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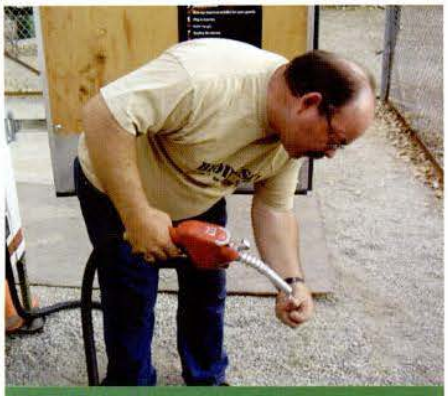

APRIL 17 - FUEL

APRIL 17 - FUEL
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Fuel
9:00PM E/P
A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

APRIL 24 - BUILD
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Build
9:00PM E/P
Waste = Food (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

MAY 1 - CITIES
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Cities
9:00PM E/P
Crapshoot: The Gamble with Our Wastes (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

MAY 8 - WEAR
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Wear
9:00PM E/P
Art from the Arctic (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

MAY 15 - EAT
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Eat
9:00PM E/P
Our Daily Bread (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

MAY 22 - DRIVE
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Drive
9:00PM E/P
Forest For The Trees (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

MAY 29 - FURNISH
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Furnish
9:00PM E/P
Clear Cut: The Story of Philomath, Oregon (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

JUNE 5 - CREATE
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Create
9:00PM E/P
Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working with Time (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

JUNE 12 - KIDS
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Kids
9:00PM E/P
The Refugees of the Blue Planet (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

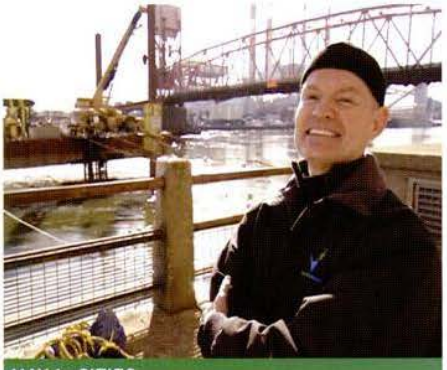
JUNE 19 - PAPER OR PLASTIC?
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Paper or Plastic
9:00PM E/P
Dead in the Water (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

JUNE 26 - SPORTS
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Sports
9:00PM E/P
Plagues and Pleasures of the Salton Sea (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

JULY 3 - WORK
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Work
9:00PM E/P
Dr. Bronner's Magic Soapbox (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

JULY 10 - PRAY
Big Ideas for a Small Planet: Pray
9:00PM E/P
Five Disasters Waiting to Happen (U.S. Television Premiere)
9:30PM E/P

"GUILT IS NO WAY TO APPROACH ENVIRONMENTALISM"
–ERIC COREY FREED


MAY 1 - CITIES


MAY 8 - WEAR

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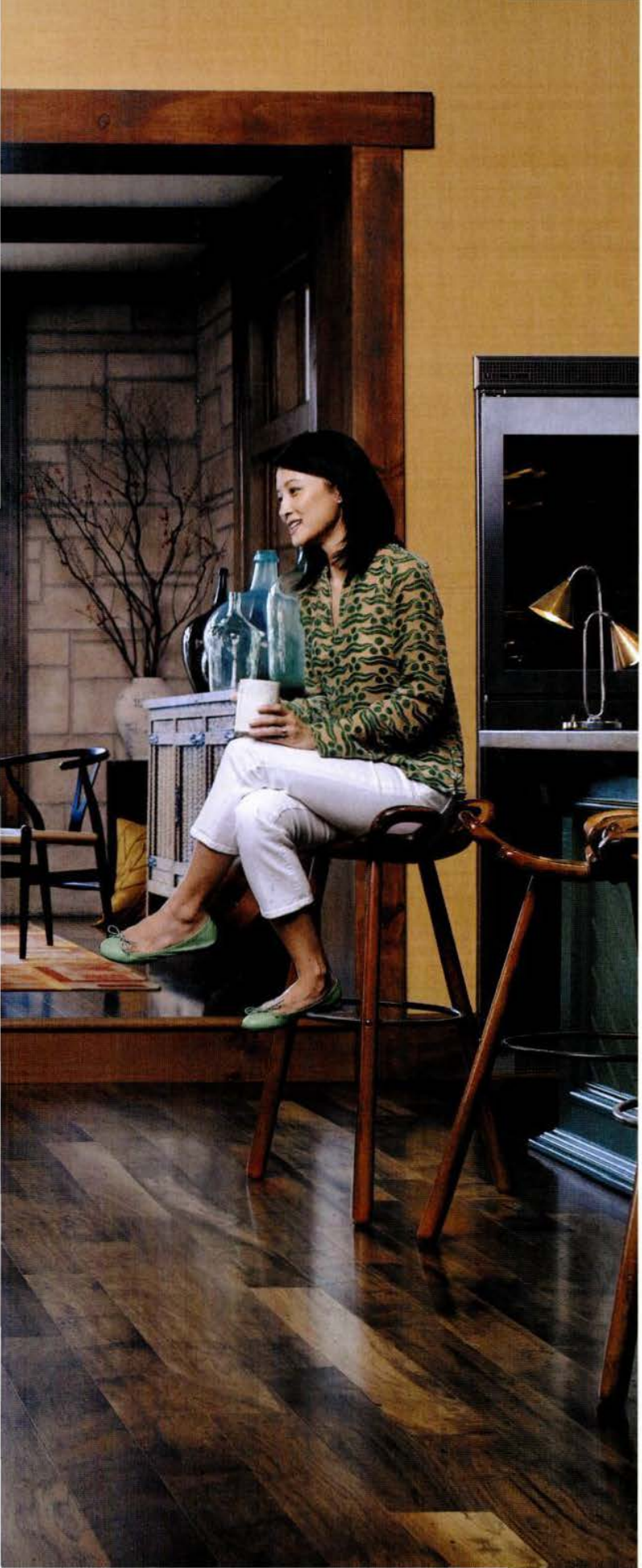

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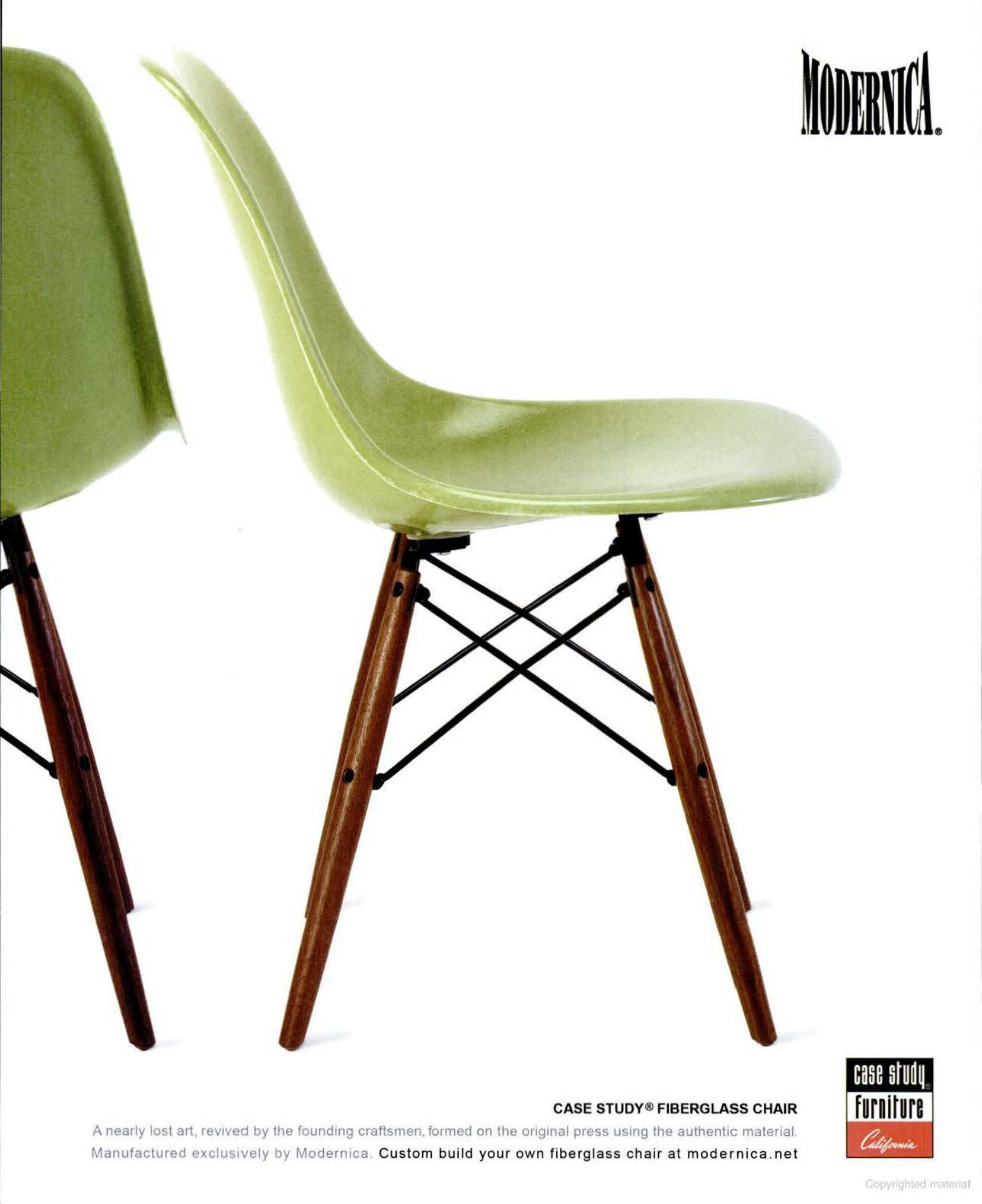

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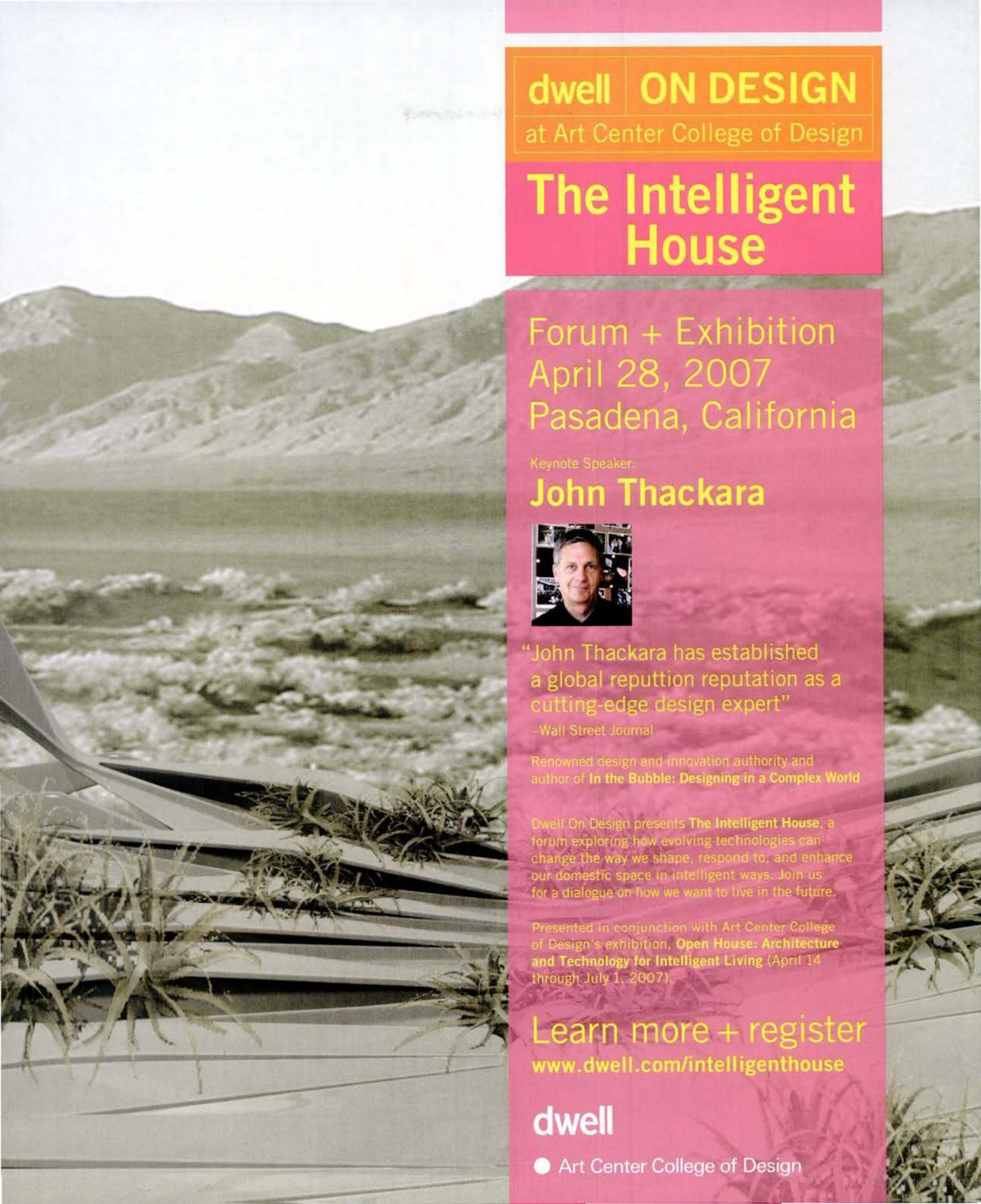

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"I could have had a normal closet and a normal bedroom and a separate bathroom, but it isn't what I wanted. I haven't had any complaints. If people think it's odd, they're too polite to tell me." —Barbara Hill

Smaller Is Smarter
May 2007

Dwellings

Cover: One Space, San Diego, California, page 168
Photo by Misha Gravenor


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Giovanni's Room: Serving up individual drip coffees and delicious bresaola and goat cheese panini, Giovanni's little kiosk down an anachronistic oil-lit alley tops Togo's any (and every) day. With rival taco truck just a few yards away, many a Dwell employee leaves the office for lunch torn, but ulitmately returns satisfied.

PHOTO BY ANDREA LAWSON

We are a new three-person residential and furniture design firm (www.theworkshop308.com) in Springfield, Missouri, and are currently preparing to take our Architectural Registration Exams. We had a terrible experience yesterday dealing with a fallout after being interviewed by our local business journal a few weeks ago, which identified us as architects. Now, registered architects around town have begun complaining to the state registration board. We take the architecture profession and its requirements for licensing very seriously and would never downplay the importance of the process. So to make a long story short, we appreciate seeing in bold the statement, "The two hardest-working architects in America aren't licensed architects—or American-born for that matter" ("Four Houses and a Future," March 2007). Thanks for that. We read it yesterday, just when we needed to hear it. If you ever have a chance to run an article about whether or not intern architects or people in the process of taking the ARE can call themselves "architects," we think you would get some interesting responses. All of us who are tired of the typical old-school thinking would certainly appreciate it. Thanks for great articles.

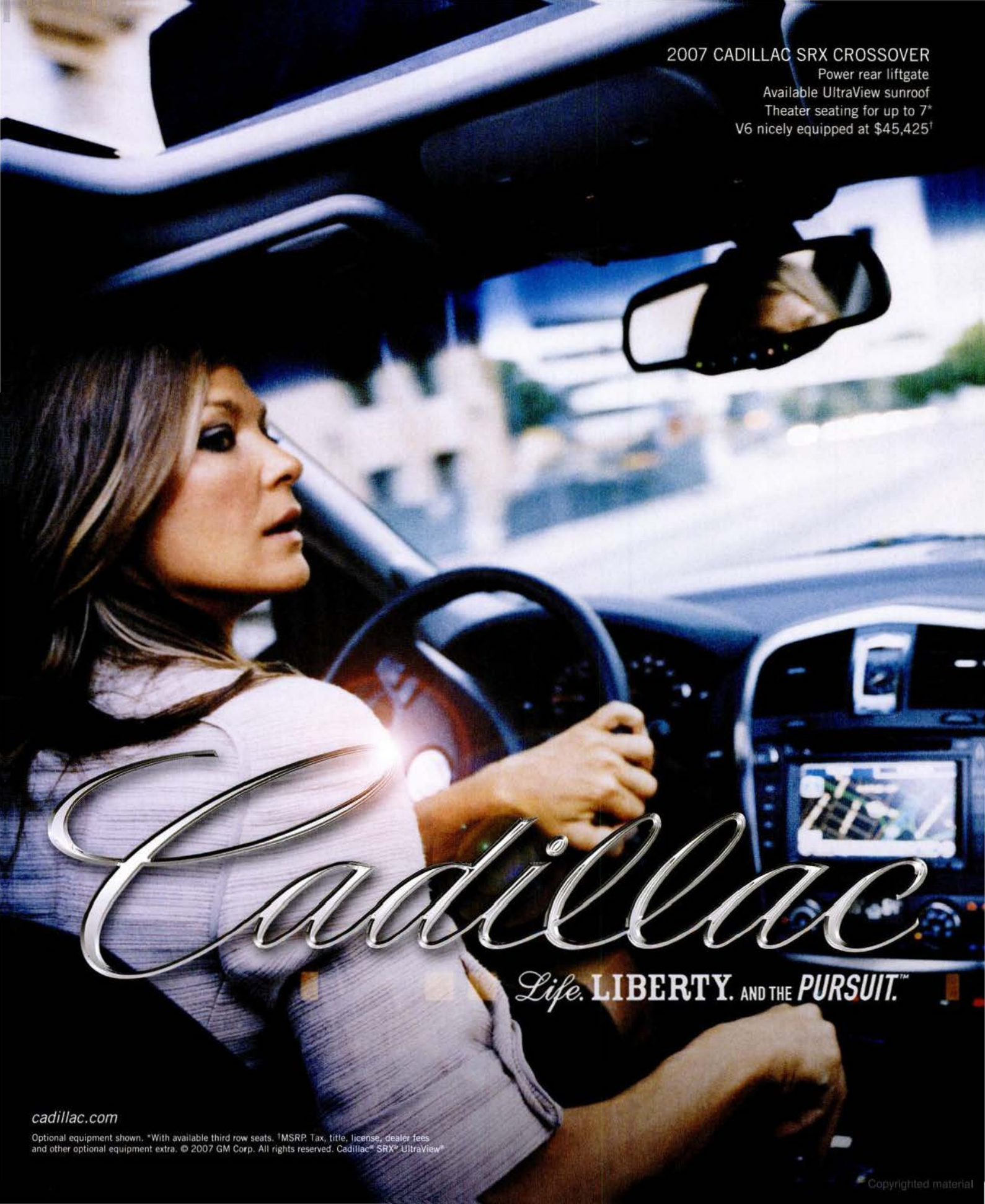
Michael Mardis
Springfield, Missouri

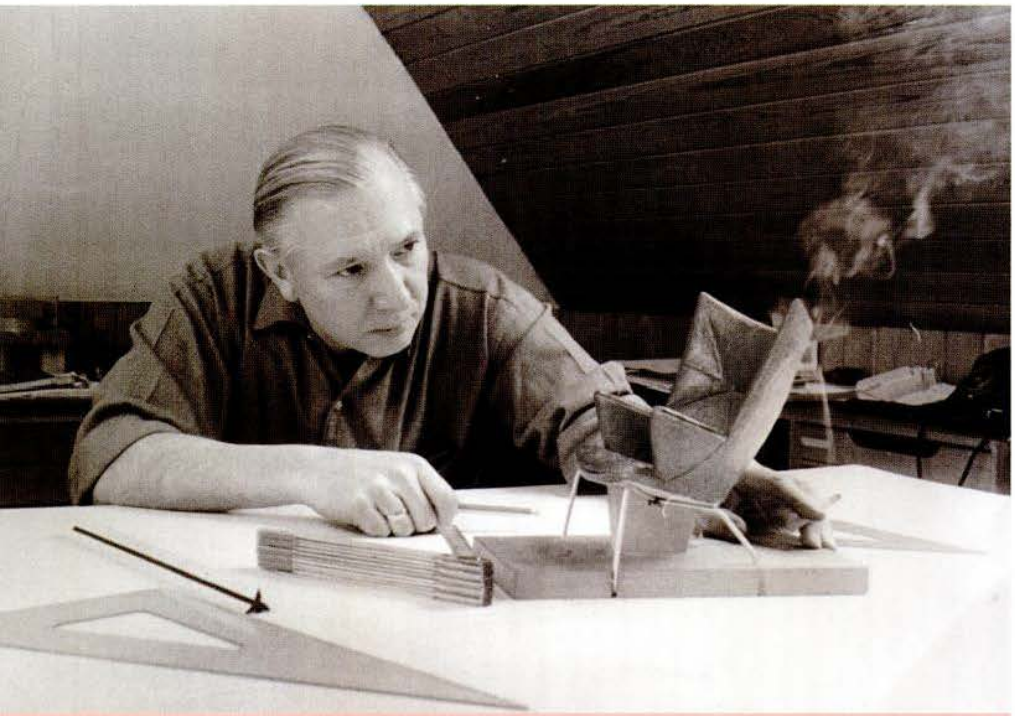
Editors' Note: *Michael, this is an issue we confront time and time again in our search to find provoking projects around the United States. It seems, too, that it is a hotly debated topic within the profession. Our Jan/Feb 2005 "Architecture 101" dealt with this issue explicitly and might be of interest to you.*

The cover of your March 2007 issue featured the name of my design company: Home At Last. It was a pleasure to see those words emblazoned across the front of my favorite industry magazine. More enjoyable was the tagline "Modern Living on a Budget."

Working with my clients as they approach their exterior environments or major remodeling projects, I am often struck that many lead with questions regarding xeric landscaping and green building. Given the prompt, I initiate discussions about their feelings and general lifestyle. More and more, my clients express their growing unhappiness—even sorrow—with the oppressive consumer culture. Challenged by their honesty, I try to find ways to design projects that reflect the values of simplicity, beauty, and living lightly on the earth. These ideas must lie at the heart of any discussion regarding a new paradigm for modern design.

My design practice receives the benefit of zero advertising, yet I am busy. As design ▸





In Memoriam: Hans Wegner Dies at 92

The bitter irony of mid-century modernism is that its founders are passing away as their work finds appreciative new audiences. The latest loss is Hans Wegner, whose name is synonymous with elegant, iconic seating. He died in January at age 92.

By softening modernism's hard edges, Wegner earned enormous popularity in the 1950s and '60s and helped introduce Danish design to the American living room. His creations won a large following by demonstrating that contemporary furniture can also be comfortable.

At a time when modernism usually meant chrome and glass, Wegner offered blonde wood and craftsmanship. "His designs possess a beauty of form, an informality, and a sinuous, organic quality," said Paul Thompson, director of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York.

His father was a cobbler, and at age 13 Wegner was apprenticed to a cabinetmaker. As a designer he stayed close to his roots, gracefully blending craft with the modern taste for simplicity. His main goal was "to cut down to the simplest possible elements of four legs, a seat, and combined top rail and arm rest."

His most famous work includes the Round Chair of 1949, which had a caned seat and a semicircular backrest. In a 1950 cover story, *Interiors* magazine called it "the world's most beautiful chair." It even played a small role in political history as the chair used on the set of the televised Kennedy-Nixon debates of 1960.

professionals, we must be willing to have these open and powerful discussions with new clients. They are yearning for change and waiting to hear from us about the simplest way to go green: Buy one-half the acreage, build one-half the square footage, and buy one-third of the stuff. Authentic abundance will follow.

Sue Reynolds
Prescott, Arizona

I find it difficult to understand why Dwell should choose to lend credence to the claim of a dissident draftsman who believes he designed buildings for which Craig Ellwood was justly famous ("Under Studied," March 2007).

I can testify that during my tenure in the Ellwood office, Ellwood guided the design of our projects through conception, detailing, and construction, and I have no reason to believe that changed the moment Jerry Lomax arrived. Ellwood's reputation had been firmly established prior to that time by the publication of his handsome steel-and-wood hillside designs such as the Hale and Zack houses, as well as Case Study House 16 and the Hollywood Courtyard Apartments, for which he was awarded first prize at the São Paulo International Exhibition of Architecture.

It is interesting to note that only after Ellwood's death in 1992 did articles appear in which several of his former draftsmen asserted authorship of the Ellwood projects. Is no proof of those spurious claims necessary prior to their publication? One would wish Ellwood himself could refute or confirm their truthfulness.

All of architecture is a collaboration: The architect and his client, his draftsmen, his engineers, the builder, and many others all contribute to the completed project. No doubt Lomax and his friends added much to the Ellwood projects, but can they say the buildings would be as they are without his guidance?

I doubt it.

Ernest E. Jacks
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Thank you for your feature on modern birdhouses in your March 2007 issue. The feature is well timed for when birds are actually looking for nests and staking territory in the mid-and-late winter in the northern hemisphere. I also appreciate your promotion of supporting wildlife in one's backyard, with an eye to quality and well-made products.

However, Style, with a capital S, is where humans and birds part ways in choice of housing. Unfortunately, many of the birdhouses you featured are not ones which most common yard birds would ever use. In fact, one of the "houses" in the article is not a house at all but a covered seed feeder. It is important to remember that we humans design livable spaces for ourselves on our terms—we should do the same for birds according to their terms.

Birds of different species select cavity shelter for nests based on entry-hole size. Most of the houses in your feature have entry holes which appear too large for the birds mentioned as possible residents. Large entry holes allow for nest raiders, such as larger birds or squirrels, and would result in a failed clutch.

The two houses with small enough holes for a discerning chickadee or wren, the Going Cheep by Luke Morgan and Nest by Gary Cruce, look to have about the right hole size and low-key wood appearance that most birds go for. However, it is unclear how to clean the Cheep. Overall, the Nest box by Mr. Cruce looks to be the only bird box that would effectively and safely attract wild birds.

Your readers would likewise benefit from information about correct mounting height, grouping of boxes for social birds like swallows, and materials that are truly safe for birds. This information could be found at any local Audubon Society website or Wild Birds Unlimited shop. Thus informed, your readers will have a greater ▸

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chance of attracting wild birds. Again, I appreciate your effort, but it is more a display of design objects than of true wild bird houses.

Bryony Angell
Seattle, Washington

After reading several issues of your publication and being impressed with the content, I am in the process of subscribing; however, I wanted to voice a concern. I, like many people, enjoy the articles about green home planning and devices, such as the March 2007 Solar 101 section. However, I have noticed a general trend of discussion within these articles: They are mainly centered around and exampled after plans and programs in the southern states. Why not extend your coverage to include the northern states? It does not seem fair to exclude information that would be beneficial to everyone, not just to those in the southern states. While this information may be of some use to us here [in the North], its usefulness is severely limited.

Doug Mara
Schenectady, New York

Editors' Note: *We are pleased to tell you that northerly "Off the Grid" projects appear both in this issue (p. 86) and forthcoming in our July/August 2007 issue; and we encourage you to check out our archive on dwell.com to discover that the warmer climes are not the only regions with warm hearts!*

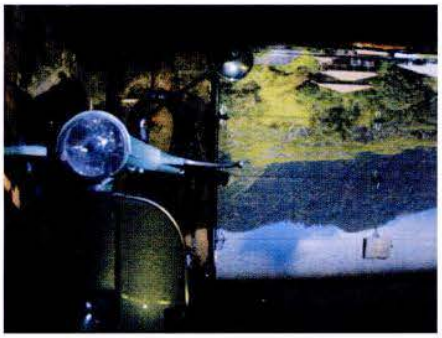
While I applaud Tryggvi Thorsteinsson and Erla Dogg Ingjaldsdóttir's gorgeously designed, environmentally and energy-conscious home in Los Angeles ("Well Thawed Out," February 2007), I was quite disturbed when it was implied that there was no protective railing on the second-story deck, just "black lava rock, which acts as a deterrent to keep children away from the edge." Excuse me? As I have yet to encounter a child who was afraid of rocks, I don't understand how that would deter one who was active and curious. It was also disconcerting to see no handrail or banister on the stunning floating staircase. I believe that good design can incorporate environmentally-conscious building practices and energy efficiency. Can't it do the same with basic safety measures that are still strikingly beautiful, especially where young children are concerned?

It seemed inconsistent and superfluous to read that the kitchen island is clad in rubber, while an unprotected staircase lurks nearby, or that "more out-swing" (of the front door) "would have been hazardous with kids around" (p. 70) when a child can walk out the sleeping pavilion door and fall off the roof. Sure, they have "freedom from having to watch [their daughter's] every move." I just hope they have a full-time nanny or baby-sitter who can.

M.D. Kistner
Holland, Michigan

Dan Maginn's essay "Your House, Your Sandwich: An Architectural Drama in Five Parts," (February 2007) should be required reading for anyone embarking on a home remodeling project. While there is a lot of reference material available about the dos and don'ts of the process, Mr. Maginn's story describes in such an entertaining, yet straightforward way what really happens. You will sleep much better during your project if you refer to this essay along the way.

Christina Legg
Rolling Hills Estates, California



Thanks for your recent camera obscura photos. Here is a shot of the Manoa Valley, Honolulu Hawaii, as projected on my garage door.

Enjoy!

Stuart Steele
Honolulu, Hawaii

My husband and I are fairly new subscribers and huge fans of your magazine. We are currently in the process of a major rehab of an old Victorian in Chicago. We are green (not in the good way) to this whole process and are trying to be as informed as possible to get the job done right. We are doing things in the most green (the good way) way possible and are attempting to source materials locally (not easy in Chicago—but that's another story).

Our concern of late is our flooring: We have been pricing out reclaimed wood and cork. There is a lot of cool stuff out there, but we are also installing radiant heat and hear that none of the green floors we've chosen are ideal or even recommended over radiant heat. Has your magazine covered this issue?

Julie Whaley and Adam Scott
Chicago, Illinois

Editors' Note: *Radiant heat is an incredibly important component to energy savings, especially in cold climates like Chicago. We dedicated our September 2006 "Dwell Reports" ("Step Lightly") to sustainable wood flooring with expert Eric Corey Freed, principal architect for the San Francisco–based firm organicARCHITECT. We encourage you to check out the article and also to solicit Freed's free advice on his monthly "Ask the Expert" column at the Greener Buildings website, www.greenerbuildings.com.*

Correction:
The Ford car shown in the "Modern Appreciation" article (March 2007) is a 1955 Crown Victoria, not a '57 Fairlane 500. We regret the error.

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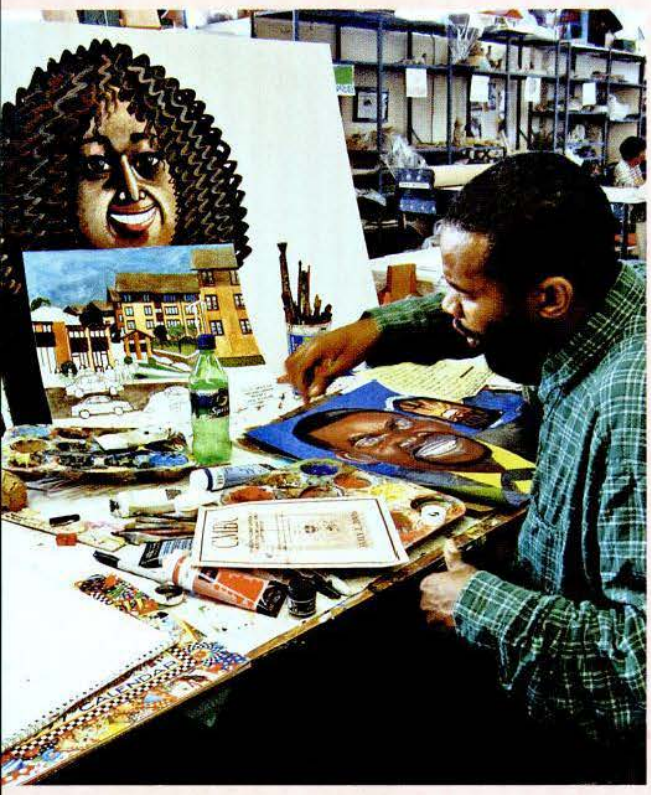

Artist William Scott adds the finishing touches to a painting at the Creative Growth headquarters in Oakland, California ("Art Start," p. 106).

Contributors

Photographer **Jessica Antola** ("Parsing Paris," p. 212) recently relocated to New York after living in Paris for the past five years. She loved meeting Erwan and Ronan Bouroullec and exploring and photographing some of their favorite haunts. The shoot reminded her of Paris's rich design history, both past and present, as well its vibrant mix of Northern and Sub-Saharan African and Chinese cultures found around the Belleville and Jean-Pierre Timbaud neighborhoods.

Fred A. Bernstein ("Universal Appeal," p. 77 and "Stripped Ease," p. 176) is an architecture writer living in New York. Maintaining journalistic detachment is a problem when his subjects are as admirable as Barbara Hill (former beauty queen who had the guts to create an apartment like no other) and David Carmel (who, since a tragic accident, has shown courage in everything he does). "Writing about design," says Bernstein, "means writing about how people choose to live."

Adam Friedberg ("Family Style," p. 184) is a photographer living and working in New York. While ostensibly in Japan for a winter vacation, his workaholism proved insurmountable and posed countless difficulties, including scheduling too close to New Year's; producing the shoot with limited knowledge of the Japanese language; having but a day to shoot with no assistant and 20 people in a space no bigger than a Manhattan one bedroom. But it was all worth the lunch and the beautiful shots: He can't wait to go back.

Lifelong New Yorker **Joanne Furio** ("Your Mother Should Know," p. 264) moved to the San Francisco Bay Area a year ago and has discovered that despite the traditional stereotype often given to northern Californian architecture, there are plenty of exceptions. Case in point, architect Mark Horton's impressive minimalist portfolio. "It's so refreshing to see such original architecture in the heart of wine country, where most people are hankering for a Tuscan villa," says Furio. She's contributed to *Robb Report Luxury Home* as well as the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *San Francisco Magazine*. She plans to buy a house that is neither French nor Italian country.

David A. Greene ("Living Room," p. 168) is a screenwriter living in Los Angeles. Inspired by David and Im Schafer's minimalist lifestyle, he has committed to purging his own home of all unnecessary extravagances. He will start with the Keebler Fudge Stripe Cookies.

Barry Katz ("Architectural Movements 101," p. 228) has been tracking the rise and fall of design movements for as long as he can remember. He has even tried his hand at writing a manifesto or two of his own, but fortunately none of them has ever seen the light of day. In his spare time, Katz tries to foment design insurrections at the California College of the Arts, where he is professor of movements and manifestos; at Stanford; and at IDEO.

Hilary Lewis ("Art Basel Miami Beach," p. 120) shuttles between New York and Miami as part of her dual roles as a founding editor of design monthly *Home Miami*, and as the Philip Johnson Scholar at the Glass House (now a National Trust Historic Site). This month she covers the annual must-do winter event, Art Basel Miami Beach, which contrasts somewhat with her often snowy visits to New Canaan, Connecticut. Her latest book examines the World Trade Center site's future: *Think New York: A Ground Zero Diary* (Images Publishing).

Major Arnold Strong ("Barrack Essentials," p. 167) is a communications director and strategy manager from Salem, Oregon. Strong has served our country both in Iraq and domestically in the wakes of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In March of 2006, Strong was mobilized as part of the Oregon National Guard to train the Afghan National Army. Initially the organization's public affairs officer, he serves as the chief operations officer and mentor at the Kabul Military Training Center, living in the room described in his article. He is scheduled to return home to his wife and two sons in June of this year. ■

PHOTO BY KATE STONE

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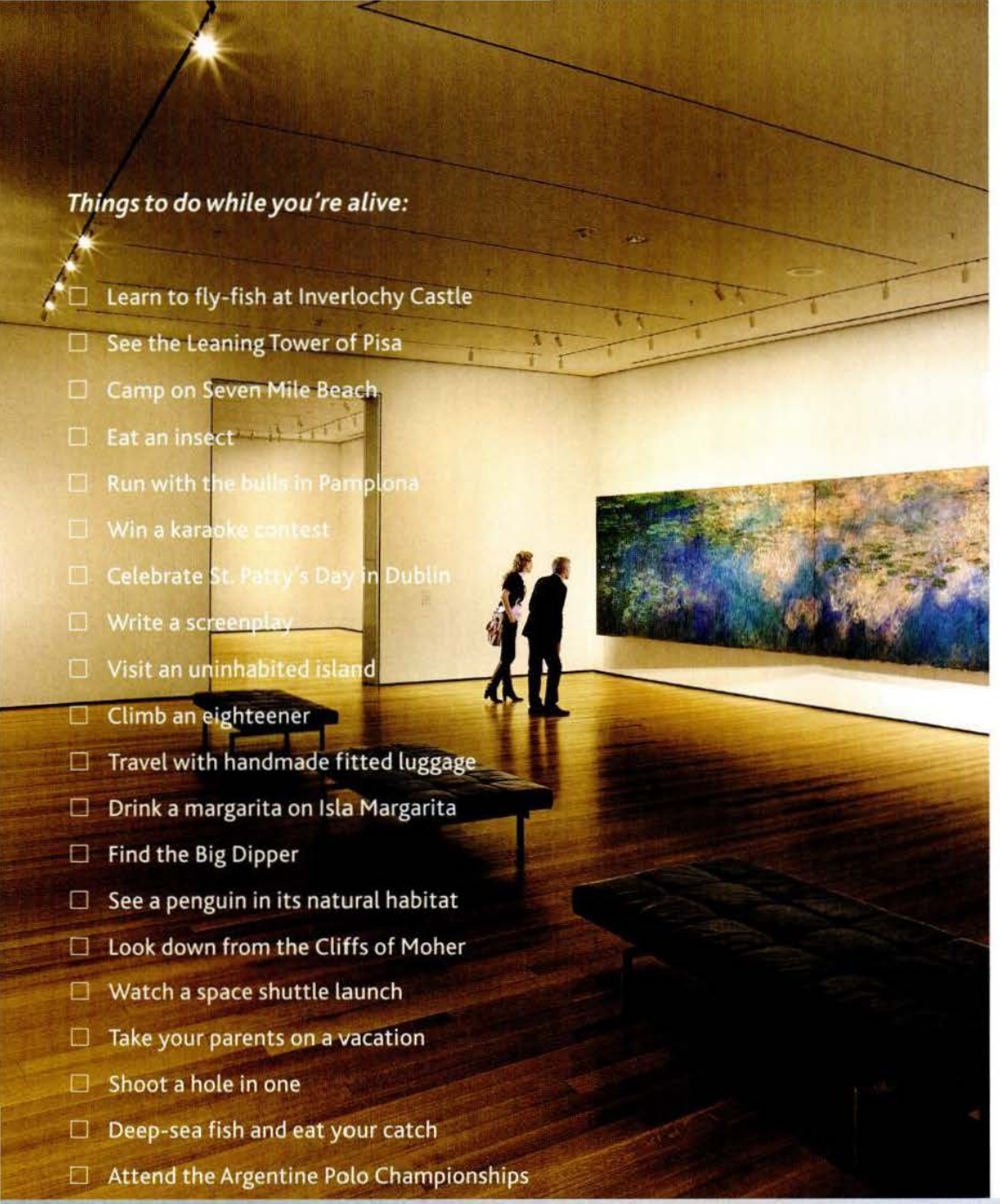
Major support is also provided by Susan Bay Nimoy and Leonard Nimoy with the members of the *WACK!* Women's Consortium.

This exhibition is presented as part of the Millennium on View program. The Millennium Biltmore Hotel is MOCA's Official Hotel Sponsor. 89.9 KCRW is the Official Media Sponsor of MOCA. Generous in-kind support is provided by MySpace.

ABOVE: Katharina Sieverding, *Transformer*, 1973, © Katharina Sieverding, photo © Klaus Mettig, VG Bild-Kunst



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Room to Consume?

With homes, the question of size often translates to a question of stuff. Without things (or more accurately, things in excess), I would hazard to guess that any one of us could live graciously in a space smaller than the average American family room (that's 300 square feet). Give us more room and we'll just fill it up with more stuff. When that stuff starts to include spouses and offspring and all of their stuff, the walls must press exponentially outward and upward in accommodation. Couple that hypothetical tidbit with the fact that in our conspicuous consumer culture having all this stuff and a bigger home to keep it in also means having higher status and we're facing what Ned Flanders would call "a dilly of a pickle."

It's not uncommon for us to get press releases touting the world's latest 17,000-square-foot dream homes (some of these are absurd enough to qualify for ironic email circulation). Reading about a 41,000-square-foot megamansion being developed to the tune of $25 million in Greenwich, Connecticut, leaves me wondering what the other 40,000 square feet are for. Stuff, I guess.

I'm not trying to dictate how much space one needs to live comfortably, or what is an acceptable level of stuff to have around. For most of us however, the size of our home isn't a flexible luxury, but rather an imposed constraint. For that reason this issue of Dwell focuses on how architects, designers, and residents make the most of their space. For Im and David Schafer ("Living Room," p. 168) it meant taking meticulous measurements of everything they own and fitting it to a tee within the shell of their 426-square-foot rental loft—their "Wall of Storage" does George Nelson proud. For Barbara Hill ("Stripped Ease," p. 176), it meant stripping back both her belongings and the guts of her apartment to the bare essentials. For Hidekazu and Miharu Higashibata ("Family Style," p. 184) it meant a holistically improved way of life that came with a thoughtful 802-square-foot house that encourages both indoor and outdoor, and intergenerational relationships.

Also in this issue is Ken Isaacs ("Nice Quads," p. 141) who developed the Living Structure as a way of taming a cramped studio apartment. We were scooped though; *Life* featured it in their October 11, 1954, issue. Living Structures extend the notion of Nelson and Wright's Storage Wall (which had appeared in *Life* about ten years earlier) into three dimensions, straddling that rare boundary of furniture and architecture—and providing an unrivaled solution to the "space race."

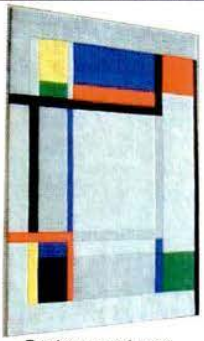
While Isaacs should be a hero to all live/work residents, Major Arnold Strong can be an inspiration to us all. Strong began emailing us from the Kabul Military Training Center in Afghanistan about a year ago. Not much longer after that came pictures of the shipping containers that make up most of the base's buildings. We asked him to tell us more ("Barrack Essentials," pg. 167). Strong's transformation of a windowless 8-by-8-foot room in the middle of a war zone to a place he's happy to call home should give us all pause the next time we wish our closet was a few feet wider.

The non-Costco-card-carrying cynic in me still chuckles at George Carlin's remark that "home is where you keep your stuff while you're out buying more stuff," but the contents of this issue appeal to my optimistic side. When you think small, there's no shortage of big ideas.

SAM GRAWE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
sam@dwell.com

Samba sectional

Rendezvous sectional and swiveling chair



Corbu wool rug

Modern classic chair

Le Corbusier pony skin lounge

Le Corbusier sofa

Modern classic bed

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Le Corbusier chair w/ottomon

Wassily chair

Philippe Starck chair

Le Corbusier pony skin chair

Alpha swiveling chair and ottoman

Media reclining leather chair

Le Corbusier coffee table

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Inspired by the story "Harlem Renaissance," which appeared in the December 2004 issue of Dwell, David Alan Basche and Alysia Reiner decided to buy a building in Harlem and renovate sustainably with design-build firm GreenStreet.

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Dwell Video brings good things to life as we interview architects, explore modern homes, travel with experts, and tour our favorite buildings. With the *Building Green in Harlem* series, Dwell follows a couple through the challenges of renovation and shares valuable how-to information on design, permits, contractors, and production. Check out our video library and see for yourself.

