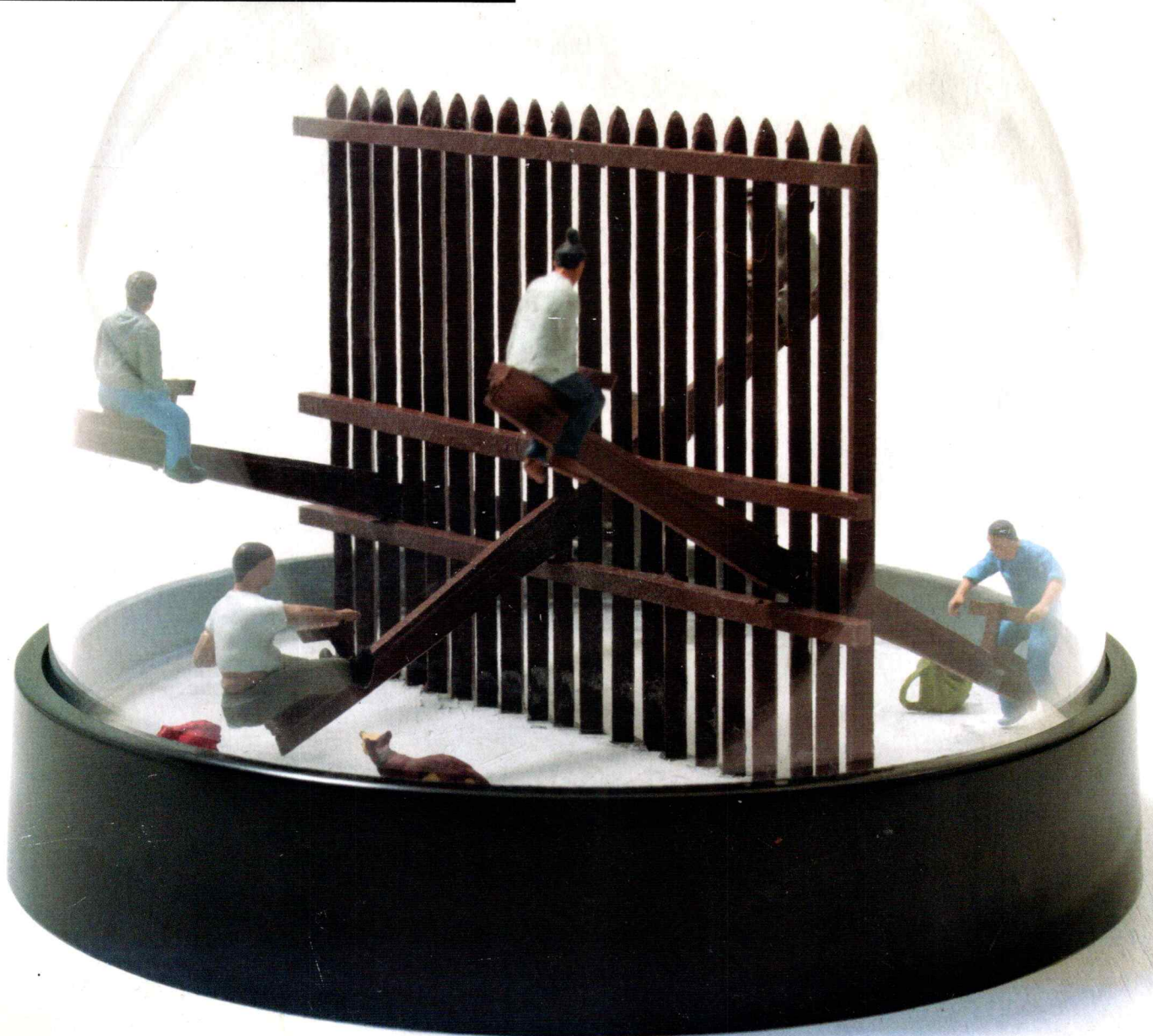


Texas Architect



Art of Brick Performance

Dickies Arena raises the roof on Fort Worth heritage and entertainment. With Acme Brick as primary finish material, the arena's design honors the revered 1936 art deco architecture of Will Rogers Memorial Center nearby. Its free-span interior seats 9,300 as the new home for the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo. The arena sits atop an 18-foot plinth to house animals for the rodeo and services for conventions and other events like basketball and concerts for up to 14,000. Standing tall on the horizon, the arena serves as the western gateway to the Cultural District.



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Dickies Arena Fort Worth

architects

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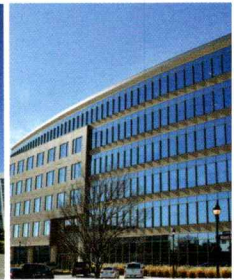
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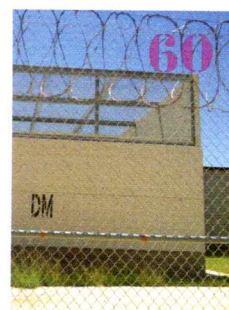
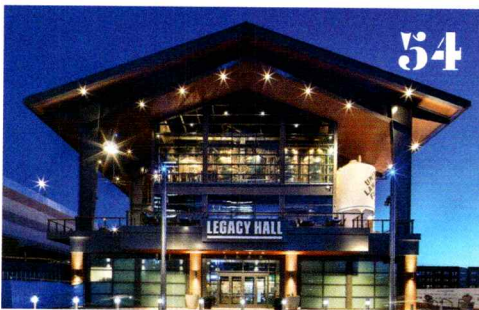
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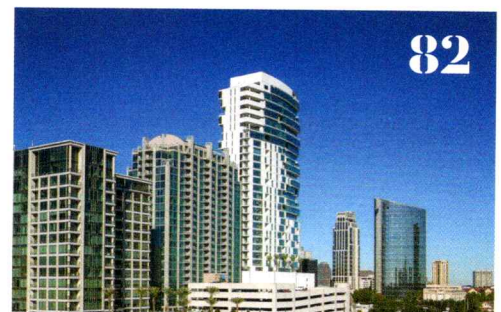
On the Cover

This intriguing recuerdo may be difficult to find in a border town gift shop. It's from "Borderwall as Architecture," by Ronald Rael, and prefigures the actual teeter totter Rael San Fratello installed on the border fence west of El Paso (p. 68).

Borders



Multifamily Housing



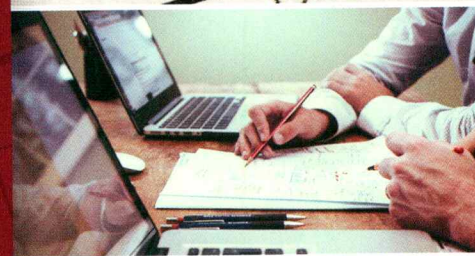
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Classical Orders

by Aaron Seward

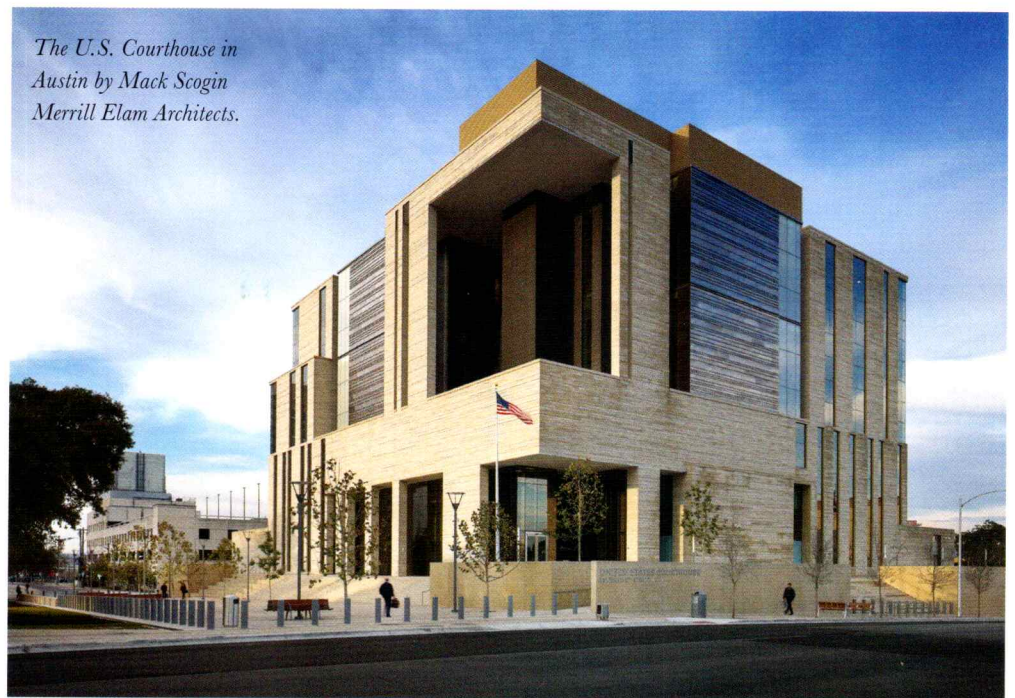
Last month, an anxious ripple stirred the murky waters of architectural discourse. Architectural Record reported that it had obtained a draft presidential executive order entitled “Making Federal Buildings Beautiful Again,” which would recast the Guiding Principles of Federal Architecture (1962) to mandate classical stylings for all new and updated federal buildings.

The draft order justifies this decree by asserting that the General Service Administration has not embodied national values in federal buildings because it has allowed Brutalist and Deconstructivist strains to infiltrate their designs.

These subgenres of modernism, the draft argues, don't exemplify the “dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability” of the American government. It specifically references the U.S. Courthouse in Austin (2012) by Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects, among other contemporary, award-winning civic structures, as having “little aesthetic appeal.” Classical architecture, it asserts, was the choice of the founding fathers because of its source in the proto-democracies of ancient Athens and Rome and continues to inspire “respect for our system of self-government.” To enforce adherence to classical stylings, the order would convene a President's Committee for the Re-Beautification of Federal Architecture that would tell architects their business and keep them in line.

The AIA responded immediately to the Record article, issuing a statement, echoed by the Society of Architectural Historians, that it “strongly opposes uniform style mandates for federal architecture,” which “should be designed for the specific communities that it serves, reflecting our rich nation's diverse places, thought, culture, and climates.” It released a call to action, co-signed by the Texas Society of Architects, urging members to tell the White House that they oppose the order.

The critical response to the draft order was also swift. Chicago Tribune architecture critic Blair Kamin called it “profoundly misguided.” Dallas Morning News architecture critic Mark Lamster characterized it as a “distraction” and pointed out that, as a developer, the president has not shied away from modern architecture. Even Michael Lykoudis, FAIA, the dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame — perhaps the only American university



The U.S. Courthouse in Austin by Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects.

that actually still teaches students classical design — wrote in the Washington Post that the order could reduce “an entire architectural philosophy to a caricature.”

On the other hand, David Brussat, former architecture critic for the Providence Journal, wrote on his blog that, no matter what Classicists may think of the president, the order is an opportunity for Traditionalist architects to unify and “fight this battle” to regain the high ground: “Classicists must do a deep think, swiftly, and rise above personality. The stakes are too high.”

The style wars that underpin the draft order and responses to it have been raging ever since Modernist architecture was developed in the years after the First World War. While at that time debating the relative virtues of Grecian columns versus pilotis may have been riveting and pertinent, at this moment, arguments for and against either style ring as boring and beside the point. Furthermore, and most disastrously, this dated disciplinary opposition, which the draft order plays on, conceals the common ground that neo-Classicists and neo-Modernists (let's face it, both styles are now well in the rearview mirror) share, which is in fact a critique of modernism. For example, both camps preach that architecture should first and foremost be derived from the wishes and needs of the communities it serves, as opposed to being imposed from the top down, and that buildings should be sensitive to street life and be constructed on a human scale.

Getting these things right seems more important than whether a building is faced with the marble portico of a 3rd-century BCE pagan temple or the metal and glass curtain wall of a 20th-century skyscraper.

Architecture, it has often been said, transcends politics. Classicism and modernism have been claimed at various times by vastly divergent regimes: democratic, communist, fascist. To say that either style embodies the spirit of any one vision of society is specious at best. Meanwhile, the 21st century has presented architecture with a slew of heretofore unseen challenges: rising sea levels, rapidly changing climate patterns, mass human migrations, accelerating demands on material resources, technologies that are completely changing the way people live their lives. Contemporary architecture, as it happens, has been grappling with these factors for the past 20 years. So perhaps what is really needed now are federal architecture guidelines that empower the architectural profession to offer its expertise to the government, as opposed to the other way around. But oh, wait, that's exactly what the current guiding principals say: “Design must flow from the architectural profession to the government and not vice versa.”

Contributors



James Adams, AIA, is a senior associate at Corgan in Dallas specializing in urban adaptive re-use projects. He is the editor of AIA Dallas' Columns Magazine. When not drawing or writing, he enjoys time with his two Audreys: one a partner, the other a daughter. Read his review of Dallas' new Holocaust museum on page 30.



Sarah Lopez, a built environment historian and migration scholar, is an associate professor at UT Austin. Her book, "The Remittance Landscape: The Spaces of Migration in Rural Mexico and Urban USA," won the 2017 Spiro Kostof Book Award from the Society of Architectural Historians. In this issue, she examines the history of detention center architecture (p. 60).

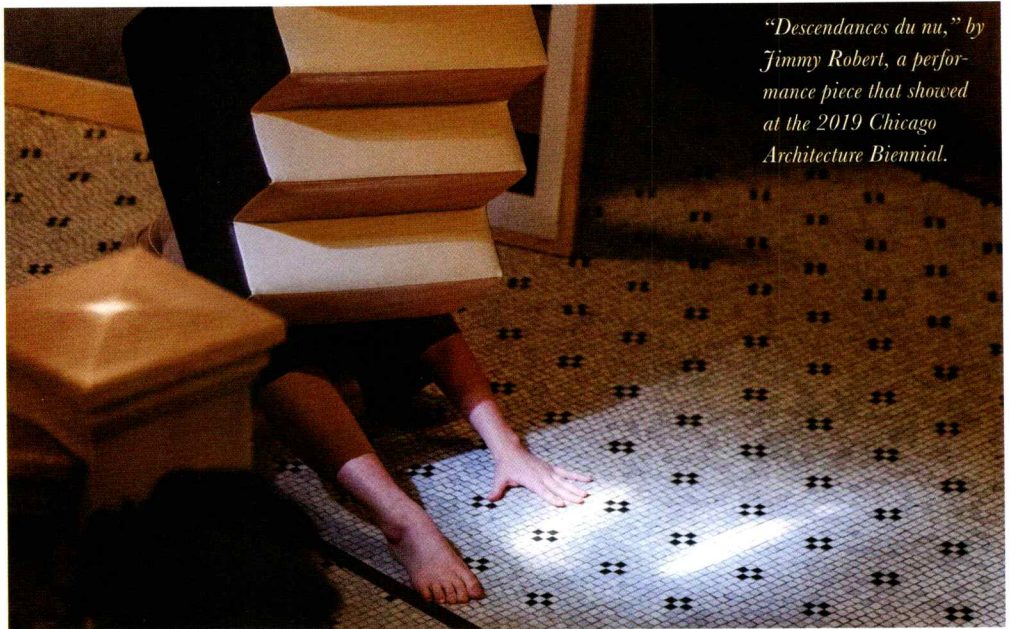


Shane Wilson, AIA, is founding principal of [w]Squared Architects. His Houston-based interdisciplinary practice focuses on multifamily residential projects. The firm is currently in a partnership with digital fabrication consultant Absolute Automation to fabricate a prototype for modular and adaptable solutions to high-rise residential structures. For our portfolio, Wilson reviews the new Arabella high-rise in Houston's River Oaks neighborhood (p. 82).



Jack Murphy is an M.Arch. candidate at Rice University in Houston. He has worked for architects in Boston, Austin, Houston, and New York City. Murphy's writing has appeared in Places, Dwell, Architectural Record, Cite, The Architect's Newspaper, and PLAT, among other publications. He has written for *TA* since 2013. In this issue, Murphy reviews Christopher Brown's "Rule of Capture" (p. 36).

Letters



"Descendances du nu," by Jimmy Robert, a performance piece that showed at the 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial.

The latest *TA* (January/February 2020) is excellent. I read it back to back and I'm so glad to see that we're finally, confidently, moving beyond politely describing/reporting on work that our peers do. "User Experience" and "About the Bones" are great pieces, and feel liberating. I hope this is a new direction for *TA* — assertive, opinionated, critical. A few people will be upset for sure, but, hey, too much politeness can lead to mediocrity. Well done.

Eurico R. Francisco, AIA

CallisonRTKL
Dallas

The following comments were submitted to txamagazine.org in response to "Land of Nod" from the January/February 2020 issue.

Well, bless your heart. Thanks for showing how much prejudice and stereotyping exists in Texas Architect.

Carl G. Harkins Jr., AIA

Barry-Wehmiller Design Group
Fort Worth

"...a little constructive criticism can go a long way." What is there about your bigotry and condescension that you find constructive? Who are you to tell anyone else what they are thinking? How ironic that you have actually taken a step to make the point of the entirely hypothetical white, male architects that you faux quote at the beginning of your article and who are the point throughout. Who else is exposed to such open ridicule and such bigoted assumptions as

they? Can any of us even imagine such a piece as this one about any other constituency within the AIA? I should actually have said "...as we?" as, full disclosure: I am a white, male architect of 40 years. I have the whole stereotypical package, the gray hair, the goatee, the BMW. What I don't have, nor have I seen from any of my colleagues over my long career, are the disrespect and disregard for others, either towards the communities we serve or towards my architecture colleagues, as that exhibited by this article.

Norman Alston, FAIA

Norman Alston Architects
Dallas

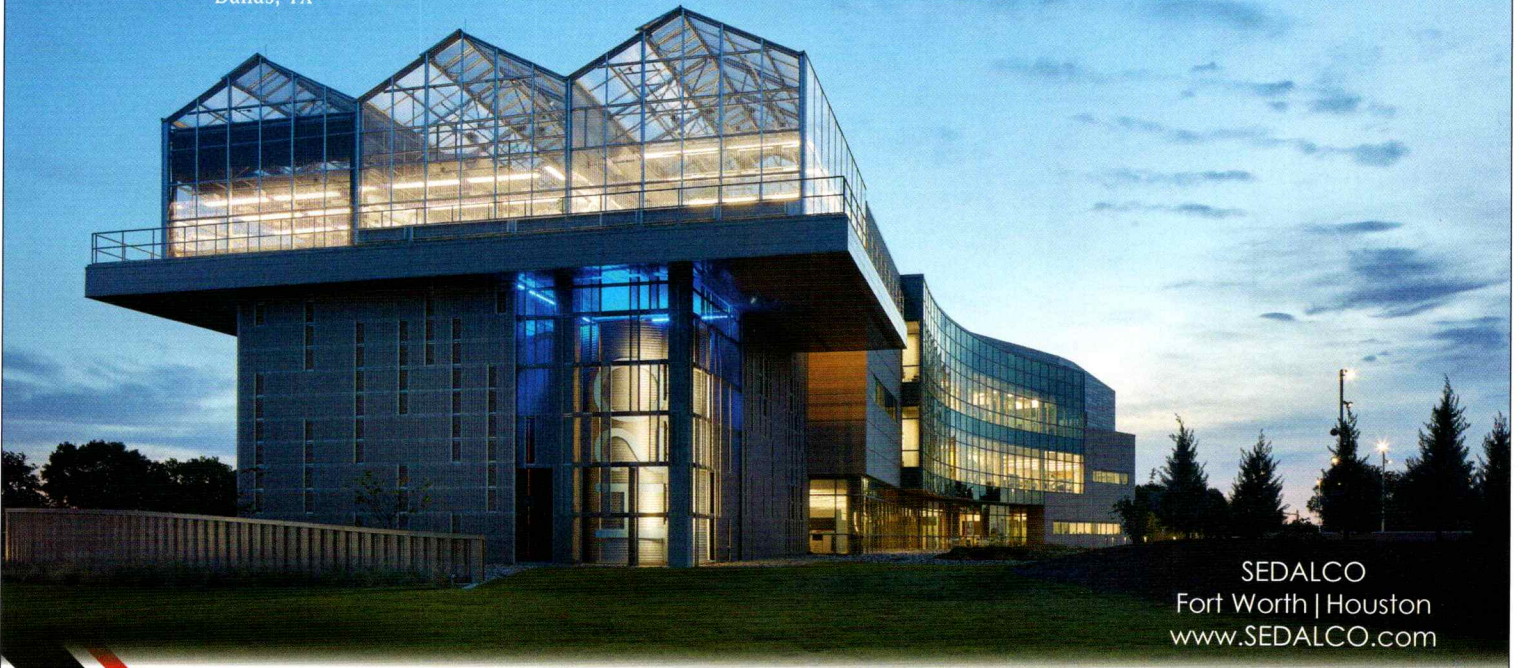
The following response was emailed to the editor.

I am grateful for your "Land of Nod" editor's note and voicing commentary on this issue that at times seems overwhelming. The state of our current representation and lack of diversity is like an overarching, unavoidable cloud that hovers over our profession. As an intersectional minority in our profession, it can feel like we are yelling from the sidelines for people to prioritize this issue more while balancing bias, perceptions and isolation that can occur just existing within the profession. I perceive your voice as part of the majority population of the profession and a leader in our TxA community. It makes me hopeful about the growing contingent recognizing the importance for supporting the growth of diversity and representation in our professional community.

Great design and social equity should be for everyone, but is also not limited to being produced

Continued on page 8

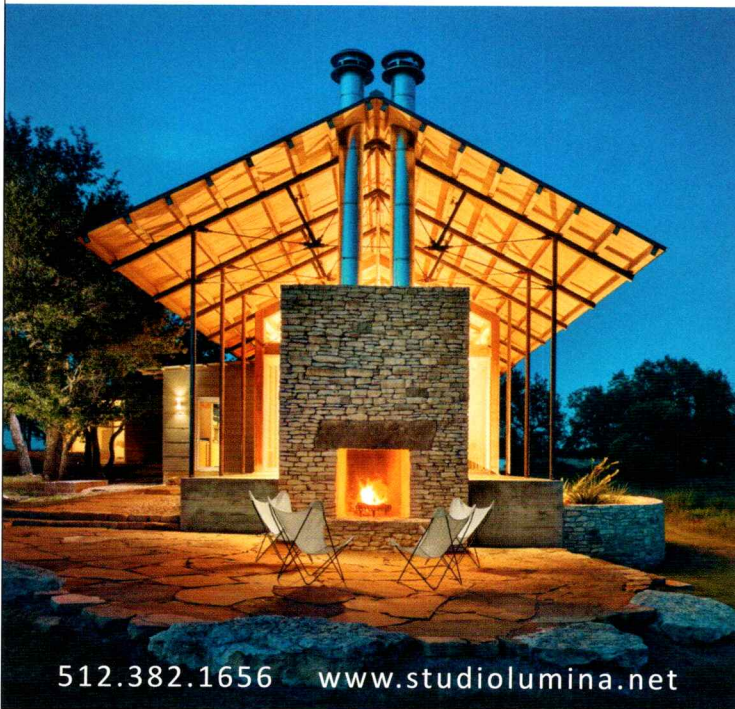
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Letters

Continued from page 6

by one singular group. It's all of us together that build the richness of our communities, enhance dialogue and further the language of what architecture means to the rapidly changing world. It is far past the time where this should be prioritized. I long for the day when it doesn't feel like the feature of those less represented in our profession is like a showcase of unicorns but is the absolute norm.

And this response is not about guilting, shaming or blaming anyone but a call for action that makes this recognition an important part of our path forward for a more inclusive, diverse, equitable representation for the communities we serve. Thank you again for bringing this to the fore and not shying away from a sensitive issue; this is how change is driven.

Adriana Swindle, AIA

Lake|Flato Architects
San Antonio

The following letters were sent to Michael Malone, FAIA, in response to his feature article "About the Bones," published in the January/February 2020 issue.

Just read your piece in *Texas Architect*, enjoyed it very much.

This quote (that Ed Baum sent me a few years ago) from Eames about Jeeps came to mind as I read your piece:

The 'Jeeps' have been with us for some time. Their 'naked truth' no longer shocks us. We have found that the lack of chromium and streamlining hasn't slowed them down or cramped their style. They have plenty of power even though the hood is just big enough to house the engine.

They have not just been 'accepted.'... We would all like to have one — because we like their 'looks.' It is true they are 'romantic' and 'timely,' but it may

also be true that a nation of super slick autos has been hungry for forms growing out of some reason and goodness. A feeling for the beauty of such forms has been growing in a thousand different ways, but before that feeling could become a part of our lives, it seems that BEAUTY HAD TO BE THRUST UPON US.

It's too bad it took a war to do away with the 'frosting,' but with that frosting gone we see the real side of many things for the first time. The honest and orderly forms we have been forced to use in order that we may survive make past attempts at styling look insipid and self-conscious and somehow rather stupid by comparison. When the 'duration' is over we can expect to swing back to self-conscious 'hopped-up' design, but we wonder if it will be the same. The change back to the easy life and meaningless form will surely not be as fast as we think and the rich feeling of 'appropriateness' in war forms will certainly have some lasting effect.

One thing becomes increasingly evident — that most of the 'design' which is lacking in the 'jeep' is something that was never really design anyway.

I was a bit surprised that TA published some architecture criticism — good for them, and thank you for writing it.

Dennis Antonio Chiessa, Assoc. AIA

Assistant Professor of Architecture
College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs
The University of Texas at Arlington

As an amateur admirer of architecture, I occasionally check out the *Texas Architect* website. That's where I read your article today and said "finally, someone is going to say it."

The "exposed ceiling" motif (?) has gone on for too long. Perhaps your article will spare us a few repeats of this trend.

With best regards,

Brian Ferguson

This letter was emailed in response to "Perpetual Frontier" from the November/December 2019 issue.

Texas has always existed with a certain polarity of opportunity in progress and achievement. Perhaps it's the size of the state that dictates this — Houston gets along without zoning while other cities prescribe 'residential' form and approve building materials. Often these rules are developed away from the input of the people responsible for designing the places we live. Questioning and challenging 'the established way' has always been healthy in the process of design.

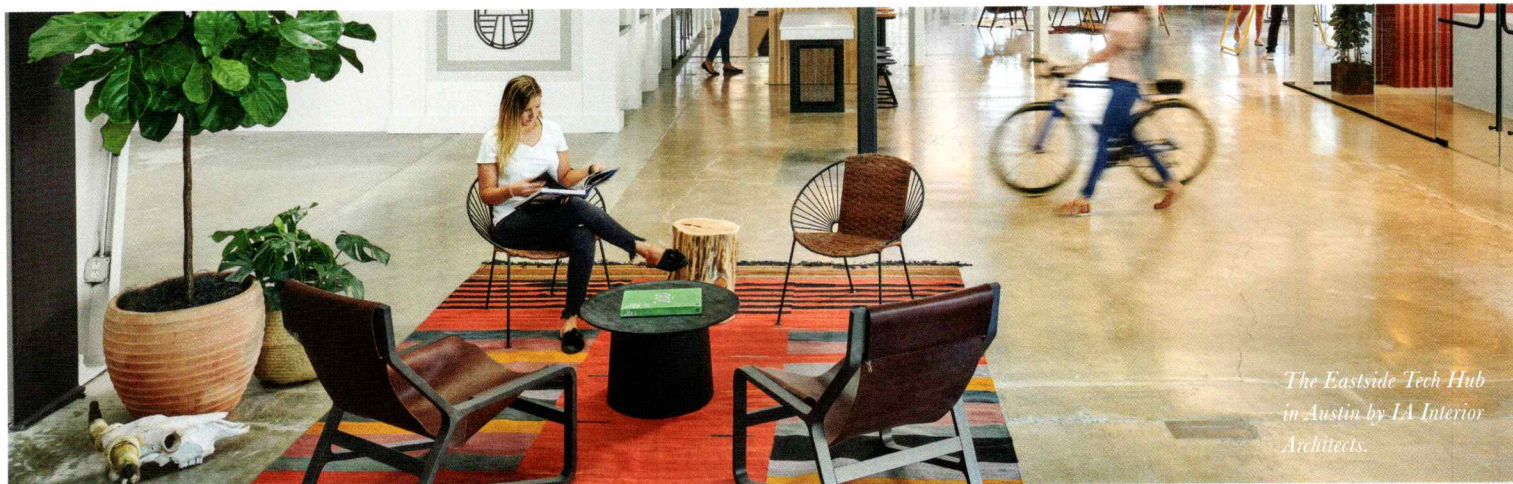
Improvised music is an excellent analogy for the power of truly creative thought. I think of the artist Jean Arp's composition explorations of 'objects arranged according to the laws of chance' or David Pye's writings on the workmanship of risk vs. the workmanship of certainty. Arp, in an effort to find true expression, and Pye's belief that we create things in order to effect change — but that the diversity that occurs as a result of 'risk' is inherently more pleasing. There is something to this and I believe that Texas will continue to be one big open experiment, boundaries will be pushed, standards questioned, and opportunities explored. And still, in our perpetual frontier — there will always be a chance of a snake bite!

Paul M. Dennehy, AIA

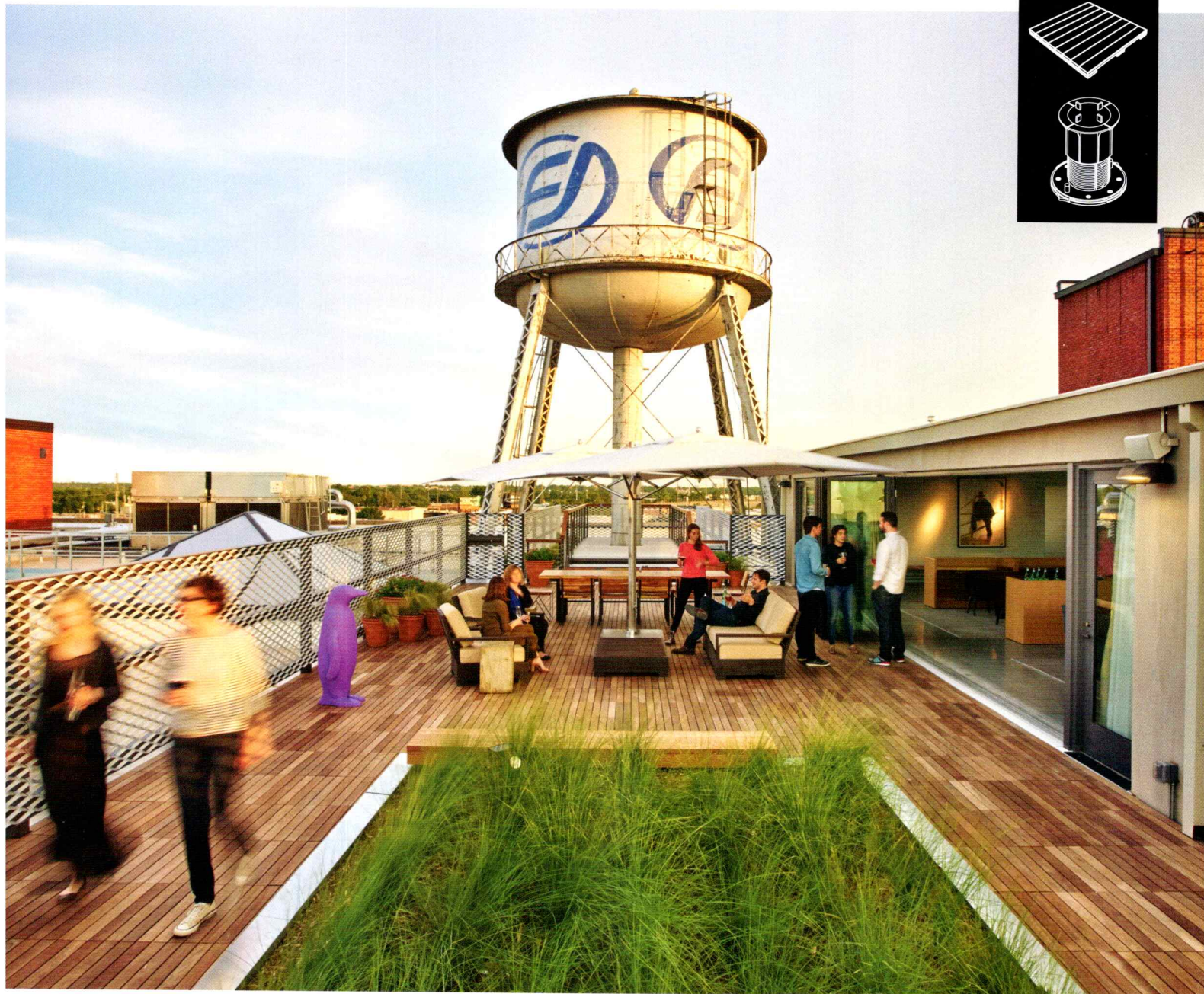
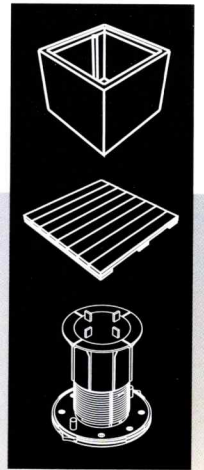
Malone Maxwell Borson Architects
Dallas

Correction

On p. 6 of the January/February 2020 issue, we listed an incorrect title and firm affiliation for Michael Friebele, Assoc. AIA. He is a senior associate at CallisonRTKL.



The Eastside Tech Hub in Austin by LA Interior Architects.



21c Museum Hotel | Oklahoma City OK
architects: Deborah Berke Partners & Hornbeek Blatt Architects
original architect: Albert Kahn
photographer: Mike Schwartz

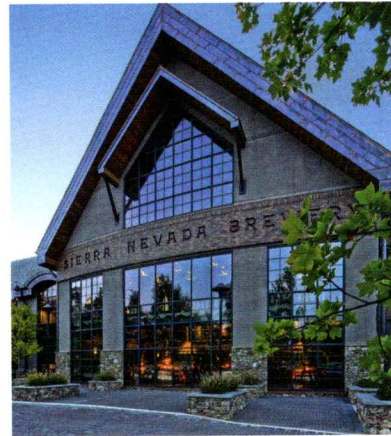
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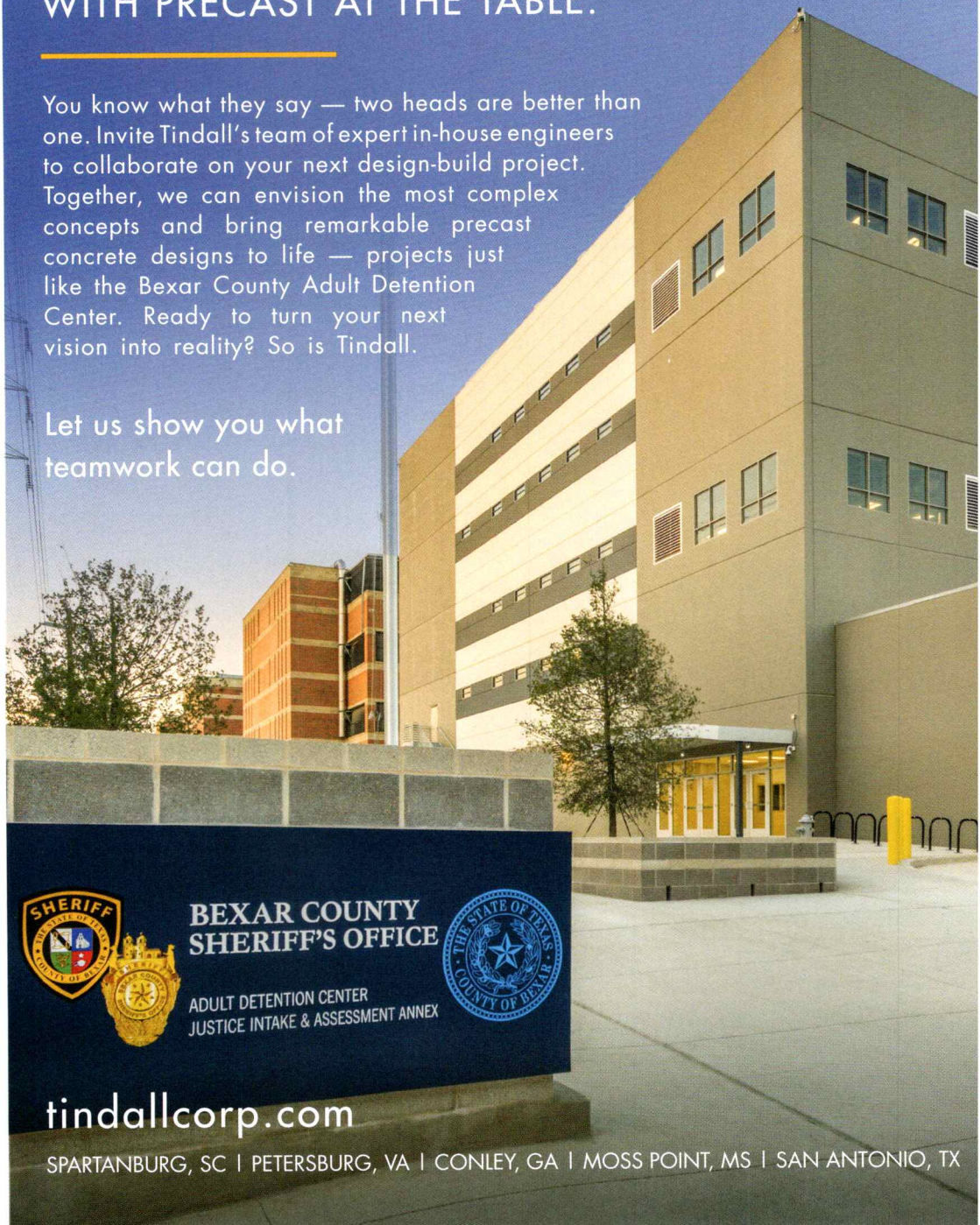
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The U-shaped plan envelopes two historic structures and creates a courtyard while fronting both the Rio Grande and San Agustín Cathedral.

Trahan Architects Designs a Convention Center for Laredo

Walking around downtown Laredo, you quickly discover two key areas dating back to the founding of the city: the banks of the Rio Grande, which today host Los Tres Laredos Park, and San Agustín Plaza, a tree-filled oasis that, following classic Spanish Colonial arrangement, fronts its namesake cathedral.

Laredo was founded in 1755, before modern day Mexico or the United States had laid claim to this part of the world, and it has long been shaped by geopolitical forces larger than itself. Located at the intersection of the border and Interstate 35, about halfway between Monterrey and San Antonio, it has also been a key location for international trade and commerce.

In previous decades, folks from Mexico came to Laredo to shop for items like clothes and electronics, while folks from the U.S. crossed to Nuevo Laredo for prescriptions, dentists, and tourism. Numbers of this largely pedestrian cross-border traffic fell drastically when cartel violence spiked about a decade ago. The fear of crossing still remains and has also reduced the number of people visiting downtown Laredo.

