SPOTLIGHT ON ANTÓN GARCÍA-ABRIL

Young Madrid architect recognized by RDA

ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009, RDA INAUGURATED AN award to recognize exceptionally gifted architects in the early phase of their professional career. The award, called Spotlight: The Rice Design Alliance Prize, will be given annually and carries a $ 1,500 cash prize. Honorees must be within their first 15 years of professional practice. A selection committee of architects and academicians considers local, national, and international architects who demonstrate design excellence and promise a great design future.

The first winner, Antón García-Abril (b. Madrid, 1969), is a prominent member of the emerging generation of Spanish architects. He received a master's degree and a doctorate in 1995 and 2000, respectively, from the renowned ETSAM, Madrid's most significant school of architecture. Besides teaching at ETSAM, García-Abril has been a visiting professor at the schools of architecture at Cornell University, the University of Texas in Arlington, and the University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain. Prior to establishing his firm in 1995, he worked in the offices of two of Spain's most celebrated designers: Alberto Campo Baeza and Santiago Calatrava. In 2000 García-Abril changed the name of his firm from "Antón García-Abril" to "Antón García-Abril *& Ensamble Studio / Materia Inorganica*," an emphatic reminder of how much the architect values materials and construction in the critical equation for making architecture.

SPOTLIGHT: THE RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE PRIZE will be given annually and carries a monetary prize. Honorees must be within their first 15 years of professional practice. A selection committee of architects and academicians considers local, national, and international architects who demonstrate design excellence and promise a great design future. The first jury consisted of John Casbarian, Lonnie Hoogeboom, Carlos Jiménez, and Rafael Longoria.

Few recent practitioners in contemporary architecture have entered their profession with the tectonic confidence and boldness found in García-Abril's sparse yet remarkable works. From the beginning of his independent practice, the architect has created works intent on manifesting the visceral power of materials, often embracing their rawness and abrasiveness. These works – appearing as if chiseled by hand – remind us of the physicality of architecture. The Musical Studies Centre (2002), located in the fabled Galician city of Santiago de Compostela, is a case in point: it probes the awe-inspiring properties of weight, mass, and scale while adding to the city's lineage of granite constructions. In this fortress-like work we find an architect unafraid to mobilize an ancient material to great effect and with surprising freedom, a builder intent on harnessing the virtues of granite for its structural, dramatic, and thermal qualities.

The Hemeroscopium House (2006), the architect's own house built in Las Rozas, a town on the outskirts of Madrid, is a fascinating merger of architecture and engineering – a still life that incorporates large structural and infrastructural fragments as primary compositional devices. The result is a work of dynamic coherence, though its singular pieces might hint otherwise. The fluid, unencumbered layout is an effective contrast to the massive, gravity-defying structural pieces that hover over the site's common platform. A similar contrast is evident when the house is seen amid the traditional houses scattered across the neighboring rolling hills. Although it comprises a highly interrelated set of transparent interior spaces, the García-Abril house expands and contracts to reveal new and surprising connections to its bucolic townscape.

Hemeroscopium House, Madrid, 2006.

The SGAE Central Offices (2006), another work in Santiago de Compostela, is architecture as urban installation, yet one farthest from the term's transient connotation. The SGAE is a porch-like building whose elongated screen wall is a marvelous concoction of tumbling and irregular granite pieces, all held captive in a resilient dance of weight, light, and gravity. Their fragile equilibrium produces a permanent yet porous wall of unforgettable power.

The architect's most recent and largest work to date is a 24-story tower composed of stacked and rotating musical programs appropriately named Tower of Music. When completed in 2011 it will become the Spanish headquarters for the Boston-based Berklee College of Music. Located on a flat site on the periphery of the Mediterranean city of Valencia, the tower emerges from a two-story translucent plinth where parking and public services have been located. Each incremental floor (delineated by large pre-stressed concrete beams on all sides) further reinforces the compelling vertical presence of the building. The Tower of Music does not shout or whisper, it simply provides ample public spaces from which to view the old city, the harbor, and the sea. It also sits engrossed in the play of sounds emitting from its many chambers.

–Carlos Jiménez

SGAE Central Offices, Santiago de Compostela, 2006.

COURTESY ANTÓN GARCÍA-ABRIL

NEWS

SMALL HOUSES DRAW BIG CROWD

The RDA architecture tour, held March 28-29, featured small houses, but drew the biggest crowd in the organization's 37-year history. Nearly 1,900 people viewed nine innovative houses, breaking the previous year's record of 1,500.

"This tour was timely. It tapped into the desire to live well while living small," said Linda Sylvan, executive director.

Lisa Gray, a former managing editor of *Cite*, wrote about the tour and the Cordell container house in her *Houston Chronicle* column a few days before the event, generating a spirited debate on the Chron.com website.

Harvey Builders managed to nearly complete the 99K House in 99 days. Though renderings have been printed in this magazine, the tour was the first time visitors could see the winning entry of the RDA co-sponsored competition come to life.

Tour goers ventured into Montrose and Rice Military as well as neighborhoods off the typical architectural trail including the Fifth Ward and East Side. Mini Coopers, Smart Cars, and Priuses entered the land of Buicks and F150s.

Those who made the full perambulation returned to their own homes with an expanded notion of design, neighborhoods, and the city as a whole.

Tour goers on the patio of the 99k House, under construction by Harvey Builders.

NEW STAFF TO SUPPORT WEBSITES

In April, RDA welcomed Zeke Minaya to the staff as web assistant and writer. Minaya brings with him a wealth of experience as a journalist.

He has reported in Iraq for *Stars and Stripes*, contributed to Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage for the *LA Times*, and covered news, politics, and crime for the *Houston Chronicle*. Raised in the shadow of Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, he left New York to pursue higher education, ultimately completing a Masters from the University of California at Berkeley School of Journalism. Minaya looks forward to helping create a dynamic web presence for the RDA and OffCite, as well as contributing to *Cite*.

BIG reactions to Lisa Gray's small house article

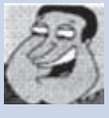
FROM CHRON.COM MARCH 31, 2009

ProudNativeTexican wrote:
I have wondered for years why some many people has such large houses. They are trying to keep up with the Jones. It might only be me but I don't find myself trying to impress others with my house, clothes, or vehicle. About all I do at home is sleep and shower so I really don't need much room.
3/25/2009 11:33:22 AM
Recommend: (14) (6) [Report abuse]

JimPfromHouston wrote:
WOW Houston - From mc mansions to real container houses. Developers actually going small and going green. Not just talking… doing it- REALLY DONE IT?? Houston… you've come a long way baby. That has to be great for long term - low cost housing. Sounds like their clients got green houseing, with original design, sized for what they want, at a price point that they want. Outdoor shower sounds nice. Could there be clusters of these? Low cost, durable, livable, housing for people? Elderly? Students? Veterans? If any city or fed money comes for low cost housing -
I hope they turn these people loose with it. They have turned talk into affordable green housing, right here in Houston.
3/25/2009 10:56:07 AM
Recommend: (12) (6) [Report abuse]

docsteve wrote:
I'm not here to carry any particular banner. I just find these potrayed homes unattractive and certainly not practical on any scale. I'm 57 years old, relatively financially comfortable, but certainly not an extremely wealthy person. I enjoy living in a nice quiet, gated community, with well trimmed yards, and an iron-fisted HOA. Perhaps if I were the same 60's era long haired dude I once was, I might "grok" at this stuff. Somewhere along the way, I lost that person and turned into "the man". I like having nice home. Mcmansion? Ok… I like quarterpounders just fine. (too well, unfortunately)

Somewhere, somehow, it's become almost "hip" to deride the American dream of a nice home and success. It's as if somehow, we should be ashamed of being comfortable and happy. I know that not everyone is so well off. In face, I came from a poverty stricken hom, awash in alcoholism and abuse. I just can't get too worked up or romanticise about living in a shoebox made out of shipping crates.
3/25/2009 2:22:51 PM
Recommend: (3) (8) [Report abuse]



GreenInRichmond wrote:
"I like having a nice home. Mcmansion? Ok… I like quarterpounders just fine. (too well, unfortunately)"

Good, you keep eating those quarter pounders and when you are gone (which will be sooner than later) we will recycle your Mc Mansion into homes for people who care about the planet. You are the problem.
3/26/2009 10:55:35 AM
Recommend: (5) (0) [Report abuse]

SHARON STEINMANN; NOTE: COMMENTS AND ICONS PULLED DIRECTLY FROM CHRON.COM

CALENDAR

CIVIC FORUM

POST HURRICANE IKE PLANNING

July 15, 29 and August 12
Brown Auditorium
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

This series of Civic Forums will discuss the status of the city after Hurricane Ike and talk about strategies to prepare for hurricanes in the future through civic planning, data systems, and architectural engineering.

LECTURES

GETTING HIGH: TOWERS IN ARCHITECTURE

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Brown Auditorium
7p.m.
713.348.4876 or rda.rice.edu

PETER BUCHANAN
ARCHITECTURE CRITIC, LONDON
Wednesday, September 16

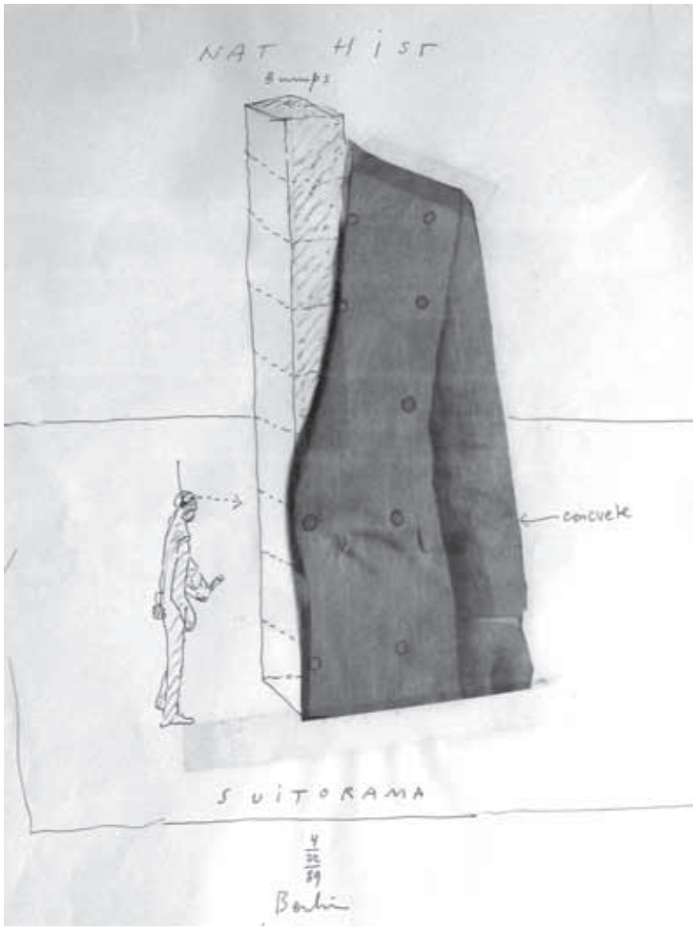
ALI RAHIM
DIRECTOR, CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE, NEW YORK CITY
Wednesday, September 23

WINKA DUBBELDAM
PRINCIPAL, ARCHI-TECTONICS, NEW YORK CITY
Wednesday, September 30

ROSS WIMER
DESIGN PARTNER, SKIDMORE OWINGS AND MERRILL, CHICAGO
Wednesday, October 7

RDA GALA

Hilton Americas
November 14, 2009



Drawing by Lars Lerup.

ACCOLADES

LARS LERUP GOES TO ROME

Former student reflects on transition at Rice School of Architecture.

LARS LERUP, THE LONG-TIME DEAN OF THE RICE SCHOOL OF Architecture, will step down this summer not to retire, but rather to redirect his energy from his fifteen-year-long project on the contemporary city to what he calls his "most deepest interest in architecture: the 'arena of the poetic.'" He recently won the prestigious Rome Prize with a proposal to "invent an expanded field" roughly focused on the Pantheon. It will be a "new project beyond the *gesamtkunstwerk*, one where writing, drawing, and design will be radically reconfigured and deployed." The result, Lerup writes, "is not entirely clear because its future lies not in a plan but in the making." Lerup is a polymath who describes his interests simply as "broad." While he lives in Rome during the next year, he will continue his work as co-founder of the Rice Building Institute to increase efficiency in the construction industry. He has just completed the manuscript for a new book, *One Million Acres* and *No Zoning*, and if that weren't enough, he plans a UN-sponsored collaboration to draft what he calls "a Law of the Indies" to help developing cities address the plight of the urban poor through new services and infrastructure.

Lerup arrived at Rice in July 1993 during a period of almost Biblical uncertainty. In the span of less than four years the Rice School of Architecture (RSA) went through three deans, two of whom died while in office. Compounding the school's unsteady leadership was the persistent malaise of Houston's economic collapse in the 1980s; the only time in its history when the city actually lost population. One wonders what appeal this situation had to Lerup, a Swede who had spent many years in idyllic Berkeley, California. Lerup suggests the reason in his introduction to the forty-fourth book in the "Architecture at Rice" series, *Everything Must Move* (2009): "Houston has been repeatedly treated with disdain, sarcasm, and dismissal. This treatment greatly inspired my contrarian nature and led me to move to Houston and to bring the city to the foreground in my role as the new dean of the Rice School of Architecture."

Upon his arrival, Lerup assumed the role of something between a tent-revivalist, pied piper, and civic booster as he prodded, coaxed, and led his little flock along a new pedagogical path. (The RSA, with an enrollment of about 200 students, is tiny.) Prior to this, Rice more or less adhered to the professional model established by Bill Caudill, director of the school from 1961–69, who reorganized the school along the lines of his mega-architectural firm, CRS. Lerup, although trained initially as an engineer, has relatively few building projects to his credit, but many essays, books, and art installations. His ecumenical approach has yielded results, for the past ten years the RSA has ranked in the top ten architecture schools in the United States according to the Design Futures Council.

Lerup hit the ground running in Houston with a clear agenda, which he pursued vigorously. It prefers research, thought, and debate to architectural form. It values ecology (trees, flood control, freeways, pollution, prairies, the metropolis) over buildings. (I was once scolded for asking the thickness of a wall. "That is the WRONG question!" I was sternly told.) It takes pleasure in the revelation of absurdity in the modern condition. It loves the city, no matter how misshapen. In particular, it foregrounds the empty spaces that constitute such a large part of a suburban city like Houston; the weeded gaps between strip mall parking lots, the pipeline easements slicing through subdivision schoolyards and parks, the miniature ecosystems below freeway interchanges, the aerial spectacle of colliding weather systems overhead. It seeks to extract the untapped potential of this vast territory, so ubiquitous we ignore it so as not to be overwhelmed. Lerup gives this, his precious, many names: dross, lacunae, archipelago of voids, jump-cuts, elastic blobs, and my favorite, the holey plane, a reflection of its quasi-divine status in his realm of thought.

> "Lars Lerup's project remains at present the most concentrated attempt to research, reveal, understand, name, evoke, and remake the world of stim and dross. We are grateful for this work, but it is unfinished, and much work is to be done. Lars Lerup leaves us with a stimulating starting point in an exploration of our drossy reality."
>
> – Aaron Betsky, *Everything Must Move*, 2009

Lerup's message was amplified by a gift for poetic rhetoric that is nothing short of awe-inspiring. I will always recall the mesmerizing performances at the beginning of each academic year when the entire school was assembled and the new students were first exposed to his wit, sagacity, and booming, Swedish-accented English as he spontaneously expounded on whatever idea was working through his mind at the time. It didn't always make sense, and it still doesn't. Slippery, writhing Houston resists the easy interpretation. Lerup's tough, yet sensitive critique remains relevant and stimulating.

–Ben Koush

FORUM

LEARNING FROM IKE

As hurricane season approaches the Rice Design Alliance announces its plans to re-examine risks facing the Houston-Galveston region and possible solutions to the public policy and design challenges that we face. Three public meetings at the MFAH Brown Auditorium are scheduled as part of this year's Civic Forum, "Post Hurricane Ike Planning." On July 15, a group of nationally recognized meteorologists, experts in surge-tide modeling, and others will address the question, What are the dangers and hazards of living on the Gulf Coast? On July 29 experts in earth sciences, coastal management, and planning will address the issue of finding the best management practices. Finally, on August 12, leading experts will discuss alternative design solutions to defend our coastal communities and industrial infrastructure against the growing threat of hurricanes.

