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Hercules Public Library by HGA Architects and Engineers
and Will Bruder + Partners

Public Spaces

» » Nelson-Atkins Museum by Steven Holl Architects

Modular Carpet

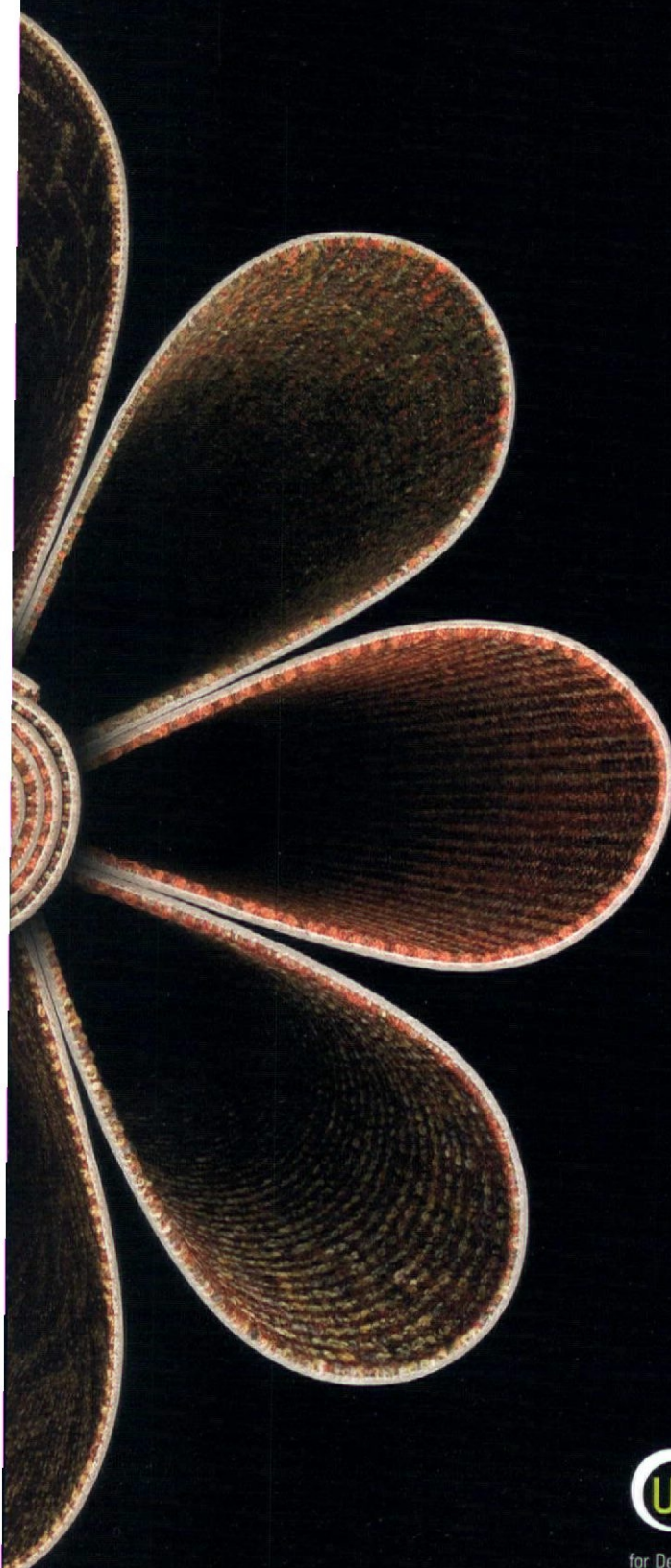
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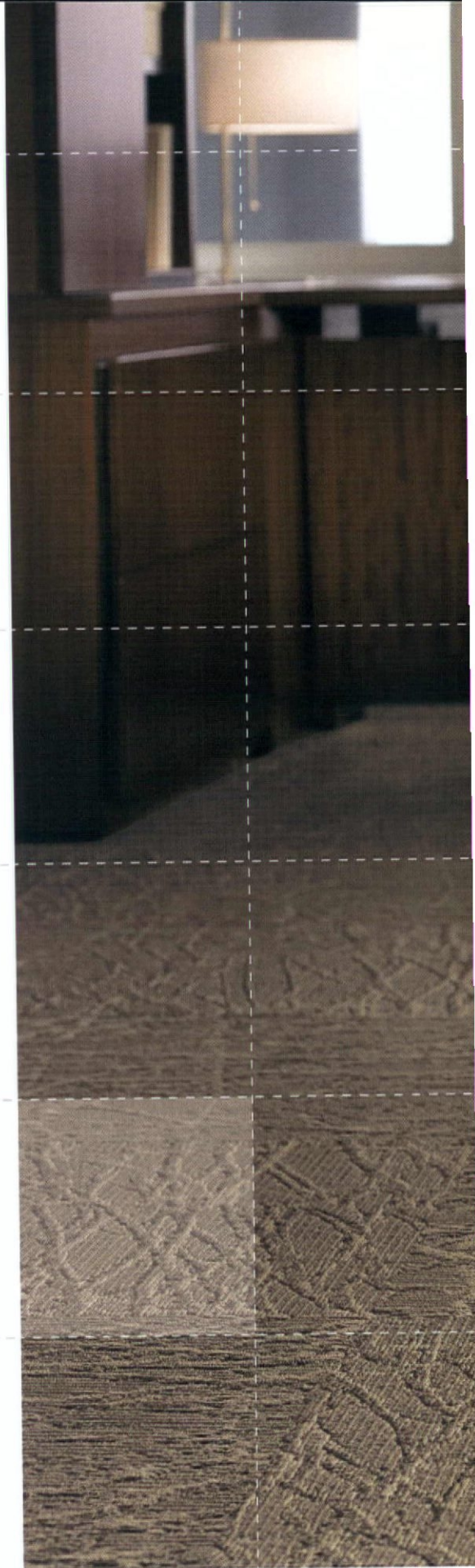
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Developed to work in conjunction with the Contract Network (www.contract-network.com), the lounge is a comfortable space where attendees can gain information on product introductions from our Network partners, view a video presentation of the 2007 Best of NeoCon® winners, and even conduct small, impromptu meetings.

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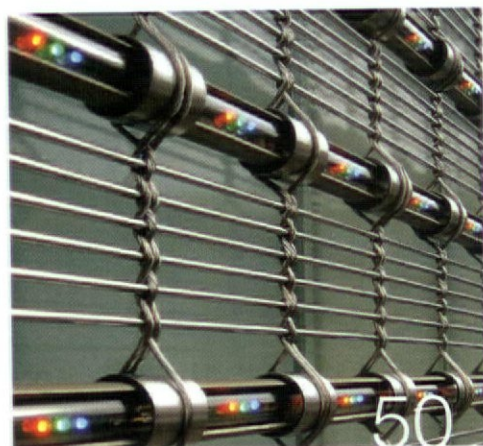
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cover: Hercules Public Library, designed by HGA Architects and Engineers and Will Bruder + Partners. Photography by Bill Timmerman. Page 78.



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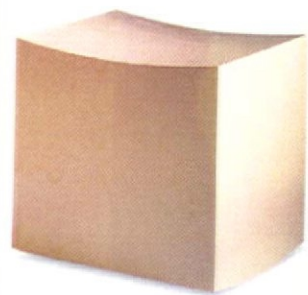
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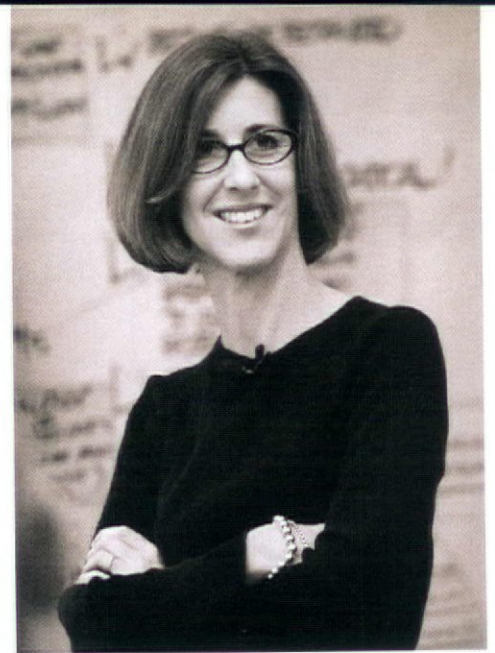
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Jennifer Thiele Busch
Editor in Chief

a little respect goes a long way

Design should always serve its constituents. Design for public space has an even greater and more complicated obligation to do so: Greater, because following our dearly held principles of democracy and equality, public architecture should be accessible and welcoming to everyone (especially when taxpayer money is involved). More complicated, because its constituents are often so demographically diverse that creating a built space of universal appeal proves virtually impossible. Obviously in the end, the old adage holds true: You can't please everyone.

So what's a designer of public space to do? Context is surely one useful guide—and an important one. Functional use is another. But in terms of style and creativity, a parade of public buildings that merely mimic the existing aesthetic of their locales would prove bland and uninspiring, and may even suggest that architecture that is afraid to embrace the future necessarily reflects the attitude of the organization.

Steven Holl, who designed the stunning Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, Mo., against an early storm of controversy and criticism, seems

to have it figured out: "Working with doubt can yield an intrinsic affirmation of human choice that gives presence to an idea, without which there is no architecture," he writes in this month's Perspectives column. "Architecture is for the bold in spirit: It rises to a pledge of inspired space out of a crowd of shrugging shoulders." The statement itself is fascinating; the recent work that resulted from the philosophy is even more so ("Landscape & Light," p. 72).

To demonstrate how complex the relationship between public design and public opinion can be, we sent the ever-engaging Nick Luzietti, a design principal at VOA in Chicago, to Akron, Ohio, to critique the new Akron Art Museum designed by Coop Himmelb(l)au of Vienna—though admittedly we did not know at the time of the assignment that his review would yield such a lovely example of the eternal controversy between new public space and old expectations. Even Luzietti—an accomplished architect and interior designer of modern design projects, who originally hails from Ohio—was admittedly skeptical of this high-profile attempt by Akron to propel itself into the 21st century. And if an

educated believer in modern design like Luzietti is skeptical, what hope does that leave for the rest of us to embrace architectural progress? His engaging report ("The Future Comes to Akron," p. 104), reads as much like an uplifting journey of discovery and self-reflection as it does an ultimately positive opinion of the new building and its interior spaces, which, like the Nelson-Atkins, delivers an homage to the earlier museum structure without mimicry and a dynamic, forward-looking design that will engage the public with its art and keep Akron on the architectural map for years to come. Mission accomplished.

In the end, good public architecture is about more than serving a public function—and it's certainly about more than some egotistical architect's monument to his or her own design philosophy, public opinion be damned. Its cultural value extends to respecting and honoring what is notable about the past while keeping a firm and determined eye on the future. Public design, like public service, is not for the faint of heart. Thankfully we have brave-hearted souls who thrive on doubt—and are able to overcome it—in our midst. ■

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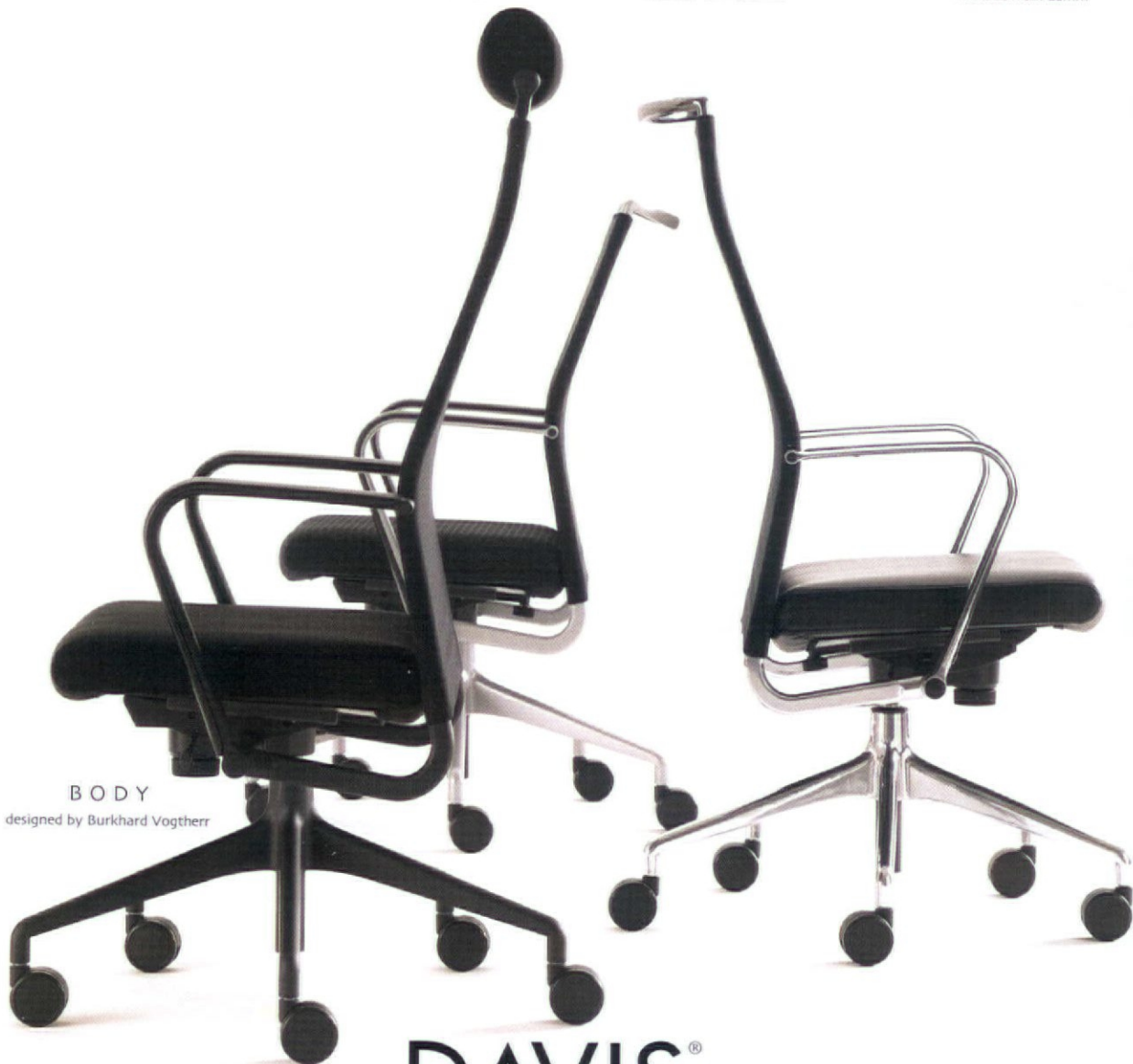
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Look & Learn

Cambridge, Mass.—Ecology.Design.Synergy, a traveling exhibition showcasing the design approach of Behnisch Architekten and Transsolar Climate Engineering, made its debut at Harvard University on August 22. Both Stuttgart, Germany-based firms believe that high-quality built environments can be realized with less consumption of natural resources and more concentration on user comfort. The projects they have created in collaboration—including Norddeutsche Landesbank in Hannover, Germany—illustrate this belief and form the foundation for this exhibition.

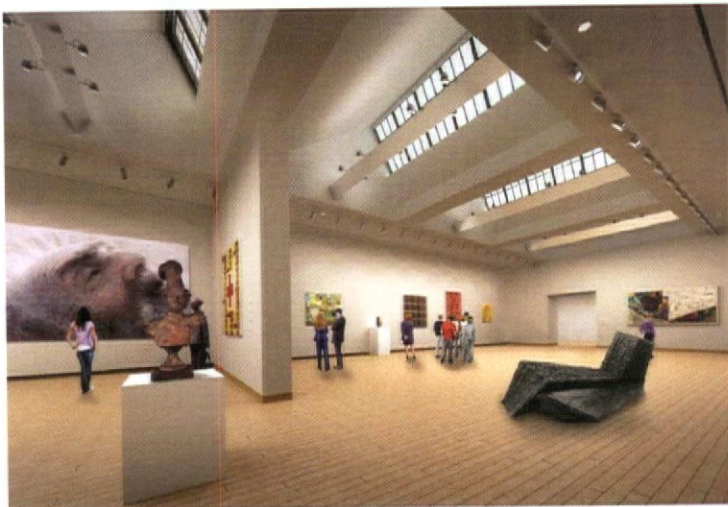
Divided into three segments—Exposition, Development, and Recapitulation—the exhibition posits the state of environmental challenge, practical solutions to create responsible places for people to thrive, and the social implications of necessary changes. Discussions of economics, development, population, politics, biology, standards, materials, and scale, among others, are woven throughout, thus showing the complexity of these synergistic issues.

The show will travel to Yale University and Heinz Architectural Center. Venues in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and other major cities are being scheduled. See www.behnisch.com for updates.

Additional Addition

Sacramento, Calif.—On July 26, the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento broke ground for a major addition and renovation program, designed by New York-based Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects, which will increase the institution's size to 170,000 sq. ft. while upgrading its original landmark buildings and 1980s addition.

The new galleries triple the existing exhibition space, with new rooms for special exhibitions and contemporary art. Charles Gwathmey, FAIA, one of the firm's two principals, comments, "Like many Gwathmey Siegel additions, this plan treats the historic and new elements as a collage, with the new building acknowledging the historic precedents through quiet manipulations in scale, window placement, and materials."



Norddeutsche Landesbank, designed by Behnisch Architekten and Transsolar Climate Engineering, in Hannover, Germany. Photo by Roland Halbe.

The new building will introduce a two-story main entrance, museum store, café, and reception area that opens out onto the courtyard. Also included are a 300-seat auditorium, public meeting rooms, education galleries and classrooms, art storage space, and offices for administrative, curatorial, and education staff. All of the administrative, meeting, educational, and retail spaces are located on the first two floors.

Galleries occupy the entire third floor in both the new and existing buildings. They include large, flexible, 18-ft.-high volumes that can accommodate large-scale contemporary art. North-facing clerestory skylights extend across these spaces, giving the roofline a distinctive silhouette.

According to Crocker Art Museum director Lial Jones, "The addition will dramatically increase our gallery space to display our own collection—both historic and contemporary artworks as well as traveling exhibits. Through the years, collectors have been very generous to the museum, but currently we can only display less than four percent of what we own. We're looking forward to expanded galleries that can display the museum's rich holdings.

"We will also be able to expand our educational programs and public amenities, allowing us to take a more active role in the community and region," he continues. "We're delighted in the way the Gwathmey Siegel design gives the museum a more contemporary face while providing a frame for our valuable historic structures."

The Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, designed by Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects.



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Undefeatable Design

London, England—HOK sport architecture has designed stadiummk, the new home of British soccer team Milton Keynes Dons. Since the stadiummk opened its doors in July, the team has gone undefeated. Could it be the design? It's possible. Or perhaps it's due to skill combined with luck. Whatever the cause, there are several features that put this stadium in a class of its own for the visitors, as well. Mike Trice, associate at HOK sport architecture, says the stadium—located in the Denbigh district of Milton Keynes, England—is “born of a strong, yet deceptively simple idea, a building with an architectural narrative that conveys something of the club, the client, and its context.”

HOK resolved issues, such as standing viewing and alcohol consumption, thorough discussions with the Football Licensing Authority to devise a strategy that includes restricting views of the pitch from the concourse, thus preventing spectators from viewing the game from behind the standing terrace rail, and positioning alcohol consumption areas within separate enclosures. This addresses two potential problems: it prevents drinking while having a view to the pitch, and prevents youngsters from walking through crowded bar areas on the way to the restrooms and concession areas.



stadiummk in Milton Keynes, England, designed by HOK sport architecture.

The stadium will incorporate two other major elements that are yet to come. Firstly, an indoor multipurpose arena with a capacity of 6,000 seats will be added to one end of the stadium. Secondly, a 128-bed hotel will be linked to the front west stand of the stadium. Several rooms from the pitchside will double as executive suites during major events.



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In the Mix

Chicago—Goettsch Partners has been commissioned by Guangzhou R&F Properties Co. to design a new 1,000-ft.-tall mixed-use building in Guangzhou, China. The project totals 1,878,000 sq. ft. and features a 180-key Park Hyatt hotel, 430,000 sq. ft. of offices, 65,000 sq. ft. of retail, 24

condominiums, 174 serviced apartments, and underground parking for 700 cars.

The 66-story building is located in the Zhujiang development, which is planned as Guangzhou's new city center, near the Pearl River. The tight,

two-acre site sits over a transit station at the intersection of two subway lines, with neighboring buildings that include the Grand Hyatt Guangzhou, also designed by Goettsch Partners; the city's new opera house; the new Guangdong Museum; and what will be China's tallest twin towers at more than 1,300 ft.

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Park Hyatt Tower in Guangzhou, China, designed by Goettsch Partners. Rendering by Goettsch Partners.



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On the Road

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reach customers who might not be able to leave their jobs to attend full-fledged seminars.

“It’s important that our customers are able to get ‘hands-on’ with our products,” says Bill Corbett, president, Corbett Inc., an independent rep group in the Philadelphia area. The Corbett sales reps drive

the bus to the customer locations. When on tour, the bus is focused on trends and KI product solutions in education, healthcare, corporate or government facilities. Corbett Inc. and KI currently are investigating the purchase of a new vehicle that will feature new technology better able to support video and interactive presentations.

Corrections

In the July Resources section (p. 28), the company name for the Specter chair was misspelled. It is by Josh Urso Design, and the website is www.joshursodesign.com.

In the August issue, the advertorial for INVISTA (p. 125) should have credited Antron Lumena® solution dyed nylon with winning a Best of NeoCon® Gold Award.

The August Best of NeoCon® section (p. 110) incorrectly lists the designer of the Education Solutions Gold Award winner. Gert Van Erum and Rudi Reynders designed the Vanerum Collection for StelterPartners.

Photography for the cover of the Best of NeoCon® section (Aug. p. 105) and the coverage of the Best of Competition winner, Haworth’s Brazo lamp (p. 107), should have been credited to Chun Y Lai (www.chunlaiphotography.com).

In the August Table of Contents (p. 8), the manufacturer of the Brazo lamp was incorrectly identified. Haworth is the manufacturer of the product. *Contract* regrets the error.



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The advertisement features a stylized illustration of a man with a beard and sunglasses, wearing a purple jacket, holding a large, curved wooden object. The background is a light tan color with a subtle pattern of wavy lines. In the upper right corner, the MDC Wallcoverings logo is displayed with the tagline "Bringing more to the walls". In the lower right corner, there are three white birds in flight. At the bottom, the text reads: "Transform the ordinary to the extraordinary with the invigorating styles of LEN-TEX wallcoverings. www.mdcwall.com • 800.621.4006". Below this, in smaller text, it says "MDC is a registered trademark of EPKO Industries, Inc. © 2007 EPKO Industries, Inc."