Dwell Daily

Mark Your Calendar

With *Design for the Other 90%*, The Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum focuses on the need to create affordable, sustainable means for survival for the 90 percent of the world's population who currently live below the poverty level.
May 5–September 23, 2007
Cooper-Hewitt / New York, NY
dwell.com/daily

Newsletter

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Sign up for our newsletter to receive updates and information on events from Dwell headquarters. Each month, one of our editors writes home with the latest—whether news from the International Builders' Show in Orlando, Florida, or commentary on a café in Barcelona.
dwell.com/newsletter

Profiles

Open-Source Art

The members of the art collective Rebar transform parking spots into temporary parks and call for a "Kite Day" in downtown San Francisco.
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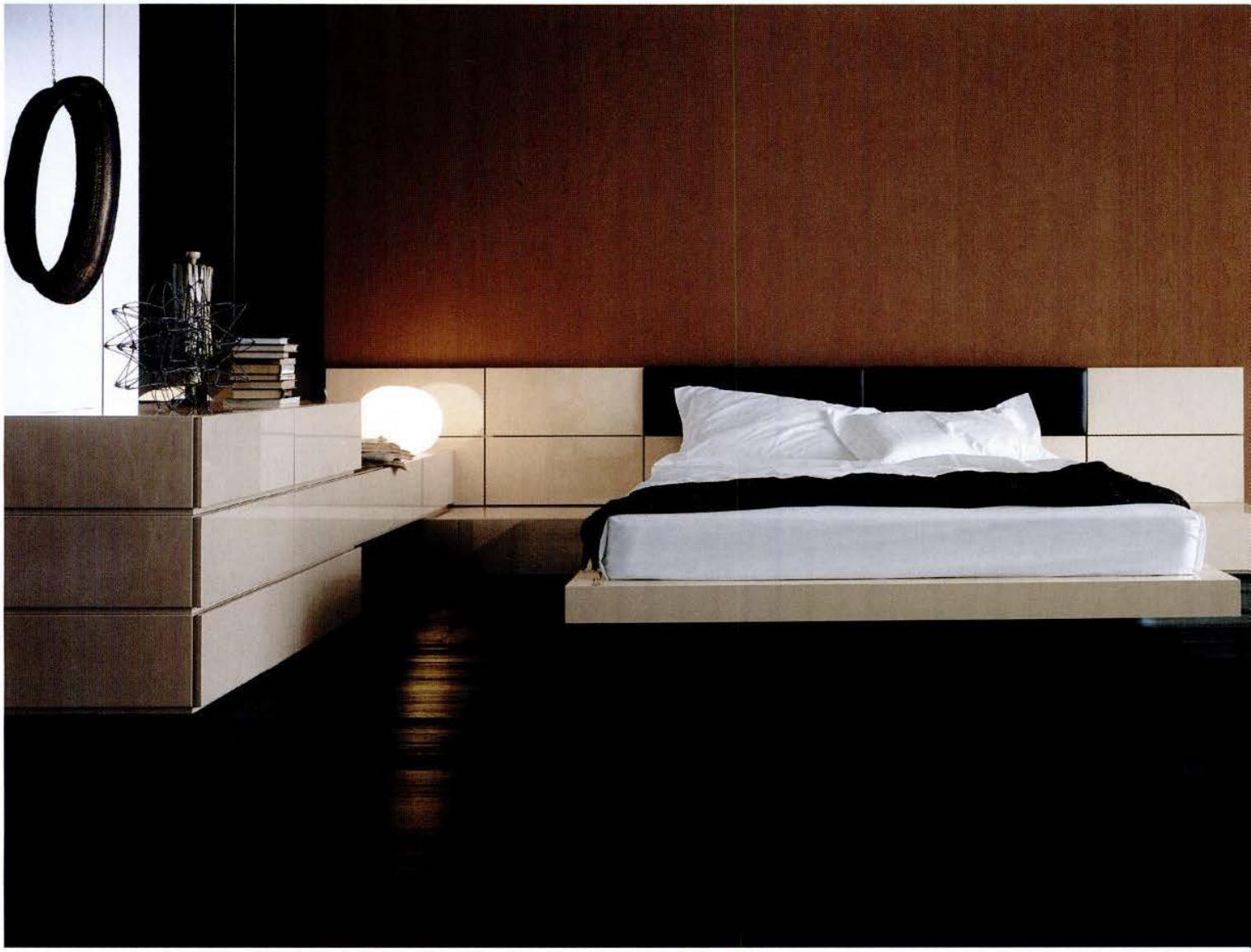

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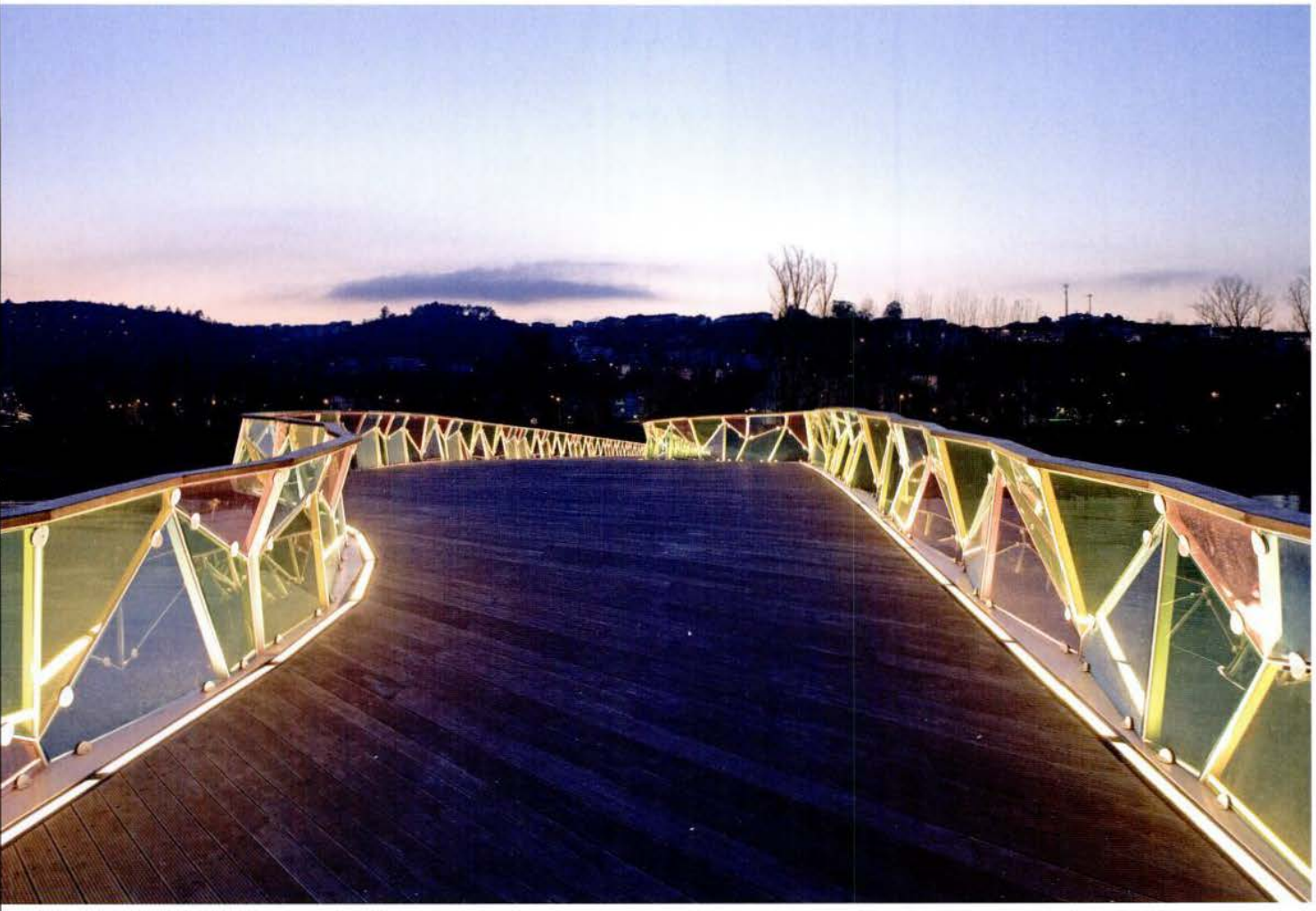
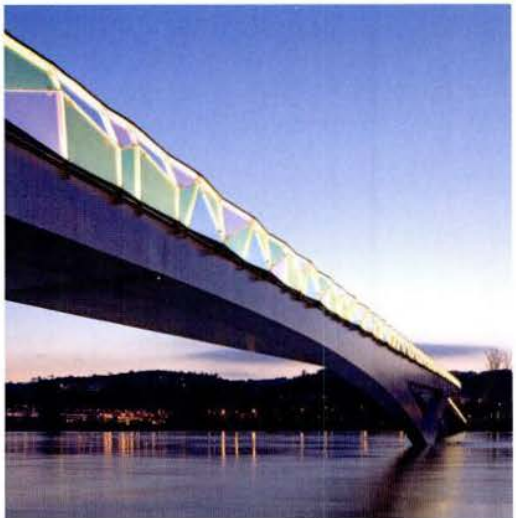
Dear Ketel One Drinker Can we just say, you looked great the other night.

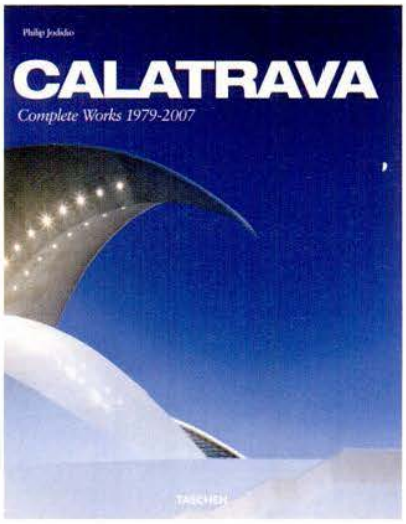


Pedro and Inês bridge / By Cecil Balmond/Arup / Famous for engineering the world's most audacious new buildings for the likes of Toyo Ito and Rem Koolhaas, structural wizard Cecil Balmond collaborated with António Adão da Fonseca on this Technicolor fantasy spanning the Rio Mondego.

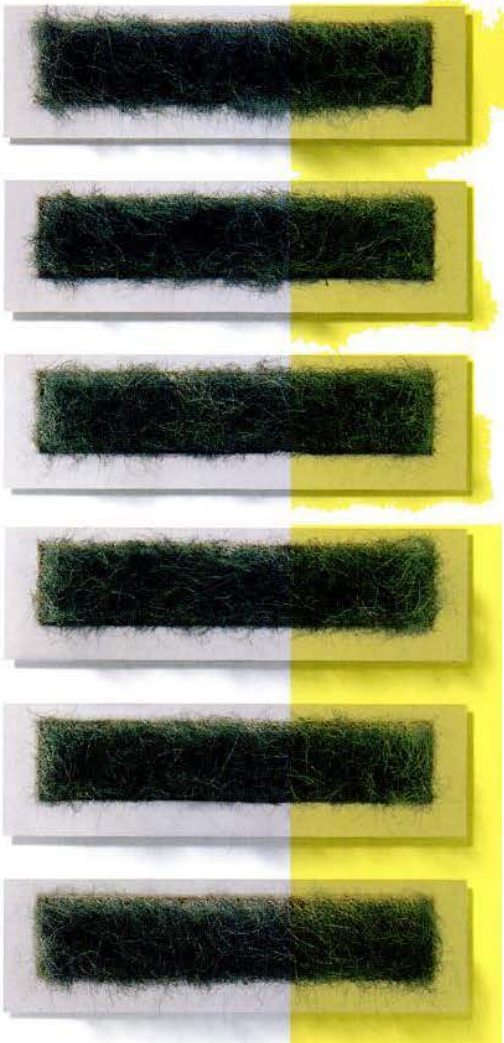
Located in Coimbra, Portugal, the Pedro and Inês footbridge launches from asymmetrical points on opposing shores, giving the impression of two bridges that will never meet—a figurative translation of the age-old legend of murder, deceit, and unrequited love among 14th-century royals from which the bridge takes its name. The spans do in fact connect at a viewing platform. This is not simply a bridge that gets you from here to there, but as Balmond noted in the *Guardian*, it's a place to dawdle, dream, and look around. "We've designed the bridge so that it's something of an adventure," says the designer. "A way across a river that doesn't insist on haste."



PHOTOS BY LEONARDO FINOTTI

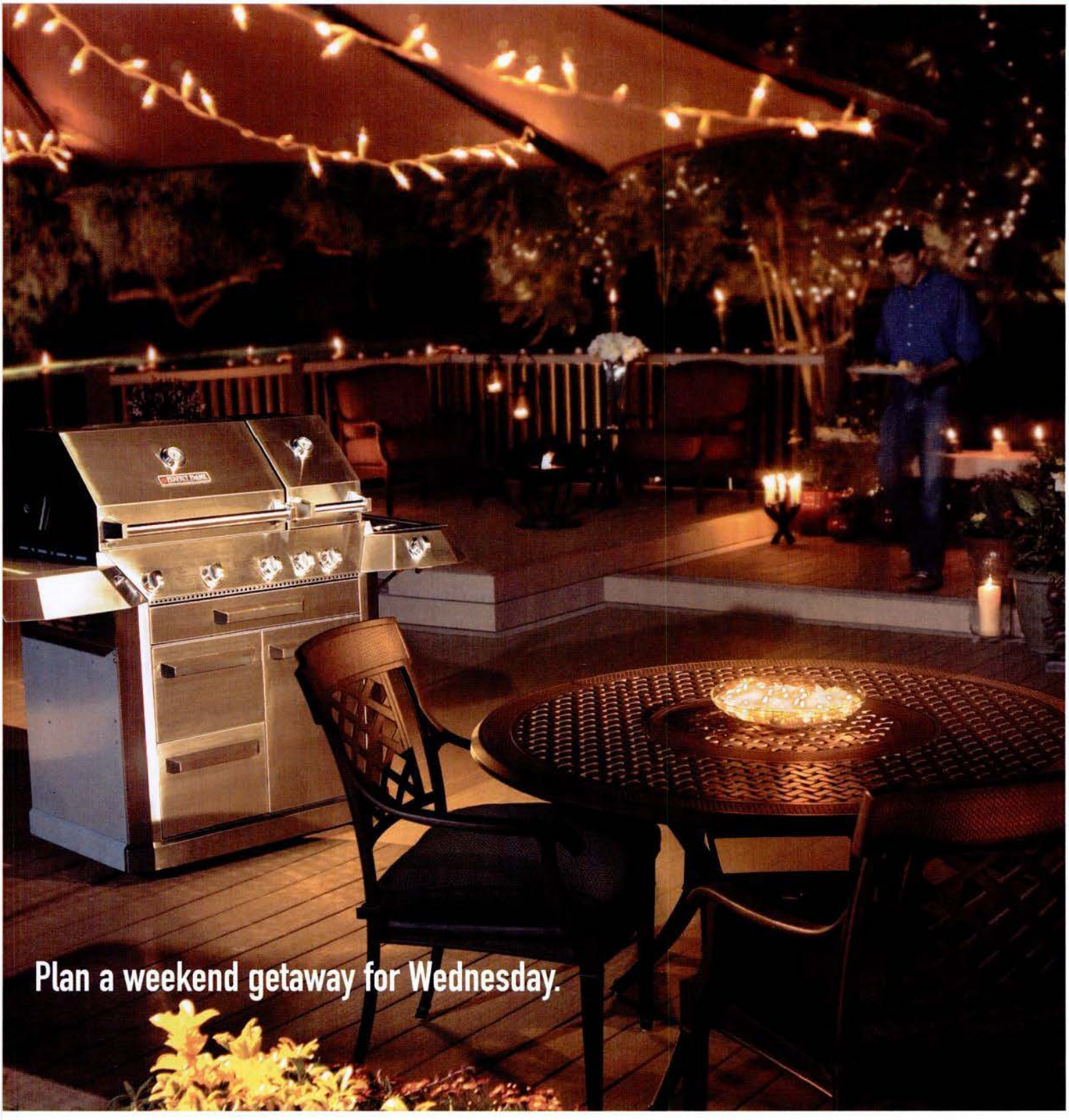


Santiago Calatrava Complete Works 1979–2007 / By Philip Jodidio / Taschen / $125.00 / www.taschen.com / Architecture critic Deyan Sudjic has succinctly likened the work of Santiago Calatrava to "the kind of sensational architecture that looks good in car commercials." It's true, the Spanish architect spent the past 30 years developing organic, sometimes kinetic, constructions whose greatest attribute is that they can all readily be identified as "a Calatrava." They're all on display, alongside sculptral sketches, in this midcareer monograph.



Grassland / By Bernd Oette for Grassland / www.grassland-site.com / At first these grass sculptures appear lush and vernal, but as the years pass—it usually takes two—the blades of these *momento moris* change from their healthy, verdant hue to the dun color of dried straw. Oette developed special growing and drying techniques that allow the roots to adhere to the stainless steel mountings—and bring the backyard inside.

Spring Chair / By Modern Bamboo for Adapt Design / www.modernbamboo.com / Despite its name, this chair can be used before the vernal equinox and after the summer solstice. The crisp elegant seat is made entirely from sustainable and durable bamboo, stained in cherry, natural, or ebony. While sitting down may be simple, the chair is actually the end result of nine previous iterations—each refining elements such as the variable thickness and compound curvature until the desired result was attained.



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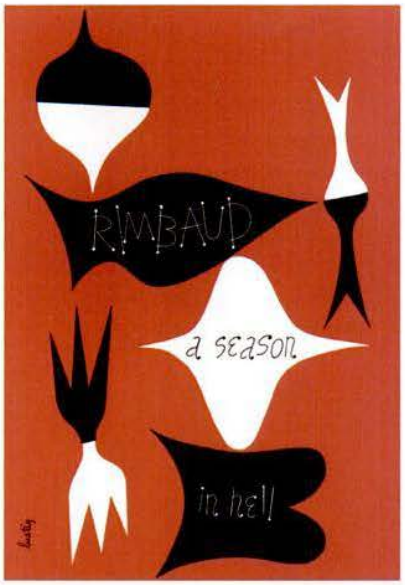
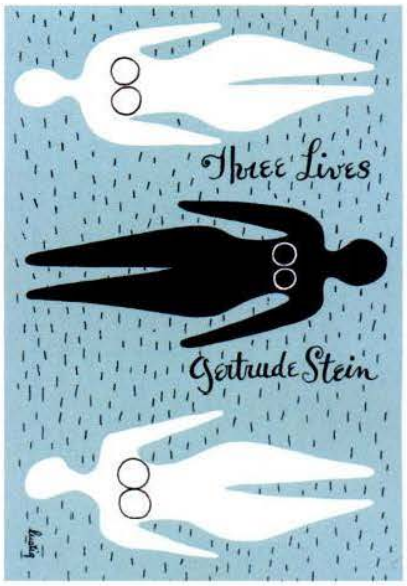
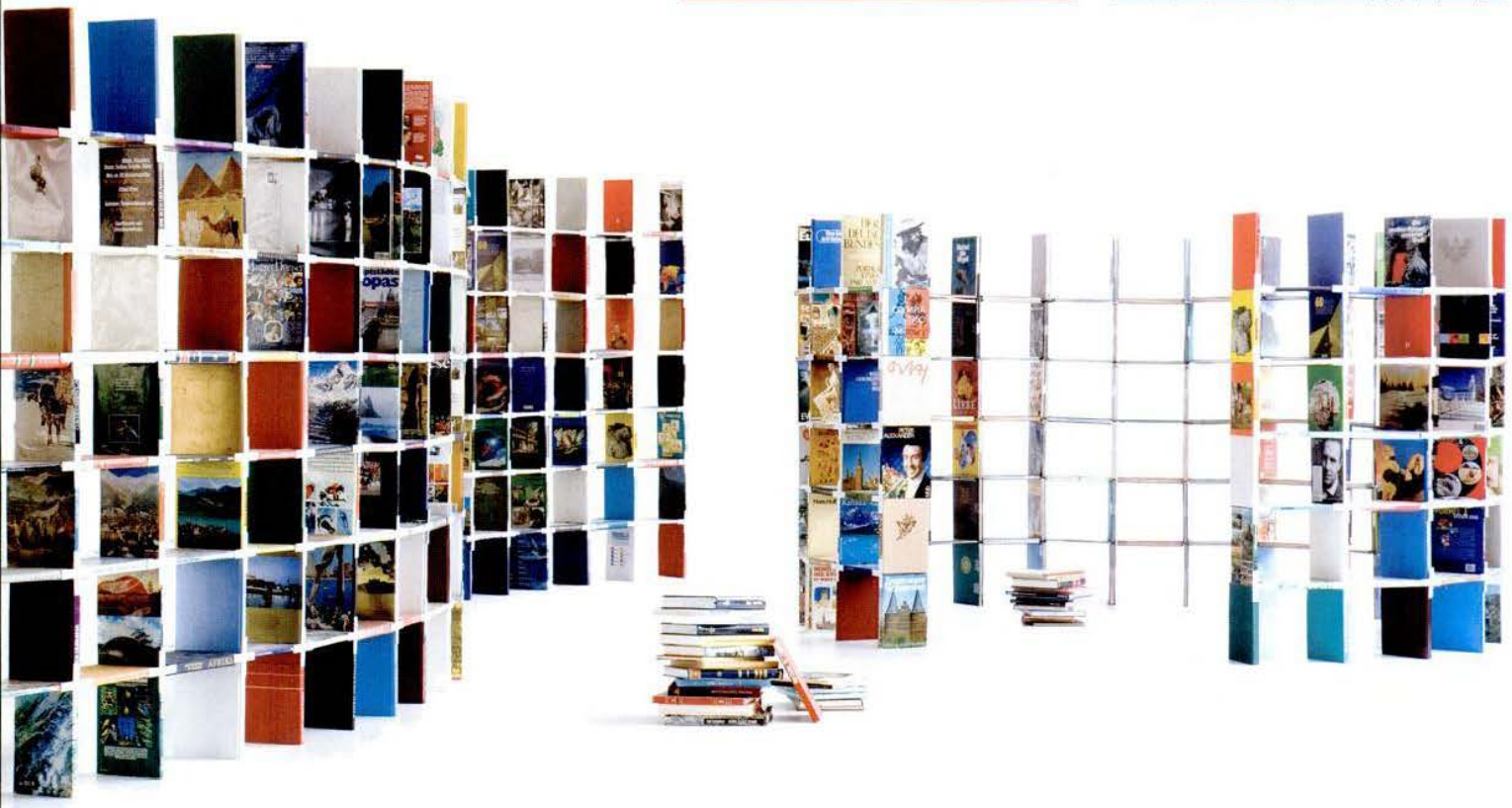
Alvin Lustig posters / www.alvinlustig.org / Graphic designer Alvin Lustig revolutionized book jacket design in the 1940s and '50s by bringing an abstract, painterly touch to what had formerly been the demesne of Madison Avenue. Though he did dozens of jackets in his career, the two reprinted here (*Three Lives* and *A Season in Hell*) are sure to beautify any bibliophile's library.







Books installation / By Studio Aisslinger / www.aisslinger.de / Rather than echo the beloved Bauhaus credo, "form follows function," this bookshelf screams it (we mean that as a compliment). Hopefully the recycled books on a metal frame will inspire you; because it was only an installation at the Cologne furniture fair and is not yet in production.

Model Mood design S. Barsacchi

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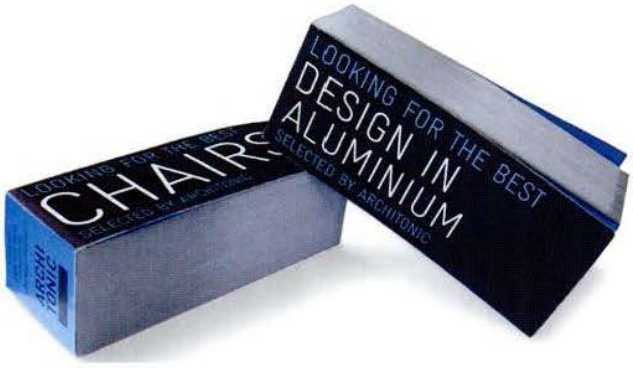
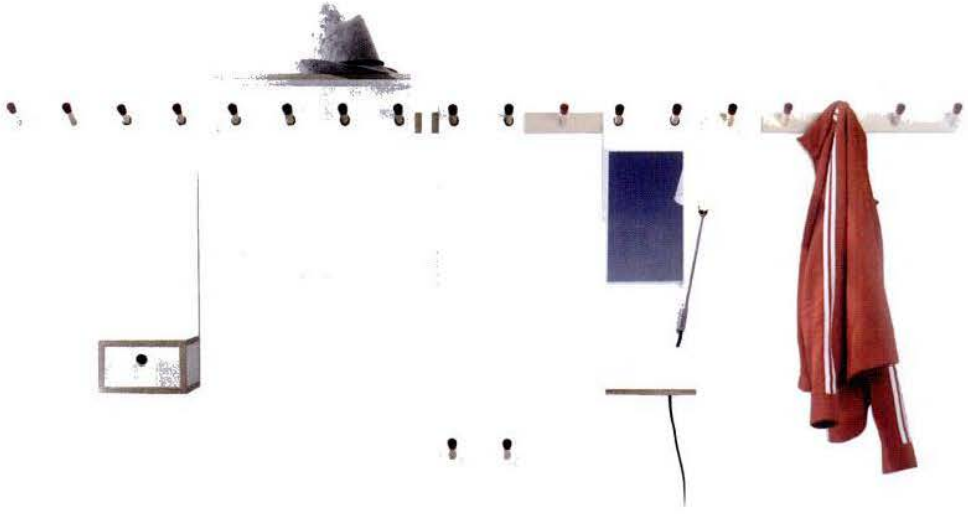
Planus doors / By Antonio Citterio for Tre-Piu / www.trep-trepiu.com / No need to worry, these doors won't have you singing Jim Morrison's half-baked lyrics. And while they might not lead to any cosmic revelations, they do offer a refined alternative to the overly ornate throwbacks that currently crowd the market. Designed by famed architect Antonio Citterio, the lightweight Planus comes with a bevy of customizable options sure to have you breaking on through to the other side.



Architonic flip books / By Architonic / www.architonic.com / The two newest editions in Architonic's four-part series simply highlight the best of chairs and the geometry-defying gymnastics of aluminum. The Swiss sourcing company's mission is to independently scout the best products, materials, and concepts in architecture and design so you don't have to.



Trick Stick / By Nils Holger Moormann / www.moormann.de / While Jeeves retired long ago, your pashminas and overcoats can still be cared for with kid gloves (and nary a raised eyebrow). The flocked material at the matchstick end of each magnetic peg is kind to fabric and this bespoke system, which includes options like a memo board and key holder, can also be customized to your whim.

Hanabi concept / By Nendo / www.nendo.jp / Moonflowers open at dusk, soaking up the lunar light only to close again at the sun's first rays. The flip side to those crepuscular blooms looks to be the Hanabi—Japanese for firework or, literally, fire flower. With Nendo's clever design the expanding shape-memory alloy comes to life with the heat of a light bulb.

StoryCorps Mobile StoryBooth Tour / www.storycorps.net / StoryCorps's mobile sound booth is an admirable oral history project and yet another example of the Airstream's adaptability. May's planned stops are Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and Omaha, Nebraska.

Inside the trailer, participants can record their personal histories in pairs while a facilitator gives cues and takes care of production. For example, at the January stop in Houston an outreach program focused on airing the experiences of displaced Hurricane Katrina victims. Funded in part by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the American Folklife Center, and National Public Radio, each story has the potential to be included in the Library of Congress archives, and aired on NPR's *Morning Edition.*

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The Infinity is a bold new architectural statement rising in San Francisco's South of Market district. Two shimmering glass towers, with panoramic vistas of the Bay Bridge, San Francisco Bay, and city skyline, *The Infinity*'s soaring height represents a bold imagining of the possibilities of urban living. The dramatic new residential complex, which will also include two mid-rise buildings, is slated for occupancy in early 2008. Reflecting its bold exterior, *The Infinity* is sure to inspire provocative interior design possibilities.

What about you—fancy a chance to design a modern home in this urban community? Dwell™ invites our readers to submit design proposals for one of three varied floor plans for homes in *The Infinity*. Designs will be reviewed by a panel of industry experts, including Dwell owner and founder Lara Hedberg Deam. Winning designers will see their vision materialize in cooperation with the development's designers.

What you need to know about The Infinity before you begin:

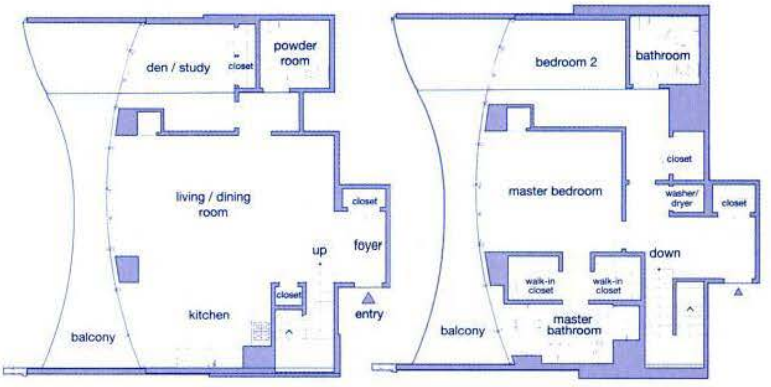
Behind the Design: Miami-based architect Bernardo Fort-Brescia of Arquitectonica is a designer with a global domain and influence and a distinctive architectural signature. Together with Heller Manus Architects of San Francisco, they've created open, modern plan residences using top-quality materials and a sensibility that reflects the city's unique character and landscape. The development is a project of owner and developer Tishman Speyer, perhaps best known for New York's Rockefeller Center and the Sony Center in Berlin, in addition to more than 140 other properties around the world.

The Exterior: Elegant. The 37-and 42-story residential towers will be among the tallest in the city, with the bay and sky as the backdrop. Walls of windows rise from floor to ceiling and give way to glorious views. The buildings' curved profiles mimic the bay. The concrete, steel and glass structures will stand out—whether glimpsed from Treasure Island or from across the street. A welcoming landscaped courtyard in the center will feature a water wall and shade trees.

The Interior: Modern. The four buildings will encompass 650 homes with one, two, or three-bedrooms, and two expansive penthouse residences. Amenities include a 5,000-square-foot fitness center with saunas, a competition-length lap pool, a private screening room, spacious club lounge, and business center.

Residence 22A, floors 4 to 27.

Residence 22F, floors 4 to 27.



lower floor upper floor

Residence 28E, floors 28 to 37.

The Site: Conveniently located on Folsom Street between Spear and Main, *The Infinity* is mere steps away from the Embarcadero, transportation, shops, and world-class restaurants. In the nearby historic Ferry Building, merchants offer organic produce, cheeses, wines, and fresh baked goods. The baseball park is a short walk along the Embarcadero. *The Infinity* will be among the tallest residential towers in the area, in a city where the high-rise residential market is coming into its own.

DESIGN CHALLENGE OVERVIEW:

- Use one of the three floor plans here as the basis for your design (available for download online at www.dwell.com/theinfinity).
- Guidelines: Budget for each is $75,000; all furnishings must be available for installation November 30, 2007.
- Format: For submission guidelines, please visit www.dwell.com/theinfinity.
- All submissions will be reviewed by a judges' panel, including Dwell owner and founder Lara Hedberg Deam, and designers from The Infinity.
- Winning designs will be posted on www.dwell.com/theinfinity.
- Winners will receive special recognition as part of *The Infinity* promotional materials, as well as in the residences.
- Full rules and information can be found at www.dwell.com/theinfinity.
- To learn more about the people and inspiration behind The Infinity, the newest landmark of modern architecture in San Francisco, visit www.the-infinity.com.

Entries should be mailed to:
The Infinity Design Challenge
Dwell
40 Gold Street
San Francisco, CA 94133

All submissions must be postmarked by June 18, 2007.
All entries must be original to contestant. Entry grants certain rights to sponsor and its agents. See official contest rules at www.dwell.com/theinfinity for further details.

THE INFINITY
SAN FRANCISCO

Painting a Fresco with Giotto #1, vase, 2005, Fernando Brízio Studio; photograph by António Nascimento

Stainless steel kettle, 2006, Ichiro Iwasaki, Tokyo

Styrene lampshades, 2002–03, Paul Cocksedge Studio; photograph by Richard Brine

Dragnet, lounge chair, 2005, Kenneth Coponpue for Interior Crafts of the Islands, Inc.; photograph by Conrado Velasco

&Fork / Phaidon / $69.95 / www.phaidon.com / Devour the latest and greatest offerings from 100 product designers with Phaidon's follow-up to Spoon. We're not exactly sure how the cutlery hierarchy works, but this prix fixe collection of mouth-watering design is no puny appetizer.

Flipping through the pages of *&Fork* is like being a fly on the wall for a globe-spanning and wholly improbable final design crit where the students all receive A's. The formula is simple: Each of the book's ten curators (who include luminaries such as Habitat UK's Tom Dixon, Galerie Kreo's Didier Krzentowski, ECAL director Pierre Keller, and former Dwell contributor and *ID* editor-in-chief Julie Lasky) selects ten innovative designers who have recently influenced the design world; the 100 designers are arranged alphabetically; each is given four pages to fill with drawings, product photos, and future plans; the curator tells us why they were selected; and as icing, each curator picks a classic product for the book's "Good Design" chapter. Add to cart.

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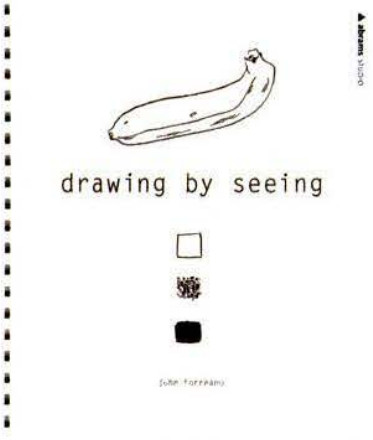
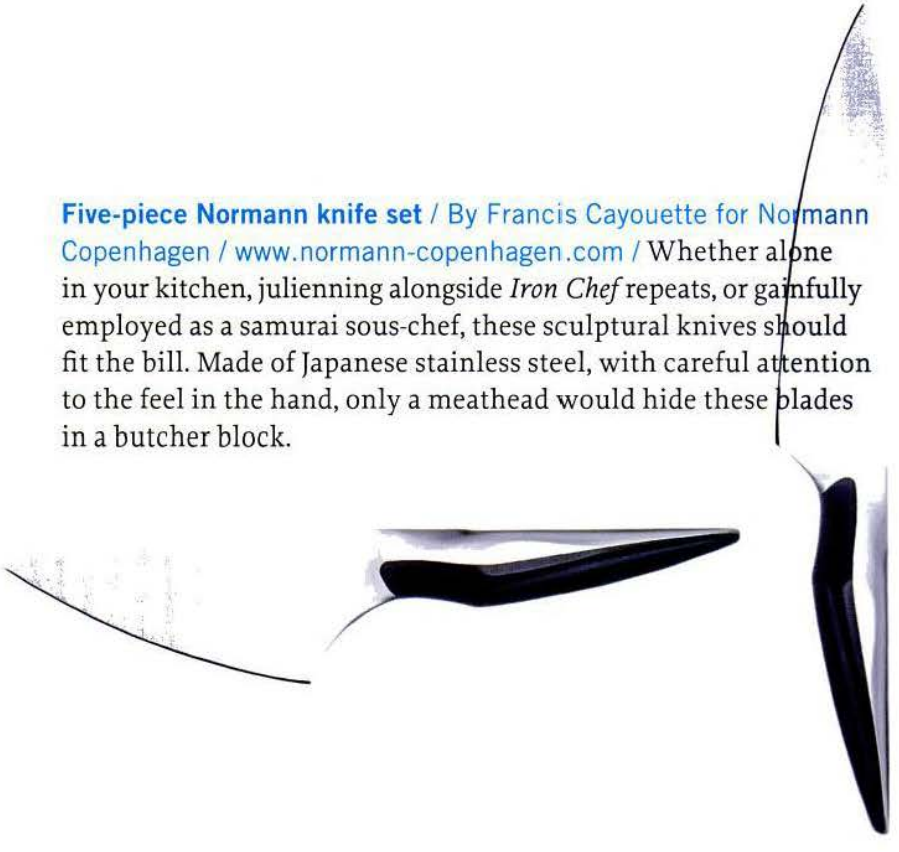
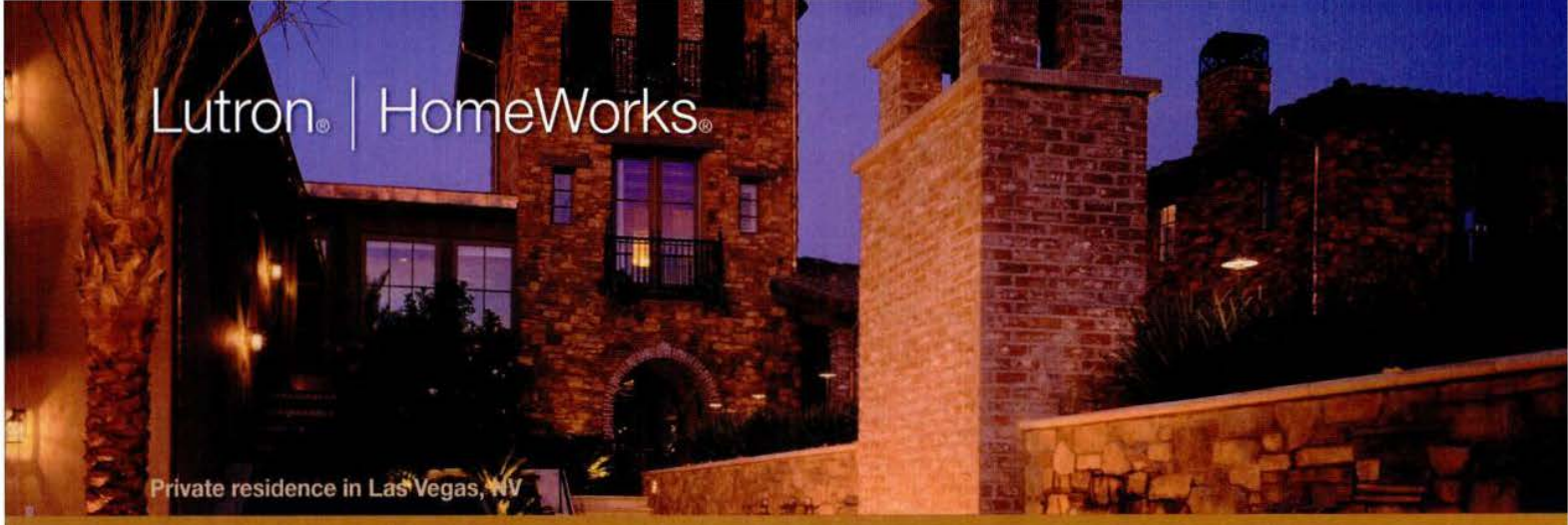
Softseating / By Molo / www.molodesign.com / Denizens of small spaces will appreciate the new Softseating collection from Molo. Like oversized ornaments, the flexible honeycomb structures are made of recyclable kraft paper and can collapse into the width of a standard book for easy storage. The fanning stools, benches, and lounges are available in brown and black.



Drawing by Seeing / By John Torreano / Harry N. Abrams / www.hnabooks.com / $29.95 / Tracing will never get you anywhere. In response to the question, "Why can't I draw what I see?" the head of the drawing and painting department at NYU created a whole book (presumably to silence pesky first-years). We're not against abstraction, but if you're like us—and would like to school the synapses responsible for making your sketches of chairs look like amoebas—this how-to is for you.

Five-piece Normann knife set / By Francis Cayouette for Normann Copenhagen / www.normann-copenhagen.com / Whether alone in your kitchen, julienning alongside *Iron Chef* repeats, or gainfully employed as a samurai sous-chef, these sculptural knives should fit the bill. Made of Japanese stainless steel, with careful attention to the feel in the hand, only a meathead would hide these blades in a butcher block.





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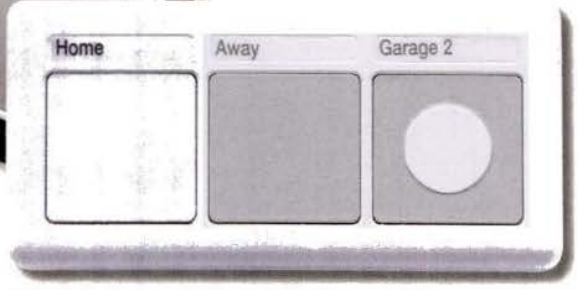

From your car…Car Visor Transmitter

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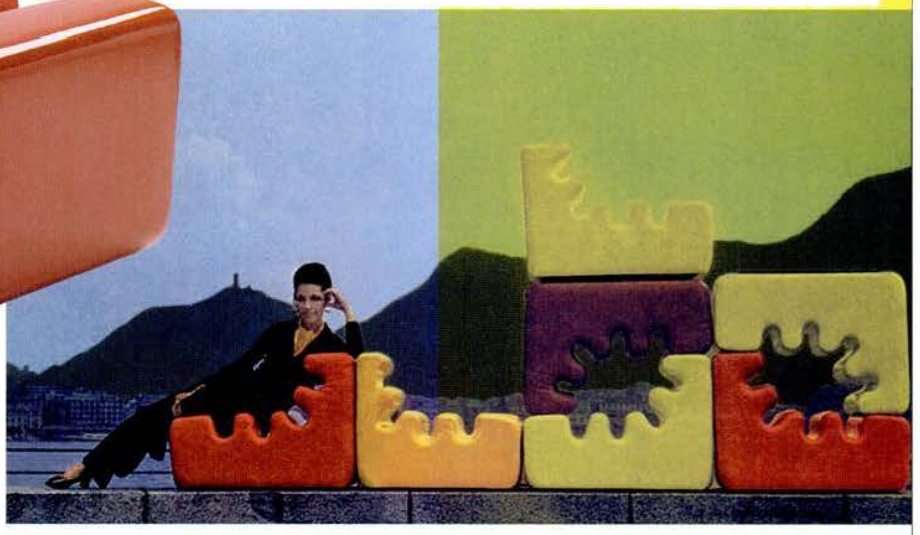
Karelia chair / By Liisi Beckmann for Zanotta / www.zanotta.it / The recently reissued 1966 cult-classic is made of kid-friendly foam that's just as well suited for adult play. Ribbed for your pleasure—the Karelia now comes in vibrant, Lifesaver-style colors. The seat's easy-to-clean, removable cover comes in leather, Stelvio fabric, and ecopelle, a synthetic material that resembles leather.



FireWire speakers / By Neil Poulton for La Cie / www.lacie.com / Inspired by the air ducts at Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers's Centre Pompidou in Paris, these new speakers from La Cie take advantage of FireWire's superior technology. No batteries or power outlets are necessary—just plug the integrated cable into your laptop and you'll be annoying fellow coffeehouse patrons with the smooth sounds of your Luther Vandross playlist in no time.

Otl Aicher / By Markus Rathgeb / Phaidon / $75.00 / www.phaidon.com / Plane spotters may remember Otl Aicher for his 1969 Lufthansa logo, but the rest recognize his stick-figure pictograms from the 1972 Olympics; he ultimately created a series of 180 symbols for public services and events associated with the games. In the first comprehensive account of his life and work, Aicher's importance to the design world comes to full light.

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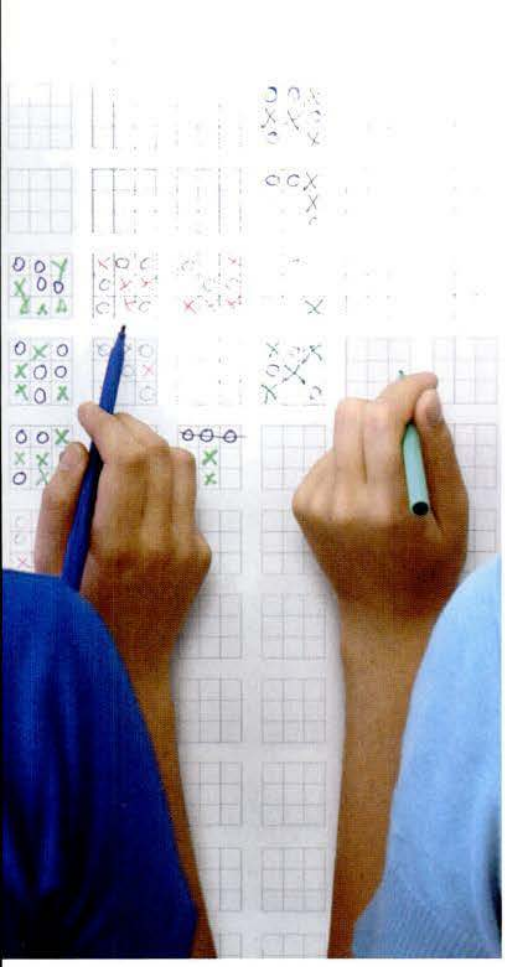
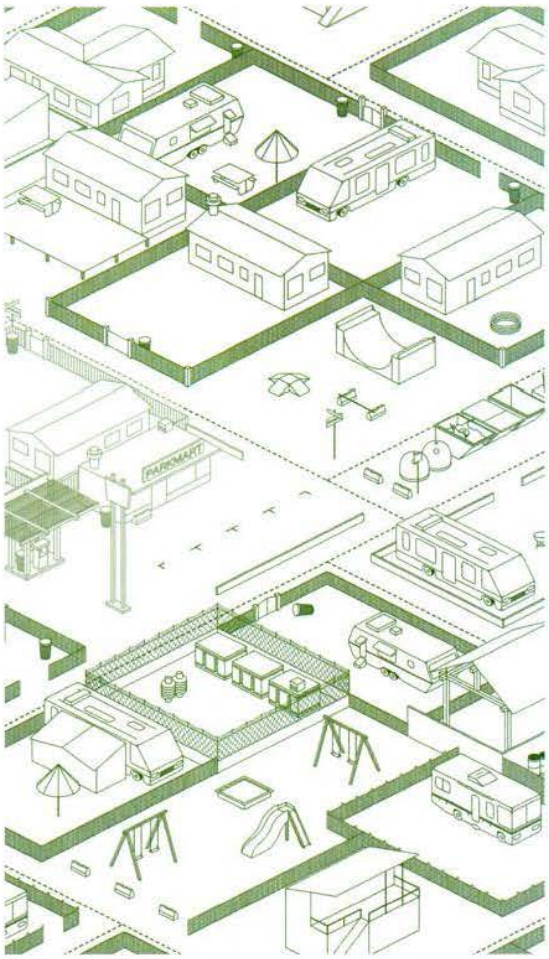
Alvar Aalto Through the Eyes of Shigeru Ban / Barbican Art Gallery / London, England / Through 13 May / www.barbican.org.uk / There's little of Alvar Aalto's oeuvre that hasn't already been explored, but Aalto acolyte Shigeru Ban provides a unique new context for the classic Nordic architect's work. Pairing projects, key themes—such as a finely attuned attentiveness to nature—begin to emerge despite the generational and geographic divides.

PHOTOS BY GUSTAF WELIN / COURTESY ALVAR ALTO MUSEUM JYVÄSKYLÄ (EXTERIOR), HIROYUKI HIRAI / COURTESY SHIGERU BAN ARCHITECTS (INTERIOR)

Sourcebook of Scandinavian Furniture: Designs for the 21st Century / By Judith Gura / WW Norton & Co / $85.00 / www.wwnorton.com / The five countries that make up Scandinavia are the ultimate design collective. Like the flowering of Italian talent during the Renaissance, these Nordic nations experienced a surge in unique furniture production in the mid-1900s. Politically and socially fortuitous times, combined with long-brewing cultural climates, made a perfect petri dish that sprouted extraordinary characters, such as designers Arne Jacobsen, Alvar Aalto, and Hans Wegner. Author Judith Gura, of the Pratt Institute, supports their biographies with more than 500 images and product specifications. Although IKEA has its place in the world, their craftsmanship is a reminder of a time when integrity of design held more sway than fashion.



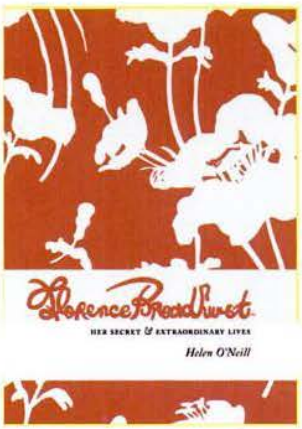


Wallpaper by 5.5 Designers, David Monsen, and Cavern Home / Nowadays, painting an accent wall chartreuse is a Martha move. To speak a different language than Stewart, take a pen to your wallpaper, paste up a trailer park, or go stark with blackbirds. Trust us, it's a good thing.

Wallpaper Games: Morpion / By 5.5 Designers / www.cinqcinqdesigners.com

Sunnydale Trailer Park (green) / By David Monsen / www.davidmonsen.com

Blackbird (white) / By Cavern Home / www.cavernhome.com



Florence Broadhurst: Her Secret and Extraordinary Lives / By Helen O'Neill / Chronicle Books / $24.95 / www.chroniclebooks.com / Florence Broadhurst left few clues to her true self, or selves. Her 1977 murder is unsolved, and so are riddles about the provenance of her hundreds of wallpapers. Their bold designs illuminate her flamboyance, but some still doubt the output, especially for a woman whose incarnations as starlet, courtier, and painter left a tangled autobiography. The mysteries make a brisk read, and the designs give historical context to our present-day wallpaper obsession.

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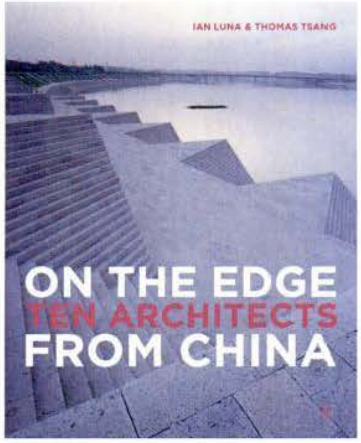
Made in China / Louisiana Museum / Humlebaek, Denmark / 16 Mar–5 Aug / www.louisiana.dk / A common sight on the back of your VCR, "Made in China" is that pervasive mark of a business powerhouse. Appropriating the manufacturer's tag, a new show of the heretofore-unseen Estella collection showcases the work of China's brightest artists.

