

Texas Architect





"Acme Brick provided the original brick for Sanchez Elementary over 50 years ago, so of course we went back to them for this renovation project. They worked with us and provided many samples to get the right blend. In the final project, you can see the seamless blend between new and old."

- Michelle Rossomando, AIA, RID, President and Principal, McKinney York Architects

A LESSON IN HISTORY



GEORGE I. SANCHEZ ELEMENTARY
CLIENT: AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
ARCHITECT: MCKINNEY YORK ARCHITECTS
GENERAL CONTRACTOR: FLINTCO CONSTRUCTION
MASONRY CONTRACTOR: WHITETAIL CONSTRUCTION
PHOTOGRAPHY: LEONID FURMANSKY



BRIDGING THE PAST & FUTURE AT GEORGE I. SÁNCHEZ ELEMENTARY

Near the intersection of Downtown and East Austin, the newly renovated George I. Sánchez Elementary embodies community, history, and innovative design. When McKinney York Architects embarked on the journey to transform this neighborhood school, they turned to Acme Brick, which supplied the brick for the original school nearly five decades earlier.

The goal was to create a modern, inclusive learning environment that celebrated the school's dual-language culture and honored the community's historic roots and values. In order to weave the existing structure and new construction into a coherent whole, matching the original brick color was essential. That match is a mix of two brick colors: Alluvial Medium, from Acme's Perla East Gate Plant; and Pago, from Belden Brick. The order totaled nearly 92,000 units, all modular size and velour texture.

As an industry partner for over 134 years, with a physical presence in Austin nearly as long, Acme Brick is a company whose associates know the importance of a proper "match job" – not simply replicating a color palette but also connecting a building to its environs.

Sánchez Elementary was recently featured on the television series *America ByDesign*. To learn more about this inspiring project, please scan the QR code to watch the episode.



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Top Photo: Masonry Units, Savoy Gris, Limestone, Classic Finish, 1 5/8" X 3" X 24"

Bottom Photo: Masonry Units, Mezzo Taupe, Limestone, Classic Finish, 4" X 4", Mixed Lengths

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THE VOICE FOR TEXAS ARCHITECTURE

Texas Architect is the official publication of the Texas Society of Architects, the state component of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

Texas Architect (ISSN: 0040-4179) is published quarterly, with an additional issue in September, by the Texas Society of Architects (500 Chicon Street, Austin, Texas 78702). Periodicals postage paid at Austin, Texas. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Texas Architect, 500 Chicon Street, Austin, Texas 78702.

Printed in the U.S.A. Copyright 2025 by the Texas Society of Architects.

WEBSITE

magazine.texasarchitects.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Visit website. Annual rates: US \$50, Students: \$40, International \$80.

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WILLIAM POWELL, R. VIGNOLA: A TREATISE ON THE FIVE ORDERS OF ARCHITECTURE. CLEVELAND, OHIO: J. H. JANSEN, 1922.

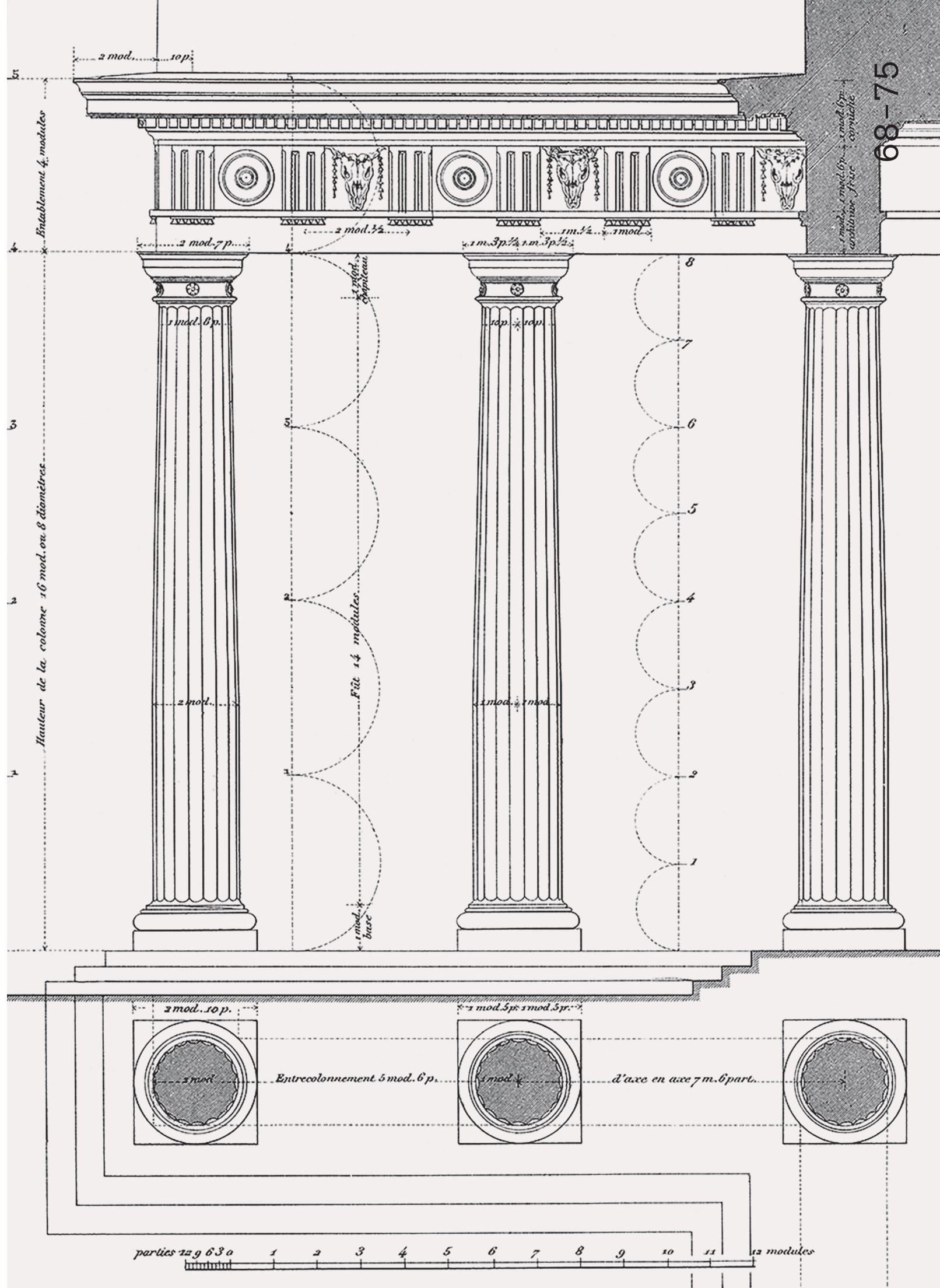




PHOTO BY CASEY DUNN

PHOTO BY ALBERT VECERKA



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MICHAEL BENEDIKT is ACSA Distinguished Professor of Architecture and Hal Box Chair in Urbanism at the University of Texas at Austin. Read his article on sensorial design amidst climate change on page 36.



DONNA KACMAR, FAIA is an author, professor of architecture at the University of Houston, and a practicing architect in Houston. In this issue, she writes about Hotel Saint Augustine (p. 58).



CAMILLE VIGIL is an architect in Dallas who works primarily on faith-based projects. See page 50 for a feature article by her and Tanvi Solanki, AIA, on the design of culinary spaces.



TANVI SOLANKI, AIA is a Houston-based architect who works with sustainable design and laboratory planning. She co-wrote “Material Palate” with Camille Vigil (p. 50).



TIZIANA PROIETTI is an architect and educator at the Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture, University of Oklahoma, where she studies perception of proportion using methods of sensory psychophysics and directs the Sense Base laboratory. Read her article co-written with Sergei Gepshtein on page 68.



SERGEI GEPSHTEIN is a scientist at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, where he uses methods of neuroscience and psychophysics to study the perception of depth and motion, perceptual organization, planning of action, and dynamics of neural networks. He co-authored “Rethinking Proportion” with Tiziana Proietti (p. 68).

ON THE COVER

Lounge of the Hotel Saint Augustine by Lake Flato Architects illustrating a careful composition of vintage furnishings set against black tile flooring

PHOTO BY NICOLE FRANZEN



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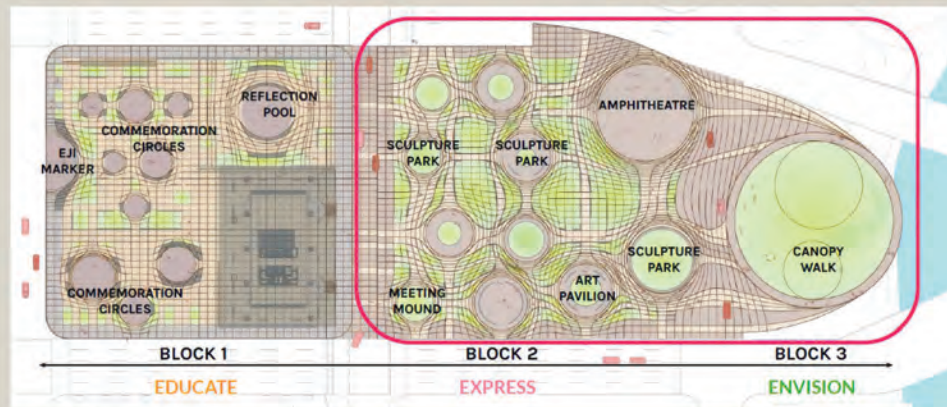
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CLIENT: HARRIS COUNTY PRECINCT ONE



PRIME - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

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Scope Summary: The 145,000 square foot project estimates break into sections: The Plaza Auditorium, art pavilion, and coffee shop, along with plaza site work (all are landscape heavy, except the coffee shop). The project seeks to shine light on Houston's and America's past injustices to its disenfranchised citizens and a celebration of people and communities making positive changes to this system. Along with the redesign of the plaza, the lobby of the Family Law Building will serve as a gallery and an extension of the plaza programming. The site is intended to be a space for gathering, reflection, education and celebration. While providing spaces for memorials and historical markers, the site also allows for the accommodation of food trucks, flexible activities and leisure. The landscape materials and flora seek to celebrate Houston by using local materials and native vegetation.

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STAR CEILING DEBUTS IN EL PASO

by Stephen “Chick” Rabourn, AIA

In downtown El Paso, one feels a slight charge in the atmosphere—a quality mostly absent from its regional neighbors but palpable in places like Mexico City, where multiple cultures and histories overlap to create novel formulations of modernity. Straddling physical and political borders with Mexico and historical epochs ranging from the Spanish incursion to the Mexican Revolution to today, the area is fertile ground for unique cultural and architectural development.

Set between the formidable restoration of Trost and Trost’s Plaza Hotel and Snøhetta’s La Nube is *Star Ceiling (El Paso)*, a stealthy addition to the El Paso Museum of Art by artist and native son Leo Villareal in collaboration with El Paso’s In*Situ Architecture.

In an effort that encompasses the creative reuse of existing urban fabric and an earnest approach to civic engagement, the work—a light sculpture composed of 14,580 individually controlled LEDs—serves as a setting for spectacle by night and respite from the southwestern sun by day. Zero-gravity loungers finished in wood plank-ing invite the public to linger and engage with the hovering plane of light in an endless and nonrepeating stream of rhythm, pattern, and movement.

Situated over a pedestrian thoroughfare in front of the museum, the piece is also architectural, functioning as both shaded pergola and grand entrance. By recom-missioning a linear series of seven concrete columns built by the City of El Paso in the mid-1990s, the instal-lation found its structural anchors and scale, as well as its economy.

In*Situ Architecture, led by principal architect Edgar Lopez, AIA, analyzed the reinforced concrete columns and found them suitable to support the 20-foot cantilever that spans 140 feet of public sidewalk adjacent to the museum. Furr-outs finished with porcelain panels house the elec-trical conduits, controls, and downspouts that drain the low-slope roof system.

The base condition of each column is a repeated com-position of a concrete planter-and-bench plinth on three sides and loungers wide enough for three facing the inter-ior of the piece. The flatwork is a randomized pattern of diagonal stripes forming deconstructed chevrons, a design by Lopez, executed inexpensively through scor-ing, staining, and etching the concrete surface.



Villareal and the El Paso Museum of Art had been in conversation for many years about creating an installation to activate the museum’s downtown location within a former Greyhound bus terminal. Although a private founda-tion raised \$5.9 million for the project, construction costs came in closer to \$3 million, leaving plenty of funding for future maintenance and upkeep.

Villareal’s work commonly uses existing architecture to create light sculptures. His sophisticated, code-gener-ated light works illuminate many prestigious institutions and civic areas in the US and abroad. One of the most well known is *The Bay Lights*, installed on a 1.85-mile stretch of California’s Bay Bridge, which connects San Francisco and Oakland. But having grown up between El Paso and its sister city Juárez, Mexico, where much of his family still lives, Villareal found this project a personal one as well.

Similar works of his, including *Cosmos*, an homage to Carl Sagan at Cornell University’s Johnson Museum of Art, and *Multiverse* at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., are nonetheless protean in their unique engagement with existing built fabric and programmatic contexts. Villareal says *Star Ceiling (El Paso)* began as an exploration of the existing architectural elements and how to make them more functional. “We didn’t reinvent the wheel, we just shifted things,” he said. “There is a sub-tle adjustment with the addition of this element, but it is transformative.”

It speaks to the skill and collaborative spirit of both Villareal’s studio and In*Situ’s team that *Star Ceiling (El Paso)* feels so highly resolved. A generosity of spirit and skill animates the project from concept to execution—per-ceivable in the proportional relationship of the columns to the cantilevered beams and thoughtful touches like the removable sides of the loungers for retrieving personal items that fall through the planks. Unveiled in January 2025, the space now hosts a farmer’s market on the week-ends and has become a venue for special events. □

Stephen “Chick” Rabourn, AIA, is an architect in Marfa.

↑ Leo Villareal, *Star Ceiling (El Paso)*, 2025
LEDs, custom software, electrical hardware, aluminum
18 ft. 9 in. x 135 ft. (5.7 x 41.2 m)
El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso.

PHOTO BY ALEX MARKS, © LEO VILLAREAL

→ Located along San Antonio’s River Walk, SAMA houses collections of Roman, Asian, Latin American, European, Contemporary, Egyptian, and Oceanic art.

PHOTO COURTESY THE SAN ANTONIO MUSEUM OF ART

HERZOG & DE MEURON REIMAGINES SAMA

by Stephanie Aranda, Assoc. AIA

“**Brewing Art**” is the fitting and playful slogan of the beloved San Antonio Museum of Art (SAMA), cleverly tying together the building’s past as the 1884 Lone Star Brewery and its present-day program as a museum. Once a derelict industrial complex, it is now a vibrant cultural institution that celebrates history, creativity, and global connection.

SAMA is a multilayered and magical place. The muse-um’s permanent collection includes more than 30,000 objects representing 5,000 years of history. Since its opening in 1981, SAMA has become a true gateway to understanding diverse cultures and civilizations from around the globe, maintaining a strong emphasis on the history and culture of South and Central Texas. Each arti-fact serves as a living ambassador of its place and time, with exhibitions connecting contextual dots and exploring the artwork’s relationship to larger questions.

Design moves, such as the remarkably transparent and clean glass elevators, visually blend the architecture of the historic brewery with the contents of a modern museum—transporting visitors, literally and metaphorically, through time and space.

Emily Ballew Neff is the Kelso Director at SAMA. “The beauty of museums,” she cheerfully shares, “is that they don’t go according to plan.” The exponential growth, including the need for expanded amenities and the unique opportunity of owning the largest undeveloped urban riv-erfront in the city, necessitated a forward-thinking camp-us plan to bring SAMA’s long-held dreams to life.

The primary goal of the campus plan is to assess the site’s opportunities and challenges in order to propose a cohesive strategy for both short- and long-term devel-opment. The plan will help guide SAMA through future stages of evolution, ensuring it continues to support its mission and organizational needs while honoring its past.

When it came to selecting an architectural firm to lead the campus planning process, experience in adap-tive reuse, museum design, and urban planning was par-amount. After thoughtful consideration, SAMA engaged the internationally renowned Swiss architecture firm of Herzog & de Meuron. Known for iconic projects such as the Küppersmühle Museum in Germany, the CaixaForum Madrid, and San Francisco’s de Young Museum, Herzog & de Meuron approaches each design with the precision

and care of an artist crafting a masterpiece. In the master-ful hands of this firm, the development of SAMA’s campus will be treated as meticulously as an exquisite sculpture.

A surprising and meaningful synergy between SAMA and Herzog & de Meuron was uncovered during the firm’s careful exploration of the museum’s cultural context. The architects explored San Antonio’s key cultural sites, including the missions and the River Walk, and were par-ticularly struck by the beauty and architectural integrity of Mission Concepción. Upon seeing the San Antonio River, they affectionately compared it to the Rhine River, which flows through their hometown of Basel, Switzerland. Both rivers have undergone dramatic environmental resto-rations, and both serve as beloved lifelines for their cities.

Adding to this sense of resonance is the strong Germanic influence shared by both Basel and San Antonio. The brewery’s original design was deeply rooted in German construction techniques, which were widely adopted in 19th-century Texas as waves of immi-grants honored the *Mutterland* in their architecture and settlements.

With Herzog & de Meuron’s design expertise and cul-tural insight, the upcoming campus plan promises to be transformative for SAMA and San Antonio. The firm is positioned to elevate the museum’s presence while hon-oring the site’s architectural and historical layers, looking forward to its future as an important connective tissue for the city. The evolution of the brewery thus continues to be a true reflection of adaptability.



Scheduled for completion in June 2025, the campus plan will outline a vision for future growth that includes enhanced educational opportunities, inviting exterior spaces, and enriched visitor experiences. Ultimately, this ambitious plan is about more than buildings—it is about creating a dynamic environment where art, history, and community intersect. Fittingly, the goal is to continue to “brew art” for generations to come. □

Stephanie Aranda, Assoc. AIA, is a designer and an adjunct faculty member at San Antonio College, where she teaches architectural history. She was named the Texas Society of Architects 2023 Associate Member of the Year.

BUILDING BETTER BRAINS

by Allison Peitz, AIA



As architects, we intuitively understand how design affects the way people feel in a space. Yet it can be difficult to convey to clients the value of elements that support less tangible outcomes. Increasingly, observational and experimental research confirms a strong connection between building design and occupants’ health and cognitive function. Terms like *biophilia* and *neuroaesthetics*—once niche—are gaining traction, offering a scientific framework for measuring these effects. However, awareness of these concepts outside the design world has lagged.

The Building Brains Coalition seeks to change that. Formed by five leading organizations—the Center for BrainHealth, the Center for Advanced Design Research and Evaluation (CADRE), HKS, the Brain Capital Alliance, and Rice University’s Baker Institute Neuro-Policy Program—this multidisciplinary initiative aims to elevate brain health in design conversations and policy. Its focus includes neurological and mental health as well as cognitive performance.

“It all started at the 2024 Science Summit at the United Nations General Assembly,” recalls Julie Hiromoto, FAIA, a partner and director of integration at HKS and founding member of the coalition. “We were the only architects in the room.”

While economists and policymakers at the summit discussed “brain capital”—the cognitive and mental well-being of a population as an essential economic

driver—the built environment was absent from the conversation. Brain capital emphasizes investment in education, health, and innovation. For Hiromoto, that presented a clear opportunity.

“The built environment is probably one of our most underleveraged assets for change,” she says. “We kept asking, ‘How do we get the built environment to show up on this agenda? What can we bring to this conversation?’”

That question led to the first Building Brains Summit in Dallas in 2024. The event convened healthcare professionals, neuroscientists, urban designers, developers, and policymakers to explore how design can promote cognitive well-being.

“We spent the whole day talking about how the built environment can drive positive outcomes for brain health,” says Hiromoto. “It got [people] thinking about the built environment in a way they had not before. It was a shift from myopic, short-term, first-cost thinking to a much larger system of values.”

While the ideas explored have national relevance, the coalition sees Texas as uniquely positioned to lead. With its rapidly growing cities and forward-looking development, Texas can pioneer brain-health policy, influencing building codes and regulations to impact all projects, not just those with particularly engaged clients.

“Dallas, like many other Texas towns, has been experiencing a consistent boom,” says Ryan Schutt, AIA, HKS principal, office director, and studio design leader for commercial/mixed-use. “Because of this growth, we have an opportunity to make policy changes that address brain health and not just talk about them. Dallas, and Texas cities, really can be [catalysts] and demonstrate what these concepts are doing.”

Beyond policy, the coalition is expanding its reach through education and industry collaboration. Summit organizers have initiated discussions with faculty at universities including the University of Pennsylvania, Howard University, and Texas A&M University to create K–12 curricula focused on brain-healthy design, infrastructure, and practices.

Interest has also grown across architecture-adjacent industries. This summer, the Business Collaborative for Brain Health will host a roundtable on the subject in Houston, and the Urban Land Institute will partner with the Brain Capital Alliance for a panel discussion. The next Building Brains Summit, scheduled for 2026 at the Georgia Institute of Technology, will focus on expanding awareness in the Southeast.

“At this moment, we’re at a formative stage,” says Hiromoto. “The whole point of the coalition is to create a space where everyone has a say in what this might become and to connect those with project ideas to the resources they need.” To learn more or get involved, visit buildingbrainscoalition.org. □

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Allison Peitz, AIA, is an architect at Lake Flato Architects in San Antonio.

← Professionals from a variety of industries gather at the 2024 Building Brains Summit in Dallas.

↓ After an extensive rehabilitation spanning years, the McFarland-McBee House, built in 1947, is now a home for Preservation Austin and a hub for the surrounding community.

PHOTO BY DARYL SHIELDS

PHOTO BY ANASTASIA CALHOUN, ASSOC. AIA, NOMA

A NEW HOME FOR PRESERVATION AUSTIN

by Alyssa Morris

For the first time since 1978, and after six years of meticulous effort, Preservation Austin finally has a home of its own. The organization recently completed renovations on the McFarland-McBee House at 3805 Red River Street, a rare Streamline Moderne structure and a long-recognized local landmark. One of only three such homes left in Austin, the house sits prominently at the corner of 38th and Red River streets, across from the historic Hancock Golf Course.

Now serving as Preservation Austin’s headquarters and a community hub, the house also stands as a model of thoughtful historic rehabilitation.

Built in 1947 by the McFarland family without the help of an architect, the house drew inspiration from South Florida’s distinctive architectural style. Positioned to maximize views of the surrounding neighborhood, the home’s unusual design and quirky construction—rumored to be the builder’s only project—lends it a unique, idiosyncratic charm familiar to many longtime Austinites.

The McFarlands lived there until 1954, and the house became a rental in 1962. That same year, a major portion of the golf course was sold to developers, prompting concerned neighbors to buy up homes along Red River



to stave off further development. The McFarland House remained a rental for more than 50 years, which preserved many original details but also left it in serious disrepair.

By 2014, the house faced demolition due to foundation cracks and severe water damage. That’s when Preservation Austin stepped in. After a lengthy advocacy effort, the Austin City Council designated the property as historic, protecting it from demolition. When the house finally came up for sale in 2019, Preservation Austin purchased it.

“Our board saw it as an opportunity to invest in our advocacy,” says Lindsey Derrington, executive director of Preservation Austin and the project’s manager. “From there, we built the vision for it to become a center for our work.”

The group partnered with the architects at Hutson | Gallagher, who first donated their services to help nominate the house to the National Register of Historic Places—a key move that allowed access to over \$200,000 in state historic tax credits. From 2022 to 2024, the team undertook a full renovation. Structural repairs were extensive: The signature cantilevers were deteriorating and had to be reinforced with steel; the foundation was replaced; and all original 1947 plumbing and wiring were updated.

Throughout the project, Preservation Austin took a hands-on role typically reserved for the entities it supports. “The city’s heritage grant program is incredible,” Derrington says. “We received a \$250,000 capital grant, which makes us better equipped to help others navigate the same process.”

A grand opening is planned for late 2025, with Derrington envisioning the space as a venue for public events, lectures, and education. “Whether you’re a legacy business owner or a homeowner, we want to help you understand how to access grants and tax credits, or how to retrofit your historic building for climate resilience—without losing what makes it special. That’s hard to navigate.”

The total project cost approached \$2 million. A major gift from the McBee Family Foundation included funds for furnishing the house with a mix of contemporary and vintage pieces, and there are plans to install a sign designed by neon artist Evan Voyles, whose work graces numerous Austin businesses, to mark the corner. The McFarland-McBee House is set to enter a new chapter in its fascinating history, and this time, all of Austin is invited in. □

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Alyssa Morris is a freelance writer based in Austin.

TTU HCOA HONORS ALUMNI

by Matt Garcia



Texas Tech University’s Huckabee College of Architecture (TTU HCoA) continues its proud tradition of recognizing excellence through its annual awards program. Presented by the Design Leadership Alliance (DLA), the awards honor alumni, students, and supporters whose work and leadership have made significant contributions to the college and the architectural profession. Each year, three primary awards are presented: the Alumni Design Award, the Distinguished Alumni Award, and the Kleinschmidt Award. In 2023, the program expanded to include a fourth honor—the Student Design Leadership Award—recognizing an exceptional graduating student who demonstrates academic achievement, peer leadership, and community involvement.

The DLA, composed of TTU alumni, friends, and supporters, hosts the awards at the Texas Society of Architects (TxA) Annual Conference. The program promotes public interest in architecture, highlights the achievements of TTU HCoA alumni, and supports students through sustained engagement and funding.

“One role of the DLA is to serve as a platform to celebrate our alumni’s prolific work and the huge impact they’ve made within the profession and college,” says current DLA president Sean O’Brien, AIA.

Design awards are open to submissions by TTU HCoA alumni practicing as architects, interior designers, or design interns. Honor awards, including the Distinguished Alumnus and Kleinschmidt Awards, are nomination-based and recognize broader contributions to the field and college.

Last year’s jury included Jes Deaver, AIA, of Nick Deaver Jes Deaver Architecture in Austin; Kristina Yu, AIA, of McClAIN+YU in Albuquerque; and Todd Wascher, AIA, of Lake|Flato Architects in San Antonio. Selected projects reflected a wide range of scale and innovation. Christ Church Anglican in Midland by Rhotenberry Wellen Architects, Cosmic Saltillo in Austin by Clayton Korte, and Sunset in San Antonio by Card and Company received Alumni Design Awards for their excellence.

The late Ron Wommack, FAIA, received the 2024 Distinguished Alumnus Award. A Dallas-based architect, Wommack founded his firm in 1990, developing a refined modern style that emphasized natural materials and light. His work earned three TxA Design Awards, 15 AIA Dallas Design Awards, and the 2006 AIA Dallas Firm of the Year award. His career reflected both design excellence and a commitment to the architectural community in Texas.

The Kleinschmidt Award was presented to Brian H.

Griggs, AIA, for his service to the college. Griggs, an alumnus of TTU and principal at Parkhill in Amarillo, authored *Opus in Brick and Stone: The Architectural and Planning Heritage of Texas Tech University*. His book explores the university’s architectural legacy and highlights the work of local architects shaped by their education at TTU.

The 2024 Student Design Leadership Award went to Jaclynn Herbein, a recent Master of Architecture graduate with a certificate in Urban and Community Design. Herbein served as a teaching assistant for two years and as a summer research assistant, demonstrating academic leadership and a strong commitment to the college community.

O’Brien reflects on the value of the program, encouraging alumni to take part in future cycles. “The DLA can serve as the common thread between the HCoA and our amazing alumni. I hope any TTU HCoA alumni reading this article considers submitting their work and nominating their peers for these awards.”

