

arcCA 08.1, “’90s Generation”

State(s) of Practice

Excerpts from a Conversation Convened and Moderated by Peter Zellner

What are the opportunities and challenges facing young architects across the State of California? What is the meaning of architectural practice to individuals trained in the ‘90s and emerging now as architects today? How does practice today differ from practice yesterday and practice tomorrow?

Conceived as a one-week online forum, State(s) of Practice invited nine young practices from across the State of California to address, debate and explore a variety of issues relevant to young architects. Addressing the state of the physical environment (built and natural), social change, politics, cultural and economic conditions, technology, and professionalism, this forum was conceived as a means to map the forces that shape young practitioners efforts today.

Peter Zellner, ZELLNERPLUS, Los Angeles: How will architectural practice as we understand it today transform in the future? What are some of the changes that this generation of architects should anticipate relative to how we structure our architectural practices?

Gail Borden, AIA, Borden Partnership, Los Angeles: The trajectory of architecture has changed enormously over the past fifty years. Older models of practice and of the discipline are almost unrecognizable today. Newness and complexity—primarily surrounding information—have changed the playing field, making innumerable new disciplinary models and methodologies valid. Architects now operate under different circumstances and as such have to set new agendas and find new ways of working. Materiality, representation, technology, digital information management, fabrication, firm organization, and even project typologies have forced the model for practice to change. Clients are truly national and international. Collaboration is essential. For us at the Borden Partnership, it makes collaborations across art, architecture, and material possible. Slowly, we are moving toward a “brick and mortar” practice focused on the production of buildings, which is always the hope, but the need for flexibility, invention, and adaptation is essential.

Joe Day, Deegan Day Design, Los Angeles: It’s been an astounding decade for both the discipline and the profession of architecture, and I think many of us are still coming to terms with our good fortune, even as those fortunes are probably about to change dramatically. Those entering the field between 1995 and 2005 have enjoyed a constant surge in construction, consistently rising property values, and a broad renewal of interest in modern/contemporary design. At the more advanced and micro-practice end of the design spectrum that this group represents, it has also been a decade of unprecedented opportunities to teach at far more schools. The whole idea of recent graduates migrating by various routes toward a “brick and mortar” practice—if in fact they choose to migrate—rather than being encased in one headed by far more senior practitioners for a decade or two, is revolutionary.

Stephen Slaughter, AIA, PHAT, Los Angeles: This prompts two critical questions; why in a time of unprecedented architectural expansion is it advantageous to either work for a master or be insulated from what has been described as a “brick and mortar” practice within academia? And, how has teaching or the opportunity to produce for the gallery, or to participate in an avant-garde architectural discourse not available to most practitioners, or to elaborate and disseminate one’s architectural agenda within the academy situated our generation with regard to the built environment? What are the potential benefits of propelling oneself into practice from an academic paradigm? What are the effects, on the practice of architecture as a whole, of a generation of talented architects focused on research rather than the market place? And how, when the authority of architects continues to be threatened, can we use the knowledge gained in the academy to change practice for the better?

Zellner: Is there a schism developing between architecture as it is practiced by the profession at large, versus architectural practice as it is being currently re-conceived within the academy? It is too often the claim of professional practices today that many graduates are under-trained for a professional environment, while conversely it may be said that many professional offices have been too slow to take advantage of emerging design approaches and technologies (time based modeling, fabrication, and BIM) being investigated and promoted by young “academic” architects.

Rene Peralta, generica arquitectura, Tijuana: New types of practices are becoming more flexible in the types of work they produce, in some cases blurring research with office projects. Doing so entails the constant expansion and contraction of staff, which in most cases is made up of students or recent graduates.

Smaller offices now have more of a chance to participate in work that was once meant for larger firms. New technologies, from management to design to construction admin, are now readily available, enabling smaller organizations to accomplish more tasks. In the near future, it will be possible for small firms to network efficiently and produce work at many scales.

And the demographics of architectural staff are changing. Young architects and recent grads are now better trained in a variety of software applications that range from web design and video editing to 3D modeling. Practices can now perform tasks—branding, marketing and publication of their own work—that were outsourced before.

Within new structures of practice, research and self-initiated work such as housing prototypes, urbanism, and material research are an important part of the work, yet funding for this rubric is tied to the economic mechanisms of the firm’s context. In Tijuana, we do not have the instruments, and, in most cases, funding is very limited, because these types of tasks don’t fall under the traditional view of an architectural practice. But working bi-nationally allows us to tap into resources not available in Latin America.

