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A bird in hand: Statue of Texas-born General Ignacio Zaragoza silhouetted against the Condominio Acero Monterrey.

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The Architecture and Design Review of Houston

A Publication of the Rice Design Alliance

52: Fall 2001

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ABOVE: Palacio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (now the Museo Regional del Obispado). Photo by Anayantzin Contreras.

COVER: MARCO (1991, Legorreta Arquitectos). Photo © 2001 Hester + Hardaway

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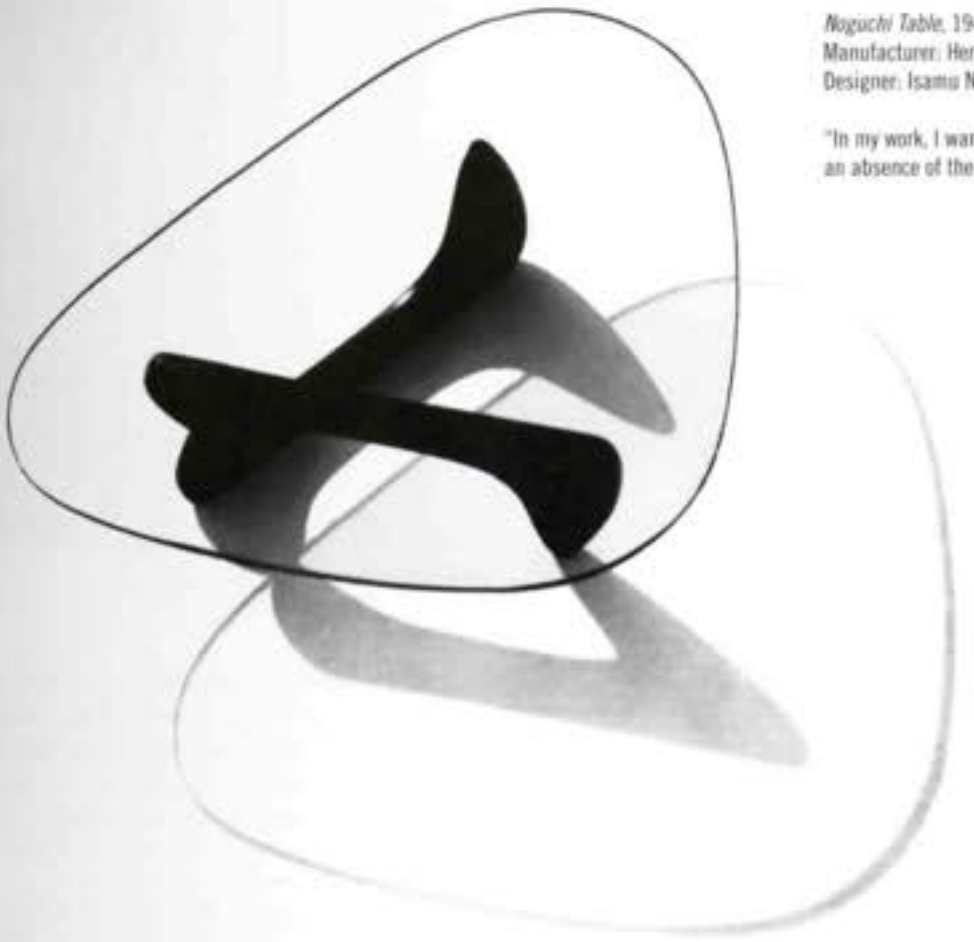
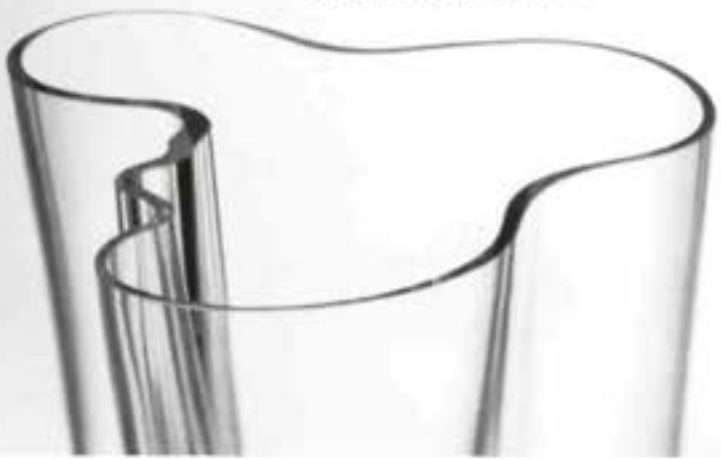


Noguchi Table, 1948
Manufacturer: Herman Miller Inc.
Designer: Isamu Noguchi

"In my work, I wanted something irreducible, an absence of the gimmicky and clever."

Rabbit Mattia, 1998
Manufacturer: Alessi
Designer: Mattia Di Rosa

"We are convinced that for the public, and not just for us, poetry is more than necessary, and much more so than technology."
–Alberto Alessi



Aalto, 1936
Manufacturer: Iittala Finland
Designer: Alvar Aalto

"I don't think there's so much difference between reason and intuition. Intuition can sometimes be extremely rational."

Cite

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The Rice Design Alliance, established in 1973, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of architecture, urban design, and the built environment in the Houston region through educational programs; the publication of *Cite*, a quarterly review of architecture and design; and active programs to initiate physical improvements. Membership in the RDA is open to the general public.

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CALENDAR

RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE SPRING LECTURE SERIES: DUTCH SURGE
Brown Auditorium
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
713.348.4876

The Netherlands have been contributing to the world's architectural heritage for many centuries. But especially in the last hundred years, Dutch architects and urbanists have been on the forefront of architectural development. Rem Koolhaas/OMA put Holland and its architects on the world scene with a bang. Many young Dutch architects worked in Koolhaas' office, then founded offices of their own. This lecture series will present cutting-edge Dutch architects and designers.

Wednesday, January 16, 7:30 p.m.
JOEP VAN LIESHOUT directs the Atelier van Lieshout, a group that creates everything from funky furniture to bumpy mobile homes to polyester-covered body parts. He calls himself an artist, but he doesn't mind that others may not classify his work as art. "I couldn't care less what they call it," he says, "as long as I can make what I want."

Wednesday, January 30, 7:30 p.m.
MARCEL WANDERS' Knotted Chair can be found in New York's Museum of Modern Art. As director of Marcel Wanders Studios, his clients include Droog Design, Boffi, Flos, Magis, Mooi, and Goods. At the last Salone del Mobile in Milan, Wanders showed, among other projects, the Airborne Snotty Vases he created for Cappellini. The concept, he explained to *Nylon* magazine, "is an unlikely marriage of the nasty (snot caught in midair) and the beautiful (the graceful vessel meant to hold a single flower)."

February 6, 7:30 p.m.
"The architect will be the fashion designer of the future," declare CAROLINE BOS and her partner, Ben van Berkel. In *Move*, their new three-volume opus, they say architects must "engage with the banal dreams of the contemporary world," including obsessions such as celebrity, advertising, and glamour. Bos' lecture, "The Blue Period," will cover "attractive organization."

Wednesday, February 27, 7:30 p.m.
BART LOOTSMA is a historian, critic, curator — and the author of *SuperDutch: New Architecture in the Netherlands*. Amazon.com's reviewer deemed the book "superfunky."

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON GERALD D. HINES COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE LECTURES
Unless otherwise noted, all lectures are held in the College of Architecture Theater, and are free and open to the public. Call 713.743.2400 for more information.

Tuesday, January 29, 6 p.m.
SHEILA KENNEDY of KVA (Kennedy & Violich Architecture in Boston), will speak on "Material Misuse: New Projects."

Tuesday, February 19, 6 p.m.
CHRISTOPHER SHARPLES of New York's SHoP/Sharples Holden Pasquarelli will describe his current work.

RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE HOMETOWN TOUR: LOS ANGELES
February 28–March 3, 2002

An architectural tour of L.A., including houses by Eames, Schindler, Wright, Neutra, and the Greene brothers. For itinerary and cost, call 713.348.4876.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON GERALD D. HINES COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE EXHIBIT
Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture Gallery and Archives
713.743.2400

March 18 through April 3, 2002
"Student Work," selected projects from both undergraduate and graduate students.

RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE 2002 ARCHITECTURE TOUR: WORKING AT HOME
Saturday and Sunday, April 6&7

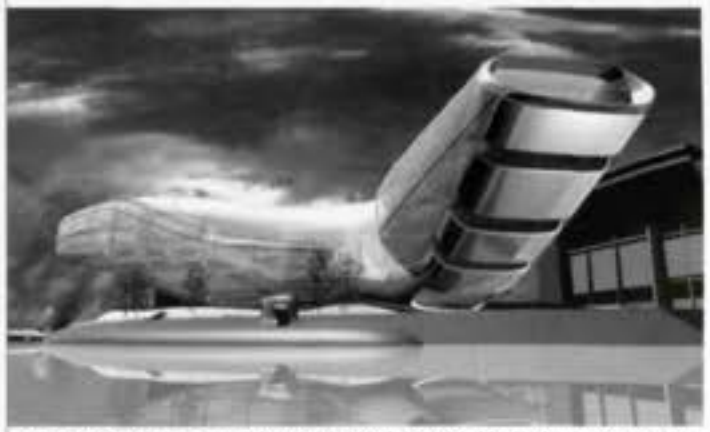
The 2002 members-only architecture tour will feature houses that serve as both homes and offices. For information, call 713.348.4876.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON GERALD D. HINES COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE GALA
Saturday, April 6, 7 p.m.
College of Architecture
713.743.2353

The Blueprint Ball benefits the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture. This year's gala honors architect Antoine Predock, who designed Rice University's Center for Nanoscale Technology and the new City Hall in Austin. The evening includes entertainment and a silent auction.

RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE SALLY WALSH LECTURE
Wednesday, April 10, 7:30 p.m.
Brown Auditorium,
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
713.348.4876

SHIGERU BAN, *Interiors'* 2001 Designer of the Year, calls cardboard tubes "an improved form of wood." With them, Ban has built churches, display pavilions, design galleries, and sturdy emergency houses for refugees displaced by natural disasters. "If you take a look at the history of architecture," he has said, "when a new material or new structural system is invented, new architecture comes out."



Dutch treat: Caroline Bos — one of the architects behind this proposal for Pittsburgh's Carnegie Science Center — speaks February 6 in the RDA lecture series "Dutch Surge."

LETTERS

BROKEN HEART

In previewing the new St. Joseph's Cathedral (*Cite* 51, "Old-Time Religion?"), Mitchell J. Shields fails to provide much explanation why the beautiful Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral must be sacrificed. He reports, almost eagerly, that the view from I-45 of the new cathedral will be great once the old church is demolished.

Is this truly the reason why one of Houston's grandest churches has to be demolished? So people like Mitchell J. Shields don't have to get out of their car? Isn't it possible to appreciate new buildings, and old, in the context of their neighborhood, not just as you're whizzing by at 60 mph?

Furthermore, what about the respect for our local history? For Catholic tradition? For all the shared memories of the many baptisms, weddings, and funerals that have taken place in the existing cathedral? Is there any more information Houston's main architectural voice can provide to justify this significant loss, other than a freeway sight line?

Please, a little help here.

James Rowland
Houston

Mitchell J. Shields reports: *According to Tony Rourke, construction manager for the Diocese of Galveston-Houston, the primary reason the diocese decided to demolish the existing Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral rather than renovate it was financial. The co-cathedral's foundation, mechanical systems, and general structure are all in serious need of repair, says Rourke, who describes the building as a "constant maintenance job." The diocese felt that the cost of the repairs would be prohibitively expensive, and could not be justified since the co-cathedral's functions will be taken over by the new cathedral.*

There was a design consideration as well, though it is described as distinctly secondary. The block on which the current co-cathedral sits, and the block behind where the new cathedral will be built, might be someday be linked into a single cathedral complex. If that occurred, the co-cathedral site could become something of a forecourt for the new cathedral.

Rourke says that there have been some, though not many, complaints about the decision to level the co-cathedral. Partially in response, the diocese may incorporate elements of the co-cathedral, such as some of its stained glass and statuary, into the new cathedral.

CHECK IT OUT

I want to thank you for your excellent article on the Houston Public Library, our facilities and our master plan, with its special focus on the Central Library [*Cite* 51, "Reading Room: The Houston Public Library Plans for the Future," by Mitchell J. Shields]. It puts our plan, the issues surrounding a new Central Library, and indeed many of the issues facing our library and public libraries in general, into perspective. I anticipate it will generate discussion among those who read it. It is already proving a useful item for me to share with board members, partner organizations and interested individuals as we discuss "where do we go from here," particularly in terms of the Central Library.

Again, my thanks for representing the library and our plans so thoughtfully and for the additional articles related to library buildings and the placement of a new Central Library. I found it particularly interesting to see the branch libraries pictured in chronological order. We have never "pictured" them this way!

Barbara A.B. Gubbin
Director
City of Houston Library Department
Houston

RDA NEWS

SHOCK OF THE NEW

We would like to thank David Theis for his article "Past Imperfect" (*Cite* 51), which shed light onto some of the problems of new construction in the Sixth Ward. For the past two years, our project, the Lopez/Harden residence, was caught in the middle of the war of words that Mr. Theis described as "the most scrutinized and criticized" house in Houston's recent history.

One one side, the opponents of our project loudly, and at times viciously, attacked us even before we broke ground. On the other side, during construction, admirers quietly encouraged us and welcomed our clients' addition to their neighborhood.

As designers, we welcome the scrutiny, although we do not seek it. As architects, we understand our language is not the language of words but the language of forms and materials. Our language is the language of the gable roof and shed roof, of front porch and dog run, of metal roof and Hardiplank siding.

Now that the project is nearly completed, our clients will soon settle into their new house. Hopefully, with good weather, plants will soon begin to take root in the gardens, and koi will swim in the lily pond. The best way to judge the Lopez/Harden residence will be to see it first-hand. We invite those who are curious to see the house in the Sixth Ward, the way that it was intended.

Mostly, we'd like to thank our clients, Martin Lopez and Christine Harden, for putting their trust in our firm to build their house despite the verbal attacks and controversy. Whether one judges our project to be constructive or destructive, one can fault our abilities, but not Lopez and Harden's sensitive intentions and respect for the Sixth Ward.

Chung Q.B. Nguyen, AIA
MC2 Architects & Construction, Inc.
Houston

Have a criticism, comment or response to something you've seen in Cite? E-mail it to citemail@ruf.rice.edu, or send it the old-fashioned way to Cite, 1973 West Gray, Suite 1, Houston, TX 77019.

RDA'S NEW OFFICES

Last summer the Rice Design Alliance expanded its offices to provide much-needed space for its cramped staff. The Rice School of Architecture provided the additional space; everything else was donated by RDA members and supporters. We would especially like to thank RDA board members Jory Alexander, who provided the architectural drawings for the expanded offices; John Miner, whose construction firm and subcontractors donated their services; Bill Donovan, who facilitated the donation of Knoll furniture systems from Enron Corp.; Barbara Amelio, who arranged the installation of the furniture by Debner + Company; and Katherine King, whose firm installed the new carpeting donated by Interface Flooring Systems. New lighting by Lighting Unlimited has also brightened RDA staff members' days.

The RDA would like to thank the following contributors for making this remodeling possible:

Drywall/Metal Studs: Applied Finish Systems
Painting: Bundren Painting
Engineering: Burns, DeLatte & McCoy, Inc.
Electrical/Data/Telecomm/AV: Capp Electric
Doors/Hardware: Century Builders Hardware
Furniture Installation: Debner + Company
Office Furniture : Enron Corp.
Carpeting: Interface Flooring Systems
Architect: Kendall/Heaton Associates
Lighting: Lighting Unlimited
Carpet Installation: McCoy Inc.
General Contractor: Miner-Dederick Constructors, Inc.
Plumbing/HVAC: TD/Industries

NEW PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Carrie Rushing, who most recently worked for the March of Dimes in San Francisco, has been hired as the new program administrator for the Rice Design Alliance. Rushing, who attended the University of Texas–Austin, grew up in Southgate, near Rice. "I used to come to RDA lectures all the time before I moved to San Francisco," she says. "So when I saw this job on the web site, I was really excited."

"The Future Belongs to Those Who Prepare For It": In the vestibule of the endangered Prudential Building, a mural's optimism has turned to irony.

Mid-century monumental: Completed in 1952, the Prudential Building (center) was the city's first high-rise office building outside downtown.

Modern Landmark Endangered

M.D. Anderson plans to demolish the Prudential Building

Commerce and preservation often clash, but the plans for the former Prudential Building recently elbowed that contest one step further: into a conflict between history and medicine.

For M.D. Anderson Hospital, which owns the building at 1100 Holcombe Boulevard, medicine wins. The hospital plans to raze the 1952 structure — which it calls the Houston Main Building — to accommodate an outpatient cancer care complex. According to hospital officials, consultants estimate that updating the 18-story building for this new plan would cost $140 million more than simply replacing it.

But Houston's handful of preservation activists think the hospital has misread the whole equation. Because Houston's preservation laws give scant protection to historic buildings, they say, powerful institutions have to fill that role instead. With study and resolve, they insist, M.D. Anderson could fold the building into its plans.

"Institutions have a cultural responsibility to the city not to destroy its landmarks," says Stephen Fox, an architectural historian. "You have to make a commitment, just as you make a commitment to curing cancer."

The spacious gray building was completed in 1952 and served as the Prudential Insurance Co.'s regional headquarters. Everything about it, Fox says, reflects the era's robust outlook. The Prudential was Houston's first high-rise corporate office building outside downtown, the first to install public art, and the first to offer workers tennis courts, a swimming pool, and lush landscaping.

Along with monumental '50s architecture by Kenneth Franzheim, the building's trademark is its fountain. Mildly shocking in its day, Wheeler Williams' statue "The Family" — a cheerfully nude man, woman, and child — anchors a verdant, palm tree-dappled entrance. Inside the building, a grand rounded vestibule displays a Peter Hurd mural that proclaims, "The Future Belongs to Those Who Prepare For It."

M.D. Anderson bought the property as office space in 1975, and by all accounts the hospital cared for it meticulously. The first hint of danger surfaced in the 1980s, when two different consultants deemed it would cheaper to build new office space than renovate the existing structure. M.D. Anderson mulled turning the Prudential into an outpatient clinic. But according to hospital spokesman Steve Stuyck, a third study, conducted a few years ago by the Houston architectural firm Falick Klein Partnership, showed that renovation would add $140 million to the clinic's projected $300 million price tag.

Meanwhile the hospital's needs were changing enormously. As cancer treatment came to rely more and more on outpatient procedures, M.D. Anderson devised a 10-year expansion project for the 22 acres where the Prudential building now sits. Just east of that building, the first structure will house a 739,000-square-foot ambulatory clinic. The plan, designed by Kaplan McLaughlin Diaz of San Francisco, in association with FKP, ultimately calls for four buildings — none higher than seven stories — in a park-like environment with easy access to offices, clinics and research buildings. When it's time to build the replacement office building, Stuyck said, the old Prudential will go.

Architect and preservation advocate William F. Stern calls the plan wasteful — and damaging to the city. "This has nothing to do with sentiment," he says. "It has to do with how you build a city. A sophisticated, intelligent organization would weave these new buildings into existing architecture."

In any other city, Stern points out, a building such as the Prudential would have achieved protective landmark status. In Houston, that status must be sought by individual owners; as a result, preservationists here can recite litanies of historic buildings supplanted by parking lots.

This summer, Stern and other activists met M.D. Anderson officials to discuss the hospital's plans. Stern praised hospital president John Mendelsohn's attentiveness — but suggested that M.D. Anderson should carefully scrutinize estimates provided by FKP, since the same firm is in charge of the new building program.

