

# THE WEST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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\$3.95



The museum will be located at the base of a condo tower next to SF's Jewish Museum.

TEN ARQUITECTOS

TEN ARQUITECTOS-DESIGNED MEXICAN MUSEUM IN SAN FRANCISCO FINALLY SET TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION

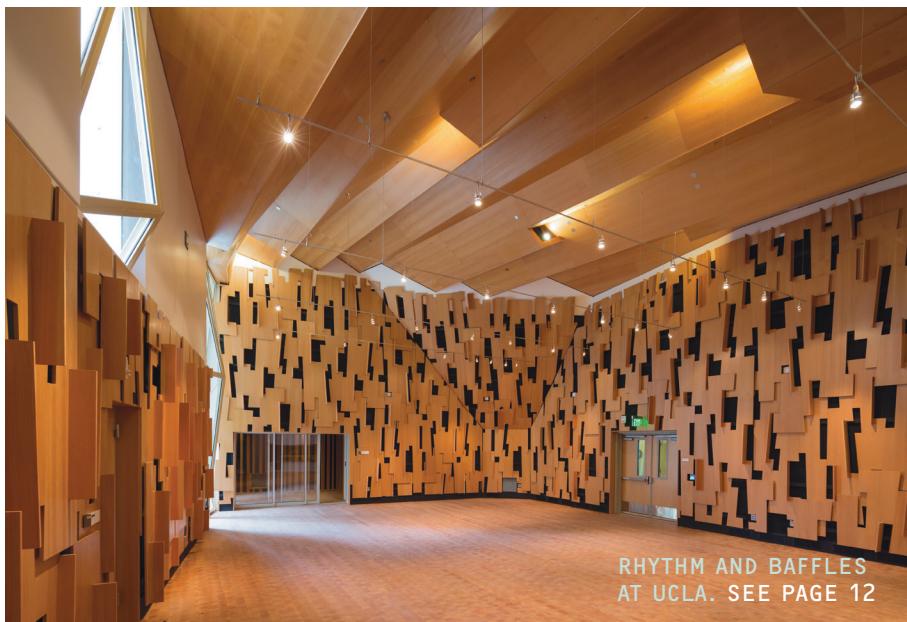
## VIVA SAN FRANCISCO

After a lengthy wait, San Francisco's Mexican Museum—designed by Mexico City-based TEN Arquitectos—is finally expected to break ground this summer.

Funds have mostly been secured to build the 54,000-square-foot, \$43 million facility, which will occupy the first four floors of a Handel Architects-designed 47-story condo tower at 706 Mission Street and parts of the restored 1903 Aronson Building. The complex sits next to Daniel Libeskind's

Contemporary Jewish Museum and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

The facility will house more than 14,000 objects related to Mexican and Mexican-American art and culture. Its main galleries are housed in a floating box recalling traditional Mexican silver, cantilevered and hung from the legs of the tower above. The lacy white facade is composed of a reflective metallic skin, designed with artist Jan Hendrix, **continued on page 6**



RHYTHM AND BAFFLES AT UCLA. SEE PAGE 12

IWAN BAAH



COURTESY PERKINS+WILL

URBAN AGRICULTURE STUDY PROPOSES FARMING NEAR DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

## LA'S GREEN THUMB

It has a name that is reminiscent of a certain friendly ghost, and nobody would mistake it for farmland, but the zone bounded by the CASP, or Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan, could be the future of Los Angeles' efforts to adopt urban farming.

A team led by Perkins+Will and the LA River Corp just released the results of its Urban **continued on page 3**

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LONG BEACH REVEALS AQUARIUM ADDITION BY EHDD

## WHALE WATCHING

The blue addition (right) connects to the original building (left).

COURTESY EHDD

Long Beach's wave-shaped Aquarium of the Pacific, which opened in 1998, is about to get its largest addition to date. Designed by San Francisco-based EHDD, which worked

on the original aquarium with HOK, the 23,000-square-foot facility would be dedicated to oceanic preservation and to whales and other **continued on page 6**

DESPITE HERITAGE NOMINATION, LA ICON STILL NOT SAFE



## Will Norms Be Googie Gone?

HUNTER KERHART

Earlier last month, Alison Martino's phone was ringing off the hook. The social media doyenne of the Facebook group *Vintage Los Angeles*, a photo-driven celebration of

iconic Los Angeles places and people, was commiserating with Googie architecture enthusiasts, who just learned that their beloved Norms **continued on page 10**

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## IT'S THE CLIENT, STUPID

What do Aaron Betsky, Martin Pedersen, Steven Bingler, and Los Angeles developer Geoff Palmer have in common?

Betsky, Pedersen, and Bingler have recently been arguing in *Architect Magazine* and *The New York Times* over (among other things) whether architects should dictate their own path or follow the less effete road of consumer demand. In my opinion both approaches are valid—one doesn't trump the other—and there is plenty of room for both radical and client-centered architecture. But neither will be effective if architects remain shut out of too much work.

This is the missing piece that architects need to address instead of fighting over their increasingly small piece of the pie. It's the constant stream of projects built in this country without competent architects, like housing developments, retail and commercial centers, gas stations, and, yes, faux Italianate monstrosities from the likes of Geoff Palmer, who has concocted an empire from the vacuum created in a city, and a country that has gotten used to mediocrity.

"Architecture for the masses," as the modernists liked to call it, has been largely ceded to corporate developers, who are by their nature large, risk-averse, and sometimes leave architects out of the equation altogether. Of course they sometimes hire top architects, and many are well-intentioned, but since they, by nature, need to generate high profits they more often resort to a pro forma model, where building envelopes, plans, and programs look similar everywhere, with a few flourishes thrown in to cater to locality. This is the 98 percent of work that Frank Gehry recently called "pure shit."

*The Independent's* Jay Merrick summed this situation up superbly: "Architects serve commercial forces that are generally uninterested in the complex qualities of place, aesthetics, and history."

After following this field for well more than a decade I'm high on the talent and sophistication of most architects. I'm less sanguine about the system and the clients that they work (or in many cases don't work) under. All have drastically different priorities.

This wasn't always the case. Sophisticated architects were once regularly commissioned by enlightened developers to design excellent housing developments, bowling alleys, offices, and coffee shops (like the beloved Norms that Angelenos recently fought to save). They weren't just building houses for the rich, museums for wealthy institutions, and headquarters for the wealthiest and trendiest. They worked for everybody, and they brought style and livability to everyone's lives. Now the type of developer who commissioned this work struggles on the fringe (burdened by unimaginative banks and corporate-favoring regulations), leaving architects to largely fend for themselves.

The AIA's efforts to give architects a voice through well-produced commercials is laudable, and helps give them a face in the public consciousness. But dispassionate corporate clients aren't moved by touching stories. We can best demonstrate the value of architecture through effective case studies, through the language of hard numbers and money, and by hammering home what people really want—quality. Only then can we return architecture to the masses. It doesn't matter if it's a starchitect doing it or a corporate firm or a struggling startup. There is a thirst for better work, in any type of language, from edgy to traditional. America is tired of banality, and it doesn't care if the replacement is contemporary or traditional. As long as they're carried out well, styles don't matter. In fact, the more styles and the more approaches the better.

SAM LUBELL

**LA'S GREEN THUMB** continued from front page Agriculture Study for the area, which borders the LA River and gritty neighborhoods such as Chinatown, Cypress Park, Lincoln Heights, and Glassell Park. Funded by State Proposition 84, the study zeroes in on agriculture projects that can both attract green developers and serve local needs. Pilot projects are set to start this spring, and some related infrastructure has already begun. Other members of the team include community outreach partner GDML, urban agriculture expert Jesse Dubois, and financing consultants PFAL.

The group looked at the area because it already had some food processing and training centers (like LA prep, which rents commercial kitchens and production space to local food makers), because it bordered the river, and, above all, because its zoning allows for urban agriculture virtually throughout, a rarity in any city.

"How can you re-stitch the urban fabric and make it stronger?" asked Perkins+Will associate principal Leigh Christy, one of the plan's leaders. "We are ridiculously excited about it. There is so much potential."

The project's study area was divided into five geographic zones, roughly in a north-south configuration. The team inventoried each area through mapping and resident surveys.

Because the neighborhood has few greenfields, and could potentially have ground and air contamination, the plan suggests largely "controlled agriculture," with internally regulated techniques like hydroponics, aquaponics, and greenhouses.

The study also suggests developing alternative financing methods, and in order to begin implementation, the team is now talking to non-profit partners like EnrichLA, which builds gardens in green spaces in local schools; Goodwill, which has a large training center in the area; Homeboy Industries, which runs a training and education program for at-risk youth; and arts group Metabolic Studio. The team is also meeting with local schools, food processing centers (like LA Prep), and government entities such as the Housing Authority of Los Angeles.

"The bond only paid for us to suggest what to do. Now we have to figure out how," said LA River Corp real estate director Jennifer Samson.

The project most likely to take off first, said Samson, is a public/private demonstration farm on land owned by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, with money coming from corporate partners. Schools could bring students to learn about agriculture, locals could harvest the yield, and community groups could program events there. The project could then attract funding for larger, more permanent projects within the next 18 to 24 months.

The project's powerful advisory board, which includes local officials, business owners, and planners, will be instrumental in making these connections.

When implemented, said Christy, the plan would not just diversify the area's economy and provide fresh local produce, but it would improve air and water quality, add local infrastructure, reduce the carbon footprint, and promote public health.

"It's allowed us to look at this land in a totally different way," said Samson.

SL



M-RAD STUDIO

## UNVEILED

## INTER-ACT

Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh is at it again in

downtown Las Vegas. As part of an ongoing effort to entice high-tech workers to the city's historic core, his Downtown Project, which *AN* has covered before, now aspires to upend the live-work paradigm. The Inter-Act concept, designed by Matthew Rosenberg of M-Rad Studio, proposes two scenarios, both of which revolve around an explicit separation of live and work units. Whether housed in adjacent structures or a single tower, the two spaces would be far enough apart to require a walking commute through programmed communal spaces, including coffee shops, grocery stores, and spiraling ramps that take the place of enclosed stairways.

Rosenberg, who conceived Inter-Act after meeting representatives of the Downtown Project at a tech conference, pointed out that building adjacent structures is a "middle ground" between contemporary commuting culture and a true live-work revolution. "The interesting idea

here is scenario 2 (the towers)," he said. "It's something that hasn't been seen yet."

Both Inter-Act iterations take the shipping container as their basic unit. "It's not necessarily the most efficient way to go, but it would be a unique tower and a unique engineering feat," said Rosenberg. "Hsieh likes that it's something we don't need to design—that frees us up to think about what's really important."

