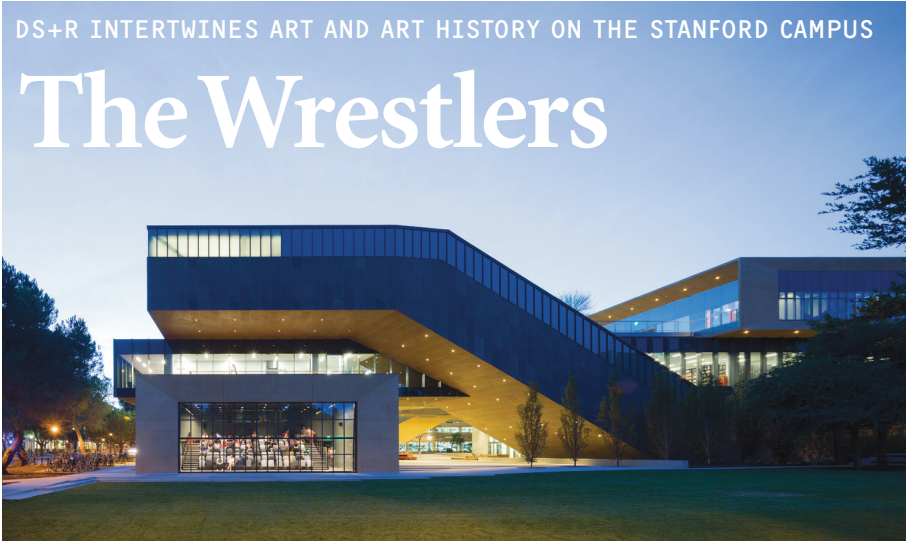


THE WEST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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DS+R INTERTWINES ART AND ART HISTORY ON THE STANFORD CAMPUS

The Wrestlers

The McMurtry Art & Art History Building opened on the Stanford University campus early October. The 96,000-square-foot building is the second of three Diller Scofidio + Renfro designs to open on the West Coast; squeezed between the red carpet opening of the Broad in September and the ribbon cutting for the Berkeley Art Museum early next year. The McMurtry is not a museum, but instead is dedicated to a pair programmatic twins: fine art and art history. DS+R's \$87 million three-story building is a riff on Stanford campus's Mission-style typologies, a blocky massing around a central wood-clad courtyard. Although the materials used on the exterior facade, patinaed zinc cladding and apricot colored stucco, might seem a bit out of character for the New York-based firm, the choices were budget-minded and correspond to the warm hues of the campus architecture and the adjacent Cantor Arts Center, Stanford's impressive art museum. At a time when art continued on page 11



L.A.'S HISTORIC COMMUNITY IS STILL SEARCHING TO FIND ITSELF

WATTS WHAT

Last month, on a bright and sunny Saturday, the East Side Riders Bike Club (ESRBC) opened their brand new bike co-op in Watts to much fanfare. Located at 11321 S. Central Avenue in the heart of South Central Los Angeles, a group of bike riders and other active transportation supporters, including other bike clubs and community members, joined in the celebration of the new shop that will tune and rehab bicycles, teach bike maintenance skills, organize safety classes and unity rides, and above all, continue to foster a positive community for at-risk youth. The opening of the ESRBC bike co-op was the most recent in a series of positive stories coming out of the community this past summer that commemorated the 50 year anniversary of The Watts Riots. While the demographic conditions have shifted as the community becomes increasingly more Hispanic and less African-American, the hard realities of what is now called "South Los Angeles" prevail. continued on page 3

A PAIR OF BUILDINGS BY JULIA MORGAN AWAIT REUSE

History on Repeat

Two long-vacant Julia Morgan-designed buildings are moving forward this fall with plans for renovation, restoration, and adaptive reuse. The architect, famously known for the expansive Mediterranean Revival Hearst Castle estate, also designed the Downtown Los Angeles headquarters for the Hearst's sixth newspaper, the Herald Examiner Building, and the progressive YWCA in Pasadena. Both structures will take on new uses and re-engage their urban settings in the coming years. Opened in 1915, the Moorish-style Herald Examiner Building at Broadway and Eleventh stopped printing in 1989. Located at the juncture of two rapidly-developing downtown areas—Broadway Corridor and South Park—there's been much speculation continued on page 10

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REOPENED CLIFTON'S IS A RORSCHACH TEST FOR L.A. LOCALS

HOT DISH OR KITSCH?

After a five-year hiatus, Clifton's Cafeteria has reopened in Downtown Los Angeles. The ballyhooed October 1 relaunch followed a period during which new owner Andrew Meieran spent a reported \$14 million to purchase and painstakingly repair, remodel and re-interpret the famous five-story South Broadway eatery known variously for kitsch, curiosities, comfort, family, and hipsterdom. Prominent Angeleno Clifford Clinton established Clifton's Brookdale in 1935 on the site of the former Boos Brother Cafeteria at 648 S Broadway. Clifton's has long served as many things to many people: Over-the-top Depression-era roadside architectural attraction; symbol of "pay what you can" Golden Rule compassion; egalitarian gathering spot; and woodland-themed inspiration to theme park builders, science fiction authors continued on page 8



A MODERN HOME RISES FROM THE ASHES IN BERKELEY SEE PAGE 10



AN LANDSCAPE ISSUE

AN INVESTIGATES THE WAYS IN WHICH LANDSCAPE DESIGN IS BEING USED TO TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES. WE VISIT DETROIT FOR ITS APPROACH TO GRASS-ROOTS FARMING URBANISM THAT IS REVITALIZING THE CITY AND LOOK AT HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP CONNECT LANDSCAPES TO THE PUBLIC. SEE PAGE 15.

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NATURAL HISTORIES

If the West Coast has a 2015 tag line—something to be read in a deep voice at the end of a movie trailer or epitaphically carved in granite—it's certainly Oscar Wilde: "To be natural is such a very difficult pose to keep up."

Our nature is certainly unruly—a parched region bracing for Santa Ana winds, El Niño, and earthquakes—but there's nothing wild about Wilde's sentiments. Susan Sontag used the line (quoted from the playwright's *An Ideal Husband*) in her pivotal essay, 1964 "Notes on Camp," to underscore the artifice, effort, and exaggeration required to approximate something authentic. In Los Angeles, we have a very loose relationship to what is natural or genuine. Reyner Banham clearly had his tongue lodged firmly in his cheek when he famously wrote "I learned to drive in order to read Los Angeles in the original," as he searched out the city's ecologies.

Here, the unnatural is second nature: face lifts, back lots, the Matterhorn, front lawns, palm tree cell towers. Which is why, perhaps, there's been such an outpouring of good cheer for the restoration and re-opening of Clifton's Cafeteria in Downtown L.A.—an establishment that has a full-sized redwood tree inside its dining room, as well as an assortment of taxidermy creatures: bears, coyotes, and buffalo. The restaurant is high camp, a celebration of its own ridiculousness, of our own perilousness in the face of real nature. Even before the tiki bar opens, it's intoxicating.

Entering into this artifact of L.A. history that has been revived as a thematic accompanied by big band-era tunes, we dare to envision an original Broadway, one mythologically free from the frictions of today—the standoffs between the homeless and the business improvement district left at the door.

The incredible change Downtown Los Angeles is undergoing is serious business. However, we also need to address a kitschy scheme in the making: The Pershing Square Restoration Society's petition to bring back the details and ethos of the park's 1910 design.

In pleading for restoration, the group's determination runs counter to Pershing Square Renew, the international design competition launched earlier this fall. Instead of pursuing an architectural solution, the society dreams of palm-lined *allées* and Mediterranean Beaux-Arts fountains—the version of L.A.'s first park prior to its midcentury demolition for a parking lot and the subsequent redesigns leading up to Legorreta's effort.

The current state of Pershing Square is pretty much unlovable. Entrances to below-grade parking wall it off from the street and the architect's Disney-fied version of Barragán hasn't stood the test of time. The failings of this piece of architecture has led Pershing Square Renew, a public-private partnership with council member José Huizar, to favor a participatory placemaking approach. "Our intention is not to create a masterpiece, but to create a canvas that invites the community to create their own masterpieces in how they use the space," said Eduardo Santana, executive director of Pershing Square Renew to AN back in September.

So while tipsters report that global players like OMA submitted for the RFQ (shortlist to be notified at the end of this month), the odds are against star schemes. Nevertheless, it would be unfortunate if the revitalization of Downtown L.A. resulted in a corny exercise in recreation or a wholly processes-orientated attitude. While a natural Pershing Square is certainly tempting, it is impossible to return to a natural or genuine state in Los Angeles. The constant oscillation between real and "real" is the city at its most authentic; anything else is a theme park. **MIMI ZEIGER**

WATTS WHAT continued from front page

Watts is still one of the poorest, most under-educated and underserved areas in the city. It is a food desert. It has the highest rate of single parent households in the County. And it is still one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the region.

Watts is also in the process of reimagining itself.

Yet within this complicated context of history, demographic trends, and economic disparity, Watts Reimagined, led by Grant Housing and Economic Development Corporation in partnership with the National Resource Defense Council and other community stakeholder groups is doing something refreshing. Instead of putting together more plans, it is doing the good, hard work of implementing the plans that already exist for the area. Watts Reimagined emerged after the state ended community redevelopment agencies, and has been focused on Main Street Watts and gateway development projects, a green streets program, wellness strategy, and advocacy for various ongoing projects.

Fresh off the reopening and subsequent redevelopment of the MLK Hospital designed by HMC Architects just to the south across the I-105, you can almost feel the change coming to the neighborhood.

Gehry Partners and (fer) Studio in Inglewood are teaming up to support the expansion of the Children's Institute, a local social service provider located in downtown Watts (See "Gehry and (fer) Making Their Mark in Watts" AN Blog 08.08.2014). The planned redevelopment, currently in the design process, seeks to refocus the Institute along a central green alley in this park-poor neighborhood. The two-acre, 50,000-square-foot campus will help expand the non-profit's services to over 5,000 families with a new multipurpose space, art room, kitchen, activity rooms, sports facilities, tech lab, offices, counseling rooms, and observation spaces.

Roy Choi of Kogi BBQ truck fame is opening the first L.A. location of his healthy fast-food establishment, Local, at a former bodega on 103rd and Grape Streets. The location in Watts is representative of Mr. Choi's commitment to underserved communities. It is currently fund-raising and drumming up support on Indiegogo, and plans to launch by the end of the year.

And city councilman Joe Buscaino has been focused on the Jordan Downs development since, well, 2008. The \$700 million redevelopment project proposes to completely overhaul the 1940s workers' housing project that, like many other public housing projects in Watts were intended to be temporary. The project missed out for the second year in a row on a federal Housing and Urban Development grant that would have been the seed money to move the redesign forward.

The truth is Watts is deep in the belly of this metropolis and still at the bottom of the city's priority list. So while the people of Watts take small strides, attracting sometimes big-named talent thanks in part to the neighborhood's infamous disparity to provide insight and a little legitimacy, the world around Watts keeps turning, a few kids ride their handmade bicycles by the Watts Towers, and millions drive by every day on the Glenn Anderson freeway.

GUNNAR HAND



COURTESY AECOM

CORRECTION

Flight Segments (AN 06_09_23_15), a piece on renovations going on at LAX, incorrectly attributed the design leadership. The Terminal 5 project is headed by Corgan Associates in association with Gensler.

Fabian Kremkus is design principal at CO Architects, not associate principal as was stated in the story In Detail> Collaborative Life Sciences Building (AN 06_09_23_15).

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The burgeoning art scene along Mission Road continues with a new space by New York gallerist Michele Maccarone. Located in a converted warehouse factory building at 300 South Mission Road, Maccarone Los Angeles is down the block from Laura Owens' 356 South Mission warehouse, an outpost of Gavin Brown's Enterprise New York gallery, and Hauser & Wirth plans to open a multi-building compound in Downtown L.A.'s Arts District March 2016.

Designed by Los Angeles-based Standard Architecture, the 50,000-square-foot gallery is minimalist: With the exception of the polished concrete floor, every surface, from the reception desk to the warehouse trusses, is white. The architects restored existing skylights, which now wash the gallery with natural California light. A single white wall splits the space into two distinct viewing areas.

