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My daughter, Greer, recently moved into her own room after sharing one with her little sister. As part of her birthday present, we gave her free reign to choose any color paint she wanted for her walls. As we stood in front of a kaleidoscope of shades, I found myself steering her toward safe hues, a soft blue or a soothing rose. She, on the other hand, had other ideas and plucked a bold sample, the shade of a Tiffany-blue gift box, and proclaimed it her own.

I shrugged my shoulders and bought a gallon of paint, though I wasn’t convinced of her choice. We spent the next week rolling and painting, and by the time it was all done, I had fallen in love with “Surfer Blue”. In a sea of neutral grays and tans my favorite room had become my daughter’s. It was a good lesson: color can be one of your most powerful design tools and one of the easiest to change. In this issue, we also explore the role of color as writer Michael Webb examines its use in urban environments for the feature, “Color and the City.” And, speaking of the city, photographer Jill Paider shares her own urban canvases in a photo essay that captures architecture from her travels. Perhaps it’s time we all take a lesson from our children: be bold and take a risk so we can fall in love with our Technicolor world.
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In ancient Rome, the term urbs referred to the totality of human settlement, a process, which led to cities like itself and encompassed the expansionary logic of Roman territories far afield. Unlike its predecessor, the Greek polis, which referred to a specific and unique local city-state, urbs embodied the universal grid, a model for urban replication and imperial ambition.

Following the Second World War, urban design emerged as a professional term in Europe and Britain. Patrick Abercrombie and John Henry Forshaw, commissioned to produce the 1943 County of London Plan in the war's aftermath, first coined it. Aimed at rebuilding the war damage, urban design attended to reconstruction and planning for a growing auto-based population.

In 1956, Jose Luis Sert, then dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Design and president of CIAM, attempted to steer the European emphasis on urban design to include major U.S. cities. Sert aspired to redefine the field from one, which had been dominated by planners and social scientists in the aftermath of the war, to one in which physical design and the participation of architects would be central. Sert stated that the new arena of urban design was now to be "that part of city planning which deals with the physical part of the city...the most creative phase of city planning and that in which imagination and artistic capacities can play a more important part." Sert's position came at a time of emerging rifts in the definition of urban design, be it the realization of a social mission, a physical platform for expanding commerce or an aestheticized formalism growing ever less relevant.

These critiques were soon lampooned by the likes of Archizoom's No-StopCity (1968-1972), which envisioned a borderless plan devoid of traditional forms and symbols and emptied of "bourgeois ideological representa­tions of the city." Urban design became the pure representation of commerce unleashed. Rem Koolhaas' City of the Captive Globe (1972) appeared, followed by Bernard Tschumi's plan for Paris' Parc de la Villette (1985), outlining two more forays into urban design as a kind of dominant formalism.

Urban design today has been largely redirected toward the effects of gross urbanization. Two years ago the world's population was estimated to reach seven billion with over half located in cities and one in six living in slums. By 2050, 75 percent will inhabit cities, the largest of which will be in developing and poor nations. Meanwhile, wealthier Western cities such as Los Angeles have mushroomed into vast regional conurbations. These sprawling mixtures of varying land use overlaid by complex infrastructure have been amply documented in recent books such as Alan Berger's "Drasscape" (2006).

A new pragmatism is emerging in which urban design is inevitably tied to an understanding of social and environmental policy. A sensitivity to evolving cultural issues such as immigration, labor, social policy and sustainability is now key to establishing links between physical design in the city and increased quality of life for the widest possible population. Urban design continues to reinvent itself. In less than a century it has migrated from singular manifestos conceived by artful visionaries to a multidimensional field of interrelated global actors.
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Beyond the Switch
Designer Christopher Thompson sheds light on the next generation of LEDs

For Christopher Thompson, the line from music student to cutting-edge lighting designer is a remarkably straight one. When his university’s theater department discovered he played the lute, “they hounded me about performing in their Shakespearean and Elizabethan plays,” he recalls. “As I sat on stage and watched the storyline unfold, I became fascinated by the lighting—the optical illusions, the way it provoked and evoked reactions in the audience.”

Soon he was hooked on illumination and decided to pursue theatrical lighting studies at the same time as he worked on his music degree. He ultimately earned another degree, this time in electrical engineering. His own Seattle-based lighting design practice, Studio Lux followed, along with accolades including, most recently, a 2012 Best in Technology award from the Society of British Interior design. His training has translated into an international body of residential and commercial work that is both aesthetically strong and technically sound. “My designs aren’t so overly creative that they aren’t practical, but aren’t so disciplined that they lack imagination,” he notes.