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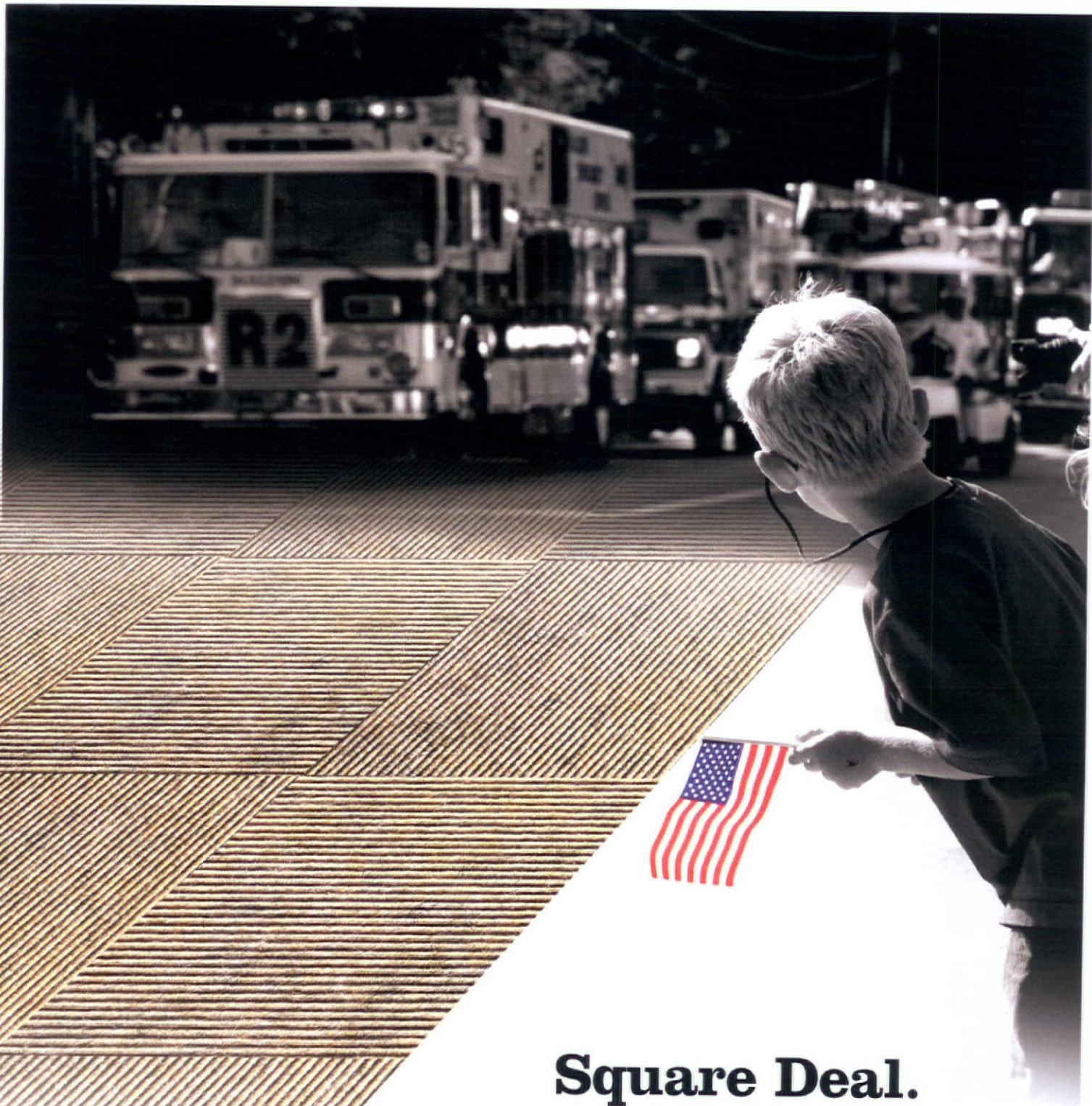
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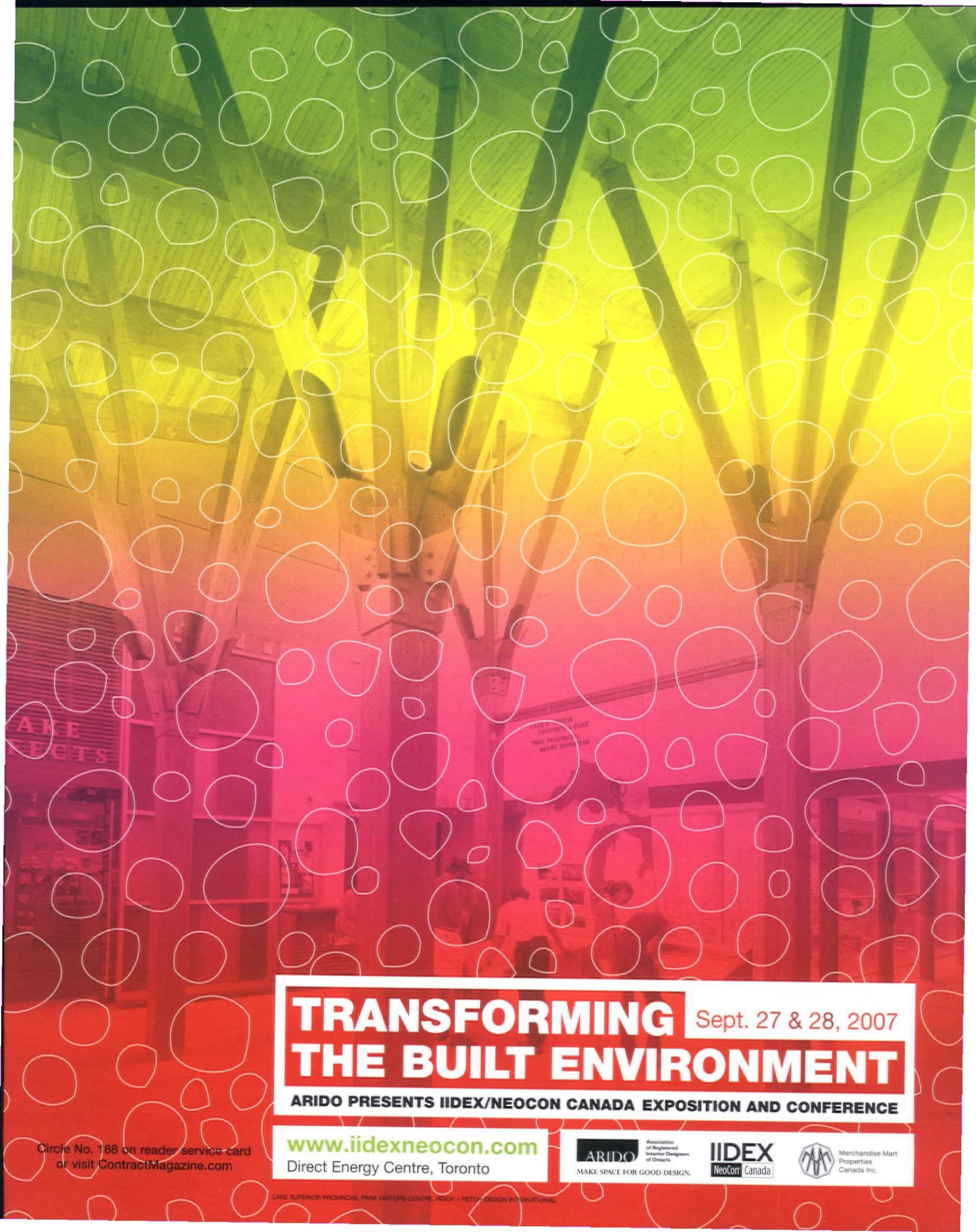
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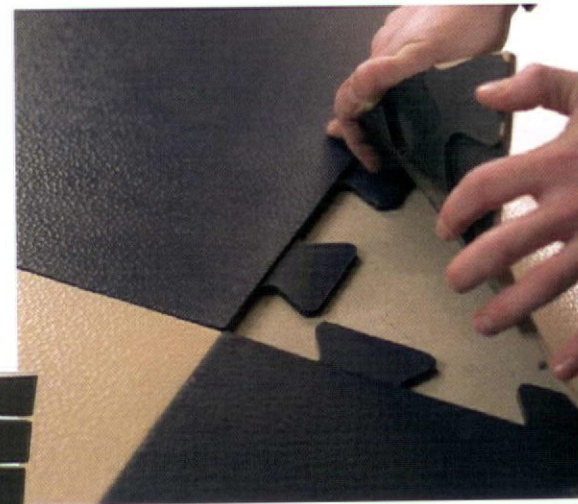
www.waclighting.com Circle No. 202



Johnsonite

UnderLock is a new installation solution containing hidden locking tabs for easy-to-install and flexible-use flooring. Because there is no adhesive involved, the product can be used temporarily or permanently. Standard options include 12 speckled and 22 solid colorways, but only a hammered finish is available.

www.johnsonite.com Circle No. 203



Avonite Surfaces

A newly unveiled line of nine products includes two recycled options that contain a minimum of 40-percent pre-consumer waste. The palette is earthy and reminiscent of the colors of India and the Far East.

www.avonite.com Circle No. 204



Loewenstein

Characterized by a clean modern interpretation of the traditional slat back design, the new KARMA collection of seating includes an armless chair, barstool, and full-sized matching lounge chair. The pieces are well suited for high-traffic areas in contract and hospitality projects.

www.loewensteininc.com Circle No. 205

HBF Textiles

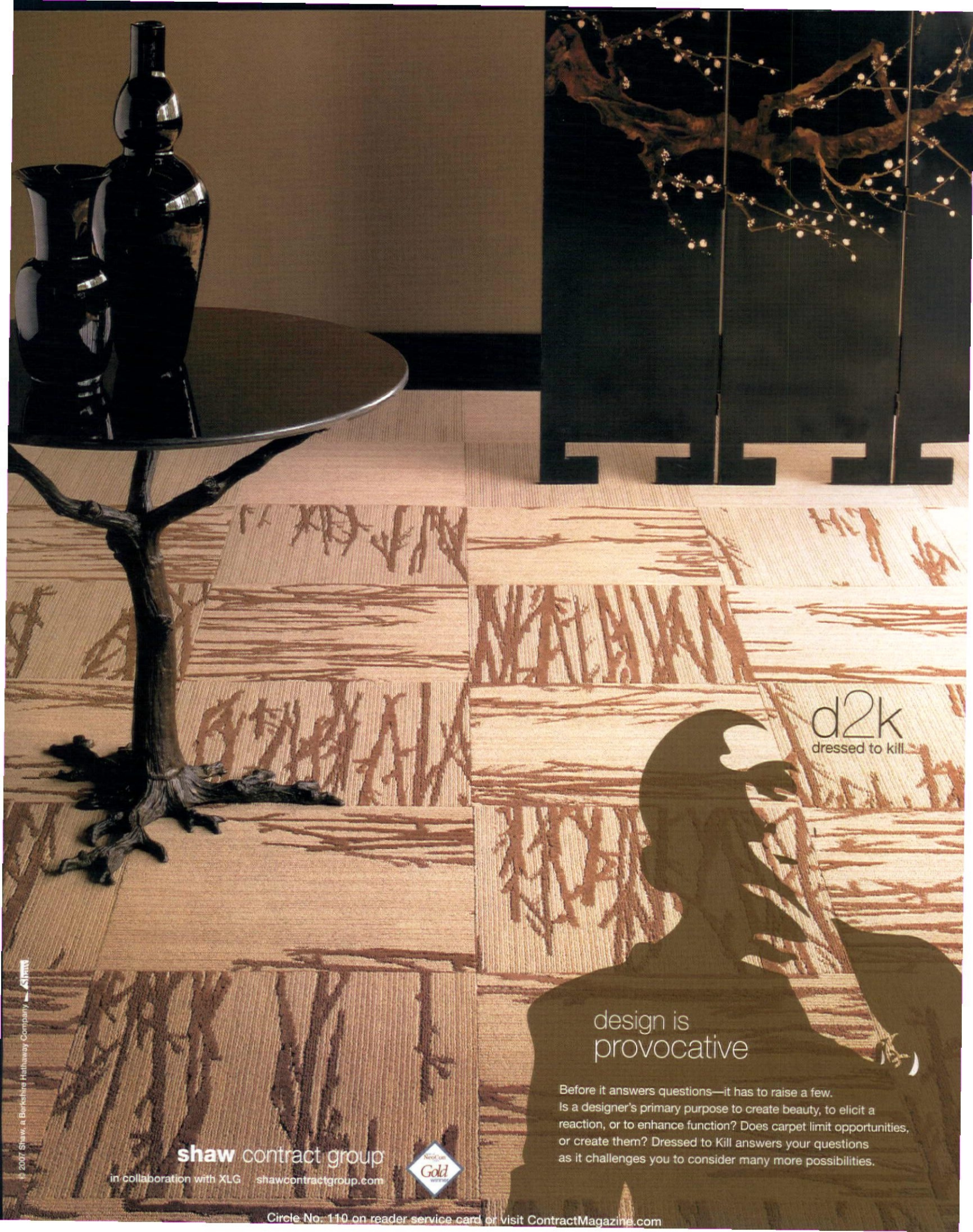
Inspired by her global travels, Barbara Barry creates a richer, more saturated palette, with Framework. The collection includes six upholstery fabrics complemented by three draperies and one multipurpose textile. The deep reds shown here (Linen Velvet, Circle Epingle, and Deco Jacquard) reflect Asian influences.

www.hbftextiles.com Circle No. 206



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Before it answers questions—it has to raise a few. Is a designer's primary purpose to create beauty, to elicit a reaction, or to enhance function? Does carpet limit opportunities, or create them? Dressed to Kill answers your questions as it challenges you to consider many more possibilities.

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Eurotrend

Senorita is an ergonomic, flexible chair made specifically for dorms, cafeterias, and classrooms. Designed in Spain, it is available in three frame designs: straight legs (the stackable version), spider legs (with or without casters), and a sled base. www.eurotrendusa.com Circle No. 208



Milliken Carpet

Created specifically for retirement and nursing facilities, Designed for Senior Living patterns and colors are tailored for seniors. The collection also provides the high performance needed underfoot. The collection's 2,700 standard SKUs are divided into six families: Historic Reference, Modern Classics, Organic Motifs, Arts & Crafts, Natural Illusions, and Architectonic. www.designedforseniorliving.com

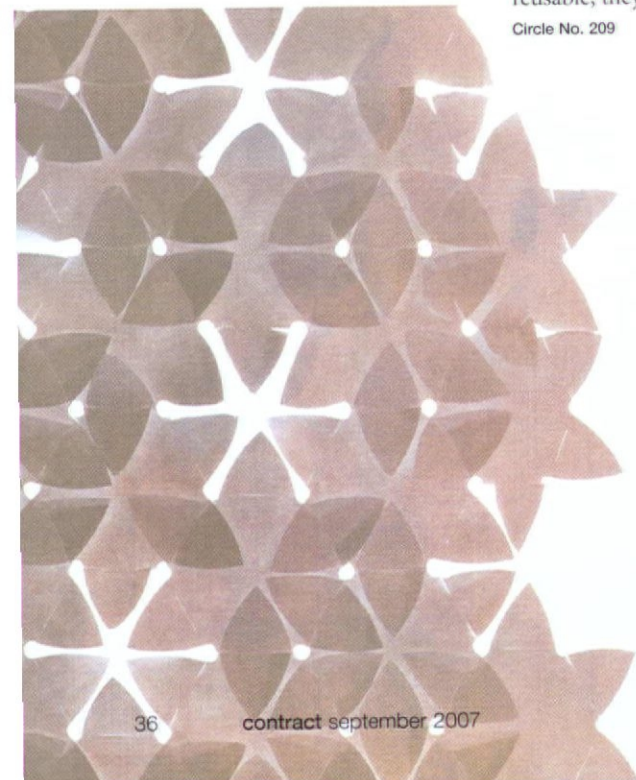
Circle No. 207



Woodnotes

Woodnotes adds a new Tyvek collection, Flake and Flower, to its spun paper yarns. This modular pattern can be used to make different surfaces for curtains, partitions, and even table decorations. The 8-in. pieces are easy to install and reusable; they come 160 to a package. www.woodnotes.fi

Circle No. 209



The Weller Group

After 25 years of designing casegoods for others, designer Ed Weller started his own furniture company. His collections are a boutique resource for the executive and hospitality markets, using quality materials at reasonable prices.

Of his five new collections, this is Arbitus, which offers components in any length and configuration in a variety of surface materials. www.thewellergroupusa.com Circle No. 210



A DISGRUNTLED

LOOFAH

I used to be considered somewhat of a luxury item. When people saw me hanging in a shower they'd say, "Ooooh, a loofah." They were impressed. Now they've got these fancy showerheads, hand showers and body sprays spouting out of every wall—I feel like I'm watching a show in Vegas. I'm lucky if I even get noticed. If this is life in a custom shower, I want out.



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resources: laminates



Abet Laminati

Abet Laminati continues to add new designs to its funky Serigrafia collection. When these 14 innovative patterns are combined with the existing line, the total number of choices grows to 37. Each sheet is individually silk-screened and measures 51 in. by 120 in. www.abetlaminati.com Circle No. 212

Wilsonart

The tone-on-tone, small texture of Wilsonart's new Mesh Series looks almost woven. This collection includes six colors in neutral and metal tones, designed to complement existing architectural elements, powder-coated finishes, and decorative metals. www.wilsonart.com Circle No. 211




Lamin-Art

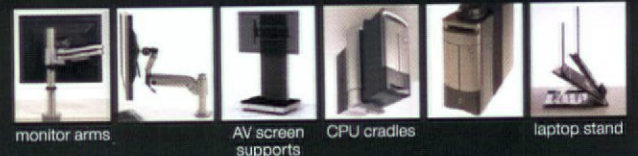
A close-up of the new Abaca laminate highlights its organic texture. Made from recycled banana fibers randomly sprinkled over 10 natural background colors, Abaca is a naturally strong and dimensional material. www.laminart.com Circle No. 213



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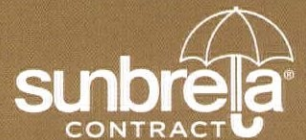
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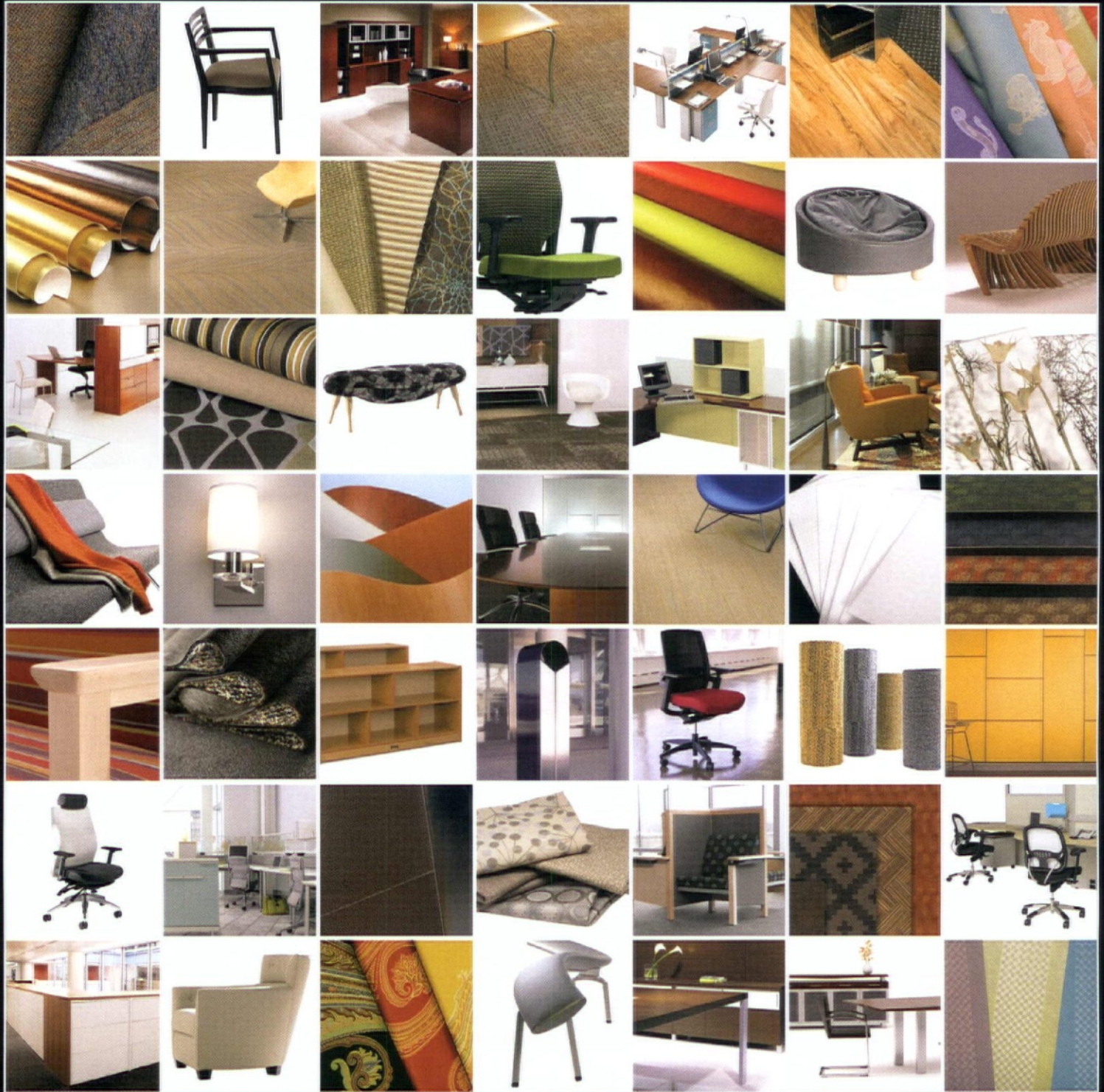


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resources

Q: When working on a big project, how do I keep all the wood samples consistent?

A: When you meet with the manufacturers' reps, ask for their company's veneer samples for all of the pieces you plan to specify. The same stain may vary on different wood species. For example, a "mahogany" stain on cherry will have a more orange cast than when it's applied on maple.

After you collect all of the veneer samples from the chosen manufacturers, determine which color should be the master sample for the whole project. If that's not possible, find a miscellaneous wood sample in your library that works better. However you acquire this master sample, collect multiple copies of it, keep several for yourself, and give one to reps so their factories can duplicate it. You may have to go through several trial runs until you get a satisfying

match, but it's worth the process in the end. Be sure to allow enough time for this to take place.

A factory code number is glued to the back of each custom sample. Pick the sample you like best, and sign it as "approved." On your written furniture specifications, write that approved code number next any item where that custom wood finish is applied. Use the words: "To match architect's sample."

Keep all duplicates of your master veneer samples as well as copies of your paperwork. That way, if you see an inconsistency of the wood finishes upon delivery, you are validated and protected by your paper trail.

Q: When specifying custom chairs, how do I make sure I get what I want?

A: Choose a local workroom so you can visit the factory, and they can send you samples quickly. If that's not possible, be sure you have a hands-on contact at the factory to whom you can talk on the phone (in addition to speaking with your local rep).

Give the custom workroom a CAD drawing, photograph, or conceptual sketch of the piece you want fabricated. Explain the purpose of your project. Include the measurements you need (arm, back, seat height, etc). Discuss upholstery and finish options as well as any special details you require.

The workroom will get back to you with a shop drawing of the pieces for you to approve. Each drawing should have a stamped form on the bottom of the page for you sign upon approval.

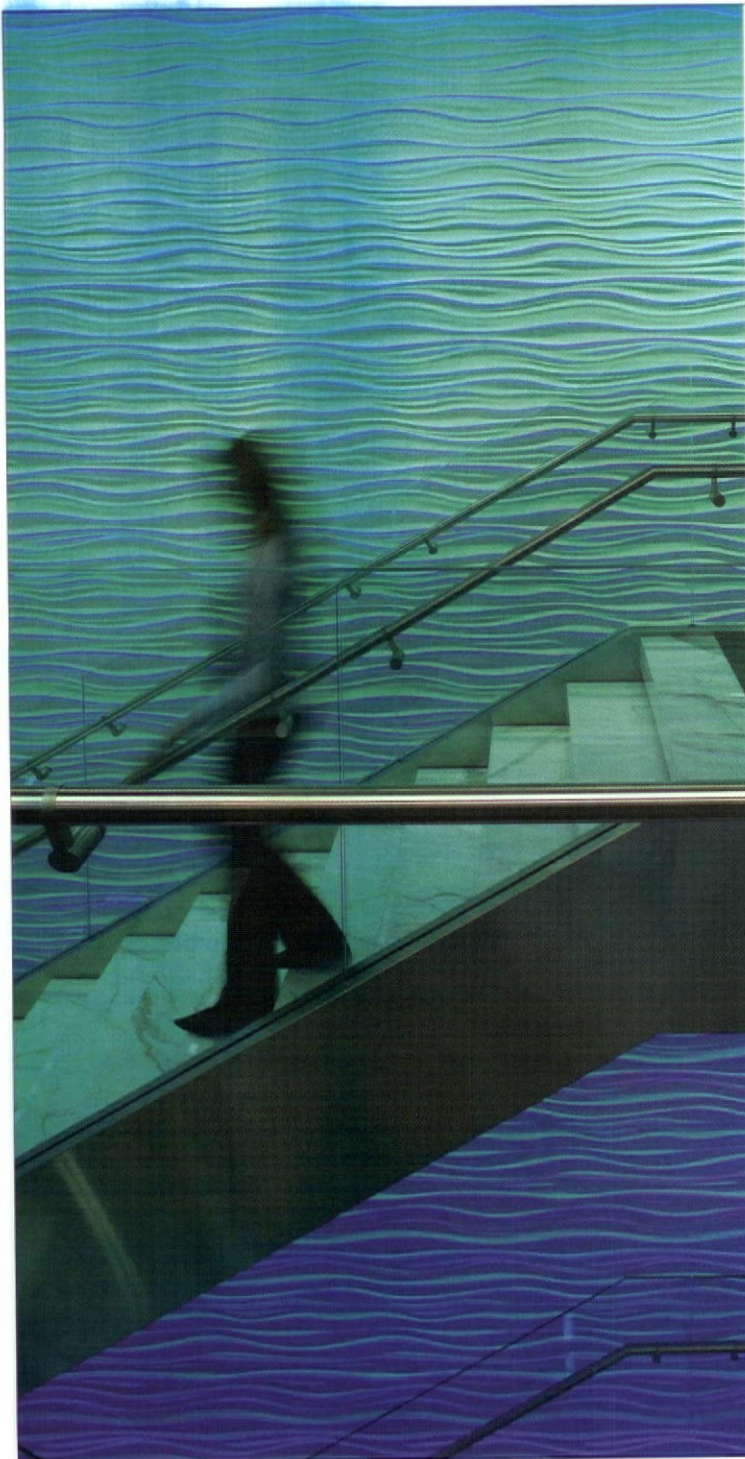
If the project is large, involving multiple pieces, have the workroom create a sample in muslin for you to test in your office. Review the sample, and tell them about any adjustments you want them to make. Ask for a second sample to which you can give the final approval.

Budget extra time into your furniture schedule to work out the details before the standard 8-10 week manufacturing process even begins. And keep records of all your approved samples and paperwork.

Resources Q&A is provided by Katherine Day Sutton, a member of the Resource Directors Association (RDA).



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Tour: lots of magic, little mystery.



multifaceted modular

Sure, modular carpet is easy to install and replace, but it also offers the chance to cover floors in unique and exciting ways

By Sofia Galadza

Why specify modular carpet? Why not! The tiles are relatively easy to install, give designers the opportunity to create custom solutions, and are ideal when it comes to maintenance of a space. And certainly, designers see these features and benefits. The growth in the modular carpet market over the past five years has been significant. Not only is it a given in the corporate sector; it's also popular in hospitality, gaming, and education.

When it comes to modular carpeting, the functional and aesthetic features are equally important. There's a demand for performance and environmentally friendly materials, but the products have to look good, as well. And what's the look designers want? Among the most popular are free-flowing, non-directional patterns, like the ones in Durkan Commercial's Mind Body Soul collection or the Progressions collection from Lees. Both vibrant hues and neutrals shades are popular, especially given the fact that designers like to use modular carpeting for wayfinding.

More and more, we are seeing interiors where designers have used modular carpeting to create unique installations. It's a custom floor without the added cost of custom products. A range of patterns and colors from Shaw Contract's Dressed2Kill line, for instance, make it custom installation-friendly. Combining tiles that are the same color, but different pile heights, is another way of achieving a custom—albeit understated—solution. The Colouresce Collection from Monterey, for example, offers a variety of pattern and textures in the same color family.

But while some designers enjoy mixing and matching tiles, others still want the monolithic appearance of broadloom. This is especially the case in higher-end executive areas where modular carpeting is replacing broadloom. Milliken's Foreign Intrigue is a favorite in law firm projects, and Llano Firma from C&A helps designers achieve the seamless appearance. (Even though the price for this C&A collection is at the higher end of the scale, it is selling very well.)

Shaw Contract, Dressed2Kill. Circle No. 220



Milliken, Plan A.
Circle No. 221



Durkan Commercial, Glam Rock. Circle No. 222



Perhaps one of the most interesting developments in the modular carpet arena is related to texture. Face weights are decreasing, which means carpet designers and mills use less yarn. In turn, they are creating illusions of depth with visual texture and dimension. Some good examples are Glam Rock from Durkan Commercial and Plan A from Milliken (especially in the greenish brown shade called Pic).

