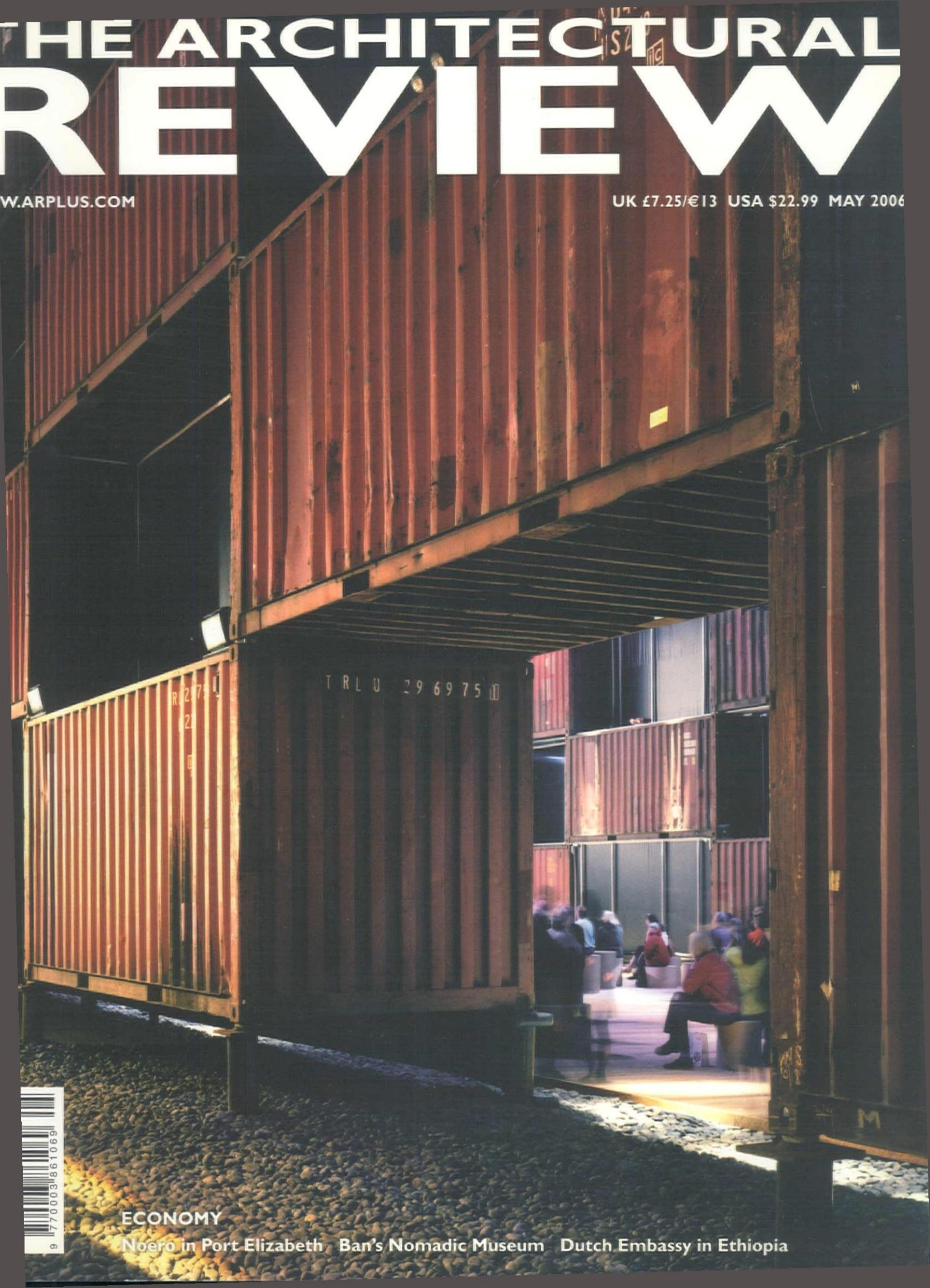
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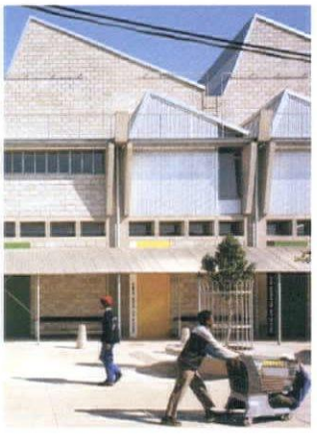
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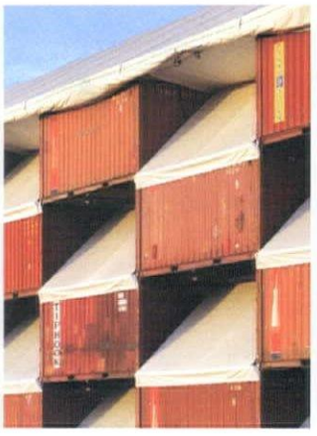
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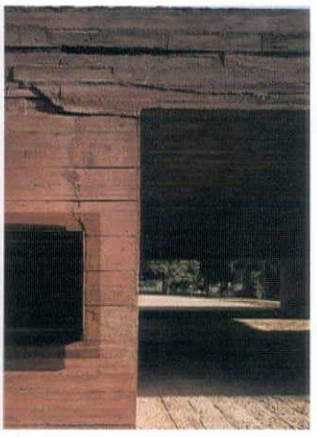
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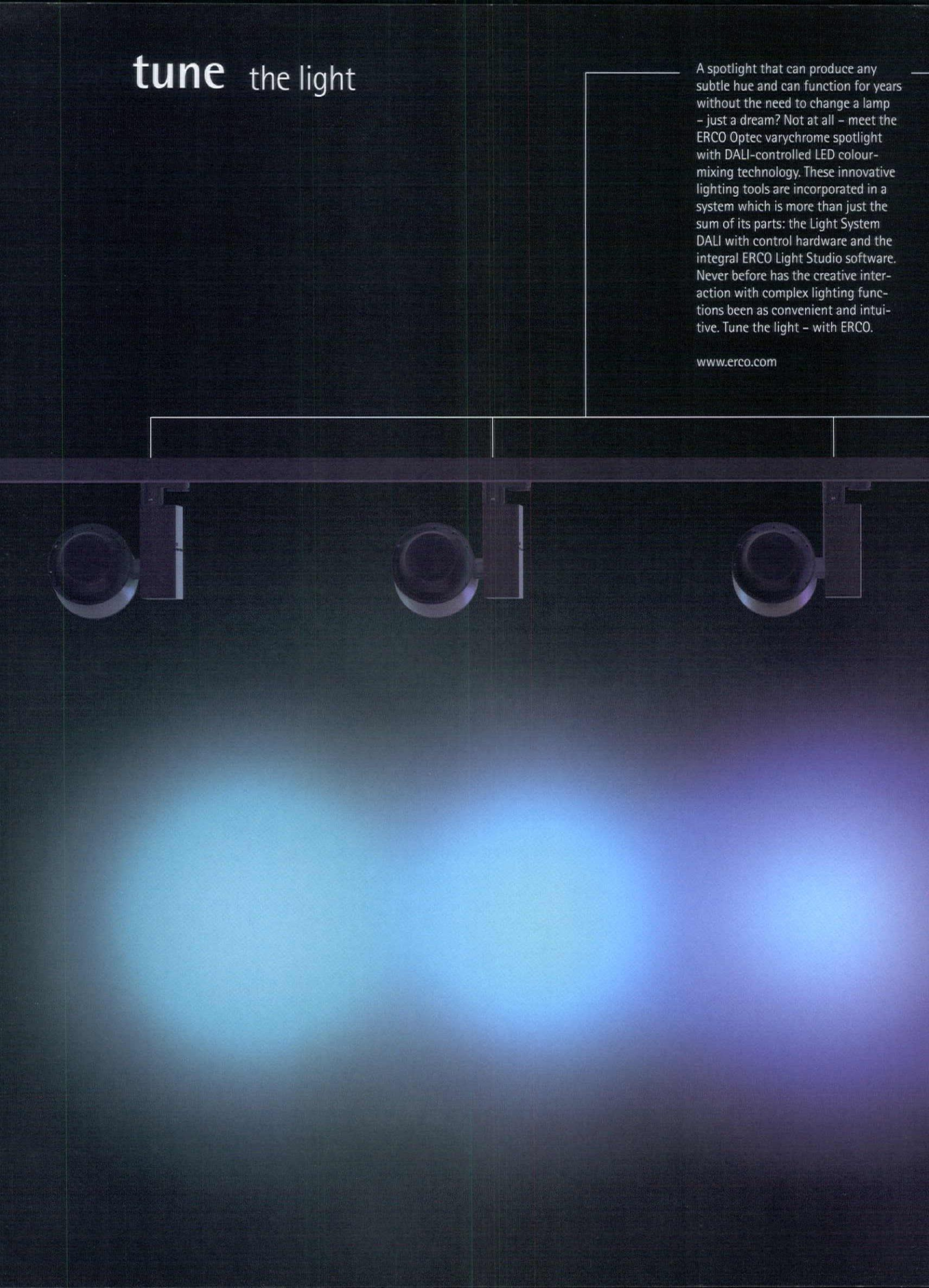
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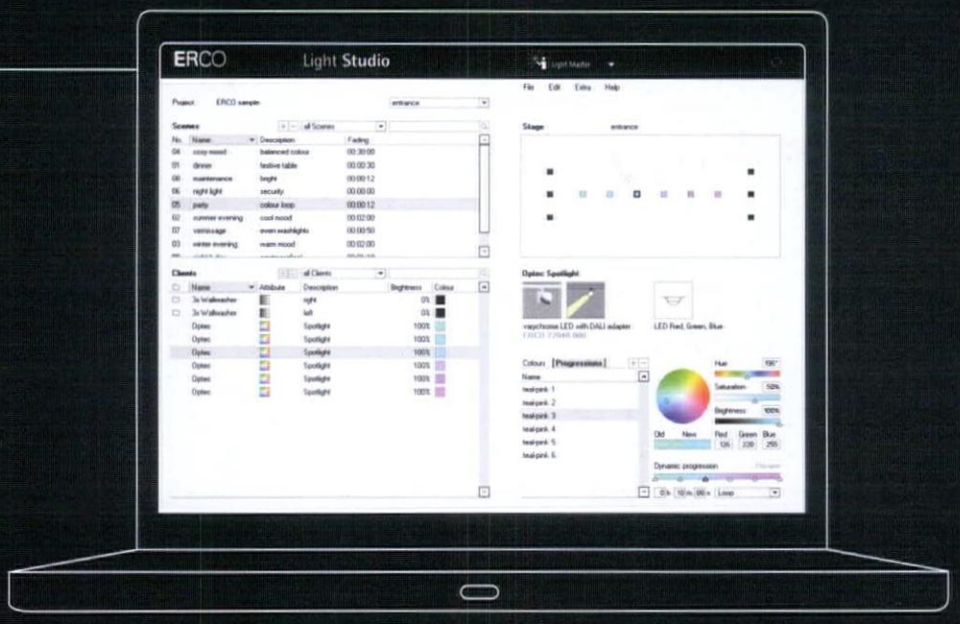
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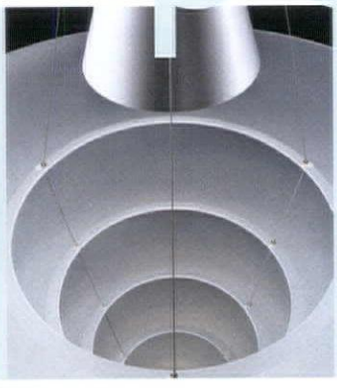
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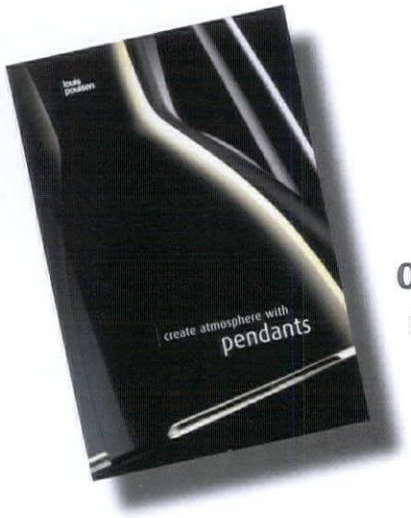
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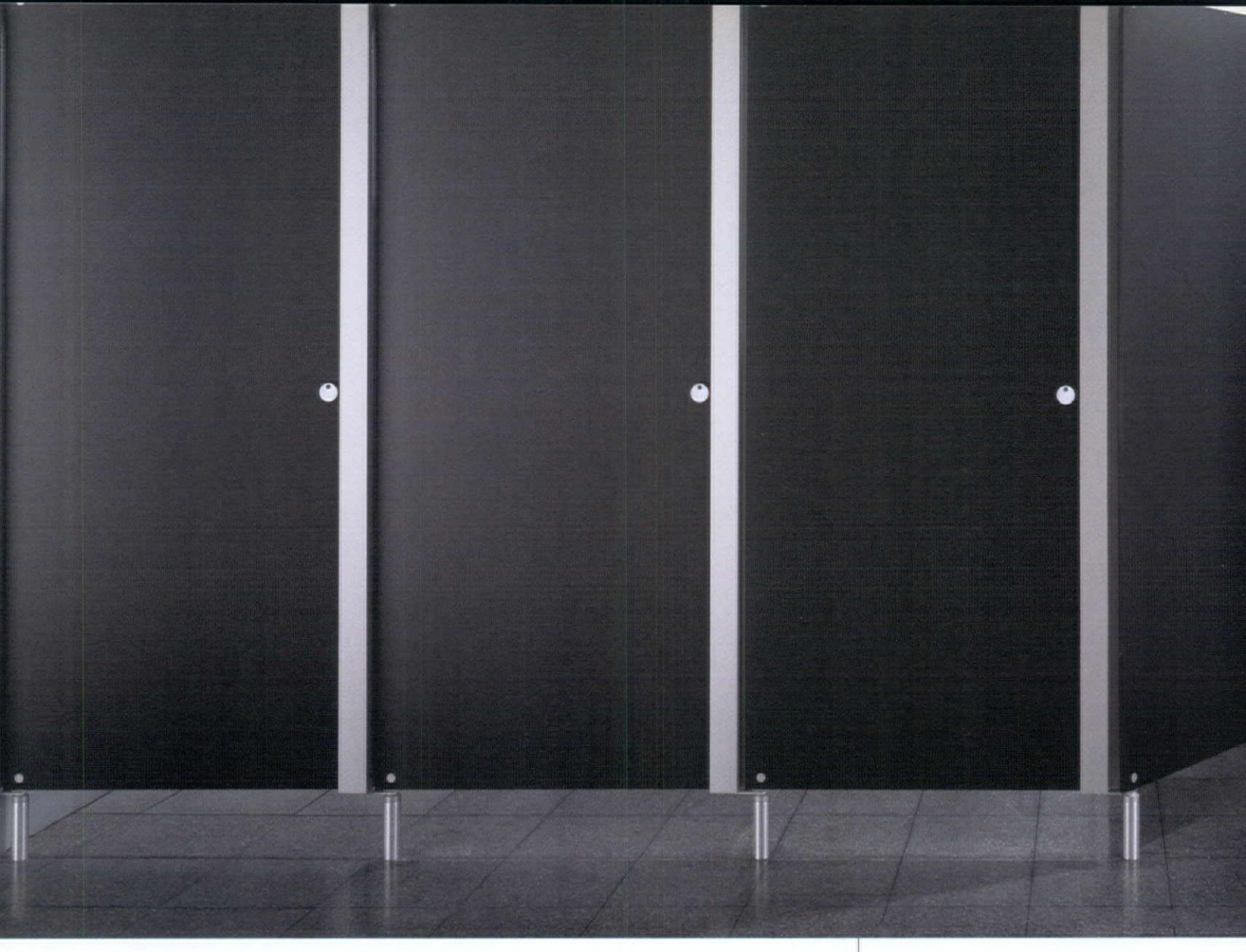
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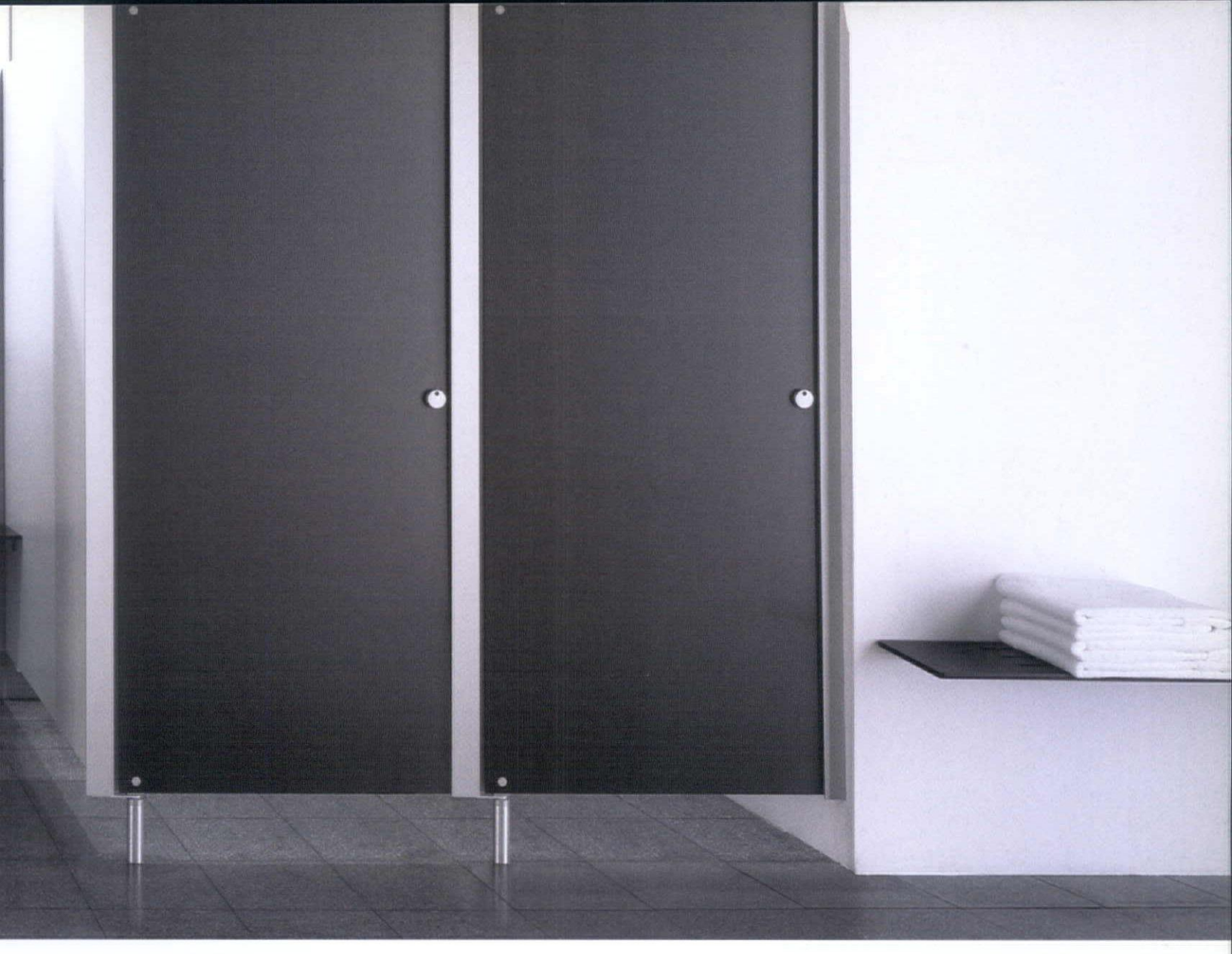
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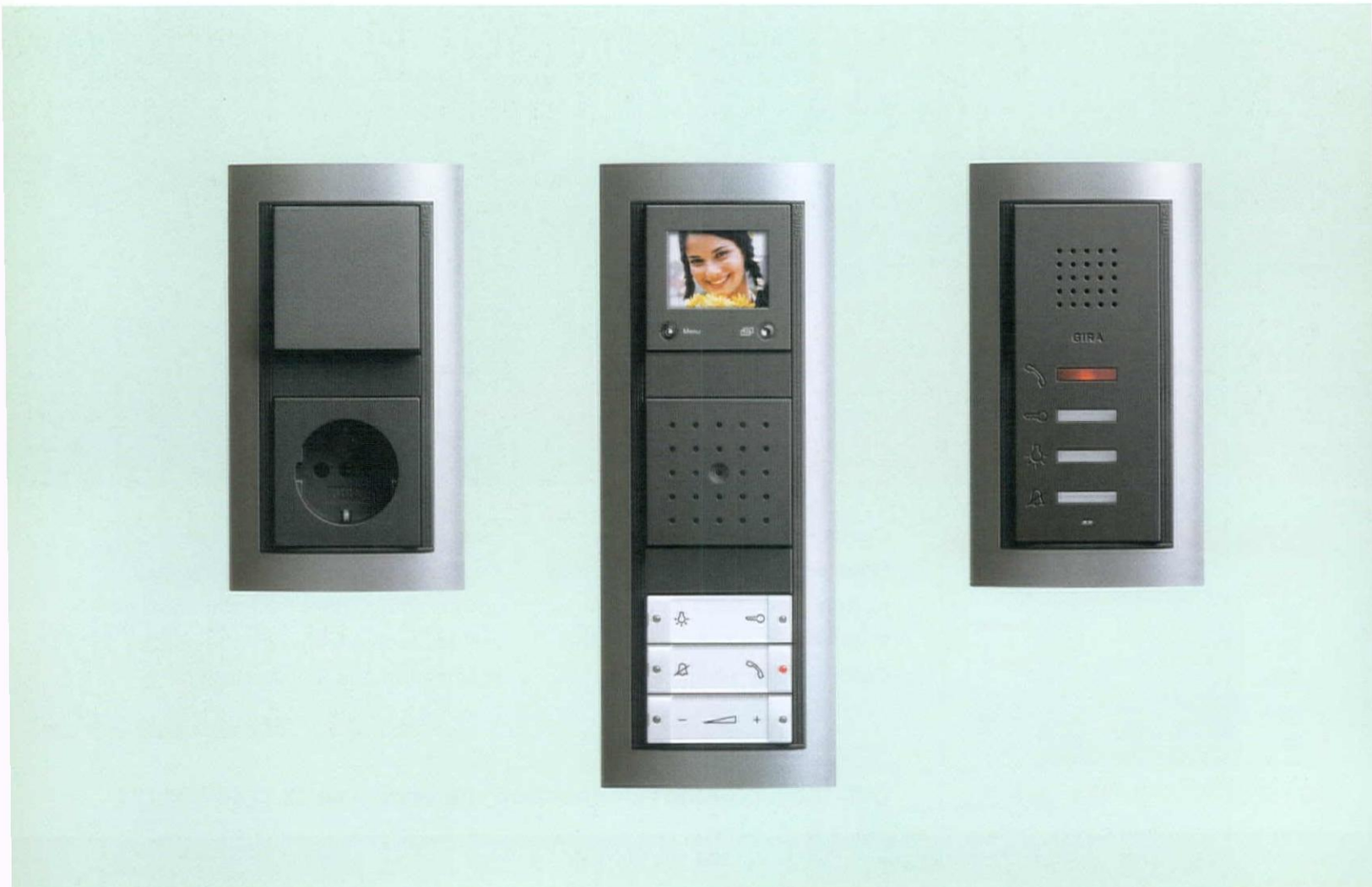
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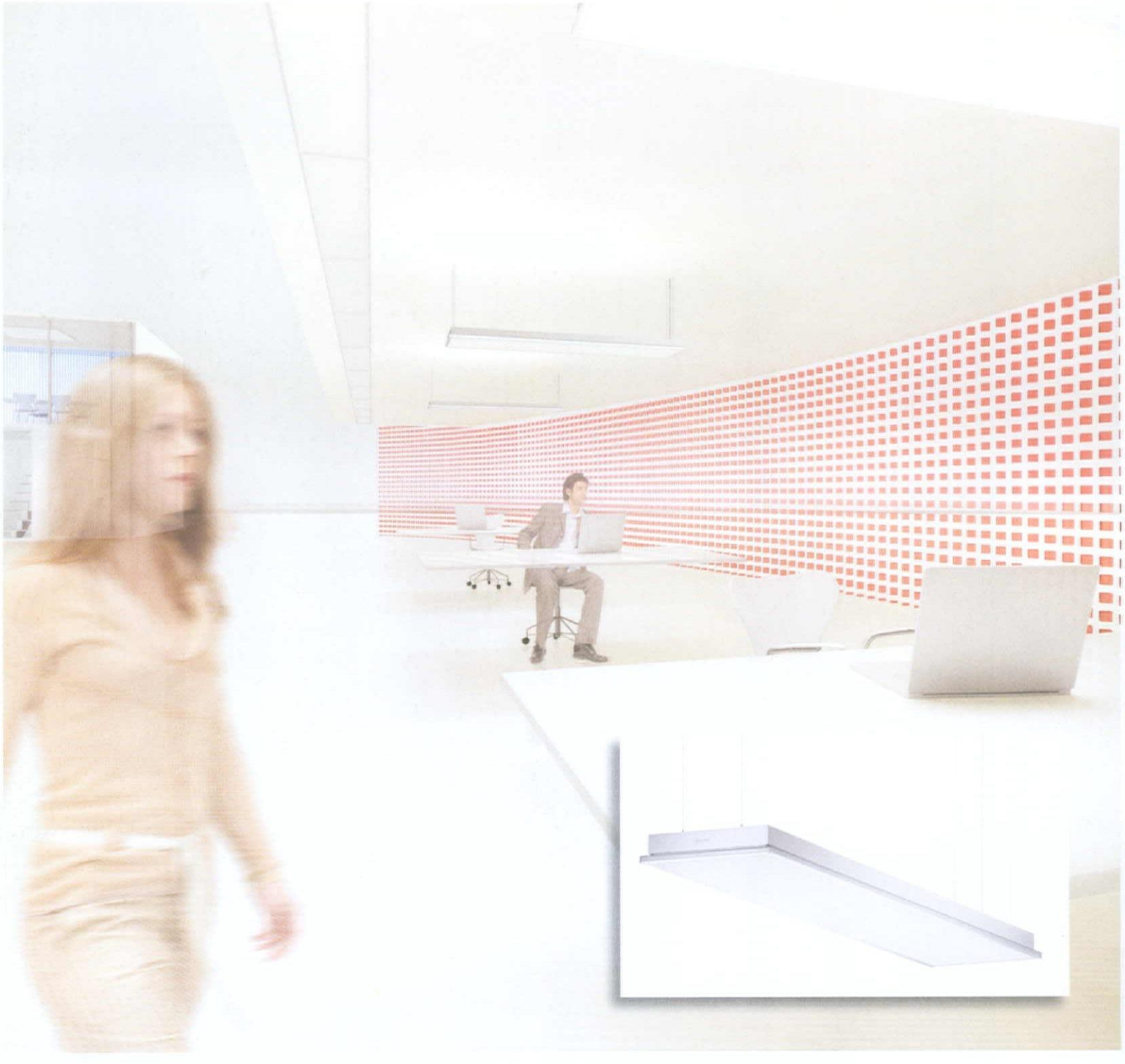


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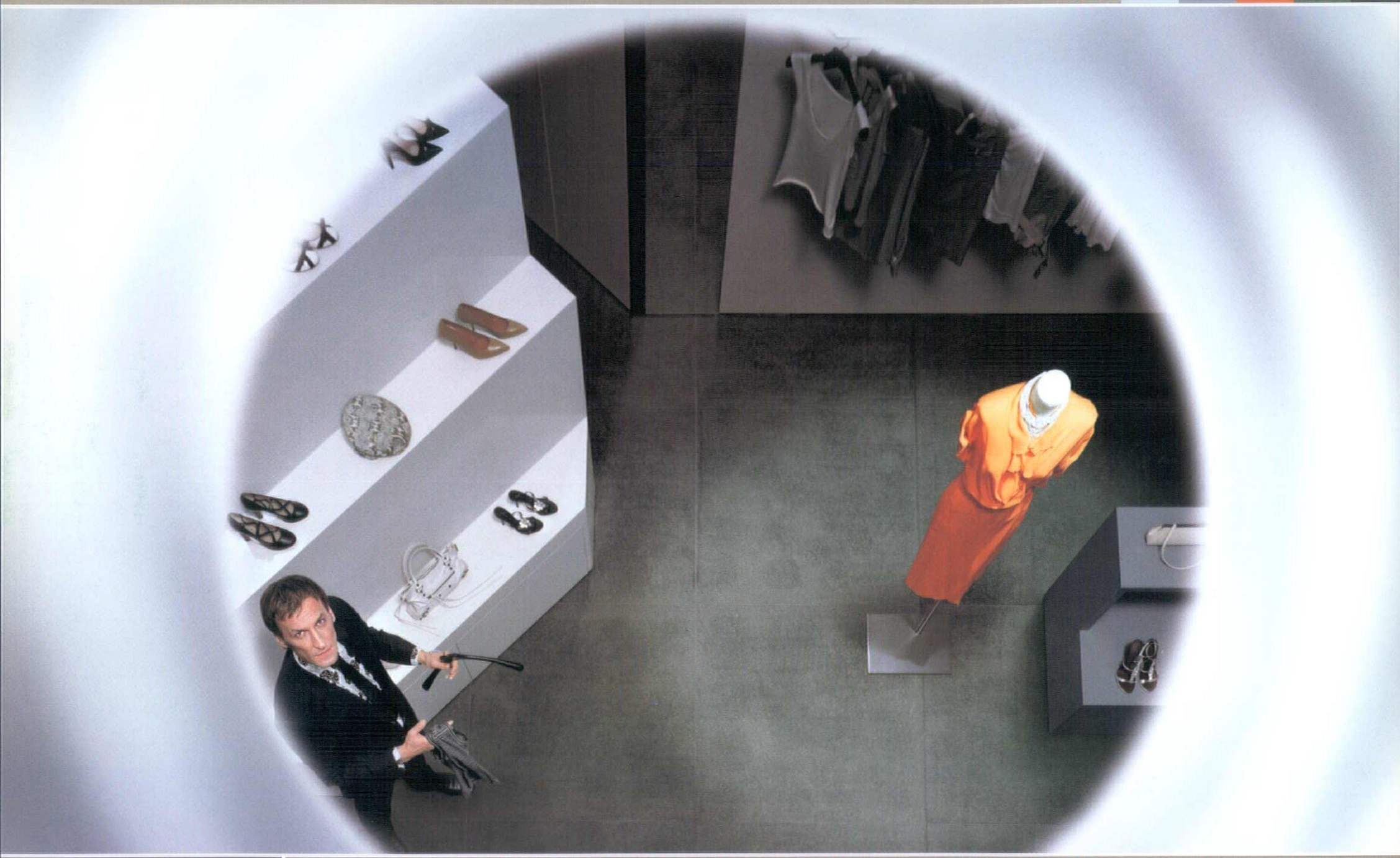
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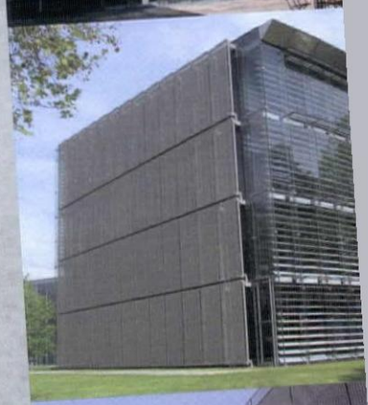
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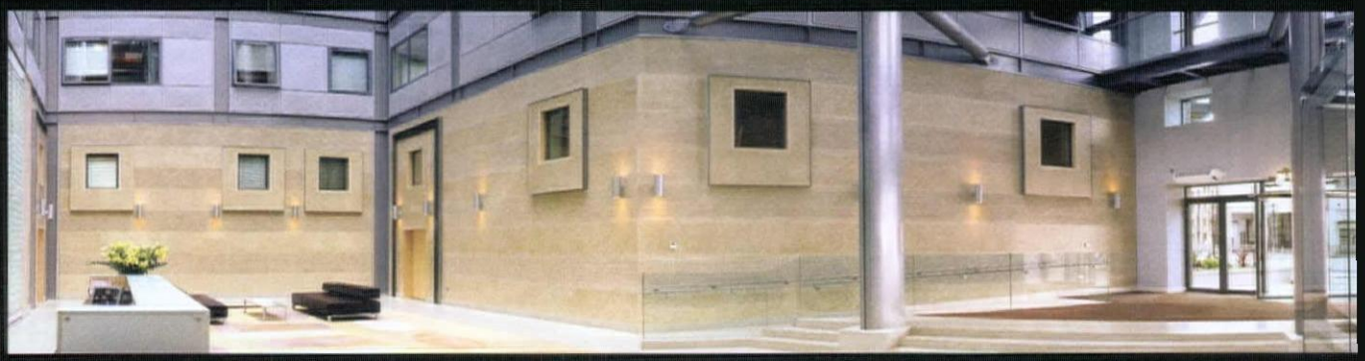
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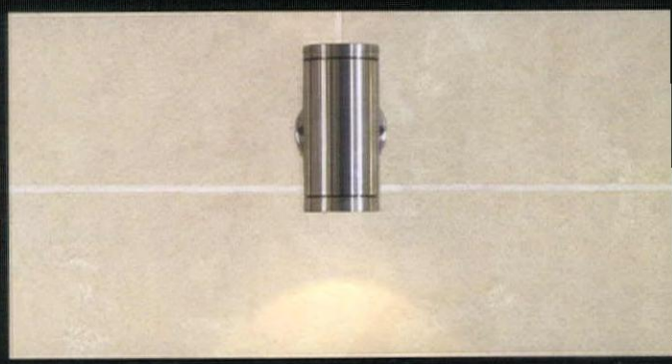