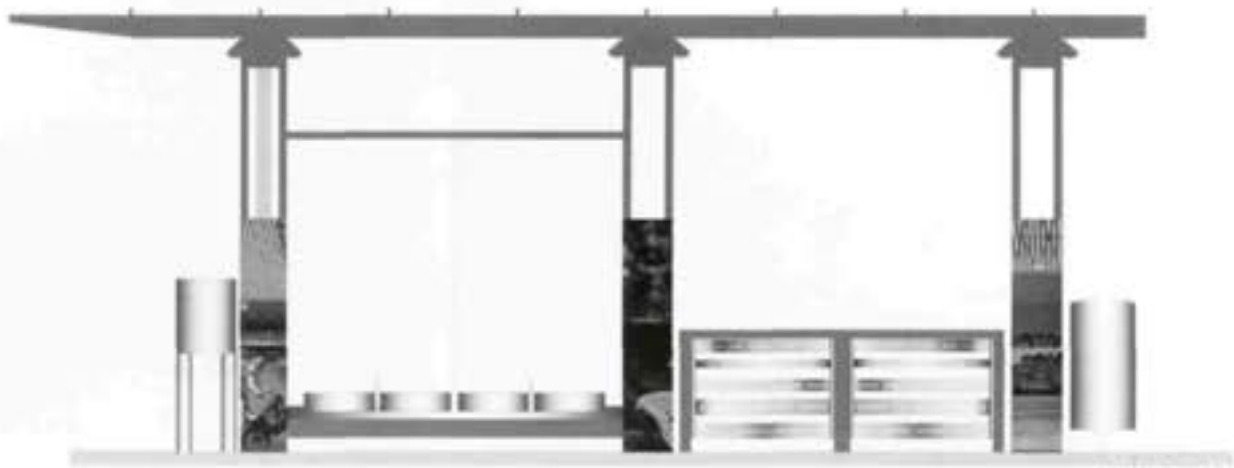
"The problem," Stern said, "is that you can twist a feasibility study in your favor. Of course you can price a door at $500 or $600. You can also price a door at $100."

Mendelsohn, though, said he weighed the Prudential's fate carefully. A board member of the Greater Houston Partnership, he said he is well aware of both the paucity of historic buildings here and the city's recent struggle to beautify. The fountain will stay in place, he points out, and the interior mural will be protected and used elsewhere in the complex.

But, Mendelsohn says, his first mission to Houston is providing cancer care that is modern — and easily accessed. "If M.D. Anderson is to grow and continue to achieve its mission to treat cancer," he says, "we think it's very important that the growth be contiguous."

The hospital's very achievements, historian Fox counters, suggest that it could accomplish both missions: caring for its patients *and* saving one of Houston's dwindling number of landmarks. "Every day at M.D. Anderson they're dedicated to doing the impossible — curing cancer," says Fox. "This is doable." — *Claudia Kolker*

Claudia Kolker is a Houston-based freelance writer.



On Track

Metro unveils artist-architect collaborations

Ballpark nostalgia: Alan Krathaus and Fiona McGettigan's Reliant Dome station (top) and detail of handrails inscribed with great moments in Dome history (bottom).

After three years of planning and political melodrama, Houston's first light rail line (which the Metropolitan Transit Authority dubs METRORail) is now an extended hole in the ground. The torn-up pavement stretches along Main Street through downtown, through the Museum District and the Medical Center, and to the Astrodome.

The first tracks were laid in September, but were threatened in November by a city proposition that could have led to their removal and a halt to the project. The proposition failed, and a competing proposition passed by a large margin. Now, if all goes according to schedule, the last track should be in place in 2003, and the first trains will run in 2004.

Despite the referendum-generated confusion, the public knows what the system will look like. The design of the vehicles was unveiled at public meetings this spring, and a Museum of Fine Arts exhibition in July and August presented the station designs.

Technically, the new system will be unremarkable, a set of proven technologies that has been implemented in 12 U.S. cities since the early 1980s. Visually, though, METRORail will be unique. Most light-rail vehicles are boxy and utilitarian, often with discontinuous window lines. But from the beginning, Metro's publicity for the line has shown sleek, rounded trains, and the final custom design by Siemens, the manufacturer, matches those initial renderings. Other cities, including Phoenix, have expressed interest in using the same design.

METRORail's stations, too, are unusual. In the U.S., station design tends to take one of two approaches. Transit agencies often prefer the cost-effective "kit of parts" approach, in which standard canopies and benches appear at each stop, though often in different arrangements. The light rail line now under construction in Minneapolis (probably one of Jesse Ventura's most lasting achievements) is an example of this approach. It will feature stripped-down glass canopies on downtown stations, and bungalow-like sloped roofs on the stations in old residential neighborhoods.

But communities often prefer the second approach, in which artists and architects design each station as an independent entity, different from every other stop on the line.

Houston's plan falls halfway between the two approaches. HOK Architects designed the basic station structure: a lightweight glass canopy with attached benches and wall panels. Then a different artist or team of artists designed each station's paving, wall panels, roof, and decorative flourishes

Metro and the Cultural Arts Council of Houston-Harris County (CACHH) selected artists, who were given the relatively small budget of $31,250 per station — intended to cover, for instance, the cost difference between the simple platform surface in the base design and more artistic pavers. For some stations, such as the ones downtown, community groups contributed significant additional funds.

The base budget, in fact, is quite small, a reflection of the tight budget of the line as a whole. Alan Krathaus, who along with Fiona McGettigan designed three of the 16 total stations — the Texas Medical Center transit center, and the Smith Lands and Reliant Park stations — says that they are still fine-tuning their designs to lower the costs. For instance, for the Reliant Park station, text on the stainless-steel handrails will be cut by water jets. Because the price of cutting is calculated by the square inch, reducing the text size by an eighth of an inch can produce significant savings.

Despite the tight budget, the art's impact will be huge. The designs range widely. Some stations will be abstract; some high-tech; some literal. Most take their cues from nearby neighborhoods. Krathaus and McGettigan's Reliant Park station will be imprinted with photos and text snippets from important moments in the Astrodome's history. Tim Glover's restrained Lamar/McKinney station echoes the cool feel of the surrounding skyscrapers. Astroworld inspired the swirling colors of Reginald Adam's Fannin South. Leaves printed on the canopy of Anne Stautberg's University of Houston-Downtown station will evoke the bayou below.

With a total art budget (including designers' fees) of roughly $600,000, art amounts to only 0.2 percent of the line's $300 million cost. That's not much compared to the 1 percent that Austin, Los Angeles, and Kansas City require of similar projects — or the 2 percent San Francisco demands. Houston, though, has only recently begun to require public projects to include an arts component. In 1999, a new ordinance mandated that city-funded projects costing more than $500,000 devote 1.75 percent of their budgets to art. The ordinance's effect has yet to be felt on the street, since most projects it concerns are still being designed.

Metro is not covered by the ordinance. But when METRORail opens, it will probably become the most prominent public art project in Houston, and may make the case for future projects. "I think that what this project does is show how modest budgets can go a long way," says Debbie McNulty, CACHH's civic art and design director. "Many people, on small projects, wonder what you can do with a few thousand dollars. Well, actually, you can do quite a lot." — *Christof Spieler*

Christof Spieler is an associate at Matrix Structural Engineers and a lecturer in the Rice University Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Glory days (and amazing nights): The Eldorado Ball Room in its heyday.

A New Home For Happy Feet

Project Row Houses revives a Third Ward landmark

In Houston's Third Ward, the historic Eldorado Ball Room is beginning to show glimmers of its former glory. Upstairs, workers have lifted sections of nailed plywood flooring, revealing a well-worn parquet dance floor hidden for more than 30 years.

From 1940 through the early 1970s, the Eldorado was the premier venue for African-American musicians in Houston. Patrons called it "The Home of Happy Feet," and its stage featured stars such as Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, Ray Charles, and B.B. King. The Eldorado also fostered the careers of Houston-grown legends including bluesman Lightnin' Hopkins and jazz singer Jewel Brown.

In the late '30s, Clarence A. Dupree and his wife Anna decided to build an elegant club to provide African-Americans a refined alternative to juke joints. Clarence Dupree was an employee of the River Oaks Country Club. Anna Dupree, a great-grandchild of a slaveholder and the grandchild of former slaves, worked as a manicurist for a shop in River Oaks. In 1935 she opened Anna's Beauty Shop adjacent to the couple's Third Ward house on Nalle Street. They invested their savings in real estate, and built a business empire that included a theater.

They hired architect Lenard Gabert to design the Eldorado, a two-story building with a bull-nosed corner at the intersection of Elgin and Dowling. One of the first graduates of the Rice Institute's architecture department, Gabert also designed the Jewish Home for the Aged, Congregation Beth Yeshurun Synagogue, United Orthodox Synagogues, the original Jewish Community Center on Hermann Drive, and many houses in Riverside Terrace and Braeswood.

The ballroom was upstairs, on the building's second floor. Small African-American-owned businesses, such as cafes and a photography studio, occupied the ground level. For years, the complex thrived as the most glamorous spot in black Houston. The Duprees became philanthropists, and Anna Dupree funded the first permanent building on what would become the campus of Texas Southern University.

The Eldorado foundered in the '70s. As Houston grew less segregated, and more Third Ward residents bought cars, the club lost patrons to other parts of town.

In the '80s, a new owner tried to carve the ballroom's space into offices, but the complex languished. In 1999, the owner donated the better part of two blocks — including the Eldorado — to Project Row Houses. Led by artist Rick Lowe, the nonprofit group involves artists in neighborhood revitalization, historic preservation, community service, and cultural education.

Rice architecture professor William Williams planned the ballroom's rehabilitation based on archival photos and the memories of the many patrons who still live in the surrounding neighborhood. Although Lowe and his associates had no trouble locating the club's regulars, those sources disagreed on some details, such as the location of the stage. (In the ballroom's 30 years of operation, the bandstand may have moved several times.)

So far, workers have removed the partitions and a dropped ceiling that were added when the ballroom was converted to office space. The plumbing and electrical systems are being updated, and an air-conditioning system will be installed.

Project Row Houses is raising money for the next phase of rehabilitation, which will include rebuilding the booths that lined the dance floor and revealing the original slot windows that allowed clubgoers to look out over Emancipation Park. No date has been set for the re-opening.

In keeping with the Eldorado's original purpose, the rehabilitated ballroom will feature small concerts and dancing. Project Row Houses also plans to use it for seminars and social functions. The ballroom might ultimately anchor an expansive arts and culture complex, which could include Project Row Houses' 22 shotgun-type cottages-cum-galleries, a sculpture garden, an open-air market, and a number of art-installation spaces.

Danny Samuels, a principal of Taft Architects, and architect Nonya Grenader are developing the first floor of the Eldorado, as well as the site adjacent to it. In an attempt to integrate arts and the community, Project Row Houses will continue to rent to the tailor and beauty salon that occupy the ground floor.

—Kent Baxter

Kent Baxter is a Houston-based freelance writer.

Saved: The Morrow House.

A Keeper

A sympathetic institution vows to preserve a grand old house

Earlier this year, when the owner of 3028 South MacGregor Way offered his property for sale, the house's admirers worried that it might not find a sympathetic new owner. Designed by architect Robert C. Smallwood, and built in 1936 for prominent Houston lawyer Wright Morrow, the Regency-style country house boasts extensive grounds — and obviously, only a limited number of prospective buyers would be able to afford and maintain such a place.

But the Morrow House also faced an extra hurdle: The property sits next to the Harris County psychiatric hospital — precisely the kind of neighbor that frightens away most would-be buyers of Regency-style country houses with extensive grounds.

The Morrow House, though, appears to have found a buyer that loves both it and its location.

The University of Texas's board of regents is now negotiating to buy the property. If the deal closes at the beginning of next year (as observers expect), the Morrow House and its grounds will become the new home of the Mental Sciences Institute, part of the medical school at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

The institute is affiliated with the Harris County Psychiatric Center, the hospital that sits adjacent to the Morrow House. The school's medical students make rounds there, and its researchers often conduct their studies with the hospital's patients. For those students and researchers, the South MacGregor site would be far more convenient than the Mental Sciences Institute's current address in the Texas Medical Center, and a low-rise building with nearby parking would better suit their needs.

But convenience isn't the only consideration in the current plans. UTHSCH has charged its architects — BNIM Architects of Kansas City and Lake Flato Design of San Antonio — with designing a new building that is energy efficient, human scale, and sympathetic to the Morrow House. And the medical school plans to meet extensively with community groups, and will try to address hard problems, such as parking and traffic, in a way that pleases the neighborhood.

The early rounds of planning haven't yet determined a new purpose for the house. Obviously, the Morrow House was designed as an elite residence, not as part of a modern institution. Security, handicapped access and other issues will require modifications.

But Rives Taylor, the campus architect for UTHSCH, says his institution hopes to make the Morrow House an important component of the complex, and that any plan will recognize its "wonderful presence."

"The house stays," says Taylor. "No question." — *Lisa Gray*

Lisa Gray is managing editor of Cite.

A long way down: Paul Hester's 1999 photo of Pennzoil Place (1976, Philip Johnson) and Republic Bank (1983, Johnson).

Photo Developments

Every picture tells a story. But sometimes the story changes.

On September 11, *Cite* photographer Paul Hester was in Monterrey, where he shot many of the photos you see in this issue. He was supposed to fly home the next day, and his show, "Philip Johnson & Texas: Photographs by Paul Hester" was scheduled to open September 14 in the Williams Tower Gallery.

The terrorist attacks changed those plans. Hester's flight, like all flights in U.S. airspace, was canceled, and the U.S.-Mexico border was closed. After an extra day in Monterrey, Hester caught a bus to San Antonio, where his wife and business partner, Lisa Hardaway, picked him up.

They were in no hurry to arrive at the gallery. Williams Tower, easily Houston's most iconic skyscraper, canceled all its public events, including Hester's opening.

Just as well, Hester thought; the show seemed out of sync with the times. Many of the photos were of skyscrapers, including Williams Tower itself. In mid-September, it was impossible to consider those photos, or Williams Tower, without thinking of the World Trade Center. Johnson's skyscrapers once served as emblems of Texan boldness. Suddenly, like all skyscrapers, they looked vulnerable. Like targets.

In the months that have passed, daily life has regained its old shape. After Williams Tower again opened to public events, Hester's show had a closing party. The show then moved to a new venue, the gallery at the University of Houston College of Architecture.

But it remains impossible to view Hester's photos in a pre-terrorist state of mind. The skyscrapers haven't regained their old swagger; you still feel protective of them. Oddly, they also seem brave — and thoroughly different from the World Trade Center. It's gone, but Johnson's buildings still exist. Merely by surviving, they serve as steel-and-glass assertions that civilization will continue.

— *Lisa Gray*

Blight Fighters

The Quality of Life Coalition aims to make Houston less ugly

"Signage puke": The new coalition opposes it.

"Houston is ugly," pronounced *The Economist* this June. The article, "The Blob That Ate East Texas," was otherwise surprisingly flattering; it held that Houston could become one of the great cities of the 21st century. But still, the three-word criticism stings. *The Economist* has a point.

A year-old umbrella group, the Quality of Life Coalition, has assigned itself the big job of fighting blight. The group plans to funnel the disparate and dispersed energy for city beautification into a single, potent force for change.

Envisioned as an "organization of organizations," the coalition aims to "mobilize both the public and government to fund and materially change how Houston looks and lives" and "capitalize on our most inspiring natural advantages: trees, bayous, and the 'can do' attitude of a unique populace."

The coalition focuses its efforts on four principal areas:

- *Trees and Landscaping.* The group hopes to improve the appearance of major thoroughfares, especially those that serve as conduits for visitors, such as freeways to and from the airports. (No matter how beautiful some parts of Houston may be, a visitor's first impression is often formed on I-45.) Additionally, the coalition will attempt to improve enforcement of existing ordinances (such as tree protection and planting), and to expand ordinances to include public sector projects. (The City of Houston and Harris County are currently exempt from the tree and landscaping ordinances that apply to private sector developments.)
- *Parks and Bayous.* The coalition contends that Houston needs more parks, and calls for full implementation of the city's Parks & Recreation Master Plan, to the tune of $520 million ($400 million from city bonds and $120 million from private donations). The group wants to see that Houston obtains its "fair share" of state and federal grant money, and to encourage the creation of a canoe trail system.
- *Billboards and Signage.* Regarding what some call Houston's "signage puke," the coalition seeks better enforcement of current city ordinances, and it will address the thorny legal and political problems of billboards on interstate highways.
- *Litter and Graffiti.* The group hopes to expand the City of Houston's Clean Neighborhood Program, a beautification effort, to include all 88 "super-neighborhoods." The group also hopes to address abandoned and neglected lots, and to compare Houston's ordinances with those of competing cities.

While none of these initiatives is controversial (outside of billboard companies), the goals have not, as yet, been made to happen. So why does the coalition believe it could succeed where others have failed?

Supporters claim that for the first time, the group unites a critical mass of Houstonians to focus on those four initiatives. The coalition's 49 member groups include a wide variety of organizations, ranging from the Greater Houston Partnership to the Houston Canoe Club, as well as long-time laborers in this field such as Trees for Houston and The Park People. The Quality of Life Coalition's leadership includes business heavyweights such as Charles McMahen and Richard Weekley. And the group, unlike many organizations of organizations, appears to be focused, driven, and well-funded.

So perhaps the cynics will be wrong this time. We'll know for sure if *The Economist* ever publishes an article titled "Beauty and the Blob." — *Leo Linbeck III*

Leo Linbeck III is chairman of Linbeck Construction and CEO of NextStage Entertainment.

MONTERREY

Monterrey & the Culture of the Northeast

Rafael Longoria

Before Texas was identified with the Southwest, it was part of the Northeast. Saltillo was its capital, and the Bishop of Monterrey shepherded its souls. The creation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Linares in 1777, which comprised Texas as well as what today are the Mexican states of Nuevo León, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas, marked the first official recognition of northeastern Mexico as an entity.

In 1792 the seat of the diocese moved to Monterrey, where the magnificent baroque façade of the bishop's summer palace still dominates the landscape from a hill west of downtown. From that point on, Monterrey emerged as the leading city of the Northeast, a role that has grown and evolved significantly over the last two centuries.

The identity of the Northeast and its part in the creation of cowboy mythology are much better understood in Mexico than in the United States. The Northeast was the cradle of vaquero culture — the place where ranching and cowboys were invented. The region has its own cuisine (flour tortillas, machacado, cabrito al pastor, cortadillo, semitas, and goat milk candies) and its own music. It also has a libertarian tradition that remains strong.

In fact, Texas owes a great debt to the 19th-century liberal politicians from Nuevo León, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas who welcomed Anglo-American settlers to the region in the ill-founded belief that the immigrants would increase the number of liberals in the Mexican Congress.

In this issue, Armando Flores Salazar, through the analysis of three urban maps, succinctly traces Monterrey's transition from religious center to industrial powerhouse. The city map of 1798 shows a colonial town defined by its plazas and churches. New military installations and civic administration buildings dominate the map of 1865. The 1894 plan shows a thriving city with consulates from Spain, Italy, Germany and the U.S., and with railroads linking Monterrey to Mexico City, the Gulf port of Tampico, and to the new border at Laredo. Also visible are the brewing company and steel foundry that changed the course of the city.

Naturally, the nascent industrial center just 130 miles from the border developed strong commercial ties with the industrial cities of the United States. Along with machinery and manufacturing technology, came architects from St. Louis and San Antonio — including Alfred Giles, whose delicately proportioned facades still survive in downtown Monterrey. And in the absence of local architecture schools, many of the most prominent local architects of the pre-World War II era received their education in Texas universities.