To counter this tourism drought, the Fasken family, owners of the historic La Posada Hotel, which sits on the southern edge of San Agustín Plaza, sought out Trahan Architects of New Orleans for help in envisioning a convention center as a means of enhancing downtown.

The firm, which came highly recommended to the Faskens because of its experience creating award-winning riverfront projects, set out to find a suitable site for the convention center. They landed on a downtown block adjacent to San Agustín Plaza, the cathedral, and La Posada, a parcel that also overlooks the Rio Grande.

The architects saw that the site could provide a major visual and pedestrian connection to the Rio Grande — a connection that, a block upriver, has been interrupted by the massive Customs and Border Protection facility. They also saw an opportunity to incorporate and renovate two historic residential structures on the block as part of the overall project: One, the historic Casa Ortiz, was built around 1830; the other, a blue house next door, was built in the 1870s. Both are in need of renovation.

Trahan's proposal caught fire with the Faskens and with the city, and the Faskens moved quickly to purchase the block in question. The architects

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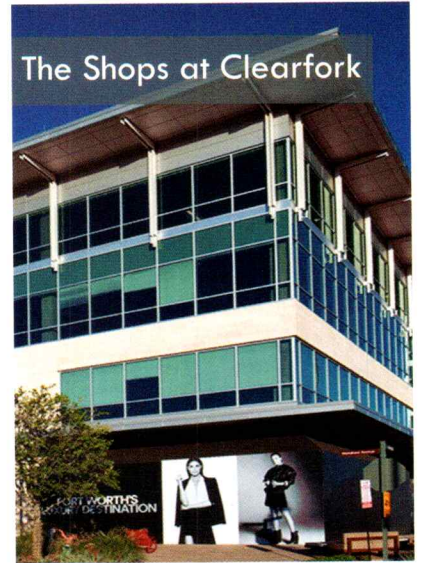
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assembled a team that included local firm Frank Architects, now Able City, to work on preserving the homes, potentially for use as meeting spaces. They then began developing the design of the convention center, which forms a “U” around the two historic structures. This move creates a central courtyard and presents four main axes for physical and visual connections in and out of the courtyard: south to the Rio Grande, west to La Posada, northwest to the plaza, and north to the cathedral. The four axes take form as arches, stretched and inverted to draw the user into and through the courtyard.

Casa Ortiz and the blue house set the scale for the design at 28 feet high, with new construction proposed as single-story, double-height spaces that emphasize connections and views in and out of the courtyard and the surrounding context. The strip of land to the south, between the proposed convention center and the banks of the Rio Grande, is envisioned as a series of parking gardens leading users to and from the riverfront park.

Trahan Architects is guided by an ethos of rootedness — connecting built environment and place. Partner Leigh Breslau, AIA, explains that the firm set out to design a convention center rooted in downtown Laredo’s Spanish Colonial architectural history by adding the courtyard and arches, by grounding the building around the two houses, and by forming key connections to other existing downtown elements.

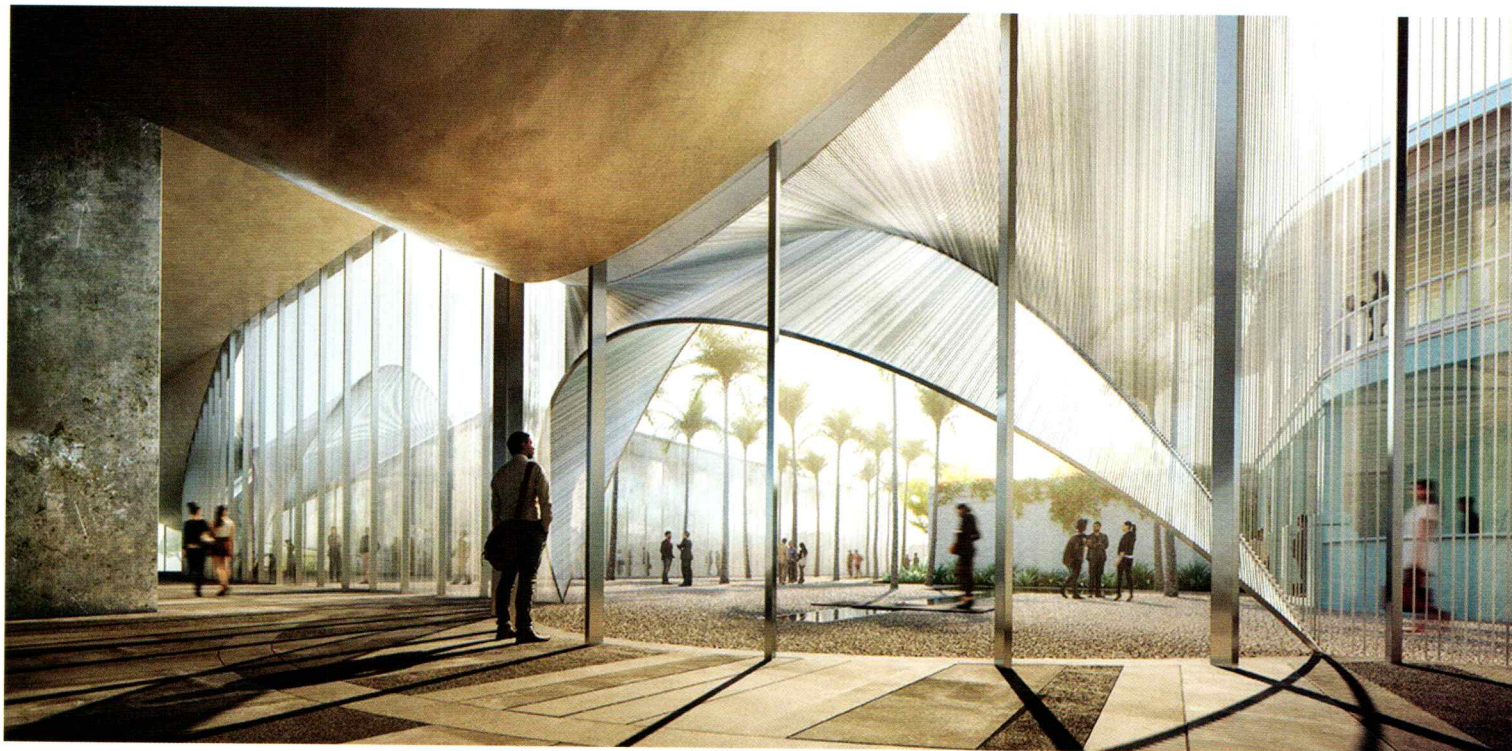
Rootedness was also applied to material research: Breslau describes the potential for employing local rammed-earth and metal-lurgical styles and traditions. He also recounts how the firm researched the use of arches in Mexican historic and contemporary architecture, investigating their role in defining entryways and forming pathways, and examining more evocative thin-shell examples, such as those by Félix Candela. This approach to rootedness reinterprets historical cues in a way that complements, rather than overpowers, San Agustín Plaza, the cathedral, and the two houses.

The impetus for this project came as a result of larger geopolitical complexities, and Trahan’s design, which embraces the view to the Rio Grande and Mexico and provides a welcoming face to visitors from Mexico, could further influence Laredo’s geopolitical future.

A ballot initiative to fund the convention center by increasing hotel occupancy and car rental taxes failed to win support from local voters in 2018; the project is on hold until funding can be secured. If the proposed design is built, the convention center could very well have a tremendous impact on downtown Laredo and the larger region.

Jesse Miller, AIA, is an architect at Megamorphosis in Harlingen. He lives in Brownsville.

Interpreting a historic precedent, the architects use arches to define connections between the courtyard and key adjacencies.



The native landscape of Quinta Mazatlán continues up and over the P.A.L.M. House via a network of interwoven steel members.

Overland and Megamorphosis Design New Educational Center for Quinta Mazatlán

A collaboration between San Antonio-based Overland Partners and local firm Megamorphosis has culminated in the design of an environmental center respectful of the unique history, culture, and ecology of McAllen. With construction set to begin early next year, the P.A.L.M. House will serve as a net positive habitat and education space for the rich biodiversity of Quinta Mazatlán, a 20-acre oasis of wild Tamaulipan thorn forest in the heart of McAllen's booming metropolitan area.

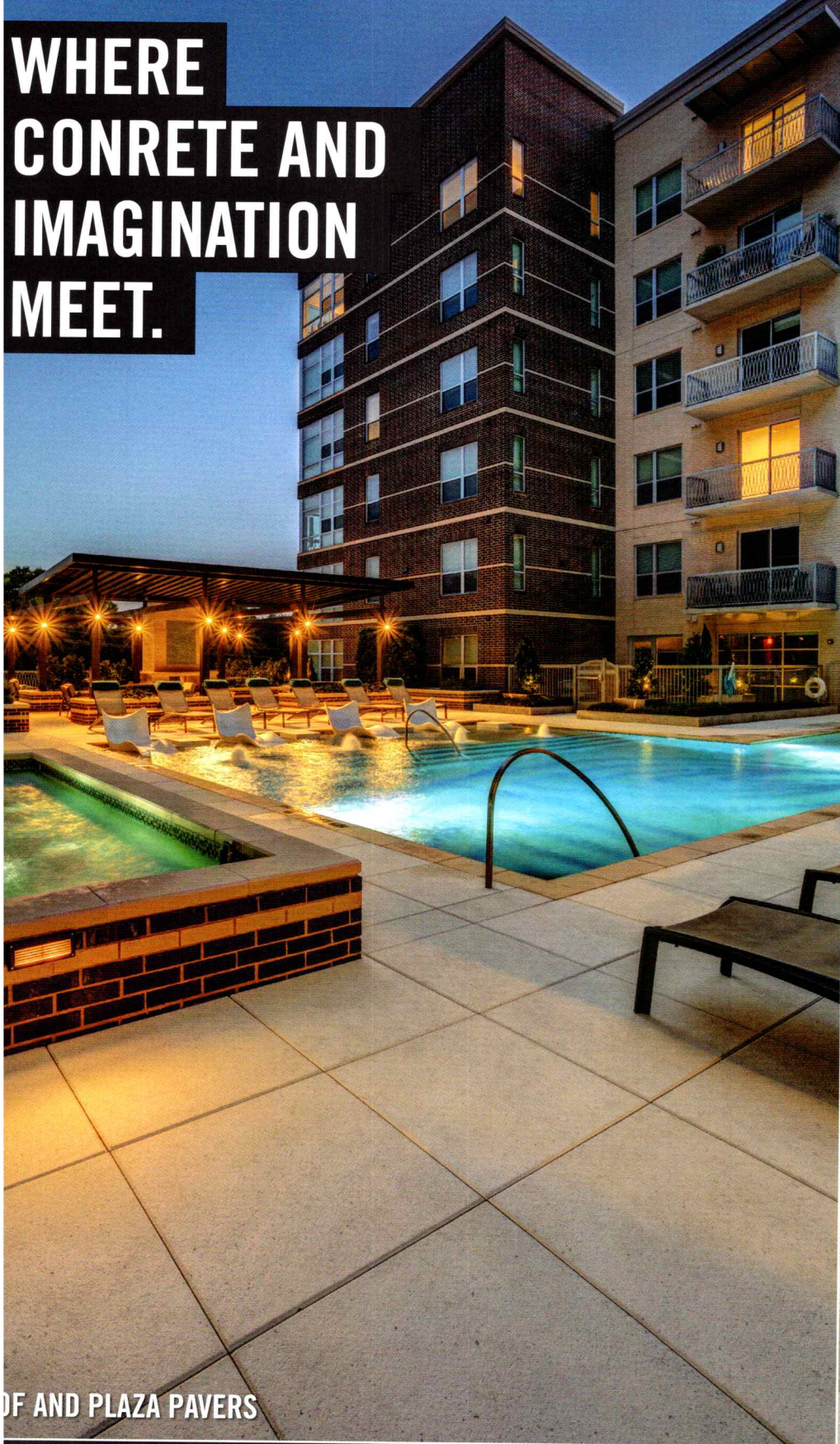
Although a geographical border may exist along the southern edge of McAllen, the North American migratory bird population is blind to this man-made distinction. Of the 500 species known to nest in or migrate through the Rio Grande Valley, over 230

have been sighted among the trees of Quinta Mazatlán. What began as a private home and estate, Quinta Mazatlán was acquired by the city in 1998 and, in association with the World Birding Center, has evolved into a crucial wildlife conservation and education destination for both local and global visitors. In 2017, the city hired Overland Partners to aid in transforming this site into a world-class gateway for the international birding network.

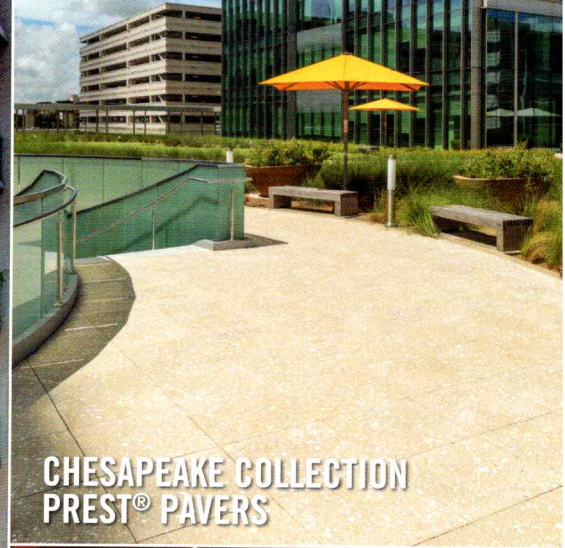
After a two-day workshop with local stakeholders, designers at Overland worked in teams to develop a master plan that addressed the various challenges of the expansive site. According to principal James Andrews, Intl. Assoc. AIA, the objective from the get-go was to “capitalize upon the existing resources, develop a solution that is relevant, and create a place to remember.” To do so, the team adopted an active and passive strategy to divide the grounds. The existing eastern land



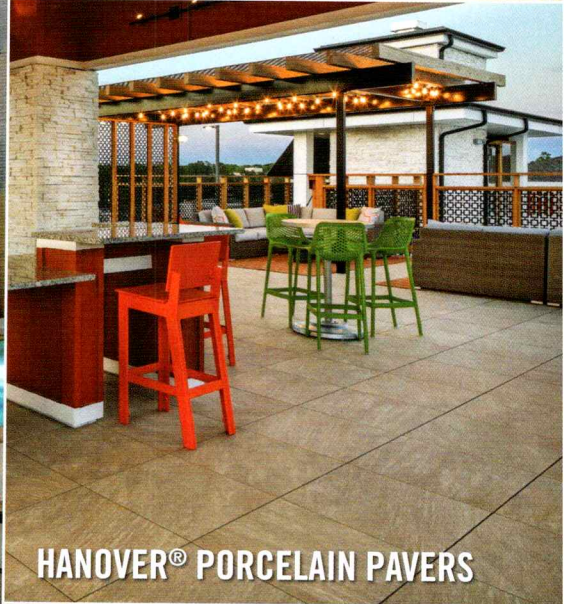
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IMAGINATION
MEET.**



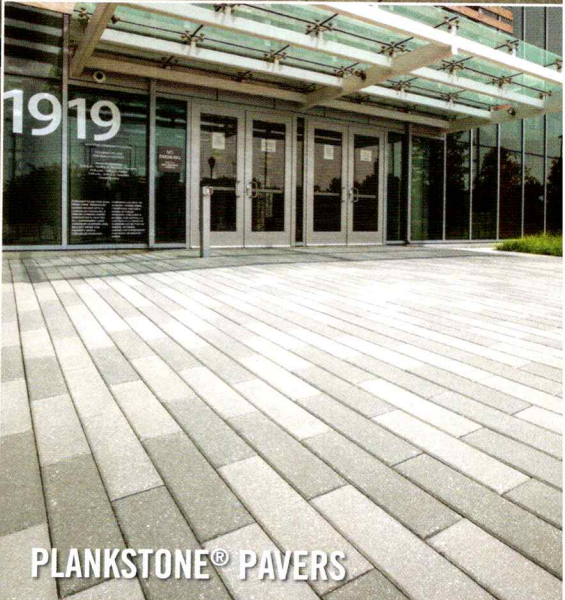
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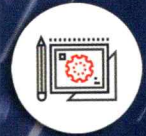


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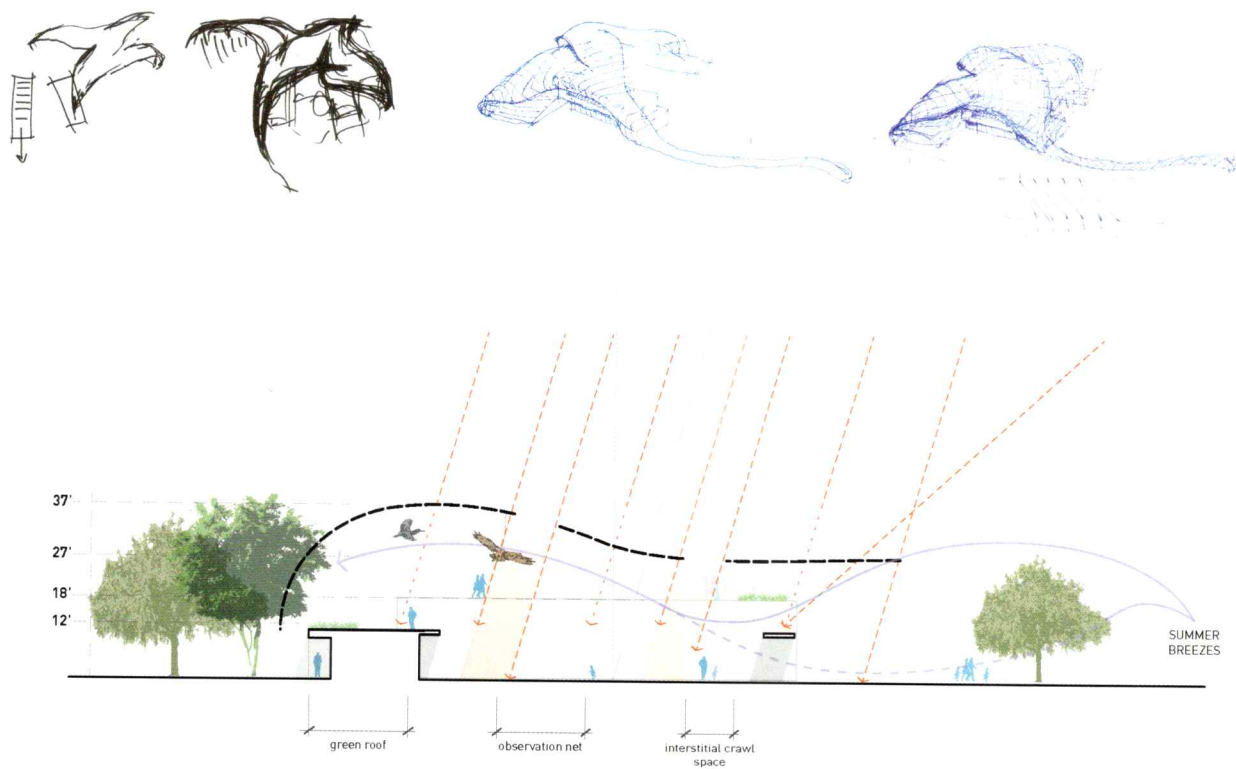


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The bird-like superstructure was designed to address migration patterns, prevailing winds, and solar exposure.

QUINTA MAZATLAN WORLD BIRDING CENTER

will continue to serve serious birdwatchers through a system of winding paths in the dense and serene forest. The undeveloped land to the west will be transformed into a native adventure garden, designed by Austin-based Ten Eyck Landscape Architects, complete with over a mile of walkable paths and interactive water features. This active development also includes a large “parking garden” that aims to set the tone for future surface parking in the region. “The land comes first,” Andrews says, as explaining how the nontraditional arrangement of parking spaces created natural bioswales, allowing the existing topography to remain unaltered. Pollutants and noise are also mitigated by locating the bus drop-off far from the urban sanctuary, while still allowing children safe passage to the new visitor center via a green-scaped “magic tunnel.”

At the heart of the firm’s master plan for Quinta Mazatlán lies the P.A.L.M. House, a center for education about plants, animals, the land, and mankind. Tethered to the active

west, a rectangular volume houses the visitor center, a children’s learning center, and the Center for Urban Ecology, which contains two labs to accommodate students from The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The learning center opens to an outdoor amphitheater for children to gather, play, and observe. Winding up and over the northern administrative area, an elevated walkway leads from the amphitheater to a rooftop exhibition space, which connects to the eastern observation deck. Below lies the Palm Room, an event space accommodating 250 with views out to Palm Lake and the serene east.

Oriented along the path of migration and prevailing winds, the rectangular adobe volumes, reminiscent of the site’s existing Spanish-revival mansion, are shaded by three tree-like superstructures designed and fabricated by Houston-based Metalab Studio. To optimize views for visitors, facilitate a comfortable, shaded microclimate, and provide a sanctuary for the birds, the woven steel structures glide over the programmatic

spaces, creating a continuation of the neighboring canopy. Along with bird-friendly glass, these “natural art pieces” work to reduce the instances of building collisions, which kill over 100 million birds in the United States each year. This furthers the P.A.L.M. House’s essential goal of creating a net positive habitat: one that is richer in wildlife as a result of the intervention. Currently, P.A.L.M. House is on track to meet LEED Platinum while the master plan is expected to earn SITES Gold certification — a distinction never before achieved in the state of Texas.

Aside from the countless environmental benefits of this development, P.A.L.M. house creates unprecedented social and educational opportunities for the city of McAllen. Not only will this state-of-the-art center attract global tourism, it will also help local communities access invaluable educational opportunities previously out of reach.

Sophie Aliece Hollis is an architecture and journalism student at UT Austin and *TA*’s editorial intern.

Updates to Dallas' Trinity River Project Position It at the Forefront of Watershed Urbanism

Since last covered in *Texas Architect* in 2017, Dallas' bold endeavor to build a great series of parks along the Trinity River continues to progress, albeit more slowly than many in the community had hoped. That said, the scope and breadth of the project has become even more fine-grained, yet broader and more innovative, particularly as related to its signature element, the 210-acre Harold Simmons Park (HSP), adjacent to downtown. Many facets of the Trinity project — not only the physical design of HSP, but also the community outreach, economic development, and urban design — are being pushed well beyond those of previous Dallas initiatives.

After Trinity Parkway (aka the “zombie toll road”) was killed by the Dallas City Council in 2017, it was hoped that the design of HSP would move quickly ahead, and in fact, that did happen. After extensive discussions, the

City of Dallas contracted with nonprofit Trinity Park Conservancy to lead fundraising, design, operations, maintenance, and programming for the park.

The Conservancy formalized agreements with the multidisciplinary design team of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA), responsible for successful urban parks across the U.S., including Brooklyn Bridge Park and Tulsa's Gathering Place. The MVVA team continued to develop concepts that pursued a different vision for HSP than had previous park schemes, still working within the framework of existing approvals.

MVVA deliberately turned away from previous formal planning schemes, instead exploring concepts that would integrate natural processes into the park design, especially those related to the river's tendency to swing from near-rivulet to flat-out flood. Rather than trying to “tame” the Trinity, MVVA's designs incorporate the different moods of the river, creating a variety of park experiences. Whether the Trinity is up, down, or

in-between, visitors will be able to enjoy the park, their experience likely varying from one visit to the next.

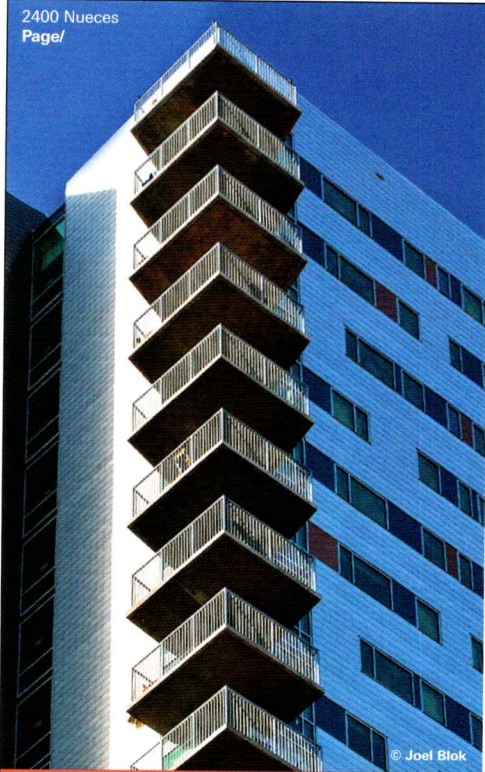
This flexibility does not come easily and requires careful analysis of critical aspects of the river environment, including topography, geology, landscape, habitat, and (especially) hydrology. Extensive computer models guide the designers as they consider design moves and their impact (often interrelated) on each of those aspects. The microscopic level at which these studies are conducted is astonishing, and the results are often surprising and counterintuitive.

A key facet of MVVA's work has been realization that the cross section of the Trinity Corridor — historically a ditch flanked by a broad plain on either side, edged by earthen levees — is not necessarily a given, and that each of these elements — channel, floodway, levee — can be sculpted, provided that hydrological effects are fully accounted for. The resulting design concepts reflect this, exhibiting an astonishing variety in the shape of the



MVVA's concept for Harold Simmons Park includes a re-naturalized floodway and overlook parks surrounding the levees on the east and west sides of the Trinity River.

2400 Nueces
Page/



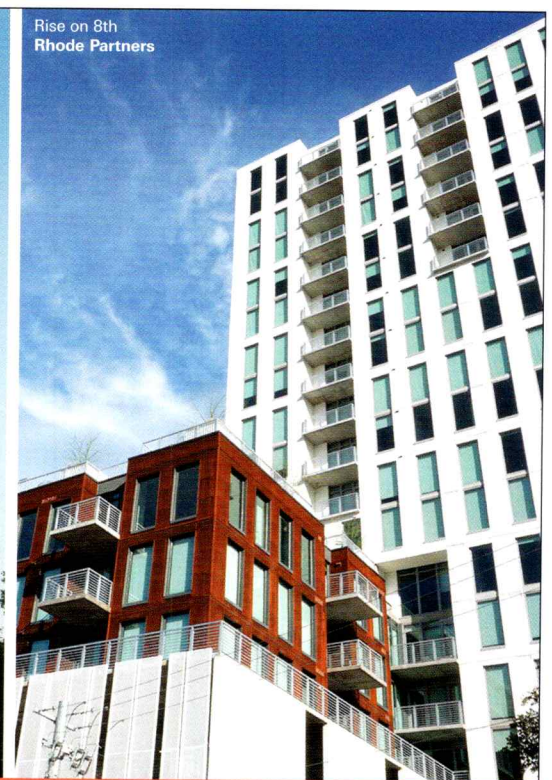
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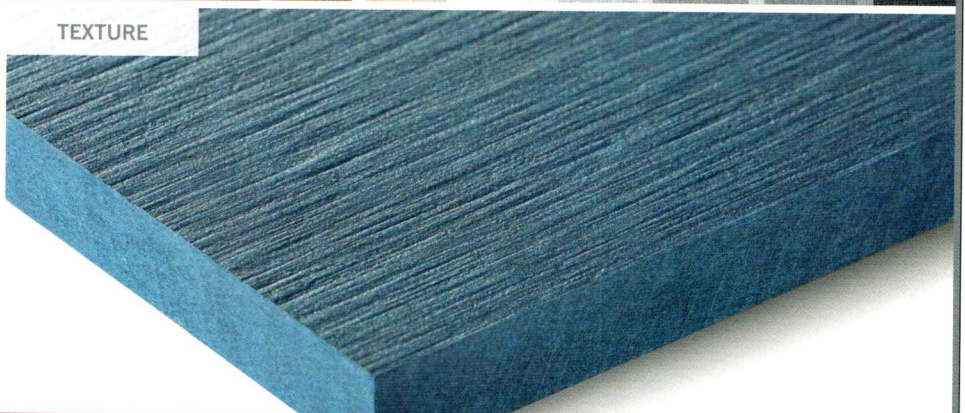
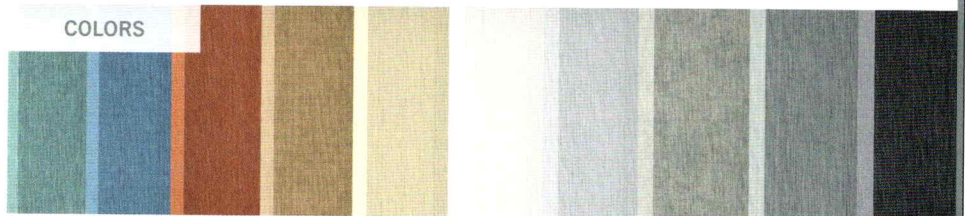


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On April 25, 2019, the Conservancy invited the community to “Designing Harold Simmons Park,” a one-day exhibit at Old Dallas High School providing a behind-the-scenes look into the design process.

river channel, the flood plain on either side, and the levees themselves. As water levels rise and fall, these elements will be transformed, creating an ever-changing park experience.

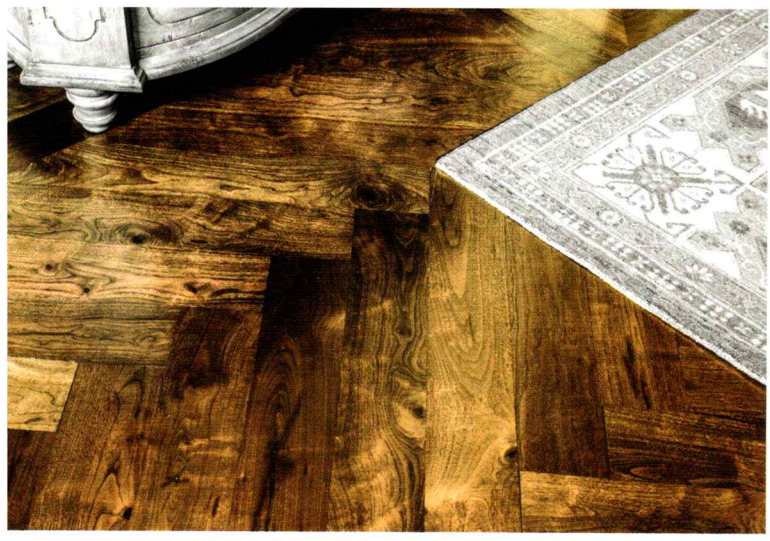
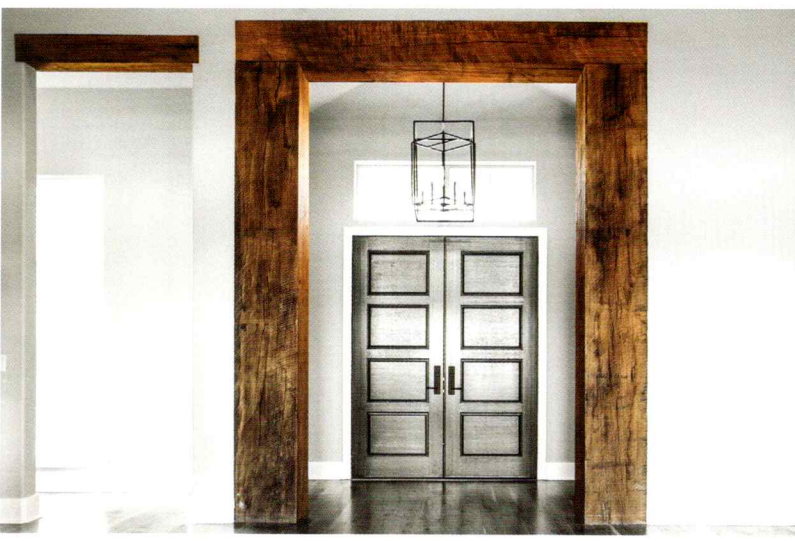
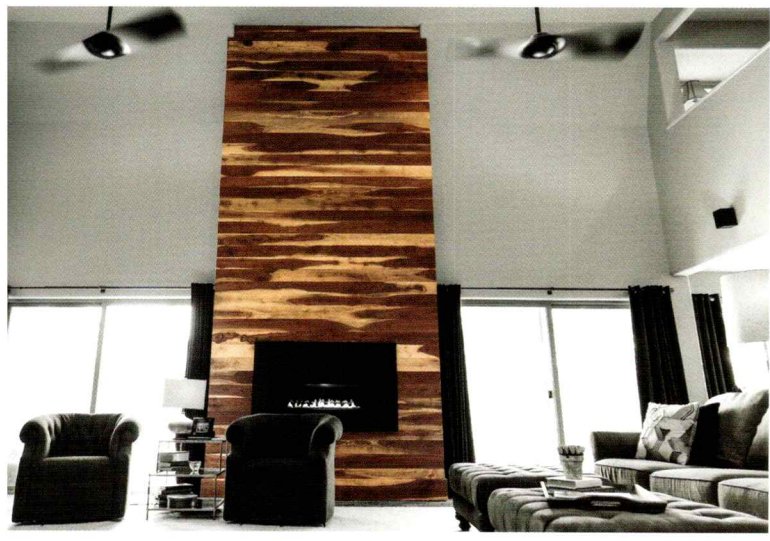
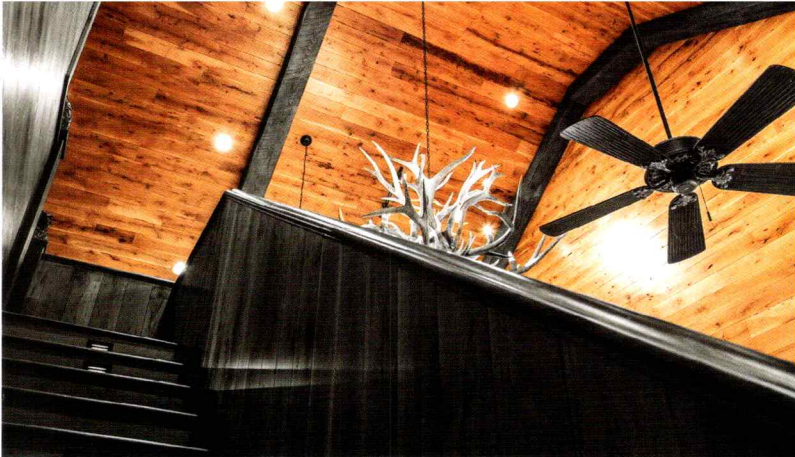
As noted above, the MVVA design team is multidisciplinary, and it became clear early in the process that the Conservancy, in order to be an effective, informed client, needed to have a similar breadth of knowledge within its staff and leadership. Thus, Deedie Rose, chair of the Conservancy board, tasked the author with creating and chairing a Design Advocacy Committee to work with Conservancy staff (led by architect Brent Brown, AIA) and the MVVA team. The resulting committee includes architects, landscape architects, developers, water experts, historians, and anthropologists, drawn from the professions, government, and business.

In 2019, much effort of the MVVA team and the Conservancy technical staff was focused on working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) to analyze and align preliminary designs with previous approvals.

Unexpectedly, the ACOE’s own (over \$350 million) flood protection project for the Trinity, expected to last for decades and proceed incrementally as funded by Congress, was fully funded in 2019 (flood protection for Texas cities being a priority, post-Harvey) and is moving ahead. Though the ACOE project’s geography is much more expansive, it does overlap the 210 acres of HSP, requiring additional coordination.

The upshot is that the ACOE, the City of Dallas, MVVA, and Conservancy are engaged in a series of discussions to coordinate ACOE flood protection measures with the design of HSP. Ultimately, there is optimism that these conversations may actually provide financial and timing benefits for the park, but needless to say, they are complex, highly technical, and slow.

However, while discussions and approvals of HSP itself move more slowly than hoped, the Conservancy (realizing that what happens outside the levees will be as important as what’s between the levees) has moved



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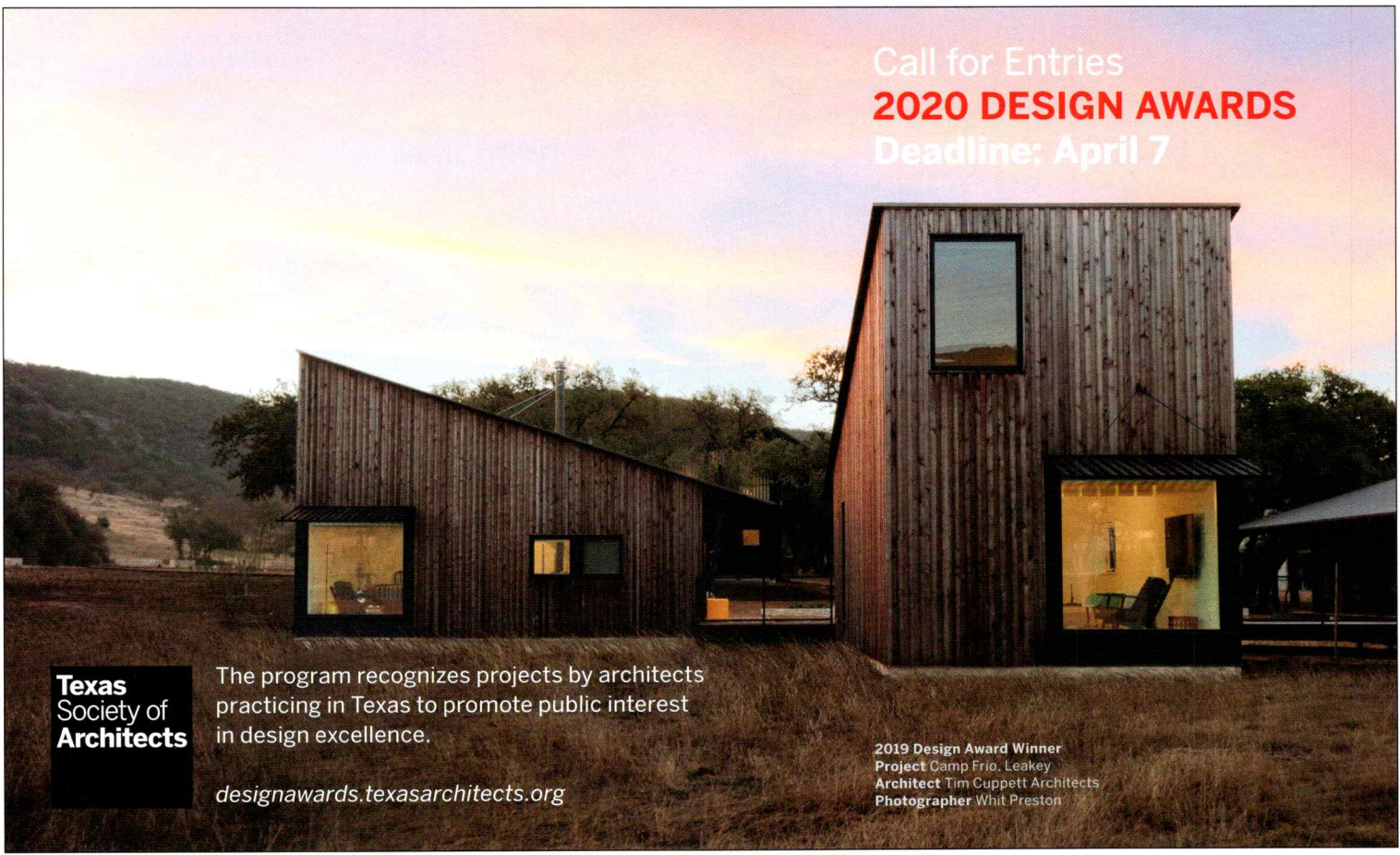
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aggressively to identify potential impacts on neighborhoods, and to mitigate the bad while optimizing the good.

