90s Generation

California: State(s) of Practice

Licenses and Time
Stretching the M. Arch.
Blog is in the Details
Technology and the Culture of the Profession
Off the Grid Competition
Multiple Generations
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The American Institute of Architects California Council, arcCA, is dedicated to exploring ideas, issues, and projects relevant to the practice of architecture in California. arcCA focuses on quarterly editions of professional practice, the architect in the community, editorial features, and copyright permissions. Third class postage paid at Lebanon Junction, MA 01949. arcCA is published quarterly and distributed to arcCA members as part of their membership dues. In addition, single copies and subscriptions are available at the following prices:

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Celebrating Whit Cox

Those of you who knew Whitson W. Cox, FAIA, may have noticed that, in the soft-cover edition of Celebrating a Century of California Architecture, mailed with the third quarter 2007 issue of arcCA, the photo accompanying his biography as California’s first State Architect was not of Cox, but of another State Architect, William S. Counts, Jr.

If I as editor and the others involved in putting together this history of the Division of the State Architect had planned the most awkward error we could possibly make, this would probably have been it. For, as many of you also know, Cox passed away during the preparation of the book. I would like to take this opportunity both to apologize for the mistake and to say a little more about Whit Cox, a beloved figure whose career as an architect in private practice was intertwined with the State Architect’s office.

In 1954, at age thirty-three, Cox was invited to become the partner of George C. Selin, who had served as State Architect from 1912 until 1945, California’s first State Architect. Selin was then seventy-three years old. Following Whit’s departure, Cox partnered with James H. Fansler to form Fansler & Fansler, hired for their design of the second Sacramento’s Crocker Art Museum. In 1967, George Lionski and W. G. Beams, joined the firm as partners. Among their projects were the free-standing period on the Sacramento County Administration Building, Sacramento’s Pacific Gas and Electric Company Building, the Safety Center of California, and the CSU Chico Student Health Center. The firm continues today as Lionski Beams Design Group, currently celebrating the hundredth anniversary of its founding by Selin.

Cox left the firm in 1976 to form an independent practice. He served as State Architect from 1982 to 1988, notable for establishing the practice of including public art in the proposal and planning phase of public building review. An accomplished abstract watercolorist, his paintings are included in many distinguished collections, including Sacramento’s Crocker Art Museum.

Paul Welch, Hon. AIA, Executive Director of the AIA California Council, recalls that, “If any architect of his time has a substantial influence on the practice of architecture in Sacramento, it is Whit Cox. He has been one of the most influential architects of his time, and his work has been an inspiration to many architects who have followed him. His work has been characterized by a commitment to excellence and a dedication to the public good. He was a true leader in the field of architecture, and his legacy will continue to inspire architects for years to come.”

Paul Welch, Hon. AIA, Executive Director of the AIA California Council, reminds us that, “Cox was a true leader in the field of architecture, and his legacy will continue to inspire architects for years to come.”
Annie Chu, AIA, is a principal of Chu+Goodman Architects in Los Angeles, focusing on projects for arts-related and higher education clients. Clients include Museum of Contemporary Art, The Hammer Museum, Kentucky Museum of Art+Craft, UC Riverside, L.A. Philharmonic Association, Safety Center, and Southern California Public Radio, among others. She is a member of the arcCA editorial board and the AIA Interior Architecture Advisory Group and may be reached at annie@cg-arch.com.

David Erdman was the principal of jensen’s Los Angeles office before establishing offices in 2007 with partner Oliver Lee. His work has been exhibited at the Centre Pompidou, Helsinki, San Francisco MOMA, Artists, Space, and Revolution in Venice, Rome, and Beijing. He teaches at UCSD and is currently the Colburn Visiting Critic at the Rice University School of Architecture. He may be reached at office@davidclovers.com.

Sean Fine, UDAP AP, is a designer at Page & Turnbull and a member of the ULI Young Leaders Group. With a bent in Arch. and MIR, he is well suited to lead management of design discussions. Sean may be reached at sean@pageturbull.com.

David Neckel, FAIA, is Director of Research & Planning for the California College of the Arts ECAL in San Francisco. He may be reached at davidneckel@ccsf.edu.

Edward Majica, AIA, is on the Adjunct Faculty in architecture at Cosumnes River College, Sacramento, and is principal of majicas architecture studio in Roseville. He may be reached at ecmajica@yahoo.com.

Michael Franklin Ross, FAIA, is a principal with Van Meter Williams and Pollack in San Francisco. Ross was the principal of Servo’s Los Angeles office before returning to ride turtles at Turtle Park in St. Louis. He may be reached at roccosalva@page-turnbull.com.

Michael Kenneth Ross, FAIA, is a principal with Van Meter Williams and Pollack in Los Angeles. He began his career in Thom Mayne’s studio, Morphosis, and has since worked with respected architects throughout the world, including Gary Bates (Space Lob), Wes Jones (Jones, Partners: Architecture), and George Yu (George Yu Architects). PMW’s multidisciplinary design collaborative co-founded with Nathaniel Fletcher, has exhibited at the Studio Museum in Harlem, Archilab in Orleans, France, and the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia. A member of the arcCA editorial board, he may be reached at michael.kennethross@gmail.com.

Christopher Sensenig lives in Berkeley with his wife, Kelly Berry, and stop, Biff. He is an Urban Designer for Van Meter Williams and Pollack in San Francisco. Whenever possible, he likes...
notes. Book tests can’t determine listening skills. They
questions, tests the applicant without relying on crib
answer? The verbal test, containing three-part
stand the verbal problem submitted, how can he or
stand the problem. If an architect cannot under-
but the architect must first listen to fully under-
An architect is called on to solve many problems,
respectfully disagree with your comments in
arcCA.
Assume a cage fan and architectural design!
mark, he failed to see the connection between a squirrel
fact that he was already a full-fledged architect in Den-
State Board Examination forty years ago. Aside from the
to design a squirrel cage fan to pass design during his
examination of the relevance of the exam. It reminded
humorous description of your experience at the Cali-
I wanted to compliment you on your wonderful and
practice! It had me in tears. Pithy & spot-on. Shocking
What an excellent send-up of this retrograde prac-
cisto! It had me in tears. Pithy & spot-on. Shocking
that no one has yet taken this on with such zest and
Humor Maybe we’re all too scarred. So your effort
is therapeutic at a minimum, or hopefully the next
step toward abolition.
Dana Bernardi, AIA
San Francisco

What a breath of fresh air! Your comments about the
oral exam were right on the mark. I enjoyed participating
in them as an examiner in ’05, and have been trying to
get others to speak against this unfair and unwarranted
requirement since. After graduating from an accredited
school of architecture, getting the practical experi-
ence under the IDP program, being a four day written
exam, AIA having to decide what I call “this legislation”
is beyond the pale. Another reason I resigned from
this process was my observation that many of the
examiners couldn’t pass the exam when it was given
to them on the first day of the two day exam session.
And then we would find that, as a complex question,
credit could only be given if the answer was given in a
certain sequence of words! That’s why you heard, “tell
me the question” again and again.
Kenneth Kruger, FAIA
Santa Barbara

arcCA ET-4 was a surprisingly revealing coverage
of the oral and new exam section of prefab. As an architect
and prefab practitioner, I appreciate you bringing this
subject to the best audience for moving this concept to
new heights and dimensions.
I would challenge your readers to move this
concept forward in their own practices. To do this,
though, they should first grasp the depth of the under-
statement made by Brian Linder, AIA, in his article’s
concluding remarks: “it’s just a method of construction.”
Roll up your sleeves, dive in, experiment, and
truly understand what the limits of the method are.
Only then can you expect it. As hands-on practition-
ers, designers, architects, and I respectfully have embrac-
early California tradition of Schindler and Goll and
embraced not only in the conceptual but in the means of
production. Perhaps in the ultimate irony of what might
seem an “off-the-shelf” approach, we have embraced the
entire process, really sandboxing the shell itself. Join us
in the discovery of what prefab architecture can be.
Constraints sure. Limits, I don’t think so.