CORRECTION: The article "After the Firestorm: The Future of Civic Art" wrongly credits the artwork "Synchronicity of Color" at Discovery Green to Nancy Retz. It was created by the Austin-based Artist Margo Sawyer, collaborating with Landscape Architects Hargreaves Associates as lead designers of the park and PageSoutherlandPage as Architects of the underground parking structure.

Shedding the Training Wheels: Houston Bikeway Plan, Phase Two

An update of the City of Houston's comprehensive Bikeway Plan is under way to boost Houston's efforts to become a bicycle-friendly community. Many of the projects envisioned in the existing plan, developed in 1993 by the Department of Public Works and Engineering, are done or nearly complete. They include 350 miles of trails, lanes, and other multi-use paths. The most recent addition, the Columbia Tap Rails-to-Trails project, converted an old Union Pacific corridor into a four-mile paved path connecting the east side of Downtown to the Third Ward. A similar project, still under construction, will connect the Heights to Downtown via the MKT (Missouri, Kansas, Texas) line.

Cylists riding the Columbia Tap trail during the official opening.

Dan Raine, the city's new bicycle-pedestrian coordinator, is directing the Bikeway Plan. A transportation planner with 15 years of experience, including four years as bicycling coordinator at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, he has many cycling advocates feeling optimistic. After soliciting feedback through contacts with Super Neighborhoods, CIP meetings, an online form, and a meeting held with the non-profit BikeHouston, he received 600 responses. "Think of the Bikeway Plan as a 15-year-old teenager," he has said. "Without direction, support, help, and education, you will have a troubled teen; you have to help this person grow." Details have not been released, but Raine hopes to repeat and build on what has been successful in the existing network, improve safety conditions, and repair deteriorating trails and pathways.

Peter Wang, a League of American Bicyclists instructor and cycling advocate, points to county-wide problems that extend beyond the Bikeway Plan. "At the Houston-Galveston level, we need a regional bikeway plan that every local government uses," he said in an interview. He added, "In some parts of the county, we are losing cyclable roads." He also called for a better intermodal network whereby cyclists could access routes by public transportation. Bicycle racks on buses have proven successful, but METRO has not placed racks on its light rail trains.

Wang argues further that the development of bicycling infrastructure needs to be accompanied by a cultural realignment. Cycling continues to be viewed in the U.S. as primarily a means of recreation, rather than transport. The development of multi-modal commuting, he points out, would have a beneficial effect on problems of traffic, health, air quality, and fuel consumption. The challenge of Houston's comprehensive Bikeway Plan is to both meet immediate needs and cultivate this attitudinal change.

GO TO OFFCITE.ORG FOR COVERAGE OF THE COLUMBIA TAP TRAIL OPENING AND THE FULL INTERVIEW WITH PETER WANG.

OffCite.org: The *Cite* Magazine Blog

OffCite.org offers news, commentary, and links about architecture and design in Houston and around the world. Check the site for these posts and others:

The Philip Johnson Tapes

Ben Koush reviews a book of interviews between Philip Johnson and Robert Stern, calling it "a juicy romp through the greater part of twentieth-century American architectural culture."

Headlines

Were you aware the city is subsidizing the Regent Square project to the tune of ten million? That after a ten-year wait, Houston is enforcing the sexually-oriented business ordinance? Read our hyperlinked weekly summaries of local news about the built environment.

Preservation

Jesse Hager tours the Houston Light Guard Armory. Barry Moore divulges the details on the Julia Ideson Building restoration and expansion. Christof Spieler weighs in on whether the demolition of Wilshire Village is tantamount to selling our soul or the truest expression of it.

RDA Lecture Series

Video of the sold-out, standing-room-only talks given by Steven Heller, Andy Altman, Ellen Lupton, and Michael Rock for the Rice Design Alliance lecture series on graphic design.

Visit OffCite.org now and look for the new Rice Design Alliance website coming soon.

>> LOOK FOR THE NEW RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE WEBSITE.

TOP: RAJ MANKAD; RIGHT: NASH BAKER

citings

MASTER OF VISUAL POETICS: Henrique Oliveira's Tapumes at the Rice Gallery

At the age of 34, Henrique Oliveira earned his Masters of Visual Poetics from the University of São Paulo. Slightly tense, with skinny dark jeans and curly hair, his mannerisms bring to mind a young Bob Dylan. His installation at the Rice Gallery was open from March 26 to May 9. Oliveira began his artistic explorations as a painter and expands a vocabulary suited to brush and canvas, transposing terms such as "gestural abstraction, movement, and blending" into the context of sculpture, or more specifically "Tridimensional." The latest of these is called "tapumes," a Portuguese word that references temporary construction fencing made from cheap Brazilian wood. Oliveira's piece is a jolting repurposing of these weathered castoffs.

Pliant and supple, Oliveira's construction appears so flexible that it gives the impression that pushing on one bubble would create two more. A girl slips between the installation and a solitary shape that seems to have dripped from above. This is a sculpture that begs to be occupied. In fact the entire piece gives the impression that the artist is

Cast-off wood was arranged by color and then layered into a three-dimensional installation.

engaged in a schizophrenic nesting, inviting you to join. The textures, depth of color, tunnels, and voids formed by the thin wood appears at times violent and at other moments serene. Caves and tunnels are formed so abruptly that they betray the slenderness of the surface; one can't help but wonder if there is more beneath.

–Jesse Hager

GO TO OFFCITE.ORG FOR MORE ON OLIVEIRA'S TAPUMES.

ART URBANISM

Chipperfield and the Menil master plan

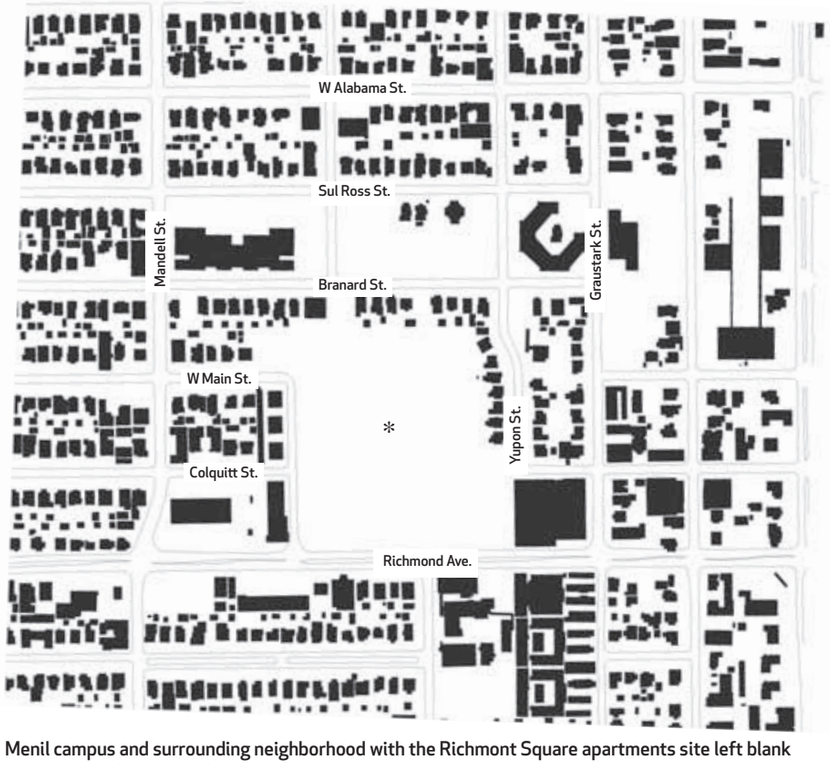
THE MENIL COLLECTION HAS CHOSEN DAVID CHIPPERFIELD Architects to conceptualize a master plan for its 30-acre property in Montrose. The selection was made after an international search, which culminated in formal interviews and presentations by several firms, including Office d'A from Boston and two Madrid-based firms, Mansilla+Tuñon and Herreros Arquitectos, all of whom are likely candidates for the design of future Menil buildings. Chipperfield, based in London, Berlin, and Singapore, recently won the Sterling Prize for its design of the Museum of Modern Literature in Germany and has completed several museum master plans.

Its current melding of architecture, landscape, and art make the Menil campus unique in terms of urbanism. The expanse of lawn fronting the main museum building, designed by Renzo Piano, is a site for three land art works by Michael Heizer – *Isolated Mass / Circumflex (#2)*, *Rift*, and *Dissipate*, while Mark Di Suvero's large-scale *Bygones* occupies a park space between the Piano building and the Rothko Chapel, where Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk* emerges from a reflection pool. Bungalows from the 1920s and 30s surround the Menil and Rothko Chapel, housing a mix of residences, museum offices, and other arts organizations. The consistent use of the hallmark "Menil Gray" for the exteriors of the bungalows creates a distinct, unified – and even somewhat surreal – appearance. The Menil Collection campus fits into the neighborhood so well that one has to look for it, and even after finding the central site, one must explore further to stumble upon the Cy Twombly Gallery, the Byzantine Fresco Chapel, and the Dan Flavin Installation at Richmond Hall.

This art urbanism creates a humane and relaxing environment for exploration and contemplation. It is this understated, sophisticated character that the Menil Collection seeks to preserve in its quest for expansion. Regarding this commitment, Josef Helfenstein, director of the Menil, said "We owe it to this place," adding that, "David Chipperfield Architects has the necessary intelligence and excellent staff to deal with complex issues."

Piano was an original consideration for the master plan, but he had to withdraw due to earlier commitments. Helen Winkler Fosdick, who worked with John and Dominique de Menil (1964–73), said, "I was saddened by the loss of Renzo Piano to continue the plan of the Menil campus, but heartened by the intelligent and thoughtful presentation of David Chipperfield and the Menil board and staff." She attended a March 17, 2009, talk by the architect during which he presented three possible arrangements. "One sensed an extremely conscious effort to respect and carefully continue the greatness of the Menil and surrounding campus of art set in the bungalows and trees. They spoke of understanding natural light with the art, keeping the quietness of the neighborhood and art spaces, and single artist's installations – all good things that help make up this extraordinary gift the de Menils gave to Houston and the world."

Several features of the original campus concept were not built when the Menil opened in 1987 and are on the list for the master plan: an expanded bookstore, a café, and a building for public programs and social functions. The new plan will also address the need for additional space for the Menil Archives, the Menil Drawing Institute and Study Center, and new buildings devoted to individual artists, as well as income-producing properties along Richmond Avenue where Metro is planning a light rail line linking the University of Houston to the Galleria area.



Menil campus and surrounding neighborhood with the Richmont Square apartments site left blank and marked with an asterisk.

That the Dan Flavin Installation on Richmond remained intact in every arrangement shown by Chipperfield delighted Fosdick as did the likelihood that the rail line will bring more visitors to the space, which was reworked by the artist for his light sculptures. The fate of nearby Richmont Square, a sprawling apartment complex owned by the Menil Collection, is uncertain. The large swath of land could relieve pressure on other properties and enable the creation of new architecturally significant sites, but the complex generates income for the Menil, illustrating the challenge Chipperfield faces.

None of the proposed master plans were released to the public by the Menil. When asked about a timeline and whether the economic climate would cause delays, Helfenstein noted, "The timing is actually good. We are at the beginning of the process. We are not building. We are not doing a capital campaign. Before fundraising, we have to have a master site plan."

Though the Menil campus is not likely to change in the very near future, the comprehensive interview process and the selection of David Chipperfield Architects are among the most promising architectural developments Houston has seen for years.

-Marc El-Khouri

GO TO OFFCITE.ORG FOR THE FULL INTERVIEW OF JOSEF HELFENSTEIN.

COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON GERALD D. HINES COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE

Front façade showing pre-engineered structure and vertical siding.

Client
Franny Koelsch
Architects
Dillon Kyle Architecture
Engineer
Dan Gay (structural)
Construction Contractor
Arrowmont Constructors

ART SPACE

A HOUSTON CASE STUDY:

Koelsch Gallery

FRANNY KOELSCH, OWNER OF THE KOELSCH GALLERY, worked closely with Dillon Kyle Architecture of Houston on the design of her new exhibition space. Years earlier, Koelsch worked with Kyle on the house she and her family share in the Heights. When she found an empty lot on Yale Street and decided to move her gallery closer to home, she knew just who to call. Koelsch speaks warmly about Dillon Kyle and appreciates his balance of intuition and precision. She knew that Kyle listens closely to his client's wishes without surrendering his aesthetic vision. Koelsch developed an interest in mid-century modern furniture and Kyle complimented this interest by introducing her to the simplicity of the California Case Study houses. The "workable efficiency" and overlap between public and private realms typical of these houses, was something she sought to emulate in her new gallery.

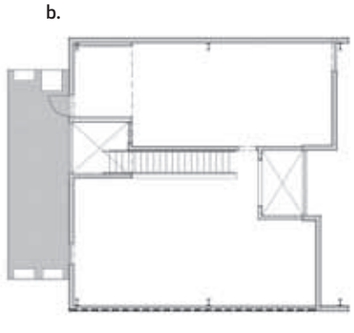
The Koelsch Gallery is a 3,000 square-foot metal frame building. The straightforward structure of the gallery building is counter-balanced with unexpected materials and unconventional fenestration patterns. The simple volume is clad with corrugated metal on two sides, while the front and back facades are treated differently. Late in the process, Kyle produced a series of elevation studies that both he and Koelsch were finally excited about. The resulting entry facade is built of variegated vertical siding made of cementitious fiber board (Hardi) trim material of different widths and thicknesses. The east and west faces of the building exterior are painted gallery white.

From the start, client and architect decided to use a pre-engineered system because of the system's assumed economy and ease of erection and maintenance. The selection of the structural and enclosure system also responds to the neighborhood which is dotted with warehouses, such as the bright green karate studio just north of the gallery, that are similarly constructed. In fact, these warehouse buildings are so ubiquitous in the landscape of this part of Houston that they are hardly noticeable. The architect worked closely with the metal building supplier collaborating on details such as the mitered joint of column and beams evident in the front façade. While the roof and wall are framed with steel the building uses a hybrid structural system and the second floor is supported by wood trusses. The second floor is largely uninhabited and provides storage for works of the artists represented by the gallery. The underside of the floor and the wood trusses provide visual warmth to the space below.

Koelsch wanted her artists to be displayed in a true living environment. Her clients live with their art and she is interested in work that mixes visual pleasure with practicality. A plywood desk serves as the entry's focal point, anchoring the space. The location of the desk in the center of the space allows for the inner workings of the gallery to be made visible. By extending upwards the desk draws the eye up through the space. Dillon Kyle's use of a common material like plywood in an uncommon way is in line with the owner's vision for the gallery. The plywood used in the front desk also balances the austerity of the white walls and concrete floors typical of most contemporary art galleries. The weathering of the surfaces of the plywood contrasts to the perpetually renewed walls, typically repainted at each show. While the walls are continually rejuvenated the desk, built by Pat Kingsbury, will age gracefully over time.

In the main gallery, pieces of the exterior wall are pulled out and treated like partitions in a changing exhibition space. The articulated walls are the architect's response to hiding the bracing system of the building. A smaller gallery alcove is located to the north of the plywood desk and stair. This allows an artist to have a "solo show," even if other artists' works are being shown in the south gallery at the same time. In addition to wall hanging spaces for paintings, there is also a small front room for the display of smaller objects such as pottery and jewelry. These smaller items are displayed in a series of plywood volumes that can be adjusted in response to changing needs. The architect and his team proved their hands-on commitment by sanding and filling nail holes in the plywood until just before the opening of the gallery. The combination of sophistication and flexibility that this building embodies is perfectly suited to the qualities of the "outsider" artists that Koelsch Gallery represents.

