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—Cuban-born American artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957 – 1996)

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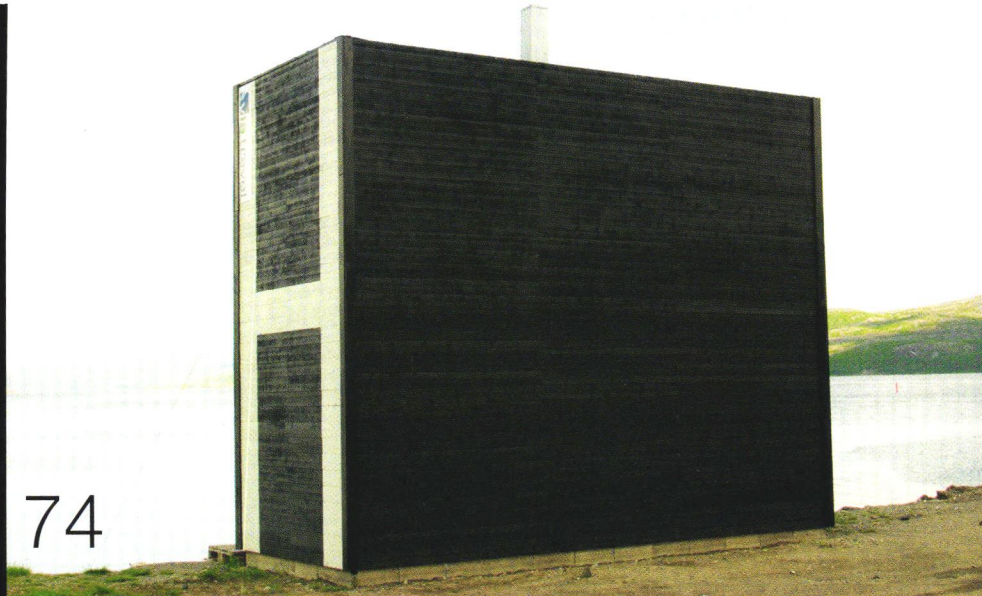
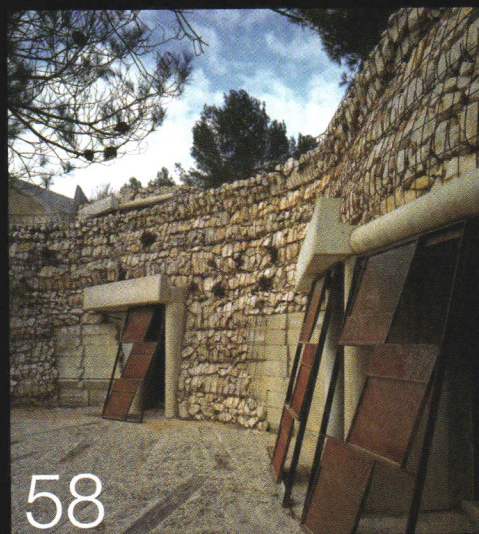
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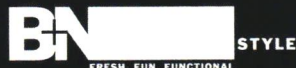
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a journey to the lesser known

When you invite someone to become a guest editor of your magazine, you have to be prepared to surrender some of your own ideas for the good of the collaborative process and out of respect for the chosen collaborator. When you invite someone like Rand Elliott to become a guest editor of your magazine, you can expect, as I rightly did, that that process would become a relentless pursuit of ideas that are not necessarily considered mainstream in the design profession. What I was not prepared for was how, in partnering with Rand to create the July issue of *Contract*, I would not only be immersed in but also impassioned by a new way of looking at design—and at the world through design.


Once he was convinced that I was in a rational state of mind and serious about my invitation, Rand Elliott, FAIA, principal of Elliott + Associates Architects in Oklahoma City, Okla., carefully broached the subject of creating a July issue devoid of the most current conversations and personalities capturing the attention of the design community in favor of a focus on mostly low-profile, uncelebrated designers who quietly practice outside the media spotlight. My enthusiastic grasp of his intention led both of us on a 10-month journey (both virtual and literal) to such seemingly ordinary places as Oklahoma, Nova Scotia, Arkansas, West Texas, New Mexico, northern Norway, and ultimately back to Oklahoma—not at all the places where cutting-edge design appears to be happening.

Or so I thought.

What I learned is that there is a whole group of refreshingly—no startlingly—independent-thinking designers, far from the world's major design Meccas and fastest-growing urban centers, who approach their subject matter with a grassroots perspective that allows them the freedom of expression to do truly unique and innovative work that is not based on a desire to produce the world's tallest, coolest, or edgiest anything. Rather, they embrace their isolation as part of their creative inspiration, producing buildings, interiors, and artworks that are truly of and at one with their surroundings.

As you read the July issue, pay special attention to the common themes that the featured individuals, works, and ideas share. Good—really good—architecture is not something that is done to the land or the immediate environment as much as it is brought forth from it, fully informed on its possibilities and limitations, and seeking to render a place better than it was: Design that is a celebration of place.

I could go on...but I will let the following pages tell the story and leave our readers to contemplate this alternative meaning of good design that the articles hold in store. In the end, the only gift I can give to Rand for all I have learned from him in these past months is my hope that the July issue of *Contract* sufficiently communicates and celebrates his own independent spirit and voice. ☐

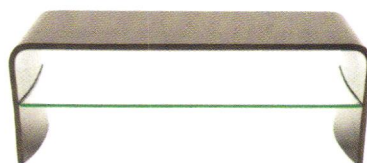
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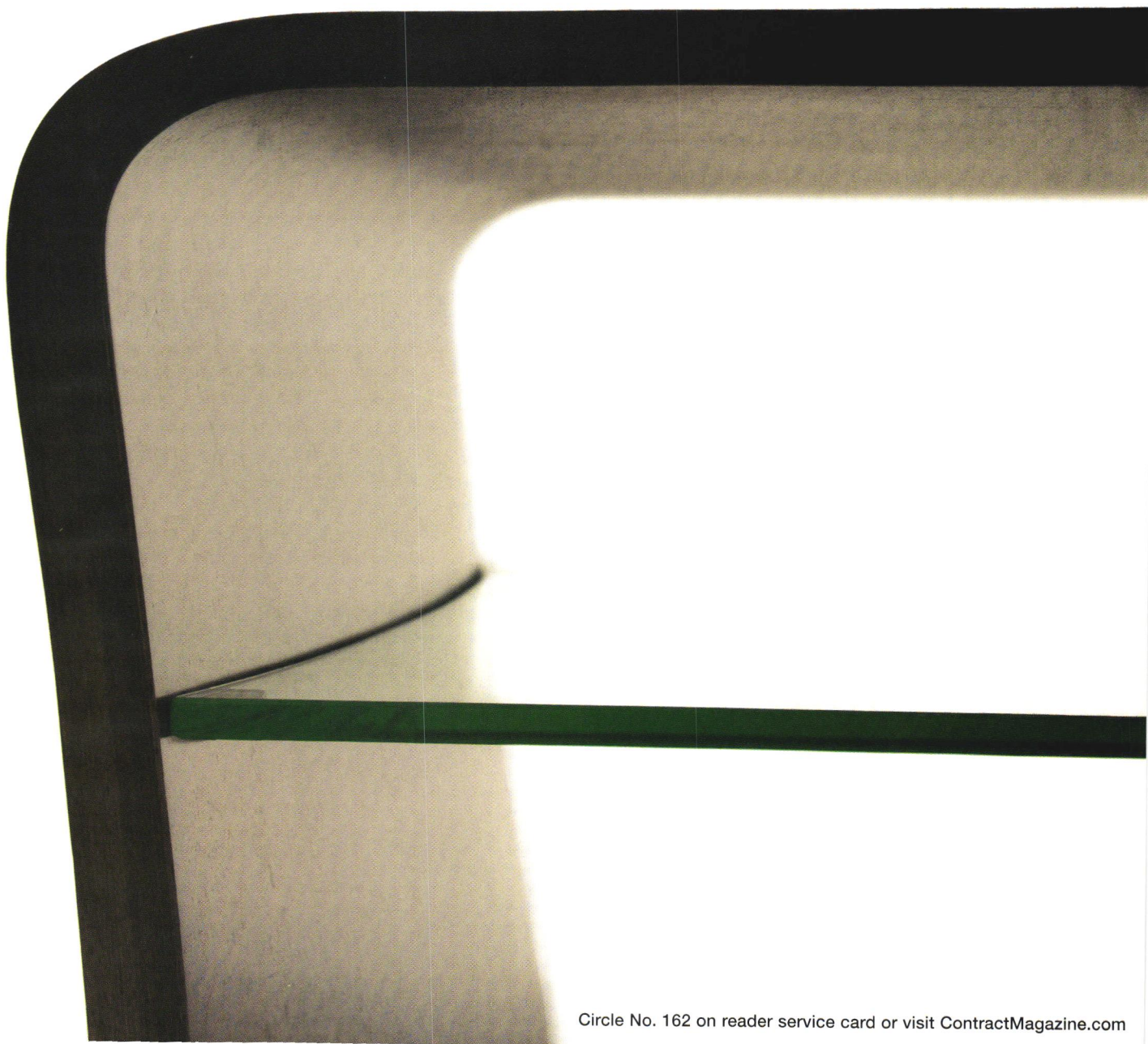


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white space

Antony Gormley: *Blind Light* at the Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, 2007

David D'Arcy

Antony Gormley is not an architect, but he uses the medium of architecture to broaden the power of art. Over the past 20 years, his projects have situated the human figure in unlikely urban and rural spaces. In his latest major work, *Blind Light*, a 28-ft. cube is a space where visual perception is almost obliterated.

The very title "*Blind Light*" (which he showed at the Sean Kelly Gallery in Manhattan last year) states a paradox. A cube with transparent walls, it encloses an area that is filled with a dense, smoke-like fog. The effect is that you can't see more than a few inches in front of you. A white cube becomes a black hole.

In architecture, the point of the glass cube used to be transparent. It was the goal of classic modernist works like Philip Johnson's Glass House, which led to thousands of imitations. In *Blind Light*, those who step inside are in the equivalent of a whiteout, the phenomenon experienced in arctic climates when light shines in such an intense way as to make anything or any sense of perspective disappear.

When you stand outside of the box and look in through its transparent walls, the effect is different. From time to time, you see the hint of hands, heads, and bodies on the other side. Figures are no more than silhouettes, if that. Every hand is the same, as is every figure, like Gormley's arrangements of metal casts of his own body that are in Yorkshire, England, Australia, and China.

Gormley had even grander architectural ambitions for *Blind Light* when he first installed it at the Hayward Gallery in London in 2007. Architecture would be turned into sculpture. He says, "It's as if I'm taking the building as any lump of clay, and I'm investigating what its capabilities are and how it can be pushed and pulled into something that has meaning." It was his meaning, of course.

There is something conceptual about Gormley undertaking such a project. Architecture is called sculptural when it is distinguished by its profile. Obvious examples would be buildings by Frank Gehry or Daniel Libeskind. With *Blind Light*, a sculptor is making a basic enclosure, a cube, which is defined not by its shape, and not even the nature of its space, but by the experience created by the sculptor to make everything in the space visually imperceptible.

Gormley's sculpture has always had an architectural dimension to it and a focus on the human figure in space. Born in 1950, he began in the 1970s by draping bodies (friends of his who agreed to be models) in castings of plaster to create ghost-like forms that resembled the sleeping bodies he saw in India when he traveled there after finishing art school. These bodies outside of architecture were the first sculptures that Gormley made.



Antony Gormley: *Blind Light*

Later he turned to his own tall, slim body, which he molded and set in casts of lead. Placing hundreds on Crosby Beach, near Liverpool, and in the desert of western Australia, he forced viewers to examine their notions of proportion and perspective, standing motionless as light and weather change, and as the Crosby Beach tides go in and out. The figures are identical, yet monumental, evoking ordinary people who lived in these places for thousands of years and never left their imprint on the history that was written.

In another set of sculptures, the Block Works series, Gormley constructed realistically proportioned figures (once again, molded from his own body) of elements that looked like children's blocks. He used larger modules to create Space Station, an amalgamation of metal cubes of various sizes, which he exhibited on its side. Was it an artist's response to the slanting angles that we know in the architecture of Gehry and Libeskind?

Architectural as his sculpture is, Gormley is an artist who uses architecture. He has no client, and there is nothing functional about the work. His architecture, or constructed space, is another medium to dazzle, to entertain, or to confuse you as you explore it.

For Gormley, a sculpture isn't just an object, but a teaching device. He has said that he wants sculpture to be a still point in the moving world where people can sense their own lives against a thing that doesn't move. In *Blind Light*, he forces people to move within his cube as they discover the limits to what, in a white cloud, seems to be infinite space. And what is art if not reaching for the infinite? ■

David D'Arcy is a correspondent for *The Art Newspaper* (London) and a contributing editor at *Art + Auction*. He is also a regular contributor to *The Architects Newspaper*.



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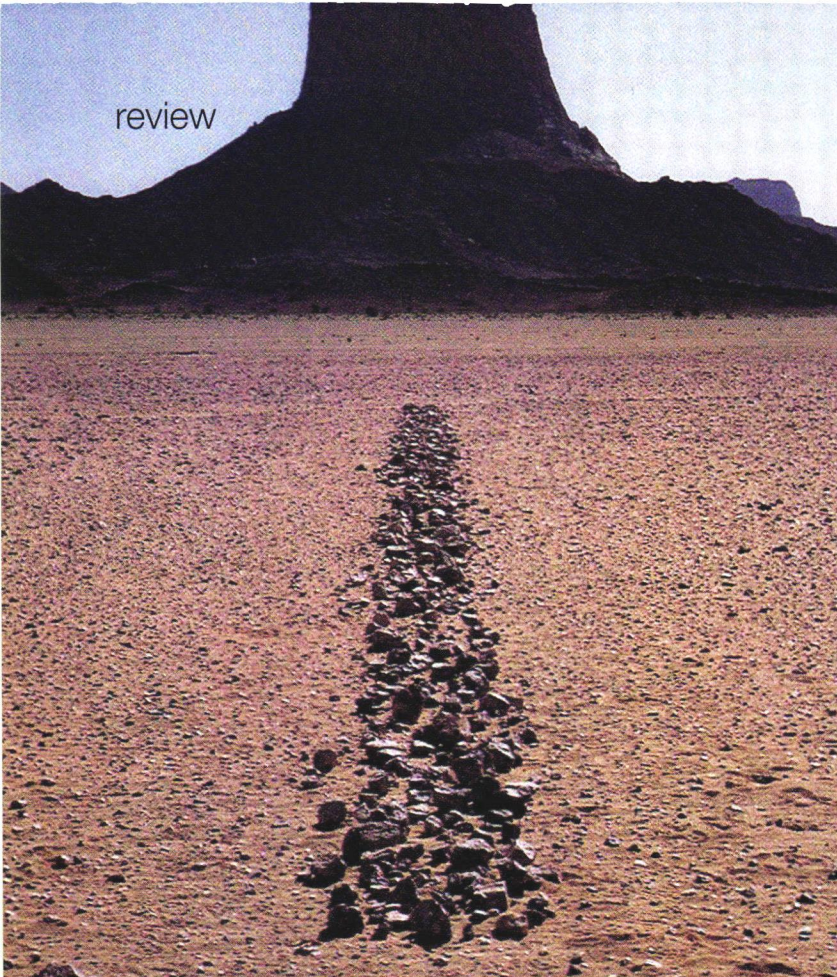
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out of the studio and back to the land

Richard Long: Walking and Marking at The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, 2007

By Richard Cork



Sahara Line, 1988 (top; photograph © Richard Long 2008; courtesy Haunch of Venison).
A Line Made by Walking, England, 1967 (above; photograph © Richard Long).

The following review is excerpted with permission from the Arts section of Financial Times, where it first appeared on August 11, 2007

In the late 1960s, when the young Richard Long emerged with such single-minded conviction, British sculpture was dominated by large, abstract, and often brightly coloured forms in welded steel. Anthony Caro and Phillip King, the leaders of this movement, taught at St Martin's College of Art in London, where Long himself studied. But he had no intention of aping their example. Far from it: like his equally precocious fellow-students Gilbert & George, Long was bent on pursuing an independent path.

Bristol-born and familiar from an early age with the River Avon's mud, he had relished going on rural journeys with his father. Long was delighted above all by country walks and saw no reason why his art should be produced in the confines of a studio. It seemed right to make work outside, far removed from any urban context. And Long also aimed at stripping his art of all inessentials, focusing on elemental circles, lines, and spirals.

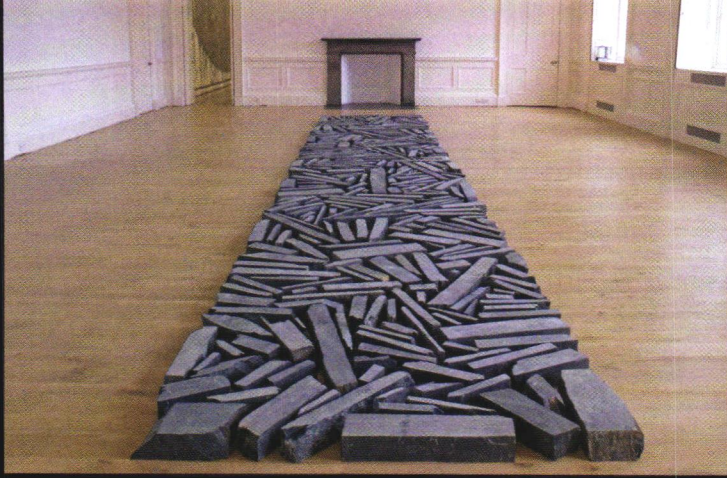
The simplicity of his work cannot disguise its revolutionary stance. Nothing seems more natural than the earliest exhibits in "Richard Long: Walking and Marking," his stunning retrospective at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh—in particular, a black-and-white photograph of a straight line he made by walking back and forth across a field of grass. But the implications of this piece, made exactly 40 years ago, proved boundless. Suddenly, the entire world became open to artists....

...With unflagging energy, he set off during the 1970s to roam through the wildest places on earth. We gradually realise that the duration of the journey, and the ever-shifting stimulus provided by new surroundings, are lodged at the very centre of his concerns. Long often uses word-pieces to chart the changes in weather, geology and light he encounters on an expedition. Titles such as "A 25-Day Walk in Nepal" foreground his fascination with the passage of time, yet it does not prevent him from pausing, contemplating, and then making a substantial work whenever the location demands. A remote stretch of coastland in County Clare prompted him to erect a monumental circle of standing stones, just as imposing as their primeval predecessors.

From the outset, Long has thrived on finding ways to match the intensity of his open-air art in spaces as imposing as the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. He suffered a broken leg while walking in the Highlands only weeks before the opening of this show. But the vitality of the wall-works made specially for this show is outstanding. They come as a release after the first few rooms, dominated by framed photographs, texts and map-works. Long is not afraid to take risks, and even the wildest expanse of wall fails to curb his reliance on spontaneity.

The first of these works is the most impulsive. He threw muddy water from the Firth of Forth straight on to the white surface, creating three enormous splashes. They hit the ceiling and dribbled down to the skirting-board, catching the pulse of Long's dynamism as he works.

Even more spectacular is the panoramic "Firth of Forth Mud Arc". This explosive work looks like the base of a titanic sun about to set, sundered by seven vertical pale streaks coursing through it like lightning. These mud works are impossible



Stone Line, 1980 (top). Firth of Forth Mud Arc, 2007, (above). (Photos © Richard Long; courtesy of National Galleries of Scotland.)

to rub out while Long is working on them. Hence their feeling of high concentration, working from outline drawing and yet embracing a high level of chance when the mud finally splashes down.

The biggest room in the show is occupied by a very different exhibit: a line running in a grey oblong of cut slate pieces down the centre of the wooden floor. None of the pieces touches each other and each one is subtly different. Yet they add up to an indissoluble whole, stretching with a sense of absolute inevitability between the old fireplaces installed at either end. The muscular directness and sobriety of "Stone Line" contrast with the muddy wall-works. It ranks among Long's most severe achievements, and must reflect the family tragedy preceding its execution in 1980. His father died the day he produced this iconic piece. "I saw my mum," he recalls in a catalogue interview, "then came up on the train and made that work."...

...When the exhibition ends in October, all these outstandingly powerful wall-pieces will be destroyed. I wish they could be saved as lasting testaments to Long's achievement in opening up and redefining art's relationship with the land....Looking at them, we feel they could travel on forever, transcending all territorial boundaries and stretching to the edges of the natural world. ☐

For the complete review, please visit: <http://www.ft.com/>

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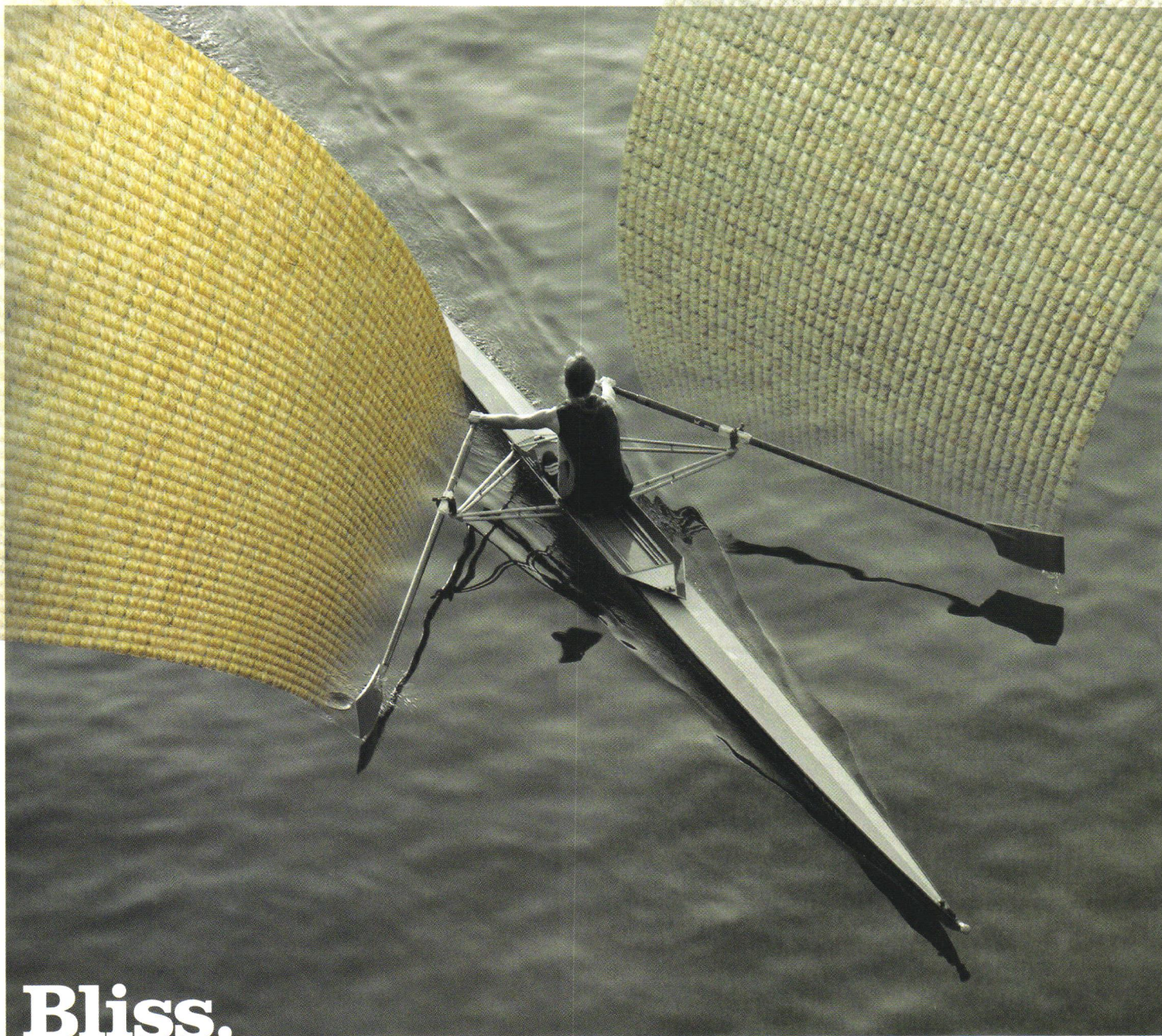
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repurposed

By Adam R. Lanman

Today's product markets have become saturated with sustainable resources, and the forecast for new innovation promises an even greener conscience from design and manufacturing. Of particular interest is the recent and pervasive use of discarded materials and objects to serve new functions.

In the design industry the paradigm of "trash to treasure" is shifting in concept and application. Materials and products that once were considered waste or left over have become jewels. Examples of this shift in thought range from ecologically based accessories like the Cyclus recycled bicycle tube handbag to artistic reclamations like the group REBAR's 2005 "PARK(ing) day" transformation of a metered parking stall into a public green space. Furthermore, the humanity behind this shift can be seen in non-profit organizational goals like those of ANEW, a 501c3 organization that specializes in diverting building waste from landfills by repurposing old commercial materials and furniture to new locations. With this transition, it has become increasingly clear that when it comes to "new" ideas, designers are taking a second look at our 4.5 lbs. of trash produced per worker per day and reassessing its value.