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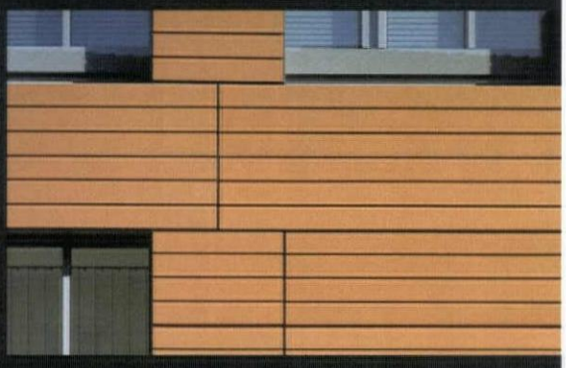
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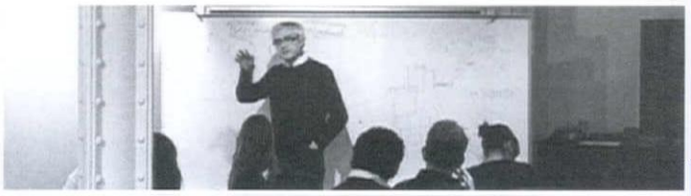
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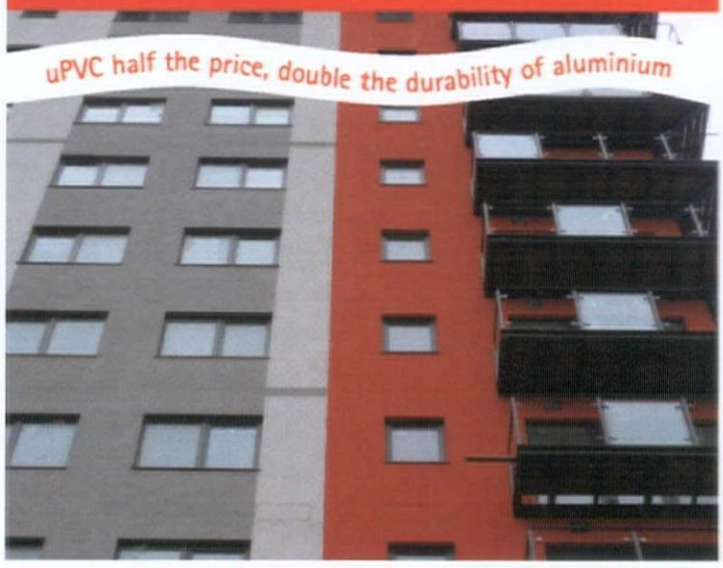
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view

REM KOOLHAAS AND CECIL BALMOND TO COLLABORATE ON THE ARCHITECTURE PAVILION AT THE SERPENTINE GALLERY IN LONDON; CALL FOR ENTRIES FOR THE AR AWARDS FOR EMERGING ARCHITECTURE; TOYO ITO WINS RIBA GOLD MEDAL; VIEW FROM MUSCAT; OUTRAGE AT THE DE YOUNG MUSEUM.

PUTTING MODERNISM IN PERSPECTIVE

Here in London Modernism is all the rage, at least in the world of museums and galleries. At Tate Modern, the work of Albers and Moholy-Nagy is displayed to magnificent effect; at the RIBA, an excellent photographic exhibition of Czech Modernism has reminded us just how advanced that country was in terms of architecture, design and industrial innovation in the first three decades of the twentieth century; and most ambitiously, the Victoria & Albert Museum is currently staging a highly successful show called simply 'Modernism'. Why now? Coincidence or zeitgeist? Whatever the answer, all three shows raise questions about our attitude to what could be simply categorised as a historical style from 80 years ago, or alternatively as a phenomenon which fundamentally changed the way we live, work, play and view the world to this day. The strength of the shows in prompting these thoughts cannot disguise the fact that they have a weakness, which is to say one is left wanting more from each: more about origins, more about the interrelationship of one design discipline to another, and more about the Modernist legacy.

Does the presentation of Modernism in somewhere like the V&A mean that as an idea it is a museum-piece? The current condition of architecture across the world suggests that far from dying out as an inspirational idea, it is flourishing as never before. As noted here last month, there is a big price to pay for the re-emergence of an International Style: a mutant version of ideal Modernism is marching across the developing world with scant regard for ecology, aesthetics or even simple functional need. Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin, always a dubious proposition for central Paris, is alive and well and propagating across southern China. Meanwhile in the developed world, the virtues of density related to reduced energy consumption are widely praised; tall buildings are in certain cities becoming everyday rather than exceptional, and the early Modern dreams of vertical cities are coming to pass. Happily there is fine work to counteract the worst excesses.

It is undeniable that we are all post-Modernists now, in the sense that Modernism can be identified as a historical style with its own language (or at least dialect), attached to a distinct period of history. That does not make us 'Post-Modernists' in the art historical sense of that phrase, since that style has more or less been and gone, never having taken root in the way some assumed would happen. Instead, there has been a reversion to the ideas and inspirations that informed the Moderns, and the splintering into different approaches by architects one could justifiably describe as Modernist suggest that the attack on Modernism by its critics was rather like being stung by a bee: painful for the recipient, but fatal for the attackers. PAUL FINCH

SPAIN REIGNS

Terence Riley wound up his MoMA career with a Spanish tour d'horizon.

It would appear from maps that guide visitors around the exhibition *Site: New Architecture in Spain* that the whole country has not seen so much building 'since the Romans unified the Iberian Peninsula with roadways and aqueducts during the reign of Augustus,' suggests its curator Terence Riley in the catalogue to his farewell exhibition at MoMA. In selecting 53 projects either under construction or recently completed, Riley captured a social dynamism reflecting recent years of liberality and Spain's participation as a power in the European Union, thus attracting a windfall of financial investments.

Though Spain may be a unified political entity, the exhibition was flavoured by its historic ties to regional autonomy, what the architect Rafael Moneo described at an opening event as 'a referential richness spread out over the country' (his Town Hall Extension across from the Cathedral in Murcia was one of the finest examples on view, AR July 1999). At the same time, the magnitude of projects, including concert halls, museums, office buildings, hotels, sports centres, airports and both public and private housing, attracted a stellar group of international architects, not that Spain has ever been devoid of significant and influential home-grown design. The whole spectrum of the past, from the clean lines of Mies van der Rohe's 1929 Barcelona Pavilion to the serpentine facades of Antoni Gaudí and his decorative splashes of colour, reverberated in this exhibition (where red predominated) without inhibiting innovative forms, not all of them successful.

Mural-size photographs of the 18 completed projects conveyed the transformative power expected of all the new architecture, especially in urban neighbourhoods. Jean Nouvel's phallic tower in Barcelona, Torre Agbar, clad in frosted glass and corrugated aluminium shaded from dark red to light blue, vibrantly lit at night, is pure fiesta and blended curiously with a honky-tonk local street carnival at its base. Also, in Barcelona, Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue's Santa Caterina Market (AR November 2005) constructed over old convent ruins and the remains of a neoclassical market building, celebrates with its broad undulating multi-coloured tiled roof (an abstraction of the palette, the architects say, of a produce stand) the spirit of Gaudí's Park Güell as well as of the surrounding residential neighbourhood with brightly-coloured awnings.

In the sculptural motif, the folded and unadorned surfaces of Sol Madridejos and J. C. Sancho Osinaga's Valleaceron Chapel recalled the stark spirituality of Le Corbusier's chapel at Ronchamp; Emilio Tuñón and Luis M. Mansilla's faceted peaks for the Museum of Cantabria echoed a nearby mountain range; and most stark of all, the Casa Rural, a house for a family of five, consists of 11 rectangular cubes of rust-coloured steel embedded in a hillside with ribboned window grilles very like the one for Gaudí's Casa Milà on permanent view at MoMA.

The greatest strides for innovation are apparent in urban settings: a green building like the ecological razzmatazz of Enric Ruis-Geli's Hotel Habitat covered by a weblike curtain of coloured lights indicating energy absorbed during the day to be released at night; Thom Mayne's (with Begoña Diaz-Urgorri) Public Housing that combines low-rise structures with a masterful gridded labyrinth of a village incorporating interior courtyards, communal gardens, trellises and pergolas (shades of old Beijing); and Herzog & de Meuron's La Ciudad del Flamenco with its facade a perforated screen of vaguely Moorish script that glows at night with light from the interior (AR June 2004).

A fascinating aspect of the exhibition is how these Spanish towns incorporated their ramparts, many of them medieval, into contemporary designs. In Badajoz, on the site of a seventeenth-century bullring within a pentagonal rampart, José Selgas and Lucia Cano designed a Congress Centre as a cylindrical volume surrounded by a stack of fibreglass rings. In Teruel, David Chipperfield Architects and b720 Arquitectos simply cut a trumpet-shaped, CorTen-steel-lined opening into the city wall as a passage from the train station below to a top-lit glazed lift shaft where people are transported to the historic promenade above. And most magic of all was Martinez Lapeña-Torres Arquitectos' La Granja Escalators in Toledo, a 90-foot-high, six-stage escalator that rises along the city wall to connect a car park and public square to a belvedere on top (AR February 2002). At night it is a jagged ribbon of light. In navigating these amalgamations of old and new at MoMA, one felt quite like Jake in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* when he arrives in Pamplona along 'the road slanting up steeply and dustily with shade-trees on both sides, and then levelling out through the new part of town they are building up outside the old walls.' PAULA DEITZ



The latest example of Spain's inclusive attitude to international architects is this competition-winning entry for the new Palace of Justice in Cordoba, by Francine Houben/ Mecanoo. The design for the 50 000 m² complex derives from the 'local patio typology' with its trees, plants and fountains. The architect is working with Seville-based engineer Ayesa on the €43 million project, which includes 23 courtrooms, a forensic institute, offices and wedding room.

POP ART... WHEN IS A PAVILION NOT A PAVILION?

In March, the RIBA claimed to have curated 'the world's first inflatable folly', installed by the architectural practice FAT (see story below). Last month, London's Serpentine Gallery announced the second – a design by Rem Koolhaas and Cecil Balmond for its summer architecture pavilion. This year's Serpentine Pavilion, the sixth in the series, is being designed by Rem Koolhaas, working alongside Cecil Balmond and Arup. Koolhaas has picked up the baton dropped by MVRDV (whose proposal to enclose the permanent gallery in a temporary 'mountain' was abandoned) to produce his first completed project in Britain. It is unlikely to be his last, since he is working on a masterplan in west London for a large redundant industrial site, and has also worked with the banker Rothschild to produce a new building in the City of London. Characteristically raising more questions than he necessarily chooses to answer, the Koolhaas pavilion is set to be a non-pavilion; a non-enclosure and a non-structure. Instead of celebrating substance, detail and expressive structural ingenuity, this year's pavilion as described by Koolhaas, will be 'defined by events and activities ... [in] a space that facilitates the inclusion of individuals in communal dialogue and shared experience'. Since 2000, the Serpentine pavilions have evolved in a variety of ways, exploiting a broad range of structures and materials (AR August 2005). This year, as Balmond notes, the design is concerned with 'the very definition of pavilion', focusing on a large inflatable ovoid that will rise and fall depending on the nature of events and activities. By engaging or disengaging with a series of landed walls, the amphitheatre – the space for communal dialogue and shared experience – will be able to respond to unpredictable British summer weather, which ceremonially took Siza and de Moura's pavilion by storm last year as the rain poured in on opening night. This year, instead of buckets, will it be guy ropes pulled in? ROB GREGORY



WORLD'S FIRST INFLATABLE FOLLY

An 8 metre inflated black sphere punctured by a half-timbered structure landed at the RIBA from 15 March to 2 May. The too-big structure was squashed awkwardly into the 7 metre high space of the Florence Hall at the heart of the RIBA's Art Deco headquarters in London. Inside, a wooden stair led up to a viewing platform, here the surrounding void was broken by small pinpricks of light, made by transparent panels cut in the sphere.

The installation, entitled *In a Lonely Place*, was designed by Fat (Fashion Architecture Taste), who describe themselves as 'a company that makes architecture and art (and all kinds of things in between)'. *In a Lonely Place* was the first in a series of installations specially commissioned by the RIBA Trust.

Speaking about the installation, Sam Jacob from Fat said: 'Entering the installation recalls Étienne-Louis Boullée's Cenotaph to Newton – a spherical structure in which the viewer was presented with a man-made approximation of the universe – in this case, for a less than perfect world'.

In a Lonely Place combined different kinds of architecture: high-tech inflatable and nostalgic historicism, creating ambiguities of form and formlessness, of narrative and abstraction, and of object and experience. The result is a modern day folly that explores the idea of architecture as a series of experiences made richer by drawing on diverse references, materials and techniques. *In a Lonely Place* was produced by inflate.

AR AWARDS CALL FOR ENTRIES

The Architectural Review Awards for Emerging Architecture are entering their eighth cycle. Inaugurated in 1999, the awards are intended to bring wider international recognition to a talented new generation of architects and designers under 45. Entries for this year's awards are now being called for.

The awards offer £10,000 prize money, and are supported by Buro Happold, the international multi-disciplinary consulting engineers. The 2006 jury includes Christine Binswanger (Herzog & de Meuron, Basel), Peter Davey (former editor of AR), Mark Dytham (Klein Dytham, Tokyo), Kim Nielsen (3XN, Aarhus), and Benedetta Tagliabue (EMBT, Barcelona).

Entries must be received by Tuesday 12 September. Full details of this year's awards with conditions and entry form will be published in next month's issue of AR, and can be downloaded from our website www.arplus.com.

DESIGNING TALL BUILDINGS

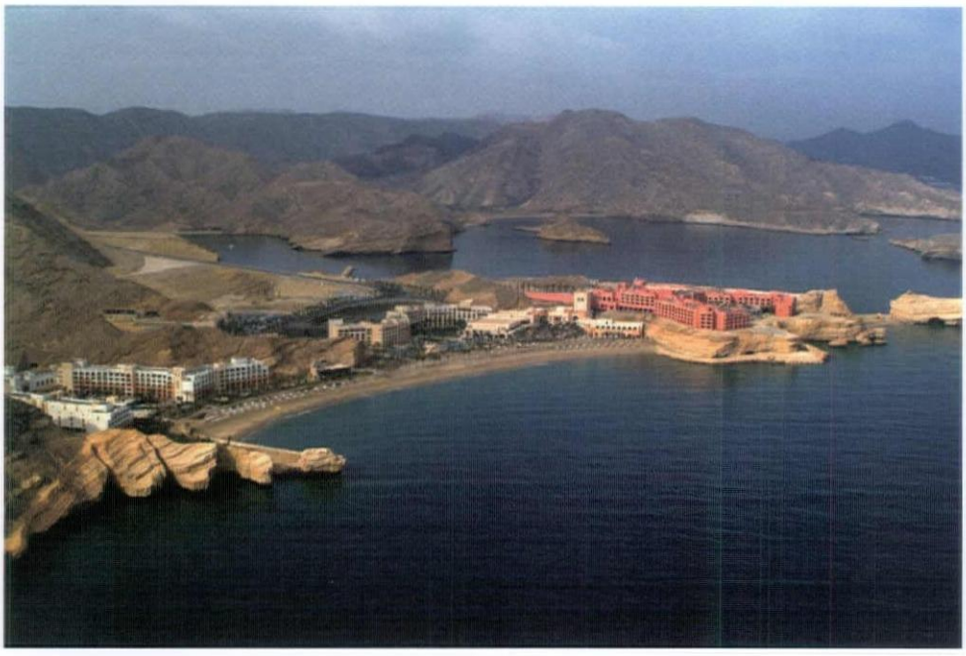
The demand for aesthetic commercially viable tall building design is at its highest in the history of not only London, but the UK. How can you navigate the quagmire of guidelines and regulations to receive planning permission? And more so, how do you make it profitable?

Hear from the veterans of tall building architecture that have already accomplished the feat. The Architectural Review and The Architects' Journal are bringing together leading architects, engineers, surveyors and planners responsible for the UK skyline. Benefit from their technical expertise and experience at a conference on 18 May 2006 at the Hotel Russell, London WC1.

For more information telephone: 0845 056 8069, email: constructconferences@emap.com.

AR INDEX

The six-monthly AR index is no longer printed but is available as a pdf on our website at *www.arplus.com* (under the AR in print category).



Aerial shot of the Barr Al Jissah Resort and Spa showing its setting in the landscape.

VIEW FROM MUSCAT

Leaving Muscat Airport to drive to the Barr Al Jissah Resort it soon becomes apparent that the city of Muscat is very different from Dubai; not a tall building in sight. None of the embassies, schools, residential buildings or offices you see as you pass along the tree-lined highway is above nine stories. Few are higher than six, most lower.

Some stand in white-walled courtyards with shrubs from gardens, most of them feature elements from Oman's architectural past – arched windows, carved doors and friezes, decorated panels, wooden ornamental railings and so forth all constructed in recent years under the present Sultan Qaboos.

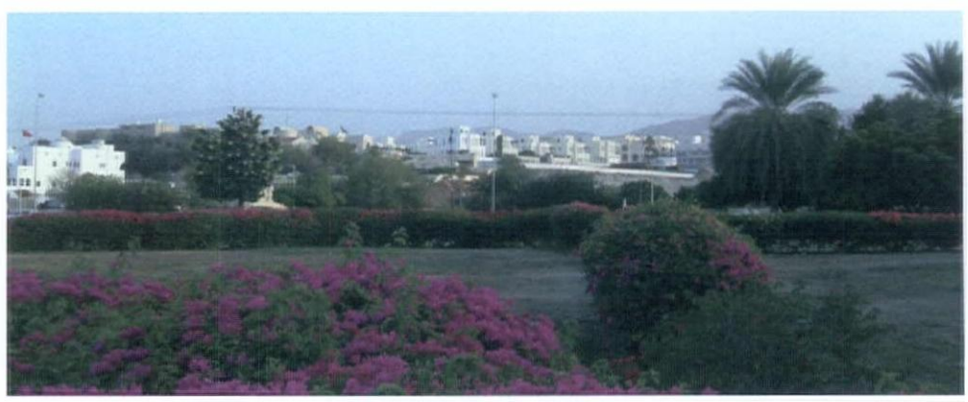
In 2003 the sultan's 'Diwan' of Royal Court Affairs circulated a pattern book for architects, called *Elevational Guidelines for Buildings in Oman*. It suggests that architects look to the existing buildings of the city and its environs as their models, in order to 'impart an Omani character'. With line drawings to illustrate examples of different types of buildings and architectural details, the book is reminiscent of the pattern books of J. C. Loudon or Batty Langley. The only modern Western style building standing in the centre of Muscat, is the Sheraton Hotel which was built in the 1970s, the first hotel in Muscat. Not a sympathetic building, it may well have determined Oman to look to its own heritage for future building.

With the development of tourism now one of the most important ventures for Oman, Muscat's search for an appropriate architecture and a general concern for the environment is having a distinct influence on the place. The Barr Al Jissah Resort and Spa, a ten minute drive from Muscat through a fantastic landscape of barren mountains, has just opened, covering an area of 124 acres with landscaped gardens. Here too, the architects – Wimberly, Allison, Tong and Goo Inc – have also taken their inspiration from Oman's architectural past. With no prototype for a hotel in the Diwan's pattern book, the three hotels here have been carefully themed to represent the architecture which their names invoke. Al Husn (The Castle) clearly dominates the scene, standing on a cliff overlooking the resort. Its inspiration is the seventeenth-century Jabrin Castle, one of the greatest residential buildings in Oman. Al Bandar (The Town) derives its form from the buildings of old Muscat, and Al Waha (The Oasis) has a series of swimming pools, which are to remind you of an oasis. The most successful element is the way it is set closely into the mountains, which provide a magical backdrop.

Both Al Waha and Al Bandar are painted in creams, ochres and earth colours to harmonise with the ochre coloured mountains. Al Husn is the most luxurious of the three, painted a rather too bright pink, which the architect Tom Russell assured me will fade within a year. Passing through its dramatically lit entrance at night, you might almost believe you are entering the opera set for *Il Seraglio*: Brighton Pavilion of Oman?

As Tom Russell explained, from the Omanis' point of view, hotels such as Al Husn are palaces and are seen as an expression of Omani heritage and culture. There are few public places to congregate outside mosques; no bars and cafés, so hotel lobbies are regarded as modern meeting places. Even in the ultra contemporary buildings in Dubai the interior design is Gulf-Arab in essence, rather than the modern Western style one would expect from the exterior. 'Oman is in its nineteenth-century Beaux Arts period', says Tom Russell 'with oil doubling in price in the last three to four years, grand public buildings such as hotels are a part of the natural evolution of Omani tradition'. When completed, the Barr Al Jissah Resort will be more like a small town, with residential areas, apartments, an archaeological site, an Omani Heritage village, a souq, a state of the art health spa, and an amphitheatre. Similar resorts are being built all down the coast, one only half a mile away. The topography of the landscape lends itself to this kind of development in that the development will probably be hidden from view by the mountains and only visible from the sea. Omani policy is to aim for high quality tourism, 4 star hotels upwards. Critics might argue that to employ modern building materials and services, and encase them behind facades peppered with Arab-motifs, is pastiche or post-modern. Omanis see it as maintaining their living tradition. For a country which is only 30 years old in modern terms and conscious of the danger of developing too fast, they do not want to lose touch with their past. The concern that they are showing for architecture and their environment, and also in maintaining their own identity, gives real hope that they will not 'kill the thing they love', which tourism in so many parts of the world has managed to do.

SUSAN LASDUN



Looking towards downtown Muscat in the residential area of Madinat Qaboos.



Toyo Ito, this year's Gold Medallist, with student medallists: Bronze Medallist, Luke Pearson (right); Silver Medallist, Yew Choong Chan (centre); and dissertation prizewinner Jessica Hrivnak (left).

ARCHITECTURE ON THE PODIUM AT RIBA

Every year since 1848, the RIBA has presented The Royal Gold Medal. Instituted by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, over the past 158 years its recipients have been many and varied, with the first being awarded to the brilliant Charles Robert Cockerell; a genius classical revivalist whose work still inspires today. With Robert Smirke (architect of the British Museum) following in 1853, Viollet-le-Duc in 1864 and William Butterfield in 1884, the annual award has only been suspended twice: first in 1901 following Victoria's death, and again in 1924 when it was declined by the nominee. With subsequent British Sovereigns taking over the role (as the Medal still requires royal approval), many more familiar names have also received the honour: Edwin Lutyens in 1921, Giles Gilbert Scott in 1925, Frank Lloyd Wright in 1942, Eliel Saarinen in 1950, Le Corbusier in 1953, and Mies van der Rohe in 1959. Groups and non-architects have also won the award, with Archigram being jointly recognised in 2002, three years before the award was given to a place: the City of Barcelona, that was heralded as an exemplary model of architecture and urban regeneration. This year the award went to Toyo Ito.

The work of the Korean born, Tokyo-based architect, has clear sympathies with this year's judges – Professor Peter Cook, Ian Ritchie, Chris Wilkinson, and Odile Decq – and Ito was an extremely popular choice. Another popular decision was the RIBA's move to raise the profile of the Gold Medal's student counterpart: the President's Silver and Bronze Medals. Remarkably for the first time since their inception in 1984, all three of the medallists were finally able to share the podium, with Yew Choong Chan awarded the Silver Medal for his University of Westminster postgraduate thesis project, and Luke Pearson, for his final undergraduate project submitted in his third year at UCL's Bartlett School of Architecture. Alongside these two design awards, Jess Hrivnak from the University of Cambridge was awarded the President's dissertation prize.

With these awards, the real treat for the students was not simply the photo opportunity that celebrated architectural talent, present and future. It was the super-crit that gave all four the opportunity to re-present and discuss their work. In an intimate forum, observed by a small number of invited academics, teachers and critics, all three students presented their work to Ito, and his long-term collaborator, the engineer Cecil Balmond.

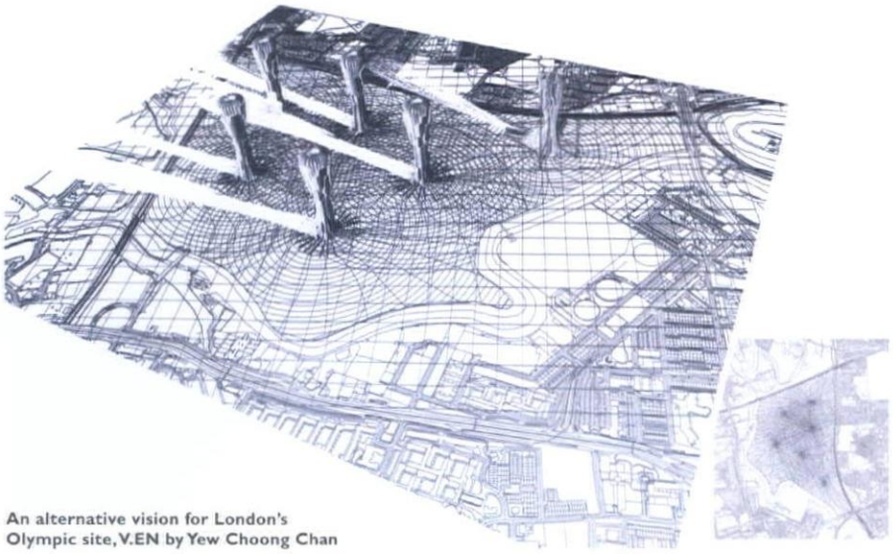
Jess Hrivnak was the first to face the formidable panel, with a difficult task: to present her 10 000+ word dissertation, entitled, 'Is Relative Sustainability Relevant'? By studying Michael Hopkins' restaurant pavilion in St James's Park, she tackled some of the broader issues of sustainability, looking beyond the new catchphrase to ask how we can quantify what a sustainable building is, and how we can measure a building's impact? Bronze medallist Luke Pearson followed, presenting the rich narrative that accompanied Collingwood's Vessel, his nautical retirement home for elderly fishermen. And Yew Choong Chan wrapped things up, with his distopian vision for London's Lower Lea Valley (the City's Olympic Village site), where he proposed the world's first Broccoli Power Plant, V.EN (vertical energy). It is hoped that this forum will be repeated in coming years.