-Donna Kacmar



LEFT: **a. First floor plan; b. second floor plan.**
RIGHT: **Gallery reception area.**

PHOTO: PAUL HESTER; PLAN COURTESY DILLON KYLE

THE EVOLUTION

TOP: **The original McNay House with Brown Wing addition.**
ABOVE: **New main entrance to Stieren Center.**

SERGE AMBROSE

SAN ANTONIO'S NEW
STIEREN CENTER FOR EXHIBITIONS
UNVEILED

BY RAFAEL LONGORIA

OF THE MCNAY

No other city in Texas has embraced its own architects like San Antonio: the Alamo City has consistently reserved its prime commissions for local architects. In the process it has nurtured such distinguished firms as Atlee B. and Robert M. Ayres (architects of the beloved 1929 Smith-Young Tower); Ford, Powell & Carson (responsible for setting the tone of the Trinity University Campus in 1949 and the HemisFair in 1968); and Lake/Flato, winners of the 2004 AIA National Firm Award. With this history in mind, it is particularly surprising that the city's venerable McNay Art Museum turned to Paris-based architect Jean-Paul Viguier for its latest addition of exhibition space, the Stieren Center.

The McNay Art Museum is far from the tourist attractions of the River Walk. It occupies a hilltop site surrounded by cozy suburbs. Originally designed as a residence for Marion Koogler McNay by Atlee B. and Robert M. Ayres in 1928, the charming Spanish Revival building wraps around one end of an Alhambra-inspired garden. It is the sort of place where you can find brides and quinceañeras posing for portraits on any given day.

After Mrs. McNay's death in 1950, the house became an art museum—with its first exhibition in 1954 dedicated to Pablo Picasso. The Brown Wing of 1970, the first in a series of additions by Ford, Powell & Carson, inserted a delicately detailed wood and glass structure to the side of the original octagonal entry tower. This pivotal sculpture pavilion, reminiscent of O'Neil Ford's nearby Intercontinental Motors showroom of 1960, is emblematic of San Antonio's celebrated modern regionalist tradition. The subsequent layers of the complex read like an essay on the evolution of Spanish-inspired architectural references—ranging from good, to bad, to ugly. The discrete Lang Galleries of 1973 and Frost Galleries

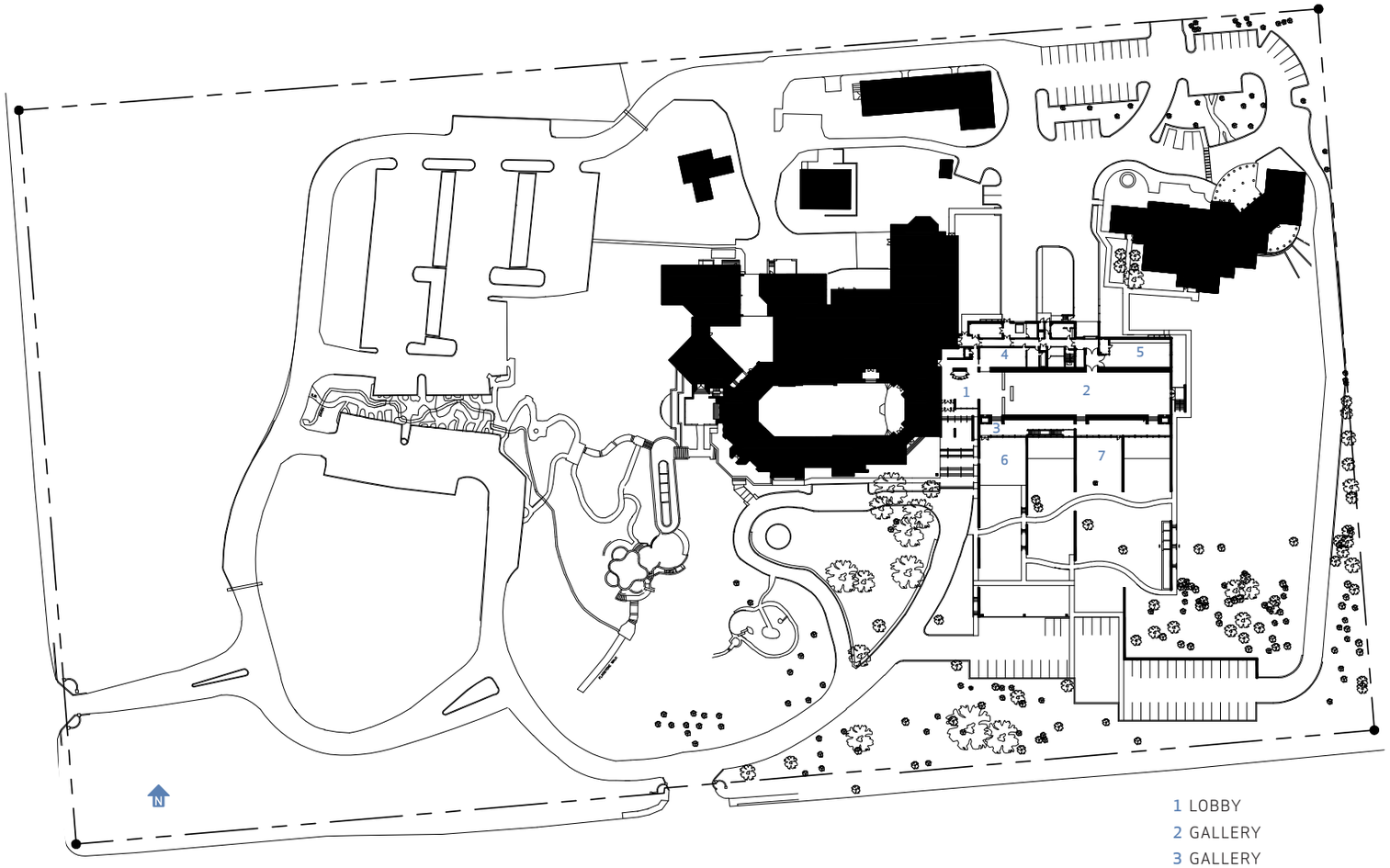
ABOVE: **Quinceañera portrait at McNay House colonade.**
BELOW: **McNay site plan showing Stieren Center.**

IT IS THE SORT OF PLACE WHERE YOU CAN FIND BRIDES AND QUINCEAÑERAS POSING FOR PORTRAITS ON ANY GIVEN DAY.

of 1975 completely enclosed the once open courtyard, taking cues from the 45-degree geometry found in the original house. But the need for a new approach became evident after an auditorium addition, with a campanile that seems more suitable for a strip shopping center, was built in the early '90s by a different firm.

Bill Lacy, former head of the National Endowment for the Arts and coordinator of the Pritzker Prize (as well as the husband of Jane Stieren Lacy), played a pivotal role in the assembly of a list of suitable architects for the planned exhibitions center, and the eventual selection of Viguier (with Ford, Powell & Carson returning as the associate architects). Other architects considered included Machado and Silvetti of Boston, James Stewart Polshek of New York City, and Carlos Jiménez of Houston.

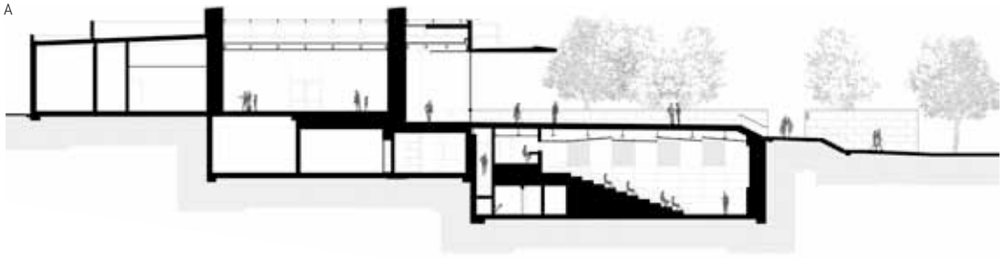
I first encountered Viguier's work at the 1992 World's Fair in Seville. His French Pavilion was one of the highlights among a remarkable collection of architecture. Its quilted fabric exterior was a brilliantly surreal solution to insulating a temporary structure, while the knife-edged umbrella covering the building and adjacent outdoor gathering space responded to the

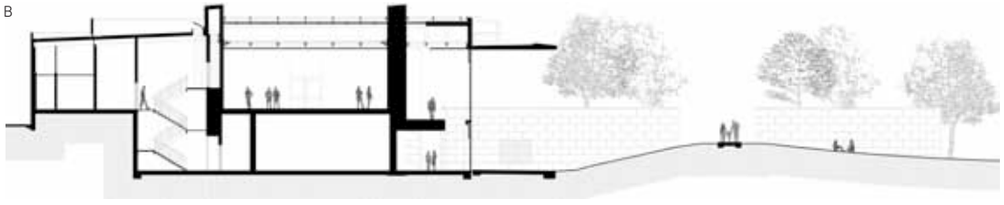


1 LOBBY
2 GALLERY
3 GALLERY
4 MUSEUM STORE
5 ART RECEIVING
6 TERRACE
7 SCULPTURE GARDEN

PHOTO: CHRISTINA BIANCHI; DRAWING COURTESY FORD, POWELL & CARSON

LEFT: **View from lower galleries to outdoor sculpture garden.**
RIGHT: **Sculpture gallery along southern wall.**





A: **Section through main entry and auditorium.**
B: **Section through galleries and sculpture garden.**

Client
McNay Art Museum

Architects
Jean-Paul Viguier s.a. d'architecture;
Ford, Powell & Carson, Inc.

Contractor
Whiting-Turner Contracting Co.

Engineers
Pape-Dawson Engineers (civil);
Robert Silman Associates (structural);
Altieri Sebor Wieber (MEP)

hot climate with conceptual rigor and elegance.

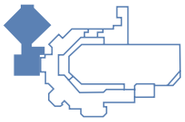
The Stieren Center's inaugural festivities in June 2008 included an exhibition titled "Cool Models/ Maquettes Froides" that featured a collection of jewel-like architectural models of buildings designed by Viguier. The highly abstracted gold, jet, and crystal models were presented, disassembled, in luxurious cases designed for the architect to carry the projects to client presentations around the world. As the array of models clearly illustrated, Viguier's buildings are often composed of discrete rectilinear elements that provide conceptual order while bending to the peculiarities of each urban condition.

The Stieren Center attaches somewhat awkwardly to the complicated agglomeration of additions east of the original courtyard, which prolong the main axis of the house. An art school designed by Charles Moore once occupied this part of the site. The new building is organized along a series of parallel walls that extend to the exterior and delineate a sequence of sculpture gardens—a strategy reminiscent of the one used by Renzo Piano at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas. The Viguier addition has shifted the museum's center of gravity by creating a new main entry that is programmatically and spatially more appropriate to a contemporary art museum. The new building has top-lit, flexible galleries suitable for the big traveling exhibitions that have become the bread and butter of the art world, as well as providing much needed ancillary spaces in a partially revealed basement level.

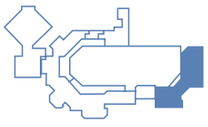
Like Piano before him in Houston and Dallas, Viguier developed a sophisticated roof system that

PHOTOS: SERGE AMBROSE; DRAWINGS COURTESY FORD, POWELL & CARSON

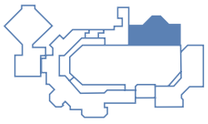
1970–2008



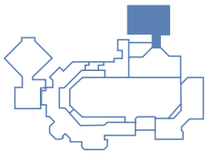
1970 Brown Wing opens including the Brown Sculpture Pavilion and the Brown Gallery. The latter is the museum's first facility for public programs.



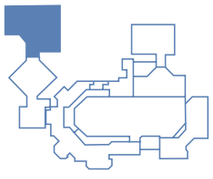
1973 The Lang Galleries open, their construction funded by Mary and Sylvan Lang.



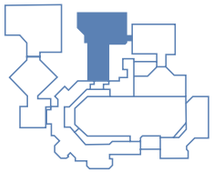
1975 Jack and Adele Frost Galleries open, completing the necklace of galleries around the museum's central courtyard.



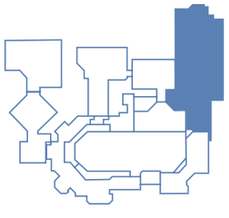
1982 The Jerry Lawson Print Gallery, the first dedicated gallery for works on paper, is completed through the generosity of Mrs. Gus Glasscock. A Print Study Room adjoins the gallery.



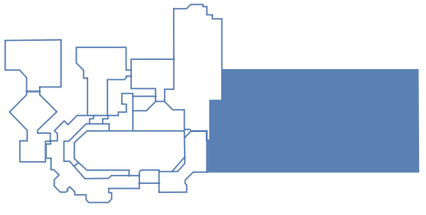
1984 The Tobin Wing, the home of Robert L. B. Tobin's theatre arts collection and of the museum's art reference library, is completed through the generosity of Margaret Batts Tobin.



1987 The Stieren Wing for art storage and receiving is completed, the gift of Jane and Arthur Stieren.



1993 The Blanche and John Leeper Auditorium is completed.



2008 Construction of the Jane and Arthur Stieren Center for Exhibitions.

THE SUBSEQUENT LAYERS OF THE COMPLEX READ LIKE AN ESSAY ON THE EVOLUTION OF SPANISH-INSPIRED ARCHITECTURAL REFERENCES—RANGING FROM GOOD, TO BAD, TO UGLY.

COURTESY MCNAY ART MUSEUM

LIKE PIANO BEFORE HIM IN HOUSTON AND DALLAS, VIGUIER DEVELOPED A SOPHISTICATED ROOF SYSTEM THAT MODULATES THE ABUNDANT TEXAS SUNLIGHT.

modulates the abundant Texas sunlight. In Viguier's words from the exhibition catalogue: **"My architectural proposal in regard to the existing building is deliberately modern, and my only demand is to adapt the project to the San Antonio light and climate.… [The] roof is made up of four layers aimed at treating natural light and adapting it to each type of exhibition. The first layer, made up of parallel blades, prevents the light from directly penetrating the museum. The second layer, made out of sandblasted glass panels set into a serrated shape, harmonizes the diffusion of light. The third layer, made up of motorized horizontal shades, regulates the light's intensity and can create total blackout if necessary. Finally, the fourth layer, made up of horizontal silk-screened glass plates, creates light 'vibrations.'"** The resulting illumination is perfect for the multiple demands of traveling exhibitions, and the sculpture gallery along the sunny southern wall is the most delightful part of the new addition. I just wish the brush-stroke pattern recurring in multiple surfaces inside and outside the building was not so distracting.

When I first saw renderings of the Stieren Center design, its dark stone seemed to be out of place next to the creamy stucco of the existing complex, and its size, which doubles the existing footprint, seemed overwhelming. But I was pleasantly surprised when I visited the finished building to realize that the green granite and brown metal of the new building blends well with the vegetation of the surrounding gardens. The southern façade consists of a glass curtain wall shaded by a deep cantilevered roof, which helps dematerialize the building. When viewed as a complete composition from the south (the new public face of the museum), the Viguier addition is arguably more respectful of the original residence than the stucco additions, primarily in the way that it helps clarify what is new and what is historic. The Stieren Center added to my appreciation of the wisdom of the Brown Wing—the delicate first addition by Ford, Powell & Carson—and made me wish that the stucco additions (particularly the southern wall of the Frost Galleries) could be covered with ivy in order to recapture the original stucco profile of the Ayres & Ayres house. ☆

TOP: Main stair with brush-stroke pattern.
ABOVE: Billboard outside the McNay.

SERGE AMBROSE

DALLAS REACHES FOR THE STARS

STARCHITECT N. (STAR + ARCHITECT) 1 : ONE WHO DESIGNS BUILDINGS AND HAS ACHIEVED CELEBRITY STATUS IN THE POPULAR PRESS AND PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS 2 : JET-SETTING ARCHITECT WITH LIFESTYLE AND CAREER RESEMBLING A HOLLYWOOD STAR.

THE *METROPLEX* GETS *A* NEW CENTER FOR THE PERFOR*MING* *ARTS*

BY MICHELANGELO SABATINO

A constellation of stars has converged on downtown Dallas to design new buildings and outdoor spaces. With the completion of the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House and the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre, due to open in fall 2009, the Dallas Arts District will boast four Pritzker Prize laureate-designed buildings. While six Pritzker winners–Philip Johnson, Rafael Moneo, I. M. Pei, Renzo Piano, James Stirling and Robert Venturi–were honored after completing their projects for Houston, the Dallas Art District architects received their commissions only after achieving their Pritzker status.