After 1945, Monterrey emerged as an educational mecca. Its Instituto Tecnológico (ITESM) became Mexico's premier training ground for business leaders, attracting students from all over Latin America. The city also acquired a significant array of museums and other arts institutions that make it today the undisputed cultural center of a very large region. It is interesting to note that Monterrey's two greatest industrial icons, Cervecería Cuauhtémoc and Fundidora Monterrey, now house cultural facilities.

Particularly significant to the city's cultural aspirations is MARCO, the contemporary art museum that in 1991 opened its doors at a prominent

In the courtyard of the Monterrey City Hall, a wraparound mural shows the city's history — from its 1596 founding to its Little League triumphs four centuries later.

Aerial view of Loma Larga and San Pedro Garza Garcia.

House in the Barrio Antiguo.

Portales of the old Ayuntamiento.

downtown site. MARCO embodies the flamboyant nationalist aesthetic that has become the signature of its architect, Ricardo Legorreta of Mexico City. The local popularity of this building brought Legorreta other important commissions, such as the enormous library for the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León and ITESM's new graduate research campus.

Although Monterrey has always imported its high culture (including architecture) either from Mexico City or the United States, it has in the last 20 years begun to export popular culture in the form of norteño music. Just as Jalisco and the Bajío region of central Mexico provided many of the cultural artifacts that became national symbols in the first half of the 20th century, the images and sounds of the Northeast have captured the imagination of the entire country — and their appeal extends even beyond Mexico's borders.

The character of the Northeast can best be appreciated in the many small towns that surround Monterrey. The city occupies an ecological border where desert plains meet forested mountains. And the vernacular architecture of the towns south of the city responds to radically different conditions from those of towns to the north. Villa de Santiago, just a half hour drive to the south of Monterrey, is a charming hill town with lush vegetation and crooked streets that dates back to the 1600s, while the hacienda of San Pedro in Zuazua, about 40 miles north of the city and also founded in the 17th century, vividly illustrates how buildings responded to an arid and hostile climate in the cattle-grazing plains. Nevertheless, the towns' similarities are stronger than their differences, and the same vernacular traditions can still be found in Monterrey.

Monterrey is a city of metropolitan suburbs, but its center, while predominantly modern, still has a provincial flavor. Sitting under the portales of the old Ayuntamiento facing the beautifully-scaled Plaza Hidalgo, all preconceived notions of Monterrey dissipate. Of course, it helps that the arches of the portales crop out the atrocious mirrored-glass buildings across the square.

Nearby is the Barrio Antiguo, or what remains of it after the construction of the Macroplaza, a controversial urban renewal project at the heart of the city. The Barrio Antiguo is a great preserve of traditional urban fabric, with the sort of friendly scale and mix of uses that make so many Mexican towns work so well (especially when traffic is removed). In recent years, the Barrio Antiguo has become a lively entertainment district, with fashionable restaurants, cafes, and bars occupying some of the oldest buildings in the city. Unfortunately, many of the rehabilitations that have taken place try to make the buildings look like they belong in Guanajuato or Querétaro rather than capitalizing on their authentic regional character. Though a vigorous nucleus of architectural historians at the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León is documenting the area's vernacular architecture, the city's decision makers do not yet seem to appreciate the richness of the local building and urbanistic traditions.

Aerial view of Fundidora Monterrey (now Parque Fundidora).

In the courtyard of the City Hall, at the southern end of the Macroplaza, a huge wraparound mural depicts the city's history — from its founding in 1596 to its Little League triumphs in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, four centuries later. In 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo partitioned the old Northeast, but the new realities of migration, communications technology, and the North American Free Trade Agreement have brought the region closer together than ever.

Reports about the vanishing border have become ubiquitous in the mainstream media. The cover of a recent special issue of *Time* proclaimed, "Welcome to Amexica." But the dramatic changes visible on both sides of the border are far from symmetrical. In Monterrey, the impact of NAFTA is most evident in the affluent suburbs on the south side of the Santa Catarina River, where HEB, Sam's, and Chili's thrive, while in cities such as Houston, the presence of Mexico is most palpable in middle- and low-income neighborhoods, where Spanish signs dominate the landscape.

Globalization is a paradoxical phenomenon. It does not create a new homogeneous, hybrid culture; rather, it brings in close contact a multitude of cultures, providing opportunities to learn from one another. And as people travel and migrate, they better appreciate the uniqueness of their own places of origin.

Highway 59, the so-called NAFTA Highway, crosses all four of the northeastern states as it connects Houston with Monterrey and Saltillo. The road's upgrade is intended to facilitate commercial traffic. But history shows repeatedly that cultural exchanges are the most lasting effects of trade. ■

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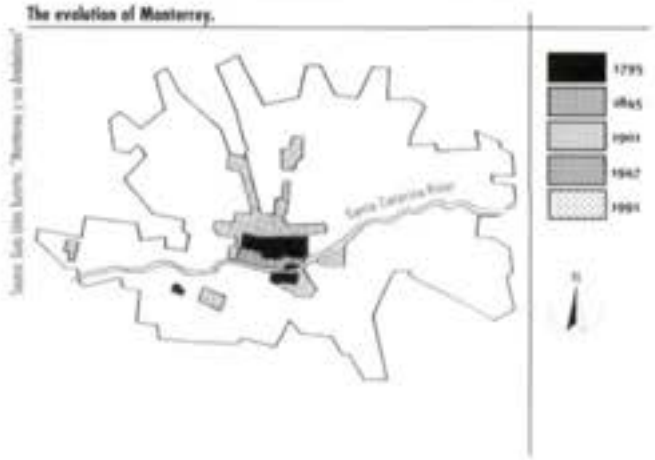
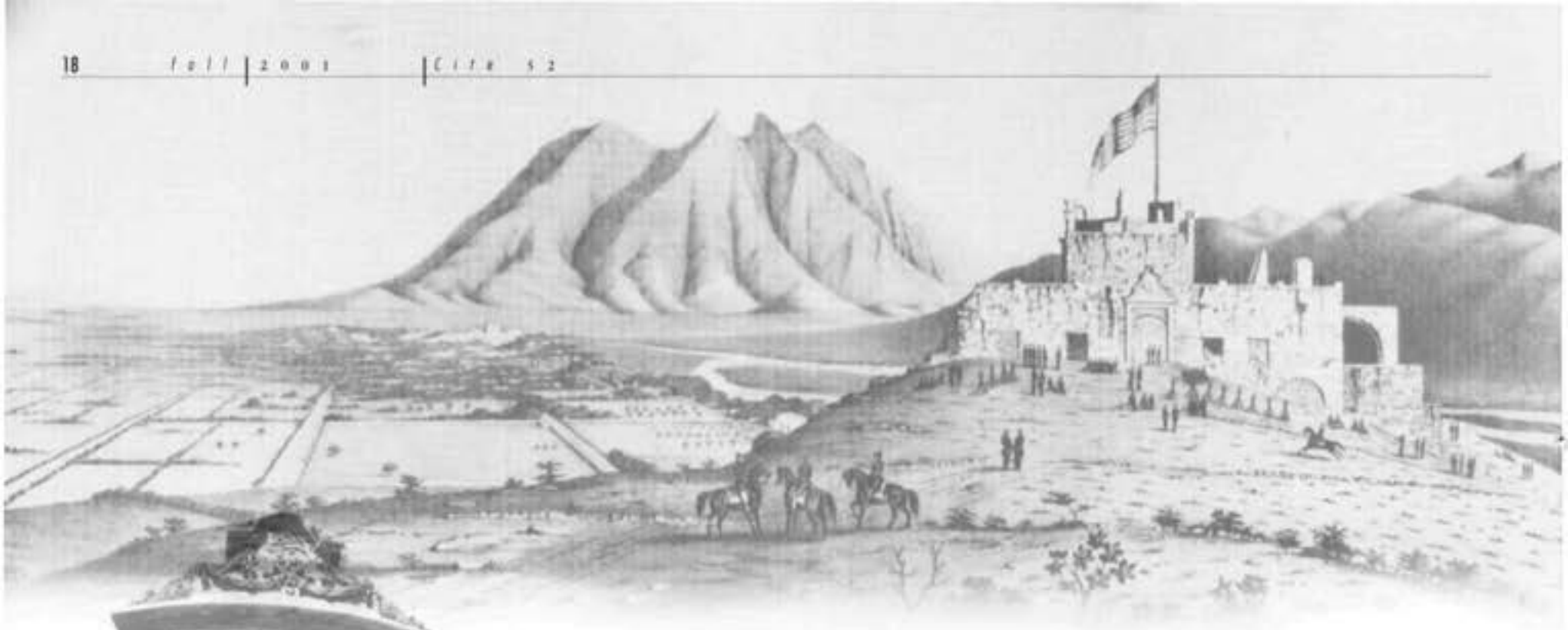
POPULATION OF MEXICO'S LARGEST METROPOLITAN AREAS

1. Mexico City	17,800,000
2. Guadalajara	3,545,801
3. Monterrey	3,110,457

Source: INEGI, 2000 Census (preliminary results)

The evolution of Monterrey.





Above: An 1847 lithograph by Daniel P. Whiting made during the U.S. occupation looks from the Cerro del Obispado toward the center of Monterrey. The Cerro de la Silla ("Saddle Mountain") is in the background. Left: A detail of La Reinera, an early department store (1901, Alfred Giles).

Mapping Change

Monterrey in Three Acts

BY ARMANDO V. FLORES SALAZAR

FOR ITS FIRST 200 YEARS, Monterrey existed as a northern outpost of Nueva España, but the 19th century changed everything about the place. Monterrey grew from a colonial town to a city of national consequence; from a population of 7,000 to a population of 70,000; from a closed economy to an open one; from an agricultural base to an industrial one; and from provincial somnolence to cosmopolitan dynamism. Architectural readings of three maps from the period show how those changes literally shaped the city.

On September 20, 1597, New Spain government officials created the City of Our Lady of Monterrey, which they designated the capital of the New Kingdom of León. (To this day, Monterrey remains the capital of the Mexican state Nuevo León.)

A broad range of cultures shaped Monterrey. In the 16th century, when Spaniards arrived in the region, they displaced the Chichimecas, indigenous nomadic and semi-nomadic people. The Spaniards brought with them their allies, the Tlaxcaltecans, an urban people from Central Mexico, and African Bantus, who had been imported to the New World as slaves. The dominant Spanish and Tlaxcaltecan cultures had independently developed similar urban styles. Both the Spaniards and the Tlaxcaltecans favored plazas surrounded by gridded streets, and they expected their new city to follow that pattern.

But even Spanish culture showed a mixture of influences: Iberian, Sephardic, Moorish, and Greco-Roman-Christian (especially Franciscan). And by the time of Mexico's independence, Monterrey had begun to interact with still other cultures: Anglo-American, French, Austrian, Italian, and German, among others. As Monterrey grew, it would reflect all of those cultural influences.[1]

But for 200 years, the settlement developed slowly. In 1775, Governor Melchor Vidal de Lorca reported that Monterrey's entire population — including both the "city" and its neighboring haciendas, and both Europeans and non-Europeans — totaled only 238 people.[2] Without a central industry, Monterrey was little more than a cluster of farms and ranches.

Act I: Religious City

In the late 18th century, Monterrey developed a religious economic base. In 1777, the Catholic Church created the new diocese of Linares, and in 1792, the Church moved the diocese's see city from nearby Linares to Monterrey. Two early bishops, Fray Rafael José Verger (1781-1790) and Andrés Ambrosio de Llanos y Valdés (1792-1799), equipped Monterrey with a cathedral, a house and summer house for the bishop, a seminary, an indigents' hospital, the Capuchin Convent, and a school of arts and crafts, as well as new churches and chapels.

Bishop de Llanos y Valdés recruited architect Juan Crouset from the Academia San Carlos in Mexico City, and afterward, Crouset worked for the colonial governor, don Simón Herrera y Leyva. In 1798, Crouset prepared for the governor the *Map Showing the Location of Improved and Unimproved Building Sites in the City of Monterrey of the New Kingdom of León.*[3]

The map, scaled in Castilian varas, shows the town bounded by the Río Santa Catarina on the south and the irrigation ditches and reservoirs of the Springs of Santa Lucía on the north.[4] The town plan consisted of six east-west streets and 11 north-south streets, within which Crouset noted the principal public squares, the Plazas de Armas and Comercio, and outstanding buildings (the pro-cathedral, a church built to serve until the proper cathedral was finished; the Franciscan monastery of San Andrés; the chapels of San Javier, Santa Rita, and La Purísima; the bishop's and the governor's houses; a temporary hospital; and the seminary). He also showed the streets, dams, and buildings being constructed under his direction: a northward extension of the town plan, the Hospital of Nuestra Señora del Rosario, the Capuchin Convent, and the present Metropolitan Cathedral of Nuestra Señora de Monterrey. The only major new building not shown on the map was the Obispado, the Palace of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, which was the bishop's summer house. It had been completed ten years earlier to the west of Monterrey. The civil and religious buildings erected by the bishops and academically trained architects, such as Crouset, marked the region's first appearance of high-style architecture.

Bishop Verger and his successors sought to expand Monterrey's town plan to the north and the west to take advantage of the area's higher, breezier, and more healthful altitudes. And certainly, the city was growing. The Census of 1802, carried out by Governor Herrera y Leyva, found a population of 7,000.

Act II: Military Headquarters

In the 1810s, Joaquín de Arredondo, the last colonial governor, made Monterrey the general military headquarters of the Eastern Internal Provinces. Effectively, Monterrey had become the capital of the future states of Nuevo León, Coahuila, Texas, and Tamaulipas.

For the next 50 years, the city endured many bouts of military hostility: the struggle for independence (1810-1821), the U.S. invasion (1846-1848), the civil war over enactment of the Reform Laws (1858-1861), the French intervention (1863-1867), and other, localized episodes of civil disorder. But Monterrey did not cease to build. In 1816, Juan Crouset and the builder Carmen Meza completed the baldachin of the cathedral, which was dedicated in 1833. The Palacio del Ayuntamiento (the City Hall, now the Museo del Estado de Nuevo León) was rebuilt by the Greek immigrant architect Papias Anguiano in 1853, and the Plaza Zaragoza, the old Plaza de Armas, was outfitted with stone sidewalks and lanterns. The Teatro del Progreso was dedicated in 1857. In 1860 the Hospital Civil opened, and in 1861 the city government opened the Alameda Nueva, a landscaped pleasure garden.[5]

The physician Juan Sotero Noriega observed in 1856 that Monterrey had "its long, wide streets, even if not completely straight, paved, and provided with comfortable footpaths on either side; its houses of solid construction, almost all of stone, generally one story high; well painted and adorned they give the city the delightful aspect of an entirely new settlement."[6]

Juan Crousset's 1798 map of Monterrey.

Isidoro Epstein's 1865 map.

Florentino Arroyo and Ramón Díez's 1894 map.

Isidoro Epstein, who was born in Germany, arrived in Monterrey in 1864 to serve as both professor of mathematics at the Colegio Civil and as Municipal Engineer, an office he held until 1868. In July 1865, he published the *Map of the City of Monterrey and Its Commons.*[3]

The map, scaled in meters, presents the existing street network, which in the nearly 70 years since Crousset's map had only grown three streets to the north of the Arroyo Santa Lucía. The future expansion of the city (additions to the north of Santa Lucía, as well as to the south of the Río Santa Catarina) were indicated as *repueblos*. The Repueblos del Norte encompassed the 40-acre Alameda Nueva.

On the map, a box of text identifies by number 16 notable buildings. These included the cathedral, parish churches, chapels, the state and municipal government buildings, military installations, schools, and hospitals. The map also named public plazas, the Alameda and the nearby Ciudadela (the citadel, based on the foundations of a never completed cathedral), waterways, mountains, and highways to outlying towns.

The Epstein map reflects the transformations the 19th century wrought on Monterrey. The separation of powers enshrined in the new Mexican Constitution is visible in the two government palaces, one belonging to the city, the other to the state. The Hospital Civil and the Colegio Civil are secular replacements for Catholic institutions. The cemetery, the Campo Santo, was a public site detached from churchyard burial grounds, as called for in the Reform Laws of 1857, which sought to secularize Mexican public life. The Ciudadela, the fort defending the city, and the Maestranza, a foundry for the manufacture of artillery, were built in answer to the military invasions Monterrey had endured. The extension of roads connecting Monterrey to other settlements reflected the movement of people and merchandise, just as the proposals for expanding the street network reflected Monterrey's increasing population.

Act III: City of Business

At the end of the 19th century, Monterrey developed as a commercial and industrial powerhouse. Many factors contributed to the city's economic strength: proximity to the new international border to the north; the U.S. Civil War, which enormously stimulated trade throughout northeastern Mexico; the construction of railroads that linked Monterrey to Mexico City and the Gulf Coast port city of Tampico, as well as to Laredo and San Antonio in Texas; the "Union and Progress" policies of Mexican president Porfirio Díaz's 35-year administration; financial incentives for new construction; investment capital; and the entrepreneurial spirit of the Monterrey elite.

Two Monterrey residents, Florentino Arroyo and Ramón Díaz, published the *Map of the City of Monterrey, Nuevo León* in 1894. It followed the cartographic conventions of Epstein's map with its marginal technical data, a box identifying notable buildings, and images of some of these.[4]

The map, also scaled in meters, presents a street network that had been expanded in the four cardinal directions. To the north, the map shows the first industrial installations, two railroad stations, and a workers' residential district whose street layout was determined by highways and by railroad and streetcar tracks rather than an extension of the *repueble* grid.

In contrast to the 1865 map, with its 16 notable buildings, the 1894 map identifies 68. The number of churches had increased from 5 to 14; among them a Baptist church. In 1891, the diocese of Monterrey had been elevated to an archdiocese. There were ten new plazas. The Alameda Nueva, renamed for Porfirio Díaz, had been halved in order to construct the State Penitentiary on what had been its north half. The growth of the city and its socioeconomic activities were reflected in new institutions of higher education. In addition to the Colegio Civil and the seminary, these included new professional schools of law, medicine, pharmacy, and education. Manufacturing and commercial activity were supported by the Banco Nacional, the Banco de Nuevo León, and the private banking house of the Irish immigrant and financier Patricio Milmo. The map also identifies five hotels, four streetcar companies, two railroad stations, a theater, and an elite social club, the Casino Monterrey. There were corresponding increases in the number and degree of specialization of institutions of government, the military, and health care. An electric light company and a telegraph and telephone company operated in Monterrey. Huge buildings housed industries such as the Cervecería Cuauhtémoc and the Grand National Mexican Foundry. The consulates of the United States, Germany, Spain, and Italy reflected the city's international ties.

In September 1896, in one of the ceremonies celebrating the Tercentennial of Monterrey's founding, the orator Enrique Gorostieta said that the city "in a century has increased its population 100 times and its resources a thousand times."[5] The three maps discussed here show that his dramatic statement was more than hyperbole. ■

Armando V. Flores Salazar is an architect and professor of architecture at the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, where he directed the architectural research department.

Translated from Spanish by Claudia Kolker.

Notes:

1. Armando V. Flores Salazar. *Calicantos: Marcos culturales en la arquitectura regiomontana, Siglos XV a XX*. Monterrey: Editorial Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 1998, p. 73.

2. José Eleuterio González. *Colección de noticias y documentos para la historia del estado de Nuevo León*. Monterrey: Editorial Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 1975, p. 97.

3. Crousset's map is deposited in the Archivo General de la Nación (Provincias Internas, volume 196). The facsimile copy belonging to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI) is deposited in the Capilla Alfonsina of the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León.

4. The three maps presented here are reproductions reformatted to the same scale to facilitate a comparative analysis of the growth and expansion of Monterrey. The maps were digitized by R. Covarrubias, J. Casas, J. Ariepe, and G. Cortés.

5. Isidro Vizcaya Canales. *Monterrey 1882: crónica de un año memorable*. México: 1991.

6. Alfonso Rangel Guerra, editor. *Una ciudad para vivir: Variaciones sobre un mismo tema*. Monterrey: Fondo editorial Nuevo León, 1991, p. 65.

