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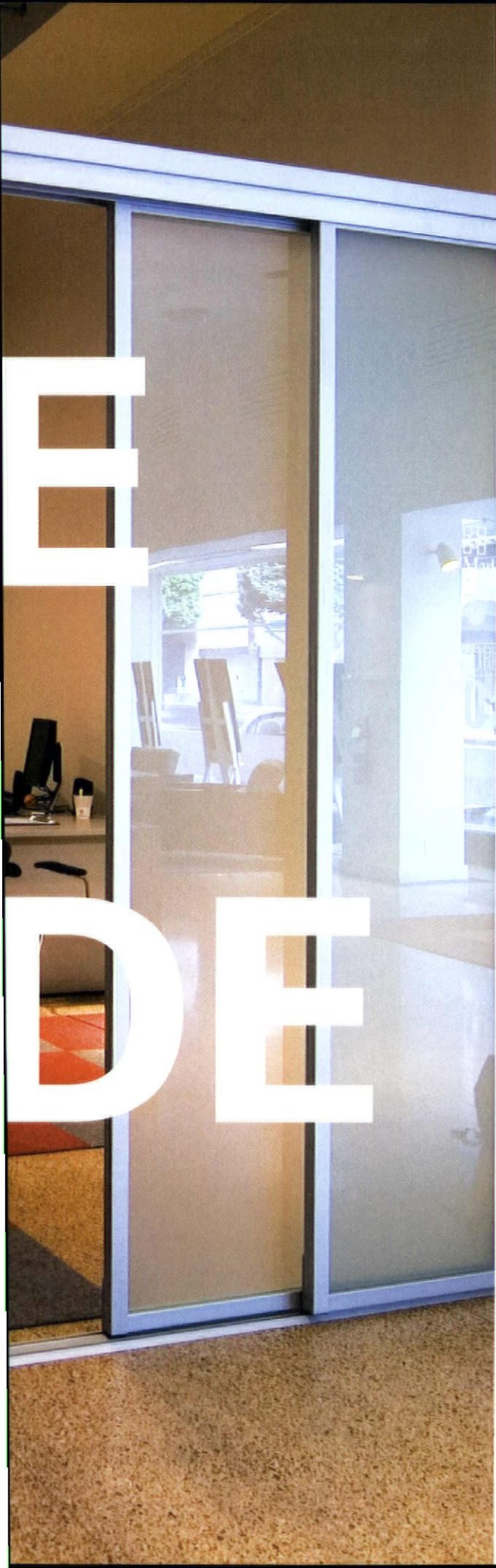
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# FORM

## PIONEERING DESIGN

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008

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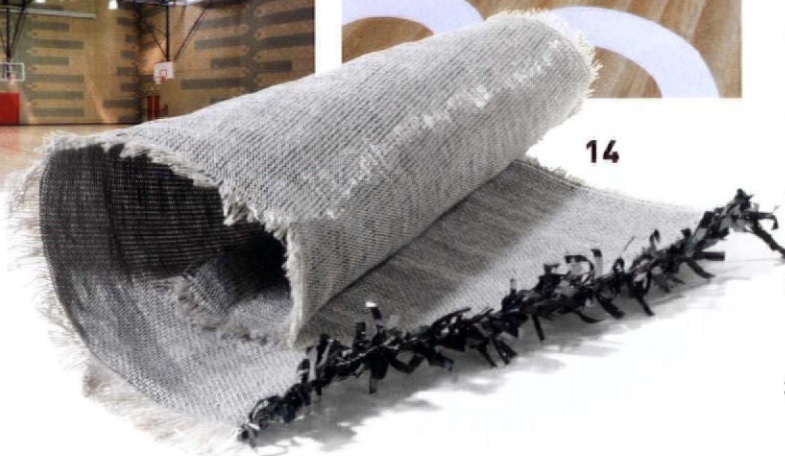
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# FORM

PIONEERING DESIGN

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Cover: Buck (naked), MASS Architecture & Design, photo by Edward Duarte



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## CONTRIBUTORS

**BALL-NOGUES STUDIO** is a collaboration of Benjamin Ball and Gaston Nogues. While studying for his degree at SCI-Arc, Ball logged stints at Gehry Partners and Shirdel Zago Kipnis. Upon graduation, he worked as a set and production designer for films, music videos and commercials. Nogues, an honors graduate in architecture from SCI-Arc, moved directly from school into a position at Gehry Partners, where he worked in product design and production and became a specialist in creative fabrication. The firm is the recipient of two AIA Los Angeles Design Awards. In 2007, its installation *Liquid Sky* was the winner of the Museum of Modern Art/P.S.1's Young Architect's Program competition. Ball-Nogues also became one of three design teams to be awarded a United States Artists Target Fellowship. Their work has appeared in publications worldwide including the *New York Times*, *Interior Design*, *ID*, *Architectural Record*, *Icon*, *Log Journal*, *Sculpture* and *Surface*.

**JEFFEREY HEAD** is a freelance writer and a self-described "research hound." In recent articles he has reintroduced the only residence designed by Edward Durrell Stone in the Los Angeles area, and the only prefab house designed by Henry Dreyfuss and Edward Larrabee Barnes.

**JOHN SOUTHERN** is the director of Urban Operations, a design and research office based in Los Angeles, California. A graduate of the Southern California Institute of Architecture, John balances his practice with academia by teaching architectural theory and design studio at Woodbury University. He currently serves on the board of directors of the Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Urban Design. He is a West Coast correspondent for the online magazine *Tropolism* and is the founder of *drowninginculture.com*.

**MIMI ZEIGER** is a former senior editor of *Architecture* magazine and author of *New Museums: Contemporary Museum Architecture around the World*. Her writing on art, architecture and design is found in a variety of publications including *Architect*, *Dwell* and *Azure*. The Brooklyn-based writer is also the editor and publisher of the zine *loud paper*.

**CORRECTION:** The designer of the Urban Spring restaurant (November/December 2007) was incorrectly identified. The project architect was Peter Lynch, not 4-pli/Associated Fabrication, which created the design for the shelves, bench and bar tops, and nesting tables.



A violin is positioned diagonally across the lower-left portion of the frame. It is resting on a surface that features a prominent herringbone or chevron pattern, which is a key decorative element of the advertisement. The background is a dark, textured surface with vertical lines, possibly representing a wall or floor covering. The lighting creates strong highlights and shadows, emphasizing the textures and the form of the violin.

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

Less may be more when it comes to design, but it is rare that you will find designers advocating for a budget crunch when it comes to a project. Of course, no matter what the budget, complications can arise.

This afternoon I read an article about the new Los Angeles Police Department Headquarters, designed by DMJM and slated for completion later this year. City Controller Laura Chick is investigating costs associated with the development; ugly words like "audit" were mentioned.

First approved at \$300 million, to date, the LA Police Department Headquarters is running around \$437 million. I read the piece with interest—not because I can't understand how a budget can escalate in light of ever-increasing material and labor costs, but because in contrast to the projects we rounded up for this issue either sum seems astronomical.

Featuring projects like that police headquarters and so many other big-budget, large-scale developments is enormously satisfying. Here are projects that consider complex security issues, incorporate state-of-the-art technology and stand to serve as symbols of the community. They are strong, sexy and dynamic, and I only can hope that civic entities continue to place value on well-designed facilities as they have done in recent years.

That said, there is something equally satisfying about showcasing the jobs done on shoestring budgets. Necessity might be the mother of invention, but in case after case it is clear that architects thrive in these invention-inducing circumstances.

The featured projects in this issue were done "On the Cheap," as the theme implies, and, therefore, could never support a police headquarters' program. Nonetheless, they are the products of complex strategies—if for no other reason than their meager budgets.

Starting with the March/April issue, *FORM* will continue under the guidance of new editor, Jonathan Diamond. With his own sensibilities and sense of aesthetic, Jonathan will continue to shape the magazine, just as I had the good fortune to do over the past few years. Thank you to all the designers and architects whose work inspired me along the way.



Jennifer Caterino



Jason Tush Photography






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# EVENTS

JANUARY

20

## Julius Shulman's Los Angeles

This exhibition, organized by the Getty Research Institute, showcases Shulman's stunning architectural photographs, which serve as visual records of Los Angeles' dramatic evolution and document Shulman's love for Los Angeles, his home for the past 85 years. Ends January 20. Getty Gallery at the Los Angeles Public Library, Central Library Branch, 630 West Fifth Street, Los Angeles.

**more information:** [getty.edu/visit/shulman.html](http://getty.edu/visit/shulman.html).

20

## Piranesi as Designer

This exhibition examines the artist's role in the reform of architecture and design from the eighteenth century to the present. This is the first museum exhibition to show Piranesi's full range and influence as a designer of architecture, elaborate interiors and exquisite furnishings. On view will be etchings, original drawings and prints by Piranesi, as well as a selection of three-dimensional objects. Ends January 20. Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, 2 East 91st Street, New York, NY.

**more information:** [cooperhewitt.org](http://cooperhewitt.org).

21

## Deborah Nevins, "Changes in Scenery: Principles in Landscape Architecture" Lecture

With her firm, Deborah Nevins and Associates, New York, Nevins has designed public and private landscapes throughout the United States and in the Caribbean that vary widely in character, yet are unified by their compelling spatial organization and sensitivity to the architectural context. University of Notre Dame, School of Architecture, 104 Bond Hall, Notre Dame, Indiana. 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

**more information:** [architecture.nd.edu](http://architecture.nd.edu).

25

## Frank Lloyd Wright: The Southwest Legacy

Architect and faculty member at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, Frank Henry, will discuss Wright's Southwest experiences and work, his biological discoveries using new materials, and his overall organic approach to architecture. 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for the general public, \$20 for Friends of the Gamble House (FOGH) members, and \$15 for students. Art Center College of Design, Ahmanson Auditorium, 1700 Lida Street, Pasadena.

**more information:** 626-793-3334, ext. 52, or [www.gamblehouse.org](http://www.gamblehouse.org).

FEBRUARY

15

## The Art of Engineering from NASA's Aeronautical Research

Co-organized by the Art Institute of Chicago and NASA, the exhibit includes a model and drawings by Frank Gehry, illustrating the parallel process of the design of wind tunnel models and the structural application that Gehry moves through to attain final designs from model evolution. Also included is a NASA site model of the National Transonic Facility, the world's largest cryogenic wind tunnel, and several images of a Santiago Calatrava project. Closes May 14. \$5.00 general admission; \$2.50 students & seniors (60+); free under 12. Architectural and Design Museum, 5900 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles.

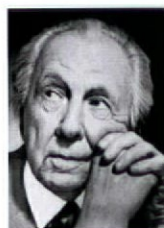
**more information:** 323-932-9393 or [aplusd.org](http://aplusd.org).

24

## Douglas Gordon: Pretty Much Every Film and Video Work from about 1992 until Now

The Glasgow-born artist, who emerged in the early 1990s, quickly gained attention for his arresting and thought-provoking film and video works, many of which involved appropriation and manipulation of source films that ranged from popular television to suspense thrillers to archival medical footage. This exhibition brings together nearly all of his video works from the last fifteen years in an ever-growing installation. Ends February 24. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 151 Third Street, San Francisco.

**more information:** [www.sfmoma.org](http://www.sfmoma.org).



## 26 Tour of Frank Lloyd Wright's La Miniatura

Visitors will be offered a rare tour of Wright's textile-blocked design, La Miniatura, which is currently undergoing a major restoration. Pasadena, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tickets are \$50 for the general public; \$30 for FOGH members.

**more information:** 626-793-3334, ext. 52, or [www.gamblehouse.org](http://www.gamblehouse.org).

26

## Gabriele Basilico

This exhibition inaugurates an anticipated three-part series exploring the current state of Silicon Valley—and the effects of the technology boom on the region—through the perspective of photographers commissioned by SFMOMA. A native Italian, Gabriele Basilico studied architecture in Milan before launching his photographic career. Ends May 4. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 151 Third Street, San Francisco.

**more information:** [www.sfmoma.org](http://www.sfmoma.org).

2.24



Douglas Gordon, *Pretty much every film and video work from about 1992 until now*. To be seen on monitors, some with headphones, others run silently and all simultaneously (installation view at the National Galleries of Scotland, Royal Scottish Academy Building, Edinburgh), 1992–present; Courtesy the artist and Gagosian Gallery, New York; © 2007 Douglas Gordon; photo: Antonia Reeve.