The Conservancy established a robust public outreach campaign, led by its Community Engagement and Inclusive Development Committee, chaired by architect and board member Darren James, FAIA. Since 2017, the committee has held many community meetings, aimed at making the design process as transparent as possible, including a very well-attended behind-the-scenes look at the design process last April.

Further, the MVVA design of the park itself has extended beyond the levees and the floodway to include signature overlooks on either side of the river. While still being designed, these will feature a variety of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, including play and picnic areas and viewing platforms.

The Conservancy also commissioned a team led by Dallas landscape architects Studio Outside to identify existing and potential connections

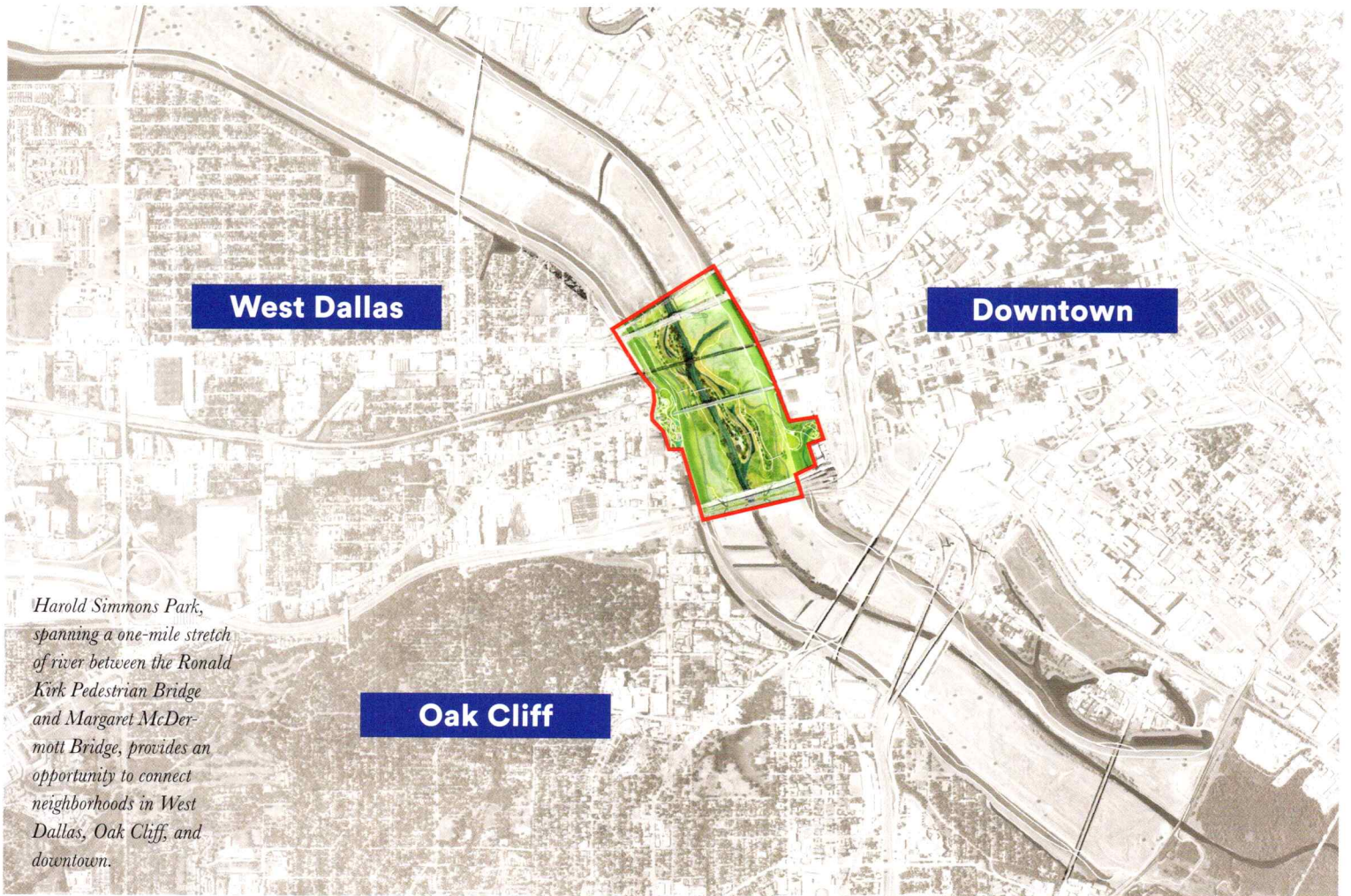
from HSP and the overlooks into adjacent neighborhoods, and to explore how these can be enhanced to either spur economic development or to preserve sensitive neighborhood character, as appropriate. Thus far, the studies have identified numerous and significant opportunities that should inform future urban design and economic policies for adjacent neighborhoods.

In a similar vein, it has long been realized that HSP will spur economic development on both sides of the river but that the quality of that development is not assured. In 2019, in a case of “putting your money where your mouth is,” the Conservancy purchased (with funds unrelated to HSP) a sturdy 250,000-sf former jail located on the downtown side of the river, with the intention of renovating it for a new, non-penal purpose. No definitive plans have been developed, but possibilities include — after a complete reskinning — affordable housing, park-related retail and services (bike shops, etc.), and offices for the Conservancy.

While the design of HSP works its way through an often frustrating approval process, there is

increasing realization that its emphasis on public outreach and transparency, economic development, and integration of nature and urban form are truly on the cutting edge and place it at the center of a global movement of Watershed Urbanism. This is perhaps best illustrated by an upcoming exhibit developed for the prestigious 2020 Venice Architecture Biennale by Adrian Parr, member of the Conservancy’s Design Advocacy Committee. Parr is also dean of the UT Arlington College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs and co-chair of water accessibility and sustainability for UNICEF. Titled “Watershed Urbanism and the DFW Metroplex,” the exhibit will showcase HSP, along with other innovative North Texas projects uniting natural processes with urban development.

Robert L. Meckfessel, FAIA, is president of DSGN Associates and currently serves on the board of the Trinity Park Conservancy as chair of its Design Advocacy Committee.



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MARCH

Monday 2

LECTURE
Dominic Leong
UTSOA Spring Lecture Series
Goldsmith Hall
310 Inner Campus Dr.
Austin
soa.utexas.edu

Thursday 5

LECTURE
J. Yolande Daniels
El Paso Museum of Art
1 Arts Festival Plaza
El Paso
epma.art

Friday 6

EVENT
BEC Annual Symposium
Earth, Air, Fire, and Water: A Building Science Medley
Commons Conference Center
10100 Burnet Rd.
Austin
aiaaustin.org

Wednesday 11

LECTURE
Jesse LeCavalier
UTSOA Spring Lecture Series
Goldsmith Hall
310 Inner Campus Dr.
Austin
soa.utexas.edu

Wednesday 18

LECTURE
Fran Gale
AIA Houston Historic Resources Committee Speaker Series
Brasil Cafe
2604 Dunlavy
Houston
aiahouston.org

Wednesday 25

LECTURE
Rowlett Lecture
CRS Center
Texas A&M University College of Architecture
College Station
arch.tamu.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING

Other Nature
Goldsmith Hall
310 Inner Campus Dr.
Austin
soa.utexas.edu

LECTURE

Jason Long
DAF Lecture Series
Dallas Museum of Art
1717 N. Harwood St.
Dallas
dallasarchitectureforum.org

Friday 27

EVENT
Meadows Fellow Symposium
Goldsmith Hall
310 Inner Campus Dr.
Austin
soa.utexas.edu

LECTURE

Claudia Pasquero
UTSOA Spring Lecture Series
Goldsmith Hall
310 Inner Campus Dr.
Austin
soa.utexas.edu

APRIL

Tuesday 7

EVENT
Annual Conference and Expo
Texas American Society of Landscape Architects
Henry B. González Convention Center
900 E. Market St.
San Antonio
texasasla.org

Monday 13

LECTURE
Salvado Macias and Magui Peredo
UTSOA Spring Lecture Series
Goldsmith Hall
310 Inner Campus Dr.
Austin
soa.utexas.edu

Sunday 19

EXHIBITIONS CLOSING
The Magic of Clay and Fire: Japanese Contemporary Ceramics
San Antonio Museum of Art
200 W. Jones Ave.
San Antonio
samuseum.org

Barry X Ball: Remaking Sculpture
Nasher Sculpture Center
2001 Flora St.
Dallas
nashersculpturecenter.org

Wednesday 22

LECTURE
Craig Garcia
AIA Houston Historic Resources Committee Speaker Series
Brasil Cafe
2604 Dunlavy
Houston
aiahouston.org

Thursday 30

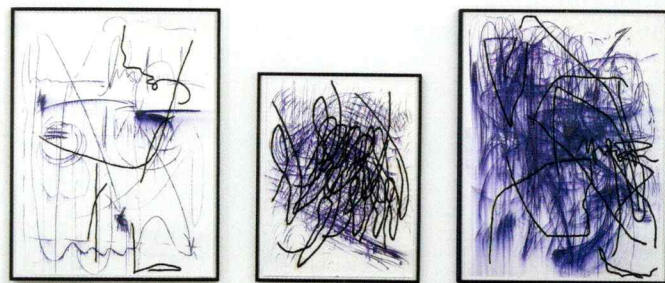
EXHIBITION CLOSING
Jewels in the Concrete
Studio at Ruby City
111 Camp St.
San Antonio
rubycity.org

SPOTLIGHT



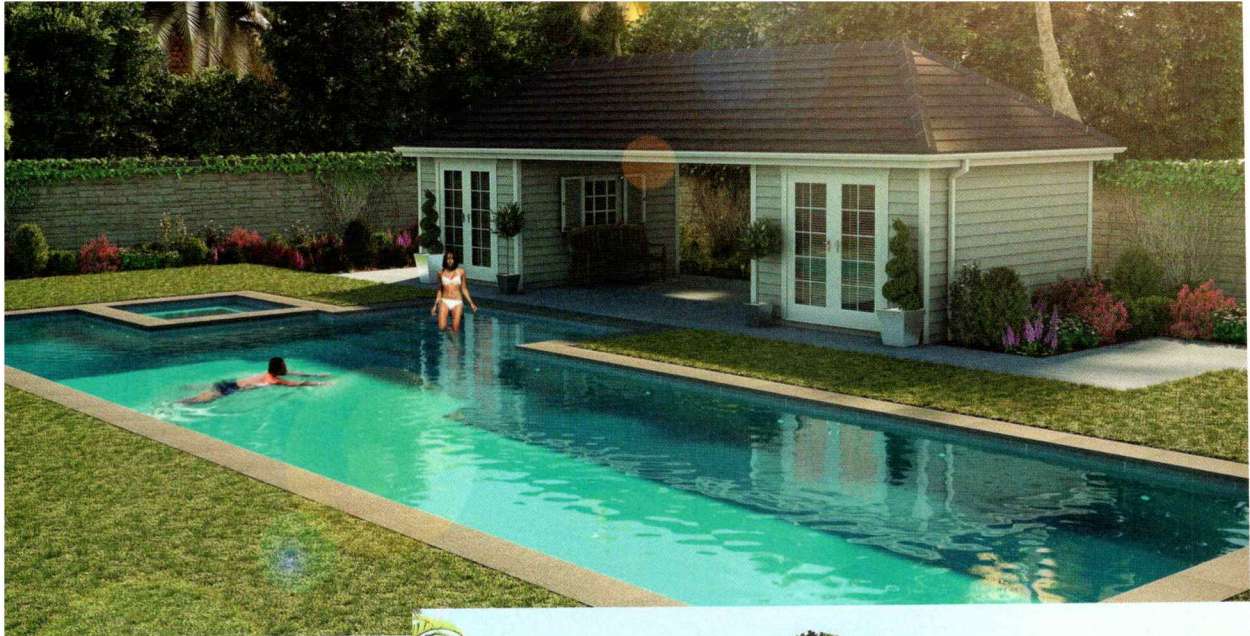
For a Dreamer of Houses
Dallas Museum of Art
OPENS March 15

Inspired by philosopher Gaston Bachelard's concept of the psychological and emotional significance of rooms and houses, "For a Dreamer of Houses" presents contemporary artworks that evoke personal spaces and considers the politics of places we identify with. The exhibition debuts major recent acquisitions — immersive installations by Alex Da Corte, Francisco Moreno, and Do Ho Suh, as well as large-scale works by Pipilotti Rist and Janine Antoni — along with a broad selection of works from the permanent collection.



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Oh So Boring

The Open-Ended City: David Dillon on
Texas Architecture

edited by Kathryn Holliday
University of Texas Press, 2019

“The Open-Ended City” is a collection of 65 newspaper articles and two magazine articles mostly about Dallas architecture and urban development written by David Dillon, the longtime architecture critic at the Dallas Morning News. It chronicles the latter part of Dallas’s major modern building boom, beginning in the 1970s and continuing until the oil crash and Texas real estate market implosion that started in 1983 and extended into the 1990s. It also documents the often-fitful economic recovery that only consistently began to produce new, remarkable works of architecture in the first decade of the 2000s.

Dallas, a huckster’s city, conjured practically out of the ether, has devoted considerable energy to crafting its image. The city’s modern history has been defined by a single, tragic event: the assassination of the president in 1963. For decades, the “dynamic men of Dallas” (as Dillon calls them on p. 92) worked to overcome the painful fallout in the “City of Hate.” Perhaps this is one reason why its major civic and developer buildings of the 1970s and 1980s seem escapist in their kitschy ostentation. On the one hand, there were the futuristic, twin, shiny, gold-glassed Campbell Centre towers (1972, 1977); the disco-ball Hyatt Regency (1978); the massive, inverted concrete pyramid City Hall (1978); and the hole-cut Texas Commerce Tower (1987). Then, as if to provide a contrast, there were the neo-Victorian, mansarded, cast-iron-encrusted Crescent (1985) and the mirror-glassed, barrel-vaulted, and also cast-iron-encrusted InfoMart (1985).

During these same years, the city’s modern mythic story was officially recorded for posterity in the fantastic, eponymous soap opera, “Dallas” (1978–1991). In it, glamorous white folks equipped with big hair, bigger houses, and firearms, and funded by gobs of Texas cattle/oil money, commit serial shenanigans. Their larger-than-life narrative compensates for an existence relegated to the upper reaches of the Blackland Prairie, one of the duller geographical and

Routes: Mapping the
Odd History of Dallas’
Street Names

Real Estate Roulette:
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Pay Even More Later

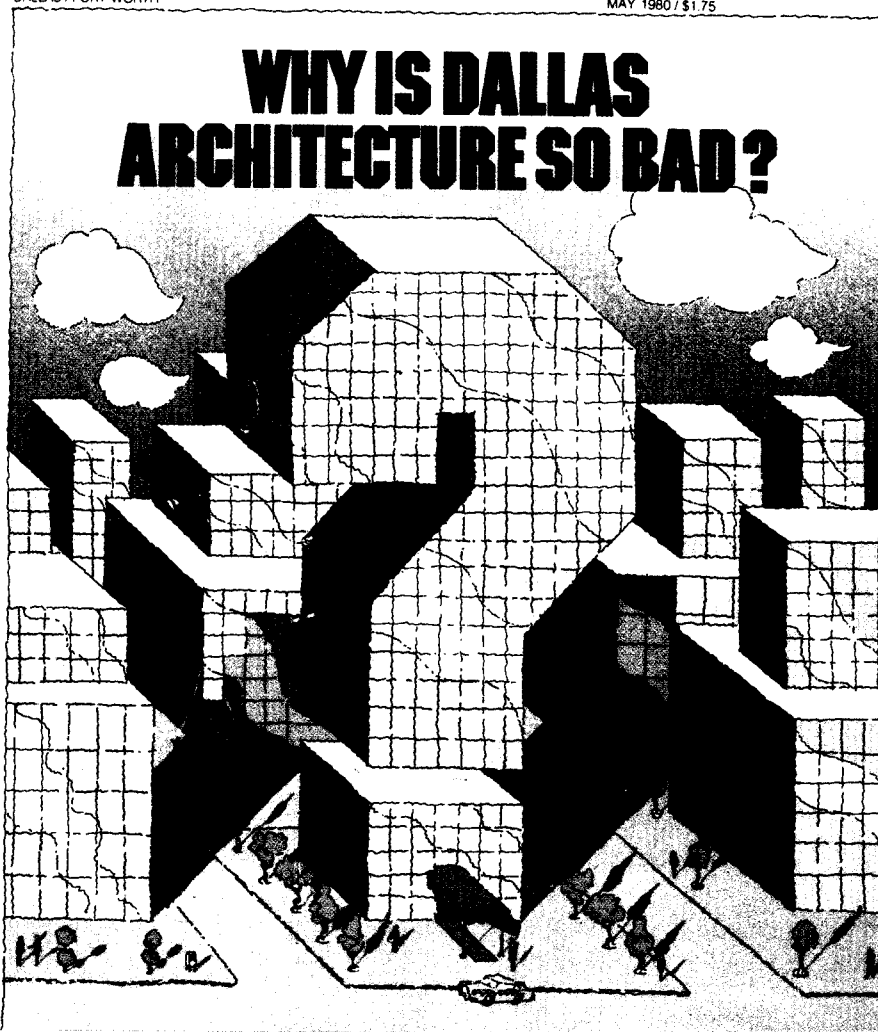
D

Bogus Burgundy: The
Wine You’re Drinking
May Be a Fraud

All in the Familia: The
Medranos’ Master Plan
to Run Dallas Politics

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historical regions of Texas. “Dallas” shifted the national discussion from “Who shot JFK?” to “Who shot J.R.?”

Into this context comes David Dillon, a Harvard literature Ph.D. born and raised in Massachusetts. He is described by his colleagues as the quintessential “crusty New Englander ... a combination of Emily Dickinson and a hockey player.” Dillon arrives in North Texas in 1969 to teach English at SMU. A dozen years later, in May 1980, he writes an incisive, now legendary, critique for D Magazine: “Why is Dallas

*David Dillon’s legendary
cover story for D Maga-
zine in May 1980.*

Reviews

Architecture so Bad?" Needless to say, it leaves the city's entrepreneurial elite agog, atwitter, and seriously agitated. The ambitious men running the venerable Dallas Morning News take notice, and Dillon becomes the city's first official architectural critic, beginning that August. It is a position he holds at the paper until it suffers severe financial reversals in the early 2000s and he finally accepts a buyout in 2006.

In his early years as an architectural critic, Dillon is a firebrand. Just three months into the job, he agrees to go on a bus tour of recent architecture in Corpus Christi during the Texas Society of Architects' 42nd Annual Meeting, with fellow critics Paul Goldberger and John Pastier. The buildings they see don't impress. Things go poorly when Corpus Christi Caller-Times staff writer (and future *Texas Architect* magazine editor) Stephen Sharpe quotes their critical comments in

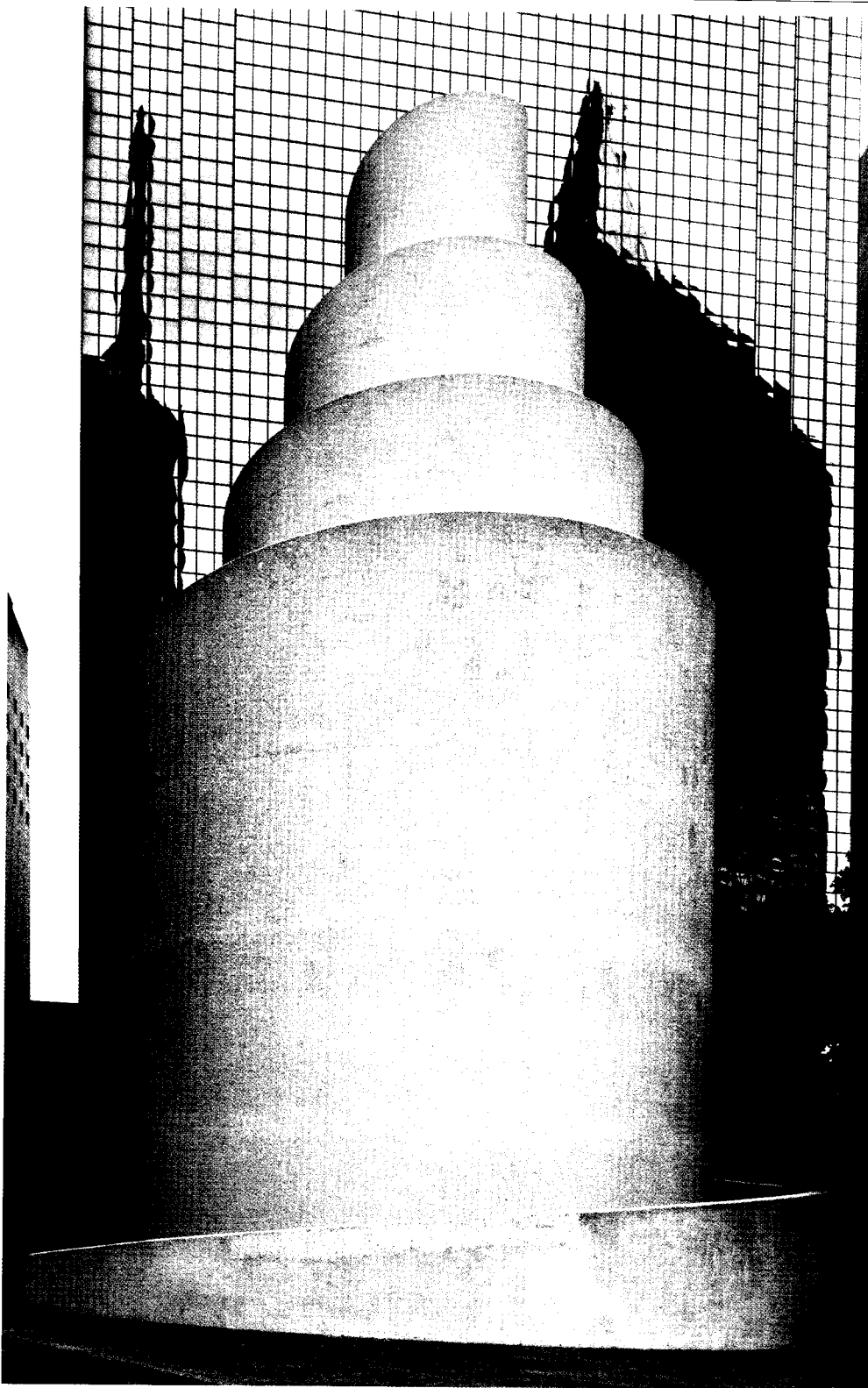
detail in a newspaper article that appears later the same day: "Downtown Bombs With the Critics" (read more in *TA* January/February 1982, page 20). In 1983, Dillon reminisces about the event in a piece for *Texas Architect*, "The Perils of the Architecture Critic" (*TA* November/December 1983, sadly not included the anthology). In it, he writes: "Every critic should get run out of town once in a while. It keeps the job in perspective." He expounds on his particular interpretation of the role of a newspaper architecture critic:

Unlike a critic for a professional journal or academic review, a newspaper critic writes primarily for the general public. ... I can't write above my audience, in the private language of a critical coterie; I have to stick to the vernacular, in hopes that it will spark a dialogue, a real conversation over matters that count ... the high-minded, aesthetic road is a dangerous one for a newspaper critic to travel. Though architecture is certainly art, it is



Facing Philip Johnson, Thanks-Giving Square, Dallas, 1976.

Below David Dillon (center) with fellow architecture critic Paul Goldberger (right) on a fateful bus tour of Corpus Christi in October 1981.



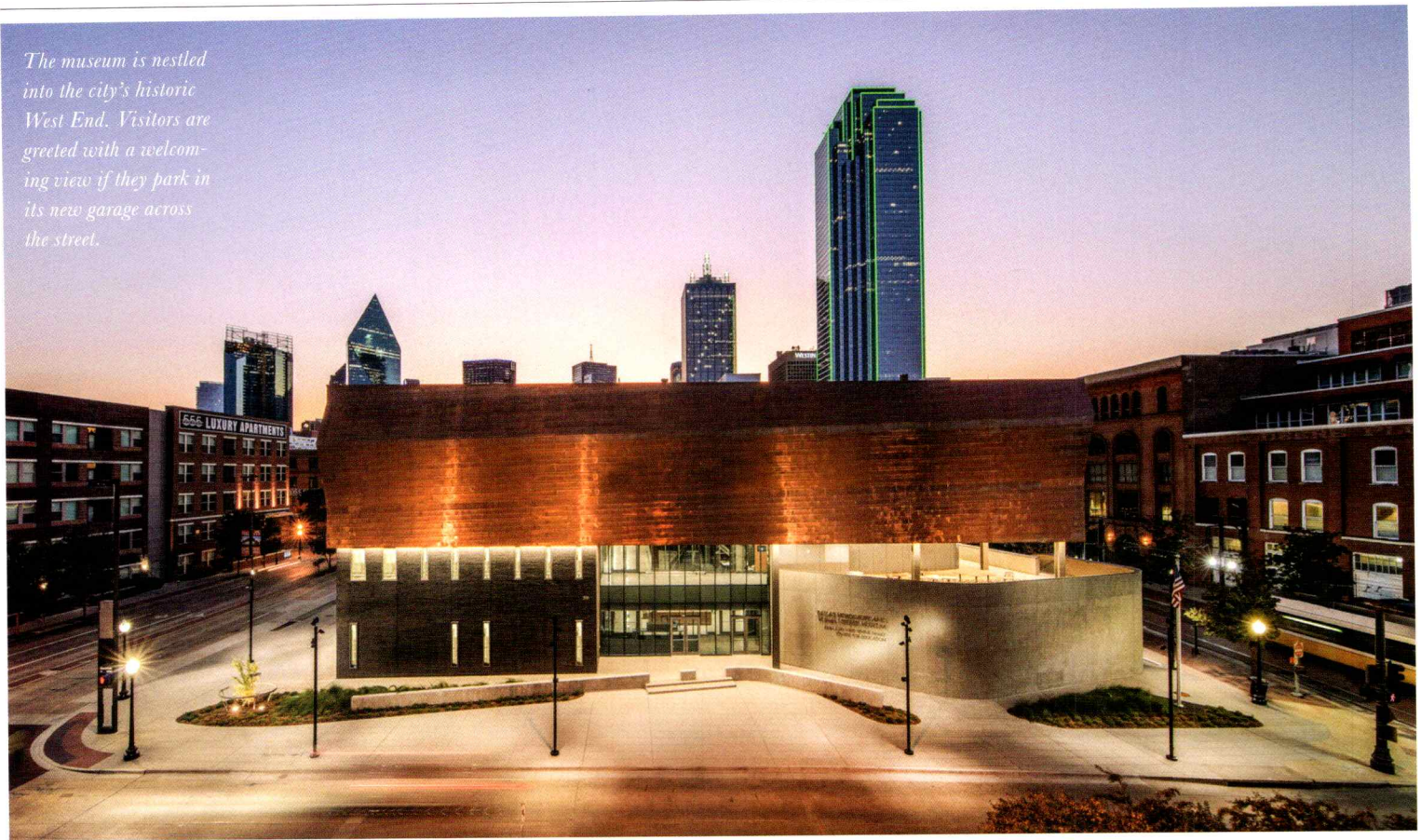
also the product of less rarified factors such as zoning, codes, easements, interest rates, and the whims of client. To focus primarily on aesthetics is to treat buildings as if they were sculptures, and to imply that they are somehow the creations of a single consciousness rather than of a broad political and cultural consensus.

This self-imposed effort to write down to his perceived audience is unfortunate, as is his frequent focus on community development. Perhaps the “fits of provincial wrath” he instigated in Corpus Christi were traumatizing. As a member of a rarefied club — there are perhaps only a dozen salaried architecture critics in the entire country at any one time — it is disappointing that Dillon so frequently wrote about topics only tangentially related to the design of buildings. These community service-style pieces could have been written by a local beat reporter. And when he did write about buildings, in later years, his tone was so even-handed and earnest as to be dull. The bristling energy of his early pieces is bracing and energizing. The slow ebbing of this energy over the course of his tenure is disheartening.

Dillon was in a privileged position, in that he was paid to be an architectural critic for nearly three decades and supported and protected by a major institution, the Dallas Morning News. In Dallas, as in all major cities, the best buildings and urban design projects — the ones that the public knows and loves (or hates) — have been shown again and again to be the product of a strong personality. These patrons, first and foremost, have a vision — and then, just as importantly, the wherewithal to shepherd their cherished project through all the tedious steps it takes to get it built. In Dallas, it is Trammell Crow and Deedie Rose; in Houston, it is Gerald Hines and the de Menils. What is needed in these situations is a relentless, noisy advocate for the highest quality of architectural design who can speak to these patrons in a public forum. Dillon, in trying to be an advocate for the consensus of the community, seems to have weakened his legacy as a champion of excellence, one who could have had a greater actual impact on the buildings of Dallas. The Dallas of the Ewing clan may have been tawdry, but it was captivating nonetheless. The Dallas of David Dillon, on the other hand, is respectable — progressive, even — but oh so boring.

Ben Koush, AIA, is an architect in Houston.

The museum is nestled into the city's historic West End. Visitors are greeted with a welcoming view if they park in its new garage across the street.



Somber Icon

Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum

by James Adams, AIA

In 1977, fellow survivors and Jewish community leaders gathered in the North Dallas home of Mike Jacobs to begin evaluating methods of educating the public on the history of the Holocaust. Forty-two years later, their vision has been realized with the opening of the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, a three-story, 55,000-sf facility designed by Omniplan and located in the historic West End of downtown Dallas. It's the fifth largest Holocaust museum in the U.S., and the second largest to be built ground-up since the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. was completed in 1993.

Neatly tucked into its surroundings on one of Dallas' oldest Anglo-settler sites at the banks of the Trinity River, the museum is, at first glance, appropriate to its context. In keeping with the surrounding architecture, brick and metal envelope the building. At approximately 55 feet high, its roofline matches those of its neighbors, both old and new. While this approach arguably maintains

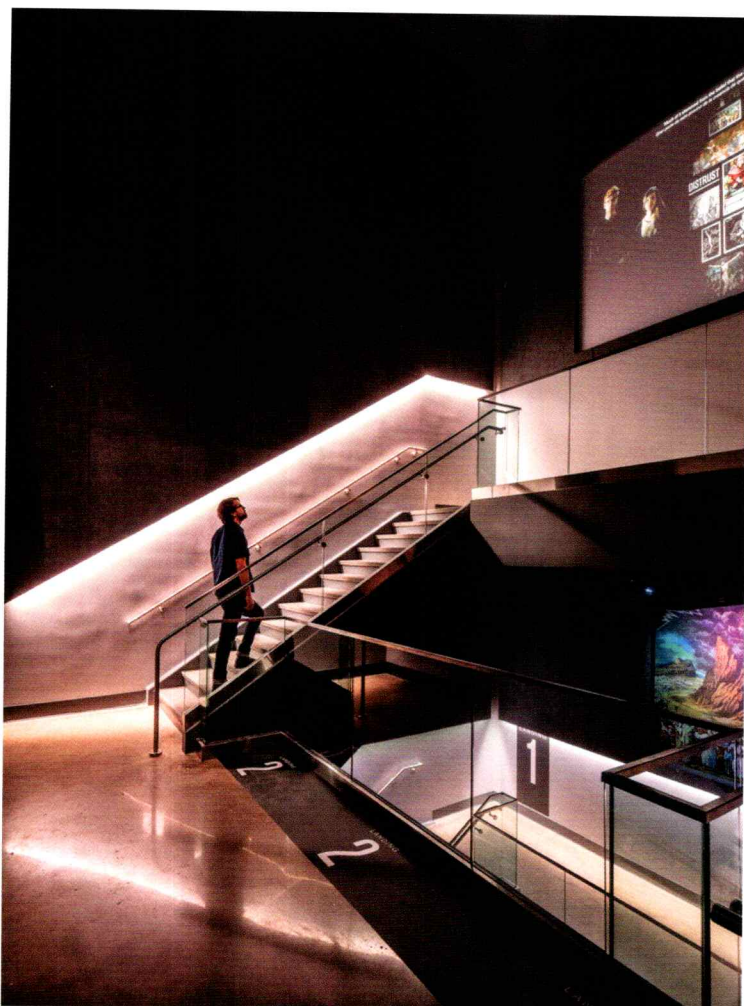
the integrity of the historic district, a fairly strict adherence to these guidelines undermines the aspirations of the museum's designers. The building seeks to be iconic but struggles — both to belong here and to stand out.

Conceptual renderings imagined a copper facade with dramatic movement in both the overall form and the orientation of the panels. These bold designs would have brought an inspiring, dramatic, and wholly appropriate character to the building exterior. Regrettably, the final product is greatly subdued, largely at the direction of the City of Dallas Landmark Commission, a quasi-judicial entity that oversees adherence and appropriateness of historically designated buildings and districts. While the project development team communicated regularly with the city throughout the design process, last-minute interjections by the commission left little time for a redesign, and the result is an attenuation of the dramatic effect of the building's form and material use.

This is unfortunate, as the exhibition designer, Berenbaum Jacobs, who was part of the selection committee during the design competition phase, had been greatly inspired by the earlier concepts. The selection process was lengthy; submissions from local and national

Right Stairs to the main exhibits on the third floor are an intentionally heavy-handed experience. Audiovisual technology corrals visitors at each landing to learn more about the history of the Jewish people.

Below After traversing the exhibits, visitors can reflect on their experience in the Memorial and Reflection Room, recreated from its original location in the basement of the Dallas Jewish Cultural Center.



design teams were narrowed to a shortlist of four that notably included both Gensler, with Studio Joseph from New York, and Overland Partners, with James Carpenter Design Associates, also from New York.

The commission's efforts to maintain the architectural language of the district also drove the redesign of the southern end of the block near the entry. This space is clad in a plaster finish meant to read as cast concrete panels that create a curvilinear foil to the overall building form. Again, original concepts that were disallowed by the commission late in the process had envisioned a dramatic cylinder flecked with tiny, playful windows reminiscent of Le Corbusier's Ronchamp chapel.

The end result is a building forced to assimilate to its neighborhood. The lack of differentiation in color between the upper and lower halves of the building is further exacerbated as the copper continues to patina. Lack of acidity in the local atmosphere virtually ensures a green tone will never be achieved. The dark brown of the copper has begun to blend with the brick below into a monotony — perhaps as the commission preferred. Nonetheless, the weathered copper is an excellent metaphor for the perseverance of survivors and adds to the monumentality of the museum.

Problems involving the context for a museum focused on the Holocaust are nothing new. The oldest such institution in the U.S., the Los Angeles



UNIQUE. DISTINCT. FACADES.

University of Texas - Tyler
Architect: Smithgroup JJR
Location: Tyler, TX

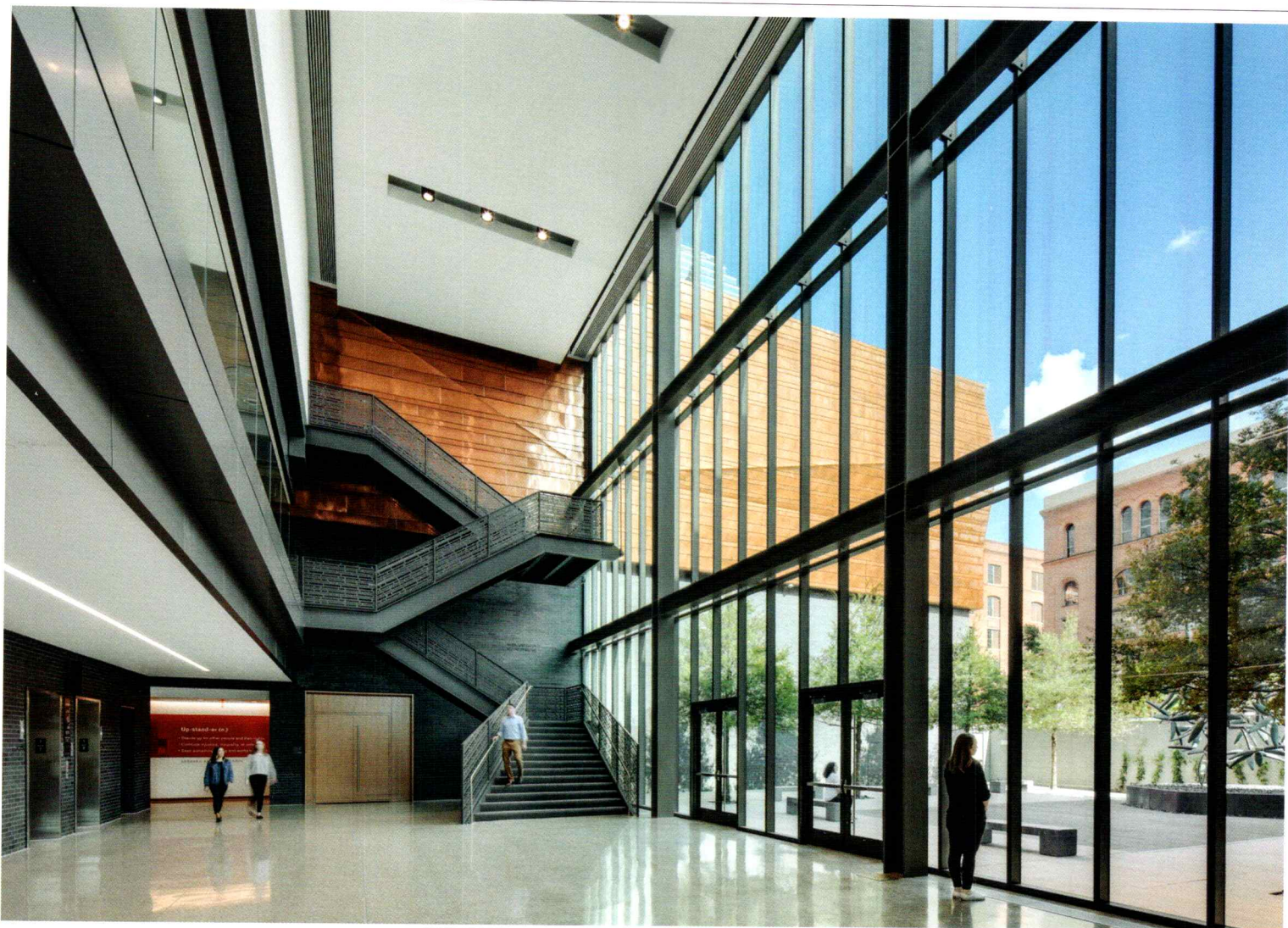
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Museum of the Holocaust, struggled with its site when creating a new home in 2010 within Pan Pacific Park. In a city rich with NIMBYism when it comes to new structures in older neighborhoods, architect Hagy Belzberg created a dramatic experience fully submerged within the park and virtually invisible outside its main entry. The result was an emotionally moving experience that satisfied park patrons.