Of course, sustainability is a huge factor in the carpet industry. Perhaps the most talked-about issue in this realm concerns carpet backing. Mohawk recently introduced Encycle™, a thermoplastic, PVC-free backing. C&A's products have PVC-free Ethos™, a backing made from an abundant waste source—the polyvinyl butryal (PVB) film that is recovered when automotive windshields are recycled. Carpet manufacturers also are emphasizing holistic approaches to greener products. Milliken, for example, likes to inform its customers that its products are made in a green facility and that it will gladly reclaim the tiles at the end of their useful life. Overall, the industry's focus is on creating products that look good, perform well, and also help designers do more than simply cover the floors. ■

Lees Carpets, Progressions. Circle No. 224



Monterey, Colouresce Collection. Circle No. 223



the art of solid hardwood

Davis introduces TIX, a contemporary new executive office furniture solution with a custom-made flavor

By Danine Alati

The quality craftsmanship of custom solid hardwood with the lead time of standard offering casegoods is what Davis delivers with its TIX office, designed by Dante Bonuccelli. Sandy Soroush, senior vice president, sales and marketing at Davis, explains that the objective with this line was to create something unique in the American contract furniture industry—not a copy, not a “me too,” but something with a contemporary aesthetic and functionality that is environmentally based and really valued by the end user.

Davis licensed the highly successful solid hardwood Zoom meeting table from Switzerland-based Mobimex in 1995 and has since looked forward to another collaboration opportunity. Having worked extensively with Mobimex, Milan architect Bonuccelli sketched out a concept for a solid wood executive office line and presented his idea to company owner Walter Zwick. When Soroush and Davis president Danny Davis first saw they sketches a few years ago, they were anxious to see what Bonuccelli would develop. The finished line exemplifies the new desk collection that Davis had been seeking.




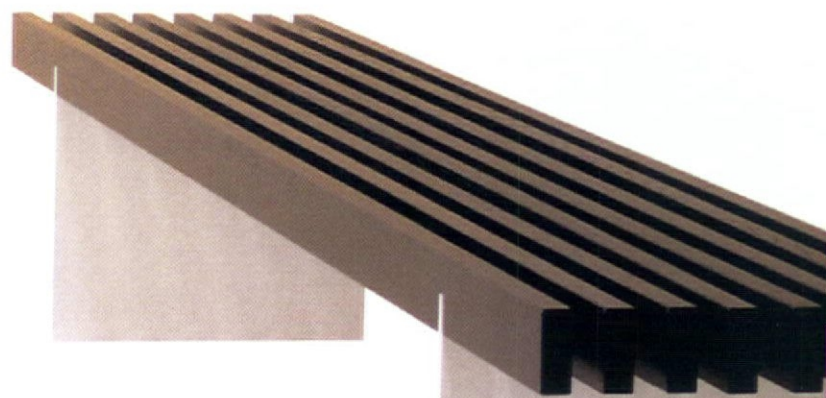


"The goals of this introduction were to take Dante's vision of offering a new work philosophy for the top corporate tier, while at the same time supplying heirloom quality and old-world craftsmanship to create a contemporary environment. At this top level of performance in the corporate world it takes something more than just the typical setting," Soroush explains.

Bonuccelli describes his design intent for TIX. "We try to see the same problem with different points of view: to use simple, minimal, essential forms in order to create a neutral and timeless image that can work well in an office space or in different architectonic languages; to create new typologies for office space in order to work in an innovative way; and to give maximum expression to honest materials—solid wood worked by hand and extruded aluminum produced in a high-tech way," he says. "Any component has the minimum section that the material requires for structural reasons. Materials are finished in a natural way: wooden parts are protected with organic oils, and aluminum is brushed and anodized; junctions are joined only with screws. We don't use painting or glue. All materials are fully recyclable."

Bonuccelli's new work philosophy incorporates three basic zones—working, meeting, and computer support. TIX comes in a standard offering, available in three woods with a short lead time and a complete custom approach, which reflects the same basic design but comes in sizes, woods, and functions to express individual user requirements. The standard offering includes one-, two-, and three-piece desks, base case, low boards, side boards, high boards, slide boards, media boards, and conference tables. An organic wedge shape allows for the attachment of additional storage or computer support items or for bringing in freestanding units that have the same solid wood and aluminum accents, Soroush explains. The name "TIX" is based on the three distinct leg forms for the tables: Bonuccelli designed a T-leg for the computer tables, a steel blade base—or I-leg—for the conference and rectangular tables, and an extruded aluminum X-leg for the wedges.

Creating casegoods with a green story is virtually impossible unless the collection is 100-percent solid hardwood, so TIX marks quite an accomplishment for Bonuccelli and Davis. Calling the collection "a true love affair with nature," Soroush says, "Each species of wood has its own special characteristics, and each tree has its own visual impression. No two tables are alike; just as no two paintings are alike when the same artist paints them. The craftsmen who make this product know how to take full advantage of what each tree offers." She adds, "This product is a pure art form."  Circle No. 200



hyper color

With a light-refracting film, 3form's latest product, Dichroic, creates luminous, multicolored effects

By Sofia Galadza

Photo shoots can be tricky. Just as the photographer gets the right kind of light, some exterior influence can factor in and change the condition. When 3form did the shoot for its new product Dichroic, a cloud rolled in. But rather than the light changing, the color of the material itself shifted. As a result, instead of this exterior influence being a burden, it was a pleasure to see the panel doing what it was intended to do: refract surrounding light and yield unexpected colors. "It's ever changing. It's truly amazing. We had a blast doing the photography," says Jill Canales, vice president of design and marketing for 3form.


How can a cloud change the color of the material? Simply put, a colorless light-refracting film, sandwiched between 3form's signature ecoresin, captures and manipulates light to reveal varying colors. More specifically, rays of light in different polarization states traveling through the panels experience varying absorption, producing what's called a dichroic effect. The resulting strength of the effect varies strongly with the wavelength of the light, making the material appear to possess different colors when viewed from different angles. The colors you see depend on the panel position, the viewing angle, and fluctuations in ambient light. Moreover, various elements—be they sunshine coming through a window, a bold carpet, or even someone's clothing, for example—affect the resulting color.

Dichroic is available in two versions: Lunar, which yields icy blue to blushing warm pink, and Solar, where one might see colors ranging from berry



blues to sun-kissed pinks. Additionally, it's available in two finish options: Sandstone for striking color shifts, and Supermatte for soft whitewashed color with subtle transitions. The panels come in 4-ft. by 8-ft. sheets, in thicknesses ranging from 1/8th-in. to 1 in.

Innovative applications include clipping thin gauge panels and cold bending them into wave-like elements. Clients may also emboss the panels with textures. "It's been specified with a large tile pattern, which is neat because you can see the refraction happening without even walking around," says Canales.

Why did 3form opt to offer this product? "We're seeing a developing interest in reflective surfaces and a sense of glamour in design," shares Canales. "This is a nice combination of science and art. Our clients want the most cutting-edge products we can create." Moreover, adds Talley Goodson, CEO of 3form, Dichroic is in line with 3form's environmental objectives. The Ecoresin used contains 40-percent post-industrial recycled material, and all manufacturing waste is also recycled. It is also SCS and GREENGUARD certified. There are LEED credits granted for using light transmitting materials—and Dichroic does that to boot. 

Circle No. 201

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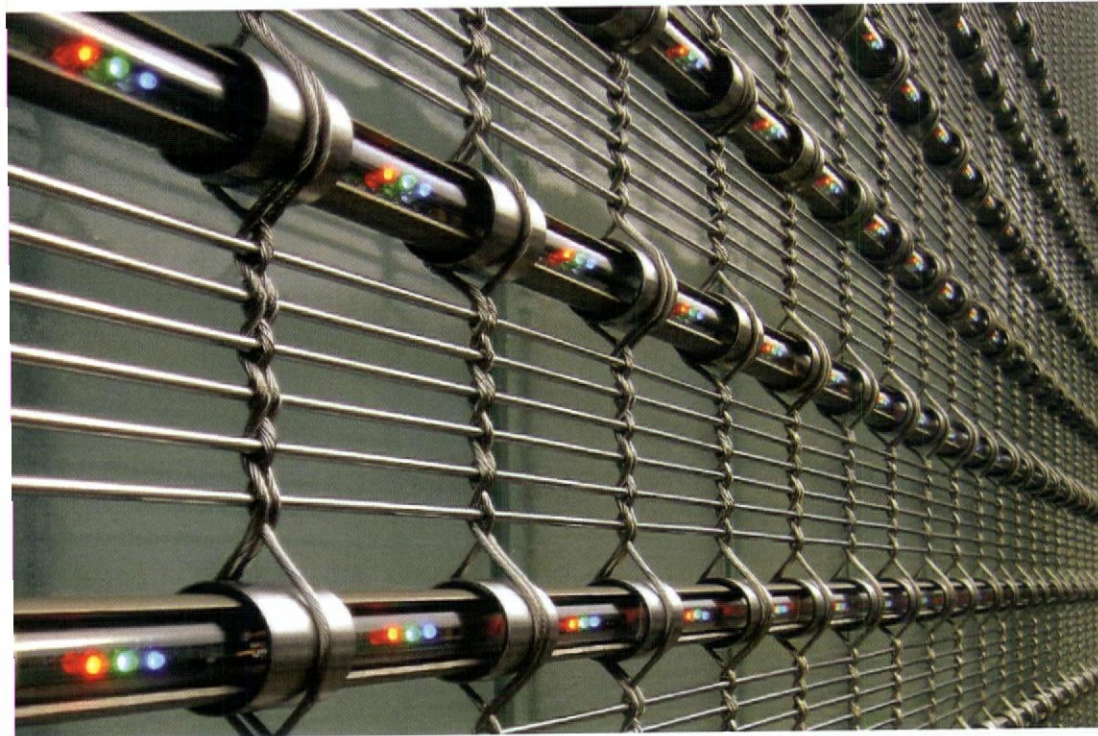
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light metal

Mesh and LED technology come together as both architectural and lighting elements

By Sofia Galadza




“Media-oriented architecture is taking over the public space,” says Tom Powley, president of GKD Metal Fabrics. “Media facades re-imagine the naturally static effect of architecture while simultaneously communicating a message to the viewer. The challenge in creating these displays is finding a way to implement them that responds to a company’s communication needs while also remaining cost and energy efficient.”

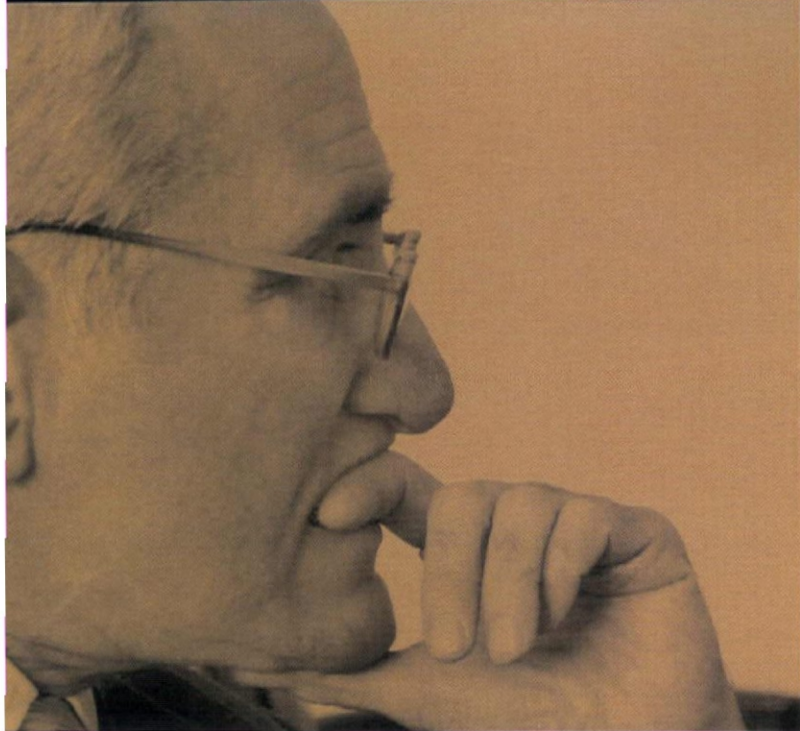
At this year’s International Motor Show in Geneva, the car manufacturer Opel had an eye-catching booth by Bellprat Associates. The Swiss firm used more than 200 sq. m. (2,152 sq. ft.) of Mediamesh to display dynamic waves of colored lights. And in Istanbul, the material colors the skyline. The Turkish pharmaceutical company Abdi Ibrahim’s headquarters, designed by Milan’s Dante O. Benini & Partners, has a 28-sq.-m. (301 sq. ft.) Mediamesh surface at the top of the 426-ft.-tall building. During the day, it features the company’s blue logo; at night, videos draw eyes upward.

Architectural mesh has been around for years. The woven metal originally was used in manufacturing and then in various technical applications, such as acoustic insulation for airplane engines. It evolved into a material that could be used on facades and also inside. The latest innovation: Mediamesh®, a system that combines stainless-steel wire mesh with IT-based LED technology. The LEDs display images—be they graphics, text, or video—onto the architectural mesh surface.

GKD Metal Fabrics—based in Düren, Germany with a U.S. office in Cambridge, Md.—already

produces woven wire mesh made of metal, synthetic wires, and fibers. It created Mediamesh in partnership with ag4 media façade GmbH, a company in Cologne, Germany. The makeup of the material can be described simply: The stainless steel mesh is interwoven with LED profiles, and connected media controls are installed behind the surface. The supply of power and data to the LEDs is coordinated through control units, which are easily concealed and connected to central servers. Once installed, Mediamesh displays can be operated via the Internet.

Among the functional benefits is that Mediamesh—unlike LED boards—is permanently weather and temperature resistant. That’s because the LEDs are encased within the round profiles, and the profiles are interconnected by cables and sealed with a waterproof resin. From an aesthetic standpoint, one of the main benefits is that Mediamesh is a transparent system that does not completely close off the facade. When the power is off, the facade is merely architectural mesh and a component of the architectural design.  Circle No. 220



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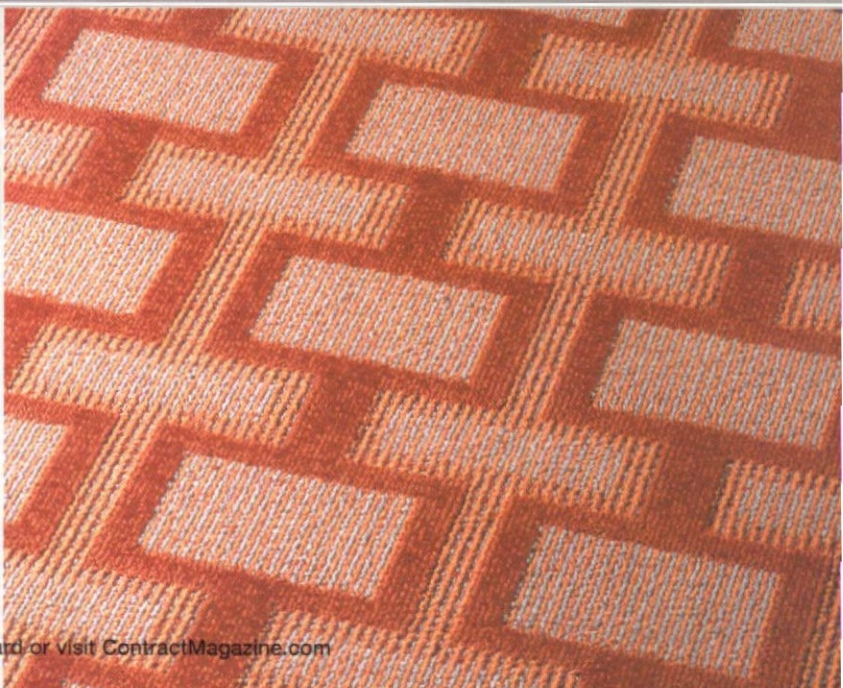
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greener pastures

LEED certification isn't just about the building features—
what's outside counts, as well

By Rico Cedro, AIA, LEED AP

"To build is to collaborate with earth..."
—Marguerite Yourcenar, *Memoirs of Hadrian*

Sustainability is taking us on an exciting journey towards a more informed and responsible design of the buildings that occupy these oceans of space in our natural and man-made world. In this revolution, which is only just beginning, attention has focused almost exclusively on buildings and interiors, especially those with eye-catching technologies, such as double façades and photovoltaic panels.

The various LEED rating systems now in use clearly acknowledge the importance of landscape through their various credits. They point landscape architects, like their building and interior design counterparts, in the direction of native material and those with recycled content, water conservation, permeable surfaces, and of course the increasingly prevalent green roof. It is an excellent start, but a deeper discussion of sustainable landscapes is attracting less interest.

This situation is somewhat deceptive. Working quietly and for the most part without the media fanfare and suaveness of the green architecture community, landscape architects and ecologists are creating a new design ethic that challenges the incidental role of the landscape in most projects, whether green or not. Older paradigms, such as the isolated building sitting on the ubiquitous turf lawn, are being overturned in favor of a landscape ethic that rethinks both the design of the land and our relationship to it.

Sustainable landscape architecture is less about formal versus naturalistic design principles—both are equally valid. Rather it is about restoring or creating anew the natural processes of the environ-

ment and revealing them to us, so we can become knowledgeable landscape stewards. Like buildings that are loved, landscapes with active, caring constituencies are more likely to be tended to and are less prone to fall into decline and ugliness.

At its very basic, this design ethic acknowledges that we are all gardeners. Cities are asking homeowners to disconnect their downspouts and use the water to create rain gardens, relieving overburdened storm water and sewer systems. Not only is a new type of urban garden created, but residents are engaged as collaborators in maintaining the very city in which

No longer is the landscape—urban or natural—a far away abstraction or just an aesthetic experience.

they reside. No longer is the landscape—urban or natural—a far away abstraction or just an aesthetic experience. We are now engaged as responsible makers of the landscape, reconnected to the environment, which ultimately sustains us all.

At Prairie Crossing, a planned ecological community in Greyslake, Ill., this sustainable approach to landscape design permeates all aspects of the place. Located on former farmland, the landscape design restores existing hedgerows, land contours, and natural water flow, creating a place that forges links between residents and the landscape. Rather than the bland evenness of a typical sub-division, houses are clustered, creating community spaces reminiscent of a New England green. A generous open space system handles storm water runoff through bio-swales, wetlands, and other natural means, avoiding expensive piping, curbs, and gutters. The native prairie plants used exclusively create a rich tapestry of

color, texture, and space that is a delight to the eye, and a paradise for native and migratory wildlife. The sights, fragrances, and sounds of the land invite cross-generational exploration, bringing together residents as active stewards of the place and each other, assuring that knowledge is passed on to the next generation.

At Olympia Sculpture Park in Seattle by Weiss/Manfredi, a waterfront park re-interprets the urban landscape. Rather than hide the transportation sinews of an existing roadway and railroad, they participate as vital compositional

elements in this reborn brownfield site. Skillfully transgressing the boundaries of architecture, landscape architecture, sculpture, and civil engineering, the project more fully reveals to residents the role of infrastructure in the very making of the city. Perhaps when infrastructure is seen in a positive light—in this case a partner in the making of the park—citizens will be more willing to invest in its upkeep.

How we deal with the land is a timeless story of our changing interpretations of paradise. In this exciting moment, the idea of landscape is being reborn not as a pristine wilderness, which may never have existed, nor as a resource to be consumed, spent and then abandoned. Rather the designers of the sustainable landscape are quietly making a place for us where we are both proprietor and guest. ■

Rico Cedro is director of sustainable design at Krueck & Sexton Architects in Chicago.



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smart bucks

Budget design trends depend on the attitude designers take when dealing with money constraints

By Sofia Galadza

When it comes to budget trends, it's not so much about what you see. It's about what you don't see. How budgets are made, setting priorities, and value engineering are all components of the design process and have a direct impact on the execution of a design. Tight resources can make these tasks more difficult, but also force designers to be more thoughtful.

Working with budget constraints means making smart decisions from the outset. Pam Milner, vice president, director of interiors at SmithGroup's Washington, D.C., office, says, "You need to put the sacred cows up front. What's most important? Is it the image? The telecommunications package? The millwork? You need to prioritize." And so, even if the budget is tight, if it's image the client values, materials and finishes will rank higher on the list. Guy Geier, principal at FXFOWLE in New York, agrees. "For our design of the National Audubon Society Home Office in New York, the client told us they wanted an open atmosphere," he recalls. "So we didn't have any full height office walls. The design decisions support their motto and work with their budget."

"We need to remind the clients of certain costs," says Tom Polucci, design director at HOK in Chicago. If the client wants offices, for example, Polucci alerts them that building within a space adds costs, and to consider whether they're truly necessary. For the Housing Authority of Cook County office in Chicago, Polucci managed to do a 20,000-sq.-ft. build out—complete with private offices along the perimeter—for \$42 per sq. ft. "The design team knew the client's need for offices, so adjustments were made elsewhere." Polucci's team used 7-ft. doors instead of 9-ft. doors. They couldn't afford the costs of glass for office fronts, so lighting for the core of the space was a challenge. Modular carpeting was not an option. Instead, they



Radio Shack Headquarters, Fort Worth, Texas, designed by HKS. Photo by Blake Marvin/HKS.

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used dark broadloom for the circulation areas and lighter carpet under the workstations.

Designing on a budget conjures images of making compromises and straying from the original intent. In many cases, compromises are inevitable, but designers are re-naming them “alternates.” Milner says, “Always have alternates so it’s not so much a compromise as it is a Plan B.” Barbara Zieve, associate partner at Butler Rogers Baskett Architects in New York, shares that since it’s difficult to predict construction costs, backup plans are necessary in order to meet budget needs. “Given how active the construction industry has been in recent years, there has been an escalation in construction costs, for labor as well as materials,” she says. “Therefore, it can prove difficult for the architect to predict the construction costs for the various trades based upon our past project experience. As a way of preserving the integrity of our design and not eliminating key elements if the project costs prove to be too high, we often create alternative material and detail scenarios that keep the basic design idea intact.”


An example of Zieve’s “kit of parts” approach is the material design methodology her team used for the

conference center walls at two New York law firms. “The walls were designed as a panel system that could be rendered in veneer, lacquer, field-sprayed MDF, field-roller-painted MDF, or sheetrock, all with a descending cost implication. “With this method, the client understood how we prioritized the design elements, thus helping them to make more informed decisions to reduce costs when it became necessary,” she notes.

If the concept is strong, you can dial finishes and materials up or down. Glenn Clarke, associate principal/senior vice president of HKS in Dallas, says: “If your design has integrity as far as form, you can do a lot with finishes.” For the Radio Shack Headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas, his team had originally planned to have back-painted glass columns standing in front of a stone wall in the foyer. When budget restraints kicked in, they opted for the alternative: plaster columns. “It is just as effective because the concept was strong from the outset,” he says.

One of the most surprising trends is the monetary benefits of going green. Sure, there are the payback cycles design teams outline for clients. But one of

the happy accidents of green design is up-front savings. “If you approach design on a more holistic level, you will see the savings,” says Polucci. For example, a raised floor system can carry the power and data typically contained by a panel system. So if the client can do without panels—which may be necessary for privacy—building a green-friendly raised floor system offers savings in the short and long terms. Geier found hidden savings of going green while working on the core, shell, and interiors for the expansion of software developer SAP America’s headquarters outside Philadelphia. The triple-glazed exterior curtainwall, which was expensive, but a necessary part of the green design, enabled the team to downsize the mechanical system and the real estate allocated for it.

The bottom line: there are no sure bet trends in budget design the way we might see trends in, say, hospitality design. However, there are new approaches, issues, and goals that drive designers to fashion budget-oriented solutions—all while staying true to the client’s needs, the design intent, even the environmental story. And in the end, says Polucci, “It’s never a compromise. It’s about making thoughtful decisions.” 

National Audubon Society Home Office in New York, designed by FXFOWLE. Rendering courtesy of FXFOWLE.



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sound investment

Pickard Chilton Architects and IA design a new state-of-the-art sustainable headquarters for CalPERS, the nation's largest public pension fund

By Jean Nayar
Photography by Peter Aaron/ESTO

For decades, the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS), a public pension fund based in Sacramento, Calif., has been one of the most highly regarded employers in the area. And since its headquarters facility was expanded with a new 550,000-sq.-ft. freestanding addition a couple of years ago, its prestige as an employer of choice has gained an even higher profile.

Designed by New Haven, Conn.-based architects Pickard Chilton with office interiors by IA and landscaping by Hart/Howerton, both of San Francisco, the new \$265-million facility doubles CalPERS' dedicated office space and brings together all of its employees in a four-square-block, campus-like setting. Located at the west end of what is known as the R Street corridor, a 30-block-long district of historic importance, CalPERS' original 500,000-sq.-ft. headquarters building—completed in 1986 by Sacramento architects Dreyfuss & Blackford—was beloved by its employees. But, due to the organization's rapid growth, it was literally bursting at the seams, with several of its 2,500 employees operating out of leased spaces throughout the city. Instead of relocating, the organization opted to expand its current headquarters, purchased two adjacent square-block parcels of land, and created a new sister building, which takes cues from the original structure and is laced with appealing outdoor terraces and courtyards.