Through these recognitions, TTU HCoA celebrates both legacy and emerging leadership—honoring the professionals who shaped the college’s reputation and supporting the students who will define its future.

The submissions period for the school’s 2025 honor and design awards closed on July 11. The recipients will be announced at TxA’s Annual Conference in Dallas this fall. □

Matt Garcia leads a small residential design studio, Matt Garcia Design, in Austin.

↑ Left to right: Christ Church Anglican in Midland by Rhotenberry Wellen Architects, Sunset in San Antonio by Card and Company, and Cosmic Saltillo in Austin by Clayton Korte

PHOTOS (LEFT TO RIGHT) BY LUIS AYALA, AIA, CASEY DUNN, AND CLAY GRIER

➤ *Art in Context: Art, Architect, and the Middle Landscape*, Part I at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, April 2025. Pictured left to right: moderator Julian Rose and panelists Erica Cooke, Shantel Blakely, and Richard Shiff.

PHOTO BY SARAH VASQUEZ, COURTESY THE CHINATI FOUNDATION

From April 4 to 6, 2025, the dusty West Texas town of Marfa became the site of a rich interdisciplinary exchange during Part I of *Art in Context: Art, Architecture, and the Middle Landscape*. This symposium—co-hosted by the Chinati Foundation and the Rice School of Architecture—brought together a diverse group of artists, architects, historians, curators, and engineers to examine the distinctive convergence of art, architecture, and landscape that defines both the Chinati Foundation and the legacy of artist Donald Judd. The audience—an intimate gathering of around 250 (plus viewers live-streaming)—was a veritable who’s who of contributors to the fields of art and design.

Now in its seventh iteration, the symposium focused on the former artillery sheds at Chinati, which house Judd’s *100 untitled works in mill aluminum* (1982–86)—an iconic installation and a touchstone of his vision. Organized by Caitlin Murray (executive director of the Chinati Foundation), Stephen Martin (director of preservation and planning at Chinati), and Troy Schaum, AIA (associate professor at the Rice School of Architecture), the event aimed to explore both the historical significance of Judd’s interventions and current preservation efforts.

Murray opened the symposium by invoking Judd’s belief that “space is made.” Referencing his 1994 essay *Some Aspects of Color in General, and Red and Black in Particular*, she emphasized that the space surrounding the work is as significant as the work itself. “By the touching of surfaces,” noted Murray, “space around the work itself came into being, and with it, context.” Judd’s conviction that space is created—not merely found—emerged as a central theme of the weekend’s discourse. While such conversations often feel most suited to the ivory tower, they take on urgent, practical meaning in the context of preservation. Questions of intent versus execution, and the very boundaries of what is being preserved, become critical.

The program opened Friday with a keynote by Carme Pigem, co-founder of the Pritzker Prize-winning RCR Arquitectes. Her talk reflected on architecture as a sensorial and environmental act, echoing Judd’s commitment to uniting interior experience with the surrounding landscape.

Saturday featured two panel discussions. The first, moderated by critic Julian Rose, included presentations by Rice professor Shantel Blakely, curator Erica Cooke, and UT Austin professor Richard Shiff. The second panel, led by landscape architect Maggie Tsang, brought together Rosetta Elkin and Rice professor Fabiola López-Durán to examine ecological and design considerations surrounding Chinati’s physical environment. Their discussion stood out for challenging the reductive notion of landscape restoration as a return to a singular, idealized view of nature.

Saturday also included keynote addresses by Mexico City–based architects Tatiana Bilbao and Alberto Kalach, whose work is deeply informed by cultural context and natural systems. During Kalach’s talk, an unseasonable snowstorm swept through Marfa, knocking out the power mid-presentation. Kalach continued undeterred—speaking without slides and illuminated only by a single emergency light, creating an impromptu atmosphere reminiscent of stories told around a campfire.

The symposium concluded Sunday with a conversation between artist Larry Bell—whose work Judd once

CHINATI AND RICE HOST ART IN CONTEXT

by Anastasia Calhoun, Assoc. AIA, NOMA



described as “a visible space modified by a phenomenological aspect that has become an important new aspect”—and author Randy Kennedy. A technical panel, moderated by Martin and Schaum, brought together engineers and preservation specialists to discuss the complexities of maintaining Judd’s vision. Artist Christopher Wool, a former Chinati artist in residence, joined curator Anne Pontégnie for a discussion on the exhibition *See Stop Run*, moderated by poet and proprietor of the Marfa Book Company, Tim Johnson. Closing remarks were delivered by Schaum and Rice School of Architecture dean Igor Marjanović.

Recordings of the sessions are available for streaming on the Chinati Foundation’s website. Part II of *Art in Context* will take place at the Rice School of Architecture in Houston on November 14 and 15, 2025. In Judd’s spirit, the symposium celebrated space not as a passive container but as a made, shaped, and deeply considered context—where art, architecture, and landscape meaningfully converge. □

Anastasia Calhoun, Assoc. AIA, NOMA, is the editor of *Texas Architect*.

ALNY × HOU ON DESIGN PRACTICE

by Pooja Desai

For more than 40 years, the Architectural League of New York has supported emerging talent in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, and planning through its Emerging Voices and League Prize competitions. In March, the League partnered with the Rice School of Architecture to host "ALNY × HOU: An Intergenerational Conversation" at Rice University's Farish Hall. The panel featured past winners of these two programs, highlighting five decades of influential work.

Eighteen firms from across Texas—primarily from Houston, Austin, and San Antonio—presented the projects that earned them recognition, reflected on how the awards shaped their practices, and discussed current work. The event concluded with a conversation exploring the future of the field and the role of design education in shaping it.

Jacob Moore, executive director of the League, opened the event by describing the organization's mission as a platform for architects and allied professionals to support critically transformative work. He emphasized the League's focus on addressing structural issues such as racism, equity, and climate change. He also introduced the Next Generation initiative, which includes the League Prize, Emerging Voices, a student program, and a mentorship network—each aimed at cultivating successive generations of design leaders.

The League Prize, launched in 1981, recognizes emerging designers within 10 years of graduation through a portfolio competition, lecture series, and exhibition. Emerging Voices, founded in 1982, honors practices with a significant body of built work that engages systemic issues and demonstrates the potential to shape the field.

The presentations followed the evolution of several firms—from Low Design Office and Departamento del Distrito, who focus on community-driven work outside of the country in Ghana and Mexico, respectively, to Lake Flato Architects, which has maintained a distinctly Texan presence while being in the national eye for decades. Several presenters described the awards as an opportunity to pause and reflect on their practices' methodology and priorities.

Scott Specht, AIA, of Specht Novak Architects spoke about the firm's early work—fast, experimental projects using unconventional materials such as plastic Coke

crates, Styrofoam packaging, Rubbermaid ice cube trays, and fiberboard egg cartons. After receiving the Emerging Voices award in 2002, the studio shifted toward more enduring materials while maintaining its inventive spirit. This balance is evident in projects like the Carpenter Hotel in Austin, where they repurposed oil drill pipe to create a distinctive screen wall.

A more recent honoree, Dept.—a Houston-based landscape architecture and urban design practice—won the League Prize in 2022. Co-founders Maggie Tsang and Isaac Stein noted that the award prompted them to reflect deeply on ecology's role in their design practice. The studio has since expanded from small installations to larger-scale projects across the Gulf Coast and Southeast. Current work includes a 50-acre ecological restoration in Central Florida, streetscape improvements in Houston's Montrose neighborhood, and a collaboration with Buffalo Bayou Partnership to repurpose historic industrial sites on Houston's east side.



Carlos Jiménez Studio, founded in 1983, won the League Prize in 1988 and Emerging Voices in 1994. Based in Houston, the studio focuses on cultural, institutional, and residential projects, such as the Won Buddhism of Houston and the Jiménez House. Jiménez reflected on the awards as foundational moments in the studio's development.

The event concluded with a panel discussion on the challenges and opportunities facing the next generation of designers. Participants spoke about the need for adaptability, the growing role of technology, and the importance of architects as problem-solvers. Notably, the discussion emphasized interdisciplinary collaboration—particularly within academia—and the importance of connecting students to practice. The panel closed with a call for mutual support and a shared commitment to shaping a more resilient, inclusive built environment. □

Pooja Desai is a designer and researcher at the Community Design Resource Center at the University of Houston and a writer.

↑ Held on March 8, the panel of 18 Texas firms discusses the challenges and opportunities facing the next generation of designers.

PHOTO BY POOJA DESAI

→ JuanRaymon Rubio, Assoc. AIA, was an associate at Architexas, a writer for *Texas Architect*, an active member of AIA Austin, and a board member of Preservation Austin.

PHOTO COURTESY JUANRAYMON RUBIO, ASSOC. AIA

REMEMBERING JUANRAYMON RUBIO (1992–2024)

by Anastasia Calhoun, Assoc. AIA, NOMA

The sudden and untimely passing of JuanRaymon Rubio, Assoc. AIA, this past December left a profound void in the hearts of those who knew him—and, in many cases, even those who only crossed his path briefly. As colleagues, collaborators, and friends reflect on his life, a common thread emerges: JuanRaymon had a rare ability to make a deep and lasting impact in the simplest of ways.

Though trained as a historic preservation architect, JuanRaymon was much more than his profession. He approached everything he touched with boundless curiosity. As a writer for *Texas Architect*, he covered a wide range of topics—from thoughtful examinations of urban development in Texas's smaller cities to explorations of how architecture can better accommodate non-human species. He was always eager to contribute, to share ideas, and to listen—always with enthusiasm, always with joy.

It's often in someone's absence that we truly feel the weight of their presence. My own encounters with JuanRaymon, though few, were unforgettable. He was bubbly, bright, and remarkably generous with his time and insights. In both his writing and personal interactions, he had a gift for opening doors to meaningful conversations—leaving a lasting impression on everyone around him.

To his colleagues at Preservation Austin, JuanRaymon represented the organization's future. "JuanRaymon was a beloved collaborator. He had everything—technical expertise as a preservation architect, a righteous commitment to advocacy, and a boundless capacity for giving back," says Lindsey Derrington, executive director of Preservation Austin. "He fiercely believed in giving historic places a voice, especially in communities of color, and his good nature and humor infused our work with so much happiness. JuanRaymon left an impact on Preservation Austin, both personally and professionally, that is hard to capture in words. We miss him desperately."

AIA Austin executive director Ingrid Spencer shares a similar sentiment: "AIA Austin is heartbroken by the loss of JuanRaymon, an AIA Austin associate member and a rising force in our community. He wasn't just an emerging professional—he was a bright light, someone who brought warmth, passion, and joy into every room he entered. Quick to laugh and endlessly kind, he made everyone feel heard and valued.

"His dedication to Austin's built environment was evident in everything he did—from his work at the City of Austin to his deep involvement with Preservation Austin. He cared deeply about honoring the past while helping shape a thoughtful future, and his time in AIA Austin's Leadership Collective showed his commitment to becoming a leader who would make a lasting impact. His insight, curiosity, and unwavering belief in the power of preservation made him someone we all looked up to—an inspiring friend.

"JuanRaymon's passing is an immeasurable loss, but his kindness, his laughter, and his love for this city will live on in the people and places he touched. All of us who knew him at AIA Austin will miss him terribly."

Though only 32 years old, JuanRaymon's legacy lives on in the ideas he championed, the people he uplifted, and the joy he carried with him. He was a rising force—one whose legacy is hard to fully express in words, but that is deeply etched in the hearts of many. □

Anastasia Calhoun, Assoc. AIA, NOMA is the editor of *Texas Architect*.





THE QUERCUS STELLATA

The Quercus Stellata, better known as Iron Wood, is renowned for its resilience. It can be found growing in the Texas Post Oak Savannah, a staple of the Texan landscape. It's got a rough, dark, gray bark, which is highly valued for its dense wood in architectural millwork and cabinetry as well as its cultural significance in the region.

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An innovative example of Iron Wood use can be seen in the Casa Campo project, designed by WernerField Architecture + Design – a project that won an AIA Dallas Built Design Honor award in 2022. The Phillips Forest products team milled everything used in the house. The paneling was cut as a log locally at their sawmill, dried in their kiln and then milled at their facility.

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Paul Field, Assoc. AIA
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“Our team worked directly with the designer, Paul Field, to make sure he got exactly what he was looking for,” said Allen Phillips, whose family owns Phillips Forest Products, “Straight from our mill here in Texas.”

Casa Campo was designed to replace a small cottage home that the client had lived in on the property for nearly 20 years. The client, an avid gardener & beekeeper, wanted the new home to have a strong connection to nature and incorporate design features that would support local wildlife.

“The Phillips Forest products team was able to provide the ethically sourced and high-quality wood materials that were required for the Casa Campo project,” said Paul Field, Owner and Co-Founder of Wernerfield Architecture + Design. “We place tremendous value on selecting high-quality products that will endure on each project.”



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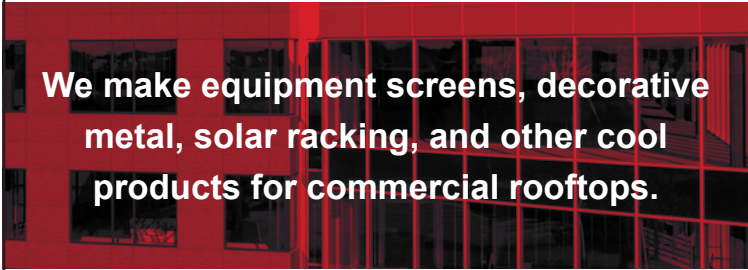
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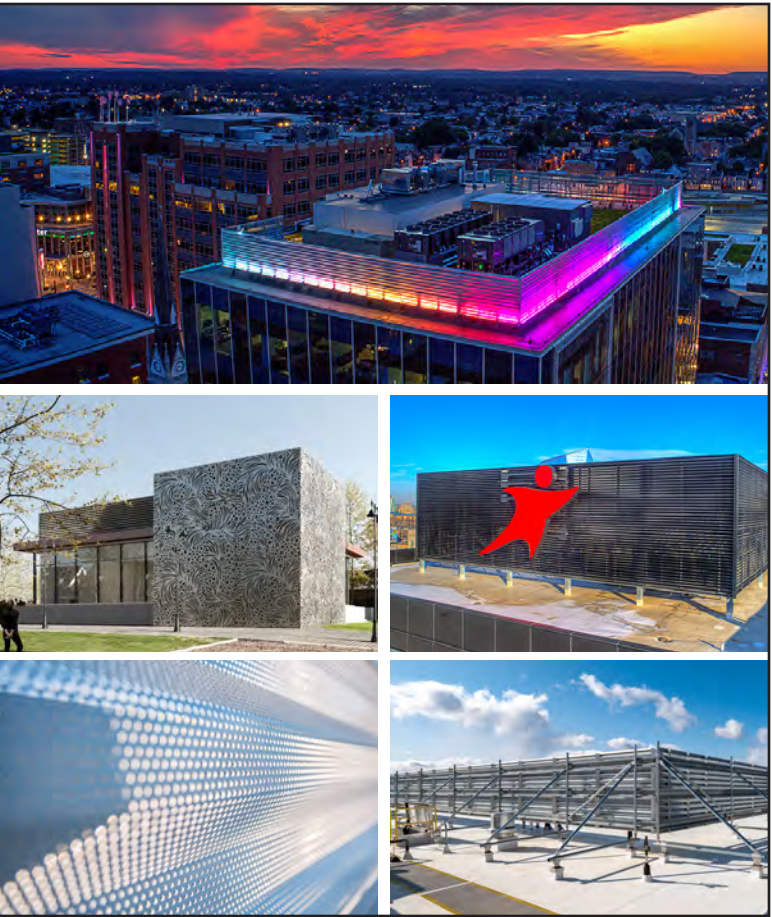




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In *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, Finnish architect and theorist Juhani Pallasmaa wrote, “To experience architecture in a deeply human way is to touch it with all the senses, not just the eyes.” In an age dominated by screens and engineered distractions, the invitation to inhabit space fully—with skin, breath, memory—is not merely poetic; it is urgent and essential. Architecture is more than what we see; it is how we feel, hear, move through, and remember space. It is scent trapped in limestone on a hot Texas afternoon. It is the echo of footsteps in a long corridor, the hush of filtered light, the brush of rough brick under fingertips. Our built environment speaks not only to the eyes but to the entire body.

This issue of *Texas Architect* explores the architecture of the senses and how thoughtful design can activate, soothe, or recalibrate our sensory lives. We now understand more than ever about the biological mechanisms that underlie our experience of space.

The hippocampus, for instance—long associated with memory—is deeply involved in spatial navigation and environmental awareness. Our sense of orientation, of “being somewhere,” is not abstract; it is built into the architecture of the brain itself.

Mirror neurons fire when we witness movement or emotion, allowing our bodies to resonate with the gestures of space—an arched ceiling can inspire awe, while a low, compressed hallway might raise heart rate and tension. The vestibular system, responsible for balance and spatial orientation, responds to shifts in ceiling height, the steepness of a stair, even the rhythm of movement through a room. Our bodies are not passive in architecture; they are constantly decoding and reacting.

This neurobiological perspective carries powerful implications. Designing for

neurodivergence—particularly for individuals with autism, ADHD, or sensory processing differences—requires recognizing how intensely some bodies perceive sound, color, motion, and texture. A flickering fluorescent light that might go unnoticed or seem like a minor nuisance to many can be overwhelming for others. A chaotic floor plan may cause disorientation. True accessibility must also encompass sensory inclusivity.

Sensory pollution, especially in urban contexts, presents another side of this conversation: the overabundance of input. Noise, flashing signage, digital clutter—the detritus of the attention economy—can flatten our relationship to place, making it harder to locate calm, clarity, or connection. Architecture, then, becomes an act of curation. What do we want to amplify? What do we need to quiet?

Even the experience of holding this magazine is a kind of architecture. The weight of the paper, the scent of ink, the texture of the cover stock—all conspire to draw your attention back to the physical world. Good design often disappears into seamless function—until it chooses to disrupt. What happens when the layout surprises your hand or eye? These moments echo the architecture we feature: spaces that awaken the senses precisely by refusing to go unnoticed.

The projects in this issue are not just visual objects—they are sensorial experiences, designed to be felt as much as understood. They recognize that the body is an instrument, and that space, like music, must be composed. In a world of constant input and fractured attention, our environments still have the power to bring the nervous system into harmony and restore us—to sensation, to awareness, to the present moment.

Christina Calhoun

OPEN SENSES



CELEBRATING THE SENSES

DESIGN FOR A CHANGING CLIMATE

Words by MICHAEL BENEDIKT

You are hiking in the woods. The smell of pine and juniper rides on the wind. Crossing a rocky clearing you find you must steady yourself with your trekking poles. You stop for a moment to take in the rolling hills, which are blanketed in trees as far as the eye can see. The silence is profound; all you hear is your breathing and the call of a nearby bird.

Or you are at the beach, returning from a swim. With your skin still drying and salt on your lips, you lower yourself face down onto a towel. Closing your eyes, you listen to the surf. You can smell the towel. The cries of seagulls and of children-not-your-own come from far away. As the wind wafts across your back, the warm sand beneath you begins to feel like a bosom: Mother Earth’s. Together you roll through space.

Why do scenes like this come to mind when thinking to celebrate the senses? Because it’s when our bodies feel pleasurably connected to the natural environment via all the senses—vision, smell, hearing, touch, taste, temperature, balance, duration, and orientation—that we feel wonderfully alive. Wanting to feel more alive is, in large part, the reason we engage in outdoor sports and adventures. It’s also why architects are periodically urged to go beyond the visual and photographic impact of their work and pay attention to how buildings address all the senses. The best buildings don’t just look good, after all; they feel good, sound good, smell good. The quality of the air is good too, and you want to touch them. My generation remembers reading Steen Eiler Rasmussen’s *Experiencing Architecture*; younger generations, Juhani Pallasmaa’s *The Eyes of the Skin*. Both books urged attention to the non-visual senses and took the richness and naturalness of outdoor experience as the gold standard. True, there are sensory pleasures to be had indoors: the smell of bread, the crackling of a fireplace, the softness of a bed, glorious concert halls, pounding dance clubs. But elements of buildings like broad sliding doors opening onto terraces and greenery, like winding balletic stairs, like skylights ushering sunshine onto stone...are more permanent, providing both actual access to and virtual “capture” of the Great Outdoors.

“Blurring the boundaries between inside and out—.” How often, dear fellow architects, do we use that phrase with pride as we claim that we’ve done it? The reason we do so goes back to the beginnings of the Modern movement: think of Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye, Aalto’s Paimio Sanatorium, Mies’s Farnsworth House. Back then, it drew justification from the health benefits of fresh air and sunlight, of cleanliness and exercise. The congested, noisy, rapidly industrializing cities of the time provided none of these things. Today we want health too, of course, but also to feel good in the sense of being alert and attuned to the world. The trick of everywhere “blurring...inside and out—” seems to accommodate that desire.

It leads, further, to the idea that architecture itself can

and should be thought of as modified landscape and so is best when long-viewed, spatially open, decentered or many-centered, traversable, and transparent; best when continuous with or “made by” the site; best when creating various “conditions for inhabitation” instead of discrete rooms.

This ideal, alas, eliminates countless other perfectly desirable architectural “conditions,” like rooms with doors, windows, and shutters, like cloisters around courtyards, like cellars and attics fragrant and useful, like places to be in for a while, to dwell, dream, and work. Can one not feel sensorially alive in such places too? Can a building not be a refuge from the “great outdoors” and a delight? Of course it can. We need to think again about what the unique sensory qualities of indoor space could be. Why “again”?

Let us go back and ask how good a job we are actually doing of “bringing the outdoors in,” of “blurring the boundaries...” and so on? The truth is that energy codes and client expectations tend to create buildings that are *in fact* climatically, thermally, and acoustically sealed. And we feel it all too well. Walls of glass have few or no opening sections, while sliding glass doors—those icons of modernity—remain closed but for a few days a year, moved briefly to allow entry and exit. If you work in an older building, chances are that the windows are nailed shut so as not to upset the HVAC. “Conditioned” air is injected into rooms via hidden ducts and pipes, as are hot and cold water. Waste is spirited away. Light is supplied by “fixtures,” while energy strong enough to kill large animals is ready to surge out of “receptacles.” Floors are smooth and flat: No balance or care is needed to cross them. How unnatural.

Are we finally living in “machines for living in”? In a way. Buildings today are more like bodies on life-support, bodies kept alive by conduits, tubes, ducts, pipes, cables, wires, and information-carrying infrared and radio frequency fields, all connected to sensors. That’s why power failures render them close to uninhabitable. In highly glazed buildings, moreover, we see the outdoors quite freely, which is better than not seeing outside at all, but we see out of them like fish in aquaria do: alive and mostly comfortable, but tactilely, motorically, olfactorily, and acoustically interred.

With climate change, sensory isolation from the outdoors is likely to become more prevalent and extreme in the developed world. Think Dubai. It’s only for a few weeks a year here, in Texas, that we can act as though we are living in Southern California or coastal Mexico, that we can leave doors open, sit outside, go for strolls, drive convertibles with the top down, dine “al fresco” in temperate comfort. Our nicer houses speak of this condition undyingly. By 2075, however, those happy weeks might be reduced to mere days. Average summer temperatures will be around 105°F, reaching 120°F in the afternoons. If the drought continues, most of Texas will look like West Texas does today, and West Texas like Death Valley, with highs around 140°F. Will we air-condition? Absolutely. For survival. But R30 insulation for walls and R60 for roofs will likely be legislated; windows will be triple-glazed and limited in area (perhaps to 20% of floor

☞ *The Weather Project* by Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson is a large-scale, site-specific installation created in 2003 for the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern in London. Using a combination of a semi-circular screen, mirror-lined ceiling, artificial mist, and mono-frequency lighting, Eliasson simulates the image of a massive, glowing sun. This immersive environment not only magnifies the viewer’s spatial and sensory perception but also invites reflection on the emotional and symbolic power of light and weather.

Through this work, Eliasson explores the deep interconnection between nature and humanity. The installation blurs boundaries between the artificial and the natural, prompting viewers to consider the constructed nature of perception and the profound influence of environmental elements on human experience.

PHOTO BY JOHNNY GREEN-PA IMAGES / CONTRIBUTOR VIA GETTY IMAGES

area). No single-wythe “curtain” or shop-front glass walls will be permitted; airlocks on all outside doors will be required. Rainwater collection and grey water recycling will become mandatory. Shade structures at civic scale will need to be provided. Indeed, shade will be considered necessary infrastructure, a public utility, prerequisite to development. Also needed will be public cooling stations set at prescribed intervals and enormous, slow-moving, wind-making fans. Open water will be treasured and also shaded. Some institutions will move their facilities underground, and many activities, like shopping, schooling, and sports, wanting to be outdoors, will become nocturnal. Texas’s inland towns will have grown quickly because of migration from Gulf Coast cities flooded by rising sea-levels, sinking ground, and ever-more-frequent hurricanes.

Global warming over the next 50 years will present enormous economic and political challenges—and not just to Texas, of course. Here we are examining one small such challenge, namely, a change in the sensory balance of life, a change in the texture of daily experience as mediated by the designed physical environment.

In that context we can be sure that people will depend ever more fully on networked digital media. People will have two or three handheld devices with general artificial intelligence (GAI), everywhere and at all times. Cheap LED screens—large and small, inside and outside, flat and curved—will mask most architectural forms like camouflage while our ears fill with non-local music, voices, and aural atmospheres (for a glimpse of this, see the Sphere in Las Vegas and the work of Refik Anadol). The senses can be occupied by things other than real places or real people, and quite happily occupied with the aid of pharma. Living substantially underground would more or less require such sensory diversion, Paolo Soleri’s amazing arcologies notwithstanding. A more realistic vision is provided by Philip K. Dick in his 1964 novel *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, which portrays life on a hot, largely abandoned Earth, as well as life “off world,” where colonists living mostly underground regularly and ritually escape into drug-and-media-induced, shared hallucinations of Earth’s better days.

You may find my reference to science fiction unnecessarily alarmist. My purpose is not to create apprehension but is twofold: first, to help prepare our profession for a future that may indeed be more stressed and artificial than we expect, and second, to consider how much of the world’s present sensory richness should be preserved. What of the smells not just of food, but of pantries, closets, garbage cans, steaming showers, medicine chests, wet cardboard, garages? Open a window, which it is still possible to do. Feel real air on your skin. Hear neighborhood music, voices, birds, and traffic, maybe the clatter of construction, and, at night, crickets and distant dogs and perhaps the wail of sirens. Worth keeping? In cities we can still catch the scent of winter smoke or of strangers’ cooking; in the suburbs, the scent of cut grass accompanied by the drone of lawnmowers, the spitting of sprinklers, and later, the scraping of rakes and roar of leaf blowers. If we cannot preserve these sensory experiences, will we try to simulate them?

Certainly, if bringing the outdoors indoors is worth doing, then it is worth doing beautifully, both now and

in the future. Similarly, if taking the indoors outdoors is valuable, then it too deserves poetic execution both now and in the future. There’s no need to “blur the boundaries between inside and out—” with acres of glass; indeed, these boundaries could be made realer and more poignant while the worlds they distinguish, indoor and out—, are superposed, reappearing in some form, on both sides. This double superposition is not easy to pull off, to design well; it requires a process of sensitization, argument, and real-world testing that will take many years.