In the design world, this reassessment has already spread beyond a simple diversion of landfill waste and become a potent means of "hacking" into a global stream of stuff. There is a cultural movement today that is looking at all manufactured goods and realizing that one plus one equals three; that is, the adjustment and combination of existing waste, products, and materials yield endless creative freedom in the design of new and useful stuff. The power of this syn-

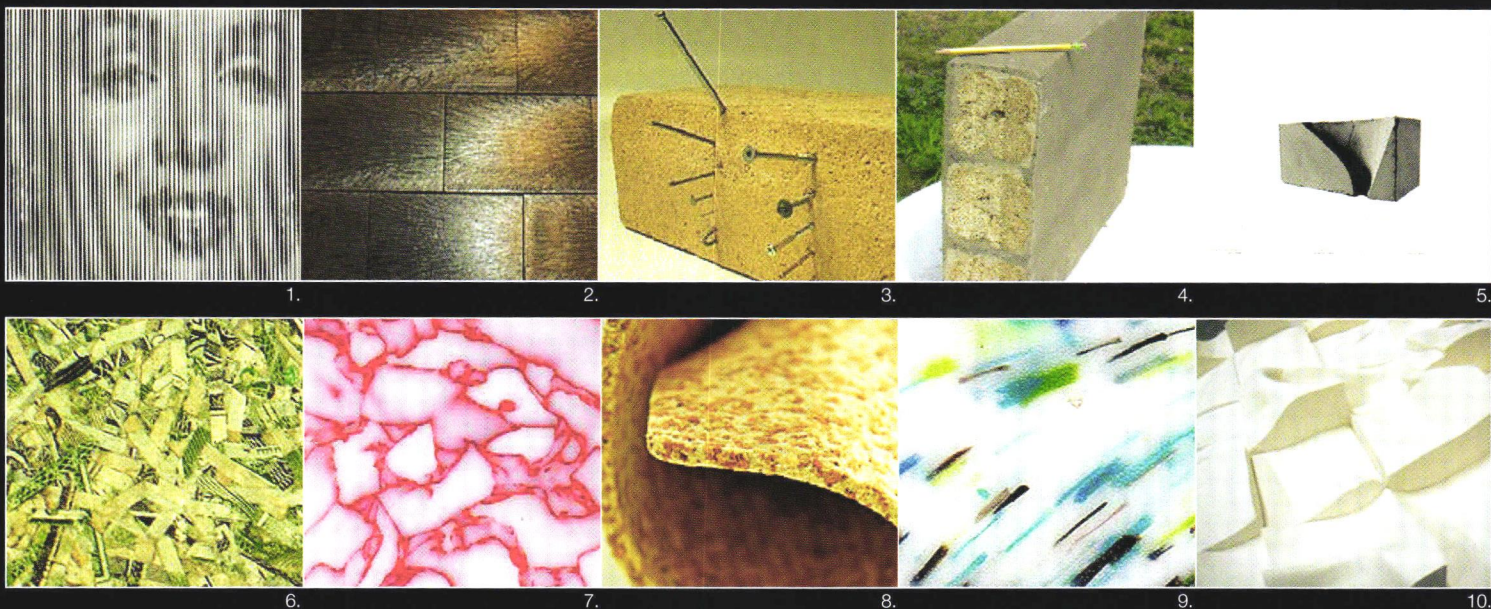


Recycled rubber messenger bag (above left). REBAR's original PARK(ing), Nov. 16, 2005 (above right).

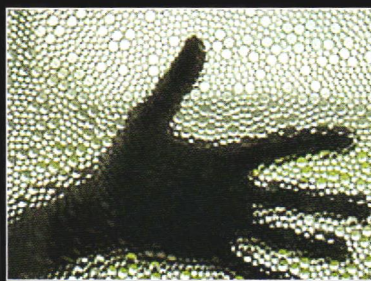
thetic thinking mode is seen when these new combinations not only yield functional and progressive goods but potentially pull straight from the waste stream in order to do so. As a conceptual act, this movement is reminiscent of the 1970s art faction dubbed Arte Povera ("poor art") in which artists demonstrated the creative potential of our world by working with any medium that they found cheap or free in order to transform everyday objects into meaningful art. The artists' social and value-based concept of reclaimed stuff seems almost prescriptive in light of environmental concerns in today's workplace.

Unlike art movements however, environmental designers must hold material to rigid testing standards: glossiness, translucence, structural quality, texture, hardness, temperature, acoustics, odor, fire resistance, UV resistance, weather resistance, weight, chemical resistance, and renewability, to mention a few. Partially due to this responsibility of examination, the question has been asked, "Is this shift in value an ecological trend or a sign of things to come?" In either case our built environment remains understood and experienced through its material presence. For designers the question is not one of a trend or things to come, but one of taking a stand in the craft of exploring materials that ignite our imaginations to reinvent the fantastic from the overlooked. □

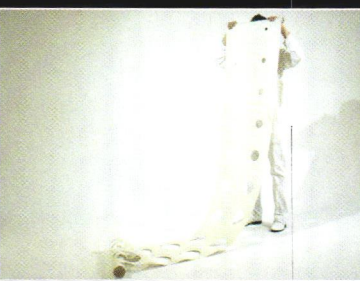
Adam Lanman is a project manager with Elliott + Associates Architects. He enjoys ramming earth with his kids, swinging from trees, and searching for true meaning in alleys and dumpsters everywhere. Prior to joining the firm, Lanman taught design studios, materials courses, and modern architectural history at the University of Oklahoma.



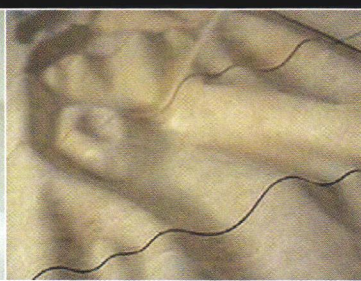
1. Combination of the RECKLI®-System and Photo-Engraving Technology for concrete form work; 2. KLP wall panels produced from recycled polyofin synthetic material; 3. Timbercrete contains more than 50 percent recycled sawmill waste; 4. Ashland School of Environmental Technology straw jet core blocks; 5. Loomstudio, 12 Blocks speculation on a common building material; 6. ShetkaSTONE made from 100 percent recycled paper, plant or cloth fibers; 7. Smile Plastic's recycled plastic sheets from shredded industrial foodstuff containers; 8. Elastic chipboard or elastic wood consists of 95 percent renewable raw materials and contains no formaldehyde; 9. Origins material is made from recycled polyethylene consumer detergent bottles; 10. Stephanie Davidson's Touchy-feely series of ceramic tiles that encourage direct physical interaction 11. KAOS by Bencore are panels with a core of polycarbonate straws in 2 diameters, chaotic ordering, and a top layer PETG or acrylic; 12. Peepshow wallpaper gives a new look with windows to look back on past memories by designer Gijs Bakker; 13. Designed by Jouko Kärkkäinen the PLY wall element is made of brand new Finnish raw material, ultra-thin textile-like plywood, thickness 0.45 mm., which is almost see-through; 14. Windochine textiles are created of pineapple fiber, or piña, a strong white or creamy cobweb-like



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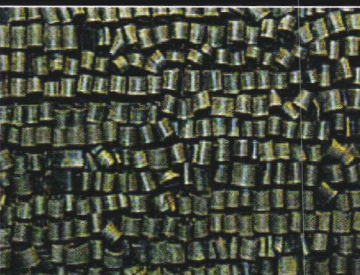
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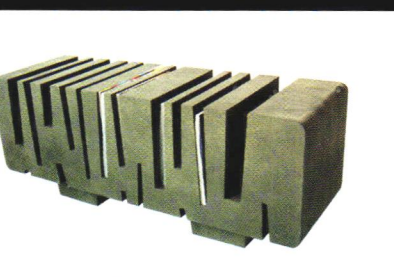
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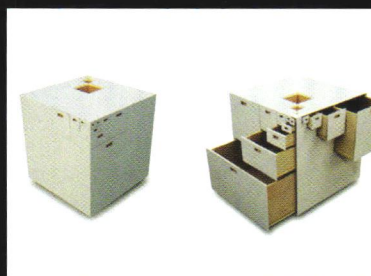
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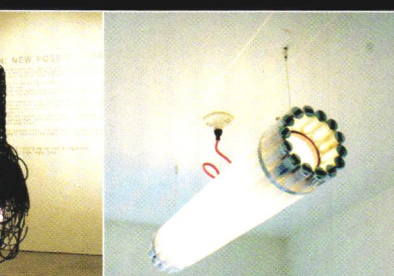
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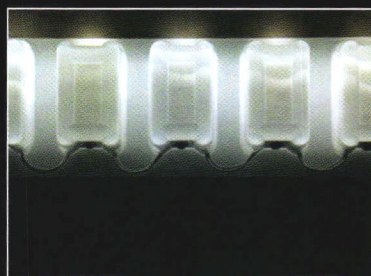
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fiber drawn from the tall leaves of an indigenous wild pineapple plant; 15. Spinneybeck recycled leather product uses leather scraps, which otherwise would be discarded to create the final product; 16-17. Danish designer Annemette Beck and designers Nani Marquina and Ariadna Miquel create rugs from bicycle tire rubber; 18. Dutch designers Tejo Remy and Rene VeenHuizen created a reclaimed material rug made from recycled blankets; 19. Inner tube furniture from Recycloop; 20. Magazine bench by designer Cantu in Monterrey, Mexico; 21. ZIPstool, rice straw and heavy duty conveyor belts; 22. Recycled Paper Table by designer Matt Gagnon; 23. Fractal 123; by NYC designer Takeshi Miyakawa makes full use of every cubic inch of space within the object; 24. Cow chair by designer Niels van Eijck consists of nothing more than a single cowhide that was stretched around a form when soaking wet and then left for one week until it has dried into a solid form; 25. Floppy disk pen holder; 26. Woven Lighting by Kwangho Lee; 27. Recycled Tube Light by designer Castor Canadensis offers a new life to the disused common fluorescent bulb; 28. Emma Caselton gives us a repurposed ink-jet cartridge light chain; 29. Shuttelcock light, by Gitta Gschwendtner; 30. Stuart Haygarth's Recycled Disposable wine glass chandelier; 31. The milk bottle lamp by Tejo Remy.

painting with light

James Turrell's artistry with light in architecture shows us how light can conceal, as well as reveal

By Michael Webb



"Light is strangely fragile—it needs to have a home where it is cared for," says James Turrell, who has been creating such havens—in hotel rooms, residential backyards, and museums—for the past 40 years. He was born to a Quaker family in Pasadena, Calif., in 1943, and he remembers: "My room had windows on three sides, and my first experience with light came from drawing constellations on the glass so that I could see stars by day and learning that light conceals as well as it reveals." He studied the psychology of perception at Pomona College and followed his father's example in learning to fly, which brought him even closer to the source of natural light.

Soon after he began to create light works, Turrell began an aerial search for the world's largest canvas: a remote, symmetrical volcano he could turn into an instrument that would bring the cosmos into focus. In 1974, he bought Roden Crater, a volcano that has been dormant for the past 300,000 years, and a huge swathe of grazing land around it, 40 miles north of Flagstaff, Ariz. He moved to a ranch house to supervise the project, but years went by before he was able to secure funds to hollow out chambers and a tunnel within the 600-ft.-high cone of basalt cinders. "I've spent 36 years in the desert," he admits. "It attracts strange people and makes them stranger."

In person, Turrell seems as straightforward as his rancher attire. He resembles a slimmed-down Orson Welles, with his white spade beard, gleaming eyes, and husky voice, and he juggles smaller projects while Roden Crater inches toward completion. Like the architect Steven Holl, who was also raised as a Quaker and developed a passion for light, he designed a friends meeting house in the Oak Park district of Houston. He has created a score of skyspaces for private



Roden Crater (left and above; photos by Timothy Hursley).

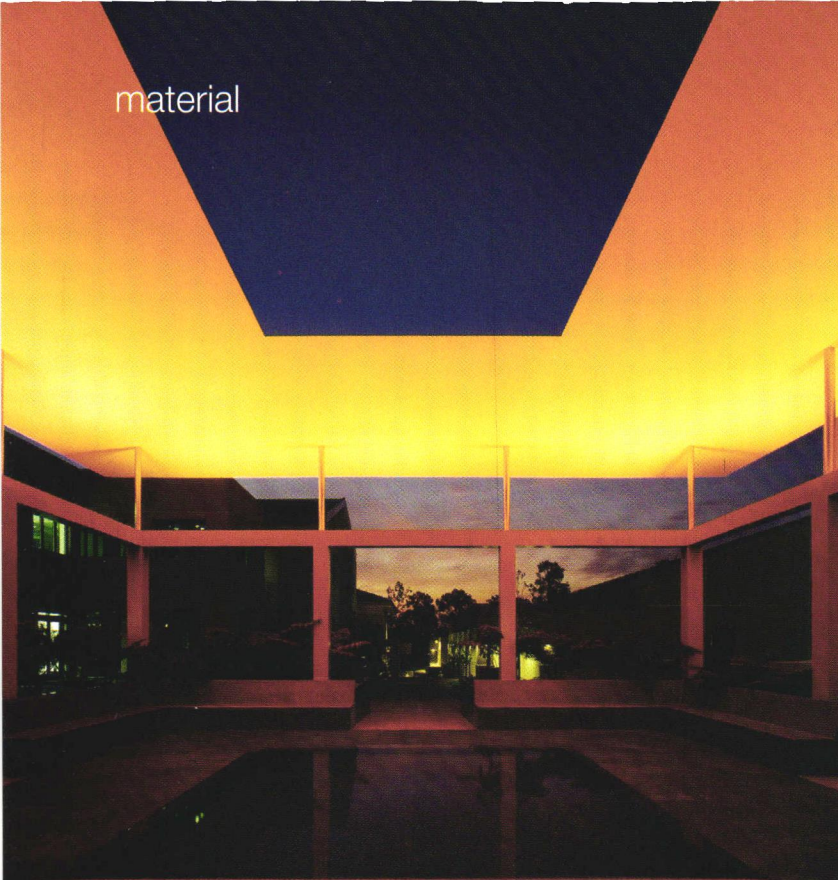


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From James Turrell's recent exhibit at Pomona College: *Dividing the Light*, 2007 (left; © James Turrell; photo by Florian Holzherr); *End Around*, 2006, neon light, fluorescent light and space (above; Courtesy GRIFFIN, Santa Monica; © James Turrell; photo by Florian Holzherr.)

clients and museums around the world. Each comprises four walls and a cut-away roof that frames the sky. As visitors gaze up, the blue or gray of the sky intensifies. The most elaborate of these installations juts from a canyon in Beverly Hills. Five thousand LEDs and incandescent lights wash the walls and are computer-programmed to slowly change tone, which makes the square of sky appear to turn red or black—a convincing demonstration of how fallible our perceptions of color really are.

For the Benesse Art Preserve on Naoshima, an island in the Inland Sea of Japan, Turrell collaborated with architect Tadao Ando, who is himself a master of light and shadow. In their first joint project, the emphasis is on the absence of light. Ando constructed a black wooden barn with a series of baffles to separate the open entry from an inner room that appears, as you feel your way in, to be pitch dark. You sit, with a few others, on a bench against the rear wall until your eyes have adjusted to the gloom. After 10 minutes, you discern a faint glimmer at the far end of the space. As Turrell explains, “When the eyes are fully opened in a darkened room, light is experienced as touch. It inhabits space rather than illuminating surfaces—as one discovers in a plane before breaking out of a cloud where there is no horizon and no sense of gravity.”

For Ando, this was an extreme manifestation of what he strives to achieve in all his buildings. Westerners (and most Japanese) have grown accustomed to spaces that are evenly lit, artificially or from expansive windows. And yet, all but the last few generations of humankind lived contently with small openings, lanterns, and candles. The book *In Praise of Shadows* was published in Japan in the 1920s as a protest against the onset of bland uniformity, and its arguments are still relevant. Ando creates architectural promenades—notably in the subterranean Chichu Museum on Naoshima—in which the alternation of bright light and deep shadows elicits a tactile response to textures, vistas, voids, and

blank walls. There is a constant sense of discovery that draws you forward, and at the end of that promenade is a Turrell skyspace. The architecture has done its job of preparing you for an aesthetic and spiritual immersion.

Roden Crater will deepen that experience. About 1.2 million cubic yards of dirt were shifted to make the crater rim symmetrical. “The workers asked me what all this was about, and I told them that they were using their caterpillars to shape the sky,” Turrell recalls. An 854-ft. tunnel slopes steeply up from the entry chamber to another, and a flight of steps ascends to an elliptical opening in the side of the crater. From there you can walk around or lie prone on a stone bench gazing up at the sky, which is framed by the rim of the crater and appears to be domed. Turrell likens the openings at either end of the tunnel to pinhole cameras. Once a year, at the solstice, the sun shines directly down the tunnel and appears as a projected image on a 15-ft.-high slab of white marble. Once every 18.6 years, the moon will cast its image on the opposite side of the stone through the entry portal. At night, when the interior is softly lit, the oculus at the end of the tunnel is black and the stars appear only when you’ve climbed to the top of the stairs.

Turrell is still fine-tuning his astronomical instrument and has stopped talking about an opening date. (It seemed almost complete when I was there in 2002, but I was obviously mistaken.) Eventually one small group at a time will be driven to the site, where they can sleep overnight in a lodge and spend hours absorbing the subtle shifts of light and the magical spirit of place, as you can do in the great cathedrals of Europe. Though the opportunities to experience this marvel firsthand are scant, and photos cannot capture the scale, Roden Crater is sure to become a touchstone for the shaping of architectural space. ■



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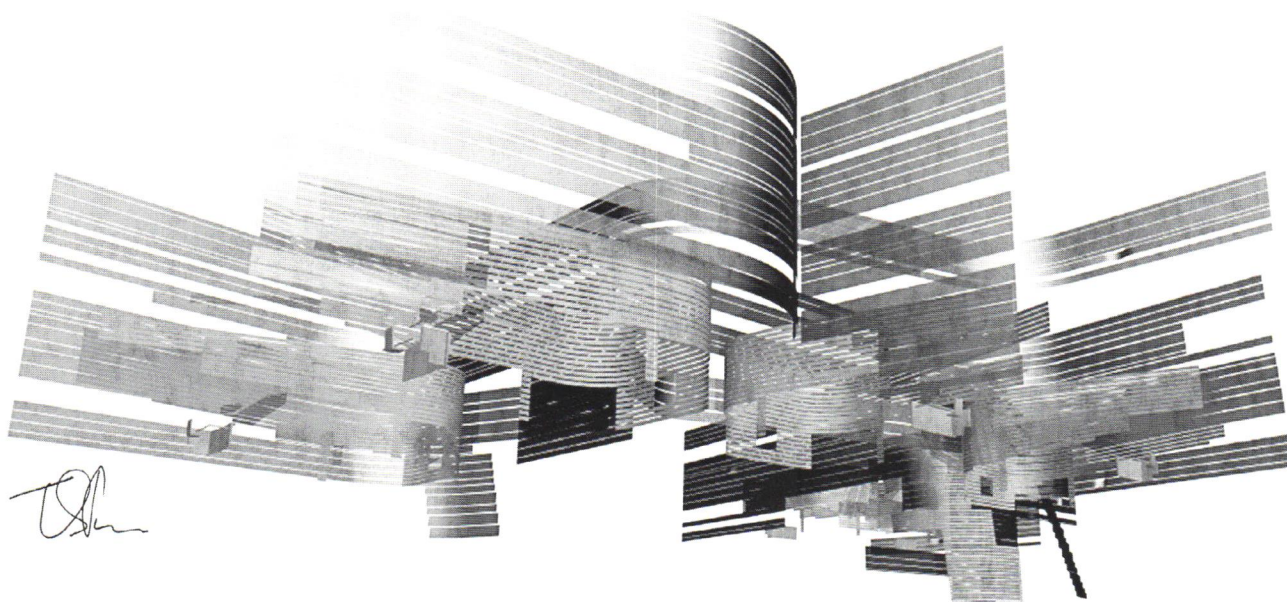
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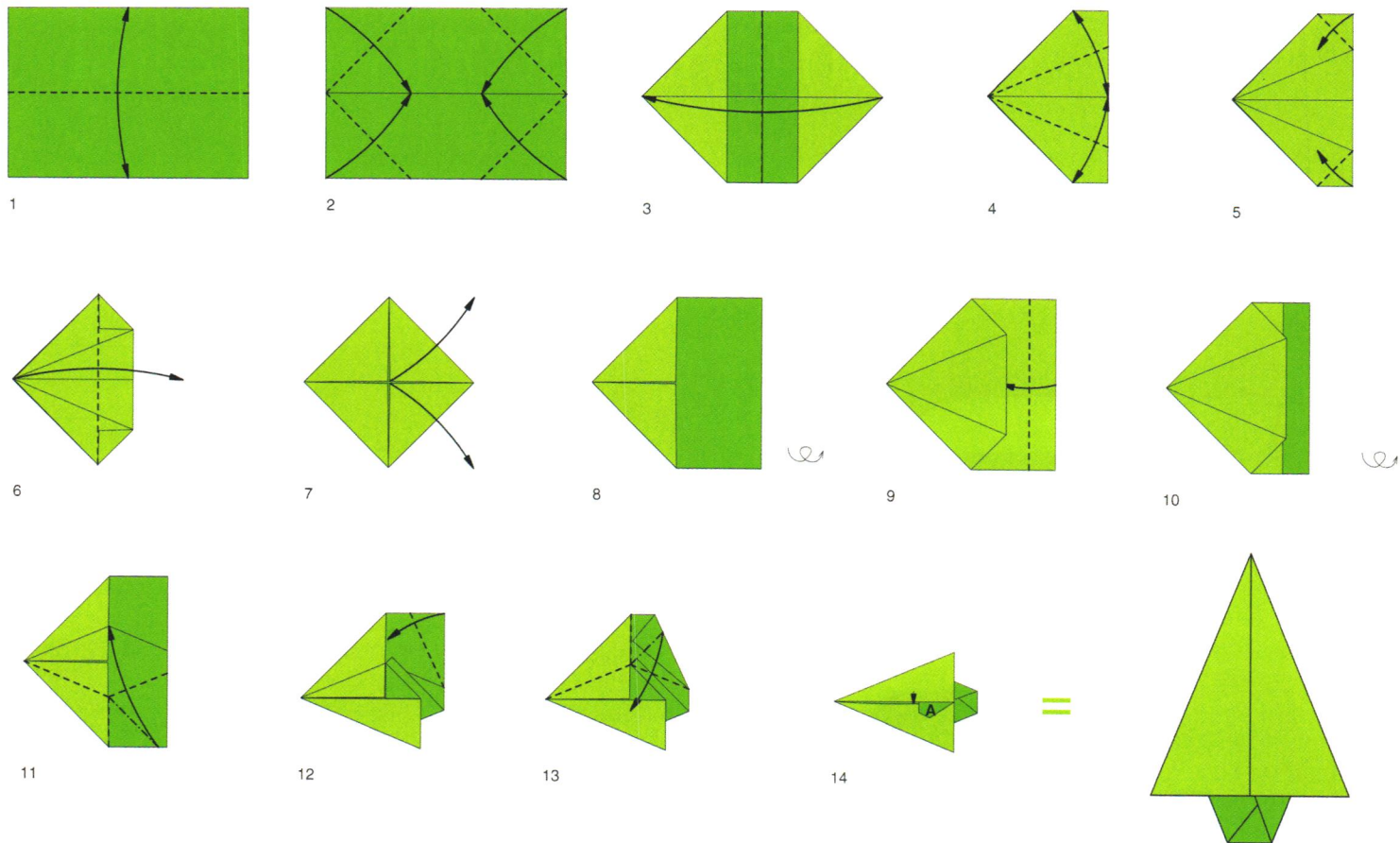
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extreme environmentalist

Pliny Fisk III of the Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems has never been part of the mainstream—and now others are inside looking out

By Holly Richmond



Pliny Fisk and his wife Gail Vittori (above), co-directors of CMPBS. (Photo by Denise Prince.)

Some people might consider 33 years a long time to be working outside the mainstream, pushing boundaries, being called a renegade and a maverick. For Pliny Fisk III that's life, and he can't imagine it any other way. Fisk co-founded the Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems (CMPBS) in Austin, Texas, in 1975, and currently serves as its co-director. CMPBS—recognized as the oldest architecture and planning 501c3 non-profit in the United States focused on sustainable design—is much like Fisk in persona, demeanor, and eccentric qualities. Forget a fancy corporate headquarters with academic scholars traipsing the halls in three-piece suits. Instead, picture an 18-acre mishmash of buildings with wildly green-growing roofs, giant compost piles, dozens of electric cars, a few cement mixers, and countless other contraptions designed to bring everything “eco” to life—real, sustainable solutions, not hypothetical theories.

Last month Fisk talked to *Contract* about his maverick status, current philosophies on sustainable design, hopes for a green future, and more:

Q: Do you consider yourself a maverick?

A: The design industry and the world in general are catching up with me. I think I'm less of a maverick every passing day, which is great. My father was a microbiologist, always tinkering in nature, and my mother was a free-thinking artist. In a way, I think my career choice was predestined. I like to say I grew up in a huge compost pile. I looked out my bedroom window in Westchester County and saw gigantic tomatoes growing, and I thought that's just how the world was. I've made that practice part of my world but expanded on the idea—some may say to the extreme.

Q: How have you gained acceptance on your own terms?

A: I'm always reinventing myself. I see gaps that need filling, and I'll try anything. For example, right now I'm working on and am very excited about one particular building system: I recently had the realization that to enter an overlooked marketplace, I needed to go in through warehouses. Boring! The last thing I want to do with my life is get involved with big boxes; they're the bane of sustainable design, taking up a huge amount of land area. But if we tweak them with multiple levels of renewable energy sources, they can be the next frontier in evolutionary design. Is that being a maverick, or just seeing what we've missed for years? The team here at CMPBS works on ideas like this and gets them going on a policy level. We're not just sitting on a hilltop creating prototypes. We work on a city level, then state and federal. The Green Building Program and the USGBC are examples of our forward-thinking philosophy.



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green



Fisk's light sport aircraft and hangar with runway counteracts his six speeding tickets and loss of car license (left). The UT 2002 solar decathlon (above left). CMPBS main building breezeway (above).



Q: How do you realize your work in sustainable design within CMPBS?

A: I see every move we make as vitally important. I have to piggyback on team projects. You can't be a maverick and be alone. You have to have a "work nest," not a "theory nest." I love to teach. [Fisk is a Fellow in Sustainable Urbanism and Health Systems Design at Texas A&M University, where he holds a joint position as signature faculty in Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Planning.] And I've been lucky that many of my students have gone on to affect change at both a state and national level. They are influential, and therefore our work at CMPBS is influential.