The new Center for the Performing Arts is only part of the story. The Trinity River Corridor Project promises to bring lakes, parks, sidewalk cafés, and waterfront condos to downtown and surrounding areas. The green swath and river will be spanned by at least two "signature" bridges designed by Spanish architect-engineer Santiago Calatrava; the first architectural project to emerge out of this ambitious plan is the Trinity River Audubon Center by Antoine Predock.

PHOTO OF WYLY CLADDING PROTOTYPE COURTESY VINCENT BANDY

TOP: **Bird's eye view of Dallas Arts District.**
ABOVE: **Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House (and One Arts Plaza in background) across the Woodall Rodgers Freeway.**

KEY

1-5 Dallas Center for the Performing Arts
- 1 Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House
- 2 Annette Strauss Artist Square
- 3 Performance Park
- 4 Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre
- 5 City Performance Hall

6 The Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center
7 Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe
8 The Belo Mansion
9 The Trammell and Margaret Crow Collection of Asia
10 Dallas Museum of Art
11 Nasher Sculpture Center
12 Proposed Museum Tower site
13 Woodall Rodgers Park
14 Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts
15 St. Paul United Methodist Church
16 Fellowship Church
17 One Arts Plaza
18 Dallas Black Dance Theatre

TOP: COURTESY DALLAS CENTER OF PERFORMING ARTS; BOTTOM: JASON GRANT

The concentration of high-profile buildings in the Dallas Arts District has generated a spirited debate about what is to be valued in contemporary architecture. Critics have charged that the Arts District will amount to a playground for the elite. Moreover, the claim is that rather than create an inclusive civic place by working collectively to meet the challenges of the city, starchitects have given Dallas iconic objects, destinations for wealthy benefactors—not a vibrant arts district of mixed uses for people of mixed incomes.

David Dillon wrote in the June 8, 2008 *Dallas Morning News*, "What's glaringly absent are the elements that would make the district a true civic showcase, where art meets life every day." He provides suggestions to create a more integrated district: more mixed-use development, more connections with mass transit, a comprehensive landscape plan. Although the criticism is worth considering, it should not undermine the efforts of those who have worked in earnest to get the Arts District to where it is now. As the new buildings of the Center for the Performing Arts begin to settle into their functions, there will be plenty of time for correctives in the form of additional transportation, landscape, and retail initiatives mentioned by Dillon that will bring people to the district on weekdays and weekends. Hopefully too, the Arts District will open up to more than just high-end residential units like One Arts Plaza and the proposed 40-story Museum Tower designed by LA firm Johnson Fain. Joint programming of all the institutions of the Arts District will be key to promoting activity throughout the week and weekends.

Seen from neighboring Houston, however, the monumental effort of Dallas's leaders and the ambition of the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts board committees are worthy of praise and close examination. Although Houston's recently inaugurated Discovery Green is an exception to several years of idle, it lacks the design ambition and scale of the Dallas Arts District and other recently completed public places such as Chicago's 24.5 acre Millennium Park, inaugurated in 2004.

ROME *WAS* NOT BUILT IN *A DAY*

What makes the 19-block, 68-acre Dallas Arts District distinctive is the way it brings together a number of institutions that serve like-minded cultural constituencies. Following the bond election of 1979, the City of Dallas under mayor Robert Folsom set aside a dozen dilapidated blocks north of downtown, in the wedge formed by the Woodall Rodgers Freeway and Central Expressway, for the future Arts District. Then, in 1982, following an international competition, the Boston and San Francisco landscape architects Sasaki Associates designed a great urban street for Dallas. Rather than eliminate cars altogether, the Sasaki plan sought to encourage pedestrian activity by way of tree-lined Flora Street, anchored at one end by the Dallas Museum of Art (1978-1993), designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes, with the recently completed One Arts Plaza on the opposite end. This mixed-use residential, commercial, and retail high-rise designed by Dallas architects Morrison Seifert Murphy is the first attempt to introduce residential units, albeit high-end, into the arts district. Hopefully, developers will introduce middle-income units on the fringes of the Arts District. The Elaine D. and Charles A. Sammons Park designed by Paris-based Michel Desvigne and the Annette Strausse Artist Square by Foster + Partners builds upon the original master plan.

Although the proximity of different arts institutions along Flora Street recall the Lincoln Center in New York, designed in the 1960s by a number of distinguished architects for related yet distinct organizations, it lacks the overall density of its Manhattan counterpart. This should not come as a surprise given the differences between the two cities. One can look closer to home to see that the trend toward the campus model is shared by other arts districts. Fort Worth has developed an arts district of its own with Philip Johnson's Amon Carter Museum (1961), Louis I. Kahn's Kimbell Art Museum (1972), Tadao Ando's Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2002), and a number of other cultural institutions all in close proximity. The

TOP: SERGE AMBROSE; BOTTOM: COURTESY ANTOINE PREDOCK ARCHITECT PC

BELOW: **Entrance facing Trailhead Pond.**
BOTTOM: **Site plan.**

TRINITY RIVER AUDUBON CENTER:

THE *NATURE* OF *SYMBOLISM*

The first architectural result of the Trinity River Corridor reclamation scheme is the recently opened Trinity River Audubon Center designed by Antoine Predock of Albuquerque with Brown Reynolds Watford (BRW) as architects of record. The symbolism of the bird-shaped plan and the bold cantilevers of the elevation facing Trailhead Pond merge abstraction and figuration. The wood and corten steel cladding, exposed concrete, and green roof make this a well-intentioned building despite occasional awkwardness. Predock's building can be added to a growing list of nationally and internationally acclaimed architects converging onto the new design capital of Texas. For more information see http://predock.com/trinity/trinity.html.

WINSPEAR OPERA HOUSE:

HIGH-TECH *MONUMENTALITY*

Rendering of Margaret McDermott Performance Hall at the Winspear Opera House.

When the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House opens in fall 2009, it will provide performance space for the Dallas Opera, the Texas Ballet Theatre, touring Broadway productions, and numerous other performances. The opera house design is distinguished by its high-tech monumentality and transparency. The deep-red glass panels that wrap around the auditorium volume thrusting out of the canopy contrast with the precious travertine of Piano's nearby Nasher Sculpture Center (2003), and the Indiana limestone-clad Dallas Museum of Art. The openessness of Nasher's transparent "storefront" façade is echoed in the transparency of the Winspear Opera House.

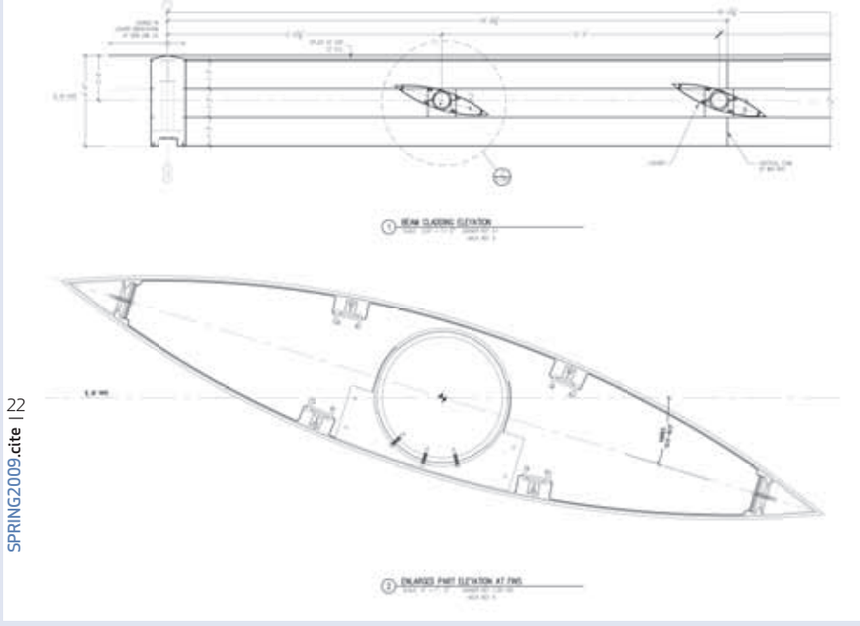
A restaurant, café, and possibly even a bookstore will remain open throughout the day in order to welcome both opera patrons and general public into the building. A clear glass façade can be raised like a garage door on the east side of the Opera House, where the café and the restaurant are located. The reflective red panels and the rounded contours of the auditorium echo the dramatic baroque draperies typically employed for theater stages. I. M. Pei & Partners' Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center (1989) to its west also rethinks in abstract terms the sculptural quality of baroque architecture.

Encouraging street life throughout the day outside of the performance schedule is key to the vitality of Flora Street. A similar open access is stressed in Foster + Partners' design for the Annette Strauss Artist Square, an outdoor performing arts space that can accommodate as many as 5,000 people on its lawn and terraced seating.

A monumental 60-foot sun canopy envelops the 2,200-seat auditorium of the opera house and projects beyond the building to create an urban space shaded from the Texas sun. It invites operagoers and the general public to linger outside the lobby and public concourse. The spacing and angles of its custom-designed louvers reduce the air-conditioning load on the building. Although the building has not gone through the LEED certification process so far, Foster + Partners incorporated many energy-efficient design features for exceptional sustainability in comparison with other buildings of its scope and size.

CLIENT: DALLAS CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS
ARCHITECTS: FOSTER + PARTNERS; KENDALL/HEATON ASSOCIATES INC.
CONTRACTOR: LINBECK CONSTRUCTION CORP.

BELOW: **Detail of sun canopy louvers.**
BELOW RIGHT: **View of sun canopy with Meyerson Hall in background.**



COURTESY FOSTER + PARTNERS

addition being planned for the Kimbell by Renzo Piano Building Workshop will likely add another distinguished building to the mix.

Despite what some critics have claimed, the Dallas Arts District will not only serve as a destination for performances but will also offer opportunities to generate a rich, interactive learning environment. The city's public magnet school for performing and visual arts, Brad Cloepfil-designed Booker T. Washington High School, connects students to performance professionals. Woodall Rodgers Park, also known as "Deck Park," designed by The Office of James Burnett, will provide a five-acre green space and pedestrian bridge across the highway that currently divides the West End Historical District, the Arts District, and Uptown Dallas. Thomas Phifer & Partners of recent Brochstein Pavilion fame will design the cafe and performance pavilions.

A RIVER WALK FOR DALLAS

Not too far from the Arts District, the Trinity River Corridor promises to offer residents and tourists new recreation and social venues. The Trinity River has suffered much abuse over the decades, having lost its natural meandering course as it became trapped between streets and highways. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the president of the Trinity Trust Foundation, Dr. Gail Thomas, and many others, the Trinity River Corridor project promises to be the green heart of the metroplex. It will soon revitalize the city along its banks while addressing flood control, transportation, recreation, and environmental restoration. The project was initiated under former mayor Laura Miller when the City Council unanimously passed a "Balanced Vision Plan" for Dallas. Devised by urban designer Alex Krieger of Harvard University's Graduate School of Design (with collaborators such as transportation expert William Eager of Seattle), the master plan aspires to reconnect the affluent northern parts of Dallas and its downtown with less affluent neighborhoods. The Trinity River Corridor project is scheduled for completion in 2014 (with a "beat 2014" motto). The task involves 27 government agencies involved in planning everything from toll roads to lakes.

It is tempting to compare these projects with those of other cities, which is useful, but only to a certain extent. Dallasites will not suddenly wake up in a city that reproduces all that is magical about Manhattan's venues or San Francisco's access to near pristine nature. Rather, thirty years in the making, a unique and substantially improved urban core is emerging in Dallas.

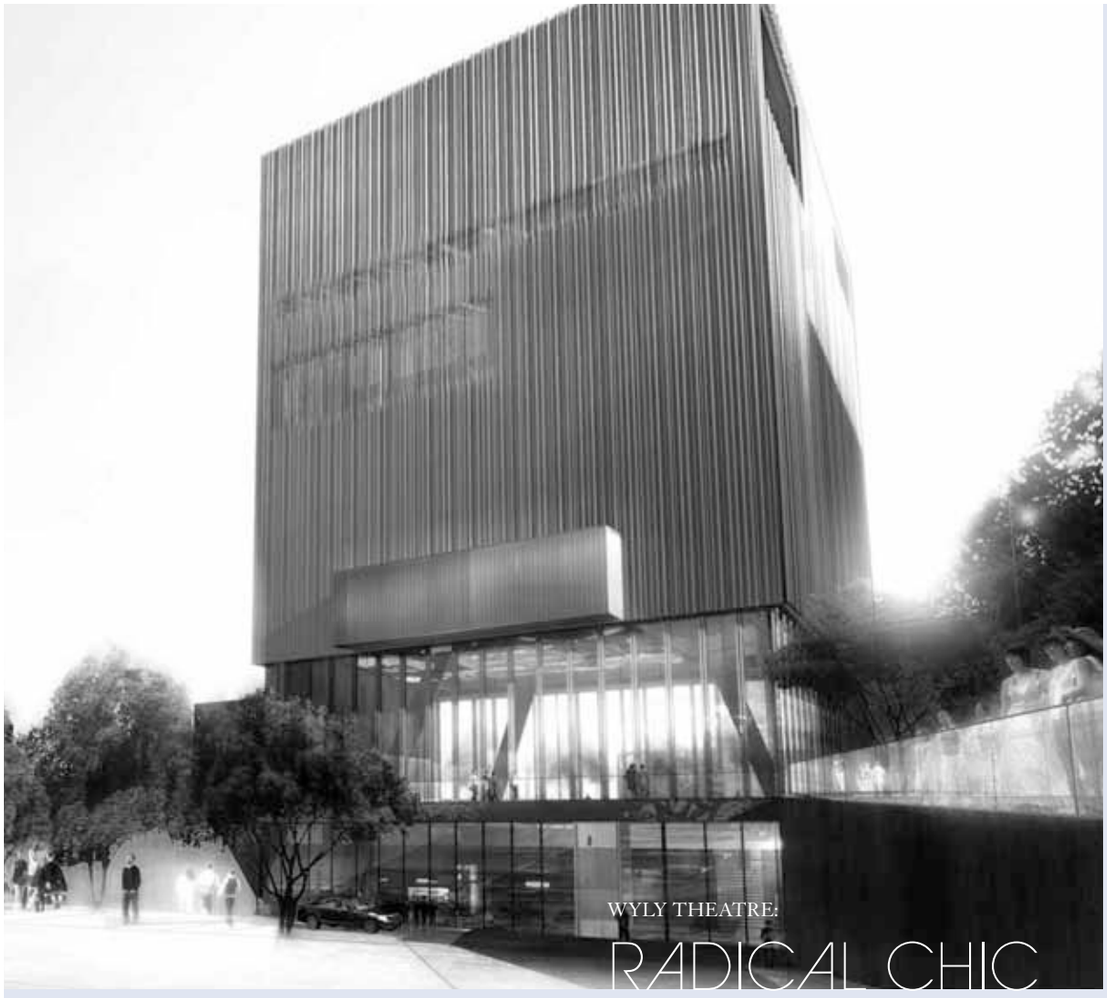
BLUE-CHIP VS "EMERGENT" ARCHITECTS?

In making these important additions to the built environment of Dallas possible, business and civic leaders have relied on the expertise of a number of American and European architects, landscape architects, and urban planners. American institutional and private clients, unlike their European counterparts, seem reluctant to adopt the talent-scouting method of open competitions as a way to inspire good design. They prefer selective interviewing instead. More than a tastemaker, Deedie Potter Rose has been part of a core of dedicated volunteers who have galvanized Dallas's business community into supporting the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. She is also a tireless promoter of high quality architecture. Most European countries have ministries of culture that are responsible for overseeing and undertaking major arts projects. In the United States we must rely mainly on the private sector for support. This makes enlightened citizens like Rose essential to the survival of the arts. Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." This is an apt description of what Rose and her associates have accomplished in Dallas.

The dynamics propelling the Arts District and the Trinity River Corridor

SEEN AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF TWO POSTMODERN TOWERS IN DOWNTOWN DALLAS DESIGNED BY SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL, THE **AUSTERE SPACES** OF THE WYLY THEATRE SERVE AS A LESSON IN **MODESTY** AND A HYMN TO **VERTICALITY** IN A LAND OF HORIZONTAL SPRAWL.

