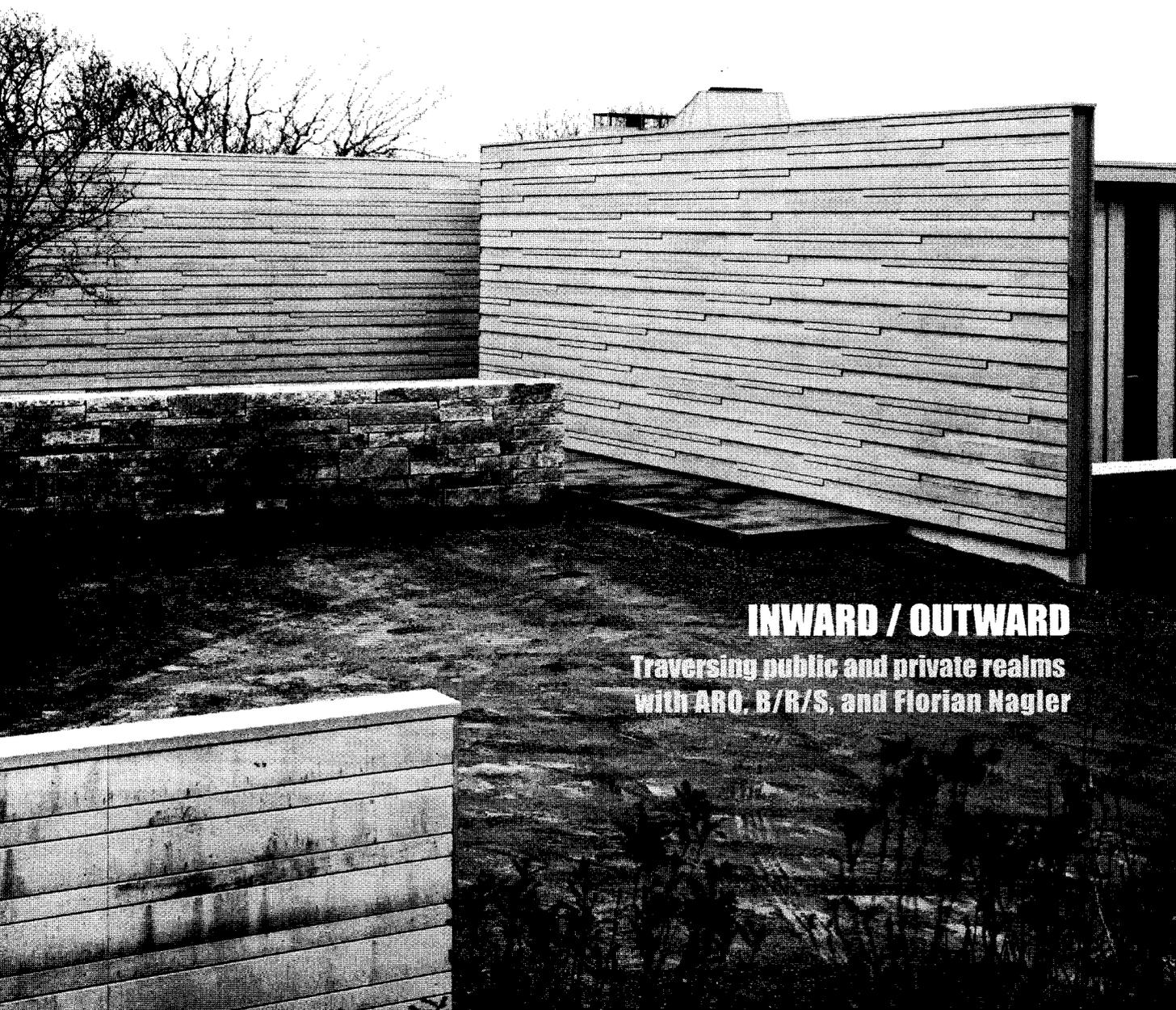


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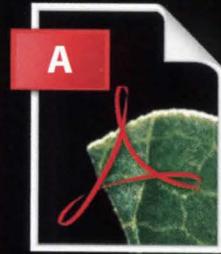
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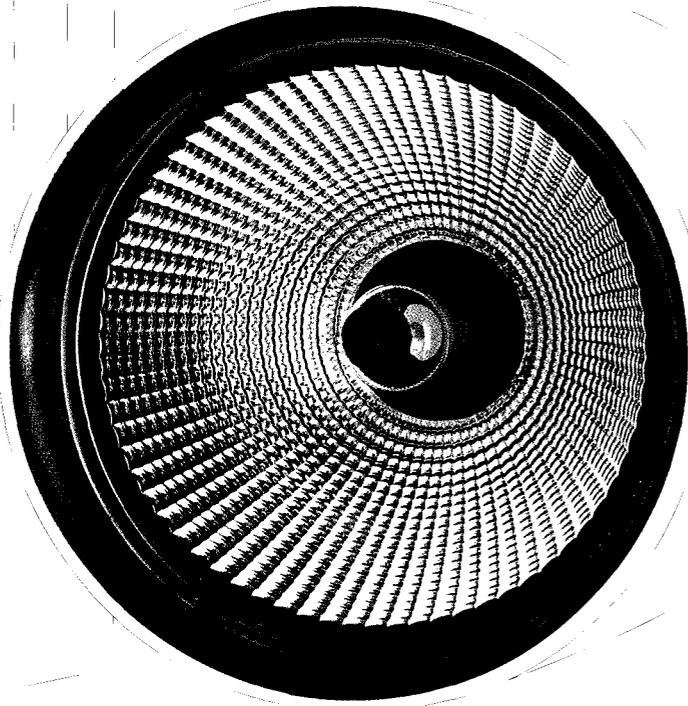
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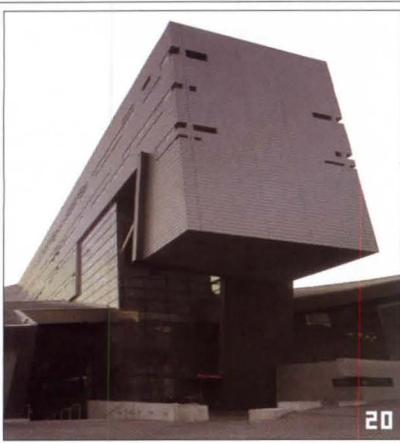
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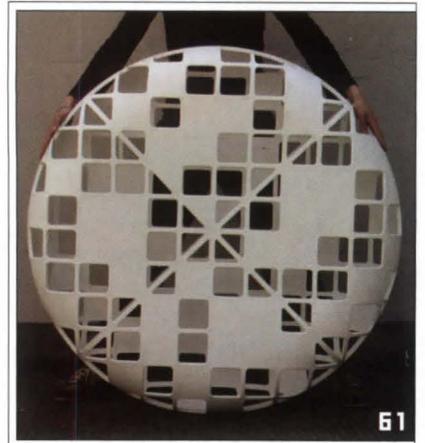
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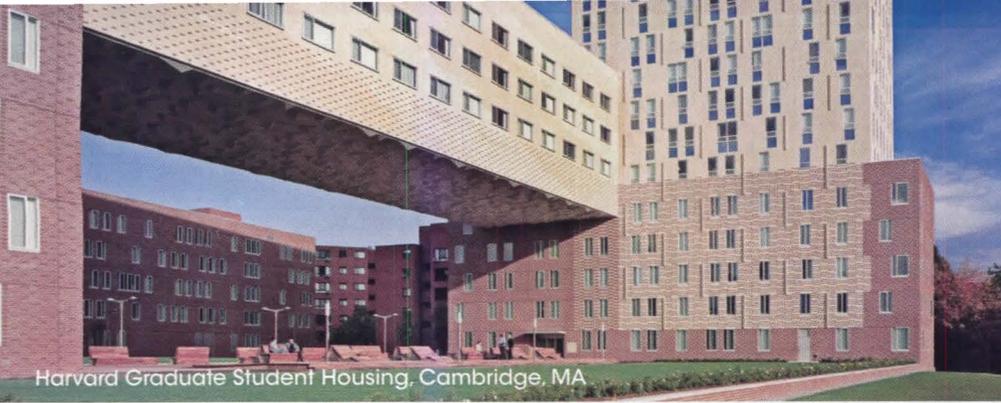
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EMINENT BALANCE

BY EMILIE SOMMERHOFF

A year after the U.S. Supreme Court heard *Kelo v. City of New London*, and eight months after it handed down its 5-4 ruling upholding the rights of the Connecticut city to condemn homes in its Fort Trumbull neighborhood for private development, eminent domain is a burning issue in state congressional sessions across the country.

Indeed, the possibilities unleashed by the interpretation are menacing. Eminent domain, formerly accepted as a right of government as long as the property was condemned for "public use" and its property owner justly compensated, has acquired broader reach. Courtesy of the Supreme Court decision, "economic development" is now loosely interpreted as a lawful public use. Moreover, as John McIlwain, senior resident fellow with the Urban Land Institute, in his paper "A Primer on *Kelo v. New London*," points out, "while Fort Trumbull is a distressed neighborhood, it was not declared to be blighted," the status of previous areas cleared by use of eminent domain.

The feared result of this judgment: Private property is prey for exploitation by private developers, as long as developers can project increased job and property tax returns for the municipality. Retired justice Sandra Day O'Connor warned in her dissent, "The specter of condemnation hangs over all property. Nothing is to prevent the state from replacing any Motel 6 with a Ritz-Carlton, any home with a shopping mall, or any farm with a factory."

Former *Architecture* editor-in-chief C.C. Sullivan addressed *Kelo v. City of New London* on this page last August, summarizing: "The only way that the Susette Kelos of the world can consider their property sacred is to elect wise leaders—those who promise to forever protect their citizens from tyrannical planning." If legislative activity since the Supreme Court ruling is any indication, those leaders are in place and on a mission. According to the Institute for Justice, the libertarian law firm that represented Kelo and her neighbors and that has closely followed the ruling's reverberations, as of the end of February, 43 states have passed or will soon consider eminent domain reform. The federal government is also deliberating measures: One in particular

was passed by the House last November prohibiting the use of eminent domain for economic development, which the bill defines as any "enterprise carried on for profit, or to increase tax revenue, tax base, employment, or general economic health." Jurisdictions that use eminent domain for this purpose would forfeit all federal economic development funds for two years. The bill is pending in the Senate.

The bipartisan energy around this issue is refreshing. (In fact, the subject has united strange bedfellows: libertarian groups, advocates for low-income citizens, the American Farm Bureau, the NAACP—the list goes on.) But could the trajectory of this widespread and potent backlash ultimately put legitimate urban renewal projects out of reach? Seeing the tides turn, groups that cheered the high court's decision last summer are now scrambling to make a case with legislators for the merits of eminent domain; and in many ways, it is a convincing one.

While there have been undeniable abuses, there are at least as many instances in which the governmental power has been used appropriately and responsibly to rejuvenate blighted neighborhoods and brownfields, create jobs and mixed-income housing, and combat sprawl. Testifying before Congress last fall, the mayor of Indianapolis and the National League of Cities' second vice president, Bart Peterson, stated: "The prudent use of eminent domain, when exercised in the sunshine of public scrutiny, helps achieve a greater public good that benefits the entire community. Used carefully, it helps create hope and opportunity for people and communities that have little of both." He cited the example of an Indianapolis area, now 71 percent first-time homeowners, that had been reclaimed from violence and drugs by the practice.

With states and the federal government still deciding if and what restrictions should be applied in the wake of the *Kelo* case, it remains to be seen who will most benefit: private developers, tax collectors, property owners, or urban renewal advocates. What is clear is that knee-jerk legislation that limits renewal efforts could be as injurious to community fabric and fate as the unchecked powers of eminent domain. ■

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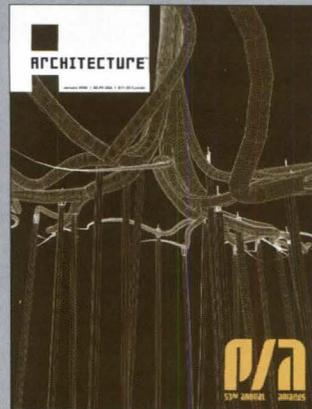
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Life lessons

Thank you for the passion evident in your editorial "Preserving the Public Process" [December 2005, page 11]. Spirit and energy are noble and necessary, however, as I see the events surrounding the Edward Durell Stone building at 2 Columbus Circle in Manhattan, the public process was in fact preserved and exercised. It seems to me that you feel the public process has suffered simply because you and others did not like the answer the process delivered. To date, several of my own buildings have been demolished to make way for contemporary life. While it was difficult to accept when the first of my works met that fate, I realized then, as now, that progress and rejuvenation are essential. What we are experiencing in the decision regarding the Stone building, is, simply, life. And frankly, I'm all for it.

Scott W. Braley

Atlanta, Georgia



01 | 2006 

Responsibilities lie elsewhere

Max Page had better brush up on his political history before he lays the blame for the FEMA failure in New Orleans on conservatives ["In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," December 2005, page 41]. The last time I looked, New Orleans and the entire state of Louisiana was in the firm grasp of the Democratic party. A significant percentage of New Orleans' population is on welfare. The failure to adequately respond to the disaster is a local governmental issue: Why is this the fault of conservatives? I agree that dreams begin with responsibilities, so let the liberals shoulder their share. Stop blaming everyone else for their predicaments, and stop relying on the government to take care of them.

Donald Shuey

Tallahassee, Florida

The author responds: *Mr. Shuey may be the only person left in the United States who believes government should have done less to aid New Orleans in the wake of Katrina. That the House of Representatives—the crowning institutional achievement of the conservative revolution—has issued its scathing report should perhaps make Mr. Shuey wonder if he might be bellowing to a crowd of one. Complaints that liberals should "stop relying on the government to take care of them" inevitably come from people in states that receive far more federal money than they deposit in federal taxes. Interstate 10 running through Tallahassee? Money for protecting the Everglades? Aid for displaced Florida citizens after Hurricane Wilma? "Liberals" in Massachusetts, California, and New York have consistently paid their disproportionate share for what Mr. Shuey calls the "local issues" of other states. And this is how it should be: The basic needs of a society cannot be met by the magical marketplace, nor by the kindness of strangers. They require the concerted actions of our national community—another name for government. —Max Page*

Speak for yourself

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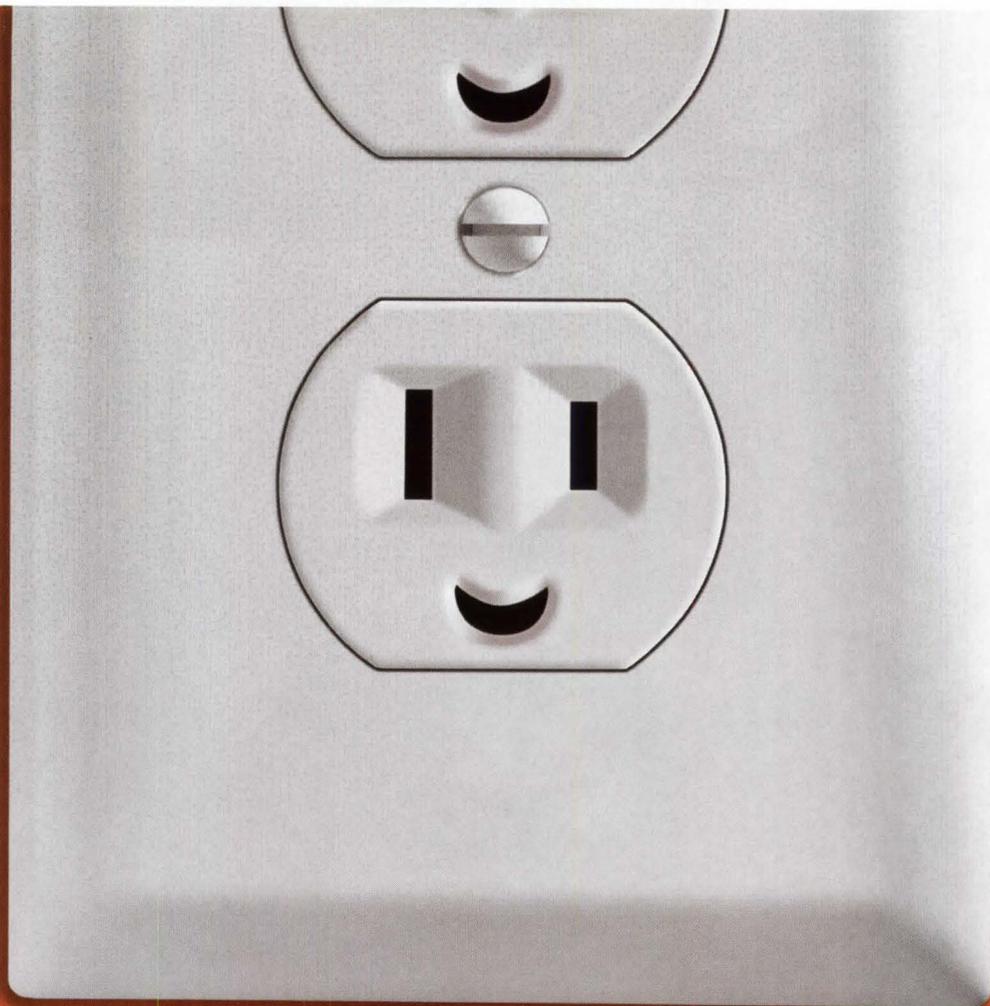
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PAUL RUDOLPH HIGH SCHOOL IN DANGER OF DEMOLITION



Paul Rudolph's first public building in Florida, Riverview High School in Sarasota, is facing demolition and a future as a parking lot. The building is not on the National Register of Historical Places, and local preservation efforts to save the structure are still in a nascent stage.

Rudolph practiced in the city from 1941 to 1958, and was the leading proponent of the influential Sarasota school. Riverview, built in 1958 and one of two local schools designed by the architect, is considered among the most innovative academic buildings of its day. The modern steel, glass, and brick structure with large concrete sunshades is one of eleven Rudolph-designed structures still standing in Sarasota County.

Later this year, construction will begin on the new \$75 million high school, designed by the Miami office of Perkins + Will, in collaboration with BMK Architects of Sarasota. The replacement buildings will be sited adjacent to the Rudolph

structure on what is currently a parking lot. When the campus is complete in 2008, the existing classroom and administration buildings—including the Rudolph structure, but with the exception of a recent addition—will be demolished.

Five years ago, when BMK Architects prepared an assessment of Riverview for the school board, maintenance, function, security, and space constraints of the 42-acre site were cited as the major challenges faced by the campus. The board, however, does not have a comparative cost analysis of renovation versus new construction. Bob Earley, associate superintendent and chief financial and business officer for the school district, was recently quoted in Sarasota's *Herald Tribune* as saying he does not have a spreadsheet identifying "what it would cost to renovate and what it would cost to rebuild, [but] our sense is that we can't renovate the building." **Anastasia Bowen**

ALLAN TEMKO, 1924–2006

Architecture critic Allan Temko died January 25 in Orinda, California. He was 81. A Naval officer during World War II, Temko taught English literature at the Sorbonne in Paris and city planning at the University of California, Berkeley. He won early journalistic recognition with his 1955 book *Notre Dame of Paris*, a groundbreaking work on the famed structure, which helped lead to his landing the job of architecture critic at the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1961. It was a desk he would hold for 32 years.

