

THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM ISSUE 1 FEBRUARY 24, 2016

\$3.95



FORUM STUDIO GOES BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD AS ST. LOUIS ENVISIONS A POST-FOOTBALL RIVERFRONT

No Stadium. No Problem

St. Louis is quickly bouncing back from the abrupt move of the Rams football team to Los Angeles, an act the city considers a slight from the National Football League. And, for a handful of stakeholders along the north Mississippi riverfront, the first step to

recovery is figuring out what will happen in the space which had, until January, been planned to be a brand new \$1 billion stadium. The latest developments did not worry Chicago- and St. Louis-based Forum Studio though. As the lead designer for the

development of the North Riverfront, its master plan had been in the works long before the idea of putting a stadium in the former industrial area came about. Working with Great Rivers Greenway, a public organization in charge of managing **continued on page 5**

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Contemporary glass-walled meeting rooms complement restored wooden trusses

GENSLER'S DESIGN CONVERTS A MASONIC TEMPLE FROM FREEMASON TO "FREE-ADDRESS"

DO THE RITE THING

There was once a time when what went on in Masonic temples was shrouded in Freemason mystery. We may never know the ritual and pageantry that filled the multiple halls of the former Masonic Temple in Glendale, California, but a recent renovation of the 1929 concrete structure revived the nine-story art deco building, opening it up to

new occupants—real estate giant CBRE—and filling the musty rooms with ample daylight. Originally designed by Arthur J. Lindley but remodeled at various times and then abandoned for three decades, the current 24,000-square-foot rehab by Gensler is the brainchild of developer Rick Caruso. It was done in record time; **continued on page 12**



WITH THE RAMS COMES NEW DEVELOPMENT IN INGLEWOOD INTO THE 'WOODS

Will a new stadium by HKS change the character of this L.A. neighborhood?

A development boom is coming to Inglewood. A number of high profile projects are coming to the predominantly African-American and Latino city of 110,000 adjacent to South Los Angeles. Major urban development is underway, from the construction of a new metro rail line to the multi-billion dollar redevelopment of the Hollywood Park Racetrack with residential, retail, hotels, and a brand new 80,000-seat stadium for a

recently approved NFL team's relocation. It's a significant about-face for the city, which has long been associated with gang crime and its proximity to the flight paths and runways of LAX. But with this development comes concern, mainly about how these new projects will change the community. Some are worried that this new wave of development will end up displacing longtime residents— **continued on page 2**



ARCHITECTURE FIRM TEAM A ADDS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO ITS ACCLAIMED AFTER-SCHOOL BUILDING IN CHICAGO'S WEST SIDE

Small Firm Moves Mountains

In Chicago's Austin neighborhood on the Far West Side, Team A, a small-but-nimble Chicago practice, recently saw its completed design for Moving Everest Charter School. The newly opened elementary school is located across the street from the By The Hand Club For Kids (BTHC), an after-school program facility also designed by Team A

that opened two years ago. BTHC recently won the AIA Chicago chapter's 2015 Distinguished Building Award, making it the smallest firm to receive this honor. The charter school continues its older sibling's sleek aesthetic with shiny corrugated metal panels, calculated bursts of bright color, and modest but **continued on page 4**

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No. 3264

The Architect's Newspaper
21 Murray St., 5th Floor
New York, NY 10007

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VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1 FEBRUARY 24, 2016, THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER (ISSN 1552-8081) IS PUBLISHED 20 TIMES A YEAR (SEMI-MONTHLY EXCEPT THE FOLLOWING: ONCE IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY AND NONE IN AUGUST) BY THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER, LLC, 21 MURRAY ST., 5TH FL., NEW YORK, NY 10007. PRESORT-STANDARD POSTAGE PAID IN NEW YORK, NY. POSTMASTER, SEND ADDRESS CHANGE TO: 21 MURRAY ST., 5TH FL., NEW YORK, NY 10007. FOR SUBSCRIBER SERVICE: CALL 212-966-0630. FAX 212-966-0633. \$3.95 A COPY, \$39.00 ONE YEAR, INTERNATIONAL \$160.00 ONE YEAR, INSTITUTIONAL \$149.00 ONE YEAR. ENTIRE CONTENTS COPYRIGHT 2012 BY THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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YOU COULD BE HOME BY NOW

Shelter. Let's start there. It's a basic need. The root of architecture— Marc-Antoine Laugier's enlightenment frontispiece offers up the primitive hut as reason over nature. A right, right? We'd like to think so. But globally and nationally, the simplest of human acts of shelter are elusive, politicized, and pushed to extremes. In architecture building types conventions split along economic lines: house versus housing. The former is a client-driven expression of taste, while the latter requires a systematic juggling of multiple units and services.

In looking for a theme to bring together Midwest and West for this issue, we found that the changing states of housing could not be ignored. Both regions share a long legacy of progressive residential design. Indeed, Frank Lloyd Wright's office birthed the careers of Los Angeles experimenters R.M. Schindler and John Lautner, whose first gig in L.A. was for Wright, project managing a Usonian-style perched in the hills. Today the West Coast is facing a critical housing shortage and rising rents mean that shelter is increasingly precarious for residents in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. Chicago, on the other hand, is dealing with a shrinking population, particularly in its low-income neighborhoods, as unemployment, crime, and foreclosure challenge community resilience.

With a loss of over 200,000 residents in the first ten years of the century, mostly from economically depressed neighborhoods, Chicago is now hoping to stop the flight from the city with an ambitious five-year "Bouncing Back" plan. Mixed-income and affordable housing are at the heart of the plan, which the city hopes will leverage some of Chicago's existing assets. With a shrinking population, finding housing stock is rarely the issue. As such, the city is focusing a great deal of its planning and money on helping existing and potential property owners in an effort to stem the neglect and foreclosure of existing single and multi-family homes. Support for these units comes from a handful of programs, including state and federal tax credits and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) incentives. This plays well with Chicago's aversion to dense affordable housing, as the city is only building limited large affordable developments.

Meanwhile, the fight between house and housing is heating up in Los Angeles. The proposed Neighborhood Integrity Initiative ballot measure drafted by the anti-development Coalition to Preserve LA pits homeowners against high-density projects. The CPLA's sights are set on the luxury apartment towers planned for Hollywood. The group decries the "Manhattanization of Hollywood", but the proposed two-year moratorium on projects that include General Plan amendments (often granted by city officials for greater FAR, more height, or reduced parking would also impact small and mid-size development, including much-needed affordable housing. The preservation mentioned that the organization's name speaks not to the conservation of the city's history, but instead maintains an Arcadian myth of a low-density urban fabric.

In early February, L.A. city and county officials approved a \$100 million plus plan to address the current homelessness state of emergency—the county has the largest chronic homeless population in the country. In the near term, the plan will tackle services, but for architects it is the long-term agenda that is critical, with close to \$2 billion allocated for housing over the next decade. This puts affordable housing as a design problem front and center.

In short, the West Coast doesn't have enough housing (affordable and market rate), Chicago doesn't have enough that is livable. The home truth is that while urbanism and infrastructure have long dominated discussions about the future of cities, it now seems that the domestic sphere will shape our understanding for the next couple decades. For designers, this inversion where private impacts public is clearly a challenge given politics, policy, and code, but it is also an important opportunity to express architectural agency.

MATTHEW MESSNER AND MIMI ZEIGER



COURTESY POSEIDON WATER

IS A NEW DESALINIZATION PLANT THE SOLUTION FOR A WATER-RICH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA?

The Life Aquatic

Just north of Terra Mar Point, a surfing hot spot in the San Diego County town of Carlsbad, the new Poseidon desalinization plant is churning away as it removes brine from seawater— sending the saltless solution through a multi-step filtering-and-reverse-osmosis process. The plant, which opened December 2015, will take in 100 million gallons of Pacific Ocean and produce 50 million gallons of potable water per day from it, enough for about 400,000 residents.

This is nothing else like the Poseidon plant in the Western Hemisphere. By using existing infrastructural elements that ring the shores of the Agua Hedionda Lagoon (most of this area is occupied and owned by the Encina Power station and its parent company NRG Energy), Poseidon was able to cut new construction costs that typically make plants like these financially infeasible here.

In a region reeling from drought-fueled anxiety, this kind of cost-saving tactic means all eyes are on the deployment of the Poseidon plant. Detractors say it, and desalinization technology in general, wastes energy, distracts from water conservation as a drought remedy, and endangers sea life when its brine by-product is dumped back into an already salty ocean. Poseidon's boosters are quick to counter these claims, however, highlighting aspects of the plant that are decreasing overall costs, energy consumption, and environmental degradation. For example, the plant's siting next to the Encina power station minimizes lengthy underground connections for cooling water and power. The plant uses recovery devices to recuperate pressure from the discharge process, reducing energy consumption by 46 percent, and brine is diluted before going back into the sea (although the dilution process hasn't satisfied most environmentalists' concerns).

The plant was realized through a partnership between Boston-based Poseidon Water and the San Diego County Water Authority. Poseidon provided permitting, financing, and design, and SDCWA helped acquire lands and is contracted to buy the entire output of the plant over 30 years. Most other desalinization plants in the United States have been public-sector developments, like the federal government's Point Loma plant, constructed for the Navy and dismantled in 1964, and Santa Barbara's city plant, which closed in 1992 when California's last big El Niño year hit. Attempts to open plants in recent dry years proved cost prohibitive for the public entity.

Projections by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association and others forecast drought as the new normal. Implementing new desalinization technologies, materials reuse, public-private partnerships, and energy recovery, these plants may soon become solvent solutions for coastal cities with their eyes on future drinking water sources. **WENDY GILMARTIN**

INTO THE WOODS continued from front page through rising property values, increased competition for local businesses, and outright gentrification.

"There is a fear now that Inglewood has been, for lack of a better term, 'rediscovered.' Because for many decades, Inglewood's just kind of been here and nobody's cared about Inglewood or thought about Inglewood one way or the other," said Anne Cheek La Rose, a 27-year resident. She says renewed attention will inevitably result in some change. "But any thinking person, it appears to me, would understand that gentrification is not necessarily a bad thing. It is the way that it is done that can make it bad," she added.

"I don't think people really understand that it's already in motion," said Odest Riley Jr., CEO of the Inglewood-based real estate company WLM Financial. He says the big

new developments are only fueling a process that been underway for years. "I have people come to me and say 'I really want to move to Inglewood,' and I'm like, 'You're already priced out. It's too late. The houses are selling for \$400,000, \$500,000. You should have bought two or three years ago, when they were giving them away.'"

The redevelopment of Hollywood Park was for years seen as a catalytic project. Before the stadium was included in its scope, a mixed-use neighborhood and entertainment complex redevelopment had been in the works since 2005. After Hollywood Park was sidelined by the recession, many worried the momentum wouldn't pick back up.

But the election of former Santa Monica police chief James T. Butts Jr. in 2011 ushered in a new political machine friendly to development and outside investment.

"Since the Mayor and Council got started, it's been like gangbusters," said Erick Holly, director of the Inglewood Airport Area Chamber of Commerce. He cites the 2012 deal with the Madison Square Garden Company to buy and renovate the Forum indoor arena as the jump-start to the boom.

While the stadium project and the revived Hollywood Park redevelopment are the biggest developments on the books in Inglewood, smaller projects around the new metro stations can be similarly transformative. The Pasadena-based planning and urban design firm the Arroyo Group is currently creating a downtown destination for the city: A transit-oriented plan for "the New Downtown Inglewood" that will add housing, retail, and commercial development centered on Market Street, near the new metro station at La Brea and Florence. **continued on page 5**

ALL MY FRIENDS

Forget a reformed LCD Soundsystem and Guns N' Roses, the line-up for the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival keeps getting more architectural. First we heard of Bureau Spectacular, now *AM's* ears picked up news that Turner Prize-winning social impact wunderkind *Assemble* will be part of the desert festivities.

I SEE A RED DOOR

The mark of directorial change is happening at SCI-Arc. It's not just a new website with model-esque faculty photos, but keen observers have tracked a gradual darkening on campus. Touches of black are spreading through the library and offices. Gone are the schools trademark wooden seminar tables, replaced by sleek, black showroom furniture. *Kylo Ren* would feel at home.

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A new entry plaza and lobby pavilion greet Pacific Amphitheatre visitors

MAKE CAPTURES DYNAMIC MOVEMENT WHILE KEEPING THE NOISE DOWN

SOUND + VISION

How does one embody the movement and energy of performance in a static form? Jess Mullen-Carey and Bill Beauter of the firm Make Architecture conceived of a metal diagrid-patterned facade with a ceiling of extruded pendants and glass-covered skylights for the Pacific Amphitheatre in Costa Mesa, California, as a dynamic entry space. The result is a perforated metal skin that, much like a theater curtain, appears to float up from the ground.

Originally built as a stand-alone facility on the 150-acre Orange County Fairgrounds, the Pacific Amphitheatre remained somewhat aloof from the rest of the grounds for most of its existence. However, after being shuttered in the 1990s and then reopened in 2003, the amphitheater's enduring popularity necessitated a greater physical connection to its surroundings. Therefore, the entrance pavilion is both a focal point in the reorganized layout of the 120-year-old site as well as an official pass-through point for the fairground.

The entrance pavilion connects the 8,500-seat amphitheater with a redesigned 32,500-square-foot plaza, and the structure also meets the site's sound-mitigation needs by creating an acoustical vestibule. "The connection and vibrancy of all that energy coming together is really what influenced us in wanting to create a skin that had that same sort of sense of movement and evolution," partner Jess Mullen-Carey explained.

