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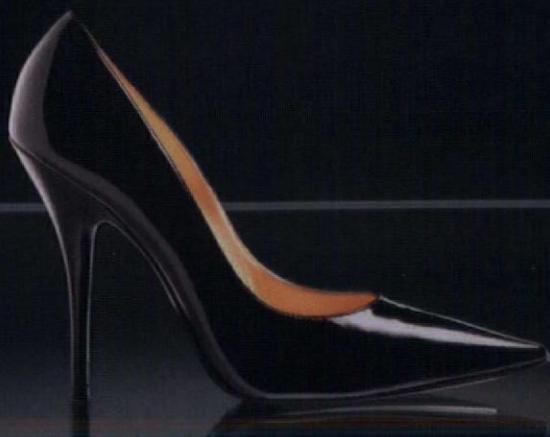


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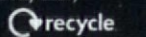
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Siza in Brazil, p50



Ishigami in Kanagawa, p60



Midland Hotel renewal, p80

THE GREAT INDOORS

VIEW

- 37 Venice Biennale preview; Peter Cook on Terunobu Fujimori; last call for entries for AR Awards

COMMENT

- 48 The Great Indoors: Jamie Fobert draws inspiration from Vilhelm Hammershøi's paintings

THE GREAT INDOORS

- 50 Art gallery, Porto Alegre, Brazil ALVARO SIZA
60 University workshop, Kanagawa, Japan JUNYA ISHIGAMI + ASSOCIATES
64 Domestic interior, London TIMOTHY HATTON ARCHITECTS
70 Experimental house, Kumamoto, Japan SOU FUJIMOTO ARCHITECTS
72 Private spa, Limerick, Ireland CARMODY GROARKE

CONSERVATION

- 76 Morecambe and Modernity: the Midland Hotel UNION NORTH and AVANTI ARCHITECTS

THEORY

- 82 Wells Coates: Maker of a Modern British Architecture

HOUSE

- 88 House renovation, Seoul, Korea MOTOELASTICO

PRODUCT REVIEW

- 92 100% Design preview

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- 94 Sebastian Conran joins forces with British Ceramic Tile

REVIEWS

- 102 Modernism in China; Blubberland; manufacturing processes; architecture in the age of cybernetics
104 Garden festival at Gothenburg; Browser; Diary

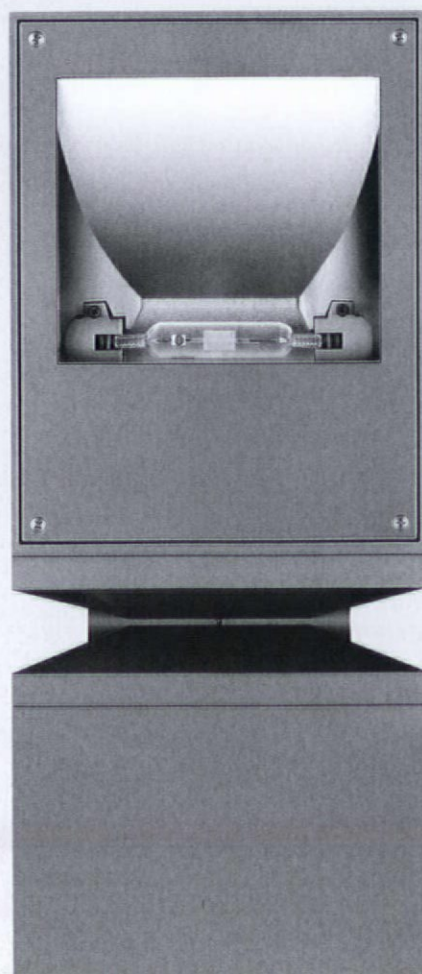
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- 106 Web design offices, Kamakura, Japan KLEIN DYTHAM

COVER

- 50 Art gallery, Porto Alegre, Brazil ALVARO SIZA Photograph: Duccio Malagamba

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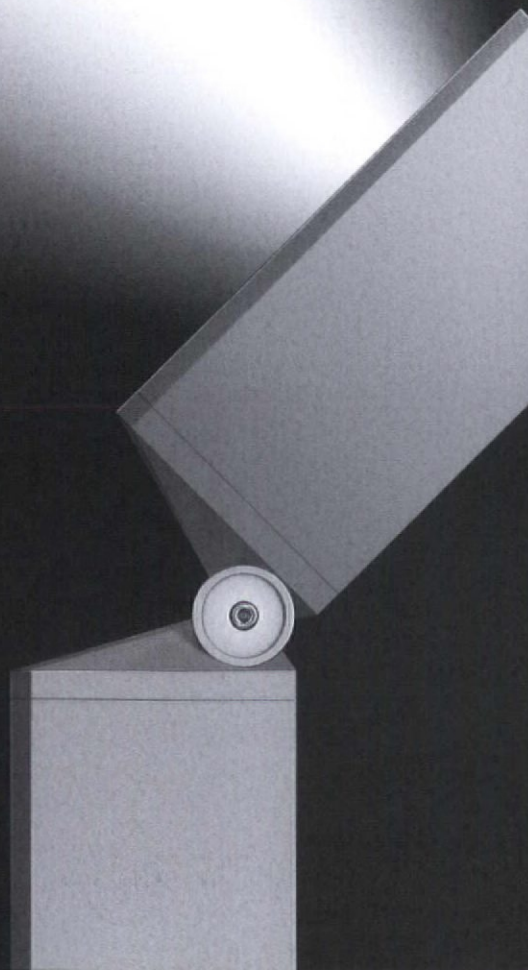


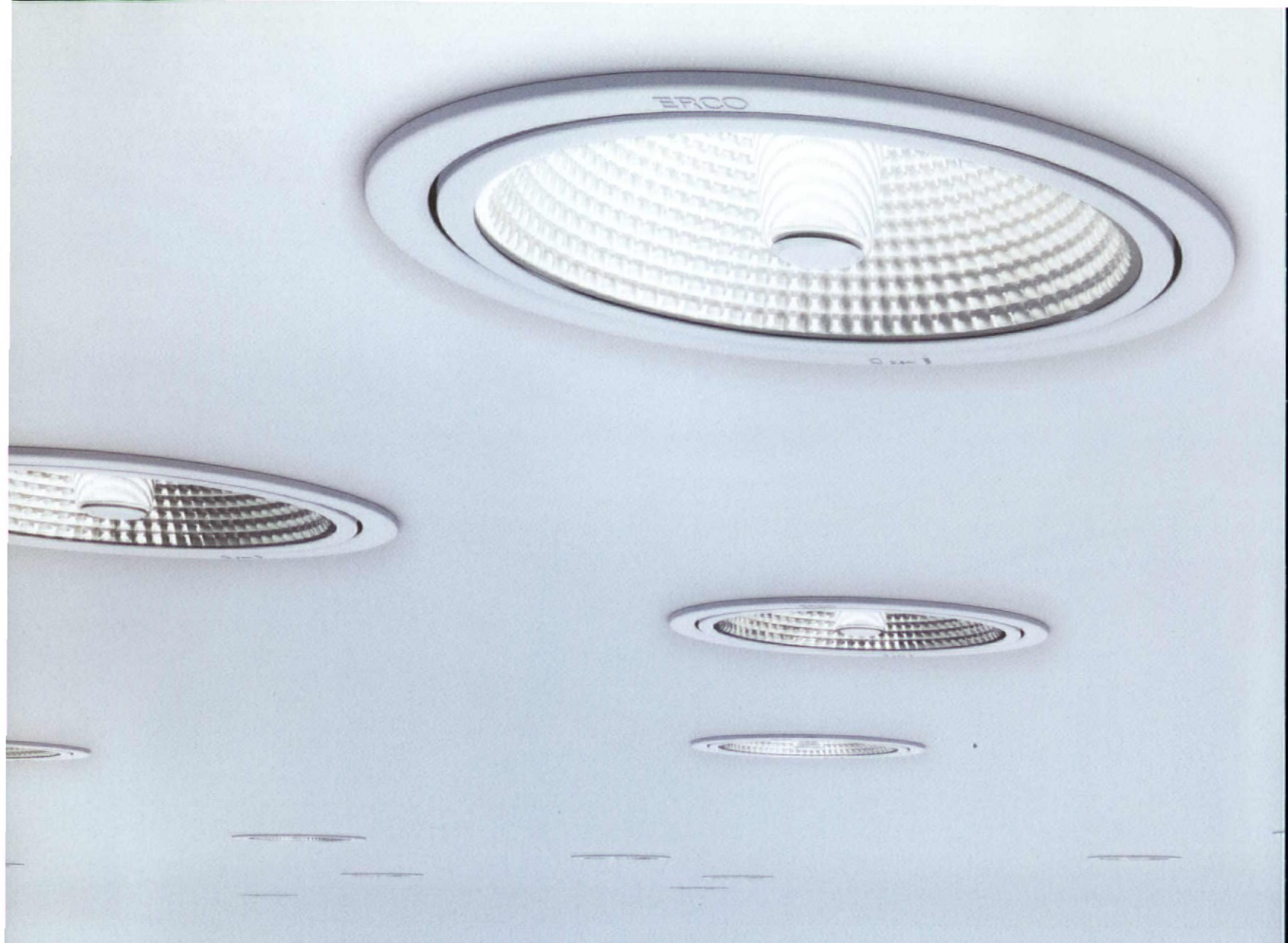
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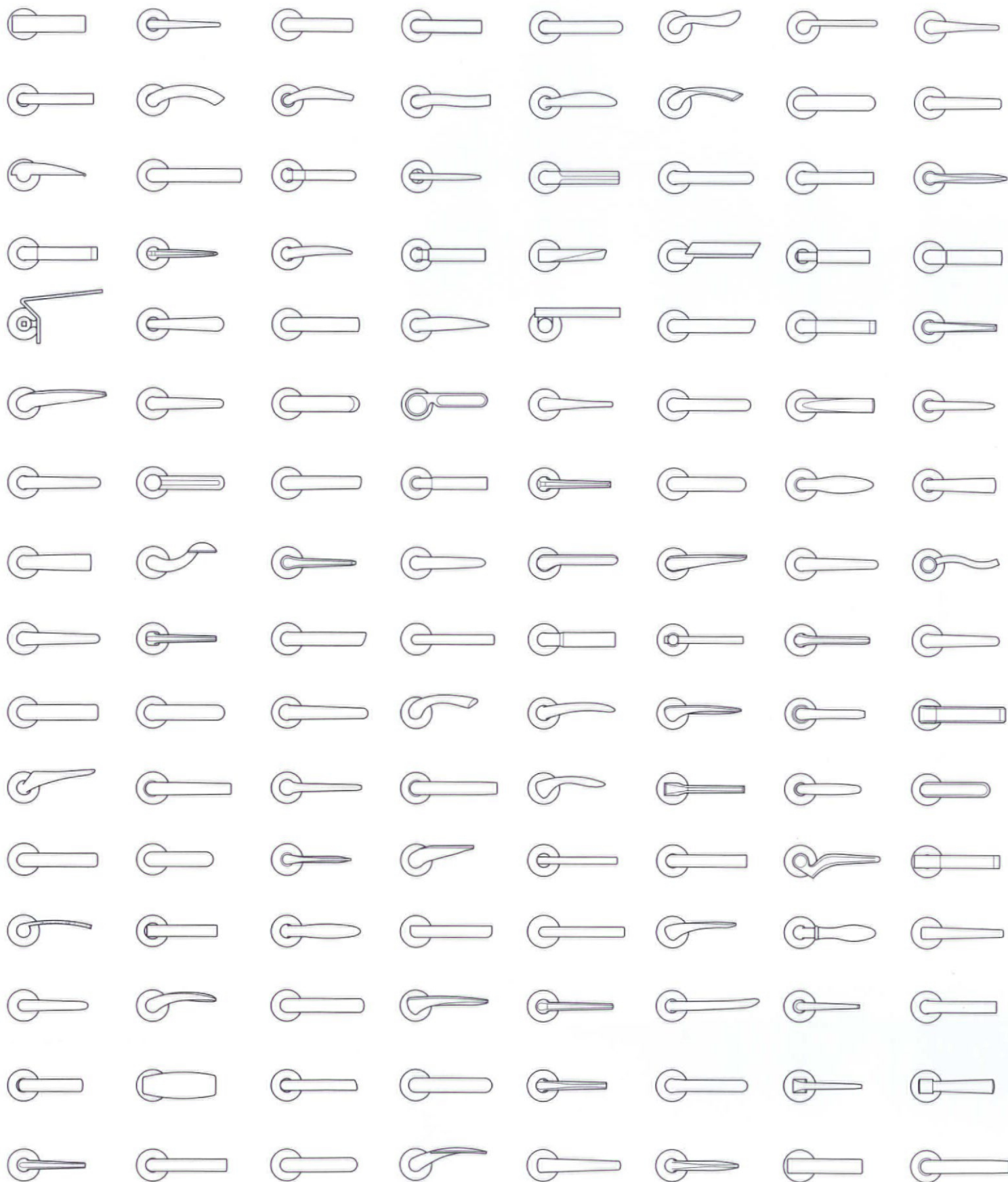
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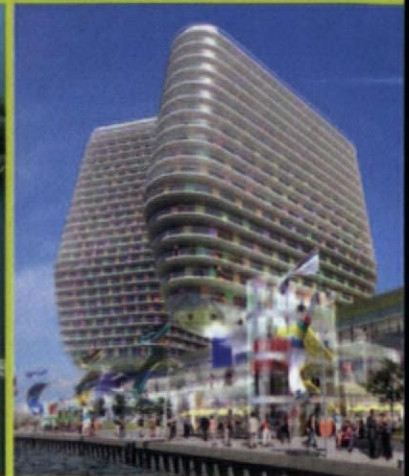
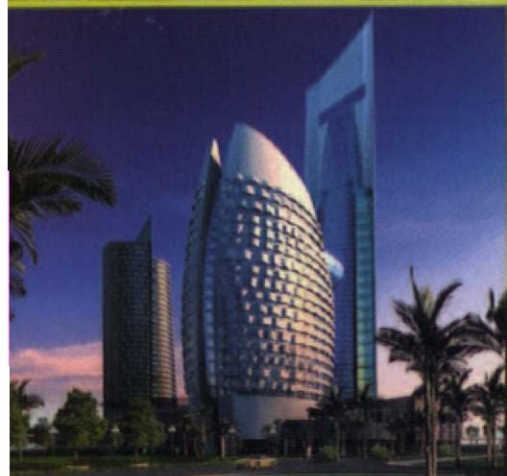
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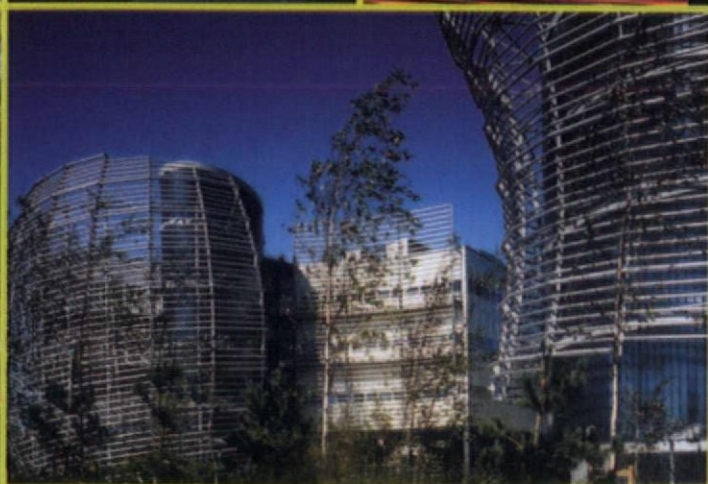
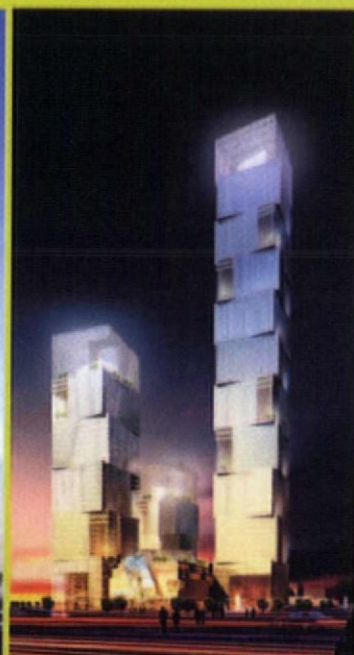
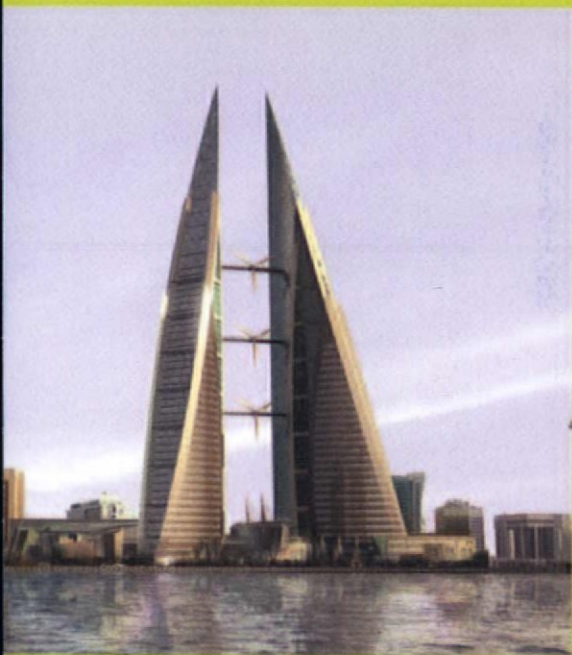


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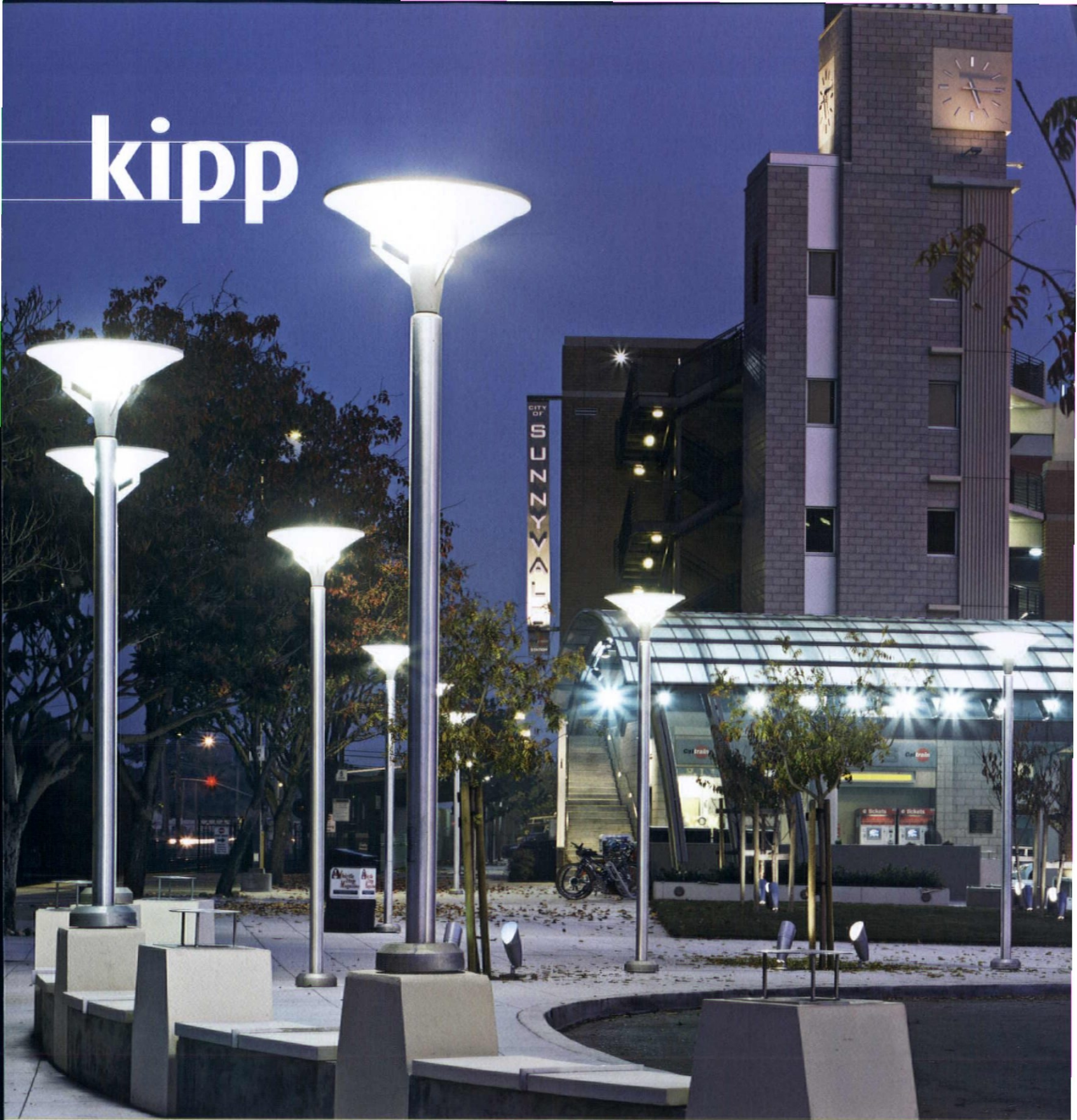
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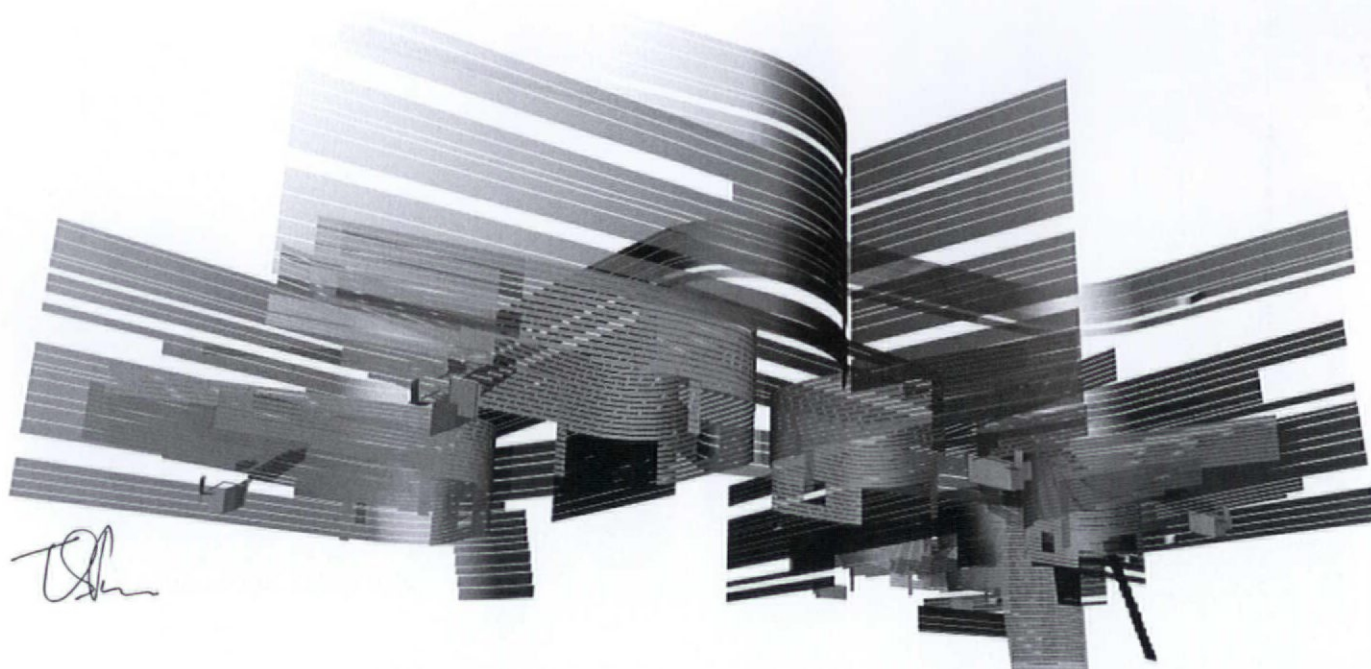
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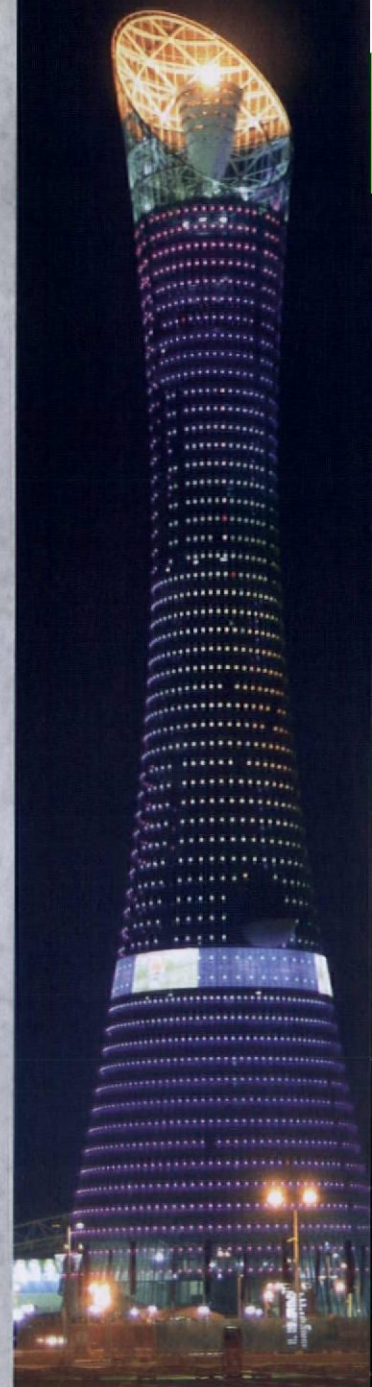
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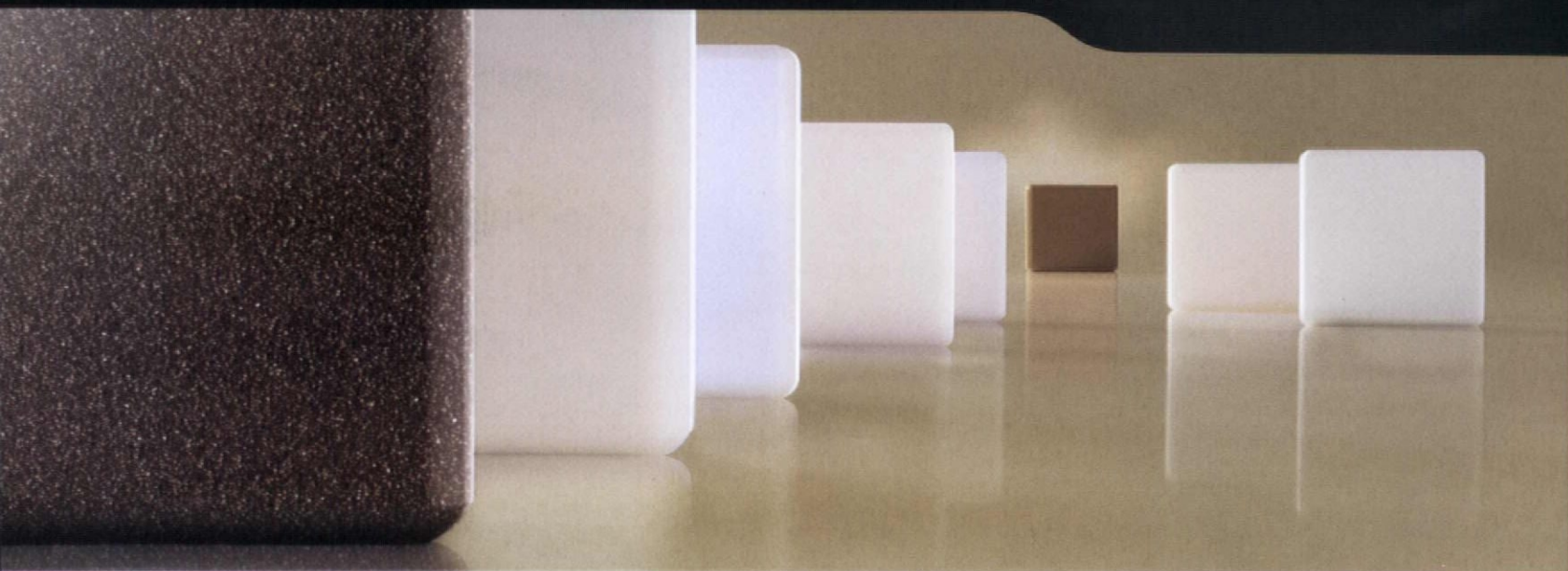
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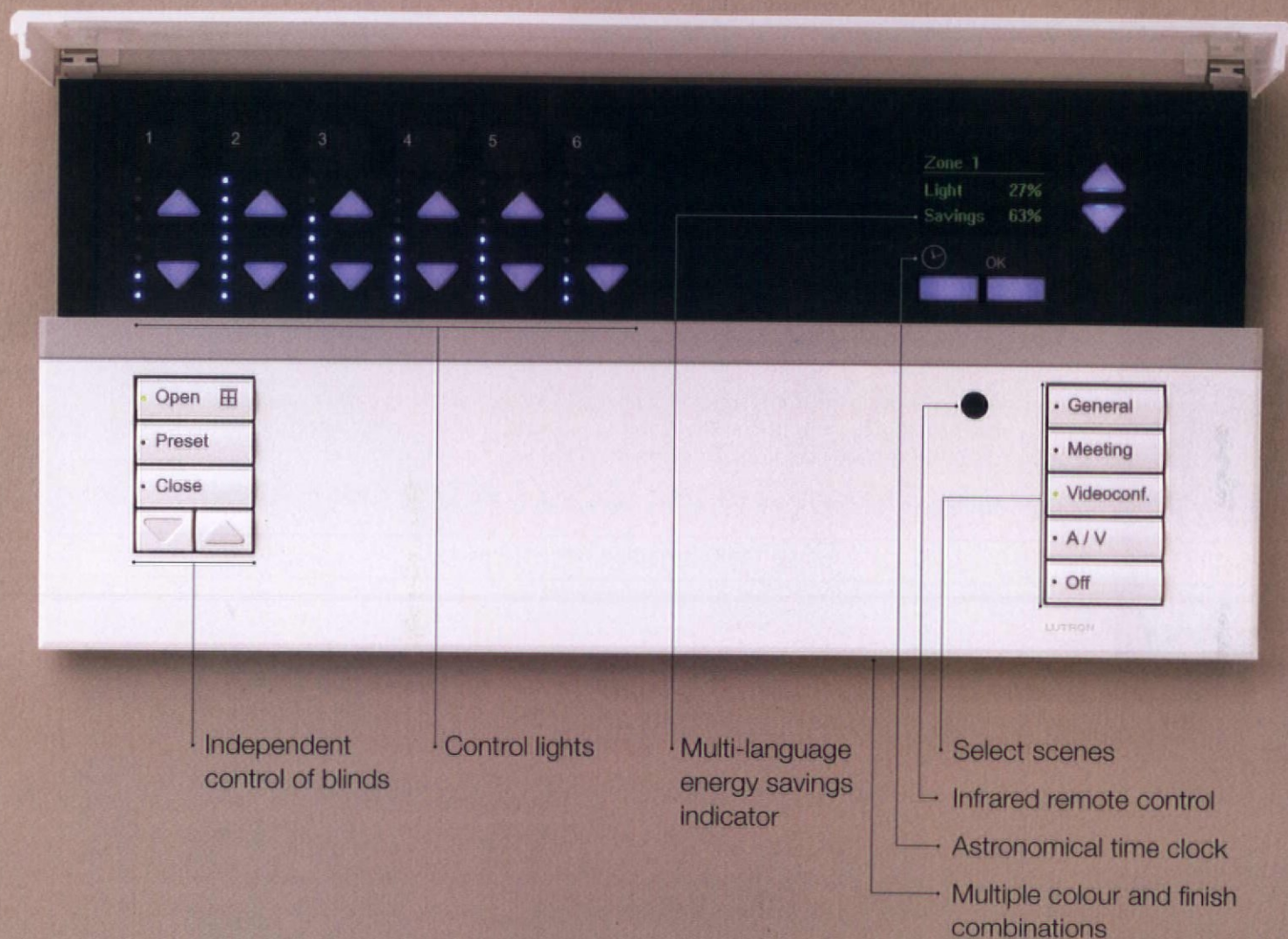


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The University is now seeking to appoint to two Professor of Architecture posts, one to lead on Research in Architecture and the other on all Educational aspects of the discipline. Successful candidates will possess outstanding track records, either as internationally-renowned academics or as leading practitioners, and be able to demonstrate the requisite commitment to, and natural leadership skills to drive an exciting vision in, the development of Architecture within this dynamic and ambitious University.

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Assistant Professor of Architecture and Design

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Chair Search

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Architecture at Cornell dates back to the founding of the institution; it is one of the oldest programs of its kind and has a long and distinguished tradition of scholarship and teaching. Professional programs in the Department include both B.Arch. and M.Arch. degrees; other programs include a post-professional masters degree in architecture and an M.A./Ph.D. in the history of architecture and urban development.