Correspondence
In this issue of arcCA, we explore the trajectories of the generation of architects who earned their professional degrees in the 1990s. What distinctive experiences have shaped their careers? One, certainly, is the rise to dominance of digital tools in the production of buildings. If you graduated in 1992, you probably drew your thesis by hand; if you graduated in 1998, you drew it on the computer. That sea change was framed by a set of exemplars—Thom Mayne, Rem Koolhass, Zaha Hadid, Bernard Tschumi, and others—who were emerging from largely speculative practices into the design of major buildings. And young practitioners' paths were inflected, and in some cases deflected, by a significant recession.

Here, we hope to promote a greater understanding among the several generations represented in today's offices. At the same time, perhaps we can offer encouragement to young architects graduating into an environment of continued technological change, beneath a pantheon of exemplars (who include members of the '90s generation itself), and another recession of yet unknown depth.

Architect and arcCA editorial board member Annie Chu, AIA, sets the stage with a look at architecture schools in the '90s...
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Architect and arcCA editorial board member Annie Chu, AIA, sets the stage with a look at architecture schools in the ’90s…
Architecture can quite simply be thought of as the accommodation of program within a composed structure on a site*, a site defined to be part of a larger context constructed by culture.

The Academy

Bernard Tschumi took over as dean of Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation in the fall of 1988. Immediately, the halls were abuzz with the launch of a program within a composed structure on a site*, a site defined to be part of a larger context constructed by culture.

In the context of the architectural community, no one doubted any battle cries, but in architecture schools across the nation, faculty and students were trying to sort out their paths after the rollercoaster ride from postmodernism to deconstruction to a free-for-all.

The first student to return to SCI-Arc studios, Doris Sung, a 1990 Columbia graduate, visited another raging episode. A住房型 studio was traditionally afforded in the second year of the M.Arch program. 1988 marked a significant shift for the curriculum as half of the studio rebelled against the faculty and rejected the imposition of typology in the studio. Their petition met with welcome from a supportive dean, who was seeking to push a series of changes at Columbia.

Upon graduation, Sung would return to a depressed job market in Los Angeles, where she found the shuttered doors of Morphosis, as Thom Mayne and Michael Rotondi sorted out their separate ways. If there were work at high availability of work for early '90s graduates, Sung would return to a supportive dean, who was seeking to push a series of changes at Columbia.

Across the country at SCI-Arc, "making studio investigations. The studio reaffirms a belief in the studio, and will be defined in broad yet quite specific terms. The studio renews a belief in the studio, and will be defined in broad yet quite specific terms. The studio reaffirms a belief in the student's role as an important determinant of architectural form. Program will be taken as a central focus of the studio, and will be defined in broad yet quite specific terms. The studio accepts programs as pluralistic, ranging from the functional program of the building typology to the cultural program as interpreted by the author from the program's contract to the (better) applied programs of metaphor and symbol. The studio sets forth the opportunity for exploring new program definitions and resulting compositional and conceptual expressions for each building type.

The special program being attended to is the program of "design" in general, and the CINEMA -- a place for showing film -- in particular, including all the issues raised when thinking about ARCHITECTURE and CINEMA. Cinema was allowed to be architecture; the two disciplines are completely related. The settings for film will be the space portion of architecture (and not transformed by film).

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Given that architecture may be considered one of the few forms of cultural production that leave 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?

Lloyd Russell, AIA, San Diego: 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.

Tom Wiscombe, EMERGENT, Los Angeles: 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.
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Editor's note: the full transcript of the conversation is available on the arcCA website at www.aiacc.org/arcCA.
The market for extreme forms is small, but each form is as critical for transforming architectural thought as discovery is for catalyzing scientific revolutions. Moral-political tendencies in design 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 US—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.

Tom Wiscombe, Novosibirsk Pavilion; Gail Borden, Low Country Line House; Teddy Cruz, Hillside. Left to right: Rene Peralta, Mandelbrot; Iwamoto Scott, Twin Peaks; Lloyd Russell, R3 Triangle, photo by Dave Harrison; Thom Faulders, Thom Faulders Architecture, San Francisco: The city—is contemporary and future—a con- struct born of collective behavior, complex economies, political power, theories and expenditures of energies, and so on. What happens when global economies penetrate this arena? One aspect of our work is to develop a language for producing spaces with provisional and allochronic qualities. Our goal is toward the former rather than the form, as 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 our economy for producing spaces with provisional and allochronic qualities. Our goal is toward the former rather than the form, as 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 our economy for producing spaces with provisional and allochronic qualities. Our goal is toward the former rather than the form, as 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 our economy.
Rene Peralta, generica arquitectura, Tijuana: 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: Koolhaas’s hyperbolic, post-modern generic city; De Certeau’s heterotopia, and other contemporary urban and cultural conditions.

I have been adjusting to an alternative practice due to my “positioning” on the border. Our contributions differ drastically as we move between San Diego and Tijuana. To the north, we intend to stimulate a discussion, while in the south it is all about tactics (architectural and social) that deal with the volatile process of change.

Teddy Cruz, Estudio Teddy Cruz, San Diego: 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 developed?

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 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 encouraging into the conflict between the political and the economic of lending, housing design goes nowhere.

Russell: Architecture is not going to move beyond the nuances that only architects can use until we branch out into other areas.22a What is it to be a community? What do we want it to be like? What is the community? Is it a neighborhood?

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David Erdman: In your and your peers’ work, I see a clear intention to render different systems but not let any one become isolated. Often, each is assigned a different materiality and geometry—say for an urban scale, another for the scale of the body. Those different “orders” are never allowed to totally gel. I think about your Sixth Street House and how you were drawing in earlier projects, where the edges are blurry due to a layering of different scales. This layering seems to be a meditation on boundaries and space, on inducing fullness by making those orders less legible. I suspect our generations share this intention, but in different ways.

Thom Mayne: But with Sixth Street, I was attacking the singularity of the thing, and it led immediately to an idea that the elevations were radically different and dealt with the contingency of a particular place. It was connected to an urban idea, a potential for radical difference of things.

Erdman: There seems to be an assumption that working with effects is an effort to reduce multiplicity and limit design to singularities. I can’t say with certainty what the specific effect of a project will be, but I can make sure I’m working with a number of different orders and qualities. The similarity between us is that there’s an intentional murkiness between these orders; the difference may be that they’re more pushed together in our generation than they were in yours, perhaps because of ways of modeling and drawing.

Mayne: It seems, with your work, that the method itself is a connective tissue. Whether it’s Maya or whatever tool you’re using, it changes the equation. That has had a huge effect on your generation. There’s the smoothing or the connectivity that comes out of the computational mathematics.

Erdman: Initially, yes, but it’s evolved. The more recent obsessions with effect, mood, and atmosphere require different materiality—not necessarily literal materials but often more abstract formations.
David Erdman and Thom Mayne, FAIA

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In your and your peers’ work, I see a clear intention to render different systems but not let any one become isolated. Often, each is assigned a different materiality and geometry—one for an urban scale, another for the scale of the body. These different “orders” are never allowed to totally gel. I think about your Sixth Street House and how you were drawing in earlier projects, where the edges are blurry due to a layering of different scales. This layering seems to be a meditation on boundaries and space, on inducing fullness by making those orders less legible. I suspect our generations share this intention, but in different ways.

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Two Generations: a Conversation

David Erdman and Thom Mayne, FAIA
For example, I’m only interested in “interaction technologies” or “innovation” because they provide other-dimensional ecologies that work on the material staff I’m operating in the space. Antoniadis and material play off one another; and because they can’t be coordinated within the same software or the same dimensions—some operating in four or more—they are difficult to organize exclusively using Maya. You have to look at them in many ways, often prototyping at full scale.

When Greg Lynn and Sylvia Lavin and Paul DeMarzo taught us how to teach, many of us focused on these almost raw, “deconstructionist” projects—often installations. They offered a way to get our hands on technologies that a small practice otherwise acquired; and they provided a theoretical territory in which to explore the design implications of LA’s technological assets. Did your early development among colleagues in LA have a similar progression?