Maccarone's venue hosts studio space for artists Alex Hubbard and Oscar Tuazon. Soon, a raw, 15,000-square-foot courtyard will display Tuazon's artworks—often unusual assemblies of ordinary construction materials.

Standard Architecture founder Jeffrey Allsbrook created a multi-layered steel gate to secure the sculpture courtyard from the still-gritty Mission Road. "The gallery is counterpoint to my more Brutalist NYC space and an opportunity to mount different kinds of shows," she said. "This is a quintessential California space that maximizes the environmental resonances of Los Angeles." **MZ**



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TOWN 'N GOWN

Although the weather seems like summer will never end, fall has been a tizzy of school daze-related comings and goings. After raising eyebrows a couple years ago when he left his practice and teaching behind to join AECOM's Los Angeles office, **Peter Zellner** recently left the corporate world to hang a shingle with former AECOM-er **Paul Naecker** and is back molding young minds at SCI-Arc.

Going from gown to town, **Roger Sherman**, long-time UCLA faculty and co-director of the urban think tank CityLAB, is now Urban Projects Director at Gensler.

Splitting the difference, Predock Frane Architects shuttered after 15 years, with principals **Hadrian Predock** and **John Frane** going their separate ways. The former is heading to USC to don cardinal and gold as undergraduate director of architecture and the latter will be joining the executive suite at HGA Architecture and Engineers as associate vice president and principal in the L.A. office.

GRRRL POWER

We live in a listicle age. Why write an article when you can clump a few names together and call it a trend? So when *Los Angeles Magazine* listed six women who have changed the face of Los Angeles architecture, which included one dead AIA Gold Medalist and two New Yorkers, it was bound to create outcry. Brava to the three local gals who made the cut, but let's celebrate all the women of the L.A. architecture and design scene. When local schools put one lady on the lecture series and pat themselves on the back, we know more needs to be done for gender equity.

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UNVEILED

VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

Herzog & de Meuron's design for the Vancouver Art Gallery is a striking departure for a city of tall, slim towers, but an ongoing motif for the Swiss firm. Concept images depict wood- and glass-clad cantilevered boxes of varying sizes hovering over downtown Vancouver. Seeking to embrace both density and nature, the vertical museum—topping out at seven stories—rises from a public 40,000-square-foot garden courtyard.

The museum's stacked expansion would create 85,000 square feet of galleries, including an admissions-free ground level and a seventh-floor terrace displaying

sculptures. There are also plans for an education center, a theater, a library, as well as a cafe, bringing the new space to a grand total of 310,000 square feet. There would also be room to grow vertically in the future.

The city is leasing the land for the new building to the Vancouver Art Gallery, which would replace a parking lot several blocks east from the current museum. The estimated cost for the project—\$350 million—to be achieved through a mix of private and public funding.

ARIEL ROSENSTOCK

Architect: Herzog & de Meuron
Client: Vancouver Art Gallery
Location: Vancouver
Completion Date: 2021



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CENTRO's central courtyard and external circulation links classrooms and offices

ENRIQUE NORTEN OF TEN ARQUITECTOS TALKS TO AN ABOUT HIS NEW CAMPUS FOR CENTRO IN MEXICO CITY AND THE CHALLENGES OF BEING A LOCAL-INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE

Enrique Norten's latest project, CENTRO, a cross-disciplinary university focused on the creative fields, recently opened in Mexico City. Meara Daly spoke with him about the 78,700-square-foot campus and how architecture and pedagogy influence each other.

The Architect's Newspaper: How does your architecture reflect the vision for the CENTRO program?

Enrique Norten: Well, it reflects this experimental spirit of the institution. It is an institution about creation, about innovation. [We wanted to capture] the feeling that you

are not in an institution, but you are really in a free-flowing workshop-laboratory that will somehow entice the spirit of creation. Also what has been interesting, as you very well understand, is a school like this is a conglomerate of little schools. Each department is a school and each one has a leader. And each leader has his or her own vision, so it is also sometimes a dissonant symphony. That was always the process, too many voices, too many visions, too many egos and characters. Not in a bad way.

Is the design activated by those voices?

Yes, as a matter of fact, a lot of what you are seeing is work in progress. For example a

white box is not meant to be a white box. It will become a mural intervention and the idea is that the space will change periodically and be activated by different interventions. There are also pieces of technology to come.

Were there challenges in designing a whole campus instead of a single building?

Well, this is funny because it is a campus but it is also a whole building. It is both. I would say the biggest challenge was that it was a very complex and ever-changing program. Things were changing constantly and maybe that is reflected in some issues of the work, so we are just trying to keep some general spirit to let it change. It was changing constantly, even through construction.

I don't know of any city that can open a new campus, a new building but not a new campus.

This is an area that will be changing enormously, which is something that interests me. [The CENTRO campus] is a signal of improvements in the area. Ours is an amazing location—just across the street from Chapultepec Park and right in the center of the city. A new, big train station is coming a few blocks way. When that happens, we will be one of the best-connected areas.

How did your partnership with CENTRO begin? Has it been a long-standing relationship?

I've known founder Gina Diez Barroso and her husband Abraham for many years. As a matter of fact, I am on CENTRO's board. Before there was anything, she invited me for lunch and was telling me she had this dream and asking if would I be

involved with her. I said I would love to if, and only if, she would really mean to have an international institution—an institution at the international level. I wasn't interested in being simply the best of Mexico.

As design leader, how is your practice is looking to the future of design in Mexico?

Mexico has always had great architecture and design energy. There is a very long, strong, and stable tradition of good design and good architecture here and fortunately, we are going through some exceptional times in these fields. There are many good people doing very good work, especially in this city. We work here, and obviously I am Mexican—born, raised, and educated in Mexico, and I am incredibly proud of that. Nevertheless, we do have part of our practice in New York. We work equally out of the two offices and it is very balanced. Our work is all over Mexico, not just in Mexico City.

Within your studio where does this lie in terms of your projects? You have worked internationally. Do you feel that all of your projects are international even if they are local?

I think they are all local and they are all international. I always say I am very interested in that intersection between the local and the global—the specific and the international. Architecture by definition is site specific, but also part of the global discourse. It is very important because each project is unique to the place but it also belongs to this global discourse and can relate on different levels with other work that is being developed around the world.



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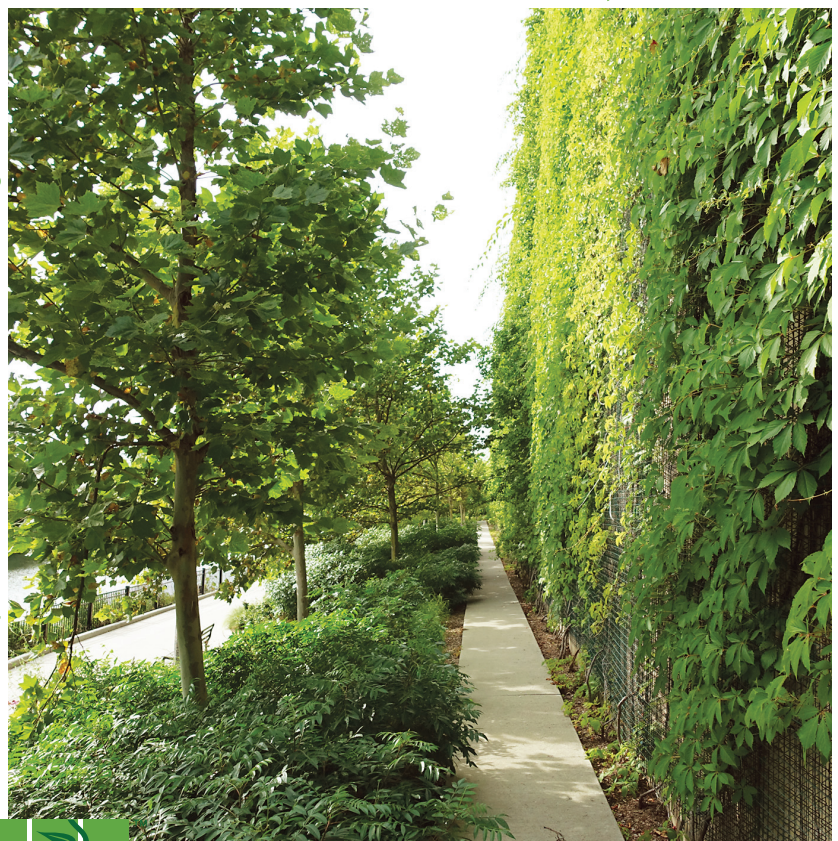


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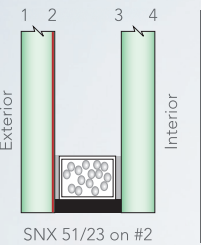
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Residential neighborhoods all over Southern California are losing their character as owners and developers exploit escalating land values. North Westwood Village, master-planned in the 1920s as a small-scale community of rental properties, has been particularly hard-hit. The North Westwood Village Specific Plan mandates harmonious development, but that requirement was ignored from the 1960s on, as hills were carved away and big-box student rooming houses overwhelmed neighboring properties and narrow, winding streets. Development was driven by the growth of UCLA and its behemoth medical center. The university (a state institution unhindered by local regulations) was the worst offender, constructing oversized faux-historic blocks

and trashing modern classics by Richard Neutra and John Lautner.

After a half century of abuse, the North Village has finally acquired an architectural gem, located across the street from Neutra's landmark Strathmore Apartments. It required legal action by a neighborhood association to compel the developer to abandon the eyesore he had proposed and commission a new design from Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects (LOHA). The challenge was to fit 31 units (totaling 37,000 square feet) onto a narrow, tilted wedge of land, stepping down from six to two stories in deference to Neutra's design, a garden court of eight units terraced up a steep slope. The strategy reprised LOHA's Habitat 825 on Kings Road in West Hollywood, where the site was excavated a story so that the

new block would not overshadow the garden of Schindler's classic studio-house.

The "luxury" condo towers along nearby Wilshire Boulevard and the dingbats on every side street are essentially alike: warrens of rooms and internal corridors, sealed off from nature and the street. LOHA's works stand in contrast; two of the firm's condo blocks in West Hollywood are set back from pocket parks, blurring the divide between public and private, and creating shared spaces that benefit the community as well as the residents.

"On Strathmore we asked ourselves, 'What if we cut into the box and landscaped the different roof levels, allowing residents to engage the outdoors?'" said O'Herlihy.

That's a concept as old as the Native American pueblos of the Southwest and the roof gardens of North Africa and the Middle East, but one that has been largely forgotten in the most developers' rush to exploit every foot of rentable space.

With Studio 11024 on Strathmore, the architects go further. The city mandates a 50-foot wide view corridor through a block that is more than 150 feet long. LOHA reinterpreted this rule to create a linear divide, which accommodates outdoor walkways and stairs linking three roof gardens, and reduces the need for double-loaded corridors. Half the apartments have opening windows on two sides for abundant natural light and cross ventilation.

Most L.A. houses and apartment buildings are faced in stucco, all too often in beige tones. LOHA had used metal facing panels on previous jobs—Formosa 1140 in West Hollywood was clad in fire engine red. Though the budget was tight, they discovered the structure could be clad in ribbed, white enameled aluminum panels for only a few dollars a square foot more than a standard stucco finish (\$16 versus \$13). The panels are deployed on the two street facades in tiers of differently sized ribs. Those variations break up the mass of the conjoined blocks and the sheer planes serve as screens to capture crisp patterns of sun and shade. Lateral cuts serve as backdrops to the roof terraces and are clad with Hardie board, layered in six tones of yellowish green that become lighter as they ascend. The white echoes the Neutra and several neighboring blocks and responds to changes of light. Handrails and metal staircases

pick up on the green walls, which introduce a vibrant new element into the townscape. They even inspired another property owner to repaint a faded pink block in forest green. Perforated white metal panels screen the staircases, teak benches divide up the terraces, and the sharp edges are softened by landscape architect Mia Lehrer's generous plantings.

