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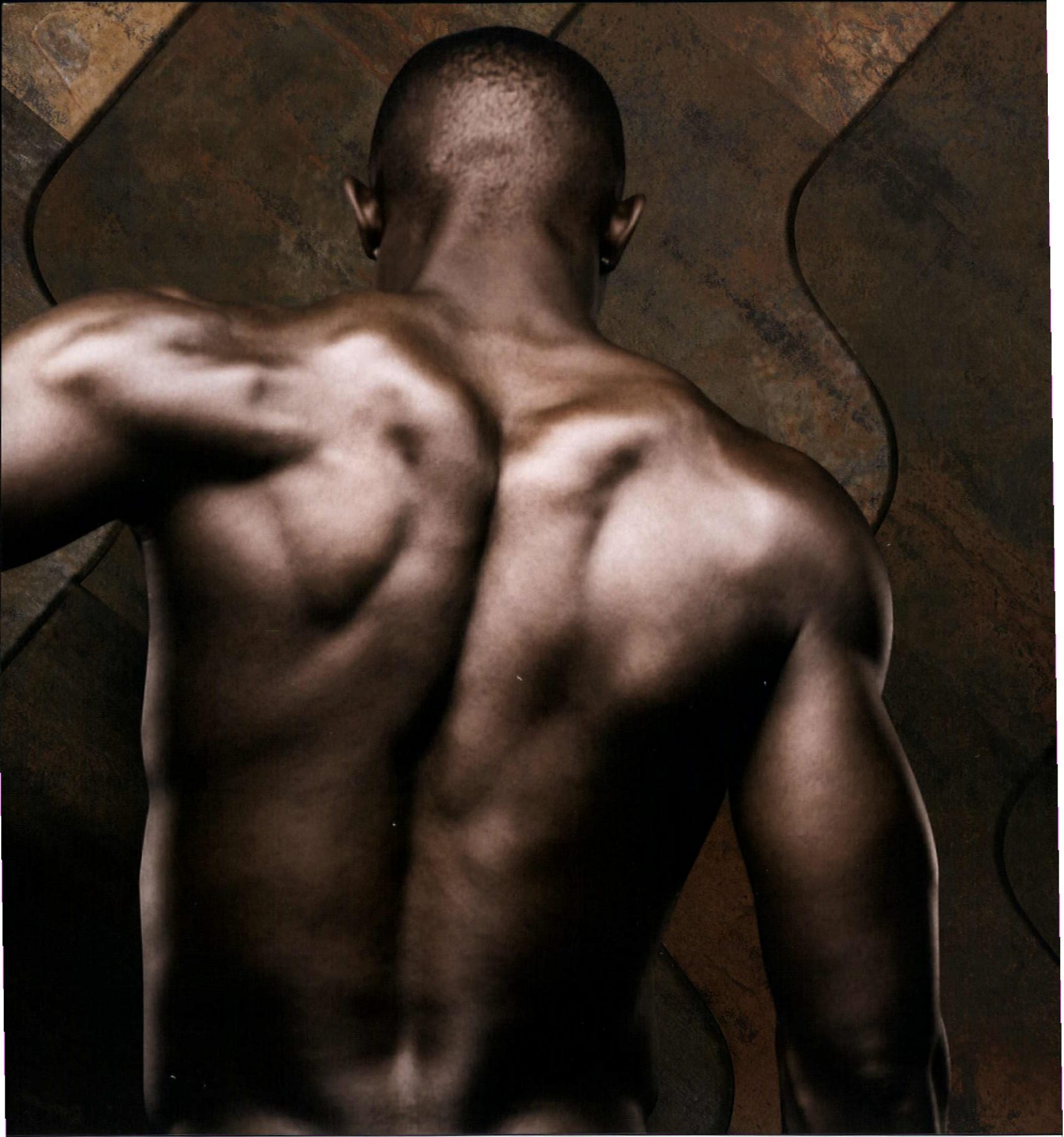




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# FORM

PIONEERING DESIGN

SUMMER 2013

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Architect Cory Buckner Photograph by Tom Bonner

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Often when we think of contemporary Asian architecture, we focus on booming development in China: the sinuous Galaxy Soho building in Beijing, the Shanghai Tower or Hong Kong's International Commerce Center. These buildings are iconic of the skyrocketing growth in Asia but they only capture a small snapshot of a larger picture.

In this issue, we travel across the globe to the Far East highlighting countries that are often sidelined, such as Cambodia (p. 30), where a new guard of designers is trying to recapture the country's lost architectural heritage. Korea is experiencing an architectural renaissance; however, the frantic pace of growth is leading to a few creative casualties (p. 34). And, these two countries have another thing in common. Both are struggling to integrate their cultural heritage into a contemporary vernacular. We also salute (p. 18) this year's Pritzker Prize honoree, Toyo Ito, who as the fifth winner from Japan underscores the country's rich legacy of design. Moving westward, we explore residences from around the world (p. 20), whether an island getaway in Greece or a mountain village in Huangshan, each home is defined by its local culture. But, before arriving to your final destination, you'll most likely land at an airport and we asked architects which ones were the best and worst (p.40). Lastly, AIA president Scott Johnson reflects on the globalization of architecture (p. 8), bringing up the question: Are we designing a homogenous world where every corner has a Starbucks and an Apple store? Let's hope not!

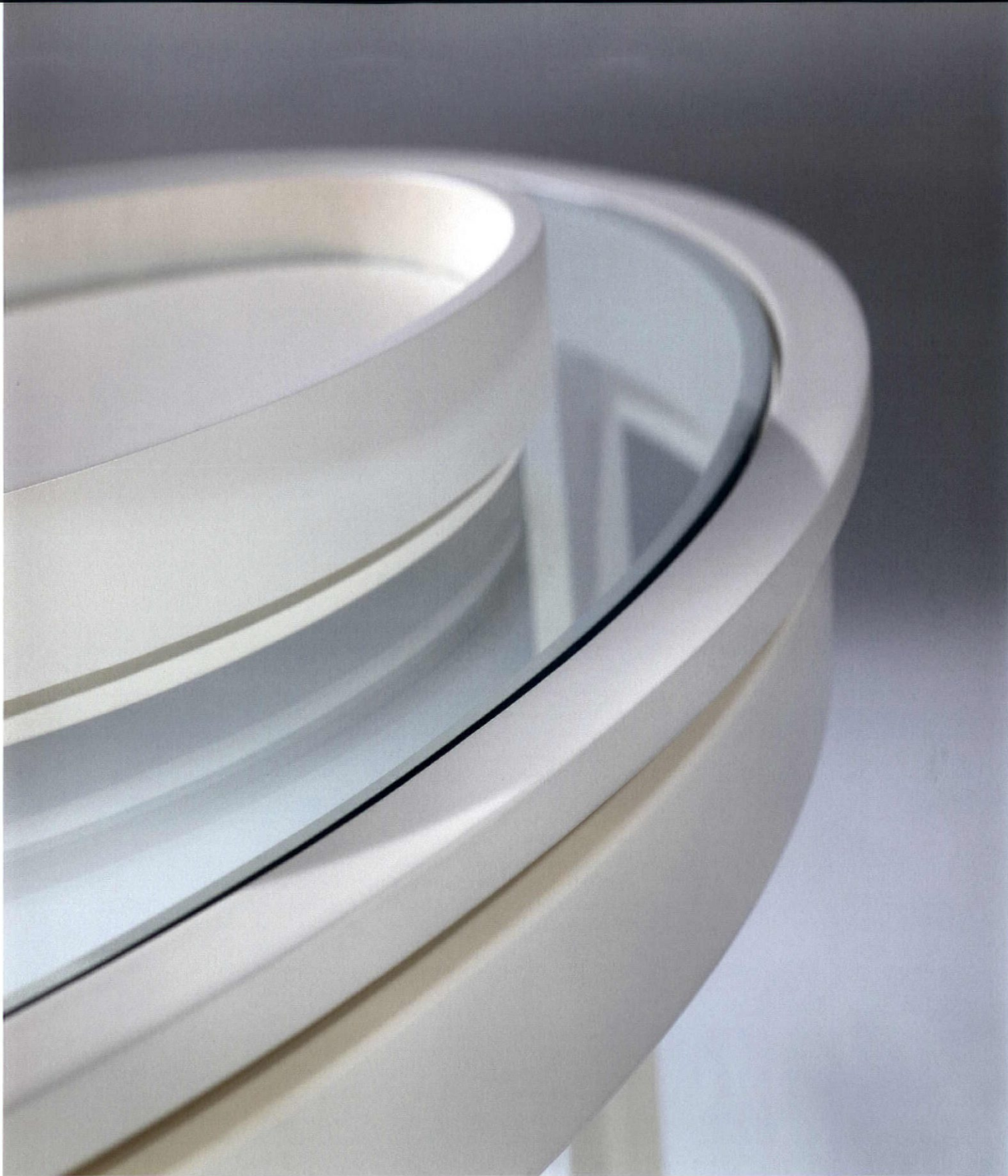


Eric Roth

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Alexi Drosu". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Alexi Drosu  
Editor in Chief





RICHARDFRINIER

---

BROWN JORDAN





## CAN GLOBALIZATION, SPACE AND THE CITY COEXIST?

"One day the need for space makes itself felt...it comes to us without warning. And never goes away. The irresistible wish for a space of our own. A mobile space that can take us anywhere. A space where everything is to hand and nothing is lacking... already, space is inside you. You've never been so firmly on the ground as you are in (the E) space."

### QUESTION 3.

SO GOES A MYTHICAL CAR ADVERTISEMENT IN MARC Auge's *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity* (1996). But is this dreamy aspirational space the same physical space that we architects have obsessed over for so many years? Or is this space an abstraction, a manufactured longing to consume that which we now desire? And, if we are speaking of the transformation of the meaning of a word, *space*—inevitably an entire language—how and when did this change in meaning come about?

In fact, three overarching trends have begun to merge, shifting our fundamental sense of space: capitalism as the dominant model for global trade; information as our newest high-value commodity; and technology as the currency for connecting both. While capitalism and the rising importance of information have historic roots, it is worth recalling the recent and rapid series of innovations in microelectronics and their application to telecommunications. In 1947, the transistor was discovered followed in succession by the integrated circuit in 1957 and the microprocessor in 1971. Connections between processing units multiplied to create new information systems. In commercial enterprises, from service industries to manufacturing, applications increased, creating the basis for CAD/CAM in the manufacturing sector. Adopted by architectural offices in the '70s and '80s, most practices today are fully computerized, many integrated with BIM 3D modeling, model printing, animation

and video capabilities, all tied to overall information networks.

Architects today are roaming the world to ply their trades in new markets. Materials and products for most buildings are now sourced from a worldwide network of suppliers. Consultant teams are assembled from an array of world cities and all are connected via familiar computer-based tools. Some 80 percent of Americans are now in the service sector, "knowledge workers" open to the prospect of global markets. As long ago as 1979, Jean-François Lyotard wrote that "knowledge in the form of an informational commodity indispensable to productive power is already, and will continue to be, a major—perhaps the major—stake in the worldwide competition for power. It is conceivable that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory." Just ask Julian Assange.

Following Lyotard, Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells noted that the global circulation of capital by multinational corporations had produced a condition by which major investment decisions, and shifts in material power, now bypass the oversight and control of nation-states. Once again the term, *space*, undergoes transformation in Castells' *Space of Flows*.

In it, he refers to "an entire world of images, sounds, and communication flows, potentially interactive, thus superseding the need for cities, as we have known them." He situates the space of the traditional city against the

emergence of the large corporation as the predominant organizational form of production and management, one, which has important physical implications for city-building.

The effects of these information "flows" have us wondering how the city will evolve in an age of global trade and tourism. On the one hand, the commercial pursuit of global brand penetration and the ever-larger capital formations, which fund it, tend toward repetition and predictability. On the other hand, there is longstanding evidence that a growing class of discretionary travelers pursue destinations with specific local character. One travels to Paris, Tokyo or San Francisco for unique physical and spatial qualities only those locations offer.

Kazys Varnelis speculates that "like Los Angeles, cities throughout the world are confronted by the problems wrought by...a spreading sameness caused by capital seeking a profitable, homogeneous field. As Los Angeles densifies, New York accepts Home Depot. The Grove and Soho become, little by little, indistinguishable, urban infrastructures supporting Banana Republic, the Apple Store and Anthropologie." As architects, certainly one of our central tasks is to recognize authenticity when we find it and to engender in our work a conception of space, which is diverse, unique and memorable. As globalization proceeds and words we long took for granted are redefined, may we stay attuned to the value of space as place and the city as a model of distinction and civility.

