

# THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

## 03\_04.22.2009

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LA GETS ITS FIRST ARABLE GREEN ROOF

SAM LUBELL

### CROPPING UP

For a city that touts itself as a leader in green architecture, LA has few green roofs. Only recently, it got one of its first, designed by architect (and SCI-Arc professor) Alexis Rochas.

The sinuous project, located on top of The Flat, a new downtown residential building, is made of a folding and torqued galvanized sheet metal surface, prefabricated off site. This forms a series of platforms or "grow channels" filled with engineered soil that's light enough not to weigh the project down. The tiered structure, supported by an armature of steel tubes and a plywood substructure, wraps around the building's existing

mechanical rooftop equipment, offering maximum solar exposure, maximum growing room, and efficient irrigation.

Besides filtering pollutants, increasing thermal insulation, and reducing storm water runoff, the 3,000-square-foot garden—engineered by Arup and built with the help of students at SCI-Arc—is its own ecosystem, with plants tended and used by residents and the chefs of The Flat's ground-floor restaurant, Blue Velvet. Vegetation is then returned to the roof in the form of compost. Over 20 types of plants are grown here, rotated by season. This spring's **continued on page 17**



NEW LA SIGN ORDINANCE CRACKS DOWN ON VISUAL CLUTTER

SAM LUBELL

### BILLBOARD BROUHAHA

One day last fall, Kate Burkart-Paulson, longtime resident of LA's Silver Lake neighborhood, woke to find that the billboard outside her duplex on Silver Lake Boulevard had been converted into a digital display that shone directly into her living room. "We need to close our blinds at night because it's so distracting. It changes every few seconds," she explained. "It really changes the tone of the neighborhood."

Burkart-Paulson is one of many residents across the city troubled by billboards. In the past few years, the city has settled several lawsuits brought by

outdoor advertising companies like Clear Channel, CBS, and World Wide Rush, allowing companies to convert signs to both digital and so-called super-graphic billboards. These often span several building stories despite a 2002 ban on new billboards in the city. As a result of the settlements, the offending signs began appearing across LA in late 2008, inciting the anger of community residents and anti-clutter advocates.

Responding to pressure from community organizers, developers, and outdoor advertising lobbyists, the City Planning **continued on page 9**

**BRAVE NEW TRANSIT**  
SPECIAL FEATURE ON AN AND SCI-ARC'S IDEAS  
COMPETITION TO SOLVE LA'S HIGHWAY BLUES. PAGES 19-22

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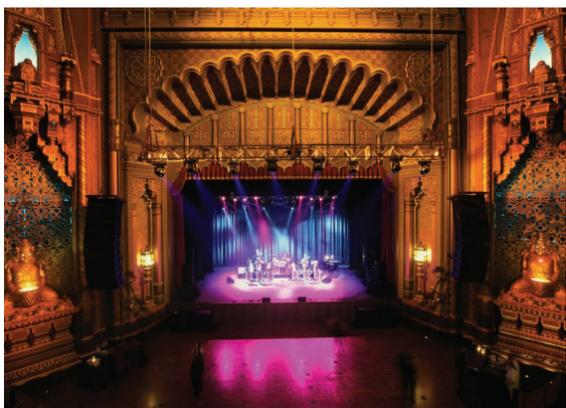
- 05 NO CUBICLES FOR MYSpace
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CALIFORNIA BEGINS TO PLOT STIMULUS DRIVE

### Tapping In

California has finally begun detailing its stimulus spending, and that's both good and bad news. The good news is, billions of those dollars will go toward construction. The bad news, at least for architects, is that the **continued on page 3**



JENNIFER REILEY/COURTESY ELS

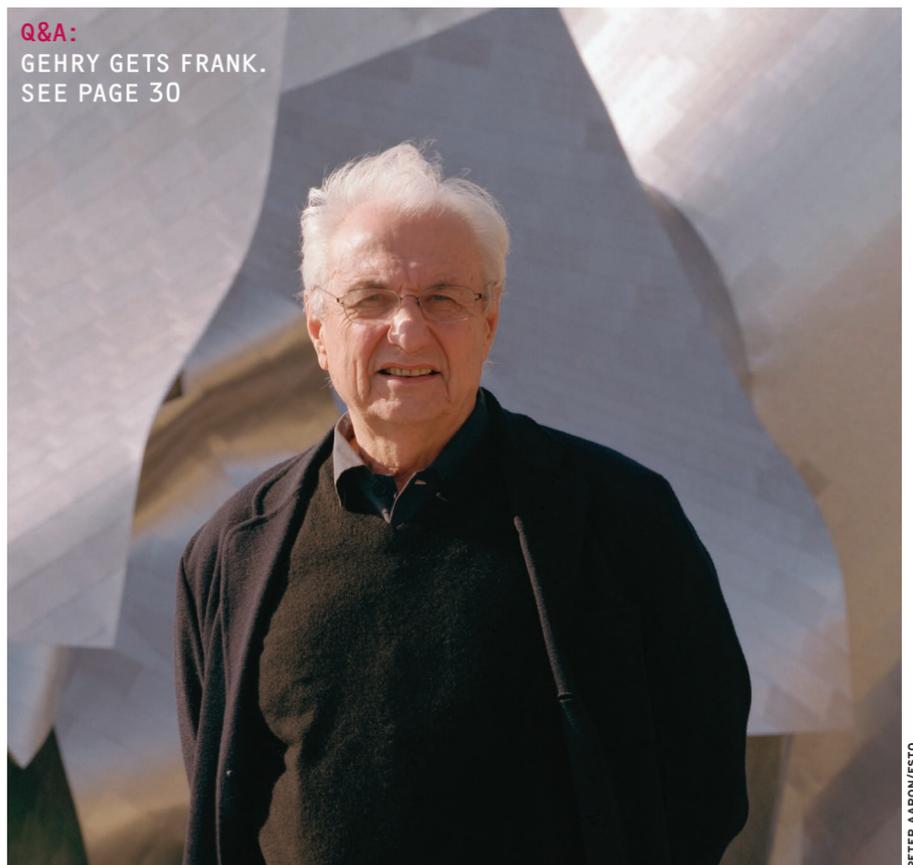
HISTORIC OAKLAND THEATER IS REHABILITATED FOR A NEW ERA

### RETURN OF THE FOX

For the first time since closing its doors in 1966, the restored Fox Oakland Theater opened to the public in February. Originally designed by California theater specialists Weeks & Day in an exotic mix of Eastern architecture styles, the movie palace opened in 1928. After being listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, the theater fell into decay until 1996 when it was purchased by the city.

The effort to restore the Fox was spearheaded by local developer Phil Tagami of California Capital Group (CCG). Hired by the city, CCG was able **continued on page 10**

Q&A:  
GEHRY GETS FRANK.  
SEE PAGE 30



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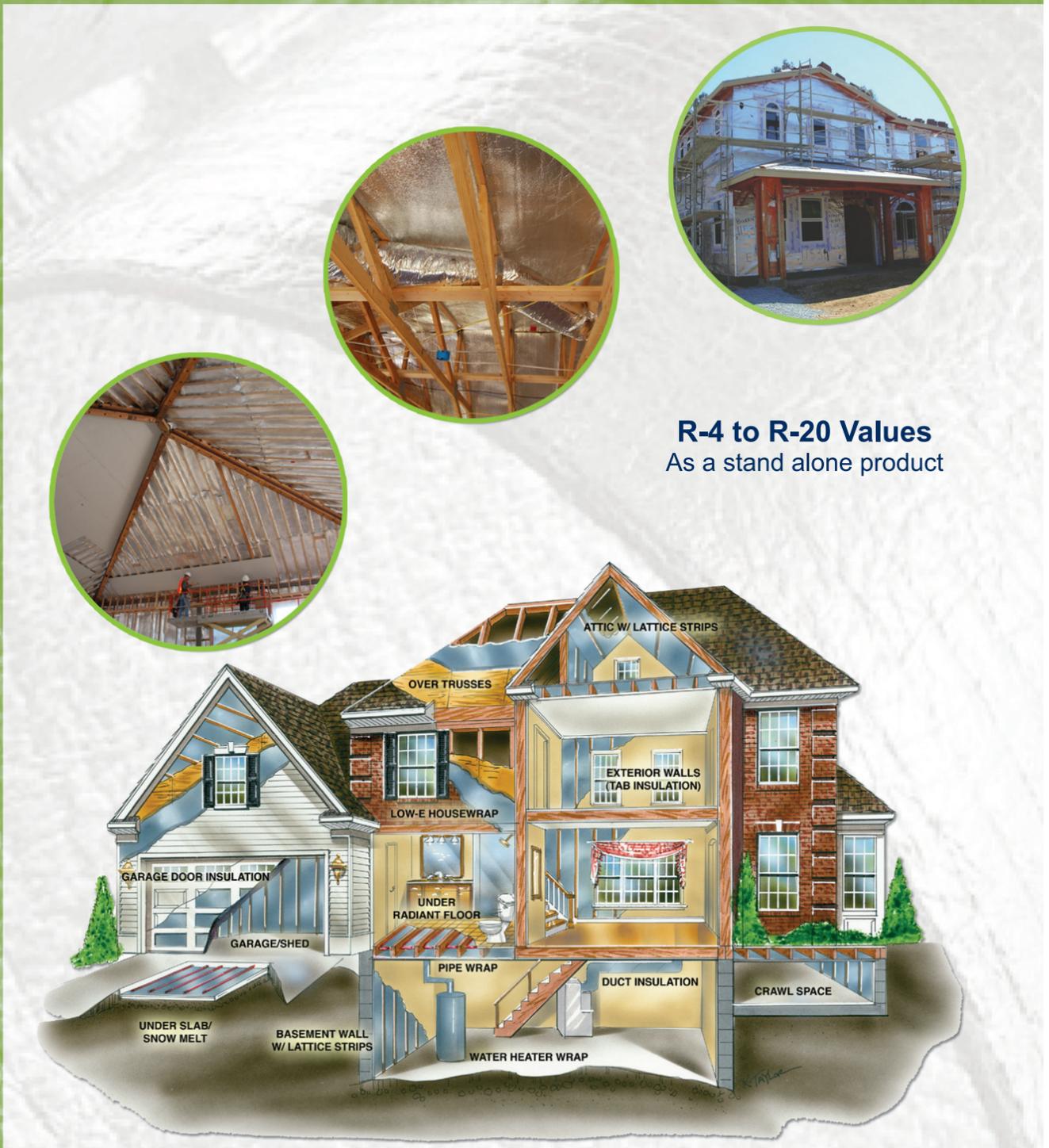
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## KEEP IT COMPETITIVE

On March 21, we finally announced the winners for the AN/SCI-Arc competition, *A New Infrastructure: Innovative Transit Solutions For Los Angeles*. I'm incredibly proud and inspired by the wonderful ideas that were proposed (see feature, page 19). They suggest fresh, smart ideas for the city, and help bring architecture into the realm of transit design and city planning, not just window dressing for the plans of engineers and city officials, but a vital unifier, helping to solve the challenges of transit, neighborhoods, and the city.

The value of competitions in architecture cannot be underestimated. The United States prides itself on being the land of opportunity. Yet when it comes to architecture, it more often feels like the land of the famous and the well-connected. In LA, smaller, talented firms usually get relegated to residential design, and they rarely get a chance to make an impact on the community.

Well-run competitions can help break down these barriers and promote the best architecture. This is common in Europe, and it works quite well, establishing public architecture as a center for excitement and civic pride. In France, for instance, all government buildings must be chosen by *concours*, or competition by law, while most of the major cultural facilities in countries like Spain, Germany, and Italy are now chosen via competition.

Not only do competitions allow smaller firms to get their start, but they also encourage creativity. Hundreds of innovative ideas can be spawned by such a challenge, well beyond what one or two firms could ever imagine. The more people we give chances to, the better the chances for good design.

Not that competitions are nonexistent in the U.S. The GSA's Design Excellence Program is a good example of how skilled juries have transformed the architectural quality of many U.S. government buildings. If you look at the competitions page on our site, or on other sites like Archinect, you'll see that there are indeed plenty. But the majority are not for real projects. Ideas competitions like ours are incredibly valuable, but to really get things moving, we need competitions for buildings in the private and public sector.

Of course, competitions aren't perfect. Some juries tend to gravitate toward the splashiest, most graphic designs without investigating the ideas behind them, or how they would affect occupants. But choosing a skilled jury and providing the right funding—this doesn't favor those with deepest pockets—can remedy that. One thing is sure, we need a change of culture, and competitions are a direct way to get that ball rolling.

At the end of the day, it's worth the extra effort. Architecture needs to be about getting the most talented people and the best ideas produced. The way to do that is to open up the field to everyone.

SAM LUBELL

## TAPPING IN continued from front page

bulk will go to infrastructure, not architecture, projects.

According to the state of California, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will provide a total of \$85 billion in funding, \$35 billion in tax relief, and \$50 billion from federal sources. Construction-related spending from that pot should total about \$5 billion, according to Cliff Brewis, senior director of editorial operations at McGraw-Hill Construction/Dodge, who compiled a list of all funded construction projects in the state. Brewis said that spending heavily favors engineering projects over architecture projects.

On March 11, the California Transportation Commission approved the state's first 57 stimulus-related projects, totaling \$625 million, most of them to help repair highways and bridges. The McGraw-Hill Construction/Dodge list indicates that California has allocated funds for 447 stimulus-related construction projects, which will be paid for by federal and state money. Totals will range from \$7.5 billion to \$7.7 billion. Highway and road paving, storm sewers, roadway lighting, new parks, bridge construction, and sidewalk construction make up two thirds of the projects. The remaining third will include schools, fire and police stations, government buildings, clinics, terminals, and military installations.

This represents about 40 percent of the total funds allocated to California projects via the ARRA, said Brewis. It does not include the governor's discretionary funds, which could total up to \$4 billion, or other federal funds for the state.

The funding probably won't hit the construction market until next year. And many of California's federal stimulus funds are still being applied for, or are waiting response from the federal government, confirmed Camille Anderson, a spokesperson for Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

At the end of March, the state sold \$6.5 billion in bonds to help pay for more public projects ranging from school construction and repair to transportation, water, and flood control. That includes \$700 million for infrastructure projects that were halted this winter due to the state's budget crisis.

And stimulus money is really just the beginning, pointed out Andrew Goldberg, senior director of federal relations at the AIA. "At the end of the day, the hope is that this will generate enough economic activity to help the whole economy. Anything that helps unfreeze credit will help building get going again." **SAM LUBELL**

## LETTERS

## R IS FOR RETROGRADE

Measure R increased the sales tax by half a cent in Los Angeles County, to raise \$40 billion over the next 30 years for transportation initiatives. While Measure R is being lauded as public transit's savior, it allocates \$8 billion toward highway improvements. Not only does it seem disingenuous for a measure sold on the premise "Reduce Foreign Oil Dependence" to divert such a large amount toward automotive transportation, it is also remarkably inefficient in terms of moving people. At 25 mph—not an uncommon speed on a Los Angeles freeway—an extra lane of highway would move approximately 23 people a minute. Alternatively, a bus lane for standard buses with a similar travel distance at the same speed would move

almost 1,200 people per minute.

A good deal of Measure R funds go toward public transit systems, but the proposed projects make the same tired and disproven fundamental assumption that we are using the best system, and our current traffic problems are because there is not enough of it. But if it takes more than 50 highway lanes to move the same number of people as one bus lane, adding more of what we have will not solve the problem soon enough. We need a shift in thinking.

There are many obvious issues with buses. But if we look to alternative models like the current system in Curitiba, Brazil, we might begin to adjust our attitude to take full advantage of the infrastructure already in place. Curitiba was able to take a broken sys-

tem and add bus-specific lanes, create nominal waiting times (sometimes buses run as often as every 90 seconds), and design stations that handle all of the fare transactions instead of the buses. Today, 70 percent of commuters use the bus.

An even more progressive model is the developing system in Cape Town, South Africa. During the 2010 World Cup, a fleet of networked buses will receive instructions from a main server that will adjust their routes, frequencies, and patterns due to different ridership demands at different moments. In this model, buses go where they are needed when they are needed, instead of blindly adhering to a rigid model.

If we look to alternative systems like these, we could build upon their proven suc-

cess and we could develop solutions that have greater potential and greater impact than what we are currently developing. Spending \$8 billion on new highway lanes that will move an additional 23 people a minute in a metropolitan population of 12.9 million does not seem effective.

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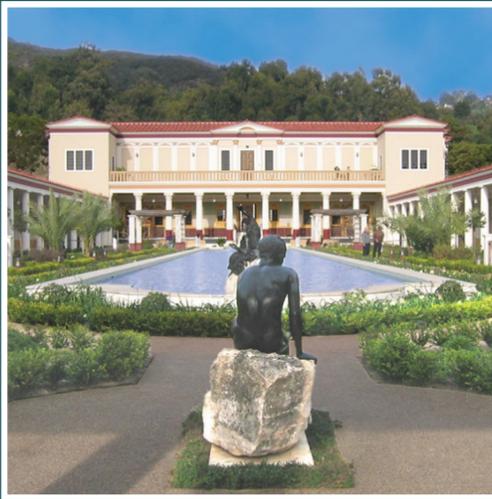
## CORRECTION

A heading for our item on Seattle's Wyckoff Memorial Bridge ("Open: Bridge," CAN 02\_03.11.2009) misstated the bridge's location. The bridge connects to the Museum of Flight, not the Museum of Transit.

# PROJECTS AS DIVERSE AS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



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EAVESDROP: ALISSA WALKER

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO FRANK

A certain someone turned 80 on the last day of February, and 500 of his nearest and dearest were dispatched to the closed-until-Eli Broad-writes-another-check Geffen Contemporary, including **Brad Pitt**, **Arianna Huffington**, and **Laurence Fishburne**. **Frank Gehry** had a cake designed like Disney Hall, a building he is no longer self-conscious about visiting, according to **Paul Goldberger**, who wrote a short piece in *The New Yorker* about the festivities. But the most provocative birthday wishes came via **Frances Anderton's** KCRW show *DnA: Design and Architecture*, where stars from **Ed Moses** to **Esa-Pekka Salonen** revealed what they'd like to give Old Frank for his 80<sup>th</sup>. But we have to say it was **Cindy Pritzker's** answer which, um, aroused the most interest: "Viagra."