As for whether his proposal will become a reality, Rosenberg is uncertain. (Downtown Project staff did not respond to an email request for comment). "We did this concept, and it's been presented to their team," he said. "It's not moving at a steady pace like a developer project." **ANNA BERGREN MILLER**

**Architect:** M-Rad Studio  
**Client:** Tony Hsieh

**Location:** Las Vegas, NV

**Completion Date:** TBD

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 25, 2015

EAVESDROP&gt; THE EDITORS

## BUILDING BRUINS

UCLA Architecture and Urban Design's new campus at the Hercules Hangar in Playa Vista has been a great success. Now we hear from a source that the school is looking to design an addition to its Perloff Hall in Westwood. Whispers say that the designer will be the campus architect, which probably wouldn't make the school's talented architects very happy. Stay tuned for a potential gossip blockbuster.

## GEHRY RIVERBOUND?

Everybody is talking about the Los Angeles River, and now we hear rumors that Frank Gehry may be doing *some* kind of work in the area—a single building or perhaps an entire stretch of the river. What we don't have right now is any proof. So if you hear anything please help us get it in our grubby, gossipy hands.

## SUNNY APPLE

We have given Apple flack for the suburban nature of its new campus in Cupertino. But we've been impressed with the company's recent attempts to make things more eco-friendly, adding shuttles, bike lanes, a bus transit center, and walking paths. Now we hear Apple is purchasing 130 megawatts worth of energy a year from First Solar. The purchase will power the new HQ as well as all of its other California offices, a large data center, and the 52 retail stores in the state.

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Coe's apartment shows a very red palette.

TOM BONNER

SCOTT FRANCES

OC DEVELOPER SUES OVER APARTMENT'S "REJECTED" RED PALETTE

## COLOR WARS

Employing bright facade colors is sometimes met with joy and other times with disdain. But rarely is it met with a lawsuit. The Marke, architect Christopher Coe's red-gridded apartment complex in Santa Ana, is being sued by Orange County developer Lakeside Partners Hutton for violating aesthetic restrictions in its 46-acre Hutton Centre development.

According to the suit filed last month in Orange County Superior Court, Lyon Communities, the owners of the 300-unit Marke, "ignored the architectural committee's request" to provide a new palette for the building by painting the facade "with the disapproved red color." Lyon submitted their plans to the committee "in or about 2013," and said that the committee "approved four of the five proposed colors," but they "rejected the fifth color."

"The color is fine. It's the amount of it that's a problem," Kenneth L. Perkins Jr., Lakeside Partners' attorney told the *Orange County Register*. The committee had recommended a plan that "reduces the color and breaks up the red pattern so that it is not so linear."

Coe told *AN* that Lakeside "didn't have any major complaints" for him during the design and construction process, except for an employee expressing one concern at a meeting. After that, "we never heard another thing, neither approval nor disapproval," said Coe.

"I find it a little weird," added Coe. "Aside from property rights and freedom of expression, it seems terribly short-sighted that [Lakeside Partners] didn't know that you can't market an apartment building the way you market an office building."

The four-story apartment building has a grayish blue and white base, over which Coe designed a composition of vertical and horizontal red lines. He estimated that repainting the building could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The 2.3 million-square-foot Hutton Park complex was constructed in the 1980s, and features office towers, a high-rise apartment, hotels, and a food court surrounding a four-acre lake.

Coe believes the matter will be settled by Lyon Communities and Lakeside Partners out of court, although he has not heard from either party. "I can't imagine what the endgame could be," said Coe.

Homeowners associations have sued property owners for not adhering to their standards, but rarely if ever has a building of this scale faced a similar lawsuit. **SL**

OPEN&gt; RETAIL



MARIKO REED

## &gt; HUCKLEBERRY BICYCLES

1073 Market St., San Francisco  
Tel: 415-484-6575  
Designer: David Baker Architects

Even before Twitter descended on Market Street in San Francisco's once downtrodden Mid-Market district, there was Huckleberry Bicycles, a retail and repair shop and de facto community space that came to the area in 2010. Now David Baker Architects, which worked on the original store, has added a 1,150-square-foot addition. The design, located in a building that once housed a series of movie theaters, uses copious salvaged materials. Baker preserved the historic terrazzo lobby floor and sections of the original oak floor. Other saved elements include old storage shelving, rolling ladders, and bike racks. The firm also custom designed all merchandise racks, display items, and fixtures. Murals by local artist Brian Barnecko enliven the space, and signage by Roving Studio adds a retro touch. The store's rough-around-the-edges interior exudes a do-it-yourself charm that makes Huckleberry's customers—whether they're dropping in for a tune-up or purchasing a new helmet—feel right at home. **SL**

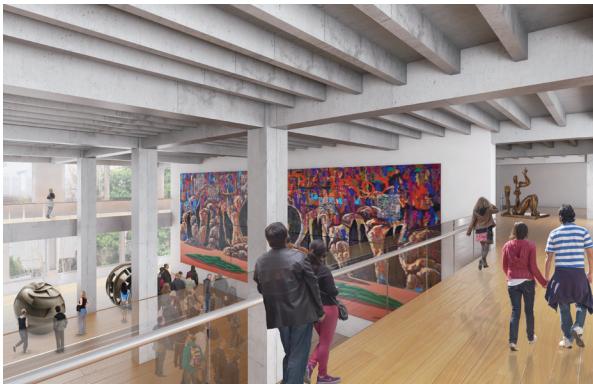
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Part of the museum will occupy the Aronson Building (above), inside naturally lit galleries (below).



TEN ARQUITECTOS

**VIVA SAN FRANCISCO** continued from front page which wraps around a glass curtain wall. Exposed structural concrete and steel characterize the interior of the museum, which also features cantilevered concrete walkways, creating what

Enrique Norten called "different scales and different opportunities." Galleries range from glassy, double-height spaces to more intimate ones, allowing light to filter through the semi-permeable facade.

The project also includes an amphitheater, café,

administrative spaces, and classrooms. The scheme was scaled down from an original design that included a Jenga-like grid of interlaced cubes sandwiched between metallic screens.

Millennium Partners is developing the condo towers, Page & Turnbull is overseeing renovation of the Aronson Building, and the museum's executive architect is a consortium between A+D, Architecture and Design, and Pfaou Long Architecture.

The museum has struggled to move to its new location since it acquired the plot of land more than 20 years ago. Fundraising issues and internal struggles held up the project recently, which at one time featured a design by the late Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta. Mexican Museum board chairman Andrew Kluger has been widely credited for reviving the long-dormant project. The Handel condo building also faced a lawsuit filed by neighbors over the tower's height. **SL**



COURTESY EHD

**WHALE WATCHING** continued from front page sea creatures that are too large to be kept in captivity. The design of the two-story building, known as Pacific Visions, contains features to share that majesty, such as a large-format, 320-seat movie theater with a 30-foot-tall screen, and changing, technology-rich, immersive exhibits and installations. It also has a flexible layout capable of hosting exhibits of sea life, including microscopic organisms.

The design also evokes the ocean animals' "awe-inspiring form," as project manager Ursula Currie put it. "We want it to take your breath away," she said. Evoking sunlight rippling through water, the building is composed of sensuous curves, much like one of these aquatic creatures, while its skin—a luminous rainscreen made of a composite of various-shaped, acid-etched, colored, and paned glass—changes appearance depending on daylight

View of the enlarged complex from the Long Beach waterfront.

conditions. The bird-safe, faceted rainscreen attaches to the building via a carrier frame system and a steel superstructure. It might also serve as a backdrop for visual projections during night events. "We did a lot of trial and error with a lot of glass mock-ups to get the final composition," said Currie. "It should create a different message for different people."

Pamela Burton & Company is leading the landscape design. The project, which is the centerpiece of the aquarium's campus master plan, is halfway through construction documents and is set to open in 2017. The aquarium has a collection of more than 11,000 animals, receives more than 1.5 million visitors a year, and will remain operational during construction. **SL**