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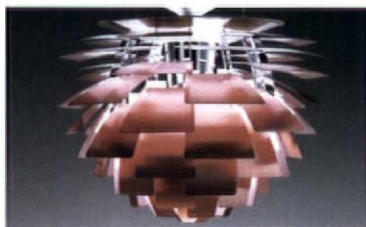
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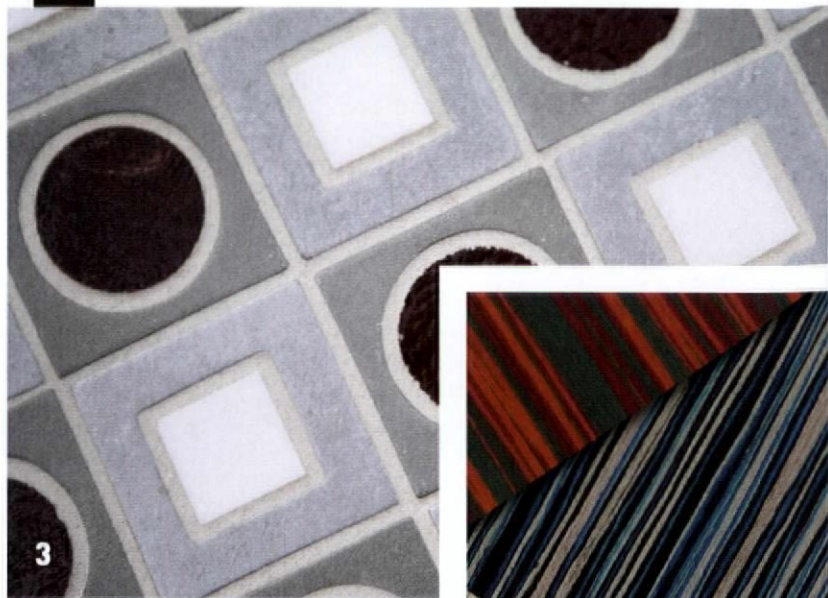
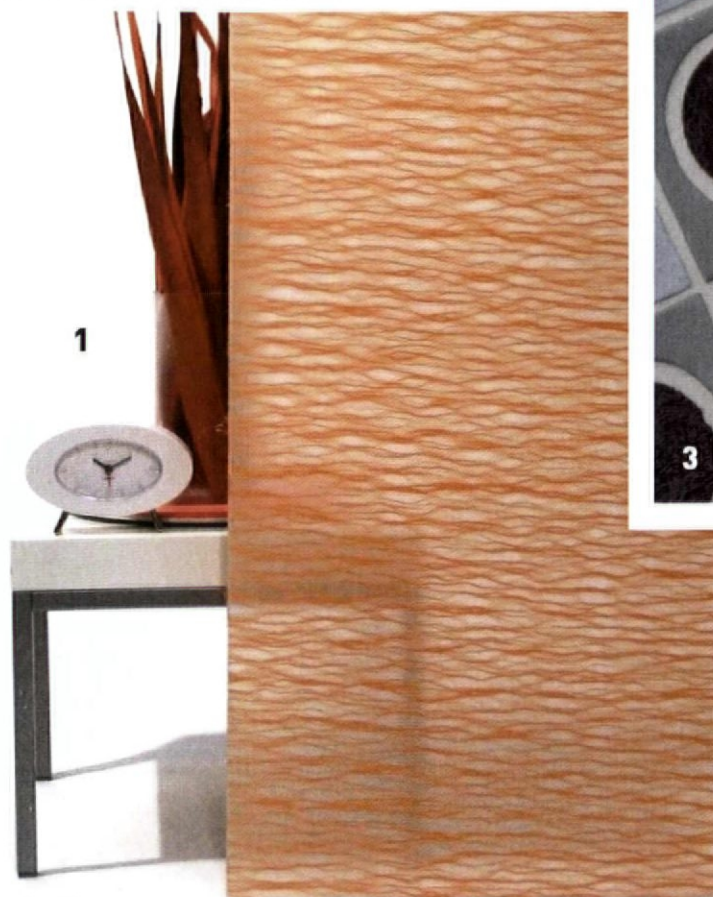
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# SHOWROOM



## 1 Jhane Barnes Collection, Lumicor

Designed by renowned fashion, furniture and textile designer Jhane Barnes, this series of translucent resin panels encapsulates uniqueness created exclusively for Lumicor. The fabrics were created using Barnes' patented push-pull technique of weaving two layers of fabrics resulting in a variety of color undulation, streaks and sequences. The collection's panels are versatile: They can be cut, formed and framed for use in any horizontal or vertical application, and panels can be inserted into existing creations or they can stand alone.

**more information:** 888-LUMICOR or [www.lumicor.com](http://www.lumicor.com).

## 2 FusionStone, Architectural Systems, Inc.

Select natural stones combined with special ultra-clear, wear-resistant glass to achieve superior surface protection while enhancing colors and retaining the distinctive veining is Architectural System's new Fusionstone line. Its proprietary process eliminates adhesion

lines, making the material appear entirely translucent from edge to edge. Intrusion of natural and chemical substances into porous marbles, sandstones and limestones is completely prevented. Cleaning, maintenance and replacement costs are greatly reduced or eliminated. Custom fabrication of shapes and edging is available for all areas of hospitality design.

**more information:** 212-206-1730 or [www.archsystems.com](http://www.archsystems.com).

## 3 Luna, Erin Adams Design, Inc.

Erin Adams Design, Inc. introduces Luna, a new environmentally conscious glass and aluminum tile collection developed in collaboration with Mexico-based Allumillennium Tile. Utilizing technologies that limit waste, all aluminum used is recycled, and recycled auto oil is used to heat up the metals during production. The handcrafted tiles, available in various sizes and in thirty-six colors, come in three finishes: brushed, sand blasted and vibrated, and range from \$100 to \$160 per square foot. The brass tile is available in four

finishes: sand brushed, green, verdigris and brown, and ranges from \$170 to \$260 per square foot.

**more information:** 212-947-4557 or [www.erinadamsdesign.com](http://www.erinadamsdesign.com).

## 4 Salsawood, Lapiswood and White Macassar, Treefrog Veneer

Treefrog introduces seven new classic and conceptual real wood veneer laminates including Salsawood, Lapiswood and White Macassar. These strong colors, coupled with vertical wood grains, bring color and the warmth of real wood to any design space. Along with their selection of forty-nine real wood veneer laminates, Treefrog features a sustainable process that harvests wood species and allows for many exotic wood looks. Treefrog is a member of 1% For The Planet, a group of businesses that give 1 percent of sales to organizations working to protect our environment.

**more information:** 800-830-5448 or [www.treefrogveneer.com](http://www.treefrogveneer.com).





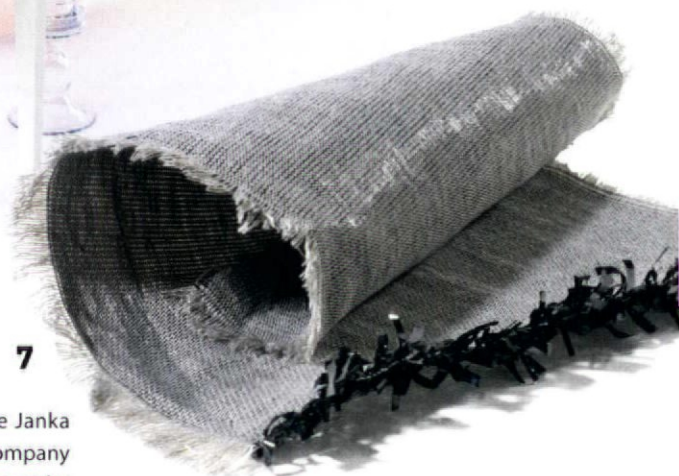
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7

## 5 Digital, Etruria Design

Etruria Design's new "Digital" collection is an innovative way of communicating with tiles. What used to be possible only through mosaic tiles, can now be achieved with Digital—you can write anything you want. The unique qualities of the beveled tile and the size (15x15 cm), help make the letters more legible. Digital is an ideal material for displaying your message in public places. Available in two finishes: Luxe or Silk.

**more information:** 516-379-3500 or [www.etruriadesign.it](http://www.etruriadesign.it).

## 6 Bamboo Hardwoods

Bamboo Hardwoods are Forest Stewardship Council certified and World Wildlife Fund approved. All its eco-friendly products are finished with a non-toxic UV-cured layer and entirely formaldehyde free. Bamboo Hardwoods currently offers more than thirty choices of bamboo flooring, ranging in species, hardness, color, form factor, length and grain style. Its bamboo flooring ranges

in hardness from 1000 – 3000 on the Janka Scale, which is harder than oak. the company can also manufacture custom, made-to-order cabinets, furniture, plywood, veneers, curved walls, raw materials and more for commercial properties and residential designs.

**more information:** 800-783-0557 or [www.bamboohardwoods.com](http://www.bamboohardwoods.com).

## 7 Material Matters, Designtex

Following the Singular Forms and Abstract Matters collections, Designtex introduces Material Matters, the third collection from its collaboration with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Focusing on architecture and building materials, the Designtex team sought to engage art and science with its new collection. With its mix of high-performance attributes, unusual materials and elegant and versatile designs, the collection offers eight categories to choose from including Titanium, Die-Cut Ingeo and Sonic Fabric. A portion of the proceeds is contributed to the Guggenheim Foundation.

**more information:** 800-221-1540 or [www.dtex.com](http://www.dtex.com).

## 8 Dichroic, 3form

Dichroic is made from 3form's signature ecoresin with an interlayer of light-refracting film that seizes light and manipulates it to create interesting and engaging effects, lending the panels an ethereal, luminescent quality. The colors vary depending on the viewing angle, and shift with fluctuations in ambient light. It is available in two versions with different spectral ranges, warm Lunar and cool Solar, and two finishes: sandstone for striking color shifts, or super matte for soft, whitewashed color with gentle transitions. Dichroic is easy to clean and offers an array of aesthetic and design options.

**more information:** 800-726-0126 or [www.3-form.com](http://www.3-form.com).



# ON THE CHEAP

"Lack of money is no obstacle. Lack of an idea is an obstacle."

— Ken Hakuta



## BUCK (naked)

Location: Los Angeles, California

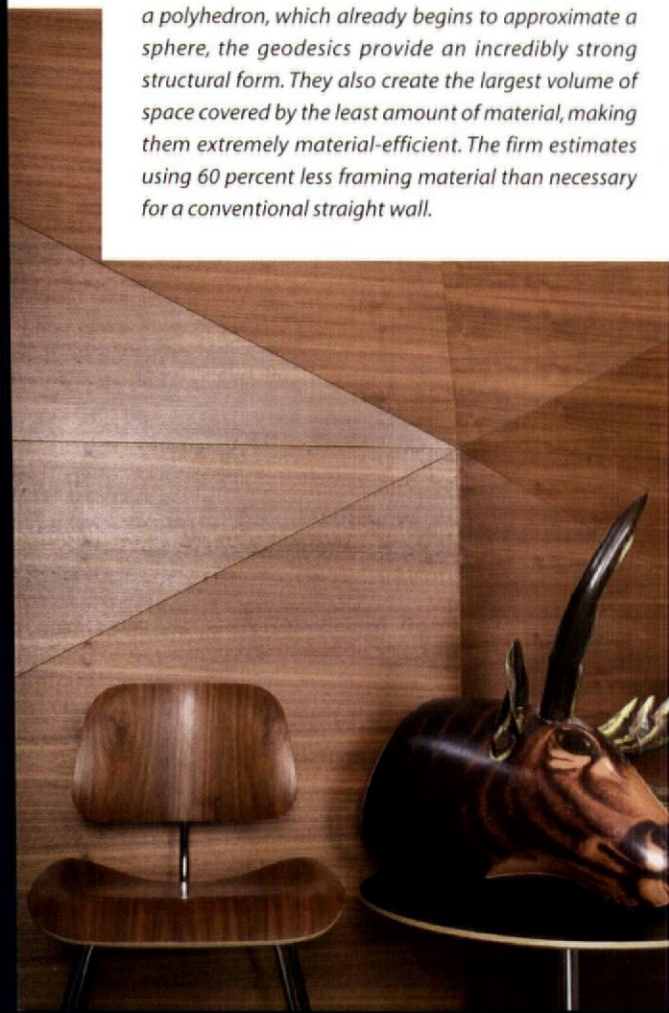
Designer: MASS Architecture and Design

Website: [www.mass-arch.com](http://www.mass-arch.com)

Seeking a space that would reflect its "cool" image, top motion-design studio BUCK hired Silver Lake-based MASS Architecture and Design to deliver low-cost, high-design corporate interiors. The 4,200-square-foot office project, which sits in a top floor of the historic Clifton's Building in downtown Los Angeles, was completed in 2007 for just \$190,000.