## POSTOPOLIS POST-OP

Two years later and 2,462 miles away from its New York origins, Postopolis (sorry, *Postopolis!*) made its second appearance on the left coast. The five-day blogathon was held on the preposterously chilly roof of **Andre Balazs's** Standard Downtown, where it was so cold that fingers froze to laptops and the Belvedere greyhounds were served hot in mugs. Meanwhile, about half of those watching the string of architects, designers, and the odd counter-terrorism detective paraded onto the Astro turf by bloggers **Geoff Manaugh**, **David Basulto**, **Regine DeBatty**, **Bryan Finoki**, **Jace Clayton**, and **Dan Hill**, surely felt another version of the cold shoulder: Out of the 62 people on the podium, only 13 were female. You'll be happy to know that the only panel with a healthy male-to-female ratio featured both your faithful Eavesdropette and fellow *AN* editor **Matt Chaban**.

## OH, THE THINGS WE KNOW

We've heard **Michael Rotondi** is hard at work redesigning the **Flea**-founded Silverlake Conservatory of Music, a job that's apparently on the hush-hush... Students at SCI-Arc have designed a shimmering pavilion for this month's Coachella Music Festival. Perennial pavilion-makers and class instructors **Benjamin Ball**, **Gaston Nogués**, and **Andrew Lyon** assured us that mushrooms will be administered on-site to truly appreciate the structure's nuanced detail...

And then there were three: According to our sources, the Broad Foundation has narrowed its list for their new museum in Beverly Hills down to three firms: It's now a face-off between **Christian de Portzamparc**, **Thom Mayne**, and **Shigeru Ban**, and nary a single Renzo.

SEND TIPS, GOSSIP, AND HALLUCINOGENS TO AWALKER@ARCHPAPER.COM

## BIG CORPORATE COMMISSION GOES TO YOUNG LA FIRM IN PLAYA VISTA

## MY SPACE!

In June, Fox Interactive Media, which includes MySpace and other web companies like Rotten Tomatoes, Fox Sports Interactive, Photobucket, and AskMen, will begin consolidating offices that are currently spread throughout Century City, Santa Monica, and Beverly Hills. The corporation will move into a pair of five-story buildings designed by Johnson Fain and HKS Architects that anchor the Playa Vista development on LA's far west side. Before moving in, Fox hired oKB architects—a three-year-old firm of only two people, partners Jason Kerwin and Shawn Bleet—to complete a 420,000-square-foot renovation.

Though a competition was held last spring that included much larger firms, Kerwin and Bleet, who worked together at Koning Eizenberg, were able to clinch the commission, as they had worked closely with Fox in the past. From this experience, they attained a close understanding of how the digital media company's high-tech employees work, where an exceptional fluidity between workgroups is demanded by the constantly changing nature of technology. For example, social networking could instantly merge with interactive gaming.

"We put together a proposal that was more of a narrative," said Kerwin. "We knew they'd need a brand identity to define what this place was like once they were all together." Their concept evoked a subway map that was more about interesting locations than specific departments.

Through a system of "megastripes" that coat everything from the wallpaper and the upholstery to the carpet, the architects used different colors and different textures (Astroturf, Homasote, and sheer aluminum curtains) as environmental graphics that create a type of indoor urban landscape with distinct "neighborhoods."

Nodes of interaction are further defined by "special moments" that gently suggest uses that might not fit everyone's ideas of workplace activities. The Fox Sports office, for example, has stripes painted onto the floor that might be turned into an impromptu bowling alley. There are rooms in other offices designed for gaming, which could be perfect stages for rock band concerts. Each floor also has a "neighborhood bar" designed for socializing (and drinking), and there is a fifth floor lounge that opens onto a roof deck.

Kerwin and Bleet also understood that employees were concerned about moving to what is essentially an office park, and tried to create an environment that preserves each company's culture (companies will reuse all furnishings from their previous spaces in the name of sustainability). They called this sophisticated, urban aesthetic "glam and grit," which meant leaving much of the concrete framing of the building exposed and pushing the offices to the core of the building to allow public access to the stellar views. This "Hollywood on the inside" mantra carried over to something as mundane as the conduits and cabling in the ceiling—quite extensive in an interactive company. Kerwin describes the tangle of wires as being left "wild," though electricians MDC Engineers artfully arranged the cables to echo the striping throughout the building. **ALISSA WALKER**

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## &gt; SASHI SUSHI + SAKE LOUNGE

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Designer: KAA Design Group



Sashi Sushi + Sake Lounge is not the first, nor the last, establishment to combine modern Japanese design and cuisine. However, unlike other strip-mall sushi joints, which can often be cold or stark, KAA Design Group's interpretation flaunts a warm, sexy, refreshingly feminine flair.

Like a Bento Box, Sashi's lounge and sake bar are housed in one square section of the space, while the main dining area and sushi bar are located in the other. An enclosed terrace stretches the length of both, doubling the size of this otherwise diminutive restaurant. Inspired by Kyoto, Japan, KAA opted for a natural palette that includes striking jarrah wood walls, teak tables, a bobbing and alabaster sushi bar, warm walnut furnishings, and vibrant orange and plum floral cushions and textiles. Bright cherry blossoms are even apparent on the bathroom ceilings. The magenta back bar is reminiscent of the flowers of the Toji Temple's gardens, while bronze lanterns and long benches on the enclosed terrace invoke images of a Kyoto village.

The design creates an aura of subtle allure—passionate without being provocative, evocative without being cloying. The space heightens one's appetite, and Chef Makoto's menu seals the deal. **HAILY ZAKI**

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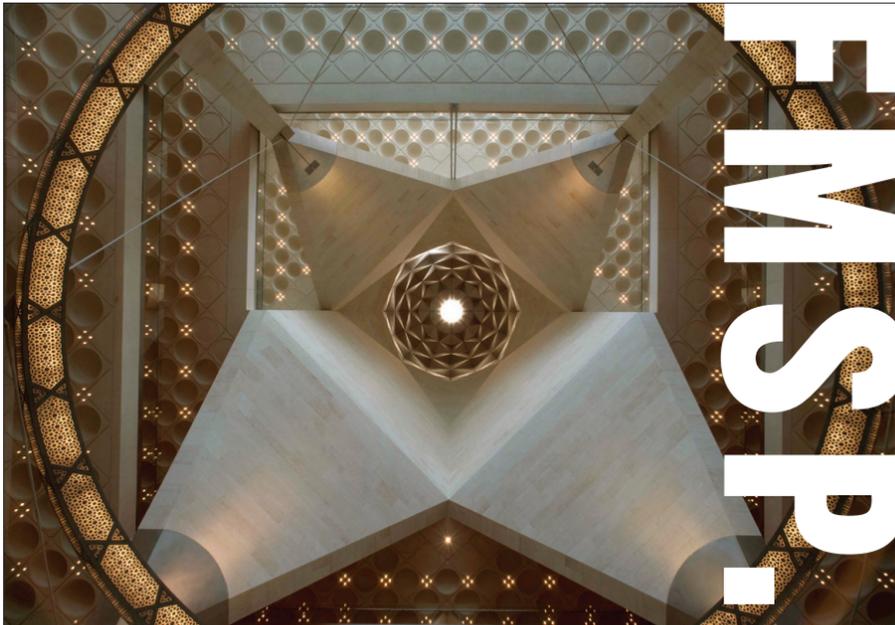
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TIGER WOODS' NEW GOLF RESORT IN MEXICO TAPS LOCAL DESIGN TALENT



COURTESY PUNTA BRAVA

## OUT OF THE ROUGH

If Tiger Woods continues to be plagued by injuries, he could always fall back on his real estate career. He recently helped unveil plans for a huge, \$100 million residential development helmed by top Mexican architects just south of Ensenada, Mexico. Punta Brava (which means "wild point") will open in 2011 with villas, casitas, and a private club tucked into a dramatic 264-acre coastal setting that includes a 1,200-foot peak and ragged sea cliffs. In addition to Woods, the project, developed by the Flagship Group, received backing from former NFL and NBA owner Red McCombs.

The project brings together three notable Mexican firms: project architects Legorreta + Legorreta, ABAX Architecture, and A5 arquitectura. Alejandro Bernardi, an architect with the firm A5, noted that the challenge was striking the right balance between the heritage details found in Mexican architecture and a more contemporary environment.

"The merger of traditional Mexican craftsmanship or *artesanía*, as we call it, with modern needs of architectural function has an amazing result," he said. This look, he added, is achieved by transposing materials like traditional terra cotta with more contemporary exposed concrete, and recreating traditional Mexican wood details like lattice, shades, and shutters with modern lines.

The complex includes 39 estate lots (three-quarter to three acres); 99 villa

residences (4,500 to 7,000 square feet); and 14 club casitas for the guests of residents. The residences play on the vertical terrain of the site, appearing to slide out of the hill-sides in layers. Using stonework that matches existing rock, and landscaping with native plants, the houses are designed to ease the transition from natural to man-made.

The boundaries between indoor and outdoor will be blurred with showers open to the elements and walls that disappear for ocean views. Rooftops planted with indigenous plants will create usable green terraces for the residences above, and thick stone walls will help with energy efficiency. Sustainable development will extend to full-on self-sufficiency: Punta Brava will be completely independent from the Ensenada water grid, using an on-site desalinization plant and reusing all wastewater.

With luck, the investors' finances are sounder than Donald Trump's. The Baja resort bearing Trump's name recently went bankrupt, causing would-be investors to sue. At least Woods seems to be walking with some deep pockets: He has started investing in luxury development projects throughout the U.S., as well as in places like Dubai.

Oh, and the golf course, designed by Woods himself, will be nice, too. Each hole of the 70-par course has a view of the ocean, including eight shots that require driving the ball over the bay. **AW**

PROPOSED SOLAR MEASURE LOSES IN LA

## LET THE SUNSHINE IN

Los Angeles charter amendment B, also known as Measure B, would have authorized the creation of a Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) program requiring the production of at least 400 megawatts of solar energy in the city by 2014. It was narrowly defeated in the city's March 3 election by a margin of 50.5 percent to 49.5 percent, and needed a majority of votes to pass.

Proponents of the measure claimed it would create jobs

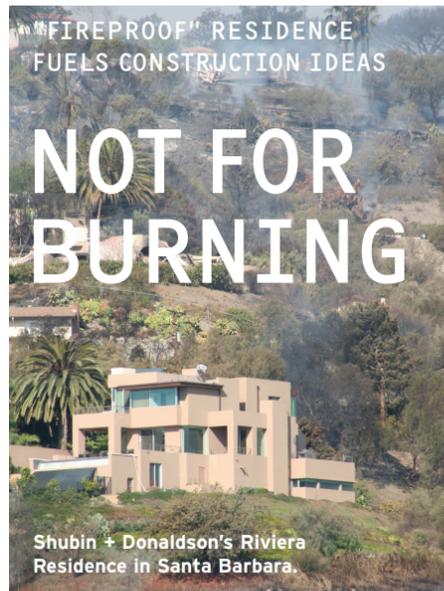
and generate enough solar energy to power 100,000 households. Opponents said that LADWP's efforts would be much more expensive (some estimates said it would add two to four percent more to the average utility bill) and less efficient than relying on experienced private solar installers.

Organizations like the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council had supported the measure, while *The Los Angeles Times* opposed it, calling it

"a grab for political power," and a "transfer of power from a relatively independent board (the LADWP) to the City Council."

The city is now scrambling to find an alternative. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who was re-elected in the same March 3 election, has said he will continue to press the municipal utility to achieve Measure B's goals.

"The mayor is committed and believes the residents of Los Angeles want to pursue solar power," Villaraigosa spokesman Matt Szabo told *The LA Daily News*. But he added, "We recognize the mayor needs to develop a transparent approach to make sure the public is comfortable with what we're doing." **SL**



COURTESY SHUBIN + DONALDSON

fire. "In every case, the client didn't want the house to burn down again and we learned it takes a combination of factors to achieve a house that will survive. There's no magic bullet."

However, there are basic fire prevention guidelines, many of them inherent to the tenets of modern architecture. These include flat roofs; fire-resistant materials like plaster, stone, and metal; and triple-laminated glazed windows with metal frames protected by eaves that are lined and edged in copper. All were part of the Riviera Residence design. Such elements are certainly less flammable than, say, a Tudor mansion with wood siding, or the Spanish Colonial residences that once surrounded the Riviera Residence.

Marked by a glass canopy entrance and floor-to-ceiling windows that give panoramic views of the ocean to the south, the 3,200-square-foot house also has a sprinkler system installed on the roof that the owners made use of when the fire broke out. The landscape design also repelled the fire, following Santa Barbara Fire Department's (SBFD) recommendations to keep flammable vegetation at least 30 feet from the home and use fire-resistant plants.

Even with these precautions, Eli Iskov, a captain at the SBFD, questions whether a fireproof house really exists: "People try to make claims that their construction protected their home, but that's a tough claim to make." Iskov isn't familiar with the Riviera Residence.

"It's not uncommon to have one house standing with everything around it burned," he added. "You can have a 99-percent-fire-resistant structure, but it's no guarantee it's not going to burn. It just takes one tiny weakness and one spark to ignite a house into a pile of debris." **STACIE STUKIN**

The Santa Barbara Tea Fire broke out at approximately 5:50 p.m. on November 13, 2008, ravaging 1,940 acres and destroying 230 homes. On November 14, one house in the tony Riviera neighborhood, designed by Culver City-based Shubin + Donaldson, remained standing among the charred remains of its neighbors.

"We were lucky," explained Robin Shubin, the principal architect on the house now known simply as the Riviera Residence. "Fire obviously has a capricious nature, but you also can build in a way to put the odds in your favor."

Shubin didn't set out to become a fire resistance expert. In 1990, the firm rebuilt four homes that were destroyed in Santa Barbara's Painted Cave Fire. Then in 1993, they rebuilt a house that didn't survive that year's Laguna Beach



COURTESY AC MARTIN

mixed-use complex with two large towers in the heart of downtown LA. If approved, the buildings would be designed by AC Martin Partners, architects of some of the city's tallest buildings. The 1,750,000-square-foot project would be built on the site of the current Wilshire Grand Hotel, at 930 Wilshire Boulevard. The new complex includes a 40-story tower that would feature a luxury hotel of up to 700 rooms topped by several floors of condos, as well as a 1,150,000-square-foot, 60-story office tower, connected with plazas and up to 18,000 square feet of public space.

Renderings suggest structures clad with folded glass facades, tapering inward as their height increases. Their thick, angular profile is similar to that of Morphosis' Phare Tower in Paris. While the project is still not funded or approved—not an easy task in this economic environment—the team has a weighty track record. Thomas Property Group's owner James Thomas has built downtown's Wells Fargo Tower, Library Tower, and Gas Company Tower. Korean Air owns three hotels in Korea and another in Hawaii. Korean Air acquired the Wilshire Grand Hotel in 1989 under the name of Hilton Hotel & Towers. The developer plans to have the scheme ready to go by the time credit markets "start flowing again."

**UNVEILED**

**930 WILSHIRE**

Developers Thomas Property Group and Korean Air have proposed a \$1 billion

Architect: AC Martin Partners  
 Clients: Thomas Property Group and Korean Air  
 Location: Los Angeles  
 Completion: TBA

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Rendering of Civic Park along Grand Avenue.



COURTESY RIOS CLEMENTI HALE

NEW DESIGN REMAINS CONTINGENT ON STALLED FUNDING

# CIVIC PARK OF THE MIND

New designs for Civic Park, the recreational area linked to the \$3.1 billion Grand Avenue development in downtown LA, were presented to the public on March 11. The project, a re-working of three concretized, LA County lots that link the Dorothy

Chandler Music Center to Los Angeles City Hall, has been cited by Los Angeles politicians as a key benefit to the Grand Avenue project, which will receive millions of dollars in public subsidies.

The refined design is the newest

go-round by landscape architects Rios Clementi Hale Studios (RCH). In April 2008, the firm presented two different schemes for the park: A "base scheme" that brought the design within the park's \$56 million budget and served to tie the three

blocks, interrupted by streets and parking ramps, together. The second, an "enhanced scheme," could be filled with more esoteric components—like a community pavilion indicated by colorful sunshades—as additional funds became available.

The firm's alteration of the base park adds more softscape to a project whose earlier iteration had been criticized for preserving too much paving. The most significant change comes to the park's center block, which lies between Hill Street and Broadway, and currently features the "Court of Flags." RCH now offers a broad walkway cutting through the center of the block, flanked by bands of community-like gardens on either side. To represent LA's ethnic diversity, the designers have proposed a 30,000-square-foot patchwork of varied mini-garden plots here. Terming this section of the park a "condensed Huntington Gardens," RCH project manager Tony Paradowski sited a range of botanical species from Asian to African countries. The Court's flags will be relocated to a group of steps and platforms overlooking Broadway to the south. The new design scheme also includes grow boxes throughout this terraced area, to add a hint of the natural environment to the previously barren steps.

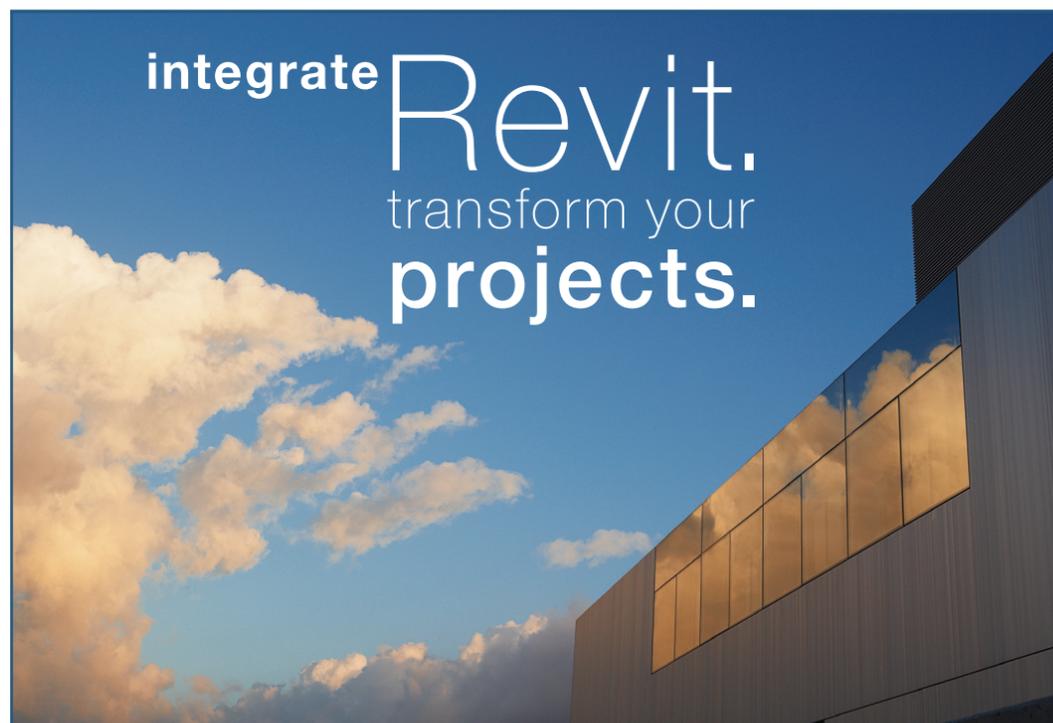
According to Paradowski, the firm also added softscape to a "perform-

mance lawn" situated in the segment of Civic Park that lies between Hill Street and Grand Avenue, removing pathways that had cut through the area in a previous scheme. Gone, too, is trestle work that the firm had previously employed to disguise two intrusive ramps leading to an underground parking garage. Instead, more landscaping will be added between the park and the ramps.