ROB GREGORY

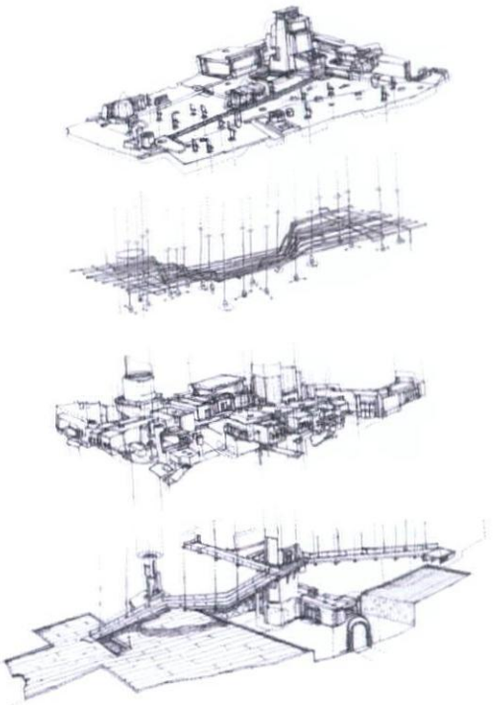
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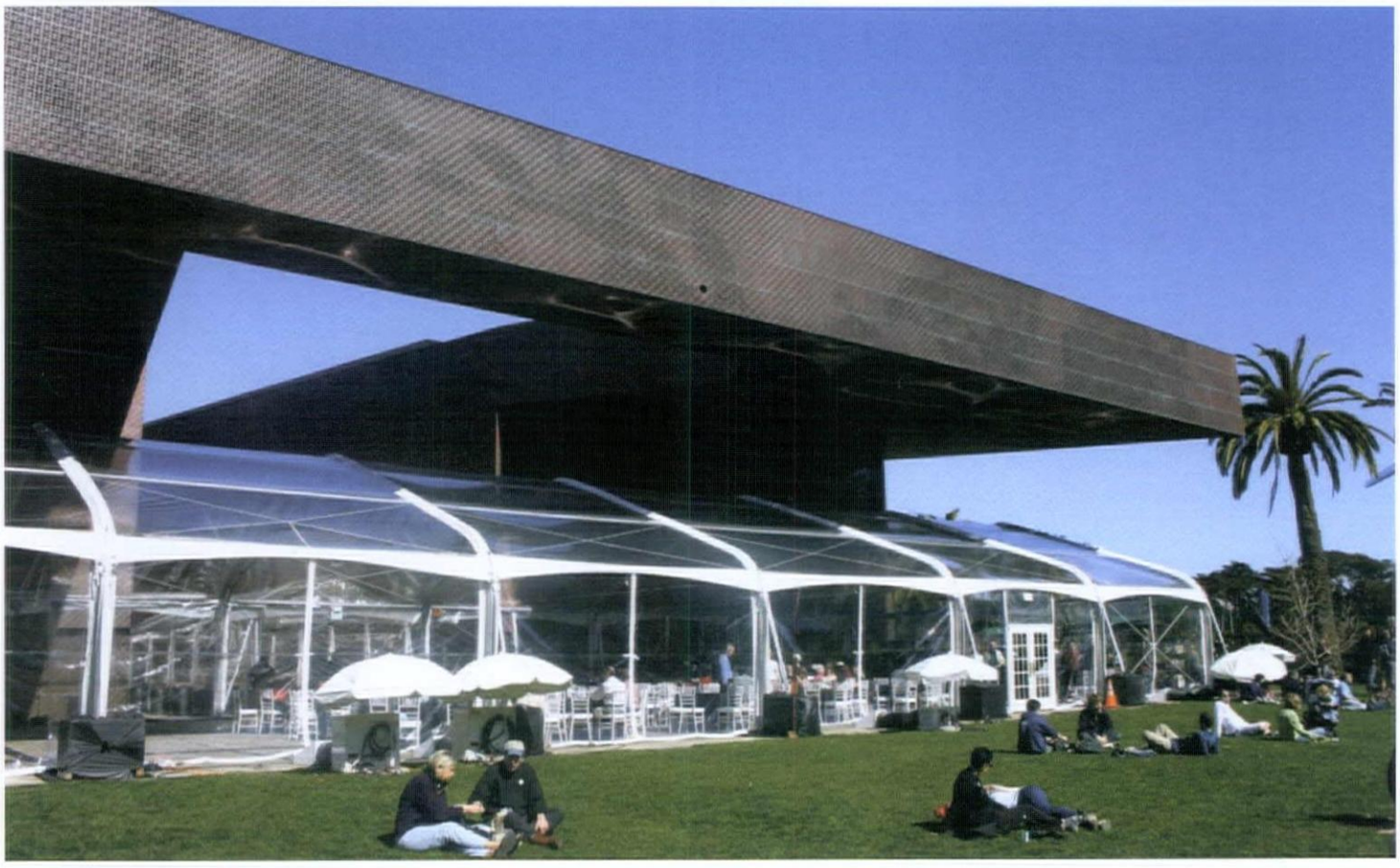
Vegetable rights and peace: can broccoli save the day?



An alternative vision for London's Olympic site, V.EN by Yew Choong Chan



Collingwood's Vessel by Luke Pearson



Are we sitting comfortably? Fortunately it would seem that not all of the de Young visitors want to be hermetically sealed within this ugly plastic pavilion.

outrage

PARKLAND PARASITE

It is not unusual for modest domestic properties to be vandalised by low-grade conservatories. Mock Victorian are perhaps the worst, seen as a bad rash across Britain, somehow achieving the impossible: to cheapen the look of the country's most banal suburban homes. Time and again people seek sun-drenched lifestyles by doing the architectural equivalent of slapping lipstick on a pig. In this case, however, the creature in question didn't even need make-up. As the architect Mark Dytham discovered while working in San Francisco recently, the bolt-on disease is spreading. The de Young Museum (AR October 2005), is perhaps one of the finest buildings of recent years, and yet even this structure is not immune to curated vandalism. Set against San Francisco's Golden Gate landscape, de Young's curious double-headed form has given it a unique split personality, grazing on Eucalyptus and grass at one end and inquisitively twisting its long neck at the other to survey the city beyond. It would seem, however, that those in the know are more clear about which end is which, demonstrated by the decision to pin this uncomfortable cellophane nappy around the backside of the building; placed beneath what some apparently consider to be its stumpy and inadequate tail. Who decided to inflict plastic surgery on such an infant? In a region that thrives on the application of synthetic materials this sort of attitude should come as little surprise. What is a surprise however is that the de Young is supposed to represent the best of American, Oceanic and African art. Is this addition a joke? Are they genuinely trying to compete with the local garden centre, or nearby wedding reception venues? Or is it simply a matter of interpretation, with us missing the subtleties of a new form of contemporary installation art? Let's hope it's not as permanent as it looks, despite the fact that it has been neatly tailored to encroach into one of Herzog and de Meuron's sharply tapering courtyards. Whatever next? Surely they wouldn't hang black-out blinds in James Turrell's skyspace, *Three Gems*, or repair Andy Goldsworthy's broken paving, *Faultline*? Please, de Young, save us and your pride by taking down this ridiculous tent.

ROB GREGORY

Photographs by Mark Dytham



Tailor made? Tent encroaches into an entrance court.



Was insufficient provision made in the original brief?



This natural Swiss desire for clean and clutter-free design has been the inspiration behind Duofix, Geberit's support system for wall-hung sanitaryware.

The Geberit Duofix installation system includes concealed frames for wall-hung WC pans, washbasins and urinals. WC frames include an integral cistern with maintenance access to all moving parts through the vandal-resistant flush plate.

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Duofix offers designers a Swiss alternative to more traditional approaches. Washrooms that are not only easy on the eye but easier to clean and more efficient, both ecologically and acoustically.

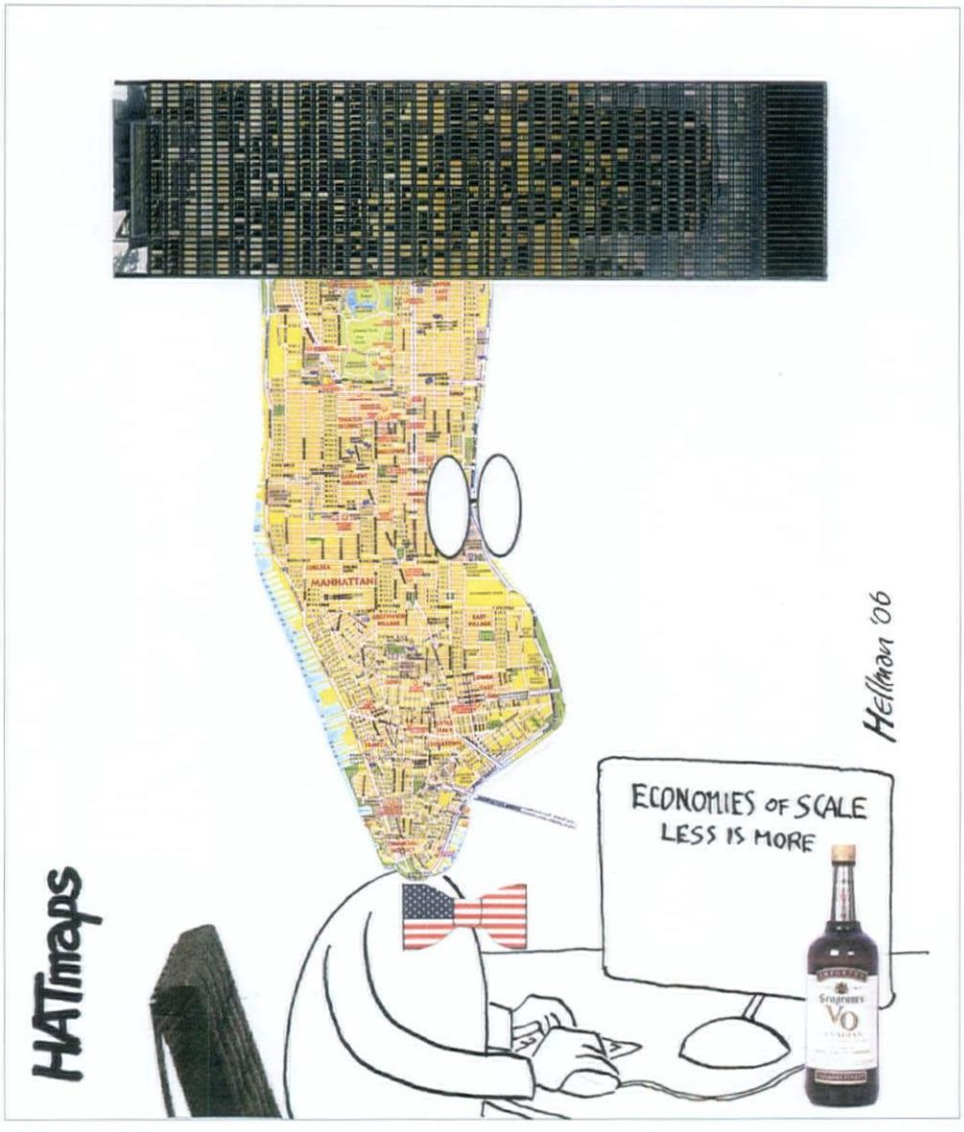
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Peter Cook

Reflections on Spanish lunches, Heidegger, and the gap between practice and theory



A morning session of muddled briefing and messed-up projection was rescued by the wit of the editor of 'Arquitectura Viva', Luis Fernández-Galiano, getting us cleverly worked up in the round-table session about culture/life/real motives/rationalism/surfacism/architectural prejudice. This provoked the normally circumspect Ben van Berkel into suggesting that Mies was a bit of a bore (something I've thought for years but didn't dare to say). This built up a wonderful hunger for the 3pm start of an endless lunch. Madrid is at its best during this ritual – now being threatened by an Anglo-Saxon logic (or tyranny) of the 'sensible' one-hour break, or grabbed sandwich that leads to third-rate architecture.

So a chance remark, that 'English architects don't really have libraries', comfortably passed me by until a crony reinforced the point by remarking that in our paper-ridden flat, there are only 2000 or so books. 'But Heidegger only had 60 books,' piped-up someone who, presumably, knew that kind of thing.

I was, I suppose, mellowed by the lunch and only afterwards reminded myself how the family Cook is constantly piling, filing and tripping over reams of printed matter. Much of this consists of magazines and catalogues – our favourite acquisitions that pick up the moment, catch the feel of a building or an exhibition, or recall the conversation. They have the freshness and immediacy of the matter in hand. Young friends start getting into corners of the mags – then get whole pages. They bring out funky little catalogues with unreadable texts, then over the months and years, less and less funky formats and more and more readable texts. Becoming important or pushy enough to make it to a book, they then seem to freeze.

Back to the late 80s, and meeting Merrill Elam and Mack Scogin. I was struck how good their work was: not the apocryphal 'black cloak' figures, but coming out of a semi-commercial background and then progressively toughening up their act. They became involved in the major academies (Mack became Chair of Harvard GSD); they produced a solid book of their work. In private conversation they're bright as buttons, yet they somehow felt it necessary to interweave the projects with 'essays' . . .and here they came, Bergren, Kipnis et al. Now M&M could be taken seriously! And lose in the process.

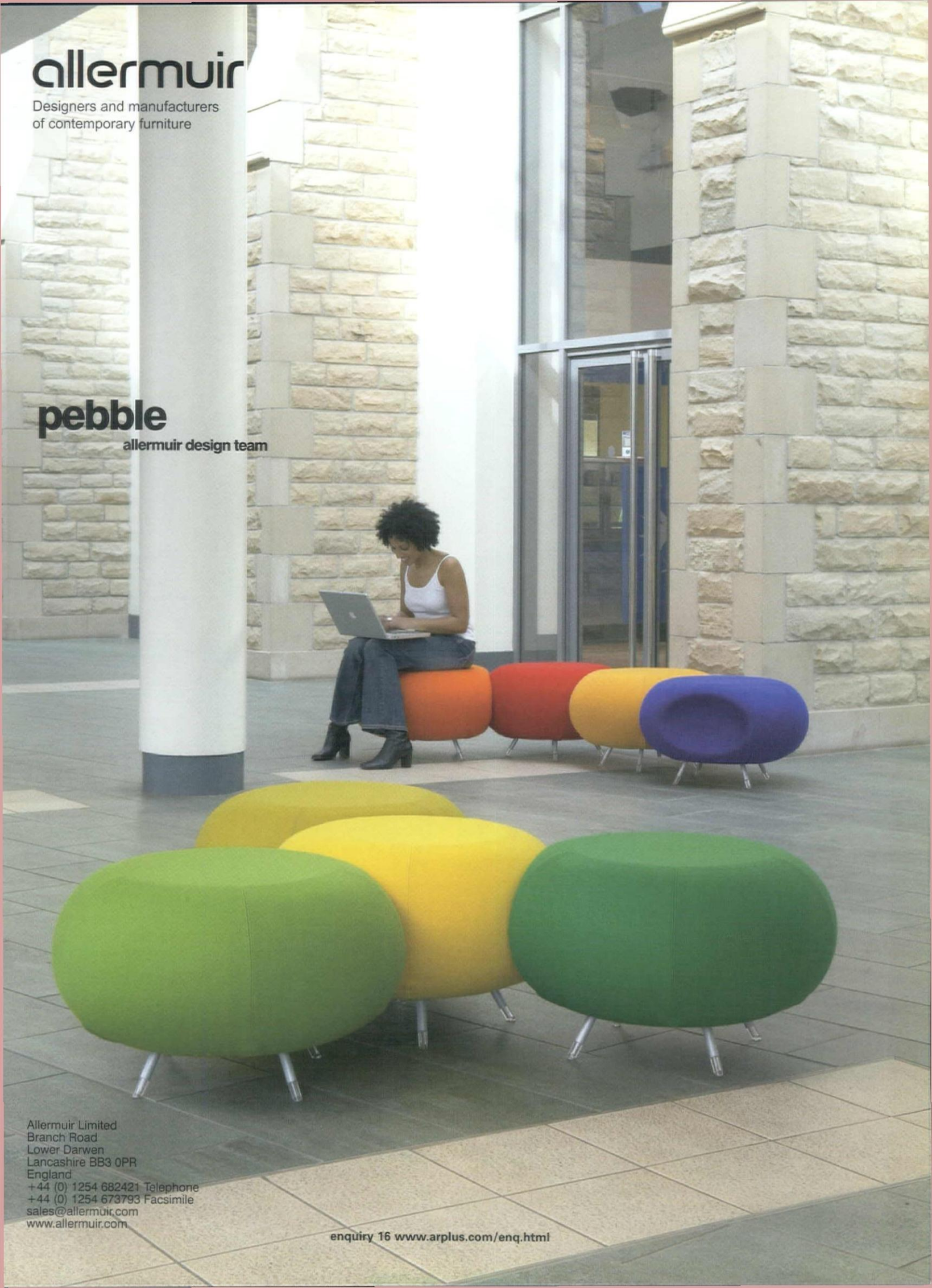
More and more we have been conned into a state where OK-thinking architects feel inadequate without the cushion of intellectual credibility. Read such essays: apart from a few, they act as a useful sump for professional theorists to jump off from a few glancing words about the buildings to worrying about Heidegger's references, Deleuze's definitions or something more fashionable.

Worst of all, when they get off on an elaborate version of the chain letter. You know the kind of thing: 'P' is editing a book of essays by 'Q', 'R', 'S' and 'T'. Six months later 'S' is editing a book of essays including – guess who? – 'P', 'Q', 'T' and the gang. The universities love it, the brownie-points flash across the screen and another professorship is squandered.

Now I don't specially mind if it were not for two things: 1. The shelf space. 2. (and more fundamentally), the degree to which young architects (and the occasional late launcher) are coerced into believing these books to be about architecture. There is a dearth of people who understand enough about the stuff itself, its relationship to the supportive condition, its playing-out of observations, mannerisms, reflections, manifestations. Why can't we admit that architecture *itself* is a rich, perverse, evocative CULTURE?

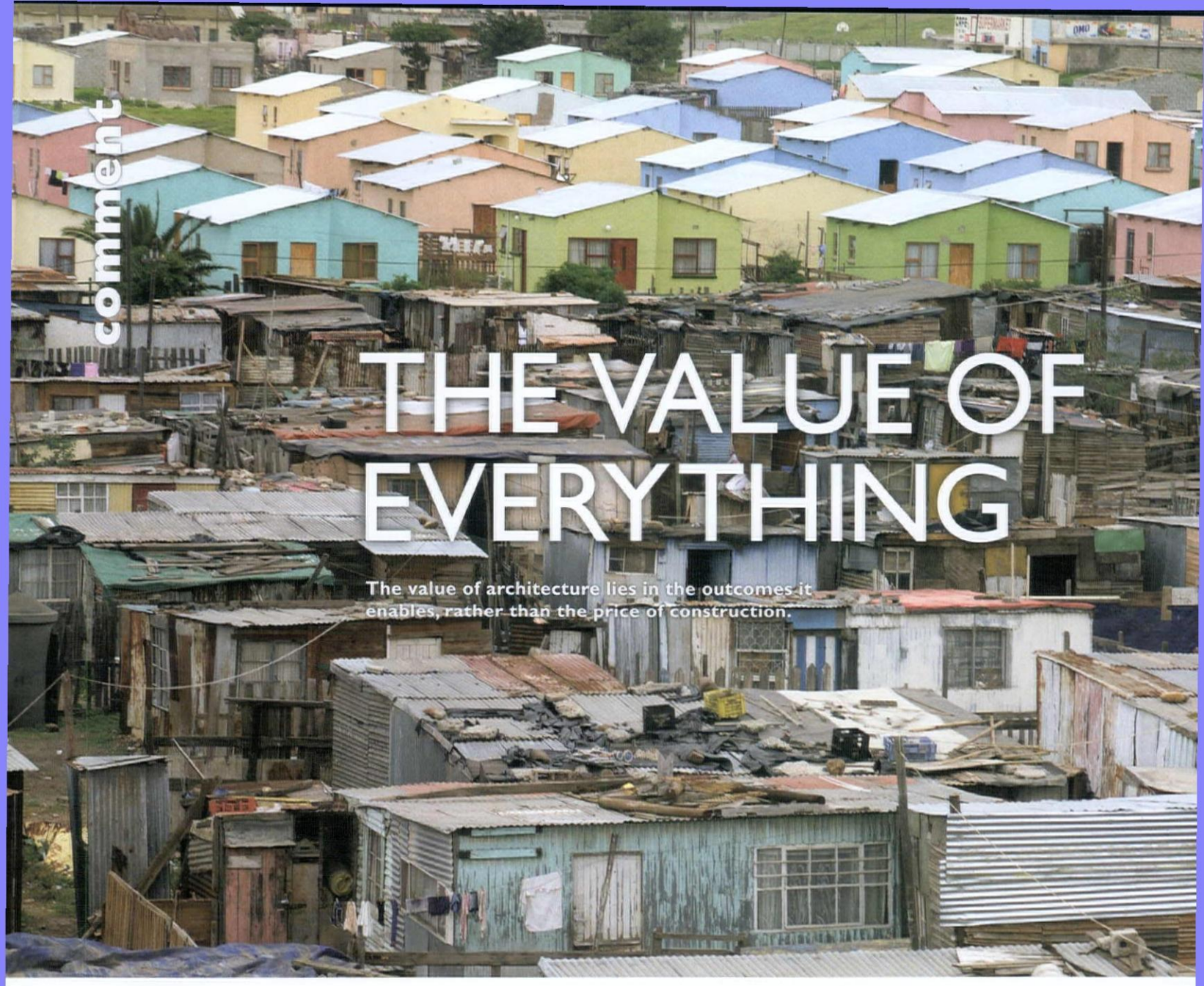
Beatriz Colomina pulls in the personality and gossip aspects of Corb, the Eames, the Smithsons *themselves*, which is a start. Some designers give good, punchy, semi-literate lectures. Classic magazines, catalogues, on-the-spot reviews catch them. Oh for a contemporary version of Banham on the run in his key 1960s essays in this very magazine. Oh for the partisanship of Esther McCoy on the West Coast, or Mendini's editorship of 'Domus' in the 1980s. We need a few deft communicators to emerge from the ranks of the doers or insiders like Sorkin or Lootsma; designers caught on tape and made just (but only just) palatable in their own words. People get embarrassed about Jan Kaplicky voicing his melancholy and taste for female flesh in print – but it's straight stuff: anyone who has heard him lecture knows how a propos these things are to his work.

Maybe Heidegger just had rather too many books.



Allermuir Limited
Branch Road
Lower Darwen
Lancashire BB3 0PR
England
+44 (0) 1254 682421 Telephone
+44 (0) 1254 673793 Facsimile
sales@allermuir.com
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THE VALUE OF EVERYTHING

The value of architecture lies in the outcomes it enables, rather than the price of construction.

'Well, nobody over five years old should expect to get everything they want.'
– Ralph Tubbs

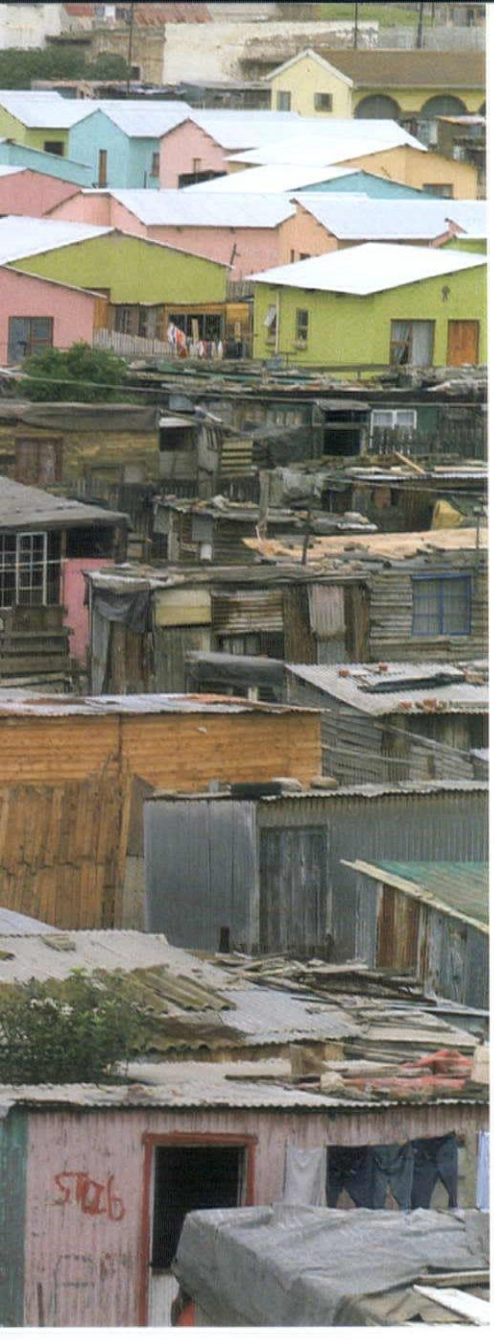
One of the joys (some might say compensations) of being a quantity surveyor is that you get to work with a succession of architects. It was my good fortune that the first of many that I worked with was Ralph Tubbs. I learnt a lot from him, but the equanimity with which he accepted the advice of a young surveyor, that a design proposal simply couldn't be accommodated within the budget, was in many ways a poor preparation for the subsequent realities of a quantity surveyor's daily lot. For rarely since has it been possible to cross so peaceably that gap between desires and needs, between art and commerce, between dream and reality.

This gap has a cultural dimension to it, as real today as it was when CP Snow wrote about the disconnected world of science and the humanities nearly half a century ago; and the difficulty of finding common ground between two quite different ways of looking at the world remains all too apparent. I believe that the best bridge across this communications gap lies in a consideration of the value that can be created by good design. Many businessmen would ask what design (good or otherwise) has to do with the bottom line; many architects will ask plaintively, 'Why does it always have to be about money? Whatever happened to poetry?' The answer is that poetry is alive and well, but architecture is not a lone art, practised in a garret. It is commissioned, for a fee, and usually by clients with a lively and necessary interest in economics.

Economics concerns itself with the allocation of finite resources in a world of infinite wants. Economy is therefore the satisfaction of wants, the fulfilment of a client's purpose, through the minimum consumption of resources. This can, with a sufficiently broad definition of 'finite resources', be re-characterized as sustainability; thus, at a stroke, mean-minded penny-pinching becomes honourable social responsibility – and so perhaps more palatable. Whatever it is called, though, it requires a clear understanding of *purpose* so that economics can be mobilized as servant, rather than master. It also requires the humility, or perhaps just the commercial nous, to recognise that the purpose that must be served above all is the client's.

Applying economics to architecture

Returning to Ralph Tubbs, he is perhaps best remembered now for the Dome of Discovery (part of the 1951 Festival of Britain) and for the later Charing Cross Hospital. They are unlikely stable-mates stylistically, and they had quite different purposes, but both were shaped, it seems to me, by rigorous attention to one creed: what is right for this client, in this place, and at this time? This leads on to a broader application of economics to architecture, which lies in the concept of value for money. A building can create value for its owner, and for those otherwise affected by it (those we are now encouraged to call 'stakeholders'), in several ways. They are not, however, well understood, and too often projects are driven by one aspect of value only. This is *exchange value* – the amount for which



The view from the new Museum of Struggle in Port Elizabeth, South Africa (p40), by Noero Wolff Architects. Here, among the jumble of informal and formal settlements, architecture aims to act as a catalyst for the betterment of a fragmented civic realm. Photograph: Rob Duker

an asset can be sold in the marketplace, which must obviously exceed the cost of creating it if the undertaking is to be worthwhile. This is the imperative of the commercial developer, and understandably, architects may feel that it involves a search for the lowest common denominator. But even in this hard-nosed environment, good architecture can increase investment returns, possibly because the quality of a design encourages the regulatory authorities to grant consent for a building which might otherwise have been made smaller or not have been permitted at all.

There is also evidence that occupiers, and some developers, will pay more for a design which enhances the image of their company. This is about *brand value*. Just as companies can differentiate themselves by the quality and design of their products, so they can with the quality and architecture of their buildings; architecture can convey powerful messages to both internal and external audiences about the culture and values of the occupier. *What* those messages may be is a decision for the occupier alone, and may range from frugal conservatism through to an extravagant demonstration of success; but *how* those messages are conveyed is a matter of design.

Just as companies need to compete for survival and prominence, so now do cities, and the idea of brand value expands to something closer to *civic value*. Here, good urban design (not the architecture of buildings themselves but the public realm that surrounds them) may go beyond the generation of civic pride and delivery of a symbol for the city. Good urban design can contribute to a sense of well-being, and even to a lessening of crime and anti-social behaviour, thereby reducing the financial burden on government – building on civic value to create *social value*.

Herein lies the clue to real value – which is that it should be measured not in terms of short-term capital expenditure against short-term monetary returns, but rather in the contribution that it represents over the whole life of the building. This concept of whole life value covers two separate categories of costs and returns: *life-cycle value* and *operational value*. The first of these compares the cost of running a building with its capital cost, where the running costs will almost always outweigh the capital cost by a ratio that will vary, but which might typically be 2:1. Operational cost, by contrast, is the cost of running all of the operations that take place in the building – whether it be a business, a hospital, a school etc. This will principally comprise salaries (typically 70 to 80 per cent of whole life cost); the ratio of these costs to initial capital cost, although it too varies, might typically be 20:1.

The typical ratio of initial capital cost to running cost to operational cost is therefore 1:2:20 – and it is the highest of these numbers that should determine how money is invested in a building, whereas too frequently it is the lowest which dominates. Once again, the key is purpose: not outputs, and still less inputs, but *desired outcomes*. So school design should be judged as an aid to educational outcomes, rather than simply by the economic provision of desk spaces; hospital design should be judged on its ability to improve clinical outcomes, rather than by the economic provision of bed spaces, and so on. This is not to claim simplistically that 'well designed hospitals make you better', but rather to explore all the ways that a building might support the people who *do* make us better; aiding the efficiency and effectiveness of an undertaking's most costly resource – its people.

Client's true purpose

It follows that at the heart of the briefing process, one should find an investigation of the client's true purpose in commissioning the building, and his or her own measures of value – that is, how the client will measure success. Asking clients about their own units of value also opens up a dialogue about the contribution that good building design can make to their enterprise; a consideration that might otherwise be neglected. Experience suggests that this leads to a focus on what really matters to the client, which may well lead them to new conclusions about their building project, its design and its cost.

More than 500 years ago, looking around him with approval at the opening of the new cathedral at Pienza (his home town), Pope Pius II remarked to his architect Bernardo Gambarelli, 'You did well, Bernardo, to lie to us about the cost'. There is evidence that not much has changed in the centuries since, and that many great construction projects (and public projects in particular) make it off the ground only because of a serious underestimate of their cost. This is sometimes the subject of deliberate falsehood, sometimes unwitting – but it is always the consequence of clients and their designers having no trusted way of bridging the divide between how little *could* be spent and how much *should* be spent.

The concept of design value – the sum total of all of the approaches to value outlined above – provides at least the foundations of such a bridge. This means that cost and the generation of value should be regarded as part of the challenge of the business of architecture; indeed, achieving value should be treated as part of the definition of good design, rather than 'money' being regarded as an enemy to be defeated by fair means or foul. Having established trust through demonstrating a commitment to taking care of the client's money in this way, the architect might say, (as I have heard one say) 'I don't know why you should do this, I just believe very strongly that you should'; and the client might just agree – as not everything that counts in life can be measured, still less measured in money. PAUL MORRELL

This article draws from a public lecture given at the Berlage Institute, Rotterdam. Paul Morrell is a partner of Davis Langdon LLP, serving as senior partner 1998-2003, and is a commissioner at the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

MEMORY AND STRUGGLE

An apartheid museum that celebrates the ordinary is South Africa's latest attempt to come to terms with its past.

The intense social and cultural convulsions of post-apartheid South Africa have given rise to a new museum type that attempts to address and commemorate the nation's troubled history. In the apartheid era, museums did not form part of the cultural life of the black majority, who were excluded from visiting such institutions, and so oral history became the most common means of recording and memorialising events. Now, as part of the often painful catharsis of social change, serious efforts are being made to document formally and publicly aspects of apartheid through the mechanism of the museum and introduce active museum going to a section ofthe populace hitherto culturally marginalised.

The Gold Reef Apartheid Museum on the outskirts of Johannesburg was the first of its kind, but it also formed part of a suburban casino and theme park, an incongruity that inevitably diminished its impact. However, smaller institutions that explore and connect with local history have tended to be more successful. Cape Town's District Six Museum is dedicated to a lively part of the city, demolished to make way for white development in the 1970s, and Soweto now boasts the Hector Petersen Museum, named after one of the 200 students shot during the Soweto Uprising, a 1976 protest against the quality of black education.



MUSEUM, PORT ELIZABETH, SOUTH AFRICA
ARCHITECT
NOERO WOLFF ARCHITECTS



I
Bringing a sense of dignity to very basic materials, the new museum has an almost industrial rigour.

Clearly, the apartheid museum is still evolving as a type and will need sensitive handling if it is not to degrade the complex and difficult history it commemorates. In this respect, the Museum of the People's Struggle in Port Elizabeth by Noero Wolff Architects suggests a perceptive new paradigm. In location, form and content it differs radically from its predecessors and challenges conventional views of museum design. Rather than envisaging the past as a single narrative, it conceives it as set of memories consciously disconnected yet bound together by certain themes. Rather than being passive consumers, visitors are encouraged to become active participants. Rather than a remote suburban location, it lies smack in the middle of a shack settlement. All this feeds into an architecture underscored by a strong formal and material economy that aims to transcend its programme and uplift its surroundings.

