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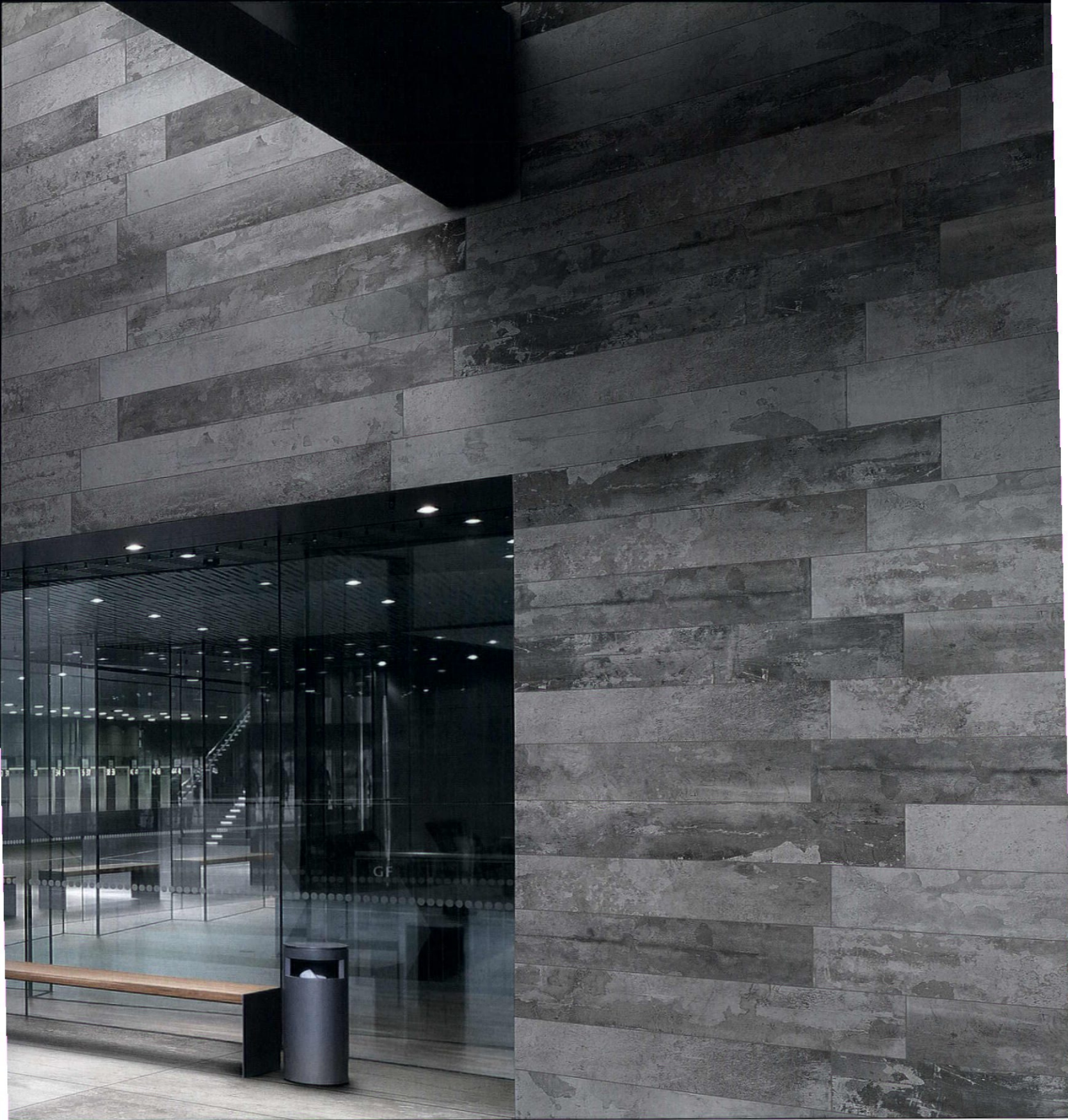


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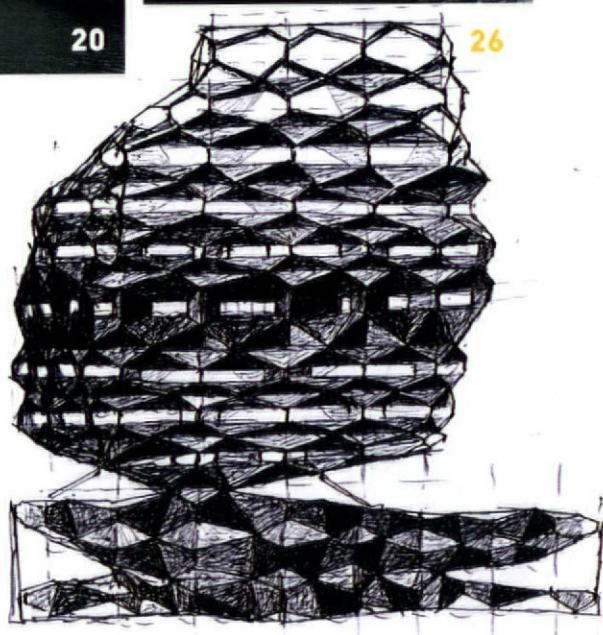
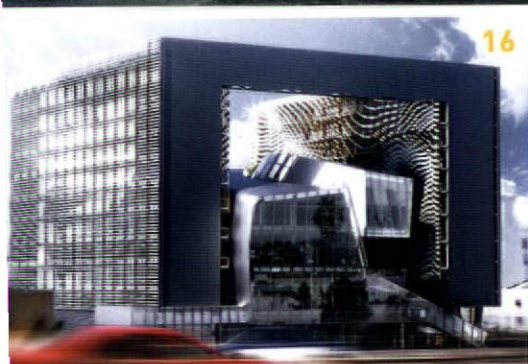
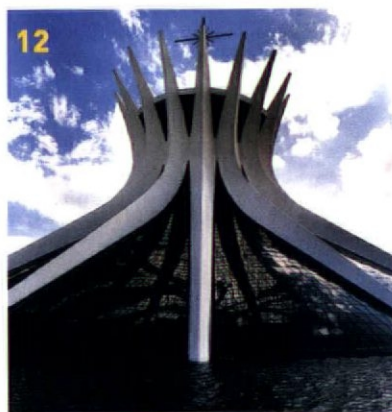
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Time can sometimes startle us. A memory is conjured and then we are hit with the reality that it happened 10, 15 or 20 years ago. We become wistful of good times gone by. But time can also inspire pride and celebration, and that's what I feel as we embark on our 15th year publishing FORM magazine. It's time to party!

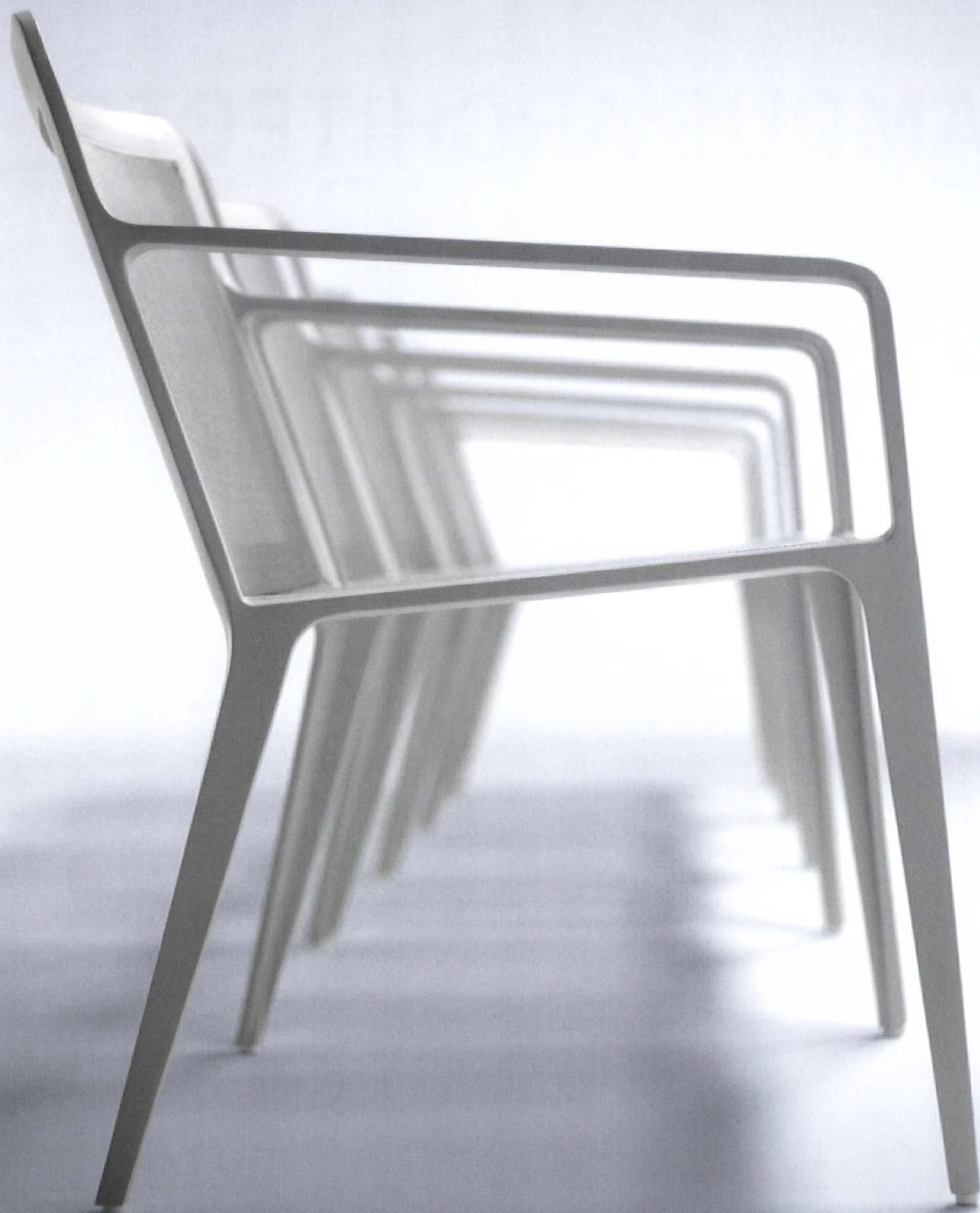
I first started working for FORM in 2008. Ann, knowing my consumer background, asked me to take FORM into a new direction. We wanted to not only be a conduit for the latest technologies and architectural news, we also wanted to celebrate the design community visually and fill the pages of FORM with images that both provoked and inspired. A wonderful publisher and boss, Ann gave me the freedom to imbue FORM's pages with my vision and explore different ways to communicate with our audience. Today, I continue to learn from you and to find new and interesting ways to explore the design world. To celebrate the longevity of the magazine, we have put together a special issue spotlighting some of our favorite pieces and notable architects from the last 14 years, including Thom Mayne (p.16), Frank Gehry (p.20) and Oscar Niemeyer (p.12). And, although we enjoy looking at the past and reliving old glories, we also are moving forward with several exciting new issues this year that take us inside the gaming world and into space. Plus, stay tuned for our new-and-improved website launching this month. Our 15th year will be an exciting one!



Eric Roth

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexi Drosu".

Alexi Drosu
Editor in Chief



RICHARD FRINIER

BROWN JORDAN

FAMOUS ARCHITECTS

"What does it take to be a famous architect? Not an important one. Not an influential one. A famous one." Writer Jeffrey Rotter asked this question a decade ago. His list of the most famous architects in 2004 (with an exception of one or two) stands the test of time.

FRANK GEHRY

HOMETOWN: Toronto, Canada

AGE: 84

PRITZKER: 1989

ROCK CRED: Seattle's Experience Music Project; Mariah Carey set a video in his Bilbao Guggenheim.

BONO FACTOR: They're old pals. Fellow architects cried favoritism when Gehry received Bono at his California office during the open competition to design U2's new Dublin recording studio.