Since CalPERS is a large government operation—it is the nation's largest pension fund and manages, invests, and administers more than \$248 billion in assets for more than 1.5 million public employees, retirees, and their families—the building development process was long and involved. It took three years to design and two years to construct after numerous meetings involving CalPERS' board, its employees, local building and city planning officials, and community groups. Both Diane Proctor, the project manager from CalPERS charged with overseeing the design and construction process, and

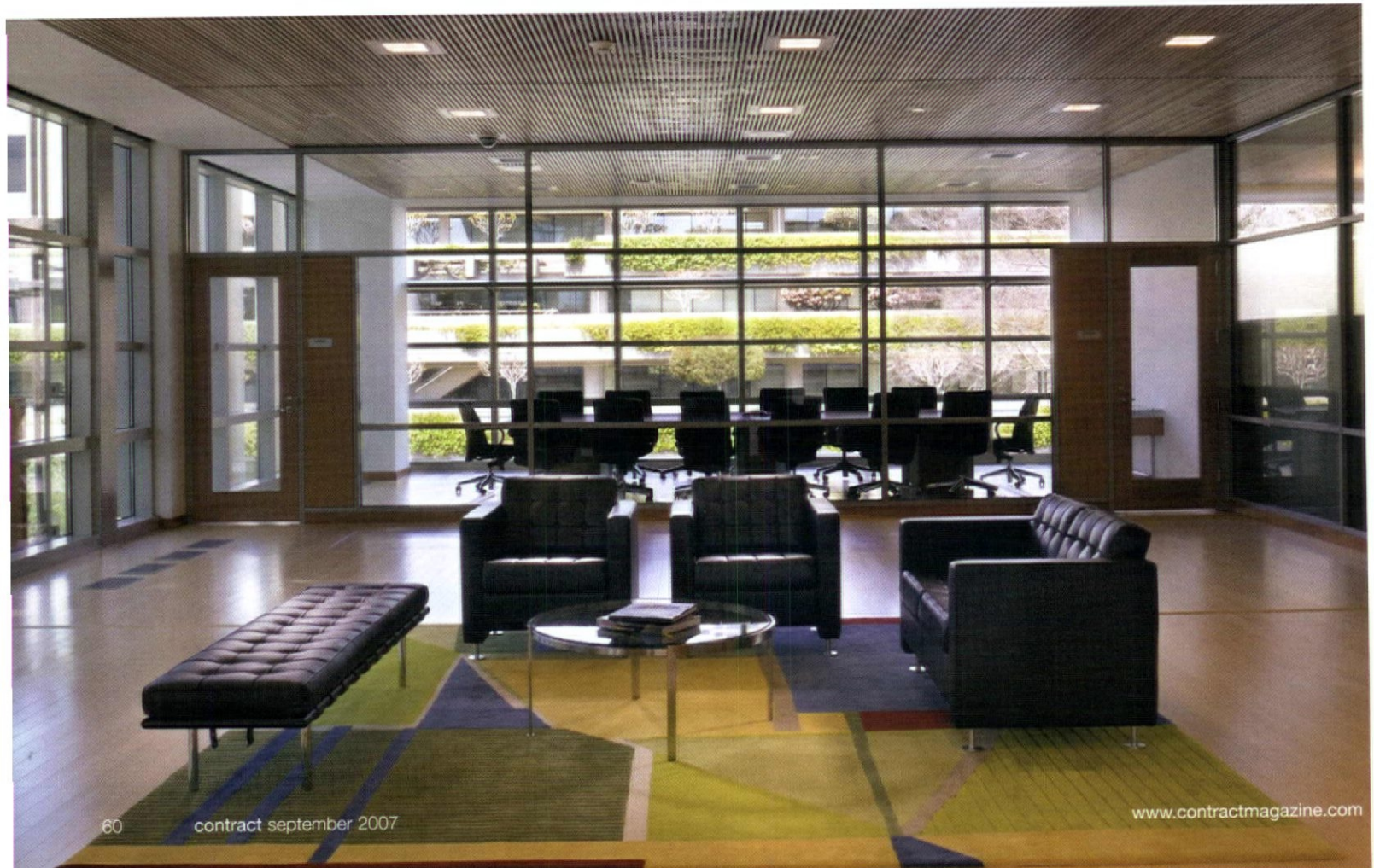
An indoor bamboo grove signals the staircase in the five-story atrium and is surrounded by several seating groups; cherry paneling covers the columns and floor slabs the space (opposite). A quiet reflecting pool enhances the contemplative spirit at the foot of the staircase (left).







In a ground level conference room, the ceiling is 2 ft. higher than on other floors, floor-to-ceiling windows let in natural light, and ribbed glass panels provide privacy while permitting light flow (left). The elevator lobby seating area (below) features a custom-designed rug; bamboo flooring and wood ceiling slats add texture.



William Chilton, the principal on the project, attributes the success of the new building to a series of thoughtful visioning sessions and a great deal of listening and interaction with local groups. "At the same time our building was being designed, another project underway within a mile of our location got entangled with community issues," says Proctor. "It was clear that working collaboratively with the community was vital." Although, as a state agency, CalPERS was not required to follow Sacramento's recently adopted R-Street Corridor Plan—which aimed to revitalize the 30-block-long R Street corridor and develop new residential structures in the area—its board chose to uphold the tenets of the plan. As a result, the new facility includes office space, retail space, child-care facilities, and a fitness center. In addition, the project also includes 180,000 sq. ft. of proposed nearby housing (1 sq. ft. of residential space for every 3 sq. ft. of its office space as recommended in the corridor revitalization plan).

"By sincerely listening to all parties early on, we distilled a number of key issues that influenced the design," says Chilton. Among them, he says, is the idea that the board, the employees, and pension fund members, saw their original building as their "home." Although the existing building was constructed in the mid '80s, it was innovative for its time, says Chilton, incorporating integrated landscaping, outdoor terraces and plazas, wide interior corridors, raised access flooring, and daylighting. "They also wanted the new building to be pedestrian-friendly and respectful of the neighborhood," he says, adding that the client wanted the building to incorporate sustainable design strategies, too. "The idea was to create a building that would be equal in quality and character to the original, yet be of its time architecturally and technologically."

To create a seamless transition from one building to the other, the architects interpreted characteristics of the original structure in new ways. Composed of two U-shaped buildings that enclose a central courtyard, the new glass-covered facility features massing, light shelves, and sun shades that echo the original building and allow daylight to penetrate deep within the office spaces. Although the architects retained the wide corridors, they narrowed the size of the overall floor plates. They also included raised access flooring, but instead of housing only cables (as in the original structure), these also contain air distribution mechanisms. Fostering a sense of community and transparency—within the organization and with the community in general—the architects created a large central atrium, which includes a bamboo grove, a reflecting pool, and casual seating areas. This space serves as an inviting gathering place for employees and is open to view by passersby.

Adjacent to the only two enclosed, perimeter offices, a breakout area (right) includes upholstered club chairs and coffee table. The ochre ceiling soffit contains the return air plenum for the HVAC system. Stone benches and gravel paths near the base of the stair (above) are among several interior landscape elements that give the structure an indoor/outdoor quality.





While it was not required, CalPERS elected to follow Sacramento's recently adopted R-Street Corridor Plan to revitalize the 30-block-long R Street corridor, which included outfitting the new facility with office space, retail space, child-care facilities (above), and a fitness center. Indirect/direct light fixtures from Zumbotel provide comfortable energy-efficient illumination in an open work area (opposite). Morrison workstations from Knoll feature reconstituted veneer worksurfaces. Workers can individually control air flow from each workstation.

During the design process, the IA team reprogrammed and restacked CalPERS' existing headquarters and provided new programming and interior design for the office spaces and conference area. According to IA principal Mary Lee Duff, who was in charge of strategic programming, a primary goal was to optimally distribute CalPERS business groups between the two buildings. "The challenge was to define business drivers—infrastructure, high growth, expense to move, and adjacencies," she says. "Ultimately we defined three core competencies: operations, customer service, and executive/strategic management. We distributed them both horizontally, so that people from all of these groups would go in both buildings, and vertically, putting customer service employees on the ground floor, operations people in the middle floors, and the executive strategic management and traders on top." They also aimed to harmonize the look and feel of the new interiors with those of the existing building and employed sustainable materials and strategies. "It was really about working with the architects to design from the inside out to meet the users needs," she says.

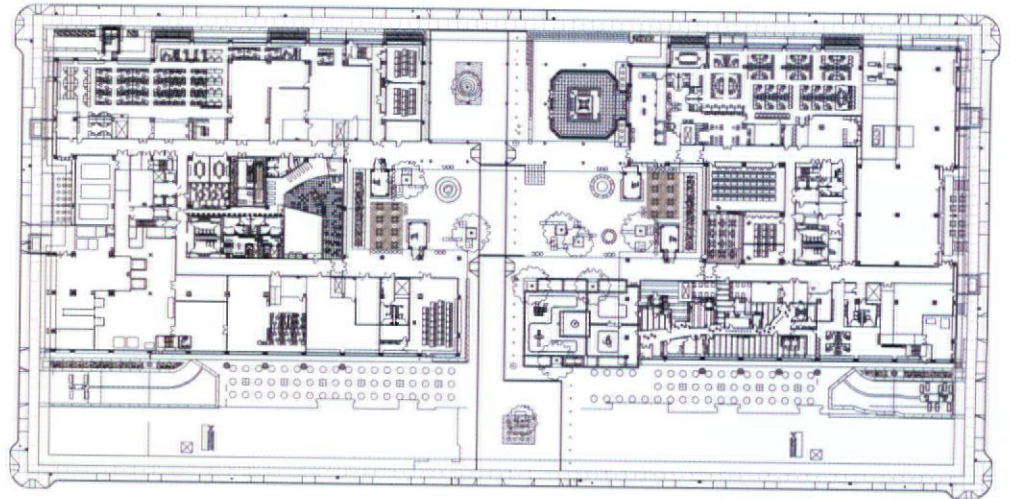
A six-story entry pavilion serves as an iconic centerpiece of the campus and signals the main entrance. "Its tree-like shape was inspired by the idea that Sacramento has historically been called The City of Trees, says Chilton. To make the buildings pedestrian-friendly and reduce their overall mass to keep in scale with other buildings in the neighborhood, the architects submerged on-site parking for 1,000 cars. Exterior walkways link the two structures,

which are bisected by a public plaza and a mews for pedestrians and vehicles. "If a non-employee or member wanted to go to a park-like setting, they'd feel at home here," says Chilton. "The grounds and the buildings were designed to embrace the community and feel very permeable."

In addition to the large central courtyard, the facility also features other landscaping gestures in a series of indoor and outdoor spaces, including an outdoor play area for employees' children, as well as quieter, more contemplative gardens. The landscape architects used sustainable practices in their choice of plants and materials. To complement the building's clean lines, they also chose a carefully honed palette of mostly ornamental grasses, flowering cherry, birch, and Japanese maple trees, and granite boulder benches. "We also employed a sophisticated irrigation system with moisture and flow sensors," says landscape architect Anne Howerton. Such practices ultimately aided in earning the building a LEED Gold rating from the USGBC. And the outdoor terraces, which edge various levels of the 4- and 6-story structures, have also earned the new facility rave reviews from CalPERS employees. "We have terraces on every floor of both buildings and a large public plaza between them," says Proctor. "We consider our buildings as recruitment and retention tools, with their outdoor spaces and access to light and air." With its inviting campus-like setting and good neighbor policies, it's no wonder CalPERS continues to be what Chilton calls "a destination employer." ☐

who

Project: CalPERS Headquarters Complex. *Client:* California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). *Design architect:* Pickard Chilton. *Architect of record:* Kendall/Heaton Associates. *Interior designer:* IA Interior Architects. *Structural engineer:* Cole/Tee/Schubert & Associates. *Mechanical/electrical engineer:* Arup. *General contractor:* Hensel Phelps Construction Co. *Lighting designer:* Quentin Thomas Associates. *Acoustician:* Veneklasen Associates. *Furniture dealer:* Hogue. *Photographer:* Peter Aaron/ESTO.



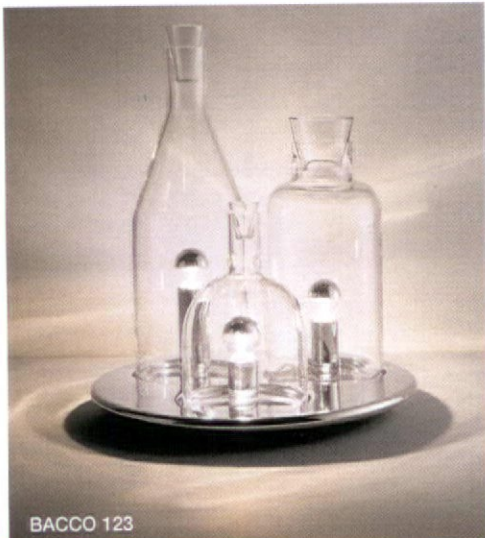
what

Wallcoverings: Carnegie, Maharam. *Laminate:* Formica. *Paint:* Pittsburgh Paints. *Dry wall:* USG. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Shaw Contract. *Carpet fiber:* Eco Sol Q Prem Brand SD Nylon. *Tile:* Dal-Tile. *Ceiling:* 9 Wood, USG. *Flooring:* Johnsonite. *Lighting:* Zumtobel, Knoll. *Doors:* Eggers, Titan Metal Products, Stiles Custom Metal, Western Oregon Door. *Door hardware:* Schlage, Dorma, Adams Rite. *Glass:* Bendheim, Old Castle, Pittsburgh Corning, Viracon, Pilkington. *Window frames/wall systems:* Benson Industries, AGA. *Window treatments:* MechoShade. *Paneling:* The Freeman Corporation. *Workstations:* Knoll. *Workstation seating:* Herman Miller, Knoll. *Lounge seating:* Krug, Malik, Brayton. *Cafeteria, dining, auditorium seating:* Leland, West Coast Industries. *Other seating:* Geiger, Keilhauer, Fixtures. *Upholstery:* Maharam, Jhane Barnes, Knoll, Momentum, Garrett Leather, Cortina Leather. *Conference table:* Krug. *Cafeteria, dining, training tables:* West Coast Industries, Versteel. *Other tables:* Geiger. *Files:* Knoll. *Shelving:* Holga. *Architectural woodworking, cabinetmaking:* Mid Canada Millwork.



where

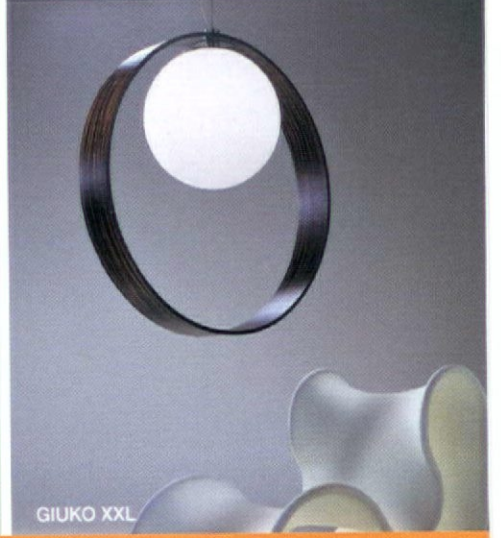
Location: Sacramento, CA. *Total floor area:* 1.1 million sq. ft. *No. of floors:* 4 (east building), 6 (west building). *Average floor size:* 40,000 sq. ft. *Total staff size:* 1,200.



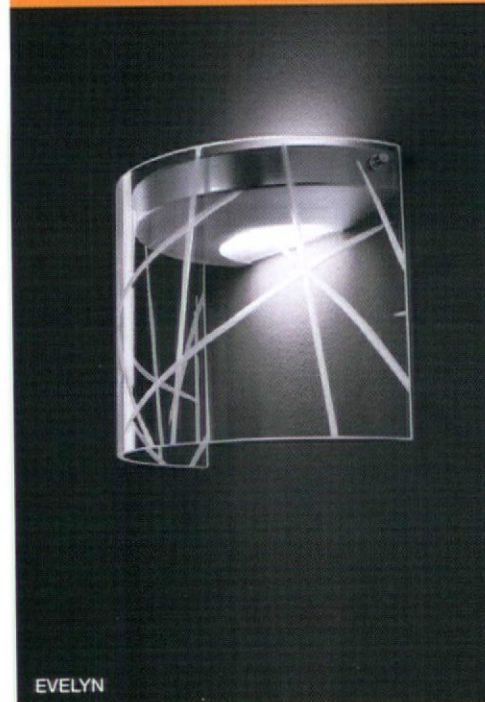
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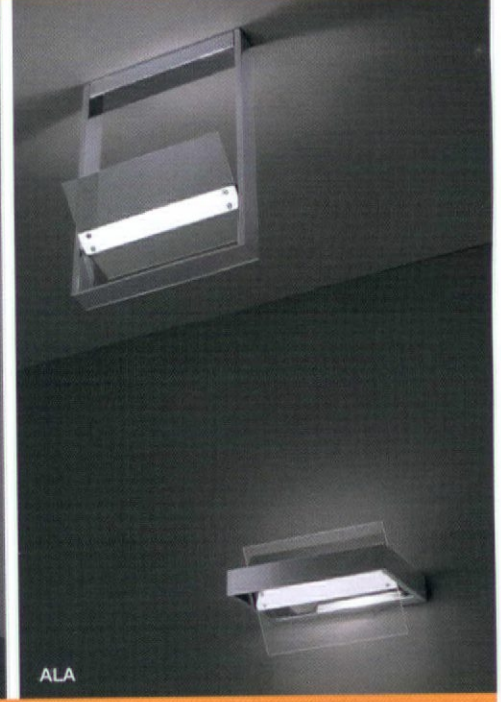
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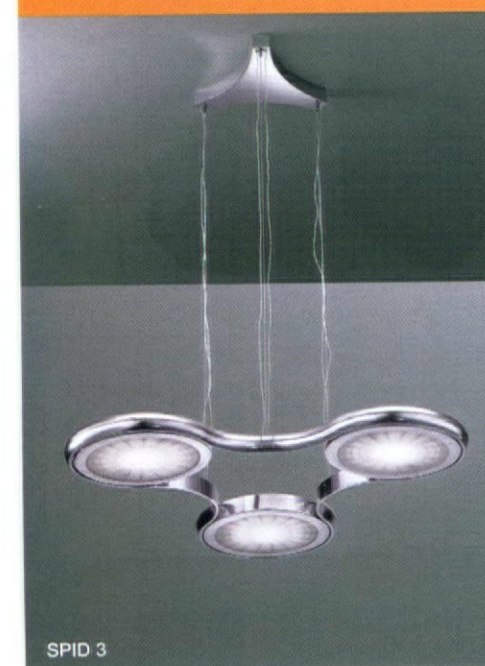
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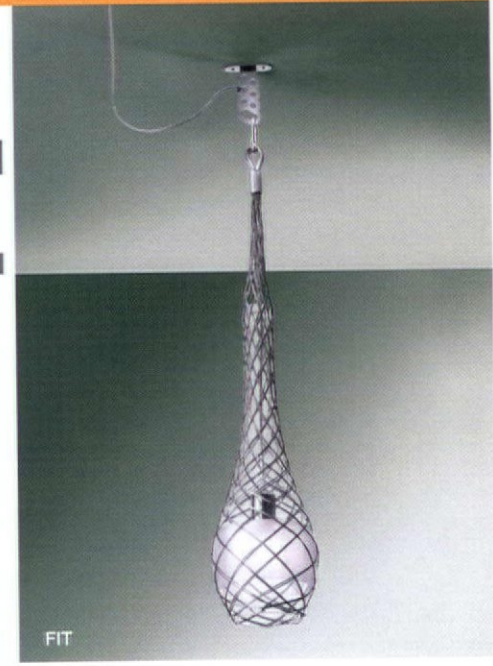


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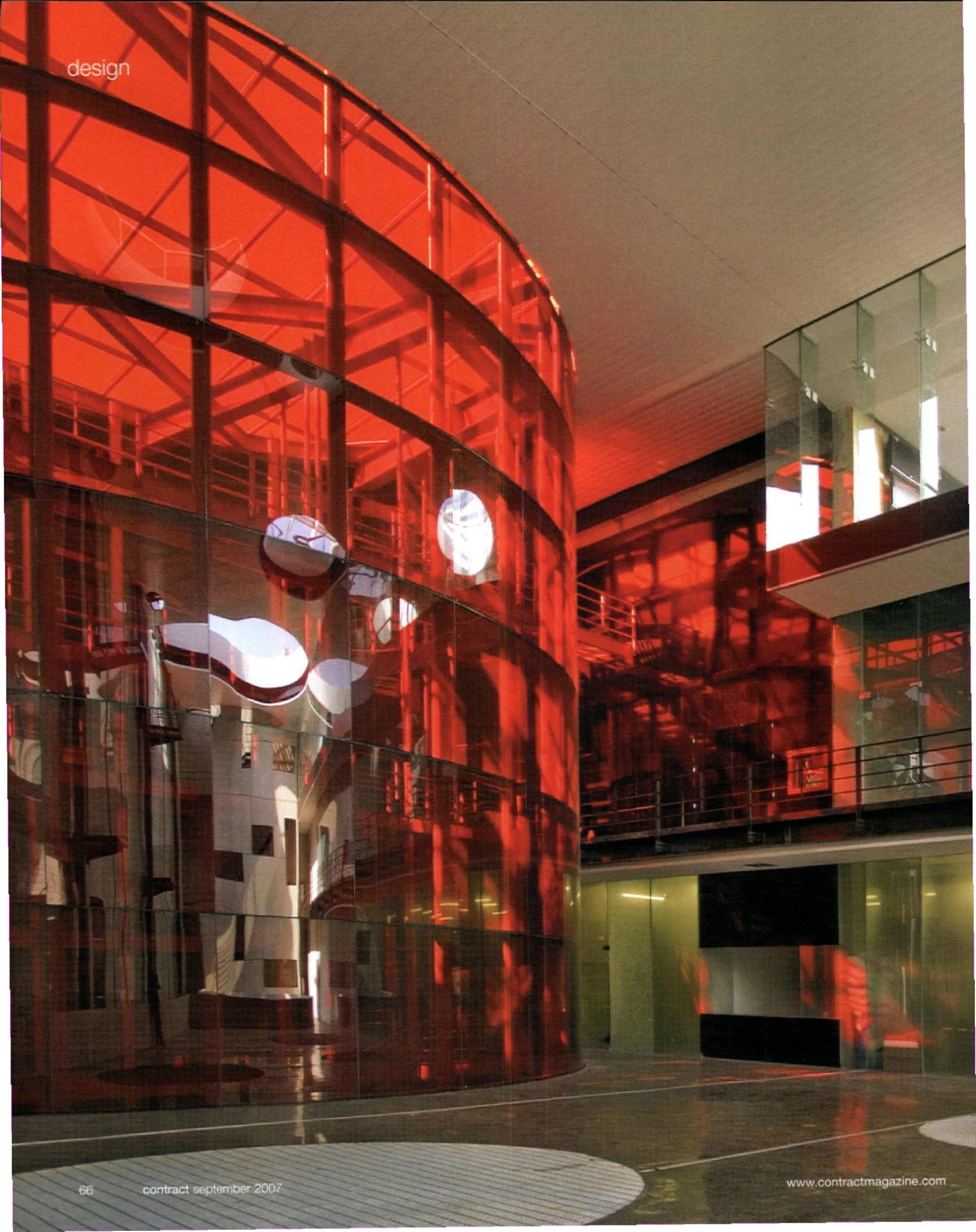


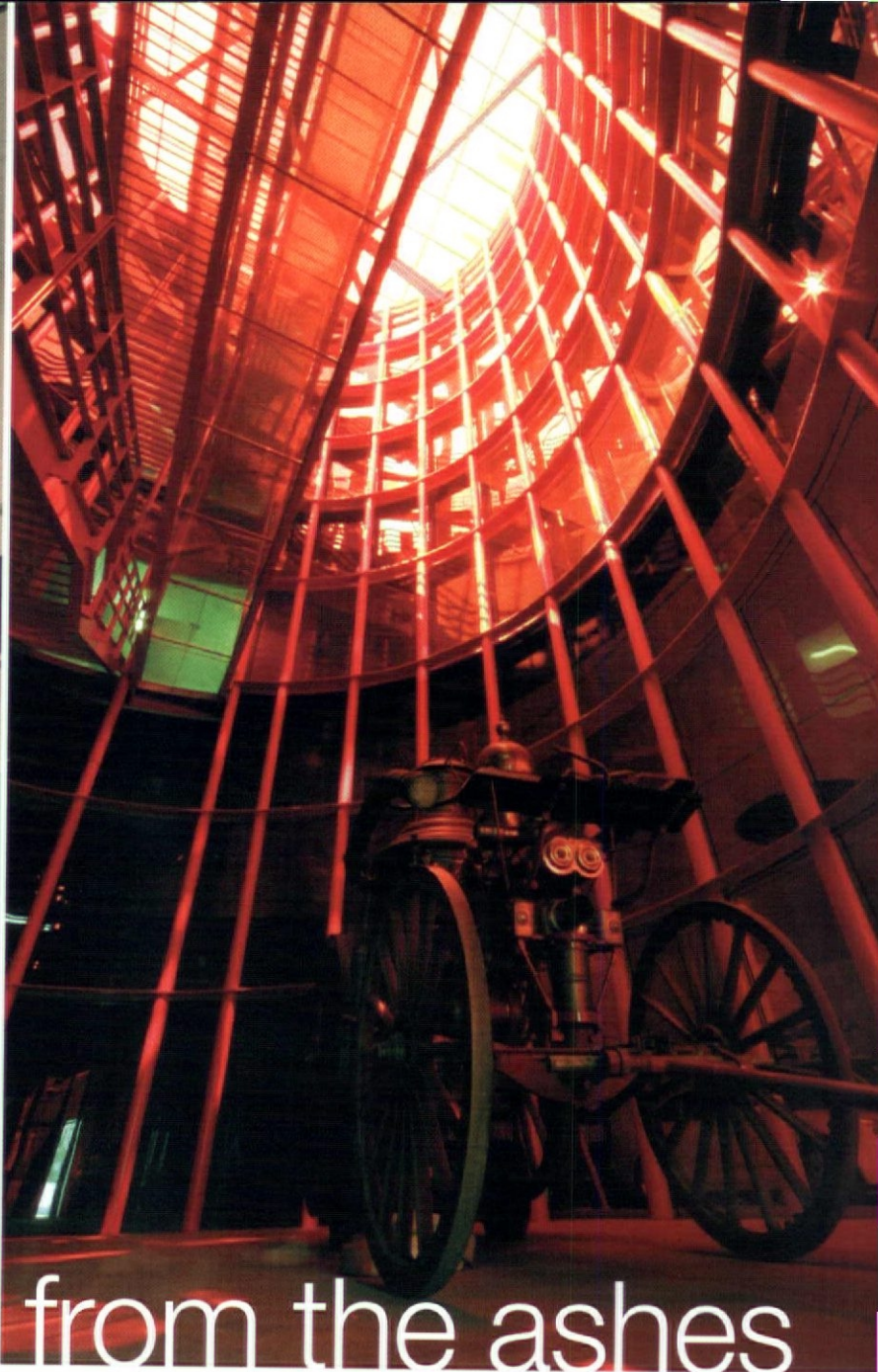
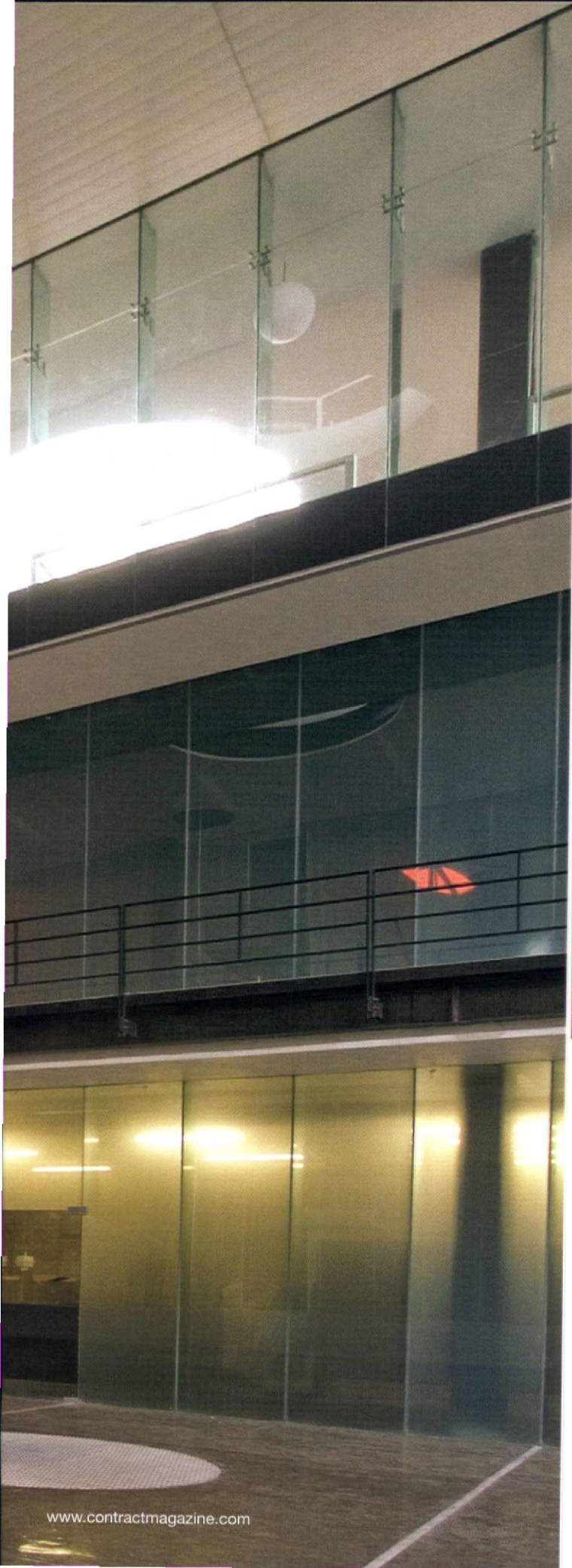
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design





from the ashes

Situated along one of Mexico City's busiest traffic ways, the Ave Fenix fire station, designed by at103, brings inspiration to a tragic site

By Katie Weeks
Photography by Jaime Navarro

The curvilinear interiors (opposite and above) of the Ave Fenix were inspired by traffic patterns in and out of the station. Abundant glass floods the space with natural light, while red tints add drama.