Scott Johnson, FAIA, founder and design partner at Johnson Fain, is president of the AIA/LA.



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### LONGDEN DOORS

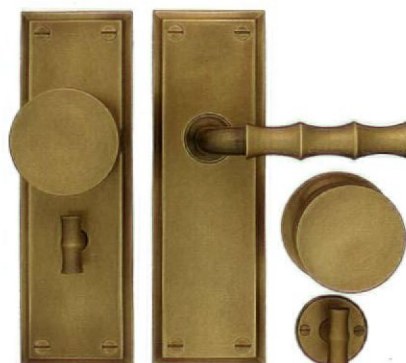
Bespoke is a word synonymous with British design and now quality craftsmanship extends to doors. Since the 19th century, Longden has crafted handmade doors, providing designers with creative freedom and quality products, ranging from restoration projects to contemporary applications. The company works with FSC-certified timber in an effort to support the growth of responsible forest management. Prices upon request. [longdendoors.co.uk](http://longdendoors.co.uk)

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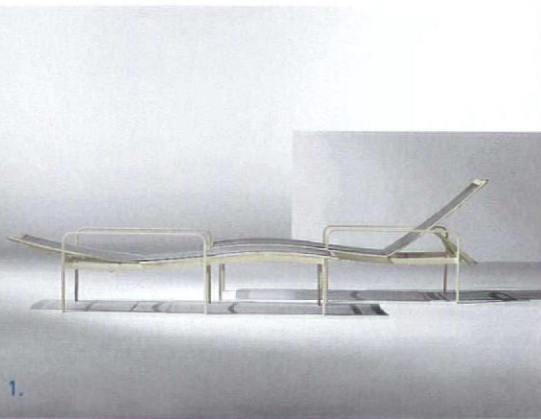


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## Relaxing Style

Originating in ancient Egypt, the chaise longue has become a ubiquitous part of any contemporary outdoor space. From streamlined to sophisticated, we offer an at-a-glance look at some of this summer's best selections.



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**2. BOOMERANG CHAISE  
BY ALWY VISSCHEDYK**

Summit Furniture  
[summitfurniture.com](http://summitfurniture.com)

**3. D-LUX LOUNGER  
BY KRIS VAN PUYVELDE**

Royal Botania  
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**4. BIKNIT  
BY PATRICIA URQUIOLA**

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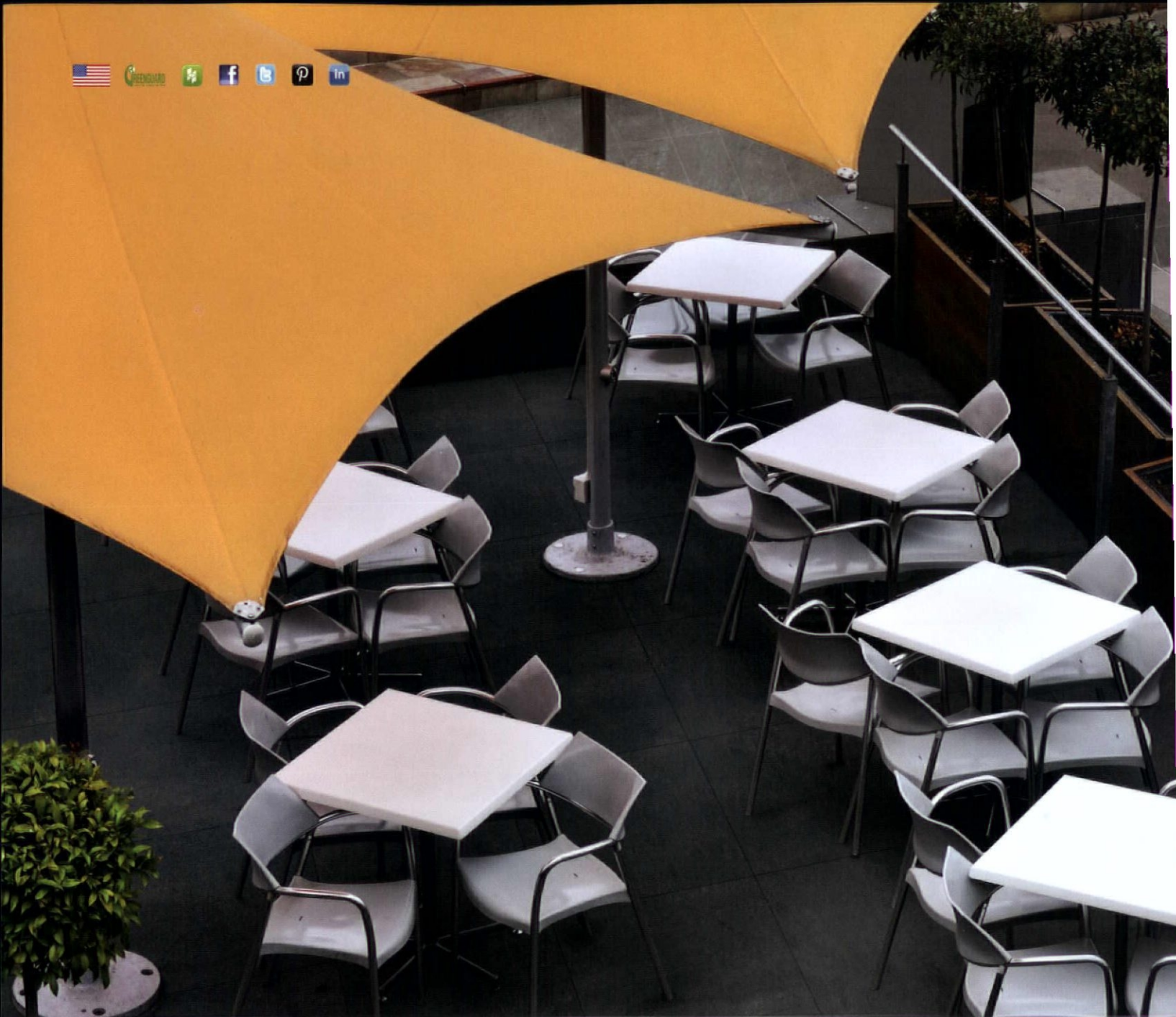
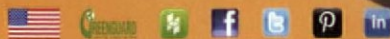
**5. 1966 ADJUSTABLE CHAISE  
BY RICHARD SCHULTZ**

Jules Seltzer Associates  
[juleseltzer.com](http://juleseltzer.com)

**6. CARRO DE BOI CHAISE  
BY ETEL CARMONA**

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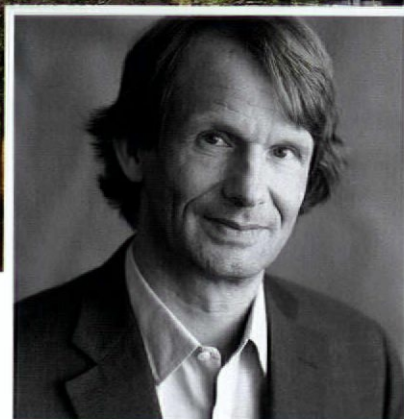
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## Fabian Kremkus

Associate Principal, CO Architects

Kremkus jokes that he was born with a hammer in his hand, the son of an architect and the grandson of a mason. "I live and breathe architecture, merging craft and academic approaches," he says. "I am committed to providing user experiences that inspire and that deliver urban and environmental solutions that advance our planet and communities." This commitment is reflected in the newly built expansion of the Natural History Museum's North Campus, one of his latest projects, where the institution's 63-foot fin whale inspired the design of the bridge connecting the front-entry façade with the street. "The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles has been my design playground for the past six years," he says. "It has been a wonderful journey of mutual inspiration." We asked the architect to reveal a few other inspirations as well.

### What architect do you admire most?



If I would have to name one, it would be Le Corbusier for his virtuous, forward-thinking ability and for realizing his idea in built form. His universal talents as a writer, artist, and architect allowed him to express his ideas in a pure form that encourages me. His buildings transcend meaning beyond the obvious. The humanistic and artistic life Le Corbusier lived is exemplary to me.

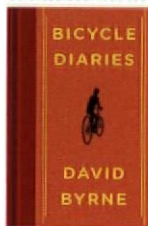
### Is there a company who is manufacturing an innovative material or product that interests you?

I am very interested in using mass timber—also known as big wood. There are varying technologies out there that are trying to replace materials with large carbon footprints, such as steel and concrete, but I think that a renewable carbon sequestering material like wood used on a massive commercial scale in an innovative way could make an exciting contribution to improve the built environment.

### What tech product do you have to have?

Revit is my software of choice and I would not want to live without it because it now allows us as designers and engineers to work together on a shared model in the cloud.

### What book are you currently reading?



I'm reading David Byrne's *Bicycle Diaries* (Penguin Books, 2010), a present from my wife Julie (a graphic designer at StudioJAS). It opened my eyes to the depth of experience you can have on a cycle ride if you

attune your senses and mind in the right way, creating a more involved way to experience the city and landscape. I commute with the bicycle every day to work and to almost all meetings that I attend in town. This book has opened my eyes even more to the pleasure any bike ride has.

### From a design standpoint, what is your favorite vacation spot?

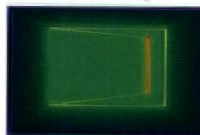
Most of my German friends and colleagues live in Berlin. When Julie and I visit, we are always involved in the art and architecture scene that, in my opinion, is one of the most exciting on the planet. Galleries and building

tours of the most recent work of my friends, like GRAFT, are always on the agenda. It is very easy to get immersed in this vibrant and ever-changing metropolis.

### What's your favorite restaurant in LA and why?

Angelini Osteria, on Beverly Boulevard. The food is to die for and it feels like you're visiting family.

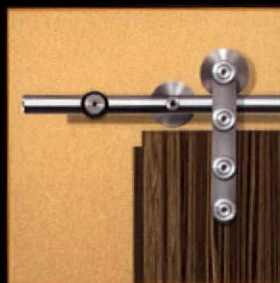
### What artist (living or dead) do you admire most and why?



There are many, but one of my earlier strong influences and interests point to land artists and work related to the cosmos and nature. I discovered James Turrell, Michael Heizer, Robert Smithson, and Walter De Maria in the early nineties while studying architecture in Germany. I was fascinated with the treatment of light and the ethereal quality of the work, the connection to nature, and the world creation these artists freely exhibit. I learned from my study of these artists the merits of the reduction to the essential and how to densely represent an idea and story. I find it a lovely coincidence that Los Angeles—my home away from home—now harbors the renaissance for Turrell and Heizer.




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## Pitch Perfect

Bercy Chen Studio's imaginative green roof blends into the landscape

"WE'RE NOT INTERESTED IN INSTALLING A FEW PHOTOVOLTAIC panels and calling it green," says architect Thomas Bercy, a partner in the firm Bercy Chen Studio. Instead, the Austin, Texas-based company's portfolio speaks to a deep engagement in sustainable design, with a recent project's green innovations both forming the identity of it and further pushing the envelope in a new and revelatory way.

Located on the outskirts of Austin, the residence, dubbed Edgeland House, stands nestled in a former industrial area overlooking the Colorado River. Today, all that's visible from the road is an Airstream "guest" trailer and a section of cleaved earth—a natural extension of the surrounding prairie—giving the barest suggestion of the 1,400-square-foot structure beneath.

That section of earth, in reality a pitched green roof, represents the most ambitious execution of the technology yet for Bercy Chen Studio—born out of a constellation of circumstances both practical and environmental. The brownfield site inspired Bercy and his team to explore the idea of "healing the land and reintroducing the prairie in the urban fringe," he says. At the same time, a disused oil pipeline crossing the property needed to be excavated. "We thought it would be appropriate to bury part of the house within this excavation for privacy and sustainability reasons. This concept follows the footsteps of the ancient archetype of the pit house that was the first [Native American] settlement in the Plains." As accomplished in those early dwellings, the surrounding earth both heats and cools the structure.

To design and build the new roof, Bercy and his team adapted the planted roof system they developed in partnership with Avant Guard-ist Specialty Fabrication. The system is notable for its inclusion of the critical, albeit costly, water barrier membrane (something other manufacturers don't offer as part of their own options) and also includes protection and drainage layers down to soil and vegetation.