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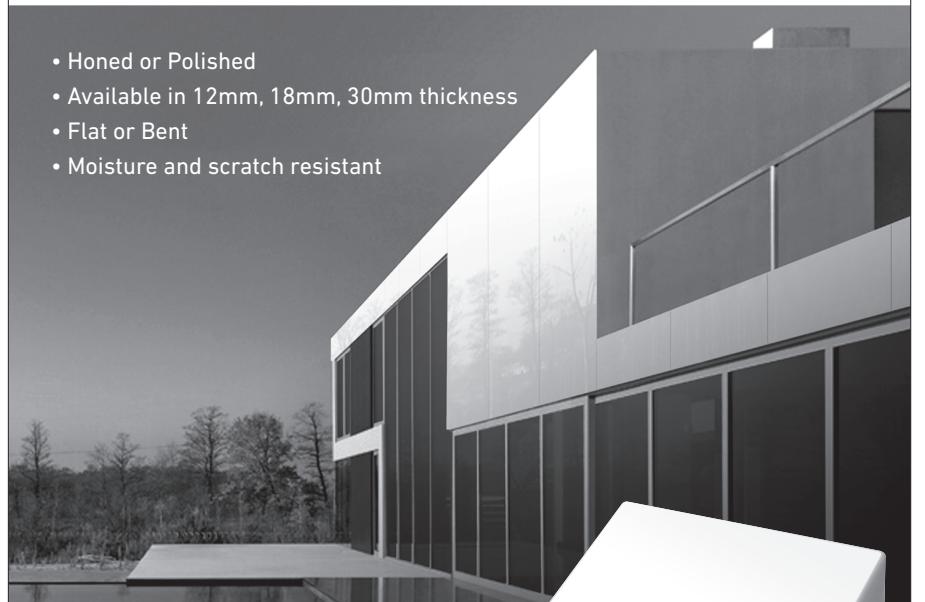
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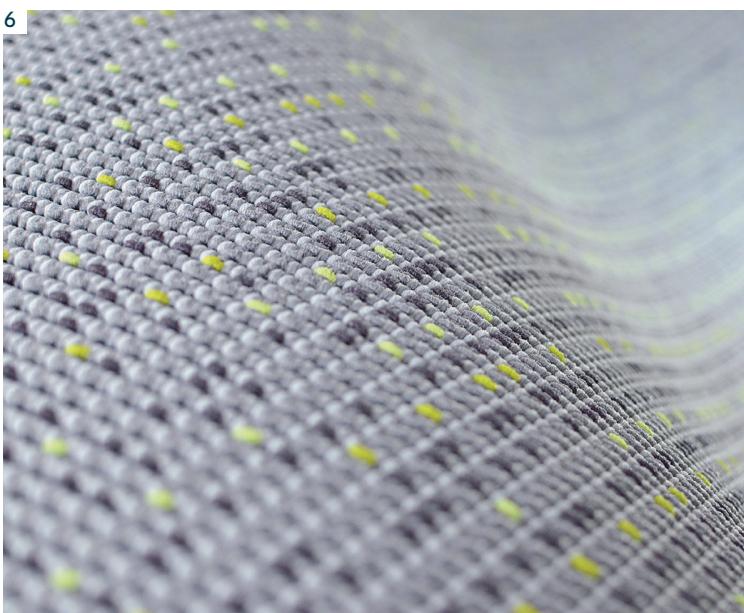
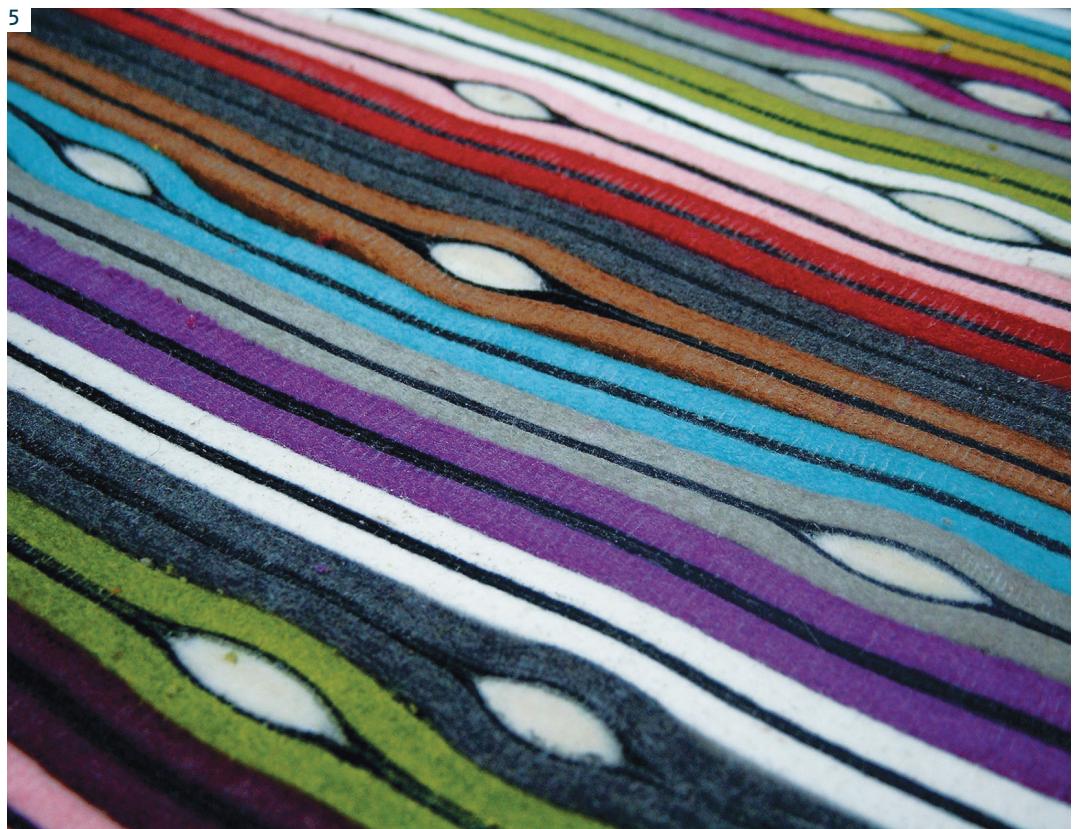
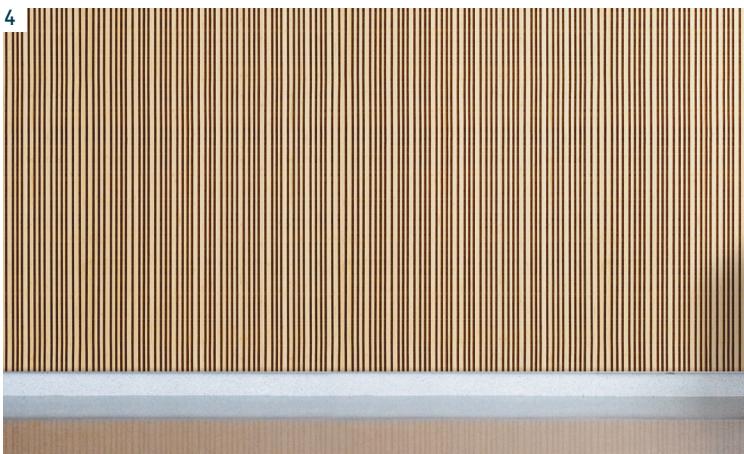
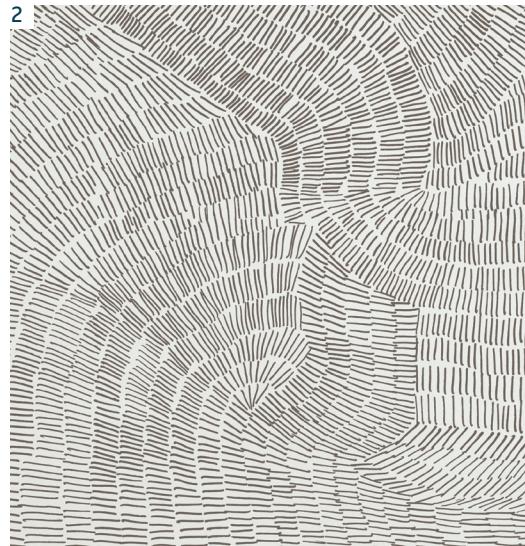
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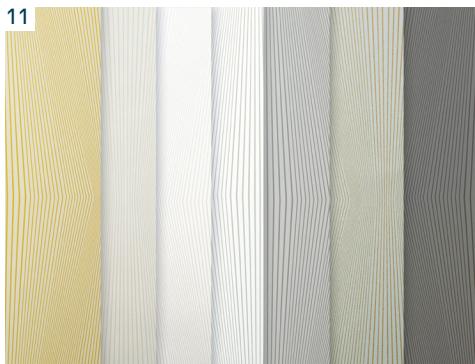
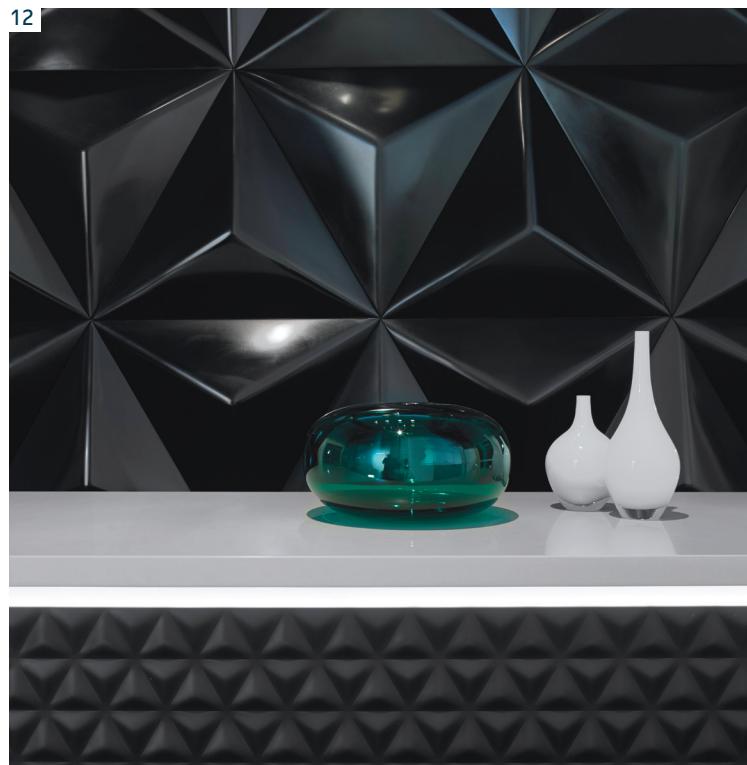
This collection of woven carpet is based on non-directional patterns of coloured dots. In 34 colorways. Designed by Ben van Berkel/UNStudio.

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7 TATAMI  
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COURTESY RESPECTIVE MANUFACTURERS



VISUAL GRACE NOTES TO ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITIONS, SURFACE MATERIALS CAN BRING TACTILITY, COLOR, AND PATTERN INTO A SPACE. FROM FLOOR TO CEILING, HERE'S OUR PICK OF THE PALETTE. **BY LESLIE CLAGETT**

8 HENRIK LARGE  
DESIGNTEX

A wallcovering on DNA substrate, the strong vertical and diagonal lines produce a dynamic pattern; from a distance, the crisp edges blend into an overall design that recalls an ikat weave.

designtex.com

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11 TALL  
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13 TIERRAS ARTISANAL  
MUTINA

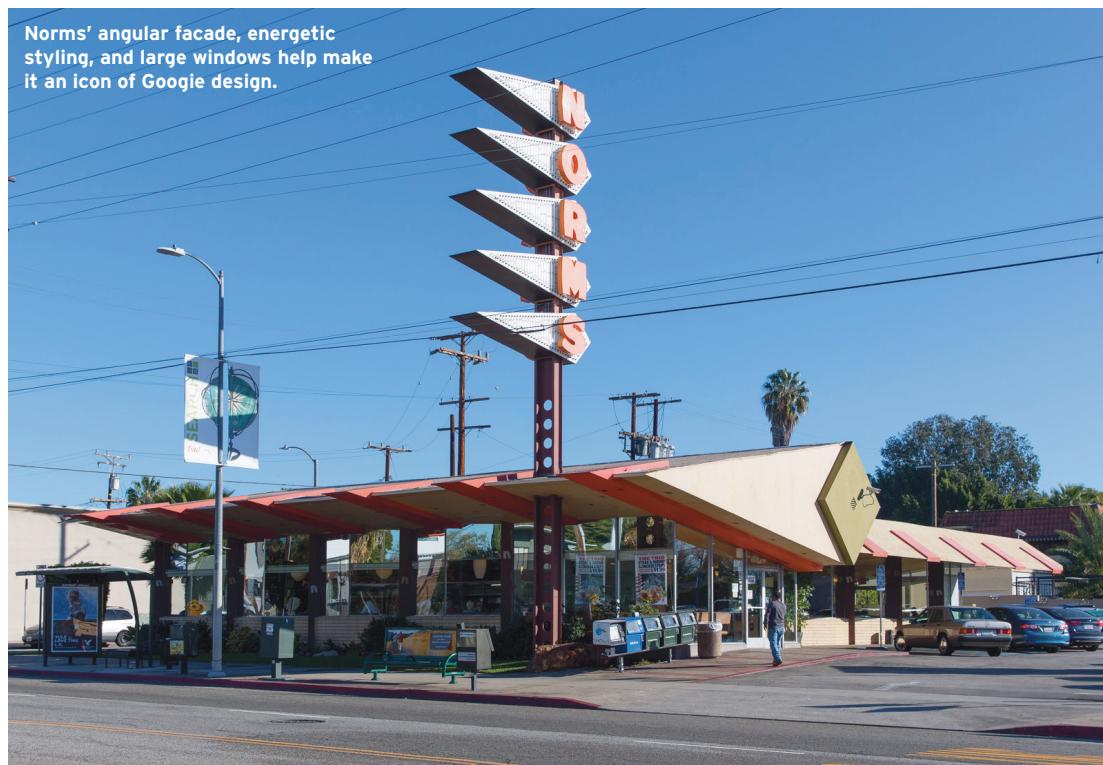
Made of extruded natural terra cotta, this collection comprises five three-dimensional tiles. Designed by Patricia Urquiola.

mutina.it

14 LUMINOUS CARPETS  
PHILIPS AND DESSO

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luminous-carpets.com



Norms' angular facade, energetic styling, and large windows help make it an icon of Googie design.

