtown landowners. The $125 million project will run on tracks, just like the streetcars that once dominated the city.

The design of the streetcars has yet to be selected, but the primary route goes south on Broadway from 1st Street to 11th Street, west to Figueroa Street, north to 7th Street, east to Hill Street, and then north again, terminating at 1st Street. LA’s transportation agency, Metro, began work on the project in 2011, collaborating with the city’s former Community Redevelopment Agency, the city itself, and ad hoc community group Los Angeles Streetcar, Inc.

Seventy-three percent of downtown voters approved the measure. Now the project needs to get federal approval before officially moving ahead.

VERONICA ALIF

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MORE AND MORE MOBY

It’s obvious that Moby, whose L.A. architecture blog has become quite the sensation, has now become the official mainstream spokesperson for the city’s design community. First he made the big address starting off the AIA/LA awards in Santa Monica. Now he put together a video to accompany his address for the kickoff of the Getty’s Pacific Standard Time Presents: Modern Architecture in L.A. Now we can only guess where he’ll pop up next. Meanwhile he becomes the latest in a line of celebs the Getty has tapped to promote its offerings, from Ice Cube to Anthony Kiedis. Move over Starchitects. Here come architecture stars.

BETTER LAX?

It looks like things at long-maligned LAX are looking up. First we reported that AECOM is working on a big makeover of the airport’s roadway spaces and that Fentress Architects is completing a new Tom Bradley Satellite Terminal. Now we’ve gotten our hands on a secret shortlist for LAX Terminal 4 Connector, the next component of the airport’s international spaces. And the finalists are... Corgan (with Turner) and Gensler (with Hensel Phelps). Now if only they could get the subway to go there LAX might actually become a world-class airport!

SCI-ARC

Our favorite new naming triumph: SCI-Arc’s “Hispanic Steps.” The new indoor amphitheater, located in the middle of the SCI-Arc building, is used for lectures, performances, symposia, film series, and community meetings. The steps were paid for in part by a recent ArtPlace grant.

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OPEN> RESTAURANT

> MENDOCINO FARMS
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Los Angeles
Tel: 323-934-4261
Designer: Poon Design

Mendocino Farms, Los Angeles’ popular sandwich joint, has quickly become an institution. Since opening a small stand on Grand Avenue downtown a few years back, the restaurant’s huge success (and lines) have spawned several more openings around the city.

The company’s de facto architect, Poon Design, designed the latest location, at 175 South Fairfax Avenue along Miracle Mile. Poon has designed three other locations: in downtown LA, Marina Del Rey, and West Hollywood; and work has begun on yet another location, for downtown. The new restaurant, across the street from the city’s heavily visited Farmer’s Market, will fuse traditional Americana with a contemporary palette, not to mention a sense of humor. According to the design team, this location is meant to appeal less to the business types downtown, and more to the families further west.

“The idea was to make the place comfortable. Like the sandwiches, these things want to appear handmade and crafted,” explained Poon design principal John Kim.

The space is lit by chandeliers, each made from 1,600 wood clothespins on wire frames, and a vaudeville sign exhorts diners to “Eat Happy.” A tree grows out of the wood and industrial pipes. Community table. There’s even artificial grass covering some of the benches, creating a picnic atmosphere.

SEATTLE KINGS continued from front page

Architecture is leading the design and submitted a series of conceptual schemes to the city during design review meetings in November and December. The proposed 725,000-square-foot arena could seat between 18,000 and 20,000 people.

Renditions of the Seattle Arena depict a grand stair leading to a steel and glass entry and concourse. Within this transparent box, a glowing, opaque orange-gold tapering cylinder contains the court and seating bowl. 360 Architecture envisions the stepped entry along Occidental Avenue South as a “front porch” for the neighborhood. The glass-enclosed concourse provides views of the city skyline and Elliot Bay. Also included are plans for a public promenade, as well as improved pedestrian and bike connections to public transit on Fourth Avenue South.

Supporters applaud the investment in the city, while critics hope to see a better connection to the Sodo area. The neighborhood is also home to a busy port, and longshore workers are concerned about traffic congestion. Terms of the agreement require an environmental review, which could take up to a year to complete.

ARIEL ROSENSTOCK

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More than two years ago, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors controversially blocked landmark status for Appleton & Wolfard's mid-century North Beach library, in favor of erecting a new facility, to be designed by local firm Leddy Maytum Stacy (LMS). Late last year, the project, which is one of the final pieces of the San Francisco Public Library's Branch Library Improvement Program, finally got the go-ahead. Construction is now under way.

“It’s been quite a process,” remarked LMS principal Marsha Maytum. “We’re happy to finally see shovels in the ground.”

LMS’s design for the two-story library provides 60 percent more space than the Appleton & Wolfard building did and emphasizes natural lighting through clerestory windows and sawtooth skylights. Large corner windows open up views to surrounding parks, the Transamerica Pyramid, and passing cable cars.

“We want the building to be light and airy, like a pavilion in the park,” said Maytum.

The firm also created a master plan for the block, relocating the library to the corner site of a former parking lot and reclaiming its former site as open space. The firm emphasized connecting the library to this surrounding recreational space, which was largely paid for through a new city bond measure, and moved a children’s play area away from a busy street.

The $105 million Branch Library Improvement Program calls for 16 branches to be renovated, four to be replaced with city-owned buildings, and three branch- es, including North Beach, to be replaced with new buildings. The program also sponsored the construction of the new Mission Bay branch, the city’s first new branch in 40 years.

Earlier acrimony that flared over the project appears to have fizzled.

“I’m not sure there is much of a controversy left,” said HRC president Charles Edwin Chase. “I really haven’t heard much about it, frankly...There is certainly the sense that there was a loss in terms of the building itself. But from a community perspective I think the new library will provide the kind of services that are necessary.”

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After years of delay, SF begins construction of once-controversial North Beach library

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UCLA's Pauley Pavilion Re-opens After Renovation

Glories Past and Present

When dealing with beloved historic structures a delicate balance is necessary and best achieved by appeasing stalwart loyalists, but also appealing to a younger, less sentimental market. A good example is UCLA's Pauley Pavilion, which, after a hiatus of almost three years, recently re-emerged from a $136 million renovation and expansion.