More than a columnist, Temko was often called an "activist critic," and has been hailed for helping to bring architectural

criticism into mainstream America's consciousness. His unabashed and impassioned verbiage held a sway that influenced the cityscape, and the design of towers and bridges, as well as San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit system. Temko indulged a devilish frankness at his typewriter that became legendary. He once referred to the Embarcadero's Villancourt Fountain as something that looked "deposited by a concrete dog with square intestines."

Temko was honored with a Pulitzer Prize for criticism in 1990. He retired from the newspaper, but not from writing, three years later. **Robert Klara**

MALL SITE SELECTED FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

The new National Museum of African American History and Culture has found a home on the National Mall. The Smithsonian Institution's 19th museum is to be located across from the Washington Monument, one block up from Constitution Avenue. The parcel won out over three other possibilities after a feasibility study conducted by Virginia-based engineering firm Plexus Scientific and the architects at PageSoutherlandPage, of Texas, analyzed the sites' physical attributes. In making their final determination, the Smithsonian Board of Regents met with various civic organizations, including the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission on Fine Arts. An environmental impact study is required to finalize the selection, but museum authorities say they do not anticipate problems at this time.



An architect for the new museum building will be selected through a competitive process, but it has not been determined whether there will be a request for proposals or an open design competition. According to a Smithsonian spokesperson, officials recognize the importance of African American representation on the design team and a joint partnership between architectural firms may be considered, but the announcement of the selection process remains many months off. The museum is scheduled to open by 2016 and expected to cost up to \$500 million, with half the funds coming from the federal government and the other half from private sources. **Bay Brown**

Adi Shamir has been named to the long-vacant post of executive director of Van Alen Institute in New York City, replacing Raymond Gastil. Shamir, who will finish the school year as the dean of undergraduate studies at California College of the Arts, takes over leadership of the institute this summer.

The AIA has selected six recipients of the 2006 Young Architects Awards, to be presented at the Los Angeles convention in June. The winners are: Michael Arad, partner at New York City firm Handel Architects; James Dayton, founder of the eponymous Minneapolis firm; John Sangki Hong, principal at Cambridge, Massachusetts's Single Speed Design; Shannon Kraus, an associate at the Dallas office of HKS; Soren Simonsen, principal at Cooper Roberts Simonsen in Salt Lake City; and Patrick Tighe, founder of Santa Monica, California, Tighe Architecture.

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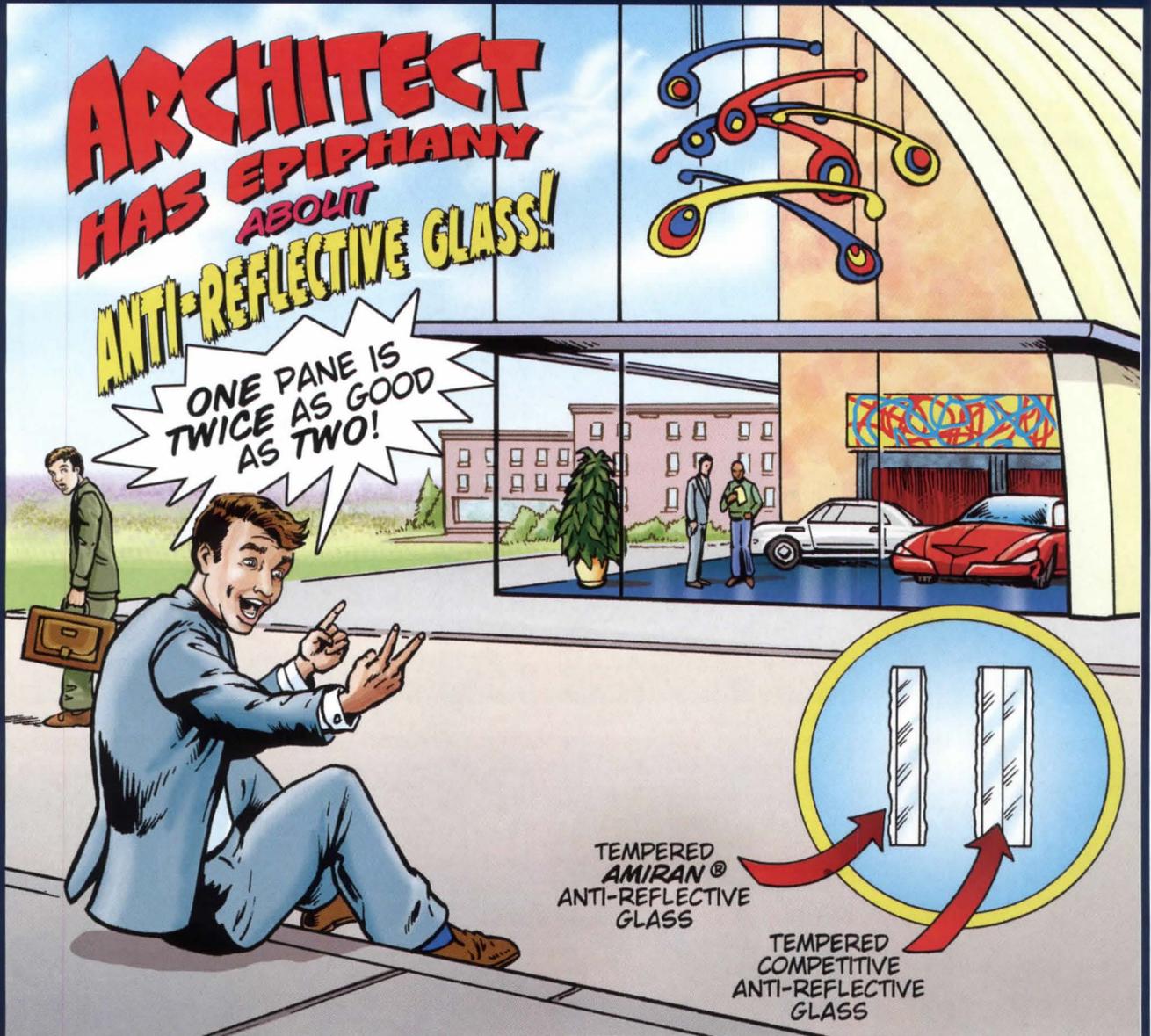
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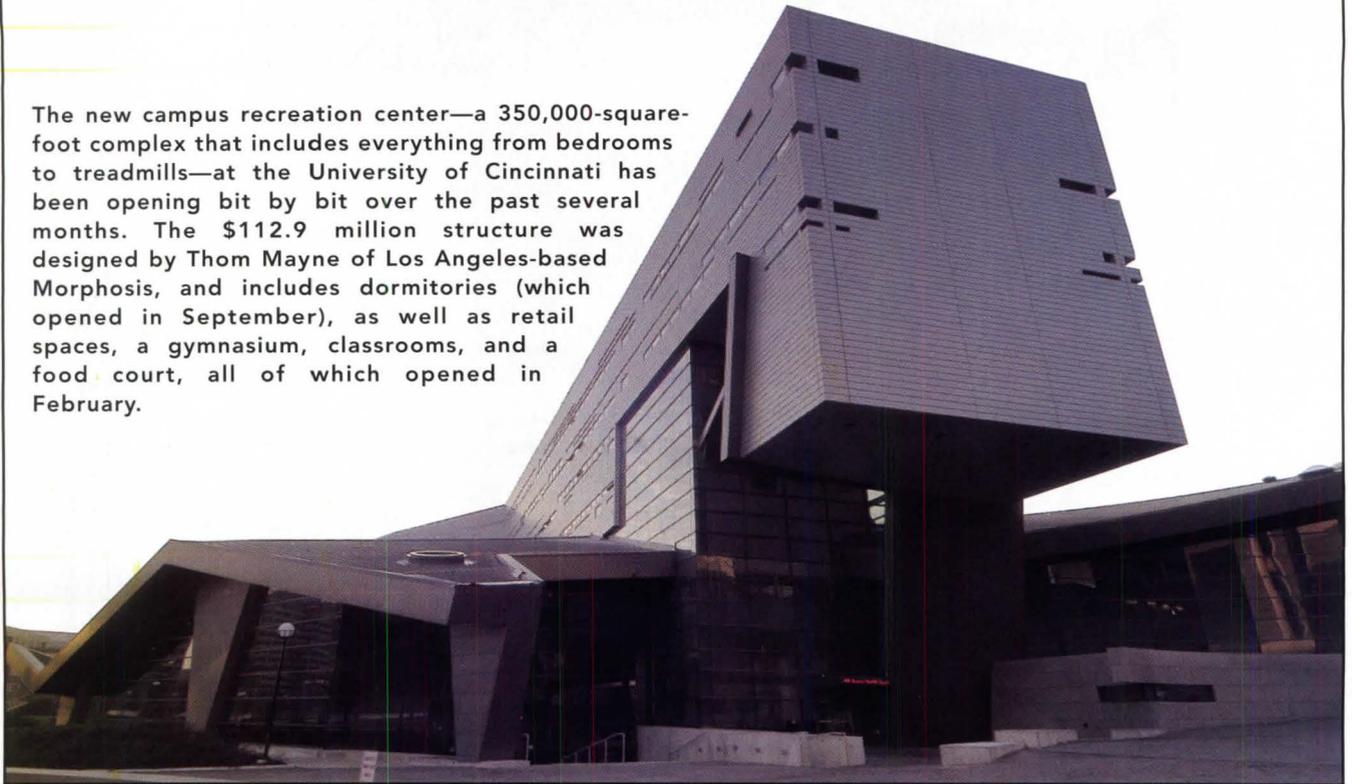
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UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI RECREATION CENTER OPENS

The new campus recreation center—a 350,000-square-foot complex that includes everything from bedrooms to treadmills—at the University of Cincinnati has been opening bit by bit over the past several months. The \$112.9 million structure was designed by Thom Mayne of Los Angeles-based Morphosis, and includes dormitories (which opened in September), as well as retail spaces, a gymnasium, classrooms, and a food court, all of which opened in February.



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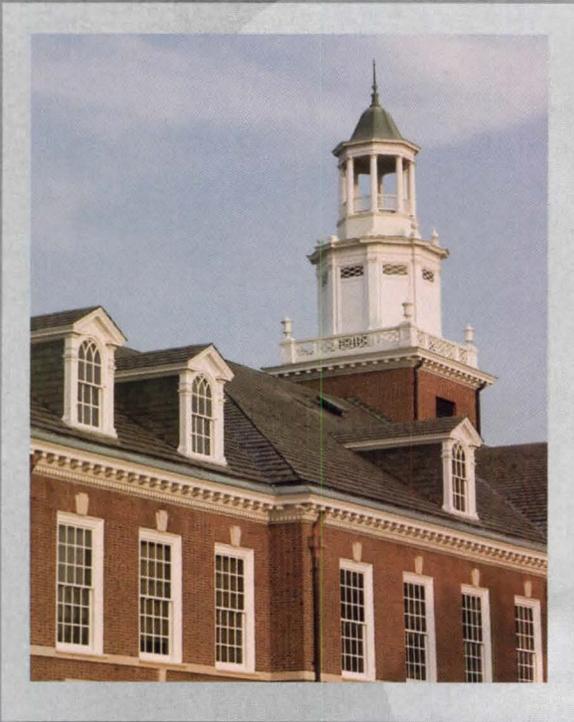
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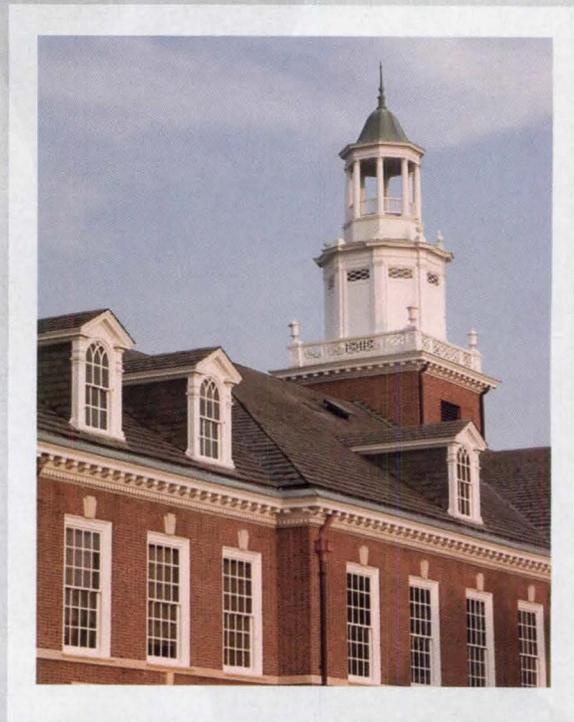
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REPORT FROM THE SHENZHEN BIENNALE

One of the world's fastest growing cities holds its first urbanism and architecture exhibition. by Liane Lefavre

Paddy fields, rustling bamboo reeds, and low buildings: This was Shenzhen under Chairman Mao, an unassuming fishing village on the South China Sea across the border from a high-powered, opulent Hong Kong.

Then along came Deng Xiaoping. In 1978, the Chinese Premier selected this sleepy backwater to be one of the country's new so-called Special Economic Zones. Transformed into the first testing bed for reform on the road to capitalism, Shenzhen is today the most dynamic economic and industrial powerhouse in China and its fastest growing new city. In the past 25 years, the population has soared from 30,000 inhabitants to over 10 million and is still expanding full tilt.

Like everything else about Shenzhen, the scale of *City: Open Door*, curated by the head of MIT's Department of Architecture, Yung Ho Chang, and running from December 10, 2005, to March 10, 2006, was simply gigantic. To the multidisciplinary scope of the 82 works of architecture and urbanism—incorporating art, graphic design, fashion, cultural magazine publishing, photography, film, and industrial design innovations—were also added the contributions of multimedia and game designers. The number of countries

represented was also impressive: besides China, there was the United States, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Canada, Germany, Austria, and Japan.

The first Biennale in the region is an historical turning point that marks the coming of age of a new, very different generation of Chinese architects. Gary Chang, whose Edge Design was for a long time the only practice among those of his contemporaries to break away from designing the mega-offices that dominated Chinese architectural practice in the 1980s, has projected himself as an individual with a personal vision. It was only fitting, therefore, that he be given pride of place in this exhibition. His installation is located in the first of the four industrial buildings hosting the Biennale: a movie house, with alternating mirrors and screens along the enclosing circular wall, in which the cinematic world is juxtaposed to the real in a performance art spirit.

This new generation of Chinese architects is characterized by a common sensitivity, and their exhibits fall into two groups. On one hand are the regionalists, concerned either with preserving existing historical architecture, urban tissue, and lifestyles, or with incorporating a traditional aesthetic and other values



Images of Shenzhen: a “villages-amidst-the-city” proposal by Urbanus (previous page) and Aglaia Konrad’s views of the rapidly growing infrastructure (above). Gary Chang’s movie house (right) juxtaposes the real and cinematic worlds.

into modern, global architecture. Shanghai-based MADA s.p.a.m., for example, in its plan for the Shangduli development, breaks with heretofore standard practice by proposing to protect the old city center of a town rather than razing it. Wang Shu’s Chinese Institute of Fine Arts in Hangzhou applies spatial concepts taken from Chinese painting to the layout of its buildings on campus in order to integrate a large modern complex into the area’s legendarily beautiful mountain landscape.

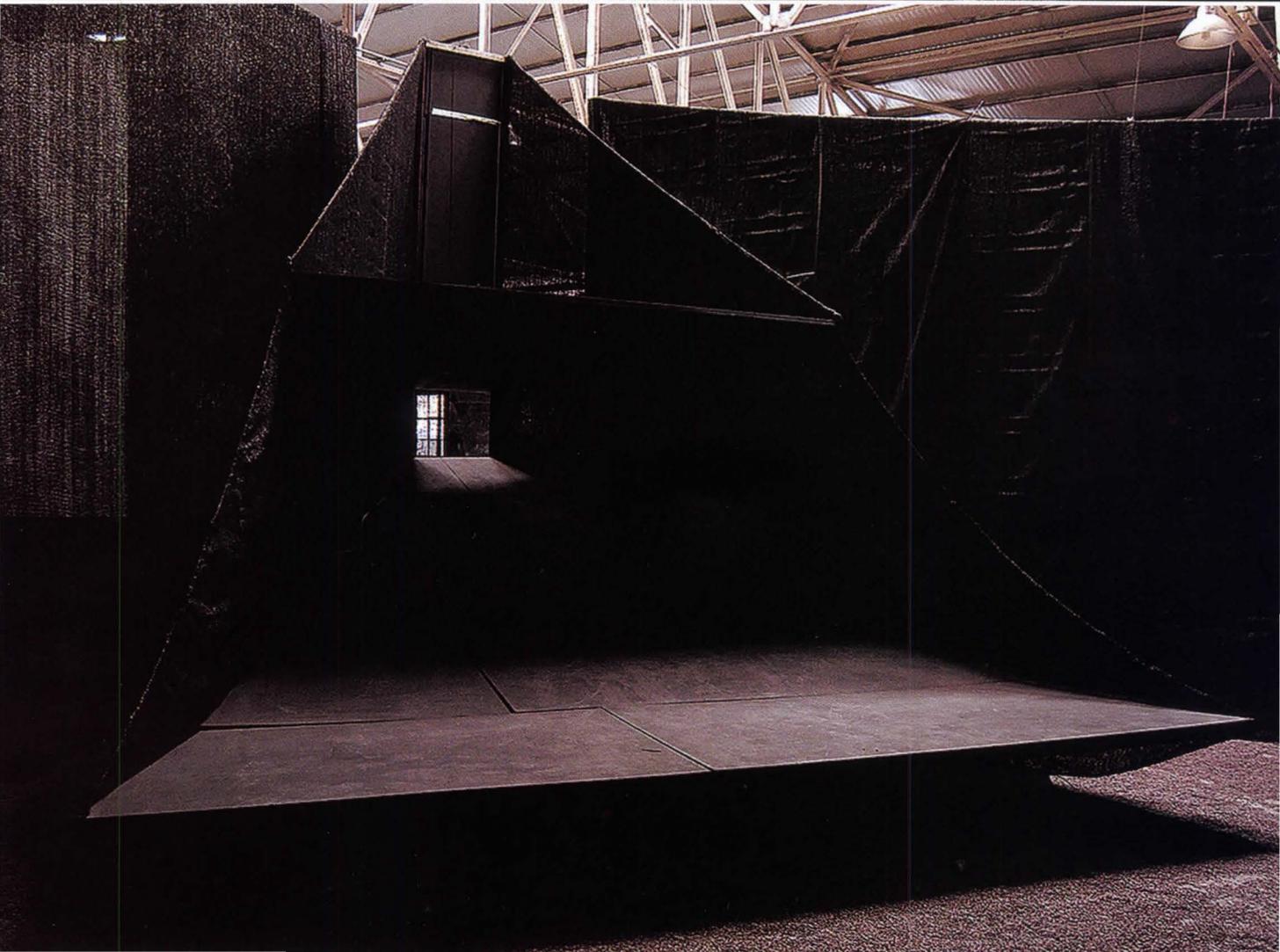
As for Li Xiaodong’s design for a school in Lijiang, it bears a striking resemblance to projects by Samuel Mockbee’s Rural Studio. It stands out both in terms of its formal qualities and also its grass roots social agenda and community participation, and the association with Mockbee’s design/build program is not coincidental. Yung Ho Chang made sure the first exhibit one encounters when entering the Biennale, in Gary Chang’s cinema, is a documentary film by American architect/filmmaker Chuck Shultz of the Rural Studio.