HUNTER KERHART

#### WILL NORMS BE GOOGIE GONE?

continued from front page restaurant on La Cienega Boulevard was threatened by a demolition permit pulled by the property's new owner.

"I was ecstatic to see all the love and support," said Martino. Over 2,700 shares later and thousands of posts on Facebook and Twitter,

Martino and the Los Angeles Conservancy both noted this was the biggest social media response they've ever had about a preservation issue. Subsequently, on January 15<sup>th</sup> the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission voted unanimously to consider the building a Historic Cultural Monument (HCM).

Designed by Louis Armet and Eldon Davis and built in 1957, Norms La Cienega has most of its original design elements intact, making it a pristine example of Googie architecture. "It's a text book definition of the style," explained Alan Hess, an architect and author of *Googie Redux: Ultramodern*

*Roadside Architecture*. Unique to Southern California, this post-war vernacular style boasts cantilevered roofs, and a space age, futuristic exuberance, with neon signage and sweeping glass facades.

But the Cultural Heritage Commission nomination is not the final word, explained Adrian Scott Fine, director of advocacy for the Los Angeles Conservancy. Ultimately LA City Council has to approve HCM designation and even then, Fine said there may be lengthy negotiations to figure out how to preserve the architecture while allowing the owner to develop the 21,833-square-foot piece of land, purchased for about \$10.7 million, according to parcel records from the L.A. County Office of the Assessor.

A Limited Liability Corporation called Norman Cienega Property Group bought the property (not the restaurant chain) from Norms founder, Norm Roybark's second wife's son John Neidlinger. DJ Moore, an attorney representing the corporation, claimed in an email that his client has no immediate plans to demolish or alter the building. He added, "We have just begun working with architects and historic resource experts to evaluate potential opportunities for the site. No decisions will be made until

we have had discussion about any potential development proposals with the community."

Moore also wrote that Michael Illoulouian is the corporation president. The Illoulouians are a well-known family of developers who are very active in the neighborhood surrounding Norms. Most notable is Jason Illoulouian whose Faring Capital has built several residences over street facing retail projects and is planning a mixed-use West Hollywood development with architects Hodgetts + Fung. According to the California Secretary of State database, Jason Illoulouian is listed as the agent for the corporation.

In the meantime, Norms continues to serve the community as long as it can. With only a month-to-month lease, it's still a tenuous situation for both longtime customers and employees who have been enjoying the building and the food since 1957. "We will be thrilled if the building gets landmark status," said Jerry O'Connell, the vice president of the Bellflower-based chain that currently operates 18 Norms restaurants. "Right now it's really hard to define the new property owners' intentions... We'd like a more permanent lease agreement but right now it seems to be out of our control."

STACIE STUKIN

#### INSIDE THE CLOSURE OF ARCHITECTURE FOR HUMANITY

## GOOD INTENTIONS, BAD MANAGEMENT

The San Francisco-based nonprofit Architecture for Humanity (AFH), a 15-year-old organization dedicated to providing critical buildings in areas of need, shut down operations abruptly this year on January 1. The official announcement from the board of directors, which came nearly three weeks later, said that the organization was filing for bankruptcy because of "serious funding challenges... the deficit combined with budget overruns and an overall decrease in donations finally became an insurmountable situation." Coming at a time when the economy is doing well and an interest in bettering the world through design is pervasive, the closure was all the more surprising. The specifics about how the organization got itself into financial straits are still outstanding. But the overall arc indicates that the organization had trouble with the challenge that so many small businesses face—how to scale up in a sustainable way.

"Ultimately the story of AFH is of an organization that grew too fast," said Eric Cesal, its last executive director, who started as a volunteer in 2006 and joined the staff as the manager of its Haiti program in 2010. "Our programs and ambitions for doing good grew faster than our

fundraising."

Launched in 1999, AFH was one of the largest and most high-profile organizations dedicated to humanitarian design, predating later efforts such as Make It Right and Public Architecture's 1%. The organization provided pro-bono design and construction management services, acting as the developer in complex situations to build homes, schools, clinics, parks, and community centers. With disaster-relief projects in far-flung parts of the globe, they had the status of an architectural version of Doctors Without Borders. It was an ambitious agenda that attracted many supporters and young architects, offering the chance to "design like you give a damn"—also the title of co-founders Cameron Sinclair and Kate Stohr's 2006 book.

Sinclair and Stohr launched AFH as an international competition to design temporary housing for refugees of the war in Kosovo, and encouraged by the response, followed it with another to do mobile AIDS clinics in Africa. Sinclair, who trained as an architect, was a passionate and inspiring spokesperson for the fledgling organization; and Stohr, a former journalist, was in charge of its day-to-day management. For the first several

years, the husband-and-wife team were the only full-time employees. Things started to rev up around 2006, when Sinclair won a \$100,000 TED Award, and AFH worked with Oprah's Angel Network on post-Katrina housing. By mid-2013, it had nearly \$12 million in contributions and grants, 32 employees at its San Francisco headquarters, and roughly 40 contractors at various field offices around the globe. It had also moved into its own office, which was purchased and renovated using a \$1.9 million loan from a board member.

However, the fundamentals were worrisome. In mid-2012, the organization reported a small gap of \$88,000 in unrestricted funds, which represents the bottom line for a nonprofit's financial health, since this general bucket of money is drawn upon for any shortcomings. It had nearly \$6 million in the bank, but those funds were earmarked for specific projects; unrestricted funds are used to pay operating expenses such as salaries and rent. By mid-2013, the gap had leapt more than a tenfold to \$1.1 million, even as funding had doubled. Reviewing the information, AFH's auditors reported that "the Organization has suffered recurring losses in unrestricted activities and has a net deficit in unrestricted net assets that raise substantial doubt about its ability to continue as a going concern." According to Cesal, the deficit was at \$2.1 million by the end of 2013.

Sinclair attributes the change in fortunes to the funding landscape and

project overruns. In an email, he wrote, "As the economy recovered in 2012, donors only wanted to fund restricted projects and not contribute to the organization... this shift in how funds were allocated coupled with project overruns created a large hurdle to climb for the current management team." He also wrote, "From 1999 to Oct 2013 I was Executive Director of AFH and the buck stops with me, so I take full responsibility in not forcing our studio directors in tightening their budgets and programs as well as not bringing more unrestricted funding on in the first and second quarters of 2013."

The organization also invested in new initiatives, including the acquisition of Worldchanging in 2011, that didn't pan out. According to multiple sources with intimate knowledge of the organization, there also were problems with management and significant turnover in key staff positions. "Kate really micromanaged everything—it was hard to make your own decisions," said Matt Miller, who volunteered with AFH in the summers of 2005 and 2006, and was an AFH design fellow in Uganda for six months in 2008. "Kate and Cameron are great visionaries but not business people."

In September 2013, the organization announced that the founders were moving on. Stohr returned to media production; Sinclair became the executive director for the Jolie-Pitt Foundation. After their departure, the organization took serious cost-cutting measures to try and get back on track. In the following months, it sold its office and moved into rented quarters;

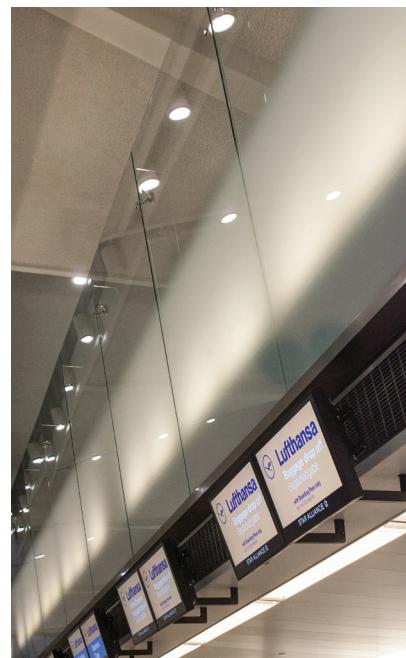
the headquarters staff shrank by half through layoffs and attrition, according to Cesal, who took over as executive director in May 2014. "I went into this difficult situation with the thought that every month we were in operation was doing a lot of good, building schools and clinics, and that we owed it to our supporters to try and pull through."

Over the course of the organization's history, it raised some \$50 million dollars for projects in 48 countries. "AFH was designing and developing projects and put boots on the ground in third world countries. Trailblazing organizations like this take on real risk," said John Peterson, founder of San Francisco-based nonprofit Public Architecture.

In the aftermath, the *San Francisco Examiner* reported that that multiple (unnamed) organizations have offered to take over operations. Some of the 60 volunteer chapters, which functioned independently and raised money for local projects, including AFH London, have said they will continue on. Besides its built work, AFH's greatest legacy may be how it facilitated the participation of so many in socially conscious design—even those on the periphery. "They were mentors," said Emily Pilloton, who started the Berkeley-based Project H, a program that teaches design and construction skills to schoolchildren, in a borrowed corner of the AFH offices in 2008. "They cleared a path for a lot of other people to do humanitarian design and architecture."