First designed by modernist architect Welton Becket in 1965, the arena has been a landmark on the campus for the last 45 years and home to a staggering 42 NCAA championship teams (in basketball, volleyball, and gymnastics). It's been home court to basketball stars like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Bill Walton, and Reggie Miller and it's where the legendary John Wooden coached.

"We wanted to keep what was here, optimize it, and make it function better," said Jonathan Ward, design partner for NBBJ, which oversaw the recent work. That expansion added an additional 65,000 square feet of lobby, concourse, and team space.

The structure's distinctive V-truss roof structure and concrete shell remained intact, but the arena was expanded outward with the creation of a new facade made of steel, clear glass, channel glass (which glows at night), and terra cotta panels. The facade leans back rather than standing perpendicularly over the street; the effect gives the adjacent busy Bruin Walk, which leads thousands of students from their dorms to their classes every day, more space to breathe.

The new facade allowed for a concourse that eased visitor flow around the arena, and upgraded and increased amenities like concession stands and restroom areas. NBBJ re-oriented the entrance to the north, adjacent to Bruin Walk, by setting on that north face the 35-foot-high glass-enclosed entrance. To the east is "Wooden Way," a mini-museum of Wooden memorabilia. On the south, glass hangar doors open up, creating an indoor/outdoor concourse space suited for grills and barbecues for tail-gating. Inside, perforated blue metal panels with digital images of UCLA athletes in action hang on the original stadium's concrete exterior and act as a way-finding system.

When the original Pauley was constructed, it was situated at the western edge of the campus. Since then, UCLA has grown around it. To make room for additional amenities, the old Pauley. It felt updated, but not so updated that it had erased what it had been before." - CARREN JAQ

END OF AN ERA continued from front page

husband's death. "We could keep going in his style, but it was his vision and passion that really drove the firm," she said.

Kanner Architects, originally founded by Kanner's grandfather, Herman, in 1946, contributed significantly to Los Angeles' built legacy. The firm made a name for itself with its sleek modernist commercial buildings, and really came into its own when Stephen Kanner's mixture of elegant restraint and compelling whimsy.

Led by its talented senior designers, the firm was able to procure work after Kanner's death, said his widow. But the firm lost what Winston Chappell, Kanner's brother-in-law, who managed the firm after Kanner's death, called its late principal's "matrix of leadership abilities," from marketing and connections, to the sheer will and charisma to push projects through.

The company flirted with a handful of purchase offers from other architecture firms. The most recent, from New York architect Ronette Riley, collapsed this past summer. Many of the firm's designers have taken projects with them to other offices or to their own practices.

"It's a weird asset, an architecture firm," said Chappell, the owner of his own residential architecture practice. "The firm was so linked to Stephen's aesthetic, and his personality."

In the end, Cynthia Kanner said, she preferred to "preserve the legacy rather than having it subsumed into another practice."

UCSB's architecture and design Collection, begun by curator and historian David Gebhard in the 1960s, contains many of Southern California's most esteemed architects' archives. Included are the work and documentation of Charles and Ray Eames, Irving Gill, Bruce Goff, Harwell Hamilton Harris, Edward Kllingsworth, Paul Laszlo, Wallace Neff, Rudolph Schindler, and Paul Williams.

"We're so excited," commented UCSB Architecture and Design curator Jocelyn Gibbs about the procurement of Kanner Architects' archives. She pointed not only to the firm's celebrated modernist architecture and to its three generations of leadership, but to the fact that the firm's work extends into the 21st century, a rarity in the collection thus far.

The Kanner archive, Gibbs estimated, includes about six months. "You can see a lot of Stephen in the archive," added Gibbs, pointing to the architect's many informal drawings, sketches, and other artwork throughout. "He drew everything, and you can really get a feel for his design process and get into his head."

"We wanted the Kanner work to be accessible to students and researchers," added Cynthia Kanner. "That was far more moving to me than making a bit of money on selling the practice."

The part that Chappell says he appreciates most when he steps back and looks at the work is "the element of pure joy of making a building that was so apparent in Stephen's work." - SL
Kilroy Realty has announced that tech giant Salesforce.com will lease 160,000 square feet of space in its proposed SOM-designed 350 Mission tower, located at 1st and Mission in San Francisco’s south Financial District. With the signing of this anchor tenant, the developer is set to begin construction on the first new office tower in the city since the onset of the 2008 recession.

The announcement follows Salesforce’s decision last February to cancel its colorful Ricardo Legoretta-designed headquarters in Mission Bay. At the time, Salesforce offered scant reason for the cancellation other than stating that a new building would not fit the company’s expansion timetable.

Located on a prominent corner diagonally across from the Cesar Pelli-designed Transbay Terminal, which is currently under construction, 350 Mission features 27 stories of office space. The building’s ground floor is faced with a fully operable floor-to-ceiling glass wall capable of opening the lobby to the street. In a nod to SOM’s 101 Second Street tower, the lobby of 350 is billed as an “interactive” space and will contain stadium step seating and changing digital graphics.

“It’s a wonderful match and I am so pleased that they are enthusiastically embracing the building’s core concept of a new form of highly porous, urban engagement,” noted SOM principal Craig Hartman. “The result will be a landmark in San Francisco.”

Kilroy plans to seek LEED Platinum certification of the building and has expressed its intention to construct a fully carbon-neutral facility.

GEORGE CALYS
OSCAR NIEMEYER, 1907-2012

continued from front page International architectural movement in a controversial new direction.

By 1940, the International Style was already fitting architecture for a narrow straitjacket of rational right angles. Niemeyer up-ended that neat formula, with a series of astonishing and controversial designs that re-established the role of the curve in Modern architecture. With the parabolic vaults of the Church of St. Francis of Assisi and the free-form marquees of an outdoor dance pavilion, at Pampulha, a new suburb of Belo Horizonte, Niemeyer threw form open to nature, landscape, and culture. What made these buildings shocking was that Niemeyer had been an insider, a prince of the realm. He had learned Modernism when he was still in his twenties, at the feet of Le Corbusier. Working with Corbu and a team of equally talented young Brazilians (Lucio Costa, Roberto Burle Marx, Afonso Eduardo Reidy) on the design of the new Ministry of Education and Health (1936-1943) in Rio de Janeiro, Niemeyer absorbed the fundamentals of the Swiss master: a mix of scientific rationalism and artistic expression.