MASS designer Ana Henton riffed on the firm's fascination with Buckminster Fuller (the studio name "BUCK" is not a coincidence) and formulated a design that incorporates a series of geodesic walls to partition the generous penthouse loft space. A modular system of exposed framing and custom aluminum hubs was developed to create the faceted "dome" walls. Walnut panels sheath the public face of the walls, while the interiors are left exposed. These voids are designed for a constant changing collection of inspiring items, whether art, graphics, toys or games. Instead of competing, the walls are a strong backdrop and support to the constant stream of images and ideas generated by the firm's creative professionals.

According to Henton, the geodesics also made structural and economic sense. Because they follow a doubly curved surface, and because the base is always a polyhedron, which already begins to approximate a sphere, the geodesics provide an incredibly strong structural form. They also create the largest volume of space covered by the least amount of material, making them extremely material-efficient. The firm estimates using 60 percent less framing material than necessary for a conventional straight wall.





## The Children's Center at Caltech's Outdoor Science Laboratory

Location: Pasadena, California

Designer: (M)Arch. branded architectures

Website: [www.marchstudio.com](http://www.marchstudio.com)

*The Children's Center at Caltech's Outdoor Science Laboratory is essentially a space about ideas. Guided by the executive director's clear vision, the project team was comprised of architects, marketing professionals, educators, board members, Caltech faculty and scientists. The intent was to create a prototype or model for a children's laboratory that will inspire other science-based curriculums.*

*The Outdoor Science Laboratory is designed primarily for children two to five years old. The director wanted to create a separate dedicated space that would expand the capabilities and opportunities for the children to explore their scientific and creative potential. (M)Arch. wanted to create a building that would reflect the identity and culture of Caltech, support its mission, and contribute to the community.*

*Three primary design strategies were developed to meet the agreed-upon project objectives. The first, "Campus within a Campus," focused on the important context of the project. The second design strategy, "Laboratory as Catalyst," focused on the role of the Outdoor Science Lab in supporting the school's mission. The third design strategy was "Integrate and Connect."*

*The Outdoor Science Laboratory cost roughly \$180,000. The architects worked with the director and the board members for over four years to help provide materials and inspiration for fund raising.*



## Los Angeles Universal Preschool Headquarters

Location: Los Angeles, California

Designer: HOK

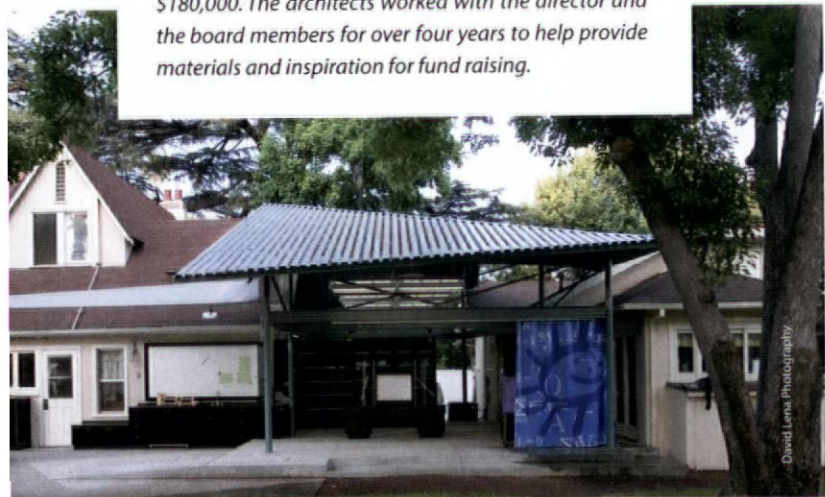
Website: [www.hok.com](http://www.hok.com)

*Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP), a nonprofit organization, seeks to make high-quality voluntary preschool available to every four-year-old child in Los Angeles County, regardless of their family's income.*

*LAUP's direction for the new facility on Alameda Street is to display a successful, organized, efficient business presence within the space and reduce the hierarchical boundaries found at their office. The interior design was conceived as "a playground for adults."*

*The 17,000-square-foot space is a combination of playful design with contemporary influences with an emphasis on frugality, natural sustainable materials and timeless color schemes, and the strength and warmth of wood. All materials used were durable and of high quality, but not expensive. Instead, the designers strove to assemble an honesty in their representation. As such, the use of metal is simple, unadorned, and true to the base material. The space also reinforces the organization's brand. The color theme of the space relate to the organization's brand and graphics, namely the use of orange and green and the oval shape of a leaf, indicated on the company's logo.*

*The project adhered to a frugal budget. Occupied since late 2005, it was achieved with an architectural budget of \$54 per square and a furniture budget of \$22 per square foot.*





## Focus Daylight Studio

Location: Venice, California

Designer: Narduli Studio

Website: [www.nardulistudio.com](http://www.nardulistudio.com)

*Working with a project budget of just \$280,000, Narduli Studio performed an adaptive reuse of an existing 1948 beachfront warehouse building, transforming it into a state-of-the-art daylight photographic studio.*

*Telling of the building's age, the architects had to strip many layers of prior conversions to reveal the eighteen-foot-high bow-truss-and-timber structure. Next, an expansive system of skylights—spanning more than 500 square feet—was installed, and power and mechanical services were upgraded to meet the demanding electrical requirements and necessary environmental controls of the client.*

*The studio and its support functions claimed most of the available space, and the day-to-day operations and amenities needed to be carefully designed for efficiency and ease of operation. The two-story building structure allowed the architects to float the conference room on a bridge between the trusses, overlooking the studio. The outdoor patio became the dining room with a retractable roof.*

*Maintaining an open, flexible space was an integral part of the program for this project, as the clients wanted the potential for all areas of the building to be used for photo shoots. Rolling dual-sided Plexiglas-and-steel panels provide a cost-effective visual and acoustical barrier that can collapse to open the studio to its auxiliary spaces. The sloped site created challenges for access, as the first floor is below grade. This was solved by designing the steel staircase to wrap the interior, with the entry placed mid-way between the first and second floors.*

*Cost was a determining factor in all design decisions. Each element was carefully considered to be both functional and an expression of the design sensibility. Cost-effective off-the-shelf solutions were used to achieve aesthetic effects. For the cable elements on the main staircase, the architects were able to achieve the high-end custom look by adapting a cabling system that is used for naval applications. The windows in the project were recycled from an architectural salvage discard pile.*





## Kruskopf Coontz Advertising

Location: Minneapolis, Minnesota

Designer: U+B Architecture & Design

Website: [www.uplusb.com](http://www.uplusb.com)

*Kruskopf Coontz, a small advertising agency known nationally for its creative work, sought a sophisticated space that could be viewed as an extension of its brand and collaborative work style. Situated in an historic office building, it wanted a light-filled space that would encourage various forms of gathering and creative thought. A variety of work environments, but a cohesive aesthetic was desired.*

*The resulting space is organized into different work environments including open and closed offices, creative work areas, lounges, and presentation rooms. Each of these spaces encourages different forms of gathering and creative thought. The interiors prioritize light and color utilizing translucent and transparent walls to transmit natural light from the large exterior windows.*

*Faced with a modest budget of \$65 per square foot, U+B made as much out of the fewest possible variables for a clear, linear and thoroughly modern design. Reflective, semi-opaque resin panels manufactured by 3form appear milky white from a distance, but the slightly iridescent surface bounces light across the space. The color palette was developed in conjunction with agency's collateral marketing materials; "Tiffany" blue, light green and pale yellow are used sparingly.*



John Christenson



John Christenson





## Venice Residence

Location: Venice, California

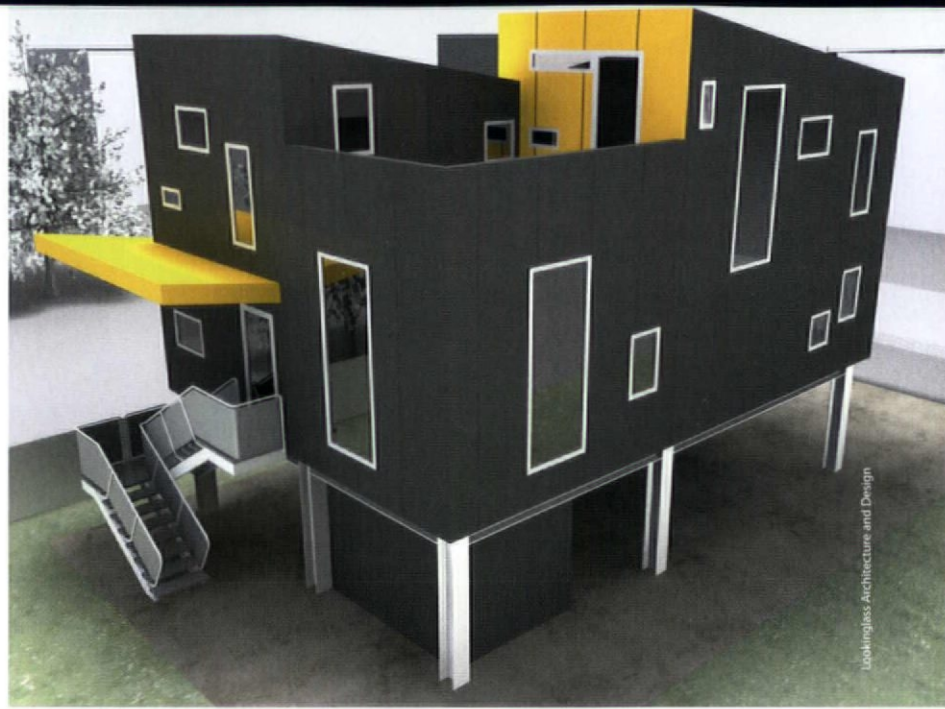
Designer: Lookingglass Architecture and Design

Website: [www.lookingglass.us](http://www.lookingglass.us)

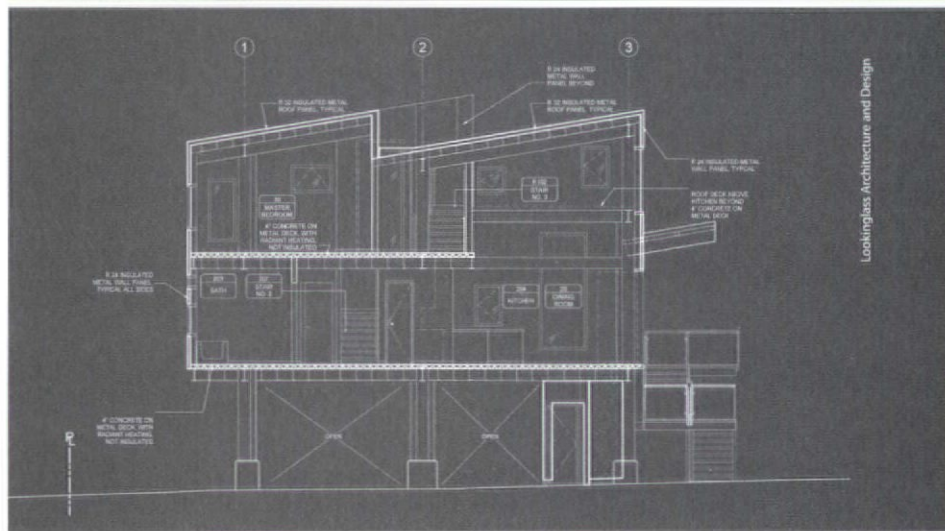
*This new residence, located behind an existing single-family home in Venice, California, takes advantage of prefabricated exposed structural steel, insulated wall panels, and metal stair elements to achieve the client's need for a flexible and energetic project at minimal expense. The first floor of the house is lifted ten feet above ground level to provide open covered parking and nearly 1000 square feet additional enclosable space below for future development as a home office. Steel structural frames allow for dynamic adjustments in floor level and soaring interiors—the living room reaches skyward twenty-two feet. Crucial to making these amenities economically viable was careful development and coordination of prefabrication techniques between the architect and fabricator to minimize costly site-welding and field work.*

*The Ecosteel prefabrication system was selected by the client before the design process began as a means of saving on construction costs. The design is a balanced deployment of the manufacturer's kit of parts, which can be assembled in a limited number of ways. Expense is reduced as a result of maximizing shop fabrication—for instance, portal frames are utilised. Though these consist of more steel than moment frames, they don't require the significant and costly field labor associated with moment frames. Reductions are also achieved in otherwise hidden costs related to normal construction durations, since the prefabricated steel structure and panelized enclosure will be erected in a matter of weeks.*

*The resulting home has a loft-like quality, taking advantage of the exposed steel structure and concrete deck floors to provide an open-plan kitchen, dining and living area. Windows in four standardized sizes playfully perforate all facades, complementing salvaged oversized commercial doors repurposed as picture windows. The elevated design also enhances privacy for the residence and accentuates rooftop western views to the ocean.*



Lookingglass Architecture and Design



Lookingglass Architecture and Design



Lookingglass Architecture and Design



## Boy Scouts of America, Orange County Council Headquarters

Location: Santa Ana, California

Designer: MVE & Partners

Website: [www.mve-architects.com](http://www.mve-architects.com)

MVE & Partners was commissioned to design the new headquarters for the Boy Scouts of America's Orange County Council. While creating an environment to reflect the values and history of the Boy Scouts, the architects were mindful of the modest construction budget (\$30 per square foot) and tight schedule. The design solution was to use common building materials in a creative manner that resulted in a space that visually expresses the resourcefulness and ingenuity at the heart of scouting.