The process behind choosing the material for the skin was iterative; Make Architecture considered glass fiber, reinforced concrete, and precast concrete before selecting the budget-conscious yet endurance-oriented metal paneling. The design itself was conceived

almost entirely in Rhino and features a progressive fenestration pattern that gradually develops from a four-foot diagrid. Although Mullen-Carey admitted that the basic concept of the diagrid was something the firm had worked with before, here he hopes that the form captures the energy of a live performance.

Previously, a 40-foot-tall, 600-foot-long berm cushioned the surrounding residential neighborhood from the acoustic blow of the music venue. Make Architecture reconfigured this berm to reclaim more than three acres of land for multipurpose use. They strengthened the visual connection between the raised plaza, which can double as an outdoor performance space, and the amphitheater. The plaza incorporates several cues to point the visitor toward the entry space, including a series of rectangular illuminated beacons. Ultimately, whether a visitor is inside the entry space or enjoying the plaza, the design encapsulates a holistic, energetic vibe. As Mullen-Carey said, "When people are in the plaza, they can actually experience the energy and excitement of people going to the show." **JULIA INGALLS**



JOHN LINDEN



BRUCE DAMONTE/COURTESY SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL LLP

> THE STRAND

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Architect: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

A century ago, San Francisco's Market Street was bustling with theaters, including The Strand. Over the decades the area declined, shops shuttered, and the old movie theater fell into disrepair. Last year, SOM adapted the abandoned space into a playhouse for the American Conservatory Theater (ACT). The design, which includes two performance venues, an education center, a rehearsal space, and a public lobby and cafe, tracks with an overall revitalization of the area. The corridor is no longer an urban wasteland now that tech firms like Twitter fill the neighboring 20th-century buildings with 21st-century buzz.

The transformation of a 1917 movie house into a live venue (with a proscenium and 120-seat black-box space) came with tough questions. "How do you make a 285-seat theater out of a long and narrow space that had no stage?" asked SOM design director Michael Duncan. The answer came from ACT—the company wanted an intimate experience. By inserting modern equipment and a stage into the tall volume, SOM brought the audience and performers closer together.

Another question was how to preserve the cinema's occasionally sordid past. "We were careful to not to create an artificial history," Duncan said. The lobby features a large LED display enticing the public in; however, the concrete walls are marked with old graffiti, and an original marquee sign in 1950s neon pink hangs above the bar. "It was never really beautiful—it was a workhouse theater—we tried to preserve as much as we could in its many states." **MIMI ZEIGER**

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CREATING CLASSICS

MILWAUKEE SOLDIERS HOME LOOKS TO PRIVATE SECTOR FOR REDEVELOPMENT



COURTESY MEGAN DANIELS

The second empire style Old Main building is one of the most recognizable monuments in the heart of Milwaukee.

VA are pursuing an opportunity to involve the private sector through the Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) authority, which would allow the VA to lease vacant or available buildings to a nonfederal entity for the purpose of creating housing for veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Through a long-term lease of up to 75 years, a private developer or lessee would assume all aspects of the building restoration and reuse including financing, construction, maintenance, management, and operation. The EUL program sustains the VA's mission of veteran care while alleviating the VA of perpetual costs of maintaining unneeded buildings.

In June of 2014, the VA issued a Request for Expressions of Interest (REI) to gauge interest from developers capable of redeveloping the historic buildings for use as supportive housing. At the time, the REI included nine buildings for potential redevelopment. Approximately ten responses were received.

In preparation for an official Request for Proposal (RFP), the VA held a public hearing December

2015 to present the proposed EUL project at the Milwaukee Soldiers Home and to receive public comment. Buildings available for lease through the proposed EUL project were evaluated for their viability as supportive housing. Based on this evaluation and REI responses, six buildings have been identified for redevelopment including Old Main, the administration building, the Catholic chaplain's quarters, and three duplexes originally used as personnel quarters. The RFP is anticipated this coming spring.

At this time, there are no plans for the Ward Memorial Hall, the chapel, or the power plant, which have been removed from the proposed EUL project.

Formally, the Milwaukee Soldiers Home is known as the Northwestern branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. The National Home system was established in 1865, taking its mission from President Lincoln's second inaugural address, "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan."

The Milwaukee Soldiers Home, opened in 1867, was one of three homes established to care for civilian soldiers that had suffered debilitating injury or illness during the Civil War. Eight additional homes were constructed in response to

subsequent conflicts, employing local architects to design campuses across the country. In 1930, the National Home system was absorbed by the Veterans Administration, and buildings were henceforth designed by the Technical Services Division of the VA.

In Milwaukee, the Soldiers Home retains a high degree of integrity and looks much the same as it did at the turn of the 20th century. Meandering through the historic core, one is removed from the city that encompasses the district and can sense the intended tranquility of the picturesque landscape. The work of celebrated Milwaukee architects Edward Townsend Mix and Henry C. Koch, the architecture is indicative of the region and articulated in the native cream brick.

Old Main was completed in 1869 according to the designs of Townsend Mix. The domiciliary is certainly the showpiece of the district with pointed arches, a polychromatic, slate-tiled mansard roof, and a soaring tower at its center. Through the EUL program, Old Main and the surrounding landscape may once again be a home and place of respite for the nation's veterans.

For more information on the Milwaukee Soldiers Home, visit savethesoldiershome.com

MEGAN DANIELS

COMING HOME

The Milwaukee Soldiers Home has been a healing place for the nation's veterans since 1867. The National Historic Landmark is an asset of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and shares an expansive 90-acre site with the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The district includes approximately 40 historic resources; some have been repurposed for the medical center while others stand unused or underutilized. In 2010, a roof collapse in the original domiciliary—Old Main—spurred local, regional, and

national stakeholders to collaborate with the VA to address emergency repairs and deferred maintenance that threatened buildings in the historic district.

Though the roof has been fixed and other improvements have ensued, a quarter of the historic buildings remain vacant or barely used. As a federal-owned entity, budget constraints and the VA's necessary focus on veteran health care prevent building restoration from being a priority.

However, stakeholders, preservation advocates, and the



COURTESY ARUP

UNVEILED

BAY BRIDGE BIKE PATH

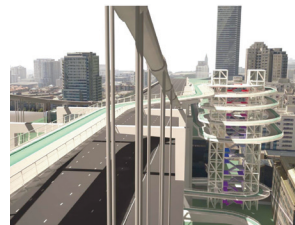
A cyclist's dream for a more than a decade, Bay Area Toll Authority officials released several designs for a bike and pedestrian path on the western span of the Bay Bridge. But bike advocates may have to wait another decade for one of the six Arup designs to get built. In question is where the 2.9-mile route from Yerba Buena Island to San Francisco will connect to the city. Options include a downtown site on Essex Street (adjacent

to Pelli Clarke Pelli's Transbay Terminal), along the Embarcadero, and a repurposed Caltrans paint yard.

Arup's schemes are infrastructurally intoxicating: spiraling ramps loop skyward 150 feet into the bridge girders. Yet getting the design to fruition is tricky: Not only is there a \$300 million ceiling, Arup needs to figure out how to connect the 15-foot wide path to the old steel without any welding. This means disassembling parts of the bridge and adding new bolts and steel plates.

With Bay Area traffic ever increasing, estimates predict 10,000 bicyclists per day riding path from SF to Oakland and a spectacular 45-minute commute. **MZ**

Engineer: Arup
Client: Bay Area Toll Authority
Location: San Francisco
Groundbreaking: 2019
Completion: 2025



TOM HARRIS, HEDRICH BLESSING/COURTESY TEAM A

SMALL FIRM MOVES
MOUNTAINS continued
from front page emphatic volumetric play.

Moving Everest Charter School and the BTHC are separate nonprofit organizations, with the BTHC renting the new building to the school. The two entities strategically share the space; BTHC uses the facilities after hours. The architects employed graphic techniques to signify the building's dual uses, particularly along the south facade where supergraphic gray-scale images of studious children (part of the BTHC's branding, also visible across the street) are framed by glowing green-colored concrete (the signature hue of Moving Everest) and a giant "ME" logo.

Though the exterior signifies newness and innovation for

the neighborhood, it's the interior of the building that is the most spatially sensitive and memorable. Students and visitors are welcomed into a soaring double-height foyer filled with natural light streaming in from an upper clerestory. Nonorthogonal walls on the ground level are intentionally and visibly misaligned with the irregular footprint of the mezzanine above, challenging students to venture forth and explore the building's internal quirks and spatial complexities. The large expanses of the foyer's walls and ceiling are painted white, while the open passages into the rest of the school reveal vibrant greens and yellows; eight-foot-tall numeral graphics on the wall indicate the floor level.

Breakout rooms and a computer lab populate the core of each academic floor.

The school's public spaces between these shared amenities constitute the programmatic centerpiece of the school. Here, boldly colored flooring, walls, and ceilings; playful interior windows; and custom wood bookcases render the spaces in between classrooms as charged zones in which to tell and stage stories, interact informally with students from other classrooms, and engage with the unexpected.

"We didn't have room for a library, so we made a library," Team A principal Joe Buehler said, referring to the makeshift book storage and seating facilitated by the built-in casework and cubbies.

Moving Everest Charter School demonstrates how aesthetic precision can make an otherwise conventional rectilinear building into something distinctive and pleasurable. Additionally, by employing its transit-facing south facade (with vantage points from both the Laramie Green Line "L" station and the adjacent commuter-rail Metra tracks) as a billboard promoting its host institutions, the graphic architecture reinforces messages of opportunity, humanism, and optimism in an underinvested Chicago neighborhood.

JOSEPH ALTSHULER

INTO THE WOODS continued from page 2

"That makes a whole new ecosystem of a community right there," said Riley. "Who are those people that are going to rent right there? Who's going to move in? They're probably not going to be at the same income level as the people living here now."

But Holly argued that new downtown developments only add to the city. "Those lots are dirt right now," he said. No one will be displaced, he reasoned, but it's hard to predict what impact hundreds of new residential units and chain retail will have.

Many claim change is needed. "Inglewood is interesting because it has a downtown that is literally unknown," said architect Christopher Mercier of local (fer) studio. He said the city has been overshadowed by its big venues, such as Hollywood Park and the Forum, and is hoping for neighborhood-scale development. "All of those things became the brand of Inglewood, but it never had a city brand. Like you say Santa Monica or Burbank, you always picture a city. But when you say Inglewood you don't picture a city. You picture these other things."

While he sees the catalytic potential of the

projects on the way, Mercier is cautiously optimistic about their impact. However, there's still uncertainty about the future of the Hollywood Park site.

In mid-January, the NFL's owners approved the relocation of the St. Louis Rams back to Los Angeles, the city the team left after the 1994 season. Rams owner Stan Kroenke and the Stockbridge Capital Group have formed a partnership to develop the stadium for the Rams and another as-yet unconfirmed NFL team. The project is expected to open in 2019.

Holly explained that the project is moving ahead, and its impact will ripple throughout Inglewood. Many potentially transformative projects are still in the pre-development stage, so it's too early to predict their effects. But Inglewood residents are watching closely.

"I think there's two types of people right now: We have the people who are fearful of any change—which is inevitable, change comes, and we have the people who are blindly waiting for something good to happen," Riley said. "There needs to be a middle ground."

NATE BERG

Forum Studio's master plan was designed to be flexible enough to function with or without a stadium



COURTESY FORUM STUDIO

NO STADIUM NO PROBLEM continued from front page the riverfront development, Forum's plan was specifically designed to be flexible enough to accommodate the possibility of a stadium from the beginning.

From vacant industrial buildings and empty lots, to a casino and chocolate factory, the 180-acre site is already diverse in its makeup. Immediately to the south are the Gateway Arch grounds, well into a \$380 million renovation. The first phase of the master plan includes a 21-acre riverfront park that will complement the more formal park surrounding the Arch. "The ability to put really active programming wasn't feasible in the Arch grounds," said Tyler Meyr, principal at Forum, when discussing some of the features their master plan will bring to the riverfront. "We really want to bring a lot of active innovative park programming to that area. It also has access to the river, so we have looked at add barges with additional venues or park spaces right on the water." The Forum plan includes a diverse series of mixed use zones and open spaces with names like the Creative District, Barge Park, the Innovation District, Energy Plaza, Mound Point, Great Lawn, the Media Wall, and Metro Plaza. The Creative District is filled with a handful of large historic warehouse buildings that Forum envisions one day being filled with university housing and workspace, or other creative institutions. The Innovation District is imagined as a series of low-rise offices with views of the river. These spaces would be targeted at businesses that might otherwise fill suburban

office parks, as well as the young tech companies that now call St. Louis home.

One of the major tasks Forum has taken on is facilitating the conversation about the possibilities of the project to the many players involved. With land held by city, county, and private interests, getting everyone on the same page can be a challenge. Discussing the current mood of everyone involved, Meyr said, "For the most part, the stakeholders are on board. We tried to include a plan that included all of the owner's interests." Because the process of assembling the private interests was bolstered during initial stadium planning, Forum has been able to piggyback off the work it and the Great Rivers Greenway already set into motion. Much of this work has been carried out through multiple open house presentations, and community stakeholder meetings over the last year and a half.