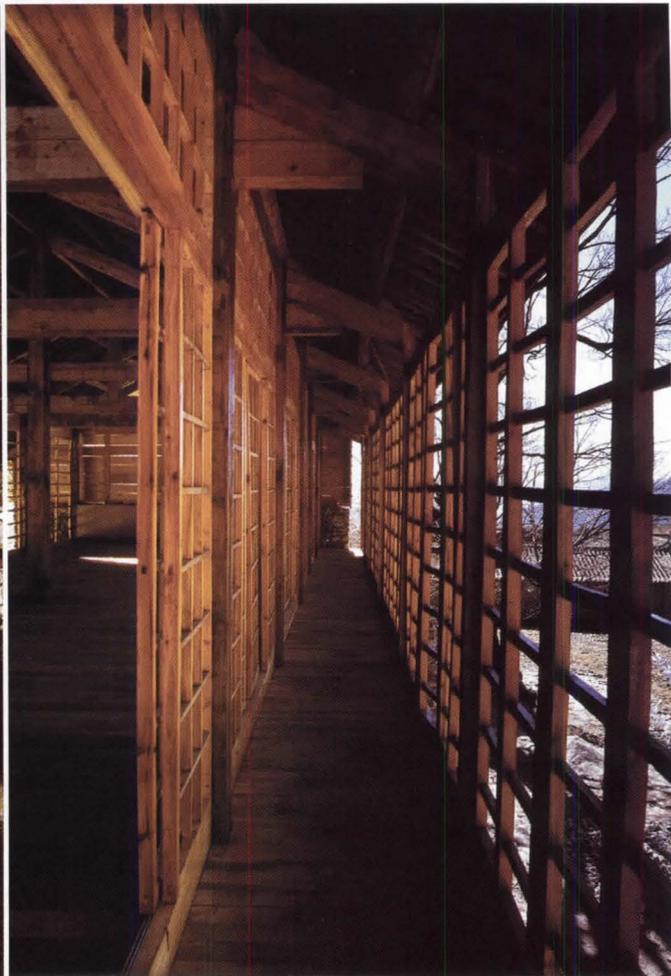
The search to integrate modern architecture with traditional community and aesthetics is not confined to the work of Mockbee’s students or Chinese practitioners. Arata Isozaki, for example, is the first big-name architect to have been given a commission *in the city*. His Shenzhen Cultural

Center, now under construction, foregoes monumentality in favor of keeping the scale of the surrounding low-rises and creating public space both inside and outside the building. Mónica Ponce de León and Nader Tehrani, of Boston’s Office dA, incorporated local rough, mottled blue-gray bricks to great sculptural effect in their design for an artist’s studio in Beijing.

The second group of works presented at the Biennale is concerned with a set of social and environmental issues that are linked to massive urbanization, a new condition where Chinese traditions offer little to fall back on. It examines the unpleasantness left in the wake of the country’s phenomenal urban boom: the wastelands, life on the periphery, inner city overcrowding, and the lack of basic urban planning of public space. Not one of the art exhibitions fails to confront these issues. Adrian Blackwell, a Canadian artist, uses handmade cameras to photograph derelict urban spaces in the areas surrounding Shenzhen, where migrant workers live in decrepitude. The young Austrian artist Aglaia Konrad’s dramatic black-and-white aerial photographs capture the tattered, gritty neighborhoods of the city itself.

The Chinese artists included were, if anything, more critical





The Yuhu elementary school and community center (above and facing page) by Li Xiaodong, in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Lijiang, employs a vernacular timber-frame construction clad with nonloadbearing limestone.

of current trends of the alienation created by urbanization in China than their foreign counterparts. Li Juchan's *Building Measure, How High is the 24th floor?*, a series of photographs of the concrete walls seen from the 24th floor of a new apartment house, expresses the bleak social isolation typically resulting from the loss of community.

This kind of critical sensibility provides the background for the more urban part of the Biennale, and these projects put forth a set of what might be termed "dirty realist" design strategies: Chinese-Canadian architect Grace Fan's movie about the remarkably successful urban policies that have made Vancouver one of the most community-friendly cities in the world deserves to be singled out. The Shenzhen Planning Office's project, entitled *Street Street* proposed to liven up the overly broad streets of the city (akin to those of Le Corbusier's megalomaniacal *Plan Voisin*) by dividing it into vehicular traffic, pedestrian zones, and public transport.

Urbanus is a young Beijing- and Shenzhen-based firm founded by three Miami University graduates, Xiadu Liu, Yan Meng, and Hui Wang. They won the competition to design Digital Beijing, which will serve as a command facility for the 2008 Olympic Games, alongside the stadium

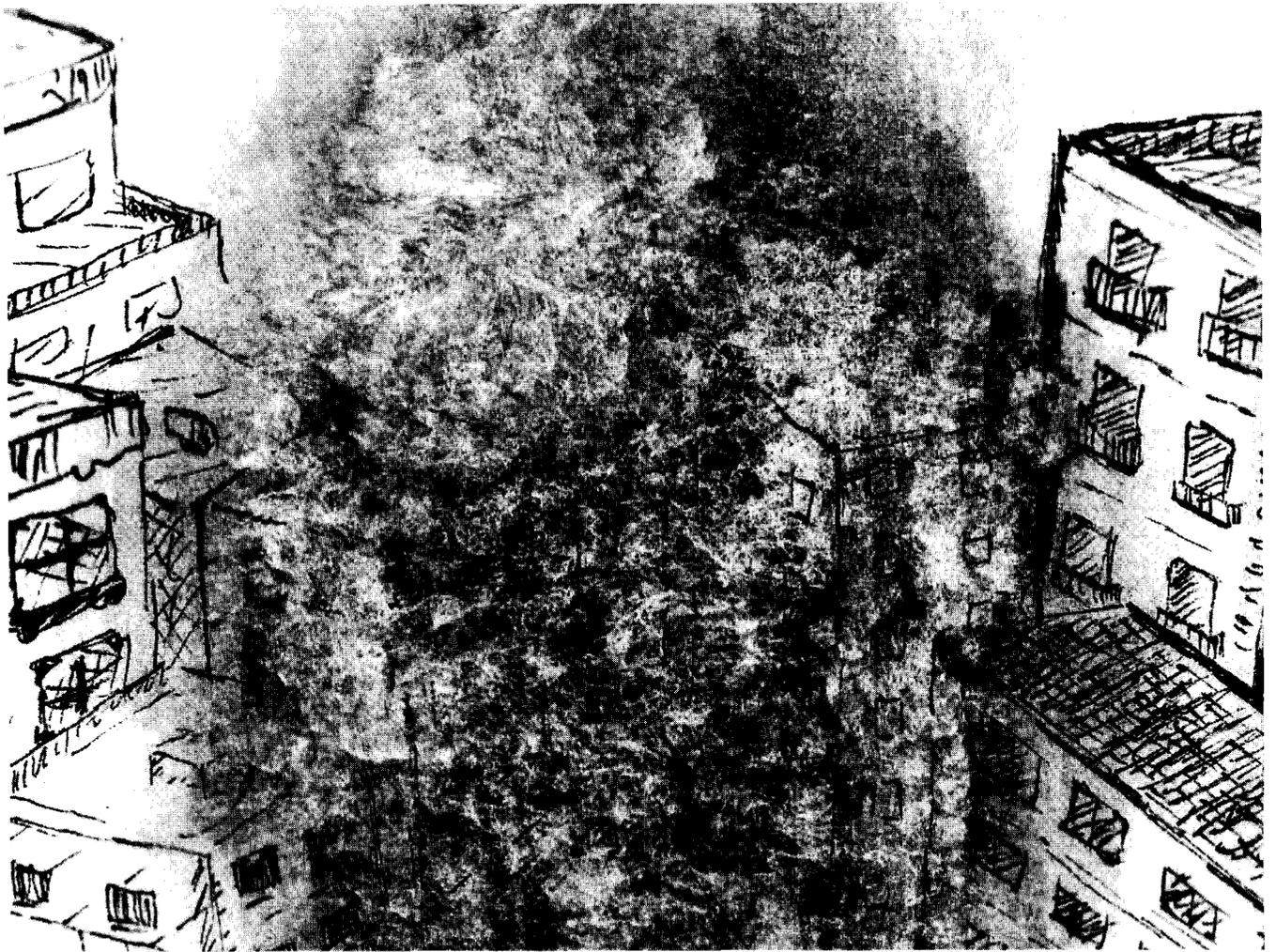
designed by Herzog & de Meuron.

Their exhibit at the Biennale formed part of a section of the overall exhibition conceived by Yung Ho Chang, and entitled "Urban Villages." Here students from Princeton, MIT, and Chinese universities submitted proposals for rehabilitating islands leftover from a 1970s urbanization effort rather than razing them, in order to avoid relocation and maintain low-cost housing for their tightly bound communities. Urbanus's solution for two such villages, based on extensive research, was so detailed in its strategies that according to Yan Meng it managed to attract both the mayor of Shenzhen and developers during the opening and is likely to be incorporated into the city's planning policy.

By contrast with their contemporaries in the West, where architecture tends to be not only shut off from real-world issues of sustainability and community but also from other arts, this generation of Chinese architects displays a remarkable range of concerns and responses, and intuits a seamless integration of constructive thinking and expertise.

Liane Lefavre is chair of architectural history and theory at the University of Applied Art in Vienna and a research fellow at the Technical University of Delft.





EYES OF THE SKIN: ARCHITECTURE AND THE SENSES

Excerpted here, Juhani Pallasmaa's recently reissued book is as precious and pertinent as ever.

Illustration by Julian Osti

During the 10 years that have passed since I wrote the book, interest in the significance of the senses—both philosophically and in terms of experiencing, making, and teaching architecture—has grown significantly. My assumptions of the role of the body as the locus of perception, thought, and consciousness, and of the significance of the senses in articulating, storing, and processing sensory responses and thoughts, have been strengthened and confirmed.

With the title *The Eyes of the Skin*, I wished to express the significance of the tactile sense for our experience and understanding of the world, but I also intended to create a conceptual short circuit between the dominant sense of vision and the suppressed sense modality of touch. Since writing the original text I have learned that our skin is actually capable of distinguishing a number of colors; we do indeed see by our skin.

The primacy of the tactile sense has become increasingly evident. The role of peripheral and unfocused vision in our lived experience of the world as well as in our experi-

ence of interiority in the spaces we inhabit, has also evoked my interest. The very essence of the lived experience is molded by hapticity and peripheral unfocused vision. Focused vision confronts us with the world whereas peripheral vision envelops us in the flesh of the world. Alongside the critique of the hegemony of vision, we need to reconsider the very essence of sight itself.

All the senses, including vision, are extensions of the tactile sense; the senses are specializations of skin tissue, and all sensory experiences are modes of touching and thus related to tactility. Our contact with the world takes place at the boundary line of the self through specialized parts of our enveloping membrane . . .

Touch is the sensory mode that integrates our experience of the world with that of ourselves. Even visual perceptions are fused and integrated into the haptic continuum of the self; my body remembers who I am and where I am located in the world. My body is truly the navel of my world, not in the sense of the viewing point of the central

perspective, but as the very locus of reference, memory, imagination, and integration.

It is evident that “life-enhancing” architecture has to address all the senses simultaneously and fuse our image of self with our experience of the world. The essential mental task of architecture is accommodation and integration. Architecture articulates the experiences of being-in-the-world and strengthens our sense of reality and self; it does not make us inhabit worlds of mere fabrication and fantasy.

The sense of self, strengthened by art and architecture, allows us to engage fully in the mental dimensions of dream, imagination, and desire. Buildings and cities provide the horizon for the understanding and confronting of the human existential condition. Instead of creating mere objects of visual seduction, architecture relates, mediates, and projects meanings. The ultimate meaning of any building is beyond architecture; it directs our consciousness back to the world and toward our own sense of self and being. Significant architecture makes us experience ourselves as complete embodied and spiritual beings. In fact, this is the great function of all meaningful art.

In the experience of art, a peculiar exchange takes place; I lend my emotions and associations to the space and the space lends me its aura, which entices and emancipates my perceptions and thoughts. An architectural work is not experienced as a series of isolated retinal pictures, but in its fully integrated material, embodied, and spiritual essence. It offers pleasurable shapes and surfaces molded for the touch of the eye and other senses, but it also incorporates and integrates physical and mental structures, giving our existential experience a strengthened coherence and significance.

When working, both the artist and craftsman are directly engaged with their bodies and their existential experiences rather than focused on an external and objectified problem. A wise architect works with his/her entire body and sense of self. While working on a building or an object, the architect is simultaneously engaged in a reverse perspective, his/her self-image—or more precisely, existential experience. In creative work, a powerful identification and projection takes place; the entire bodily and mental constitution of the maker becomes the site of the work. Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose philosophy tends to be detached from body imagery, acknowledges the interaction of both philosophical and architectural work with the images of self: “Work on philosophy—like work in architecture in many respects—is really more a work on oneself. On one’s own interpretation. On how one sees things . . . ”

The computer is usually seen as a solely beneficial invention, which liberates human fantasy and facilitates efficient design and work. I wish to express my serious concern in this respect, at least considering the current role of the

computer in the design process. Computer imaging tends to flatten our magnificent, multisensory, simultaneous, and synchronic capacities of imagination by turning the design process into a passive visual manipulation, a retinal journey. The computer creates a distance between the maker and the object, whereas drawing by hand as well as model-making put the designer into a haptic contact with the object or space. In our imagination, the object is simultaneously held in the hand and inside the head, and the imagined and projected physical image is modeled by our bodies. We are inside and outside of the object at the same time. Creative work calls for a bodily and mental identification, empathy, and compassion.

A remarkable factor in the experience of enveloping spatiality, interiority, and hapticity is the deliberate suppression of sharp, focused vision. This issue has hardly entered the theoretical discourse of architecture as architectural theorizing continues to be interested in focused vision, conscious intentionality, and perspectival representation.

Photographed architectural images are centralized images of focused gestalt; yet the quality of an architectural reality seems to depend fundamentally on the nature of peripheral vision, which enfolds the subject in the space. A forest context and richly molded architectural space, provide ample stimuli for peripheral vision, and these settings

center us in the very space. The preconscious perceptual realm, which is experienced outside the sphere of focused vision, seems to be just as important existentially as the focused image. In fact, there is medical evidence that peripheral vision has a higher priority in our perceptual and mental system.

These observations suggest that one of the reasons why the architectural and urban settings of our time tend to make us feel like outsiders, in comparison with the forceful emotional engagement of natural and historical settings, is their poverty in the field of peripheral vision. Unconscious peripheral perception transforms retinal gestalt into spatial and bodily experiences. Peripheral vision integrates us with space, while focused vision pushes us out of the space, making us mere spectators.

The defensive and unfocused gaze of our time, burdened by sensory overload, may eventually open up new realms of vision and thought, freed of the implicit desire of the eye for control and power. The loss of focus can liberate the eye from its historical patriarchal domination.

Juhani Pallasmaa is a professor of architecture at the University of Technology in Helsinki, Finland. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (1996), from which this text is excerpted, was reprinted with the permission of John Wiley & Sons; the publisher revised and reissued the book last year.

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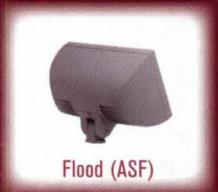
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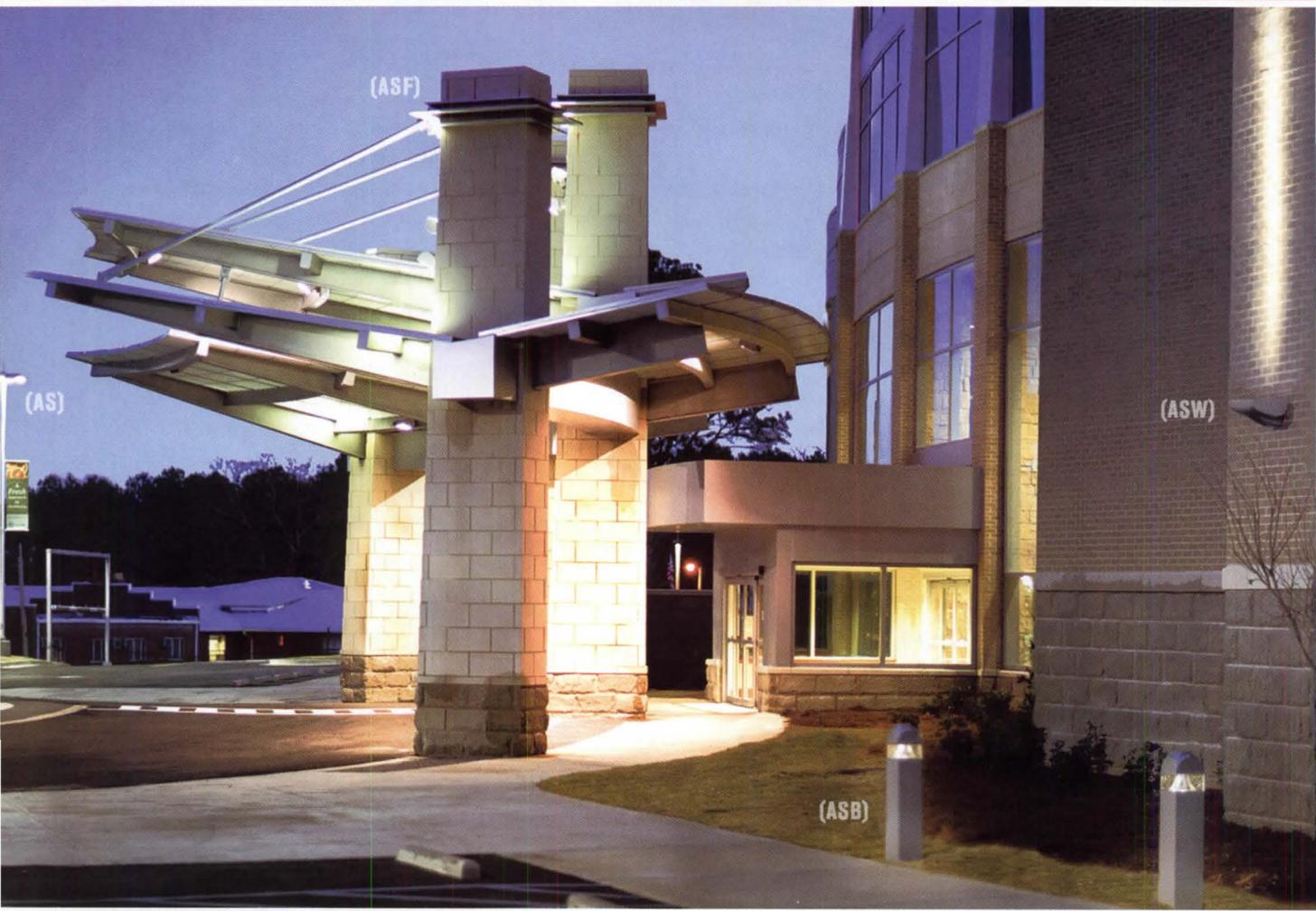
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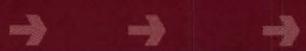