The exterior of this 40,000-square-foot building is lit by a thirty-five-foot-high glass-block rotunda highlighting the Boy Scouts' logo, and creating the building's central focus. Beyond the one-story glass doors, a fireplace is set within the wall to the left of the entryway, under a four-high logo made of oxidized copper that was formerly located on the exterior of the original headquarters building. Across the wood-grain vinyl flooring, bright white lettering spans the length of the open lobby to read the famous motto "BE PREPARED," while leading to the reception desk.

Among other features, the main floor houses conference rooms of multiple sizes, restrooms, an elevator and a flight of stairs leading to the second floor, which hosts a large cubicle office area where specific sections are separated by wooden folding dividers with large black-and-white photos of Boy Scout troops. This photography detailing is part of the custom-designed graphics program created by the MVE & Partners in-house graphic design team. The program incorporates directional signage, donor plaques and honor walls, along with the vintage photographs and a forty-five-foot mural spelling out the Boy Scouts pledge.

Individual offices and conference rooms, located on the second floor, have a near floor-to-ceiling fluted plastic wall framed in aluminum, which cost-effectively provides natural lighting. The materials palette is consistent throughout, punctuated with splashes of color on select walls and furniture. Completed within five months from construction start date, the new facility was on time and within the budget.





## Neighborhood Legal Services

Location: Glendale, California

Designer: Osborn

Website: [www.osborn320.com](http://www.osborn320.com)

*The project for Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS) responds to the low-cost prompt by taking a stance toward preservation through the idiosyncratic use of a simple materials palette with very well defined roles. The 5,500-square-foot project is an interior tenant improvement with minimal exterior modifications.*

*A primary challenge of the project was the inherent mismatch between a traditionally hermetic law office program and an existing building with compelling interiors. NLS purchased the 1924 former market for the organization, attracted by the potential of the vast, open interiors. The existing bowstring trusses and clerestory windows made for a dynamic environment even before the lawyers arrived. In order to retain the value of their building choice, the architects chose to advocated for an open scheme where the NLS team would all access the architectural value of the existing building by a level of openness that is not common in a law practice.*

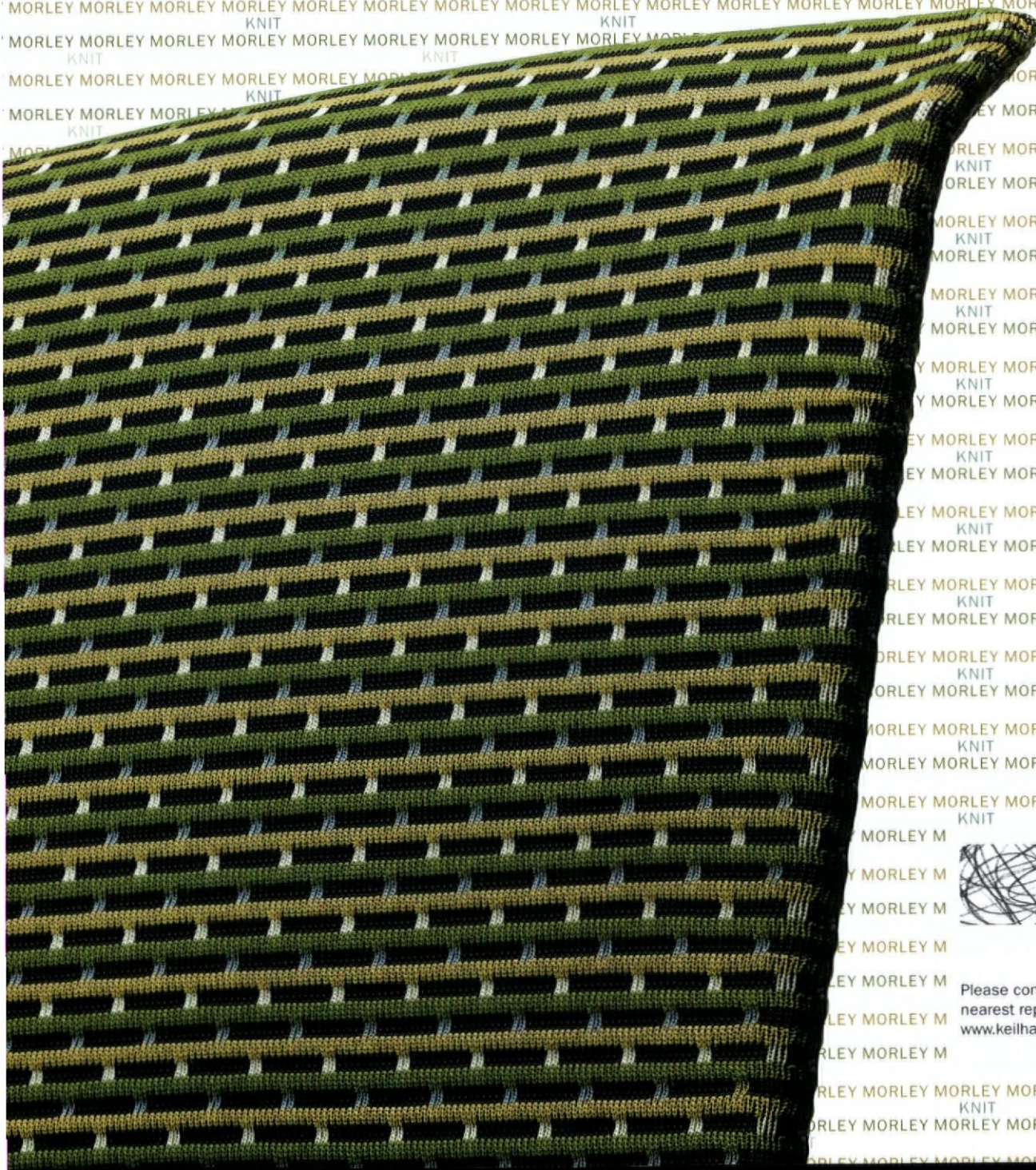
*The project's tight budget also worked in favor of an open, collaborative model. To save money on air distribution, the offices don't have ceilings and don't have doors. In lieu of dropping a ceiling in the space, the existing ceiling was merely sanded lightly, and new insulation was installed with kraft-paper backing. An architectural strategy was advanced that left the upper areas of the interior largely untouched; most work occurred in the areas ten feet and below. This controlled the scale and provided a background for the use of the polycarbonate, which takes on the most public program and the climatic condition simultaneously by housing it all in a "structure within a structure," creating spatial dynamism and depth as well as a ambiguous lightness. Also, the polycarbonate houses the only color of the project palette; everything else is either monochromatic color or subdued natural colors. Further, the program is brought to the street. Continuing the openness model, each of the windows along the street-level façade provides a glimpse into an aspect of the legal practice.*





# Morley Knitback

Designed by Mark Kapka



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## Presents EcoDensity VANCOUVER STYLE

Vancouver's success in creating a livable downtown with 80,000 residents has spawned some new terms, including Vancouverism and EcoDensity. Hear Gordon Price, a Vancouver City Councillor for six terms and current Director of Simon Fraser University's City Program, tell the Vancouver story as we Envision a Green LA.

GORDON PRICE  
February 2008  
Los Angeles

### Vancouverism

Constructing high-rise residential and mixed-used development in urban centers

### EcoDensity

Green development that reduces environmental impact on land, energy, waste, and natural resources; high quality densification that can make Vancouver more ecologically sustainable while maintaining livability and improving affordability

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LOS ANGELES

Envisioning Green Los Angeles is part of a public dialogue around how we increase sustainability in Los Angeles in light of the needs of our growing population. Envisioning Green Los Angeles takes on critical issues including the environment, traffic and housing affordability and sets the stage for a healthy future by familiarizing more people with the real challenges and achievable, creative solutions.

For exact location of Mr. Price's talk, sponsorship opportunities, and future events see [www.livableplaces.org](http://www.livableplaces.org)

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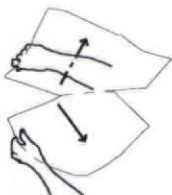


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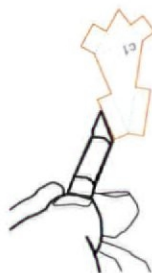
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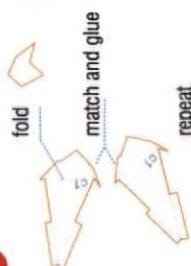
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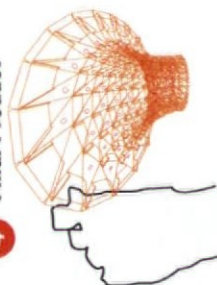
**2 Cut Out Parts**



**3 Assemble Parts**



**4 Final Product**





**A down and dirty project: assemble your own paper model based on Liquid Sky at MoMA / PS1 - Queens, NY, Summer 2007**

**Liquid Sky** was a collaboration among the following:

**Design:** Ball-Nogues Studio

**Structural Engineers:** Endres Ware Architects & Engineers, Arup

**Computation, scripting:** Product Architecture Lab at Stevens Inst. of Technology

**Water Effects:** Fountainhead

**Seating Hammocks:** Sheila Pepe

**Posters: Israel Kandarian**

**Construction:** 40 magnificent volunteers

**Ball-Nogues Studio** is Benjamin Ball, Gaston Nogues, and Andrew Lyon

**Expenditures:** collaborators and consultants - \$0

materials, rentals, outside fabrication, transportation and food - \$70,000

**Materials:** Polyester reinforced Mylar film (\$6/yd.), untreated utility poles (\$250/unit), sports netting (\$0.40/sf.), adhesive backed dacron reinforcement (\$15/yd.), beer (\$9.49/12 pak.), earth anchors (\$75/unit), comealongs (\$43/unit), cable (price varies), turnbuckles (price varies), grommets (\$49/144 pcs set)

**Equipment:** high reach forklift, bobcat w/auger, 28 ton crane, chainsaw, boom lift, CNC table cutter, jackhammer, impact wrench, rigging gear, grommet dies, Weber grill