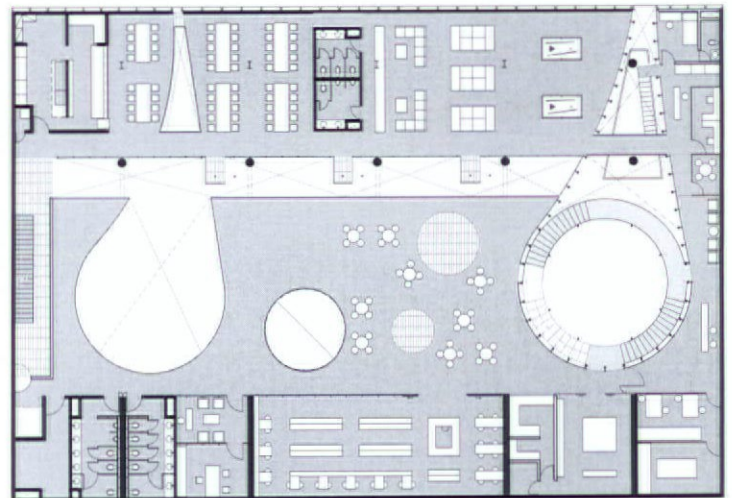
It seems fitting that in redeveloping a Mexico City site that was devastated by a fatal nightclub fire in 2000, state and municipal officials chose to rebuild not with another club or restaurant, but with a fire station. Of course, given the tourist-friendly, bar- and disco-heavy nature of the locale, not just any fire station would do.

Designed by local firm at103, the Ave Fenix fire station sits on Insurgentes Avenue—the longest avenue in Mexico City—as a simple, elevated box, accented by the ground-level movement of rescue vehicles and fire trucks. Its subtle design, however, gives just a hint of the dramatic interiors.

Awarded the project through an invite-only competition, at103 approached the design by looking at the station's functions. First, the space had to house a busy firehouse with trucks of various sizes and be organized in such a way as to not affect traffic on the avenue. In addition, it had to include areas where local business owners could come and be trained on emergency evacuation procedures. As the plan developed, the interiors also evolved to include a *bomberoteca*—a library dedicated to firefighting—and a small café that is yet to open.

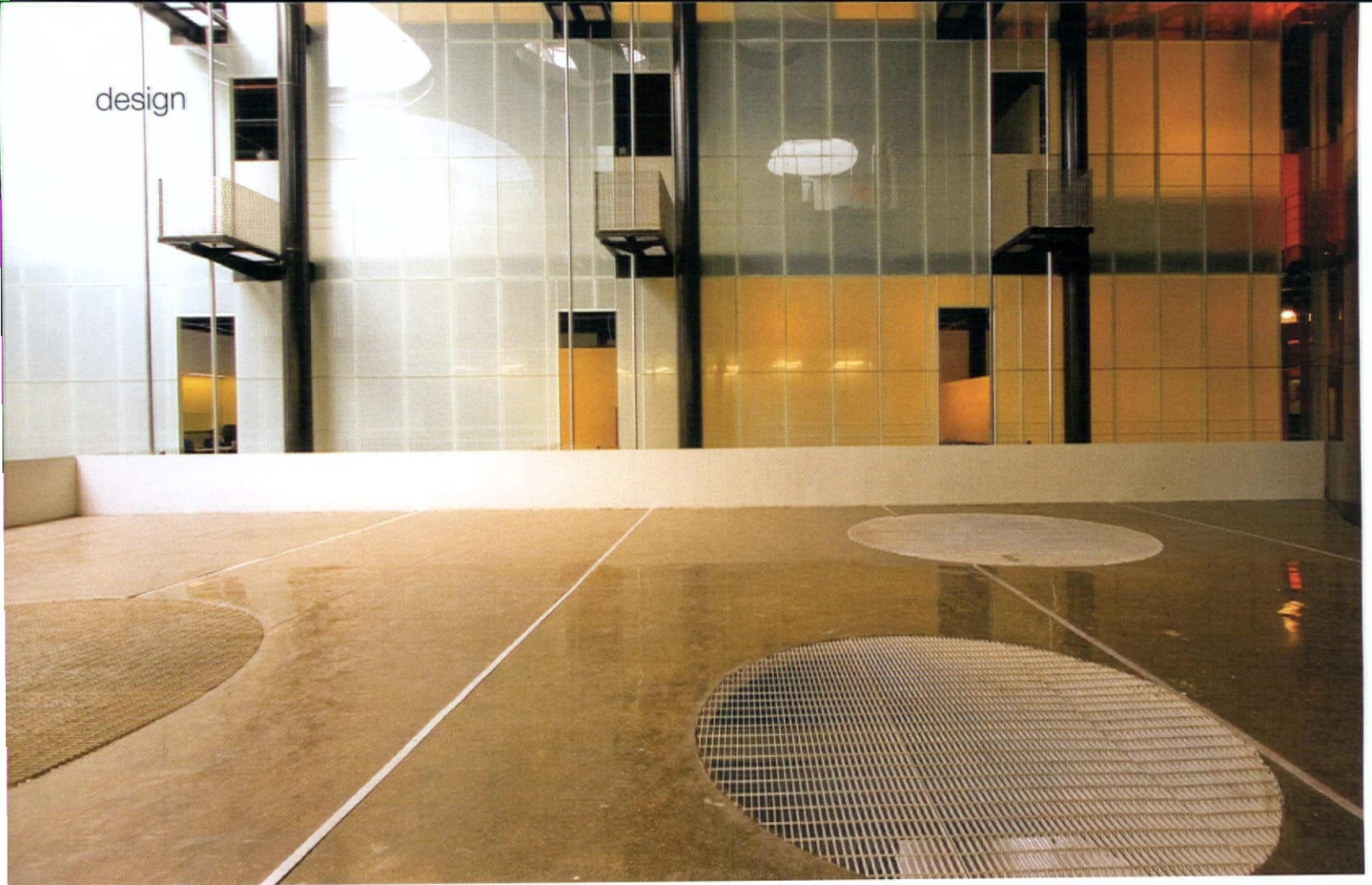
Function wasn't the only focus, however, as a good looking design was seen as a key selling point for the donation-dependent project. Luckily—and perhaps unexpectedly—researching the more functional aspects like traffic patterns led to an innovative concept.

Open sight lines mean that no matter where visitors stand—whether on a walkway (above) or on the main level looking up (opposite)—they have a connection with both the ground floor and the sky.





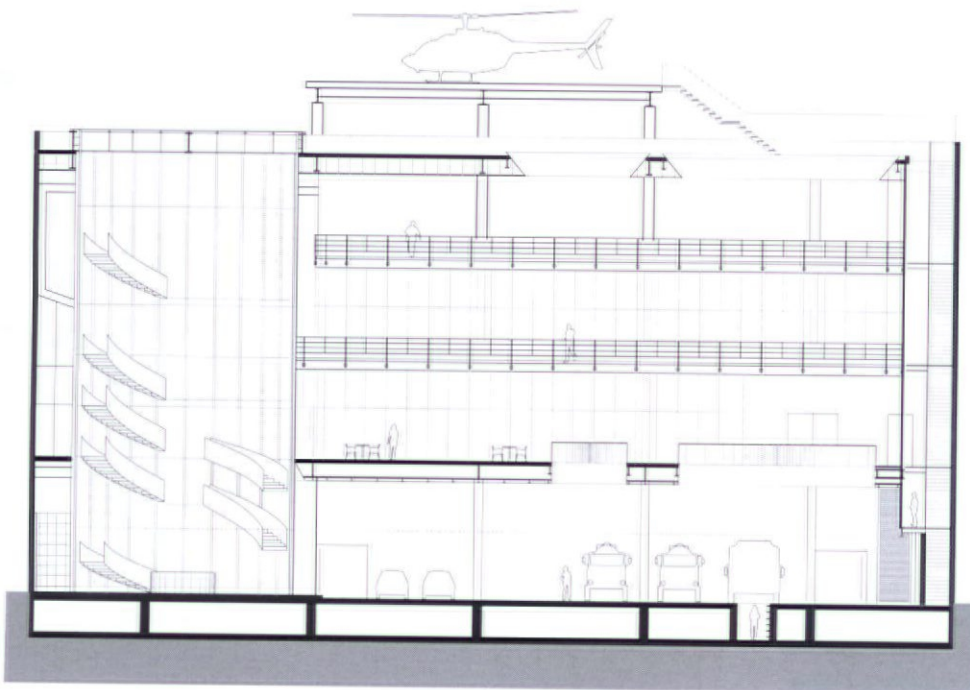
design



In tracking traffic and truck movement, at103 came across a pattern that lent itself to teardrop-shaped spaces, and “that started informing the whole project in terms of visual connections and light and platforms,” says Julio Amezcua, a principal at at103. Playing with the teardrop shape on each floor and adding abundant colored glass resulted in interior spaces that offer unique visual connections between floors that give visitors, no matter what their location, a constant connection with both the ground floor and the sky above. “We closed the façade and have the views coming from the inside. These circles and tears become windows in the ceiling,” Amezcua notes.

Finishes and materials are deliberately sparse. “Many public buildings are not maintained in Mexico so you have to design thinking that your building won’t receive much cleaning or maintenance. You have to think very long term,” Amezcua says. Of course, convincing a client to spend a little more up front to prolong the aesthetic life of the building is no easy feat, especially in this particular project, he notes, as finances were a constant obstacle.

“There was always a financial issue,” he recalls. “At the beginning, we started really fast, designing and beginning construction, but after one year, we had to stop because there was no money. That year, they wanted to begin changing the project.” One particular point of contention was a dual staircase in the original design. Organizationally, the building is split with the firehouse functions on one side and the more public areas on the other. Each side was to have its own half of a double stair. However, during construction, the contractor objected, citing costs, and insisted the stair be changed. After heated arguments, the architects relented, only to find in the long run that the redesigned, singular stair ended up costing more than the original double stair would have. Another near-loss: the dynamic red coloring throughout the space. Thankfully, the bureaucracy relented and the red remained—and has since become a defining element of the station. “As an architect in Mexico, every day you have fights and confrontations. Some you win, some you lose,” says Amezcua. Luckily, he says, “in the end, I think that 90 percent of the things we designed are there.” ■



who

Project: Ave Fenix Fire Station Mexico City.
Client: Cuauhtemoc District, Mexico City.
Architect, interior designer, lighting designer: at103; Julio Amezcua, Francisco Pardo, Jorge Vázquez, Tiberio Wallentin, Margarita Flores, Daniel Ramírez, Aida Hurtado. *Collaborator:* BGP arquitectura; Bernardo Gomez Pimienta, Hugo Sanchez. *Structural engineer:* Colinas de Buen. *Mechanical/electrical engineer:* GLM (Gumaro Lizarraga). *Transportation engineer:* Martín Moncada. *General contractor:* Sare. *Construction manager:* Hermeregildo Acoltzin. *Models:* FAB-MAK. *Acoustician:* Hunter Douglas. *Furniture dealer:* Mamparas SA de CV. *Photographer:* Jaime Navarro.

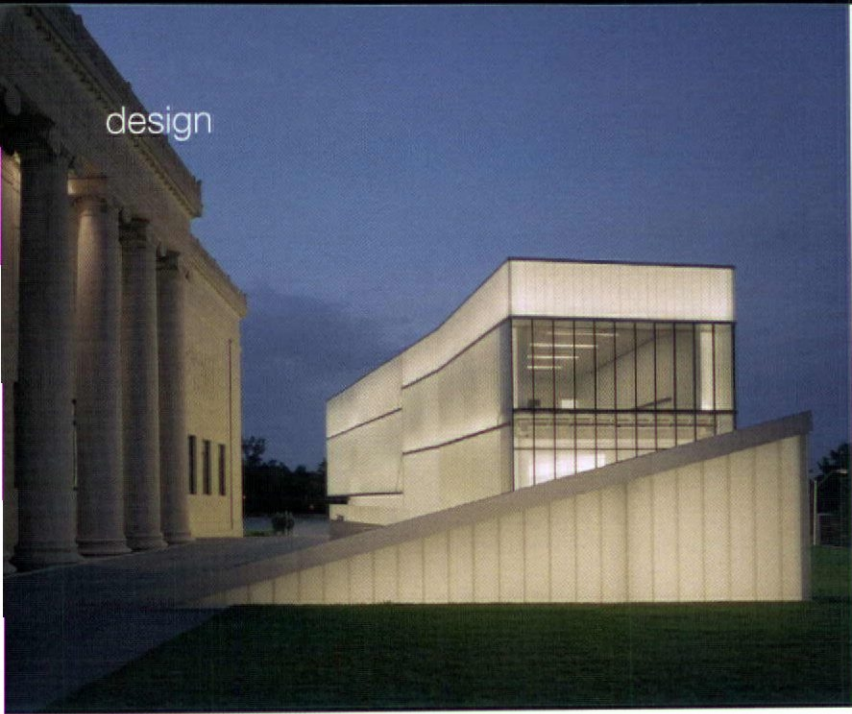
what

Wallcoverings: Cemex. *Paint:* Nervion. *Laminate:* Eurostilo. *Dry wall:* Tablaroca, DuPont Corian. *Flooring:* Cemex, Nervion, Irving. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Colorines. *Carpet fiber:* GerFlor. *Carpet backing:* Siesa. *Ceiling:* Hunter Douglas. *Lighting:* Troll. *Doors:* Navitrum. *Door hardware:* Dorma. *Glass, window frames, window treatments:* Plabesa SA de CV. *Railings:* Sare. *Seating, tables, administrative desks/seating, seating upholstery:* Steele. *Shelving:* Montel. *Files:* Mobilex. *Architectural woodworking:* Carpinteria y Ebanisteria SA de CV. *Cabinetmaking:* Jose Celso Tierradentro. *Fire safety:* Aurum S.A. de C.V. *Security:* Cuauhtemoc District. *Building management:* Ave Fenix Trust. *Access flooring:* Nervion. *Underfloor duct:* Xypex. *Plumbing fixtures:* Helvex.

where

Location: Mexico City, Mexico. *Total floor area:* 4,500 sq. m. *No. of floors:* 3. *Average floor size:* 1,500 sq. m. *Cost/sq. m.:* \$900.

The unassuming exterior of the station (opposite bottom right), situated along one of Mexico City’s busiest avenues, is meant to be a shoe box-like shell that holds more exciting interiors. Inside, cut-outs on various levels (opposite top) mirror those in the façade. In addition to traditional fire station spaces, amenities include a conference room (opposite bottom left).



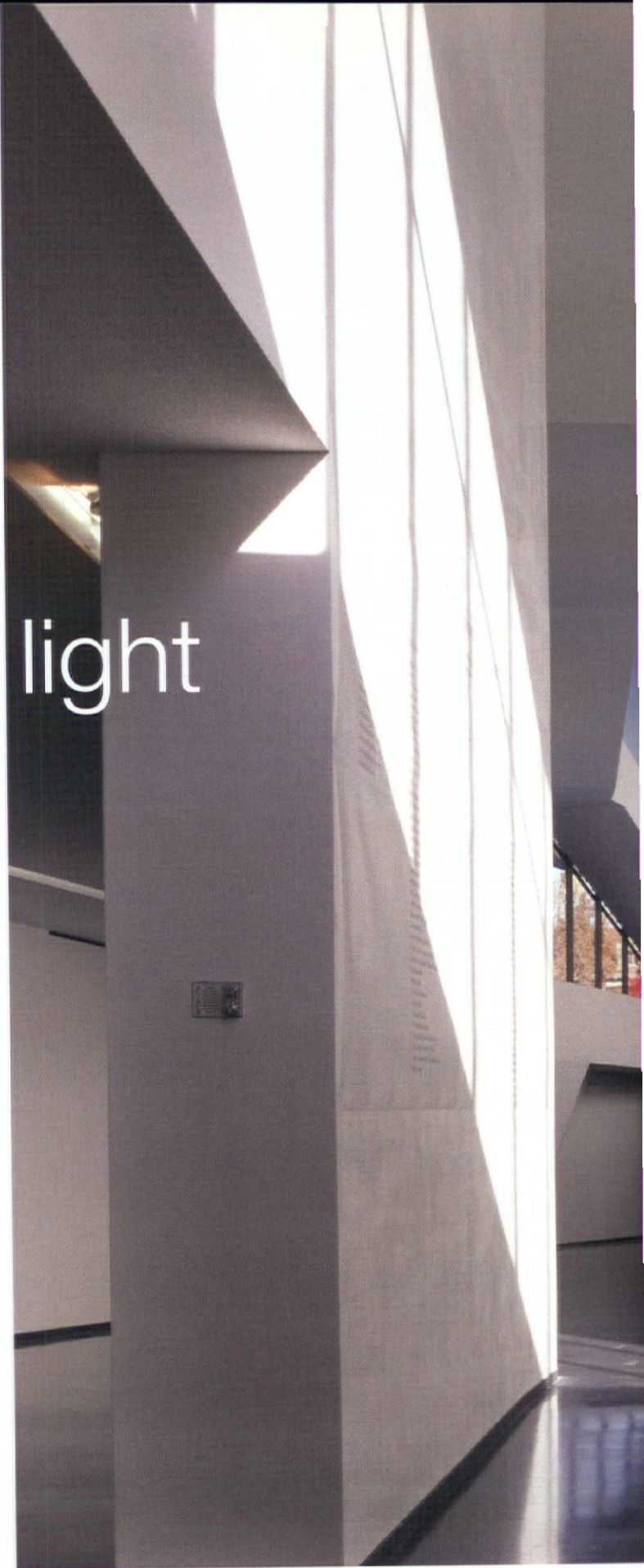
landscape & light

Rising from the landscape to balance art and architecture, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art by Steven Holl Architects, puts Kansas City, Mo., in a distinguished new light

By Holly Richmond
Photography by Roland Halbe

Any publicity is good publicity, right? After eight years of tough talk, all is well at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Mo. The city's residents, museum staff, and New York, N.Y.-based Steven Holl Architects (SHA) are celebrating the successful and dramatic fusion of art, architecture, and light. Set on 22 glorious acres, the project encompasses the 165,000-sq.-ft. addition of the Bloch Building, a Sculpture Park, and the 234,000-sq.-ft. renovation of the 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building, designed by Wight & Wight. Given the scope and ambition of the project, the journey was not without bumps. "During construction, the design sparked a debate within the community as to the appropriateness of placing unconventional architecture next to the sacred icon of the original Nelson-Atkins Building," explains Chris McVoy, Steven Holl Architects' partner-in-charge.

The interior of the Bloch Building, linked with stairways and ramps, encourages natural flow throughout the long structure, allowing visitors to look from one level to another (right). At night the glowing glass volume of the lobby provides a welcoming transparency (above).





design



The debate spanned the full range of praise and criticism. But now, with the July grand opening a few months behind him, McVoy relishes the public's response of appreciation for the Museum, considering the art, architecture, and landscape as a balanced whole. "Many people told me they have never had such a rewarding museum experience, which is a testament to the continuing power of substantive architectural ideas to transform our collective experience, as well as the occasional benefit of controversy," he wittily remarks.

The addition of the Bloch Building expanded the museum by 71 percent, allowing it to better serve the community and present its renowned collection of more than 34,500 works of art. Extending 840 ft. along the eastern edge of the Museum's campus, the notion of complementary contrast drove the design. In juxtaposition to the original stone building, the new lightweight architecture features abundant glass and light. With the spaces enveloped in the Sculpture Garden, it is five white glass "lenses" that form the buildings' presence. Literally blocks of light, they shape space between them and with the original building in intervals in the landscape.

McVoy describes the lenses as "instruments of light," which filter, diffuse, mix, and intensify light's variation to the interior during the day and glow in the sculpture garden at night. Made of 1-m.-thick glass walls with inner

Called "instruments of light," the five lenses are made of a double-layer glass assembly with a pressurized air cavity between the layers (opposite). The lenses filter, diffuse, mix, and intensify light's variation to the interior during the day and glow in the Sculpture Garden (below) at night. Plaster walls, glass railings, and stainless-steel hardware complement the light-filled structure (right).



and outer layers separated by a pressurized air cavity, the glass layers are transformed by various processes. He explains, "We used sandblasting, texturing, laminating, acid etching, and iron reduction to produce reactions with the light, which creates unpredictable phenomena like diffusion, diffraction, refraction, reflection, and absorption."

Dana Knapp, the Museum's director of planning, feels that the project respects the quality and aesthetic of the original site and structure, yet gives visitors something completely revolutionary and unexpected. "To the south the building is interwoven into the landscape, to the north it evolves into something more prominent, while the plaza features a grand and essential introduction to the Bloch Building. It all creates the perfect marriage of old and new, which was of imminent importance."

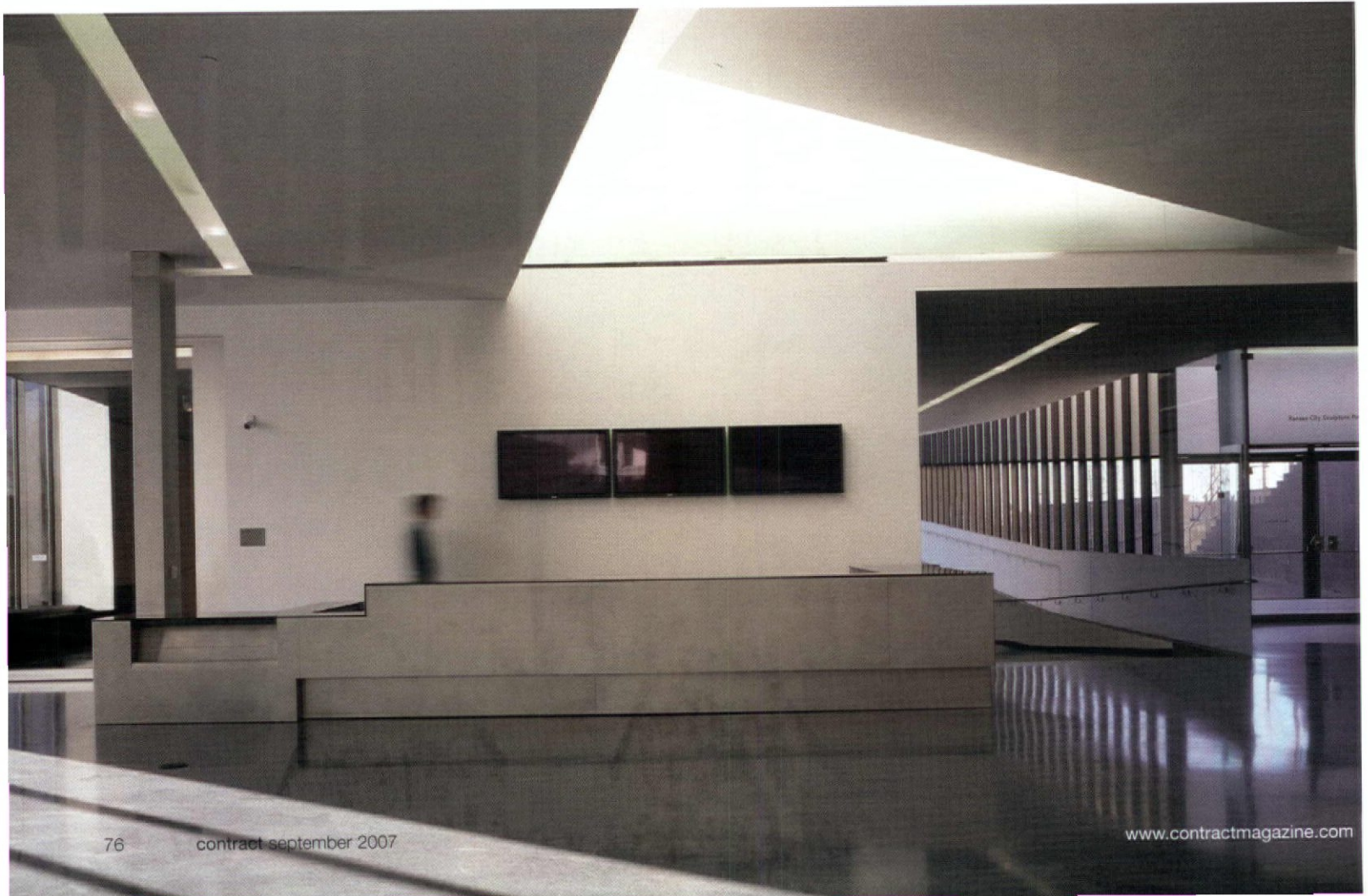
The first of the five lenses forms the bright and transparent lobby with café, art library, and bookstore, inviting the public into the Museum and encouraging movement via ramps toward the galleries as they progress downward into the garden. From the lobby a new cross-axis connects through the original building's grand spaces. At night the glowing glass volume of the lobby provides a welcoming transparency. "I hear so many positive comments from visitors about how the building looks in the evening. When you're outside looking in, it literally beckons to you," remarks Knapp.