PLANS AND RENDERINGS COURTESY FOSTER + PARTNERS



WYLY THEATRE:

RADICAL CHIC

CLIENT: DALLAS CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS
ARCHITECTS: REM KOOLHASS (OMA); KENDALL/ HEATON ASSOCIATES INC.
CONTRACTOR: LINBECK CONSTRUCTION CORP.

Rendering, Wyly Theatre.

ABOVE: **Dallas Theatre Center formerly on the Arts District site.**
LEFT: **Construction before cladding.**

The Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre is the most unconventional building in the Arts District. It will provide a home for the Dallas Theater Center, the Dallas Black Dance Theatre, and the Anita Martinez Ballet Folklorico. In 2001 a group of potential architects for the theatre were invited to deliver lectures. Those included Rem Koolhaas and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), Daniel Libeskind, Snøhetta, and UN Studio. Deedie Potter Rose chaired the committee that eventually selected Rem Koolhaas / OMA.

The design includes the 600-seat Potter Rose Performance Hall and a black box theatre, as well as support spaces organized vertically, stacked on top and below the performance space. Seen against the backdrop of two postmodern towers in downtown Dallas designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, the austere spaces of the Wyly Theatre serve as a lesson in modesty and a hymn to verticality in a land of horizontal sprawl.

Three-dimensional building section.

With its exposed structure of reinforced concrete and suspended steel, the Wyly refuses the gravitas and glamour of such materials as the travertine of the Nasher and Indiana limestone of the Dallas Museum of Art. The understated, even gritty quality of the Wyly echoes the recently demolished corrugated steel shed building that once served as an alternative performance space for the Dallas Theatre Center. The curtain wall that wraps around the Wyly tower is made of unpainted aluminum extrusions of different diameters; the overall effect is that of an undulating theater curtain wrapped around a volume. In an attempt to integrate the building with the rest of the city, the Wyly can be entered through a downward sloping ground plane known as the "draw" or the "scoop". This subterranean entrance allowed the designers to keep the performance space visible to the public on both Flora Street and Ross Avenue.

CONSTRUCTION PHOTO: SERGE AMBROSE; DALLAS THEATRE CENTER PHOTO: DCPA; RENDERINGS: COURTESY LUXIGON

reclamation reflect the ways globalization has increased competition among cultural institutions and their architects, who now come from far and wide to win commissions and realize projects—usually with the help of local firms who serve as architects of record.

The immediate economic gains are clear. According to the Fall 2005 issue of *Stages*, preliminary studies have shown that the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts will create up to 2,000 new jobs in the arts and hospitality industries, and generate an estimated $170,000 million for the Dallas economy. Cities are competing to make themselves more attractive places to live and work, and in order to generate revenue related to tourism and conventions. Although opponents of the "creative class" strategy for revitalizing cities claim it perpetuates an elitist attitude, civic and business leaders can promote initiatives that spread wealth and opportunities.

Paying for good design—rather than opting for more expedient alternatives—not only elevates the day-to-day life of a city's inhabitants, it attracts people from the region, the nation, and around the world. Accordingly, discerning developers and civic leaders have realized that good design makes for good business. In "Pennzoil: Houston's Towering Achievement," published in Ada Louise Huxtable's 1976 *Kicked a Building Lately?*, the developer Gerald D. Hines described the money-generating dimension of good design as "status value." An interview with Mr. Hines in this issue of *Cite* explains his strategy and experiences as a developer. In the market of Class A office leases, returns can be dramatically increased by high-quality architecture that attracts clients who want to be associated with these distinguished spaces. In her article, Huxtable identified Houston as the place "where money, power, and patronage are coming together in a city of singular excitement and significance for the 1970s." If that was true of Houston then, it is certainly truer of Dallas today.

In the public sphere, buildings that contribute to an expanding appreciation of the city can revitalize its prospects, in which case the need to focus on choices based on quality rather than parochial loyalties is crucial. This is not to say that local architects should be ostracized from designing of their own cities. But ideally local talent coexists with and complements "outsider" talent. Consider the "Mies effect" experienced in Houston after Ludwig Mies van der Rohe completed Cullinan Hall (1958) for The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, or the "Piano effect" after Renzo Piano (who had never worked in the United States) designed the Menil Collection building in 1987. One only need recall the 1990 RDA tour, "After Mies" that focused on Houston architecture inspired by the German emigré architect to see the point.

Few U.S. cities are matching the large-scale investment of cultural and financial capital that Dallas is making in its public architecture. It is more the city's sense of goodwill toward architecture and faith in the process of pursuing greatness than the aspiration for flawless design that should inspire others. Bold initiatives concerning design and the environment sponsored by a small group often function as a catalyst for other courageous initiatives. Dallasites are working collectively to improve the architecture, landscape, and infrastructure of their city, and have channeled the expertise and glamour of starchitects to help them achieve this ambitious goal. ☆

FEW U.S. CITIES ARE MATCHING THE **LARGE-SCALE INVESTMENT** OF CULTURAL AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL THAT DALLAS IS MAKING IN ITS PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

SANTIAGO CALATRAVA'S BRIDGES:

THE ART OF ENGINEERING

Fundamental to the Trinity River Corridor's regenerative-type role are two freeway bridges designed by Santiago Calatrava. The first of these, the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge whose completion is expected by 2010, is an airy and elegant tensile structure. Extending the Woodall Rodgers Freeway across the Trinity to Singleton, West Dallas. The second of the bridges, the Margaret McDermott Bridge, will carry U.S. Interstate 30 connecting Dallas and Fort Worth. With their lofty sculptural forms, these two bridges will provide visual markers that can be seen from the distance and will no doubt draw residents and tourists alike to the recreational and entertainment spaces of the Trinity River Corridor.

Bird's eye view of the Trinity Corridor Project Model.

Rendering, Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge.

Model, Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge.

Rendering, View of Margaret McDermott Bridge from the Trinity River.

FROM TOP IMAGES COURTESY TRINITY RIVER CORRIDOR PROJECT (TRCP); SANTIAGO CALATRAVA, SANTIAGO CALATRAVA, AND TRCP

Whitechapel Idea Store, London, Adjaye Associates, 2005.

Making PUBLIC BUILDINGS

DAVID ADJAYE AT ARTPACE.

By Stephen Fox

A traveling show, organized in 2006

by the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London and devoted to public buildings by the London architect David Adjaye, was brought to San Antonio by Artpace as its final 2008 exhibition. It coincided with Adjaye's initiation of design for the Linda Pace Foundation in San Antonio. Linda Pace was the founder of Artpace. An artist, art collector, and former co-owner of the Pace Foods Company, she died in 2007 shortly after commissioning Adjaye to design a building to house her personal collection.

David Adjaye is a charismatic personality, as Houston audiences discovered when he spoke in RDA's "New Directions in Museum and Exhibition Design" lecture series in October 2005. If his articulate diction registers as British, his openness and enthusiasm seem almost American. Adjaye's father was a Ghanaian diplomat, which meant that Adjaye had an international upbringing in Africa, the Islamic world, and London, where he attended London South Bank University in the late 1980s and the Royal College of Art in the early 1990s. Adjaye has had a studio in London since 1994; he now has offices in Berlin and New York as well. Adjaye Associates have completed three buildings in the United States: Pitch Black (2006), an artists' space in Brooklyn; the MCA (Museum of Contemporary Art) in Denver (2007); and the LN House (2008), also in Denver. They were recently chosen to design the Smithsonian's National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington D.C.

"David Adjaye: Making Public Buildings" was installed in Artpace's windowless second-floor gallery. A table-height platform occupied the center of the big gallery. On it were displayed eight of Adjaye's designs for public buildings. For each project, a large-scale detailed model was accompanied by smaller-scaled study models, a site plan, a visual diagram explaining the architect's conception, an axonometric drawing, floor plans, samples of finish materials, and an artifact of African origin materially analogous to Adjaye's architectural conception. On two of the gallery's four walls, color photographs of the completed buildings were hung in columns above horizontal bands of smaller photos. The other two walls were used for projected and video images. A musical score composed by the architect's brother, Peter Adjaye, played continuously.

The exhibition followed the didactic model for architectural exhibitions associated with Renzo Piano. The emphasis was on the design process rather than on completed buildings. The design of the platform and the table-mounted display panels occupying a perimeter band subtly conveyed the rational process of analysis and presentation through which Adjaye Associates typically work out the design of their buildings, whose skewed, swelling shapes and provocative exterior surfaces may at first glance seem whimsical and impulsive.

Photographs of African capital cities, which Adjaye showed at a 2007 exhibition at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University and which were displayed at Artpace as continuous projected images

TIMOTHY SOAR

ADJAYE'S RESISTANCE TAKES THE FORM OF **wit** RATHER THAN MILITANCY.

ABOVE: View of model of Fairfield Road Housing in London, 2008.
LEFT: View of model of Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, 2005.

without explanatory text, had an immediacy that the architecture component lacked. This was not due to any curatorial flaw in installing the exhibition, but because understanding the process of architectural design is ultimately less emotionally gratifying than walking around and through, and enjoying, an inspiring work of architecture.

The exhibition catalogue edited by Peter Allison contains the same array of interpretive images as the exhibition. Short introductory essays by Saskia Sassen, Okwui Enwezor, and Nikolaus Hirsch probe the public dimension of Adjaye's work. Each criticizes the complacency with which the phenomenon of the "public" is invoked today during an era of eroding civil liberties, police profiling of those who stand out as different, and fearful anxiety over perceived threats to middle-class privilege posed by "others." Each essayist sees in Adjaye's public buildings a resistance to this fear-fueled oppression.

Adjaye's resistance takes the form of wit rather than militancy. His buildings don't conform to their programs and sites: they deform in response to them. They appear to have been creased, folded, bent, mashed, twisted, wracked, and punched. If this terminology suggests a Koolhaas-like approach (i.e., the paranoid-critical method + delirium = a deranged box), Adjaye's buildings pursue this approach with disarmingly exuberant cheerfulness. Hirsch sees this facet of Adjaye's buildings as indicating his affinity for "opportunism, superficiality, ruse, narration, and appropriation." These may not seem like complimentary observations, but taken literally, they incisively name the attributes that make Adjaye's buildings so compelling.

Of the eight buildings in the exhibition, the Idea Store branch libraries are symptomatic of what makes Adjaye's work so attractive. Both are in Tower Hamlets, the most racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse immigrant working-class borough in London. Both reimagine the branch library as a "store," where the usual library access to books and other media is combined with continuing education classrooms, plus an existing retail center in the two-story Chrisp Street building, and performance and health therapy spaces, in the five-story Whitechapel Road building. In both buildings, program loosely occupies loftlike interiors. Adjaye's diagrams demonstrate how he and his associates deformed the boxlike program containers they shaped so that the buildings deflect to external and internal pressures, especially in bounding adjacent public open space. Rather than trying to annex the open space through design intervention, Adjaye Associates faced the Idea Stores with transparent glass curtain walls, producing visual continuity between inside and outside. The curtain walls are almost banal, but by interspersing the transparent or opaque panels with thin vertical stripes of blue and green vision glass, the architects made the boxes radiant from inside and outside. Similarly, their use of laminated wood joists and vertical fins inset behind the curtain walls, as well as fiberboard panels—extremely economical, off-the-shelf materials—make the interiors feel spontaneous, noninstitutional, and modern. Materially and volumetrically as well as programmatically, the Idea Stores liberate space in their dense urban neighborhoods. They play off more solemn buildings around them to construct spaces of informality, where social difference is the norm, where new layers of urban continuity are inserted with a light hand, and where new forms of community can be socially constructed without being architecturally prescribed. In this pair of buildings, the applicability of the catalogue's subtitle—Specificity (in response to site and program) Customization (of standardized building materials) Imbrication (insertion into a bigger whole)—to Adjaye Associates' practice becomes clear.

The exhibition and catalogue illuminate the sensibility and imagination that attracted Linda Pace to David Adjaye and his work. As Adjaye's designs for the Pace Foundation building, adjacent to Chris Park at South Flores and Camp Streets, take shape, count on a new spark of energy and mischief to light up the south edge of downtown San Antonio. ☆

View of exhibition "David Adjaye: Making Public Buildings."

PHOTOS THIS PAGE SERGE AMBROSE











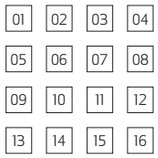




GERALD D. HINES *visits* HIS COLLEGE

A Conversation with Joe Mashburn
Transcribed by Allison Parrott

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY HINES



01 - 3100 RICHMOND
02 - HOUSTON GALLERIA
03 - ONE SHELL PLAZA
04 - ONE SHELL PLAZA
05 - PENNZOIL PLACE
06 - MUTUAL INSURANCE
07 - HOUSTON GALLERIA
08 - J.P. MORGAN CHASE TOWER
09 - 2929 RICHMOND
10 - J.P. MORGAN CHASE TOWER
11 - ONE SHELL PLAZA
12 - ONE SHELL PLAZA
13 - HOUSTON GALLERIA
14 - 3015 RICHMOND
15 - PENNZOIL PLACE
16 - 3101 RICHMOND

ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2009 THE LEGENDARY DEVELOPER GERALD D. HINES VISITED THE "INTRODUCTION TO ARCHITECTURE AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGN" CLASS TAUGHT BY JOE MASHBURN, ARCHITECTURE DEAN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON.

JM: The gentleman sitting on this stool to my right is Mr. Gerald Hines, for whom, of course, our college is named.

The designer of this building, Philip Johnson, said that Mr. Hines was the most important client of architecture—patron of architecture—in the 20th century. He has changed the faces of cities all over the world. In this city, Hines buildings include Pennzoil Place, Williams Tower, and many, many others.

Mr. Hines, you began with a one-man office, founded in 1957, more than 50 years ago and grew it into one of the largest, most well-respected real estate investment, development and management firms in the world. How did you organize your company as you expanded?

GH: It was very difficult. For an entrepreneur who grew up as a mechanical engineer, the one thing I had was a sense of detail, and that was very difficult to delegate to someone else. But I finally let go a little bit, and I found out that some of the younger people were smarter than I was, so I gave them more responsibility.

I started with a "single point of responsibility" model—giving to one person the total responsibility. Of course, for awhile, that person was me. We believe in that model and it exists to this day. Early on, we did some crazy things that no one should ever do. We started two major projects, One Shell and the Galleria, with a $6 million real estate net worth with 50 percent equity. But I brought in some partners, and got some additional equity.

We have expanded geographically to Austin, Minneapolis, Cincinnati, San Francisco, New York, Boston, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, China, India, Russia, and elsewhere. But it is all based on a regional structure: there is one head, and then there are senior officers that handle the individual projects in a given region. The CEO of each division now runs a big company.

JM: Thinking about the enormous complexity of what you just described—operating with a whole array of architects and contractors, and contracting systems, all of that enormous diversity—what's the common thread?

GH: Well, I want to improve the built environment with what we do. That's a pretty big statement. But it is up to each of the regions to make their own decisions how they want to build a project, what architect to use. Sometimes we used a mini-competition, where we selected three architects and gave them about five thousand dollars apiece, to come back and give us their concept of how they would solve the problem that we have with the proposition

TOP: Gerald D. Hines (left) with Joe Mashburn.
ABOVE: Interior, Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture.

we are making. That's worked very well. We did that in France for the EDF Tower. Harry Cobb won that one, and it became the building of the year in Paris. For an American, that's something. We used that same system on the Texas Commerce Tower [now the JPMorgan Chase Tower], which is the tallest building in Texas. I. M. Pei came up with a design. We liked it, and it made sense, so we built that design without going to another designer. So there are a lot of different ways that we look at new projects.

JM: Tell me about the most important highlights of your firm's history?

GH: Well, in 1952 (that's before I started the firm), I was junior partner in an engineering company here called Texas Engineering, and my partner, who had been the Dean of Engineering at the University of New Mexico, was one of the first consulting engineers for the city of Houston. We'd design and sell equipment to the big high-rise buildings. But I was building small projects on the side, five years before I founded the firm—I built warehouses and so forth.