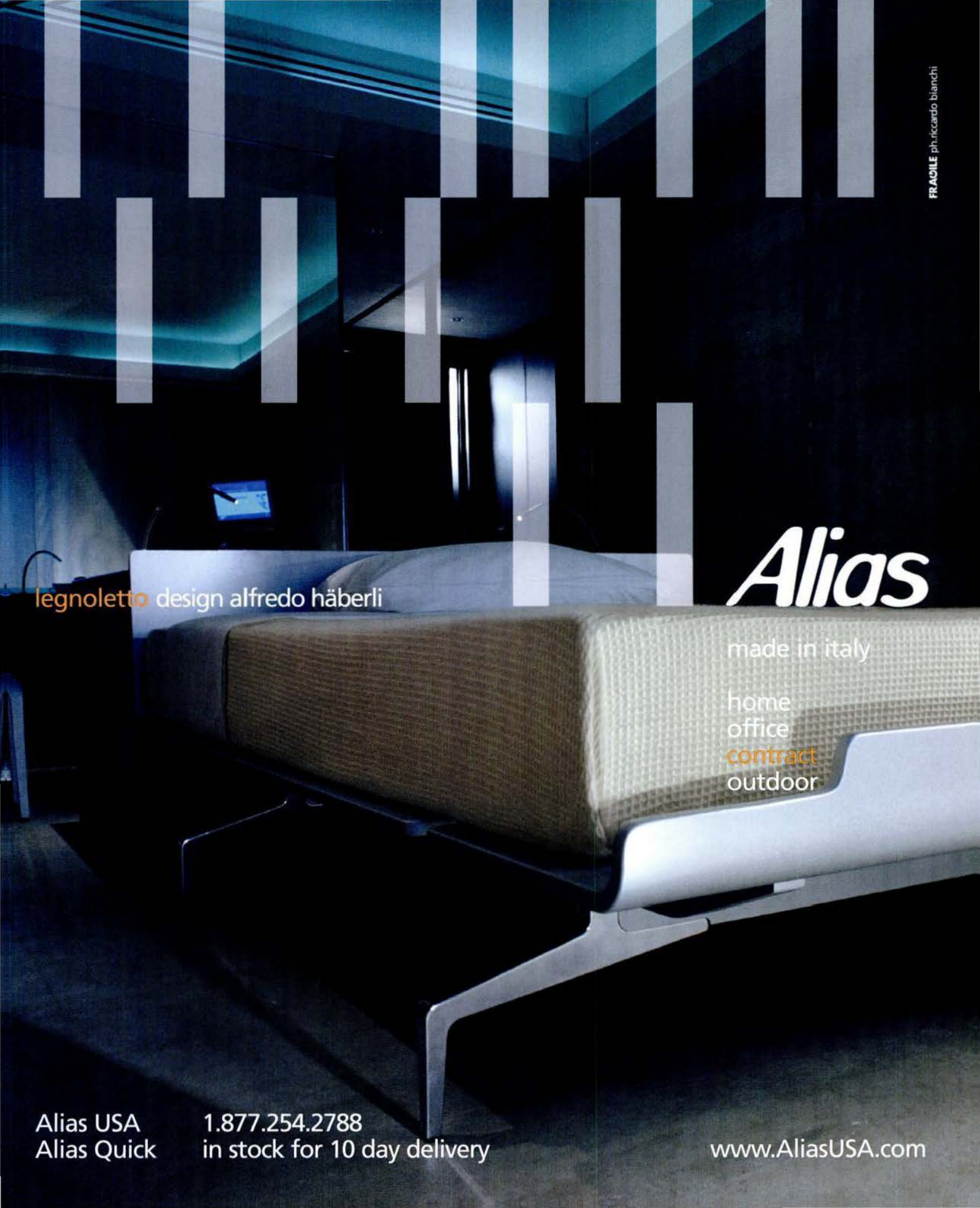
Qui Zhijie
Tattoo II, 1994

Su-en Wong
Mirage Lake / Peak of Perfection / Twilight, 2005



On the Edge: Ten Architects From China / Edited by Ian Luna with Thomas Tsang / Rizzoli International Publications / $45 / www.rizzoliusa.com / The Scandinavians have long sat at the top of the modernist heap, but a recent outpouring of forward-looking Asian architecture—the ten firms featured here all hail from mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong—looks to be giving the Nordic set a run for their kroner.

Intensity vacuum / By Electrolux / www.electrolux.com / This little dynamo from Electrolux lets you benefit from its Napoleon complex—compensating for its small size with tons of power. The design of the Intensity is smart: Rather than moving detritus and dirt through a standard 30–45-inch–long hose, the motor and dust bag are a mere three inches from the intake. Add the telescopic handle, foldable design, HEPA filter, and fingertip controls and you have no choice but to get around to that spring cleaning.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Studio Drör / By Drör Benshetrit / www.studiodror.com / Israeli-born designer Drör Benshetrit uses narrative themes in his work to distill complex meanings into simple, accessible forms.

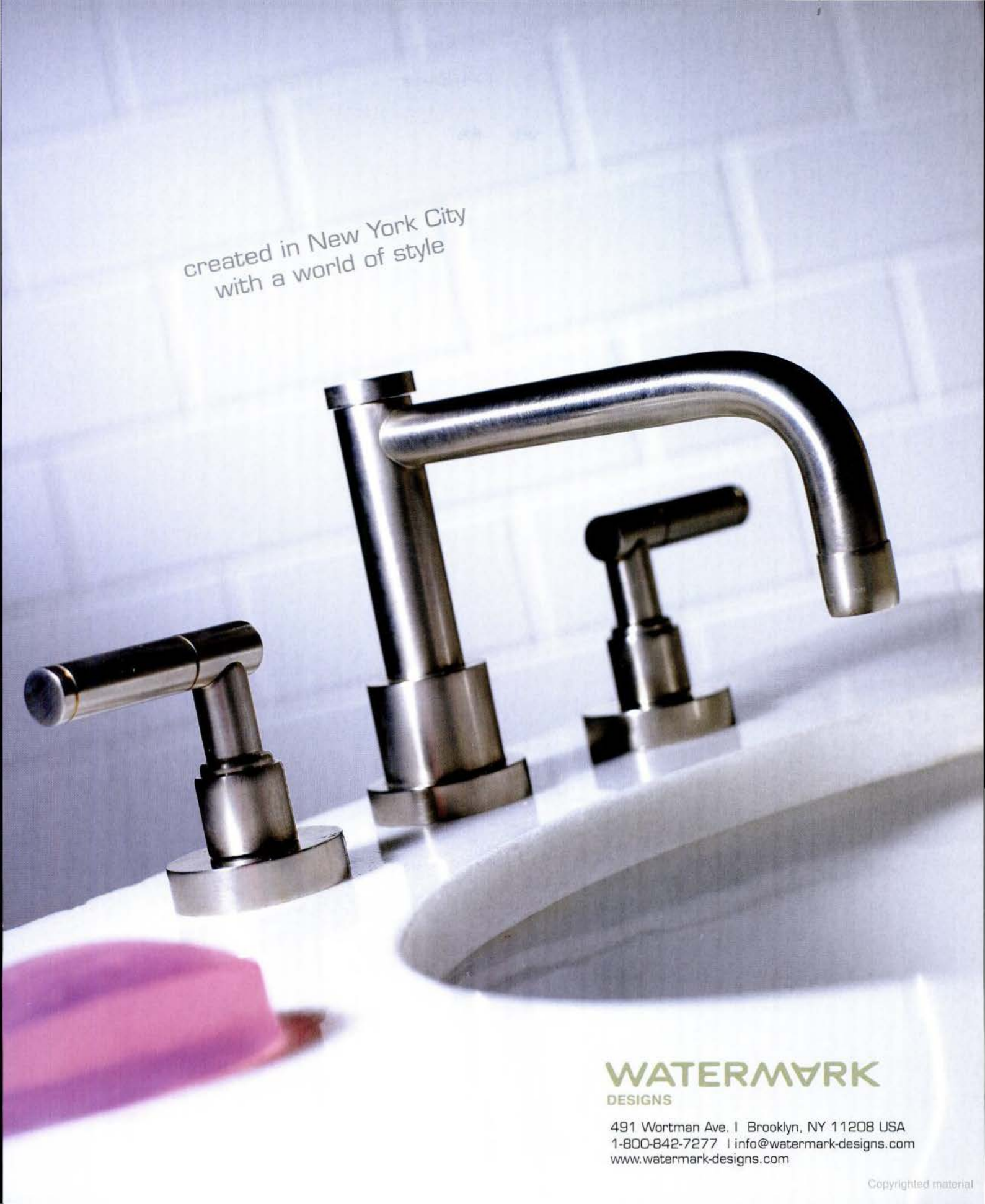
It has been a banner year for Drör Benshetrit, now the youngest member of the exclusive design agency, Culture and Commerce (his esteemed colleagues include Philippe Starck and Marcel Wanders). Spring 2007 marks the launch of eight new products from Benshetrit's private outfit, Studio Drör, ranging from chandeliers and tables to Boffi bathroom commissions. His heralded "Vase of Phases" exemplifies the metaphor of transformation throughout his work, while giving a nod to deconstructivism. Regardless of philosophy, Benshetrit makes simple objects feel fresh again: from a folding chair that's also wall art, to footwear designed with a separate, changeable skin and single orthopedic "bone."

Pick chair / By Studio Drör for Bbb emmebonacina / www.bbbemmebonacina.com

Folding sofa / By Studio Drör for Bbb emmebonacina / www.bbbemmebonacina.com

Skins footwear / Overall design, brand identity, and "bone" styling by Studio Drör for Skins Footwear / www.skinsfootwear.com

Vase of Phases / By Studio Drör for Rosenthal / www.rosenthal.de



"Create the space and a bigger life happens."

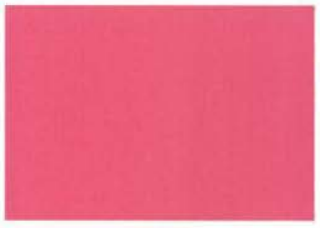
—Alysia Reiner









Follow New York City residents David Alan Basche and Alysia Reiner as they live through the realities of renovation and make a home to call their own. Introducing the new dwell.com video series, Building Green in Harlem at dwell.com/daily/video.

Visit our Open House on Sunday, May 20th, 2007. Take a tour and meet David and Alysia in person. For more information, please visit dwell.com/harlem.

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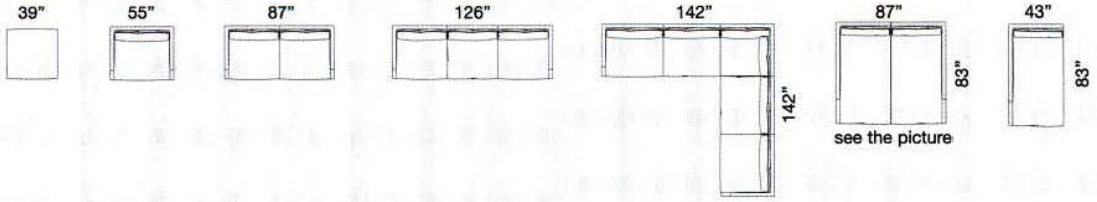

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Universal Appeal

A ceiling-hung projection TV, aimed at a white wall, frees up floor space in the living room, where David Carmel's modern pieces mix with Kirsten's more traditional choices, including the wing chair and leather "fainting couch."

When David Carmel decided to propose to Kirsten Axelsen, he was at home in Manhattan and she was in Ethiopia, working to eliminate trachoma (the world's leading cause of preventable blindness). No problem: David flew 7,000 miles to pop the question at a restaurant in Addis Ababa. A year and a trip to the altar later, the Carmels now live in a Chelsea apartment that's designed in part to make it easy for David to get around in a wheelchair; a diving accident eight years ago left him paralyzed from the waist down.

Their home is the result of collaboration with architects Andy Bernheimer and Jared Della Valle, of Brooklyn's Della Valle Bernheimer, whom David hired before he met Kirsten. The fact that the two architects are about his age was a plus, he says. "Jared and Andy saw me as a 20-something who wanted a great apartment—it had to be totally accessible but not look institutional."

When David bought the place, his mother, Ann, and older brother, Jonathan, were also getting ready to move into the building—creating a vertical family compound. They had chosen the location because it is wheelchair accessible, with a street-level lobby and elevator access to the garage, where David now keeps his hand-operated van. But Bernheimer and Della Valle, the 2002 winners of the Architectural League of New York's Young Architects Forum, couldn't start construction on the Carmel apartments until the developers finished the interiors, which meant adding "walls we knew we were going to tear down," Bernheimer recalls. (In New York, the building department won't grant a final certificate of occupancy unless the construction matches approved blueprints.)

This waiting period gave the architects and David time to consider both the pros and cons of his new home. Facing north, the apartment David chose has glorious views of midtown, including the Empire State Building. But its layout included a living room so narrow that "it felt like a tunnel," he says. David and his twin brother, Jason, who were sharing the space at the time, decided ▸

David's desk (above), like the other furniture in the apartment, was chosen for both style and wheelchair accessibility. North-facing windows (top right) offer views of the Empire State Building and just enough reflected light to keep the sliding wall of aluminum foam glowing. The apartment sits at a lofty remove from the busy Chelsea streets (right).

to make do with just one bedroom. By eliminating the second bedroom, the architects were able to create an L-shaped living room with more width and more windows. They also devised a sliding wall that allows the space formerly allocated to the second bedroom to be closed off from the rest of the apartment. This wall is made of Cymat, a kind of aluminum foam that is so light David can open and close it from his wheelchair. Behind the sliding wall, a storage unit conceals a Murphy bed, which is now used by guests. It moves up or down at the touch of a button.

When Kirsten entered the picture, she helped make a few changes to what had become a stylish bachelor pad. The first step was adding some color to the walls—but not without a careful plan of attack. She and David hung about 25 swatches around the apartment and left them there for several weeks. They finally opted to apply the shades they liked to individual surfaces rather than entire rooms. As Kirsten puts it, "We made canopies ▸

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Behind the living room's foam partition, and accented with orange paint (below left), a storage wall includes a Murphy bed for guests. The bedroom is painted white with one blue wall and built-in shelving (below right). Wood floors, largely rugless, are luminous and wheelchair friendly.

out of color." In the open kitchen, where an island was removed to make it easier for David to navigate, the wall color—a grass green—helps delineate the space.

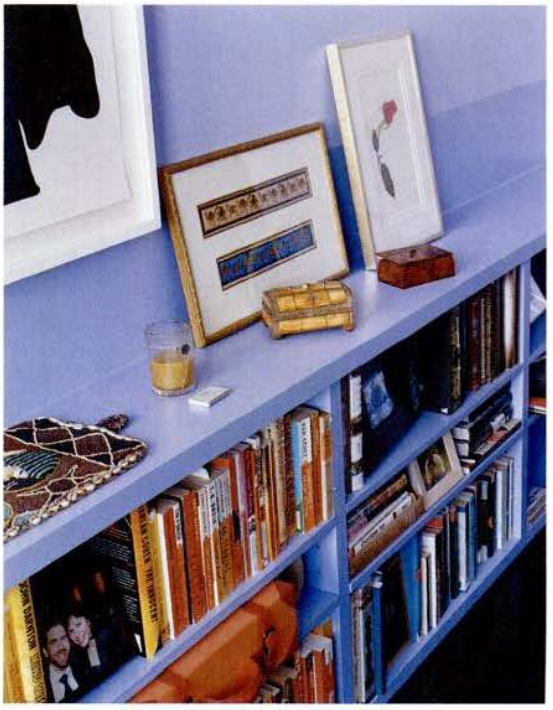
Kirsten, who had been living in a 1920s apartment in Harlem and claims to have "more traditional" taste than David, also contributed several pieces of furniture, including a black leather "fainting couch" which was handed down through her family. The couple also purchased a red-lacquered credenza that serves as a buffet for entertaining.

Not that they're home much. David began work in social activism while a Harvard undergraduate in the mid-1990s, founding an organization called Jumpstart that recruits college students to help disadvantaged children learn to read. After the diving accident and a long period of rehabilitation, he got his MBA from Stanford and resolved to focus on health care issues.

He became particularly interested in human stem cell research, which gained scientific momentum in the late '90s with a series of breakthroughs and has since become a hot-button political issue. During the 2004 election cycle, David worked on behalf of the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative, for which voters ultimately approved $3 billion. He is now a vice president for business development in the Princeton, New Jersey, office of StemCyte, a California company that collects and stores stem cells from umbilical cords. Kirsten is an economist at Pfizer, working on improving public access to medication through government-funded programs.

David and Kirsten guard their privacy, but, as Kirsten explains, "We'd like to show that an accessible space can be beautiful and modern. That people in wheelchairs can have a cool apartment and do interesting and valuable things in the world.

"If the story does that," she says, "or helps somebody who just got hurt realize it's possible to have the things that we have—love, home, careers, and family aspirations—then I'm cool with it." ▸



FIVE DECADES OF EVERYDAY LIFE ON A PEDESTAL

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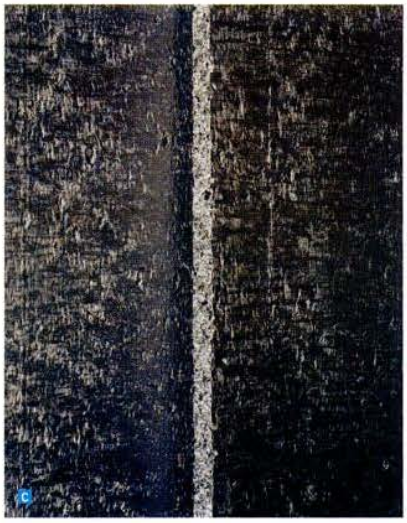

How to Make My House Your House

A All-Access Kitchen
In the kitchen, architects Jared Della Valle and Andy Bernheimer removed the island because it was difficult for David to get around it in his wheelchair. They chose a refrigerator with a cold-water dispenser on the door and shelves that slide out all the way. The apartment works "amazingly well for me," David says, "and yet you would never know that somebody with a disability lived here."

A Delights of the Round Table
Eero Saarinen probably wasn't thinking of wheelchair access when he designed his famous tulip table (shown here in black with a marble top). But the absence of corner legs makes the table easier for David—and everybody else—to get to. Says Kirsten, "One of the things I've learned living here is that many of the design decisions that work for us are nicer for everyone. We have a lot of children over, and the parents always marvel at how much easier it is for the kids, because they're not always knocking things over."

B Bath Roomy
David's bathroom was enlarged so he could move around comfortably in his wheelchair. The bathroom has a roll-in shower and a sliding door made of Lumasite, a translucent acrylic that resembles rice paper. The architects bolted the Lumasite to an aluminum frame, but it can also be glued to wood, for a shoji screenlike effect. For extra stiffness, the architects glued two sheets of Lumasite together. Finding the right glue required a lot of trial and error, Della Valle recalls—which may explain why the manufacturer now sells double-thick sheets.

C Not-So-Heavy Metal
Cymat—a stabilized aluminum foam—was developed for industrial uses (and has even been used on NASCAR frames). The architects realized it would be perfect for a lightweight wall that a person in a sitting position could move. The material can be cut, using an electric saw, but since it is essentially a series of aluminum "bubbles," cutting it exposes rough edges (which the architects dutifully filled with resin, using a syringe). Once trimmed, the material was easy to hang from "barn door" tracks, which are designed to accommodate far more robust materials. It is also beautiful, suggesting water droplets frozen in metal. ■

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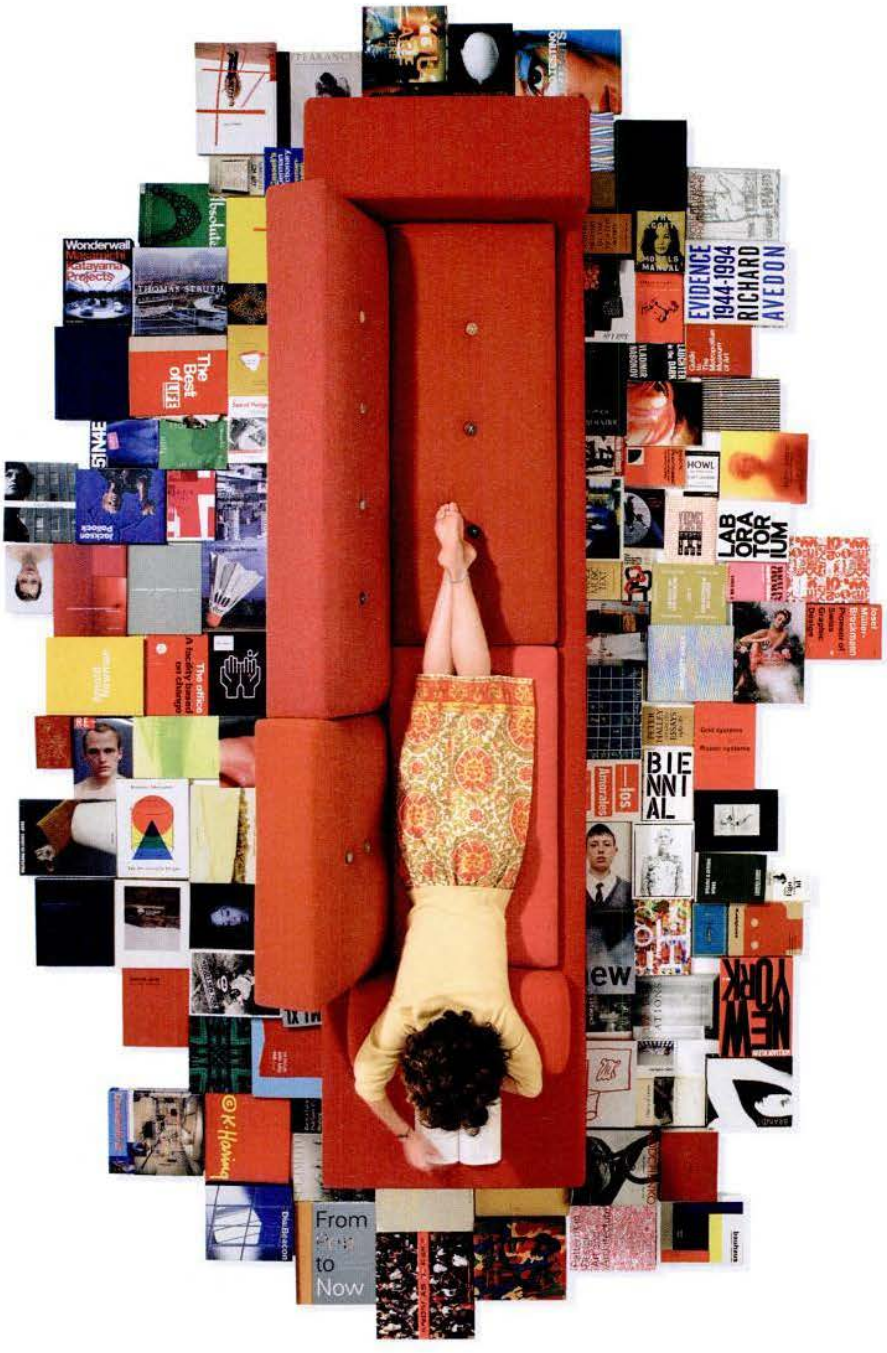

"My design philosophy is: form follows feeling." Hella Jongerius

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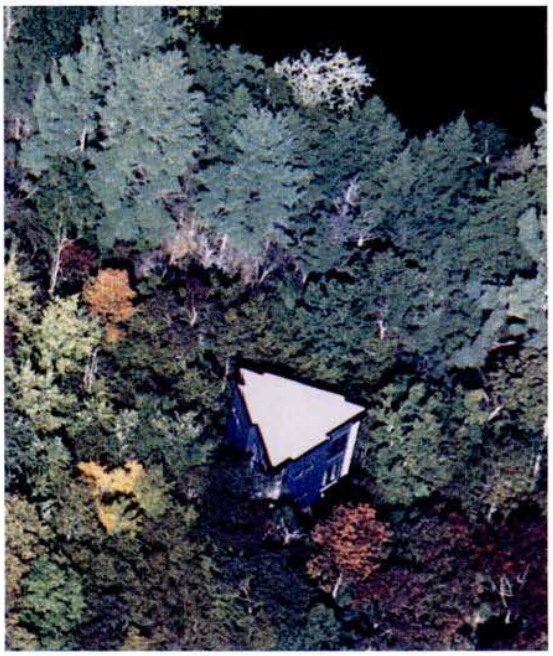

Playfully christened La Tour des Bébelles, the three-story, steel-framed tower (below) has shown itself to be the ideal summer retreat: secluded, perfectly positioned near Ontario's Otter Lake, and encouraging of its inhabitants to spend time outdoors.

Canadian Beacon

When most people think of locations for a holiday home, they have visions of beaches, golf courses, spas, and chalets. But few have the mettle to choose the sort of place that architects André Lessard and Barbara Dewhirst deemed perfect. "We first saw the site on a rainy fall morning," Dewhirst says of their Otter Lake, Ontario, weekend spot. "The place was overrun with hemlock trees, and it was dark and gloomy. We immediately decided to buy it."

The price might have been right, but, like so many eager home builders, the couple found that buying the land was the easiest part of the ordeal. Construction was delayed for years, and the whole process took nearly a decade due to factors like stringent local environmental building codes and cash-flow concerns.

On most weekends the architects would make the six-hour round-trip drive from their Toronto home to camp on the 32-acre plot with their three boys, who were three, five, and nine years old when they bought the property. ▸

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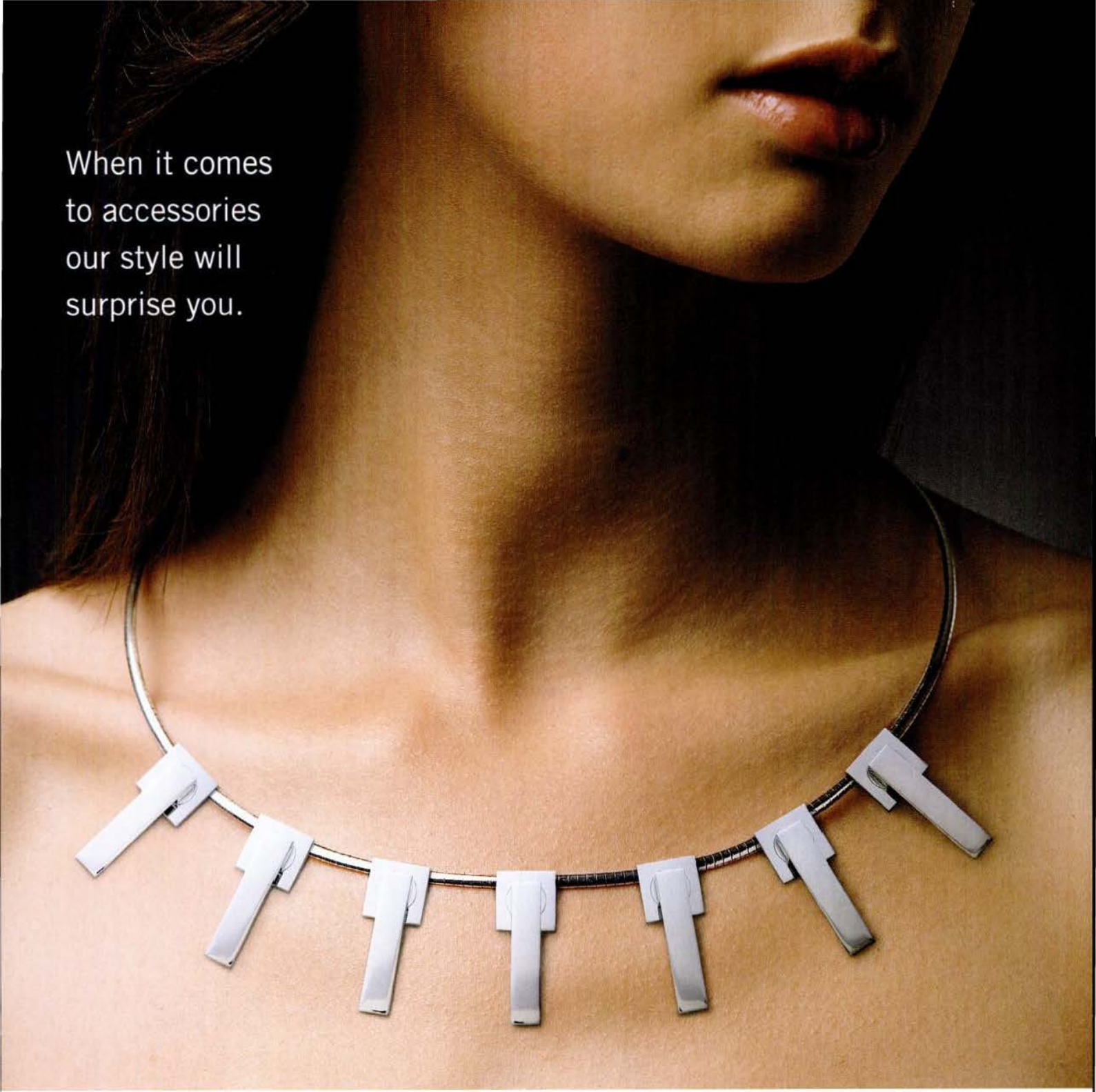

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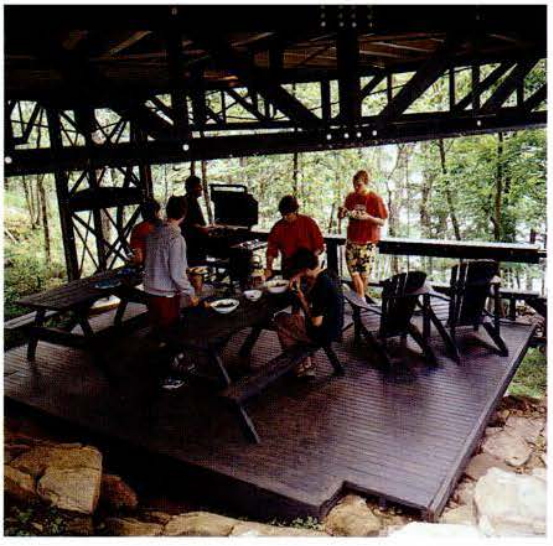

Almost all the furniture in the house was built out of leftover scrap steel and wood from the structure's frame (above and lower right). The deck built on the ground level (top right) provides ample outdoor space during inclement weather.

At first, the children were urbanites, more accustomed to taxis and lattés than tree frogs and lichen, but the new spot proved better than the Boy Scouts when it came to teaching them about nature. "The kids didn't expect to be living on such a rugged, swampy property," Lessard says, slightly embarrassed at the recollection. "The first time they saw a beaver swimming through the water, they thought it was a crocodile."

The boys quickly adapted, chasing wildlife around the lake in a canoe and helping their parents landscape—an arduous task that involved clearing logs from the water, trimming the hemlocks, and building a fire pit. The time spent roughing it also enabled the family to envision a structure perfectly suited for the site. There were some environmental constraints—local codes required a 100-foot setback from the lakeshore—but nothing limited their aesthetic choices; to further the rustic feel they opted to place the house 300 feet from their shared driveway. Ardent modernists as well as proponents of green design, Lessard and Dewhirst chose to build a tall house on higher ground further from the water in lieu of clearing trees. The three-story triangular tower both maximized their views of the water and minimized their footprint on the land.

Mindful of the road's inaccessibility, yet understanding the need for a sturdy structure, the architects chose to construct the frame out of ten-guage steel beams—each ten-foot piece weighting no more than 25 pounds. To ensure that the house wouldn't blow over in a stiff wind, Lessard and Dewhirst enlisted the expertise of a friend, structural engineer Eric Jokinen. Jokinen's initial surprise at the choice of building material gave way to admiration, leading him to dub the house, La Tour des Bébelles, in reference to snap-together metal toy sets.

Two workmen helped carry in the beams, then assembled them on-site with nuts and bolts over the course of a month. Wood stud walls and a cladding of stained tongue-and-groove pine helped create the shell of ▸

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Massive six-foot-by-seven-foot double doors on all three sides of the house let in light (with bug screens deterring uninvited tree frogs and flies), as well as provide excellent natural ventilation and crossbreezes.

the building. The result, Dewhirst observes, is that the house doesn't disrupt its surroundings; it "looks like it was plucked from outer space and plunked directly into the forest."

The interior of the house is as unconventional as the exterior. La Tour de Bébelles has no divisions within: It's essentially two large, open rooms, each measuring 450 square feet, stacked one on top of the other. A deck was built underneath so that rainy days don't deter lounging outside on the Adirondack chairs. The only private area in the whole place is the space that contains the shower, sink, and composting toilet, which has been afforded four walls. "As a reaction to Victorian homes, where the bedrooms are light and the lower rooms dark, the bedrooms here are placed below the living area," explains Lessard, letting people slumber in dim peace, then eat and play upstairs, and outdoors, in the light.

Although the house is rigged up to the electrical grid, everything else about it is resolutely green. All drinking water comes from a well beside the house, and the family collects graywater for use in the kitchen. To protect the lake, they use only biodegradable soaps and truck their laundry to nearby Laundromats or—before their recent move to Vancouver—back home to Toronto. There's no lawn as such; instead, Dewhirst speaks fondly of some saplings she's tending. Lessard dragged granite chunks from other parts of the land to create steps up to the house from the lake, cutting a path betwen the few small areas of grass and wildflowers.

Over the years, the boys have become accustomed to the deer, beavers, loons, porcupines, and other animals that traipse across their land, and, as Lessard boasts, "You can catch fish in the lake with a pail." It's an idyllic existence for any earth-friendly folk, although one that the family can't claim as frequently since they headed west to British Columbia last spring. "We don't miss Toronto at all," says Dewhirst. "Our only regret is leaving Otter Lake."

It's in the Can

As anyone who has ever camped knows, nature calls even when it's cold, rainy, or dark. For three little boys, having to venture behind a bush in the middle of the night was less than appealing. So one of the family's priorities when building the house was to figure out some kind of toilet system—without going septic.

"In order to build a septic system in such a rugged area," Dewhirst explains, "we would have had to cut down trees, truck in sand, and, in general, make enough changes that the front of the house would have looked like a lawn. Plus, any waste from a septic tank would eventually find its way to the lake, especially with all the rocks around here."

The solution was a composting toilet. A European off-the-shelf model called the BioLet was installed inside the house, and although it looks like a severely bloated version of a normal commode, it works just fine. Peat moss is used as the starting compost ingredient, and the contents have to be emptied only once a year. Since the toilet "can be quite smelly when it vents," as Dewhirst delicately puts it, they aimed the vent through the roof—perhaps not appreciated by birds flying by, but scentless for the cottage's residents. —A.H. ■

Dewhirst and Lessard knew that an unobstructed lake view often means clear-cutting the interfering arbors. Opting to leave the trees as they were, they decided to build the house on higher ground, thus sparing the innocent hemlocks from needless sapshed.

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Plastic, that omnipresent malleable material we associate with disposable goods, Hollywood personalities, and instant-gratification charge accounts. It contributes to the ever-growing class of indistinguishable items that clutter our lives, yet makes possible the essential devices and practical minutiae we rely on each day; imagine a world without toothbrushes, bicycle helmets, and (gulp) iPods. The spectrum of harm and benefit is as elastic as the material itself, simultaneously the evil villain and superhero of the material world.

The breadth of plastic chairs is no different from the diverse characters of the material—from the omnipresent backyard bucket to a high-tech rotation-molded import. So how to differentiate the good from the bad? The popularity and prevalence of plastic chairs have run the gamut over the decades since their inception—from space-age wonder, to commonplace eyesore, to high design. It's safe to say there is a plastic chair to match every style, taste, and fashion.

Technology has played an integral part in the direction of plastic-chair design. Developments in the manufacturing process have allowed new forms, weights, and colors previously relegated to the imagination. And aside from keeping us from standing all day, these pragmatic furnishings also express our personalities. Chairs are fundamental indicators not just of our salaries but of our values and character as well. The saying may be that you wear your heart on your sleeve, but "seat" might be equally true.

When it came time to find an expert to help us assess the current crop of plastic chairs, we chose none other than Karim Rashid (hoping for the utmost blobjectivity). His Oh chair, released by Umbra in 1999, won an IDEA award, has been added to the SFMOMA permanent collection, and reinvigorated the medium—in addition to making Rashid a household name (at least at our house). Who better to help suss out the brilliant from the banal than the prince of plastic himself?

A Note on our expert:
For those of you who have been excommunicated to a remote Antarctic outpost, Karim Rashid is a renowned industrial designer known for his playful curvilinear shapes and deft use of color. Rashid's affinity for plastic began at an early age, and has since driven him to obsess over the redesign of what he calls "that ubiquitous white atrocious paltry garden chair." Memories of a treasured, oversized orange alarm clock by Howard Miller and model cars painted in iridescent pink acrylic finishes precipitated the creative 10-year-old's passion for plastic long before Rashid became synonymous with the material.

The Haute Seat

I want to say one word to you. Just one word. Plastics.

Easy chair from Magis / $90 / www.magisdesign.com / Designed by Jerszy Seymour in 2004 / Polypropylene with fiberglass reinforcement / Available in sky blue, gray anthracite, yellow, purple, beige, white, olive green, fuchsia, and red.

Expert Opinion: This chair falls under the same rubric of that ubiquitous white plastic garden chair, although I think that Jerszy's spin on it is enough to separate it from that tired archetype. I like its friendly, soft, rounded sensibility and easiness. And Magis is never afraid of color. It is lightweight and easy to stack—perfect for outdoor decks and beaches. This chair is definitely an affable zaftig blobject, but very expensive compared to, and not very dissimilar from, the cheap $5 garden chairs made of polypropylene. The problem with polypropylene, especially when it's matte in texture, is that it tends to look dirty and scratches easily.

What We Think: This chair elicits idyllic reveries of crayons and play dates. The diverse color selection and "Easy"-going form could create a fun atmosphere, but this chair is a little too kindergarten for us. ▶

ArcoBellini chair from Heller / $195 / www.helleronline.com / Designed by Mario and Claudio Bellini in 2005 / Injection molded nylon or polycarbonate / Available in white, black, red, and transparent.

Expert Opinion: If Darth Vader were a chair, here he'd be. Either Mario Bellini is nostalgic for the *Star Wars* era, or there is a younger Gen-X designer in his office. On the one hand, I like this chair because it is an intelligent, quality, injection-molded chair made from a reinforced nylon polymer, which makes it remarkably strong, scratch resistant, stackable, and comfortable. On the other hand, it's not far from the world of Rubbermaid. The sharpness of the chair concerns me a little, as I would prefer it to be a little softer and less dangerous. The armrests are not at all comfortable, and unfortunately the beautiful high-gloss finish makes it easy to slide right off.

What We Think: Rashid's Dark Side theory is spot on; Bellini's son collaborated on the design. This is a versatile contemporary classic, adept at the rigors of daily use as well as upscale get-togethers. We like the juxtaposition of old and new archetypes. The quirky combination creates a playful sensibility without being goofy. ►

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Panton chair from Vitra / $225 / www.vitra.com / Originally designed by Verner Panton in 1960, updated in 1999 / Polypropylene / Available in black, blue, red, white, yellow, and orange (limited edition).

Expert Opinion: I love and respect so much of Verner Panton's work. This chair is so elegant, amorphous, soft, and fluid. Everything is beautiful about it, the clearance for your feet, the comfort, and the visual articulation. The only issue I have is that because it has become so familiar, it sends a strong '60s statement, so it is hard to use in interiors without dating them. Also, it is now produced in polypropylene, whereas the original was thick glass-reinforced polyester that was glossy, heavier, and much more elegant.

What We Think: It's hard to take issue with this updated icon. There are new color choices, and with polypropylene you don't have to worry about cracking the lacquer (although it does scratch easily). The Panton chair is clearly not for every decor, but it does emanate a certain design savvy. ►

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Supernatural chair from Moroso / $176 / www.moroso.it / Designed by Ross Lovegrove in 2005 / Polyamide shell with fiberglass reinforcement / Available in white, yellow, orange, gray, light blue, and black with solid or perforated back.

Expert Opinion: Air-injection technology became very popular in the 1990s; Philippe Starck used it for a chair in 1999 called Slick Slick for XO. With air injection you can achieve a very strong structure with thin legs, and ribs become unnecessary. The Supernatural chair is quite refined in terms of form and elegance compared to previous examples, like Jasper Morrison's Air and Starck's Soft Egg chairs. The Supernatural is like a remix of the Ant chair by Arne Jacobson and Jasper's Air chair. Ross made a holey version that I prefer, except the openings are too small for your hand, and too big for water drainage. I remember the two of us sitting on these chairs in Belgrade discussing the design. This specious chair, like all of Ross's work, is zoomorphic, yet formally and visually so astute. The price is reasonable, it stacks well, and is quite comfortable. Definitely my favorite.

What We Think: We can't argue with our expert, we love this chair too. The hollow but sturdy legs make it lightweight without being flimsy, and there is a friendly pallette of color options. The Supernatural is a unique, progressive design without being cold. ▶

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La Marie chair from Kartell / $261 / www.kartell.it / Designed by Philippe Starck in 2002 / Polycarbonate mold / Available in crystal, violet, light yellow, clear orange, and rose orange.

Expert Opinion: The clarity, pellucid quality, and strength, paired with Starck's hard sculptured lines, create a new and interesting chair based on an 18th-century archetype. Polycarbonate wants to be square and hard-edged when injection molded, so this form answers the technology beautifully. But this chair is too narrow and a bit too small for long sitting. I sat on it for two hours during a panel discussion in Brazil and lost circulation in my legs from the sharp front line. Even worse, someone in the audience fell off one during the symposium.

What We Think: Starck's combination of a traditional exemplar with this transparent material was an important design benchmark. We agree with Rashid, it's a bit small, but we'd still be proud to repose on such a clever dialogue between old and new themes. ■


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Art Start

Jennifer Strate O'Neal stands in front of a print portfolio from 1985. The Diana Ross bust is by William Scott, whose self-portrait is on the floor, among works by Angela Archuleta, Dan Miller, and Donald Mitchell. The soft sculpture is by Judith Scott and the clay forms are by Charles Nagle.

In the summer of 2004, Creative Growth Gallery opened the group show "I ♥ Music" without text on the walls. Visitors were flummoxed. While unorthodox for any gallery to hang work without attribution, Creative Growth's choice was especially provocative as the show mixed artists with physical and developmental disabilities with professionals. Visitors wanted to know who made what. The point was: Is there a difference?

Creative Growth Art Center began in 1974 in the Oakland, California, living room of psychologist Elias Katz and educator Florence Ludins-Katz. With the belief that art is a universal means of expression, and one that people with disabilities could use to communicate and contribute to society, the pair provided art supplies and workspace to a handful of adults with disabilities. Thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Creative Growth established a gallery in 1980; like the studio, it was the first of its kind.

For more than 20 years the studio and gallery have operated in concert out of a warehouse in Oakland's Auto Row. Curatorial manager Jennifer Strate O'Neal calls it the "homestead" of a now-flourishing creative community. The studio itself has blossomed into a daily workshop for 148 artists working in mediums that range ▸

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The variety of work produced at Creative Growth shows that each artist has a distinct visual language.

Untitled, 2005 (top left)
Dan Miller

Untitled, 1989 (bottom left)
Judith Scott

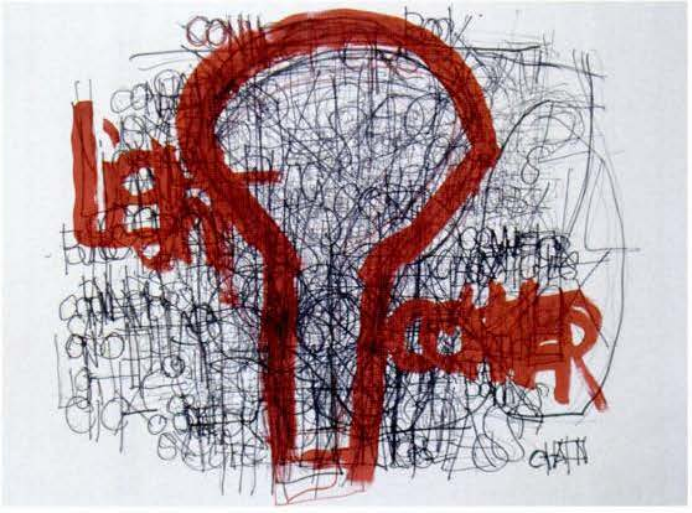
New Fox Plaza, 2005 (right)
William Scott

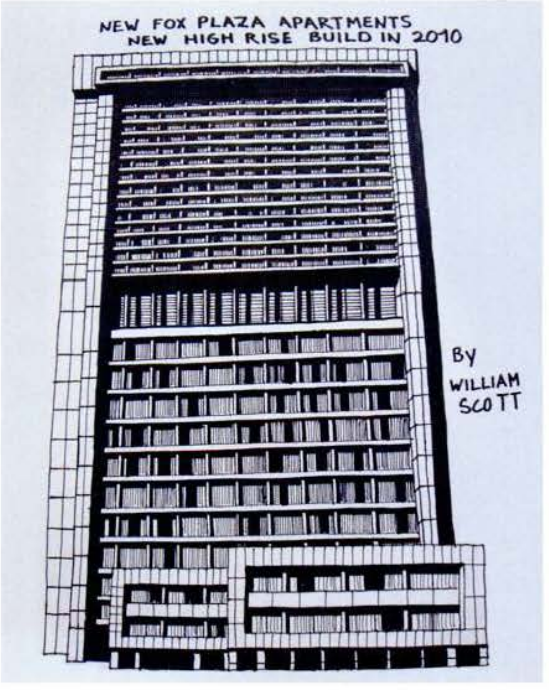
from pottery, weaving, and woodworking to film and painting. While writers and critics struggle to categorize the work, often settling on the quasi-archaic and potentially misleading term "outsider art," the truth is that Creative Growth artists are a coterie in contact with both high and popular culture. Their studio is open to visitors, and they have access to working artists, as well as to a wide range of supplies and reference materials. When the day is done, about 80 percent of them go to group homes, where they socialize or watch TV, like anyone else.

As gallery director, O'Neal feels it's her responsibility to present "a window into the studio," to inspire collectors to contextualize the work by showing it in other collections or environments. A former curatorial assistant for SFMOMA, O'Neal finds the fecundity at Creative Growth invigorating: "By the end of some afternoons the floor is so thick with art you can't walk through here." In contrast to her academic background, she says "it's a luxury" to witness the artistic process and also to be part of the lives of people with disabilities. As executive director Tom di Maria puts it, "We're turning the idea of developmental disability on its head with the art process. It is fundamentally important as an advocacy issue, but it's also visually compelling—it challenges the art world to consider a whole new realm of visual interpretation."

Creative Growth artists have received some of the art world's greatest benedictions: reviews in the *New York Times*, purchases by public collections, and appearances at the NADA Art Fair, a satellite show of Art Basel Miami Beach. Recently, a single Judith Scott piece sold for $15,000. Thanks to the success of her solo exhibition at White Columns gallery in New York, Aurie Ramirez was able to afford an assistant to aid her with daily tasks. And when William Scott (no relation to Judith) came back from his nearly sold-out solo show at White Columns, he began calling himself an artist. As O'Neal points out, "For any creative person, there are artificial rules about when you can call yourself an artist—the moment you're comfortable identifying yourself as one is a big deal."

"Creative Growth is a nexus of contemporary culture," says di Maria, "both in terms of how we've defined this neighborhood and how our artists are leading and inspiring academically trained artists." While di Maria and O'Neal are aware that the work produced at Creative Growth is novel—the fickle art world's most prized quality—they are happy to take advantage of opportunities for the artists' sake; they also don't mind if times change. "When you suggest that people with disabilities are going to make art that challenges you intellectually—that's a radical notion," says di Maria. He smiles and adds, "At least for now." ■





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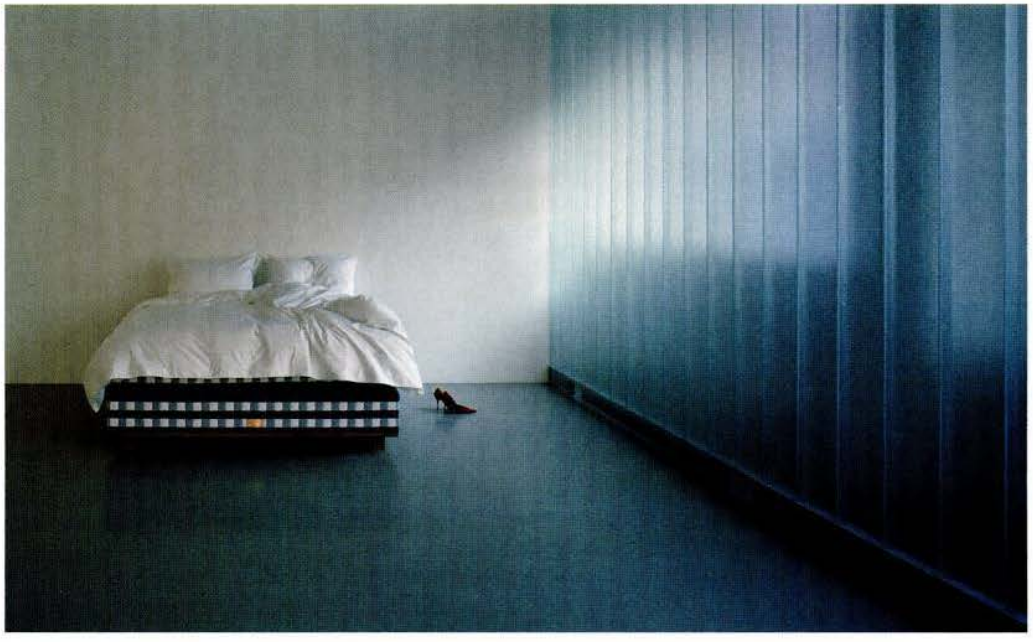

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Chilean Evolution

Though modern architecture in Chile became an instrument of the state in the '50s and '60s, it garnered little international attention. Pinochet's 16-year reign did little for the avant-garde, but today Chilean architecture is experiencing a rebirth. One example is this arboreal abode by Maurico Pezo and Sofia von Ellrichshausen.