Wayne: When I did that it was very small projects, but somehow they were immediately affected by material and technical side. But it was quite conventional, almost nineteenth-century. I was looking at Delos.

There was definitely a commonality at the mechanical, material, tectonic level among the pieces. I think the materials haven’t been invented yet to accommodate your formal language and your aspirations, the desires you have that come with the nature of that language.

A lot of you put larger demands on the conceptual part of your work. You aren’t in any way hardened with those types of real- tions or even the potential of those realities. That’s going to limit the type of work—institutional versus small-scale versus large-scale project—but it probably should. Something important about being 30 to 40 years old in our job description is establishing your intellectual, conceptual part of your work. That’s your job, that’s the conceptual priorities. That’s your job.

Elaine: Did you feel that way yourself?

Wayne: Absolutely. In your 20s, you’re a kid still and you’re just—you’re trying to establish what the project is. In your 30s, it’s still very possible that your practice is not primary, which makes some pragmatically, because nothing important is going to happen—in this country especially—until you’re 50 anyway; or 45, if you are lucky. The commissions will be further apart and they’re going to be smaller scale, what people trust you with in terms of invest- ment. And your job is to do your research.

In your 40s, you’re in transition. You’re emotionally more frustrated. You’re probably exhausting those ideas that are operating only on paper. And you should be ready—in terms of your energy level, your accom- plishments, where you are in your artistic intellectual project, in your research—to start writing. Teaching’s probably becoming quite different in terms of the questions you ask. It’s probably not as much first-principle; it’s now much more in sync with where you are in your work life and becoming a bit more pragmatic because of that—more synthesized, typological projects that are paralleling, poss- ibly your practice, but much less investiga- tion into broad theories that don’t even relate to building.

It seems impossible to get out of that when you’re young, to win a major competi- tion at 20—which can be, by the way, a horrible thing. As many times as it’s made careers, it’s been really frustrated by government, find it totally irrelevant. And it seems to be galvanizing a whole new group of people.

The thing that changed me the most—when I hit, say, 50, I was with Richard Wein- stein and we were walking and talking and looking at this and that, and he turned around and said, “Then, you’re finally done. You’ve connected the social act and the aesthetic act.”

For him, that’s the definition of architecture. And it was me too. I felt it was like the first building I had ever done, the first time I did actually affect society. I did something that could shape behavior, that in some small way changed the world. We’ve been there. That, in fact, in some way can change somebody’s life.

Elaine: It’s a big difference. There’s a kind of spiritual politics . . .

Wayne: And with that goes the resistance. There’s nothing to resist. I think that when you change. Every generation develops its own way, and part of that development isn’t psychological or personal. It has to do with the general environment, and maybe in some way it has to do with what’s going on right now with the current political scene, with Obama, that he seems to be bringing in huge numbers of young people who go up to your age, the 20 and you 30s, who haven’t been disengaged by government, find it totally irrelevant. And he seems to be galvanizing a whole new group of people.

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For architects, there’s a huge amount of serendipity involved in your development, which you have no control over. It’s been frus- trating, because I’m a person who would like to have control over my own destiny. Some- thing takes place that will completely change the responses you as an architect need to make to resolve the problem. At that point you’re going to have to say, “No, I’m not ready. These aren’t my interests, not from this proj- ect to that project is actually going to harm me, because the distance is too great, and I need some sort of a ramping up to maintain who I am.”

At 45, I was so passed off I could hardly talk to anybody, because I was ready to do that work. And now I look back and say, “Actually, really, I wasn’t quite ready to do what I thought I was ready to do.” I was thinking about it in design terms, and maybe that was correct. But I wasn’t thinking about the complexity it takes to accomplish a project on a certain scale, which takes an organization that you’ve built up so that it’s not you anymore, it’s your culture. It’s you as a thought leader, with the authority and the strength and the talent to bring people together and multiply your ability to deal with complex problems.

I’m working on this project in Paris right now with a group of people who are taking big pieces of it, and I went over and did a charette. We had to make a huge amount of changes. And I came back and—I don’t mean to be bringing—I was really proud of myself, because I get a lot done in five days, and I was able to solve a huge amount of stuff I can get my arms around a neat project that has thou- sand of variables, and I was joking with my wife, “Darn, I actually learned some shit all this time.”
For example, I’ve been interested in “interactivity” or “immobility” because they provide other dimensions of technology that work on the material stuff I’m organizing in the space. Instrumental and material play off one another, and because they can’t be coordinated within the same software or the same dimensions—some operating in four or more—they are difficult to organize exclusively using Maps. You have to look at them in many ways, often prototyping at full scale.

When Greg Lynn and Stefan (Lynn) and Neil [Denari] brought us out here to teach, many of us focused on these almost run “demonstration” projects—open installations. They offered a way to get our hands on technologies that a small practice otherwise wouldn’t acquire; and they provided a theoretical territory in which to explore the design implications of LA’s technological projects. Did your early development among colleagues in LA have a similar progression?

Wemyss: When we did that it was very small projects, but somehow we were immediately affected by material and technical issues. But it was quite conventional, almost nineteenth-century. I was looking at Diller. There was definitely a commonality at a mechanical, material, tectonic level among the people there. It was challenging the simplicity and the crudeness of the construction that takes place, and how to protect your artistic capital in this part of the world. And it also probably came from the tradition of Schindler and Gregory Ain and a group of people we all rejected, but who were still there somewhere patting around in our brains.

Your generation started in a much more conceptual territory, and it seems to have the opposite problem. I accepted a simple, general palette, and I find my architecture spatially, organizationally, and other places. You guess the materials haven’t been invented yet to accommodate your formal language and your aspirations, the desire you have that comes with the nature of that language.

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Eldeman: Did you feel that any yourself?

Wemyss: Absolutely. In your 20s, you’re a kid still and you’re running—you’re trying to establish what the project is. In your 30s, it’s still very possible that your practice is not primary, which makes sense pragmatically, because nothing important is going to happen in this country especially until you’re 50 anyway, or 45, if you get lucky. But the commissions will be further and they’re going to be smaller scale, what people trust you with a term of investment. And you just sit in your research.

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It seems impossible to get out of that when you’re young, to win a major competition at 35—which can be, by the way, a horrible thing. As many times as it’s made careers, it’s ended careers, because you’re not ready. The Koroneus talk about making opportunity, and when you get an opportunity, you have to be prepared to utilize that opportunity. You had to have gone through those stages in some fashion to be able to utilize it.

Eldeman: In LA, there’s a legacy of people going through the evolution you outlined, whereas on the east coast it seems very for July make it through that cycle.

Wemyss: New York—I’ve been a transplant through my whole life, because of the architectural scene—living there now. I’m starting to realize it’s a centralized city, power-wise, and commode capital is so powerful that it’s extremely difficult, especially for architects. Young architects get consumed by it. It’s the city of Warhol, and it just swallows you up.

But L.A., for whatever reason, is still an institutional anachronism, it allows for a certain freedom and autonomy. Two powerful things in my generation were seeing architecture as an autonomous activity and that autonomy as connected to resistance. Not the resistance and autonomy of moderates in the mainstream. A much more calculated, much more personal, diminished objective. But still absolutely connected to resistance. It’s still incredibly important, the political nature of architecture, part of my practice and my person. I would have said it’s a little different in your generation.

Eldeman: It’s a big difference. There’s a kind of spiritual politics . . .

Wemyss: And with that goes the resistance. There’s nothing to resist. I think that’s going to change. Every generation develops its own rate, and part of that development isn’t psychological or personal. It has to do with the general environment, and maybe in some simple way it has to do with what’s going on right now with the current political scene, with Obama, that he seems to be bringing in large numbers of young people who go up to your age, the 20 and 30s who, if they haven’t been disengaged by government, find it totally irrelevant. And he seems to be galvanizing a whole new generation of people.

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Eldeman: Absolutely.
If the 1990s began in 1988 with MoMA’s “Deconstructivist Architecture” exhibition, they died with the closing of the critical journal of architecture Assemblage, whose forty-one issues spanned from 1986 to 2000.