Other new elements will include rows of olive trees sprouting from a hardscape court that forms a new "gathering space" on the west side of the performance lawn. The new scheme also more deeply engages the 1960s-era Arthur J. Will Memorial Fountain, creating a pool that incorporates a wading area and pop-up jets, if the budget will allow. The firm will also reduce the depth of the water to make the fountain more efficient.

The new designs for the park were presented to the LA Community Redevelopment Agency on April 2 and the Board of Supervisors on April 7. The County Board of Supervisors initially designated \$56 million for the park. An additional \$27.1 million in state funds, coming from California's Housing and Emergency Shelter Trust Fund Act, is on hold because that money is tied to construction of phase 1 of the delayed Grand Avenue project.

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**BILLBOARD BROUHAHA** continued from front page Commission—facing the June expiration of their December 2008 temporary sign moratorium—approved a comprehensive new sign ordinance for LA on March 26 by a vote of 6-3. The measure will next go before the LA City Council (as of press time a date for that vote had not been set).

The new ordinance all but bans digital billboards and supergraphics in the city, except in 21 designated sign districts, including most of Chinatown, Hollywood, and downtown, as well as parts of Century City, Boyle Heights, and Miracle Mile. Hoping to address what has been seen as a relatively lax enforcement policy for billboards, the ordinance also calls for much stricter enforcement guidelines, including hefty financial penalties for violators.

"If I said you can park anywhere and never get a ticket, you wouldn't obey parking rules," said Craig Lawson, a land use consultant in LA who represents a number of local retail and residential projects. "It's the enforcement problem that is causing a signage problem." Jeff Aran, director of government affairs for the California Sign Association, agrees: "The city should enforce the ordinance that's already on the books and abandon this ongoing waste of civic energy."

Additionally, the ordinance requires a reduction in existing signage as a condition for establishing the sign districts. While the potential sign districts represent a compromise between competing interests, they've been met with cautious optimism. "This sign ordinance isn't perfect, but it's a big improvement over what's on the books now. Requiring meaningful off-site sign reduction as a condition for establishing sign districts could be a real benefit to neighborhoods suffering from the visual clutter and blight of billboards," said Dennis Hathaway, president of the Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight, a nonprofit opposing most outdoor advertising in LA.

But while the new ordinance, if passed, may satisfy some early opponents, the effect of the new regulations on the architecture and design industry still remains a question. Thus far, many architects have been concerned by the lack of visual analysis undertaken by the city regarding billboards. For instance, said Bob Hale, managing principal at Rios Clementi Hale, "The horizontality in LA makes it different from New York and other cities," but such distinctions haven't been adequately addressed. "It seems to me that the planning department is using the hue and cry of a community bombarded by digital billboards to do a wholesale recreation of the sign code from scratch, even though no one I know of has complained about it," Hale said.

In the view of John Kaliski, president of the AIA/LA chapter and principal at Urban Studio, "Ultimately, this is a visual ordinance." The challenge, he stressed, is approving a sign ordinance that balances agendas to create successful legislation. "In general, we're seeking a balance between creativity in sign districts and sensible citywide guidelines to ensure the integrity of communities." **MARISSA GLUCK**

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Sculpture: Gyre, Thomas H. Sayre, N.C. Museum of Art



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## Far From Controversy

RICHARD BARNES

The long awaited opening of the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA) in Ann Arbor, Michigan on March 28 has afforded Allied Works Architecture of Portland, Oregon the chance to finally move past the uproar over their Museum of Arts and Design in New York.

The \$41.9 million project includes renovating the museum's existing classical-style building and the construction of a new 53,000-square-foot modern wing. The new space will allow UMMA to double exhibition space for its collections where as only 3 percent could be shown at one time in the current galleries and halls. And like many other museums, they are also expanding space dedicated to educational purposes.

The addition is named the Maxine and Stuart Frankel and the Frankel Family Wing, after a main contributor (90 percent of funding for the entire project came from private donors) and is a boxed combination of Wisconsin limestone, glass, concrete, and steel. It adds a 225-seat auditorium, classrooms, and a myriad of galleries. AWA architect and principal Brad Cloepfil noted that, "This finally brings contemporary architecture to the historic." The Frankel Wing opens up onto State Street and the Drag, a main pedestrian walkway that runs through the University of Michigan. The warm tone of the limestone facade subtly mimics the sandstone of the original museum. Strips of glass act as a reveal between differences in material

and defining planar elements of the new building's exterior.

The glass elements of the structure help the building glow like a "lantern" to guide and welcome the school's approximately 40,000 on-campus students and the wider public. "The new wing was all about extroverting" in contrast to what is built, claimed Cloepfil. Use of fritted glass in public spaces, milky white transparent glass in gallery spaces and clear glass maximize natural lighting coming into the building. It also provides openness to the surrounding landscape and community.

The visual dialogue of texture and glass seems to have blurred the lines of more typically organized museums. Director of UMMA James Steward appreciates the difference. "The spaces that are the most gratifying for me are the ones I have the least understanding of," he told *AN*. Apart from its main mission to collect, preserve and present artwork, Steward said he'd like to furnish civic life, or the "connective tissue between a public university and the larger audiences and communities" that are nearby. Thus the wider reach of support in its donors. Private funding came from a large and loyal group of alumni that reached from San Francisco to Seoul, Korea to local supporters in the state of Michigan. It has also allowed the museum to provide free admission for all visitors.

MARTINA DOLEJSOVA

**RETURN OF THE FOX** continued from front page to help secure \$50 million in financing from historic tax credits, grants, and private donations by collaborating with the Oakland Redevelopment Agency, Bank of America, and nonprofit Friends of the Oakland Fox.

The conversion began in 2003 with a design concept by Berkeley-based ELS Architecture and Urban Design. ELS also served as the historic architect for the restoration, while Architectural Dimensions was the lead architect during the renovation.

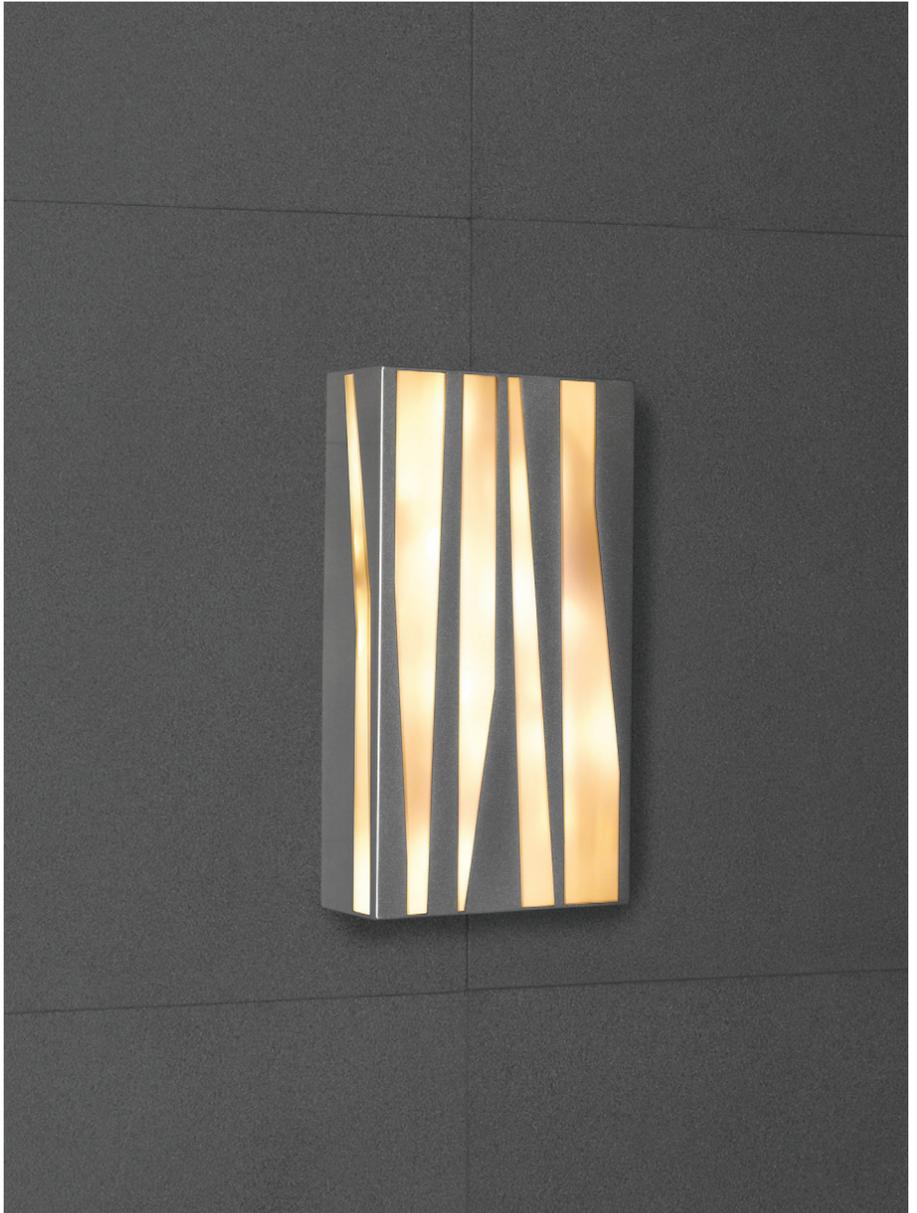
"You have to put yourself in the mind of the original designer," said ELS principal Kurt Schindler, "and try to bring back the original intent for the space." As clues, the architects had only a dozen black-and-white photos from the 1930s and 1940s. Luckily, the original decorative plasterwork and paintings were in fairly good condition, even after abuses from squatters and vandals.

Despite 50 years of accumulated cigar and cigarette smoke, restorers EverGreene Architectural Arts were able to discern the theater's original brilliant interior palette and match it shade for shade. The theater's

ornate, nine-color plaster ceiling had to be re-anchored and repainted with faux wood grain and metallic notes, which took almost a year. Additionally, new lights were fabricated to match the originals. ELS's only major change was installing adaptable seating to create a versatile space that could accommodate various types of performances.

The Fox is now not only a 1,500- to 2,800-seat theater, but also a performing arts school. The Oakland School of the Arts will move into the three-story wings that surround the theater. Designed by local firm Starkweather Bondy Architecture, the renovated structure will house new classrooms, rehearsal space and, in a unique arrangement, permit students use of the theater.

The structure is an anchor for the revitalization of Oakland's re-emerging Uptown Arts and Entertainment District. Its mixed-use program, points out Tagami, assures consistent use at the demographic center of the Bay Area. Only a half block from a BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) stop, the Fox is almost equally within reach from San Francisco or Berkeley. **JIMMY STAMP**



# Silvus Family

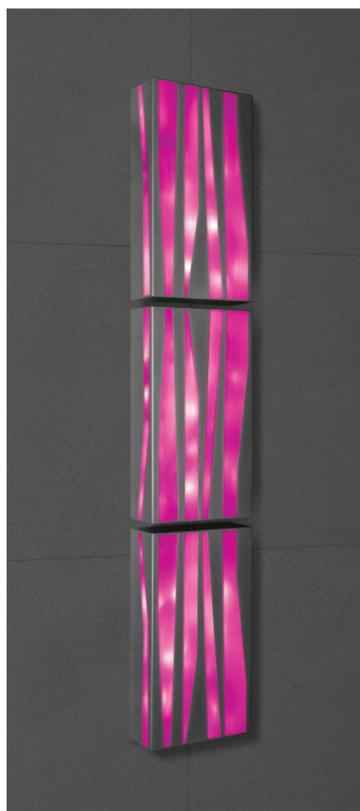
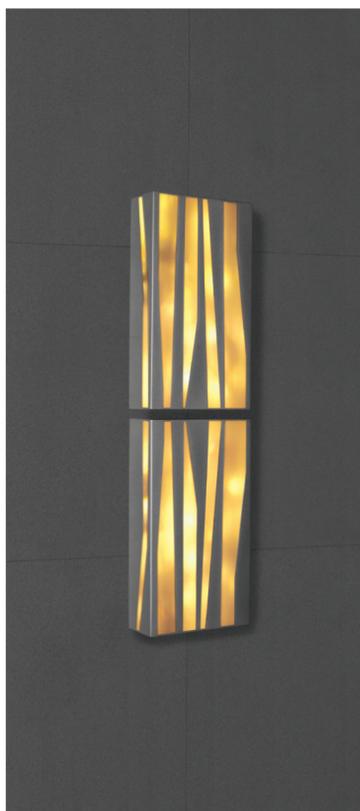
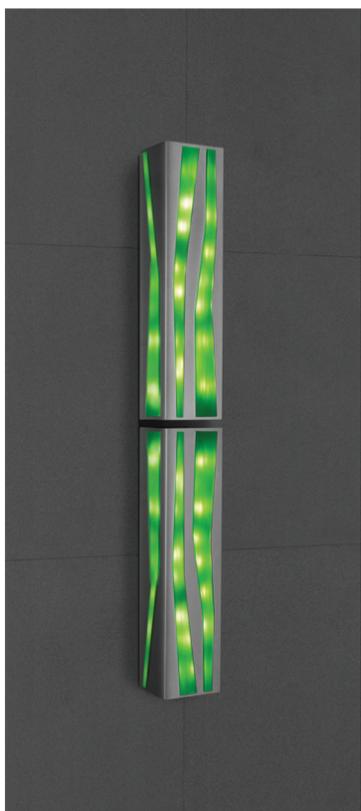
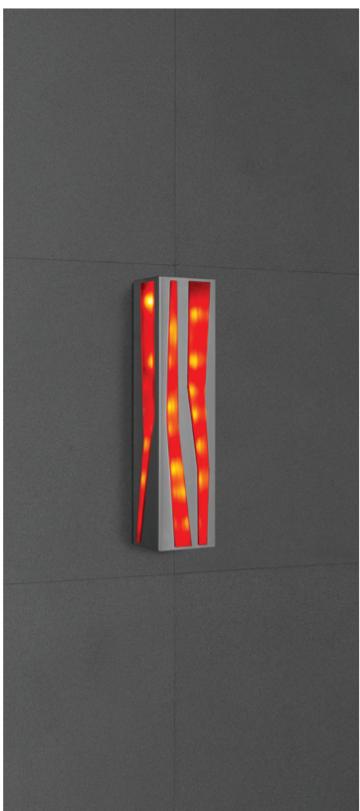
Interior/exterior lighting fixtures designed by Roger Duffy of SOM

The modularity of these luminous elements allows for a wide range of applications—single unit, column or field. Its LEDs and carved inner surface evoke the gentle motion of light across water, filtered by foliage.

Shown: **Silvus30** (30" x 7.5" x 6.5") and **Silvus24** (24" x 13" x 6.5")  
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CLOVIS MEMORIAL DISTRICT  
CONFERENCE CENTER AND THEATERCOMMUNITY SCHOOL OF  
MUSIC AND ARTS

LEFT: DAVID WAKELY; RIGHT: TIM GRIFFITH

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After a number of years in New York working for Barnes, Cavagnero, who received his master's degree from UC Berkeley, returned to California and opened a branch office in 1989 with Barnes' son, John. Their first significant commission was the renovation of the Palace of the Legion of Honor, a joint venture between what had become two distinct firms.

During this period, Cavagnero stuck to what he wanted to do—cultural and institutional buildings. If he didn't think he was the right architect for a commission, he turned it down. For the first decade, much of his practice focused on thoughtful but low-budget interventions within older buildings. His modest but successful Brava Theater Center and Rafael Film Center restoration projects gave him visibility in the local cultural community.

Cavagnero's first ground-up cultural facility came in the form of a

commission from the Community School of Music and Arts in Mountain View. The widely published project, completed five years ago, established him as a force in the cultural typology. The recently completed Clovis Conference Center and Theater, Trinity School expansion in Menlo Park, and San Francisco's Sava Pool (in a joint venture with fellow San Franciscan Paulett Taggart) have all received design awards and cemented his reputation. Staying true to his modernist mentor, all three recent projects are rooted in program, and each expression, although minimal, reflects function. Yet unlike Barnes' work, they all reach out and engage the landscape. The buildings recognize California's clement weather and diffuse light. While Cavagnero favors concrete, his buildings are not brooding like so much of his mentor's work. He does not avoid using wood or plaster if the context warrants it.

But Cavagnero's work, minimal as it is, is not free from controversy, and he doesn't hesitate to tell stories about how local communities often resist him at first. Again, he is patient, and listens and explains clearly the rationale behind his designs. Eventually, enough of the opposition sees what he is trying to do. He treasures the moments on opening day when the people who were initially nervous about a design tell him how proud they are of their new building.

SL

**CHRONICLE BOOKS**  
SAN FRANCISCO,  
CALIFORNIA

The iconic 1920s-era brick building in San Francisco's South End Historic District was an appropriate backdrop for the city's well-known publisher, Chronicle Books. The renovated 54,000-square-foot structure can accommodate 225 people, and is organized according to a careful study of the staff's work patterns, which range from collaborative to solitary. The top floor, with the most dramatic views of downtown, houses the central gathering space, meeting rooms, a library, and a cafe.

