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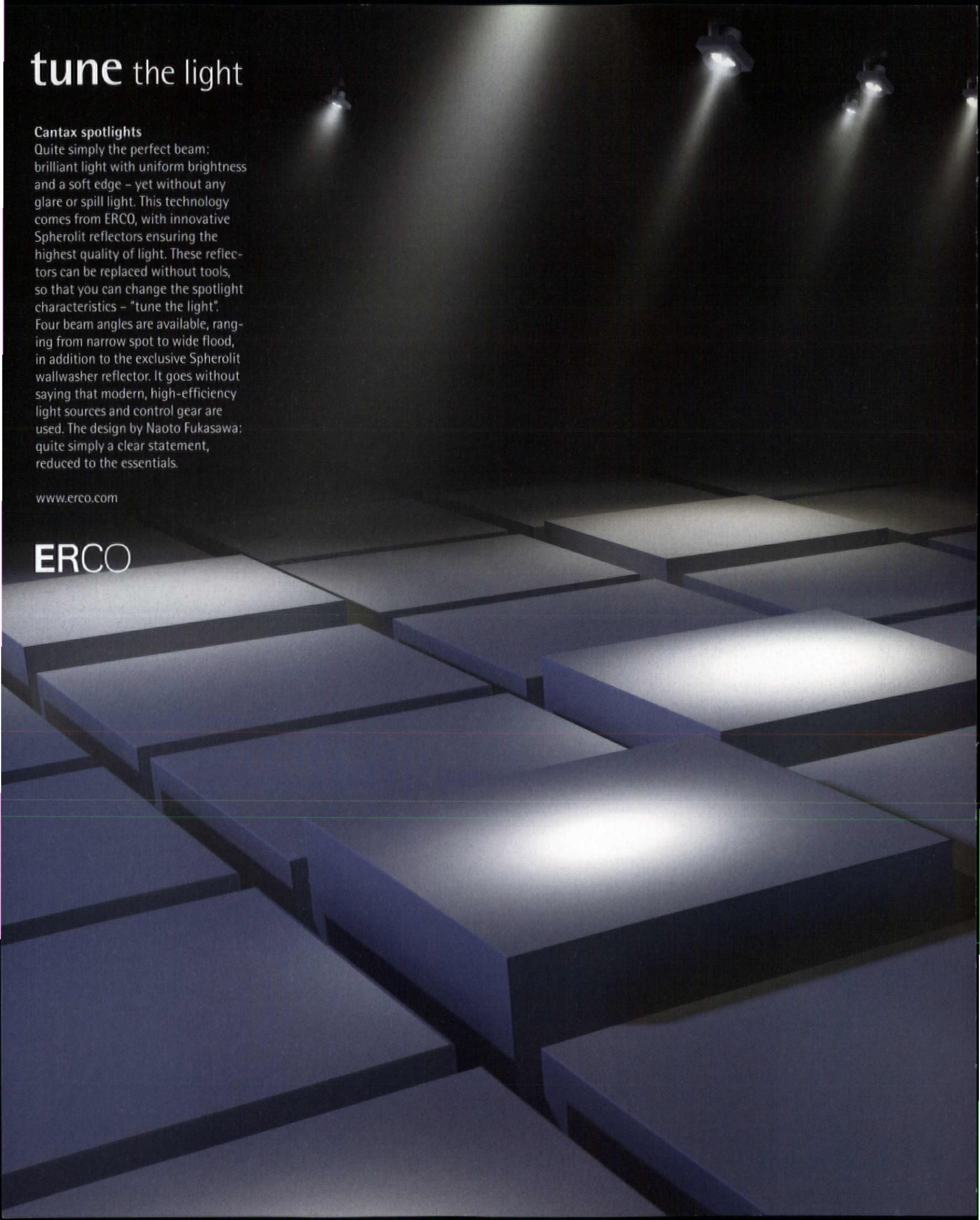
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048 MICHAEL WEBB

Michael Howe is a London-based architect and partner of mae. The practice's most recently completed building is a chapel and cemetery in Letchworth Garden City. He writes on his experiences of the historic Hauz Khas complex in Delhi

Mark Isitt is a freelance architecture writer and curator based in Gothenburg, Sweden. He is former editor of Forum AID magazine and writes for the AR about the recent result of the design competition for Slussen in central Stockholm

Phyllis Lambert is one of the most decorated names in architecture. After graduating from IIT in 1963 she became a noted client, commissioning Mies van der Rohe to design the Seagram Building in New York. She went on to found the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal in 1979, and has since been honoured around the world for her contribution to the profession. A film about her life, Citizen Lambert: Joan of Architecture, has recently been released

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VIEW



Grappling with an open brief: SANAA on its Serpentine Pavilion

CHRISTINE MURRAY

www.serpentinegallery.org

I catch up with Ryue Nishizawa and Kazuyo Sejima, co-founders of Japanese practice SANAA, at a restaurant in Venice to discuss their design for this year's Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, due to open on 12 July in London.

The duo are here for a symposium on their museums for the Seto Inland Sea regeneration project, a 'cultural archipelago' in Japan. But as we meet, construction has just begun on their pavilion, and their design – an amorphous, polished aluminium cloud-on-stilts – is set to open within weeks.

Every year, the Serpentine Gallery invites an architect or practice that has never completed a project in England to design an event space and café on its lawn in Kensington Gardens, which is later dismantled and sold.

You would think the prestigious commission would be a cinch for most architects, who are essentially given carte blanche as a brief. But SANAA found it rather tough.

'This project, it's very difficult,' says a jaunty Sejima in heavily-accented English, a cigarette smouldering in one hand. 'Normally architecture has a lot more requirements, but this is just a blur.'

'There are no strong restrictions to regulate the shape,' adds the boyish-faced Nishizawa, sipping his mineral water. 'They said: "Please make

a roof, to avoid the rain; please make a wall, to protect from the wind." Very primitive restrictions. One of the difficulties with this project is that anything is kind of OK.'

Their struggle with the Serpentine is revealing of SANAA. Since 1995, the practice has gained a reputation for having eschewed shape-making architecture in favour of delicate, minimal buildings, from the New Museum of Contemporary Art's tower of grey boxes in New York (2007), to the curved glass walls of the Glass Pavilion for the Toledo Museum of Art (2006).

At first glance, SANAA's Serpentine Pavilion may seem like a departure for the practice. The very first renderings revealed a flat blob – a cartoonish chewed piece of bubblegum or squashed amoeba when viewed from above. But in section, the thinness of the undulating mirror-polished aluminium roof gracefully rises from the height of a table, sweeping up to create a 3.5m dome over the 200-seat auditorium, supported by slim 4cm diameter, mirror-polished stainless-steel pillars. The structure has weight and form, yet appears weightless and shapeless. The materials both reflect and reveal the sky and the park. Its ethereal lightness of being is pure SANAA.

According to Sejima, the park itself inspired the pavilion's form. 'The site is very beautiful, so we wanted to emphasise the context as much as possible. Compared to a normal building, the design is more undefined – just space under a roof, but also under the park, under the trees.'

'We thought it would be strange to give a square shape here,' adds Nishizawa. 'We thought it would be nice to create something like a cloud with no boundaries...'

'Running between the trees,' adds Sejima.

'Floating to create a space that is big, soft and very open,' Nishizawa concludes. 'We studied very much to find the exact shape, the curve.'

During the interview, Sejima and Nishizawa often complete each other's sentences this way. The partners – who collaborate on international projects as SANAA, but work separately with their individual practices on Japan-based projects – make good company, alternately joking and debating, laughing and setting each other straight.

Freedom of movement was another factor in the pavilion's design. 'You don't have walls and doors, so when 100 people come to the pavilion, they can go through it without reducing their speed,' Nishizawa marches his fingers across the plan to demonstrate. 'This is a very

interesting idea for architecture, to let people go through.'

'Actually, there is a bit of a wall,' Sejima interjects, pointing to two thin lines encircling the auditorium and the café – requested by the Serpentine to keep out the wind.

'But you can't see them, and they're very little,' says Nishizawa.

'And we used a different line for the walls than for the roof,' adds Sejima, 'to not create one space.' The enclosures also have multiple entry points to further encourage freedom of movement.

Even before the Serpentine, Nishizawa says public parks have inspired SANAA's work. He cites the Rolex Learning Center, their school facility in Switzerland, as an example of 'park-concept architecture.' The building has a wave-like floor that creates a landscape of rolling hills within the structure, forming 'different geographies you can visit as you like'.

'The public park is something we think of as a typology,' he says. 'If you go to a park, you see people doing totally different things. One of them is walking, another is speaking, or reading a book...'

'Or eating,' adds Sejima.

'But if you come to this restaurant,' says Nishizawa, 'everyone must sit at a table, lined up in this way. Order is given by the architecture. The park gives you something different. Freedom.'

If the park engenders freedom, what does the city say to SANAA?

'In Tokyo, there is too much definition. Too much dividing the inside from the outside,' says Nishizawa. 'This is something I don't like. I want something much more simple and open.'

And London? 'I have been just twice,' says Nishizawa, 'so I have no strong idea. But I like Hyde Park very much.'

AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

Backlash as Gerrit Rietveld art school plans to leave its namesake's building

RIYA PATEL

www.gerritrietveldacademie.nl



The Gerrit Rietveld Academie, one of the Netherlands' foremost art schools, faces dissent over plans to move out of its landmark home (pictured). Designed by modernist architect and furniture designer Rietveld between 1950 and 1963, and completed after his death, this historic landmark is his most important public building.

The art academy that occupies it has proposed moving due to increased student numbers. This would see the building partly taken over by the British School of Amsterdam,

a private, non-creative education enterprise. **The idea has caused controversy in design circles worldwide and prompted a petition of over 2,000 signatures.**

One signatory, Marcel Brouwer, head of 20th-century decorative arts and design at Christie's in Amsterdam, said: 'Replacing the art academy – so indissolubly attached to the avant-garde and modernist ideas of Rietveld – by an elite private school is like proposing to



Buildings are not always mere floorplate to be leased. This building is the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, in much more than name

upholster his red and blue chair like a Chesterfield settee.'

The academy commissioned a study by Amsterdam-based Hootsmans Architectuurbureau to assess the feasibility of remaining on site, but it was deemed unsatisfactory. In a newsletter to staff and students, academy president Tijmen van Grootheest wrote: 'Hootsmans' plan is not a bad proposal, but it shows 11,000m² of space on our site of which we could lease approximately 3,500m²; the rest is for use by another party'. He refers also to a scale model of the proposal which shows that 'the sun only shines on our site a few days of the year'.

Instead, the former Gemeentelijk Administratie Kantoor (GAK) building in the district of Los en Bommer could become the academy's new home, expanding on its current lease of one floor. However, many locals are not in favour. Product designer Ann Maes believes the move (which will house student accommodation and studios within the same building) will be detrimental to students' creativity. 'It's dangerous to isolate people in this way. Students need the impulses of Amsterdam life in order to enrich themselves as designers. You cannot expect them to sleep and work in the same building,' she said. For many petitioners, the only solution is to reduce the amount of students at the academy. 'The management should be more selective. This would ensure quality of design work as well as the preservation of the building.' However, the academy is reluctant to reduce pupil intake due to government funding for greater student numbers. The debate continues.

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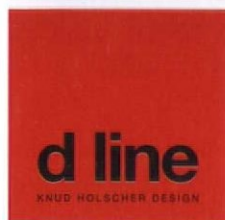
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MADRID, SPAIN

Church design gets tough with a steel incarnation

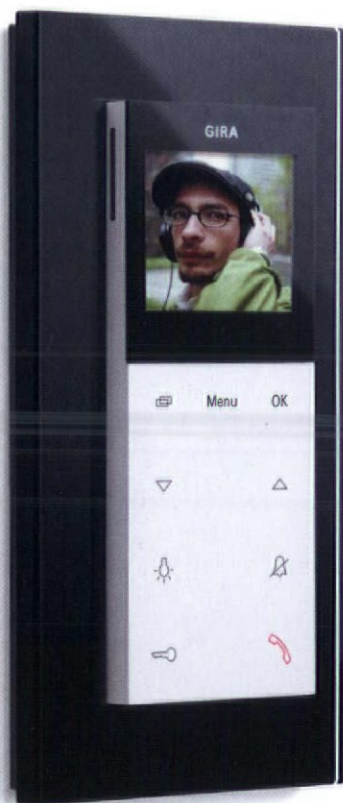
Catholic devotions get a futuristic twist with this new church in a Madrid suburb by local architect Vicens + Ramos. Cor-ten is not what you'd associate with the divine, but here it forms an external skin capable of seeing off the devil himself. Behind the altar, glazed prisms funnel light inside, their madcap form inspired by the idea of a frozen Big Bang. Fiat lux.



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HONG KONG, CHINA

The battle for affordable housing sends squatters to the skies

LAYLA DAWSON

www.peperoni-books.de



What do Redfern in Sydney, Dharavi in Mumbai, Nickelsville in Seattle and Hong Kong's rooftops have in common? All are long-term sites of informal squatter communities, sometimes without clean running water, power, sewage systems or rubbish collection, built by and for the globally increasing numbers of disenfranchised. Gentrification, privatisation, marginalisation, definitions of legality, financial collapse and mortgage foreclosures have all added to the widening gap between rich and poor, meaning photographs taken this year of tin shacks on urban wastelands

or tents pitched under motorway flyovers in California mimic images of the 1930s Great Depression. For many, the cost of urban survival is unaffordable. Not only the unemployed and minimum-wage earner but also the middle class can be at risk.

Rufina Wu, a Hong-Kong-born Canadian architect, and Stefan Canham, a German photographer and film-maker, met through In The Field, a Chicago-based arts organisation for 'creative engagement with global housing crises'. Wu won AIA Medals for her studies on the *Three Gorges Commune* (2006) and catacomb living in *Beijing Underground* (2008). Canham's book, *Mobile Squatters* (Peperoni Books, 2006), recorded an informal community in Hamburg which was dispersed by riot police.

In a new collaboration, *Portraits from Above*, Wu and Canham documented five rooftop communities in Hong Kong to produce an exhibition and book (Peperoni Books, 2009). One example, in Tai Kok Tsui, is a 1959 eight-storey block with 35 households in a labyrinth of self-made huts, some three storeys high, on its 1,145m² flat roof (pictured). In 1998, Hong Kong officially counted 9,000 'illegal' communities. By 2006, after demolition of older blocks, it claimed numbers had been reduced to 3,962 people in 1,554 households, but there has been no comprehensive survey. The problem is largely ignored because Asians without legal identities have no social housing rights and, by living illegally, low-paid but essential workers remain within affordable reach of their employment or their children's schools. However, even in these basic shelters,

there are fridges, televisions, and mobile phones because in comparison to 'legal' homes, consumer items are cheap.

Canham's photos and Wu's axonometric drawings treat these 'illegal' structures with respect, bringing them into architectural discourse. *Portraits from Above* won third prize at the 5th International Bauhaus Awards 2008 – though, ironically, it featured in the roof extensions category with luxury lofts. The jury was appreciative, but recognising individual creativity deflects interest in dealing with the complex causes of a crisis.

China's economic slowdown has now left 22 million floating, indigenous migrants homeless. Dubai's foreign workers, already the poorest, have been left unpaid and stranded. These are today's headlines but architects have known for decades about exploited household servants in airless cupboards and building workers in huts with a shared water tap. Only now the problem is nearer home. In Paris in 2007, families living in caravans and cars on wasteland were forcibly cleared away using the same strategies as Olympic committees for Beijing 2008 or Vancouver 2010. For the 2014 World Cup, Brazil wants to wall off 1.5 million people in the Rio favelas.

In 1933, US magazine *The Nation* wrote of the homeless: 'This is a crowd that won't scatter.' In January 2009, it mapped resistance to housing foreclosures in the US. Little has changed. In Germany, graffiti on a wall on Hamburg's Hafenstrasse, the scene of violent clashes between police and squatters, proclaims: 'No person is illegal.' No informal home should be a slum, either.



The growing issue of informal settlements must not be ignored. Architectural discourse can generate serious discussion and solutions

The AR Awards for Emerging Architecture

CATHERINE SLESSOR

www.arplus.com

The 2009 AR Awards for Emerging Architecture is now open for entries. Founded in 1999, it has grown to become the world's most popular and prestigious awards programme for young architects. **In a prize system still skewed in favour of predictable gongs for lifetime achievement, Emerging Architecture is a real breath of fresh air, giving young and often relatively unknown practices an invaluable impetus on their trajectory to stardom.** It's encouraging to track the progress of fledgling architects as they grow in stature and progress in their careers. A random scan of the Emerging Architecture roll of honour throws up Barkow Leibinger (Germany), Ofis Arhitekti (Slovenia),

Jensen & Skodvin (Norway), Bucholz McEvoy (Ireland), Sean Godsell (Australia) and a clutch of perpetually inventive Japanese – among them Sou Fujimoto, Junya Ishigami and Atelier Bow-Wow. All are now making names for themselves.

No awards scheme can claim such geographical diversity. Last year, for instance, there were over 400 entries from 50 countries. Awards are given for excellence across a very broad spectrum of design, ranging from landscape and urbanism to product design and furniture. Yet by far the largest proportion of entries are buildings.

A stipulation of entry is that all projects must be completed and built. No amount of

seductive paper or electronic theorising can deflect or distract from the fundamental purpose of architecture, which is to build; moreover to build well and to build responsibly.

Displaying great formal diversity, entries are united by their engagement with certain crucial concerns. These include the inventive and appropriate use of materials and technology, environmental and social responsibility, place-making, consideration of context and how to respond to challenging contexts and climates. The limiting age for entrants is 45 – admittedly an elastic definition of 'young' but, because of the long education and training, it is often very difficult for architects to express themselves clearly in built work before then.

Each year, we invite a new international jury to review entries. For 2009, we are very pleased to welcome Elizabeth Diller (Diller Scofidio + Renfro, New York); Tony Fretton (Tony Fretton Architects, London); Thomas Heatherwick (Heatherwick Studio, London) and Yvonne Farrell (Grafton Architects, Dublin). Kieran Long, AR editor-in-chief, is chairman. Winners will be invited to a gala prize giving at the RIBA at the end of November and will also be invited to participate in the RIBA's Spring Lecture Series in 2010.

Over the years the entries have provided a constantly entrancing kaleidoscope of endeavour. Canopies, car parks and chapels compete with stage sets, stations and squares. We're always surprised and delighted by what we find and trust that this year will be no exception. **Closing date for entries is 8 September. Full details of how to enter, including a downloadable entry form, can be found on www.arplus.com**

This hotel in Tudela, Spain, by Emiliano López & Mónica Rivera Arquitectos, was a prize winner in the 2008 Emerging Architecture Awards



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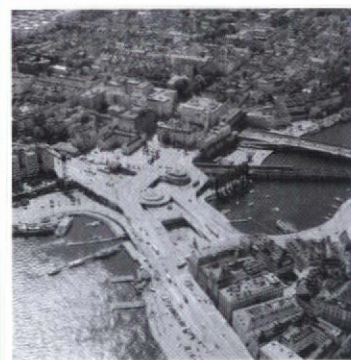
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STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

At last, a solution for Slussen: Foster's simple vision proves a winner

MARK ISITT

www.stockholm.se/slussen



Top_ Foster + Partner's scaled-down winning proposal for Slussen

Above_ The traffic complex today, joining Södermalm to Gamla Stan, the historic old town of Stockholm

Slussen. A historic trading post, a passage of military importance, a barrier between the working classes and the bourgeoisie. Add to that, a persistent topic of Stockholm City Hall debates. No one now can keep track of how many plans for Slussen's renovation have been submitted, revised, rejected – and all because no architect has yet managed to seize the magic of this symbolic site, where the fresh water from Lake Mälaren meets the salty strains of Saltsjön, at the very heart of the Swedish capital.

Five shortlisted development proposals have now been reduced to one. The five included Danish firm Bjarke Ingels Group, the Swede Gert Wingårdh and the

flamboyant Jean Nouvel. Judging by Stockholm's press, the Parisian was favourite – not so much for his entry (which consisted of two huge inhabited bridges), it seemed, as for his Swedish girlfriend, the youthful architect Mia Hägg, listed as co-author of the project.

About Norman Foster, the other international celebrity in the shortlist, little was written. This was unfair because, while Nouvel's proposal was excessively complex, Foster's was strikingly well structured.

Where Nouvel had tried to squeeze in as many functions and finesses as was humanly possible, Foster peeled away the superfluous until nothing remained but the most essential.

His overriding aim was clear: by sweeping away the gigantic 1935 traffic complex – the concrete lid that totally ruins north and south coastal stretches – he proposed to restore the view of Stockholm's prime asset: water.

From this starting point he orchestrated a fascinating water landscape. Above the old lock he scattered pedestrian bridges hither and thither following the flow of the site; one sprang from the ferry terminal, another leapt from the bus station, a third from the subway and Götgatan parade. And instead of Nouvel's numerous unspecific spaces, he proposed the creation of two classic squares, an open one down by the quayside and an enclosed, covered square near the Nicodemus Tessin-designed city museum from 1663 – the latter a reference, perhaps, to his own glazed courtyard at the British Museum in London.

It proved to be a winning concept. When the city planning committee recently presented their final verdict it was Foster who carried the day. British pragmatism had triumphed over French prolixity. A brave decision, considering the views of the press – and yet not so, because only the most basic elements now remained of Foster's vision. The Swedish authorities had managed to edit down the rest in their desperate efforts to cut the project to fit the prevailing recession.

The greatest loss is the landmark rosette that was intended to soar up from the water. Two bridges were planned to skim the surface before swinging up and out, offering at their peak all that makes Slussen unique: openness and panoramic views, contrasts of height, flow of people, the meeting of town and archipelago. Slussen is due to be ready by 2018. Believe it if you will.



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VANCOUVER, CANADA

Tribute to a visionary architect ahead of his time: Arthur Erickson, 1924-2009

PHYLLIS LAMBERT

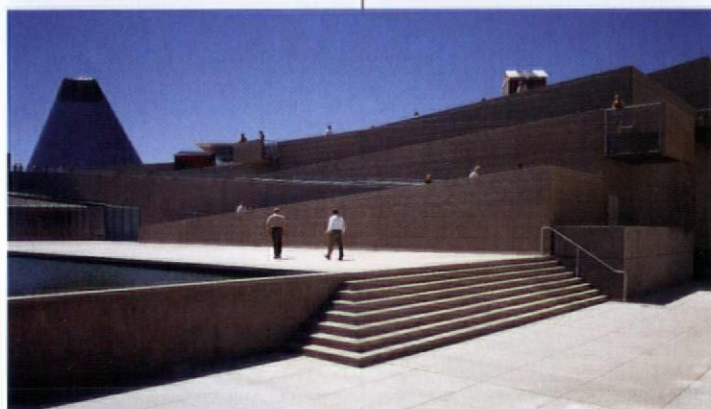
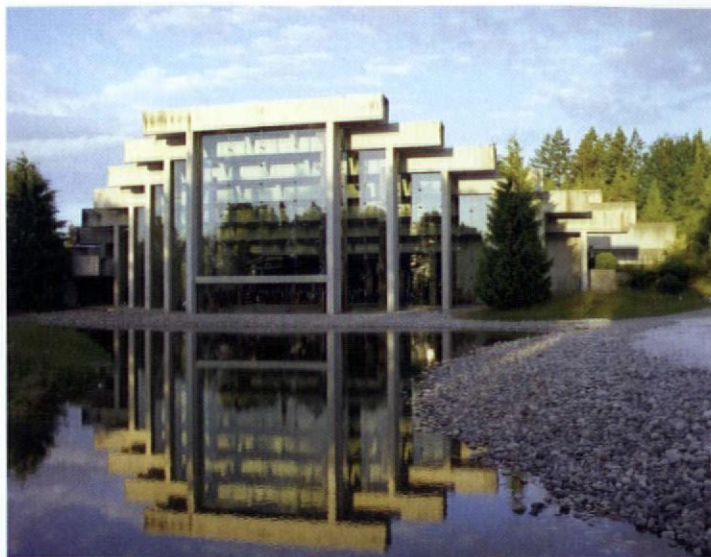
When Arthur Erickson was born in Vancouver in 1924, the city was just 38 years old. His culture therefore lay in the natural environment – the thick forest of 800-year-old firs, 100ft cedars and moist, rich underbrush, bounded by the rivers and ocean of the mountainous Pacific Northwest. It was this context that grounded him forever in a belief in 'profound communion between building and site'.

Returning from military service in India, Ceylon and Malaysia, Erickson plunged into architecture, inspired by images of Frank Lloyd Wright's winter home, Taliesin West. On graduating from McGill University, he turned down

a tempting offer of work in Wright's office and opted for a three-year travelling fellowship to view world architecture in historical sequence, studying the cultural contexts of Europe, Scandinavia, the Middle East, and later, Japan – **always holding the belief that there is no more poignant source of meaning in architecture 'than the act of setting a structure in its environment'.**

Erickson's canonic works of the 1960s and 1970s interweave landscape and structure, the spaces and light that enfold the human context. The massive wooden beams of his early post-and-beam houses climbing the densely wooded hillsides are symbolically of the earth. Near Vancouver, Simon Fraser University (1963) occupies the summit of Burnaby Mountain, its undifferentiated academic departments wrapping around a vast greensward, with living and meeting spaces descending the contours on terraces. Erickson and his partner Geoffrey Massey projected a new idea of the university, achieving a direct translation into architecture of expanding fields of knowledge that defy traditional boundaries, encouraging cross-fertilisation through physical proximity and sharing of spaces. Their University of Lethbridge in Alberta (1971) is more extreme, with academic and living spaces





Previous page,
left_ Vancouver's
Law Courts
building and
public garden
Previous page,
right_ Arthur
Erickson
This page, from
top to bottom_

Anthropology at
the University of
British Columbia
(1972), the
Museum of Glass
in Tacoma (1996),
and Hugo Eppich
House (1979) in
Vancouver

of all kinds contained in one powerful building.