Balancing the discipline’s technical requirements with aesthetics has never been more important than now, as his field undergoes a revolution. While he still comes back to the standard incandescent MR16 lamp—the gold standard in Thompson’s estimation given its light quality, reliability and flexibility—he sees a day not too far off when LED technology will supplant it. Not immediately though, kinks in the technology are still being worked out. The quality of light varies from lamp to lamp (“Every time we specify LED, we have to live with it and play with it,” he notes.), and only now are the filters and lenses he uses in his incandescent lighting arsenal being developed for LEDs.

One of his newest projects reflects the current flux in his field. At the request of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Thompson will be retrofitting some 5,000 interior and exterior light fixtures at Taliesin West with greener options—and be walking a fine line between technology and aesthetics. “People have in their minds what this place looks and feels like,” he explains. “We have to incorporate proper light levels and configurations and have to mimic the incandescent glow of the old lights.”

Frank Lloyd Wright’s own office on the property is a case in point. Outside, large white light bulbs dot the iconic structure, but, Thompson points out, they are decidedly unsafe in the way they are mounted and wired—not to mention not rated for exterior use. “We’re working with a major lamp manufacturer to build a lamp that will both maintain the iconic look of these bulbs against the building, but do so in an LED version,” says Thompson. The rated, LED version will not just decrease power consumption but maintenance costs as well. In turn, the collaboration between Thompson and the manufacturer will serve as his industry’s calling card to the architectural design community.

As much as Thompson is introducing architects to greener lighting technology, he is also keeping up with the change in those fields. “Any time that technology changes or a discipline starts to embrace new ideas about doing old things, it’s time to make sure you understand what’s going on,” he explains, so he is back in school, getting a master’s degree in green building design. “The architectural community is embracing green and sustainable practices that reduce a home’s carbon footprint during construction and after. My desire is to get a better understanding of those ideas and concepts. Not so much as it relates to my industry but to understand what architects are contending with.”

In the meantime, Thompson recently completed work on a three-acre estate in Palm Springs. Despite the property’s size, it is lit entirely by 300 LED light fixtures and consumes about 1000 watts—a bit less than a standard hair dryer. “There’s never been a better time to be a lighting designer, in terms of new challenges and wonderful new tools,” he says.

—Lisa Bingham
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The Public Realm
Spaces that serve their communities
Patel Taylor was selected to design Birmingham's first new park in more than a century in an area that had experienced a slow decline and low occupation due to a lack of investment. Located in the heart of the new Eastside district, the park welcomes those entering the quarter and drives new investment to the area and the community. “To an individual, a park might provide a place to stop and relax, to exercise, to meet friends and so on. For the community, parks can provide a sense of identity, and can make statements about the values of that community,” says Director Andrew Taylor.

The first challenge was to design the park so that it linked to the city’s existing roads, pedestrian routes and public transportation. Since many of the buildings surrounding the park are in the planning stages and have yet to be built, the park needed to stand alone while also having the ability to transform with the future development.

“As a graphic metaphor, the park has been ‘drawn’ with the white precast [concrete] and colored in with granite paving, self-binding gravel, lawns and planting beds,” says Taylor. Steel structures, such as planting screens and pergolas, reference the areas industrial past with some affixed to concrete benches and planted with various climbing species. “These screens and the benches create small scale spaces, each with subtly different characteristics, in contrast to the larger formal parts of the park,” he adds.
Gold Line Bridge
Location: Arcadia, CA
Designer: AECOM with Andrew Leicester
Website: www.aecom.com

The Gold Line Bridge stretches across the East-bound I-210 highway as an integral part of the 11.5-mile Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension. The Construction Authority hired award-winning artist Andrew Leicester to create a design concept that would express both the past and present of the local community in this “Gateway to the San Gabriel Valley”. After conducting extensive research, Leicester drew upon the origins of the area as an ancient trade route; while nodding to today’s development of the light rail that ferries people instead of goods across the basin.

“Baskets are emblematic of the earliest artifact and seemed appropriate for this kind of activity,” says Leicester. The result was two, 25-foot-tall sculptural baskets flanking either side of the main structure. The illusion of a concrete woven basket was created through 60 individually pre-cast segments fabricated by Moonlight Molds. The underbelly of the bridge invokes the skin of a Diamondback Snake and brings to mind the serpentine quality of the road ahead.

AECOM directed the project’s design and engineering in order to successfully achieve the unique artistic concept. One of the architect’s greatest challenges was engineering the long span crossing over an active seismic fault. As a result, they integrated smart column technology into three of the cast-in-drill-hole foundations in order to allow engineers to make more informed assessments of the integrity of the foundations below grade.

Photography by Douglas Hill
Perk Park
Location: Cleveland, OH
Designer: Thomas Balsley Associates
Website: www.tbany.com

“Our public realm defines who we are as a society and how we value the lives of our citizens,” says Principal Thomas Balsley. In this case, Perk Park provided the architect an opportunity to design a space that would enhance the urban quality of life for the community. They were inspired to create an urban meadow and forest that was both open and intimate. “We knew that diverse spatial and social experiences would ensure the long-term success for the park and its neighborhood,” he adds.