Borden : I absolutely believe there is a schism between the profession and the academy. I believe this happened during the formal and conceptual backlash to modernism. The intellectual ideals of the academy and the actualities of practice diverged and exploded later with the advent of newer technologies (digital, material etc.) that placed a massive divide between the profession and the academy. Smaller practices, closely linked to or even rooted in academia, have the opportunity to bridge between the conceptual and the actual. These opportunities, in combination with academic access to relative financial stability (providing selectivity in client and project opportunities) and hard resources (access to technologies, representation, fabrication tools, etc.), provide the laboratory model that actually takes the idea of the “new” to the next level of implementation. Such infrastructure has previously been possible only at extremely large firms (100+) that can handle the investment and overhead. This new model is able to be at the cusp of technology, material, media, form, theory, and, ultimately, practice. This condition of flexibility and fluidity allow such a model of practice to provide integrity and opportunity simultaneously.

Peralta: I agree, as well, that new technologies plus access to financial stability are extremely important for alternative practices. Yet, beyond the latest technology of fabrication or sustainability, we are faced with the issue of how to be politically active. How does the “new” engage in a socio-cultural dialogue? If we consider architecture a cultural practice, then we must envision the involvement of smaller practice into the social realm.

Day: Rene’s account sounds like an accurate description of most emergent practices today: flexible staffing by a young, transnational workforce employing advanced modeling/visualization techniques, merging academic and “real world” workloads.

Craig Scott, Iwamoto Scott Architecture, San Francisco: There's no denying that major shifts in architectural practice are underway, but the nature of this shifting landscape is still rather murky. Along with the positive changes to practice mentioned above, we've seen the rise of both the construction management industry and the sense—largely fostered via the media and internet—that anyone can be a designer or at least constructively creative. Paradoxically, this notion has been promoted alongside the phenomenon of the “starchitect.”

In this country, the profession is still dominated by bigger, more commercial offices. While a number of small offices have indeed made serious inroads into emerging design approaches and technologies (advanced modeling, fabrication, and BIM), North America may never offer the same opportunities to younger architects that we see in Europe or Asia. Thus, for the foreseeable future, it may very well be the pairing of an experimentally oriented practice with a career in academia that will allow small offices to hold their own against the instabilities of the design marketplace.

Zellner: What is the difference between an academic posture and a professional position? Is the strategic posturing or political positioning of a young practice crucial to its survival today? And if so, how are posturing (not used pejoratively here) or political positioning translated into tools for practice?

Lisa Iwamoto, Iwamoto Scott Architecture, San Francisco: While it is unfortunate that the majority of the construction industry, manufacturers, and a good segment of the population are reluctant to invest in new ideas at the scale of building, this divide has also been extremely liberating. It has enabled the small “academic” practice to focus on architecture as a form of applied research—investigating tools, technologies, and techniques for design that have the capacity to influence the profession as a whole. The past five to ten years have already seen wide dissemination of design technique knowledge that will no doubt accelerate in the coming decade. Small practices need to leverage their specialized areas of research as a marketable commodity.

Day: Three priorities will shape this discussion over the next ten years: globalization, new media/digital techniques, and ecological priorities. Not that these are new concerns—the first two have underpinned the last ten years' work—but their fast-changing terms will both fuel and limit experimentation in architecture. The political, in our field, will be approached through each or all of these lenses, and I think it will be a less apolitical decade than the last, especially as green/sustainable/eco impact questions come to the fore.

We are all the profound beneficiaries of globalization, in terms of clients, students, a much enriched discourse, etc., but its downsides will likely dominate the next decade: global warming, transnational credit problems, border hysteria, you name it. Already, most of the issues we associate with architecture and urbanism gone wrong—sprawl, urban blight—are being described not in terms of fairness and quality of life, but in terms of their chemistry: air quality, soil depletion, and carbon loads. For the most part, eco issues have so far been taken as a pretext for innovative solutions, especially in the academy, but in practice, these issues will limit possibilities as much or more than they enable them—more stringent and complicated compliance regulations, for a start. It's going to be a tougher decade for formalism, both in theory and practice, and that's before any diminishing returns on digital innovation.