On the other hand, the Dallas museum's parking structure is brilliant, and the most successful element of the project. In an urban core struggling to balance the infill of parking lots throughout the city with parking structures that do not further erode the quality of the streetscape, the parking structure succeeds. It is clad almost entirely with dark brick matching the museum, and, here, the material is more appropriate. The facade is playful yet forms an orderly pattern in keeping with the warehouse district surrounding it. Large openings reminiscent of removed

windows read as conceptual, rather than as false modifications to a historic building. The fenestration is reinforced with detailed brick weaving that contributes to a porosity that appropriately clads the structure while revealing grand views toward the museum entry.

Upon entering the building and passing through registration, the lobby opens upward to a three-story volume and frames views of a large staircase against the far wall. A full-height curtain wall facade to the south faces an external courtyard, bringing light and a sky view into the main lobby. This well-illuminated courtyard is not visible upon arrival for most visitors and thus provides a delightful surprise after passing through the monolithic structure. The outdoor space also gives visitors a much-needed opportunity for reflection after completing the pathway through the exhibit halls above.

Off the entry lies the special exhibits wing, topped by a terrace and a small "Dimensions in

Once within the foreboding walls of the museum, visitors are rewarded by an expansive atrium with courtyard views to the south and a well-crafted stair framed within the space.



Perforations in the brick facade of the parking structure provide an appropriate and delightful vernacular response to the more somber museum.

Testimony” theater, where visitors can interact and have “conversations” with holographic recordings of survivors. The remainder of the second floor primarily houses the administration offices, open and well-lit by the playfully set exterior walls.

Experiencing the exhibits of the museum is an efficient journey through open space on a prescriptive pathway. Visitors are taken inward off the far corner of the lobby into a room featuring a video orientation. From here, the education begins, via multimedia displays integrated into the stairs leading up to the third floor. Audio instructions to pause at each landing establish a controlled pace at which to experience the history of the events leading up to the Holocaust.

By the time visitors arrive on the third floor, this uncomfortable ascension has prepared them for the grim story that is told through the exhibits that follow. A circuitous pathway takes visitors along from room to room in a way that was intended to mimic the weathering copper that moves along the building’s outside skin. The Dallas Holocaust museum culminates in a memorial gallery that overlooks the courtyard. This space, carefully re-created as it appeared

in its original location in the Jewish Cultural Center nearly 40 years ago, serves to help guests decompress after their intense encounter with this horrific chapter in world history.

The museum was designed for those unfamiliar with the events of the Holocaust. In its simplicity, it seems to place its focus on teaching children, but it remains somber enough that even adults well educated about the Holocaust can appreciate it. Notably, the museum follows a somewhat controversial trend in newer Holocaust memorial centers by placing attention on other genocidal events and emphasizing tolerance education. It is also the first museum to link such atrocities with America’s journey for civil and human rights.

Immediately across the rail tracks is the infamous school book depository, both the location from which Lee Harvey Oswald shot and killed President John F. Kennedy and the home of the Sixth Floor Museum, dedicated to education on Kennedy’s assassination and the events that led to it. This museum was the result of great controversy and self-loathing for Dallas, which has long struggled with the moniker the “City of Hate.” Today, Dallas continues to struggle with this breeding ground identity in light of recent tragedies such

as the murder of 22 innocent people in an El Paso Walmart by white-supremacist Patrick Crusius, who drove 700 miles from a Dallas suburb to commit the crime, or Micah Xavier Johnson’s 2016 rampage, in which he murdered five Dallas police officers and injured nine others in an effort “to kill white people.”

It is to be hoped that the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum is a good start in steering the city away from a future rife with such tragedies. It is a significant accomplishment in scope and scale, compared to its contemporaries. Last year saw the dedication of two other revamped centers, including the Holocaust & Humanity Center at the Cincinnati Union Terminal, and the expanded Holocaust Museum Houston. And while the design struggled with outside influence, it succeeds nonetheless in emotionally engaging its visitors. At the ribbon-cutting last fall, museum president Mary Pat Higgins noted that the founders saw as their legacy the creation of a museum for future generations. “Their mission — and ours,” she said, “is to ... advance human rights to combat prejudice, hatred, and indifference.”

James Adams, AIA, is an architect at Corgan in Dallas.

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Down by Law

Rule of Capture
by Christopher Brown
Harper Voyager, 2019

by Jack Murphy

In “Rule of Capture,” Christopher Brown’s second novel, we meet Donny Kimoe, a Houston lawyer reliant on court appointments for defense work and a regular habit of uppers for productivity. He is assigned to Xelina Rocafuerte, a young Latina on trial for terrorism charges; she’s actually a journalist silenced for political purposes. Kimoe, in pursuit of justice, tears through the murky underworld of a chaotic, near-future Houston: a world in which America recently lost a war to China, a Harvey-like superstorm is an excuse for martial law, and the incumbent president prefers to stay in power following a contested election. The story unfolds during this tense interregnum.

Kimoe is sharp and fiercely independent. He quickly detects a cover-up in Rocafuerte’s case and begins pulling at the threads. Shady business dealings are unearthed in the Evacuation Zone southeast of Houston near the port, an area quarantined after the last hurricane and sold off to private interests. Kimoe learns that Rocafuerte witnessed the murder of Gregorio Zarate-Taylor, a promising Houston city council member who hoped to establish an “edenic post-racial eco-Texas-atopia.” Her camera caught the event on tape. But who were his murderers? During his investigation, Kimoe enters an eclectic assembly of Houstonians — colleagues from his former law firm, judges, drug dealers, hired guns, and radio show hosts, among others — and Joyce, his ex-girlfriend, a liberal gun-toting professor at Rice. It becomes clear that Rocafuerte’s case exposes much larger criminal movements, and her and Kimoe’s fate are swept up in those tides.

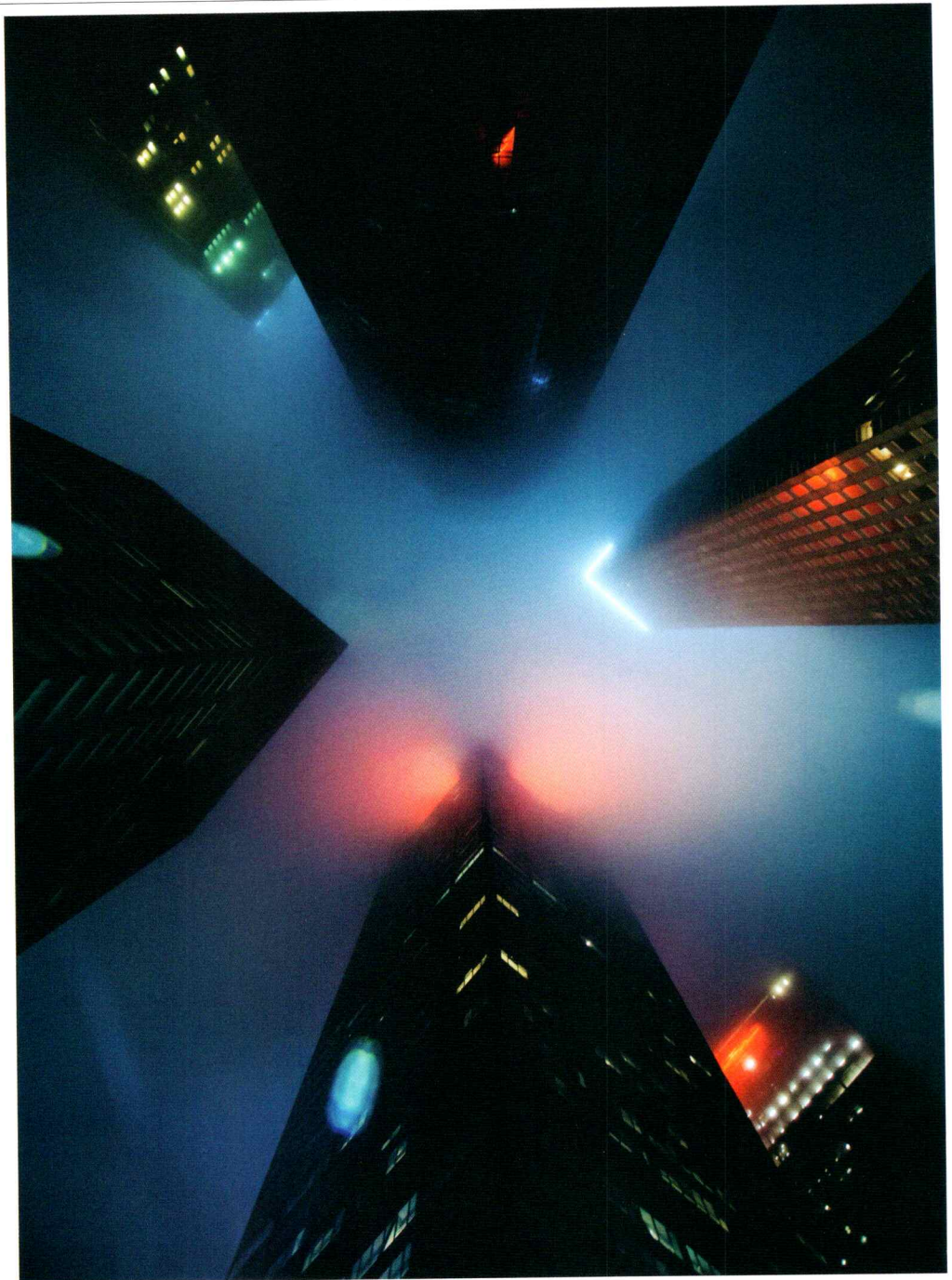
Brown’s colorful, noir-style language allows the reader to devour the book, in a good way. The short chapters fly by — everything moves fast. There’s some masterful anti-dramatic irony, with the characters launching into their plans long before one can discern their arcs. The tone is variably punky, with lengthy anarchist soapboxes offset by whip-smart exchanges that spur action.

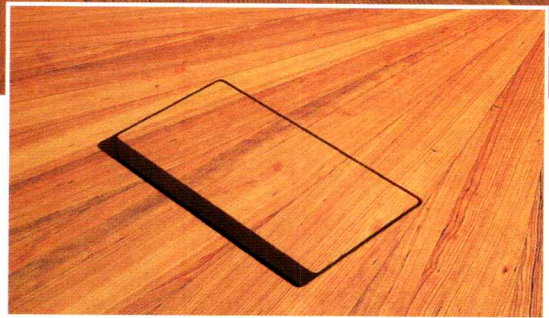
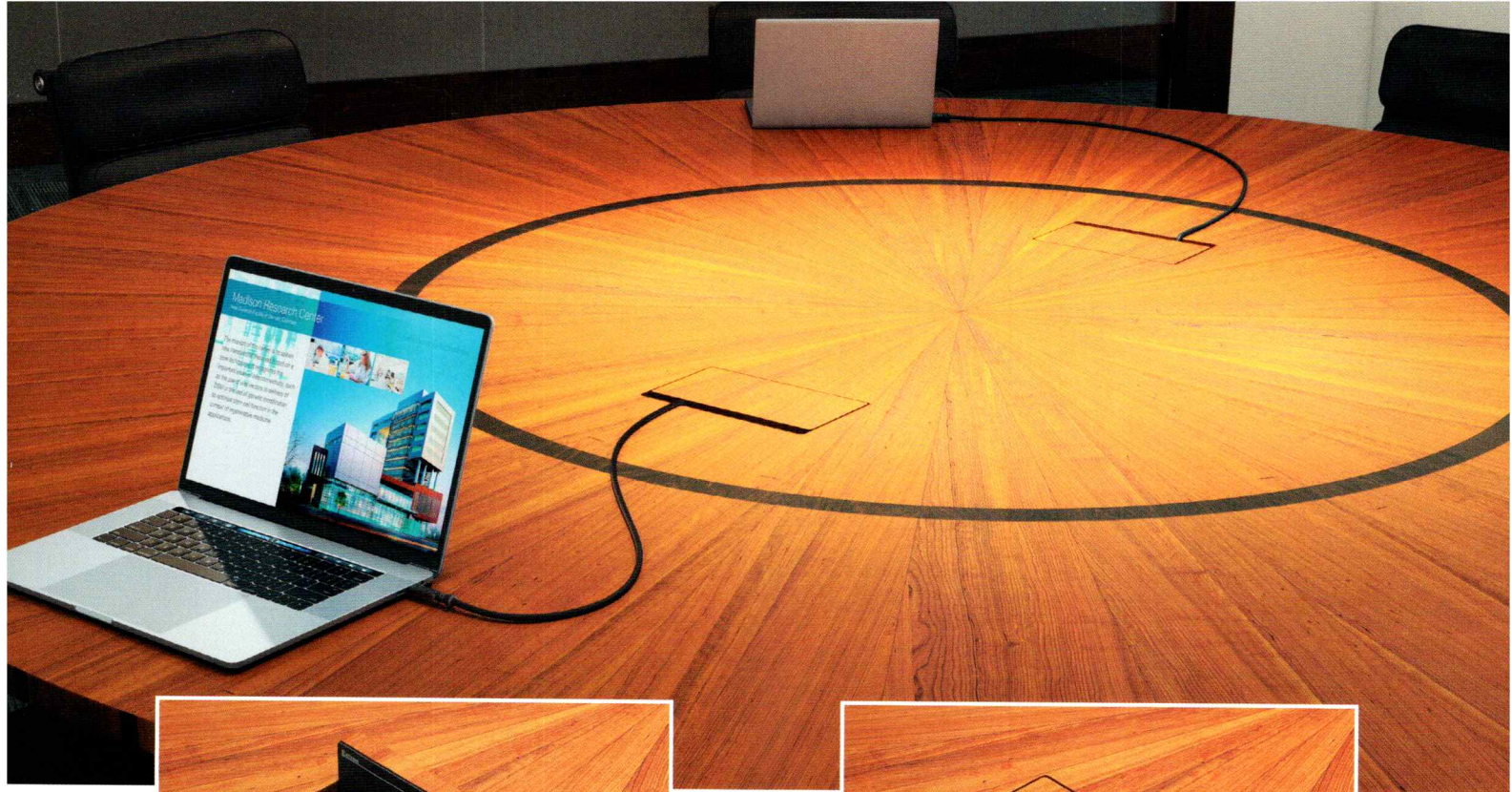
A lightly fictionalized Houston plays a major role. Those who know the city will take pleasure in imagining the story unfolding in familiar-ish places. Kimoe’s office is an abandoned bank on

Bissonnet Street, “eleven hundred square feet of corner lot brutalism that used concrete forms to hide the bankers from the sunlight”; one afternoon he works furiously in “an ancient office services place in a run-down 1980s building on Milam Street.” Brown’s antihero clambers through culverts, creeks, golf courses, private freeways, a nightclub called Detention, an abandoned apartment complex, a gated community turned refugee housing, and the innards of a downtown federal courthouse. Brown stages Houston in all its motley glory. He summarizes:

Houston was a city built on a swamp.... Most of the homesites along the bayou were empty now, the idea of their occupancy ceded to the inevitability of the next flood.... The best of those were beautiful lattices of fractal steel rising up out of feral landscaped tropical foliage, the kind of innovation Houston’s zoning-free development culture fostered, beautiful and also sad in the message they sent about what was coming. The banks were behind it all, keen to believe in a viable future for the business of asset-backed securitization.

Brown seems to have absorbed enough of Houston — this swamp of potential, where





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Reviews

everything starts rotting the second it's finished — to chart its future trajectory. Architecture is a backdrop for life, as always, and here establishes the ramshackle environment in which the story transpires.

“Rule of Capture” is indebted to classic science fiction tropes, but there are also specific Houston literary overtones. One character meets his demise after careening off an unfinished overpass on Mayor Donald Barthelme Memorial Turnpike; Barthelme was an author named for his father, a famed Texas architect. Kimoe, in his manic moments, is reminiscent of Danny Deck in Larry McMurtry’s pleasantly depressing “All My Friends Are Going to Be Strangers,” who at times takes to sleeping on the fifth floor of Rice’s Fondren Library. Brown’s work also summons “Lot,” Bryan Washington’s impressive debut collection of short stories, which collects contemporary scenes of Houston’s multicultural reality.

The novel’s themes are rooted in who can do what with the land we share. Given its focus on southeast Houston, these ideas feel indebted to Texas Southern University professor Robert Bullard’s decades of work on environmental justice, with the recognition that issues of pollution, race, and class intersect in deep ways.

Brown himself practices law, and this expertise powers the plot’s tight turns. There are passages on legal history, including the eponymous precedent: Borrowed from hunting practices, the rule of capture establishes that a natural resource becomes property when an individual is first able to “control” that asset. Kimoe’s legal maneuvers and courtroom exchanges flavor the text with a satisfying bureaucratic realness; its conclusion is a riveting trial that gives John Grisham a run for his money. Only then does the full extent of the terribleness at hand finally emerge.

“Rule of Capture” is a prequel to Brown’s 2017 novel, “Tropic of Kansas,” and further builds its fictive world. While Kimoe’s procedural gymnastics are invented for this book, Brown explains in a postscript that the statutes are “all extrapolations from existing legal precedents.” Meaning: This could happen to us, a realization that hovers in one’s mind when reading “Rule of Capture.” We too live in an era where powerful storms regularly inundate cities, chemical fires threaten neighborhoods, militias of insecure men rally with automatic weapons, economic inequality surges, neoliberal privatization runs wild, dark

money funds politics, an impeached president was acquitted of treasonous charges, and an election approaches — one whose legitimacy is preserved and whose outcome is respected, we hope. Dark days. William Gibson was right: “The future is already here — it’s just not evenly distributed.”

Two years ago, in this magazine, Brown filed “A Natural History of Empty Lots,” a text about the drosscapes of Austin. In it, he

roots around in the creek bottom muck, reading the tea leaves of our future in the trashy dregs of what passes for a river. “Rule of Capture” works on Houston similarly. It shows us a future mired in dystopia, but not without hope. That future could easily become ours, if we let it.

Jack Murphy is an M.Arch candidate at Rice University. He lives in Houston.



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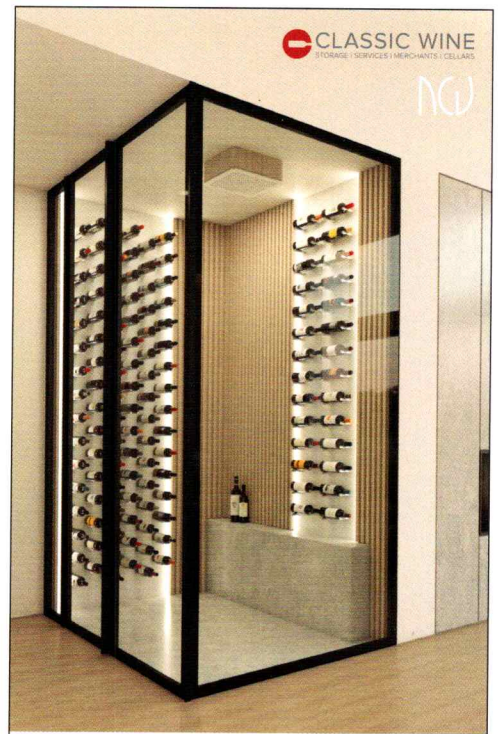
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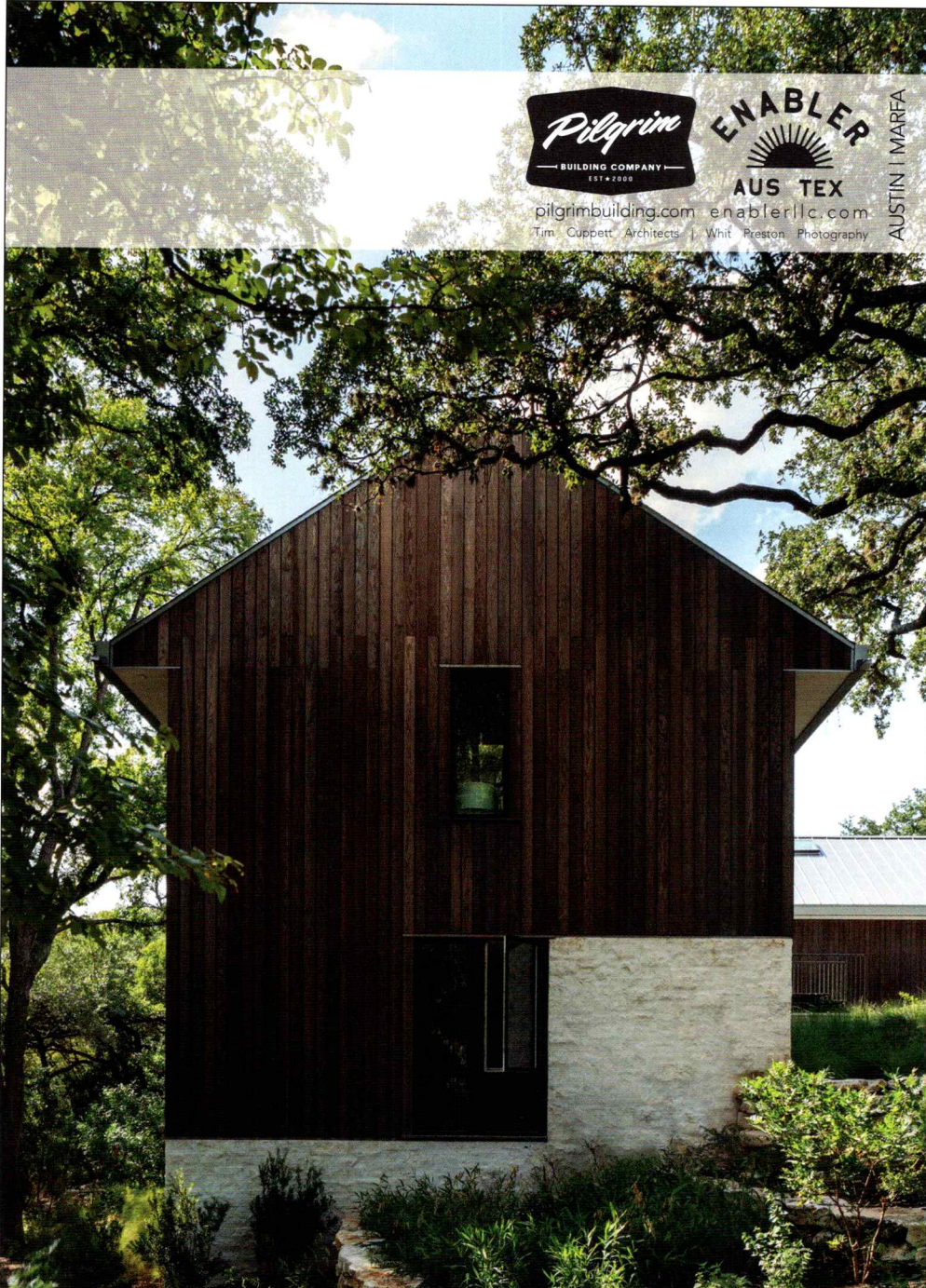
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carnegiefabrics.com

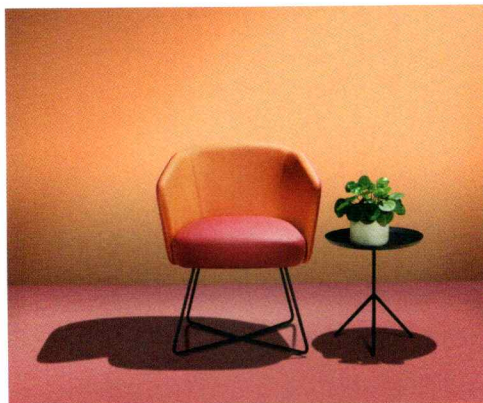
Carnegie's new line of high-performance commercial upholstery includes bold, multi-colored patterns and textured plains, some applicable to panels or other surfaces. The collection includes: Axion, a classic yet bold épingle velvet that is bleach-cleanable; Amplify, a large-scale linear pattern in a poly/upcycled cotton blend with a clean graphic look; Honeycomb, a versatile patterned-plain poly/nylon blend in 10 bright shades; Brushstroke, a plaid-inspired polyester; and Rhythm, a mélange wool in 11 colorways.



Husk

Kvadrat Fabrik
kvadrat.dk

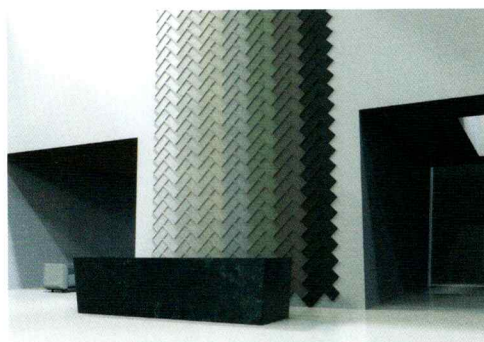
Designed by architect and industrial designer Marc Thorpe, Husk is a knitted textile with a 3D ribbed structure, inspired by the leafy outer shell of an ear of corn. The tactile ribbing, in thicknesses of 5 to 10 millimeters, runs parallel to the self-finished edge of the fabric. Suited for residential or commercial use, Husk is constructed with two different colored yarns that unite to create a uniform mixture in 10 colorways. The stretchable, knitted construction allows Husk to easily cling to various shapes of furniture.



Volar Bio

Ultrafabrics
ultrafabricsinc.com

Crafted in Ultrafabric's Japanese mill, Ultra-leather Volar Bio is the brand's first bio-based collection. Corn-based content is blended with polycarbonate resins for the fabric surface, and wood pulp-based materials are incorporated into the twill backcloth. The leather-grain-like fabric has a semi-lustrous, matte surface in a subtle range of natural colors. The Class A-rated fabric has earned a 29% BioPreferred Program Label from the USDA. By 2025, the company aims to include bio-based ingredients and/or recycled content in 50% of all new product introductions.



Ecoustic Edge

Unika Vaev
unikavaev.com

Ecoustic Edge is an architectural acoustic ceiling and wall tile that creates brickwork patterns. A more refined scale (15.75-in. by 7.87-in.) allows designers to make better use of the available wall space and create endless textural designs. Designed by Sydney-based industrial designer Adam Goodrum, the tile is made of 100% PET with more than 50% recycled content. An optional infill supplied for each tile improves sound-absorption capabilities. Wall mount clips allow for quick and efficient installation for an acoustic upgrade to a variety of interiors.



The Bauhaus Project

Designtex
designtex.com

In celebration of last year's Bauhaus centennial, Designtex introduced eight upholstery textiles and digitally printed wallcovering designs based on the work of Gunta Stözl and Anni Albers, who played a crucial role in developing the weaving program at the Bauhaus. The five woven textiles in the Stözl collection — ranging in construction from wool to postconsumer recycled cellulose — are inspired by her original work or weaving practice, including her pattern repeating methodology. The three geometric textiles in the Albers collection, including the monochromatic Mountainous pattern produced via 3D weaving techniques, were developed in close collaboration with the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation.



VEER by Alik van der Kruijs

Wolf-Gordon
wolfgordon.com

Wolf-Gordon's VEER commercial upholstery collection, a collaboration with Dutch artist Alik van der Kruijs, was created by the exploration of 2- and 3-D space through a subtly manipulated grid motif. The three patterns in the collection include: Float, a linear high-performance polyester/nylon construction; Turn, a durable polyester/polyester chenille in a larger scale pattern with a slight moiré effect; and Slide, a highly graphic luxe-cotton/polyester/nylon construction with an exaggerated ridge-like texture.

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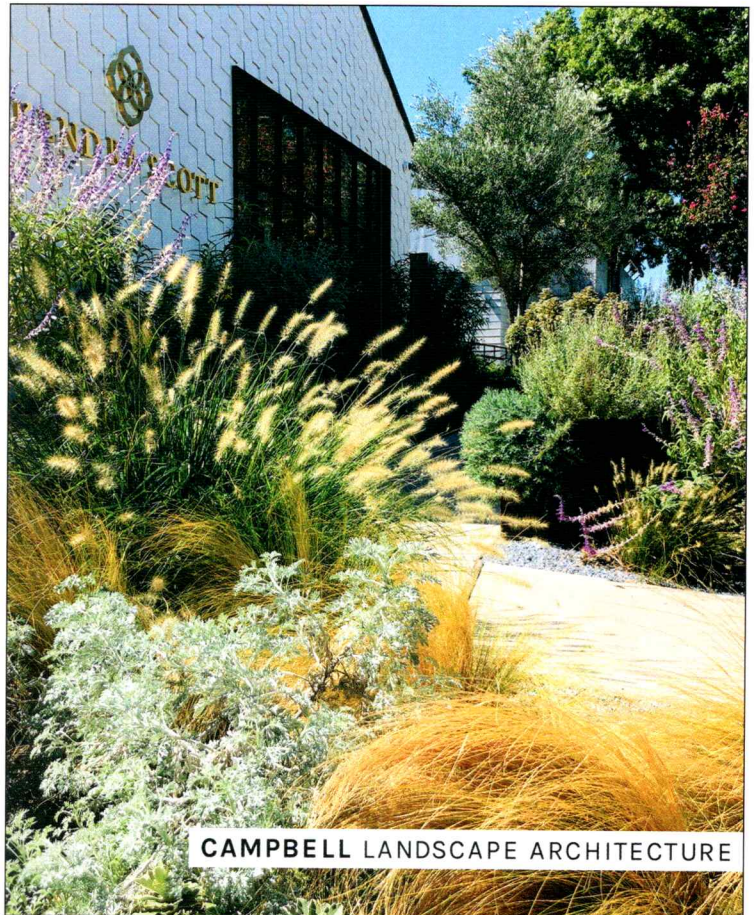
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The Hybrid

An Austin bungalow renovation blends the old Texas dogtrot and the contemporary Texas air-conditioned box, with pleasing results.

Architect Charles Di Piazza Architecture

General Contractor 22 Construction

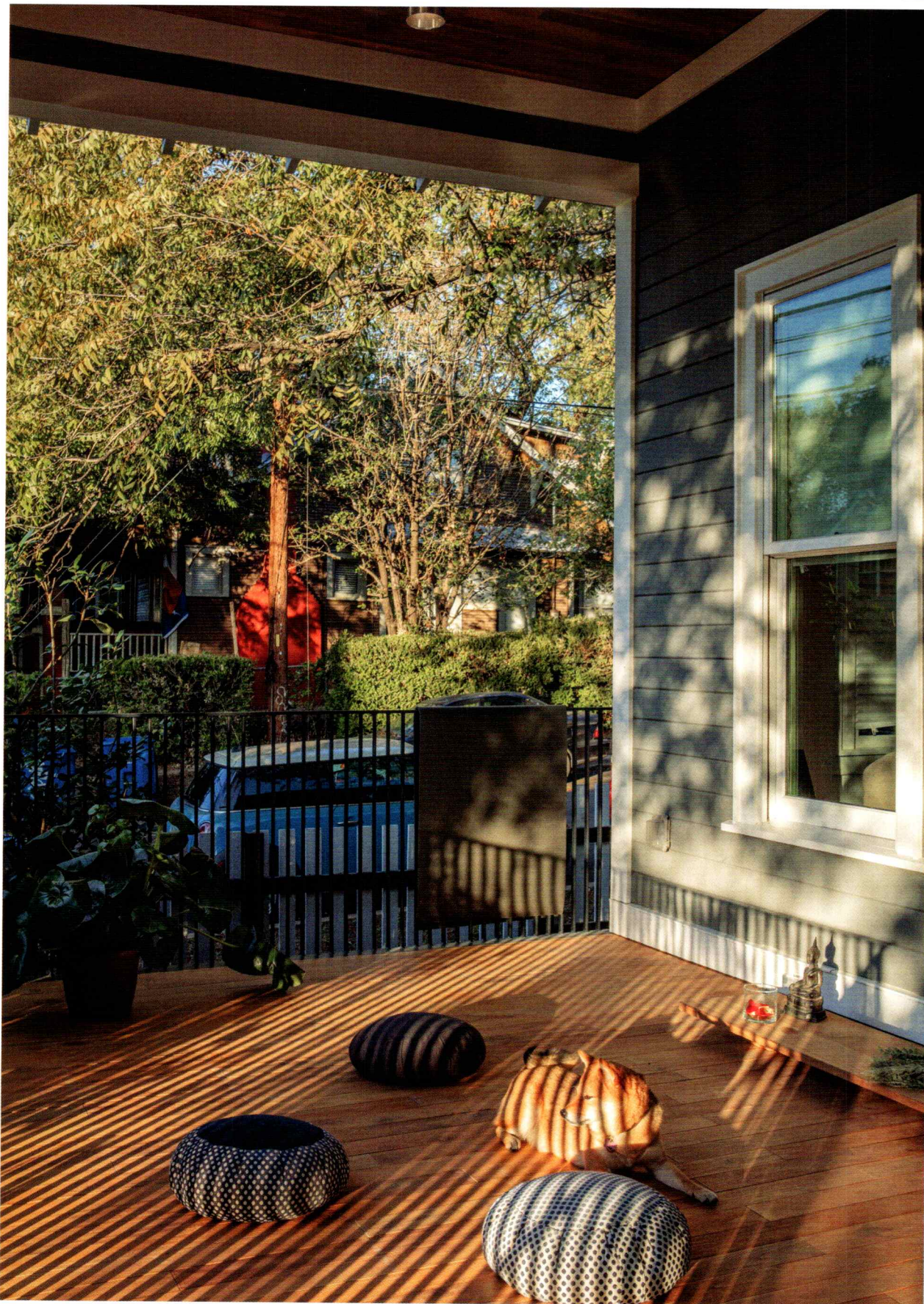
Landscape Architect Campbell Landscape Architecture

Structural Engineer Fort Structures

by Aaron Seward

An eclectic array of old frame houses on small lots makes up the block of Rio Grande Street between 29th and 30th streets in Austin's Heritage neighborhood. It has the look and feel of the quirky little college town that this city used to be. The midrise student housing blocks that have transformed West Campus just to the south have yet to dominate this area. Even the more nefarious stealth dorms that have infiltrated so many neighborhoods near the University of Texas are not to be seen here. It's not luck that has preserved this block, but a brand of NIMBYism that has counterintuitively resulted in architectural patronage.