New leadership, facilities, and evolving programs reflect both a continuing commitment to excellence and an ongoing renewal of architectural education at Cornell. In particular, the Department and the College seek opportunities for greater interdisciplinary collaboration within the College and the University as a whole -- with its wealth of humanistic, artistic, scientific, and technological resources. Beyond the institution, the Department seeks to build upon its already extensive contacts and interactions both in the U.S. and internationally.

The new chair will have responsibility for the management of the Department's academic and operational affairs in Ithaca as well as at the College's longstanding program in Rome and at its recently initiated New York City program. In fulfilling these responsibilities, the chair will work in close collaboration with the department faculty and the college dean.

Desirable qualifications for this position include: a record of distinction in professional practice, research, scholarship, and/or teaching, experience in academic administration, and an established commitment to an interdisciplinary approach in education and the profession.

Links providing more information about various aspects of the Department, College, and University -- including a broad view of the Ithaca campus as well as a detailed look at our newly designed Paul Milstein Hall by OMA -- can be found at <http://aap.cornell.edu/aap/arch/faculty/chair-search.cfm>.

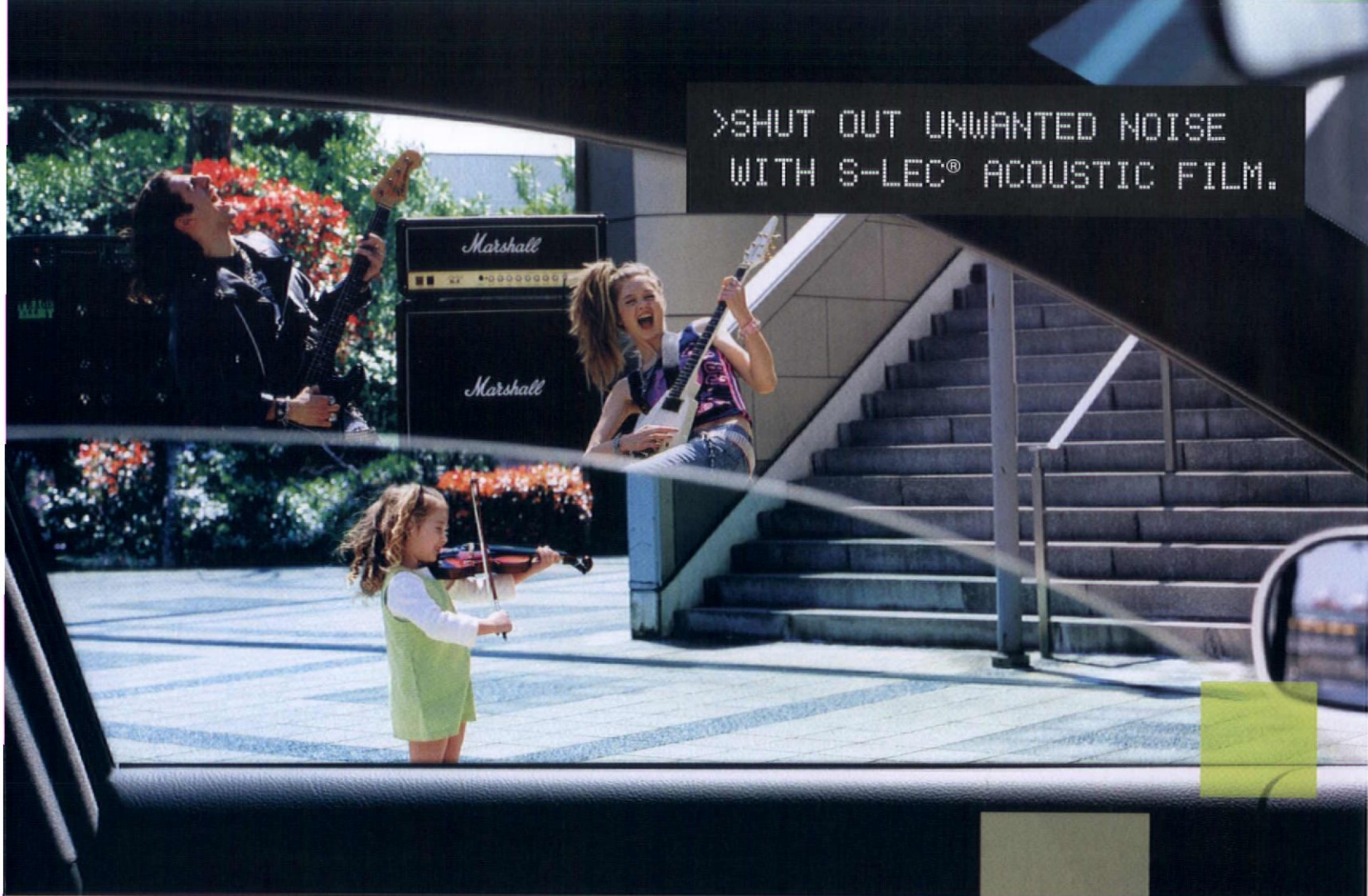
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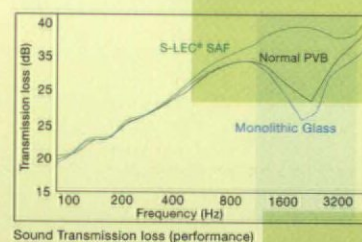
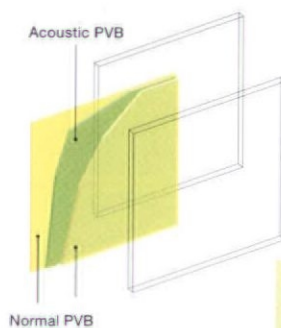
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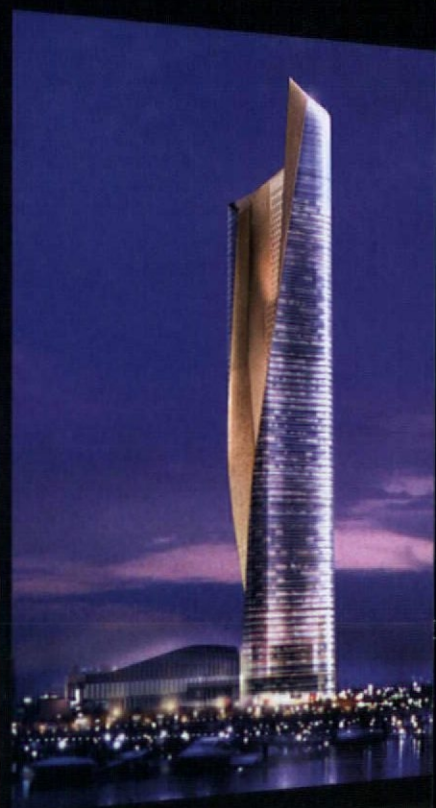
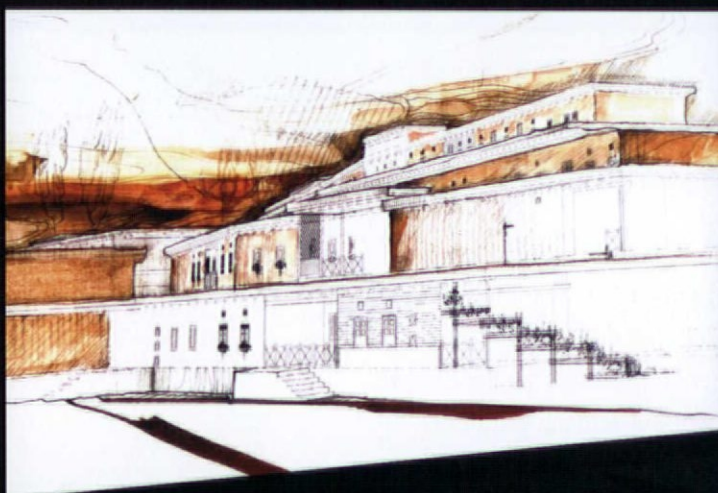
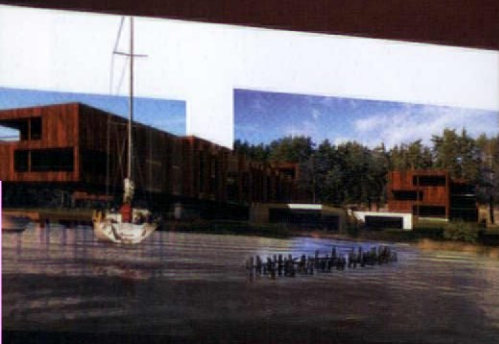
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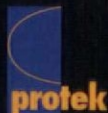
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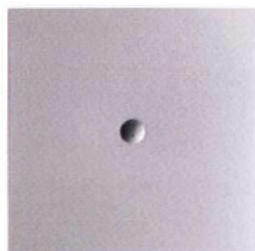
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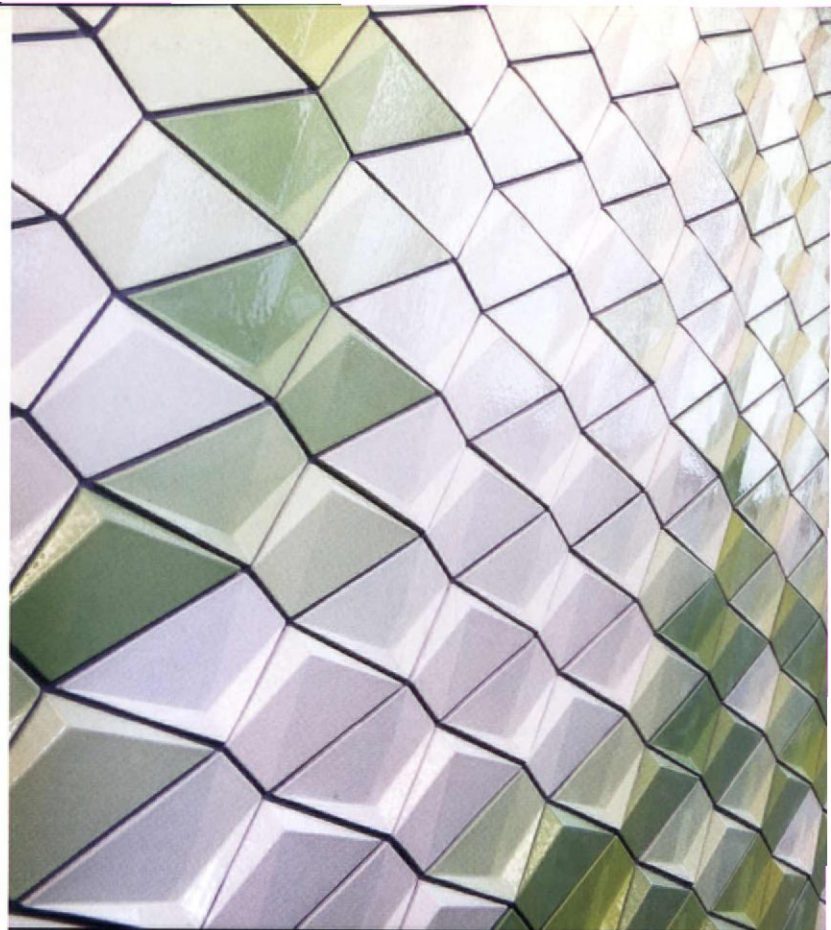
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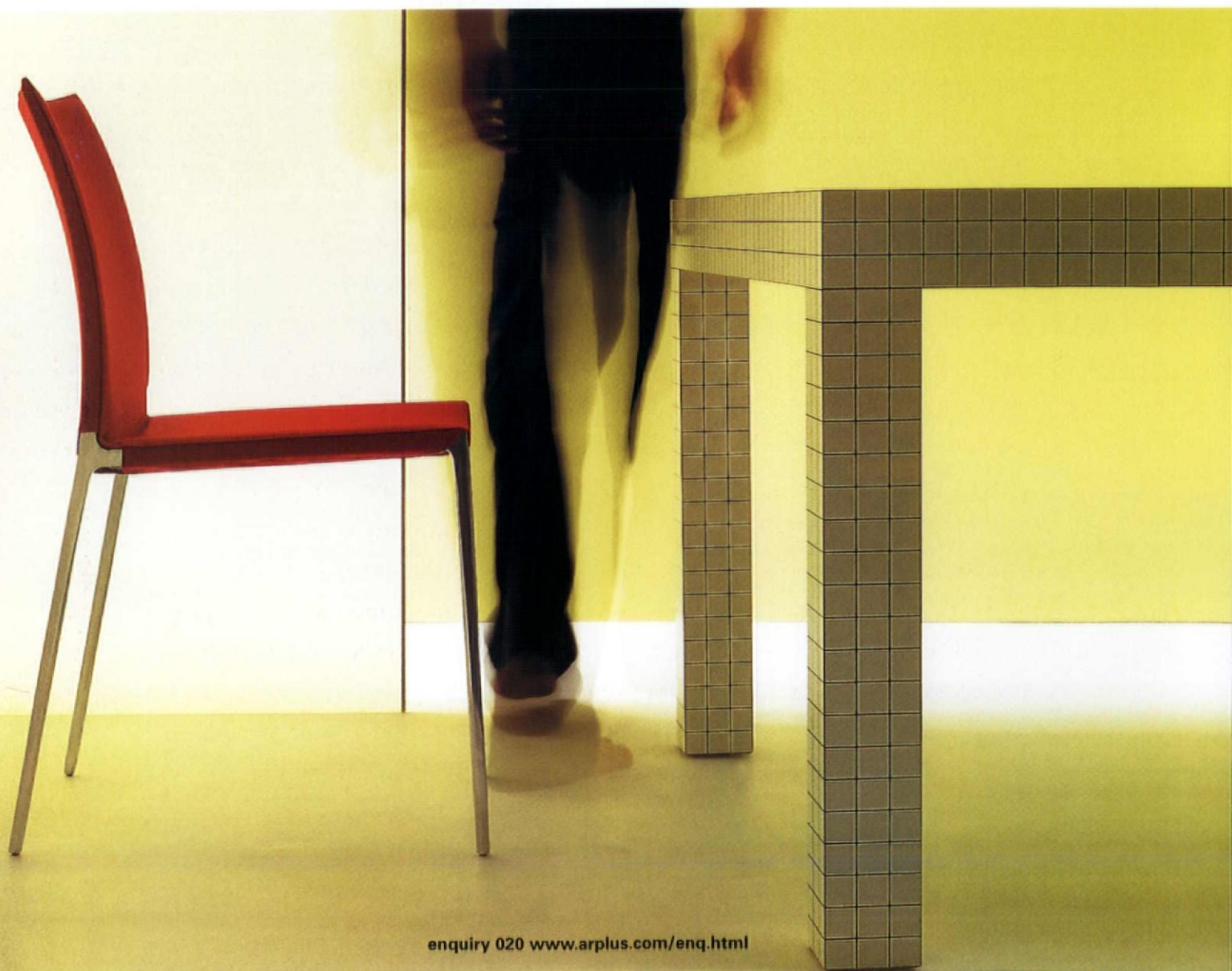
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VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE PREVIEW; PETER COOK ON WHY TERUNOBU FUJIMORI IS THE PERSON HE MOST WANTS TO MEET; THE OPENING OF AN EVENTS BUILDING BY UNSANGDONG ARCHITECTS IN SEOUL; LAST CALL FOR ENTRIES FOR THE AR AWARDS FOR EMERGING ARCHITECTURE.

FROM OUT THERE TO IN HERE

'Buildings are objects and the act of building leads to such objects, but architecture is something else,' declares the director of this year's Venice Biennale, Aaron Betsky. An accomplished impresario and critic, his chosen theme for the biennale is 'Out there: architecture beyond building', a provocative and stimulating starting point for what should prove a successful event (it opens on 14 September). Betsky's own proposition about architecture shows how much room for argument there will be: 'It is the way we think and talk about buildings, how we represent them, how we build them'. Nothing about design, then, though rest assured that the army of architects whose work will be displayed in the Arsenale will be distinguished by the fact that they are great designers. What will they make of Betsky's further proposition that buildings are 'the tombs of architecture, the residue of the desire to make another world'. Venice is probably the right place to air such a view, a city of redundancy and ruins amply represented by the Arsenale itself.

The concomitant proposition, if buildings are not architecture, is that the usual histories of architecture are inadequate to explain what has really been happening: 'There is a secret history of architecture separate from the progression of styles and the vagaries of technological perfection,' in Betsky's words. Or perhaps not so secret, since his own writing, on Modernism for example, adds to existing histories as any thoughtful research would do. (It is sometimes said that there can never be a satisfactory history of architecture because such a work would be the history of everything, that is to say all the events and movements represented in the architecture, in this case buildings, of any given period.)

Perhaps it is less a question of secret histories, and more a matter of what one could think of as the inner life of architecture, susceptible to exposure and discussion but operating independently of the formal requirements of clients and the thickets of regulation apparently indispensable to architectural production. This inner life is where creativity, the 'art' side of architecture, meets science and the 'normal' world. It is where reflections can be made on what is happening 'out there', rather in the manner of those Dutch artists of the mercantilist era, painting interiors where there is generally a window out to the wider world – but that world is not shown. The power of those paintings, for example by Pieter de Hooch, lies partly in the reversal of the usual perceptions of exterior and interior, where it is the former which is known and the latter only guessed at. Betsky shrewdly points to the potential influence of enigma in architecture, certainly a suitable subject for discussion in Venice. **PAUL FINCH**

PIANO COUNTERPOINTS

International debate over Renzo Piano's proposals at Ronchamp is reaching a climax.

Will Renzo Piano win permission to create a modest building close to Le Corbusier's late masterpiece, Ronchamp? It appears that a decision may be taken later this month following polemical arguments for and against the proposal, a convent for a dozen Clarisse nuns on a slope below Corb's chapel.

The argument centres round the impact of the half-buried convent on views to and from the chapel, and whether the integrity of Corb's design in the round, and in particular in its relation to topography and horizon, are at risk. There is a subsidiary question of new entrance arrangements, replacing the current messy car park.

One gets the feeling that some of the participants in this debate are dealing with a

shrine to the architect rather than a piece of architecture by an architect, and that nothing likely to be proposed will, somehow, ever be good enough. There have even been suggestions that any improvements or additions to the chapel environs will have the effect of in some unpleasant way popularising the site, making it too convenient.

Whatever he may have said about the building during his lifetime, it seems unlikely that Corb himself would have shirked the challenge of creating a new building next to a great one, especially one with such a modest programme. The critic William J. R. Curtis will discuss this issue in the context of Corb's work in next month's AR. P. F.

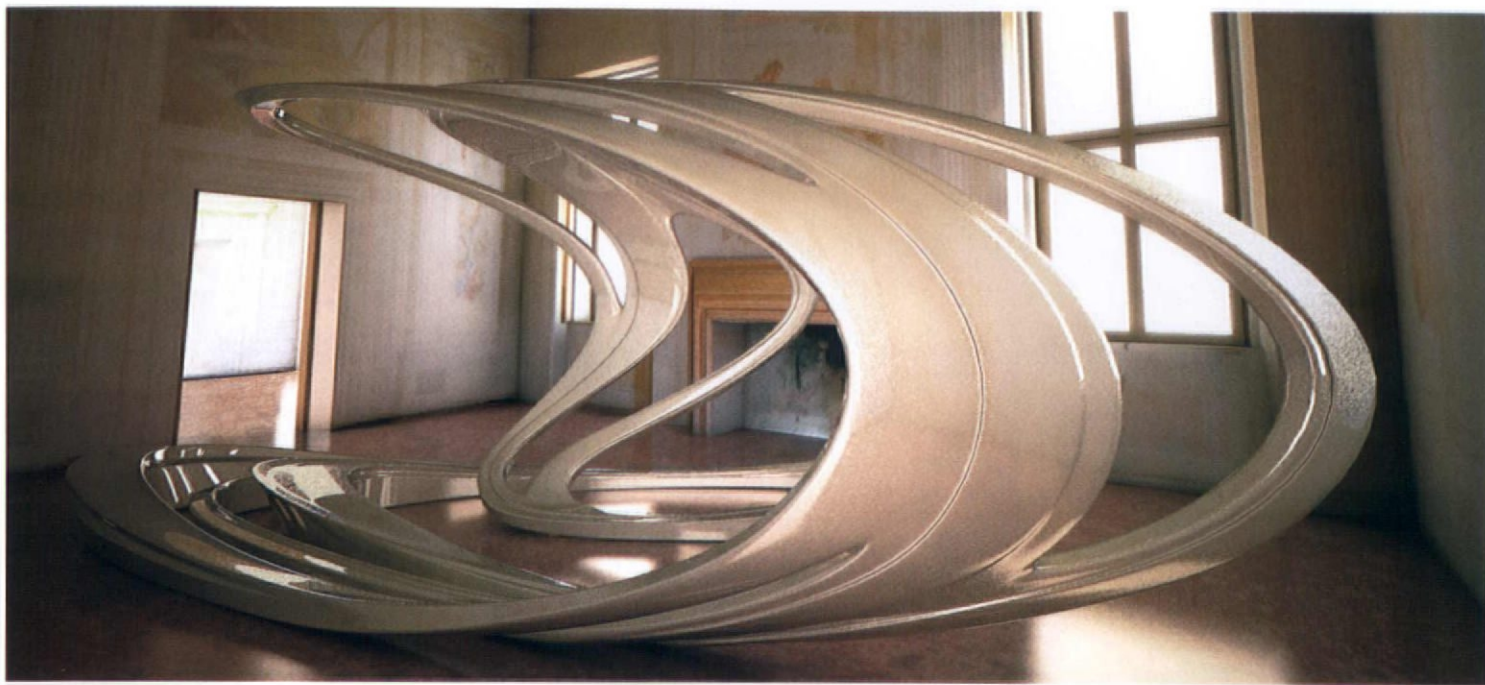
The petition against the Piano project ('Pour la sauvegarde du site de Ronchamp') can be found at <http://ipetitions.com/petition/Ronchamp>. The petition in favour of the Piano project can be found at <http://ipetitions.com/petition/rehabilitationronchamp>

Poster from Piano's office urging support for the Ronchamp project for a convent for Clarisse nuns.



The latest building by Seoul-based Unsangdong Architects opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by the usual professionals and clients but also by two of Korea's best known actresses. The mixed nature of the opening party is echoed in the mixed nature of the building itself, which makes a spectacular contribution to the night-time look of the area. The Kumho Gallery of Housing Culture is an unusual combination of arts facility and showcase for housing developers to market their recently completed developments in a building which bears no relationship to any usual real estate brokerage. The machined patterning of the exterior plays through into the internal structure, complemented by extraordinarily white interiors. The building has a very different feel to the Gallery Yeh that won the practice an AR Emerging Architecture Award in 2007, suggesting a versatility of touch in marked contrast to much of the me-too commercial architecture around it. Photographs: Bong-Kyun Kim (above), Lynne Jackson (right).





Showing work in at least six locations (including the French, Russian and Italian pavilions), Zaha Hadid will be hard to avoid at this year's Venice Biennale. However, the most intriguing locale must be Palladio's Villa Foscari, where, in a tribute to the 500th anniversary of the maestro's birth, Hadid and Patrik Schumacher will present *Aura*, an installation that translates Palladio's theories of harmonic proportion into a dynamic, contemporary perception of space (shown here is a rendering).

VENICE BIENNALE

An online competition about urban identity pulls in the students ...

Venice Biennale director Aaron Betsky's online competition, EveryVille, has attracted more than 780 registered participants. In response to a text written by Betsky, participants from schools of architecture in over 48 countries have accepted the challenge to consider proposals for a 'new exurban community', in EveryVille; an imagined place that has emerged around the intersection of Avenue Z and X Street, just to the south-west of the intersection of Highway 1 and the Beltway around Megalopolis, about 20 kilometres from the city's core.

As narrated by Betsky, after several factions proposed different strategies, the City Council are seeking the response of the architectural fraternity for ideas of how to give Everyville coherence and identity. Believing that architects would have the expertise to determine whether any new buildings would be necessary to do this, or whether what was really needed was a method of creating common and shared space with a clear and distinct Everyville identity, the challenge has been set: How might they create an image, a coherence, a character and a civic sense for this small town, appropriate to its location and to its history, its site and its future?

The work will be selected by an international jury, including Zaha Hadid, Thom Mayne

and Louisa Hutton, and the winning projects will be exhibited in the course of the 11th International Architecture Exhibition. www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/exhibition

... as the Le Corbusier exhibition gets a Biennale warm-up.

The flurry of recent books devoted to Le Corbusier, undergoing a huge revival of interest in the last year, will be echoed in two events at this year's Venice Biennale, opening to the public on 14 September.

The morning before a student workshop will examine Corb's unrealised hospital project for Venice, taking place in the library of the San Giovanni Paolo Hospital, which owns all the drawings and models of the project. On the same day in the afternoon at the Palazzo Loredan on the Grand Canal, a symposium chaired by Charles Jencks, including Massimiliano Fuksas and Wolf Prix, will debate Corb's global influence and his legacy as the first global architecture 'brand'.

Both events (AR is media partner) are organised by the RIBA Trust, and are sponsored by the UK's Northwest Regional Development Agency, which is responsible in part for cultural investment in cities such as Liverpool. The RIBA Trust is staging *Le Corbusier – the Art of Architecture* in Lutyens' crypt of Liverpool RC Cathedral from 2 October to 18 January, after which the show moves to London.



Maggie's Centre, London: landscaping by Dan Pearson.

ERRATUM

In the June issue of the AR, the landscape component of the Rogers Stirk Harbour Maggie's London was incorrectly attributed to America contemporary artist Dan Graham. This was of course an error. The landscape component for Maggie's was in fact done by Dan Pearson. Our apologies.

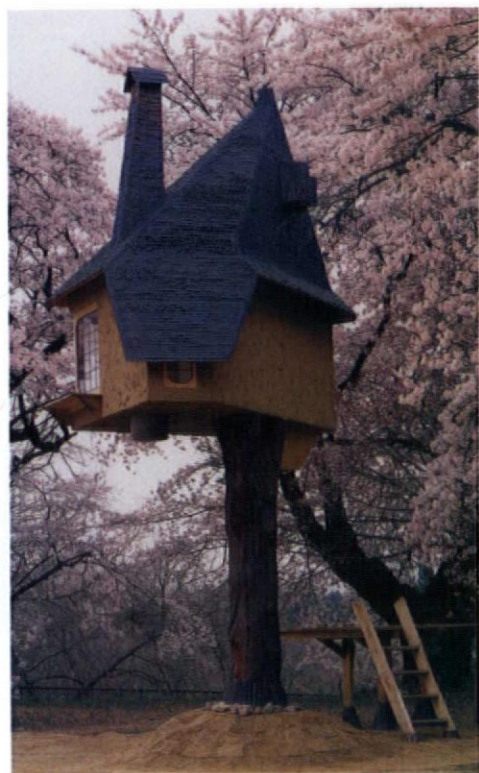
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AR AWARDS DEADLINE REMINDER

The closing date for entries to the 2008 AR Emerging Architecture Awards is Monday 8 September. Entry details on www.arplus.com

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Terunobu Fujimori: teahouse meets treehouse.

Peter Cook

The person I most want to meet.

Luckily (for I can't resist the place) I have been invited to Japan again: as the European Curator for 'New Directions in Architecture', tagging along with a posse of much younger architects from Stavanger, Oporto, Budapest and elsewhere, presumably maintaining the line that Europe still carries the flame of experiment, initiative and wit in our wayward field. Yet 29 years ago it was *my* heart that pounded at the thought of finally seeing in the flesh *their* strange, gawky and sometimes impossible structures that were already straying quite far outside our own confines of Modernism.

The intervening years have been informed by multiple revelations, whereby the experiences of Japanese friends and Japanese structures have become intertwined, all of us enjoying the same passion for gadgetry, layering, robots, translucency, here-not-here or a taste for provocative juxtapositions. The initial impact of Tokyo's exuberance or Kyoto's ambiguities has not paled, but acted as an incentive for architects as unlike as Peter Salter, Enric Miralles or Herzog & de Meuron to perform at peak – only too aware that down the street the locals can contrive just as ingeniously and think just as deviously.

My own personal admiration and enjoyment has been on site, where the depth of Arata Isozaki's mind, the audacity of Itsuko Hasegawa's compositions, the finesse of Fumihiko Maki's

spaces, the cuteness of Atelier Bow-Wow's observations or the sheer range and virtuosity of Toyo Ito's whole output sends you back West feeling very humble.

So exposure to the weird world of Terunobu Fujimori at the 2006 Venice Biennale hit me oddly sideways. At first I treated it as 'craft', as a form of provocation altogether too coy, and instinctively recoiled from an implicit attack upon my friends mentioned above. Isozaki had admittedly made built responses towards traditional Japanese conditions but remained an International architect through the substance of the pieces, but *this* stuff was more edgy, more worrisome.

So the recent lavish book (published by TOTO) was irresistible; a brilliant level of translation has been achieved with both Fujimori's descriptions, his own essays and an illuminating piece of gossip from Genpei Akasegawa, his friend and client.

We are confronted by the 'Sprout of the Earth' and the 'Tokyo Plan 2107' where hive-like mounds recall those ant-cities or maybe cacti. Then onto teahouses of ever increasing audacity sitting upon progressively more exotic sets of legs. All backed by an extraordinary atmosphere of nonchalant but naughty observation. The kind of disarming matter-of-fact, but at the same time oblique, line of explanation that only the English (and, it seems, the Japanese) can pull off: 'Ultimately, I decided that I would have to commit an architectural crime and conceal the structure under natural material ... the act would be a failure if it were discovered or seemed somehow suspicious'. Or provocatively: 'Has anyone before Gaudi in the long history of Christian churches ever designed a cathedral that has a snake as its starting point? Are giant lizards, crocodiles and serpents indispensable to the Holy Family?'

His decision, on graduating, was to be an architectural historian; Kathryn Findlay, a colleague teaching at Tokyo University, remembers him only as such. But in the book, he narrates bit by bit his gradual return to design. Nearly all his work claims to be inspired by material: its naturalness, its localness, its manner of being cut or honed or planted. Yet as he narrates and as the buildings become more and more purposeful, we become aware of a complex set of motives. With observations that are certainly cosmopolitan – the guy has travelled, looked and read far beyond his locality of Nagano Prefecture (where his first works were made) yet his rediscovery of the 'stuff' of architecture is bedded in narrative and local memory. He intriguingly gives us an insight into an approach to Modernism whereby he debates whether Mies or Gropius is its 'point of origin', a line of creative agonising that few of my own (European) mentors would have dared to expose.

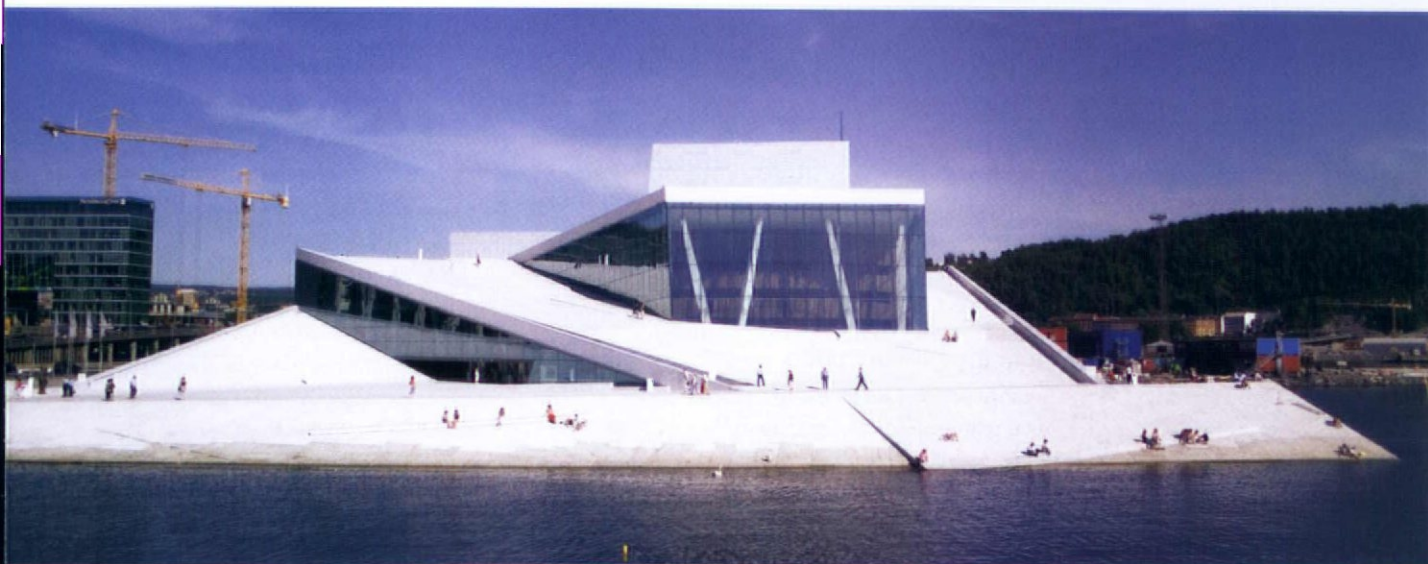
I would love to show him the 'House in the Clouds' at Thorpeness, Suffolk, and can imagine him sharing my delight at this one-time water tower as sky-borne cottage which (after the dismantling of the water tank) *actually became* a house. He'd surely get the double irony if we are read his friend Akasegawa, who recalls, '... the next time I saw Fujimori was at a broadcasting station ... once we began talking, we really hit it off. He proved to be so entertaining we talked for two hours straight, though the original plan had been to talk for half an hour. The radio station staffers the other side of the glass were in stitches'.