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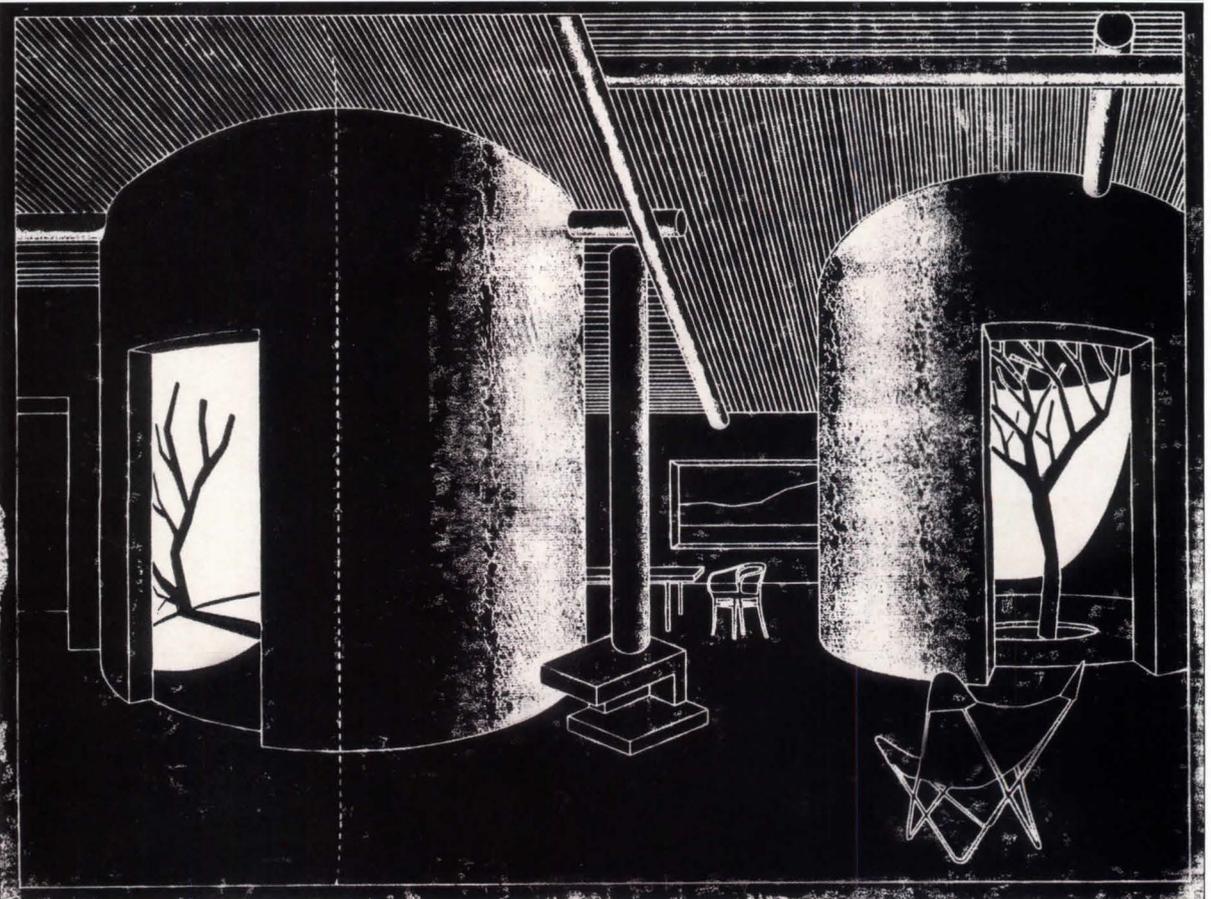
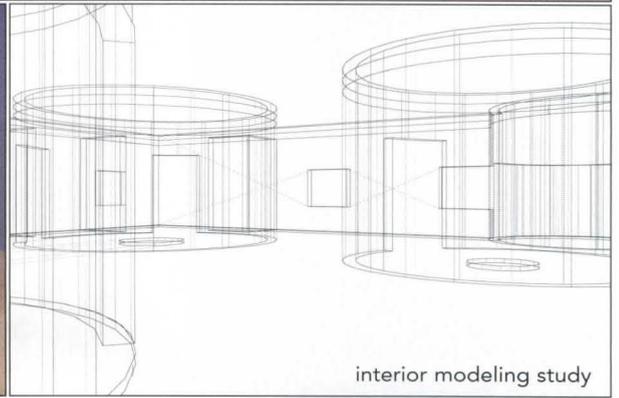
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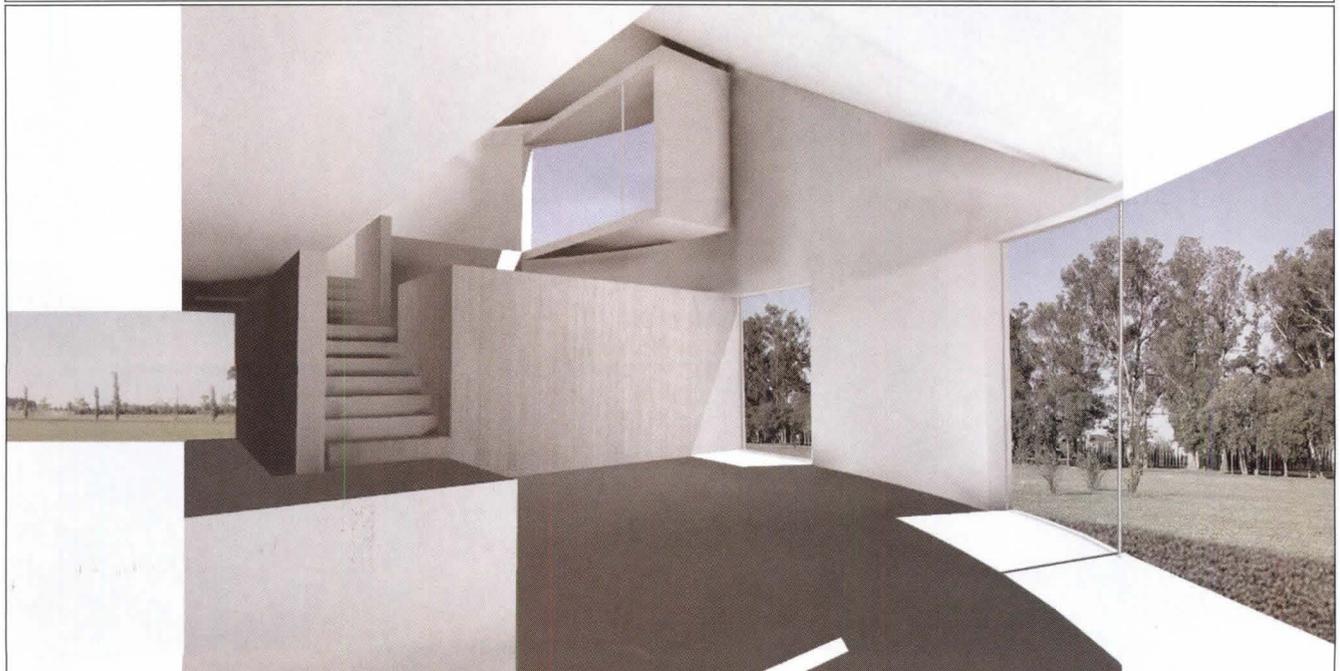
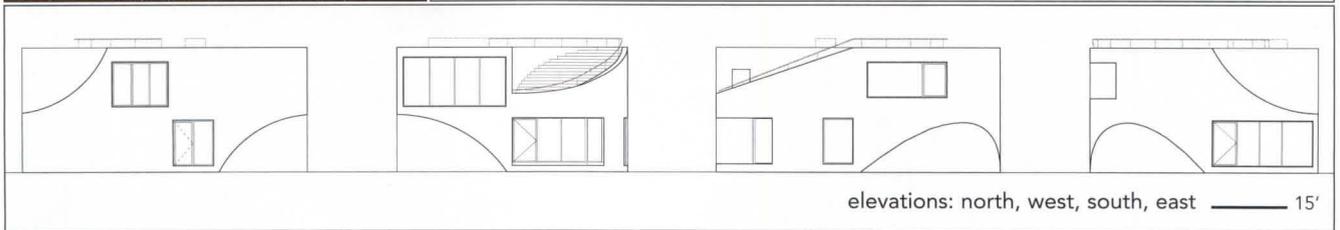
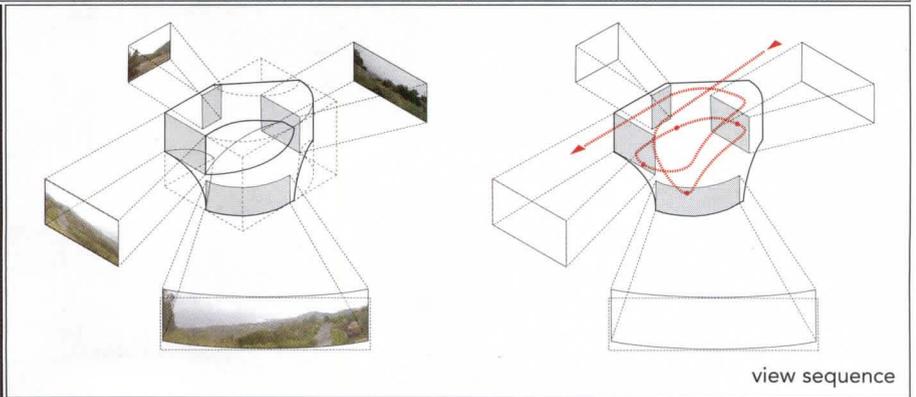
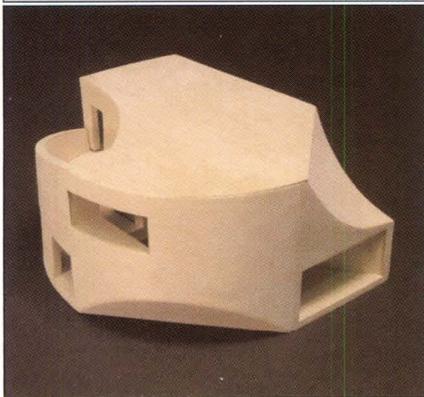
➔ OBRA ARCHITECTS | HOUSE OF MULTIPLE HORIZONS | SAN JUAN, ARGENTINA

Casa en la Finca, or the House of Multiple Horizons, takes its name from the layered mountains of the nearby Andes range and questions the notion of traditional boundaries. The 4,000-square-foot structure sits in the orchard of a 49-acre vineyard. Concepts of interior and exterior, privacy and encounter are transgressed and conflated in the form of five circular courtyards, each containing a tree and cut from a one-story square mass comprising the residence. Pablo Castro and Jennifer Lee, of Obra Architects in New York City, desire that the spatial ambiguity they've created invites contemplation for years to come, and to that end they've purposely aligned disparate systems to underscore the building's contrasting characters: the temporal and cyclical nature of the sun's passage across the concave adobe courtyard walls versus the imperceptible linear timeline of the trees' growth within the contained spaces. The house is constructed of a timber post-and-beam frame with hand-formed adobe walls and a cane-reed mat roof supported by poplar beams culled during the site's clearing. The concrete floor is stained grape red and some interior walls are washed in a hazy blue that recalls the furthest mountain horizon. Construction begins in September. ■



➔ JOHNSTON MARKLEE | VIEW HOUSE | ROSARIO, ARGENTINA

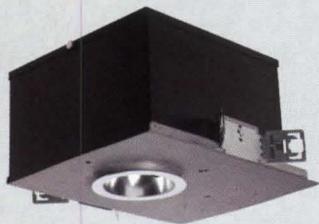
In the 1,278-square-foot View House, a sophisticated lesson in subtraction yields a graceful volume that suggests less can be far more. Zoning restrictions determined that the house, which replaces another lost to fire in 1993, couldn't exceed its predecessor's size. Inspired by equally compelling coastal and mountain views surrounding the 37,000-square-foot parcel of land, the Los Angeles-based architects chose an elliptical footprint that favored no particular vantage and set into motion a spiral circulation path that maximizes visual access to the outdoors, from the ground-floor entrance to the rooftop. In order to keep within the allowable living space, they carved into the volume in the round, as one would model a block of wood. The resulting structure relies on a pentagonal steel ring embedded into the floor plate and walls, together with poured-in-place concrete and shotcrete panels. A minimal distinction between façades reinforces the sculptural quality of the house's exterior, in the same way its fluid interior promenade lends coherence to various dwelling spaces. A monochromatic color palette helps to distinguish the newly built form from the natural landscape outside, from which the house takes its shape. Construction begins in April. ■





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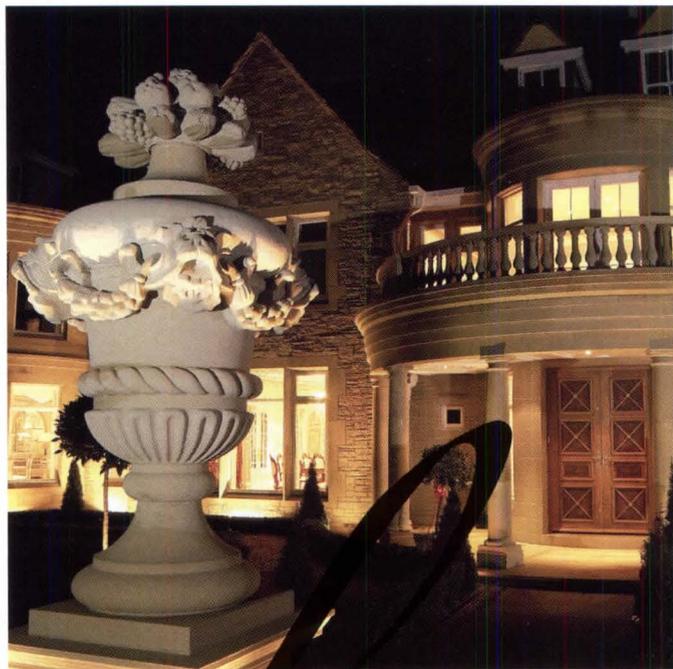
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William Beckford 1760-1844



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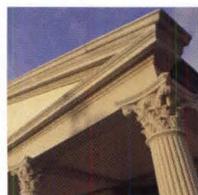
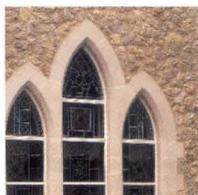
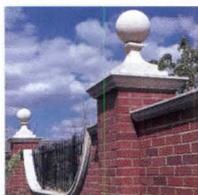
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THE CLOISTERS

The world is getting louder. Privacy is being invaded. Sanctuary is not so easy to find anymore. But there are still places of exquisite silence: a second home nestled into a sloping field of scrub oak; a scientific research center sequestered within a mirrored-steel envelope that absorbs and reflects its surroundings; a house of worship for two congregations encased in whitewashed brick. These are contemplative spaces for life, work, and spiritual pursuit—their inward aspects modulated by outward gestures to site, sky, and common purpose.



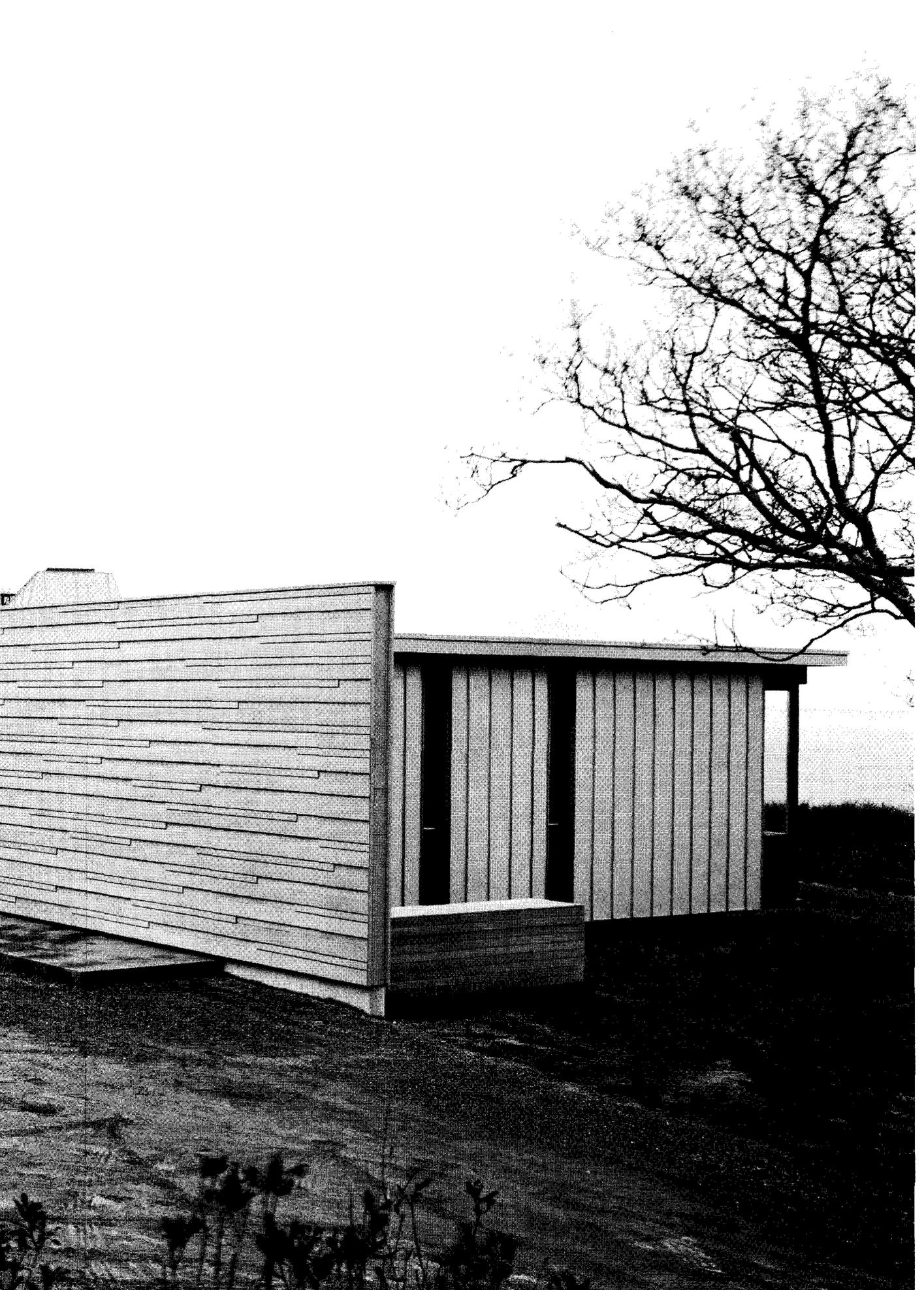
SHADOW BOXES

The walls of this Martha's Vineyard house by ARO register the variable moods of light and weather. They also bear the welcome trace of careful hands at work.