Throughout the 20th century, architecture critics have given Chile short shrift, particularly when compared with Brazil. Without a Brasilia of its own, or the likes of an Oscar Niemayer or Lucio Costa, Chilean architecture's presence on the international scene from the '50s to the '70s was limited to a few magazine appearances. Most covered the work of Emilio Duhart, a Chilean architect who designed the United Nations headquarters in Santiago (1961–1966). His firm and other major studios such as Sergio Larrain had a remarkable influence on Chilean culture as the state upped its participation in housing and urban development. As a major commissioner of architects and engineers, the state encouraged modern design—a clear sign of Chile's changing political and social climate. Progressive architecture made those changes visible and local authorities soon realized it could be a powerful ideological tool. Architecture schools embraced modernist values and countless buildings were erected in the name of a new era.

With the coup of 1973 and the rise of Augusto Pinochet as military dictator, this process was stalled; with the fraught political situation, a small group of young Chilean architects moved to Europe. Democracy returned in 1989, as did many of those architects to teach and establish their practices. Teodoro Fernández, Fernando Pérez Oyarzun, and Rodrigo Pérez de Arce relocated to the Universidad Católica de Chile School of Architecture to become leaders in the local scene. Attracting talented, young students through a vision that linked the legacy of modernism, art, and craftsmanship with a fresh sense of local identity, their influence is essential to the latest architectural blossoming.

Now Chilean architecture follows in the footsteps of Duhart and his colleagues, though the client is no longer the state and smaller studios are producing the best work. By the early '70s, Chilean society had accepted modern architecture as the party line, but today's avant-garde is something more extraordinary. ▸

The Rivo House's wooden interiors and façade allude both to the surrounding rainforest and to the strong tradition of timber craftsmanship in the south of Chile.

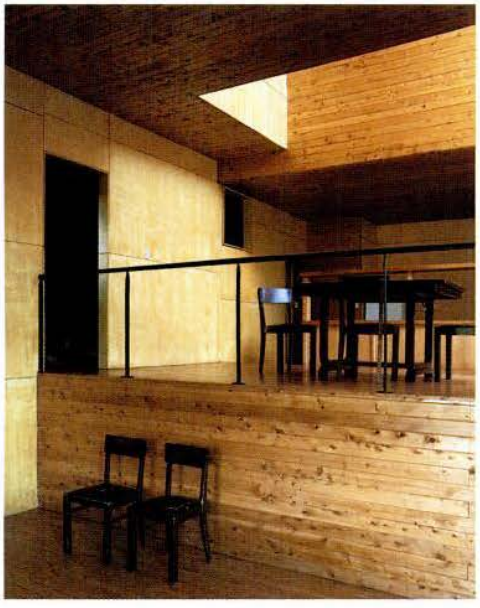
Project: Rivo House
Architect: Pezo von Ellrichshausen Architects
Location: Valdivia, 2003

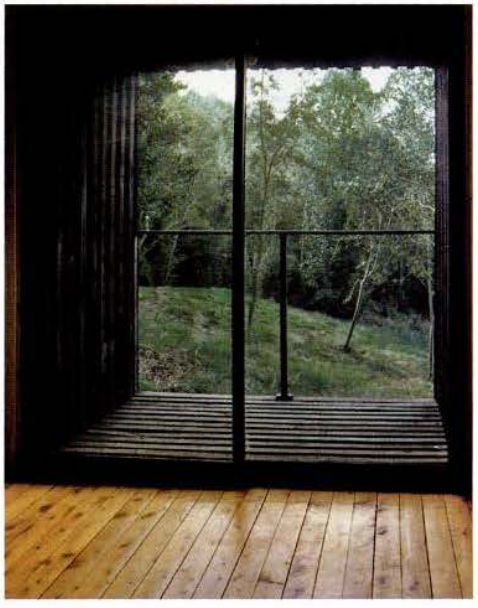
The first building by the Chilean-Argentinean practice of Pezo von Ellrichshausen Architects is located on the outskirts of the southern city of Valdivia, 520 miles from Santiago. It's home to a couple that made the romantic decision to swap their townhouse in Santiago for a place to live and work in the middle of the rainforest.

The architects Mauricio Pezo and Sofia von Ellrichshausen liked the idea of the owners trading the city for the jungle, but they soon grew concerned, as they later wrote, about, "having two people spending the whole day all alone, without kids, and only in a few rooms." They foresaw "possible boredom and weariness" as a threat. These perceived problems, however, eventually became keys to the design.

The idea was to create distance between spaces in the house, stimulating the encounters and near misses of the inhabitants. The interior space became a labyrinthine sequence composed of the vertical and horizontal axes. The house was conceived as a small but rambling interior to protect its inhabitants from routine. Large windows afford magisterial views of the nearby Cutipay River—encouraging an outward breath. The scheme also allows for two distant studios: his on the third floor and hers in the basement.

Taking advantage of the local timber traditions, the entire house is made out of wood. This monomaterial strategy left the architects free to focus on fine-tuning the interior spaces instead of losing sleep over the vagaries of construction. The simple, minimal shape made for an inexpensive and easy-to-build design that cleverly incorporated the clients' way of life. ▶





Alone I have found a glitch in time. A moment where new meets old and the hour hand crawls to a stop. The unnecessary has been stripped away, leaving a heart of intrinsic beauty. Within this simplicity lies an essence that screams without speaking a word. Quietly. Quietly. This is my soul revealed through a minimal coat of wrapped steel.

brizo.com

BRIZO

This unusual addition to the decidedly traditional landscape near Talca, is assuredly forward-looking, though its rustic copper cladding takes a reverent sidelong glance at the many clay-roofed houses nearby.

Project: Copper House #2
Architect: Smiljan Radic Architect
Location: Talca, 2005

This family house is something like the Chilean real estate market's ideal: located in the countryside of Talca, 160 miles south of Santiago, it's a nearly 1800-square-foot structure on a large rural lot. The home's three bedrooms and two baths are standard fare for Chile, and its price, $43 per square foot, is also decidedly average. The married owners, a university math professor and an actress, wanted a big garden and lots of space for their two children to play. On paper the house seems not so different from the neighbors', but even the most cursory glance at the structure reveals its singularity.

Santiago-based architect Smiljan Radic designed a light, expansive framework that encloses a small central courtyard, which is integrated into the living areas through sliding glass panels. The shifting interior/exterior space succeeds in making the outdoors intimate and the indoors unusually versatile. Each wall is painted white to soften the boundaries into a flowing sequence of living areas. To further engage the surroundings, the courtyard and an exterior gallery face a nearby ravine.

The copper sheeting that covers the exterior of the house—from the roof surfaces to the exterior walls—is a knowing reference to the neighboring, largely faux-Spanish colonial, homes. This nod to Chile's Spanish heritage, however, is anything but a postmodern flourish. Radic claims that, "The shape of the house and the texture of its copper surface relate to the heavy, sagging clay roofs of Chilean rural homes." The architect goes on to explain the influence, "The deep overhangs, large continuous textures, and misshapen geometries are due—in equal parts—to earthquakes and a patchwork of fixes and additions." ▸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The spare and compact Bremen Apartments by architect Cecilia Puga sit in what was once a leafy suburb of Santiago, but has since become a central neighborhood in the rapidly expanding capital city.

Project: Bremen Apartments
Architect: Cecilia Puga
Location: Santiago, 2004

Garden city communities in Chile's central valleys were quite popular during the '50s and '60s, and most middle-class urban developments were designed according to a scheme that featured 40-foot-wide streets and 3,200–6,500-square-foot lots with a house set squarely in the middle. Santiago's earliest suburbs adhered to this model, but with the remarkable urban expansion that hit the city in the '80s—and has continued unabated—these old suburban neighborhoods are quickly becoming central, well-connected urban hubs. Given the demand for well-built infrastructure and accessible locations, the renovation of old garden city districts has recently generated a serious overcrowding problem and a number of new, none-too-appealing apartment buildings.

There are a few exceptions however, like this project by architect Cecilia Puga, who says, "I tried to follow the rules of the real estate market, operating within its codes, by introducing subtle variations such as a playful layout, an emphasis on collective areas and a discreet façade with a wholly modern shape." The result is a 16-unit building that has replaced two large, centrally located houses on a busy public square.

Working within the confines of the urban apartment complex, Puga creatively customized the units—only four of the 16 layouts were duplicated, and all feature modern open-living plans. A large public roof terrace serves as an entrance hall and lookout for the upper units, while the ground floor is home to individual gardens and a public barbecue.

As the design aimed to use as few materials as possible, every superfluous element was eliminated and large public areas were incorporated without increasing costs. The use of exterior rough finishes and austere cast concrete contrasts nicely with the smooth, warm interiors. By staying true to the urban values of density and community without sacrificing outdoor space and heterogeneity, it seems—at least for Puga—that you can win playing by the rules. ▶

Housing projects haven't always been Chile's strong suit, but in the case of Quinta Monroy Social Housing in Iquique, which has replaced a tent city with permanent structures, a little public investment looks to be going a long way.

Project: Quinta Monroy Social Housing
Architect: Elemental
Location: Iquique, 2005

Quinta Monroy is a recent housing project by Elemental—a "doing tank" (the think tank's more active cousin, it seems) led by Alejandro Aravena that stands for an urban social mix and opposes gentrification. In an innovative proposal on social housing, Elemental sought to consolidate and renovate a shantytown located in the core of the northern city Iquique.

As part of a new program by the Chilean Ministry of Housing and Urbanism, owners receive $7,500 in state financial assistance for an approximately 320-square-foot house built on the same lot where they used to live, and then expand the house through additions and renovations.

Quinta Monroy doesn't force poorer people out of downtown urban areas. The scheme developed by the architects creates a spacious but high-density complex that keeps the city center within reach of low-income residents. It was planned as a series of three-story blocks composed of ground-level units and two-story, second-floor duplexes, all of them directly accessible from the street. As a medium-sized development inserted into an existing neighborhood, it's already well integrated into the city's flow.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Quinta Monroy is the inclusion of the residents into the design process and subsequent construction—a feat rarely attempted or accomplished. The construction was designed for a set group of around 100 families and the residents participated in a series of workshops, allowing them to choose whether they would live upstairs or downstairs, select what they wanted most from the four public courtyards, and suggest how to build the future additions—while still ensuring the integrity of the complex. ■

Now in its fifth year, Art Basel Miami Beach isn't just the American counterpart to its Swiss sister, Art Basel. This year, the annual art fair boasted record growth: Of the 650 galleries that applied to present, 200 galleries from 28 countries were chosen to display their best and brightest talent (including Galerie Italienne shown below). But more than just a place to buy and sell art, Art Basel Miami Beach has morphed into an all-out art-and-design happening, offering plenty for seekers of an all-encompassing cultural experience. More than ever, the official programming (and the many coinciding satellite fairs) showcased the interplay between art and architecture.

Art Basel Miami Beach

A Art Loves Design

The annual Art Loves Design party turned Saturday night in the Design District into a block party. Exhibitions by Moss Gallery, the Vitra Design Museum, and the Centre Pompidou were highlights, most notably Pompidou's beautiful Eileen Gray exhibition and Moss's "Live! From Our Studios," which included pieces by Philippe Starck and Guido Crepax. ►

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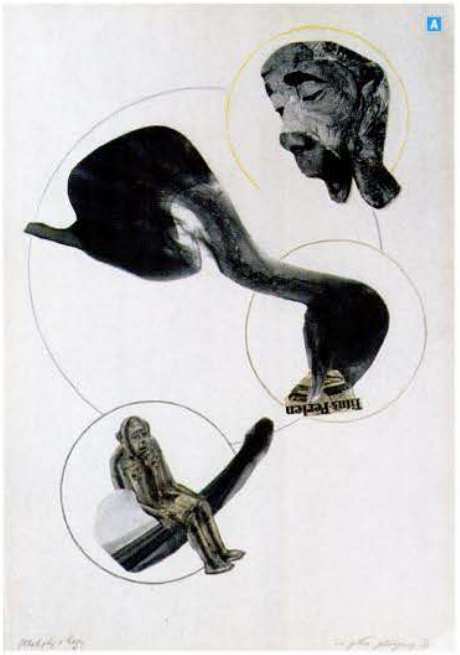


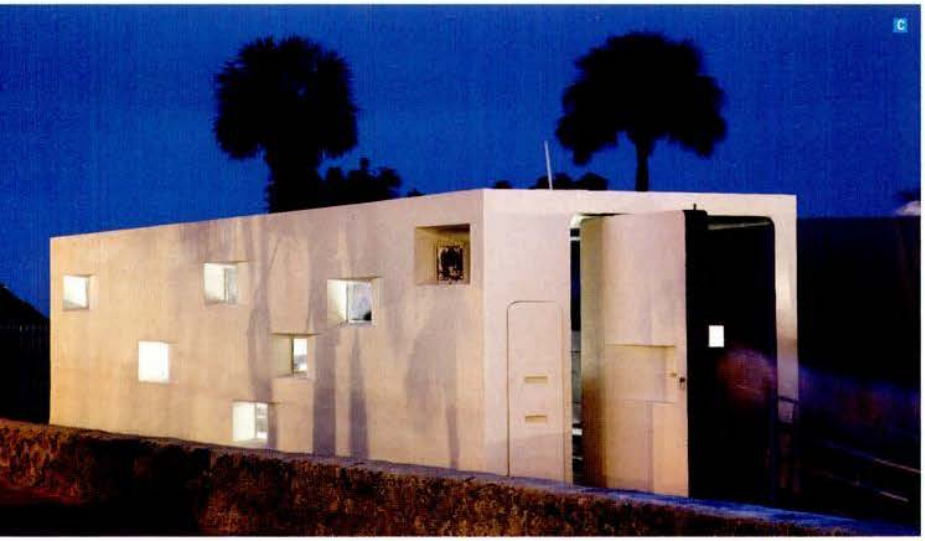


PHOTO BY ALEXANDER TAMARGO/GETTY IMAGES (INSTALLATION), COURTESY KICKEN BERLIN (PHOTO COLLAGE), KENNY SCHACHTER/ROVE LONDON (EXTERIOR, INTERIOR)

A Art Kabinett

Delighting in the diminutive, Art Kabinett's modest 14-gallery offering proved that smaller is often better. Kicken Berlin (Berlin) celebrated the Bauhaus's László Moholy-Nagy through photos, photo collages, and typophotos (shown). Galerie Gmurzynska (Zurich) contrasted the work of Louise Nevelson and Kurt Schwitters. Allan Stone Gallery (New York) went pop with four paintings of food by Wayne Thiebaud.

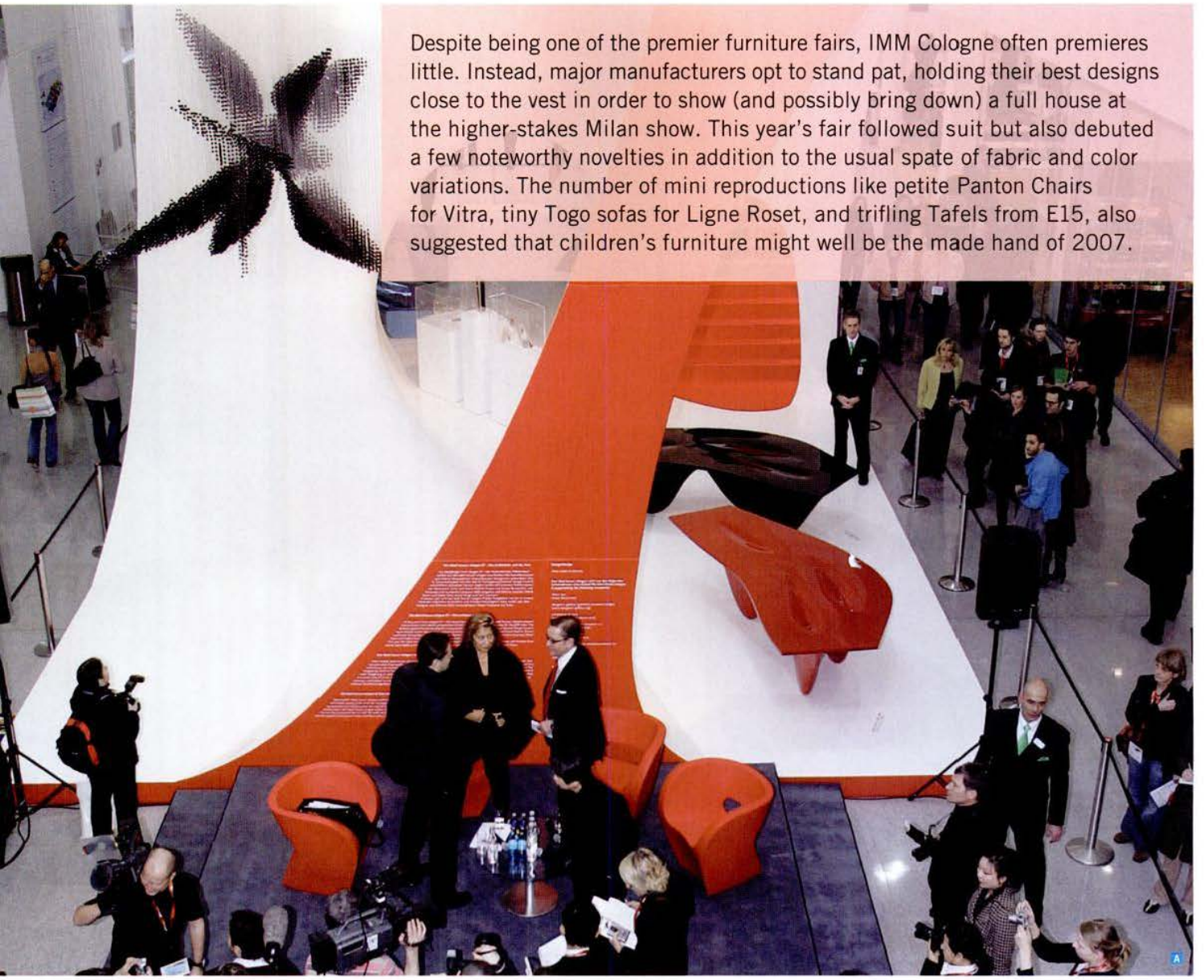
B Art Projects

Eight sizable installations sprinkled throughout the fair area made up this year's Art Projects. We especially liked *1:1* by Finnish artist Tea Mäkipää, which shed light on the ever-elusive inner workings of the modern-day home: The bare-boned structure exposed everything from ventilation shafts to phone and electric lines, giving a glimpse of the messy, often complicated insides of even the simplest shoe-box apartment.

C Art Positions

If the Miami Beach Convention Center were Manhattan, then Collins Park would surely be Williamsburg: Shipping containers became impromptu exhibition spaces, showcasing cutting-edge galleries. Two of the best were Kenny Schachter Rove's (London) installation by Zaha Hadid (shown) and Harris Liebermann's (New York) performance sculpture by American artist Aaron Young, whose sand hourglass tracked the fair's progress. ▶

Despite being one of the premier furniture fairs, IMM Cologne often premieres little. Instead, major manufacturers opt to stand pat, holding their best designs close to the vest in order to show (and possibly bring down) a full house at the higher-stakes Milan show. This year's fair followed suit but also debuted a few noteworthy novelties in addition to the usual spate of fabric and color variations. The number of mini reproductions like petite Panton Chairs for Vitra, tiny Togo sofas for Ligne Roset, and trifling Tafels from E15, also suggested that children's furniture might well be the made hand of 2007.



IMM Cologne

The Ideal Houses 2007: "The Architect and Poet" / www.imm-cologne.com
This year's pairing of Zaha Hadid and Naoto Fukasawa presented what can only be characterized as polar-opposite ideals. While Hadid's design (above) was all high-volume drama with her voluptuous pavilion and super-sleek furnishings, Fukasawa (left) was markedly more reticent, curating spare vignettes with signature pieces like his Muku series for Driade, Déjà Vu series from Magis, and electronics for Plusminuszero. ►

PHOTOS COURTESY IDEAL HOUSE

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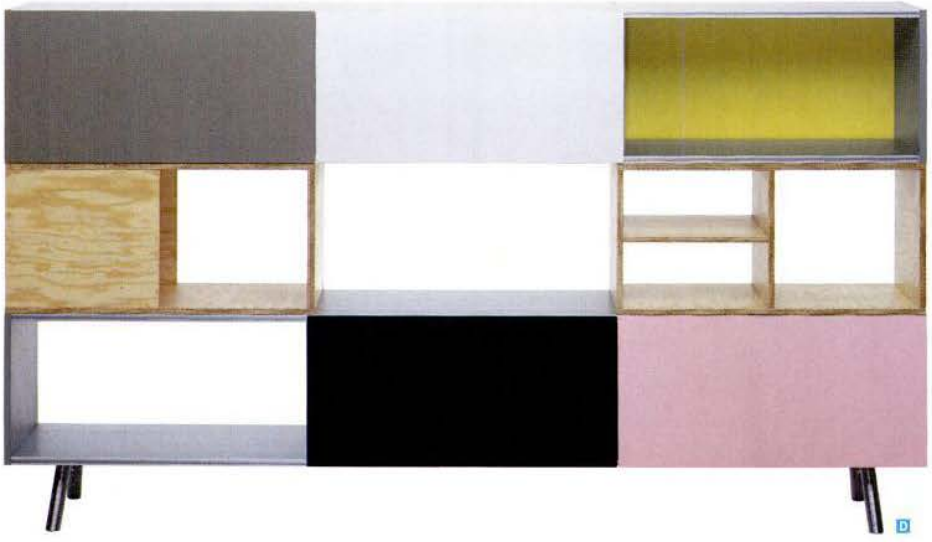


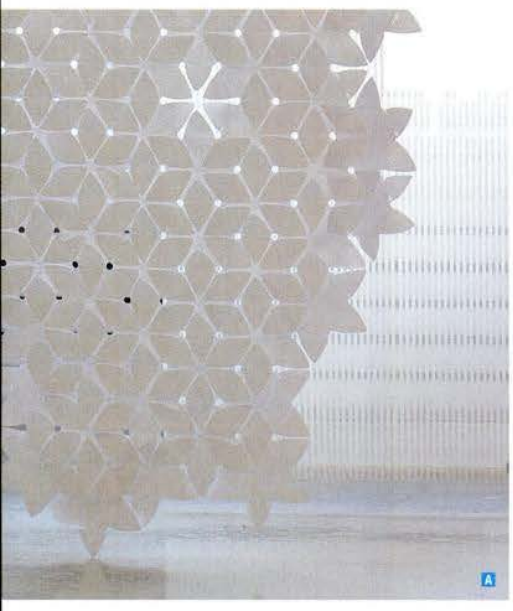
A Moël by Inga Sempé for Ligne Roset / www.ligneroset.com
Named for a French derivation of the word "moelleux," meaning soft and comfortable, Inga Sempé's new line, which includes an armchair, small and large ottoman, loveseat, and sofa not only offered a comfy place for us to stop and rest our weary feet, it was arguably the show-stopper.

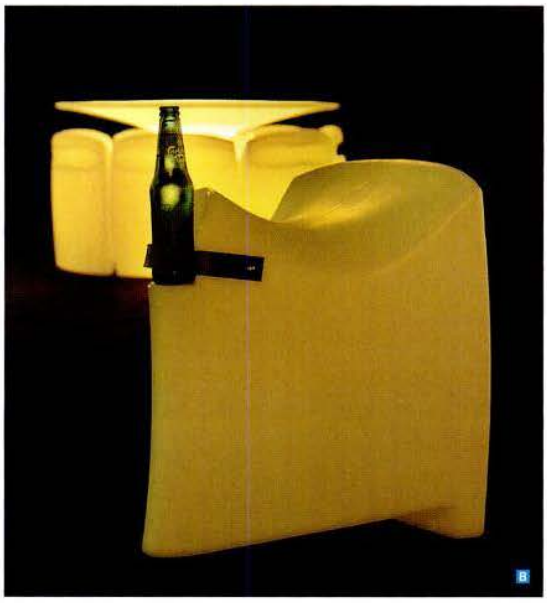
B Twist Lamp by Vogt + Weizenegger for Elmar Flötotto / www.elmarfloetotto.de
While this lamp (available in a pendant, table, and floor version) is unappealingly reminiscent of those ever-finicky automatic cloth towel dispensers outfitted in many a Euro WC, we couldn't help but fall for the flippant charm of its quirky, draped shade; we'd take it over a towel rack any day.

C Upholstered Fold Chair by Mårten Claesson for Swedese / www.swedese.com
Swedese's new iteration of Mårten Claesson's fold chair is an example of when the fair's characteristically underwhelming upholstery options actually resonate with good design sense. The newly upholstered fold chair offers a sleeker alternative to Claesson's bulkier Fold easy chair, which also saw new tweaks—a small maneuverable side table and castors—to less elegant results.

D Kast by Maarten Van Severen for Vitra / www.vitra.com
Despite its unarguable youthfulness, this piece of furniture was designed in the last few months of Maarten van Severen's life. Van Severen's elegant proportions and playful use of color create a shelving and console system that would grace any interior with its idiosyncratic restraint—qualities that characterized much of the designer's life and work. ►

PHOTOS COURTESY LIGNE ROSET (SOFA), ELMAR FLOTOTTO (LAMP), SWEDESE (CHAIR), VITRA (SHELVES)





A Flake interior elements by Mia Cullin for Woodnotes / www.woodnotes.fi

There were a number of interior elements and space dividers kicking around Cologne this year, but most seemed more "the poor man's Algue" than anything else. The exception is Mia Cullen's subtle and elegant Flake elements, fashioned not from brightly-hued molded plastic, but rather simple sheets of shaped and slotted Tyvek.

B Bronco by Dirk Wynants for Extremis / www.extremis.be

Although the moniker suggests a swaggering, .45-slingin', no good son-of-a-gun cowboy, the feel of Bronco's saddle seat is decidedly English—save for a slight pommel at the front, which is outfitted with a leather handle or, more likely, a holster for your beer. When paired with Extremis's Qrater fire dish or Corral table (shown), you and your posse will be able to ride on through a night of unbridled fun.

C Familia by Ole Jensen for Normann Copenhagen / www.normann-copenhagen.com

Ole Jenson looked to a Mesopotamian muse for his Familia ceramics line for Normann Copenhagen. By taking 6,000-year-old design cues, Jensen was able to do away with all the "unnecessary details" and create, rather ironically, an iconic series for the forward-thinking Danish design company.

D Lava by Design Studio Vertijet for Cor / www.cor.de

At the risk of sounding cheesey: Lava was one of the hottest sofas debuted at Cologne this year. The sofa system is composed of four upholstered tubes that can be rolled out and manipulated to create molten mounds, hillocks and dikes in your den, or rather, "wreck" room–once this seating ensemble has erupted into your space. ■

PHOTOS COURTESY WOODNOTES (INTERIOR DETAIL), EXTREMIS (CHAIR), NORMANN COPPENHAGEN (CERAMICS), COR (SOFA)

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Story by Sam Grawe

Mark Dytham, of the Tokyo-based practice Klein Dytham Architecture, comments on the breadth of their output: "The set of circumstances is always different, but the spirit is always the same."

From Commodore Perry's arrival in 1853 to *Lost in Translation*, Japan's relationship with the West has teetered at the extremes of xenophobia and obsession. It was the latter that attracted London-based architects Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham to Tokyo toward the end of the 1980s—just as Japan's booming economy was about to come crashing down. Despite the recession (in fact, feeding off the punk-rock-like culture it spawned among Japan's younger generation) they established Klein Dytham Architecture (KDa) in 1991. By 1996, after a string of smaller-scale projects, they had built their first building in Tokyo, the Idée Workstation—a furniture showroom that somehow managed to hybridize a '50s diner with the Japanese lantern.

With chameleonic range, KDa has since completed a dizzying array of projects—from construction site barriers (such as Pika Pika Pretzel, constructed from shiny pretzel-shaped balloons, and Green Green Screen, a 900-foot-long plant-covered fence in front of Tadao Ando's mixed-use development), to office interiors (such as Viacom's Beach office, which incorporates boardwalks, sand, and plastic beach furniture), to high-end wedding service spaces (their Leaf chapel features an intricately perforated dome that opens at the end of the ceremony), to Canned (a portion of their website which was dedicated to overabundant Japanese drink products and their respective vending machines).

KDa is also responsible for the now-famous Pecha Kucha Night, a sort of open-mic for architects and designers in which each participant shows 20 slides and is only allotted 20 seconds per image. What began as a new take on the after-hours party at KDa's event/office space, SuperDeluxe, has evolved into a worldwide phenomenon, with regular nights in more than 40 cities.

When Mark Dytham came to Berkeley, California, to teach a seminar at the university and kick-off San Francisco's Pecha Kucha Night, we couldn't resist the chance to have a chat over lunch. ▸

Carpe Dytham

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The diversity of your work is really striking. So much of it lives outside of the world of what one might consider architecture.
The thing about architecture is that everybody reads too many books. Architects look at architecture, but they don't open their eyes and look beyond that. And so it's sort of inward-looking and everything spirals downward and gets more and more contrived. We're trying to sort of stop that and look around us a little bit more.

Where did that rationale come from?
It came from college I think. We both did our postgrad at the Royal College of Art, which is not just architecture. Well, it's architecture and interior design in the same course—so I think that's where this notion of interior architecture came for us. At the RCA there were all these different disciplines—car design, sculpture, painting, furniture, industrial design, glass, ceramics, and jewelry—so you were always seeing amazing stuff pinned up everywhere. You always stuck your head in other rooms—you've got friends in other departments—so there was this multidisciplinary thing going on even then. That crossover was really, really important to us.

When we set up our office in Japan, we tried to find a similar way to work. We didn't want to be isolated, so we started this thing called Deluxe, which was a warehouse with five other disciplines—an interior designer, a graphic design company, a high-end computer graphics company, a dj/musician, and a microbrewery. Beer is universal—so we needed that.

In Lucy Bullivant's *British Built* she makes the point that when Japan's economy tanked it was actually beneficial to your work—because you were doing smaller projects and had to think in a renegade way.
Well, I think that's why recessions are good. When we arrived in Japan, it was bubble time, and there was nothing interesting at all. Rich kids became artists because they had lots of money and they just did extravagant things. Then the recession hit, and for a client to pull something out of the bank then, you had to be really, really inventive. It's not just about how much money you spend on something or if it has Italian marble—it's got to be about a good idea. So all of that work came through hustling, which you know, Japanese people really don't do. ▸

Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham arrived in Tokyo in the late 1980s after graduating from London's Royal College of Art. After a stint with a relatively unknown Toyo Ito, they established their own firm and have never looked back.

"Most people haven't had a design education, so you can't stand outside your building saying, 'This is about that.' The building has to speak for itself." —Mark Dytham

PHOTO BY MICHELLE LITVIN

But how exactly did you get started?
First of all, we met Toyo Ito and for the first nine months within his office we did our own work—it was a project that he really probably didn't want to do and said to the client, "These guys are from England, they're quite good." So just right after leaving college and arriving in Japan, we have our own project—in Tokyo. Ito wasn't famous then—we were like employees eight and nine in his office.

Was the language barrier an issue?
The client could speak a little bit of English—but not very much—so the model had to say everything. The drawings had to say everything. The usual blurb you give made no difference at all, because the client couldn't understand that or the finesse of your language. I think when we eventually opened our own office, that stayed true. We couldn't explain our projects, and out of that has come this fairly easily read clarity to our work. Most people haven't had a design education, so you can't stand outside your building saying, "This is about that." The building has to speak for itself.

And yet one doesn't look at your work and say, "That must be a Klein Dytham."
If you see the work together, there is a coherence to it, but every project is completely different. It's about making a tailor-made project for that client, that site, that budget—whatever we felt was good or fashionable. It's just a moment in time, and we like expressing that point—not worrying about the lineage that got us there. The set of circumstances is always different, but the spirit is always the same. There's an energetic, enthusiastic thing behind it.

Could you elaborate on that?
There's sort of a twist—or something funny—but it's also got a lot to do with the ordinary. We're big fans of Paul Smith, the fashion designer. He once said, "If you can't find inspiration in the things around you, you're not looking hard enough." So we're always looking really closely at what's around us. We're always on.

So Tokyo must be sensory overload.
Well that's why we're still there, I think. We said that we'd leave Japan when we stopped finding things. Each day, there's something new. It could be anything—a can, a product in the convenience store, a new car. There's ▶

Brillare (2005) is part of the Risonare wedding resort. Dytham likens the building's form and cladding to a British camping caravan and *Terminator II* respectively. A 60-foot-long table tapers outward, resisting the forced perspective of the long room.

PHOTOS BY DAICI ANO (DAY), MARK DYTHAM (NIGHT)

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like new cars ten a minute it seems, of course they've got new, funny shapes, odd names, different materials, whatever. So that's a constant thread. There's always a search for newness—and that's common in Japan, I think. The Japanese don't stop and wait for a VCR to break before buying a new one. But they are also very, very good at recycling things. It's not what you think: When they knock down buildings, it's not slash and burn, they actually recycle everything very carefully. So it is kind of sustainable, I believe.

I recently read that the average life span of a building in Japan is around 25 years, which is a bit of a daffy concept even here in the States. And yet, the client of your Heidi House wanted it for only five years!

Five to ten years—but generally what happens is it will be there 15 years later. Our Idée Workstation was only meant to be there for seven years, and 15 years later it's still there. The garage we did [Vrooom!] was meant to be demolished—still there.

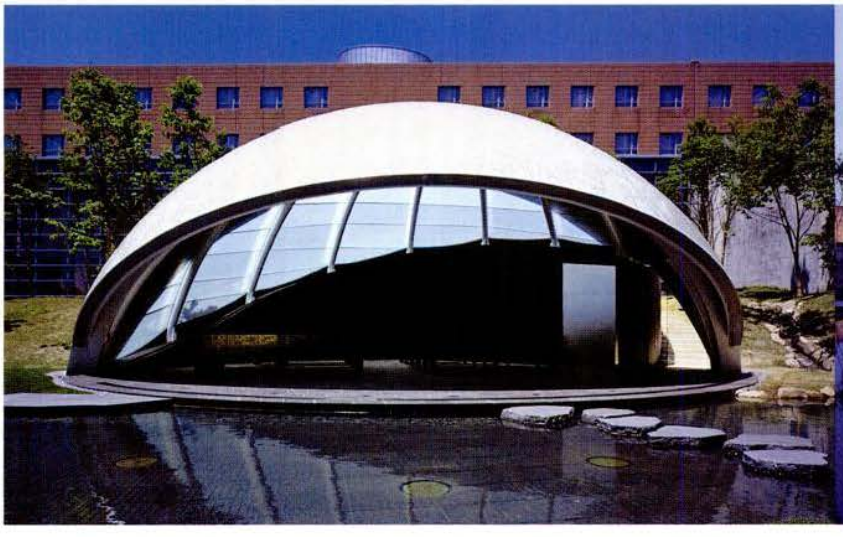
Does disposability manifest itself spiritually in a project?

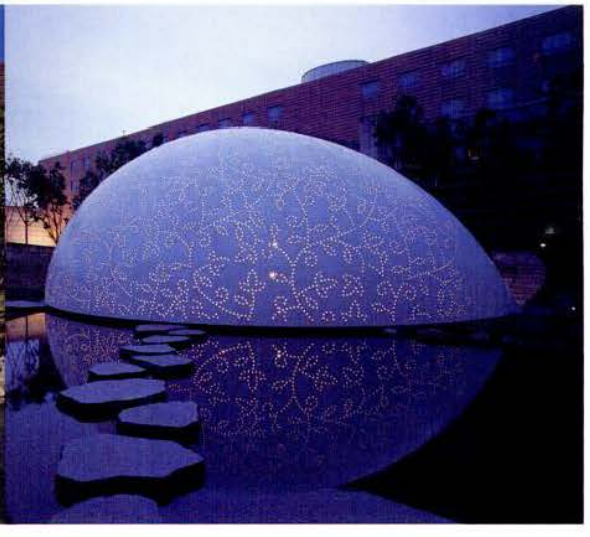
It makes us less worried. If you build something in London it's going to be there for—I don't know—at least 50, if not 200, years, so there's a little more weight on your shoulders. But in Japan, it'll be gone—don't worry about it. So there's less of this big, heavy pressure on us. I'm not saying we don't think our projects through, but it is a little bit lighter—the way you build and the materials you use, things like that.

Do you ever wonder what your work would be like if you hadn't gone to Japan?

We don't say we're a Japanese practice—I think we're a Tokyo practice, and that's really key. We're not into kendo or judo or sumo wrestling. We're not into that religious, Zen bit of Japan that so many people go there to find—which does exist but is certainly not in your face every day. In Tokyo, it's full-on millions of people coming in and out of the city each day—a crazy amount of energy—and that's what we get off on. And I think that energy is similar in New York and London, so it's not so different, but it is kind of crazy.

Because we're outsiders, we see things in Japan that the Japanese don't see. In a taxi in Japan, I see the driver's white gloves, the lace covers, some kind of funny lights, ▸





Also on the grounds of Risonare are Gao (left; 2005), an interior woodpile housing a nursery and activity spaces for "little critters," and the Leaf Chapel (right; 2004). The chapel's 11-ton "veil" is perforated with 4,700 acrylic-filled holes and lifts at the end of the ceremony in a mere 38 seconds.

PHOTOS BY DAICI ANO (GAO), KATSUHISA KIDA (LEAF CHAPEL)

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flowers, a printer for the receipt, two or three machines that have to do with the cost, a satellite navigation system. And then in the back there will be a novel, just in case you want to read, some wet tissues, sweets, all this stuff. A Japanese person gets in there and sees nothing, because that's normal. So we allow the Japanese, or Tokyo, to see a thing they can't otherwise see. And now going back to London is interesting, because I'm seeing bits of London that I didn't see when I was living there.

A friend of mine from Paris has been staying with me—his first visit to the United States—and I find myself empathetically experiencing those sorts of everyday things.
Exactly. Today I realized that in America, and probably England too, when you park in your driveway, you park front-first. In Japan, you back in, so when you bring somebody to the car, it's ready to go. There's that sort of politeness even in parking.

In London, somebody sees a photograph of Japan and they say, "Oh it's so disgusting, all those wires in the street." But in Japan, it's illegal to park on the road; before you buy a car, you must prove you've got a parking space or you won't be given a license to buy a car. Back in London you look at Regent's Park—or any of these classical housing areas which are all white and have very strict planning about what paint to use—and in the bloody road there are all these ugly cars. But no one sees them. In Japan no one sees the wires. I think those types of things are really important for architects and designers, and they've not really been talked about.

Well I would imagine that at least you have Astrid to talk about them with. What's the deal with you guys?
Well we're not married. We started as boyfriend and girlfriend and then we split up because it's like...

Like Eurythmics?
[laughing] Yeah, actually. But we were grown up enough to know that we should try and keep it together. She brings something to the practice that I don't have, and I bring something that she doesn't have. If I get to a bit of Japanese that I can't do, somehow Astrid will jump in and finish the sentence. And we tend to risk a bit more. We'll say: "Should we do it?" "Nah." "Oh go on..." "Yeah, okay!" She's my best friend, and that's very difficult to find in an architecture practice. ■

The Heidi House (2005), so named after the "Tryolean" cut-outs in the structural plywood, is a low-cost home and office space that the client intended to use for five to ten years. Dytham reckons it will survive for an additional 15.

PHOTO BY RYOTA ATARASHI


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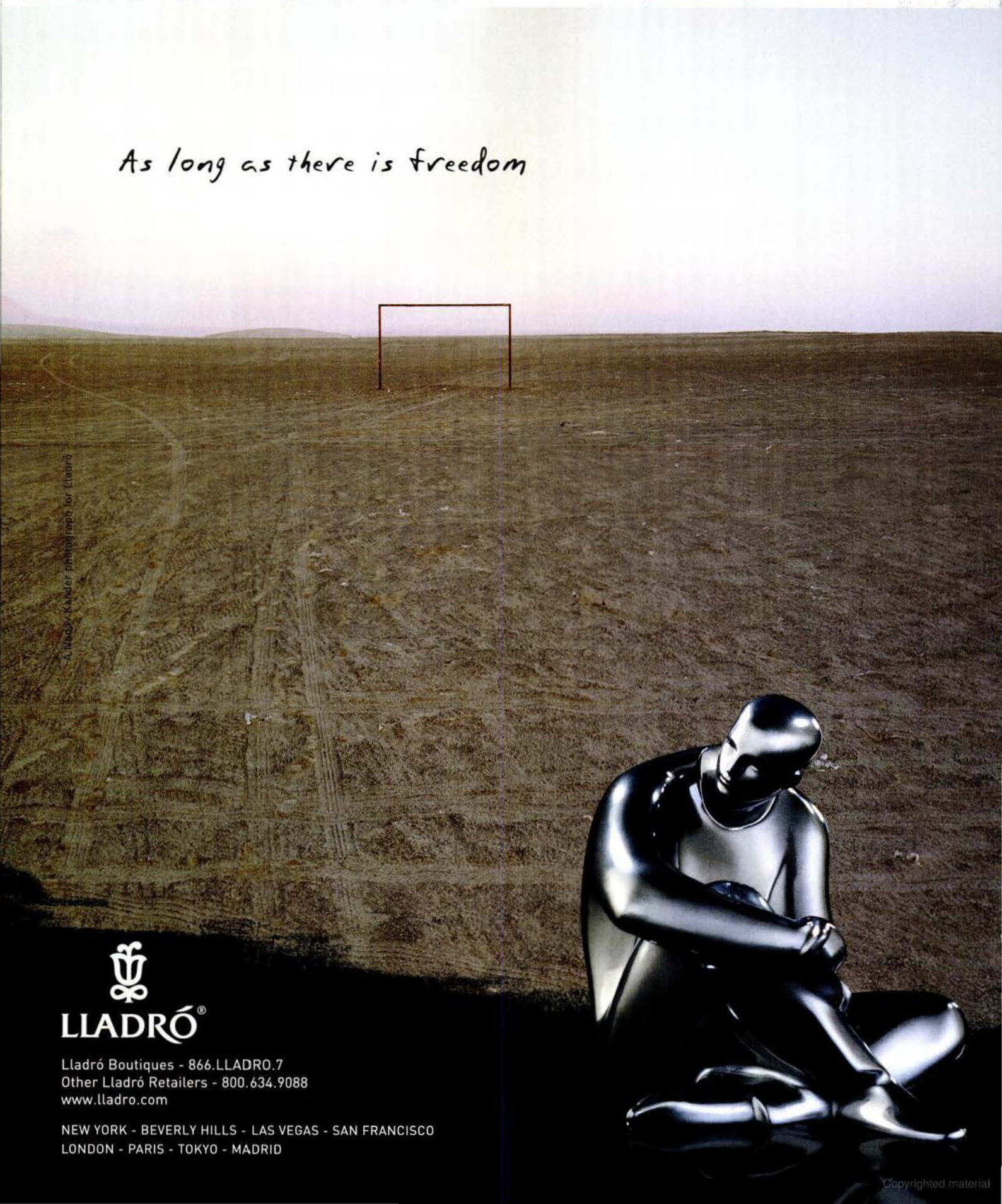


Nice Quads

Ken Isaacs and his wife, Jo, lived in a one-room apartment furnished with an 8' Living Structure for a year, but here they pose for *Life* magazine while the cube is on display at the Cranbrook Academy of Art. In their apartment, the fireplace's flue went out the window.

PHOTO BY JOHN G. ZIMMERMAN / TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

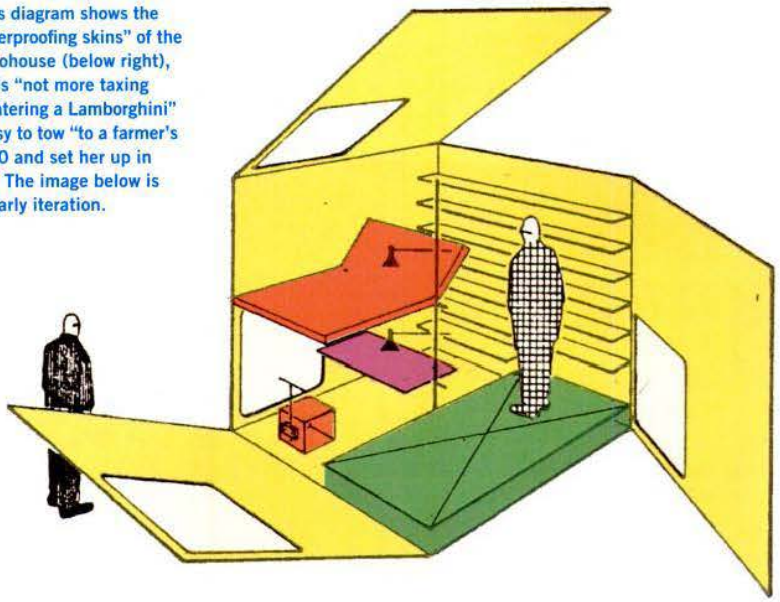
In the early 1950s, a newly married couple in Peoria, Illinois, found themselves confronting a thoroughly modern predicament: how to find happiness in a cramped studio apartment. For the husband, a young design student named Ken Isaacs, the challenge proved prophetic. He engineered a solution so surprising in its economy and elegance that *Life* magazine featured it in the October 11, 1954, issue (cover price: 20 cents). In an article entitled "Home in a Cube," Isaacs and his wife were shown fashioning an "odd contraption" out of two-by-twos and plywood panels. Once assembled, the cubic frame created "a kind of two-story house with living and dining quarters, bedroom, study, [and] storage space."

Isaacs called his spare creation a Living Structure. It was the first of his essential designs—essential in that he prized simplicity and abhorred waste. Over a long career that included furniture systems and a variety of minimal dwellings, his fascination with spatial interactions made for designs that were almost obsessively compact but cunning in their versatility—hovering somewhere between proto-IKEA and James Bond's Q. Isaacs designed his Superchair for reading (a lamp was built in), watching TV, eating, and sleeping—the seat back reclined into a bed. His Microdorm integrated a bed, desk (also with lighting and electrical outlets), bookshelves, dining table, and bureau into the floor space of a cot.

Beneath the gee-whiz artfulness was Isaacs's desire to help create a better way of life. In a postwar culture giddily engaged in material consumption and expansion, his concerns nevertheless struck a chord. "It was a time of optimism," he recalls. "People were ready for and interested in new ways of life."

His study of anthropology, and in particular Ruth Benedict's classic work *Patterns of Culture*, had convinced him that our notions of culture are subjective and therefore essentially arbitrary. "If [culture] is arbitrary," he concluded, "why shouldn't we break the mold and use conscious selectivity and sensitivity to restructure it, ▸

Isaacs's diagram shows the "weatherproofing skins" of the 8' Microhouse (below right), which is "not more taxing than entering a Lamborghini" and easy to tow "to a farmer's back 40 and set her up in a day." The image below is of an early iteration.



attempting to make a more objective and harmonious life for ourselves?" Moreover, he argued, traditional design dealt in partial or fragmented solutions to life's needs, whereas his approach expressed the "Matrix Idea," which would "strive in each case toward construction of the total environment—or matrix—that integrates all functions of the unit at hand." He also used this approach to develop innovative teaching structures at Cranbrook Academy of Art, where he received his MA and later headed the design department, and at the Illinois Institute of Technology and RISD.