We would start the process by appreciating more deeply the effects on our psyche of actions like spreading a picnic blanket on a meadow in just the right place (what art!), of cupping our hands around a lantern in a wind-battered tent (how memorable!), of gazing at the stars though the hardly existent “roof” of a handmade *sukkah* having just eaten grapes (how grateful!). As architecturally schooled designers, we should admire upholstered sofas arranged confidently outside in lofty, arched patios beside lush, walled gardens (think *Architectural Digest* in Puerto Vallarta) and recognize the pathos of the patio chairs, umbrella, griller, and gazebo, usually forlorn in our backyards, but which today, in the late afternoon, children are excitedly arranging in order to make camp—yes, camp—overnight “by themselves.” And let us enjoy, or remember, or imagine, how wonderful it is to shower outdoors without concern for privacy.

“It’s when our bodies feel pleasurably connected to the natural environment via all the senses—vision, smell, hearing, touch, taste, temperature, balance, duration, and orientation—that we feel wonderfully alive.”

If this is bringing normally interior activities outside, what of the reverse—bringing outside experiences indoors? We touched on the effect earlier and will again below in more professional, architectural terms. In the meantime, let us not disparage the longing expressed by indoor plants, caged birds, water fountains, standing fans, mirrors near windows—windows whose curtains might move in a breeze. Let us look kindly upon naïve landscape paintings, coffee-table nature books, flower arrangements on sideboards, and avocado seeds and herbs sprouting on kitchen windowsills or mini greenhouse-like “garden windows.” Weather thermometers, globes, binoculars, driftwood sculptures, bowls of sea-shells and geodes, wicker furniture, wooden shutters, screened porches, humming-bird feeders, rain chains... these familiar, and yes, kitsch objects make it quite clear: Our senses want us outside, in paradise.

What to do, then, in preparation for 2075? Come massive climate change as predicted, or not, either way: How can we give our senses what they crave without resorting to kitsch? How can we create a sensorially richer, need-responsive, and beautiful architecture in that warmer future, starting now? Consider the following, quite concrete suggestions.

1. COHERENT AIR CONDITIONING

Several lines of present-day research are aimed at making air-conditioning more efficient: solid-state thermoelectric convection systems, geothermal heat exchangers, super-reflective roof coatings, and more. By 2075 we can expect a 50% improvement in HVAC energy performance, which will be great. However, none of these technologies address the way air moves through a building, which at present is very unnatural. We can do better than inject streams of very cold (or very warm) air via small, noisy “vents” into large bodies of air. Let us provide more wind-like coherent or laminar flow throughout a building. Buildings do not need air ducts snaking above their ceilings and up cavities because buildings are ducts already. Large, quiet, low-velocity fans can draw air through an entire structure, while perforated, positively pressured walls can provide broad, low-turbulence, horizontal flows across entire rooms. Treating a building’s interior as a problem in aerodynamics puts us in uncharted territory. Done well, the result would feel more natural on the skin (more like outdoors), save energy, and launch entirely new interior organizations and aesthetics.

2. ACOUSTICALLY TRANSPARENT WINDOWS

Windows with opening sashes and sections need only be opened a crack to let considerable sound through with

minimum air transfer. In the future, high thermal performance windows could incorporate purpose-made, openable/closable slots in their frames. These might be visible or concealed. Alternatively, microphones outside can be paired with volume-controlled loudspeakers inside at every window. This done everywhere, the building would become acoustically linked to its larger environment, helping all its inhabitants stay temporally and geographically oriented. Windowless and underground buildings, of which there may be many more in 2075, would benefit especially from this technique. Finally, referring back to (1) above, open windows were once where outside air came in and interior air exited. Should future windows need to be sealed, however, conditioned air should be introduced only *near* them—say in the panels below or above them. Indeed, air and sound handling both could be part of the window package.

3. INCENTIVES TO PROVIDE OUTDOOR SHADE

Presently, the real-estate value of covered outdoor space is 50% to 75% less per unit area than conditioned indoor space. Open, uncovered landscape is valued even less. Apartments with useful balconies are rarely being built: There’s more money to be made expanding buildings to their legal lot lines and using the thinnest permissible walls. Publicly accessible sun- and rain-sheltered spaces like market sheds, covered sidewalks, closely treed plazas, and fields of fabric canopies (in parks, on beaches) are rare in the US, although beloved when visited in the rest of the world. Now, it is possible that in a warmer future Americans will want to stay cool indoors even more and will value conditioned space more highly than they already do, even at the price of sensory isolation. Left to the market, the result would be a world of fully

inflated, hermetically sealed, private buildings, with nothing but sun-blasted empty space between. Large parts of the world already look like this. If this is not what we want for 2075, there should be options, such as public funding for public outdoor space and percent-outdoor-shade requirements for developers. There is an art to making shade interesting: Shade is volumetric and partitionable by shafts and “walls” of sunlight. Shade moves; it has textures and quality. Then, too, wind need not be waited for but generated by large, slow fans, some misting, some blowing across bodies of water. In some places there could be hollow towers, wide enough to be under, and tall enough to use convection to pull cooler air down.

4. KINESTHETIC PLANNING

Among our most important senses is a bundle called *kinesthesia*: the feeling of our joints rotating and our muscles working, the feeling of spinning or accelerating (as judged by our inner ears), an awareness of gravity and of the changing patterns of friction and impact on our bodies. All these stimuli combine to tell us what we are doing, what shape we have taken, and how big we are. Indeed, a large part of our 3D vision is devoted to looking at our own bodies (especially our hands) and to planning and predicting how our bodies are going to feel as we negotiate the physical world. Now, among architects’ most accepted mandates is to *minimize* the amount of space devoted to *circulation* (usually meaning unassisted walking from A to B). Efficiency is the name of the game. And yet one of the ways we measure how much space we are in is by how much, and how far, we actually walk in it. It’s as though our bodies had fool-able planimeters in them. Too little circulation—too little kinesthetic stimulation—in an apartment, say, will make it feel smaller and more cramped.

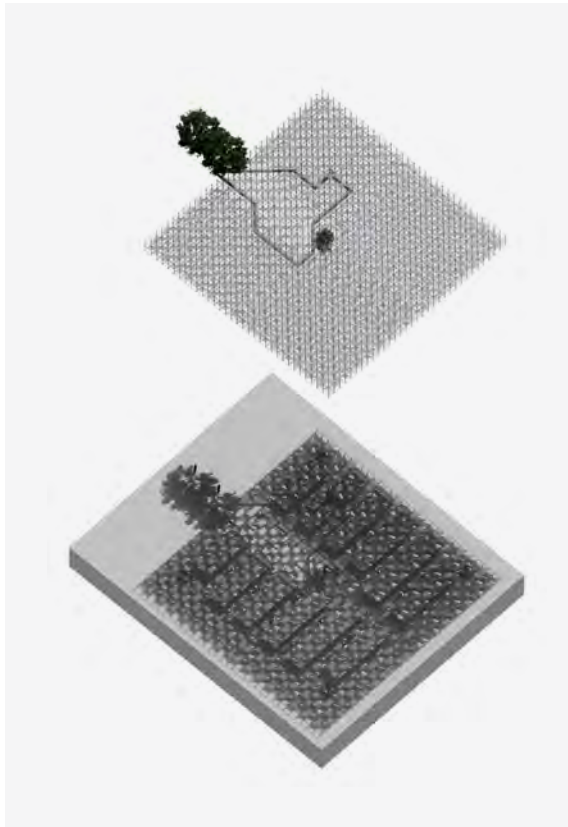
When built space is expensive for any reason, including climate-ameliorating technologies, it would behoove architects to extend rather than condense circulation. There will be optima to be sure, and trade-offs. The research to determine what those optima are remains to be done.

This essay began by explaining why architects are periodically urged, as in this issue of *Texas Architect*, to consider *all* the physiological senses rather than just vision. It’s because we *feel most alive* when all of our senses are stimulated simultaneously, which they usually are when we are (voluntarily) outdoors and in nature.

In the end, the challenge before us is not merely technical—it is emotional, philosophical, even existential. Architecture is ultimately about shaping the quality of life. If the climate forces us to retreat further indoors, to insulate and isolate, then we must ask: What kind of inner worlds are worth retreating into? The answer lies not in simulating the outdoors or endlessly reproducing its imagery, but in honoring the full complexity of human perception and memory. To build well in the decades ahead is to awaken the senses, not silence them; to craft spaces where the textures of life—of air and light, of sound and stillness, of motion and repose—can still be felt deeply and meaningfully. Let us not strive to escape nature, nor merely echo it, but to translate its richness into architectural forms that sustain both body and spirit. That is the real task for 2075—and it begins now. □

Michael Benedikt is ACSA Distinguished Professor of Architecture and Hal Box Chair in Urbanism at the University of Texas at Austin.

In Michael Benedikt's Spring 2025 Advanced Architectural Design Studio, students envisioned the future of Utopia, Texas, in the year 2075, when temperatures are expected to reach 120 degrees. Justin Gill and Zachary Landrum designed a community center that is primarily underground to escape the extreme heat, with above-ground elements featuring extensive shading devices.



The final design by UT Austin architecture students Alexandr Terekhov and Andrew Blanco envisions a farmers market composed of modular tensegrity components that form a striking, large-scale shading structure.



FORM FOLLOWS FEELING

Reimagining the Courtyard House

Words by EURICO FRANCISCO, AIA

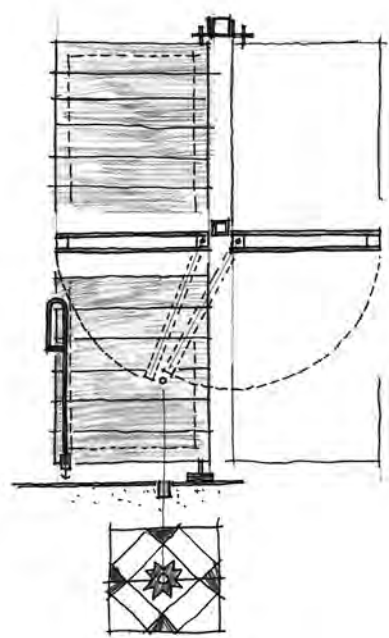
Shipley Architects' Courtyard House is a full experience for the senses. Everywhere you look, there's something interesting to see, something that catches the eye and invites it to linger, observe, and understand. Sometimes the surfaces and details even dare you to touch and run your hand over them: the various textures, a handcrafted metal handrail, perfectly honed box-joints on the wood stair, or an inventive custom latch. The house asks us to pay attention to what we see, hear, and feel.

Located in the Bluffview neighborhood of Dallas and aptly named the Courtyard House, the residence unfolds around a lofted courtyard that serves as the introduction to the interiors. While privacy and restraint guide the exterior presence of the home, the courtyard embraces flow and openness. The space is a constant witness to the passing seasons, and breezes crossing through remind us that air conditioning is not always mandatory, even in Texas. This “in-between” courtyard—neither indoors nor fully outdoors—is filled with the sounds of birds singing and wind ruffling the leaves of the nearby trees. The geometric and colorful concrete floor tiles—crafted in the Dominican Republic—create a tapestry of intense hues, drawing the eye in and defining the space as the heart of the home. The experience of the courtyard awakens and grounds you in the best way possible.

The clients, Lynn and Tom McIntire, empty nesters and newly retired, sought a family house where their children and grandchildren would feel comfortable when visiting. Courtyard houses are not necessarily common in Texas, but Dan Shipley, FAIA, founding principal of Shipley Architects, thought that organizing the house around this tried-and-true model could be the answer to his clients' goals.

The prototype of the courtyard house design has long been associated with Ancient Rome, where homes were typically organized around central atriums—open to the sky—that brought light in and structured the flow of living and working spaces. The courtyards in Roman houses also occasionally doubled as spaces for social gatherings and even for conducting business, which made them truly multifunctional and semi-public spaces.

The Courtyard House is a contemporary cousin of the Ancient Roman house. Here, the courtyard also brings light in and organizes the internal circulation, although in a less strict manner. It allows the house to be open but not transparent to the street, something the clients requested.

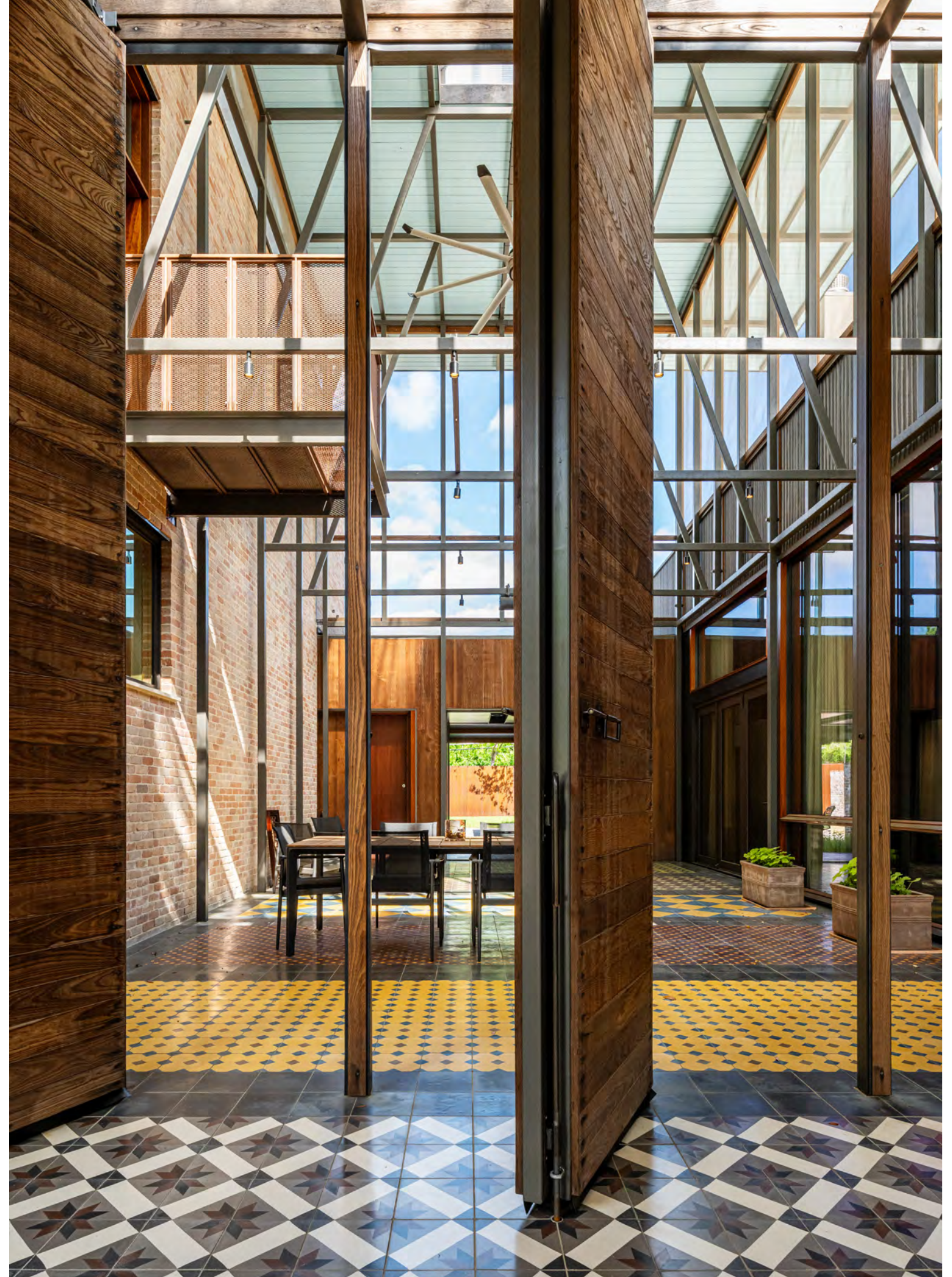


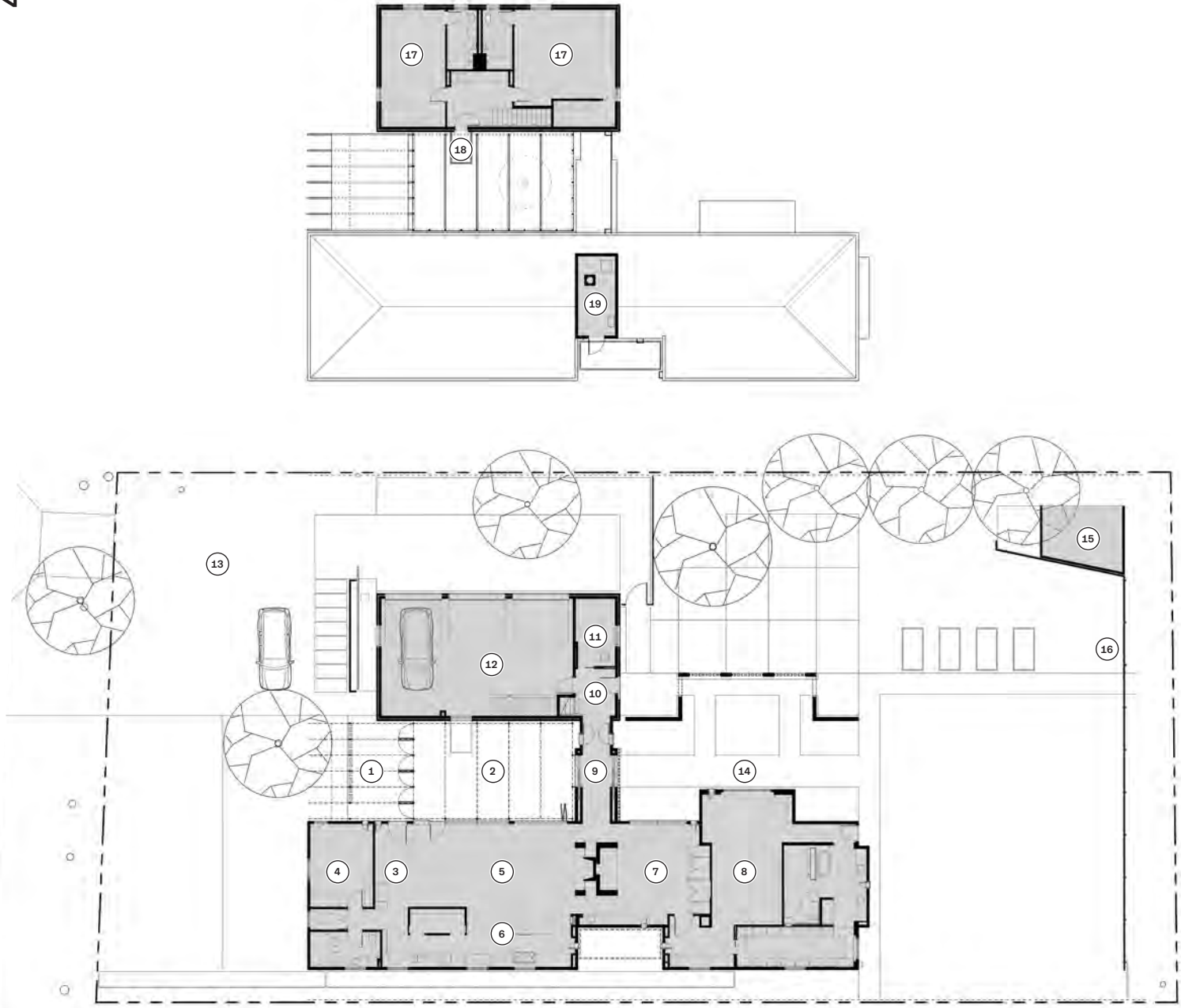
↵ The courtyard is the focal point of the house and can be opened to the street to welcome large groups of visitors.

↑ The choreographed arrival sequence employs turns, textures, and scale. The front door is intentionally shielded from view.

← Dan Shipley's design process extends into the construction phase and includes sketching and collaborating with subcontractors on the job site.

→ The courtyard is open to breezes, views, and sounds, grounding inhabitants in the best way possible.





↑ FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR PLANS

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|----|--------------------|
| 1 | SCREENED PROCH | 11 | LAUNDRY |
| 2 | OUTDOOR LIVING | 12 | GARAGE |
| 3 | ENTRY | 13 | CAR COURT |
| 4 | STUDY | 14 | GARDEN |
| 5 | LIVING | 15 | SHED |
| 6 | KITCHEN | 16 | CORTEN SCREEN WALL |
| 7 | DINING | 17 | BEDROOM |
| 8 | MAIN BEDROOM | 18 | BALCONY |
| 9 | HALLWAY | 19 | MECHANICAL ATTIC |
| 10 | GARAGE ENTRY | | |

PROJECT

Courtyard House

LOCATION

Dallas

CLIENT

Thomas & Lynn McIntire

ARCHITECT

Shipley Architects

DESIGN TEAM

Dan Shipley, FAIA,
Corey Reinaker, AIA, Kurt Vrbas

CONTRACTOR

ShipBuild Partners

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Coombs Engineering

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Paper Kites Studio

PHOTOGRAPHER

Robert Tsai



↖ A visually and experientially rich palette animates the main entrance.

↖ ↑ Textures, colors, and light organize circulation and spaces.



The courtyard is, inevitably, the focal point of the house, as it can be seen from most rooms. Interestingly, the McIntires also use the courtyard for receptions and other events. Large doors on the front porch can open the courtyard to the street, allowing guests to access it without entering the house. This immediately transforms the courtyard from a family space into a semi-public one—a perfect historical nod to the function of domestic courtyards in old Rome. Everything old is new again.

From the street, the house is organized in three volumes that flow from solids to voids and back to solids in easy patterns of brick and steel. The lowest, one-story volume to the south of the courtyard has the main living spaces: living room/kitchen, office, primary suite, and dining room. Curiously, a built-in day bed is part of the dining room, coyly suggesting lazy post-meal siestas. To the north, the two-story volume contains the three-car garage, utility room, and guest bedrooms on the upper floor. A land bridge connects the north and south wings of the house and delineates the eastern edge of the courtyard.

Design moves include a dramatic floating canopy topping the courtyard—the tallest of the three massing elements visible from the street. The very light structure rises up delicately in a pattern that is parallel to and reflective of the rhythm of the adjacent trees.

“The structure is made up of very small pieces, even smaller than the limbs of the Live Oak tree by the entrance,” says Dan Shipley. He is an architect who thinks like a builder. His drawings are sent directly to a shop for fabrication, erasing barriers between design and construction. In fact, Shipley primarily describes the house through the building process and its materiality.

Of note are the two types of brick facing the street: The house is clad in St. Joe, a molded brick from New Orleans, and a low wall next to the house is made of Old Texas brick from Mexico. Why two types of brick? The choice is deliberate. One is veneer, the other is structural; one plays protagonist and the other supporting actor.

Other examples of material dexterity include the main entrance, where the integrated bench-plus-coat-closet

↖ A floating canopy tops the airy courtyard—the tallest element in the composition.



↑ From the street, the house is organized in three volumes that flow from solids to voids and back to solids in patterns of brick and steel.

in Sapele is a sculptural custom piece of built-in furniture, a virtuoso exercise in cabinetry technique. Next to it, the freestanding pantry acts as a major organizing volume in the living space. Made of quarter-sawn oak, its modulation reconciles its own internal logic with the overall organizing grid of the house, making it unique and specific to its location. Also by the entrance, a sequence of recycled heart pine columns is made of imperfect wood twisting organically in sections and then realigning with the overall orthogonal order at the attachment points. In the living room, powder-coated aluminum sheets clad the prefabricated fireplace, giving it an unexpected sheen and texture.

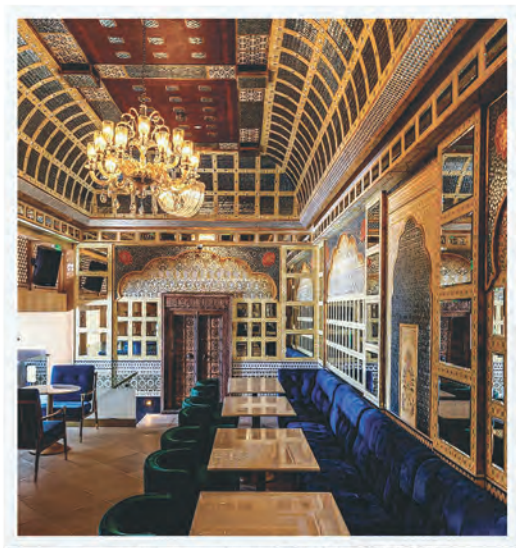
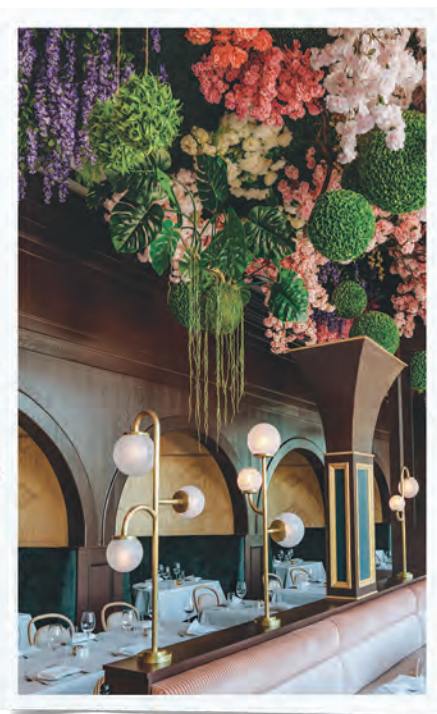
Materials such as wood, ceramic, cork, and wool carpeting are used on walking surfaces, each chosen according to use and to reinforce the unique character of a space. For instance, cork tiles are used exclusively on the land bridge, and wool carpet is used in the main bedroom.

Spending time in the McIntires' Courtyard House makes you aware of your place and time. Rather than

isolating you, the house brings you into the here and now as it asks for your full attention. Not only is what you see captivating—which is the baseline for good architecture—but so is what you hear and feel as you move through the spaces. The senses are engaged, almost heightened.

The home invites you on a journey through both subtle and obvious juxtapositions, elegantly choreographed—lighter and darker, taller and lower, open and enclosed, compressed and expanded. This sensorial experience elevates the house from good architecture to something exceptional: a place for living fully. The McIntires, their children, and their grandchildren would surely agree. □

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Eurico R. Francisco, AIA, is a design principal at Perkins&Will and a contributing editor to *Texas Architect*. Originally from São Paulo, Brazil, he has called Texas home for 25 years.



MATERIAL PALATE

SHAPING THE CULINARY EXPERIENCE



This page clockwise from top: 1) Buttermilk Baby by sensitori 2) Annabelle Brasserie by sensitori 3) Uchi Austin by Michael Hsu Office of Architecture 4) Loro by Michael Hsu Office of Architecture 5) Musaafer Houston by Chromed Design Studio; Facing photo: Annabelle Brasserie by sensitori

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: PHOTOS BY 1) KIRSTEN GILLIAN 2) BRIAN KENNEDY 3) TOBIN DAVIES 4) CASEY DUNN 5) COURTESY MUSAAFER HOUSTON; FACING PHOTO BY BRIAN KENNEDY

Words by TANVI SOLANKI, AIA, AND CAMILLE VIGIL

Food has long been a central thread in the fabric of human experience. Whether a quick coffee break, a casual lunch meeting, or a celebratory dinner, the rhythms of our daily lives—and our cultural milestones—are punctuated by meals. Just as the food itself tells a story, the environments in which we dine shape our sensory and emotional engagement. From upscale dining rooms to hole-in-the-wall cafés, every element—from lighting and furnishings to artwork and plating—plays a role in how we perceive a meal. Eating becomes not just a routine act of nourishment but a multisensory journey. These layered sensory components are what transform a meal into an experience, telling a story that deepens our connection to a time and place.