Inside the 50,000-square-foot park, maple, linden and locust trees offer residents intimate and shaded seating areas while mounded landforms serve as topographic relief. A “beyond the bench” approach explores different seating arrangements to create various social settings and engage the public to linger in the park.

“Urban picnic tables, raised bar tables with stools that swivel, long banquette seating for watching people promenade, all have raised the bar and offered an alternative to the park bench lined up in a row,” says Balsley. Vibrant red awnings that line the park’s perimeter on 12th Street are illuminated in the sun by day and pavement lights by evening while light wands serve as welcoming beacons for the community at night.

The project was championed by non-profit organization Parkworks (now known as LAND Studio), which raised additional private funding for the park’s development and oversaw the design, construction and maintenance. Local support was provided by McKnight Associates.
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Playa Vista Resident Club and Park
Location: Playa Vista, CA
Designer: Rios Clementi Hale Studios
Website: www.rchstudios.com

The 25,000-square-foot community center has been designed with the intention of creating a space where the people of Playa Vista can congregate, socialize and exercise. "The location of the new resident club required the use of a diagonal pedestrian line to connect the ground floor and site with the existing environment," says Bob Hale, Principal. This orientation allowed the club to integrate more seamlessly into the neighborhood and welcome the community. An adjacent public park further connects the resident club with the existing community, encouraging residents to gather either before or after using the club.

The LEED Platinum design incorporates a green roof, solar panels and is covered in a recyclable cool roof PVC membrane to reduce heat gain. According to Hale, natural ventilation will cool more than 65 percent of the building. "Cool air is brought inside the building through interior gardens, and pulled into warmer interior spaces through the use of large sliding doors," he says. "During winter, the low sun enters through strategically placed glazing and helps the mechanical heating system warm the space."

Community programs will be held in one of several event spaces also open to residents for conferences and meetings; a sliding glass wall between one of the courtyards and an event room blurs the line between indoor and outdoor space.

Renderings courtesy of Rios Clementi Hale Studios
Marin Living: Home Tours
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Image: San Rafael Residence (John Sutton Photography) Architect: Ohashi Design Studio

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Ju Gong Bridge
Location: Sichuan Province, China
Designer: Michael Maltzan Architecture
Website: www.mmaltzan.com

The client had three main objectives for the Ju Gong bridge: to make a structurally sound form; incorporate circulation paths for pedestrians, bicycles and cars; and to create an icon for the surrounding 565-acre lakeside development, which was being simultaneously designed and built. Since the two were being developed in parallel, it gave the architect an opportunity to influence the design of the development through his vision for the bridge.

"The client was very supportive of making the bridge much more than a purely functional span which allowed us to more holistically consider the development’s broader social, experiential, and iconographic context," says Principal Michael Maltzan, of the fluid design process that gave him more flexibility than he initially expected for an infrastructure project.

In an effort to achieve all three goals, Maltzan conceived a design where the “belly” of the 260-foot-span bridge drops down to meet the water below creating two distinct experiences. "Pedestrian pathways crossing overhead descend through a pair of oculi to the level of the water below, creating a direct connection between visitors passing overhead and stepping stones that lead to a network of park green spaces along the southern shore," says Maltzan. The paths then widen and incorporate seating recalling meirenkao, or “beautiful seat,” a traditional Chinese element of bridge design.

Renderings courtesy of Michael Maltzan Architecture
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It's Jill Paider's love of design that draws her to architectural photography—the strong curves and lines of the Sydney Opera House or the elegant shape of the AO Building in the Tokyo rain. This passion to capture architecture's ability to "transform and reshape how we think and feel, creating a highly designed backdrop for our lives" has led her to travel the world in search of urban canvases. To photograph Kenzo Tange's St. Mary's Cathedral, Paider convinced a nun to let her into the church with her equipment. "It's really a stunning space inside and out, so unlike any structure you've ever seen, and the cement interiors and lit vaulted ceilings add to its distinctiveness."
"I love the dramatic interior of this space and the artful intersection of curves and lines."

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE
“I love the elegance and shape of the building, the sporadic interior lights and the crane diagonally intersecting the image for contrast.”
COLOR AND THE CITY

BY MICHAEL WEBB
Color can invoke a mood or enhance a visual experience but can it find a home against a backdrop of beige and gray?