Yet his own buildings are several notches more sophisticated than the Suffolk folly. In some ways they are built critiques, in some ways built rhetoric, in some ways I might claim from them my own territory of desire (reiterated again and again since Archigram days) that our architectural vocabulary is generally so narrow, so hidebound, surrounding us with politeness and circumspection. That perhaps we insult the tradition of Modernism by being so mean with it. I'm looking forward to having that conversation in Tokyo.



Above: Fujimori's Tanpopo House, 1995. Most of his work is inspired by material: its naturalness, its localness, its manner of being cut, honed or planted.

Left: 'House in the Clouds', former water tower as sky-borne cottage, Thorpeness, Suffolk.



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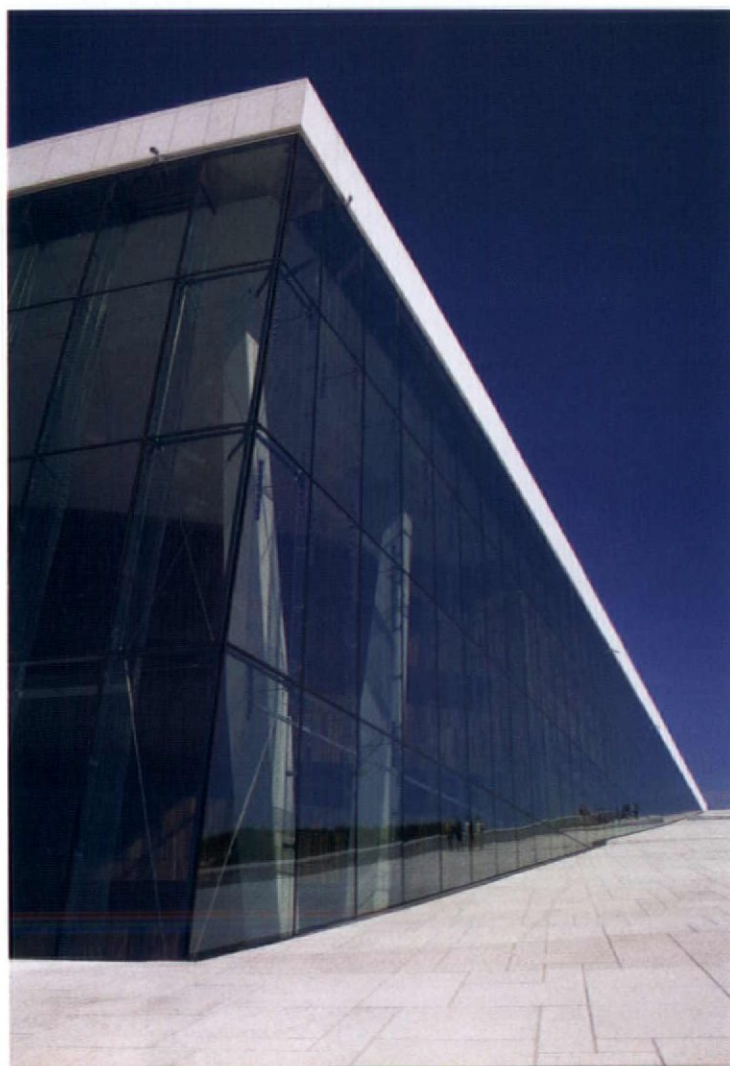
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Icon at Oslo Opera House

Oslo Opera House

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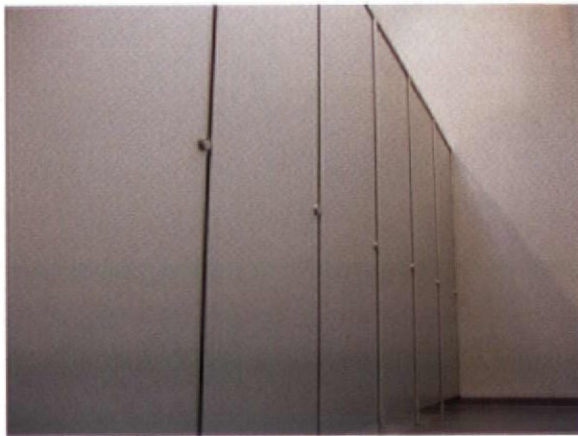
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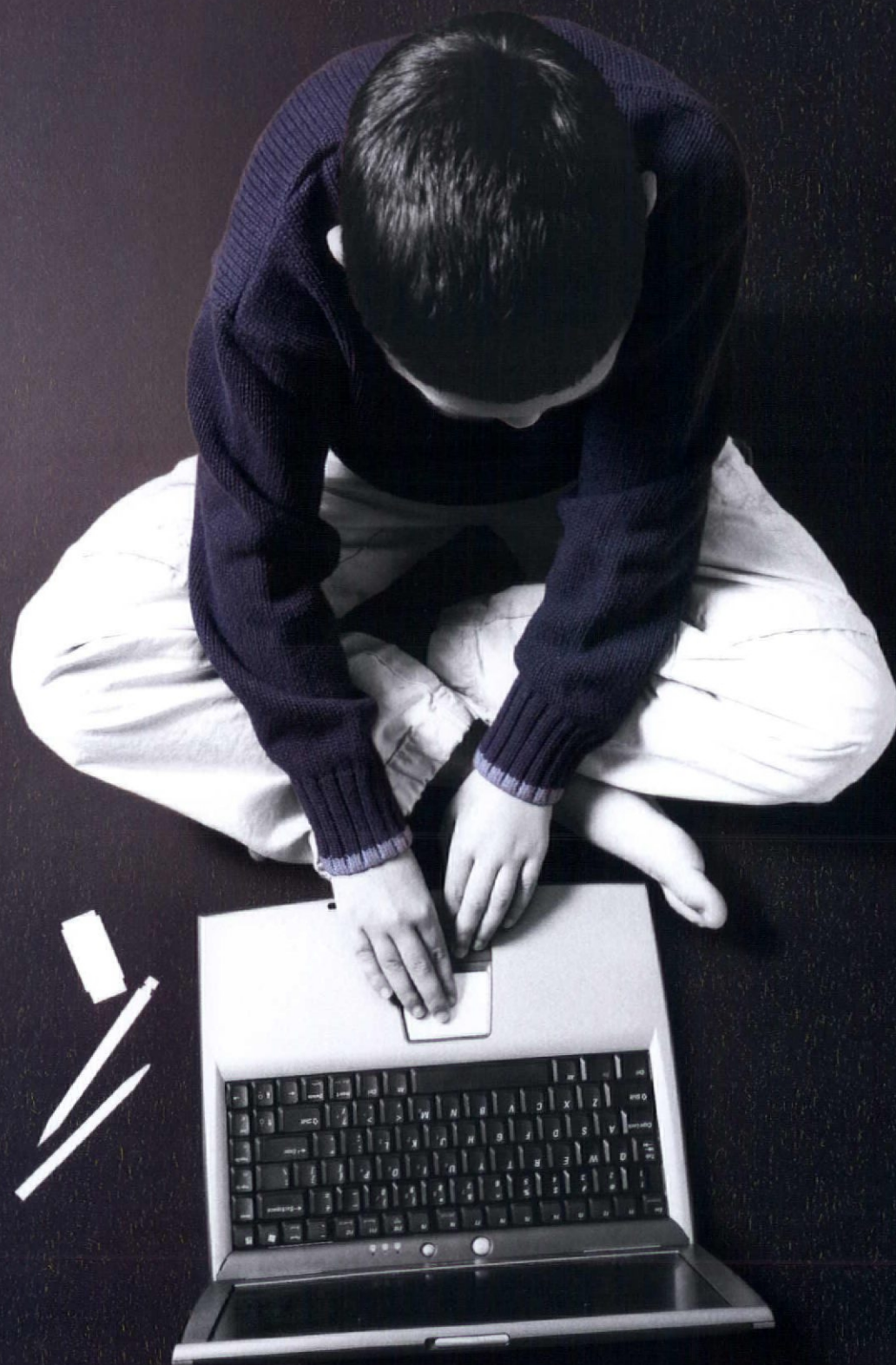
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The background of the page is a painting of an interior space. It features a dark, heavy wooden sofa in the foreground, a white door on the left, and a wall with several small, framed pictures. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a moody atmosphere.

comment

THE GREAT INDOORS

In an issue that focuses on the qualities of interior space, Jamie Fobert sets the scene with a personal comment on the work of Vilhelm Hammershøi (1862-1912), describing how the Danish artist's work has influenced his practice and continues to focus his attention on architecture's principal element: the room.

There was something magical about discovering Vilhelm Hammershøi paintings. It was in 1997, the year I set up my practice. Since then, most of my public lectures have begun with two slides of his interiors. Setting the tone, they establish a sense of calm, and encourage the contemplation of architecture as considered primarily from the interior. With Hammershøi's paintings currently exhibited at the Royal Academy, I have been able to re-consider why these images have become so important to me as an architect, and how his approach has influenced the development of my practice.

At the Musée d'Orsay in 1997, as in the RA today, the curator selected a variety of Hammershøi's paintings, from landscapes and cityscapes, to portraits and domestic interiors. Most interestingly, however, were a series of paintings of the interior of his own flat in Copenhagen, produced between 1898 and 1909. This series shows that when his interest was in what was right in front of him, working with what he was closest to, he was at his most successful, producing works that speak of the power of stillness, and of how simple things attain beauty when considered and controlled carefully. Hammershøi painted canvas after canvas inside his flat, reworking the same view again and again, with only subtle shifts between each. Making careful decisions to add or subtract detail, or to include or exclude furnishings, objects or a solitary figure, he captured varying qualities of light. For me, getting to know Hammershøi's paintings came at just the right time as I was beginning work on two small projects, both essentially single rooms that could easily have been seen as insignificant. Hammershøi's focus on interior space, however, convinced me otherwise, inspiring me, giving value to a wall, a window and to the volume of air, and demonstrating the significance of 'the room' as the primary element of architecture.

Understanding the subject

On first examination one could easily conclude that the subject of these works is the person in the room. Or, when the person is no longer there, we might wonder if the subject is the absence of human occupation. Is the subject the elements of the room – the door, the window, the furniture? Or is it something altogether less physical? From a title such as *Sofa* (1905), one would naturally assume the subject of the painting is the sofa. But here, as in many of Hammershøi's interiors, it is the soft patches of light falling across its surface which emerge more convincingly as the subject. There is real sophistication to this painting which is less prevalent in paintings such as *Sunshine in the Drawing Room III* (1903), which more conspicuously claim light as their subject. As his works become more muted and soft, the atmosphere itself becomes the subject. In architecture, the search for the subject is equally important. And while simplistically it could be the brief or the site, rarely do these have the substance to be the true subject, which is often tangential to the main function. In the case of a residential project, a small clue may emerge that tells us something about the way the clients like to live their lives, which in turn becomes central to the completed project's sense of presence and uniqueness.

Constructing the void

Hammershøi painted the walls, doors and windows of his own flat over and over. But, more importantly, he also painted the space in between these elements. He paints the value of a room perceived as a solid mass. There is a palpable sense of the void or the volume of air which is held by the solids we build. Capturing on canvas this atmosphere, his interest in the use of light and materiality in domestic interiors grows out of a long Nordic/Dutch tradition, but these are unsentimental in comparison with the interiors of Vermeer. Hammershøi depicts home, but his paintings are hardly homely. Apparently devoid of life, Hammershøi captures the moment of stillness between activities, and many of his interiors allow a glimpse through a door to a room beyond, representing adjacent rooms as enticing new places to go. As such, doors hold great importance as elements, giving the portal or threshold a metaphysical resonance.

The success of Hammershøi's interiors is a result of his careful devotion to his subject. As other artists such as Morandi have done, Hammershøi chose a path and focused intently to form a singular dialogue with his subject. He came to know intimately the light of the rooms and the way it fell. He identified and captured even the slightest variations in atmosphere and mood. And he carefully sought to understand and portray the materiality of his own domestic objects and furnishings. Light is portrayed as a character inhabiting the room – sometimes cheerful, sometimes brooding but most often a calm and gentle visitor. The brushwork is for the most part loose and soft, giving the painting a gentle, diffused appearance. But on closer inspection the viewer sees that in many of the works careful attention has been paid to the rendering of materials. The depiction of the hard sheen of a piece of polished wood or the glaze of pottery is as masterful and tactile as any Dutch still life. As the light shifted, Hammershøi captured a variety of moods, from the overtly cheerful light of *Sunbeams or Sunshine. Dust Motes Dancing in the Sunbeams* (1900) – the most published image of the windows but my least favourite – to the dim, dusky light warming surfaces just above the murky brown of the room's deepest recesses.

While some find these darker paintings depressing or claustrophobic, they translate a feeling of contentment; they are about existing in a contemplative, quiet environment.

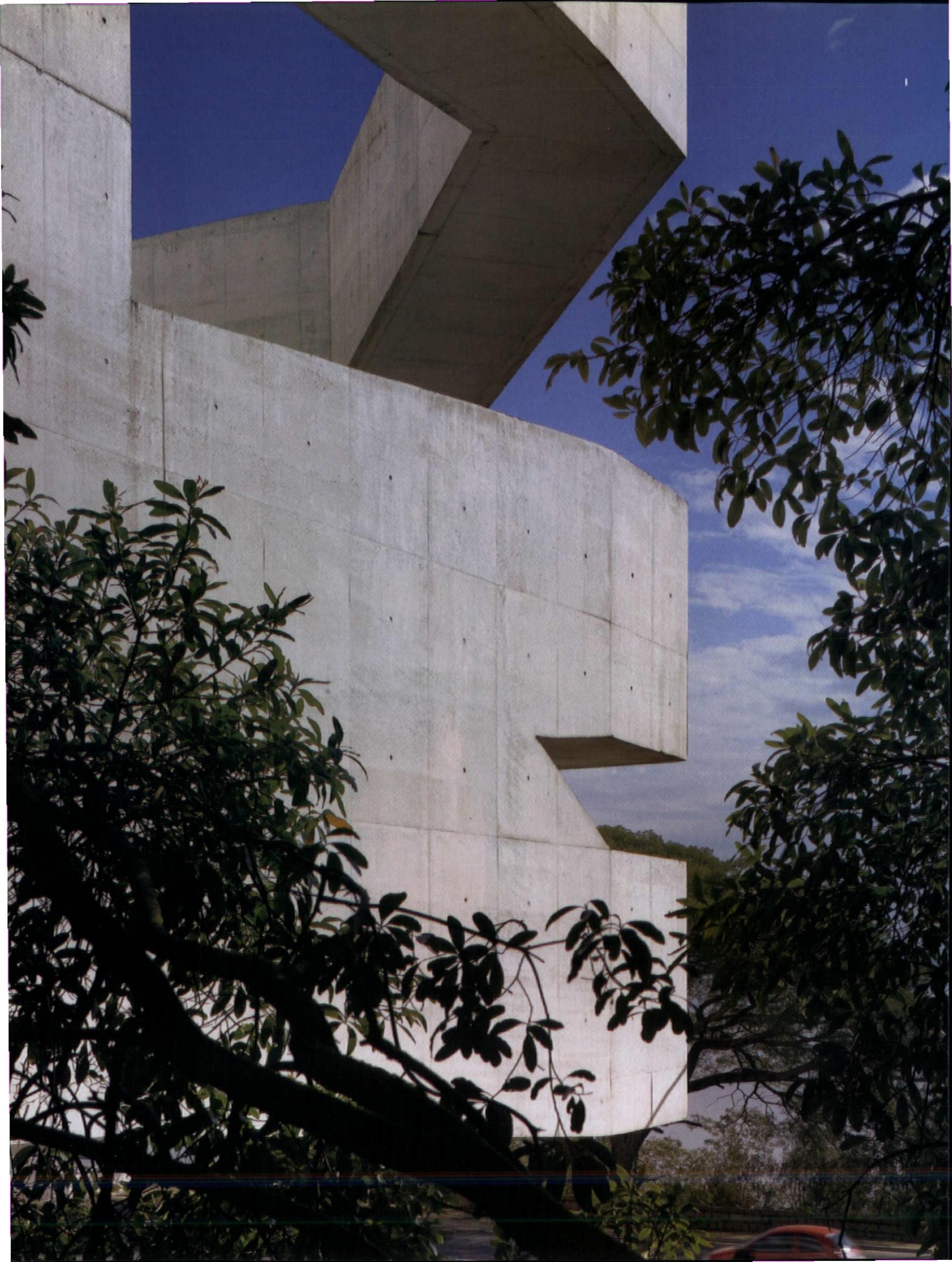
Regardless of scale, each of our architectural endeavours is limited by both gravity and the human form that we build for. Hammershøi's quietly poetic works remind us of this unchanging condition. This aspiration to create calm, tranquil environments – spaces where the atmosphere itself could be the subject of the work – should be the priority of every architect. JAMIE FOBERT

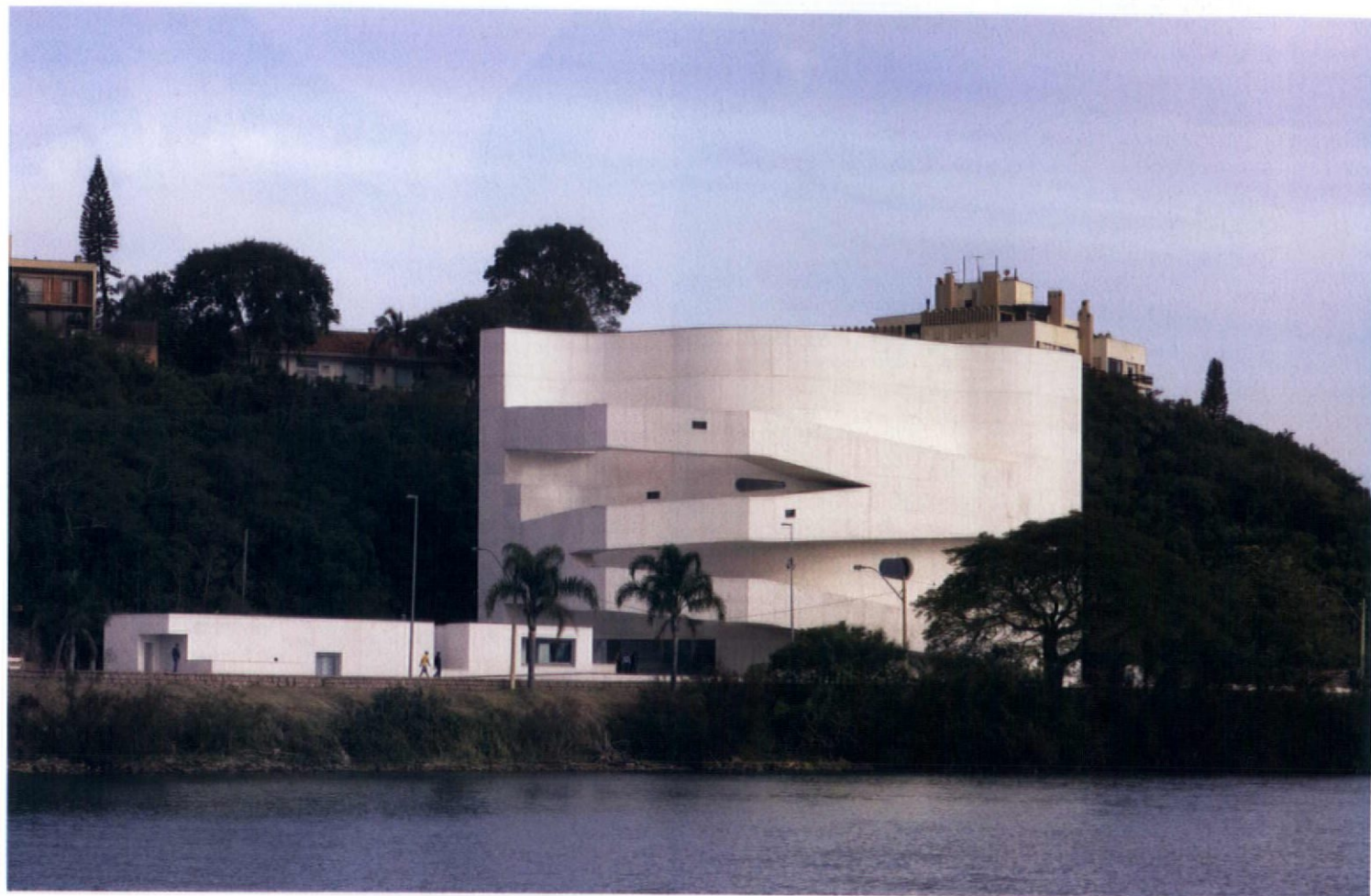
Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence at the Royal Academy of Arts, London runs until 7 September. It will then go to the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo (30 September – 7 December 2008).

Jamie Fobert would like to acknowledge the contribution of Benna Schellhorn in compiling this article.

Opposite: *Sofa*, 1905. Oil on canvas. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie. Photo: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Alte Nationalgalerie, SMB/Jörg P. Anders. Below: *Interior, Strandgade 30*, 1908. Oil on canvas. ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark. Photo: Ole Hein Pedersen.







2

ART MUSEUM, PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL
ARCHITECT
ALVARO SIZA

When visiting a building is problematic, as in this case when a 12 500 mile round trip to Brazil seemed inappropriate for just one afternoon, the next best thing is to visit the architect in person (in Portugal). This is especially true when meeting someone like Alvaro Siza; an individual of remarkable directness, who having absolutely nothing to prove simply tells it as it is. No frills.

In his peaceful Porto office, where he and 30 or so staff work, the 75 year old Pritzker Prize winner talks about the Museum for Iberê Camargo Foundation in Porto Alegre, Brazil, as if it were an enduring long distance love affair. He shows warmth and affection for the project, the people involved and the place where the building stands. Supported by numerous props – a huge rough and ready 1:50

model (big enough to climb inside), early sketches and the sort of impromptu scribbles that any decent architect seems predisposed to produce – Siza describes the project with such sensitivity and detail that the character of the building is palpable. He clearly did not delegate responsibility for this project, but was fully engaged, describing the process as 'miraculous'; an experience that Siza goes on to suggest, somewhat poignantly, is one that he is unlikely to have the opportunity to repeat.

Convened specially for this edition of the AR, the conversation was purposely directed towards matters of interior space, which Siza immediately took as an opportunity to state how troubled he is by the current fascination with external form. Of course, as he has been responsible for some of the world's most celebrated buildings, each with their own unique identity, it would be easy to suspect he was being disingenuous. After all, isn't this building simply



3

SEIZING THE VOID

Alvaro Siza challenges Modernism's conventional attitude to the relationship between inside and out.

1
Siza's distinctive concrete ramps project out towards the expansive Porto Alegre landscape.
2
Siza describes the double curve of the museum as a response to the landform behind.
3
From further afield, the region's strong sun bleaches the foundation's concrete white.

a sculptural hybrid of an Aalto vase and Brinkman and Van der Vlugt's Van Nelle Factory, in Amsterdam? Apparently not. As the conversation progressed, Siza's narration became increasingly persuasive of the fact that this curious mixture of forms and volumes derived from a strong response to site and programme, rather than from any contrived formal ambition. In Siza's mind, any hint of sculptural invention represents little more than a shadow of his first emotional response to the site. Early sketches bear little relationship to the outcome that Siza describes as a confluence of many circumstances, as he sets out his design development in surprisingly pragmatic terms.

For Siza, problems and opportunities are one and the same thing. 'Difficult sites are', he says, 'a good way to find special solutions.' Compressed between river, road and escarpment, the plot was defined as an elongated wedge, with a narrowness exacerbated by the need for rear access art delivery, well away from the busy highway. A high water table provided an additional boundary, limiting the amount of excavation that could be achieved, and the region's at times fierce climate completed the picture. Finding equilibrium in this situation was always going to

produce an eccentric form, and Siza has achieved this with one of his most striking formal and spatial compositions.

Built to house a collection of work by regional artist Iberê Camargo (1914-1994), Siza describes his early vision of a large internal void. 'A big hole', he says, defined on one side by an L-shaped succession of rooms, each with different dimensions, that form an orthogonal corner between two vertical circulation cores. On the other side, 'the building makes a curve', re-tracing the line of the landscape that it obscures and incorporating a series of internal ramps that form the principal means of circulation, bridging and completing the loop between cores. Despite additional length gained with the double curve, however, single ramps did not work. In response, three pairs of switchback ramps were devised, each rising half a level, clinging to the internal face of the sinuous wall before leaping out as dramatic faceted cantilevers to complete the second half-level ascent. Through this, whether you choose to take the lift to the third floor and ramp down, or climb up from the ground, the circulation allows visitors to roam around the building in a zigzag that leads them through exhibition spaces in opposing orientations. Landing on alternate floors at alternate ends



4

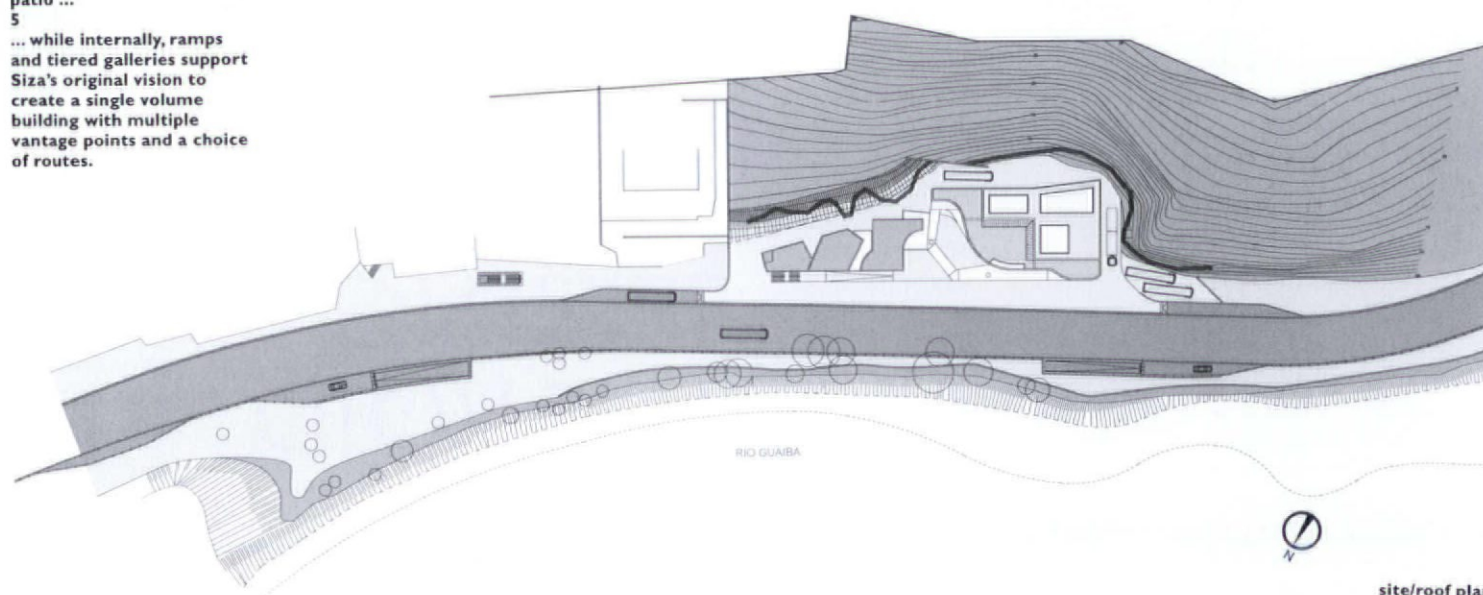
ART MUSEUM, PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL

ARCHITECT

ALVARO SIZA

4
External ramps create a dramatic vertical entrance patio ...

5
... while internally, ramps and tiered galleries support Siza's original vision to create a single volume building with multiple vantage points and a choice of routes.



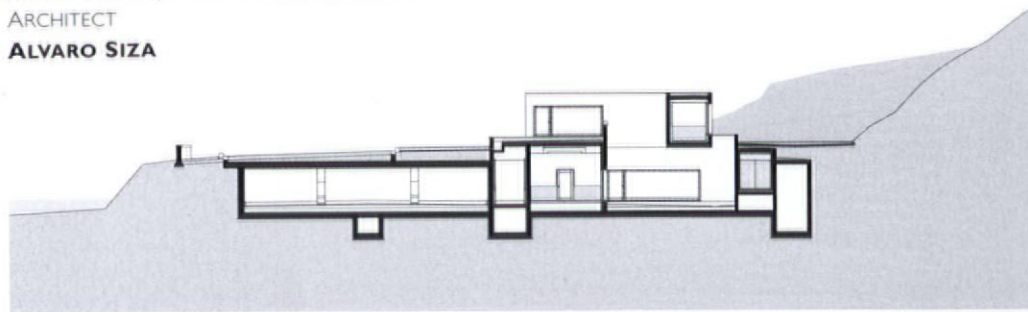
site/roof plan



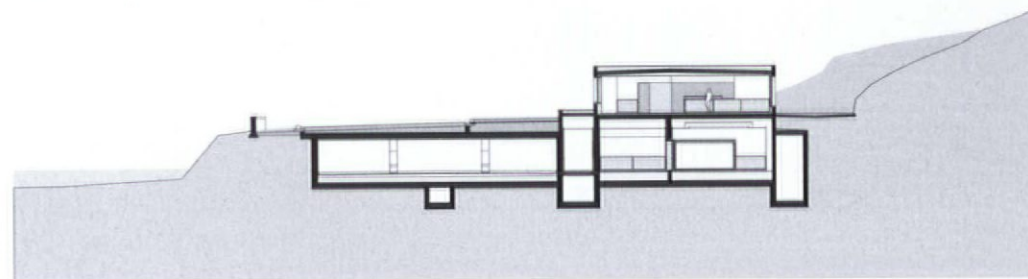
ART MUSEUM, PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL

ARCHITECT

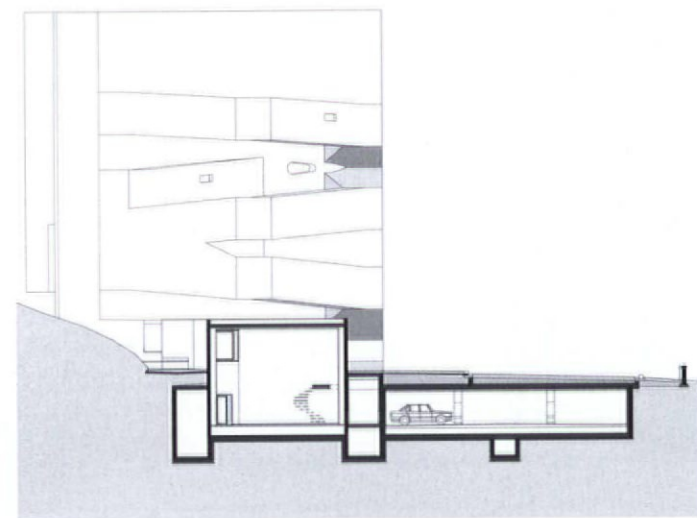
ALVARO SIZA



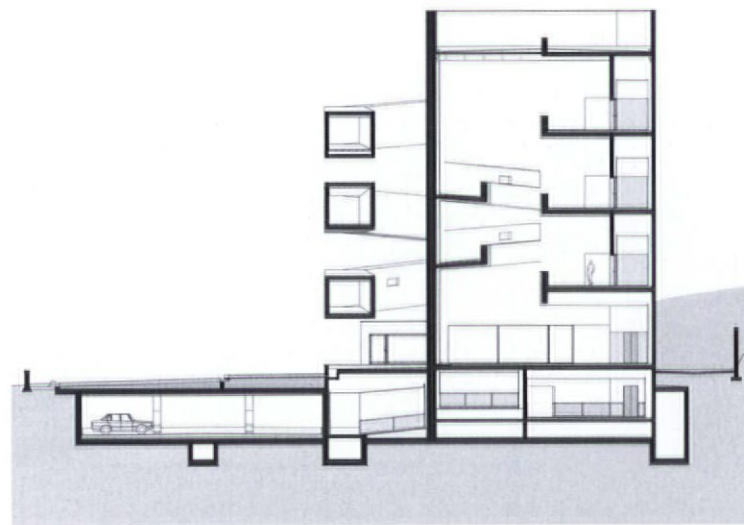
section through office and sunken courtyard



section through office and cafeteria



section through workshop

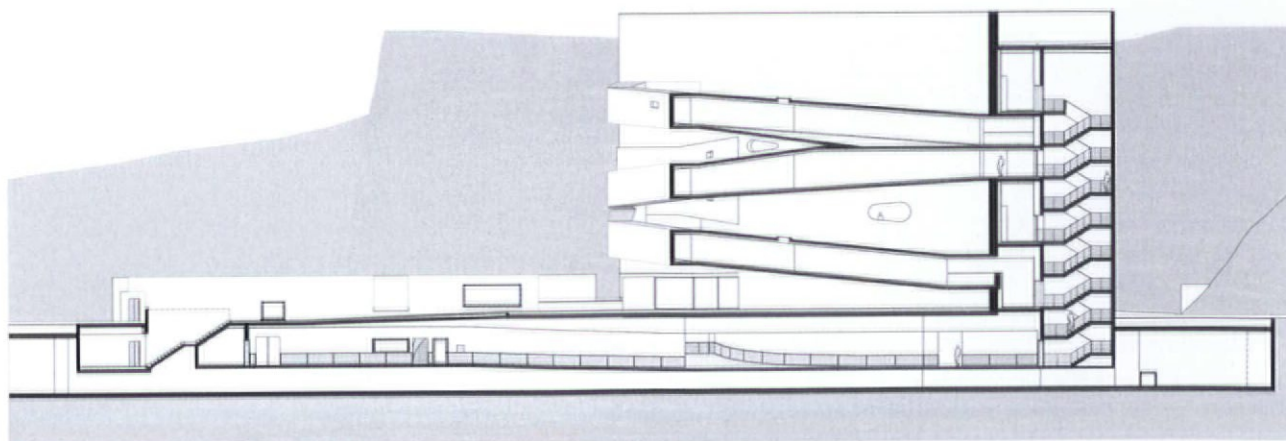


section through atrium

6
Rising half a level between first and second floors, all levels are visible. Top floor employs naturally lit rooflight, with artificial lanterns in their place below.