**Accommodations:** tent

Printing: none

**Software:** Digital Project, Rhino, Oasys

**Design Time:** eight weeks

**Construction Time:** eight weeks

**Dissassembly Time:** five days



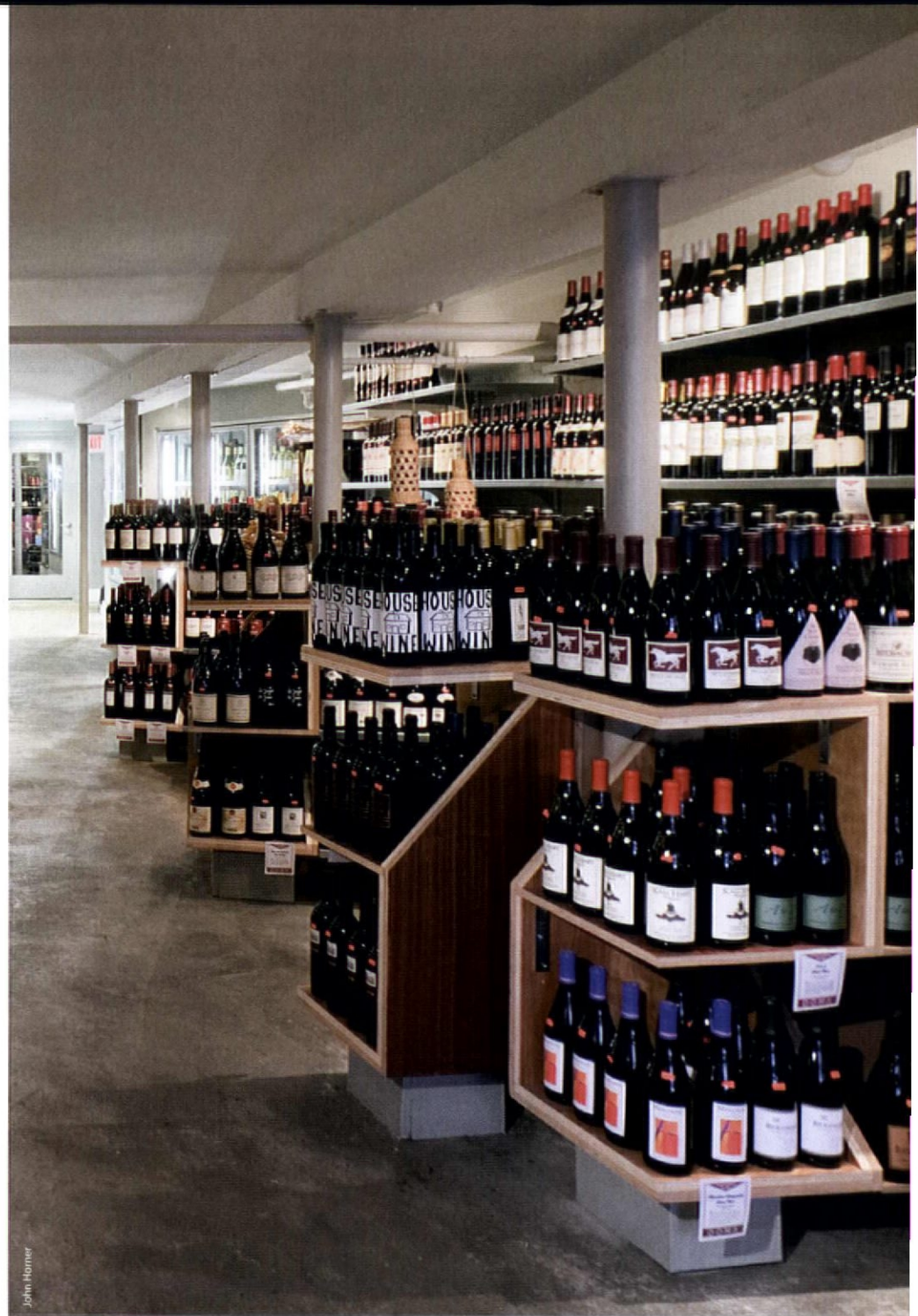
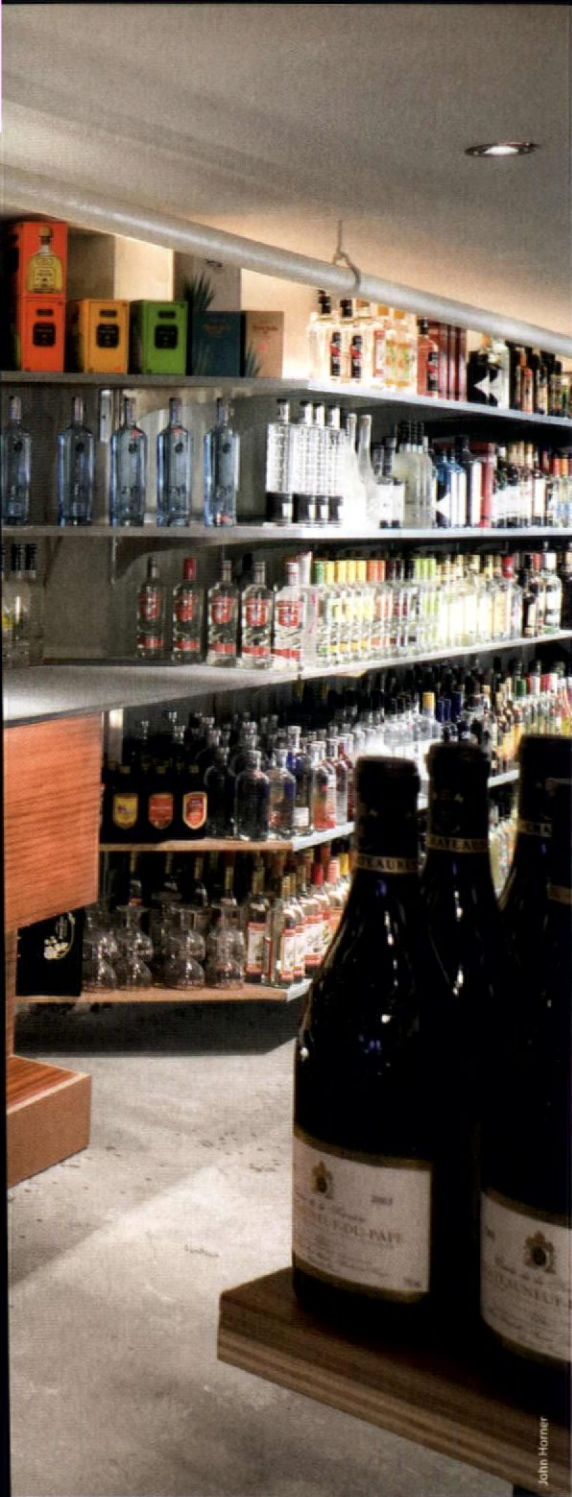




# social constructs: STUDIO LUZ

BY MIMI ZEIGER





**AT DOMA VODKA BOTTLES ALIGNED ON SAPELE WOOD SHELVES GLOW ENTICINGLY, BUT SADDLE UP TO THE BLACK GRANITE COUNTERTOP AND** you'll be hard-pressed to tipple a splash with tonic. Rows of mixers and malts edge the perimeter—this intimate space is a liquor store, not a bar. It is difficult to imagine that such a pedestrian program can sum up an architecture firm's philosophy. A house, cultural institution or a museum might illuminate an approach: e.g., the Vanna Venturi House or OMA's Seattle Public Library, but a package store conjures visions caught on a closed-circuit security camera.

Yet for Studio Luz founders, architects Hansy Better Barraza and Anthony Piermarini, Doma, a "liquor boutique" located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, does just that. In 1,200 square feet it efficiently encapsulates the office's methodology: A social space that emphasizes materiality, even on a tight budget. The term "social" is important for the designers: They hope to create encounters on both the large and small scale. This means a tiny, personal detail influences the whole piece of architecture.







"[Doma] is meant to bend the genre and feel more like a bar, but the client was hammering on us to display more product, so we needed more shelves," explains Piermarini. "We were not doing community work; we were selling liquor. We worked with a pre-made system and then grafted into that more refined, custom shelves." Those shelves sculpturally fold to create the check-out counter. But there is more to them than simply formal or programmatic concerns, and that is where Studio Luz starts to philosophize. "The project is an architecture of joints. With a kind of surrealist detailing, we tried to capture that moment in time between what is customized and what is standardized," says Better Barraza. "We asked ourselves, 'What is the least amount of intervention you can do to make a boutique out of what is grungy and raw?'"

Studio Luz's two principals first met in the late 1990s as architecture students at Cornell University and both went on to get their master's degrees at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. There is still an undercurrent of their academic training running through the designs: little disjunctures, subversive details and defamiliarized materials. "We were in school during the body politics era. There was a movement to declassify boundaries and deal with gender issues," reflects Better Barraza. This discourse is not always overt in the architecture. A black granite countertop is subverted at Doma—turned upside down so that its rough surface is exposed. The move is also budget-friendly; the commercially available granite was actually cheaper than poured concrete counters. (There is a stronger sexual subtext at the firm's celebrated Diva Lounge, a high-concept restaurant and bar in Somerville, Massachusetts, where one of the many seductive touches are the "nipples" that rise out of the tabletops.)

Although the firm has worked on residential and commercial projects where money wasn't a restraint, Piermarini believes that low-budget projects lend themselves to innuendo and experimentation precisely because of the tight purse strings. The firm loves tweaking off-the-shelf materials. Better Barraza breaks the process

"With a kind of surrealist detailing we tried to capture that moment in time between what is customized and what is standardized." — HANSY BETTER BARRAZA

into three parts: the kind of effect the material produces in the environment; how the original source material is demonstrated to the public; and, finally, determining potential ways to use it.

For the 2004 façade design of W.O.W., a retail store in Newton Highlands, Massachusetts, specializing in art-to-wear women's clothing, the client asked the architects to transform the former auto parts store (a big vanilla box with strip windows) and give the space a new identity. "The concept was to make it reflect the high-end artisan





stuff inside," explains Better Barraza. "We wanted to make the views into the space more specific—highlighting one view at a time." The firm had just enough budget to buy thirty-eight sheets of polycarbonate plastic. They took the common material, often used for shed and carports, and altered it into the puzzle-like skin that wraps the building. Each panel is notched and framed in standard aluminum C channels. When the panels are all fitted together, those apertures allow views of the merchandise.

Studio Luz's material investigations continue in Mela, a 1,300-square-foot Indian restaurant in Boston. "With copper we found a direct relationship between the cuisine and culture—traditionally it is used as cookware and in presentation," says Better Barraza. "So, we went to Home