BY JULIE SINCLAIR EAKIN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIZABETH FELICELLA

Occasionally, buildings can make the experience of a spectacular site richer still. A new residence for a museum curator and her husband in Martha's Vineyard speaks thoughtfully to this condition. The couple and their children have summered here since they bought the land in the mid-1970s, in a house shaped like a lean bar with unobstructed ocean views. When Adam Yarinsky and Stephen Cassell, principals at Architecture Research Office (ARO) in New York City, were asked to replace the original dwelling, they sought to express a more complex relationship to the site than the one fostered by the simple 1,700-square-foot house. For the new place, where the couple plans to eventually retire, and which includes 1,000 additional square



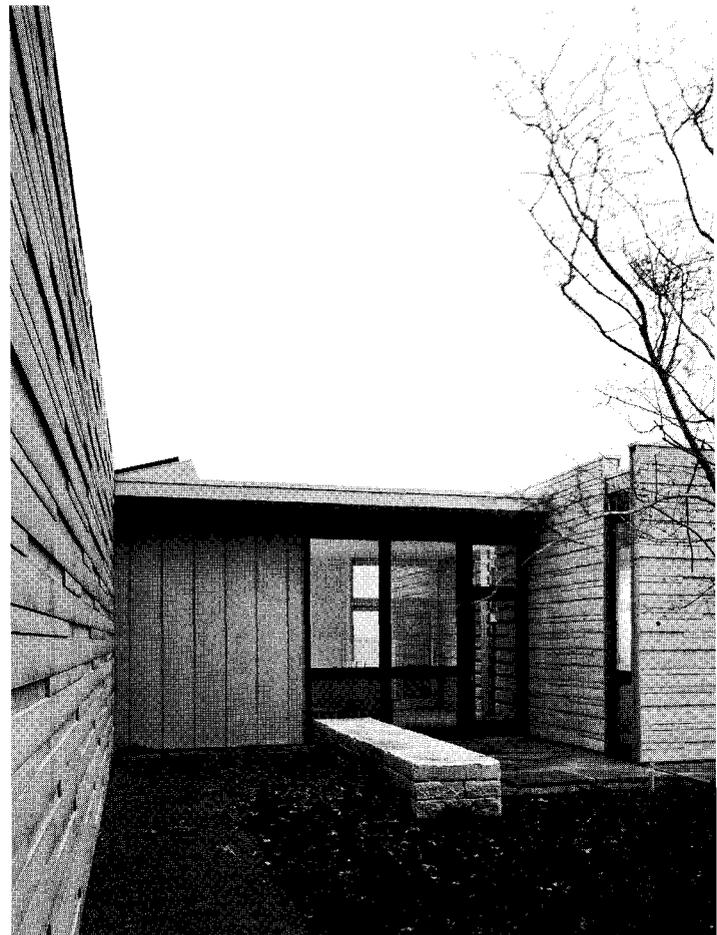


feet, the architects conceived a house as another terraced element in the land that slopes gently down to meet the sea, designating three areas in the surroundings deserving attention: a hillside garden, a ravine, and the ocean. Their approach indicates a broader philosophy that unifies the varied work of the 13-year-old firm. "We love the multiplicity of layers in every project, where many things may be seen to be happening," explains Yarinsky. "This house is not just about the water, but also about passing through to reach it, and about the quality of how the place is used."

The visual force of the uninterrupted horizon suggested to the designers that they purposely reduce the expression of their architecture to defer to nature. According to Yarinsky, they created a deliberate abstraction so the building is not immediately legible as a house, an impression that relies heavily on a group of vast wooden walls that form a series of eels bracketing outdoor spaces. A reinterpretation of the island's vernacular clapboard siding (because it's economical, durable, and can be built locally) yielded highly refined planes of Alaskan yellow cedar, with alternating flush and inset boards treated with bleaching oil to accelerate weathering. Approaching the building from the road, one sees the expansive walls eclipse smaller elements, rising above the roof to further obscure the "houseness" of the house and make their presence more prominent. These refined constructions exemplify the firm's ideal of layering. As the walls register the ephemeral gestures of the ubiquitous scrub oaks on the property, they also create shadows by virtue of their recessed elements. "The shadow-making character of the house is an abstraction of what's happening on the site naturally, with the trees constantly casting their own shadows," says Yarinsky, adding that a neutral materials palette aids in this reading.

The landscape's multidimensional character also inspired the plan for the house, a transition from the original structure's bar form to three wide interlocking blocks that privilege different relationships to the site. (Approximately thirty 1/8-inch chipboard models at ARO's office illustrate this massing evolution.) A centralized, glass-fronted living and dining area overlooks the ocean and functions as a permeable link to the more cloistered kitchen, bedrooms, baths, and studies that adjoin it on either end. The most striking aspect of the house's interior, however, is the extension of the cedar wall that flanks the entrance: It continues into the living room, where it pauses and parts to invite passage to the northeastern section of the house, then continues outdoors through the opposite side of the volume to contain a deck. The brief disassembly of the wall, with its construction laid bare, reveals bookshelves and a powder room door in a corridor behind it—a suggestion of orientation and habitation that neatly marries pragmatism to the abstract gesture. A similar interruption in a zinc wall separating the kitchen and living area also functions as a kind of interior landscape element, framing vignettes and providing scale and material contrast.

Yarinsky explains that ARO thinks early about making the process and method of a building's construction insepara-



entrance



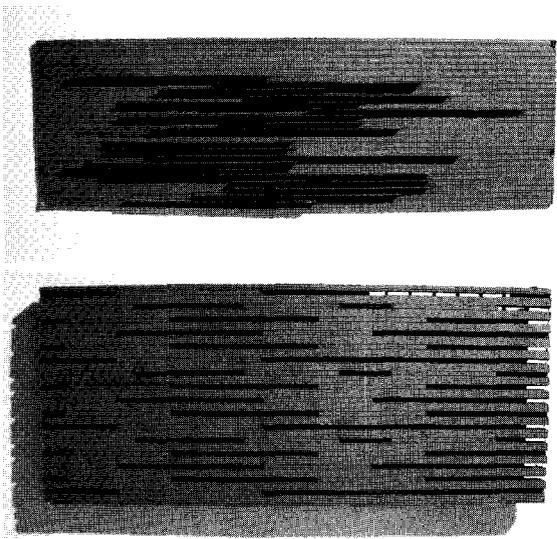
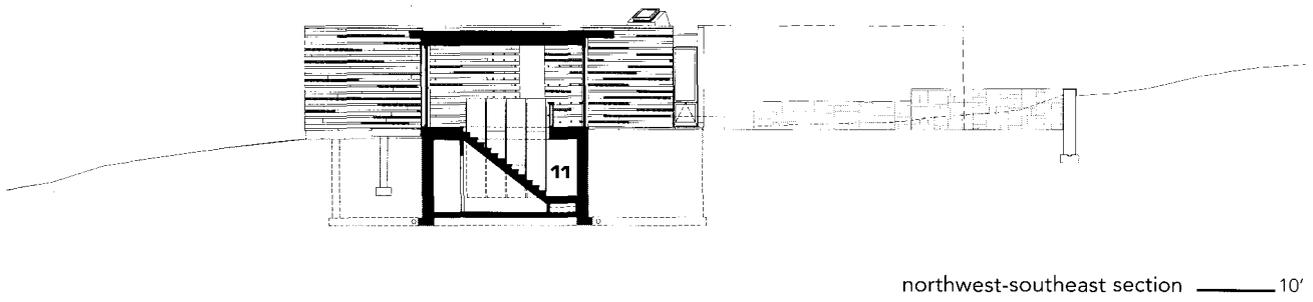
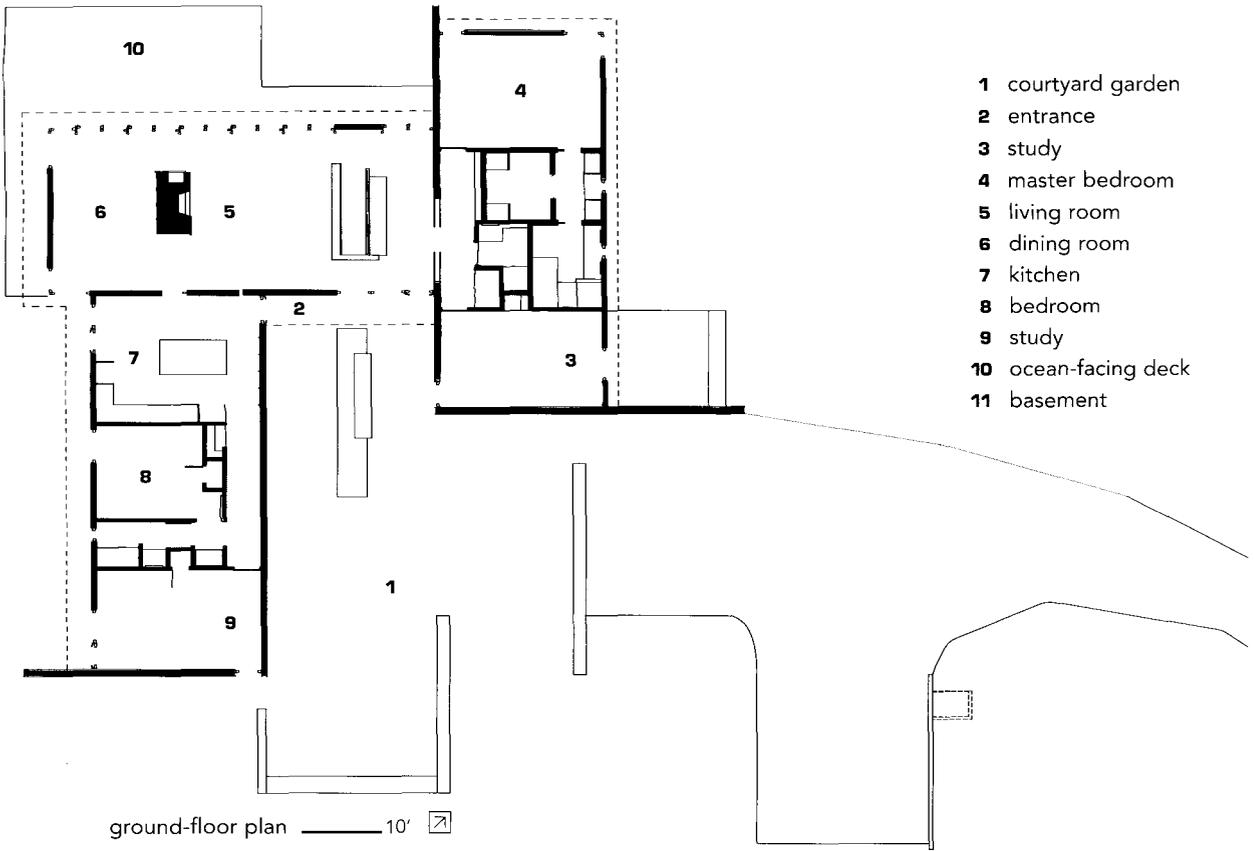
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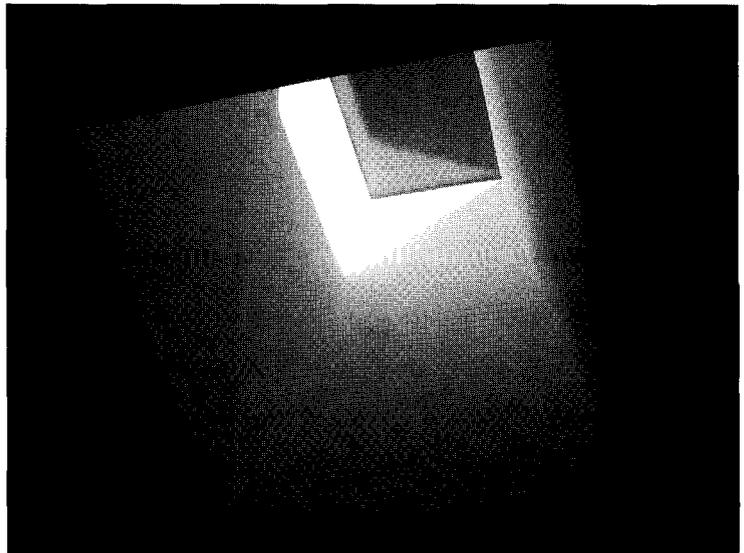
living room



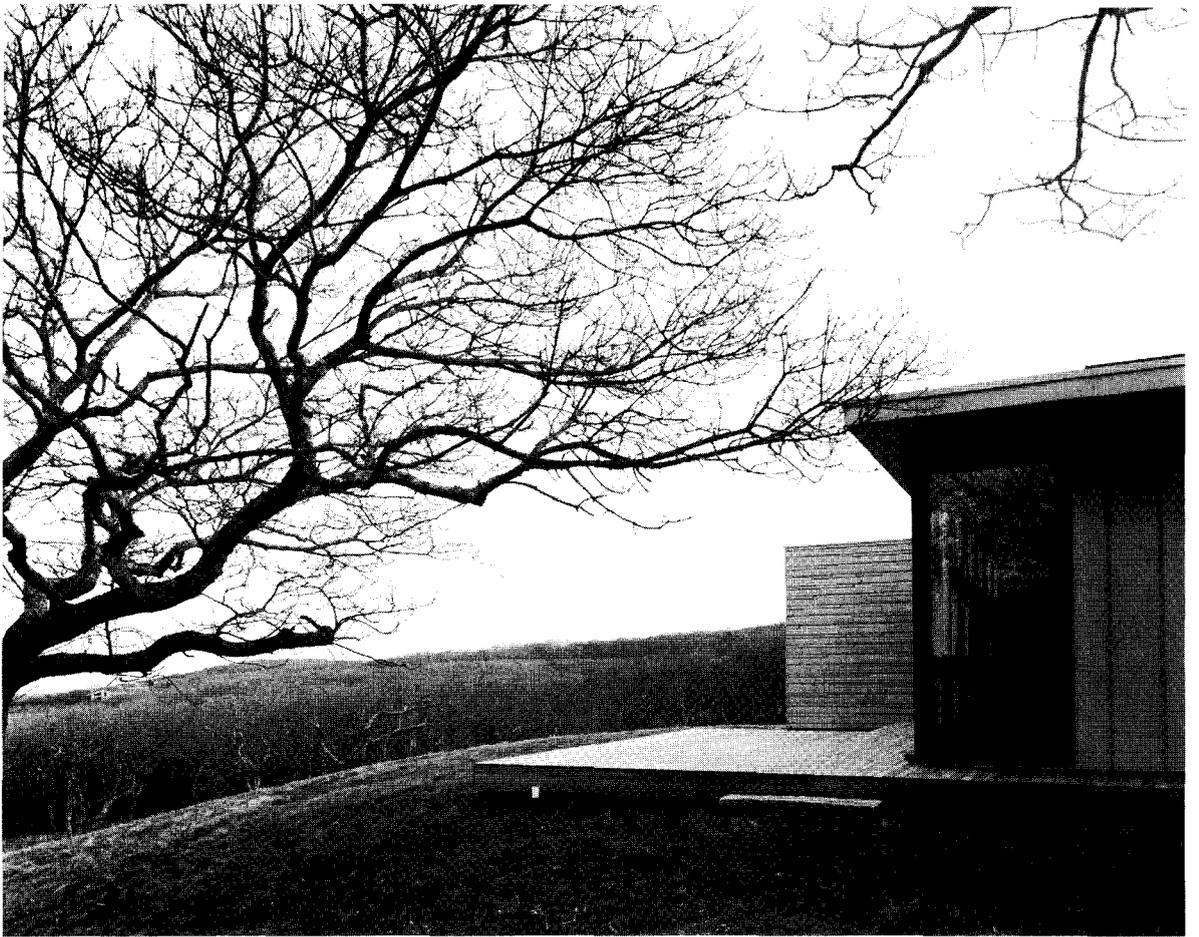
hallway



chipboard wall studies



beveled skylight well



rear ocean-facing deck

hillside vantage



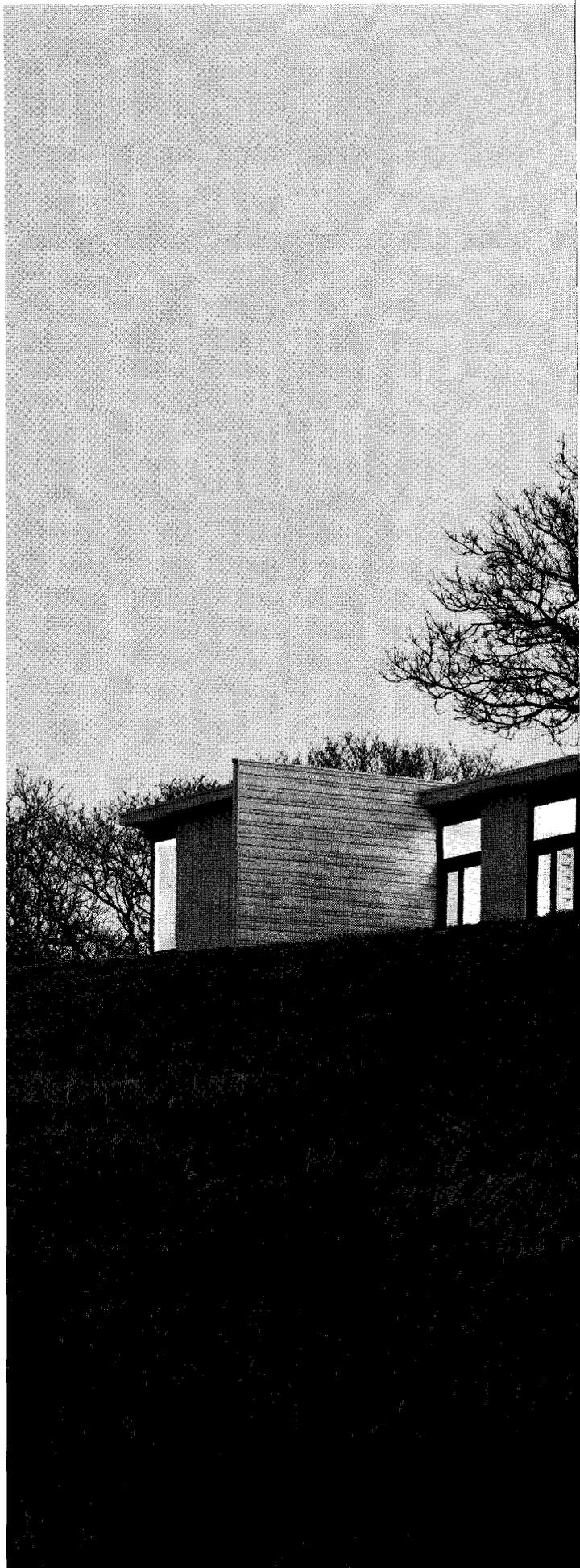
ble from its spatial/formal concept, and that the firm believes the integrity of the concept should be grounded in construction. He speaks of framing each problem appropriate to the means at hand. The budget for this house, for example, suggested wood, not stone, so the design team questioned what that decision could yield and took advantage of the material's constitution, in this case articulating walls as pieces. "We wanted the sense that everything's resolved, but not in your face," Yarinsky says. "By the time we're done, so much care has gone into making the process look effortless—into what's seen and unseen, and constraining the effects. Care is given to each element, but in the service of creating an experience. The pieces are not important in and of themselves."

Still, the pieces in this house deserve recognition: stealth window-closing mechanisms, nickel-sized glass bathroom tiles, quarter-sawn oak floors, a fireplace faced with Basaltina in four different finishes, whitewashed ash cabinets, an ipé wood deck, and light-emitting glass transoms above the bedroom doors. That said, the abstract aspects of the building's design are the most compelling: the highly articulated expansive walls, and the dramatic recession and meeting of those planes in perspective; the three generous skylight wells faceted and angled to coax the sun precisely down into the rooms, and the wonderfully strange rooftop landscape of their zinc-trimmed housings; the over-scaled 11-foot-high windows in the corners of the master bedroom.