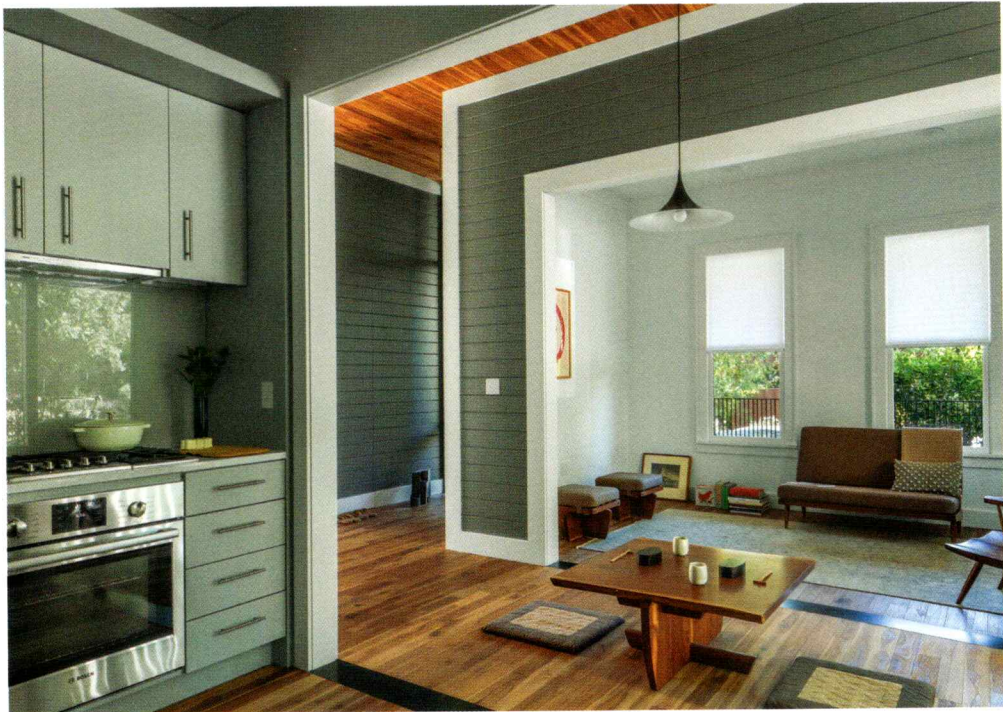
As detailed in "Campsite Rules" (*TA* March/April 2016), a wealthy individual, who wishes to remain anonymous, has been buying up properties in Heritage to keep them out of the hands of developers. Some of these properties have been transformed into architectural think pieces that owe nothing to the recommendations of real estate brokers. The



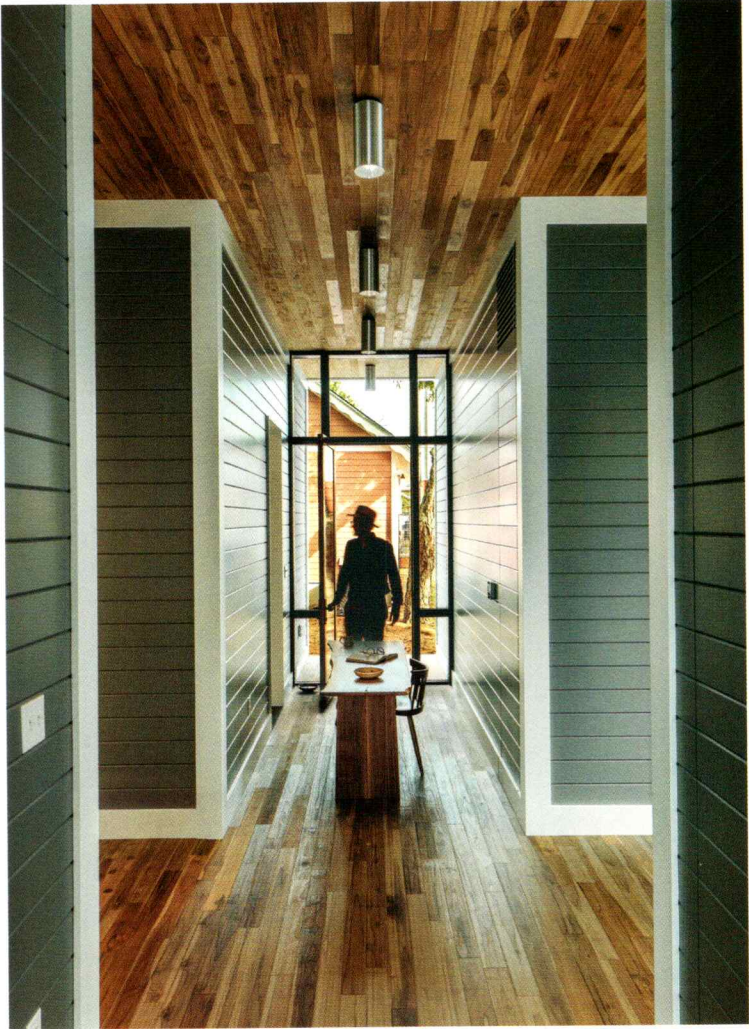
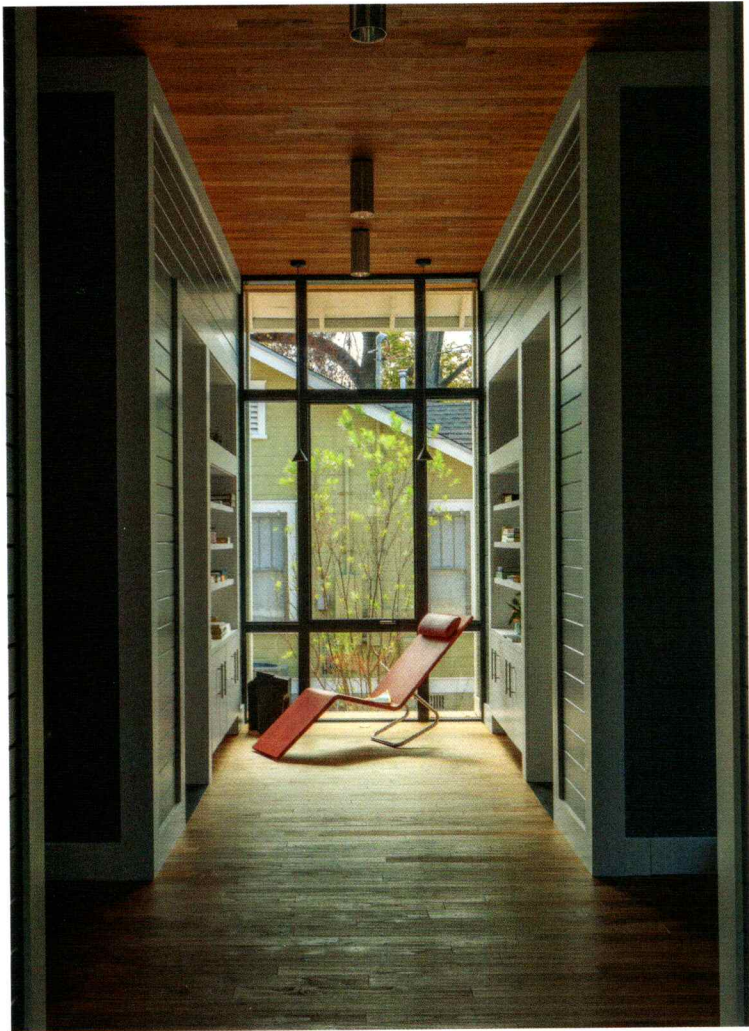
Facing *The first clue this is not your average bungalow is the white picket fence, whose darkened rear support structure fades away visually, emphasizing the crisp, vertical posts.*

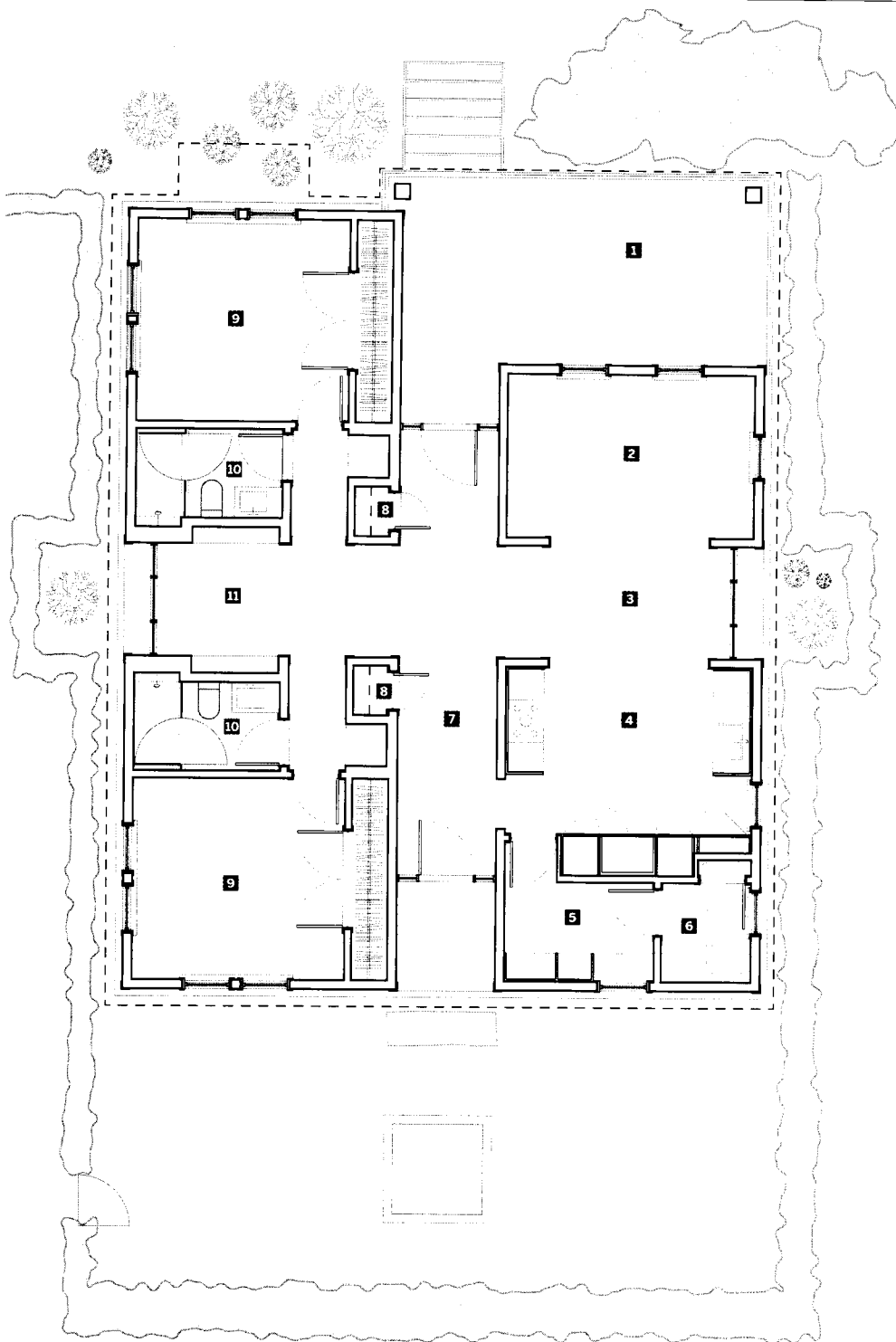
Left *The largest unimpeded space in the plan is the western-facing front porch. Its large overhang helps to mitigate afternoon glare.*

Open House



The generous width of the breezeway allows for ambiguity of program. Pictured staging promotes dining, reflection, and workspace.





FLOOR PLAN

- 1 PORCH
- 2 LIVING ROOM
- 3 DINING ROOM
- 4 KITCHEN
- 5 PANTRY
- 6 LAUNDRY
- 7 DOG TROT
- 8 CLOSET
- 9 BEDROOM
- 10 BATH
- 11 OFFICE

house detailed in the aforementioned article is one of them — a modernist jewel wrapped in weathering steel that could serve as a residence for visiting professors, an art gallery, or a posh space for intimate events. And now, directly across the street is another — a rehabilitated bungalow with a curious modern intervention.

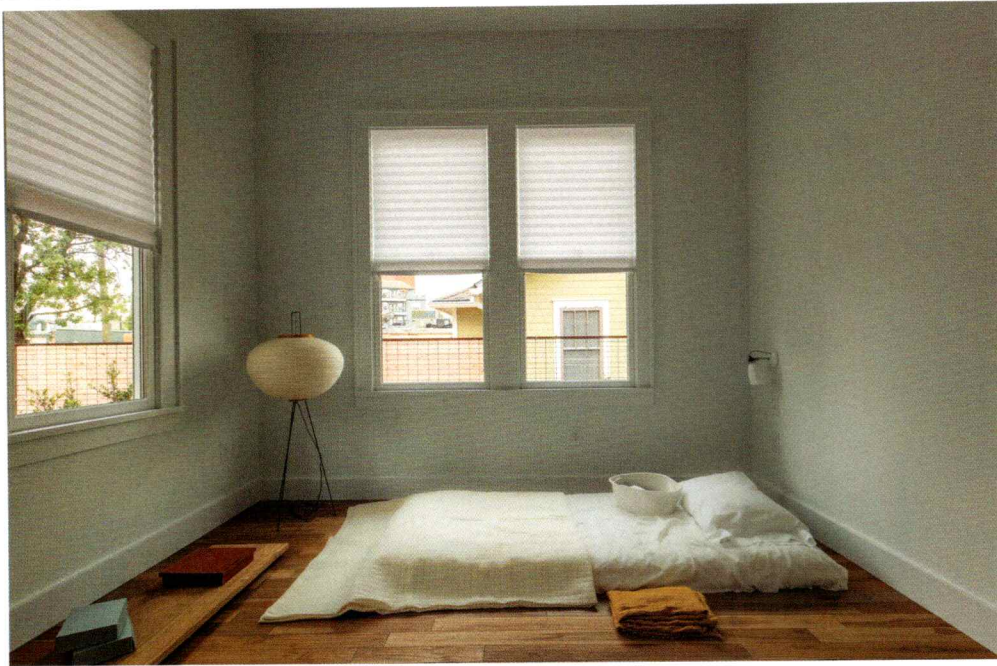
Designed by Charles di Piazza, who was one of the architects credited with the previous house, the refreshed bungalow looks very much like the 1926 structure that it is, complete with chunky white trim and other gingerbread house details. However, in the center of each elevation is a generously proportioned rectangular cutout filled in with an unapologetically modern-looking glass door or window wall. These glazed apertures, which have black framing, correspond to wide cross-sectional hallways that divide the plan into four sections. “This was a complete gut renovation,” says di Piazza. “What we discovered when peeling back the layers is that the house had been added onto many times over its history, but that, originally, it was a dogtrot.”

In the days before air conditioning, the dogtrot was one type of habitation that made Texas’ outrageously hot summers more bearable. Temperatures in the central breezeway that defines the typology remain significantly cooler than those outside. The breezeway also helps ventilate the cabins that it separates, keeping them cooler than they might be otherwise.

In di Piazza’s version, the dogtrot is not just a means of cross ventilation, but also an organizing principal for the architecture. The breezeways, which are wide enough to accommodate program — an office, a dining area, etc. — also divide the space into four “cabins.” The two on the south side of the building are bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms. Of the two on the north, one is a kitchen and utility area, and the other a small living room that looks onto a sizeable front porch facing the street corner. From the breezeways, each cabin is wrapped in the same pine clapboard siding that clads the exterior of the house.

One of the quirks of the existing structure is that it has exceptionally high ceilings for a house of its era — 11 ft, 6 in. Di Piazza took advantage of this condition by using it to further distinguish breezeway from cabin with sectional variation. While the breezeway takes full advantage of the height, in the cabins the ceiling is dropped to 9 ft, 6 in, further reinforcing the cozier feeling of shelter within

Open House

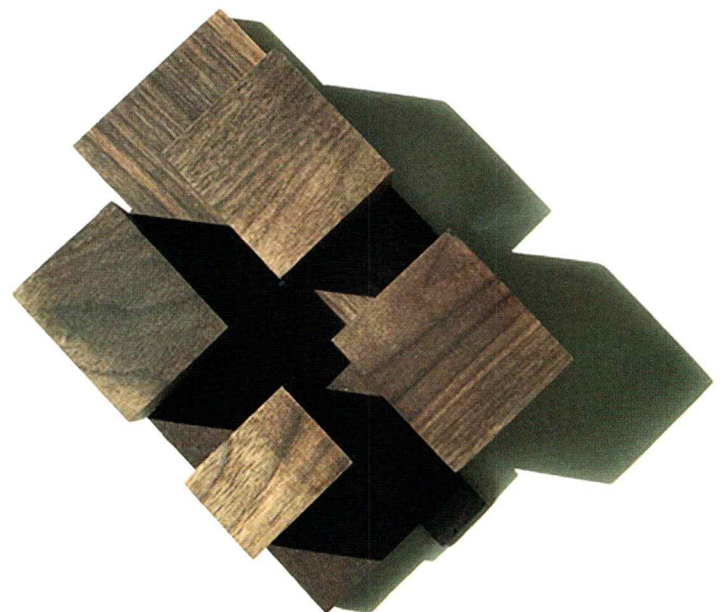
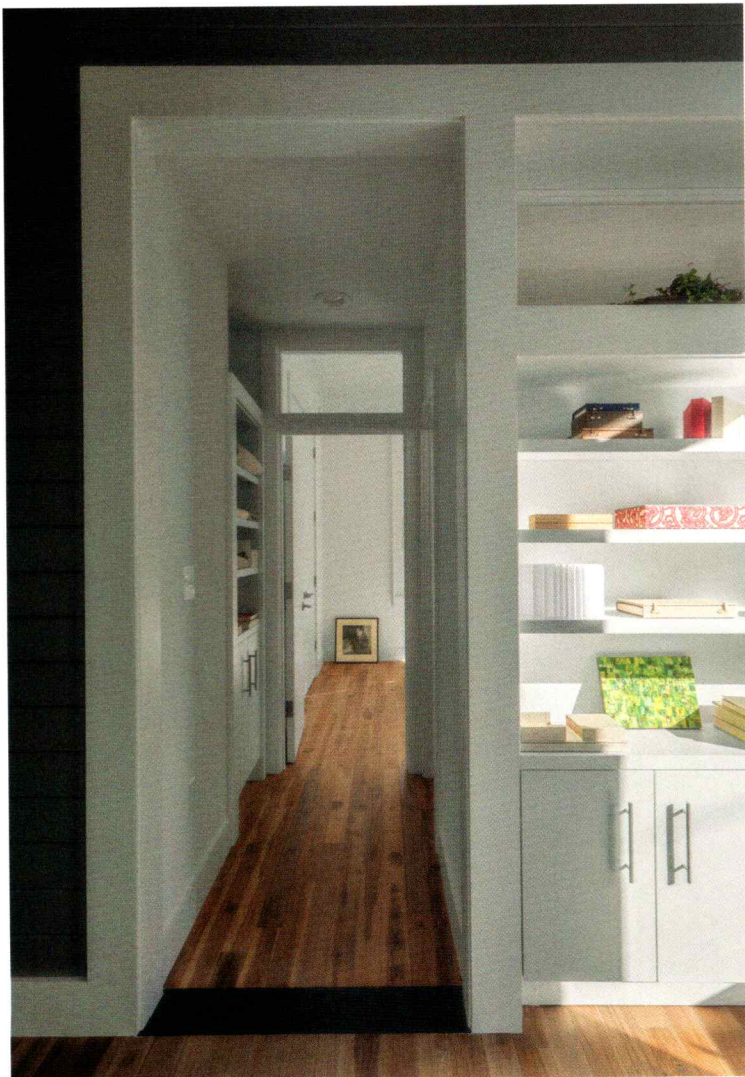


Left *Minimalist Japanese decor further emphasizes the elegant simplicity of this remodel.*

Bottom left *Black-painted thresholds demarcate the boundary between cabins and breezeway.*

Bottom right *A simple parti model demonstrates the straightforward division of the spaces by the breezeway.*

Facing *The architect maintained the chunky white trim and gingerbread house details of the existing building.*



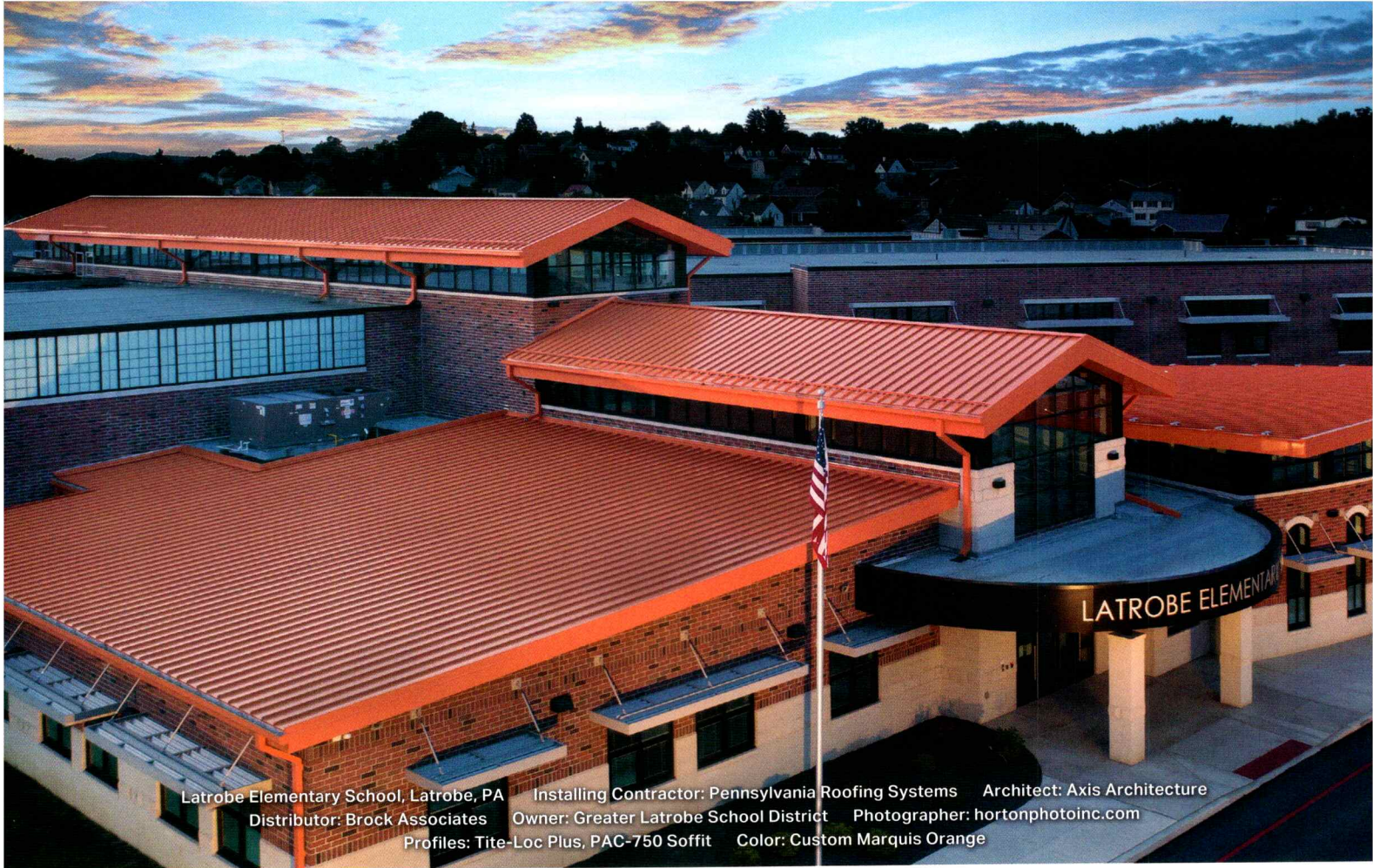
these spaces. Thresholds in the teak flooring, demarcated in black — the same as the thresholds that separate inside from outside — add another sign of difference. The ceiling in the breezeway is also teak, whereas, in the cabins, they're drywall.

On the one hand, the combination of modern and vernacular expressions in this project seems particularly profane. Why not, for example, enclose the breezeways with period-sensitive glazing systems? But upon consideration, the choice of a modern expression here is completely appropriate for what this house is: a dogtrot with air conditioning. Di Piazza initially wanted these glazed apertures to be framed in steel with thin mullions — an aspiration that was soon value engineered out of the project. But the specification



instead of a wood system, capped on the exterior with black metal for weather protection, and painted black on the inside to resemble the exterior metal, is also perfect for the project. The meatier framing elements speak to the chunky white trim that the architect was content to draw into the project. “When designing a house on a tight budget, it’s important to concentrate on the essentials of the architectural idea so that intent and legibility are maintained in the final product,” di Piazza says. In other words, draw things that the contractors will be able to do well. The strategy paid off. While certainly not rarefied in any of its detailing or finish elements, the project has a crispness that’s evidence of everyone working well within their abilities.

Aaron Seward is editor of *Texas Architect*.



Latrobe Elementary School, Latrobe, PA Installing Contractor: Pennsylvania Roofing Systems Architect: Axis Architecture
Distributor: Brock Associates Owner: Greater Latrobe School District Photographer: hortonphotoinc.com
Profiles: Tite-Loc Plus, PAC-750 Soffit Color: Custom Marquis Orange



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LEGACY HALL

PLANO, TX

PROJECT DETAILS

ARCHITECT:
Gensler

OWNER:
Front Burner
Restaurants, LP

- Three-story building
- European style food hall with over 24 food stalls
- Box Garden with capacity for 1,000 to enjoy live music, sporting events and more
- Craft brewery and taproom offering a wide range of premium beer



Toyota North American HQ
Plano, Texas



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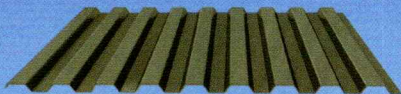
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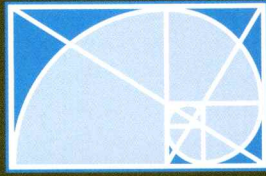
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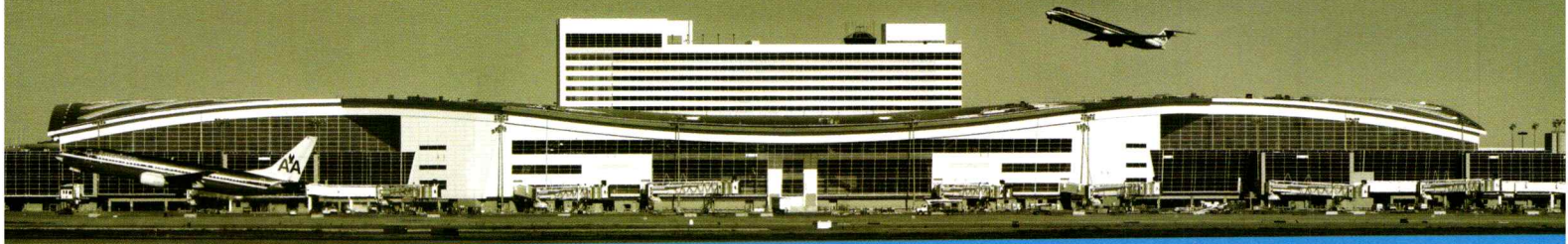
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Antony is trapped. He is free to sit at table with his helmet and crest, he can also keep on telling himself that he is the conqueror. But, if he looked around, he would find himself watched by inscrutable — and certainly not benevolent — eyes. No trace of Rome, nor of deference to its empire...[Cleopatra's] gaze does not meet that of her lover-adversary. It is suspended in emptiness. Instead, it is Antony who is staring at her, puzzled and enchanted — with the eyes of a romantic adolescent, even though he tries to affect composure by resting one hand on his hip and thrusting out his strong arm.

— Roberto Calasso, “Tiepolo Pink”

Borders, it might be said, are made to be crossed. But the difference that borders separate exerts its influence on those who traverse them, whether they be conqueror, tourist, or refugee. Borders have a way of sweeping up individual lives into the great course of history, bending them out of shape if not crushing them, or landing them in a tacky-tacky suburb. How can liberty be preserved when such boundaries hem us in, forcing us into the currents of fate? Perhaps the answer, as any responsible couples therapist would have told Antony and Cleopatra, is more openness.

In this issue of *Texas Architect*, we consider three facets of the state's posture toward its borders, and architectural responses to that posturing. First, we look to Texas' porous border — the one that absorbs as many businesses and workers as possible — by touring the North Dallas suburbs and taking in their meteoric development. Then we peer at the state's militarized and hardened southern border through a history of the design of its migrant detention centers. Finally, our gaze turns aspirational with a roundup of art and architectural border interventions centered on El Paso.

Borders

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Elephant Food

The North Dallas suburbs fill out

by Michael Malone, FALA

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Detention

Civil disobedience and punishment

by Sarah Lopez

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Snakes and Ladders

A roundup of border interventions

by Monica Mendez



Elephant Food

Texas' hardened international frontier garners most of the headlines, but its porous state-to-state border, the one legislated to absorb as many businesses and workers as possible, is just as important in defining the character of the state. Here, a Dallas architect considers his city's swelling northern suburbs, where much of this encouraged in-migration is accumulating.

by Michael Malone, FAIA

Early in my career, I made a number of trips to Southern California to support a retail client's national expansion. The Los Angeles area represented an intense concentration of potential customers, and the expanding chain planned to build a number of stores there. I vividly remember flying west over the massive metropolitan area that surrounded LAX, beginning abruptly in the eastern desert and unfolding continuously in an uninterrupted tan and gray undulating field to the ocean. Coming from Texas, the L.A. landscape seemed exotic and incomprehensible, the presence of mountains and the ocean in close proximity to where people lived was a startling contrast to the flat prairies of North Texas. These site visits provided opportunities to see landmarks and iconic architecture, but it was obvious that the real experience of the region was not sun and surf, but rather, commuting, and time in one's car. Getting around Southern California was a trial; crawling along the inadequate freeways between destinations was frustrating and inexplicably sad. Who would do this? Even more, who would do it by choice every day? In reality, the traffic and the time spent commuting were an unavoidable, endemic part of life in L.A. If you lived there, you just accepted it and did it.

Facing *The Liberty Mutual Insurance Regional Offices, designed by Omniplan.*

Right *At a height of nearly 300 ft, the campus is the tallest office project in Plano.*





As architects, we were taught to consider extended commuting in a personal vehicle as a cautionary tale, a flaw in the way Southern California had grown and how its population expansion had been allowed to indiscriminately cover the landscape. It was an easy example, long a topic of late-night jokes and humor. It was painful to consider that the locals dealt with it every day. What's more, the same traffic issues and patterns were also present in the Eastern cities and becoming a way of life in the Sunbelt too. Land use norms or not, American cities expanded and grew into their surrounding available land, and what we consider to be sprawl became commonplace. Like it or not, this is the de facto model of American urban development, present (and still thriving) throughout Texas, where you can drive on crowded freeways out to the suburbs of Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and even eco-friendly Austin.

Back in the 1980s, despite the oil boom and the real estate bonanza it spawned, the part of Dallas I lived in was somewhat simpler and the sprawl more contained. Perhaps it is a romanticized memory, but the freeway system seemed manageable; indeed, rarely did the traffic hamper my movement about. There were signs it was getting worse. More people were moving to Dallas-Fort Worth, and the region's lack of viable public transport meant they were all driving everywhere they went. Forty years on, the Dallas area

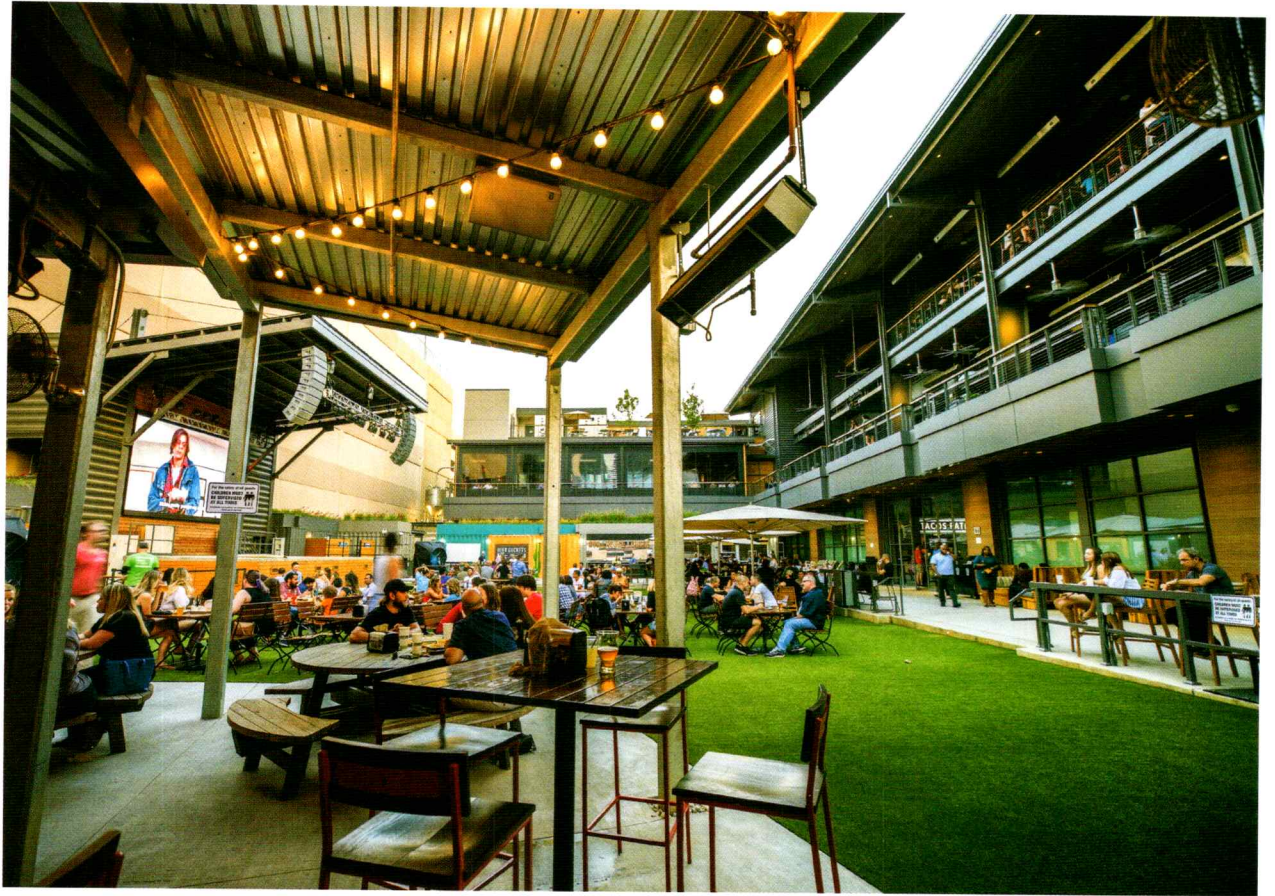
appears very much like that L.A. the 20-something me discovered, only with more trees. The suburbs are far flung; it takes a long time to get anywhere; and sitting in cars on choked and crowded roads is how you get about.

A lot of the ambitious development in Dallas is aimed to the North, and indeed, the growth in that direction seems to be aligned along the corridor defined by the Dallas North Tollway, an arterial that points a direct path from downtown to the most remote northern suburbs. The growth along this corridor also includes several of the most affluent residential neighborhoods, the toniest shopping, and the most complex multiuse and entertainment-oriented development. The toll road begins just north of downtown Dallas, near The Crescent, which, along with Old Parkland, provides offices for the plutocracy that midwived much of North Texas as we know it. The American Airlines Center, the heart of the Victory Park development, also parallels the toll road, which then moves through the yuppie paradise that is Uptown and the Park Cities, where the real movers and shakers live. Continuing on, the tollway bisects Preston Hollow, with its verdant estates and significant residential architecture; then it skirts the city's most elite private schools before reaching the cluster of consumption that surrounds the Galleria. Next, it passes the restaurant and entrainment enclave of Addison, then heads through West Plano, ground zero for the McMansion,

Facing *The Toyota North American Headquarters, by Corgan, is a 2.2 million-sf campus in Plano.*

Right *Gensler's Legacy Hall, an eatery at the heart of the Legacy West development, which aims to bring culture and density to the sprawling suburb of Plano.*

Below *Frisco Square, flanked on one side by a large city hall, was developed in the 2000s as a nod to civic engagement.*



and North Plano, with its corporate headquarters, home to companies seeking an escape from taxes and environmental obligations and paving over the prairie in the process. The Legacy West development promises faux urbanism, walkable streets accessed by acres of free parking. Next, the toll road heads up into Frisco, and beyond that, Prosper, the current northern border of the DFW Metroplex. It's worth noting that the tollway is a private road. You pay to drive on it, and this route is not meaningfully served by any public transit.

Frisco is an interesting case of how the North Texas environment is changing. At one time, the remote suburban city was the northern extremis of Dallas development. Statistics suggest it was home to 6,500 people in 1990; 30 years later, that number is closer to 180,000. There's a lot of space yet to build out, so those numbers are likely to increase substantially by mid-century. Hard by the toll road is Frisco Square, home to Frisco City Hall and the axially planned central greenspace that organizes its presumption of urbanism. Denser development is intended to ring the greenspace, in the form of developer apartment "donuts," where five-story residential buildings ring a parking garage. Retail and restaurants are provided on the ground floor. This aspirational town square hearkens back to the era of civic engagement, but it's oddly juxtaposed with the FC Dallas soccer stadium to the north, empty and locked unless there's a game or event there. It's an interesting choice for a civic venue, and of course, it's also surrounded by parking. Besides the gesture of this "square," the rest of Frisco is a pattern book of mediocre suburban sprawl, silo zoning, and strip development. If you like chain restaurants, the selection is stupendous! Frisco also seems to have placed its bets on sports as a way to attract visitors and their discretionary dollars. The Dr Pepper Ballpark is home to the minor league Frisco RoughRiders.

A more ambitious development is associated with the Ford Center, the Dallas Cowboys practice facility, and the adjacent offices where the team is headquartered. Collectively, the development is called The Star, and the 12,000-seat stadium is a partnership between the City of Frisco and the Dallas Cowboys. High school football is played in the stadium when it's not being used for practice by the Cowboys. These sports venues are boosted heavily by Frisco, but one wonders if they really add to the average citizen's experience of civic life.

The kind of idealized neighborhoods and communities that design professionals and urbanists like to point to as examples of model living exist in Texas and have for at least a century. Most of these predate the region's explosive postwar growth, but they are home to many and still functioning well today. Indeed, they are some of the most desirable residential communities in the state. Large Texas cities have strong traditional urban neighborhoods that started out as suburbs with the kinds of institutions and services generally associated with vibrant urbanism. These places have thrived since their founding and include University Park in Dallas, Alamo Heights in San Antonio, and West University Place in Houston. The rapid increase in the state's population coincided with the growth of less organic suburbs, primarily defined by large merchant housing developments and little institutional base. When people moved to the region, suburban areas around the core cities became home to many of these newcomers. These suburbs have been perceived to offer the amenities and attractions that folks moving to Texas seek: affordable, detached single-family houses on individual lots, good schools (though what constitutes "good" is fungible), and a uniformity of other residents (racial, economic, political). What these suburbs often lack are the kinds of infrastructure and institutions

Facing A partnership between the Dallas Cowboys and the City of Frisco, *The Star* is a development housing a 12,000-seat stadium, a practice facility, and offices for the franchise.

Right Centered about a main street, the dense mix of uses at Legacy West promotes an urban walking experience in the heart of suburban Plano.





that make urban life so compelling and enjoyable. One example is the new schools built in these suburbs, which are large buildings that are poorly massed, clunky in their organization, and set on large parcels of land isolated within a complex system of drives and ring roads that primarily channel drop-off, pick-up, and parking, defying you to walk your children to school. Characteristically enough, the architects of many of these buildings tout them as being “designed from the inside out.”

We’d been led to believe the generation now coming into their own middle-class prosperity would have different values, but data suggests they too are choosing the suburbs, duplicating the lives they had as children. Significant numbers of people are still selecting this pattern of life for themselves, and, based on the demographics, they’re well educated, affluent, and presumably woke enough to know what’s potentially wrong with their choices. But, as with the three generations before them, including the parents of most of the readers of this magazine, it’s a life they’ve selected, despite a variety of urban housing options available in most of the large cities. We can’t categorically suggest that they don’t want this suburban life with its commitment to commuting, or that it’s their only alternative economically. Perhaps it’s still a powerful reflection of our collective vision of the American Dream.

As architects, it’s easy to despair over the pattern of sprawl and the seeming unsustainability of it all — the sheer ugliness of it. But then there’s Legacy West, with its intense collection of uses, retail stores, and restaurants arranged around a central street, overlooked by apartments and offices. There’s a remarkable multi-story food court, a beehive of activity with live music, and a variety of seating options. Everywhere in Legacy West is packed, filled with people on foot, strolling through throngs of fellow pedestrians who have self-selected to drive to a mixed-use development that peddles walkable urbanism and requires their participation. You can have the same experience elsewhere in suburban Texas, north of Houston at the Woodlands, in north Austin at the Domain, in the heart of San Antonio at the Pearl. These folks know they’re doing something fun and different and collective, and it has to suggest to at least some of them that this is how their lives could unfold every day, with the sorts of variety of experiences we associate with Europe. It’s sad they have to drive there to experience this, but then again, people travel great lengths to experience it in Europe and, closer to home, at Disneyland, too.

Michael Malone, FAIA, is a principal at Malone Maxwell Borson Architects in Dallas.

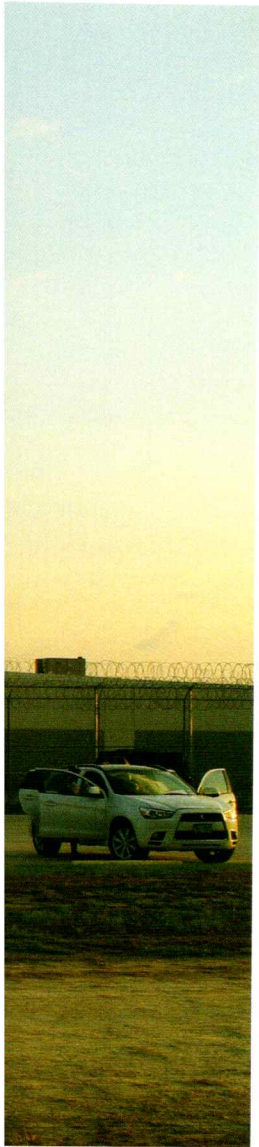


Detention

According to United States law, being in the country without proper authorization is not a criminal offense, but a civil violation. So why are we designing and building migrant detention centers with the same formal and material components as prisons?