Forum's master plan is designed to flex, change, and grow with the different interests involved. Though stadium plans may come and go (now interest has turned to Major League Soccer coming to St. Louis), the firm feels confident that its robust and diverse layout can accommodate whatever stakeholders can throw at it. Meyr pointed out how the plan has, in some ways, already been put to the test, "We are definitely open to collaborating, if somebody has a vision for a project. Just as it did with the stadium, where we took something that came to us as vision and integrated it into the plan. We would do the same for other opportunities"

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 24, 2016

HAYMARKET CHICAGO



XAVIER TOWER



JOHN BLAIR BUILDING



HILTON GARDEN INN



ACE HOTEL



In 2014, Chicago's GREC Architects made the expansionist move into a background building on the Magnificent Mile. It was a sign of health and ambition—that a firm cut to half its 2007 size by the recession was back on the warpath. From a generic office floor, GREC is spinning a symphony of modernism that threatens to infect the building's common areas.

Founded in 1989, GREC counts a growing staff of 30. The three managing principals hail from corporate America, easing the courtship with large clients like Related Midwest, John Buck Company, and Chicago newcomer Gerding Edlen Development. Every client large and small gets principal involvement from start to finish.

Their work fans out programmatically, with hospitality and multifamily residential as the sweet spots.

"We're trying to find the strengths of living in an urban high-rise and bleed that into our hospitality work," said principal Don Copper. "Conversely, we want to bring hospitality's social component into our residential work. How can we promote people coming out of their units for a greater sense of community?"

Both sectors are amenity centric, but GREC believes an integrated design has to get at variety and a sense of discovery. Rather than consolidate lounges, coworking spaces, game rooms, fitness rooms, and pool decks all on one floor, dispersion is seen as oxygen for community. In particular, GREC has nurtured a symbiosis between their high-rise projects. A handful of fresh Chicago projects and one in Los Angeles exemplify this approach.

IAN SPULA

HAYMARKET CHICAGO
CHICAGO

This first look at a 200-unit apartment building planned for Desplaines Street behind the Haymarket Memorial is GREC's second project with Gerding Edlen. "It won't be branded by its proximity to the memorial, but we have designed in deference," Copper explained. "It gives us something to organize around without going into political gestures." The developer, acknowledging a scarcity of green space, incorporates a public pocket park with benches for memorial visitors. A meandering walkway and multifaceted lobby promote a gradation from public to private space, with a cleanly layered sequence of memorial, park, lobby, and artwork. GREC will partner with the memorial's sculptor Mary Brogger to design the building's lighting and sculptural elements. A third-floor deck will host an urban agriculture project from The Roof Crop. Up another 12 stories, a skeletal crown gestures to the West Loop's converted-loft aesthetic.

JOHN BLAIR BUILDING
CHICAGO

The John Blair Building, an anonymous Michigan Avenue office block, offered GREC a blank slate for its studio build-out. The firm gutted a drop ceiling to reveal 15-foot coffered concrete ceilings and full-height window walls. Concerned with material authenticity, the ceiling and structural columns were left alone. Free-hanging LED tubes, terrazzo floors, mill-finished steel, and midcentury walnut tables are the supplemental *Mad Men* elements. The space engages the hot trend of non-hierarchical office design with open circulation and the absence of corner offices. According to Copper, such collaborative design premises really do work.

XAVIER TOWER
CHICAGO

"Xavier Tower isn't far from anywhere, but it still feels like it's in a developing area," said Copper of the apartment tower's Cabrini-Green location. For the time being, but perhaps not for long, this new high-efficiency tower with sustainable materials, a stormwater collection system, and rain gardens is the tallest building within a half mile. GREC put the residential entry on the calmer Howell Street and the commercial space on Division Street. The lobby bores straight through to a coworking space and garden courtyard. To cross-pollinate, a 25-foot opening connects a future food-and-beverage tenant with the residential lobby. The 240-unit project was not beholden to the special mixed-income formula applied to the development of Chicago Housing Authority-owned parcels, but Gerding Edlen included 10 percent public housing nevertheless.

HILTON GARDEN INN
CHICAGO

The recently opened 191-key Hilton Garden Inn in Chicago's Loop wriggled into the most cramped of sites between the brutalist Seventeenth Church of Christ and Chicago Motor Club building—we're talking 50 by 110 feet for a 27-story tower. "It was a really fun site to work on," reflected Copper. "Not sure the contractor would agree." Regulations for exposures at the property line forced the developer to go with a windowless west facade and posed a design challenge for GREC: How to build dynamism into a flat prominent wall without trompe l'oeil, advertising, or other familiar devices. They chose a pixilated image derived from sunlight reflecting off water in gray scale, corresponding to the vendor's standard array of aluminum finishes.

ACE HOTEL
LOS ANGELES

GREC's first experience working in Los Angeles was an adventure indeed. The boutique Ace Hotel brand scored one of L.A.'s all-time classics for adaptive reuse: The 1,600-seat United Artists flagship theater dating to 1927 and the attached 13-story art deco office tower, formerly Texaco's West Coast headquarters. The landmark needed seismic stabilization, which required spraying a concrete frame behind the old facade. The restored movie palace now hosts dance productions, music, and Hollywood premieres. GREC and Ace are known to be at work on a Chicago venture, but neither would give details.

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MICHAEL MALTZAN ARCHITECTURE



One Santa Fe offers up predictive density in a city undergoing a change of urban identity



In 1781, Spanish explorer Felipe de Neve established *El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles de Porciúncula* (The Village of the Queen of the Angels of Porciuncula). A vast pastoral terrain teeming with grizzly bears surrounded the tiny outpost in what is now called California. In the beginning the creatures were unlikely companions, but soon the tranquil coexistence between beings and beasts devolved. After the Spaniards came the cowboys, then the railroads that brought the settlers. Most were farmers, who, unlike their predecessors, hunted grizzlies to protect their crops from foraging. Gradually the grizzlies were hounded into extinction—defenseless against newcomers' ferocious determination to domesticate the great basin across which the City of Angels was quickly spreading. Bears gave way to people in the town blessed with warm winter sun.

Over time, this garden city grew to become a metropolis, home to nearly four million inhabitants. And yet, Los Angeles remains narrowly characterized by freestanding homes engulfed in lush vegetation. Every swath of industry, every mile of imposing infrastructure, every bit of dwelling, and all the fragmented space resulting from their confluence is obscured by the city's Arcadian myth. What remains intact is a cliché to which all urban realities must surrender. So what value is there

in pointing out, as does USC professor Todd Gish, that Los Angeles is also "built on the back of multifamily rental housing in an urban setting?"

Many believe that if new strategies in favor of density are not implemented, Angelenos will face the same fate as the grizzlies. While predators might not kill the city's inhabitants, the inability to create denser forms of living may. Although some neighborhood activists and interest groups object to greater density and the potential ills that such practices might bring, pundits are quick to point to its advantages.

A handful of informed developers, financiers, planners, politicians, civic institutions, and architects have begun to script a revisionist plan for what it means to live in the city that is predicted to become the densest in the country. Together, these "place entrepreneurs," so it appears, are seeking to radically alter the way urban living is conceived and implemented in Los Angeles.

One Santa Fe, located in Los Angeles's river-adjacent Arts District, is such a project. Michael Maltzan Architecture designed the hyper-dense mixed-use development for a consortium of real estate developers and investors including Canyon Johnson Urban Fund. Realizing that cities are subject to uncertainty or chance, Maltzan describes One Santa Fe as well as

other ongoing projects by his firm (the Sixth Street Viaduct and the Central Avenue Art Park) as examples of "anticipatory architecture"—exercises in form making that endow architecture with the power to productively shape urban policy, planning, and the city at large.

In contrast to Hollywood, where building up is intended, horizontality is One Santa Fe's tactic for achieving greater density. Two six-story buildings occupy an unusually narrow four-acre interstitial strip wedged between South Santa Fe Avenue and an adjacent Metropolitan Transit Authority railyard. Running more than a quarter of a mile, the two elongated masses take cues from nearby linear forms including the Los Angeles River, adjacent rail lines, and SCI-Arc's reconditioned freight depot building.

At 510,000 square feet, One Santa Fe fuses architectural prowess with developer ambition. The end result shares many traits with OMA's recent *Entrepôt Macdonald*, a grand urban renewal project in northeast Paris. Envisioned as urban armature, Maltzan's design invites other adjacent elements to participate in a larger civic project. At its northernmost end, the project links directly to the First Street Bridge, which carries pedestrian sidewalks, vehicular traffic, and the LA Metro Gold Line. There are open-air portals that punctuate the building volumes to afford visual and pedestrian access at strategic moments. Ground-level connections across the width of the site will soon provide access to a future commuter station to be located on the existing Metro repair yard. Proposed community gardens are planned atop of bridge-like appendages that are hoped to one-day link MMA's project directly to the Los Angeles River. In the words of Maltzan, "One Santa Fe is a work-in-progress." Whether these appendages will ever be realized depends heavily on a sustained collective effort involving the Metropolitan Transit Authority, Friends of the Los Angeles River, and other civic agencies.

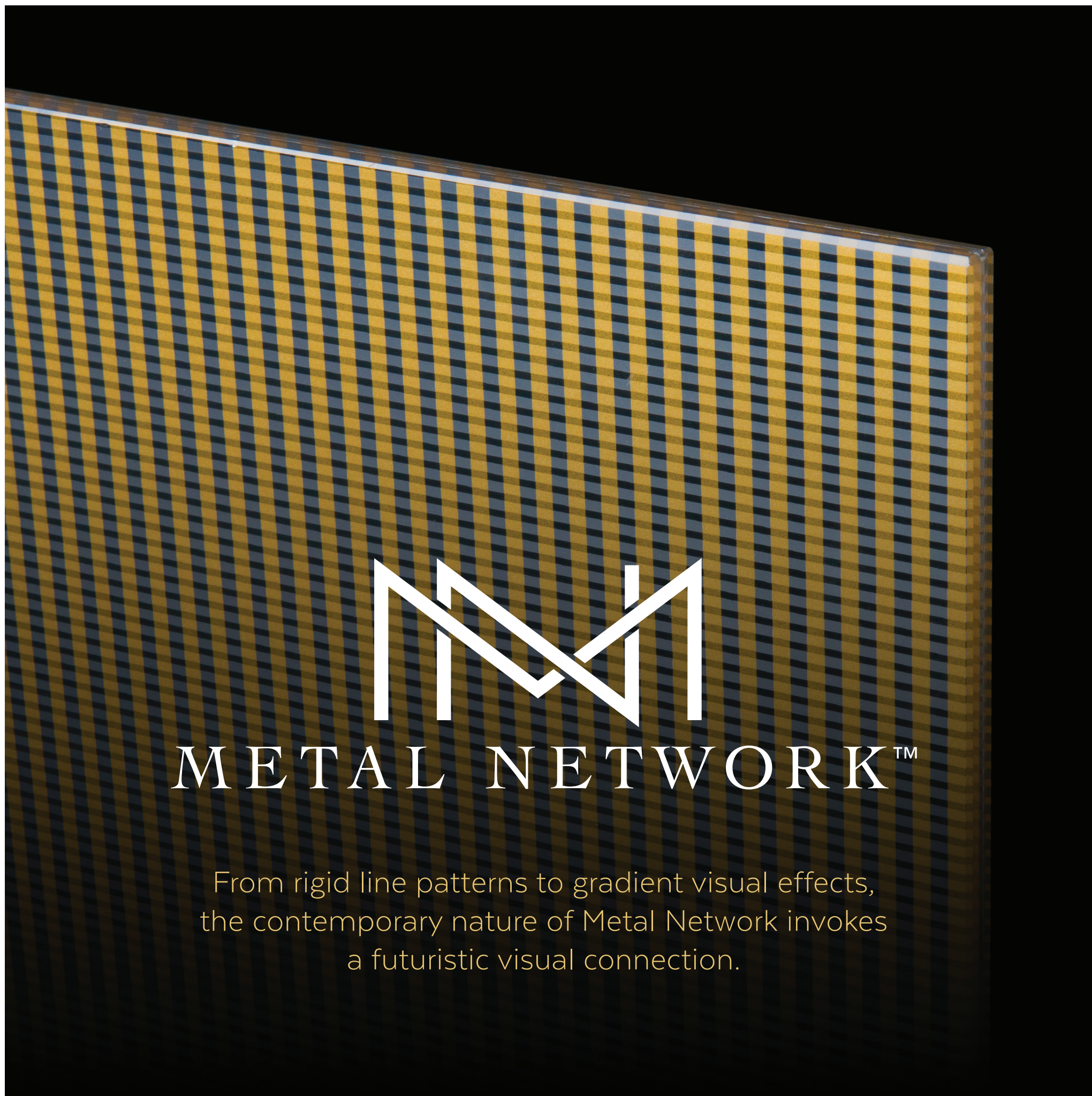
Suggesting that the old edge of the city is the new center, One Santa Fe is intended to cater to a growing number of individuals seeking alternative lifestyle preferences—people who are less interested in owning a car or having a house and backyard and more excited by the thought of riding a bike, walking, or taking public transit to work—socially-minded folk who are not intimidated by socio-economic diversity. To that note, nearly 20 percent of the total 438 units are earmarked as affordable housing.

One Santa Fe oscillates between pragmatism and design wit. Ubiquitous construction methods, generic materials, and standard details mandated by cost effectiveness and building code are the architect's palette. What Dan Flavin did with fluorescent tubes, or Frank Gehry with chain link, Maltzan must accomplish with sticks, stucco, and paint. In this particular instance, affect supersedes connoisseurship. The buildings' signature white enhanced with red accents stands in stark contrast to the gritty, post-industrial landscape. Air conditioning condensers and ventilation ductwork march unapologetically across the rooftops, and the utilitarian nature of raw concrete ramps spiraling around like a wound up springboard at the building's northern base is indebted to utility.