Isaacs, like R. Buckminster Fuller, believed that technological advances could go a long way, but not all the way, toward alleviating social and environmental problems. A progenitor of green design, he proposed lifestyle alternatives such as light-living and nomadism—ideas that fundamentally challenged the burgeoning American cul-de-sac culture. "Ken was really important in a hundred ways," says Stanley Tigerman, the Chicago architect and former director of the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "There's no question about the authority of his work in the development of sustainability."

"I was always a builder," Isaacs says. "I would save my money and buy lumber and metal and actually build these projects like the Living Structures. And when you build things, it changes you. You're not just commenting intellectually on something, you're actually putting your energy on the line."

Isaacs's celebrity reached international levels (and *Life* came calling again) in 1962 with his invention of the Knowledge Box. Created while he was teaching at ▸

[illegible] BY BARBARA ISAACS ("MICROHOUSE"). BOB WITANOWSKI (8' MICROHOUSE). DRAWING BY KEN ISAACS

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A second vantage point from the *Life* magazine article. In the story, Isaacs says the reaction of friends, "was usually one of curiosity and amazement. Only a few laughed."

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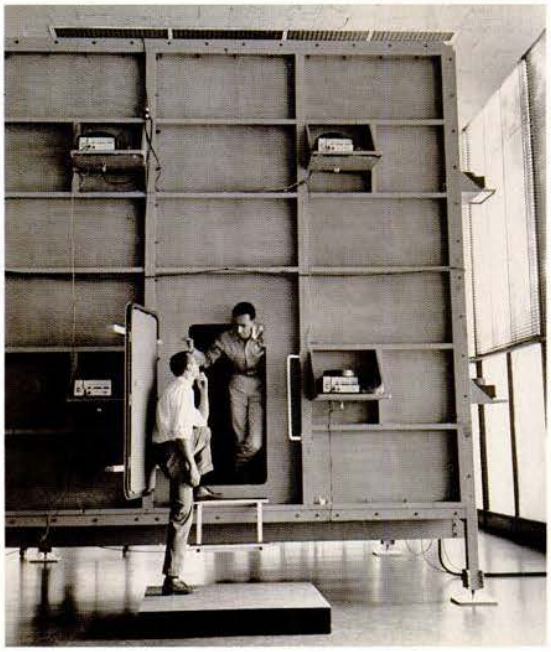
Two images of the Knowledge Box in its 1962 *Life* debut, the magazine introduced the work by saying that new teaching methods are required for the modern man "to cram as much knowledge as possible, as fast as possible into his swimming brain." The box form is repeated in the diagram for the Microcar (below right).

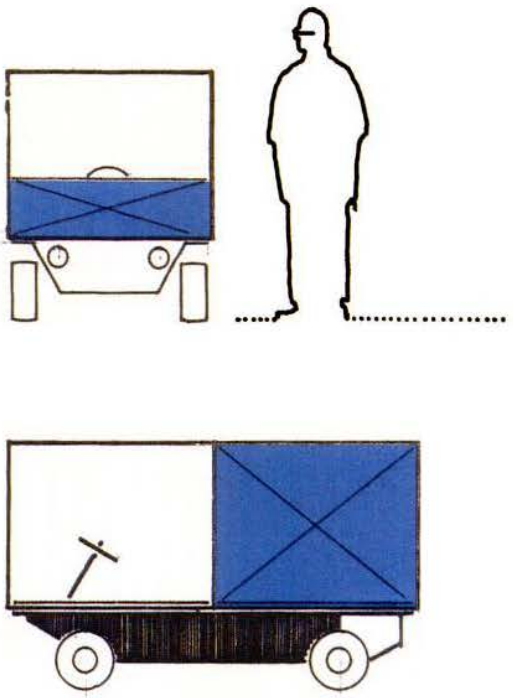


the Institute of Design in Chicago—formerly the New Bauhaus, founded by László Moholy-Nagy in 1937—the 12-foot cube structure had 24 inward-facing projectors that blitzed viewers standing inside with images projected onto the walls, floor, and ceiling. The intensity of the experience and juxtapositions of the images prompted people to see relationships in new ways. Because it could "manifest things that are usually abstract," Isaacs believed the Knowledge Box had tremendous value as an educational tool.

When the Graham Foundation gave Isaacs an architectural grant, he moved to rural Groveland, Illinois, and developed a series of light structures that he called Microhouses. In 1970, he joined the faculty of the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago and remained there until retiring in 2000.

These days Isaacs can be found in Indiana, pondering another lifelong interest: the design of a lightweight, electric-powered Microcar that would offer an alternative for the majority of American automobile trips, which Isaacs says average less than three miles.

The Microcar synthesizes Isaacs's quest for the essential, his appreciative but qualified take on technology, and his building instincts. "I see a slight problem with incredible technologies," he says. "The processes that are used to develop these new products—their level of complexity is absolutely forbidding. And you know, nothing lasts forever; eventually everything has to be worked on. In thinking about the Microcar, I wanted something that was not simple-minded but truly simple. Like if something went wrong with it, you could just kick it and it would start." ▸



PHOTOS BY ROBERT W. KELLEY / TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES. DRAWING BY KEN ISAACS

Ten Things You Should Know About Ken Issacs

1 / Ken Isaacs was born in Peoria, Illinois, in 1927. As a teenager he apprenticed with several local industrial firms, including the earth-moving equipment company LeTourneau, gaining experience that shaped his functional approach to design.

2 / While head of the Design Department at Cranbrook Academy of Art in the late 1950s, Isaacs created the Matrix Study Course, an introductory design curriculum that was used until 1980.

3 / Isaacs served in the military during World War II and the Korean War, and worked on exhibition design for the Pentagon.

4 / Isaacs first conceived of the Living Structure—work bigger than furniture, smaller then architecture—while helping design a theater built inside a Quonset hut.

5 / The "weatherproofing" for the Knowledge Box was Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's iconic Crown Hall.

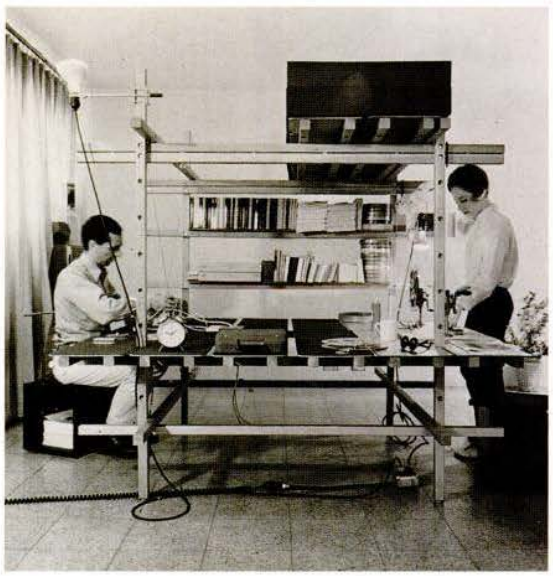
6 / Isaacs and the Knowledge Box appeared on the cover of *Life* magazine in September 1962. Inside he was included among the "red-hot hundred"—the young leaders of the "Take-Over Generation."

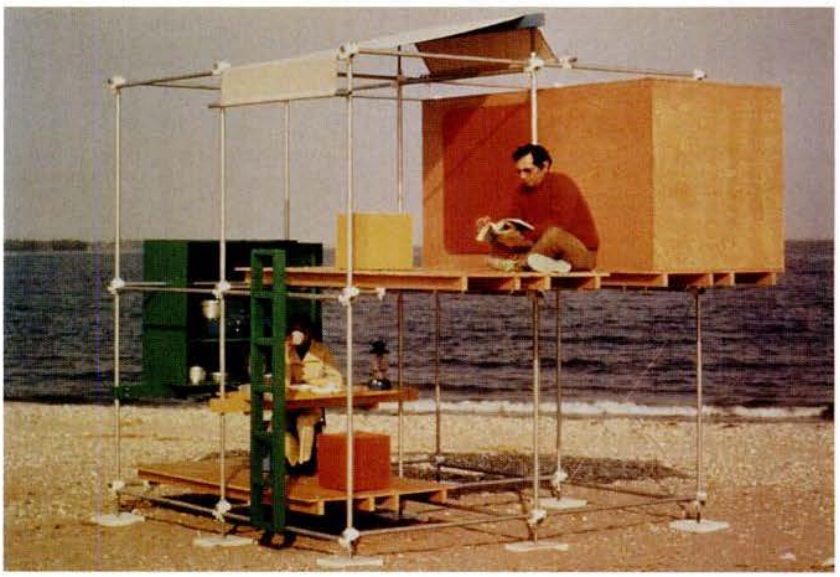
7 / In 1969, Isaacs choreographed 36 slide projectors and 5,000 images to create the background projections used during the Broadway production of *Inquest*, a play about Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

8 / In 1974, Isaacs provided plans and detailed instructions for nearly all of his projects in his book *How to Build Your Own Living Structures*. The *New York Times* unappreciatively remarked, "These designs are solely attributable to the author, which may be limiting."

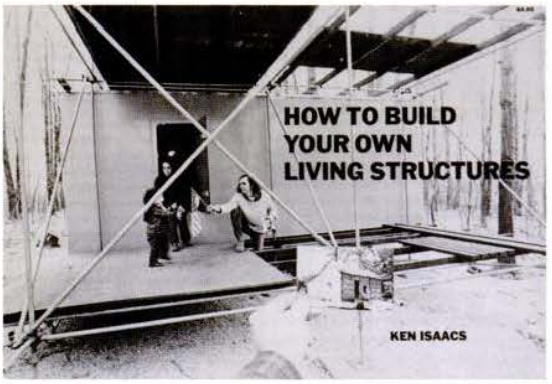
9 / Isaacs designed and built a home in the New Urbanist community of Seaside, Florida, in 1995.

10 / Today, the father of the Microhouse resides in a 4,500-square-foot home. Periodically he likes to live in a reverse way to check himself and his assumptions, he explains. And of his large house? "It's wonderful. My quarrel isn't with bigness, but bigness at the expense of life." ■





Clockwise, from upper left: a 6' Living Structure in Chicago; the Beach Matrix on the sand in Westport, Connecticut; the cover of Isaacs's 1974 how-to book, detailed down to the shopping lists; and a 3' by 6.5' Living Structure at an exhibition.



PHOTOS BY MIKE WILLET (6' LIVING STRUCTURE), BOB WITANOWSKI (BOOK COVER), COURTESY KEN ISAACS (BEACH MATRIX, LS EXHIBITION)

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—**Mark Durant**, Brooklyn, New York

As everyone from Julia to Jacques to (dare we say it) Giada has made clear, when it comes to cooking, fresh is best. Who could defend canned "green" beans against their snappy garden-fresh cousins, or herbs that you shake versus those you pick? Here are a few indoor garden kits that should satisfy even the most particular palate.

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Self-Watering Pots by Eva Solo (previous page) / Brown, gray, or white / 4.5-inch pot, $34.50; 5-inch pot, $39.75 / www.sprouthome.com
If you want a row of pots on the windowsill but are afraid to plant because of a busy schedule and a tendency to forget the required watering, these pots are the perfect solution. Tiny nylon threads extend from the pot into a water reservoir below, helping extend roots' reach and thus giving chives or tomatoes at least a week's worth of water.

Streamgarden by Green Fortune / $146.94 / www.greenfortune.com
Used by NASA and greenhouse gardeners for years, hydroponics offer a growing technique that substitutes water and a nutrient solution for soil. Streamgarden provides the technology; all you have to do is refill the water about once a week and plug in the included nutrient solution every three months. The only hitch: It doesn't pipe in sunlight, so the windowless are out of luck.

Sprout Salad by P2 & Associates / Six seed types / $8 each / www.smpstyle.com
The myriad physical benefits and superior tastiness of sprouts are touted by many a health guru, but the vast mushy flats at the grocery store are about as appealing as a Chia Head. Luckily, Japanese firm P2 & Associates has packaged a variety of seeds in tidy cups, from red cabbage to broccoli, so that freshly plucked alfalfa can be enjoyed on sandwiches at home.

Garden-in-a-Bag by Potting Shed Creations / 40 types of herbs, flowers, vegetables, and fruits / $7.50 to $15 each / www.pottingshedcreations.com

The earth-friendly Potting Shed Creations produces leak-free paper bags full of soil; space-challenged gardeners simply have to add the enclosed packet of seeds and keep everything watered regularly in order to enjoy fresh produce. Depending on the size of your windowsills or countertops, it's possible to have a whole garden arrayed in brown paper bags—from basil to alpine strawberries. ■

Story by Deborah Bishop

Structured Play

Two of the country's most creative and thoughtful playground designers—architect Richard Dattner and landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg—spent countless hours observing how children construct and choreograph their own play, using whatever materials and urban artifacts are at their disposal.

Strolling past another candy-colored, molded-plastic McPlayground, it's hard to remember that once upon a (brief) time in America, a playground commission was as coveted as an edgy new museum or concert hall.

For urban dwellers, the playground functions as both backyard and social hub. Ideally, it is safe enough to keep children in one piece, but challenging enough to keep them engaged. "Better a broken arm than a bruised spirit," remarked Lady Allen of Hurtwood, a landscape architect and child advocate, who once urged New York parents to sue the city fathers "for emotional damage to their children because they failed to provide suitable and exciting playgrounds for them."

Indeed, former New York City parks commissioner Robert Moses considered playgrounds as places to "intercept" children, where they might work off "excess energy" on the ubiquitous trio of slide, swing, and seesaw without damaging the pastoral surrounds. If Moses was the Darth Vader of playgrounds, his nemesis was Isamu Noguchi, whose fantastical (and unrealized) proposals for a new approach to play never failed to inspire the commissioner's ire.

Noguchi sought to replace the stock, single-use structures with a customized (and safer) landscape of mounds, craters, steps, slides, and peaks molded from the earth. He refined his ideas over decades, beginning with Play Mountain in 1933—which the artist considered the "progenitor of playgrounds as sculptural landscapes"—and culminating with the Levy Memorial Playground in 1961. Designed over the course of five years with Louis Kahn for an eight-acre site in Manhattan's Riverside Park, it resembled a kind of Aztec village set atop a lunar landscape. Although Noguchi's Playscapes was finally built in Atlanta in 1976, it was his earlier concepts that influenced the built designs of Richard Dattner and M. Paul Friedberg—authors, and spiritual leaders of the modernist playground.

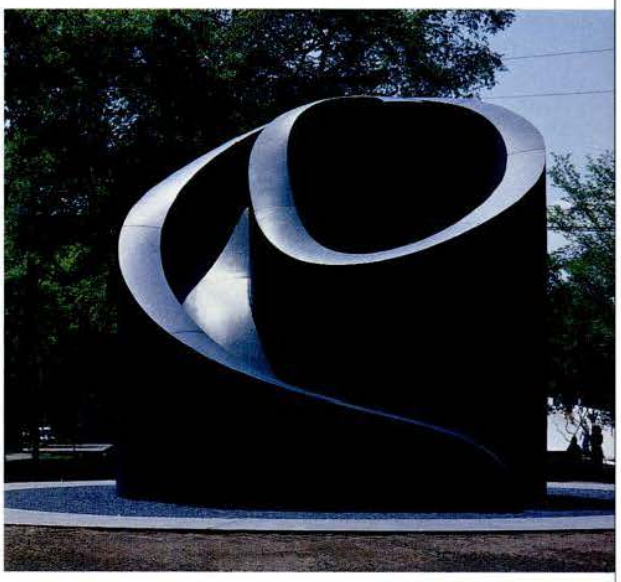
Another inspiration, adventure playgrounds, drifted ▸

PHOTO BY ART PHILLIPS / BETTMAN / CORBIS

A classic Noguchi fusion of play equipment and sculpture, Black Slide Mantra (right) sits in Odori Park, Sapporo. Although none of Noguchi's seminal playground designs for Manhattan, such as Play Mountain and the Levy Memorial, ever made it out of the maquette stage, Playscapes (below) was built in Atlanta's Piedmont Park in 1976 and rehabilitated twenty years later.

over from Europe like the heady smoke of an unfiltered Gauloise after landscape architect Carl Theodor Sorensen observed children playing in junkyards and construction sites. A kind of *Mad Max* meets *Bob the Builder*, these "junk" or "Robinson Crusoe" playgrounds proliferated in bombed-out lots across Europe and Britain during and after World War II (there are still more than a thousand today); children built and outfitted their own forts, tree houses, slides, and other amusements using scraps of timber, sheet metal, old tires, blow torches, and tools under the watchful eye of a play supervisor.

Although adventure playgrounds were too rough-and-tumble to flourish stateside, there was a postwar groundswell for something new. In 1954, the MoMA and avant-garde toy company Creative Playthings cosponsored a Play Sculpture Competition that attracted more than 350 submissions. Abstract in nature, so as to inspire creative projection rather than a prescribed response, these cubes, domes, and spirals provoked in Moses a ►



"Play Mountain was the kernel out of which have grown all my ideas relating sculpture to the earth. It is also the progenitor of playgrounds as sculptural landscapes." —Isamu Noguchi

PHOTO BY MICHIO NOGUCHI (BLACK SLIDE MANTRA); COURTESY THE NOGUCHI MUSEUM, NEW YORK (PLAYSCAPES)

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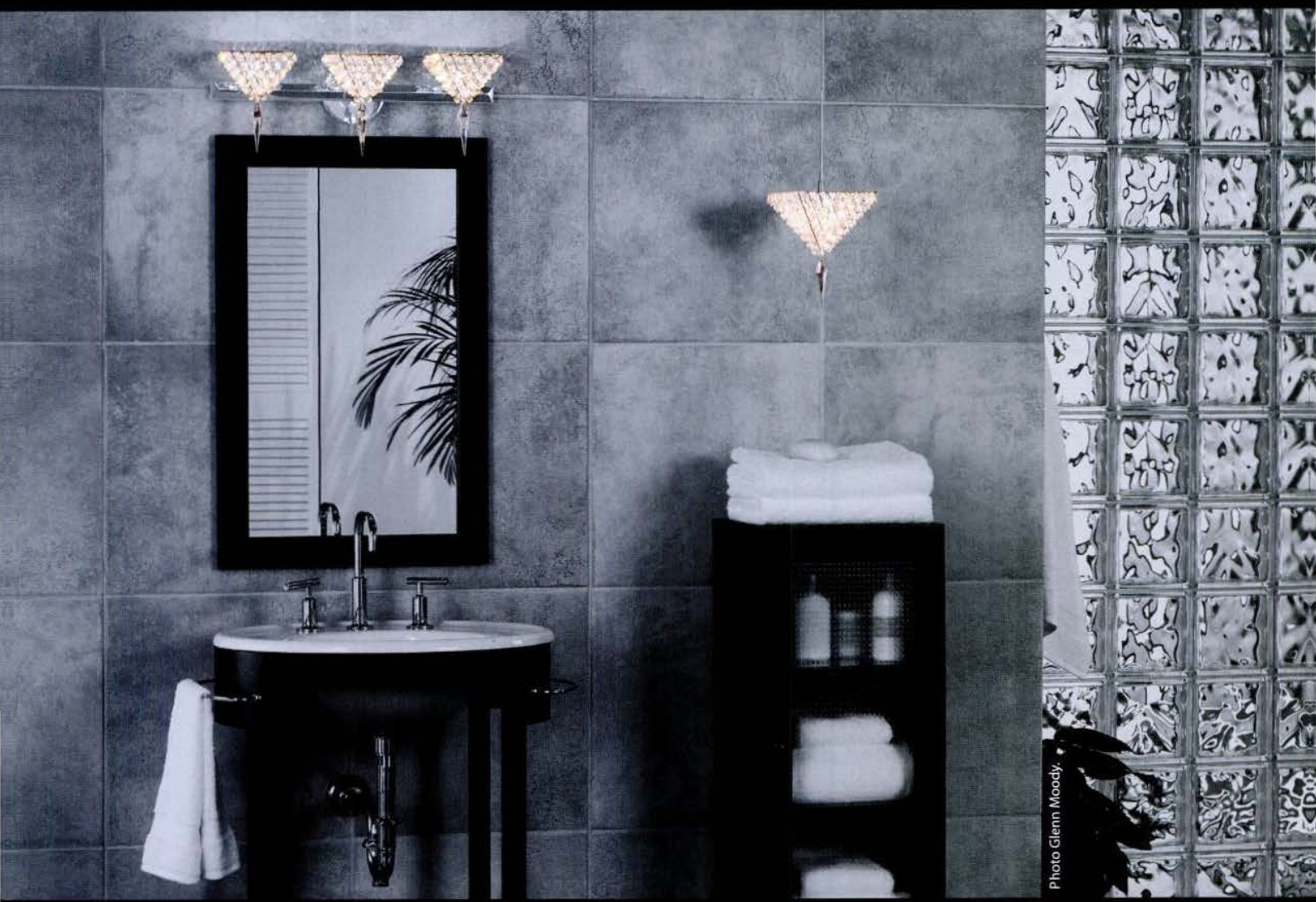

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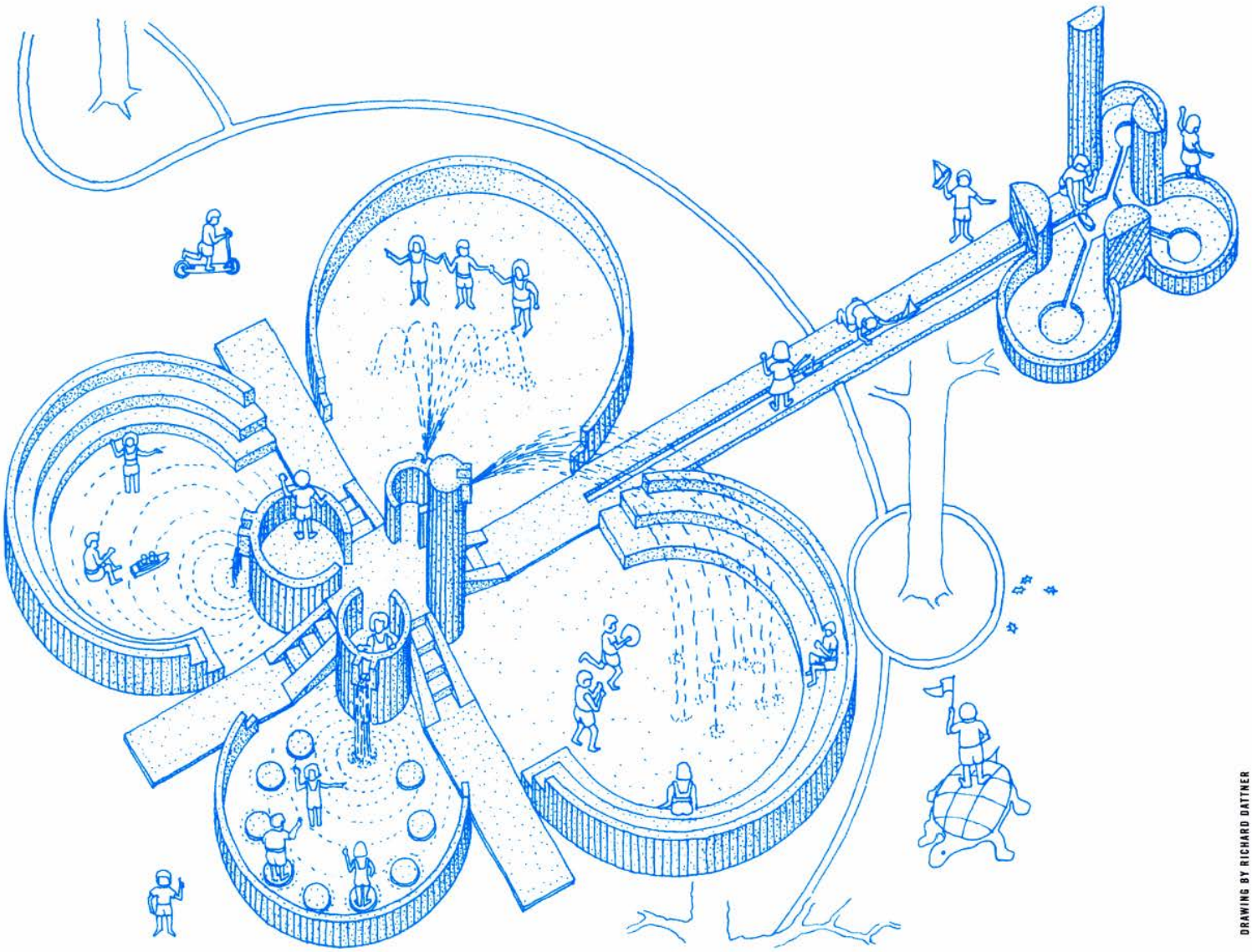
Dattner designed five playgrounds for Central Park, including the Ancient Playground (near the Egyptian wing of the Metropolitan Museum) and the West 81st Street playground (shown in plan, below), which originally offered a panoply of streams, sprays, and shallow pools. (The circular forms were modified to octagons and the water channel eliminated before construction.)

stentorian defense of figurative art: "There is an essential difference between Hans Christian Andersen, *Alice in Wonderland*, and your stone, fiberglass, and steel Play Sculptured equipment." The tide turned in 1965, when Mayor John Lindsay appointed Thomas Hoving as parks commissioner, and Hoving promptly declared: "When people begin attacking us for being too far out, that's when we'll know we are really trying out constructive new plans that our children deserve." By 1967, Jay Jacobs, writing in *Art in America*, decreed that "the public playground is suddenly in the midst of a renascence as designers, sculptors, painters, and architects strive to create a new world of color, texture, and form for toddlers."

Seeking to satisfy the needs of a growing child's mind and body, Friedberg and Dattner were interested in the connections between imaginative play, exploration, and cognitive development as explored by psychologists such as Jean Piaget, R. D. Laing, and Erik Erikson. "An environment that provides only the familiar challenges that already have been overcome countless times, will never call forth any new learning," observed Dattner in his 1969 book *Design for Play*. After observing how children choreograph their own entertainment in construction sites and on city streets—running, jumping, swinging, and vaulting from hydrant to fire escape to stairwell—both men championed "linked" or "continuous" play rather than offering one static experience per element. "The choice of what to do next becomes an experience. The more complex the playground, the greater the choice and the more enriched the learning experience," explained Friedberg in his 1970 book *Play and Interplay*.

Friedberg made his mark on public housing, most notably in 1966 at the Jacob Riis housing plaza on the Lower East Side. Ripping out the fencing, which he described as "cages," Friedberg connected a series of open venues for all ages, including a play area, children's fountain, stepped garden, and amphitheater for performances. The playground was furnished with a granite ▸



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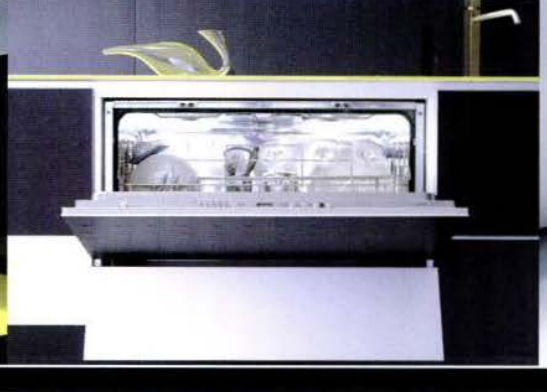
Freidberg's (now vanished) "vest-pocket" parks transformed garbage-strewn lots into destinations for creative play (below). At Riis House (right), he favored abstract shapes that could fulfill multiple fantasies: "Literal design restricts a child's imagination, for he can bring to a playground, in his hand or in his mind, any fire engine. An object with only one use creates attitudes and experiences with one dimension."

igloo, tunnels and ladders, a wood-timber area, a pyramid, a maze, arching monkey bars, and a Sahara of sand. "We created experiences comparable to those a child might find elsewhere in widely scattered areas—a mountain, a tunnel, a tree house—and brought those together into a single environment." Sadly, little if any of Friedberg's seminal work from the '60s and '70s remains, including his "vest-pocket" parks—creative play spaces tucked into derelict lots throughout the city.

Dattner's tour de force was his adventure playground—one of five play areas in Central Park that he designed, and arguably the country's most famous (seen daily in the opening sequence of *Sesame Street*). Built in 1967, and renovated with Dattner's participation in 1995 after a public outcry prevented its razing, it was a thoughtful, unified space that encouraged improvisational play from the moment children strolled under the low tower and through a maze, "as if entering into their own private world," wrote Dattner. ▶

"Play is the child's work. The world is his laboratory, and he is its scientist. Play is the research by which he explores himself and his relationship to the world." —M. Paul Friedberg

PHOTOS COURTESY M. PAUL FRIEDBERG AND PARTNERS



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For his Adventure Playground, Dattner incorporated some of the elements of the wilder European versions (where children build their own play structures). The original pyramid (below) contained building and art materials handed out by a play supervisor, which allowed children to "rearrange their physical world to their liking—one way to exert some control over their experience."

Mounds, peaks, climbing poles, tree houses, a volcano notched with cobblestones, and a crater composed of concentric walls were furnished with a network of tunnels, ladders, slides, climbing surfaces, and multiple ways of ascending, descending, and getting from here to there. The structures invited imaginative scenarios that could turn on a dime—from castle fortress to Egyptian desert to polar igloo. There was also a water channel, which Dattner, who appreciated impromptu urban play, considered "a redesigned version of the gutter." Inside the pyramid were art materials and interlocking wooden panels that gave children a taste of manipulating their environment, as in a traditional adventure playground. Said Dattner, "The next best thing to a playground that children design themselves is a playground designed by an adult but incorporating the possibility for children to create their own places within it." Low serpentine walls defined the spaces while offering caregivers a place to perch without hovering. ▸

"The place where children play is a sort of magic circle, outside and separate from the rest of the world; it has its own time, which cannot be measured by our clocks." —Richard Dattner

PHOTOS COURTESY DATTNER ARCHITECTS

Fifty years later, one of the most popular attractions at the tot lot at Mitchell Park remains the Gopher Holes—a series of circles cut out of cement over a bed of sand that encourage jumping, peeking, and burrowing. Landscape architect Robert Royston kept the surrounding fence low by design: "I wanted grandmas and grandpas to be able to rest their elbows there and watch."

Also narrowly avoiding obliteration was the tot lot in Palo Alto, California's Mitchell Park, a curvy, Arp-like space designed in 1957 by landscape architect Robert Royston. "We aimed to bring modernism's free-flowing space to the playground, which was designed without corners so every child could be seen by his mother," explains Royston, who consulted with landscape architects Reed Dillingham and Stephanie Pearson on the 2000 renovation. The whimsical play structures were all designed by Royston in the precode era, and some (such as the multitiered "apartment house") had to be removed. "Codes? We never had any rules and regulations," says Royston. "We had common sense!" A splash area follows the same outlines of the original wading pool, which Royston had designed to be shallower in the center, where children were farthest from their caregivers.

Despite the truth of Dattner's observation that "no playground can prevent a child from being hurt (and if it protected him from upset completely, it would convey the very misleading impression that he has got nothing to fear from his environment)," the brief era of the designer-built playground fell victim to lack of maintenance, budgetary priorities, and the litigious American mindset. Eventually these creations were superseded by mass-produced structures that came with full liability insurance, if limited imagination.

An encouraging alternative is the crop of community-built playgrounds springing up around the country. And there remain in California two popular European-style adventure playgrounds, a model that might be cheaply reproduced anywhere with a vacant lot and some scraps of lumber. In the quest for play that engages the whole child, we might heed Friedberg's admonition from half a century ago: "Just as TV becomes an electronic babysitter, so do our existing play facilities become great, gray outdoor nannies, incarcerating children and protecting them from experience and involvement. The air may be fresh, but the play is stale." ■

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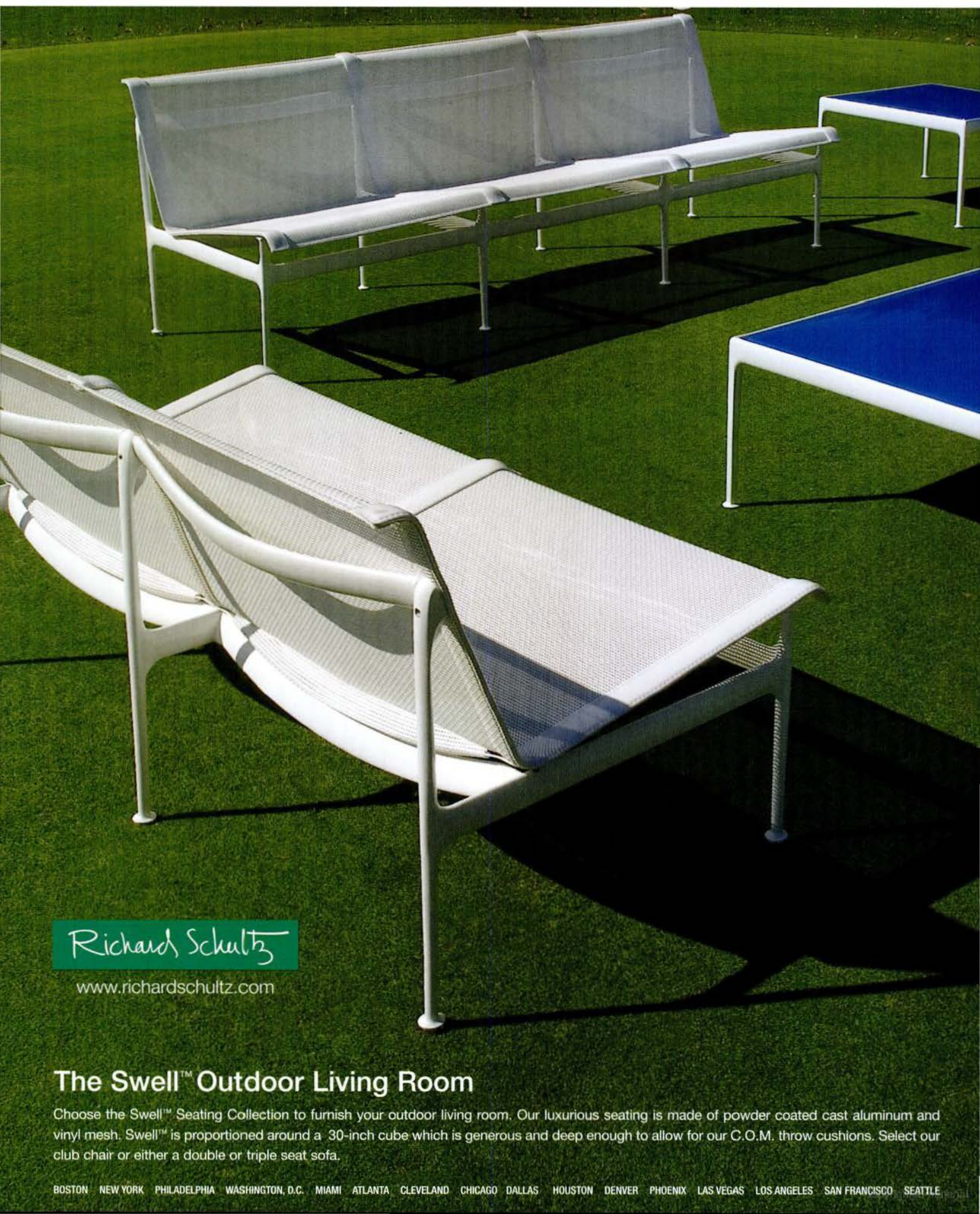

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Barrack Essentials

Good design is essential, even in the harshest environments. Major Arnold Strong explains how he makes the most of his eight-by-eight foot trailer at an army base in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Major Arnold Strong is a deployed member of the Oregon Army National Guard serving in Afghanistan at the Kabul Military Training Center, where he is an operations officer and mentor to staff officers of the Afghan National Army. He maintains a blog of his experiences at www.majorstrong.com. Major Strong's living quarters (below) show the versatility of the shipping containers used to house soldiers, as well as an unmistakable human touch.

In a war zone, the art of home is stripped down to its basics. As an army officer deployed to Afghanistan, I am stationed at a base in Kabul, where my and my fellow soldiers' homes are simple shipping containers, stacked up, wired with electricity, fitted with an HVAC unit, and furnished with a twin bed and a wall locker. The same trailers we make homes out of serve also as fortress walls, Laundromats, latrines, shower facilities, and storage. For obvious reasons, we call our makeshift apartment complex Legoland, and when I'm not interacting with my Afghan counterparts, I spend much of my time inside its blocks. On routine convoys throughout Kabul, I see trailers converted into small shops, apartment-style quarters, business offices—even goat barns. The city may be a far cry from the modern world, but sustainability and modularity are here on display.

Recognizing that we are soldiers first, the immediate availability of body armor, helmet, boots, and primary weapon is the most essential need. With this met, however, there are no rules governing the design and layout of one's personal space other than that it be kept clean and orderly.

With access to a lumberyard and basic tools, the members of my unit have built everything they can think of to make their quarters more livable. For some, it's a bunk bed; for others, a television stand, wall unit, or bench. For me, it's a place to read, to write, to reflect, and, if possible, to stretch away some of the stress of the day.

In my eight-by-eight-foot home, I constructed a lift for my bed to create more space, and a bookshelf to hold my professional and personal library. I purchased an adjustable computer desk, as well as lighting to offset the harsh fluorescent tubes that come with every room. Over time, I added colorful Afghan textiles to warm the sterile walls and several paintings by Ahmad Farhad, a local artist, for ambience. Despite its limitations, my shipping container has become a home.

Back in Oregon, I live with my wife and two sons in a spacious 4,000-square-foot 1950s ranch house that sits on a beautiful, lush plot of land. In contrast to the small cell in which I've lived for the past eight months, it seems that distant home provides far more than I could ever need—after all, I arrived in Kabul with only a footlocker, two duffel bags, and a rucksack. But even here, in a country facing nearly it's 30th year of conflict since 1979, the basic needs for survival do not override the desire for comfort or personal aesthetics. Survival may be first, but for all of us, there is always a need to feel at home. ■

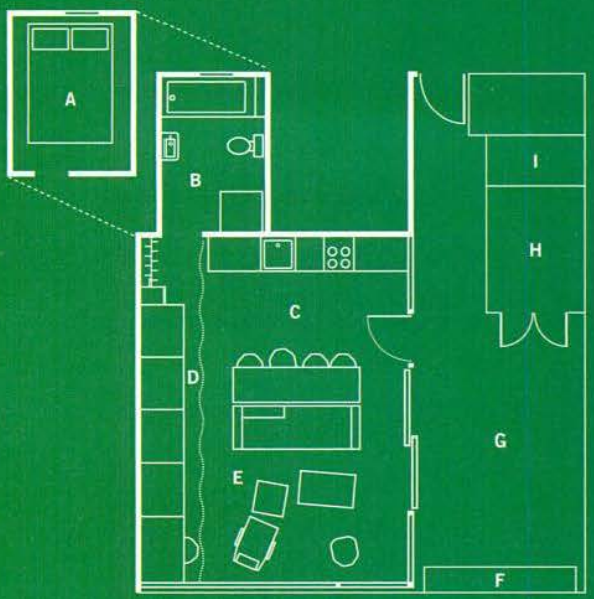
Story by David A. Greene

Photos by Misha Gravenor

Living Room

When Im and David Schafer moved in together they faced the challenge of combining the contents of David's 880-square-foot loft and Im's 550-square-foot apartment into a one-room, 426-square-foot downtown loft.

Project: One Space
Designers: Im and David Schafer
Location: San Diego, California
Size: 426 square feet



One Space
Floor Plan

A Bedroom
B Bathroom
C Kitchen / Dining
D Storage Wall
E Living
F Storage
G Terrace
H Workshop
I Storage

The computer-designed kitchen area has the feel of a ship's galley, with everything neatly stowed, yet visible and instantly at hand: It's pretty much the definition of "ship-shape." For dinner parties, well-worn Eames shell chairs are pulled down by David, with the help of a footstool. "I have nearly an eight-foot reach," says the 6'3" David. ("It gets a little tough if I have to spend a weekend or so alone," says Im.)


THE PHOTOBOOK

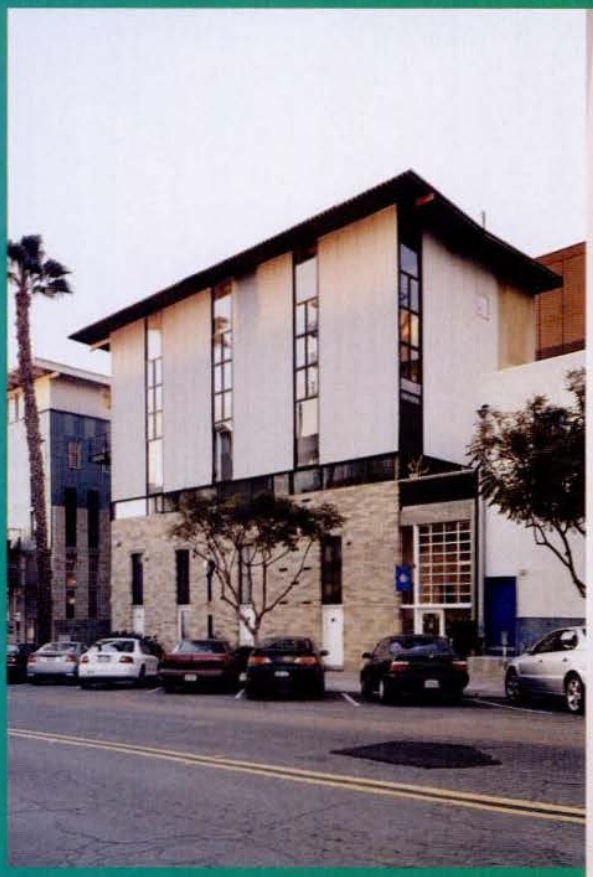
When David Schafer moved into his 426-square-foot San Diego rental in 2003, the Chiclets-sized floor-plan wasn't exactly a deal breaker. At six foot three, he found the live-work loft's double-height ceiling a plus, and the aspiring architect geeked on the building's pedigree: the Merrimac, built in 1999, was one of the first modern, mixed-use redevelopment projects in San Diego's formerly blighted Little Italy neighborhood. (Plus it was featured in the very first issue of Dwell.)

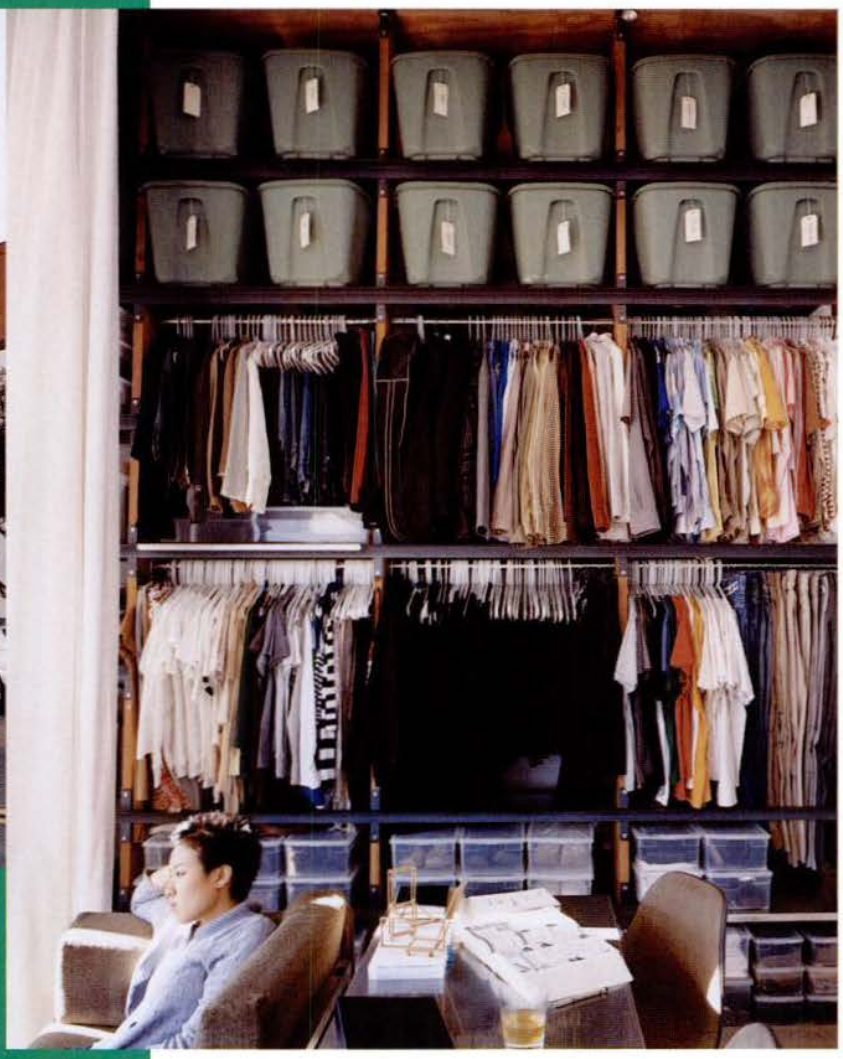
But when David, 31, and his now-wife Im, 26, discussed living together (they met in college, both pursuing degrees in architecture), making smarter use of the vertical space became a priority. Make that a necessity: The previous tenant was a bachelor with Spartan tastes, and with a 260-square-foot outdoor deck and sleeping loft, the place was perfectly adequate—as long as you didn't own any stuff. Like books. And clothes. And food. All of which David and Im owned and used pretty much every day. "When we moved in, we had the range, the sink, and the refrigerator, and that was it," says David. "Everything else we made ourselves." Their solution was storage; and they had nowhere to go but up. The result has been an ongoing collaborative project, an experiment in extreme design and domestic tranquility.

The first thing David did (with help from his dad) was build a corrugated-steel workshop out on the deck, from whence most of the loft's interior fittings have sprung; only heavy-duty metalwork was completed off-site. The shed's obsessively orderly jars of sheet-metal screws and neatly coiled extension cords are a pretty good metaphor for the inside of David's skull: This is a man who makes CAD drawings of his spice collection. Im is an organizer, too, though the flavor of her fervor differs. While David is an inveterate collector, disassembler of machines, and obsessive cataloguer ("I call him an 'objectician,'" says Im), her neatness is more visually oriented. "I need to make sure I know where everything is," she says. "I need to see it to keep it in order."

The couple's proclivities are enshrined in the kitchen area, where shelves computer-calibrated to their condiments and liquors climb the wall behind the bare-bones appliances, warmly lit by halogen spots like an alterpiece ▸

When they moved into the Merrimac (below left), the Schafers unburdened themselves of books, clothes, and food that wouldn't fit in their small space. The Wall of Storage (below right) came later. The Schafers' furniture (opposite) includes an Eames Aluminum Group lounge chair ("And ottoman!" adds Im). A coffee table made of glued, corrugated cardboard was the couple's first project together, when they met in college eight years ago. p.262





Local sailboat shops wanted thousands to make the 13-by-13-foot curtain that hides the Wall of Storage. "So we called my parents in Bangkok, gave them the dimensions, and they got it made for 150 bucks," says Im.