Iwamoto: I think we are in a unique position in the U.S., where design *is* the marketable commodity. It is not uncommon now that we are attracting young practitioners from around the globe who want to be in a climate, as Gail Borden said, fostered by the financial stability and demand for creativity that our academic institutions offer. This will necessarily include how to think through issues of ecology as a, if not the, design imperative in coming years. I agree that any positioning we do—culturally, socially, environmentally or otherwise—needs to be economically viable. I am not sure that the goal is to change

the practice and gain authority here, however. It may need to happen globally before the U.S. eventually feels the pressure to make the design of buildings a priority.

Day: The US still leads in terms of innovation within the discipline and, importantly, in terms of career flexibility, but the EU and Japan lead us in terms of building practices and execution.

Peralta: A young practice has the opportunity to engage a dialogue in regard to policy. It's not always a matter of design. Therefore, the instruments for affecting policy at a community level are ones of research and public empowerment. Design then comes in to formulate a view of possible futures. This is what I see working between the Third and First Worlds here on the border: on one side (Tijuana), the preoccupations deal with issues of proposing "new" alternatives across a large spectrum, while on the north side (San Diego), we deal with "site" and established rules of engagement.

Tom Wiscombe, EMERGENT, Los Angeles: Architecture is still presented by insiders as some kind of inevitable social grace, almost a morality. It's not. Its design, and some kinds of design are hands down better than others in any particular moment in time. They resonate. The new Lamborghini Reventón resonates. Like the Countach, which ended production in 1990, but nothing in between. I always look to fashion and design. We should think of our work in lines, in vogue, not as oeuvres. I know as well as anyone that there is not a market out there waiting for a product. Before the iPhone there was no market for tele-video experience, now there is.

Thom Faulders, Thom Faulders Architecture, San Francisco: With regard to architectural practice and morality, there is such a strong notion that buildings and cities are to be done "properly," thus relegating practices that are attempting to challenge accepted norms—those inventing new needs, new tools and means, and new cultural products for living and occupying—into the role of "alternative practices." This label is bothersome to me, in that it presupposes that one is attempting to work outside of the culture of production, and more on the fringe. I doubt many are satisfied with this defined role or title. Having just recently finished a small project in Tokyo, and one that is urban and visible, I found it quite refreshing that those living near this project saw it as a vibrant addition to their constantly changing city. Whether or not the neighbors liked the project did not come with some idealized notion of correctness. Fashion is a bottom-up phenomenon, so too should be cities.

Zellner: Joe, you made quite a daring assertion that seems to have gone under the radar. You said: "It's going to be a tougher decade for formalism, both in theory and practice, and that's before any diminishing returns on digital innovation." Do you want to expand on that comment or does anybody want to take on that comment—pro or con?

Day: The funny thing is, I hope I'm wrong, and I'm not much of a formalist.

Teddy Cruz, Estudio Teddy Cruz, San Diego: The transformation of my practice in recent years, in terms of my own interests, motivations, and procedures, has been inspired by a feeling of powerlessness, as I have been witnessing our institutions of architecture representation and display lose their socio-political relevance and advocacy. I have been increasingly pissed off at the futility of our "design" fields, in the context of pressing socio-political realities, the conditions of conflict that define the territory of intervention. It's been incredibly disappointing to see the manifestos that inspired my generation become reduced to mere caricatures of change, as the architecture avant-garde has become fully complicit with an international, neo-liberalist project of privatization and homogenization, by camouflaging gentrification with a massive hyper aesthetic and formalist project. Yes, I hope that the future of practice is and will be inspired by this sense of dissatisfaction, and that this feeling of "pessimistic optimism" will produce more activist-practices that can provoke, head on, the sites of conflict that define and will define the cities in the future: conflict between the top-down and the bottom-up, enclaves of mega-wealth and sectors of poverty,

urbanities of labor and surveillance, the formal and informal, and so on. For me, the exposure of conflict has redefined a way of operating, of practicing, thinking.

I have written before that new experimental practices of intervention in the collective territory will emerge only from zones of conflict. I anticipate that the radicalization of the local in order to generate new readings of the global will transform the neighborhood—not the city—into the urban laboratory of the 21st century. The micro-heterotopias emerging within small communities across the world, provoked by social emergency, are producing non-conforming spatial and economic contingencies that will incrementally pixelate the large with the small, homogeneity with difference. In this context, the future of architecture practice is not only to reveal ignored socio-political and economic territorial histories and inequalities within this ideologically polarized world, but also to generate new forms of sociability and activism.