Those first buildings were pretty important. I had my first office at 4219 Richmond. I wanted to do a really good warehouse with Walter Rolfe, who hadn't done many warehouses. Mr. Rolfe had been the Dean of Architecture at the University of Texas, and he took me under his wing and explained how he was going to do this. He explained how the soffit was integral to his design. We built a very good 30,000-square-foot warehouse with 10,000 square feet of office; and it's still there. Later I went after the Houston Natural Gas Building and I had it, then they changed management, cancelled me, and gave it to Ken Schnitzer, who was going to build them a much bigger building downtown. Shell was a project I wasn't going to lose. I met Bruce Graham, a partner with SOM, at a golf resort on the Gulf. He was a heck of a salesman and a very good architect, talking to me about doing a concrete building. So, with Fazlur Khan, one of the great structural engineers, we built the tallest concrete building in the world: One Shell. It's still the tallest lightweight concrete building in the world.

One of the reasons we got Shell was that we knew that they moved a third of their space every year, so we tried to come up with a system that would cut their churn costs. With their tight floor-to-floor mechanical systems (they were just wedged in there), the cost of the mechanical was huge when they made changes. So I said, "Instead of going 11 feet 3 inches floor-to-floor, we'll go 13 feet 4 inches." It gave me a huge space so that we could run oval or round duct work you could hang for a fraction of the price of changing other ductwork. So we had lowered the cost of future operations. That was our first energy-conscious building. What we didn't realize at the time was that with all that additional plenum space, when all the technology came in, we had a huge reservoir where we could run cables and keep our building updated. So there it is, almost 40 some years later, and the building is still modern.

JM: For those of you unfamiliar with One Shell Plaza, it is travertine-covered and has a sort of ripple-down façade.

GH: Bruce said, "Oh, Gerry, you can just paint the concrete." Well, I went with the travertine cladding.

JM: You can read the structure. Begin at the base, and as it goes up the building, the structure is expressed in the elastic concrete it is made from. It has a huge fluid foundation.

GH: And we almost lost the street. We had to go across the street, and the contractor had to keep the street from caving in on us. We've had some interesting construction problems through the years.

JM: You have worked with many important architects. We mentioned Philip Johnson. What are the challenges?

GH: Well, one I didn't mention was Gyo Obata, who designed The Galleria. Stanley Marcus, who wanted to use Obata for one of his stores, said I should talk to him, so I did and was impressed. Gyo said, "Gerry,

Early on, we did some *crazy things* that no one should ever do.

TOP: COURTESY HINES; BOTTOM: PAUL HESTER, FROM *PHILIP JOHNSON AND TEXAS*

The skyline that Hines Developed. Left to right:
1 - J. P. Morgan Chase Tower (1982, I. M. Pei & Partners and 3D/International)
2 - 717 Texas (2003, Hellmuth Obata & Kassabaum)
3 - Pennzoil Place (1975, Johnson/Burgee Architects and S. I. Morris Associates)
4 - Bank of America Center (1983, Johnson/Burgee Architects and Kendall/Heaton Associates)
5 - One Shell Plaza (1971, Skidmore Owings & Merrill and Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson)
6 - 1100 Louisiana (1980, Skidmore Owings & Merrill and 3D/International)
7 - 1500 Louisiana (2002, Cesar Pelli & Associates and Kendall/Heaton Associates)

JIM OLIVE

when you build a space as big as you're talking about, one thing that you have to think about is how do people know where they are inside it?" That's the reason that we have the skylight, so you know where you are in the space. That was interesting. And the other thing unique about The Galleria was that we had this basement space, and I was worried: basement space normally went for 20 to 25 percent of your main floor in rental, so how did we get that rental up? Gyo said, "What about ice skating?" I thought, okay, no one's put an ice skating rink inside of a mall. So I went and figured out what the operating costs would be in an open versus closed mall. It was small in relation to the number of square feet I had to lease, so I said let's just put it in the middle. So we did, and it generated rentals that were higher than our main floor tenants paid. A lot that you have to do as a developer is come up with ways to make the rental stronger.

JM: Robert A. M. Stern calls The Galleria one of the most innovative buildings of the 1970s and 1980s, and that's because it broke all the rules.

GH: It broke some of the rules, and almost broke me!

JM: No one thought that you could have three floors of retail or that people would use a parking garage like they use it today. All the rules were shattered with that project, and of course it has been successful ever since.

You mentioned some innovations in One Shell Plaza as well. You've been a forerunner in initiating movements that have had a historical impact on architecture and real estate, such as Park Lane with its famous architects—the "Starchitects." How did that happen?

GH: Building a good building means other people come to you. The president of Pennzoil came to us after Baker and Botts moved into One Shell and asked us to take a look at doing a building for them. Bruce Graham came up with a building that was more like the Sears building in Chicago, and I said, whoa, I just don't think Houston is ready for that kind of building—it's too stark. The developer is the conduit for the people of the city: he has to interpret their taste. The Brochsteins asked me to bring Philip Johnson and Burgee into it. We had rejected four of their initial designs for Post Oak Center, so I said, "I'm not going to go with someone that crazy." But since we *had* built that fifth design, I thought, well, I'll give him another try. I said to Philip, "What I really need is a second major tenant." He said, "Why not put a second building on the site?" I said, "No one's ever put two buildings on a 250 by 250-foot block." And he said, "Let me show you." He drew the NBC logo in plan: two trapezoids in counterpoint. He said, "You've got two buildings; go find another tenant," and we did. Philip did an excellent job: it cost less than the building that Bruce Graham had proposed, our parking was three times better because we had a shorter building (two 37-story buildings versus one 55-story one), and we still did a mullion system on 2-1/2 feet at an 8-inch depth. I like that because, as you look at it obliquely, you get a rhythm. If you did it on a 5-foot center, you wouldn't get that rhythm.

JM: When you're developing a building, do you think of that project as existing in the fabric of the city? Is each of your projects a sort of isolated exercise or more of an urban design?

GH: Well, I think you look at both. For a lot of the buildings we built in New York, like 53rd At Third, we looked at how it sat in the framework of the buildings around it.

JM: That's the lipstick one.

GH: Because it curved, it sat within a nice setting created by the buildings on either side. Built over a train station, 450 Lexington fit within the context of the original building, which was a historic landmark: all four facades had to be preserved and integrated into the new building design. So I think we've done both. The EDF Tower in Paris, in La Défense, is a singular building crying for attention, and it gets it because there wasn't much of architectural repute on either side. That was interesting. We did Five Hundred Boylston, which was a Philip Johnson building, and then he went down to a seminar in Florida where he made the statement, "All architects are whores." That got back to the mayor of Boston, and he said, "Hines, you're not building phase two of your project with Johnson, are you?" So Bob Stern got that job. Today, his adjoining Two Twenty Two Berkeley fits with other classical red–brick, Boston buildings and also sits well with Johnson's original building.

JM: What is your advice to these students entering this market? One of our students asked, "Did you ever have thoughts about changing your major to something else during the rougher times of your student life?"

GH: Well, I went to school for a year before I turned 18, and then Uncle Sam took me into the army, first in the infantry and then into the Corps of Engineers as a young officer. When I came back in 1946, there wasn't much chance of changing my major at that point. As my father told me, "Gerry, engineers didn't get laid off during the Depression." His comment should be in each of your thoughts right now. We're going through one of the toughest downturns I've seen. In 1982 I was the chairman of the Dallas branch of the Federal Reserve Bank, and that was very, very tough. Inflation was so high, we had treasury bill rates of 15 percent and interest rates from the bank at 20 to 25 percent. It wiped out the real estate community. I don't know where we're going on this one, but some of us think it's going to be as bad as '82 and maybe '29. I don't think we're going to see much over a 10-percent unemployment rate, but it is going to be tough.

JM: If there's any real estate developer who will survive the downturn, it will certainly be Hines.

GH: Thank you. And you all should study hard! ☆

For a detailed overview of Hines see the recent: *Paul Goldberger (et al.),* Hines: A Legacy of Quality in the Built Environment *(Bainbridge Island: Fenwick, 2007)*

ARTIST DISTRICT AS DIASPORA

BY CHRISTA FORSTER

In his essay "Strange New City," the poet and essayist Mark Doty, a former professor in the University of Houston Creative Writing program, dramatizes the conflict between his initial experience and his final assessment of Houston:

> After the initial shock [one] feels on entering the rawly energetic Sunbelt is the odd exuberance of it, an unexpected feeling of human energy, the room, even in the endless asphalt acres, for individual expression…. [T]his is what the future looks like: if America has a ready example of life in the twenty-first century, this is probably it: artificial, polluted, a little dangerous and completely confusing, yes—but also interestingly polyglot, open-ended, divergent, entirely unstuffy and appealingly uncertain of itself.

Undoubtedly, Doty's paean to Houston would resonate with most creative people who make Houston their temporary or permanent home. For artists, the character of the landscape plays a central role in the epic struggle inherent in the creative process. How Houston produces and sustains the necessary ache and yearning that prompts the artistic imagination lies precisely within its constant enactment of paradox, its unification of contraries, its ability to marry Heaven and Hell. An alpha and omega city, the beginning and the end of the American Dream—as a muse, Houston is unfailingly generous to her protégés.

This generosity may be the reason why the city has emerged in the avant-guard of the nation's alternative arts scene. Pamela Clapp, executive director of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts in New York City, credits Houston's strong and viable arts infrastructure, including major museums, art schools, commercial galleries, and alternative art spaces, with shaping the city as an important hub in the national and international arts network. "It's a testimony to the health of the arts environment when a city can spark new creative enterprises the way Houston has," Clapp says, citing DiverseWorks, Project Row Houses, Aurora Picture Show, and Voices Breaking Boundaries as luminary examples of such creative enterprises.

Through the Houston Idea Fund, the Warhol Foundation continues to invest money in Houston's arts scene, supporting unconventional artistic practices that fall outside the traditional frameworks of gallery, museum, or alternative arts space. The Joanna, an experimental exhibition space created as an open platform for emerging artists and curators, and Skydive, a collection of exhibition spaces located on the floor beneath Scott Gertner's Sky Bar, have received Houston Idea Fund monies. And it's not only the

- PROTOTYPE 180
- ART GUYS WORLD HEADQUARTERS
- ITCHY ACRES
- SPACETAKER AT WINTER STREET STUDIOS
- SKYDIVE
- FRENETICORE/FRENETIC THEATER
- BOX 13
- VOICES BREAKING BOUNDARIES AT CAFE FLORES

Warhol Foundation that is interested in Houston's alternative arts culture and its contributions to the national stage; the venerable *New York Times* itself has also taken notice. In its 2008 Travel Magazine, the editors highlighted Houston as a "true cultural hotbed" especially suited to "creative types with more ideas than cash," identifying Spacetaker, an artist resource center located within Winter Street Studios, as an energetic arts space where "designers and artists of every stripe come together." (Full disclosure: Christa Forster is married to David A. Brown, the founding director of Spacetaker.) Indy-small-town vibe.

Besides its supportive infrastructure and artistic camaraderie, there's something even more primitive at work in Houston's thriving arts scene: opportunism. As Bill Davenport, a visual artist featured in the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston's 2009 exhibition "No Zoning," says, "At first Houston seems awful, gross, but once you get used to this disorganized, weird, post-apocalyptic mess of a city, you realize you can get away with murder. You can do anything." Often this opportunistic, winner-take-all attitude, so prevalent in business, debases the needs and principles of the community, as Houstonians have witnessed with the Enron and Stanford Financial debacles or the lax environmental regulatory policies that have resulted in Houston's abominable air quality. On the other hand, when artists seize upon the same opportunistic spirit underlying a practice such as the city's lack of zoning, their work may—intentionally or not—benefit the community in uplifting, transformational ways.

Houston's low cost of living, coupled with its minimal property restrictions, provides artists with incentives to dream large. As New York-based artist Mary Ellen Carroll suggests, where land art is concerned Houston's lack of zoning is the equivalent of acreage elsewhere. This is exactly why she chose Houston for her latest conceptual art work, *Prototype 180*. Located in Southwest Houston's Sharpstown subdivision, *Prototype 180* will involve literally rotating the 1950s house situated on a large lot abutting Bayland Park—that is, picking the house up and turning it around, the first result being that the entrance now faces the backyard and the public park. Her intention with this project, already ten years in the making, follows the trajectory of land art: she wants the conceptual presence of the work to reflect an artistic gesture that trumps its design. Carroll's artistic goal is to "consider every object, every process that takes place in the building process," including historical precedents in land use, best practices in new construction, innovative heating and cooling techniques, food production, public policy, private/public corridors, and redevelopment's impact upon

AS A MUSE, HOUSTON IS UNFAILINGLY **GENEROUS** TO HER PROTÉGÉS.

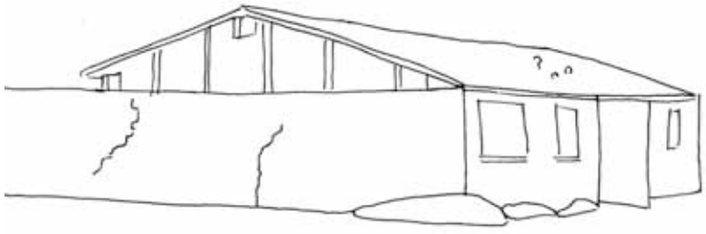
"Some day it will be our day," graffiti near Box 13 and the corner of Harrisburg and Cesar Chavez Boulevards.

MAP: NICO GARDNER; PHOTO: DAVID A. BROWN

the community. Ideally, *Prototype 180* can serve as a model for these investigations.

She chose Sharpstown because while doing her initial research, she noted it as an "innovation territory," a place where history, public policy, community, and land use converge to form a crucible for revolutionary new thinking about how and where we decide to live. In this way, she wants the project to go beyond mere urban renewal. Regardless of how *Prototype 180* shapes up, however, Carroll shrinks from any intimation that its intention is to transcend its function as a work of art and instigate a social movement. "I can set up the conditions [where rethinking] is probably going to happen, but I can't make that emotional experience occur. Artists are not social workers. It's someone else's job to keep [what they get from *Prototype 180*] in motion. Ultimately, I am always returning to the conceptual apparatus as a work of art."

HOW HOUSTON PRODUCES AND SUSTAINS THE NECESSARY **ACHE** AND **YEARNING** THAT PROMPTS THE ARTISTIC IMAGINATION LIES PRECISELY WITHIN ITS CONSTANT ENACTMENT OF **PARADOX**, ITS UNIFICATION OF CONTRARIES, ITS ABILITY TO MARRY HEAVEN AND HELL.



Nestor Topchy is another artist considering land use as a central trope in his artistic practice. In contrast to Carroll, however, Topchy aims specifically for his latest project, Oprojecto, to transcend his individual artistic vision. "I was getting to it with TemplO/Zocalo," he says, referring to the erstwhile multidisciplinary artist complex in Houston's West End that he, along with fellow artists Rick Lowe, sculptor Dean Ruck, and conceptual artist Jim Pirtle, co-founded in 1989. "But I didn't own the land." The website for the project, organhouston.org, describes Oprojecto as a "living work of art, a self-sustaining village and an environmental action." Once Topchy and the non-profit he created to help realize the project—Organ—secures the acreage needed for its development, his plans include the following:

OProjecto will be constructed primarily from 486 steel shipping containers, and will consist of two main elements: an outer bazaar, which serves as the walled

Proposals from a "Sunday Soup" held at Skydive. Participants contributed to a common fund, shared soup, mounted proposals, and voted on which project would receive the money. The winning proposal by Mindy Kober and students at the Houston Outdoor Learning Academy was to produce an interactive garden of native plants. The American Wandering Club proposed commissioning public sculpture on abandoned empty sites throughout Houston. Performance Art Lab sought funding to curate a guerrilla art show at a Taco Bell.

DRAWING: NICO GARDNER; PHOTO: DAVID A. BROWN

NO ZONING

by christa Forster

Site of *Prototype 180*, not-yet-rotated rear of house abutting Bayland Park, Sharpstown.

Box 13 ArtSpace, corner lot, Harrisburg and Cesar Chavez boulevards.