7. The Epstein map in facsimile from INEGI; original deposited in the Archivo General del Estado de Nuevo León.

8. The Arroyo and Díaz map in facsimile from INEGI; original deposited in the Archivo General del Estado de Nuevo León.

9. Alfonso Rangel Guerra, editor. *Una ciudad para vivir*, p. 91.

City at the

By James Mayeux

Monterrey is an energetic city with a proud, self-made spirit. It attracts young people seeking work in the industries whose major market, the United States, lies only 130 miles to the north. With four million inhabitants, Monterrey already ranks as the third-largest city in Mexico, and its fast-growing population is predicted to double in the next ten to 15 years. New pipelines, electric towers, highways, subdivisions, industrial parks, and feed lots thrust themselves into the surrounding landscape.

The city is set in an arid valley at the foot of the Sierra Madre Oriental, a stunning range of folded and tipped limestone mountains that lies within one of the 25 most biologically diverse and endangered areas on the planet. Monterrey, hungry for land, the land it needs for housing and industry, threatens to alter the mountain ecosystems more in the next ten years than it has in the 400 years since the city's founding. The rural and wilderness areas of the Sierra Madre, though nominally protected by federal and state environmental laws, are undergoing major changes, some of which are reducing or outright destroying the habitats of indigenous plants and animals, leading to their extinction.

Scientists are only beginning to study the effects of the expanding city's adjacency to the large, fragile habitat area. Historically, the city has behaved toward the Sierra Madre with benign neglect at best and unchecked plunder at worst. The inaccessibility and poverty that once protected the Sierra Madre no longer deter the city's inhabitants, who are eager to flee the wrack and strain of urban life for the cool folds of Sierra's skirts.

ABOVE THE CITY

It has been estimated that climbing 1,000 feet is the climatic equivalent of moving 400 miles north. At the elevation of Monterrey, 1,800 feet above sea level, the landscape is desert scrub and grasses — the Coastal Plain, *matorral* in Spanish. The mountains surrounding the city, however, rise abruptly to over 6,000 feet, the climatic equivalent of moving northward nearly 2,000 miles. The vegetation responds accordingly, changing from Coastal Plain to Piedmont Scrub, then Oak Forest, Mixed Pine-Oak Forest, and finally Pine Forest at the summits. At the summits are deeply folded plates of upended limestone and shale strata, each fold rising higher than the last until the highest peaks in northern Mexico at just over 12,000 feet. West of the folds, the land dries out becoming the Altiplano, Mexico's high central plateau.

The Coastal Plain vegetation is recent, the result of overgrazing since Spanish colonial times. Early explorers found the Coastal Plain a rolling prairie with wooded stream beds and an occasional mesquite tree or group of live oaks. The Coastal Plain runs from the base of the Sierra Madre east to the Gulf of Mexico, northwest to the Balcones Escarpment, and fades out on a line between Corpus Christi and San Antonio.

In 1836, Mexican ranchers retreated to safety south of the Rio Grande after Texas independence. The cattle they abandoned thrived and multiplied in the clumps of mesquite, huizache, retama, and prickly pear, and formed the herds first worked by Anglos in the Spanish style, on horseback. The cowboy culture quickly spread up the Great Plains to Canada, but its birthplace was in the matorral of the Coastal Plain.

The Piedmont Scrub chaparral at the base of the Sierra, around 2,000 to 2,500 feet above sea level, is made up of shrubs and small trees from 12 to 20 feet high, including anacahuita (the state flower of Nuevo León), yucca, chapote, charrasquillo, colorín, verbena, and sage. The tough plants are able to endure extended dry spells, but in a good spring display remarkable colors and give off delicate perfumes

The Oak Forest *bosque de encino*, from 2,000 to 4,000 feet above sea level, marks the line of greater rainfall, anywhere from 30 to 40 inches per year. (Monterrey receives only 20 inches per year.) The trees of the Oak Forest tend to legginess. Competing with each other for light, they grow without much horizontal branching, merging into a solid canopy of deep green over a hypostyle hall of black trunks. The spatial effect is haunting at any time of day, but after dusk in the early summer of certain years, fireflies emerge by the millions to create a floating carpet of light pulsing in rhythmic waves — as gentle and awe-inspiring a natural phenomenon as I have ever witnessed.

Looking more closely within the Oak Forest one begins to notice vegetation not expected in northern Mexico: dogwood, redbud, yew, ferns — vegetation familiar in the northeast United States. Moving south along the Sierra, into the state of Tamaulipas, rainfall amounts are greater — as much as six to eight feet per year — and one finds even more: magnolia, hornbeam, sweetgum, maple, and other species not seen again for many hundreds of miles, beginning in the pine forests of East Texas. These relict colonies survived in the cooler, wetter parts of the Sierra

Edge of the Clouds

Will Monterrey destroy the mountain wilderness that surrounds it?

The trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be.

— Paul Válery

Jorge Ramos

after the last Ice Age ended, and now are landlocked into high-altitude "islands," microclimates created by altitude, rainfall, and indirect sunlight. They are comparable, ecologically, to the pools and puddles left behind as a lake dries out.

The Oak-Pine Forest *bosque de encino-pino* begins at around 4,000 feet, where cooler temperatures make the growth of pines possible. With greater altitude one finds more pines, until at the tallest peaks in northern Mexico, 12,000 feet above sea level, nothing remains but alpine meadows and needle-leaf trees — pine, fir, spruce — that is, vegetation you would find today in the far northern United States and southern Canada. The dwarf pine *Pinus culminicola* survives on only the three highest peaks in northeastern Mexico: La Viga, El Potosí, and La Marta. Its total habitat measures mere acres.

AN ANCIENT FOREST

The region is no stranger to massive change. In the cooler times 25 to 15 million years ago, all of Mexico, down to the Isthmus of Panama, was part of a northern temperate forest that circled the northern hemisphere below the line of glaciation. Fossil remains of *Liquidambar*, the genus that includes sweetgum, have been found in Alaska, Maryland, the Norway-Greenland sea bed, Japan, China, and central Asia. Their genetic heirs are still found in North America, Turkey, and eastern Asia. But the North American temperate forest has never been able to leap the tropical heat of the Isthmus of Panama, and stopped abruptly there. The vegetation of the two Americas is genetically quite different.

The glaciers' retreat repeatedly separated the temperate forests of Mexico and Central America from those of North America, with results still visible in the gene pool. Northern temperate vegetation in the U.S. shows low genetic divergence, even among far-flung plant populations, indicating that the genes have flowed freely. Some 18 to 20 glacial events during the Pleistocene epoch determined the ranges of the U.S. populations; the current range reflects a re-colonization that occurred about 10,000 years ago, as the last glaciers retreated.

The Mexican populations, and presumably the Central American populations, show greater genetic divergence, which probably reflects different climatic forces. The Mexican and Central American populations would not have been as affected by the cooler temperatures of the glacial periods, and their populations are likely to be much older. The greater divergence among them reflects gradual adaptations to unique local conditions over longer times — and isolation. The isolation that made them genetically divergent and unique also makes their numbers small, and makes their species easily disturbed or extinguished.

SCIENCE IN THE SIERRA

The first large-scale satellite-image study of the Sierra Madre was carried out last

year at the Centro de Calidad Ambiental of the Monterrey TEC (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey). Called the *Ordenamiento Ecológico de la Sierra Madre Oriental*, the study compares satellite images from the years 1975 and 1995 for an area of about 250,000 hectares in the Sierra Madre south of Monterrey. The *Ordenamiento* shows that during those two decades, approximately 40 percent of the land area suffered changes: 57 percent by forest fire; 19 percent by forestry; 13 percent by urbanization; 6 percent in vegetation cover; 4 percent from deterioration by insect pests; and 1 percent from erosion.

That is to say, forest fire has either partially or totally destroyed nearly one quarter of the study area. Though fire caused by lightning is a natural event in the Sierra Madre, the majority of the fires are man-made. Whether willful or accidental, they are the result of greater numbers of people camping, touring, and vacationing there.

Loss of tree cover due to logging represents another 8 percent of the study area. Because rainfall is variable, slopes steep, soils thin, and regeneration slow, legal forestry cannot be considered an important, sustainable industry for the region. Illegal forestry — the theft and sale of a few hasty truckloads of timber — reflects rural poverty and the difficulties of monitoring human activity in remote places. The TEC study points dramatically to a problem central to the fate of the Sierra: how to replace a legitimate but ecologically undesirable industry with a viable one.

Another 5 percent of the land-use change comes from urbanization and agricultural development. Urbanization includes new road cuts and buildings, often on steep, wooded sites where land values are lowest and views are best. Weekend farmers commonly clear the native vegetation on steeper slopes to replace it with orchards — and are dismayed to see their soil rush downhill in the first torrential rain. Ironically, the technical difficulties of urbanizing remote sites often destroy the very qualities that attracted homebuilders in the first place.

The *Ordenamiento* recommends protective measures for ecological and agricultural resources. New development should take place only:

- within 500 meters of existing paved roads, and 200 meters of existing unpaved roads
- on slopes of 20 percent grade or less
- outside prime agricultural land
- outside a 20-meter buffer on either side of waterways, including dry washes
- outside habitats of endangered plant and animal species, or of species unique to a area
- at least 500 meters from natural springs and bat- and parrot-roosting sites.

Within the study area, approximately 24,000 hectares (60,000 acres) meet those conditions — about 1 percent of the total study area. Densities of resort residential developments in the area range from 0.2 houses per hectare to three houses per hectare. Though the *Ordenamiento* does not recommend densities, if only those lands it identifies as ecologically safe are developed, 25,000 to 50,000 new houses could be built in coming years. The environmental impact of that many new dwellings has not been modeled, but would include new road and utilities infrastructure, construction activities, and almost certainly human activity extending beyond the bounds of the approved housing sites.

A comprehensive plan for the Sierra Madre would seek to balance ecologic, economic, and social forces for the entire region — both the city and Sierra. The human flight to the city for opportunity and the flight away from it for relief are linked and should be studied together. The TEC study and others by the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León mark the first steps in that direction: We are beginning to know the Sierra scientifically.

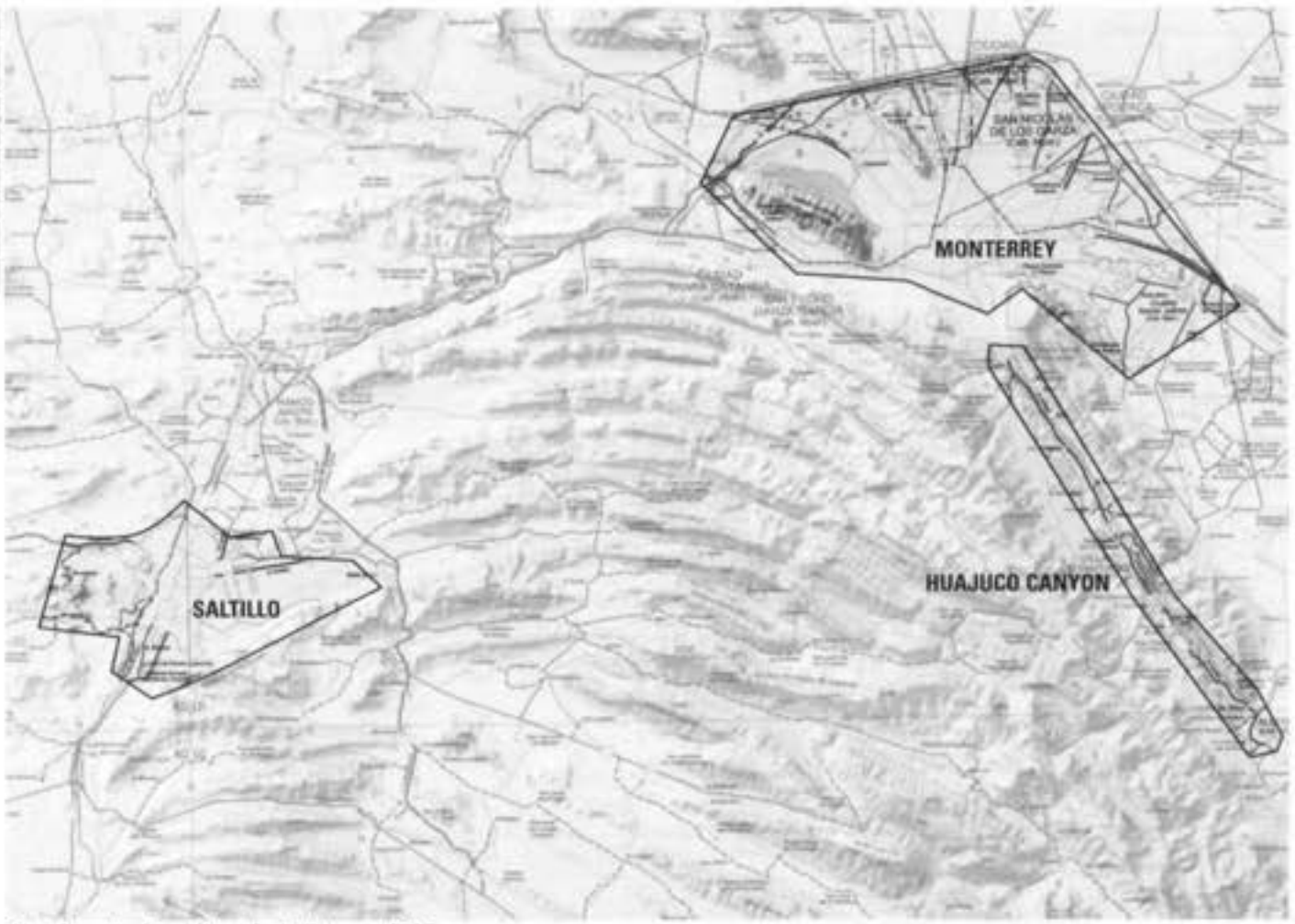
The *Ordenamiento* is an invaluable basis for further planning for the Sierra — planning that would include community participation, economic modeling, and consideration of visual resources, such as views. Such plans would require the long-term support of state and local governments, academia, and extra-national environmental groups. One fact emerges clearly from the TEC study: Though in the imagination of most city dwellers the Sierra Madre is a largely unspoiled "wild" area, untouched by the city of Monterrey, the reality is that as the city has become a difficult place for people to live, it has changed the Sierra, mostly in unstudied, accidental, undesirable ways.

WHICH NATURE?

Ann Whiston Spirn, in her essay "The Authority of Nature: Conflict and Confusion in Landscape," writes that since classical times we have conceived of "first" and "second" nature.

First represents a nature unaltered by human labor. Cicero defined second nature thus: "We sow corn, we plant trees, we fertilize the soil by irrigation, we confine the rivers and straighten or divert their courses. In short, by means of our hands we try to create as it were a second nature within the natural world." John Dixon Hunt has written that gardens have been called a "third nature," a self-conscious re-presentation of first and second natures, and artful interpretation "of a specific place... for specific people."

By that definition, Man-the-Builder is forever condemned to work in second or third nature, forever banished from the original garden. The making of gardens, then, which symbolize paradise and consciously represent the first lost nature and the second man-made nature in its most delightful, personal, and expressive forms, seems a logical art form. It is a way of regaining some of the harmony with nature we lost when Adam bit the apple. As Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn tells us, "Nature is ideology... is a (more-or-less) systematic scheme of ideas, held by particular social, political, cultural,



Cities and mountains: Topographic map showing Monterrey and Saltillo.

and other groups. Without human beings on earth, the idea of nature would not exist at all." For us, as for Adam, the apple is knowledge. We now know what we do.

The biologists who see the deterioration of the Sierra Madre and decry its impending development tend to be passionate and open with their low regard for human activity. They invoke science and ecology with the weight of religious dogma. Since they are generally frustrated and angered by what they see happening, and often do not express themselves in terms that most people can understand, they do not provide the kind of charismatic public leadership that would best serve their ends.

Developers, on the other hand, offer a simple deal: "For a reasonable amount of money, you can own all the peace and quiet and beauty the mountains can offer." They aim to please, but ironically, since few of them are either trained environmental professionals or acute observers of life in the mountains, they tend to destroy the very qualities they sell in the act of making them accessible to their clients. The destruction occurs in several ways. Part of the rural land's appeal was its lack of man-made structures, including roads. But development, of course, creates those structures.

The developers who build Swiss chalets in the Sierra plant an unfortunate idea: that the place's value lies in its resemblance to the Alps. Lacking knowledge of the unique biological value of the Sierra, they make the strangeness of it familiar by reference to other known places — Switzerland or Colorado — missing the opportunity to cultivate a unique genius loci in the public mind.

Last, because the mountains are developed in the same way as the city (with lots, car spaces, and yards), owners soon plant grass, mow lawns, and drive just as they do in the city. This behavior reflects a fundamental rift in people's idea of "man-made" and "natural": "man-made" is to live in, and "natural" is to look at. Since "natural" is mute and of indeterminate economic value, "man-made" usually wins when one must choose between them.

A GARDEN

It seems to me that what distinguishes third nature from the first two is the degree of consciousness we bring to it. Our ideas are tools with which we fashion the tools to change our world. If nature is a human intellectual construct, then the more conscious we are of it, the more powerful it grows as a construct, and the more powerful will be the tools it creates. The questions Ann Spirn raises — "whether humans are outside or inside nature, whether human impact is inevitably destructive or potentially beneficial, whether one can know an objective nature apart from human values"— are questions that we must begin to address. It's difficult even to define the word "nature." Spirn notes, "A.O. Lovejoy identified 66 different senses of the words nature and natural as used in literature and philosophy from the ancient Greeks to the 18th century.... At first the abstraction of the word nature conceals differences. Then when arguments inevitably ensue, it befuddles and confounds."

Spirn ends her essay with an optimistic observation: Gardens provide hope. She writes: "Gardens have been a medium for working out fresh ideas and forms of human habitation, and they are particularly fertile ground for exploring relationships between the human and nonhuman. In the garden there is a recognition of constructedness and an attitude of beneficial management, as well as an acknowledgement that certain nonhuman phenomena are beyond human control. Gardens are never entirely predictable; one cultivates a garden with an acknowledgement of unforeseen circumstances. Nature may be constructed, but it is not only a construct.... Any approach to landscape design based on the notion that nature is singular or its meaning universal or eternal is sure to founder. The emphasis should be on a spirit of inquiry and exploration rather than close-minded certainty. Emotional rhetoric and doctrinaire positions will not advance this agenda, but rather a more reasoned, self-critical, inclusive approach which acknowledges the plurality of human values and motives embedded in ideas of nature and authority."

Having bitten the apple of knowledge, we change the way we see nature in the Sierra — and in the city. We cannot reasonably continue to see the Sierra as "the other," the wild, unspoiled nature apart from the city. That first nature exists now only in the imagination. We must question the wisdom of seeing the Sierra as second nature, a region of manageable engineering projects, for we run the risk of losing the strangeness and complexity of the place by defining problems too simply, and are no closer to bringing that "other" into our city lives. Perhaps the idea of third nature, where we consciously explore the idea of the Sierra as a wild garden, can guide us. By seeing the city and the Sierra as one — our home and our wild garden, each one better for the other — maybe we can learn to manage our household while properly valuing what is unpredictable and complex beyond our control. ■

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The data relating to changes in the landscape were taken from the Ordenamiento Ecológico de la Sierra Madre Oriental, *produced by the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey in March 2000.*

MEXICO'S NASHVILLE

BY SERGIO MARTÍNEZ

Arco de la Independencia (1910, Alfred Giles).