Nearly all L.A. apartment blocks are as repetitive as a motel, but LOHA insist on diversified interiors, ranging from studios to lofts. O'Herlihy—like architects Michael Maltzan, Kevin Daly, and other contemporaries—understands that a younger generation wants to break free of the conventional layouts imposed on earlier generations. On Strathmore, the two- and three-bedroom apartments were configured by the developer's interior consultant, but the plans are varied, and there are three duplex apartments on the fifth floor.

Studio 11024 is a deceptively complex building with well-varied fenestration that responds organically to the shifts of elevation and orientation. It raises the bar for Westwood Village and shows how architecture adds value for the owner, tenants, and neighbors. Ideally, it will not become another student rooming house, but will attract a lively mix of residents, and encourage other developers to aim higher, hiring talented architects rather than docile hacks. It should also stiffen the resolve of the Westwood Community Design Review Board, which rejected the previous scheme and enthusiastically supported this, but has sometimes been too tolerant of mediocrity.

MICHAEL WEBB



Original dining room murals are restored to their naturalist glory.

HOT DISH OR KITSCH? continued from front page and diorama enthusiasts.

Clifton's is also a Rorschach test for how one views the built, economic and socio-cultural environment of contemporary Los Angeles rapidly changing historic core.

Opinions are varied: A writer for *Vice* online called out Clifton's for its yuppification. *Los Angeles* magazine's "Ask Chris" Nichols updated

his ongoing 127-year history of the building and the Clinton family. *Los Angeles Times* architecture critic Christopher Hawthorne published an intriguing piece that, in part, connected Google's faster loading logo redesign with Clifton's collections curated in the meatspace.

Meanwhile, 12,000 people came through Clifton's during the first four days after re-opening, the restaurant said. Social media was captivated. *Eater LA* live-blogged.

An earlier press preview and a Los Angeles Conservancy fundraiser were likewise packed.

"The idea is creating drama and narrative. If you don't create that, you may not have succeeded at using space to engender experience," said Meieran, who is also the developer behind the retro-futurist hospitality hot spot, The Edison.

"Getting the wow factor in a space," he added, "and getting certain moments where people recognize you didn't have to do that, but you spent the time, you spent the money, you made sure that with the project in the end, the whole is better than the sum of its parts."

At Clifton's, those parts include the cafeteria on the first floor and differently themed bars throughout. "There are areas that are updated and refreshed and historically restored properly," Meieran said. "And then there are areas that are entirely new and unexpected. The building is designed to be explored and enjoyed at somebody's leisure."

Nichols—the *Los Angeles* columnist and a longtime historic

preservationist—offered a similar assessment. Sitting in front of a 40-foot-tall faux Redwood tree, a taxidermied buffalo to his left, Nichols noted that Meieran had incorporated everything from geodes to pieces of a Boston cathedral altar to a tiki collection.

"It's a spectacular re-imagining of a lot of dead space and a thoughtful restoration of a sacred space," said Nichols. "These party rooms, store rooms, offices—this haunted house back here that nobody ever used—has been reimagined into this complete Disney-level fantasy environment celebrating nature and science and history."

Will Wright, Director of Government and Public Affairs, AIA|LA, lived downtown during the years Clifton's was closed. "The team that restored Clifton's should be applauded for their patience, perseverance, and the blood, sweat, and tears it took to revitalize this important Downtown L.A. cultural asset," Wright said. "As more people converge on [the neighborhood] as a place to live, work and play, what's

more important than ever before is that Downtown retains a sense of authenticity—that we embrace the new and yet respect the strength of foundation delivered by the past. Clifton was built to last."

Edmond J. Clinton III can vouch for that. A grandson of Clifford Clinton, Edmond recently published the Angel City Press book *Clifton's and Clifford Clinton: A Cafeteria and a Crusader*. In an interview, Edmond Clinton recalled bussing tables at Clifton's in the early 1960s.

Clinton observed that the new Clifton's dining room retained its traditional aesthetic. He was also pleased with how Meieran had restored two murals by Einar C. Petersen. "I was trying to stay in touch with Andrew Meieran once we realized he wanted to re-do the Brookdale," Clinton said, using a familiar name of Clifton's—as there used to be a dozen locations, each with different themes, across the Southland. "And certainly, Clifton's did need re-doing," Clinton said. "It really had run down over several years."

JEREMY ROSENBERG

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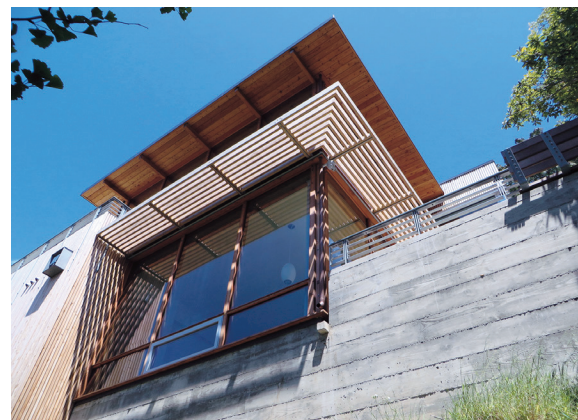
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ANTHONY VIZZARI

The aptly named Phoenix House—its prior Henry Hill—designed iteration burned to the ground in 2008—rises from the ashes with a meticulously executed splendor. Evoking the “rich, optimistic” atmosphere of midcentury Bay Area buildings while integrating contemporary construction techniques like CNC milling, the 3,700-square-foot house located in Berkeley, California, fittingly sits on its old foundation while embracing an entirely new design.

Light, and the client’s relationship to it, figures prominently in the design: The original owners were fabricators of lighting fixtures for Julia Morgan and Bernard Maybeck, among other architects and artisans. To preserve this artistic lineage, the client, who is the grandchild of the original owners, hired the San Francisco-based design-build-company-turned-architectural firm Anderson Anderson. This choice was motivated in part by the fact that the firm’s offices are located next door to the original South Market workshop of the client’s grandparents, but also because over the span of their 31-year career, Anderson Anderson’s principals Mark and Peter Anderson have overseen and developed construction techniques in Asia, Europe, and the United

States. The result is a home that materially encapsulates its heritage in an exquisitely realized form.

The firm first undertook a study of natural lighting conditions on the existing plot. Sited facing west near the eastern shoreline of the San Francisco Bay, the house is frequently bathed in fog. Mark Anderson assembled a palette of wood and concrete finishes to best welcome and enhance the natural lighting conditions without allowing the house to blend into the fog. The exterior is clad in weathering cedar, which will turn to silvery gray over time. Inside, small touches like the kitchen-mounted spun copper fixtures with glass pieces reference the house’s former owners, while the oiled interior Douglas Fir panels preserve the warm tones of the wood and, according to Mark Anderson, create “a lantern-like feeling of warmth.” Raw concrete retains the heat of the early eastern light, while cedar slats on top of the roof provide shading.

Also notable is the use of new design and building technologies, and the corresponding specificity with which architects can now craft details that would have previously been left up to the carpenter. “In the past, architects would

Anderson Anderson uses contemporary technology to pay homage to midcentury design. A material palette of cedar, Douglas Fir, concrete, and copper lends warmth to its often foggy Berkeley, California location.

have submitted three or four pages of drawings of global details,” Mark Anderson explained. “Now with REVIT, it is the architect that builds everything in the digital model. We can make the windows ourselves and integrate them with the framing, which would have been unaffordable prior to digital technology.” This degree of precision not only allows for tighter design, but also lowers overall construction costs.

Since most of the family’s collection of sculptures and paintings was lost in the fire, the new design was created as a highly livable artwork unto itself. The Phoenix House features radiant floor heating, cork floors in the bathroom, and operable windows that look out into a central courtyard. At night, the oiled trim, Corian countertops, and steel bookshelf reflect the interior light back out through the array of generous rectilinear windows. The house is like a giant wooden lantern glowing in the fog. **JULIA INGALLS**

Soon to be a boutique hotel: Morgan’s Pasadena YWCA



COURTESY PASADENA HERITAGE

HISTORY ON REPEAT continued from front page as to its eventual redux. Properties on either side of the building have been sold off and at one time it was speculated that a Morphosis-designed high-rise would fill one lot. As of 2014, Forest City was developing two seven-story mixed-use buildings for the flanking properties.

Prior to its close, nine years of worker strikes led to the newspaper boarding up the building’s street side arcade facade. In the years since, it has hosted film and television shoots—uses that kept the building from falling into total neglect. Development partners Georgetown Company and Hearst Corporation have partnered to redevelop the historic building, bringing in Gensler to trans-

form the structure into more than 100,000 square feet of mixed-use retail and office space. The hope is to capitalize on the area’s revitalized street life and L.A. real estate’s demand for creative workspace.

Robert Jernigan, architect and Gensler principal, noted the building’s singular ceramic domes and terra-cotta details, vowing to approach the renovation carefully and “with a high degree of honesty.” He pointed out the potential of the largely intact, roughly 1,500-square-foot lobby to become a bar, cafe, or lounge area leading for a ground floor restaurant. “It’s a building that went through a lot, but it wasn’t a precious building,” he explained. “There’s an internal stair that has a brass railing that is dimpled because the strikers took sticks and beat the railing.”

He relayed a story about how the sawtooth skylights over the printing floor were blacked out during World War II and never uncovered. He suggested that the restoration will bring back the natural daylight.

“The cultural history is important,” said Michael Fischer, vice president of Georgetown Company, explaining that there are plans to also work with historical consultant. “The

Hearst Corporation is staying in the deal with us. This building was very important to them and they will remain as stewards. There are a lot of stories in this building. We’re thinking about the history and how to incorporate it into the old new design.” He anticipates that the building will reopen in the middle of 2017.

In Pasadena, a proposal to convert Morgan’s 48,000-square-foot YWCA building in the city’s civic center into a Kimpton Hotel is working its way through approvals. Architectural Resources Group is leading the effort, which also includes an adjacent 87,000-square-foot, six-story building. Pasadena citizens are carefully watching the design development of the addition, which sits across the street from Pasadena’s Beaux Arts City Hall. According to Kevin Johnson of Pasadena’s Design & Historic Preservation Section, an environmental impact report is expected to be released at the end of October.

Combined, the new hotel buildings would feature 179 guest rooms and suites, meeting rooms, and a 140-seat restaurant. The design also converts the old gym into a large event space. Morgan’s YWCA buildings were known for their beautiful indoor swimming pools. Here, the pool will be kept intact, but

covered and used for a ballroom.

In the late 1980s, the YWCA left the building, finding that the upkeep and maintenance of the historic structure was beyond the organization’s mission. It sat empty for decades, with some promising change in ownership, but little came of those efforts. The City of Pasadena, who now owns the building through eminent domain, is leading the current proposal. There’s been some opposition to the new building component, which sits on land that—while not an official park—is considered by many a public green space. The city’s proposal notes that the nearby Robinson Memorial is unaffected by new construction.

Conservation non-profit Pasadena Heritage has long been interested in Morgan’s Mediterranean gem and helped to protect the structure during its 100-year history. “Pasadena was a progressive community in the 1900s and local women were part of having a vision for the city—one of the things to happen was to have Julia Morgan design our YWCA,” explained executive director Sue Mossman. “Pasadena was on the cutting edge of hiring a woman architect. We are lucky to have this building and have it largely intact with very little change over the last 100 years.” **MZ**

THE WRESTLERS continued from front page departments routinely boast of interdisciplinary and theoretical leanings, Stanford remains more classical in its divisions, but with yearnings toward exchange. Architect Charles Renfro led the design with local Boora Architects serving as architects of record. The resulting architectural parti is a kind of wrestling hold out of Greek sculpture—a match of two equals. “The two programmatic strands, one zinc and one stucco, are intertwined to make a graphic read on the facade,” he explained. The art department, with its messy art spaces—light-filled with clerestory windows—are separated from the department of art history’s more bookish study carrels.

In between the two programmatic opponents, the territory is neutral and hopefully collaborative, such the courtyard and library. In other places, deep persimmon-colored paint maps commonalities. Almost garish, it covers the walls in a wide open-air corridor that leads students into the courtyard from Roth Way. From the street, the space resembles a bright cut, a riotous slash in the otherwise polite facade.

The outdoor courtyard physically and visually links together many of the shared programs. Large windows look into the sculpture studio, wood shop, and gallery. Light sensitive programs, such as the video and photography labs, are located below grade, while a roof garden, or “sky court,” provides makers and thinkers views across campus.