*Most cities have a distinctive palette.* In London, the older residential areas are built of yellow or red brick, the monuments of white Portland stone. Some are still blackened from coal smoke, others have been scrubbed clean. Looking over Paris from Sacré Coeur, the expanse of gray slate and stone is interrupted by the multicolored Pompidou Center—much as the PDC stands out in West Hollywood. St. Petersburg is a joyful symphony of pale blue, green, yellow and pink. The further south you go, the more you'll find brightly painted walls, ceramic tiles, and honey-colored stone. Intense blues relieve the chalky white of Greek island settlements. Some Mexican towns and villages provide a kaleidoscope of vibrant hues and that vernacular tradition inspired Luis Barragán to incorporate them into the houses, convent, and urban markers that he built in Mexico City. Color can be employed as urban therapy. When the Albanian economy collapsed in the aftermath of a huge Ponzi scheme, the government consoled the populace by distributing paint and encouraging them to paint their drab Soviet-era apartment blocks and rotting tenements. It was a bit like putting a bandaid on a flesh wound, but it lent variety to an otherwise depressing cityscape.

Moore Ruble & Yudell used colored glass in their Santa Monica Civic Center Parking Structure to create "a dancing curtain of color."
Los Angeles lacks the stately order of Paris and the cheerful exuberance of southern cities. As Lorcan O’Herlihy observes, “nine out of 10 buildings are painted beige for ease of maintenance.” This may be the preference of white-bread immigrants from the mid-West but one wonders why Latinos and Asians perpetuate such monotony, so at odds with their native cultures; it wasn’t always like this. In the middle decades of the 20th century you could indulge your fantasies—be it an Egyptian tomb or a Gothic spire, a mosque or a Babylonian fortress—without risk of censure. Sam Rodia spent 30 years building Watts Towers from scavenged iron and broken ceramic, creating a brilliantly colored masterpiece of bricolage. Commercial strips offered an entertaining mix of programmatic buildings and gaudy neon signs. These were created by individuals not franchises and had a naive charm their corporate successors lack. New arrivals were alternately fascinated and appalled. Driving though LA for the first time in 1938, John Lautner felt physically sickened by the ugliness but he recognized the potential to build as he pleased in such a raw and untrammeled setting.

It couldn’t last. Orson Welles pronounced the obituary in a 1959 Esquire article, Twilight in the Smog: “Architectural fantasy is in decline, the cheerful gaudiness is mostly gone, the more high-spirited of the old outrages have been razed or stand in ruins. In the ‘better’ residential and business districts a kind of official ‘good taste’ has taken charge. The result is a standardized impeccability, sterile and joyless, but it correctly expresses the community’s ardent yearnings towards respectability.”

Welles blamed the decline on television and Madison Avenue, each contributing to the insidious growth of conformity. In the next five decades, the yearning for respectability grew even stronger. The rich retreated into gated communities that mandated an ersatz historicism—generally an inauthentic and inept version of ‘Mediterranean’—itself a mongrel style. Standardized suburban tracts metastasized across southern California, and Bunker Hill in downtown L.A. was obliterated and replaced by a dead zone of generic office towers. Neighborhood groups appointed themselves custodians of the status quo, opposing anything that
challenged convention. In Santa Monica, Frank Gehry caught hell for deconstructing a dumb stucco cottage and daring to clad it in plywood, chain link and anodized metal. The affluent residents of Brentwood delayed the construction of the Getty Center for seven years, demanding multiple changes that compromised the design. They would have much preferred a private enclave of plop chateaux atop that hill.

Color might have played a larger role in L.A.’s architectural landmarks. R.M. Schindler and Richard Neutra, who introduced European modernism to southern California, were exposed to the experiments of the first generation of modernists. In Vienna, Otto Wagner clad two apartment blocks in boldly colored ceramics; in Berlin, Bruno Taut articulated a succession of social housing estates with vibrant oranges, blues, and yellows. Le Corbusier used a subtle palette on the Villa Roche in Paris and his apartments for the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart, before adopting the primary colors that were favored by the De Stijl movement (notably Gerrit Rietveld and Theo van Doesberg) in Holland. The Bauhaus masters were equally adventurous and the house shared by Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky in Dessau employs more than a score of strong and subtle hues. In fact it’s hard to think of a modernist pioneer who didn’t make some use of color, except for the two who practiced in L.A. With a few exceptions, Neutra stayed loyal to white with silver trim through his long career. His preferences tied in well with the cult of the white cube that was central to the International Style, as codified by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock. Even Schindler, so expressive in many ways, made very limited use of color. The Eameses used primaries in the manner of Mondrian in
the cladding panels of their iconic house and studio, but the other Case Study Houses were monochromatic, relying on the materiality of wood, stucco, and steel.

A few contemporary architects are ardent colorists. The German firm of Sauerbruch Hutton makes every building an abstract composition of multi-toned bars. In France, Jakob + MacFarlane have employed a single intense color on perforated steel structures that become points of attraction in new developments: the green City of Fashion on the Quai Austerlitz in Paris, and the Orange Cube on the banks of the Saône in Lyon. Jean Nouvel is a maestro of color, mostly in his interiors, but he created an all-red pavilion in a London park two years ago, and his Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis is a celebration of blue. Odile Decq uses scarlet as her talisman on public buildings in Paris and beyond.