MY MOTHER TELLS me that my grandfather Ezequiel liked parties and sharing good times with his friends. We're talking about the 1930s, the young adulthood of my grandparents, the childhood of my mother, a Monterrey of possibly 100,000 inhabitants. Almost every weekend, my grandparents converted their house into a kind of party hall. They butchered a sheep or kid goat, or maybe a calf if the party was very big, and they arranged a big pit barbecue. Or if they had a pig, there was a little festival of chicharrones, carnitas, and other delicacies of the Mexican country kitchen.

Music wasn't lacking. It was *norteño*, the regional music of northeastern Mexico — a rural, working-class music, the country music of Mexico. All the music of Nuevo León comes from the farms (at least the music that has lasted), but its roots are surprisingly cosmopolitan. They lie in central Europe, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in the salon dances from the middle of the 19th century. The polka, the dedova, the schottische, the mazurka, the contradanza, the waltz — all are from central Europe. And all have made their way to northeastern Mexico.

The exceptions are the *huapango* and the *corrido*, subgenres with Mexican mestizo origins. Spanish influence declares itself in the guapango's rhythm and the corrido's words. Perhaps the corrido, or story song, is descended from the romanza, the medium through which one village sang the news to another. But now, instead of talking about tragic lovers, fights caused by women, and stories from the Revolution, modern corridos tell stories of drug runners.

Speaking of corridos, my mother tells me my grandfather, like everyone else, was honored by a corrido that described his qualities and good humor. He probably paid to have it written for him; I don't believe he was always in a good humor.

Even today, the Monterrey region's groups continue to perform at parties, drinking sprees, weddings and baptisms, and of course, serenades for girlfriends, mothers, and lovers. Any local person can contract a duet or trio in the street, in a place called El Arco, which is a small monument in the middle of a principal avenue of Monterrey.

The globalized accordion: Priscila y sus Balas de Plata.

Ever since the days of my grandfather, El Arco was the meeting place for musicians, not only for the regional musicians — each group with an accordion and bajo sexto, a bass with six double strings — but also for the mariachis and the romantic trios, groups whose roots lie in other regions of Mexico. Potential employers stand on the avenue to audition the groups, who are picked up by passing cars and taken to the party.

In the 1940s, norteño was heard only rarely outside northeastern Mexico. The stars of Mexican cinema — Pedro Infante, Jorge Negrete, Antonio Aguilar — favored other regions' music. Only El Piporro, a campy comedian, sang norteño in the movies.

As American and European pop and rock conquered Mexico, norteño — considered a hick music — went underground. It's not that norteño disappeared, just that it didn't belong to the dominant culture. When it appeared on TV, it was local TV. Norteño wasn't played much on radio; it lived mainly through live performances.

In the '70s, norteño musicians began substituting electronic keyboard instruments for the accordion. At first they used a kind of electronic organ; later, synthesizers. A new genre was born: grupera music. In grupera, there are no soloists — only groups, such as Bronco or La Mafia.

In the '80s, radio programmers began offering Mexicans music in their own language. Suddenly, norteño commanded the eyes and ears of all Mexico — and also of fans in the United States. Dances (really concerts) drew up to 150,000 people. To accommodate the crowds, norteño events were held in parks and even soccer stadiums.

Bronco's lead singer, Lupe Esparza, opened his own recording studio in Monterrey, and Los Temararios and other groups soon followed suit. Monterrey became Mexico's Nashville, its country-music capital.

Norteño's popularity favored an interchange between Mexico and the United States — not just a commercial interchange, but a cultural one as well. In Texas, accordion-driven music had survived as Tejano, norteño's American relative. As Tejano interbred with norteño and grupera, the norteño accordion resurfaced, reclaiming some of the ground it had lost to the keyboard. Record sales in both genres soared.

Tejano superstar Selena paved the way for norteño's first wildly popular female singer, Grupo Límite's Alicia Villarreal, of Monterrey. Villarreal was in turn followed by the genre's first popular female accordionist, Priscila Camacho, of Priscila y sus Balas de Plata. Camacho, who lives and records her light, pop-influenced songs in Monterrey, has said that as a child she was inspired to learn the accordion after watching a performance by norteño accordion king Ramón Ayala. Ayala lives in San Antonio.

In this way, Texas and northern Mexico reclaimed their unity. Music ignored the border. ■

Since 1985, Sergio Martínez and his wife, Dolores, have performed as Música Maestro, an educational group that links Mexico's music to the country's history.

Translated from Spanish by David Theis.

By Stephen Fox

Observations on Monterrey

Above: Gran Plaza looking toward the Faro del Comercio, the Metropolitan Cathedral of Our Lady of Monterrey, and the Palacio Municipal.

Left: Three views of the Gran Plaza.

Street in Barrio Antiguo.

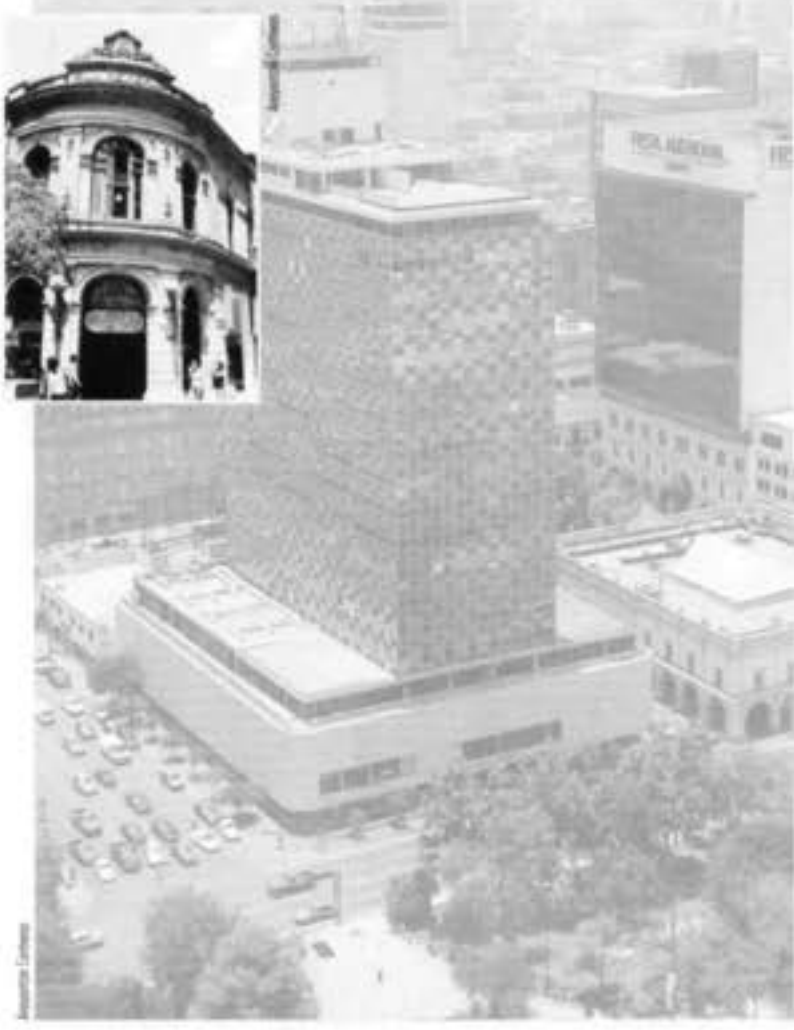
As a first-time architectural tourist, I had been warned that Monterrey was architecturally uninteresting. But I found it fascinating. Judgment depends on expectation. If Guanajuato or San Miguel de Allende is your idea of Mexico, then Monterrey will disappoint. With the exception of the small Barrio Antiguo, wedged between the Macroplaza, the Avenida Constitución expressway, and the Ojos de Santa Lucía, Monterrey lacks the narrow streets bordered by high-walled casas-patio that define traditional Mexican urban spaces. Even the westward extension of downtown, the Zona Centro, toward the Cerro del Obispado, initially laid out in the early nineteenth century, has wide, straight streets lined by buildings that differ in height, mass, and site coverage. Central Monterrey is not a U.S.-style city (as some have characterized it); its mixture of buildings and uses is typical of older Mexican city centers. But Monterrey is largely a 20th-century city, with diverse building types and varied urban spaces. It is not disappointing, but like Houston, it is not a city of consistent urban spaces or unified architecture.

THE MACROPLAZA

You see this lack of consistency even in the central city. Since the 1980s the Barrio Antiguo (historically called the Barrio de la Catedral) has been isolated from the Zona Centro to the west by the Gran Plaza, or Macroplaza, as it is popularly known. The Macroplaza is lined with assertive modern buildings of the mid-1980s that house cultural institutions and governmental agencies. The eight-block plaza terminates in front of the Palacio de Gobierno del Estado, the state capitol of Nuevo León, an imposing neoclassical building completed in 1905. Behind it rises the slender Art Déco tower of the Palacio Federal (1930). At the opposite end of the Macroplaza, at its southern foot, is the Palacio Municipal of 1973, Monterrey's city hall. The Palacio Municipal faces what had been the Plaza Zaragoza, Monterrey's original *plaza de armas* before it was stretched northward to become the Macroplaza.

The scale of the Macroplaza is not what I had expected. Because it is basically a seven-block extension of the one-block wide Plaza Zaragoza, it is less of a departure from the small scale of historic Monterrey than photographs suggest. Like most of the center of Monterrey, it shows evidence of intensive use.

In terms of design, the Macroplaza is low-key, especially in contrast to the flamboyant, gestural designs of the State Congressional Office Building, the regional headquarters of the INFONAVIT social housing agency, and the Municipal Theater (all three by Oscar Bulnes Valero and Benjamín Félix of Monterrey), the Central Public Library (by José Angel Camargo de Hijar of Monterrey), and the State Supreme Court Building (by Rodolfo Barragán of Monterrey), which line the run-up to the Esplanade of Heroes in front of the Palacio de Gobierno.



Clockwise from top left:

Gran Hotel Ancira (1912).

Antiguo Palacio Municipal (now Museo de Historia de Nuevo León, 1818, 1853, 1887).

Banco Mercantil (1901, Alfred Giles).

La Reinera (1901, Alfred Giles).

Condominio Acero Monterrey (1959, Ramón Lamadrid) alongside the Antiguo Palacio Municipal.

Edificio Monterrey (1960, Ricardo Guajardo and Armando Ravizé Rodríguez).

The Macroplaza's amiability contrasts with a more obviously designed offshoot from the mid-1990s: the Paseo de Santa Lucía by RTKL of Dallas. The paseo begins at the Plaza de 400 Años, one level below the street. This large sunken plaza incorporates the ojos, the springs of Santa Lucía, and is the monumental forecourt to the Museo de la Historia Mexicana (1996). Another work of Oscar Bulnes Valero, this time in collaboration with the veteran Mexico City architect Augusto H. Alvarez, the history museum is boldly scaled but less exaggerated in its composition than the public buildings of the 1980s. It also appears to have had the advantage of a much higher construction budget. The Paseo de Santa Lucía is pleasant, but its suburban timidity, historically themed picturesqueness, and general lack of pedestrians seem more characteristic of North American public spaces than Mexican ones.

THE ZONA CENTRO

Downtown in the Zona Centro, the street and block pattern dates from the 18th century, but the buildings are largely from the 20th. The Plaza Hidalgo, which abuts the 19th-century Antiguo Palacio Municipal (the old city hall, now the Nuevo León Historical Museum), is surrounded by multi-story buildings, many of them hotels, including Monterrey's most famous, the Gran Hotel Ancira (1912), a wishful transposition of the Parisian Belle Epoque to the skirts of the Sierra Madre.

Avenida Morelos, one block north of the Plaza Hidalgo, used to cross the Macroplaza block. Now the seven blocks of Morelos to the west of the Macroplaza are a pedestrian mall. Architectural counterparts of the Gran Hotel Ancira — the stone-built, classically detailed Banco Mercantil (1901) and La Reinera department store (1901), both designed by Alfred Giles of San Antonio — are the most venerable landmarks along the Morelos mall.

Next to La Reinera is a building that impressed me very much: the Edificio Monterrey (1960), a 14-story office tower by Ricardo Guajardo and the engineer Armando Ravizé Rodríguez. Like other Monterrey skyscrapers of the 1950s and '60s, the Edificio Monterrey has a small floorplate. It fits tightly on its site, a half block framed by two side streets that have been turned over to pedestrians. The ground floor is two stories high, with two more stories of flush-glazed lease spaces atop. An intermediate floor with a terrace is recessed, and the remaining ten floors rise in a concrete-framed tower, which contains clear plate-glass window walls set within bay-sized sunscreens on the front (south) face and blind east and west sides surfaced with orange-red Roman brick with raked joints. The building is precisely scaled. The ground floor feels monumental at street level, yet the building doesn't disrupt the fabric of the Avenida Morelos.

The Edificio Monterrey neatly sums up the city's modern architectural identity. The building is formally austere, constructionally specific, and meticulously detailed to serve the purposes for which it was built.

One other modern tower in the Zona Centro especially attracted my attention: what was originally the Edificio Financiera Nuevo León (1970). This nine-story building, located in a low-rise sector of the Zona Centro, is the work of the dean of Monterrey architects, Eduardo Padilla Martínez Negrete. Its north-facing glass curtain wall is set back behind a delicate exo-skeletal grid of reinforced concrete. Because the exoskeleton is so articulately proportioned, the tapered concrete columns and slender beams achieve a fine balance between tectonics and decoration. The exposed structure is restrained rather than melodramatic, and the problem of blind party walls was addressed with wit, flair, and precision. The contrast of the glass curtain wall and the blind end walls of glazed green brick contributes to the modernist tradition that I was beginning to interpret as emblematic of Monterrey.

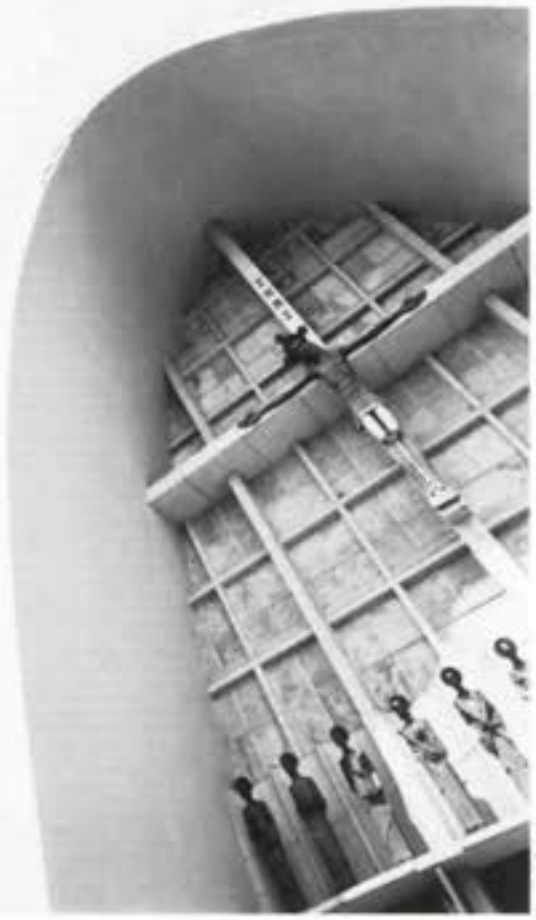
AUSTERITY AND RESTRAINT

Well to the west of the Zona Centro lies what was once Monterrey's most famous building, the Basílica de la Purísima of 1946, the first modern church building in Mexico. It was the first work of architecture in Monterrey to be published in the international architectural press.

The Mexico City architect Enrique de la Mora y Palomar designed La Purísima in collaboration with Armando Ravizé Rodríguez. The church's parabolic vaults are thick folded plates of reinforced concrete supported by a series of parabolic concrete arches. The free-standing, artfully tapered, stone-faced bell tower displays modernistic touches.

De la Mora's determined regionalism is striking, as is the joy he took in working with ordinary materials. The walls filling the concrete frame are made of rubble stone and evoke traditional masonry work. The pews were made from the roof beams of the church that previously occupied the site, grounding La Purísima's modernity in the history of the parish. The almost rustic ambiance of the interior is rigorous and austere, but leavened by such details as the golden onyx panels set in the concrete frame beneath the entry arch. The critical regionalist attitude implicit in the church reminded me of O'Neil Ford and Arch Swank's Little Chapel in the Woods (1939) in Denton, Texas.

De la Mora's work again reminded me of Ford at the campus of Monterrey's best-known private university, Monterrey Tec: the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey. The buildings that de la Mora designed (again with Armando Ravizé) were completed in 1947, and their virtues — their conscientious dedication to constructional and spatial economy, and their willingness not to be "interesting" — evoke Ford's early buildings at Trinity University in San Antonio.



Gymnasium, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (1965, Ricardo Guajardo).

Top and above:
Exterior and interior views of the Basílica de la Purísima (1946, Enrique de la Mora and Armando Ravizé Rodríguez).

At Monterrey Tec the four-story classroom buildings, called *aulas*, are simple slabs lined up in rows along a wide, tree-shaded promenade that frames distant views of Monterrey's natural *signum urbis*, Saddle Mountain, the M-peaked Cerro de la Silla. The south end of the promenade terminates alongside a classic example of Monterrey modernism, the university's gymnasium of 1965 by Ricardo Guajardo, who began Monterrey Tec's school of architecture. Tec's buildings, I thought, were even more characteristic of Monterrey than La Purísima. Unpretentious, solidly built, conservatively finished and detailed, with wide, stacked, open-air patios, they combined constructional integrity with spatial flexibility and generosity.

Tec's original architecture is disarmingly modest and straightforward, especially when contrasted with that of the Ciudad Universitaria, the National University of Mexico, built outside Mexico City between 1950 and 1952 as a showplace of Mexican modernity. (De la Mora, like most of the other important Mexico City architects, contributed to it.) Monterrey's entrepreneurial elite founded Tec; its sober, solid buildings reflect what they understood to be their mythic virtues.

SAN PEDRO GARZA GARCIA

Monterrey Tec is located on the south side of the Río Santa Catarina, an intermittently dry river lined with high-speed, limited-access roads that splits Monterrey into northern and southern halves. The Santa Catarina also divides the west end of Monterrey from its southwestern suburban neighbor, the separately incorporated township of San Pedro Garza García. Since the 1970s, San Pedro has been where almost everything of consequence has happened in metropolitan Monterrey. It is the middle-class capital of Monterrey and, as Juan Ignacio Barragán has demonstrated, it is a model for communities that Mexico's middle class longs to construct: governed by responsive public officials, with well-planned, well-maintained public infrastructure and very few residents who aren't affluent. On the surface, San Pedro can seem very North American. Drive your SUV to a restaurant and you could be in north Dallas, except that all the people are speaking Spanish.

Juan Ignacio Barragán has documented San Pedro's transformation from rural township to metropolitan suburb. The process began in 1945, when Alberto Santos platted its first elite neighborhood, the Colonia del Valle. In 1947, Santos built the first vehicular bridge over the Río Santa Catarina, linking his new subdivision with the west end of Monterrey, where such elite neighborhoods as the Colonia Obispado had been developed in the 1920s and '30s. The Colonia del Valle set the standard for later development in San Pedro, and by the end of the 1950s, the suburb's demographics began to attract country clubs and private schools from Monterrey proper.

Despite the oscillations of Mexico's economy between the 1970s and 1990s, San Pedro systematically displaced Monterrey as the center for corporate headquarters and luxury retail stores. Monterrey Tec's new graduate school of business, the EGADE, is nearing completion in Valle Oriente, a large, master-planned, mixed-use development near San Pedro's border with Monterrey, rather than adjacent to the Tec campus, which is surrounded by mixed urban neighborhoods.

ARCHITECTURE OF EMOTION

The EGADE is the work of Mexico's most internationally celebrated architecture firm, Legorreta Arquitectos of Mexico City. Since the early 1980s, Ricardo Legorreta has designed one minor and one major office building in San Pedro, two important institutional buildings in Monterrey, and several houses in San Pedro.