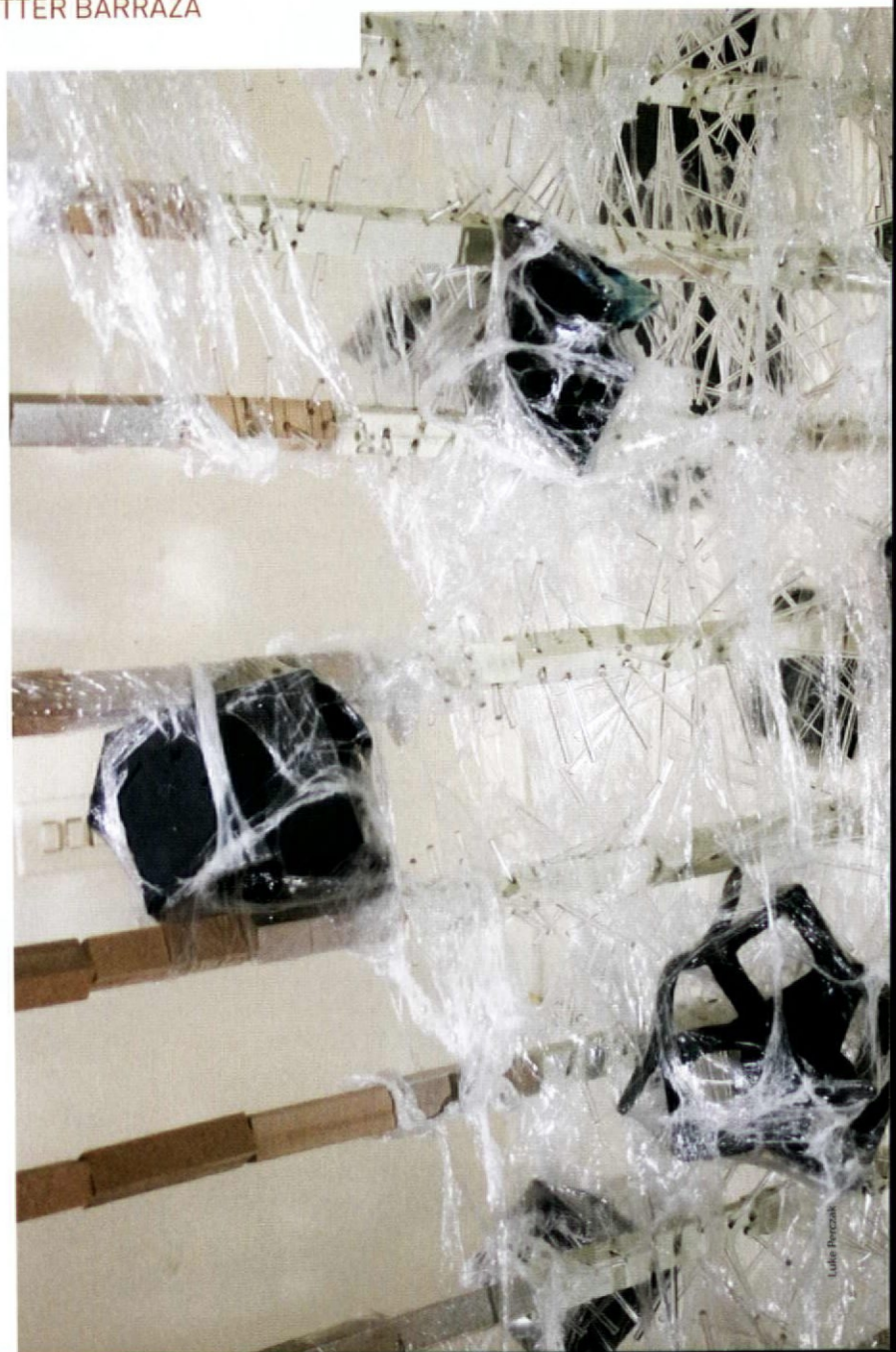


**"Through collaborative production, the teens felt like they owned the space." — HANSY BETTER BARRAZA**

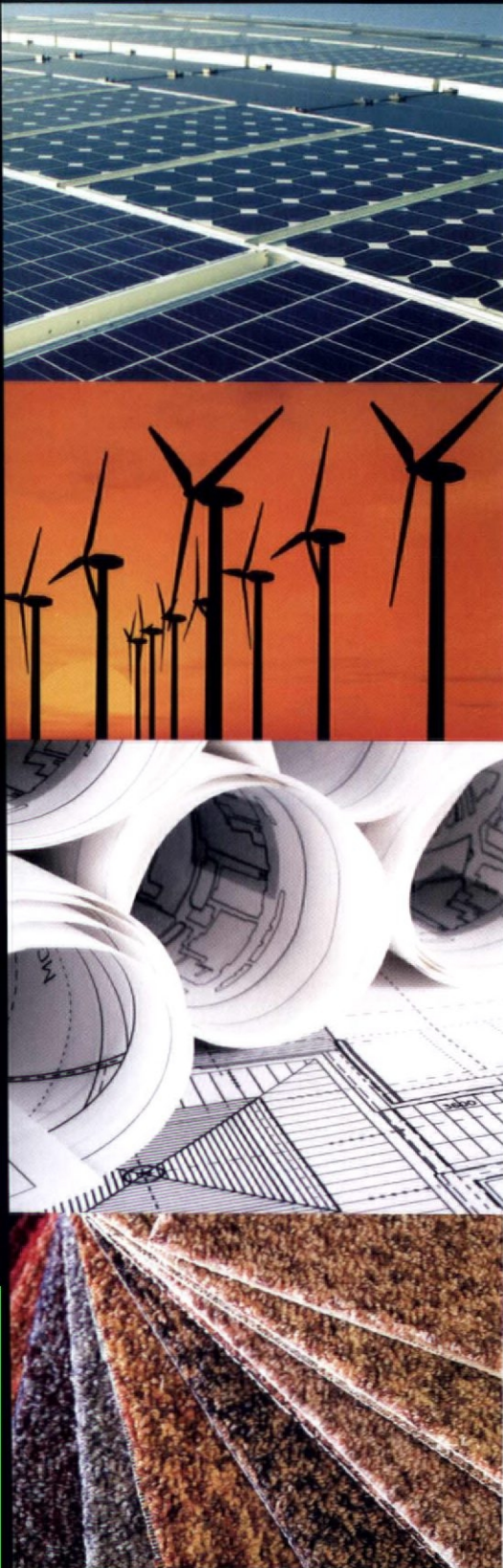
Depot and got copper flashing." The architects used the metal as an interior finish on the dining room walls. Each strip sculpturally loops in on itself, a reference back to the cooking vessels. The technique is simple, but the architects still needed to be on site to show it to the contractor. With larger, more complicated installations, they make a mock up in their garage.

Given the architects' penchant for material experimentation, it is fitting that both teach in the architecture department at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), an institution known for interdisciplinary exchange. The educational setting acts like a think tank, a place for new ideas and inventions. Last spring, Better Barraza teamed with ceramics assistant professor Linda Sormin for a cross-disciplinary studio. RISD students were asked to design and construct screens at Harmony Hill School in Chepachet, Rhode Island, a nonprofit school for aggressive, at-risk youth. Additionally, the ceramics students worked directly with the boys on small clay sculptures, which were then incorporated into the panels.

The Harmony Hill students are behaviorally and emotionally challenged, so are subject to strict rules of conduct, which include not having any physical contact with the visitors. Made of wood, plastic, ceramics and wire, the screens are sited in the lounge outside the counseling offices. They add texture, detail and metaphor to an otherwise-banal room. Projects like Harmony Hill School illustrate the architects' commitment to building connections between material investigations, social constructs and socially conscious practice. "Through collaborative production, the teens felt like they owned the space," notes Better Barraza. "The screens are really amazing. They deal with boundaries, interactions between people and the body in space." ■







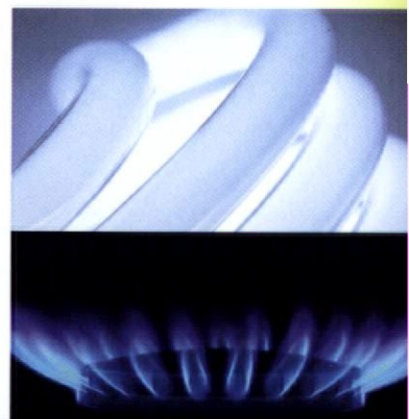
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# making the ORDINARY EXTRAORDINARY

## A Trio of Gyms by Koning Eizenberg Architecture Delivers on the Firm's Promise to Bring Design to the Everyday BY JEFFREY HEAD

**"GYMS ARE NOT SEXY, AND THEY TAKE JUST AS MUCH WORK AS A PROJECT THREE OR FOUR TIMES THEIR SIZE," SAYS JULIE EIZENBERG, AIA,** of Santa Monica, California-based Koning Eizenberg Architecture (KEA).

Indeed, in recent years, the firm—formed with partner Hank Koning, FAIA, in 1981—has been more synonymous with seduction than civic mindedness (think the slick 2002 adaptive reuse of the Standard Hotel, formerly the Superior Oil Company building, in downtown Los Angeles). But look a little closer, and one will see a public-minded attitude is clearly reflected in KEA's affordable residential, mixed-use, commercial and institutional projects, such as the Waterloo Heights Housing project in Hollywood, PS#1 Elementary School in Santa Monica, and the West Hollywood Community Center. Add to that a recently completed trio of Los Angeles-area inner-city public gyms, and a pattern starts to emerge. Call it architecture in the public interest with invariably limited funding.

The underlying theme in these and other projects is KEA's pursuit of a personal architecture that directly affects more people, what Eizenberg calls "workaday urban living." Her almost-rhetorical question—"We expect great qualities in buildings like museums; shouldn't we also expect them in places for everyday life?"—is addressed in the firm's 2006 monograph, *Architecture Isn't Just for Special Occasions*, and appears as a central tenet of the firm's work.

The new gyms are the latest examples of Eizenberg's belief that "places for daily activities should be highly valued" and that "making places comfortable for everyday living is more about an economical and social infrastructure than an ornamental approach to building design." In developing the gyms, the firm took the responsibility to provide a functional, useful space that means more than what the space literally represents, avoiding unnecessary design elements to hide or disguise the buildings' generic qualities. Instead, though they share common design components and construction materials such as brick and corrugated metal, there is a distinct personality to each gym.



The three freestanding gyms, each getting heavy use in their respective neighborhoods, are Green Meadows and Van Ness Park (also known as the Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr., Gymnasium), both located in South Los Angeles, and Pecan Park in East Los Angeles. All were funded by the City of Los Angeles' Proposition K, and the Department of Public Works' Bureau of Engineering managed the projects through its Recreation and Cultural Facilities Program.

Eizenberg recounts how the jobs came to the firm: "The City (of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks) had limited funds, but was shopping for quality architecture and approached us." The firm had already secured a place on the City's pre-qualified list and had previously completed gym projects for the City at Peck Park and the Sepulveda Recreation Center. Though the project began with one gym, it quickly expanded to three when the City approved KEA's proposal of a prototype that could be modified for various site-specific conditions that would help to standardize costs.

Prior to construction, community input was solicited to help refine the site selection and orientation of the new gyms in each park. When it was time to build, KEA looked at design efficiencies to encourage public bidding, a process the City supports as a way to bring less experienced contractors to projects. As a result, a different builder constructed each gym. The basic design left as little room as possible for mistakes, yet also allowed some flexibility in construction. The materials are the same across the three gyms and were selected for their initial cost, life-cycle cost and durability. For example, Pecan Park and Van Ness Park incorporate structural piers on the exterior. For the roof, both gyms use a cost-effective, pre-finished long-span Energy Star reflective metal deck with skylights. The Green Meadows gym also uses an Energy Star metal roof deck, but on top of a truss structure. The Green Meadows project takes a few twists: Here, the natural lighting source comes from strategically oriented clerestory windows, and a Solatube Daylighting System

was used to reduce energy. Additionally, the project's metal siding contributed to passive cooling. These components added to the Green Meadows gym's LEED-equivalency mandate set by the City, an expectation that was not required for these particular projects.

The primary material for each gym is high fly-ash-content Concrete Masonry Units (CMUs), an environmentally friendly product mostly made of the dust left over from burned coal. These CMUs, or bricks, were selected from a cost and sustainability perspective. Contrasting brick color combinations and block patterns of stripes with varying widths gives each gym its own identity, though once again Green Meadows stands out because it incorporates a folded wall. This technical solution—a straight vertical crease in the wall to provide a stronger support without requiring

occurred during the construction of the Pecan Park gym, all three gyms have resisted vandalism. Though an anti-graffiti coating helps mitigate the damage, other strategies were incorporated—like vines in the case of the Van Ness gym to cover the east wall, which was prone to tagging.

In addition to being built at a relatively low cost and with an eye on cross-purposing design strategies, the projects offer users a sense of place, social interaction and connectedness, in accordance with a principle that is resonated in KEA's book that "an individual's self-image is based on the quality of his or her daily life."

KEA Project Manager Robert Fabijaniak confirms the gyms' roles in their respective communities.

"Pecan Park is enthusiastically embraced by the mostly Latino neighborhood, which

"Expectations need to change; people can have more than they think." — JULIE EIZENBERG

structural piers—lends a dynamic looking effect while permitting greater flexibility and more open space. According to Jimi Chae, project manager for Tobo Construction on the Green Meadows gym, the entire project was quite challenging because the bricks' design, color pattern and configuration did not comply with a typical rectangular shape.

"The structural engineer conceptualized a zig-zag wall pattern, so we custom cut each CMU to meet the angles. You cannot find a straight wall on the project," says Chae.

This craftsmanship was recognized by the Concrete Masonry Association of California and Nevada, which honored the Green Meadows gym with its 2006 Merit Award.

Among the myriad concerns associated with public projects, the gyms were identified early as possible targets of vandalism and graffiti. Yet, according to the architects' accounts, aside from some tagging that

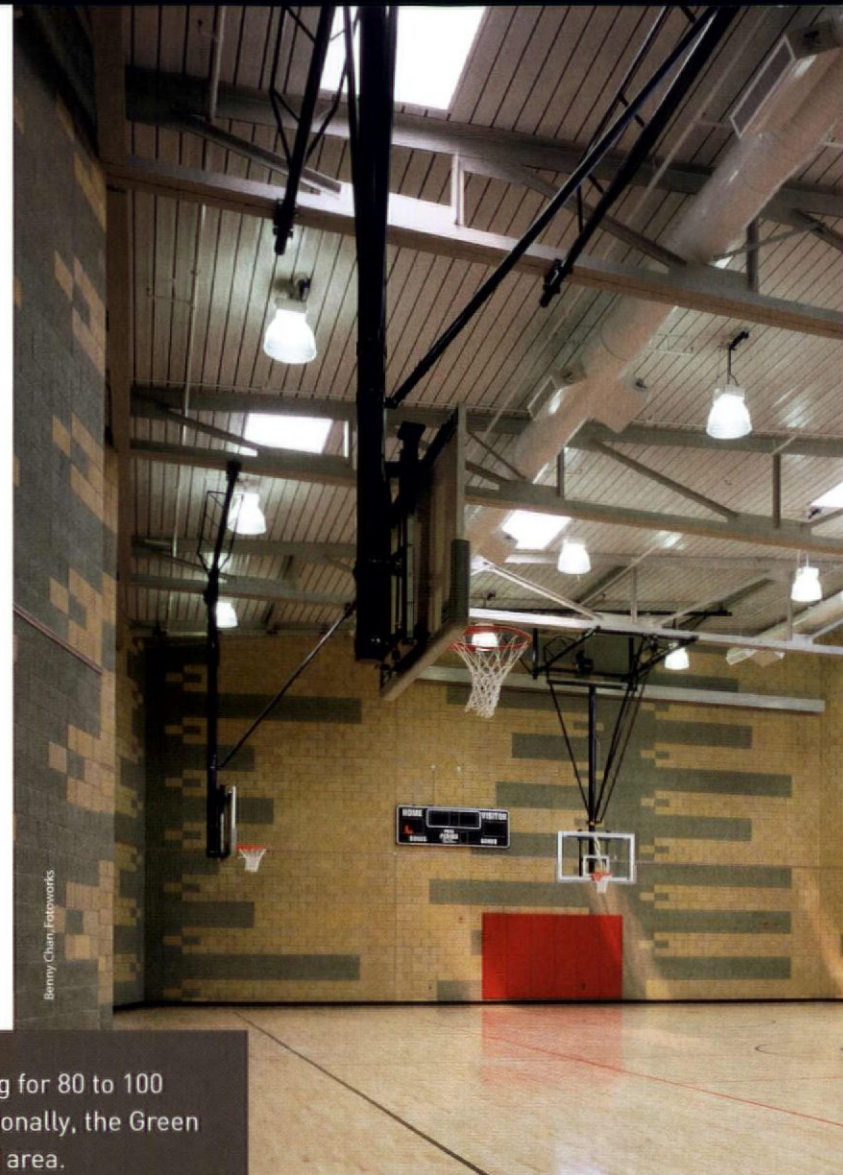
considers it their gym. There is pride of ownership; the community loves the colors," he says. "And the Van Ness gym has also been embraced by its largely African-American community, which is also pleased with the green and black colors of their building that complement the local team's colors."