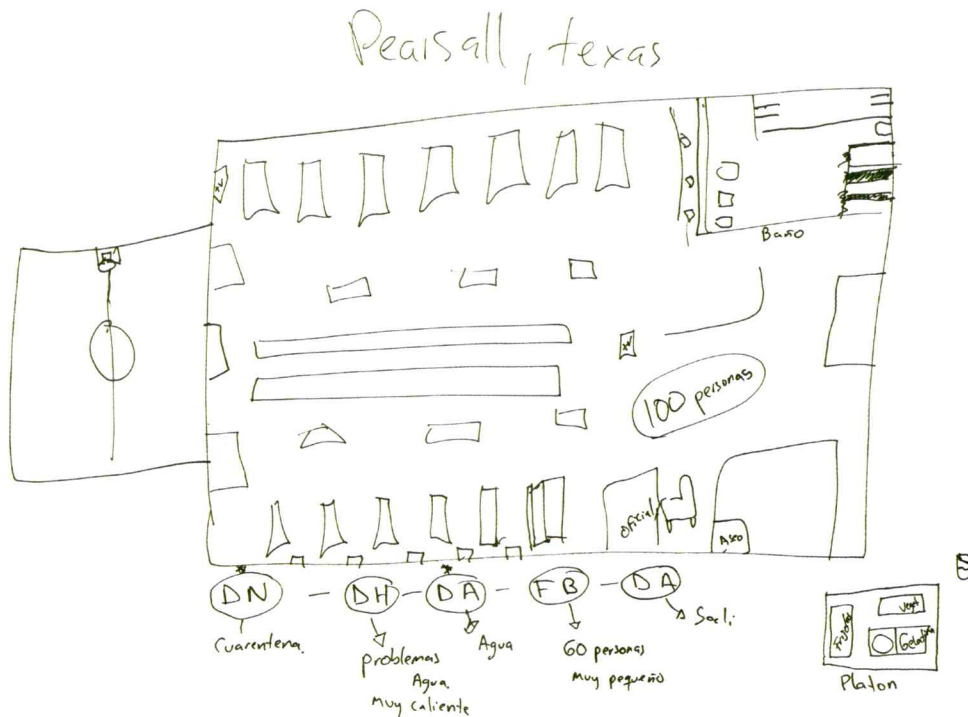
by Sarah Lopez

What lessons can we learn from examining a history of designing detention? And why is the detention center a building of critical and national importance? Building immigrant processing stations, detention centers, and alien prisons has its own history, yet little is known about the specifics of that design history, spanning from the building of Ellis Island in 1892 to the dozens of quickly erected, sprawling detention facilities found throughout the United States today. The detention center is singular. As Immigration and Customs Enforcement asserts, the “legitimate restriction on physical liberty is inherently and exclusively a governmental authority.” Stripping individuals of their freedom to move is an awesome (and terrifying) power granted to the government alone. The architecture of detention is also the environment in which many migrants and asylum seekers are “welcomed,” and where many vulnerable persons interact directly with the spaces and mandates of the State. Finally, examining the architecture of detention raises questions about immigration and detention policy and the intent of such policy as expressed through its physical infrastructure. Detention centers are places to quarantine individuals who are awaiting a legal process that will determine if they are imprisoned, deported, or released. Legally, they



Facing *The La Salle County Regional Detention Center in Encinal, Texas. The private prison corporation Emerald Companies broke ground on this female and male detention facility in 2002. Today it houses both migrants awaiting trial and civilian convicts.*

Left *A migrant's drawing of his dormitory, or "pod," in Pearsall, where, alongside 99 other men, he spent four months.*

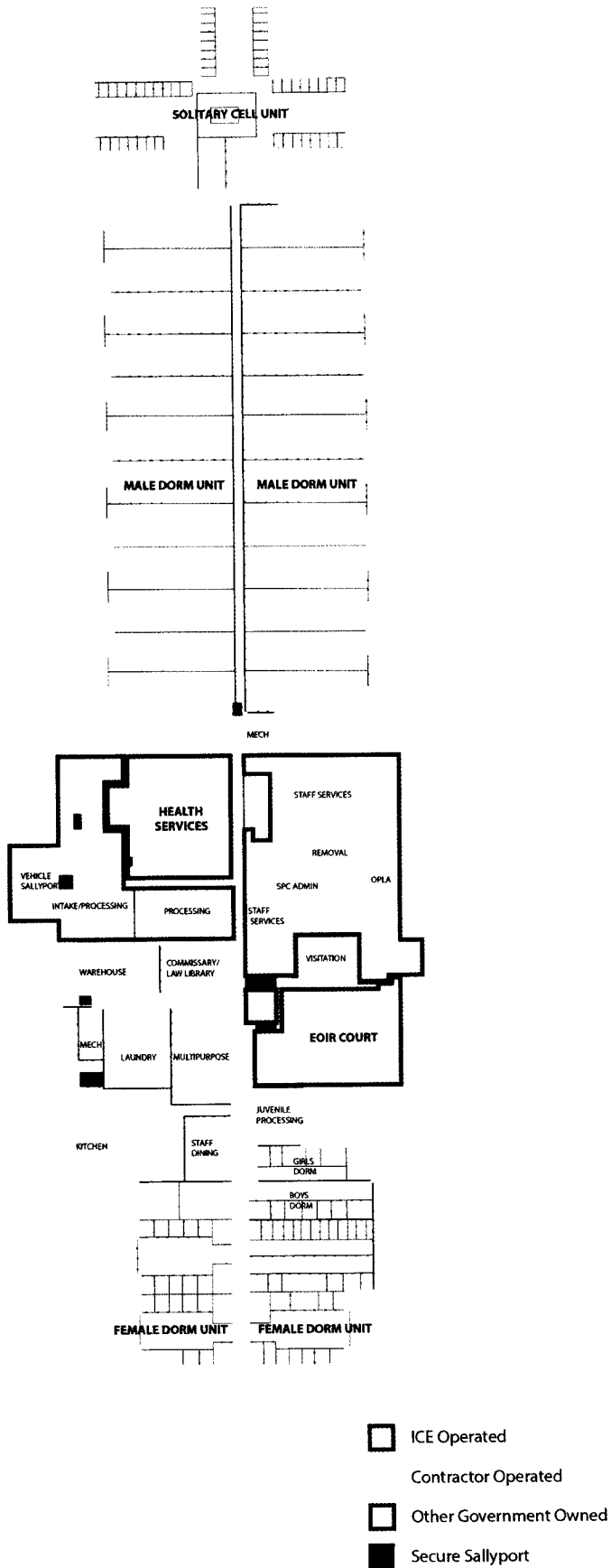


are “administrative” processing centers. This has been the case since the Geary Act of 1892, which established detention and deportation in the context of rising Chinese migration to the U.S. Confirmed in 2009 by an ICE administrator, “Immigration proceedings are civil proceedings and immigrant detention is not punishment.” Overstaying a Visa or being in the U.S. without proper authorization is a civil issue, not a criminal one. Yet, the architecture and infrastructure of detention in the U.S. today comprises dozens of buildings designed as prisons, or designed using the same formal and material components as prisons.

Texas plays a special role in the history of the detention construction industry. The Southwest is (and has been) a place of experimentation when it comes to defining and hardening the boundaries between the U.S. and Mexico. Texas has immigrant processing and detention facilities that date to at least the 1930s, but it was not until the 1990s that what has become a large-scale infrastructure of detention commenced in earnest. In fact, today, Texas has the capacity to detain more migrants than any other state in the Union. The large-scale infrastructure of migrant detention in Texas is possible because private prison corporations have developed new ways to design, build, and

manage detention. While only 15 percent of the U.S. prison system is privately owned and managed, an estimated 73 percent of the migrant detention system is owned and managed by about five private companies. Since the 1980s, private corporations have built at least 16 detention centers for the federal government, a count that does not include the county and city jails repurposed or built anew to detain migrants, nor the Criminal Alien Requirement (CAR) facilities erected to incarcerate so-called criminal aliens. In 1970, Texas had the capacity to detain about 1,500 migrants. In 2017, Texas had the capacity to detain over 15,000 migrants daily, comprising about 26 percent of the nation’s detention space.

In the 1930s, a new Border Inspection Station was built in Laredo. This is one of Texas’ earliest formal, federally funded, and purpose-built immigrant processing stations. In this period, after an extensive survey of existing conditions at ports of entry, the Customs and Immigration Bureau recommended the construction of 48 stations built across 11 U.S. states. According to the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), which now oversees extant Border Inspection Stations, these stations were needed in response to the rise of the automobile, changing



immigration policy (i.e. the literacy tests and head tax imposed on those entering the U.S. from the southern hemisphere in 1917), and the enforcement of Prohibition. The GSA celebrates the architecture of inspection stations:

These buildings were a part of a larger movement in federal architecture to express the meaning and the strength of the federal government to its citizens present and future. For those entering the United States for the first time, the border inspection station building was what Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty were for those entering by water: the first symbolic expression of the United States and its values.

Designed by the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, individual stations reflected the “region and climate where they were located.” Laredo’s station — an institutional building with a stripped down “Spanish style” arched portico — was designed to inspect both vehicles and people.

In the 1960s, El Paso received federal funding to replace its inspection station with a new detention center. This was, in part, a response to the bilateral guest-worker Bracero Program (1942-1964), which authorized hundreds of thousands of agricultural workers to come north. Formal migration spurred unauthorized migration both during the program and after it was formally terminated. The El Paso center was relocated one mile inland from the U.S.-Mexico border. Constructed out of concrete, cinder block, and brick, four rectilinear dormitories housed up to 192 men each. Women and juveniles were detained in separate church and charity facilities nearby. Archival photographs illustrate dormitories lined with windows letting in natural light, and “latrines” including private stalls. In an article titled “U.S. Detention Facility Almost Like Army Camp: Detainees Amazed at Fine Treatment,” the Immigration and Naturalization Service’s district director notes:

The camp was built as inconspicuous as it could be ... [T]he absence of watchtowers and strict confinement measures are designed to make life easier to the deportee while in facility. The people detained here are not violent criminals. They merely are charged with being illegally in the U.S. and are awaiting investigation before being returned to Mexico, or whatever country they are from.

Nonetheless, as is standard now, the facility had 12-ft-high fencing topped with electrified concertina wire that set off alarms when touched. Almost 200 men were in 60-ft-by-30-ft barracks with no air-conditioning. Polished steel mirrors replaced glass, which could be used as a weapon or to hurt oneself. An immigration official in El Paso conceded: “Any time you put a fence around a place, you can’t get away entirely from the feeling of prison.”

Before the 1980s, Texas had three main immigrant processing stations, all located at the U.S.-Mexico boundary: El Paso, Laredo, and Port Isabel. In the 1980s and 1990s, apprehensions rose, facility construction rose, and private prison corporations entered the arena of immigration policy. Jenna Loyd and Alison Mountz’s book “Boats, Borders, and Bases” traces the rise of migrant detention to the 1980s, when Cold War politics and policies, coupled with streams of Haitian and Cuban refugees, resulted in new punitive practices and new detention centers. In 1996, President Clinton enacted the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, which greatly increased the number of persons eligible for detention. During the 1980s and 1990s, private prison corporations began to construct privately owned facilities that were leased to governments for direct government operation. The private prison corporation argued that it would save the government money in



Facing This schematic rendering of the South Texas Detention Center in Pearsall is based on the only publicly available architectural drawing of a migrant detention center, found in the 2007 ICE Design Standards manual.

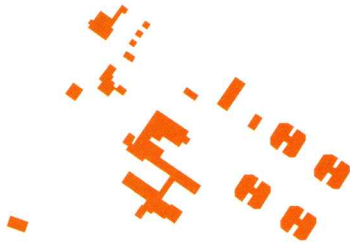
Left Inspired by the formal characteristics of detention centers evident in satellite Google Earth images, immigrant rights activists, legal experts, and scholars refer to these facilities as the “warehousing” of migrants.

the cost of both construction and housing detainees daily. While these promises were untested, the private sector was able to deliver faster construction (buildings were erected in two to three years rather than five to six), and the government could finance facility construction in new ways. By using contractors for facility construction, the government was able to tap different accounts, accounts that did not have publicly-voted-on budgets. This minimized democratic engagement with, and potential roadblocks to, facility expansion.

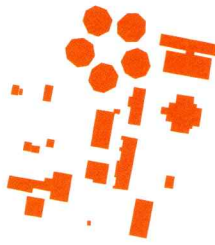
In the 1980s and 1990s, just as new prisons and detention centers were being envisioned and built in Texas, the Justice Facilities Review, an annual publication of the American Institute of Architects on “justice architecture,” documented prison design as turning away

from notions of rehabilitation. Juries composed of three architects and three practitioners from the judiciary, corrections, and law enforcement repeatedly described prisons as “non-normative environments.” Non-normative environments, also referred to as the “hardening” of facilities, rely on small dark cells, caged recreational spaces, an absence of natural light (replaced by “borrowed light,” where skylights and clerestories are used to channel indirect light in lieu of windows), harsh fluorescent lighting, an increase in use of concrete floors, crude signage, and minimal person-to-person contact. Reduced human contact is achieved by an “indirect supervision concept” that relies on video surveillance, video visitation, one-way glass, and non-overlapping circulation spaces for both employees and inmates that can contribute

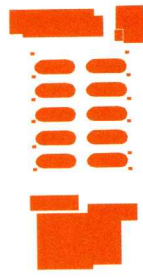
Detention facility footprints clustered according to historic prison types: campus-sprawl, campus-barracks, telephone pole, self-enclosed, singular, comb, and radial.



Port Isabel Detention Center
Campus-Sprawl



Reeves County Detention Complex



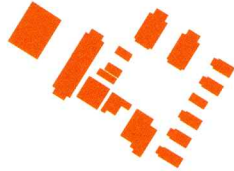
Willacy County Correctional Center South Texas Family Detention Center
Campus-Barracks



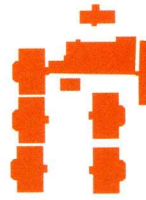
Val Verde Correctional Facility
Telephone Pole



South Texas Detention Center



East Hidalgo Detention Center
Self-Enclosed



Rio Grande Detention Center



Burnet County Jail



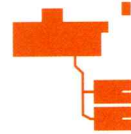
Brooks County Detention Center & Brooks County Jail



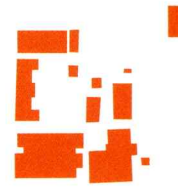
Houston Contract Detention Facility
Giles W Dalby Correctional Facility



Fannin County Detention Center



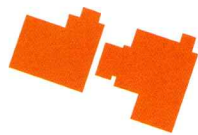
West Texas Detention Facility



Eden Detention Center



T. Don Hutto Residential Center



Jack Harwell Detention Center and Correctional Facility



Laredo Processing Center & Laredo Detention Center



Polk County Adult Detention Center
Singular



Bedford Municipal Detention Center



Joe Corley Detention Facility



Big Spring Correctional Center



El Paso Service Processing Center



Rolling Plains Regional Jail



Lasalle County Regional Detention Center



Euless City Police Detention Center



Randall County Jail



Johnson County Detention Center
Comb



Karnes Correctional Center



Kinney County Detention Center



Coastal Bend Detention Facility



Lubbock County Detention Center
Radial

to a sense that those incarcerated are always being watched while also interminably isolated. By the end of the 1990s, the jurors warned of the consequences of this design: “Feelings were that once a facility is toughened, there may be no going back — it is difficult to rescind philosophical and architecture decisions.”

Construction companies and private prison corporations were incorporating these ideas into both civilian prisons and immigrant detention centers. Since at least 1992, The GEO Group initiated a design/build component into their corporate structure tasked with developing cost-effective technologies to standardize prisons and detention centers, build them off-site, and use prefabricated designs. These design goals have allowed GEO to build detention centers in increasingly rural places. For example, “technology integration” allows video installations to replace face-to-face court hearings or person-to-person visitations, incentivizing and enabling geographic remoteness. New technologies in combination with specific prison layouts attempted to maximize surveillance without increasing staff. The construction industry was especially keen to the fact that “staffing is one cost factor that may be addressed by design.” Design that aimed to lower the “long-term operational costs” of facilities was especially important, since the same companies designing the facilities were often responsible for their long-term operation.

These techniques and technologies are apparent in most of the detention centers in Texas today. In aerial view, detention center footprints cohere with the barracks, telephone pole, radial, self-enclosed, singular and comb layouts typical of 19th- and 20th-century prisons. GEO’s South Texas Detention Facility (known by its location in “Pearsall”) has a ‘telephone pole’ layout, where parallel rectangular spaces connected by a central spine control interior circulation. Classification and categorization are fundamental to Pearsall’s organization; the southern wing houses female and juvenile dorms, and the northern wing houses men in stacked dormitories. Three wings used for solitary confinement radiate from the end of the spine, with a panoptic view from a room positioned in the central crossing.

In an interview with an asylum seeker from Colombia, Miguel, who was detained at Pearsall for four months, the details of the dormitory space came to light. Miguel drew his ‘pod,’ explaining that a large rectilinear space lined with bunk beds on each wall had two long tables lining the center of the room. Bathrooms and showers are depicted at one end; a recreational room is on the other; and a small private room is tucked next to the doorway. He explained that 100 men (from all over the world) slept; ate breakfast, lunch, and dinner; went to the bathroom and showered; prayed; played basketball; or paced in this pod 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with few breaks or exceptions. The bathrooms are not private. Men (and female guards) witness others defecating. The pod has no skylight or windows. The outdoor space is a caged ‘rec room’ with a narrow clerestory at the top that is covered with concertina wire.

Detention facilities have an abstract and generic architecture that conjures a “utilitarian neutrality” similar to Walmart and Amazon facilities, yet the design choices embedded in their form are neither absent nor unimportant. Rather, private prison corporations that view detention as a problem of management rather than a space that shapes daily experience for thousands of people rationalize design choices through a logic of efficiency and economies of construction. A top manager of JE Dunn Construction, an international firm that has built several prisons, detention centers, and Border Patrol stations in Texas,

described the driving factor behind detention design as “cost per bed.” This echoes GEO’s design and management philosophy, which emphasizes “cost effectiveness” as one of its prime objectives, achieved by building with future expansion in mind. In so doing, pods are rationalized and noncitizen populations are used as guinea pigs in a laboratory for low-cost technologies of immobilization.

The U.S. government is (still) not driving the design decisions that translate a detaining boom into bricks and mortar — rather, corporate CEOs and shareholders are at the helm of most decisions. In 2007, ICE published a “Design Standards” manual to “establish operational directions and architectural relationships for ICE spaces.” Companies like GEO refer to this manual for detailed information about ICE’s “organizational, operational, and functional” requirements. Plans, photographic illustrations, and dimensions describe ICE offices; even the fax and copy machine room is defined. However, the manual does not provide detailed specifications for the facilities’ primary program — the detainee living quarters. After more than 270 pages, the section titled “Detainee Housing” is blank, labeled only “Contractor Operated.” These spaces are “typically defined and controlled by the Contract Detention Service Provider,” such as GEO. The design of the detainee living quarters exerts great influence over the daily lives of noncitizens in ICE custody; while ICE controls the amount of daylight in its own offices, they deem corporations as better suited to determine migrants’ architectural standards. It is precisely this lacuna at the heart of the program that severs the awesome power of the government to detain from the physical environment in which that power is exercised, suggesting a moral abdication by the state.

Although what has become a crisis of detention today would not be immediately solved if the government resumed ownership and management over the detention infrastructure, public processes and public facilities are an important means toward greater accountability, responsibility, and a higher moral purpose. Serious debate about whether or not these facilities are warranted at all should be occurring within the public arena, not driven by the financial interests of corporations. Private corporations make critical decisions about siting, design, and management that are motivated by profit and responding to shareholders rather than a broader public or international diplomacy. This results in increasingly punitive spatial settings for migrants in detention, with profoundly harmful effects on the migrants themselves.

In the 1930s, the government viewed immigrant processing stations as the place where newcomers encountered “the first symbolic expression of the United States and its values.” Today, that is still true. Men, women, girls, and boys come to the U.S. for all sorts of reasons. Currently, the U.S. mechanism for interfacing with and processing people, to determine who can stay or what a person’s options are, is to throw people in remote prisons with another name. In addition to Texas’ infrastructure of detention being demoralizing, dehumanizing, and a violation of human rights on innumerable fronts, it is literally the material artifact that announces to newcomers and the world who Texas is, and by extension, who the U.S. is as a nation. We, as a nation, are as good as our spaces crafted to receive newcomers, and the symbolic expression embedded in the contemporary landscape of detention is all too clear.

Sarah Lopez is an associate professor at The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture.



Snakes and Ladders

El Paso-Ciudad Juárez is the second largest binational metropolitan region on the U.S.-Mexico border (behind San Diego-Tijuana). While much of the rhetoric about the border focuses on differences between the two countries and the need to protect people on one side from those on the other, recent architectural interventions in the area challenge these stances, encouraging us to stop viewing two separate sides and instead consider the shared history, culture, and development of the region as a whole.

produced by Monica Mendez

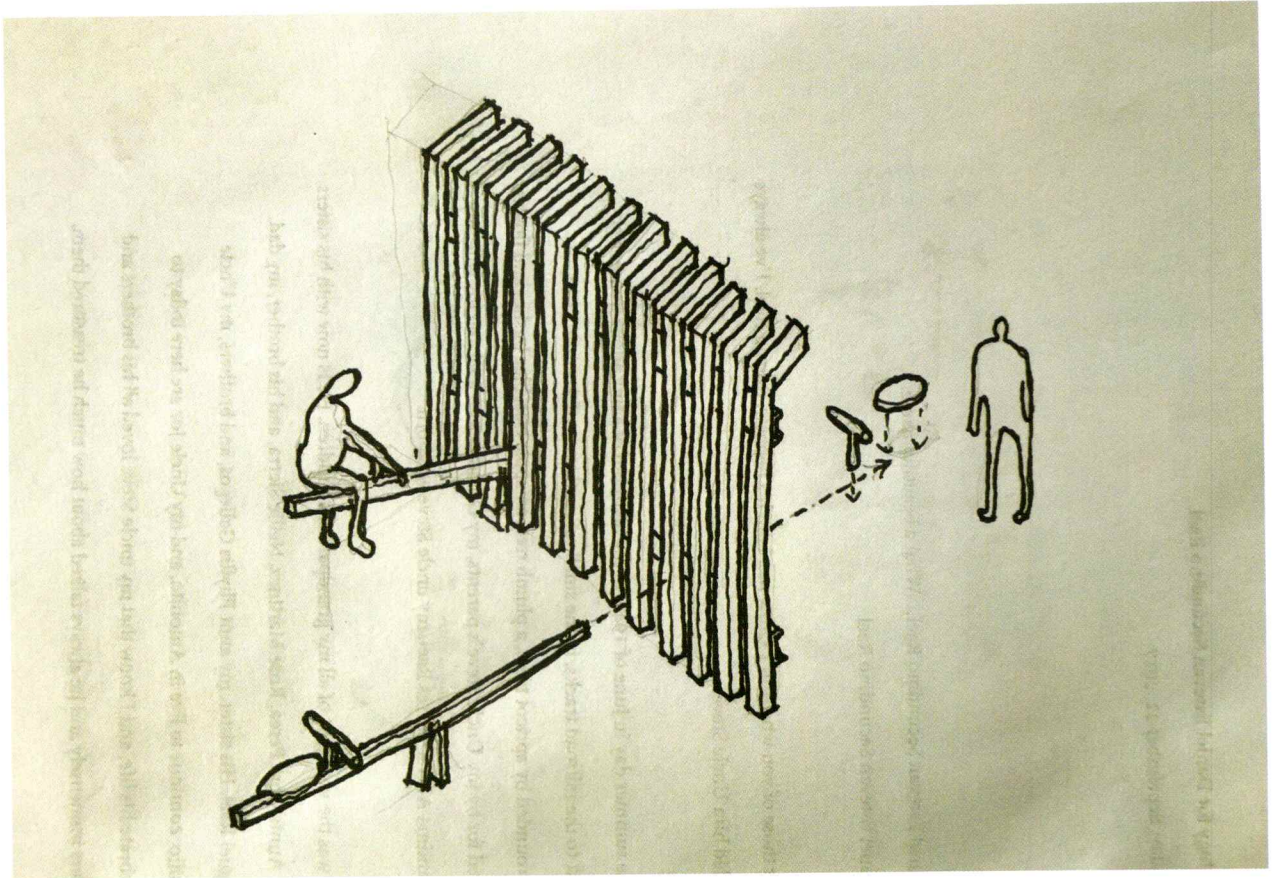


Border Tuner

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

For 12 nights last November, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's large-scale art installation "Border Tuner" created bridges of light in the night sky that opened channels of communication across the border. The project featured three interactive stations in El Paso and three in Juárez, each equipped with a dial to control the direction of an arm of light, along with a speaker and microphone. When a beam directed from one station met one from another, a bidirectional channel of sound was opened between the two stations, with users' conversations effecting modulations in the light.

Each night started with binational, curated content from poets, musicians, indigenous voices, students, and others; the communication stations were then opened to the public. The goal of the "Border Tuner," which attracted nearly 12,000 visitors, was not to create new connections, but rather "to make visible the relationships that were already in place" and to "draw international attention to the co-existence and interdependence" of the sister cities.





Teeter Totter

Rael San Fratello

Southern New Mexico is often grouped together with the El Paso-Juarez metropolitan region, with the town of Sunland Park lying just 20 miles to the northwest and directly across the border from the Juárez colonia Anapra. The two residential communities are divided by a section of the border wall built in 2017, and children from the Mexican neighborhood that runs right up against the fence are often seen playing on it.

In June 2019, the wall's horizontal bar briefly served as a fulcrum for a teeter totter installation produced by Rael San Fratello. Designed to slide through the fence posts easily, with seats and handles that could be attached quickly, the see saws were painted bright pink, a significant color for the people of Juárez, who associate it with the memorials for women killed in the area's femicides.

In a viral moment more than 10 years in the making (early design ideas are documented in Ronald Rael's book "Borderwall as Architecture"), children and families from both sides of the border came together for 40 minutes of joy, excitement, and connectedness, showing the world that play could be an act of protest, and, symbolically, that actions on one side have a direct effect on those on the other side.

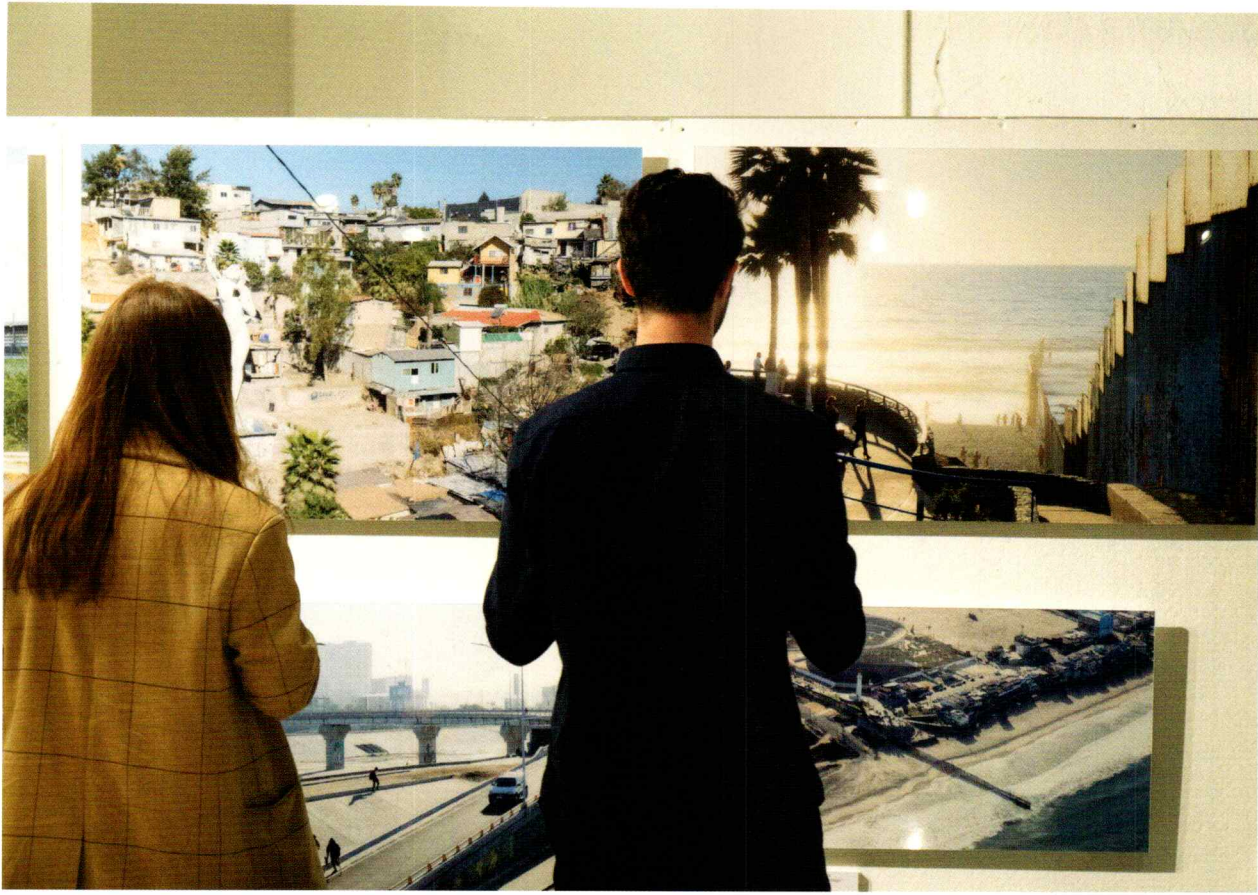


Two Sides of the Border

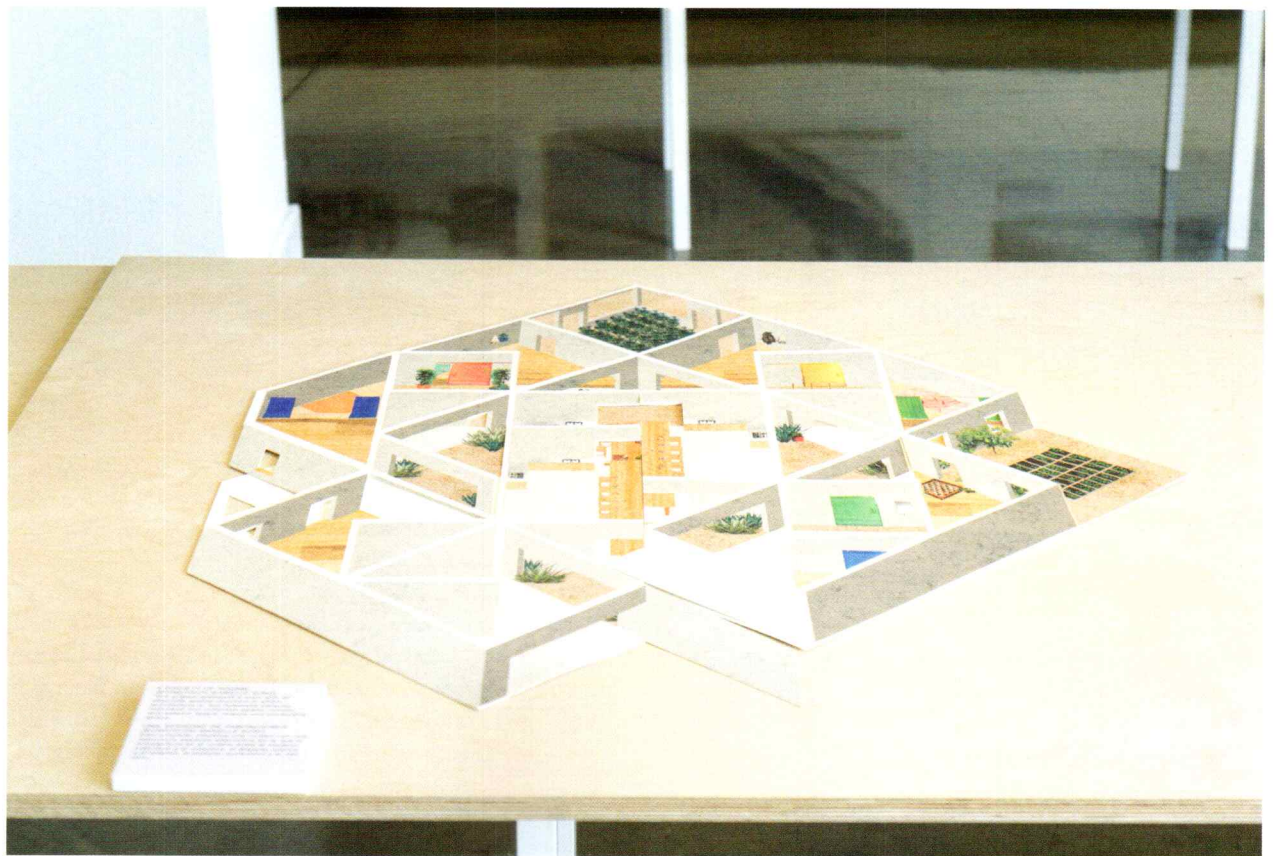
El Paso Museum of Art

From November 9 through December 6, 2019, the El Paso Museum of Art hosted “Two Sides of the Border,” an exhibition organized by Tatiana Bilbao and previously unveiled at the Yale School of Architecture Gallery. Featuring the work of 12 institutions across the U.S. and Mexico, “Two Sides” is conceived as an atlas, highlighting the shared history, environment, and economy of the region divided by the border wall. Historical maps, new commissioned maps by Thomas Paturet, and photography by Iwan Baan were displayed alongside students’ imagined potential futures for the area to emphasize the connections, rather than divisions, that exist. The exhibit was co-curated by Nile Greenberg of NILE in New York, and Ayesha Ghosh of Tatiana Bilbao Studio.

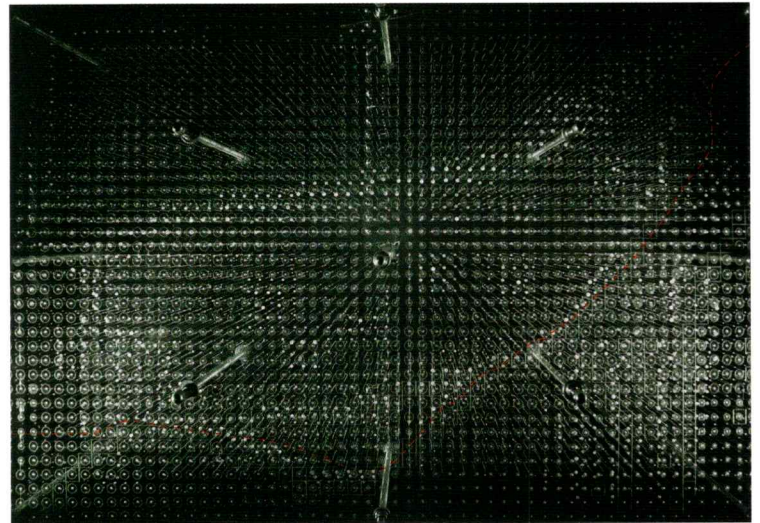
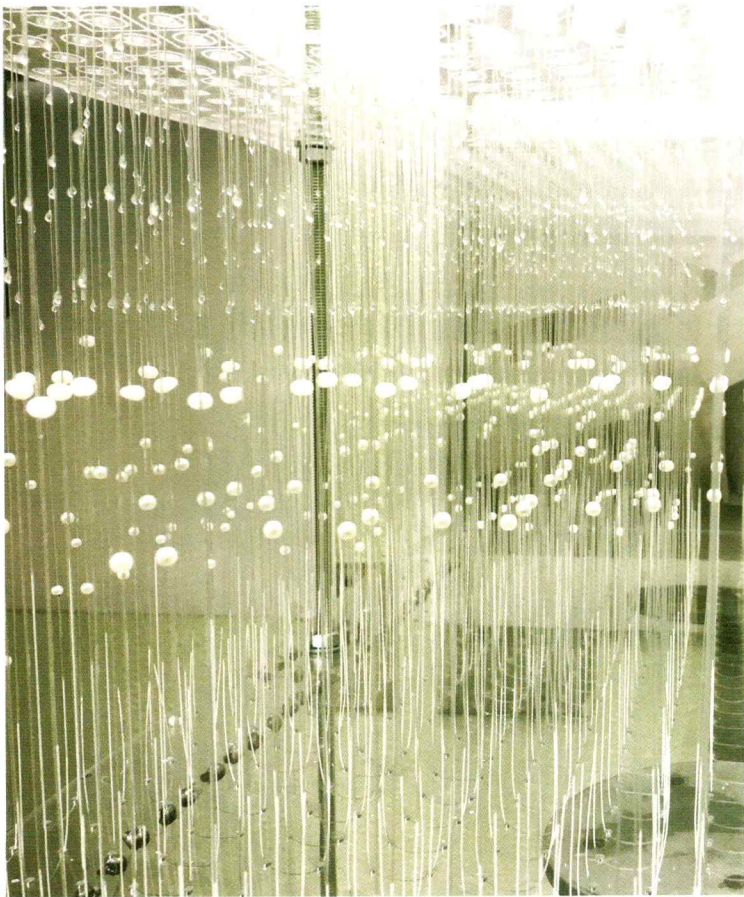
Among the participants were two studios at the Texas Tech University College of Architecture in El Paso — one group was asked to envision a place of shared healing at the city’s border with Ciudad Juárez, and the other tasked with designing an institute for the examination of binational air quality issues and airborne contaminants in the region. The following pages feature a selection of these exhibited works.



The “Two Sides of the Border” exhibit premiered at Yale University; it was brought to El Paso thanks to funding support from Texas Tech College of Architecture Dean Jim Williamson. The exhibit featured work of two TTU El Paso architecture studios.