Q: You were once quoted as saying you weren't rich enough to truly be eccentric. If you had all the money you needed to be truly eccentric, what would you do?

A: One of the grand ideas we're incorporating is a building system company with design, engineering, and manufacturing start-up partners, all with in-depth experience in each of the three areas. The company's name is Sustainable Construction Technologies, based in Texas, and we're working on a system that can be adapted to many different materials, environmental impact zones, income levels, and build-out density scenarios. As part of this, I created what I call the "Dial a Building System Wheel," which contains all the protocols for clients to choose the system combination that best suits their needs, from housing to mixed-use to warehouses.

Q: Will negative factors in the economy such as high gas prices and the mortgage crisis help your cause at CMPBS?

A: Yes, if we are careful. It's about creating life cycle analysis measures as a design technique in order to understand and balance resources. We need to see the big picture, not just focus on alternative fuels, for example. Are they all good? No! But, that said, we can't handle everything at once. My particular focus is buildings, which are major energy users. To solve this problem we need systems thinking in a holistic sense, no Ph.D. bull. We must do our work rapidly. It's about ecology. We are part of nature. She is responsible to us, and we are responsible to Her. There has to be a shift in approach to resource utilization through transportation, manufacturing, use and reuse, recycling and disposal.

Q: What is your opinion on the current state of sustainable design trends?

A: We're going in the right direction. We need to use our ideas—which I consider to be like green-thought viruses like blogs, community projects and national green design competitions—to connect individuals to their community and the world. [Fisk heads up a team from Texas A&M competing in the Solar Decathlon, an international sustainable design competition on the Washington, D.C., Mall.] This is happening, and I'm proud CMPBS is part of that trend. However, I feel sustainable design is far too list-oriented. We need to focus on the life cycle of all of our resources like water and food, not just energy. You can't get truly sustainable design with checklists.

Q: What are your views on having once been an outsider?

The real mavericks and outsiders are nonprofits and NGOs, of which CMPBS is a part. I'm just a piece of that. I'm proud to have been a trigger, in a sense. I'm glad the design industry and the greater community are listening to us because we are not here to make big money. We are here to do big thinking. ☐



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guest editorial

stray dogs

Reading the words of N. Scott Momaday and entering Antony Gormley's "Blind Light" installation were life-changing experiences for me. Traveling to Marfa, Texas, to experience the art of Donald Judd and Dan Flavin forever changed my perception of place and space. Seeing the candy spill art installations by Felix Gonzalez-Torres was profound. I have kept my cellophane-wrapped sweets for inspiration and as a reminder that I need to use every minute with purpose.

When Jennifer Busch called last August about being the Guest Editor for this July issue, I reminded her that I live in one of the square, fly-over states, and that I consider myself an outsider. She simply said: "I know." So I tried to scare her off until she said I could talk freely about things on my mind. It is my hope that the questions, inspirations, and challenges that I see each day might be a common ground to share.

I find inspiration in a sentence fragment, unfinished forms on a construction site, or early morning shadows. I seek out artists who take me to new places. My goal with this July issue is to introduce the design community to another way of seeing. I have chosen to showcase creative people whose work has impacted me personally. Some names will be

familiar, and some will be new. These are creative people working outside the mainstream and following their own vision. They have one trait in common: They are unafraid of not "fitting in."

Bruce Goff was once asked why he chose to work in Norman, Okla., and he said, "Oklahoma is a young state not blessed or cursed with dusty, outworn traditions or invasions or European styles; it is fertile ground for the development of an indigenous creative architecture truly expressive of the pioneering and democratic spirit of our people."

I hope you are challenged and inspired by the words and images in this issue. And I hope you get comfortable with not fitting in.

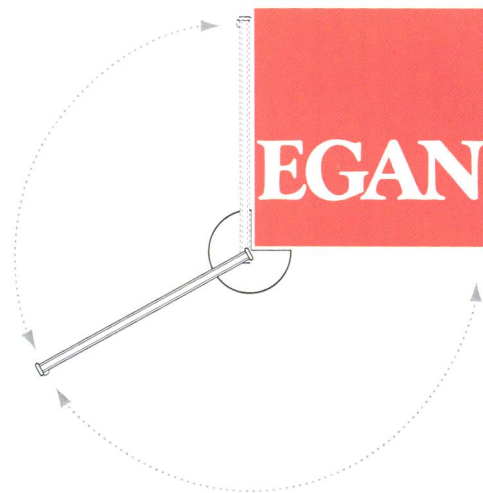
Rand Elliott

I would like to say a special thanks to Jennifer Busch and John Rouse for this opportunity. I learned new things about myself.

(Photo by Michael Ives.)

Egan Screen Door

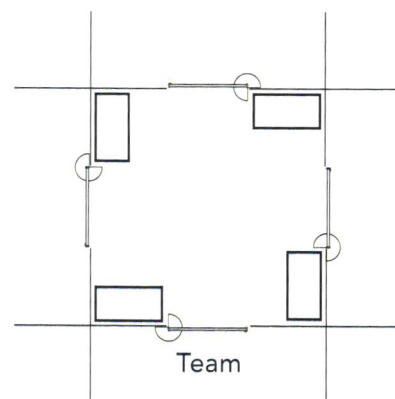
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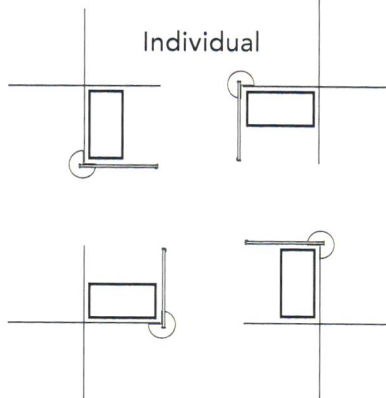
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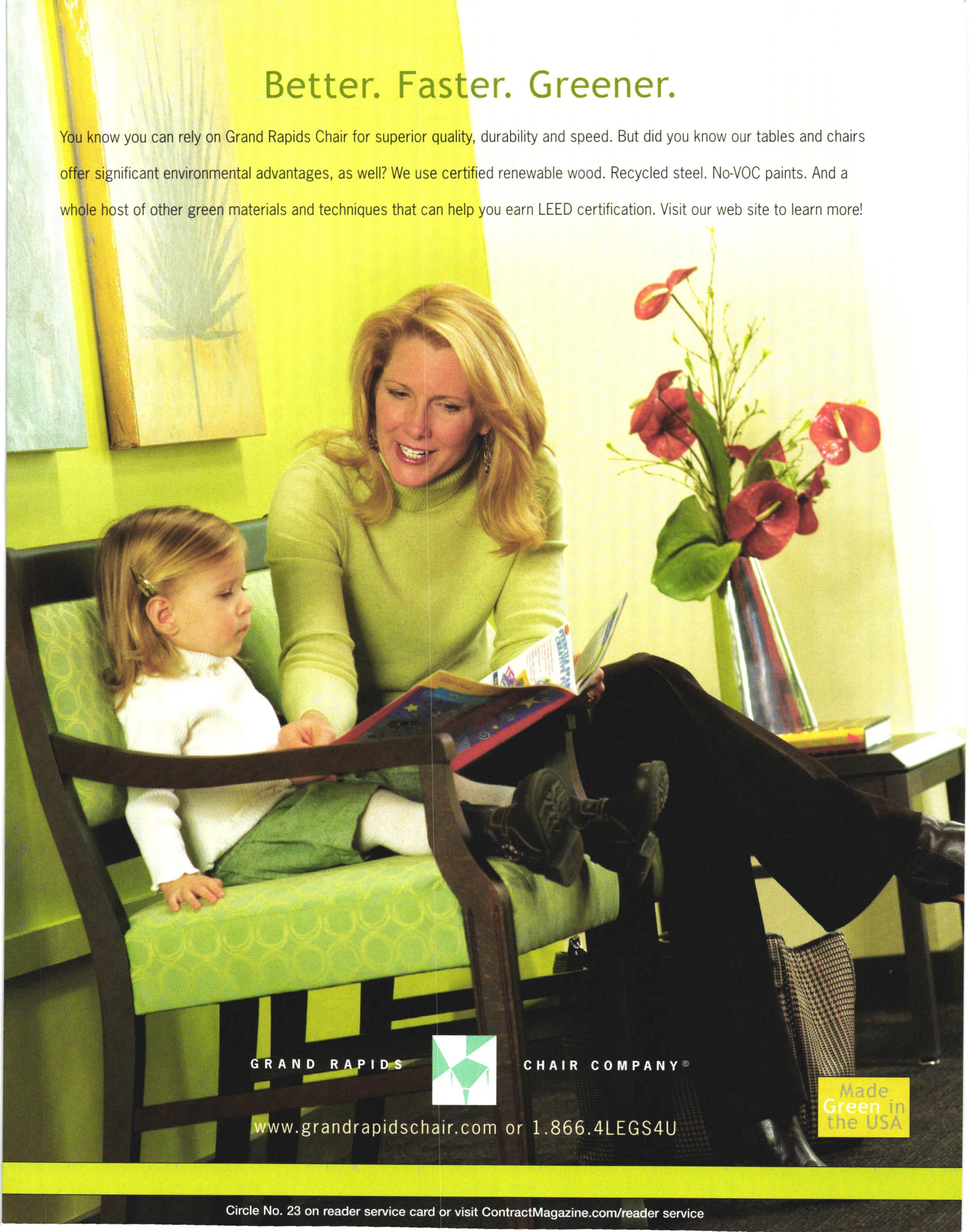


East of my grandmother's house the sun rises out of the plain. Once in his life a man ought to concentrate his mind upon the remembered earth, I believe. He ought to give himself up to a particular landscape in his experience, to look at it from as many angles as he can, to wonder about it, to dwell upon it. He ought to imagine that he touches it with his hands at every season and listens to the sounds that are made upon it. He ought to imagine the creatures there and all the faintest motions of the wind. He ought to recollect the glare of noon and all the colors of the dawn and dusk.

From *The Way to Rainy Mountain* by N. Scott Momaday,
Poet Laureate of Oklahoma

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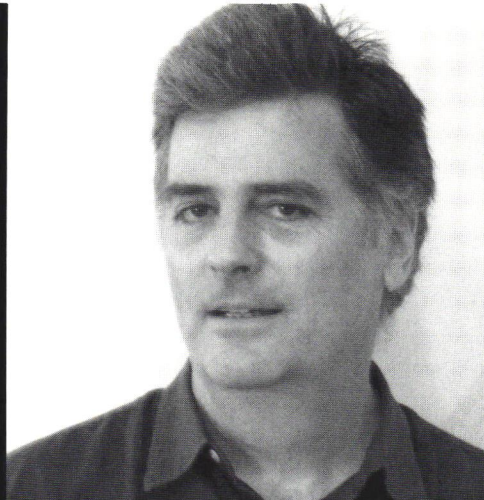
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Gary Cunningham: playing his hand

By David Dillon

Gary Cunningham is a burly guy, a linebacker, lumberjack type, who works in a sprawling warehouse near downtown Dallas, surrounded by welders, engineers, landscape architects, graphic designers, and computer geeks. A loose, at times bewildering arrangement, as much repertory company as architecture office, it nevertheless reflects the open-ended, exploratory spirit of Cunningham's work.

"We don't design beautiful buildings," he says emphatically. The Golden Section and the flawless joint are not for him. Nor is he interested in developing a signature look or style. "I like to start over every time. I couldn't handle consistency."

Yet even a cursory survey of Cunningham's architecture shows that his contrarian, "take that" attitude is neither an affectation nor a marketing ploy, but a starting point and first principle. His range is impressive, from houses, schools, and office buildings to churches, theaters, and a tribal center for Southern Ute Indians. No two projects are alike, yet all express a set of basic convictions about materials, structure, and process that connect him to builder-architects of previous generations, as well as to the earlier Arts and Crafts movement.

"Corky's not an ivory tower type," says one client of Cunningham. "If push comes to shove, he knows he can always do it himself."

Among Cunningham's first solo projects in the 1980s was a pair of modest suburban office buildings in North Dallas—"dumb boxes," to quote him—that provided an

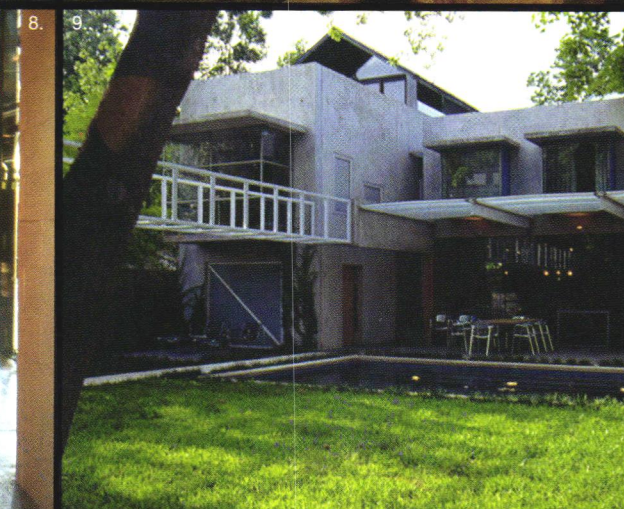
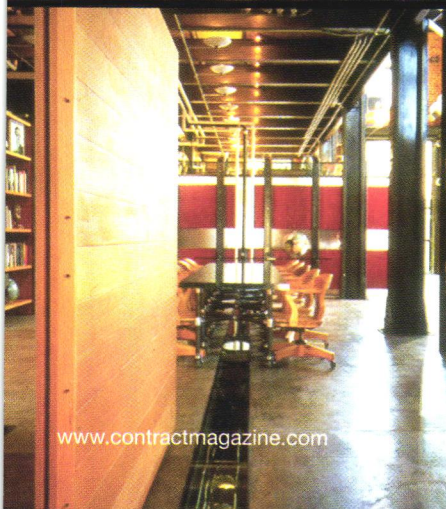
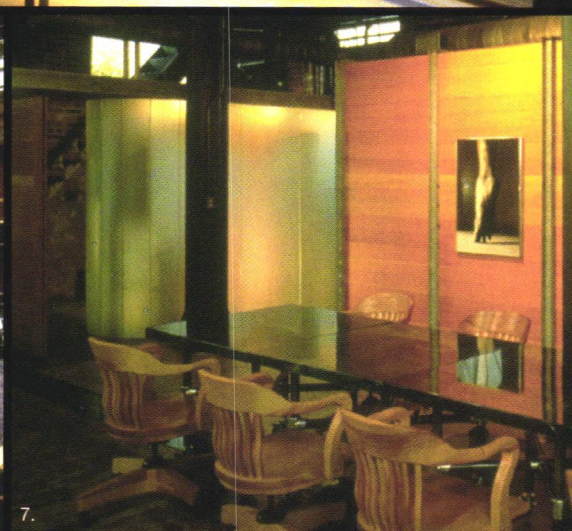
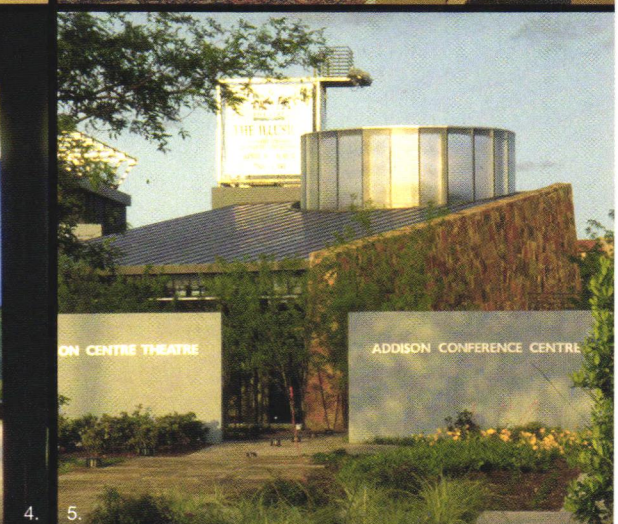
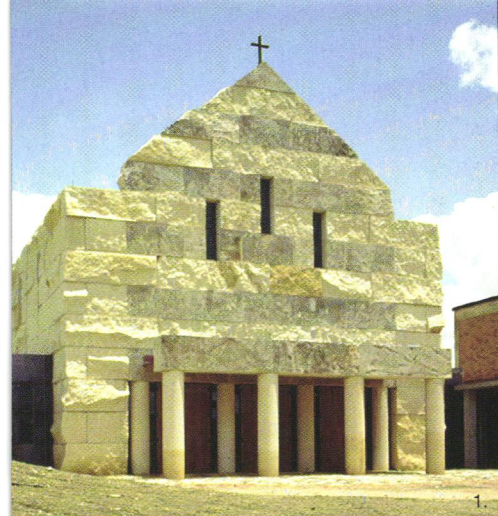
antidote to all the loud, strident commercial architecture going up nearby. Instead of grandstanding shapes and gimmicky special effects, Cunningham designed simple, carefully crafted brick shells that do their job with a minimum of fuss and a maximum of common sense. Decoration is limited to discreet brick banding on the façade and a bit of teak trim around doors and windows. A torqued staircase is about it for pyrotechnics.

Cunningham took quietness to another level with his Cistercian Abbey Church in Irving, Texas (1992). Unlike many recent churches, more interested in flexibility than sacredness, it evokes 900 years of history, scholarship, and prayer while remaining unmistakably modern in its construction and handling of natural light. Set against a low hill, its copper roof hidden behind massive limestone parapets, the Abbey Church conveys a powerful impression of weight and strength, reaching back across time to evoke a culture and a way of life, and memorialize them in stone.

Yet simplicity and directness is only one of Cunningham's modes. His breakout project was the 1988 Power House, a 1920s electrical substation in Dallas that he converted into a stunning residence using steel, chrome, glass, and much of the original machinery, including a 20-ton traveling crane and a huge chain fall. Remarkably, the house was designed and built on the fly, without complete working drawings or lengthy discussions with the client.

"We realized that we didn't have to spend six months in the office doing all that," Cunningham recalls. "We could begin the collaborative process at once because architects, contractors, and craftsmen were all in the same boat. The

Images 1 - 3: Cistercian Abbey Church, Irving, Texas, 1992; Images 4 - 6: Addison Conference and Theatre Centre, Addison, Texas, 1992; Images 7 - 8: Power House, Dallas, 1988; Images 9 - 10: Casa Caja (Cunningham Residence), Dallas, 2002 (Photography by James Wilson.)





“We don’t design beautiful buildings,” he says emphatically. The Golden Section and the flawless joint are not for him. Nor is he interested in developing a signature look or style.

job changed the way we practiced.” He reprised the idea, though not the specific design, in his 2004 conversion of an abandoned Dallas pump station, incorporating existing pumps, pipes, and holding tanks into a stunning meeting space and gallery for local arts organizations.

The Addison Conference and Theatre Center (1992) shows Cunningham’s skill at playing the hand that’s been dealt. Taking the mundane fragments of the existing site — a windmill, a stone cottage, and water tower — he created a major civic space in the middle of a faceless, drive-by suburb. The centerpiece is the theater, a combination factory and renaissance playhouse with 200 seats, classical proportions, and rugged industrial materials, including concrete floors, concrete block walls, and a dizzying assortment of joists and I-beams for creating unusual performance spaces. The basement can be flooded, the floor can accommodate eight feet of soil, and a fire truck can be suspended from the ceiling. Cunningham describes it as “just a lot of rock ‘n’ roll technology, more U2 than classical theater,” but actors and directors describe it as one of the most exciting performance spaces in the country.

Cunningham’s destruction and recreation of his own 1930s tract house could stand as the exclamation point to his career so far. The project took 10 years (1992 to 2002) and involved his entire family, who tore out walls,

poured foundations, and helped build a three-story bedroom tower where the front lawn used to be. He pushed the zoning code to the limit, which sent some of his neighbors into shock. When the house eventually won an award, one juror suggested that the neighbors get one as well for putting up with him.

Cunningham clearly enjoyed every minute of the confrontation, and saw the fallout as just part of the design process. “If you believe in something strongly you have to fight for it, and sometimes that scares the hell out of people.” ☐

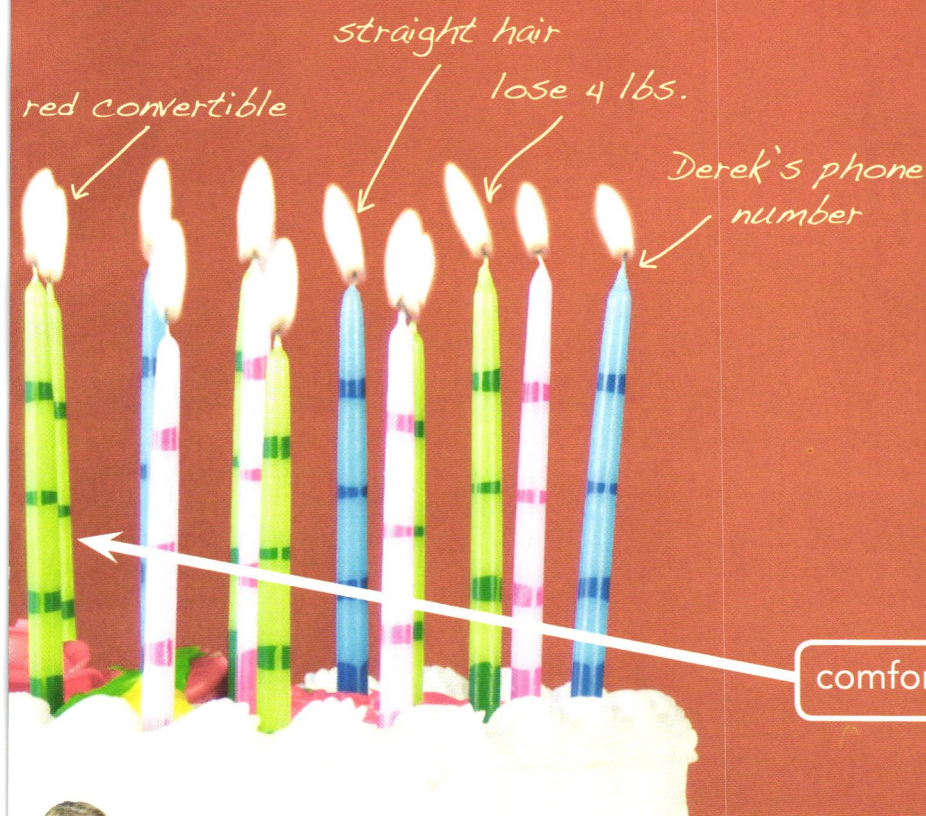
David Dillon has been the architecture critic for the *Dallas Morning News* since 1983. He has an M.A. and Ph.D from Harvard University in literature and art history, and was a Loeb Fellow at its Graduate School of Design in 1986–87. He has written 10 books, including *Dallas Architecture 1936–1986*, *The Architecture of O’Neil Ford*, *The Miller Garden: Icon of Modernism*, and *Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood*. He is also the author of the new plan for Washington, D.C., *Extending the Legacy*, as well as the plan for the White House and President’s Park. He is a contributing editor to *Architectural Record* and writes regularly for numerous national design and planning magazines, including *Landscape Architecture*, *Preservation* and *Planning*.

Images 1 - 2: Turtle Creek Pump Station Adaptive Reuse, Dallas, 2004; Image 3: Epstein Chapel, Temple Shalom, Dallas, 1991; Image 4: The Richards Group, Dallas, 2002 (Photography by James Wilson.)



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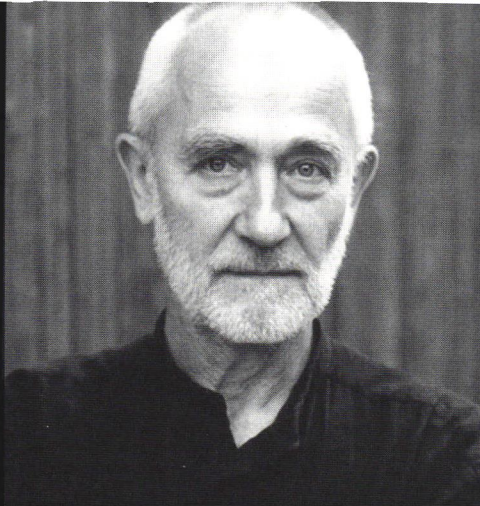
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Peter Zumthor: the creation of place

By Kate Goodwin

"There are no ideas except in things"—Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture*

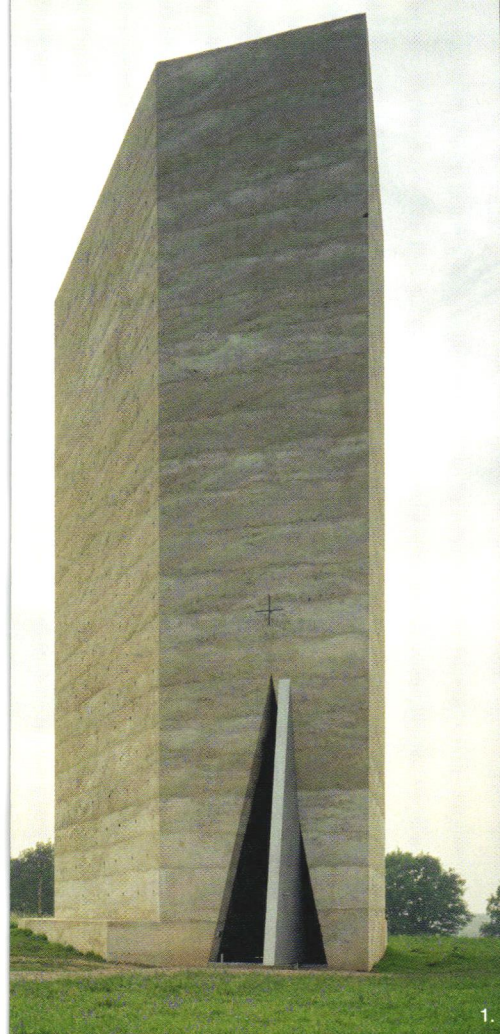
As I descend the broad generous staircase of the American Academy in Rome, where Peter Zumthor is architect in residence for three months, I realize that the two-hour conversation with him has changed the way I look at the world. I am acutely aware of how the afternoon light softly fills the volume, bathing the white walls with a serene glow. I feel and hear the stone stairs beneath me; I am aware of my body's movement down the slightly modest treads, of the timing of another alongside me, of the blueness of the sky visible out the high window. He makes you see the qualities of architecture and the atmosphere it creates.