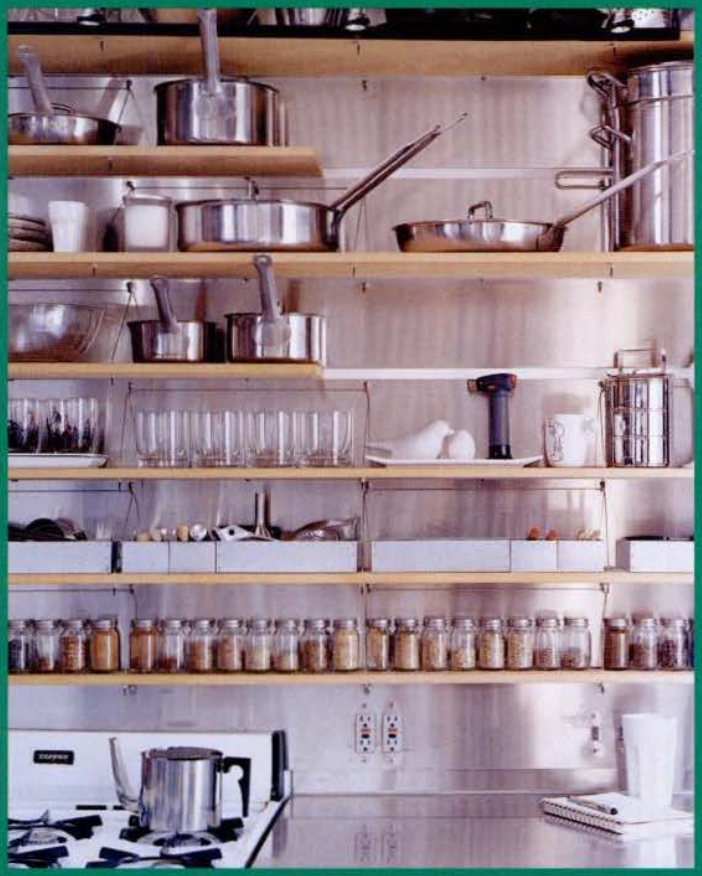
to Our Lady of the Garlic Press. Frugality and ingenuity harmonize in IKEA drawers fitted into frames made of construction lumber and cold-rolled steel from the local Handy Metal Mart, and galvanized boxes from The Container Store spot-welded together to fit silverware and utensils.

Because the loft is a rental, everything they've built has to be removable; and because David and Im are smart, all the best stuff is recyclable. Accordingly, their choices of construction materials are as carefully measured as their calculations of spatula and pasta lengths: "If it was a material we could reuse, we opted for something more durable and more expensive; if it would only work for this space, then we defaulted to the cheapest material we could find," says David. The kitchen shelves—which will stay—are unstained, unfinished MDF plywood, while the countertops and dining table—which will move on to their next abode—are heavy-gauge stainless steel.

And then there's the "Wall of Storage": A five-columned steel structure that occupies the entire west wall of the loft and contains everything else the couple owns—piled 20-feet high. David explains the painstaking planning that went into making the freestanding behemoth rental-friendly: "We screwed plywood to the ceiling, and then bolted the steel structure to the plywood, which serves as a membrane. So this massive thing just sits on the ground." For those thinking of trying this at home, consider that David has a chummy relationship with his landlord. "He's an architect, so we speak the same language," David says. "In our minds, this qualifies as furniture."

The Wall of Storage is not just a wall of storage—it's a machine for daily living, an office, a TV room, and a walk-in closet that's as aesthetically pleasing as an American Apparel window display. Though their T-shirts are arranged by color, *Rain Man*–style ("If you had to stare at your closet every day, you'd do it, too," says Im), there's a 13-foot cotton curtain that can be pulled to hide it all from view. "Guests can be out here," says Im, indicating the living area, "and I can still be getting dressed back there—it connects straight to the bathroom. And if we ▸

The kitchen shelves (left) are organized with clinical precision. The stairway to the sleeping loft (right) is a riff on a ship's ladder: "We spent a lot of time figuring out how much space we need to maneuver," says David. "It allowed us to make it as small and perfect as we wanted to." Instead of a handrail, sail cleats are bolted to the walls as hand-holds.



At the table (below), a Todd Oldham for La-Z-Boy modular sofa serves triple duty as seating for work, dinner, and overnight guests. In the bathroom (below right), they did "basically surface things," says Im. p.262

have an overnight guest, we basically have our own bedroom." Sometimes, at the very top of the Wall of Storage, hibernating in a shoebox, is Atlas, the couple's California desert tortoise—the ultimate neatnik's pet: This gentle and noble creature spends half its 80-year life span asleep, and its (infrequent) waste products are easily swept away.

If the Schafers possess any latent messiness or packrat tendencies, they're forever entombed in the Wall of Storage, inside clear plastic bins and big, green rubber totes placed up top for the heavy, infrequently used stuff. Seismically sensitive visitors invariably question the wall's stability. David asserts that since the bins rest on parallel bars of steel, any sizable temblor would just cause them to tip conveniently into the gap, wedging them tight. And as long as the engineer is also the guinea pig, who's to argue?

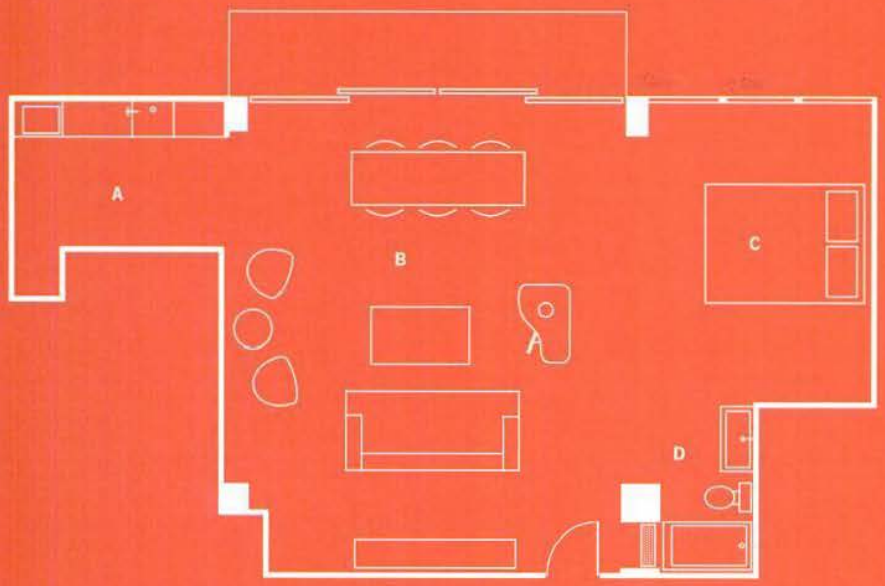
But this is where the Schafers' evangelism about their project shows, revealing their apartment-as-experiment to be a little less grad-school-application fodder, and a little more Unabomber Hut (but in a good way). The couple believes fervently in what they're doing—call it an exercise in Extreme Shelving, pragmatic Minimalism, or just plain neat-freakiness—as evidenced by the rigor of their calculations and the mental and physical energy they've expended. And it's obvious that they truly enjoy living this way, scrambling like spider monkeys to reach all their artfully arranged stuff, from books and clothes to the gaggle of frayed Eames shell chairs hanging above the entry, like moose heads in a hunting lodge. In this sense, the two budding architects are part of a long line of artists who adjust their surroundings to jibe with their quirky mental furniture, and an equally storied tradition of pioneers—from Marie Curie to Frank Gehry—who've experimented on themselves, as the cheapest, least annoying, yet most demanding client they'll ever have.

David and Im readily admit that their style of living isn't for everyone. "The space wasn't intended or designed to work for anybody but us," says Im. "It's a little case study for ourselves, to see what we can get away with," adds David. He pauses. "Honestly," he says with a grin, "I think we could live in less space." ■

The Schafers consider their loft a work in progress. Says Im: "We thought about building a library ladder for the Wall of Storage, and we'd planned to build a catwalk out from our sleeping loft, with a desk—but decided it was too much structural engineering to concern ourselves with at this point."

A Philippe Starck standing lamp and Eames chaise longue bracket the living room; two Lawrence Weiner prints hang behind a pair of Warren Platner chairs and a table purchased from a River Oaks estate sale; at far left of room, a partial wall of new cinderblocks hides a return air vent.

Story by Fred A. Bernstein | Photos by Dean Kaufman



Hill Residence Floor Plan

A Kitchen
B Living
C Bedroom
D Bathroom

Project: Hill Residence
Location: Houston, Texas
Size: 850 square feet

Stripped Ease

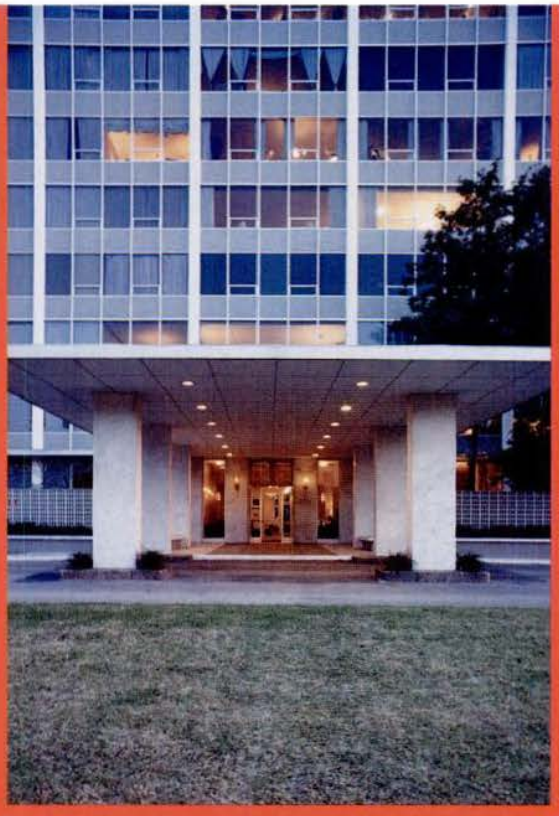
All of the money Barbara Hill poured into remodeling her 1960s condo in Houston was spent taking things out—and she couldn't be happier.

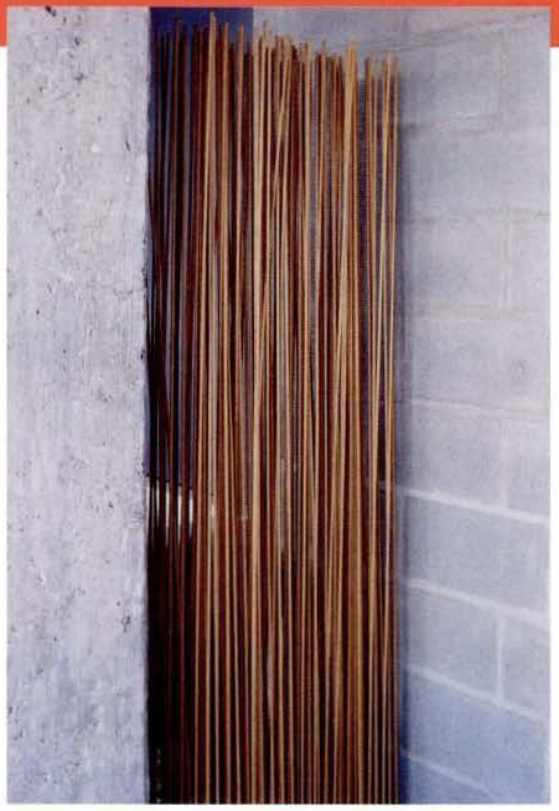
There used to be walls; now Barbara Hill's bed offers views not just of Houston, but also of a French farm table surrounded by a sextet of black and white Harry Bertoia chairs for Knoll.

For some architects, minimalism is about sleek surfaces that cost a fortune to achieve. But to Barbara Hill minimalism means living with the blemishes that remain once she's stripped the sleek surfaces away. The raw concrete of Hill's apartment, she notes, is anything but plain: The mottled gray surfaces evoke both the mountains near her weekend house in Marfa, Texas, and the work of minimalist artists, which she began selling more than 30 years ago. In a ceiling with rust stains and nail holes, Hill sees the natural and the man-made in beautiful profusion.

Hill, who was born in Beaumont and crowned Miss Texas in 1956, is an expert in both conventional and unconventional beauty. She has lived "with every style you can think of," but some of her fondest memories are of the 1970s, when she turned her Houston house into a gallery, representing artists such as Daniel Buren and Sol LeWitt early in their careers. "Minimalism is where my heart is," she says. So when she moved back to Houston a few years ago to be near her four children and seven grandchildren, she was determined to create an environment that left room for people and just a few objects.

She chose a condominium in a 1960s building, largely for the sunset views from its southwest-facing terrace. Its 850 square feet provided enough space, but little within that space was worth keeping. "It was a bachelor pad,"





she says, with walls of mirrors, a white gold-trimmed Corian bar, and an entertainment center reminiscent of another Houston landmark: NASA's mission control. Hill lived downstairs in a borrowed apartment during the construction process, ascending each morning in her pajamas to watch workers tear things out—often after a 7 a.m. consultation with her contractor, Brent McCaleb, and designer friend Carol Zimmermann, who both live in the building. "Demolition is always the most fun part," Hill says. Soon she was down to concrete floors, a concrete ceiling, and dark gray concrete block walls—and loving it. She says, "Once I saw the exposed space, I couldn't bear to put anything back." ▸

With bright red hair, Hill is a standout in a gray-glass 1960s building (exterior, top right). Her coffee table (foreground, top left) is a French mail-sorting table with the legs cut down. A room divider by Extremis (bottom right), made of sticks protruding from a rubber base, shields the bathroom.

That includes a bathroom wall. "I could have had a normal closet, a normal bedroom, and a separate bathroom," she explains. "But it isn't what I wanted." She adds, "I haven't had any complaints. If people think it's odd, they're too polite to tell me."

What Hill did put back, she put back sparingly, in her own way. The bathtub, designed to be set into a tile enclosure, was left bare to expose a rough exterior and surrounded by walls of zinc sheeting traditionally used for roofing. The sink, designed to be undermounted, was overmounted to expose its similarly unfinished edge. The door to the apartment (which doubles as a blackboard) opens alongside the bathroom—a problem Hill solved with a room divider made from wooden sticks set in a rubber base. A piece of bamboo "carpet," standing on end, serves to partially hide the closet.

And then there's a hanging light fixture by the German master Ingo Maurer: a bit of razzle-dazzle that delights and distracts the eye. "A real minimalist wouldn't have that," Hill says of the piece, entitled "Birdie," adding, "My approach is minimalism with juice."

In Hill's kitchen, appliances—including a 24-inch undercounter refrigerator, a 15-inch dishwasher, and a microwave convection oven—are set into custom steel frames topped with soapstone, to bring softness to the hard-edged composition. Storage is open wire shelving ▸

Winged light bulbs, part of an Ingo Maurer fixture, bring levity to Hill's bathroom (opposite). The space features a zinc wall by Houston metalworker George Sacaris, who also did the bathroom and kitchen cabinets. Who needs shelves when there's plenty of floorspace? Stacks of books and a framed print sit alongside a Peter Maly Ligne Roset bed (left), reupholstered to Hill's specifications. p.262

The door to Hill's medicine cabinet (top left), made by Geroge Sacaris, slides open to reveal a concrete wall. In her kitchen (top right), exposed pipes behind the counter have plenty of company: the pipes that form her storage units. The rug (by Chilewich) is made of vinyl. Hill enjoys a glass of wine and the paper at her dining table (bottom left). p.262

which, says Hill, "forces you to get rid of things you don't really need." The gray walls are optimal for hanging her extensive art collection that is both discerning and quirky: She lined a wall with photographs of rear ends, she says, "to give the place a sense of humor."

But Hill's approach isn't entirely subtractive—she covered the floors in a water-based sealant and built a couple of concrete block walls. One of those walls is set, ingeniously, three inches from an existing concrete column, creating a narrow vertical slit that serves as a return air vent. The gap reads as a simple dark line, far less obtrusive than the usual metal grille, which Hill says is something she "didn't want to look at."

The words of the prophets are written on the chalkboard-paint-coated door to Hill's apartment. A painting by Mark Flood hangs behind a plaster Buddha on a chest from Cassina. The Ligne Roset cotton sofa was bought on sale.

When it came time to furnish the space, Hill bought some pieces for pocket change at estate sales in River Oaks, a wealthy Houston neighborhood where mid-century houses are slowly being supplanted by McMansions. Others, like the French mail-sorting table she uses as a coffee table, came from bona fide antique stores. Even new pieces are tweaked to Hill's tastes, like a Peter Maly platform bed from Ligne Roset, reupholstered in stiff linen to replace the softer standard cushions.

Perhaps her most dramatic piece of furniture is the swooping white fiberglass chaise by Charles and Ray Eames, which Hill likes to see through the eyes of one of her grandsons. "He has pretended it was a snow-capped mountain, a ship, a wave. We've played all kinds of games on it." When one of those games added some scratches to the piece, Hill says, unflinchingly, "It became that much more valuable to me."

When she isn't playing with her grandkids, Hill is a consulting designer for clients who aren't afraid of her improvisational approach. "You don't know what you're going to find until you open up the walls," she says, shrugging. "I don't do sketches."

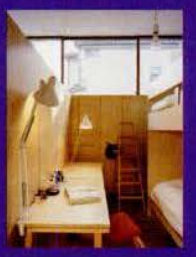
What she does do is bring a refined sense of style and a spirit worth emulating. "When you have less stuff around," Hill says, "I think you can feel more expansive." ■

Story by Femke Bijlsma

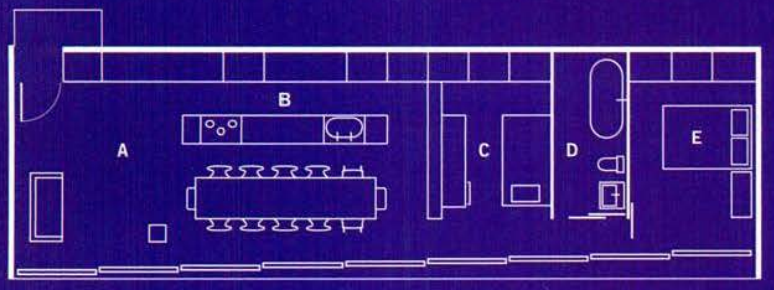
Photos by Adam Friedberg

Family Style

When a Japanese couple asked architects Takaharu and Yui Tezuka to design a small home that would evoke the Italian love of food, informal gatherings, and natural settings, the result was *la dolce vita* in Tokyo.



Project: Engawa House
Architect: Tezuka Architects
Location: Tokyo, Japan
Size: 802 square feet



Engawa House
Floor Plan

A Living / Dining
B Kitchen
C Bedroom
D Bathroom
E Master Bedroom

Large clerestory windows (right) face the street at the Higashibatas' house in Tokyo, optimizing both privacy and natural light within. The architects designed the large dining table (below), which is framed by the open kitchen, the wood-burning stove, and the garden beyond.

The entire interior wall opens, extending the house visually and socially into the small garden that lies between the multigenerational family's two homes. The boys' favorite feature is the soccer goalpost (which doubles as clothesline).

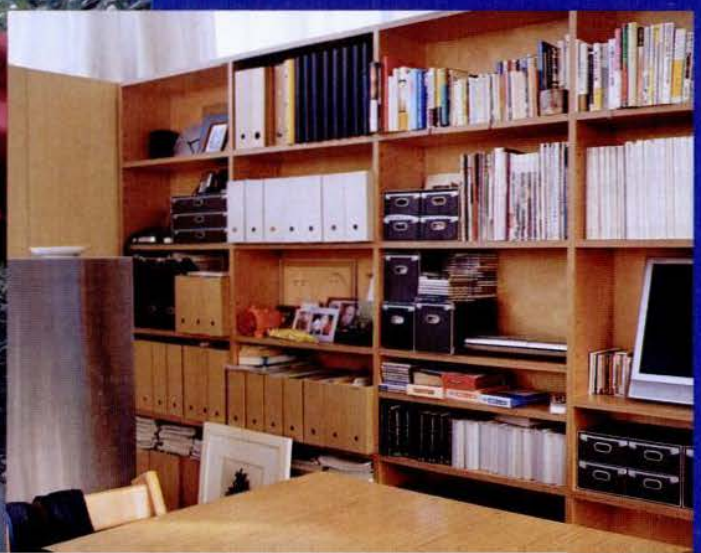
Hidekazu Higashibata, who travels throughout Europe for his job as a fashion merchandiser, was in Italy several years ago when he discovered something unusual and precious that he wanted to bring back home to Tokyo. It wasn't a product, but rather a sensibility. An Italian friend had invited Hidekazu to his farmhouse in Biella, west of Milan, where they spent evenings eating at a long outdoor table and later enjoying discussions by the fireplace in a large room lit by candlelight. The experience made a deep impression on Hidekazu. "When I looked for an architect," he says, "I knew I had to find someone who was capable of understanding that sort of lifestyle."

The obvious answer presented itself in the work of one particular architect—or rather, two: the husband and wife team of Takaharu and Yui Tezuka. Since founding their practice in 1994, the Tezukas have, to increasing renown, built a science museum, a hospital, commercial and apartment complexes, and a flight of single-family homes, all characterized by a strong relationship between interior and exterior space. Their residential projects place special emphasis on indoor-outdoor living, with configurations that include rooftop floor plans, glass façades that can open 360 degrees, decks, verandas, and viewscapes. The names of several of their single-family projects—Observatory Room House, Big Window

House, A House to Catch the Sky (versions I, II, III, and IV, no less)—reflect the Tazukas's quite literal environmental awareness.

During a stint in the United Kingdom (where Takaharu worked for Richard Rogers), the couple developed a personal attachment to what they see as hallmarks of a European lifestyle. "People there have more free time, and they know how to enjoy it well," Takaharu says. "The European influences on our architecture are the lofty spaces and high ceilings, the firmness of the details, and the outward orientation of the interiors." Yui adds, "And the fireplaces, of course." Moreover, in contrast to the ongoing popularity of plastics and other synthetic materials in Japanese architecture, they favor a palette of steel, wood, and concrete. And, above all, they think of the home as a gathering place, especially at mealtimes—another cultural departure, since Japanese tend to dine out in groups rather than at someone's house. Yui, who notes that she and Takaharu both love to cook, says, "We consider the kitchen and a big table crucial for a house."

Even before he learned of the couple's design philosophy, Hidekazu was hooked by a photo of the Tezukas he happened to see in a magazine. "In all the usual photos, architects are dressed in black, gazing with pseudointellectual expressions into the camera," he says. "But not ▸



The architects designed a tall unit of closets and open storage (below) to minimize clutter but also echo traditional Japanese architecture—an open plan with no floor-to-ceiling inner walls. The boys' bedroom (right) is compact while providing room for sleep as well as study.

the Tezukas. They are always smiling, dressed colorfully, looking relaxed. Plus when I saw that they drive a yellow Deux-Chevaux, I knew for sure they would get my idea."

When Hidekazu and his wife, Miharu, met with the architects to go over their specific needs and desires, they quickly settled on the essentials: an inviting, open living area, with an open kitchen and a wood-burning stove; traditional building materials; and a good overall environment in which to raise their two sons, then ages seven and ten.

There were other family members in the picture as well—the building site was a long, narrow lot running alongside Miharu's parents' house. The Tezukas's task was to create a visual and thematic connection between the existing house and the new one, with a middle ground for the extended family to share.

The resulting long, one-story house can be completely opened on its interior side, which consists of nine sliding glass panels. Some amazing structural acrobatics are carried out by a single steel beam, which spans the 50-foot façade in its entirety. The same steel-beam trick is used on the opposite side of the house, facing the street, where the upper portion of the wall is dedicated to operable clerestory windows.

A tall, expansive shelving and closet unit divides the home's interior into cubicles that serve as bedrooms ▸

The magic wall-disappearing act is accomplished by means of sliding glass panels, which the family tends to leave open almost year-round. Miharu Higashibata says she feels the new home has strengthened the family bond through shared activities like cooking and gardening. The Series 7 chairs are by Arne Jacobsen. The kid's chair is a Tripp Trapp by Stokke. p. 262

and bathrooms, while leaving enough distance from the ceiling so that the interior appears to be one uniform space. In this regard, the house is a modern yet faithful interpretation of traditional Japanese architecture, which often calls for an open floor plan without inner walls.

Another time-honored Japanese design element gave the Higashibatas' house its name: Engawa. The word describes the wide corridor, protected under eaves, that skirts the perimeters of a traditional house. By way of sliding doors, this intermediary space was historically designed to connect a home's interior and exterior. Typically, an engawa would be used in mild weather, as one could comfortably be seated under the edge of the roof even in the rain, and also be protected from wind and sun. It was intended as a passageway from the garden into the house but equally as a place to entertain guests. "Most elderly people in Japan share the image of grandma or granddad sitting in the engawa telling stories to children," says Takaharu.

Miharu's parents' house was built in traditional Japanese style, with an engawa, but one that needed some restorative attention—rather than opening onto a garden, it faced a blank wall. The Tezukas knocked down the wall, creating a larger lot. They situated the new house on the length of the lot, alongside a new garden that extends to the parents' engawa. "Our house doesn't have a real

Even the bathroom can be exposed to the elements—and often is: "We take a bath with the doors wide open," says Miharu. The official "living room" (below) may be the least-frequented locale, since the house and garden combine to create one big, interconnected living space. The whole was conceived as a modern take on the traditional Japanese sheltered veranda, or "engawa."

engawa," observes Yui, "but our plan makes the house itself act like one."

With a grass lawn and a goalpost that also functions as the clothesline, the Higashibata boys are probably the only kids in Tokyo who can play soccer in their own backyard. (The kids also discovered that the house really does have a "second story"—something the architects themselves hadn't considered. It's right there on top of the shelving unit and now accessible by means of a ladder.)

The engawa ethos affords an unusual quality of spaciousness to the house. "Before, we lived in a regular apartment," says Hidekazu. "I would come home, plop down on the sofa, and just watch TV." By contrast, Miharu now says, "My husband is constantly taking care of the garden, and in the winter he chops wood there that we'll burn in the stove in the evenings."

The family keeps the glass wall open almost year-round. "We take a bath with the doors wide open," Miharu reports. "It's wonderful to sit in the hot water, breathing the fresh air and looking at the leaves of the tree." The new home fosters an environment the Higashibatas all appreciate. "Now, we often cook together with the whole family," Miharu says. "We have tea or dinner outside with my parents, and on Sundays I have coffee with a lot of the other mothers. We often say it is as if this house came growing out of the earth." ■

Hidekazu Higashibata wanted to recreate the same sort of feeling he'd experienced on trips to Italy—a long table, leisurely meals, and lengthy conversations. The boys discovered the home's "second story" on top of the cabinetry and, armed with a ladder, like to perch there for better views.

Photos by Eirik Johnson

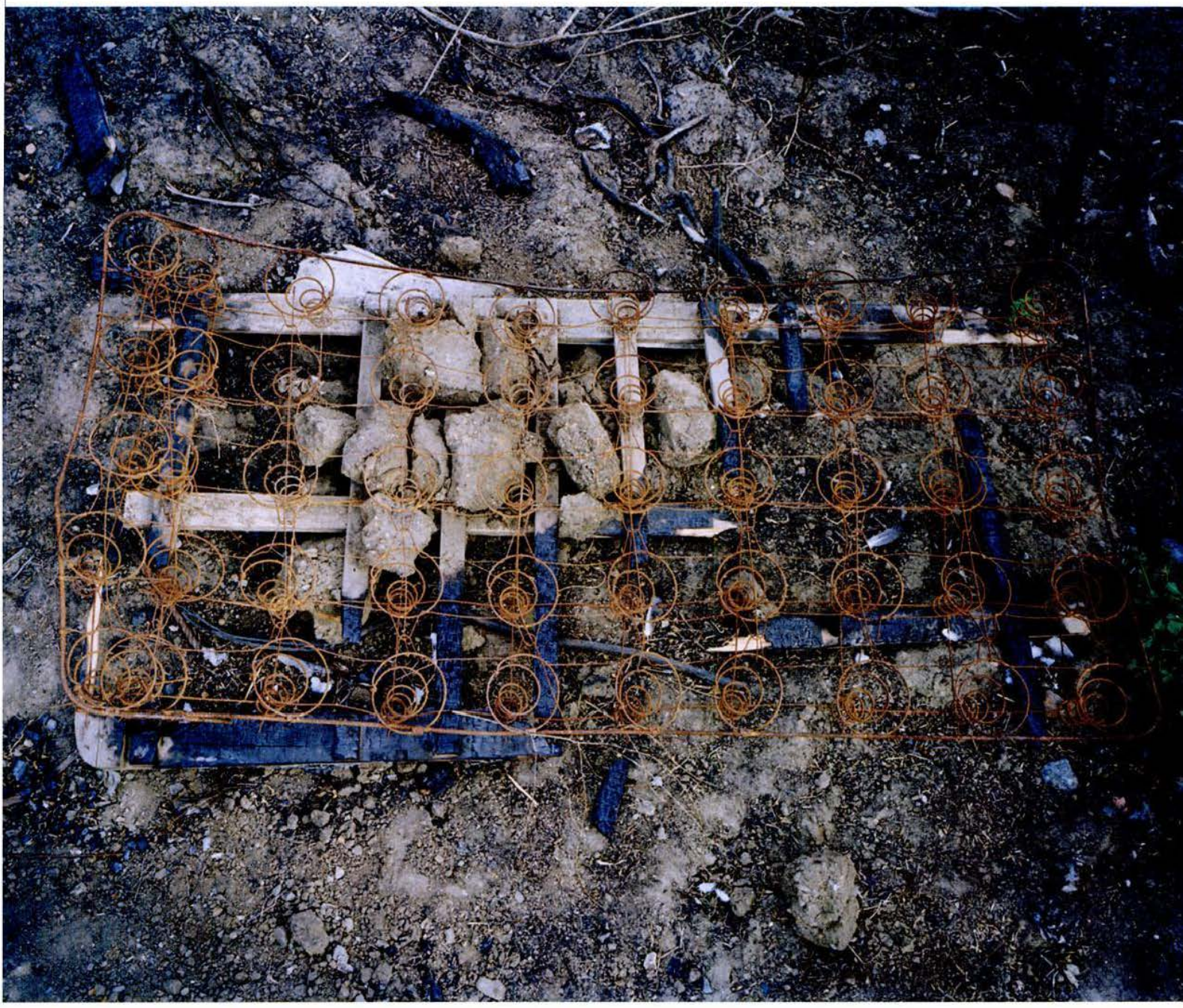
Borderlands

"Stories about place are makeshift things. They are composed with the world's debris."—Michel de Certeau

Untitled (island), 2004

Eirik Johnson's photographs, beautiful in their form, but eerie in their serenity, set the stage for a story. They capture crime scenes of past events and the calm before a storm. As much as man desires to define his surroundings, nature craves chaos. Her borders shift like tides; they cannot be controlled. The uncanny quality of these photos comes from the fact that they shift too. These are liminal places, as physical as they are psychological; always present, but never in focus. Johnson's camera confronts us with evidence of America's uneasy relationship to nature and development. Their beauty makes them fantastic; their meaning makes them foreboding; because although man may move on, nature never forgets. Look long enough, and mysterious mist dissipates to gray foreshadowing: It is the story of the price we pay for living only in the present.

Untitled (coils), 2005



Untitled (tracks), 2005

Untitled (sweater), 2004

Untitled (log), 2002

Untitled (tires), 2002

Story by Alastair Gordon

The Home Stretched

In 1970, Aleksandra Kasuba transformed a standard New York apartment into the *Live-In Environment*, a softly enfolding interior of fabric membranes stretched between the floor and ceiling. To the left, through an oval portal, is the *Group Shelter*, a hairy landscape of shaggy rugs woven by Urban Jupena.

In a cluster of eccentrically shaped buildings set amidst the New Mexico desert, 84-year-old Aleksandra Kasuba lives alone. She has always been an independent visionary, forging her own path forward—whether as an artist, poet-philosopher, or architect. Born in Lithuania in 1923, she studied at the Vilnius Academy of Fine Arts until the occupying Germans shut the school down. She escaped before the Soviet occupation with her husband, sculptor Vytautas Kasuba, and settled in New York.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s she became part of a vital group of young anti-designers who used art, architecture, color, light, sound, and even smell to create singular sensory experiences. Anything seemed possible as they abandoned conventional practice and attempted to translate their experiences into spatial versions of psychedelic flux—what some would call LSDesign. Their goal was to create an ambiguous sense of space in which interiors—and even whole cities—would appear as intangible elements, detached from reality, floating and dematerialized. The right angle, the soul-withering square, the corporate grid would all melt into a web of swirling, non-Euclidean patterns. Domestic architecture was no longer about status or upward mobility. Instead, it was a catalyst for personal transformation: "Change your surroundings and change yourself," as West Coast architect and activist Sim Van der Ryn wrote.

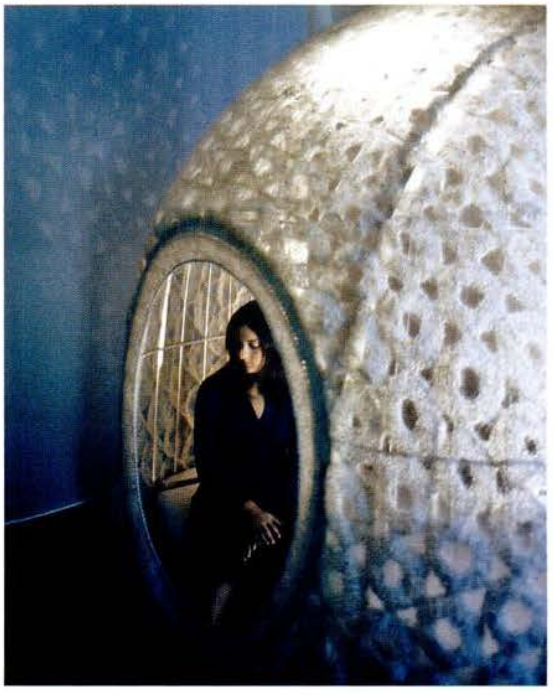
In the mid-1960s, Kasuba was working on a series of marble mosaics and brick-wall installations—some fabricated as individual art pieces, others designed in collaboration with architects. The undulating forms of her mosaics soon led to a new appreciation of form that was less about mass and surface and more about the tension between objects. "Gazing at a reflection of clouds in a street puddle I pondered the nature of illusion, wondering what was real about the real," she wrote in 1993. "As my awareness sharpened, the man-made environment, especially the 90-degree angle, became an increasingly more disturbing and unwelcome intrusion." She began to see space not as an empty gap between objects, but rather as a dynamic continuum. Space, in a sense, pulled invisible strings that conditioned the growth of every shape.

She began work on a scale model for an amorphously curving space called *Cloud Room*. This unrealized project led, in turn, to a series of walk-in environments made from soft, pliant materials. One evening she took her husband's undershirt and, in a breakthrough moment, tried stretching it between two plywood disks. "Sure enough, a shape evolved as if by itself," she recalls. "The shape was not willed, but formed by flows of tension active within the material itself."

In 1969, she constructed her first full-scale tensile fabric environment for "Contemplative Environments," an exhibition at New York's American Craft Museum. Scrims of nylon fabric were stretched from the floor to the ceiling, creating a softly enfolding space awash in colored light. Some visitors felt it was like walking into the spiraling chamber of a nautilus shell; others were reminded of a psychedelic trip.

During a summer trip to Ireland, Kasuba visited an ancient stone circle at Drombeg and experienced a kind of spatial epiphany. "I felt a sudden upsurge, as if the ▸

PHOTO BY NATHANIEL LIEBERMAN / TODD WATTS



A tubular passageway (left) leads back to *Sensory*, where individuals could sit and contemplate a changing array of "color odors." Like the hive of an exotic insect, Kasuba's *Sleeping Bower* (right) was woven from yak hair.

stone circle were boring into space, creating a twisting cylindrical shaft between the sky above and the ground under my feet," she says. With this cyclonic uplift in mind, she returned to New York and attempted to recapture the experience with *Live-In Environment* (1971). She transformed one floor of a brownstone on West 90th Street into a series of seven amorphous areas, called space shelters, that reconfigured notions of home by combining primitive and space-age concepts. There would be no hierarchy of conventional spaces, no linear progressions, no straight walls or right-angled corners to constrict flow. Partitions made from translucent fabric membranes in glowing hues were held in place by wire hoops and strips of lattice. Rooms became uterine chambers; floors were covered with thick, earth-colored carpet. Kasuba had developed her own intuitive process of fabrication. "Not a single curve was willed," she says. Instead, she waited for the material to tell her how to proceed: "Each shape acquired its volumetric expression as if of its own volition."

One space, called *Sensory*, was a spiraling tube of fabric with a mirrored floor that reflected light from above. Here, one or two people could sit in contemplation and experience the changing spectrum of "color odors," which were "conducted" by Danuté Anonis, a consulting chemist-perfumer, and accompanied by computer-generated sounds composed by Emmanuel Ghent. An adjacent area called *Greenery* was filled with plants and beds of thick moss. A gently sloping ramp led to the cavelike, Barbarella-esque *Group Shelter;* landscaped with pillows and shaggy rugs woven in deep blues and greens by Urban Jupena, the space could house a dozen people lounging on its squishy mounds and growing intimate around a mirror set into the floor as if it were a pond. At the far end of Kasuba's fallopian maze was *Sleeping Bower*, which served as Kasuba's bedroom: a domed chamber made from yak hair knitted into a cellular pattern by Silvia Heyden. One visitor likened it to the hive of an "exotic, heavenly insect."

In the spring of 1972, Kasuba took her investigations outdoors. On the banks of a pond in Woodstock, New York, she and 14 students from the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan fabricated a structure that recalled both a butterfly's cocoon and a Native American teepee. As with her other soft environments, the process of construction was nonlinear and intuitive. She followed signals from the light, the wind, the natural elements of the site. "The shape was not preconceived," Kasuba remembers. "The approach was spontaneous throughout." A system of ropes, hoops, and wooden strips served as a loosely assembled armature for 10-by-40-foot swaths of nylon fabric. This time, tree trunks and branches ▸

PHOTOS BY NATHANIEL LIEBERMAN / TODD WATTS (PASSAGEWAY), ILSE MESSNER REESE (SLEEPING BOWER)

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In 1972, working with a group of art students, Kasuba built a temporary shelter overlooking a pond in the woods of Woodstock, New York. The structure was made from white fabric stretched between different trees and anchored to the ground with stones.

provided structural integrity. Loose edges of fabric were sewn together by hand, and piles of stones anchored the fabric to the ground. A flap of cloth served as the front door. "The Woodstock project made me realize that tension is not an adversary but a silent partner," says Kasuba. "It cannot possibly err."

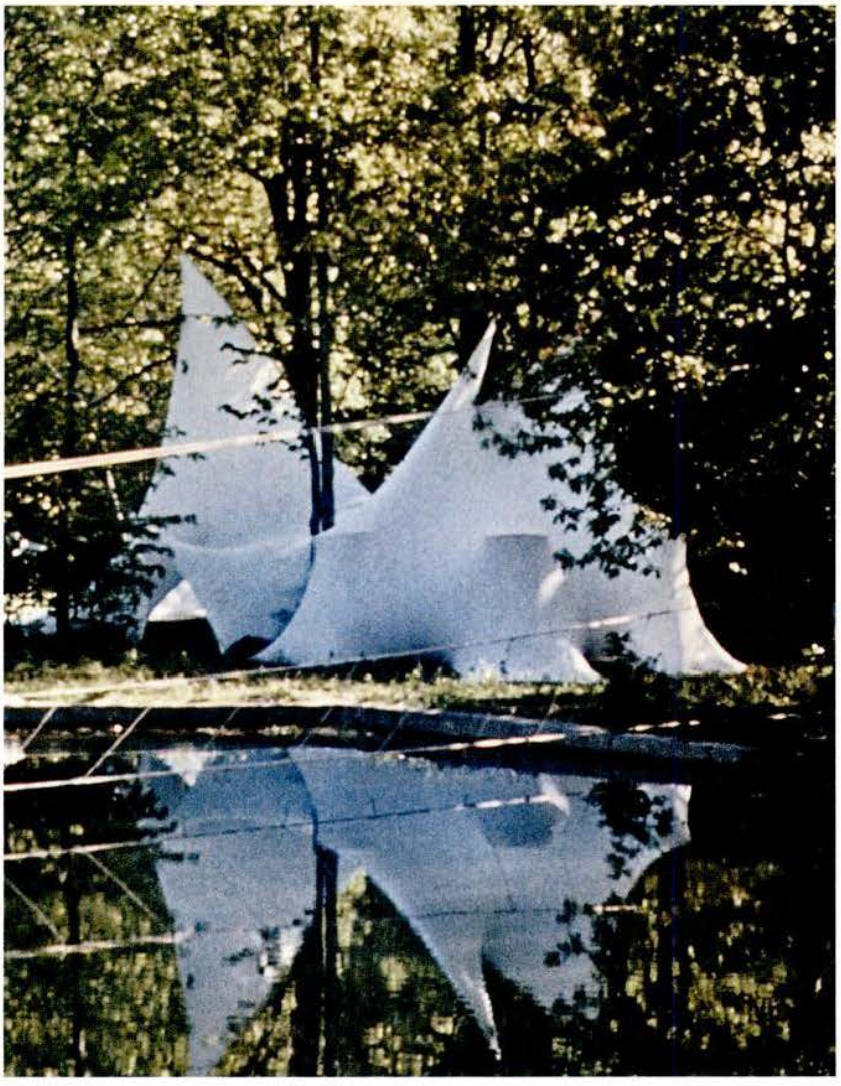
Over the next 20 years, Kasuba continued to develop her membrane theories through installations at museums and universities. At the State University of New York at Potsdam, she used fabric forms illuminated with fluorescent lights covered with blue and green Plexiglas. For her *20th Century Environment* (1973), she transformed a gallery and rotunda inside the Carborundum Museum of Ceramics in Niagara Falls, New York: Fabric shapes were stretched between metal runners on the floor and plywood frames hung from the ceiling. In 1975, at the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco, Kasuba created *Spectral Passage*, seven stretch-fabric environments lit from within and mounted in the museum's main gallery. The shape of each structure was determined by a corresponding color. Red, for instance, produced a "round, swelling" space, while blue produced a "tall, crisp" form.

In 1997, following her husband's death, Kasuba migrated once more—this time to the high desert of New Mexico. "It was like a whole new wind blowing," she says. "I had exhausted the possibilities of New York." On a car trip through California she noticed a group of odd rock formations cropping up near the Sierra Nevada mountains. Sitting in the passenger seat, she pulled out a sketchbook and started making drawings for a new kind of shelter. "All of the shapes I had done before suddenly found their landscape," she says. "I needed rocks."

In 2001, she purchased a 70-acre tract near the town of Estancia, or as she puts it, "in the middle of nowhere." The land's most conspicuous feature is a pile of red sandstone rocks not unlike those she saw in California. "I came out to build and live in isolation like a hermit," she explains. "My closest neighbors are the coyotes, rattlesnakes, and road runners."

Kasuba's drawings for the site were transformed into three-dimensional models that featured arching walls topped by undulating, free-form roofs similar to the soft membranes of her early installations. But she still had to figure out how to transform the models into buildings. "Workmen would come by and say, 'You don't need a hammer, you need a needle and thread,' " she jokes.

The first dwelling to be built was her own house, set in the middle of the rock mound. She settled for a flat roof because she didn't yet know how to build the complicated membrane roof the original drawings called for. "I needed a place to live," she laments. Kasuba moved into the ▸



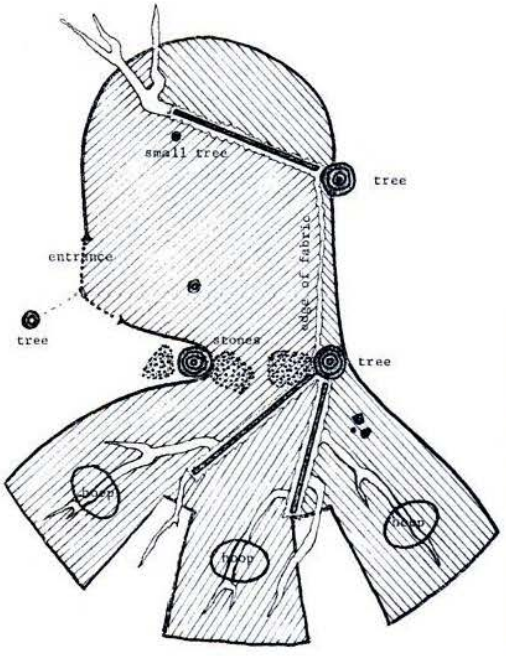
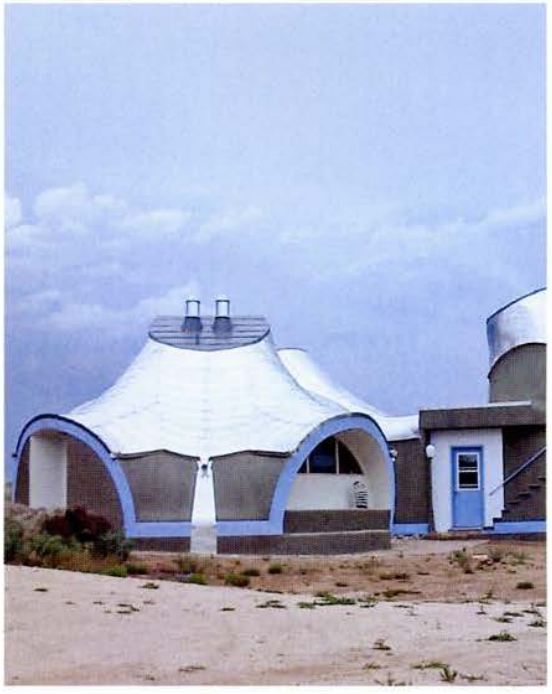


PHOTO COURTESY WBQC2, DRAWING BY ALEKSANDRA KASUBA



Kasuba's latest creations are a series of small, eccentrically shaped buildings in the desert of New Mexico. The first version of her studio and kitchen buildings (left) were painted with bands of color. The final version of the kitchen (right) is clad with aluminum shingles that reflect the desert sky.

house in August 2002. A month later, her building crew broke ground for two experimental shell buildings located south of the main house: a semicircular kitchen building and an oblong studio/guest house.

"It gelled very slowly," says Kasuba of how she developed a method for turning her ephemeral visions into solid, weatherproof shelters. First, concrete foundations were laid and shaped wood frames erected. Several wire cables were stretched from small oval-shaped roof plates and secured to the edges of the wood frames. Then, overlapping lengths of chicken wire held together with metal upholsterers' hog rings were pulled and stretched between the frames to produce the undulating forms dictated by the arrangement of the frames.

The chicken wire was covered with wire mesh pre-pleated four-and-a-half-inches thick on the outside, and with felt-lined metal lath on the inside. Polyurethane foam was then sprayed onto the pleated mesh for insulating and waterproofing. Another layer of metal lath was laid over the foam and then covered by two coats of stucco. The interior walls were given two coats of plaster. Each successive layer further reinforced and strengthened the curving forms; the resulting shell was approximately seven inches thick.

The shells were finished by the fall of 2003, but it wasn't until 2005 that Kasuba was able to clad the metal roofs. She used 54 sheets of aluminum that were cut with water jets into curved, uniform 48-by-18-inch bands and overlapped like shingles to accentuate the tensile forces of the sculptural forms.

In need of a drainage system, she leaned toward the decorative. "Here we will have gargoyles," she told her builders, cupping her hands together to make a spout. And that's exactly what they fabricated: At the lowest points of the roofs' valleys, aluminum hands funnel and guide rushing rainwater to the ground. "I just thought, why not make hands," says the artist. Now completed, the outbuildings rise up from the desert plane, their stucco walls painted the same color as the earth.

Surrounded by open wilderness, the glistening roofs of Kasuba's home meet the sky, as if carrying on a secret dialogue. Their reflective sheathing is reminiscent of a pleated garment or an armadillo's armor. But there is a hint of something else—something of another culture, another era. While for so many years Kasuba's designs lit a path forward, here one can't help but consider the 18th-century gables of her native Lithuania, as if she had explored so many mutations of a single idea only to arrive, full-circle, exactly where she started.

"There are no big ideas here," the designer claims. "It's all quite simple." ■

PHOTOS COURTESY KASUBA WORKS

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Story by Oren Safdie

Illustrations by Mike Perry

Habitat '67 was designed by Moshe Safdie as one of 90 pavilions created for the 1967 International and Universal Exposition, or Expo '67, the World's Fair held in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The iconic building, which has since become condominiums, is composed of interlocking modular units meant to integrate a variety of private housing types and income levels in an apartment-type structure.