Citing Marshall McLuhan's view that modern man was on his way back to the tribe, Erickson believed this would lead to total environments. In 1965, he concluded that individual buildings were things of the past: 'We are already dealing with the complex, where buildings are only important as contributors to the total experience of moving through a vast complex. It is both a step forward as well as a return to the total building of the medieval city: the streets of Orvieto, the facades of Florence, the squares of Venice.' He effectively abandoned the mechanistic 19th-century view of separate functions in favour of the holism of antiquity.

At his Robson Square complex of 1973 – a three-block-long, low profile public garden in the heart of downtown Vancouver – government offices are interwoven with cascading flora, a block-long rooftop pool and waterfalls in a topography designed with eminent local landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. Under a huge tilted glass roof plane, the Law Courts building, a profound innovation in courthouse design, induces an optimistic concept of justice, in opposition to the traditional grim assumption of guilt. Its great hall, like the third section containing the new premises of the Vancouver Art Gallery, accommodates social and cultural activities. Visionary in the 1970s as an example of sustainable and humane concepts of government and urban planning, Robson Square still points the way for cities today.

Erickson's third canonic and also highly inventive work, the column-and-beam framed, glass-skinned Museum of Anthropology (1976) at the

University of British Columbia, is redolent of Kwaikiutl (American Indian) construction. Totemic poles within rise against Oberlander's natural and created landscape, while Erickson challenged the museum typology by opening storage to the public, encouraging autonomous learning and pleasure. Nearby is the Arthur Erickson House and Garden, an enchanting wilderness with mounds, ponds and vegetation that confound boundaries and dissolve edges to create the illusion of extended space on two ordinary suburban lots.

Alive to the consistency of tradition and believing that, no matter how inventive culture is, human habit is stronger, Erickson's buildings and urban projects across the world are very different in vocabulary and expression from those he designed for British Columbia. Of his extensive buildings and town and university planning projects in the Middle East dating from 1980, **he spoke about the length of time it takes to 'get underneath [the] superficial level' of these cultures, and questioned the ability of architects to build effectively in cultural contexts that they do not deeply understand.**

Erickson stands with major architects of the last half of the 20th century, notably James Stirling and Aldo Rossi, in having invented unsurpassed urban schemes as well as brilliant new building types that were well ahead of their time socially and environmentally. However, the dynamic evolution of his work still waits to be assessed and, like other distinguished figures not yet properly situated, including Jørn Utzon, Sverre Fehn and Luis Barragán, the full extent of Erickson's body of work will be a real discovery.

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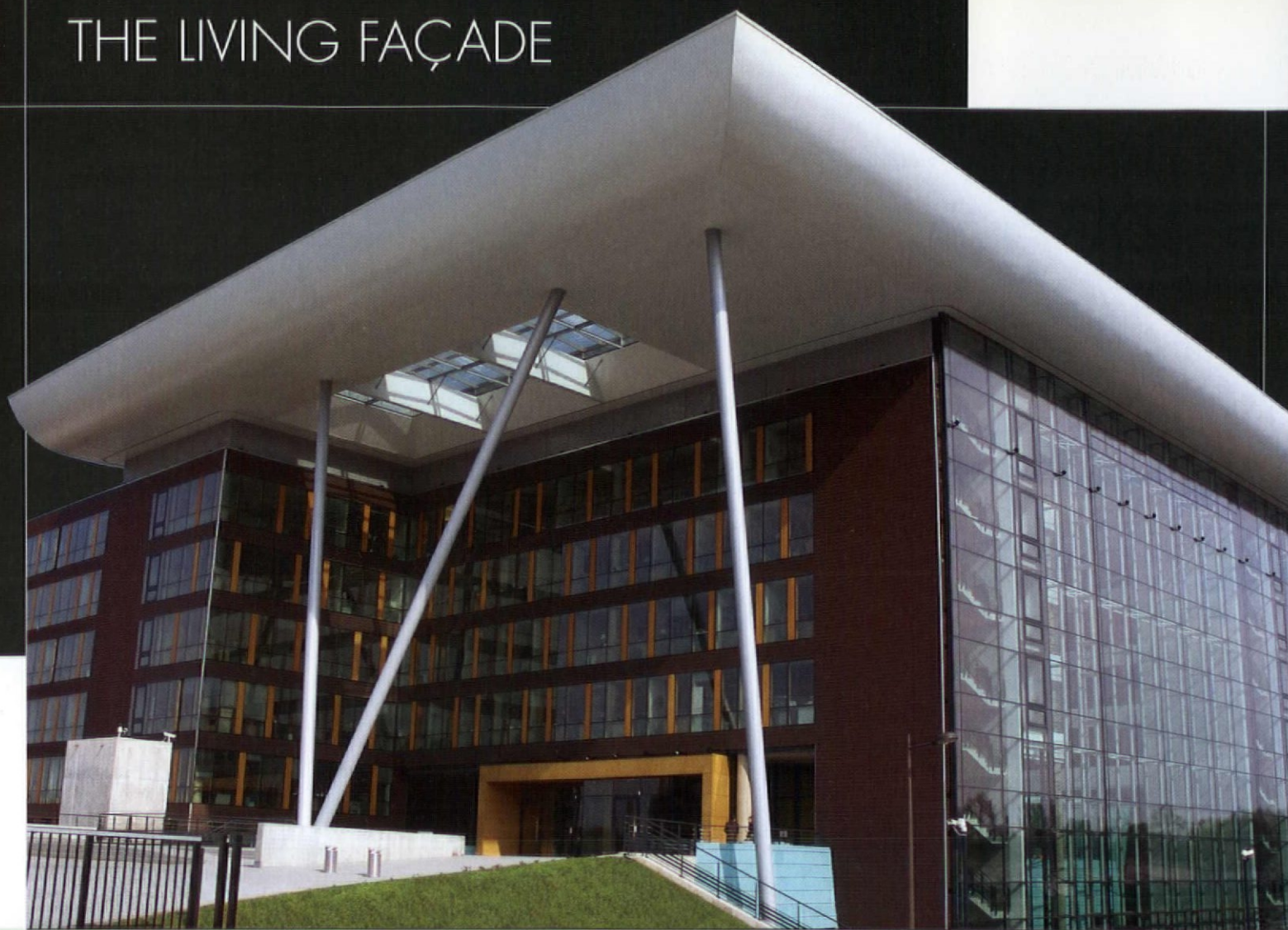


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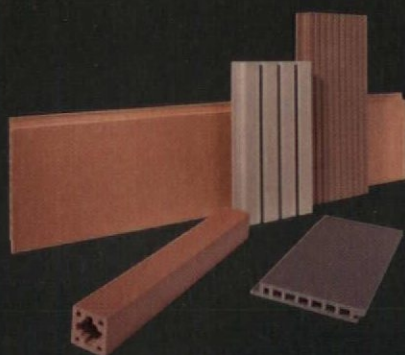
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BUILDINGS

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LOCATION CHICAGO, USA

ARCHITECT RENZO PIANO
BUILDING WORKSHOP

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LAVEZZORIO COMMUNITY CENTER

LOCATION CHICAGO, USA

ARCHITECT STUDIO
GANG ARCHITECTS

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MUSEUM BRANDHORST

LOCATION MUNICH, GERMANY

ARCHITECT SAUERBRUCH HUTTON

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LIBRARY AND SENIOR
CITIZENS' CENTRE

LOCATION BARCELONA, SPAIN

ARCHITECT RCR ARQUITECTES

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CITY OF JUSTICE

LOCATION BARCELONA, SPAIN

ARCHITECT DAVID CHIPPERFIELD
ARCHITECTS/B720

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POPE JOHN PAUL II HALL

LOCATION RIJEKA, CROATIA

ARCHITECT RANDIC-TURATO
ARCHITECTS

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CRANE HOUSE

LOCATION KARUIZAWA,
NAGANO, JAPAN

ARCHITECT ATELIER BOW-WOW

048

MUSEUM BRANDHORST

LOCATION

MUNICH, GERMANY

ARCHITECT

SAUERBRUCH HUTTON

WRITER

KIERAN LONG

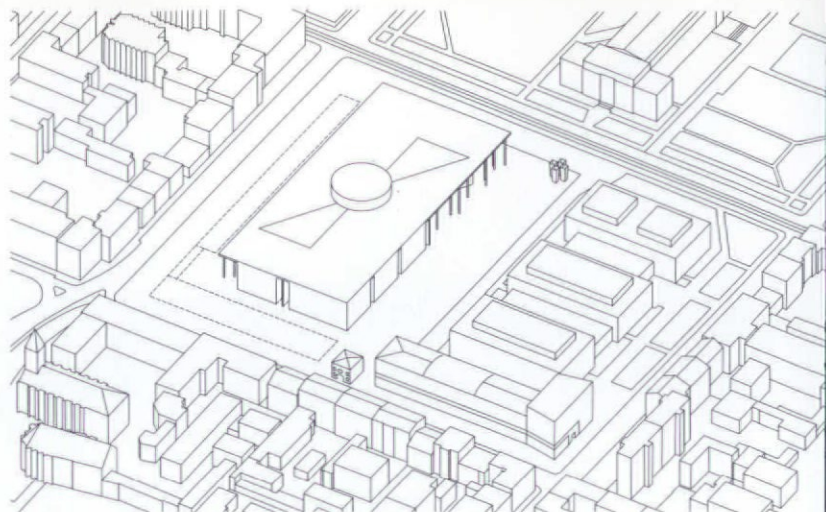
PHOTOGRAPHY

RAINER VIERTLBÖCK





**THE FACADE PRESENTS A
FASCINATING COLOUR MAP, LIKE
SOME SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT,
OR THE PIXELS OF A TV SCREEN,
OBSERVED CLOSE-UP**



Previous page_ The Museum Brandhorst from the corner of Theresienstrasse and Tuerkenstrasse in Munich's Kunstareal cultural quarter
Left_ Axonometric of the site, showing the Brandhorst's

relationship to the Pinakothek der Moderne by Stephan Braunfels (left) and the Alte Pinakothek (top left corner)
Below_ The back of the building, showing the cladding made of 36,000 ceramic rods



‘[Cy Twombly] says that landscape is what he likes looking at most and that this is why he has lately been spending four months of each year in Virginia. Architecture comes next, and then painting. I asked him where he placed sculpture. He said it was part of architecture.’ David Sylvester, ‘The World is Light’, 1997

Art critic David Sylvester wrote this in an essay about American painter Cy Twombly. In the Museum Brandhorst – the Munich gallery designed by Berlin-based architect Sauerbruch Hutton, which opened in May – an entire floor is dedicated to Twombly’s large canvases. One vast room is full of pictures of roses, giant swirls of colour applied to the canvas with, perhaps, a screwed-up rag or a very wide brush.

These staggering paintings of Twombly’s productive late period ask profound questions of Sauerbruch Hutton’s work at Brandhorst. The Berlin architect has colour as its trademark, often creating multi-coloured skins for buildings, most famously at the Federal Environmental Agency building in Essen, Germany, (completed in 2005) and the red blinds of the GSW Headquarters tower in Berlin (1999). At the Brandhorst, a new museum created to house a brilliant collection of mainly late-20th century art donated to the city of Munich, the practice has been careful to associate its use of colour with the history of painting and architecture.

Sauerbruch Hutton couches its work in the aesthetics and motivations of abstract painting, creating a multicoloured ceramic and steel facade that is phenomenologically beautiful but also very controlled. Made of thousands of ceramic rods held in front of a coloured and faceted steel rainscreen, it presents a fascinating colour map, like some scientific experiment, or the pixels of a TV screen, observed close-up.

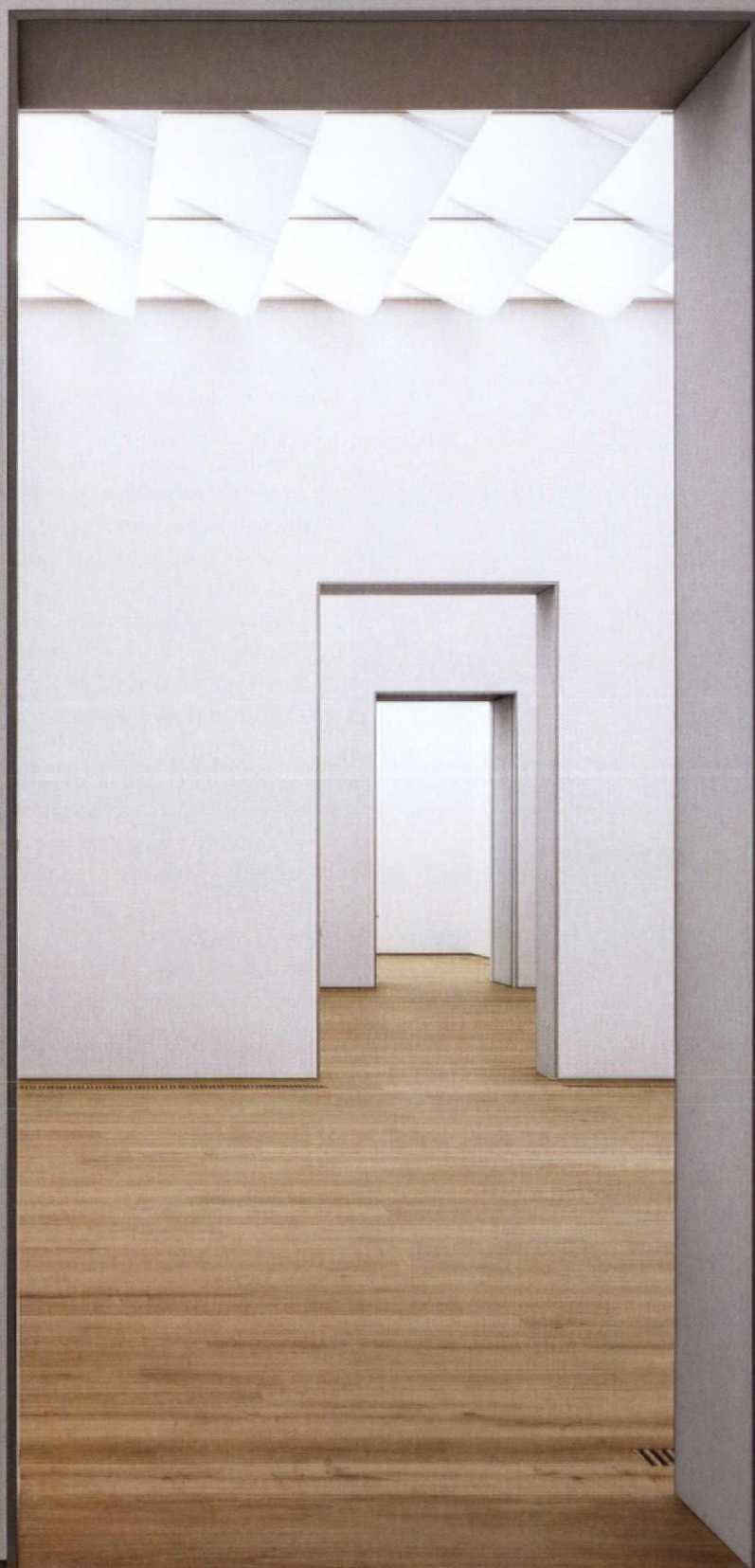
The gallery is on a tight site in

Munich’s Kunstareal, the Bavarian city’s cultural quarter. This area combines several of the most important galleries in Europe, most significantly the Alte Pinakothek (Old Art Gallery), a magnificent work of neo-classicism by Leo von Klenze, inaugurated in 1836. More recently, the Kunstareal has added buildings in the 1970s (the Neue Pinakothek) and the 1990s (Pinakothek der Moderne) to create an imposing district set in large, formal gardens.

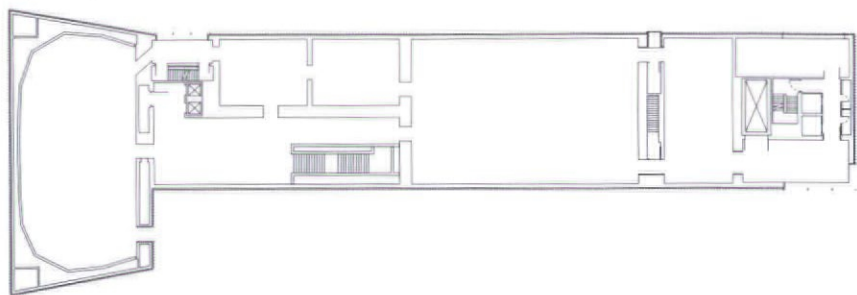
The Brandhorst’s form is pretty simple. The decision to place the entrance on the corner of Theresienstrasse and Tuerkenstrasse seems the correct one urbanistically, despite resulting in a mute relationship with the well-used green space between the back of the Brandhorst and the Pinakothek der Moderne. The building is at its highest here, and the plan splays to further mark the entrance as a civic event on the street. This grand gesture nicely interfaces between the mixed-use streetscape of Theresienstrasse and the enormous campus of cultural buildings.

Through anonymous sliding glass doors you enter an antechamber that contains ticket desk, café and stairs to a basement cloakroom. This is very much a reception area, but it is high, airy and pleasant. Passing through into the gallery you arrive in a grand stairwell. The staircase is hung from the ceiling, so there are fissures running the full height of the building from the basement to the ceiling of the top floor. This spectacular staircase doesn’t strike you as such immediately, thanks to the laconic material treatment. White walls, solid Danish oak parquet floors and balustrades, and leather handrails predominate.

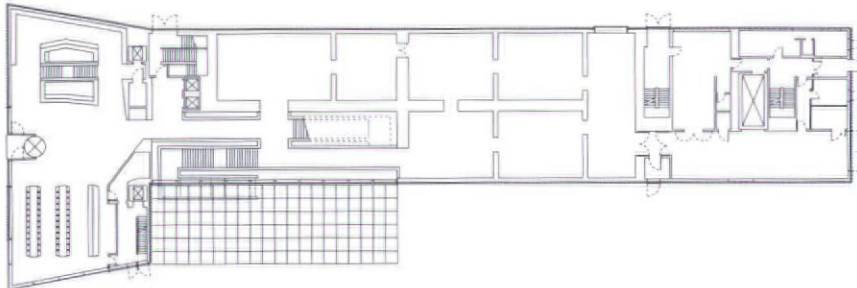
Perhaps the most impressive thing about the building is its approach to natural light. A simple shift in section on the basement level allows the floor to be illuminated from above. The middle floor is ingeniously lit from the side through high-level windows washing light along a curved soffit. On the top —



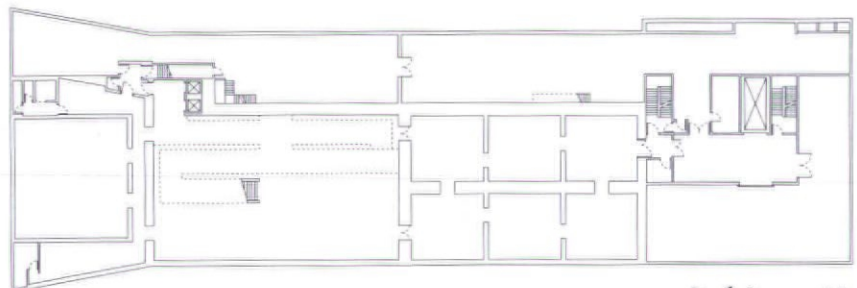
top-floor plan



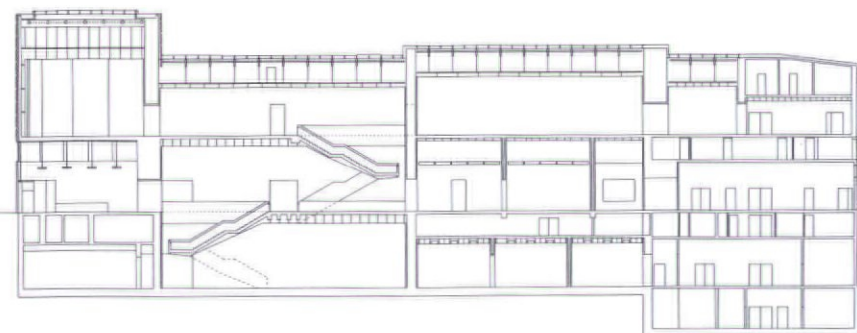
ground-floor plan



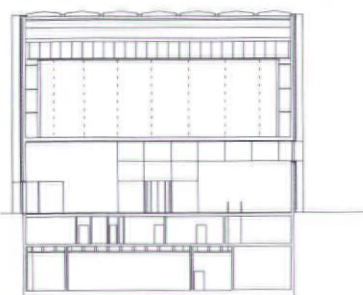
basement plan



section A



section B



Far left_ Galleries on the ground floor arranged in a kind of diagonal enfilade. The soffit glimpsed here consists of a parabolic roof with

wing-like light baffles. This lends the rooms a very regular natural light, despite the fact that they are side-lit on the ground floor

floor, a glass roof allows light in, filtered through two layers of fabric. In all cases, the almost 100,000 lux of light outside (in summer) is filtered down to an artwork-friendly level of about 300 lux, with an amazingly uniform distribution. The quality of light in the side-lit galleries on the ground floor is particularly impressive. When I was there, most of the galleries supplemented this natural light with artificial, but practice partner Matthias Sauerbruch told me he prefers it when the lights are off. I agree.

The three display floors have distinct characters. The 460m² basement gallery, for example, is barn-like, with 7m-high ceilings, and lit from skylights shielded by a metal grid. There are six smaller galleries (65m² each) in the basement, too, without any natural light. These are intended to show works on paper, but are used for general sculpture and painting right now.

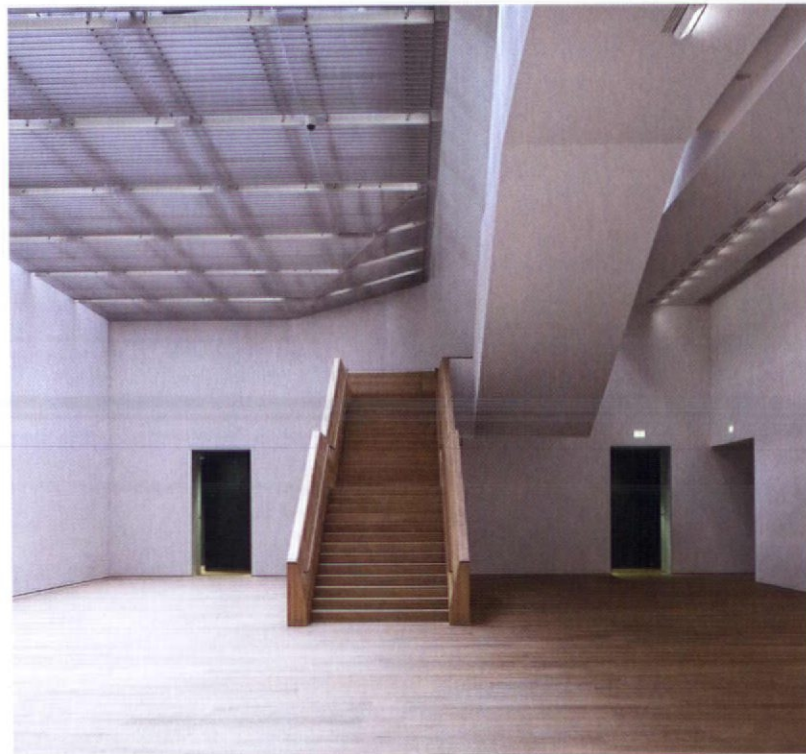
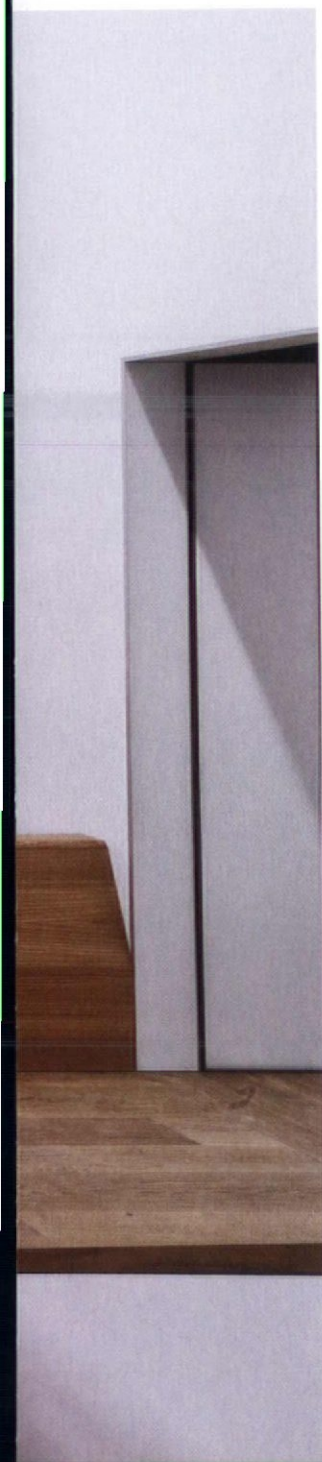
The ground floor is a series of intimate galleries (between 55m² and 100m², with hanging heights of 5.5m). On the upper level are the fabulous, large spaces for Twombly's work – two large galleries, one for the Roses, the other for the Lepanto cycle, 12 large canvasses describing a naval battle. The Lepanto room has one straight wall, with the other a faceted, irregular arc designed for the slightly varying dimensions of the paintings. This panorama is just wonderful. The architects fought to keep it in the scheme and their success has created one of the most special custom-designed spaces for a particular artwork in recent years.