Terms such as "outsider" and "hermit" are to Peter Zumthor misleading labels, placed upon him by the international press fueling a legend of "a monk in the alps." His objection, quite rightly, is that these labels suggest he is working in isolation, removed from the everyday world. He sees nothing mythical about his existence or his home and studio in Haldenstein, a beautiful small town in the Swiss mountains. By his own admission, his working process in his studio, or "small shop of 18 people," is closed and concentrated, enabling a response that is deeply rooted in place and being. He draws inspiration from music, literature, philosophy, and a perceptive observation of the world; he has never been concerned with abstract architectural theory. When he studied architecture at Pratt Institute in New York in the 1960s, he found: "School was boring. It was not happening there—it was happening in the streets." He has always responded to the tangible in architecture, starting his career working on the preservation of old buildings, dealing with connectivity to the past and to the ground.

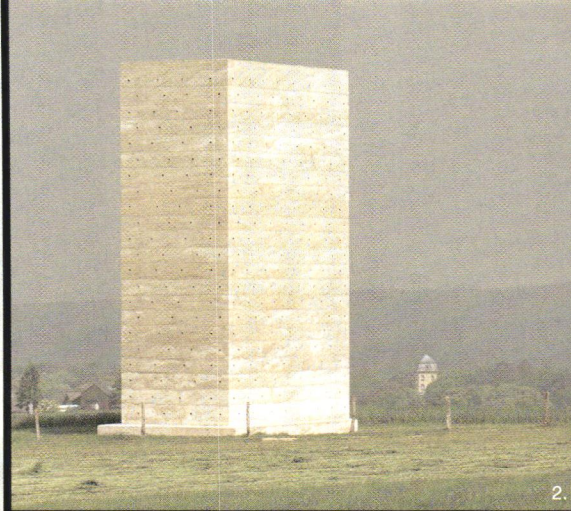
Zumthor is a craftsman who creates a whole architectural composition, marrying function, construction, history, and aesthetics, evoking memory and creating an experience. He embraces his projects in totality, going through a rigorous process of critiquing and refining what it is and what it needs to do, be, and evoke, before even picking up a pencil. "You can reach the quality I am interested in reaching only in this way, with this sort of close concentration, which starts in the programming phase," he says. "This is controlled to the end, like a painter who paints a picture or a composer who puts together a piece of music." He sees the majority of architecture today as simply a veneer "about the surface and the image. I am about the content, about the whole thing," he says, acknowledging that he is not the only architect with such concerns, and believes this approach will have a popular resurgence.

Uniquely for an architect, Zumthor rarely speaks of completed buildings in lectures, and when interviewed, his answers constantly relate to the buildings he is working on. His words paint vivid pictures, describing the location, history, tradition, program, and how he is thinking of weaving together the architectural elements, moving one through the intimate spaces and creating an understanding of what he is doing, what he hopes to evoke. "Black sail cloth is hung so it will make a noise, so the windows will shake," he says. One understands very quickly that his mind is completely occupied with these buildings and that he invests his soul. However, it is not something that he gives away lightly. The project, client, and conditions must be exactly right, and he will walk away if he feels the situation is compromised. "This is because I don't want to be a toy," he explains. "This is because for me it is always flesh and blood and heart. I don't want to find myself in the situation of just being bought."

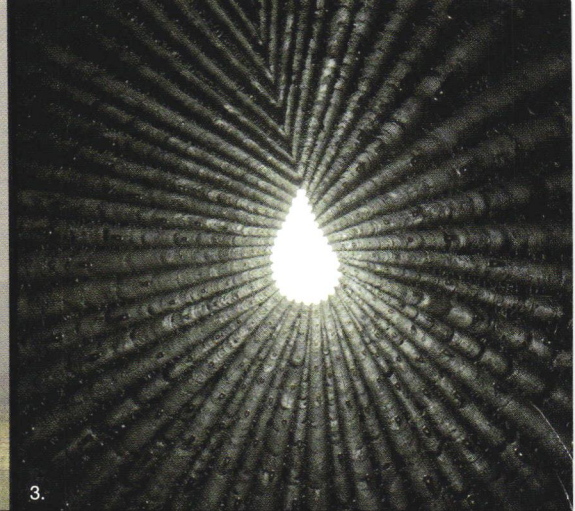
Images 1 - 4: Bruder Klaus Kapelle, Wachendorf, Germany, 2007 (photography by Walter Mair). Images 5 - 9: Thermal Baths, Vals, Graubünden, Switzerland, 1996 (photography by Hélène Binet).



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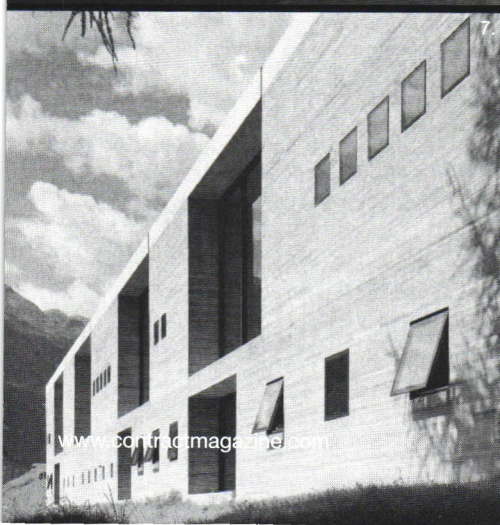
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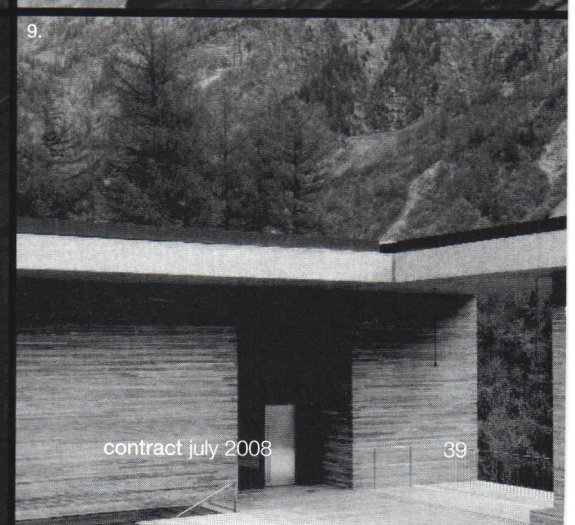
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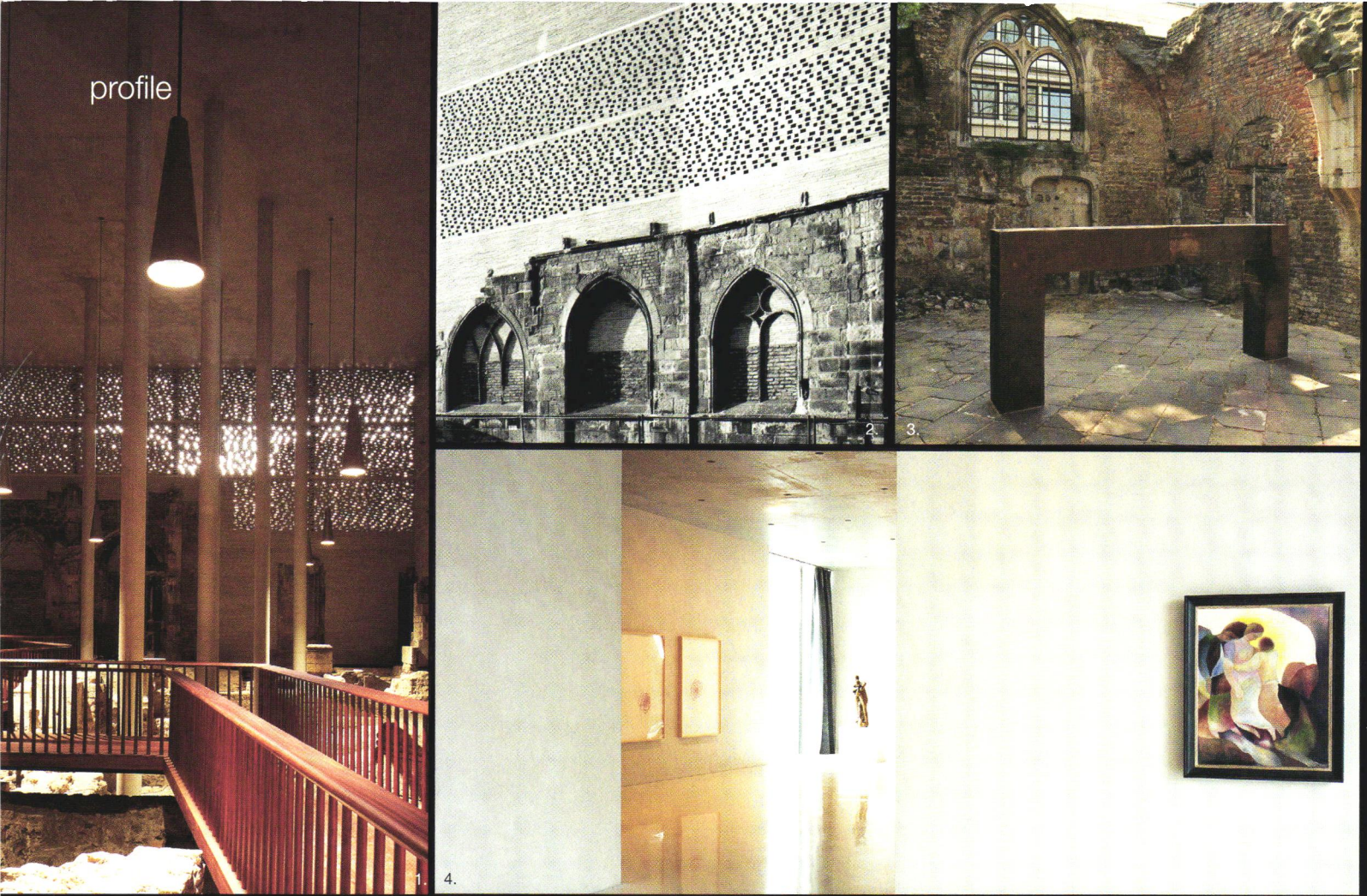
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He embraces his projects in totality, going through a rigorous process of critiquing and refining what it is and what it needs to do, be, and evoke, before even picking up a pencil.

To have the ability to control a project and to create the building he wants, he has even taken a commission for free, releasing himself from the normal client/architect burdens. He believes it takes a client who is innovative, who can acknowledge that quality can create profit—conditions that should also be possible in the commercial world. His relationship with his clients is intense: “I put the stakes up very high,” he notes. “They must prove to me that they really want it.” “They” become completely engaged with the buildings and the process, enhanced by his generosity in sharing his ideas from the first instance.

His books *Thinking Architecture* and *Atmospheres* are crafted with exquisite care and show the same generosity of ideas. They are less than 100 pages, double-spaced, with whole pages given to a single framed image. His writing is highly personal and individual while capturing something universal, a characteristic that underlies his buildings. *Atmospheres* questions what we mean when we talk about architectural quality, setting out his concerns in nine chapters that explain how he goes about creating an atmosphere. *Thinking Architecture* contains eight essays extracted from lectures he has given between

1988 and 2004, illustrating a consistency of thought and relevance to his current designs. As he says, his ideas have not changed with fashions or trends but have matured, and he has gained more confidence in his intuitive responses. While not being about a trend, his buildings are still of our time with reference to the past and suggestion of a future. They are about the making of architecture and the creation of places in which we exist. They have a quality that is exceptional and engender a response that is difficult to articulate. Spend time with his books, but visit his buildings, as there is no substitute. The world will look different. ☐

Kate Goodwin is the curator of the architecture program at the Royal Academy of Arts in London since 2003. She has expanded the scope of the program into a high profile part of the activities of Britain's oldest arts institution, broadening the discourse on architecture to encompass exhibitions, debates, lectures, film-screenings, and performances. She has been involved in university crit panels and written for various publications including *Blueprint* and *WAN*. She completed her degree in architecture at the University of Sydney.

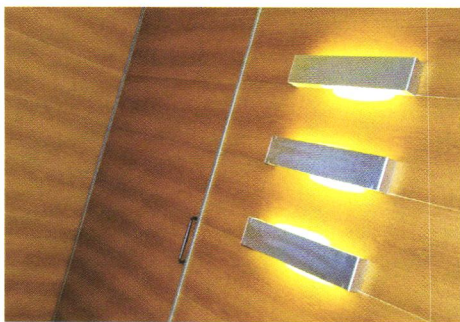
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Above: Kolumba Art Museum, Cologne, Germany, 2007 (photography by Hélène Binet).

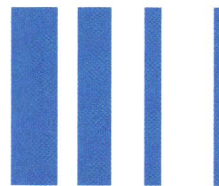
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Marlon Blackwell: strangely familiar

By Thomas Fisher

The opening photo on Marlon Blackwell's Web site shows a recreational vehicle driving through farm fields, passing a truck trailer parked by the road—a familiar sight along America's highways and yet a strange one as well. What are these metal-clad machines that populate our landscape, and what do they tell us about ourselves and our relationship to place? As an architect in Fayetteville, Ark., and a professor at the University of Arkansas, Marlon Blackwell finds inspiration in the "strangely familiar" quality of the American landscape. "It's an emerging vernacular," he says, "not yet recognized or accepted, containing the fragmented vestiges of the old with the refuse of technology." Blackwell has found a way, through this vernacular, to do top-notch design in "a big-box world," as he puts it, and a way to do so within tight budgets in a "culture not in love with architecture."

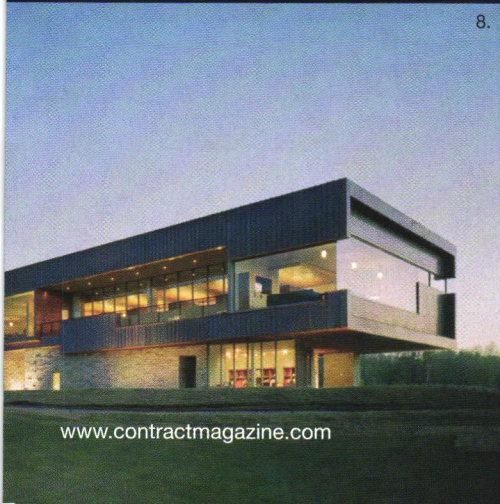
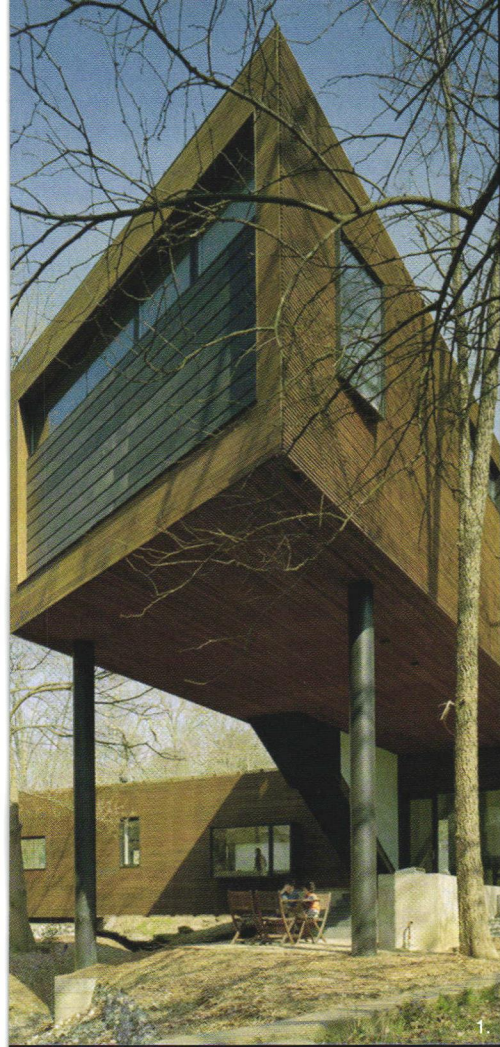
Blackwell's buildings reflect the "unholy union of things" that characterizes our contemporary vernacular. America's car culture, for example, comes through in projects like his Srygley office building, whose metal cladding wraps the narrow box-like structure like an automobile's sheet metal, with an angled back end that recalls Cadillac tail fins, a plate glass window across the front like a windshield, and cantilevered walls and roofs that suggest the movement of a vehicle. That expression of motion also emerges in the stairs that Blackwell frequently exposes on the exterior of projects. In his Blessings Golf Clubhouse and in his own house, angled

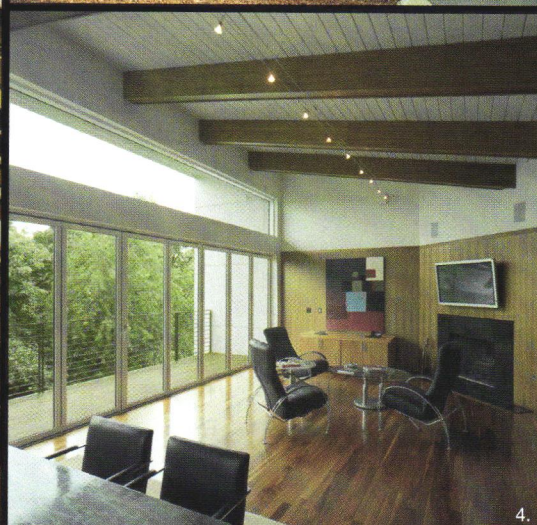
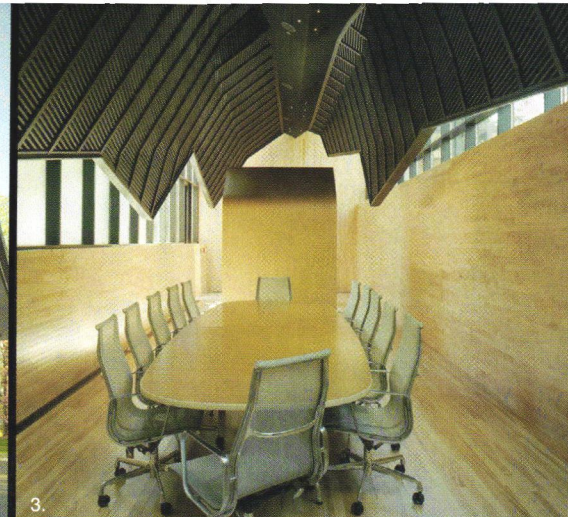
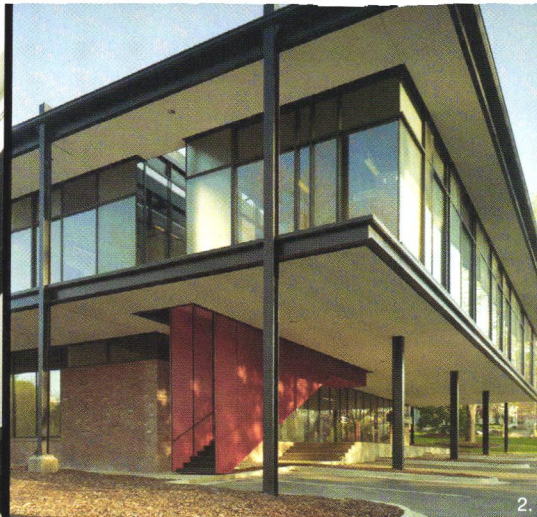
stair-housings convey the vertical movement of people between floors and make these buildings feel energetic and constantly on-the-move.

His interiors have a similar fluid quality. The stores that Blackwell has designed for the women's apparel company Mason's have undulating walls, benches, and display areas that not only draw customers into the shops, but also convey a sense of mobility and mutability fitting for a place selling fashionable clothing. Blackwell's renovation of the Fulbright Building in Fayetteville, Ark., uses glass to similar effect, with full-height glass walls that zigzag along the office corridors, in and out of the existing black-painted columns, as if to echo the slight meandering of people as they walk. The real tour-de-force of the Fulbright Building is the metal "shroud" or "shell" that Blackwell has hung over a conference space to control light and acoustics, looking like the aerodynamic body of an old car or boat visible from the street through glass walls, as if in a display case. In this building, as in so many others, he takes pieces of pop culture and makes them a part of a place.

His buildings also reflect upon the strange relationship Americans have with the land and with nature. While many of us may yearn for the open road and the escape that the car represents, many also yearn to feel rooted in a place and to live close to the land. That productive tension exists in Blackwell's own career. After a couple of years in Arkansas, he was ready to move on, when a col-

Images 1 - 3: L-Stack House, Fayetteville Ark., 2006 (photography by Tim Hursley). Images 4 - 8: Blessings Golf Clubhouse, Johnson, Ark., 2005 (photography by Tim Hursley). Image 9: Mason's at the Mall, Fayetteville, Ark., 2007 (photography by Rod Hudnall).






After a couple of years in Arkansas, he was ready to move on, when a colleague told him that he needed to stay if he was to do his best work. Blackwell took that advice and doesn't regret it.

league told him that he needed to stay if he was to do his best work. Blackwell took that advice and doesn't regret it, knowing that while practicing in Arkansas places him outside of the architectural mainstream, it has also allowed him to get inside a place and "to see beyond the surface of things," a lesson that many globe-trotting designers have yet to learn.

Seeing beyond the surface of things has affected his views of the natural environment. Blackwell has designed a number of projects that, while not overtly "green," take their ideas from the workings of nature. The forms of his "frog" and "dragonfly" houses draw from the way those animals adapt to environments like wetlands or hillsides, elevated above the landscape. Meanwhile, Blackwell's favorite (and smallest) project, the Moore honey house, has a carport and beekeeper's workshop under a roof flared like bee's wings, with a window-wall of angled glass set in deep steel-plate frames that function like a human honeycomb, providing space for storing and displaying the owner's jars of honey. "A link exists between things made and things born," observes Blackwell, "between a nice artifact and a beautiful organism. Architecture is a kind of husbandry that connects the two."

That husbandry idea captures what Blackwell sees as the primary purpose of architecture: to "enrich the everyday environment around us," to "ennoble the lives of citizens," and to "increase our empathy with the world." Blackwell shows that those high aspirations do not require highfalutin architecture. They arise, instead, through "the simple act of building well," he says, in ways "imbued with local specificity and invention." Great architecture has always done that, which raises the question of why, in our contemporary culture, qualities so familiar to past generations have become, strangely, so rare. 

Thomas Fisher is a professor and dean of the College of Design at the University of Minnesota. Educated at Cornell University and Case Western Reserve University, he previously served as the editorial director of *Progressive Architecture* magazine. He has published more than two dozen book chapters, 250 articles, and four books: *In the Scheme of Things*, *Salmela Architect*, *Lake/Flato Buildings and Landscapes*, and *Architectural Design and Ethics: Tools for Survival*.

Images 1 - 3: The Fulbright Building, Fayetteville Ark., 2007; Images 4 - 5: Srygley Office Building, Johnson Ark., 2004 (photography by Tim Hursley).



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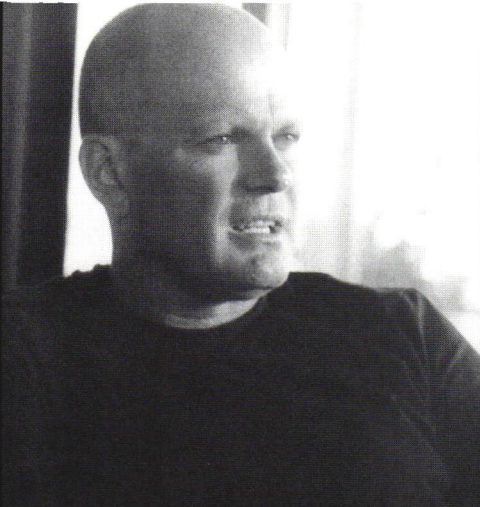
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Brian MacKay-Lyons: toward an architecture of its time and place

By Robert McCarter

For the last 25 years, in a critical regional practice par excellence, Nova Scotian architect Brian MacKay-Lyons has been what he calls the “village architect” for Kingsburg, a small cluster of farms whose roots can be traced back to one of the earliest European settlements in North America, first founded on the southeastern coast of Nova Scotia more than 400 years ago by French-Acadians. During this same period, he also realized a series of buildings in the city of Halifax, where he searched for the urban equivalent of the “primitive hut” that lies at the origin of architecture—a fundamental kind of urbanism appropriate for modern times. Also during this period, he began a second career as a professor of architecture at Dalhousie University in Halifax, and 15 years ago he started the “Ghost Laboratory” projects—annual two-week design-build workshops held on the Nova Scotian coast. More recently, he and his firm since 2004, MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple, have been recognized as being among Canada’s leading architects and have received steadily increasing attention in both national and international publications, as well as an expanding number of commissions outside Nova Scotia.