7
From the ramp, you can see far into the distance.

8
Siza made only a few small apertures, giving specific views toward the town.

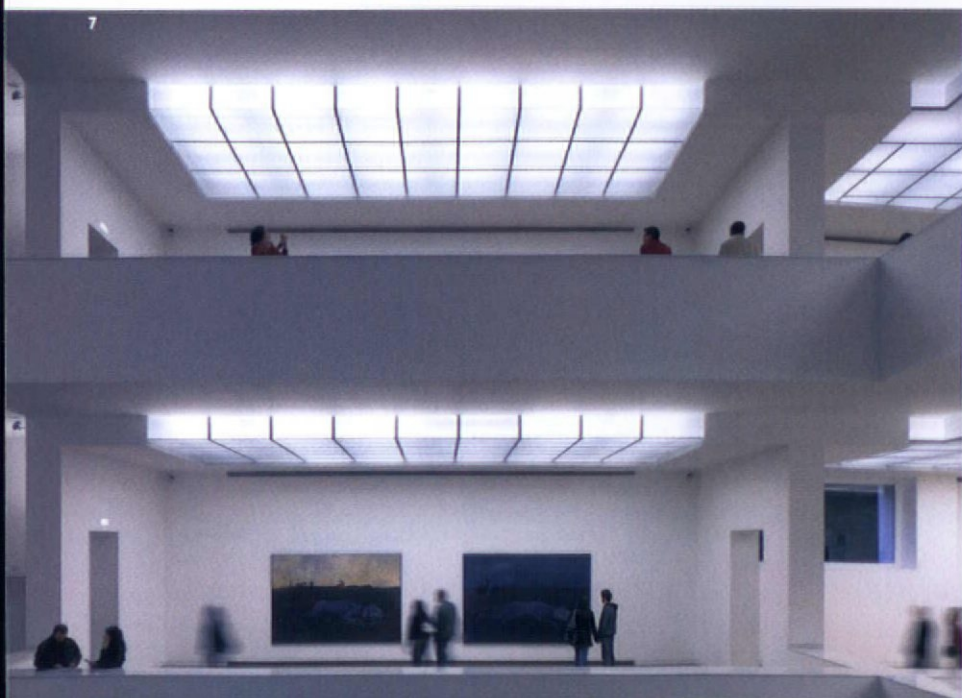


long section

of each of the L-shaped suites, visitors change orientation from one level to the next.

Richer than the singular experience of New York's Guggenheim, visitors gain a full appreciation of the building's curious form, as they take a leisurely but essential *dérive*. Siza describes this experience as a matter of comfort, giving people an eye break between each suite of rooms, either with an internal view of the whole exhibition, or by glimpsing a view of the landscape through one of the sparingly and carefully located windows.

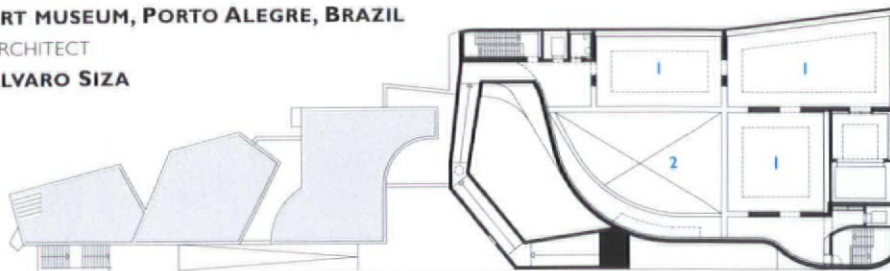
On the opening night, this arrangement was tested to capacity when 2500 people gathered in the space, evenly distributed throughout the building, yet part of a singular collective, shared experience.



ART MUSEUM, PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL

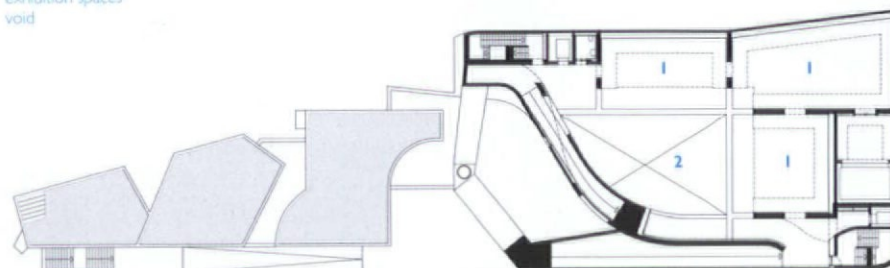
ARCHITECT

ALVARO SIZA



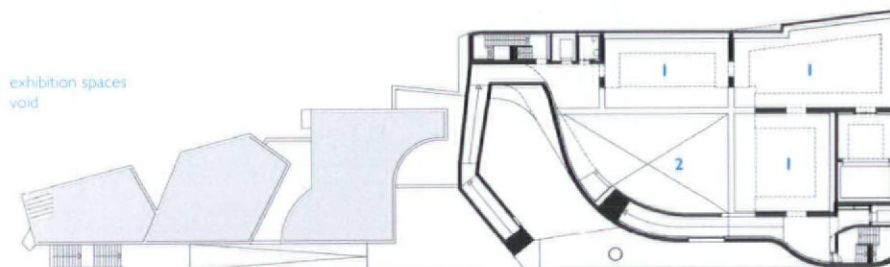
third floor plan, reached via faceted ramp from second floor

- 1 exhibition spaces
- 2 void



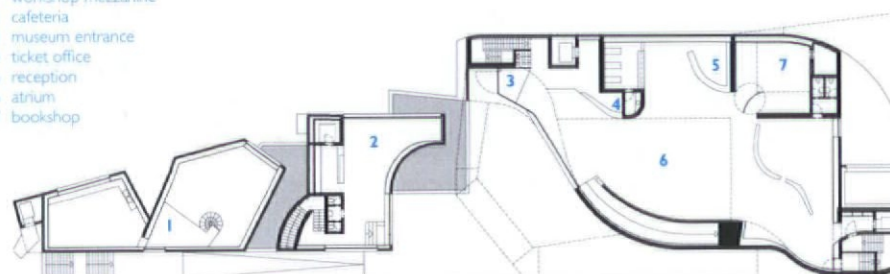
second floor plan, reached via faceted ramp from first floor, showing curved ramp rising to third floor

- 1 exhibition spaces
- 2 void



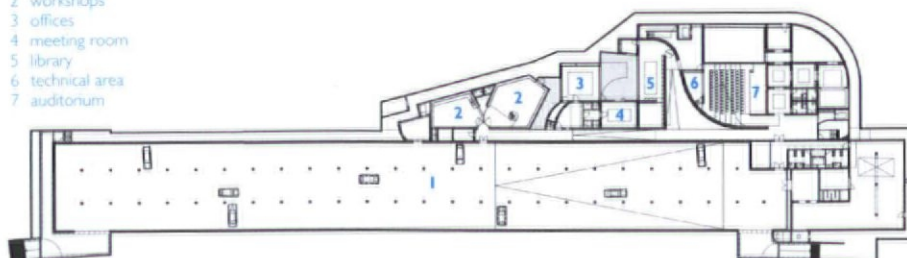
first floor plan, reached via faceted ramp from ground floor, showing curved ramp rising to second floor

- 1 workshop mezzanine
- 2 cafeteria
- 3 museum entrance
- 4 ticket office
- 5 reception
- 6 atrium
- 7 bookshop



ground floor plan, showing curved ramp rising to first floor (scale approx 1:725)

- 1 car park
- 2 workshops
- 3 offices
- 4 meeting room
- 5 library
- 6 technical area
- 7 auditorium



basement level car park plan

Use of the ramps, Siza noted 'takes the compression away from the exhibition space, so there is no sensation of claustrophobia'.

This pattern of circulation also extends Siza's enduring preoccupation that is specific to the design of exhibition spaces, providing clarity and flexibility by offering a choice of routes and giving curators the opportunity to close spaces without confusing visitors with locked doors or dead ends. It also creates two contrasting worlds, with the nature of space on this *promenade architecturale* oscillating between the expanse of the internal atrium and the constriction of the faceted ramps, curiously inverting the Modernist convention that the way to respond to a view is with an expansive window wall.

Despite concerns from the client that interiors would be dim and starved of any connection with the landscape beyond, Siza chose to control light and views with carefully placed apertures. He admitted to taking a risk with this, but is pleased with the results, amplifying the scale of the landscape and the effect of the light through small openings. Such key decisions were made on site, once the concrete carcass was nearing completion, along with other matters such as the need to finalise junctions at the end of the ramp, where geometries collide. This is a moulded in-situ building, and it is clear that Siza is yet to venture into the world of predictable parametric modelling.

With the main building located at the point of maximum deepness, as the site narrows, other elements of the brief were lined up in series towards the apex of the plot. Three fractured elements, reduced in scale and separated to allow light to reach the single-storey basement, contain workshops, offices and a cafeteria, connected below ground to the large car park. This is an essential part of the museum, built below the public highway and demonstrating the sort of can-do support and political will that Siza recalls with such affection.

In his long career, Siza has inspired many generations of architects, and this building seems set to extend his global influence.



9



10

9
Each of the three principal gallery levels comprises an L-shaped suite of display spaces.
10
First floor corner gallery has large window, providing view to the existing landscape that Siza was so keen to preserve.

With wise words that match the clarity of his interiors, he pays tribute to the work of Niemeyer and more generally to the fluency of space in Brazilian Modern architecture, freely identifying precedent. 'We architects' he states, 'work with references. Nobody makes an invention, technical inventions yes – but [at] the base of architecture we work with references. [For this building] there are many obvious references. When we begin we know few references. But when we are old enough, we have a lot of references, and they become part of ourselves ... in our mind there are a lot of experiences and impressions.'

So with echoes of Niemeyer, Frank Lloyd Wright and Lina Bo Bardi combined, this building creates a unique formal fusion with a powerful spatial resonance. Here, as with so many of his fine works, Siza controls the relationship between internal space and external form with masterful effect, having never fallen foul of the tyranny of the ubiquitous Modern box.

One of the most enduring aspects of Siza's work is the careful and highly mannered positioning of relatively small apertures, and in conversation it

was revealed that this is a trait that can be traced back to one of his earliest recollections as a child, when sent away to recover from an acute illness. Packed off to a remote place where he was forced to spend hours on a veranda, overlooking a stunning valley view, by the second week, it was clear that the view was not having its desired effect. 'After two weeks I was sick of the landscape. I couldn't look at it. It was worse than claustrophobia. As such I have never made a glass wall.' He derides those who argue for fully-glazed walls, only then to require the input of other experts to apply chemical coatings that result in lights needing to be left on most of the day. When asked, 'You still make windows?' he simply replies, 'Yes, I am an old man.' This, however, is clearly no matter of age. '... People will come back to doing windows', he declares.

ROB GREGORY

Architect

Álvaro Siza Vieira, Porto

Principals in charge

Barbara Rangel (until 2001)

Pedro Polónia (after 2001)

Project team

Michele Gigante

Francesca Montalto

Atsushi Ueno

Rita Amaral

Photographs

Duccio Malagamba



11

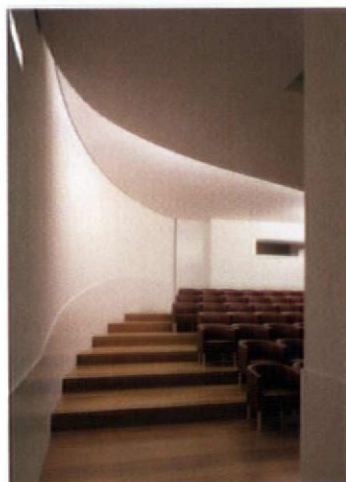


12

ART MUSEUM, PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL

ARCHITECT

ÁLVARO SIZA



13

11

External ramps are faceted, and were conceived to give visitors a comfortable and restful ascent.

12

Ancillary and support spaces are located in a series of smaller conjoined pavilions separated by a series of sunken courtyards.

13

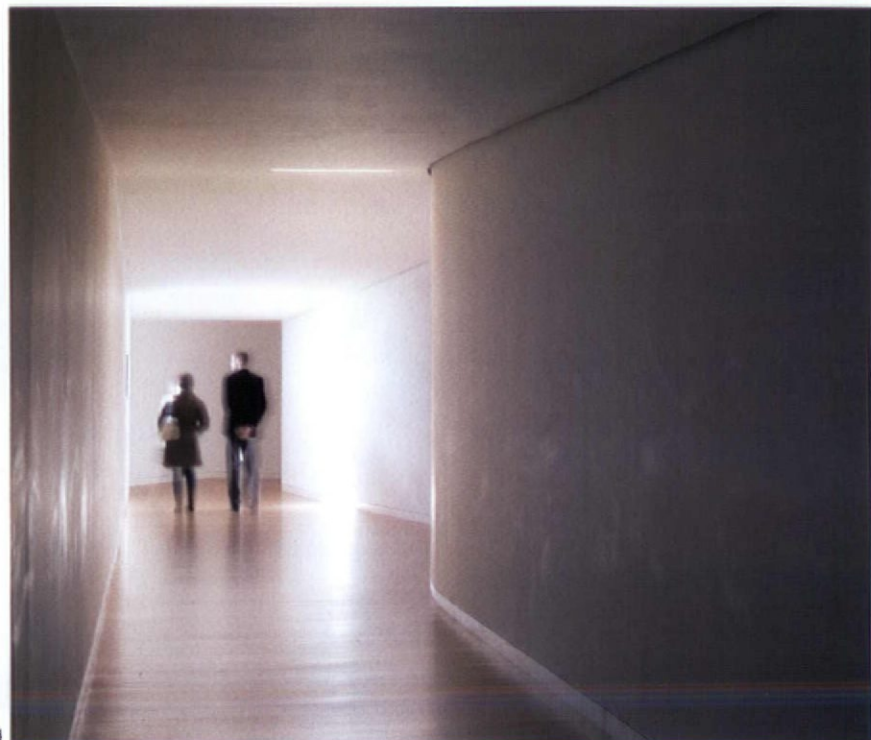
A large auditorium is located in the basement podium level.

14

Walking through the ramps is a leisurely experience, with occasional views and spots of light.

15

Interstitial spaces provide further opportunity for Siza's trademark formal invention.



14



UNIVERSITY WORKSHOP, KANAGAWA, JAPAN

ARCHITECT

JUNYA ISHIGAMI + ASSOCIATES





2

POLES APART

Junya Ishigami uses slender columns as spatial moderators.



3

1 Interiors are given character through the relationship between lightweight structure and heavyweight furniture.

2 Orientation of columns creates shifting degrees of visual permeability.

3 Even during the day, the interiors appear luminous.

Completed at the start of the year, this is Junya Ishigami's first completed building. The material and spatial themes it explores, however, have been developed for some time through the architect's experimentation with so-called 'extreme parameters'. At the Basel Art Fair in 2006 he illustrated this with a work that demonstrated the strength of a 9.5m length of pre-cambered 3mm steel plate, forming a table levelled only by the weight of objects placed on it. The Kaito Workshop at Kanagawa (one hour west of Tokyo), appropriately built to provide space for extra-curricular experimentation, extends this interest in efficiency and slenderness. In plan, it looks nothing more than an amalgamation of dots. But these dots are the result of a detailed analysis of steel pillars, which

have been made as slender as possible in relation to their relative disposition.

This process of reduction in architecture is popular in Japan, and is a phenomenon that can be observed in the works of SANAA and Kengo Kuma, among others. Having spent time in the office of Sejima before setting up on his own, Ishigami takes these pursuits to another level, developing ideas of SANAA's Koga Park Café (1998) (AR February 1999) and the more recent Naoshima Ferry Terminal, with an open plan that allows users to roam freely. In this case, however, unlike the columns in SANAA's buildings, which are evenly spread to present no real obstruction to views, the density of Ishigami's flat-section pillars begin to assert their presence. Purposefully placed to obscure certain views, they create visual screens, demarcate different areas and mark paths from one end of the building to the other.

4
Lit from strip rooflights that give the interior a distinctive luminosity, the space merges influences from SANAA's Koga Park Café and Naoshima Ferry Terminal.



UNIVERSITY WORKSHOP, KANAGAWA, JAPAN

ARCHITECT

JUNYA ISHIGAMI + ASSOCIATES

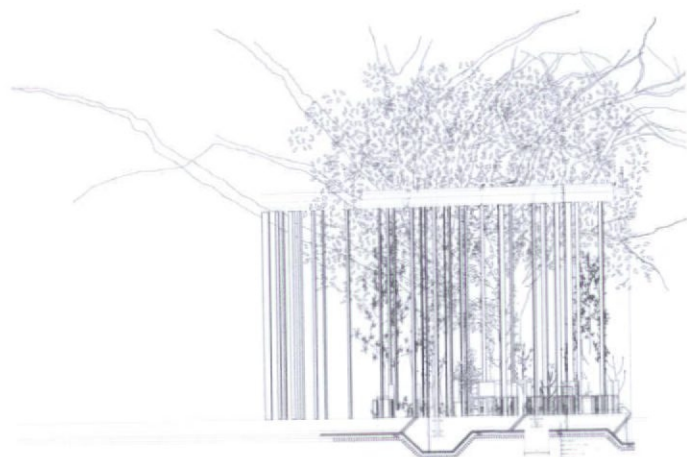




4



long section



detailed section, showing veil-like effect of structure

Ishigami also plays with scale and illusion, and in contrast with heavy salvaged machinery and old wooden desks, his white steel chairs and tables have been scaled and designed to be delicate. As such, when placed in circles among various potted plants, they radiate a serene, otherworldly quality, which makes you wonder if they are designed for invisible weightless fairies. This magical theatre also continues externally, with the building's concrete plinth levitating above the surrounding bitumen to increase the building's anti-gravitational effect.

The curtain wall is formed by $5 \times 1.5\text{m}$ glass panels stabilised with perpendicular fins, which offer complete transparency, setting the stage for the audience who pass by every day with all four corners of the building being used to display students' work.

Light pours in through the apertures in the roof, with the brilliance of the pillars and other props bouncing off radiation to animate the stage. The workshop forms a lantern in day and night.

Although SANAA and Ishigami share a number of interests, on closer inspection it is evident that Ishigami's work has distinction of its own. Whereas SANAA would deploy mirrors to promote transparency, the pillars in the Kaito Workshop defy, or recoil from, such lucidity. Instead, they play a central role in Ishigami's theatre, to inspire awe and curiosity (how can these thin pillars bear the load?). Practicality is set aside for playfulness, and art and architecture converge effortlessly. YUKI SUMNER

Architect
Junya Ishigami, Tokyo
Photographs
Edmund Sumner/VIEW

DOMESTIC INTERIOR, LONDON
ARCHITECT
TIMOTHY HATTON ARCHITECTS



While acknowledging there is danger in making ambitious predictions, when entering this central London house it is difficult to ignore the possibility that guests could be witnessing the next Soane Museum in the making. Certainly, when describing his client, architect Timothy Hatton speaks of an individual who, like Soane, has the qualities of an Enlightenment philosopher. He refers to him as 'a polymath of the twenty-first century'. Today's curious and enlightened collectors, however, are a different breed altogether, under no illusion that they could possibly amass all of the world's knowledge in one collection. Now, such people simply collect because they want to, taking pleasure in how artefacts form a backdrop to everyday lives, as is the case with this collection, which soon outgrew the constraints of the four-storey

seventeenth-century building at the centre of its curator's London life.

But the client's identity is to remain anonymous. Having held chairs in a number of the country's most august cultural institutions, the extent of this individual's knowledge and appreciation of art comes as little surprise. Collected through curiosity, an extensive and varied inventory has been created, including works that range from Roman busts and Piranesi through to more experimental and contemporary recent works. Were this place a gallery, people would almost certainly be happy to pay to visit, and a fine catalogue could be produced. As it is, however, this building is still very much a private home, and only a privileged few get to see inside it.

The house has been in the family for many years, previously



2

ENLIGHTENED LOFT

Timothy Hatton Architects transform an eighteenth-century attic.



1 The double-height attic storey provides a place into which the client can retreat.

2 Additional height brings the property to a similar ridge line as neighbours.

3 A glass mezzanine allows light to reach the rear.

3



4

DOMESTIC INTERIOR, LONDON

ARCHITECT

TIMOTHY HATTON ARCHITECTS

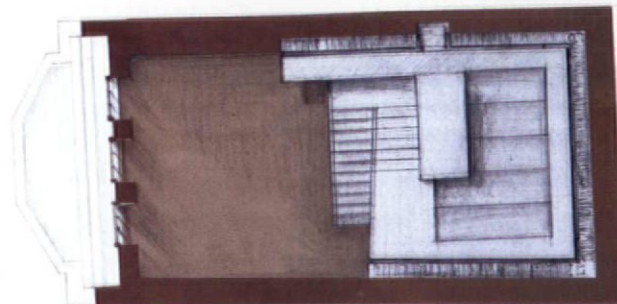
serving as family chambers. With an ever-expanding collection, when the interiors reached their capacity the client asked Timothy Hatton (architect of the family home in the Mediterranean) to make proposals for the fourth floor and attic storey. The result is this double-height drawing room/library, which offers a complementary alternative to the seventeenth-century interiors below; a place into which the client can withdraw or invite guests when desired.

The key to Hatton's proposal, considered in close dialogue with the client, was continuity of the graceful central stair, believed to be the house's original. Lined with busts, paintings, sketches and artefacts, the accent takes

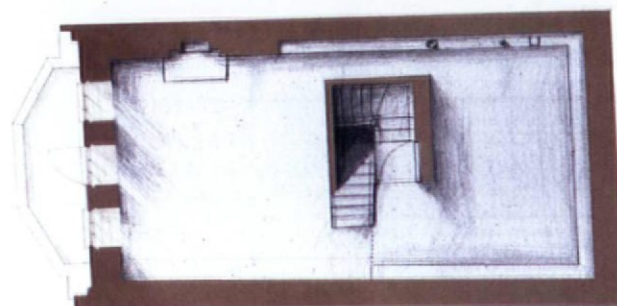
visitors through the original interiors to a point in-between the third and fourth floors, where seventeenth-century timber panelling changes to opaque glass, which emits light from above to blur the boundary between ancient and modern.

Having worked for Leslie Martin, Sandy Wilson and Powell & Moya, Hatton's pedigree as an ambitious contemporary designer is unquestionable. However, the architect practises what he describes as 'responsible conservation', making contemporary interventions that are responsive to the nature of the site and the culture in which they are immersed. In the case of this project, this has been borne out through

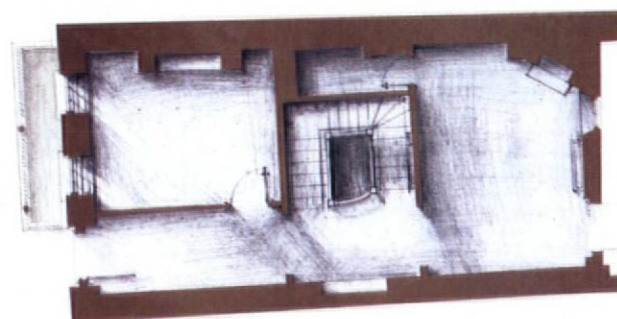
the relationship between new and old. Hatton describes the space as 'an architectural celebration of liberation through enlightenment', and its relationship with the old as a journey that requires visitors to climb through the seventeenth century in order to reach the twenty-first. Fittingly, therefore, everything above the third-floor parapet of the Grade II* listed property is a new construction, with the steel structure adding an additional metre to the cross section, bringing the roof in line with neighbouring properties. Inside, the glass mezzanine spans freely from party wall to party wall. The internal structure allowed Hatton to improve the proportion of the windows,



fourth floor (mezzanine) plan



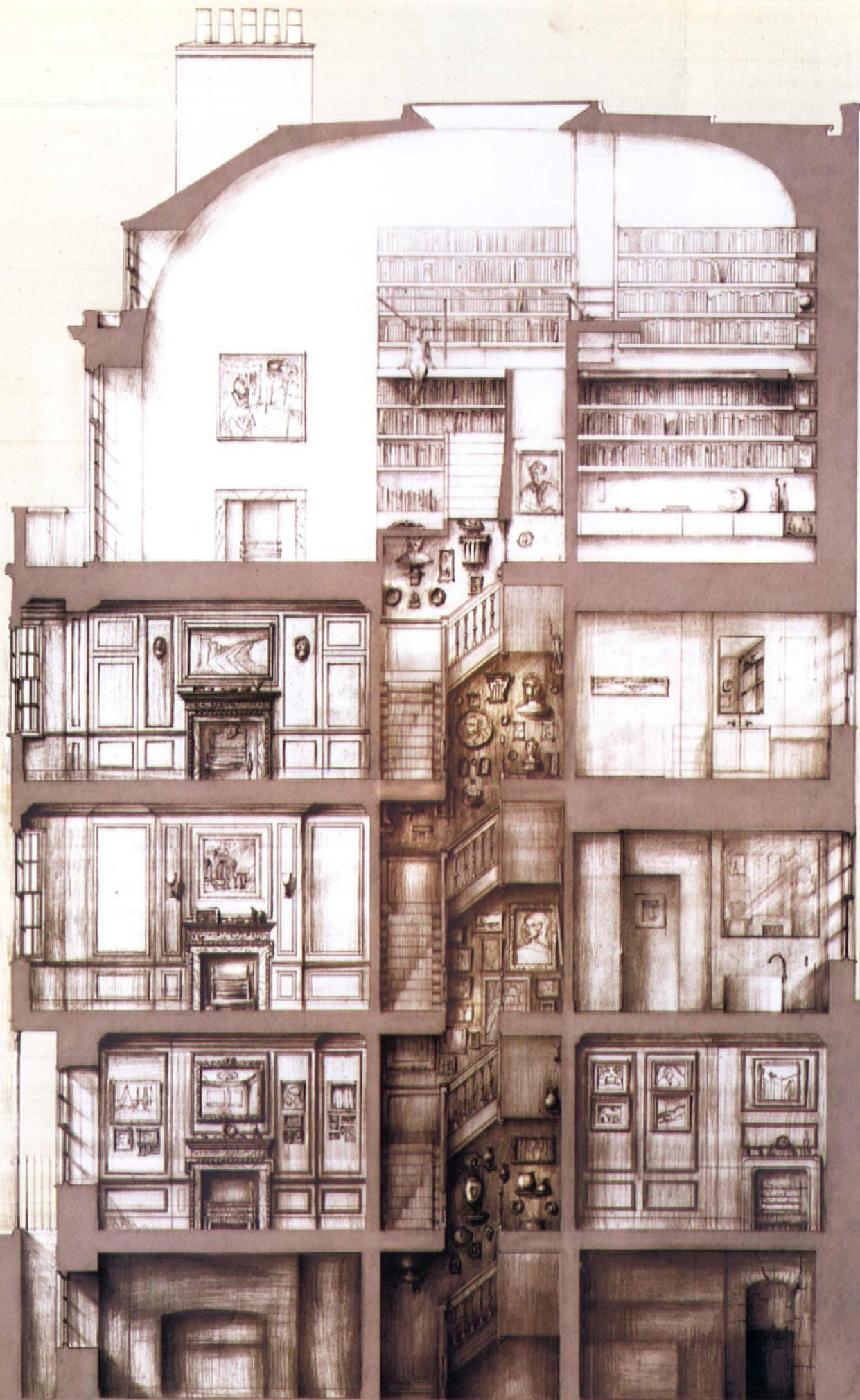
third floor plan



ground floor entrance plan

4 Three rooflights align with dormers on to the street.

5 Cross section shows stair at the centre of plan, which leads visitors through the client's extensive collection.



and to add three new dormers and three skylights. As well as solving spatial and structural constraints, the architect also provided integrated solutions to safety regulations, discreetly, with invisible hold-open fire doors, and, more conspicuously, with a sculptural ladder to a rooftop fire escape, which makes direct reference to Donald Judd's well-known vertical array of trays.

Having had some work done on the more sensitive lower levels, including the integration of a new master bathroom suite on the first floor, the house still presents a real challenge that needs tackling. A single-storey rear addition fails to make the most of the potentially delightful relationship between street and ornamental courtyard. With the same enlightened approach, this space could be vastly improved upon through a series of well-placed lightwells and lanterns. Fortunately, inspiration for such future expansion already exists, just a mile or so away at 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields.

ROB GREGORY

DOMESTIC INTERIOR, LONDON
ARCHITECT
TIMOTHY HATTON ARCHITECTS



6



7

Architect
Timothy Hatton Architects, London
Structural engineer
Price & Myers
Services engineer
Building Services Design Partnership
Photographs
Hélène Binet 1, 6, 8
Peter Cook/VIEW 3, 4, 7
Sofia Olofsson 2

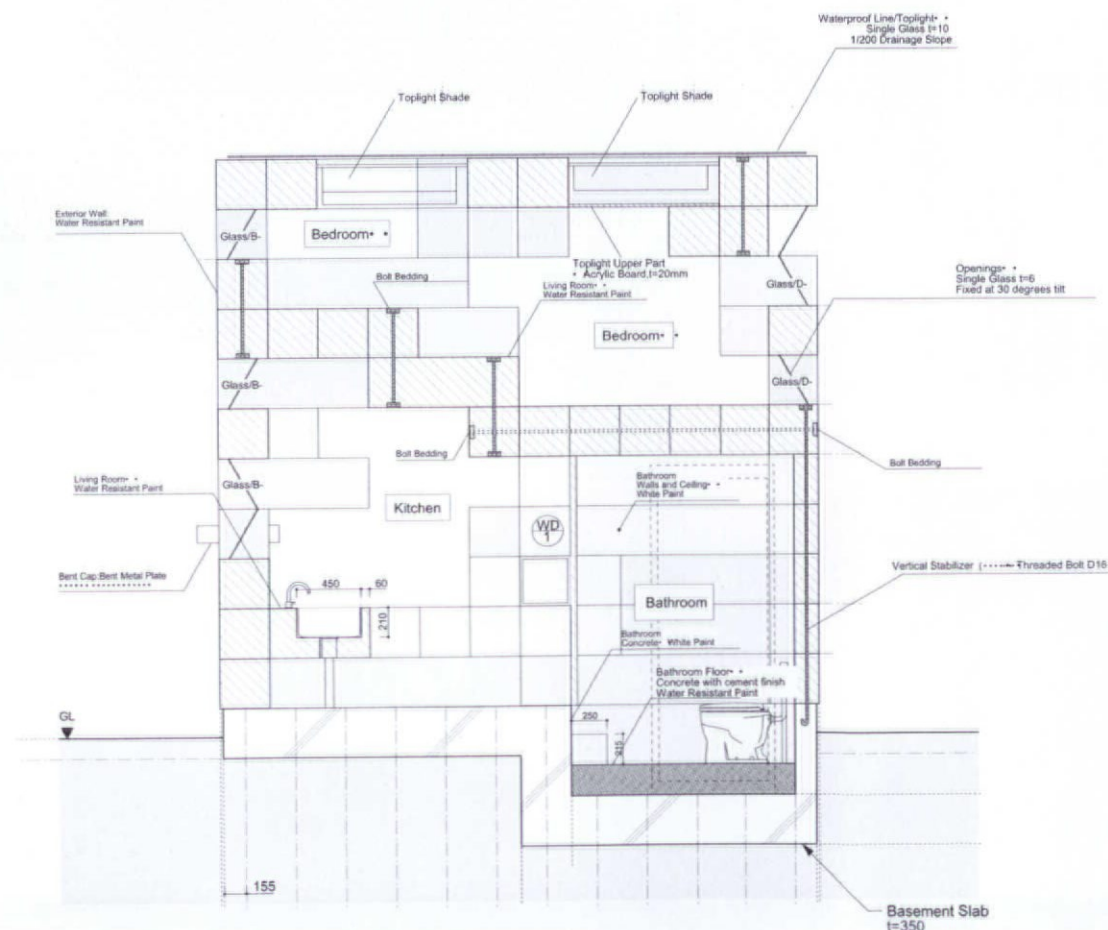
6
Glass stair illuminates the original below.
7
Mezzanine is lit from above.
8
Improvements have been made to proportions of windows, below three new high-level dormers.