DAVID A. BROWN

Houston's no zoning policy has birthed a barrage of surreal juxtapositions—that church around the corner from the icehouse across the street from the adult bookstore facing Headboard Heaven next door to that single-family home. In any other metropolis, one with rational zoning practices, magnificent mashups like these might never see the light of day. In Houston, however, such absurdities weave through our collective consciousness, fashioning a genius loci that is at once defiant and pliant.

The show running through July 12, 2009 at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, "No Zoning: Houston Artists Engaging the City," celebrates makers whose imaginations have enmeshed them in the city's ordinary woof and extraordinary warp. What ties most of the exhibition's works and projects together is how they recall audacious acts direct from dreamland: viewing movies while Jacuzzi-hopping, marrying a plant, constructing a walled city with shipping containers, knitting cozies around stop signs, flipping a house literally, removing the heart of a home and feeling the void that results after the heart is cut out.

No Zoning features seventeen individual artists and collaborative teams, including The Art Guys (Jack Massing and Michael Galbreth), Mary Ellen Carroll, Rick Lowe, Mel Chin, Bill Davenport, Ben DeSoto, Sharon Engelstein, Andrea Grover, The Flower Man (Cleveland Turner), collaborators Dan Havel and Dean Ruck, George Hixson, Lauren Kelly, KnittaPlease (Magda Sayeg, et al.), Eric Leshinsky, Nestor Topchy, Jim Pirtle, and Workshop Houston (Zach Moser and Benjy Mason). In addition to their work, the show provides examples and documentation of significant projects from the 1980s to the present, and presents a program of performance, lectures, and video screenings during the museum's extended Thursday evening hours. Special artistic programs and educational tours located throughout the city are scheduled as well.

Call the CAMH, 713.284.8250, for more information.

ECONOMY OF EVERYWHERE

by christa Forster

Houston's oil bust in the 1980s, and the ensuing recession in the early 90s, resulted in a surplus of derelict and affordable spaces in the city's center, a boon for artists and small arts groups, because they could occupy space in the same neighborhoods where their audiences, patrons, and fellow artists dwelled. With Houston's urban renewal, artists and small arts groups have embraced sprawl and ventured farther out. Some went north; many went east; some shifted into the very air.

"Itchy Acres" in Independence Heights has been an artistic locus on Houston's north side for 20 years. Recently, more artists—mostly visual—have ventured there, including the Art Guys who moved their world headquarters from 22nd street in Shady Acres to Knox Street in Acres Homes. Nestor Topchy's shipping container village, "Organ," is also envisioned as being on the north side.

When Rebekah French and Robert Thoth first started looking for a space for their multi-media dance theater, Freneticore, "there were ten warehouses available along Navigation," says French. "By the time we had our financing together, there was only one left." French and Thoth bought that remaining 17,000-square-foot warehouse on the corner of Navigation and North Adams, and for the past three years, have been retrofitting it as a theater/exhibition/studio space.

While working as a fine-dining waiter in mid-2000, Thoth consistently overheard developers talking about gentrifying the Second Ward. "We figured that buying out here was a good compromise between the old Commerce Street arts district and affordability," says Thoth. French and Thoth describe their predominantly Hispanic neighborhood as "vibrant." "And we're five minutes away in every direction from a lot of weirdness, a lot of magic," says French.

> "WE'RE FIVE MINUTES AWAY IN EVERY DIRECTION FROM A LOT OF WEIRDNESS, A LOT OF MAGIC."

In 2009, everyone is concerned about affordability. "It's going to be a time of great change," says Michael Peranteau, a respected leader in Houston's art community since helping to found Diverse Works in the early 1980s. "In this economy," Peranteau suggests, "the smaller, more agile groups without spaces might fare better. They don't have the albatross of (having to maintain the cost of their) space around their necks." For example, Nameless Sound, a non-profit for international contemporary music, has a dispersed approach, using spaces all over town.

Living Room Series: Brown in the 3rd Ward, September, 2008.

Pamela Clapp, executive director of the Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, reinforces Peranteau's speculation when she commends groups who are able to solve their space needs creatively, referring specifically to the Houston arts group Voices Breaking Boundaries, whose "Living Room Series" moves that organization's arts programming for the public into the private homes of willing individuals.

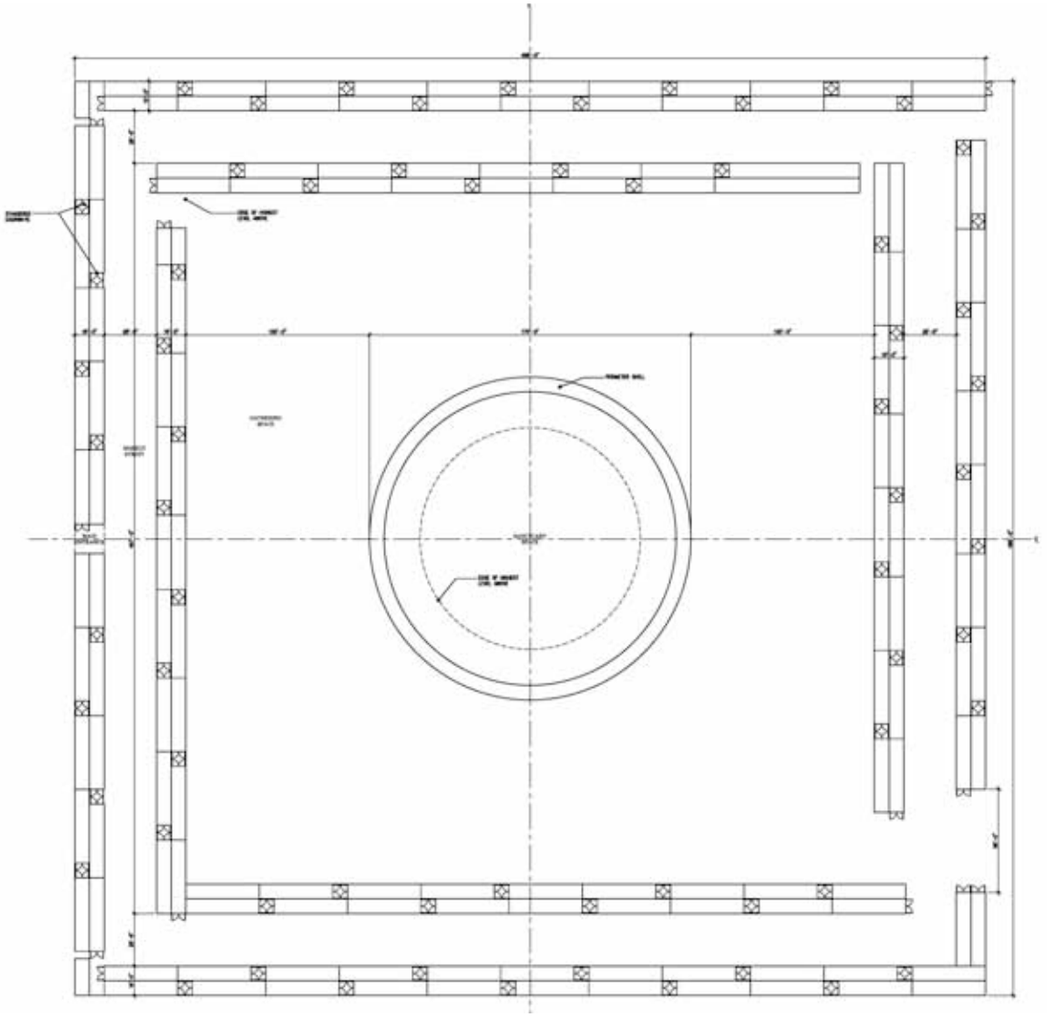
perimeter of the city, and an inner sanctum/park. OProjecto will include low-cost artist and architecture studios, micro-enterprises, shops and restaurants, an outdoor theater, meditation-contemplation center, garden and pond.

Whereas most developers are inspired by visions of new avenues for financial profit, the type of profit Topchy seeks, playing the role here of artist *and* urban developer, is a spiritual one. He envisions Oprojecto as a social sculpture embodying a meritocratic communal effort that will evolve toward a balance of excellence and happiness—reflecting, he hopes, the "presence that's evolving in everything, a divine presence." In order for this type of evolution to happen, "people have to be comfortable, feel secure, be inspired," Topchy says. "All these things can come from one space. The space can lead people to an easier way to transcendence."

It speaks to Houston's power upon the artistic imagination that Oprojecto has become an emergent reality. Topchy and his team of key players, architect Si Dang of ANDRIA Design and civil engineer Hirsham El Chaar, have been checking out the neighborhood of Acres Homes as the site for Organ's Oprojecto. Acres Homes, historically an African American neighborhood and currently one of the city's poorest and most blighted, has been targeted by Mayor Bill White's Houston HOPE program, which proposes to "invest in a collaborative coalition of community stakeholders and city leaders that develop and implement comprehensive plans to improve the quality of life in low-income neighborhoods." Inviting Topchy and company into this collaborative coalition would be an interesting move on the part of Houston HOPE; it's a truism that artists are the mavericks who often blaze the trail for other pioneering folk seeking to improve their lives through land ownership and entrepreneurship. Acres Homes is an ideal location for Oprojecto: land there

ERIC HESTER

Rendering and plan of Oprejecto, a village to be made of shipping containers.



RENDERING AND PLAN COURTESY NESTOR TOPCHY

is still relatively affordable and, just as important, highly accessible to Houston's commercial, medical, cultural, and residential center—the Inner Loop. Already creative Houstonians seeking more room to realize their visions, including The Art Guys, the late Virgil Grotfeldt, and the painter Terrell James, have relocated to Acres Homes, sowing the seeds for the urban renewal so coveted by city planners and urban developers alike.

The story of how artists revitalize defunct metropolitan areas can be read all across America and viewed in places like Brooklyn's Williamsburg, Los Angeles's Chinatown and Silver Lake, and San Francisco's Mission District. Abandoned or empty properties, viewed as blight by many citizens, are seen by artists as raw canvases upon which to mount their works. Here in Houston, alternative arts groups are embracing the East End as one of the last frontiers for securing an Inner Loop address. BOX 13 (formerly Commerce Street Artists' Warehouse) dominates the corner of Harrisburg and Cesar Chavez; FrenetiCore Multimedia Dance Theatre has set up shop on the corner of Navigation and North Adams; and the fledgling Independent Arts Collaborative has had its eye on a large parcel of land along Canal. Affordability and accessibility are prime reasons why these groups are drawn to the East End. Metro's rail expansion, now in full swing along Harrisburg, provides them with the hope that if they build it, their audiences will come.

While it's uncertain whether long-term residents of these transitional neighborhoods—Sharpstown, Acres Homes, the East End—will embrace the influx of artistic innovation, it's probable that the artists' tendency toward collaboration will serve them well as they undertake their projects in these "innovation territories." And surely Houston's "unstuffy" character, this polyglot of problem-solvers, will ultimately convince its citizens to navigate the journey's obstacles together. ☆

While Houstonians are hard at work drawing relationships between their city and places like Chicago and Los Angeles, we sometimes overlook our relationships to other peer cities. Miami, for example, is a city that, like Houston, started the 20th century small and boomed after WWII.

"Interama: Miami and the Pan-American Dream," an engaging exhibition at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida

Interama:

Miami and the Pan-American Dream

by David Rifkind

that ran from June 21, 2008 to January 25, 2009, explored a project whose personality and vision finds no equivalent in the history of the Bayou City. When Houston was building SOM, Johnson, and Pei, Florida chartered utopic visions for Miami of unbuilt Kahn, Rudolf, and Breuer.

Aerial perspective of Marcel Breuer's design for the Eastern South American Community, 1967.

The exhibition "Interama: Miami and the Pan-American Dream" documents the numerous unrealized designs for Interama, a vast exposition site and urban design project planned for North Miami's Biscayne Bay coast. Conceived as a Truman-era exercise in hemispheric diplomacy, Interama originated in 1951 as the permanent Pan-American fairgrounds and later evolved into an ambitious plan to develop commercial and cultural facilities on a new site created over a landfill. Curators Allan Shulman and Jean-François Lejeune, professors in the School of Architecture at the University of Miami, have mined numerous archives to gather previously unexhibited and unpublished materials that chronicle the project's 24-year history and trace the vicissitudes of its numerous schemes. The exhibition features a wealth of engrossing material that rewards careful inspection.

International fairs have always provided a testing ground for formal invention, and Interama's numerous schemes record two decades of postwar modernism's search for an appropriate form for expressing regional political ambitions. Shulman and Lejeune's exhibition locates the project within the two-century history of "Pan-Americanism"—from the Monroe Doctrine to the Cold War—and demonstrates how local business and government elites leveraged federal interest in fostering hemispheric relations into support for Miami's bid to mediate commercial and diplomatic ties between the United States, the countries of Latin America, and the Caribbean. The state of Florida chartered the Inter-American Center Authority in 1951, a decade after the city emerged as the country's principal port of entry, handling nearly half of all international arrivals and departures. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Interama bore witness to the period's changing trends in exposition planning and pavilion design.

Hugh Ferris, a veteran of the 1939 New York World's Fair and a member of the large team that designed the first three schemes for Interama, produced many of the most compelling images in the exhibition. The architects of the initial project intended—as did the designers of the contemporaneous United Nations headquarters building—their architecture to represent the abstract notion of peaceful transnational cooperation. This group included Paul Rudolph, Alfred Browning Parker, Rufus Nims, Tripp Russell, Russell Pancoast, and Luis Malaussena; it was led by Miami architect Robert Fitch Smith. Another early contributor was University of Miami-trained architect Fernando Belaúnde Terry, who later served two terms as President of Peru.

Ferris's gorgeous renderings convey the giddy exuberance of Interama's first decade, where pavilions drawn from the period's repertoire of structural invention (parabolic arches, hyperbolic vaults, hypocycloidal towers, and accordion-folded plate roofs) surround a dome and tower (the "Hemisphere" and "Spire") whose skeletal forms resemble the unclad armatures of their 1939 predecessors in New York. By 1955, the lagoon-centered circular plan of the first two schemes had been replaced by an elegant Persian carpet of interlocking canals and land, and the Hemisphere dome had given way to a dynamic play of three nested but untouching arches "symbolizing the unity between North, South, and Central America."

Yet none of these schemes came to fruition, stamping Interama as a project whose ambitious plans never found sufficient support to ensure

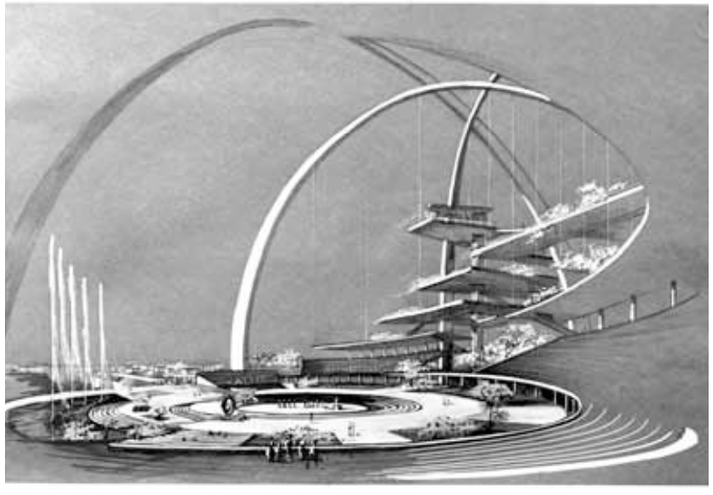
MARCEL BREUER PAPERS, ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ART, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Paul Rudolph's International Bazaar, 1966-67.

realization. With the 1960s came great changes to both the motives driving Interama—whose patrons in the federal government now included a Kennedy administration seeking to counter the Cuban revolution with the Alliance for Progress program—and the authority's governance and design team. Under the theme "Progress with Freedom," architect Robert Browne assembled a design team that included Milton Harry and Edward Durell Stone Jr., who produced a new site plan of paths and biomorphic building plots centered on a star-shaped lagoon. One quarter of this plan and subsequent schemes is dedicated to an "International Area," whose elaboration commands nearly half the exhibition.