As with a flat green roof, the team had to balance the requirements of the plantings—soil depth and irrigation—with the realities of what the roof itself would bear. The moisture barrier had to offer enough redundancy to protect the house, as did the root barrier. One of the biggest challenges the team faced was gravity, since the roof's varying pitches put it on the wrong side of it. They came up with several creative solutions. To improve soil retention, Bercy turned to a product more often used for road embankments and earthwork.

"We assumed that we would have to fight gravity and thought that erosion mats would be the easiest to install and probably the most economical," he says, noting that the mats added little weight to the roof in comparison to saturated soil. "We had to engineer a new type of soil composed of crushed bricks for better water retention."

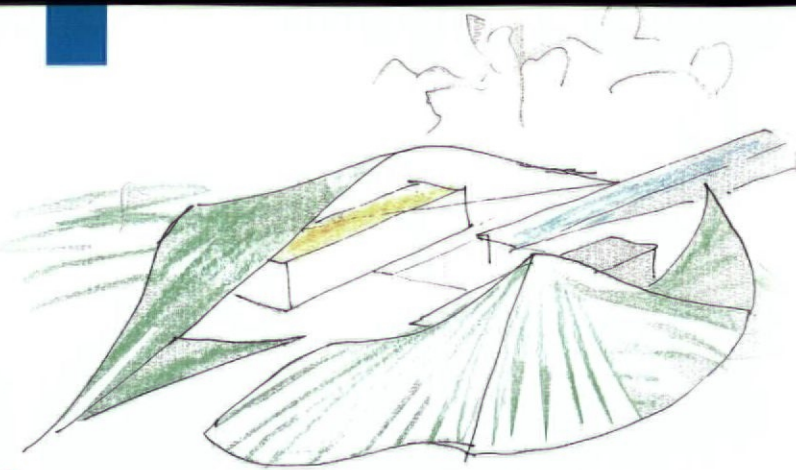
It ultimately took 100 pounds per square foot of loading requirement and made it necessary to build a substantial structural steel frame. Finally, they had to build an improved drainage area around the base of the house to contend with

runoff from the roof. Even with the unique challenges given the roof's design, the construction surprises were few given how extensively the firm planned and tested for a range of scenarios.

As the plantings developed, perhaps the most exciting discovery was just "how transformative the vegetation was to the roof and the house," recalls Bercy. The mix of some 40 native species of plants and flowers, planned with the input of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, came into flower almost immediately and within a few weeks grew nearly knee-high. "It created a seamless boundary between the surrounding land and the house and immediately became part of the habitat for the local fauna," he says. "The house became part of the ecosystem rather than a hindrance to it."

Down the line, Bercy sees the firm adapting the idea of the Edgeland House's folding landscape in similar projects requiring "sloping gardens." More broadly, he sees his system being adapted to sloped roofs of any size: "Architects and clients should not be afraid of experimenting with green roofs. The technology and savoir faire allows for much more extensive use of these types of roofs. The imagination of the designer should be the only limitation to these systems."

—Lisa Bingham Dewart





d'Autremont Penthouse, Portland, OR  
Architect: In Situ Architecture | Jeff Stern  
Designers: Jeff Stern, Don Tankersley, Hugh d'Autremont  
Photo: Jeff Stern

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# TOYO ITO

## BELATED HONOR FOR A JAPANESE MASTER

TOYO ITO IS THE FIFTH PRITZKER LAUREATE FROM JAPAN, counting SANAA as one, and it's an honor as long overdue as it is richly deserved. It was illogical for the jury to honor Kazuyo Sejima, brilliant as she is, before her mentor. For Ito occupies the role that Kenzo Tange and Arata Isozaki did before him: He is a godfather to younger Japanese architects, inspiring them by his example, helping to find them commissions, and advancing their careers. He does this with an appealing modesty and lack of show, while creating varied work of great originality.

I've had the good fortune to know Ito and explore several of his key works. In 1984, he invited me to the Silver Hut, the house he had just completed for himself in Tokyo. That's a rare privilege in Japan, where one's home is usually restricted to family and close friends. Still more remarkable was its spaciousness, and he mentioned how his wife had surprised him one evening by hosting a fashion show. At that time he was championing nomadic architecture: temporary, lightweight structures that used aluminum sheets and mesh to create cloud-like volumes.





LEFT: Toyo Ito Museum of Architecture, 2006-2011, Imbari-shi, Ehime, Japan.

RIGHT, FROM TOP: Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, 2002, London, U.K.; Sendai Mediatheque, 1995-2000, Sendai-shi, Miyagi, Japan; TOD's Omotesando Building, 2002-2004, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

Fronds of weed floating in an aquarium inspired the Sendai Mediatheque, which remains his best-known work. He sketched the columns that support this six-story block as delicate, interwoven tendrils and projected them on the walls of a gallery to demonstrate his concept for the building. Next day, I took the Shinkansen to Sendai, and discovered that the steel structure, fabricated in a local shipyard, was as massive as the branches of a redwood. Seismic regulations mandated this resilience and the Mediatheque was one of the few buildings to survive unscathed after the 2011 earthquake that devastated the region.

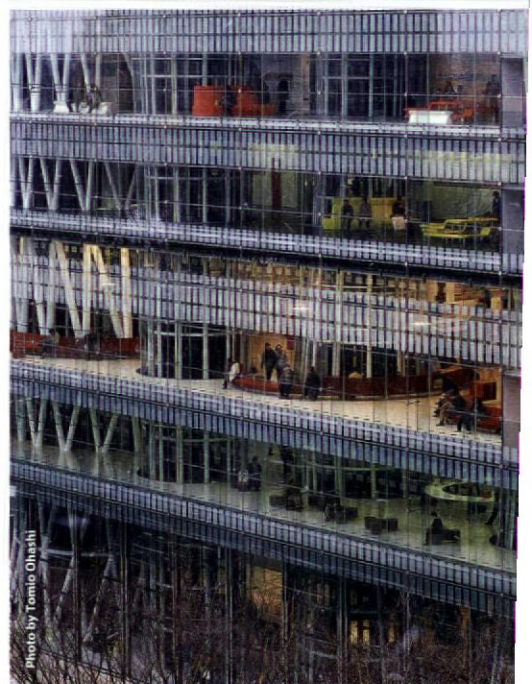
Lightness and transparency are still hallmarks of Ito's best work. The miniature tower for Tod's in the Tokyo district of Aoyama-dori is a glass box within a structural cage of criss-crossing steel bars, and there's a springy elegance to the arched vaults of Tama Art University Library and the Kakamigahara crematorium, which bring an exuberance to serious programs. His stadium for the World Games in Taiwan is a sinuous, permeable structure, and the recently completed architectural museum on the island of Imbari is as graceful and airy as the Silver Hut. Construction is now under way on the Taichung Opera House, which is boldly expressive and porous.

This small sampling of a productive 43-year career demonstrates Ito's capacity to reinvent himself while remaining true

to his concern for the people who use his buildings. His creativity is disciplined by a sense of place, by the program, and the desire to make his spaces life-affirming. It's a paradox that Japan, a deeply conservative and conformist country, has nurtured such an adventurous architectural culture. Ito's work combines the evanescent with the deep-rooted; the traditions of ink-brush paintings and respect for nature, with contemporary technology and forms of expression. His understated manner veils deep passions and may have hindered his career. It's hard to imagine him competing head to head with such assertive architects as Hadid and Foster, Koolhaas, Nouvel and Gehry. He has only recently begun to build outside Japan though he created one of the best Serpentine pavilions in London in 2003, a structure that was disassembled and re-erected on the Cote d'Azur. His acclaimed design for the Berkeley Art Museum was shelved in 2008, because the university lacked the vision and funding to realize it.

The Pritzker can be a passport to international fame, but Ito has already secured his position as one of the most creative spirits of our age. The award may further strengthen his claim on our attention and bring him many more commissions.

—Michael Webb



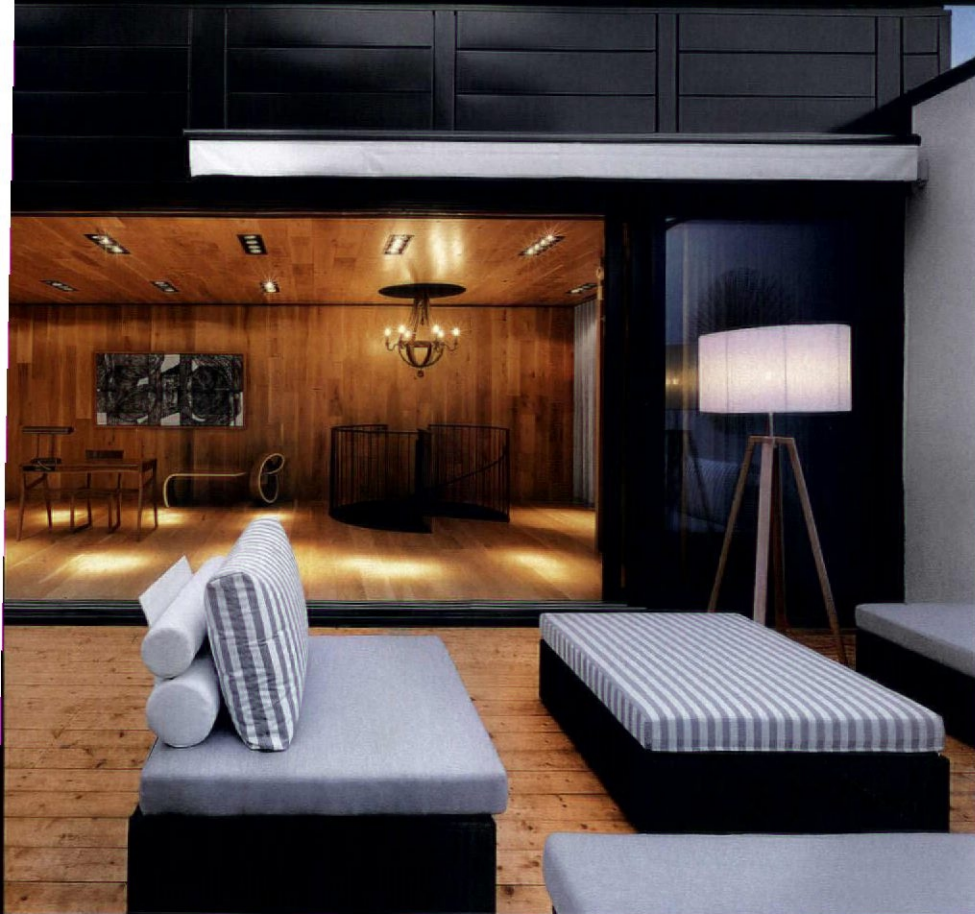


# Home Sweet Home

Residences around the world

For Workbook credits, please see page 48.





## White Canvas on a Green Roof

Location: Montreal, Canada

Designer: Martine Brisson

Website: [www.martinebrisson.ca](http://www.martinebrisson.ca)

The client wanted to create a green space reminiscent of the countryside for his urban residence, and turned to the interior designer to create this vision. "It was important for me to integrate [the green space] with the rest of the design of the residence," says designer Martine Brisson. "But since nature often speaks for itself, I had to keep the line as pure as possible."

The terrace straddles two roofs of a former bottling plant and measures more than 3,000 square feet. It revolves around an attic; and the designer skillfully created permeable divisions to give a sense of intimacy without interrupting the flow of the space. The interior and exterior rooms are unified through the use of red cedar flooring and basic geometric volumes that create a feeling of warmth, functionality and simplicity.

A series of long cedar boxes serve as a balustrade that runs around the perimeter of the terrace, and a pergola houses an outdoor kitchen and dining room. The structure itself is composed of flowerboxes filled with plants, creating a living vegetation screen. A living room/lounge that opens up entirely to the roof terrace features oak siding, and offers a seamless transition into the outdoor space. In an effort to reduce the amount of supplementary weight on the roof, Brisson chose lightweight materials over heavier installations to preserve the integrity of the building.

Photography by Marc Cramer





## Huangshan Mountain Village

Location: Huangshan, China

Designer: MAD

Website: [www.i-mad.com](http://www.i-mad.com)

For decades, the verdant landscape and limestone cliffs of Huangshan Mountains have served as a setting of inspiration and reflection to artists; however, it also lures travelers and has become a popular tourist attraction. The increase in tourism has exposed the UNESCO World Heritage site to the potential compromise of its iconic beauty.