In some ways, the story of the museum site is emblematic of South Africa's wider history of racial movement and spatial colonisation. On the edge of Port Elizabeth, an industrial town on the south-east coast, lies Red Location, the area's first black township. The name derives from the settlement's corrugated iron barrack buildings that over time rusted to a distinctive deep red. Originally, they were built for a concentration camp in nearby Uitenhage where Boer families were interned during the Boer War. In 1902, at the war's end, the barracks were moved to Port Elizabeth to house British soldiers and when the soldiers left, local black families moved in. Red Location and the surrounding township of New Brighton became an important site of resistance to the apartheid regime and many prominent cultural and political leaders were either born or lived there, including Govan Mbeki, father of current South African president Thabo Mbeki. Today, the original barracks are in a cannibalised, barely inhabitable state, yet their almost archaeological presence is a potent reminder of the dynamics of political and social struggle.

In 1998 a national design competition was held for a new town centre precinct that could act as a revitalising economic and developmental catalyst for the township. The Museum of Struggle formed the core of the brief, but it also involved the preservation of the Red Location barracks and a range of new civic buildings and housing. Jo Noero, now in partnership with Heinrich Wolff, won the competition, with Mashbane Rose, architects for the Gold Reef Museum in Johannesburg taking second place. Noero Wolff have built extensively in the demanding context of South Africa's townships (AR July 1994, March 1995) and their architecture is characterized by its quiet dignity and 'fierce decency' that consciously strives to improve the lives of its users.

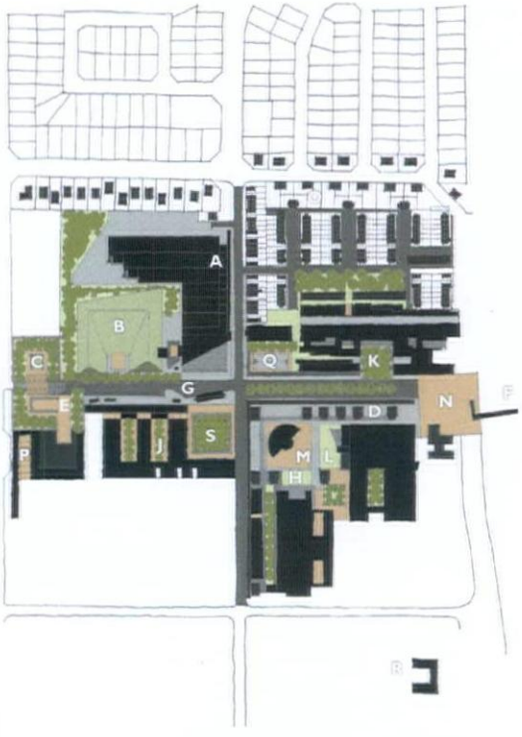
Noero and Wolff's museum draws its strong physical and thematic structure from the notion of the Memory Box, inspired by the boxes in which migrant workers stored their most prized possessions when away from home. Workers in urban centres could be separated from their rural families for up to eleven months of the year and the boxes were not just a treasured reminder of home and family, but also helped sustain a sense of identity in a world of harsh social and economic dislocation.

Twelve mute, monolithic, unmarked boxes clad in rusted corrugated steel are arranged in rows around the main exhibition space, like a phalanx of brooding Richard Serra sculptures. Each box is 6sq m in plan and almost 12m tall, the height of a four-storey building. Each is entirely self-contained, offering diverse readings of life in South Africa that are only revealed on entry. Together, the array of boxes constitute a shifting mosaic of memories that attempt to illuminate the complexities of human experience. Their contents can be changed as time goes on, so in a still shifting cultural climate, the museum is not tied to one particular curatorial line. There is no prescribed route, so visitors are free to explore at will and draw their own conclusions. The cavernous, toplit volume of the main exhibition space is also augmented by an auditorium, library, art gallery and offices.

With its simple concrete block walls topped by a jagged profile of saw-tooth roof lights, the building seems more like a place of industry than culture. However, in a community where the factory represented social opportunity and the museum stood for social exclusion, this architectural camouflage seems somehow appropriate. Materials also reflect their surroundings, but are given resonant new readings. Standard steel windows are used in unconventional ways, the corrugated sheets wrapping the Memory Boxes are deliberately rusted (evoking the Red Location barracks), and concrete blocks, an utterly basic material commonly used in township houses, are employed with great rigour and precision as though they were facing bricks. Shots of industrial strength hues of yellow, green and red enliven a largely neutral palette.



2



A Museum of Struggle
B cinema screen
C park/square
D Red Location houses
E entrance square
F bridge and railway station
G taxi and bus rank
H theatre
J library
K creative arts centre
L art gallery
M performance space
N station square
O new high-density houses
P taxi rank and shops
Q basketball court
R future family houses
S market place

MUSEUM, PORT ELIZABETH, SOUTH AFRICA
ARCHITECT
NOERO WOLFF ARCHITECTS

site plan showing Red Location area development in 2010

he township context.
he museum is surrounded
low-rise housing.

nformal shack settlements
p around its edges.

ntrance pergola defines
public gathering space.



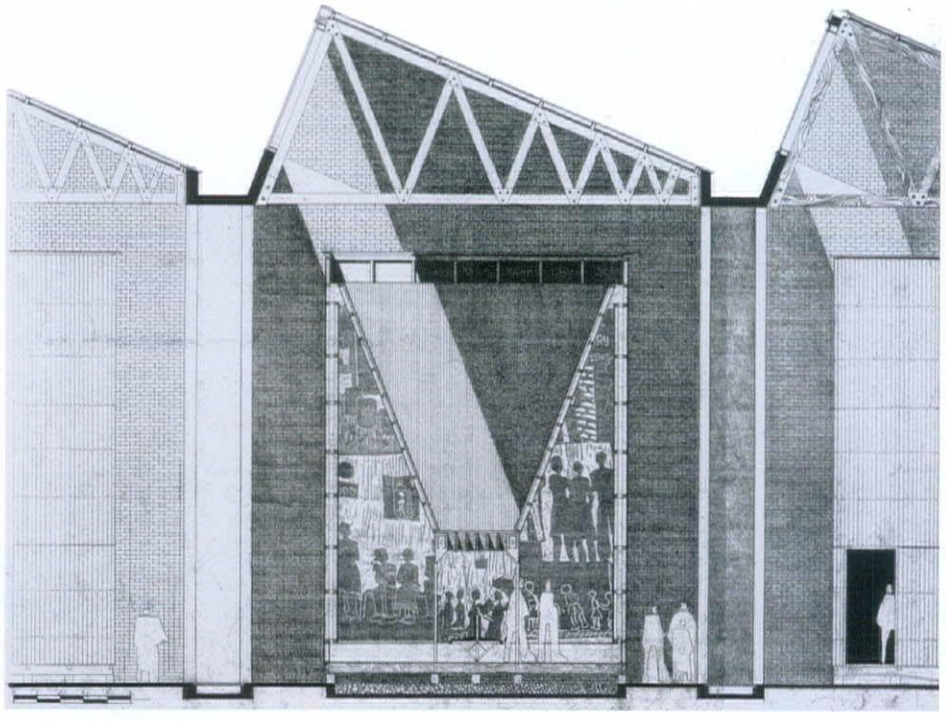


5
The long east wall is conceived as an inhabitable space, with seating, shelter and incident.
6
Entrance porch and pergola.

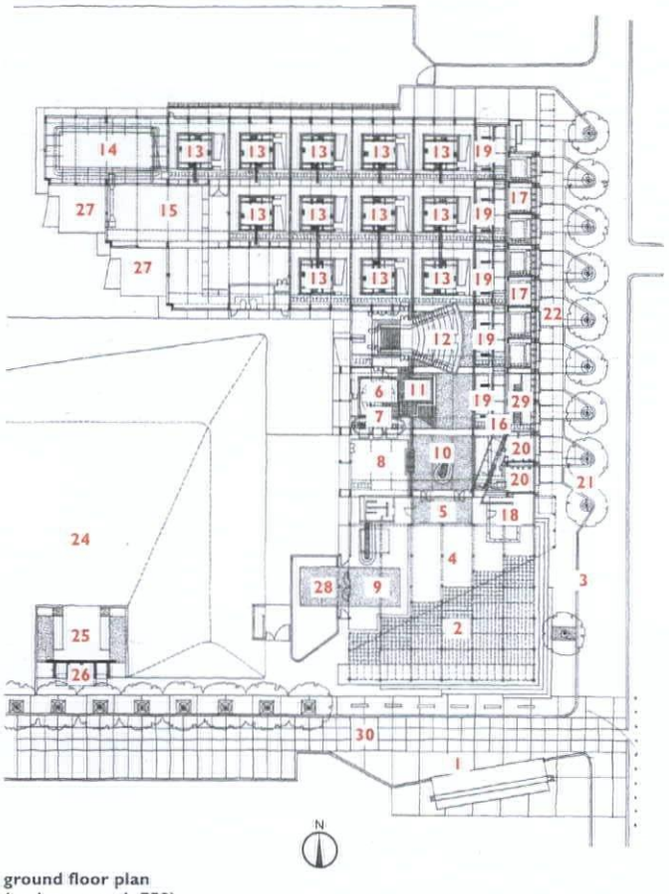
Museum, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

Architect

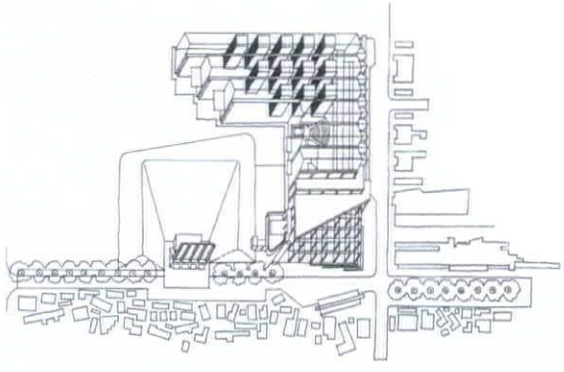
Noero Wolff Architects



cross section through Memory Box



ground floor plan
(scale approx 1: 750)



axonometric projection

1 taxi rank
2 public square
3 bus rank
4 entrance porch
5 entrance
6 memorial space
7 tombs
8 kitchen
9 restaurant
10 reception
11 deck
12 auditorium
13 Memory Box
14 art gallery
15 storage/archives
16 timeline walk
17 temporary exhibitions
18 museum shop
19 memorial columns
20 WC
21 taxi parking
22 covered walkway
23 public parking
24 grass amphitheatre
25 cinema screen/stage
26 shops
27 loading bay
28 beer garden
29 stairs to boardroom and library
30 Olof Palme Road



long section looking west



5



6



7

7
Auditorium is a self-contained volume.
8
Open-air cinema screen in the adjacent park.
9
Memory Boxes form a regiment of imposing and impassive structures that are clad in rusting corrugated sheeting.

Experientially, Noero and Wolff conjour a kind of architectural Arte Povera through poetic use of the cheap, the commonplace and the disregarded. And though the museum is very intensely focused inwards on its subject matter, it also aims to connect with and enrich its wider surroundings. Noero cites the example of the Smithsons' *Ordinariness and Light*, in which architecture acts as an armature for and backdrop to everyday lives. Here, the long eastern side of the museum is transmuted into a habitable wall with seating, a children's play area and parking spaces for taxis. The entrance at the south end is marked by a generous porch sheltered by a timber pergola which is also forms a public gathering space. And on the west side, the L-shaped footprint of the building defines a grassy park area with an outdoor cinema screen that can accommodate an audience of 2500 people. These efforts at urban integration did not prevent some commentators from questioning the museum's conspicuous monumentality, but though its scale is clearly at odds with the low rise, makeshift houses of its surroundings, paradoxically, as a tangible symbol both of historic struggle and a new urban sensibility, it has had the effect of boosting local civic pride. It was also built using a pool of local labour, thus improving and developing the skills base.

In a country still tentatively grappling with daunting political, economic and social transitions, the Museum of Struggle might seem like a small drop in a restlessly heaving ocean. Yet it is a hugely important building for South Africa, and one that would have been unimaginable 15 years ago. It is perhaps misguided to assume that architecture (not so long ago the despised physical expression of state policy and power) can instantly salve deep-rooted hurts and injustices, but as a courageous attempt to confront and understand the past, it does offer the prospect of redemption and a coming to terms. Without this there can be little hope for a better future. CATHERINE SLESSOR



8

Architect
Noero Wolff Architects, Cape Town
Associate architects
John Blair Architects
Structural engineer
de Villiers & Hulme
Mechanical engineer
C.A. duToit
Photographs
David Stafford

MUSEUM, PORT ELIZABETH, SOUTH AFRICA
ARCHITECT
NOERO WOLFF ARCHITECTS



CONTAINER ART

Shigeru Ban's inventive yet frugal Nomadic Museum berths on the Santa Monica beachfront.

For the past 14 years, Gregory Colbert has been filming the interaction of animals and humans around the world, creating images of great beauty. In 2002, he mounted an exhibition, Ashes and Snow, in the Corderia of the Venice Arsenale, and invited Shigeru Ban to design a prefabricated gallery in which this show could be displayed in varied locations. Naturalist and architect shared a concern to make the building environmentally sensitive, and for Ban it was a challenge to recycle commonplace materials on a heroic scale. Ever since he first employed discarded paper tubes for the installation of an Alvar Aalto exhibition, he has used them in an increasingly sophisticated way – in a post-earthquake church in Kobe (recently re-erected in Taiwan, AR December 1996), a canopy over the courtyard of MoMA (AR September 2000) and the Japanese pavilion at Expo 2000 in Hanover with Buro Happold (AR September 2000).

TRAVELLING MUSEUM,
SANTA MONICA, USA
ARCHITECT
SHIGERU BAN

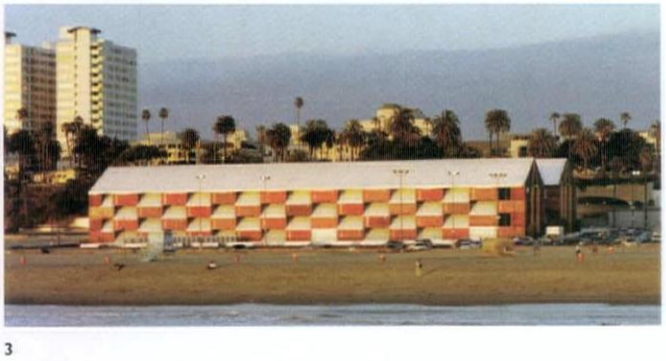




The gritty grandeur of shipping containers used on a heroic scale to create an ingenious travelling museum.



2



3



4

TRAVELLING MUSEUM, SANTA MONICA, USA

ARCHITECT

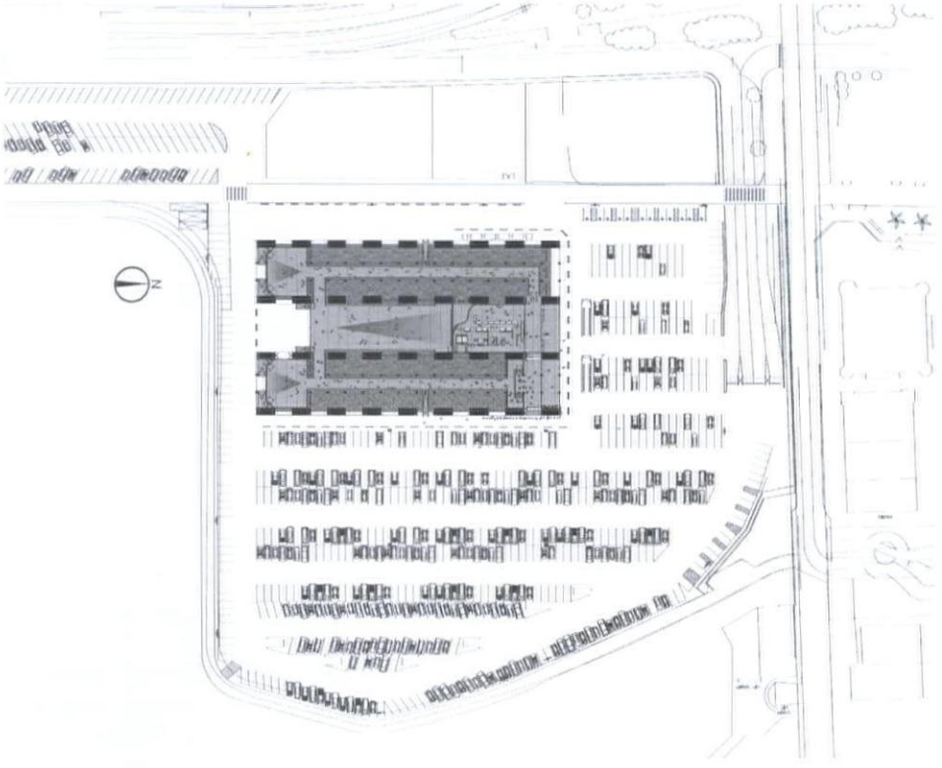
SHIGERU BAN

For the Nomadic Museum, Ban specified walls of used shipping containers (which can be rented in every major city), supporting a roof frame and tensile PVC membrane braced by trusses atop two colonnades. The 152 long and short containers are stacked four-high and attached at the corners with twist-lock connectors to form a chequerboard of solid and void. The spaces between are filled with a diagonal membrane providing the same protection from wind and rain as the roof. For the columns, two 5m-long, 750mm diameter Sonotubes (used for pouring concrete pillars) are bolted together, and smaller tubes are joined to form trusses that read as pediments at either end. The reception area and shops are also made of paper tubes and honeycomb panels. This inner structure, along with lighting and wood-slat walkways, can be quickly disassembled, packed, and shipped to the next location in eight containers.

At the museum's New York debut last spring, the walls extended 200m along a West Side pier, and the linear, colonnaded interior recalled Venice's Corderia. For the second presentation, by Santa Monica pier, southern California, Colbert wanted to expand the interior to house additional exhibits and avert congestion in front of the main projection screen. Ban proposed a V-plan in which the linear gallery would be folded to enclose a wedge-shaped projection area. This was rejected by the local authorities because it would have occupied too large a footprint and impeded public access to the beach. Instead, the two halves flank a broad concourse with a butterfly roof.

To expedite and execute construction, Ban teamed up with the Santa Monica office of the large international firm Gensler. But there



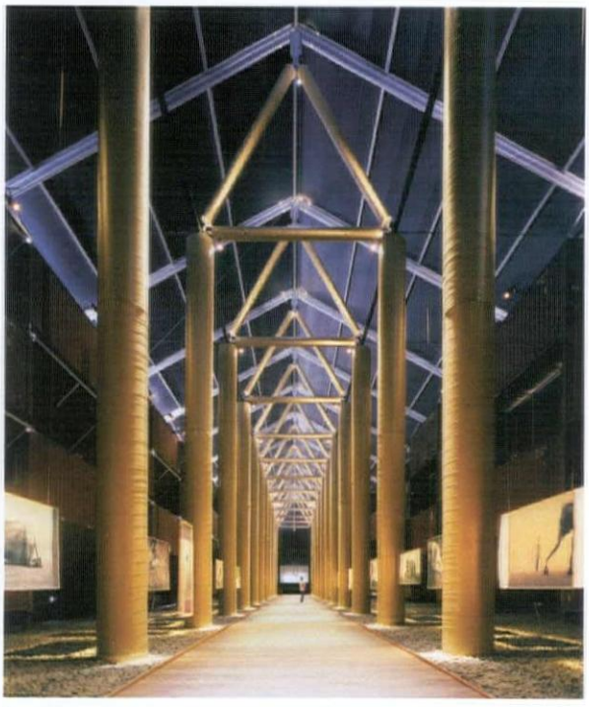


site plan



5

2
The two halves of the museum flank a concourse with a butterfly roof. Tubes used for casting concrete pillars are employed for low budget pediments.
3, 4
The Santa Monica beachfront context.
5
The first version of the Nomadic Museum on a New York pier. The long thin form of the pier could only accommodate a single volume, but the larger Santa Monica site allowed a doubling in size.



6



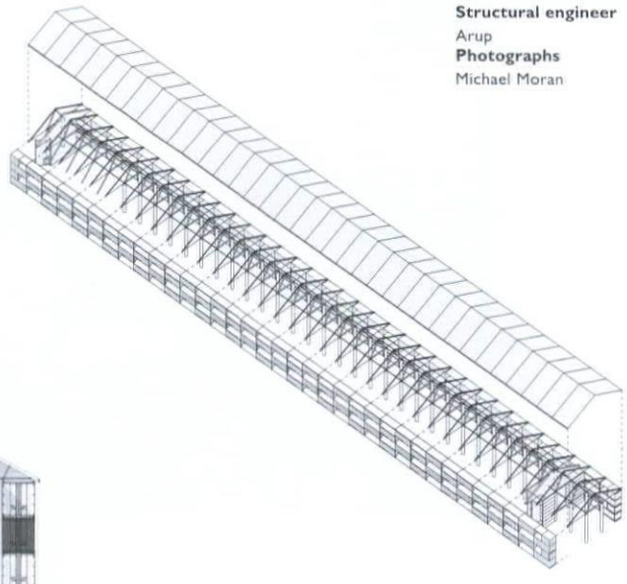
7

Architect
Shigeru Ban Architects, Tokyo
Associate architect
Gensler
Structural engineer
Arup
Photographs
Michael Moran

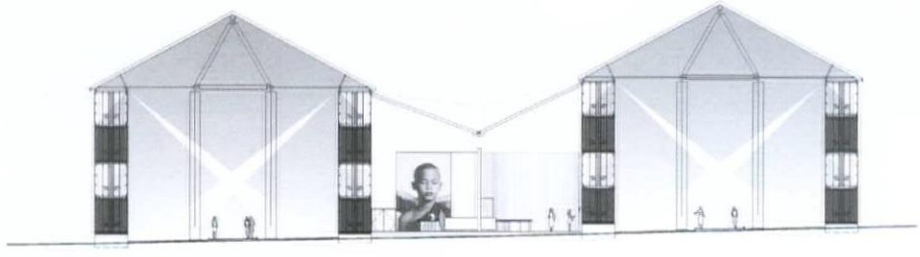
TRAVELLING MUSEUM, SANTA MONICA, USA

ARCHITECT

SHIGERU BAN



exploded isometric of basic structure



cross section

were other issues to resolve. Santa Monica, which was hard hit by the 1994 Northridge earthquake, has a tough seismic code and requires that any structure that is intended to remain for more than three months should conform to the requirements for permanent buildings. Because the pier parking lot is built on sand, the containers had to be supported on chance anchors – 200mm pipe columns drilled 9m into the ground. That underpinning also kept the structure level on a gently sloping site. Aluminium extrusions with expandable joints replaced the heavy steel roof frame used in New York. These structural enhancements were worked out with Arup in two months, drawings and permits were fast-tracked, and site preparation and assembly took only ten weeks.

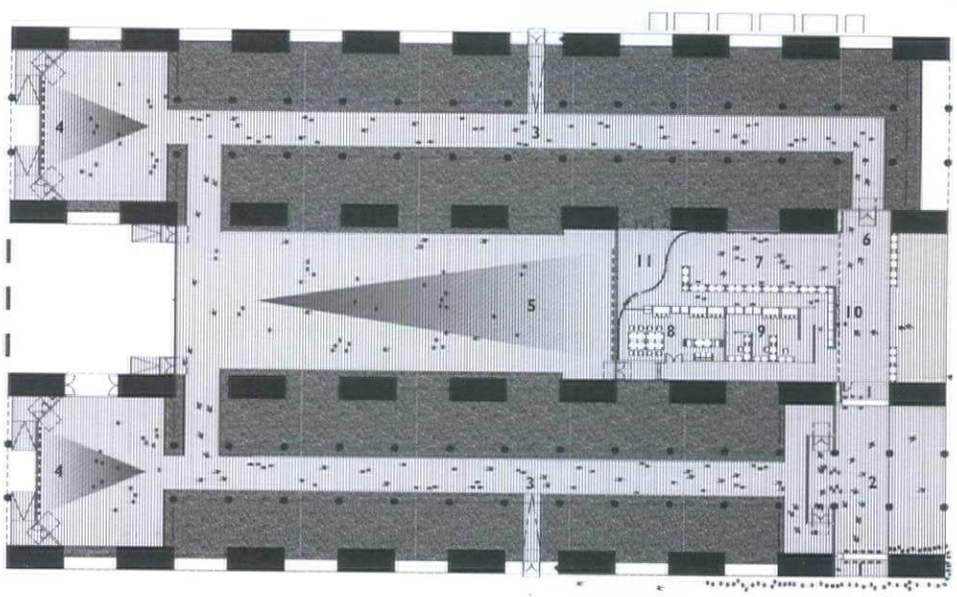
Shipping containers are impressive in their natural habitat, stacked high on a quayside, and they are equally satisfying when used artfully as building blocks, combining strength and implied lightness. As with the sculptures of Donald Judd, each red steel box is superficially similar, yet subtly different from the rest in its labelling and patina. Sun and interior lighting bring out the texture and the scarring from hard use. The interior, with its dimly-lit nave and aisles, and light-washed columns, has the majesty of a great cathedral at evensong. From the dark void emerge still and moving sepia-toned images of Colbert's peaceable kingdom, an idealised world of picturesque natives cavorting with wild beasts. The languorous movements of cheetahs, whales and people seem choreographed to the New Age score. Seen on an Imax screen, these images would dazzle, but the grandeur and chiaroscuro of the architecture diminish their impact, while arousing aesthetic expectations the pictures are hard pressed to meet.

'I want the building to enhance the emotional charge of this interplay of man and nature,' says project manager John Picard. 'The museum should be performance-based and not just shelter, incorporating new technologies for spot cooling and generating power.' A solar cloth developed by Siemens may be used for future roof membranes – though it is currently ten times the cost of PVC – and employed in conjunction with a fuel cell. 'And yet,' Picard insists, 'the museum has to stay simple. You can measure the efficiency of packing up and moving by the number of containers you need, like the number of bags you take to the airport'.

The Nomadic Museum is expected to travel to Tokyo and Beijing, Abu Dhabi and Europe. In all these varied climates, the basic building blocks are unlikely to change, and, like Ban's inventive shelters for victims of natural disaster, they demonstrate the architect's commitment to the art of frugality. MICHAEL WEBB

8

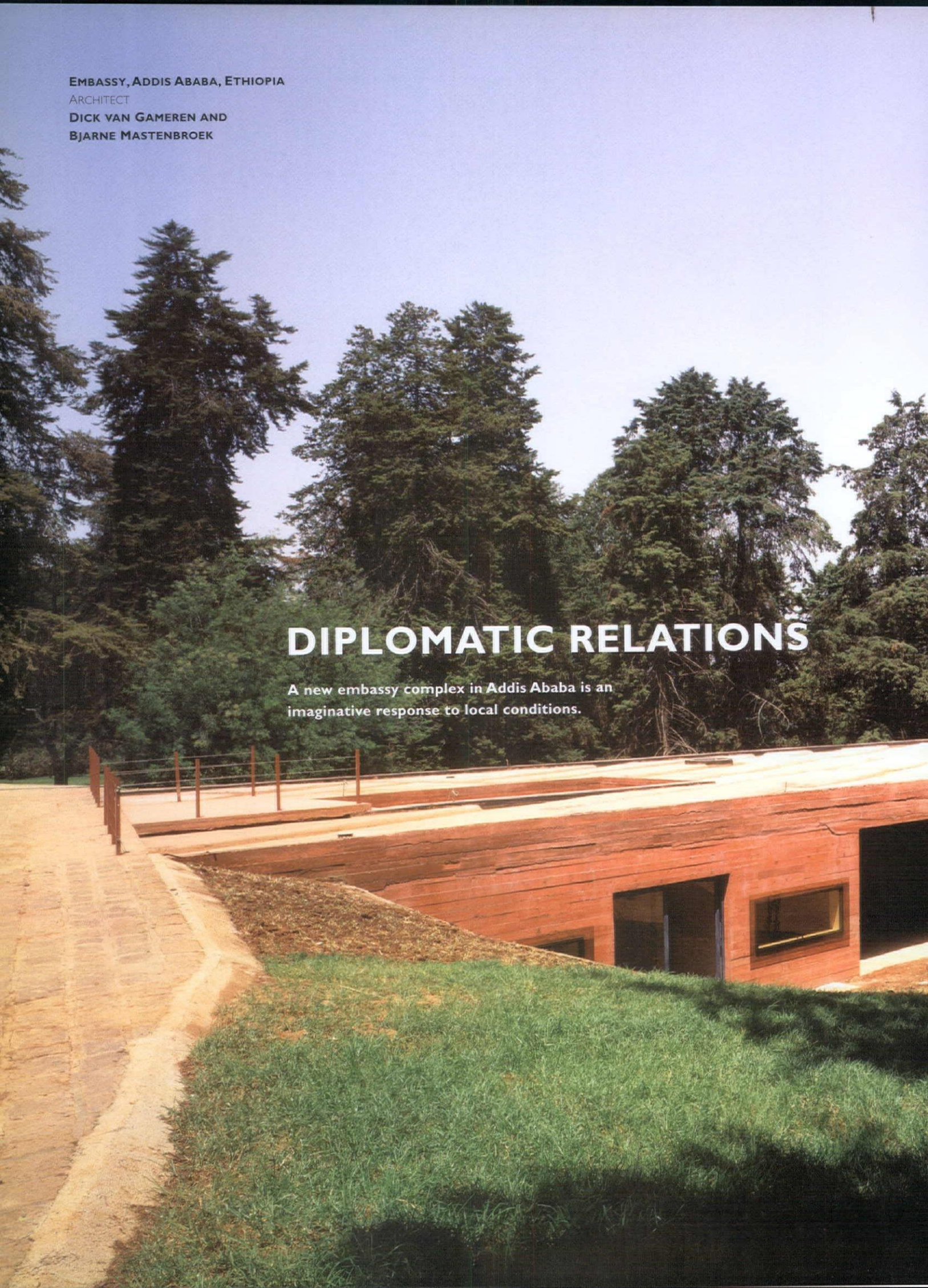
1 tickets
2 entrance
3 display space
4 small exhibition
5 large exhibition/forum
6 exit
7 bookshop
8 multi-purpose room
9 office
10 information
11 storage



6
The cathedral nave, with its imposing structure of cardboard tubes.
7
Museum shop.
8
The forum space between the two elongated volumes.