—Paulette Singley

Patricia Morton: Theory’s ascendancy within architecture culture can be traced in the rise of new, outlaw institutions, such as the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies (IAUS, 1967–1985) in New York and the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc, founded 1972) in Los Angeles. Oppositions, published by the IAUS, was the original for Assemblage and its successors; it was a livelier, more topical version of what has become a somewhat tired mix of history, theory, and criticism.

The members of the IAUS elite corps are now the gray-haired establishment (Peter Eisenman, Anthony Vidler, Mario Gandelsonas, Diana Agrest, Steven Peterson, Rem Koolhaas, et al.), but they were rebels who broke with International Modernism and brought politics, theory, and history to the fore. A similar thing has happened to the SCI-Arc establishment, but LA’s geographical distance from the dominant East-Coast schools has kept SCI-Arc closer to the edge of both practice and theory.

Paulette Singley: The publication of two anthologies—Kate Nesbitt’s Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965–1995 (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995) and K. Michael Hays’s Architecture Theory Since 1968 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997)—signaled both the rise and the demise of architectural theory. These publications translated what had been an esoteric, verified bibliography and vocabulary into a semi-transparent and more accessible format and in so doing popularized an elite body of knowledge.

They collected in one place most of the most important essays that influenced this moment.
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historians, and philosophers. As the title of
Vidler’s The Writing of the Walls: Architectural
Theory in the Late Enlightenment (Princeton:
Princeton Architectural Press, 1987) suggests,
that moment was concerned with writing,
language, reading, difficult texts, and seeking
architecture’s theoretical potential.

Morton: In the 1990s, the critique of Modern-
ism was codified and institutionalized, the
young rebels became middle-aged culture
stars, and Ivy-League architecture schools
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practice. Hay’s and Snøhetta’s anthologies from
the discourse and its history into a canon,
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In many circles, it was not simply theor-
ies that held sway, but a particular brand of theory
that informed practice. In its more aggressive
moments it proposed a more radical politics of
design. This was the moment in design education,
summoning the work of both Eisenman and
Venturi.

Vidler: This was the moment in which the
critic or the theorist became the center of the
world, rather than the designer or the artist.
Architecture was the equivalent of Birkenstocks
to bring a social conscience to architecture.

Singley: If for some, postmodernism never
really existed, and for others it was politically
impossible, then for yet others it was a site
of liberation, intellectual freedom, and class
empowerment. In its quasi-dialectical mode,
theory and feminism emerged in architecture
Schools of Radical Design, and the political
activity of the New York School.

Morton: Could it all be a hangover from the
Beaux-Arts revival? The figurative, the decorative,
and internally-generated form have been the
dominant impulses in architectural thinking
and as a means to an end, rather than as
something to be ignored as outdated, part
of the previous generation of discourse. What
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of the previous generation of discourse. What
they left out was as interesting as what they
included: sociological investigations of built
form, political activism, pentadrome utopia (or
against) the academic, guerilla building, com-
modity design.

Simply: With theory serving as the operative
term in design education, a new position
emerged in architecture schools, that of the
architectural theorist. Theory was neither a
homogenous nor a consistent discipline, but
in its more aggessive moments it proposed a
standardizing regime while simultaneously calling
for the end of totalizing regimes. In declaim-
ing grand narrative, it is that constructed one
in many circles, it was not simply theory
that held sway, but a particular brand of theory
called postmodernism. But here is where it
grows tricky. This was not the postmodern clas-
sic of Robert Venturi and Michael Graves, which
sought architecture’s potential to com-
municate through the language of form, but
rather a deep reliance on philosophy, on the
legacy of structuralism (including Derrida),
practice of deconstruction, post-structuralist
analysis, and the death of the author—the
notion that texts beget more texts, that nobody
 commuter the work of both Eisenman and
Venturi.

Worten: How it all falls into the Ban-Arte revival? The figure, the decorative,
and internally-generated form have been the
dominant impetus in architectural thinking
although no longer elucidated in postmodern
language.

Singley: If for some, postmodernism never
really existed, and for others it was politically
irresponsible, then for yet others it was a site
dETERMINANT.
of liberation, intellectual freedom, and class
consciousness to architecture.

At the same time, feminism provided a
blueprint for a political practice that wasn’t about bloody
Heart liberal or urban planning, which
seemed to be the only alternatives. And speak-
ing of anarchism, three important collections
of feminist work appeared in 1993. The Sex
of Architecture, Diana Agaet, Patricia Con-
noy, and Lorde Kaner Weinman, ed.; Architec-
ture and Sexism, Debra Coleman, Elizabeth
Banes, and Carol Henderson, ed.; and The
Architect: Reconstructing Site Practice, Frances
Hedges, ed. There was an explosion of inter-
net in society, sexuality, and identity and their
expression in architecture.

Also in the 1990s, environmental activ-
ism and sustainability emerged as a persistent
political arena that’s now of actual importance,
with global warming on everyone’s mind. This
is an area where architects have the power and
knowledge to have a huge impact on the public
realm, even given their limited role in the
design of the built environment.

Simply: Where language, discourse, and sym-
bolism represent one end of the intellectual
spectrum, the other end might be the body
vision, and practices of everyday
life. Michel Foucault emerged as a dominant
presence for critiquing the power of corpo-
real disciplines and their corresponding archi-
technical institutions. In bodily and cognitive
vision, architecture and theory found common
ground—in frames, points of view, systems of
surveillance, or absolutist planning techniques.
Vision and virility emerged as dominant
obsessions of design (at least to the extent
that reflective surfaces could be fetishized).

Worten: Technology had an enormous impact
on the obsession with sight and virility, and
not just from the theory side. You can “see”
that reflective surfaces could be fetishized.
Maybe technology isn’t determinant.

Simply: Marshalling such heady intellectual
powers also led to a kind of intellectual terro-
rist in which words were deployed as weapons
and political incorrectness posioned upon. Is it
any wonder that there was a backlash, and that
this moment of intensity was unsustainable?
At times the voices became shrill, the archi-
tecture increasingly illiberal, and the ability
to generate form nearly abandoned. Theory
failed. Threatening itself and architecture out
of existence. The jaunam and sheer entropy
of this time period produced an excess of words
and gestures that eclipsed the necessity of design and even-
ually eclipsed itself. Today, the volume of
Dardis, Jacques Sanc, and even Walter Ben-
jamin’s 1993’s on booksellers collecting dust.

Worten: Given the corporatization of Robert A.M.
Stem, Michael Gorm, and Ren Koolhas,
why not just assume, some joy, some dissac-
dence, even if it was “just” words? What hap-
pended to the delirious architect” who looked for
alternatives. Sometimes they were frivolous,
but sometimes they were productive and excit-
ing. There were collaborations between art-
ists and architects, strange amalgamations and
hybrid practices like HEDG Collective in Los
Angeles or the Biosciarch for Art and Architect-
ure in New York, for example, and practices
of contemporary architecture that seemed to have nothing to do with “archi-
tecture.” These new practices have led to an
opening up of architecture, and a whole new
understanding of melding theory with practice.
Five Schools, Eight Voices, Two Surveys

Cris Butler
Lecturer, Cal Poly Pomona 1993
Licensed CA, NY
My first job out of school was for a scenery company in Carson City, and I went on to do five special effects. I’ve been a local planning commissioner, helped establish a (501c3) for the Sutter Green Building Association, and am helping to establish a co-housing community. I have a straw bale home under construction and am starting a new business.

Tina Leon
SLO 1999, Pomona 2001
Assistant Professor Adjunct, Cal Poly SLO
Licensed CA
I was once a child in the office of Bernard Tschumi. I had the chance to work in Bernard Tschumi’s office during his transition from academic to full-time practitioner. I share Bernard’s disdain for pure formalism, but I am not “anti-form.” This discourse still provides a critical perspective, given the increasing degree of abstraction we see today. I strongly agree with Bernard when he says, “Architecture is not a knowledge of form, but a form of knowledge.” Architects will always design buildings; that is what the architect does. But, in the current discourse, we see an increase in the public’s interest in architecture. The architect will always be the designer of buildings, but today we write our own software.