In an effort to stem the effects of tourism while protecting the site, the architects designed a nearby retreat, providing housing, hotel accommodations and communal amenities situated across the southern slope of Taiping Lake on a site that measures just over 1.1 million square feet.

"We hope that residents will not just look at the scenery, but see themselves in relation to this environment, attention that is brought inward," says MAD founder Ma Yansong. "In observing oneself one perhaps begins to notice a different self than the one present in the city."

Each apartment will feature a spacious balcony overlooking the lake, and the use of local materials, plants and greenery aims to bring the natural surrounding environment inside. Individual apartments are accessed through communal spaces on each floor that provide balance between public and private spaces. Walking paths surrounding the buildings encourage residents to meander and reflect in the village, while the buildings themselves evoke the geology of the region blending into the landscape.

Renderings courtesy of MAD







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## 4 House

Location: Dublin, Ireland

Designer: TAKA Architects

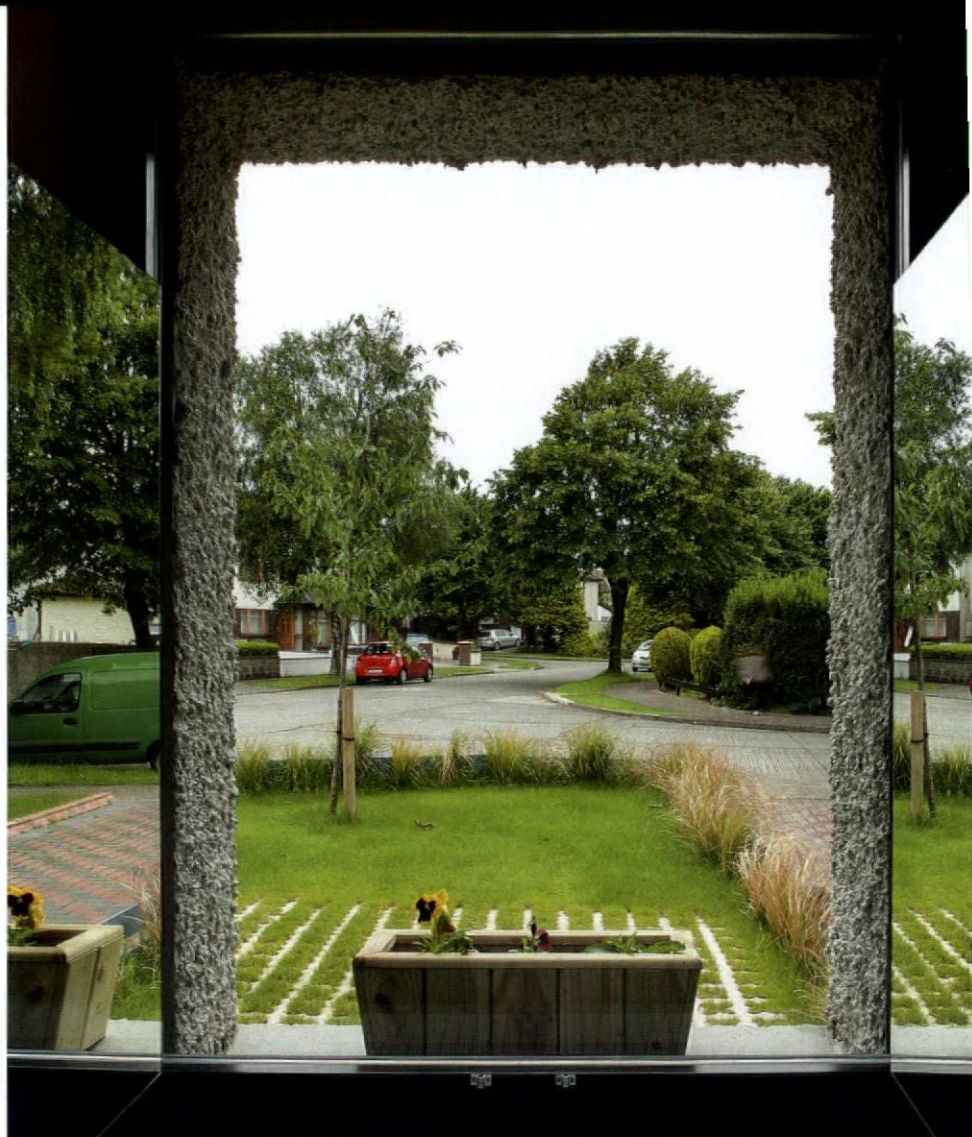
Website: [www.taka.ie](http://www.taka.ie)

The designer sought to integrate the new-build structure, located in Dublin's outer suburbs, with the surrounding context. "This approach seeks to connect the house with the older buildings still dotted around the suburban landscape, such as 19th century cottages and Knocklyon Castle, located a few hundred meters away," says principal Cian Deegan.

At the same time, the designers did not want the house to blend into the neighborhood so seamlessly that it would lose its identity, and sought to infuse the design with its own unique interpretation. They adjusted traditional suburban elements — a pitched roof, pebble-dashed external walls — into a more contemporary translation. For example, no overhanging eaves and a rawer version of large aggregate, unpainted rough-cast render. As in most large cities, land is a valuable commodity in Dublin so the designer sought to maximize the plan, allowing for the largest two-story footprint possible. Inside, all three rooms radiate from a central landing space and each one features a tall, pitched ceiling to make them feel more spacious.

The designer also integrated several sustainable features into the project: drylined blockwork with an insulation depth nearly twice what is typical; solar panels were placed on the south facing pitch of the main house; and a 3000 liter rainwater harvesting system collects water used in the washing machines, dishwasher and toilets.

Photography by Alice Clancy





*Jules Seltzer*

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## Pix\_L House

Location: Serifos, Greece

Designer: K-Studio

Website: [www.k-studio.gr](http://www.k-studio.gr)

"In our eyes, Cycladic villages look like pixelated landscapes—such as in the village of this island, Serifos," says Principal Dimitris Karampatakis. "This was our starting point and main inspiration for the house." The architect was briefed to design two summer houses—one main and one guesthouse—on an approximately 100,000-square-foot lot that brought a fresh perspective to the local vernacular.

The designers did not want to create a mass that was separated from the landscape, instead they sought to work with the idea of "pixilation" to delineate between external and internal space. "This was complimentary to the typical daily lifestyle of the Greek islands—a constant flowing from inside to out and being able to live as comfortably in both," he says. "We used the pixel concept to separate each of the main spaces—bedrooms, living area, guest house—with small courtyard gardens to increase privacy and give the potential for more interesting circulation routes other than the main hierarchical flow, allowing a progression from in to out and an interplay between both environments."

The designers will use traditional building methods of stone wall constructions and whitewashing to reflect sunlight into smaller, shaded areas; and each stone will be laid tilting towards the external face, allowing the house to breathe and keeping water out without the use of sealants. The green roofs will collect water into a central cistern below the house during rainy season, while also insulating the home from heat in the summer and cold weather in the winter.

Renderings courtesy of K-Studio.





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## Country Club Residence

Location: Mexico City, Mexico

Designer: Migdal Arquitectos

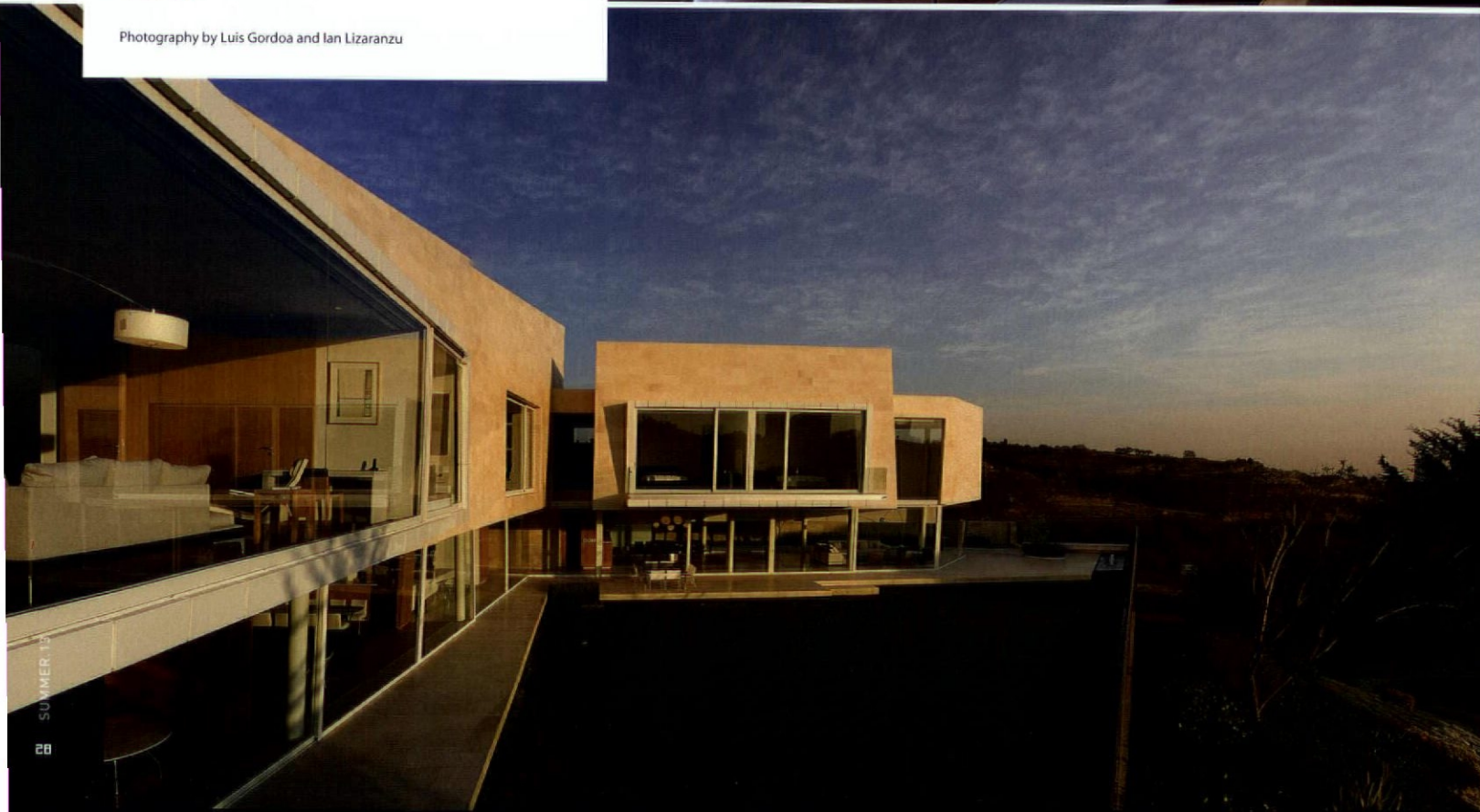
Website: [www.migdal.com.mx](http://www.migdal.com.mx)

This L-shaped residence was designed to maximize views, facing the exclusive greens of a golf course. The plan itself was devised in three layers, starting from the bottom: the services basement presented as a black stone "podium" that supports the entire residence; the public space, with its light and airy views of the garden; and the private, upstairs area supported by slender metal columns. The upper floor also features a 16-foot overhang that serves as a shaded terrace below.

The designer blurred the lines between interior and exterior space, ensuring that the common areas integral to daily life, flowed directly into the exterior garden. A double-height living room is enclosed in glass, and defined by a hanging wall that unfolds from the ceiling, creating a more intimate space. The fusion between the exterior and interior is further underscored through the use of complementary materials across both spaces—black stone, beige marble, aluminum and glass.

The transparency of the residence was developed with sunlight in mind. During the day, the residence is bathed in natural light with overhangs casting strategic shadows to provide shaded respite from the sun. While at night, the house is illuminated like a lamp, emphasizing the volumes that float over the grass.