Returning to Yarinsky's discussion of ARO's priorities, one wonders ultimately what the experience of this house will be. How can abstraction best offer the qualities that make home a singular place? As it stands now, not quite occupied, the structure has a faintly institutional air, and it's possible that everything may be too resolved: The use of Rheinzink cladding on the exterior contributes to this impression, as do the nearly black mahogany window frames. Compared with the elegant cedar walls, these choices seem like the visual equivalent of punctuating a poem too aggressively. During the photography session for this article, Yarinsky was plainly disappointed to find that all traces of ash had been carefully eliminated from the fireplace. His reaction may have held the tacit hope that this house will offer places for the imprint of time and use by the occupants, and that the evidence will be more enduring than the shadowy gestures recorded on the meticulously wrought wooden walls.

House, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

architect: Architecture Research Office (ARO), New York City—Adam Yarinsky, Stephen Cassell (principals); Megumi Tamahana (project manager); Reid Freeman, Josh Pulver, Eunice Seng, Rosalyne Shieh, Josh Weiselberg, Kim Yao, Hee Jung Yoon (project team) **landscape architect:** Michael Boucher Landscape Architecture **engineers:** Allan Klein PA (structural); Schofield Barbini & Hoehn (civil); **general contractor/construction manager:** Martha's Vineyard Construction Company **lighting designer:** Richard J. Shaver Architectural Lighting **area:** 2,700 square feet

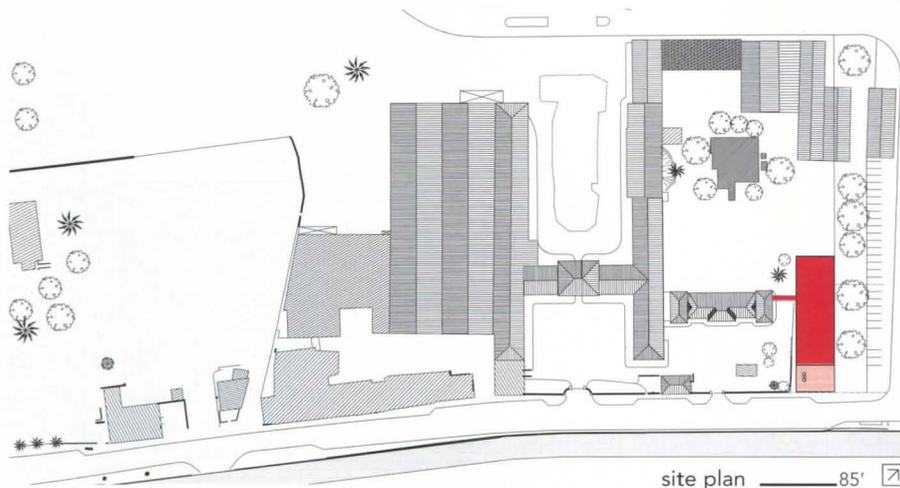






Steel Works

A new laboratory building by B/R/S_Architectes-Ingénieurs in Montceau-les-Mines, France, uses local materials to reflect a city in flux.



BY GREG DELANEY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROLAND HALBE

The Maison de l’Innovation sits beside a canal, opposite a large municipal car park, on the site of what was once an important, and now defunct, coal mine. It is an unlovely industrial place, but the building—conceived for advanced research into wireless communication and the testing of electro-mechanical equipment—breathes excitement and dynamism into Montceau-les-Mines, a forlorn town that lies to the south of the bucolic wine-producing region of Burgundy.

The Paris and Cologne-based firm of B/R/S_Architectes-Ingénieurs—led by Agnés Bertholon, Jean-Michel Reynier, and Uli Seher—won the commission after a competition among 80 practices in 2004. “The style of La Maison de l’Innovation” says Seher, “was dictated by function and the program for the entire site. The structure had to be erected fast and this informed the materials we used.” The building was up and running in a mere nine months and steel was used throughout—not only because of the time constraint but because top-grade materials could

The façade is constituted by self-supporting vertical steel elements and the metal frontage is treated in three ways: opaque prelacquered steel sandwich panels (with built-in insulation) for most of the west- and east-facing sides; opaque stainless steel (also with built-in insulation) for the double-height space and the side that faces the canal; and perforated stainless steel in front of the glazed window parts to protect from prying eyes the often secretive research being carried out in the labs. On the west and east sides of the building, alternating stainless and prelacquered steel panels create a bar code appearance, and in some lighting conditions they are reminiscent of a sculpture by Donald Judd.

One enters the building on the east side, under the plane trees, and between two elegant steel lighting posts. The walkway toward the reception area is paved with locally sourced stone panels. The rest of the frontage is surrounded by a grassy margin and there’s a parking lot with space for several cars. The



A reflective steel cladding mirrors the surrounding area (facing page) on all but the glass-enclosed entrance (above).

be sourced from the world-renowned steelworks in Le Creusot, barely twelve miles down the road.

The fruit of a collaboration between the École Supérieure de Physique Chimie Industrielle in Paris, various high-tech enterprises, and La Communauté de commune de Montceau-Creusot (a municipal body that represents 16 towns and villages in the region), the Maison looks like a polished metal box when viewed from afar. The façade glistens and gleams, and appears to change—depending on natural light conditions—from being near invisible to reflecting all movement on the adjacent road and canal. The structure’s low height makes it unobtrusive in the context of the soaring branches of the monumental plane trees that stand at the facility’s entrance and the buildings of the old mine complex to the west.

The exterior of the Maison vigorously draws attention to its two main aspects: a low rectangular form (for three laboratories), and a blocky double-height volume to house a Faraday cage (a grounded steel box that excludes all electromagnetic influence, see “Tool Box,” page 58). In other words, it is an upended L-shaped form with a simple rectangular floor plan.

entrance is one of just two parts of the exterior sheathed in clear glass, the other being a glazed footbridge that leads to the first floor of the neoclassical Maison d’Administration, the old mine offices that now house laboratory-related business. Several types of interior partitioning are used throughout: standard and acoustic plaster board, transparent glass panels (between the corridor and laboratories), and concrete walls for the technical areas. A dropped ceiling hides all cabling and insulation, and the floors are polished concrete.

The building has three separately controlled heating, ventilation, and cooling systems. Small rooms situated behind the Faraday cage are reserved for heat production and there is a substation for stocking low-temperature hot water. An electric compressor for the production of iced water (to cool the building’s interior) is installed on the upper roof.

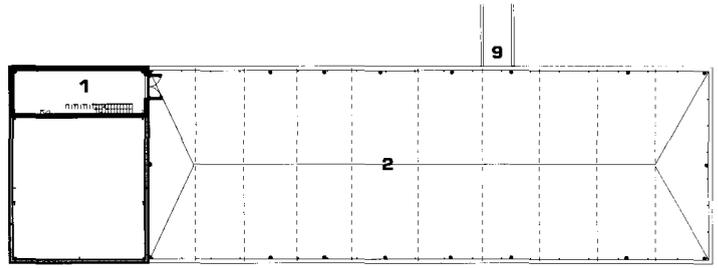
The Maison is the first building completed in an ambitious redevelopment of the area, scheduled for completion in 2008. What the larger site of the old coal mines will look like in a few years is still difficult to say. But the B/R/S addition fosters a sense of hope that the future buildings will only enrich the area.



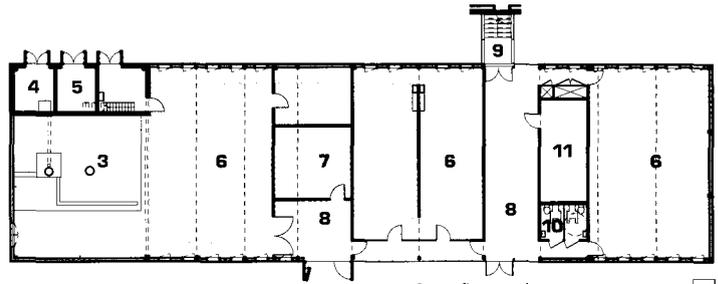
A glass-enclosed pedestrian bridge connects the new science facility to the existing neoclassical administration building (above and below left). Glass partitions are used to illuminate the interior space (bottom left), but most windows are covered with perforated steel to prevent passersby from seeing sensitive experiments (below right).



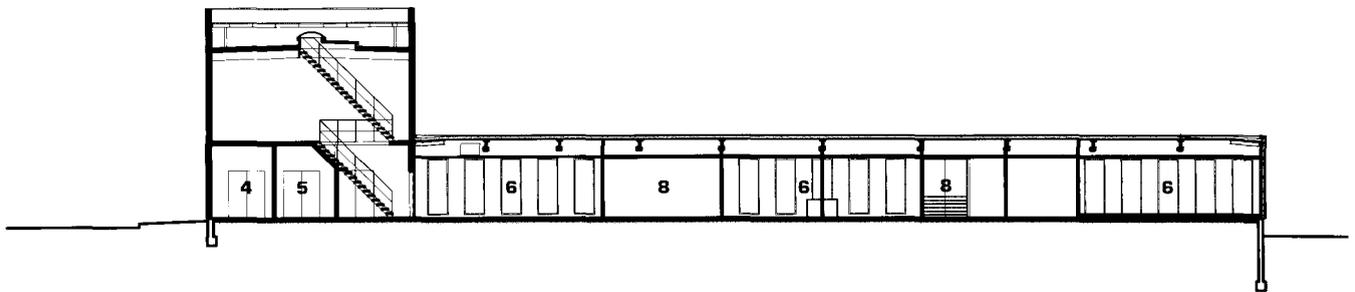
- 1 ventilation systems
- 2 roof
- 3 Faraday cage
- 4 compressor
- 5 generator
- 6 laboratory
- 7 storage
- 8 entrance
- 9 pedestrian bridge
- 10 restrooms
- 11 technology closet



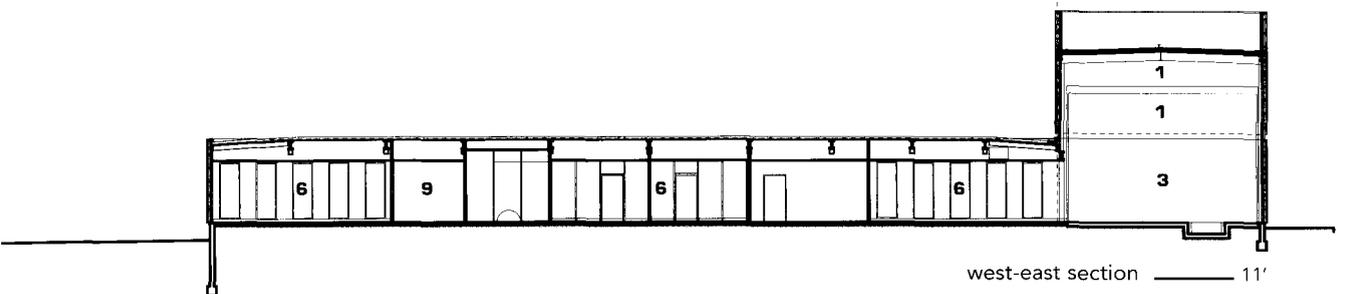
second-floor plan



first-floor plan 16' ↘



east-west section



west-east section 11'

Maison de l'Innovation, Montceau-les-Mines, France

client: Communauté de commune de Montceau-Creusot **architect:** B/R/S_Architectes-Ingénieurs **associate architect:** Jean-Louis Ducerf **engineers:** TECO (structural), Ponsot (concrete), Bouillet (electric) **area:** 8,700 square feet **cost:** \$1.12 million

Specifications

steel: Le Creusot Steel Works **color concrete hardener:** Acrocolor acoustic **drywall:** Placostyl **doors:** Bezault (locks and hardware) **windows:** Schuco (hardware) **bathroom:** Porcher (hardware, fixtures); Allia (fixtures) **lighting:** Troll, Mazda (interior lights); Simes, Cubi-spot, Mazda (exterior lights); Legrand (laboratory lights) **HVAC:** Carrier, Guillot-Athena (heating)



inner sanctum

A cloistered precinct shelters two churches from the clamor of everyday life.

BY JAN OTAKAR FISCHER | PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEFAN MÜLLER-NAUMANN

The Munich-Riem Church Center stands on ground once frequented only by rabbits and airplanes. In the early 1990s, Munich built a new airport far beyond the city limits, and the old airport at Munich-Riem was demolished and gradually replaced by a convention center and an adjoining settlement designed to accommodate 16,000 residents; today the Messestadt (“convention center city”) is only half complete. It is a cheerless place characterized by unremarkable, multistory apartment blocks and a town center with a hulking shopping mall that separates two public plazas, the southern of which, Human Rights Square, permits the only compelling view in town—distant snowcapped Alps.

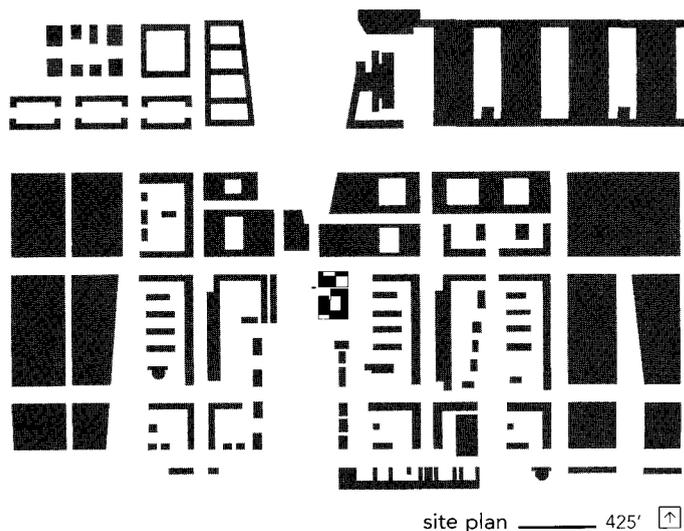
Anticipating a population 30 percent Roman Catholic and 10 percent Protestant, the planners of Messestadt prescribed two churches—one Catholic, dedicated to Saint Florian (martyred by the Romans in 304 A.D. and the patron saint of Bavarian firemen), and the other Lutheran, the Church of Sophia. An invited competition was finally held in 2000 to solicit proposals for the project, with a novel twist: Both churches and their respective ancillary structures would have to be built on the same lot. The chosen site was directly across from the shopping center at the head of Human Rights Square. Munich-based Florian Nagler Architekten won with a design that provides an understated spiritual antidote to the satellite-city blues.

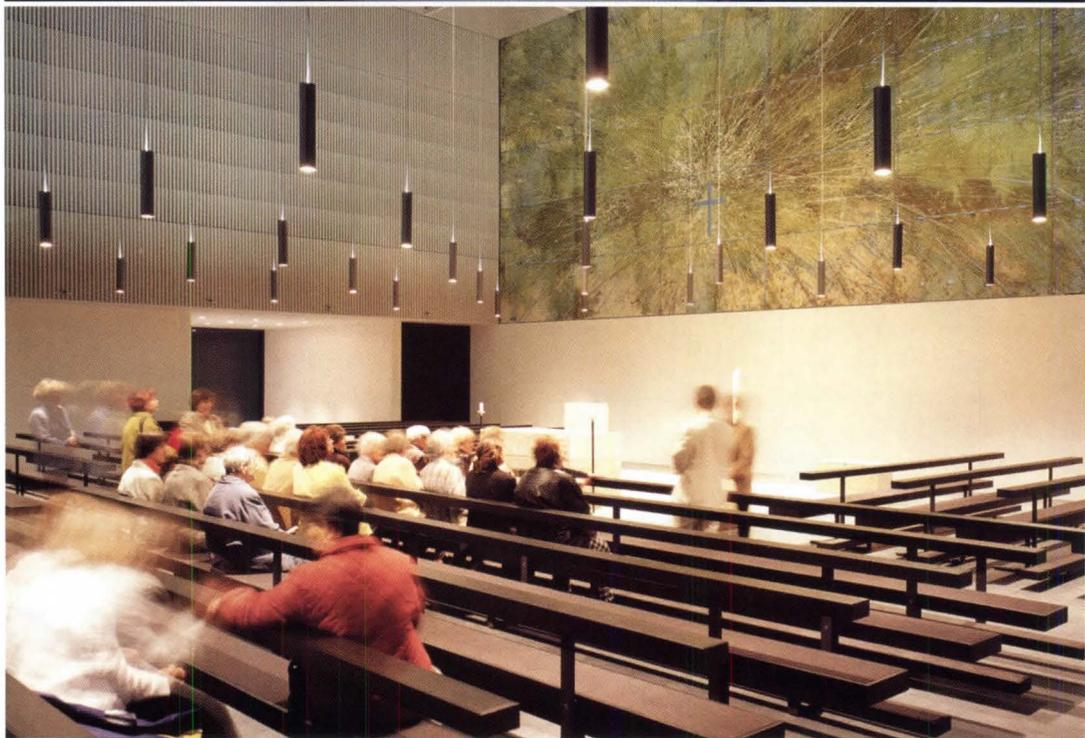
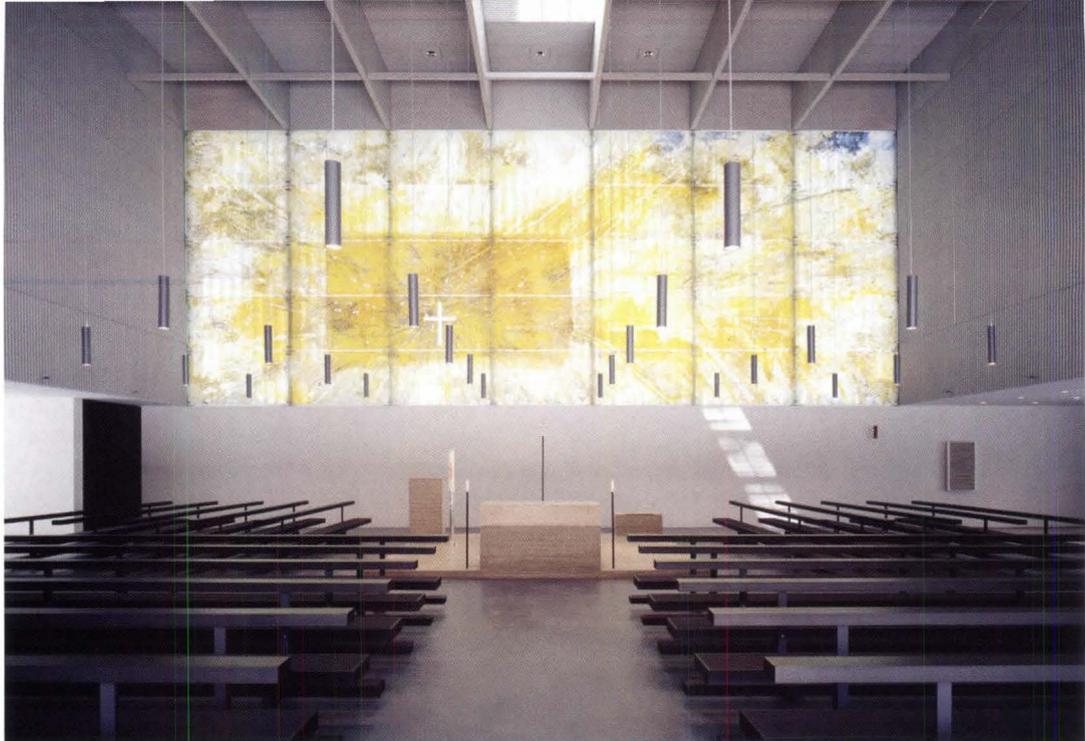
“We wanted to plant the two congregations like flowers in a garden, so that they could take root,” says Nagler, and like any garden, this one required a protective boundary. The Church Center is wrapped in a brilliant white-washed brick perimeter wall, which is actually

composed of rough-spackled brick panels hung off a concrete core. It rises 33 feet and is only interrupted along its north and west flank by a horizontal joint at 10 feet above the ground and, intermittently, by screens of vertical fixed louvers. An offset, 125-foot-tall white concrete stele—a bell tower with a delicately incised cross—signals the entrance to the Center at a point where the wall pulls back to form a modest forecourt. The cross and the glowing, pervasive whiteness of the entire complex are the only external hints that the building is a place of worship.