Legorreta's EGADE is dramatic: a spiral that encircles a stout tower. The building demonstrates Legorreta's skill at shaping architecture that, unlike the restrained, austere modernism of Monterrey, responds emotionally to its setting (in this case, a plain with the Sierra Madre as a backdrop). In a similar vein, Legorreta incorporated circular geometry in plan and a sweeping diagonal in section in the 1994 Biblioteca Magna of the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, Monterrey's major public university. And in a private office compound in San Pedro, diagonally sloped walls faced with yellow stucco gesture insistently toward the Sierra Madre.

Legorreta's most restrained public building in Monterrey is also the most easily accessible: MARCO, the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Monterrey (1991). Commissioned by Eugenio Garza Lagüera, who was then head of the Grupo Financiero Banconer and the Fomento Económico Mexicano, as well as chairman of the board of trustees of Monterrey Tec, the museum was built to contain a yet-to-be-assembled collection of modern Latin American art, as well as traveling exhibitions. The MARCO occupies an entire block front facing the Macroplaza, next to the Metropolitan Cathedral of Our Lady of Monterrey and across from the Palacio Municipal. It is contained on the outside, but complexly sculpted inside, with sectional surprises, unexpected switchbacks and twists in circulation, and a sequence of courtyards that brings daylight and views out into the galleries. Legorreta's exterior composition is powerful and directed. But MARCO's interior does not seem rigorously connected to its program. Instead, it seems indulgent — just what the stern formal sobriety of Monterrey-style modernism was meant to guard against.

ARCHITECTS: IN AND OUT OF TOWN

Such well-known Mexican architects as Legorreta and de la Mora were the exceptions in Monterrey, not the rule. Although one might expect the city's corporations and institutions to commission major buildings from Mexico's leading architects (which is to say, Mexico City's leading architects), this has not been the case. Most of Monterrey's public institutions and many of its corporate undertakings are the work of Monterrey architects.

Eduardo Padilla Martínez Negrete made his mark on Monterrey with large

Aerial view of Valle Oriente in San Pedro Garza García with the EGADE (2001, Legorreta Arquitectos) in lower right corner.

Center for Advanced Technology in Production, ITESM (1988, Oscar Bulnes Valero and Grupo 103 Diseño).

Entrance lobby of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (1991, Legorreta Arquitectos).

industrial complexes that he began to design for major corporate groups in the 1950s. In the 1980s, the flamboyant Oscar Bulnes Valero and his Grupo 103 de Diseño dominated institutional architecture. Bulnes's signature work is Tec's Center for Advanced Technology in Production of 1988, which sits (although "sits" is surely too static a verb) next to the Rectoría at the front of the main campus.

During the twentieth century, the out-of-town architects active in Monterrey were most likely to be Texans. Caudill Rowlett Scott designed the American School Foundation of Monterrey in San Pedro (1958). 3/D International was the architect of the Grupo Industrial ALFA's low-rise building in the Zona Centro (1981), the last major corporate office building constructed in the center of Monterrey. ALFA gave up the building during the economically turbulent '80s but kept the company's suburban headquarters in San Pedro, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill of Chicago. ALFA was not alone. In the '70s and '80s, many industrial groups built low-rise headquarters complexes in secure, park-like settings in San Pedro.

HOUSES IN THE SUBURBS

Domestic architecture provides many more opportunities for Monterrey architects than is the case in Houston. Rodrigo de la Peña, a graduate of the Architectural Association in London, designs houses that are purposefully Mexican and modern, in contrast to the highly visible preference in San Pedro for the sort of monster "traditional" houses being built in affluent Texan suburbs. De la Peña's houses are planar constructions of masonry walls, faced with white stucco and penetrated by large glass openings but configured around patios and walled off from the street, even when they are free-standing houses. A one-story house in an established neighborhood on Via Angélica, north of the Colonia del Valle, demonstrates Peña's ability to project a modernist identity that incorporates the street wall, entrance gate, and street-facing garage door.

The most singular domestic architecture produced in Monterrey in the last half of the 1990s has come from the former husband-and-wife team of Cecilia Rangel and James Mayeux. Cecilia Rangel is a native of Monterrey; James Mayeux is from the United States. The two met in the mid-'80s at the University of Texas at Austin, where both had returned to school as mature adults to study architecture. The house Rangel and Mayeux built for their extended family in Colonia Olinalá, on the side of the Sierra Madre Oriental overlooking San Pedro, demonstrates their distinctive approach: building lightly but articulately in the landscape. Their house rides above its steeply sloping site on thin steel columns. Decks link the street to the upper floor, a concrete slab on which a glass-walled, curved-roofed pavilion looks out over the Santa Catarina valley. Below this, and set at a right angle to it, is a second house, occupied by Rangel's daughter and her family. Wedged into the hillside and open to intensively planted natural terraces, the house feels light, spontaneous, and improvised. The upper deck seems to hover in space, while the bottom nestles into the mountain.

Armando V. Flores Salazar, who teaches at the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, has focused his research on the cultural identity of northeastern Mexico. Although he is the architect of the Palacio Municipal of San Pedro Garza García, Flores lives in the Colonia Obispado in Monterrey in a handsome, planar-fronted, flat-roofed, white stucco-faced modern house that he designed. He cleverly juxtaposed the void of a street-facing carport with the roofless void of a walled front patio to spatially enliven the house's planar composition. In the more

Valle Oriente, San Pedro Garza Garcia. The tallest building is the Torre Dataflux (2000, Agustin Landa).

American School, San Pedro (1958, Caudill Rowlett Scott).

Housing, Apodaca.

urbanized neighborhood that the Colonia Obispado became after its fall from grace in the 1960s, Flores Salazar's modern house stands out by virtue of its serenity and composure.

Eduardo Padilla Martínez Negrete designed and lives in a house in San Pedro called El Cielo (1988). Although free-standing, El Cielo's high stucco walls are built to the curb and lot lines. Inside this enclosure, the house is shaped in plan like an irregular cross, with open-air patios at the corners of the enclosure. The patios differ in size and character. The focus of the house is a split-level living room beneath a skylight; the room's low windows offer views of the most serene patio on one side, and the narrowest and least vegetated patio on another. El Cielo's walls, patios, and openness not to the landscape but to the sky bespeak the engagement of Monterrey's most thoughtful architects with the concept of cultural identity in the 1970s and '80s. Although a modern house, El Cielo's introversion and purposeful rusticity evoke rural Jalisco, where Eduardo Padillo grew up. Its iconography is personal: a relief over the front door celebrates don Eduardo's grandchildren.

Ricardo Padilla, Eduardo Padilla's son and occasional collaborator, seriously pursued questions of cultural identity in the 1990s. Near his father's house, Padilla designed a house for one of his brothers. This house is modern yet also rustic, although in this case street walls are dispensed with and the house separates the rear garden from the narrow, quiet street. Here again, not so much in the design of the house as in the determinedly informal design of outdoor space, one senses a strong parallel to O'Neil Ford, especially Ford's family's house, Willow Way, in San Antonio.

THE NORTHERN SUBURBS

Ricardo Padilla continues to receive the kinds of commissions on which his father's practice was built: large industrial complexes located on expansive tracts in Apodaca, San Nicolás de los Garza, and other industrial suburban cities that ring Monterrey to the north. These articulately organized, concisely designed complexes tend to be big in scale and precise in their spatial layout — unlike the working-class communities that surround them.

State-subsidized residential neighborhoods, featuring identical one-story, single-family housing units about the size of mobile homes, ride the rolling terrain of Apodaca. These are built amidst the more typical landscape of popular construction and the fluid mixture of uses that give Apodaca and San Nicolás their sprawling intensity. One comes to realize that this dense, low-rise landscape of houses and small-scale commercial establishments, interspersed with gated industrial enclaves, is much more characteristic of the suburbs of metropolitan Monterrey than the affluent sprawl of San Pedro.

SMOKESTACKS AND SKYSCRAPERS

Art exhibition is connected to the two most notable works of industrial archeology and historic preservation in Monterrey: the transformation of historic industrial buildings into museums. The Cervecería Cuauhtémoc (1898), a brick-faced Victorian Romanesque-style brewery, was designed by the St. Louis architect Ernest C. Janssen and constructed by the Monterrey builder José María Siller. The brewery was the mother industry of Monterrey. In 1909, it prompted the founding of the Vidriera Monterrey, a glass company that produced beer bottles and eventually became Vitro SA. Likewise, in 1936 the brewery spawned Empaques de Cartón Titán, which produced cardboard boxes for the brewery and eventually became the Grupo Industrial ALFA. Since 1978, the brewery has housed the Museo de Monterrery, the city's first major art museum.

The Fundidora de Fierro y Acero de Monterrey, the first steel foundry in Latin America, began operation in 1903 and did not cease production until 1995. In 1986 the state of Nuevo León and the federal Department of Urban Development and Ecology formed a public-private partnership to transform the bankrupt foundry into an arts, trade, and convention center called the Parque Fundidora.

The site is extraordinary: 285 acres in the center of the city, three kilometers east of the Zona Centro. To date, the brewery's historic metal and brick buildings have been reused as the Centro de las Artes de Nuevo León, with sections devoted to painting and sculpture, photography, film, and the Museo de la Industria y Tecnología.

A century after the beginnings of Cervecería Cuauhtémoc and the Fundidora, skyscrapers, not smokestacks, are the prime architectural symbol of Monterrey's entrepreneurial ambitions. The two tallest have been built in San Pedro by International Investments, the consortium that developed Valle Oriente: Jorge Loyzaga's 29-story Torre Comercial América (1995) and Agustín Landa's 43-story Torre Dataflux (2000). Neither building possesses the tectonic rigor of the Zona Centro's much shorter skyscrapers of the '50s and '60s. But the Torre Dataflux stands out nonetheless. Its composition of white concrete piers that slope inward near the top to frame projecting bays of dark-glazed office and apartment floors is so sculptural that the Torre Dataflux looks like it's a hundred stories tall.

IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY

From the winding mountain roads of Olinalá to the narrow gridded streets of the Barrio Antiguo, from Ricardo Legorreta to Alfred Giles, Monterrey presents a range of landscapes and architectural works that are varied, stimulating, and provocative. Lacking the glamour, sophistication, and star-making power of Mexico City, or Guadalajara's sense of cultural superiority, Monterrey continues to search for an identity. Perhaps it is this sense of questioning, doubt, even inferiority, as much as proximity, that allies Monterrey to the cities of Texas. Like Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and even San Antonio, Monterrey combines

Rangel-Mayeux House, Colonia Olinalá, San Pedro Garza García (Rangel-Mayeux Arquitectos).

House in Colonia Obispado (Armando V. Flores Salazar).

Galvak industrial complex, Apodaca (Ricardo Padilla).

entrepreneurial energy and cultural ambition with an uncertain architectural course, veering between excessive regard for external opinions and external reputations and a defensive parochialism.

The efforts of the 1980s and '90s to retrieve and rehabilitate the old city's major historical and industrial landmarks, and to construct institutions of high culture that signify that Monterrey's elite is as serious about art as it is about business, suggest a broader sense of civic awareness and responsibility. These efforts were reinforced by the prodigious activities of Juan Ignacio Barragán and his associates at the Urbis Internacional research center, as well as Armando Flores Salazar, Ricardo Padilla, and others at the Universidad Autonóma de Nuevo León, who documented the history of Monterrey's architecture and urban development. Now debates about development, historic preservation, and new architecture can be more securely anchored in a historical context.

Monterrey's architecture of the 1990s lacks the precision of its best architecture of the 1950s and '60s. But it does not lack a desire to explore new approaches or reformulate and refine existing positions. Monterrey is fascinating for the same reasons as its Texan counterparts: the enormous potential it possesses and the possibility that this potential may yet yield works of genius. ■

Stephen Fox is a fellow of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas.

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Metropolitan Monterrey.

Monterrey Modernism

At first, the movement was all business

By Juan M. Casas

Insets: Exterior and interior of El Auto Universal Garage.

Background: Calle Zaragoza, circa 1921, in a photograph by Alberto Flores Varela.

Modern architecture entered Monterrey through the back door. The city's first modernist buildings were utilitarian, designed for practical uses in industry and trade. Often, those structures employed a humble but cutting-edge new material: reinforced concrete.

THE SAN LUISITO BRIDGE

At the beginning of the 20th century, Alfred Giles, a British architect who settled in San Antonio, was well known in Monterrey. He had designed the Banco Mercantil de Monterrey (1901) and La Reinera (1901), one of the most prominent commercial buildings downtown. And though the San Luisito Bridge was essentially an engineering project, Giles was hired to design it.

The bridge would span the Río Santa Catarina, connecting Monterrey to San Luisito, a growing neighborhood to the south. Earlier wooden bridges hadn't lasted long: The previous one, built in 1904, burned in 1908. But Giles' bridge would be constructed of fireproof reinforced concrete.

He designed a simple but attractive three-section covered bridge. The central section was tall enough to allow the passage of people, animals, wagons, and perhaps even a streetcar. The two shorter flanking sections housed retail shops.

Giles knew the basics of building with concrete, but to do the engineering calculations, he sought the help of J.F. Woodyard, a St. Louis engineer. (Woodyard later received so many job offers in Monterrey that he settled there permanently and maintained a prolific practice well into the 1940s.)

The bridge was dedicated in 1909, and only a few months later it withstood a flood that killed more than 5,000 people and washed away 40 city blocks. In fact, the bridge survived as a dense marketplace until 1955, when the Río Santa Catarina was straightened, and four car-and-truck bridges were built. Deemed antiquated, the San Luisito Bridge was demolished.

SALÓN VARIEDADES

In Monterrey, Modernism often arrived literally on top of older architecture. The city's oldest movie house opened in 1904; it shared a masonry building with El Progreso cantina. The cantina and theater were so successful that the owners, brothers Adolfo and Antonio Rodríguez, added a second floor to the bulding in 1910.

As the *Monterrey News* reported in September of that year, the addition was constructed of "that new material, that famed acquisition of modern architecture, reinforced concrete, which amazed both laymen and experts alike with its marvelous properties of strength."

The Variedades movie house survived until 1951, when the entire side of its street, the Calle Padre Mier, was demolished in a street-widening project.

CASA HOLCK

Casa Holck, a hardware store, was founded in the second half of the 19th century, and in 1910, engineers J.F. Woodyard & Lee designed a new Casa Holck shop and warehouse. Woodyard & Lee's aesthetic composition seems conservative compared to U.S. utilitarian buildings of the time, but even so, Casa Holck stood out. Woodyard didn't exploit all the possibilities reinforced concrete offered; for instance, he proved quite moderate in the openings used for shop windows on Matamoros Street. But those windows are wider than the ones traditionally found in masonry construction, and in that way, they foreshadow Woodyard's later, bolder (but not too drastic) explorations — the large windows of reinforced-concrete structures such as the Langstroth Building (1922) or El Auto Universal Garage (1924). The tiny window openings in the large warehouse behind the shop appear antiquated, though perhaps the mere necessity of storing hardware didn't require much more light.

Put into service in 1911, the building has survived and currently provides parking for a department store. Despite the conversion, its utilitarian architecture remains impressive.

EL AUTO UNIVERSAL GARAGE

Cars changed Monterrey's infrastructure. The first garages — ancestors of contemporary car dealerships — emerged in 1909 and 1910. At first, car-related buildings were adapted from pre-existing structures, but as cars gained in popularity, buildings were designed and built specifically for automotive services.

This page, left to right:
Side view of the San Luisito Bridge (1909, Alfred Giles).
Entry view of the San Luisito Bridge.
Palacio Federal (FyUSA, 1930) under construction.
Edificio Chapa (Guillermo González Mendoza, 1946).
Condominio Acero (Ramón Lamadrid, 1959).

J.F. Woodyard's El Auto Universal Garage dates from this pioneering period. El Auto Universal (also known as "The Ford Building") was not the first salesroom and maintenance garage in Monterrey, but it is undoubtedly the most architecturally notable; it is the first eloquent example of modern architecture in Monterrey. The first floor is completely transparent, allowing customers to see the cars for sale. That transparency, and the horizontal bands on the building's façade — both hallmarks of modernism — lighten the massive structure, which could easily have appeared too heavy.

THE PALACIO FEDERAL

Over the first 30 years of the 20th century, the United States heavily influenced Monterrey's modern architecture — not only through the U.S. engineers and architects who'd come to the city since the end of the 19th century, but also through the many Mexicans who studied architecture and engineering at U.S. schools such as the Illinois Institute of Technology, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Texas A&M.

Mexico City's influence on Monterrey was almost invisible until 1930, when it came on the scene strongly. The Palacio Federal, one of the political triumphs of Governor Aarón Sáenz, was designed and built by the Mexico City-based company Fomento y Urbanización S.A. (FyUSA), and was inaugurated with great pomp and circumstance. It was the first tall building in the city; it demonstrated structural possibilities for steel combined with reinforced concrete, and it introduced to the city a new architectural language, Art Déco.

The Palacio Federal's ornamentation, although austere, shows the culture and iconography of the nation's central region. The friezes contain serpentine Nahuatl elements; the tile work is Talavera-style; and heads of Quetzalcoatl adorn the steps on the east and west facades.

The Palacio Federal at first housed all Monterrey's federal offices, as well as headquarters for the postal and telegraph administration. But the historic building is now extremely underused. Of its ten floors, only two are occupied — used only by the postal and telegraph service.

THE EDIFICIO CHAPA

Around 1946, Guillermo González Mendoza, a self-taught architect born in Monterrey, designed the Edificio Chapa, a modernist milestone. As in a high-budget film, many of the well-known personalities in the small world of Monterrey building and architecture participated in the building's design and construction — among them, architect Juan R. Múzquiz and his partner, engineer J. F. de la Vega, and engineer Antonino Sava.

The Edificio Chapa was the first building in Monterrey to introduce modern architectural elements that would be used widely in the 1950s. Although not designed with a completely open floor plan, at least half of the ground floor of the Edificio Chapa formed an outdoor lobby. The shaft of the building, supported by round, pile-like columns, features a special window pattern. A 1997 remodeling eliminated the building's outdoor lobby and replaced it with an architecturally incompatible restaurant.

The Chapa building's architectural language bears more than a casual resemblance to Oscar Niemeyer's Ministry of Education and Health Building in Rio de Janeiro, which was completed in 1943. That modern language arrived late in Monterrey. But despite the Edificio Chapa's potential influence, the building ended up being almost alone in its class. Monterrey's architecture students looked not to their own city, but to Europe.

THE CONDOMINIO ACERO

In the '50s, Monterrey's culture of development encouraged razing buildings to make way for government-supported utopias. Those utopias failed, of course — and in fact laid the groundwork for the urban decline we see today.

Nonetheless, the private sector provided interesting modern architectural designs, the most significant of which were the "condominium" buildings made possible by the Condominium Property Act, which allowed a building to be subdivided into parts with different owners. The act was enacted in 1955, and in the next six years it made possible the construction of Monterrey's only five skyscrapers of the last great period of the modern movement: the Condominio Acero (1959); the Edificio Monterrey (1960); the Condominio Monterrey (1960); the Edificio PH (1961) and the Condominio Del Norte (1961).

Ramón Lamadrid graduated in 1954 from the School of Architecture at Monterrey Tec, and soon afterward proposed, designed, and oversaw the construction of what was originally called the Edificio Banco Popular. Renamed the Condominio Acero Monterrey a few months after its opening in 1959, the building's innovative design recalls Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Lever House.