LYDIA LEE

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Liberty Airport, Newark, NJ  
Voorsanger Architects PC

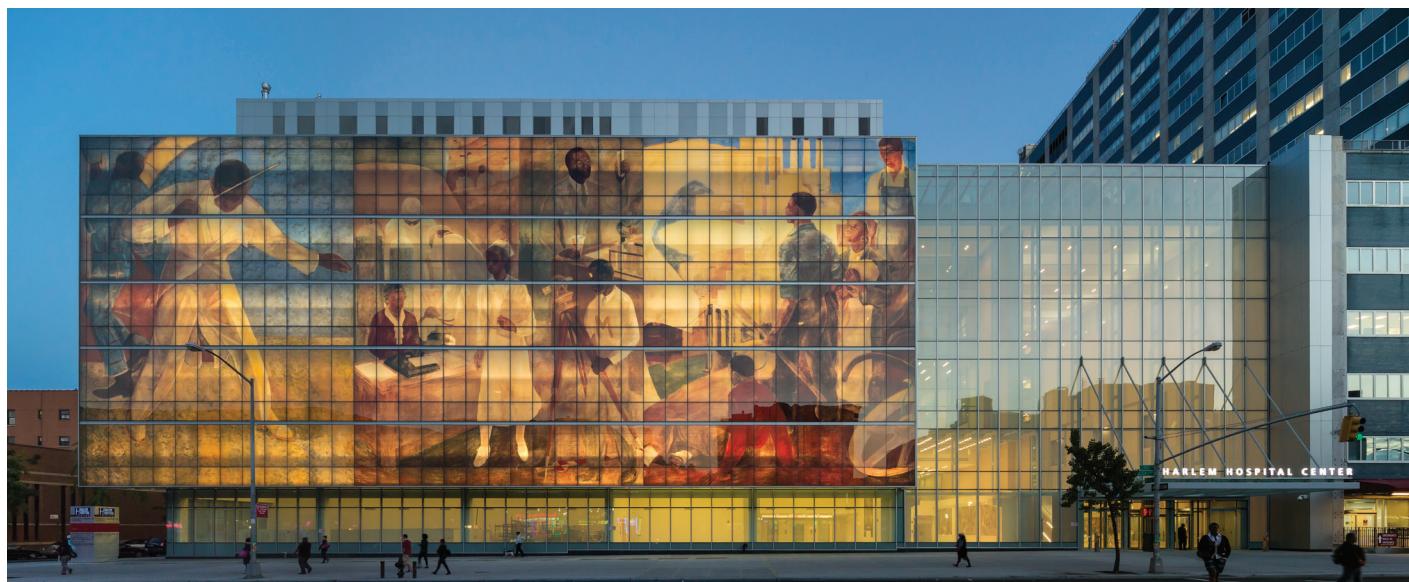


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Larry Kirkland



Presbyterian Medical Center, New York, NY  
HOK New York

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# MAKING MUSIC AT UCLA



Clockwise: Aerial view of the music school; new buildings are clad in tilting and alternating terra cotta planks; Douglas fir baffles shape the ensemble room.

Kevin Daly Architects have brought the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music into the digital age, with additions that enliven one of the main entry points to the campus. Welton Becket designed the Schoenberg Music Building in 1955. His firm added another wing in 1985. Both are introverted red brick boxes, turning their backs on the Inverted Fountain to the west, and overshadowed by the tall arched facade of Knudsen Hall, the 1963 physics building across the cobbled plaza.

"Facilities of this kind are usually opaque," said Daly. "The musicians are hidden away and have very little interaction or participation in the life of the campus. So we've tried to crack it open at a few points."

The architects have reinterpreted the red brick and white stone palette of the campus in terra-cotta planks that are tilted in and out to catch the light and create a lively surface pattern. They come in two tones and three shapes, and are clipped to an aluminum frame. Angled planes with white trim and window

reveals wrap a recording studio to the north and an ensemble/rehearsal room to the south. The asymmetry of their plans is expressed in the exterior geometry. In between is a glazed block containing a ground-floor café, second-floor faculty offices, and third-floor studios, with a computer lab, and mixing and editing bays below grade. These additions are linked to the existing buildings, which may be upgraded and extended in future phases of construction.

The dull mediocrity of postwar additions to the UCLA campus is redeemed outside the building by leafy open spaces and mature trees. Over the past decade there have been some glimmerings of architectural awareness, and Daly has raised the bar. Michael Palladino of Richard Meier Partners made the Broad Art Center and Wasserman Eye Clinic studiously reticent; in contrast, the Ostin Music Center is as joyful and exuberant as a Handel anthem or Stravinsky's wind octet. Each of its three elements has

its own expressive personality, but plays in harmony like a polished trio.

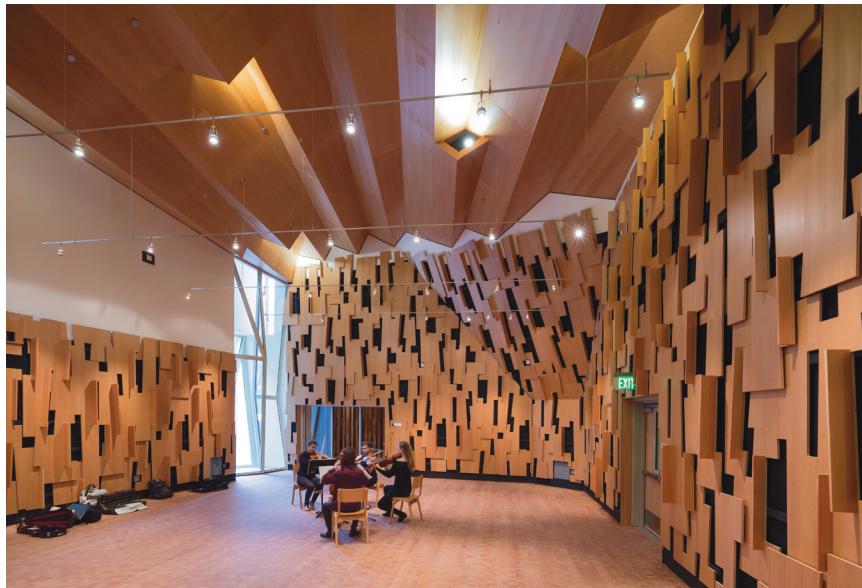
The precise detailing and pronounced horizontality of Daly's composition stand in contrast with the massive verticality of Knudsen Hall. The scale is humane, the facades tactile, and the closed forms accentuate the transparency and openness of the glass-walled café and the projecting brise-soleils that shade the two upper floors. A crystalline porch provides a symbolic entry to the ensemble room, there's an outdoor stage for occasional performances, and there's an easy flow of space to promote social intercourse.

The two major interiors have similar end grain wood block floors, finned Douglas fir baffles over white plaster walls, and an angled soffit backed with sound absorbing materials. Windows pull in natural light and offer views. But each space has its own distinctive character. In the ensemble room, the baffles rise halfway toward the suspended plaster folds of the soffit. Daly worked

closely with three acousticians to achieve a good balance for radically different kinds of music making, breaking up sound at a lot of different wavelengths, and settling on a 1.2 reverb count. The irregular floor plan allows musicians to come together in different configurations.

The recording studio is acoustically isolated within a steel-roofed concrete block building clad with terracotta panels. Isolation buffers and springs separate the inner steel-stud floor and walls from the outer shell and concrete slab floor, openings contain 1.25-inch laminated glass, and a low-velocity air displacement system employs the space between the folded fir soffit and roof as a return plenum. The wall baffles rise to full height, creating intriguing and warm geometric relief. In a city that's full of professional musicians, this may become the recording studio of choice for its artistic and aural excellence.

**MICHAEL WEBB**



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# RETURN TO SPLENDOR

Restoration Brings Long-Suffering Wright House Back To Original Form





The lengthy renovation of Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House—his first residence in Los Angeles—is finally over. On February 13, Mayor Eric Garcetti and other local luminaries cut the ribbon on the landmark's re-opening.

Built between 1919 and 1921, the house takes its name from the favorite flower of Wright's client, feisty oil heiress Aline Barnsdall. Its eclectic style combines elements of Mayan Revival, early modernism, Japanese forms, and Wright's own Prairie Style, featuring tilted concrete walls, narrow leaded art glass windows, bas-reliefs, and an expansive central courtyard. The centerpiece is the living room, with its theatrical fireplace, which was once fronted by a large, water-filled moat. The Hollyhock motif

is repeated in details throughout.

The house, which Wright worked on with his son Lloyd and his protégé Rudolph Schindler, had already undergone renovations in 1944, 1974, and 2001 (due to earthquake damage.) But over time the property had further deteriorated. The \$4.35 million renovation began in 2011, led by curator Jeffrey Herr, non-profit Project Restore, Griswold Conservation Associates, and the city's departments of Engineering and Cultural Affairs, among others. The bulk of funding for the restoration came from the California Cultural and Historical Endowment, the National Park Service's Save America's Treasures program, and the City of Los Angeles.

"We were able to dig deeper into this than

has ever been done before," said Herr, who noted the team brought the house as close as possible to its original form through "archaeological" explorations, investigating everything from paint and plaster layers to original drawings and blueprints. For instance, to bring plaster finishes from their "muddy" form back to their original glistening gold state, the team devised a formula of mica suspended in alcohol.

"When you walk in, it's pretty amazing the difference. I still haven't gotten used to it, which is a good thing," said Herr.

Among other things, the team restored many of the home's moldings, walls, floors, fixtures, doors, and fenestration. Heavy lifting included waterproofing the house, fixing drainage systems,

Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House underwent a thorough renovation, meticulously restoring interior details, including moldings and windows, and reviving the lush courtyard.

restoring the roof, and performing crack repairs. The most rigorously restored rooms were the dining room, library, enclosed porch, garage, kitchen, and chauffeur's quarters. Outside, the courtyard has been returned to its original grandeur.

"This house has never looked better," said Herr. "It's become more lush, more romantic than I ever dreamed." **SAM LUBELL**



# HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PLAN

LONG NOTORIOUS FOR ITS LACK OF ZONING AND SPRAWLING, DEVELOPER-DRIVEN, LEAPFROG GROWTH PATTERNS, AMERICA'S FOURTH LARGEST CITY IS ON THE CUSP OF ADOPTING ITS FIRST GENERAL PLAN. FLORENCE TANG SPEAKS WITH THE ADVOCATES, PLANNERS, AND POLITICIANS WHO ARE SEEKING TO MAKE HOUSTON A SUSTAINABLE METROPOLIS WHERE ANYONE CAN PROSPER AND FEEL AT HOME.

Houston is famously, or notoriously, known as the largest city in America without zoning. It covers roughly 630 square miles. To put that in perspective, Houston could accommodate within its limits Washington, DC, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Boston, Baltimore, Cleveland, Denver, Miami, and San Francisco combined. As of the 2010 census, the city had a population of about 2.1 million with a metro area totaling 5.95 million. In the next 20 years, a million more residents are expected to call the Bayou City home.

In the past, Houston has managed such projected growth by expanding its hub-and-spoke freeway system and sprawling out across the vast coastal plain on which it sits. Now, however, a convergence of political forces, an urban planner from Harvard, a newly installed city planning

director, the united voices of citizens, leaders, and groups across jurisdictional lines, and a tenacious campaign lasting more than a decade from one non-profit board is producing a road map for sustainable growth and development.