The architect's choice to embrace the cheap and everyday is best understood by his deep suspicion of materials and detailing as "stand-ins" for what architecture is really about, claiming that material refinement is too frequently at the expense of bigger, more compelling issues. Maltzan urges that One Santa Fe is most successful when we can appreciate how the project operates at the scale of the city and at the scale of the surroundings community.

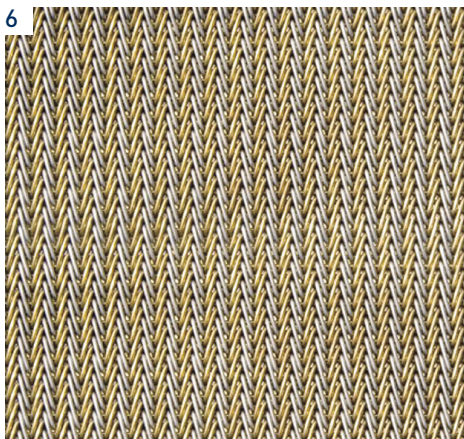
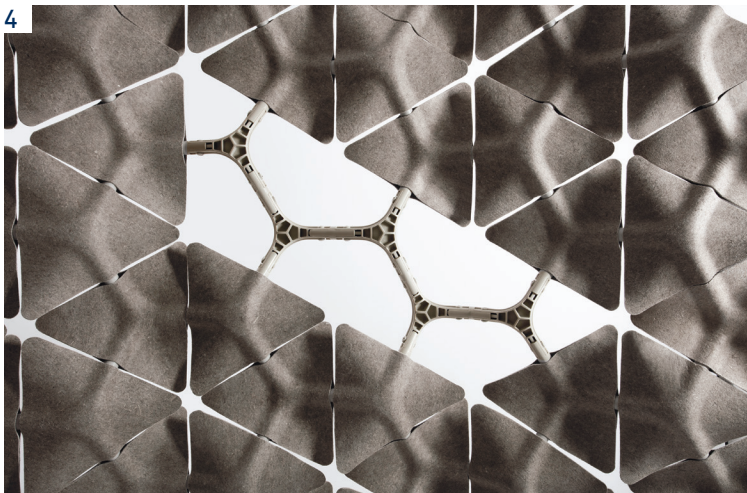
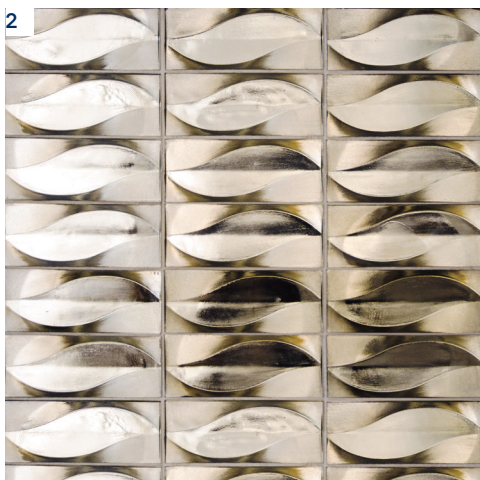
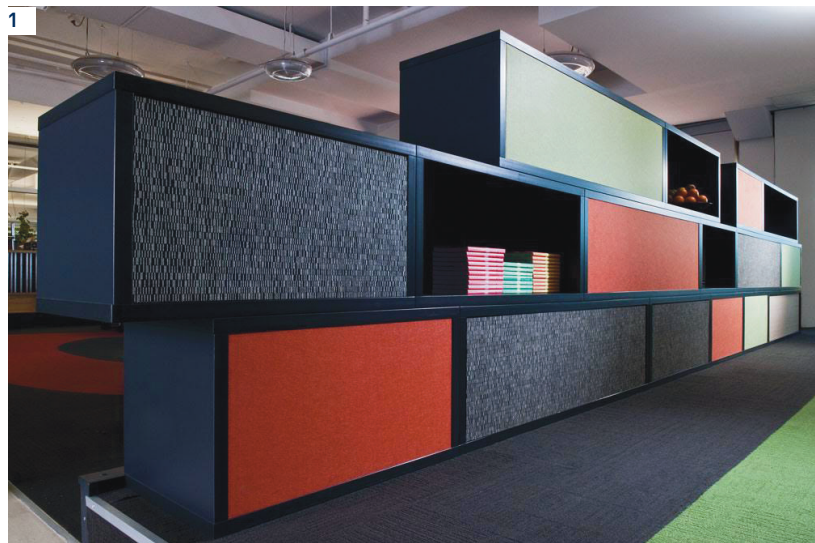
It is not likely that One Santa Fe will bring back the bears, but for Maltzan, the project does represent a moment in which architecture reestablishes a foothold at the table of civic engagement, a turning point where architects reclaim their rightful place as visionaries of large-scale urban propositions that influence urban policy, planning, and city growth. For Angelenos, it is a sign to take stock in their urban diversity rather than pretend L.A. is all about sunshine and seashells.

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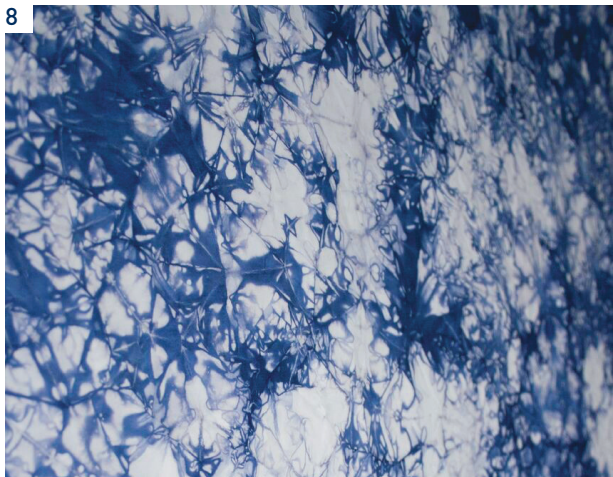
Hand painted on 70-percent recycled clay tiles, the Sakura Collection displays subtle earth toned hues that are derived from traditional Japanese landscapes, including patterns that resemble mountains, tortoise shells, and river rocks. They are available in eight-by-eight and six-by-twelve sizes.

fireclaytile.com

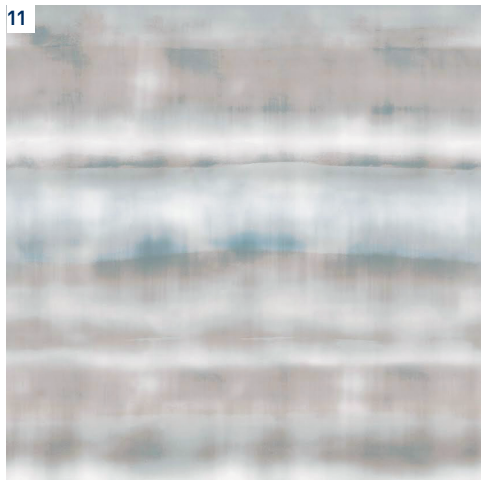
**6 TWEED MESH
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Cambridge is known for its architectural mesh; it has recently released two new patterns, including a "tweed" mesh made with stainless steel and brass that resembles the weave of a classic wool overcoat—so much so that it has been used in several lounges for British Airways.

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mayaromanoff.com

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**11 FADE
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walnutwallpaper.com

**12 BANDA
ESKAYEL**

The tropics collection is designer Shanna Campanaro's interpretation of beach motifs in Belize and Nicaragua. The prints are a modern take on traditional wallpaper motifs like toile, shibori, and palm leaves, and are available in a variety of color options.

eskayel.com

**13 GEO
WALLPAPER DIRECT**

Part of a larger collection of hyper-realistic photo paper by Ella Doran, this print is intended to capture texture and sunlight on solid architectural surfaces and adds a touch of glamour to smaller spaces without the bulk of using actual stone.

wallpaperdirect.com

VALERIO DEWALT TRAIN ASSOCIATES



Valerio Dewalt Train's Gordon Parks Arts Hall samples styles and forms from its architecturally diverse surroundings



The University of Chicago is often praised for its rigorous academics, its serene location in an enclave on South Side, its superb bookstores and museums, and its traditional ivy-laden, collegiate atmosphere. It is less frequently cited for its impressive collection of buildings designed by notable modern, postmodern, and contemporary architects: Henry N. Cobb, Holabird & Root, Frank Lloyd Wright, Eero Saarinen, Mies van der Rohe, SOM, Murphy/Jahn, César Pelli, Rafael Viñoly, Jeanne Gang—and the list goes on—are all represented on the campus. In October 2015, Chicago-based Valerio Dewalt Train Associates (VDTA) joined these prestigious ranks with their Gordon Parks Arts Hall, the latest addition to the University of Chicago Laboratory School.

Located at the southeastern corner of the university campus, the Lab School occupies two square blocks. The eastern

block is dedicated to a playing field and sports facilities, while the academic buildings sit around the perimeter of the western block. The new arts wing is given pride of place along the north side of the block—being the first thing one sees as one approaches from the north, east, or west, this VDTA addition is the new face of the South Side prep school.

Set back from the street, it faces Scammon Garden to the north and the Lab School's central courtyard to the south. Both are important exterior spaces used for recreation and instruction, and are extensions of the Main Lobby gathering space. The Scammon Garden in particular elegantly responds to the architecture; a simple green field meets the main entrance in a ripple of concentric circles, as though the building were a stone dropped in a pond of grass.

From the north, the building appears as



a long rectangular form made of Indiana limestone and glass. This continuous curtain wall is intersected by an irregular procession of rectangular masses, or "vertical solar chimneys," which punctate the long facade and recall, abstractly, the buttresses of a gothic cathedral. The limestone carries around to the east and west facades, connecting the hall materially to its context—the Lab School's original limestone building was designed by James Gamble Rogers in 1896—while glass-enclosed corridors connect it to the existing structures that flank the new wing on the east and west ends.

The building has spaces for music and visual and performing arts education for the middle school and high school students. Arranged along the north side of the building, all the classrooms are treated to floor-to-ceiling glass and a wash of natural light. Visual arts and music are designated to the upper two floors with studio and rehearsal spaces as well as digital media labs. On the first floor, there are classrooms for the performing arts, a formal art gallery for the display of student work, the Studio Theater, used for cinema screening, and the 250-seat Sherry Lansing black-box theater that doubles as a sound stage. According to the architects, Gordon Parks Arts Hall is a symbol of the Lab School's commitment to multimedia literacy and "should be understood as a place where work is created by hand, and then shown to a larger, real or virtual audience using every



ABOVE FAR LEFT AND MIDDLE: BARBARA KARANT; ABOVE RIGHT AND BELOW: STEVE HALL

possible media imaginable," said Joe Valerio, VDTA design principal.

The most prominent feature of the first floor is the 750-seat assembly hall for performances, meetings, and special events. A large cylindrical drum, the hall dominates the double-height lobby and intersects the southern wall of the building, jutting out into the courtyard. It is the one interior volume that makes its presence known externally, signaling its importance beyond the arts program and for the school at large.

While the architects refer to the project as "emphatically modern" in its formal articulation and in its "seamless connection between the outdoors and the interior," it has a distinctly postmodern flavor. The east and west facades are marked by a gabled roof profile and a fenestration pattern which mimics the adjacent neo-gothic towers of Belfield Hall. This explicit contextual gesture mixes somewhat incongruously with the north facade, a modernist curtain wall that seems to buckle under some invisible pressure—is this a nod to the deconstructivist fold, or simply a flex of the firm's digital muscles? Either way, the historicist references and not-so-subtle collage of architectural styles suggest the building belongs to a strain of contemporary-corporate design, a neo-postmodernism, where modern architecture is no longer the primary mode of expression but rather one among many styles to reference, mimic, and embellish.

JULIA DI CASTRI



The former Masonic Temple as viewed from the pool deck of Caruso Affiliated's Americana.

DO THE RITE THING continued from front page just ten months from start to finish.

The most striking space is on the eighth floor, where the elevators dispatch visitors to reception in an unconventional scene. Refurbished multi-paned windows greet guests with vistas of the Verdugo Mountains (and Caruso Affiliated's Americana complex), but the real drama happens in the reverse view: The floor drops away. Gensler orchestrated the space so that rather than arriving at the bottom of a 26-foot-tall area, visitors take in the retrofitted Masonic Hall and its original dark-wood trusses from the mezzanine.

New 20-foot-tall windows spill bright daylight across the workplace, outfitted in a minimal palette and featuring all-glass

meeting rooms, "focus" and "huddle" rooms, and rows of gleaming white workstations. A bleacher stair, designed for all-staff meetings, leads from the entry to what Gensler principal Carlos Posada calls "the heart" of the office—a boomerang-shaped island that easily multitasks as cafe space, informal desktop, and banquet seating. Round tables and chairs scattered around cater to CBRE's "free-address" mandate—there are no assigned desks or offices.

In converting the mini high-rise from clubhouse to flexible workplace, Gensler's team first had to address larger seismic and structural issues. The building is unique in that every other floor—three total—is a large double-height volume: the top showstopper, the offices on the fifth and sixth, and a yet-to-be-finished third and fourth. In order to maintain the open spaces and introduce

large windows, existing concrete-encased-steel and board-formed-concrete walls were upgraded. A pair of elevators (and core), plus two new egress staircases, were added to accommodate the change in tenant occupation.