Achieving a balance of apart and together was also a structural challenge. Palo Alto (and all of the West) is a high seismic zone. Each of the diagonal “strands” is a bridge-like steel truss held off the ground on pins. This allows structural components to move independently from each other and from the central art and architecture library. DS+R worked with San Francisco-based Forell/Elssesser Engineers on the structural design. (The local firm had previously engineered Viñoly’s vertigo-inducing Dolby Regeneration Medicine Building at USCF perched on a SF hillside.) According to architect and DS+R project lead David Chacon, buckling restrained braces were used throughout McMurtry, which allowed the design team to forgo heavy sheer walls and open up more transparency between spaces.

The multipurpose Barbara and M. Kenneth Oshman Lecture Hall & Presentation Space is something of a DS+R typology in itself. Several of the firm’s projects feature a performance space that has a glass or retractable rear wall. The ICA theater in Boston looks out over the city’s harbor and the Berkeley Art Museum will have a public screen on the street outside the main auditorium. Here, a bi-folding glass wall opens up to a shared lawn with the Cantor Arts Center. The plan is that the hall and the lawn will be used for events and performances that engage the campus. Once siloed departments can now open (quite literally) their doors to share ideas with the Stanford community.

MZ



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Taking It Outside

A notable, nascent trend in site furnishings: pieces that are specifically designed to accommodate working outdoors. By Leslie Clagett

1 Algarve
Renson

The Algarve terrace cover, offered up to 13 by 20 feet, features a gutter system that drains water away from the rotating aluminum roof louvers. It can be fitted with lighting, heating, and audio accessories.

renson.us

2 Basket Planters
Fermob

A steel frame and convenient handle make these aluminum planters easily portable. The Long model measures 47 by 10 by 21 inches; the High model measures 28 by 13 by 33 inches. Available with anti-UV powder coating in 24 colors. Designed by Fabio Meliota.

fermob.com

3 Cirque Collection
Kornegay Design

These cast concrete landscape containers take their design cues from nature: Composed of 24 facets placed at 15-degree intervals, the tapered-cylindrical forms interpret the earth's rotation. Designed by Larry Kornegay.

kornegaydesign.com

4 Grove Furniture
and Lily Shade
Sixinch

A 90-watt solar panel topping the Lily Shade powers an integral charging station, allowing users at the modular Grove tables and seats to plug in.

grovebysixinch.us

5 BuzziShed
BuzziSpace

This modular, outdoor-ready workspace is framed in metal and sheathed in Sunbrella fabric. A weather-resistant table-bench combo, BuzziBreeze, is also offered. Designed in collaboration with Atelier Tradewinds.

buzzi.space

6 77 754 LED
Bega

This robust bollard provides glare-free widespread symmetrical illumination while doubling as a piece of urban furniture for schools, parks, and other public areas. Fabricated of die-cast aluminum, the fixture is rated for wet locations. Offered in four standard colors with custom hues available.

bega-us.com



On Solid Ground

Decking and pavers can enhance the look of a site while improving its environmental functionality. By Leslie Clagett

1 Treo Unilock

These pavers feature EnduraColor, two performance layers that are compressed and cured together to increase the strength and durability of the surfacing and amplify the intensity of the color. Available in three formats and five colorways.

commercial.unilock.com

2 Aqua Roc Belgard

Aqua Roc permeable pavers boast an attractive residential look that stands up to the heaviest vehicular traffic. The sustainable pavers reduce water runoff, are comfortable underfoot, and ADA-compliant.

belgard.com

3 Sand Tectura Designs

These pressed-concrete pavers are colored by tinting the cement matrix with standard-sized aggregate. Economically priced, the units have a uniform slip-resistant surface and are strong enough to be pedestal-set. In five standard hues; custom shades available.

tectura designs.com

4 Wood Decking Tiles and Versadjust Supports Bison Innovative Products

These deck supports are height-adjustable, have a 1,250-pound weight bearing capacity, and feature built-in slope compensation from zero to half-inch-foot slope. Suitable for residential and commercial projects, the pedestals accommodate a variety of surface materials, including wooden deck tiles and concrete pavers.

bisonip.com

5 Morvan Rocersa

The buff tones of this porcelain paver give it wide aesthetic compatibility. Field tiles are offered in two sizes, with numerous trim pieces available.

rocersa.es

COURTESY RESPECTIVE MANUFACTURERS



Photo: Champ de Mars - Paris : Stéphane Rambaud

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All summer, a lively cavalcade of events and performances testified to a reawakened cosmopolitanism in Detroit and proclaimed a community that is growing in size and complexity. Detroit's 139 square miles are suddenly teeming with contemporary art, design, and development activity. The projects are no longer isolated but connect larger tracts: the Jam Handy industrial film production building-turned-performance space hosts a temporary Sunday market, around the corner from the ONE Mile funk revivalist project by Anya Sirota and Jean Louis Farges, with Catie Newell's studio halfway between. A land rush has begun in the area.

Enter Culture Lab Detroit. The three-year-

old brainchild of Birmingham-based designer and creative director Jane Schulak, Culture Lab Detroit orchestrates dialogues between the Detroit community and internationally renowned designers and urbanists, instigating potentially paradigm-shifting collaborations that evangelize green interventions in the landscape.

"My platform is about connectivity," Schulak said. "I pose a design question each year and try to identify people who will respond to that question in all very different ways."

In early September, urban ecology-themed panels in packed auditoriums at the College for Creative Studies and the Detroit Institute of Arts brought together San Francisco chef Alice Waters, industrial-scale urban farmer

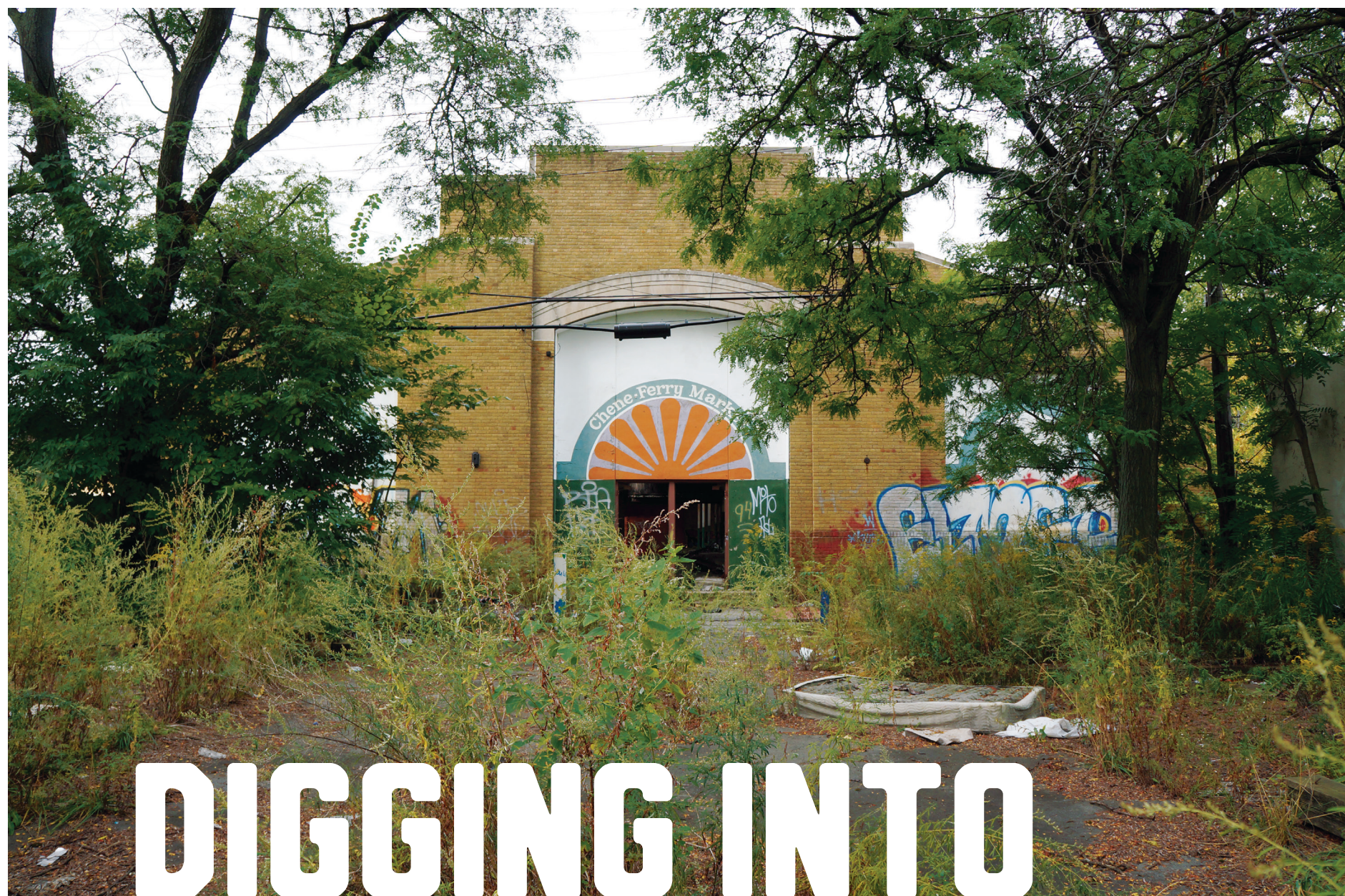
Will Allen, French vertical gardener Patrick Blanc, Oakland landscape architect Walter Hood, and Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto to discuss strategies for greening the city and evolving architecture with nature.

"I've always thought that agriculture could be the lead piece to bringing these cities back," Allen, who grew up in a sharecropping family in Maryland, said. "This city is really primed for local production because all of the vacant land where you could grow food. There's a lot of opportunity."

At Acre Farm in North Corktown, several blocks adjacent to the highway form a patchwork of fertile fields that skip over paved streets, the only sign of a once-populous neighborhood. Acre Farm is in an in-demand

but mostly demolished area between the MotorCity Casino Hotel and a retail strip on Michigan Avenue (pioneered by restaurateur Phil Cooley). The farm is marked with large plywood "CITY DO NOT CUT" signs to prevent public agencies from mistaking it for overgrown lots.

Urban agriculture is not new, yet the diversity of greening tactics and players spreads benefits far from the heavily invested downtown, the Woodward strip, and Midtown areas. The number of farming and gardening initiatives has multiplied: Keep Growing Detroit has supported 4,000 gardens in the last decade with seed packs, transplants, educational, and technical assistance. Nonprofits like the Greening of



STEPHEN ZACKS

DIGGING INTO DETROIT'S FUTURE

**ECOLOGICAL DESIGNERS USE AGRICULTURE AND
LANDSCAPES TO RECLAIM THEIR CITY. BY STEPHEN ZACKS**



STEPHEN ZACKS

Previous Page: The Chene-Ferry Market is a closed-down farmer's market in Poletown. It is part of an urban design plan at the University of Detroit Collaborative Design Center (CDCDC) led by Dan Pitera.

Top: Acre Farm's "CITY DO NOT CUT" signs are meant to prevent public agencies from mistaking crop fields for overgrown lots. This tension between the small scale farm and the urban scale network of municipal government is one of many interesting conditions raised by the urban agriculture in Detroit.

Above: A circular path is planted with flowers and grass, while a fish sculpture combines art with landscape. A small building sits in the background, drawing an illusion to the wild west.

Detroit have planted about 4,000 trees in the past year, while Hantz Woodlands installed 15,000 trees in a square mile of East Detroit. In 2013, the City Council adopted a zoning ordinance that legalized existing urban farms and set standards for agricultural land use.

"For some of the more grassroots or ground-up entrepreneurs, it's all based on returning to true connections between people, relying on businesses that can help support your business, that are within the city itself, and producing real food that you know who grows it," said D MET studio's Liz Skrisson. D MET designed offices and a Great Lakes Coffee shop for Midtown Inc., a major player in cultural developments and a tech innovation district near the Detroit Institute of Arts.