WOODEN DEN

The interior of Sou Fujimoto's competition-winning experimental house belies its flush cubic form.



The Final Wooden House is an experimental project that Sou Fujimoto won in competition in 2005. Run by Kumamoto Artpolis (also responsible for the realisation of Taira Nishizawa's Tomochi Forestry Hall, a winner of AR Awards 2005), with Toyo Ito as judge, the competition was for entrants under the age of 35. The project was to be built all in timber, because the material could be freely provided by the client Kumamura Forestry Association, which also operated holiday bungalows along a deep valley in the lush countryside of Kumamoto, Kyushu.

Although cedar is commonly cultivated all over Japan, it took the local forestry association a while to collect large enough trees, which could be lumbered into pieces of timber each with a cross section of 350mm. These heavy pieces of timber have been 'endlessly piled up' and discreetly bolted together to create a small bungalow, measuring about four cubic metres in volume.

The dense presence of chunky wood, cut rough and left untreated, gives its interior a sense of wilderness. Users must negotiate their way through oversized steps, hanging pieces of timber and large gaps as if they were still in a forest. In contrast, the flush exterior walls appear slick and neat, with a patchwork pattern created by varying textures of the wood itself.

The distinction between walls, floors and ceilings blurs as any part of them can be used as a table, a chair or a bookshelf. A small kitchen, shower and lavatory are fitted under the steps to the left and right of the entrance, but everything else is created in wood, all in 350mm increments. Users sleep among wood that embraces them closely like a protective cave.

Toyo Ito had rightly predicted that the structure might leak, but he also deemed that it did not matter. After all, people would be coming here to be close to nature, and ultimately to think and move beyond the confines of normalcy.

YUKI SUMNER

Architect
Sou Fujimoto, Tokyo
Photographs
Edmund Sumner/VIEW

1
From outside,
apparently random
openings allude to
a more complex
interior.

2
Space within
responds to
Fujimoto's
exploration
of stepped
modular units.

3
Playing Jenga with
the modules allows
natural light to
illuminate the
interior.



2

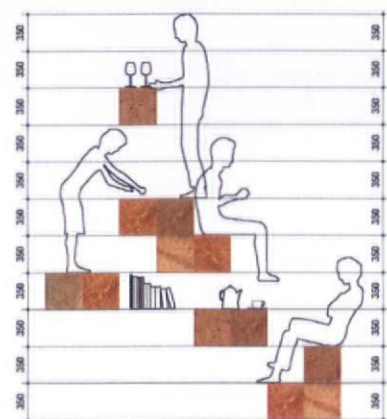


3

EXPERIMENTAL HOUSE, KUMAMOTO, JAPAN

ARCHITECT

SOU FUJIMOTO ARCHITECTS



exploring the bungalow's 350mm module

**PRIVATE SPA,
LIMERICK, IRELAND**
ARCHITECT
CARMODY GROARKE

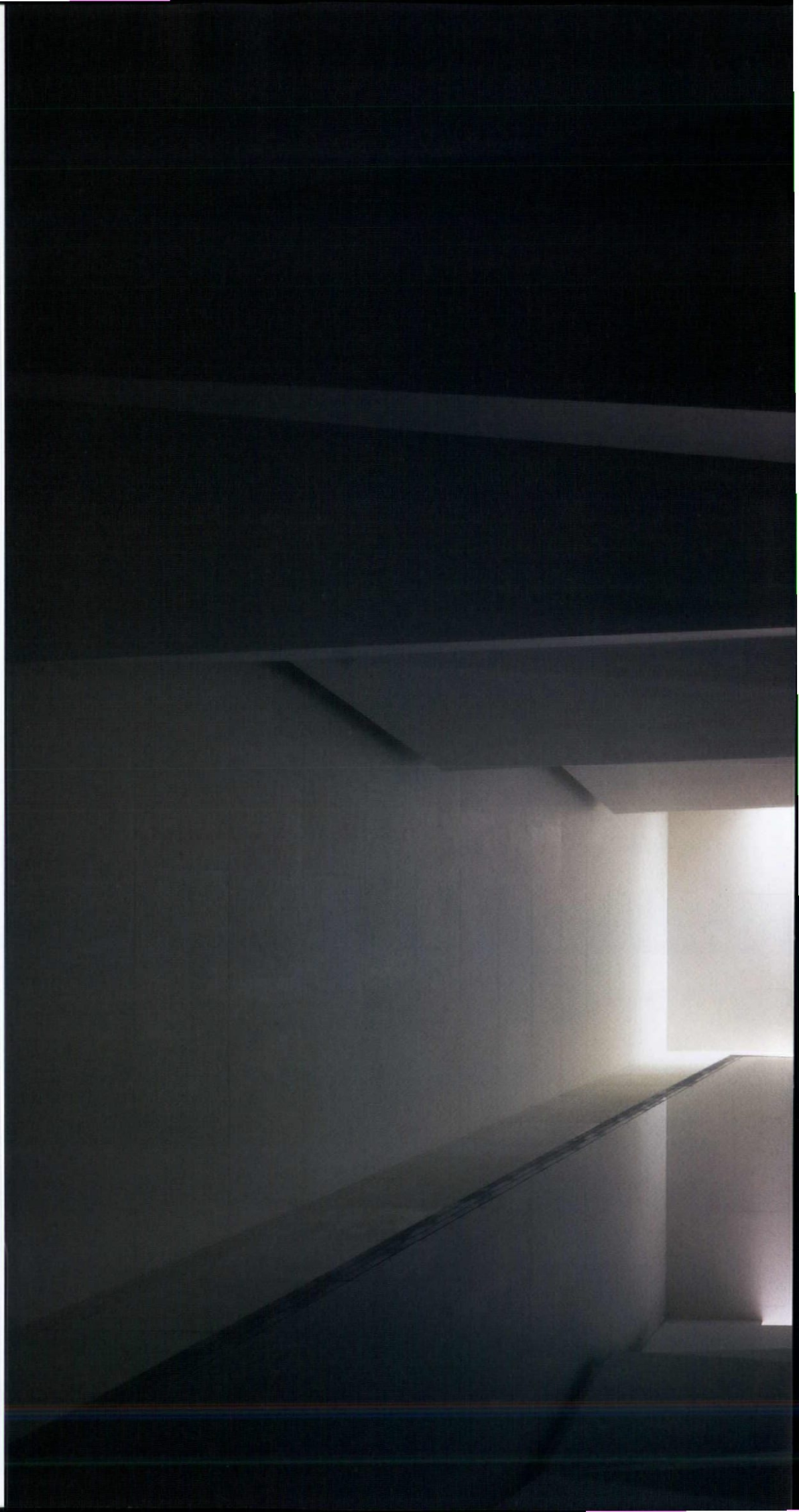
This private spa forms part of an ambitious residential extension in Limerick, south-west Ireland. Brought onto the project relatively late, once another architect's plans to double the size of the house were already in place, the challenge faced by Carmody Groarke (winners of Building Design's 2007 Young Architect of the Year Award) was to carve out sufficient space beneath and around the building footings for a 17.5 x 8m swimming pool, jacuzzi, sauna, steam room and gymnasium. Beyond this, the architectural challenge they set themselves was to produce a series of spaces with order, coherence and integrity that would set their work apart from the traditional and eclectic expression adopted elsewhere in the house.

Rather than shouting about how inventively problems were solved, a muted, expressionless language was adopted. So, while some may have amplified the many clever details required to build what is essentially a machine for exercising in, Carmody Groarke chose to focus on atmosphere and ritual. To this end they established rules that would bring material and spatial order, exploring relationships between stone, water, and light.

After extensive excavation, employing chemical explosives, a 10m deep hole created space for Carmody Groarke's orthogonal limestone box. Into this they set

STONE COOL SOBER

Carmody Groarke create an intense spatial experience in a new basement in Limerick.





I
Two materials predominate:
Bianco Neve, a white chalky
stone defining all dry areas,
and black Basaltina, a dark
textured stone for wet zones.

two pools, carving a jacuzzi and swimming pool in black Sicilian basaltina. Two freestanding limestone blocks flank these dark wet masses, containing sauna and steam rooms, and on axis sits a glass-screened gymnasium.

Entering via a narrow fumed-oak stairwell, a triangular anteroom neatly resolves geometries of the double butterfly plan house. Beyond this, the traditional world of domestic interiors is left behind, allowing family and guests to journey down into a more sensual and magical subterranean realm. As if passing through an oak wardrobe, a cavernous world awaits, with no ornament or detail; a place in which water and stone produce such an extreme spatial focus, that even a single drop of water would be sufficient to produce visual and acoustic resonance.

Turning through 90 degrees, the pool creates a strong axis that culminates in a toplit wall; naturally lit by day, and balanced by a range of artificial light scenes at night. Providing just the right amount of theatre (as colours range from cool blue to warm pink), the ultimate scenographic transformation occurs when the pool's stone floor rises from the depths, displacing water through agonisingly precise 3mm joints, to create a solid terrace: a child-safe surface, with all of the quality of a fine Sicilian patio, freshly washed down after a cooling rain shower.

Above this the folded glass reinforced plaster ceiling (formed in one piece before being cut and shipped to site in sections) neatly conceals tapering air ducts and perimeter lighting, underlying the architect's prioritisation of spatial intent over creative trickery, and establishing this as a thoroughly mature and accomplished work.

ROB GREGORY

Architect

Carmody Groarke, London
Kevin Carmody, Andy Groarke,
Andrew House

Photographs

Christian Richters

PRIVATE SPA,

LIMERICK, IRELAND

ARCHITECT

CARMODY GROARKE

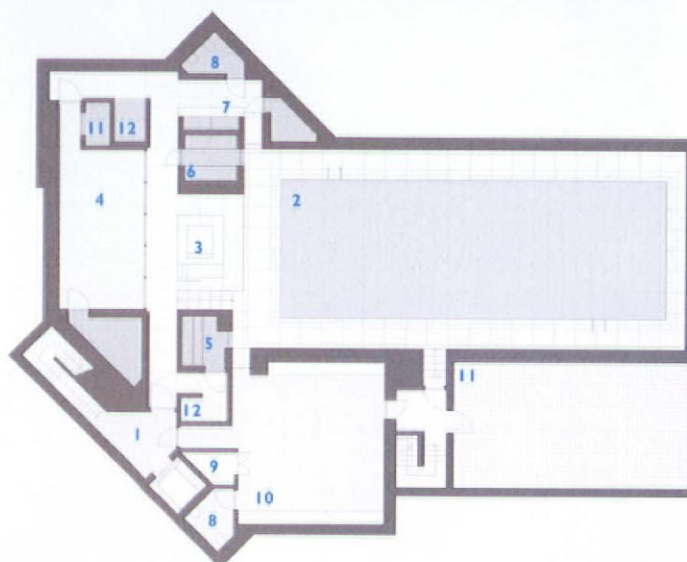


2



3

- 1 entry
- 2 pool
- 3 jacuzzi
- 4 gymnasium
- 5 sauna
- 6 steam room
- 7 changing area
- 8 bathroom
- 9 store
- 10 play/day room
- 11 plant
- 12 shower room

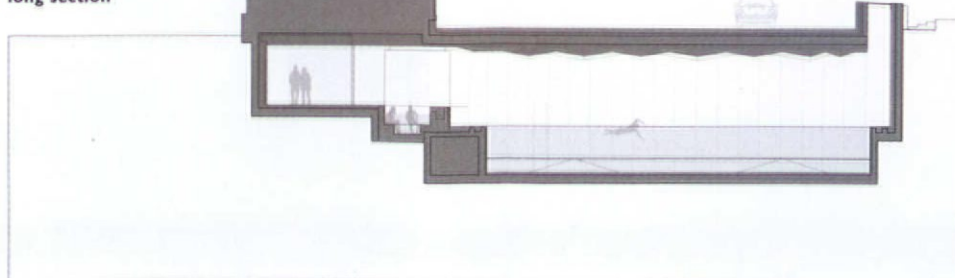


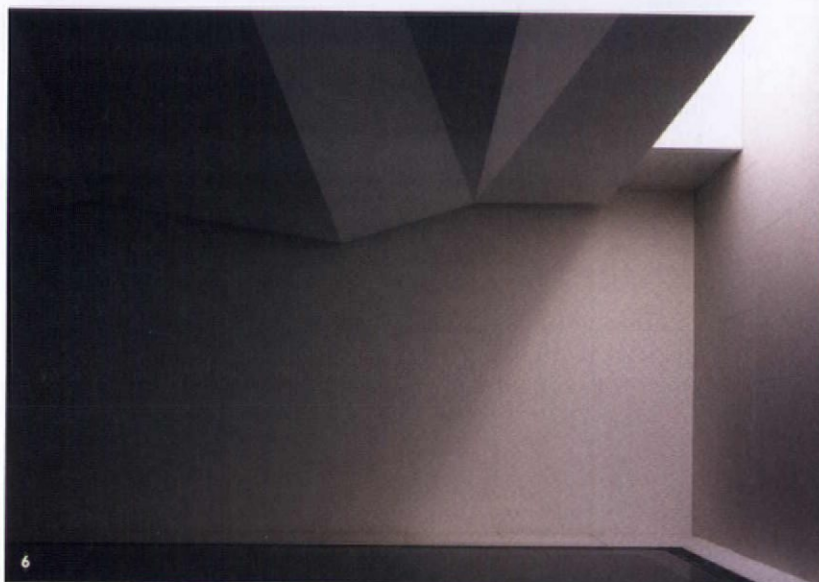
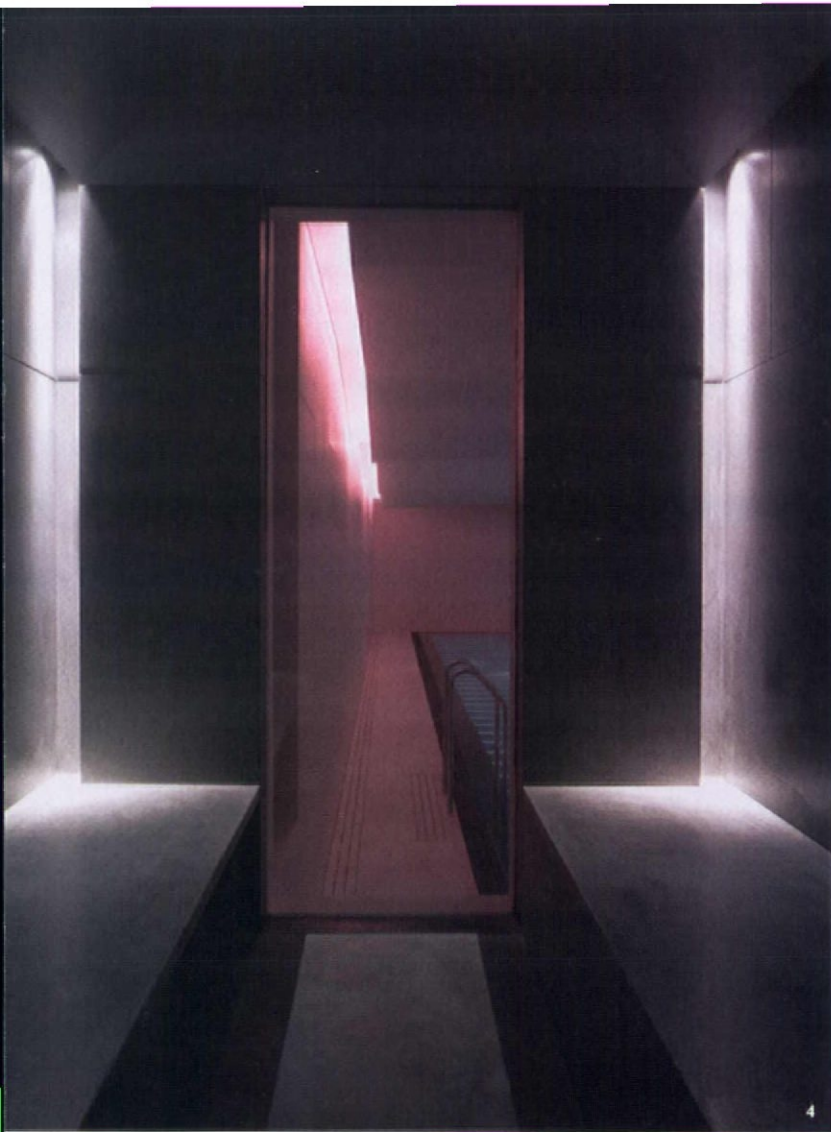
pool plan



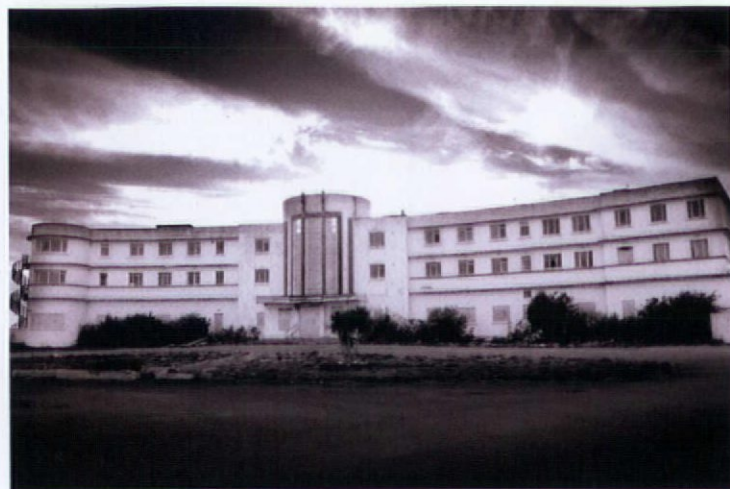
indicative location plan

long section





- 2
Spa is entered via a fumed-oak stairwell.
- 3
Entering on a cross axis, gymnasium is to the left.
- 4
Basaltina is used in all wet areas, including steam room.
- 5
Pool and jacuzzi appear as deep dark masses.
- 6
Daylight illuminates the end wall.
- 7
The stone floor rises with dramatic effect to create a child-safe environment.



MORECAMBE AND MODERNITY

Union North and Avanti Architects help revive Morecambe's Midland Hotel for developer/hotelier, Urban Splash.

On 26 January 1932, Oliver Hill wrote a letter to his client Arthur Towle, Controller of the London Midland and Scottish (LMS) railway company's Hotel Services, in which he boasted that he had 'made it my business to keep in touch with the best Continental work ... in France, Germany, Austria and Scandinavia etc and I feel that you have here a unique opportunity of building the first really modern hotel in this country'.¹ Clearly no tyro at buttering up clients, Hill added that 'my enthusiasm was greatly stimulated by the situation itself'.

It would be difficult not to be moved by the site. It looks west and north towards the misty fells of Cumbria over Morecambe Bay, the vast mysterious glistening expanse of mud and sand covered twice a day by frightening tides reputed to move faster than a running horse. Morecambe may have fallen on sad days since, but in the early '30s it was looking up. The ship-breaking yard that had dominated the sea front for decades was closed and about to be replaced by public gardens and a luxury open air swimming complex. In 1928, the town had adopted a new motto 'Beauty surrounds: Health abounds'. With its two piers, Winter Gardens and new promenade, it claimed to be 'Britain's most modern and progressive resort'.² Clearly it had to have an up-to-date swish hotel.

The railway company was keen to make the place rather more upmarket than Blackpool further down the coast. Oliver Hill, who had a flourishing practice of grand houses in several styles: Palladian, Tudor and, increasingly, Moderne, was appointed architect of the Midland Hotel, partly because of his familiarity with the sort of clientele the LMS hoped to attract. Hill curved his plan to follow the new sea wall and to maximise views of the bay from the convex side. Three storeys high, the slab was roughly symmetrical about a central drum containing the entrance and the grand stair, on which guests could parade in holiday finery.

To the north, the slab terminated in a one-storey circular element, the rotunda, containing a café and public bar intended to serve the municipal gardens and the projected swimming complex. The kitchen was placed between hotel dining room and the rotunda, so local café and bar customers were almost as greatly discouraged as the staff from mixing on equal terms with hotel guests: in outline, the plan was a clear diagram of '30s class structure.

The main public rooms were laid out on the convex side of the plan with, next to the kitchen, the main dining room opening from the entrance hall. On the other side of the hall was a chain of rooms that changed their function as the hotel was designed (and continued to do so in use). These terminated to the south in an open loggia overlooking the sea – '30s holidaymakers seem to have been much more robust than we are. Photographs from the period are now enlarged on the landings of the stair and reveal that it was common to sit on the sands wearing a cloth cap and heavy overcoat.

The concave side of the ground floor plan was taken up with the entrance and the service rooms. Upper floors were devoted to sleeping, with the best bedrooms and suites on the convex side, usually with balconies. Less grand bedrooms (often single bedded) on the concave side overlooking the town did not have individual bathrooms – unthinkable in a hotel with such pretensions now, but then commonplace. Guests could use a solarium on the roof. At the north end of both upper floors, staff had living quarters, carefully placed over the kitchen to avoid disturbing guests with cooking smells. In all there were only about 40 guest rooms and suites served by some 15 resident staff, with more outsiders coming in daily.

Structure was usual for the era, with a concrete encased steel frame and reinforced concrete floor slabs incorporating hollow pot infill. Very rapid construction (start on site was on 29 August 1932 with the hotel

Above: hotel in its nadir, just before restoration. Photograph: Nick Gaunt. Right: Gill's Nausicaa relief, now returned to the building and mounted behind reception desk. Photograph: Simon Webb. Opposite: restored entrance with heraldic seahorses on the stair drum. Ramp is new.







Top: restored west (sea) front. Above: Gill's Neptune and Triton medallion crowning stair drum. Right: Gill's restored stone seahorses. Photographs courtesy of the architect.



opening on 12 July in the next year), strange foundations on a sand-dune and lack of movement joints caused structural cracking even before the building opened to guests – apparently the two wings had started to sag away from the staircase drum. But defects were patched up, and in July 1934 Hill boldly announced that the building was 'highly satisfactory structurally' in his report to the LMS.³

Externally, the brick walls were covered in a polished white render incorporating carborundum and crushed glass to give sparkle. Blue-green glass (supposedly reminiscent of the colours of the bay) was used in the precast architraves to the principal windows. Though the hotel is commonly referred to as one of the first Modern buildings in Britain, it is a Classical design transforming itself into Art Deco (Hill had been an assiduous student of the 1925 Paris Exposition des Arts Décoratifs). With its architraved windows and string courses that almost, but not quite, echo internal floor levels, it was heavily unlike the stripped-down mainstream of continental Modernism. The Architectural Review unintentionally pointed up differences by publishing Aalto's Paimio

Sanatorium in the issue in which its reviewer Lord Clonmore (the magazine had a different class of writer in those days) hailed the hotel as rising 'from the sea like a great white ship', and as 'comfortable as if it were on the Continent'.⁴

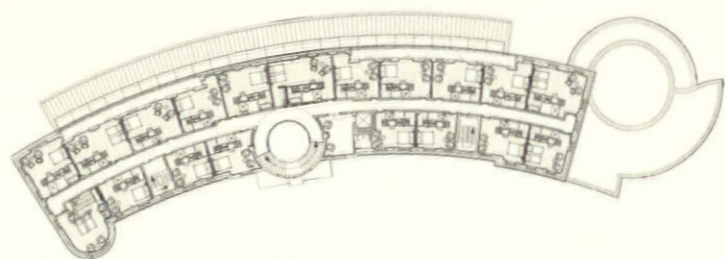
Inside, references to the sea continued. For instance, the entrance hall, which stretched right across the whole width of the plan to the great windows of the west wall that overlooked the bay, had a buff terrazzo floor, reminiscent of sand, inlaid with strips of silver mosaic to evoke waves. Hill chose all the furniture and designed much of it himself. To achieve a Gesamtkunstwerk, he worked with other artists, the most well known of whom was Eric Gill, who designed and carved the great medallion of Neptune and Triton entwined with mermaids on the drum ceiling (it was coloured by Denis Tegetmeier). Gill's classical mood continued in the south wall of the entrance hall where he carved the relief of *Odysseus Welcomed from the Sea by Nausicaa*: a metaphor of the hotelier receiving guests.

Gill's work also appeared on the exterior where two stylised stone seahorses heraldically crown the entrance side of the drum. The seahorse motif was invented by Marion Dorn, who designed carpets for special rooms, and the little creature was quickly adopted by the LMS as a motif for the whole hotel. The carpets have gone, but a Dorn mosaic seahorse remains in the middle of the entrance hall. Lost, like the carpets, was the mural of *Night and Day* by Eric and Tirzah Ravilius that decorated the inner walls of the café in the rotunda. Here was '30s fantasy at its most lighthearted, yet the yachts, flags and fireworks quickly disappeared – a victim of the hotel's hurried construction: the plaster was too wet, and the wax painting began to peel.

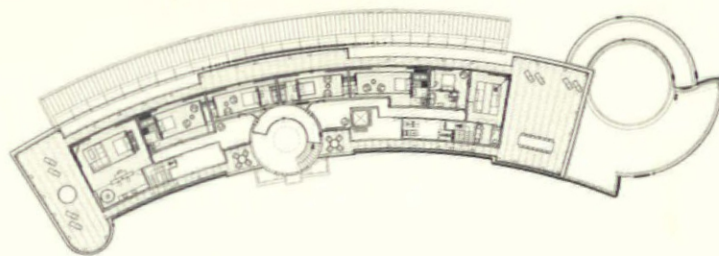
Efforts to repair the work were fruitless, but the hotel was an immediate success when it opened and attracted exactly the clientele the owners had hoped for: the Lancastrian and Yorkshire business community with famous theatre and music hall stars who performed at the Winter Gardens. *Country Life* called the Midland an 'exquisite building',⁵ and people like Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson, Churchill, Noel Coward and Gloria Vanderbilt were supposed to have stayed, but their visits can no longer be authenticated for all records disappeared in subsequent chaotic events.⁶ These began in September 1939, when the hotel was requisitioned as a hospital for the air force. It opened again after the war and I was taken to stay there then, but one of my few recollections is of sliding backwards down the wide, smooth silvery polished aluminium banister rail to the great consternation of the staff. Infinitely more worrying for their future was the sale of the place by the newly nationalised railways in 1952. Though the new owners were experienced hoteliers, they continued the erosion of Hill's masterpiece begun by the military. It was under them for instance that all the cutlery



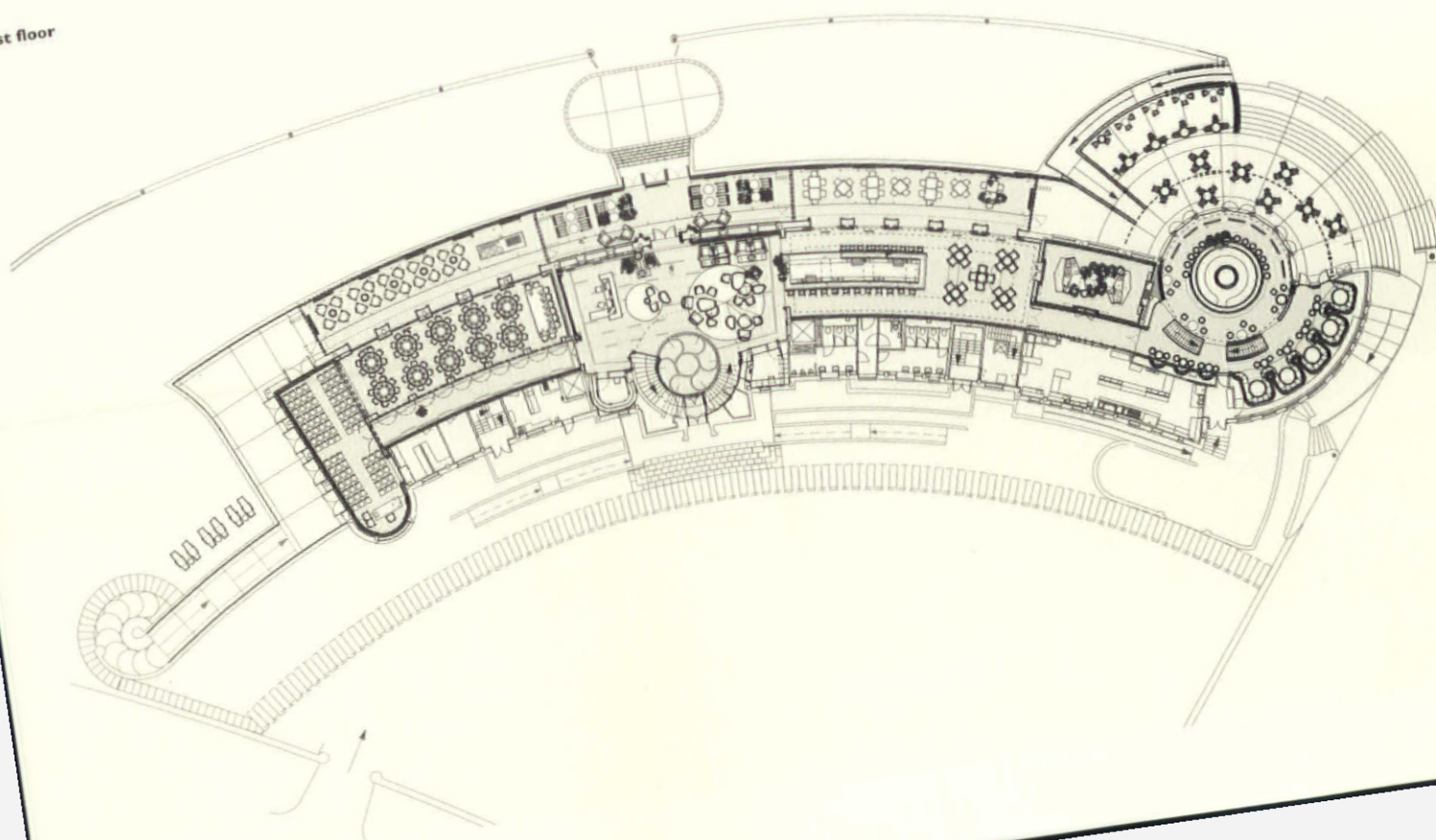
Left: from north-west, with rotunda in foreground. New third floor recessed behind Hill's facade. New sun lounge projects from ground floor. Opposite: function room to south of entrance hall is enriched by Gill's relief of north-west Lancashire. Photograph: Simon Webb.



first floor



third floor



ground floor



Above left: stair drum restored to original splendour. Above centre: looking down through stairwell to new reception desk. Above right: new layout of first and second floors. Below left: new bar in rotunda, open to public and guests alike. Below right: new cosy area served by rotunda bar. Opposite: new sun lounge extends Hill's original public rooms and offers dramatic views of bay. Ceiling slot delineates new and old. Photographs by Simon Webb.

and crockery stamped with the seahorse motif disappeared and crude alterations started to be made in the public rooms.

Deterioration continued under a string of (generally) increasingly disastrous owners.⁷ The building was a metaphor for the whole town, which progressively lost trade as cheap plonk and air fares made Mediterranean sunshine more attractive than the bracing air of northern England. Morecambe's piers were destroyed by fire and storm; the Winter Gardens closed; clumsy attempts to create new attractions failed. By the late '90s the hotel's windows were smashed or boarded up, huge rust stains appeared on the white render, and the interior was left to fall to pieces; all the original furniture was lost. In 1992, Gill's *Nausicaa* relief was removed and sent to London for an exhibition after which it disappeared. The building remained as a hulk, protected by its Grade II* listed status, but its future seemed hopeless.

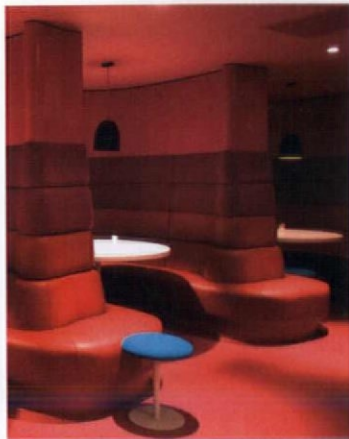
Suddenly in January 2003, everything changed. Urban Splash, the adventurous developers who had already shown themselves brilliantly capable of sensitively rescuing fine but decayed buildings and making a profit from them, bought the Midland. Tom Bloxham, the company's chairman said that it was a 'fantastic building [which] I hope we will be able to restore ... as a hotel and restaurant but it will be very difficult, expensive and will no doubt take several years'.⁸ He was right – and now the result (with a few small aberrations) is a triumph.