**SAVA POOL**  
SAN FRANCISCO,  
CALIFORNIA

This new pool replaces a much loved but deteriorated midcentury pool complex in a public park located in a relatively old neighborhood. A simple 90-degree shift in the building's orientation enabled a strong connection with Stern Grove to the south and distant ocean views, and sheltered the building's oversized multipurpose courtyard from busy 19th Avenue. The siting preserves the existing mature landscaping and trees. A south window wall frames an expansive view of Stern Grove, concealing the street below, while large corner windows look west and north. Cast-in-place concrete is appropriate for a public pool near the ocean. The architects contrast the monumental forms with a carefully designed aluminum curtain wall.

**CLOVIS MEMORIAL  
DISTRICT CONFERENCE  
CENTER AND THEATER**  
CLOVIS,  
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This new complex is intended to bridge an historic downtown to an adjacent civic center. The architects clad this new building in limestone, because it has a monumental presence but is distinct from the dominant brick masonry of the old town center. The first phase of the project, the auditorium, is carefully articulated by the placement of glazing on the street elevation. Large, high windows can illuminate the auditorium or be blacked out. Low windows in the circulation area are activated as people move through the space. A large lobby serves as a pre-function area and exhibit space for veterans' artifacts.

**TRINITY  
ENRICHMENT CENTER**  
MENLO PARK,  
CALIFORNIA

A relatively small 5,200-square-foot expansion gives the independent school a new entry identity and a new hub. The monumental stair mediates two different campus levels and provides the students with a protected space to hang out. New classrooms are positioned to benefit from light on three sides, reducing the need for artificial illumination.

**COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
OF MUSIC AND ARTS**  
MOUNTAIN VIEW,  
CALIFORNIA

The shed roofs of this community complex recall the forms of Ed Barnes' Haystack School, a summer arts colony in Maine. This school, which operates year round and needed a sturdy structure, includes a concert hall, private music studios, visual arts studios, classrooms, and administrative space arranged around an interior courtyard. Concrete offers the mass needed for acoustic privacy, while a carefully delineated system of wood-and-glass infill panels provides a material contrast.

**ODC THEATER CENTER  
RENOVATION AND  
EXPANSION**  
SAN FRANCISCO,  
CALIFORNIA

The historic elevation facing 17th Street in the Mission District will be retained and the 170-seat main theater will be upgraded to meet current codes and offer more flexibility for different kinds of performances. The east side of the site will be replaced by a slender rectangular volume that will house new classrooms, rehearsal spaces, and a cafe adjacent to the theater lobby. The glazed corner will offer views into the cafe and lobby. The first floor of the building will be clad in slate, and the upper volume clad in stucco. The dance studios on the upper floors will be partially visible behind a planted steel screen.

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 22, 2009

The studio shares a plinth with the main house.



When Mark Cigolle and Kim Coleman of LA-based Cigolle X Coleman Architects chose a steeply pitched Pacific Palisades site for their 5,500-square-foot TR+2 StudioHouse, they had a singular goal in mind—design a residence and studio that maximized the breathtaking view of the ocean while responding to the lay of the land.

Their first step was to embed the lower level of the main house into the sloping topography. This concrete-framed plinth rises from the ground and acts as a heat sink that moderates temperature throughout the day. Atop this sturdy base, the architects perched a steel frame whose slim columns allow unobstructed views

through floor-to-ceiling glass panels. Some of the glass panels along the ocean facade slide open, further removing any boundaries to the exterior.

Concrete stairs at the center of the home anchor the square plan. There are no clear boundaries—merely an open-ended volume that allows for flexible use. Upstairs, the home emerges as a series of layers, an ever-evolving space that is able to add or take away privacy. A sliding panel glides across the floor to close off a bedroom, while its honeycomb screen design, composed of cut straws sandwiched between glass panes, maintains a view to the ocean. The polished concrete floors of the lower level and a

maple floor on the upper level create a contrast of cool and warm surfaces.

In addition to the floor-to-ceiling glass panels, a perforated and corrugated zinc rain-screen envelopes the main house. On the upper level, a portion of this cladding, sans perforations, wraps around the underside of the roof and penetrates the interior of the bedroom, bringing a bit of the home's exterior treatment indoors.

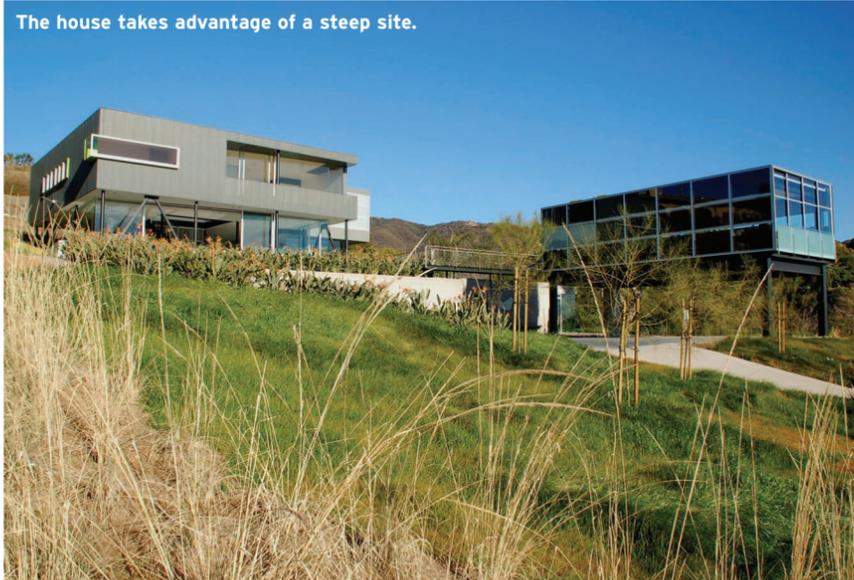
A bridge connects the main house to the 800-square-foot, open-plan studio, which sits perched atop a steel frame that acts as a carport. The studio serves as an office, but can also double as a guesthouse. The core consists of a bathroom and kitchen, while the usable spaces

occupy the perimeter. Photovoltaic panels alternated with thin sheets of glass make up the south-facing wall.

In addition to the studio's solar-power capabilities, Cigolle and Coleman integrated energy efficient technology throughout the home. Because the east-facing facade receives the most light and heat gain, silver screens roll down automatically every day at sunrise. On the roof above the central core of the main house are more photovoltaic panels. Radiant tubing beneath the concrete driveway warms the pool, a minimal rectangular sculptural element that runs along the front of the house.

**CHRISTINA CHAN**

The house takes advantage of a steep site.



In the living space with concrete floors.



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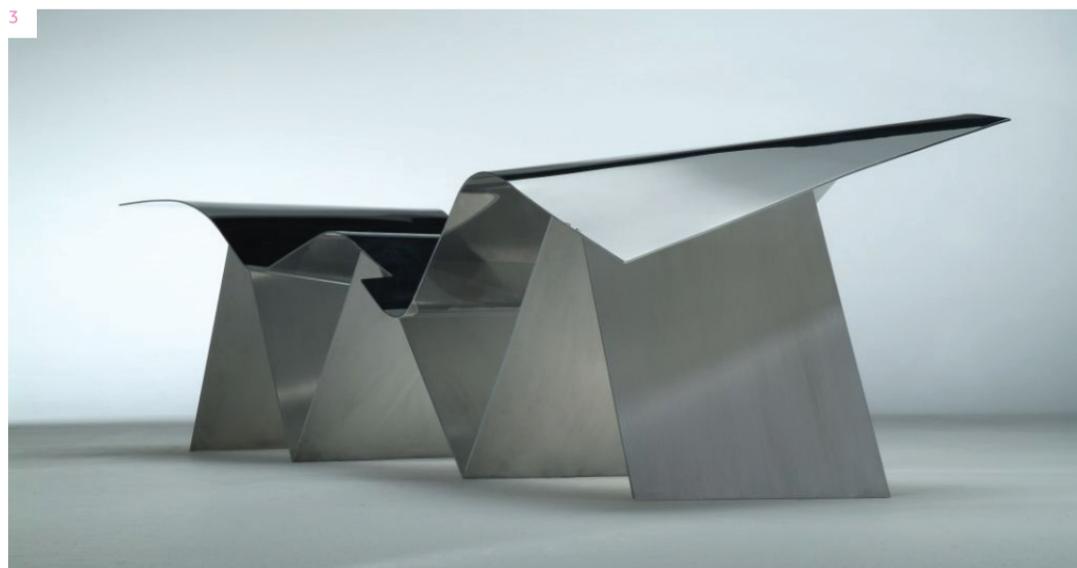
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## SHOW OF HANDS

FROM FRANK GEHRY'S HAND-POLISHED ALUMINUM BENCH TO ZAHA HADID'S SINUOUS TAP, ARCHITECTS ARE DESIGNING FURNISHINGS THAT CELEBRATE CRAFTSMANSHIP AS MUCH AS TECHNOLOGY. BY DANIELLE RAGO

**1 SKIN**  
JEAN NOUVEL  
MOLTENI & C

A departure in scale from his Musée du Quai Branly, French architect Jean Nouvel reinterprets the unique architecture of the museum in his latest collaboration with Italian manufacturer Molteni & C. A sculpted seating system, SKIN synthesizes innovative technology with modern design to create a suspended seat in which the decorative material becomes the very structure of the object. An outer frame composed of tubular pretensioned aluminum with foam rubber inserts acts as the base for the structure and is covered in hide, leather, or double-face felt with geometric incisions. The seating system is available as a sofa, an armchair, and an ottoman, and is currently on view at Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum's *Fashioning Felt* exhibit. [www.molteni.it](http://www.molteni.it)

**2 FOSTER 510**  
NORMAN FOSTER  
WALTER KNOLL

Recently launched at the Cologne International Furnishing Show, Foster and Partners' Foster 510 sofa for the German manufacturer Walter Knoll is a minimalist take on the classic English club. Intricately detailed with stitched piping and drawn-in leather, the sofa subtly references its tailored past yet gestures forward with seamless orthogonal lines. The seat is discreetly supported by steel frame legs, and consists of hundreds of pocket springs that provide maximum comfort. Foster 510 is available in black and white leather, with or without a backrest, and chrome-plated or coated black legs. [www.walterknoll.de](http://www.walterknoll.de)

**3 TUYOMYO**  
FRANK GEHRY  
EMECO

Pennsylvania-based manufacturer of aluminum chairs Emeco has once again joined forces with architect Frank Gehry in the development of Tuyomyo, a large-scale bench, to be debuted during the Salone del Mobile in Milan. Using 80-percent-recycled aluminum components, CNC, and aircraft manufacturing technology, as well as craftsmanship, the bench is composed of a nine-foot, hand-polished "wing" of offset trapezoids supported by a brushed "truss." The sculpted, one-of-a-kind prototype will be auctioned in May and proceeds of the sale will benefit the Hereditary Disease Foundation. [www.emeco.net](http://www.emeco.net)

**4 KITCHEN AND BATHROOM**  
TRIFLOW TAPS  
ZAHA HADID  
TRIFLOW CONCEPTS

In designing the "tap of the future," brassware designer Triflow Concepts looked to London-based architect Zaha Hadid to combine the capabilities of brassware technology with modern design and good engineering. Inspired by the movement of water and the continuous flow of liquid, Hadid captures the performative quality of water in the Kitchen and Bathroom Triflow taps. Fluid in form and ergonomic in shape, the tap blends handle and body into a continuous form composed of curvilinear geometries. [www.triflowconcepts.com](http://www.triflowconcepts.com)

**5 TONALE**  
DAVID CHIPPERFIELD  
ALESSI

Inspired by Oriental ceramics and by Italian painter Giorgio Morandi's study of color, British architect David Chipperfield designed the Tonale table service as a collection of typologically ambiguous objects that are pure in form and function. Using a variety of materials including metal, glass, and wood, the pieces maintain a sculptural elegance while serving as durable and practical objects. Available in a range of muted colors, from pale yellow to deep red earth and dark green, the set consists of various-sized plates, bowls, and cups, as well as a carafe, beaker, and tray. [www.ales.si.com](http://www.ales.si.com)



The green roof of The Flat in downtown LA.

for green roofs.

Still, Jill Sourial, environmental projects manager for City Councilman Ed Reyes (Sourial helped Rochas navigate the approvals process for his green roof), warns that the city won't become the next Chicago, where green roofs are everywhere. Nor does she think that green roofs—which can be costly, and provide little storm water runoff benefits in a low-rain area like LA—will ever become mandatory. "It's a good option for creating new open spaces, and for heat minimization, but in LA, it's more for people who have a green aesthetic and want to promote that," she said. City environmental supervisor Jose Gutierrez is more upbeat, looking at green roofs' city-wide benefits, which could include an overall drop in air temperature, lower heating and cooling costs and less related emissions, new habitats for birds and insects, and a beautification of the city.

"Would you rather look at concrete on the top of the building next to you, or a beautiful garden?" he asked. **SL**

**CROPPING UP** continued from front page crop includes thyme, kale, artichokes, tomatoes, chard, Thai basil, four types of mint, and Walla Walla onions.

"It's really an unexplored program," said Rochas, noting that most green roofs are basically flat, and not necessarily architectural. He likens his design to a series of rolling hills. "Because it's a mix of garden and sculpture, it's something you can enjoy looking at, as well as using," he said.

So is this the beginning of a green roof revolution in LA? Maybe not a revolution, but there are more planted roofs on the way. The city is putting a planted covering on its new Council District 9 constituent center in South LA, and a restroom in the

new Vista Hermosa Park downtown has a green roof on top of it. According to the city's Department of Environmental Affairs, the LA Zoo is also investigating a green roof for its upcoming reptile and insect center, and the city is considering installing a partial green roof above City Hall, although neither project has yet received funding.

To encourage more in the future, the Department of Environmental Affairs in 2007 published a Green Roof Resource Guide, laying out the best ways to create a green roof and get it through the regulatory process. Furthermore, the city's new Green Building Ordinance, passed last fall, requires that new buildings pass a green checklist, and awards points

## AT DEADLINE

### SFMOMA GETTING BIGGER

Despite hard times, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art has announced plans to double the exhibition space for its growing collections. The museum chose San Francisco-based Gensler to plan the 50,000-square-foot addition. (Arthur Gensler is vice chairman of SFMOMA's Board of Trustees.) As proposed, the new addition will not alter the Third Street view of the 1995 Mario Botta building. The new wing will primarily be located on a series of lots that back onto Natoma Street, and bridge over a parking area on Hunt Street, a dead end. The expansion will allow the museum to consolidate its offices, 60 percent of which are not on site. Last summer, museum trustees put fundraising for the expansion on hold when the economy took a downturn and there is not yet a dollar figure attached to the expansion, nor has a capital campaign been established or design architect chosen.

### FREEWAY CAP FOR SANTA MONICA?

On March 24, the city of Santa Monica approved submittal of a \$250,000 grant application to the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) to study the feasibility of a freeway cap over the 405 Expressway between 17<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> avenues. The deck would connect areas between the park and south of the freeway, creating up to seven acres of additional land area for the city. The Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) envisions the freeway deck as "an opportunity to expand open space, explore joint development, and repair connections with neighborhoods that were broken by construction of the freeway."

### PRESIDIO DISNEYFIED

The heirs of Walt Disney are preparing to unveil the \$112 million Walt Disney museum in San Francisco's Presidio in October. The project would be located inside an historic building just down the street from the site of the proposed Contemporary Art Museum of the Presidio, the plans of which are still in jeopardy.

### TELLING SIGN

Meruelo Maddux Properties, one of the largest developers in Los Angeles, announced in late March that it was filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The company owns many of the city's downtown residential projects, including The Union Lofts, Southpark Towers, Olive Street Towers, and the Transamerica Lofts. Excluded from the filing is a 35-story apartment tower that the company is building on 9<sup>th</sup> Street near the Staples Center.

## NEW PRACTICES NEW YORK/2008

Organized by: The AIA New York Chapter and the Center for Architecture Foundation

A portion of **New Practices New York 2008** will be on view April 29 – May 2, 2009 at the San Francisco Center for Architecture + Design (130 Sutter Street, Suite 600, San Francisco).

The first-ever **New Practices San Francisco** exhibition will be opening at the New York Center for Architecture (536 LaGuardia Place) on June 4, 2009 and will travel to the San Francisco Center for Architecture + Design in November.

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**New Practices New York 2008** was the second juried portfolio competition and exhibition in a biennial tradition sponsored by the New Practices Committee of the AIA New York Chapter. **New Practices** serves as a platform to recognize and promote new, innovative and emerging architecture firms within New York City and abroad that have undertaken unique and commendable strategies – both in the projects they undertake and the practices they have established.