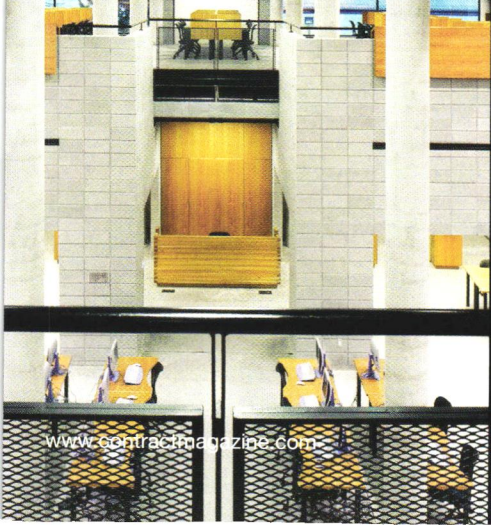
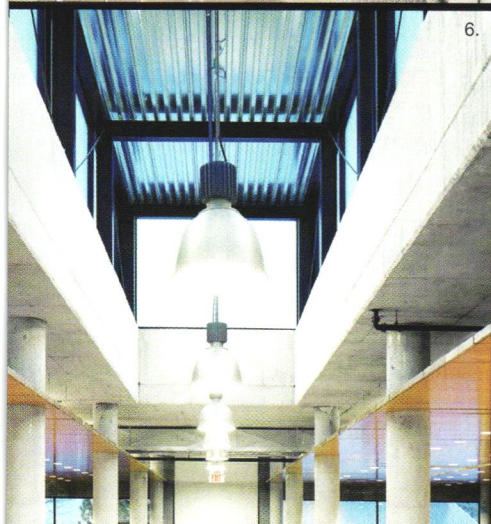
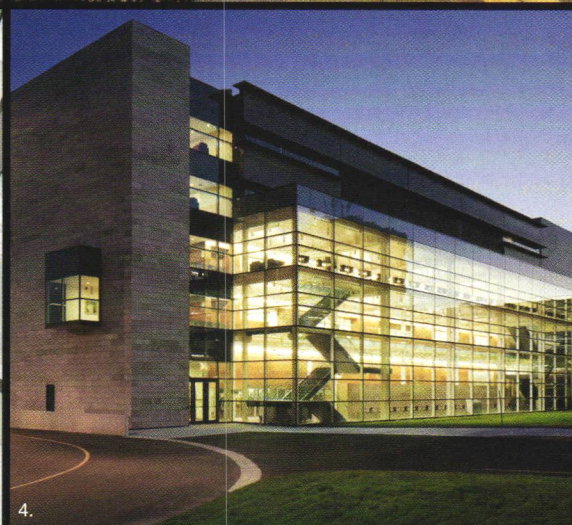
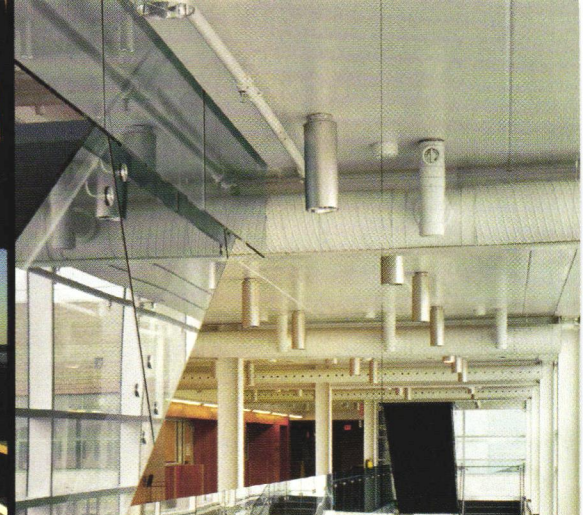
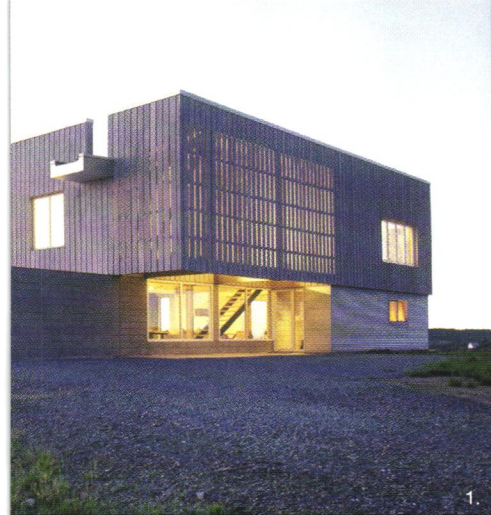
MacKay-Lyons maintains that his work “comes out of the ground, out of a particular place,” a literal “grass roots” that comes from having what he calls a short focal length. This is balanced by his insistence on “going to the mountaintop,” analyzing the works of the masters of Modern architecture—in particular Frank Lloyd Wright, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Luis Barragan, and Louis Kahn—what he calls having a long focal length. These short and long focal lengths allow MacKay-Lyons to literally overlook the middle-ground of what is in fashion at the moment, enabling him instead to focus on coming to terms with the funda-

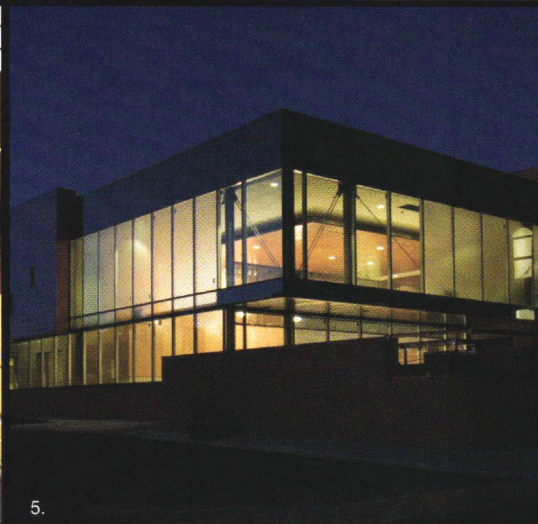
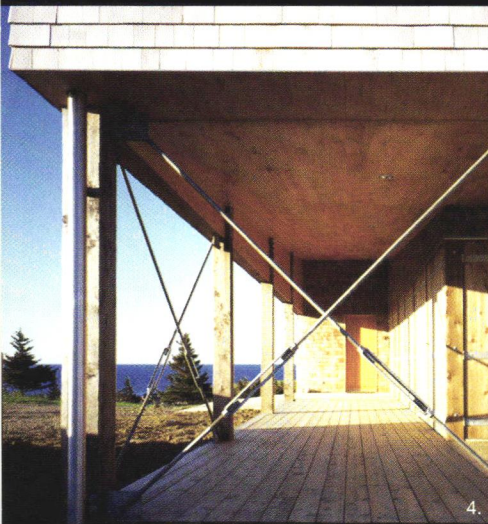
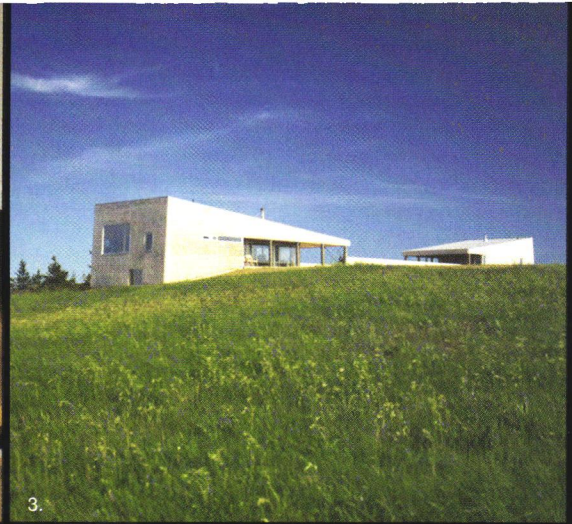
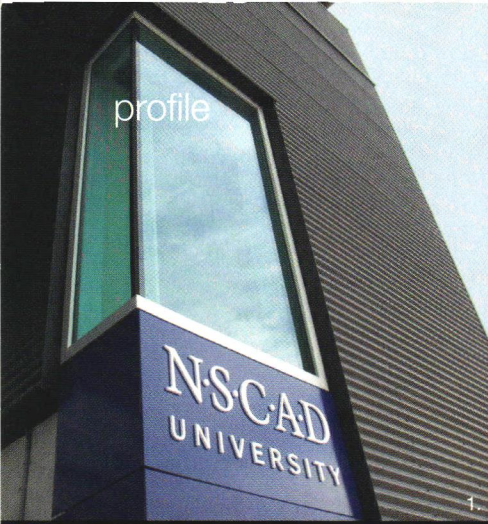
mental and essential principles of his discipline. Rather than being any kind of impediment to practice, MacKay-Lyons feels that his peripheral and remote location in Nova Scotia has allowed him to maintain this focus, or concentration, on what really matters in architecture.

Yet, rather than exhibiting any kind of provincialism, MacKay-Lyons’ practice exemplifies the concept of a liberative regionalism, in which aspects of universal civilization are adapted to the local culture, reinventing and transforming both the universal and the local to make a unique and appropriate construction for its particular place and time. MacKay-Lyons’ deep understanding of his place—its ancient traditions of farming, fishing, and boat-building; the characteristics of its climate and landform; the methods of building; and the nature of the materials at hand—is critical. His work has a directness that arises from tending to the nature of these materials, rather than imposing his own formal desires upon them. This is related to the Bauhaus and Black Mountain weaver Anni Albers’ statement: “Being creative is perhaps not the desire to do something, but listening to that which wants to be done, the dictation of the materials.”

MacKay-Lyons, unlike the majority of his contemporaries, operates in the tradition of practice, engaging the ethical and aesthetic principles—economical, functional, ecological, constructive, structural, material, psychological, sensorial, social, and cultural—that together affect our experience of inhabitation, which remains the ultimate measure of a work of architecture. The common characteristics that MacKay-Lyons’ buildings share with the local vernacular structures of Nova Scotia are a sense of restraint and econ-

Images 1 - 2: House on the Nova Scotia Coast No. 22, South Shore of Nova Scotia, 1998 (photography 1 by Undine Pröhl; 2 by James Steeves). Images 3 - 5: Plaza Building 2006 at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ont., 2007 (photography by Steven Evans). Images 6 - 8: Academic Resource Centre at University of Toronto, 2003 (photography by Steven Evans). Image 9: Rubadoux Studio, Rose Bay, Nova Scotia, 1989 (photography by James Steeves).





Short and long focal lengths allow MacKay-Lyons to literally overlook the middle-ground of what is in fashion at the moment, enabling him instead to focus on coming to terms with the fundamental and essential principles of his discipline.

omy—in the sense of getting the greatest benefit from the least expenditure of material, energy, and space, and an understated yet precise revelation of the nature of local building materials and how they are transformed by weather and time. Starting from his first, “zero point” works, MacKay-Lyons has accepted and engaged the severe limitations imposed by the climate, topography, and building culture of his place, and the high quality of his work may be directly related to these limits. It was Frank Lloyd Wright who said: “Limitations are the architect’s best friends.”

MacKay-Lyons’ example indicates that architects best serve their local culture by employing practices that leave the place in which they work more cultivated—capable of sustaining richer experiences of inhabitation—than when they first came to it. This process of building the site—a cultivation of the land, whether rural or urban—involves looking both forward and backward in time, and using the traces of the history of agricultural or architectural inhabitation of the site to counteract the current ravages of suburban sprawl and overdevelopment, depressingly the same around the world. MacKay-Lyons’ recent projects—many of which are at ever-greater distances from his home on the southeast coast of Nova Scotia—offer him the chance to apply the tool kit of “lessons learned at home” to projects being built in places like Bangladesh. He sees this work as a natural extension of his practice from the small village of his home to the

larger “village of the world,” where his work continues to come out of its place, out of the ground on which it is built, and out of the building cultures of these new places.

The work of MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects unites the universal and local, fuses the vernacular and modern, re-integrates architecture and agriculture as two related ways of cultivating the land, and re-establishes the importance of place—with its climate, landform, geology, sunlight, and its history of inhabitation, cultivation, and construction—in the making of contemporary architecture. Maintaining his disciplinary focus and his ethical balance, MacKay-Lyons makes what has always been, and always will be, appropriate—an architecture of its place and time. ■

Robert McCarter is a practicing architect, professor, and author. He is the Ruth and Norman Moore Professor of Architecture at Washington University in St. Louis. Prior to this appointment, he taught at the University of Florida and at Columbia University, among others. He is the author of *Frank Lloyd Wright: Critical Lives* (2006), *On and By Frank Lloyd Wright: A Primer on Architectural Principles* (2005), *Louis I. Kahn* (2005), *William Morgan, Architect* (2002), *Frank Lloyd Wright* (1997), among others. Currently he is under contract for three books, *Alvar Aalto*, *Carlo Scarpa*, and *Architecture as Experience: A Primer*. In summer 2007, he was the invited critic for Ghost Laboratory 9.

Images 1 - 2: NSCAD University Port Campus, Halifax, N.S., 2007 (photography by Alvin Comiter). Images 3 - 4: Hill House, Nova Scotia, 2005 (photography by Steven Evans). Images 5 - 6: School of Business at University of Prince Edward Island, 2006 (photography by Greg Richardson).

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national wallcovering



Will Bruder: artist as architect

Reported by Kelly Bauer
Written by Kelly Bauer and
Jennifer Thiele Busch

The Southwest boasts untouched desert landscapes, dramatic sunsets, and extensive scenery offering respite and solace. Many brilliant minds have come to this beautiful and challenging environment to savor its unique natural beauty and to seek new possibilities inspired by its defining horizon and dramatic light. In the design world, early adapters were Frank Lloyd Wright and Paolo Soleri, along with a handful of others who brought their Modernist principles to a new place.

Nationally and internationally recognized architect Will Bruder happens to be one of them. Regardless of peer pressure, status, or popular trends, Bruder has honed his work to his own vision, producing with his studio exceptional and award-winning buildings. His work is regarded as sculptural, perceived as a journey into the unknown. It is not driven by form or style. "I have come to see the world from a different perspective and with greater clarity, with perhaps less and less tolerance for fads and fashion," he explains.

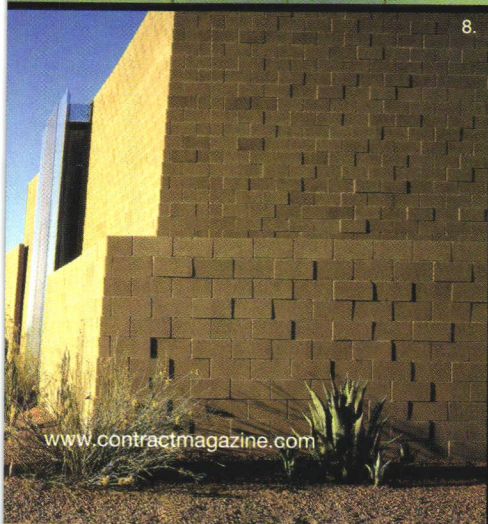
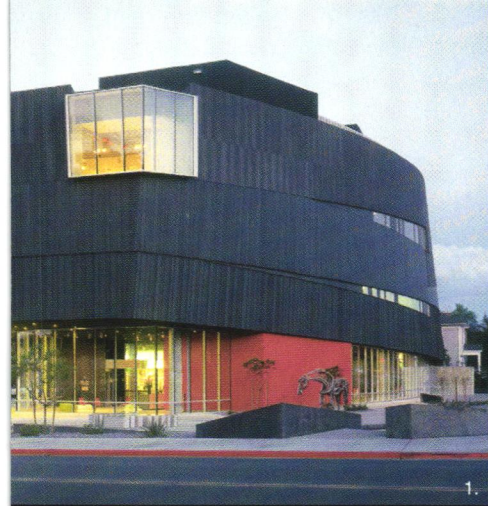
When Bruder came out of the Midwest in the late 1960s, he had in the back of his mind the possibility of striking out in a place where he could cut his architectural teeth. He opened his own practice immediately after getting his license in 1974 and started carving out a distinctive path for himself, building his first studio off the back of

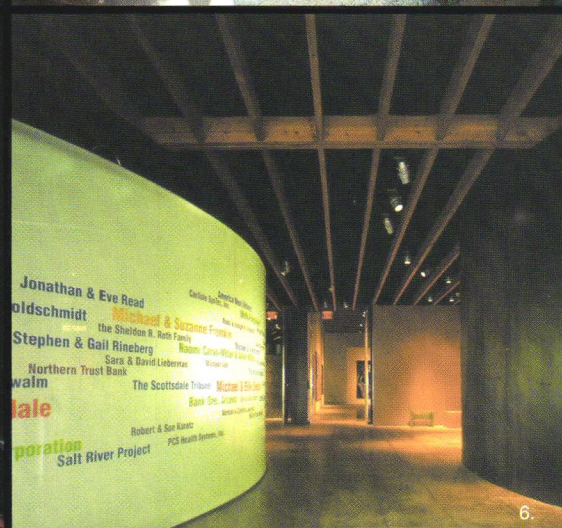
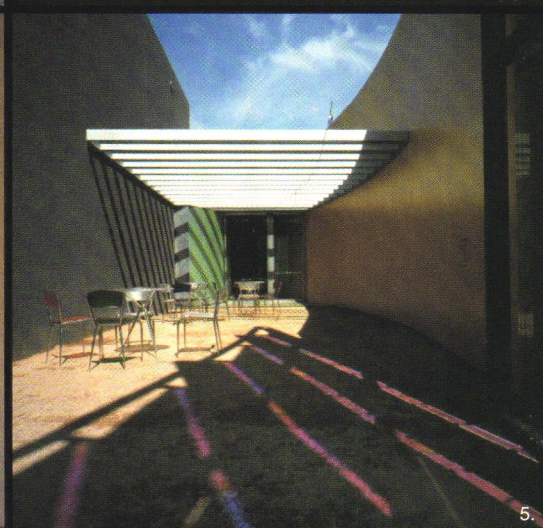
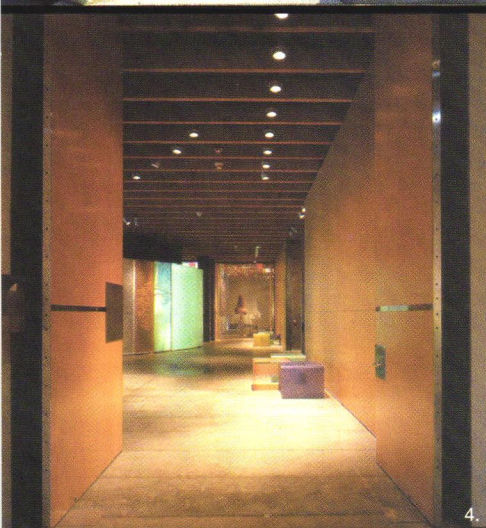
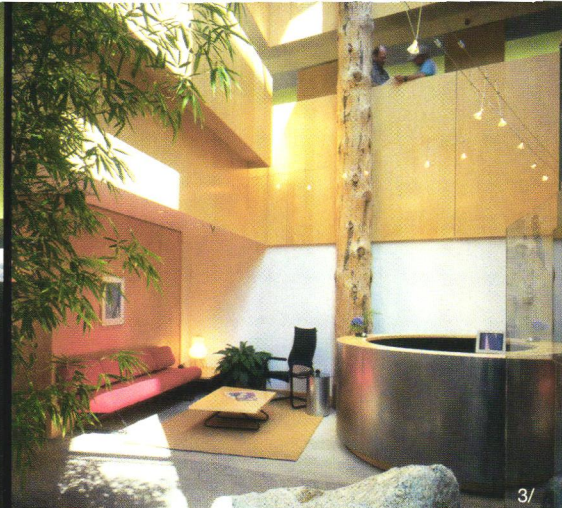
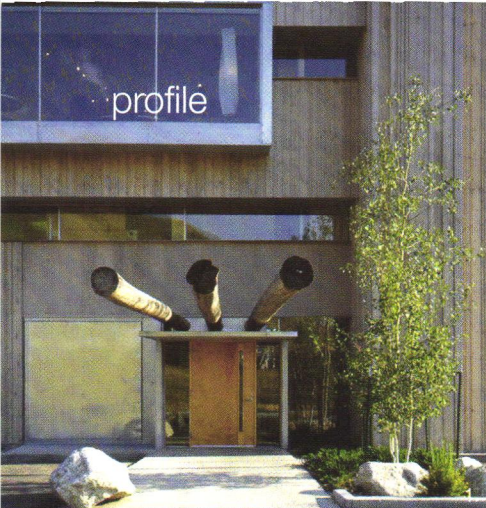
his rental apartment in downtown Phoenix, then moving to a home and studio of his own design in the desert beyond the edge of the city.

After the completion of the Phoenix Central Library, the project that brought his studio national and international acclaim, he returned to the heart of the city to pursue increasingly frequent and complex public and private projects. His unique portfolio has enabled the studio to grow, and to celebrate its 33rd year the practice has become Will Bruder + Partners, a collaboration of Bruder and three partners, who have been pivotal colleagues for more than 10 years. There are now projects in play throughout the West.

Bruder first revealed his position as an independent thinker with the design motif for his own home. Tapering his house into the topography and considering climate conditions for energy efficiency, he also designed his home with minimal views of the city. His primary views to the northwest would show him the unspoiled desert landscape, not the banality of mass civilization. His unconventional education and somewhat atypical apprenticeships—he received a BFA in sculpture from the University of Wisconsin, and his formal design training came through apprenticeships with architectural designer Michael Johnson and visionary architects Paolo

Images 1 - 4: Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, Nev. (photography by Grant Mudford). Images 5 - 7: Burton Barr Phoenix Central Library, Phoenix (photography by Bill Timmerman). Images 8 - 9: Temple Kol Ami, Scottsdale, Ariz. (photography by Bill Timmerman).





He never forgets that “architecture, in order to be transcendent, needs first to connect with people where they live—metaphorically and physically.”

Soleri and Gunnar Birkerts—had taught him to look at a place more from the viewpoint of an artist, rather than from a traditional architectural approach based on pragmatism or theory. “I see and ask questions of the places that I have had the privilege of working,” he says.

Lately, Bruder has the privilege of working in an expanding range of locations and on increasingly complex project types. In Phoenix, several multi-family condo projects are underway, and there is a new branch library coming out of the ground. The firm’s largest building and interiors project to date, the 350,000-sq.-ft. Dial Henkel U.S. headquarters and R&D facility, will open in late 2008. “We are master planner/architects for both the CBD 101 (central business district) in Glendale, Ariz., a 77-acre sustainable, mixed-use, agrarian, urban vision with 4.8-million-sq.-ft. of buildings, and TAXI, a mixed use project on a gritty, 18-acre site between the railroad tracks and the Platte River in Denver,” he reports.

Bruder’s self-described design process is fueled by intensive investigations into the uniqueness of each setting geographically, climatically, and topographically in regard to either its urban or rural context. “From there

we are inspired by the sensual textures of light and materials that inform the identity of a place,” he explains. With that research in play, his process with his colleagues is to design from the outside in and the inside out. “I strive to poetically choreograph ideas of form, space, and materiality into an architectural vision that becomes a celebration of our clients and of the communities that our buildings inhabit,” he says.

“Through architecture, my goal is to create original inventions of beauty and function that are simultaneously simple and complex,” continues Bruder. He never forgets that “architecture, in order to be transcendent, needs first to connect with people where they live—metaphorically and physically.” As a result, Will Bruder’s buildings blend intellectual rigor with an artful aesthetic. □

Kelly Bauer, IIDA, is a principal at richard + bauer, the Phoenix-based firm she founded with architect James Richard, AIA, in 1996. This studio based, integrated architectural and interiors practice focuses primarily on higher education, research, and library design. Bauer completed her education in interior design, graduating from the University of Arizona in 1982. Along with Richard, she was *Contract* magazine’s “2007 Designer of the Year.”



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Images 1 - 3: Riddell Office, Jackson, Wyo.; Images 4 - 6: Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, Ariz. (photography by Bill Timmerman).

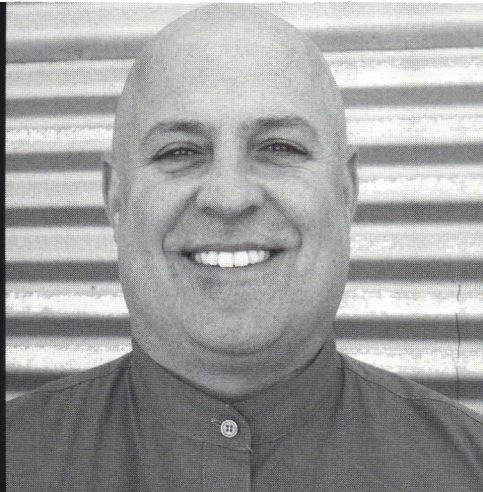


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Larry Scarpa: between creativity and pragmatism

By Steve Dumez

To hear Larry Scarpa describe Pugh + Scarpa Architects' design process, you might wonder if you are hearing a descriptive synopsis of the 1997 film "Fast, Cheap and Out of Control." And, like the four near-obsessive individuals featured in Errol Morris' unconventional documentary, Scarpa shares a razor-like intensity and focus, coupled with a childlike curiosity about the world around him. "In the early days, we operated a bit like a little kid's soccer team—you know, where everybody follows the ball," Scarpa says. "That's how we worked. Everyone would essentially sit around one desk focused on the project at hand, get it done, and then we'd all jump to the next project."

Los Angeles-based Pugh + Scarpa Architects' design strategy, employed on many of the firm's early projects in commercial interiors, was well outside the norm of the conventional design-bid-build practice. The office often partnered with contractors and builders to deliver projects on very tight budgets and aggressive schedules, essentially at-risk. "We started with minimal drawings and kept designing until the client moved in. It was very quick and intense, but extremely gratifying in that we often saw our designs realized in three months or less," says Scarpa.