Even with budget, resource and time constraints, KEA's approach allowed for buildings that transcend ordinary, nondescript design. Koning Eizenberg Architecture, for one, is not surprised with the results.

"Expectations need to change," Eizenberg asserts. "People can have more than they think."

For now, her firm is awaiting a new funding stream with the City of Los Angeles for low-cost public projects. "We're trying to get the word out that this is a viable approach—where design quality can emerge despite tight-budgeted public building projects." ■





Each gym features a basketball court, bleacher seating for 80 to 100 people, bathrooms, an office and storage space. Additionally, the Green Meadows gym has a classroom, kitchen and courtyard area.

#### *Green Meadows*

PREVIOUS PAGE, TOP LEFT; THIS PAGE, TOP RIGHT  
Located in South Los Angeles, the 10,000-square-foot Green Meadows gym was completed in April 2006 for \$2.9 million.

#### *Pecan Park*

PREVIOUS PAGE, TOP RIGHT; THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT  
The Pecan Park facility in East Los Angeles comprises 9,300 square feet and was completed in December 2006 for \$2.5 million.

#### *Van Ness Park*

PREVIOUS PAGE, BOTTOM; THIS PAGE, BOTTOM  
The 8,800-square-foot gym at Van Ness Park opened in March 2007 and came in at \$2.4 million.



Brian Lane, Koning Eberberg Architecture





# POWER SAVINGS

Electrical Design Strategies  
Every Architect Should Know



The desire to incorporate environmentally sensitive materials and designs in new projects and rehabilitations has moved into the mainstream, but many still struggle to incorporate "green" into their designs.

The U.S. Green Building Council has set up guidelines and incentives through its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, and the costs are lower than many predicted. By some estimates, the majority of all LEED projects are achieving certification for less than 1 percent in first costs, with silver averaging 1.65 percent, gold costing 2.2 percent and platinum coming in at 4 to 5 percent.

That's the budget side of the equation. What about balancing certification with appealing design? FORM asked William H. Dahl, Jr., an electrical designer and Associate at IBE Engineers, about the best way to marry the design process with the search for LEED certification. Dahl was lead designer on the Getty Villa, Tudor Hall at the University of Southern California, the McDonald Medical Research Building at the University of California, Los Angeles and is currently working on the USC School of Cinema, the Natural History Museum and Frank Gehry's Hall Winery in Napa Valley.

**Form:** How does LEED certification affect the approach to the design process?

**William H. Dahl:** If you start out Day One and everyone knows you are doing a LEED rated project you look at things in a completely different way. You look at what kind of materials you are going to be specifying. Your design might be affected by what is available within a 200 mile radius. You think about how you might reuse anything already existing on the site instead of sending it to a landfill.

**Form:** So where do you start?

**WHD:** We start with a base model of energy usage for the area or alternately based on ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) standards. Everything we do that improves upon the standard model gains points. If the decision to go for a LEED rating is made during CDs, costs may be added to the project. For example, increased insulation may have to be added to compensate for poor orientation. Lighting control systems might be more extensive due to suboptimal window design.

When we start an electrical design with energy savings in mind we first check to see if there are alternate sources of

energy generation available on site such as photovoltaics, wind turbines, methane recovery and fuel cells. We work with the architect to make sure adequate space is allocated and that the structure is designed to accommodate this. The roof may not have been designed to carry photovoltaics and the structure may have to be beefed up. We may have to do a wind analysis to make sure we are able to capture wind on the site after the building is built.

**Form:** What about channeling natural light to interior spaces?

**WHD:** Daylight harvesting is crucial these days. This is way beyond the occupancy sensors that everyone is familiar with. We identify the required footcandle level at the work surface, for example. Maybe 50 footcandles. We install photo sensors to determine how much light is reaching the work surface from natural sources. If there is a deficit, we augment the natural daylight with electrical lighting but the lights might be dimmed to only meet the amount of the deficit. We have window shades on automatic controls so we can maximize daylighting, minimize glare, control heat gain and at night, when the lights are on full, we can reduce light pollution leaving the building. ■



# CREDITS

## BUCK (naked)

LOCATION: Los Angeles, California  
DESIGNER: MASS Architecture & Design

### PROJECT TEAM

PRINCIPAL DESIGNER: Ana Henton  
PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT: Gregory Williams  
MASS TEAM: Heather Perilliat, Tina Pezeshkpour,  
Nathan Levi Lewis  
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Ernie Aiken, Garden Domes  
CLIENT: Jeff Ellermeyer, Principal/Founder BUCK  
GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Morgan Stine, Stine Builders  
#837045

INTERIOR MILLWORK: Robert Perez, Custom WRX  
FURNITURE: Herman Miller, Eames Collection  
FINISHES: Walnut veneer plywood walls; Benjamin  
Moore, painted walls and ceiling; Polished Concrete  
floors; Lightolier light fixtures

ART: Painting in private office by Frank Ryan

KITCHEN/BATHROOM: Tamara Kaye-Honey,  
Original Nineteen

PHOTOGRAPHY: Edward Duarte

LIGHTING: Lightolier

## The Children's Center at Caltech's Outdoor Science Laboratory

LOCATION: Pasadena, California  
DESIGNER: (M)Arch.

### PROJECT TEAM

PARTNERS: Todd A. Erlandson AIA, Sherry Hoffman  
DESIGNERS: Lara Hoad, Jon Rahman,  
Benjamin Gramann  
CONSTRUCTION: Vancrest Construction Corp.

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: C.M. Peck Consulting  
STEEL FABRICATOR: Eric's Creative Wrought Iron  
CLIENT: The Children's Center at Caltech  
PHOTOGRAPHY: David Lena Photography  
PHOTOGRAPHY: Lawrence Anderson.

## Los Angeles Universal Preschool Headquarters

LOCATION: Los Angeles, California  
DESIGNER: HOK

### PROJECT TEAM

HOK PRINCIPAL-IN-CHARGE: Pam Light  
SENIOR PROJECT DESIGNER/PROJECT MANAGER:  
Tim Gajewski  
HOK PROJECT DESIGNER/JOB CAPTAIN: Nicky Kaplan

## Focus Daylight Studio

LOCATION: Venice, California  
DESIGNER: Narduli Studio

### PROJECT TEAM

PRINCIPAL: Susan Narduli  
PROJECT ARCHITECT: Paola Amodeo Newman  
CONTRACTOR: Hinerfeld - Ward, Inc.  
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Gordon L. Polon  
CLIENT: The Focus Studio  
PHOTOGRAPHY: All photographs are by permission  
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DRAWINGS: All drawings are by permission

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## Kruskopf Coontz Advertising

LOCATION: Minneapolis, Minnesota  
DESIGNER: U+B Architecture & Design

### PROJECT TEAM

PRINCIPALS: Mark Burgess, AIA; Paul Udris, AIA

PROJECT MANAGER: Eric Ludwig  
PHOTOGRAPHY: John Christenson and William Dohman

## Venice Residence

LOCATION: Venice, California  
DESIGNER: Lookingglass Architecture and Design

### PROJECT TEAM

LOOKINGGLASS PROJECT TEAM: Nick Gillock, Emil Mertzel,  
Robert Mothershed, Jovan Rodriguez  
FABRICATOR: Ecosteel  
ENGINEER OF RECORD: Scott Christensen

## Boy Scouts of America, Orange County Council Headquarters

LOCATION: Santa Ana, California  
DESIGNER: MVE & Partners

### PROJECT TEAM

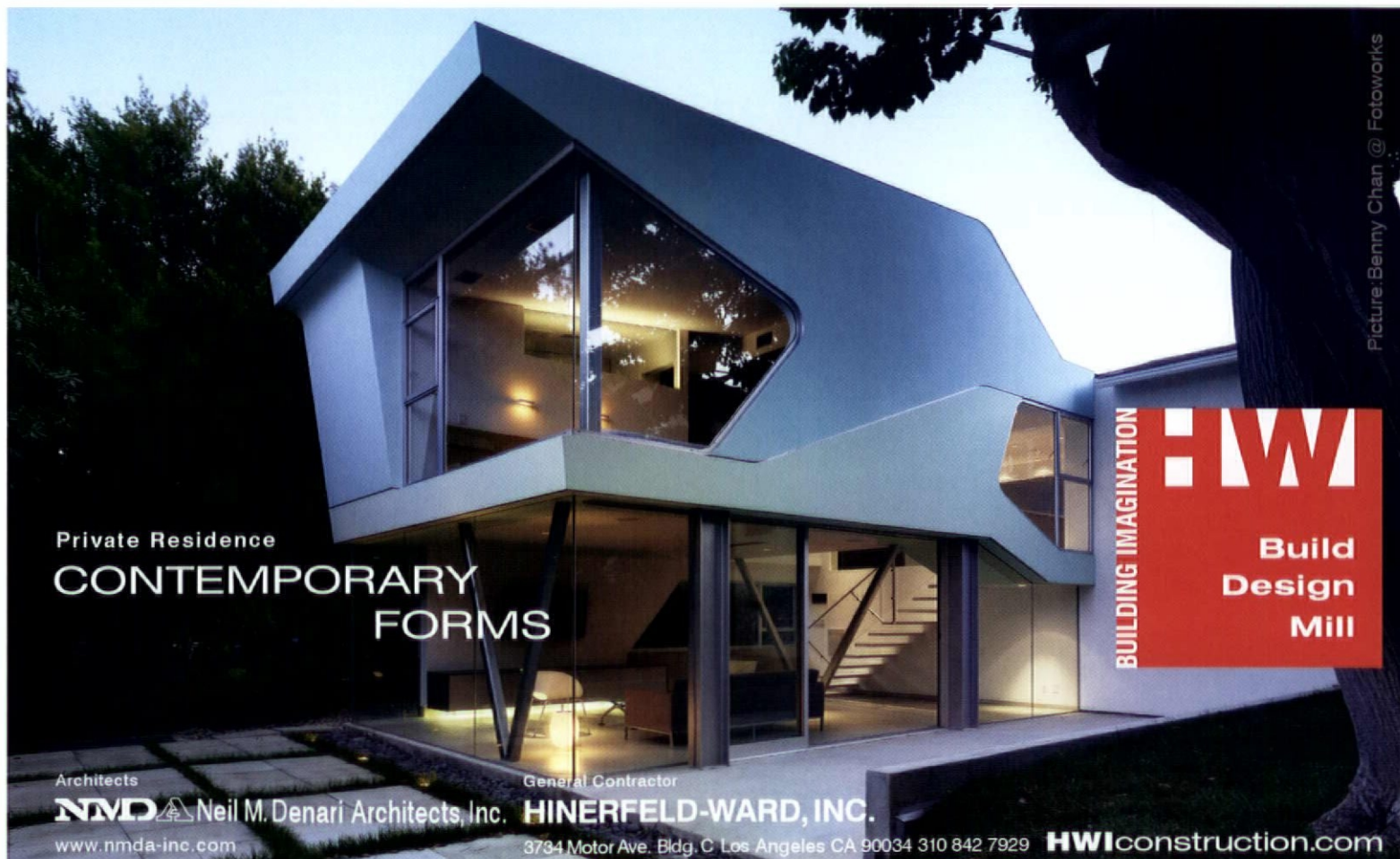
ARCHITECT: MVE & Partners  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD: Carl McLarand, AIA  
FOUNDING PARTNER: Ernie (Ernesto) Vasquez, AIA  
FOUNDING PARTNER: Richard Emsiek, AIA, President  
ASSOCIATE PARTNER/DIRECTOR OF INTERIORS: Robert Puleo