It's been a revelation to understand that no advances in affordable housing design can be made without advances in housing policy and economic subsidies. No advances in urban planning can be made without redefining the meaning of density, mixed use, and economic development. Imagine: we all continue to define density as "an amount of units per acre." We need to shatter these obsolete equations. Could density, for example, be redefined as an amount of social and economic exchange per acre? I truly hope that more and more our practices will be instruments of social and political change, producing alternative agencies, new institutions, modes of representation (particularly in this era of political apathy). Possibly, we can imagine that practice in the future will comprise not only designing buildings, but also the alternative political and economic processes, the conditions that can ultimately yield truly experimental architectures. We can be designers of collaboration across institutions. Without altering the socio-political ground, the backward discriminating policies constructing the territory, I am afraid we are destined to continue being mere decorators of program.

Lloyd Russell, AIA, San Diego: My first few thoughts on the topic begin with disclaimers. I really don't understand architectural practice today, and my practice is much unstructured. I don't know if that is the future or the past. If I had an analogy, I would say I am a guerilla. But it seems to me that nobody is content with just calling themselves architects anymore. When everybody starts defining themselves as architect-artist, architect-educator, architect-developer, architect-builder, or architect-planner, is that just symptomatic of the marginalization of architecture? We used to be the head of the building trades, the arbiters of good taste; presently, the profession seems mired in legalities and liabilities. So stealth architecture it is: unstructured, no overhead, forming whatever partnerships are possible, creating whatever projects are possible, taking on the bureaucracies, and taking out the middleman.

Zellner: Lloyd, can you expand on what you mean by guerrilla architecture? I know that you are alluding to your role as an architect-developer, but I think it might be useful to expand on how the hyphenation has allowed you to operate outside of the current limitations of the profession.

Borden: The new model of the guerilla architect—ground-up and independent—is an appropriate model. The realities, however, of the scale of capital and the resulting scale of the projects possible, their interface and exposure with the "public," and the scope and risk of innovation become intrinsically limited. Now I am not sure these are bad limits, as self-indulgence is equally damaging to the profession and rampant in many of the "starchitect's" methodologies. I think Joe's statement is right-on: "It's going to be a tougher decade for formalism, both in theory and practice, and that's before any diminishing returns on digital innovation." The newness of technology is wearing off, sustainability as justification not simply expectation is on the ropes (or soon will be), so where does architecture turn? The next revolution is how to practice and how to find relevance. It is already underway, though not fully focused. Guerilla tactics are beginning but only work to a certain scale and scope. "What is next?" is the question.

Marcelo Spina, LA PATTERNS, INC., Los Angeles: I am always personally a bit perplexed in trying to answer about the future, given that our discipline and architects in general—especially in academic circles—seldom use this kind of question to escape constraints and produce purely visionary (often formal but programmatic as well) attempts to deal with a reality that does not yet exist. While this was attractive during the '60s, given that it was rare, it seems that it can quickly be made old fashioned by the next thing. I am personally much more interested in provisional utopias, rather than pure visionary approaches.

Provisional utopias are ways of dealing with some form of reality. The issue of formalism-or-not is less relevant than the issue of relevance. Not only intellectual relevance as a form of discourse, which seems to be ever more diminished compared to capital, but also some sort of cultural relevance of architecture at large. We will have to change to maintain our relevance beyond the traditional artistic model, which in some form or another we all operate within. Issues of collaboration, research, and expertise make it more possible today than ever before for young architects or architects without a lot of experience to be able to afford projects that are out of their league in terms of complexity and scope. Being able to do so and to introduce some “change” in the way things look, work, and affect the world is not a minor thing.

Russell: Guerilla architecture to me is two-fold. At the level of the office/design process it implies a horizontal structure vs. a vertical organization. It is a more collaborative process of many entities fully capable in many areas, with a minimum of hierarchy in decision-making, as opposed to a vertical organization whose strength is the specialization of tasks and the hierarchy of decision making. I find the horizontal format much more flexible, responsive, and rewarding.

The second part of guerilla architecture is understanding the entities that have undermined or marginalized our profession and infiltrating, influencing, or taking them over. I will call out three examples; finance, construction and politics (zoning).

Regarding finance, I abhor that the one person who profits most in the building industry and who has the biggest impact on the built environment (we may decide what it looks like, but he decides what it is and where it gets built) has no license or degree that enables him to do so. For our degrees, we take calculus and ethics, pass licensing exams, carry liability insurance, etc. Financing a building requires third grade math. What does the guerilla architect do? He learns the language of the banker and appraiser. He learns their math. He turns their formulas in his favor. Without these tools, the architect can barely affect the program, and, if you can't question the program, architecture quickly devolves into formalism.