Inside, the collections are organized in sequential loops linked to a Gallery Walk route, allowing visitors multiple options of engaging one or more col-

lections without retracing a path. The continuum of gallery spaces, linked by both aligned openings for distant perspective and openings offset within spaces, carry visitors through the diverse, variously scaled galleries. Both Knapp and McVoy agree that the museum's art lead the decision making, with the ultimate goal of creating a positive viewing environment of lighting, traffic flow, comfort, and space. "Of course, the Contemporary Collection fits wonderfully within the space, but special consideration was given to historical collections, too." For example, she explains that the African Collection mainly comprises casework, which takes up ample space. "SHA focused on the cases, creating sufficient space and breathing room that allows the objects to sing," she notes.

With the art, the museum's staff, and visitors singing the project's praises, it seems McVoy and the SHA team have found the balance they sought. Yet, while aiming to integrate the Museum's cultural program into the life of the city, McVoy believes the Museum's architecture must be removed from the environment of the everyday, with spaces of rarified atmosphere for experiencing the art. "Art demands the viewer's sensitivity of perception and concentration," he concludes.

Knapp adds, "As a museum professional, my goal is to fulfill the mission of connecting people with art, and this project goes beyond that. It offers a strong expression of architecture for our time. It is architecture as an art form, which is an indisputable reflection of what you can accomplish with such focused dedication and perseverance." ■





The first of five translucent lenses encompasses a bright lobby (opposite) with an adjoining café, art library (above left), multi-purpose room, and bookstore, inviting the public in and encouraging movement via ramps toward the galleries (above right).



who

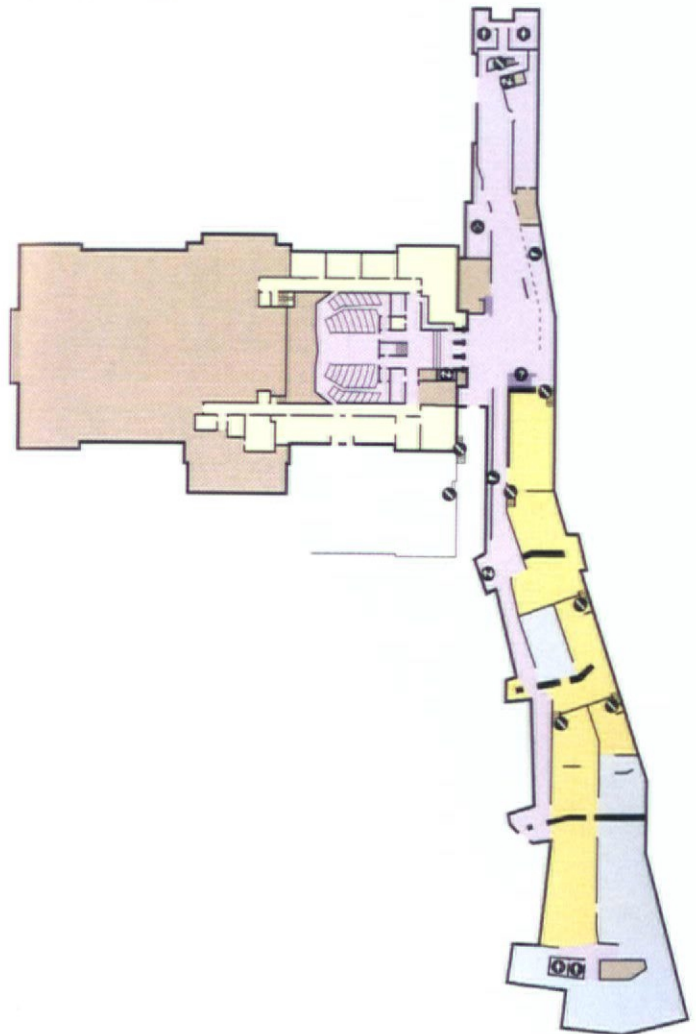
Project: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. *Architect:* Steven Holl Architects; Steven Holl, Chris McVoy, design architects; Martin Cox, Richard Tobias, project architects; Gabriela Barman-Kraemer, Matthias Blass, Molly Blieden, Elsa Chrysochoides, Robert Edmonds, Simone Giostra, Annette Goderbauer, Mimi Hoang, Makram el-Kadi, Edward Lalonde, Li Hu, Justin Korhammer, Linda Lee, Fabian Llonch, Stephen O'Dell, Susi Sanchez, Irene Vogt, Urs Vogt, Christian Wassmann, project team. *Local architect:* Berkebile Nelson Immenschuh McDowell Architects. *Structural engineer:* Guy Nordenson and Associates. *Associate structural engineer:* Structural Engineering Associates. *Mechanical engineer:* Ove Arup & Partners with W.L. Cassell Associates. *Glass consultant:* R.A. Heintges & Associates. *Lighting consultant:* Renfro Design Group. *Landscape architect:* Gould Evans and Olin Partnership. *Artist:* Walter De Maria. *Photographer:* Roland Halbe.

what

Metal/glass curtainwall: Bendheim Wall Systems, LINIT Channel Glass by Lamberts (Carter Glass Company). *Concrete:* Custom, JE Dunn Construction. *Roofing:* Tamko Roofing Products. *Flooring:* terrazzo with recycled glass aggregate (public areas); stained end-grain red oak block, terrazzo, and granite (galleries). *Wall finishes:* polished plaster (public areas); gypsum board and gypsum plaster (galleries). *Railings:* low-iron glass; stainless steel. *Ceilings:* acoustic plaster (public areas); painted gypsum board (galleries); perforated wood acoustic ceilings (meeting rooms). *Lighting:* Custom.

where

Location: Kansas City, Mo. *Total floor area:* 165,000 sq. ft. addition, 234,000 sq. ft. renovation, 450 sq. ft. car park. *No. of floors:* 4 (addition). *Cost:* \$200 million.





long overdue

Formerly one of two Californian cities without a public library, Hercules starts a new chapter with a design by HGA Architects and Engineers and Will Bruder + Partners

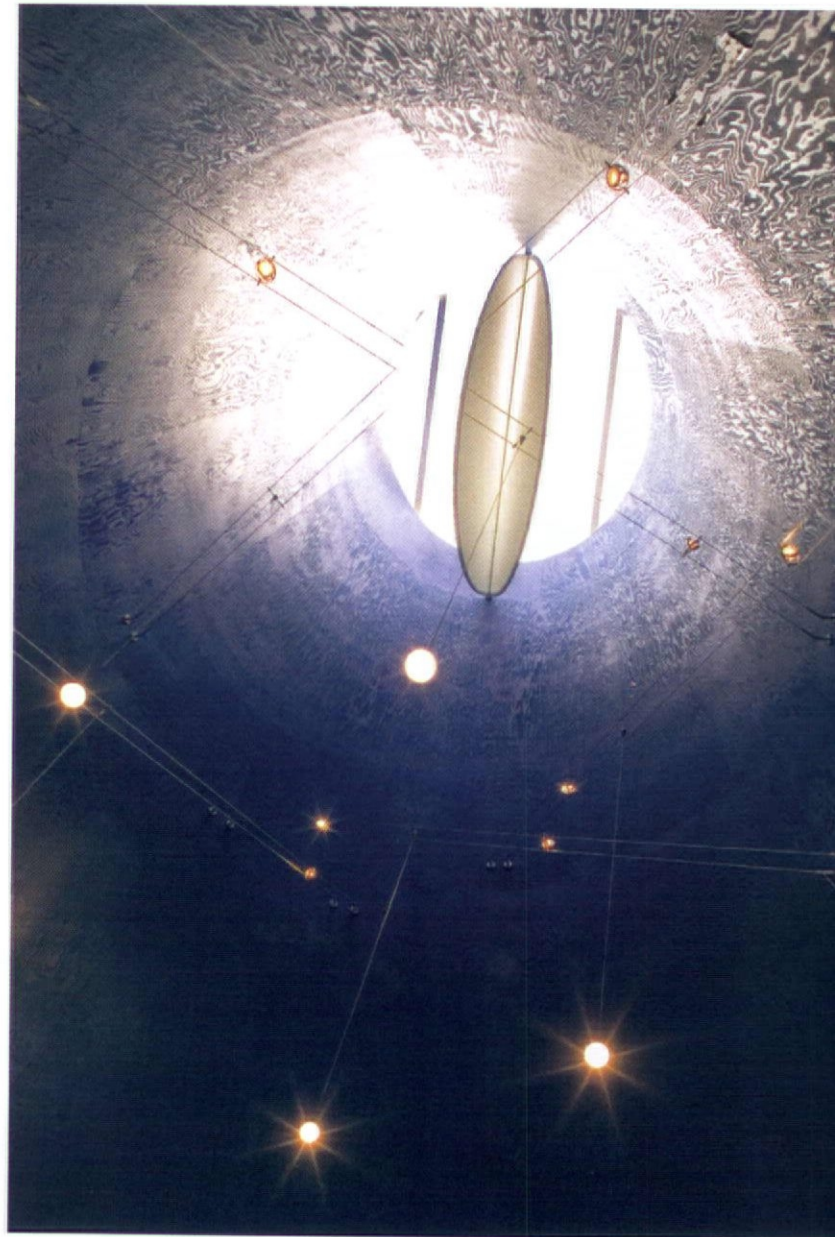
By Katie Weeks
Photography by Bill Timmerman

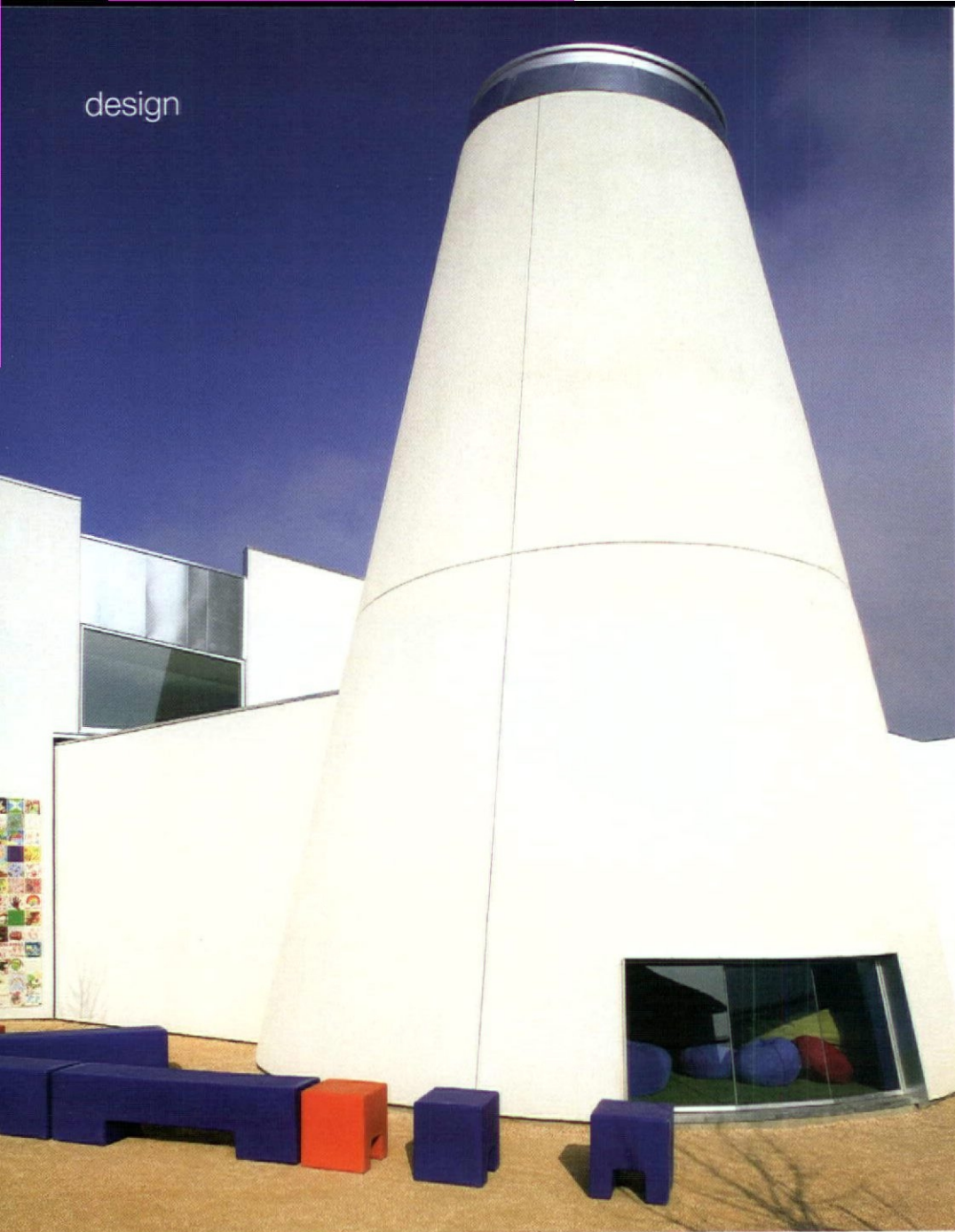
Usually in most stories, the excitement of a stampeding crowd is contained within the words on a page (unless, of course, the crowd is gathered for the release of a Harry Potter novel). Yet a stampede-like reaction was the scene when the Hercules Public Library in Hercules, Calif., debuted in March 2007. In this case, however, the standing-room-only crowd was gathered to celebrate a different sort of debut—that of the destination itself. Given the stunning design of the \$10.4-million facility in this small town 25 miles north of San Francisco that was crafted by HGA Architects and Engineers in association with Will Bruder + Partners, it's easy to see the source of excitement.

A bedroom community that is home to about 20,000 people, Hercules became incorporated as a city in 1900, yet at the start of the 21st century, the municipality remained one of only two cities in California without a public library. That changed in 2000, however, with a state bond funding public library construction.

In designing the 21,500-sq.-ft. facility, the designers sought to create not just a physical home for an 800,000-book and periodical collection, but also to offer a living room for the community. "Hercules is very suburban and doesn't have a traditional downtown, so the city council really wanted to make a statement," says Liz Warmerdam, project manager at Hercules Public Library. "We wanted it to be something out of the ordinary and spectacular." No short order, however the designers were prepared. "Most public libraries are becoming *de facto* community centers for many small towns across America," notes Frederick Sherman, AIA, principal in charge of HGA's San Francisco office. What's more, Will Bruder adds, "This building really made them a community. The challenge was to create an architecture of optimism that was about ideas beyond the written program and pragmatic needs of the community. Hopefully, we choreographed a stage set that complements all of the greater abstract aspirations of the community rather than just how many volumes or computer terminals the building would hold."

Designing the Hercules Public Library to meet the city residents' needs meant including spaces for even the smallest patrons: The children's story cone (opposite) keeps windows and seating on a kid scale at ground level, only to soar up to an oculus letting in the California sun (right).





Mirroring the diversity found in Hercules' population, the library's design is a subtle mix of eastern and western influences. Taking cues from old California missions, the exterior massing communicates with an angular, city hall-like building across the street, but also is crafted to embrace an elliptical sky garden in the center of the library, which was inspired by Japanese meditation gardens. On a more local level, the dynamic brick façade is reminiscent of the old headquarters of California Powder Works, a manufacturer that produced the Hercules brand of dynamite for which the city was named.

Inside, the connection to the community continues. One specific element that was developed out of meetings with townspeople is a wall dedicated to showcasing the history of Hercules. "The community loves the cultural wall and having an exhibit wall to put up various things to remember the city's past, ethnicity, and future," says Sherman. To further emphasize a sense of personalization, the interiors are filled with a variety of seating. "It was about coming into the library with a multiplicity of seating so that everyone can find those two or three chairs that they feel were made for their body—those chairs they totally engage with and are comfortable with. Just like everyone in the building is wearing different clothes, the interiors acknowledges it," says Bruder.

In addition to standard sections for books and periodicals, the library also contains a teen homework center, a café, a reading area with fireside seating, and three conference rooms. The sky garden, encased by large windows and centered around a magnolia tree, anchors the interiors, providing views as well as abundant natural light. However, realizing this concept required planting a seed within the minds of county administrators that the space would be more than a design whim. "Getting the courtyard built was a challenge as the library commission in Sacramento was worried it would be a maintenance and security issue," recalls Sherman. But arguments from locals in favor





The interiors curve around a central sky garden that is anchored by a magnolia tree (opposite bottom). Larger continuous windows bring in abundant natural light to all spaces, including the adult reading areas (above) and a small work room (right). The curves are continued on the children's story cone (opposite top).



The brick-and-glass facade (opposite) is an historical reference to the headquarters of California Powder Works, which produced Hercules dynamite. Inside, the design provides modern spaces including a teen center (bottom right) and a wide range of individual work and reading areas (below left).

of the garden helped prove “it wasn’t just an architect trying to do something. These people wanted it badly and fought for it verbally.”

Rising up into the sky is another defining element, the children’s story cone. Conceived by Bruder as an homage to Bay Area architect Bernard Maybeck, the conical form is designed to capture a sense of playfulness. The blue interior funnels up past lighting, hung like planets in the sky, to an oculus that lets in the sun. The seating options and low-to-the-ground window placement are purposely scaled to a child’s perspective. “You operate in that room as a child first,” Bruder says.

“Going to the library is an experience now, and that’s what this building is all about,” says Sherman. According to Warmerdam, child and adult visitors alike are reveling in their time spent in the new space. “On opening day we literally came close to a stampede to get in,” she says, noting that public pride in the building has continued. However, Hercules residents aren’t the only ones celebrating. Says Bruder: “It’s become a point of pride to the community and that gives you so much gratification as an architect when you are able to cross that line.”





who

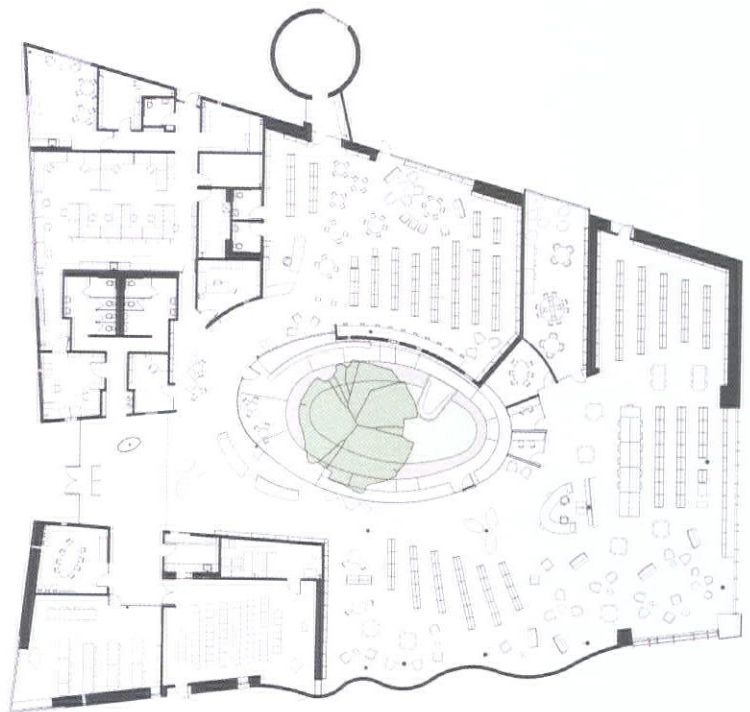
Project: Hercules Public Library. *Client:* City of Hercules. *Architect, interior designer:* HGA Architects, Will Bruder and Partners. *Structural engineer:* Umerani Associates. *Mechanical/electrical engineer:* Glumac. *General contractor:* Turner Construction. *Lighting designer:* HGA Architects. *Landscape architect:* CMG. *Photographer:* Bill Timmerman.

what

Paint: Dunn Edwards. *Laminate:* Abet Laminiati, Formica. *Flooring:* polished concrete. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Shaw. *Ceiling:* Armstrong. *Lighting:* Elliptipar, Erco, Zumtobel, Metalux, Artemide, Cooper Lighting. *Doors:* Marshfield. *Glass:* Singapore Safety Glass. *Curtain wall:* Vista Wall. *Window treatments:* Maharam, MechoShade. *Library seating:* ICF. *Library tables:* Vecta, Leland. *Conference seating:* Keilhauer. *Conference tables:* Accademia. *Administrative desks and seating, files:* Herman Miller. *Lounge seating:* Brayton, Morosso, Easy Bean, Geiger. *Meeting room seating:* Stylex. *Meeting room tables:* Nevins. *Upholstery:* Maharam, Designtex, Luna, Textus, Textile Mania. *Children's seating:* Danko Pershing. *Children's tables:* Artek. *Technology seating:* Kartell, Vecta. *Occasional tables:* Nienkamper, Brayton. *Online catalogs:* Fantoni. *Shelving:* Estey. *End panels:* Ross McDonald. *Architectural woodworking:* ISEC. *Planters, accessories:* Custom shelving, fireplace, signage: Will Bruder + Partners. *Plumbing fixtures:* American Standard, Crane, Elkay.

where

Location: Hercules, Calif. *Total floor area:* 20,162 sq. ft. *No. of floors:* 1. *Book capacity (in volumes):* 800,000. *Seating capacity:* 275.



in the pink

Toronto proudly hosts hometown design favorite Umbra in a new flagship store with interiors by figure3

By Amy Milshtein

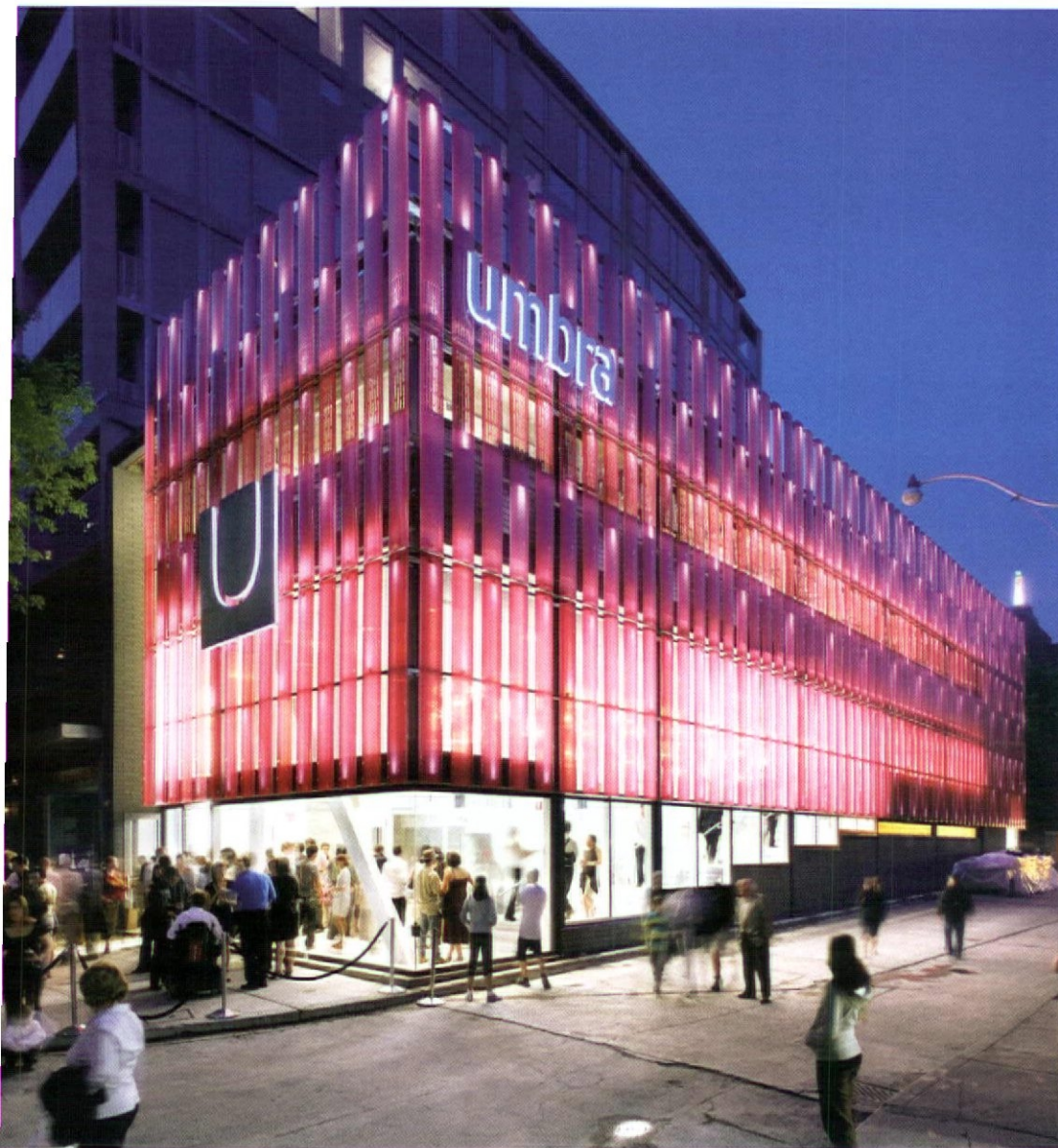
Photography by Richard Johnson

You see their products showcased at retailers around the globe. You know the iconic forms and colors. You may even have a piece or two of the brand in your home or office. But does anyone really know Umbra? Sure, it is the worldwide leader in casual, contemporary, affordable design for the home, but until recently it had no home of its own. That's changed since figure3 designed its first flagship store in the company's hometown of Toronto. Now, consumers can get to know Umbra, and its designers, intimately.