Across Texas, new developments are serving as fertile ground for innovative and iconic restaurants to take root. In North Texas, the town of Addison boasts more than 200 restaurants within its 4.4-square-mile urban center. It’s home to the original location of Texas de Brazil and the first US outpost of the Brazilian churrascaria Fogo de Chão. In Dallas, the Knox-Henderson neighborhood features a vibrant blend of restaurants, coffee shops, bars, and retail, whose long-standing success has sparked plans for additional expansive projects. Austin’s South Congress—particularly its new Music Lane development—remains a beloved destination for locals and visitors alike, with a lush array of boutiques, businesses, and eateries. Each of these developments has the potential to nurture restaurants that focus on immersive, guest-centered experiences.

This renewed interest in cultivating innovative eateries is perhaps most visible in budding mixed-use developments. In Houston’s Heights neighborhood, the adaptive reuse project M-K-T exemplifies this trend. Once an industrial, pebble-dashed complex, M-K-T has been transformed into a vibrant destination through the efforts of Michael Hsu Office of Architecture and Method Architecture. These firms gave the former business park structures more than a facelift—they redefined the area. Murals and artwork that pay tribute to Space City’s spirit are integrated throughout the complex, adding layers of local identity.

One of M-K-T’s recent additions is Buttermilk Baby, a diner serving American comfort food. Designed by interior firm sensori, which focuses on creating sensory-rich spaces, the restaurant aims to immerse guests in a nostalgic yet imaginative environment. Founder Gail McCleese says: “I saw a missing layer in the industry. sensori was born from a desire to shift [the] narrative. We blend the art and science of design to create environments that foster connection to nature, to others, and to self.”

Collaborating with New York-based firm ICRAVE and client Berg Hospitality Group, sensori infused Buttermilk Baby with a playful twist on the 1950s soda



fountain. Traditional diner elements like flashy signage, long counters, round barstools, and cushioned booths are reinterpreted through a whimsical lens. Chrome gives way to pearlescent textures, mirrored ceiling clouds, and glittering disco balls, casting a dreamlike filter over the space. Exaggerated visual motifs—a sundae sculpture, candy embedded in the bar, a carousel unicorn—animate the space with a feeling more akin to an interactive exhibit than an old-fashioned restaurant. The unicorn might even be a playful nod to the horse-drawn origins of the American diner.

Buttermilk Baby’s collaboration with Carvel, a 90-year-old soft-serve ice cream company, further connects past and future. Through this partnership, Carvel enters the Texas market—and the realm of boozy milkshakes—for the first time. For sensori, the existing architecture of the M-K-T site, including a 1950s-style parapet, provided an ideal backdrop for the restaurant’s midcentury inspiration. Pastel tones and cloud-like swings accent the building’s exterior, continuing the theme of sensory immersion. “We imagined Buttermilk Baby as more than a destination—it’s a sensory moment designed to invite both intentional visits and spontaneous discovery.”

Through guided workshops and sensory mapping activities with the client, sensori arrived at a design that draws on memory, emotion, and the senses. This three-tiered approach fosters both curiosity for the new and a subconscious longing for the past, encouraging guests to explore and interact with the unexpected moments the space holds. For sensori, how a space feels is just as important as how it looks. The final design delivers an environment that feels like a wonderland—a playful escape where visitors can indulge in comforting classics and sweet treats.



← Visitors at M-K-T are greeted by the pastel tones of Buttermilk Baby.

→ Suspended disco balls play off the chromed interiors of a classic diner.

↓ The large sundae sculpture at Buttermilk Baby serves as a whimsical focal point.

PHOTOS FACING AND THIS PAGE BY KIRSTEN GILLIAM





moment of surprise—a garden blooming above the dining room. Intimacy and elegance permeate the space through details like “opera booth” seating and antique chandeliers that dangle like heirlooms from a bygone era. Paintings of flora and fauna, along with a bronze sculpture of a woman poised in quiet grace, cultivate a feeling that is at once both curated and wild.

Annabelle’s brick archways and interior windows frame views from one room into the next and ground the spatial experience with a sense of permanence. The bistro’s modern French fare, too, offers a taste of its surroundings, with vibrant leafy greens and colorful vegetables accentuating refined dishes like steak tartare and diver scallops, connecting the freshness of the space to the plate. With Buffalo Bayou skirting the horizon and the cascading verdant ceiling above, dining at Annabelle Brasserie feels like being transported to a secluded garden. It’s a setting that disguises itself as a quaint bistro beneath a contemporary tower, but it houses an unexpected encounter between architecture, nature, and the senses.

← Annabelle Brasserie’s blue-grey paneling and floral patterns create a sense of warmth at the ground level of the residential tower.
PHOTO BY BRIAN KENNEDY

↓ The vegetated canopy above the dining space simulates the experience of eating in a garden.
PHOTO BY ANDY PHAM



Prior to collaborating on Buttermilk Baby, sensitori and Berg Hospitality also worked together on the French restaurant Annabelle Brasserie. Situated at the base of Hanover Autry Park, the high-rise apartment tower overlooking Buffalo Bayou, Annabelle Brasserie draws inspiration from both the built environment and the natural rhythms of the bayou.

The restaurant’s north facade gracefully negotiates a shift in scale and elevation—from the bayou’s pedestrian park and streetscape to the restaurant level, and upward toward the stark height of the tower above. The blue-grey paneling of the storefront creates a warmth and sense of invitation that contrasts with the tower’s expansive glass curtain wall. A terraced landscape unfurls at the café entrance, echoing the natural forms of the bayou and trails across Allen Parkway.

This harmonious composition between nature and architecture continues inside. Rich wood paneling lines the interiors and is complemented by gold accents and vintage globe post fixtures. The classic black-and-white checkerboard marble floor is juxtaposed with a lush, vibrant floral canopy suspended overhead, creating a



← The cinder block wall art installation can be seen from the exterior of Uchi in Miami.

↓ Interior of Uchi Miami. Reverence for wood is apparent throughout all of Uchi’s locations.

PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY CHASE DANIEL



Other restaurants establish immersive experiences through their own poetic ethos. Uchi and its sister restaurants by Hai Hospitality are known for high-quality dishes deeply rooted in Japanese culinary heritage. To reflect this intention, Michael Hsu Office of Architecture (MHOA)—Hai Hospitality’s go-to designer—was tasked with translating the same sense of craftsmanship into the interior architecture. The result is a neutral yet richly layered palette, full of character and narrative. Like the food, the design employs traditional materials in ways that celebrate their natural integrity. Timber appears throughout the space, from scalloped overhead conditions at the entry to the interior lattice frames. These natural materials are chosen for their ability to age gracefully, creating a sense of evolving heritage.

Each Uchi and Uchiko location—in Austin, Dallas, Houston, and beyond—shares a common language based in natural materials while incorporating distinct interior elements by local artisans. Choosing collaborators with similar material philosophies has created a quiet, stoic atmosphere where the human touch is always evident. “Each partner brings their own artistry to the table, and we gave them room to shape the final product with us,” says Michael Hsu, FAIA, founder and principal of MHOA. “This level of attention and reverence for material and technique reflects the same care that goes into preparing each dish in the kitchen.”

At Uchiko Houston, lighting studio Warbach and sculptor Brandon Mike’s eroded cast concrete light fixtures guide visitors from the entry into the dining spaces. Reclaimed walnut floors and handcrafted seating by SRG Millwork add warmth and intimacy. Color is strategically introduced to the dining area, through the varying blues of Camille Warmington’s landscape wall-coverings and Alfredo and Vera Montenegro’s ceiling mural. These design elements orchestrated by MHOA provide traces of the human touch and human scale. As Hsu notes, “[At Uchiko Houston] ... a sculpted volume ... carves away space for intimacy, material layers that feel worn and warm, and collaborations with ... artists and makers whose work felt textural, expressive, and rooted in process.”

Following the success of Uchi and Uchiko, Hai Hospitality and MHOA launched Loro, a genre-defying restaurant concept that blends Texas barbecue with Asian culinary traditions. Turkey breast with yuzu chutney and beef brisket with Thai herbs are just some examples of the blended flavors that the smokehouse serves. “Architecturally, the spaces draw from the informal spirit of Texas Hill Country dance halls ... while also weaving in design elements rooted in Japanese craft and restraint,” according to Hsu.

This cultural intermingling is evident throughout Loro’s architecture and establishes a unique sense of familiarity. Timber trusses evoke modest local community pavilions; *shou sugi ban*—charred wood pays homage to Japanese traditions. Similarly, salvaged wood tables reflect Texas’s rustic aesthetic, while white-glazed terracotta pendants point toward a Japanese minimalism. Large patios and skylit interiors foster a sense of openness and interaction, aligning with both Asian and Texan dining cultures. The restaurant’s cafeteria-style seating references utilitarian, blue-collar Texas BBQ joints, while the shared plates evoke family-style Asian meals. Loro’s approach seeks the tried-and-true from the region while aiming to create something wholly new. “Across all its locations, Loro is a celebration of cultural and regional fusion on the plate and in the built environment,” Hsu concludes.

Uchi, Uchiko, and Loro all are Japanese-inspired establishments that emphasize the importance of intention in every design feature, yet each differs in the atmosphere it aims to cultivate. Uchi and Uchiko tell a story of fine artistry and intimacy; Loro infuses intrigue into a largely vernacular setting. Tradition and craftsmanship are expressed through different methods in each to curate distinct adventures—both culinary and architectural.



↑ The careful detailing of the wood structural members and the wooden benches can be seen in the interiors of Loro.

← Outdoor seating at Loro emphasizes the feel of a neighborhood barbecue.

PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY CASEY DUNN

Another restaurant layering tradition with modernity is Musaafer, located in Houston’s Galleria shopping complex. In 2024, Musaafer earned a One Star designation with the introduction of the Michelin Guide in Texas. Designed by the New Delhi–based firm Chromed Design Studio, the restaurant incorporates architectural elements inspired by India’s diverse regional cultures, resulting in a series of distinct yet interconnected spaces: the Aangan, the Shadow Room, the Sheesh Mahal, the Patio, and the Travelers’ Room.

The Aangan, which translates to “courtyard,” symbolizes a prominent communal space in South Asian architecture. Evoking an outdoor ambiance within an interior setting, the Aangan features breeze chairs, greenery, an arcade reminiscent of Mughal architecture, and a sandstone grille–inspired balustrade positioned overhead. The ancient Indian architectural and design principles of Vastu Shastra consider the courtyard to be a significant space, where positive energy flows through freely. Reflecting this idea, the Aangan is the focal point of Musaafer, connecting the restaurant’s various areas and functions. With its white walls and slightly darker tiled floor, the Shadow Room is simple but elegant. Ornamentation is cleverly given to the room through the

use of rustic Muda chairs and light fixtures that project shadow patterns resembling intricate henna designs. This minimal yet evocative environment fosters a focus on both the food and the social experience at the table.

The Sheesh Mahal, translating to “the palace of mirrors,” is a luxurious space furnished with chandeliers that reflect off the thousands of mirror mosaics lining the walls and ceiling. Historically, such rooms served as entertainment halls in royal palaces, their mirrored surfaces amplifying dance and theatrical performances held for the royal court. At Musaafer, this room offers a similarly exclusive dining experience for a select few, its location physically elevated above adjacent spaces further underscoring its palatial character. Situated on the restaurant’s balcony, the Patio introduces a more relaxed atmosphere. It features hand-painted lamps, imported ceiling fans, and daybeds that, as the restaurant’s website notes, “resemble ancient Indian beds used for midday naps.” With its dedicated bar and a view overlooking Uptown Houston, the Patio feels breezy and informal, a contrast to the opulence of its counterparts.

The final space, the Travelers’ Room, takes its name from a statue held within that represents the many cuisines and architectural forms from across India that inspired Musaafer’s concept. A wall decorated in traditional Dhokra art further underscores this diversity, the framed pictures each telling a different story of everyday life through folk motifs.

Each space acts as a microcosm of symbolism and meaning, echoing the culinary intricacy and complexity of the menu. The *mishti doi*, for example, is a dessert that layers a variety of textures and flavors using one main ingredient: yogurt. Presented to resemble mushrooms on a forest floor, the dish features freeze-dried yogurt “mushrooms” and a scoop of *shrikhand*—a traditional saffron-flavored yogurt—all atop a grass-like

↙ The Travelers’ Room at Musaafer includes a large live-edge wood table and an intricate counter with kitchen utensils displayed above.

↓ The traditional *mishti doi* dessert is uniquely interpreted and plated at Musaafer. PHOTOS THIS PAGE COURTESY MUSAAFER HOUSTON



base of crumbled almond cake and pomegranate seeds. This sculptural reinterpretation transforms the familiar into the imaginative, offering a contemporary take on a time-honored dessert. “Musaafer” translates to “traveler”—a fitting name for a restaurant that offers a journey through both space and flavor, offering distinct experiences with each visit and every bite.

The story of food is often told through the spaces that surround it. Whether evoking nostalgia through sensory details or reframing cultural narratives through contemporary design, the careful curation of culinary spaces anchors the intangible meaning of what food represents. Time-honored means and methods that connect us to those who came before us evoke deep feelings of memory and heritage. Regardless of approach, impactful design is rooted in human experience and tactility, cultivating layered, immersive environments. The experience of eating becomes not only a necessity but a moment to savor, to share, and to return to. Designers hold the power to evoke emotional memories—or create new ones. It is their palette, in the end, that ultimately shapes our palate. □

..... Camille Vigil is an architect in Dallas who works primarily on faith-based projects.

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A ROOM WITH A HUE

Modern
Hospitality
Meets Cultural
Legacy

Words by DONNA KACMAR, FAIA

Tucked within a 1920s-era residential neighborhood at the southern edge of Montrose in central Houston sits the 30-acre Menil campus, a “neighborhood of art” with world-class buildings that protect centuries of cultural and artistic works. Dominique de Menil (1908-1997) and her husband John (Jean) de Menil (1904-1973) began collecting art shortly after immigrating to the United States from France in 1941 and settling in Houston. As historian Stephen Fox notes, the de Menils “brought Houston face to face with 20th-century modernism in all of its cultural aspects—art, architecture, music, theology, and civil rights.”

Their personal home, designed by Philip Johnson in 1951, is a modern, reductive building enlivened by an eclectic art collection and exuberant interiors designed by fashion designer Charles James. The house, in which the de Menils hosted a rich array of international guests, has been referred to as the “DNA of the Menil Collection”—the primary museum building designed by Renzo Piano and completed in 1987. Over time, the museum campus has grown to include the Cy Twombly Gallery (Renzo Piano, 1995), Dan Flavin Installation at Richmond Hall, Fresco Building (Francois de Menil, 1997), and Menil Drawing Institute (Johnston Marklee, 2018).



Adjacent to this ensemble now steps a quietly confident addition—a 71-room hotel designed by Lake Flato Architects. David Lake, FAIA, a founding partner of the AIA Gold Medal–winning firm, was mindful of the cultural importance of the neighborhood as they began designing the project as a welcoming bridge between the neighborhood and the Menil campus. The design team was also inspired by the modernist homes of architects Rudolph Schindler (1887-1953) and Louis Kahn (1901-1974), which led them to craft a tactile, quiet architecture. Five individual two-story structures, composed of modern planes of brick, wood, and glass, create four courtyards that weave around the existing trees, respectful of the sophisticated informality and scale of their neighbors. These volumes

← Lounge with Ingo Maurer light fixture on central axis
PHOTO BY NICOLE FRANZEN

↑ Main hotel entry at dusk
PHOTO BY JULIE SOEFER

→ Circular water fountain outside the lounge, trickling water into main courtyard
PHOTO BY JULIE SOEFER





are wrapped with individual porches and connected by two-story external covered walkways, reminiscent of the nearby University of St. Thomas campus, designed by Johnson in 1958.

The communal exterior spaces were developed in collaboration with Ten Eyck Landscape Architects, matching the porosity of the surrounding neighborhood. A network of entries and meandering paths invite movement: concrete walkways transition into diagonal wooden boardwalks that hover delicately above the ground, channeling water into a central rain garden, which slows the movement of water and protects the roots of mature trees.

Landscape architect Christy Ten Eyck and her team selected the *Ficus tikoua* ground cover to blend in with the existing streetscape and worked with the John Faurey Garden in Hempstead to grow climate-resistant palms and ferns to fill the courtyards. The sound of water softly spilling from circular water fountains located at the lounge patio and at the swimming pool courtyard helps to define the inner sanctum. These ambient cues—including sound and scent—contribute to a layered, immersive environment.

Newly planted trees in the courtyards ensure privacy for the outward-facing guestrooms, reinforcing the careful balance between seclusion and openness. Lake Flato, well known for their elegant passive solar responses, worked to create shaded spaces, allowing breezes to flow through the courtyard, passively cooling the outdoor spaces. The expansive outdoor spaces

required the development of an efficient room bay module and building layout. In addition, the buildings are oriented with glass facing either north or south with deep roof overhangs.

Project director Nyssa Sherazee, AIA, is proud that the firm's standard material specifications do not contain any chemicals listed on the LBC (Living Building Challenge) Red List. The covered walkways and porches are supported by tall Douglas fir glulam columns with an ultra-low VOC water-borne protective wood treatment. Sherazee especially appreciates the use of thermally modified wood cladding and the fact that heat, without any chemical additives, is used to increase the durability of the material. Durable grey elongated Norman brick veneer walls, adjacent to the vertical combed Ash walls, and board-formed concrete garden walls complete the exterior material palette.

Inside, Bunkhouse, the hotel operator, enlisted Post Company to design the interiors of the guestrooms, public spaces, and restaurant. No artwork adorns the hotel. "How could it compete?" asks Post partner Jou-Yie Chou. Instead, the interior designers created lively compositions of furniture, lighting, and objects to add depth, variation, and detail to the spaces. Guests are greeted by an initial glimpse into the courtyard and then led to the entry door that opens into a deep red lobby reception.

The interior sequence of lounge spaces to the east of the lobby are defined by layers of full-height curtains and anchored with modern pieces such as Cassina

↑ View from courtyard looking toward restaurant and event space
PHOTO BY JULIE SOEFER

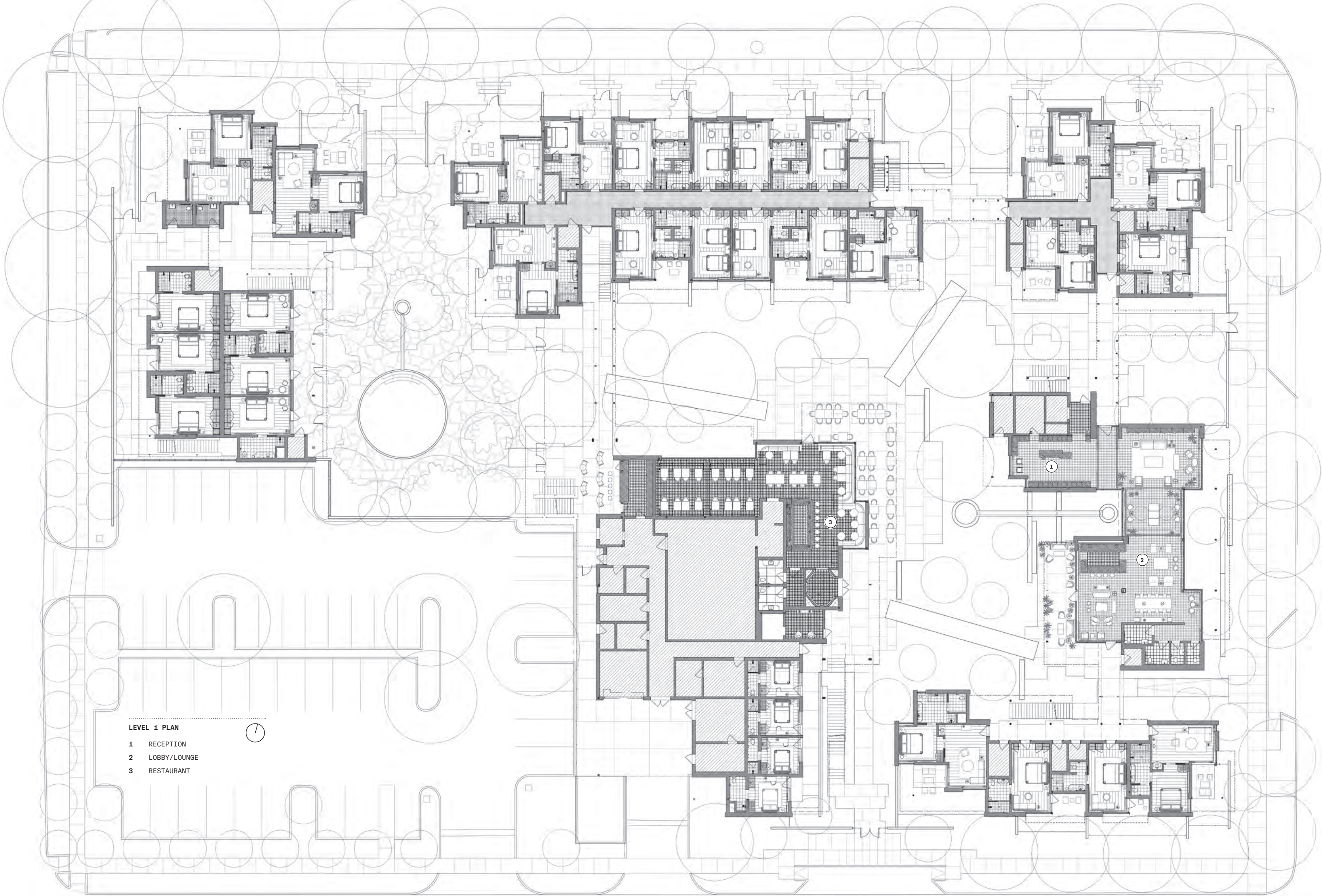
↗ Lobby with deep red display area behind reception desk
PHOTO BY JULIE SOEFER

→ Listening room looking towards the lounge, with seating areas separated by translucent curtains
PHOTO BY NICOLE FRANZEN



LEVEL 1 PLAN

- 1 RECEPTION
- 2 LOBBY/LOUNGE
- 3 RESTAURANT



Soriana chairs and a suspended Ingo Maurer LIL light fixture. Vintage furnishings found more serendipitously through multiple buying trips to Round Top add a layer of time that connects with the diverse collecting spirit of the de Menils. Chou worked with saturated interior colors, clearly visible through the architecture’s ample glazing, to invite people into the interior spaces. The tension between the interior and exterior palettes, connected through nature and light, directly borrows from the attitude of the de Menil’s personal home.

Opposite the lounge, the on-site restaurant, Perseid, is entered from the courtyard; its placement was carefully considered to avoid disrupting the tranquility of the surrounding residential neighborhood. Curved interior elements play off the rectilinearity of the architecture. Pale “French butter” yellow walls and textured plaster accent walls contrast the black matte glazed flooring that is reminiscent of the cement tile flooring in the de Menil home. In the guestrooms, a deep threshold of built-in millwork—painted in soft shades of bone, blue, and peach—absorbs travel-related clutter and creates a generous zone of transition between the public and private. The surprising, luminous jewel-box interior of the bar, with its high lacquer finish, reflective mirrors, and glassware, creates a convivial attitude, reminding guests that this is more than a place to sleep.

Although the Menil Foundation does not own or operate the hotel, they recognize it as a neighborhood amenity, equally welcoming to visitors and locals. This new presence within the beloved cultural enclave is more than an architectural addition—it is an experience that enlivens the senses. The project invites engagement through the play of light with its multivolume composition, the textural contrast of interior and exterior materials, the feel of gentle breezes against the skin and the melodic trickle of water in the courtyard, and the gustatory delights offered by chef Aaron Bludorn. There is even a signature scent—custom incense—that lingers in the air. Most dramatically, the sense of proprioception—the ability to sense movement and location in space relative to other objects—is heightened through the movement and play offered by interconnected rooms and courtyard. This new hotel does more than provide shelter; it supports presence. It draws guests and neighbors into a shared experience of place that is felt deeply by all the senses. □

Donna Kacmar, FAIA, is an author, professor of architecture at the University of Houston, and a practicing architect in Houston.



PROJECT	Hotel Saint Augustine
LOCATION	Houston
CLIENT	The Marchbanks Company/Loretto Projects
ARCHITECT	Lake Flato Architects
DESIGN TEAM	David Lake, FAIA, Chris Krajcer, AIA, Nyssa Sherazee, AIA, Heath Henderson, AIA, Michael Salinas, AIA, Daniel Mowery, AIA, Harly Hutker
CONTRACTOR	Forney Construction
INTERIOR DESIGN	Post Company
HOTEL OPERATOR	Bunkhouse Group
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER	Architectural Engineers Collaborative
BUILDING ENCLOSURE	Acton Partners
LIFE SAFETY & FIRE SUPPRESSION	Jensen Hughes
REGISTERED ACCESSIBILITY SPECIALIST	David Demings
ACOUSTICS	EEA Consulting Engineers
FOOD SERVICE	Melbil
PERMIT EXPEDITOR	Texas Permit
LIGHTING DESIGNER	Within Light Studio
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT	Ten Eyck Landscape Architects
PHOTOGRAPHERS	Nicole Franzen, Julie Soefer

↑ Lounge with layers of full-height curtains, anchored by modern pieces such as Cassina Soriana chairs

PHOTO BY NICOLE FRANZEN

↗ Bar and seating area in the hotel restaurant, Perseid, with “French butter” walls and circular ceiling elements

PHOTO BY NICOLE FRANZEN

→ Guest room interior with a striking color composition of gold velvet accents and pale pink and blue casework

PHOTO BY JULIE SOEFER

→→ Hallway interior with saturated colors and reflective ceiling surface

PHOTO BY NICOLE FRANZEN





RETHINKING PROPORTION

AT THE INTERSECTION OF NEUROSCIENCE AND DESIGN

Words by TIZIANA PROIETTI and SERGEI GEPSHTEIN

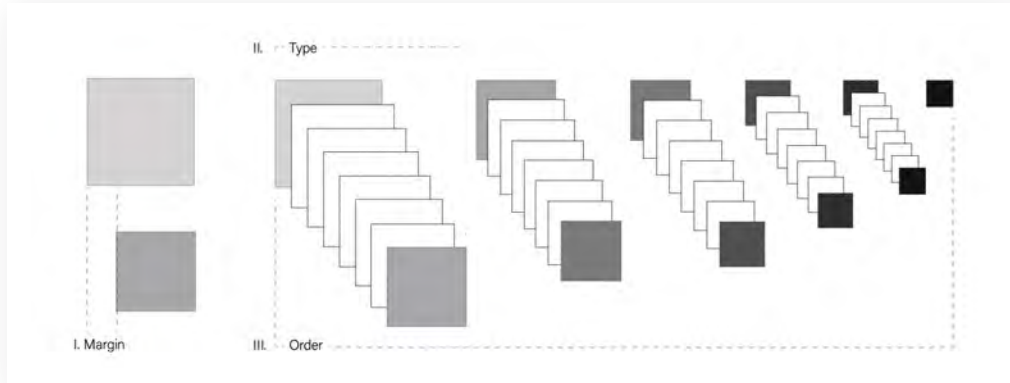


FIGURE 1. Illustration of the concepts of “type of size,” “margin of size,” and “order of size” within the plastic number system.

For centuries, architects have pursued beauty and harmony by organizing form according to systems of proportion. Architectural forms, from the symmetry of Greek temples to the modular grids of modernist icons, exemplify the logic of proportion. Among these systems, the golden section, derived from the Fibonacci sequence, is the most renowned. Its influence peaked in the mid-20th century when Le Corbusier introduced *Le Modulor*, a human-scaled proportional system based on the golden section. It begins with the height of a man with his arms raised and uses the golden ratio to derive harmonious measurements.