Photography by Luis Gordoa and Ian Lizaranzu





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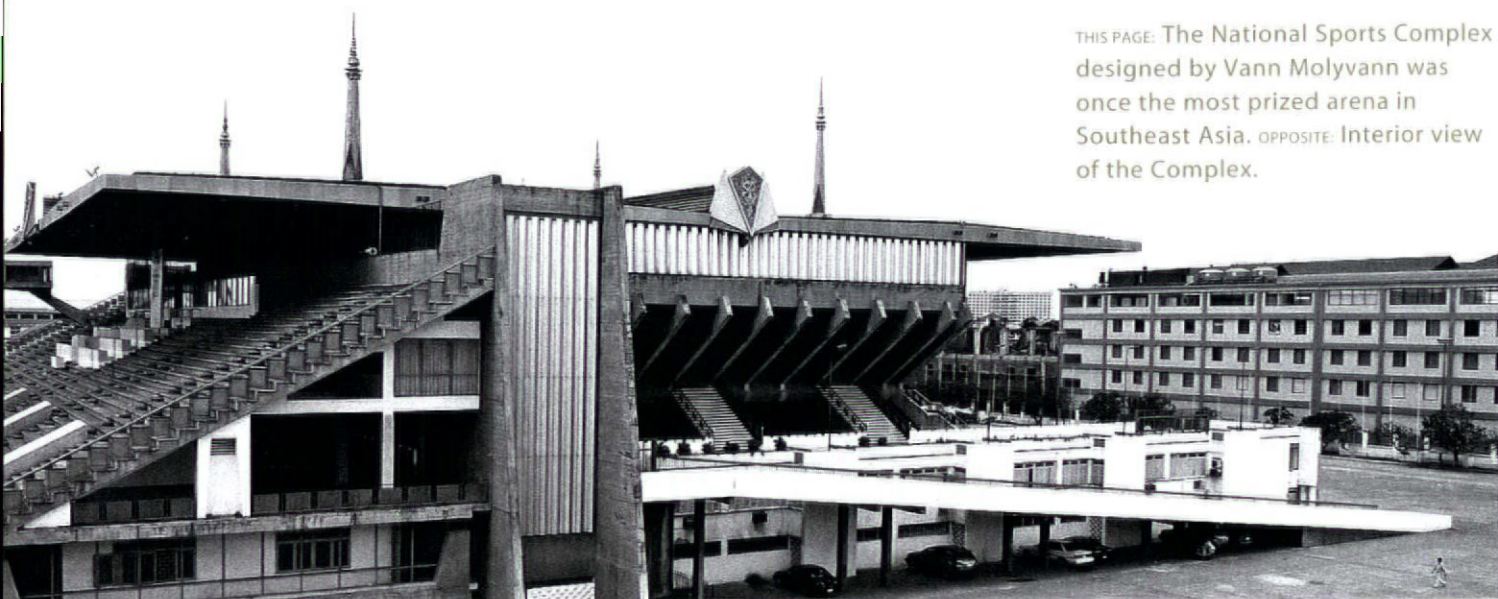


# BEYOND ANGKOR WAT

BY KIM FAY

Photo by Shelby Elizabeth Doyle.





THIS PAGE: The National Sports Complex designed by Vann Molyvann was once the most prized arena in Southeast Asia. OPPOSITE: Interior view of the Complex.

Photo by Geoff Pyle

## In Cambodia, architecture is at the mercy of developers unless the past can be reclaimed.

The words *Cambodia* and *architectural preservation* are most notably associated with the ancient Khmer temple of Angkor Wat. From UNESCO to private non-governmental organizations, protectors abound for this sandstone marvel. What few know is that Cambodia experienced two architectural zeniths. The first, with its steady construction of royal temples, took place from the 9th to 15th centuries. The second, which spawned some of Southeast Asia's greatest endangered treasures, happened relatively recently: the 1950s and '60s. Fed by a wellspring unique to its midcentury time and place, New Khmer Architecture revolutionized the innovative blend of contemporary and vernacular styles, and leading this movement was a celebrated Cambodian architect named Vann Molyvann.

Today, though, New Khmer Architecture is considered by many to be an outdated relic in

the country's battle for urban development, with up-and-coming architects being seduced by the sleek skyscrapers of Hong Kong and Shanghai instead of drawing from the past and local culture to create a unique vision for Cambodia. However, there is a small, vocal group who is working tirelessly to try and change the path towards unbridled development and the destruction of national monuments.

New Khmer Architecture was based on the design principle that space is a part of the structure, but these days, in Phnom Penh, space is at a premium and developers are the new ruling class. In the past decade, two of Vann's most prominent buildings, the National Theater and the Council of Ministers, have been torn down. Preservationists fear that the next to go will be the much-lauded National Sports

Complex, which the government sold to Taiwanese developers who have filled in the ponds and built up commercial properties around it. It was the destruction of the theater that caused Bill Greaves, a New York-based architect, to create the Vann Molyvann Project.

"Vann Molyvann's generation is dying. It doesn't have a lot of time left, and so we're trying to make that last-minute connection between his generation and the 20 year olds, the people who are still in school," he says.

The New Khmer Architecture movement started in 1953, when French rule ended in Cambodia, and many young Cambodians were still attending university in Paris. One in particular, Vann Molyvann, studied under Le Corbusier at École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts. When Vann returned to an independent Cambodia in 1956, Norodom Sihanouk, the country's former king turned prime minister, was embarking on an unprecedented program of urban development designed to steer the country away from its colonialist past and beyond its



"In addition to all the human loss and material destruction, war destroyed the most precious thing of a country, its civilization on the level of civility and culture, on the level of basic knowledge about one's own origins. This intangible heritage could not be brought back to life easily, if ever."

- Helen Grant Ross

OPPOSITE: Details from the interior of the Institute of Foreign Languages.

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: Institute of Foreign Languages Library.

agrarian state. To do this, he appointed Vann the country's chief architect and director of urban planning.

Vann took the tabula rasa presented to him and led the charge in creating a city like no other in Asia. His signature buildings from that time period abound, from the fan-shape Chaktomuk Conference Hall, built in 1961 with progressive designs for natural ventilation, to the Olympic Stadium (National Sports Complex), completed in 1964 and featuring ornamental pools, inspired by Angkor Wat, to collect runoff during the flood season.

"What's extraordinary about Vann's buildings is the way they work with the environment to provide shade, cooling, light, and an awareness of water, flooding. It's like he invented green architecture before green architecture existed as a movement. To do this, [Vann] borrowed many aspects from [traditional] Cambodian architecture," says Greaves. "For example, the idea of a permeable wall. Imagine taking a concrete block wall and molding each block so it has some kind of form that allows air to flow through it—that imitated the tradition of using reeds to create a kind of breathing wall."

When Sihanouk was overthrown in a coup in 1970, Vann and his family fled the country and settled in Europe. What followed was Cambodia's most well-known era, the reign of the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979, which led to the death of an estimated one-quarter of the country's eight million

residents, including the majority of its educated class.

"Cambodia suffered from amnesia of all that had happened before the Khmer Rouge. The 'collective conscience' had been destroyed. Society was broken down and did not function as a network. There was no transmission of knowledge from generation to generation," says Helen Grant Ross, co-author of *Building Cambodia: New Khmer Architecture 1953-1970*, who arrived in Cambodia in 1997 to work in the Faculty of Architecture at the Royal University of Fine Arts. "In addition to all the human loss and material destruction, war destroyed the most precious thing of a country, its civilization on the level of civility and culture, on the level of basic knowledge about one's own origins. This intangible heritage could not be brought back to life easily, if ever."

Moreover, the Khmer Rouge had destroyed the majority of the country's documents, including its architectural drawings, making it more difficult for students and contemporary architects to learn from the past and build upon it. "When one of these buildings comes down," Greaves says, "there's nothing left, except for things that might have been caught in a film or photographs. Basically, our project was to create a set of documents that could be of use to future scholars."

Working with a mix of Cambodian and American students from 2009 to 2011,

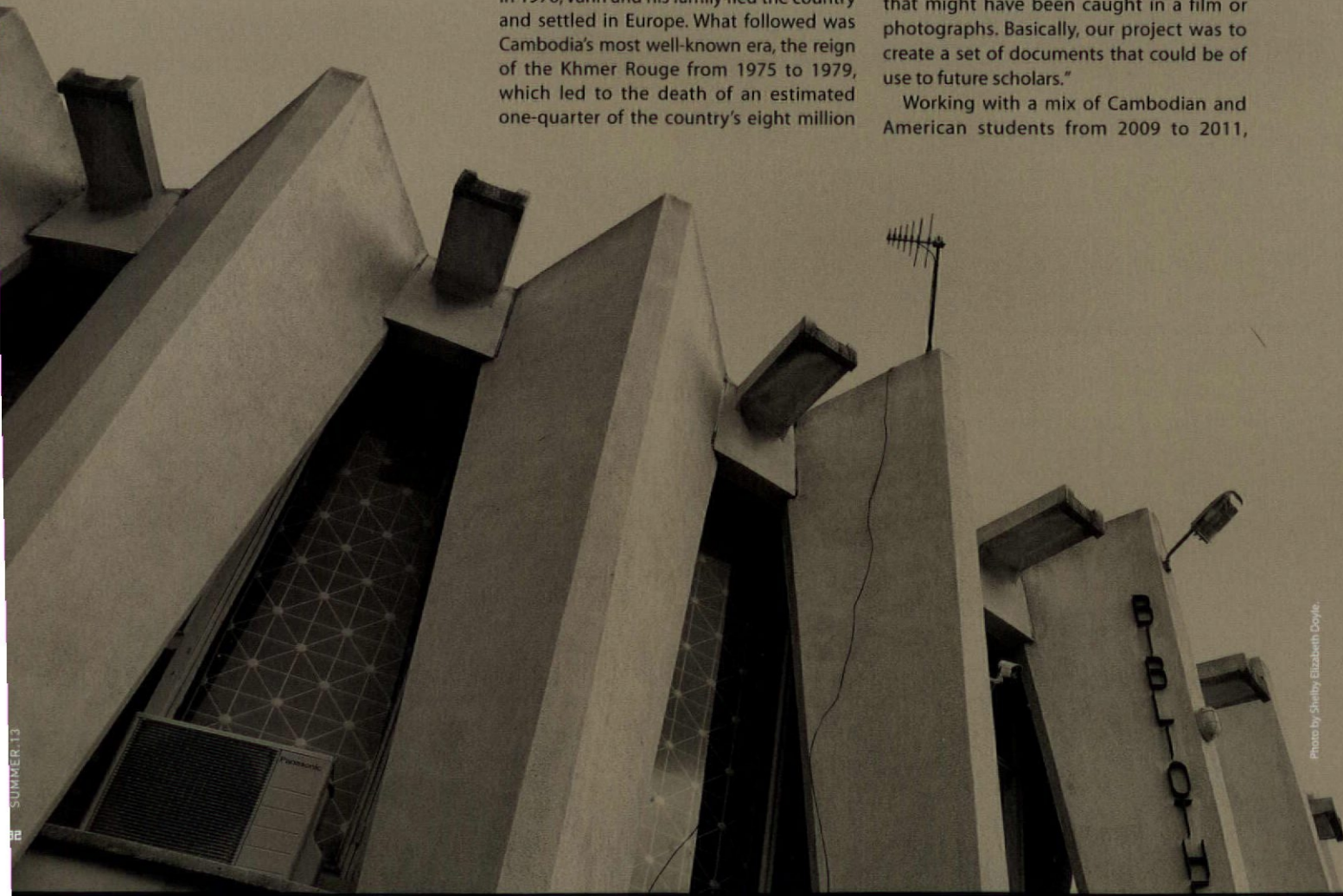






Photo by Geoff Pyle



Photo by Geoff Pyle



Photo by Shelby Elizabeth Doyle

Greaves and his colleagues chose the most significant examples of each type of Vann's buildings, and measured and recreated them in drawn form. "We'd go out into the field with a tape measure, measure the building, go back to the office, draw up the building, then go back to check it. We'd show it to Vann Molyvann and say, 'Does this look right?'"

Greaves sees this project as a catalyst towards building awareness, an awareness that will hopefully lead to preservation and the incorporation of New Khmer Architecture principles today. At the same time that students redraw Vann's buildings, they are given the opportunity to stake their own claim in their city's history. This process is crucial because, as Greaves explains, "there are young kids who either studied abroad or just graduated from the Royal University of Fine Arts, who are probably doing the best architecture in the country right now. But I think we're at a tipping point. It's a critical moment. Except for Rangoon and Phnom Penh, there aren't many Southeast Asian cities that haven't gone the way of Bangkok."