The galleries are arranged room to room and the oblique enfilades are beautifully judged. The one on the top floor, from the right corridor-like breakout space in the east corner of the plan looking towards the large Roses gallery, is thrilling, interposed with one of Twombly's sculptures.

But what of the exterior? In all Sauerbruch Hutton's architecture, the skin is considered almost completely separately from the spaces inside, —

**YOU CAN'T HELP WISHING THEY
WOULD ADD TO THEIR POISE AND
ELEGANCE AN UNDERSTANDING
OF SCULPTURE WITHIN THE
GENUS ARCHITECTURE, AS
CY TWOMBLY DOES**





Clockwise from top left: Cy Twombly's *Lepanto* cycle is arranged in a custom-designed curved room, which Sauerbruch says was inspired by the naval panoramas in the Alte Pinakothek; Natural light from rooflights on the top floor is filtered through metal louvres and two layers of white fabric; The basement 'patio' gallery; The staircase is lined in oak

ARCHITECT

Sauerbruch Hutton

PRINCIPALS IN CHARGE

Matthias Sauerbruch,

Louisa Hutton, Juan

Lucas Young

PROJECT ARCHITECT

David Wegener

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Ingenieurbüro Fink, Berlin

LANDSCAPING

Adelheid Schönborn

Gräfin, Munich

PREVENTIVE


CONSERVATION

Doerner Institut, Munich

and that lends the building, despite its exuberant colour scheme, its propriety and reserve. The facade is made of 36,000 ceramic rods (4cm x 4cm x 110cm) in 23 different colours, fixed vertically in front of a two-coloured perforated metal skin. The perforations mitigate sound from the busy roads. From a distance, the skin looks homogenous, shaded variously according to the three main volumes of the building. Up close, individual rods are visible.

For Sauerbruch Hutton, colour in architecture is more related to painting than to sculpture. In a short text, half apology, half manifesto, Sauerbruch describes the Brandhorst as a 'polychromatic' building. Justifying use of colour in architecture with reference to neo-classical frescos, it continues into modernism through Le Corbusier and a brief, revisionist reading of Adolf Loos (who hated adornments, but not decoration per se).

What is not mentioned is as interesting as what is. He refers to von Klenze's Alte Pinakothek and to a now-demolished neo-classical building by von Gaertner and van Voit using the names of the architects, but does not mention the authors of the Neue Pinakothek (by Alexander von Branca, completed in 1981) or the forbidding Pinakothek der Moderne (by Stephan Braunfels). Sauerbruch seems keen to situate himself in a longer modern tradition, rather than the strange post-modernism of German architecture of the late 70s and 80s. His perception that facade-making is like abstract painting backs this up.

But you can't help wishing they would add to their poise and elegance an understanding of sculpture within the genus architecture, as Twombly does. The elegance of plan and section of the Brandhorst is tangible, but the feeling outside is of a building assembled of volumes, dressed tastefully rather than achieving a powerful unity. Sauerbruch Hutton's work is overwhelmingly professional and very fine indeed. If they loosened up a little, they would be all the more powerful. 

049

LIBRARY AND SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

LOCATION

BARCELONA, SPAIN

ARCHITECT

RCR ARQUITECTES

WRITER

ROB GREGORY

PHOTOGRAPHY

**EUGENI PONS,
HISAO SUZUKI**

When the AR last featured a library in Barcelona, it was an object building set within the medieval grain of Gracia. Situated on the north-west edge of the city, beyond the tyranny of Eixample – Ildefons Cerdà's distinctive grid – the Jaume Fuster Library (AR June 2006) demonstrated Catalan architect Josep Llinàs' masterful handling of a rotund form negotiating its place in response to distinct urban adjacencies and complex internal dynamics. By contrast, this library by RCR Arquitectes – a practice based in Olot, north of Barcelona – is anything but an object building, clinging to the edges of its context and lining the interior of one of the city's distinctive chamfered urban blocks in the south-westerly district of Sant Antoni.

This building serves a new city-wide vision of Catalan urbanism, commissioned by ProEixample, a company formed in 1996 to acquire land in block interiors for public use. So strong is its motivation, the

programme was not even the project's principal driving force. Instead, a break in the continuity of the street generated the project, providing a rare opportunity to fill the gap and give a new use to the courtyard beyond. The original design competition proposed a relatively generic administrative office. Once the spatial and social opportunities of RCR's winning composition were understood, however, the client agreed that a public amenity would be far better suited. Thus the library now occupies the gateway building, setting up complementary social dynamics with the senior citizens' centre, which was part of the initial proposal, at the rear of the courtyard.

Before remodelling began, this block was typical of many in the city: inaccessible to the public and occupied by low-rise light industrial workshops, sheds and occasional chimneys. In her analysis, presented to the Mies van der Rohe Award jury in a public lecture (the project was one of —





**GLAZED FACADES VEILED IN
STEEL SIT AGAINST RENDER
AND STONE, EXAGGERATING
IN MATERIAL EXPRESSION WHAT
THE BUILDING CONCEDES IN FORM**



site plan



Previous page_ The new library and senior citizens' centre occupies the interior of one of Barcelona's chamfered city grids. Above right_ From the street (Carrer Comte Borrell), the five-storey library sits conspicuously as an insertion within the existing streetscape

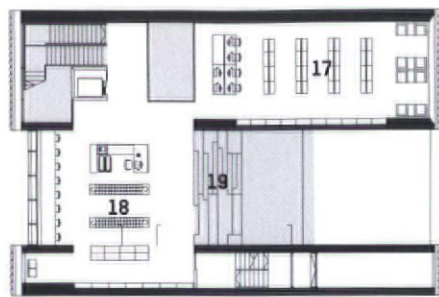
five shortlisted schemes, AR June 2009), practice co-founder Carme Pigem named aspects of the city that had failed to come to fruition. 'The reality of Cerdà's plan was different,' she conceded. Describing how the engineer's aim was to have a number of open blocks, not impenetrable monoliths, she underlined the need to reopen them for public use. When this project began, a single-storey unit plugged the gap in the street, perpetuating a false understanding of the Cerdà grid as being more about blocks than buildings.

A quiet anxiety was evident in Pigem's description, identifying the desire to create buildings that read more clearly than the blocks, which explains the bold shift in articulation of the new library against its context. Glazed facades veiled in perforated steel sit conspicuously against render and stone, exaggerating in material expression what the building concedes in form, as it's stealthy figure quietly finds its place in the

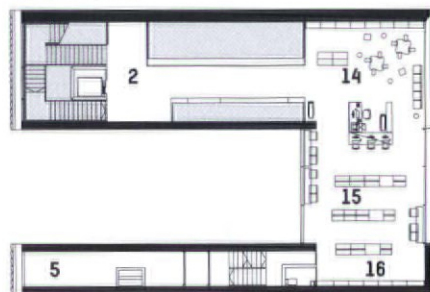
city. In both plan and section, the black form negotiates itself into a very settled state, with a five-storey block sitting within the existing vertical gap and double-height/single-storey wing forming a cranked armature that steps in and around the west and north boundaries.

While the wish to make a more identifiable building may have drawn some to use exuberant forms to create a dialogue between new and old, RCR's trademark sensitivity to landscapes has been reapplied with skill and restraint here. The plans are logical and clearly arranged, and the section breaks up to bring light into the covered passageway. In terms of material application, however, their restraint fails to add any subtlety to the grain of the townscape. While the ambition to unify street and courtyard is clearly conveyed, extending the application of minimal black surfaces to the library's interior was perhaps a move too far. Some may also agree that —

second-floor plan

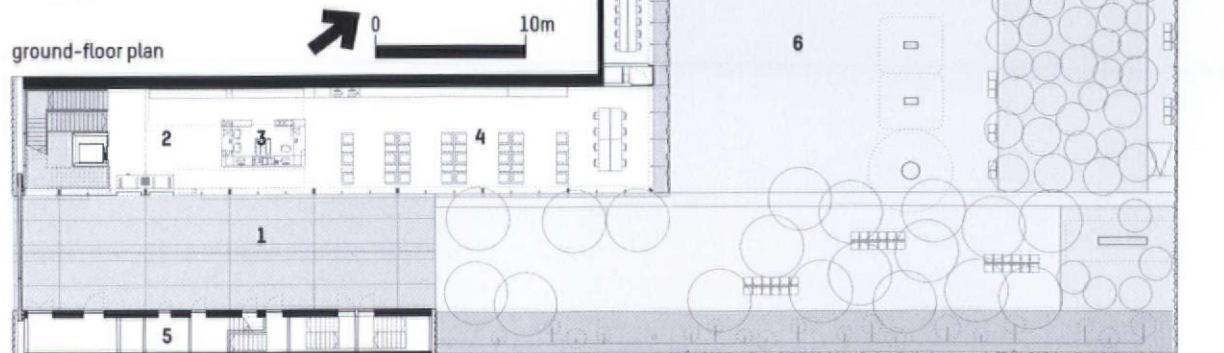


first-floor plan



- 1 entrance passage
- 2 entrance hall
- 3 reception
- 4 reading area
- 5 plant
- 6 courtyard garden
- 7 management offices
- 8 lounge
- 9 colonnade
- 10 cyber café
- 11 drinks machines
- 12 function suite
- 13 workshop
- 14 children's reading area
- 15 fiction library
- 16 reference library
- 17 general library
- 18 music library
- 19 steps

ground-floor plan








Left_ The library comprises a ground-floor armature (right) and a five-storey stack of reading rooms. A gap remains in the building, bridged by a stepped reading room at the top and children's library at the bottom

Above_ Turning twice through 90°, the armature also contains a senior citizens' centre, foiled by a cloister-like external space

the armature in the courtyard should have had its own, more distinctive cladding and lining. Moving from street to courtyard and further still into the stacked reading rooms, the spatial shifts are insufficient in making this a truly urban experience. A return trip to Jaume Fuster, with its diversity of interiors and interrelations, underlines this point with potency as the most successful spaces in this new building are those that deal with specifics of context, placing lightwells along boundary walls in the senior citizens' building. It would seem that the library structure was unable to shake off the corporate undertones of the previously planned office building.

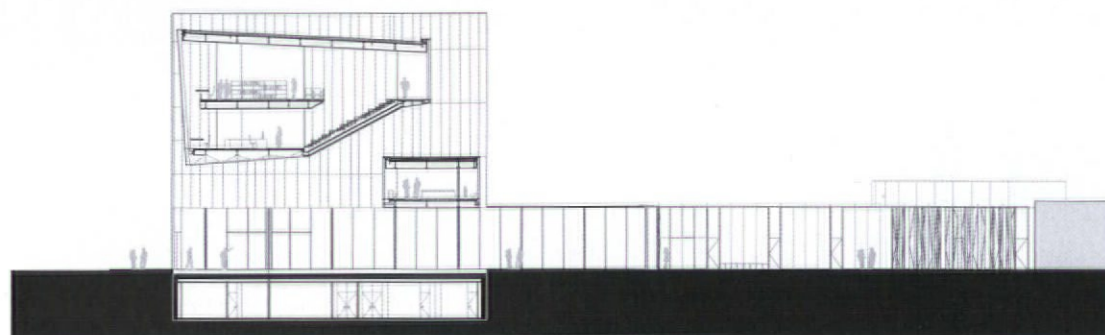
The use of steel also has a problem, relating to the recent addition of a children's playground in the easternmost corner of the site, on land acquired since these photographs were taken. While providing shade, enclosure and shelter for the cloister, the buckled steel fins serve too well as solar

collectors, absorbing the scorching heat of the Catalan sun, to the point where unsuspecting hands or backs get a nasty shock when they brush the surface – another unfortunate consequence of having to retrofit a brief into a predetermined architectural proposition.

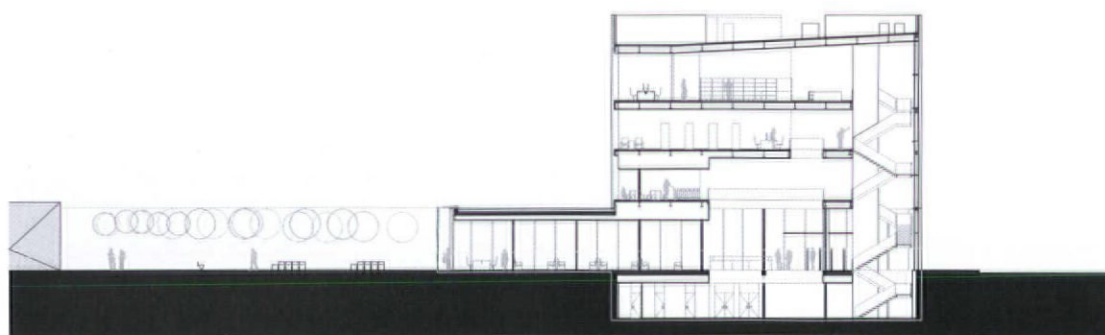
Despite this, the experience and amenity offered to local residents is an exemplary model for future ProEixample initiatives. Sitting in the stepped reading room the library certainly provides welcome respite from the hustle and bustle of this vibrant market district, and the building is extremely busy. Pignon describes Barcelona's new libraries as 'cultural supermarkets', forming an essential part of day to day community life. Here then, despite the slightly topsy-turvy process of retrofitting a function into a form, RCR has produced another fine library for Barcelona, making the city an exemplary destination for any would-be library architects and clients from around the world. 

**EXTENDING THE APPLICATION
OF MINIMAL BLACK SURFACES
TO THE LIBRARY'S INTERIOR
WAS PERHAPS A MOVE TOO FAR**

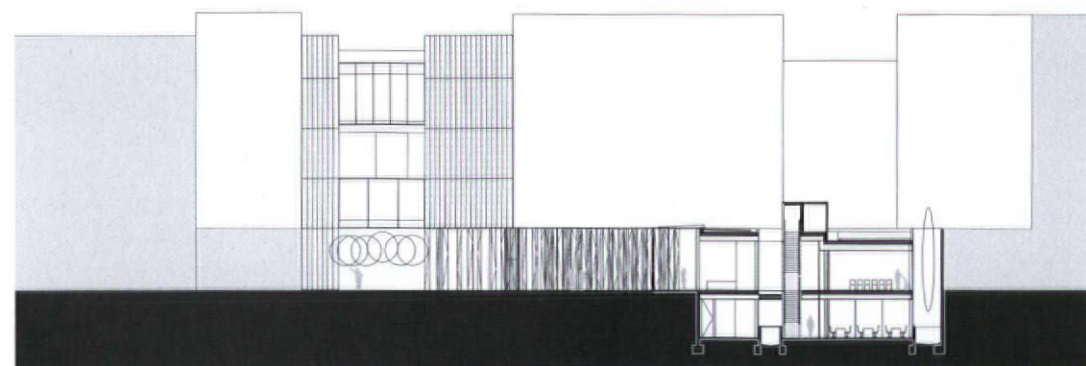
ARCHITECT
RCR Arquitectes,
Olot, Spain
PROJECT TEAM
O Gallez, G Tregouët,
C Marzo (ProEixample)
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
Blázquez-Guanter
Arquitectes
COST CONSULTANT
C Carrasco
(GPO Ingeniería)



section through covered entrance passageway



long section through library



short section through senior citizens' centre



Above_ On the ground floor, the library provides day-to-day community services, where many locals come to read newspapers
Above right_ The cloister widens to create a sheltered external space. The chimney on the left is a remnant of the courtyard's former life
Right_ A stepped reading room bridges flanking spaces and links the second and third floors



050

ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

LOCATION

CHICAGO, USA

ARCHITECT

RENZO PIANO

BUILDING WORKSHOP

WRITER

MICHAEL WEBB

PHOTOGRAPHY

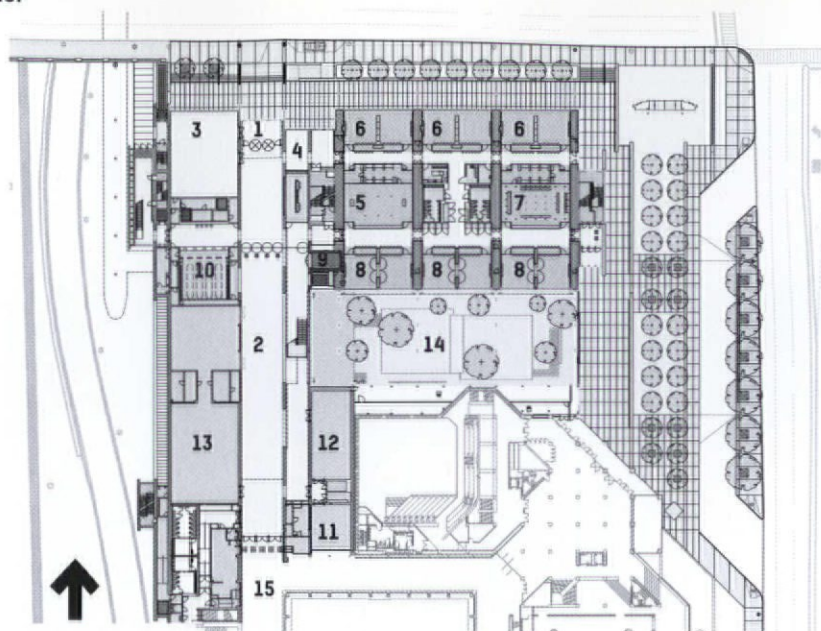
NIC LEHOUX





IT WAS A PRIVILEGE TO BUILD IN CHICAGO. THE CITY INVENTED MODERNITY, AND MY BUILDINGS TRY TO CONNECT WITH THAT

RENZO PIANO



ground-floor plan

Few contemporary architects have such a strong commitment to purpose and place as Renzo Piano. Each of the eight US museums he has built or extended, from The Menil Collection in Houston (AR March 1987) to the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco (AR November 2008) is shaped by context and programme. The newly completed Modern Wing of the Art Institute of Chicago is no exception. It comprises two blocks of galleries extending north from earlier additions to the Beaux Arts original, linked by a skylit concourse and shaded by aluminium blades set into a lofty white steel canopy. Limestone from the same quarry as the 1893 block clads the side walls, and a double glass curtain wall to the north dissolves the mass.

'It was a privilege to build in Chicago,' says Piano. 'It's a place of myth for me. As a young architect I saw it as the city that reinvented itself after the great fire, using steel balloon frames to create buildings that were light and vibrant. It invented modernity, and my buildings try to connect with that legacy.'

Relics of Louis Sullivan's Chicago Stock Exchange, preserved beside

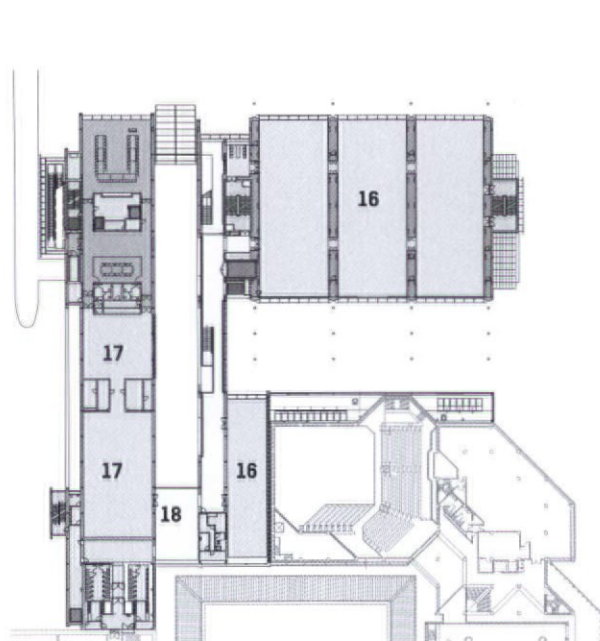
and within the art institute, are tangible reminders of the city's modern origins. Survivors from the first generation of master-builders are cherished landmarks, as are the urbane towers of Mies van der Rohe. But those are scattered highlights. Most recent construction is as banal as in any American city, so Piano's addition is a welcome return to the principles that sustained the myth. It conducts a dialogue with history and with arts and landscape centre Millennium Park to the north. When Frank Gehry completed the Jay Pritzker Pavilion – a baroque swirl of steel plates enclosing a concert shell – he issued a friendly challenge. 'Come and get me,' he told Piano, who was finalising his design. The Italian did just that, exploiting the rigorous street grid to align his concourse on the pavilion, counterpointing Gehry's exuberance with his cool rationality. 'He works in his language, I with mine, but the two projects do a similar job,' says Piano. 'He created an acoustical space and we created a visual space protected from the sun.' To tie the two together, a slender 180m-long footbridge slopes gently down from a rooftop sculpture garden to the middle of the park,

complementing the equally graceful span that Gehry designed to link landscape with lake shore.

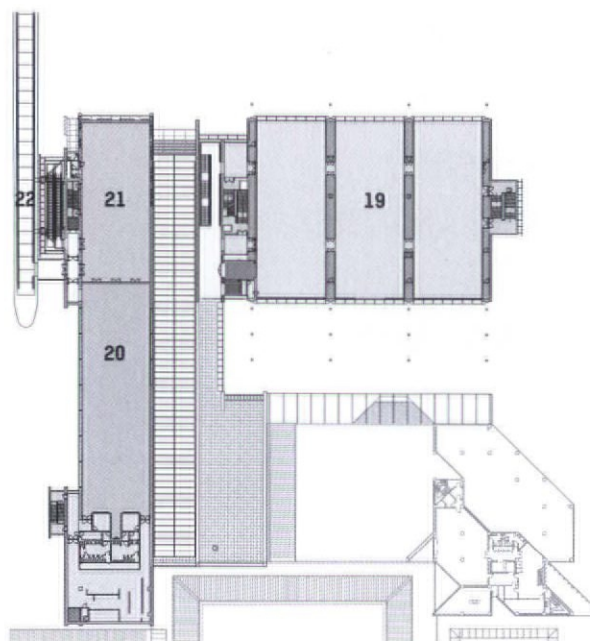
All this might have turned out differently but for a serendipitous encounter. As Piano recalls, 'I was in Chicago in 1999 and James Wood, the Art Institute director, invited me to stop by. A number of people came and we had a very informal conversation about their plan to expand. Later I understood that was the selection process. I like it when there is an exchange of ideas. Competitions are too often like beauty contests.'