COUTURE CONNECTION: Gehry designed the Issey Miyake store in New York's Soho.

MERCH: Fossil's Frank Gehry Signature watches.

SARTORIAL FLOURISH: Gehry needs to work on the wardrobe, but his penchant for French cuffs and the shock of white hair are a start. Note the hardhat in his headshot.

COOL CLUB NAME: The Los Angeles School

CELEBRITY INDULGENCE: Changed his name from Goldberg to Gehry.

DIVA MOMENT: He promises never to work with Donald Trump, no matter how much he begs.

VISIONARY QUOTE: "I was freaked out about going on the road and being marketed like Yves Saint Laurent." (I.D. magazine)

REM KOOLHAAS

HOMETOWN: Rotterdam, The Netherlands

AGE: 69

PRITZKER: 2000

ROCK CRED: Stoner dudes can't believe his name is really Koolhaas. **VISIBILITY:** He's the king of coffee-table books. Koolhaas is on every hipster's intellectual syllabus, somewhere between Baudrillard and Howard Zinn.

COUTURE CONNECTIONS: Miucci Prada's architect of choice; he designed her boutique on Rodeo Drive. Koolhaas repays the compliment with his all-black, all-Prada wardrobe.

BONO FACTOR: They rubbed elbows at the 2002 World Economic Forum in New York.

VISIONARY PRONOUNCEMENT: Where do we begin? Koolhaas was an architecture critic before he built a building. "As more and more architecture is finally unmasked as the mere organization of flow—shopping centers, airports—it is evident that circulation is what makes or breaks public architecture..." (from his statement for the MoMA expansion project)

DANIEL LIBESKIND

HOMETOWN: Lodz, Poland

AGE: 67

PRITZKER: Inevitable.

VISIBILITY: His disputes with the developer of the World Trade Center have made Libeskind a staple of both the gossip pages and the business section.

ROCK CRED: Before taking on architecture, Libeskind was a virtuoso accordion player. Make of that what you will.

MERCH: There's no line of Libeskind sportswear, but he is designing the biggest shopping center in Europe (outside Bern, Switzerland).

BONO FACTOR: Who needs famous friends? Libeskind is working on the most talked-about construction site in the world.

COOL CLUB NAME: Deconstructivist

DIVA MOMENT: Feuding with the money men over the Freedom Tower. Incidentally, his name means "love child" in Yiddish.

SARTORIAL FLOURISH: Bauhaus-inspired spectacles; frequently spotted in black leather.

VISIONARY PRONOUNCEMENT: "A building can awaken us to the fact that it has never been anything more than a huge question mark." (acceptance speech for the German Architecture Prize)

MICHAEL GRAVES

HOMETOWN: Indianapolis, Indiana

AGE: 80

PRITZKER: No, but Bill Clinton gave him the National Medal of Arts in 1999.

MERCH: Been to Target lately? His designs for Alessi are legendary. He's also got a line of Delta faucets.

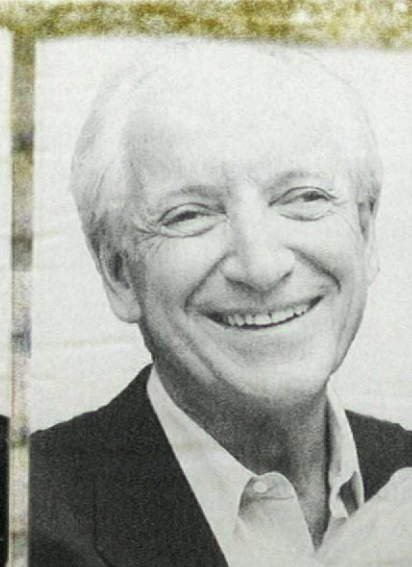
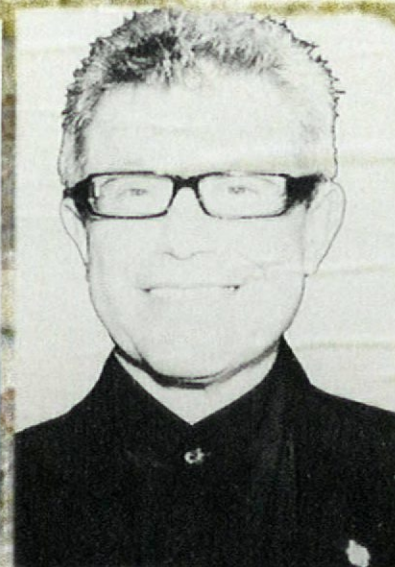
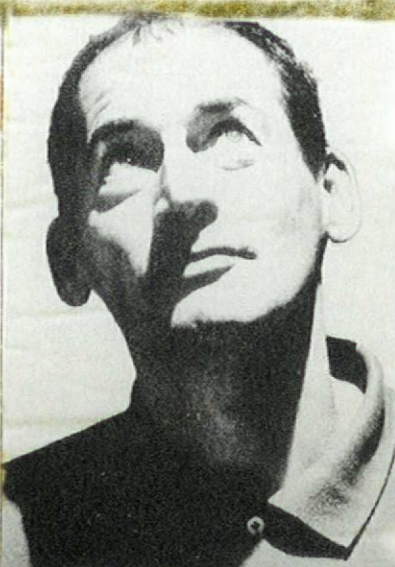
COOL CLUB NAME: The New York Five

BONO FACTOR: They were both on the invite list for the Clinton's millennium celebration at the White House.

DIVA MOMENT: Graves hosts celebrity signings for his bird-spouted Alessi teapots. If his teapot were a CD, it would be certified gold by now (500,000 have been sold since 1985).

VISIBILITY: The 47-foot tall swans atop his Dolphin and Swan Hotels at Disney World don't hurt. He's become the king of "entertainment architecture."

VISIONARY QUOTE: "It's when art comes down from the wall that things get really interesting." (Target promo copy)





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"Marketing, merchandising and schmoozing..." the key skills needed to attain architecture stardom.

SANTIAGO CALATRAVA

HOMETOWN: Valencia, Spain

AGE: 62

PRITZKER: Just a question of when.

ROCK CRED: "Take it to the bridge" could be Calatrava's slogan.

VISIBILITY: Although Calatrava himself keeps a low profile (try getting a headshot of this guy), his buildings are among the most televised in the world. Sports fans got an eyeful of his Athens Olympic Sports Complex all summer. He also designed a very telegenic commuter rail station at Ground Zero.

BONO FACTOR: Low. But he did design the James Joyce Bridge in Dublin.

DIVA MOMENT: Calatrava is a bridge designer who can't drive. How diva is that?

VISIONARY PRONOUNCEMENT: "Asymmetry allows you to explore." (Time online)

ZAHA HADID

HOMETOWN: Baghdad, Iraq

AGE: 63

PRITZKER: 2004

ROCK CRED: Designed stage sets for the Pet Shop Boys' 1999/2000 tour; Metropolis magazine called her a "rock star architect".

GUGGENHEIM: She's designed one for the Taiwanese city of Taichung.

COOL CLUB NAME: Deconstructivist

DIVA MOMENT: Known for her queenly carriage, Hadid is the only star architect who may properly be called a diva.

SARTORIAL FLOURISH: Her Issey Miyake shawl and hennaed hair. Hadid must have gotten a few fashion tips from her old mentor Rem Koolhaas.

MERCH: Strictly high-end. Her silver tea and coffee service was produced in a run of 10, and they go for 50 grand a pop.

BOLD STROKES: Hadid is designing a master plan for a whole new town in China.

VISIONARY PRONOUNCEMENT: "There are 360 degrees, so why stick to one?" (The Guardian)

RICHARD MEIER

HOMETOWN: Newark, New Jersey

AGE: 79

PRITZKER: 1984

MERCH: Meier designed a limited-edition Lucite gift case for a six-pack of 1995 Dom Pérignon (\$2,000).

VISIBILITY: The Getty Center is considered the most important American commission in recent memory. Meier's Perry Street Towers is a home to dozens of New York celebrities, including Calvin Klein, Martha Stewart, and Nicole Kidman.

BONO FACTOR: Perhaps the least rocking of the celeb architects. But Neil Sedaka did serenade the architect at a recent awards ceremony.

COOL CLUB NAME: The New York Five

CUISINE CONNECTION: He designed Jean-Georges Vongerichten's latest New York eatery, 66.

VISIONARY PRONOUNCEMENT: "My goal is presence, not illusion." (Pritzker acceptance speech)

RENZO PIANO

HOMETOWN: Genoa, Italy

AGE: 76

PRITZKER: 1998

VISIBILITY: His jobsites (Potsdamer Platz, for one) are among the most visible and visited in the world, and Piano even had his own Italian TV show, Habitat, back in the 1970s.

PRICE OF FAME: His Pompidou Center had to be shuttered for a time because it was attracting more tourists than it could handle (an average of 25,000 a day).

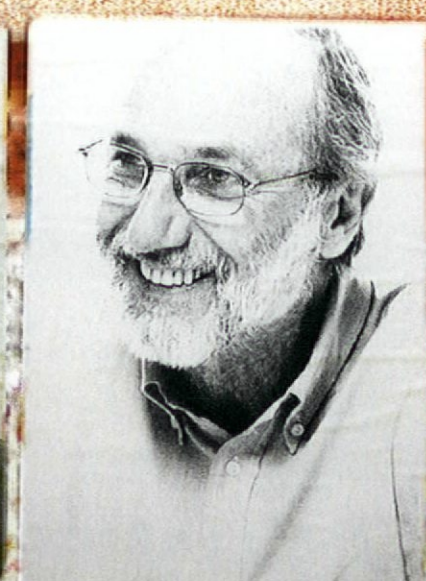
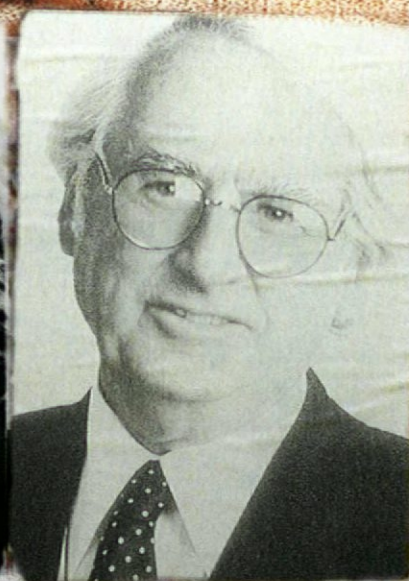
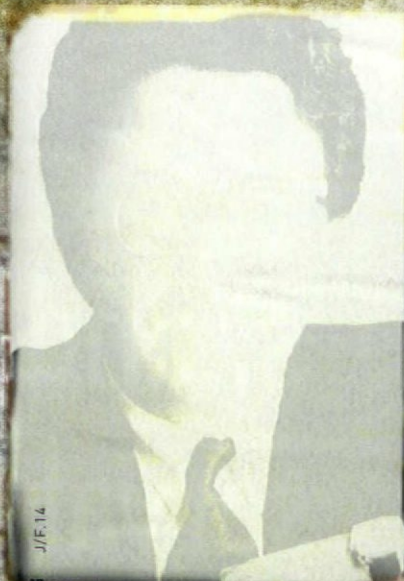
BONO FACTOR: Low, but Bono buddy Jacques Chirac conducted Piano's 1992 wedding.