Niemeyer took these curvilinear forms even further in a tour de force design for his own 1963 house in Rio de Janeiro. He would not recant the curve, he would not fall in line, and he became an official apostate. “Your house is very beautiful,” remonstrated Walter Gropius, “but it is not multiplicable.” The European leaders of Modern architecture were horrified that Niemeyer had undermined the scientific rationality in which they put their own faith.

But Niemeyer was more interested in Modernism for the license it gave him to explore new forms of architecture and life. Visiting him at his Copacabana beach office, I met a true Brasileiro, a true Carioquinha—native-born to Rio de Janeiro. He was a Modernist who loved pleasure. Indeed, his office, squeezed between two larger buildings on the wide Copacabana sidewalk and fronting the famous beach, hardly seemed the focal point of an international architecture office. The wide sidewalks, bordered with undulating black and white cobblestones, were jammed with beachgoers. And the narrow nine-story building was almost quaintly Moderne, with a top-floor office whose two curving bay windows jutted out to embrace a view of the Atlantic. The oddly surreal shape of Sugarloaf at one end of the panorama, the curving line of the surf, the crowds of sun worshippers—this was the balmy atmosphere that Oscar Niemeyer had breathed his entire life. Of course it would shape the way he saw architecture.

Niemeyer, then in his mid-eighties, was friendly and generous to this architect visiting from the United States (despite the fact that the U.S. in 1964 had refused Niemeyer, because he was a Communist, a visa to supervise the third building in Santa Monica, the Joseph and Anne Strick house). He spoke English, but preferred to have a staff member translate as he told and drew his story, once more, about architecture.

Architecture was clearly his life, but “architecture” included all of life: the pleasure of friends and conversation, the beauty of women, the rhythms of Samba (he designed the special civic promenade for Rio’s Carnival parade in 1983), the conviction of his politics, and his extended family. He spoke of his love of modern engineering and materials (particularly concrete) to create breathtaking structures that sheltered from the sun and rain, but also had the potential to be natural sculptures. He kept coming back to the point of view of the individual human eye taking in the landscape.

This natural love of living formed the foundation for his architecture and his revolutionary ideas. He was both sensuous and cosmopolitan. Growing up in Rio, he knew that life was not just about rationality; it was about emotion, sensual touch, and beauty. Like the Surrealists and other Modern artists, he used impulsive and intuition; there is a dreamlike quality in Niemeyer’s forms. Those dream forms also blend easily with Brazilian nature: the wildly dramatic landscape of Rio de Janeiro’s granite domes; the luxurious meanders of the Amazon seen from a plane; the intense colors and shapes and opulent size of the country’s plants.

These inspirations also blended with Niemeyer’s love of Brazil’s colonial architecture—another aspect of his work that did not sit well with his International Style critics. With his mentor Lucio Costa, Niemeyer actively preserved the colonial architecture—another step in Brazil of the country’s plants.

The Ministry buildings, on the other hand, are a series of rational glass boxes, lined up like dominos, one after the other—a vision of communal government power and bureaucracy. Niemeyer was, after all, a Communist.

Between these two poles, the superblock apartments are, in many ways, a reasonable Modernist manifestation of Corbusier’s Ville Radieuse towers (Paris, 1924), tempered by humanity. They are only seven stories tall, low enough to relate residents to the ground, which is landscaped with parks by Burle Marx. But Niemeyer’s overconfidence is seen in that which was left out, and which later forced itself into the picture: the helter-skelter satellite cities that housed the thousands of workers who were not so neatly taken into account in the original city plan.

Niemeyer’s Brasilia, curves and all, is in many ways the zenith of 20th century Modernism. Yet, then, there was no place for it to go. By the 1960s, international Modernism was confronting a rising tide of questions that undermined the certainties that already had been conceived and fought for, for a half century. From his office overlooking Copacabana Beach, however, Niemeyer continued to build in Brazil, Europe, and Africa, with forms that became even bolder, simpler, more colorful, and more surreal.

Modernism for Niemeyer the Brasileiro was no ascetic hairshirt philosophy. It was the use of modern means to embody the joyful rhythms and leisure of life.

ALAN Hess is an architect and writer based in California.
Architecture, as the cliché goes, doesn’t happen in a vacuum. Even the most masterful of designers relies on a cadre of consultants, contractors, and suppliers for the success of their projects. Each year, AN sets its sights on calling out these unsung heroes of the building trade: the engineers, technology specialists, and material sources whose labor and products come together to turn the abstractions of design into concrete reality. The lists that follow were drawn from hours of interviews conducted by AN’s editors with the architects of some of 2012’s finest finished work.

“I have had a long term personal and professional relationship with Hopkins Construction. They are very smart, progressive, and dependable. They are accustomed to working as part of an ‘out of the box’ project team and working with an architect on their own office is definitely an ‘out of the box’ experience. Hopkins did a great job—they were a joy to work with.”

Doug Lowe, Cunningham Group Architecture

“As a developer and general contractor, Nautilus Group is clearly one of the best I’ve ever worked with in my 30-year career. As a client, Randy Miller was open and willing to explore design in a way unlike any other.”

Michael W. F felonis, Michael W. F felonis Architects

“We were delighted to work with Chris Smith, founder of Angel City Builders, to reuse shipping containers to create private offices, ‘phone booths’ and our server room. Both a talented designer and builder, Chris brought innovation and determination in maneuvering and structuring the containers in our space. He showed great dedication to our sustainable mission, understanding that reusing containers would eliminate our need for steel studs and gypsum board to create these spaces.”