Umbra claims a special relationship with its designers since boyhood friends Les Mandelbaum and Paul Rowan founded the company in 1979. Their first product was a printed window shade. (Umbra means "shade" in Latin.) Today the company employs 30 designers from around the world along with notable outside product designers. The company wares can be found at more than 25,000 retailers in 75 countries. Perhaps its most iconic product, the Garbino trash can designed by Karim Rashid, is in the Museum of Modern Art's Department of Architecture and Design's permanent collection.

But along with that graceful trash can that everyone knows so well, Umbra's catalog boasts, "over 2,000 products with 300 new offerings a year." Company president and co-founder Mandelbaum says, "We don't overtly put our brand on the products because they are meant to stand alone in the home. So how can we educate the buying public and strengthen our retail base?"

Pink cladding sets the exterior of Umbra apart from its Toronto neighbors (left) and casts warm, sexy light into the interiors. Glass panels (opposite) etched with stories about Umbra's designers line the staircase. The etchings are more or less obvious, depending on the amount of exterior light.





designer fair
stairs

U+
umbra



EXIT

U
umbra

EE



The answer turns out to be a flagship store. Not meant to compete with Umbra's retail partners, the store instead is intended to build brand awareness. "People know our name but not what we're about," continues Mandelbaum. "We intend to change that with this store."

The education starts at first glance. The 7,000-sq.-ft., two-level structure greets guests with an exterior wrapped in translucent pink plastic cladding. Mandelbaum was secure in the cladding's ability to hold up to the harsh Canadian elements as Kohn Shnier Architects used the same technique on its headquarters in 2000. However, he was not so sure about the color. "Pink has connotations," explains Mandelbaum. "But in the end it's just a less aggressive shade of red. Toronto can be conservative in its architecture, so this really stands out."

It also imbues the interior with warm, sexy light that turned out to be challenging for figure3 partner Christopher Wright. "Lighting is key in a retail showroom, and on a sunny day it's quite pink inside," he says. Wright overcame the lighting and the innate colorfulness of Umbra's product offering with a sleek, neutral interior that falls back and lets the product shine. "We wanted to create an interior where Umbra's designers and merchandisers could play," says Wright. "It's like their sandbox."

Wright outfitted Umbra's playground with the same lacquered wood, metal, and acrylic found in the products. Never meant to compete with the merchandise, the displays and interior fade to the background. This allows staff to change



By combining 12 of Umbra's table lamps into one star-shaped pendant (opposite), figure3 created unique chandeliers for the interior. Neutral displays (above) let the colorful products shine. Part of Umbra's mission with this flagship store is to educate consumers about design; a fair-sized book selection and display screens (right) help accomplish that directive.

out displays as needed, while accommodating products of different colors, materials, and scales.

To guide shoppers from one story to the next, figure3 employed wide, gentle stairs that they call "step landings." With the pink-clad exterior window on one side and translucent images mounted into glass on the other, the journey proves calm and easy. The steps are wide enough to accommodate merchandise, adding valuable retail space.

The interior is mostly white, so when patrons come upon something different they realize that the distinction is deliberate. This oasis is where Umbra's U+ collection is shown. Intended as Umbra's studio line, U+ features limited-run products that allow the designers to stretch a bit. To showcase these special pieces Wright and his team used black carpet, black displays, and black shelving to display eye-popping products at their best.

The store contains other surprises, as well. Made-to-order furniture and limited-edition clothing is for sale along with books from a well-stocked

design library. Not every unexpected touch is available for purchase. For instance, the store's five impressive and distinctive chandeliers are actually 12 of Umbra's table lamps clustered together on a frame.

Another surprise is a genuine, functioning design space where customers can observe a different Umbra designer working every day. Along with a video loop playing in a display area and regular events, this is a way to introduce the actual designers to the customers and strengthen the relationship. "Design is what we're about so this is a way to bring that further into the public's mind," says Mandelbaum.

With this flagship in Toronto, Mandelbaum reveals that he would like to put one in New York, another in Los Angeles, and a fourth in Chicago. Tokyo and London are also on Umbra's map, but don't expect a store coming to a mall near you anytime soon. "Umbra knows its boundaries and values its relationship with retailers," says Wright. "It doesn't want to compete with them."

But for now, in Toronto at least, design is in the pink. ☐



who

Project: Umbra Concept Store. *Client:* Umbra. *Architect:* Kohn Shnier Architects. *Interior designer:* figure3. *Structural engineer:* Blackwell Bowick Partnership Limited. *Mechanical engineer:* ENSO Systems. *Electrical engineer:* HCC Engineering Limited. *General contractor:* Urbacon. *Photographer:* Richard Johnson.

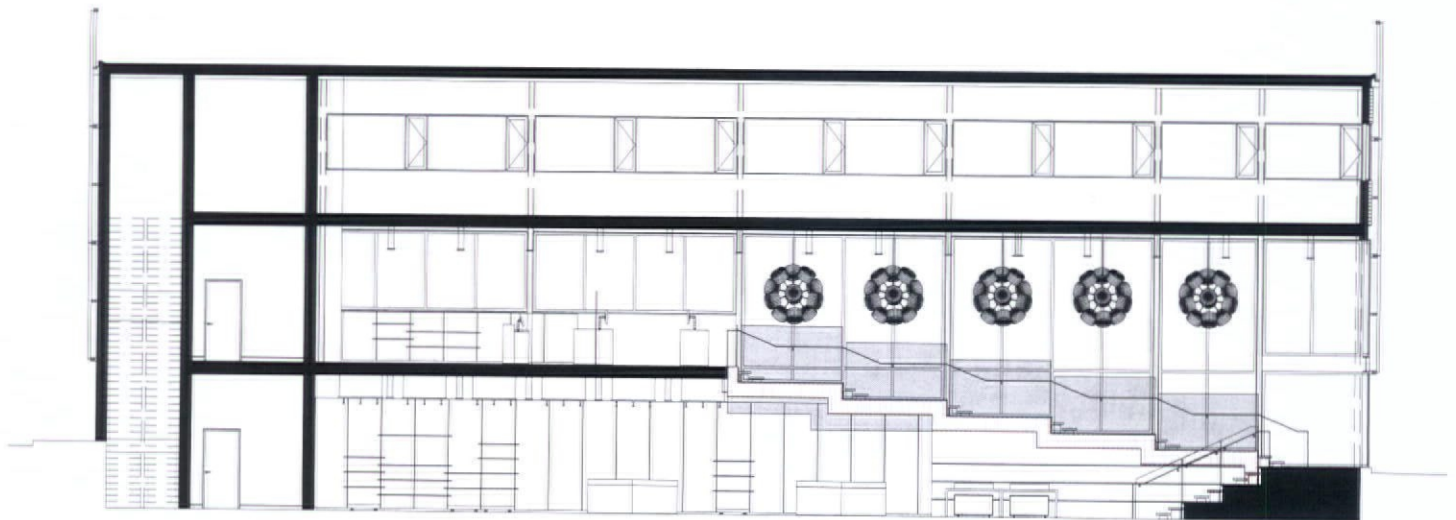
what

Paint: Sico Paints. *Laminates, veneers:* Wilsonart, Nevamar, Octopus. *Flooring:* polished concrete. *Rubber flooring:* Johnsonite. *Stairs:* 3form. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Interface. *Lighting fixtures:* Sistemalux. *Glass:* Camden Glass. *Door hardware:* Trillium Architectural Products. *Railing:* Cult Iron Works. *Display fixtures:* JAC TY, Marlite. *Elevators:* Concord Elevators. *Plumbing fixtures:* American Standard.

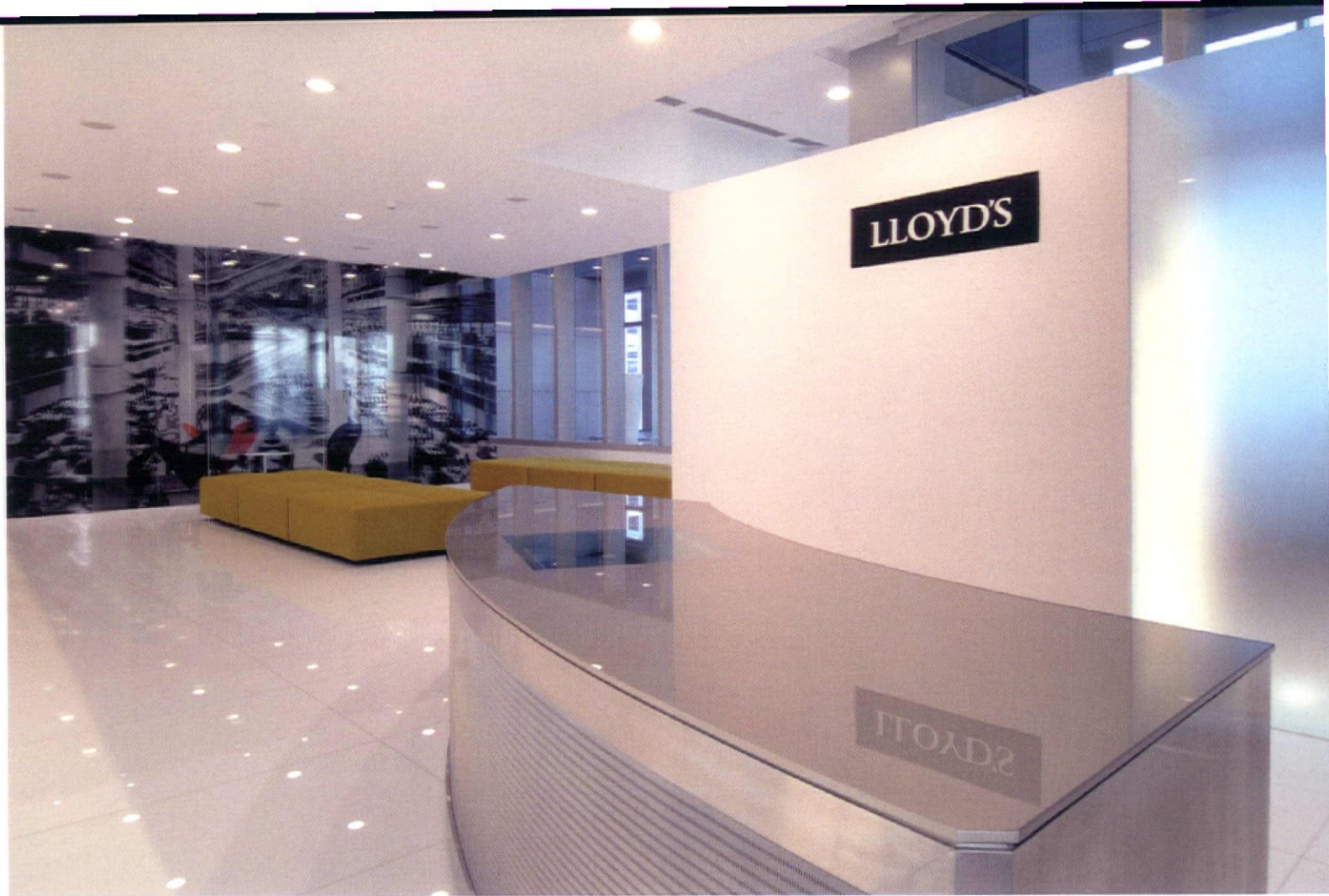
where

Location: Toronto, ON. *Total floor area:* 7,000 sq. ft. *No. of floors:* 2. *Typical floor size:* 3,500 sq. ft.

The designers had to create displays that accommodate products of different colors, materials, and scales (opposite left). The special U+ line of products is showcased in a black-and-white oasis meant to set these limited-run products apart (opposite right). Umbra entices passersby to sit and take in the view (right).







risk model

The striking minimalist environment of Lloyd's China in Shanghai embodies the firm's adventuring spirit in its largest office outside England

By Celia Ying
Photography by Vitus Lau, M Moser Associates

Once praised by Queen Elizabeth II as "the pride of England," Lloyd's is the world's largest insurance marketer, providing specialist insurance services to businesses in more than 200 countries and territories. From its modest foundation in a London coffee house in the late 17th century to today's worldwide business, its long and legendary journey has been full of adventure. Take the company's experience in the wake of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, for example. After the disaster sparked uncontrollable fires that raged for three days, taking thousands of lives and rendering half of the city's population homeless, Lloyd's underwriter Cuthbert Heath instructed his San Francisco agent to "pay all our policyholders in full irrespective of the terms of their policies." His decision cemented Lloyd's reputation in the United States and had a profound impact on the shape of the insurance industry today. Since then, the company has continued to take on new levels of risk, from non-marine insurance in the Gulf War to insuring the NASA satellite.

In the 21st century, the market's latest adventure is taking place in the world's fastest growing market: China. Last year, Lloyd's officially launched its Chinese operation, Lloyd's Reinsurance Company (China) Limited, in Shanghai. As its first standalone office in Asia, this modern workplace, designed by M Moser Associates, unmistakably embodies the company's

The reception (above) is moved back to create a better flow of the "sky walkway." Transparent, semi-closed glass partitions (opposite) with company statements etched on them are used ingeniously to link units to both their neighbors and the outside world.

300-year history of originality. "When expanding into Asia by opening a Shanghai office, we wanted a workspace that reflected our transparency, integrity, and commitment to China in a credibly understated way," says Ian Faragher, managing director of Lloyd's China.

The 750-sq.-m. office, located on the top level in the Azia Centre in the Pudong District, possesses a panoramic view of Shanghai. "In designing this office I intended to break down all the walls and partitions, making everything open and clean," says Ziggy Bautista, a designer at M Moser. "Many people believe putting tables along the window is the only way to do so, but I was the only one who proposed having all working compartments in the middle, enabling everybody to enjoy the 360-degree city view."

Using a column-free floor plan with extensive glass façade wrapping the entire building, M Moser capitalizes on the spectacular by turning the façade into the "living wallpaper" of the office. To fully employ the view available through Lloyd's 33rd-floor windows, M Moser broke down all existing walls and located the Syndication Area—the heart of company activity—in the center of the office. By providing an independent workspace for each syndicate team through ingenious use of transparent, semi-closed glass partitions, the design maintains high levels of privacy and autonomy, while at the same time instilling an overall feeling of uniformity.

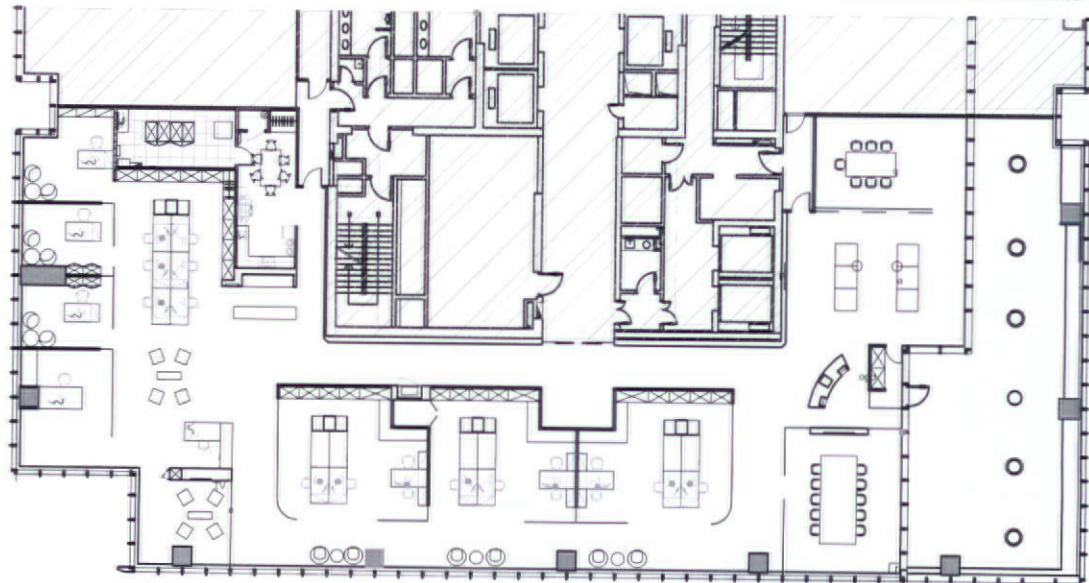
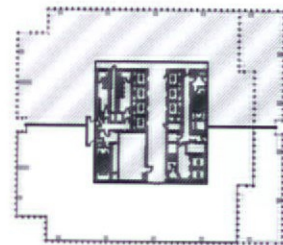
Thanks to this organization, spaces along the window are cleared for a groundbreaking "sky walkway," also called the "window-sided lounge." A series of classic, Verner Panton-designed Heart Cone Chairs is set along the windows, quietly accented in the background by the dramatic Oriental Pearl TV Tower and the Huangpu River. According to Bautista, the dynamic form of the chairs reminded him of the picture of a bunch of butterflies flying in the sky. "When the sun shines upon the chairs, their shadows mimic the shade of the Oriental Pearl TV Tower outside," he says. "Indeed, the way the sun interacts with the furniture and the people who work inside the office emphasizes Lloyd's commitment to transparency."

Apart from the poetic sensation, M Moser's design for the Lloyd's China office also fulfills its functional and practical needs. To reiterate Lloyd's reputation for openness and integrity, M Moser's in-house engineering team worked closely with its Lloyd's counterparts to ensure an uncluttered workspace by concealing the sophisticated communications technologies. All wiring and A/V equipment is concealed within walls and floors, while the state-of-the-art PC in the conference room is located under the carpeting, and a handheld touch-screen control panel operates everything from the curtains to laptop connections. As a result, it is a genuinely paper-free office whose Spartan simplicity perfectly mirrors the open and transparent manner in which Lloyd's manages risk.





The semi-transparent feature wall at the lounge area (opposite) shows an old picture of Lloyd's headquarters in London—an interesting comparison between the past and present. All wiring and A/V equipment are concealed inside walls and floors, leaving the workspace (above) totally free from clutter.



design



Colorful drawings (left) by Ziggy Bautista vitalize the very succinct and minimal office. A series of the classic Heart Cone Chair (below) designed by Verner Panton is set along the "window-sided lounge," reminiscent of a bunch of butterflies flying in the sky. The breathtaking view of Shanghai (opposite) is the "living wallpaper" for the Lloyd's office.





Bautista, who has lived and worked in China for more than eight years, also knows quite a bit about local customs and subtly integrated some feng shui elements into the space planning. "I suggested moving Ian's office to the corner, where he could enjoy a more extensive view of Shanghai," he says. "On one side, he can see the iconic Pearl Tower; on the other side, there's the Huangpu River with water running to the east, which has a symbolic meaning of money pouring in all year round." In an effort to respect its local culture, Lloyd's also hired a feng shui master to bless the design.

Offering stunning views of the city's historic Bund and futuristic Pearl Tower, the office Lloyd's chose for its Asian flagship perfectly symbolizes Shanghai's past and present. "As such, it positioned us as being the gateway to the future," says Faragher. "We couldn't be happier with our new home. In using the whole Shanghai skyline as 'living wallpaper,' M Moser ensured the seamless integration of Lloyd's corporate look and vision with the Shanghai landscape." Thus, day after day, the sun shines upon the ever-changing cityscape of Shanghai, providing a dynamic backdrop that, no matter where you are in this office, allows you to feel the rhythm and heart-beat of the city, witness its past glory, and share its dream and vision. ■

who

Project/client: Lloyd's of London. *Architect, M&E engineer, project manager, construction manager, acoustics consultant, lighting consultant:* M Moser Associates; Kennes Colarossi, project leader; Ziggy Bautista, designer; Becky Yao, Paul Xiao, associate; Michelle Zeng, assistant designer; Ricky Chen, project manager. *Photographer:* Vitus Lau, M Moser Associates.

what

Paint: ICI. *Laminate:* Formica. *Flooring, walls:* Phoenix Stone. *Ceiling:* Lafarge; Gu Long; Sakula. *Partition:* Lafarge. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Milliken. *Carpet backing:* Cushion back. *Office furniture:* Walter Knoll, Vitra. *Lounge seating:* Walter Knoll. *Conference chairs/tables:* Vita. *Shelving/cabinetry:* Formica. *Lighting:* NVC-Lighting. *Glass:* Yao Pi. *Architectural woodworking, signage:* M Moser Associates.

where

Location: Shanghai. *Total floor area:* 8,073 sq. ft. *No. of floors:* 1.

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Resource Director
Gensler
San Francisco



Eileen Ragsdale
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TPG Architecture
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New York

Photo credit: Allison Michael Ovenshan

conference furniture

Contract asks two designers to name and explain their preferred products



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Bill Van Erp
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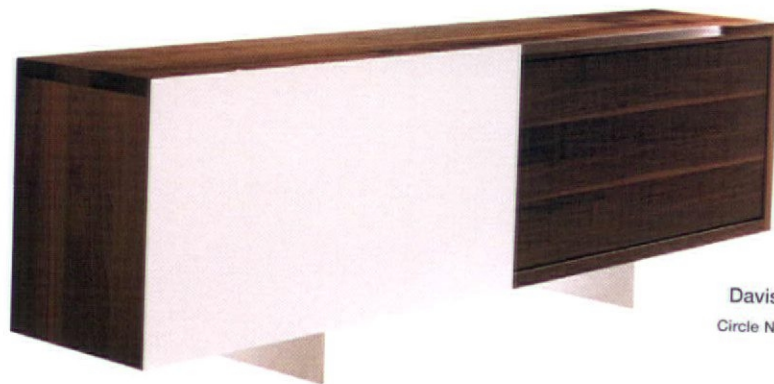
Comfortable for the entire length of any meeting, this chair, designed by Charles Pollack for Knoll, is also a sentimental favorite.

HBF, Logic.
Circle No. 215



Knoll, Pollack.
Circle No. 216

Eileen Ragsdale, LEED® AP
TPG Architecture
TPG Planning & Design



Davis, TIX
Circle No. 217

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TIX

www.davisfurniture.com

Razor-thin metal legs and panels complement solid wood surfaces in elm, sycamore, or walnut. These natural materials are constructed in slim profiles with exquisite precision. Sliding panel doors and gliding power/data units move gracefully with the slightest touch, yet the solid sectional wood tops offer a substantial counterpoint. Side boards and a video cabinet complete a stunning conference room.

Prismatique

Vidro

www.prismatique.com

An unlimited range of back painted color options offer rich depth to a sleek glass surface. The glass tops can be fitted with recessed metal flip top power units or under-table connectivity. The most elegant version is a white arced boat top and a simple sculpted T base that nods to a traditional ball foot. These subtle decorative accents temper Vidro's minimal lines beautifully.



Prismatique, Vidro.
Circle No. 218

Bulo

Table Blanche

www.bulo.com

I simply love Table Blanche for any occasion: working, meeting, dining. The long seamless top is wrapped in canvas skimmed with gesso and holds the promise of a blank canvas each time you use it. Designed by Ann Demeulemeester for the Carte Blanche collection, its slender width encourages a more intimate exchange of ideas. The soft white surface will record users' marks over time, developing a natural patina that can be embraced, or "erased" with a fresh coat of gesso.

Bulo, Table Blanche.
Circle No. 219



In this flat world, a company going global is nothing new. Supersizing a design firm by merging with another to meet the demands of the global economy, however, is a relatively recent development. This past summer saw two significant mergers. Edinburgh, Scotland-based RMJM, one of the world's largest architectural practices merged with Hillier of Princeton, N.J. And in Baltimore, Md., 100 percent of the shares of privately held RTKL were acquired by Arcadis, the international consulting and engineering company based in Arnhem, The Netherlands.

But size isn't the only issue. According to J. Robert Hillier, founder and chairman of the firm that bears his name, "It's about more than having 1,000 architects worldwide; what is significant is that we now have 250 architects on each of four continents. That's huge in terms of our ability to understand the issues that face our clients, work with them closely, and still bring a broader, global perspective to everything we do." On another level, it contributes to an entrepreneurial spirit within a company.

the table a diversity of services and skills to maintain a leading role in the design and delivery of those kinds of projects."

There is also a benefit for employees. RTKL's merger with Arcadis, Jacob says, will foster an entrepreneurial spirit within the company. "One of the strategic initiatives of the firm was to grow beyond the individual who started it," he says. "One way to do that is provide opportunities for employees, because as you grow and expand the firm, there are opportunities for employees to grow and essentially become leaders of the firm. If you don't have those opportunities, they'll eventually leave to do other things."

Mergers are not unlike marriages. They require a kind of dating to ensure that both parties are compatible on a cultural level. When RMJM courted Hillier, Morrison had his major principals tour all of the Hillier offices. Hillier's principles visited RMJM's offices, as well. Jacob shares a similar sentiment when talking about RTKL's experience with Arcadis. "They were culturally very sim-

supersize us

Merging design firms expands global reach, diversifies skill sets, and provides new opportunities for clients and designers

By Sofia Galadza

Two heads are better than one, and the same goes for firms that merge. For RMJM, venturing into the U.S. market was part of the goal. "We're well represented in other parts of the world, but not the United States," says Peter Morrison, CEO of the RMJM Group. "Moreover, many of our clients, particularly in Asia, are United States based." For Hillier, it was the next logical step. "We got to the point where almost 40 percent of our work was overseas. It was all being done with associate architects. And literally wherever we had a big project, RMJM already had an office there." Arcadis' strength is in environmental services, infrastructure, and program management, but wanted more design and master planning services. RTKL—which already has offices in London, Madrid, Shanghai, and Tokyo—began looking to expand its global reach. The two parties found they suited each other's goals. "It was a good 'one-two punch,'" shares Paul Jacob, chairman of RTKL.

Certainly, clients benefit from these arrangements. "We want to work wherever our clients need us. And we believe that in order to do that, we have to have a physical presence in that market that will allow us to do that properly," shares Morrison. Jacob adds that clients benefit from mergers because services become more diversified. "As the real estate industry matures and projects become more complicated, firms really have to be able to bring to

ilar to us, interested in doing the highest quality work for clients around the world, and focused internally in terms of developing employees and creating an entrepreneurial spirit within the company."

And as with modern marriages, identities are preserved in such mergers. In North America, Hillier will be branded as RMJM Hillier and form the North American business of the RMJM Group. "With some mergers, they come in the next day and paint the signs over with a new name. They've lost all of the branding value." In Hillier's opinion, the firm hasn't lost its identity. Rather, "the brand is just further enhanced by RMJM." And at RTKL, Jacob says the name will stay the same. "We will remain as RTKL. We have been told from Arcadis that our brand is managed by us, and they have acquired us not to take over and tell us what to do, but for us to keep on being RTKL and to grow as RTKL."