New Practices New York 2008 winners:

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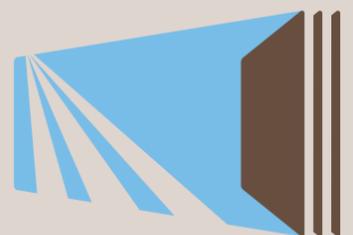
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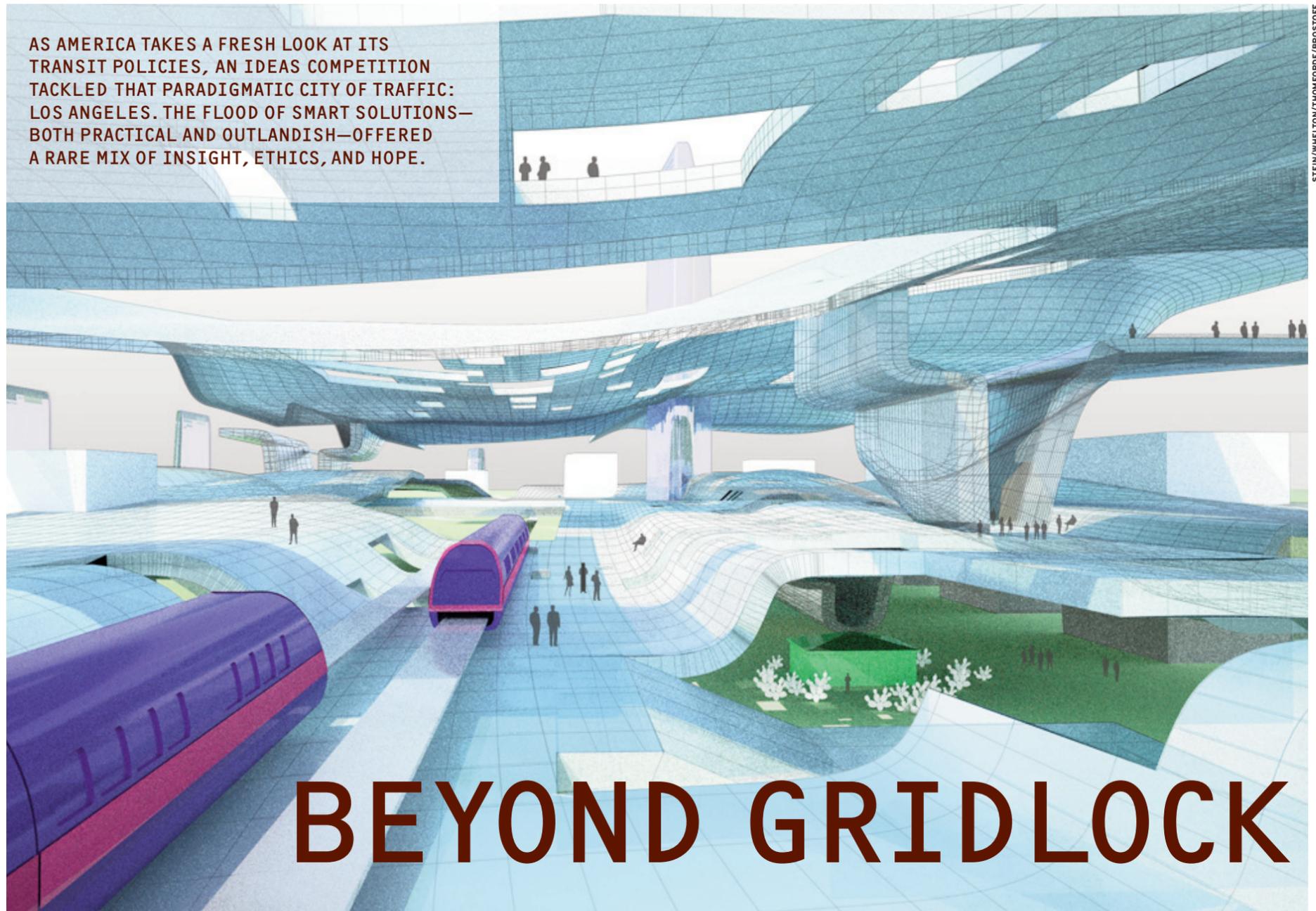


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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 22, 2009

AS AMERICA TAKES A FRESH LOOK AT ITS TRANSIT POLICIES, AN IDEAS COMPETITION TACKLED THAT PARADIGMATIC CITY OF TRAFFIC: LOS ANGELES. THE FLOOD OF SMART SOLUTIONS—BOTH PRACTICAL AND OUTLANDISH—OFFERED A RARE MIX OF INSIGHT, ETHICS, AND HOPE.



STEIN/WHELTON/THOMFORDE/BROSTOFF

# BEYOND GRIDLOCK

On March 21, *The Architect's Newspaper* and the Los Angeles-based Southern California Institute for Future Initiatives, a program of SCI-Arc, announced the winners of their open ideas competition, *A New Infrastructure: Innovative Transit Solutions for Los Angeles*.

Inspired by LA County Measure R—a half-cent sales tax hike passed last November that promised up to \$40 billion in transit funding for the city—the competition offered architects, engineers, and planners a chance to rethink LA's transit infrastructure from a neighborhood scale and from far-reaching, system-wide perspectives. The contest attracted 75 proposals from around the world, providing a refreshing look at a set of problems all too often met by sighs of weary futility among transit professionals.

Most of the winning schemes took a big-picture approach to reintegrating this famously far-flung city. The professional winner *Más Transit* (pictured above), by Joshua Stein, Aaron Whelton, and Jaelyn Thomforde with Jacob Brostoff, proposed

a system in which high-speed regional and local rail would be seamlessly linked via a raised infrastructure above the city. The design would cluster nodes of density around its inventively layered network, while making San Diego less than an hour away by train. The student winner, Ryan Lovett, tackled transit issues in concert with rezoning to incorporate work, production, and living into the same dense districts, a simple development strategy that solves multiple environmental problems.

Many of the best ideas to emerge from the competition were repeated across the spectrum. The second-place student winners, Alan Lu and Yan-ping Wang, proposed a modular mobile transit vehicle, which, like one proposed by Lovett, could travel both on and off a track. Meanwhile, the third-place professional winner, Osborn's *Mag Luv* proposal, also integrated high-speed rail with local mass transit systems, including zip cars and other individually-oriented transit technologies, converging on 12 centers of transportation and activity.

Several of the top prize winners—like Ben Abelman, Vivian Ngo, and Julia Siedle's *Freeways Are For Trains*—proposed using LA's existing freeway system as a base from which to build new transit and dense urban development. Others, like Fletcher Studio's *Infrastructural Armature*, looked at merging transit with other existing infrastructure, like water and sewer networks, from which “infrastructural tentacles” could grow. Roe Goodman's honorable-mention-winning student proposal suggested transit stations that could double as neighborhood centers, offering markets, bike storage, and other amenities. NBBJ's *Green Tech City* scheme, which won a professional honorable mention, proposed linking new stations within a greenbelt, accompanied by zoning in the area to encourage the burgeoning green-tech sector in the city.

Among the organizers' special selections was Odile Decq's eye-popping *Fast, Fluid & Free*, which proposed an electric-car transport system modeled on free bike-sharing systems developed in

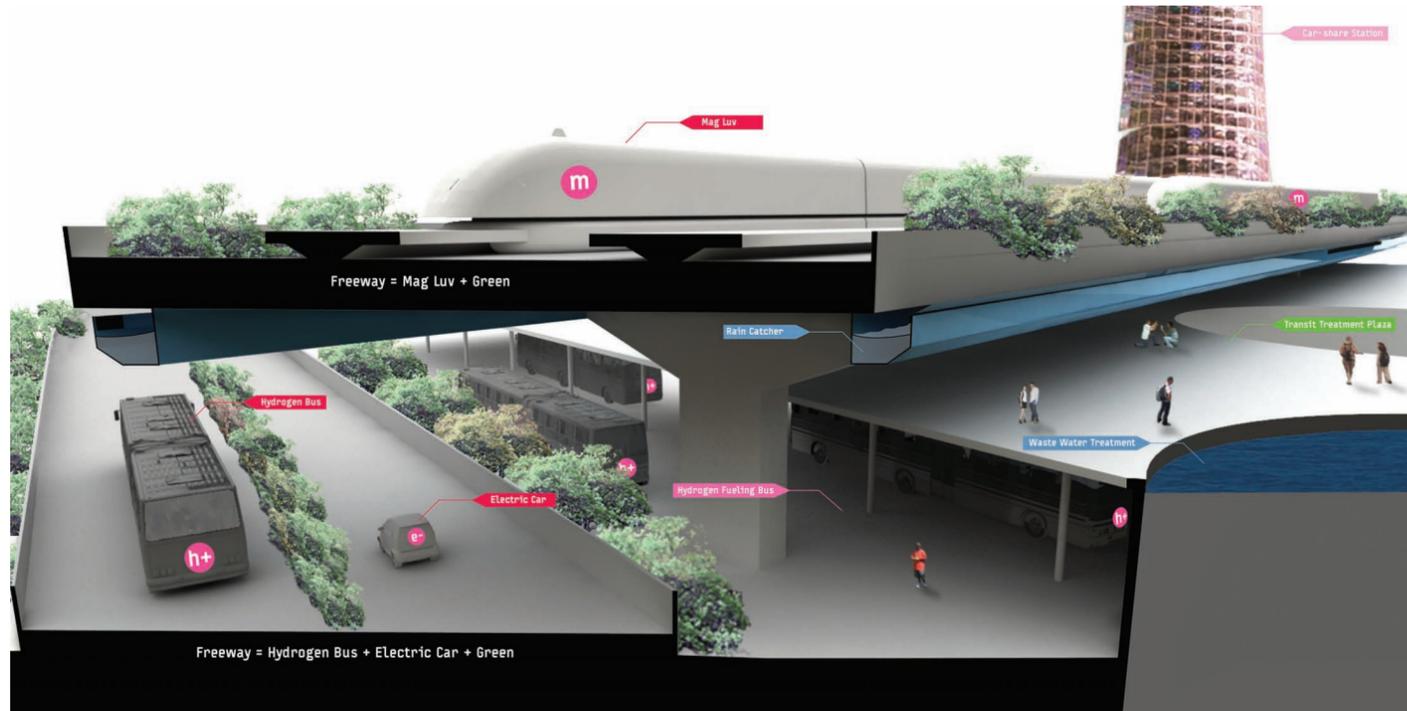
Europe, along with mixed-use linkages spanning the freeways with parks, commerce, and car and bike stations. Wes Jones' *The Answer Is Not Mass(ive) Transit* took a contrarian approach, suggesting that instead of resource-intensive infrastructure, planners consider small-scale solutions like the Elov, a pod-like electric vehicle that fits into less space than a smart car and reduces the volume of traffic by serving the same number of occupants in only one quarter of the space. (A complete list of winners is available at [www.archpaper.com/newinfrastructure](http://www.archpaper.com/newinfrastructure).)

Outside of new ideas, the competition encouraged conversations among transit players, designers, and community leaders, who don't speak together enough when transit decisions are made. The jury included architects Thom Mayne, Eric Owen Moss, and Neil Denari; but also Aspet Davidian, director of project engineering facilities for the LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority; Cecilia V. Estolano, chief executive officer of CRA/LA; Gail Goldberg, director

of planning for the City of Los Angeles; Roland Genik, urban planner and transit designer; and Geoff Wardle, the director of advanced mobility research at Art Center College of Design.

Most agreed that the discussion about transit in the city needed to better tap into the design and urban planning fields. But they also argued that the whole issue needed rethinking from a coordinated, regional perspective. Mayne pushed for a change in how we see the city at large, while Denari pressed for proactive—not reactive—planning, and Goldberg pushed for more long-term thinking. Moss pointed out that Measure R only detailed rail and road improvements, but not how such improvements would affect the city. He deplored a city balkanized by local politics, without an overall vision. “We're known in LA for experimental architecture,” he said. “But when it comes to urban planning, we're about as meek a place as there is.”

**SAM LUBELL IS CALIFORNIA EDITOR AT THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER.**

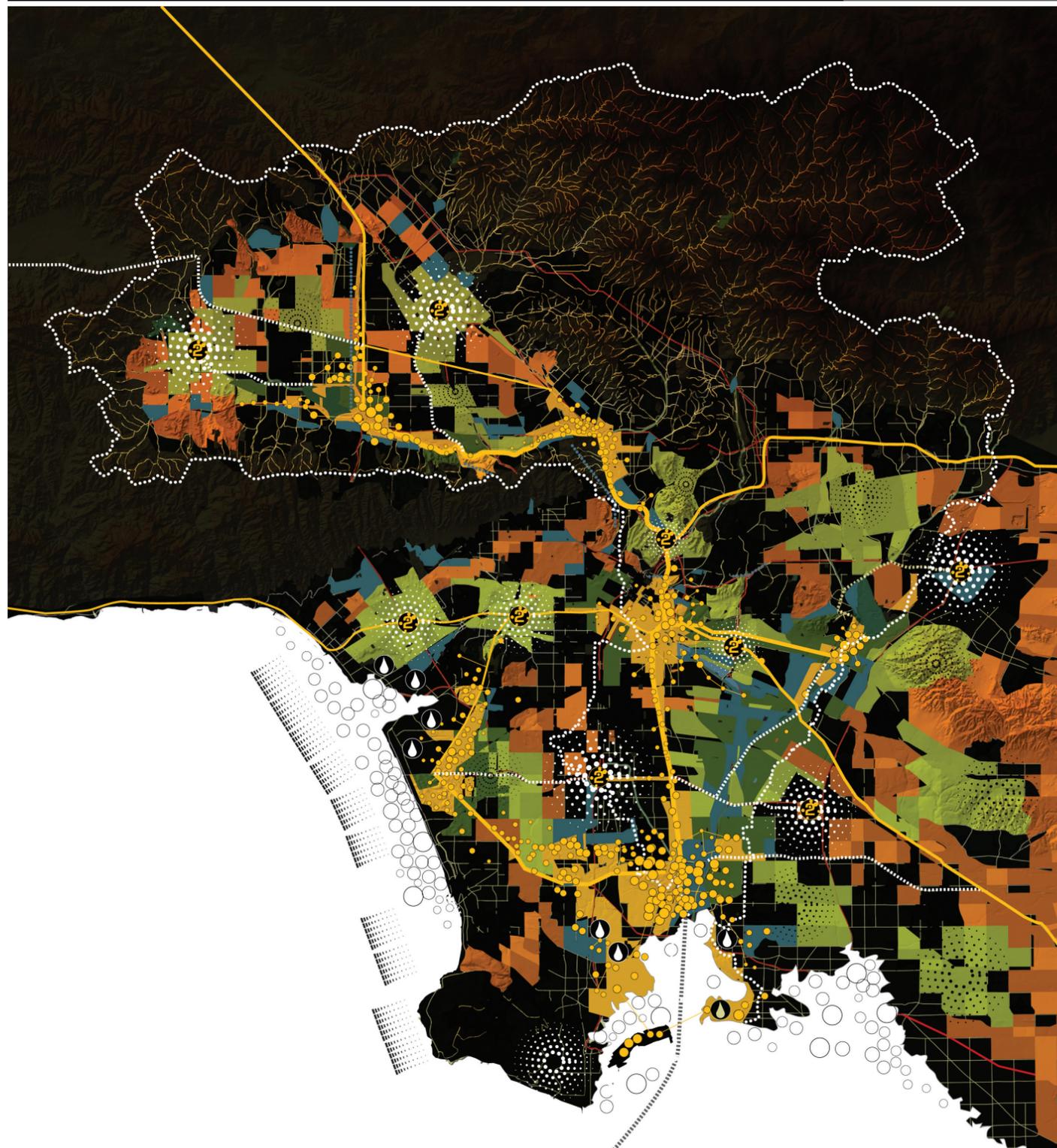


PROFESSIONALS

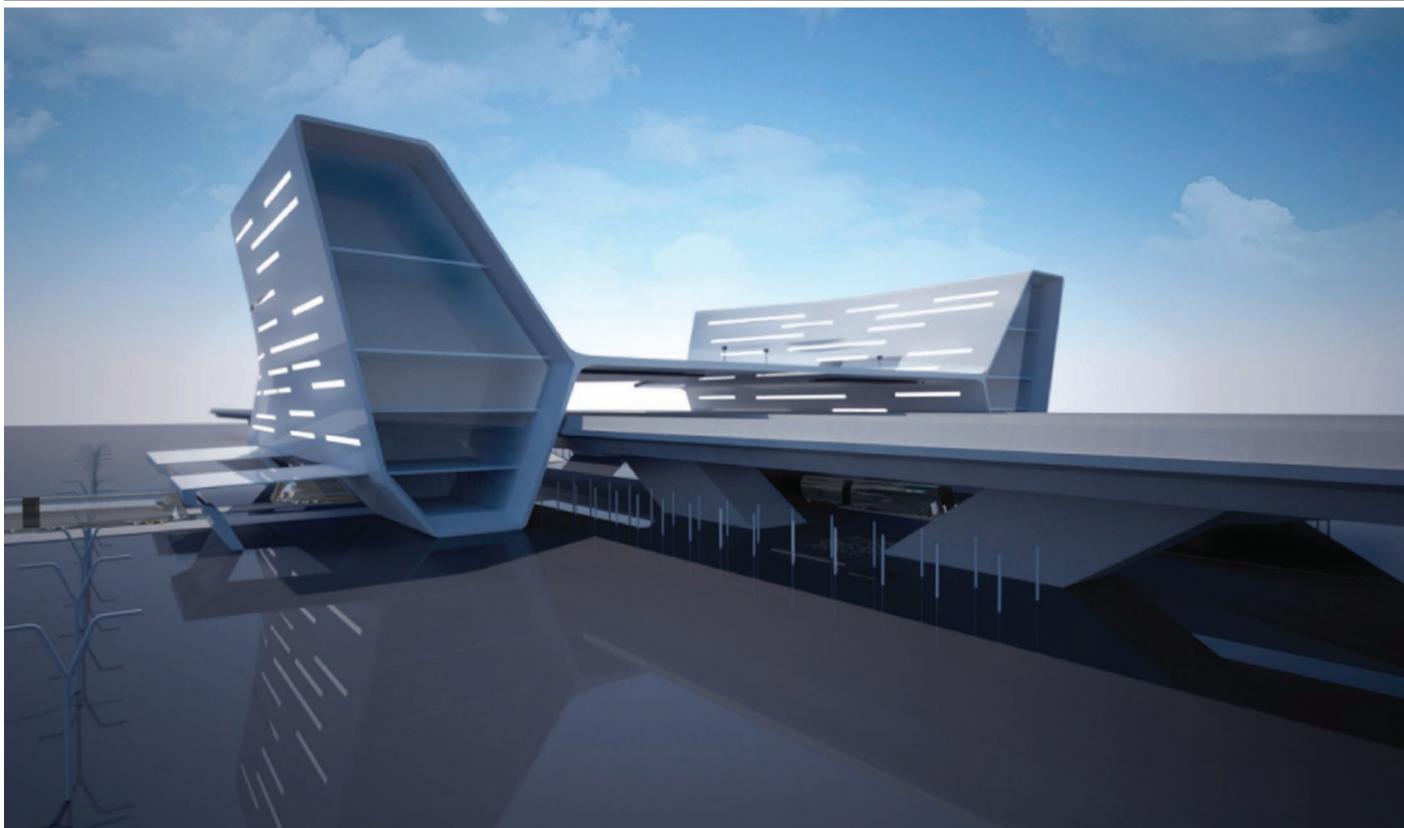
**First Prize (previous page):**  
*Más Transit* by Joshua G. Stein/Radical Craft, Aaron Whelton/AAW Studio, and Jaclyn Thomforde with Jacob M. Brostoff. *Más* is regional high-speed rail for Los Angeles with a landscape to match. Promoting dense, organic development, it diversifies the communities in the built environment, making travel less necessary, easier, and more predictable, while bypassing roadway congestion through a new raised infrastructure. Looping around the city, with connections to subways and buses, *Más* knits together local and inter-regional commuting by linking with the California High Speed Rail network.

**Second Prize (bottom):**  
*Infrastructural Armature* by Fletcher Studio (David Fletcher, Dylan Barlow, Ryan Chandler, Daniel Phillips, and Tobi Adamolekun). Recognizing the vital role that mobility, water, and sewage will play in Los Angeles' future, this proposal reorganizes the city along the matrices of transportation, water, and sewer networks. Only by investing in a core armature of new bundled infrastructures will the city survive the impending reality of peak water and peak oil.