Amelia Feichtner, Cunningham Group Architecture

Compiled by
Sam Lubell
with Carren Jao

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<td><a href="http://www.hinerfeldward.com">www.hinerfeldward.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner Space Constructors</td>
<td>2250 South Central Ave., Rancho Dominguez, CA</td>
<td>310-769-4112</td>
<td><a href="http://www.innerspacecontractors.com">www.innerspacecontractors.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A. Mortenson</td>
<td>700 Meadow Ln. North, Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>763-522-2100</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mortenson.com">www.mortenson.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Construction</td>
<td>9814 Norwalk Blvd., Santa Fe Springs, CA</td>
<td>562-903-2277</td>
<td><a href="http://www.matconstruction.com">www.matconstruction.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morley Builders</td>
<td>3330 Ocean Park Blvd., Santa Monica, CA</td>
<td>310-399-1600</td>
<td><a href="http://www.morleybuilders.com">www.morleybuilders.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nautilus Group</td>
<td>2201 Dwight Way, Berkeley, CA</td>
<td>510-343-5593</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nautilusgroup.com">www.nautilusgroup.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nibbi Brothers</td>
<td>180 Hubbell St., San Francisco</td>
<td>415-883-1820</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nibbi.com">www.nibbi.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver &amp; Company</td>
<td>1300 5th St., Richmond, CA</td>
<td>510-412-9090</td>
<td><a href="http://www.oliverandco.net">www.oliverandco.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Row Builders</td>
<td>189 South Los Robles Ave., Pasadena, CA</td>
<td>626-304-1190</td>
<td><a href="http://www.parkrow.com">www.parkrow.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul White Construction</td>
<td>3721 Santa Rosa Ave., Santa Rosa, CA</td>
<td>707-546-7012</td>
<td>paulwhiteconstructionlincoln.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert F. Vario Construction</td>
<td>1913 West Balboa Blvd., Newport Beach, CA</td>
<td>213-229-9929</td>
<td>rfvarioconstruction.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarlan Builders</td>
<td>9503 North Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA</td>
<td>310-216-8440</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sarlan.com">www.sarlan.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundt</td>
<td>2620 South 55th St., Tempe, AZ</td>
<td>480-293-3000</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sundt.com">www.sundt.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner Construction</td>
<td>555 South Flower St., Los Angeles</td>
<td>714-940-8000</td>
<td><a href="http://www.turnerconstruction.com">www.turnerconstruction.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor Perini Corporation</td>
<td>15901 Olden St., Sylmar, CA</td>
<td>818-362-8391</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tutorperini.com">www.tutorperini.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webcor Builders</td>
<td>207 King St., San Francisco</td>
<td>415-768-1400</td>
<td><a href="http://www.webcor.com">www.webcor.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodcliff Corporation</td>
<td>1849 Sausalito Blvd., Los Angeles</td>
<td>310-312-1400</td>
<td><a href="http://www.woodcliff.net">www.woodcliff.net</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compiled by Sam Lubell with Carren Jao*
To our surprise, they were to be within our budget. Such a fantastic system design, we did not expect glazing systems and facade research for point-fixed Novum Structures’ “When we discovered that we got an extremely affordable. As a result, we got an extremely well designed and detailed engineered glazing system. Michael W. Folonis, Michael W. Folonis Architects
“The aluminum bar grating specified by Brodiehead Steel for the roof’s shade trellis structure is a fairly standard and widely used material, but in this application it is allowed to show-off its ability to reflect light and create shadow in ways that are abnormally beautiful. While it is a highly functional apparatus, providing much needed shade for the outdoor programs, it also serves as a canvas for the southern California sun to project its seemingly limitless color spectrum upon throughout the year. The dynamic nature of the material in an ever-changing sky is a tremendously satisfying maker of place.” Eric Anson Alden Lohner Architects

“Bonhoff Lumber is the source of most wood used in the Eel’s Nest house. They are a family owned lumber yard in downtown LA and wood is all they do. They can supply almost any species of wood and know everything about what they sell. Furthermore they mill and cut anything as long as wood counts.” Simon Storrey Anonymous Architects

“Tortoise Industries made the steel supports for the main floating stair. The piece had to be delivered in two pieces through the front window of the house because it’s so long.” Simon Storrey Anonymous Architects
SUSTAINABILITY

BUILDING CONTROL SYSTEMS
Alerton Envision
6670 195th Ave. Northeast, Redmond, WA; 425-965-9400
www.alerton.com
Convia
60 Woodlawn St., West Hartford, CT; 860-621-0049
www.convia.com
CONSULTANTS
Christopher A. Joseph & Associates
11149 West Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles; 310-472-1600
Gilleran Energy Management
759A Davis St., Santa Monica, CA; 310-393-9411
www.gilleranenergy.com
Green Building Services
421 Southeast Sixth Ave., Portland, OR; 866-743-4277
www.greenbuildingservices.com
Integral Group
www.integralgroup.com
Michael Heacock Architects,
LEED Consultant
43 Loring Ave., Mill Valley, CA; 415-845-5326
www.michaelheacock.com
Sherwood Design Engineers
58 Maiden Ln., San Francisco; 415-877-7700
www.sherwoodengineers.com
TRANSSOLAR Energetechnik
Curiestrasse 2, Stuttgart; +49 711-67-97-60
www.transsolar.com
Zimmer Consultants
528 21st Pl., Santa Monica, CA; 310-393-9411
www.zimmerconsultants.com
GREEN ROOFS
Hydrotech
303 East Ohio St., Chicago; 847-877-6125
www.hydrotechusa.com
SHADING SYSTEMS
greenscreen
1745 South La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles; 310-837-0526
www.greenscreen.com
Mesh Systems
42-03 35th St., Long Island City, NY; 718-729-2020
www.meshoshade.com
Unisolair
2566 Waterview Dr., Rochester Hills, MI; 734-205-5000
www.unisolair.com

ABOVE: CUNINGHAM GROUP
OFFICE
CUNINGHAM GROUP
ARCHITECTS
INTEGRAL GROUP

“We had a great relationship with Transsolar. They helped us during the conceptualization phase, when we were looking at the massing. They did computer modeling of energy consumption. They’re engineers, but they really understand architecture and design, so it’s really a pleasure dealing with them.” Paul Zajfen, Principal, CO Architects