The Ye-Olde-Brooklyn style pioneered by John McCormick in Williamsburg—repurposed wood, distressed paint, thematically culled antiques, industrial objects, and Edison light bulbs—is as pervasive here as elsewhere. Culture Lab Detroit, however, is cognizant of a need to move beyond adaptive reuse to pioneer innovative buildings: nothing of any architectural significance has happened here in decades. Schulak's advisory board is packed with a savvy group of local and international cultural leaders, among them Reed Kroloff, David Adjaye, collector Marc Schwartz, and Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit founder Marsha Miro.

Miro selected Hood and Fujimoto for a panel that emphasized ecological design to create landscapes and structures that connect people and evoke delight. Fujimoto incorporated vegetation into high-rises that mimic both repetitive and idiosyncratic patterns in plant life. Like inversions of vacant houses overgrown with wilderness, the design rationalizes natural forms into building technologies.

"I do think fresh voices are good for a place," Hood said. "Places that become so insular keep repeating the same patterns over and over again: bringing people in might help others get excited."

The dialogues double as provocations for speakers to explore Detroit: local facilitators tour designers around sites and schedule meetings with project organizers and entrepreneurs, offering a platform to present proposals. For the past year, Patrick Blanc has speculated on ways to grow vegetation on the concrete embankments along the Dequindre Cut. Blanc seeks to irrigate the plants without access to running water.

Hood is working on a concept for a square-mile area near the northeastern edge, incorporating blue-green infrastructure concepts from the 2012 Detroit Future City strategic plan to deploy large depopulated spaces for the benefit of those still living there. "One of the things that I'm interested in is how you can change people's sociology through the pattern on the landscape," he said.

The Flower House, a project by Lisa Waud, will create floral installations in a blighted building facing the I-75 highway in Hamtramck. Inspired by the work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, twenty or so florists will descend on the house during



the weekend of October 16, filling its rooms with flower arrangements. Afterward, the house will be deconstructed and the lot will become a flower farm.

Further north, near the Squash House, the Play House, the Power House, the Sound House, and the Ride It Sculpture Park—a well-known collection of repurposed homes and lots by Gina Reichart and Mitch Cope of Design 99 and Powerhouse Productions—ceramicist Abigail Murray and architect Steven Mankouche (Archolab) are building a passive greenhouse in the burned out foundation of a 1920s bungalow. The team

erected a slanted south-facing polycarbonate roof within the existing foundation, cladding the exterior with dark charcoal slats (cutoffs from a lumber mill) charred using the ancient Japanese *shou-sugi-ban* method. Inside, they plan to grow almond, olive, and pomegranate trees, as well as other non-native plants.

“The project is in dialogue with blight in a lot of ways, and how we can deal with blight other than just ripping everything out of the ground and carting it to a landfill,” said Mankouche, a professor at the University of Michigan’s College of Architecture. After the project is completed, Archolab plans to

donate it to a local gardener and evaluate its reproducibility in other places.

Elsewhere in Hamtramck, sculptors Andrew Mehall and Ben Hall, co-owners of the Eastern Market’s Russell Street Deli, are using a large warehouse as a gallery to stabilize a block overgrown with weeds and grass, its double-height space presenting a fair likeness of industrial Bushwick. However, these reclamation projects demand fortitude. The day we visit, Hall struggled to open the gallery door after a break-in the night before—scrapping metal is a full-time occupation for pickup-driving bandits in southeast Michigan. Inside, the gallery exhibits colorful truck-sized inflatable pieces by Chicago-based Scottish artist Claire Ashley.

“In a lot of ways the gallery is just a basic stopgap to keep the neighborhood solid,” Hall wrote in an e-mail. “In one way we’re pretty anti any kind of Richard Florida narrative...As the businesses in the neighborhood that were hanging on by a thread gave up, or let go, or demurred, or decided to forfeit, it became a matter of introducing some solidity, or reintroducing occupants for the sake of the building not being vacant.”

Within this ambivalence lies much of the trepidation about the city’s fast-moving developments. Dan Gilbert’s Quicken Loan-led renovations—all paid for with the ill-gotten gains of payday lending—gobble up dozens of downtown buildings to restore long-lost landmarks. Among these is a

planned SHoP-designed replacement for the symbolically important Hudson’s building.

Another example is Chene-Ferry Market, a voluminous closed-down farmer’s market in Poletown that is part of large-scale urban design initiative led by Dan Pitera’s University of Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC). Situated in a spottily inhabited area on the East Side, RecoveryPark uses urban farming, fisheries, value-added foods, and a farmer’s market to provide job skills training to substance abusers, the formerly incarcerated, and others struggling to land on-the-books employment. Working with the mayor’s office and the new planning director Maurice Cox, DCDC is designing RecoveryPark and other mile-wide areas far from the central business district with a mixture of ecological and commercial functions.

“We wanted to show that every area that looks like this is right adjacent to a dense area,” said Pitera. “Can they be seen more as a unit? Then you design them in a way that this could become blue-green infrastructure, more interesting design opportunities, like retail, that become assets for the denser area. How do we think about design in ways that can keep people in place, think about more off-grid ideas for people who live in neighborhoods like this?”

STEPHEN ZACKS IS AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM REPORTER, THEORIST, AND CULTURAL PRODUCER BASED IN GREENPOINT, BROOKLYN AND A NATIVE



The Flower House is a project by Lisa Waud where artists will make floral installations in a blighted building facing the I-75 highway in Hamtramck

Above: The industrial stock of Detroit provides a unique backdrop for urban agriculture.

STEPHEN ZACKS

NEW (AND OLD) VISUALIZATION TOOLS CHANGE THE FACE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

MAKING BY SEEING



Firms Mathews Nielsen and Heatherwick Studio collaborated on Pier 55 in Hudson River Park, displayed in photorealistic renderings.

Connect the Dots uses low-tech materials to visualize opportunities for storm water infiltration in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Pacoima. (Below left)

Arquitectonica designed the portals and landscaping to the new PortMiami Tunnel. (Below right)

COURTESY HEATHERWICK STUDIO

One would assume that virtual reality technologies that can create fantastical battlefields and solar systems for gamers would be a boon for architects, who can create nearly complete structures without turning a single shovelful of earth. For landscape architects, though, earth poses unique challenges. So do air, light, and water.

With the advance of computer drafting and simulation technologies, such as architectural visualization and 3-D modeling software Twinmotion and Rhino—in addition to relatively old-fashioned tools like Illustrator and Pencil—designers are discovering new, better ways

to create landscapes. They enable designers to represent detail at microscopic proportions. They can place viewers in virtual environments that seek to mimic the experience of seeing the proposed landscape.

“Every image, every piece of that visualization is a design decision,” said Signe Nielsen, principal at Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects, which recently collaborated with Heatherwick Studio on Pier 55, a proposed park-pier on the west side of Manhattan.

Visioning exercises, in which designer-activists seek to change the public’s thinking about a

landscape, if not to change the place itself, are blurring the lines between technology and earth and between designer and public.

The Uses of Representation

As inherently public creations, many landscape projects lend themselves to stakeholder and public-sector input more so than private developments. They must serve the people who look at them as much as they do the people who own and use them. They also must fulfill multiple goals. A park may also be a habitat for native species. A highway median may also absorb

storm water. A golf course can offset a heat island. A landscape can extend up to the stratosphere and down to the water table. Every piece of land is influenced by temperature, geology, precipitation, and countless other invisible factors.

As a result, “These visualizations are shown to a huge range of people, from zoning approval boards, historic preservation boards, open public meetings related to zoning approval,” said Robert Lloyd, senior associate at Arquitectonica who recently designed the landscaping around the portals to the PortMiami Tunnel. “The largest and most public audiences are the various



LEFT: COURTESY AJA RICHARDSON RIGHT: COURTESY ARQUITECTONICA

regulatory boards. Those tend to be folks who are in the industry and who look with a critical eye at what we're representing."

The revolution in computer technologies has given architects and landscape architects a dazzling array of new tools. Those tools, though, may not necessarily be as useful as they appear—especially for landscape architects—and they must be used with discretion.

"I think it's more difficult...than architecture," Lloyd said. "You're dealing with much more loosely defined spaces with much more complex geography. In the simplest way, there's just more information in a landscape rendering."

Static renderings, drawn by hand or with Illustrator, might capture the appearance of a landscape—at a certain moment, from a certain angle—but they cannot express the entirety of its purposes nor the ways that they serve flora, fauna, and people. A landscape may not fit into a neat box for the eye to behold, even with the most advanced visualization software.

"You're trying to render something that's inherently unpredictable," said Lloyd. "The form of one tree is and should be different from the form of the next tree. The way they interact over time in nature is super-complex."

To Visualize or Not Visualize

More so than many other public projects, Pier 55 sprang fully formed into the public consciousness. Funded in part by media titan Barry Diller, the park has been fashioned as more of a gift than a public amenity. The firms used Twinmotion to create renderings of the whimsical space that promises to be the waterfront equivalent of the High Line. It's the distinctive sort of project that might literally be unimaginable, and unsalable, without visual aids.

"The ability to actually do a [digital] visualization at whatever level of detail and finished product that we want to convey is extraordinary," said Nielsen. "I feel that everybody wins. The public knows what it's really going to get. The client knows what it's really paying for. And I know what I've designed."

What Nielsen would use to present a finished work of starchitecture, though, might not have gone over so well with a more nascent project.

"The first and most important thing is to calibrate the type of visualization with the stage in the process, particularly for outreach," said Nielsen.

The trouble is twofold: Programs' capacity for detail can often outstrip designers' own imaginative capacities, especially when a project consists largely of vegetation. And a project that appears complete and polished on screen can, intentionally or not, be an affront to stakeholders who wish to contribute their own ideas or public officials who are given to scrutiny. These situations may call for old-fashioned representations.

"I'd never want to walk into an early-on meeting with a group of stakeholders and show a design that looks finished," said Nielsen. "I think it really shuts down communication."

Therefore, designers must use technology judiciously, being careful to impress but not to overwhelm the public. With the likes of Diller and other big clients, though, they might take the opposite tack: creating dazzling renderings to land a commission or sell units in a residential development.

Appropriation by Visualization

For all its anonymity, California's Owens Lake is one of the most adulterated, and long-contested, landscapes in the United States. The 1913 opening of the Los Angeles Aqueduct appropriated the lake's tributary streams and left a toxic dust-bowl. For generations, engineers have tried to

restore the lake and cut down on dust pollution.

The director of the Landscape Morphologies Lab at the University of Southern California, Alexander Robinson, thinks they might be doing it wrong.

Robinson came up with his own method of imagining what Owens Lake can become. Resembling a 1980s arcade game console, the Rapid Landscape Prototyping Machine for the Owens Lake Dust Control Project (or Owens Lake Machine), invites participants to create their own versions of Owens Lake—ideally, versions that are functional, aesthetically pleasing, and respectful of the place itself.

"We took place-making experience and aesthetics, and inserted those values into a design paradigm of operations, habitat design, and resource management, so it's a response to the idea that maybe we could make an interface for designers that creates a dialectic," said Robinson.

Users can decide how much water the lake should contain, what sort of dust-reducing berms it should employ, what angle of sunlight is most pleasing, and how many birds should be bobbing on the lake surface. A rendering program takes user input to generate two images of the lake: a human-scale view from the surface and an abstract map-like view from above.

"It has two different views of planning," said Robinson. "There's a first-person view, the human experience, and the planner's view of someone who's having control."

The machine then prints out postcards depicting these not-quite-imagined but not-quite-real versions of the lake, thus making it seem like an actual destination from which to write home. Robinson hopes that the keepsakes will encourage the public to think about ways that the lake can be restored and the concerns that public agencies, in a democratic society, should consider.

"The social imagination is a very powerful political force and guides these projects kind of in a subliminal way," said Robinson.

Another group is leaving its virtual mark not in topography but rather in bathymetry. The Dredge Research Collaborative (DRC) is dedicated to inquiry into underwater landscapes, specifically those that are manipulated, restored, and adulterated by the process of dredging. Their research sites include New York Harbor, the Great Lakes, and Louisiana. Researchers use data-enhanced maps to represent that which is otherwise unknown precisely because it is invisible.

"The public is very used to looking at things like watershed maps and water flow diagrams," said Gena Wirth, a member of the DRC and the design principal at SCAPE landscape architects. "We try to make a lot of comparable imagery... looking at (things like) sediment sheds."