The International Area began to take shape with the 1966 commission of six prominent architects: Louis Kahn, Marcel Breuer, Harry Weese, José Luis Sert, Rudolph, and Stone. All six had designed embassies or consulates for the State Department, as had Minoru Yamasaki, who contributed several designs for a tower in the center of the lagoon. The International Area represented a unique collaboration whose charge was to represent the nations of the Americas both individually and collectively. A unifying theme of community animates projects by all six architects, especially the four (by Kahn, Breuer, Sert, and Weese) intended to serve regional groupings of nations.

The "pre-Columbian and tropical" designs developed for the International Area are striking for their embrace of archaic forms drawn from the monumental ruins of Central America. Here the search for an appropriate formal expression of regional identities intersected with modern architecture's broader turn toward primitive and monumental non-western sources for a language that could fulfill modernism's emerging need for emotive, yet non-figurative vocabularies. Kahn, for example, centered his triangular complex (with seven pavilions representing the countries of Central America) on a great ceremonial plaza bordered by seating in a configuration that recalled Mesoamerican ball courts. Breuer's Eastern South American community (representing Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay) included exhibition and auditorium structures that consciously, if inappropriately, evoked the pyramids of Teotihuacan and Tikal, which are located much further north of that region. The perimeter battlements of Stone's United States Pavilion also echoed the battered masses of pre-Columbian pyramids and ball courts, but opened unexpectedly onto a lush garden planted on an archipelago of irregular islands in a pool at the heart of this otherwise rigorously symmetrical cruciform building.



The Interama Hemisphere, c. 1955-56.

Stone's rich landscape design speaks to another of the International Area's formal concerns: the tropical climate. Each of the six projects approached the region's weather with architectural gestures—such as broad canopies—intended to moderate light, reduce heat, and promote breezes. Rudolph arranged his International Bazaar as a collection of open-air and enclosed spaces under a series of billowing concrete canopies carefully sited for shade and ventilation. Weese assembled the national houses of the Caribbean community into a long, narrow bar, pierced with shaded circulation spaces and sheltered from the western sun by two rows of trees cut into a single topiary volume that matched the building's height and massing.

The simple geometry of Weese's prismatic design emphasizes the unity of the Caribbean region, rather than the specific concerns of its constituent states. Both Sert, in the Western South American complex, and Breuer consolidated freestanding national houses under expansive, unifying canopies that express the transnational aspirations of the Interama authority's organizers. The theatrical space of Kahn's great plaza establishes a locus for collective activity. The themes of community and cooperation extend to the International Area's site plan, which evolved through the close collaboration of its six architects.

"Interama: Miami and the Pan-American Dream" offers a valuable chronicle of the site's numerous designs, all of which address the question of representing regional and hemispheric relations in architectural terms. The exhibition's chief drawbacks are its relatively small size, its uneven treatment of the various schemes, the inclusions of numerous unattributed and unidentified drawings, and the lack of a catalogue. The last is particularly irksome, given that Shulman and Lejeune hint at such issues as Interama's ties to contemporary geopolitics, but cannot explore these ideas in depth within the constraints of an exhibition. A catalogue would have allowed the curators to examine in detail the collaboration among the six architects of the International Area and to situate each project within its designer's oeuvre. A catalogue would also have accommodated the lengthier historical analysis necessary to determine the extent to which architects from outside Miami (such as Ferris or Sert) were hired for their expertise with expositions or for their "star" quality. Further historical analysis could have addressed as well the lingering influence of Interama's numerous schemes on two generations of Miami architects.

The occasional failure of the exhibition to distinguish the sequence of development, and even the definitive version, of particular projects would have been redressed in a catalogue, too. The exhibition's rich trove of archival materials deserves to be published, as do the illustrative digital models commissioned by the curators, lest "Interama" share its subject's fate and lapse into undeserved obscurity. ☆

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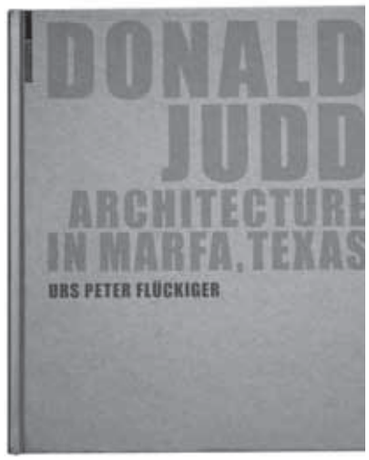
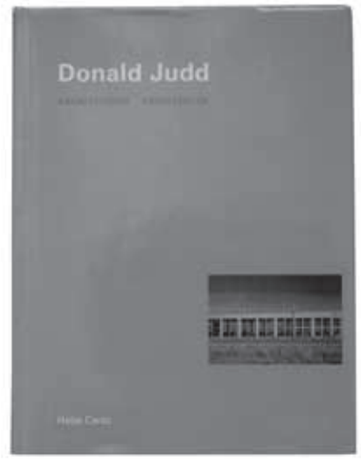




DONALD JUDD'S TEXAS

Donald Judd: Architecture (Peter Noever, ed., Hatje Cantz, 2003, 144 pages, $35.00, hardback)
and
Donald Judd: Architecture in Marfa, Texas (Urs Peter Flückiger, 2007, 154 pages, hardback)

by Tom Colbert

DONALD JUDD IS KNOWN ALL OVER THE WORLD FOR THE MERGER of architecture and visual art that he espoused and ultimately realized in far west Texas. The place where his work is centered, the town of Marfa, has become the best-known architectural pilgrimage in the state. Here he designed, and had built and installed, a host of projects that blur conventional distinctions. The body of work there includes a treasure trove of Judd's drawings, sculptures (specific objects), furniture, and buildings. Two recent books look at Judd's work, examining its relationship with conventional architectural practice. Taken together these two books contain a significant catalog of Judd's oeuvre, painting a cogent picture of the many ways in which he operated within the framework of architectural history and tradition, using many of the tools and techniques of practicing architects.

Donald Judd: Architecture contains an impressive collection of design drawings including plans, sections, and details of buildings and furniture, as well as photographs of pieces and settings created by Judd. The volume includes essays by museum director Peter Noever and art historian Brigitte Huck, as well as two essays by Donald Judd himself.

Noever describes his experience as Judd's "client." In terms that academic architects might find familiar, he characterizes Judd as "a devout modernist," a modernist intent on "freeing modernism from the ideal of functionality." In more concrete terms he describes the way in which Judd worked on the design of the installation "Stage Set" in Vienna; first visiting the site and discussing the project with Noever, and then producing drawings to guide fabrication and construction. Axonometric and hard-line elevation and plan drawings of the project serve as evidence of Judd's command of the tools of the architect.

Huck reflects on the manifold relationships between Judd's sculpture and his architecture. She first examines his "stacks" and "progressions" and their formal and material consistency with contemporary architecture. She then analyzes his built work in similar terms. Like Noever, Huck is impressed with the architectural aspects of Judd's design process; particularly his use of sketches "to record the basic idea for a building, a piece of furniture or an architectural detail, that others—engineers, technicians—turn into detailed plans." She explains Judd's design approach by quoting some of his most architectonic aphorisms: "never just 'plunk down' a simple and isolated piece of art (architecture) somewhere, but rather make something built in place, particular to the site."

Judd's essays focus on his rejection of "fake architecture" and his horror at Mario Botta's art museum in San Francisco, Hans Hollein's museum in Salzburg, Frank Gehry's design for Vitra, and "post-modernism" in general. What he means by "fake architecture" and the basis of his rejection of these architects are left tantalizingly unclear, but his familiarity with the contemporary architectural scene is unmistakable. Hinting at a philosophy of art and architecture he asserts the essential unity of thought and feeling as a foundation of experience and, presumably, of creative production. As Judd writes in the aphoristic style, it is difficult to identify an overarching theory but the significance of architectural history and practice to his thinking is evident. In order to illustrate his argument that the judgment of quality is a central question of artistic practice he says, "The El Paso telephone directory has a list of architects and yet there is no architecture in El Paso." And then to provide an example of a good work of

"THE **EL PASO** TELEPHONE DIRECTORY HAS A LIST OF ARCHITECTS

AND YET THERE IS NO **ARCHITECTURE** IN EL PASO."

architecture, "A good building, such as the Kimbell Museum, looks the way a Greek temple in a new colony must have looked...The Kimbell is civilization in the wasteland of Fort Worth and Dallas."

Urs Peter Flückiger's *Donald Judd: Architecture in Marfa, Texas*, published in 2007, examines a selection of projects in Marfa and the Chinati Mountains from a different perspective, that of a practicing architect and professor of architecture. He includes what architects most want to see in architecture books, a rich collection of architectural drawings and photographs of buildings. He begins with a plan of Marfa, showing the location of Judd's projects. He follows this with a general introduction to Judd's work followed by chapters dealing with many of Judd's most important buildings. Each chapter includes photographs, site plans, and sections as well as building plans and sections at a larger scale. The drawings and photographs alone make this volume a valuable addition to the literature surrounding Judd's work. But Flückiger goes further. He digs into Judd's personal history and education, even unearthing evidence of Judd's youthful ambition to practice architecture, an ambition that Judd only abandoned because of what he felt were the onerous aspects of running a firm.

Flückiger brings to light the interesting fact that while pursuing a master's degree in art history, Judd was a student of Rudolph Wittkower, the noted author of *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*. In this exposure Flückiger finds the origin of Judd's seemingly strange admiration for the work of Baroque artist-architect Gianlorenzo Bernini, with whom he shared a fascination with control of light, placement of objects in space, and the unification of art and architecture. Flückiger also documents striking correspondences between the writings and material production of Judd and various architects that Judd would have been exposed to while in graduate school including Gropius, Le Corbusier, and Schindler among others.

One comes away from *Donald Judd: Architecture* and *Donald Judd: Architecture in Marfa, Texas* with the feeling that by nature, education, and self-study, Donald Judd was steeped in architecture. One comes to see Judd's "specific objects" as architectural studies, not unlike the sort of exercises that are given to entering architecture students, and his buildings as mature works of architecture.

An interesting aspect of these books is the neither one refers to the intense theatricality of Judd's work in Marfa; especially the theater of the architect's office. "The Architecture Office," a permanent shop-front installation, is a virtual display case for architectural models, plans, and other props of an architect's office. It isn't mentioned in either publication. Another building is surprisingly little discussed. "The Architecture Studio" contains eight office settings opening onto one another, each illustrating an architect's work in progress. In each space the furniture (by Judd, Mies, Schindler, Rietveld, etc.) is arranged with precision just as the drafting equipment and writing implements are arranged on desktops. Everything is left as though the master architect is just about to return and begin work again. This theatrical staging seems to be rooted in the theatricality of Judd's minimalism, wherein the observer is brought into the space of each piece and the views between spaces and views of the horizon are tightly controlled. Also tightly controlled are the spatial sequences leading to the many dramatized places throughout Marfa where one is made to imagine Judd seated, sleeping, or at work.

Michael Fried described the theatricality of minimalism and of Judd's early work in his 1967 essay, "Art and Objecthood." What Fried could not have anticipated at that time was how literally occupiable and theatrical Judd's later work would become, or that the theater of architecture would ultimately become Judd's final subject and one of the least discussed aspects of his work. What Judd himself could probably not have imagined is the fascination that architects would come to have with his work. But this is something that *Donald Judd: Architecture* and *Donald Judd: Architecture in Marfa, Texas* explain in considerable detail. ☆

the stars are *big* and *bright*—deep in the heart of texas

by Stephen Fox

hindcite

EVER SINCE GEORGE W. BRACKENRIDGE commissioned Cyrus L. W. Eidlitz of New York to design San Antonio's First National Bank Building (1886), and Magnolia Willis Sealy commissioned McKim, Mead & White to design her house, The Open Gates (1891) in Galveston, astute Texan clients have engaged the services of out-of-state star architects to produce buildings that set new design standards in Texas cities. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the University of Texas, in commissioning Cass Gilbert of New York to design a new university library, and the Rice Institute in Houston, by commissioning Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson of Boston to design an entire university campus in Houston, demonstrated that Texan clients could contribute to a national discourse on building architecture of cultural signficance.

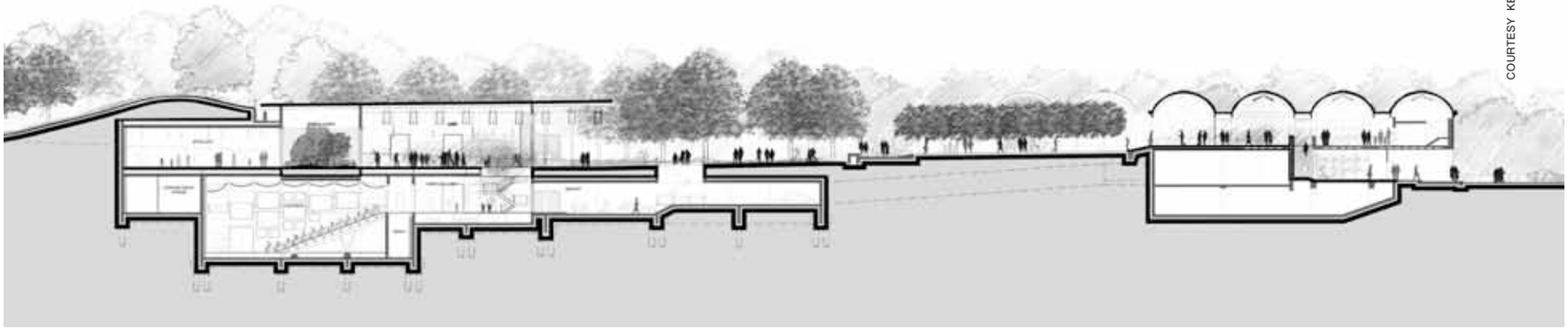
The patronage of architectural stars in Texas has tracked general trends in American architecture. Blue chip eclectic architects figured strongly before the Depression. Modernists appeared on the scene in the mid-1930s. During the 1950s, the domino theory applied to star patronage in Texas: the Fort Worth Art Center (Herbert Bayer, 1954) was followed by Cullinan Hall at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1958), the Dallas Theater Center (Frank Lloyd Wright, 1958), and the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth (Philip Johnson, 1961). Corporate patronage followed cultural patronage, with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) carrying out major downtown skyscrapers in Fort Worth (1960), Houston (1961, 1963), and Dallas (1968). During the 1960s, Neiman-Marcus's Stanley Marcus and Houston developer Gerald D. Hines began to use stars to give their enterprises a higher profile. SOM's various offices, Edward Larrabee Barnes, I. M. Pei, Paul Rudolph, and—as Frank Welch has so engagingly described—Philip Johnson profited handsomely, as did the cities where their buildings were constructed.

Louis I. Kahn of Philadelphia delivered an architectural masterwork in 1972 with the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth; still the one Texan building regularly appearing on all lists of the greatest buildings of the twentieth century. Dominique de Menil advanced this architectural patronage to the global stage by hiring Italian Renzo Piano to design the Menil Collection (1987). British architects James Stirling & Michael Wilford, who had preceded Piano, created critically-acclaimed designs for Rice University in 1981. This gave other Texan clients the courage to hire internationally: Ricardo Legorreta, Solana Westlake/Southlake (1989–91) and the San Antonio Central Library (1995); Rafael Moneo, Audrey Jones Beck Building, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2000); Tadao Ando, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2002); Jean-Paul Viguier, Stieren Center for Exhibitions at the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio (2008); and most recently, Yoshio Taniguchi, Asia House Texas, Houston, and Adjaye Associates, Linda Pace Foundation, San Antonio.

In the Texan cultural firmament, Dallas now outshines Houston. Today, it's Deedie Rose who inspires Dallas clients and institutions to commission exciting architectural performances, doing for Big D what Dominique and John de Menil and Gerald Hines did for Houston from the 1950s through the early 1990s. Houston is now lagging badly because its clients have either lost their nerve or simply don't care; they have allowed major new building design in Houston to sink below second-rate status. This is what makes such small buildings as the Brochstein Pavilion at Rice (Thomas Phifer + Partners, 2008) and the Menil Collection master plan by David Chipperfield Architects so crucial.

The works of the masters can show local clients what immense emotional satisfaction great architecture can deliver, inspiring and encouraging them to commission architects (whether locally or globally) to make some more. ☆

Preliminary section of proposed addition to the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Renzo Piano Building Workshop and Kendall/Heaton Associates.



COURTESY KENDALL/HEATON ASSOCIATES