In September 2014, Mayor Annise Parker directed the planning commission to create Houston's first General Plan. "Houston is constantly changing and growing. We have to have a better way to plan for that growth," said Parker in a statement. "A general plan will allow us to better coordinate our resources, create opportunities for innovative partnerships, and provide a path to achieving our goals."

## BLUEPRINT HOUSTON AND THE GENERAL PLAN

Mayor Parker's announcement

marked a major milestone in the decade-long journey that Blueprint Houston, a nonprofit organization formed in 2002, has spent advocating for a plan. "We have tried to be the squeaky wheel in the face of mayors," said Joe Webb, an architect and chairman of Blueprint since 2010.

Among other efforts, Blueprint raised \$120,000 to hire an experienced planner to advise the city in how to develop the plan, scopes, budgets, and timelines. "The city, having never done this before, had no concept of resources," said Webb. The City of Houston pitched in \$10,000 to hire the consultant.

Blueprint hired Peter Park—the urban planner, professor, former Loeb Fellow, and visiting critic at Harvard's GSD, former planning director of Milwaukee and Denver, and director of his own planning

practice—to work as a consultant to the City of Houston's Mayor's Office and the Planning Department.

Park's track record includes innovative planning in urban land use and regeneration, transit-oriented development, and zoning code reform. His research and work focuses on the link between leading innovation for quality design and practical implementation strategies for communities.

Blueprint also held three citizens' congresses over the years to collect visions of what citizens wanted their city to be. "We compiled all that and gave it to Peter Park," said Martha Murphree, Blueprint's executive director.

## THE URBAN PLANNER

Park initiated the exploratory steps for the plan to spur the discussion about viable strategies critical to the growth of a major metropolitan

area. He worked with city staff to define the scope of the plan and what it should accomplish.

"It's a big change from what Houston has been in the past, and while Houston does not have zoning, there are a lot of regulations. They have regulations that cities with zoning are getting rid of," said Park. "Houston has been going along without a plan, and people ask, 'Why do you need a plan?' but the past approaches of building highways and annexing is not a growth pattern and won't serve the city in the long run."

This historic approach of meeting challenges as they come has created a reactive state and Park believes it is not a viable approach. "How can you have a broader conversation of coordinating growth and policy and vision so that you can optimize the development of the city over time? There are a lot of project plans, and services, and MUDs, and mechanisms, but no overall vision about what's the big idea," continued Park.

Park explained that there are myriad reasons to have plans and, for Houston, the relationship between development and transportation needs to be addressed—not just cars and future traffic, but also the relationships between development and various types of transportation beyond the automobile.

"Too much development, too much traffic—that comes with growth and change," said Park. "There are changing patterns of Americans moving back into



the city and wanting a walkable urban city. It hasn't been a priority. [Walkable areas are] not going to be everywhere, but it ought to be easier to do in Houston and the next generation of people who inherit the city are interested in these urban walkable places. Where people go and want to be there is a high priority on the human scale and activities for people. American cities prioritize the automobile at the expense of other things: freeways cut through underrepresented neighborhoods or high parking requirements result in objects in a big surface parking lot. High parking requirements and wider roads have not made it easy to create walkable urban areas but I think that is changing."

Park cited Houston's Complete Streets policy (a plan to make streets safer and more accessible, that Mayor Parker issued an executive order for in 2013) as one of the major initiatives that would fall under this broader umbrella vision for the city to grow, protect established neighborhoods, and find ways to direct growth and investment where it is most beneficial.

He also spoke about Houston's light rail system, MetroRail. The system opened its first line in 2004 and has five new lines in different stages of planning and construction. "I have heard people criticize the light rail and it's ridiculous," said Park. "The corridors are going to become enormously successful and will be able to demonstrate to other cities what capitalized transit investment looks like."

Park also addressed the city's tradition of freewheeling, speculative development. With good planning in place, he said, the risks associated with this type of unrestrained urban growth can be mitigated. "More clarity can be broadcast from the city as a signal to the investment community," he said. "[Planning can] coordinate major tax breaks, increase jobs, and distribute density in a smart way to concentrate it on the transit corridors." He added that smart planning is also about adding density, more affordability, and greater mobility without more and more cars on the road.

"It's the nature of success that brings people together," said Park. "If you aspire to make great places, people will want to experience them."

### THE PLANNING DIRECTOR

In March 2014, Mayor Parker and City Council installed Pat Walsh as Houston's top planning and development official. Walsh is a trained civil engineer from Carnegie Mellon and the University of Texas, Austin, and former director of transportation and long-range planning for the City of Sugar Land. "We have made great progress in developing the plan,"



**Facing top:** This NASA satellite image captures, roughly, Houston's Inner Loop, merely the inner ring of the city's 630 square miles. **The rest:** These photos by Houston-area artist Patrick Feller show some of the odd juxtapositions of the city, including what remains of Freedman's Town, which was settled by freed slaves in the wake of the Civil War.

said Walsh. "We are wrapping up the vision and goal statement and then we will add more meat to the bone."

He also pointed to a planning and coordination tool, an interactive map available online, with layers of project information on it from various groups such as Buffalo Bayou Partnership, METRO, TxDOT, management districts, TIRZ (a Texas version of tax-increment financing), and the parks department. The city has been asking for voluntary participation from these organizations. The map will be on the city website and powered by its geographic information system.

The plan, as Walsh described it, is being created in a compressed timeline of 10 months. It will be at a higher level as a planning document and is an opportunity to assess whether or not the city

has the right tools and if it is using them in an efficient and right way. "We have to do a better job of coordinating with the amazing numbers of entities who do planning in the city, and we have got to work in a more strategic way to work with our development community to utilize our land in the most effective way possible," said Walsh. "We want our development community to be successful and we want to support them. And we know there are ways we can work together to mutually benefit. Houston is very successful in many ways without zoning. But we regulate development with subdivisions, landscape ordinances, dedication of right of way, drainage, and parking. We do have a lot of deed restriction-like zoning protections. We do not expect This is about making sure we are

effective as possible at creating and enhancing the city."

One of the ordinances to be examined relates to parking. Walsh said the city would revisit its parking policies to encourage vibrant walkable areas where people can visit their local restaurants and shops by foot, on a bike, or using transit. "Or it could be thinking more systematically about parking," he said. "There are opposing interests with parking, there is a balance to be struck."

One of Walsh's goals is to gain a maximum degree of community support for the plan by being transparent and soliciting community input so that any future mayor will also have interest in supporting the needs of the people. "I am cautiously optimistic that this plan is going to offer valuable insight into how Houston can achieve good governance," said Walsh.

That is a sentiment echoed by Park. "If a plan reflects what people wanted then it's more likely to be adopted and taken," he said.

### IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

On January 8, Jennifer Ostlind, division manager of Houston's planning commission presented the draft vision statement for the General Plan. "Houston offers opportunity for all. We celebrate our diversity of people, ideas, economy, culture, and place. We promote healthy and resilient communities through smart civic investments, dynamic partnerships, education, and innovation. Houston

is the place where anyone can prosper and feel at home."

The plan is uniting major stakeholders from METRO, the Texas Medical Center, Greater Houston Partnership, Greater Houston Builders Association, Urban Land Institute, Houston Independent School District, The Kinder Foundation, TxDOT, and Harris County to churches, neighborhoods, management groups, and professional groups to coordinate, collaborate, and focus their efforts on strategies to deal with a host of future growth and investment issues: infrastructure maintenance, growing the tax base, efficient spending of tax dollars by City Council decisions, and streamlining the planning and permitting procedures.

"It's a business plan," said Webb, "A set of guiding principles and strategies based on what the citizens said about goals and priorities."

The city will inform and engage the public in the coming months by conducting a series of outreach strategies before the framework plan is presented publicly to City Council for adoption in late summer/early fall 2015. If successful, the General Plan could transform Houston from a model of automobile-enabled urban sprawl into a paradigm for how post-war American cities might reinvent themselves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**FLORENCE TANG IS A DESIGN PROFESSIONAL AND JOURNALIST BASED IN HOUSTON.**



FACING TOP: COURTESY NASA; REST: PATRICK FELLER

FEBRUARY

WEDNESDAY 25

**EVENT**  
**REAL 2015: Capture, Compute, Create**  
8:00 a.m.  
Fort Mason Center  
2 Marina Blvd., San Francisco  
fortmason.org

**EXHIBITION CLOSING**  
**2014 Fellows: John K. Branner 2014 Fellowship**  
121 Wurster Hall  
UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design  
Berkeley, CA  
ced.berkeley.edu

**LECTURE**  
**Seismic Protection of Nonstructural Components: Six Months Since Napa**  
5:30 p.m.  
AIA East Bay  
1405 Clay St., Oakland, CA  
aiaeb.org

**THURSDAY 26**  
**LECTURE**  
**Casey Reas: Ultra-Concentrated, Image, Media, Software**  
6:00 p.m.  
Lawrence Hall Rm 115  
1190 Franklin Blvd., Eugene, OR  
uoregon.edu

**FRIDAY 27**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Urban Cartography**  
6:00 p.m.  
SPUR San Jose  
76 South First St., San Jose, CA  
spur.org

**EVENT**  
**POWERFUL: Celebrating Women in Architecture**  
9:00 a.m.  
Annenberg Space for Photography  
Skylight Studios  
10050 Constellation Blvd., Century City, Los Angeles  
aialosangeles.org

MARCH

**TUESDAY 3**  
**EVENT**  
**AIA|LA and DCP Urban Design Review Sessions**  
10:00 a.m.  
Los Angeles City Hall  
Conference Room 501  
Los Angeles  
aialosangeles.org

**LECTURE**  
**Eric Owen Moss + Frank Gehry: You Can't Rehearse Something You Haven't Invented Yet**  
7:00 p.m.  
W.M. Keck Lecture Hall, SCI-Arc  
255 South Santa Fe Ave., Los Angeles  
sciarc.edu

**WEDNESDAY 4**  
**EVENT**  
**Insights - ArchiCAD Case Study Presentations**  
6:00 p.m.  
AIA East Bay  
1405 Clay St.  
Oakland, CA  
aiaeb.org

**LECTURE**  
**Sustainable Urban Affordable Housing Models**  
12:00 p.m.  
AIA San Francisco  
130 Sutter St., San Francisco  
aiaSF.org

**THURSDAY 5**  
**EXHIBITION CLOSING**  
**Sink or Swim: Designing for a Sea Change**  
Annenberg Space for Photography  
2000 Ave. of the Stars, #10  
Los Angeles  
annenbergphotospace.org

**SUNDAY 8**  
**EXHIBITION CLOSING**  
**Work and Play: The Eames Approach**  
Petaluma Arts Center  
230 Lakeville St.  
Petaluma, CA  
petalumaartscenter.org

**MONDAY 9**  
**EVENT**  
**The World's Healthiest Home**  
12:00 p.m.  
AIA East Bay  
1405 Clay St., Oakland, CA  
aiaeb.org