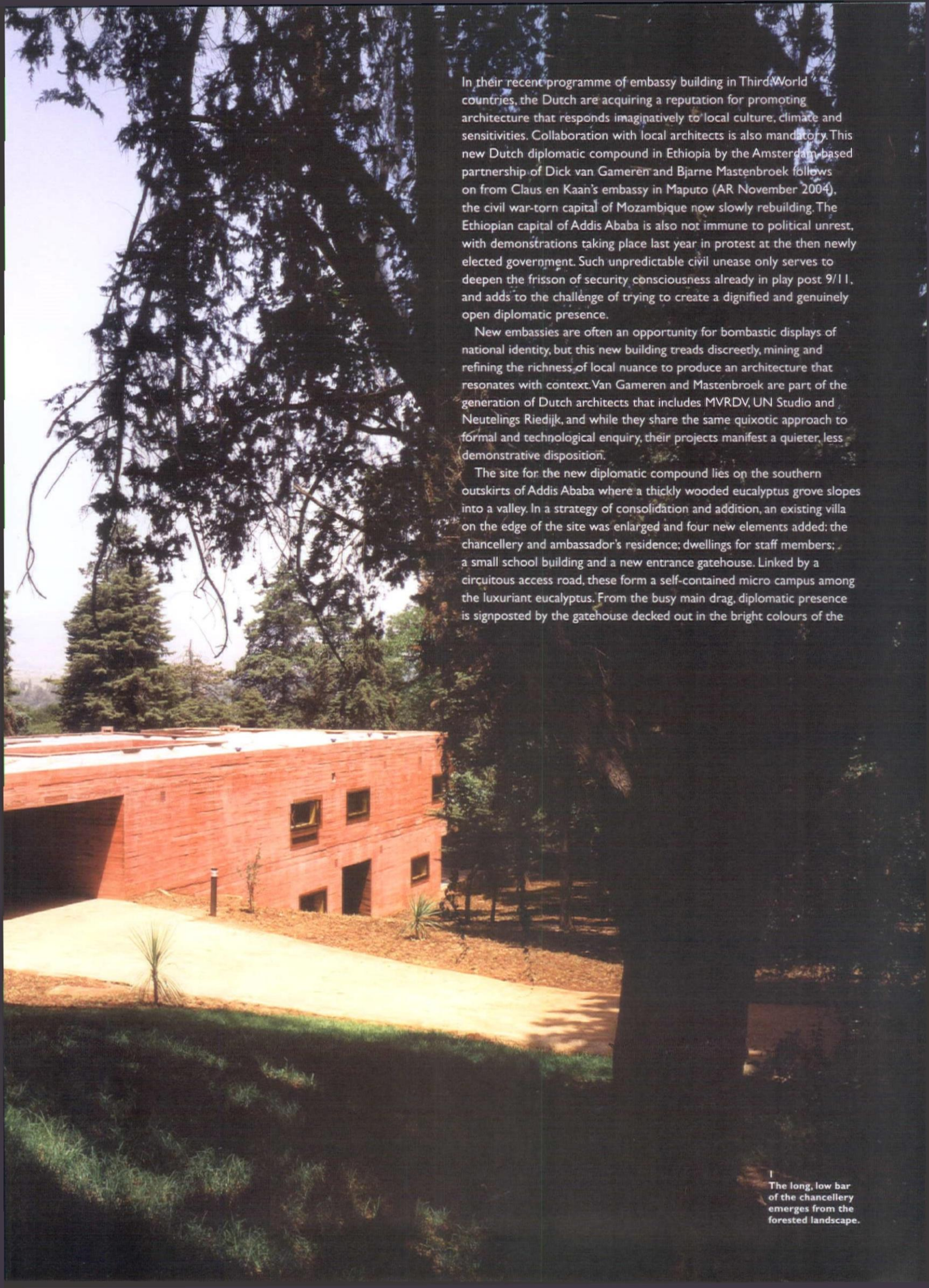
ground floor plan (scale approx 1:1250)

Embassy, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Architect
Dick van Gameren and Bjarne Mastenbroek



DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

A new embassy complex in Addis Ababa is an imaginative response to local conditions.



In their recent programme of embassy building in Third World countries, the Dutch are acquiring a reputation for promoting architecture that responds imaginatively to local culture, climate and sensitivities. Collaboration with local architects is also mandatory. This new Dutch diplomatic compound in Ethiopia by the Amsterdam-based partnership of Dick van Gameren and Bjarne Mastenbroek follows on from Claus en Kaan's embassy in Maputo (AR November 2004), the civil war-torn capital of Mozambique now slowly rebuilding. The Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa is also not immune to political unrest, with demonstrations taking place last year in protest at the then newly elected government. Such unpredictable civil unease only serves to deepen the frisson of security consciousness already in play post 9/11, and adds to the challenge of trying to create a dignified and genuinely open diplomatic presence.

New embassies are often an opportunity for bombastic displays of national identity, but this new building treads discreetly, mining and refining the richness of local nuance to produce an architecture that resonates with context. Van Gameren and Mastenbroek are part of the generation of Dutch architects that includes MVRDV, UN Studio and Neutelings Riedijk, and while they share the same quixotic approach to formal and technological enquiry, their projects manifest a quieter, less demonstrative disposition.

The site for the new diplomatic compound lies on the southern outskirts of Addis Ababa where a thickly wooded eucalyptus grove slopes into a valley. In a strategy of consolidation and addition, an existing villa on the edge of the site was enlarged and four new elements added: the chancellery and ambassador's residence; dwellings for staff members; a small school building and a new entrance gatehouse. Linked by a circuitous access road, these form a self-contained micro campus among the luxuriant eucalyptus. From the busy main drag, diplomatic presence is signposted by the gatehouse decked out in the bright colours of the

1
The long, low bar of the chancellery emerges from the forested landscape.

Dutch tricolor, a playful Pop Art twist on flagwaving expressions of national identity. At the western end of the site, the extended villa now houses the deputy ambassador and his family, with a new school and trio of staff dwellings placed along the northern perimeter. In scale and organisation, these subsidiary service elements clearly defer to the main architectural event of the chancellery, a horizontal volume 140m long which cuts commandingly across the compound on an east-west axis.

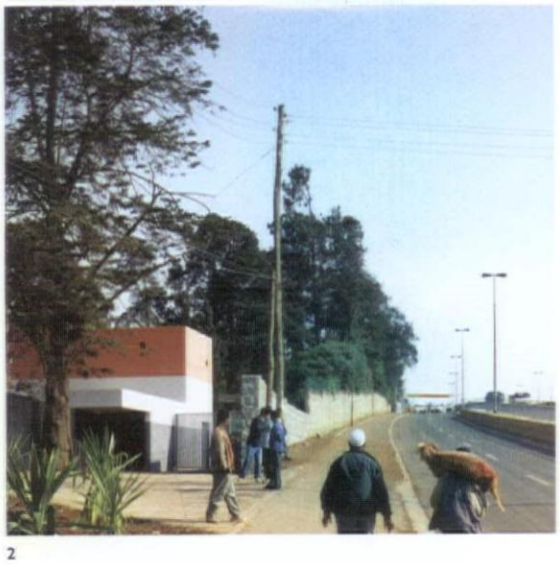
Built out of roughly textured concrete pigmented the same intense red ochre as the Ethiopian earth, the elongated, monolithic structure of the chancellery seems to have been carved out of the ground, in the manner of the country's extraordinary Coptic rock churches (AR June 2003). Utterly uniform in colour and texture, its geological gravitas confronts you head on, suggesting archaic solidity, stillness and mystery. Like a lost temple or abandoned monument, the building is partially engulfed by the landscape, a move that reinforces its already powerful topographic quality. About a third of the way along its length, the ground rises to allow the approach road to pass through the embassy at first floor level. This also effectively divides the building into two parts, separating the smaller head of the ambassador's quarters (west end) from the main body of chancellery functions (east end).

Though divided by the road, the two parts are reunited by the span of an immense flat roof, its surface raked by an organic network of channels like a dried-up river bed. From mid June to mid September Ethiopia experiences its rainy season, so the roof is periodically transformed into a shallow reflecting pool, a reminder of the life-giving cycle of nature. The sculptural rivulets also allude to the Dutch knack of managing water and the Netherlands polder landscape. Steps lead up to the roof/pool from the chancellery and a series of slightly elevated paths provide opportunities for rooftop/poolside contemplation. At its eastern extremity, the roof overshoots to form a beetle-browed canopy marking the main public point of arrival and entry.



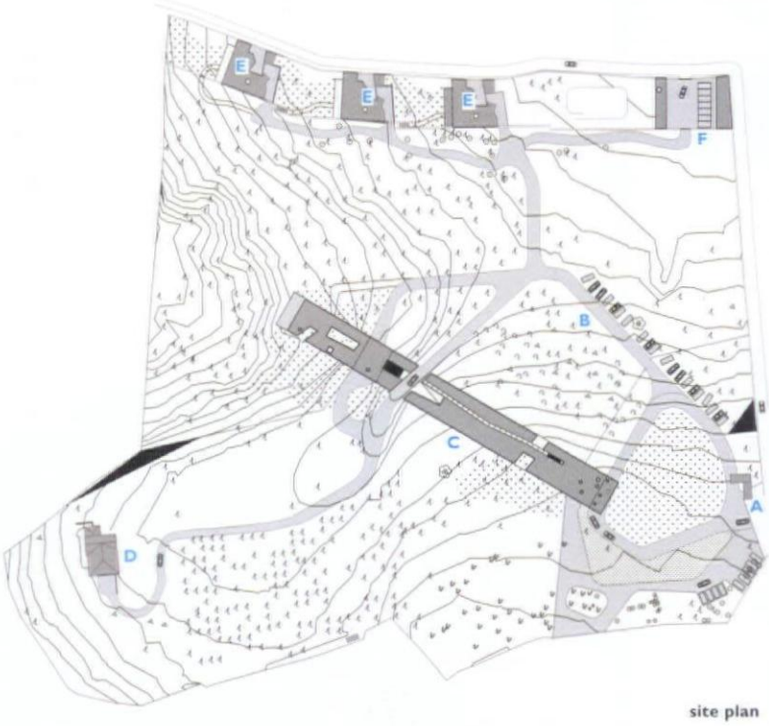
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2
A gatehouse in the colours of the Dutch flag signposts the embassy complex off a busy main road on the southern outskirts of Addis Ababa.
3
Ethiopia's remarkable Coptic churches, which are literally hewn from rock, were a powerful source of inspiration.
4, 5
The long roof overshoots to mark the main public entrance, at the building's east end.
6
The ambassador's private residence is housed in the west end.



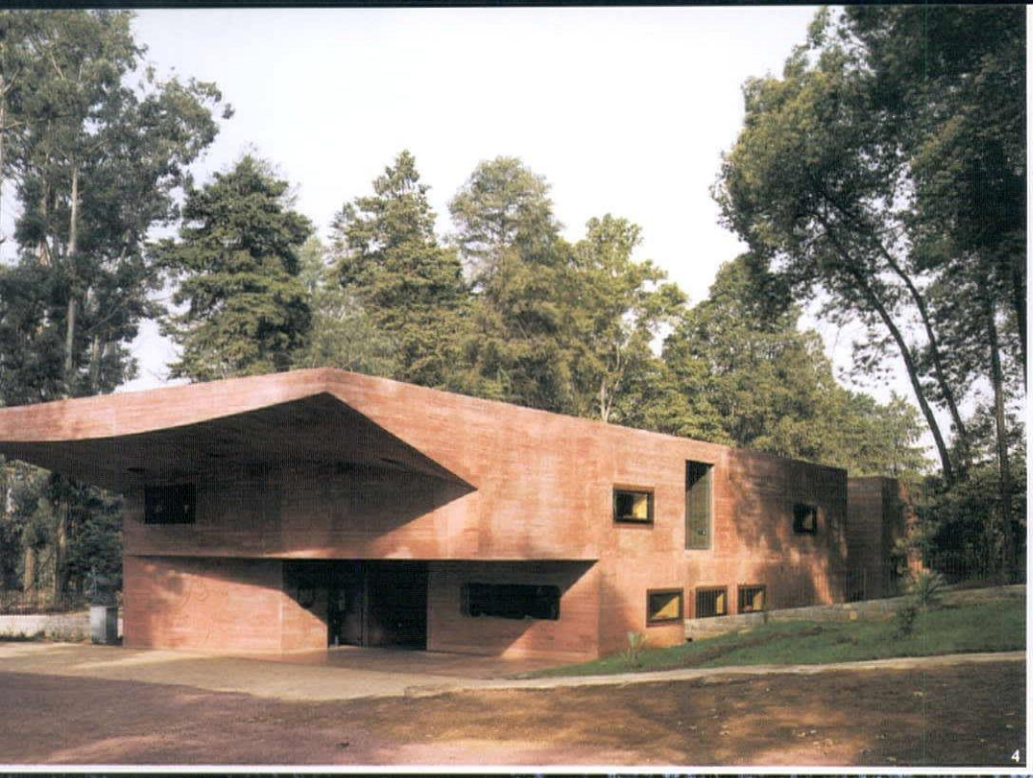
2

A gatehouse
B approach road
C chancellery
D deputy ambassador's residence
E staff houses
F school building

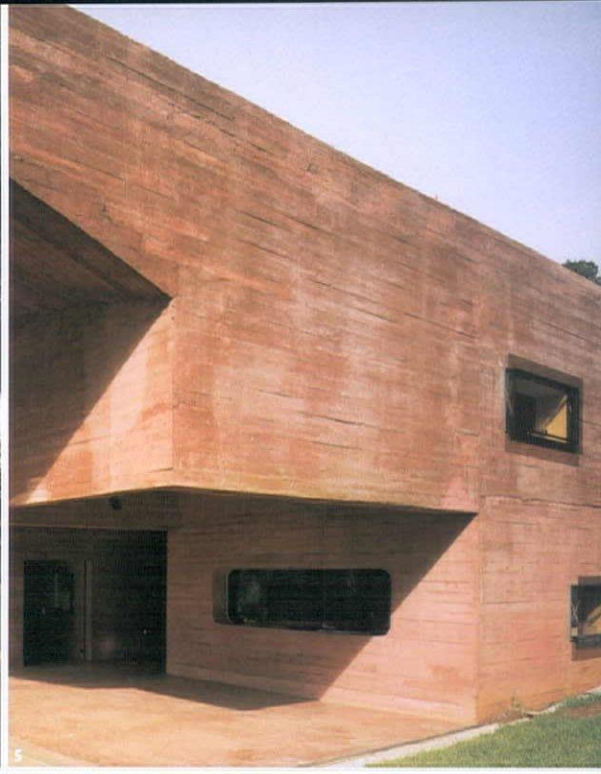


site plan

EMBASSY, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
ARCHITECT
DICK VAN GAMEREN AND BJARNE MASTENBROEK



4



5



6



Embassy, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Architect
Dick van Gameren and Bjarne Mastenbroek



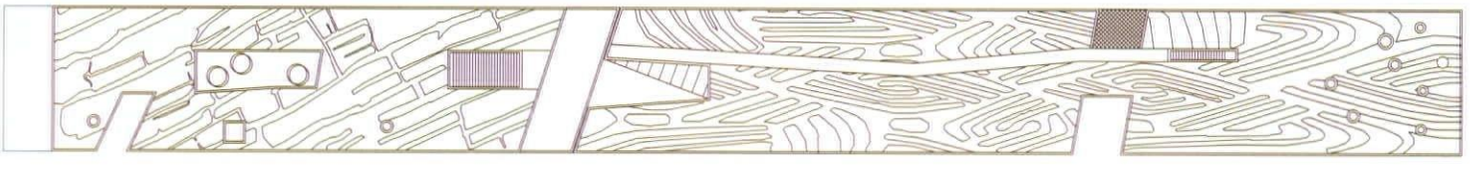
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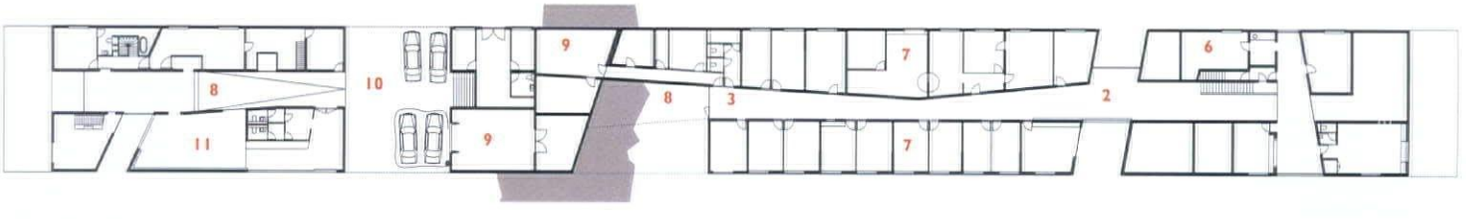
9

7
Walls of deep ochre pigmented concrete retain the marks and scores of their making.
8
The roof is carved with shallow channels to catch water.
9
The pattern of the channels evokes Dutch wetlands.

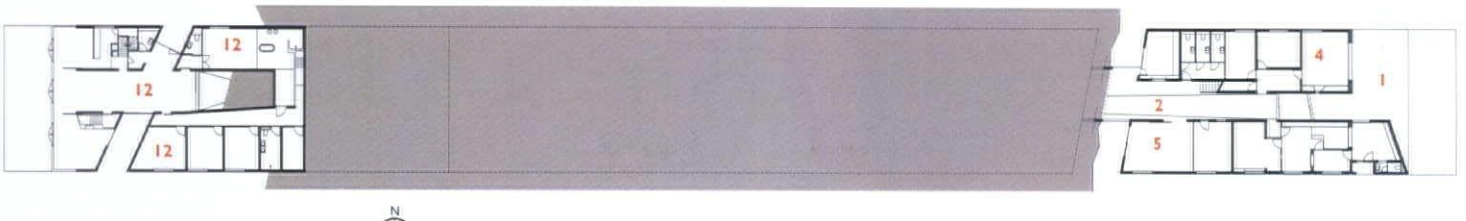
1 main entrance
2 central hall
3 spinal corridor
4 reception
5 library
6 ambassador's offices
7 administration
8 patio
9 technical/storage
10 approach road
11 salon
12 ambassador's private quarters



roof plan



first floor



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:750)

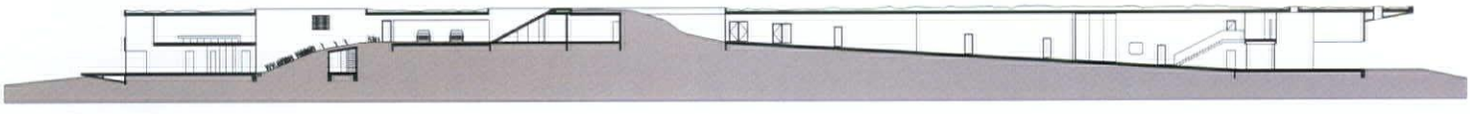
Internal organisation is admirably economical, with cellular offices double-banked off a spinal corridor that rises gently through the building from the entrance hall, following the gradient of the site. The two-storey ambassador's residence has private quarters at lower level with more formal reception spaces above. These connect with a secondary entrance and the approach road that penetrates the building. A trio of concealed staircases (for the ambassador, his family and staff) link the two floors.

Cleft-like patios are cut at intervals into the long volume to capture and funnel dramatic shafts of light. The ochre concrete is largely left exposed (floors are of the same material but polished), so the general effect is like being in a system of caves. This could be romantically interpreted as a return to primeval arcadia, but the bullet-proof glass in some windows is an indicator of more pressing contemporary concerns. Cast in horizontal formwork using local materials and labour, the pigmented concrete has an unselfconscious roughness entirely suited to its context. The striated texture catches the light and vigorously animates the building surface. Clearly this is all worlds away from the obsessive perfection of Japan or Wolfsburg (which in any case would be out of place here and well beyond Ethiopian resources), but as Van Gameren and Mastenbroek persuasively demonstrate, limited means and skills need not necessarily result in limited architecture. CATHERINE SLESSOR

10
A grandly-scaled staircase leads up to the roof.
11
The spinal corridor gently rises through the building.
12
The ambassador's private quarters give on to a terrace.
13
Dividable salon for formal entertaining.
14
Patios cut into building bring light into the cave-like interior.



long section



long section

Architect
Dick van Gameren and Bjarne Mastenbroek, Amsterdam
Associate architects
Abba Architects, Addis Ababa
Structural engineers
Ove Arup & Partners,
Messele Haile Engineering
Photographs
Christian Richters except nos 3 & 9

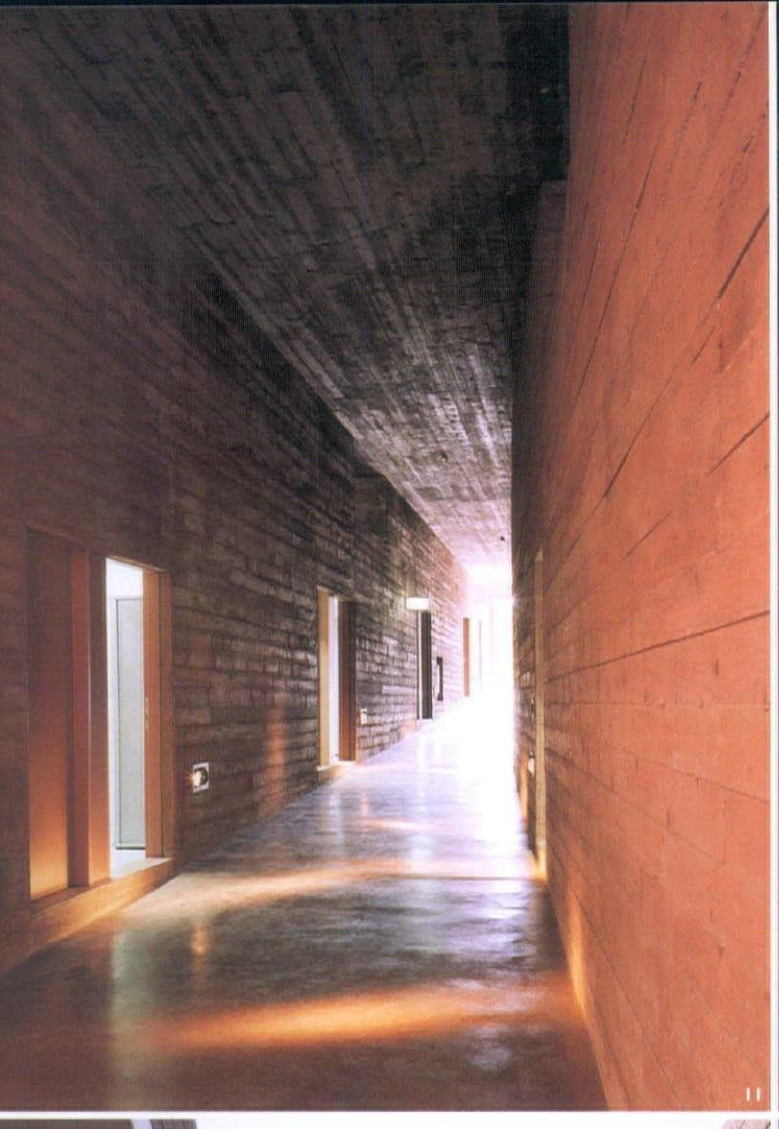
EMBASSY, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

ARCHITECT

DICK VAN GAMEREN AND BJARNE MASTENBROEK



10



11



12



13



14



APARTMENT BLOCKS, IZOLA, SLOVENIA
ARCHITECT
OFIS ARHITEKTI

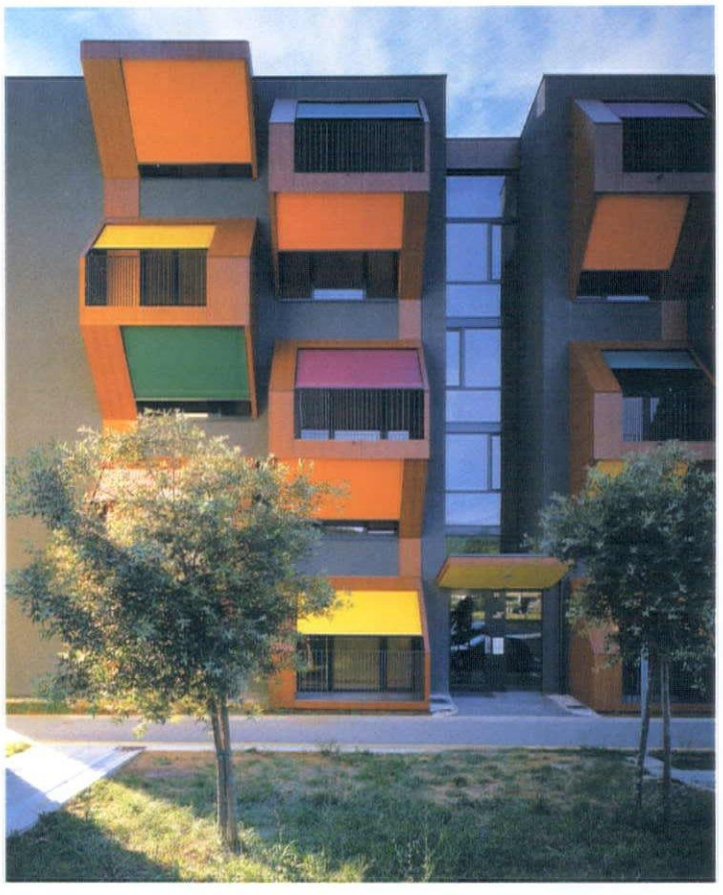
CHEAP AND CHEERFUL

Low-cost housing is given an eye-catching and inventive twist on Slovenia's Adriatic coast.

Premiated in the 2004 Emerging Architecture Awards for its imaginative addition to Ljubljana's City Museum (AR December 2004) Ofis is a young Slovenian practice now honing and testing its skills in a series of new housing projects with demanding briefs and unforgiving budgets. Confronted with a serious shortage of housing and stratospheric free-market prices, the Slovenian government has introduced a national housing policy, financed by the Slovenia Housing Fund and also encouraged competitions for new projects in an effort to raise the standard of architecture. Many have been won by younger practices, such as Ofis, but it is perhaps too early to tell whether the fresh thinking generated by youthful brio will percolate more meaningfully around the state subsidised housing system.

First featured in the AR Preview issue last year (April 2005), Ofis's competition-winning scheme for two housing blocks on Slovenia's Adriatic coast is now complete. The brief was for 2800 sq m of accommodation in twin blocks, each containing 30 apartments for sale. Construction costs were nailed down to 600 euros per sq m, which translated into a 1250 euros per sq m selling price. Arranged six per floor over five storeys, dwellings are intended to be affordable, aimed at young couples and families, so space standards are far from generous. As a result, floor plans are admirably modular and economical, with communal areas reduced to a minimum.

Despite these constraints and the additional drawback of a site on the industrial edge of town, Ofis has succeeded in creating a pair of lively and eye-catching blocks, their facades animated by angular loggias. The tightly packed, regular geometry of the loggias evokes comparisons with the organic structures of nests or beehives. Sun shading and privacy is provided by coloured textile screens, which add to the general gaiety and variety of the composition. Wrapped in timber cladding, the sides of the loggias are perforated to encourage cross ventilation in Izola's hot summers.

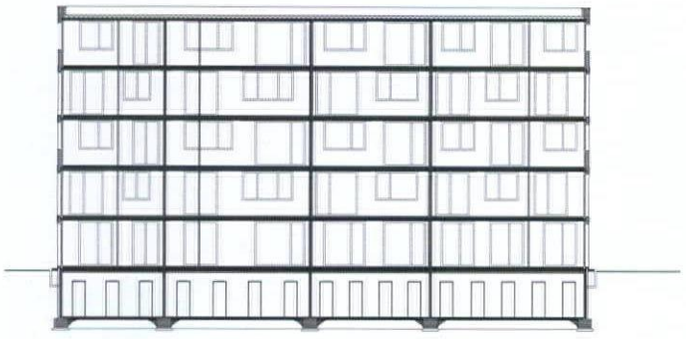


2

3



1
Angular *loggias*, with overtones of Japanese capsule housing, animate the facades.
2
Each block has a communal entrance.
3
The geometry in context.



long section



cross section

By providing precious intermediate indoor/outdoor space, the loggias extend the compact apartments. Flat types range from studios, as the emphasis is on the starter home market, to two-bedroom family units. Internal planning is simple and logical, with flats double banked off a central spinal corridor and ancillary spaces (kitchens, storage and bathrooms) contained in an inner service zone. Larger two-bedroom apartments are placed on the corners to take advantage of the double aspect.

Living spaces and bedrooms connect directly with the loggias which, unlike conventional terraces, have a greater degree of privacy due to the angular kinks of their geometry. Hence they are more like small rooms or modern versions of the traditional enclosed balconies of Ottoman and Moorish architecture, where intricately carved *mashrabyia* screens filtered light, air and views. Here, blinds are made from translucent material in jaunty shades of blue, green, pink and yellow, so preserving views and a sense of connectedness with the wider world. The potential for human animation of the loggias is considerable: residents can dine, sit, read, play, sunbathe or even garden. The dogged economy of the internal planning finds giddy release against the playfulness of the facades, adding surprising life to what, on paper, could have been just another very dreary state-sponsored housing block.
C. S.

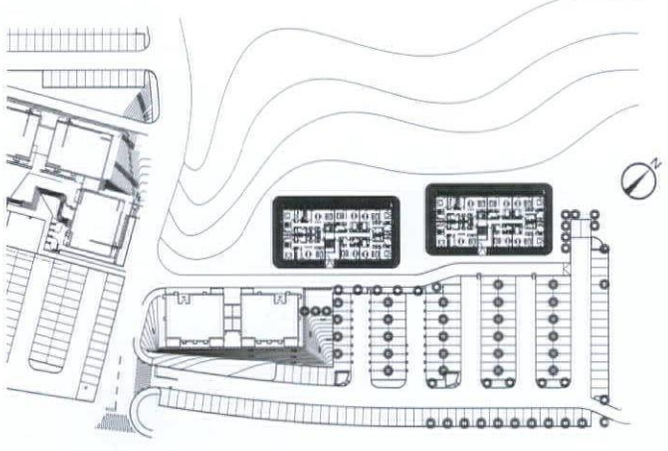
Architect
Ofis Arhitekti, Ljubljana
Structural engineer
Valide
Photographs
Tomaz Gregoric

APARTMENT BLOCKS, IZOLA, SLOVENIA

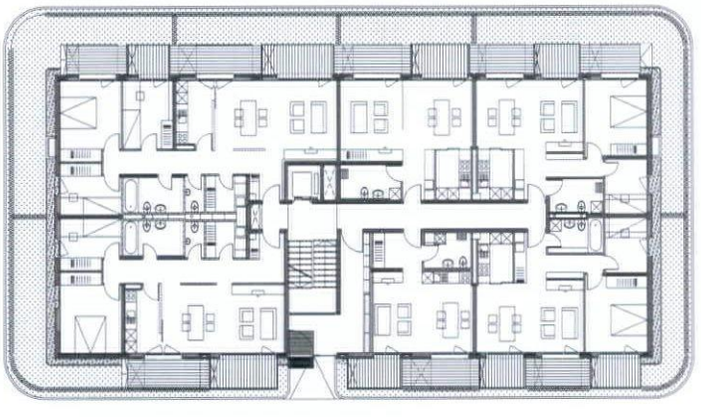
ARCHITECT
OFIS ARHITEKTI



typical upper level plan



site plan



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:500)

4



5

4
Coloured blinds provide shade and enhance privacy.
5
Loggias extend living and sleeping spaces. The translucent blinds still allow views out.