Along with Greaves' preservation project another unlikely source in the form of a tourist attraction is bringing attention to Cambodia's architectural legacy to a new guard of design students. Khmer Architecture Tours (KA Tours) was founded by Geoff Pyle, a British architect based out of Phnom Penh and London, whose firm is responsible for the extension to Hun Sen Library at the Royal University of Phnom

Penh. Influenced by New Khmer Architecture principles, the building won Sustain magazine's 2012 International Project of the Year. As a byproduct of KA Tours educating visitors, it also enlightens those who work for it. "When I lead my tours of Vann Molyvann's buildings, I feel like I am studying architecture that I have never experienced at school. I am luckier than some of my classmates who have learned nothing about the New Khmer Architecture movement," says Virak Roeun, a KA tour guide and fourth-year architecture student at the Royal University of Fine Arts.

Sim Sitho, Virak's fellow KA guide, agrees: "Since I've been working for KA Tours, I feel that all of the things I have seen from the old architectural period have influenced me. The methods applied to the old architecture design are really good examples with their own special techniques that we must learn from, and we can apply those techniques to our design and studies. Each New Khmer Architecture building has its own full explanation about our architectural history. If we think deeply, we will see what is hidden in that architecture."

As the efforts of a dedicated few have proven, education comes in all forms, and through these unconventional outlets, a new generation of students will be able to learn from their own architectural heritage in order to create a contemporary Cambodia that pays tribute to the past while embracing the future. ■

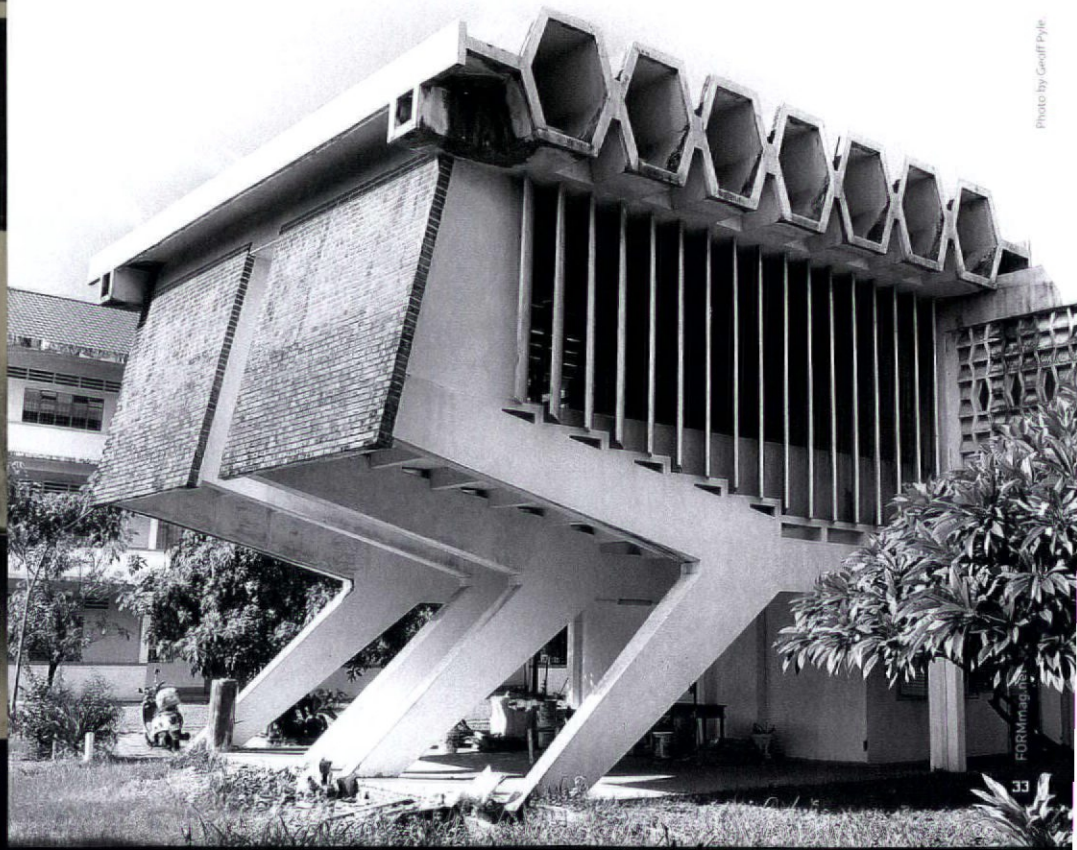


Photo by Geoff Pyle

FORM magazine



# KOREA'S GOT TALENT

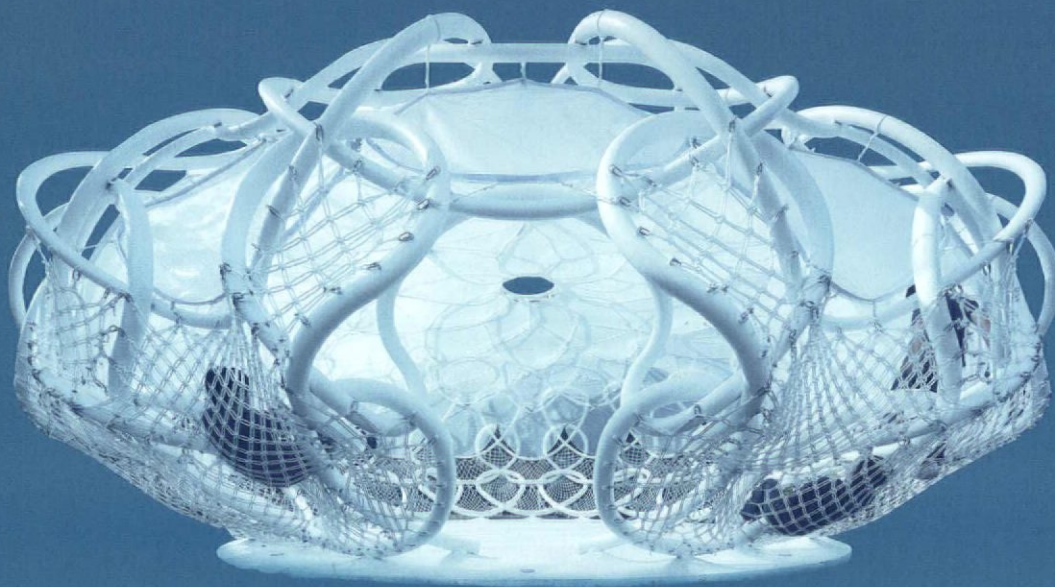
Architects struggle to excel  
amidst frantic development

BY MICHAEL WEBB





OPPOSITE: Songwan Art Space by Mass Studies. THIS PAGE: APAP 2010 pavilion in Seoul provides a climbing frame for children.



Architecture is shaped by history and culture, and nowhere is this more evident than in South Korea. Over the centuries, the peninsula absorbed ideas from China and Japan while battling its powerful neighbors to maintain a separate identity.

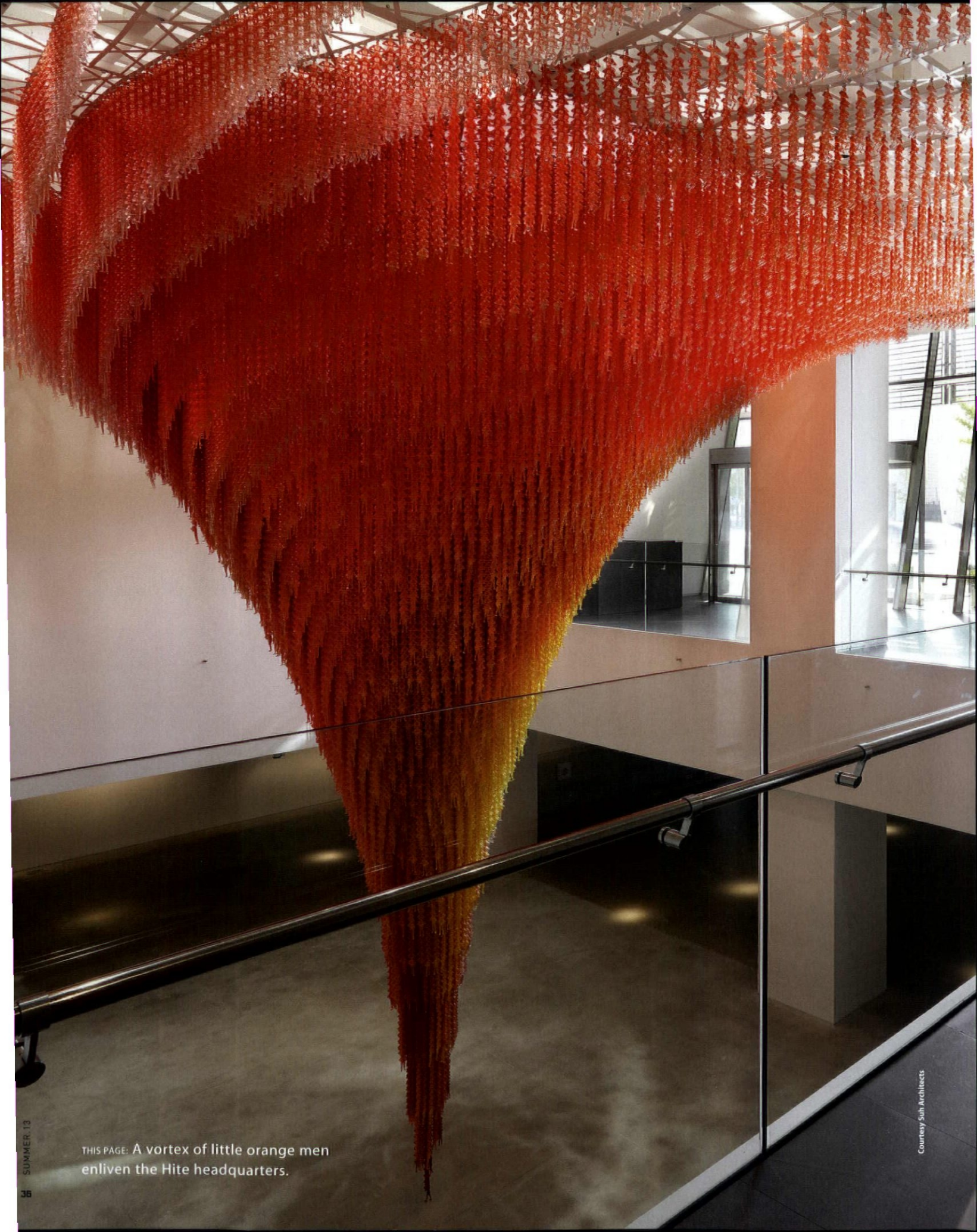
That passion for independence survived the brutal Japanese occupation of 1910 to 1945 and the devastation of the communist invasion, after which the south emerged from the ashes to become one of Asia's most powerful economies. Half of its 50 million people live in the densely populated capital of Seoul and the urban agglomeration that extends to the port of Incheon. Forests of sleek office towers and bland apartment blocks were thrown up in a hurry to meet the urgent demands of housing and commerce, and prosperity has brought more surface glitz.

Seoul is a vibrant metropolis and its quality of life has risen significantly since the city hosted the Olympics in 1988 (just as it did in Tokyo, following the 1964 Games). The airport and subway system have been voted the world's best, Seoul was named the World Design Capital in 2010, and its public spaces offer free WiFi at 1 GB/s. Thanks to two progressive mayors, the Han riverfront has been opened up, as has Cheonggyecheon, a

downtown stream that had been paved over as an expressway. Historic sites have been restored and the center greened with new parks. Hated reminders of the Japanese empire have been torn down, and the 1936 city hall encased in a great wave of glass. High-speed trains link the capital to other major cities, some of which (like the southern port of Busan) have enjoyed their own renaissance.