Border Bubble/Infrastructural Sanatorium
Instructor: Ersela Kripa



Light Object Field
 Valente Leanos

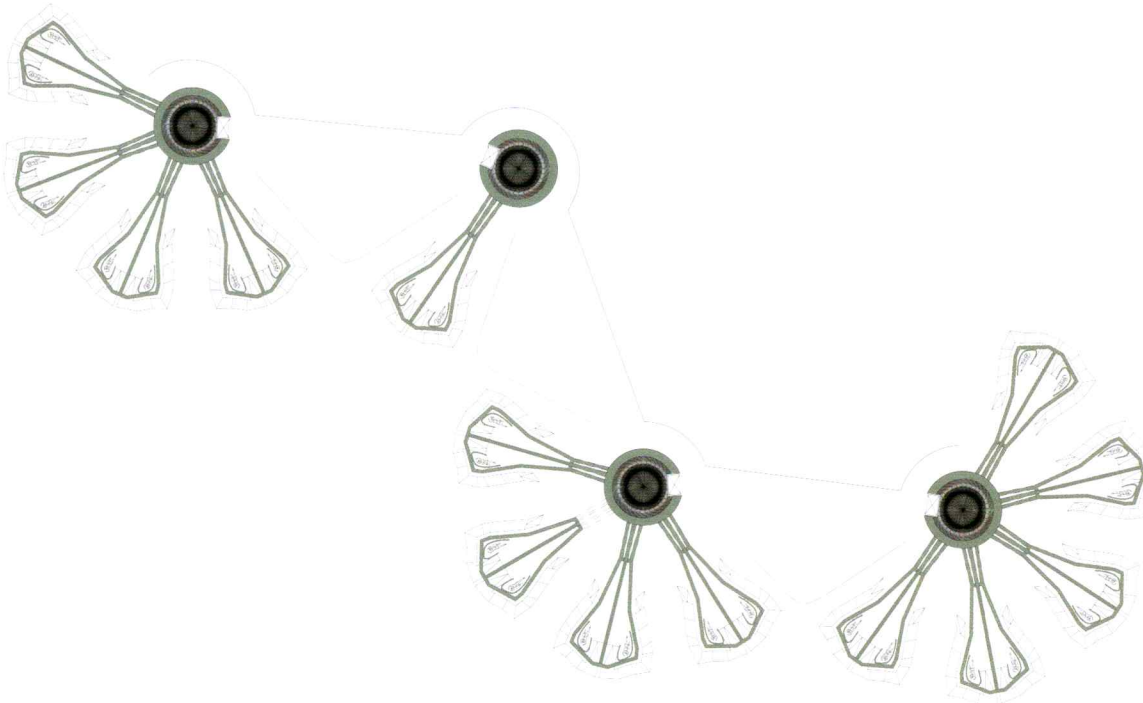
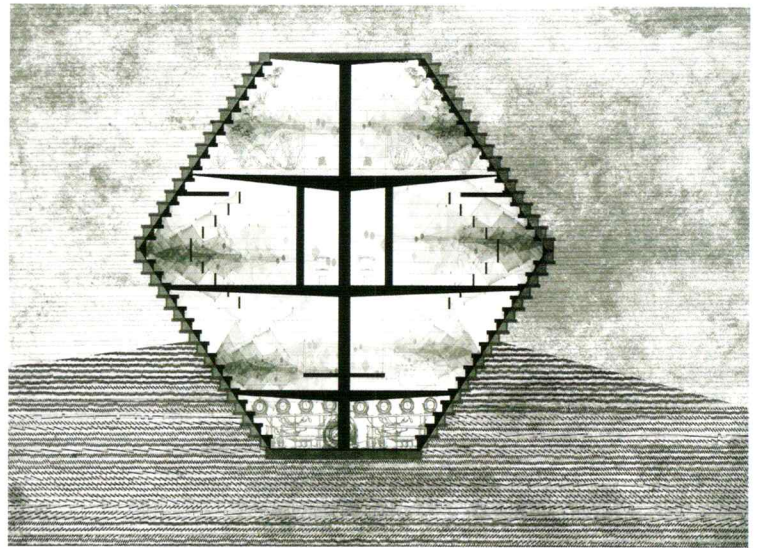
This project examines the infrastructure of protection and mistrust at the border through maps recording field measurements of monitoring technologies like surveillance lights, body heat cameras, and Border Patrol vehicles. The maps reveal a disproportionate field of vision directed toward Juárez, an aggressive front fostering paranoia. The proposal aims to counteract the incessant monitoring by creating a dense field of reflective objects to disorient surveillance optics, effectively fighting light with light, while providing a communal space for public health interventions.



Environmental Container

Jonathan Fierro

Imagining a scenario in which contamination due to unchecked natural resource extraction and manipulation can no longer be reversed, this proposal uses architecture to address the political inaction, poverty, and lack of medical care at the border. It creates a system of decontamination chambers on the highly toxic site to filter and contain air to support a treatment center. Communal areas are provided in the spaces between the pods, drawing attention to the challenge of maintaining communities in the face of environmental deterioration.



LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN

JONATHAN FIERRO | ARCH 4602 | SPRING2018 | ERSELA KRIPA

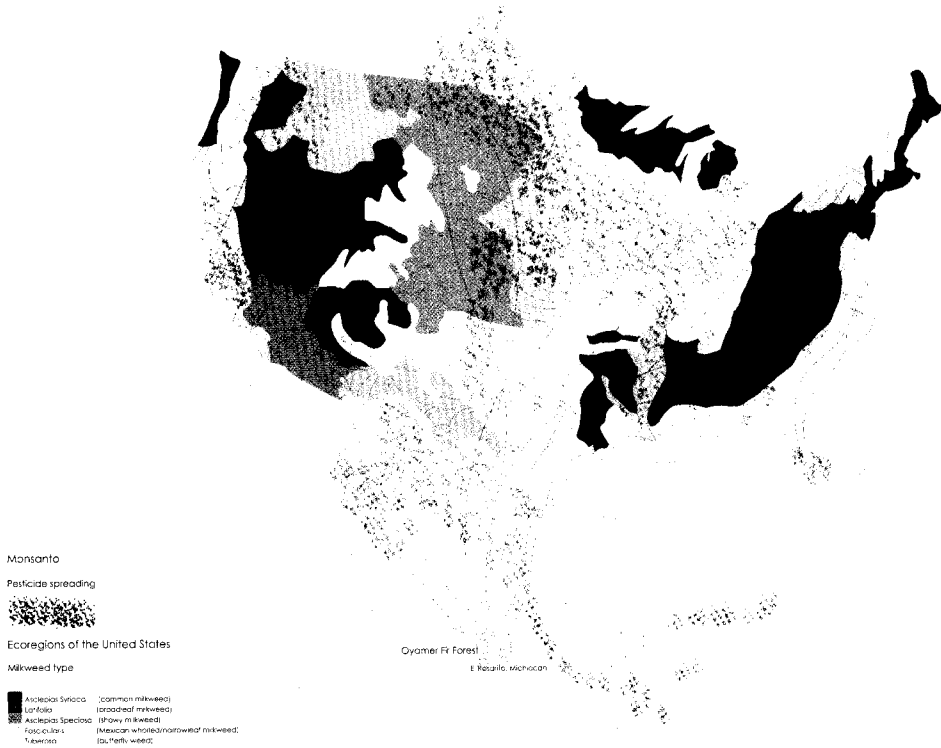
Monarch Infrastructure

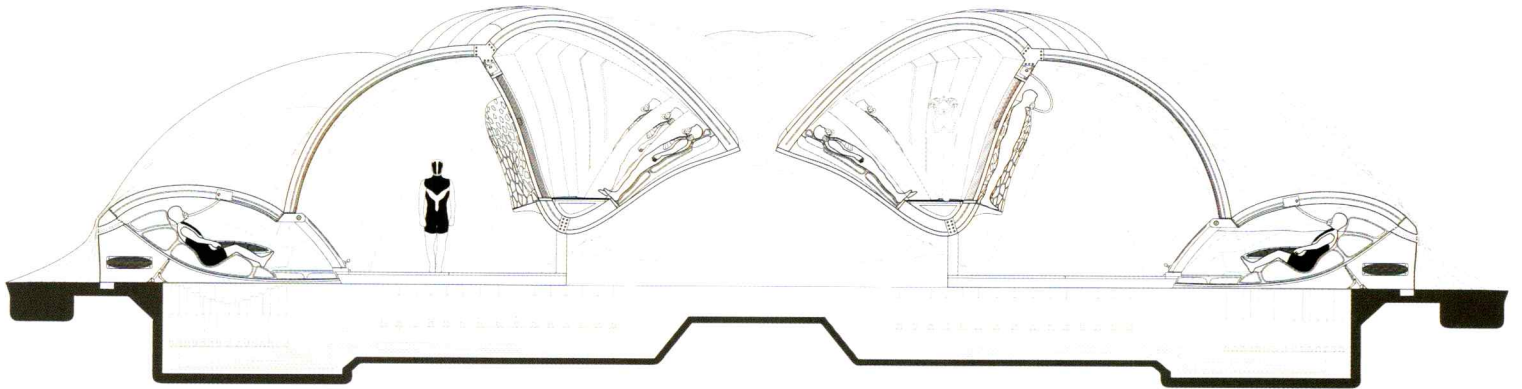
Marilyn Reyes

Monarch butterfly migration transcends political borders and takes no note of the contentious wall dividing the U.S. and Mexico, but while the region serves as a resting point for monarchs, pesticides and pollution threaten their habitat. Research for this project revealed that the El Paso-Juarez agricultural industry, concentrated along the Rio Grande, is characterized by relatively low levels of pesticides, and that the river valley serves as a sound and movement buffer. In response, the proposal creates a binational infrastructural park straddling the river to provide a safe place for butterflies to rest along their journey.



NEGATIVE IMPACT RESEARCH

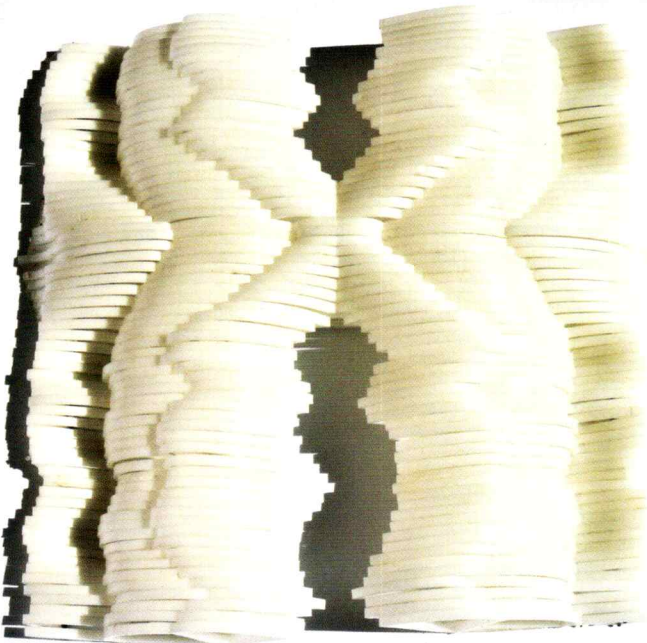


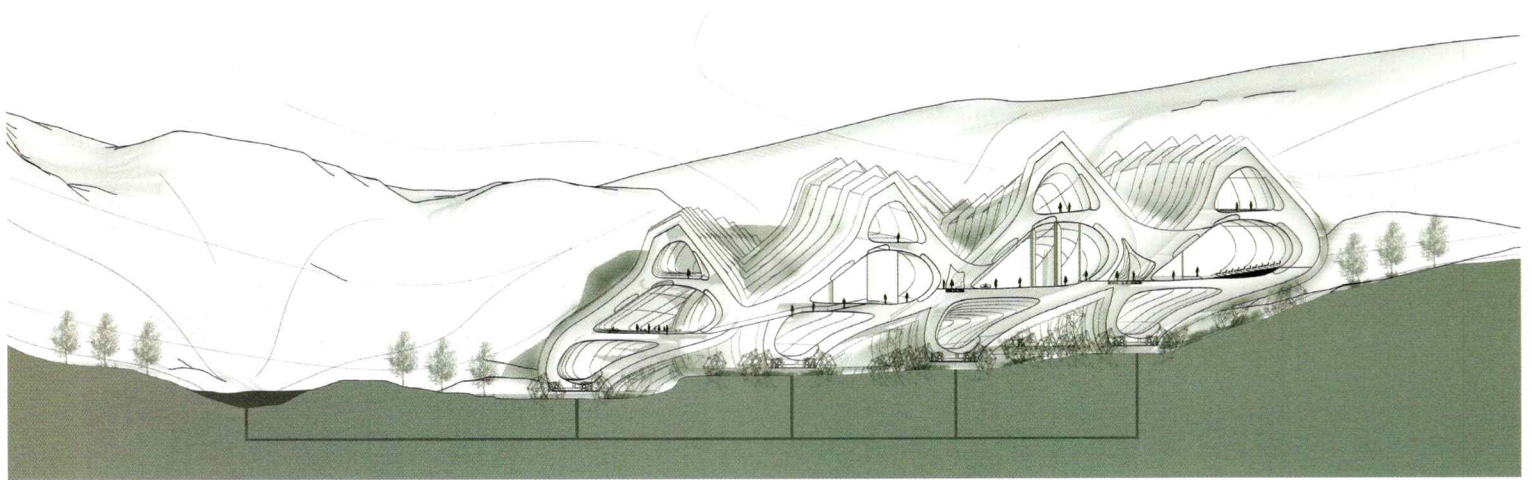


Water Bubble

Daniel Rios

This proposal creates a Medical Free Economic Zone in order to care for individuals whose health has been damaged by the environmental impacts of a Commercial Free Economic Zone. Taking advantage of the binational politics of water management, it creates a mechanical system for regulating water baths used to treat respiratory disease. The center floats on the Rio Grande, and maps documenting the locations of surveillance mechanisms along the border help identify places along the river that allow undocumented migrants to access the care they need.

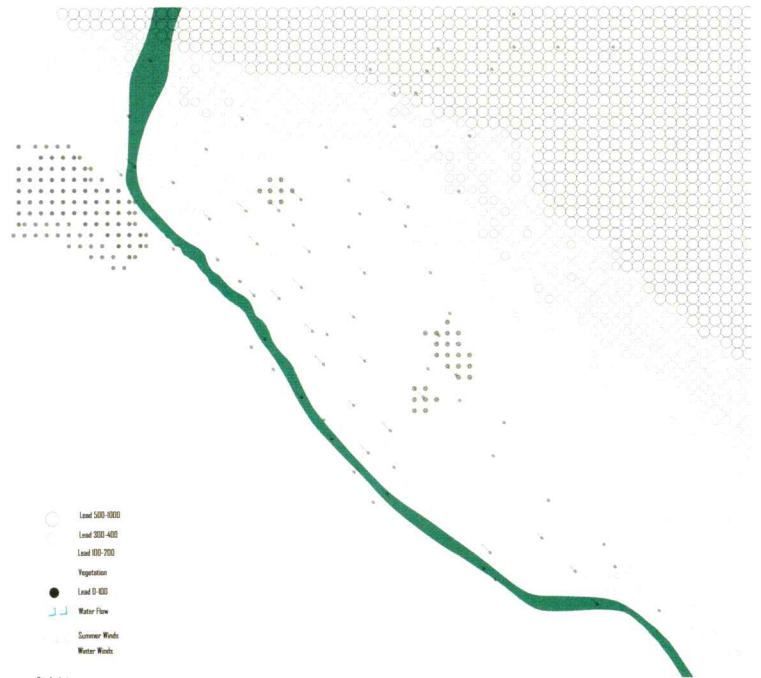




Inhabiting Mechanical Space

Javier Breceda

Blurred jurisdiction at the international border has resulted in high levels of contamination in the area. This project maps lead accumulation at the proposed project site and creates a mechanical shell that works to expel pollutants while providing a sealed space for human activity within. The architecture meets the site via robots that continuously work at digging and cleansing the contaminated soil below.



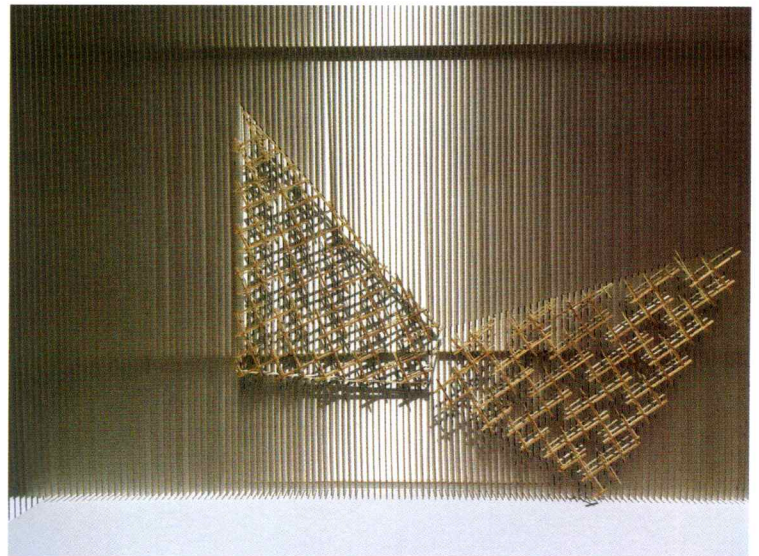
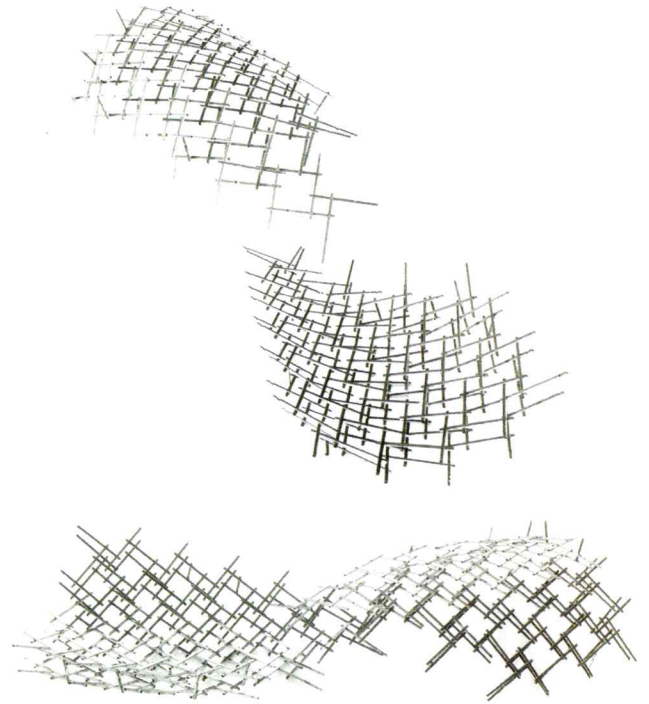
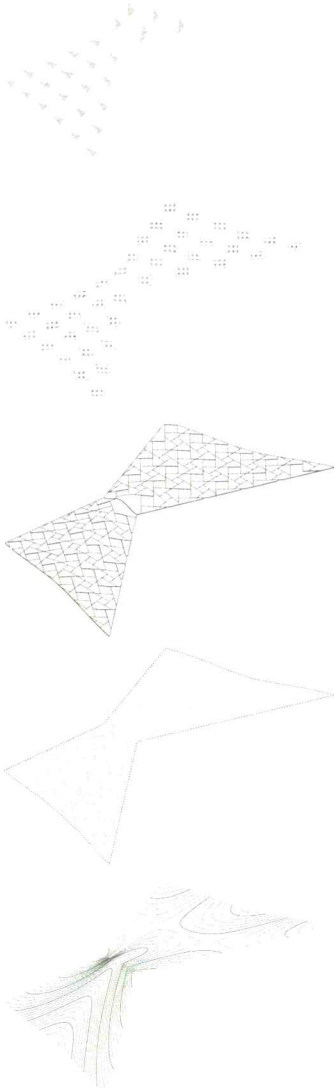
Dust Institute

Instructor: Stephen Mueller

Desert Optics

Daniel Ramirez

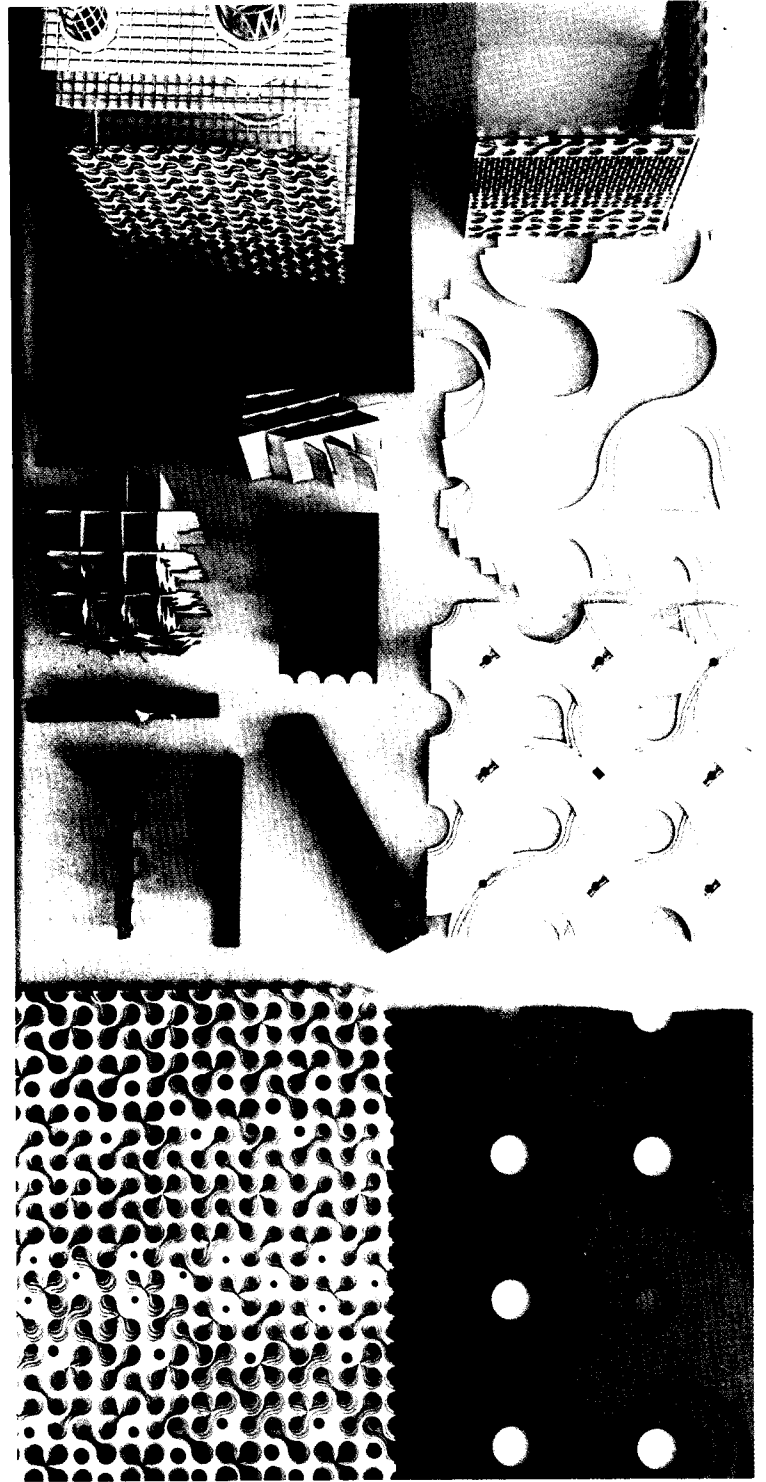
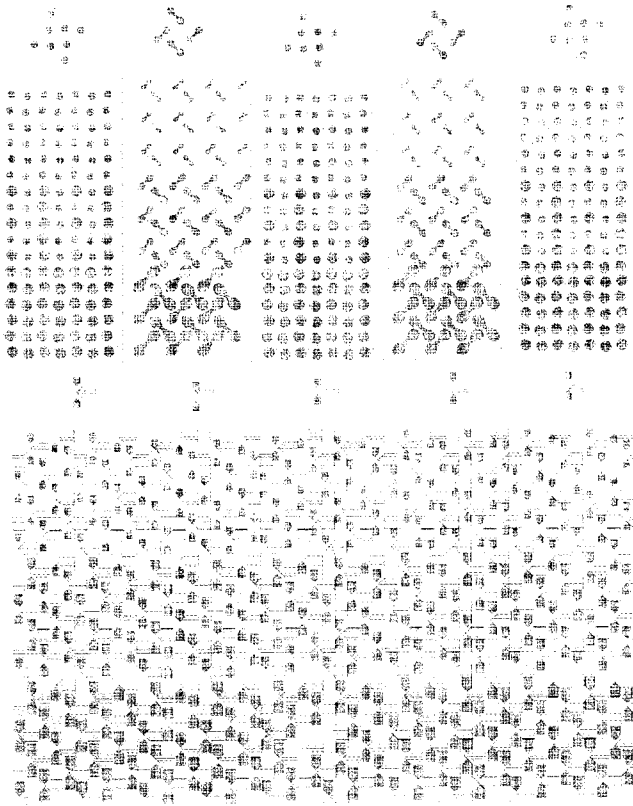
Featuring layered shells in a double curvature design that references the Samalayuca Dunes, this center is oriented to provide both vistas of area landforms and landmarks, and points from which to observe atmospheric haze and inversions. Skylights filter light through dust-filled chambers within laboratories and public areas, allowing visitors to gain an understanding of the airborne materials connecting the two sides of the border.

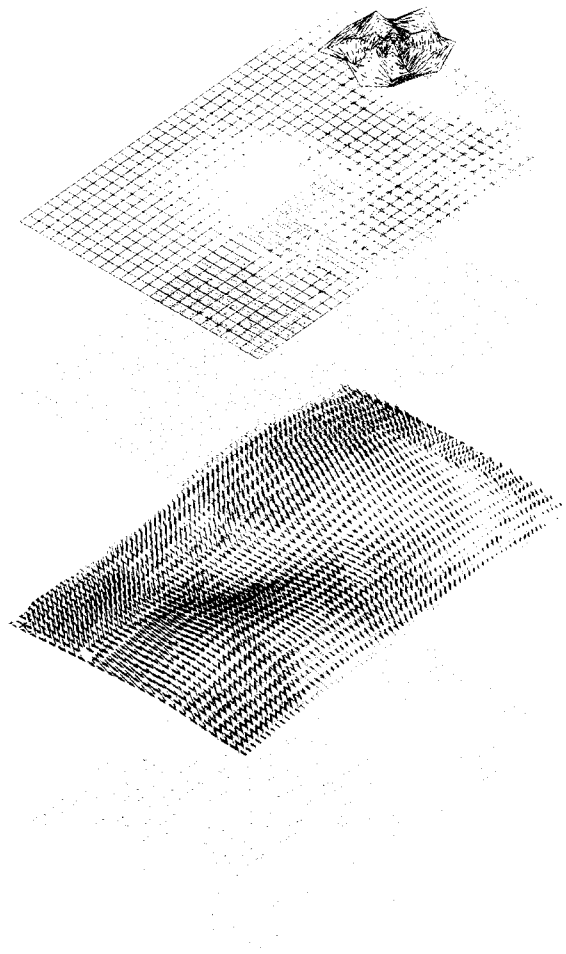
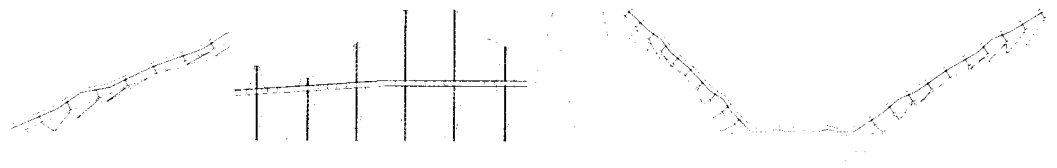
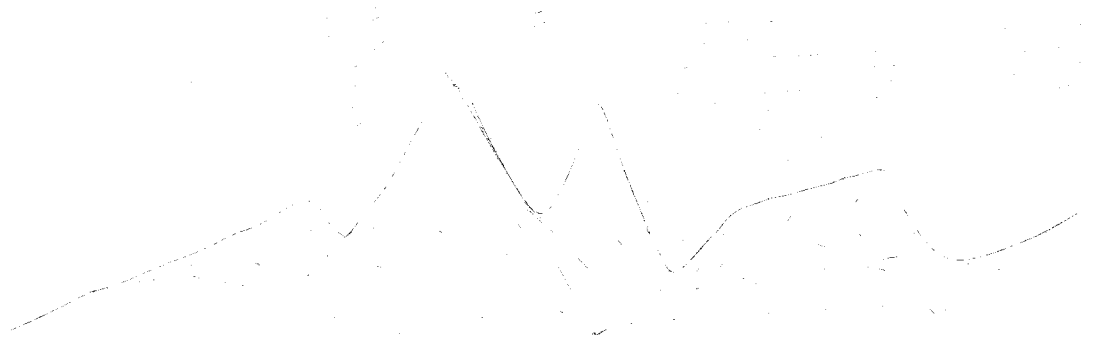


Smog Institute

Sabrina Schrader

This proposal creates a center for the study of binational air pollution that also acts as a distillery for the desert winds. An architectural enclosure filters contaminants within a custom structural screen tuned to anticipated levels of industrial pollutants and the needs of the interior workspaces. The collection of pollutants in the screen is on display in research areas and public spaces, while the filtered air is broken down into its basic chemical components and stored for later use.





Mycologic

Irving Cuellar

Fungal spores are integral to the ecosystem of the Chihuahuan Desert, and an increased understanding of these is critical to the health of the region's population. The proposed building features a tiling geometry that accelerates the capture of airborne particles, while the roof provides areas where shadow, moisture, and negative pressure combine to encourage the fungal forms. A water capture system provides a misting chamber to aid researchers, while public areas provide space for education and demonstrations.



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The need to quickly and significantly reduce emissions requires a shrinking of the city's energy and environmental footprint. It has long been established that urban density can drastically reduce the expenditure of energy. In Manhattan, for example, the average per capita use of energy is one-quarter that of the average Houstonian. The counterintuitive fact that the grayest city is effectively the greenest city leads to the conclusion that the dispersed and fragmented urban models of today must be incrementally replaced with contemporary models of urban density that employ fewer and larger buildings.

— Albert Pope, “Accelerated Obsolescence,” Log 47

Every Design Award jury that visits the Texas Society of Architects comments on it: Multifamily housing in the state is “not quite there yet.” This is a crying shame, considering that, whether one likes it or not, the future of Texas cities lies in greater density. Our very survival depends upon it. And so, if we care at all about people's happiness, we should reflect more on what makes this typology successful, and where it fails.

In this issue of *Texas Architect*, we review two multifamily projects that take big swings at the typology, though their balls fly foul. One is a luxury condo tower in Houston that pushes developer and architect out of their comfort zones, with mixed results. The other is an affordable housing development in South Austin that aspired to greatness, only to fall short in the face of value engineering.

Multifamily Housing

82

View Chimera

Arabella by Powers Brown
Architecture

Shane Wilson, AIA

88

Economy View

Lucero by Bercy Chen
Studio

Jessie Temple

View Chimera

With Arabella, the majority of whose 99 units are unique, the weirdly shifting mirage of Houston's high-rise luxury residential development landscape just got a lot weirder.

Architect Powers Brown Architecture

General Contractor GT Leach Constructors

Civil Engineer Brooks & Sparks

Electrical Design-Build Engineer Hargrave Electric

MEP Engineer Kilgore Industries

Structural Engineer SCA Consulting Engineers

Interior Design 212box

by Shane Wilson, AIA

Sales pitches for a lot of high-rise residential architecture in Houston's vast, tower-speckled landscape have focused on the need to obtain uninterrupted views while they're still available. The 33-story, 502,400-sf Arabella, for example, which is currently at almost 90 percent occupancy, offers ample views of the clustered towers of the nearby Galleria — just to the west, across I-610 — as well as arching panoramas of the city's verdant tree canopy, interrupted by the thick arteries of the freeway system and other tower clusters: the Medical Center and Museum District to the southeast, and downtown to the east. Prior to the construction of the 24-story SkyHouse River Oaks next door, the Arabella offered these views unobstructed around the entire building perimeter.

Houston developer Randall Davis, in partnership with Roberto Contreras of DC Partners, kicked the project off in 2014. Davis is known for erecting solidly constructed luxury residential projects in broadly interpreted historical styles — most notably, perhaps, the Renoir on Shepherd Drive, which is reminiscent of Second Empire France on LSD and steroids, complete with 16-ft-tall concrete caryatids punctuating the upper arcade. For Arabella, his vision was no less bold. He wanted something “iconic.”

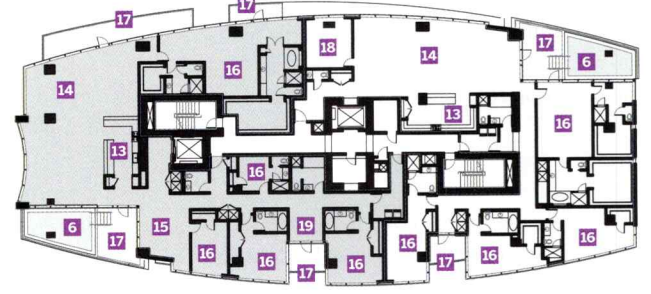
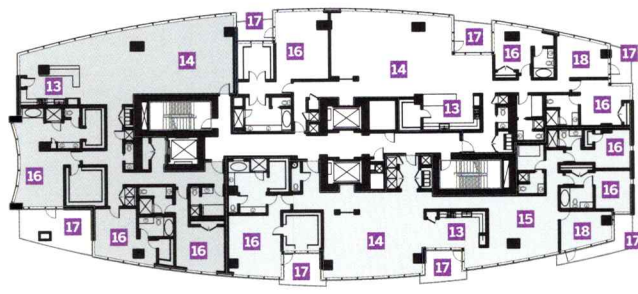
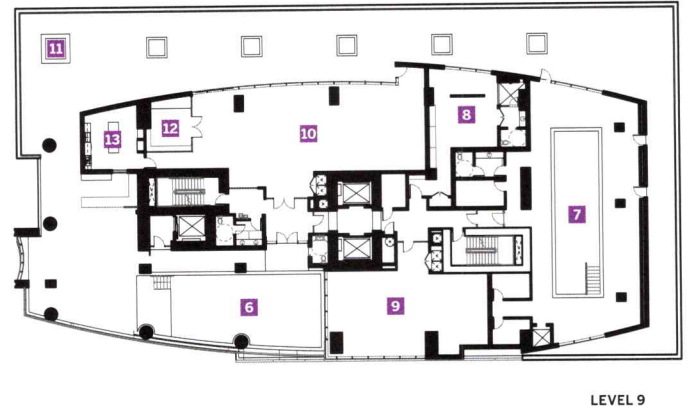
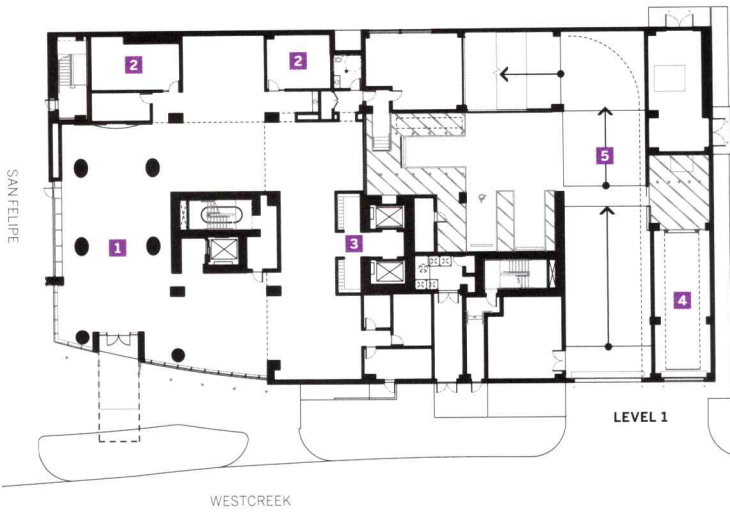
The developers hosted a design competition to find the bold visionary to realize their ambi-



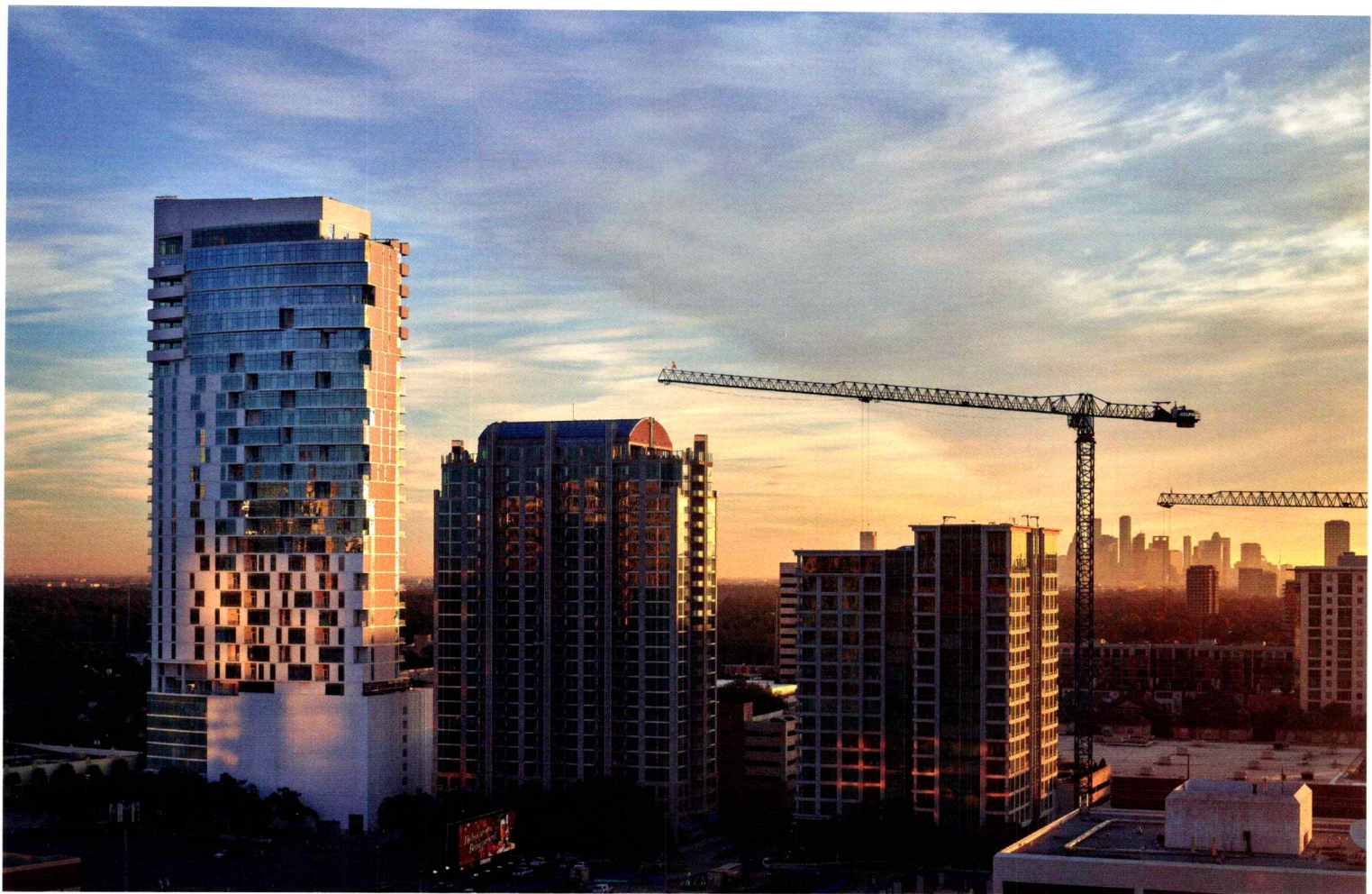


Facing *The view of Arabella from the northwest corner along San Felipe is the most celebrated and elaborates on the high-rise's grandiose verticality via a singular stroke requested by the client.*

Left *Primarily used for guests and delivery services, a cozy corner entry continues the glass facade to grade.*



- FLOOR PLANS**
- 1 LOBBY
 - 2 CONFERENCE ROOM
 - 3 MAIL ROOM
 - 4 LOADING DOCK
 - 5 GARAGE
 - 6 POOL
 - 7 INDOOR POOL
 - 8 GUEST SUITE
 - 9 FITNESS
 - 10 RESIDENT ROOM
 - 11 FIRE PIT
 - 12 WINE ROOM
 - 13 KITCHEN
 - 14 LIVING
 - 15 DINING
 - 16 BEDROOM
 - 17 TERRACE
 - 18 STUDY
 - 19 PLAYROOM



tion and attracted an unexpected fish: Powers Brown Architecture, which is more typically known for designing tilt-wall buildings and infrastructural projects. Jeffrey Brown, FAIA, design principal of Powers Brown (who has actually authored a book on tilt-wall construction), saw the timing of this opportunity as crucial to the growth of his 20-year-old company. In his words, “We felt if we didn’t get vertical, we would miss another vertical cycle.”