Ironically, at the golden section’s peak of popularity, a crisis of confidence in proportion was taking shape. In 1951, the IX Triennale in Milan hosted a symposium titled “De Divina Proportione” that marked a turning point: Excitement over proportional systems gave way to skepticism about their relevance in a rapidly industrializing world. Rudolf Wittkower, one of the leading architectural historians of the time, observed that this was the first time in history that the foundational role of proportion in architecture was being seriously questioned.

A few years later, doubts erupted into public debate. At the 1957 Royal Institute of British Architects conference in London, attendees voted on the motion “Systems of proportion make good design easier and bad design more difficult.” It was soundly rejected—48 in favor and 60 against.

Reflecting on this shift, Wittkower warned that the belief in universal values, which form the philosophical core of proportional thinking, had been eroding for over two centuries: “It can surely not be won back by an act of majority decision.” Bruno Zevi, another major voice at the conference, was even more blunt: “No one really believes any longer in proportional systems.”

Despite decades of doubt and debate, the golden section still occupies architects’ minds whenever proportion is mentioned—yet it represents only one chapter in a much larger story.

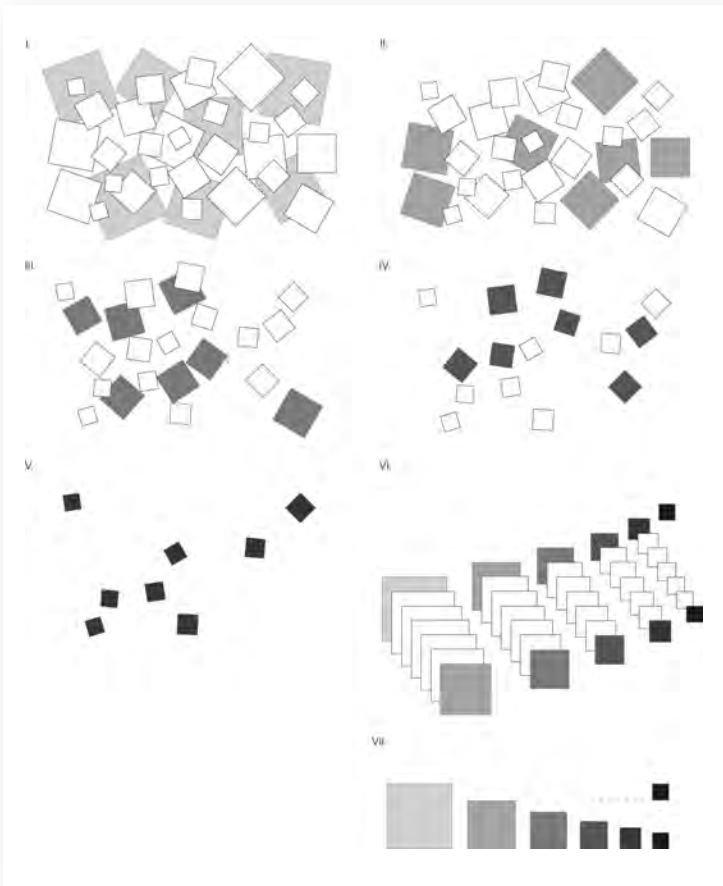


FIGURE 2. Informal experiments on grouping by similarity conducted by Hans van der Laan using cardboard squares to determine the just-perceptible differences of size.

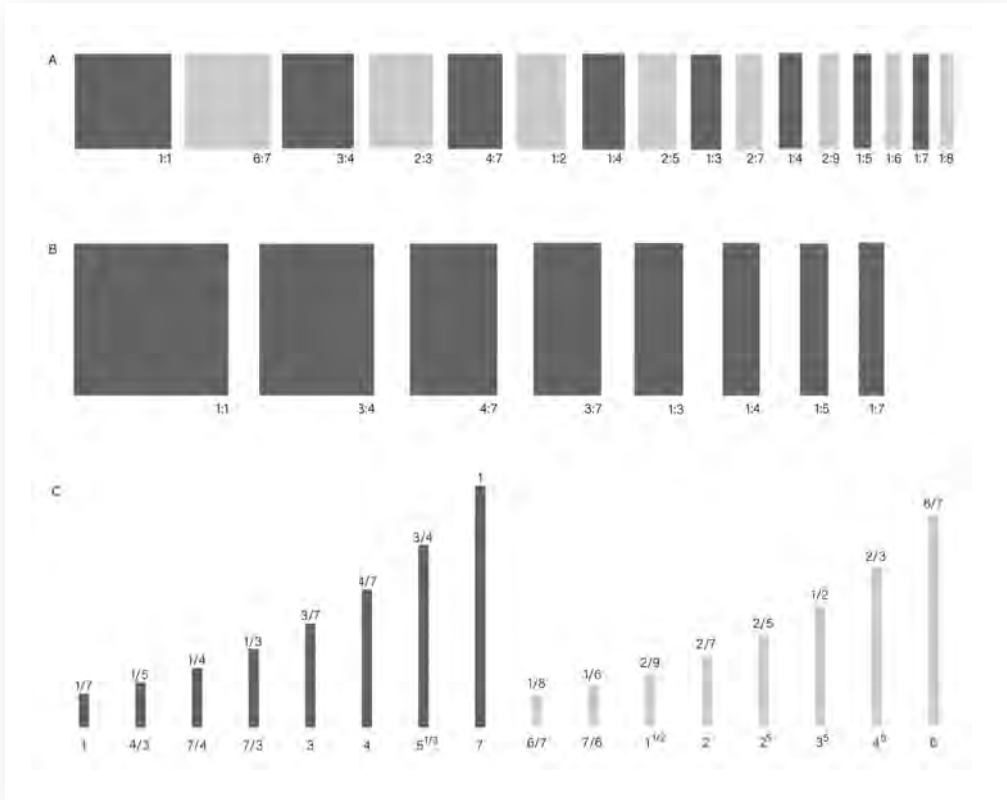


FIGURE 3. (A-B) Illustration of the eight main proportions of the plastic number system (dark grey), referred to as “authentic measures,” each representing a distinct type of size. Also shown are the intermediate proportions (light grey), called “derived measures.” (C) The relationship among authentic and derived measures is illustrated in the bottom row. In the dark-grey sequence (authentic measures) at left, the numbers above the rectangles represent the fractions of their heights relative to the rightmost rectangle in the sequence; the numbers at the bottom represent the fractions of the heights relative to the leftmost rectangle. The same applies to the light-grey sequence (derived measures) at right.

Mathematically, the appeal of the golden section comes from the additive rule of the Fibonacci sequence, where each term equals the sum of the two before it. However, other sequences governed by similar additive rules also generate noteworthy proportions. For example, the *silver ratio* arises from the Pell sequence, and the *plastic number* underlies the proportional system developed by Dutch architect and Benedictine monk Dom Hans van der Laan. Despite their potential, both the silver ratio and the plastic number are seldom used in architectural design today. Here we turn our attention to the plastic number system because of its remarkable connection to human perception.

Van der Laan’s plastic number system took shape in the 1940s and 1950s and was introduced in his 1960 book *Le Nombre Plastique*. Rather than relying on abstract mathematical rules, his approach directly addresses how we distinguish size differences in three-dimensional space. The mathematical structure of this system was later formalized by Richard Padovan, and today it is known as the Padovan sequence (or Cordonnier sequence, after the French architect Gérard Cordonnier, who explored similar recursive patterns).

As a child, Van der Laan visited his father’s construction sites and became fascinated by the simple act of sifting gravel. He observed that large pebbles stayed on the sieve while smaller ones slipped through, and that none matched exactly the size of the sieve’s holes. He

realized that natural forms rarely align with the precise measures devised by humans. To sort the gravel, workers used two sieves with slightly different hole sizes, capturing stones whose diameters lay between those limits. Later in life, Van der Laan coined the term “type of size” to describe groups of objects differing only by subtle, often imperceptible size differences. He then proposed a proportional method in which each size category accommodates variations so slight they go unnoticed. In other words, within the same “type of size,” object sizes differ by small, imperceptible amounts. And the measures that represent different types of size are separated by just-perceptible differences, a small difference that Van der Laan called the “margin of size.” These sizes, each separated by just-perceptible differences, form an ordered scale (“order of size”), in which every size relates to the next (FIGURE 1).

To test his idea of perceptible and imperceptible differences, Van der Laan conducted informal experiments with visitors at the St. Benedictusberg Abbey in Vaals, where he lived as a Benedictine monk. Using simple materials such as pebbles and cardboard squares, he asked visitors to group the items by similarity (FIGURE 2). He observed how small differences—too small to be noticed—did not affect the grouping, while differences that were just perceptible led visitors to form new groups. These insights into human perception became the foundation of the plastic number proportional system (FIGURE 3).

FIGURE 4. Exterior view of the St. Benedictusberg Abbey (1967-1986) at Mamelis (near Vaals), Netherlands, designed by Hans van der Laan.



FIGURE 6. (A) Drawings and photographs of the apparatus used in our experiments in the format of external observation, showing the camera obscura, experimental setup, and blocks placed inside the device. (B) Drawings and photographs of the apparatus in the format of immersive observation, showing the observation room, 3D mapping projector, and experimental setup with illuminated facets of three-dimensional blocks.

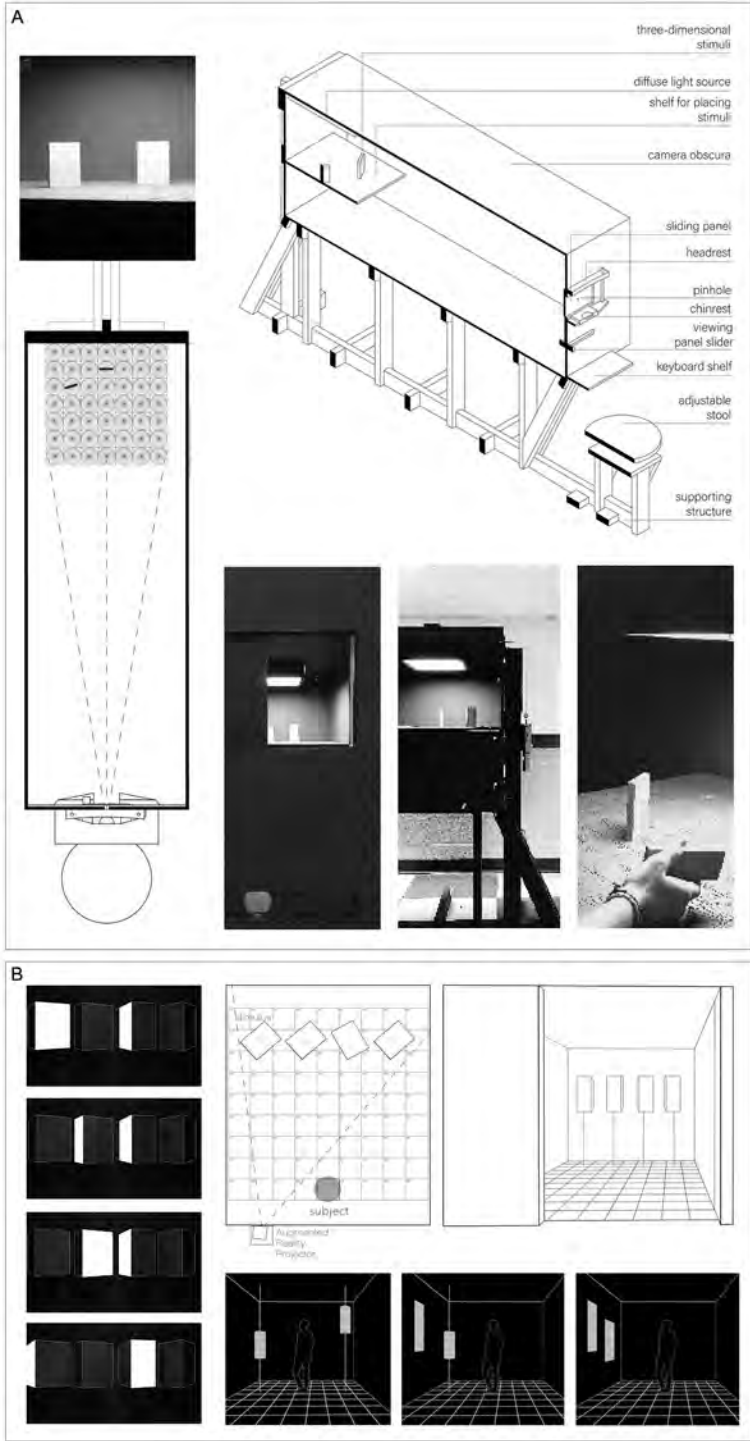


FIGURE 5. Liturgical hall of the St. Benedictusberg Abbey (1967-1986) at Mamelis (near Vaals), Netherlands, designed by Hans van der Laan.

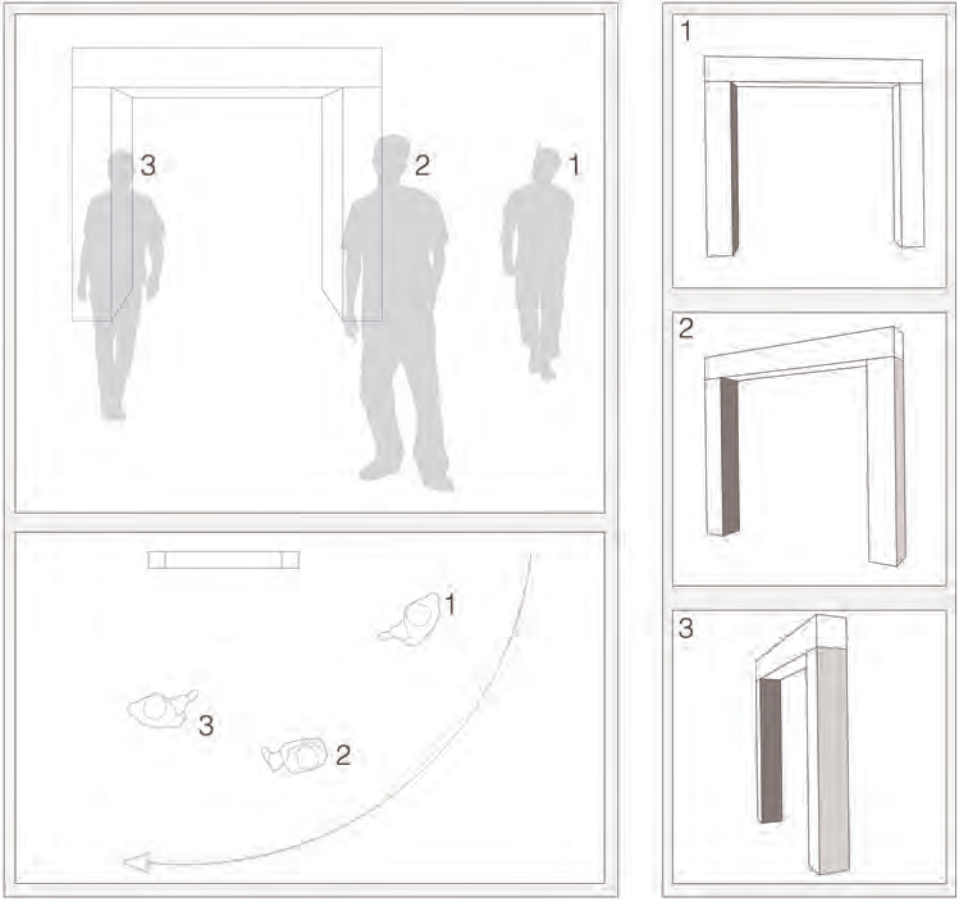


FIGURE 7. Illustration of the perception of proportion in movement, showing views of a portal from three different locations.

The St. Benedictusberg Abbey itself, which Van der Laan designed according to this system, remains the most comprehensive architectural expression of his proportional theory (FIGURES 4 AND 5). The plastic number system is consistently expressed in three dimensions throughout the building. For example, in the liturgical hall shown in Figure 5, the spacing between columns creates rectangular openings with a 3:4 proportion, identified by Van der Laan as fundamental to the plastic number system. This ratio is maintained across both the upper and lower levels of the colonnade, varying only in scale. The result is a balanced composition that emphasizes clear perception of proportions, where repetition of a single proportion facilitates interaction with the interior space.

Although working in monastic isolation, Van der Laan developed ideas that parallel key principles of psychophysics—the scientific study of perceptual thresholds in size, brightness, and sound. *Psychophysics* had introduced the concept of the “just noticeable difference” (JND) in the 19th century, but this idea had little influence on architectural thought. Unaware of developments in the empirical science of perception, Van der Laan independently arrived at a similar notion and used minimal perceptible differences to define the intervals in his proportional system.

Designing with human perception in mind aims to make architecture not merely a physical shelter but a bridge

between our minds and the built environment. By taking into account our perceptual and cognitive limitations, this approach helps designers to create environments that feel clear, coherent, and intuitively understandable.

Building on this approach and on modern scientific insights into perception, we are prepared to open a new chapter in the history of architectural proportion. We begin by asking how proportions are directly perceived in the built environment and how actual perceptual experience influences our behavior and experience.

To this end, we conduct experiments using methods of the scientific discipline called *sensory psychophysics* while trying to simulate conditions of natural behavior. These conditions reflect the basic fact that the built environment is made up of three-dimensional objects whose spatial properties people must be able to distinguish across various distances and angles of observation.

Our experiments have two formats: external observation and immersive observation. In external observation, participants view pairs of three-dimensional objects presented inside an apparatus that resembles a camera obscura: a dark box with an illuminated shelf inside. On each trial, two objects are displayed on the shelf. Participants look into the box and compare objects’ proportions, making simple judgments such as “the front of the left object certainly has a larger proportion than the one on the right” (FIGURE 6A).

In immersive observation, people perform the same task while they stand or walk inside a darkened room, in which proportioned objects are mounted on adjustable vertical rods (FIGURE 6B). A scanning projector illuminates two faces of the objects at a time, and observers compare proportions of the illuminated faces while moving around, simulating the changing distances and perspective distortions experienced when walking through a real building.

We use proportions drawn from the plastic number system and set one “type of size” apart, so they should be just noticeably different. One of our first aims is to determine whether the just-noticeable differences persist under realistic viewing conditions, as observers view objects at different angles. Indeed, we find that discrimination of three-dimensional proportions varies significantly with object orientation and the perspective distortion introduced by user movement.

Our results challenge previous assumptions about proportion. They show, for example, that glorifying a single “perfect” proportion is misguided: not only because any given proportion stands among many that differ only slightly, but also because perspective distortion inevitably affects our perception. In light of this evidence, our understanding of the roles and effects of architectural proportion must fundamentally change.

First, proportion must be examined in three-dimensional space. Historically, architects relied on two-dimensional drawings: plans, sections, and elevations that emphasize particular proportions. The golden section, especially, has been a recurring feature, identified in buildings from different eras, sparking debates over whether its recurring presence reflects genuine historical preference or the biases of later interpretation.

Our work renders the question of the golden section’s historical validity less relevant. As noted, the golden section originates in two-dimensional media, not in the dynamic, three-dimensional spaces we inhabit (FIGURE 7). Experience of proportion in the real world is shaped by movement, varying perspective, and the constantly changing bodily relationship to the environment. Understanding proportion therefore means reaching beyond ideal rectangles and fixed ratios to embrace the fluid nature of our spatial experience.

This brings us to the next point: Proportion is perceived dynamically. We must account for the movement and fluidity of our experience within built spaces to understand how proportion organizes our daily interactions. For example, does a certain ratio of architectural elements make us walk slower or faster? Does it guide us more intuitively toward an exit? Does it affect how readily we grasp the relationships between different rooms?

Imagine walking down the central nave of a famous church with which you have been familiar through many drawings and photographs. Instead of seeing column spacing on a flat plan, you experience it directly—dynamically and in vivid depth—as you move by them. When the columns stand close together, you quicken your pace because the altar feels farther away. When the gaps widen, you slow down as the altar seems closer.

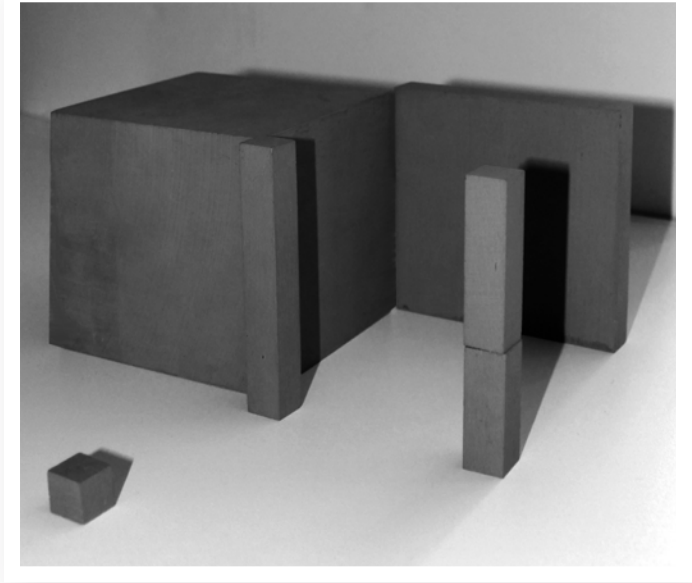
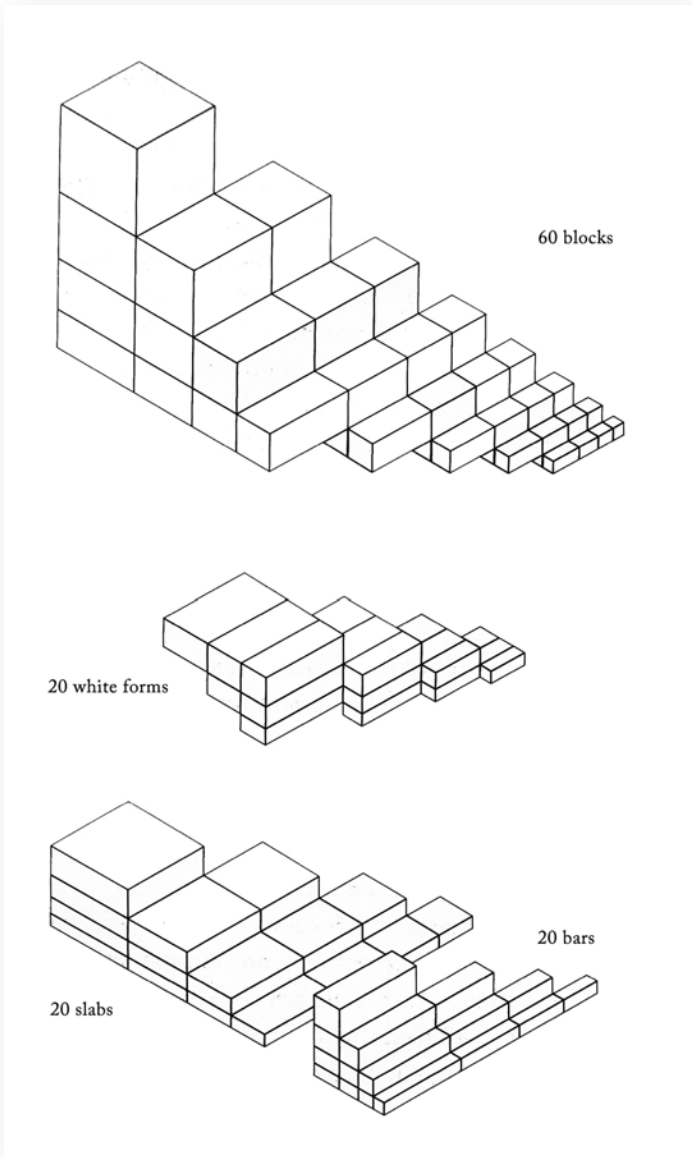


FIGURE 8. Proportional tool named *Morphotheque* designed by Hans van der Laan based on the eight authentic proportions of the plastic number system (figure 3).

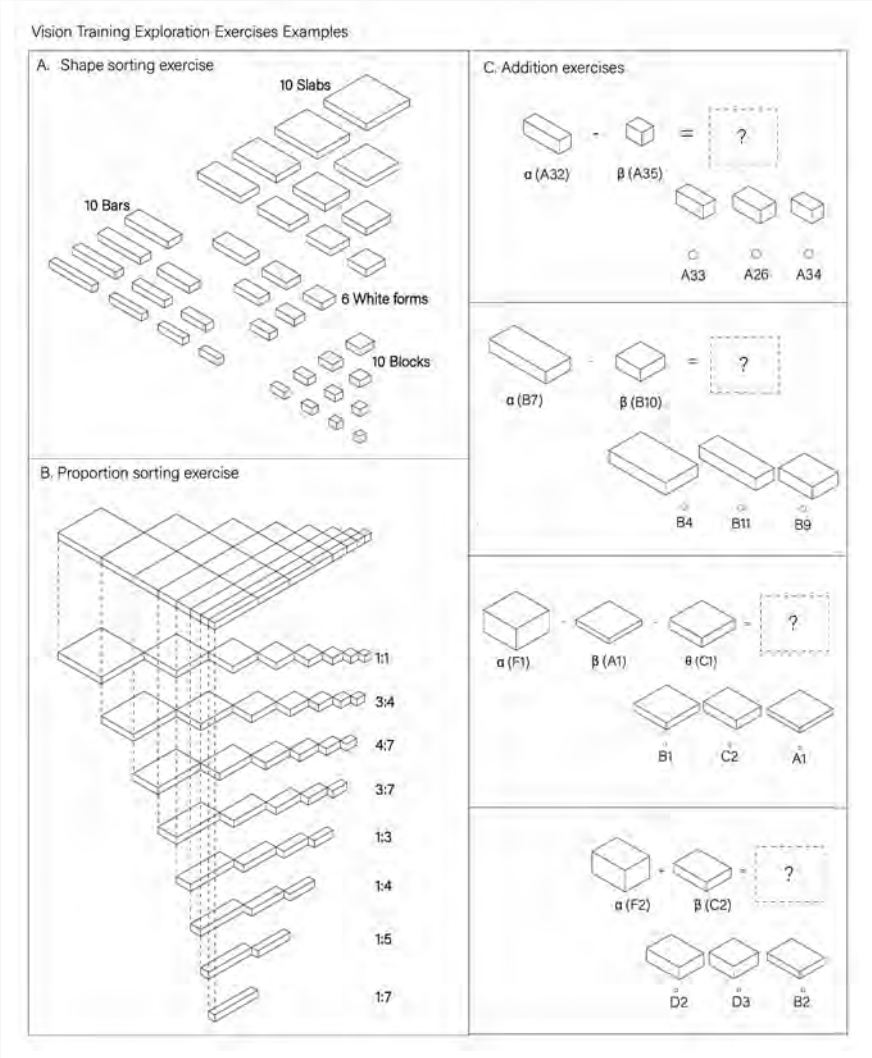


FIGURE 9. Examples of exploratory exercises from the program *Vision Training for Designers*.

Or imagine standing in a public plaza surrounded by benches, trees, and a central fountain. If the distances between these elements are tight, you may find the space crowded or overwhelming, prompting you to pass through quickly. But if the distances are generous and proportions well-balanced, the space feels open and inviting—encouraging you to pause and perhaps engage with others in a setting that naturally fosters social gathering.