INTEGRAL Group were part of the design team from the beginning. We designed and modeled various mechanical systems before committing to naturally ventilate the studio and warehouse space without air conditioning.” Amelia Feichtner, AIA, Principal, Cunningham Group Architecture
## DOORS AND WINDOWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Firms</th>
<th>Addresses/Contact Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aluflam</td>
<td>3616 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles; 714-899-3990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asiara Glass and Aluminum</td>
<td>323-734-0005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besam Entrance Systems</td>
<td>1520 South Sinclair St., Anaheim, CA; 714-446-0358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blumcraft</td>
<td>3852 South Water St., Pittsburgh, PA; 412-681-2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Door Metal Systems</td>
<td>1460 Central Ave., Chino, CA; 800-408-3667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell Iron Works</td>
<td>305 Elmwood Ave., Crestwood Industrial Park, Mountaintop, PA; 800-233-8358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldbrecht USA Inc.</td>
<td>1512 11th St., Santa Monica, CA; 310-393-5540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horton</td>
<td>5th Floor, One South Grand Ave., Los Angeles; 213-687-4206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaveneer</td>
<td>555 Guthridge Ct., Norcross, GA; 951-765-7048</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marshfield Door Systems</td>
<td>1401 East Fourth St., Marshfield, WI; 800-869-3678</td>
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<tr>
<td>McKendry Door</td>
<td>12930 Sunnyside Pl., Santa Fe Springs, CA; 562-531-2576</td>
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<td>Petri</td>
<td>1551 Industry Ln., Huntington Beach, CA; 714-899-3990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perkin and Will</td>
<td>3641 Holden Ave., Los Angeles; 310-736-3850</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janus et Cie</td>
<td>1230 Greenstone Ave., Santa Fe Springs, CA; 800-246-2697</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hivé Modern</td>
<td>820 Northeast Glisan St., Portland, OR; 888-663-4463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HumanScale</td>
<td>11 East 26th St., New York; 800-400-0625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Douglas</td>
<td>3483 21st St., San Francisco; 415-520-9845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keilhauer</td>
<td>1520 South Sinclair St., Anaheim, CA; 714-446-0358</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kohler</td>
<td>12930 Sunnyside Pl., Santa Fe Springs, CA; 562-531-2576</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knoll</td>
<td>555 Guthridge Ct., Norcross, GA; 951-765-7048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Forms</td>
<td>431 Lawndale Ave., Kalamazoo, MI; 269-381-3465</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loewenstein</td>
<td>10th Floor, 1551 Industry Ln., Huntington Beach, CA; 714-899-3990</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPG/Haverson</td>
<td>801 South Grand Ave., Los Angeles; 213-687-4206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitra</td>
<td>2011 E. 2nd Ave., Los Angeles; 213-687-4206</td>
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## CARPET AND TEXTILE

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<th>Firms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bart Halpern</td>
<td>497 Greenwich St., New York; 212-414-2727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Fabrics</td>
<td>1765 Selby Ave., Los Angeles; 310-441-2289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharam</td>
<td>8552 Muir Avenue, Los Angeles; 310-648-9550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaw</td>
<td>1230 South Water St., Pittsburgh, PA; 412-681-2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1765 Selby Ave., Los Angeles; 310-441-2289</td>
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## FITTINGS AND FURNITURE

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<tr>
<td>ArcCom</td>
<td>497 Greenwich St., New York; 212-414-2727</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arttek</td>
<td>13131 Los Angeles St., Inwood, CA; 628-982-8751</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clark Pacific</td>
<td>13131 Los Angeles St., Inwood, CA; 628-982-8751</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coalesse</td>
<td>1551 Industry Ln., Huntington Beach, CA; 714-899-3990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>305 Elmwood Ave., Crestwood Industrial Park, Mountaintop, PA; 800-233-8358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designers</td>
<td>800-221-1540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathory</td>
<td>13131 Los Angeles St., Inwood, CA; 628-982-8751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fritz Hansen</td>
<td>22 Wooster St., New York; 716-989-3990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldfish</td>
<td>924 Palomares St., La Verne, CA; 562-439-6700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herman Miller</td>
<td>3641 Holden Ave., Los Angeles; 310-736-3850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. C. Edwards</td>
<td>13131 Los Angeles St., Inwood, CA; 628-982-8751</td>
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<td>Janus et Cie</td>
<td>1230 Greenstone Ave., Santa Fe Springs, CA; 800-246-2697</td>
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<td>Hunter Douglas</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. M. Selzer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kohler</td>
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<td>Knoll</td>
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<td>Loewenstein</td>
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<td>PPG/Haverson</td>
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<td>Vitra</td>
<td>2011 E. 2nd Ave., Los Angeles; 213-687-4206</td>
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## HARDWARE

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Adams Rite</td>
<td>258 Knowlton St., Bridgwater, CT; 697-777-0592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assa Abloy</td>
<td>5 Cliffside Dr., Cedar Grove, NJ; 973-239-7272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorni</td>
<td>151 Vermont St., San Francisco; 415-665-2380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hafele</td>
<td>151 Vermont St., San Francisco; 415-665-2380</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index-D</td>
<td>285 Knowlton St., Bridgwater, CT; 697-777-0592</td>
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<td>Omnia</td>
<td>5 Cliffside Dr., Cedar Grove, NJ; 973-239-7272</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rockwood</td>
<td>300 Main St., Rockwood, PA; 614-926-2028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT Industries</td>
<td>18222 Pheobe Ave., La Mirada, CA; 800-800-8777</td>
</tr>
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**Both Herman Miller and Human Scale were a delight to work with. They truly seemed just as excited and enthusiastic about the project as we were.**

Michael W. Folonis
Michael W. Folonis Architects

“I love Hive Modern because they have a very wide range of modern favorites and can customize fabrics and finishes.”

Julie Dowling
Dowling Studios

---

**TOP:** PERKINS AND WILL/ UCLA CABLES YOUNG RESEARCH LAB
**STEELCASE, KNOLL, DESIGNER, BOBRIKE, GOLDFISH**

**ABOVE:** CAMPBELL HALL
**DESIGNERS: ARCHITECTS**

**BOTTOM:** GRAND PARK
**DESIGNER: CLEMENTI HALE STUDIOS**

**JANUS ET CIE**
Lighting Designers

BATH

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7546 North Loshheed Dr., Burbank, CA; 818-787-3793
www.delraylighting.com
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www.emergelight.com
Gotham
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www.gothamlighting.com
Ingo Maurer
89 Grand St., New York; 212-985-5817
www.ingo-maurer.com
The Kirin Co.
3401 East Jefferson Ave., Detroit, MI; 313-202-1001
www.kirlinlighting.com
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www.thelightinguotingalliance.com