For Posada, the success of the space comes from not doing too much. Existing concrete was cleaned and painted, several of the wood trusses were rebuilt, and a sculptural stair was inserted between the sixth and seventh floors to add a sleek counterpoint to the rough walls. "We wanted to honor the building itself," he explained.

Currently, the double-height space on the ground floor is raw. Caruso hopes to bring in a restaurant tenant to take advantage of the lofty and historic real estate. One can't help but wonder if the Masonic traditions will live on—perhaps the host will require a secret handshake and password for VIP access. **MZ**



STUDIO GANG FINISHES ITS LATEST CULTURAL PROJECT WITH THE INVITING WRITERS THEATRE

FROM BACK ROOM TO BACK STAGE

"Why is opening a theater such a big deal?" Michael Halberstam, artistic director and cofounder of the Writers Theatre, asked a jovial crowd in the Litowitz Atrium at the ribbon cutting of the new Studio Gang-designed playhouse in the North Shore suburb of Glencoe, Illinois. For a mid-February day, the weather was cooperating with Halberstam's impassioned speech about the role of the theater as both a building

typology and a cultural pursuit. Dramatic clouds broke to let a clear winter sunlight cascade through the fritted glass as he continued: "A theater seduces you into empathic communication. When it's at its best, audiences find themselves in a heart-guided meditation, which is at once both entertaining and provocative."

The new 36,000-square-foot home for the Writers Theatre, a renowned group of actors and writers, was a long

time coming for the group that started out in the back room of a bookstore a few blocks away. The Chicago-based firm's design takes those humble beginnings and the theater's aspirations as a cultural institute as its starting point. Located on the former spot of the Women's Library Club of Glencoe, a building that had become the home of the growing theater as it expanded out of the book store, the theater is only steps away from the regional Metra train stop, connecting it directly to downtown Chicago.

The lobby and atrium are bright wood- and glass-filled spaces that function as public gathering areas outside of their roles as the entry for shows. Two large sets of riser seating

that flank the space allow it to be used for informal performances. Those risers are primarily built out of wood that was harvested directly from the site, a theme that continues throughout the project. Off the lobby, the 2,275-square-foot Green Family Rehearsal Room sits at grade, even with a playground just outside of a large glass wall. This sets up a moment where the children outside and the actors inside can play side by side.

The building's most distinctive feature, however, is the suspended Grand Gallery Walk. Surrounding the atrium at the second level, the outdoor walkway looks out over Glencoe, the lake, and the site's landscaped oak savanna. A screen of long, three-inch-wide cedar

An outdoor walkway is suspended by a lattice of cedar battens at Studio Gang's new Writers Theatre.

battens not only gives the building its signature facade but also is the structural member from which the walkway is suspended. The engineering for this and the long-span glue laminated timber and steel box truss that makes up the atrium was realized with the help of engineer Peter Heppel and Chicago project engineers Halvorson and Partners. "The structure of the roof, the truss, and the walkway, is quite complicated because it all works together," Heppel explained to *AN* at the opening. "We had to test the wood, because it is not in the standard Timber Institute's manual. We broke a lot of pieces in the design process."

There are two performance spaces. The Gillian Theatre, a 50 to 99 seat black box, allows for flexibility in performance and viewing. Its small size harkens back to the simple 50 seat shows the theater would hold in its original bookstore home. The 250-seat Alexandra C. and John D. Nichols Theatre features a thrust stage for intimate engagements. Working closely with New York-based Auerbach Pollock Friedlander theater

consultants, Studio Gang integrated the exterior bricks from the Women's Library Club into a woven brick acoustic wall screen system, which stands a foot in front of the space's true concrete walls. "We wanted to use as much of the building that was here as we could. Reusing bricks is not that easy," said firm founder and principal Jeanne Gang. "They need to be cleaned and sorted. It is not really for cost-saving measure. It's more of a 'trying to keep it out of the landfill' measure." The goal of the acoustic design was to mimic the sound qualities of the forest clearing, or a space without boundaries. The chipped and irregular nature of the recycled bricks was also an advantage in achieving the desired acoustic performance by breaking up the sound waves.

Though the North Shore is known for stunning old homes and quaint, brick-paved town centers, it is rarely a place to find contemporary architecture. As such, Writers Theatre challenges the style of its surrounding neighbors, while still engaging with its community. Together, they hope the project will act as an open invitation to the rest of Chicago to take the short train ride north. **MM**

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The Memphis Movement

A strong culture of arts-based regeneration and new civic-minded developments herald a long-anticipated turnaround for Memphis, but will the benefits of neighborhood-based revitalization spread citywide?

By Audrey Wachs

In Memphis, there's nothing quite as fantastical as Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid, a 35-story riverfront sports arena converted into a complex that is a unique interpretation of mixed use. Upon waking up in Big Cypress Lodge, the hunting cabin-themed hotel, visitors can go bowling in newly-purchased camouflage print bathrobes, practice sharpshooting at two indoor ranges, or take in panoramic views of the cityscape from an observation deck 300 feet high, accessible by a ride in North America's tallest freestanding elevator. Below, visitors can shop for speedboats—if you buy one, the staff will float it into the Mississippi River for you. It is an apt example of the diverse, large-scale projects currently cropping up in Memphis.

Not surprisingly, there's more to the city than self-contained shopping and entertainment zones. A 2014 study by Portland, Oregon-based think tank City Observatory found that along with those of New York, Chicago, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C., the Memphis metro area was one of only five of 51 metro areas over a 40-year period with five or more "rebounding" neighborhoods—areas that experienced drastic



COURTESY ARCHIMANIA



COURTESY LRK

Facing page: Local firm archimania is building Tennessee's first net-zero office building. The complex, which includes a six unit apartment building, is intended to carry downtown's energy further south.

Above: Crosstown Concourse, a \$200 million, mixed-use redevelopment of a former Sears distribution center, will invigorate Memphis's Crosstown neighborhood.

Below: In Binghampton, about five miles from downtown, the Broad Avenue Arts District is a notable example of an arts-based corridor revitalization. Guillaume Alby's mural, *This is We*, faces a half-mile-long strip of galleries, restaurants, bars, and boutiques—businesses that often signal successful culture-based reinvestment.

declines in poverty rates. With everyone focusing on the downsides of gentrification from San Francisco to Boston, what could this finding tell us about Memphis?

Three Fortune 500 companies—FedEx, AutoZone, and International Paper—are headquartered there and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the University of Memphis are longtime civic anchors. Elvis, the blues, and barbecue perennially attract tourists.

Adaptive reuse flourishes downtown. Last April marked the grand opening of the aforementioned Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid. A local developer, the Henry Turley Company, is directing a \$53 million partial conversion of Central Station—currently an active Amtrak stop—into a restaurant, a movie theater, apartments, and a boutique hotel. The historic Chisca Hotel was transformed into an apartment building last year, and developer Billy Orgel's Tennessee Brewery will open to residents and businesses in late 2016. The Downtown Memphis Commission, an independent development agency, facilitates many of these projects.

What does small-scale urban investment look like in Memphis, and how does it relate to the city at large? Of the six rebounding neighborhoods in the Memphis metro area, only one is in the dense, older urban core—the South Main Arts District. There, local firm archimania is building the first net-zero office in Tennessee and

a residential complex to enliven a downtown corner.

These changes are not isolated: Four miles northeast in Crosstown, an old Sears distribution center is turning into an ambitious mixed-use, "health and well-being complex." And at Memphis's easternmost edge, Shelby Farms Park is undergoing a dramatic 20-year transformation that will tie it securely to surrounding communities.

Memphis asks the same question as many other cities: When certain districts come back strong, despite an overall climate of disinvestment, how does this affect the entire city?

"Archimaniacs" Push the Boundaries of Prime Downtown

"We are in a growth period, and I don't think it's just because of the economy," said principal Barry Alan Yoakum, referring to his firm, archimania, but he could have been talking about the excitement around new development in the city as a whole. Based in prime downtown Memphis, the firm is currently building itself a mixed-use, net-zero office complex eight blocks south of its current location.

Founded in Memphis in 1995, archimania is committed to revitalizing downtown. The firm purchased an awkward, 30,000-square-foot piece of land "for next to nothing" at East Carolina Avenue and South Main Street five years ago. Despite its prime location, the property was a challenge to

develop, with 12 feet of infill and an AT&T line running through the center. To prime the site, archimania lowered the line and brought the property level with the sidewalk.

This is the firm's second net-zero project. The approximately 5,000-square-foot office building currently under construction will be the firm's headquarters, and an adjacent 6,000-square-foot structure will contain six apartments. For Yoakum, the ambitious choice was simple: "We wanted to share more of what that property can handle. We're able to place apartments on the back side so that when our offices

are closed at night there's something to activate that space."

The complex extends activity on South Main, the busy spine of one of Memphis's largest arts districts. Yoakum mused on the transformation: "When we came here 20 years ago, it was nothing, it was pretty dead. It is now one of the busiest places in Memphis. People ask, 'Why are you going farther south?' Well, we want to bookend the development of South Main."

A Memphis Icon

The revitalization imperative extends out past downtown. In a

neighborhood four miles northeast of the South Main Arts District, Todd Richardson, a professor of art history at the University of Memphis, is leading the redevelopment of Crosstown Concourse, a \$200 million conversion of a former Sears distribution center into a "vertical urban village."

This is Richardson's first foray into development. Crosstown Concourse "is really a civic project," he explained. The idea came about six years ago as an outgrowth of Crosstown Arts, a community-based nonprofit that Richardson cofounded with Christopher



PAT BROWN



COURTESY BASS PRO SHOPS

Left: From North America's tallest freestanding elevator in the Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid, it's possible to see the speedboat shop, ponds stocked with live alligators, cypresses shrouded in Spanish moss, and Big Cypress Lodge, the rustic hunting cabin-themed hotel encircling the pyramid's perimeter.

Bottom: Crosstown Concourse's section depicts an extraordinary range of uses. Public art and community-based arts programming share space with a charter high school, restaurants, 265 apartments, and 620,000 square feet of commercial space.

Miner in 2010. Building on the city's rich arts and music history, Crosstown Arts staged hundreds of events, exhibitions, lectures, and performances to start conversations about the changes that could happen in Memphis.

The surrounding urban fabric is strong. Crosstown Concourse is bound on three sides by historic districts. It's close to Overton Park, home to Memphis College of Art and the Memphis Zoo.

The scale of the project—large—matches that of the city. Richardson emphasized that the 1.5-million-square-foot deco and art moderne

structure, built in 1927, "is a real icon in Memphis." The ten-story, three-square-block distribution center stands sentry over Crosstown, a neighborhood of low-slung homes and strip malls. At its peak, Sears employed 1,500 workers in the distribution center and retail store before closing the facility in 1993.

Richardson saw a need for a signature revitalization initiative that would get the neighborhood and the city excited. His eclectic team of fifty—architects, developers, business owners, activists, and financiers—want Crosstown Concourse to "put the neighborhood

back on the mental map of Memphis." Local architects Looney Ricks Kiss and Vancouver, Canada-based Dialog are collaborating on the project. Community institutions like the Church Health Center and St. Jude contributed to the development in its nascent stages, investing both for the project's quality and its spirit of civic engagement.

Others followed the anchors: 550,000 square feet of commercial space is already leased. With the development slated to open in 2017, the City of Memphis estimates that it will create 800 jobs and generate \$37 million in new

wages per year.

About 3,000 people are expected to pass through the building each day. For the development team, "density is a welcome by-product" of mixed-use, but the real driver is promoting diverse functions that work well together. Following the anchors, the structure is programmed for a 150,000-square-foot wellness center, a charter high school, and an arts area. Floors seven through ten feature 265 loft-style apartments, and 620,000 square feet of offices are spread over floors two through six. The ground floor boasts 60,000

square feet of restaurant and retail opportunities.

Adaptive reuse can be expensive. Crosstown Concourse costs \$9 million more than the lavishly kitschy Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid. The project received funding from 21 sources, including historic preservation tax credits.

A relatively small proportion of the street-level floor is reserved for commercial businesses to spur retail development in the surrounding neighborhood. There's a spillover effect already, Richardson said, citing a spate of restaurant openings close to the site.



COURTESY LPK

Does Richardson have concerns about gentrification? “Not yet. Neighbors are so happy that something’s going into the building. They’re excited about it.”

Development on the Edge

652,050 Memphians fan out over an area bigger than New York City. Despite Memphis’s size, the six lane roads and highways that slice through the city cut the drive from its eastern edge to the banks of the Mississippi River on its western edge to less than 30 minutes.

Twelve miles east of downtown, Shelby Farms Park is Memphis’s largest natural feature aside from the Mississippi. The 4,500-acre green space (almost five times the size of Manhattan’s Central Park) sits on the city’s outskirts, though around one million people live within a twenty-minute drive. The park is now undergoing a total renovation with new facilities by Fayetteville, Arkansas-based Marlon Blackwell Architects (MBA) and a master plan by New York’s James Corner Field Operations.

Acquired by Memphis through annexation in 1973, present-day Shelby Farms Park has a strange past. From 1825 to 1828, some of the land that the park now occupies was the Nashoba Community, a utopian settlement that educated and emancipated slaves. One hundred years later, the commune was converted into a penal farm that ran through the mid-1960s.