Dominic Lourie
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FAPA, Brooklyn, NY
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Erik Nebosa
SLU 1999, Harvard 2004
Lecturer, Cal Poly SLU
Licensed NY
Among Morphosis, Grémmolzh Architects, and Ateliers Jean Nouvel, I expected the obvious differences in models of practice and theoretical frameworks, but differences in mentorship were more challenging than I anticipated. At Morphosis, small project teams enabled a comprehensive understanding of the project, team hierarchy was relatively flat, and team members participated in consultant and client meetings. The mentor-protege relationship Meyve developed—and in which project managers and architects were committed—led to consistent quality. Access to Sir Nicholas Grimshaw was limited; nevertheless, the strong office infrastructure focused on employee development. These partners, each offering a specific expertise, were easily approachable. I participated in most internal meetings, but only external meetings that related to my deliverables package—and never client meetings. At Ateliers Jean Nouvel, in a joint venture with Foster and Partners, the team struggled constantly due to lack of hierarchy between the offices and a difference in practice models, and there was no apparent effort towards mentorship.

Justin Perry
Pomona/BIPA
Alonso Balaguer + Associates, Barcelona
My first job, at a giant Southern California engineering firm, did not provide much inspiration but did provide a solid foundation for organizing a project. A few of the more interesting things I did in San Francisco are: set design for a PBS TV/FILX commercial; forming a collective of artists, graphic designers, musicians, music producers, and architects in a downtown warehouse space, where we meet to create and play, designing and curating a sensory art event to showcase work from a graphic design film’s free global office; and a video-sculpture installation for a championship boxing event.

Jean Moline
Pomona 1992
Chafetz Inc., Chicago, IL
I have been helping El Valor, an organization started thirty years ago by a Latina woman with a disabled son. She found that there were no reintegration services in Chicago to help her son become a viable part of society. They have a vision for an International Inclusion Center, bringing together people of all disabilities and ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds to learn to reintegrate through the culinary arts, horticulture, and music. I’ve also begun assisting Causes for Change International with their vision for developing Exploration Institutes for Children and Youth with Disabilities throughout Latin America.

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Five Schools, Eight Voices, Two Surveys

Creek Butler
Woodbury 1995
Lauging Gravy Studios, Truckee
Licensed CA, NY

My first job out of school was for a scenery company in Carson City, and I went on to do five special effects. I've been a local planning commissioner, helped establish a 501c3 for the Sierra Green Building Association, and am helping to establish a co-housing community. I have a straw bale home under construction and am starting DD on a Tahoe City fire station. I've found the ideal schedule is Monday through Thursday, six weeks on, two weeks off. The time off comes to deploy the knowledge of "architectural" thinking to many more arenas.

Tommaso LoCicero
SLU 2003, Columbia 2003
FMDA, Brooklyn, NY

I had the chance to work in Bernard Tschumi's office during his transition from academia to full-time practitioner. I share Bernard's disdain for pure formalism but I am not "anti-form." This discourse still provides a critical perspective, given the increasingly daunting formalism we see today. I strongly agree with Bernard when he says, "Architecture is not a knowledge of form, but a form of knowledge." Architects will always design buildings; that is what the public expects, so that's where we start, what we hope to master and go beyond, to deploy the knowledge of "architectural" thinking to many more arenas.

Juan Mora
Pomona 1996
Ghafari Associates, Chicago, IL

I have been helping El Valor, an organization started thirty years ago by a Latina woman with a disabled son. She found that there were no reintegration services in Chicago to help her son become a viable part of society. They have a vision for an International Inclusion Center, bringing together people of all disabilities and ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds to learn to reintegrate through the culinary arts, horticulture, and music. I've also begun assisting Causes for Change International with their vision for developing Exploration Institutes for Children and Youth with Disabilities throughout Latin America.

Eric Nolhes
SLU 1999, Harvard 2004
Lecturer, Cal Poly SLU
Licensed NY

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Justin Perry
Pomona/THK
Alonso Balaguer + Associates, San Francisco

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Craig Bizos
Woodbury 1994, Art Center 1990
Zimmer Samual Fossa Architects LLP, Seattle, WA

I had the great fortune of working in an environment, where I had a big gig on "The Discovery Channel"—it was easy—as an illustrator on "Monster House."
Between 1997 and 2000, six students—Mara Baum, Jeff Carney, Kari Holmgren, Laura Mezoff, Amit Price Patel, and I—graduated from Washington University's School of Architecture and went on to pursue dual degrees in architecture and city planning at U.C. Berkeley. Three of these students, Amit, Laura, and Jeff, won the prestigious Branner Traveling Fellowship, a nine-month journey around the world studying a topic of relevance to their theses. Currently, Emily Cubbison, a 2003 graduate of Wash. U., is completing a dual degree in architecture and landscape architecture at Cal. During this time, no Wash. U. grad has come to Berkeley without pursuing dual degrees.

What is it about our experience that led us all to pursue dual degrees? Seven students may form a small sample, but it begins to suggest a common knowledge, worldview, and philosophy about architecture. Whether our experience is more broadly representative of our generation, I can't say. In this article, I will simply explore how the influence of the City of St. Louis, Washington University, and individual professors led us to pursue dual degrees.

St. Louis

The City of St. Louis has been in a constant state of despair since World War II, continually trying to reinvent itself and reclaim some of its previous glory. It is also a city with very visible color and income lines drawn into its fabric. Built for a million people, it has struggled to keep its population above three hundred thousand while the suburbs have exploded, pushing the metropolitan area's population well above two million. With two thirds of the city's population missing, only a third of its buildings are inhabited. The vacant city is omnipresent, a constant reminder to those who remain of what is missing and an insurmountable hurdle for new development.

While it has had its struggles, St. Louis is filled with vibrant, diverse neighborhoods and public parks. Exploring them taught us what it means to live in a city and how both people and
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While it has had its struggles, St. Louis is filled with vibrant, diverse neighborhoods and public parks. Exploring them taught us what it means to live in a city and how both people and
buildings create a place. During our time, the city was experiencing drastic changes: Forest Park, the second largest city park in the U.S., was going through its biggest redesign since the 1930s. The Fair Park is, and a plan by John Hail called for开发ing the River Des Peres and restoring natural habitats. The old loft buildings of Washington Avenue were transforming into residences and offices, bringing new life to a quiet downtown. One summer, Marc and I watched the demolition of the DeWitt-Wells Public Housing Project, the last of the towers that represented the failed ideals of modernist public housing, while we worked on a small infill housing project across the street for Jo Sowers.

St. Louis, the laboratory of our architectural adolescence, played a large part in our understanding of architecture as something greater than an object. As we explored the city, we struggled to understand its contradictions, and fell in love with its charm, we experimented with the altruistic potential of design and the role of the architect in creating places.

Washington University
Washington University's campus played a similarly large role. Built of Missouri red granite in the late 1920s on a hilltop at the city's edge, overlooking Forest Park. “What I loved about the campus was not so much its buildings, but the spaces between them. The campus is a mass of interconnected spaces outlined by thin, double-loaded classroom buildings. One could wander the campus for hours and never get lost. Every space had a unique character and charm. The campus taught me the importance of the public realm and how buildings define it. It also taught me the importance of planning and what kinds of details matter in creating a place. The student union and the law school [much hated for its concrete modern aesthetic and staircases that went nowhere] were contemporary spaces that exemplified the qualities of the original campus plan. The business school and law, now Jean-Francois Berthier law school buildings, by contrast, are the antithesis of the plan, with fully enclosed courtyards, shut off from the public and with more than a hint of elitism. These two buildings formed a recurring subject of the architecture curriculum and a favorite topic of discussion with our non-architecture friends.

A Liberal Arts Education
Washington University offers undergraduate and graduate-level arts degrees and programs in architecture. It is a liberal arts education, and the classes we took outside of the School of Architecture broadened our view of architecture and led us ultimately to pursue dual graduate degrees.