**WEDNESDAY 11**  
**EVENT**  
**Adapt, Flee or Perish: California's Water Sector Adapts to Climate Change**  
1:00 p.m.  
UC Berkeley College of Design  
315A Wurster Hall  
Berkeley, CA  
ced.berkeley.edu

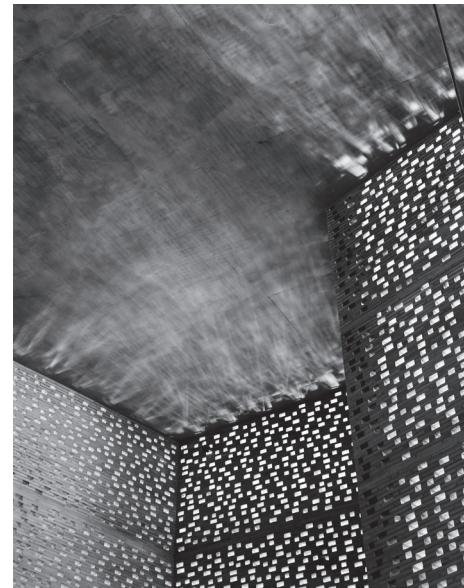
**LECTURE**  
**Craig Dykers: Snøhetta Works**  
7:00 p.m.  
W.M. Keck Lecture Hall, SCI-Arc  
255 South Santa Fe Ave., Los Angeles  
sciarc.edu

**SUNDAY 15**  
**EVENT**  
**Iconic LA Tour: A. Quincey Jones, Smalley Residence**  
11:00 a.m.  
Brooklawn Residence  
8000 SF, Beverly Hills, CA  
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**WEDNESDAY 18**  
**EVENT**  
**The Bay Delta Conservation Plan: Learning to Love the Tunnels**  
1:00 p.m.  
UC Berkeley College of Design  
315A Wurster Hall  
Berkeley, CA  
ced.berkeley.edu

**LECTURE**  
**Eric Owen Moss: Not Farewell but Fare Forward**  
7:00 p.m.  
W.M. Keck Lecture Hall, SCI-Arc  
255 South Santa Fe Ave., Los Angeles  
sciarc.edu

**WEDNESDAY 25**  
**EVENT**  
**Westweek 2015**  
Pacific Design Center  
8687 Melrose Ave.  
West Hollywood, CA  
pacificdesigncenter.com



**HÉLÈNE BINET: FRAGMENTS OF LIGHT**  
WUHO Gallery  
6185 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles  
February 28–March 22

Accentuating the interplay between architectural design and natural light, veteran photographer Hélène Binet's latest exhibition at Woodbury University's Hollywood Gallery (WUHO) depicts various light sources dappling the work of iconic contemporary and historical architects. Binet's photographs show how light glances off facades, interiors, and even perforated walls to unique effect. Curated by Binet and Emily Bills, the exhibition spans the photographer's 25-year career photographing landmark edifices, including Peter Zumthor's Therme Vals hotel and spa in Switzerland and Zaha Hadid's Phaeno Science Center in Wolfsburg, Germany. "The sense of light, the sense of coming out of the dark, it's something that stays very much in the way I photograph," said Binet. She is also the recipient of the 2015 Julius Shulman Institute Excellence in Photography Award.

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METROPOLIS BOOKS

## AFTER THE AFTERSHOCK

*Earthquakes, Mudslides, Fires & Riots: California & Graphic Design, 1936-1986*, By Louise Sandhaus  
Metropolis Books, \$55.00

"There is science, logic, reason, there is thought verified by experience, and then there is California."

Louise Sandhaus quotes anarchist, environmentalist, and author Edward Abbey to introduce the first section of her new book, *Earthquakes, Mudslides, Fires & Riots: California & Graphic Design, 1936-1986*. His words encapsulate the inexplicable otherness, the raw intuition, and the optimism borne of dissent that Sandhaus credits with defining the ethos of California graphic design at midcentury.

The book's title suggests its argument: California graphic design has been shaped

by a perennially uncertain environment—physically, culturally, ideologically—where tradition can gain little traction. As the East Coast absorbed an influx of European émigrés fleeing fascism in the 1930s and bringing a prescribed European modernism with them, the West Coast was left largely to its own intuitive devices. California, at the time, was still very much an outpost, and its local designers questioned the foreign strictures of an imported modernism: rigid grids, a reductive color palette, the pretense of universality. The influences that did make it across the country were filtered through the characteristics of a distinctly Californian *mise-en-scène*—its cultural diversity, its unique landscape, its burgeoning film industry, and its emerging counterculture. Sandhaus divides *Earthquakes'* 400-plus pages and over 250 images into four sections. Each section consists of a short preamble by the author, a commissioned essay offering a more focused point-of-view, a sampling of related primary source texts, and a robust selection of visual work. The reproductions are accompanied by detailed descriptions, essentially footnotes-writ-large,

that offer significant anecdotal and historical background. These visual examples and their accompanying narratives are the book's most satisfying offering, helping to draw out the somewhat elusive arguments of the introductory essays.

The book's structure echoes the organization of another classic study of California design, Reyner Banham's *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. Sandhaus credits Banham's influence as she offers her own "ecologies" of California graphic design. The first section, "Sunbaked Modernism," attempts to define a distinctive California-Modern style, concluding that it is, ultimately, style-free. The next section, "Industry and the Indies," examines the development of motion graphics as a tension between the market-driven Hollywood "Industry" and the experimental, technically innovative artists, "The Indies." "Sixties Alt Sixties" demonstrates the true eclecticism of visual production in the 1960s by looking beyond the familiar counterculture psychedelia. The final section, "California Girls," reviews the conceptual evolution of the significant number of women design

leaders that came to prominence during this period.

Sandhaus's curation emphasizes the view that California graphic design came about through a multiplicity of perspectives, styles, reactions, and transformations. She makes clear the pervasiveness of certain Cal-Modern themes: the fascination with folk art and vernacular visual languages; improvisation mixed with an ambivalent awareness of high modernism; technical invention especially in film, animation, and video games; and, through all of it, a friction between personal motivations and commercial concerns. The examples are plentiful and the usual suspects are well represented: Alvin Lustig, the Eames Office, Saul Bass, Oskar Fischinger, and April Greiman all make multiple appearances. Arguably, *Earthquakes'* more significant contribution lies in its excavation of work by lesser known but equally deserving practitioners like John and Marilyn Neuhart, (Sister) Corita Kent, Gere Kavanaugh, and Boston and Boston, to name a few.

Reviewing this feast, one senses both the magnitude and the dilemma of Sandhaus' project: How to **continued on page 20**

## Faulty Tale

*California Moderne and the Mid-Century Dream: The Architecture of Edward H. Fickett* by Richard Rapaport  
Rizzoli, \$65.00

Instead of promoting an architectural legacy and providing meaningful insight, *California Moderne and the Mid-Century Dream: The Architecture of Edward H. Fickett*, by Richard Rapaport, creates a disservice to the architect. Fickett, an AIA Fellow, designed large housing tracts, apartment buildings, and high-end residences in Southern California during the 1950s and 1960s. He also built housing for the government, commercial buildings, and public spaces.

The book contains dozens of errors that could easily have been avoided with more research, fact checking, and interviews. The essential

components typically found in publications about an architect are a list of selected built and planned projects, a selected bibliography, a selected biography, a list of sources, footnotes, and an index. These are all missing from the book. Fickett's archive is fully intact and accessible at the University of Southern California, yet Claude Zachary, Associate University Librarian and Archivist, states Rapaport never contacted the archive. In multiple instances the book highlights work by Fickett that is easily proven to be the work of other architects. The book also contains missing photo credits, including the work of photographer Julius Shulman.

The most egregious error is Rapaport's attributing the design and construction of the Ocotillo Lodge Hotel in Palm Springs to Fickett. Since the construction of the hotel in 1957 there has never been an issue of provenance because William Krisel with his partner Dan Palmer are the architects of record for the property.

For nearly 60 years Ocotillo has been credited to Krisel. His original drawings and documentation for the project are in the archives at the Getty Research Institute. Whereas the Fickett archive at USC contains an empty letter folder with an Ocotillo file label. Authenticity of Krisel's leading role is further corroborated by many historical and current references, including the website for the Ocotillo Lodge. One of the more embarrassing contradictions is Rizzoli's own oversight. In the publisher's book, *Julius Shulman: Palm Springs* (2008) by Michael Stern and Alan Hess, the credit for Ocotillo is given to Palmer and Krisel, without any mention of Fickett. (Shulman's archive held at the Getty Research Institute indicates his client for the project was Palmer & Krisel.) Ronald S. Dunas, the developer of Ocotillo and many other projects in Palm Springs involving Palmer and Krisel, states he was not contacted by Rapaport about the book, and expressed in a recent email how the book misrepresents

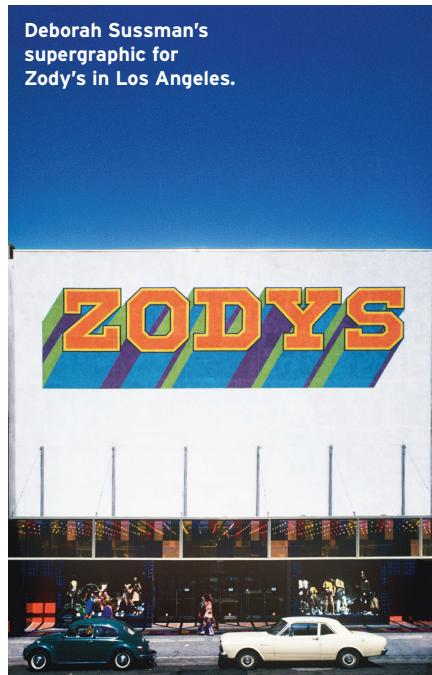
both Dunas' and Fickett's association with the Ocotillo project.

The book also credits the design of the Janss House in Palm Springs to Fickett. This is another mistake. The house shown is the Jorgensen House designed by architect William Cody. Material related to the project is found in Cody's archive at California Polytechnic State University. In one of several instances, the book presents a Fickett rendering without any indication of the project being built or not, such as the Las Vegas Riviera Hotel. On the subject of Trousdale Estates for which Fickett developed the master plan, Rapaport states the architect designed 38 houses. This inference, like others in the book, suggests built projects. Although Steven Price, the author of an upcoming book on Trousdale Estates, said only "three houses in Trousdale Estates were built by Fickett, and one of them was an interior remodel." Trousdale Estates resident Groucho Marx is among those listed as

Fickett's celebrity clientele. However, the Marx house was designed and built by Wallace Neff, which was widely documented in both the Wallace Neff and Maynard Parker archives at the Huntington Library. If Rapaport is looking to rewrite history he does not offer evidence for a counterpoint.