Initially, the goal was to add galleries on the south side, as the largest of seven successive additions to the original building. By late 2001, it was clear that Millennium Park was becoming a new centre of activity. The Goodman Theatre facing the park across E Monroe Street had relocated and the institute was able to acquire and demolish its old building. That provided a larger, more prominent site, with the opportunity to create a bold cross axis that would bring a sense of order and connectivity to a muddled east-west sequence. As Piano observes: 'The old galleries offered an incredible place to view art but people got lost easily.' The —

Previous page_ As with his other American museums, light and space are Piano's dominant themes, realised in taut refined structures that fuse craft and technology. A new footbridge links his Modern Wing with Millennium Park, locking the building more intimately into the city

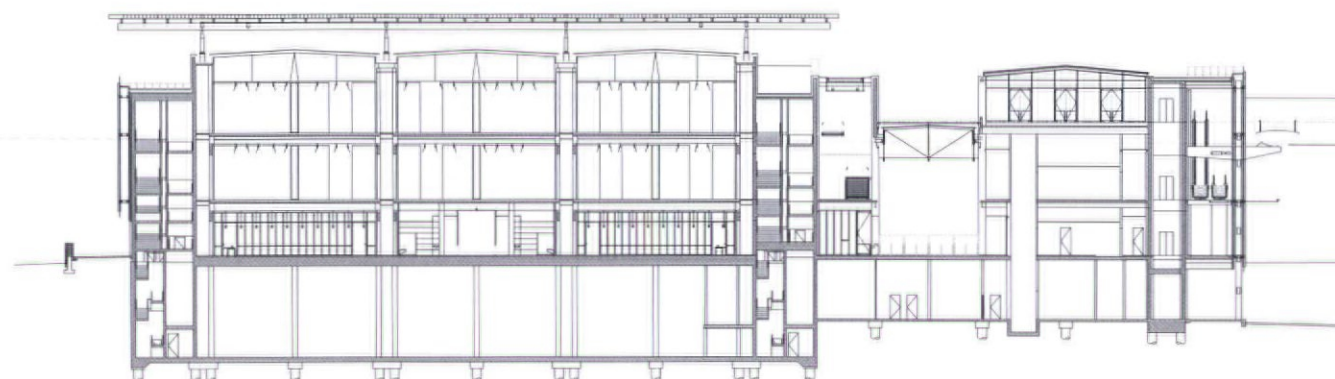


first-floor plan

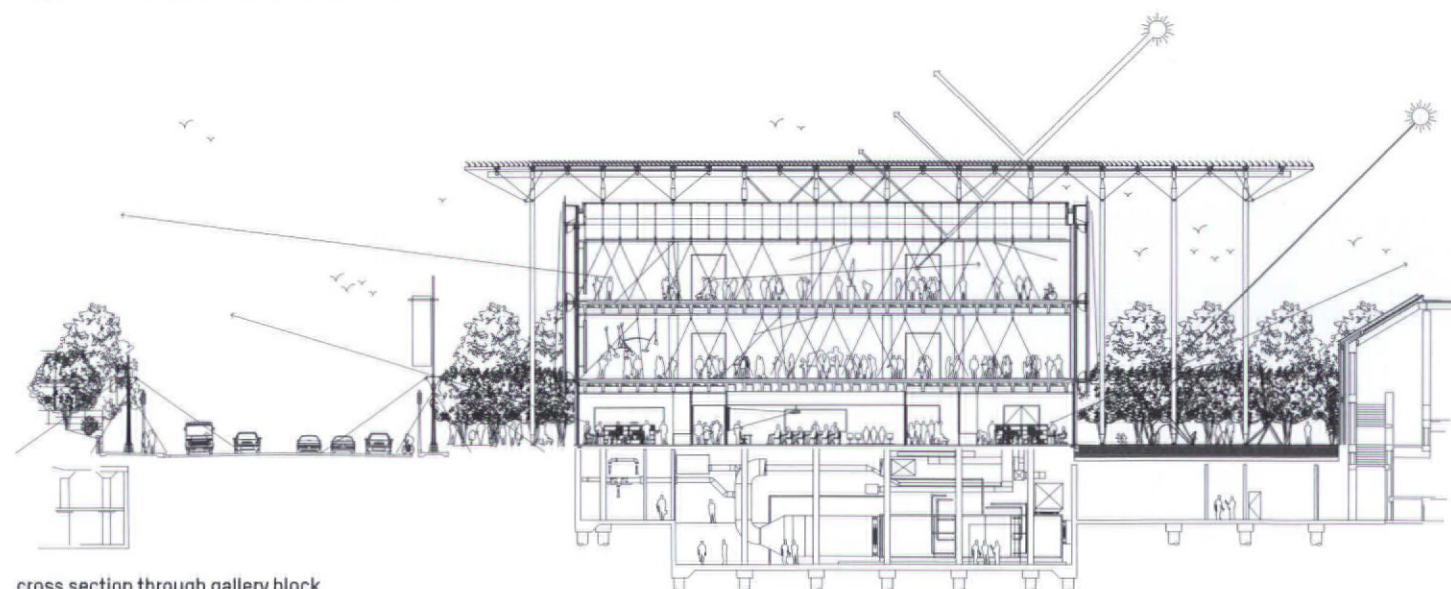


second-floor plan

- 1 entrance
- 2 Griffin Court
- 3 shop
- 4 membership offices
- 5 family room
- 6 studios
- 7 education centre
- 8 classrooms
- 9 kids' shop
- 10 cloakroom
- 11 film, video and new media
- 12 photography
- 13 temporary exhibitions
- 14 courtyard garden
- 15 link to existing museum
- 16 contemporary art
- 17 architecture and design
- 18 café
- 19 modern art
- 20 restaurant
- 21 terrace
- 22 bridge link



long section through gallery block and concourse



cross section through gallery block

PIANO BELIEVES THAT MUSEUMS NEED TO BALANCE SACRED AND PROFANE SPACE, AND THE BUSTLE OF THE GROUND FLOOR GIVES WAY TO THE SERENITY OF THE TWO UPPER LEVELS

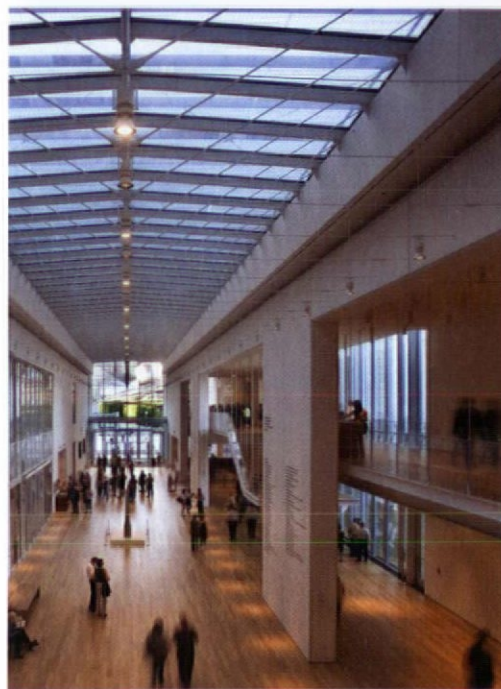
desire to bridge a busy street led to the idea of a sloping promenade, accessible to the disabled, which would draw people in from the park. As graceful in its profile as the hull of a skiff, the footbridge doubles as a belvedere offering a panorama of the city and as another point of entry.

The transparency of the north facade turns the axial concourse named Griffin Court into a public gathering place, alive with school parties using the educational centre to the east and visitors to the shop and temporary galleries on the west side. The shallow pitched skylight is cable-braced like the rigging of a ship. Piano believes that museums need to balance sacred and profane space, and the bustle of the ground floor gives way to the serenity of the galleries for modern and contemporary art on the two upper levels. 'You "take your shoes off" and you go up – it's a different world,' says the architect.

There's a seamless link between the white oak floors and benches. On the top floor, you can glimpse the sky through the canopy that projects beyond the building and the thin fabric that filters the light. The blades are computer controlled to respond to fluctuations in the intensity of

light and photovoltaic cells in window scrims conserve energy. An exemplary collection of modern classics from the first half of the 20th century is suffused in natural light. On the level below, contemporary art and the rich collection of design and architecture are displayed in galleries that flow into each other and draw natural light from windows and the concourse. An encyclopedic museum that has collected contemporary art since it was founded 130 years ago, now the full sweep of the institute's holdings is finally on view.

The grandeur and intimacy of the galleries matches the engaging presence of the exterior. 'For me, a building never stands alone. It's a piece of the city,' says Piano. He has woven the Modern Wing into the fabric of a heroically scaled metropolis as successfully as he accommodated The Menil Collection to the scale and character of its residential neighbours. The new structure is rigorous but welcoming – a measure of quality and relevance for Chicago, where the guiding vision was eclipsed for several decades. It also provides a subtle riposte to the overheated, ego-driven world of museum design. 



Top left_ Gallery block and new courtyard seen from Griffin Court, the spinal concourse
Top right_ The top-lit, axial concourse unifies the building
Above_ The concourse is a new gathering place
Right_ A typical gallery space

ARCHITECT

Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Genoa, Italy
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Arup

SERVICES ENGINEERS

Arup, Sebesta Blomberg

CIVIL ENGINEER

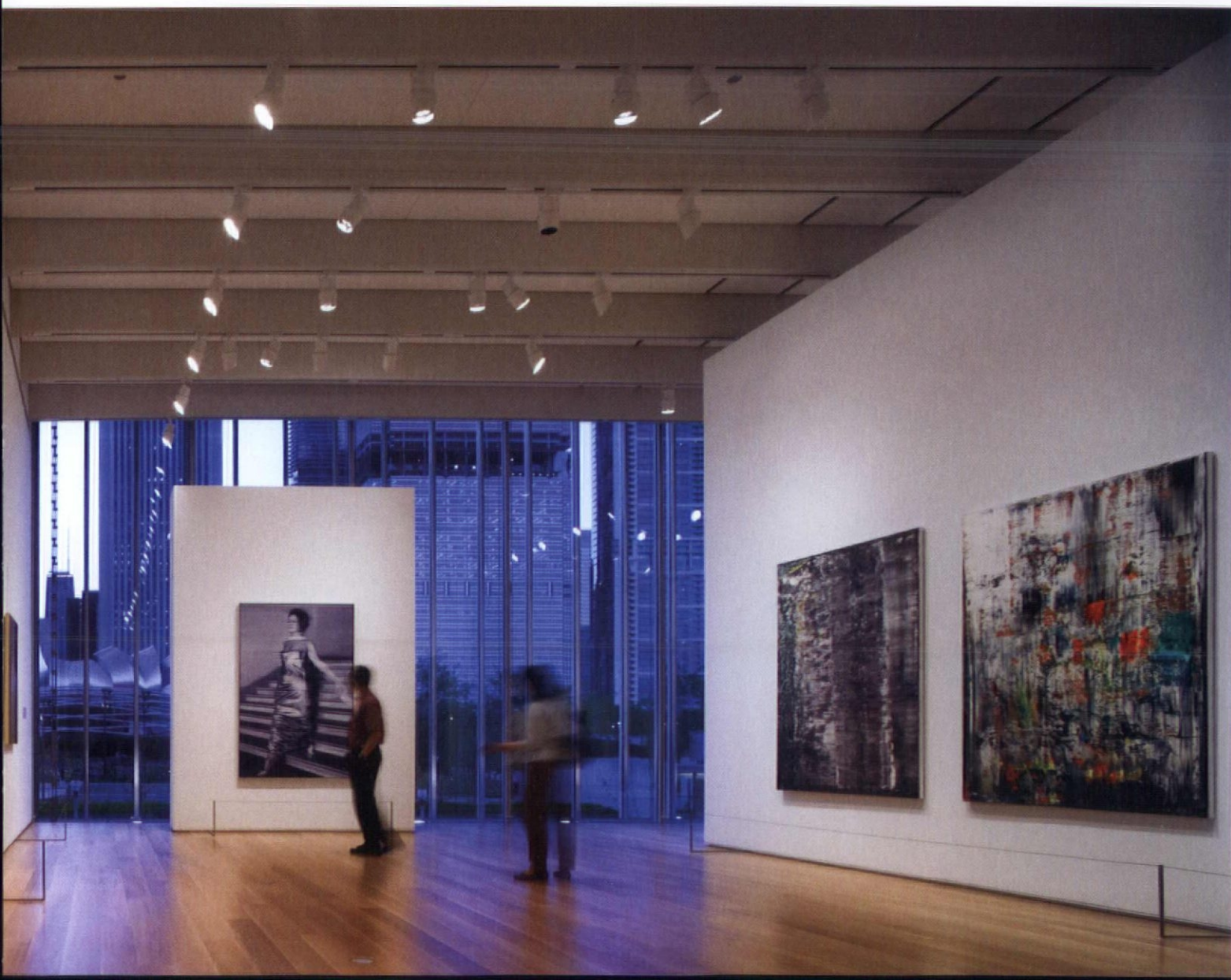
Patrick Engineering

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Gustafson Guthrie Nichol

COST CONSULTANT

Morgan Construction Consultants



051

POPE JOHN PAUL II HALL

LOCATION

RIJEKA, CROATIA

ARCHITECT

RANDIĆ-TURATO ARCHITECTS

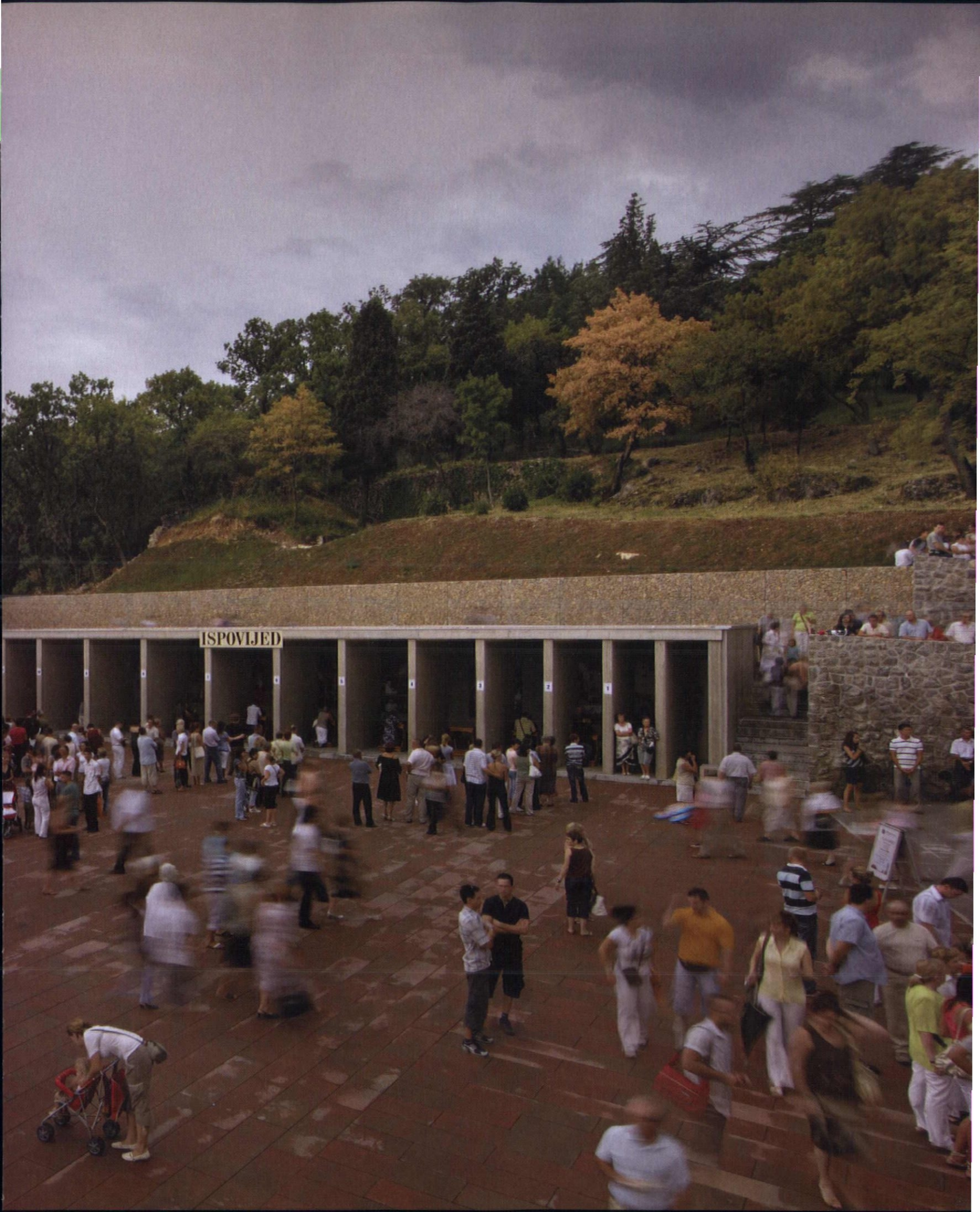
WRITER

CATHERINE SLESSOR

PHOTOGRAPHY

SANDRO LENDLER



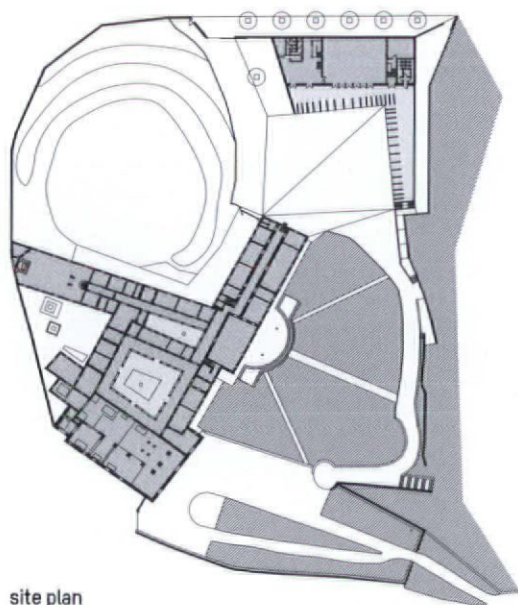


SINCE THE ECLIPSE OF
COMMUNISM, FAITH OF ALL
KINDS IS NOW EXPRESSED
WITH RENEWED DEVOTION

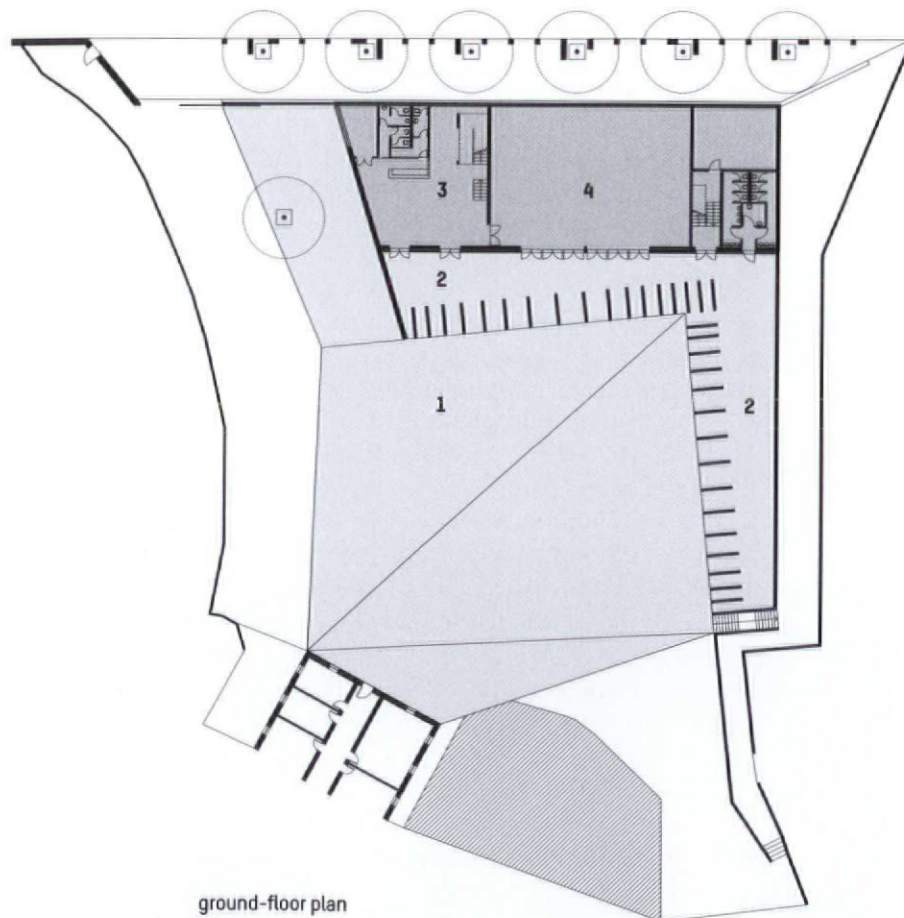


Previous page_
Enclosed and
defined by the new
cloister and hall,
the courtyard is a
place for encounter
and assembly
Above_ From its

sacred hillside site,
the monastery
overlooks the port
city of Rijeka
Right_ Brick cladding
is pulled away to
create the effect
of a warped weave



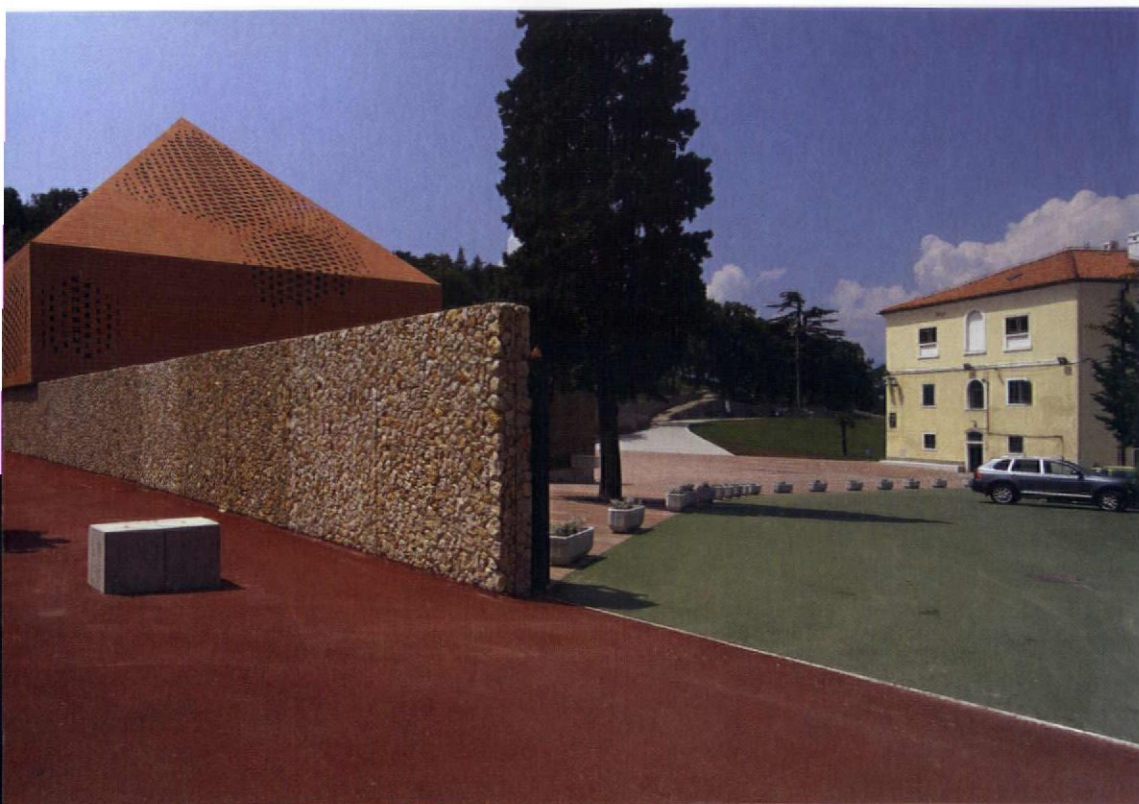
site plan



ground-floor plan

- 1 courtyard
- 2 cloister
- 3 canteen
- 4 assembly hall





Lying near Croatia's northern border with Italy, Rijeka is home to the Church of Our Lady of Trsat, the oldest and most important Marian pilgrimage site in Croatia. Legend has it that in 1291, angels brought the Nazareth Tabernacle belonging to the Holy Family to a site at Trsat, in the hills above Rijeka, where it remained for three years before being transferred (again by angelic intervention) to its final resting place at Loreto in Italy. At the time, a church was built on the Trsat hillside to commemorate this miraculous event. Later, in the 15th century, a new church and Franciscan monastery were founded along with a school and hospital, in accordance with the order's tenets of openness and active social ministry.

Since the eclipse of Communism in the Balkans, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, faith of all kinds is now expressed with renewed devotion. The church at Trsat attracts a steady stream of pilgrims, swelling to thousands for the pivotal Marian festival, the Feast of the Assumption, on 15 August. The challenge for the monastery authorities was how to


manage the practical and sacral needs of such an influx in the spirit of Franciscan tradition. This was given impetus by the visit of Pope John Paul II in 2003 (only the second pontiff to set foot on Croatian soil), who visited the church for private prayer and gave his blessing to the monastery's expansion plans. The new complex, consisting of a hall, cloister and courtyard for open-air assemblies, now bears his name.

In its handling of mass and light, and exploration of relationships between the man-made and nature, humanity and divinity, this is a building of many subtle parts. Designed by the local partnership of Saša Randić and Idis Turato, it achieves a quiet transcendence, yet also acts as a reconciling bridge between the mysteries of the numinous and the more humdrum demands of the modern world.

The hall lies on the south-east edge of the monastery compound. At its base is an L-shaped cloister defining a new public courtyard. Articulating processional routes through the monastery grounds and spaces, the new hall and cloister

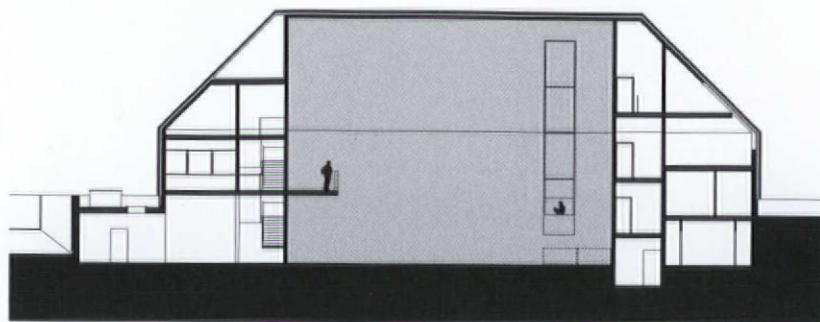
emphasise the permeable quality of the overall ensemble. At its heart is the 'charged void' of the courtyard, which holds new and historic elements in equilibrium and is periodically transformed by crowds of visitors. In effect it becomes an open house, a notion as ancient as the liturgy itself, protectively gathering hoards of pilgrims into the bosom of the divine.

The hall is a plain hipped barn, an abstraction of the most basic form of shelter, yet this apparently simple volume is endowed with a powerful ornamental quality. Walls and roof are uniformly sheathed in a taut skin of terracotta bricks, but in some places the bricks are pulled apart, like a loosely woven fabric, to allow light through an inner layer of translucent cladding to the hall and its ancillary spaces. This effect is most compelling at night, when a soft radiance leaches out through the pixelated brick veil.

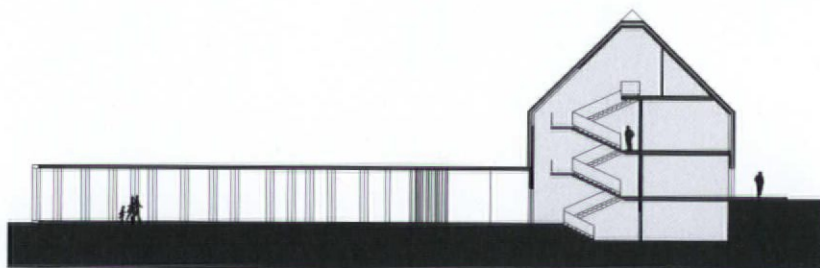
The cloister is supported by slim, irregularly spaced concrete fins. Like the warped brick, which softens a large volume, the uneven spacing generates an informal, rippling rhythm as a retort (conscious or otherwise) to the institutional rigour of symmetry and monumentality. The concrete lamella forms a series of niches perfectly proportioned for two people and so are enthusiastically employed by the monks for al fresco confession on busy feast days. The cloister itself also serves as an informal exhibition space, so the new elements are not simply receptacles for passive contemplation, but have an active role in cultivating the monastery's engagement with the wider world. The hall, in fact, is used for both sacred and secular gatherings, which perhaps explains its neutral, almost Scandinavian ambience. The only concessions to Catholic symbolism are bands of papal yellow, outlining horizontal and vertical slots of glazing. This assured and inventive project is all the more remarkable when you consider that its architects gave their services for free, as a gift to the monastery. A reward in heaven must surely await. 