Shelby Farms Park was transformed into its present recreation-oriented program in the 1970s, though the space hosts more diverse activities than a typical city park. Agricenter, the self-anointed “Versailles of American agricultural technology” and the region’s largest urban farm, is building on the penal farm’s legacy of progressive farming and education, operating on 1,000 acres in the southeast corner of the park. Its buffalo herd is a crowd favorite.

Shelby Farms Park Conservancy (SFPC), the park stewards, commissioned Field Operations to develop a roughly 20-year master plan in 2008. Primary goals of the \$70 million project include creating an identity for Shelby Farms Park; connecting the park to the city and surrounding county via infrastructure improvements and better way-finding; promoting biodiversity; and improving recreational facilities.

Field Operations divided the park into 12 “landscape rooms,” such as orchards and berry fields, fishing ponds, and areas for horseback riding and agricultural development. Signature projects like the Wolf River pedestrian bridge, the Shelby Farms Greenline, and the Woodland Discovery Playground are already complete. Fifty-two-acre Patriot Lake will be

expanded to 80 acres; plans call for planting one million trees.

Much of the facelift focuses on the Heart of the Park, a central recreation area anchored by Patriot Lake. Currently under construction, these upgrades will open to the public this fall.

MBA designed four main structures to reactivate the core, a visitor’s center, a boathouse, an amphitheater for concerts on shore or films facing the lake, and a retreat center—restaurant, as well as lakeside pavilions. The center has an “ag-tech” aesthetic, explained project designer Stephen Reyenga. Referencing downtown’s orientation toward the river, the west-facing porch “frames the view out toward the lake.” The design incorporates local material where possible: The porch roof is Tennessee cypress; the stone is quarried from Arkansas. The restaurant tenant will be a branch of The Kitchen, the Denver-based nonprofit and upscale farm-to-table restaurant.

A Challenging Context

New developments like these three can have a trickle-down effect by spreading prosperity, especially in disinvested areas. Optimism sustains urban revitalization. Archimania, Todd Richardson, and SFPC justifiably believe in the transformational potential of civic-minded changes. The enthusiasm surrounding these three developments is palpable across Memphis. Citywide, trends are encouraging: Downtown residential occupancy rates are at 95 percent. The Broad Avenue Arts District and the remediation of Overton Square were cited by many during AN’s visit as examples of successful corridor revitalization.

Archimania’s complex should activate a southern corner of downtown, Crosstown Concourse may spur significant redevelopment, and Shelby Farms Park will likely broaden access to better public space. Quality amenities can anchor a neighborhood: These projects are bright spots on city terrain marked by persistent disinvestment. They should be praised for their intent and watched closely for their outcomes.

“There’s a cognitive bias we bring to neighborhood change,” said Joe Cortright, economist and coauthor of the report *Lost in Place*. “We don’t notice the very slow deterioration of neighborhoods.”

Long after the closing of the frontier, American cities still absorb collective fantasies of transformation. Until recently, Memphis left the door ajar: While most 19th-century cities closed their borders, Memphis grew by annexation into the 2000s.



Above: James Corner Field Operations is spearheading a 20-year master plan for Shelby Farms Park, Memphis’s largest green space. Marlon Blackwell

Architects of Fayetteville, Arkansas, designed outbuildings to activate space in the park’s core. The boathouse (top) restaurant and retreat center (middle), and

outdoor event space (bottom) open out onto 80-acre Patriot Lake, a recreational focal point at the heart of the park.

RON COON / AERIAL INNOVATIONS



RON COON / AERIAL INNOVATIONS

Above: The Shelby Farms Park master plan is being implemented in phases. A central element of the Field Operations—designed Woodland Discovery Playground, completed in 2011, is a winding arbor planted with native trees and vines that demarcates the space's six play areas.

Below: Although famous for its musical contributions, Memphis has strong public art citywide. Since its founding in 1997, the UrbanArt Commission has completed over 140 projects, often in collaboration with community groups. Downtown, Jeff Zimmerman's

A Note for Hope (2008) overlooks AutoZone Park, home of the AAA Memphis Redbirds.



AUDREY WACHS

Suburbia, though, accounts for most of metro Memphis's rebound. Five of six rebounding neighborhoods are located outside the core downtown or in West Memphis, Arkansas. Declines in poverty rates may not be the result of new investment and opportunities for residents: The research is unable to determine whether residents in rebounding areas are getting wealthier, or whether there is an influx of people with higher incomes. Particularly in the South, Cortright noted, rebounding neighborhoods tend to be on the periphery of the metro area where formerly rural areas were developed into suburbs.

Architecture alone is not equipped to attack structural problems. Beyond neighborhood-level transformation, there's a limit to what a few signature projects can do to reverse the fortunes of a struggling city. For two years in a row, Memphis has had the highest poverty rate of any metro area of more than one million people—almost double the national average of 15 percent. Tom Jones, a consultant and blogger at *Smart City Memphis*, notes that

there are more people living in poverty here than the entire population of Chattanooga. While gentrification dominates the conversation in large metropolises, the effects of concentrated poverty, not gentrification, are the greatest challenge for most cities.

Is the city of Memphis rebounding? The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis offers perspective: Stubbornly high unemployment, a lackluster housing market, and weak growth in most industries indicate that there are many obstacles to economic recovery, although education, health, and business services remain relatively strong. Urban renewal projects "provide reasons for optimism."

When sprawl and entrenched poverty are prevailing conditions, what constitutes successful urban revitalization? At what scale? These questions can be asked not just in Memphis, but St. Louis, Atlanta, Detroit, and many other lower-density, high-poverty cities that are nevertheless experiencing reinvestment in targeted areas.

AUDREY WACHS IS THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER'S ASSISTANT EDITOR.

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Architecture Today**
6:00 p.m.
678 Mission St., San Francisco
californiahistoricalsociety.org

LECTURES
Duel + Duet
Peter Testa and Greg Lynn
7:00 p.m.
Southern California Institute
of Architecture
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
sma.sciarc.edu

**Sou Fujimoto with
Nicholas de Monchaux**
Architecture and the Future
12:00 p.m.
BAMPFA
2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley
bampfa.berkeley.edu

**SATURDAY 27
EVENT**
**Diamonds & Gold Tour:
The Art Deco Skyscraper
Northwest Style**
10:00 a.m.
Center for Architecture
and Design
1010 Western Ave., Seattle
seattlearchitecture.org

**MONDAY 29
LECTURE**
Tom Wiscombe
6:30 p.m.
University of California,
Los Angeles
aud.ucla.edu

MARCH

**SATURDAY 5
LECTURE**
Lawrence Rinder:
Building and Metaphor
The New BAMPFA
and Architecture of Life
1:30 p.m.
BAMPFA
2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley
bampfa.berkeley.edu

**MONDAY 7
LECTURES**
Jacques Herzog
6:30 p.m.
S. R. Crown Hall
IIT College of Architecture
3360 South State St., Chicago
arch.iit.edu

Peter Zellner
5:30 p.m.
1100 Architecture+Design
Studios
845 West Harrison St.
Chicago
arch.uic.edu

Architecture is Art
**Tod Williams Billie Tsien
Architects**
6:00 p.m.
MCA Edlis Neeson Theater
220 East Chicago Ave., Chicago
architecture.org

Michael Young
Hard Boiled
6:00 p.m.
McNeal Hall
1985 Buford Ave.
St. Paul, MN
events.umn.edu

**TUESDAY 8
LECTURE**
**Mabel O. Wilson
and Peter Tolkin**
6:00 p.m.
Graham Foundation
4 West Burton Pl., Chicago
grahamfoundation.org

**WEDNESDAY 9
LECTURE**
Etienne Iliffe-Moon
6:00 p.m.
Gin D. Wong Conference Center
Harris Hall
USC School of Architecture
Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

**FRIDAY 11
LECTURE**
**Benjamin Aranda
and Chris Lasch**
4:30 p.m.
Ethel S. Abbot Auditorium
Sheldon Museum of Art
R St., Lincoln, Nebraska
architecture.unl.edu

MONDAY 14
Ferda Kolatan
6:30 p.m.
College of Fine Arts
Carnegie Mellon University
5000 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh
soa.cmu.edu

**WEDNESDAY 16
LECTURE**
Michael Meredith
5:30 p.m.
1100 Architecture+Design
Studios
845 West Harrison St., Chicago
arch.uic.edu

**THURSDAY 17
FILM**
Afronauts
**Frances Bodomo and
Jacqueline Stewart**
6:00 p.m.
Graham Foundation
4 West Burton Pl., Chicago
grahamfoundation.org

**FRIDAY 18
EXHIBITION OPENING**
Ellie Abrons: Inside Things
7:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc Gallery
Southern California
Institute of Architecture
960 East 3rd St.
sciarc.edu

FILM
Frei Otto:
Spanning the Future
6:00 p.m.
Gin D. Wong Conference Center
USC School of Architecture
Los Angeles
arch.usc.edu

**MONDAY 21
LECTURE**
Sebastian Kaal
6:30 p.m.
College of Fine Arts
Carnegie Mellon University
5000 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh
soa.cmu.edu

**WEDNESDAY 23
LECTURE**
Lesley Lokko: Tropics Antics
6:00 p.m.
Graham Foundation
4 West Burton Pl., Chicago
grahamfoundation.org



IWAN BAAN

**ARCHITECTURE OF INDEPENDENCE:
AFRICAN MODERNISM**
Graham Foundation
Madlener House, 4 West Burton Place, Chicago
Through April 9, 2016

Based on a book of the same name, *Architecture of Independence: African Modernism* explores the boom of modernist buildings in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960s and 1970s. With research by architect and writer Manuel Herz and photographs by Iwan Baan and Alexia Webster, *Architecture of Independence* looks at 80 buildings in five countries. From new parliament buildings to schools and central banks, the show presents architecture as a means of declaring and expressing independence after centuries of colonization. Along with local architects and planners, architects from Poland, Yugoslavia, Scandinavia, Israel, and, surprisingly, former colonial powers, transformed urban and government centers across the continent.

This exhibition is being shown for the first time in the United States at the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts in cooperation with the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany. Numerous talks and film screenings will accompany the exhibition throughout its run.

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MINNESOTA'S MODERN LOVE

Minnesota Modern: Architecture and Life at Midcentury
 by Larry Millett
 University of Minnesota Press, \$49.95

In his new book, *Minnesota Modern: Architecture and Life at Midcentury*, author Larry Millett reminds readers: "Midcentury modernism was more than just a style. At its heart, it offered the prospect of a world unchained from the past. Behind

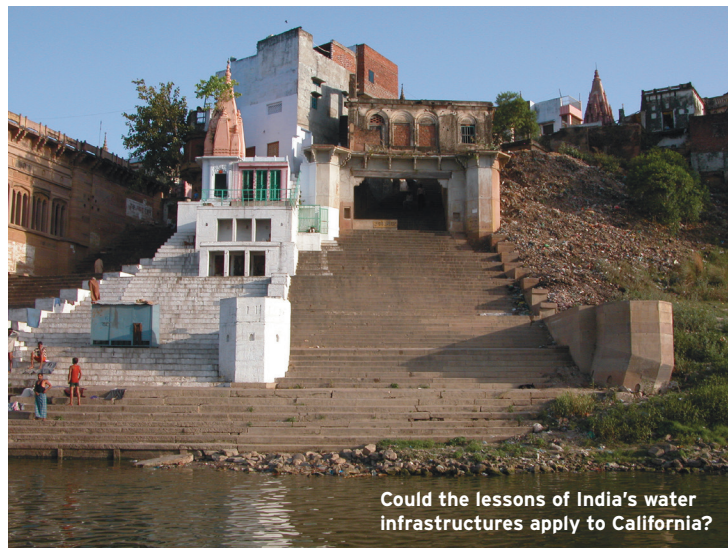
the movement lay a whole way of thinking about how to live, work, and play in the new suburban communities that sprang up after World War II."