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9009 Beverly Blvd., West Hollywood, CA; 310-888-4099
www.artmide.us
Arktura
8650 Decarie, Montreal, Quebec, Canada; 800-263-2947
www.arktura.com
Axis Lighting
8650 Decarie, Montreal, Quebec, Canada; 800-263-2947
www.axislighting.com
Bega
1600 BEGA Way, Carpinteria, CA; 805-884-0553
www.bega-usa.com

KITCHEN / BATH

Avonite
7550 Empire Dr., Florence, KY; 859-354-9888
www.avonitesurfaces.com
Albani
P.O. Box 55, Cabin John, MD; 301-329-0042
www.renewedmaterials.com
Boffi Los Angeles
8775 Beverly Blvd., West Hollywood, CA; 310-652-5500
www.boffi-la.com
Bulthaup
103 Eisenhower Pkwy., Roseland, NJ; 973-226-5390
www.bulthaup.com
Cabinets Quick
1742 North Case St., Orange, CA; 714-532-9005
www.cabinetsquick.com
California Facets
5271 Argory Dr., Huntington Beach, CA; 800-822-8855
www.cafacets.com
Cesaroni
6940 Hayvenhurst Ave., Van Nuys, CA; 818-779-9999
www.cesaronineus.com

Dornbracht
1700 Executive Dr. South, Duluth, GA; 770-564-3599
www.dornbracht.com
Dupont Corian
www2.dupont.com
Duravit
2205 Northmont Pkwy., Duluth, GA; 770-931-3575
www.duravit.com
Hansgrohe
1490 Bluegrass Lakes Pkwy., Alpharetta, GA; 800-334-0465
www.hansgrohe-usa.com
KWC
1770 Corporate Dr., Norcross, GA; 678-334-2121
www.kwcamerica.com
Siematic
August-Siessmann Str. 1-5, Löhne, Germany; +49-0-5732-67-0
www.siematic.com
Sloan Janson
10600 Seymour Ave., Franklin Park, IL; 847-671-1400
www.sloanvalve.com
Valucine
www.valucine.com

“Having worked with talented young designer Justin Horvath while at his previous firm, Cunningham Group was excited to give Justin’s personal design firm Illum1 an opportunity to light our new office. The results are everything we hoped—efficient, comfortable, flexible and dramatic.”

Jonathan Watts, AIA, Principal, Cunningham Group Architecture, Inc.

“Kaplan Gehring McCarroll have consistently provided thoughtful and creative lighting design work. They understand what we are trying to achieve and always help elevate our work.”

Scott P. Kelsey, FAIA, Managing Principal, CO Architects

“Having worked with talented young designer Justin Horvath while at his previous firm, Cunningham Group was excited to give Justin’s personal design firm Illum1 an opportunity to light our new office. The results are everything we hoped—efficient, comfortable, flexible and dramatic.”

Jonathan Watts, AIA, Principal, Cunningham Group Architecture, Inc.

“What makes me happy is if it disappears and it’s minimal. That’s what Corian provided.”

Paul Zafan
Principal, CO Architects

“Cabinets Quick in Orange is the supplier of all my cabinets. They offer full custom cabinetry and will ship the finished product flat or assembled.”

Simon Storey
Anonymous Architects

“We’ve been specifying Caesarstone for 10 years and have never once been disappointed with the product, which is always of the highest quality.”

Michael W. Folonis
Michael W. Folonis Architects
Keynote Speaker: Christoph Ingenhoven
World Class Sustainable Design Visionary

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JANUARY 30

WEDNESDAY 30
LECURE
David Ruy: Returning to (Strange) Objects
7:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc
W.M. Keck Lecture Hall
960 East Third St.
Los Angeles
sciarc.edu

THURSDAY 31
EVENT
Perspectives on Craft + Design:
One Object, Two Views—Collectors and Museums
6:30 p.m.
Museum of Contemporary Craft
The Lab
724 NW Davis St.
Portland, OR
cal.pnca.edu

FRIDAY 8
FILM
The Naked City:
New York Noir and Neorealism
7:30 p.m.
LACMA
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
lacma.org

SATURDAY 16
LECTURE
Oregon Lecture Series:
John Storrs
Architectural Heritage Center
10:00 a.m.
701 SE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR
visitahc.org

TUESDAY 19
LECTURE
Architecture of Affordable Housing and Health Outcomes
12:30 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St.
San Francisco
spur.org

FEBRUARY 1
EVENT
Studio One Symposium 2013:
Architecture and The Technological Artifact
6:30 p.m.
UC Berkeley
Wurster Hall
200 University Ave.
Berkeley, CA
arch.ceb.berkeley.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Organic Updates
David Choong Lee
5:00 p.m.
111 Minna Gallery
111 Minna St.
San Francisco
111minnagallery.com

LECTURE
Cities Will Save The Planet:
An Evening With Alex Steffen
7:00 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St.
San Francisco
spur.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Byproduct Becomes Product
7:00 p.m.
Intersection for the Arts
925 Mission St.
San Francisco
theintersection.org

THURSDAY 7
EVENT
Leo Villareal on the Bay Lights
7:00 p.m.
SFMoMA
Phyllis Wattis Theater
151 Third St.
San Francisco
sfmoma.org

EVENT
What Public Design Opportunities Exist for a Small Firm?
6:00 p.m.
AIASan Francisco
130 Sutter St.
Suite 600
San Francisco
aiasf.org

FRIDAY 8
FILM
The Naked City:
New York Noir and Neorealism
7:30 p.m.
LACMA
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
lacma.org

SUNDAY 10
EXHIBITION OPENING
Slavs and Tatars
Friendship of Nations:
Polish Shi’ite Showbiz
6:00 p.m.
Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater
631 West Second St.
Los Angeles
redcat.org