**Third Prize (top):**  
*Mag Luv* by Osborn (Holly Chisholm, Kate Harvey, Armen Isagholi, Takeshi Kobayashi, Michael Pinto, Jared Sopko, Esmeralda Ward, and Yuju Yeo). This scheme proposes eroding a portion of the freeway and supplanting it with a new object, mode, and form for adoration—*Mag Luv*. The high-speed, magnetic levitation peripheral train appropriates freeway, right of way, and "dream space" to become the megastructure of the Los Angeles transit system. The loop circumnavigates the city, providing 12 hubs of activity, transportation, and power production.



WINNERS



**STUDENTS**

**First Prize (top):**  
*Glocalizing Los Angeles* by Ryan Lovett. In conjunction with newer, faster transit systems, this plan proposes a simple development strategy that collapses the distances between all the elements needed to support our lifestyles. It suggests that workplaces, as well as the production of food and goods, be within walking distance.

**Second Prize (middle):**  
*Modular Diffusion* by Alan Lu and Yan-ping Wang. In a car, the passenger can go from any given point to another in one continuous trip. To achieve such mobility in tandem with an increase in roadway capacity, this team introduces a mass-transit system based upon a modular transit vehicle (MTV for short). This system would allow passengers to board from a wide range of street stops, travel along the freeway, and take the freeway exit closest to the destination and drop passengers off there, all in one ride.

**Third Prize (bottom):**  
*Freeways Are For Trains* by Ben Abelman, Vivian Ngo, and Julia Siedle. This team believes that Los Angeles need not invest in a "new" public transportation system, but transform its existing freeways into "trainways." By taking over freeways with rail tracks, a comprehensive expansion of the LA Metro will respond to the projects that are suggested in Measure R and will commence at a much lower cost by taking advantage of the rights-of-ways established by the freeway.

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 22, 2009

PROFESSIONALS

**Top left:**  
*Go Mixed-Modal* by Tom Beresford. In 2000, LA Metro gambled that it could increase both ridership and transit efficiency by making a bus a little more like a subway: The Metro Rapid. *Mixed-Modal* suggests that any bus has the potential to go "local," "rapid," or "express" at coordinated points along its route to flexibly serve transit demand. A bus may go "express" by entering grade-separated lanes shared with planned or existing rail modes, with the help of new frictionless electric power-transfer technologies and hybrid rail/road drive surfaces. The project offers a vision of what the Expo line might look like if it operated as the "trunk" of a regional transit tree with "branches" extending up and down existing Metro Rapid lines.

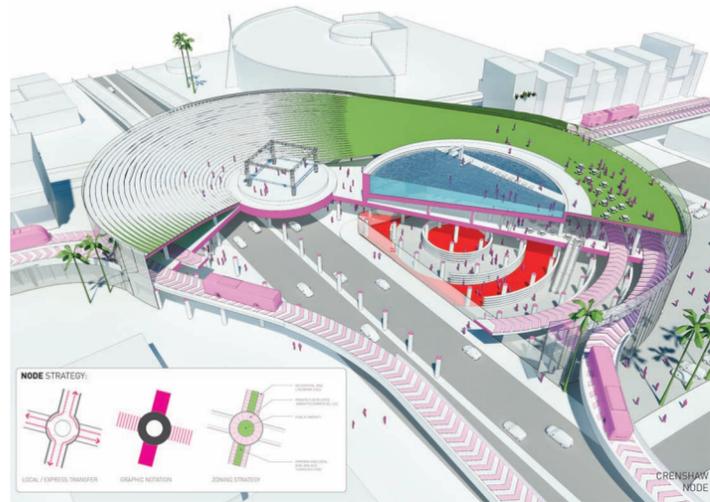
**Top right:**  
*Green Tech City* by NBBJ (Harry Bairamian, Hrant Bairamian, So Eun Cho, Tony Choi, Scott Hunter, Byoung Kweon, Anthony Manzo, Nnamdi Ugenyi, Jonathan Ward, and Tim Zamora). This scheme creates green-tech districts along the Westside expansion corridor stretching from downtown to Santa Monica. The plan takes on the shape of a living organism, including a skeletal system composed of new green districts between stations; a respiratory system that includes a 2.5-mile park along the length of the transit system; and tendons, which are linkages to the community, including freeway bridges, urban parks, and agricultural zones.

**Center left:**  
*Mobility on Demand* by RSA (Dwight Bond, Diane Tadana, and James Wong). A combination of rail, light-rail, smart cars, bike share, and different bus systems will provide easy connections in and between cities. Multiple vehicle types provide users with choices: A commuter might ride the train to work, pick up a smart car to attend a meeting, go to the gym, or pick up groceries before going back home. In creating a dense commercial and residential environment to support and foster the inevitable expansion of the transit system, the scheme also investigates alternative development strategies that are adaptable to the ever-changing conditions of urban culture.

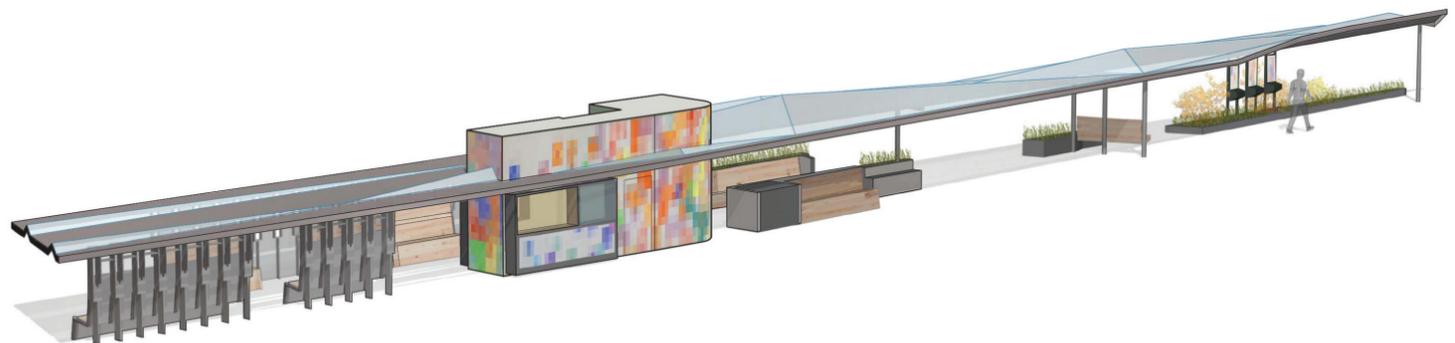
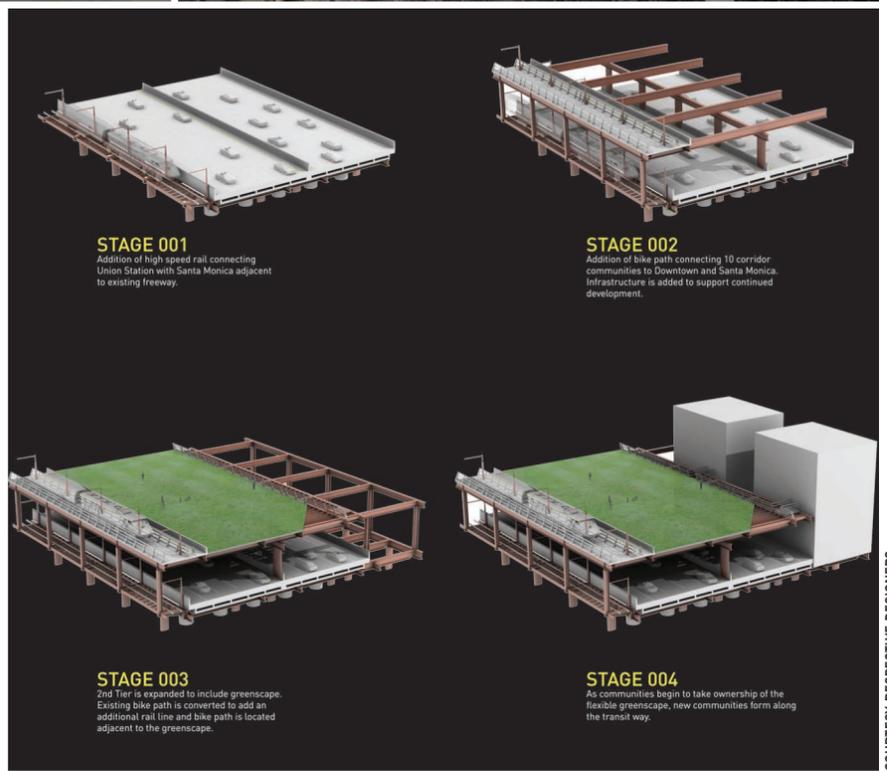
STUDENTS

**Right:**  
*Interstate 10* by Tim Do, George LaBeth, and Randy Stogsdill of SCI-Arc. This scheme proposes a reconsideration of the existing freeway corridor as a multi-function transit corridor. The freeway would be retrofitted with a new structure that over a series of stages adds layers of public and environmentally friendly transit options. As this second tier becomes more populated, greenscaping is added, converting the freeway corridor into a vibrant public space.

**Below:**  
*Feeding Community and the Gold Line* by Roe Goodman of the University of British Columbia. If we are to develop along a freeway, we need to keep in mind that the surrounding residential neighborhoods need to access the train in a way that encourages a shift away from car dependency. This entry proposes a string of micro-scale infill developments along a bus line that feeds into the Eastside Transit Corridor. Positioned along newly developed commercial corridors, stops have waiting rooms that store bikes, serve as markets, and create a center of community.



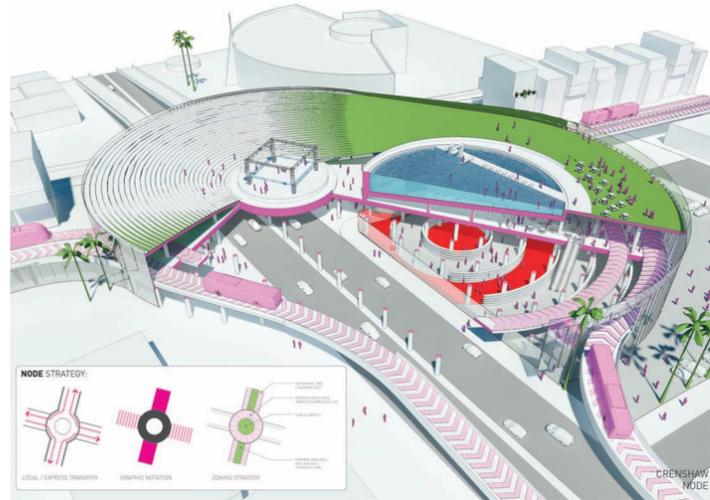
HONORABLE MENTION



THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 22, 2009

PROFESSIONALS

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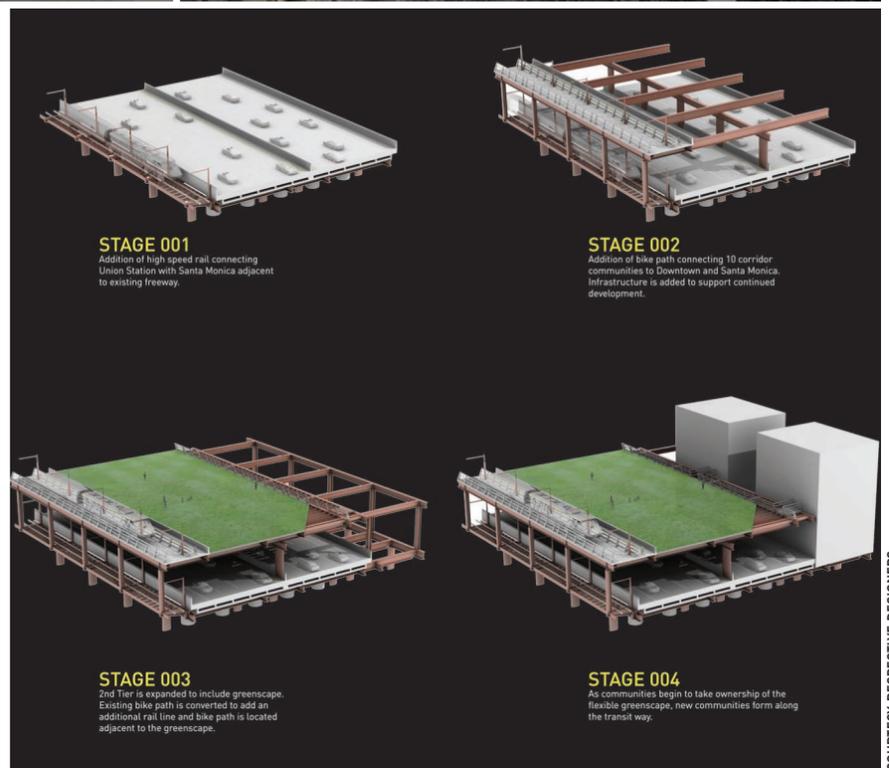


**Center left:**  
*Mobility on Demand* by RSA (Dwight Bond, Diane Tadana, and James Wong). A combination of rail, light-rail, smart cars, bike share, and different bus systems will provide easy connections in and between cities. Multiple vehicle types provide users with choices: A commuter might ride the train to work, pick up a smart car to attend a meeting, go to the gym, or pick up groceries before going back home. In creating a dense commercial and residential environment to support and foster the inevitable expansion of the transit system, the scheme also investigates alternative development strategies that are adaptable to the ever-changing conditions of urban culture.



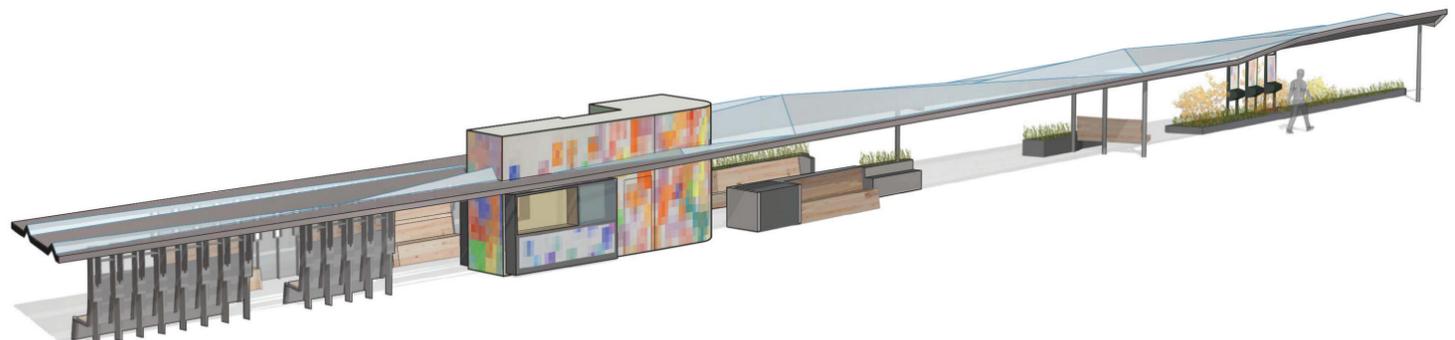
STUDENTS

**Right:**  
*Interstate 10* by Tim Do, George LaBeth, and Randy Stogsdill of SCI-Arc. This scheme proposes a reconsideration of the existing freeway corridor as a multi-function transit corridor. The freeway would be retrofitted with a new structure that over a series of stages adds layers of public and environmentally friendly transit options. As this second tier becomes more populated, greenscaping is added, converting the freeway corridor into a vibrant public space.



HONORABLE MENTION

**Below:**  
*Feeding Community and the Gold Line* by Roe Goodman of the University of British Columbia. If we are to develop along a freeway, we need to keep in mind that the surrounding residential neighborhoods need to access the train in a way that encourages a shift away from car dependency. This entry proposes a string of micro-scale infill developments along a bus line that feeds into the Eastside Transit Corridor. Positioned along newly developed commercial corridors, stops have waiting rooms that store bikes, serve as markets, and create a center of community.