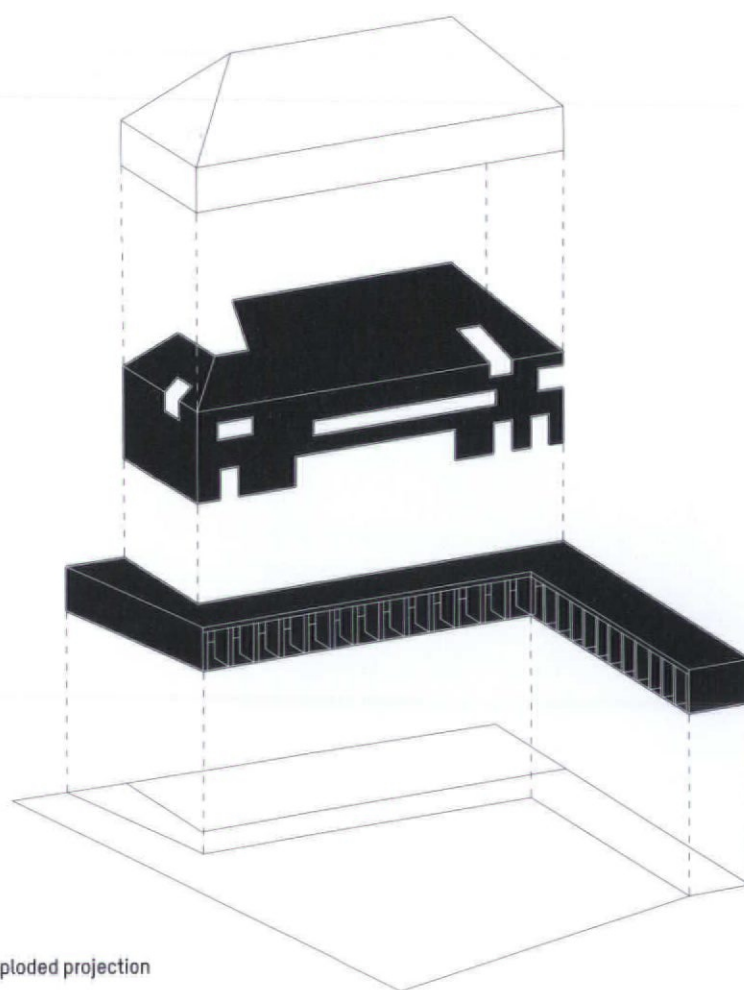
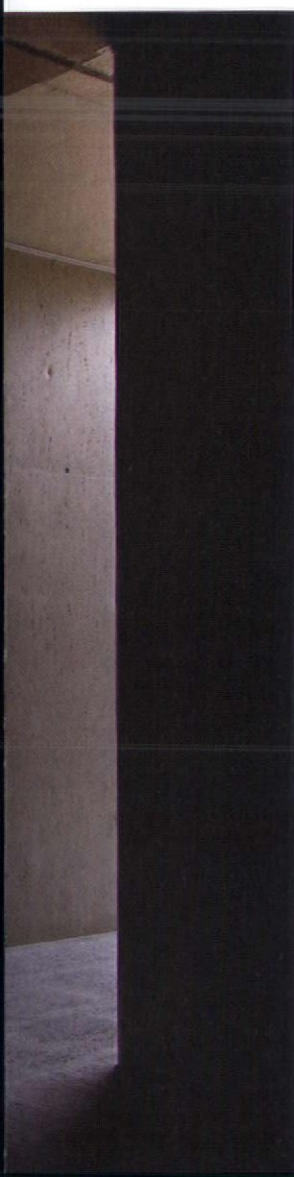
**IN ITS HANDLING OF MASS
AND LIGHT, AND EXPLORATION
OF THE MAN-MADE AND
NATURE, THIS IS A BUILDING
OF MANY SUBTLE PARTS**

long section



cross section





exploded projection

Far left_ The cloister forms an informal exhibition space and its niches are used as confessionals
Above_ Illuminated by daylight filtering through the brick skin, the new hall has a studiously neutral ambience

ARCHITECT
Randić-Turato Architects,
Rijeka, Croatia
PROJECT TEAM
Saša Randić, Idis Turato,
Sinisa Glusica, Gordan
Resan, Iva Cuzela-Bilac,
Ana Stanicic
CONSTRUCTOR
Aljosa Travas

052

CITY OF JUSTICE

LOCATION

BARCELONA, SPAIN

ARCHITECT

DAVID CHIPPERFIELD

ARCHITECTS/B720

WRITER

ROWAN MOORE

PHOTOGRAPHY

CHRISTIAN RICHTERS







Let me say this at the start. I had the same reaction as most others I know who have seen David Chipperfield's new City of Justice in Barcelona, whether in pictures or from the road outside. Isn't it a bit forbidding? Do its cage-like blocks not suggest prison to the accused in advance of any verdict, and imply that he is guilty until proved innocent? Local critics have called it a fortress, and the F-word – Fascist – hovers in many discussions of it. Even the President of Catalonia, at the opening ceremony, chose to praise it with flinty words: 'It will fortify confidence in the legal system.'

Soon after charming German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Prince Charles and countless others with his reconstruction of the Neues Museum in Berlin (AR May 2009), David Chipperfield has completed his most cussed work to date, as well as his largest. The question is, why would he want to do that? The short answer, according to the architect, is: 'These are great big legal factories. Do you take a machine and disguise it or do you celebrate its normative qualities? Do you camouflage it? Do you somehow make it more friendly by softening these volumes? It seemed daft to do that at this scale.' For a longer answer, it helps first to lay out a few facts.

The idea behind the City of Justice was to unify Barcelona's courts in a single vast complex, together with the court house of the neighbouring municipality of L'Hospitalet de Llobregat. The site straddles the border of Barcelona and L'Hospitalet, with the bulk of it on the Barcelona side. Like areas on municipal edges everywhere, it has an air of neglect. It is located on the Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, a multi-lane road that runs through the city before heading out towards the airport. At the point where the City of Justice is placed, the road runs through an edge territory with indeterminate apartment and office blocks. Further up the road, a red, sock-like hotel with associated office building is near

completion: officially it is by Toyo Ito, albeit seemingly in collaboration with Dr Seuss.

In conjunction with Barcelona-based practice b720, David Chipperfield Architects won the competition to design the City of Justice in 2002, beating Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners, Ricardo Bofill and MBM Arquitectes. The City of Justice was the baby of the ruling political party, which was in danger of losing office before construction started. There was therefore a rush to get the project irreversibly on-site before elections in 2004, when the opposition duly took power.

As expected, and as is common with municipal regime changes in Spain, as elsewhere, the incoming party tried to cancel the work of the outgoing party. It found that the project had progressed too far to be abandoned, so contented itself with shrinking it. Storeys were shaved off the as-yet unbuilt blocks, and one entire block was removed from the plans. It was, says Chipperfield, 'a difficult project. It had no parents; it was a political football'.

The completed Chipperfield/b720 project consists of eight blocks in differently coloured concrete, in a freeform distribution across the site. Four, in tones of eau de nil, mulberry, dust and rust, are dedicated to providing justice to Barcelona. Their lower storeys contain courtrooms flanked by broad public corridors and waiting areas; the upper floors contain offices. There is a separate plum-coloured building dedicated to forensic science, and two cash-earning apartment blocks, in terracotta and sand shades. The L'Hospitalet courthouse, meanwhile, stands self-contained and mustard yellow across a road, and on the other side of the municipal boundary. An additional block, to contain apartments and commercial premises, is under construction. The total area is 330,000m².

Two public routes cross the site from south to north. One, free of access, traverses a new piazza; the

other, subject to security controls, passes through an enclosed glass atrium that links the court buildings. These are also linked underground, by passages connecting cells, morgues and other necessities of justice, while running through the complex are the separated circulation systems needed to keep judiciary, defendants and the public apart. Appearing as several blocks above ground, the courts are therefore a single joined-up organism.

Each block – whether Barcelona or L'Hospitalet court buildings, forensic laboratories or commercial offices – is constructed identically. Made of structural in-situ concrete cages with vertical windows set back from the front surface, they are laid out to a 60cm module that is varied occasionally to allow the greater width required for access by the fire department. The module widens at the base in those places where shops will be installed, but is otherwise the same whether offices lie behind it, or passages serving court rooms.

The atrium, in contrast to the coloured concrete blocks, is black, grey and white. Its external walls are mostly of glass, with a fine diamond-gridded steel mesh filtering light, providing security, and creating a kind of haze when looking out from the inside. A scattering of jacaranda and gleditsia trees and concrete benches occupy the cobbled piazza.

Explaining his choice of technique, Chipperfield says: 'It is for this climate and this light: why make a glass tower in Barcelona?' In Spain, he adds, building is a 'very flexible system, and you can be a victim of this flexibility. Initial drawings are a template and nothing more'. Contractors, in other words, are free to interpret them as they think fit. He contrasts this with Germany, where 'there is no flexibility. Any anomalies are going to be solved in advance'.

Therefore, 'you need to anchor the project. That's where the concrete facades came from. They are irrevocable and undeniable physical presences. The builders either —

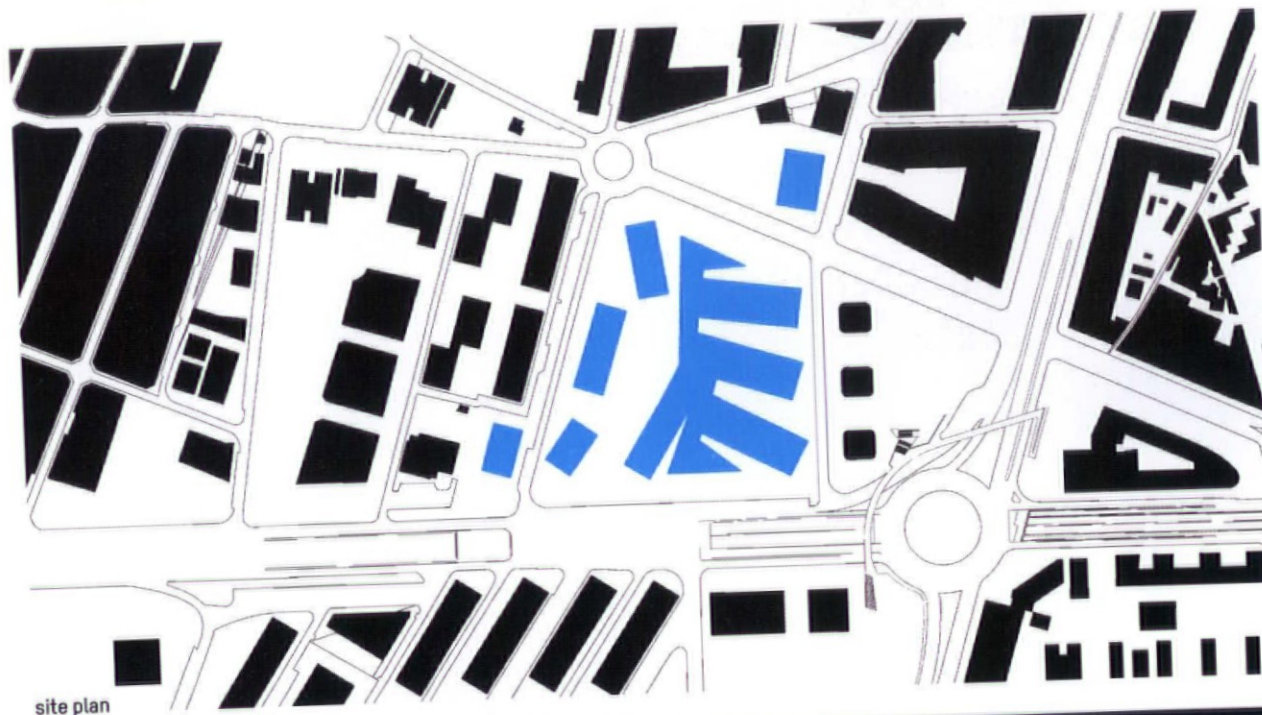
Previous page_
Barcelona's new
City of Justice is
a modern legal
factory, uniting the
city's courts in one
mega complex
Top left_ Blocks
are of identical
in situ concrete
construction, but
each is a subtly
different colour
Top right_
The rhythm of
the windows is
unnervingly
unvarying
Left_ A long, low
glass atrium links
the four court
buildings

**YOU NEED TO ANCHOR THE PROJECT.
THAT'S WHERE THE CONCRETE
FACADES CAME FROM. THEY ARE
IRREVOCABLE AND UNDENIABLE
PHYSICAL PRESENCES**

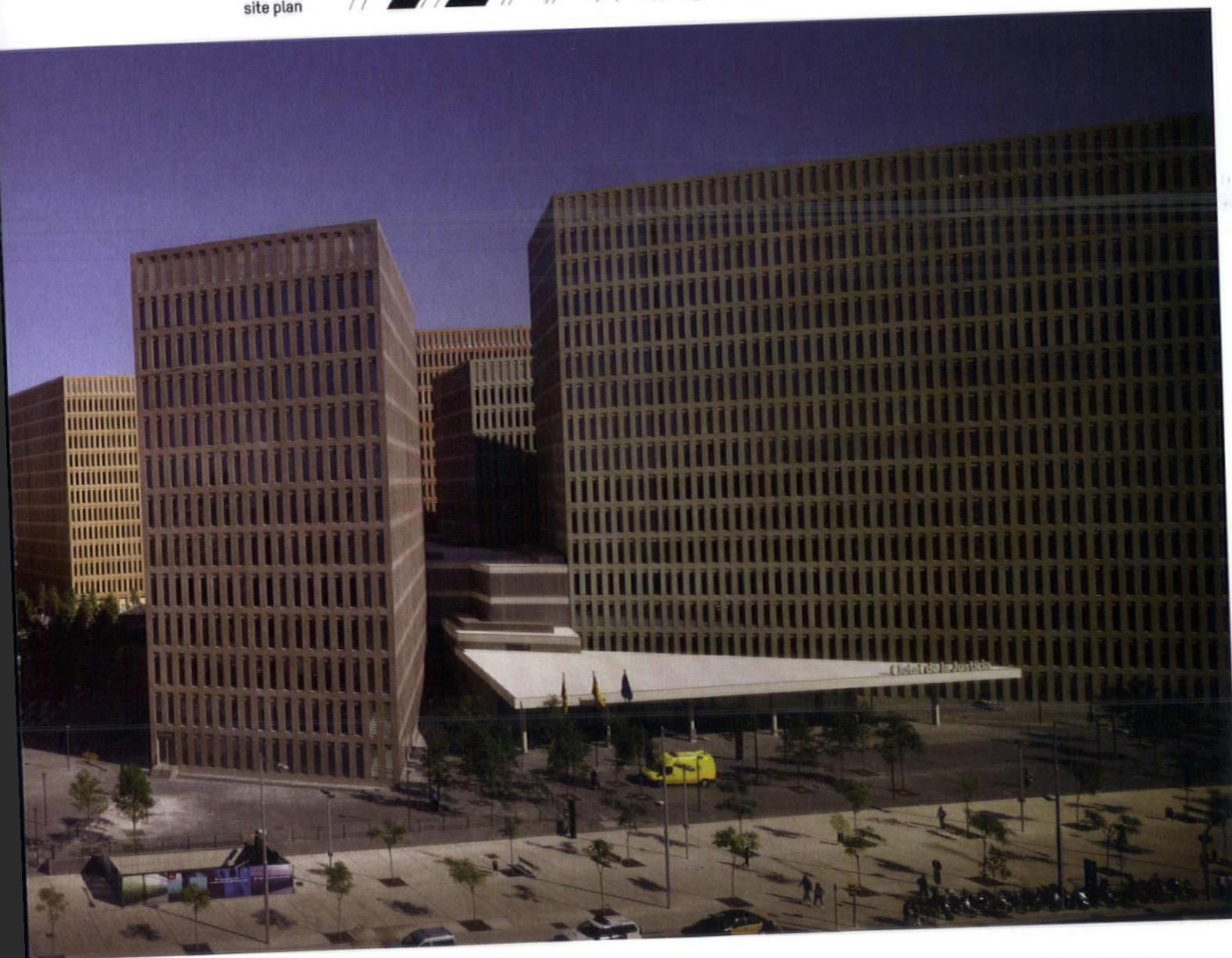
DAVID CHIPPERFIELD



Below_ Little attempt is made to mitigate the *anomie* of the overall composition, which recalls painter Giorgio de Chirico's renditions of cities, but Chipperfield maintains that the important civic nature of the scheme implies a certain level of sobriety, dignity and monumentality



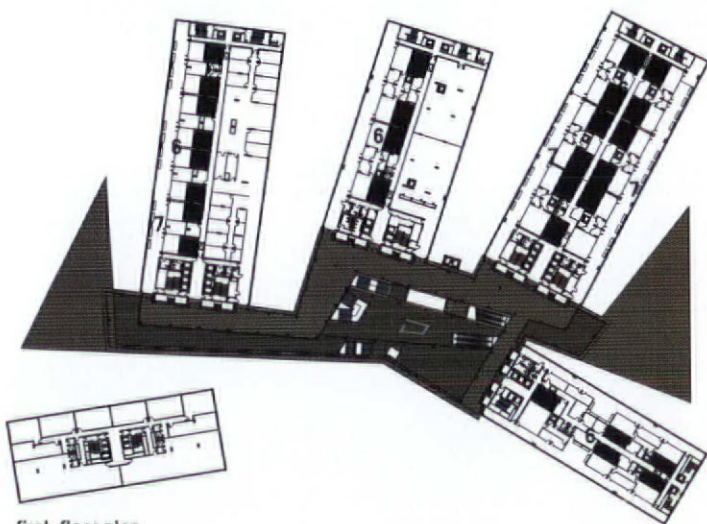
site plan



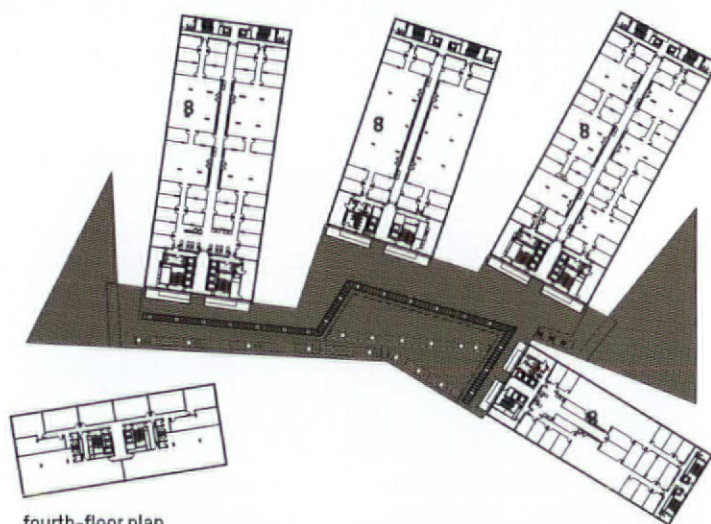
Right_ The calm, monochrome world of the linking atrium that acts as a reception and concourse for the quartet of towering court buildings

Far right_ When in full use, the complex will absorb around 12,000 visitors each day (and 4,000 staff), so the architecture needs to be able to give a sense of dignity to this encounter with the legal system

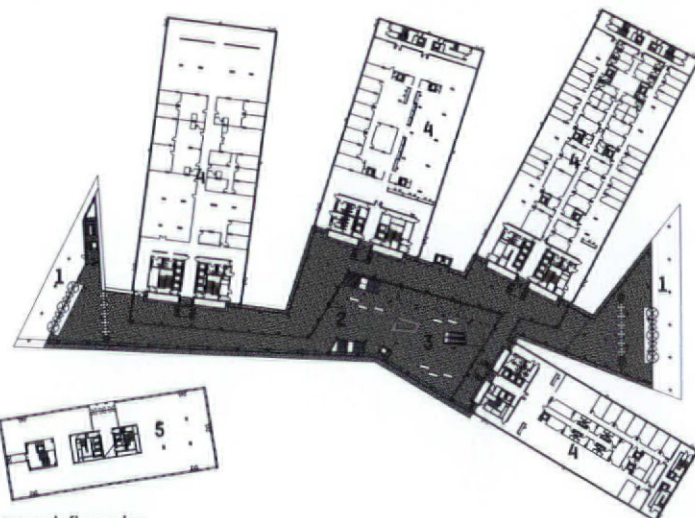
- 1 entrance
- 2 atrium/concourse
- 3 reception
- 4 court/office blocks
- 5 forensic science block
- 6 courtrooms
- 7 waiting rooms
- 8 offices



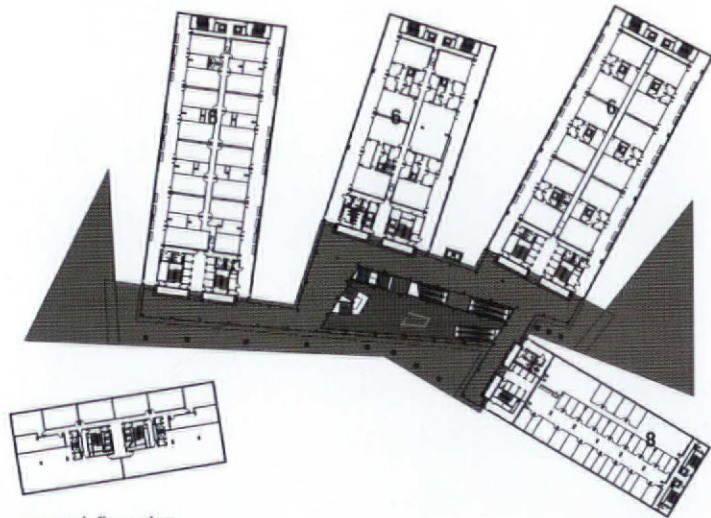
first-floor plan



fourth-floor plan



ground-floor plan



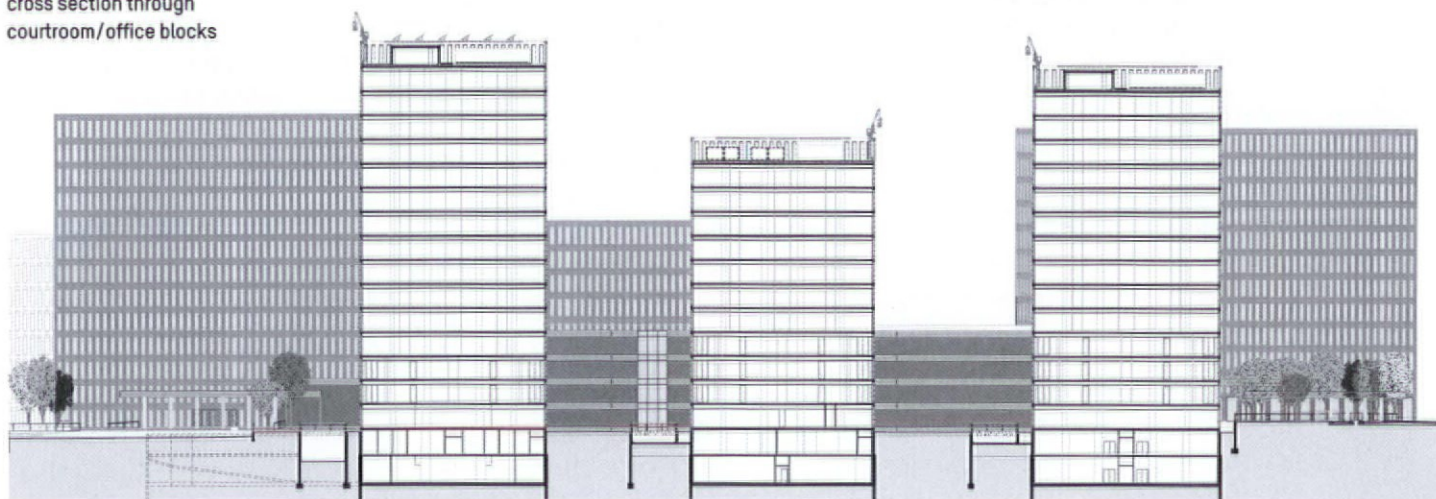
second-floor plan



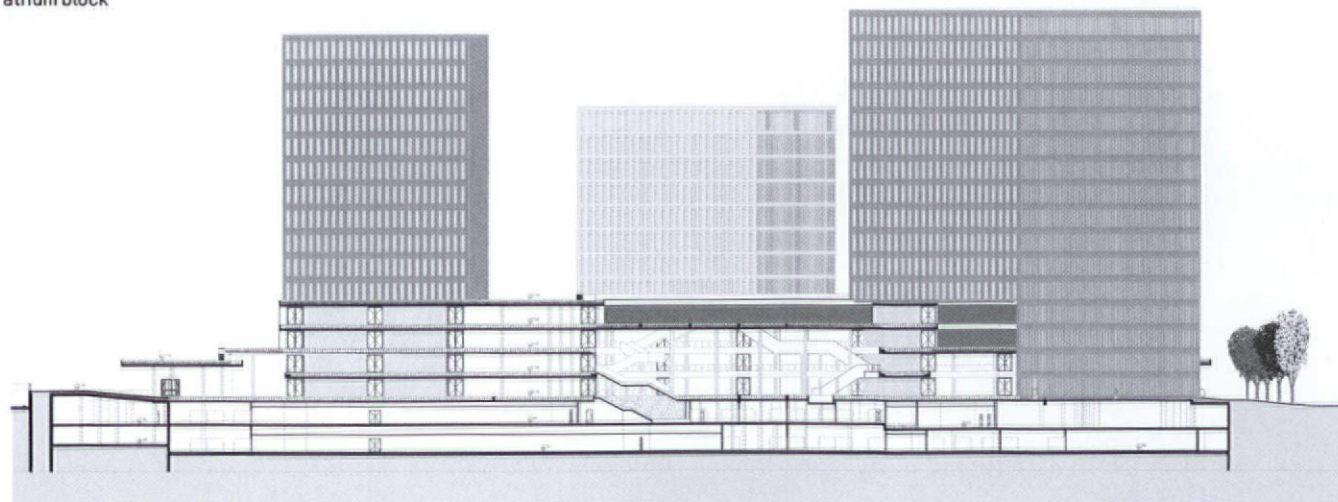
**ARCHITECTURE SHIES AWAY
FROM THEMES SUCH AS
MELANCHOLY AND ALIENATION.
HERE, CHIPPERFIELD SEEMS
TO SAY THAT SUCH THINGS ARE
PART OF CITIES AND OF THE LAW**



cross section through
courtroom/office blocks



long section through
atrium block



ARCHITECT

David Chipperfield
Architects, London, UK,
in association with b720,
Barcelona, Spain

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Jane Wernick Associates

SERVICES ENGINEER

Arup

build them or they don't. There is nothing in between'. Had the firm specified expensive Swiss glass, Chipperfield says, it would probably have ended up with a cheaper approximation. The repeated openings are also forgiving to flaws. 'In general terms I wouldn't complain about the quality of the concrete, but it is also broken up so you don't notice the faults.'