HAMMER PROJECTS:
DARA FRIEDMAN
Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
Through April 14
Miami-based artist Dara Friedman is known for her black and white films of dancers dancing through city streets. For her film Dancer (2011) she used a 16mm camera to examine urban space and individuals within these spaces, filming improvisational dancers in a variety of styles, from flamenco, to ballet, to belly and break dancing, and more. In her work, Friedman also investigates accepted concepts of performance-based art. Her grainy films sometimes capture the sounds of street traffic, and she sometimes dubs music that is not always in rhythm with the dancers’ movements. For her first exhibition in Los Angeles, Friedman has prepared an 8mm film that is a follow-up to Dancer.
Garry Neil Kennedy's long-awaited *The Last Art College* reveals the visionary infrastructure that placed the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) outside of mainstream European and North American art world influences to become the most relevant program for new visual and conceptual art to emerge in the late 1960s. Similar to Black Mountain College (North Carolina) in its removal from urban centrality and general eclecticism, NSCAD, which Kennedy presided over during the years he describes, was a rural creative enclave, which, through an innovative pedagogical approach, inspired aesthetic investigations that dramatically altered the traditional understanding of the way art could be taught, produced, and even perceived. NSCAD’s flexible mission, ideologically influenced by Pop Art, Fluxus, Dada, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, and European Avant-Garde Theater and Dance, was inextricably wed to the social context of this ten-year period. While the college maintained a permanent faculty of active artists and artist-residents, the political reality of the Vietnam War, the assassinations of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy; and the shoot-outs at Kent State and race riots in major American cities, were equally influential in the creation of NSCAD’s pedagogy during this time. Garry Neil Kennedy’s robust chronology of student and faculty work, essays, photographs, exhibition posters, letters, and interviews is at times overwhelming in its day-to-day detail. Yet the book still authenticates the story of the author’s ever-evolving search for, and discovery of, a highly conceptualized model for art education. NSCAD, perhaps inadvertently, made history by encouraging the emergence of fresh, myriad-minded, process-driven, Post-minimalist art forms of an unprecedented caliber.

Kennedy, who became president of NSCAD in 1968, had very strong feelings about what should remain central to the renewal of the institution’s mandate. In his introduction, he describes the importance of the school’s “peripheral geographic location” and suggests a relationship between the school’s location and its ability to avoid the “rigid and controlling hierarchies” that characterized more established institutions. Kennedy’s then-open acknowledgment of the school’s error” in Halifax. Within the constructs of such offerings as the school’s Conceptual Projects Class, its Lithography Workshop, the NSCAD Press, NSCAD’s exhibition spaces, and a World Encounter Course, Kennedy provided a loose network of laboratories in which those willing to discover new artistic terrain could turn on, tune in, drop out, return, produce, and disseminate works in whatever form they demanded. Many professional artists, such as Sol LeWitt, Dan Graham, Martha Wilson, Vito Acconci, Claes Oldenburg, Carol Conde, and Richard Serra, were involved in the genesis of Kennedy’s vision. The prologue list of renowned artists associated with NSCAD during this period goes on and on.

Although each chapter of *The Last Art College* is more or less similar, in containing a mélange of notes, interviews, essays, published works (by NSCAD Press during that year), lithographs, exhibition announcements, photos, and letters, many things do stand out. Peggy Gail’s “Artist’s Talk” summaries are particularly insightful, as are Charlotte Townsend’s essays on various artists. In terms of the works catalogued, the most striking pieces include but are not limited to: Gene Davis’ Halifax (1970), David Askevold’s Catastrophe (1970), Patrick Kelly’s Lithograph Untitled (1970), Robert Maclean’s His/Her Doodle (1970), Joyce Wieland’s O Canada (1970), Robert Ruman’s Two Stones Depicting forever (1964), and Cameron’s Flame Red (1974), Agnes Denes’s Map Projections (1974), Gordon Smith’s Pacific Rim #1 (1975), and various pieces by Vito Acconci and Sol LeWitt. The continued on page 20

Comics have always shared architecture’s lexicon by combining text and drawing: For architecture, it’s to explain a structure. Both can be wildly fantastic or utterly banal while tracing narratives of the heroic, comic, tragic, and adventurous. Lately, it seems that architects increasingly have used comics to explore concepts or explain ideas, just as artists have used architecture to define a sense of place and set a mood.

Continuing the precedent that Archigram, the 1960s avant-garde architectural group, set during the 1960s, of employing “illustrated essays,” recent architectural comics include BIG’s best-selling *Yes is More: An Archiconic on Architectural Evolution and Jimenez Lac’s Citizens of No Place: an Architectural Graphic Novel.* Even Chip Kidd and David Taylor have co-opted the style of golden age comics, producing *Batman: Death by Design.* Archigram, however, eschewed the category “comics” while this generation seems to embrace it. Add Chris Ware’s recently anthologized *Building Stories* to the list of architectural comics. Previously published as the serial *Building* in various periodicals, including the *New Yorker* and Ware’s own Acme Novelty Library, the episodes have been collected in an oversized box reminiscent of a board game or box of memorabilia. The 14 volumes contained within come in a wide variety of formats—pamphlet, hardbound book, accordion-fold, tabloid, and a game board-like quadrtpy—none of which has a correct or even defined order. Reading them is an act of putting together pieces of the puzzle: Histories are revealed, characters cross paths, and stories develop.

While Ware sets the story with some ambiguity, or at least multiple readings, the main characters are readily apparent. Taking place over 100 years in Chicago, the stories tell of a brownstone and its inhabitants and the changes in the neighborhood as it ages and goes through a series of demographic changes—the tale of many cities. The building’s elderly landlady occupies the first floor and rents out the upper levels to a bickering couple, and—the character around which many of the stories focus—a lonely, one-legged florist. There’s also an appearance by Bradford the Bee, a foil to the human characters. Each of their stories is weighted with depression, despair, abandonment, loss, and melancholy, barely balanced with hope and brief moments of continued on page 20
CROSS SECTION OF URBAN LIFE continued from page 19

Waren’s passing observations of the built environment dovetail with another of his projects, to reveal that he is no stranger to architecture. In 2003, he contributed to a special episode of This American Life called “Lost Buildings.” Ware provided the illustrations and visual pacing of Ira Glass’ and Tim Samuelson’s discussion of architecture in 1960s and 70s Chicago, specifically targeting Louis Sullivan’s demise and Mies van der Rohe’s rise. In Building Stories, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Home and Studio and the Arthur Heurtley House, both in Oak Park, make cameo appearances.

Although it appears prominently, Ware’s story is not about architecture. The three-story brownstone quickly becomes a character in the story, with its thoughts appearing throughout. The back of the quadriptych features axonometric drawings of each floor while the flipside panels depict the building through the four seasons; they are exquisitely laid out and surrounded by the progression of narrative. They also resemble a blueprint, featuring a main drawing, with details and notes filling the remainder of the page via directional arrows, thought bubbles, and arrangements left entirely to the reader.