The chapter called *The Research Houses*, intended to highlight Fickett's advances in home design, is muddled. Rapaport indicates that the publication *Architecture & Interiors* selected Fickett to design its 1955 Research House. The title of this publication is unknown. Although it is not reported in the chapter, the *Associated Architectural Publications* was the sponsor of the 1955 house. The publication sponsored two identical research houses designed by Fickett, but these details do not appear in the text. The *Los Angeles Times Home and House & Patio* magazines along with *Architectural Products* were also sponsors of Fickett Research Houses, but these **continued on page 20**

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 25, 2015



Deborah Sussman's supergraphic for Zody's in Los Angeles.

METROPOLIS BOOKS

**AFTER THE AFTERSHOCK** continued from page 19 organize an incredibly rich era of design that achieves its seductive energy by refusing the prevailing order—and, perhaps, any order. The upside is the eclecticism and breadth of the work. The downside is that the original concept—California graphic design as a product of myriad upheavals—never gets much critical momentum. But herein Sandhaus implicitly reinforces a different point: To be truly “Californian,” the prescribed order has to be subverted as a means to achieve creative autonomy. We certainly see this dissident

spirit in both the work and the lives of several of the designers represented in this book—Oskar Fischinger buys back a film project from Paramount to continue the experiment on his own terms; Barbara Stauffacher Solomon rejects the entire profession as too hamstrung by capitalism; and, perhaps most dramatically, designer and Catholic nun Sister Corita Kent abandons her convent over its refusal to adopt the institutional updates of Vatican II.

Sandhaus does make plain the idiosyncratic curatorial filter that she used to select the included body of work. The book, she said, is “like a dinner party that serves only desserts.” The desserts are decidedly beautiful, their array stunning, and the dessert cart is noteworthy, if a bit baroque. But the sugar high risks leaving the reader both over-stimulated and under-nourished.

Still, the rich tour of California work and the diligently researched backstories far outweigh questions of structure and critical clarity. *Earthquakes* is a deeply informative and visually rewarding review of a place and time largely overlooked by more standardized histories. Its seismic effect will be two-fold: First, it firmly establishes the impact of California’s contribution to the development of an American modernism; and second, it reinforces the postmodern form of the “eccentric history”—a hybrid of personal experience and historical fact, à la Reyner Banham—as perhaps the only way to honor the multiplicities that we inadequately file under the title “modernism.”

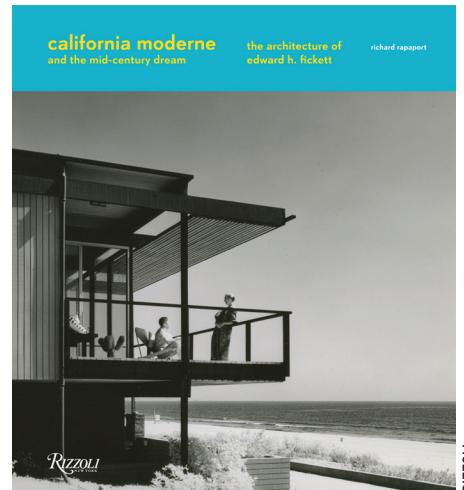
**JEREMY MENDE IS FOUNDER OF MENDE DESIGN. ISABELLE SMEALL IS A BAY AREA ARTIST.**

**FAULTY TALE** continued from page 19 are also not referenced.

The book reassigns credit in other ways. For the Prinzmetal House (1956), the caption reads Fickett designed the barstools and footstools. These pieces, along with many of the other furnishings in the home, were designed by William “Billy” Haines, and included in Haines’ biography. In the instance of the Krause House (1959), Fickett reportedly designed the ceramic pot at the entrance to the house, however, it is an Architectural Pottery piece, not designed by Fickett, and appears in the company’s vintage product catalogs. This makes the attribution of the hanging light to Fickett at the front door questionable.

Sian Winship, President of the Society of Architectural Historians, Southern California Chapter, with a masters in historic preservation from USC, addressed the work of Fickett in her thesis. She said, “While Fickett’s talent and his contribution to the built environment of Los Angeles is undeniable,” she believes the record must be corrected. Rapaport writes that Fickett graduated from USC with a degree in architecture, and then studied at MIT, where he earned multiple degrees in architecture, city planning, and engineering. Winship points to Fickett’s own 1963 Fellowship application to the AIA, a sworn statement, where he indicates “none” in the degree column for USC and no mention of MIT (also missing from his list of projects is the Ocotillo Lodge Hotel).

Although *California Moderne* is well-designed with double-spreads, inviting layouts, and sharp photographic reproductions, it denigrates Fickett’s true contributions and influence. Rizzoli has said it will correct all substantiated errors in the next printing of the book. Ironically,



RIZZOLI

and most unfortunately, a new edition will be driven by sales. Low sales means the errors remain as is, in perpetuity.

The glaring number and type of errors are distracting and disruptive, and takes away from the pleasure of reading. For those affected more directly by the factual misrepresentations, one could rightfully argue that this is the architectural equivalent of identity theft.

Publishers vet the work of their writers to ensure accuracy and to alleviate such issues. Hopefully the problems with *California Moderne* are an aberration, not an indicator of deteriorating publishing standards at Rizzoli, which has a catalog of otherwise richly produced, factual, informative, and engaging books.

**JEFFREY HEAD IS THE AUTHOR OF THE BUBBLE HOUSES OF WALLACE NEFF AND PAUL EVANS: DESIGNER & SCULPTOR, AND A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MODERN AMERICANA: STUDIO FURNITURE FROM HIGH CRAFT TO HIGH GLAM.**

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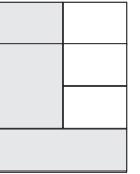
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## GOOGIE AND NORMS

The avalanche of support for Norm's La Cienega, the Googie Modern coffee shop recently threatened with demolition, exposes an often overlooked fact: Modernism can be popular.

Many early modern architects sought to bring the fruits of the industrial age to the average person. Over time that goal was often blurred as modernism focused on custom homes and skyscrapers. Today modernism has been narrowed to a stripped-down, less-is-more aesthetic of white walls and spare furnishings, but back in the day there were many modernisms—including the vibrant, popular public architecture of Googie coffee shops that began in Los Angeles and spread nationwide.

In midcentury Southern California, the everyday life of the average citizen was filled with modern architecture: supermarkets, gas stations, banks, bowling alleys, drive-through laundries. Leading the list were the exuberant Googie-style coffee shops (not "diners") that were prominent on the streets of Los Angeles. Besides a half dozen Norm's by Armet and Davis, there were Tiny Naylor's and Biff's by Douglas Honnold, the Wich Stand and Pann's by Armet and Davis, Ship's by Martin Stern, Jr. in Westwood and Culver City, Bob's Big Boys by Wayne McAllister, and many more. They helped define the urban character of the car-centric city. Most have been replaced, and always

by buildings designed not nearly as well.

Googie, the name given to this ultra-modern roadside style, comes from the name of a 1949 restaurant on the Sunset Strip designed by master architect John Lautner, who studied with Frank Lloyd Wright. It exhibited the hallmarks of the style: outside, a boldly scaled roof to grab the attention of motorists driving by, with a neon sign integrated into the design. Inside, large glass windows gave views of the lively street scene, and the kitchen was open so customers could watch their food being made. True to modern principles, form followed function in Googie design, and the function was to draw in customers in their cars, and feed them in an appealing, exciting modern environment.

In Los Angeles, to be part of the modern age you didn't need to hire A. Quincy Jones or Ed Killingsworth to build you a Case Study house. For the price of a hamburger and coffee you could step into the modern world, anywhere in the city.

In dozens of examples, Googie was excellent design—modern architects orchestrating modern materials, technology, and lifestyles into thoroughly modern spaces and structures. Step inside Norm's today and the optimism, the openness, the innovation of its style is still striking. Instead of the traditional box enclosed by four walls, the space is open, defined by glass walls that eliminate the barrier

between inside and outside. Slender columns clad with ceramic tiles support the truss roof that sweeps upward to expand the space. Every detail, from the shape of the roof, to the integral neon sign, to the jazzy angles of the tables and banquettes, to the custom-designed stainless steel kitchen counters, grills, pie cabinets, and spring-loaded plate holders, contributes to a unified design. The kinetic shapes, natural textures, landscaping, and warm colors reflect the organic modernism of Frank Lloyd Wright, not the austerity of Bauhaus modernism.

The quality of Googie Modernism is no mystery. Louis Armet and Eldon Davis, the architects of Norm's and a series of definitive Googie coffee shops, trained at the USC School of Architecture, one of the headwaters of California Modernism.

Yet in spite of this heritage, and its fulfillment of modernism's quest to serve the average person, Googie has been largely neglected by official histories. "Googie was used as a synonym for undisciplined design and sloppy workmanship," explained writer Esther McCoy.

Most establishment critics considered Googie the bastard child of modern architecture. Residential and institutional design was respectable; commercial design (especially coffee shops) was not. Googie's flashy neon, exaggerated forms, and its appeal to the masses disqualified it as serious design. Plus it was from California.

Modernists may have embraced the masses in theory, but the profession's

Clockwise from top left: Pann's diner exterior, Norm's in La Cienega; Tiny Naylor's interior; Googie bowling alley sign.

patrician heritage found popular architecture distasteful.

Paul Rudolph (perhaps with a touch of defensiveness) warned in 1952 about the lack of discipline he detected in Googie. Freedom in design was fine, but needed to be carefully guided. Then "one could unleash the imagination... without fear of producing 'Googie' architecture," he lectured. The modernism heralded by Museum of Modern Art exhibits was elegant, tasteful, subdued. It did not need to shout. Googie did.

So successfully was Googie suppressed that to this day there are academics from the east coast who have never even heard of the term.

But Esther McCoy was right: "Googie was not a name forgotten in a year; it clung to us." The support for Norm's La Cienega proves Googie has stood the test of time.

Make no mistake, Googie is as Modern as a Craig Ellwood house. From now on when we think of Los Angeles Modernism, we must think of the public modernism of Googie as well as the private modernism of the Case Study houses. They're two sides of the same coin.

**ALAN HESS IS THE AUTHOR OF GOOGIE: FIFTIES COFFEE SHOP ARCHITECTURE (1985) AND GOOGIE: ULTRAMODERN ROADSIDE ARCHITECTURE (2004), AMONG OTHER BOOKS.**





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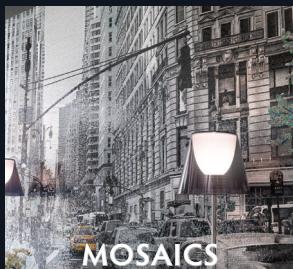
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