In L.A., Moore Ruble Yudell enhance their buildings with subtle tones, thanks to color aficionado Tina Beebe. "I think color enlivens the city," she says, "creating points of reference and giving buildings a sense of identity. People are often scared of bold colors, but it's only paint and easy to change." Beebe takes her cues from the context and "used color like exclamation points" to animate MRY's parking structure in Santa Monica. O'Herlihy uses bold hues in several of his recent condo blocks, notably the fiery reds in the Formosa apartments, which were inspired by the eponymous West Hollywood café. "Light and color shape space," he declares, "and white changes through the day". Black stained wood grounds the block he built alongside the MAK/Schindler house on Kings Road, and white and green emphasize the lightness of the upper stories. Koning Eizenberg have always used color in a playful manner, but, as Julie Eizenberg explains, "we struggle to make the right choice and we try to look beyond those colors that are currently fashionable and will quickly go out of style."

Nelly Galan, a Latina television producer, chose Caribbean colors to transform and unite three cottages on the Venice canals. "I wanted to cheer everyone up following the 2008 Crash and, being Cuban, I love vibrant hues", she says.

These projects demonstrate that color can serve like spice in a stew, not to overpower but add flavor and character to a sober neighborhood. It would be unfortunate if everyone were to follow the example of Tirana, and wield a brush with abandon. A cacophony of clashing colors would be worse than the present monotony of Los Angeles. People have strong likes and dislikes in their choice of colors, and the street is a public space that needs to accommodate a wide range of tastes. However, it doesn't have to be boring. A vivid splash here, a subtle shade there, can highlight an exceptional building or enhance a plain one.

Color is one (easily reversible) ingredient in a lively cityscape. Professional murals flourished in the mid 1980s, encouraged by the 1984 Olympic arts program. Terry Schoonhoven and Kent Twitchell created memorable work, most of which has been painted over or vandalized by mindless taggers. It's time to restore the surviving work and encourage a few exemplary artists to do more, on blank walls and freeway embankments. As head of L.A.'s Department of Cultural Affairs, Al Nodal organized the relighting of rooftop neon signs on the apartment blocks of Wilshire Blvd. and Hollywood. He's no longer around, but the Museum of Neon Art could supply the expertise to restore some of the better street-level signs, and create new ones.

The forces of inertia are strong in any community, and the new is always perceived as a threat to the status quo, disturbing familiar patterns. But carefully plotted interventions can swiftly win acceptance and shift the balance of the cityscape, especially if they are an integral part of innovative architecture. Public-private partnerships could upgrade selected thoroughfares, as West Hollywood and Santa Monica have done, and these demonstration projects might inspire developers and homeowners. We can hope that a few enlightened individuals will take up this challenge.

Nelly Galan's Venice retreat invokes the Caribbean while uniting the three cottages.
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CONTRACTOR: Wates

Gold Line Bridge
ARCADIA, CA
CLIENT: Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority
DESIGN CONCEPT ADVISOR: Andrew Leicester, Artist
AECOM: Pat Nicholson, Design Team Manager; Rivka Night, Architect; David Yee, Bridge Structural Engineer
BUILDER: Skanska USA
CASTING AND INSTALLATION: Moonlight Molds; Masonry Concepts, Inc.
CIDH DRILLING: Anderson Drilling
ADDITIONAL CONTRACTORS: CMC Rebar; Dywidag; Group Delta; National Ready Mix; Fitzgerald Formliners

Ju Gong Bridge
SICHUAN PROVINCE, CHINA
DESIGN PRINCIPAL: Michael Maltzan, FAIA, NCARB
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PROJECT DESIGNER: Wil Carson, NCARB, LEED AP
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STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING: Chinese Academy of Building Research
LIGHTING: Tillotson Design Associates
EXECUTIVE ARCHITECT: ChongQing Municipal Design Research Institute

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CLIENT: City of Cleveland and LAND studio
LEAD DESIGNER - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Thomas Balsley Associates
LOCAL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: McKnight Associates, Ltd.