Perhaps never more so than in Minnesota, where a burgeoning,

postwar population in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul began to sprawl beyond city boundaries across the fields and prairies, in large part because of the tract houses built quickly and inexpensively by Orrin Thompson

Homes. Young couples could afford to marry and raise families in the new ramblers and drive their new cars on new highways connecting their cookie-cutter suburbs with new shopping malls and office buildings. In fact, Millett opens his book with a 1953 image of Minnesota's first cloverleaf highway interchange, built in 1937 just outside of Minneapolis in a soon-to-be first-ring suburb. There's an argument to be made here: that midcentury modern—the good, the bad, and the ugly—is suburban. In his book, however, he covers not only modest suburban ramblers, but also how the reach of mid-century modern encompassed a remarkable array of architectural typologies in locations (rural, suburban, and urban) throughout the state—consider Marcel Breuer's church at Saint John's Abbey and University (Collegeville); Eliel Saarinen's Christ Church Lutheran (Minneapolis); Eero Saarinen's IBM Building (Rochester); the Northwestern National Life Insurance Building by Minoru Yamasaki (Minneapolis); and Victor Gruen's Southdale Center (Edina), the first enclosed shopping mall in the United States. Midcentury modern also encompasses Ralph Rapson's Guthrie Theater (razed), along with such no-less-venerated venues as the Terrace Theatre in Robbinsdale (mothballed), the now-iconic Dairy Queen in Roseville (still dishing up soft serve), and St. Paul's Porky's Drive-In (razed).

affordable rambler, midcentury modern birthed other housing types, from the long, one-level ranch house, to compact metal Lustron homes, to the flat-roofed, glass-walled, open-plan, architect-designed residence. Millett includes 12 such "high-style" homes throughout Minnesota—by Frank Lloyd Wright and Twin Cities' architects Elizabeth Close, Ralph Rapson, and Gerald Buetow, among others. But his investigation goes even deeper. As Millett also points out, mid-century modern, which dominated architecture and design from about 1945 to the late-1960s, "penetrated like oil into the social, political, and cultural machinery of the times." So while delving into these projects and more in a nearly 400-page book rich with photography and illustration, Millett also places Minnesota's love of midcentury modernism in a broader context. He traces Minnesota's development and practice of midcentury modernism to three sources or "strains." One was the work of such European architects like Adolf Loos, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, Rudolph Schindler, Richard Neutra, the Saarinens, Alvar Aalto, and Le Corbusier ("who was very fond of American concrete grain elevators, a building type invented in Minnesota in 1989"). Millett describes how these architects' work and influences, combined with elements of art deco and art moderne, **continued on page 23**



WATER WORLDS

Ganges Water Machine: Designing New India's Ancient River
 Anthony Acciavatti
 Applied Research and Design Publishing, \$49.95

The Ganges River originates in the Himalayas and flows across northern India, where it ends in the Ganges River Basin, a highly productive agricultural zone that encompasses one-quarter of India's current

population of more than 1.25 billion people. In addition to the problem of balancing agricultural production and high population density, the Ganges River is also an alluvial plain, radically changing every year due

to the summer monsoons. It is the highly dynamic nature of the Ganges and the infrastructure that has been built around it, ranging from the colonial canals to networks of individually drilled wells, that have inspired Anthony Acciavatti's extensive research collected in *Ganges Water Machine*. His book draws connections between agricultural zones and urban centers and gives perspective to the possibilities for design research that are as applicable to the growth of "New India" as they are to arid California. Trained as both an architect and a historian of science, Acciavatti has traveled extensively in the Ganges River Basin for the past decade and has documented its layers of development and speculated about its future. It is this tension between illustrating the past and outlining scenarios for the future that allows *Ganges* to function as both atlas and almanac, a socio-technological history of the Ganges River Basin and an index of diagrams, photos, and maps that contemplates how its changing. Acciavatti begins at present-day Gaumukh, one of the primary sources of the Ganges, and descends into the Ganges River Basin while combining text, image, and diagram

to describe the interplay of the indigenous and the imperial. Acciavatti compiled more than 25,000 photos during the course of his research, and he uses a sampling of these images to show the passage of time and states of change. Alexander von Humboldt's concept of the transect, a three-dimensional sectional drawing meant to highlight change in the natural environment, appears throughout the book. These transect drawings reveal the gradient of the river surface and the natural conditions below and beyond the Ganges basin. With the continual use of sectional drawings and photographs throughout the project, Acciavatti complements contemporary documentation with archival images of imperial fantasy related to the Ganges. These British colonial representations morph into a narrative of the Ganges as a "supersurface," a river basin that connects to a network of canals extending throughout northwest India. Here, a narrative of control emerges through the exploration of work of Victorian-era engineers such as Sir Proby Cautley and Patrick Flynn. This narrative is paired with design documentation of projects in three major zones of

the Ganges River Basin. Each of these zones involved the construction of *rajbujas*, outlets to villages from the central canal, which were owned by irrigators, not the government. Despite this ability to distribute water through *rajbujas*, and an ever-expanding canal system off the Ganges, colonial engineers were learning by the mid-1940s that mass starvation could occur should an even greater percentage of the population not gain access to the water of the Ganges. It was this necessity that drove the development of the tubewell, a steel or plastic pipe that can extend 200 feet below the surface and, with the use of an engine, extract water from the aquifer that flows beneath the Ganges. With the creation of tubewells, the control of water was extended away from the government and into the hands of farmers and millions of others who live near the densely populated Ganges River Basin. The World Bank, the American government, and NGOs became involved in the development of tubewells, which now number more than 3.5 million in the Ganges region. With an extensive description of the development of the tubewell network, Acciavatti briefly speculates on who owns **continued on page 23**

MINNESOTA'S MODERN LOVE continued from page 22 produced such Minnesota architects as Rapson—a proponent and practitioner of the International Style.

California's ranch houses (even though their emphasis on outdoor living didn't translate well in Minnesota's tough winter climate) and the corresponding commercial version (affectionately named Googie) were the second source of influence. A third strain apparent in Minnesota's midcentury modernism was the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, particularly his Usonian houses. Millett goes on to add that materials developed during World War II—laminated wood trusses that were used instead of steel, as well as prefabricated structures and prestressed concrete—also influenced the design and construction in midcentury modernism in Minnesota and elsewhere.

Despite these influences, Millett stresses that, "midcentury architecture in Minnesota was mostly a homegrown product." Today, many of buildings designed by local and regional architects are sorely in need of preservation. The former architecture critic for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Millett is an architectural historian whose previous books include *Lost Twin Cities* and *Once There Were Castles: Lost Mansions* and

Estates of the Twin Cities. Both books, as their titles suggest, discuss the architectural treasures Minnesota has lost to the wrecking ball.

Millett's new book concludes with a call to action. Though the "architectural legacy of the midcentury era in Minnesota is decidedly mixed," he writes, citing instances of "drably utilitarian" public buildings, "excesses of urban renewal" in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and ill-planned suburbs, "the time has come to look at ways to protect significant works of the period." Many of these works are now eligible for National Register of Historic Places designation.

What need to be saved, Millett continues, are not just individual "high-style homes" and the churches that have become "masterpieces of American architecture," but entire neighborhoods of midcentury residences. The problem, he continues, is that "architectural modernism, especially in its high-style manifestations, has always had an elitist aura, and the general public has never really warmed to it."

Minnesotans, with their no-nonsense approach, nonetheless cultivated a singular architectural sensibility worth saving.

CAMILLE LEFEVRE IS A MINNEAPOLIS-BASED WRITER.

WATER WORLDS continued from page 22 these wells and the possibility of uneven development and the concentration of power in their operation. However, with the amount of rigor and research previously devoted to describing large-scale water projects, both the concepts of atlas and almanac would be greatly enhanced through some mapping of existing tubewells as well as drawing connections to ownership, operation, and power.

Acciavatti ends *Ganges* with a chapter titled "Changes of State," which extensively documents the existing conditions of six transects of the supersurface of the Ganges River. With its invocation of change, this final chapter most aspires to function as almanac, an illustration of the dynamic nature of the Ganges and how it impacts the population around it. While attractive as abstract line drawings, the representation in this section is difficult to read and even harder to understand in terms of its implications of change. Perhaps this is where the book falls short as an almanac. While Acciavatti's work rigorously weaves documentation of present conditions with a history of the design and development of the Ganges supersurface, the dynamic nature of the river and the power of those

who control it are not as apparent.

For readers familiar with the development of water infrastructure that led to the growth of the West, and 20th-century Los Angeles in particular, greater probing into the nature of infrastructure, water, and power might seem merited. The California Water Wars, which began with the construction of the Los Angeles aqueduct and the drainage of water from Owens Valley, created a political dynamic between urban growth and the agricultural economy that continues to affect the future of planning and development in California. It is impossible to understand the creation of the Los Angeles aqueduct as its own kind of water machine without studying the political forces that both supported and fought its development.

Despite this, *Ganges Water Machine* offers us a viewpoint and suggests a methodology for documenting and understanding water infrastructure. As our own approach to the built environment will inevitably need to adapt due to the contingencies of climate change, this viewpoint is a valuable starting point for conceiving new processes for design in response to constant states of change.

PAUL SCHUETTE IS AN ARCHITECT, WRITER, AND STRATEGIST LIVING IN OAKLAND.

Who's Afraid of the Big, Bad Xenotype?

Xenotypes

Design Matters Gallery, 11527 West Pico Blvd, Los Angeles, CA
November 7, 2015 - January 8, 2016

Design Matters is an open, white space tucked behind storefront windows in a concrete block building on the western edge of Los Angeles. Part gallery, part architecture office, the hybrid venue promotes an expanded model of design appreciation. As Mark Bittoni, the director, explained, the venture's name conveys the aspiration: "Initially, I set out to use the word 'matter' more as a noun, but as I developed the gallery concept and the range of shows that I wanted to present, it seemed to be more fitting as a declaration of sorts." By putting private practice on display and by interchanging the expectations for design and art, he introduces conditions that he hopes elevate the societal awareness of architecture's material and technological experimentation—and, in turn, of its art value.

In a recent Design Matters exhibition, the works of nine groups of architect-designers are presented as part of a literal alternate universe of and for design. The arrangement is ordinary enough, just another gathering of creative productions in a showroom setting. As expected of such expositions, things hang from walls and occupy arranged positions on the floor. The media of the pieces, typical to the contemporary maker scene, are mixed, including drawing, modeling, coding, and fabricating. The premise for this assembly, though, is not to conform, but rather, to unsettle.

Entitled *Xenotypes*, the exhibition brings to life imagery from the pages of eVolo's 2013 *Xenoculture* publication,

a document dedicated to "intensifying [the] practices of [xenophobia] towards new thresholds, those that unleash the potential of the alien in the world." Carlo Aiello, cocurator along with Juan Azulay (who guest edited the publication), sees the materialization of the magazine content as a next, more intimate, step in furthering an innovation agenda: "I am always looking for the 'xeno' gene, the DNA that breaks the mold and pushes into new outcomes."

The *Xenotypes* notion of advancement builds from a fascination focused on the visually extreme. The assumption is that there is (r)evolution in the look of the foreign—that the unfamiliar, or the act of misinterpreting it, is evocative of radical emergence. Herein, the optically strange, through the allure or repulsion of exoticism, clears the way for the abnormal and encourages the stranger still. Flat, figurative, and form-driven specimens, classed by the curators for their aesthetic as extra-terrestrial, are imbued with the compositional power to trigger the ever unexpected.

Xenotypes deploys these logics with a sample population of proto-architectural creatures. The presentation, ambiguous in its explanations, confronts unsuspecting visitors with alien first encounters: Hollow shells of a barnacle species amass, sitting on a shelf, in a conjoined family of puckered orifices. Or, framed in a row, three Mylar slides capture dissections of a mysterious, hirsute anatomy in inked

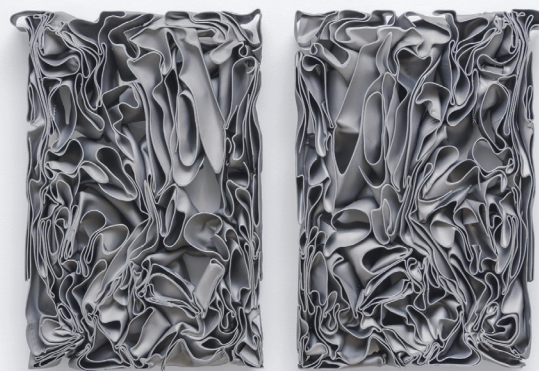
multispectral images.

The taxonomy continues in a line-up of bulbous glassy jellies pooling in a corner crosswise from a vine of pink plastic articulated tentacles. Nearby, a many-appendaged animal glows under enveloping restraints, pushing subtly in protruding bulges at the bounds of an apparently elastic casing. Interspersed with the biological, a few technological deposits, including a meshed metallic hammock and pixelated multiples of a faraway color-field cartography, lay out not the alien being, but rather the inanimate stuff of a science-fiction future.

If the *Xenotypes* theory holds, these entities are enough in the weirdness of their pedestaled physicality to inspire the passion or fear generative of breakthrough in the experience of the designed environment; by spectacle alone they are presumed to imbue their onlookers with the will to interrogate, if not reinvent, the everyday. But, disassociated as they are from their provenance, they, like any found object, depend on the imaginative impulse generated by their audience's first impression to perceive and further the potential latent to their form. All to say, sure, these things are edgy and cool to behold, but the show's exclusive reliance on appearances traps the works—these alien creatures—in their bodies. Limited to a fixed and objectified state, distanced from the journey of intent and technique that conditioned them, they are held back from their intergalactic ambition to do more than momentarily attract a mystified gaze.

In the *Xenoculture* source text, on the other hand, the alien aesthetic is a byproduct of design processes loosed without stylistic concern; it is an effect of a pursuit driven by questions indeterminate in shape.

Crushed and flayed steel from Ball-Nogues Studio.



COURTESY DESIGN MATTERS GALLERY.

This methodological bias is more suggestive of how the *Xenotypes* might satisfy their designated role as progenitors of change in the standards of the art of building. It offers a rereading of the Design Matters collection, one that makes the mechanisms of mutation transparent.

Instead of simply showing a row of organic-tissue-like slabs, sensuous in the leathery sheen of their rippling folds and pockets, the visual appeal of the Ball-Nogue Studio's four steel wall panels might, if allowed some history, broaden into a larger narrative about industrial production. The four prototype segments tell a tale that spans from scrap metal recovery, to junkyard compressor appropriation, to multi-shop fashioning and finishing. It's a story of insight, motivation, and humor that, with a window into the whys and hows of execution, is simultaneously relatable and wonder inciting.

Similarly, the patterns projected through the tessellated armature of the lamp by Alvin Huang's Synthesis, while mesmerizing in their dance of light and shadow, belie an extensive effort to push additive fabrication

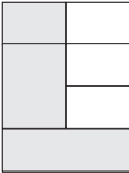
practices. The structure, one in a long series of trials, represents a breakthrough in the elimination of the support substance, and thereby the waste, of 3-D printing. By employing operations akin to corbelling, it utilizes plastic's stable angles of repose to arrive at its intricate lattice of cantilever geometries.