COMMUNITY CENTRE,
LOS ANGELES, USA
ARCHITECT
FERNANDO VAZQUEZ



1

COLOUR FIELD

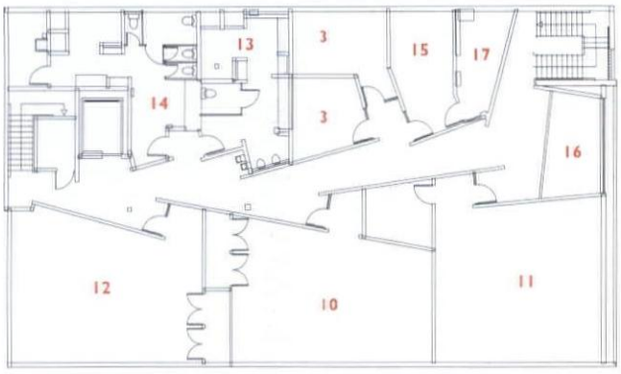
A former warehouse is boldly revitalised to provide a community and urban focus.



2

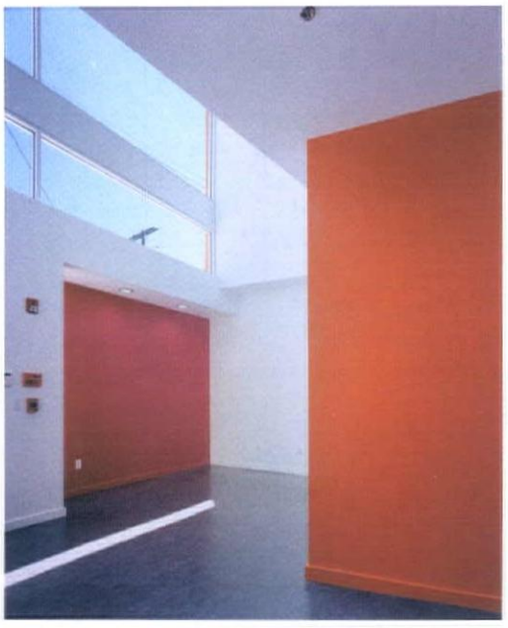
El Centro del Pueblo in the Echo Park district of Los Angeles is the kind of building block that every inner-city community needs: a non-profit institution, run by dedicated professionals and volunteers, which weans youths away from drugs and gangs by infusing them with a sense of hope and self-esteem. Thanks to generous grants from the S. Mark Taper Foundation and other donors, it has recently acquired a new home, a 1000sqm warehouse inventively remodelled by Fernando Vazquez, a Uruguayan-born architect who is constantly bringing high drama to simple projects in his adopted city. Drawing on the Latino heritage of vibrant street architecture, he created a dynamic shopping centre behind the facade of The Citadel (a former 1920s tyre factory resembling an Assyrian fortress) in the aptly named City of Industry. More recently, he designed a Constructivist bicycle station of tubular metal in Long Beach. His home in the oceanfront community of Venice is a laboratory for games of perspective and he's applied those lessons here.

The Anglo establishment in Los Angeles tends to be as timid with colour as it is with coffee, turning everything into a bland latte, and rearing like a startled horse whenever a neighbour defies the norm. Most Latinos revel in bright hues and black brews, and they will soon constitute a majority in southern California. For Vazquez, who grew up in the Modernist white city of Montevideo, and went to school in Argentina, colour was something to discover on trips through Central America and in the barrios of east Los Angeles and midtown. He worked

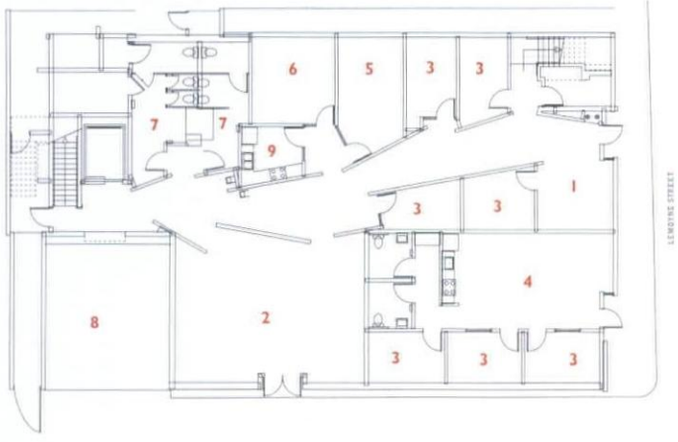


first floor

1 reception
2 games room
3 offices
4 lounge
5 computer games room
6 sports library
7 wc
8 loading dock
9 kitchen
10 dance studio
11 exercise studio
12 boxing & weightlifting
13 men's locker room
14 women's locker room
15 accounting
16 void
17 storage



3



ground floor plan (scale approx 1:500)



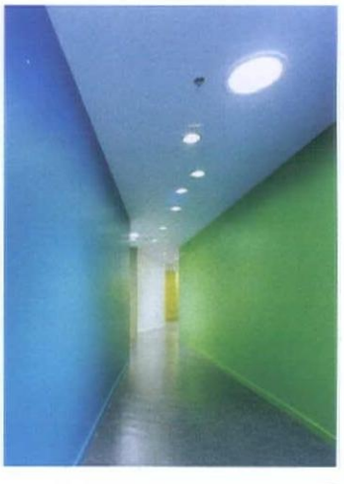
cross section

with the environmental graphics firm of Sussman/Prezja, which devised the hot, festive palette for the LA Olympics of 1984 (AR August 1984), before opening his own office and taking on projects in Japan.

A few smart moves transformed the generic, windowless, white stucco box. To pull in natural light while shielding the interior from the street, Vazquez pushed out a ground-floor bay with a strip of glass at the side, and opened up a big window at the upper level. Bold accents of magenta and orange on the facade provide a sense of place, and create a new abstract geometry that plays off the exuberant mural on the neighbouring property. The second floor is cut away in front to form a double-height lobby, and allow natural light to penetrate the corridors that extend to the rear of the building. These are treated as village streets, with grey linoleum in place of asphalt, and angled planes that enclose activity rooms and offices. These planes animate the corridors, shifting perspectives and alternately concealing and revealing glass entry doors. To suggest a row of house fronts, they are painted in sizzling yellows and oranges below, and cooler blues and greens above. The colours draw you into the building and lift your spirits.

Skylights in the corridors and studios bring natural light to every space. Materials were chosen for their economy and durability: gypsum-board walls and ceilings, linoleum floors, and exposed insulation in the studios. These are tested to the full every day. Activities on offer include boxing and weights, aerobics, gymnastics, martial arts, and dance. There's a computer lab-library, a classroom, café, and lounge. Every space is fully used, and plans are being made to expand into the adjoining property. To the south is a garden with a court for basketball and volleyball. This is as impeccably maintained as any neighbourhood park on the affluent Westside, and there is no graffiti on the building – a sure sign that it has won local respect. Vazquez, working with Ena Dubnoff of ONE Company Architecture, has created a disciplined exterior and a liberating interior: a metaphor for the youths and mentors who use this rejuvenated community focus. MICHAEL WEBB

Architects
Fernando Vazquez
Ena Dubnoff
Photographs
Benny Chan



4

1
The building's revitalised and searingly colourful facade proclaims its mission of social improvement.
2
The original warehouse.
3, 4
Skylights and clerestories bring daylight into the deep industrial plan.

DIB DIB DIB

In the heart of Denmark's national forest, Chris Thurlbourne provides a platform for outdoor pursuits.

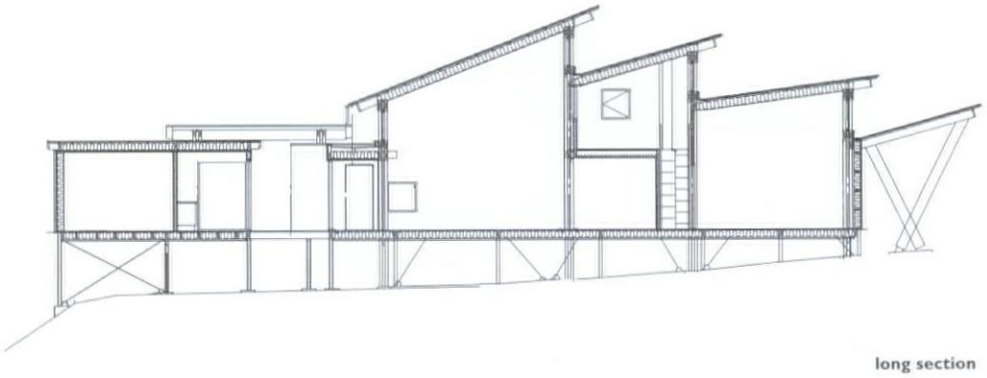
Peter Cook once described Chris Thurlbourne's approach to construction as one that is based on boy-scout technology; lashing together simple, affordable and traditional techniques to create an innovative contemporary architecture. In hearty boy-scout style, this project relied on the spirit of camaraderie and collaboration, on land donated by the state-owned forestry commission. The architect, who spends the majority of his time teaching at the school of architecture in Aarhus, worked well beyond the call of duty: as did the master carpenter Frank Hansen. The result being a hand-made, bespoke building of remarkable quality, for an equally remarkable cost; completed for less than £600/sqm.

On this remote forested site in Sejs, north Denmark, Thurlbourne lifted the building off the ground to allow visitors to register the fall of the existing ground. Reminiscent of a treehouse when viewed through the forest from the road, timber was the obvious material of choice. Cheaper, lighter and easier to repair than alternative choices, larch and timber shingles were used as cladding, to cloak an impressive stilted X-frame and ladder beam structure.

Set against a tree belt, above a gentle gradient, the building serves as an alternative platform to that of Playstation or television, providing a robust base for outdoor pursuits. A sheltered passageway leads from the ramp and stair to provide an external route through the building, linking the glazed kitchen to the left with the principal assembly hall to the right. Flanking the hall is a curved screen wall that contains a boot room, where dirty clothes can be stored before the troops enter the activity space. Upon leaving the outside world behind, the discovery of the assembly hall reveals a lofty double-height volume with its own canopy; articulated by a mezzanine and a trio of glazed ladder beams that rise to catch light through the three diminishing mono-pitches; dib dib dib.

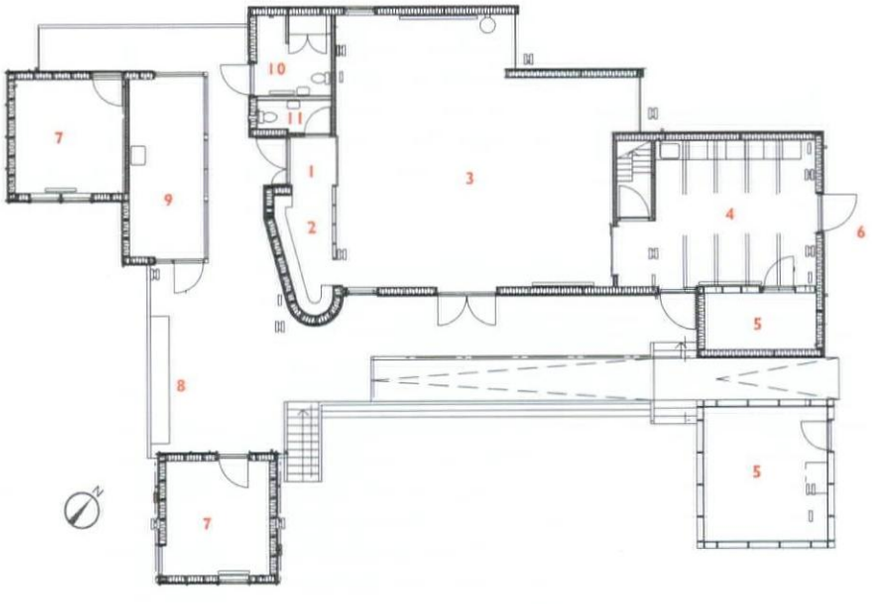
Providing 340sqm for less that £200 000, this building is a fine example of how to specify appropriate materials and techniques. On an isolated site, the construction sequence ensured that poor conditions would not be too disruptive, quickly raising the roof in camp-craft style to provide shelter during the six month construction period: bob-a-job done. ROB GREGORY

Architect
Chris Thurlbourne
Photographs
Chris Thurlbourne



long section

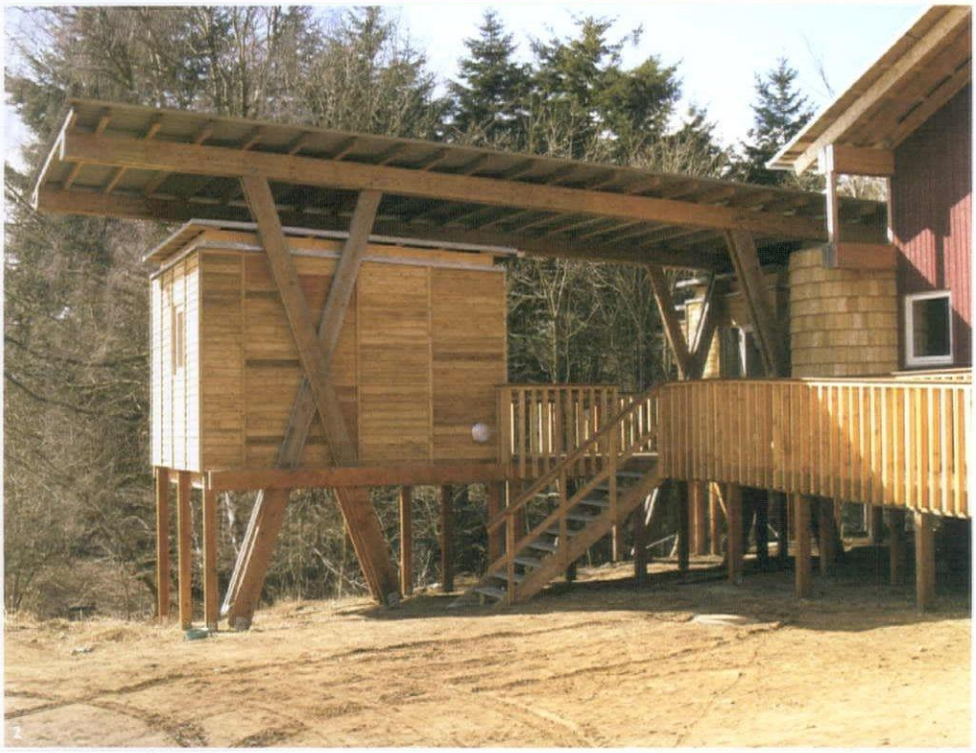
1 entrance lobby
2 boot room
3 assembly hall
4 workshop
5 tool store
6 outdoor workshop
7 meeting room
8 covered cooking area
9 kitchen
10 washroom/accessible lavatory
11 lavatory



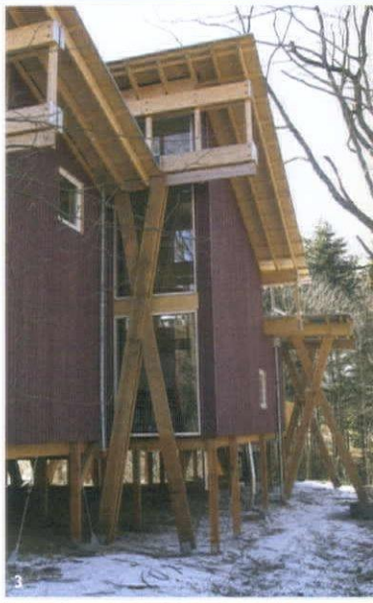
ground floor plan

OUTWARD BOUND CENTRE, SEJS, DENMARK
ARCHITECT
CHRIS THURLBOURNE





1
Elevated above the gently falling ground, the assembly hall is articulated by three diminishing mono-pitch roofs.
2
Set against the tree line, the new facility uses larchwood for principal structural members, timber cladding and shingles.
3
On the northernmost elevation, the three bay assembly hall is staggered in plan, with full-height windows, X-frames and ladder beams fully expressed.
4
The longest roof span running north to south creates a large canopy that shelters an external cooking area and a cellular meeting space.
5, 6
Internally timber is dominant material.









St Catherine's, Oxford

In 1964 Reyner Banham called it the best motel in Oxford. With 130 new bedrooms, and slightly wider beds, it is time to check in to St Catherine's north quad.

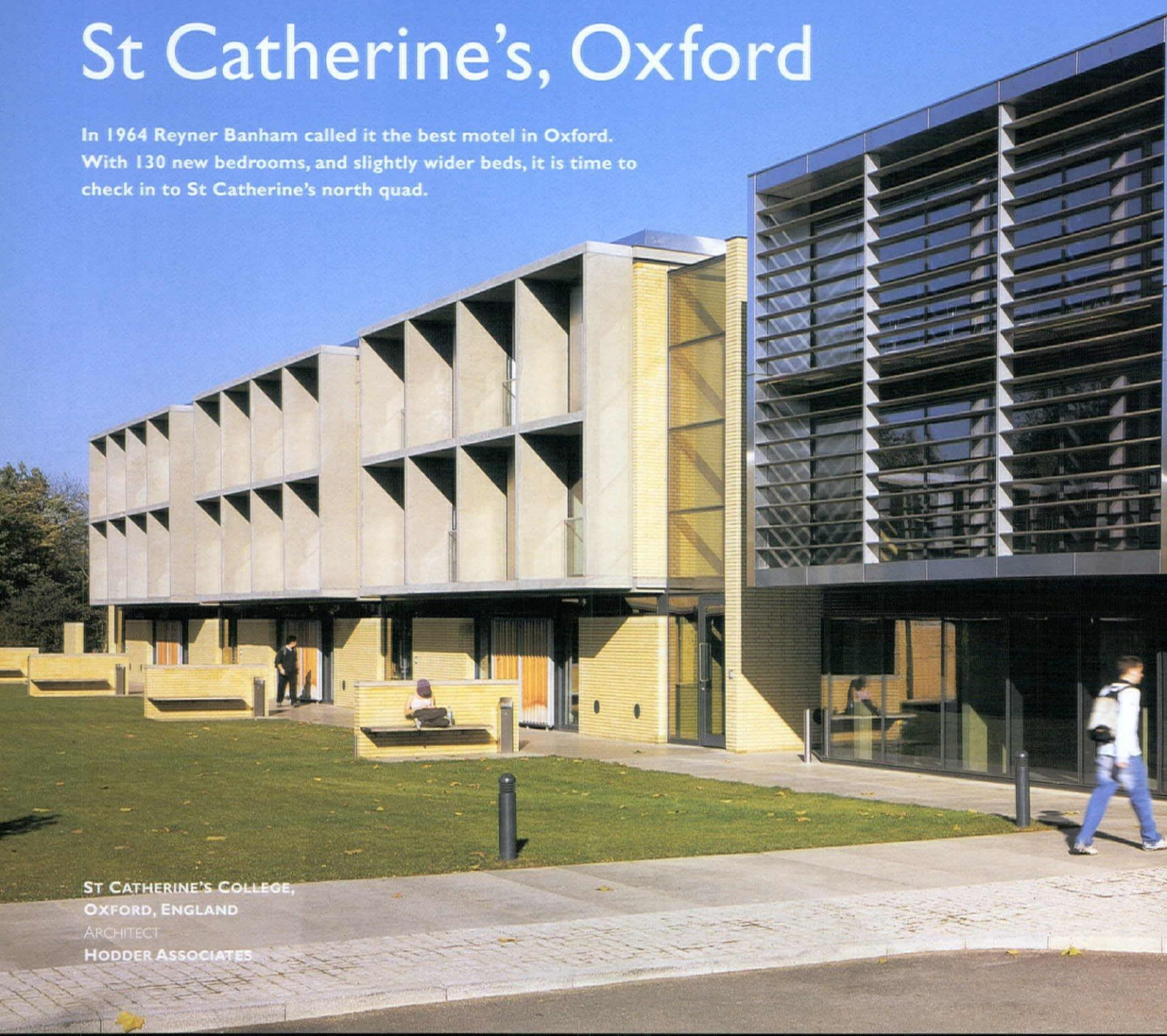
With twenty-five years of post-war expansion the University of Oxford doubled in size. St Catherine's was a new college, and from the outset Founding Master Alan Bullock was clear that it would have to contribute something distinctive to the architecture of its time. On the remote Holywell Great Meadow site, innovation and experimentation led the way, presenting a unique opportunity in the University's recent history. A special sub-committee was established to consider a number of exemplary buildings, and the search began and ended in Denmark. Following a field trip in 1958, the committee considered the work of Kay Fisker, Preben Hansen, Arne Jacobsen, Jørn Utzon and C. F. Møller, and were unanimous in their decision to offer the job to Jacobsen.

Jacobsen was immediately invited to visit Oxford, and five years later the college opened. Today, forty years on, the work still endures, standing with sublime presence. As a legacy to Jacobsen's creative genius and to the vision of the College, St Catherine's College sustains a unique character, and remains one of the UK's greatest post-war buildings. Unswervingly modern, yet consistent to the collegiate type, study bedrooms and shared facilities are organised around staircases, with the Jacobsen scheme comprising staircases 1-16. In 1994 three more stairs were added by Stephen Hodder, and here we focus on Hodder's second phase: a further seven staircases and a new porters' lodge.

The appointment of Hodder and details of his strategic masterplan have already been discussed in an earlier study (AR February 2004), however, the creation of the college's new quad deserves closer attention, seen here in its completed form.

Originally planned by Jacobsen to be approached from the west, the arrival sequence was never fully resolved. The house that was to be demolished to open up the axial route remains intact today, and as such the college has had to make do with a number of interim solutions. Holscher's tutorial pavilions at the north-west corner went some way to define the riverside route that turned guests on axis with the original lodge; but this arrival sequence always felt somewhat contorted. Later alterations by Philip Dowson introduced visitors to the celebrated view of the long lawn; but visitors still had to double back to align themselves with Jacobsen's ceremonial route across the bridge. Today, however, with a new porter's lodge, Hodder has subtly shifted the site's centre of gravity, without destroying any of Jacobsen's original clarity.

The extension of the long lawn was the starting point for Hodder's new quad, not only linking new with old, but also providing a dominant landscape feature in space that may otherwise have been dominated by car-parking. With the lawn as the principal place-making device, two new ranges of study-bedrooms run along the north and east boundaries, with



St Catherine's College, Oxford, England
Architect
Hodder Associates

place



1
As part of the seven stair expansion, Hodder's new east range provides four new studyroom staircases and a porters' lodge at the southernmost corner.

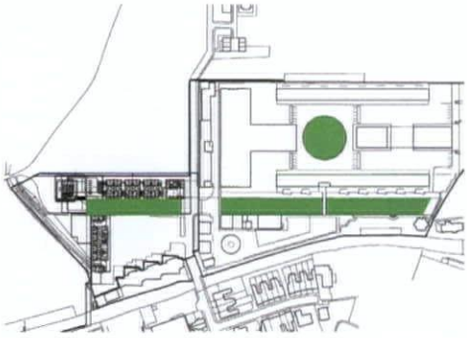


2

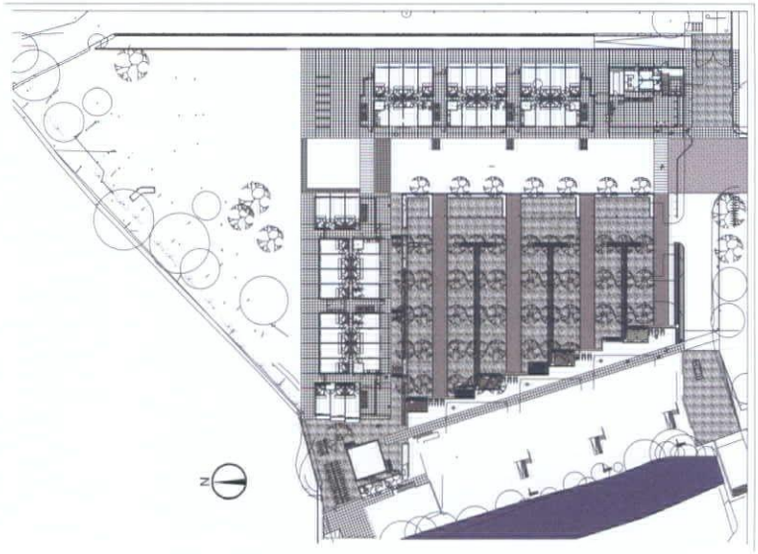


3

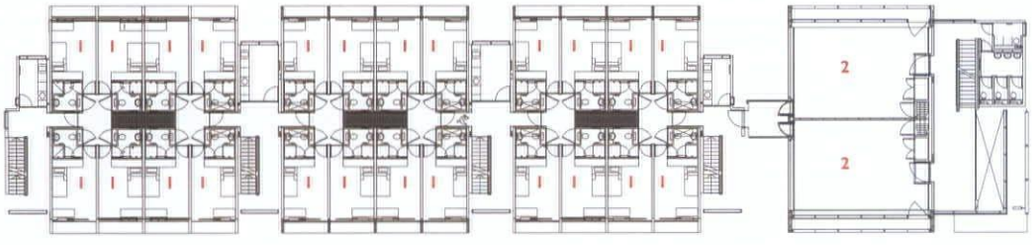
ST CATHERINE'S COLLEGE,
OXFORD, ENGLAND
ARCHITECT
HODDER ASSOCIATES



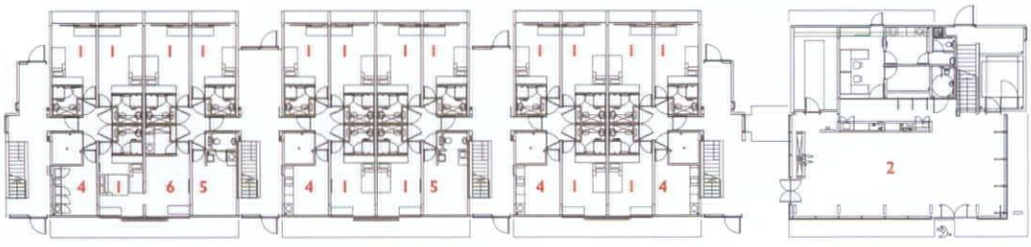
finalised two-phase strategy



site plan



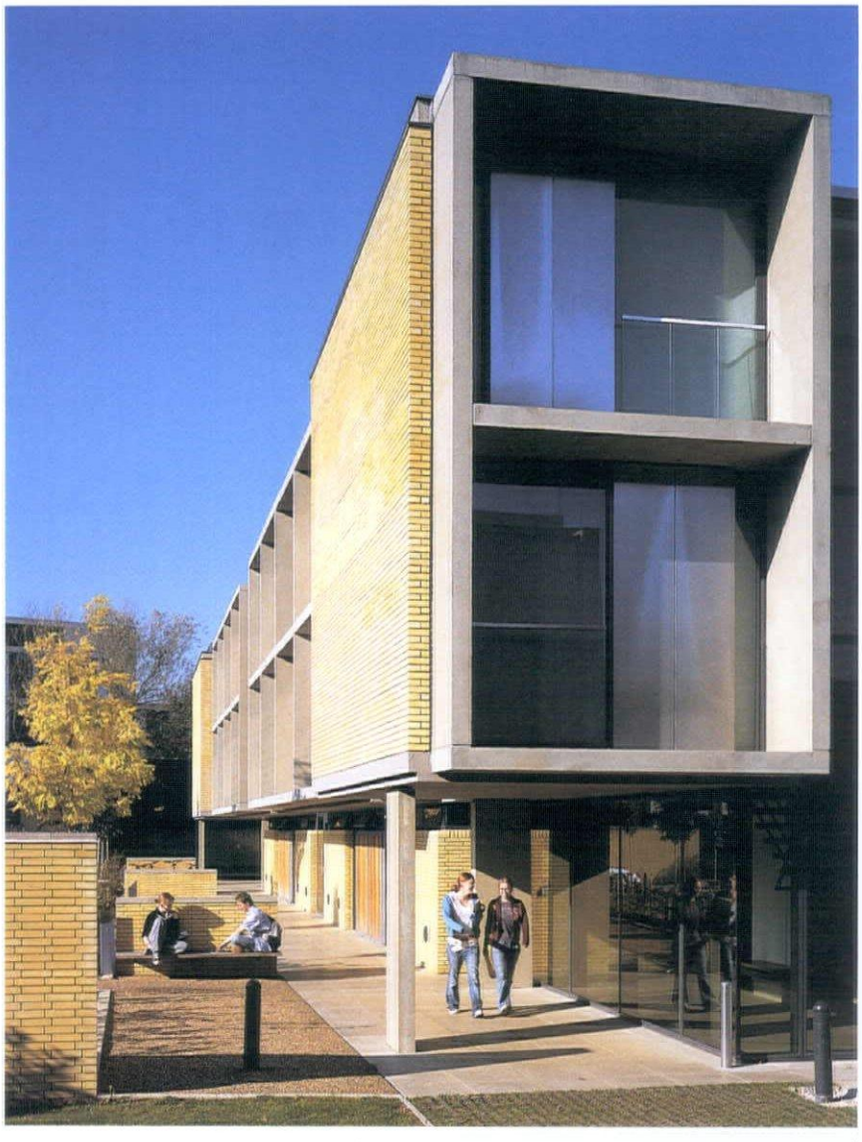
first floor plan, east block



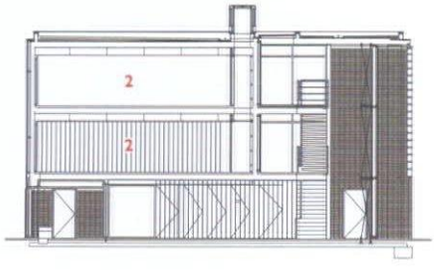
ground floor plan, east block (scale approx 1:500)

1 bedroom
2 seminar room
3 porters' lodge
4 pantry
5 scout/linen
6 living space

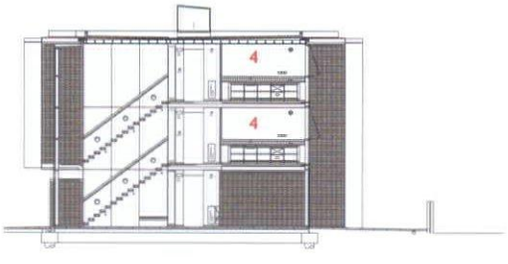
2
From Jacobsen's original long lawn, the new north quad is well mannered, sitting extremely comfortably within the college grounds.
3
From the meadow, the east range creates a new edge to the green belt, and maintains the horizontal emphasis of Jacobsen's original.
4
The new north range leads to the new intimate punt-house quad, rotating in plan to create new corner conditions.