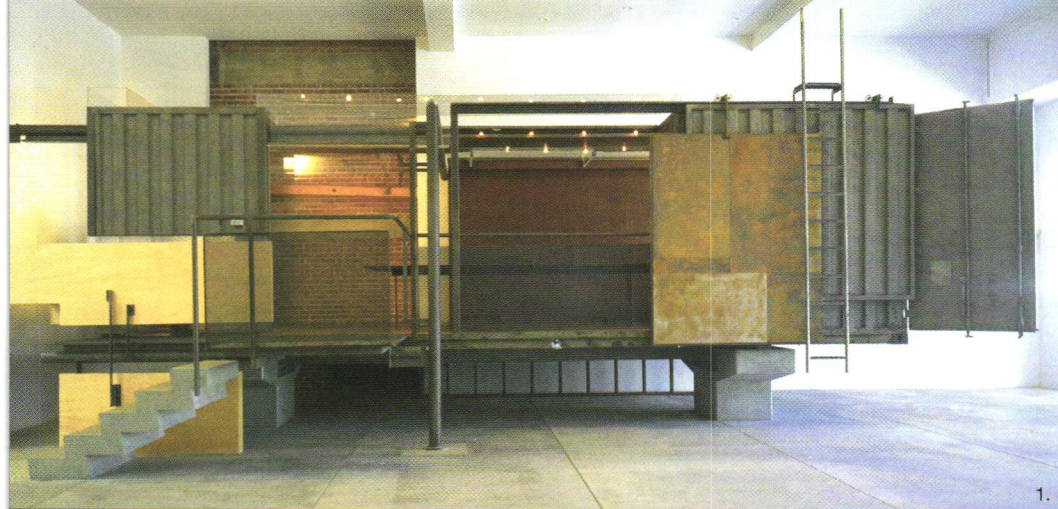
Starting with Reactor Films in Santa Monica, Calif., where a shipping container is reimagined and transformed for conference-room use, Pugh + Scarpa has consistently applied a vigorous combination of creativity and pragmatism to its projects, imbuing everyday items with new poetry, even in prosaic applications. There is a strong interest in materials

research and exploration; the firm is well-known for using the common and everyday in remarkable ways as a means to heighten experience and awareness. This is readily apparent in the offices for Creative Domain in Los Angeles, where colored, translucent Dixie cups penetrate a wall to provide borrowed light to a corridor, or at Jigsaw in Los Angeles, where ping-pong balls are sandwiched between glass panes to form a window that evenly illuminates a post-production editing room.

The lessons learned in the early projects, set against the need to work quickly and in concert with numerous parties to the building process, have been put to the test more recently for the international headquarters of MGA Entertainment, where Pugh + Scarpa is collaborating with Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects on a 300,000-sq.-ft. adaptive reuse and expansion of the former *Los Angeles Times* printing facility located in Chatsworth, Calif. While the scale of many of the firm's projects may have changed—from small-scale boutique interiors to larger commercial and institutional projects, multi-family housing, and educational and civic buildings—the firm's focus on delivering creative, sustainable environments has not.

A constant thread through all of the work is a focus on the experience of the project—a focus on how you do something rather than what is done. Or, put another way, the experience of the space is more important than what it looks like. "We typically design from the inside-out rather than the outside-in, and I have always been influenced by artists who leave something with the visi-

Images 1 - 2: Reactor Films' production studio in Santa Monica, Calif., 1998 (photography by Marvin Rand). Images 3 - 6: XAP Corporation in Culver City, Calif., 2001 (photography by Benny Chan, Fotoworks). Images 7 - 8: MGA Entertainment in Chatsworth, Calif., is a collaboration with Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects to be completed in 2010 (renderings by Pugh + Scarpa Architects).



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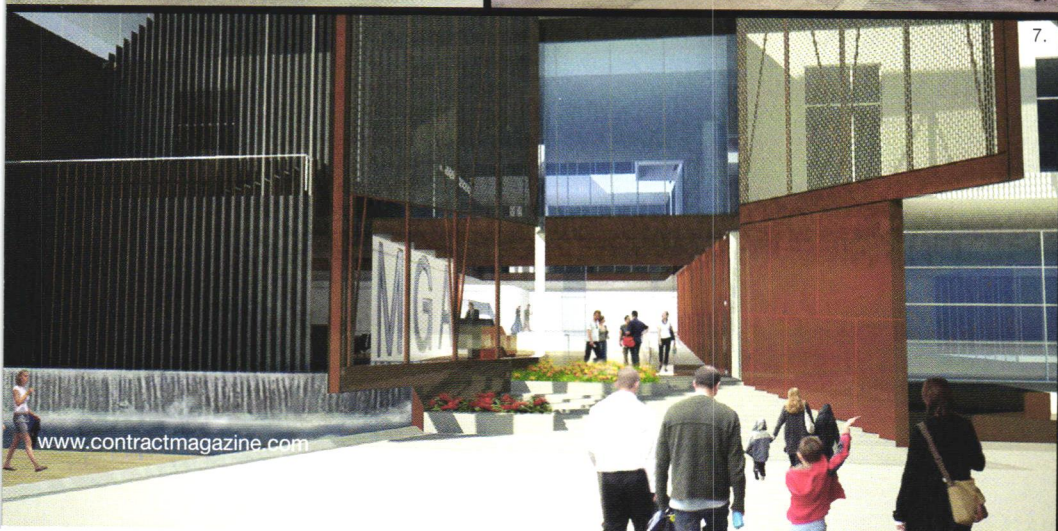
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A constant thread through all of the work is a focus on the experience of the project—a focus on how you do something rather than what is done. Or, put another way, the experience of the space is more important than what it looks like.

tor,” says Scarpa, adding that this is the case regardless of whether the building is ultimately constructed or not.

Having grown up in Florida, Scarpa was also influenced by the Sarasota School of Architecture, a group that practiced during the '50s and '60s and created some astonishing sustainable buildings in the harsh, central Florida climate. Perhaps best known among these was Paul Rudolph. While following his undergraduate studies in architecture, Scarpa spent two years working with the somewhat reclusive and iconoclastic modernist. While profoundly influenced by his time with Rudolph, he is no less an iconoclast than his mentor. What I find unique about Larry Scarpa is his genuine enthusiasm in sharing information and ideas with colleagues, his interest in creative collaborations with other architects, and his ability to take great pleasure in accomplishing what is possible, rather than losing focus on the impossible. I have had the pleasure of working with and alongside him on three projects over the past three years, and I have found his energy and enthusiasm contagious.

When asked what frustrates him most about current practice and the state of commercial construction, Scarpa offers that while the cost of building sustainably is closing the gap on conventional, developer-driven cost models, it's still too difficult to convince certain clients on the value of sustain-

able design. He feels the biggest issue in commercial construction is developers' ability to ignore issues of sustainability and energy management because, in the world of triple-net leases, all costs are passed on to the tenants.

“I am usually not big on rules,” Scarpa says. “But in this case, I feel that there will be a need to legislate some sort of performance-based model or provide incentives as they relate to sustainable construction. If we were to handle it in a manner similar to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it would eventually be seen as standard practice and we wouldn't find ourselves constantly fighting in the margins. Sustainability is a question of professional ethics.”

Steve Dumez, FAIA, is a partner and design director at New Orleans-based Eskew+Dumez+Ripple. Dumez says of Scarpa: “My own experience in working with Larry has been characterized by an atmosphere of collaboration. This has been the case across three projects. The first was a competition to design the Mill Center for the Arts, a cultural arts facility in Hendersonville, N.C. We then worked in parallel with Pugh + Scarpa on an affordable housing prototype for the Make it Right Foundation, a group committed to rebuilding a sustainable community in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. Larry recently asked us to assist Pugh+Scarpa in the development of a new museum for Laumeier Sculpture Park in St. Louis.”

Images 1 - 2: Click 3X LA, 2000; Images 3 - 4: Creative Domain in Hollywood, Calif., 2004; Images 5: Jigsaw, Los Angeles, 2005 (photography by Marvin Rand).



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unlikely partners

Craft and technology are not mutually exclusive tools in the service of good design

By Rysia Suchecka

In a Barcelona cemetery (above; photo by Hisao Suzuki), Spanish designers Enrique Miralles and Carmen Pinos use the most fundamental material—stone—held back with wire mesh like that used to control rock slides aside highways. The entrances to the tombs are made of rusticated steel sliding doors. Janice Arnold of JA FELT uses felt, this most basic and ageless fabric, in contemporary costume and set designs for theaters and interiors like this “woven wall” (left; photo by Jeff Green), created for a Wolfgang Puck restaurant in Las Vegas.



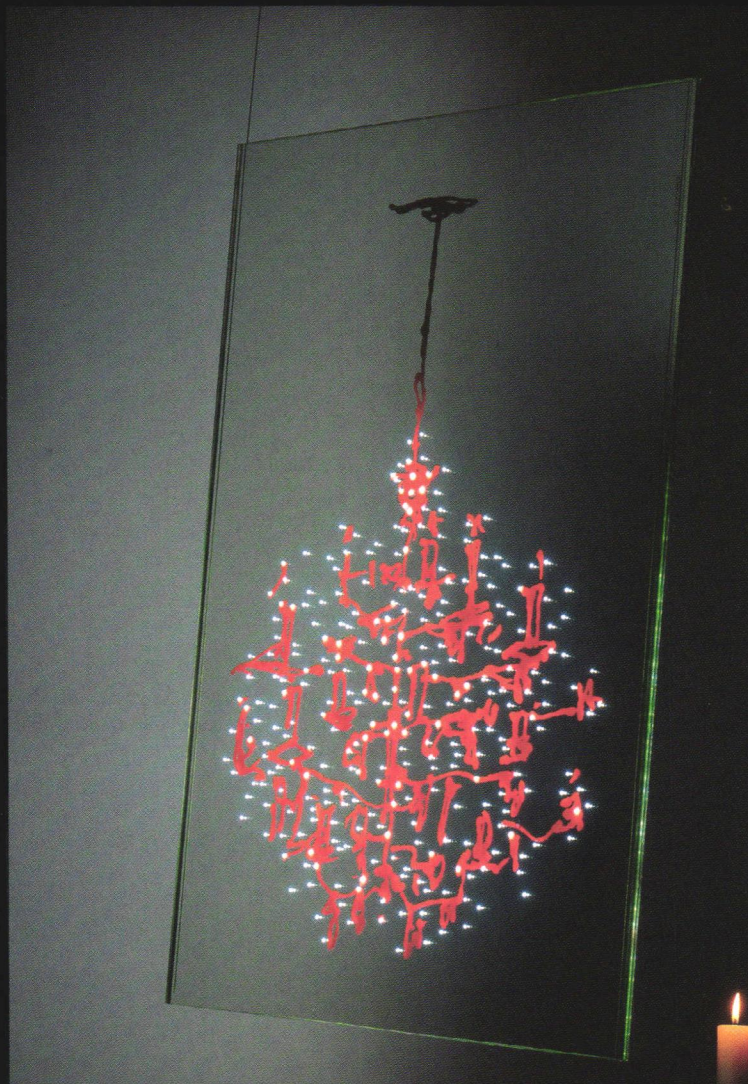
I want to make it clear from the start that I believe technology can be harnessed in the service of greater craftsmanship for a number of reasons ranging from efficiency—time and money saved—to innovation. Evidence can be found in those programs that allowed architects, interior designers, and industrial designers to create buildings, interiors, and furniture designs that were beyond the realm of possibility before the advent of CAD, CAM, and, more recently, BIM (building information modeling). I believe in the possibilities of craft innovation through technology. But it is crucial to remember that creativity, not technology, lies at the heart of good craft-making.

Whatever we design must be of use, but at the same time, it also must transcend its use. It must be rooted in time, place, and the needs of the client, but it also must transcend those requirements. It must be rooted in craft, while challenging the limits of craft-making—of craftsmanship itself—and through this challenge, it must resist the temptations of design opulence. By using the same technologies that perhaps have stripped craft-making of its originality and individuality, craft can be brought back into the foreground as a humanizing element in the making of architecture and design.

In a different time, the master builder fused constructive intelligence with skilled craftsmanship. This kind of builder made structures where all the elements—windows, floors, walls, etc.—were interdependent. This idea that every part of the building was part of a whole, was essential not only to the aesthetics of the building, but also to its survival. The whole was the sum of its parts, and every part was crucial to the aesthetic and functional success of the whole.

In the 20th century, “progress” in the construction industry divided the disciplines: components were made separately, by different people in different places or shops, which ultimately compromised the aesthetics of the whole. This separation of elements created a disjunction between architectural form, constructive intelligence, and skilled craftsmanship. The problems with this approach are various and complicated, but essentially, it seems to me that we lost the ability to use craftsmanship as a means of elevating what otherwise might be banal design or ordinary construction. Today, relevant, thoughtful design must rediscover that synthesis of skilled, artful craftsmanship and building use or function.

One remarkable technological innovation that works toward renewing and rediscovering this synthesis is BIM. This tool allows every person involved in the planning, design, and construction of a building—including client, architect, designers, and engineers—to be involved from the beginning. By integrating all the data required in the process of planning and construction into a 3-D model, BIM creates a visual/digital database that maximizes flexibility, recognizes problems early on, and provides an ongoing visual and



Ingo Maurer has reinvented the craft of lighting fixture design with his whimsical yet elegantly contemporary fixtures, such as this piece with LED lights and sketches sealed inside sheets of molded glass (top). Designer Andrew Scribatti utilizes a throwaway natural material—a highly invasive Asian vine—to handcraft lounge chairs (above) in a marvelous contemporary interpretation of the timeless craft of hand-making furniture.

written record that all team members can access. As it evolves, this tool should greatly enhance efficiency and thereby save time and money, which in turn frees up that time and money for more important, humanizing elements—such as craft.

Currently, one element of the successful designer's mission is to raise the profile of contemporary design by redefining the relationship between craft-making, industry, and the digital processes that have come to dominate our design work. Today, we need to transcend the limitations of new media, and put them to use in new ways.

Consider this: There is a distinctive look to contemporary furniture design that has come about as a result of designers using CAD and CAM programs. More recently, industrial designers have utilized the software program Visualize and Modeling Program (VAMP) to aid in the design and production of furniture. VAMP can produce plans and forms of the skin/surface panels for furniture designs on screen, and then translate these images into data that can control the actual production of furniture. This creates a conceptual link between traditional craft practice—dreaming, drawing, making images of pieces to be constructed—and technology—the use of digital formats to actualize ideas and concepts. These technologies can be used to explore relief tiles, tessellations, and the interplay of light and shadow to create the illusion of three dimensions on screen in two dimensions. Certainly in the future these technologies can be taken further, and used to explore new territories for craft-making, for example, the use of lasers to cut stainless-steel into jewels.

The challenges raised by the use of technology in craft-making go beyond the merely technical to embrace more philosophical questions. These technologies raise the question: What are the aesthetics of “craft?” I believe that authentic craftsmanship can cross the boundaries and can unite crafts design with digital forms of industrial production. But we have to learn how to use craftsmanship to create complex custom products—and how to



employ our technologies, where applicable. Not all craft-makers will embrace digital technology, nor should they, but these technologies should enable some craftsmen to re-imagine the fundamentals of their work in a contemporary way. There is no doubt that most serious practitioners of craft-making understand the importance of individuality in their products—the stamp of individuality is part of what makes craftsmanship so appealing. The challenge, however, may be in synthesizing that individuality with current and future digital technologies to create more commercially viable forms of customized crafts—that remain recognizably individual—to meet the demands of 21st century design culture.

Like art, craft is seen with the eyes, felt with the hands, heard with the ears—it is more than ideas or words, and it is experienced physically, with the hands as well as the head. ■

Rysia Suchecka is a partner at NBBJ in Seattle. She joined the firm in 1981 and has served a pivotal role in promoting national and international expansion. She holds a degree in Interior Architecture from the Polish Academy of Arts and a Bachelor of Environmental Interior Design from Pratt University, and she is an honorary member AIA Seattle 2000 and Fellowship to Rome 1989.

Architect Eve Jiricna fitted this 21st-century steel-and-glass staircase (above; photo by Arcaid: Images & Assignments) into a 19th century apartment building in London, demonstrating how contemporary craft-making can work in juxtaposition with older, handmade buildings. At DIFFA's 2008 Dining By Design, Rockwell Group created a totally knit environment, where every element is handcrafted with meticulous detail (left), bringing people together through ritual and new technology.



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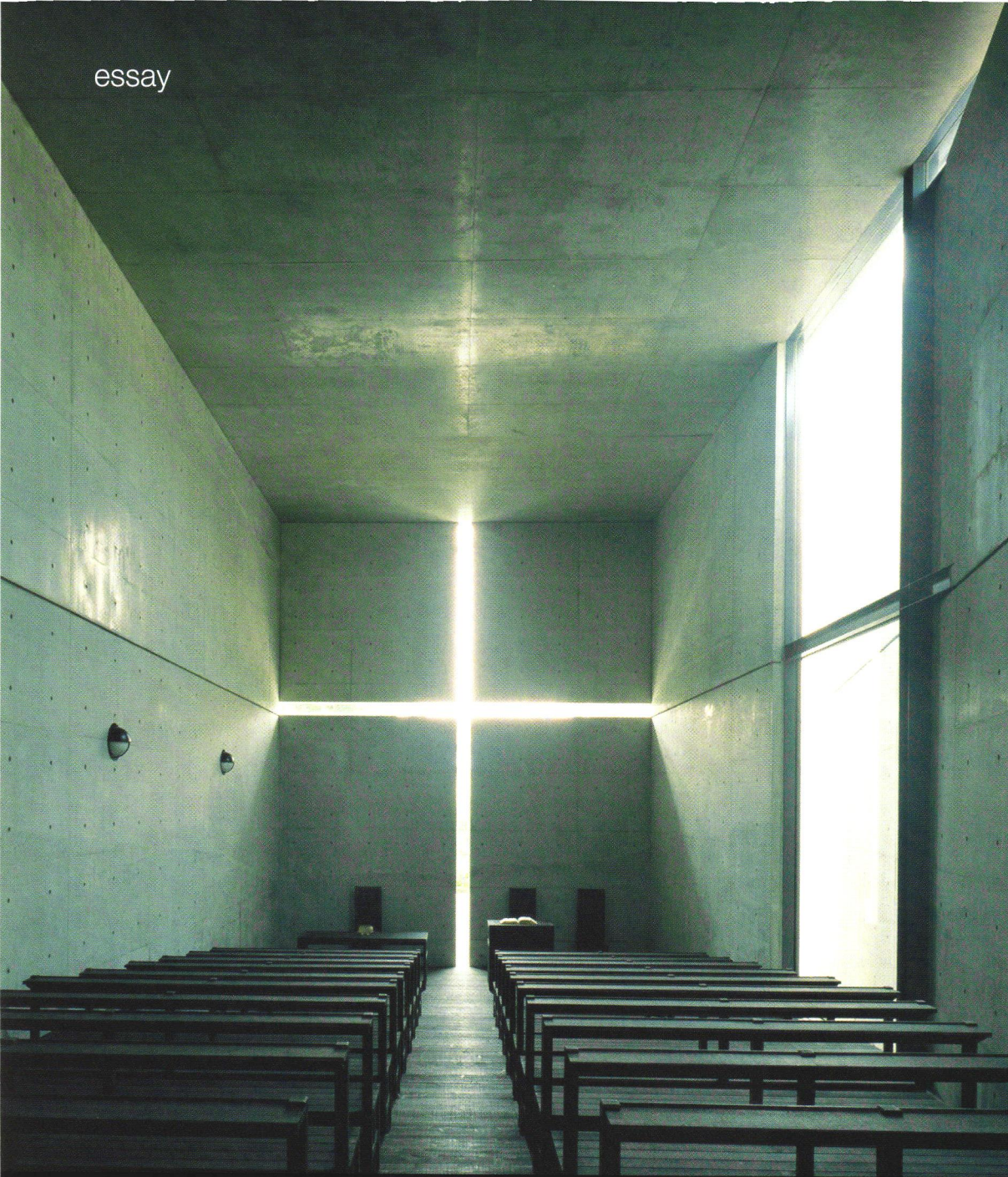
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essay



more than meets the eye

Some architecture must be experienced—and not merely seen—to be fully appreciated

By Fred A. Bernstein

It's hard to imagine a list of the world's greatest architects that doesn't include Tadao Ando. So why is it so hard to picture the outside of an Ando building?

Ando's interiors—such as a church where light shines through a cruciform gap in concrete walls or a towering cylindrical lobby—are famous. But the outsides rarely make lasting impressions. Indeed, on the Japanese island of Naoshima, Ando created a building with no exterior at all. The Chichu Museum is underground, meaning there is no way to picture it without experiencing it: Walking down long hallways whose walls tilt in (“so that you feel the weight of gravity,” Ando explained during a visit), until suddenly you turn a corner into a vast chamber designed for a gathering of Monet’s *Water Lilies*. It is a version of compression and release, a technique—favored by Frank Lloyd Wright—that heightens the experience of leaving one room for another. Elsewhere, Ando employs methods associated with the artist James Turrell for using light to define, not merely illuminate, spaces.

Clearly, Ando isn't focused on what it's like to see his buildings, but on what it's like to *experience* them. That puts him squarely in a category of designers who have resisted the current vogue for photogenic “trophy buildings.” Front Inc., the Manhattan firm that designs high-tech facades for architects like Frank Gehry and Yoshio Taniguchi, attributes its success to the current demand for dazzling architectural exteriors. But there is more to buildings than their fronts.

Of course, architects reject the notion that some are creating objects and others are creating experiences, and no one doubts that a building by Frank Gehry or Zaha Hadid, however iconic its exterior form, is also meant to offer a compelling experience. Even Philip Johnson probably didn't mean it when he told an interviewer, “The only thing I care about is the form.” (Being inside his Glass House, with the trees outside as “wallpaper,” is an experience that is animated by the changes in light, weather, and season.)

On the other hand, architects who say that all they care about is the experience are probably exaggerating: “We’re not without ego,” admits Billie Tsien, who practices in Manhattan with her husband, Tod Williams. “We want people to like the way our buildings look.”

But listening to architects like Tsien and Steven Holl makes it clear that looks aren't everything. Speaking of the Storefront for Art & Architecture, which he designed with the artist Vito Acconci 15 years ago, Holl is proudest of the fact that the building's facade is full of moving parts, allowing it to adapt to an astonishing variety of curatorial inventions. In the early 1990s, Holl points out, “People were doing deconstructivist buildings, which were all about angles, but still they were static forms.” The Storefront, he says, “isn't static.” Indeed, each visit promises a new experience.

Tadao Ando's Church of the Light in Ibaraki, Osaka Prefecture, Japan, 1989 (opposite; photo by Mitsuo Matsuoka). Steven Holl's interior of Writing With Light House, Long Island, N.Y., 2001-2004 (above; photo by Andy Ryan). David Byrne's “Playing the Building” installation at the Battery Maritime Building in New York, 2008 (right; photo by Danielle Spencer).





Ai Wei-Wei's Ordos Art Museum in Ordos, Inner Mongolia, 2007 (above left; photo by Fred Bernstein). Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects' American Folk Art Museum in New York, 2001 (above right; photo by Michael Moran).

Holl's latest creation is the Linked Hybrid, a collection of eight tall buildings joined by an above-ground walkway. It occupies a prominent site in Beijing, and it is handsome enough that it surely will grace the magazine covers. But ask Holl about the building, and he'll talk about the experience of moving through it, a trip that is like navigating the inside of a kaleidoscope, as each window reveals bits of the building's other facets. Or ask him about his Writing With Light House, on Long Island, and he'll talk about how shadows (cast by horizontal slats attached to the exterior) animate the interior spaces as the sun moves through the sky. In this house, even staying in one place allows a voyage through architectural possibility.

For Williams and Tsien, the experience of a building has to relate to its mission. At their American Folk Art Museum in New York, the contents set the tone. Folk art, Tsien points out, "is characterized by the idea that there's not a very big distance between that artist's impulse and what his hand produces—it's not filtered through theory or history. We wanted to create a building where you felt the same immediacy in the architecture." That meant using rough materials in whose surfaces the hand of the maker was ever-present.

They had a tiny site to work within midtown Manhattan. So they added complexity, creating a number of ways to move vertically through the space, allowing visitors to author their own experiences. "You leave feeling that it's bigger than it is," says Tsien. "Your feet don't feel it, but your head does."

As for the building's façade—made of dark, cast-metal panels that some find off-putting, Tsien says, "The façade is just something you pass through. It's the interior experience that generates the building." Naturally, when Williams and Tsien were hired by a very different client—a neurosciences institute in San Diego State—they came up with a very different building, a cloister encircling a courtyard where scientists could meet to talk through new ideas.

It makes sense that neuroscientists would want a building that activates the senses, given what science is showing about how the brain reacts to spaces. According to John P. Eberhard, the founding president of the Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture, science is beginning to explain how some interiors create a sense of well-being, with textures, colors, and even proportions triggering responses "at a much more profound level than that of conscious likes and dislikes."

Buildings that reward the senses don't arrive overnight. It's been a year since Tsien and Williams won the commission to create a new home for the Barnes Foundation, a small museum of impressionist paintings, long housed in a mansion outside Philadelphia. But after a year of work, Tsien says—not coyly—that she and Williams don't know what the building will look like. They know they want to recreate the experience of seeing the artwork in its current home, and they are looking for the best way to achieve that.

But the Barnes needs to win philanthropic support for the project. "It's always a tug with nonprofits, because they need to raise money," Tsien explains. "They always want to go out with an initial image of what the object will look like—which is something we're loathe to produce." Creating meaningful experiences takes time.

And even after the new Barnes is built, photos won't capture it. "We believe that you never know anyone's building, and are unable to judge it, or know the value of it," says Tsien, "unless you've actually been there." She might have added: More than once. ■

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Shade.

The dark sprinkle left by leaves in eclipse
hiding from the boiling yellow ball
in refuge.

Crossing the line from sun to shadow brings
instant cool.

That place.

Below.

Protected.

Celebrate Sol from the shadow and shade
and witness the splendor of each green blade.