Most deceptively, the presentation of the *Two-String Piezoelectric Violin*, a collaborative work between Monad Studio and musician-luthier Scott F. Hall, as an inert tarry lozenge conceals both its utility and radicalism. The instrument upends musical expectations with its otherworldly shape and sound, alike. A coded arrest of a performer's rhythmic movements, it formalizes the actions of playing and skews the resonant frequencies of the resultant notes through a honeycombed, 3-D printed interior.

These details and revelations, however, bring the *Xenotypes* into a realm of comprehension, of affinity. They amount to an unmasking of the alien—an act that, of course, ultimately renders the works harmonious.

ANDREA DIETZ IS A LOS ANGELES-BASED ARCHITECT AND EDUCATOR.

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Taking cues from the Slow Food Movement, the future of landscape in the West is local and resilient, with or without a drought.

of Los Angeles's most distinctive streetscapes derive their historic identity from the use of a single street-tree species, such as the towering *Washingtonia* palm. If the ground cover plantings under these established trees were indigenous, the many possible combinations within the street-tree system would increase neighborhood and street-to-street differentiation. Simply removing the pervasive lawn and replacing it with better-suited understory plants would have an impact at the urban scale. The floral diversity under the trees would make it easier to understand where in the world you are at a glance, telling a more authentic and healthy story of a place.

Embracing Slow Landscapes

It is inherently false that El Niño would render such drought-tolerant Slow Landscapes obsolete. Episodic El Niño winters are as much an integral part of the California climate as sporadic drought is. These extreme climatic cycles are not an aberration requiring a dramatic but temporary solution; our landscapes are neither instant nor static, but instead ebb and flow with the amount of rainfall. Acceptance of this variability is the essence of a movement toward Slow Landscapes. We will need to reexamine our landscape values and discover together what it means to live in Los Angeles.

Temperatures are increasing, and as soil moisture and water bodies evaporate rapidly under the one-two punch of extended drought and the advance of global climate change, it will be ever more crucial for Slow Landscapes to build in resilience and acceptance of seasonal and multiyear extreme weather fluctuations.

For the Los Angeles context, Slow Landscapes will mean, in part, bringing seasonality to our gardens and stressing acceptance of the "California Gold" of summer, along with the verdant green of winter. The great landscape gardens of the world rely on the "good bones" of a strong winter garden framework to define the ephemeral beauty of plantings. In other cultures, trees and plants that change color, lose their leaves, provide fleeting flowers, or patterned winter bark are revered for the reference they provide to the life cycle.

The "bones" of our Los Angeles gardens don't necessarily have to be organic. Our city's staggering aesthetic richness provides abundant opportunity for designers to merge novel, locally inspired forms and motifs with the dynamic living element of our indigenous flora. Imagine sprays of *Rosa californica*, the delicate pink native rose, draped upon trellises influenced in form by the sinewy infrastructural exoskeleton of the concrete freeways and waterways. Or sultry bright sages, evoking the dream of the Old West, laid out in parterre geometry derived from cultural icons, such as street art, graffiti, or commercial signs and marquees.

If the drought has a silver lining, it may be that more slow and thoughtful technology and capital are being focused on urban-scale infrastructural improvements that finally hybridize ecological and cultural needs. The reality is that Los Angeles's landscape has become an engineered environmental system that now needs to be reckoned with. Ecological issues, including soil health, heat-island effect, appropriate vegetation, habitat, and water use, collection, and recharge, all need to be weighed when considering our landscapes. True performance-based landscapes are still the minority of design projects, but this is changing rapidly. In addition, awareness of how cultural influences can and should affect our landscapes is growing.

The time is right to slow down and be ever more thoughtful in how we design and engineer our landscapes to create richer, more interesting, and more resilient spaces that are genuine and redolent of the best of an area's native environs.

SAMANTHA HARRIS IS A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT AND ARTIST. A PRINCIPAL AT RIOS CLEMENTI HALE STUDIOS, SHE IS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE STUDIO'S SLOW LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE.

SLOW LANDSCAPES

Long before Los Angeles was stereotyped as a place that didn't respect age or heritage, its terrain had been transformed from hillside native chaparral, oak woodlands, and riparian meadows to a regularized landscape of exotic evergreen trees, tropical palms, and green lawns. This botanical metamorphosis was spurred by Southern California's unusual ability to grow the vast majority of the world's plant species—given enough imported water.

By the 1950s, Los Angeles had found its own special place in garden history for having the finest, most pristine specimens of the flat, sterile, suburban yards that defined the era.

There has never been much historic consideration for the region's subtle seasonal changes, and there have been shamefully few examples of landscape design even attempting to harness the spectacle of California's vast poppy fields or the sculptural, shaded cathedrals found beneath our majestic native oaks. But now, four years of drought are finally forcing us to confront the limitations of these revisionist landscapes.

The Obsolescence of Canned Green Beans

Although Americans have moved on from many other midcentury values, Angelenos' landscapes still reflect the way people wanted to live 75 years ago. How then can we update our values? The Slow Food Movement, begun in 1986 by Carlo Petrini to protest the opening of a McDonald's near the Spanish Steps in Rome, provides a positive and applicable analogue to L.A.'s future landscape.

In recent years, more diverse demographics and lifestyles have combined with a better scientific understanding of diet and health to create a new normal in dining and an interest in rediscovering slow, local, and heirloom foods. Chefs around the world are now driven by the desire and attempt to keep local color, freshness, and authenticity in our cities. Vibrant, experimental restaurants serving regional and site-specific, farm-to-table/dock-to-dish cuisine have popped

up across the nation. This way of thinking about food has crossed over to home cooking as well, with the proliferation of neighborhood farmers' markets and the display of heirloom, organic produce and grass-fed beef as standard fare at many local supermarkets.

This groundbreaking and relatively rapid shift in the way Americans eat may very well parallel an imminent sea change in the way we consider and develop our landscapes. If canned green beans are no longer our go-to vegetable, why should exotic lawn grass continue to be our go-to landscape? Californians were among the first to embrace the Slow Food Movement; the current drought's water restrictions are impetus for us to recognize and support a Slow Landscape Movement.

A Slow Landscape Movement would create the framework for designing regional American landscapes that are more appropriate for our times. By designing landscapes that combine performative infrastructural technology with deep understanding of regional flora, fauna, and ecosystem function—and adding a large and crucial helping of creative artistry—we can make places that not only become more authentically rooted in Los Angeles, but can help lead the way for other U.S. cities to do the same. In fact, since Hollywood will most likely export images of our most successful and beautiful "Slow Landscapes," interest in which specific landscape "ingredients" define a region's own characteristics would grow.

Moving away from the monotonous overuse of passé and thirsty lawn grass is a great first step. In our front yards, sidewalk parkways, and street medians, grass is little more than a maintenance headache. What if we reconceived and replanted those areas with plants more suited to our climate and resources? In addition to using less water than grass, native, drought-tolerant plants require very little maintenance. They typically need supplemental water for just one or two years until establishment, and they rarely require the excessive use of petrochemical fertilizers or pesticides. Our neighborhoods in aggregate would utilize fewer resources and provide a healthier habitat for birds and beneficial insects.

Just as important for designers, our residential streets would have more identifying character. Many



COCURATORS CYNTHIA DAVIDSON AND MÓNICA PONCE DE LEÓN TAP INTO THE IMAGINATIONS OF 12 PRACTICES FOR THE 2016 VENICE BIENNALE UNITED STATES PAVILION

Detroit Imagined

Before 2016 Venice Biennale Director Alejandro Aravena put forth his charge to architects around the world to exhibit what they were working on to improve quality of life through architecture, the United States Pavilion was already imagining the future of postindustrial American cities. With Detroit as their inspiration, Anyone Corporation Director Cynthia Davidson and Princeton School of Architecture Dean Mónica Ponce de León are hoping to position the speculative work of 12 diverse offices as a model for urban architecture. Davidson and Ponce de León spoke with AN about their inspiration and how this year's U.S. Pavilion is engaging with the city.

The pavilion, titled The Architectural Imagination, will be part of the 15th Venice Architecture Biennale, open from May 28 through November 27 in Venice, Italy.

***The Architect's Newspaper.* Aravena has asked that the national pavilions "show what they have been fighting for on the home front," in trying to improve quality of life. What would you say the thesis for the U.S. Pavilion is this year and how does it relate to the Biennale as a whole?**

Cynthia Davidson: Well, Mónica and I were selected for the architecture show before Aravena was named the director of the biennale. When Aravena was announced, we were very pleased because we feel that our exhibition will be a very good fit with his ambitions even though we had conceived of it before we knew what he wanted to do. And this is because, Monica might have another idea, we are working with architects who are operating on the city. Detroit is a city that is rethinking what it means to be a postindustrial city in the 21st century. That is something you could say Americans are "fighting for on the home front" to put it in his words. We did not set out to achieve that, but we think we fit his agenda with what we are doing.

Mónica Ponce de León: Actually it is interesting. The project is not about

Detroit. The title of the project is The Architectural Imagination. We wanted to commission original work by architects to think about the 21st century. We chose Detroit because of its long history of creativity, of imagination, of being on the forefront of new ideas. So Detroit is a catalyst for thinking about the present and thinking about possible multiple futures. We also wanted the architects to produce speculative work, but to work within the context of the present and to have as their framework the realities of the city today. In Detroit many of the realities of the city are magnified. Detroit became a very positive city for us to work with.

What has been the reaction of the city, or people of the city?

Davidson: One of the things we did was through the University of Michigan's Taubman College. Mónica invited all of the architects to come to Detroit to meet with the advisory board we put together, which included Maurice Cox, the city's planning director, community leaders, people involved in real estate, and other institutions. A number of them had never heard of the Venice Biennale, and they are now really on board with it because it brings architects to Detroit to visit sites, meet with people in the communities, and have conversations about the definition of the architectural imagination. We did a lot of ground work with these architects before they started working. Not only has there been a great deal of media interest in what we are doing, but several people in Detroit are writing for the catalog. The exhibition is going to travel back to Detroit after the Biennale and will open at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit in March 2017. We think that's an incredible indication of the level of interest there.

Ponce de León: I think we are doing something really unique—as far as I know it has not been tried for the Biennale. We are not taking projects off the shelf.



We are commissioning work, but we decided the work should not just be "everything goes." So Cynthia and I, from the very beginning, before we chose the site, before we chose the architects, assembled an advisory board of people that know Detroit really well. We have a number of folks on the board who have been active for a long time on urban issues in Detroit and who are working very hard to make it a city of the future. They helped us select the sites. We had a weekend where we asked, "What sites need speculative work?" Not what are the sites that need to be fixed tomorrow, or what are the sites that are in ruins, or what are the sites that need quote-unquote "help?" But, instead, what are the sites that can be helpful in looking at the city of the 21st century and can become models outside of the city of Detroit as well? We came up with 20 sites originally and narrowed it down to seven with the board.

Davidson: Then Mónica and I revisited the seven sites and narrowed it down to four. We picked four because there are four rooms in the American Pavilion in Venice. (Laughing) It is sort of dumb...

That is probably the best way to do it...

Davidson: That way we have three architects on each site.

Ponce de León: The intent is that they are not working as teams; they are giving us three different proposals for each site. We don't want architecture to come across as a solver of problems, as if there is a single way to approach urban issues. Instead we wanted to show how architecture can show multiple solutions. One of the unique things we did was a national call of interest. We allowed anyone across the country to submit their interest in participating. And we selected 12 teams from across the country. Some of them are names you may know and some you have probably never heard of before. We ended up with a very diverse group with different forms of working, different histories, different expertise. Which we think is exciting because it shows the versatility of the discipline, the versatility of architecture. The third thing we did that was unique, as Cynthia was describing, was to organize a series of visits for these offices to come to Detroit to meet with community groups,



The idea of the future post-industrial American city, exemplified by Detroit, serves as inspiration for Cynthia Davidson (right) and Mónica Ponce de León's (left) vision for the U.S. pavilion at this year's Venice Biennale.

meet with business leaders, meet with government officials and really get to understand the culture of the place. Not just the physical characteristics that make a site, but also the broader context. We are very excited about the level of generosity of those that spent time with the architects, and the level of exchange between the architects and community members.

Davidson: Another reason those visits were important was because the architects are not just making forms, the architects are also choosing program. The community meetings and feedback were intended to help them to choose realistic programs. They are speculative projects and you can pick any kind of form, they could be sexy or grotesque, but we wanted them to be able to say, this is a bank, or this is a hotel, this is a hospital. It's really interesting how diverse the programs have become as well.

Are they producing parts of the pavilion in Venice or something on site in Detroit? Can you give us an idea of what they are producing, and what are the qualities we can expect of the pavilion in Venice? If you can.

Ponce de León: Everyone is required to build a model that is four by seven feet. They are free to do the model at whatever scale they choose. As a result, we are ending up with a wide variety of models, even for those working on the same site. We are also displaying other drawings and other models on the walls. We are not just showing final products. Cynthia and I have been very interested in displaying process drawings as a way to expose what we understand as the power of design, the architect's imagination. We are really happy that the 12 participants work very differently, so not only are the process drawings very different, the final products are very different. We have a really rich array of techniques and ways in which architects explore architectural ideas. They are as diverse as the architects themselves.

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