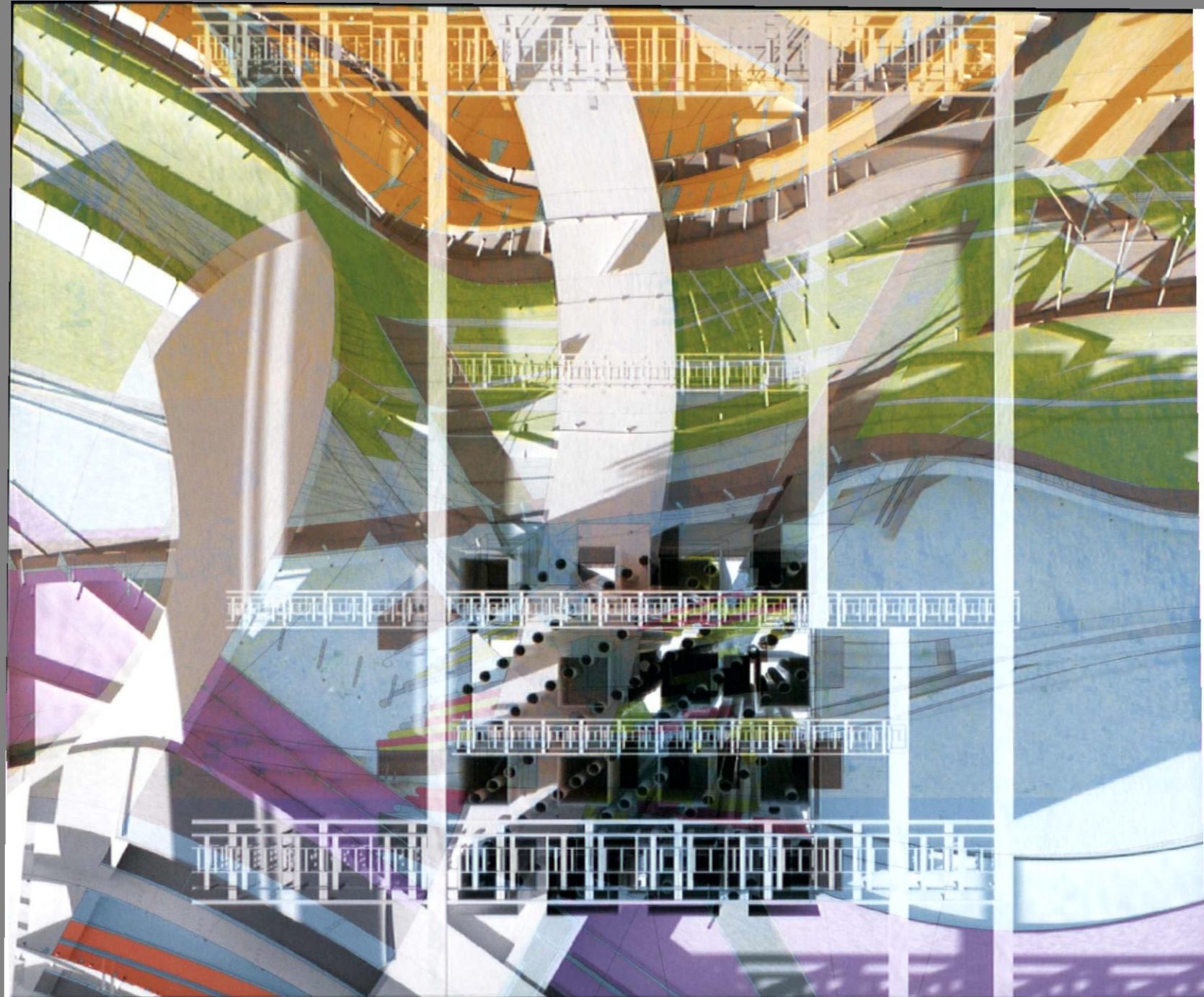
COUTURE CONNECTION: La Maison Hermès in Tokyo

COOL CLUB NAME: "High Tech" movement

MERCH: If his 70,000-ton ocean liner doesn't count, how about Swatch's timepiece replica of the Pompidou Center?

VISIONARY PRONOUNCEMENT: "The space of architecture is a microcosm: an inner landscape." (pritzkerprize.com)





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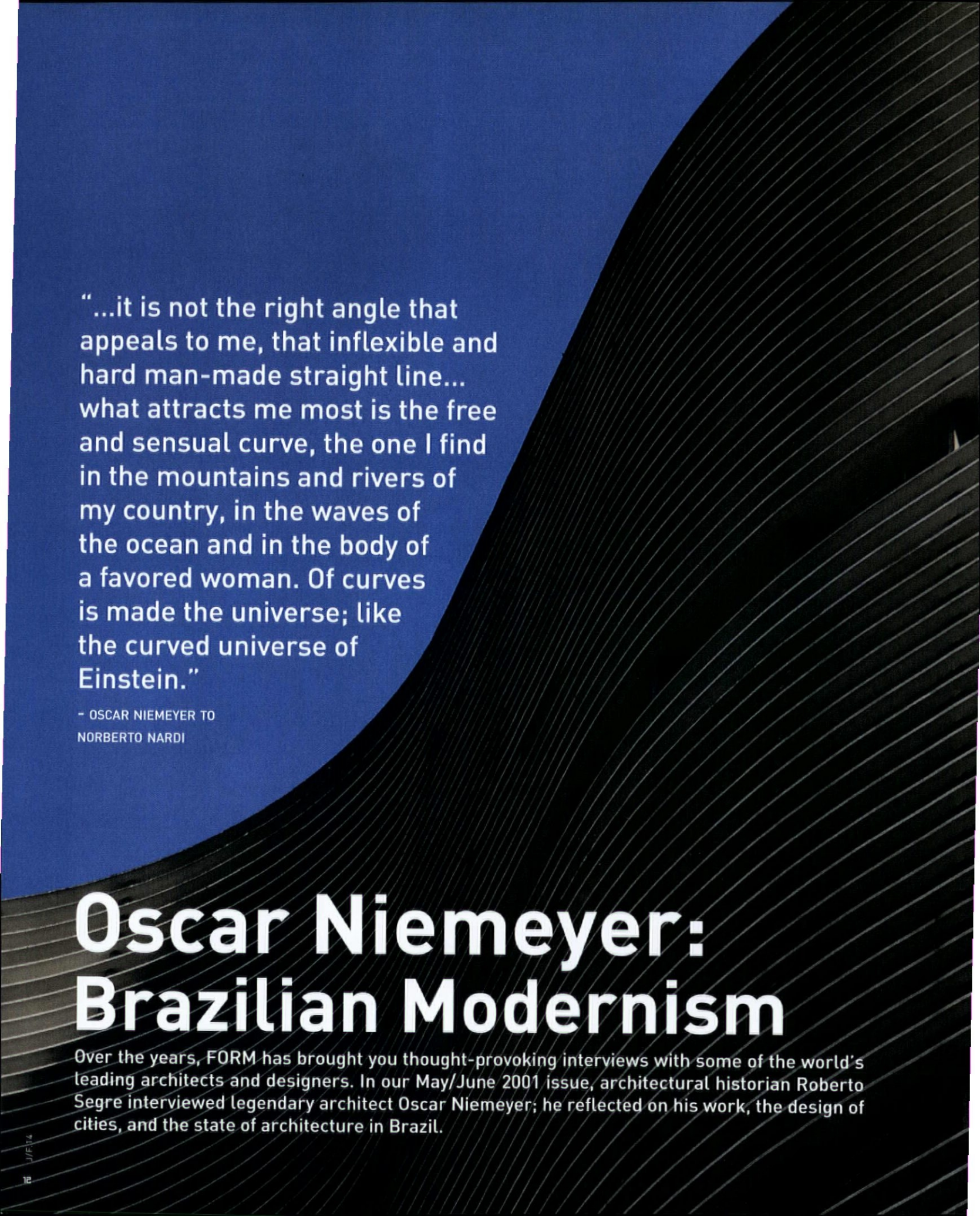
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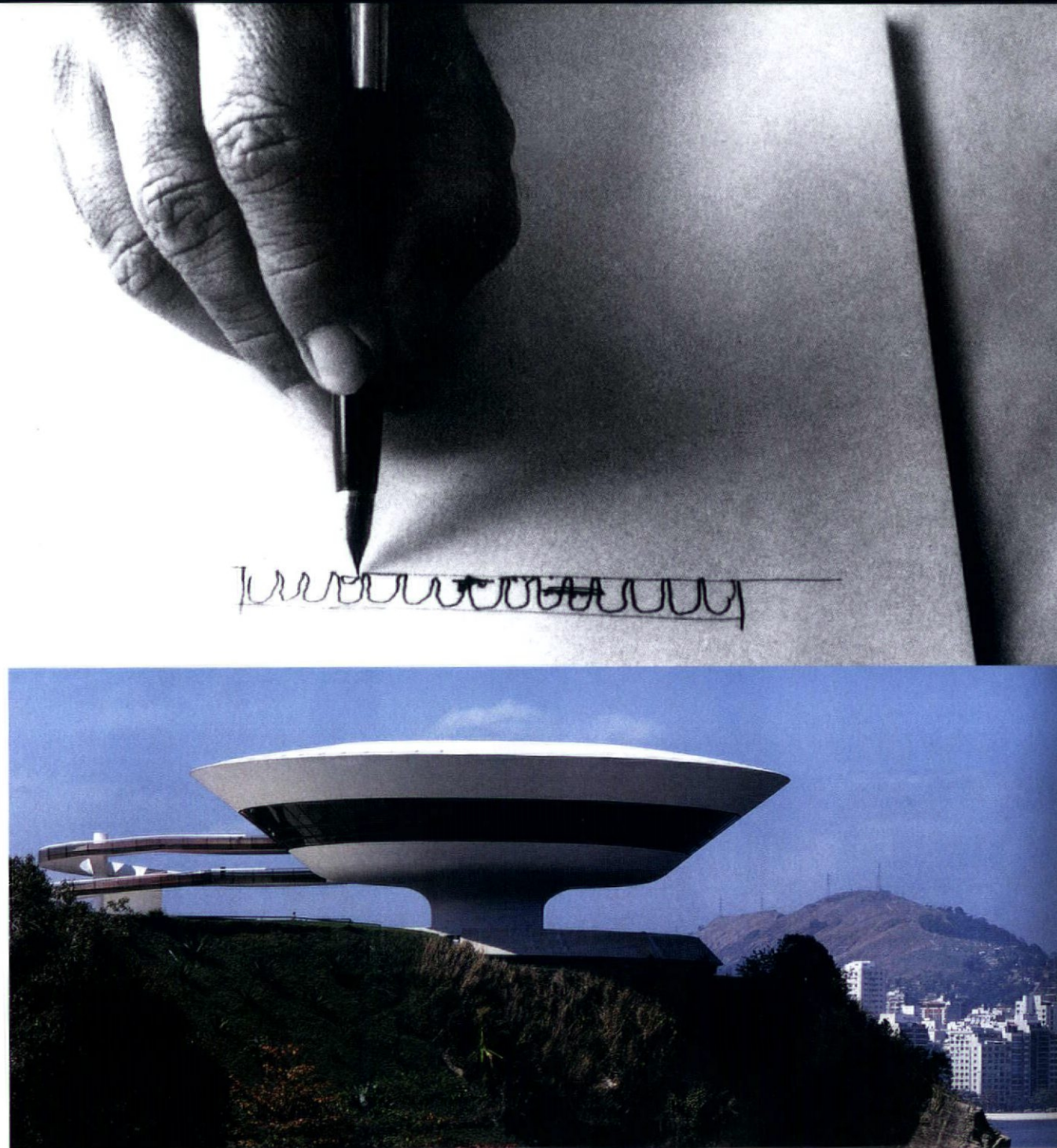
The background of the page is an abstract composition. The upper left portion is a solid, deep blue. A large, curved, dark grey or black structure, resembling a modern architectural form or a stylized wave, sweeps from the bottom left towards the top right. This structure is composed of many fine, parallel lines that follow its curve, creating a sense of depth and texture. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and modern design.

"...it is not the right angle that appeals to me, that inflexible and hard man-made straight line... what attracts me most is the free and sensual curve, the one I find in the mountains and rivers of my country, in the waves of the ocean and in the body of a favored woman. Of curves is made the universe; like the curved universe of Einstein."