Once again the hotel sparkles on the sea front. Original fenestration and colour scheme have been retained, and on the east side the only obvious major alteration is a new, but very discreet, top storey of posh bedrooms built on the old flat roof. The drum still dominates the facade and Gill's seahorses have been repaired and cleansed of '40s paint. Hill's grand green copper outer doors have disappeared, and so has his revolving inner door,⁹ now replaced by two pairs of automatic sliding ones. Changes are more obvious on the sea front, where a long thin sun lounge with a west wall glazed with butt-jointed panes has been added

on the ground floor, effectively extending the public rooms toward the sea. The extension replaces a cruder one added in the 1950s, one of the few alterations to Hill's original design that made sense. The scale and smoothness of the addition is clearly Modern, High-Tech even, slicker than Hill's work, from which it is separated by a continuous flat rooflight that at night allows light to shoot up the '30s facade from below.

Inside, the basic layout of the public rooms has been preserved, and the rediscovered *Nausicaa* relief has been replaced in its original position, now with the reception desk in front. Hill's glass screen between entrance hall and dining room has gone, as have fixed partitions between the string of rooms to the south of the entrance; these are now intended for functions which, from its opening, provided the hotel with a vital source of income. Upstairs, all partitions were swept away and a new layout installed, allowing every room to be double and have an en-suite bathroom, created as a wooden island within each space. Each guest room has different furniture designed this century and chosen by Urban Splash.

Resident staff are no longer required, so the space taken up by their old quarters has been given over to guest rooms which, with the new ones on the roof, are hoped to provide enough revenue to make the hotel viable.¹⁰ Urban Splash will be the first to discover if they do not, for the developer has set up a separate company to own and run the Midland and its other hotels. Materials and workmanship have been carefully chosen to respect Hill. In the public rooms, the principles of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings have largely been obeyed: new work is seen to be new and old fabric (even if battered) is often left – occasionally disturbingly, for instance the sandy terrazzo floor of the rotunda bears the stigmata of decades of misuse, and can simply look dirty. Yet generally, when you go to the hotel, you cheer up and 'insensibly relax and feel peaceful'¹¹ as *Country Life's* readers were expected to do in 1933. All members of Urban Splash's team have clearly approached the rebirth of the Midland with passion. Will their energy be enough to ignite the renaissance of Morecambe itself? The hotel did so once. PETER DAVEY



1. Letter in RIBA Manuscripts Collection, quoted in *Conservation Analysis: Proposed Scope of Works Appraisal*, Avanti Architects, November 2003, p71. This report was the foundation for most of the work on the building by the architects for the works, Union North. Avanti already had experience of reclaiming Oliver Hill's work in a house in Hampstead.
2. Advertising poster shown in Guise, Barry and Pam Brook, *The Midland Hotel: Morecambe's White Hope*, Palatine Books, 2008, p95.
3. Avanti report, *op cit*, p22.
4. Clonmore, The Lord, London, Morecambe & elSewhere, AR, vol LXXIV, September 1933, pp 93-99.
5. The LMS as Mæcenas, *Country Life*, vol LXXIV, 18 November 1933, pp539-544.
6. Guise and Brook, *op cit*, p101.
7. Details of the sad story are given in Guise and Brook, *ibid*, pp 151-178.
8. *Ibid*, p179.
9. It was removed by the RAF to allow stretchers to be taken in.
10. Further space was realised by relocating many services accommodated on the east side of Hill's ground floor plan to the basement. This level had been ill-considered by Hill, and was found to be half full of fetid sea-water. It had to be drained and thoroughly water-proofed.
11. *Country Life*, *op cit*.



theory

In a remarkable sequence of events, three of Wells Coates' major buildings have been restored in the past few years. Under new owners Lawn Road Flats (1934) and Embassy Court, Brighton (1935) have been rescued from decades of neglect, and his Palace Gate flats (1939) have also been restored. The three buildings are now landmarks of the Modern Movement in Britain.

In 1946, however, the mood was different. Lawn Road was awarded second prize in an 'Ugliest Building' competition.

Perhaps the first indication of a changing aesthetic climate was Sherban Cantacuzino's lecture at the RIBA (1975). Old friends and colleagues were there – Monica Pidgeon, Jim Cadbury-Brown, Max Fry and Jane Drew, Jim Richards – bringing memories of sun-filled meetings at CIAM conferences in which Wells loved to take part.

Cantacuzino's brilliant Monograph was published by Gordon Fraser in 1978. It combined a detailed, wide-ranging analysis with a human understanding of Wells' virtues, disappointments, and shortcomings. The Door to a Secret Room: A Portrait of Wells Coates (1999), my own book, tried to provide insight into my father's life and character by drawing on personal documents and previously unknown material. His life was short, but crammed with passionate invention, now recalled 50 years after his death. LAURA COHN

The motivation for restoring and re-launching early Modernist buildings, such as Oliver Hill's Midland Hotel (p80), suggests that even 70 years on such projects hold lessons for the modes and mores of twenty-first-century life. The ideas of its authors prevail, and as such, in recognition of the 50th anniversary of Wells Coates' death, it is timely to evaluate the importance of his body of work, which J. M. Richards reminded readers 'Modern architecture owed more to [...] than it was customary to acknowledge'.¹

Coates was an important figure in British Modernism, as instigator and organiser of the process of modernising architectural culture in Britain. In pursuit of new modes of spatial planning, he worked constantly to bring together like-minded designers and sympathisers to campaign more widely for the cause of a new architecture and its adoption on a larger scale. From the earliest moments of a group cause in Britain, Coates may be found arguing for plans of action and for definitions of what a Modern architecture should be. As a member of the Twentieth-Century Group in 1930, of Unit One, and as a

Modernist infiltrator of the Design and Industries Association, Coates' organisational peak came in February 1933 when he founded the MARS (Modern Architectural Research) Group as the British chapter of CIAM. Without Coates' direction, it is arguable that British Moderns would have institutionalised themselves as early as 1933.

Campaigning, experimentation and invention

As significant as his energy as organiser and instigator was Coates' ability to experiment and invent. For him, design was a process of problem solving, as he wrote in 1930 how he had worked for years '[to] build up the technique and the knowledge and the experience to cope with this great problem which I believe to be at the root of all social disorder and distress; this problem of the kind of place a man and a woman and a family should live in, this problem of the theatre of ordinary daily life, the theatre of modern living'.²

Coates' concern was always to work out precisely how best space might be used to allow this theatre to be conducted; to fashion the equipment of modern life from door handle to dwelling. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he articulated his preoccupation in writing and thereby disseminated the cause further, helping to establish the British Modern Movement not as a stylistic phenomenon but as a living and developing system of architecture.

The intermingling of the roles of campaigner and experimenter in Coates' career may be attributed to his lack of formal training as an architect. Born in 1895, it was only in 1927 that he turned his hand to design, creating a marital home from two rented rooms in Bloomsbury. In so doing, Coates found his vocation and, through a mixture of friends' recommendations and chance encounters, embarked on what would be a 30-year long career. Prior to this, Coates had been working as a secretary and journalist, which meant he had little to unlearn, unlike many of his contemporaries who had to determinedly rid themselves of their Beaux-Arts training in order to think afresh about what architecture could be. There was also the influence of Japan, where he was born and grew up, constantly encouraged by his parents to observe and to document what he saw.

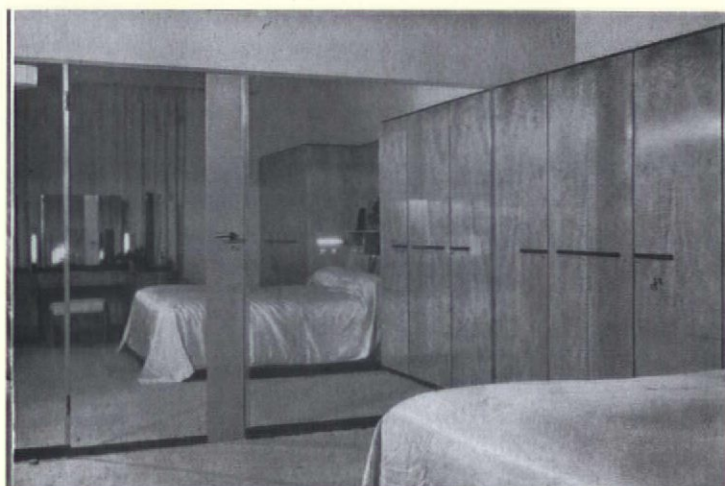
While there is an air of Romanticism to Coates' pronouncements on the influence of Japan on his life – a favoured aphorism was 'the

WELLS COATES: MAKER OF A MODERN BRITISH ARCHITECTURE

Fifty years after his death, Elizabeth Darling considers the contribution of Wells Coates, and argues that his attitude towards the optimisation of space remains relevant to the design of interiors today.



Left: 34 Gordon Square (since destroyed), designed by Wells Coates for Elsa Lanchester and Charles Laughton, 1933-34. Above and below: before and after views of dining room at No 1 Kensington Palace Gardens designed for George and Patricia Russell Strauss. Below left and centre: Mrs Strauss's bedroom and dressing table.



man whose eyes have been trained in the East will only rarely want to open them in the West' – there can be little doubt of its importance to his later practice.³ In Japanese architecture he saw 'an inspiration, not a precedent' through its emphasis on structure. Describing a typical Japanese dwelling, he noted: 'All the wood members, posts, lintels, ceiling members, etc., are actual structure [...] Nothing is "planted on"; everything does a structural job'.⁴ This lack of concern for extraneous detail, the idea that space should be left to speak for itself, that the architecture itself should not be decorative but the setting for life, were other key principles that Coates absorbed from Japan. They correlated well with his mechanical inclinations and would, of course, be reinforced in the writings of Le Corbusier, who later became a significant influence on Coates.

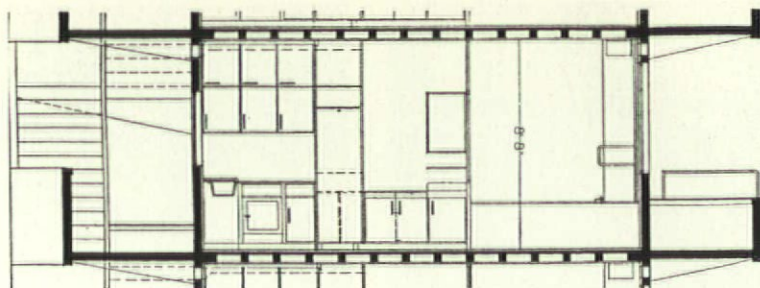
A further influence from his Japanese childhood was the sight of what have been described as 'the bizarre but efficient rigs of the China Sea trading junks'.⁵ Like the Japanese dwellings in which nothing was 'planted on', use and the maximum efficiency of space were priorities. Coates would remain fascinated by the sea and sailing, later patenting several yacht designs, and as Philip Gumuchdjian observes, the yacht was for Coates what the liner was for Corbusier.⁶

Finally, the nature of Coates' earliest commissions also shaped him as a designer. All of these were for interiors and this might have inculcated a sensitivity to space as a material to be moulded and manipulated. Alongside this, is the fact that most of Coates' clients were demanding completely new things, ranging from new forms of

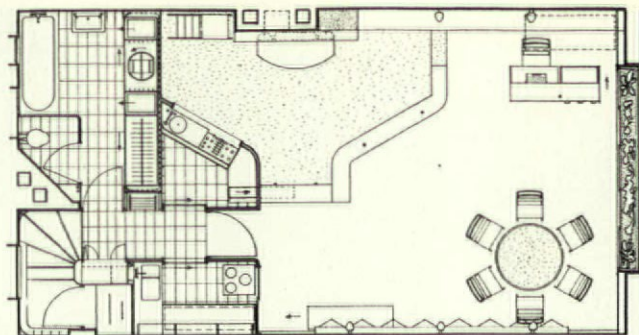
retail space, settings for new forms of lifestyle or, in the case of the BBC, studio interiors in which everything was custom-made because no one had worked out, until then, how best to design a microphone for a sound effects studio or the best form of chair to facilitate this extraordinary new medium of broadcasting.

The design of Modern interiors

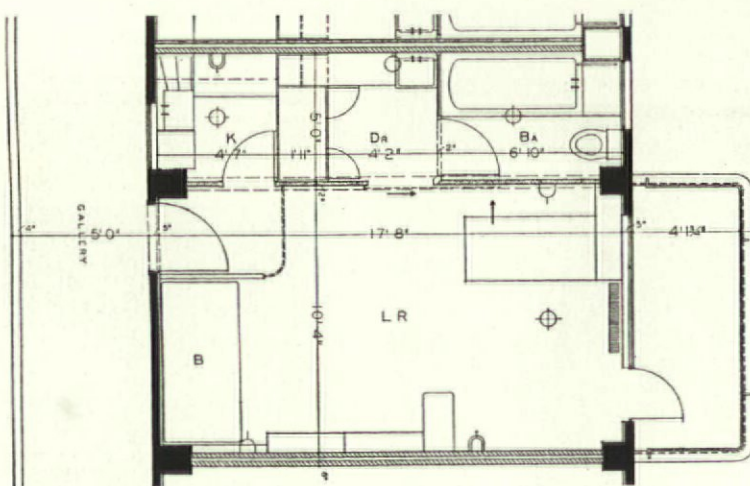
Such influences were worked, in the first instance, into a distinctive vocabulary for the design of Modern interiors, such as those for George and Patricia Russell Strauss (1932-33) and Elsa Lanchester and Charles Laughton (1933-34). In both cases, Coates was confronted with full-blown late Victorian interiors, which he proceeded to have dismantled in order to create what Lanchester described as 'open, liveable space'.⁷ In both inspiration from Japan is clear: screen doors, a limited palette of colours and built-in furniture: acting as a stage for the interior's true 'furniture' – the vase of flowers or the painting that provided what Coates called 'the select value of a personal environment'.⁸ In a theme he would repeat, much of the furniture, especially for the Strausses, was designed to fold away or to be multi-purpose, here the influence of the yacht being most evident. Mrs Strauss's dressing table had double-backed mirrors of different tints, which rotated so that she could see herself in varying lights, while the fitted wardrobes (again, a new device) either side of the bed featured a spring door, operated from the bed, from which a tray slid out to form a breakfast table.⁹



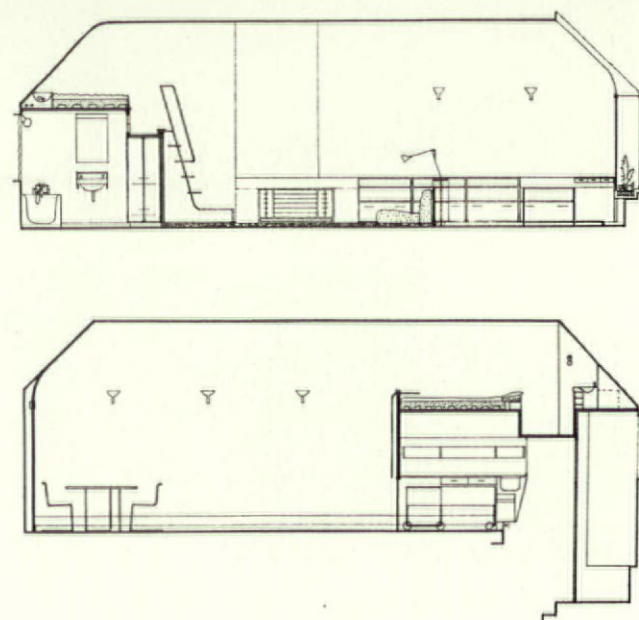
cross section through flat at Lawn Road Gardens, 1934



plan of 18 Yeoman's Row



plan of typical Minimum Flat at Lawn Road Gardens, 1934



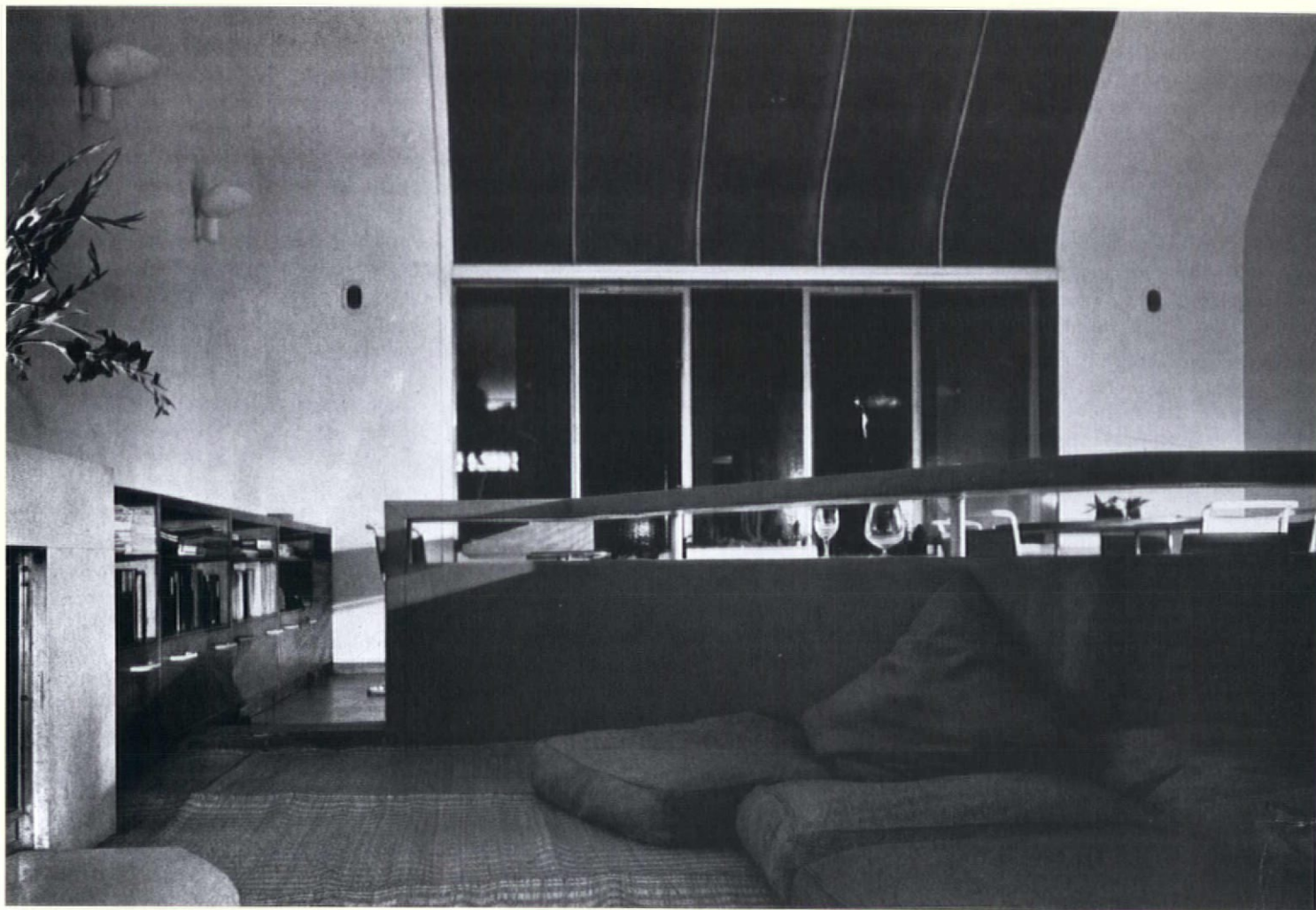
The assimilation of these techniques with the structural challenge of designing a building was realised in the series of blocks of flats that Coates designed between 1932 and 1938. In these we can see how his desire, as John Allan of Avanti Architects puts it, 'to maximise the utility and value of space', evolved.¹⁰ Lawn Road is an exercise in meticulous planning, which was extrapolated in scale and in type at Embassy Court. Coates then moved towards more complicated and poetic uses of space, as he developed his system of planning in section, first at his own home in Yeoman's Row, Knightsbridge, and then in the block at Kensington.

The Lawn Road Flats were commissioned by Jack and Molly Pritchard to provide homes for a figure overlooked in the contemporary housing market: the single professional man or woman or the professional couple who needed to be close to their jobs but who might be expected to socialise and dine outside the home.¹¹ The brief was for a block comprised of a series of one-roomed service flats (and a smaller number of studio and double flats). Coates solved brilliantly the problem of how to design a small space in which to live well (the main living area is 17'8" by 10'4"). As Allan observes, his design begins with the fact that the floor-to-ceiling heights were larger than usual for the period. This allowed a greater throw to the window in an interior which was single-aspect, as well as enhanced headroom. Within that shell every square inch of space was accounted for and put to use. Built-in furniture demarcated the living and sleeping areas of the living room, sliding doors separated the 'service' strip of rooms in the flat, and the tiny kitchen was planned around the arm-reach of its user.

Planning in section

In the August 1937 *Architectural Review*, Coates wrote a criticism of the formulaic programmes of commercial developers. He argued that while they might succeed in pulling in a 10 per cent return on their investment through their emphasis on the maximum coverage of site, number of floors and flats, minimum floor heights and disregard for orientation to the sun, they did not succeed in producing either homes or architecture.¹² What, he asked, could architects do until 'the arithmetic changes'? Coates, at once campaigner and innovator, declared: 'There is only one answer: invent new forms for homes and get them built (even to postage stamp size) and cause drawings to be made and exhibited to show what the complete gallery would look like'.

Coates' article continued with his first ideas on what he called 'planning in section'. Instead of the standard programme of apartments all on one floor, he proposed a basic system of a three-two unit in which three floors on one side of a flat were equal to two floors on the other, so that two flats interlock in the height of three floors. At the middle level would be placed one or two 'corridors': an open gallery for service and access to the escape stairs and an internal corridor. From this one would either go up half a storey to the flat at the upper level, or down a full storey to that at the lower. This arrangement allowed a reduction in access space (with lifts stopping at alternate floors only) while creating what he called 'the "scale" to the group of rooms which is to be someone's home'. He continued, 'you should contrive to have a higher ceiling than in other rooms, without wasting "cube"'.



The hearth scene of 18 Yeoman's Row (since destroyed), showing enclosed fireside snug and large mansard window wall.

Coates's concern to provide more generous space and to acknowledge the hierarchy of function within the theatre of modern living, while also taking advantage of the planning possibilities of increased ceiling height, signal his evolution as a designer. At Lawn Road he was aware that even apparently small increases to ceiling height could create a greater sense of space. We might, however, attribute this more directly to the need to mitigate any sense of claustrophobia in what was an extremely compact interior rather than to a desire for a formal gesture. It is also unclear whether at that date Coates was using, as part of his creative process, the sectional drawing (and, indeed, the model); techniques which would have enabled him to move from thinking purely at the level of the plan to a three-dimensional consideration of space as something to be moved through and experienced.

The fact that such techniques are not mentioned in any articles on or by him until 1937 suggests that planning and thinking in section were tools he acquired, or worked out, in order to solve a particular problem; certainly this is how Coates explains the method in the Review. It allowed him to provide developers with the alternative arithmetic that supplied more space for their money but, perhaps more importantly, also gave him the chance to address the problem of what John Allan calls a more 'rhetorical' use of space. So, while Coates had always been aware that the architect's job was 'to give to the whole a formal aspect of significance',¹³ this was a precept he had tended to apply only to the exteriors of his schemes. In a talk on interior design in 1939, we revealed that this understanding had migrated inside: 'You must remember that as interior designers you

have to plan for use, first, but you also plan for delight. Dimensions here are perhaps fourth dimensions, at any rate the problem is not merely three-dimensional. And you will find what colour, texture, the type of lighting, whether artificial or natural; the selection of your materials and the way you organise them, you will find what all these will do to *dimensions*'.¹⁴

Coates' first essay in planning in section, and for delight, was unveiled in the 1937 article. It illustrated his conversion of a London pied à terre at 18 Yeoman's Row, Knightsbridge (since destroyed) into his studio-home. Here, his highly personal programme of the largest possible living (and designing) space, no separate bedroom, plus kitchen and bathroom, was accommodated by enclosing, as he wrote, 'every cubic inch of space' of an interior with a floor-to-ceiling height of 12 feet.¹⁵ This, he acknowledged, did not allow two floor levels; instead the two bed cabins, either side of the entrance area, occupied about a third of the overall space, and beneath them were slotted the bathroom on one side, the kitchen on the other. This allowed the creation of one main living area whose height extended the full 12 feet, in keeping with Coates' insistence on appropriateness of scale in the modern interior. Like Lawn Road, this was zoned by the use of built-in furniture, the main feature being a 'hearth-scene à la japonais', which Coates described as 'penned off' by a shaped fitting which is a bookcase on one side and a back-rest for cushions on the other. Your book, your glass, your cigarette are at hand at the proper level and cannot be carelessly knocked over'. This Coatesian conceit was echoed in others: a typing desk which could be pushed into the wall bookcase,

its top thus forming a continuous buffet tabletop for parties. There was also a large radio clad in Perspex so its inner workings could be seen: 'I have enclosed too many beautiful radios with wood or bakelite,' rationalised Coates.

Coates was able to put his three-two system into practice on a grander scale thanks to a chance encounter with the property developer Randal Bell.¹⁶ This became the scheme at 10 Palace Gate, Kensington, which was completed in early 1939. It comprises two blocks. The western entrance block is planned conventionally, with single-level flats on each floor. It interconnects via the stair/lift tower to the rear block, which has three sets of three-two units topped by a penthouse and extensive roof terrace. As these photomontages show, Coates' technique restored the ceremonial aspect to the modern interior, the generously dimensioned double-height living areas akin, as Coates wrote, to the Great Halls of the pre-Renaissance house, with all their connotations of communal gathering and entertainment.¹⁷ On a more subliminal level, the three-two proportions were so much more satisfying to the senses than the two-one section used by Coates' contemporaries, such as Tecton at Highpoint II.

The three-two arrangements also created exteriors of great formal significance. The interplay of the void of the service galleries against the three-section screen walls on the front elevation, and the tapering of the columns towards the top of the block, signal the building's structure, as Philip Gumuchdjian notes. He adds that the extension of the roofline of the penthouse to form the roof pergola achieves a satisfying junction as the building meets the sky. The rear elevation, with the windows of the living spaces fully articulated, again offers a clear statement of the interior organisation. It is no wonder that a critic noted, 'Palace Gate now shelters an architectural work of contemporary significance'.¹⁸

Sustaining lessons for today's developers

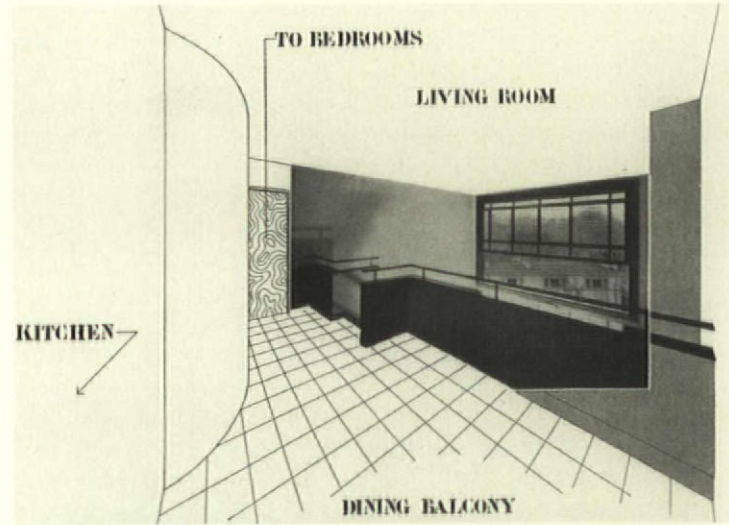
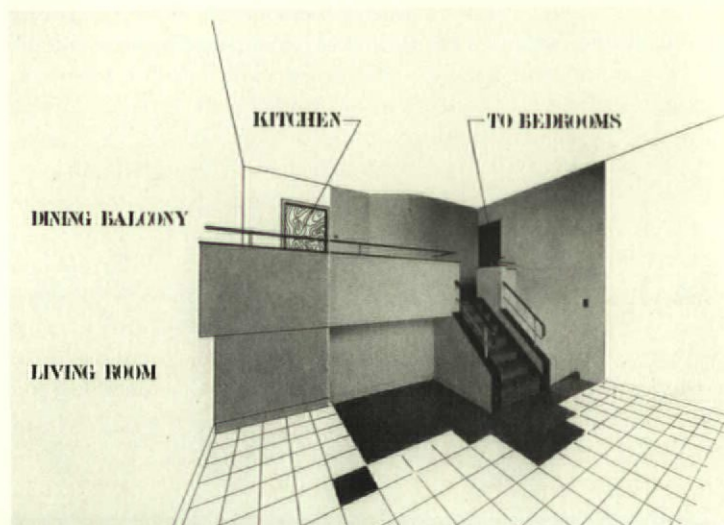
This article began with some observations about the way in which landmark buildings of Britain's early Modern Movement were being brought into the present through schemes of conservation and renovation. The suggestion was that at the same time as such activity commemorated the architectural significance of these buildings, it also showed that, despite their age, they still had a continued relevance for today. In conclusion, it is worth reiterating the qualities that have made Coates' work so appropriate for rehabilitation into the present.

Perhaps the most obvious relevance, and a sign of Coates' and his clients' farsightedness, was that he was designing for a particular type of inhabitant and environment. The single professional and the working couple, based in urban areas, are now a dominant demographic and you might well imagine that if Coates were alive today he would be working with cutting-edge developers like Urban Splash to design homes for them. His legacy has, instead, left us with prototypes of flexible dwellings in which people could live in maximum comfort and with maximum efficiency; planning in section – and the embryonic loft space which was Yeoman's Row – are ripe for further development.