A postmodern comparative literature course, exploring the possibility of place in relation to the construction of place, was defining for Jeff. “In a largely abandoned city like St. Louis, it led to the question, “How do you make ‘places,’ when everyone is leaving or has already left?” For Marc, a minor in anthropology helped him develop an understanding of the public realm and its importance in the design of environments. His Warren County, Missouri childhood on a farm in the Ozarks, with an in-depth look at both the history of the site and the people who live there, taught him about the relationship between the built environment and the people who inhabit it.

The seven week summer design studio, we were taught the “seven essentials”: site context, climate, program, space and form, structure and materials, traditions, and the meaning of place.

The school also took great advantage of the larger university. Professors from a wide range of subjects lectured in Givens Hall on the relationships between their areas of study and the built environment. Jeff and Kari each took a graduate level course taught jointly by Architecture and Social Work, exploring the relationship between the built environment and the social problems of the city.

Professors of Architecture
Washington University’s School of Architecture was housed in Givens Hall, an intimate 1956 Beaux Arts building, with a grand, central staircase where students gathered. The scale of the program was intimate, as well. Undergraduate and graduate students took classes together, hung out together, and shared experiences. Third semester studio, the Masters student took classes with first-semester undergraduates. The graduate students provided leadership and a broader worldview, while undergraduates brought energy, passion, and blind faith in design.

Washington University is steeped in the history of the Bauhaus and team co. From the start, we were encouraged to look beyond the object to the social factors of design. In the first design studio, we were taught the “seven essentials,” site context, climate, program, space and form, structure, traditions, and the meaning of place.

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Professors of Architecture

While each professor at Washington University played a role, a few great mentors had a special influence on our understanding of architecture and the world. What Bob Hanneman did outside of his drawing and painting courses taught us the importance of working with and for the neglected people of the city. Through drawing and painting courses, he taught us to care about people and parts of the city that are rarely seen by the designer who sits in a glass office all day.

Gay Scherbaum taught that architecture is not just the design of an object but a meaningful and delightful place for people, a collaboration among planners, designers, and users, working together toward a better end. The emphasis on site and climate became integral to our thinking.

African who co-founded and directed the City of St. Louis’s first urban design department, introduced us to the profession of urban design. Sue Daskalakis and her work in Detroit and Barcelona taught a very different perspective on urban-based architecture and the impact of larger forces. Zeuler Lima’s “Architecture as an act of charity” taught the importance of mapping how the built environment reflects larger cultural forces.

University of California, Berkeley and Beyond
Our experiences at Washington University led us all in search of a greater understanding of our built environment. We understood that an architecture or planning degree alone would not be enough to pursue either field in a way that suited our desires. The dual degree program at Cal, as Amit so eloquently points out, “allowed us to explore a wide range of topics that resulted in an invaluable general education—almost like a liberal arts graduate program.”

Mark Deaky, an author of Sun, Wind and Light, brought sustainability to the forefront when it was largely ignored in the studio and the profession. Marc, who worked closely with him, pursued architecture and urban design at Cal with a focus on the environmental and health impacts of buildings and cities. The studio of John Heald, another South African who co-founded and directed the City of St. Louis’s first urban design department, introduced us to the profession of urban design. Sue Daskalakis and her work in Detroit and Barcelona taught a very different perspective on urban-based architecture and the impact of larger forces. Zeuler Lima’s “Architecture as an act of charity” taught the importance of mapping how the built environment reflects larger cultural forces.

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South African architect Jo Noero, chair of the graduate program, lectured on the importance of place and architecture’s role in society, both as a catalyst for and a reaction to culture. Amit relates, “From Jo, I learned about the long-term importance of design in a larger cultural and historical context and the responsibilities of a designer as a political and social being.” Amit, Mara, and I worked for him in his small St. Louis practice on Bed location, a museum of apartheid in Port Elizabeth and a redevelopment plan for its South African township, and in Bohemian Hill, a small infill housing project in St. Louis.

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The multitude of technological changes of the last two decades have had a tremendous impact on the way architects do things. But it is equally important to recognize and understand the impact on the culture and structure of our profession.

When I first started in this profession as a pre-intern in 1989, CAD was just becoming commonplace in architecture firms, but was used mainly by a few, specially trained CAD draftspersons. Only a select few had a PC at their desks; the bulk of the technology was located in the CAD room. Most work was still produced in the traditional manner: a single designer passing on information via drawings and sketches to a drafting technician, who would complete a sheet of working drawings on a drafting table with pencil or pen on vellum. Other technologies in use at the time were the ammonia-based blue line machine for creating reproductions, the felt or metal tipped pen plotter, 5.25" and 3.5" floppy disks, the KROY lettering machine, and the abundant use of the Letraset® peel-and-stick films and lines. All of these available technologies helped us do things a little faster; but it was still a relatively slow way to produce work.

Today we have BIM—Building Information Modeling—3D modeling programs such as Sketchup and FormZ, email and instant messaging, smart phones and the Web. These technologies provide us with a better and faster way to communicate, to find information, and ultimately to be more productive in our work. Everything is faster, smaller, and contains more memory: think iPod nano. Technology has given us the ability to get information on-the-go. Podcasts, Twitter, and YouTube allow us to find information or entertainment on demand, rather than waiting for a specific showtime. Friends, family, and coworkers easily communicate using email, texting, or IM (instant messaging), regardless of their geographic location. In project delivery, information can be uploaded and shared with a click of the mouse and instantly provide the most current and up-to-date information for our client, contractor, and others.

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The multitude of technological changes of the last two decades have had a tremendous impact on the way architects do things. But it is equally important to recognize and understand the impact on the culture and structure of our profession.

When I first started in this profession as a pre-intern in 1989, CAD was just becoming commonplace in architecture firms, but was used mainly by a few, specially trained CAD drafters. Only a select few had a PC at their desk; the bulk of the technology was located in the CAD room. Most work was still produced in the traditional manner: a single designer passing on information via drawings and sketches to a drafting technician, who would complete a sheet of working drawings on a drafting table with pencil or pen on vellum. Other technologies in use at the time were the ammonia-based blueline machine for creating reproductions, the felt or metal tipped pen plotter, 5.25” and 3.25” floppy disks, the KROY lettering machine, and the abundant use of the Letraset® peel-and-stick films and lines. All of these available technologies helped us do things a little faster, but it was still a relatively slow way to produce work.

Today we have BIM—Building Information Modeling—3D modeling programs such as Sketchup and FormZ, email and instant messaging, smart phones and the Web. These technologies provide us with a better and faster way to communicate, to find information, and ultimately to be more productive in our work. Everything is faster, smaller, and contains more memory: think iPod nano. Technology has given us the ability to get information now-now. Podcasts, Tivo, and YouTube allow us to find information or entertainment on demand, rather than waiting for a specific showtime. Friends, family, and coworkers easily communicate using email, texting, or AIM (instant messaging), regardless of their geographic location. In project delivery, information can be uploaded and shared with a click of the mouse and instantly provide the most current and up-to-date information for our client, contractor, and others.