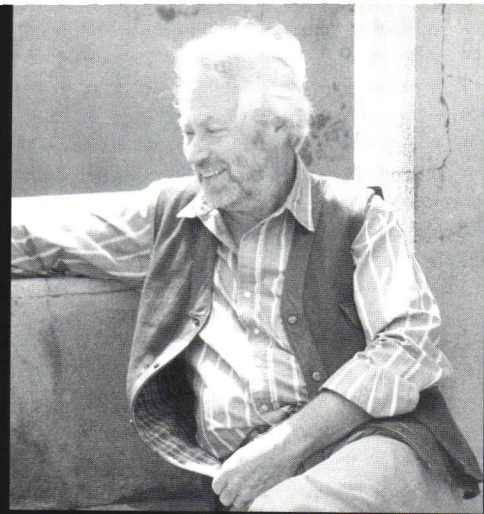
Stare into the horizon
and melt
into the long view.



light in texas

If anyone personifies the independent spirit of the intensely creative, it is Donald Judd, master of art, light, landscape, and architecture

By Jennifer Thiele Busch



When you study the work of Donald Judd in Marfa, Texas, you truly come to understand the complex and powerful relationship between architecture and landscape, space and light, raw nature and the precisely manufactured. When Judd migrated to this mere pinpoint on the map in 1972—a refugee of sorts from the sophisticated but smothering art scene in New York City—he arrived seeking a place where he could exhibit his art as he wanted it to be seen, independent of the gallery showings by which he, like most artists, made his living. In the introduction to his 2007 book *Donald Judd: Architecture in Marfa, Texas*, author Urs Peter Flückiger writes: “Any major museum showing 20th-century art most likely has a work by Donald Judd in its collection....In Marfa, Judd was in control of the artwork, its placement, and the location. In short, he was in control of all the factors he considered paramount when placing an artwork or establishing spaces in which to live. The visitor to Marfa experiences not just Judd’s works, but those of his fellow artists in situations the artists themselves chose and considered appropriate.”

Over the ensuing 22 years until his untimely death in 1994, Judd almost single-handedly elevated

Marfa from an economically depressed West Texas cattle town to an art Mecca, celebrating the work of three pivotal artists—Dan Flavin, John Chamberlain, and Judd himself. After Dia Art Foundation purchased the decrepit Fort D.A. Russell, an abandoned army base now home to the Chinati Foundation, Judd carefully set about restoring its buildings and grounds to house his own art and the art of Dan Flavin. Indeed, the buildings and grounds here are at one with the art in a way that Judd could not have enjoyed in installations beyond his complete and holistic control. Other key sites in town were acquired and restored to show the work of sculptor John Chamberlain and to house Judd’s various studios and living quarters.

On a recent trip to Marfa, Texas, hosted by Tandus (with the ever-gracious Terry Mowers and Suzanne Tick at the planning helm), Rand Elliott and I talked with Marianne Stockebrand—who worked closely with Judd in Marfa and now protects his legacy as the current director of the Chinati Foundation—about his ideas on space and place, and what is left to learn from this remarkable and prolific artist.

A permanent exhibition of Dan Flavin’s work (left and above) at The Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas.



Restored artillery sheds (top left) at The Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, house Judd's 100 untitled mill-aluminum pieces (top right). The rugged landscape of West Texas sets the backdrop for Judd's untitled works in concrete (above) on the grounds of Chinati.

JTB: How did the sense of place influence Donald Judd's work?

MS: Early on, Judd felt that his work would be best presented if it had certain conditions surrounding the work itself. It was important for him to realize the work in a way he felt necessary and appropriate. He contemplated the choice between architecture and art and chose art because he thought it gave him greater freedom. Growing up in a rural area, he pointed out that the land was important to him. Because his thoughts and his art had so much to do with how it was placed and the immediate environment, he couldn't get placement where he wanted...so he started to do it himself.

Judd was an artist, and art was his only income. He needed to show his work in galleries, but this was not his ideal solution. He believed that if you sent objects around the world, they would lose some of their meaning, whereas permanent exhibits could give future generations a sense of what this time was about. That's why he wanted not just to have one object, but a bigger group of work in a setting that was on par with his sensitivities. And he didn't just complain and accuse. He did it. He ultimately achieved this.

JTB: Tell us about how Donald Judd used materials.

MS: The use of materials was important to him; he believed in modesty and appropriateness to the architecture. He felt it was important to not be offensive to the land, to the environment, to the community. A lot of architecture, he felt, was exaggerated, pretentious, elaborate, or decorative when it was not necessary. It was a broad attack. He was very direct.

JTB: What were Donald Judd's ideas on architecture and the integration of architecture and interiors?

MS: Relevance was very important to him; the appropriateness of the new, the potential for longevity—insofar as it is important not to be wasteful and to think about a design that can last. This might have been as much of an inspiration to him as this theme of clarity that runs throughout his work. Build what is appropriate and suitable to a climate and an area. [Architecture and interiors] are connected. That is what Chinati exemplifies, and exactly the reason why the foundation was established. He wanted things to be connected as they are connected in real life.

RE: My relationship with Judd's work is that he understood space better than most architects.

MS: Space is made, it doesn't exist. If you go outside you don't find space in the same way that we think about space. He would puncture that volume in an arbitrary or specific way. A specific way would be to give a work of architecture an axis of light.

The artillery sheds [at Chinati] are among Judd's most beautiful ideas. He added the vaults—a rectangular volume below, a circular volume above. These were often very subtle means, but they would define a space and how it works very clearly.

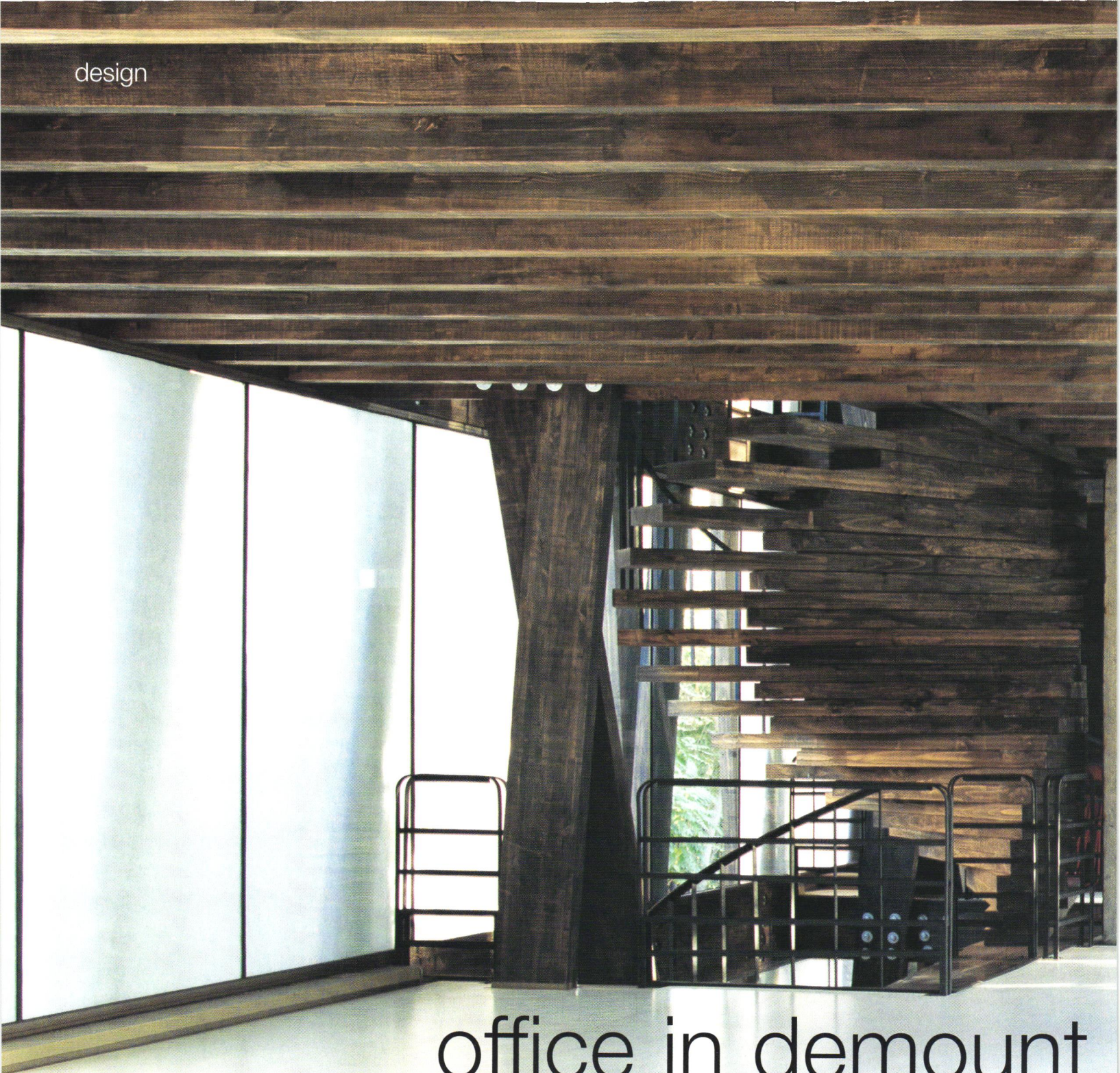
JTB: What aspects of Donald Judd's work have not been fully explored?

MS: I think that Donald Judd was a unique figure insofar as that he was capable of producing outstanding work in so many fields. It is not unknown but it is unknown in its complexity. It is not recognized deeply enough that he had this concept of space and he could apply it to anything from 100 untitled mill-aluminum pieces to the design of a tablecloth. All of that was achieved in his knowledge of the world, its history and philosophy. There were a lot of social and political considerations that informed his work. ☐



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design



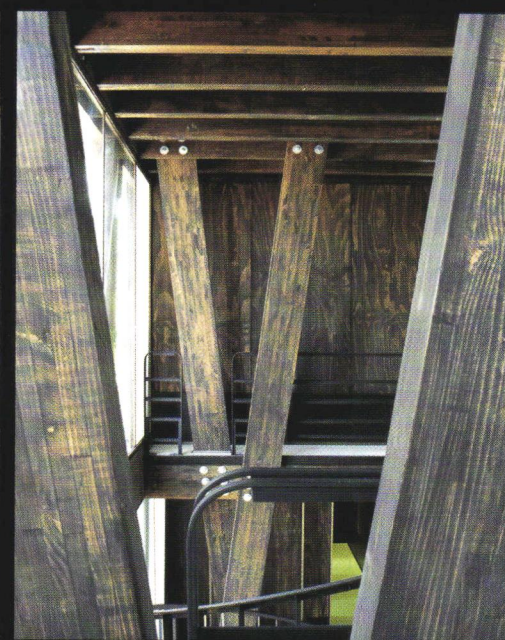
office in demount

The BIP Computers Building by the Chilean architect Alberto Mozó achieves an impressively high level of eco-efficiency through a design that can literally come undone

By Celia Ying
Photography by Cristobal Palma

All laminated timber beams in the BIP Computers office are harvested responsibly from renewable forests and fabricated to be identical and interchangeable for easy reassembly elsewhere.





Full-height, double-glazed walls allow the interiors to be filled with amber daylight (top). Like the laminated timber beams (above), the spiral staircase also is made of sustainably harvested timber and is designed so that it can be taken apart and rebuilt (left). Nappa polyester inside the glass walls acts as a thermal insulator, providing a bright and comfortable working environment for the BIP Computers staff (opposite).



Today, almost every developed city is ambitious to construct a landmark building in the name of immortality—in terms of height, like the Burj Dubai and the Freedom Tower, or form, like Calatrava's Chicago Spire, Beijing's CCTV Headquarters, or Zaha Hadid's Dancing Tower. The acute competition begins to challenge the origin of architecture, which ironically, makes our cities increasingly more detached.

Unlike the typical 21st-century skyscrapers that are competing for the title of world's tallest building or bragging of the most state-of-the-art construction materials, the BIP Computers Building by the Chilean architect Alberto Mozó, on the contrary, is an intimate three-story structure made of laminated timber. To many people's surprise, it is built in such a way that it can be dismantled and reconstructed elsewhere.

Located in Santiago, Chile, the BIP Computers office building rises between two old houses built in 1936, as part of a development occupying a site that allows construction up to 12 stories high. This municipal regulation determines a high value for the land yet depreciates the value of any construction that does not meet this limit.

In planning for the event that the building may not last long, the architect made use of standard-sized, laminated, timber beams that can be dismantled and reconstructed entirely at another location, thus avoiding a potentially contrary demolition. "I was introduced to the client as a 'rehabilitator' architect. Even though the client wanted a 'high-tech' design, he

asked me if I could do something with the old houses, because they didn't look like BIP's style," recalls Mozó. "My answer was that the landscape of the city is a mix between styles so this was an opportunity to reuse these structures as a complement of the company."

With a sense of giving the maximum economic value to a new building of just three floors, Mozó built an innovative laminated wooden structure, which can be dismantled in case of a future real estate sale. In fact, this is the first continuous wood pillar building in Chile—a "transitivity" idea, as described by Mozó, which tries to put value on sustainable architecture and town planning. In fact, the design of this building also allows the beams to be transformed into other uses, such as doors and tables, extending the life cycle of the laminated wood.

Other advantages incorporated into the design of this building include the use of the 9 cm. by 34.2 cm. standard-sized timber beams harvested responsibly from renewable forests, which permitted fast lamination of the wood. This specific dimension considers efficiency in the cut of the tree, and the uniformity also makes for easy reconstruction, as there's no need to label the timber beams to make sure they are placed in exactly the same location and order.

Inside the building, the combination of a white interior with the timber roof looks incredibly controlled and comfortable. With full height glass windows installed behind the external timber beam structure, the build-


In addition to sparking a significant sales increase, the BIP Computers office building succeeds in delivering a message about quality of life (right). The building is a three-level structure clad in a woven pattern of laminated timber beams; its intimate design sets an uncommon contrast between itself and the neighboring houses (below).



ing draws in ample natural light and provides plenty of useful space. An impressive element inside is a spiral staircase constructed of the same laminated timber. Like the rest of the building, the staircase is also made from sustainably harvested timber with pieces fabricated to be identical and interchangeable, so that it can be taken apart and reassembled elsewhere should it become necessary.

Today we are all living in a world full of changes—our cities, land uses, climates change, even our way of living change rapidly. Sometimes when interventions are unavoidable, the challenge, says Mozó, is the exact measurement: “For those cases where there’s an intervention and conservation of existing structures, I apply an equation that determines what I should keep off (demolish), what I should put in (build), and finally what’s going to be kept (rehabilitation).”

While it becomes “mainstream” to run after something people see as groundbreaking and unprecedented, perhaps it’s time for us, the lucky minority who are enjoying the most of the resources on earth, to think again about the life cycle of our buildings, our cities and our planet. Mozó’s BIP Computers Building leads us to embark on a rediscovery journey on the beauty of simplicity. More importantly, it embraces a wish to leave our world better than we found it for our future generations. ☐

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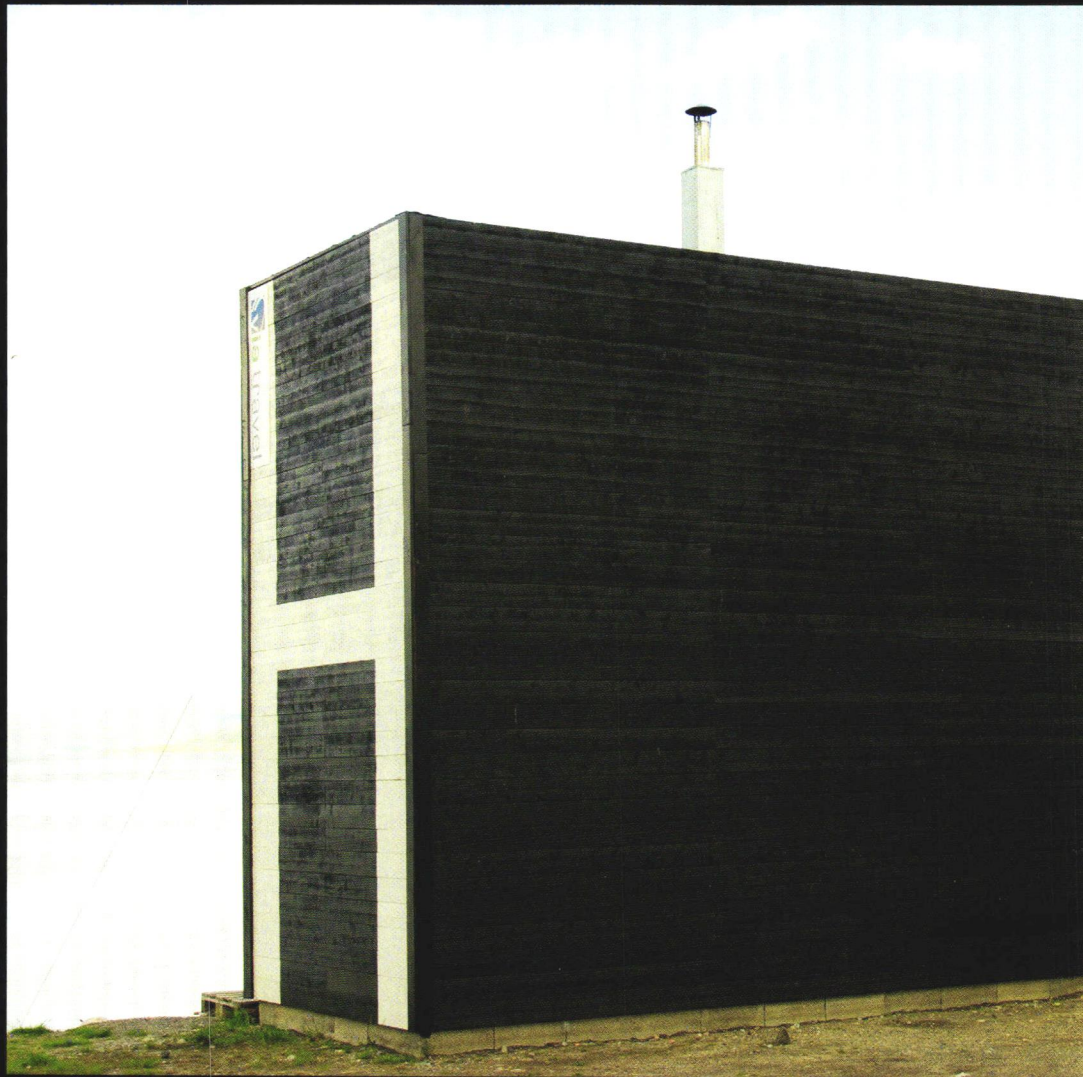
The remote town of Kirkenes, Norway, finds a useful piece of art in the work of architect Sami Rintala

By Jennifer Thiele Busch
Photography by Jan Erik Svendsen

The seaport of Kirkenes, in the Barents region of Northern Norway near the Norwegian/Russian border, is an unlikely spot for a “boutique” hotel, but Finnish artist/architect Sami Rintala has provided one—of sorts—to this remote town of 3,300 residents. In 2004, Rintala was commissioned to design an artwork for the center of the town, but preferred to express art as architecture. “Having thought about it for a while, I said I wished to create something useful instead,” says Rintala. “In my view the seamen, fishermen, hunters, hikers, and fortune seekers flowing through the town need a place to rest for the night that would suit their economy, which changes like the weather. I suggested building a hotel by the sea.”

The suggestion created mixed feelings, admits Rintala, because the time allotted for construction was only 10 days and the budget was limited. “I specified that this would be a very small hotel,” he laughs. Ultimately, the town agreed to accept the risk, and Rintala and three architecture students designed the Kirkenes Hotel and saw it built in just 10 days, for \$10,000. Since its opening in 2005, guests of the hotel have included as diverse a group as the Prime Minister of Norway, a contingent of Russian artists, and some hearty young backpackers.

Rintala’s design concept turns today’s idea of a small, custom-designed hotel on its ear. “All unnecessary luxury would be eliminated: no satellite channels, minibar, or brass doorknobs,” he explains. “The idea simply would be based on a warm shelter and a view out to the Barents Sea. A person spending the night in a room would still feel that he or she was in Kirkenes.



Architect Sami Rintala’s simple concept for a seaside hotel in Northern Norway turns its back on the main road and town of Kirkenes (above) preferring instead to focus on stunning views of the Barents Sea (opposite).

Anyone who has had to spend many nights in hotels knows that slight feeling of alienation upon entering a hotel room; it could be anywhere in the world, and the connection to the surrounding reality is severed."

Rintala has, in fact, dedicated his Oslo-based practice to just such design challenges, preferring to work in remote areas—on what he calls the "edge" of civilization—and for people whom he finds to be much more open than urban dwellers to new architectural ideas that reflect their values, culture, and way of life. The natural beauty of the Barents region informed the choice of the simple materials and color palette: the timber construction is typical of the other buildings in the area; the dark painted exterior responds to the dark rock of the Barents Sea shoreline, while the goal of the light painted wood interior was to maximize the impression of size and light.

Kirkenes is on the cusp of those Northern areas that plunge into darkness for half of the year and never lose daylight for the other half.

And though the hotel's small size—it consists of two guest rooms and a lobby heated by a wood-burning stove—was mostly dictated by budgetary issues, Rintala sees it as entirely representative of its locale. "This small city hotel symbolizes the city itself, on the last point of land facing toward Russia," he says. He deliberately turned the structure's back on the city's main road running right behind the site, favoring, of course, the spectacular views of the Barents Sea, the whales that inhabit those waters, the Russian fishing vessels that regularly visit the seaport, the country of Russia to the right, and the occasional Russian submarine sighting. "There was no need for curtains," adds Rintala, "since the closest neighbor is in Alaska."

With the Kirkenes Hotel and much of his other work in places as far flung as Inner Mongolia and China, Rintala strives to demonstrate that architecture realized outside the mainstream of the mass production line can be cost-effective and result in better, more site-specific solutions. Though his office is in Oslo, he prefers to work and spend his personal time in remote locations. "Nobody needs me in the city," he observes. "In the city, you don't even see how things change. And the biggest problems are often in remote places where there is a need and openness to something different. In these areas I tend to meet people with all different types of knowledge. I learn from them, and then I give them something back." The Hotel Kirkenes was essentially an art installation that Rintala never intended to be permanent; but apparently it is a gift that the city wants to keep. ☐

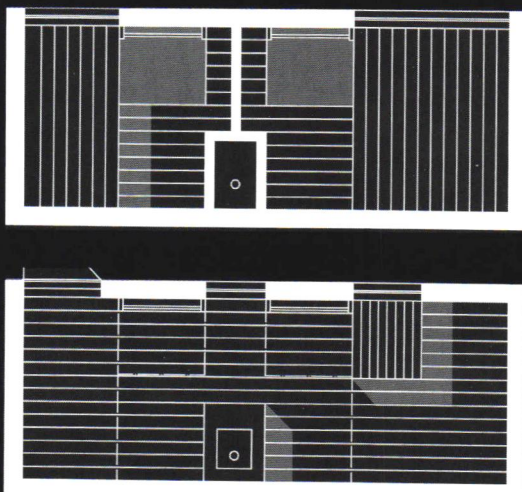
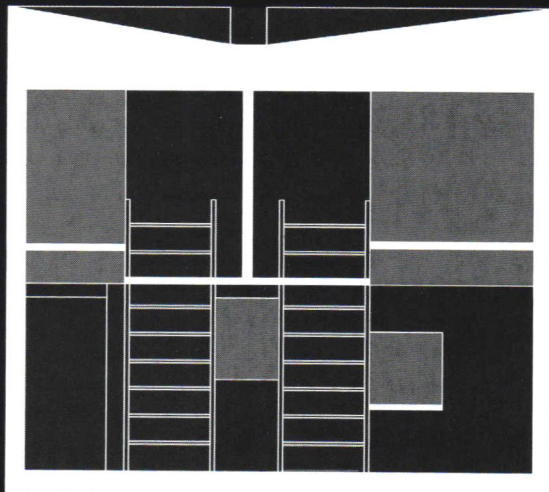


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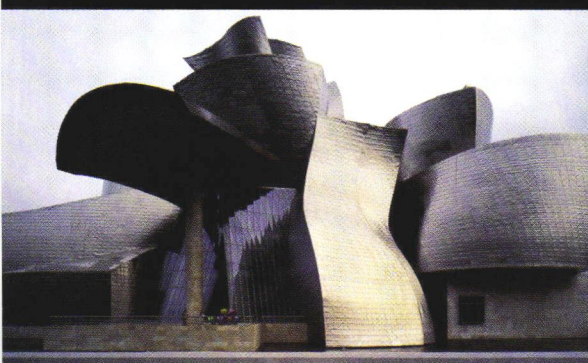


The timber construction of the Kirkenes Hotel is typical of the area, with the outside painted dark in deference to the rocky shoreline of the Barents Sea (opposite), while the generous windows (above) and white-painted interior (right) maximize the impression of size and light.



heroic scale

Thomas Krens of the Guggenheim Foundation talks to *Contract* about the importance of risk



Guggenheim Museum Bilbao by Frank Gehry, Bilbao, Spain, 1997. (©FMGBGuggenheim Bilbao Museoa, 2008; photo by Erika Barahona-Ede.)

During his 20-year tenure as director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Thomas Krens emerged as a provocative patron of architecture, responsible for developing an international network of Guggenheim Museum sites, from Las Vegas to Spain, including the famous structure in Bilbao designed by Frank Gehry. Krens announced his resignation from his post on February 27, 2008, but plans to remain at the Foundation as a senior adviser for international affairs, overseeing the creation of a 452,000-sq.-ft. museum in Abu Dhabi, also being designed by Frank Gehry.

David Martin, FAIA, design principal at Los Angeles-based AC Martin Partners spoke with Krens on behalf of *Contract* about his reputation for risk-taking and what the design profession can learn from it.

DM: The Guggenheim and particularly Bilbao are so successful. In a world rife with risk, what can you tell us about your ingredients for success?

TK: It's a hard question, because it presumes [that the client] has a certain level of success. You have to step back and break it down into parts. The Guggenheim has been successful as a brand for several reasons: It had an existing brand, then being in New York City helps, and Frank Lloyd Wright's building also contributes. The Guggenheim Bilbao follows that tradition only with a more heroic scale appropriate to the

world of 2000. Gehry's architecture is consistent with our Manhattan flagship in that both are appropriate to their locale, both have practically no straight lines, and both introduce a level of surprise that engages curiosity. The programming at both places is aggressive, comprehensive, and surprising; they are erudite and readable at the same time. We design for both buildings, what brings out the best in each circumstance. The complexity that is behind this is what defines the consistency of the institution. We find the best talent at programming, for the curators, and for research. This is also true with artists and architects. The search for creativity at the highest level reinforces our brand recognition and global aspirations. While 92 percent of our program is based on 19th- and 20th-century contemporary art, we occasionally venture slightly from this; for example, what object better captures the industrial age than the motorcycle?