My father's prefabricated housing project, Habitat '67, broke ground in April of 1965. The building, which grew out of his bachelor's thesis, came to be regarded as one of the touchstone buildings of Montreal's Expo '67. There are many twists and turns in the story of how the building came to be, but, simply stated, it was born at the fortuitous juncture of social and political change, Canada's coming-of-age as a progressive country, and a young architect's naive determination to realize his vision. As it happens, Habitat's groundbreaking also coincided with the realization of another of my father's projects: me. And thus much of my early history is entwined with the building's: While most children played with Legos, I lived in them. But, for me, Habitat is not simply the place where I grew up; it is also a symbol of idealism as well as a reminder of loss.

My first memory of experiencing Habitat as architecture rather than as my home coincided with my first job as the building's paperboy. Not only did I have to make sure that the paper hit each doorstep by 6:45 a.m., I was also responsible for collecting payment. Needless to say, I quickly familiarized myself with the complex's incongruous floor layout—not to mention the tenants. The openness of Habitat's structure, along with the staggered skywalks—the elevators only stop on floors 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, and 10, and you walk up or down to the floors in between—enabled me to deliver the paper to several levels simultaneously. Each morning, I would roll up the papers with elastic bands and place them in a shopping cart. Strolling down the skywalk of the sixth floor, I was able to drop a paper four flights down to the doorstep of apartment 239, and then lob a paper up three flights ▸

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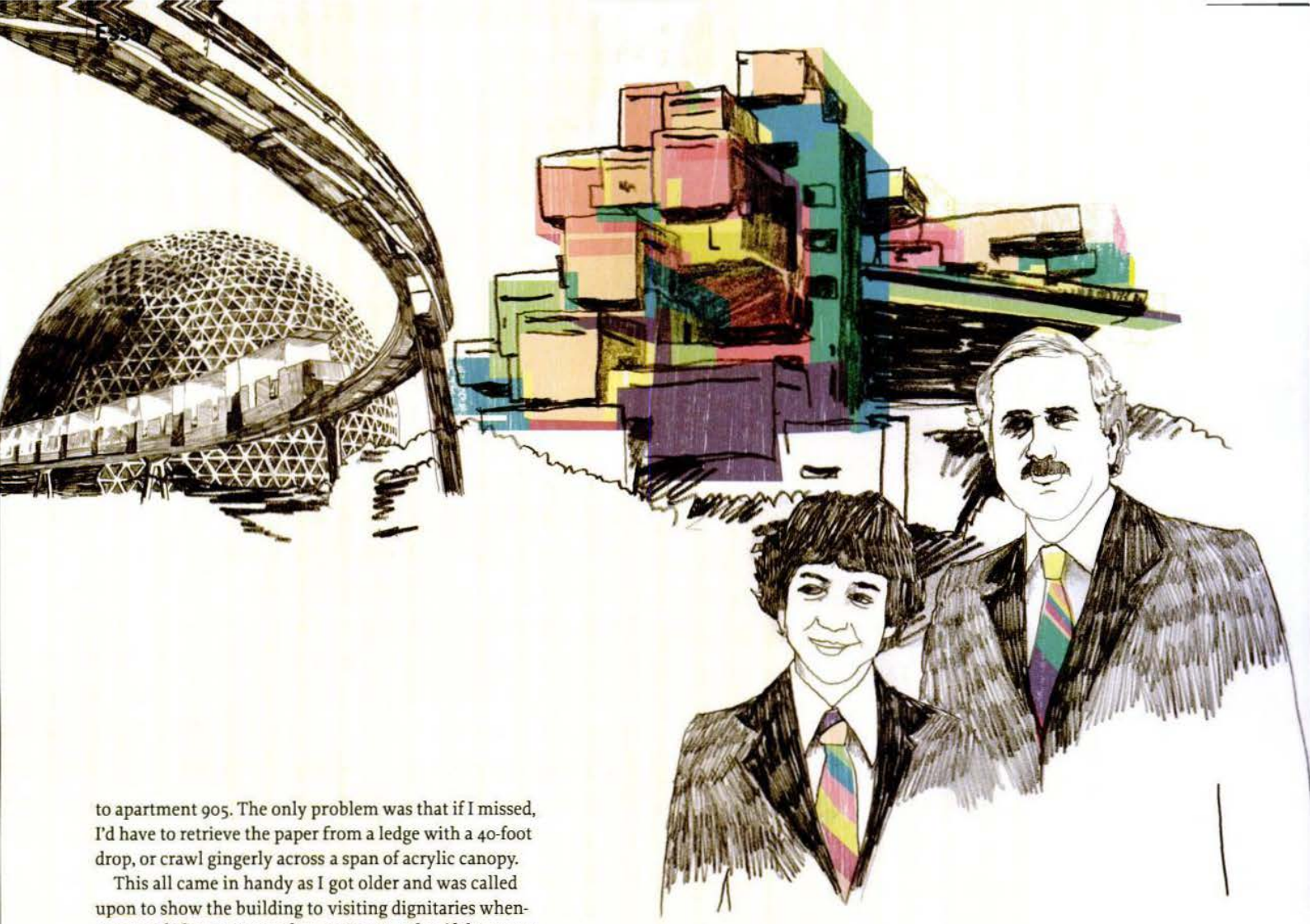

to apartment 905. The only problem was that if I missed, I'd have to retrieve the paper from a ledge with a 40-foot drop, or crawl gingerly across a span of acrylic canopy.

This all came in handy as I got older and was called upon to show the building to visiting dignitaries whenever my father was out of town. It seemed as if there was always a prominent Czech architect or a city planner from Kuala Lumpur passing through Montreal, in need of a tour. I usually started in the garage, careful to point out the skylights, which brought in natural light. I'd then lead my visitors up to the second-floor plaza, where they could glimpse the inner workings of the structure, then to the third-floor lobby, where cool gusts of air blew off the fountains. After zigzagging through the other floors, we'd finish the tour at my family's apartment on the tenth floor. I would invite the guests in to test out the prefabricated fiberglass bathroom, sit back in the apartment's custom-made built-in furniture, and enjoy some tea while gazing out at the city through the floor-to-ceiling windows. If a head of state came for a visit, the whole thing turned into a banquet, my entire family dressing up like we were ambassadors of some imaginary nation. I remember, in particular, shaking hands with Indira Gandhi as a throng of reporters snapped our picture, and the time I had 15 minutes to squeeze fresh orange juice for 30 people after it was discovered that President Senghor of Senegal was Muslim, and that all the champagne on ice would not be appreciated.

Being adaptable was something I learned early on growing up in Habitat. Because the building was so isolated from the rest of Montreal, there were very few children around. It forced us all to be friends regardless of language or age; there was an unspoken understanding that we had been dragged here by our parents—away from schools, shops, and movie theatres. According to them, it was for the greater good, and we were left to make the best of the situation. I think we did. During winters, we found freedom in the vast open fields where we built sophisticated snow forts with secret dens and multiple light wells. When spring came and the snow melted, we took to our bikes and rode across the Concorde Bridge to Île Sainte-Hélène, where the entire abandoned Expo site served as our private playground. Whether it was the hexagonal frames of Arthur Erickson's pyramidal theme pavilion, or the wide-open spaces of Buckminister Fuller's geodesic dome, each ►

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pavilion was unique and bold, and you couldn't help but feel inspired. Every year, rumors spread about the site being fixed up and opened as a permanent exhibition, but the buildings continued to stand vacant, deteriorating slowly, until eventually Expo was demolished.

When I turned 13, my parents threw me a bar mitzvah that people at Habitat still talk about today. It felt as if the entire building participated in my passage into manhood. Unfortunately, it was also around this time that my parents decided to separate for good. There is never one reason why marriages break up, but it seemed to me that my father's early fame complicated matters. For five years, things went back and forth, but when my father was offered a teaching position at Harvard and moved to Boston, my mother decided not to go with him. I was already used to the separation that comes with split families—he often traveled for work half the year—but this separation felt different. Suddenly all of Habitat's wonderful details, once so inspiring, served only as a reminder of his absence. Surprisingly, my mother continued to live there for many years, even after my sister and I went to college. She had formed close friendships with many of the tenants, and she was with the building from the beginning. In *Beyond Habitat*, my father wrote that if they ever gave out honorary degrees in architecture, my mother most certainly deserved one.

Today, Habitat has been turned into a condominium complex. Some tenants have bought two or three apartments and broken through walls to create mega-apartments out of five or six of the original modular units. Most of the original bathrooms and kitchens have been refurbished to suit contemporary tastes. The exterior of the building is much the same, except for dozens of new glass solariums that enclose terraces and give owners an extra room—especially useful during the long winters. Next door, there are two nondescript glass and concrete high-rise apartment buildings, as if to suggest a textbook comparison for architecture students. Across the Concorde Bridge, the remaining frame of the geodesic dome has been converted into an ecological museum, and the French pavilion has been taken over by the Montreal Casino. Yet, 40 years after Habitat first opened its doors to the public, it continues to thrive as a proud community. The concept has never been successfully reproduced elsewhere—but perhaps cities need to reach a point of crisis before people begin to pay attention. As for me, no matter where or how I live, Habitat will always be a part of who I am. ■

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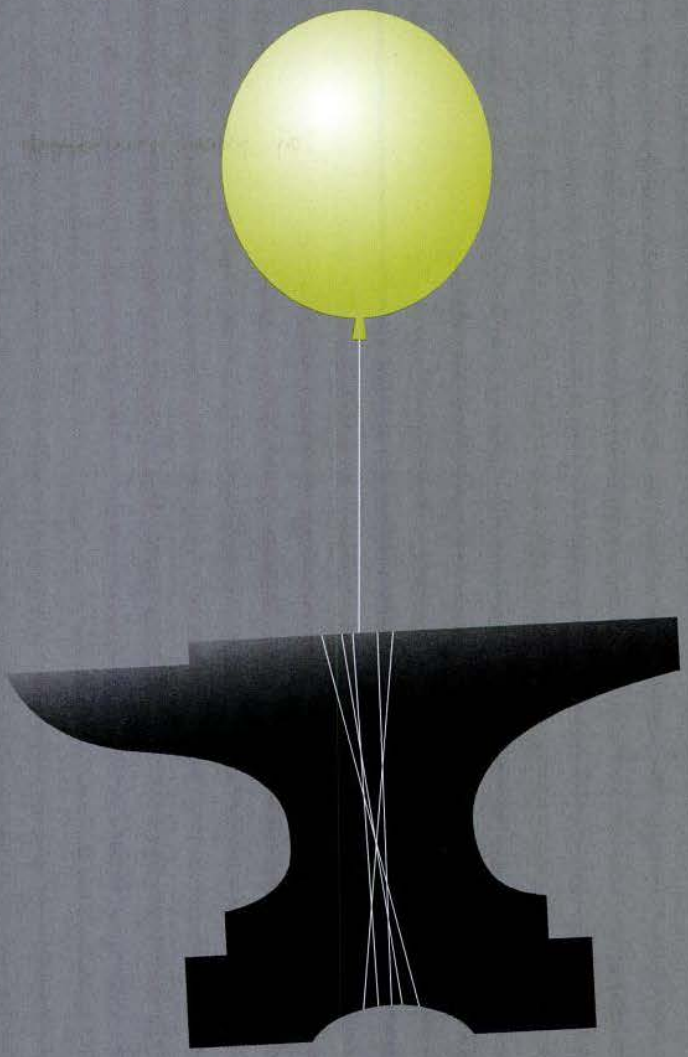

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Story by Michelle Hoffman | Photos by Jessica Antola

Parsing Paris

Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec in front of North Tiles, a modular textile space divider designed for Kvadrat's Stockholm showroom. Outside their studio, people forging their careers in creative fields are part of what Erwan calls Belleville's new "working class."

Damned if it does and slammed when it won't, Paris has a hard time with the notion of change. One of the world's most visited cities—the Valhalla of the tourist circuit—has had a lot of good reasons to stay the way it is. Its classic layout, forged in the brutal urban reconstruction led by Baron Haussmann, has been successful enough to last virtually unmodified for a century and a half—and to inform the aesthetics of at least a dozen other cities around the world. There's a pleasing physical and spatial uniformity to much of the city, a feat that would be impossible to recreate anywhere in the world today, save an iron-fisted dictatorship or theme park. And, of course, any changes would infuriate Paris-lovers, both highbrow culture mavens and buyers of the Eiffel Tower snow dome. People seem to need the city to remain as it is because it serves as some immutable reference—they'll always have Paris.

But it has even more reasons to change. Ranking among the world's densest cities, Paris nevertheless lacks housing—it would take more than 100,000 units to satisfy current demand. Two million inhabitants are crunched *intra muros*, hemmed in by 9 million others in the larger metropolitan area. Traffic snarls. Pollution mushrooms. Worst of all, the city is falling behind in the image game. Modernists mock it as a Sleeping Beauty and say it lacks the chutzpah for contemporary design. Business backers say it's losing out to London in attracting multinational companies, and that its tax base is deflating. Even the mayor, Bertrand Delanoë, who has so far failed to muster enough support to scrap the rule limiting building height to 120 feet, has scolded Parisians for fuddy-duddiness.

Despite the confliction, change is afoot in the supposed *ville-musée*. Some is big—backed by money, master planners, and politicians. It comes in the form of the Plan Local d'Urbanisme, or PLU, which will shape the city's development for the next two decades; several ambitious architectural projects have been announced in recent ▸

The rue du Faubourg du Temple cuts through lower Belleville and its cultural cross sections: Chinese dim-sum palaces to halal butchers, French pastry shops to bric-a-brac stores serving a variety of ethnic communities.

months, including a 980-foot eco-skyscraper called Phare ("the Lighthouse") designed by Californian Thom Mayne, which is supposed to anchor a renaissance in the La Défense business district. A major transport rethink is under way, and has led to the return of the tramway last year after 70 years off the tracks. Bike lanes, bus routes, and reduced space for cars are also part of a plan to transform gridlocked thoroughfares into "civilized spaces."

Change, too, starts small. Some describe it as gentrification, others as the inevitable rhythm and flow of local economies. Belleville, in Northeast Paris, is fertile ground for these transformations—it has a hefty stock of turn-of-century industrial buildings, as well as gross monstrosities of public housing blocks erected in the 1970s. This neglected outcrop of the capital has long been home to itinerant workers, first from across France in the late 19th century, and now from all over the world—North Africans (both Muslim and Jewish), sub-Saharan Africans, Chinese, and South Asians.

The burgeoning neighborhood's latest stream of migrants come from the land of bourgeois bohemia. Today Belleville is full of bobo artists, admen aspiring to artiness, young craftsmen inhabiting the former workshops of old craftsmen, and people who simply appreciate the neighborhood's cultural kaleidoscope. Beyond the Chinese dim sum palaces and down a twisted street, past housing projects and through the courtyard doors of a cracked and ragged building housing machinists, you'll find the studio of designers, and brothers, Erwan (31) and Ronan Bouroullec (36). Their tender ages belie their vast experience—they have designed furnishings for Vitra, Cappellini, Ligne Roset, Magis, Kartell, and Galerie Kreo, and environments such as the A-Poc store for Issey Miyake. They are also represented in several major museum collections. I asked Erwan how a country boy from Brittany, makes a home both in a rarefied stratum of the design world and back on the ground in the grittier Belleville millieu. ▸

Paris, France

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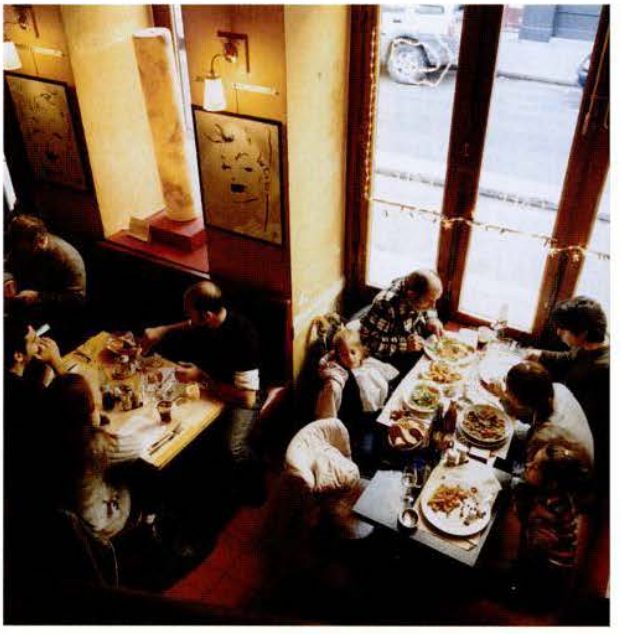
You camped out in the Saint-Denis outside Paris for seven years and have been in the city for four. But you say you're still not Parisian. What does the city look like from an outsider's perspective?

When I moved to Paris, I discovered the people there. It's what I like most about the city. I find them marvelous. I find them wonderfully beautiful. Elegant. I have to say, I'm quite attracted to elegance. Of course, the downside to elegance is snobbery—people can be impossibly snotty and all that. But in Paris people pay attention to what they wear; how they walk, speak, carry themselves. There's this almost classic elegance to them. So many codes.

So you prefer sleek, upscale areas?

No, no. What I mean is that elegance is everywhere. I used to live down on the rue de la Fontaine au Roi [a working-class street in the 11th arrondissement, now trendy and home to boutiques and restaurants]. I consider it to be very stylish. It's like Tokyo. I believe great cities give birth to masters—people far advanced in their understanding of a particular thing. Paris, as a fashion capital, has tons of people with that very heightened sense and attention to style. And that influences everyone. It takes them to a higher level. Anytime I go elsewhere in France, I'm always so disappointed. Really.

In Saint-Denis it was the same thing. There were a lot of Africans. The black men had this tradition of style, of being really well dressed, like Englishmen, with the just-so suit. And then there were all those ghetto kids from the public housing projects, the rough neighborhoods. It's obvious they wear their clothing like armor, like something to found their identity on, to help them deal with who they are, to push back against the world. ►



Paris, France

People-watching can just as well take place at a casual hang-out like L'Autre Café (above) as at the venerable Crillon (left), a "palace hotel" of gilt trimmings and privilege overlooking the Place de la Concorde.

Paris, France

Erwan advises that Paris's finest architecture can be found in its train stations—such as the Gare de Lyon pictured here. "I love all those 19th-century buildings created by engineers who worked in metal," he adds.

Jules Seltzer Associates

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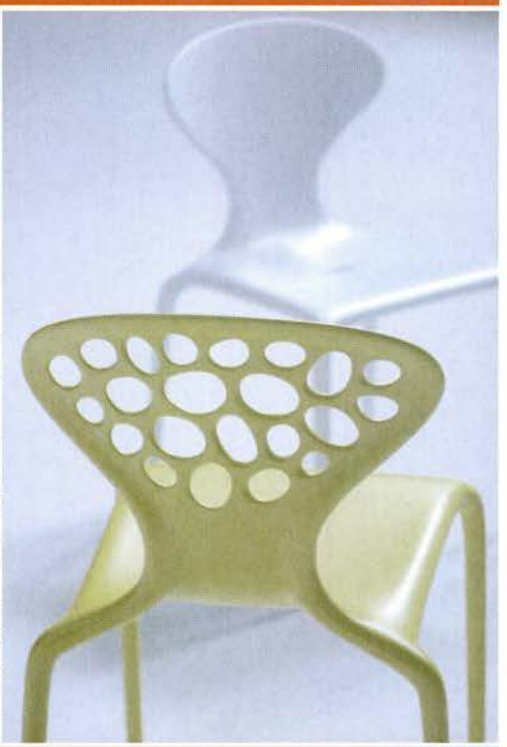

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You sound like an urban voyeur.
There's no perversity in this voyeurism, since people in Paris also put themselves on display. Working in design has educated me to be attentive, to look at and appreciate that which can be seen and touched, rather than appreciating something that needs to be dissected, understood, intellectualized.

You work in the heart of Belleville. Don't you fear you're part of a gentrifying trend slowly wiping out its working-class identity?
Gentrifying isn't happening here. Calling people "bobos" is just another way of talking about those well-dressed people I've been describing, people who may go to the theater but still love this neighborhood. There's this incredible mix in our neighborhood, from top to bottom. I mean, you still have the rue du Faubourg du Temple. The street is like an entire bazaar. It's incredibly matter-of-fact, but violently so—a perfect example of that Parisian mix, where space is free of any kind of structured order. As a designer, it's interesting to be confronted by this profusion of objects that cost nothing, that are absolutely not design, that are either pure utilitarianism or pure kitsch. There's nothing else: no halfway, no subtlety.

If you start from there, then you should wander through the next couple of streets—push open the front doors of buildings, and you'll find these series of amazing courtyards. There are so many old workshops back here, like ours, which are often in the process of being transformed. The neighborhood is constantly improving, it's got a great blend—a little gallery, then a clothing store, then, next to that, an auto mechanic. It's full of people who work in the cinema, graphic design, fashion. I'm not talking about stars, but people who actually exercise the craft. ▶

Paris, France

The most famous flea market, beyond Porte de Clignancourt on the north edge of the city, is a treasure trove for antique hunters, with specialist stands chock-full of items from every decade—from Art Deco on up.

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It's very working-class, but in a new manner. People come to these neighborhoods because they're less expensive; it's a way to maintain creative independence.

Where should we go in Belleville?
Not far from the rue du Faubourg du Temple, there's this great bar, Le 9 Billards. Either it's sordid, or super. It's excellent for people-watching. They give tango classes.

Do you dance?
No. I shoot pool. But Le 9 Billards, it's not really a place for serious pool players. Other local cafés? Le Cannibale, which has a good feel to it, and L'Autre Café, which on weekday afternoons feels like a typical little French brasserie.

Where can you take the pulse of design?
The Galerie Kreo is obviously a great place to visit for art and design. And then there's the ToolsGalerie, which is more oriented toward contemporary design pieces, objects, little things that tend to be more accessible. They show various younger French designers, like Olivier Sidet and Florence Doléac of Radi Designers. And, of course, people who come to Paris should really get up to the flea markets, whether at the Puces de Saint-Ouen or the Porte de Vanves.

What do you avoid in the city?
What I truly don't understand is this love people have for Saint Germain des Prés. I find it incredibly horrible.

Critics complain Paris is a *ville-musée*, a museum city, beautiful but asleep.
I don't give a damn if it's asleep. I don't need more than what I have in Paris. I'm here because I need a certain level of serenity. ►

Paris, France

"I think people see Paris as a *ville-musée* because it has such an extreme sense of time about it," Erwan tells us. "It keeps the trace of things that existed a thousand years earlier. It's a city with depth—the more you hunt and dig, the more clues you discover."

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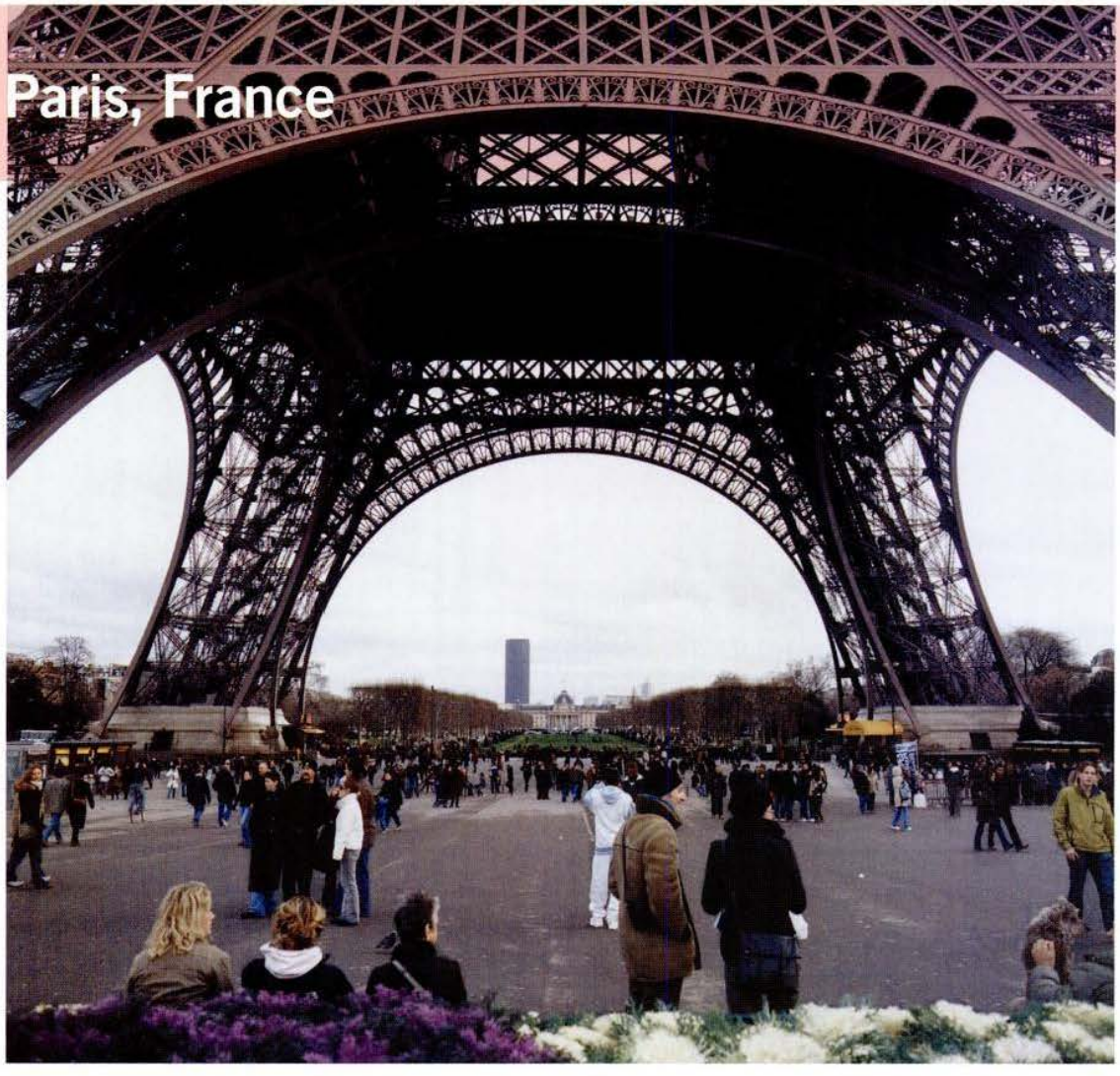
I think people see Paris as a *ville-musée* because it has such an extreme sense of time about it. It keeps the trace of things that existed 1,000 years earlier. It's a city with such depth—the more you hunt and dig, the more clues you discover.

Hotels in Paris must have that depth. Can you recommend any?
I don't really know them, since I don't stay there, but one thing to do is to go have a drink in all the old palace hotels. I have a drink from time to time at the Crillon. It's very Paris—elegant and outdated at the same time. For me a hotel is only beautiful when it has historical depth.

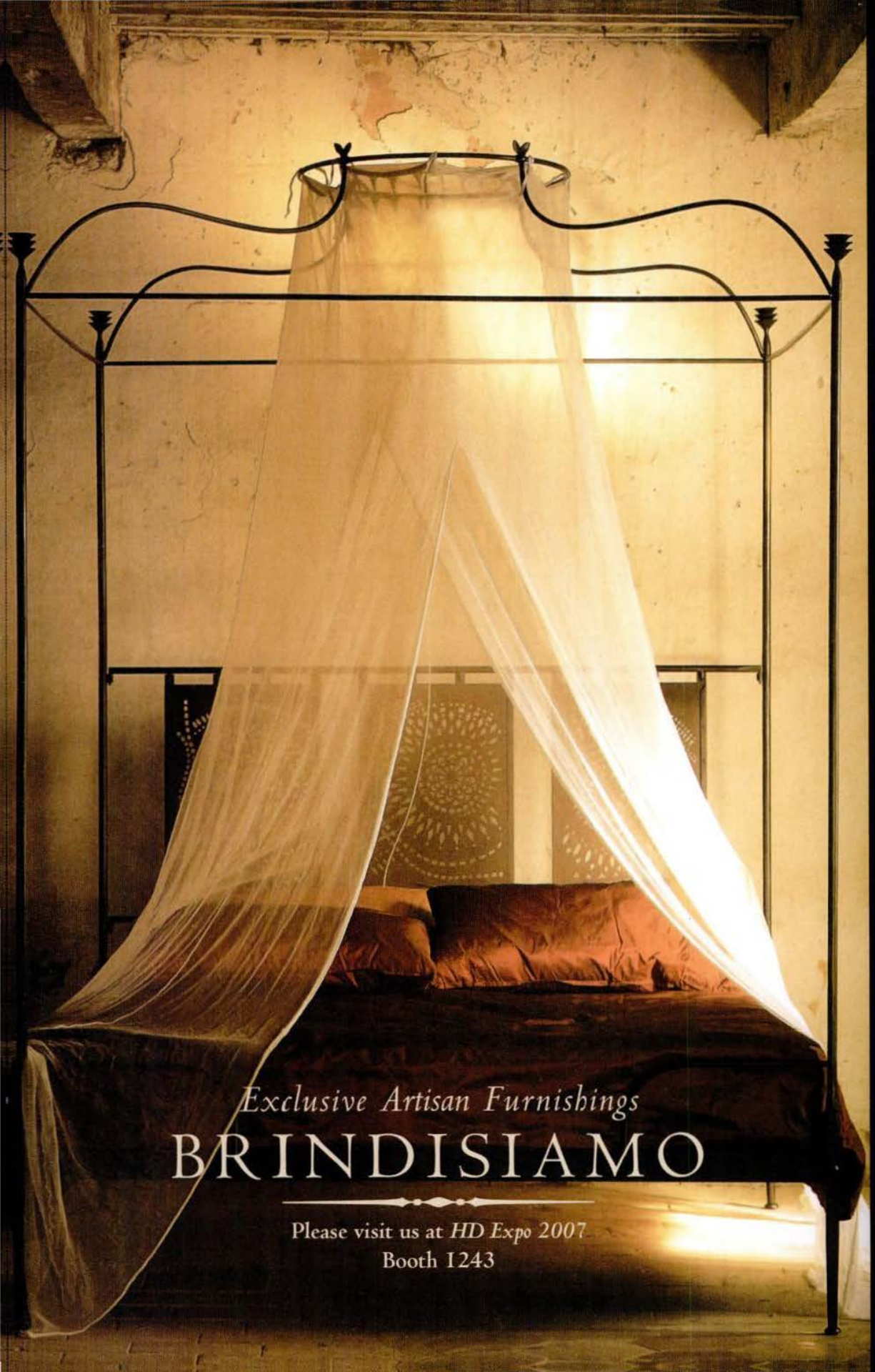
Any monuments worth a visit?
The Eiffel Tower. It's stupid, I know. But it is truly beautiful architecture. The best places in the city, architecturally, are the train stations—Gare de Lyon, Gare de l'Est, Gare du Nord. I love all those 19th-century buildings created by engineers who worked in metal. They crafted these incredible arborescences—which were at once both structural and decorative.

So where do you recommend someone go if they don't want to wait in line to climb the Eiffel Tower but refuse to trespass into run-down courtyards?
There's a great place to have a drink at Place de la Bastille. Down in the Port de l'Arsenal there's a restaurant called Le Grand Bleu. You should absolutely not eat there; it's horrible. But in summer you have to go have a drink. It's below street level; you disappear completely from the city. You can see more, and farther. It's one of those places that offers an amazing perspective. You can forget the city and let your gaze drift. ■

Paris, France



Design landmarks like the Eiffel Tower (left), which raised more than one eyebrow in 1889, are joined by newcomers like the ToolsGalerie in the Marais district (above), which spotlights the work of young French designers.



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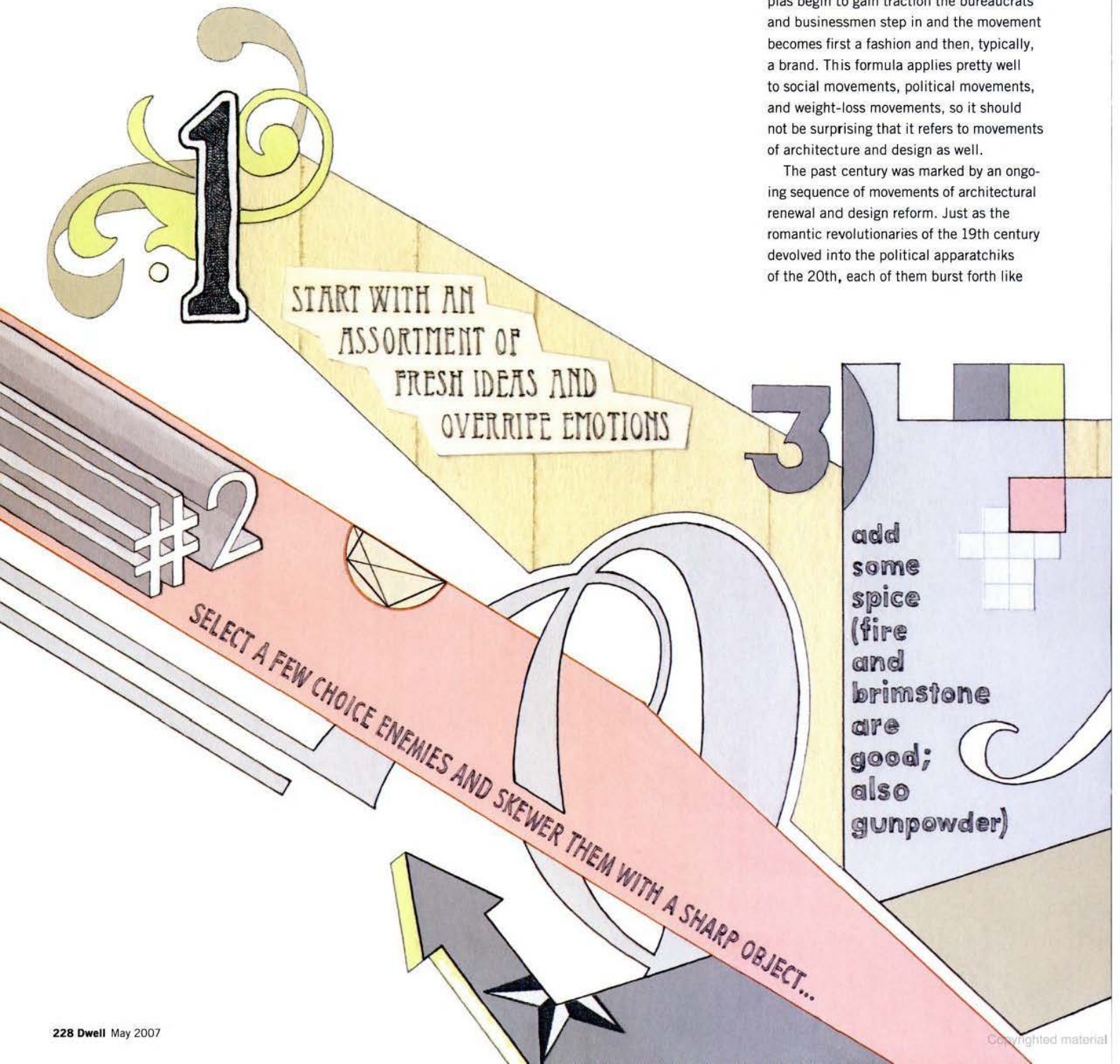
Manifesto Destiny

There is a pivotal point at which an idea becomes a conversation, a conversation turns into a conspiracy, and a conspiracy foments a movement. Then begins the inevitable decline. Initially the people who drive the great movements of reform are idealists and visionaries, but once their private utopias begin to gain traction the bureaucrats and businessmen step in and the movement becomes first a fashion and then, typically, a brand. This formula applies pretty well to social movements, political movements, and weight-loss movements, so it should not be surprising that it refers to movements of architecture and design as well.

The past century was marked by an ongoing sequence of movements of architectural renewal and design reform. Just as the romantic revolutionaries of the 19th century devolved into the political apparatchiks of the 20th, each of them burst forth like



Story by Barry Katz | Illustrations by Tim Tomkinson

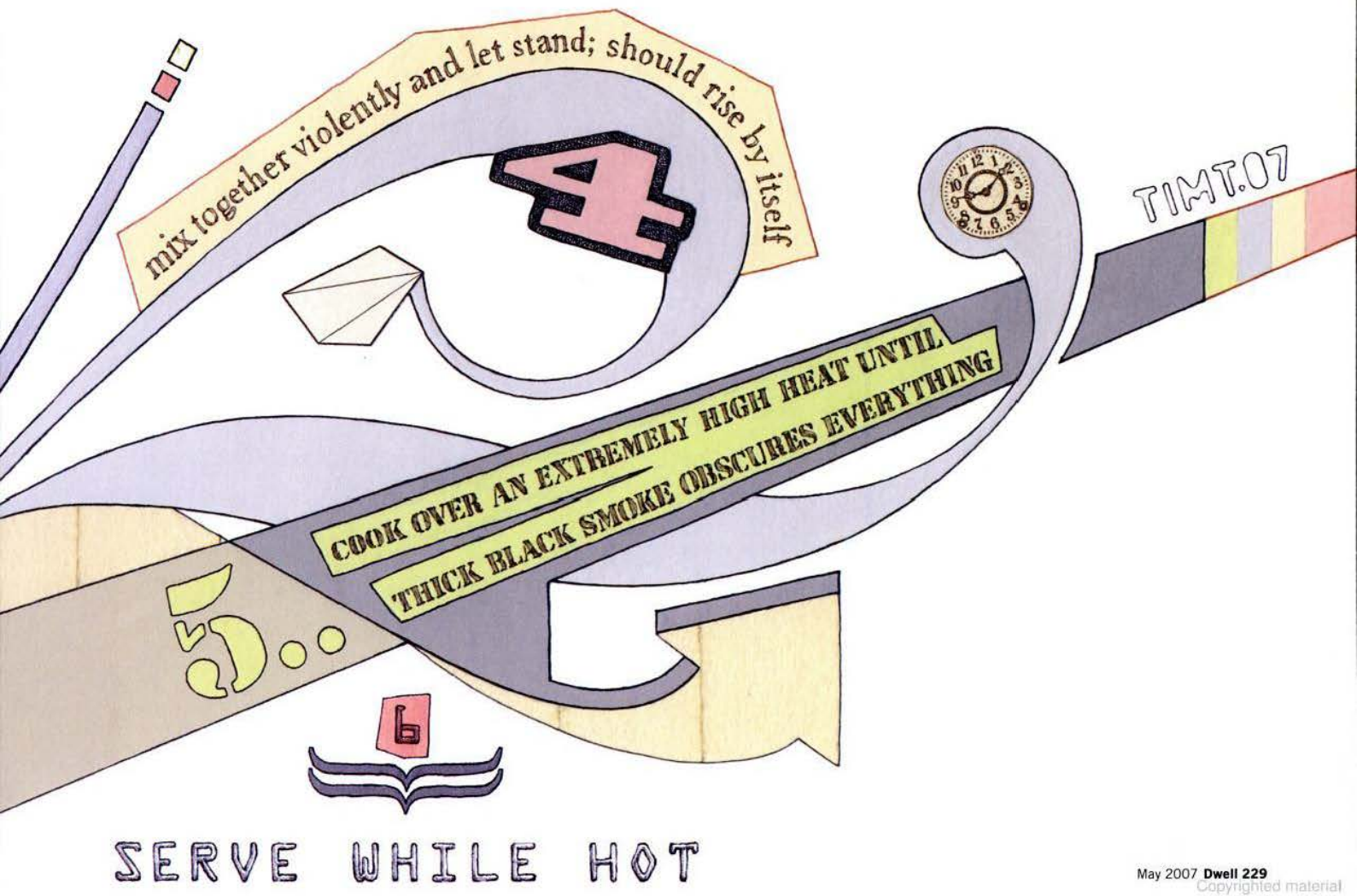
a volcanic eruption, spewing molten manifestos and covering the landscape with houses, furniture, typography, kitchen gadgets, and office buildings, the likes of which the world had never seen—only to harden into the next orthodoxy. Every social scientist has a different name for it, but the pattern is always the same. But what, exactly, is a movement? Where do they come from, and what drives them forward?

A new design movement erupts when the energies of the prevailing one start to show signs of exhaustion, when new ideas cannot gain a hearing and new talent cannot find a place to breathe. Alternatively, events may overtake the old order: the arrival of the automobile, with its demands upon the city; the Depression, and with it the necessity of innovation to inspire a new breed of industrial designers; the World Wars, with their unprecedented logistical requirements, and the World's Fairs, with their vision of possible futures. Old ideas simply may not be adequate to the new realities and these are the circumstances that favor the prophet of reform who descends from the mountaintop, armed with a flaming manifesto under one arm and a prototype under the other.

The manifesto has been the weapon of choice for architecture and design movements for a hundred years, and its verbal pyrotechnics and passionate prose have lent an air of drama to what might otherwise read like a mere procession of styles. Despite the occasional resort to nihilism or hysteria, however, rarely have they left the streets littered with barricades and corpses. Although Valerie Solanas did pump a couple of slugs into Andy Warhol shortly after publishing her SCUM Manifesto in 1968, the general decision to fire bullet points rather than bullets testifies to a belief in the possibility of positive change. Whether mimeographed, scrawled, broadcasted, or blogged, the manifesto is the first portent of a new movement.

Movements and manifestos of modern design are rarely just about design; they are sweeping demands, as the futurist Giacomo Balla put it in the aftermath of the Great War, to "decompose and recompose the universe." The proximate target may be a flaccid use of ornament or a timid way of building, but these are but symptoms of a deeper cultural malaise that cannot be cured except by the transformation of civilization as we know it. The most dramatic of the century's manifestos, even more than the movements to which they gave birth, launched a frontal attack on the complacent institutions of bourgeois society.

Movements and manifestos are the drivers of modern architecture and design, the fuse and the dynamite, the windup and the pitch. ▸



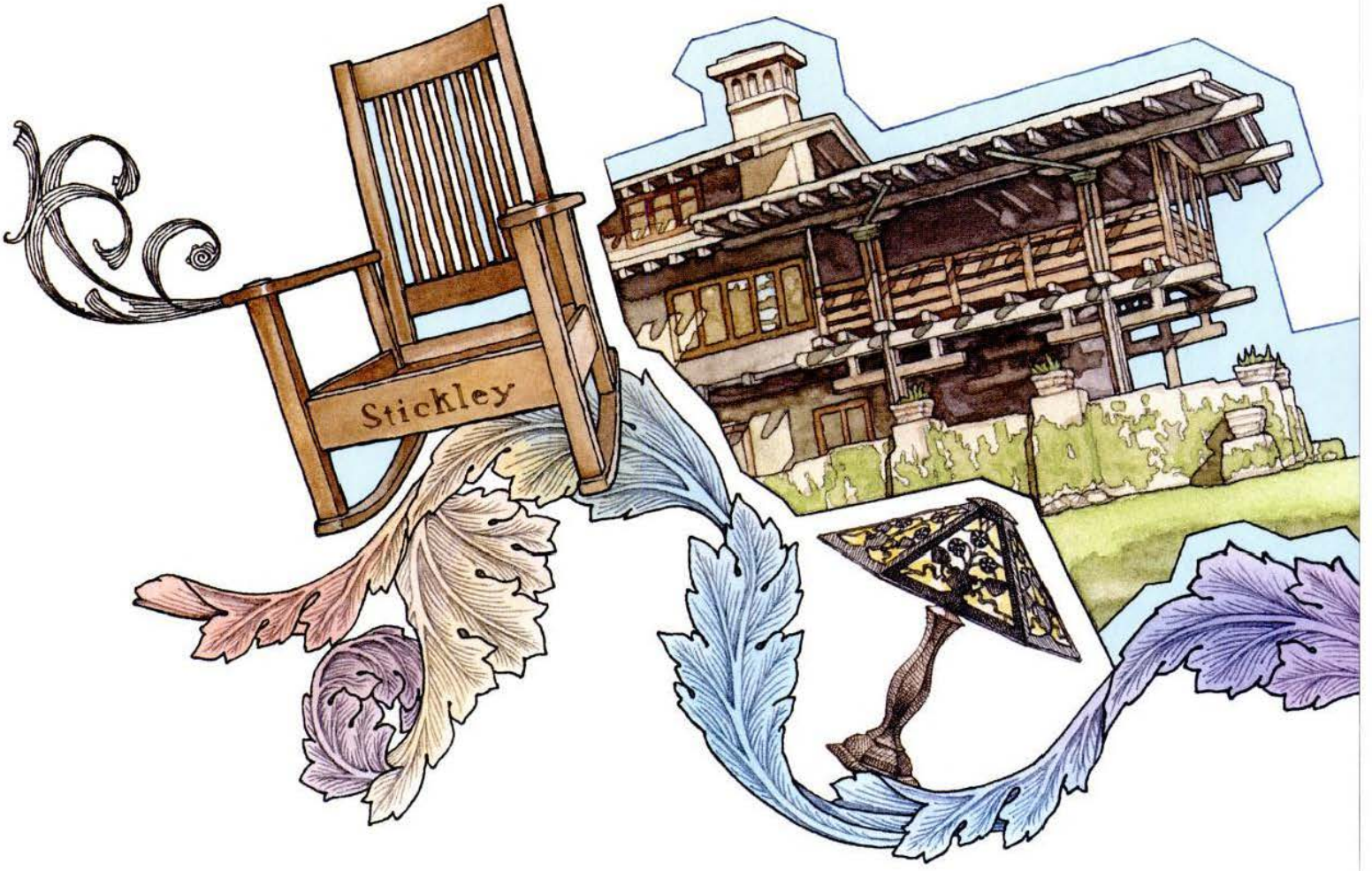
The Arts and Crafts Movement

Manifesto:
William Morris, "The Lesser Arts of Life" (1877)

It is just over a hundred years, now, since the Arts and Crafts movement launched the program of modern architecture and design; some see it as the last gasp of the 19th century—with its mistrust of the machine and flights of medieval fancy—but it was really the first breath of the 20th.

The moving force behind the Arts and Crafts period was that irrepressible walking manifesto, William Morris, the Victorian gentleman who had come to despair over the separation of beautiful but useless art objects and useful but ugly factory products. How to reconcile them? How to bring honest, well-made products into the lives and homes of common people? "I do not want art for a few," he thundered in his riveting manifesto of 1877, "any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few!"