Coates' ability to maximise the utility and value of space, creating liveable dwellings on high-density sites, has obvious resonance in a period during which demand for affordable dwellings is at a height. Moreover, as Paul Zara points out, the fact that he was able to incorporate a high level of servicing, and communal areas, into his schemes recognised the importance of such features to the safe and pleasant day-to-day experience of flat living. Above all, and Zara puts it well, Coates' work was important, radical and stands the test of time. It's just a pity there wasn't more of it. ELIZABETH DARLING

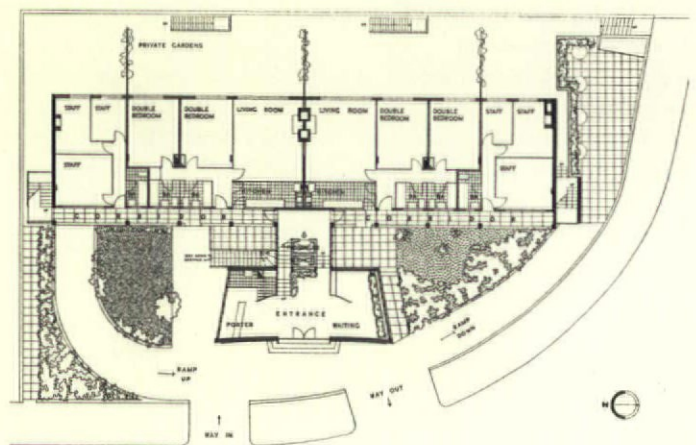
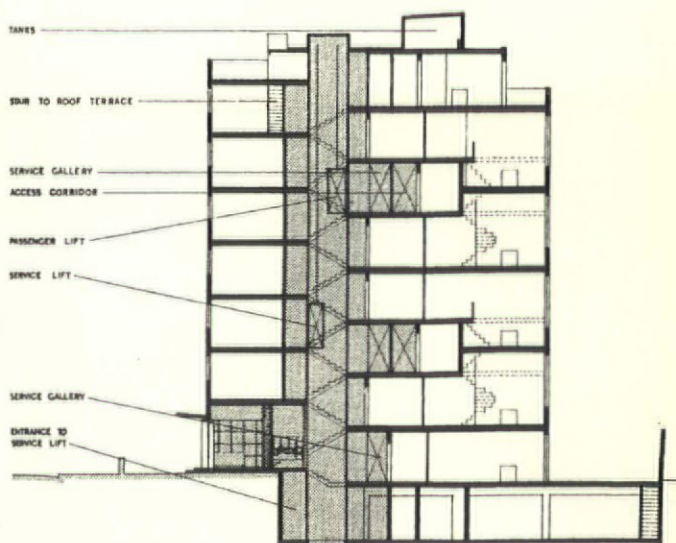
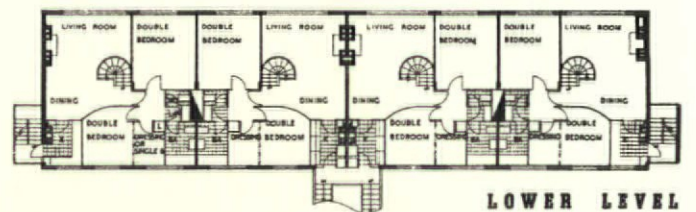
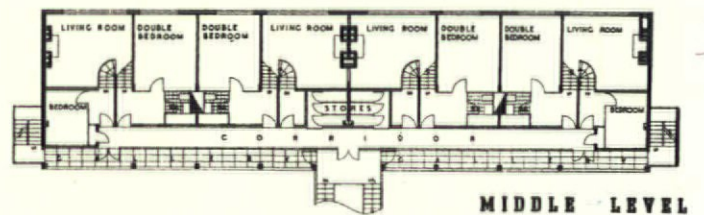
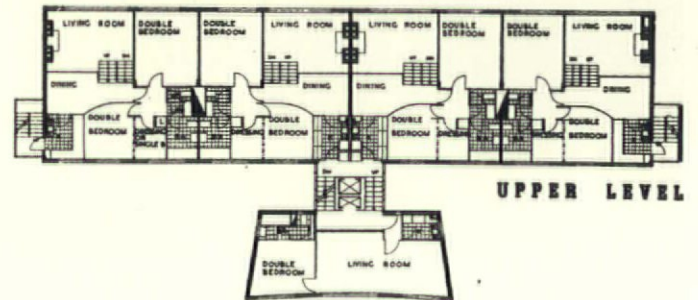
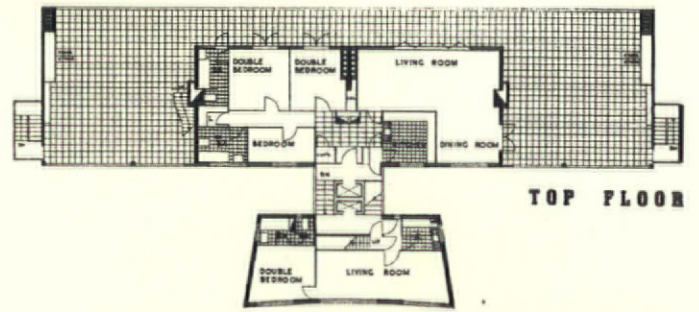
1. J. M. Richards, 'Wells Coates, 1895-1958', *Architectural Review*, November 1958, 357-60.
2. Coates to Jack Pritchard, 13 July 1930, Jack Pritchard Archive, University of East Anglia, PP/23/1/26. He is referring to a commission for a house for the Pritchard family.
3. Coates used this phrase in much of his writing, my source here is a relatively early use, taken from *ibid.*
4. Wells Coates, 'Inspiration from Japan', *Architects' Journal*, 74 (1931), 586.
5. David Owen, 'The Design of Boats' in *Cantacuzino*, Wells Coates, 103-109.
6. Interview with Philip Gumuchdjian, London, 3 July 2008.
7. Elsa Lanchester, Charles Laughton and I, London: Faber & Faber, 1938, 191.
8. Wells Coates, 'Furniture today – Furniture Tomorrow – Leaves from a Meta-Technical Notebook', *Architectural Review*, July 1932, 34.
9. The full glory of the interiors of the Strausses' house at 1 Kensington Palace Gardens, London, are featured in *ibid.*
10. Phone interview with John Allan, 8 July 2008.
11. The flats were originally commissioned as a house in 1930, but by 1932, on grounds of social responsibility, this had become a block of flats with a penthouse for the Pritchards and their two sons. See Jack Pritchard, View from a Long Chair, the Memoirs of Jack Pritchard, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984 for an insider's account of this process.
12. Wells Coates, 'Planning in Section', *Architectural Review*, August 1937, 51-58. Subsequent quotations are from this text until signalled otherwise.
13. Coates, 'Furniture Today', 34.
14. Wells Coates, Notes for a lecture to the Reimann School, 14 June 1939, WCA, Box 6. The Reimann School was a well-known private design school, the talk was to students attached to Duncan Miller's Department of Interior Design.
15. Coates, 'Planning in Section', 55.
16. Randal Bell describes this encounter and their subsequent collaboration in 'Wells Coates' in Laura Cohn (ed), Wells Coates, Architect and Designer 1895-1958, Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic Press, 1979, 63-68.
17. 'The "Three-two" Planning System', *Architectural Review*, April 1939, 178.
18. Nicholas Stephen, 'Palace Gate Flats, London', *Building*, July 1939, 282.

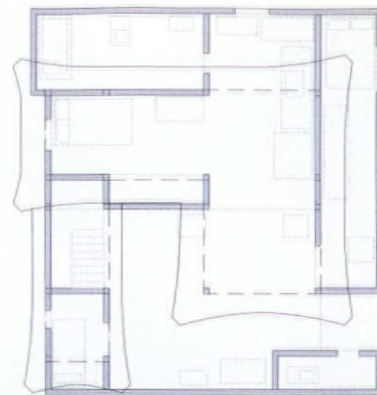
Elizabeth Darling would like to thank John Allan, Philip Gumuchdjian and Paul Zara for sharing their thoughts on Coates, David Lawrence for discussions of planning in section, and Laura Cohn, Coates' daughter, for instigating this commemoration of her father's life.



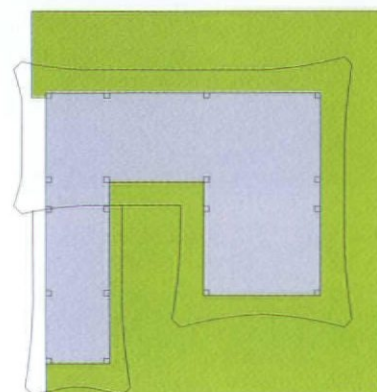


Top: 10 Palace Gate, Kensington, 1939, showing articulation of entrance and rear blocks, extension of penthouse roof to form pergola, and expression of three-two configuration. Above: 10 Palace Gate rear elevation, with living spaces fully expressed.





OLD HANOK



Original House
Added Construction



NEW HANOK

Inner Seoul

A traditional Korean family house has been skilfully transformed.

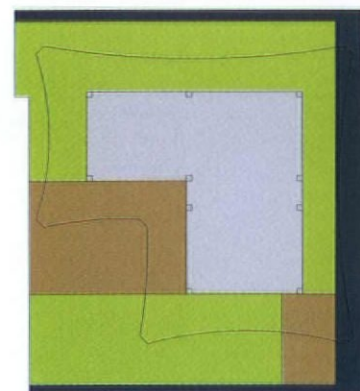
Schiller's comparison of architecture to frozen music springs to mind in the context of an ingenious adaptation of a traditional Korean *hanok* (family house) in the middle of Seoul.

Wittily referred to as the 'Dub acid remix', the project uses the conventions of recent Jamaican music culture, taking the bass and drum elements of a song/instrumental, enhancing them then adding a new mix of sounds and melodies. Italian architect Simone Carena studied

at Kingston University in Jamaica; he now works in Seoul as professor of digital media at Hongik University, while practising via MOTOElastico, formed with fellow-Italian Marco Bruno, who is professor of interior architecture, also at Hongik.

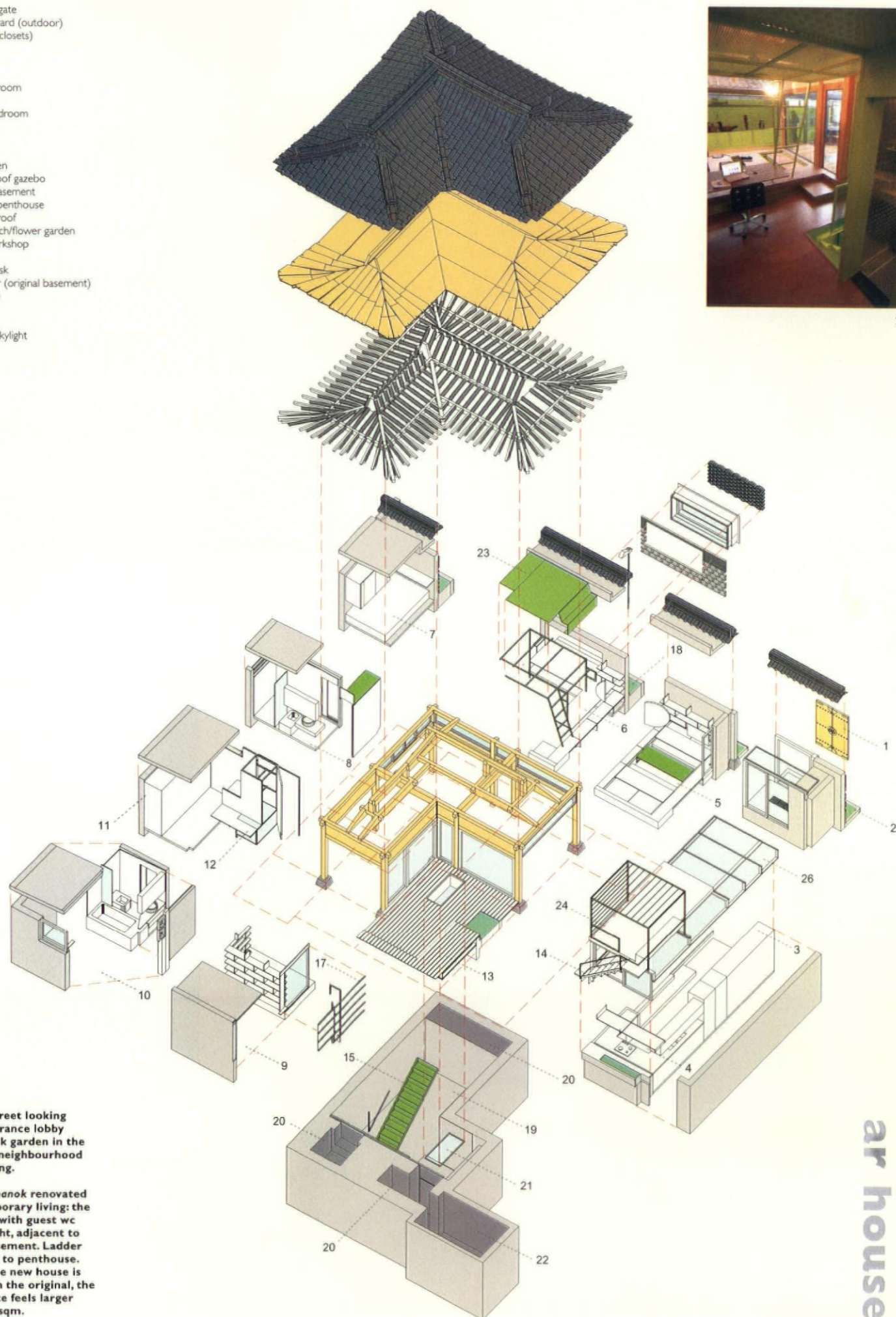
The programme for the house was to increase area, supply more storage, create some outside space and so on; the location and planning context, however, are highly unusual. The *hanok* district of Samcheong lies between the

**HOUSE RENOVATION, SEOUL,
SOUTH KOREA**
ARCHITECT
MOTOELASTICO



New House
Modern Prosthesis
Out door space
Lost Surface

- 1 Dae Mun gate
- 2 entrance yard (outdoor)
- 3 entrance (closets)
- 4 kitchen
- 5 living
- 6 studio
- 7 guest bedroom
- 8 guest wc
- 9 master bedroom
- 10 master wc
- 11 closets
- 12 laundry
- 13 deck garden
- 14 stairs to roof gazebo
- 15 stairs to basement
- 16 ladder to penthouse
- 17 ladder to roof
- 18 street bench/flower garden
- 19 design workshop
- 20 storage
- 21 skylight desk
- 22 wine cellar (original basement)
- 23 penthouse
- 24 gazebo
- 25 bench
- 26 entrance skylight
- 27 bamboo



1 From the street looking through entrance lobby towards deck garden in the tightly knit neighbourhood of Samcheong.

2 Interior of hanok renovated for contemporary living: the studio area with guest wc extreme right, adjacent to stairs to basement. Ladder gives access to penthouse. Although the new house is smaller than the original, the flexible space feels larger than its 110sqm.

ar house

two main royal palaces in Seoul; homes, built for dignitaries, gradually became more fragmented but until 10 years ago were still largely residential.

As elsewhere, the comforts of apartment blocks began to attract people, particularly the young, away from cramped, humid and/or cold, and sometimes less than sanitary closely-packed environments. The traditional homes themselves began the slow march towards museum-land.

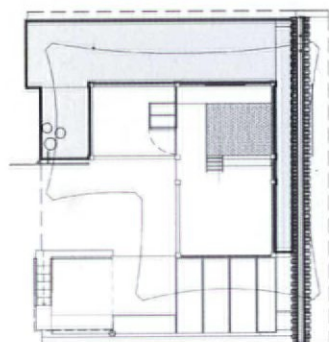
Carena and Bruno have therefore undertaken something both radical architecturally and provocative socially: challenging the idea that these traditional buildings are inappropriate for

contemporary living. Building inspectors and other officials don't know whether to make a fuss about the alteration of the traditional (which in fact occupies less space but feels larger), or to hand out medals for extending tradition in a contemporary way.

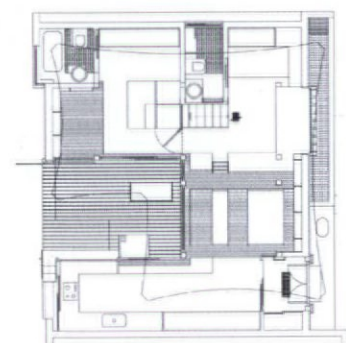
As the drawings here illustrate, MOTOElastico has cleverly combined Korean tradition with an Italian sensibility to design and space. The programme has been achieved; the old dubbed and the new added; the *hanok* remixed. PAUL FINCH

Architect

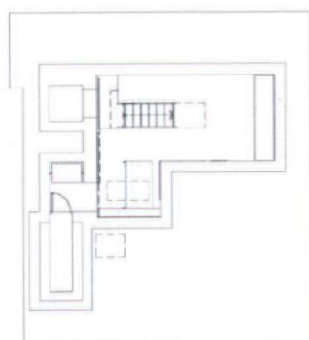
MOTOElastico: Simone Carena, Marco Bruno
+ Cesario Carena, Seoul



penthouse



first floor



basement

HOUSE RENOVATION, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

ARCHITECT

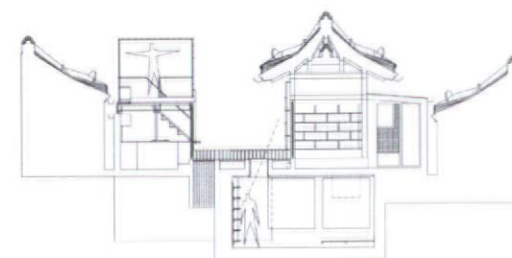
MOTOELASTICO



cross section



cross section



long section



3

3 Basement design studio with skylight above the desk.

4 The deck garden with steps to rooftop gazebo above the kitchen. There are views across the President's Blue House to mountains beyond.





501
W cantilevered chair constructed from a single sheet of aluminium or laminated wood by Sebastian Gronemeyer for Silence and Grace.



502 ♀
Norwegian Forest pendant light in laser cut birch veneer by Cathrine Kullberg.

100% Design

This year's 100% Design is an expanded and lively celebration of design innovation that cuts across geography and generations. Tantalising side dishes include 100% Detail, 100% Futures, focusing on upcoming talent, 100% Sustainable, which addresses issues of environmental responsiveness and special sections on Norwegian, Korean, German and Danish design. Here we give a flavour of coming attractions.

For more information go to www.arplus.com/enq.html

503 ♀
Clothes tree in solid ash by Danish designer Cecilie Manz for PP Mobler.


505 ♀
Stackable Slab chair and table in oak by Tom Dixon.

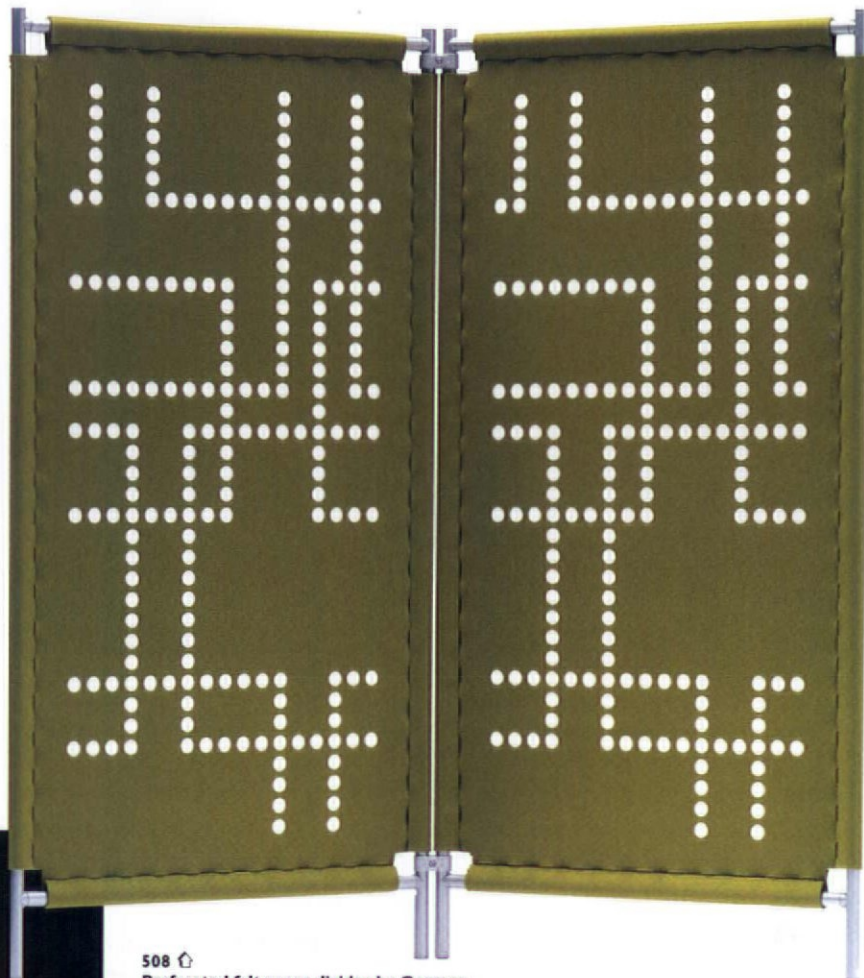



504 ♀
Sensuously contoured Manta chair by Matthew Hilton.

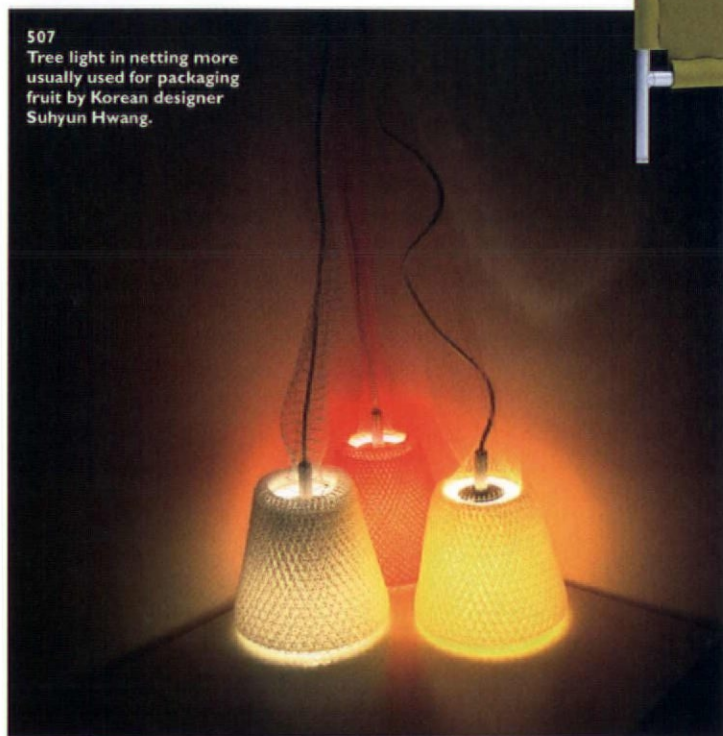




506  Heavy lights in cast concrete (yes really) by young British designer Benjamin Hubert.




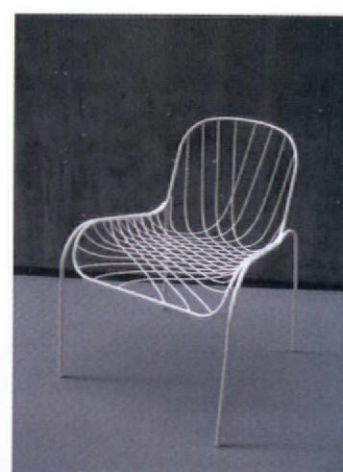
508  Perforated felt room divider by German designers Bernadette Ehmanns and Wiebke Hoffmann for HEY-SIGN.




507 Tree light in netting more usually used for packaging fruit by Korean designer Suhyun Hwang.




509  Crisply faceted Origami chair in coated steel sheet by Norway-based Japanese designer So Takahashi.



511  Net stacking chair in powder-coated metal by Sam Johnson, for Mark, a new furniture company based in Cornwall.

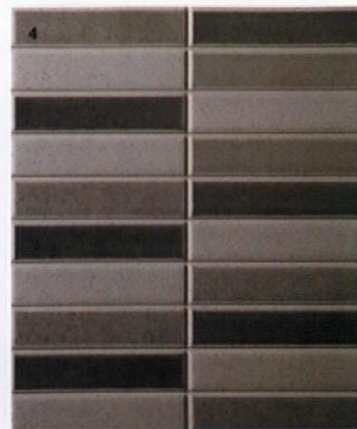
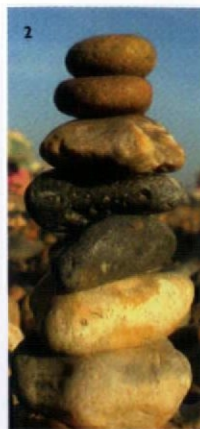
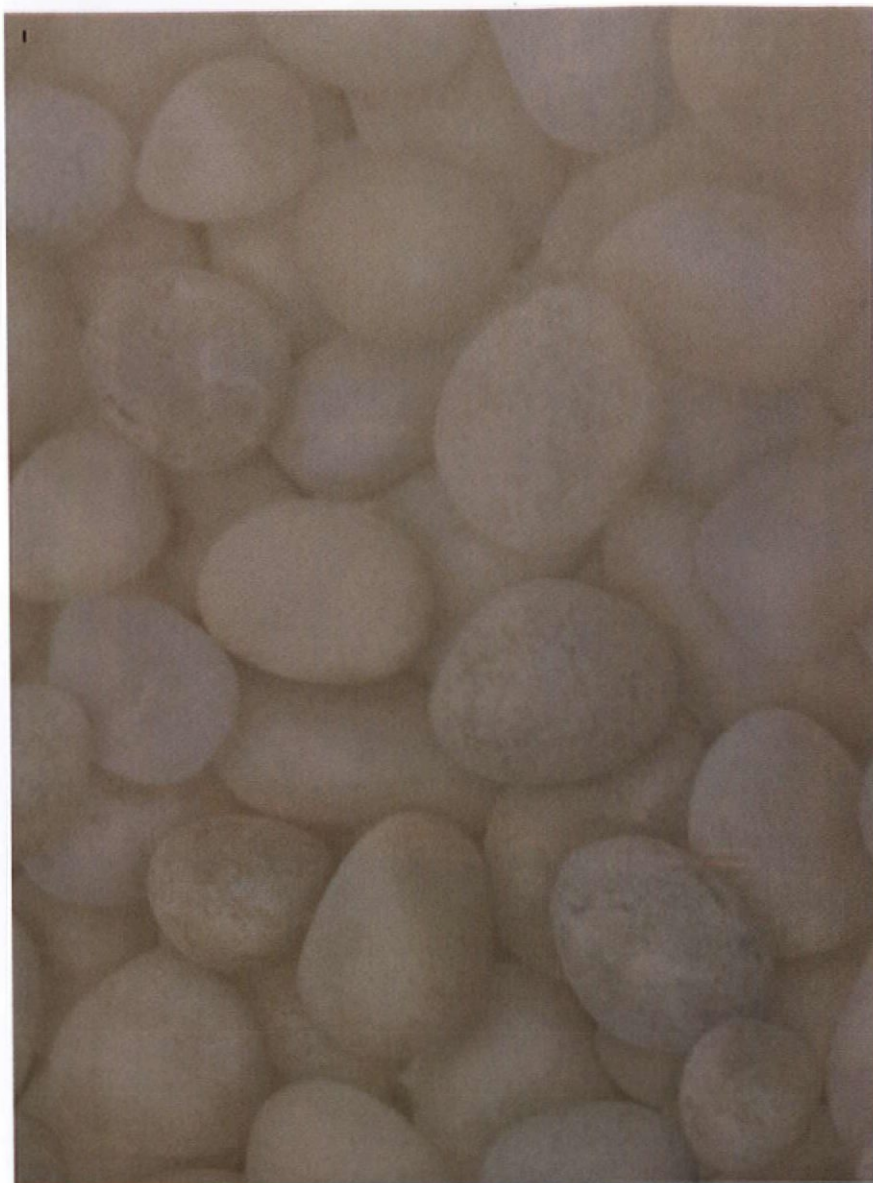


510  Prototype for Ribbon pendant light in strips of oak by Tom Raffield for Mark.



510  Spir, vitrified chinaware by Norwegian designer Johan Verde for Figgjo.

100% Design runs from 18 to 21 September at the Earls Court Exhibition Centre in London.
www.100percentdesign.co.uk



1
Pebble, from the Chesil Beach range.
2
Seaside walks and beach landscapes
provide inspiration.
3
Chesil Beach imparts a coastal spirit.
4
Mixed Grey from the Starcross range,
abstracts the natural patina of stone.

Tactile collaboration

Designer Sebastian Conran has joined forces with leading manufacturer British Ceramic Tile to create a new range of floor and wall tiles inspired by sources as disparate as geology, water and industrial archaeology.

'Fashion isn't more important than merit', Sebastian Conran assures me, quoting the late Josiah Wedgwood. He's introducing *Tactile*, the floor and wall tile collection of six ranges launched by his design company, the recently rebranded Studio Conran, for British Ceramic Tile earlier this summer. 'We want to be original, yet need to be commercially on trend', says Conran of a collection that balances distinctive aesthetics with mainstream appeal.

British Ceramic Tile has worked with high-profile

designers before but its previous catalogue has mostly been aimed at the consumer, tile retailer and house-build markets. Now, as it extends its production facilities with a large addition to its Devon factory, British Ceramic Tile is widening this appeal to include an architectural and design audience. It's not only aiming for domestic applications but for commercial environments such as hotels, restaurants and reception areas.

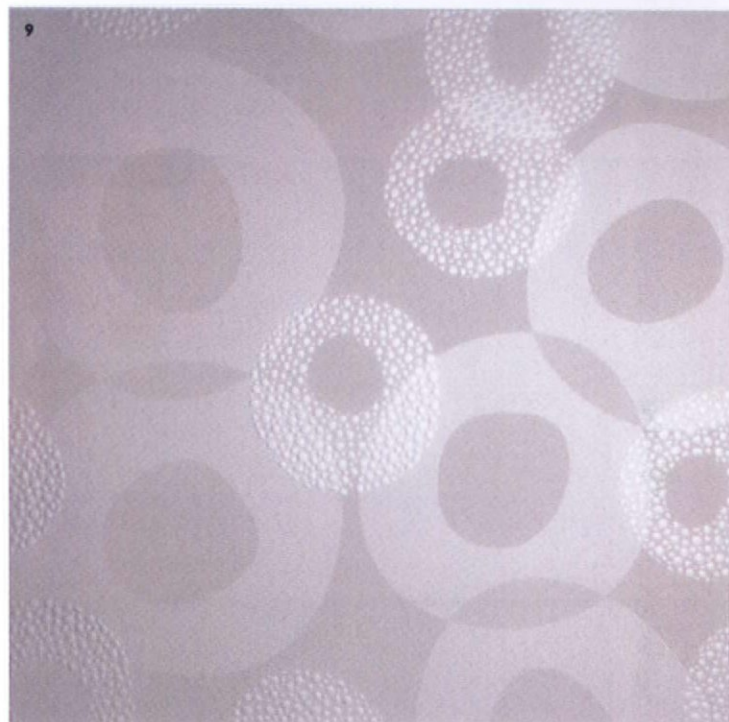
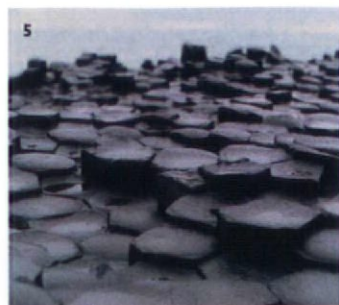
And British Ceramic Tile could hardly have picked a more recognisable name.

Terence Conran, Sebastian's father, nurtured Habitat from its 1964 London origins into a national brand renowned for its unpretentious, well-made modern furniture and, in more recent years, dozens of Conran restaurants have flourished in the capital, conceptually merging design and cuisine. It is these Conran associations, the easily-evoked images of good living, that British Ceramic Tile hope will have a halo effect.

'Like much of our work, *Tactile* has been strongly influenced by the natural world around us but

there are no fake stone finishes or anything like that', Sebastian explains. 'The problem with many tiles, though, is that they're very flat, so we've tried to build visual depth into these designs while maintaining authenticity.' This ambition has variously played out in the six design ranges, with Chesil Beach Pebbles and Chesil Beach Deep Sea the most literal, and probably the most directed at a broader consumer audience. These rectangular repeating designs both have a photorealistic yet slightly ethereal quality. 'When you see

- 5 Complex natural rock formations inspire the Hartland range.
- 6 Hartland is complemented by two versions of a stainless-steel mosaic sheet; the circular one is shown here.
- 7 The mosaic-like surface of Hartland adds rich visual texture to rooms.
- 8 Seagrass Black from the Sharkham range in a bathroom setting.
- 9 Shale White from the Sharkham range.



a single pebble tile it looks a bit insipid,' says Conran, 'but repeated over a large area it's very effective.'

The sophisticated glazing technology and production design knowledge developed by British Ceramic Tile has allowed Conran to exploit subtle gradations of patterning. For example St Ives, which was partly inspired by the treatment of swimming pools in David Hockney's earlier work, uses two glazes to create a tile that, like water itself, is very reactive to light and movement: a sinuous pattern forms the first layer, then a uniform translucent tint, and last a finish of a similar but different pattern, like photos of a pool taken moments apart. The Sharkham range further develops this distinctive decorative language, with a

surface relief of small- and large-scale circular shapes.

Avoiding direct imitation, stone has been used as a departure point for a number of the designs; the mineral deposits found along the Devon coastline inspired the subtle patination of Starcross, while the inland rock of England's south-west strongly influenced Hartland. In this latter design the collection really starts to explore texture with circle- or brick-raised mosaic square wall panels, in a reflective stainless-steel finish which accentuates their unique topography.

The designers have also used the process of making tiles to suggest the material randomness that occurs in nature over time. Lamorran, a large format floor tile coming in coffee or charcoal, has a weathered metal look created by an innovative glazing

application that ensures each tile will be unique. Says Conran: 'This design has an industrial archaeology; it really reminds me of going to old steel works where I'd see corroded metal doors that have a really beautiful time-worn feeling'.

To arrive at the collection of six ranges, over fifty designs were produced, some of which, such as a dark earth-coloured tile with a densely scratched surface, didn't go ahead because of a perceived lack of market appeal. This, of course, is all part of the collaborative design process. The ability to suggest contemporary values without overstating them is perhaps the collection's greatest strength and both parties are hoping it will broaden exposure and attract interest in Europe and beyond.

WILL HUNTER

www.studioconran.com



10
The St Ives range recreates the calming effect of dappled water.
11
David Hockney's famous pool paintings provide inspiration.
12
Available in blue or white, St Ives imparts a sense of tranquillity.
13
The Lamorran range for floors exploits dark patinas derived from the appearance of sea-worn metal.

ABOUT BRITISH CERAMIC TILE

British Ceramic Tile is a UK manufacturing success story that is leading change in the marketplace. They are based in Heathfield, Devon, in the heart of south-west England. Tile production in Devon dates back to the 1860s, when Frank Candy founded a factory on the site which was taken over in 1998 by British Ceramic Tile. Production facilities are adjacent to the raw materials, so the company is well placed to serve the UK market, but also has wider ambitions.

British Ceramic Tile produces an extensive range of wall tile products, together with complementary floor and strip tiles. Increasing demand has given rise to a major expansion of its site and production facilities, which is currently under way. Investment worth £15m will see factory capacity double by the end of 2008. This development is the largest ceramic tile manufacturing project of its kind in Europe.

The integration of design and manufacturing facilities enables the rapid implementation of new designs, which means that British Ceramic Tile can respond to trends and spearhead innovation. This has been much in evidence over recent years and continues through collaborations with leading designers, such as Sebastian Conran and Wayne & Gerardine Hemingway. Ideas are tested and refined through its in-house design team, led by Sheila Elliot.

Though this expansion marks a major step up in manufacturing capacity, British Ceramic Tile is also keen to maintain its focus on

minimising the plant's environmental impact, with a target of 20 per cent improvement in energy efficiency. This includes ensuring that water waste, tile body process waste and heat emissions are all recycled. A new purpose-designed building will receive and store raw materials, further reducing the factory's impact on the local community. These measures will make the British Ceramic Tile plant one of the most energy efficient in the world.