Playa Vista Resident Club and Park
PLAYA VISTA, CA
ARCHITECTURE, INTERIOR DESIGN, LANDSCAPE,
ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS: Rios Clementi Hale Studios — Bob Hale, FAIA, Principal; Greg Kochanowski, Senior Associate, architect; Naseema Asif, Associate, architect; Aimee Less, Associate, interior designer; Tavi Perttula, ASLA, LEED AP, Associate, landscape architect; Tom Myers, NCARB, Designer; Hamilton Hadden, Designer; Karen Madrid, Designer, landscape
CLIENT: Brookfield Residential
MEP ENGINEER: IEG Consulting Engineers
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: VanDorpe Chou
CIVIL ENGINEER: Hunsaker & Associates
LIGHTING: HLB Lighting
KITCHEN CONSULTANT: Laschober + Sovich
POOL CONSULTANT: Holdenwater
LEED CONSULTANT: Zinner Consultants
WATERPROOFING: D7 Consulting
METHANE MITIGATION: Methane Specialists
SOILS ENGINEER: Group Delta Consultants
SPECIFICATIONS: Looking Glass Architecture & Design
IRRIGATION: Sweeney
Mollenhauer Group provided Civil Engineering, 3D Survey and surveying support to Grand Park Downtown Los Angeles, Winner of AIA Los Angeles 2012 BUILDING TEAM of the YEAR award. Developer, Related California.
"The big idea behind this desert "oasis" was to use water as an omnipresent element in and around the house, and allow the water to cool the warm desert breezes as they enter the house. The large stone masses are united by the visual transparency of glass elements and surrounded by vast basins of water. At night, the stone masses are punctuated by an interesting play of diffused light and windows."

— Richard Landry
“The extraordinary design by Michael Palladino and dedication of the Wasserman Foundation and TGPM all came together to make this a world-class addition to the Jules Stein Eye Institute. It was gratifying to be entrusted with this great project.” - Ron Elazar, Vice President and Project Executive
I live downtown around the corner from Edgar Plaza, an underutilized space. This project is a way to inject life and style in a modular way—the idea that the bamboo snakes could be reconfigured to help choreograph the flow of people lining up in an impromptu way.

— Principal Russell Greenberg
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ARCHITECT: TAKA
DESIGN TEAM: Alice Casey, Cian Deegan
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Cora
MAIN CONTRACTOR: Sapele Construction, Ltd.

Country Club Residence
MEXICO CITY, MEXICO
ARCHITECT: Migdal Arquitectos
DESIGN TEAM: Jaime Varon, Abraham Metta, and Alex Metta
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: CTC Ingenieros Civiles
INSTALLATION: Intebrax
GLASS AND ALUMINUM DESIGN: Vitrocanceles, SA de CV
LIGHTING DESIGN: Luz + Forma

Huangshan Mountain Village
HUANGSHAN, CHINA
ARCHITECT: MAD

Pix-L House
SERIFOS, GREECE
ARCHITECT: K-Studio

White Canvas on Green Roof
MONTREAL, CANADA
INTERIOR DESIGN: Martine Brisson
GREEN ROOF CONSTRUCTION: Les Toits Vertige
GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Renovation Deschênes, Pied Pouce
TINSMITH: BLV Consultant

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De Anza College Media and Learning Center: Architectural Award for Sustainability
The Strand: American Conservation Theater (ACT): Citation Award for Environmental Design

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How do you make sure it doesn't happen again?
Ideally, before you fix something you need to understand the cause of the deterioration. If the problem has taken 75 years to develop, you have to assume you can't necessarily change the environment that the building exists in but you can re-treat it periodically and prevent loss of integrity. The issue of retreatment is a tricky one because most institutions don't plan for maintenance. There's an increasing recognition of the importance of maintenance; it's key. It's less expensive to maintain than to wait for something to go wrong and then fix it.

What about the envelope of the building?
If you go to medieval Italy, buildings were very heavy—thick masonry and stone walls—and while they may be damp they were designed with water tables built in, and are more forgiving. The way we're building in the 20th century—postwar and into today—buildings are high performance but very thin. Every detail in how you manage the temperature gradient, moisture, condensation, energy conservation, curtainwall systems is much more sophisticated in a technological way. If I'm looking at almost any building other than a wood frame residence, I would want to have a building scientist on board who can help me analyze the structural and engineering conditions. What holds the building up? How is the envelope performing in terms of moisture and temperature?

How do you find historically appropriate materials?
Finding replacement materials is just as difficult as finding artisans who fabricate, patch finishes and install things the right way. It's a recognized issue in the historic preservation world. The Association of Preservation Technology International has a spinoff group called the Preservation Trades Network, where contractors and artisans—the hands as opposed to the heads—organize themselves and promote their trade. We want those trades and skills to be passed along because we need more of them.

Let's talk more specifically about some of the projects you've worked on like the Gamble House.
The Gamble House is a very fragile building because it's mostly all wood, and it's a precious cultural resource. The exterior conservation and its wood finishes were important. And, it was done with a soft touch to maintain a high level of integrity.