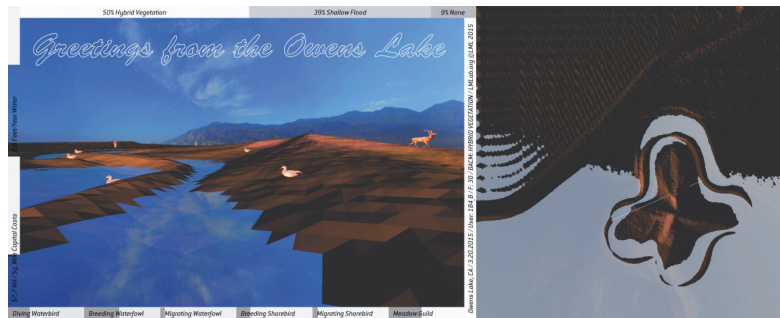
Wirth is also conducting a project in Lexington, Kentucky. There, the firm developed a smartphone app to trace and illustrate streams flowing through the karst landscape underneath the city's downtown. The app is accompanied by a plywood model that displays both city blocks and stream channels. The project is intended to make residents aware of these hidden waterways and to consider the natural cycles that persist even amid urbanization.

"It's difficult to get people excited about what is essential culvert underground," said Wirth. The app is "definitely an alternative way of interpreting landscape architecture. It's about visualizing something that is invisible. It's more narrative-based."

The Image of Nature

Other types of visualization convey not what the land looks like—with or without deliberate design—but rather how it functions.

Throughout Los Angeles' current four-year drought, many critics have wondered why the city does not capture its rainwater or at least use it to replenish its natural aquifers. Aja Bulla-Richards, of the Arid Lands Institute at The University of Southern California, Woodbury



The director of the Landscape Morphologies Lab at the University of Southern California, Alexander Robinson, created the "Owens Valley Machine" to help stakeholders envision the restoration of Owens Lake. Using the machine (above), they can manipulate the habitat's elements and then print out a post card of their creation (above left).

University, has developed a low-tech way of explaining why it's not so easy.

Richards illustrated the mysteries of permeability in a pilot project called Connect the Dots. She enlisted residents in a working class community in Los Angeles' Pacoima neighborhood to place manhole-sized multicolored dots throughout their community. Richardson identified areas of low, medium, and high permeability, correlated with dot colors. By interpreting Richards' data, residents placed dots in appropriate places, thus turning the landscape itself into its own data set.

"I think having this one to one coding notation of the street lets people interact with it in a more visceral, direct way," said Richards. "It's different from having a map."

Richardson said that this low-tech version of augmented reality can apply to almost any set of spatially oriented information in an urban landscape.

"It's a quick, cheap transformation that allows people to think about the street differently without concerns over major investments in change," said Richards.

And ultimately seeing differently so a public can think differently about landscape and the built environment is what these visualization tools are all about. Digital software and participatory interactions have the ability to go beyond video game fantasy and engage a larger stakeholder discussion on the design and impact of real world landscapes now that there are more tools to complement, restore, and even improve what nature has given us.

JOSH STEPHENS

COURTESY ALEXANDER ROBINSON

OCTOBER

FRIDAY 30
EVENT

Examining the Right to Bicycle
12:00 p.m.
Distance Learning Center
Portland State University
cca.edu

SATURDAY 31

**EXHIBITION OPENING
Hopscotch:
A Mobile Opera for 24 Cars**
The Industry
244 San Pedro St.
hopscotchopera.com

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY 1

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Cao Fei: Shadow Plays**
10:00 a.m.
Auditorium Building
The Mistake Room
1811 East 20th St.
tmr.la

Rain Room

10:00 a.m.
Los Angeles County
Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
lacma.org

TUESDAY 3
FILM

Frank Gehry
2:00 p.m.
Resnick Pavilion
Los Angeles County
Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
lacma.org

WEDNESDAY 4

**LECTURE
Kelly Shannon, Ph.D
Water & Forest Urbanisms**
6:00 p.m.
Gin D. Wong,
FAIA Conference Center
Harris Hall
USC School of Architecture
arch.usc.edu

THURSDAY 5

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Matter, Light, and Form:
Architectural Photographs
of Wayne Thom, 1968–2003**
6:00 p.m.
WUHO Gallery
6518 Hollywood Blvd.
wuho.architecture.woodbury
.edu

**New Objectivity: Modern
German Art in the Weimar
Republic, 1919–1933**
2:00 p.m.
Broad Contemporary
Art Museum
LACMA
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
lacma.org

LECTURES

**Natalie Jeremijenko
AICAD 2015 Symposium
Keynote Simulcast**
5:00 p.m.
Campus Center
California College of the Arts
1111 Eighth St.
San Francisco
cca.edu

**Frank Escher and Ravi
GuneWardena
Escher GuneWardena
Architecture**
5:30 p.m.
Lawrence Hall
1190 Franklin Blvd.
Eugene, OR
calendar.uoregon.edu

WEDNESDAY 11
LECTURE

Sam Jacob: Strange Harvest
6:00 p.m.
Gin D. Wong, FAIA
Conference Center
Harris Hall
USC School of Architecture
arch.usc.edu

EVENT

Sound and the City
6:00 p.m.
SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission St., San Francisco
spur.org

SATURDAY 14
LECTURE

**Frank Gehry Retrospective
Student Visit**
10:30 a.m.
LACMA
5905 Wilshire Blvd.
arch.usc.edu

EVENT

**Janet Cardiff
The Forty Part Motet**
10:30 a.m.
Fort Mason
2 Marina Blvd., Building A
San Francisco Museum of
Modern Art, San Francisco
sfmoma.org

MONDAY 16

Craig Hodgetts
6:30 p.m.
Decafe
1317 Perloff Hall
UCLA Department of
Architecture & Urban Design
Los Angeles
aud.ucla.edu

TUESDAY 17
EVENTS

Start-Up City
6:00 p.m.
SPUR San Jose
76 South First St.
San Jose
spur.org

WEDNESDAY 18
LECTURE

**Beatrice Galilee
The Institute Effect**
7:00 p.m.
W.M. Keck Lecture Hall
Southern California Institute
of Architecture
960 East Third St.
sciarc.edu

FRIDAY 20
EVENT

**James Burnett
& Mark Rios
Landscape as Necessity
Debate Series**
6:00 p.m.
Helms Design Center
8745 Washington Blvd
Culver City, CA
arch.usc.edu

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COURTESY THE MISTAKE ROOM

CAO FEI: SHADOW PLAYS

The Mistake Room
1811 E. 20th St.
Los Angeles, CA 90058
Through November 21, 2015

Cao Fei's first solo exhibition in L.A., *Shadow Plays*, features a chaotic conglomerate of contemporary urban forms in Chinese life. Focusing on the obscurities, Fei's work offers a surreal sideways glance at China's rapid development. Utopian and dystopian universes exist in her video and "Second Life" artworks, representing the hypothetical extremities to which China is susceptible as a product of growth and potential collapse.

Pop-culture references punctuate *Shadow Plays*, intertwining developmental, cultural, psychological, and economic shifts in her home country. Fei adds an overriding sense of playfulness to the situation. The almost childlike arrangement and oversaturation of components makes the dystopian undertones of her work all the more disturbing, amplifying the fact that, like children, we are all perhaps powerless to the external forces being exhibited on and in China today.

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GEHRY PARTNERS, LLP; FREDRIK NILSEN

Exhibiting Frank Gehry

Frank Gehry
Los Angeles Contemporary Art Museum
Through March 20, 2016

LACMA should follow the lead of natural history museums and allow sleepovers in the Resnick Gallery during the run of its Frank Gehry retrospective. In place of little kids dreaming of dinosaur skeletons coming to life, architectural

aficionados would share a sense of wonder as the models and sketches morph into buildings they could explore in their sleep. No exhibition I can recall so stimulates the eyes and imagination; it's even more exciting than walking through the vast

studio in which this work is created.

If you don't get to camp out, you should pay repeated visits and take pleasure in the fact that Gehry has made Los Angeles his home for seven decades and left an indelible mark on the city, despite a general lack of appreciation. Only now, 26 years after he won the competition to build Walt Disney Concert Hall, is this prophet winning accolades and substantial commissions close to his base in West Hollywood and Santa Monica. He may even realize his ambitions as an urbanist with a compelling master plan for the

Los Angeles River.

Architecture challenges the idea that art museums should show nothing but precious originals. A painting is either from the artist's hand, or it's a copy (or worse, a fake). Buildings can be represented only by two-dimensional images or sketches, by videos that offer little sense of scale or volume, or by models a fraction of the size. An architecture exhibition requires the spectator to make a leap of imagination, to transform what one sees into a three-dimensional reality. This can be difficult when the forms are shockingly new, and it's easy to dismiss the unfamiliar as fraudulent. When the Walt Disney Hall was first presented as a black and white photo of the model in the *Los Angeles Times*, it was dismissed as a pile of broken china, a disparagement the editors cheerfully embraced.

A similar incomprehension greeted other works that were later acclaimed as masterpieces, here and elsewhere. Parisians are peculiarly resistant to novelty—they raged against the Eiffel Tower when it was first proposed, and the Louis Vuitton Pavilion drew its share of brickbats. But the Gehry exhibition of 2013 at the Pompidou drew record crowds and may have won over many skeptics.

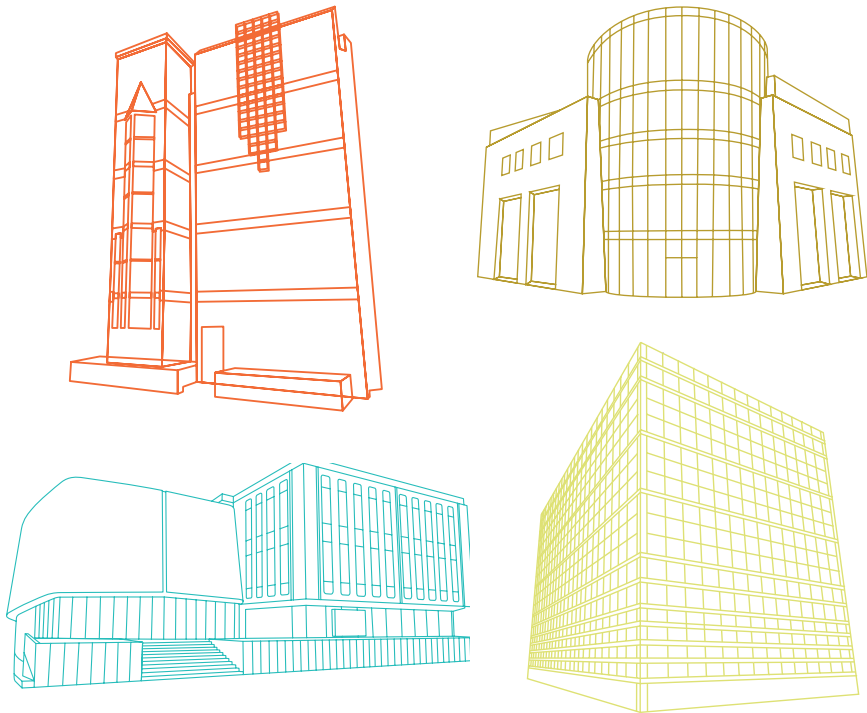
Stephanie Barron, LACMA's senior curator, worked with the Pompidou curators and with Gehry Partners to adapt the French show to the expansive Resnick Gallery. The team spaced out the exhibits

to give them room to breathe, and added ten current projects as a coda to the retrospective. The exhibits are arranged chronologically and by theme on a pinwheel plan with six display areas leading off, but these divisions are hard to make out, and it's tempting to stray. The horizontal sprawl of the exhibition could be seen as a metaphor for the city. Sketches and models of different sizes are supplemented by still images on video screens, plus showings of *Sketches of Frank Gehry*, a documentary by his good friend Sydney Pollock, and a video interview with Pompidou curator Frédéric Migayrou.