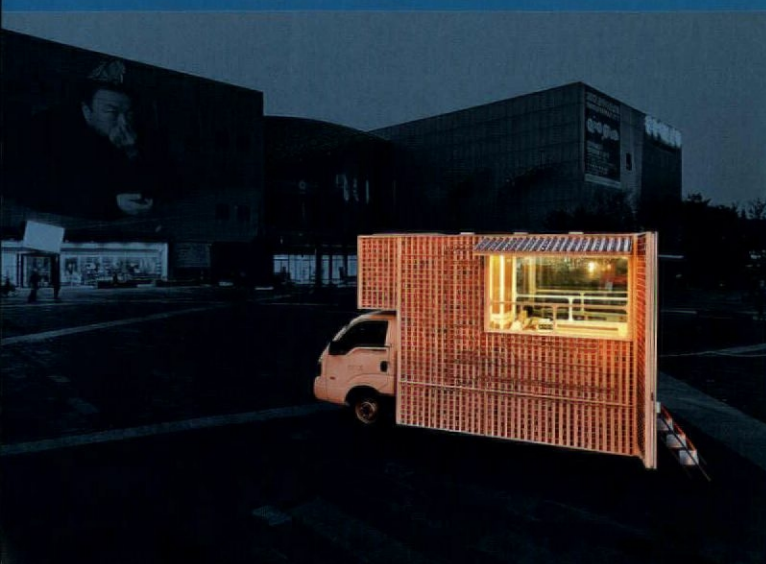
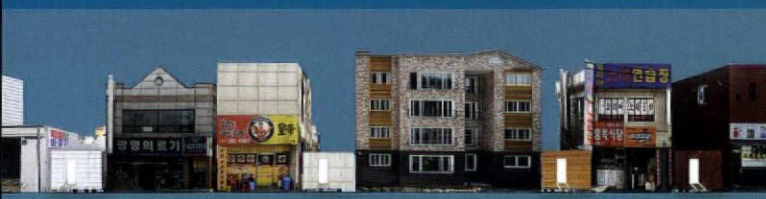
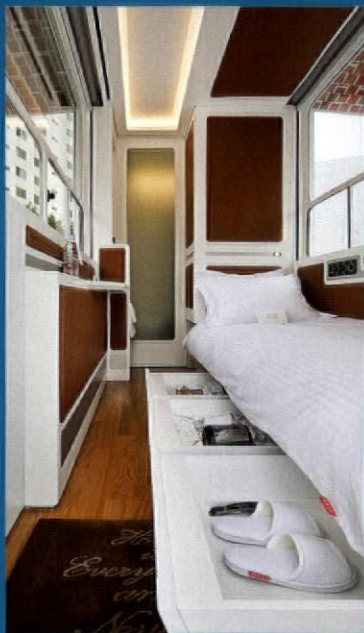
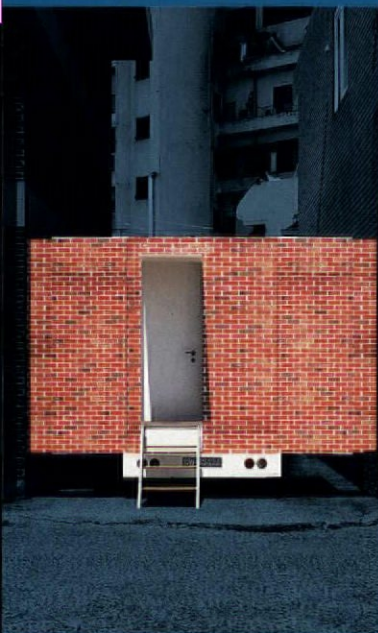
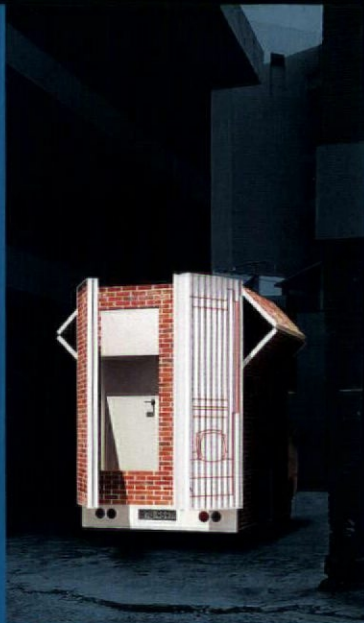
In the frantic race for wealth and show, however, creative architects have been marginalized. "Most of the plum jobs in Korea are secured by large firms and foreign architects," says Minsuk Cho, who worked with Rem Koolhaas and now heads the widely admired firm, Mass Studies. "Even the older generation of respected Korean architects and smaller atelier firms have been shut out of public projects because things operate under a nepotistic, turn-key system that favors the construction companies. Most of our built work is for enlightened private clients." Mass Studies did secure one prestigious public commission—for the acclaimed Korean Pavilion at the 2010





THIS PAGE: A vortex of little orange men  
enliven the Hite headquarters.





THIS PAGE: For the "In-Between Hotel," Suh Architects collaborated with installation artist Do Ho Suh.

Shanghai Expo. The firm has built several adventurous houses, contributed to the redevelopment of Jeju Island as a resort, and recently completed the Songwon Art Space in Seoul. There, on a small wedge-shaped site adjoining a heritage property, they cantilevered two floors and clad them in pleated panels of painted steel. Skylights pull natural light into the upper level restaurant and subterranean galleries.

Mehrdad Yazdani's studio in the Los Angeles office of Cannon Design has been working in Korea for the past ten years, and their experience, like that of Mass Studies, has been mixed. Yazdani soon discovered that competitions can be rigged; the head of one large firm was arrested when police discovered bundles of bills addressed to architectural professors on the jury of a project he was competing for. Yazdani has had a more positive experience with corporate clients—notably on the golf clubhouse in Incheon. "In China they want to make a statement to the world, however crazy," he says. "Koreans seem more pragmatic and confident in what they want from their buildings".

Over the past few years, the recession has dried up funding and slowed construction. Several architectural offices, including the much-admired Space Group, went bankrupt and others are struggling to survive. Even Samsung, a global giant, has felt the pinch. During the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s, it cancelled plans for Frank Gehry's art museum, which promised to outshine the Bilbao Guggenheim. This time around, they have shrunk the size of three museum wings designed by OMA, Jean Nouvel and Mario Botta. The new socialist mayor has sidelined Zaha Hadid's ambitious Dongdaemun Design Plaza and Park, a learning center for professionals and the public, because he considers it elitist.

A few architects continue to flourish, notably Eulho Suh, who opened an office when he returned to Seoul from a stint with Morphosis in Los Angeles. He sometimes works with his brother, Do Ho Suh, one of the country's top artists, on a diversity of commercial, residential, and recreational buildings. Standout projects include a football clubhouse for Hyundai Motors in Jeonbuk, and the Hite headquarters in Seoul.

"We have found our experience of being educated and working in the U.S. has given us a fresh perspective on Korea, while having been raised here makes us empathetic," says Kyungen Kim, co-principal of Suh Architects. "Our portfolio has expanded exponentially faster than it could have in the U.S., due to the Korean awareness of international affairs, the desire to be on the cutting edge, and the general efficiency that reigns."





Photo by Sung Kwan Lee.

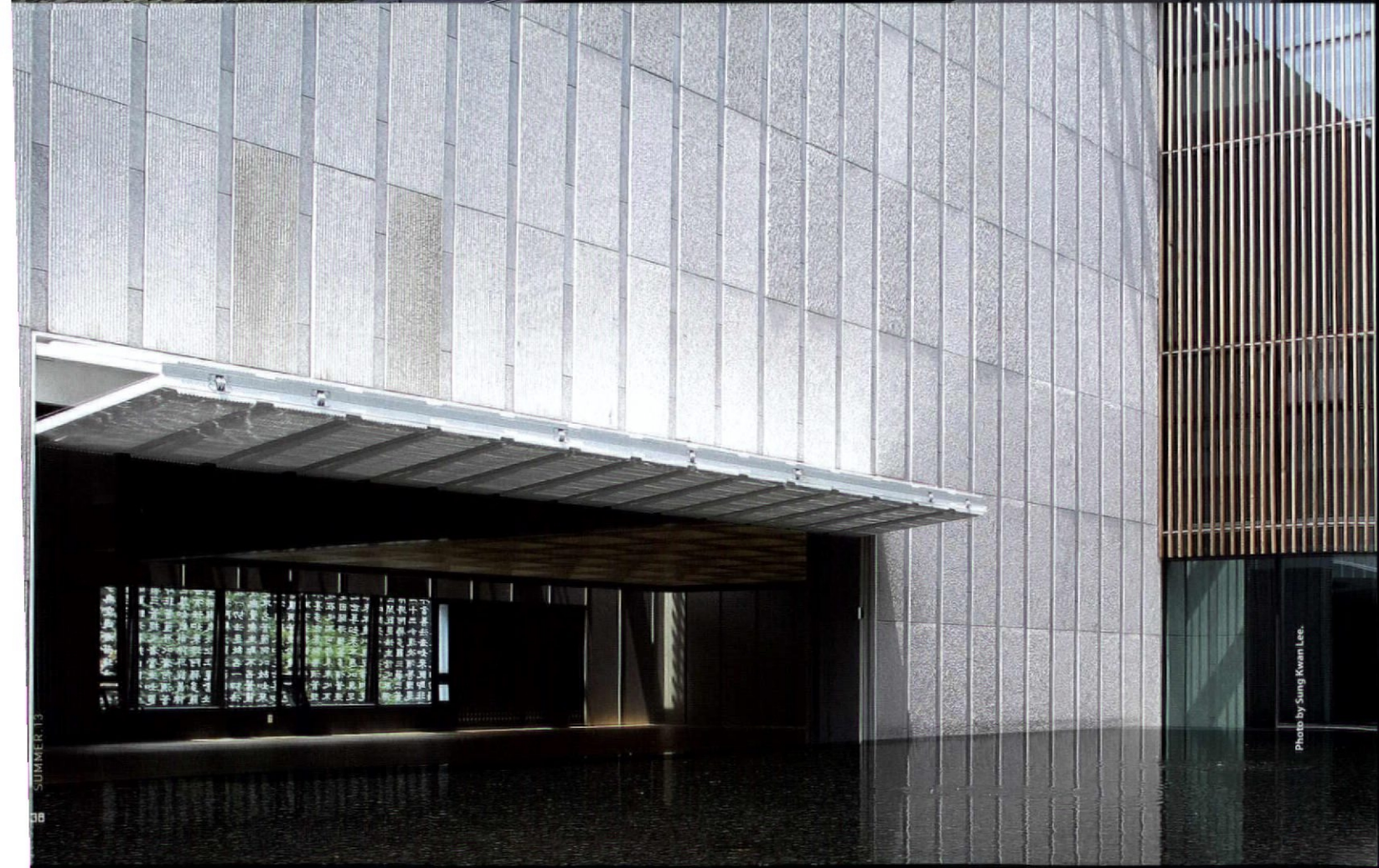


Photo by Sung Kwan Lee.



Eui-Sung Yi, a UCLA professor and design principal at Morphosis for four years, has rejoined Chang-Jo Architects in Seoul, where he won the competition for the Korean Embassy in Tokyo, now nearing completion. Hanul Architects, headed by Sung Wan Lee, has specialized in university buildings and master plans, while fusing modernity and tradition in the Tanheo Memorial Museum in Seoul, which is dedicated to a Buddhist Grand Master. Byung Soo Cho of BCHO Architects is also well regarded by his peers for such recent projects as the Scissors house on Jeju Island, and the Hanil Visitors' Center in Mt. Sobaek National Park near Seoul, which demonstrates the importance of recycling concrete. These three, and several other progressive firms, are striving to make their mark in a conservative yet dynamic country. ■

OPPOSITE: Tanheo Memorial Pavilion, Seoul by Hanul Architects is dedicated to a Buddhist Grand Master.

THIS PAGE: Hanil Visitors Center (BCHO Architects).