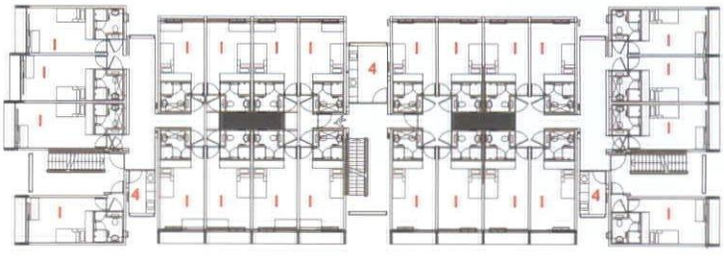
4



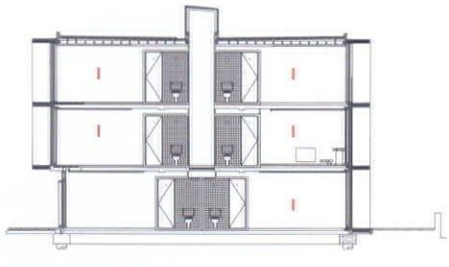
section through porters' lodge, east block



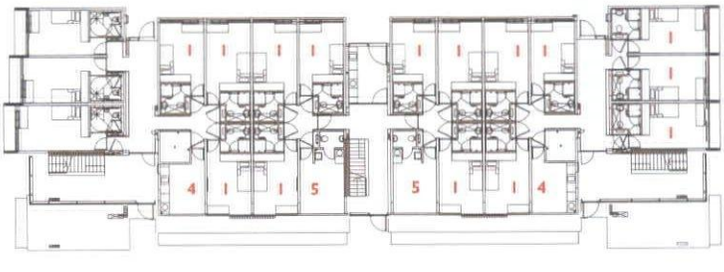
section through staircase, east block



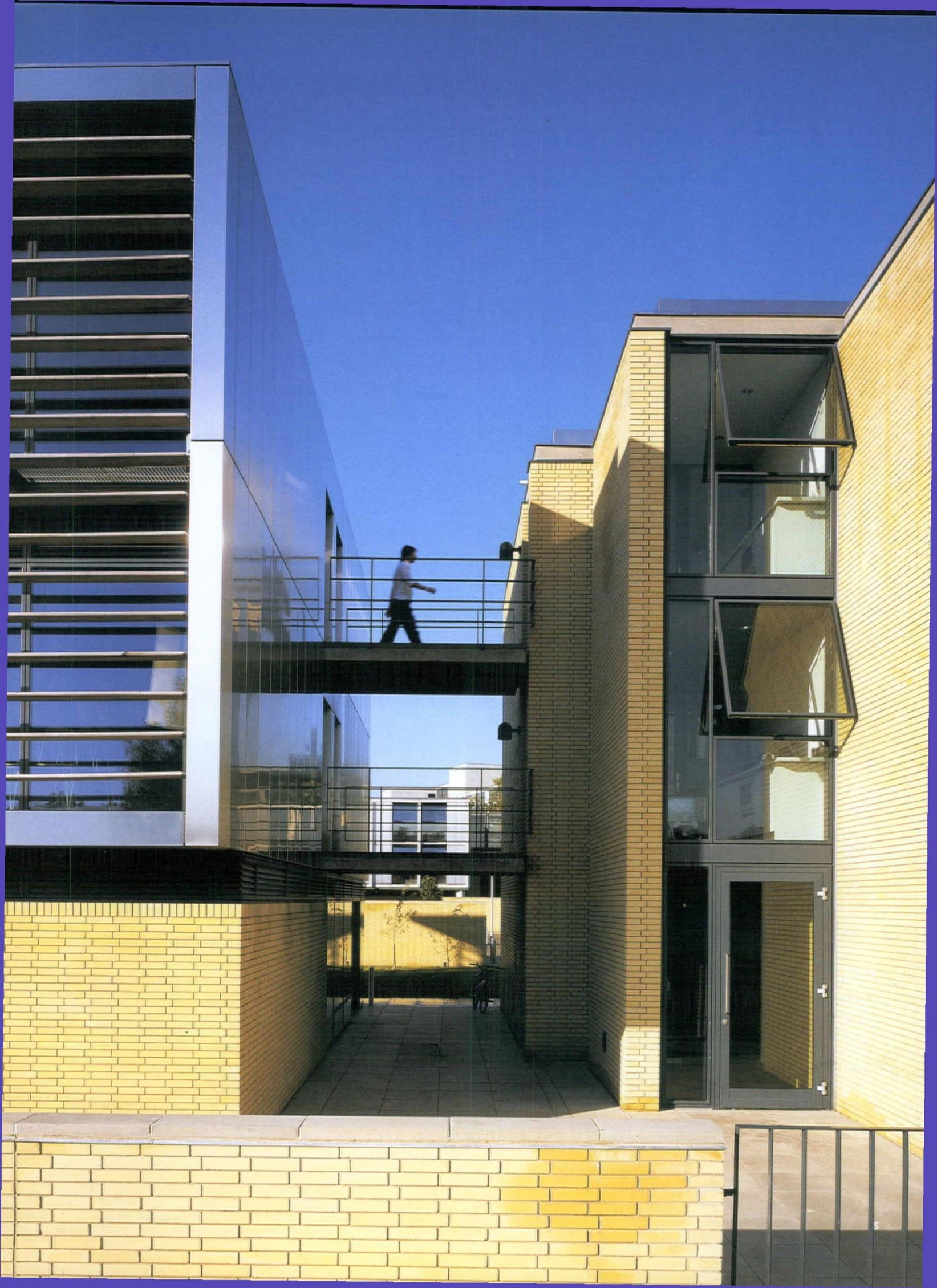
first floor, north block



section through bedrooms, east block



ground floor, north block



5
Hodder has expertly reinterpreted Jacobsen's principles of alignment and axis, here with views between lodge and staircase 26 looking west towards Hodder's 1994 phase one.
6
In-situ concrete, precast treads and maple joinery articulate each of the new staircases.
7
Exemplary detailing: Hodder's staircases maintain St Catherine's precise quality.
8
As group tutorials become a bigger part of college life, the Porters' Lodge provides four new seminar rooms, with a generous lobby overlooking the grounds.
9
A ground level study bedroom in staircase 25, overlooking the new north quad.



6



7

St Catherine's College, Oxford, England

ARCHITECT

Hodder Associates

the new lodge and seminar building serving as a prominent gatehouse, clearly visible on approach. The new quad adheres to many of Jacobsen's governing rules, being identical in height and controlled by rigorous planning grids that extend through building and landscape. Free-standing walls have also been incorporated to control views, access and thresholds, and the open corner at the north reminds us of Jacobsen's reinterpretation of the closed courtyard.

Internally the plans are well ordered, deceptively simple perhaps. However, in response to previous staircase configurations, a new format has been chosen. Unlike phase one, there are no shared corridors (spaces that proved to be oversized and unused), and unlike staircases 1 to 16 that were set in the middle of the plan, these are fully expressed and bright. With eight rooms arranged around each glazed stairwell, space is released for light-wells that bring daylight to all but a few of the internalised shower rooms, and the ground floor rooms step in to create a modest inset cloister.

Throughout the project, Hodder Associates have maintained a necessarily sharp eye for detail, responding well to Jacobsen's 'ideal platform'. Since 1992 when Hodder was first appointed, his work has been extensive, not only adding staircases 17-26, but also through the restoration of all the original study bedrooms and the adaptation of four staircases to include ensuite bathrooms. New glazing has also been skilfully installed throughout, working with Dissing and Weitling, Jacobsen's original design partner Teit Weylandt, and the Jacobsen Foundation. In all areas the architects have applied ingenuity and restraint, and considering the project was delivered under a hybrid design and build contract, everyone involved deserves to be extremely proud. Making a pedigree Great Dane even bigger is no mean feat. ROB GREGORY



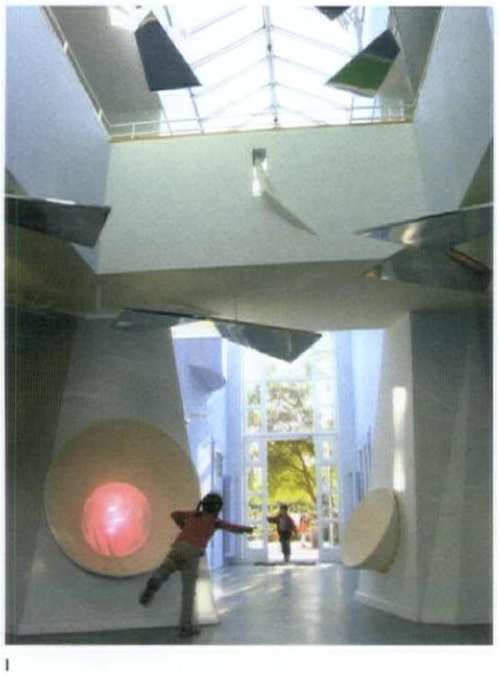
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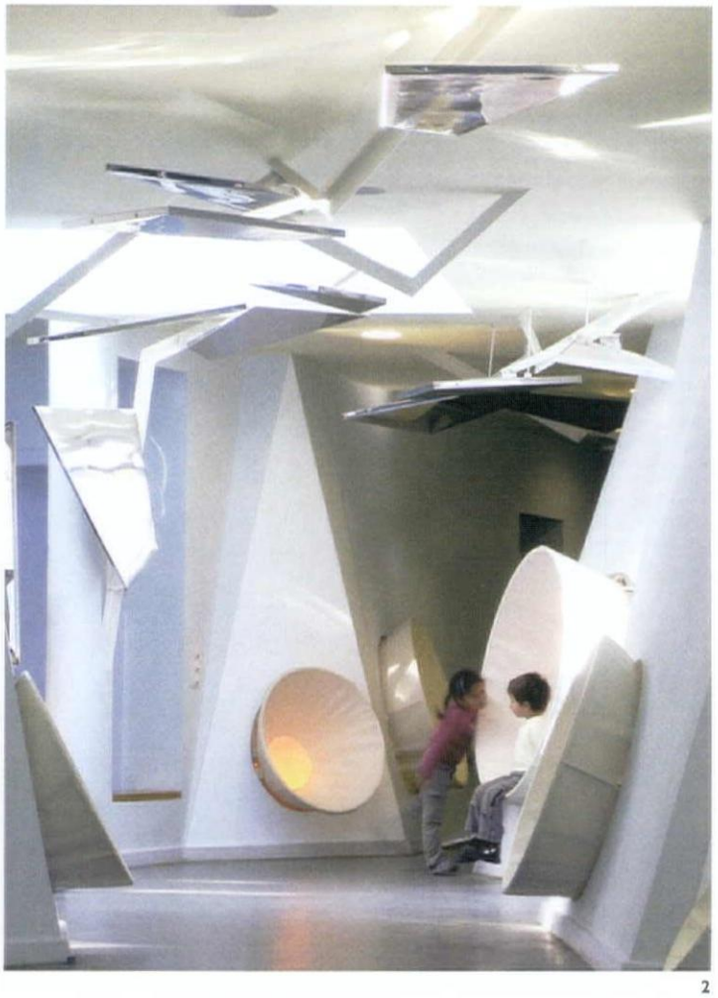
9

Architect
Hodder Associates, Manchester
Structural and civil engineer
Anthony Hunt Associates
Photographs
Martine Hamilton Knight

1
The complex, colourful arboreal structure brings light down into the interior.
2
Trunk-like constructions create social focus.
3
Detail of light deflecting 'leaves'.
4
Users clearly relish the potential for play and interaction.



1



2

Tree of dreams

A children's day care centre is animated by an arboreal fantasy, inspired by its young users.

Die Baupiloten is an architectural studio at the Berlin Technical University (TU) founded and led by architect Susanne Hofmann who trained at the AA. Projects to date have been characterised by highly imaginative communal spaces that provide a setting for rich social interaction, especially between children. The practice's first project, the Erika-Mann School in Berlin (AR December 2004) received prizes and awards for transforming a network of run-down corridors in an old nineteenth-century building.

The more recently completed kindergarten 'Tree of Dreams' has a similar remit in which a dreary, functional building is charged with new life and energy.

Though the building only dates back to 1990, its dark corridors and bleak atrium were devoid of any stimulation. Die Baupiloten asked the children, whose ages range from 2 to 11 and who come from different ethnic backgrounds, to articulate their ideas for a new kind of kindergarten. The children's responses galvanised the architects to develop the notion of a 'tree of dreams', in practice an arboreal structure which filters and directs the daylight as it streams in through the central atrium roof. Different types of lighting scenarios are brought into play according to the seasons. For instance, the low sun during the winter months creates a mysteriously bright winter sparkle, as light is mirrored from metal sheets (metaphorical leaves) and guided deep into the building. So the tree of dreams acts as a sensor of the seasons, weather and time of the day.



3

KINDERGARTEN,
BERLIN, GERMANY
ARCHITECT
DIE BAUPILOTEN

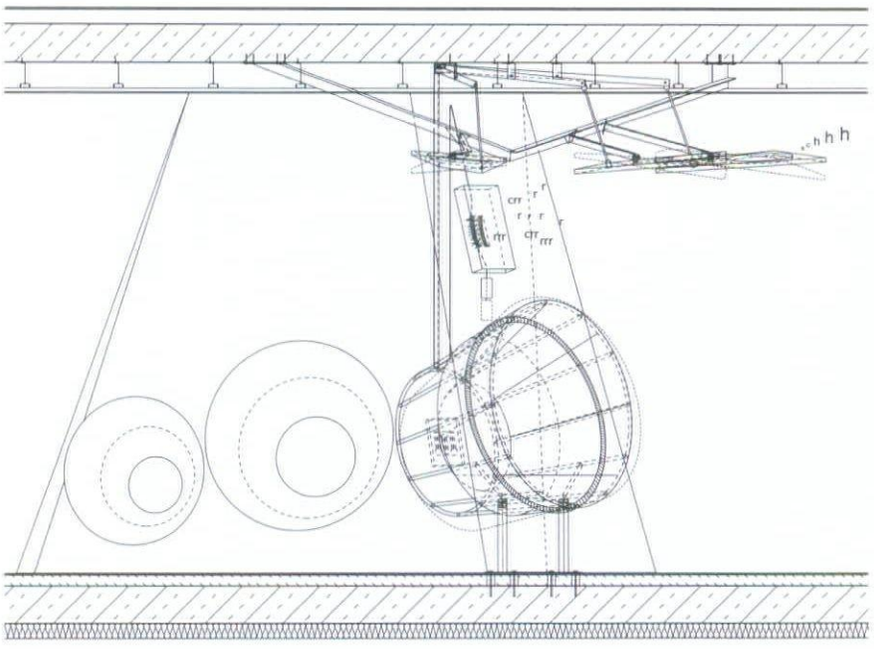


On the ground floor the corridor walls are reshaped as hollow, inclined tree trunks. Some of these house 'dream-blossoms', radial openings lined with backlit textiles which on a dull day literally radiate colour. The children use the trunks as places to retreat and hide, and sounds of snoring, hissing and giggling constantly permeate the space. The tree has thus become an animate beast which can shine, twinkle, move and make sounds. There is even a tree telephone which conveys messages from other children.

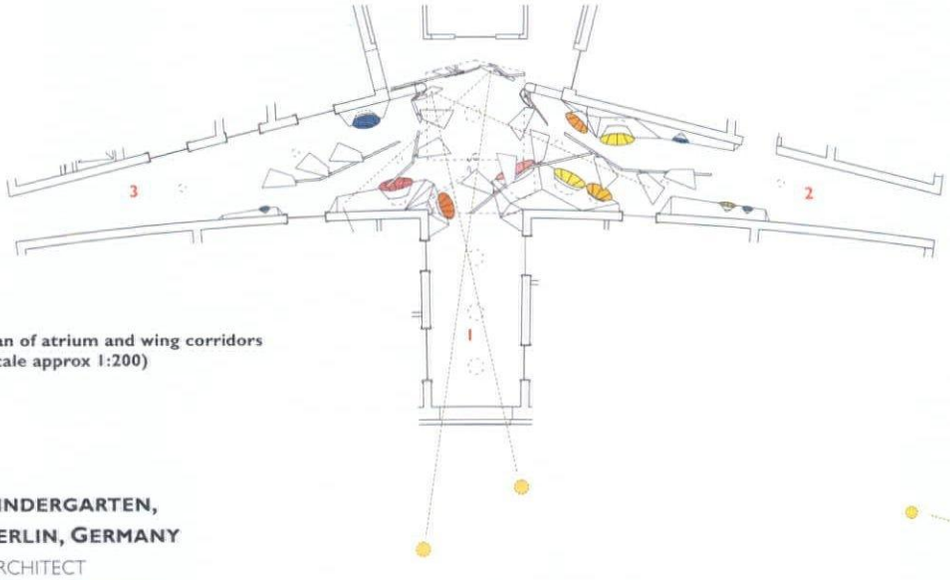
This latest project reinforces Die Baupiloten's sensitive, socially aware approach to design that succeeds in making apparently childish fantasies a resonant, imaginative reality.

CHRISTIAN BRENSING

Architect
Die Baupiloten, Berlin
Photographs
Jan Bitter



detail of trunk construction

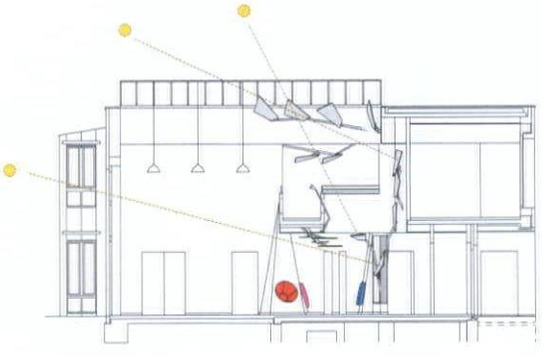


1 atrium
2 east wing corridor
3 west wing corridor

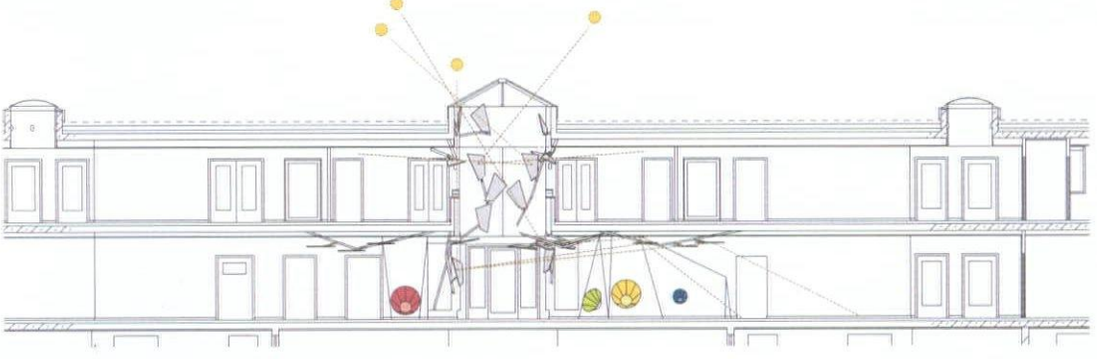
plan of atrium and wing corridors (scale approx 1:200)

KINDERGARTEN, BERLIN, GERMANY

ARCHITECT
DIE BAUPILOTEN



cross section



long section



1
Box with a view. An elevated structure saves on foundations.

1

Bijou box

This prototype for an easily transportable and economical house shows that small can be beautiful.

PROTOTYPE HOUSE, MUNICH, GERMANY
ARCHITECTS
HORDEN CHERRY LEE/ HAACK + HÖPFNER

First the tiny, tiddly Smart car (AR January 1999), now an ultra compact house which touts an equally impressive economy of space and resources. The challenge, from Munich's Student Housing Authority, was to create an economical, lightweight, transportable, low-energy dwelling prototype. The concept was developed over four years by British architect Richard Horden, professor at the Technical University of Munich, and German practice Haack + Höpfner. As the design team observes, 'We are used to spending time in compact spaces – in our cars or when we travel by air. The micro-compact home is informed by both of these in its incorporation of advanced technology and design. Living in it means focusing on the essential – less is more'.

Inspired by the scale and order of the traditional Japanese tea house and the technological sleekness of the aviation and automotive industries, the prototypical dwelling is inventively compacted in a 2.65m (9ft) cube. Each house can accommodate up to four people and is divided in sets of zones that fit together with the fiendish precision of a Chinese puzzle box. A central axis of entrance and circulation provides access to seating in a lower dining area. An upper bunk can be folded out of the way, while the sunken dining space also doubles as an additional sleeping area. A compact zone of wet services contains the lavatory, shower and kitchen.

The penchant for Oriental rigour also extends to the external treatment. Highly insulated panels of aluminium and glass are mounted on a timber and galvanised aluminium frame. The structure sits slightly elevated above the ground to cut out the time and expense of foundations and to minimise the impact on its surroundings. Groups of units can also be arranged vertically and horizontally around circulation cores in order to form larger, extended communities.

Occupants of the first seven prototypes will be students from Munich's Technical University and architect Richard Horden. The university is keen to test new accommodation solutions as it currently has 90 000 students and only 10 000 flats. Previous experiments included housing students in redundant shipping containers, but at half the size of a container, the micro house needs much less space. While not envisaged as a permanent, long term dwelling, it has obvious potential for the student, business traveller and holiday home markets. Or it could simply help housing authorities respond to general accommodation shortages. If successful after a year of testing, the micro-compact home will be marketed in Europe with a guide price of €50 000 (£34 500), around the cost of a mid range executive saloon. Ingenious in both concept and execution, it gives new meaning to that well-worn estate agent soubriquet 'compact but bijou'.

CATHERINE SLESSOR

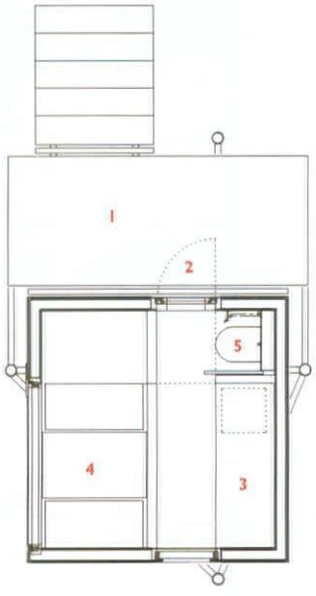
Architects
Horden Cherry Lee, London;
Haack + Höpfner, Munich
Photographs
Sascha Kletzsch

2
The ultra compact design is inspired by the elegant economy of aviation and automobile design.
3
Living/dining quarters, with sleeping bunk above. The sunken area can also be used as an extra sleeping space. Large areas of glazing help to dispel claustrophobia.

PROTOTYPE HOUSE, MUNICH, GERMANY
ARCHITECTS
HORDEN CHERRY LEE/ HAACK + HÖPFNER



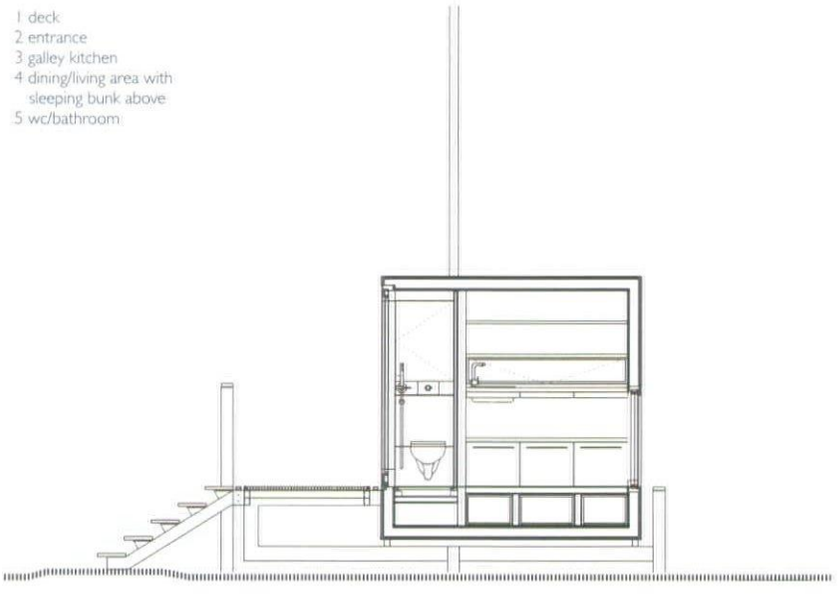
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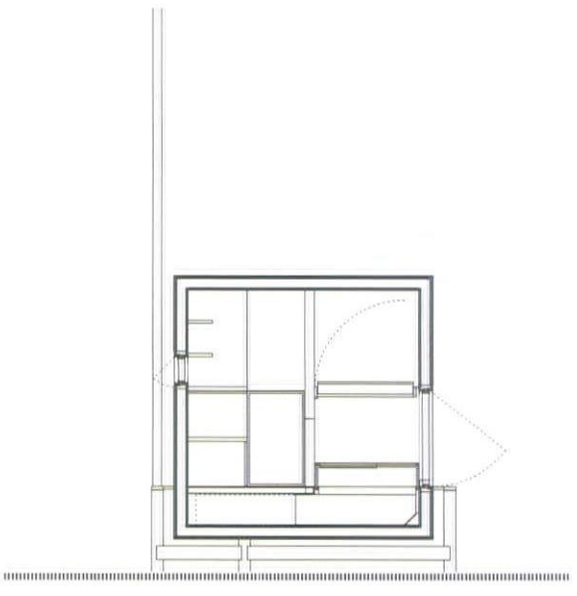
scale approx 1:100

3

1 deck
2 entrance
3 galley kitchen
4 dining/living area with sleeping bunk above
5 wc/bathroom



cross section through kitchen and bathroom



cross section through kitchen and living space

Milano

This year's Milan Furniture Fair was the first to be held in the newly inaugurated Fiera megastructure by Massimiliano Fuksas on the north-west outskirts of the city. Within the centre, the showroom scene was as frenetic as ever, as furniture companies engaged in a gruelling programme of launches and lunches. Clutching a glass of flat prosecco, Catherine Slessor reports.



501 VITRA
Semi-abstract sculptural figures inspired by folk art, first designed in 1963 by Alexander Girard (a contemporary of George Nelson and the Eames), now colourfully revived by Vitra.
Enquiry 501 www.arplus.com/enq.html



502 LAPALMA
OC chair by Simon Pengelly for Lapalma with sinuous plywood veneer shell on a wire base.
Enquiry 502 www.arplus.com/enq.html



505 ESTABLISHED & SONS
Aqua dining or conference table by Zaha Hadid for Established & Sons. The challenging geometry of the design is seamlessly executed in gloss finish polyurethane.
Enquiry 505 www.arplus.com/enq.html

503 ESTABLISHED & SONS
Subtly curvaceous Drift bench by Amanda Levete of Future Systems for Established & Sons.
Enquiry 503 www.arplus.com/enq.html





504 KLAESSONS
Mayflower chair in injection-moulded plastic by Swedish architects Lars Petterson and Thomas Bernstrand for Klaessons.
Enquiry 504 www.arplus.com/enq.html



506 SEGIS
Slide chair by Matteo Thun for Segis in transparent coloured polycarbonate on a chrome frame. Sweet wrapper shades enhance the sensation of lightness.
Enquiry 506 www.arplus.com/enq.html





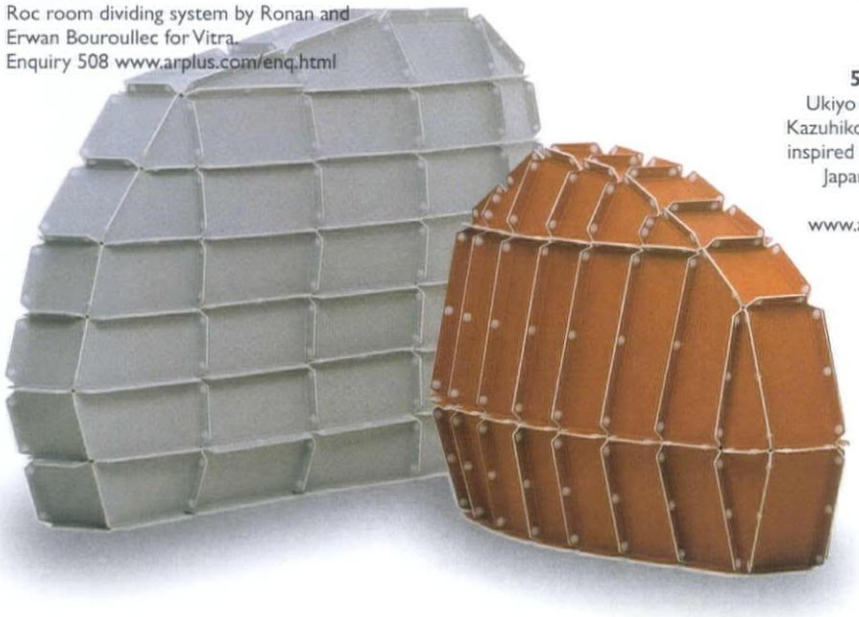
507 SEGIS
Jo-Lie chair by Roberto Romanello for Segis. Sinuous one-piece seat and back-mounted on a swivel or sled base (shown here).
Enquiry 507 www.arplus.com/enq.html

511 VITRA
Worker armchair by Hella Jongerius for Vitra combines earthy hand-crafted elements with technological sophistication.
Enquiry 511 www.arplus.com/enq.html



510 HORM
Elegantly sculpted Min bed by Toyo Ito for Horm.
Enquiry 510 www.arplus.com/enq.html

508 VITRA
Roc room dividing system by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec for Vitra.
Enquiry 508 www.arplus.com/enq.html



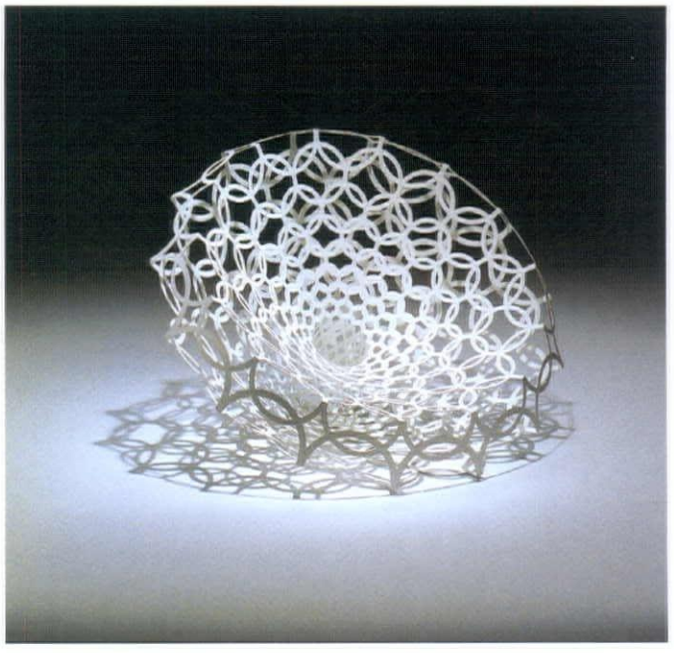
509 MOROSO
Ukiyo occasional tables by Kazuhiko Tomita for Moroso inspired by the luxuriance of Japanese kimono fabrics.
Enquiry 509 www.arplus.com/enq.html



products



512 ARPER
Leaf lounge chair by Lievore, Altherr, Molina for Arper. Steel structure with a chrome finish, suitable for indoor or al fresco use. Also comes with optional (but perhaps essential) cushions.
Enquiry 512 www.arplus.com/enq.html



517 ZANOTTA
Veryround laser-cut sheet steel lounge chair by Louise Campbell for Zanotta.
Enquiry 517 www.arplus.com/enq.html



513 KREATY
Delfy Lux stackable chair by Gino Carollo for Ciacci Kreaty. Chrome or steel legs with a technopolymer seat and back in a range of hues.
Enquiry 513 www.arplus.com/enq.html

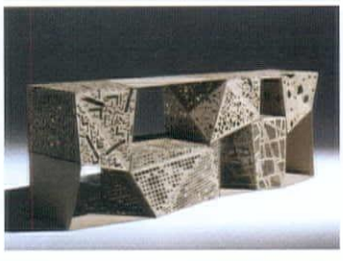


516 MOROSO
Ripple chair by Ron Arad for Moroso dressed in fabric by Issey Miyake and Dai Fujiwara.
Enquiry 516 www.arplus.com/enq.html



514 MOROSO
Antibodi chaise longue by Patricia Urquiola for Moroso upholstered in lightly padded felt and wool 'petals'.
Enquiry 514 www.arplus.com/enq.html

515 HORM
Riddled storage cupboard by Steven Holl for Horm in walnut veneer held in an anodised aluminium frame. The distinctive laser-cut tracery continues Holl's explorations with porosity.
Enquiry 515 www.arplus.com/enq.html



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Komfort Workspace

Komfort's Architectural Glass Division has completed a striking project for the medical equipment supplier, Cory Bros. The client's design brief was to maintain natural light throughout the office environment using glass as the primary material. In consultation with Komfort's architectural glass design team, it was decided to create laminated glass beams with a laminated glass ceiling. Komfort also supplied the glass balustrading and bespoke glass doors. Solar controlled film was applied to the existing skylights.