This retrospective contrasts sharply with the very experiential 1987 Walker Art Institute traveling exhibition and its walk-through mock-ups. And it's a different beast from the Guggenheim exhibition of 2001, designed by Gehry to evoke the messy process of creation, with disorderly piles of material samples, sketches, and study models that evoked his studio. The extraordinary variety and fertility of the work is played up by the orderly arrangement, concise labels, and 60 clearly articulated projects. There are moments of serendipity, such as the model of the Abu Dhabi museum dwarfed by Michael Heizer's "Levitated Mass" in the park beyond the gallery. One artwork overwhelms another; the real world intrudes on a simulation of reality.

Like Picasso, Gehry is constantly reinventing **continued on page 22**

LAtitudes from Heyday Books takes an unconventional approach to discussing L.A. architecture



LESLEY PEDRAZA, COURTESY MAX CENTER

GUIDES AND GUARDIAN ANGELS

LAtitudes: An Angeleno's Atlas, Heyday Books, \$30
Under Spring: Voices + Art + Los Angeles, Heyday Books, \$20

For the last 40 years, Berkeley-based Heyday Books has published dozens of excellent works, particularly in the realms of history, geography, and urban studies. Many of their books have a Northern California focus, but two of their most recent spotlight Southern California.

Under Spring by Jeremy Rosenberg catalogs the changes occurring in Northeast Los Angeles. Fusing art history and urban planning, this book collages 66 voices from performance artists, scholars, activists, urban planners, politicians, and graffiti writers to chronicle the transformation of a no-man's land under a bridge next to the Los Angeles River into a dynamic art space for live performances. The focus on this location is a metaphor for the recent wider spread changes occurring across Los Angeles with both the Los Angeles River and emerging art scene.

From 2005 to 2009, Rosenberg worked for the Annenberg Foundation on the Downtown Los Angeles-based projects of the artist Lauren Bon. Bon was involved with the creation of the thirty-two acre park, "Not a Cornfield," as well the "Farmlab," and eventually "Metabolic Studios." Over this time, Rosenberg was a daily witness to the rise of an emerging art community where urban planning, architecture, environmental, and political issues collided.

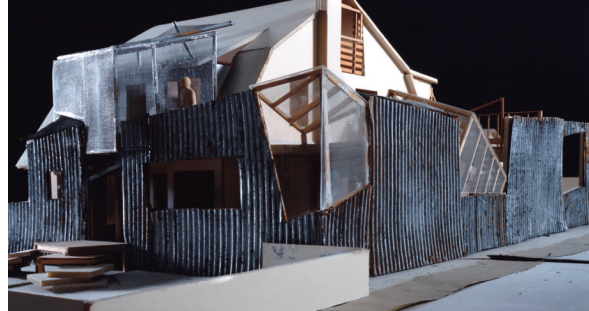
He explains more in the preface: "As a writer, I was used to having to travel from place to place in search of fantastic stories. During the years above, I didn't have to go

anywhere. All the stories came to me. One day, the mayor would stop by. The next, leading academics. The next, Native American activists preparing for a ceremony. The next, famous international artists, musicians, or actors."

The lively dialogue creates the framework for the book. The insight offered by thinkers like the progressive urban planner James Rojas and the founder of the Friends of the Los Angeles River, Lewis MacAdams, presents a candid snapshot of a city being transformed. UCLA professor Fabian Wagmister explains the importance of the site described in the book in greater detail: "In between the Spring Bridge and the Broadway Bridge there is a really amazing area. Being at the riverbed, with those two bridges between, to me always felt like an amazing urban amphitheater." This amphitheater is what Rosenberg masterfully captures, and for his efforts the work was declared the winner of the 2013 California Historical Society Book Award.

LAtitudes: An Angeleno's Atlas is an anthology of essays and thematic maps edited by Patricia Wakida. The book's premise was inspired by the author Rebecca Solnit and the twenty-two thematic maps she used to explicate the Bay Area in her award-winning work from 2010, *Infinite City*. Each thematic map in her book is paired with a short essay that explains the idea being mapped. *LAtitudes* follows this template by including 19 thematic maps on Los Angeles with an essay accompanying each. The book is divided "into three **continued on page 22**

Frank Gehry's eclectic home in Santa Monica



GERALD ZUGMAN/MAK/COURTESY GEHRY PARTNERS, LLP

EXHIBITING FRANK GEHRY

continued from page 21 himself and reinterpreting familiar themes and motifs. In 1978, he shocked his neighbors by deconstructing a Dutch cottage, wrapping it in plywood, galvanized metal, and chain link. In the new house he is building for his wife and himself, pitched roofs float free in another tongue-in-cheek variation on the conventional family house.

Those of us who have had the good fortune to explore Gehry's work around the world, from MIT's Stata Center to the Museum of Biodiversity in Panama, Berlin's DZ Bank, and the

Fishdance Restaurant in Kobe will recognize the linking threads, reoccurring ideas, and the uniqueness of each project. Walls billow like sails, roofs tilt, and structures writhe with an inner energy. The materials range from brick and stone to titanium and glass, each revealing a previously unsuspected expressive potential. These are hand-made buildings, and the sketches and models are the clay from which they are formed. The software comes into play after the building has taken shape. "The technology provides a way for me to get closer to the

craft," reads a wall quote from Gehry. "The computer is not dehumanizing; it's an interpreter."

Above all, the exhibition demonstrates that an artist lives within the architect, guiding his hands, inspiring every move, even as he shapes buildings to context and purpose, staying (hopefully) on schedule and on budget. No wonder Gehry provokes vitriol from puritans, philistines, and lesser professionals—as did Borromini, Palladio, and Wright before him. Art critic Robert Hughes wrote of the Gilded Age architect Stanford White, "If the Renaissance valued *sprezzatura*, the knack of making hard things look easy and natural, White had more of it than any American then or since. He was the kind of gorgeous millipede whose dance is hated and resented by every toad on the forest floor." The same could be said of Frank Gehry.

MICHAEL WEBB IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

GUIDES AND GUARDIAN ANGELS continued from page 21 subsections: "Orientations," "Histories," and "Perspectives."

Wendy Gilmartin's essay "Ugly Buildings" celebrates and maps the structures that make up "the city's messy stew of urban elements." Gilmartin acknowledges the legacy of great Los Angeles architecture, but is personally more inspired by its ugly counterparts. "Let the critics concern themselves with the architectural beacons of our contemporary times, ugly buildings are really where it's at," she writes. Moreover, she feels that "Ugly buildings are the stock of the people, and they are the products of their culture and history. They're kind of like us, in a way." To this end, she lauds the postmodern three-story Kentucky Fried Chicken in Koreatown, a stucco dingbat apartment in Palms, and a gaudy mini-mall on Valley Boulevard in San Gabriel.

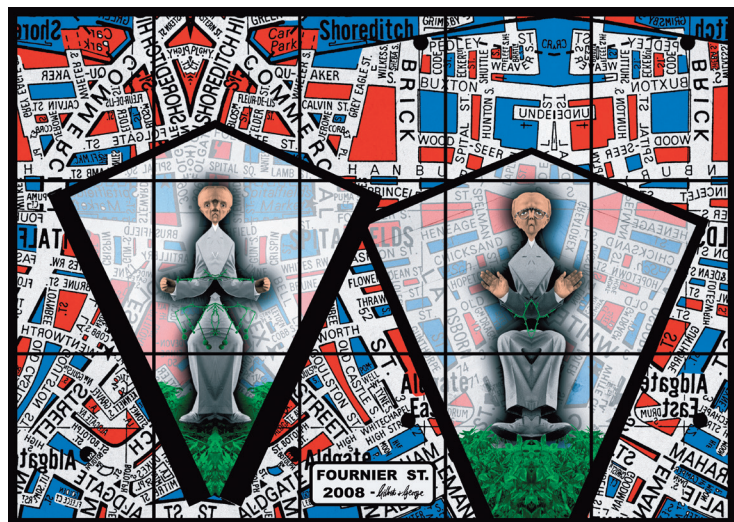
Her explanation for the plethora of ugly buildings in Los Angeles connects to the transitory nature of the city. "Much of the ugliness in Los Angeles stems from an attitude of disposability toward buildings," she writes. "Build it quick and then flip it, tear down, rebuild, gentrify, repeat." She writes a convincing ode to ugly buildings and puts them in the proper context in regard to the rest of Southern California's built environment.

Steven Graves, on the other hand, moved to Los Angeles in 2003 and shortly after

observed "that Woody and Buzz provide excellent metaphors for exploring the landscape of America's classic postwar suburb." In his essay, "Woody and Buzz: Landscape Motifs in the San Fernando Valley," he passionately describes two prevalent themes in the residential, commercial, and industrial landscape of the Valley. "Cowboys and spacemen are everywhere in the Valley: the former evoke a romanticized past and the latter a romanticized future as those dreamed by those living in the 1950s and '60s," he writes. Moreover, Graves examines how, "the gun-slinging past and rocket-ship future imagined by Cold War-era Valley residents are still etched in the environment today, selling everything from alcohol to used cars to insurance." Graves maps these sites from Woodland Hills to Burbank. The metaphor works well and directly relates to both the former prominence of the aerospace industry during the Cold War and the mythology of the Western past that permeates Southern California, in film and domestic architecture like the ranch home.

Both Heyday titles blend historical information with the latest contemporary developments in the city's political and built environment. Together they offer an in-depth, well-rounded, and timely snapshot of 2015 Los Angeles.

MIKE SONSKEN IS AN EDUCATOR, JOURNALIST, HISTORIAN, AND POET.



GILBERT & GEORGE (ARTISTS), FOURNIER STREET 2008

GET LOST

Mapping It Out: An Alternative Atlas of Contemporary Cartographies
Edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist
Introduction by Tom McCarthy
Thames & Hudson, \$50

Charting uncertain territory is an architect's primary function. Sites are investigated, plans are drawn, and structures are built—although not always as depicted or intended. Sometimes mere sketches depict a framework for improvisation where one can find success or get lost.

Novelist Tom McCarthy introduces this collection, which emerged from the *Map Marathon* at the Serpentine Gallery's 2010 annual pavilion programming. Hans Ulrich Obrist, one of the event's curators, edited the tome of maps, ranging

from didactic to imaginary and from concrete to abstract. As McCarthy reminds us, "Cartographies can be altered endlessly to reflect different priorities...[and] challenge with which maps depict the 'truth.'"

Referencing György Kepes, Obrist identifies the book as both an investigation and conversation of mapping and a "pooling of knowledge" that can help readers understand and navigate "the increasingly complex terrain that is contemporary life." However, more than a few maps indicate life is tied to a cyberspace between land and imagination, rather than *terra firma*.

Each of the book's five sections addresses a different theme. In the first, "Redrawn Territories," Jonas Mekas interprets Manhattan by whiting out the area between 14th and Murray Street and projecting his memory of the locales of his friends, bars, and film houses. At

another scale—to make people realize the size of Africa—Kai Krause stuffs foreign countries into the continent's outline. The combination of the U.S., China, India and Eastern Europe leaves plenty of room for much of Western Europe.

Phillip Hughes' *Ingleborough* (1998) is a bit more interpretive and representational of land formations, while Doug Aitken's *Manhattan Metamorphosis* (2008) is an abstract array of red lines and planes.

The section "Charting Human Life" swerves all over, attempting to "point toward a land of the future." Tim Berners-Lee navigates "influences in the World Wide Web technology," although his *Dungeons & Dragons*-style illustration belies its high-tech content. Tom Standage goes back in history with a "map of the internet in 1901," which traces that year's international telegraph system, from which Internet connections eventually sprung. Conversely, Emanuel Derman in *Pleasure Pain Desire: A Map of Emotions* uses a simple, box-laden flow chart to relate human psychology. Attempting to make the politics of architecture visible in domestic interiors, architect Andres Jaque provides *Fray Foam Home* (2010) to illustrate the origins and use of the building's resources, but without details, it appears as mere decoration. Meanwhile, the red-lined detail of Tehching Hsieh's *One Year Performance* (1981–82) does not enhance the original information. Claude Parent's heavy ink sketches in the *Le Tsunami Humain* series take us far from the

his utopian 1960s oblique to suggest fragmentation and disarray that humanity needs to overcome.