'I am really happy. I think... boom!' adds Chipperfield, suggesting the force of the architecture by hitting his hand with his fist. 'It is anonymous and quite powerful. It is a non-detail building. It would be a beautiful ruin.' Clearly, the repetitive concrete is more than a tactic for dealing with the seven contractors who erected the City of Justice. It is central to the intent of the project.

What is startling about the City of Justice is partly its endless repetition, and the narrowness of the windows, which suggest fortification, but also the fact that the grids suppress the different uses behind them. Most architects would take the chance to vary the rhythm, perhaps by creating something more arcade-like, with broad corridors for people waiting outside courts. Chipperfield considered such options and rejected them. Indeed, even the atrium, which is the means by which the complex becomes permeable and accessible, and a little friendly, would ideally not be there. 'This would be such a nice project without the atrium,' he says.

'There's something very ruthless about them,' he says of his blocks. 'You can use the same windows for an office and a corridor. And why not? In architecture we're always very uncomfortable about what something looks like. So we're just shapemaking. But I'm always suspicious of using differences to shape a facade. I'm against the idea that architecture is a representation of programmatic differences. It undermines its own fundament; it becomes an expression of other things rather than an expression of itself. We didn't want go for a flight of fancy every time.

That would weaken it.'

'The authority of the volumes becomes their saving grace,' he continues, stressing that the impressive constructional presence of the blocks is what makes the project. He says that there is a balance between 'linguistic and abstract' – that the City of Justice is suggestive of certain known architectural types, but is also 'about itself rather than representing one thing or another'. Thus the blocks 'look like normal office buildings, but they aren't'. Once started on creating this half-abstract architecture, 'you had to lead where it wanted to go'.


There is something refreshing and heroic about the City of Justice's refusal to ingratiate. We have seen law courts that try to behave as if justice is nice, by adding playful bits, when it isn't. There have been court buildings that foster the myth of 'transparency', wrapping themselves in glass under the illusion that this will somehow increase public knowledge of the processes within. The City of Justice, by contrast, declares that the law is a serious business, and that it has its element of intimidation, as well as being essential to civic society.

A striking thing about the complex is its echo of the paintings of 20th-century Italian artist Giorgio de Chirico, which is acknowledged by the architects. The painterly colours, the hard-to-read scale, the mute volumes, the half-familiar types and the skewed perspectives are all reminiscent of de Chirico. So is the play between fixed objects and elusive atmosphere: a sense, for all the blocks' weight, of unreality. De Chirico explores themes such as melancholy and alienation, from which the usually upbeat profession of architecture shies away. Here, Chipperfield seems to say that such things are part of cities and of the law – and he might be right.

The City of Justice creates, as intended, a powerful urban presence. It feels like a thing built rather than assembled. It defines a territory of

the city whose character is shaped by the business of law, but also serves other purposes. Its consistency creates substance in an area of pointless difference, while the plan works skilfully with its surroundings to create a rich tissue of spaces. The central piazza is likely to be the most satisfying public space for miles. When fully in use, the complex will absorb a huge daily flux of people – 4,000 employees of the justice department and 12,000 visitors – and the robustness and quality of the architecture will be required to give dignity to an experience that could easily descend into shabbiness.

As you move about the City, both inside and out, the presence of the module is insistent but shifting, presenting itself in different angles, glimpses and hues. The combination of steel mesh and concrete module creates strange moirés and curious moments of dreaminess, which the thumping blocks might not at first lead you to expect. Out of the repetition emerges a surprising, almost other-worldly atmosphere.

The more you see of the complex, the more it grows on you (or at least, me), and the more Chipperfield's explanations make sense. The question remains whether the City's qualities of authority and substance could have been achieved without the prison feeling which many will sense. At its worst, the grid creates spaces such as office floors from which the view is through one relentless grid, across a court, to another identical grid – which could get you down if you worked there. There is also a moment in the piazza where, facing the side of the atrium, you might expect the building at last to give a little, but it presents only a mute mesh. Might some tweak of the proportions, or the admission of at least one other rhythm, have been possible? Could the building be more approachable without diminishing its power? Unlike the architects, I haven't done studies of these possibilities, but my guess is yes, it could. 

Top left_ Fine steel mesh screens the glazed walls of the atrium for security and shading purposes. The moiré patterns of the mesh induce a curious, dreamlike quality, quite at odds with the pervasive rigour of the architecture

053

**LAVEZZORIO
COMMUNITY CENTER**

LOCATION
CHICAGO, USA

ARCHITECT
STUDIO GANG ARCHITECTS

WRITER
JAFFER KOLB

PHOTOGRAPHY
STEVE HALL





There is an almost magical quality to the SOS Children's Village in Chicago's Auburn Gresham neighbourhood. Laughing children play unsupervised on pink tricycles. Occasionally a parent will open a window or door to check in or deliver some mild admonishment. The overall feeling is less panoptical, more Jane Jacobs dreamscape. The reality is, however, a bit more grim. SOS Children's Village, a locally-designed residential complex finished in 2005 by Campbell Tiu Campbell, has a remit to develop stable foster families and reconnect foster children to their siblings and, on occasion, parents. A reductive description might identify it as a neighbourhood of broken homes, but on my visit it seemed to operate better than any nuclear American paradise of McMansion cul-de-sacs. The district itself is one of the city's less affluent, populated by predominantly black families.

Amid this landscape and acting as a figurehead for SOS' activities stands the Lavezzorio Community Center, designed by Studio Gang and opened earlier this year. Founded by principal Jeanne Gang in 1997, the firm is one of

Chicago's best-known young practices, currently engaged in a range of work from interiors to the high-profile 82-storey Aqua Tower in the city's Lakeshore East development area, which will complete later this year. At the risk of anthropologising Lavezzorio and the community it serves, the centre's greatest success comes from mediating between local gloominess and a more hopeful sense of community. So the architects have created a building that is open and light, yet also solid and protective.

At 1,500m², the budget (excluding the cost of land, donated by the city), was only US\$ 3.5 million, prompting the architect to solicit donations from various suppliers and manufacturers. These included carpet, wood flooring and ceiling panels. This approach determined the building's most distinctive external feature, the geological stratification of its concrete walls in a series of multi-hued, grey-toned and irregular horizontal bands. These bands provide a map of donated materials, lending the project a temporal dimension. Colours represent different concrete densities and are

mimicked by a local muralist on the interior of the atrium. The interplay between the cave-like concrete and the glass walls represents the most obvious duality between strength and lightness, forming a symbolic and experiential synthesis that expresses the essence of the project.

Inside, the entrance hall is dominated by a set of connecting stairs. On one side, steep steps are covered in green, loose-knit shag carpeting that resembles AstroTurf. Pillows are scattered across this carpet, and it faces a large-screen television. Studio Gang conceive of this as an informal gathering place, like stadium seating. On my visit, however, the head of the centre asked if they could install intermediate steps, as the large risers were proving too challenging for smaller children.

The ceiling features translucent polycarbonate panels (also donated) which brighten up the interior and create interesting light perforations and shadows. Paired with the heavier concrete stairs, the effect mimics that of the main exterior volume. West of the atrium, the architects created a more generic space for day care —

**WITH FLOOR-TO-CEILING
GLAZING, EXPOSED CONCRETE
AND FLUORESCENT LIGHTING, THE
SPACE HAS A POST-INDUSTRIAL
FEEL: SIMPLE, ROBUST AND OPEN**

on the lower floor, with staff offices and meeting rooms above. On the upper floor in particular, these spaces have a clinical, neutral quality appropriate for often emotionally charged family encounters. With its floor-to-ceiling glazing, exposed concrete and fluorescent lighting, the day care space has a post-industrial feel: simple, robust and open. The community room addresses the two busiest streets, opening up into the neighbourhood with two fully glazed walls. V-shaped columns support a concrete beam that cantilevers across the corner, keeping the structure open and light.

The success of the centre lies in its ability to mediate between extremes. Both gestural and generic, it creates a local landmark while also accommodating a range of uses. It is both heavy and light, playing solidity against transparency. It is finished but unpolished, with its use of raw and scavenged materials. And given that programming and circulation were so tightly defined, the architects have achieved something deeply admirable, rallying the community around a new local icon.

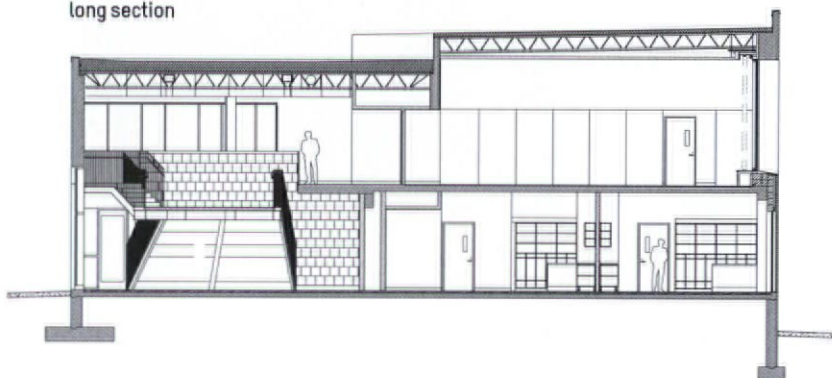
- 1 entrance hall
- 2 stepped seating
- 3 day care
- 4 classroom
- 5 infant day care
- 6 office
- 7 sick room
- 8 mechanical
- 9 kitchen
- 10 upper lobby/ children's computers
- 11 community room
- 12 games room
- 13 filing room
- 14 counselling rooms



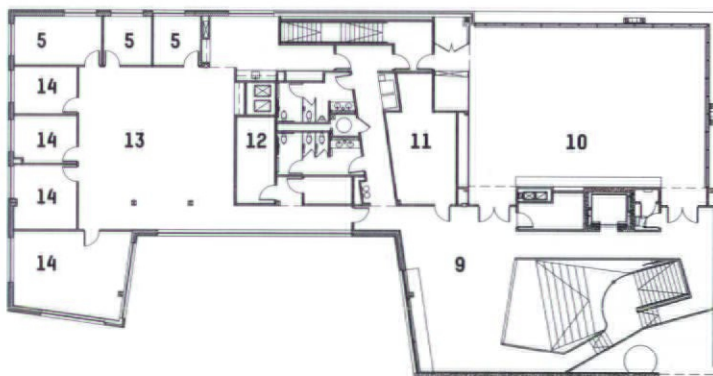
site plan

ARCHITECT
Studio Gang Architects,
Chicago, USA
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
Thornton Tomasetti
SERVICES ENGINEER
CCJM Engineers
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
Site Design Group

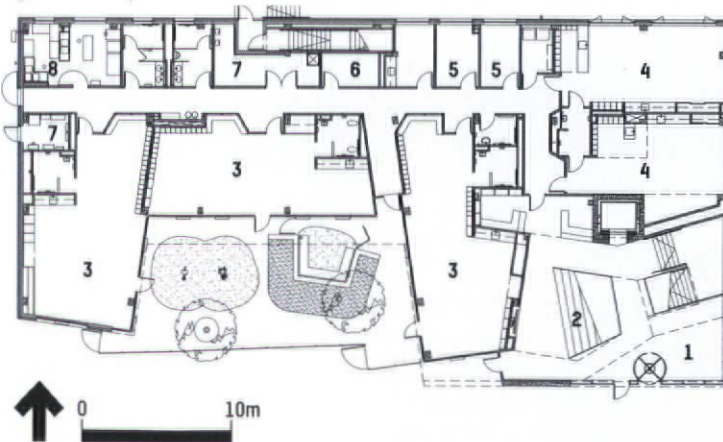
long section



first-floor plan



ground-floor plan





Previous page, left_ The boldly striated concrete facade reflects the project's ethos of creative scavenging
 Previous page, right_ The interplay between concrete and glass epitomises the symbolic and experiential duality between openness and protectiveness
 Left_ Interiors are simply appointed yet enticing
 Below_ The entrance hall with a carpeted staircase serves as an informal gathering and hanging-out place



054

CRANE HOUSE

LOCATION

KARUIZAWA, NAGANO, JAPAN

ARCHITECT

ATELIER BOW-WOW

WRITER

CATHERINE SLESSOR

PHOTOGRAPHY

EDMUND SUMNER

Tokyo architect Atelier Bow-Wow is perhaps best known for its jousts with the absurdity of the Japanese urban condition, easing eccentric houses into microscopic plots and celebrating the often bizarre hybrids of functions precipitated by the pressure on city land use. For this recent project, however, the firm has decamped to the rural idyll of Karuizawa, a tourist and weekending town popular with urbanites seeking solace from the Tokyo conurbation. Away from it all, the tensions of urban life are dissipated and people and buildings can recover their equilibrium. 'With the wind and sun tickling our bodies we can't help having fun,' says Bow-Wow principal Momoyo Kaijima.


Commissioned to design a weekend house on a wooded hillside site, Kaijima and partner Yoshiharu Tsukamoto have clearly had fun rustling up this snappy little essay in material lightness, spatial fluidity and general architectural brio. The simple, single-storey volume is a diaphanous glass wedge topped by a lightweight, oversailing roof.

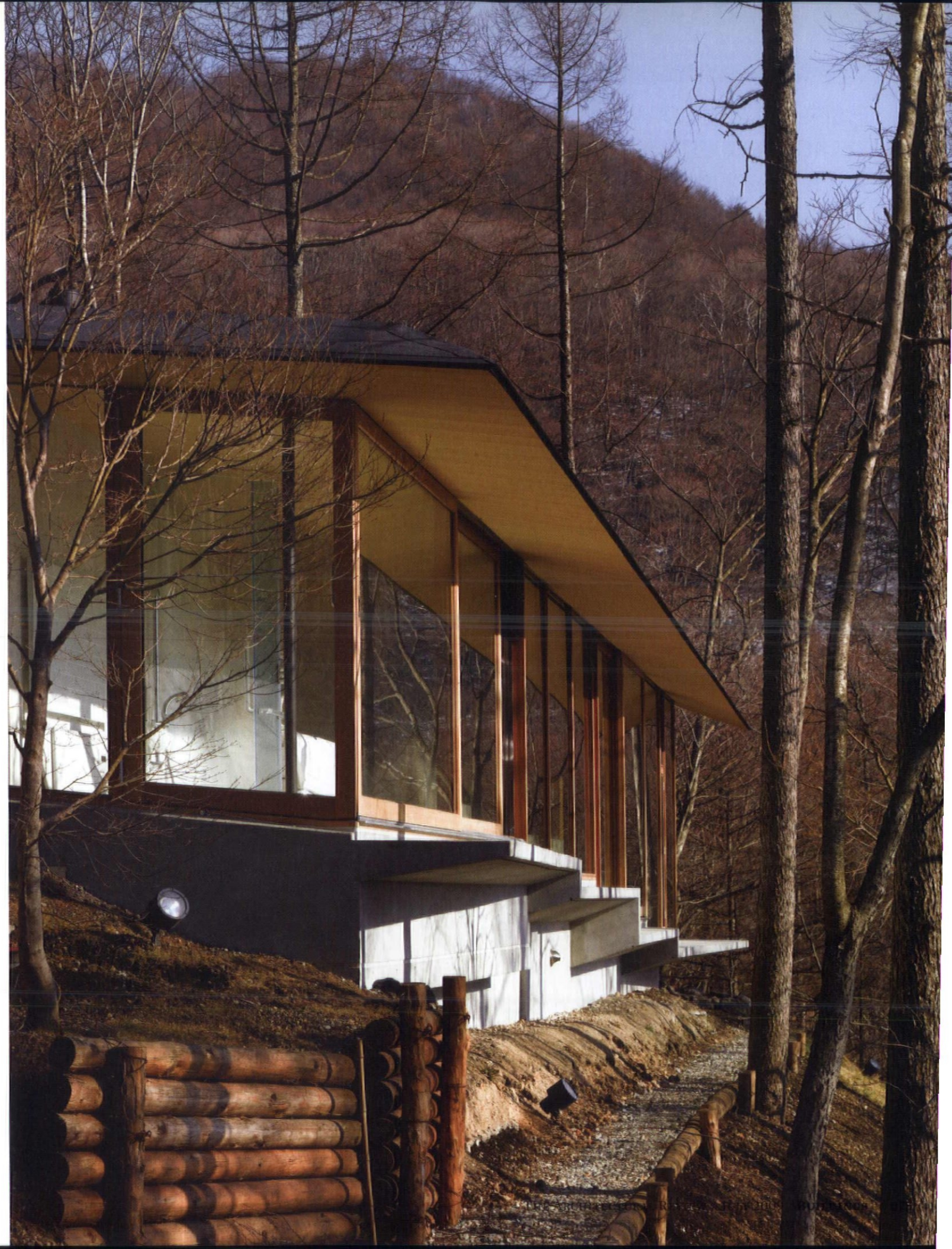
Delicately perched on top of a ridge, it resembles a stranded ship; specifically, its proportions and form give it the air of an abandoned Venetian vaporetto.

It's the classic Miesian/Johnsonian pavilion in the landscape, but with a twist. Rather than impose its will on the site by flattening the terrain or floating above it on stilts, the house responds to the subtle but awkward shifts in topography by stepping both down and across the sloping site in a series of linked platforms. Some sense of this can be apprehended from the way in which a stepped concrete brim, abstracting the geometry of the actual floorplate, runs along the base of the walls to mirror the overhang of the roof. The roof itself is also skewed slightly, twisting gently in two directions to reflect the change in levels and tapering plan.

Internal organisation is logical and linear, with the family coming together at the sharp end for concertedly communal activities, such as eating and watching TV, and retreating into cellular sleeping spaces at the flared-out stern.

A lounge area spanning the width of the house mediates between the two and provides a place to receive visitors. Floor and ceiling are seamlessly lined with warm, honey-coloured paulownia wood, so it's a bit like being in a reassuring timber womb, albeit with views of the surrounding forest through the full-height glazed walls.

In a largely open plan, spaces are demarcated by changes in level; from the highest bedroom level to the studio in the prow, there's a drop of around 1.4m. 'There are no identical cross-sections in this building,' says Kaijima. 'As you move around, you discover the changing aspects of width, depth and roof pitch.' So unlike the familiar modernist orthogonality, everything here is just slightly off grid, as the tensions of an apparently bucolic site feed through into the built form, just as they do back in Tokyo. But this is all good; Bow-Wow likes having something to kick against. 'When architecture learns from contradiction and conflict, and transforms itself by assimilating them, you get lively forms and spaces,' says Kaijima. 

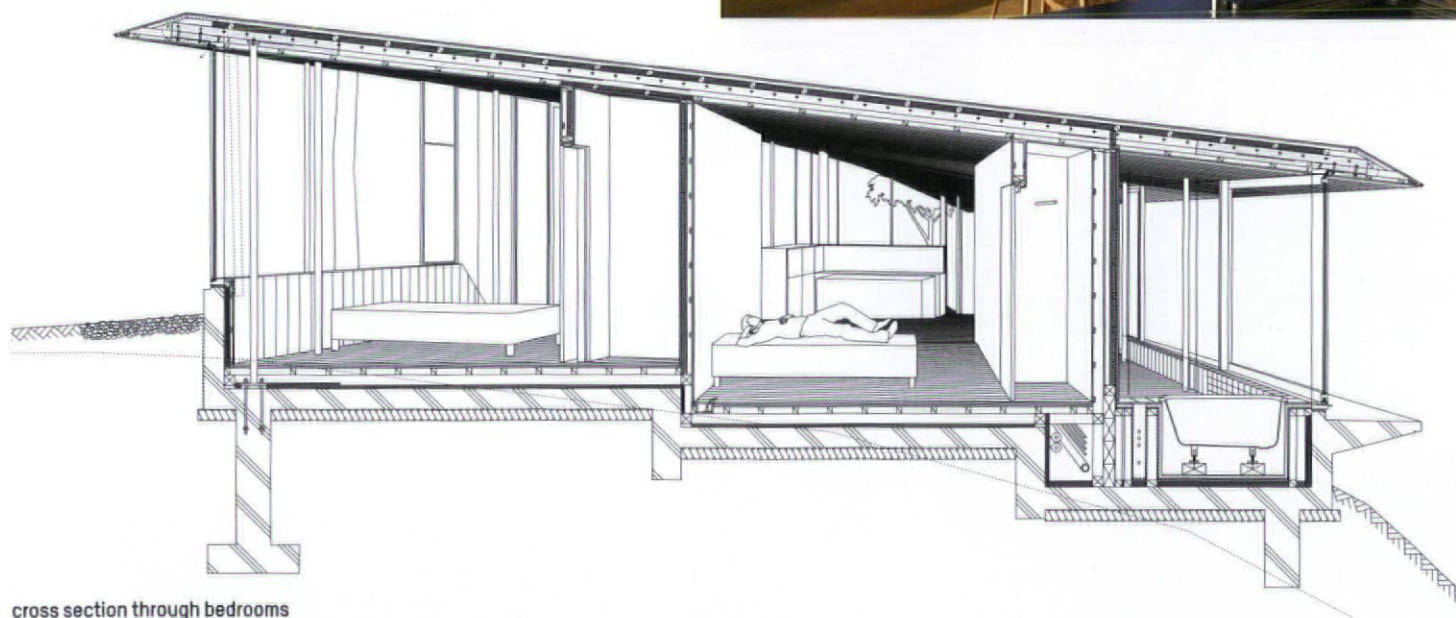


**FLOOR AND CEILING ARE
SEAMLESSLY LINED WITH
WARM, HONEY-COLOURED
WOOD, SO IT'S LIKE BEING IN
A REASSURING TIMBER WOMB**



Previous page_
The glazed volume
of the house steps
down across
its hillside site
Right_ Kitchen
and dining space
step up to the
living area, with
bedrooms beyond

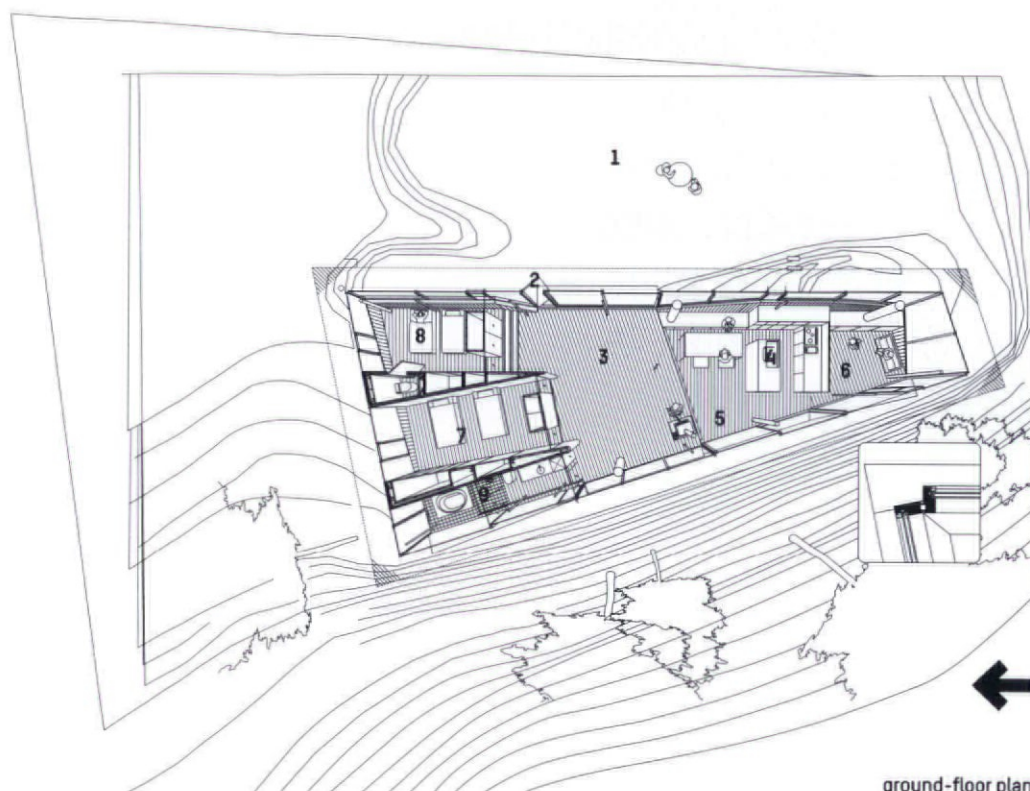
ARCHITECT
Atelier Bow-Wow, Tokyo
PROJECT TEAM
Yoshiharu Tsukamoto,
Momoyo Kaijima



cross section through bedrooms

Left_ The interior
is lined with warm
timber, bathed in
light from the full-
height glass walls
Below_ Perched
on its hillside site,
the house resembles
a beached ship

- 1 garden
- 2 entrance
- 3 living
- 4 kitchen
- 5 dining area
- 6 studio
- 7 bedroom
- 8 guest room
- 9 bathroom



ground-floor plan



SKILL

**CREATIVE BUSINESS
UNITS**

LOCATION
ABERYSTWYTH, UK

KEY WORDS
**CUSTOMISED
STAINLESS STEEL
CLADDING**

DESIGNER
HEATHERWICK STUDIO

WRITER
CATHERINE SLESSOR

PHOTOGRAPHY
EDMUND SUMNER

- 1 annealed stainless steel 0.127mm thick
- 2 150mm polyurethane rigid foam insulation
- 3 35 x 50mm battens
- 4 prefabricated timber structure raft and column foundations
- 5

Left_ Detailed section through external wall and roof. The stainless steel strips are fixed to battens at 600mm centres and lined with 150mm of polyurethane foam insulation, which hardens to form a tough composite cladding. Internal surfaces are lined with plasterboard and painted, a calm counterpoint to the exuberant exterior





Above_ Simple form is given a sparkling, bespoke dressing, as ultra-thin sheets of stainless steel cladding are crumpled like tin foil. Roof and walls are clad in 700mm-wide steel strips fixed to battens and a prefabricated timber structure

If you go down to the woods today, you're sure of a big, shiny surprise. Embedded in the sylvan landscape of Aberystwyth University's campus is a cluster of space-age cabins, each wrapped in a scintillating carapace of crushed and crumpled stainless steel. The project was commissioned by Aberystwyth Arts Centre to provide a new community of studio spaces for artists and creative industry types.