Our profession has been profoundly altered by the constant and quickly changing technolo-
In our profession, the expectation of immediacy has produced some very positive changes. Our generation finds technology to be easily digested, and we understand its continually evolving nature. In our profession, the expectation of immediacy has produced some very positive changes. Our generation finds technology to be easily digested, and we understand its continually evolving nature. We are comfortable with the speed of change. We thrive on the ‘new’, as we know that it will make our work easier, faster, and better. We are anxious to see the next release of our BIM software, knowing it will provide new tools that will help us do our job more efficiently. We are interested in trying new tools to see what they are. Upon graduation from college, we expected immediate opportunities for leadership, and receive rapid increases in pay. We are impatient for the opportunity to produce happier employees, better projects, reduced schedules, and increased profitability. Some of these changes have come from the expectations of immediacy. These are among the many positive outcomes that stem from the expectation of immediacy, but it has also caused tensions within the workplace. These tensions usually relate to our seeming impatience with the way things are. We have trouble waiting, because, when it comes to technology, we are used to getting things as quickly as we ask for them. Upon graduation from college, we expected immediate licensing (well, at least some of us did). We want to run our own projects, hold positions of leadership, and receive rapid increases in pay. We are impatient for the opportunity to show our capabilities and to earn our place, right now. Because we are so used to having to figure out technology for ourselves, we are self-sufficient and willing to take risks—sometimes to the dismay of our elders. These changes in technology in the ‘90s created many benefits and challenges for our profession. We can only expect that each change will accelerate as technology moves in more interesting and varied directions. Understanding both the direct and indirect implications of these changes will be critical for the development of future generations of architects, for the culture of the profession, and for the things we do best: creating the emotional and spiritual sense of place that we are charged to create.
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The idea is to meet as many potential ways—at church, at the store, in the local bar—than meeting people in a more traditional way, and we want it. Consider “speed dating.” Rather than meeting people in a more traditional way, at church, at the store, in the local bar scene—the idea is to meet as many potential mates as possible as quickly as possible. It usually doesn’t happen in thirty seconds or less, but then what if the chance I might like this person in the long term? We have become stimulus-driven and often require multiple streams of information in a short amount of time to keep us interested and focused.

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But if AT&T provides the iPhone with your service only, and you can’t get it with Verizon, you’ll change service in a heartbeat to get the new service, right? Similarly, if a business relationship is not providing the opportunities necessary for development, those opportunities will be sought out elsewhere. This is not so different from a firm choosing to terminate employment when it judges that it is not getting what it is paying for. Most of the ’90s Generation simply considers a good place to work as one with a stimulating and challenging environment, a clear path for growth, and opportunity for leadership in the firm. The problem is compounded by the fact that the ’90s left a huge void of qualified architects when the profession hit a major economic low. This void created a competitive market in which, if an employee is unhappy in a current position, it is easy to seek other, more desirable opportunities. Employment is now seen as a mutually beneficial business relationship which lasts only as long as both parties have an interest in it. This situation has given our generation the stigma of being disloyal to our firms—especially if the firm has invested quite a bit of time and money in the development of the employee.

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Licensure and Time

“Are we really surprised that career and licensing ambitions are continually postponed while interns struggle to satisfy their employers?”

“In some ways, I feel that the low prestige of the intern out of school did a number on my lasting sense of self-worth. I watched as my fellow university graduates became corporate managers, consultants and project managers, while I remained an intern for five years. The intern program is not designed to foster it. It is hard to pass the exams. A lot of work is involved and a lot of time is invested in it.”

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A 1999 study of the impact of IDP, funded by NCARB, recommended that the profession return IDP to a voluntary program rather than a mandatory requirement, as there were no significant differences between the experiences of interns who participated in the program and those who did not. The results of this study were published in a 2003 issue of the Journal of Architectural Education in an article titled, “A Sociological Analysis of the Intern Development Program.” In Dr. Beth Quinn’s article highlighted the problem that “IDP simply assumes the goodwill of the employer, regulating only the intern, who is arguably the weaker party in the (employment) relationship.”

Because IDP placed additional requirements on interns to get specific work experiences that they were mostly powerless to ensure, the time it took for interns to obtain these experiences and document the process was often extended from the three years that was the norm before. Although many states in the 1990s took longer to complete this new internship program, few leaders in the profession were aware of the extent of the impact this new program was having on the licensing process.

Architect Registration Examination

Meanwhile, although IDP did add slowly but steadily gained momentum, the switch to the computerized ARE was a sudden shock. One initial shock was the dramatic increase in cost of the computerized ARE. NCARB’s need to develop sophisticated testing software for the computerized version of the exam made the test extraordinarily expensive when compared in the paper and pencil version, as well as when compared to other professions. A 2001 comparison of the costs of professional licensing conducted by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants revealed that the $981 fee for the ARE was higher than that for all professional exams other than medicine ($5,350), more than double accounting ($475) and law ($345), and more than triple engineering ($150). This increase in price even surprised many state licensing boards and initially led the legislators in Texas to refuse to allow the ARE to be administered. At the 1998 AIA Convention, the AIA membership passed a formal resolution encouraging NCARB to find ways to reduce or mitigate the price of the new exams.

More importantly, however, the technology used to administer the new ARE was optimized for individual test-takers, rather than a group delivery method. It simply did not make sense to fill a convention hall with computers for three or four days once a year, and so NCARB turned to a single private testing company to administer the ARE year-round in cities across the country. This setting made it logical to split what was once one exam—the ARE—into nine separate exams that could be taken individually over time. This fragmenting of the ARE radically changed how candidates (and the firms that employ them) viewed the profession’s licensing process.

The accessibility and flexibility of the new computerized version of the ARE was in many ways an important improvement for interns. But the obvious benefits came at the non-obscene cost of making the exam a highly individualized experience rather than a collective rite of passage. An architect who graduated in the 1990s was far more likely to complete licensure as an individual rather than a shared achievement. Additionally, that celebration was almost certainly triggered by a letter stating that the individual passed the Mechanical and Electrical Systems division, for example. For architects who graduated in the 1990s, licensure was most often achieved not with a bang, but a whimper.

Time to complete

Together, in the mid-1990s, the internship process and the examination process were restructured in ways that artificially extended the time it took most graduates to achieve licensure. Although there were no statistics at the time, IDP was widely understood to take an average of five years to complete. This meant that by the time they were eligible to start taking the ARE, many interns were further along in their professional careers with substantial work responsibilities, and more interns had significant community and family responsibilities. Interns had to balance these expanded responsibilities to others with their own need to study for and take each one of the nine time exams required by the ARE. Perhaps as a result, interns also took longer to complete the ARE than had previously been expected. In 2003, the most recent survey of recent graduates on this topic indicated an average of 15 years to complete the ARE.

Over the years, regulatory changes to the Interstate compact and the examination process changed significantly during the 1990s, and IDP was intended to respond to genuine concerns about the efficacy of a generic three-year apprenticeship. Instead, the point is that both the internship and the examination process changed significantly during the 1990s, and IDP was intended to respond to genuine concerns about the efficacy of a generic three-year apprenticeship. Instead, the point is that both the internship and the examination process changed significantly during the 1990s, and IDP was intended to respond to genuine concerns about the efficacy of a generic three-year apprenticeship. Instead, the point is that both the internship and the examination process changed significantly during the 1990s, and IDP was intended to respond to genuine concerns about the efficacy of a generic three-year apprenticeship. Instead, the point is that the examination process was restructured in ways that artificially extended the time it took most graduates to achieve licensure.

In 2003, the AIA and NCARB joined in, and that same survey was repeated with a broader reach and consequently higher quality data. These two surveys were motivation for the first time the overall impact of IDP and the ARE on the licensing process. These surveys were motivated by the lack of meaningful, public data on internship that could be used to guide public policy decisions about licensure requirements. In 2005, these surveys served to transform ongoing national debate about whether to allow architecture graduates to begin to take the ARE while in the midst of IDP. Because the ARE was no longer a single exam, it could be completed concurrently with IDP, shortening the overall licensing process without eliminating any substantive requirements. A small number of states, like California, already allowed this structure, and a number of profession-wide tasks forces had recommended the change, but there was no clear national direction.

The AIA again circulated a version of this survey late in 2007 and presumably a final report of the results will be available later in 2010. Hopefully, this biennial survey will continue to be used to inform policy decisions about licensure and internship. In addition, the AIA has initiated other significant data collection efforts aimed at division in the profession in the first decade of the twenty-first century. These surveys were motivated by the lack of meaningful, public data on internship that could be used to guide public policy decisions about licensure requirements. In 2005, these surveys served to transform ongoing national debate about whether to allow architecture graduates to begin to take the ARE while in the midst of IDP. Because the ARE was no longer a single exam, it could be completed concurrently with IDP, shortening the overall licensing process without eliminating any substantive requirements.
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The point of this article is not that the licensing requirements should not have changed during the 1990s. Clearly a paper-and-pencil examination would be an anachronism today, and IDP was intended to respond to genuine concerns about the efficacy of a generic three-year apprenticeship. Instead, the point is that both the internship and the examination process changed significantly during the 1990s, and IDP was intended to respond to genuine concern about the efficacy of a generic three-year apprenticeship.