The cartographers in section three, "Scientia Naturalis," use their work "to reach some truth of the natural world," whether it's genomic, DNA, charting worms and wasps, or explorations of space-time continuum. Dave McKean's map juxtaposes an image of a human heart over London's M25 motorway in a particularly Ballardian move, though it is inspired by Iain Sinclair's book *London Orbital* rather than *Crash*. More naturalistic, both Albert-László Barabási and Yong-Yeol Ahn categorize a number of maladies and food flavors, respectively, and network their relations in bubble diagrams, the latter in relationships among tastes and frequency of use.

"Invented Worlds" opts for complete imagination. Opening the section, John Baldessari's *Swamp* (2010) humorously speculates that a "found photograph" could depict the location of comic character Swamp Thing's home. Yona Friedman follows with the word-based *A Map to the Future* (2010). David Adjaye's *Europolis* (2012) collages the European Union's capital cities into a single "imagined, phenomenological city...[that] explores extremes of scale and the diversity of grain" that reveals a simultaneous density and emptiness.

The final section, "The Unmappable," attempts to visualize an abstract idea or an event that has not yet happened. Toyo Ito supplies a porous sponge-like

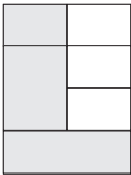
graphic that suggests a more complex, heterogeneous, and diverse direction. What it charts is unclear, perhaps it's a map in search of a place. Some cede to colorful scribbles, while text dominates others in a reminder of verbal directions, such as Philippe Parreno's discussion of mapping and invisibility and Tris Vonna-Michell's page. Oraib Toukan's *20/20* is a simple and subtle combination of a concrete poem and a collage studying distance, size, and scale.

The book design by Daniel Streat of the provocative studio Barnbrook, is on par with the maps. Each section launches with a topographic spread depicting chapter number and contours organizing the contributors. A title block accompanies each contribution with the artist's name and occupation, and then title and text if they exist. Each is designed as an interpretation or key to the map, an admirable feat considering there are 120 maps. With such diversity in the atlas, I often found the title blocks interesting—repetitive in language yet different in form.

Unfortunately for such a beautifully designed and interesting atlas, the five themes create an uneven organization. Perhaps the answer lies with polar explorer Erling Kagge, included in "Charting Human Life," who implores us to engage our inquisitiveness and exploratory intuitions: "It can feel both unpleasant and somewhat risky to explore the world. But perhaps it's even more risky to do nothing."

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Peter Zumthor's June 2014 LACMA scheme took a grand leap across Wishire Boulevard.



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perimeter, and the building would separate street from park. Instead, the building and the art are lofted off the ground, allowing access into the center of the building from beneath. The ambulatorium, a continuous circulation space surrounding the galleries, offers views across the city that help to orient the visitor within the building and lead to the galleries' entry points.

And, of course, we all want to know more about the space beneath the museum. We want to see what the vertical play will be, the rise and fall of the public topography against its horizontal datum, and we want to see how the space will meander in and out from under its building. And why the shrieking, as if the building's underside were exposing something indecent?

This is Southern California. A large covered outdoor space is a good thing. This is a space that will connect the street to the park, a space that will be filled with people and activities—bars, cafés, restaurants, outdoor concerts—that now populate LACMA's current covered outdoor spaces. It will be unlike anything we have seen before in Los Angeles. I predict LACMA's out-of-door foyer will become our city's agora.

If visual aids must be provided, one can look at Herzog & de Meuron's Barcelona Forum Building, which floats above its site. Beneath that building exists a glorious shaded space, a reprieve from the relentless Mediterranean sun.

It is clear, though, that the new LACMA may just be too quiet for some, not offering enough entertainment or spectacle. Or, as Giovannini concludes, "Zumthor represents one end in architectural debates currently polarized between complexity and simplicity. In choosing Zumthor, LACMA has taken sides in a broader polemic, becoming both a testing ground and a battleground." Our architectural world, though, is more nuanced. Let us distinguish between architecture that is complex and architecture that is complicated. There are enough examples of architecture that pretends to *épater la bourgeoisie*—an important cultural position one hundred years ago—and instead manages only to *amuser le bébé*.

Complexity in art may be expressed in a simple form, a complex idea in a simple phrase. It is precisely the tension between conceptual complexity and formal simplicity—the absence of noise—that makes Zumthor's work so good.

FRANK ESCHER TRAINED AT THE ETH IN ZURICH AND IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPALS OF THE LOS ANGELES FIRM ESCHER GUNWARDENA.

Architecture and the Court of Public Opinion

We should remember why Rem Koolhaas' competition-winning scheme for LACMA's campus project was abandoned a few years ago: There was a lack of funding but, above all, there was a lack of support for the project, making fund-raising infinitely more difficult. A complainers' chorus criticized the concepts and schematics of a project in development. Opposition focused mainly on the tent-like roof, with little understanding that ideas presented in a competition or at an early stage of a project change, sometimes completely, as a project develops. OMA's roof could have easily become an enclosure similar to the one at, say, the Musée d'Orsay, or the courtyard of the British Museum. Instead, the water was thrown out before the tub was full. Let's not have this happen again.

One can legitimately criticize that the fact that Peter Zumthor's project is not yet complete. One cannot criticize what one imagines will come. In a series of lengthy articles, architect and design journalist Joseph Giovannini has led the opposition to the current Zumthor project. There is no question that LACMA has to address its financial obligations—regardless of who designs a new building—or that the selection process could have been more transparent. Nevertheless, one must separate

politics from architecture. They have little to do with each other and muddling these issues serves no one.

Giovannini, like everyone else, has his formal preferences. His Kurt Schwitters-inspired art gallery illustrates these. He is the Godfather of Deconstructivism, and he really wanted one of his friends to get the LACMA commission. The first article of his epic cycle for the *Los Angeles Review of Books* is "A U-Turn on Wilshire: Why Frank Gehry Should Design LACMA." In the last article, he slips in a bit of praise for the new Petersen Automotive Museum down the street: "Its streaming lines will soon give it a striking new physical presence based on visual flows." The new Petersen is—to use a precise architectural term—a piece of garbage. But such is Giovannini's taste and we must accept it.

The insulting and condescending tone of his articles make them difficult to read. His platitudes become tiresome: the "monkish architect coming down from a village in the Alps with promises of architectural simplicity," the "Alpine prophet" who "has come off the hill to levitate our expectations," or the "ayatollah of elementalism" expecting us to make "the hajj to Haldenstein."

Accusations of plagiarism, the inane comparisons, or Giovannini's advice to study the

New York Guggenheim make the articles impossible to take seriously. Frank Lloyd Wright's ramped, continuous gallery, the "thrilling promenade" which "serves the art itself and the display of the collection as a whole" and is, according to Giovannini, "a paradigm waiting for takers." The Guggenheim may be a good space for a promenade but it is not a good space for art—it famously never was.

Giovannini rightfully describes Zumthor's Therme Vals as a "remarkable environment—beautiful, evocative, atmospheric, serene [with a] deft play of elements." Elsewhere, he states that Zumthor "orchestrates entire environments to cultivate atmospheres, not just singular moments, resulting in spaces that are light-and-materials installations."

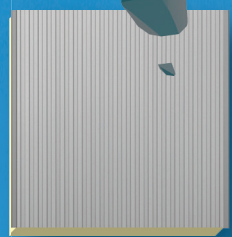
Giovannini cunningly leaves out an equally important quality: the extraordinary choreography Zumthor sets up, the spatial sequence, the visitors' movement through the landscape to and through the building, the horizontal and vertical path towards views, light and landscape. He leaves this out because he is trying to make the idiotic argument that the new LACMA is a one-story building because Zumthor is "spatially limited, even challenged" and "working with a limited tool kit."

But why, then, a one-story

museum? Last year, like many other architects, our firm entered a project for the Helsinki Guggenheim competition. To better understand the needs of the museum, we invited three internationally known art world figures to be a competition advisory team: curator and West of Rome Public Art director Emi Fontana; conceptual artist and Harvard Visual and Environmental Studies professor Stephen Prina; and curator and former Museum Ludwig director Phillip Kaiser.

For weeks, various strategies were examined and we, the architects, learned that the museum is best organized on one level. One level allows collections to expand, contract, and shift over time; it permits non-hierarchical arrangements between collections (without a traditional front or back, Zumthor's LACMA pushes this idea even further); and draws the audience through permanent collections that often go unvisited through strategically placed temporary exhibition galleries. Most importantly, it allows all galleries equal access to natural light. Anyone who has worked with art, anyone who has contemplated art, knows the central importance of light. A museum is as good as its light.

This one level museum could be at ground level, but this would restrict access to the



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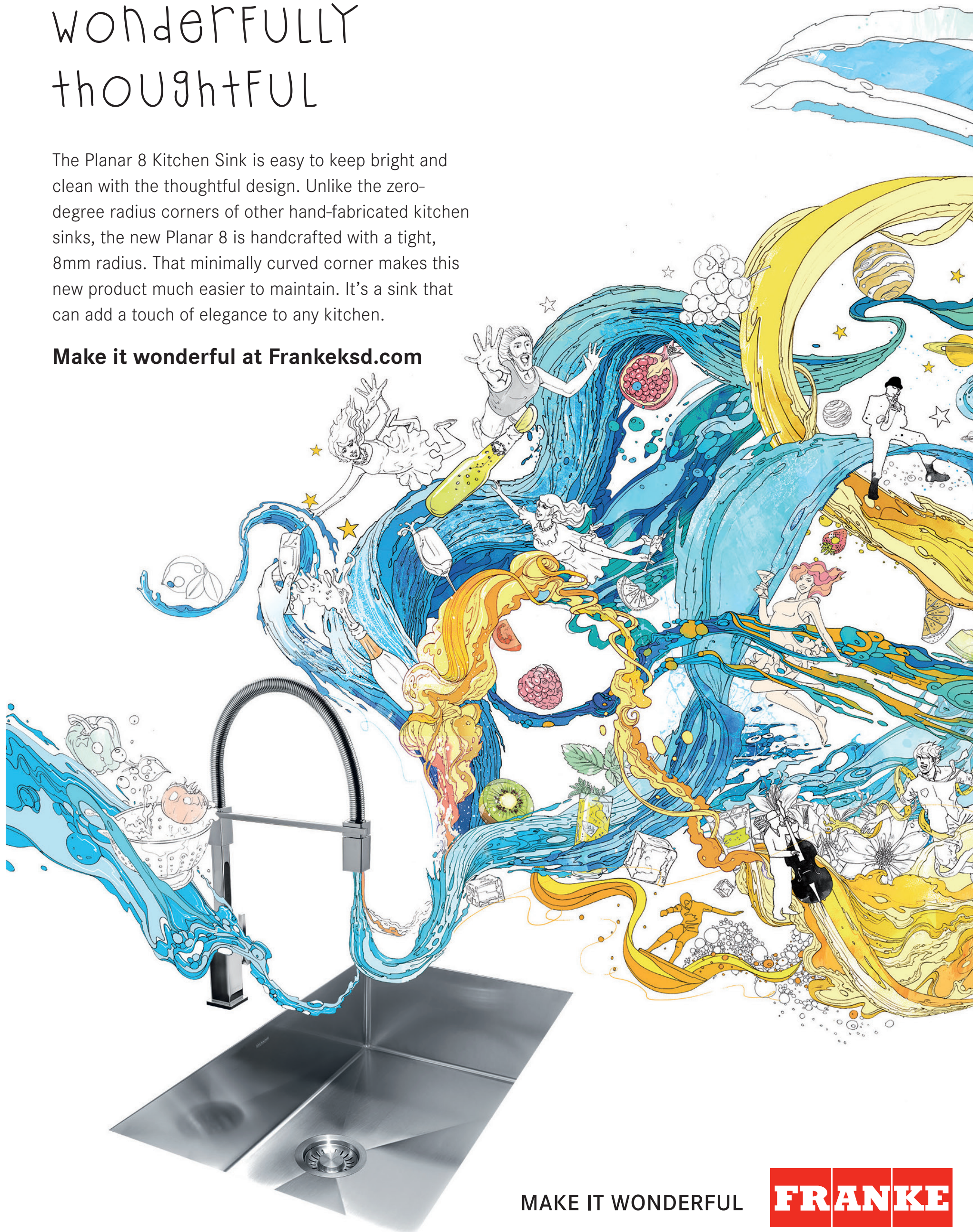



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