DM: The Gehry motorcycle show at the Koolhaas-designed Guggenheim in Las Vegas was sensational. Can you compare the show in New York and Las Vegas?

TK: The Las Vegas exhibition was a box display. In New York, the walls were all lined in stainless steel.... The idea was to make you feel almost as though you were inside an engine. We treated motorcycles as sculptures, and placing them on pedestals with mirrors underneath allowed visitors to appreciate their mechanicals. This display method had an aspect with the lighting that was also reflected on the walls. It was Marcel Duchamp gone crazy.

DM: Speaking of risk, can you comment on the seven years that the Guggenheim was in Las Vegas?

TK: Las Vegas as a city doesn't give you a lot of time to resolve differences. Some 40 million people go to Las Vegas each year, and the competition for their time is tremendous. Actually, the smaller gallery space was quite successful for seven years. (And we made money!) I once speculated that if we had put prices on the art we would have had bigger audiences.

DM: Considering New York and Bilbao, what do you think about continuing to create these icons? Is there a saturation point for iconic architecture?

TK: It is always hard to top the last paradigm. However, everything in front of us now in 10 years will look antiquated. When we started in a brownstone in 1870, the founders hardly expected the museum to achieve the huge facility and status it has now. You can see things at Bilbao that wouldn't be possible anywhere else. Who has the ability to go beyond Bilbao right now? That would be Abu Dhabi. They are in the process of building an island of museums that we will be a part of. This will make Bilbao seem modest by comparison. And there will be other museums by Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid, and others—all in an extraordinary setting, a true cultural destination. Whether these will be anything more than a cultural theme park remains to be seen, and it surely raises the issue of authenticity. Abu Dhabi is trying to establish itself as fundamentally different and has the money to do so.

DM: You've dealt with all kinds of "personalities." Any wisdom on getting along with the creative artist, as well as trustees?

TK: My world is filled with "high achievers," but at the end of the day, high achievers are human—people who can take advantage of any opportunity presented to them. They are people who must establish an identity, have an ego, be committed and tough—intersecting with the curve at the right time, the right elements, and involving a bit of serendipity. The Guggenheim institution puts me in touch with these kinds of people. It is not my doing alone. What amazes me is the ability of artists and architects to lead. They have to deal with extraordinary amounts of client interfaces and public relations; then they go back to an organization of sometimes two or three hundred people to deliver extraordinary work. ■



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pivotal point

Can a project's limitations become opportunities for innovation?

By Katie Weeks

In 2000, Malcolm Gladwell shot to the top of the bestseller lists with *The Tipping Point*, which introduced the masses to those moments when change happens quickly and unexpectedly. His follow-up, *Blink*, focused on the idea of rapid recognition and thinking that must happen in the blink of an eye—a moment familiar to architecture and design veterans.

Throughout the course of each project, there comes a point—or two or 10—where an architect or designer runs up against a project limitation—be it budget, time, red tape, etc.—and must react. For some, these roadblocks serve as a stop sign for innovation, curtailing the design in one way or another. For others, however, in these moments project constraints transform from obstacles into opportunities for innovation. And for others still, these elements aren't limitations or obstacles, but simply the defining characteristics of the profession.

"I happen to believe there isn't anything other than limitations, so I don't have a problem facing them because I cannot conceive something that is not grounded in these conditions of feasibility," says New York-based architect Rafael Viñoly. "Limitations, in general, are not so much limitations as misformulations. In other words, to me an inherent part of the design proposal is to find these problems."

So how can designers capitalize on these project characteristics and the points at which he or she may encounter them and turn them into springboards for pushing an idea or concept beyond the conventional? First, it seems key to realize that these pivotal points aren't as much singular defining moments as they are a continual process, and it is this evolution that should be embraced. "Charles Eames' daughter recently told me that according to Charles, innovation was completely overrated. After all, only about six percent of all innovations actually come into effect as products of design," says Clive Wilkinson, AIA, RIBA, president and design director at Clive Wilkinson Architects in Los Angeles. "The evolution of products and design is much more valuable."


Evolution is also what keeps things exciting. "A lot of the time, a client is going to drive you to a certain place, and then you have to work with the situation. Design is so collaborative that you don't really have control over these moments in a big way," says Elva Rubio, executive vice president and creative director at Bruce Mau Design in Chicago. Instead, Rubio says, the process is akin to riding the log flume at an amusement park. "You move from one curve to the next. It's a continuum, and the issues evolve and flow and change," she explains. "Your choices, basically, are to keep it moving, flowing, and evolving, or to wipe out."

And making sure the client is along for the ride from the beginning is essential in pushing beyond a conventional solution. "Finding out who the clients are and how they see themselves—those are the pivotal issues," says Wilkinson. "Once you find their comfort zone and see where they want the project to go, that's the point at which you decide how far you can push, because, ultimately, the result is intimately related to how the client is going to adapt to it and use it." Keeping the client—rather than the push for innovation—at the heart of a project is essential, Wilkinson says. If the client is forgotten, it becomes easy to push a concept beyond the innovative and into the realm of the inappropriate. "We constantly have to remind ourselves that we're in service to a client," he explains. "It doesn't matter if a project looks spectacular and impresses everyone if the users are uncomfortable. It's like putting an avant-garde set of clothes on a conservative person. They might look good in it, but they might not be comfortable."

These moments aren't stumbling blocks.
They are the basic essence of what we do.

Drilling down with the client is key to Viñoly, as well. "If the person wants something that's different from what's depicted in his brief then you need to really engage him and find the problem," he says. "These moments aren't stumbling blocks. They're the basic essence of what we do: To deal with the circumstances, try to make sense of the project's purpose, and make people understand that they may not be completely attuned to what it is exactly that they need."

This mind-set, Viñoly says, makes all the difference. "Everything is a limitation. Gravity is a limitation, but we don't get sad that it exists. It would be a waste of time," he says. "Every single thing that relates to design is some sort of articulation of a limit or a condition with clear determinates—whether it's money, gravity, constructability, adherence to a program, or technology. You take those things and, rather than think of them as hurdles, think of them as your subject matter. A sculptor who works in marble doesn't think of marble as a limitation and architecture is the same. ■

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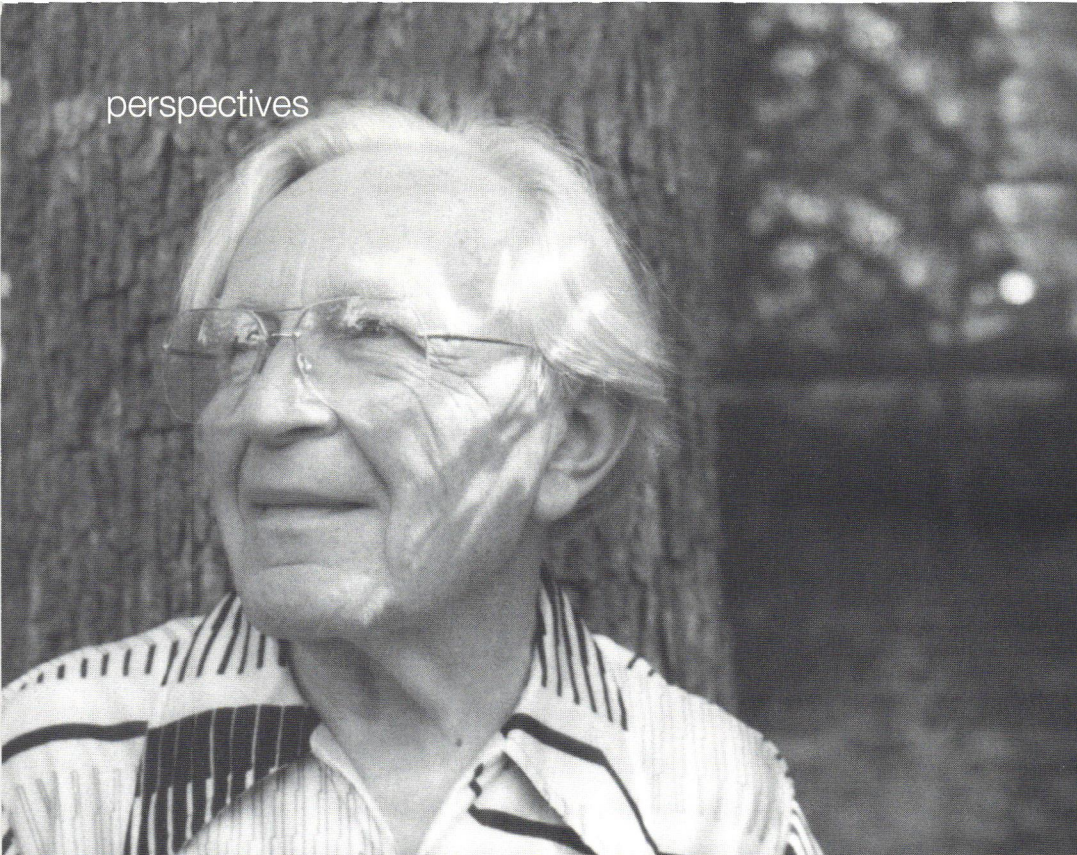
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Bruce Goff (1904 – 1982): the democratic maverick

By Tim Murphy

Bruce Goff built few large buildings, focusing on smaller residential commissions and teaching. Yet he was the most democratic of architects because he actually believed that architecture was a combination of the individual architect's expression and the individual client's needs. Because his forms were so original, he was also one of the country's most misunderstood architects. While his use of materials and soaring designs were unusual—even brazen—they were not employed at the cost of the client's needs or program. Indeed, his clients came to love their houses because he listened so carefully to their aspirations. Their appreciation for the artistic aspect of his solution grew out of his appreciation for the practical. His genius was a result of connecting the individual reality to the transcendent.

Goff spent much of his career in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, places often associated with a conservative ethos. While that culture may have cost him his job at the University of Oklahoma in the mid-1950s, it was also a fertile ground for him to practice because nobody told him what he could or could not design. And his students were reverential. In the wide open plain he taught them to listen to music, art, and finally, their own voice.

Rand Elliott and *Contract* invited me to host a conversation between people who could share personal stories about the man and his work. More than a quarter-century after his death, he is still inspiring us.

Our roundtable consisted of Jerri Hodges Bonebrake, Goff's former secretary at the University of Oklahoma; Arn Henderson, a retired architecture professor, who is writing a major book on Goff; Bart Prince, an internationally renowned architect who worked with Goff for many years; our guest editor Rand Elliott; and *Contract* editor in chief Jennifer Thiele Busch. The focus of the discussion was on Goff as a teacher, a person, and an architect working with clients.

TM: We know the outline of your various associations with Goff. But tell us how you came to work with him?

JHB: I met Mr. Goff when I was 18 and on my first job interview. He conducted an unorthodox interview. His desk was covered with books. Immediately, he started showing me the works of Corbu, Gaudí, Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan, and Mies van der Rohe.

Finally I said, "Well, you know, sir, I don't really know what architecture is." He laughed, and said, "Well, neither do a lot of people." He didn't ask very many questions, but he did ask if I could take shorthand. I wrote some shorthand symbols down, and he looked at them strangely and turned the paper around, up and down, back and forth, and then he handed it back to me and said, "I don't understand that either, but I could if I wanted to." Later, I realized that he didn't really care whether I could take shorthand or not, he was simply making a point.

AH: I studied architecture at OU from 1956 to 1961 and came under the sway of Goff through both Jack Golden and Herb Greene. I also taught at the University of Oklahoma from 1968 to 2002. I've been working on a book on Bruce Goff for a long time.

BP: I became aware of his work while I was at Arizona State University. He came to give a talk in 1968. I went to work for him that summer, and returned when I finished school and worked with him in Kansas City and Tyler, Texas. After I started my own practice, we associated on several things.

TM: What was he like as a teacher? Can you comment on his teaching style?

AH: The foundation that he used was the notion that everyone had creative potential, and that everyone had a right to his own ideas. That was sort of the bedrock platform that Goff used as his pedagogy. That is what accounts for the incredible array of diversity one would see in his student projects. He dovetailed intimately with Frank Lloyd Wright's ideas; a democratic architecture as a symbol of a democratic society, and that meant freedom, the freedom to have your own ideas.

JHB: He wanted the students at school to know what was going on in other universities. And so we had traveling exhibits that came in from many universities around the country. And, of course, we had one that went out. I kidded Goff one day: "You know, when our exhibit comes back it is always followed by a string of transfer students."

We had a recorded concert every Friday night. Mr. Goff had hundreds and hundreds of records, and he played them extremely loud. I remember that he played a lot of Russian music. If you were an employee of the University of Oklahoma in the '50s, you had to sign a loyalty oath. Anything to do with Russia was taboo. And one Friday

evening a policeman came up and asked why so much Russian music was being played.

TM: There's a certain courage, I would think, that would be required to play Russian music in Oklahoma in 1950. Can you talk about his courage as an architect working outside the Modernist mainstream?

BP: I don't know if he ever thought of it as courageous. He was doing what was coming from inside him. I remember people coming to visit and being very surprised to see books on the Bauhaus and on Mies van der Rohe in his library.

People didn't understand his curiosity about all kinds of things. So in his mind, he was really working in his own time, expressing the time that he was living in a way that came from him, and recognizing the importance of other people. He was aware that he was outside the mainstream to some extent, but he was never trying to scare or shock anybody.

JHB: In my hometown of Norman, I thought this work was a sort of far-out thing. I said something to him about that one time. And actually, he said that he thought he was in the perfect place.

He said, "Oklahoma, a young state not blessed or cursed with dusty, outworn traditions or invasions of European styles, is fertile ground for the development of an indigenous creative architecture truly expressive of the pioneering and democratic spirit of our people." I guess he thought he found a place where he could exercise his imagination.

BP: At different times people asked him, "Why aren't you in Los Angeles?" or "Why aren't you in New York?" And he said, "Well, because I want to do creative work." His work may have been unusual, but people readily accepted it; and they didn't have somebody there to tell them that it wasn't proper.

JHB: I would also like to give credit to Dr. George L. Cross, who was President of the University of Oklahoma and hired Goff. He said, "I assured him that we valued ideas above degrees in building our faculty." So Goff had only a high school education when he came to the University, and nine months later, he was chairman of the School of Architecture.

JTB: Well, wasn't it Frank Lloyd Wright who said it was a good thing [Goff] didn't go to school?

BP: Go to school, and lose Bruce Goff. I think that was Wright's comment.

Goff also recognized the value of an education—what an open, inquiring kind of an education can do for somebody.

TM: He always had a small practice correct?

AH: He had one or two people. When he moved to Bartlesville, he had both his living quarters and his office combined in Frank Lloyd Wright's Price Tower.

TM: Do you think the interest in working at home was because of the size of his office, or his interest in being so intimately connected to his work?

BP: I think it was the intimate connection. He told me once that he could work anywhere. "I could sit down in the middle of a shopping mall if I had a little card table and some paper," he said. And it's true. He was using his mind. Tools and the rest of it was just a means to help him explain something to someone else. I saw him sitting at a table with typing paper. If he ran out of space, he just taped another piece onto it.

TM: What was his process like?

BP: It was mostly mental. Initially, he spent a lot of time thinking about things. And he never started working until he really had an idea.

AH: I think that's an important distinction from other architects. Many architects do a great deal of sketching, searching for ideas. With Goff, it was thought-built.

BP: But once he started, it exploded fairly quickly onto the page.

TM: How did he communicate his ideas to his clients or translate that process to clients?

BP: The initial drawing was fairly thorough and complete at a small scale. I sat with him through many presentations to clients, and it was a lengthy process. He wanted the client to experience the process as he had.

When the client would come in, there might just be a glass table with some sheets face down. He would sit there and talk to them for quite a while, and then eventually, he would start to turn over the sheets one by one. And he didn't like to label them. He didn't want the client to be able to run ahead of his explanations. He would make them follow his hand.

He explained it in the same order that his process went creating it. By the time they got to the end—sometimes a couple of hours later—he'd show them an elevation or a perspective. He never showed them that until after they had gone from the inside and seen how it was developed. And in the rare situation where there was a model, he would bring that out.

Bart Prince, Palmer Boggs, and Bruce Goff in Santa Fe, 1981 (below).



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JTB: And what would the reaction be?

BP: It was always delight and surprise. Every little thing they ever mentioned in their discussions was in there.

TM: A lot is written about his expression and style. Can you elaborate a little bit on how he focused on the client?

BP: Well, the client was the entire focus. The first time they walked in the door was very informal. He was interested in anything they had to say. If there was something they liked or didn't like, he wanted to know. He wanted to know how they lived. They didn't talk about shapes or forms.

TM: You have someone who was such an iconoclast, but at the same time, he's really listening.

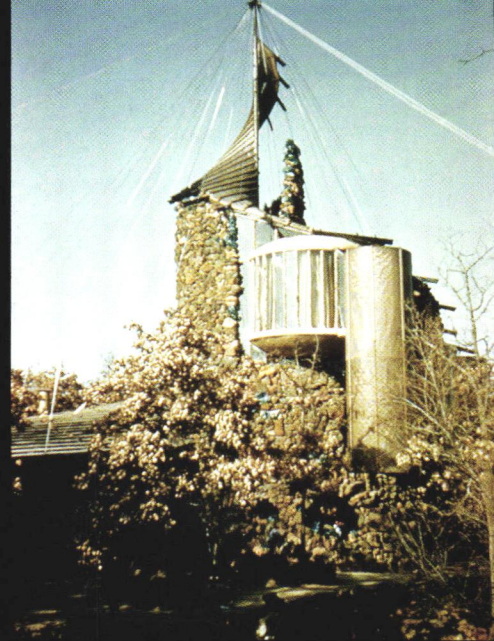
BP: When he started with the client, he wanted to be as blank a slate as possible. He was not waiting for the next client to come in the door so he could spring something on them that he'd been thinking about for a long time. He did not do several schemes; he did one scheme. As the architect, he felt that you had to have confidence.

AH: Goff said many times that the client was the most important determinant of the design—the client and the site. Not only would he spend enormous amounts of time talking with clients to find out what they needed and wanted but also to get some understanding of them psychologically.

TM: Do you think it was hard for him to be viewed as an outsider by the rest of the profession when he was working so hard within the normal structure of the discipline?

AH: No. He liked being in that position, because he felt like it gave him freedom. He wasn't expected to conform. But few people ever suspected that his process was so intimately tied to each individual and each situation. Wright used to say there ought to be as many kinds/types/styles of buildings as there are kinds/types/styles of people, but he never took it quite as literally as Goff did.

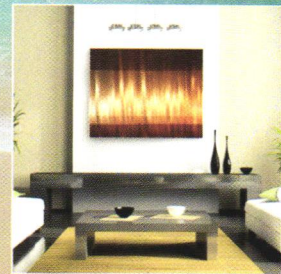
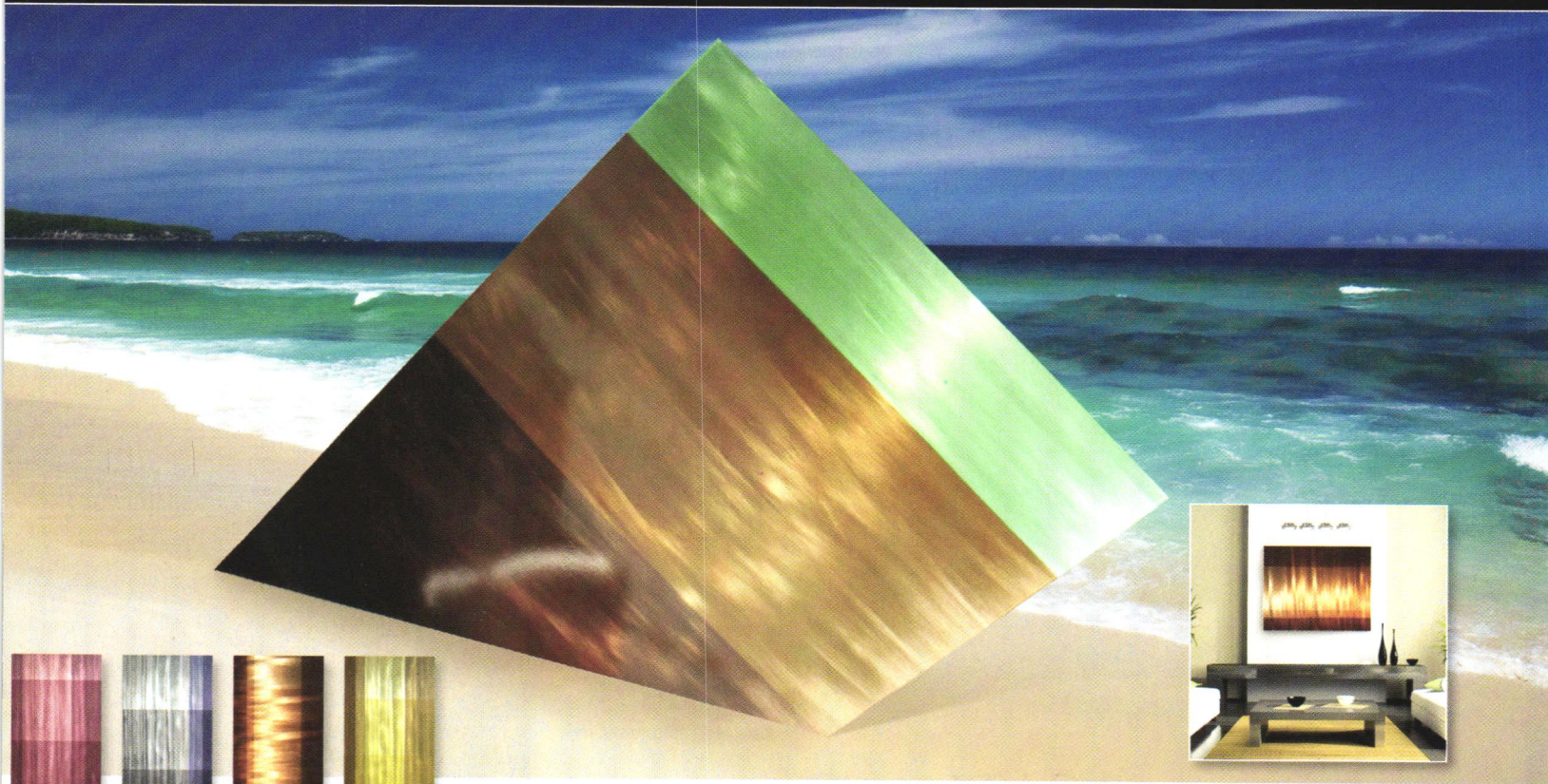
A lot of people can misunderstand this and say, "All right, well then, these are the client's ideas; the clients are designing it." And that's not the case at all. The clients didn't have the ability to put into a drawing or into an idea or into a structure what they were thinking. And whatever he showed them,



Bavinger House, Norman, Okla., designed by Bruce Goff from 1950 to 1955 (above; photo by Robert Alan Bowlby).

they never expected it. But they also could see that it made sense, and that it solved their problem.

JHB: When we had reunions in 1974—19 years after he left school—and then again in 1983, a year after his death, many of his clients came. They paid their respects to Goff because they had become great friends.



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BP: And they all thought they had his best house.

JHB: Which is what you want them to think!

BP: But they really did. Each had his best house, because that's what was done for them.

TM: Would it be fair to say that he was far more interested in celebrating the individual than the style?

BP: Absolutely. Style didn't interest him. In fact, he never used that term at all. Each one became its own style; it was the client. We were in London

once, and he was being interviewed, and they asked him: "What style is this house?" And he'd say, "Well, that's the Nichols style," or "the Price style"—whoever the client was. Each building was essentially a portrait of that client done by an artist who was able to bring all these different things together.

TM: It's interesting to think of Goff as maybe an outsider during his lifetime, and now he's being looked at as sort of an insider.

JHB: I was so young when I first discovered Goff so I took a few courses in architecture to be better at my job, and I began to see it so differently. After a while everybody else was the outsider.

RE: My first experience of seeing that work was sort of shocking. It was like the first martini you ever have. It's not quite what you expect, but the more of them you have, the better they taste. My appreciation for Bruce Goff is really about his independence.

Recently, I was in the restored Ledbetter House. We walked in the door, and my wife said, "Gosh, aren't those doors and windows just beautiful?" I smiled, and said, "Do you know what those are?" She replied, "They look like glass blocks." And I said, "Actually, they're ashtrays." And there's just such an imaginative solution—everything had the opportunity to be something special.

BP: It's important to understand, too, that the way he arrived at those things is through the process we've been talking about. He didn't just arbitrarily try and think of some way to use a material in a shocking way. In the Ledbetter House, for example, he had something he wanted to accomplish, and he would think, "Now, how could I do this? I could have some very fine leaded glass made. But that's too expensive." And then he would realize that something he had seen that was used for another purpose would actually work.

RE: That evening that the fireplace was going, and every one of these pieces of glass picked up the sparkle. There was this magical kind of experience—almost as if the room were full of fireflies. ☐

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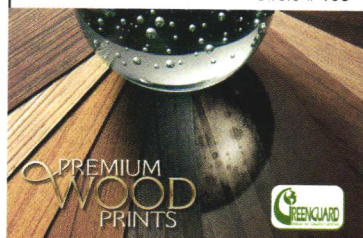
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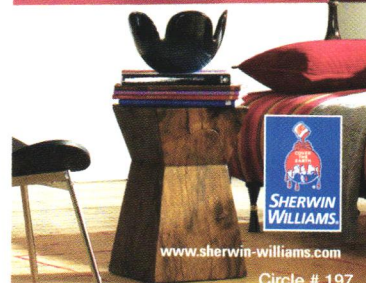
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