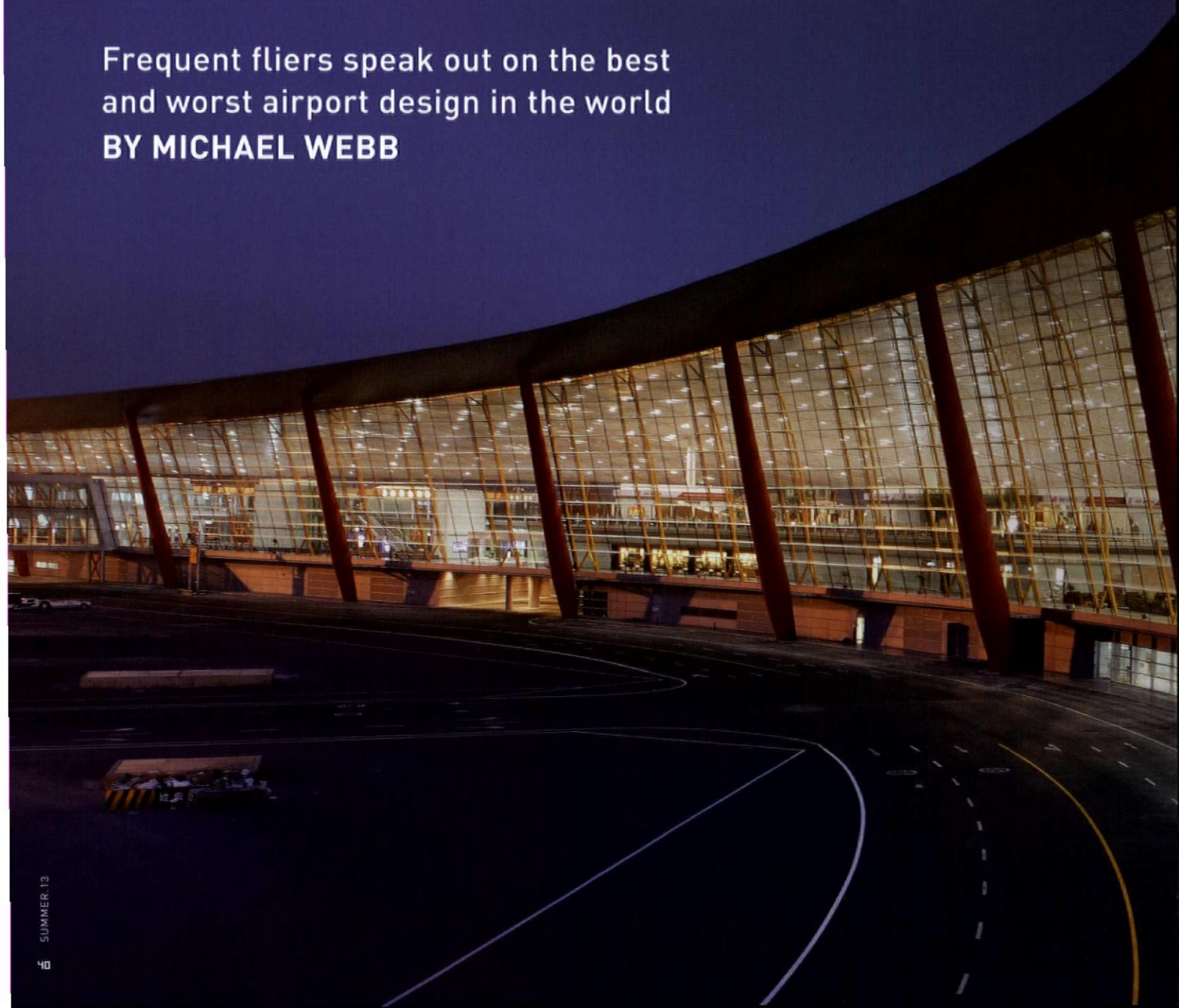
"In China they want to make a statement to the world, however crazy. Koreans seem more pragmatic and confident in what they want from their buildings." –Merhdad Yazdani




# ARCHITECTS ON AIRPORTS

Frequent fliers speak out on the best  
and worst airport design in the world

**BY MICHAEL WEBB**







AIRPORTS HAVE GONE FROM SIMPLE SHELTERS—DRIVE up on one side, fly from the other—to sprawling labyrinths that can consume more of our time than the flight itself. Long lines, security barriers, chaotic signage, a cacophony of announcements, flickering screens that nobody watches, regimented seating, bad food, and now—more than ever—unpredictable delays. It's an ordeal made worse by mediocre design, and it's especially painful for architects, who are frequent fliers but rarely have the chance to apply their remedial skills. I asked some well-traveled professionals which airports they liked or hated and why. What changes, large or small, would they make to improve the experience? Several had just disembarked from a plane or were about to board and responses came rapidly.

"Currently sitting in a dreary part of Logan Airport," groaned Buzz Yudell. "Off to Jakarta now, which has a rather nice airport—open air pavilions with dense tropical plantings," wrote Scott Johnson. Craig Dykers, a Snøhetta partner, confessed: "I have been told I travel so much that I am likely to meet myself at the airport." Kulapat Yantrasast of WHY Architects emailed: "Just arrived in New York after a series of flights—fresh impressions indeed!" Stefan Behnisch

deplored the lack of identity in terminals, and recalled that "we once flew from Stuttgart to Hamburg when my sons were small. They fell asleep on the plane and when we disembarked they asked, 'Why are we back in Stuttgart?'"

It's a far cry from the era described by F. Scott Fitzgerald in *The Last Tycoon*, when traveling was a costly adventure for a privileged few, and a bumpy ride with many interruptions. "Airports lead you way back in history like oases, like the stops on the great trade routes," he wrote. "In the big transcontinental planes we were the coastal rich, who casually alighted from our cloud in mid-America."

By the 1950s, flying was still something you dressed up for—remember *Funny Face*, and the TWA Constellation landing in Paris? Jet aircraft changed everything: adding speed, lowering costs and bringing the crowds, which grow exponentially every year.

Major airports are lagging in their race to keep up with the traffic, and the bigger they get the less they please. Johnson describes LAX as "an international embarrassment—start over, please." He applauds Norman Foster's Beijing Terminal 3, currently the world's largest, for its "fabulous vaulted

ceilings" and mezzanine lounges where "you enjoy the space from above while sitting in intimate areas on comfortable chairs." Renzo Piano's Kansai—an island airport serving Osaka—is praised for its generous sloping roof, huge windows and a linear plan "that makes way-finding a cinch."

London Heathrow draws the most scorn. "Tasteless, dysfunctional, out-of-control, cheap-looking—this is an airport to avoid at all costs," growls Behnisch. "People tend to forget that an airport is the most prominent gateway to a city or country" setting up expectations for what lies beyond, he adds. He urges a sophisticated use of color (as in the rainbow of Richard Rogers' Barajas, Madrid), plenty of daylight, and discreet illumination, plus gardens that allow you to step outside, as in Bangkok.

**BACKGROUND:** By 2020, the Beijing Airport Terminal 3 will cater to 50 million passengers annually.



Dykens would redesign security areas, adding sound-absorbing materials, soothing colors, and extended tables to ease the bottleneck around the x-ray machines. He would make circulation and waiting areas more transparent and provide varied seating choices, as in the best new libraries. Yantrasast extols Foster's Stansted—London's best alternative to Heathrow—for the clarity of its design and circulation. "We need to bring back the fun and excitement of flying and give airports a sense of place by combining adventurous retail and restaurants, entertainment, arts and culture to create an urban experience," he says. Yudell echoes that plea: "We should think of airports as public places that support a wide range of human activities, interactions, needs, and even pleasures—think Grand Central Terminal, not regional shopping mall."

**"People tend to forget that an airport is the most prominent gateway to a city or country."**

**-Stefan Behnisch**

Predictably, smaller airports in design-savvy countries elicit enthusiasm. Copenhagen is a favorite—for its wood floors and beautiful details. Zurich's new international terminal draws raves from Yudell: "Dignified and serene, elegantly detailed and crafted, generous but not bombastic public spaces, beautifully maintained and fastidiously clean. The acoustic environment and lighting contribute to the welcome sense of peacefulness. There is an Illy café, rendered with verve in stainless steel with enameled red details." Closer to home, he praises the mid-sized airports of Austin, TX ("industrial materials used with a sense of the region") and Manchester, NH, for its "daylighting and thoughtful sectional design, which makes the spaces commodious."

Norway is second home for Dykers, who lived there before Snøhetta opened its New York office. He shares a widespread enthusiasm for Oslo's Gardermoen airport: "It is light-filled, simple to use, the security areas are well organized, and there's an abundance of interesting artworks." He regrets the closure of Berlin's Tempelhof, where "you walked onto the tarmac beneath the vast canopy to get on the plane." And he was much taken by the small international airport at Longyearbyen, on the Norwegian island of Spitsbergen, which is the closest most of us will get to the North Pole. He recalls "a sign that asks you to always carry your firearms, even in the terminal, in case you come across a polar bear. I was greeted by friends who all had rifles slung over their shoulders when they met me at the arrival gate." Let's hope the NRA doesn't hear about this, or American airports will become even more intimidating than they already are.

CLOCKWISE, FROM NEAR RIGHT: A dramatic welcome at Kansai Airport designed by Renzo Piano; Beijing Terminal 3 by Foster + Partners; Richard Roger's Barajas, Madrid airport.







Photo by Iñida Situnji



Photo by Nigel Young

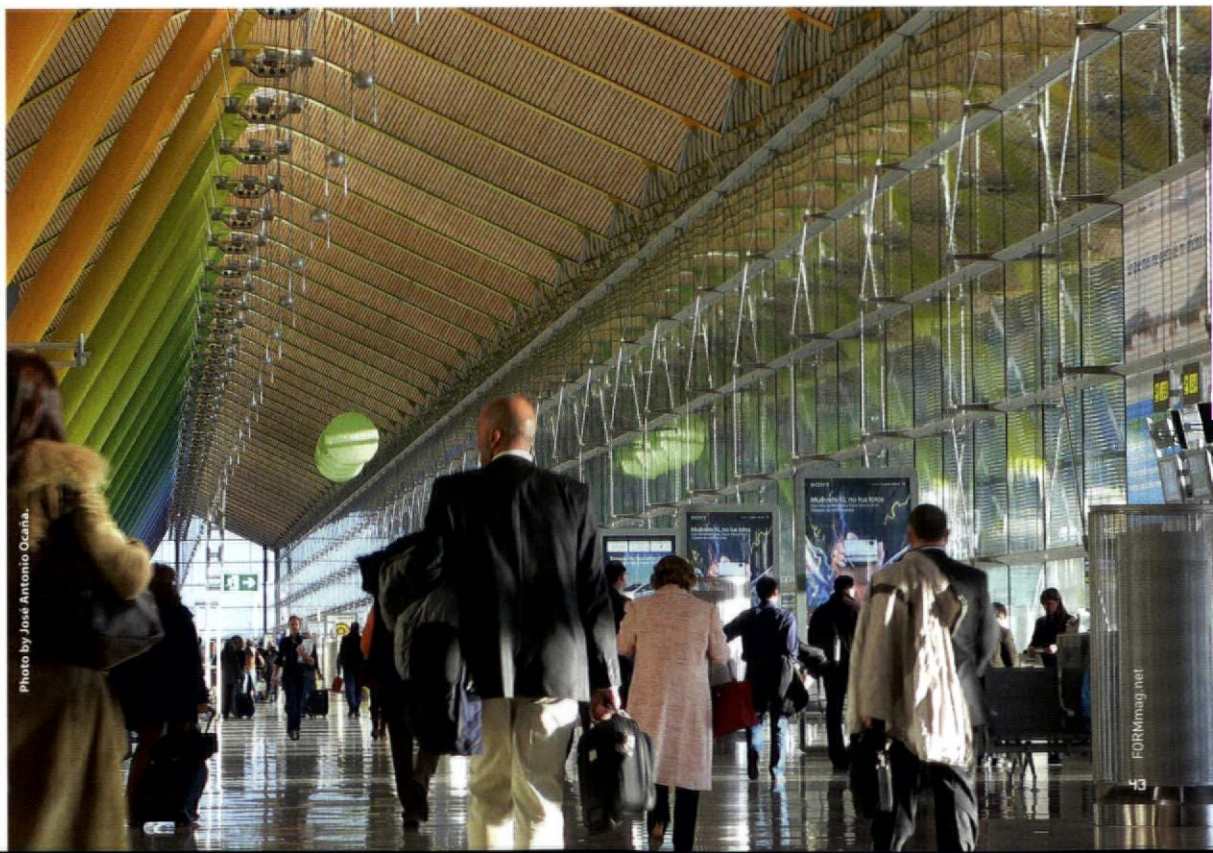


Photo by José Antonio Ocaña





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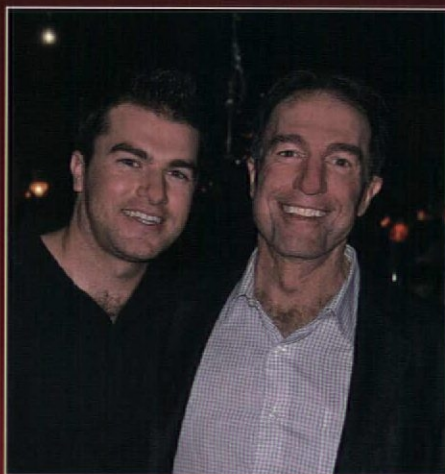
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