Morrison adds, "We think the future of this industry is going to be the super-firm. This is for a number of reasons. These can invest more heavily in the technology required to work all over the world, to invest in the right people and talent. It's not necessarily about being big. It's about having a diverse group of people all over the world that you're able to put in front of clients all over the world. That would be a core advantage." ■

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Whether it's involving design liaisons, various review processes, or specialized commissions, measures abound that aim to prevent working with federal, state, and municipal governments from becoming a bureaucratic tug of war

By Katie Weeks

There are few things that stifle creativity—and the patience of a designer—more than an abundance of red tape. Unfortunately, in both the private and public sectors, the lifespan of many projects sometimes ends up resembling that of a bill struggling to get through Congress while having its purpose distorted with add-ons or cuts, rather than that of a creative vision being heralded for its power to impact its locale. Fortunately, this death-by-committee scenario is one that a number of federal, state, and municipal governments are working to prevent.

Increasingly cognizant of design's impact on its surroundings—neighborhoods and residents alike—governmental institutions across the country are laboring to streamline bureaucratic design processes to the benefit of all involved. In many cases, these efforts emerge under the guidance of design liaisons within government agencies and offices.

Within one of the more well-known national efforts, the General Services Administration's (GSA) 12-year-old Design Excellence Program, policies like a two-step architect/engineer selection process, and the incorporation of peer review aim to provide a system structured to nurture design, not neuter it. "We see ourselves as design liaisons who promote design for the government and bureaucracy, but we also see ourselves as responsible for making sure that any bureaucracy in the process comes across as minimal," says Charles Matta, FAIA, director for the Center for Federal Buildings and Modernizations with the GSA Public Buildings Service. On one hand, he notes, the office is responsible for shepherding projects from creating the initial RFP through financing and construction to make sure they stay on budget and adequately address client demands. On the other, "we review documents throughout the process to make sure the design isn't watered down

or changed or that value engineering does not detract from the quality of the original design."

Design advocate departments aren't just operating on the national level. In New York, the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) employs design liaisons that manage projects for the city's fire, police, health, corrections, and transportation departments, as well as its cultural institutions. "I'm here for communication. To make sure that the client's needs are met, that the designer is hearing these needs clearly, and that the designer is then able to communicate his response and sell his design back to the client," says Miguel Cedeno, structures design liaison in the DDC. As such, Cedeno is involved from concept to completion, beginning with writing the RFP through construc-

Design advocates must not only consider the wishes of the architect and the client, but also each structure's impact on its physical surroundings.

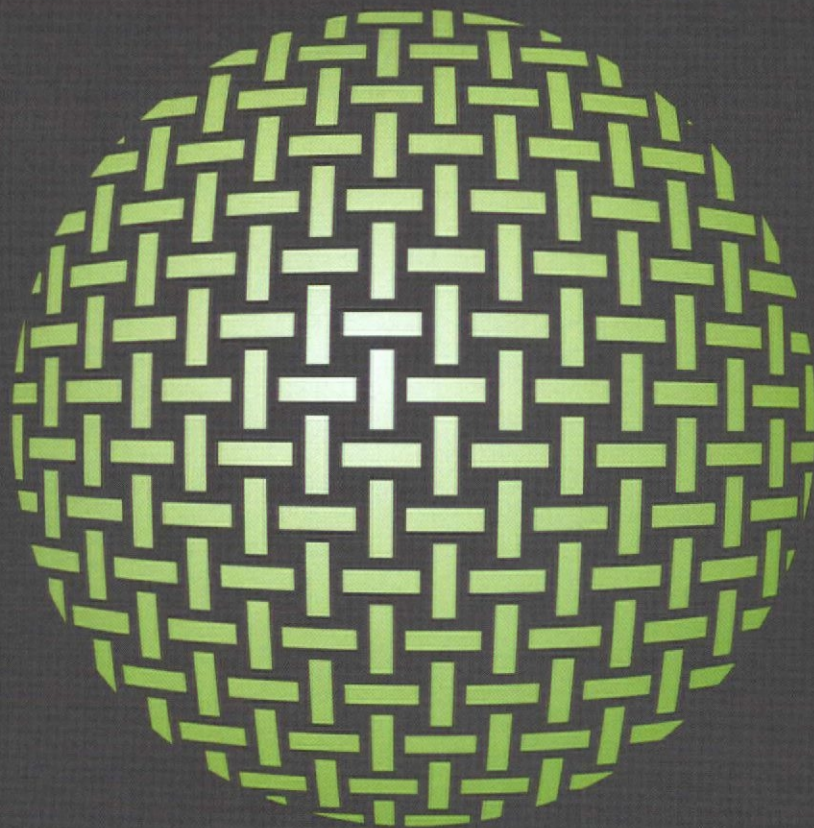
tion. "We help the client, as well as the designer, navigate the different processes and commissions, and streamline things so there isn't a lot of trial and error," he explains. In addition, the City has also instituted its own design excellence initiative, which maintains a pool of select architecture and design firms that compete for city projects. "We have what we feel is the top pool of architects in the city, and they then go after the projects," he explains. Because all pool participants compete for the same fee, the DDC can focus more on each firm's technical and creative approaches.

Of course, design advocates must not only consider the wishes of the architect and the client, but also each structure's impact on its physical surroundings. Thanks to citywide zoning regulation in

Boston, every public and private project must receive approval from the Boston Redevelopment Authority, which examines designs in light of their location in the city as a whole. "We look at the individual pieces in the context of the overall vision for Boston," says Patraat Patrose, deputy director for urban design at the BRA. "For example, for a building on Boylston Street in the Back Bay, we want to make sure the ground floor uses are contributing to the retail-oriented character of Boylston Street, which is different from buildings in the residential part of the Back Bay." A constant focus, Patrose says, is scale. "We're building in an historic city that has streets that were laid out 200 to 300 years ago. There's a lot of historic fabric that's important not just to the city, but to the entire country. When you start juxtaposing 19th-century buildings with 21st-

century floor plates, there are very different scales coming together, and finding out how to make those work together is critically important to making Boston function."

Whether it's instituting a pool process for project bidding or instilling departments to serve as liaisons between city officials and designers to protect both designer and client, streamlining project development benefits all involved—especially in light of ever-rising construction costs, which can drastically change between a project's first budget and the start of construction. In the end, however, the power to foster innovative and creative design lies in the ability of an administration—be it federal, state or municipal—to recognize the power of design in the first place. ■



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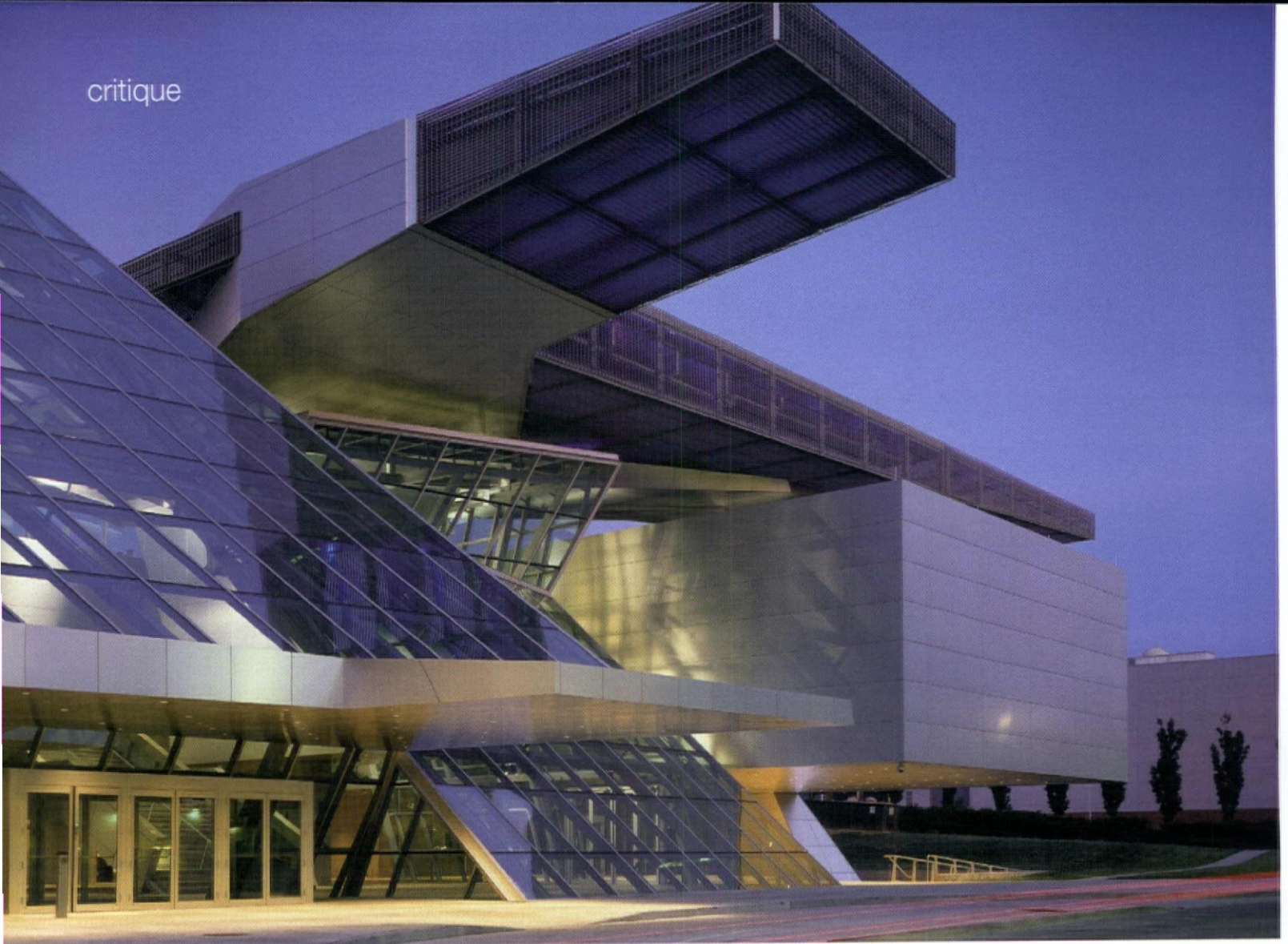
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the future comes to Akron

The Akron Art Museum, by Coop Himmelb(l)au, successfully invades middle America

By Nick Luzietti
Photography by Roland Halbe

I flew out of Chicago, on a sunny Thursday morning, with lots of preconceived notions. I was flying to Akron, Ohio. I grew up in Cincinnati, so I knew something about the city. I had seen a few photos of the new art museum by Viennese architecture firm Coop Himmelb(l)au that I was asked to review. So I knew beforehand that Akron had been invaded by the “Big Blue Meanie”—modern architecture.

Now brace yourself for my in-flight daydream. Even though I’ve delivered many modern design projects myself, I was on the side of the underdog. Poor little “Andy of Mayberry,” Akron. The headlines read: “Akron is Invaded by Aliens (and from Europe, at that!)”

The daydream went on...And I awoke as the plane was descending. Beautiful little farms, speckled in this organized way but truly and purely pastoral. This must be Akron. We’re not in Chicago anymore, Toto.

I was beginning to believe *I* was the alien. And guess what? After living in Chicago for some 30 years, I was from another world, too.

The Cab Ride

A short, chatty cab ride later, and we're approaching the art museum. Out of the blue, one of the museum wings peeped out through the trees, and I got a quick burst of excitement. Then, it disappeared behind the foliage. I anticipated another peek. We continued down the west side, which is the service side or back side of the building. I was happy to see it expressed in an honest manner. So many of the new buildings pretend all the sides are the same, covering up the truth with a false façade. We turned the corner moving along the north side which is where...

The Old World Meets the New World

Hovering, the winged, mechanical-like structure comes into view in partnership with this 1899 historic structure (originally a post office designed by James Knox Taylor). It's alive, and it's a dance between the two. All at once I saw the intimate warmth of old world charm meet with the impressive technological space age world—which is at least 50 years old today (i.e. Sputnik was 1957; the moon landing was 1969).

I turned the corner at Main Street, the cab pulled up front, below a winged canopy, and I felt welcomed both in the car and then on foot. I was surprised that the scale was humanistic; so many of our newer buildings don't acknowledge the human scale or sense of arrival and entry—all "Old World" ideas.

The Front Door

This new building is pristine, light, and translucent. As you walk into the entry lobby space, the older structure is still in view through the glass enclosure.

sure, juxtaposed with a sense of drama playing up the sharp contrast between them. Because the new museum soars into the future with the same gusto as the modern art it houses, the contrast really makes for a rich complex experience. They need each other.

The lobby itself is very stark in the same way that Louis Kahn's work was some 40 years ago. This building is about opening your mind and expanding your imagination. There is a "thrill aspect" to it that suggests the heightened feeling one gets from an amusement park: This is the "new ride" attitude that excites the eye. Wheeeeeee...

The lobby was not yet finished, awaiting plastic-colored curvilinear furniture. The south side opens up to a future sculpture garden. Phasing, rather than value engineering quality design out of the project, was a smart move. I can't wait for the icing. The new seating and the sculpture garden will soften the space and bring the extra human touch. Wait for it...its coming!

Within the Challenges Lie the Opportunities and Added Difficulty

The building is well sited, responding in scale and texture, while still delivering to visitors an over-the-top statement that is way overdue. Its presence very proudly begins to revive and revere a sense of center to the city, becoming a beacon and town square at the same time. The decision to site the two buildings side by side showed courage, and it pays off. I couldn't imagine the new building of glass glittering in the sunlight without the history of our country and good old days nestled below, once I got a taste of it. The upcoming sculpture garden will revive the piazza era that got lost in our vocabulary with the invention of the car.

Thank God this design reaches for the stars. The dichotomy is what's exciting, except for where one of the cantilevered wings touches the roof of the old building as it goes overhead, it's a delicate moment in this little dance. The new, lightly framed, hovering wings act as guardian to the coexistence of these worlds, like a new-age Madonna protecting her family. So in the end, it is the overall concept that will mold a respect and love for the past, with a front seat view to the future. Anything less would have been a missed opportunity.

The collection of art from the 1850s to the 1900s finds itself in the older building making for a holistic experience, and the very hip newer structure is just the right setting for Andy Warhol's "Brillo Boxes."

About That Preconceived Notion...

I reversed my preconceived notion as I pulled away in the cab. I now think that poor little old Akron is lucky to have these well-appointed architectural examples interlocked in a dance with destiny. The old world and the new world are not exclusive unto themselves. You can have both as it should be in—you guessed it—Akron, Ohio.

The cab driver said an earlier fare from New York came to see the museum on the same day. So sweep off the sidewalks. The outside world is coming to Akron for a peek at the future. I had a great time. Bravo. ☐

The epitome of poise and elegance, Nick Luzietti is loved and revered both for his outrageous earthly behavior and his passionate off-screen crusade as comical ambassador for all living things. A registered architect and certified interior designer, Nick reigns as design principal in the Chicago VOA interior design office, where he brings a balanced structural perspective and strong creativity to each one of his projects and endeavors.



credits

Design firms featured in this issue:

Pickard Chilton ("Sound Investment," p. 58); New Haven, CT; 203.786.8600; www.pickardchilton.com

at103 ("From the Ashes" p. 66); Mexico City; 55.5525.2556; www.at103.net

Steven Holl Architects ("Light & Landscape," p. 72); New York; 212.629.7262; www.stevenholl.com

HGA Architects and Engineers ("Long Overdue," p. 78); San Francisco; 888.422.8255; www.hga.com

Will Bruder + Partners ("Long Overdue" p. 78); Phoenix; 602.324.6000; www.willbruder.com

figure3 ("In the Pink," p. 84); Toronto; 416.363.4591; www.figure3.com

M Moser Associates ("Risk Model," p. 90); Shanghai; 8621.6213.1933; www.mmoser.com

Photographers in this issue:

Peter Aaron/ESTO ("Sound Investment"); Mamaroneck, NY; 914.698.4060; www.esto.com

Jaime Navarro ("From the Ashes"); Mexico City

Roland Halbe ("Landscape & Light"); Stuttgart, Germany; 49.711.6074073; www.rolandhalbe.de

Bill Timmerman ("Long Overdue"); Phoenix; 602.420.9325; www.billtimmerman.com

Richard Johnson ("In the Pink"); Toronto; 416.755.7742; www.richardjohnson.ca

Vitus Lau ("Risk Model"); c/o M Moser Associates; Shanghai; 8621.6213.1933; www.mmoser.com

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
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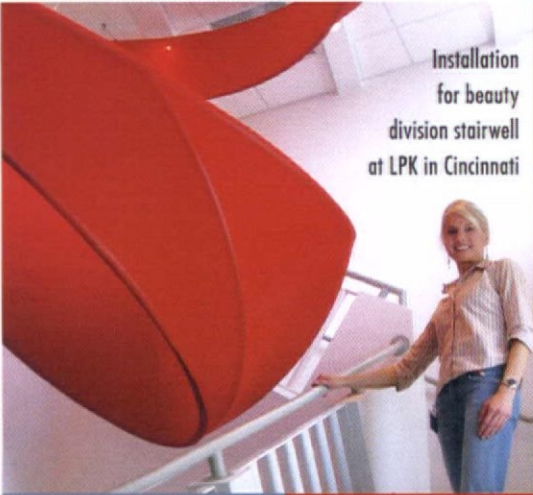
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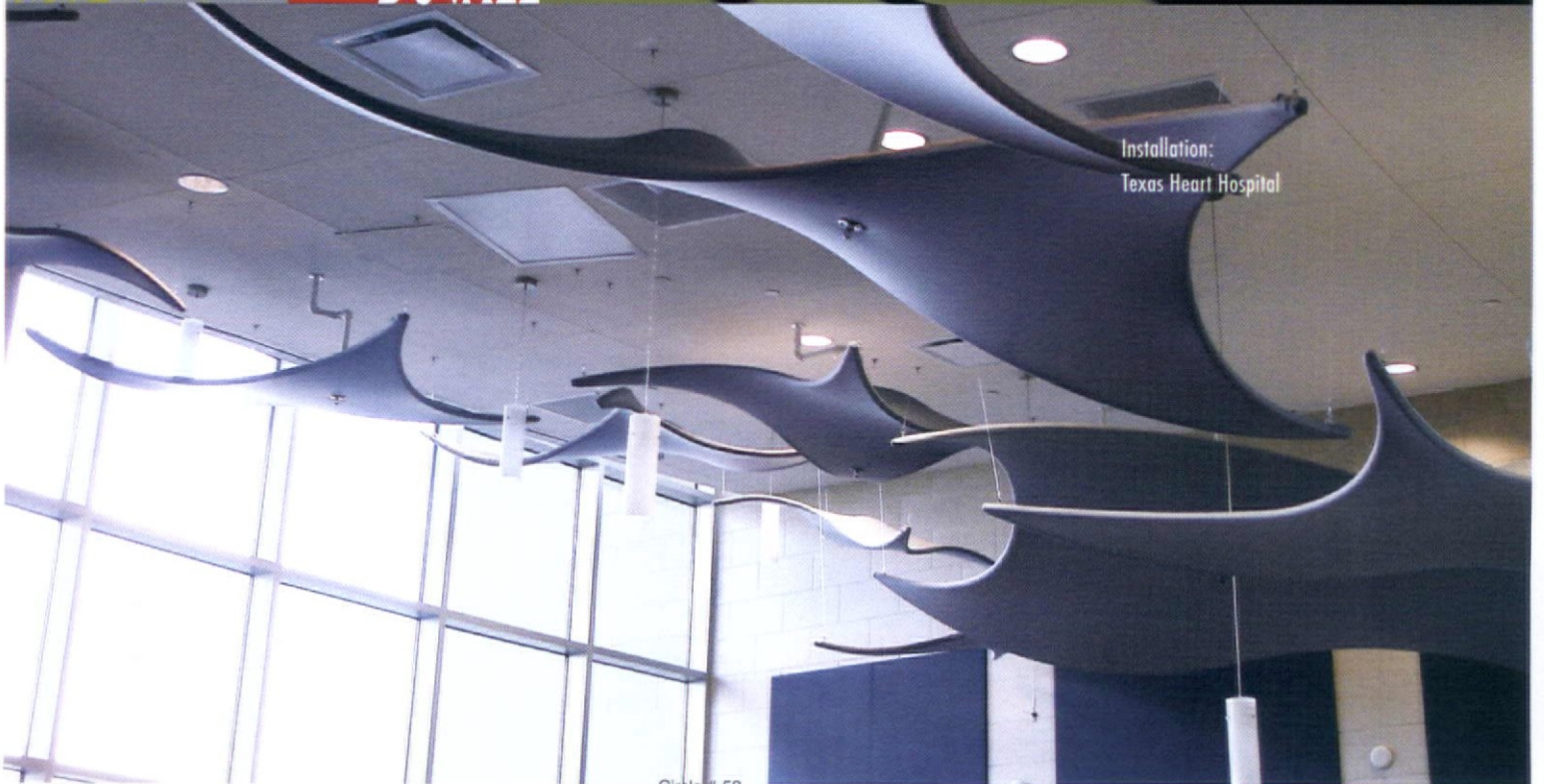
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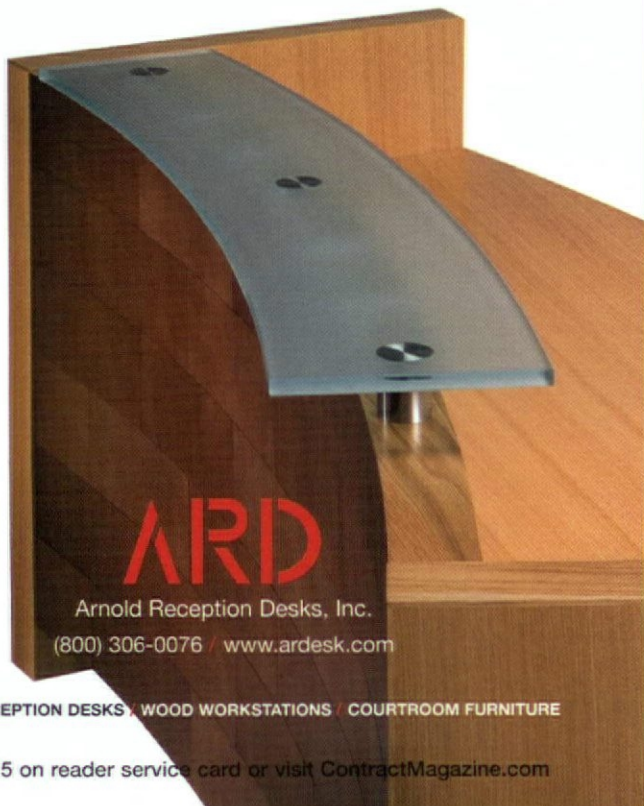
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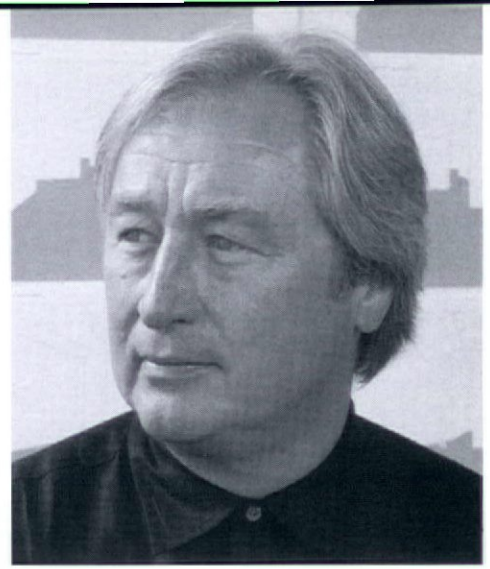
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Steven Holl

Title/Firm

Founder, Steven Holl Architects

Notable Projects

Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, Finland (1998), Sarphatistraat Offices, Amsterdam (2000) and Chapel of St. Ignatius, Seattle, Washington (1997).

What do you consider to be your greatest professional achievement?

The fact that we are currently building several projects on an urban scale with themes I was already writing about 20 years ago in *Edge of a City*. With the building boom in China, we are finally able to do this. In Beijing we are constructing the Linked Hybrid. Most of the projects currently under construction in Beijing have no urban aspirations at all; at the base there's a fence and two guards, and you drive your car in. They're isolated and anti-urban. We believe that we have to make a project that has a vision for urban interaction, one that has services, and is open to the public. The Beijing Linked Hybrid has stores, cafes, a cinema, a swimming pool, and the eight towers all connected by public sky bridges. It has 660 geothermal wells providing all cooling and heating. It's gratifying to see we can realize 21st century aims such as renewable energy systems and hybrid urban programs with openness and new public space.

What is the most fulfilling part of your job?

The opening of a building is always a great moment. For instance, with the Nelson-Atkins Museum in June, you could finally experience the open-ended geometry of new architecture. You can experience its spatial energy personally from the viewpoint of our eyes positioned in our moving bodies as they glide through the new spaces. It isn't just the idea of this architecture being "of its time," which is at stake. It is a proposal aimed at the experience of moving through these spaces as an individual act.

What are the biggest challenges facing designers today?

The 21st century presents us with one-third of the earth already developed, much of it in sprawling waste. A fundamental change of attitude, a re-visioning of values must take place.

What is the best thing you've learned in the past 10 years?

The principle: "Working with Doubt." The power of working with doubt, or suspending disbelief, is fundamental for creative thought in science and in architecture. Today, the absolute is displaced by the relative and the interactive. Instead of stable systems, we work with dynamic systems. Instead of simple and clear programs, we engage diverse and contingent programs. Instead of precision and exactness, we work with intermittent crossbred methods and combinative systems. The dynamic and interactive are qualities of contemporary architecture that set it apart from the clarity of the classic and the functional purity of the modern. We desire architecture that is integral rather than empirical, that has depth rather than breadth; we desire an architecture that will inspire the soul. Working with doubt can yield an intrinsic affirmation of human choice that gives presence to an idea, without which there is no architecture. Architecture is for the bold in spirit; it rises to a pledge of inspired space out of a crowd of shrugging shoulders. A fusion of changing functions finds its flow within the open volume of an emphatic testimony, so that architecture today can shape and inspire new feelings.

How do you foresee the future of design changing?

Yesterday's efforts to develop technology for our needs have given way to an avalanche of new technologies and the challenge of incorporating them. Technology-guided function slips easily into technocratic architecture. Discoveries in science require a new relation to architecture, not a renewal of monastic rationality or deterministic thinking. A nonconformist openness explores new potentials while embracing archaic wisdom. Incongruous methods conduct explorations that are critical of science and yet that utilize ultramodern techniques, creating supercharged doubt.

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