Each cabin is conceived as a simple, pitched-roof shed split down the central ridge line and pulled apart slightly to create two tall studio spaces, which are still conjoined, like Siamese twins. These can be let either separately or together. The interstitial slot is roofed with translucent polycarbonate panels (cheaper than glass), which let in light and air. Although the sheds are utterly basic, the cladding transforms them into glittering jewel boxes. 'In a way, we're like architectural tailors,' says designer Thomas Heatherwick, 'fashioning simple forms with an extraordinary skin.'

The original competition brief stressed issues of cost and modular construction. So, despite its high performance, stainless steel was not an obvious cladding material. 'The trick,' says Heatherwick, 'is to use ultra-thin sheets. Our steel, from a supplier in Finland, is only 0.1mm thick, about the thickness of a drinks can. But the problem with such wafer-thin sheets is that they tend to dink and dent very easily. So why not exploit this quality by deliberately crumpling the steel?'

To see how it might work, Heatherwick's studio devised a bespoke crumpling device, like a heavy Victorian mangle, its roller kinkily studded with rubber nodules. Experiments with different nodule configurations and pressure settings finally achieved a suitably pleasing crinkle quotient. All the cladding was hand-crumpled on site by the studio (which acted as contractor for project), in a temporary marquee. During crumpling, the steel —

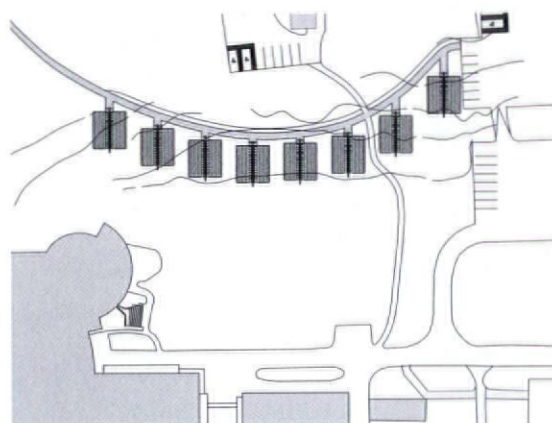
THE PROBLEM WITH WAFER-THIN STEEL SHEETS IS THAT THEY TEND TO DINK AND DENT VERY EASILY. SO WHY NOT EXPLOIT THIS QUALITY?

THOMAS HEATHERWICK

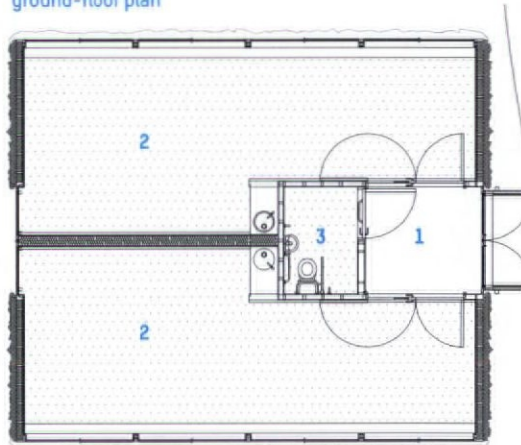
- 1 entrance lobby
- 2 studio
- 3 WC



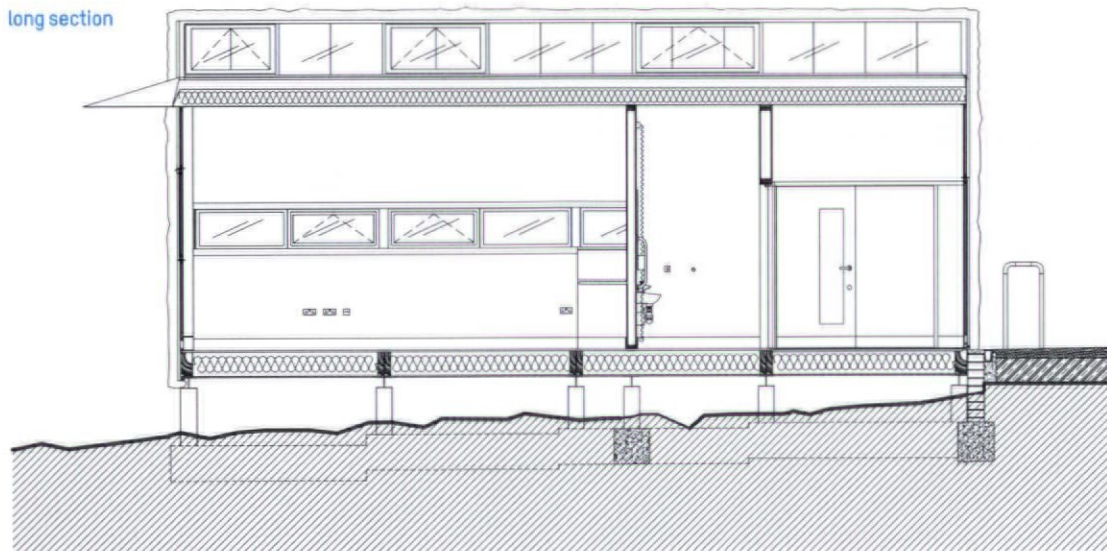
site plan



ground-floor plan



long section



Above_ The eight units occupy a sloping, wooded site on the campus at Aberystwyth University. Each foil-wrapped cabin contains two studio spaces, which are let either separately or together. The simple cabin form is pulled apart slightly to create a glazed slot running along the ridge line. The crumpled steel cladding takes on the hues of the surrounding landscape

Right_ The specially designed mangle used to crumple the sheets of stainless steel. Crumpling exploits the tendency of the wafer-thin sheets to deform and crinkle. The steel is supplied on a roll and is simply fed through the mangle, which is studded with rubber nodules. Trial and error eventually produced the desired effect



ARCHITECT

Heatherwick Studio,
London

PREFABRICATED STRUCTURE

Lowfield Timber Frames


GROUNDWORKS

E L Hughes & Son

shrinks from 1m wide to around 700mm, so this becomes the modular unit of measurement, effectively determining the dimensions of the walls and roof.

Because the site slopes steeply, each cabin sits on raft and column foundations up to 2m high. Columns were cast in situ on strip footings to minimise their impact on the densely wooded site. A simple, prefabricated timber frame provides an armature for the steel cladding, which is fixed to the timber structure on battens at 600mm centres. Overlapped like conventional tiling, but with a fatter profile, almost as if they were inflated, the crumpled strips run lengthways along the walls and roof. On the short ends, the effect of folding the strips diagonally across the walls gives each shed a kind of Art Deco flourish. Once fixed in place, the inner surface of the steel was sprayed with polyurethane foam to a thickness of 100mm. The foam, which adds rigidity, strength, insulation and a further layer of waterproofing, is more usually used to line pig pens (yet more technology transfer). 'It sets rock solid so the pigs can't chew it,' says Heatherwick.

The cladding reflects and distorts the surrounding foliage like a broken mirror. More trees are due to be planted as protection from wind and rain on the hillside site. So, over time, the units will merge more intimately with their environment. And, while all this sparkling steel might look a bit bling, the cost was actually disarmingly low: £20,000 out of a total budget of £1.1 million.

All the units are now let except one, conceived as a 'graduate incubator', which will be offered on a year-long residency to students or staff at Aberystwyth University. The hope is that the civilised setting and companionable contact with others will help great things to hatch. Painter Mary Lloyd Jones, one of Wales' best-known artists, sums it up: 'One of the reasons for applying for a residency was because of the light in the studio – so beautiful.' 

EXPLORING 3/E

STUMBLING UPON DELHI'S HAUZ KHAS COMPLEX, THE AR FINDS A MARRIAGE OF MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE AND MODERN CONSUMERISM

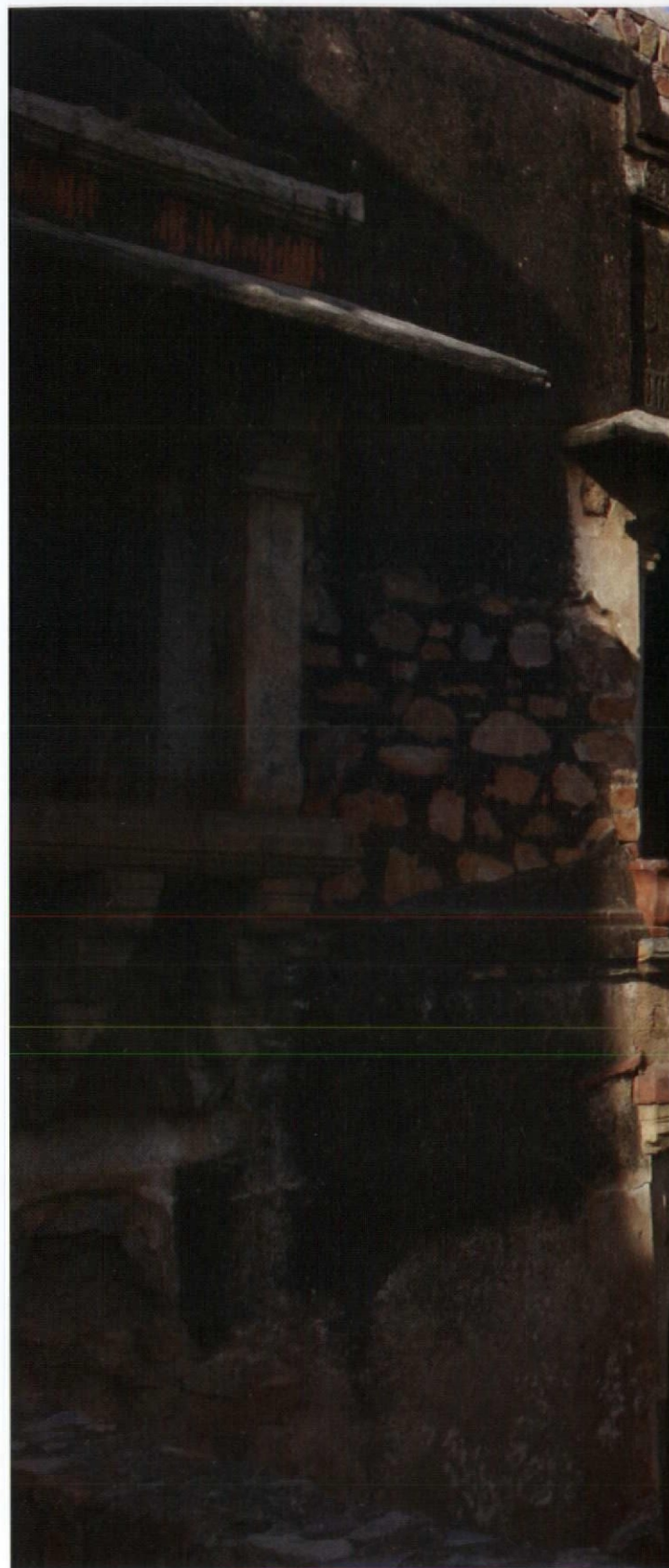
WRITER

MICHAEL HOWE

My wife is a London-based accessories designer who visits India once or twice a year. Each time she spends up to three weeks in Mumbai or Delhi, where her designs are manufactured in one of the new high-end factories that have helped to drive the growth of northern India since the 1980s.

Occasionally I fly out to meet her. 'Programme drift' is a fairly predictable aspect of doing business in India, so I often find myself left to my own devices. It was on one of these occasions during my first visit to Delhi that I stumbled across a set of buildings at Hauz Khas – meaning the great (*khas*) water reservoir or tank (*hauz*) – built by Alauddin Khilji at the end of the 13th century and repaired and augmented with various tombs and a madrasa (theological school), commissioned by ruler Firoz Shah Tughlaq in the 14th century.

I didn't know I was going to see these buildings at the time and when I did, I wasn't quite sure what I —



Below_ The madrasa's
west wing (looking
south), with colonnade
overlooking the tank



I SAW GROUPS OF STUDENT TYPES SITTING IN THE HYPOSTYLE SECTIONS OF THE BUILDING, ENJOYING THE COOL SHADE AND VIEWS OUT OVER THE TANK, NOW OCCUPIED BY PARKLAND

was looking at. I was attempting to prove that I am just as capable a traveller as my wife, and not just a disorientated European tourist with digestive issues. Earlier that day, I had been hijacked (in the nicest possible way) by a charming taxi driver called Mr Singh who had taken me to various emporia where I had disappointed both him and his friends by not buying anything. Disappointment was rapidly turning to defeatism, when with a last throw of the dice he dropped me off in Hauz Khas, an area just south of Delhi's ring road.

Having given up on the nearby shops and café (I had been unwell the previous day and food was not among my priorities), I wandered off through a small area of forest. It was warm, so most human activity had come to a halt, the only noises coming from birds. I followed a path through a massive rubble wall surmounted by decorative Kangura battlements and saw the first of the Tughlaq tombs and smaller *chattris* (stone parasols)

which occupy the enclosed ground to the east of an L-plan madrasa. The tombs are open domed structures in square, octagonal and hexagonal plan form with chunky square or hexagonal stone columns.

The school appears to consist of two slightly ruinous wings of a single-storey quartzite rubble building (originally rendered in white stucco), pierced by stone colonnades through which a small greenish body of water to the north-east could be seen. The hinge of the two wings is formed by Firoz Shah's tomb, a square building in plan with battered walls and an early surviving *jali* (pierced stone) screen above the entrance door. The tomb is topped by a slightly pointed dome set on plasterwork squinches and corbelled beams that translate the square plan into an octagonal drum then a 16-side drum and finally the dome.

Walking through the colonnades, I realised that the building drops away to form two storeys on the north and east sides facing the site of the

original open tank, which was about the size of a football pitch. The lower level appears to be formed of residential areas for scholars or perhaps ablution spaces. I saw small groups of trendy student types sitting in the hypostyle sections of the building, talking quietly and enjoying the cool shade and views out over the tank, now occupied by parkland.

That evening I joined my wife and one of her colleagues, describing to them the quiet, almost hallucinogenic aspect of the Hauz Khas complex. My wife's colleague smiled and said she was glad I had seen the place in that light. 'Normally it is a zoo, with the world and his wife climbing all over and stuffing their faces with snacks.' She then told me a story about some of the residents of the site. I can't confirm if all the facts are correct, but it went something like this.

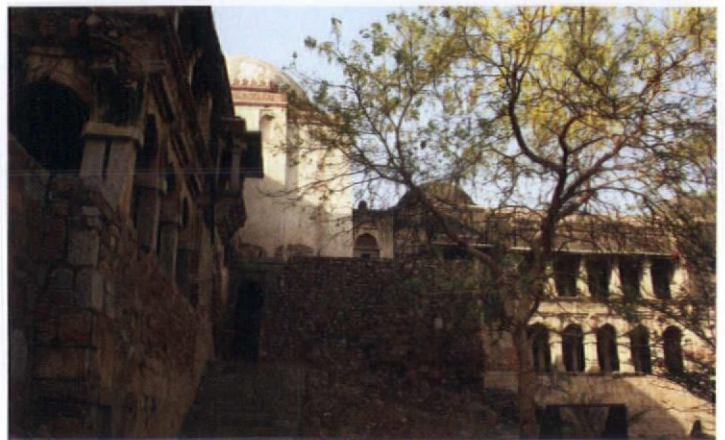
Some time after Alauddin had completed his great tank, a group of a group of Jats (small farmers) set up a village, taking advantage of the water. Over the next 100 years the tank gradually silted up, which was no problem for the farmers who grew crops over it. Almost a century later (1351) saw the accession of Firoz Shah, a man who by all accounts valued building, agriculture and religious scholarship over the warlike arts of his preceding sultanate relatives. Firoz Shah had the tank dredged and repaired so that fresh water could be provided to the area again, and constructed a madrasa with a tomb for his remains. This work was duly carried out, but not before the villagers had been evicted from the site.

With the fall of the sultanate came the eventual abandonment of the religious precincts. The villagers moved back, converting the madrasa and tombs into family dwellings. This was still a fairly mixed little community of Muslims and Hindus, farmers, dhobi wallahs (washermen), sweepers and small shopkeepers, and this is how the area stayed, more or less, as various new rulers and invaders visited, —





Left_ Firoz Shah's tomb, with the northern wing of the madrasa behind it
 Below left_ The interior of Firoz Shah's tomb with a jali screen above the doors and a small *chatri* in the background
 Below_ The Tughlak tombs, with recently constructed apartments behind
 Bottom_ Remaining steps from the tank with the west face of Firoz's tomb in the foreground and the hypostyle section of the madrasa to the rear



VARIOUS DESIGNERS MOVED INTO THE AREA IN THE 1980S. THE VILLAGE OFFERED AN AUTHENTIC ENVIRONMENT FOR THEIR EXPLORATIONS OF INDIAN IDENTITY

stayed or left Delhi.

The next time the site changed was in the early teens of the 20th century, when a group of scholarly men from the Archaeological Survey of India (the Ministry of Culture's guardian of archaeology and monuments) decided that the buildings at Hauz Khas were of such importance that they should be preserved (although it could be argued that the villagers had not done a bad job over the preceding four-and-a-half centuries). The villagers were moved on, with enough compensation to buy land to start a new village adjacent to their old homes. The tombs and religious buildings were excavated, catalogued and preserved and the villagers left in peace until independence and the subsequent partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. During appalling intercommunal violence triggered by partition, millions of people moved between what was to be northern India and Pakistan. Any Muslims with money left the village, leaving their


poor co-religionists and the Hindu Jats. The government bought up surrounding land over the next 10 to 20 years in order to provide homes for refugees from the north. This purchase was later to include the villagers' farmland, covering the tank and religious precinct, which was set out as a public park.

The position of Hauz Khas between Delhi's inner and outer ring roads did not profoundly alter its backwater character, partly because connections between the two roads were not that great. This saved the area from the fast and furious land development that has transformed many of Delhi's villages into dense areas of isotropic urbanism over the last 20 years.

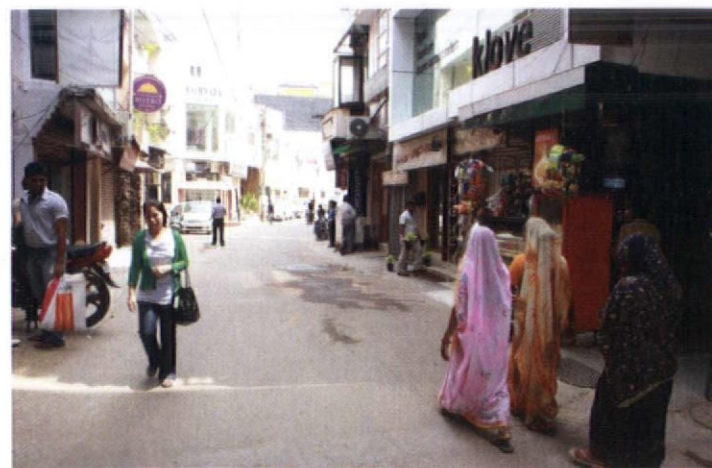
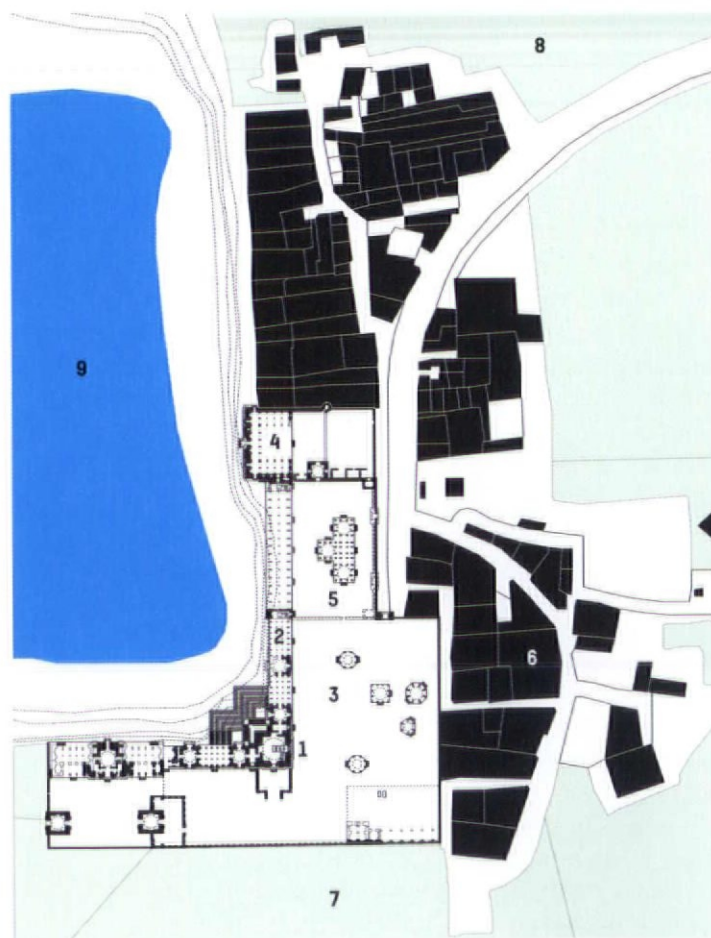
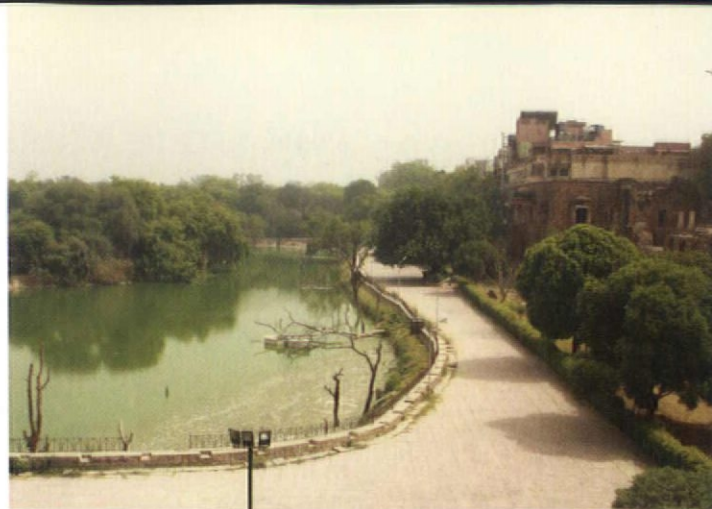
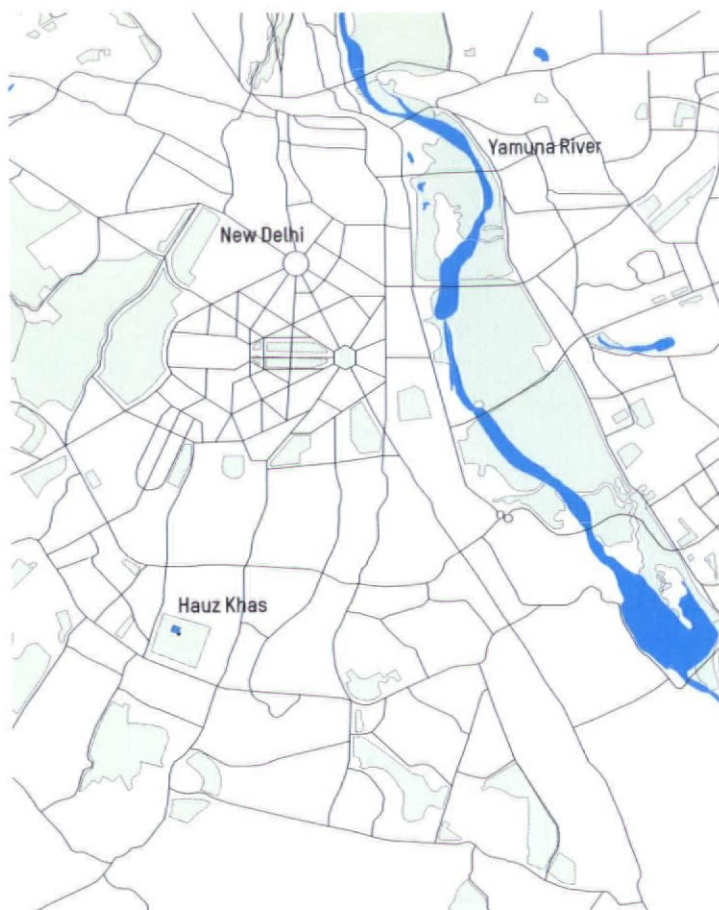
The villagers were by now no longer farmers, however they managed to maintain something approximating a village existence, with old-fashioned properties and cattle kept in domestic courtyards. With the increased interest in traditional clothing and non-

industrial techniques, various designers moved into the area in the 1980s. The village offered an authentic environment for their explorations of Indian identity. Film stars and middle-class ladies wafted about in fabulous 'ethnic' clothing while the villagers, who would not have dreamed of spending such money on clothes, looked on.