Were there any specific challenges?
The rafter tails and beams that extended from the roof had little termite damage, but there was some major fungal damage and dry rot. Those areas were dug out and filled with a permeable epoxy so that the density and the moisture characteristic of the repaired wood would be similar to [the original wood]. After the surface and volume was restored, we used a tinted epoxy that was then sculpted with the cracks in the wood adjacent to it and stained with colors that one perceives [matches] the older wood. Originally the exterior shakes were dipped in tinted stain, [but] around 1940 the family over-painted the house. One of the alternatives was to restore the original finish in order to uncover the design intent of Charles and Henry Greene by removing the paint. The more we investigated, the more we realized it would be dangerous and damaging to try to take the original finishes off the existing wood. Through testing, we found the paint put over the stain closely matched the original paint. [In fact.] painting the Gamble House wasn't really vandalism; it was, in an unexpected way, conservation. So we proceeded with a light application of a clear wood protectant with UV. When you put this clear coat on the wood, you re-saturate the original pigments so you start to bring back the color of the wood not just the grain and texture.

Currently, you are finishing up work on the Beverly Hills Post Office.
The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts has an old building [the Beverly Hills Post Office] with a new building being constructed behind it. In the old building, the roof tile was removed in order to [install] new waterproof membranes. There was breakage, less than 10 percent, and it was anticipated. There are several companies that fabricate replacement roof tiles. Among the things we did in looking at samples was to go out to the factory and kilns, and look at their manufacturing and their samples. Also, primarily due to rusting of interior steel elements in certain areas, the brick masonry was deteriorated on the outside; part of the brick was broken off. Those losses were patched with fill material that's specially designed for this situation and then coated over with a material and technique that would make it hard to see where those bricks have been patched. Those are very hands on artisan-oriented projects that take very special manufacturing.

How do you feel the field has changed over the last decade?
There are cycles in what we do and what we learn in construction, architecture and design and starting in the '60s, the U.S. has gone through a series of changes [in] our attitudes, our laws, our regulations, and our land use. Identifying, appreciating and taking care of cultural properties is now institutional; it's part of what makes our streets more interesting.

—Alexandra Drosu
How do you approach each preservation project?
Evaluation is a priority. Is water, sun, heat or dirt getting into the ceiling, walls, floors, or foundations in a manner that is destabilizing the building? I think many people's first thought is that we're looking at what makes a building look pretty. But we are actually looking at a building in a forensic way. What's holding this building up? What's keeping it whole? Is it stable? Before we get to the appearance aspects.

What are some of the challenges you face structurally?
Termites in wood buildings, seismic issues in concrete and steel buildings, and I would add to that geotechnical issues. Soil and foundation conditions are often a big problem. Let's say a basement wall is collapsing, or the soil wasn't compacted where a building is sinking on one side—those are all serious issues that affect a building. Reinforced concrete is very challenging because it's hard to analyze, you almost immediately need a structural engineer to help tell you how the concrete wall is going to perform in an earthquake.

What technology can you use to see inside the wall?
Not only do you not know the strength of the concrete matrix but you don't know what type of steel reinforcing, if any, there is. Radar is increasingly a tool that is used to see where there are metal components, and the differences in density. It can compute the amount of corrosion in a steel bar so you know, through non-destructive investigations, where the steel bar is [located] and how corroded it is without cutting the wall open.

How do you maintain the historical integrity of the building?
The integrity and authenticity of materials is very meaningful and therefore one of the fundamental concerns is if there is a problem with the structural strength of a building and we want to intervene, we still want to keep as much original material as possible. One strategy is to intervene by adding. Additive changes can be better than subtractive changes. Rather than replace a termite damaged floor joist, let's add a floor joist next to it; therefore, we have some added strength but we keep the old floor joist.

What about concrete? It seems a more challenging problem to overcome.
A fundamental problem with concrete is carbonation and acidification. When you first make your concrete reinforcement, it's alkaline for ferrous metal. Through carbonation and often through salts, water that soaks into the concrete, it goes from being an alkaline environment to an acidic environment, which catalyzes the rusting of rebar inside the concrete. It destroys reinforced concrete from the inside out. There are methods using applied electrical current where you can desalinate, reverse the carbonation process and re-alkalize the concrete. It's magical in my mind because it's not a product you slather on, or something you cut out and replace. It involves chemistry and physics and electricity.
SUSTAINING THE PAST

Peyton Hall of Historic Resources Group talks about the challenges facing preservation architects today

As a preservation architect, Peyton Hall is often called upon to consult on precious cultural landmarks and determine the best ways to preserve them. More often than not, these kinds of efforts are met with unique construction challenges, and his company, Historic Resources Group, helps identify innovative solutions to determine the best, and most cost effective solutions. We spoke with Hall to learn more.
HISTORIC PRESERVATIONISTS HAVE LONG WAGED FUNDING BATTLES.