Regarding construction, our profession has only recently begun to address it with design/build, etc. There is a huge disparity between our education, knowledge, and experience and our fees, as compared with the contractor's. I feel like an infiltrator when I have to adopt their cultural nuances in order to achieve my ends. Do you want to talk NFL playoffs, hot rods, hunting to earn respect? Or, better yet, put on a tool belt and get dirty? In a physical and artistic sense, it gets you closer to the work. In a fiscal sense, it can get you lower bids so that you can spend more on architecture (or have more flexibility). It also increases and keeps current your technical knowledge of materials and methods.

Regarding politics, I have recently been involved in our redevelopment agency as a neighborhood representative. On design review boards, it is interesting to experience how remedial the general population's aesthetic tastes have become. It is encouraging, however, to discover how much they do want to learn from architects. I was lucky enough to be involved on the doubling of the density downtown San Diego. Yet, in the sixth largest city in the U.S., you couldn't find six architects to discuss urban design requirements in a public forum. The macro and micro benefits of community activism are immeasurable. Every town, neighborhood, or jurisdiction has zoning constraints, and they all get reviewed on a constant basis (even if it is every ten years).

Zellner: Given that architecture may be considered one of the few forms of cultural production that leaves a lasting imprint on the physical, social, and economic environment, what are some of the goals you have established for your practice relative to the notions of innovation, contribution, and legacy?

If there was one thing about architecture that your practice might change (even slightly) through its own evolution, what would that be?

Russell: Meaningful architecture is the expression of the sum of forces that bring it into being. The goal of my practice is to express exactly the unique condition that arises from combining the roles of architect, developer, and contractor. A city built by enlightened developer-contractor-architects is my definition of utopia. I hope my practice and teaching get us a little closer.

Wiscombe: I am getting more interested in dealing with energy in terms of design. The trick is to avoid formal assumptions about “green building” and move on to more inventive territory. “Energy performance” is starting to breed a new functionalism, which would be a huge step backward. The next generation of digital production will involve more sophisticated tools, such as true physics simulators, which have the capacity for optimization feedback loops. This has begun to happen with the so-called BIM revolution, which is not a revolution at all but an inevitable expediency. At the end of the day, it is in the realm of design that architects are the most productive, and I am committed to that above all.

Day: Almost all of us oscillate between the pure and the provisional—between speculation and realization, but also between the ideal and *ad hoc*. I don’t feel like a guerrilla, doing daring work against long bureaucratic/capitalist odds, nor like part of a movement pioneering a field of digital possibility. My goals are modestly Duchampian—as he put it, “mediumistic”: to elucidate the mechanics of our discipline and its impact on cities, in the hope of sensitizing more people, more acutely, to their environment. I feel as I imagine Duchamp must have, arriving in Paris after his two older brothers, one a painter, the other a sculptor, had already immersed themselves in Cubism. All the serious positions in advanced abstraction had been staked out, but no one was weighing the avant-gardes against one another or doing work that “stripped bare” their techniques enough to invite a public into dialogue. Advanced architecture is at a similar moment of intense but deeply self-regarding innovation, and almost all of the nuances we fret over are lost on a broader audience. I’m not interested in refuting those advances, but in doing work that opens them to and challenges them in a wider arena.

Peralta: There are so many possible futures, since my firm is engaging in writing, film, and architecture, all strategies to survive as a young practice. Theory plays an important role: Canclini’s hybridity, Koolhaas’s generic city, De Cauter’s heterotopias, and other contemporary urban and cultural conditions. I have been adjusting to an alternative practice due to my “positioning” on the border. Our contribution differs drastically as we move between San Deigo and Tijuana. To the north, we intend to stimulate a discourse, while in the south it’s all about tactics (architectonic and urban) that deal with the volatile process of change.

Cruz: I think of the political as a process by which we expose power: Who owns the resources? Whose jurisdiction is it? Who profits? Can a neighborhood be a developer? One example: in San Diego’s most successful recent building boom, not one affordable housing project has been built in some of the depressed neighborhoods. Why? Because developers can’t profitably build affordable housing there. To be competitive in terms of tax credits, and hence profitable, projects would have to be at least fifty units in density, but zoning prohibits fifty units. Without encroaching into the conflict between the political (zoning) and the economics of lending, housing design goes nowhere.