- OSCAR NIEMEYER TO
NORBERTO NARDI

Oscar Niemeyer: Brazilian Modernism

Over the years, FORM has brought you thought-provoking interviews with some of the world's leading architects and designers. In our May/June 2001 issue, architectural historian Roberto Segre interviewed legendary architect Oscar Niemeyer; he reflected on his work, the design of cities, and the state of architecture in Brazil.



Niterói Contemporary Art Museum, Rio de Janeiro, 1996

What are the memories and experiences that you still hold from your past?

Rio de Janeiro is a city where nature prevails over human actions, in spite of the evil and destruction working against it. I remember, at the beginning of the century, when some of the original morros [hills] were leveled, it altered the "natural" references to the landscape downtown. The winding shapes of the bay, the sweetness of the surrounding hills, and the lusty exuberance of the vegetation, make it unique in the world. There are few urban contexts in which one can experience mountain heights in the

midst of a dense tropical forest, and in a few minutes, be on a white beach at the ocean's edge. Until the 1930's, when I was growing up...the city's architecture wasn't imposing, rather it molded itself to the strong presence of the natural environment. It's no wonder that from the moment Le Corbusier entered the Bay of Guanabara, he incessantly sketched the undulating curves of the morros in his sketchbooks.

Do you think that the authentic values of Rio have been lost forever?

Rio is a city that has aged badly. Speculation

and the indiscriminate construction of tall buildings have obliterated much of the natural beauty. Direct contact with the sea was also lost. In Copacabana, you used to be able to leave your home and easily walk down to the beach. Now, the presence of an expressway for cars has made pedestrian access to the sea difficult. Even though Burle Marx's design for Aterro do Flamengo is beautiful, it creates a neutral space that blocks views to the ocean.

Do you think the government's initiative to aesthetically rescue some important areas of the city is a good one?



Ministry of the Army, Brasília, 1972

The city's effort to recuperate cultural values is praiseworthy in relationship to the multiple aspirations of its inhabitants. But, Rio's biggest problems are providing services to the residents of working class neighborhoods, creating jobs, and improving living conditions in the favelas [squatter settlements].

Your admiration for the traditional city didn't motivate you to create projects integrated into the urban fabric, instead they have always been broken out of the context. What is your reasoning?

I am a fan of old cities that have a homogeneous and continuous structure. Recently, I was in Lisbon and I appreciated its historic neighborhoods, so coherent, orderly, and clean. It's a pity that they have introduced post-modern towers that break up the harmony of the urban landscape. Paris continues to be a universal example of a context created by architects and urban designers. I remember reading that in the past, before constructing a palace on Place Vendôme, they sketched all the facades around the plaza so that unity was achieved.

Today, in the chaos of the contemporary metropolis, the link between city and building has been lost: everybody does as they please. The city is the sum of its buildings: good, regular, and bad. For this reason, the creator must imagine an original project that breaks with the surrounding mediocrity, and at the same time, he must generate a cultural symbol that evokes surprise and curiosity in citizens. Art doesn't exist without beauty and surprise.

Let's return to Rio; do you think that, with its current degree of heterogeneity, it is possible to save the environmental culture with isolated symbols?

In times in which contemporary cities are dominated by social and economic conditions dictated by speculation, the drive to make a quick profit, the lack of culture among businessmen, and the lack of commitment in politicians, one can only produce gestures or suggestions at the

"I see the Brazilian contribution to world architecture as an explosion of originality and tropical innovation in its formal and special proposals."

— OSCAR NIEMEYER

moment an opportunity arises. In Rio, when at last they decided to insert the proposed Ministry of Education and Culture into the civic center — Le Corbusier had suggested that it be located on an isolated site in the Gloria district. We tried to juxtapose the compact masses of the surrounding monumental buildings by raising the main volume with 10-meter high stilts in order to create an open space—a green lung—for free movement of pedestrians which would alleviate the tension produced by heat and the lack of ventilation on the narrow streets.

Actually, I don't think that this building is an expression of Brazilian architecture; it is instead a product of Le Corbusier's talents.

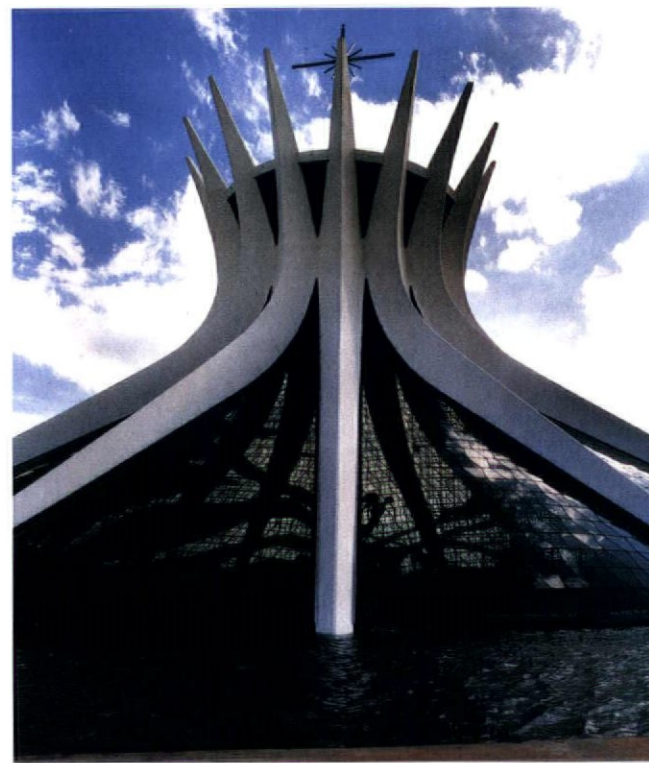
Your most recent work was just built in the Bay of Guanabara. What significance does the Museum of Contemporary Art in Niterói have for you?

I am very moved by the impact the Museum has had. In the first month, it had 40,000 visitors. This reinforces my belief that works of art, originality, and the element of surprise can have social importance. People experience sensations and perceptions for the first time, provoking curiosity, pleasure and happiness. For this reason, in addition to resolving the functional requirements of an art gallery, I wanted to create an abstract flower, floating in the breathtaking bay, its whiteness standing out against the blue of the ocean and the sky.

I see the Brazilian contribution to world architecture as an explosion of originality and tropical innovation in its formal and special proposals. We do not have the same ties to the past that restrict European architects. We assume connections that are closer to nature, the landscape, the possibilities of new materials than to a historical heritage. My relationship to baroque architecture is not stylistic, rather it is conceptual, an admiration of the inventive fantasies of those artists, even though they had to work with traditional technology. That's why I find shortcomings in the exploration of some of the masters of Modernism, that obsession for cubic forms, as is the case of Gropius or Mies van der Rohe. We should, without prejudice, take the historical principles and apply them



Pantheon, Brasília, 1985



Metropolitan Cathedral, Brasília, 1970. Glazed panels by Marianne Peretti.

to the future by using modern technology to its greatest potential in order to originally conquer space.

You have been a participant in the difficult struggle of the Latin American artistic vanguard to build a more beautiful and just world, do you feel these original ideals have failed?

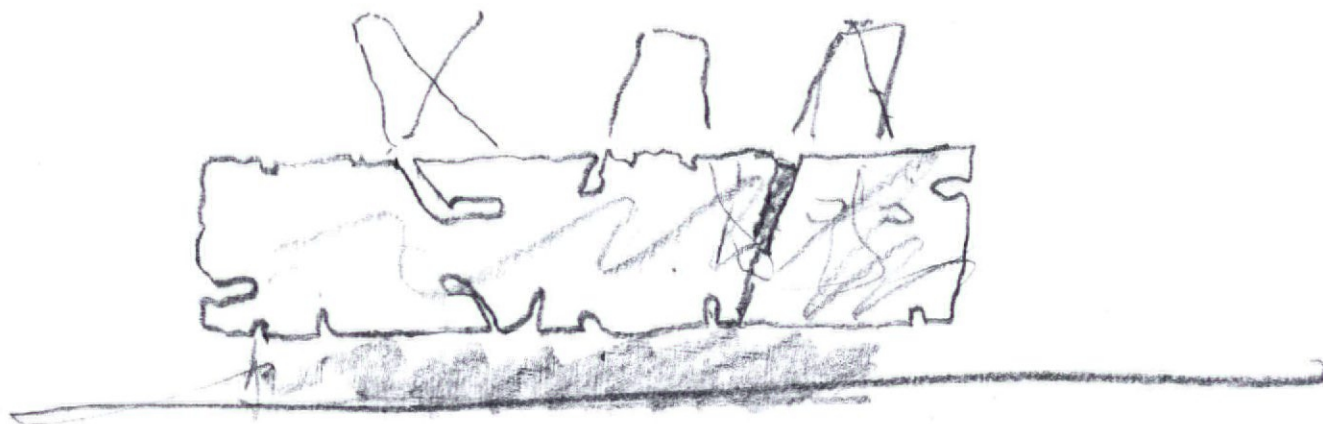
Despite all the contradictions that trouble us at the end of this century, I am an optimist. I believe in the human race, in our insatiable

desire to build a better future. The history of mankind and its culture is so long that we are alive for only a fleeting moment. We leave a footprint and then we disappear, with the illusion that we are leaving behind a meaningful legacy for our fellow human beings. Life is a continual struggle between good and evil, between happiness and suffering. We can look up to the example of two leaders in the struggle that were able to imagine a glimmer of hope that illuminated the future, in spite of adverse and closed

conditions. Locked up for decades in the prisons of fascists and racists, Antonio Gramsci in Italy and Nelson Mandela in South Africa, never tired in the face of adversity. At the gates of a new century, my advice to young generations of architects is to be realistic, creative and optimistic.

INTERVIEW by Roberto Segre
TRANSLATION by Christina Hale-Nardi





THE MAYNE IDEA

Since founding Morphosis almost forty years ago, Thom Mayne is producing work that is more relevant than ever. His iconic designs have earned him membership to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Pritzker Prize, more than 100 AIA awards (most recently, four 2010 AIA/LA Design Awards) and commissions all over the world. Publisher Ann Gray sits down with the architect to find out what inspires his dynamic practice.

Do you have an overarching source of inspiration or does each project have its own inspiration?

I think inspiration starts with some sort of a desire to change things. My sense is it's in your DNA. Certain people look at the world and are more or less in agreement with the way things are. Other people look at the world and say, "I see problems." That sets up desires, and all action begins with desire. I can remember being an architecture student when somewhere it became understood that my role was to define my generation and somehow advance things.

So you actually perceived a generational shift with your schooling?

Oh, huge! It was the '60s. A series of things were happening that were just amazingly powerful. I was in the Vietnam generation. Civil rights, Kennedy—it was a time of huge optimism in

terms of the potential of change, which came from inspiration. You can still listen to Martin Luther King's famous speech and have it bring tears to your eyes. Within architecture itself there was an exhausting of the modern project, so there was already a discussion of what was going to take place next. Outside of architecture, there was film. I grew up with Truffaut and Fellini and Godard, an amazing group, which probably had as much affect on me as stuff within the discipline.

So an overarching social component inspired creativity?

The world was changing and we, the public, could make that change. And we, the students at the university, could affect that. But going back to inspiration, I think it comes from observing the world. It becomes the material of your ideas.

So it's assimilating the input, be it creative or experiential.

Architecture is so broad; it deals with everything. So it could be reading *Seeing is Forgetting*, by Robert Irwin. It could come from the art world itself. It could be through observation of a particular work, like Heizer's *Double Negative*, or visiting a work that completely alters the way you think you know architecture. It's your visual literacy.

Over time, you're assimilating things that you might have experienced not just last week but also 30 years ago. Have you seen a change in your inspiration over time?

The time framework is quite complicated. It doesn't quite matter if it was seen an instant ago or twenty years ago. Ideas, the gestation, take many, many years, sometimes decades. You also accumulate baggage, and I think

When designing projects, architect Thom Mayne (left) looks to the program first. "I don't allow myself to think about solutions until I have a piece of work," he says. ABOVE: A sketch of the Cahill Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics at Caltech.