Operating 24 hours per day, seven days a week, the factory currently manufactures 10 000sqm of tiles daily. The latest technology is employed to achieve high quality production through a traditional twice-fire process, and glazing lines exploit a combination of a classic waterfall glaze technique and pattern applied by Rotocolor™, which produces an attractive random effect, avoiding the repetition prevalent with screen printing. Such technical and production capabilities keep British Ceramic Tile in the forefront of design innovation.

British Ceramic Tile was awarded the Millennium Business Award for Leadership and Environment in 2000 and is the only company to have won the Tile Association's Wall Tile of the Year award for two years in succession (2005 and 2006). More recently, British Ceramic Tile has been the *Retail and Contract Floors* Reader's Choice for Ceramic Tiles in both 2006 and 2007. Building on a distinguished history, technical advances and visionary designs, the future looks bright for British Ceramic Tile.

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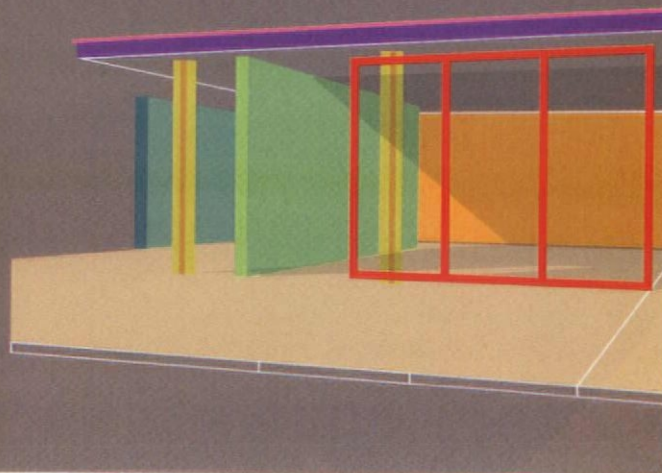
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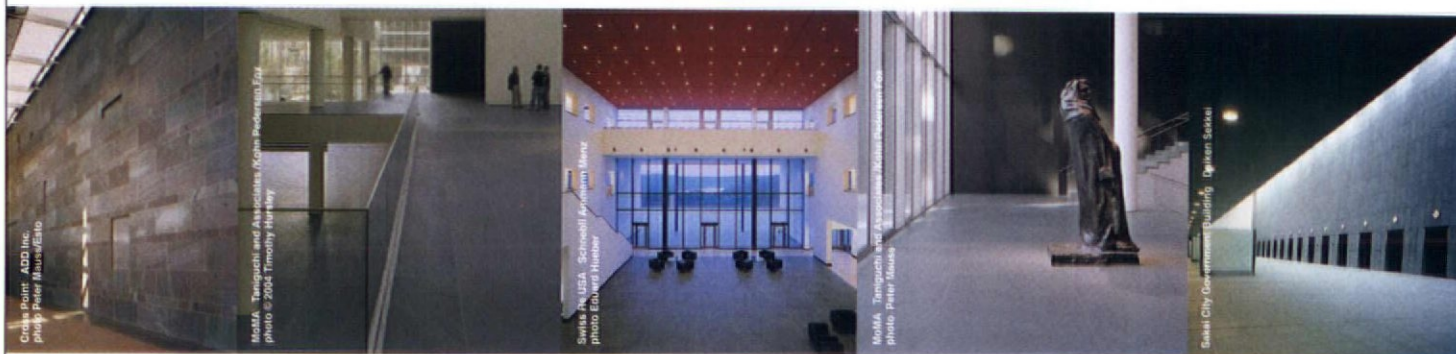
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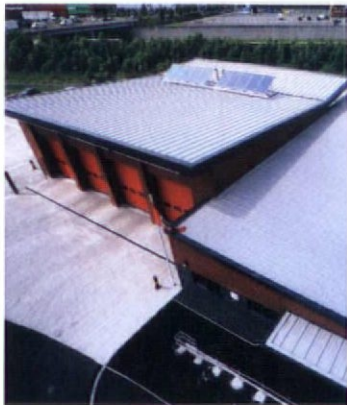
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Corus

The new fire station in Ashton-under-Lyne, Manchester has used Corus Colorcoat HPS200® in Goosewing Grey as part of a Euroclad SF500 roofing system. The Corus product has now been superseded by Colorcoat HPS200® Ultra which offers an exciting colour range and improved colour and gloss performance. Colorcoat HPS200® Ultra comes with the Confidex® Guarantee: the longest, most comprehensive guarantee for pre-finished steel products in Europe, with up to 40 years' cover. The building has achieved a 'very good' BREEAM rating.

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Tile of Spain

Tile of Spain member Apavisa Porcelanico has introduced the Beton collection, an urban-styled porcelain tile which replicates pressed concrete. With low porosity (<0.5%) and hard-wearing properties the tiles are suited to floors and walls in interior and exterior settings. Beton allows architects to use contemporary concrete finishes in areas where wet mixes are impractical and the rectified tiles allow the panels to be laid with minimal spacing for grout, ensuring a smooth finish. Multiple colours and two finishes are available.

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Sarnafil

The roof on the first Maggie's Centre in England at London's Charing Cross Hospital has won Robseal Roofing the prestigious single ply category in the NFRC's Excellence in Roofing Awards 2008. Robseal chose Sarnafil membrane for this challenging open specification roofing project. The roof has a series of geometrically spaced diamond shapes and triangular openings cut completely through the roof structure. The Sarnafil G410-12ELF fully adhered membrane in Lead Grey met all the required criteria in terms of flexibility, aesthetics and design parameters.

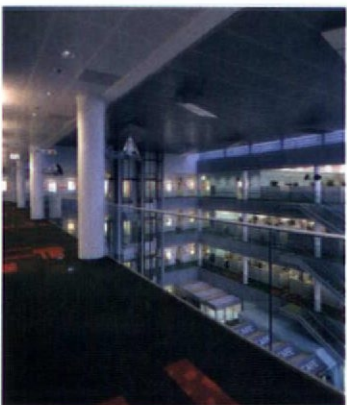
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Whitecroft Lighting

Whitecroft Lighting presents the Noc family. Part of the WACO range, Noc uniquely is able to incorporate ambient and/or accent lighting or even a loudspeaker in the same fitting, in a multitude of different models. There is a choice of colour for the ceiling trim, with standard options of grey, white, black and brushed anodised. Installation is simple – first first install the fixture frame and then snap in the light unit. www.whitecroftretailighting.com

903 www.arplus.com/enq.html



SAS International

Metal ceiling and architectural metalwork solutions from SAS International were chosen for the Kodak Israel HQ, north-east of Tel Aviv by D. S. Blay Architecture Industrial Design. The building has an eye-catching main entrance foyer with atrium. This large open space, the height of the building, creates a light-filled environment. SAS System 330, painted silver grey, created a ceiling feature in the atrium. Class A acoustic absorption or 49db attenuation can be achieved using a range of acoustic inlays, and bespoke spandrel panels clad the atrium walls.

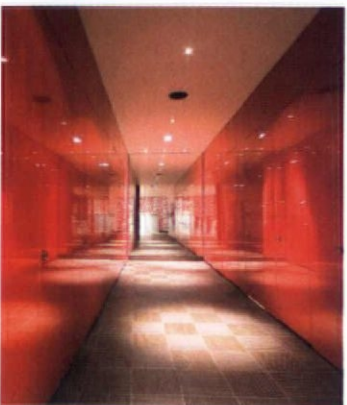
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Häfele

Hawa Frontslide 60 automatic window shutter systems have been installed on the first zero carbon home by housebuilder Barratt. The automatic shutters not only provide a distinctive and attractive external feature, they also play a crucial part in the technical design. They are linked to a central computerised building management system that automatically opens and closes the individual shutters to optimise solar gain and minimise overheating. For convenience, occupants will also be able to manually override the automatic function of each shutter.

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Abet

The new Alea Glasgow Casino features Abet's new high gloss HR LAQ high pressure laminate in all its washrooms. Cubicle specialists Decra worked with casino architects Real Studios to design the washrooms and specified Abet's HR LAQ as it not only provided a collection of bold and bright colours but also provided very high resistance to scratching, wear and abrasion, making it perfect for this kind of application where the combination of high performance and visual appeal are paramount.

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Dorma

DORMA effectively reinvent the future of lightweight movable walls with the MOVEO® system. At around half the weight of most conventional alternatives – and with a huge range of finishes – it is the first radical alternative system since movable walls first appeared. MOVEO® has excellent sound insulation properties and can be installed in both new fit, or refurbishment projects where movable partitions could not previously be considered because of structural limitations.

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reviews

CHINA SYNDROME

MODERNISM IN CHINA: ARCHITECTURAL VISIONS AND REVOLUTIONS

By Edward Denison and Guang Yu Ren. London: John Wiley. 2008. £45

Denison and Guang are heritage consultants, better described as global researchers. Their earlier books, well illustrated and written, covered some of the curiosities of our emerging mono-cultural world economy, Asmara, Africa's secret Modernist city, and Shanghai, as an east-west revolving gateway. Here, undaunted by the complexity of the subject, they tackle the phenomenon of Modernism in China. What is it doing, adrift in the China seas, remote from Dessau's socialist agit-propagandists, cool Scandinavians or American corporate culture? Attempting an analysis is like tackling mushrooms with chopsticks. The slippery surfaces defy capture.

It used to be said that socialism could not flower in a feudal state, only evolve from an industrialised society in which the state then gradually withered away. Another belief was that architectural Modernism, as an expression of material and social progress, could only reach its pinnacle in a democratic and egalitarian nation. Real politics confounded both these dogmas. Two feudal empires, Russia and China, embraced communism, having skipped out on mass-middle-class culture. Modernist architecture also thrived under Italian Fascism, and contemporary China

appears to be an instant Modernist miracle, fully fledged without precedent. But, is not the veneer as thin, and unstable, as the glass facades, which fall off their skyscrapers?

The authors unearth gems in the outer provinces, and offer lots of photographs, but it cannot be denied that the heyday of Modernism was 1930s Shanghai, where it balanced precariously on ruthlessly run industries, enormous poverty and a wealthy minority of cosmopolitans, who studied abroad, and returned to realise imported ideas. In Manchuria, with an economy driven by Japanese colonialism, Modernism arrived with military domination. Seen against the scale of China this was, and still is, a drop in the wok of planned urban slums and countryside concrete block hovels.

The authors quote Gerald King, reporting from China in 1919 for the *Far East Review*: '... every variety of Western hideousness can be studied in detail, from the simple biscuit box to the economically pretentious', and suggest that China's intrinsic belief in impermanence helps sustain myriads of industries, profiting from an unbroken cycle of destruction, construction and reconstruction. Never has the world seen such a scale of economic turnover and environmental upheaval, in which architecture has become, itself, an object of consumption, and 'projects' – no longer mere buildings – are as exchangeable as hard currency. Towards the end Denison and Guang expound an ingenious theory: Modernism is a Chinese invention! Its vocabulary, which we believe sprang from the brains of gods, Corb, Gropius, and Mies, eg. frame, infill, plus proportion, was already used in traditional Chinese timber

construction. Contemporary obsessions with uplifted eaves and dragons are only red herrings, frequently caught by architects wanting to curry favour with their nationalist minded and insecure, but moneyed, clients. We should have guessed this might be discovered in Beijing's Olympic year.

LAYLA DAWSON

The exhibition *Modernism in China* is at Gallery 1, RIBA, 66 Portland Place, London until 27 September.

BEYOND BLUBBER

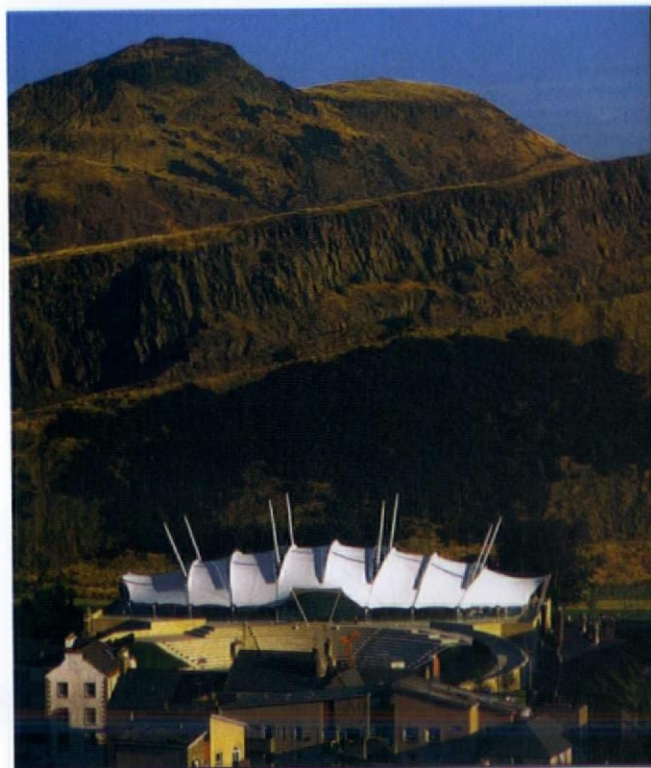
BLUBBERLAND: THE DANGERS OF HAPPINESS

By Elizabeth Farrelly. London: MIT Press. 2008. £12.95

This lively and heartfelt book sets out to do something not dissimilar to Alain de Botton's overrated *The Architecture of Happiness* and does it a great deal better; whereas the RIBA rewarded de Botton with, incredibly, a place as a Stirling Prize judge, thus signifying that it cared more about public relations than the quality of the built environment, Farrelly's book will no doubt be largely ignored here; and that would be a pity, because the writer evidently knows a great deal more about architecture, writes about it wryly and perceptively, and has a memorable and amusing turn of phrase on every page.

The blubber of the title is the layer of protective fat in which people wrap themselves to be isolated from the outside world – in this case, from the ugliness created by self-gratification and greed, converted by the worst offenders into a masochistic cult. So the book is primarily about building beautifully by creating more people-friendly structures. There's a little preaching here, admittedly, and the soggy ending is something of an anticlimax; some themes – the infantilisation of culture by political correctness in particular – are familiar, and I'm not sure if I'm convinced by the all-out attack on suburbs as a waste of land and resources since the ones I know have small plots with tiny houses on them. Yet the book profits from its energetic narrative style, as if Farrelly was thinking aloud; memorable descriptions such as of a grandmother's friendly platitude as 'a sniper-attack from doiley-land' do much for it.

Farrelly writes from Australia and some of the references need a moment's reflection: watch out for 'Paddington' and 'King's Cross', which are not what the British reader might expect, not to mention 'dilly bags' and such like. And yet this only shows that we don't read enough about Australian architecture over here. I wrote a while back complaining that the last offering from MIT Press was all gloss and no content; this book is cheaply printed and looks nasty, yet is a hundred times more interesting. Have we learnt a lesson here? TIMOTHY BRITAIN-CATLIN



Tent structures predated the world of formal architecture by millennia, perhaps explaining the near-obsessional interest in this form of design by what used to be called High-Tech architects. A brief history precedes well chosen contemporary examples in *New Tent Architecture* by Philip Drew (Thames & Hudson, £29.95), covering the work of architects including Oscar Niemeyer, Richard Rogers and Shigeru Ban. Pictured here is Hopkins Architects' Dynamic Earth Centre in Canongate, Edinburgh, dramatically located between city and wilderness. The combination of permanent structure and tensile topping is something our ancestors could only have dreamed of; you can't take this tent away with you, but then you don't need to.

MAKING IT

MANUFACTURING PROCESSES FOR DESIGN PROFESSIONALS

By Rob Thompson. London: Thames & Hudson. 2007. £48

This book is sumptuously illustrated taking the reader into factories and workshops, removing a veil of mystery from the production of consumer products. It is almost a wonderful book. It features 'many of the plastic products surrounding us today' – ably illustrating how similar thermosetting polymers can be used to make packaging or, for example, a car headlamp cluster. One of the dilemmas of society is the need to learn how to use plastic responsibly, where its inherent durability can be put to good use. Reading *Manufacturing Processes* at times can seem to be like wading through mountains of unnecessary packaging. Rob Thompson is not a new William Morris. The book lacks a philosophical approach, in comparison Phaidon's *Design Classics* quotes Peter Opsvik, 'When a planet is overwhelmed by products and users for an endless number of articles, it can appear a paradox to develop new products. Nevertheless, I am convinced that products will enjoy a longer existence where devotion, farsightedness and thoughtfulness contribute to the development, than those governed by fashion and trends.' Unlike *Design Classics*, the products in *Manufacturing Processes* are not all exemplars.

The book is divided into five sections: Forming, Cutting, Joining, Finishing and Materials. It would be easier to read if Thompson had started with materials, however this could have made the book appear less distinctive. The structure of each entry is consistent with diagrams, key data (including application), a description of the process, and excellently illustrated case studies. This structure is both repetitive and graphically over complicated, the author at times seems trapped in his own rigid structure! The application categories are inconsistent and for an architect or engineer often miss where a technology is or can be used to create architecture. Like many books on technology the history is unsound. Thompson implies in his Introduction that Superplastic Aluminium was first produced in 1980, however as many AR readers know, the Sainsbury Centre, completed in 1978, was originally clad in superplastic aluminium, and Superform of Worcester and Riverside, California was founded in 1975.

This book shows the influence of computing on contemporary design and manufacturing – the section on rapid prototyping is good but not comprehensive. In the section On How to Use This Book, Thompson suggests that 'there is a danger today of designers becoming detached



Another excellent production by Birkhäuser, *Non-Fictional* is a monograph on the work of Denton Corker Marshall, the Australian-based practice with an increasingly impressive portfolio outside that country. Pictured here is the Civil Justice Centre in Manchester, UK, which has been shortlisted for the RIBA Stirling Prize, awarded in association with the AR's sister magazine, *The Architects' Journal*. An introductory essay by Leon van Schaik and thoughtful contributions by Jianfei Zhu (on the China work) and Deyan Sudjic on the Justice Centre complement high-quality photography throughout, and justify the €59 price.

from manufacturing as a result of CAD'. My experience and research indicates the opposite – digital design and fabrication has led to a renaissance of interest in the process of making.

Who are the design professionals this book is targeted at? The coverage of architecture is uneven, the Millennium Bridge by Wilkinson Eyre and the Sage by Foster + Partners only appear in this book as an etching on a glass bowl! Key technologies are missing – particularly aluminium extrusions – and although polymer composites are well covered, pultrusions are glossed over. Gang nail trusses, however, are included! A space wasting technology that hopefully has had its day. This book suffers in its attempt to be encyclopaedic, the materials data often falls short and some comments are trite, or misleading, for example – 'softwood and engineered timber can span large gaps'. The book concludes with the float glass process, strangely included in the materials section, and the final image is of the Mall of Millenia, Florida by JPRA Architects – of all the buildings in all the world glazed with float glass why this shopping mall? A book about manufacturing with its origins in workshops appears to have been overtaken by shopping, packaging and more shopping. MICHAEL STACEY

BODIES AND BUILDINGS

ARCHITECTURAL PRINCIPLES IN THE AGE OF CYBERNETICS

By Christopher Hight. Abingdon: Routledge. 2008. £27.50

One assumes this book is a rehashed PhD and consequently it has a reasoned and articulate argument but lacks steaming polemics. Contrary to its title, the main thrust of the text is to chart different conceptions of the symbiotic relationship between the epistemologies of body and architecture. Historically the text reaches back to the Renaissance and forward to our own Digital Age (but all too briefly). Mainly it focuses on Le Corbusier, Giedion, Rykwert, Rowe and others from the halcyon days of architectural historians and in this respect is delightfully old-fashioned.

So it is interesting that the title of the book and the cover blurb posit the book as something it isn't. It implies, on the back, that it radically challenges conventional modern architecture, it doesn't. It documents the historical conceptions of the body in art and science and their influence on architectural discourse. When it refers to the gorgeously slippery notion of cybernetics it is brief and simple. The conceptual ground that second order cybernetics implies is the construction of a personal world as a conversation of ideas and influences determined by purely personal observation and ethics – much more appropriate for a conception of Digital Architecture (which I would argue is infinite cybernetic embrace).

I would recommend this book to students as a swift, accurate and well-written primer into this complex world of body/architecture although the gender issues embodied in this idea could be more accentuated. Hight is a good and thoughtful author and sticks doggedly to this intellectual point of departure. It is also interesting that, as a member of the American trendy digital architects SERVO, he has felt an obligation not to confront the synthetic contemporary architectural condition head-on. He undoubtedly has some important perspectives on operating as an architect in the Digital Age and I would have enjoyed seeing them in such a book, which in a world of no constraints seems a tad constrained.

It is good to see this book in a context where so many historians seem compelled to define themselves as 'critical theorists' yet are wary of designers and it is good to see a designer writing history. This is a proper and good book just not what's described on the publisher's wrapper.

NEIL SPILLER

These and other AR book reviews can be viewed at www.arplus.com and the books can be ordered online, many at a special discount.



The wedding place at the new modern rose park by Ulf Nordfjell. Photographs: Lisa Brunnström.

GLORIOUS GOTHENBURG

Gothenburg plays host to an eclectic array of landscapes in its current summer-long Garden Festival.

Set among woods and lakes to the south of Gothenburg, Gunnebo Slott is Swedish Neo-Classicism at its very most beguiling. Complementing Carl Wilhelm Carlberg's villa of 1796 is a fine formal garden of the same period, with clipped green cones and spheres in symmetrical array. It's one of four venues in and around Gothenburg for the city's current garden festival – not, like Chaumont (AR August 2008), a playground for the avant-garde, but eclectic in its attitude to gardens and landscapes, exploiting the character of contrasting sites.

Perhaps surprisingly one of them is Liseberg Amusement Park – a place of pastel-coloured stage-set buildings, roller-coasters, kiosks and merry-go-rounds – where there's a new permanent 20 000sqm wooded hillside garden which a team led by the park's creative director David Schofield has designed. In detail it isn't always convincing – the dichromatic patterning of stones in the pools is a little too artful, the rusted steel footbridge too eccentric – but it does constitute a completely parallel world to the hectic one below.

Begun in the mid nineteenth century and recently restored, the Garden Society of Gothenburg's canal-side park has the greatest concentration of show gardens but, for any first-time visitor, also some serious competition

in such existing features as a spectacular rose garden and Palm House. This is where the festival nods to Chaumont in 02 Landskap's 'Grandmother's jewellery box', with its translucent screens and compartment of pink cushions; a scheme by Gothenburg University students in which the garden becomes a white-tiled laboratory; and a kind of anti-garden by students from Stockholm's Konstfack University College of Arts – a scene of charred tree trunks, ash and mirrors that could come from a story by J. G. Ballard. These are all provocations, whereas Philip Nixon's 'Passage', with its subtle pervasive geometry, its architectural structure and its softening drifts of grasses, is a garden you could actually inhabit.

There are permanent additions here too, including a steel-and-concrete pavilion by Nina Thalinson and Gert Wingårdh, notable mostly for the delicate nuanced planting of its broad raised borders, and an attractive new rose park with pergola, pond and yew hedges by Sweden's foremost garden designer, Ulf Nordfjell.

His Linnaeus Garden, a Gold Medal winner at Chelsea in 2007, has deservedly been recreated at the festival's third site, the city's Botanical Gardens. With spruce hedges, flat-topped apple trees and freestanding timber frames, it is intricate but not to excess, the white/green palette emphasising its restraint. Another Nordfjell scheme greets you just inside the gardens: six circular beds of plants and some millstone-like wheels of granite placed asymmetrically in an oblong of crazy



Student lab garden by HDK School of Design and Crafts.

paving – and, in a small but telling move, some circles partly overlap the oblong's edges. Nordfjell's near-monochrome planting in blue and yellow is striking, while the Botanical Gardens themselves are magnificent – above all in their simulated wildness, with visitors free to follow mossy little paths among waterfalls and crags.

This rocky naturalism seems far removed from the formal garden at Gunnebo Slott, but parterres and geometric pruning are not the whole story there. The villa and its outbuildings have been restored but in parts also reconstructed; in the case of the servants' quarters, even built from scratch to plans by Carlberg unexecuted at the time. While this has all been done quite scrupulously it must have been contentious, but continuing in the same vein for the festival, Topher Delaney has picked out in scaffolding the outline of the fire-destroyed orangery, which may also be rebuilt – it stands near the formal garden's southern boundary. Then beyond the orangery lie the remains of a large English garden on Picturesque lines, which in turn leads on to pastures, water meadows and woodlands. At Gunnebo, landscape and garden-making are addressed in numerous ways.

All the more so because of the highly variegated kitchen garden that has been recreated to one side of the house and which sets the theme for the festival displays. They include Monika Gora's witty 'travelling garden', unpacked from a motorhome and raised beneath an awning that serves as a greenhouse, and John Tizzard's more earnest 'allotment of the future', whose premise is our need not for mobility but roots. Yet the star exhibit here remains Gunnebo's own kitchen garden, which is emblematic of a festival that puts more stress on permanence than fireworks. By all means visit before the closing date of 28 September, but the prime sources of pleasure will be there long after that.

ANDREW MEAD

*Gothenburg Garden Festival, until 28 September
www.gunneboslott.com*

browser

Sutherland Lyall dons his virtual swimming costume to surf the net.

A poke in the regionalist eye

Fivefootway is the metrically incorrect name of a Singapore-based blog www.fivefootway.com founded by Singapore University architecture students Adib J. and Yeo Jia-Jun. It is, in their words, 'an online platform focused on exploring Asian Architecture', and it's just a year old. I was re-reading Reyner Banham's last essay which was on the universality of the architectural experience and here, if it were ever needed, was the living proof. These guys have been forged in the same architectural furnace as every other tyro architect around the world. It's a salutary reminder that architecture didn't start at the last Bartlett summer show. Although there is, er, a review of this year's Bartlett show on the blog. This isn't the most sophisticated site in the world – they can't afford pro writers and illustrators and everything has been done on a shoestring. But you can download some very interesting Indonesian student stuff at the same time as material from the European heavies. Inclusive is the general thrust. And, despite the 'Asian architecture' promise, so is yah boo sucks to the chimera of regionalism.

Round and round the bamboo bush ...

Despite the beards, sandals, socks and anoraks, the message of the ecological/sustainability/carbon footprint connection can't not be taken seriously. Not least because, in the UK at least, it is less a well-meaning message than lengthy sets of paragraphs firmly embedded in the local building regulations. But it's still a minefield. Are sea-miles all that much better than air-miles and so-what about renewable materials when they are only renewable half a world away? And what will happen to pandas if the West mass-converts to all-bamboo flooring. I'm not certain that Treehugger, at www.treehugger.com, has yet addressed the latter topic but you feel that in the fullness of time it might. Actually there's quite a lot about pandas and about post-quake building in bamboo because this is a broad church site with architecture and design just one of 20 or so Green special interest sections. I don't think it's too preachy to suggest the average architect could do worse than sign up for a free daily dose of Treehugger news.

Take once a day

Talking of daily doses I revisited that well known blog, A Daily Dose of Architecture, which we covered a couple of years back. It's

at www.archidose.blogspot.com. I don't get a regular feed but I'm going to give it a month simply because a visit to the site was so interesting. It's nothing to talk about design-wise: big main column with two subsidiary strips on the right. There's a search engine at the top – but don't hit the adjacent 'Next Blog' which takes you on an intriguing but inexplicable and non-architectural journey. Daily Dose (which has a weekly version) is the creation of John Hill, an architect in New York. The fact that he's an architect means that he can pick out stuff likely to be of interest to his fellows – and it means he's not afraid to take on normally 'obscure' topics such as the building diagram, top subject in an issue last month. That same issue also covered a Shigeru Ban column, Coop Himmelblau's BMW in Weit and Studio Gang's Aqua Tower in Chicago.

Free billboard architecture

If you are of a certain age you will know those giant-high-tech animated video walls at big league rock shows. They're a tad more sophisticated than those even bigger experiments by Blinkenlights using the windows of entire office buildings on which you play Pong using your mobile phone. And there's that tiny Thomas Heatherwick lightworks sitooterie and the Cook-Fournier Graz Kunsthau. But these and the surprisingly large number of small scale examples of that ilk are not necessarily sustainable. And sustainable is exactly what the Simone Giostra Media Wall building in Beijing is (AR July, p98). Its 2200sqm facade deploys metre-square glass panels which are both giant pixels and the substrate for a mass of photovoltaic panels. The panels suck up light during the day and emit it in the form of coloured electric light at night. OK so since they are going to run ads, maybe Times Square or Piccadilly Circus are better paradigms. Whatever, it's an idea you can't resist urging on designers of office buildings everywhere. Forget all that Scheerbart Glasarkitektur historical stuff – take a look at the living, pulsating light architecture at <http://tinyurl.com/5jo3mm>.

Towards a moving architecture

And while we're looking at moving architecture here's the Huggy Wall at <http://tinyurl.com/5p753p>. Check out the surrounding YouTube videos and the stuff on muscle wire whose potential for cheering up drab, repetitive building facades can't be over-estimated <http://tinyurl.com/55183s>.

Sutherland Lyall is at sutherland.lyall@btinternet.com

diary

AR'S CHOICE OF INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS FROM WWW.ARPLUS.COM

FRANCE

3XN, DENMARK

La Galerie d'Architecture, Paris
Until 25 September

An exhibition presenting the wide-ranging work of 3XN, a Danish practice with an international outlook that has made a name for itself by winning a number of international architectural competitions including Deutsche Bahn's HQ Cube in Berlin, the cultural centre Buen in Mandal, Norway and the ill-fated Museum of Liverpool. Cultural buildings, institutions, corporate headquarters and residential developments all get that spare, elegant Scandinavian touch. www.galerie-architecture.fr

UNITED KINGDOM

CREATIVE RESOURCES

The Building Centre, London
Until 29 September

A must-see for anyone interested in sustainable design and materials, this exhibition brings together products from around the world that show the creative potential of materials made from the things we used to throw away. Visitors can peruse products from internationally renowned designers such as Philippe Starck and Tom Dixon and over 200 new materials which come from many unexpected sources, including recycled coffee grounds, currency, mobile phones, swimming pool covers and aeroplane windscreens. Designer products include furniture, electronics, textiles and even a coffin, all made from waste materials. www.buildingcentretrust.org

LUCIEN HERVE

Michael Hoppen Gallery, London
6 September - 11 October

The second exhibition of photographs by Lucien Hervé at the Michael Hoppen Gallery, this one will include rare vintage prints from Le Corbusier's exhibition in 1953, colour portraits of Zaha Hadid, architectural photographs of the Eiffel Tower and colour works of the artist's apartment. www.michaelhoppengallery.com

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FRIDA KAHLO

SFMOMA (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art), San Francisco
Until 28 September

Mexican artist Frida Kahlo's folkloric style and her fantastical imagery earned her recognition among the Surrealists, but her intriguing persona and originality propelled her beyond the confines of a specific movement to become a leading figure in modern art. This exhibition, commemorating the centennial of the artist's birth, brings together her paintings, along with a selection of her own collection of photographs, most of which have never been on public display. www.sfmoma.org

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Photographs: Daiji Anjo

KLEIN DYTHAM ARCHITECTS TRANSFORM TWO FLOORS OF A NONDESCRIPT OFFICE BUILDING IN KAMAKURA.

The work of KDa continues to exploit the intriguing condition of its directors, Mark Dytham and Astrid Klein. Describing themselves as dislocated, they have refused to settle as typical expats. Taking no sight for granted, inspiration comes from their surroundings. With heightened senses, they observe apparently mundane situations and play them back with a twist, to create new fusions.

This latest project for web design firm Kayac is such a fusion, addressing the practical needs of a growing business, while reinterpreting a number of familiar Japanese devices. The project also served to resolve the architect's divided view of IT technology; Astrid Klein supporting the cause of WAC (women against cables) and Mark Dytham that of MEC (men enjoy cables).

The challenge in this instance was to improve the typical web-cell environment that most companies settle for. Exploiting the relatively generous 4.5m ceiling height of the lower floor, KDa proposed a raised island of tatami mats, fitted out in traditional style with cushions and low tables to allow impromptu meetings and group work. Into this is set a *horikotatsu*, a dug out (conference) table, more typically found in traditional Japanese restaurants, with the leg well providing more comfortable seating. Around this tatami island, is a continuous wooden desk – with fully integrated accessible IT kit – that KDa have called the *engawa* desk, referring to the transitional zone between inside and outside that is so fundamentally embedded in traditional Japanese architecture.

An *engawa* usually takes the form of a narrow wooden veranda between the tatami mat floor of a building's interior and the surrounding garden, and applying this analogy here, KDa see the raised floor as a form of building interior, with the desk as an *engawa* and the circulation areas the garden.

Since completing the project, the company has grown to 60 people, which has led to the construction of a second *engawa* desk on the upper floor; a sure endorsement if ever one was needed, that this client is thrilled with their new environment. ROB GREGORY



Gira E22 Stainless Steel Aluminium Thermoplastic One design. Two installation types. As an alternative to the standard installation, the Gira E22 switch-range offers a new mounting procedure with which the cover frame is just 3 mm thick when installed on the wall. The three materials allow the complete equipping a building with one design while differentiating according to value. Over 230 functions can be integrated – from door communication to the Gira Instabus KNX/EIB system.

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Fig.: Gira E22 Stainless Steel, push button sensors of the Gira Instabus KNX/EIB system



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