Or consider walking down a wide urban street where the surrounding buildings are unusually not tall. The proportions feel off—the street is wide open while the buildings offer little vertical enclosure. You may feel exposed, as if you are crossing a vast, unprotected space rather than moving comfortably through it. Without the spatial “walls” that the appropriately proportioned buildings provide, the street lacks a sense of definition and shelter. You might feel a subtle sense of unease and avoid lingering. But when the height of the buildings is proportionate to the street’s width, the space feels enclosed yet open, encouraging a more relaxed pace and a sense of belonging within the urban fabric.

In effect, proportion becomes something we *live*, and not only see, when movement and bodily experience are taken into account. This basic insight transforms how we understand architecture itself.

Finally, the proportional ratios most relevant to our experience are not those celebrated for harmony, symbolism, or aesthetic appeal, but those that respect the limits of our perceptual systems. In other words, a proportion’s true significance lies not in abstract ideals but in its correspondence to the constraints of human perception, movement, and cognition.

This shift in perspective carries important implications for architectural practice and education. If proportion is not about adhering to a fixed series of revered ratios but about engaging directly with the reality of human perception, then designers must cultivate a new kind of sensitivity: one that attunes them to how subtle variations in size can guide movement, influence how we orient ourselves in space, and shape our overall experience of a place.

In architectural education, the new proportional thinking calls for a new kind of training that cultivates skills of perception instead of memorization of canonical rules. Drawing on our laboratory findings, we have created a program called “Vision Training for Designers.” As a point of departure, we use the plastic-number tools devised by Van der Laan, most notably the *Morphotheque*, a set of 120 solid forms whose proportions follow the “authentic measures” of the plastic-number system shown in Figure 3. The collection comprises 60 blocks, 20 slabs, 20 bars, and 20 intermediate “white forms,” as they were called by Van der Laan (FIGURE 8).

Through targeted exercises that engage both vision and touch, students first learn to sharpen their ability to detect, discriminate, and work with proportions in three spatial dimensions (FIGURE 9). This perceptual foundation enables future designers to use proportion deliberately as a tool to enhance spatial orientation, clarity, and coherence of built form. Through an understanding of how specific proportional relationships influence movement, perceived distance, and recognition of spatial hierarchies, proportion becomes an intentional instrument rather than a distant aesthetic ideal. □

.....
Tiziana Proietti is an architect and educator at the Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture, University of Oklahoma, where she studies perception of proportion using methods of sensory psychophysics and directs the Sense Base laboratory.

Sergei Gepshtein is a scientist at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, where he uses methods of neuroscience and psychophysics to study the perception of depth and motion, perceptual organization, planning of action, and dynamics of neural networks.



SCOPED FOR IMAGINATION

Snøhetta Transposes the Borderland

Words by LAURA FOSTER, AIA

El Paso is five-eighths sky, underscored by mountains from nearly every view. On cloudless days—so most days—the entire sky stretches out in baby blue; on others, silky cirrus clouds hang like a mantilla high over the mountain range that spans El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. On a map, the El Paso end of the range points toward the downtown grid, where seven possible exits from I-10 take you into the city's core. The last westbound exit, Santa Fe Street, carries you south toward the silhouette of La Nube—the city's new STEAM discovery center, designed by Snøhetta. The top of the building's 89 feet peeks from behind a row of red brick offices, a portmanteau of cloud and home, reminiscent of a drawing come to life, insistent on its belonging.

“Only a few, who remain children at heart, can ever find that fair, lost path again.... They, and only they, can bring us tidings from that dear country where we once sojourned and from which we must evermore be exiles. The world calls them its singers and poets and artists and story-tellers; but they are just people who have never forgotten the way to fairyland.”

—L.M. Montgomery, *The Story Girl*

Snøhetta has a native connection to El Paso. One of the firm's founding partners, Elaine Molinar, AIA, grew up here and ensured that La Nube would reflect the city's inimitable nature—especially its vast, defining sky—while brightening El Paso's historic downtown with the vernacular of childhood imagination.

As you approach the building, even the sidewalks seem to celebrate the sky, with blue glass aggregate framing the ground upon which La Nube seems to float. The site was offered to the design team in the way an empty appliance box is handed to a child—as an invitation to play, to imagine something new.

Housing a former bus maintenance facility at the intersection of two trash collection zones and sharing a wall with a submerged railway, 201 West Main Street embodied its gritty history. These less-than-ideal conditions confronted Snøhetta but perhaps gave them that much more creative freedom. La Nube's playful form responds cheekily to its context, reframing it forever. You do not see the 60-foot piers driven deep into unforgiving soil; what you see is a 70,000-sf building hovering happily.

La Nube's brawny 651 tons of steel are arranged to look weightless. An aluminum-tiled curtain wall—smooth to the touch and pixelated in shifting shades of zinc white and grey—curves around the compass points as if it's always on the move. The steel and glass body seems almost sentient. The roof splits open knowingly to the east, the morning light swinging in, while to the west, an out-of-scale dormer window pops up from the roof



↶ La Nube restores connections at many scales. A passage through El Paso's downtown re-creates a previously fragmented path linking San Jacinto Plaza to the Ballpark and Union Plaza. The sculptural canopy, called *Weatherscape*, by FUTUREFORMS uses mist and kinetic energy to demonstrate microclimatic effects.

↶ The curtain wall's metal tiles are patterned to respond to light. Twelve hundred fiber-optic pinpoint lights set into the curtain wall also twinkle at dusk.

↓ La Nube's southwest corner at Santa Fe and Main Street. The graphic designer, Harry Mark, FAIA, wanted the blade sign to be as “light and airy as the building itself.”

like a giant periscope. Fenestration patterns climb and descend the facade, beginning or ending in arches that echo the geometry of two nearby buildings. The glazing itself is patterned with what looks like condensation—millions of raised ceramic droplets, each maybe a millimeter in size. They lend La Nube's galleries their own sensation of cloud cover and, from the outside, create the impression that the entire building might just be a mischievous rendering.

La Nube's design—thoughtful across all scales, abilities, and sensitivities—is evident not only in its architecture, both interior and exterior, but also in its graphic design, sill and header details, mounting heights, lighting, acoustics, and even its operations. La Nube offers sensory-friendly hours and caregiver passes, among other thoughtful rewrites of convention. As a project developed during the COVID era, La Nube was hit hard with the contingencies that stymied us all, but it seemed to taunt the pandemic. Its program is the antithesis of “no contact.” John Hand, project leader for Arup, La Nube's structural engineer, shares that “the controlling design case for vibration in the multipurpose room was a Quinceanera.” For those unfamiliar with a “Quince,” as it is called in El Paso, it is a whirling, coming-of-age celebration with family and friends, friends' families, and friends of their friends. It's a perfectly logical design criterion for any assembly space in El Paso—the very opposite of lockdown.

Deft partnering and careful shepherding brought La Nube to life, allowing its original ideas to remain unadulterated and fully realized. What began as a city bond project for a children's museum developed into La Nube through a generous infusion of private equity, community investment, and a shared sense of protectiveness on the part of all parties.

The El Paso Community Foundation—which has made an art of civic project delivery—took the lead, helping the project avoid the hopper that can often derail iconic public works. Eric Pearson, the foundation's president and CEO, explained, “The foundation and its board envisioned a place that not only educates people within its walls but inspires them”—something, he notes, that can only happen through encounter.

This is why, before the foundation hired renowned educator, writer, critic, and consultant Reed Kroloff, AIA, to lead the competition that ultimately selected Snøhetta, they first engaged Gyroscope, a multidisciplinary design studio known for STEAM exhibits and museum master planning.

The vision for meaningful encounters is emphatic from the moment of entry, where visitors are greeted by an expansive concave touch screen—Gyroscope's *Connected Sky* exhibit. Setting the tone for La Nube's boundaryless experience, this first “engagement”—a term Harry Mark, FAIA, a principal with RSM Design, uses when speaking about La Nube's exhibits—is



a virtual yet tangible connection to a fiber-coupled screen at *La Rodadora Espacio Interactivo*, the children’s museum in Ciudad Juárez. Here, real people from one city appear on the sister screen in the other to play games in real time, their respective screens pulsing between silhouette and full image, mapping their contact—technology creating art.

Gyroscope’s synesthetic work at La Nube beckons young hands to the messages at each stop. These stops are not lessons; they are invitations to see something new—or differently. Snøhetta’s architecture responds with what Elaine Molinar describes as “broad views and key moments, long vistas”—a studied interplay of foreground and background. RSM Design expanded this dialogue through environmental graphics, poring over details with Snøhetta and Gyroscope and organizing tomes of information to be embedded into La Nube’s architecture. For the signage, the RSM team played with dichroic materials, exploring light transmission and reflection, and rediscovered how children engage with letterforms. The result is a building—and a site—alive with all the ways information can reach us and open new perspectives.

This spirit of integration is especially evident in the massive, Gyroscope-designed, 50-foot-tall climbing structure that spans the atrium, intertwined with the work of Snøhetta and Arup. Arup uses the voluminous structure to brace the facade against wind loads, while Snøhetta wraps it in a series of long-span, helically curved stairs. Arup engineered the stairs using custom steel box girders with 2-inch-thick flanges. Signs of interdependence are everywhere—creating what would otherwise be impossible.

At the top of the climber, the *Flow* exhibit suspends thousands of gallons of water nearly 60 feet above ground. Here, a refreshing humidity fills the air, along with a faint scent of swimming pools and the sound of moving water. Across the same floor, a giant sun-shaped marimba resonates with deep, wooden tones triggered by those who stop to play underneath it. Somewhat centered along the north wall is the cathedral-scale arched entrance to Fab Lab El Paso—La Nube’s makerspace and home to a rich and evolving program of its own. All this precipitates beneath the exposed vaults of Snøhetta’s arches, where a math mural climbs the back wall, marking the vaults’ geometries.

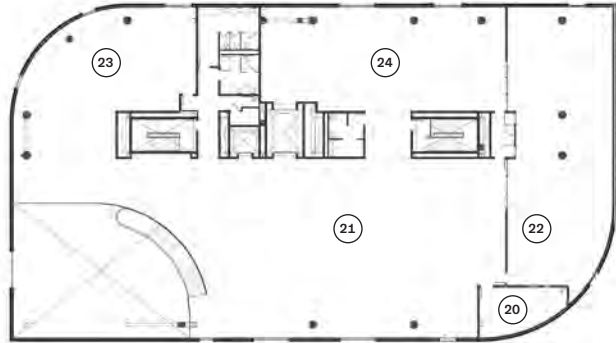
→ FLOOR PLANS

- 1 GROUP ENTRY
- 2 LOBBY
- 3 CAFE
- 4 FIRE PUMP
- 5 RETAIL
- 6 KITCHEN
- 7 MECHANICAL
- 8 WORKSHOP
- 9 STORAGE
- 10 LAUNDRY
- 11 ELECTRICAL
- 12 EMERGENCY ELECTRICAL
- 13 EXHIBIT: ANYTHING’S POSSIBLE CLIMBER
- 14 EXHIBIT: FLY HIGH

- 15 ADMINISTRATION
- 16 MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
- 17 EXHIBIT: FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCTS
- 18 EXHIBIT: DESERT BLOOM
- 19 EXHIBIT: FLY HIGH
- 20 PUMP ROOM
- 21 EXHIBIT: *FLOW* (WATER)
- 22 EXHIBIT: *FLOW* (TERRACE)
- 23 EXHIBIT: MAKING WAVES
- 24 EXHIBIT: CHALLENGE IT



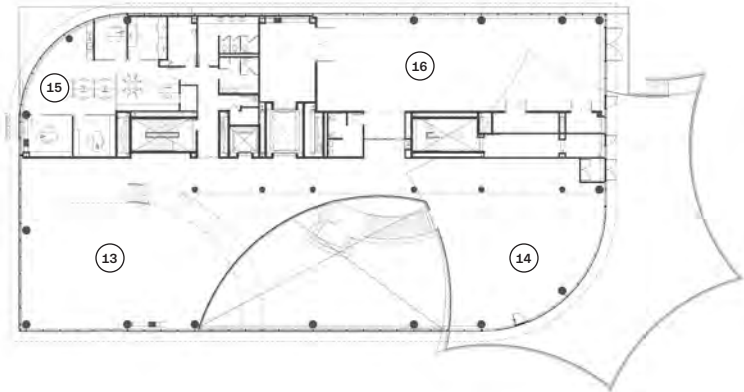
LEVEL 4



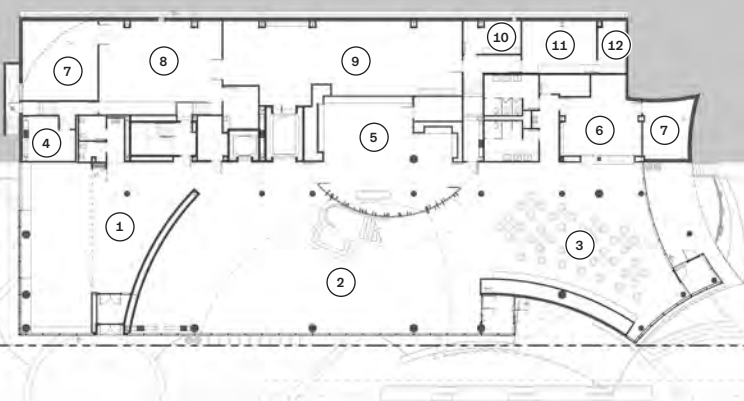
LEVEL 3



LEVEL 2



LEVEL 1





↶ Snøhetta's staircase at play around Gyroscope's three-story climber. Arup designed the stair's structure to be formed and bent rather than fastened.

↶ CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: 1) Christin Apodaca's mural, *In Our Desert, There Is Magic*, celebrates the Chihuahuan Desert. 2) Geometric information about the building design becomes a vertical wall mural, ascending floors. 3) The *Connected Sky* exhibit touchscreen greets visitors in the lobby, inviting real-time, virtual contact with the children's museum in Ciudad Juárez. The climber begins above, extending three floors. La Nube's laterally braced frame system is hidden in plain sight and integrated with the climber. 4) For the *Flow* exhibit, thousands of gallons of water are suspended 60 feet above the ground.



Maintaining this cohesion throughout the construction also required the painstaking technical care and diplomacy of Exigo Architecture, the local architect of record. Paulina Lagos, AIA, who served as Exigo's project architect, recalled the close collaboration between the design and construction teams that allowed for the realization of La Nube's refined architectural effects. She cited the example of the 1,200 twinkling fiber-optic lights that push through the aluminum tiles of the facade: "They were meaningful because they were difficult"—all of it worth the effort to achieve what she calls the "quiet precision of La Nube's detailing and assembly."

Snøhetta's competition proposal foretold a weaving together of ideas and people. It presented an exuberant collage of poppies; appropriated storybook drawings of clouds and children; Bernard the Bull and Max from *Where the Wild Things Are*; vignettes of El Paso history; hummingbirds and morning glories. The periwinkle, iris, violet, and plums of El Paso's skies blended with the sage greens and blues of its botanical palette, washing over pages animated with scenes from the project's narrative—including an aquamarine Buick GNX (Grand National Experimental) circling the site, seeming to signal how rooted, rare, and iconic this project would be. The proposal was, itself, a wild rumpus. It did include a building design, but the architectural concept that became La Nube was developed after the project began—an approach fully intended by Snøhetta. "We like it when a client chooses a team rather than a design," said Molinar, emphasizing the kismet that comes of their process, one that pulls the fantastical from the existing.

It was important to Molinar, who helped guide the public art selection, that the animals on artist Christin Apodaca's third-floor mural were drawn realistically, not as cartoons. Titled *In Our Desert, There Is Magic*, the piece honors the brilliance in nature's original information. Snøhetta traffics in this form of revelation. Their calling card is not a style sent directly to construction documents; it is a working method, a way of being, that connects them deeply to each project. They call it *transpositioning*, a concept explored in their monograph *Collective Intuition*.

Transpositioning is Snøhetta's badass riff on interdisciplinary practice and what brings their projects to life. A Snøhetta project team may include liberal arts graduates prototyping in the model shop, or landscape architects ideating on interior spaces. The method prioritizes intellectual craft—the often-missing link in what we build. It is the "A" in STEAM.

There is tremendous power in engaging our minds artfully with the facts, and La Nube offers El Paso extraordinary potential for powerful invention. It is more than a children's museum by a renowned firm—it is a structure built in the dialect of imagination created for members of a generation who must become better and smarter than we were. They are the ones who will need to find a way forward out of the trouble we've handed down, and this is exactly the kind of place where that discovery might begin. The hunger for such a realm is evident in the numbers: At the time of publishing, more than 270,000 visitors have poured in since opening day—nearly matching the combined attendance of the city's nearby museums and theater.

La Nube was conceived around the concept of the sky as a symbol of limitlessness, freedom, and inclusion. Like the sky, it belongs to and connects everyone, especially young people. The design brief reflected a deep commitment to equity and empathetic space that goes far beyond any policy. La Nube's consideration for all ages, sizes, and abilities is essential to its magic. You can take a wheelchair into the climber—whether you need it or not. The grand staircases features additional handrails for children. English and Spanish are used interchangeably throughout, reflecting the way people often speak in the region. Hierarchies, as we know them, are reimagined and transformed.

I saw a woman pause in front of the restroom door, looking for the label "Women." Instead, the sign read "Niñas." She wasn't disoriented—she was reoriented, awakened by mindful design to the invention and clarity behind the creation of La Nube. □

Laura Foster, AIA, is an El Paso architect who has worked in local government for more than a decade as El Paso's first city development architect, as the city's first chief architect, and presently as El Paso Water's first architect. Foster graduated from the Southern

PROJECT	La Nube STEAM Discovery Center
LOCATION	El Paso
CLIENT	El Paso Community Foundation, City of El Paso, La Nube
DESIGN ARCHITECT	Snøhetta
ARCHITECT OF RECORD	Exigo
DESIGN TEAM	Snøhetta: Marc Andre Plasse, Nick Anderson, Elaine Molinar, AIA, Joyce Hanlon, Jake Levine, AIA, Kurt Marsh, Donesh Ferdowsi, Michael Cotton; Exigo: Paulina Lagos, AIA, Eugenio Mesta, AIA, Edna Landa, Luis Lares
CONTRACTOR	Jordan Foster Construction
STRUCTURAL, MECHANICAL, AND ACOUSTIC ENGINEER	Arup
CIVIL ENGINEER	Sustainable Engineering Resource Group
OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE	Broaddus & Associates
EXHIBIT DESIGNER	Gyroscope
GRAPHIC DESIGN	RSM Design
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT	Snøhetta
PHOTOGRAPHER	Casey Dunn



LA VIE EN ROSEDALE

Designing for Neurodiverse Students

Words by ABIGAIL THOMAS

The Rosedale School first opened in 1988 in the original Rosedale Elementary School building. Of the 70,000 students currently enrolled in the Austin Independent School District, fewer than 1% attend Rosedale, a school designed to serve neurodiverse students ages 3–22 who are medically fragile or need intensive behavioral support. Having a facility dedicated to the education of the district’s most vulnerable students placed Austin at the forefront of inclusive education, but over time it became evident that the existing building did not meet their needs.

The new Rosedale School, built as part of Austin ISD’s 2017 Bond Capital Improvement Program, is a 103,000-sf facility specifically tailored to the Rosedale commu-

nity. The design concept creates a “school within a park,” emphasizing connection to outdoor spaces and integrating artworks that bring the outside in. Placemaking efforts were critical, as many Rosedale students attend the school from their preschool years through young adulthood. The design team wanted to reflect the best of Austin inside the building, with an emphasis on outdoor attractions. These students often do not get to experience Austin in a conventional way but can learn about and connect with the city through the incorporation of classic Austin elements into the design of the school. The most unique feature of the Rosedale School, however, is its co-location with the Dell Children’s Comprehensive Care Clinic. As one of the first public schools in the nation to

have an integrated, full-service health clinic, Rosedale’s dual typology allows students to receive care and education in the same building, increasing the ease of students’ frequent medical visits and decreasing disruption to their learning.

Designed for sensory experience, the school takes into account the varied visual, auditory, and cognitive abilities of Rosedale students. Page’s multisensory design approach selectively engages the senses of sight, sound, touch, smell, and proprioception—the body’s ability to sense its own position and movements. Their design choices reduce sensory overload, support communication and comprehension, promote physical and emotional regulation, and encourage independence and

Randomized colored fins on the Rosedale facade reflect the unpredictability and joy of an average day at the school.



engagement among students. There is a focus on tranquility, with the new school offering more space, smaller class sizes, and a low staff-to-student ratio.

“For students with significant special needs, multisensory design is not just supportive—it’s transformative. As architects, we have the power to shape spaces that speak to every sense, unlocking potential where barriers once stood,” explains Chad Johnson, AIA. As both a Rosedale dad and the academic sector director for PK-12 at Page, Johnson feels strongly that “designing with empathy isn’t an option—it’s our responsibility.”

Spatial transitions were given special design attention, as sudden sensory contrasts can cause distress for many neurodiverse students. Conscientious design of the

all-abilities playground is composed of accessible specialty equipment to facilitate play for all.

Rosedale’s all-abilities playground is composed of accessible specialty equipment to facilitate play for all.

The Dell Children’s Comprehensive Care Clinic can be accessed from inside the school and directly from the parking lot.

building approach addresses this concern; rather than facing students head-on, the exterior walls taper inward to offer more transition space between the bus drop-off area and the central interior atrium. Maintaining direct sightlines into and through the building also reduces transitional stressors, with wide automatic doors at primary entrances providing ease of access for students with mobility aids and their caregivers.

The school is organized around a group of shared central spaces, the largest of which is the spacious “living room” entry, where high ceilings and abundant natural light aid in the transition from exterior to interior. To minimize echo and background noise, there are no parallel surfaces in the main space; angled walls and a butter-

between the common space and learning neighborhoods were designed with care, using ceiling height adjustments and tapered walls to soften corners and reduce visual and auditory contrast between spaces. Textured tile supports tactile wayfinding on every wall, helping guide students with visual impairments or those who benefit from physical interaction with space. In and near the learning neighborhoods, conversation nooks provide a place for students with mobility aids to stop and rest, for nurses and caregivers to provide assistance, and for students to socialize. Throughout the school, the use of strong cleaning chemicals or heavily scented materials is avoided to limit complications for students with asthma or sensory aversions.



Rosedale’s all-abilities playground is composed of accessible specialty equipment to facilitate play for all.

The learning neighborhood for medically fragile students is located in the blue wing. Each studio is equipped with ceiling lifts and additional storage space for mobility aids and medical equipment. Natural daylight illuminates the studios, supplemented by dimmable and color temperature tuning LEDs that replace flickering fluorescents to help students prone to migraines, epilepsy, or sensory sensitivity. Restrooms within each studio contain adult-size changing tables and space for two staff members, with a cleverly concealed exhaust system in the millwork to address olfactory sensitivities. In the wide hallways, colored ceiling tiles provide visual interest for those students in wheelchairs whose field of view is often focused upwards.

The school is composed of three educational wings that radiate out from the living room. Spatial transitions



SITE PLAN

- COMMON AREAS
- ADMINISTRATION
- MEDICALLY FRAGILE
- SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL
- CIRCULATION
- CLINIC



➤ The airy "living room" entry area is designed to reduce reverberation, providing a tranquil place for students and staff to gather.

➔ The kitchen provides a communal gathering space, complete with cozy nooks for those seeking retreat.



Every studio has a “peace center” where students can go to self-regulate when they feel overwhelmed. In the blue wing, integrated pegboards allow teachers to adapt the peace centers with lights, visuals, and tactile elements that encourage engagement. The semi-enclosed space aids in proprioceptive regulation without isolating the student from their classmates. A sensory room is also located in this wing, containing elements like fiber optic light filaments and bubble tubes that reduce stimuli or increase them in a controlled way. The blue wing also has a direct connection to a park-style outdoor space that includes a small soccer field, paved trail, and shaded play court. Large gatherings are frequently hosted here, and the park is opened to the public on evenings and weekends.

equipment that facilitates play for all. From here, the randomness of the facade, which reflects the randomness and unpredictability of the average day at Rosedale, is clearly visible. By using design concepts that are tied to the users, Page successfully connected the building with the spirit of the school.

Upstairs, the yellow wing houses the Transition to Life in the Community (TLC) program, which serves students between the ages of 18 and 22. Many TLC students hold jobs or internships at local restaurants and businesses, splitting their time between work and school. The yellow wing’s fully accessible Living Life Lab is a mock studio apartment, providing a place for students to practice life skills in a safe, controlled environment. Peace centers



Students with behavioral support needs attend class in the green wing. These studios contain flexible, soft furniture that is safe for students that stim or engage in self-injurious behavior. The green wing also has two single-learner studios—temporary spaces for one-on-one interactions between students and teachers. Peace centers in this learning neighborhood prioritize student safety with padded walls and floors and allow students to block their visual connection to the classroom to assist with self-regulation.

An outdoor “calming court” connected to the green wing offers a safe, transitional area adjacent to the primary playground. This all-abilities playground is a place for community gatherings, with accessible specialty

in the yellow wing take the form of comfortable lounge furniture with high-backed shrouds that muffle sound. A shaded outdoor terrace provides an outdoor connection, containing multiple kinds of flexible furniture for socializing and learning.

The 17,000-sf clinic, located on the second floor, serves all of Travis County, including some Rosedale students who enter the clinic directly from the school. Non-student patients have a separate entrance from the parking lot, creating spatial separation to minimize academic disruption and providing distinct secured entries for both populations. The clinic integrates specialists to bring care to the patient and place them at the center of their experience. Spacious exam rooms offer outdoor

↑ Each wing contains a multifunctional collaboration space where students from different classes can gather to engage in practical skill-building.

↑ Wide hallways with textured tile walls prevent claustrophobia while providing sensory guidance.

views, which are especially important during multi-hour visits. The clinic integrates positive distractions to reduce patient anxiety: engaging visuals, soothing colors, and interactive sensory features. Located on the second floor with views into the trees, the clinic adopts a “treehouse” theme, incorporating playful angular elements and light-boxes that mimic natural light. The sensory strategy in the clinic matches that of the school, maintaining consistent surroundings for student-patients.

Brian Henry, director of the Rosedale Foundation, commented: “We were incredibly fortunate to capture the interest and intent of Dell Children’s and Ascension Health to better serve the complex and comprehensive care community, as well as the unique perspective and



commitment of Page to deliver a one-of-a-kind, ultra-accessible facility. The Rosedale Model is a game changer for public health and education in this marginalized community.” The Rosedale Foundation—whose full support helped make this new, dual-program facility a success—is dedicated to raising special needs awareness and empowering the Rosedale community.

The staff at Rosedale are also treated with great care. The school’s flexible staff wellness space can be used for relaxation, reflection, or light exercise. The faculty center, which looks out onto the school’s memorial garden, contains additional amenities and provides hoteling space for visiting therapists. Nurses dispense medicine and administer care throughout the day from a centrally located

station. For staff members who provide care, being cared for in return can make all the difference.

Reflecting on how the school has benefited the Rosedale community, principal Matthew Nelson explained: “What we do here at Rosedale can somewhat be replicated at other schools: low teacher-to-student ratio, modified curriculum and schedule, and intensive staff training. What cannot be replicated is the nurturing, unique, engaging environment our campus provides for our students and staff. All who enter here feel heard and valued and know they are in a safe space.” □

Abigail Thomas works at McKinney York Architects in Austin.