Modern Delhi has a complex relationship with its architectural past and, like most rapidly urbanising societies, a complex relationship with its agrarian past. Many of Delhi's (Hindu) population have an equivocal attitude to the monuments erected by their former Islamic rulers. Delhi street maps show the area around Hauz Khas as enclosed to the south by the enormous Indian Institute of Technology campus and to the north and east by middle-class neighbourhoods packed with teaching hospitals, art institutes, schools and universities. To the west are the park grounds of the tank containing the old madrasa. My wife's colleague continued with her theory about the villagers and their talent for keeping forgotten things safe until Delhi needs them again. First the tank, then the madrasa and tombs and, in our own time, the idea of village life within an intensifying and transforming urban environment.

We talked about identity, place, Indian actor Pavan K Varma and British author Iain Sinclair. As we left the restaurant my wife's colleague said something that threw me: she was conscious that her story about the villagers was romanticised. That I believed it was forgivable because I am an outsider. She, however, could not, although she found it a pleasant fiction. The villagers were still at Hauz Khas because they own some of the land on which they live, and because they provide an interestingly anachronistic backdrop to a shopping area and public resort. If that land were to be required for something else in future, she supposed, they would be evicted immediately. 

Right_ Map of Delhi showing Hauz Khas in relation to the city centre
Below right_ Plan of the site
Far right, from top to bottom_ The view over the tank to the village; Recent apartments in 'Disney heritage style', looming over the east wall of the site; The village, with women wearing both urban (left) and country (right) dress



- 1 Firoz Shah's tomb
- 2 colonnaded space above halls of residence
- 3 tombs
- 4 mosque remains
- 5 triple-domed building
- 6 Hauz Khas village
- 7 forest
- 8 deer park
- 9 tank

ARTS

Not since Matisse has an artist been handed such a liturgical carte blanche

SCULPTURE /
Anthony Caro,
The Chapel of Light
Church of St Jean-Baptiste,
Bourbourg, France
www.anthonycaro.org

While artists today often complain that architects want them to reaffirm rather than redefine space, a collaboration between the two was once integral to the creative process and the cultural environment. In Gothic cathedrals, for instance, you cannot imagine the soaring architecture without stained-glass windows or sculptured iconography. This tradition held firm for centuries, and no one was busier than Michelangelo in working both sides of the arts.

In 1999 sculptor Anthony Caro was invited to France by representatives of the Bourbourg diocese and local arts council to view the war-damaged choir of 12th-century Gothic church St Jean-Baptiste, and told to 'do whatever you like'. Not since Matisse designed all the elements of the Chapelle du Rosaire in Vence, France, has an artist been handed such a liturgical carte blanche.

Now with the completion of Caro's installation, no one should pass Calais without stopping in this nearby town, preferably on market day when life swirls around the church and its Chapel of Light, filled with 21st-century sculptures married to the architecture.

In 1940, a fighter plane fell on the church, collapsing the

roof into the choir and leaving intact only the niches below. Although the roof was eventually replaced with a wooden barrel vault and new stained-glass windows were installed, the choir remained sealed off from the main sanctuary by a brick wall. A major artist was then sought to complete the renovation. At the 1999 Venice Biennale, a curator recognised in Caro's installation *The Last Judgment*, depicting 20th-century atrocities, a similarity to St Jean-Baptiste church's carved wooden altarpieces. And seeing each sculptural grouping displayed in its own wooden case, she thought of the architectural niches in the choir.

The bishop had suggested that the choir also serve as the baptistery, and water was proposed as a motif for the sculptures rather than references to the sufferings of this war-torn region. While remaining non-denominational in intent, Caro elevated these concepts into his theme of The Creation. As one follows the semicircle of nine niches – five Gothic and four Romanesque – the sculptures of folded, twisted and welded mild steel and blocks of wood begin in the depths of the sea and slowly rise through evolutionary levels and shoreline landscapes as the waters part biblically to reveal land and fruited trees.

In high relief, with elements that flow like rolling waves and spill out, like the waterfall, onto the floor, the niche sculptures

also incorporate some very engaging sea and land creatures in stoneware: among them, a turtle in *Galapagos*, a pelican and the symbolic lamb in *The Seashore*, and a monkey and alligator in *Beside the River*. When light streams through the tall stained-glass windows, the sculptures in monochromatic shades of rust can take on a quality of blue-green, modulated by the rough surfaces.

Caro continues his theme in the shallow transepts with two free-standing sculptures: *Paradise Garden*, a stoneware Adam and Eve under wooden arches, the serpent glaring up from below, and *Alleluia*, a scattering of stoneware body parts pouring out from a funnel topped by clasped hands, which hints at Rodin. To experience the soaring height of this Gothic church, Caro ventured further into architecture by building a north and south tower of French oak, the former between two piers, the latter around a pier. Though they relate to the sermon platforms of old, these reference treehouses with their secret nooks and balconies that give direct visual access to the boat-like construction of the roof and a view of the panorama below, including two massive benches in concrete. The perfect joinery of the towers with arcs of wood shaped like pieces of Caro steel are a tribute to his collaborators.

In lieu of the brick wall, the Chapel of Light is now divided from the nave by translucent

Below left_ *Watering Hole* continues the water motif in Caro's sculptures Below_ The Chapel of Light features nine sculptures and a full-immersion baptismal font



glass panels that also serve as the backdrop for Caro's furnishings facing the congregation: a stone altar encased partially in steel as well as twisted candle stands, angular lecterns and a mounted tabernacle, all in steel. What was once an emergency exit is now the official entrance and outside, for visitors and official baptismal gatherings, is a Cor-ten steel gateway of two giant ziggurat formations embraced by a ring of steel with a pathway between them. The geometric relief of squares and rectangles on the door echoes the protruding bricks of a ruined buttress on the same wall, a reminder of the church's prior demolition. Again, a perfect union of art and architecture.

PAULA DEITZ

✚ *Modern art boldly implanted in a historic building*

✚ *Not all architecture projects have as much faith in creativity*



JOHN RIDDY

A new generation is finding its voice in Portugal

EXHIBITION/ Overlappings: Six Portuguese Architecture Studios

RIBA, London

Until 2 July

www.architecture.com

London is having a Portugal moment. Following Álvaro Siza's RIBA Gold Medal scoop (AR April 2009), there's now a chance to see how the next generation of Portuguese architects is shaping up. Curated by Jonathan Sergison of London-based firm Sergison Bates, six practices are, literally, showcased in the airy confines of the RIBA. Models, photographs, videos and material samples are arrayed in large wooden flight cases, like giant cabinets of curiosities. It's fashionably austere – nothing on the walls – but this seems appropriate given the nature of the work, its tone characterised by what Sergison describes as 'an absence of rhetoric'.

Aires Mateus shows models of seven houses, all at the same scale, while Inês Lobo distils things down to just two video screens, meditating on the creative cannibalisation and reuse of old buildings. Bugio, the studio run by João Favila Menezes and Pedro Domingos, presents a hotel on a coastal site, complete with pebbles scavenged from the beach. Perhaps the most compelling exhibit is Paulo David's pair of models, layered like mammoth millefeuilles, of an arts centre in Funchal, Madeira, and

beautifully rustic constructions that enable tourists to visit lava caves in São Vicente.

Historically, Portuguese architecture is firmly rooted in the vernacular, with craft-based, artisanal origins and a limited range of forms and materials. Modernism has been an essentially liberating influence, nourished by the abstraction, sensitivity and social awareness of the Porto School, positioned at a crucial geographical and philosophical distance from the more state-sanctioned orthodoxy of Lisbon.

Today's emerging generation is able to draw on a much wider frame of reference than was possible for its predecessors, with the advantage of being able to travel and study beyond Portugal. Many younger designers have spent time in the offices of the masters, which may account for the inherent conservatism that still touches much Portuguese architecture.

There are indications, however, that a new generation is starting to find its own voice, tempered and inflected by other influences and general intellectual curiosity. This laconically presented, yet enthralling exhibition is proof that things are moving on.

CATHERINE SLESSOR

✦ Exhibits are presented in 'cabinets of curiosities'

✦ Portuguese architecture is still reticent at heart

The American West has been romanticised as an unspoiled paradise ripe for consumption

BOOK/ Into the Sunset: Photography's Image of the American West

Eva Respini

Museum of Modern Art,
2009, £25

When French philosopher Jean Baudrillard took a trip across the American West in the late 1980s, he remarked: 'The desert you pass through is like the set of a Western.' His phrase succinctly summed up the power of the mythical West in our collective imagination: so vivid, it seems more real than the real thing.

Into the Sunset: Photography's Image of the American West, a new book published to accompany a recent exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, explores how photographers have perpetuated that myth over the last century and a half. Since large-scale settlement began in the mid-19th century, the West has been romanticised – by painters and photographers alike – as an unspoiled, God-given paradise ripe for consumption by Americans. Photography was the more potent mythmaker of the two media, since, unlike painting, it possessed the cachet of objective truth. But in fact, even the earliest photographers freely manipulated their images, superimposing negatives of clouds from other scenes and arranging 'natural' compositions in the foreground of their

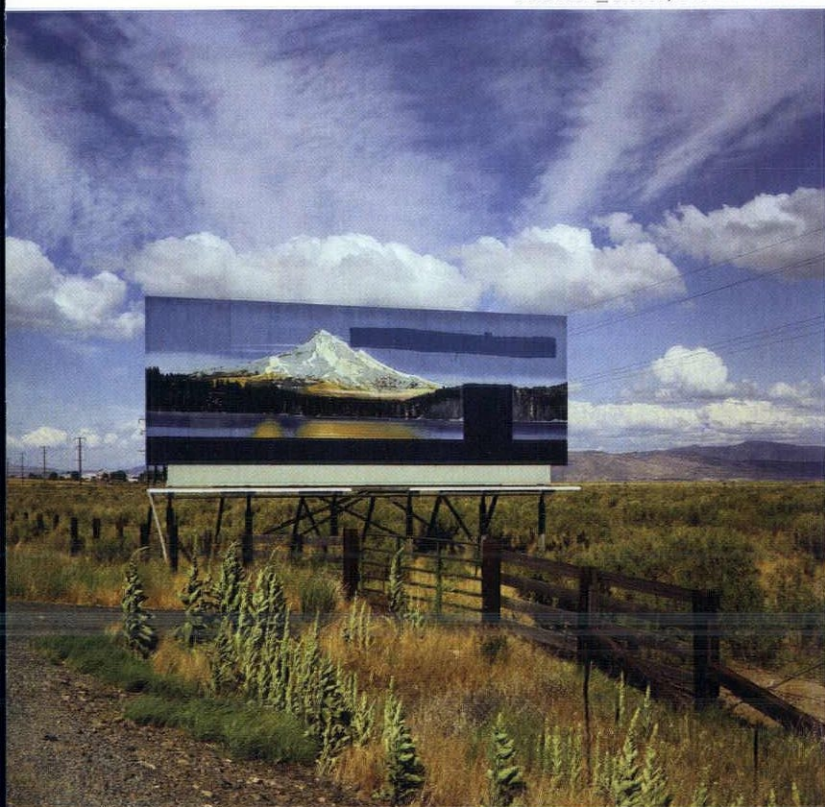
landscapes. They also exercised enormous influence through their choice of subjects: the workers who laid the railroad tracks that made Western expansion possible were mainly Chinese immigrants, but their faces are absent from the photographic record.

It's interesting to watch the photographers in the book becoming increasingly aware of how their medium manipulates the West's image. Lee Friedlander's *California* (1965) shows a poster of a movie cowboy in a shop window: in snapping the shutter, Friedlander created a photo of another photo of a film portrayal of an archetype. Other artists photograph their own meticulously arranged stage sets of toy cowboys, covered wagons and subdivisions. And Larry Sultan peels back the artifice of a quintessentially Western industry by documenting the quotidian moments between takes on the sets of pornographic films. Amazingly, though, the photo that breaks the fourth wall with the most panache comes from 1867: Timothy O'Sullivan's *Desert Sand Hills Near Sink of Carson, Nevada* depicts the footprints of the photographer leading from his wagon (which served as his darkroom) to the spot from which he is taking the photo.

Into the Sunset's self-consciousness is sometimes overplayed. It includes not one but three different photographs of cheap copies of Western



Below left_ *U.S. 97, South of Klamath Falls, Oregon* (1973) by Stephen Shore Below_ *We're Really Happy...* (1972) by Bill Owens



vistas: a billboard displaying a majestic landscape beckons drivers' attention away from the actual landscape around them; a painting of Mount Shasta in California adorns an ordinary storefront; a couple poses in their walled-in backyard which they have decorated with a mural of sun and palm trees. But the book's explorations of the Western image can also be subtle and clever. A thorough search will reveal that most of the cowboys who appear are faceless – they're turned away from the camera, their faces blocked by their hats or blurred. After all, any individual cowboy would fall short of the mythical cowboy of our imaginations.

From the 1930s onward, the automobile increasingly provided the frame through which people experienced the West, a device exploited by photographers such as Friedlander, Garry Winogrand and Dennis Hopper. In their work, desert hills and suburban strip malls alike are viewed through windshields or reflected in rearview and side mirrors. And just as the car separates its driver from the surrounding landscape, frames separate the viewer from the photographs' subjects. The effect is alienating. Robert Adams' *Colorado Springs, Colorado* (1968) gives us a glimpse of a woman silhouetted within a



window, within another window, within the stark rectangle of the tract house, and finally within the frame of the photo. Dislocated from us by so many nested boxes, she appears distant and unreachable. In Garry Winogrand's more menacing *New Mexico* (1957), a toddler is swallowed up in the yawning black mouth of the garage around him, his tricycle lying overturned in the driveway.

But if you've any doubt that the bleakness in these images is at least as much the creation of the photographers as of the West itself, look no farther than the titles. Photos of houses, stores and people are frequently titled according to the location where they were taken, signaling a conscious decision on the part of the photographers not to engage with the individuality or humanity of their subjects. John Divola takes this detached approach to another

level entirely, with a photo of a house which he identifies by its geographic coordinates. But at least the dispassionate titles are less heavy-handed than the ironic ones, like Bill Owens' 1972 portrait of a couple feeding their baby in their modern suburban kitchen, called *We're Really Happy....* It's hard not to feel indignant on behalf of the subjects who smile out at the audience, unaware that they are characters in the photographers' narrative about the artificiality of the Western dream.

JULIA GALEF

+ *An evocative collection of images*

— *Makes the same point about artificiality too many times*

Suddenly, here's a vision of Big Jim doing action painting and hurling himself out of windows

SYMPOSIUM/ 'James Stirling: Architect and Teacher'

9-10 May 2009, Yale School
of Architecture, New
Haven, Connecticut, USA

This event marks the concerted re-presentation of James Stirling's work and legacy by the Yale School of Architecture, where Stirling taught for 20 years, and the Canadian Centre for Architecture, home to the Stirling archive. The symposium follows Stirling's achievements from the spindly modernistic University of Leicester Engineering Building (with James Gowan) to Stuttgart's urbanely post-modern Staatsgalerie (with Michael Wilford), icons of their distinct eras. Yet are such achievements even on the architectural radar today? A major exhibition, opening at Yale in autumn 2010 and intending to travel to London and Liverpool, aims to copper-fasten Big Jim's place in the pantheon.

In New Haven, proceedings are instigated by Anthony Vidler, curator for the exhibition. His excursus through the Stirling archive produces old photographs (Colquhoun at the Maisons Jaoul), doodles (Düsseldorf on the back of tickets to Chandigarh), lecture notes from early days at Yale and Stirling's own thesis (1950) for a civic centre in County Durham.

Round Two sees a quartet of younger historians 'situate'

Below_ Big Jim (left) quaffs with Peter Cook (right) at a 1975 show of Cedric Price's work



Stirling. Referencing his texts on Corb for the AR in the 1950s, University of Manchester's Mark Crinson balances Big Jim's interest in the vernacular with an attraction to Renaissance prototypes and the English baroque. Northeastern University's Amanda Lawrence analyses the 1958 Churchill College competition before Claire Zimmerman from the University of Michigan conjures a wonderful kinship between Stirling and Yves Klein in their 'repurposing of modernist strategies'. Suddenly, here's a vision of Big Jim doing action-painting and hurling himself out of windows. It's left to Yale's Emmanuel Petit to parse the role of humour in Stirling's work.

Round Three brings forth

reminiscences of working with Stirling, from Wilford (Stirling's fondness for A4 drawings in which 'you can see the whole image'), Craig Hodgetts (memories of a studio above Warhol's Factory in New York), Leon Krier (Stirling 'had no world view that he could articulate') and David Turnbull, who describes 1980s starchitect competitions characterised by glamorous form-making.

Round Four, finally, introduces a little argy-bargy. Wily Robert Maxwell of Princeton states that Colin Rowe 'made Stirling into a formalist architect'. Yale's Kurt Forster flies a flag for his engagement with Germany, the site of extraordinary proposals that 'could only be done by someone not German'. His colleague Peter

Eisenman, however, posits that Stirling had greater influence in the US. But what of his influence in England today? Have not the Smithsons more appeal for Britain's Young Turks and does Stirling's later oeuvre not appear unduly eclectic for contemporary taste? The upcoming exhibition promises a reconsideration of this figure Vidler calls 'the consummate British architect'.

RAYMUND RYAN

+ *Big Jim lives*

- *The late eclectic years still preclude full canonisation*

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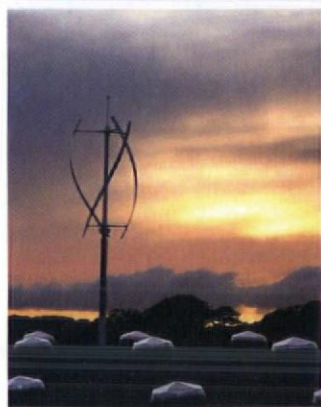
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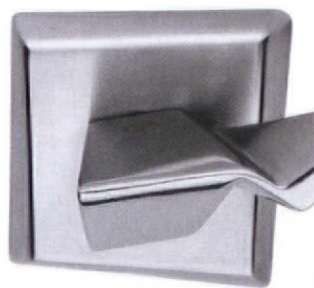
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Häfele UK's latest training seminar for specifiers has been approved by the RIBA for inclusion in its Continuous Professional Development (CPD) core curriculum. Entitled 'Specifying Door Ironmongery - A Basic Guide', it aims to help building professionals confidently specify door hardware. The seminar examines the five basic parts of a typical door set, used to hang, close, operate, lock and protect the door.



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Corus Colorcoat HPS200 Ultra prefinished steel in Goosewing Grey for the roof and Colorcoat Prisma in Silver Metallic for the walls have been specified at the new Audi car dealership in Edinburgh. The combination of Colorcoat Prisma and the perforated anodised aluminium supplied by Trim Trimapanel gives the building envelope presence and robustness.



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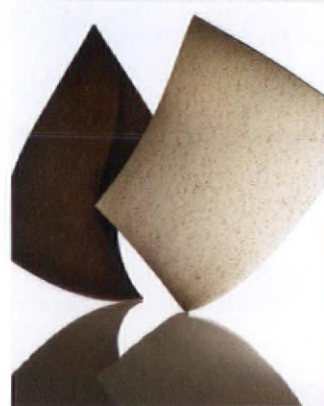
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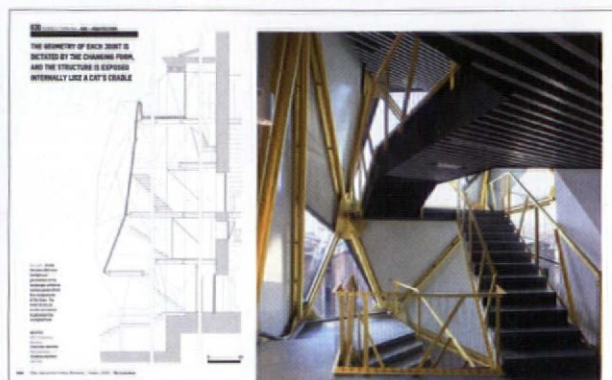
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In 2009 the World Games and 33rd congress of the International Urban Development Association (INTA) will be held in Kaohsiung city. The "Idea for Action, Kaohsiung" International Competition is organized jointly by the Kaohsiung city government and the International Urban Development Association (INTA). The idea is to invite the assistance of young people with a unique understanding of urban development and governance from around the world. They are encouraged to come up with innovative ideas for the future development of Kaohsiung on the basis of such recent trends as "Redevelopment of Harbor Waterfront", "Strengthening Core Urban Functions" and "Increasing City Habitability".

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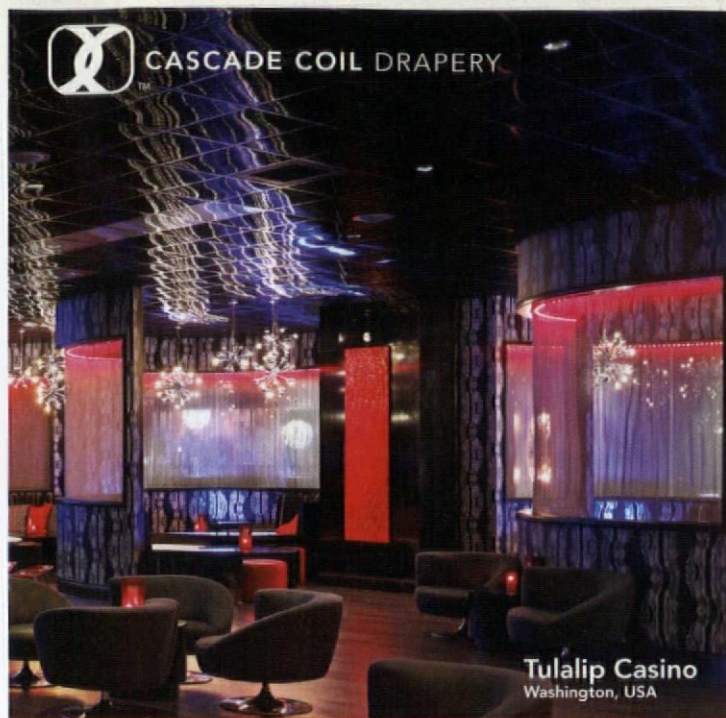
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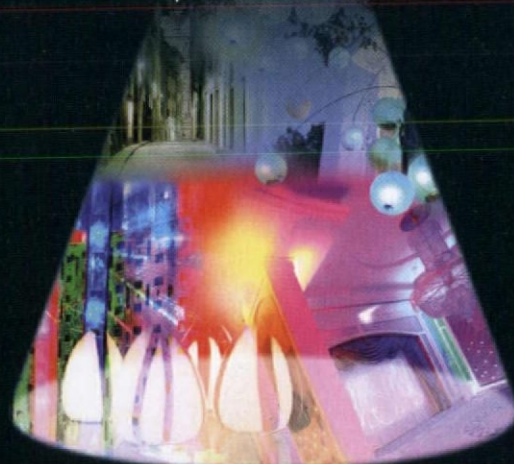
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#4

ANIMAL ANIMATES THE SPACE

KAREN KNORR

Artist Karen Knorr made this work titled *The Ramp in Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye*. Parrots, due to their ability to mimic human speech, often figure in literature as noisy potential revealers of secrets. In this mute photograph, the exotic bird is a visitor, the serene house undisturbed. Yet the potential of that bird disrupts the space; at any moment Loulou will take off from her perch, possibly even producing a dropping. **RUT BLEES LUXEMBURG**

The photographer and artist Rut Blees Luxemburg curates a monthly series of artworks for the AR relating to questions of space and architecture





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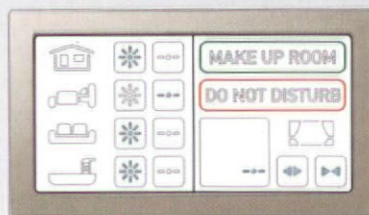
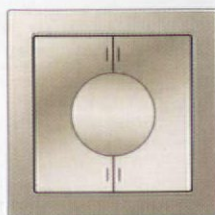
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