The Condominio Acero ("Steel Condominium") was built using materials that were standard for modern commercial architecture at that time: aluminum, marble, Siporex dividing walls, and stainless steel and red porcelain-enameled insulated steel panels fabricated in Dallas and Youngstown, Ohio, for the exterior curtain wall. Although the structural composition of the building was typical of 1950s modern architecture, Lamadrid found local justification for his design, explaining that the lower volume of the condominium was scaled and proportioned to respect the predominantly two-story surroundings of Plaza Zaragoza. Except for the recent elimination of the mezzanine terrace, the Condominio Acero remains in admirable condition. ■

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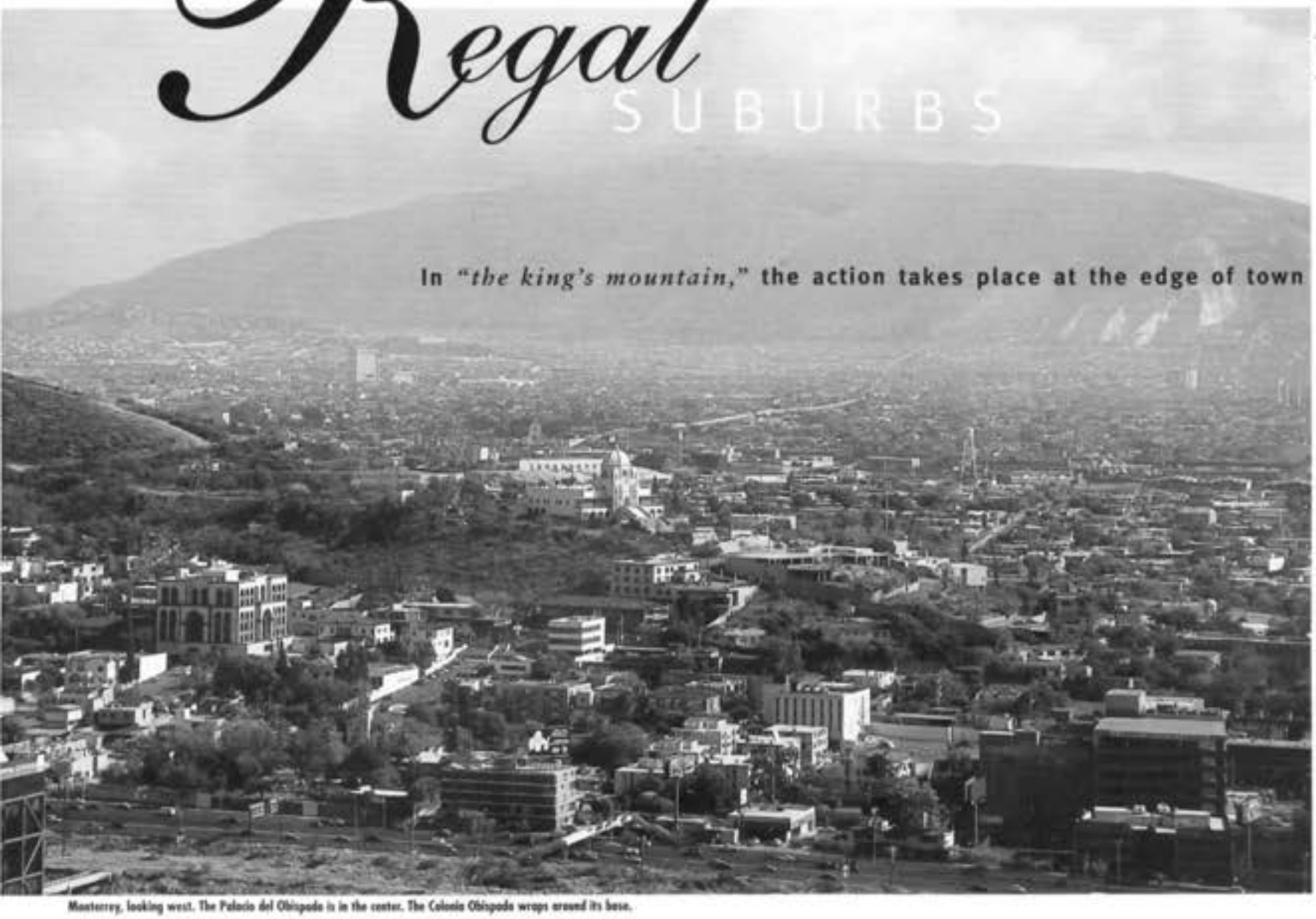
Translated from Spanish by Kirk Anderson.

Regal SUBURBS



Monterrey, looking west. The Palacio del Obispado is in the center. The Colonia Obispado wraps around its base.

TRADITIONALLY, cities of Spanish origin were characterized by strong urban centers. Office buildings sat side by side with residential buildings, which were often several stories high. That model is still visible in many Latin American cities (including Mexico City, Bogota, Caracas, Buenos Aires, and Lima), but it has been losing strength. Latin American cities are growing through their residential suburbs — which means that they look like Monterrey.

Visitors to Monterrey scarcely recognize the city's Hispanic heritage. It looks like a North American city: Wide streets bearing high-speed traffic connect downtown to residential suburbs. But in fact, Monterrey's suburbs have existed longer than most North American cities.

CENTRALITY AND SUBURBS

In 1573, King Felipe II of Spain ordered that all the cities in his dominion plan themselves on an orderly grid. Monterrey was founded 23 years later as a metropolitan city — that is, a seat of regional government and religious administration — but for nearly 200 years, despite the plans, the city refused to develop a proper urban core. The area's economy was based on farming and ranching (at least 25 agricultural haciendas, or ranches, existed in the current metropolitan zone), and farming does not encourage urbanism. Other cities coalesced around their major industries. Mining drew workers to Guanajuato and Zacatecas. Commercial, religious, and regional military economies concentrated people in Puebla, Morelia, and Guadalajara. But in Monterrey, to the consternation of the city's authorities, the great majority of the population preferred to live on haciendas on the periphery of town. Authorities repeatedly directed property owners to build houses in the city, and in 1660 they even threatened to fine those who did not reside in the urban zone; the ordinance was invoked on various occasions.

It wasn't until the 19th century, when Monterrey's economic base changed, that the city assumed an urban form. In 1783, when the Diocese of Monterrey was established, the city became a religious center. And in 1848, when an international border was established with the United States, Monterrey became the commercial and military center of northeastern Mexico.

If at any time Monterrey grew in the manner of Spanish urban centers, it was between 1790 and 1890, when a well-aligned grid system with a series of central plazas was designed. In 1865, when Monterrey had 15,000 inhabitants, a plan for grid-based growth encompassed approximately 700 hectares (1,680 acres), housing a population of 150,000 or more. But three revolutionary innovations

By Juan Ignacio Barragán Villarreal

For left: The Colonia Bella Vista, Monterrey's first suburban residential colonia, housed the brewery's managerial and technical staff.

Second from left: Colonia El Mirador pioneered the use of cement.

Third and fourth from left: From 1935 to 1965, Monterrey's social elite built grand houses in the Colonia Obispado.

doomed that plan: railroads, large industries, and residential suburbs.

In 1883, railroad tracks began to cross the city with no respect for its street grid, and establishments began to locate themselves in relation to rail lines — and outside the limits of the 1865 grid. The breakdown accelerated in the 1890s when large factory precincts appeared outside the historic grid. The Cerveceria Cuauhtémoc, Monterrey's first brewery, was built to the north of the historic core in 1890; then the American Smelting Company, also to the north in 1891, then Foundry Number 2 to the east at Peñoles in 1892; then, also to the east, the Monterrey Iron and Steel Foundry of 1901; and finally the Vidriera Monterrey, the glassworks, to the north in 1909. Each of these industries built large, walled enclaves that blocked the street grid of 1865. The enclaves forced new avenues to branch off the grid, generating new axes of urban growth.

THE FIRST RESIDENTIAL COLONIAS

Several factories began to develop housing for their workers either near or within their installations — and therefore outside the grid. The American Smelting Company and Monterrey Foundry built inside their industrial enclaves, and other enterprises promoted residential subdivisions (*colonias*) beside their plants. Monterrey's suburban dispersion had begun.

In 1901 the Cerveceria Cuauhtémoc established the first suburban residential colonia to house its technical and managerial staff. The Colonia Bella Vista, just north of the brewery, was developed by a U.S. entrepreneur, Colonel Joseph Robinson, but its success was hampered by the economic crisis the country suffered between 1910 and 1920, the decade of the Mexican Revolution. Nevertheless, some English-style chalets (the Mexican term for free-standing single-family houses with their own gardens) were constructed in Bella Vista and still survive.

With the return of political stability and economic growth came Colonia El Mirador, Monterrey's first successful suburban subdivision, and the first modern subdivision in Mexico. Curiously, this neighborhood was located inside the area of the 1865 grid, in a tract west of the central core.

The 1865 plan had not included the tract because it contained El Mirador, a grand country house constructed by General Mariano Arista and later enlarged by an important businessman, Gregorio Zambrano. In 1920, Zambrano's grandson, Lorenzo Zambrano Gutiérrez, built the Cemento Monterrey factory, now part of today's Grupo CEMEX. Around 1925, when Zambrano developed his family's Mirador property, he naturally used his company's products. Colonia El Mirador is noteworthy for its concrete streets and sidewalks. Cemento Monterrey made sure that the innovation caught on. Its magazine, *Cemento*, used images of El Mirador to promote concrete.

Colonia El Mirador wasn't, strictly speaking, a suburb, even though it possessed many suburban characteristics, such as relatively large house sites, wooded areas, and concrete streets intended for intensive automobile use. The predominant architectural styles were Andalusian and Californian, though other styles were also built. Today a movement exists to defend the historic heritage of El Mirador, which is seriously affected by conversion of houses to offices and businesses.

After El Mirador, other residential colonias, such as the Colonia María Luisa and the Colonia Obispado, developed west of the city. The installation and expansion of Monterrey's potable water infrastructure, begun around 1909, freed developers from having to situate new neighborhoods near traditional sources of water.

The Colonia María Luisa was developed at the end of the 1920s near the Cerro del Obispado (Obispado Hill), at what seemed to be the western limit of Monterrey's urban expansion. At the foot of the hill, the traditional right-angled block and street grid could not be applied, so the next subdivision, the Colonia Obispado, broke drastically with the scheme and was laid out around the base of the hill, with streets aligned along the contour lines.

The hill had an aristocratic character. Since 1790 it had been occupied by the Bishop's Summer Palace (now the Museo Regional El Obispado). The property was expropriated by the federal government in 1859, and was finally sold to private citizens around 1922. In 1925, when the hill's lower reaches were developed as the Colonia Obispado, it became Monterrey's first true suburb. The buyers were the city's most prominent business leaders, along with the managers of foreign firms; they built elegant European-style residences whose terraces commanded views of Monterrey from on high. To one side of the hill were Monterrey's first golf club, the Monterrey Country Club, and a sports club, El Club Deportivo Obispado, which contained tennis courts, swimming pools, and polo grounds.

From 1935 to 1965, the Colonia Obispado was the headquarters of Monterrey's social elite. It was filled with large gardens and grand houses containing more than 1,000 square meters — 10,000 square feet — of living space. The earliest architecture was based on historic European styles, but residents soon began to adopt more modern forms, mostly inspired by conservative models from the United States.

Unfortunately, the Colonia Obispado began to decline after the private clubs moved away. The Monterrey Country Club left in 1936; Club Hípico in 1940; and Club Deportivo Obispado in 1960. The clubs' land was redeveloped, but upscale residents followed the clubs to new neighborhoods.

The colonia also came to be surrounded by middle-income developments,

Three views of San Pedro Garza García: *Casa with the West-style house in Colonia del Valle; Calzada del Valle;* and an HEB store.

such as the Colonias Vista Hermosa, Mitras, and Lomas de Chepe Vera, which generated traffic. The final blow to the neighborhood came as its original inhabitants aged and began to move to smaller houses. Young families could not afford to buy the large residences, which were slowly transformed into schools, offices, and commercial buildings. Today the Colonia Obispado has lost much of its beauty, and its former prestige has completely disappeared. Its torch has been passed to a suburb outside Monterrey's city limits.

THE COLONIA DEL VALLE

In 1946, Alberto, Manuel and Ignacio Santos established the Colonia del Valle some five kilometers south of Monterrey's city limits. The valley lay near the San Pedro Garza García municipality, and was separated from Monterrey by the Loma Larga, a large hill, and the Río Santa Catarina, which is dry almost all year long. The valley boasted certain natural advantages: flat terrain; fertile soil, which was then intensively cultivated with vegetables and fruits; splendid views of the Sierra Madre Oriental to the south and the Cerro de las Mitras to the northwest; and a climate slightly cooler than Monterrey's. Two summer resort colonias already existed in the area.

The Colonia del Valle's extraordinary success transformed the Mexican system of urban residential development, and San Pedro is held up as a model municipality, the most advanced in Mexico. Its successes rest on several foundations. First is the size of the Colonia del Valle: Its 400 hectares (approximately 960 acres) permitted orderly development on a scale never before attempted in Mexico, making it the 1940s equivalent of a planned community. The developers contributed land and money for the construction of two large private schools and an imposing parish church. For years they subsidized the owner of El Centrito, del Valle's specially designed business district, and for 25 years they financed and administered all public services.

The developers incrementally transferred their administrative authority to the residents of the Colonia del Valle by creating the equivalent of a Texas-style municipal utility district, the first of its kind in Mexico. The new administrative structure led to a high level of citizen participation in a country whose political institutions were typically characterized by paternalism.

In terms of urban design, the Colonia del Valle introduced a modern, designed landscape marked by two beautiful avenues 70 meters wide and divided by landscaped medians 30 meters wide. Del Valle also took advantage of existing, tree-lined irrigation ditches so that from the start the neighborhood was endowed with large trees. To stimulate the market, the developers built a number of luxurious residences that they sold at low prices. And in a country where mortgage loans were still new, they established modern financing mechanisms for buying lots and building houses. Simultaneously, the Club Campestre, one of the most prestigious social clubs in Mexico, was established to one side of del Valle in 1954.

The development of the Colonia del Valle took approximately 25 years. By 1960 other colonias, such as Fuentes del Valle, El Rosario, Mira Sierra, San Jerónimo, San Patricio, Veredalta, Valle de San Angel, and San Agustín, were added nearby. This process culminated in the 1990s with the development of Valle Oriente, where today the most important office and corporate buildings in northern Mexico are gathered along with an important commercial and hotel district.

As a unit, the suburbs around the Colonia del Valle make up the better part of San Pedro Garza García, which has the highest living standard and highest per-capita incomes in Mexico. San Pedro Garza García is known for its innovations. It is the place where, in 1963, a mayor from an opposition party first took office, and where, in 1966, the first woman mayor in northern Mexico took power. It was also the first city to have a master plan for drainage that brought potable water, drainage, and electricity to 100 percent of the city's houses.

Considered a pioneer in citizen participation in decision making, San Pedro Garza García also achieved consistent and high standards of urban development and modern environmental control as well as an efficient tax collection system. It has the highest number of police per thousand inhabitants in Mexico, and one of the lowest urban-zone crime rates in the Americas. As if that were not enough, more than 70 percent of the high-quality educational institutions in the metropolitan area of Monterrey are located on its territory. Its autonomy is such that, according to the city's transportation agency, more than 50 percent of San Pedro Garza García's residents go to Monterrey only when they cross it en route to the airport. San Pedro has not escaped problems common to all urban areas. It suffers from traffic, noise, confrontations between environmentalists and developers, and the destruction of historically significant buildings. But the municipality confronts these problems in a much more civilized manner than do cities in the rest of Mexico.

CUMBRES AND CONTRY

The majority of the upper-income inhabitants of metropolitan Monterrey are concentrated around the Colonia del Valle, but it is not the only upper-income suburban area in the city. The Colonia Mitras was established in 1948, and the Colonia Cumbres was added in 1957; the Colonia Contry arrived in 1958. These two suburbs began with 250 and 300 hectares respectively (600 and 720 acres) and grew in ways similar to the colonias around them.

The Colonias Contry and Cumbres certainly offer advantages to their upper-income inhabitants, having been developed on a scale sufficient to offer order and space for recreation, sports and services. Contry and Cumbres are far superior to the hundreds of small neighborhoods of less than ten hectares that developed by aggregation, linking themselves haphazardly to the historic center. But Contry and Cubres lack the integrated development, quality of life, and functional autonomy of San Pedro.

For various reasons, Cumbres and Contry never had the impact of del Valle. Neither was conceived with the integrated vision of the Colonia del Valle, and neither achieved del Valle's relative autonomy or distinct lifestyle. Even though each was developed at a distance from the center of Monterrey, both are inside the city limits, No physical barriers separate them from the rest of the city and the rapid urbanization and growth it experienced in the second half of the twentieth century. And inside Monterrey, they lack the political clout exerted by heavily populated working-class neighborhoods and the historic center. Cumbres and Contry never had sufficient weight to transform Monterrey.

THE NEW SUBURBS OF MONTERREY

New developments in metropolitan Monterrey emulate Colonia del Valle. These suburban zones on the metropolitan perimeter offer an ordered development scheme with a mixture of land uses and an integrated master plan. To the south of the city, beyond the Colonia Contry, a new urban district known as El Huajuco is contemplated. This will contain several large developments covering between 50 and 500 hectares, for a total of 1,500 hectares (3,600 acres).

A group of large landowners are jointly developing the area as a planned community. Despite the difficulties of managing such a large development when potential competitors are involved, El Huajuco could become Monterrey's new residential suburb par excellence, improving on previous models by preserving wooded areas.

The other large-scale project, Valle Poniente (Valley West), is located to the west of the city. Valle Poniente covers a developable area of 700 hectares (1,680 acres), and the land is controlled by only three competing property owners.

These projects are still in the planning stages, but they represent new versions of a distinctly Monterrey style of development. And they reinforce Monterrey's reputation as a city planned in the image of a North American suburban metropolis. ■

Juan Ignacio Barragán Villarreal is a planner for the state of Nuevo León, an architect, historian and the founder of Urbis Internacional.

Translated from Spanish by David Theis.

The American *Ciudad*

Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. Big City *by Mike Davis. Verso Books, 2000. 174 pp., $19.*

Reviewed by Bruce Webb

There's nothing particularly magical about the urbanism Mike Davis writes about in this prickly exploration of how Latinos are transforming American cities. Rather, this is the work of a street-smart demographer, high on statistical evidence that shows, among other things, that Spanish surnames have increased five times faster than the general population; that Hispanics now outnumber non-Hispanic whites in Los Angeles, Houston and San Antonio; and that over the next 50 years they will account for two-thirds of the country's population growth. Whatever magic there is comes from Davis' ability to wade into heaps of demographic data and come out with his sensibilities inspired and ready to spin statistical bits into vivid and entirely compelling pictures of the urban melting pot at the point of Latino saturation.

Hispanics are a budding political force. Davis reports that their share of the vote rose an amazing 16 percent in recent years while overall voter participation in the United States continued to decline. But as a group they lag behind the general population (and other minorities) in terms of respect, entitlements, and getting a piece of the good life. Davis describes a pattern of income and educational inequalities as well as straight-out discrimination that is sadly reminiscent of the treatment afforded immigrants in the 19th century. But he argues convincingly that the historical analogy isn't adequate for dealing with what is actually taking place: in scale and character, and in the context of an intensely globalized economy, the impact of Latinization on America's cities and culture is unprecedented and calls for new conceptual explanations and new narratives. Davis' strategy is to zone in on situations where hidden realities of this burgeoning crossover culture can be uncovered and revealed through his unique brand of broad-band research, facile interpretations and soaring speculation. The result is a protean, almost manic collection of 15 diverse, stand-alone essays, each one chipping into a different aspect of the subject.