The building’s suspicions, observations, and comments appear as cursive notes in the margins. Like a classical choir, the building is the remote observer that reveals hidden stories to the reader.

Comics have a lowbrow association but can illustrate ideas for a wide audience. A couple of resources that explore the image and the word are Scott McCloud’s Understanding Comics, which gives a thorough overview of comic conventions, and Douglas Wolk’s Reading Comics: How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean, which exposes leading figures of the medium and includes a chapter titled “Why Does Chris Ware Hate Fun?”

Whether the title Building Stories means creating tales, constructing levels of narrative, or establishing sagas about the house, Ware’s latest offering surely contains each, and his graphics, ability to pace the action, portrayal of time, and, more important, attention to detail are unparalleled. Despite the downer tone of the stories, Ware certainly knows how to tell a story, and show it.

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PETER ZELLNER ESPouses THE VALUE OF FINE-GRAIN DEVELOPMENT FOR LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles sits at a fork in the road: a proverbial decision point that will determine whether it will replay the cycle of development, decline, and redevelopment that characterized it at the close of the 20th century, or evolve into a more cultivated, connected, and egalitarian version of itself.

The city is poised to move beyond its misrepresentations and embrace its recent achievements. For many Angelenos, the day-to-day experience of life is far removed from anyone’s memories of life in LA in the late ’80s and mid-’90s. There is still smog; and it’s easier than ever to find a sophisticated meal and see a great play or attend a world-class opera.

And yet it feels as if something is missing. Los Angeles remains a city subject to the diurnal rhythms of its traffic patterns. LA, especially downtown LA, remains disconnected, and its overarching and under-addressed ethos of urban disengagement has yet to be adequately challenged.

LA has recently been visited by big buildings by star architects, various proposals for megamalls and mixed-use projects like L.A. Live and, perhaps, the Grand Avenue Development. It’s still proposing mega-stadiums, giant parks, and plans for big river and transit renewal programs. For this city, the abiding urban-redevelopment logic seems to be that if you build it big and make it iconic, the private funds and presumably the public incentives will find their way to the table.

While it would be churlish to deny the value of ambitious public buildings in the urban context, LA’s grands projets (projéctos grandes?) only worked well… of the 20th century, or evolve into a more

Indeed, the predominant, disconnected mega-project approach is hard to build, hard to finance, and likely to produce monolithic environments. And although we cannot refute the value of large-scale civic works, cities must develop organically, through incremental means but with raised expectations. Anything else is unsustainable.

There is another model of redevelopment that is native to LA and the region. It suggests both a better ethos for remaking the city center, and a path forward for the reconnection and reconstruction of LA’s more dispersed neighborhoods. It takes advantage of the facts on the ground, not in a report, and it is organic and intuitive. And it’s likely to work.

Several successful examples of such an approach are already at work in LA: the Downtown Los Angeles Arts District, Culver City’s Arts District and Hayden Tract (much of it by architect and SCI-Arc director Eric Owen Moss) as well as other, more boutique commercial strip transformations (the Sunset Triangle in Los Feliz/Silverlake and Venice’s Abbot Kinney Boulevard).

There is the notable work Michael Maltzan has completed for the Skid Row Housing Trust and Inner City Arts, an after-school program. Finally, there has been much to praise in the city’s successful small-lot subdivision ordinance, which has given teeth (and a protocol) to LA’s pressing need to move toward higher density on a manageable scale.

In an era of tightened financial opportunities, city governments need to stop relying on redevelopment plans that will inevitably fail. Sites for mixed-mega-projects, if they are to be developed at all and not sit stalled in financing agreements, should be parcelled up and handed out competitively to smaller teams of architects and developers. Incentives should be provided to these teams, to lower risk but demand greater responsibility and higher design values. Multiple players on multiple sites means shared risk and diminished scale, but also a realistic agenda for where we are now.

Will this approach lead to the micro-Balkanization of the city? Perhaps it will. Is this approach Pollyanna-ish? Hardly: it has worked elsewhere. Beijing’s smarter big-block redevelopments, Mexico City’s sophisticated Condesa District, Melbourne’s CBD, and Barcelona’s extensive work for its (1992) Olympics facilities are all good examples of locales that have marshaled the political courage and financial means to try to grow intelligently.

A clear distinction to the top-down approach promulgated during the boom years in LA should be made: the current approach should be cumulative, collective, and bottom up. Redevelopment in LA on the micro scale should be experimental, innovative, and attuned to community involvement and outreach. While it’s important to acknowledge that demographic pressures to add density to Los Angeles will require a continued commitment to large-scale transit improvements, and these transit projects may in turn spur or require the occasional mega-project, these projects will be connected and not isolated.

Imagine start-ups on an urban scale. Imagine temporary environments. Imagine strategies for incremental, not monumental, change. Imagine the next Los Angeles as an urban stage formed of multiple, tangentially-related set pieces, each uniquely shaped by inimitable means, yet still involved in a dialogue with other urban characters. This approach will re-introduce a nuanced grain to the city, as opposed to its foundational and tract-oriented logic of uninspired repetition and customization. This approach to civic design envisions well-managed but radical shifts in scale across the city. It marks the end of over-manicured districts and a challenge to the Byzantine rules that have built this city alongside capriciously arbitrary administrative fiat, and the quest for short-term financial gain.

This approach imagines a process for the rebuilding of LA along the lines of the city’s best virtues: its informality, an enviable climate, and its convivial arrangements of social and private spaces. This approach imagines LA as a city of plurals, as a city of many Davids, not just Goliaths.

To build it and move it forward will take a communal effort led by unique voices. There are two, indeed more than two, future city models for Los Angeles, and we must pick one. On the one hand there is the LA of the big and spectacular (the rest remains ordinary). On the other hand is the LA of new forms of collectivity, new aggregations of social and cultural variety, and experimental architectural innovation. The choice is ours to make.

Peter Zellner established his Venice-based, award-winning firm Zellnerplus in 2004. Zellner is a faculty member at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, where he coordinates the Future Initiatives Urban Design Program.
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