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## APRIL

WEDNESDAY 22

## LECTURE

**Leo Marmol**  
**Prefab Housing: From Craftsman to Contemporary**  
7:30 p.m.  
Art Center College of Design  
1700 Lida St., Pasadena  
www.artcenter.edu

THURSDAY 23

## EVENT

**Transparent Cities**  
7:00 p.m.  
The Hammer Museum  
10899 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.hammer.ucla.edu

FRIDAY 24

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Eric Owen Moss Architects:**  
**If not now, when?**  
SCI-Arc Gallery  
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles  
www.sciarc.edu

## FILM

**52nd San Francisco International Film Festival**  
Through May 7  
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive  
2625 Durant Ave., Berkeley  
www.bampfa.berkeley.edu

## EVENT

**Petchitecture 14**  
7:00 p.m.  
The Fairmont San Francisco  
950 Mason St., San Francisco  
www.aiaf.org

SATURDAY 25

## LECTURE

**Sidney Williams**  
**E. Stewart Williams**  
10:00 a.m.  
Palm Springs Art Museum  
101 Museum Dr.,  
Palm Springs  
www.psmuseum.org

## EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Bill Jensen, Michael Lazarus,**  
**Aaron Morse, et al.**  
**Prescriptions**  
ACME.  
6150 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.acmelosangeles.com

Matthew Picton

**Postwar Landscapes**  
Solway Jones Gallery  
5377 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.solwayjonesgallery.com

## EVENT

**Ignite the Power of Art!**  
11:00 a.m.  
Laguna Art Museum  
307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach  
www.lagunaartmuseum.org

## WITH THE KIDS

**Greening the Earth Day & Family Arts Festival**  
10:00 a.m.  
Armory Center for the Arts  
145 North Raymond Ave.,  
Pasadena  
www.armoryarts.org

SUNDAY 26

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Urban China: Informal Cities**  
The Hammer Museum  
10899 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.hammer.ucla.edu

MONDAY 27

## EVENT

**Career Strategy Roundtable:**  
**Informal Peer-to-Peer**  
**Discussion on Weathering**  
**the Economic Downtown**  
12:00 p.m.  
AIA San Francisco  
130 Sutter St., San Francisco  
www.aiaf.org

TUESDAY 28

## LECTURE

**Jeffrey Kipnis and Thom Mayne**  
**Conversations on Urban China**  
7:00 p.m.  
The Hammer Museum  
10899 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.hammer.ucla.edu

WEDNESDAY 29

## LECTURE

**Four x Four: 4 Architects/**  
**4 Regions/4 Visions/**  
**4 The Future**  
5:00 p.m.  
Häfele America  
SF Showroom  
151 Vermont St. #9,  
San Francisco  
www.hafele.com/us

## SYMPOSIUM

**Ethical Dilemmas in the**  
**Conservation of Modern and**  
**Contemporary Art**  
**Edward Goldman,**  
**Matthew Gale, et al.**  
7:00 p.m.  
The J. Paul Getty Center  
1200 Getty Center Dr.,  
Los Angeles  
www.getty.edu

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**New Practices New York**  
**2008 Exhibition**  
AIA San Francisco Gallery  
130 Sutter St., Suite 600,  
San Francisco  
www.aiaf.org

THURSDAY 30

## CONVENTION

**AIA 2009 National**  
**Convention and Design Expo**  
Through May 2  
The Moscone Center  
747 Howard St.,  
San Francisco  
www.aiaconvention.com

## FILM

**CalArts Film/Video Showcase**  
Through May 2  
Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts  
Theater  
631 West 2nd St., Los  
Angeles  
www.redcat.org

## MAY

FRIDAY 1

## TRADE SHOW

**Kitchen/Bath Industry Show**  
Through May 3  
Georgia World Congress  
Center  
285 Andrew Young  
International Blvd., Atlanta  
www.kbis.com

## EVENTS

**First Islamic Architecture**  
**Mosque Tour**  
2:00 p.m.  
33330 Peace Terrace, Fremont  
www.aiaf.org

## PechaKucha Night—

**San Francisco v.33**  
7:00 p.m.  
Autodesk Gallery  
One Market Bldg.,  
San Francisco  
www.aiaf.org

SATURDAY 2

## LECTURE

**Teddy Cruz**  
**Practices of Encroachment:**  
**Urban Waste Moves**  
**Southbound, Illegal Zoning**  
**Seeps Into the North**  
6:00 p.m.  
Palm Springs Art Museum  
101 Museum Dr.,  
Palm Springs  
www.psmuseum.org

## SYMPOSIUM

**A/cute Tokyo**  
**Hitoshi Abe, Jun Aoki,**  
**David d'Heilly,**  
**Mark Dytham, et al.**  
12:30 p.m.  
The Hammer Museum  
10899 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.hammer.ucla.edu

## WITH THE KIDS

**Put Your Best Face Forward!**  
3:30 p.m.  
The J. Paul Getty Center  
1200 Getty Center Dr.,  
Los Angeles  
www.getty.edu

SUNDAY 3

## EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Interactions**  
Armory Center for the Arts  
145 North Raymond Ave.,  
Pasadena  
www.armoryarts.org

## Icons of the Desert:

**Early Aboriginal Paintings**  
**from Papunya**  
**Innovations in Western**  
**Desert Painting, 1972-1999:**  
**Selections from The Kelton**  
**Foundation**  
Fowler Museum of Art  
308 Charles East Young Dr.,  
Los Angeles  
www.fowler.ucla.edu

## EVENT

**Art and Design Open Market**  
10:00 a.m.  
Art Center College of Design  
One Colorado Courtyard,  
Pasadena  
www.artcenter.edu

MONDAY 4

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**A/cute Tokyo**  
UCLA College of Architecture  
and Urban Design  
Perloff Hall  
Wyton Dr. and Hilgard Ave.,  
Los Angeles  
www.aud.ucla.edu

FRIDAY 8

## LECTURE

**Thom Mayne**  
7:00 p.m.  
Museum of Contemporary  
Art of San Diego  
700 Prospect St., La Jolla  
www.mcasd.org

SATURDAY 9

## EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Antonia Guzman**  
Couturier Gallery  
166 North La Brea Ave.  
www.couturieryallery.com

## Cal Crawford

Sister  
437 Gin Ling Wy., Los Angeles  
www.sisterla.com

SATURDAY 16

## LECTURE

**Victoria Kastner**  
**The Gardens of Hearst Castle**  
1:00 p.m.  
Art Center College of Design  
1700 Lida St., Pasadena  
www.artcenter.edu

## EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Looking In: Robert Frank's**  
**"The Americans"**  
San Francisco Museum of  
Modern Art  
151 3rd St., San Francisco  
www.sfmoma.org

## Modern Moments:

**Recent Gifts in**  
**American Photography**  
Palm Springs Art Museum  
101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs  
www.psmuseum.org

SUNDAY 17

## WITH THE KIDS

**CD/3-D Art!**  
1:00 p.m.  
Contemporary Jewish  
Museum  
736 Mission St., San Francisco  
www.thejcm.org

TUESDAY 19

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Walls of Algiers:**  
**Narratives of the City**  
**Interactions**  
The J. Paul Getty Center  
1200 Getty Center Dr.,  
Los Angeles  
www.getty.edu

## TRADE SHOW

**Ecobuild America and**  
**AEC-ST 2009**  
Through May 21  
Colorado Convention Center  
700 14th St., Denver  
www.aecocobuild.com

FRIDAY 22

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Mix: Nine San Diego**  
**Architects and Designers**  
Museum of Contemporary  
Art of San Diego  
700 Prospect St., La Jolla  
www.mcasd.org

SATURDAY 23

## EXHIBITION OPENING

**Nic Hess**  
The Hammer Museum  
10899 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.hammer.ucla.edu

SATURDAY 30

## EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel**  
**Adams: Natural Affinities**  
San Francisco Museum of  
Modern Art  
151 3rd St., San Francisco  
www.sfmoma.org

Tony Feher,

**Allison Miller and**  
**Mitzi Pederson**  
ACME.  
6150 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Los Angeles  
www.acmelosangeles.com

## EVENT

**Palette to Palate 2009**  
Laguna Art Museum  
307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach  
www.lagunaartmuseum.org



COURTESY PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF (SOCIAL) RESPONSIBILITY

AIA San Francisco  
Center for Architecture + Design Gallery  
130 Sutter Street, San Francisco  
Through May 29

Exploring the idea that architecture can directly shape people's lives, this show presents the work of six San Francisco-based nonprofits that range from emerging collectives to established community organizations. Each of the groups—Asian Neighborhood Design, Architecture for Humanity, Rebar, PlantSF, Architectural Foundation of San Francisco, and Public Architecture—demonstrate that volunteerism and social activism can alter the fabric of the landscape as well as the role of architects and architecture around the world. Whether focusing on affordable housing projects in San Francisco or rebuilding tsunami-damaged Sri Lankan villages, each organization defines "San Francisco values" through a common interest in community building and dialogue. As a case in point, Public Architecture's Day Labor Station (above) can be deployed at informal worker pick-up locations and was based on the realities and needs of the laborers as well as their clients.



RICHARD KARSON

## BOOLEAN VALLEY

MOCA Pacific Design Center  
8687 Melrose Avenue, West Hollywood  
Through July 5

The inaugural exhibition of MOCA's Craft & Computation series titled *Boolean Valley* explores the convergence of digital technology and handcraft techniques in contemporary design practice through a site-specific installation designed by potter Adam Silverman and architect Nader Tehrani. Originally commissioned by Montalvo Arts Center in Saratoga, California, the project on view at MOCA draws on the principle of Boolean logic to develop a pattern for the dome-shaped ceramic objects that respond to the gallery space. Comprised of approximately 400 cut-clay dots glazed in cobalt and black with silicon carbide, the units produce an undulating landscape that varies in size, shape, and dimension (as seen installed at the San Jose Museum of Art, above). The show includes architectural plans and perspectives that demonstrate the evolution of the work at its various venues, along with an animation created by Tehrani and Monica Ponce de Leon's architecture studio Office dA.



Exterior and lobby of the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Building (1925).

TOM PAIVA

## MASTER BUILDER AND PITCHMAN

*Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger*  
By Therese Poletti, with photographs by Tom Paiva  
Princeton Architectural Press, \$55.00

Joe DiMaggio grew up in San Francisco and played baseball here, but it was only after he went to New York that he became a superstar. The San Francisco architectural firm of Miller & Pflueger wasn't so lucky, at least if having a national reputation means anything. The principals of the firm lived their whole lives in San Francisco and did most of their work in this city and elsewhere in California. And they are barely known outside San Francisco. What would

the firm's reputation be if the Pacific Telephone Building, 450 Sutter, and the Paramount Theater had all been built in New York?

Perhaps there were many regional architectural firms in the hinterland about whom something similar could be said. Well, that loss was San Francisco's great gain. Miller & Pflueger designed many of the iconic buildings of San Francisco and California—stylistically innovative skyscrapers that helped shape

the skyline, early modern schools and fanciful theaters that anchored city neighborhoods and small-town downtowns. They accomplished all this by coordinating a high artistic sensitivity with great technical expertise.

A couple of themes run through most of this work: working with independent artists and incorporating artwork into their design concepts, and taking particular interest and pride in interiors. These themes were perhaps

most fully realized in the San Francisco Stock Exchange (1930) with its exterior sculpture by Ralph Stackpole and its interior bas reliefs, medallions, carved panels, murals, and other pieces by nine artists, including Diego Rivera.

How did all of this come about? Who were Miller & Pflueger? What did the firm's work mean in the context of 20<sup>th</sup>-century American architecture? What was the contribution of Miller & Pflueger **continued on page 26**

## Behind the Facade

*Le Corbusier: A Life*  
Nicholas Fox Weber  
Knopf, \$45.00

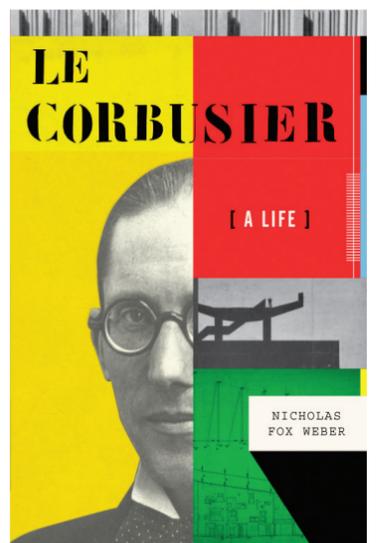
It is a pleasant paradox that a literary-minded architect such as Le Corbusier has had to wait—posthumously—more than four decades before publication of a major narrative of his life. The long delay has given biographer Nicholas Fox Weber access to a considerable collection of information and interpretations published since the opening of Le Corbusier's archives, and he has packed his book with both. Weber's biography is not, strictly speaking, the first on the architect. At the end of World War II, Le Corbusier commissioned journalist Maximilien Gauthier to write an apologia for his work "at the service of humankind." Under his guidance, Jean Petit, a publisher (not architect,

as described by Weber), shaped two indispensable documentary volumes in the 1960s. And from early writings onward, many texts by Le Corbusier have had an autobiographical posture.

Recent publication of his intense correspondence with his mentors, painter Charles L'Eplattenier and architect Auguste Perret, as well as letters to his parents and the writer William Ritter, have provided a solid base for Weber's story, yet this abundance puts him in full light. In contrast to the monolithic image Le Corbusier sculpted of himself, and the demiurgic character into which he has been cast by the press since the 1920s, his inner conflicts are now clear. Wavering

between becoming a painter, an architect, a businessman, or a publicist, he took a long time to find his way to designing and building. The correspondence with Ritter reveals the exaltation and the illusions of young Jeanneret-Gris during his travels to Europe, trying "to become who he was," echoing the precepts of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, a book he read with passion in 1907.

In her *Le Corbusier in America: Travels in the Land of the Timid* (2001), Mardges Bacon has shed light on the liaison between Le Corbusier and Margaret Tjader Harris, his frequent companion during his first trip in 1935 to the United States. Weber chronicles with great attention **continued on page 26**



THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 22, 2009

## Watch Yourself

Dan Graham: Beyond  
Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art  
250 South Grand Avenue  
Through May 25

*Dan Graham: Beyond* is the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art's survey/retrospective of the artist's work, which is generally regarded as conceptual and complex. With full-size and smaller-scale models of his well known pavilions, as well as video works, texts, and photographs, this temporary museum show is a crash course on intelligent public art for this city.

Still, it's easy to fall for dismissal, intimidation, misunderstanding, and perverse desire while participating in and viewing Graham's work. Many do. But the works are meant to bypass all that, uniquely located outside the usual grading systems of traditional art display. In Graham's pieces, color, composition, art, landscape, and architecture are all layers meticulously studied and carefully placed. The artist's in-depth knowledge of aes-

thetic theory and historical perspective is second to none, but even so the center stage belongs to the perception of the mind within the periphery of [his] built environments and situations.

Graham is ultimately interested in the exchange between the individual and the public. In his video and pavilion works, reflections are paramount, creating a kind of visual echo chamber that literally blurs the boundaries between self and other. The use of mirrors, camera on cameras, and monitors is packed into the intermediary exchange that is in perpetual motion at any given time and deeply rooted in psychoanalytical theories. This is when his works get really interesting and complex.

Within Graham's art, you are audience, environment, creator, and created, continuously engaged in a series of systems that lead to non-sys-



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND HAUSER &amp; WIRTH ZÜRICH LONDON

tematic results. One thing is certain in Graham's works: The processing never ends, making it difficult to stop, sit back, and digest as traditional art forms require.

Architecture is generally evaluated in its static form. The end user usually takes this static condition for granted, critiquing space according to predictable, functional concerns. Graham's "devices," or pavilions, as they are called, make sure this static relationship is broken, and the dialogue of the signifier and signified is brought back

via the specific constructions and the site placement. The presence of architecture is at once dynamic, interactive, and experimental, like injecting movement and life into the frozen renderings and flatly distilled objects of architectural production.

"Time," when paired with architectural "code," generates endless numbers of perceptual and informational systems within buildings, urban conditions, and within the social landscape. One can almost trace these elements in the "mirror phase"

of Graham's pavilions, even justifying the pavilion shape based on the length of planned experience suggested by the artist.

These concepts are the paradigms of our networked societies, deliverable packets of expression, control, and stimuli. This is where we get a critical sense of Graham's experiments, challenging the conventional perceptions of architectural space and investigating seemingly ordinary interactions like watching and being watched.

Graham is a multi-faceted

Dan Graham's *Girl's Make-up Room* (1998-2000).

artist, designer, landscaper, writer, storyteller, lecturer, historian, social critic, and most importantly, provocateur of further discovery, who creates impaired buildings and landscapes. People "interact," ideas and thoughts "reflect," allowing the "self" to learn from its own psychoanalysis. The viewer/participant must try not to overanalyze his works but unresistingly experience them, participating voyeuristically and consequently being changed through the critical, narrative, and experimental mind of the artist.

In a way, he is a matchmaker of sorts, connecting all kinds of labyrinths and people. Public art in LA never had it this close and personal. Los Angeles artist Ed Ruscha once said that, for the general purposes of understanding art, good art should elicit a response of "Huh? Wow!" as opposed to "Wow! Huh?" The former is particularly appropriate for Dan Graham's work.

**ORHAN AYYUCE, AN ARCHITECT AND WRITER IN LOS ANGELES, IS A SENIOR EDITOR AT ARCHINECT.COM AND TEACHES AT CAL-POLY, POMONA.**

**BEHIND THE FACADE** continued from page 25

Le Corbusier's many affairs with women on several continents, and makes no mystery of his intense erotic drive. Still, Weber's account leaves certain questions unanswered, such as the extent of his relationship with Josephine Baker, and it omits significant friendships, such as the one with Sri Lankan architect Minette da Silva. Weber also ignores a somewhat mysterious letter sent in 1963 at the height of the Profumo Affair by Christine Keeler, the main protagonist in the scandal. Perhaps a joke by a friend of Le Corbusier, it might have been more intriguing evidence of his womanizing.

However, the fundamental feminine presence in his life, more so even than Yvonne Gallis, his companion and spouse of 30 years, remained his mother Marie Charlotte Amélie Jeanneret-Perret. Between his first trip to Italy in 1907 and her death in her hundredth year in 1960, he wrote to her at least once a week. This ongoing conversation, sometimes involving his elder brother Albert, constitutes the framework for Weber's narrative, which could be defined in a sketchy manner as an epistolary novel with glosses on architecture. The letters of "Ed" or "Édouard"—he often refers to himself in the third person—constitute a life-long attempt to convince his mother that he was the real genius of the family and to dethrone Albert, whose youthful achievements were celebrated by parents more focused on music than on the visual. At the same time one perceives, through the correspondence with her and through other indices, that Le Corbusier was capable of

caring generously for relatives and friends.

Revealingly, in 1930 Le Corbusier defined his profession as "man of letters" upon applying for his first French I.D. This notion is borne out by the energy spent, beyond the private sphere, in a constant labor of persuasion and seduction aimed at the economic and political elite. Weber devotes 62 out of 674 pages to Le Corbusier's wartime illusions. The architect was mistaken about the Vichy regime's willingness to endorse his ideas for France's future, but Weber misses many points that would have required a more in-depth knowledge of French politics and French culture and language. Despite some minor slippages, Le Corbusier emerges as more naïve than manipulative, as is the case with the series of disillusionments in his relationship with the United States and New York.

In the end, the book achieves one of its goals: restoring a human—and humane—stature to Le Corbusier. It doesn't succumb to dismissive judgments, as in many accounts by writers exterior to the architectural field, but it falls short of helping the reader to understand his work. The descriptions of the designs and buildings, sometimes lengthy, are invariably pompous and rhetorical in a narrative overloaded with the tired tropes of the biographical genre. The reader might share the author's well-conveyed sympathy for his hero, but also be at a loss as to why a man with such an epic and Romanesque life has been so fundamental in shaping a different architecture.

**JEAN-LOUIS COHEN TEACHES AT THE INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS IN NEW YORK.**

**MASTER BUILDER AND PITCHMAN** continued from page 25 to San Francisco?

Therese Poletti, a journalist who writes for a general audience, provides an accessible introduction to the firm in her book *Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger*. With many historic images and new photographs by Tom Paiva, the book surveys the work of the firm and tells some interesting local stories. As it is published by Princeton Architectural Press, one might expect a treatment that engages architects and historians.

The first clue that this isn't the case is the title, *Art Deco San Francisco*, which trivializes the work of the firm, as if the architects were simply trying to get the style right—there is only one plan in the book and not a word about how they tried to solve the complex planning problems they faced. And the book's subtitle begs a question that is never answered: How was the firm organized, how big was it, what was the relationship of the partners, and who provided the technical expertise in engineering,

acoustics, school design? How about Michael

Goodman, later an influential member of the architectural faculty at the University of California, a key participant in all the most notable projects of the 1920s and '30s? Or Theodore Bernardi, later a partner of William W. Wurster, who was in charge of the artistic program for the Paramount Theater?