Little can be taken for granted. In his second chapter, Davis tackles the semantic issue of defining (and hence naming) the subject population; the exposition reveals the shifting biases in the U.S. attitudes toward immigrants from Latin American countries. Davis points to vacillations at the U.S. Census Bureau over the question of whether Mexicans were a race, concluding yes in 1930 and no in 1940. "Hispanic," which became the official collective for 12 different national identities during the Nixon administration, is preferred in South Florida, while Texas and California favor "Latino." (Both are 19th-century European labels.) The implied homogeneity of either name is deceptive, since the Latino population itself is complex, as Davis reminds us: U.S. cities contain the most diverse blendings of Latin American cultures in the entire hemisphere. As each generation evolves, it establishes its own unique cross-cultural identity. As Román de la Campa writes in his superb foreword, "All Latinos in the United States can be said to share some characteristics besides the imposed need to identify ourselves with names we may not like or agree with like Hispanic, Latino, or hyphenated American." What those characteristics are can be difficult to pin down, an enigma that drives the heterotopic, crossover aesthetic of Latino expatriate art and literature.

Davis is a committed Angeleno, and many of his observations reflect on Southern California, where a population of 5 million Latinos in L.A./Orange County has created a new urban ecology, an ethnic city-within-a-city equaling in size its Anglo counterpart. As a ferocious critic of urban America, Davis views this Latino hegemony as just what the doctor ordered. In a chapter called "Tropicalizing Cold Urban Spaces," he touts the Latino "genius for transforming dead urban spaces into convivial social settings" and literally colorizing drab neighborhoods and resurrecting moribund urban districts with "micro-entrepreneurship." But these efforts are often applauded in theory and persecuted in practice: "The glorious sorbet palette of Mexican and Caribbean house paint — verde limón, rosa mexicano, azul añil, morado — is perceived as sheer visual terrorism by non-Hispanic homeowners." And a labyrinth of laws, conventional zoning, and building codes along with city funding programs favoring middle-class professional gentrification have frustrated attempts to build vibrant, ethnic inner-city neighborhoods. Taking a lesson from the community advocacy planners of the 1970s, Davis argues that mainstream planning lags far behind grassroots imagination, and the Latino metropolis needs design strategies of its own, a combination, perhaps, of aggressive pragmatism and an elaboration of its own audacious cultural hegemony.

There are enough examples of these redemptive efforts to spur the imagination about counter-strategies for reurbanizing American cities, but not enough to justify the statement that "all of Latin America is now a dynamo turning the lights back on in the dead spaces of North American cities."

Davis is at his best mapping the elusive contours of the invisible, transnational metropolis where social, political, and economic life is situated with one foot in the U.S. and the other in villages in Latin America or the Caribbean. Separated by thousands of miles, immigrant Latinos stay connected; living and working in American cities, they support the economic life and participate in the social and even political lives of their hometowns. (Davis cites the case of Houston's Randalls grocery chain, which recruited more than 1,000 workers from closely related villages in Guatemala who were installed in a "cluster of faux Georgian low-rise apartment houses.... amid the freeways and strip malls.") For some the transmigration circuit itself, rather than any particular place, constitutes the principle setting for their lives.

Nothing portrays these transnational complexities as vividly as La Frontera, the 2,000-mile-long zone of daily cultural and economic exchange. It's a zone of contrasting faces (Davis calls it the "lusty bastard offspring of its two parents") animated by daily crossover exchanges among its estimated 8 million inhabitants. The borderline itself is remarkably ineffectual. Formidably barricaded and militarized, it nonetheless is deliberately porous, "a dam creating a reservoir of labor-power on the Mexican side that can be tapped on demand via the secret aqueduct of smugglers [bringing workers to]

the farms of south Texas, the hotels of Las Vegas, and the sweatshops of Los Angeles." Traffic moves in two directions. Asian companies have been encouraged to set up shop in Tijuana while their managers live in San Diego. At the border crossing, the managers pass hordes of green-card carrying Mexicans traveling to the U.S. to perform menial service jobs.

Magical Urbanism is tinged with more than a little working-class romanticism. Against evidence of massive inequalities Davis offers stories of small, grassroots successes, some of them ingenious, some even touching. Latinos lack direct access to the power points of government or industry, but Davis sees their power growing through the labor unions, an old warhorse I haven't seen cast in a redemptive role for a long while. He may be right; the labor union and the Latino struggle may be made for one another. But the real strength of this book is not so abstract or polemical. Rather it's in engendering some of the same appreciation voiced by a prescient Walt Whitman, who in 1883 observed, "As to the Spanish stock of our Southwest, it is certain to me that we do not begin to appreciate the splendor and sterling value of its race element. Who knows but that element, like the course of some subterranean river dipping invisibly for a hundred or two years, is now to emerge in broadest flow and permanent action."

Bruce Webb is a professor of architecture at the University of Houston.

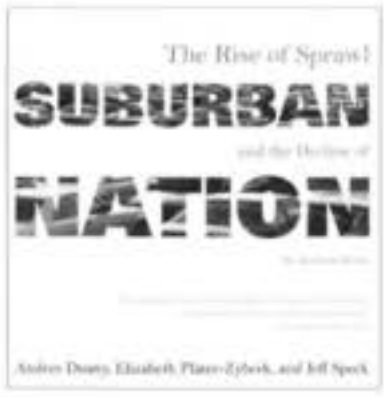
The Latino Core

Top Latino States (1997)		Top Latino Counties (1997)		Top Latino Cities (1992)	
1. California	9,941,014	Los Angeles	4,000,642	New York	1,783,511
2. Texas	5,722,535	Dade (Fla.)	1,139,004	Los Angeles	1,391,411
3. New York	2,570,382	Cook (Ill.)	867,520	Chicago	545,832
4. Florida	2,105,689	Harris (Tex.)	852,177	San Antonio	520,282
5. Illinois	1,182,964	Orange (Cal.)	761,228	Houston	450,483

Ivan Miguel Moreno

Cite 53

Joel Barna reports on Austin's Smart Growth experiment ■ John Kaliski explains the beauty of planning by the numbers ■ Architects teach an old Dome new tricks ■ And more



All the Answers

Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream
by Andrés Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Jeff Speck. North Point Press, 2000. 304 pp. $18.

Reviewed by Susan Rogers

Suburban Nation is about answers, not questions. For anyone familiar with the New Urbanists, it will come as no surprise that their answer to the rise of sprawl and the decline of the American dream is the traditional neighborhood. The essential characteristics of the traditional neighborhood — mixed uses, walkable streets, public transit, and mixed-income housing — unquestionably build strong communities. For designers, planners, policy makers, politicians, and citizens in search of the means to build such communities and cure sprawl, *Suburban Nation* is a virtual how-to manual.

For readers asking, "How did America become a sprawling nation?" *Suburban Nation* also provides answers. Like other authors before them (see Kenneth T. Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier*, James Howard Kunstler's *Geography of Nowhere*, among others) Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck trace how sprawl became the norm in post-war America. They point, accurately, to misguided federal and local policies and the planning profession — the principal culprits being the federal loan and highway programs, professional planners' obedient adoption of zoning, and the rational model of management brought back from World War II. To this familiar list of blunders, the authors add loan-financing structures, development standards, and the practices of marketing professionals and homebuilders. The predictable results have been sprawling, single-use pods connected by congested threads of concrete and occupied by market-segmented "cookie-cutter schlock" and "McMansion" estates.

The authors propose that the solution to suburban sprawl resides in the trilogy of "design, policy, and management" set within a framework of regional planning. Many of the design and policy recommendations in *Suburban Nation* recall the grand civic ideals of the City Beautiful Movement — primarily that through policy reforms that encourage good design, the public realm can be restored and society can once again become whole. The recommendations rely on physical planning and design while preaching the gospel of the free market. The ideologies are contradictory. The authors worship at the altar of the free market, property values, profit motives, and investment security, while advocating for mixed-income neighborhoods and social equity, two things the market has consistently failed to provide.

Suburban Nation proposes management strategies borrowed from suburbia and proven by suburbia's popular success. The authors provide clear evidence that while people prefer a "traditional" community, most notably a small town (fewer than one in five prefer a city), they are seduced into the homogenous and safe arms of suburbia by amenity packages, civic decorum, marketing strategies, investment security, and the interior grandeur of suburban homes. In fact, the authors herald the suburbia's packaging and management strategies as precedents to be copied by the "inner city"— challenging the city to compete with the suburbs on suburban terms. They fail to question the implications of applying suburban strategies to the city, or to address the contradiction between the suburban values of conformity, homogeneity, and security, and the urban values of diversity, risk, and excitement.

The answers supplied in *Suburban Nation* appear too simple. Perhaps the reader would be more readily convinced had the authors stayed out of the "inner city," focused their critique on suburbia, and saved their recommendations for the development of new towns. In many cities throughout the United States, including Houston, the dire urban conditions described in the text no longer apply. The "city as beggar" is disappearing, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find public or affordable housing in the core of cities such as San Francisco, Houston, and Charlotte. In such places, housing costs have skyrocketed and entire districts are being remade into tiny versions of Daniel Burnham's "White City" — often under the auspices of New Urbanism.

It is easy to be critical of the saccharine urbanism *Suburban Nation* promotes, but the authors indisputably offer concrete solutions to our urban and suburban crises. This is in stark contrast to those who have cloaked themselves in the capes of abstract theory, elusive representation, arcane knowledge, and inaction, and many of the book's answers are persuasive. But in the end the questions that are not asked — including the impacts of globalization, technology, mobility, population flux, diversity, and equity on our cities — remain even more compelling. Ultimately, it is ugly to imagine a city blanketed in the universal design strategies of any visionary.

Susan Rogers is an assistant professor of architecture at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

NEW AND NOTABLE

One Hundred Years of Architecture: Drawings from the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art *edited by Matilda McQuaid. MoMA/Abrams, 176 pp., illus., $45.* The first in a series of three titles that will showcase the superlative holdings of the Museum of Modern Art, this volume features drawings by masters of modernism — including Frank Lloyd Wright, Alvar Aalto, Le Corbusier, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe — as well as contemporary practitioners Rem Koolhaas, Frank O. Gehry, and Zaha Hadid. Full-page reproductions of their drawings and watercolors, which combine exacting detail with astonishing beauty, reveal not only a variety of aesthetic viewpoints but also the development of architecture over the last century.

XS: Big Ideas, Small Buildings *by Phyllis Richardson. Universe, 224 pp., illus., $29.95.* Focusing on small-scale, nonstandard, idiosyncratic contemporary structures, *XS* explores the little buildings that we either take for granted or rarely experience, but whose design can delight, inspire, and instruct. Richardson puts these structures — from bus shelters to public lavatories to garden sheds — in a historical context, and presents 40 examples from around the world that have been conceived, designed, and built using the best ideas from architecture, product design, street furniture, and graphic design. The result is a distinctive source-book of practical ideas and inspiration.

California Modern: The Architecture of Craig Ellwood *by Neil Jackson. Princeton Architectural Press, 192 pp., illus., $50.* If ever there was a product of Hollywood, it was architect Craig Ellwood (1922–1992). A fiction of his own making — even his name was an invention — he fashioned a career from charm, ambition, and a connoisseur's eye. By the 1950s, Ellwood had a thriving practice that infused the rationalism of Mies van der Rohe with a breeziness that was all Southern California. This copiously illustrated monograph traces Ellwood's fascinating personal history, provides a critical evaluation of his work, and establishes his role as a shaper of California style.

Single Building: Greenway Plaza Penthouse *by Oscar Riera Ojeda. Rockport, 132 pp., illus., $25.* This addition to Rockport's *Single Building* series examines a project by Houston-based architect David Guthrie, who transformed a 3,300-square-foot apartment atop Greenway Plaza's 30-story high-rise. Rather than chop the space into small rooms, Guthrie used concrete slabs, glass and metal skins, and sheer walls to preserve the apartment's 280-degree view of downtown Houston. Through photographs, drawings, and details, as well as essays by both the architect and a critic, this volume explores Guthrie's design and construction process from initial concept to finished project.

House: American Houses for the New Century *by Cathy Lang Ho and Raul Barreneche. Universe, 224 pp., illus., $39.95.* Focusing on houses built since 1998, most of which have never been discussed in print before, *House* investigates new directions in American residential architecture. More than 20 houses are featured, including work by Daly Genik, Toshiko Mori, Public, RoTO, and Barton Myers. While profiling these buildings, the authors keep in mind issues central to contemporary architecture: the use of unusual materials and innovative techniques, the relation of a house to its environment, and designing a home that suits the constantly changing structure of the American family.

Louis Kahn *by Joseph Rykwert. Abrams, 224 pp., illus., $75.* Published on the centenary of Kahn's birth, this monograph lauds the lifework of a master American architect, whose importance has only increased since his death in 1974. Eminent architectural historian Joseph Rykwert presents a fresh assessment of Kahn's achievements, including such landmark buildings as the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, and the Exeter Academy library in New Hampshire. Specially commissioned photos by Roberto Schezen, as well as sketches and plans from the Kahn archive, supplement Rykwert's thoughtful text.

Marcel Breuer, Architect: The Career and the Buildings *by Isabelle Hyman. Abrams, 384 pp., illus., $85.* During the course of an illustrious 50-year career that took him from the Bauhaus to London, Harvard University, and then New York, Marcel Breuer (1902-1981) generated an influential and remarkably varied body of work. Among his hundreds of buildings are such triumphs as the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. For this first comprehensive study of Breuer's architectural oeuvre, Hyman has used extensive unpublished archival material and collected hundreds of photographs, plans, and sketches.

Boca Rococo: How Addison Mizner Invented Florida's Gold Coast *by Caroline Seebohm. Clarkson Potter, 304 pp., illus., $35.* Renowned biographer Seebohm introduces the flamboyant genius behind Florida's iconic Mediterranean-style mansions. A leading San Francisco society figure in the 1890s, Addison Mizner made his way to an exploding turn-of-the-century New York, where his natural talent established him as architect of the rich and famous. The getaways he designed made Palm Beach America's most elegant resort and fed his dream of developing a "Venice-on-the-Ocean" in nearby Boca Raton. But his plans ended with the collapse of Florida's real estate boom, and he died in 1933, broken and bankrupt. — ***Michael Kimmins***

Fallacies of Wonder

September 11, 2001

Most of mind is memory — it is
memory which grants the means of thought.

From modern masters we have learned a lot —
from Freud

> *We remember what we want to remember,*
> *forget what we find no longer important.*

and antithetically from Proust —

> *The only true memory is involuntary.*

but we have yet to learn that memory
is a fallacious mirror, rich but wrong,

useless as a record of experience,
for memory IS experience. In the end,

nothing remembered can be true, although
only what is remembered can be real.

> *Confusion now hath made his masterpiece*
> *and stolen thence the life o' the building*

Often, still, I turn to look downtown
from where I live on Waverly. I trust

the evidence, by daylight or by dark,
of variations in the versions of

those hundred-story towers, so neighborly
I scarcely need to look. I know that I can count

on seeing them where I *remember* them,
no different yet never quite the same.

I do look, though, and, where they were,
replace their being by their absences.

> *Memory can only be artificially improved by the*
> *operation of fantasy towards* ideas *in the Round*
> *Art, which uses magical images, effigies of the stars,*
> *statues of gods and goddesses, or through images*
> *of corporeal things in the Square Art, using buildings*
> *as places.*

Such is the way of wonders: no longer seen
because, being there, remembered merely;

and, no longer there, remembered because
no longer seen. Did they have to be beautiful?

(Was that what the ancient wonders were,
beautiful?) All are gone but the Pyramids —

> *Though palaces and pyramids do slope*
> *Their heads to their foundations, though the treasure*
> *Of Nature's germens tumble all together*
> *Even till destruction sicken, answer me*
> *To what I ask...*

merely remembered: gardens, temples, tombs,
a lighthouse and the statues of two gods.

Did some three thousand die for us to call
remembered towers, wonders, beautiful?

> *The reaction has commenced, the human has*
> *made its reflex upon the fiendish; the pulses*
> *of life begin to beat again; and the re-establishment*
> *of goings-on of the world we live in makes us*
> *profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis*
> *that had suspended them.*
>
> —***Richard Howard***

Richard Howard is a poet and translator. He teaches literature in the School of the Arts (Writing Division) at Columbia University.

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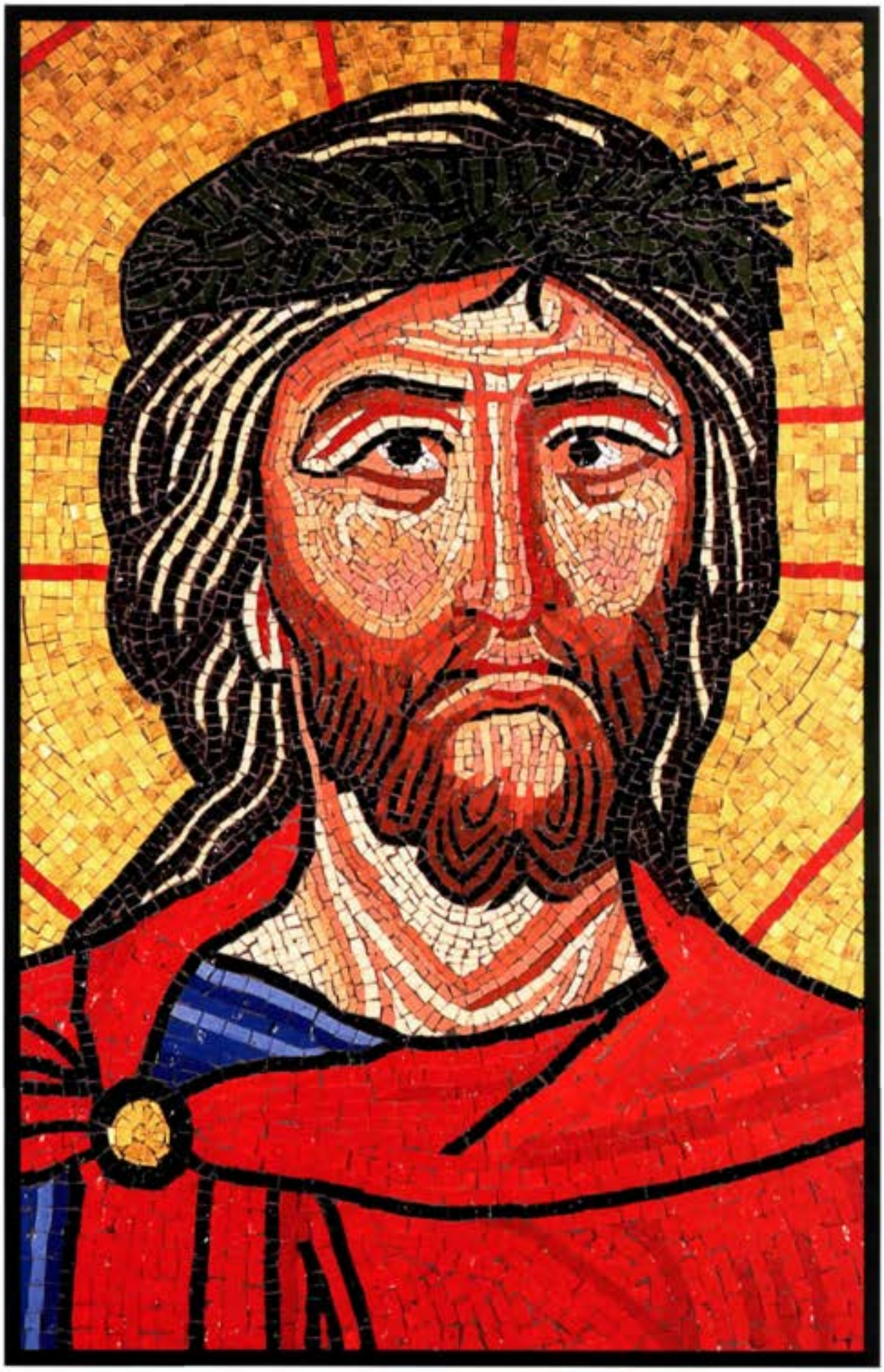

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