Nagler realized that, even with two congregations, the program was too small to create enough density on a site surrounded on three sides by large existing buildings. The wall he designed became a compensatory device, giving the Church Center extra height and therefore sufficient presence on the street; it also defines a special precinct, a contrast to the clangorous and indistinct neighborhood. Remarkably though, the compact, hermetic form of the Center’s exterior dissolves on the inside. Whitewash yields to natural red brick as a diverse assortment of interconnecting buildings—divided by paved courtyards and walkways, screened by wooden lattices, and terraced at varying levels with roof gardens—comes into view. It is something like being in a medina in North Africa, a city in miniature, yet one that is perfectly orthogonal.

The halls of Saint Florian and the Church of Sophia are the highest structures within the complex. The respective materials and configuration of the church interiors clearly reflect the different liturgical practices of the two faiths. “Saint Florian is primarily defined by four win-

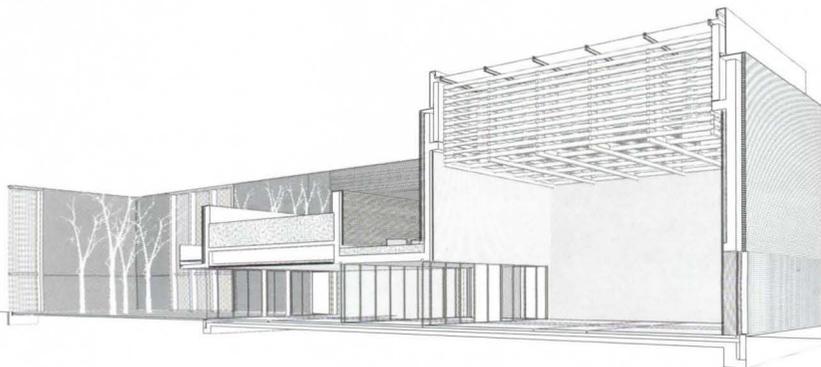




Saint Florian



Church of Sophia



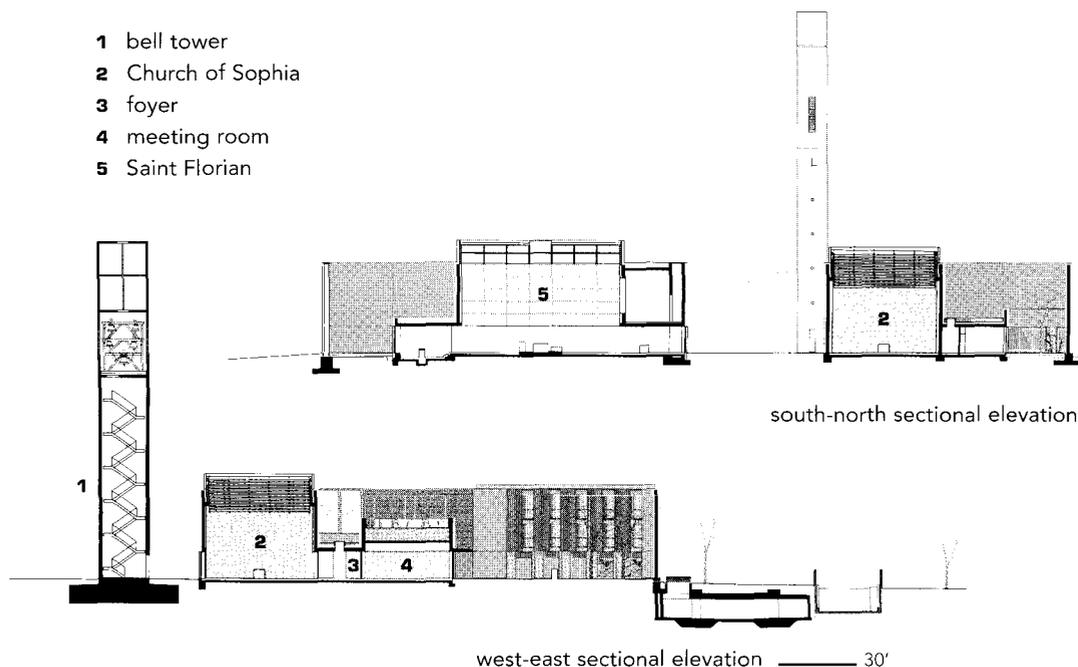
dows, set at the points of the cross," explains Nagler. An abstract depiction of the resurrection in yellow and gold glass, conjured like an exploding quasar, backs the altar. To the north is another window of blue glass fragments, and to the south, in a baptismal niche, there is a window of fiery red glass tubes. Apart from the windows, created by the Berlin artist Hella Santarossa, the interior is spartan, with rigid oak pews, a compressed clay altar, and a choir loft hidden behind a screen of vertical spruce slats. It is a space devoted to sober ritual within stripped-down symbolic coordinates.

The Church of Sophia occupies about a third of the Church Center complex, divided from Saint Florian by a narrow alley on axis with the bell tower. "It was important for the Sophia Church to hold its own on the site, despite its smaller size, and not to seem like an appendage," says Nagler. The balance feels right. Ecumenically, the two churches share the external wall, a common entry plaza, basement space, and the bell tower itself. But the Church of Sophia's congregational space, unlike that of Saint Florian, is intimate, concentrated, and furnished to be flexible. The walls are lined with horizontal spruce slats that merge with a ceiling grid of overlapping spruce beams that support a skylight. All the functional elements—stackable Egon Eiermann chairs, a four-part sheet-metal altar, a lectern, and baptismal font—are easily rearranged to allow for different activities, even concerts. The impression is one of well-illuminated simplicity and restraint.

Service buildings are strategically distributed

around the main churchyards. Both congregations have priest's offices and multipurpose spaces. Most of the rooms are outfitted with simple materials: wood parquet or polished concrete floors, exposed concrete ceilings, Douglas fir paneling, industrial lighting. Because of the felicitous organization of the solid and void elements within the outer brick wall, there are always visual connections to the outside world and ample access to light and air. The light emanating from behind the various fixed louvers of the perimeter at night is just as mysterious as the daytime muteness of this cloistered ensemble. And much of the energy for this nocturnal illumination is generated by roof-mounted solar cells.

Certain details of the project may nonetheless be questioned: the sharp edges of Saint Florian's prayer space; the undistinguished entry sequence into both churches; the way the play area for Saint Florian's kindergarten is forced outside of the precinct wall, violating its authority. Yet the Church Center undeniably succeeds on at least two critical scores: It brings two congregations together in a way that quietly celebrates ecumenical possibilities while maintaining the dignity of each institution. And it provides a necessary sense of retreat and sanctuary from secular life at the same time that it modestly, but firmly, asserts its presence in the cityscape. Despite the thoroughly modern idiom, the monks of Thoronet, the imams of Kairouan, and the temple priests of Didyma would feel at home in this corner of Munich-Riem. ■





Church Center, Munich

client: Evan.Luth Dekanatsbezirk **architect:** Florian Nagler Architekten, Munich—Florian Nagler (principal); Steffan Bathke, Gunther Moller, Mattias Muller, Thomas Neumann (project team) **engineers:** Merz Kaufmann Partners (structural); Schneider, Germering, Linsmeier (M/E/P); Transolar (civil); Beneke, Daberto + Partners (sound) **landscape architect:** Realgrun **consultants:** A. Hagl, Waubke + Klessinger, Harald Chaber (bells), Belzner Holmes (lighting) **area:** 60,278 square feet **cost:** \$26.5 million

Specifications

wood-and-steel façade: Mettallbau Sauer **brick façade:** Krotzer + Senf **carpentry:** Carpenter's Workshop Loferer



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GREAT DIVIDES

A Vancouver firm's honeycombed paper walls lend an intimate identity to small spaces.

by Lilas Harley

For architects **Stephanie** Forsythe and **Todd** MacAllen, the smaller-scale products they design under the Molo ("middle ones, little ones") label often grow out of their eponymous, Vancouver-based practice, Forsythe + MacAllen, which was founded in 1996 and has built primarily community-oriented works in Japan, Africa, and Canada. Softwall, for instance, resulted from their belief in what Forsythe calls "the power of a small object in creating space."

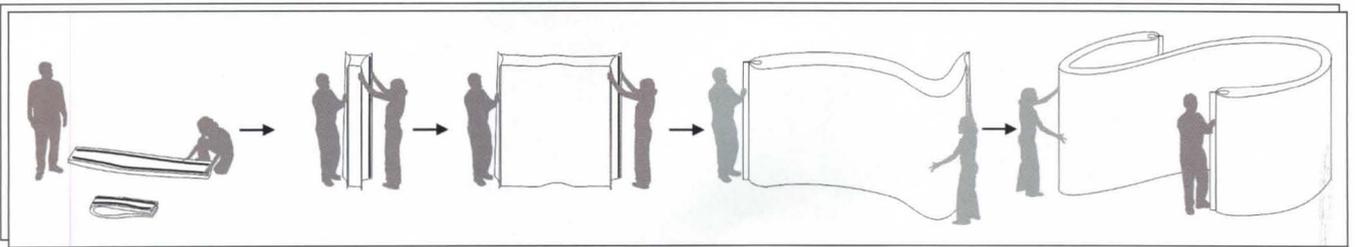
The partners initially set about designing an impermanent space divider to offer interior versatility and privacy in their own 700-square-foot live/work loft. They started by making scratch paper mock-ups and soon realized that even humble paper becomes supportive when folded. Today, the impromptu material is integral to the function and look of the finished product: Softwall is made of 400 layers of honeycombed, fire-retardant white paper sandwiched between two gray natural felt panels that operate as handles during installation and as casing during storage. The standard version measures 12 inches wide and 6 feet tall, a scale that intentionally blocks typical sight-lines. From

1.5 inches thick collapsed, Softwall can expand to 20 feet long, and weighs only 17 pounds. Snaps allow Softwalls to connect end-to-end. Translucence and sound absorption enhance the intimate quality of the spaces they enfold.

Forsythe was initially worried that the public would be turned off by cheap, disposable paper. Moreover, the honeycombing technique is usually associated with unrefined products such as supermarket holiday decorations. However, the divider's elegant aesthetic and practical appeal made it an instant hit when it debuted last May at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) in New York City; it's now found in offices and homes across the globe, as well as in the Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection.

Encouraged by its success, Molo's designers developed a line of related products. Softsurface, a wider four-foot iteration that can support objects of up to ten pounds, is made entirely of Tyvek, so it wipes clean after cocktail party spills. At this year's ICFF, visitors to Molo's exhibition will see the Softwall reinterpreted in black, as well as Softlight, a floor lamp, plus chairs and stools that achieve supportive cushioning through tighter honeycombing.

Not least, Softwall has both financially and conceptually enabled the firm to carry out work for nonprofits. One such effort is Softhousing, an ambitious endeavor that consists of 60-square-foot, single-occupancy rooms that can be unfolded inside gutted buildings. The almost glowing, pliant walls are a significant departure from the institutional cells with which so many homeless people are familiar. Common Ground, a nonprofit devoted to sheltering those



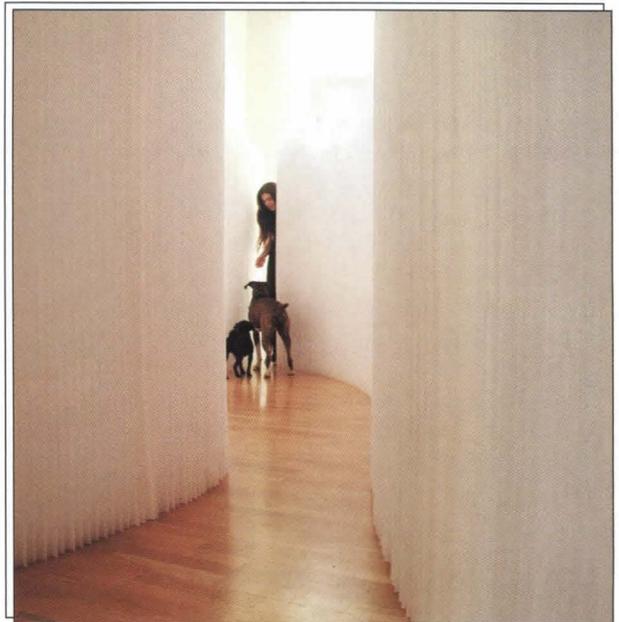
At 17 pounds, Softwall is easily shipped and assembled: From its collapsible state at one-and-a-half inches to its fleshed out incarnation at 20 feet, the durable partition is equally appropriate in installations from museums to homeless shelters.

without houses, named Softhousing the winner of its 2003 First Step Open International Housing Competition and plans to implement the product in a former single room occupancy hotel on the Bowery in New York City as soon as some technical problems are surmounted: Above all, a sufficiently tough, fireproof, and cleanable substitute material with a paperlike sensibility must be found.

The attention to detail for which Molo is already known has allowed the company to grow organically. Softwall proves that little things can at times make a big enough difference. ■

Softwall

developers: Stephanie Forsythe, Todd MacAllen (owners, directors, designers); Robert Pasut (owner, director) **cost:** \$690 to \$1990



MOLO DESIGN, LTD.

TOOL BOX

In La Maison de l'Innovation, the design expertise of B/R/S was forced to take a backseat to plans for a highly specialized space.

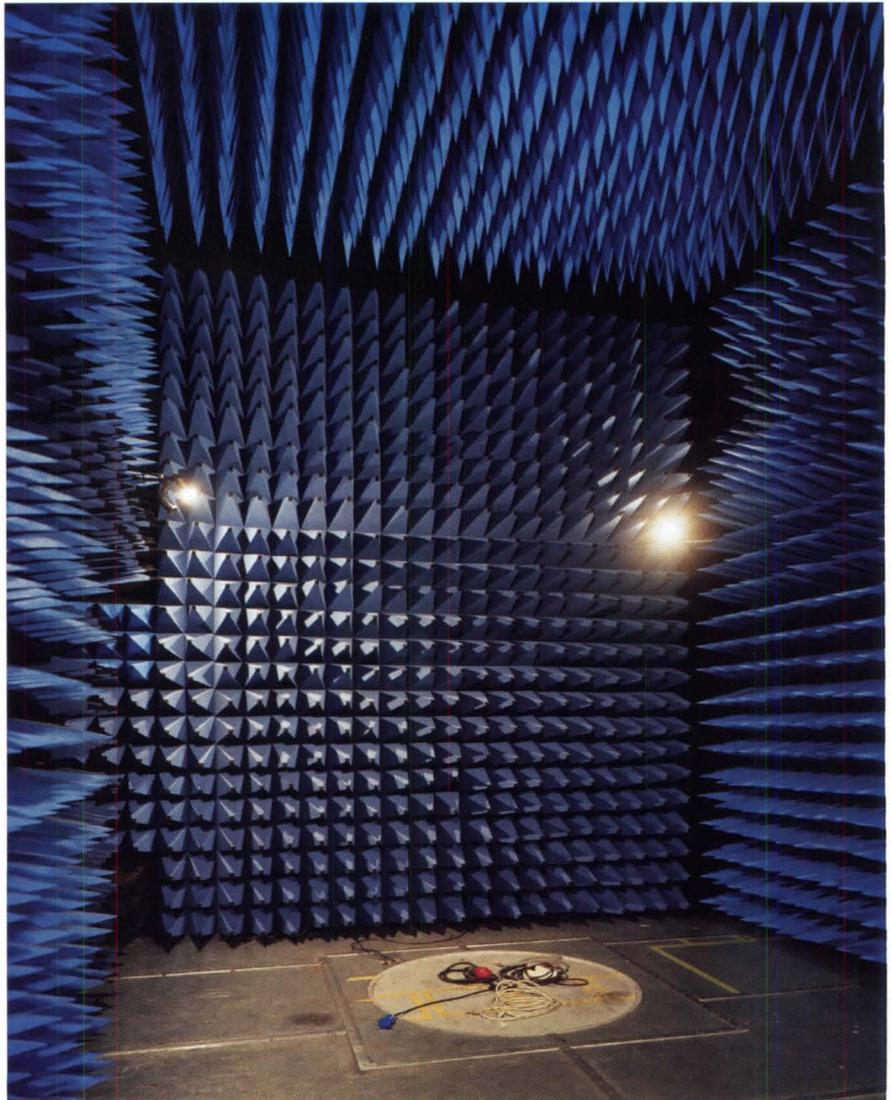
by Katie Gerfen

"The first thing that you have to remember when you are designing a science facility," says Uli Seher, a principal at B/R/S_Architectes-Ingénieurs in Paris, "is that you are not designing a building, you are designing a tool." Which is exactly what Seher's team did: a facility for scientists to conduct research into wireless technology in the small town of Montceau-les-Mines, France (see "Steel Works," page 44). Every aspect of the building is geared toward its empirical function, from laboratory spaces to grilles over the windows to protect the secrecy of the experiments being carried out. But one room came to define the complexity of the project in a unique way: a steel-enclosed chamber called a Faraday cage that proved too complex for the architects themselves to address.

In laymen's terms, a Faraday cage is an electrically grounded box made from a nonconductive material that stops electromagnetic interference from entering the space. The structure is called a cage because it can have holes in the walls—as long as they are smaller than any external wavelengths that might penetrate. (Think of a microwave: The holes in the inner metal door are small enough to prevent the food-heating waves from escaping into the room, but large enough to see through.) Scientists use chambers such as this when they are conducting research that requires an electromagnetically neutral environment. In the case of the professionals at La Maison de l'Innovation, they bring wireless devices into the chamber to see how well those machines communicate with each other, without any atmospheric radiation tainting their experiments. The devices' electromagnetic waves are contained, while all others are excluded.



The double-height volume of the Maison de l'Innovation (above) houses a specialized experimentation room known as a Faraday cage (below).