"Architecture is so pragmatic, and you get involved with all of the day-to-day. I thought it was time to start freeing myself from the constraints and start looking at the conceptual directions."

that's a problem. As you get older, you yourself produce work and that work becomes a source for future work. It's a problem because now your own experience, your own knowledge base, is potentially hazardous territory, and it's going to drag you down. It's going to impede the type of creativity that looks at something from a much more naïve position where anything is possible.

Is the baggage a tendency to repeat something that worked before? Or is it a tendency to work toward expectations that have been laid down over the years?

Both. We're all habitual creatures. You become comfortable with certain things. It comes out of a success that you've been rewarded for being successful in certain aspects of your work. It's definitely something to be cautious about.

You have to remember that what got you to that level of success is not necessarily the buildings, but the way you approached every single project.

Exactly. In professional terms, inspiration connected to a particular endeavor—architecture—requires an understanding of an operational strategy. Meaning you understand the nature of your own creations and the procedures that got you there.

How do you keep your approach fresh now?

I've got some paintings that I started doing after fifteen years of producing architecture and kind of stopping the "secondary" stuff. It's absolutely about wanting to rethink and challenge basic principals of what I'm involved in.

Is painting something you've just taken up?

Up until about 1995 I'd always produced a lot of drawings, artifacts, objects, furniture, etc. As I got really busy in the mid-'90s I kind of stopped doing that. Architecture is so pragmatic, and you get involved with all of the day-to-day. I thought it was time to start freeing myself from the constraints and start looking at the conceptual directions. What was I doing twenty years ago that was useful? That was it. It was incredibly important, and it actually defined the office. The studio was known as a place that dealt in ideas and wasn't limited by the huge contingent factor of architecture.

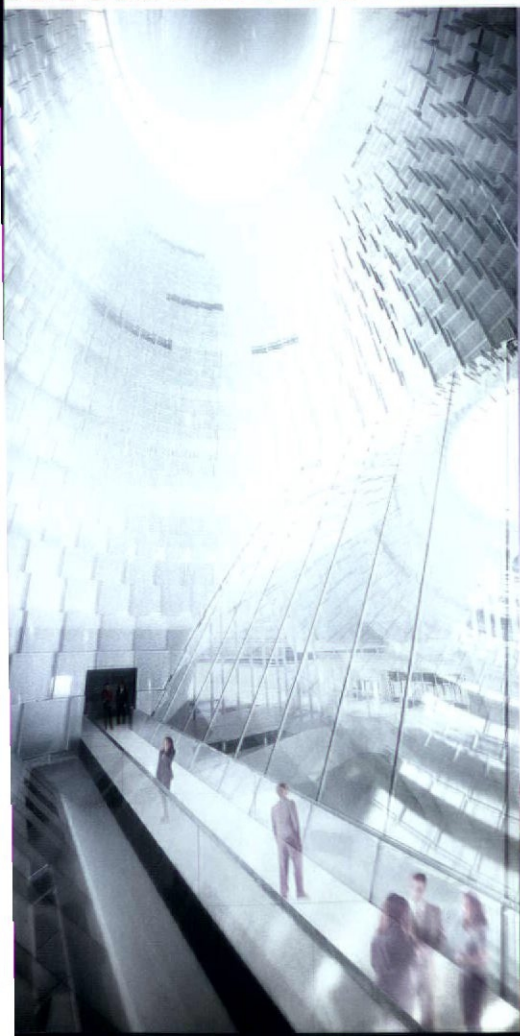
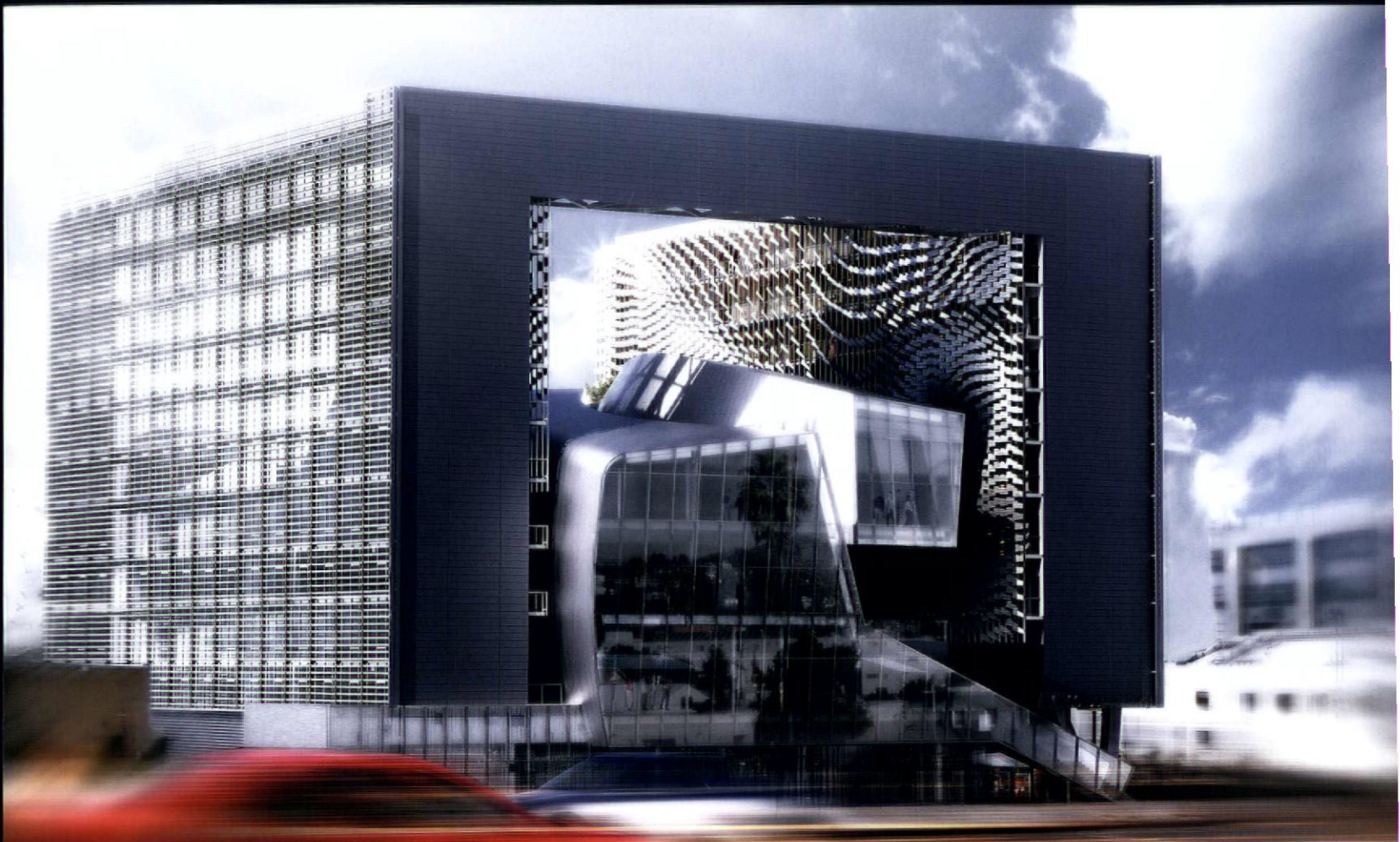
Frequently, architects like to draw for fun, but even their non-architectural drawings become very literally translated into their architectural work. What conceptual level are you operating on?

I'm interested in organizational structure, which is leading to ideas that will definitely have to do with architecture, but not in any literal way. If you look at them, they are not architectural works. They're within the realm of sculpture, painting, whatever you want to call them. For me, it'd have to operate on an abstract level if I'm doing them for myself. And I'm not doing them for anyone else. I'm doing them because it gives me a huge release. As the projects get larger they get much more cumbersome, and much more difficult in every sense, certainly emotionally. These allow me a bit of freedom. ■

To see a video of the full interview and Thom Mayne's paintings, visit formmag.net.

TOP AND ABOVE: "Technology totally changed our profession," says Mayne. "The Phare Tower in Paris would not be possible without a digital environment." OPPOSITE TOP: The relationship of living space to academic components set up Mayne's approach to the Emerson College Los Angeles Center. OPPOSITE, BOTTOM RIGHT AND LEFT: Morphosis's competition design for a new U.S. embassy in London would redefine the city's skyline. An interior bridge would appear to float in the transparent, light-filled space.

The original article was published in the January/February 2011 issue of FORM.



GEHRY'S DARWINIAN ASCENT

BY JOSEPH GIOVANNINI

ARCHITECTS HARDLY SEEM LIKELY CANDIDATES FOR pursuing an Icarus wish, but as Frank Gehry says, "that Magritte rock floating in space: it's a compelling image."

Gehry, who made a reputation using chain link fence, plywood and cardboard, may be the most material of architects, but since 1968, when he specified a metal roof for the O'Neill Haybarn in San Juan Capistrano, he has increasingly cultivated a little-noted aspiration in his work both toward immateriality and flight. Set at an oblique angle, the Haybarn's corrugated roof seems to take wing; seen in certain lights at certain angles, it dissolves into the sky. When he designed the chain link "fences" bordering the upper deck of his Santa Monica house, he conceived them as emanations.

At "The Waking Dream: Photography's First Century," a show held at New York's

Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1993, Gehry came across the photograph by Samuel Joshua Beckett of a dancer who, twirling her robes, looked like a spinning petal: he wondered aloud why architects don't achieve the same fragility, lightness and sense of movement. Relative to Vitruvius' triumvirate of architectural criteria, Gehry was shifting emphasis from firmness and commodity to delight, turning the dial up on joy. Through the early 1990s, the majority of the buildings in his portfolio hit the ground bluntly, at right angles, but in a series of buildings done over the last decade, he aggressively started to answer his own rhetorical question, responding to gravitational logics that were no longer earth bound.

In 1987, Gehry had already cast mass into the air with the Fishdance restaurant in Kobe, where a carp leaps at the side of an elevated highway. Much has been made of Gehry's flirtation with the fish, but the fish here occupied the air, defying gravity. Gehry describes his departure from the ground with a characteristically practical explanation that is deceptive. "It's hard to bring soft materials like metal

LEFT: O' Neill Haybarn, San Juan Capistrano. OPPOSITE PAGE: Samuel Joshua Beckett, Loie Fuller Dancing, circa 1900, Gelatin Silver print, 10 x 12.4 cm., Gilman Paper Company Collection



Photo by Martin Rand





and titanium to the ground because of the upkeep. At the Vitra Museum (in Weil am Rhein, Germany), where the plastered masonry surface meets the ground, the owner has to repaint it every year. Stone works better, but there's that transition between the vertical and horizontal plane that's always a maintenance issue. It's a practical question."

The Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain, is the first major structure in which Gehry visibly eschews the ground. The fish that he celebrated in museum installations here metamorphosed into headless, tailless fish schools that are more abstract, and they seem to swim in an anti-gravitational state above pools of water: the building does not rise up from a plinth of stone but flows out of a plinth of water.

The Brancusi-esque forms seem to float in an implied liquid, but in subsequent projects he switches from designing the object suspended in the medium to creating the medium itself. From 1995-97, designing the Samsung Museum of Modern Art in Seoul, Korea, a convergence of images about fluidity inspired the non-representational design: Gehry cites a floating temple in the capital, and according to Edwin Chan, a principal designer in the firm, so did the tradition of Asian water colors and the frequent depiction of waterfalls. For the museum's tight urban site and ambitious program,

Gehry took apart the Brancusi object—he filleted the fish—and composed a building of wide and narrow ribbons that, depending on the point of view, flow downward, as in a waterfall, or up in an ascending motion akin to the rising flame in the Statue of Liberty's torch. The formal flow outside assists the spatial flow inside, where a sequence of galleries steps up within the building. The ribbon-like language is perhaps more similar to the billowing Disney Concert Hall, which predates Bilbao as a design: Gehry's evolution of forms is not strictly linear.