Pflueger was widely admired. Ralph Stackpole said there was never any doubt that he was the boss, and there is no reason to doubt that he played a dominant role in the firm. But it is simplistic to attribute achievements that required many people and many kinds of expertise to one man. Indeed, Poletti presents evidence that Pflueger was a super salesman: his firm thrived during the Depression when others went under. He got big jobs that others wanted badly, like advising on the Bay Bridge and designing a key building at the 1939 exposition on Treasure Island. If he was busy keeping up his client contacts at clubs, restaurants, bars, etc., how

much time did he have for the rest of it?

It may be that a more accurate picture of the firm would not diminish Pflueger's contribution so much as explain it. It appears that the author, who opens the book with a quotation from *The Fountainhead*, has bought the myth of the architect as a heroic artist in charge of his fate.

If you're in San Francisco, this book can guide you to the great buildings of Miller & Pflueger. But the book that explains the work hasn't been written yet.

**MICHAEL R. CORBETT IS AN ARCHITECTURE HISTORIAN AND WRITER IN BERKELEY.**



Paramount Theater (1931) in Oakland.

TOM PAIVA

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250 South Grand Avenue  
Through May 25

*Dan Graham: Beyond* is the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art's survey/retrospective of the artist's work, which is generally regarded as conceptual and complex. With full-size and smaller-scale models of his well known pavilions, as well as video works, texts, and photographs, this temporary museum show is a crash course on intelligent public art for this city.

Still, it's easy to fall for dismissal, intimidation, misunderstanding, and perverse desire while participating in and viewing Graham's work. Many do. But the works are meant to bypass all that, uniquely located outside the usual grading systems of traditional art display. In Graham's pieces, color, composition, art, landscape, and architecture are all layers meticulously studied and carefully placed. The artist's in-depth knowledge of aes-

thetic theory and historical perspective is second to none, but even so the center stage belongs to the perception of the mind within the periphery of his built environments and situations.

Graham is ultimately interested in the exchange between the individual and the public. In his video and pavilion works, reflections are paramount, creating a kind of visual echo chamber that literally blurs the boundaries between self and other. The use of mirrors, camera on cameras, and monitors is packed into the intermediary exchange that is in perpetual motion at any given time and deeply rooted in psychoanalytical theories. This is when his works get really interesting and complex.

Within Graham's art, you are audience, environment, creator, and created, continuously engaged in a series of systems that lead to non-sys-



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND HAUSER &amp; WIRTH ZURICH LONDON

Dan Graham's *Girl's Make-up Room* (1998-2000).

artist, designer, landscaper, writer, storyteller, lecturer, historian, social critic, and most importantly, provocateur of further discovery, who creates impaired buildings and landscapes. People "interact," ideas and thoughts "reflect," allowing the "self" to learn from its own psychoanalysis. The viewer/participant must try not to overanalyze his works but unresistingly experience them, participating voyeuristically and consequently being changed through the critical, narrative, and experimental mind of the artist.

In a way, he is a matchmaker of sorts, connecting all kinds of labyrinths and people. Public art in LA never had it this close and personal. Los Angeles artist Ed Ruscha once said that, for the general purposes of understanding art, good art should elicit a response of "Huh? Wow!" as opposed to "Wow! Huh?" The former is particularly appropriate for Dan Graham's work.

**ORHAN AYYUCE, AN ARCHITECT AND WRITER IN LOS ANGELES, IS A SENIOR EDITOR AT ARCHINECT.COM AND TEACHES AT CAL-POLY, POMONA.**

### BEHIND THE FACADE continued from page 25

Le Corbusier's many affairs with women on several continents, and makes no mystery of his intense erotic drive. Still, Weber's account leaves certain questions unanswered, such as the extent of his relationship with Josephine Baker, and it omits significant friendships, such as the one with Sri Lankan architect Minette da Silva. Weber also ignores a somewhat mysterious letter sent in 1963 at the height of the Profumo Affair by Christine Keeler, the main protagonist in the scandal. Perhaps a joke by a friend of Le Corbusier, it might have been more intriguing evidence of his womanizing.

However, the fundamental feminine presence in his life, more so even than Yvonne Gallis, his companion and spouse of 30 years, remained his mother Marie Charlotte Amélie Jeanneret-Perret. Between his first trip to Italy in 1907 and her death in her hundredth year in 1960, he wrote to her at least once a week. This ongoing conversation, sometimes involving his elder brother Albert, constitutes the framework for Weber's narrative, which could be defined in a sketchy manner as an epistolary novel with glosses on architecture. The letters of "Ed" or "Édouard"—he often refers to himself in the third person—constitute a lifelong attempt to convince his mother that he was the real genius of the family and to dethrone Albert, whose youthful achievements were celebrated by parents more focused on music than on the visual. At the same time one perceives, through the correspondence with her and through other indices, that Le Corbusier was capable of

caring generously for relatives and friends.

Revealingly, in 1930 Le Corbusier defined his profession as "man of letters" upon applying for his first French I.D. This notion is borne out by the energy spent, beyond the private sphere, in a constant labor of persuasion and seduction aimed at the economic and political elite. Weber devotes 62 out of 674 pages to Le Corbusier's wartime illusions. The architect was mistaken about the Vichy regime's willingness to endorse his ideas for France's future, but Weber misses many points that would have required a more in-depth knowledge of French politics and French culture and language. Despite some minor slippages, Le Corbusier emerges as more naïve than manipulative, as is the case with the series of disillusionments in his relationship with the United States and New York.

In the end, the book achieves one of its goals: restoring a human—and humane—stature to Le Corbusier. It doesn't succumb to dismissive judgments, as in many accounts by writers exterior to the architectural field, but it falls short of helping the reader to understand his work. The descriptions of the designs and buildings, sometimes lengthy, are invariably pompous and rhetorical in a narrative overloaded with the tired tropes of the biographical genre. The reader might share the author's well-conveyed sympathy for his hero, but also be at a loss as to why a man with such an epic and Romanesque life has been so fundamental in shaping a different architecture.

**JEAN-LOUIS COHEN TEACHES AT THE INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS IN NEW YORK.**

### MASTER BUILDER AND PITCHMAN continued from page 25 to San Francisco?

Therese Poletti, a journalist who writes for a general audience, provides an accessible introduction to the firm in her book *Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger*. With many historic images and new photographs by Tom Paiva, the book surveys the work of the firm and tells some interesting local stories. As it is published by Princeton Architectural Press, one might expect a treatment that engages architects and historians.

The first clue that this isn't the case is the title, *Art Deco San Francisco*, which trivializes the work of the firm, as if the architects were simply trying to get the style right—there is only one plan in the book and not a word about how they tried to solve the complex planning problems they faced. And the book's subtitle begs a question that is never answered: How was the firm organized, how big was it, what was the relationship of the partners, and who provided the technical expertise in engineering,

acoustics, school design? How about Michael

Goodman, later an influential member of the architectural faculty at the University of California, a key participant in all the most notable projects of the 1920s and '30s? Or Theodore Bernardi, later a partner of William W. Wurster, who was in charge of the artistic program for the Paramount Theater?

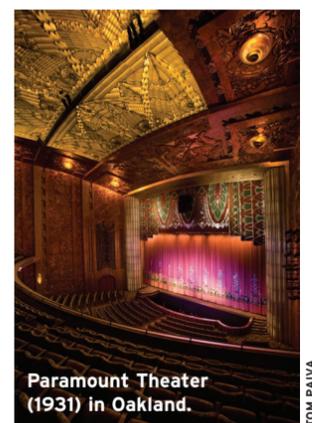
Pflueger was widely admired. Ralph Stackpole said there was never any doubt that he was the boss, and there is no reason to doubt that he played a dominant role in the firm. But it is simplistic to attribute achievements that required many people and many kinds of expertise to one man. Indeed, Poletti presents evidence that Pflueger was a super salesman: his firm thrived during the Depression when others went under. He got big jobs that others wanted badly, like advising on the Bay Bridge and designing a key building at the 1939 exposition on Treasure Island. If he was busy keeping up his client contacts at clubs, restaurants, bars, etc., how

much time did he have for the rest of it?

It may be that a more accurate picture of the firm would not diminish Pflueger's contribution so much as explain it. It appears that the author, who opens the book with a quotation from *The Fountainhead*, has bought the myth of the architect as a heroic artist in charge of his fate.

If you're in San Francisco, this book can guide you to the great buildings of Miller & Pflueger. But the book that explains the work hasn't been written yet.

**MICHAEL R. CORBETT IS AN ARCHITECTURE HISTORIAN AND WRITER IN BERKELEY.**



Paramount Theater (1931) in Oakland.

TOM PAIVA



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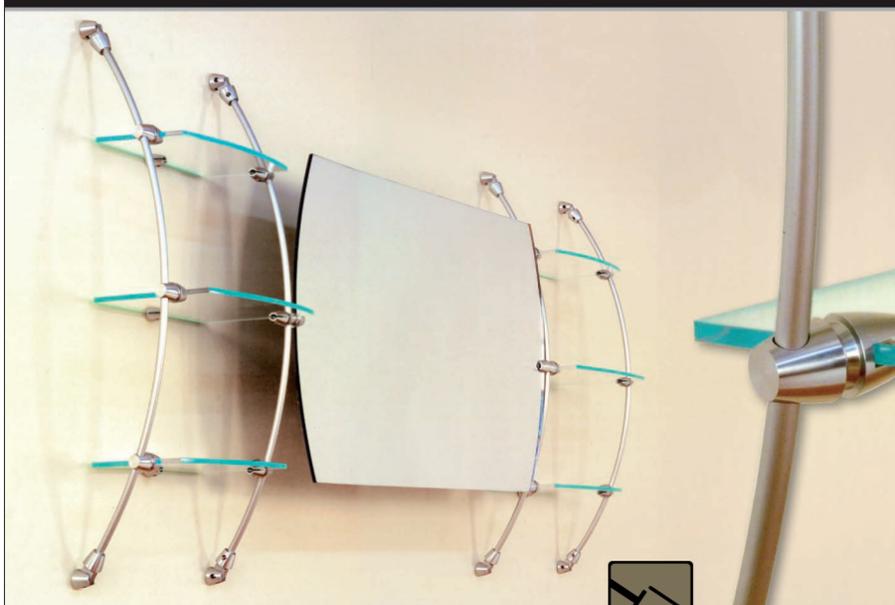
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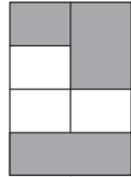
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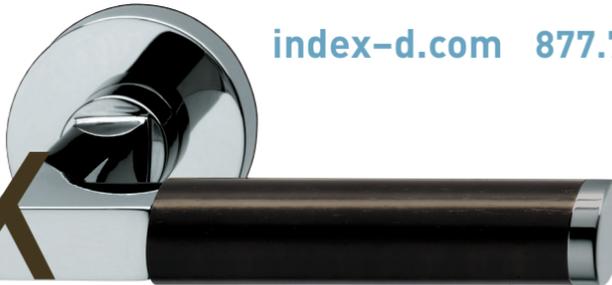
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## A SENSE OF MOVEMENT

**A few days before his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 28, Frank Gehry sat down with his good friend, the author and historian John Pastier. The two ranged widely over the architect's life and work, touching on how he's been hit by the economy, energized by Obama, and inspired as ever by new technology.**

**John Pastier:** Looking back, did you ever hope or imagine that you would get this far professionally?

**Frank Gehry:** No, and even though I'm conscious of where I am professionally, I'm actually unconscious of it because psychologically I don't feel any different from where I've always been—I'm always nervous and insecure. I think it's a positive thing, it helps keep you grounded. But it's pretty exciting, much of it.

Originally I wanted to do city planning and big-scale urban design projects and social housing. But there was no interest in having architects involved in that. The social housing projects all stopped—HHFA, NFA, etc., didn't continue.

**You started your career working for Victor Gruen. What prompted your leaving in 1960?**

They were promoting project managers while the design types were being marginalized. I wasn't the same Frank Gehry back then. I couldn't get up and do public presentations. I was very shy and had a hard time with all that. The guys that could do it were promoted and made associates of the firm.

I was productive, but they weren't promoting me. I went through a period where I was always angry, and they didn't know what to do with that. They wanted me to be happy and I couldn't be, even though I often got to work with Victor very closely, and with Rudy Baumfeld, and Edgardo Contini, people who I adored and respected.

The office had people like Fred

Usher, Marion Sampler, Gere Kavanaugh, Kip Stewart, Greg Walsh, and John Gilchrest. It was a place that was interested in art and culture and design. Some of them came out of the Eames office. It was a very vibrant group and Rudy loved it, as did Victor. But then it became corporate because they weren't making money, I suppose. Suddenly all of us were marginalized for these manager types, so I decided it was time to go.

**I see a great watershed between the earlier and later parts of your career, when you went from linear, skewed geometries to compound asymmetrical curves. That was a huge change.**

Well, what ushered in that change was more what happened in the design world. People had turned to postmodernism, so all my friends were doing historicist buildings. Venturi, Johnson, Graves, Moore—I always considered them important friends, people I loved very dearly. But I was pissed off that they were going backwards. We've just gone through the modern thing, and before that the Beaux Arts, now do we have to go back to the Beaux Arts just because the architecture curator at the Museum of Modern Art decided that it's time to go back?

This made me angry, and I thought, "If you're going to go back, then go back three hundred million years before man, to fish." Earlier, in the Norton Simon House, I was trying to create a sense of movement because he had a Shiva dancing figure on his dining-room table, and you'd look at it and turn around, and you'd swear it had moved!

I kept searching for that motion, and one day started looking at fish. That's when I did the big wooden GFT Fish in Italy, the "kitsch" fish, I call him. Standing beside it, you felt the movement of the tail. So I asked, how much of this kitsch stuff can you make

abstract, yet still get the sense of movement? Finally, I used the computer to help me—that's when I cut loose.

**Exactly how did you come onto the computer?**

The turning point was the spiral staircase at the Vitra Furniture Museum. I drew it using descriptive geometry, but since there was a kink in it, the contractors couldn't build it from my drawings, so that's when I asked the people in the office, "Isn't there a way to describe it digitally?" They took us to IBM, who took us to Dassault [creators of the CATIA], and that's how it happened.

**Your two greatest monuments have arguably been Bilbao and Disney Hall. Obviously you've done a lot of other work. One favorite of mine was the New York Guggenheim on the East River in the Financial District. Yeah, but that was never real. I knew you couldn't build out over the water there. The Corps of Engineers would never allow it. It's struck me that Disney Hall and Bilbao are not just radically different form departures, but also represent a major jump in scale. They're very monumental but still very accessible. The first time I visited Disney, I rounded a corner and saw it all at once. It loomed like a mountain range, yet was also something very intimate, even friendly. How do you do that?**

You've got to want to do it, consciously.

**What gave you the idea that it was even possible?**

Well, if you look at antiquity it's possible. Great buildings of the past had it. Borromini did it, Bernini did it.

**But those buildings were full of fine-scale detail.**

I know, but that's the point. By using the sense of movement you replace the details.

**That's a major insight.**

That's why I did the whole thing with the fish and then moved into

this, because once I understood how to characterize movement at a big scale, then I knew I had something. I could play with it, and I let it evolve, that's all. It was a real breakthrough for me.

**But during the design process, how do you know what it's really going to be like at full scale? Is it a leap of faith or can you actually visualize it that precisely?**

No, I visualize it because we make models at several scales, which forces me to shift scale. It makes me think, "Real." So I don't let the model become the object of desire. I continually challenge myself about that, to keep myself in "real scale." We also build full-scale mockups of parts of the building before I "print it," so to speak.

I've spent a lot of time with that idea because during that same period, Michael Graves had the great trouble with it, and we'd talk about it. The drawings were beautiful and a lot of my colleagues' drawings were beautiful, the models were beautiful, but then the building didn't deliver. I do lots of drawings, too. They are exciting to people because they're so scribbly and free, but the important thing is to deliver that feeling to the final building.

**Looking back on your work, which projects do you like the best and which have been especially significant to your development? Let's consider residences.**

They allow freedom because they were easier to play with—the scale is easier. The Smith House, a little addition to the first house I did [in 1959], that let me do my first "still life" village. Then the house for the filmmaker where I separated the pieces and you had to go outside to go to the bathroom. But I was thinking of production houses then—tract houses—and got the idea of separate pieces so you could put the shapes in the computer, and somebody could pick four shapes and then, on the comput-

er, place them on their lot. They could be mass-produced and delivered to your site. I still think it's a good idea, but nobody did it. **Which other unrealized commissions do you most wish had been built?**

The Corcoran Gallery in D.C., the Atlantic Yards project in Brooklyn—I don't think it's going to happen. There are projects underway that are being threatened, and may not be completed. That would be devastating to me. Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles is also on hold. But now we're working on the Louis Vuitton Foundation Museum in Paris, and that's exciting. It's a pretty big building, bigger than Disney Hall.

**Do you feel some need to adjust to age now that you're hitting 80? Will you give up playing hockey?**

Well, I gave that up a couple of years ago. I had a back operation and I was having trouble.

**Will you cut back on working and heavy travel?**

I talk about that, but in fact I don't, and now I'm more excited. I guess you might say I'm Obamaized. He's the real thing and what he's talking about is a new revolution in technology. The world's energy concerns can lead to new architectural models, and not just by that part of the profession that's using it to get business, putting on their Boy Scout uniforms and doing terrible buildings in the name of "greening." Now there's finally traction on this issue, and it's become something that clients are asking for.

**So you're sensing a change in that perception.**

I really think there is. What Obama is talking about is certainly going in that direction. I was recently called by somebody asking if I could play with new materials that could become photovoltaic. I said yes, and I've been very interested in it.

**I can see you experimenting with that and having a lot of fun, so you're in no danger of burnout there.**

No, I'm not going to go there at all, and I'm having fun with the young people in the office. The only problem I'm dealing with is, how do I exit? What do I leave here, and should I worry about it? **You've cut back on staff size—what was the peak?**

About 250, about a year and a half ago. We were doing Brooklyn and Grand Avenue, they were big staffs, 40 to 50 people each. Now we're at about 120 to 125.

**Will you keep shrinking until the economy improves?**

No, I think we're pretty steady there unless Abu Dhabi were to stop. You never know about that. I'm doing a Guggenheim museum there with Tom Krens and it's really exciting to work with him.



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