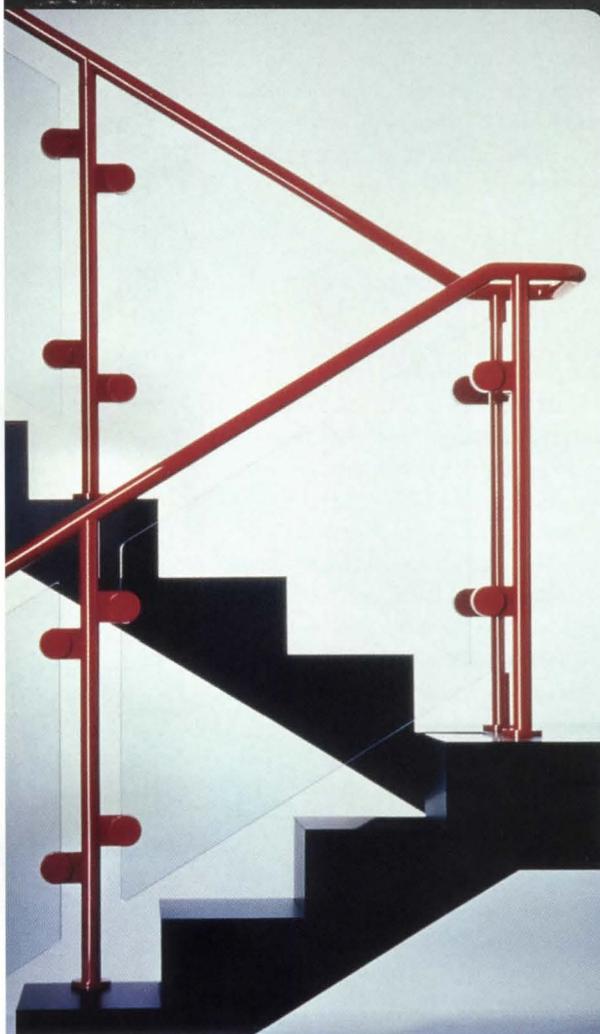
Such a specialized room requires the sort of technical knowledge in wave mechanics that architects don't typically possess. So B/R/S designed the building around a blind set of measurements for the dimensions of the Faraday cage, provided by the scientists in charge of the structure. These measurements changed halfway through the process, requiring some quick redrafting in AutoCAD of the canalside double-height volume, where the cage is located on the first floor. Aside from leaving a blank space in the building, the architect's only other responsibility was to accommodate power needs for the customized area.

The final design for the cage specified eight-centimeter-thick stainless steel walls, with the same material enclosing the ceiling and floor. Inside this metal box, the scientists called for a thick layer of blue foam insulation on the walls and ceiling. A layer was also placed on the floor and then covered with another steel plate to create an even work surface. The insulation serves two purposes: It dulls the noise that would echo around in a bare metal room, saving the users from reverberations; and because it is soaked in a highly concentrated, carbon-rich solution, the foam helps to ensure that no waves can enter through seams in the steel construction. When so treated, the insulation absorbs any errant electromagnetic waves within the room, and pointed cones on the ceiling and walls that were carved into its surface help to gather and neutralize those rogue waves by providing more surface area.

As the waves hit the wall, they bounce among the variegated surfaces until they are neutralized entirely. This shielding and filtering is crucial for this particular type of research because all of the wireless devices are tested through signals to or between multiple machines. Errant waves could create false signals, jeopardizing the purity of the results. A round plate in the floor allows access to power for the machines to run: this carefully grounded conduit is the only connection between the Faraday cage and the building itself.

The cage was constructed by the general contractor with help from the scientists themselves at the same time as the rest of the facility. This timing was crucial in order to embed one of the steel floor plates in the concrete floor. B/R/S intentionally allowed wide enough hallways for any machinery to be wheeled from the laboratory space into the testing chamber. Staircases wind up and around the steel enclosure to provide access to systems (such as power and ice water generation for ambient cooling) on the upper floor in the building's only double-height space. The facility came together like a puzzle, but when this final piece was constructed and seen by the architects, it became clear just how much a hands-on space, and how much a tool, the Maison de l'Innovation has the potential to be. ■

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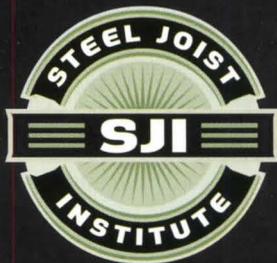
The IWP custom wood and IWP Aurora custom fiberglass exterior doors are available with recessed grilles, which can be inset into the door glass or sidelight openings. The grilles are customizable, and are easily maintained, courtesy of a hinge-and-latch system that allows the grille to swing outward.



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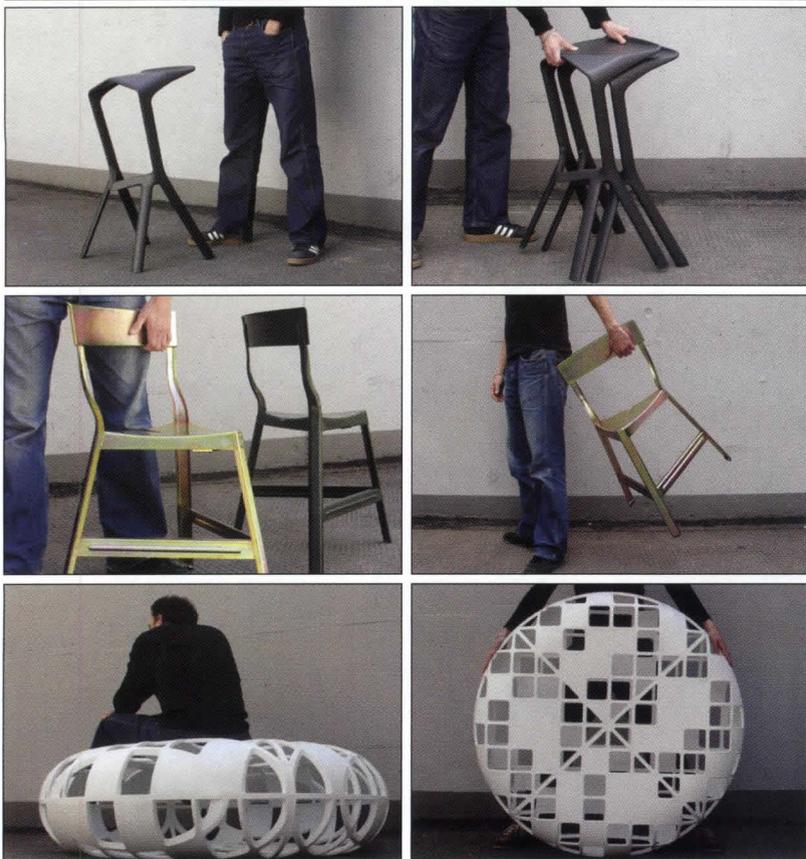
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It's not often that furniture recalls Lewis Carroll's caterpillar pontificating from atop an oversized mushroom cap. But 41-year-old Konstantin Grcic's innovative use of materials results in such whimsical yet structured designs. His Osorom seating system (bottom left and right), designed for the Italian furniture house Moroso, is a large, round, pillowlike form made from Hirek, a combination of fiberglass and resin. The hollow form's delicate tracery of cutout shapes belies the intrinsically rigid structure.

The German industrial designer has created works for Krups, Flos, and Groupe SEB, winning awards and continuing to experiment with materials and form in his Munich studio. His Miura barstool (top left and right), for example, which garnered him a *Blueprint* design

award for best new product at last year's 100 Percent Design exhibition in London, is a geometry lover's delight: A slightly canted seat, with triangular depressions to accept the sitter's legs rests over a bowed, angular footrest and atop inverted Y-shaped supports. Designed for Italian distributor Plank, the stools are stackable, and can be transported on a coat-hanger-aping trolley. The stools come in seven colors of injection-molded polypropylene, ranging from a vibrant orange to an austere dark gray.

Finally, Grcic's stackable Tin chair (middle left and right) for Magis Design updates the colonial corner chair both in material (his is pressed sheet metal) and orientation—the tri-cornered seat places the apex in front, with the backrest running along one side.

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EXHIBITION

On-Site: New Architecture in Spain | Museum of Modern Art | New York City | Through May 1 *On-Site: New Architecture in Spain* blasts away the staid formula of so many architectural exhibitions by adding a third element

to the usual assemblage of boards and models: giant, engulfing photography. While the maquettes on display are beautifully crafted and the project boards offer mercifully concise text, it is the massive, wall-mounted images by German photographer Roland Halbe that provide an experiential entrée into the projects by portraying the element inherent to all architecture: scale.

This visceral effect is fitting to the work itself, which is characterized by bright, electric colors, organic shapes, and stout, muscular proportions. Assembled by outgoing Museum of Modern Art architecture and design curator Terence Riley, the show is a paean to a new age of Spanish innovators, liberated from the oppressive Franco government and infused with the youthful energy of native and foreign designers working in Spain after the nation's 1986 entry into the European Union.



The 53 works on display are uniformly gutsy, starting with Enric Miralles's and Benedetta Tagliabue's Santa Caterina Market in Barcelona—an undulating canopy resembling a rainbow-hued 1960s afghan (left). This penchant for color is echoed throughout, including in Jean Nouvel's technicolor Torre Agbar in Barcelona and the multitalent Museum of Contemporary Art in Léon by Mansilla + Tuñón. While the similarities between projects allow for a detailed critique, the exhibition's success lies in its simplicity: The work speaks for itself. **Anna Holtzman**

BOOK

Placing Words: Symbols, Space, and the City | William J. Mitchell | MIT Press In the culinary world, chefs speak of *mise-en-place* ("put it in its place")—meaning every implement must be stored properly, lest the kitchen descend into chaos. In *Placing Words: Symbols, Space, and the City*, William J. Mitchell, professor of architecture and media arts at MIT, makes a corollary case for the architect's creative zone—the city. The author's *mise-en-scene* is "a place populated with objects for words to refer to," and he believes that words and buildings are mutually defining. Yet Mitchell also plays with his own connotative balance: As cities shape linguistic meaning, the dynamics of language possess a correlative power to reformulate physical space. For example, Mitchell lauds LED screens for their dual facility to deliver information and serve as building façades. Architecture is no longer autonomous, he says. It is, instead, "the constructed ground for... extracting meaning from cross-connected flows of aural, textural, graphic, and digital information." **Robert Klara**

EXHIBITION

Living in Motion: Design and Architecture for Flexible Dwelling | Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston | Through May 7 Organized in 2002 by the Vitra Design Museum in Germany, *Living in Motion: Design and Architecture for Flexible Dwelling* examines how designers adapt domestic environments to accommodate shifts in our ideas about work, sociability, and lifestyles, as well as technological advances.

By grouping over 150 objects and hundreds of images into six functional categories—transporting, assembling and disassembling, folding and unfolding, adapting, combining, and wearing and carrying—the curators intentionally juxtapose eras and cultures. Yurts, igloos, and sampans appear beside modernist structures such as Rietveld's mutable Schröder House of 1924 and Buckminster Fuller's prototype Wichita House from 20 years later. Contemporary projects range from the spare mobile rooms of Shigeru Ban's Naked House to the gritty logoeed containers of Wes Jones's Pro/Con Package Housing System (right). Filling these varied spaces or offering substitutes for them are furniture and devices that can be transported, stacked, adjusted, collapsed, rolled, inflated, draped, or slipped into a jacket. Wit abounds as well: Martin Ruiz de Azúa's inflatable Basic House serves as temporary protection from a storm or as privacy "for a bit of hanky-panky." The show raises interesting questions about the collapse of public and private spheres and the affiliations we make between home, property, and place. **Alicia Kennedy**



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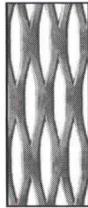
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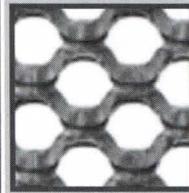
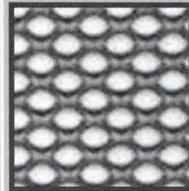
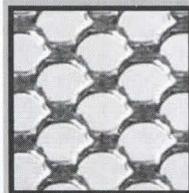
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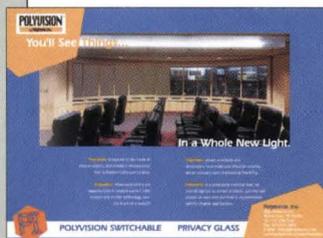


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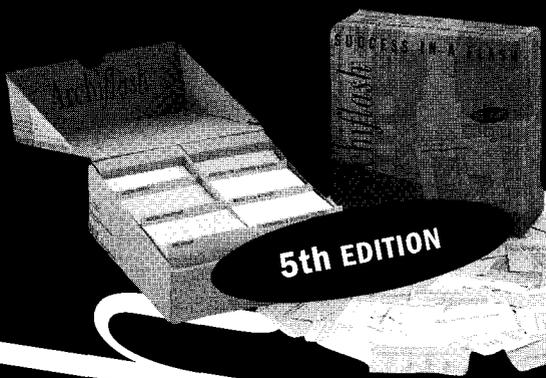
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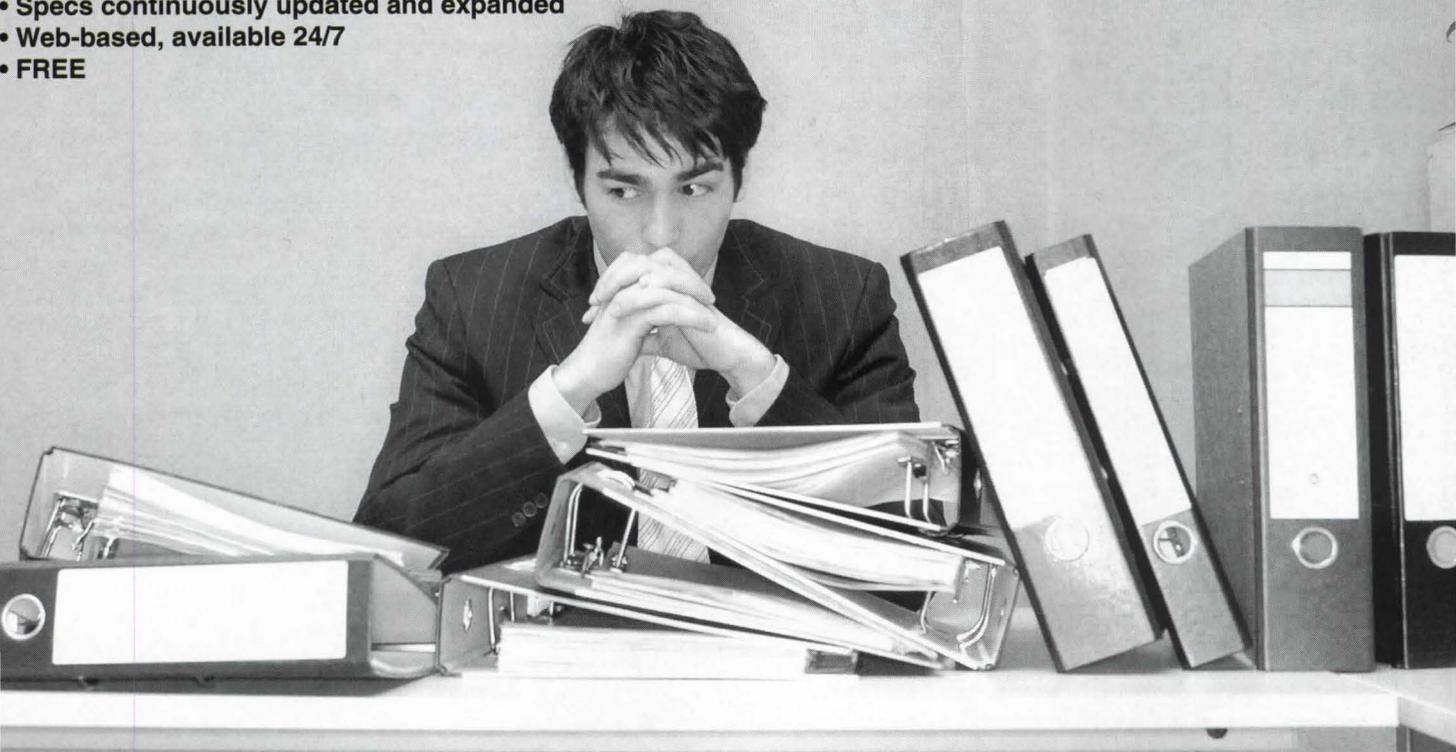
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WHY ARE SO MANY DISPLACED RESIDENTS OF NEW ORLEANS BEING LEFT OUT OF THE REBUILDING PROCESS? BY ANNA HOLTZMAN | ILLUSTRATION BY JULIAN OSTI

As another hurricane season swiftly approaches New Orleans, a cacophony of agendas and inconsistent information continues to muddy the debate regarding how, where, and what to rebuild. Yet while the din has created a stalemate to critically needed action, equally troubling is the absence of an enormous number of voices: the hundreds of thousands of displaced who remain scattered across the country, and whose exact whereabouts are unknown to New Orleans officials. While the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has access to incomplete but extensive data on current evacuee locations—supplied by local residents who have applied for assistance from out of state—agency spokespeople maintain that the agency is barred by the Federal Privacy Act from releasing this information.

On a micro scale, the city's inability to contact missing constituents is problematic because it means that houses tagged by FEMA for demolition may be torn down without the knowledge of their owners—many of whom are from low-income African American neighborhoods such as the Lower Ninth Ward. State Representative of District 99 and Ward resident Charmaine Marchand claims that while much of her neighborhood is beyond repair, there are houses bearing FEMA's red marker that could conceivably be salvaged. Yet many of her evacuated neighbors remain uninformed of FEMA's plans and cannot afford to return and assess their own homes. "The city needs to move forward," Marchand concedes, "but you can't usurp people's rights."

On a larger scale, the missing voices of evacuees represent a hole in discussions that are shaping the future of the city. Even if some of the homes Marchand refers to can be saved, whether or not they should be is debatable—one of the most painful dilemmas of reconstruction revolves around whether the city can preserve the generations-old, historically black neighborhoods that sustained



major damage, while at the same time undoing city planning mistakes that contributed to the flooding.

While more fortunate residents make a case for their neighborhoods either by rebuilding on an individual basis or attending city council meetings, the preferences of those relocated out-of-state goes largely unregistered. "I don't doubt that FEMA thinks it doesn't have the authority to give out information," says Sheila Crowley, president of the Washington, D.C.-based National Low Income Housing Coalition, "but the situation is a disaster of unprecedented proportions." While refraining from laying the blame on any one entity, Crowley suspects other intentions. "Most of the evacuees are low-income African Americans who vote Democratic," she points out. "You can call me a conspiracy theorist, but [the result of withholding contact information will] change the political complexion of the city."

FEMA spokeswoman Barbara Ellis notes that her agency "is prohibited by the privacy act from releasing [evacuees'] contact information." Only in a few special cases has the agency released names and addresses—for example, to aid law enforcement authorities in identifying

criminal offenders and to help the state attorney general's office contact people for voter registration. When asked whether or not FEMA itself could contact evacuees for input about their homes and neighborhoods, Ellis explains, "That's not part of what FEMA does. We provide assistance for temporary housing and home repair and replacement—those are the confines of our program."

Other organizations have also come up against a wall when trying to obtain evacuee contact information from FEMA, reports Walter Fahr, manager of the Louisiana Clearing House for Missing Children. However, says Fahr, "FEMA's been the bogeyman here. We have the same problem with the Red Cross, and schools are also a source of information that have been hard to negotiate with—so it's not just FEMA."

Regardless of who we should be pointing the finger at, concludes Crowley, "There's lots of inconsistent information, and in the absence of knowing what people want to do, rebuilding plans in New Orleans will only reflect the desires of people who are present." Such an inequity in the decision-making process should in no way be acceptable to any government agency. ■

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