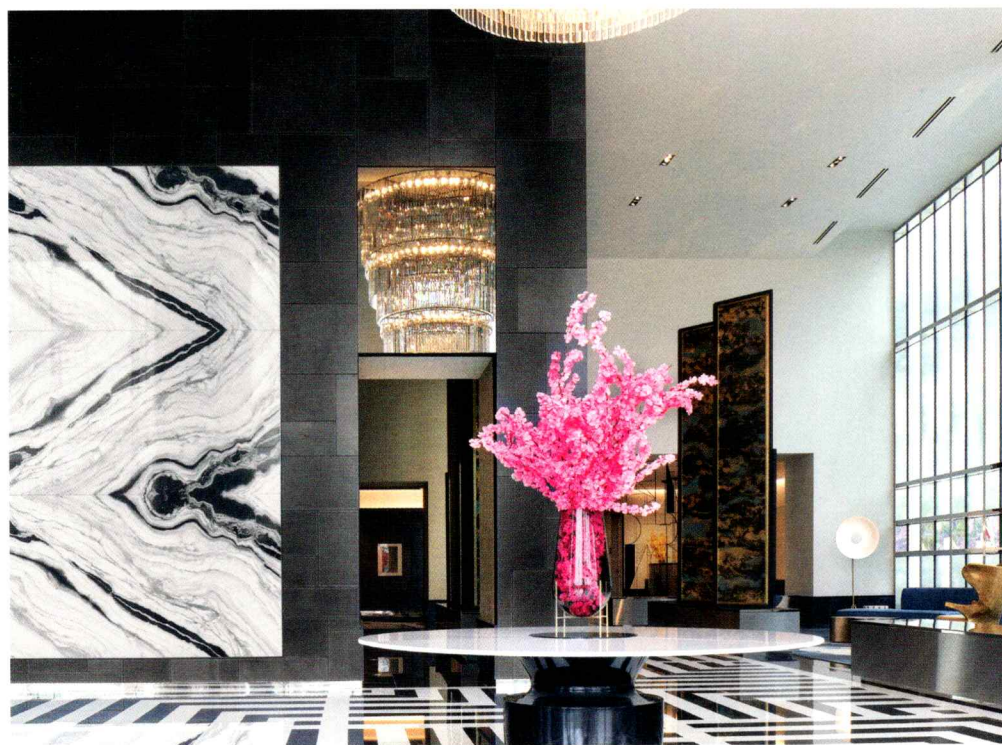
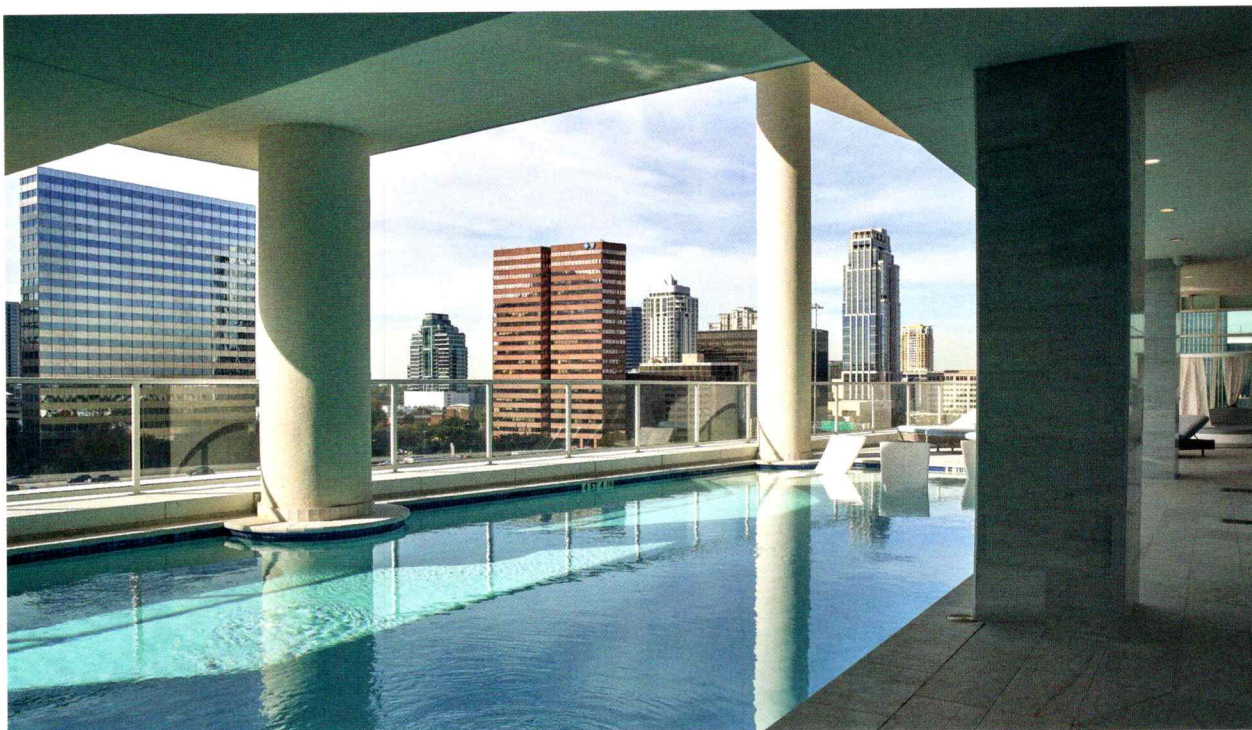
The Davis/Powers Brown combo turned out to be a match made in heaven, or Houston anyway, and wound up pushing both developer and architect out of their comfort zones, with results that can only be characterized as eye-catching — or eye-popping. “The iconography of the building came from trying to be a careful listener of Randall,” Brown says. “His whole brand was about uniqueness. And we thought, ‘What if we grab a hold of what his modus operandi is, and you run it to the smallest grain you can?’ And the smallest grain we could run it to was the expression of every single individual unit as something different.”

Powers Brown’s design engages the developer’s brand in a way that elides Davis’ preferred nostalgic, period stylings. “When you’re working with developers, you’re a midwife for their product,” Brown says. “We were able to conform to the brand he created in a different way than he normally does.” They accomplished this by going against the high-rise trend of “amenitized repetition” and creating a tower of unique, customized homes.

Increasing buyer options by offering more variety in unit types directly translated to the organization of the facade. Residential floors rotate from a fixed end at variable intervals, and, when overlaid with a fenestration strategy that alternates every other floor, the result is nearly 75 percent distinctive dwelling plans.

Rotating at stepped intervals is a logic shared by the design of automotive camshaft lobes. Technically, it’s an interesting strategy. It’s also uncertain whether or not the vertical village is fully grasped by the viewer, or whether that’s even important. The entire elevation was originally designed as glass. The EIFS panels that

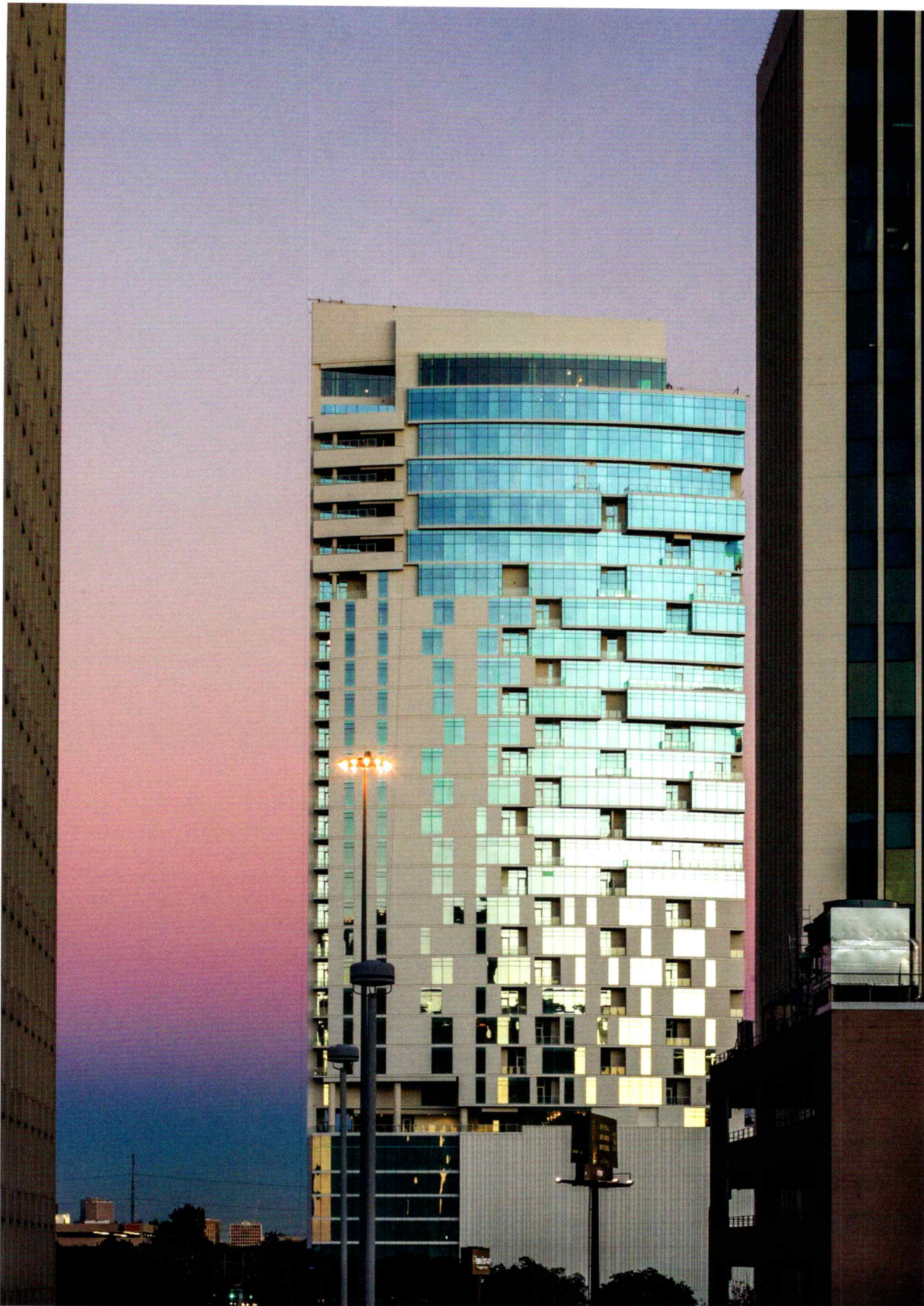
Arabella is the tallest and most eye-popping structure in the immediate vicinity. Variable floor plates provide options for configurations of the individual dwelling units.



are now interspersed along the facade were not the designer's intent; they were a late addition to save on construction costs. From the adjacent roadway, the lower nine levels of garage podium are clad in monolithic, vertically ribbed stucco panels. The base of the building is not part of the dialogue, reminding the viewer that the architecture is best read quickly by a driver speeding past.

Nestled as it is beside the River Oaks Shopping District and a stone's throw from the Galleria, Arabella is positioned well to take advantage of Houston's luxury lifestyle offerings. More immediately, it sits adjacent to surface parking lots and low-rise big-box stores, and along the innermost arterial loop encircling Houston. Emerging above the dross, it also delivers a crash course in the perils of form over function: Structural columns in unfortunate locations act as a reminder of the cost of living in an 'iconic' building. The internal organization is discontinuous, and the daily procession for residents is intentionally isolated and private. The building eschews notions of walkability and mixed-use, since residents are far more likely to get in their car and drive a few blocks. You have to look beyond the block, though, as the lifestyle provided is, in Brown's formulation, "sold as part of a larger urban ensemble."

Shane Wilson, AIA, is a founding principal of w[squared] architects in Houston.



Facing top *One of two pools is outdoors and primarily decorative, reflecting the surrounding urban landscape.*

Facing bottom *The lobby, designed by 212box, has a crisp, Spanish modern aesthetic.*

Left *A flattened view between neighboring buildings shows the gradient of reflections across the broken facade.*



Economy View

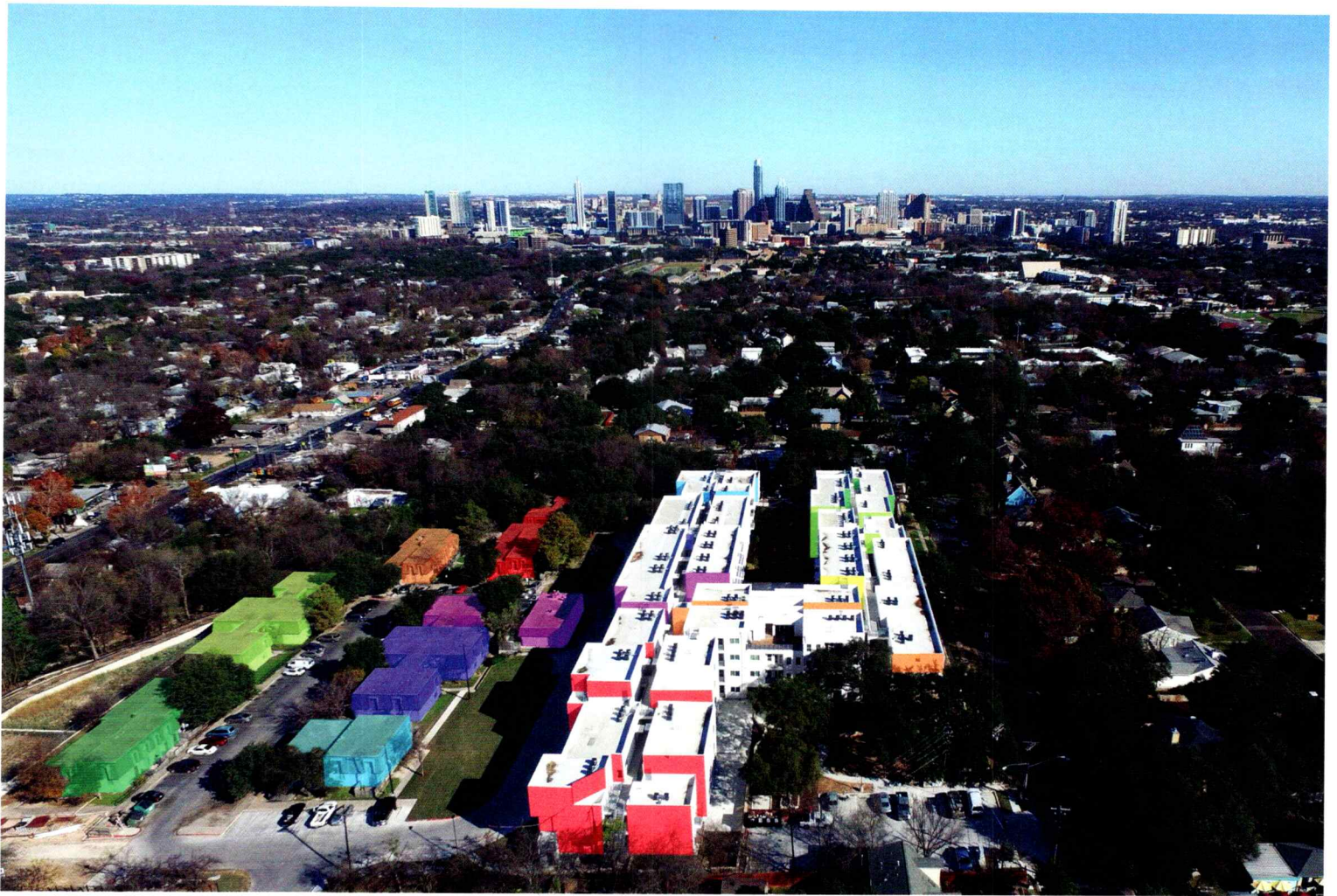
Lucero, a new affordable housing development in South Austin, shows how designers can slip some poetry into a tight budget.

Architect Bercy Chen Studio
General Contractor Weis Builders
Civil Engineer Davcar Engineering Services
MEP Engineer P.E. Services
Structural Engineer SCA Consulting Engineers

by Jessie Temple

For a panoramic view of Austin's construction boom, head to the leasing office at the Lucero Apartments. The complex, designated as affordable housing, sits on one of the highest points in South Austin, its windows and balconies looking north toward downtown. Designed by Austin firm Bercy Chen Studio for Dallas-based developer Eureka Holdings, Lucero shows how a design firm can work with basic elements to create a more-than-basic place to live. It's also a primer on the forces that shape the view, including the financing mechanisms and developer incentives that make affordable housing possible — or don't.

Lucero's 173 units, completed in 2016, are Phase One of the redevelopment of Oak Creek Village, a 9-acre low-density affordable housing development recognizable for its shingled mansard roofs. Eureka Holdings acquired the property back in 2007. (Lesson One, from Harris Block, Eureka's head of acquisitions: "Never let a recession go to waste." According to the Austin American-Statesman, Eureka now owns a significant chunk of East Austin,



including the Mt. Carmel Village apartments, another low-density affordable housing development.) Bercy Chen has worked with Eureka on a number of multifamily projects, and principal Thomas Bercy, Assoc. AIA, says, “They’re good at figuring out where density can happen, and they do this little switcheroo — stop leasing, move people around, build higher density.” Phase Two renovated 65 existing units for homeless veterans. As of now, the units sit waiting, their mansard roofs now boasting bright coats of rainbow-colored paint.

Constraints on time, budget, and program shape most building projects, but for affordable housing, they’re particularly tight. The budget for Lucero, for example, was around \$130 per square foot. For a willing architect, these constraints are a kind of “Chopped” challenge of design — sure, you can make a great béarnaise, but what can you do with a cabbage, an egg, and some salt? “We’ve been active in the multifamily domain for a while,” Bercy says, “and I think, socially, we really liked the idea of making com-

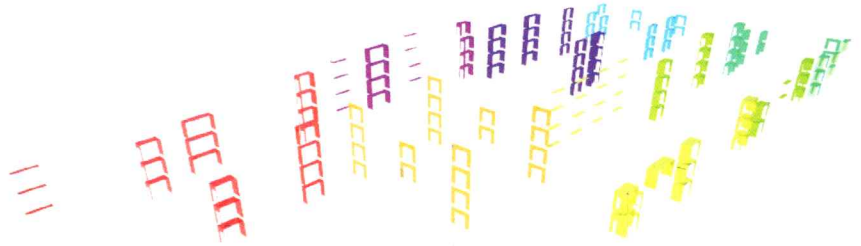
pellent affordable housing and doing our part to address the shortage.”

Bercy Chen began with massing, landing on a U-shaped building oriented toward downtown. At the commercial corridor of Oltorf Street, the building is four stories and a podium, stepping down to two stories toward the neighborhood — though by partially sinking the bottom units, the architects were able to achieve three stories at the low side. “We were thinking of a Mediterranean village,” says Bercy, “with the intimate scale and more humane spaces, the use of rooftops for a view and to catch a breeze.” This reference also explains the white stucco, which, judging from the number of workmen and ladders on site, is a maintenance headache. But, as Bercy points out, multifamily housing projects are second only to student housing in terms of maintenance demands, and with a lower budget for materials. The facades are articulated by 4-ft recesses that accommodate balconies, and by the use of brightly painted walls that double as wayfinding devices. “These walls are a refer-

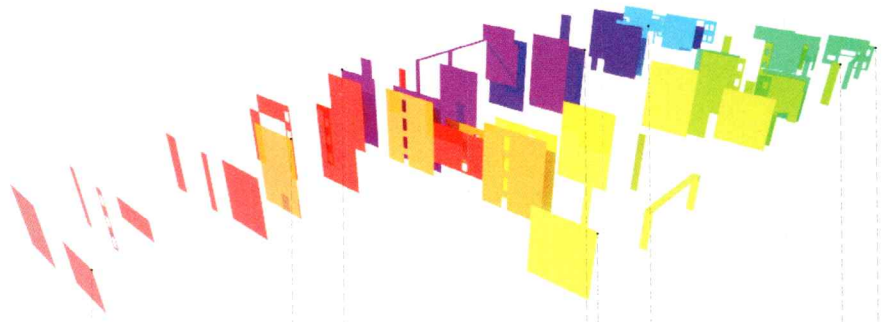
Facing *The entry courtyard is shaded by old oaks and a mural by artist Cruz Ortiz enlivens a wall.*

Above *On the left, the mansard-roofed structures of the former Oak Creek Village development are oriented toward an internal parking lot. The apartments at Lucero, on the right, are oriented toward a view of downtown. Parking is buried beneath the building.*

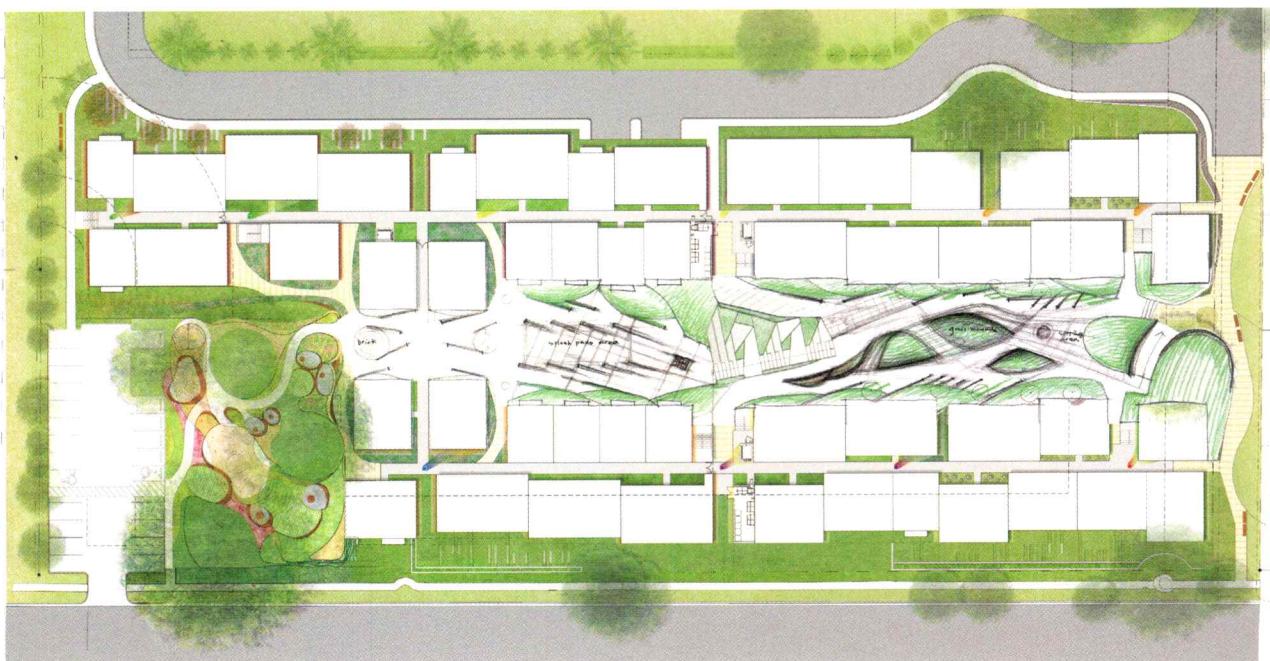
BALCONY WALLS



COLOR ACCENT WALLS



SOUTHEAST VIEW





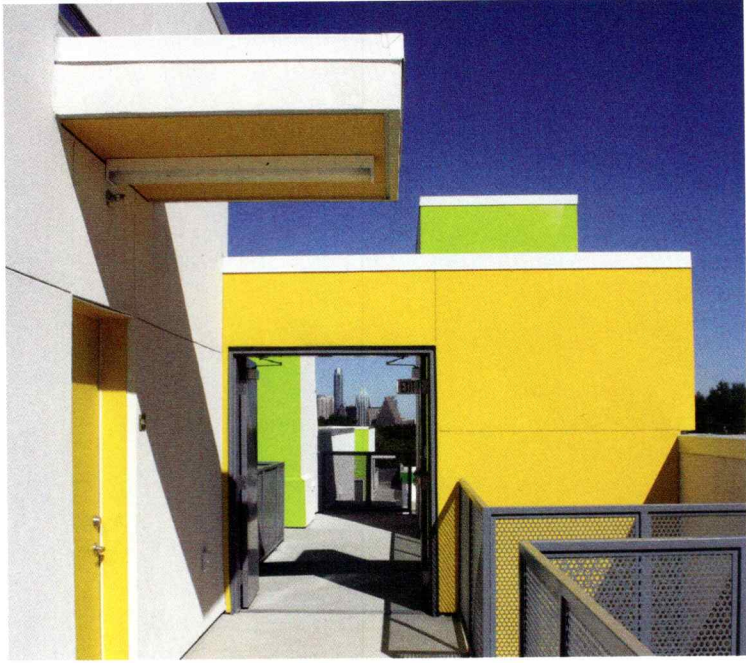
ence to Barragán,” Bercy says. “We tried to get as much poetry as we could get in on the budget.” The colors also echo another poetry-on-a-budget project: artist-turned-mayor Edi Rama’s efforts to lift spirits in Tirana, Albania, by covering Stalinist grays with bright oranges, blues, and pinks.

Light, air, and green have been the buzzwords of rational housing developments for more than a century, but in low-budget, high-density projects, light can often lose out to privacy. Here, the architects designed the corridors as unconditioned exterior walkways, pulling these away from the apartment walls to allow light to penetrate down to the lowest level. This strategy allows for glazing on two sides of each unit, which also helps with passive ventilation. The interior courtyard with its trees and barbecue grills shows signs of heavy use. Bercy notes with satisfaction that in most affordable housing developments, that area would be occupied by parking; instead, Lucero’s parking is buried under the slope, with access off the courtyard. The low-slung breezeway at the entry is decorated with a colorful mural by local artist Cruz Ortiz, who was aided by the apartments’ resident children. Beyond, cheerful yellow squares indicate the location of a splash pad. Instead of the proposed “Spanish steps” leading down from the splash pad to the courtyard, however, there is now a fence and a steep drop-off. Likewise, the sculptural steel entry pavilion that appears



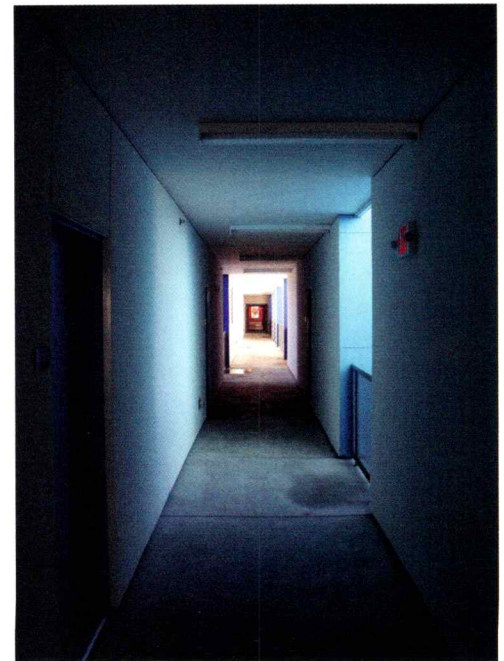
Above Artist Cruz Ortiz invited apartment residents to help adorn the entry breezeway.

Left The colors are a nod to Barragán, while the site circulation references Le Corbusier’s promenade architecturale, eschewing symmetry and a hierarchy of space in favor of an ever-changing perspective.



Left and below *By pulling circulation away from the building, the architects created light wells, illuminating the bright accents and allowing for windows on both sides of a unit.*

Facing *The original site plan (see previous spread) included both a sculptural pavilion at the entryway and landscaping referencing “the different geological zones and microclimates that compose Texas.”*



in project renderings was not built. As Bercy laments, in affordable housing, something always gets value engineered.

But does it have to? For years now, Bercy Chen has been exploring how architects can assert more control over projects. Cambrian Development, the firm's development arm, was awarded the same 9 percent Housing Tax Credit that funded Lucero and is now building a 65-unit multifamily structure with 55 affordable units. Especially with market-rate apartments in high demand, developers need an incentive to build affordable housing. The tax credits are one such incentive; a higher developer fee — some 15 percent, compared to 3–4 percent on a market-rate project — is

another. For Bercy, the primary incentive is control. As an architect, he points out, he has a 10-year liability for whatever he draws, while a developer “basically has zero liability, because you create an entity for the project, and when the project is done, you dissolve the entity and that's it.” He says: “If I'm going to get dragged into the lawsuit no matter what, I want total control. I want to say what that siding is, who's installing it, what the flashing is.”

Meanwhile, with Austin facing a projected affordable housing gap of 48,000 units, more incentives may be needed. Bercy points to the \$250 million affordable housing bond that passed in 2018 as a start, but says that amount needs to be closer to \$1.5 billion. Other incen-

tives, like more density in exchange for affordability, along with a mechanism to guarantee affordability, are also needed. (The terms of the Housing Tax Credit require that funded projects maintain affordability for 40 years.)

With many early-to-mid-career architects qualifying for affordable housing assistance (in Austin, as of 2019, 80 percent of the median family income — the Housing and Urban Development's threshold for low-income status — was \$52,850), there may also be a personal incentive for designers to get involved — or to change their business model to give themselves more than a view to work with.

Jessie Temple is an architect and writer in Austin.



Resources

Dog Trot, Austin

Contractor 22 Construction

Consultants **LANDSCAPE:** Campbell Landscape Architecture; **STRUCTURAL:** Fort Structures

Resources **METAL FABRICATOR (STAIR AND HANDRAIL):** Metal Work Austin; **CARPENTRY:** Central Texas Construction; **LUMBER:** Eastside Lumber; **INTERIOR TRIM:** Thompson Woodworking; **CABINETS:** Signature Cabinets; **INSULATION:** Best Insulation; **SIDING:** Central Texas Construction; **WINDOWS:** Kolbe (Grand Openings); **INTERIOR DOORS:** Maverick Doors; **DRYWALL:** Inter City; **FLOORING:** Luma Hardwood; **PAINTING:** Moise; **STUCCO/PLASTER:** Dean's Plastering; **TILE:** TradeMark Floors; **APPLIANCES:** Miele (Home Expressions); **COUNTERTOPS:** New Stone Concepts; **PLUMBING:** Lago Plumbing; **PLUMBING FIXTURES:** Moore Supply; **HEATING, VENTILATING, AND AIR CONDITIONING:** Elite; **ELECTRICAL:** Falcon Electric

Legacy West Hall, Plano

Contractor Rogers-O'Brien Construction

Consultants **STRUCTURAL:** L.A. Fuess Partners; **MEP:** Purdy-McGuire; **LIGHTING:** Scott Oldner Lighting Design; **ACOUSTICAL:** Saunders & Associates

Resources **CORRUGATED METAL PANELS, STANDING SEAM ROOF:** Fabral; **FIBER CEMENT CLADDING:** Nichiha; **CURTAINWALL:** Kawneer

Liberty Mutual at Legacy West, Plano

Contractor Balfour Beatty Construction

Consultants **STRUCTURAL:** L.A. Fuess Partners; **CIVIL:** Kimley-Horn and Associates; **LANDSCAPE:** Studio Outside; **MEP:** Telios; **PARKING:** HWA Parking; **VERTICAL TRANSPORTATION:** HH Angus; **ACOUSTICAL:** Jaffe Holden; **LIGHTING:** The Lighting Practice

Resources **ARCHITECTURAL PRECAST CONCRETE PANELS:** Enterprise Precast Concrete; **TENSION MESH:** IWR North America; **ROOFING:** K Post Company; **CURTAIN WALL**

AND GLASS: Harmon (Viracon); **ELEVATORS:** Otis; **HEATING, VENTILATING, AND AIR CONDITIONING:** TD Industries; **ELECTRICAL:** Walker Engineering

Toyota North American Headquarters

Contractor Austin Commercial

Consultants **CIVIL:** Kimbley Horn; **STRUCTURAL:** L.A. Fuess Partners; **STRUCTURAL:** AG&E; **MEP:** Telios; **LANDSCAPE:** OJB Landscape Architecture, Pacheco Koch; **DEVELOPER:** KDC; **REAL ESTATE ADVISOR:** JLL

Resources **CONCRETE:** Redi-Mix, EJ Smith Construction; **PRECAST GARAGE:** Coreslab; **MASONRY:** Texas Quarries (Clayton Masonry), Featherlite (DMG); **METAL:** CMU (Misc. Steel Industries); **WOODS, PLASTICS, COMPOSITE:** Wood Haus, Flameproof Companies (LASCO); **THERMAL & MOISTURE PROTECTION:** Dow Corning; **ROOFING MATERIAL/WATERPROOFING:** Carlisle; **OPENINGS:** Harmon (Old Castle); **GLASS:** Vircon; **STRUCTURAL GLASS:** Pilkington; **CARPET:** Mohawk; **LVT:** Mohawk; **CEILING TILE:** Armstrong; **PAINT:** Benjamin Moore, Sherwin Williams; **WALL GRAPHIC:** Marharam Digital Projects; **WOOD:** Terramai; **FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:** JL Industries (Fire Specialties); **SIGNAGE:** Synergy; **WINDOW WASHING EQUIPMENT:** Probel; **STEELCASE:** Business Interiors; **SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION:** InControl Water Systems; **CONVEYING EQUIPMENT:** Otis; **FIRE SUPPRESSION:** Elite Fire Protection Systems; **PLUMBING:** Lochinvar; **HEATING, VENTILATING, AND AIR CONDITIONING:** Trane; **ELECTRICAL:** Bega - US (ALA), GE Energy; **COMMUNICATIONS/ELECTRONIC SAFETY AND SECURITY:** Siemens; **EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS:** Contain Water Systems (InControl Water Systems); **UTILITIES:** North American Pipe (Wright Construction Company)

Lucero Apartments, Austin

Contractor Weis Builders

Consultants **CIVIL:** Davcar Engineering Services; **MEP:** P.E. Services; **STRUCTURAL:** SCA Consulting Engineers

Resources **CONCRETE:** Advanced Concrete Surfaces; **METAL:** Paramount Steel; **OPENINGS:** Elite Door & Trim; **FINISHES:** Elite Multifamily Interiors, Four Resurfacing & Paint; **FURNISHINGS:** Master Woodcraft Cabinetry; **FIRE SUPPRESSION:** Central Fire Protection; **HEATING, VENTILATING, AND AIR CONDITIONING:** Pearson Mechanical

Arabella, Houston

Contractor GT Leach Constructors

Consultants **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** SCA Consulting Engineers; **MECHANICAL & PLUMBING DESIGN-BUILD:** Kilgore Industries; **MECHANICAL & PLUMBING ENGINEER OF RECORD:** Dabney Commercial; **ELECTRICAL DESIGN-BUILD ENGINEERS:** Hargrave Electric; **CIVIL ENGINEER:** Brooks & Sparks

Resources **CONCRETE:** Cemex (Baker Concrete Construction); **CONCRETE MASONRY UNITS:** Headwaters (Brickfield Builders); **COLD FORMED METAL FRAMING:** Clark Dietrich (RSL Contractors); **METAL FABRICATIONS, STAIRS, MISCELLANEOUS STEEL:** Postel International; **ARCHITECTURAL WOOD CASEWORK:** Eggersmann; **TRAFFIC COATINGS:** BASF (Reliant Roofing and Sheet Metal); **EXTERIOR INSULATION AND FINISH SYSTEMS:** Corev (Compass Services); **ROOFING:** Firestone (Reliant Roofing and Sheet Metal); **HOLLOW METAL DOORS AND FRAMES:** DKS Door and Frame (JL Hardware Supply); **GLAZED ALUMINUM CURTAIN WALLS:** Ranger Glazing Systems (Curtainwall Specialist); **STRUCTURAL GLASS CURTAIN WALLS:** CR Laurence (Curtainwall Specialist); **GLAZING:** Cristacurva (Curtainwall Specialist); **GYPSUM BOARD ASSEMBLIES:** Georgia Pacific (RSL Contractors); **EXTERIOR PAINTING:** PPG (Bamex Painting); **FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:** JL Industries; **SWIMMING POOL:** Watt's Pool Company; **PASSENGER AND FREIGHT ELEVATORS:** Kone; **FIRE SUPPRESSION:** Reliable Automatic Sprinkler (HG Fire); **HEATING, VENTILATING, AND AIR CONDITIONING:** AAOON (Texas Air Systems); **DESIGN SOFTWARE:** Autodesk Revit

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David Costanza and Piergianna Mazzocca's Shared Beds

Each year, Ragdale, an artist community in Lake Forest, Illinois, hosts an artist-in-residence program, inviting architects, artists, and designers to build installations for its summer outdoor performance series. The winner of the 2019 competition was “Shared Beds,” designed by David Costanza, director of Houston practice DCS, and Piergianna Mazzocca, a former Wortham Fellow at Rice and currently a visiting lecturer at UT Austin.

Costanza and Mazzocca’s project is meant to question the role of the individual in relation to the collective by reconsidering the bed. Usually overlooked as part of the background of our lives, beds in fact possess the power to define spaces and interactions. To emphasize this influence, the designers defamiliarized the typically rectangular, flat, and soft thing we all know, instead producing beds that are round, tilty, and made of wood.

Three of these beds are positioned within a grassy clearing on Ragdale’s bucolic campus. The largest, measuring 21 feet in diameter, is a fixed, angled surface that serves as a stage and parallels the axis of approach from the main entrance and the road. The other two are 15 feet

in diameter and rest on tipping axes – they actually rock when people get on them and move around. The designers proposed that by tossing out the horizontal stability of a traditional orthogonal bed and introducing a teetering directly related to the position and movement of other people on the same surface, visitors would question their notions of autonomy and become more conscious of those who share their space. It also looks like a lot of fun.

The shared beds are constructed from plywood sheets that were CNC-cut and assembled on site. The conical bases and top sheets are supported by internal waffle frames. Waterproofed with urethane, the design allows for easy assembly and disassembly for future reuse.