The Samsung museum became the victim of Korea's faltering economy and wasn't built, but the results of the intense design research Gehry carries on in many of his designs resurface in a family of buildings that includes the renovation of the Corcoran Gallery in Washington D.C., and the Weatherhead School of Management building at Case Western University. If Gehry is not a linear thinker, he never really abandons his best ideas, but mulls them over for decades. The tumultuous flow of watery ribbons for Gehry's winning competition proposal for the Corcoran turns the waterfall into a white-water ride, a break-out facade

RIGHT: Fishdance Restaurant.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Guggenheim, Bilbao, Spain. Museo

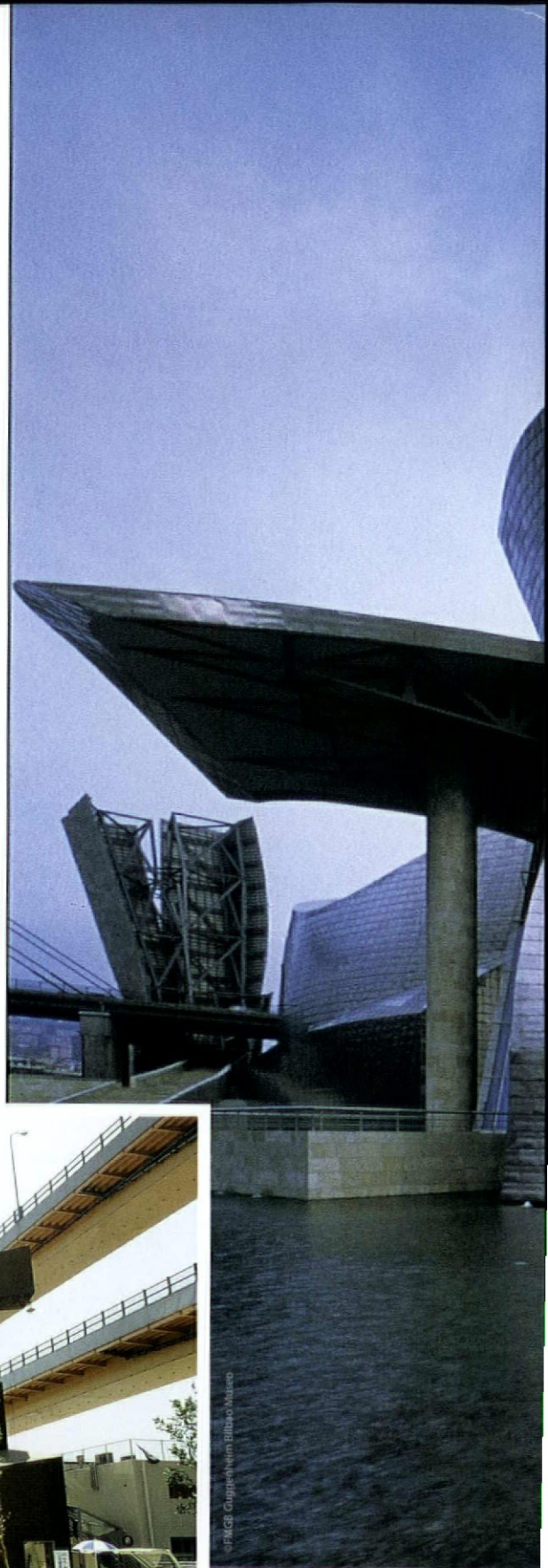
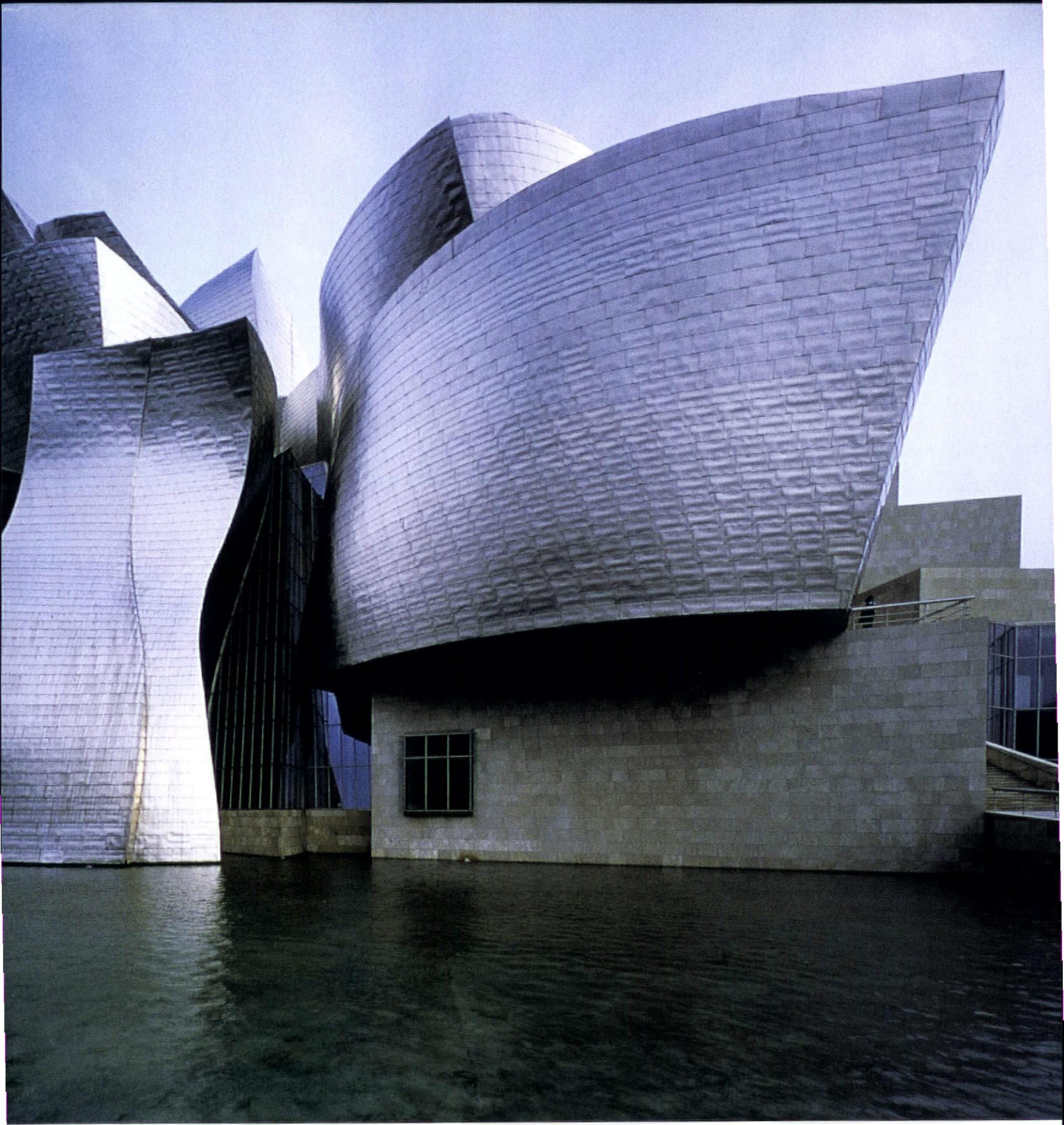


Photo by Gehry Partners.

© F&G Guggenheim Bilbao Museo

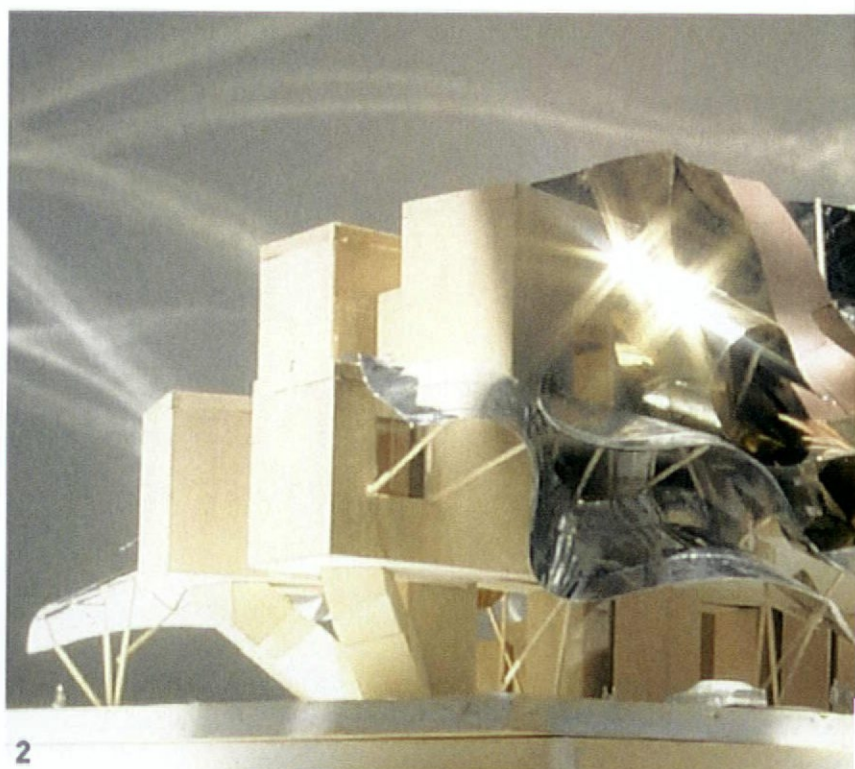
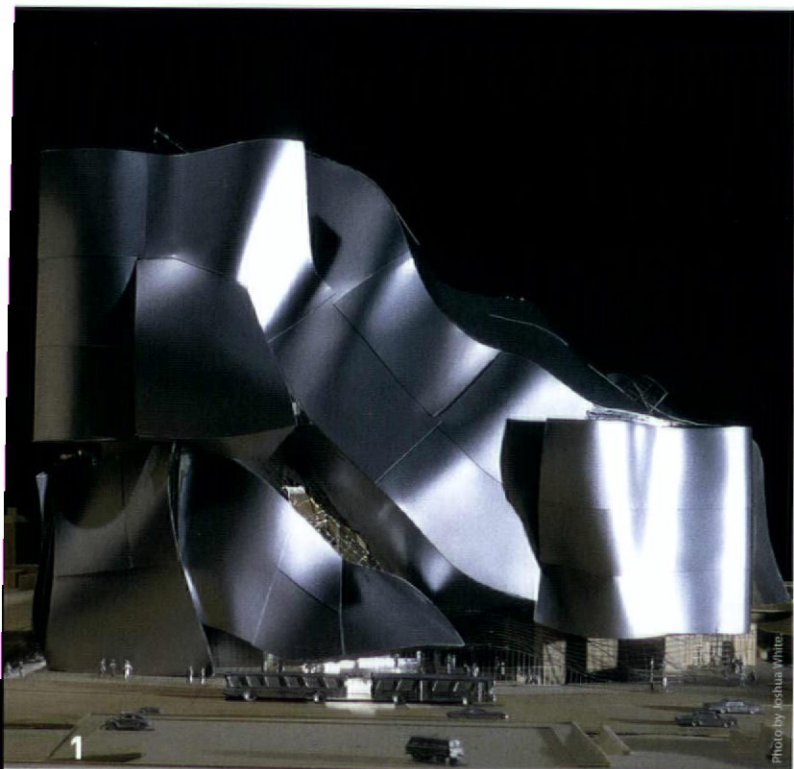


in which the ribbons part chaotically, avoiding any sense of a closed volume, creating interstices in which light will fall and illuminate the spaces below. At Case Western, the waterfall of metallic sheets spills not only over the facades, but inside into the atria, creating one of the most conceptually complete designs in Gehry's entire opus: the cascade invades the cubic massing, creating a mix of static and dynamic forms and spaces. Gehry is sometimes accused of repeating his architectural spectacles, but in fact the designs vary in both concept and gesture.