Russell: Architecture is not going to move beyond the nuances that only architects can see until we branch out into other areas. Funny thing is, when you ask a community what they want, it's usually more parking and no more density. Architects agree that density is good for cities and that the suburbs are unsustainable, yet the public has no idea about this discussion. There are three parking spaces for every car in the U.S.: 720 square feet, counting half the aisle. How big is an affordable unit? 720 square feet. As a culture, we are building parking lots instead of affordable housing.

Faulders: The city is a construct born of collective behaviors, complex economies, politics, power, flows and expenditures of energies, and so on. What happens when global sameness pervades this arena? One aspect of our work is to develop a language for producing spaces with provisional and idiosyncratic qualities. Our goal is toward the formless rather than the form, so we look to new paradigms generated by the co-opting of technologies coming out of Silicon Valley. What if architecture could be transformed as readily as one "transforms" content and navigation in personal electronics? Would this be a new form of collective empowerment of end users? Probably. Or a noisy mess? Probably. Who knows? But it gets us into the studio each day."

Cruz: I am not suggesting that each of us should turn into the Che Guevara of urbanism, nor that practice as a rigorous, self-referential, autonomous process is worth nothing in a world polarized by social and economic inequalities. We need "good" design. What turns me off is that a hyper project of beautification, whether of New Urbanists or the avant-garde, continues to hide the true problems of our cities. Practice should accommodate not only building buildings but also building a position. We are so obsessed with the conditions of design that we are not designing the conditions that can yield alternative architectures and, in turn, new cultural experiences.

Scott: Most architects focusing on research are ultimately also aiming at the marketplace. If a political stance can break through the common socio-cultural barriers that challenge small experimental practices in the U.S.—the bottom-line mentality of much public and private work, the expectation of an established track record, and the strongly tradition-based construction industry—then more power to political action.

Borden: My interest in academia stems from the desire to have an impact on the broader profession, to teach towards our collective responsibility. The conversation in architecture needs to return to space. Technology of fabrication, of formal generation, of materials: all of these are interesting, but if they do not aggregate into architecture, which ultimately is about space, something is lost.

Russell: I began teaching in the Masters in Real Estate Development program at Woodbury. Before you take on these tools, you have to be grounded in ethics. An architect or architect-developer without a soul is a tool for someone else to use. Technology is not the answer, because it was never the problem.

Wiscombe: The market for extreme forms is small, yet such forms are as critical for transforming architectural thought as discovery is for catalyzing scientific revolutions. Moralizing political tendencies in design are too open-ended; architecture can too easily become the tool of factions on both sides. A degree of autonomy is necessary, and the control of space and form is extremely political.

Spina: Architecture engenders spatial conditions that induce new forms of experience and sensation. We aspire to an architecture that best incarnates these conditions, what Peter Eisenman called "presentness," an aura that persists over time, independent of use or meaning. We want to produce singular spaces that challenge the body and assumed notions of inhabitation. Technological advances contribute to the materialization of those challenges. Our interest is not necessarily in producing newness, but rather in articulating moments of local innovation within existing models, like the paintings of Francis Bacon, inserting indeterminacy into matter, variability into figure.

Cruz: French art critic Nicolas Bourriard says that form is a tool to anticipate social encounter. I agree, and would like to denounce autonomy, to transcend the property line and my solitude, so that things become messy and complex. That is the ultimate definition of density: to embrace the contradictory. It's precisely what we have erased from our systems of thought: complexity, not of forms but of social relations. It is amazing how our notions of democracy, as Michael Sorkin reminds us, are based on the right to be let alone. Democracy should be measured by our capacity and willingness to be together in a space: propinquity—like this precarious chat room. Can architecture frame democracy?

Day: My last thoughts have to do with a series of overlapping sensibilities: the minimal and post-minimal, the millennial and post-millennial. Minimalism was about presence, post-minimalism about diversified approaches to the same; the millennial about immersion, the post-millennial its ramifications and diversification. We are still at the cusp of the millennial / post-millennial, a moment that will be dated to 9/11 and the mess we've made since. Already, the most groundbreaking work of the last few years has the look and logic of amalgamation, collaboration, and informality, rather than the heroic and aesthetically doctrinaire essays of the '90s—Super Modernity, Bilbao/Getty, and FORM.

Peralta: Thanks to everybody for making this forum full of passion. I sometimes feel that students don't have passion; it's hard to get them to be critical of our profession. I hope this dialogue demonstrates that to be a young practice requires sacrifice, passion, and dedication.