Although the Arts and Crafts movement may call to mind the solid oak furniture of the Stickleys, the intricate wallpaper designs of Morris, or the lovingly illuminated books from the Kelmscott Press, it was always meant to be more than a style. It was a call for a different kind of life, a simpler, more honest one. ▶



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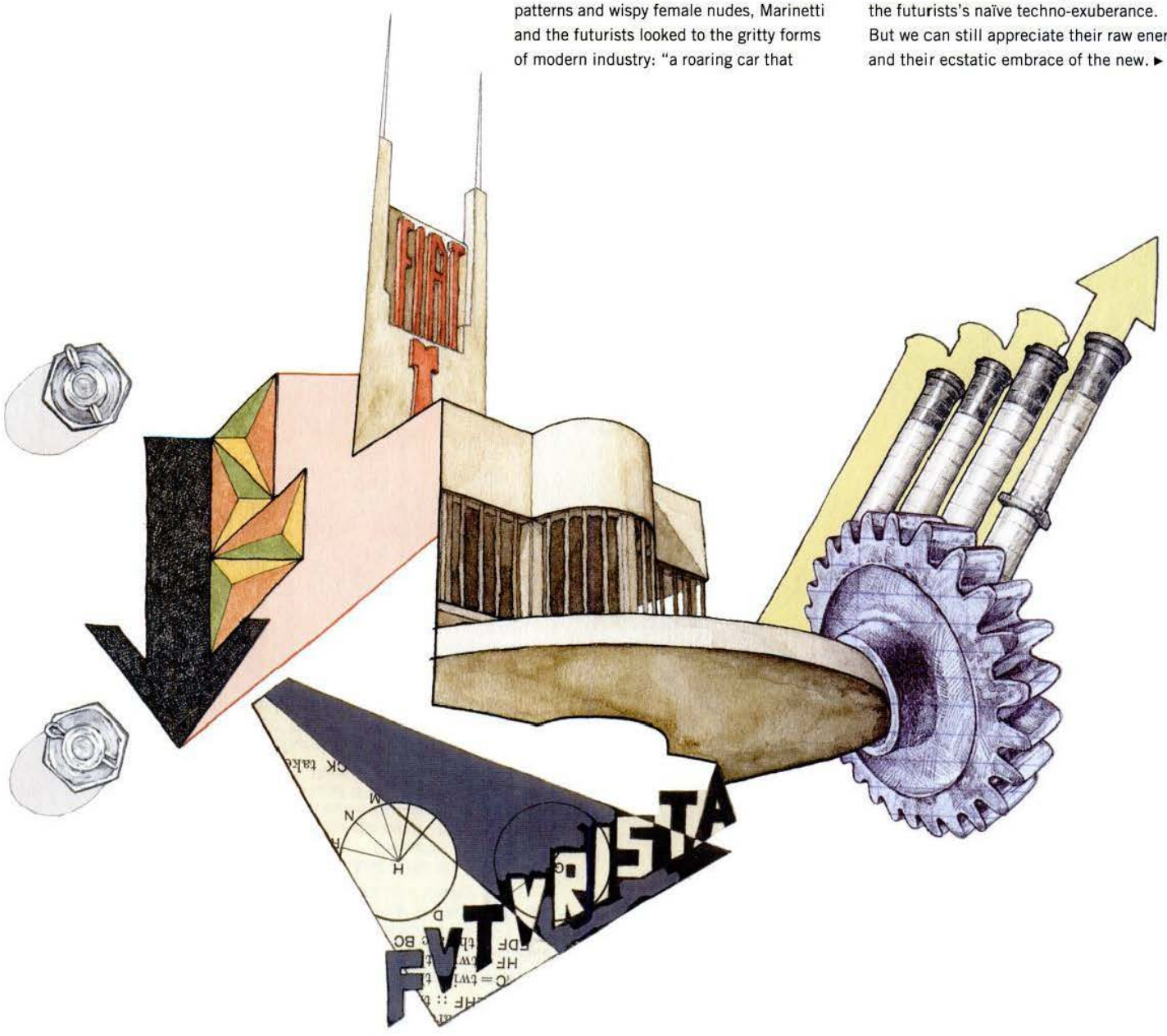
The Futurist Movement

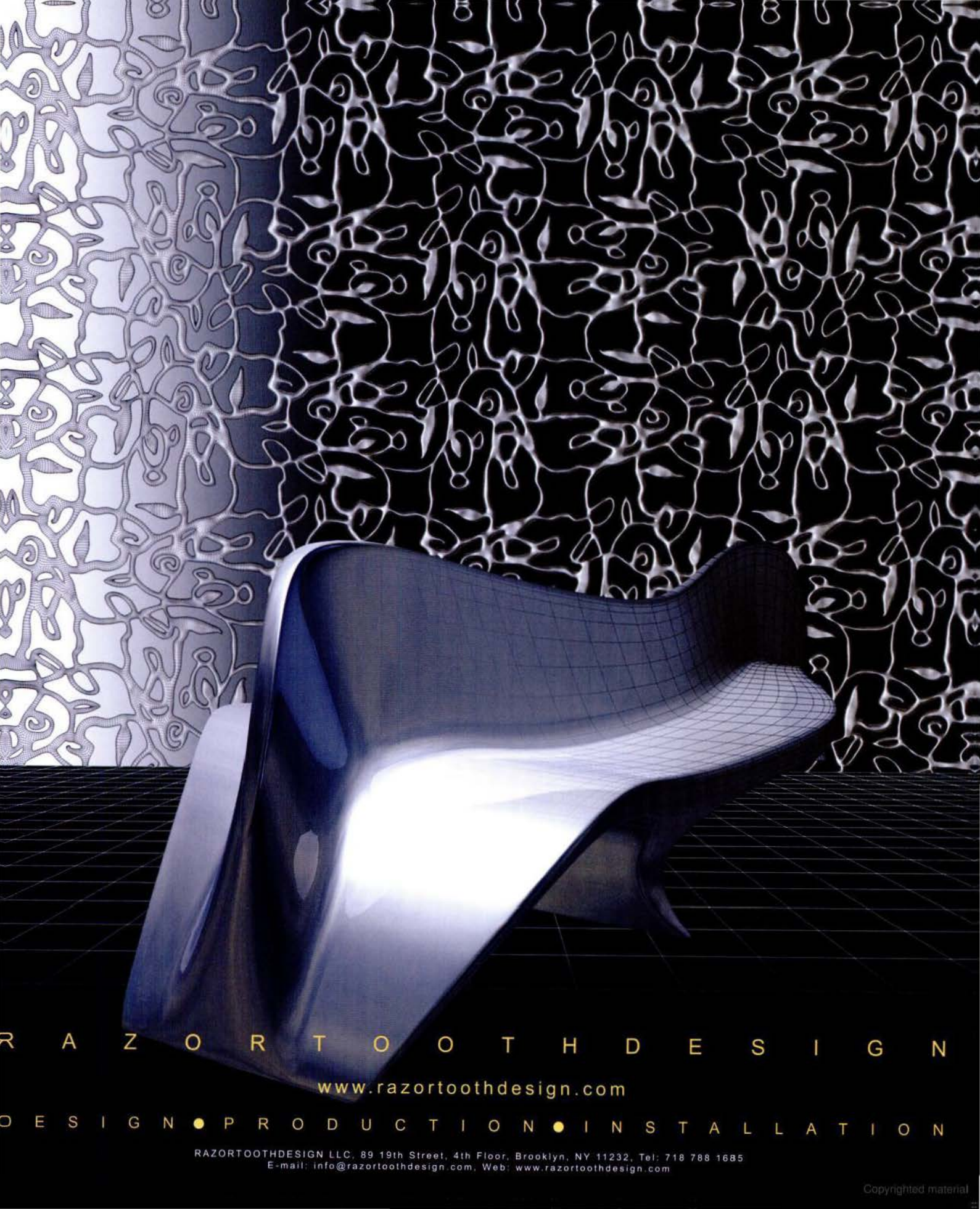
Manifesto:
F.T. Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" (1909)

In 1909 F.T. Marinetti, the bowler-hatted mafioso of modernism, let fly with the first manifesto of futurism: "We must shake the gates of life," he cried, "test the bolts and hinges!" It is true that Marinetti and his merry pranksters threatened to "destroy the museums, libraries, academies of every kind," but allied to this nihilistic rant was an exhilarating vision of a world that stood poised for redemption.

While the architects and designers of their time were busying themselves with floral patterns and wispy female nudes, Marinetti and the futurists looked to the gritty forms of modern industry: "a roaring car that seems to run on grapeshot"; "deep-chested locomotives whose wheels paw the tracks like the hooves of enormous steel horses"; "factories hung on clouds by the crooked lines of their smoke"; and more ominously, the staccato bursts of machine-gun fire.

The futurist movement began and ended with a celebration of technology, the source of the most vital energies, the most inspiring forms, and the most unimaginable possibilities. Today, gazing bleakly into a future with no fish and no ozone, it may be hard to share the futurists's naïve techno-exuberance. But we can still appreciate their raw energy and their ecstatic embrace of the new. ►





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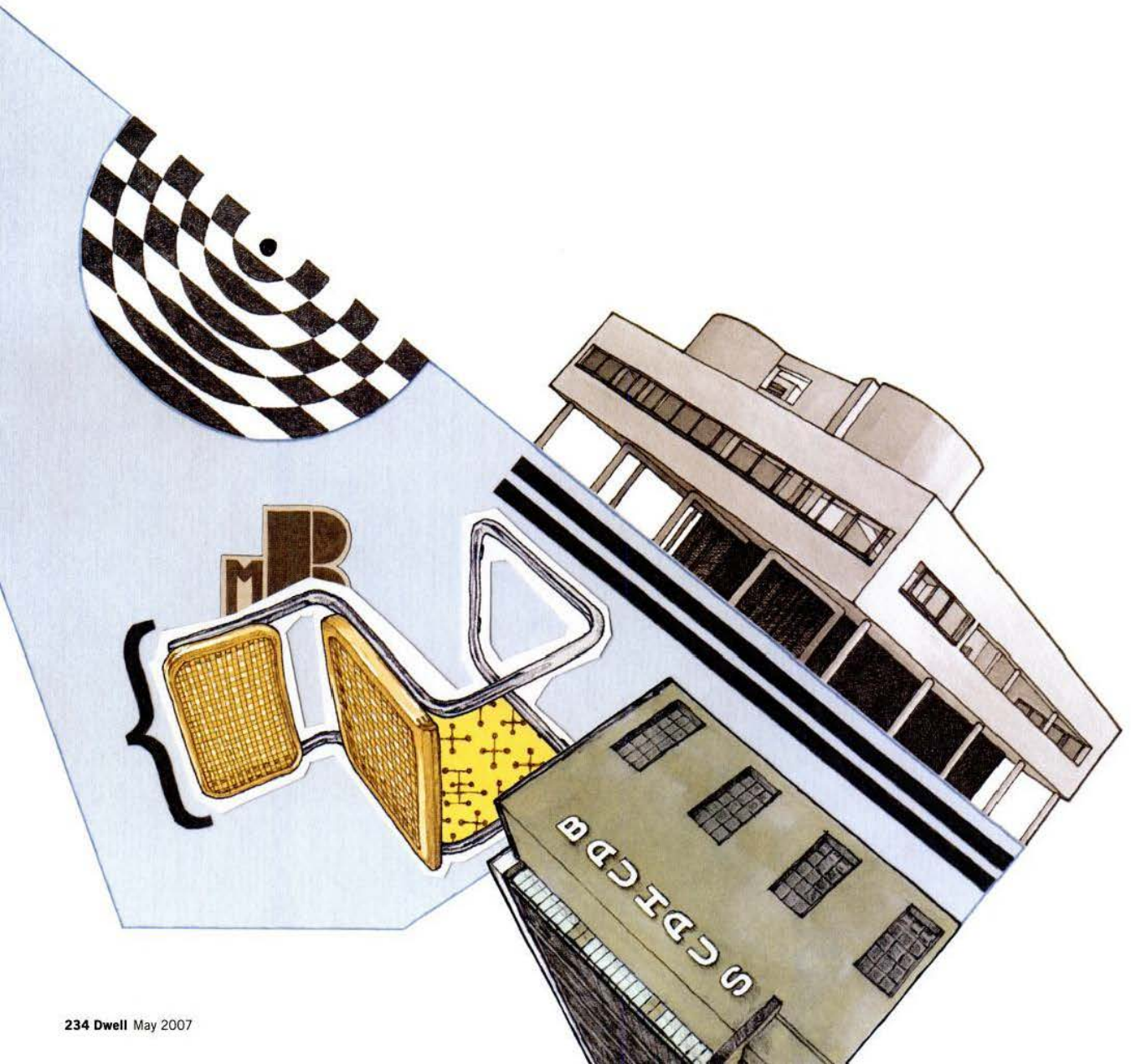
The Modern Movement

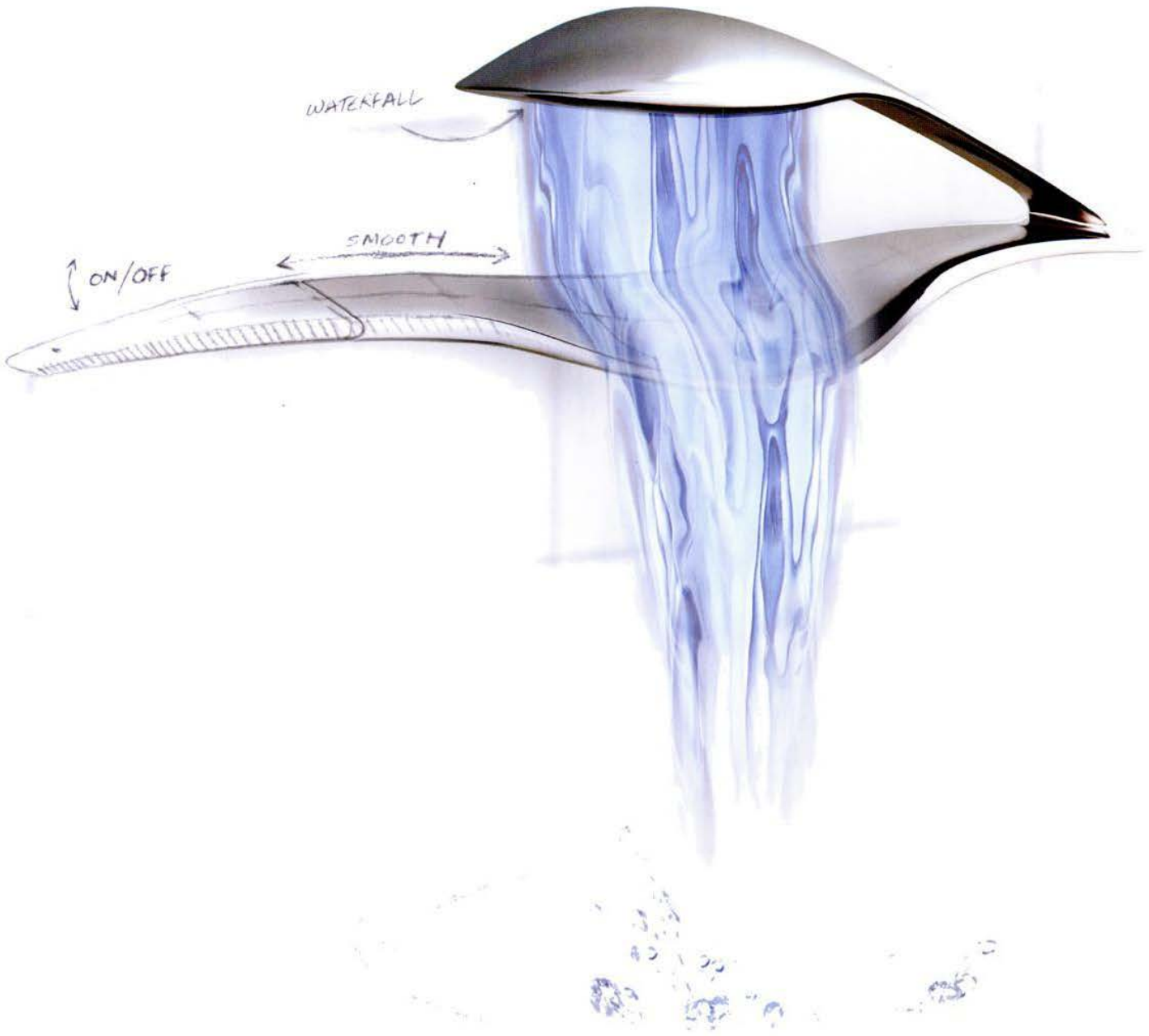
Manifestos:
Le Corbusier, "Towards a New Architecture" (1923)
Walter Gropius, "The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus" (1923)

If 1905 was the annus mirabilis of modern physics, 1923 was the year of wonders for modern architecture and design. In 1923 Le Corbusier published his road map to the future, "Towards a New Architecture," and in 1923 Walter Gropius moved the Bauhaus to its new, curtain-walled, flat-roofed home at Dessau and inaugurated its program of "Art and Technology: A New Unity." The modern movement was born.

Looking back at the right-angled, white-washed villas of Le Corbusier or the obsessively geometrical teapots and typefaces of the Bauhaus, it can be hard to recapture the sense of utter amazement that greeted their first appearance. Here are the words of Sigfried Giedion, then a young architecture student, who had traveled by overnight train from Munich to see the first public exhibition of Bauhaus architecture and design: "I had a glimpse of a world that was being reborn. An indelible impression of that demonstration remains with everyone who took part in it for the rest of his life." He might just as well have woken up at Woodstock.

Like all radical movements, modernism has been a victim of its own success as its steel-and-glass visions became the reality of the corporate cityscape, and its antistyle became the most successful style of all time. ▶





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The Postmodern Movement

Manifesto:
Robert Venturi, "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture" (1966)

In 1966 the Museum of Modern Art made the reckless decision to sponsor the publication of what an aspiring young architect named Robert Venturi described as "a gentle manifesto." It was anything but gentle: "I am for messy vitality over obvious unity," he declared, and went on to celebrate an architecture of ambiguity, complexity, and contradiction. This was heresy.

Since its founding, modernism had stood for clarity of meaning; Venturi demanded richness of meaning; where modernism insisted upon an exclusive program of "either-or," Venturi boldly called for an inclusive approach that was "both-and"; modernists saw the world as black or white; Venturi coyly straddled the fence: "I prefer black and white," he countered, "and sometimes gray."

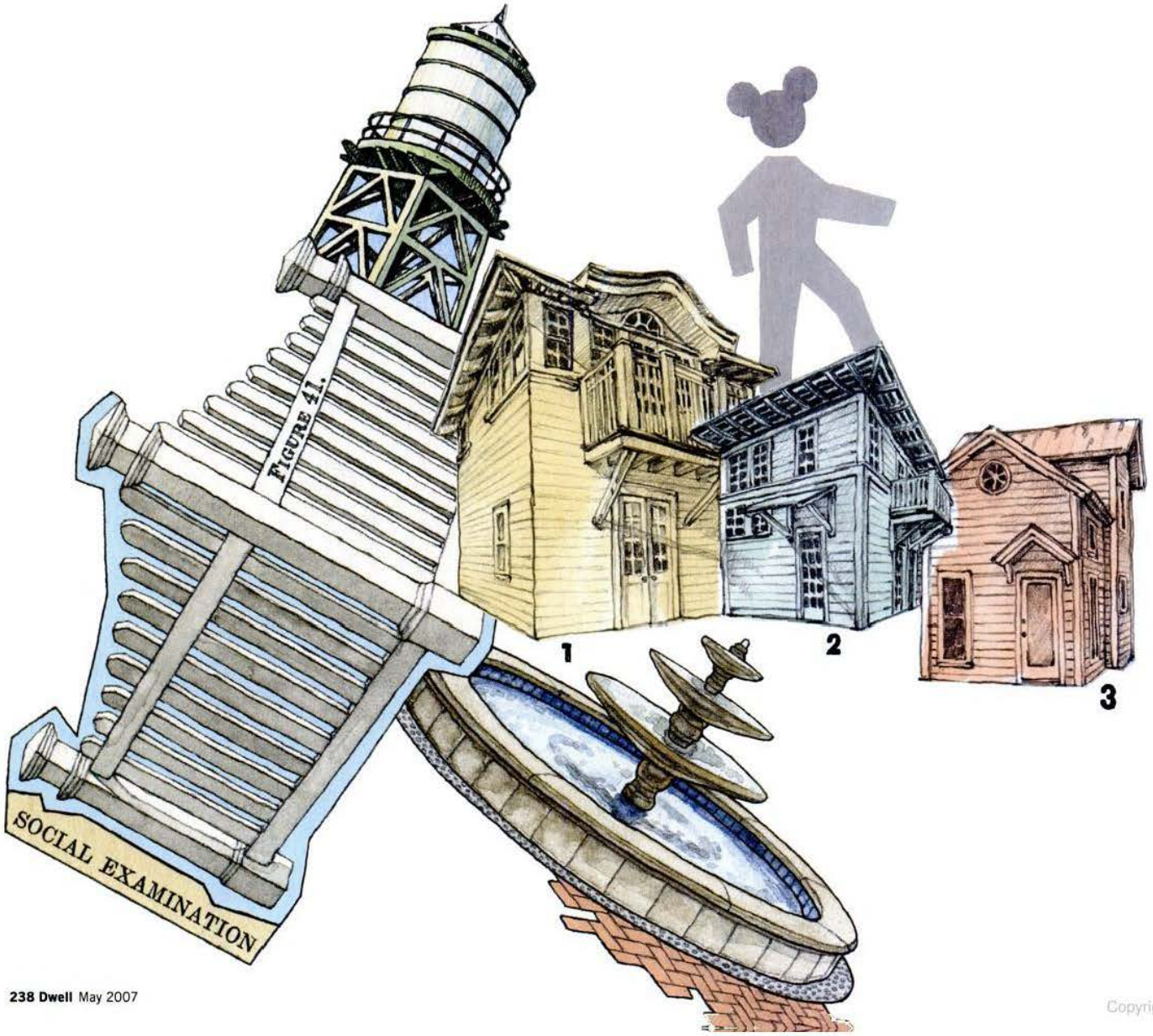
Abruptly, the spell was broken. It was not so much that modernism was finished—although plenty of obituaries have been written—but that it had lost its monopoly. Color made its first, tentative appearance in architecture after 40 years of white plaster and black steel; undulating surfaces, historical references, and seemingly contradictory but deliberate juxtapositions became the visual emblems of what first became known as the post-modern, and then the postmodern. "Pastiche" suddenly ceased to be an insult and became a badge of honor to be worn proudly by a newly emboldened generation. ▶

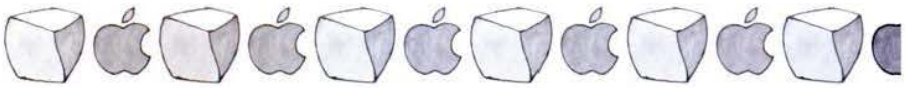
The New Urbanism Movement

Manifestos:
Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Congress for the New Urbanism, "Charter of the New Urbanism" (1993)

In 1961 the late Jane Jacobs published *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*—the classic case of an idea that launched a movement. Previously, the chief weapons against urban blight were the bulldozer and the housing project. The discussion now turned in a completely different direction: Planners began to think about networks rather than grids; to whisper about pedestrians rather than motorists; to talk openly about urban infill rather than suburban sprawl; to speak out boldly on behalf of mixed-use buildings and diverse, self-governing neighborhoods. The concept of a New Urbanism was stirring to life.

In 1993 the chief advocates gathered in Alexandria, Virginia, to launch the Congress for the New Urbanism; the conspiracy had officially become a movement. Coherently planned communities, walkable neighborhoods, and the village green began to blossom across a landscape once abandoned to shopping malls and freeway exits. But movements change and evolve, and this one too is beginning to fray around the edges. For some, the New Urbanism is a lofty excuse for gentrification; others have linked its communitarian ideal to racism, xenophobia, and an excess of social control. Disney's hermetic new urban development in Celebration, Florida, is one indication that the movement is being appropriated by corporate interests. ▶





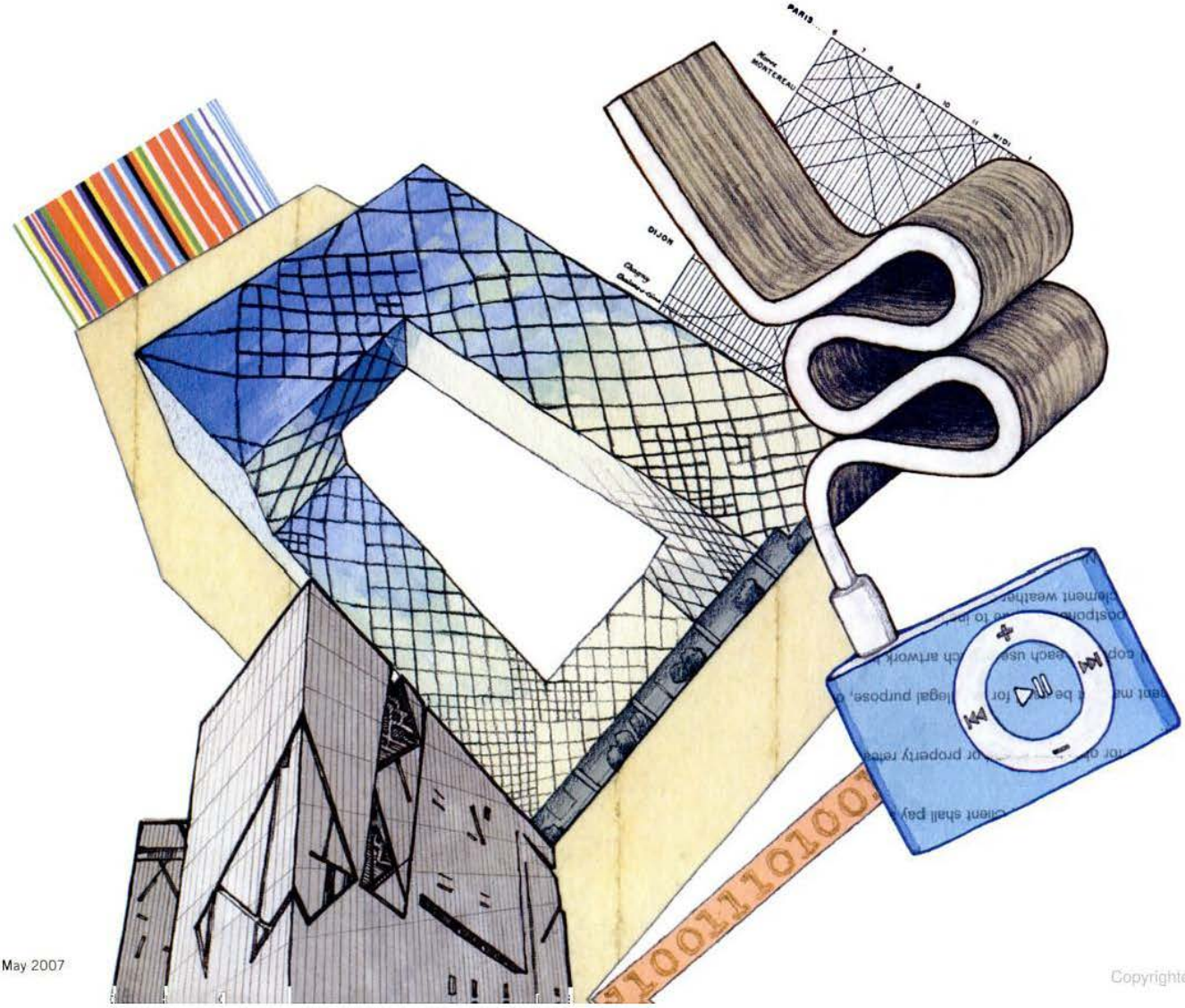
The Deconstructivism and Digital Design Movements

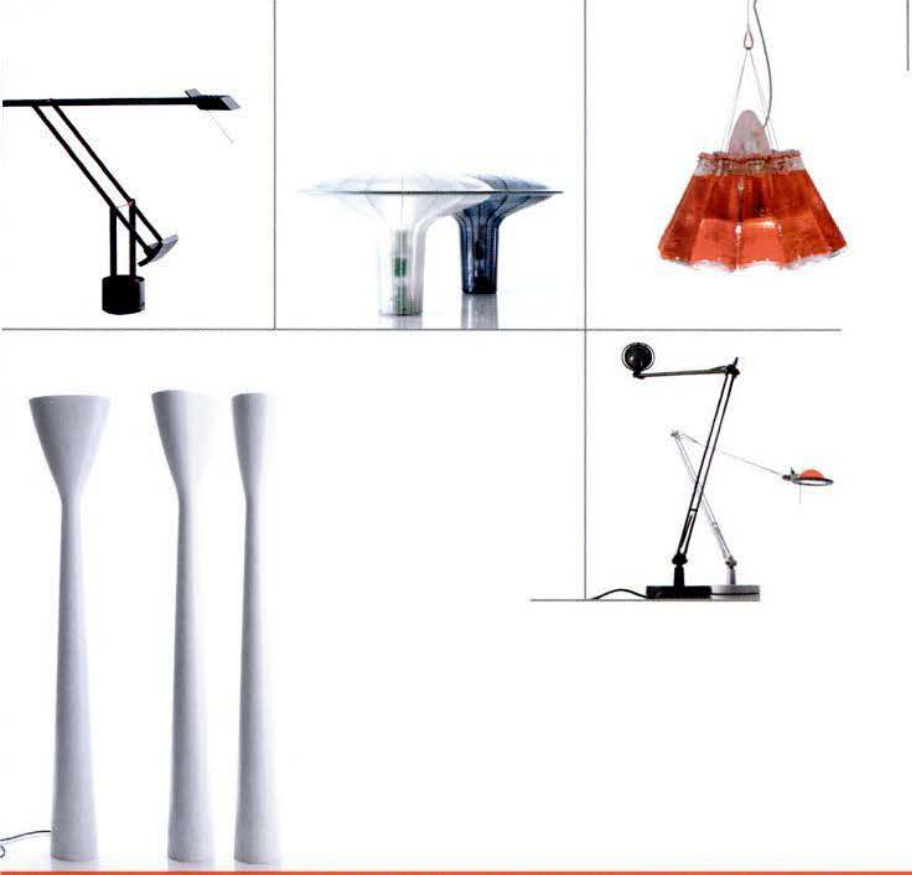
Manifesto:
Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, "Deconstructivist Architecture" (1988)

If there is one thing about which all deconstructivists agree, it is that there is no one thing about which all deconstructivists agree. What are we to make of a movement that picks apart the very concept of "movement?" Of science without truth, texts without authors, and buildings without visible structural logic? Deconstruction is the expression of an age that has lost faith in the idea that there is a key out there that will unlock the mysteries of the universe, if only we can find it. Fuhgeddaboutit.

It must have been with a certain sense of irony, then, that Mark Wigley and the venerable Philip Johnson put together their landmark exhibition, "Deconstructivist Architecture," back in 1988. The tortured angularity of Daniel Libeskind; the plastic fluidity of Frank Gehry; the theorizing in three dimensions of Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi, Zaha Hadid, and Coop Himmelblau—the only thing their architecture seemed to have in common was to question the very notion of architecture.

But that was nearly twenty years ago. While academics have begun to weary of the language of arbitrariness, disjunction, and nonlinearity, and are busily scouting out the next new thing, architects and designers have increasingly embraced it, aided and abetted by the power of the computer as a design tool. The full bloom of deconstructivism may not be represented by a building at all, however, but by that phenomenally successful product, the iPod Shuffle—because "life is random." ▶





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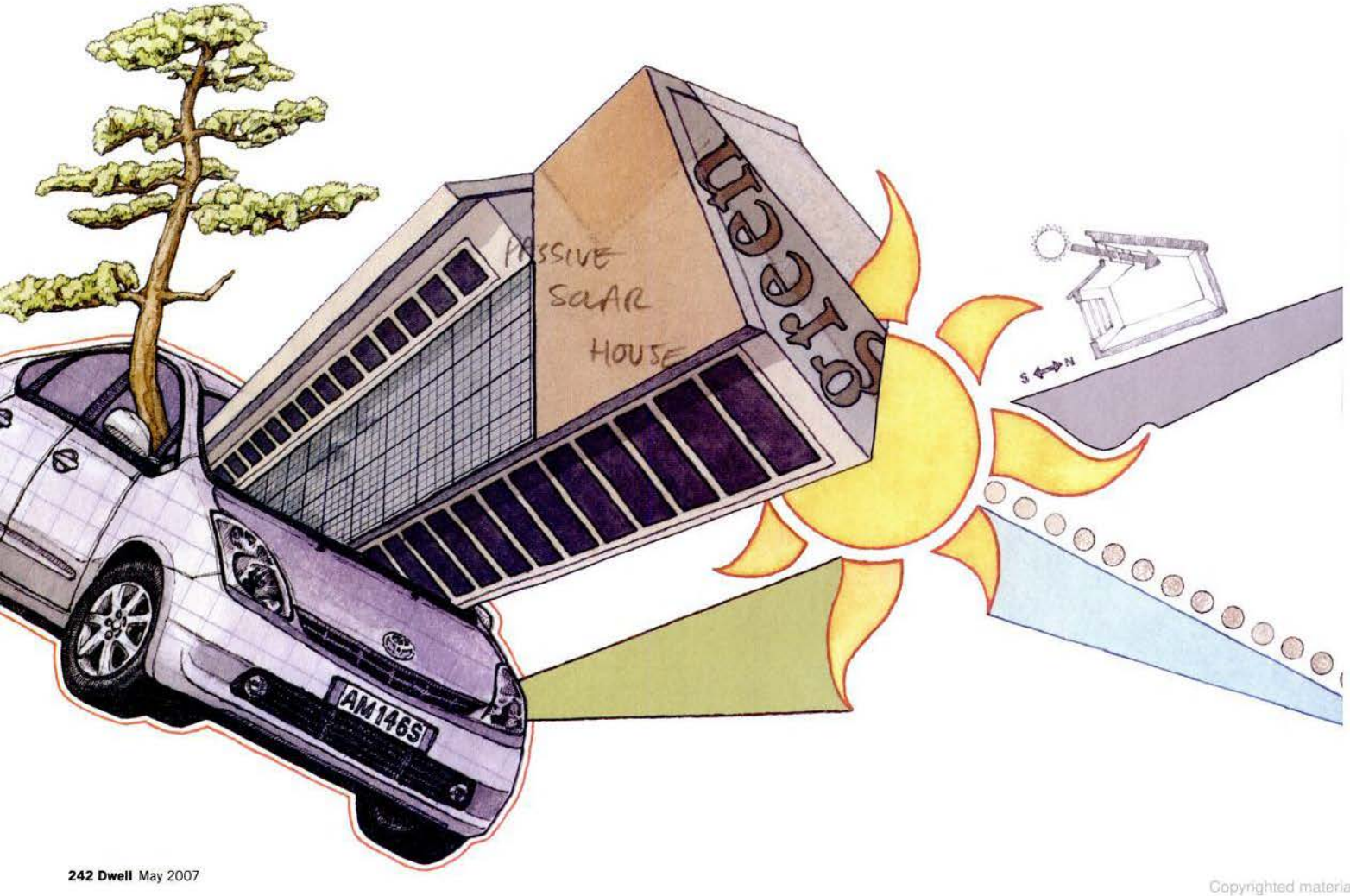
The Eco-Design Movement

Manifesto:
Bruce Sterling, "Viridian Design Speech" (1998)

Like an endangered species, green design has a fragile hold on life. True, all the design and architecture schools are teaching it, Wal-Mart is marketing it, and venture capitalists are investing in it. But it had better be more than that; it had better become the movement to end all movements or we will all be facing what the self-described "former next president of the United States" has bluntly called "an inconvenient truth."

Although as a movement eco-design is still relatively fresh and unformed, some emerging trends can already be discerned. First, there is what might be called the moralistic approach: Be less bad. Get rid of your SUV and buy a Prius. The problem here is that, according to Worldchanging.org, a minimum of 50 to 60 percent of the lifetime energy consumption of a car goes into its manufacture and shipping, so this may translate into feel-a-little-too-good-a-little-too-late. At the other end of the spectrum, William McDonough and Michael Braungart are trying to design buildings that are not just "energy efficient," but net energy producers.

Eco-design's most colorful prophet is Bruce Sterling, author of an unending stream of Viridian manifestos. Sterling's bottom line? We must ditch the bad habits of the past, and create a new "viridian" green future. ■



Whitney Museum of American Art Architecture Dialogues: Generating Fields

Exploring innovative practices across contemporary art and architecture, this season's series of talks takes its cue from the work of Josef Albers, László Moholy-Nagy, and Gordon Matta-Clark. K. Michael Hays, the Whitney's adjunct curator of architecture and Eliot Noyes Professor of Architectural Theory at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, moderates these talks.

Li Hu
For the past three years, Li Hu has been leading a team of designers from Steven Holl Architects to work on the Linked Hybrid project in Beijing, a project that was dubbed "one of the ten architecture wonders in China" by *Business Week* in December 2005. This ambitious "city within a city," a 2.4-million-square-foot mixed program with residential, commercial, and comprehensive supporting facilities, is sustainable development writ large. Li is a partner at Steven Holl Architects and the director of their office in Beijing.

Admission: $8; members, senior citizens, and students with valid ID, $6. Tickets may be purchased online at www.whitney.org, or at the Museum Admissions Desk. Inquiries at public_programs@whitney.org or (212) 570-7715.

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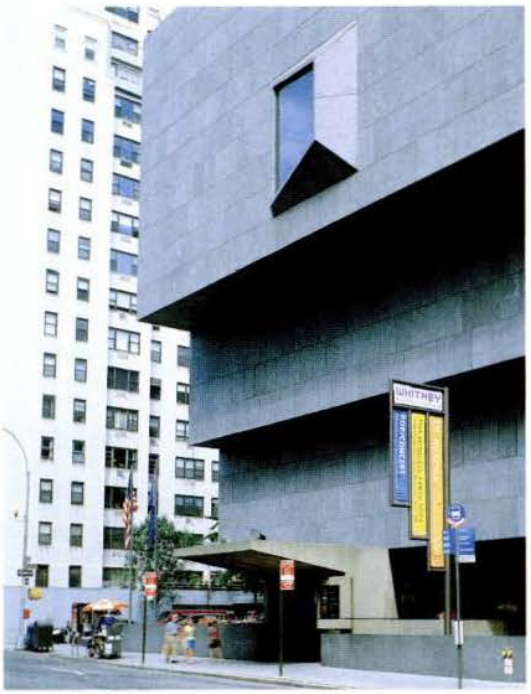

Architect: Marcel Breuer and Hamilton Smith (1963–1966)
Photograph by Jerry L. Thompson, NY

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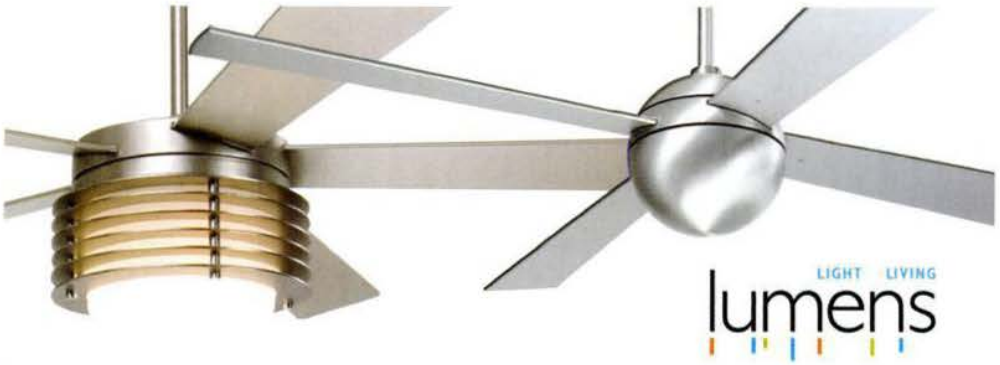

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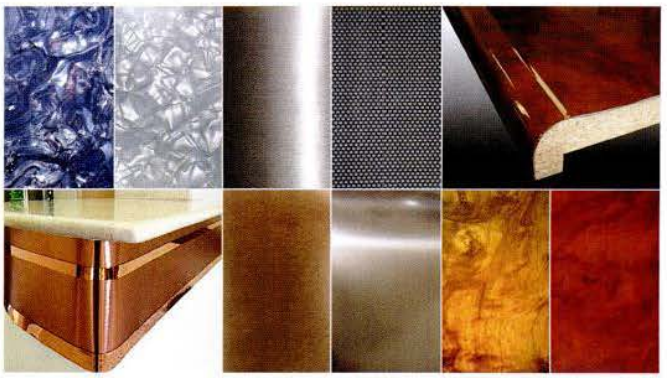

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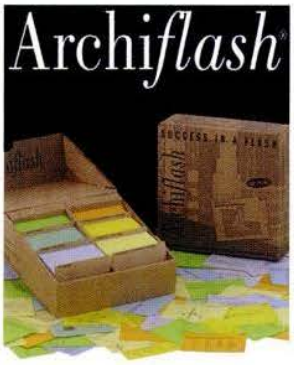

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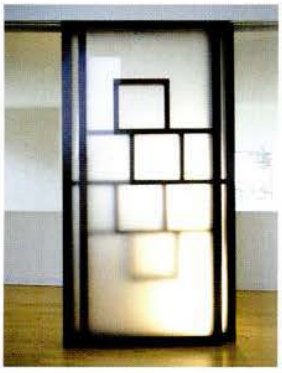

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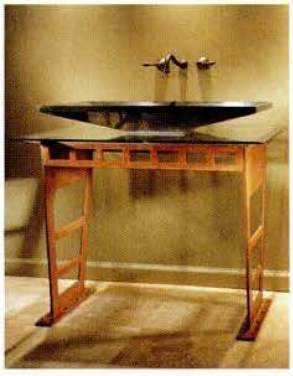

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Shown: Softseating by Molo

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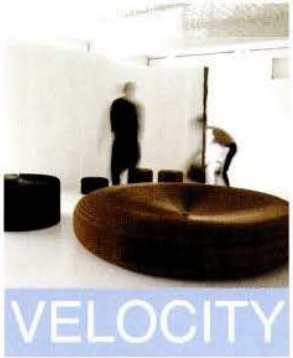

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Shown: A novel interpretation of the classic bud vase, the porcelain Outline Vase provides a fresh perspective on flower display.

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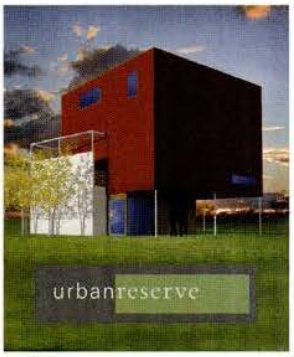

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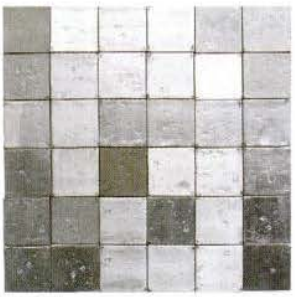

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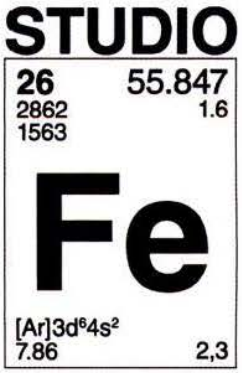

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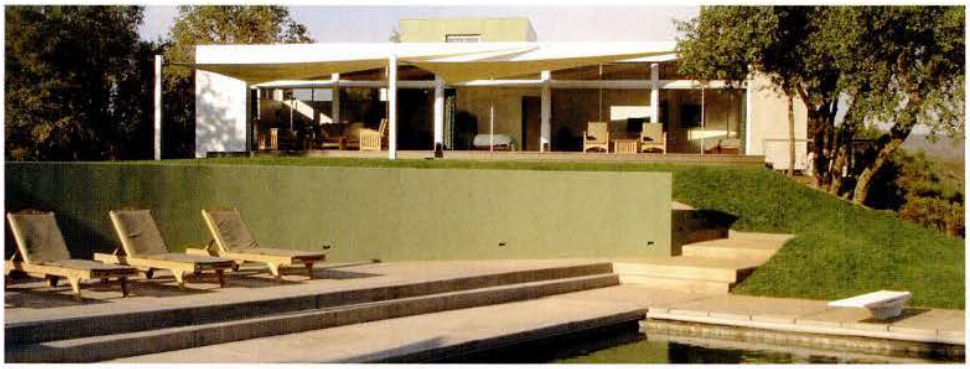

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Shown: The Living Room no. 14, 2006, 15" x 11", watercolor.

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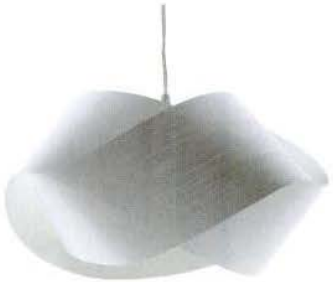

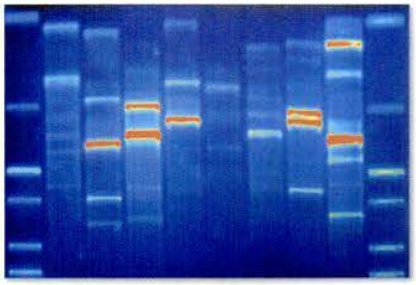

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dna 11

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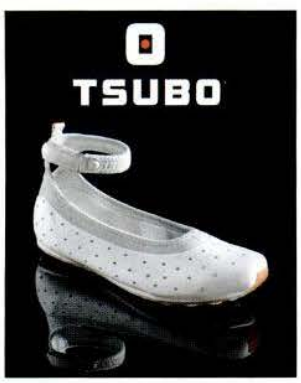

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Shown: Tsubo women's "Pinger"

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Shown: Patinated copper column fountain

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Charley Harper

Serigraphs

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Shown: Green Jay, silkscreen from the "Ford Times Series," $395, paper size 21" X 15", image size 19" X 13", circa 1955

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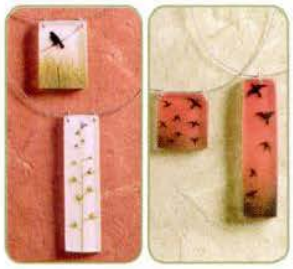

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Shown: Fernwork's resin jewelry and wall art

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Shown: Flora bench, bench pad, flora end table

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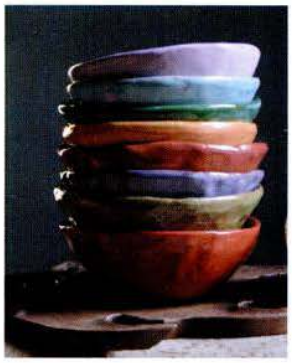

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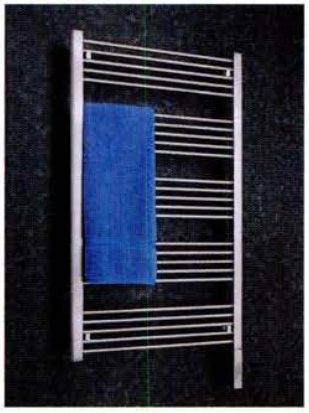

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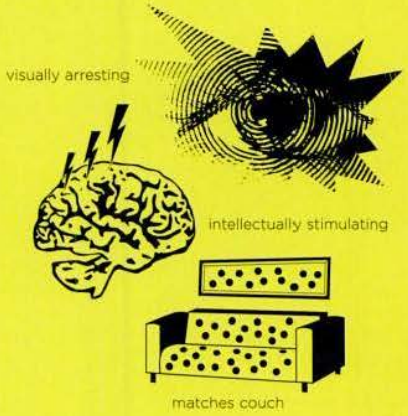

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Story by Joanne Furio

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Your Mother Should Know

When architect Mark Horton was approached to design a home in Healdsburg, California, the client had three requests. First, there should be very little decoration. That was easily accomplished, since Horton is known for a rational, minimalist style. Second, the exterior should require little maintenance. Horton obliged with a galvanized-steel roof, metal siding, and aluminum windows. The third requirement would prove more challenging: The client asked that the house be cozy. "I don't do cozy," Horton laughs.

Fortunately, the client happened to be the architect's 80-year-old mother (and as it happens, a returning client), so garnering a deeper understanding of the request came down to familial duty. Acquiescing, Horton designed a pine wall that runs the length of the 1,850-square-foot house and continues outside under a covered porch. "The feeling of wood—that's my definition of cozy," reports the architect's mother, Yvonne, clearly pleased with the results.

Another warming touch was the addition of a reading nook. Wood-paneled on the inside, stainless steel on the outside, the cantilevered cranny provides a visual break from the simple white-walled interiors and the earth-toned, horizontal exterior. The exterior colors are the home's only connection to the prevailing architecture of the region—descendants of Tuscany and Provence.

In addition to providing the cozy factor, the wood wall divides the home into public and private domains. A combination living, dining, and cooking area, open and sparse, runs along the south wall. Three bedrooms traverse the north side, where the roof dips down for privacy and warmth. There are few furnishings and nary a lacy doily to be found. "It doesn't feel like a grandmother's house," Yvonne notes. ■

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