In more recent projects, the flowing ribbons and cascading forms that evolved from the Brancusi fish have in turn changed again, this time metamorphosing into nebulous or vaporous forms. The plan for the Guggenheim designed for New York not only leaves the logic of the ground behind but also the logic of

water—in favor of the air. In order to create public space and assure view corridors from the city to its location at the foot of Wall Street on the East River, Gehry raises the Guggenheim on multi-story piers and pursues the notion of a cloudscape in the body of the building. Unfurling ribbons of stainless steel scroll in great involutions: he has created a design deeply different from Bilbao, though for the same patron and a similar program.

At a more modest scale but just as dramatically, Gehry cultivates the same idea near Bilbao in the Marques de Riscal Winery (design, from 1998-2000), where he lifts a cloudscape above the ground on a tentacular truss standing balletically at one end en pointe. The architect mixes the wafting forms with volumes in one of his most convincing dialogues between solid and liquid. Among the many designs he explored for a hotel done for Ian



3



Schraeger on Astor Place in New York is a vaporous proposal—a tower shrouded in a metallic mist. Liquid has turned to a gaseous state.

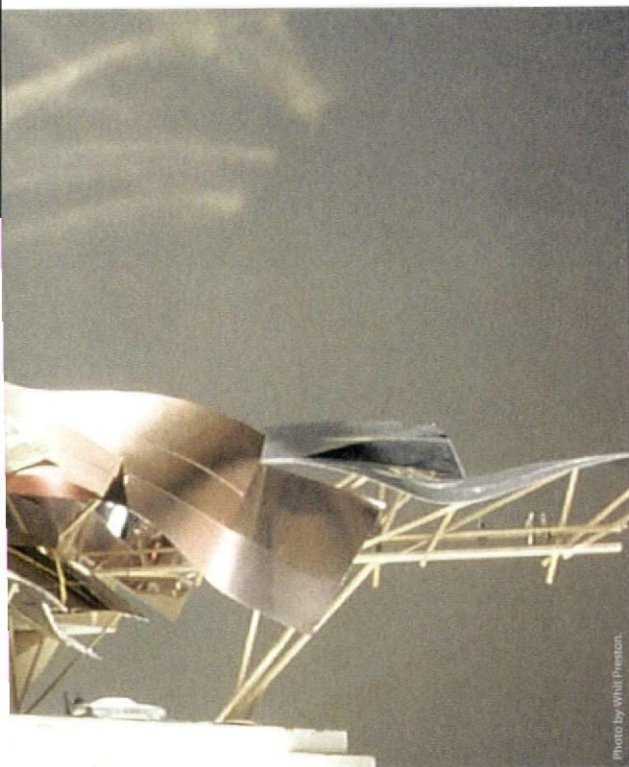
The metaphors driving the explorations—fish, cloud, mists—may change, but what remains consistent is his interest in movement in an aleatory, irrational and uncontrolled context. Each is a version of the legendary crumpled wad of paper in the wastepaper basket that has long intrigued architects—the search for gestural spontaneity and

- 1) Samsung Museum of Modern Art.
- 2) Marques de Riscal Winery.
- 3) Guggenheim Museum Manhattan.
- 4) Weatherhead School.

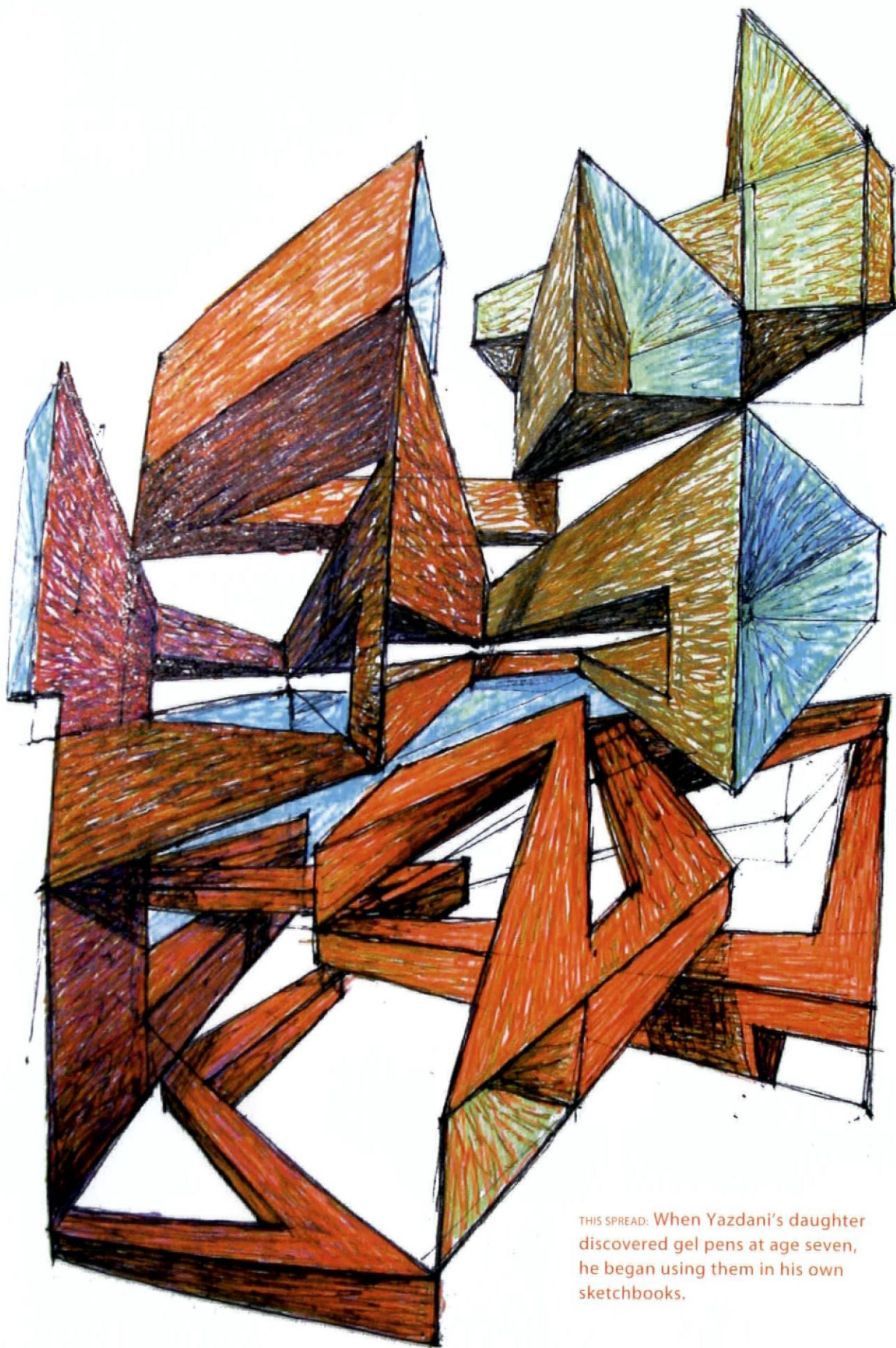
accident outside the ordering logic of gravity as we have known it since man first piled one stone atop another.

The architects' dream of building clouds no doubt dates from the time of Icarus, but what is remarkable about Gehry's emergent vision is the virtuosity that his office has developed in making the ephemeral physical. The computer, famously, has allowed Gehry to break the controlling spell of gravity on buildings, but credit should go where it is due: the ideas predated technique and precipitated the search for it. Fortunately for Gehry, and us, he lives in a time when technology could support and even evolve this most difficult and inspired vision. ■

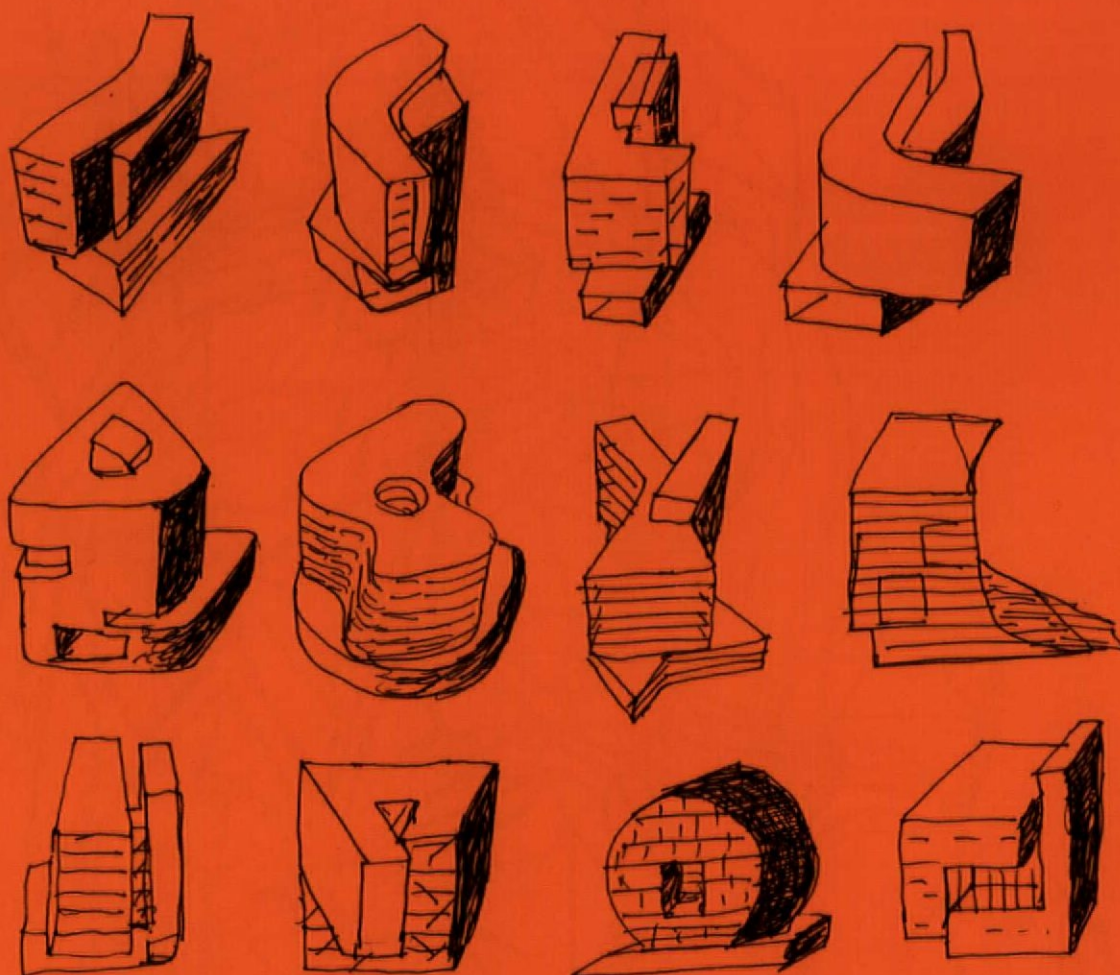
The original article was published in the March/April 2002 issue of LA Architect.



4



THIS SPREAD: When Yazdani's daughter discovered gel pens at age seven, he began using them in his own sketchbooks.



THEN^{AND}NOW

Revisiting Mehrdad Yazdani's sketches

BY MICHAEL WEBB

"PAINTING AND DRAWING WERE MEHRDAD YAZDANI'S FIRST LOVES," WROTE ALLISON Millionis in the November 2002 issue referencing the architect's prolific sketchpads. She extolled the fluid, curvilinear forms—inspired by Yazdani's mastery of writing Farsi—that filled the pages of 20, 6-by-8-inch notebooks. As an architectural student, and later as a professional, he used sketchbooks to explore space and light without the constraints of site, context, or program, trying to escape everyday realities. He insisted that his sketches were architectural, not art, and they informed his paintings as well as the models his associates built of different projects.