900 www.arplus.com/enq.html



Junckers

For the Royal Bank of Scotland's (the world's fifth largest bank) new Gogarburn HQ, architects RHWL specified Junckers floors for several areas. To meet environmental requirements, Junckers had to demonstrate the sustainability of all of its floors. 2000 m^2 of Junckers' solid Jatoba WideBoard flooring is used in offices, corridors, walkways and conference areas in the main office block, with 280m^2 of Junckers' solid Oak in the Bar Bistro area and 340 m^2 of Premium Beech in the fitness club.

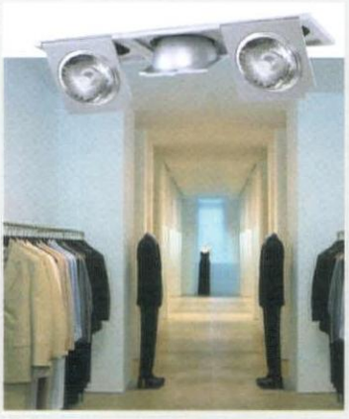
901 www.arplus.com/enq.html



Hands

As one of the UK's longest established, experienced and environmentally sound manufacturers of high quality office and contract furniture for the workplace, Hands are pleased to announce the recent launch of their new, interactive and dynamic website. Visit www.hands.co.uk. The Hands London Showspace based in Clerkenwell is now permanently open where their designer Dee McCauley will help make your visit a constructive and enjoyable experience.

902 www.arplus.com/enq.html



Hacel Lighting

The distinctive Theta range from Hacel Lighting, available in recessed Solo, Duet, Trio and Quatro formats, offers versatility and effective multi-light source illumination. Each luminaire is manufactured from die-cast aluminium and can be repositioned within its own module to create alternate lighting solutions and appearances suitable for architecturally stimulating retail projects, museums and galleries.

903 www.arplus.com/enq.html



Armourcoat

Coventry's new Meriden Hospital recently underwent a successful operation using Armourcoat polished plaster. Part of the Walsgrave medical campus, the state-of-the-art BMI Healthcare hospital represents a £24m investment. Armourcoat worked with architects James Totty Partnership to create a stunning polished plaster backdrop for the reception and waiting areas within the hospital. The rugged texture of the Armourcoat Pitted finish used throughout creates the appearance and feel of lightly polished limestone.

904 www.arplus.com/enq.html



Senator

Designed for simplicity and ease of use, Senator's new Sprint chair is a competitively priced, high performance and high comfort task chair. It features a progressive synchro-mechanism, seat slide and back height adjustment with optional height-adjustable arms, that represents the very best integration of style, function and value.
'Sprint' is available in two options:
- SP640 with no arms but a sliding seat
- SP640HA with height adjustable arms and sliding seat

905 www.arplus.com/enq.html



Interface

Modular flooring giant Interface Europe will unveil the brand new Pond Collection at Design Prima this month. This collection, inspired by Bauhaus' minimalistic elements – balance, symmetry, clean lines and diverse geometric patterns – is the perfect complement for the modern environment. The Pond Collection has four ranges: Hannover, designed for quarter-turn installation, Weimar (pictured), Berlin and Cologne, which have a random pattern and are designed for non-directional installation.

906 www.arplus.com/enq.html



Milliken

Off the rails is the latest smart new design created on Milliken's premium fusion bonded cut pile modular carpet. The product is manufactured using Anton® yarn with up to 30% recycled content, is rotary sheared for a tighter, sharper finished and enhanced colour, has a 10 year wear guarantee and is guarded against latent defects. The collection is made up of five different design elements which are supplied randomly and can be used in a number of different ways depending on your requirements.

907 www.arplus.com/enq.html

GEORGIAN VISIONS

JOSEPH GANDY, AN ARCHITECTURAL VISIONARY IN GEORGIAN ENGLAND

By Brian Lukacher. London: Thames & Hudson. 2006. £40

Most of us know Joseph Michael Gandy (if at all) as John Soane's draughtsman.

Soane was extremely lucky – through Gandy's perspectives, we see Soane's works as the architect wanted them to be seen, from the grand melancholic ruins of the Bank of England to the sunny domestic interiors of Lincoln's Inn Fields. But Gandy did occasionally build on his own account, and he certainly did not confine his amazing graphic talents to showing Soane. His architectural fantasies produced in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first three of the nineteenth recall the power of paintings and stage sets by Gandy's almost exact contemporary Schinkel. Gandy's command of vertiginous perspective was as awesome as that of John Martin, whose dramatic prints of for instance the Fall of Babylon were immensely popular. But though Gandy's fantasies were regularly shown at the Royal Academy, where they received favourable reviews, they were not engraved, so he never had a popular following nor much money.

Brian Lukacher's book is the first monograph on Gandy and the author explains with trepidation that 'first monographs are an inherently flawed and fragile scholarly medium' because everyone will inevitably be anxious to correct mistakes and exaggerations. He need not be so modest. Doubtless more will be discovered, but Lukacher will remain the Gandy book for many years. Available evidence of the life and work has been thoroughly researched and is well presented by the publisher (though even more colour would have been welcome).

Lukacher rightly calls Gandy 'an architect/artist of the Burkean sublime', that strange and disturbing quality in art and nature that Burke said inspired 'Astonishment – that state of the soul, in which all its emotions are suspended, with some degree of horror'. It has never been more clearly expressed than by Gandy. For instance, his 1805 perspective of *Pandemonium*, or *Part of the High Capital of Satan and His Peers* with its endless Neo-Classical arcades, and domes and pyramids belching fire, and sable backdrop of arid mountains conflates the horrors of Milton's *Palace of the Rebel Angels* with the smoke and flames of the Industrial Revolution (Lukacher tentatively suggests Ledoux's 1804 Cannon Factory at Chaux as a possible source for some of the imagery; surely the influence of Alexander Cozens at Coalbrookdale is there too).

Gandy's own architecture ranged from austere Ledoux-like model designs for agricultural cottages to the spare but fantastic Neo-Classicism of Doric House in Bath that still overlooks Royal Crescent from Sion Hill. Few other buildings remain, for his practice never really took off. Perhaps he lacked the strength of character needed to construct in reality. But, once seen, his drawn work is unforgettable. He was one of the first architectural draughtsmen to understand the potential drama of artificial light enhanced by mirrors and lenses, and one of the last to see the fearsome power of the ancients. Lukacher has rescued a great Romantic imagination from obscurity. PETER DAVEY

THE FORGOTTEN FIXER

WERNER HEGEMANN AND THE SEARCH FOR UNIVERSAL URBANISM

By Christiane Crasemann Collins. London: W. W. Norton. 2005. £35

Born in 1881, Werner Hegemann was of the Modernist generation but never trained as an architect and did not draw. His possible claim to fame is based on two different roles; first as an authority on town-planning between 1910 and 1920 alternating between Germany and the United States, second as editor during the 1920s of the leading Berlin monthly *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* and its sister journal *Städtebau*. Having annoyed the Nazis in 1933, he fled via Switzerland to the States where he died in 1936. Christiane Collins came across Hegemann's widow when she and her husband George were researching their important book on Camillo Sitte in the mid '60s, and she was given his letters and papers. Forty years later, and with further research, this record fills a historical gap and makes a mild claim for Hegemann as forgotten hero. Nobody will be surprised by the work: a totally conventional house for himself of 1924 and some American planning schemes based on the Garden City concept. His ideas on the development of town planning and the need to integrate buildings into the whole seem intelligent enough, if rather general. His lecture tours and consultancy in the States do at least seem to have persuaded about the need for planning. As a critic he was not particularly prescient, and he veered dangerously close to supporting the later Nazi architects Schmitthenner and Schulze-Naumburg before recognising the latter's racism. He managed to annoy the Modernists enough to earn the boycott of his journal by leaving Frank Lloyd Wright out of his account of the United States, failing to back Mendelsohn on the planning battle over the Herpich Store, and being gratuitously rude about the Amsterdam School. He hid behind pseudonyms, added sly editorial riders, and one gets the impression that he enjoyed throwing his weight about. J. J. P. Oud counted him as a friend, was shabbily treated by the magazine, and tried to forgive: his shining honour leaves Hegemann's tarnished. All in all, Hegemann comes across less as a creative figure or scholar than as a mover and fixer in architectural politics.

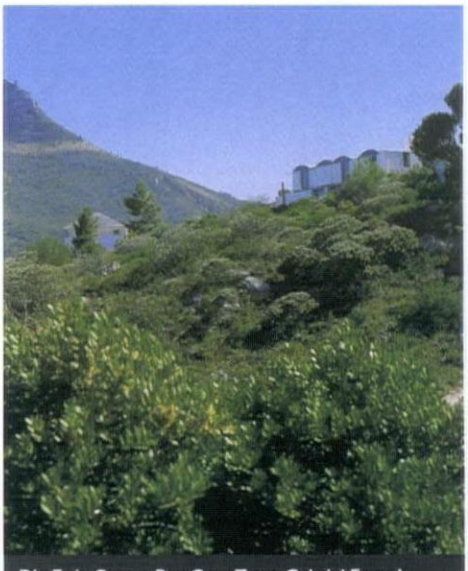
PETER BLUNDELL JONES

HORNS OF A DILEMMA

ARCHITECTURE AND ITS ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Edited by Nicholas Ray. Abingdon: Taylor and Francis. 2005. £75 hardback, £25 paperback

While not pretending to be exhaustive, this collection of essays based on a conference held at Cambridge in 2004 provides a timely reminder of the extraordinary range of ethical issues faced by architects on a daily basis; from conflicting responsibilities to client and contractor, to obligations to the greater public good and in particular to the natural

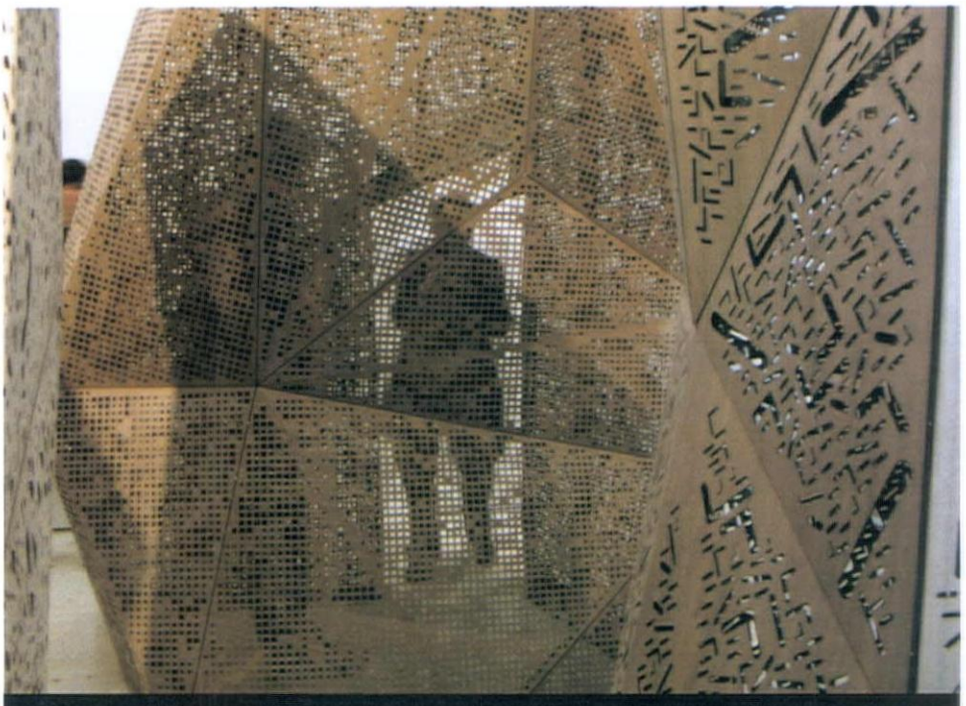


Die Es in Camps Bay, Cape Town, Gabriel Fagan's remarkable house built with his wife Gwen in 1965, from *Gabriel Fagan – Twenty Cape Houses*, Cape Town: Breestraat Publikasies, 2005, ZAR460, £42. Now 80, Fagan is the redoubtable doyen of Cape architecture, his working life encompassing almost 200 restoration projects and numerous houses. Twenty of the houses are collected for the first time in this single volume with a perceptive introduction by Peter Buchanan.

environment. Whether most architects are conscious of all of the issues raised is clearly open to question, which makes their discussion here all the more important.

It isn't possible in the limited scope of a review such as this to do justice to all the individual contributions, which are consistently well written and thought provoking. I was struck, however, by what appeared to be a clear convergence between several of the papers; namely, the relationship between the individual designer and society at large. Richard MacCormac, for example, makes a compelling case for valuing individual intuition in the service of the common good, which seems to be consistent with Jane Collier's account of John Dewey's notion of the 'Moral Imagination'. Historian Andrew Ballantyne suggests that the only real temporal continuity we have as societies is shared habit, and Sjoerd Soeters describes his personal experiences in practice of using variations on established architectural types to successfully balance the unique and the common.

It may or may not be more than coincidence that the famously withering description of Stirling's History Faculty at Cambridge by the then Professor of Classics (discussed in Nick Ray's detailed account of the building process and its aftermath) was an apparent reference to its being based on the wrong shared architectural type, the 'hotel', rather than the 'library.' Whatever the case, resolving the relationship between the individual and the collective good seems to lie at the heart of the ethical issues raised in these papers. At a time when architects are being arrested in Japan for knowingly putting the public at risk for personal gain, this is an extremely timely publication which I would highly recommend. KEVIN NUTE



Detail of a new kind of perforated material developed by Steven Holl in collaboration with Italian company Albeflex. Designed to be lightweight and self-supporting, it takes advantage of CNC driven digital fabrication techniques. Laser-cut porous patterns can be generated by random and non-repetitive mathematical strategies, resulting in a limitless range of rich, unexpected spatial phenomena. From *Experiments in Porosity, Steven Holl*, Buffalo: Buffalo Books, 2005, $16.50, a slim yet delightful volume illustrating Holl's 2005 Martell Lecture at Buffalo University School of Architecture and Design. More than just the usual formulaic show and tell, Holl's research into the possibilities of materials leads him to consider the evolving relationship between the practical and the phenomenological and between buildings and perception. As Holl notes 'The power of technique – no matter how omnipotent – requires a human motive, requires a connection of spirit and matter. Otherwise all our works are relegated to empty show or the dilettante facile act of manipulating fashion.'

CHE STUPENDO

MASSIMILIANO FUKSAS: WORKS AND PROJECTS 1970-2005

By Luca Molinari. Milan: Skira. 2005. £39.95

It is nearly ten years since Italian architecture lost Aldo Rossi, its ambassador. With Rossi theory and practice appeared inevitably entwined. We all learnt a lot, Herzog and de Meuron most. And then in the last decade Italy appeared to sleep, Piano being an export. In the past year, a new series of monographs appears from Massimo Zellman, in charge of Skira now not Electa, covering the likes of Alvaro Siza, Emilio Ambasz and Fuksas all with the paraphernalia of vanity publishing (which means paid for by the architect to bolster reputation). These monographs have a formula – a fawning text, glowing images, small drawings and a contact number. With Fuksas there is more reason perhaps. Already in his *troisième âge* he has been a specular presence in architecture, most recently reaching the greater public with the spectacular new Fiera site in Milan. While some of the works are derivative, splitting a facade on a school could be Pink Floyd as much as Matta-Clark, there seems a kind of hand – one that separates ordinary stuff, housed in glass and steel boxes, from unique – splashed into bendy androids temporarily anaesthetised who countering, contrast, or cover up the otherwise rational organisation. It is unclear from this book whether these works are both-and or neither-nor; the sprawling enthusiasm of the writer, Luca Molinari, leaves little possibility of independent decision. But love it or hate it, Fuksas has guts from the same gene pool as Will Alsop.

Fuksas' buildings want to be icons as pleasing to the boss of Grappa exporters Nardini as to King Giorgio of deconstructive tailoring. What purpose the booze bubbles serve has to be covered by the explanation that a new image was required after 250 years. For Armani, he wanted freshness and innovation all within the Armani shopping codes. So this is architecture as logo, the offering of a simple spatial idea that foregrounds itself through colour, shape, or scale while behind the messy stuff is tidied. In Rossi's last works each project seems to become monumental, drawing attention to itself rather than those aspects of his complex theories that dealt with the everyday texture of his native Milan. Fuksas by contrast is only ever designing object buildings, pieces that stand forth and draw attention to themselves. It remains to be explored whether such an architecture does anything other than merely conceal covert ideology through glitz; or, not being the spatial equivalent of spin, opens up new vistas of creativity and personal invention. Fuksas is without doubt sincere, charming, fun and talented. Sadly this monograph makes it look like the ego has landed.

Book reviews from The Architectural Review can now be seen on our website at www.arplus.com and the books can be ordered online, many at special discount.

SENSE OF THE CITY



Surface of the city: New York, 1 January 1899, with carriages sitting in mud on Willet Street.

The coupling of architecture and the city in the twentieth century was at its best a sad fumbling; at times it was brutal and heartless. Is it too late for these two tired partners to produce an alternative of equal optimism to the Beaux Arts tradition? What responsibilities *do* architects have to the city in which they build? Why do the form and texture of the city remain so hostile to any new building? Must the designer, like a figure from mythology, forever fail to represent in built form the shifting and unrepresentable complexity of the modern polis?

These very large questions are addressed with very quiet rhetoric in the current exhibition at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal, which runs until 10 September. Its elegant premise is that we have come to rely too much on our eyes as a tool for understanding the urban environment; the exhibition advances the marginal players as the best witnesses of our collective experience – the deaf, the blind, the people who only go out at night. And it even wryly suggests we might do well to let the animals design the cities they share with us, privileged as they are with different and sharper sensory apparatus.

Surprising and complex histories of noise, smell and light emerge, together with a perception that pollution is always redefined by time and place. The 'Big Noise' of mechanisation changed human experience forever, making silence – in Le Bretton's wonderful phrase – 'a remnant waiting to be used, like a vacant lot in the heart of the city ...' Street lighting begins as a demonstration of power, bartering personal freedom for the promise of security. Asphalt was a luxury offered to the boulevardiers of Paris and Berlin, appearing as a pavement surface long before it was adapted to the wheeled traffic of the streets themselves. Smells seem only ever to have been bad, the link with disease and overcrowding unbreakable, at least until Western cities all smelt the same.

In that instant a Strand paved in horseshit, or the abattoirs of Chicago, become the subject of the richly contrived regret for urban frémissement that so animated the Situationist International; its shade can be felt everywhere in the exhibition. Against it, and at much the same moment in history, are arrayed all those strange projects that sought to isolate the city dweller from season, weather, place, even nightfall. Bucky's glass bubble never did address the question of who might actually want to live at the North Pole.

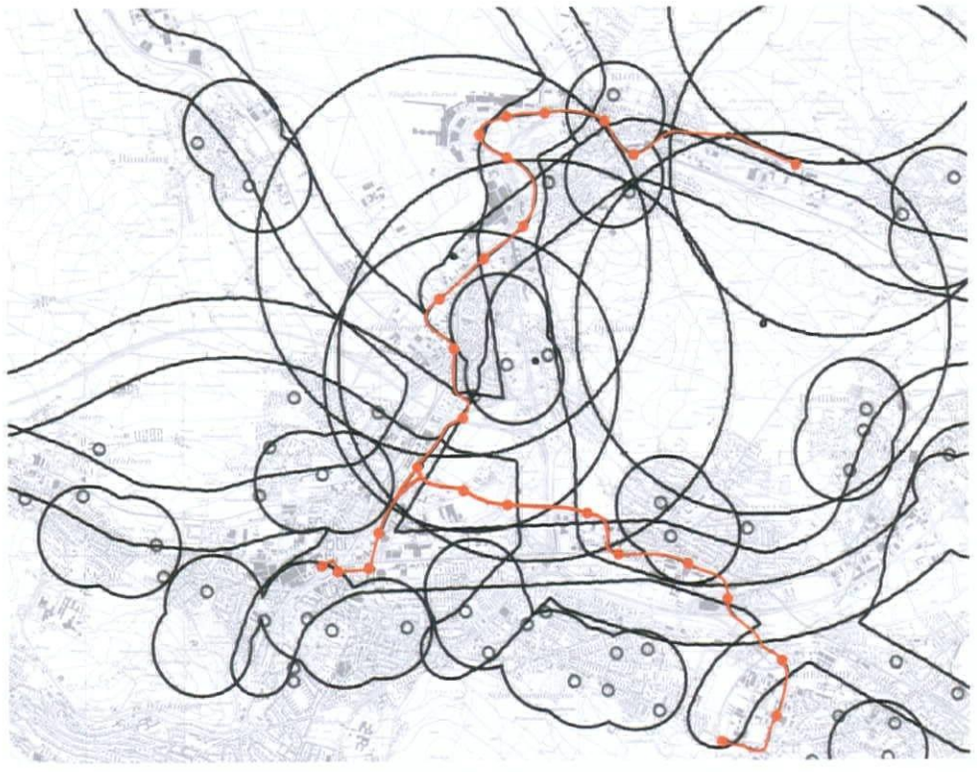
So also with the disparate polemics of urbanism that have characterised the discourse for the last thirty years; the A to Z of urban mantras – quoted by Mirko Zardini, the exhibition's curator – from Anxious City to Zwischenstadt, that speak mostly of alienation and indirection. Here, the counterpoint lies in a vein of projects by a few architects that propose radical change achieved by every means short of actually building. These explore the sensory 'turn' in our understanding of urbanity, and powerfully demonstrate the eloquence of research as a tool of design.

The exhibition is one of a sequence originated by the CCA, developed over long periods in the relative isolation of Montreal, that have demanded deep curatorial knowledge of the material, and subtlety in its orchestration. Taken together, they provide a critique of the present culture of monographic or thematic architectural exhibitions that are the necessary preserve of institutions less rigorous or international, with missions that compel them to demonstrate, not to enquire.

The CCA, long a valuable interpreter of the architectural past, is assuming a voice as moderator of the contemporary discourse, and a possible role for itself in the future.

NIALL HOBHOUSE

Sense of the City; an alternate approach to urbanism, *Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal, until 10 September. The exhibition is accompanied by a 350 page catalogue, edited by Mirko Zardini, illustrated with over 400 colour and black and white images.*



A 'soundscape' of north Zurich, mapping overlapping traditional and contemporary noises.

browser

Sutherland Lyall on the joys or otherwise of thumbnails and blogs.

Slipping away

You know those (usually) horizontal strips of thumbnails that slide left and right across the top or bottom of the screen activated by a mouse, needing a click or, worst of all, running automatically? They're the architectural version of those horrid running texts on tv news shows. You can see the attractions. Here is movement without having to spend on animation. You can devise interesting ways of controlling the speed and direction and irritate those not gifted with manual dexterity by making thumbnails dodge, speed past or ignore the cursor.

Hiding under a bushel

Still sliding thumbnail strips is a way of coping with showing lots of buildings – and one that Herman Hertzberger, that personable, talented Dutch architect, has adopted for the pics on *www.hertzberger.nl*. Hertzberger is welcoming to surfers: 'This site is meant for everybody interested in our work' his home page announces. Down the left is a navigation strip in the form of a cropped photo over which are printed the three main sections: Introduction, Projects and Publications. You could be excused for missing the latter two because they are crammed at the bottom of the strip and have arty diagonal hatching making them look like part of the image rather than headings. Headings which lead, in the case of Projects at least, to the often only interesting part of any architect's site. That's it? Oh, there is stuff in the middle, the practice contact details and phone numbers plus a less than necessary explanation of what the various headings cover. Er, News is news, Projects is the projects. Duh. And so, once you are in Projects, to the horizontal moving strip. When you do manage to capture a sliding building, things cheer up. You get stationary pics on the left, text on the right. The latter is chatty, deals with serious issues with zero pretentiousness although there are too many quote marks round quite innocent groups of words such as 'mission statement'. Still it's better than most English sites I've seen, and interesting. You can't change the text size though I could just about read it even without specs, and it is pretty fast.

Energy level on show

Simon Allford, hon RIBA education VP, will accuse me of nay-saying but the first thing that hits you at the site of Archaos, the UK architecture students' organisation, at *www.archaos.org/index.html* is a month-old announcement of the cancellation of a concrete workshop. Hey, it's not enough to have a website. You have to look after it. Think of puppies not being just for Christmas. What happened was, you've guessed it, student apathy. Not enough people signed up. Whatever, please take that cancellation notice off the front page. And think, maybe it's better to have a token site or a blog, than the quite elaborate and actually well thought out site currently on show – but which, as you could only expect of a transient, term-time-only student body, is looked after only intermittently.

Blog bank

You look at the long list of CAD blogs at *www.tenlinks.com/CAD/reference/blogs.htm* and browse the linked sites: 'The General tab offers the usual opportunity to edit the Name and Description of your List Definition. The Applies To tab, shown below, allows you to specify to which object types the list will ...' is a random bit of text from David Koch's The Architect's Desktop at *http://architects-desktop.blogspot.com/*. Looking at both, you get wistful for the days when draughting was about semi-edible hand-made Fabriano paper and the time-honoured T square/set square/Rapidograph combo. Especially when it turns out, reading another of the link sites *http://heidihewett.blogs.com/my_weblog/*, that when you create a 3D wedge in AutoCAD you have to remember that the first point you pick determines which side is the height. Worryingly, given the maverick reputation of blogs, the author, Heidi Hewett, works for Autodesk and it's not her weblog but her company's. Then you discover a raft of Autodesk staff have blogs in various design formats, and even an alleged architectural newsfeed.

Own up you blogcos

Favourite-ise the main list above and move swiftly to a real blog at *http://architectureyp.blogspot.com/*. It is, if Henry Blogster at *http://partiv.blogspot.com* in a recent email is correct, one of the few UK blogs. In the best blog tradition it is enigmatic. Under the heading ARCHITECTURE is an ad for Microsoft Visual Studio, a catch-all list of possible subjects, ads down the left-hand column and in the wide right-hand column significant practices such as Future Systems and Daniel Libeskind with medium-length encomiums, then captioned images and references to designs and designers. It's all a bit mysterious as are its custodians who are presumably someone called Pong, the other Young, who are possibly British and possibly something to do with the Cambridge school. In light of the likelihood of every second architectural blog turning out to be run by Autodesk I think we should have authors' names attached.

Sutherland Lyall is at sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com

diary

AR'S CHOICE OF INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

AUSTRIA
YVES KLEIN: AIR ARCHITECTURE
MAK, Vienna
Until 24 September
Architectural projects and concepts by French artist Yves Klein famous for his, mostly blue, sponge paintings. Yet he also experimented with the notion of 'Air Architecture', an architecture of ephemeral materials such as air, fire, water, and space as defined by the body.
www.mak.at

THE NETHERLANDS
DYNAMACITY: TACTICS FOR A CHANGING METROPOLIS
Netherlands Architecture Institute, Rotterdam
Until 11 June
It takes more than buildings to make a city, claim a new group of architects from Spain, Italy, Japan and the Netherlands. They feel buildings are too sluggish and cities too fast, so have developed methods to intervene in the city's dynamics, including driving around the city with a mobile pub and collaborating with local residents to change buildings.
www.nai.nl

SWITZERLAND
HENRY MATISSE: FIGURE COLOUR SPACE
Fondation Beyeler, Basel
Until 9 July
Exploration of the interior with figure which holds such a key place in Matisse's oeuvre: drawings, paintings and sculptures drawn from museums and private collections including Paris, London, Chicago, New York and St Petersburg.
www.beyeler.com

UK
ALBERS & MOHOLY-NAGY: FROM THE BAUHAUS TO THE NEW WORLD
Tate Modern
London
Until 4 June
Rediscover two dazzling pioneers of Modernism. With more than 200 works from painting and moving sculptures to photography, film, furniture and graphic design, this is the first Tate exhibition dedicated to early Modernist abstraction for more than two decades.
www.tate.org.uk

USA
THE GREEN HOUSE: NEW DIRECTIONS IN SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
National Building Museum, Washington DC
From 20 May 2006 to 3 June 2007
Ground-breaking exhibition focusing on new developments in green technology and products for the house building market.
www.nbm.org

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lelight



his funky little building – more llboard than architecture – is a sponse to Tokyo's lack of space.



The Japanese might be said to have elevated compactness into an art form (bonsai, origami, capsule hotels), but lack of buildable space is a perpetual and pressing issue. Such constraints do, however, continue to generate responses that, despite their often bizarre physicality, suggest alternative ways of engaging with and experiencing the city. Here, Tokyo-based architectural funsters Klein Dytham prove that they are never ones to shirk a challenge, even when confronted by the prospect of colonising a barely inhabitable sliver of land. Left over from successive developer and local authority machinations, the site, in the Moto-Azabu district, was still too valuable to waste.

The commission came from jewellery designer Masako Ban (wife of Shigeru Ban) who snapped up the tiny plot when it came up for rent. Known for her boldly contemporary pieces in silver, lacquer, acrylic and foam, Ban wanted a studio-cum-shop that reflected her penchant for strong, unconventional designs. The striking outcome is a building that is bonsai-sized, even by Japan's extreme standards, but which also adds a shot of graphic vigour to the urban realm.

Measuring 11m long and 2.5m wide (but tapering down to a mere 600mm), the main facade of the slim, two-storey wedge boldly fronts a busy road, rather like an advertising hoarding. To Klein Dytham, the relationship between the building and its surroundings seemed more like a piece of advertising than architecture, so rather than being an ultra small building, it became a large, inhabitable billboard.

This perceptual twist offered the potential to experiment with the facade which has been eagerly and inventively seized. Images of a bamboo grove are stencilled in white along the glass facade and the long back wall is painted green. By day, the bamboo graphic becomes an eye-catching and simple form of sun-shading; by night, green light dapples through the interior to create the seductive and slightly surreal optical illusion of a luminous bamboo plantation sprouting in the heart of one of the world's densest cities. CATHERINE SLESSOR

Photographs: Daici Ano