PROJECT	Austin ISD Rosedale School
LOCATION	Austin
CLIENT	Austin Independent School District
ARCHITECT	Page
DESIGN TEAM	Brian Roeder, AIA, Chad Johnson, AIA, Chesney Floyd, Jim Brady, FAIA, Todd Ray, FAIA, America Alva, AIA, Natale Stephens, AIA, Brandon Justice, John Michael Scott, Sunny Onadipe, Chris Maanani, Jerry Nance, JT Hevrin, Erin West, Cameron Brown
CONTRACTOR	Rogers-O'Brien Construction
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER	Datum Rios
CIVIL ENGINEER	GarzaEMC
MEPPF ENGINEER	CNG Engineering
BUILDING ENVELOPE & ROOF CONSULTANT	Engineered Exteriors
INTERIOR DESIGN	BCDM Architects
ACCESSIBILITY ADVOCATE/ADVISOR	Archer Archer
ACCESSIBILITY (RAS)	Contour Collective
TECHNOLOGY/SECURITY/AUDIOVISUAL	Combs Consulting Group
PROGRAMMING (BRIDGING DOCUMENTS)	DLR Group
KITCHEN CONSULTANT	Foodservice Design Professionals
ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT	Jaffe Holden
DOOR HARDWARE CONSULTANT	Allegion
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT	Asakura Robinson
PHOTOGRAPHER	Albert Vecerka/Esto



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REFINING INTUITION THROUGH DATA

by Camden Greenlee, AIA

Our brains are constantly trying to make sense of the cacophony around us.... We arrange things into recognizable arrays of meaning and fit unknowns into previously categorized groupings. This is a survival mechanism from way back in our existence, and we have become very good at ‘reading’ our surroundings. Indeed, we are so good at this, that we will persist in seeing meaning where there is none.
—Karl Aspelund in *The Design Process*

A pen leaves a single mark on a page, one yet to have meaning. As more lines are drawn, a recognizable pattern emerges. The pen keeps moving, rendering an idea that was once invisible, even to the person controlling the pen. That is the power of intuition. An important part of the design process, intuition is the subconscious process our brain uses to understand the world without rational, conscious thinking. It is somewhat reactionary and, in many cases, invisible to our perception. When we act on intuition, our brains reference an archive of experiences, extract relevant information, and guide us to

solutions that feel instinctively right. Many factors determine how our intuition evolves: the type of information we've been exposed to, our personal experiences, our geographic upbringing, our focus in the moment, and, as Amber Alhadeff describes in “The Power of Hunger,” even how hungry we are at any given time. Thus, intuition can be both held hostage by the fallibility of our senses and a source of profound creativity. In design, intuition gives us the sense that something is right or wrong, or indicates that a solution lies in one direction or another. It quickens architectural problem-solving by referencing experience to shortcut an otherwise laborious rational dialogue. This is why it is so valuable—it's the opposite of "reinventing the wheel" and can be usefully thought of as a palimpsest of notable experiences written on the folds of our brain. If our intuition informs our design decisions and is built on our experiences, we should verify that our experiences correctly describe the environment in which we design. If our intuition is influenced by what is "seemingly" true but not "actually" true, the outcome will be flawed.

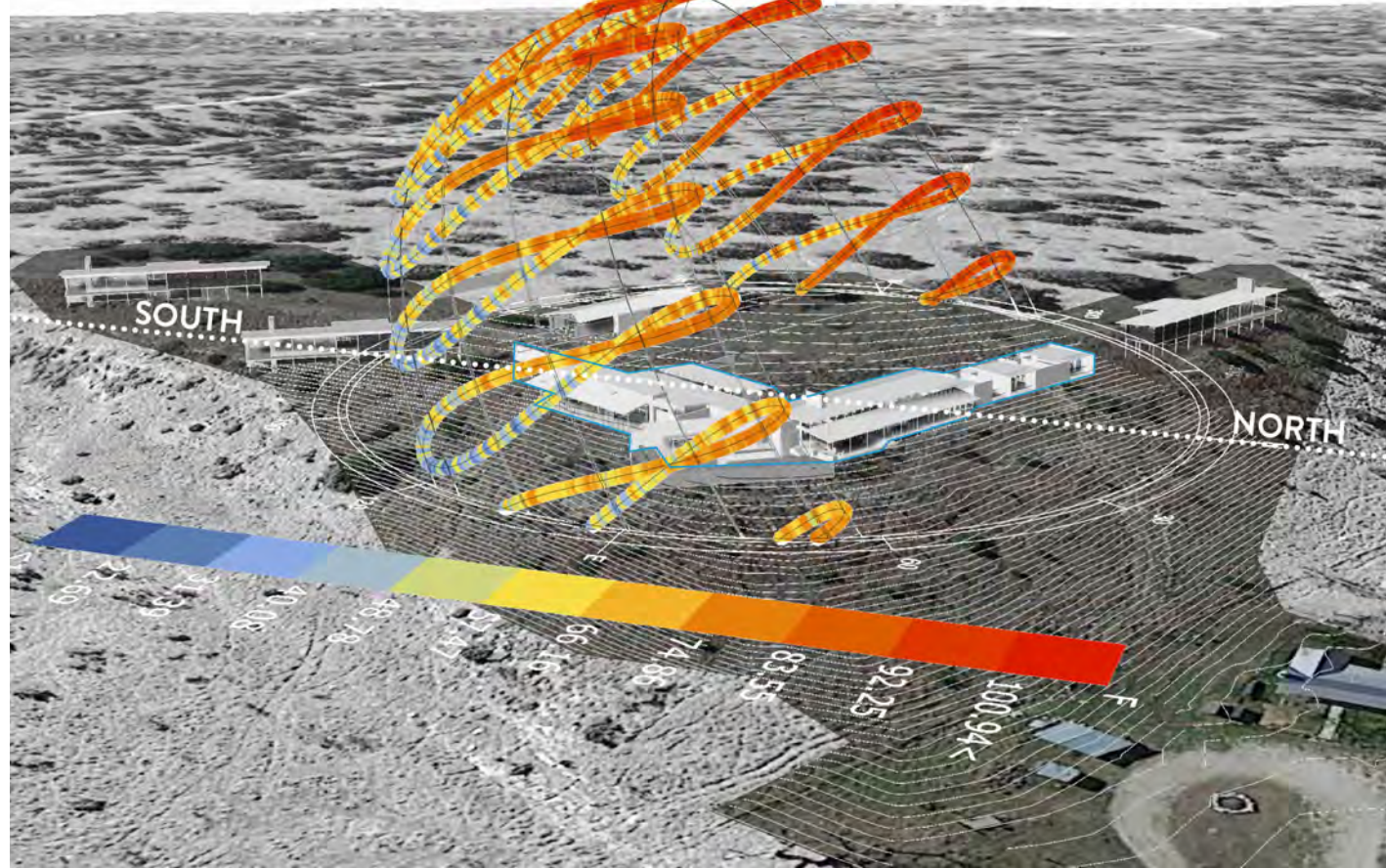
Architect Juhani Pallasmaa argues in *The Eyes of the Skin* that "elements of architecture are not visual units or gestalt; they are encounters, confrontations that interact with memory." Our senses are the bridge to our understanding of reality. However, this bridge needn't be built through direct experience alone. Some elements of reality are either invisible to or distorted by our direct senses. Below, we will explore how to augment our direct experience with measured, objective site and climate data to seek greater accuracy in our perception of reality. Climate data offers a valuable opportunity to deepen our understanding of how well-informed intuition enhances design. There is no building in existence that is not, in some way, intimately connected to climate. It is arguably one of the principal components of our design zeitgeist. So, the process of gathering and mapping climate data gives us the means to understand and make obvious important lessons learned—lessons that will carry us through subsequent design efforts. Climate data is useful because it is robust, objective, and accessible. It serves as a fact check on our intuition, which is otherwise

shaped by subjective experience. A comprehensive site analysis is even more important when designing in unfamiliar regions. A thoughtful site analysis should:

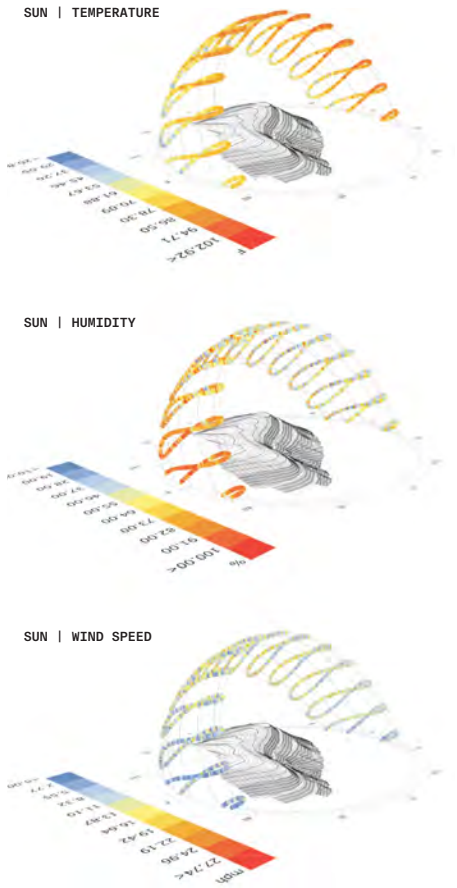
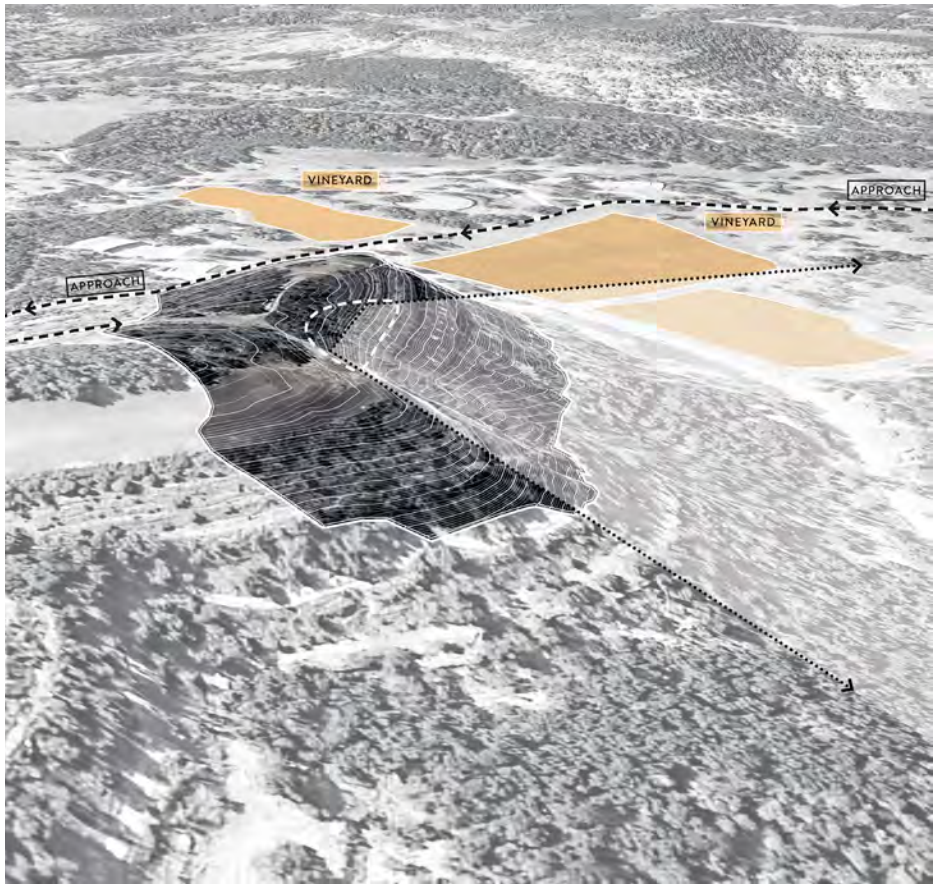
- Illustrate useful environmental patterns, beyond the mundane and trivial.
- Reveal environmental extremes that need tempering or leveraging through design.
- Communicate important and substantiated claims.
- Establish an objective check on the whims of the design team.
- Reveal unique and ephemeral opportunities to heighten human experience.
- Modify the designer's intuition through awareness of site conditions.

If we accept these metrics, we must recognize that merely overlaying winter and summer sun paths on a plan or drawing blue and red wavy lines to identify wind patterns is

An overlay of site-specific climate data on an aerial view of the site and proposed structure. Dry-bulb temperature is color mapped onto the hourly position of the sun.



Site analysis of a project in the Texas Hill Country with a comparison of solar diagrams. Each diagram maps a different quality of the climate data relative to the hourly position of the sun.



completely insufficient. They do not manifest keener intuition. Similarly, showing that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west doesn't further our understanding of the sun's importance in architectural design. These types of analyses are, instead, lip service to an otherwise vast source of profound insights. They are entirely insufficient and unfortunately all too common.

Fortunately, we have an enormous body of data from which we can extract truly meaningful insights about climate. This data is freely available as EnergyPlus Weather (.epw) files. So, our muse is accessible and robust. We need but find the tools to utilize it. Here, we are fortunate as well. Parametric modeling software built for this purpose is available at low cost. Grasshopper, now integral to Rhinoceros modeling software, gives us the ability through free plugins to evaluate data from .epw files and produce legible graphic outputs that, with a bit of work, can be beautiful.

Within Rhino, Grasshopper runs plugins like Ladybug and Honeybee, powerful tools

for climate and building analysis. The availability and power of these tools means that if we claim to take seriously the responsibility of designing sensitively to climate, then we have a responsibility to use them. We cannot be satisfied with red and blue wavy lines, summer and winter solstice arcs, or clouds with raindrops.

Let me offer an example, a telling one that illustrates the potency of critically evaluating even the ideas we hold with high confidence. Below is a series of wind rose diagrams using climate data for Death Valley, California. A wind rose diagram uses a polar grid representing cardinal directions. Highlighted areas indicate values that increase in frequency further from the grid's center, colored to represent values according to a legend. The first wind rose illustrates wind direction (coordinate grid), frequency (distance from center), and temperature during that hour (color).

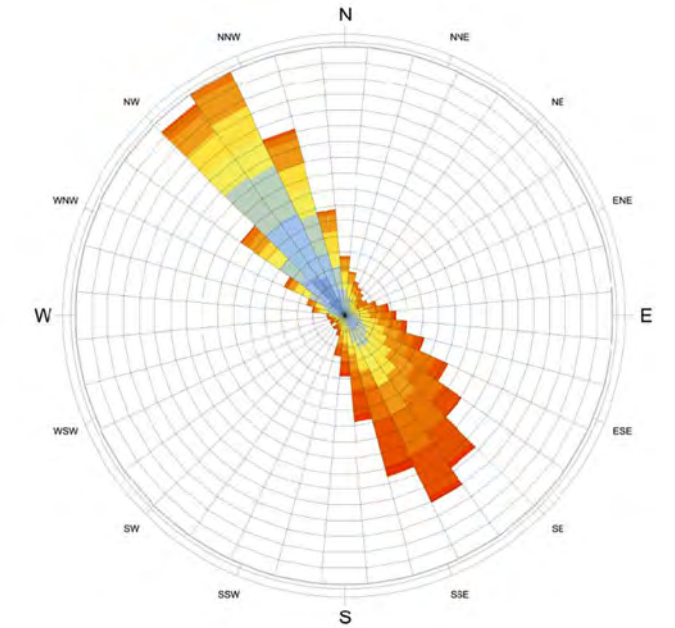
From this diagram, we can conclude that wind primarily comes from the northwest and southeast, is more frequent from the northwest, and is hotter from the southeast. For

those familiar with Death Valley's record temperatures, it is no surprise that the average temperature tops out at 125 degrees Fahrenheit.

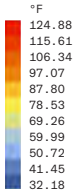
What surprised me was mapping wind speed instead of temperature. Having visited many mountainous deserts tortured by incessant high winds, but never having visited Death Valley, I presumed it was frequently windy. As it turns out, that's not the case. A significant portion of the wind rose is blue, indicating lower wind speeds. When we remove data for wind speeds over 10 mph, we see very little change in the scale of the wind data. That surprised me. The intuition I've held with no small amount of confidence is being shown to be wrong. Am I reading the graph correctly? Is the average wind speed of this mountainous desert less than 10 mph? After the initial confusion, the work of "re-justifying" my new intuition began.

After reflection, it makes perfect sense that Death Valley wouldn't be windy when it's hot. Wind would disperse the heat. It may still be hot, but not record-breaking hot.

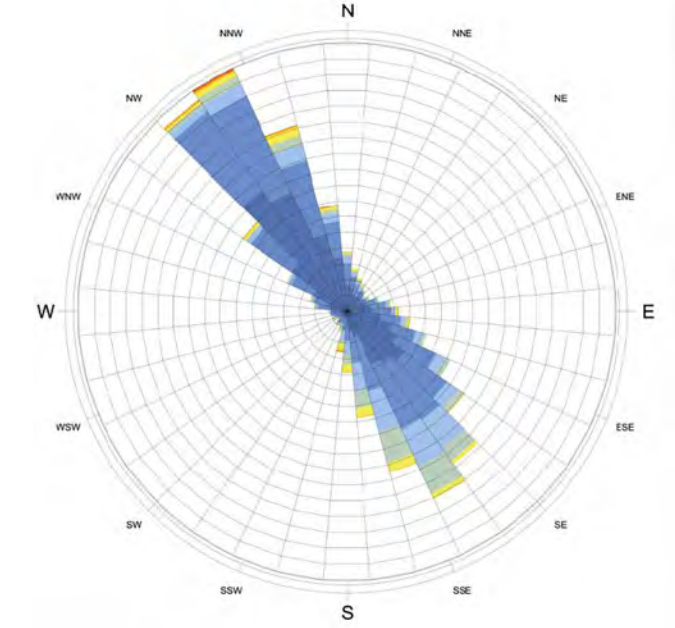
Wind rose diagram of Death Valley, CA, showing direction, frequency, and dry-bulb temperature of the wind.



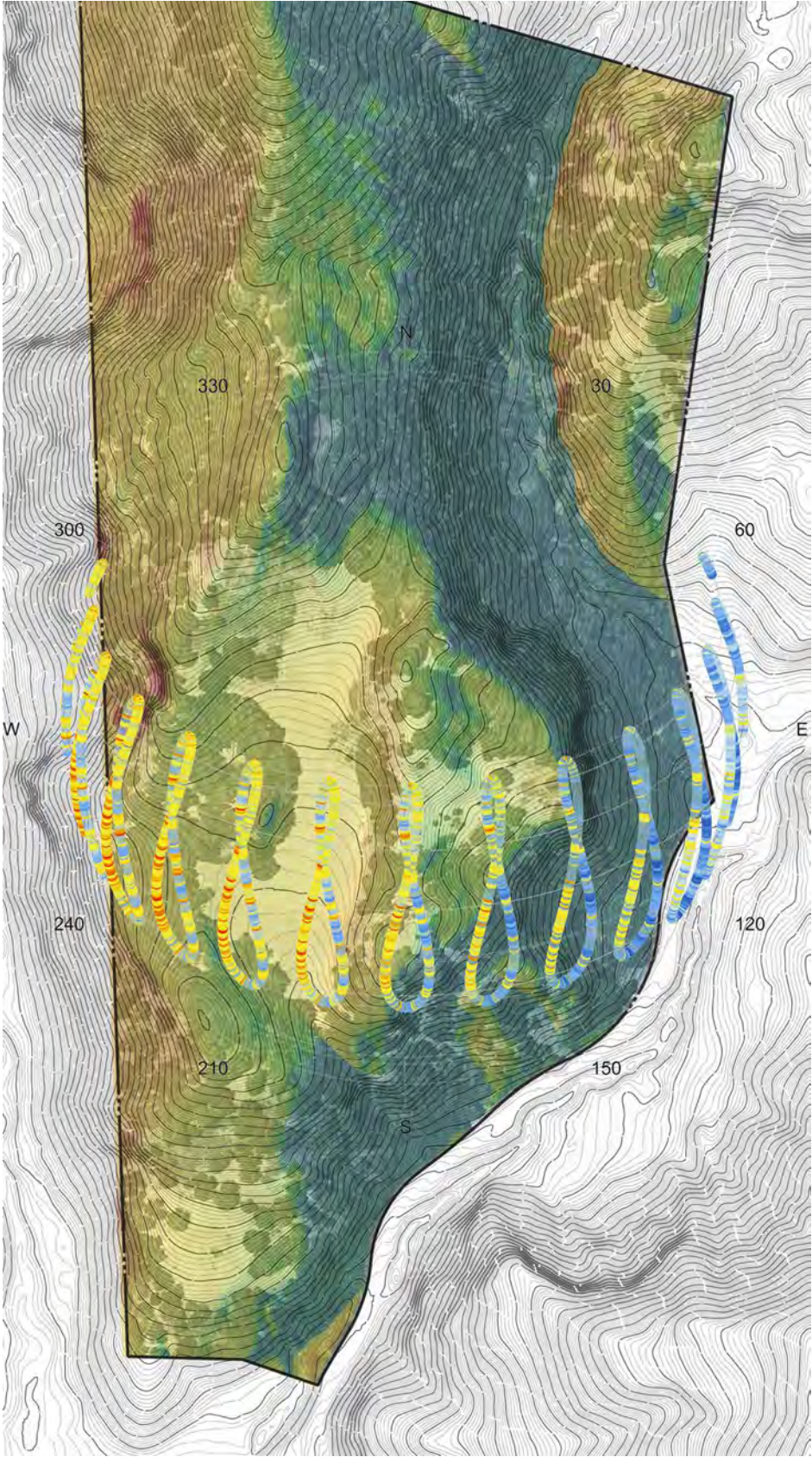
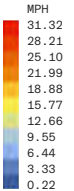
Dry Bulb Temperature (F)
city: Stovepipe.Wells-Death.Valley.Natl.Park
country: USA
time-zone: -8.0
source: SRC-TMYx
period: 1/1 to 12/31 between 0 and 23 @1
Each closed polyline shows frequency of 0.6% = 50 hours.



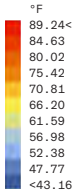
Wind rose diagram of Death Valley, CA, showing direction, frequency, and speed of the wind.



Wind Speed (mph)
city: Stovepipe.Wells-Death.Valley.Natl.Park
country: USA
time-zone: -8.0
source: SRC-TMYx
period: 1/1 to 12/31 between 0 and 23 @1
Calm for 0.0% of the time = 0 hours.
Each closed polyline shows frequency of 0.6% = 50 hours.



Evening solar intensity mapped to the topographic surface of a site in California. A sun path diagram is overlaid with hourly temperatures.



To achieve Death Valley's extreme temperatures, air needs time to heat up. It needs to stay where it is. I was surprised by how such a simple distinction shocked me.

My reasoning wasn't flawed, but rather the basis of my intuition was wrong. This example may not surprise the wise among us, but it raises the question: If this is not the limit of *your* intuition, then where may it lie and how might you test it? A critical site analysis allows us to manipulate data in ways to *reveal* what's useful for understanding the conditions we're studying. With modest effort, we can either confirm the basis of our intuition or reform it.

This example shows how latent biases hidden in the imperfect folds of my brain incorrectly applied past experiences. I was tricked by my hippocampus. Tricked into believing something was "seemingly" true but not "actually" true. Only through critical analysis of pertinent data could I reform my perception of reality. The consequences here were, thankfully, minor—just a sullied pride.

But what if an incorrect intuition were applied to a new visitor's center in this hottest of national parks? Assuming consistent wind might lead one to design passive systems like the vernacular evaporative cooling towers (badgir) of Middle Eastern deserts. How terrible it would be to realize after construction rather than before design how ineffective such an investment might become. There are real costs to a faulty design intuition. To minimize these costs, we owe it to ourselves and our clients to form the sharpest possible intuition about the places in which we design. Thankfully, we've never been closer to the data and tools to conduct this refinement. □

Camden Greenlee, AIA, is an associate at Clayton Korte in San Antonio. He developed the firm's environmental design handbook, which outlines best practices for site and climate responsive design.

REFERENCES:
Aspelund, K. (2006). *The Design Process*. Bloomsbury Academic.
Alhadeff, A. (2021, October 29). The Power of Hunger. *Science*. 547.
Pallasmaa, J. (2012). *The Eyes of the Skin* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

- USEFUL RESOURCES TO GET STARTED:
- Where to find .epw files:
ladybug.tools/epwmap
- Rhinoceros modeling software:
rhino3d.com
- Ladybug plugin for Grasshopper:
food4rhino.com/en/app/ladybug-tools
- Ladybug tutorials:
youtube.com/watch?v=pSZHnAw5Jjk

HOMeward BOUND

In Depth: Urban Domesticities Today

Edited by Florian Idenburg, Jing Liu, et al.

Lars Müller, 2025

by Michael Friebele, Assoc. AIA



The meaning of home is unique and deeply personal to all of us. Our life experiences and their influence upon our approach to housing as designers are often in contrast with the defined, pragmatic values we encounter from our clients, our community, and in some cases our own colleagues. Pro forma, efficiency, and proof of concept are a few of the things that coalesce on top of stringent, formulaic city zoning standards that inhibit a process of exploration. The essence of what can make a home personal to the people it will serve all too often takes a back seat.

SO-IL’s *In Depth: Urban Domesticities Today* does not attempt to solve this problem for us but rather illustrates how one practice

is currently navigating these challenges. It does not aim to explicitly impart knowledge; rather, SO-IL offers us hope through their own “attempts to enchant the house,” presenting a compelling case for reimagining our approach to housing and what is possible.

The opening section, “Life,” begins acclaimed photographer Iwan Baan’s documentary of SO-IL’s projects, which presents the theme of space as a series of experiential qualities. Subtle shifts in gloss and tone found across the photo-documentary sections highlight particular traits of the work. Capturing the approach to the projects from the street, to the interiors themselves, down to intimate moments—such as kids enjoying

the ability to make the space their own and the ways our pets liven the mood—the images are punctuated with SO-IL partner Jing Liu’s perspective of home as our “innermost sanctum.” Her perspective sets the tone early in the discussion, as she reflects on how her own sense of home was erased and replaced by the current models we encounter day to day. What follows is a documentary-style exploration of SO-IL’s work, one that leaves no stones unturned in tracing influences and past attempts by others to bring meaning to personal space. As the depth of the inquiry unfolds alongside these pointed influences, the book resists a linear reading—and welcomingly so.

The in-depth and human-centric way in which Baan is able to capture SO-IL’s projects is compelling and sets up the critical conversation in the essays sandwiched in between. From touching upon specific aspects of New York City zoning and setbacks (Karilyn Johansen’s “Layered Lives”) to exploring the contradictions of priority between building and environmentally driven codes (Ted Baab’s “Codes of Living”), the essays serve to highlight the firm’s current work, particularly their ongoing collaboration with Brooklyn developer Tankhouse.

One of the most impactful takeaways from the book is SO-IL’s move away from double-loaded corridors, a ubiquitous feature in nearly every contemporary building type. Nicolas Kemper’s short essay “Cancel the Corridor” opens with a dialogue between SO-IL partner Florian Idenburg and Sam Alison-Mayne, head of Tankhouse, drawn from their 2020 interview in *The Architect’s Newspaper* conducted at the height of the pandemic. The contrast between a photo of Kemper’s own corridor, taken with his cellphone, and Baan’s images powerfully illustrates the questions raised during the interview. “Can we imagine the journey from apartment to street as joyous and celebratory...?” asks Idenburg.

The essay then shifts focus to mental health and well-being, tracing the origins of the double-loaded corridor back to the 14th century. Citing Mark Jarzombek’s 2010 piece *Corridor Spaces*, Kemper notes that the word *corridor* originally referred to a person who could run fast and deliver a commander’s orders. Corridors, then, were designed for speed and efficiency. But whereas projects today have become a product of that efficiency, being designed from the inside out, the essay proposes a reversal: to take the street outside as the initial prompt and let that connection carry inward.