The economic pressure to tear down and build new rather than preserve a historic building can be overwhelming. Likewise, archive preservations have often struggled in obscurity, lacking the means to promote their messages. In a time of "sequestration" cuts to cities, and the elimination of redevelopment agencies, the design community may feel more besieged than ever. But a newer tool offers an alternative to bake sales, grants and galas. Crowdfunding, the kind provided by well-known websites Kickstarter.com and Indiegogo.com, is now embraced widely.

"While traditional avenues may still bring in a larger sum, crowdfunding websites may be a great place to launch your fundraising campaign and hone your message to potential investors," says Devin Miles, an AmeriCorps volunteer who works for Heritage Ohio, "Ohio's official historic preservation and Main Street organization."

You may need $100,000 to preserve the windows of a historic building, but wouldn't it be nice to get the $10,000 from Kickstarter and plan the rest of your fundraising strategy around that momentum?"

- Devin Miles

Kickstarter is the most popular crowdfunder. Launched in 2009 to assist creative art and music projects, it now claims 4.1 million people have pledged over $624 million to more than 41,000 creative, independent projects.

Among its many preservation campaigns is the restoration of Chicago's historic Patio Theater movie palace. Theater owner Demetri Kouvalis recently described the process to the Huffington Post, saying: "I knew going in that I'd have a challenge with this Kickstarter campaign, because the only people who can really benefit from the incentives are people living in and around Chicago. It's more location-based than somebody making a CD or documentary or invention. It's really hard to gauge how responsive people were going to be, and, in that sense, we set a realistic goal on Kickstarter of $50,000."

Still, the campaign was successful, raising $54,079 from 804 backers.

As Kouvalis notes, other architectural projects may have a documentary film or a book associated with them, which can help broaden a project's timeline and geographic scope. They have included a campaign to preserve the archive of famed Mid-Century modern architect Andrew Geller and fund a movie in the process. Forty-three backers pledged $4,022 of its $3,000 goal.

Other groups gravitate towards Indiegogo. Among its recent successful campaigns are $10,631 for creating a structures report to help save the Waugoshance Lighthouse in Michigan; and $37,172 to help rescue the Old First Reformed Church in Park Slope, Brooklyn, New York. Another Indigogo-based project - seeking $89,550 to restore the Flagstaff, Arizona Lowell Observatory's 117-year-old Clark Telescope - was not successful. It achieved not quite half of its goal, exposing a risky problem.

"They are excellent programs, but they are risky, since they have an all-or-nothing system," says Judith Brooker, Program Director of Adventures in Preservation, based in Boulder, Colorado. "If all the money is not raised you end up with none of it."

She also was concerned about elaborate submission requirements: "It's like writing a grant proposal," she said. To help fund the 12-year-old group's new website, it turned instead to FundRazr, which she says is less ambitious but more manageable. The campaign has yet to reach its $4,500 goal.

And Indiegogo and Kickstarter do not accept all campaigns. Kickstarter spokesman Justin Kazmark could not comment on why specific projects are denied, but says: "We have guidelines. The project must fit into 13 different creative categories. It must, for example, have a clear beginning and end."

The site remains crucial to the design and architecture community. Of 75,000 total project launches, the "design" category ranks third overall in dollar haul, according to Architectural Record contributor David Sokol, who says it is virtually a "design incubator."

But he points to two micro-philanthropy sites even more focused on places. Citizinvestor accepts projects already approved by municipalities, in categories from art and culture to parks and neighborhood improvement. Neighbor.ly caters to governments, public-private partnerships, nonprofits and similar institutions working in civic infrastructure, assisting with adaptive reuse, historic preservation, and acquisition of blighted or underutilized structures.

For all these platforms, says AmeriCorps' Devin Miles, success comes down the pitch.

"There is nothing more important than having a good story for potential investors," he says. "As a preservationist, you want to tell the history of the building, what it means to the community, why it needs to be saved, and what you want to happen with the structure."

Kickstarter has a tiered-rewards system. The project sets the gifts that go to different levels of backers and pays them when the goal is reached.

"Keep them intriguing, reasonable for the amounts, and something you want to offer," he says. "A night of tours might be much more rewarding to you and the donor than an agonizing marathon of handwritten thank-you notes."

He also advises making the goal achievable. Architecture is hugely expensive. Yet many of the crowdfunding targets are noticeably modest.

"Nothing will doom your project faster than aiming for the moon," he says. "You may need $100,000 to preserve the windows of a historic building, but wouldn't it be nicer to get the $10,000 from Kickstarter and plan the rest of your fundraising strategy around that momentum?"
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624 MILLION DOLLARS
41,000 PROJECTS

OF 75,000 PROJECT LAUNCHES THE DESIGN CATEGORY RANKS THIRD IN CASH HAUL

Statistics from Kickstarter
RESTORATION ONLINE
HOW CROWDFUNDING CAN HELP RESCUE PRESERVATION PROJECTS
BY JACK SKELLEY