## Neighborhood Legal Services

LOCATION: Glendale, California  
DESIGNER: Osborn

### PROJECT TEAM

OWNER: Neighborhood Legal Services  
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Brandow & Johnston  
MECHANICAL/PLUMBING ENGINEER: Creative Design  
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER: Arrow Design  
PHOTOGRAPHY: Yuju Yeo; Juan Azulay



Private Residence

# CONTEMPORARY FORMS

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**NMD** Neil M. Denari Architects, Inc.  
www.nmda-inc.com

General Contractor  
**HINERFELD-WARD, INC.**  
3734 Motor Ave. Bldg. C Los Angeles CA 90034 310 842 7929

**HWI** construction.com

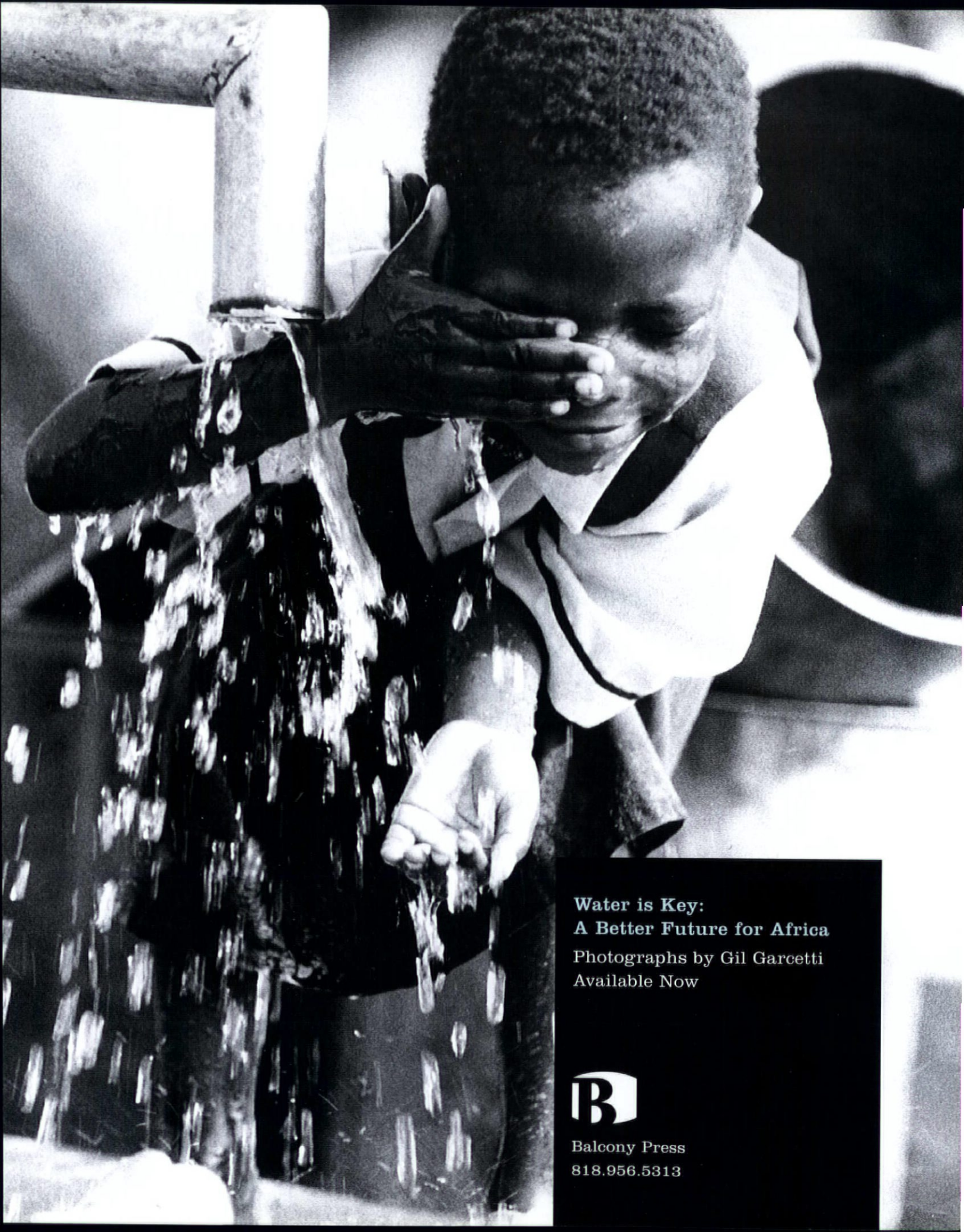
BUILDING IMAGINATION

**HWI**

Build  
Design  
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Picture: Benny Chan @ Fotoworks





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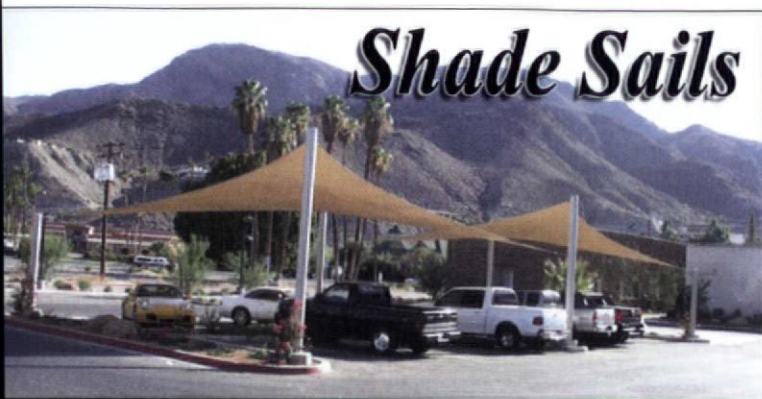
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# PROFESSION

## A PUBLIC MATTER

### Open-Space Discussion Takes Shape at AIA/LA Summit

**PUBLIC SPACE LA!—THE FIRST AIA LOS ANGELES SUMMIT ON PUBLIC** parks and open space—took place on October 26 in the Silver Screen Theatre at the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood.

The concept for a summit stemmed from a series of enthusiastic conversations that took place between Marc Porter Zasada and William H. Fain, Jr., FAIA, about public parks and their influence on civility in Los Angeles.

Eventually, these casual discussions formalized into a series of lunch discussions with a small handful of interested individuals, including Martha Welborne, FAIA, Dave Gold, Ph. D., Sara Feldman, John Kaliski, AIA, Will Wright and Anne Koshalek. When it soon became apparent that the complexities of the topic required a larger forum for the exchange of viewpoints and strategies regarding public open space, or lack thereof, in Los Angeles, the Public Space LA! summit was born.

With more than 250 people in attendance, Fain framed the event's overall discussion in his opening address—stressing that there is a hope “to create continuity between regional groups to share strategies and gain new understanding of public space issues in Los Angeles.”

Fain also led a panel discussion on design, ownership and the use of public space, and Welborne presided over two informative presentations from Tupper Thomas, president and park administrator of New York's Prospect Park Alliance, and Ed Uhlir, director of design for Millennium Park Chicago. Other participants included assembly member Kevin DeLeon, sponsor of the State's Open Space bill AB 31, Kaliski, who testified to the measurable and fundamental benefits of

open space on the health, economy, and livability of cities, Zasada, who moderated *The Special Problem of LA*, and Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti. Presented by KFWB News 980 Radio, the Power Lunch featured a Keynote Conversation between Kevin Starr, Patt Morrison and Barry A. Sanders. The event concluded with closing remarks from architecture critic Robert Campbell, who emphasized the value of learning from one another and supporting a common agenda.

—Anne Koshalek, David Alpaugh and Todd Gish



## AIA/LA EVENTS CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 04 Design Awards – Call for Entry
- 08 POC Meeting
- 15 Membership Renewals Due
- 26 AIA/LA Board Retreat



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For more information on these and all AIA/Los Angeles events, please visit [www.aialosangeles.org](http://www.aialosangeles.org) or call 213-639-0777.

- 12 POC Meeting
- 20 Grassroots Conference  
Washington, DC (2.20–2.23)
- 26 AIA/LA Board Mtg
- 29 POC Breakfast Reception (TBC)

FEBRUARY



# MOBIUS LA

West Hollywood's Pacific Design Center  
October 24th, 25th & 26th, 2007



IN CELEBRATION OF LA'S FIRST OFFICIAL OCTOBER AS ARCHITECTURE MONTH, AIA Los Angeles unveiled its inaugural "MOBIUS LA, Presented by Kohler—A Continuum of Architecture, Design, Mobility, Style & Sustainability"—with an attendance of nearly 500 people. The three-day event featured programming on Sustainability and Professional Practice. Friday offered the first ever Public Space LA! Summit, featuring a keynote lunch conversation with celebrated author and California historian Kevin Starr, *LA Times* columnist, Patt Morrison, and Board of Recreation & Parks Commission President Barry Sanders. The lunch, which was presented by KFWB News 980 Radio, was sandwiched between four outstanding Public Space panels that dared to ask: "What is urban open space and who owns it?" Interspersed throughout the three-day event were networking opportunities including the *FORM* magazine launch party on the MOBIUS LA expo floor featuring a crowd-pleasing Ketel One Martini Luge and Ice Sculpture as well as the third Annual Restaurant Design Awards Ceremony hosted by Poliform at their spectacular Robertson Boulevard showroom. MOBIUS LA offered the unique opportunity for AIA/LA members to earn all 18 of their required learning units in three days at a convenient Los Angeles location.







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## BUILDING ON A BUDGET

**"YOU'D BE CRAZY NOT TO BE YOUR OWN CONTRACTOR;** the savings alone are enormous!" a friend remarked to me back in fall 2003. I'd just purchased a "mutt" of a vacant lot in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Silver Lake and was about to build a home on it. Though at that point I'd realized several projects, I had little construction experience, so the possibility of actually managing a project of my own seemed not just unreasonable, but insane. "I'll think about it," was all I could say. "The savings! Just think of the savings!" he remarked again, this time with a glimmer in his eye.

Twelve months later this conversation came back to me as I knelt, covered in mud, in the crawl space of my new, unfinished home. The winter rains had come to L.A. a couple of months early, and my plumbers had yet to connect the internal roof drains to the storm sewer. I was in the midst of cobbling together some temporary pipes to divert the torrent of water flowing into the house from the roof. The project had been in construction since April 2004, and, so far, things had gone smoothly, but my sanity was beginning to show signs of slipping; I'd acquired the look of a trapped animal. "Just think of the savings," I mumbled as a torrent of muddy water coated me from head to toe.

When you take on your own project as an owner-builder, the risks are enormous. You are, after all, constructing a very large physical object that has to respond to gravity. If things don't work out, then all you've got to show

for it is a pile of used building materials, which probably cost your savings, and are now worthless. However, if you succeed, then the lessons outweigh the risks. For example, when I decided to build my home and office on that tiny lot, I had already designed several custom homes, but none I was proud to attach to my name. As a young architect just out of school, my partner and I took every project we could, and thus had a few built compromises, but nothing fully satisfying. With this house, I had the opportunity to test all of the ideas that had been previously rejected.

The results were invaluable. Whenever I see something in my house that is well designed, I'm proud of my vision and the risks I took. Likewise, when I see a mistake (and there are several), I make a mental note to never repeat it again. As the job progressed, and my budget shrank, I ended up doing a lot of the finish carpentry myself, learned how to hang corrugated steel siding, installed deck rails, and made bathroom cabinets on the fly. I also learned the value of labor and craft, and now think twice before telling a subcontractor to do something over on a project. Instead, I now try to figure out a way to make it work, without feeling like it's a compromise.

In the end, the project came in on budget and on schedule. I'd spent a total of \$350,000 on construction, and the subsequent appraisal made it obvious that architects can indeed save money by building their own projects. It emboldened me to take on



When the time came for architect John Southern to build his own home in Silver Lake, he bet on big savings by acting as his own contractor.

another house, this time a "spec" on a steep hillside, to continue my education as a D-I-Y builder and architect.

The most important lesson, however, was not tied to how much money I saved or what I proved to myself, but what I learned about architecture. With the profession currently distracted by the slickness of contemporary materials and computer-driven forms, we forget that buildings, like people, are imperfect vessels that decay as they age. No building can remain new forever, but good space endures. And if that's all you achieve by taking on your own building project, then you've succeeded. Just remember to stub out those drains before it rains.

—John Southern





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