The essay section is followed by a photo-documentary of 450 Warren, a built culmination of the book’s central themes.

Completed in 2023, 450 Warren is carefully stitched into a brownstone-lined context, using a stepped massing that responds to the street. Its bold form is softened by a custom CMU facade, which breaks down the scale into a pattern that echoes the surrounding brickwork and is visually grounded by the street’s tree canopy. Porosity from the sidewalk leads into a sequence of three courtyards, around which the units are organized. This internal street gives each residence two exposures for daylight and creates a shared place for community interaction. The full-height mesh “rail” surrounding the courtyard harkens back to an influence mentioned in the book’s introduction: environmental artist and architect Aleksandra Kasuba’s own apartment, where a rectilinear plan is held in tension by a stretched, tactile surface. Baan captures daily life throughout the project—within the units and across the layered circulation paths in the courtyard. A compelling story emerges, though it leaves you wondering whether the book arrived too soon. A follow-up—featuring SO-IL’s current work with Tankhouse and allowing more time for projects to mature and come into their own—would be welcome.

Within the structure of the book, the “Projects” section is a necessary addition yet feels slightly adrift. Organized around three themes—“Cores, Courts, and Corridors”—the portfolio traces a clear transition of scale, from small to large. The expected monograph-type drawings are present but, at times, feel too detached from the rest of the book’s vitality. Also, it would have been interesting to see models of the work living in SO-IL’s creative office. Given that the firm is notable not just for the whimsy and rigor in its work but also for its commitment to fostering culture in their studio, a more creative approach to this section would have been interesting to see. Still, this critique arises largely in part due to how unique *In Depth: Urban Domesticities Today* is—less a standard monograph than a snapshot in time. As Idenburg puts it, it’s an “attempt to capture something intangible in words and images... a plea for a return to consciousness in how we conceive homes for the masses.”

Diving into this book makes for a fun—if occasionally uncomfortable—journey toward uncovering something new. *In Depth: Urban Domesticities Today* sparks in its readers an interest in joining the party, inviting us all to imagine what might unfold if no stone were ever left unturned. □

Michael Friebele, Assoc. AIA, is a senior associate at the Dallas office of Perkins Eastman and resides in Minneapolis.



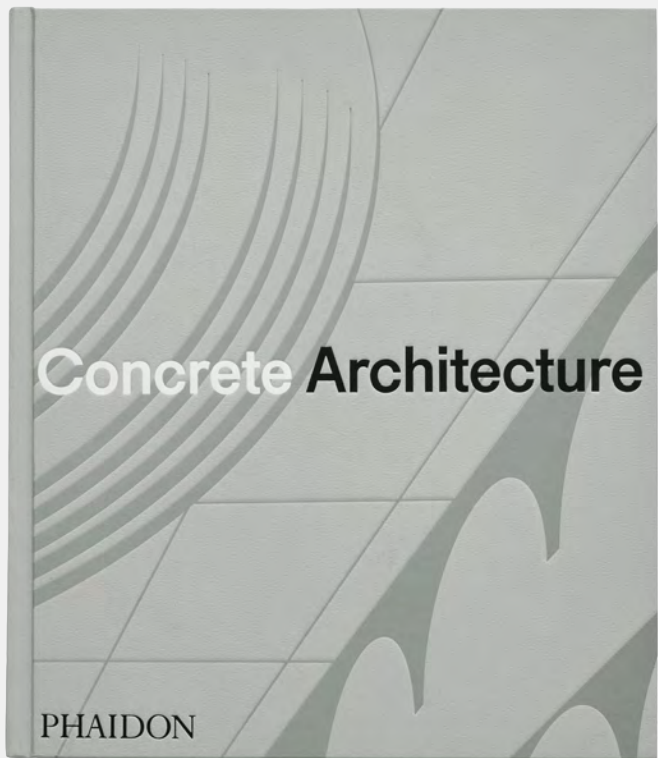
GREY MATTER

Concrete Architecture

Phaidon Editors, with Sam Lubell and Greg Goldin

Phaidon, 2024

by James Russell



When writers Sam Lubell and Greg Goldin of Los Angeles write a book, they use what architects love: a blueprint. Their books of beloved and rarely seen buildings include crisp and tight sentences and ruminative essays about whatever the subject may be.

The Atlas of Never Built Architecture (Phaidon, 2024), reviewed in the spring issue of this magazine, followed that blueprint. *Concrete Architecture* (Phaidon, 2024), a 352-page tourist guide highlighting 300 buildings designed during the 20th and 21st centuries, does too.

One of the delights of their books is the meticulous research and their commitment to highlighting a variety of projects. They like the practical, small, and peculiar as much as they do the ostentatious.

In *Concrete Architecture*, Lubell and Goldin include a demolished parking garage in London. The prefabricated Welbeck Street car park was designed by Michael Blampied and Partners and built in 1970 for the Debenhams department store. Garages are practical. But this one had a diamond-patterned facade wrapped around a central elevator and staircase. It was torn down in 2019 after failing to achieve historic protections.

Tvisöngur, meaning “the duet,” is a sound sculpture by the German artist Lukas Kühne near Seyðisfjörður, Iceland. It’s one of those projects that makes you want to book a pricey flight just to see. Its interconnected igloo shapes of varying sizes make it look like an abandoned, experimental spaceship. But in reality, it’s a prideful representation of Icelandic music, and what the authors call “singing concrete.”

Some featured projects are eccentric monuments from the Soviet era, including Igor A. Vasilevsky’s Druzhba Sanatorium in Kurpaty, Ukraine, built in 1985. Get this: The Soviet government mandated rest for workers, including two weeks of paid vacation time each year. Sanatoriums were a go-to place to relax, get a massage, and—per the name Druzhba, which means “friendship”—make community. It’s an ambitious, towering space station-like structure in harmony (even with all that concrete!) with nature. It’s what college residence halls should be.

When it comes to Texas sites, there’s no doubt which you would expect to see. And, duh, the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth makes an appearance. The engineering and concrete feat by Louis Kahn, which opened in 1972, was in part saved by his sparring partner, August Komendant, an Estonian engineer who worked with Kahn on many projects. (One joke is that commissions were taken between their fights.) There are many rewards on the campus, including the calming landscape designed by Harriet Pattison,



and, of course, the art collection. But it’s the museum’s undulating barreled vaults, modeled on since-demolished grain silos, that stand as the project’s true architectural triumph and as a model for other buildings in the city.

The Kimbell’s neighbor, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth by Tadao Ando, is also featured. When the building opened in 2002, the oldest art museum in the state finally got a megachurch for its contemporary and modern art collection. The complex of five rectangular glass pavilions supported by Y-shaped columns centers around a calming pond. It is a signature Ando design, the authors argue, because it reflects his trademark minimalism and mix of light and solitude, even when the exhibitions are loud.

And those small projects? They’re represented by the Webb Chapel Park Pavilion in Dallas. Built in 2012 by Studio Joseph, it was constructed as part of the city’s plans to replace outdated shaded areas in the city’s parks. The street view and photo don’t do it justice. From a distance, it appears as a minimalist facility in the middle of the northwest Dallas park. But get closer, and you see it’s far more complex—and a delight to sit under. The structure is held up by only three supports, and inside are four pyramidal chimneys of varying sizes painted in a lush, vibrant yellow. The reveal is a surprise and a welcome shelter from the state’s erratic weather.

If one includes the Kimbell as an example of architecture in the state, then one must also include at least one project by Lake Flato, right? Lubell and Goldin highlight the firm’s pavilion for San Antonio’s Confluence Park, built around the theme of connecting the built and natural environments. Central to the design are 22 sculptural concrete petals that emerge from the ground to form a canopy. The petals, though, look weightless and also allow rainwater to flow down into the grass below and be stored for later.

Concrete, as proven in this book, isn’t just another material but one that also inspires, engages, and allows for a sense of peace, or at least a reprieve from the challenges and banality of life. □

James Russell is a journalist in Fort Worth writing about art, the built environment, and politics. His writing has appeared in *Landscape Architecture Magazine*, *CityLab*, *Arts and Culture Texas*, and the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, among others.



↑ SEAGLAS COLLECTION
Bendheim
bendheim.com

This calming collection captures the essence of surf-worn sea glass within a sheet of glass. Available in a standard 60" x 120" format or larger upon special request, the scale, size, and colors of the glass can be customized to meet specific design requirements. Seaglas is available in tempered or tempered and laminated safety forms suited for wall surfaces, partitions, and more. The collection is engineered to integrate seamlessly with Bendheim's Z-KISS wall mounting system and TurnKey wall glazing solution.

↓ NEW PORCELAIN HANDLE COLORS
California Faucets
calfaucets.com

From muted neutrals to vibrant bolds, this colorful palette of porcelain handles is offered in two new handle styles for the minimal Cayucos series and classic Del Mar series. Complementing the high-quality solid brass of California Faucets spouts and handles, the authentic porcelain handles are made in Stoke-on-Trent, England, known for its fine porcelain production. From earthy tones such as black, white, and blue to bold shades like orange, red, pink, and yellow, the handles can add a pop of color to a bathroom or coordinate with other details such as tile and accessories.

↑ 2025 COLOR COLLECTION
3form
3-form.com

The 10 colors in 3form's 2025 Color Collection include five bold hues and five muted counterparts chosen to evoke emotions such as confidence, charisma, and optimism. The pairings include cranberry-hued Winterberry and light purple Teaberry; deep red-orange Vermillion and rose-pink Sunstone; lush green Jewel and serene green Buoyant; radiant yellow Pharoah and soft yellow Lemon; and rich brown Tourmaline and airy white Ivory. 3form's Varia and Glass materials stand out with the vibrant, deep hues, while the softer, muted hues shine with Chroma.



These finishes and furnishings focus on the power of color to influence mood, productivity, and overall well-being.

by Rita Catinella Orrell

↓ ALLEGRO CONSOLE
Hastings Bath Collection
hastingsbathcollection.com

The Allegro console's bush-hammer textured solid-surface exterior is contrasted by a smooth gel-coated interior, creating a sensory experience enhanced by color. Optional towel hooks and a built-in storage shelf provide functional utility, while color-matched drain covers complete the look. Designed and crafted by Italian artisans, Allegro is available in 44 solid surface basin colors and 18 metal leg finishes.

↑ GELATO LAMPS
Established & Sons
establishedandsons.com

Originally designed in the 1960s as a wired table lamp, Gelato has been redeveloped by Carlo Nason and Established & Sons into a portable lamp featuring a colorful glass vase, or cup, that nestles an orb of frosted glass. The freestanding orb hosts a custom-made, replaceable LED bulb with an integrated battery and is activated with a haptic three-step dimmer. The portable lamp is charged directly on the orb, using USB-C magnetic charging. It is offered in four distinct finishes—Spritz (orange), Mint (green), Azure (blue), and Smoke (grey)—for commercial or residential interiors.

↓ NEW PET COLORS
Kirei
kireiusa.com

Five new colorways from Kirei are available in the brand's Mura wallcovering, its Embossed Panel Series, and all 12mm PET panels and products, from baffles and clouds to tiles and screens. The colors include Butter, an airy yellow that delivers a sense of serenity and joy; Dusk, a sophisticated pink that invites reflection; Mint, a refreshing and tranquil green; Cayenne, a robust red that adds depth and warmth; and Nutmeg, an earthy brown offering comfort and serenity.



AUGUST

SUNDAY 3

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Foyer Installation: René Magritte
The Menil Collection
1533 Sul Ross St.
Houston
menil.org

This installation celebrates the Menil’s extraordinary holdings of work by Belgian Surrealist René Magritte (1898–1967). It focuses on a core group of paintings from the 1950s and ’60s, in which the artist rendered impossible situations with virtuosic precision and uncanny clarity.



FOYER INSTALLATION OF RENÉ MAGRITTE PAINTINGS AT THE MENIL COLLECTION, HOUSTON. PHOTO: SARAH WUENSCHER

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Navigating the Waves: Contemporary Cuban Photography
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Nancy and Rich Kinder Building
5500 Main St.
Houston
mfah.org

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Tiffany Chung: Rise Into the Atmosphere
Dallas Museum of Art
1717 N. Harwood
Dallas
dma.org

SUNDAY 10

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Richard Avedon at the Carter
Amon Carter Museum of American Art
3501 Camp Bowie Blvd.
Fort Worth
cartermuseum.org

EXHIBITION CLOSING
What Drawing Can Be: Four Responses
The Menil Drawing Institute
1412 W. Main St.
Houston
menil.org

SATURDAY 16

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Ken Roberts Memorial Delineation Competition
ADEX
325 N. St. Paul St. Ste. 150
Dallas
dallasadex.org

SUNDAY 17

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Otobong Nkanga: Each Seed a Body
Nasher Sculpture Center
2001 Flora St.
Dallas
nashersculpturecenter.org

2025 Nasher Prize laureate Otobong Nkanga reconsiders our relationship with land and its materials through site-responsive works rooted in local histories and ecosystems. Featuring new iterations of major ongoing projects, the show engages with Texas history, material culture, and ecology through deep research and collaborations with local artisans. An installation photo appears below.

TUESDAY 19

EXHIBITION OPENING
Latinos in Architecture Enlaces 2025
AD EX
325 N. St. Paul St. Ste. 150
Dallas
dallasadex.org

THURSDAY 21 - FRIDAY 22

EVENT
Design Excellence Conference
Austin Central Library
710 W. Cesar Chavez St.
Austin
aiaaustin.org



INSTALLATION VIEW OF 2025 NASHER PRIZE LAUREATE OTOBONG NKANGA: EACH SEED A BODY, NASHER SCULPTURE CENTER, 2025. © OTOBONG NKANGA. PHOTO BY KEVIN TODORA, COURTESY NASHER SCULPTURE CENTER.

FRIDAY 22

EVENT
AIA Dallas EMPOWERING Conference
Pegasus Park
Dallas
aiadallas.org

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Verdant Laboratory
Architecture Center Houston
902 Commerce St.
Houston
architecturehouston.org

SUNDAY 24

EXHIBITION CLOSING
The Wyeths: Three Generations | Works from the Bank of America
Art Museum of South Texas
1902 N. Shoreline Blvd.
Corpus Christi
artmuseumofsouthtexas.org

FRIDAY 29

EXHIBITION OPENING
Larry Bell: Improvisations
San Antonio Museum of Art
200 W. Jones Ave.
San Antonio
samuseum.org

SUNDAY 31

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Cao Fei: Whose Utopia
Blanton Museum of Art
200 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Austin
blantonmuseum.org

SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY 5 - SATURDAY 6

EVENT
Building Communities Conference & Tradeshow
South Padre Island Convention Center
7355 Padre Blvd.
South Padre Island
lrgvaia.org

SUNDAY 7

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Alex Da Corte: The Whale
Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth
3200 Darnell St.
Fort Worth
themodern.org

SATURDAY 13 - SUNDAY 14

EVENT
Galveston Sandcastle Festival
1923 Boddeker Rd.
Galveston
architecturehouston.org

SUNDAY 14

EXHIBITION OPENING
Myth and Marble: Ancient Roman Sculpture from the Torlonia Collection
Kimbell Art Museum
3333 Camp Bowie Blvd.
Fort Worth
kimbellart.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Roaming Mexico: Laura Wilson
Meadows Museum
5900 Bishop Blvd.
Dallas
meadowsmuseumdallas.org

MONDAY 15

LECTURE
Michael Meredith
Rice Architecture Lecture Series
Farish Gallery at MD Anderson Hall
Loop Rd.
Houston
arch.rice.edu

THURSDAY 18

EVENT
AIA Dallas Design Awards + Announcement Celebration
AD EX
325 N. St. Paul St., Ste. 150
Dallas
aiadallas.org

FRIDAY 19

EXHIBITION OPENING
Robert Rauschenberg: Fabric Works of the 1970s
The Menil Collection
1533 Sul Ross St.
Houston
menil.org

SUNDAY 21

EXHIBITION CLOSING
Floating World: A.A.Murakami
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Audrey Jones Beck Building
5601 Main St.
Houston
mfah.org

Floating World is the first US museum exhibition by Tokyo/London-based artist duo A.A.Murakami. Featuring immense bubble-like clouds that dissolve into mist, swirling fog rings, and plasma krypton “lightning” tubes, the installations transport visitors to an ethereal world of singular experience and scientific spectacle.



A.A.MURAKAMI, “BEYOND THE HORIZON,” © A.A.MURAKAMI. FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM KOVÁR AND PETR&CO., MODEL BY ASHLEY LIN. IMAGE COURTESY THE ARTIST.

MONDAY 22

LECTURE
Brett Schneider: “Heterogeneous Constructions”
Rice Architecture Lecture Series
Farish Gallery at MD Anderson Hall
Loop Rd.
Houston
arch.rice.edu

SATURDAY 27 - SUNDAY 28

EVENT
2025 AIA Fort Worth Homes Tour
Various locations
Fort Worth
aiafw.org

OCTOBER

SATURDAY 4

EXHIBITION OPENING
Lines of Resolution: Drawing at the Advent of Television and Video
The Menil Drawing Institute
1412 W. Main St.
Houston
menil.org

FRIDAY 10 - SUNDAY 12

EVENT
Chinati Weekend
Various Locations
Marfa
chinati.org

SATURDAY 18 - SUNDAY 19

EVENT
AIA Houston 2025 Home Tour
Various Locations
Houston
architecturehouston.org

MONDAY 20

LECTURE
Paola Viganò
Rice Architecture Lecture Series
Farish Gallery at MD Anderson Hall
Loop Rd.
Houston
arch.rice.edu

SATURDAY 25 - SUNDAY 26

EVENT
2025 AIA Austin Homes Tour
Various Locations
Austin
aiaaustin.org

EVENT
AIA Dallas Tour of Homes
Various Locations
Dallas
aiadallas.org

To submit calendar items for consideration, email event details or a link to more information to communications@texasarchitects.org.

SEE PAGE 42	
LOCATION	Dallas
CLIENT	Thomas & Lynn McIntire
ARCHITECT	Shipley Architects
CONTRACTOR	ShipBuild Partners
CONSULTANTS	STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Coombs Engineering LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Paper Kites Studio
RESOURCES	BRICK: St. Joe Brick Works (Blackson Brick) CORRUGATED METAL PANELS: Western States Metal Roofing WOOD: Thermory USA (Mason's Mill and Lumber) CORTEN CORRUGATED PANELS: Western States Metal Roofing GARDEN WALL BRICK: Old Texas Brick (Blackson Brick) VERSA-LAM LVL AND LSL: Boise Cascade (Davis-Hawn Lumber) ADVANTECH SUBFLOORING: Huber Engineered Woods (Davis-Hawn Lumber) WRAPSHIELD SA SELF-ADHERED WRB: VaproShield (All-Tex Waterproofing Solutions) TPO ROOFING: GAF (StazOn Roofing) BIFOLD, CASEMENT, & DIRECT SET WINDOWS: Marvin (OmniView) MULTISLIDE POCKET AND GARAGE ENTRY DOORS: Marvin (OmniView) QUARTZ: Vicastone (Kitchens & Baths by Beltrand) COUNTERTOPS: Wilson Art (Classic Countertop) FIREPLACE: Isokern (Earthcore Industries) CEMENT TILES: Sabine Hill (Knox Tile) CORK FLOORING: Duro Design OTHER FINISHES: Richlite DOOR HARDWARE: Schlage DITRA HEAT: Schluter Systems (Flooring & More) HVAC: Fujitsu (Wise Energy) GEOTHERMAL HVAC: Enertech Navigator (Wise Energy) COOKTOP, REFRIGERATOR, AND WINE FRIDGE: Dacor (Capital Appliance) RANGE HOOD: Elica (Capital Appliance) DISHWASHER: Bosch (Capital Appliance) BUILT-IN OVEN: Wolf (Capital Appliance) FAUCETS: Blanco, Hansgrohe, and Dornbracht Lisse (Apex Plumbing Supply) SINKS: Barclay, Kohler (Apex Plumbing Supply) BATHTUBS: Cheviot Regal, Kohler (Apex Plumbing Supply) TOILET: Toto (Apex Plumbing Supply) FANS: Big Ass Fans

SEE PAGE 58	
LOCATION	Houston
CLIENT	The Marchbanks Company/Loretto Projects
ARCHITECT	Lake Flato Architects
CONTRACTOR	Forney Construction
CONSULTANTS	INTERIOR DESIGN: Post Company HOTEL OPERATOR: Bunkhouse Group LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Ten Eyck Landscape Architects STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Architectural Engineers Collaborative BUILDING ENCLOSURE: Acton Partner LIFE SAFETY & FIRE SUPPRESSION: Jensen Hughes REGISTERED ACCESSIBILITY SPECIALIST: David Demings ACOUSTICS: EEA Consulting Engineers FOOD SERVICE: Melbil LIGHTING DESIGNER: Within Light Studio PERMIT EXPEDITOR: Texas Permit
RESOURCES	MASONRY: Summit Brick Company RAINSCREEN: James Hardie WOOD CLADDING: Thermowood Ash Comb Siding MOISTURE BARRIER: WR Meadows BUILT-UP ROOFING: Versico TPO Membrane METALS: Northwest Roof Tile and Metal; McElroy Metal METAL AND WOOD DOORS: Ceco Door GLULAM: Rosboro WINDOW WOOD FRAMES & SLIDING DOORS: Pella GLASS: Vitro ENTRANCES: Grand Door Company ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS: Armstrong CABINETWORK AND CUSTOM WOODWORK: American Woodworking; Montague PAINTS & STAINS: Benjamin Moore; Sherwin Williams WALL COVERINGS: Elitis SOLID SURFACING: BAS Stone SPECIAL SURFACING: Starsilent FLOOR & WALL TILE: Fireclay; Design and Direct Source CARPET: Blended LA LOCKSETS: ASSA ABLOY; Yale LEVER: Frascio CLOSERS: ASSA ABLOY; Norton EXIT DEVICES: Yale SECURITY DEVICES: ASSA ABLOY INTERIOR AMBIENT LIGHTING: Vintage; Roll & Hill; Chapman Lighting; Better Designed Lighting; Blue Green Works DOWNLIGHTS: Integer Lights; Eurofuse TASKLIGHTING: LEDI EXTERIOR LIGHTING: Hevi Lite DIMMING SYSTEM: Lutron

SEE PAGE 76	
LOCATION	El Paso
CLIENT	El Paso Community Foundation; City of El Paso; La Nube
DESIGN ARCHITECT	Snøhetta
ARCHITECT OF RECORD	Exigo
CONTRACTOR	Jordan Foster Construction
CONSULTANTS	EXHIBIT DESIGN: Gyroscope GRAPHIC DESIGN: RSM Design STRUCTURAL, MECHANICAL, AND ACOUSTIC ENGINEER: Arup CIVIL ENGINEER: Sustainable Engineering Resource Group OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE: Broaddus & Associates
RESOURCES	FACADE PANELS & ROOFING: ATAS International WINDOWS: Kawneer CEILING BAFFLES: Autex ACOUSTIC SPRAY: ICC
AUSTIN ISD ROSEDALE SCHOOL	
SEE PAGE 84	
LOCATION	Austin
CLIENT	Austin Independent School District
ARCHITECT	Page
CONTRACTOR	Rogers-O'Brien Construction
CONSULTANTS	ACCESSIBILITY ADVOCATE/ADVISOR: Archer Archer LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Asakura Robinson INTERIOR DESIGN: BCDM Architects STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Datum Rios MEPFP ENGINEER: CNG Engineering CIVIL ENGINEER: GarzaEMC TECHNOLOGY/SECURITY/AUDIOVISUAL: Combs Consulting Group PROGRAMMING (BRIDGING DOCUMENTS): DLR Group DOOR HARDWARE CONSULTANT: Allegion BUILDING ENVELOPE & ROOF CONSULTANT: Engineered Exteriors

KITCHEN CONSULTANT: Foodservice Design Professionals	
ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT: Jaffe Holden	
ACCESSIBILITY (RAS): Contour Collective	
RESOURCES	
METAL WALL PANELS (HORIZONTAL HWP-16 SYSTEM) & METAL ROOFING (TITE LOC PLUS): PAC-CLAD (Dean Contracting Company)	
METAL WALL PANELS (VERTICAL HC-16 SYSTEM): Berridge	
EXTERIOR SUN CONTROL DEVICES: Canopy Solutions	
BURNISHED CONCRETE BLOCK: Austin Block & Quarry (Brazos Masonry)	
VINYL WALLCOVERINGS: DesignTex (Cherry Painting Company)	
WOOD SLAT WALL: 9Wood (3G Drywall)	
PVC ROOFING SYSTEM - 80 MIL: John Mansville (Dean Contracting Company)	
FLUID-APPLIED AIR BARRIER: Tremco (Southwest Sealants)	
THERMAL INSULATION: CertainTeed (3G Drywall)	
SOUND CONTROL DOORS: Krieger Specialty Products (The Door Company)	
FOLDING PANEL GLAZED PARTITIONS: Modernco (Rob Pelleteir Construction)	
ALUMINUM STOREFRONT: Kawneer (Bell Glass & Mirror)	
SLIDING AUTOMATIC ENTRANCES: Stanley (Bell County Glass Company)	
ACOUSTICAL CEILING BAFFLES: Sound Seal (3G Drywall)	
ACOUSTICAL WALL PANELS: Quiet Technology Systems (3G Drywall)	
DECORATIVE TILE: Daltile (GQ Tile)	
TEXTURED GLAZED TILE: Virginia Tile (GQ Tile)	
TEXTURED WALL PANELS: Soelberg (3G Drywall)	
CARPET: Interface (Flooring Solutions)	
RESILIENT ATHLETIC FLOORING: Gerflor Taraflex Sport M Plus (Flooring Solutions)	
ACOUSTICAL CEILING TILE: Armstrong (3G Drywall)	
PLUMBING FIXTURES: Sloan, Elkay, T&S, Bradley (Precision Plumbing Company)	
INTERIOR LIGHTING: Spectrum Lighting - Lithonia, Finelite, Eureka (Big State Electric)	
PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT: Landscape Structures (Whirlix Design)	
PATIENT LIFT SYSTEMS: Gulmann	
GYMNASIUM EQUIPMENT: John F. Clark Company	
CUSTOM FOOD TRUCK FABRICATION, ROOM SIGNAGE, & MEMORIAL BUTTERFLIES: Building Image Group	

ACME BRICK	IFC-1
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PHOTO BY KRISTIAN ALVED

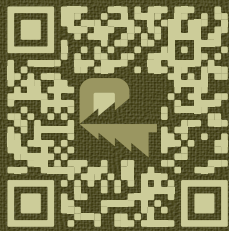
MIRROR HOUSES

In partnership with LCRA Parks, the ÖÖD Mirror Houses have been introduced for the first time to a public park in the US at the new Cameron Ranch Glamping site on Lake Bastrop. “We wanted to create a place where guests could disconnect from the outside world and reconnect with their loved ones,” says Garrett Brown, CEO of Cameron Ranch Glamping. “These unique cabins immerse visitors in nature while offering the comfort and luxury of thoughtfully designed mirror houses.” Designed by Estonian brothers Jaak and Andreas Tiik, these minimalist, prefabricated structures feature reflective exteriors that blend into the natural landscape, offering a striking yet unobtrusive presence. ÖÖD Houses are typically found in remote, private settings, and their integration into public parkland required thoughtful navigation of environmental, design, and guest experience challenges—bringing a new level of accessibility to high-end, nature-focused accommodations while advancing goals around mental health, sustainability, and beautiful design in everyday travel.



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