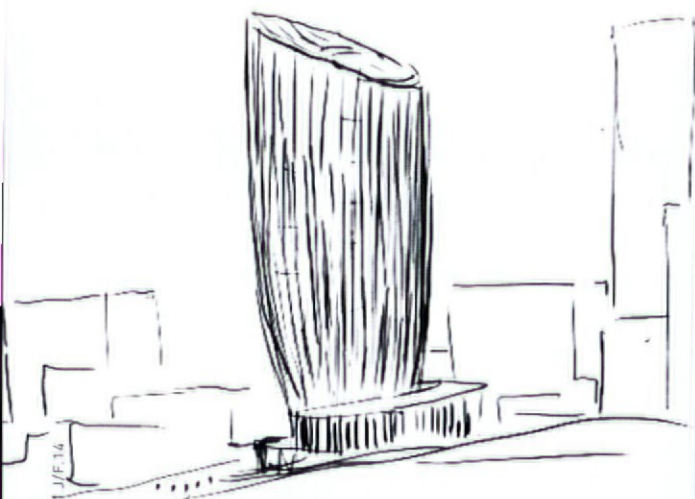
Twelve years since the original article ran in the magazine, he's just completing sketchbook number 32—roughly one for every year of his practice. Meanwhile, the scale and volume of his work, as head of Yazdani Studio at Cannon Design, is much larger than it was more than a decade ago. He recently created a brilliant design for the Los Angeles Courthouse competition, and an award-winning medical center in Buffalo, NY. He's currently working on projects in the U.S., Asia, and the Middle East, and he has to coordinate the work of design teams in Los Angeles, Boston, and Shanghai. However, he remains committed to his sketchbook, though he has embraced technology as a tool since his drawings were first featured on these pages.

How have you changed the way you approach sketches?

Until five years ago, I was making changes to designs on overlaid trace paper in the plane, and when I landed I would fax those drawings to the team. One of my tech-savvy designers suggested I draw on a tablet using Sketchbook Pro, a program used by animators who still draw by hand. It gives me the flexibility to imitate a pencil, pen, marker, even a watercolor brush, and it opened up a whole new world to me. On overseas flights I have up to 20 hours to myself. I no longer have to carry paper and writing tools, or wake up my neighbor tearing off a sheet in the middle of the night. A team emails me a plan or a massing diagram and I can draw over it and email it back wherever I am in the world. The Shanghai office starts

TOP: A drawing titled "I Dream;"

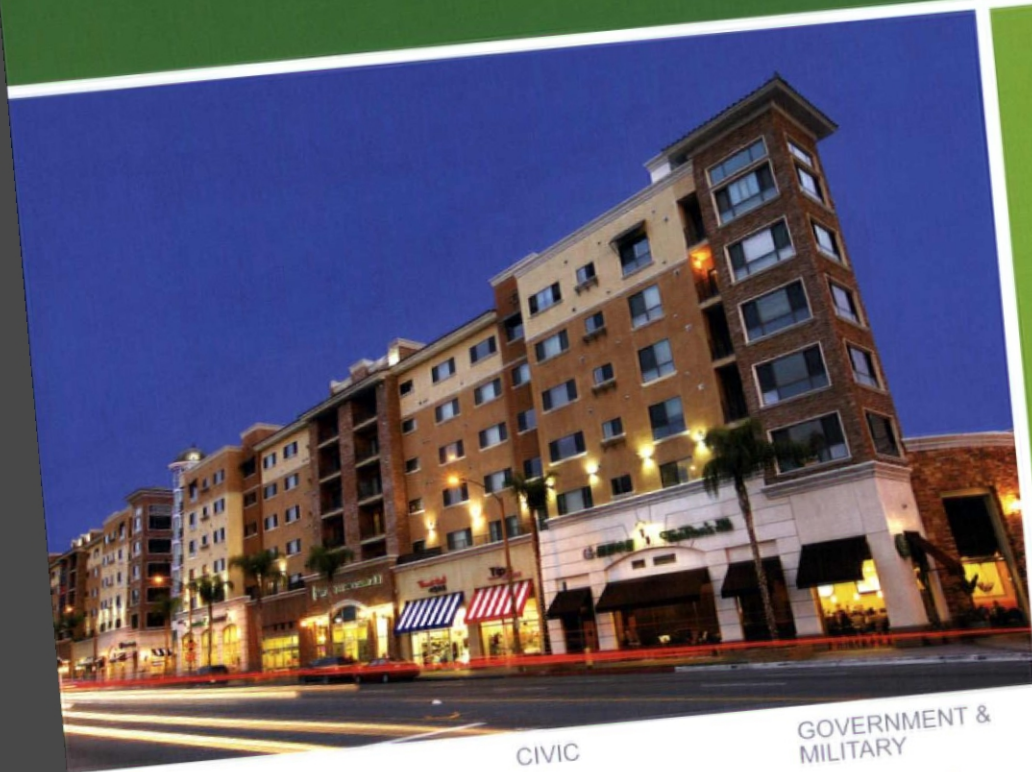
BOTTOM: Two sketches, ink and digital drawing, of the L.A. Courthouse.



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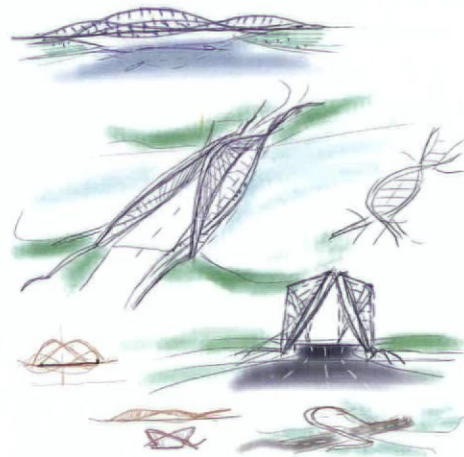
work when it's night in California, so when I get in the next morning the developed designs are waiting for me. But I will go on using sketchbooks until I can't draw any more—they contain ideas that pop into my head and aren't ready to be shared.

What are the differences between drawing on paper versus a stylus on a screen?

The texture of the paper and the nature of the pen has a lot to do with the speed and the quality of the line. I generally use a ballpoint pen because it slides beautifully and doesn't bleed. As a tablet, I prefer Wacom, a Japanese product, because the screen has some friction. Steve Jobs was against the stylus so using an iPad is like drawing with the back of your finger.

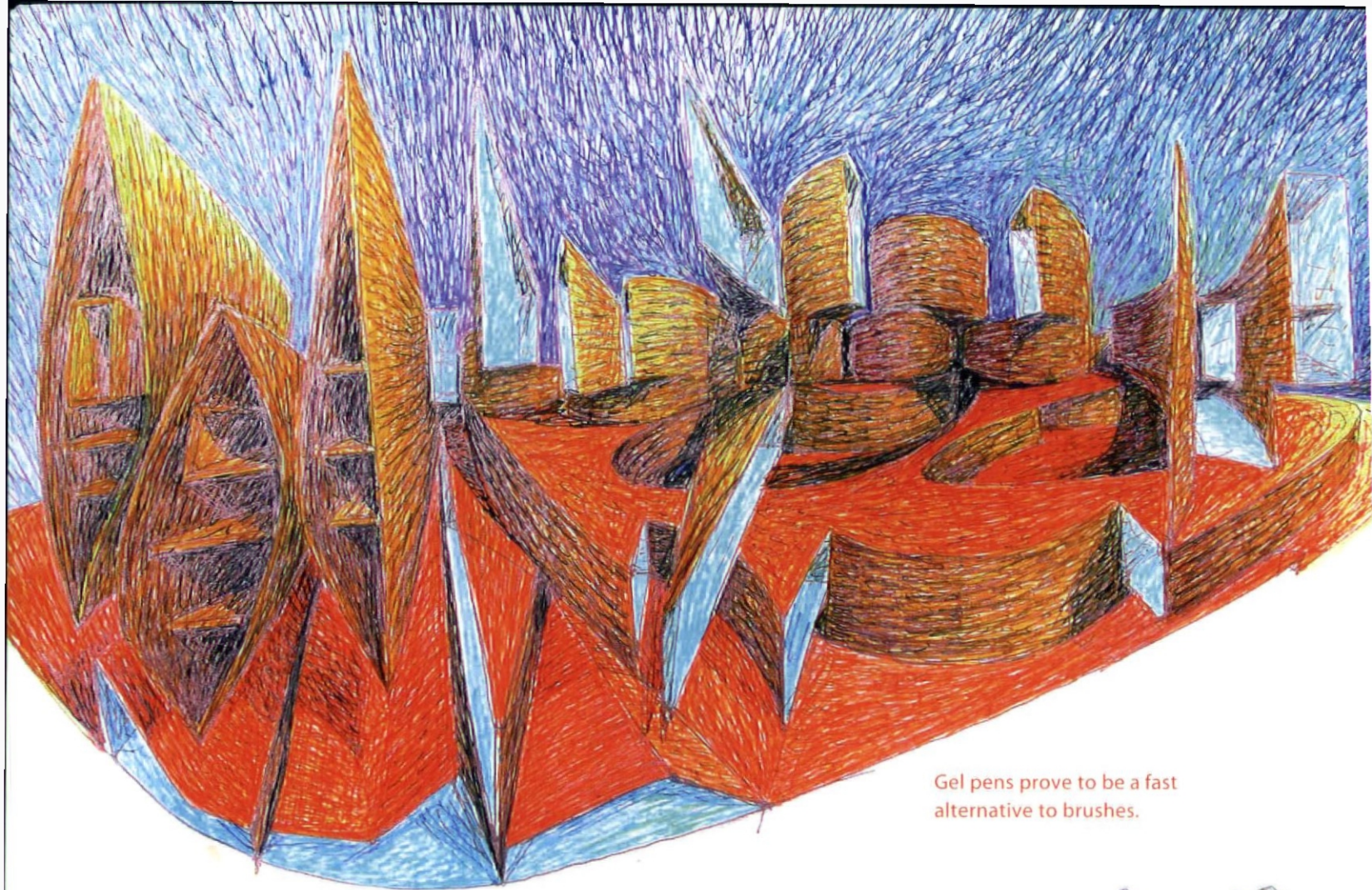
As your architectural practice has grown have you put art aside?

I've had less time to paint over the past four or five years, but I'm as productive on the sketching side as ever. I've been fascinated by gel pens since my daughter discovered them at age seven. She likes bright pink and orange; I have 40 different colors and use them as a fast alternative to brushes. What looks like an abstract composition is actually the seed of a million-square-foot hospital we are designing in Korea. My hand starts drawing and it may turn into a building, a 3D print, sculpture, or a piece of furniture. My sketchbooks are full of project-specific drawings. Sometimes they are memories of an idea and when I get stuck on a new job I go to my past sketchbooks. If you flip through them, you won't find people; the gravitation is always towards architecture. There are geometries, rectilinear and curvilinear, and sets of variations on a theme, as though you were rotating a form on a computer screen.



LEFT: Drawing of the UCSD Jacobs Medical Center. RIGHT AND BELOW: Several sketches of bridges for the Luxelake Development.





Gel pens prove to be a fast alternative to brushes.

Does sketching give you a sense of continuity with the history of architecture?

I grew up in that culture. I was at the GSD when CAD was first beginning to influence documentation drawings. I was part of the last generation that could get away with not doing it. Massimo Scolari, a fine Italian artist, taught a studio in which he demanded that we draw with pencils,

after sharpening them with blades, and use watercolor to delineate, and that was part of my education at Harvard. I'm one of the biggest advocates of the latest technology, and our studio is pushing the envelope at Cannon Design. But I still believe in the sketch for generating ideas. There is so much power in the suggestive aspects of a sketch that you will not get from any computer-generated image. ■



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