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arcCA: In its Management of Design series, Page & Turnbull recently examined practice management across generations. What was the objective?

Fine: Our most recent seminar raised awareness regarding the opportunities and challenges of multiple generations in the workplace and how we work together. Each of us works in teams with others who are not necessarily the same age. An HBR article describing the generations, their attributes, and how they work best, was read and discussed (“The Next 20 Years: How Customer and Workforce Attitudes Will Evolve,” July-August 2007). Rarely was the ideal working condition of one generation the same as or even similar to another. Generation Xers, for example, are entrepreneurial individual workers and expect their teams to be just as entrepreneurial. On the other hand, the younger Millennials require direction and work best in teams.

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It was a bit of a shock to Gen-Xers that Millennials did not put work first. The younger crowd has multiple interests—one of which is work—but that is certainly not the priority.

Fine: In a single word, cooperation. In our case, it happens to be Xer entrepreneurship needing others to help achieve their goals. If they create an environment that supports and sustains creative and collaborative group work, they will meet their goals, which include income and financial viability. Although group work, as an example, can be more expensive because it involves more people (more billing), groupthink might also be able to solve a problem more quickly and creatively than an individual can do. In other cases, a more singularly focused approach might actually be the right fit. If clients get good and timely service and internal morale stays high, why not work in multiple kinds of ways according to the pattern of outcomes you see?

arcCA: Do clients interact differently with different generations? Can you project something of the future experience with clients?

Fine: Depends who your clients are, because they come from various generations too. We find that it’s productive to have professionals from various generations in positions of authority. Clients will usually identify best with some over others. Interestingly, though, these comfort levels with the client aren’t necessarily over others. Interestingly, though, these comfort levels with the client aren’t necessarily driven by age—whether you’re laid back or fairly aggressive can be a plus or a negative given how a client reacts to that kind of personality.

arcCA: On balance, are generation gaps a positive thing?

Fine: Absolutely, provided that they can be managed. Each generation has its own habits, requirements, and attitudes. You will not change those, so a good work environment will recognize the different ways that people work and will provide for those habits. The hard part isn’t identifying the differences. The hard part is identifying the differences that cause problems—inefficiencies, strife with clients and inside the office. Successfully tackling problematic differences, whether or not they’re rooted in generational issues, will have us all on the way to better business practices.

Fine: My biggest surprise was that, in spite of real differences in how the generations want to work and do work, the differences among individuals within generations seem just as significant as those across the generations. Architec-
It was a bit of a shock to Gen Xers that Millennials did not put work first. The younger crowd has multiple interests—one of which is work—but that is certainly not the priority.

It happened to be Xers entrepreneurs needing others to help achieve their goals. If they create an environment that supports and sustains creative and collaborative group work, they will meet their goals, which include income and financial viability. Although group work, as an example, can be more expensive because it involves more people (hence, more billings), group-think might also be able to solve a problem more quickly and creatively than an individual can do. In other cases, a more singularly focused approach might actually be the right fit. If clients get good and timely service and internal morale stays high, why not work in multiple kinds of ways according to the pattern of outcomes you see?

An obvious differentiator might be adapting to technology. Is it?

You would think that, the older the generation, the more resistant it is to technology. But remember that Generation X played a big part in the development of a lot of the technology that we use today. As a whole, it was understood and accepted that we need to adapt new technologies, no matter what generation we belong to. The difference lies in how quickly and blindly we will jump in. Millennials are willing to make wholesale changes. Gen X wanted to think it through, see how other people like the technology. Older generations adopt technology as it is handed to them, using it in a limited capacity and usually not exploring the full potential. An example is the change from AutoCAD to Revit. Millennials and in-betweens are ready to jump in with only a few lessons. The Generation Xers want to try it out on a few small projects, see how it goes, then slowly work it into the system. Maybe the difference is that Gen X is financially responsible and doesn’t want to make hasty decisions that would be costly to undo. But sometimes the entrepreneurial spirit push-through, changing or with computer modeling. We can’t all do it all, but we can appreciate the range of talents we have around us. As a historic preservation architect, in a deeply personal creative endeavor, Generational differences seem to be just one among many factors that lead us to different approaches to our profession.

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In Orson Scott Card’s *Ender’s Game*, protagonist Ender Wiggin is launched into deep space, charged with the task of defending humans from an intergalactic menace. Not content to stand by and do nothing while their brother saves the galaxy, Peter and Valentine Wiggin take it upon themselves to tackle a more terrestrial, yet no less difficult, challenge—preventing the next world war. Using the virtual communications network, “The Nets,” to educate themselves on world history, international politics, and even transportation and infrastructure networks, the Wigginses familiarize themselves with contemporary world politics. Once properly informed, they begin to self-publish their thoughts and concerns onto net discussion groups and private forums. Peter and Valentine are able to attract like-minded thinkers who respond and contribute to their ideas, eventually developing a dialogue having massive global ramifications. In this subplot of *Ender’s Game*, Orson Scott Card was essentially describing a vast and powerful network of political blogs and bloggers. It’s worth noting at this point that *Ender’s Game* was published in 1977.

To make sure we’re all up to speed here, let’s establish a basic definition for the term “weblog” or “blog.” Paraphrased somewhat, Wikipedia defines a blog as “a website where entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order, combining text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. Many provide commentary or news on a particular subject while others function as more personal online diaries. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.” With that taken care of, the question now remains, “What does this have to do with architecture?”

For many people, the first serious exposure to architecture and architectural discourse doesn’t come until college, where everything seems to become suddenly accessible at once. The inner sanctum of academia offers its acolytes a well-versed faculty, lively peer groups, studios, histories, crits, discussions, and specialized libraries filled with vast collections of books, magazines, and journals. Views and opinions can finally take shape, technique is developed, and per-
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The Daily Times Two are South and University

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The Daily Jane Jacobs are South and University

According to blog search engine Technorati.com, there are 112.8 million unique blogs as of January 2008, 5,407 of which are listed as relevant to “architecture.” That may seem like an inaccessible abundance of information, but blogs are nothing if not 1) specialized and 2) ephemeral. Readers quickly discover their preferred sites and visit them regularly, expecting new content. If it’s not there, readership diminishes until the blog drops off the radar—sometimes this happens after years of daily updates and regular maintenance. Demand for content is high, and as blogs are labor of love, those who write them are typically afforded little reward besides the flouting thrill of new comments, continual discussion, and the occasional fifteen megabytes of fame.

In this group of loosely affiliated, dedicated compatriots, there are as many different types of architecture blogs as there are architecture bloggers, and more are signing on every day (4,401 – 5,407 – 5,408). Every day Content ranges from the super local (“I’m thinking about renovating my apartment.”) to the international, from adding new information multiple times a day to updating just once a month. From praising the work of emerging young architects to spreading the gospel of R+K Koolhaas—sometimes in the same post. Generally speaking, most architecture blogs can be collated into just a few basic categories, but with so many individuals creating unique content, the taxonomy becomes similarly idiosyncratic, reminiscent of yet another famous work of fiction, Borges’ The Analytical Language of John Wilkes. In this work, the author revolving some of the elaborative classifications he has encountered, most notably the “Celestial Empire of Remedios Kaleshniy,” a system dividing animals into categories such as (a) belonging to the empire; (b) excluded; (c) exiled; (d) having just broken the water pitcher. Luckily, high-minded bloggers tend to attract one another. By sharing content, linking back and forth, and commenting on and creating responses to posts, informal networks of common interests are established. This drastically helps the reader distill those 5,405 home, a twelve-year-old French boy and an eighty-year-old Japanese woman can both learn about the history of architecture in Dubai and the importance of sustainable design in the desert. Like the children in Ender’s Game, they have access to a profusion of news, notes, bits, photographs, and—most importantly—ideas.

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The Analytical Language of John Wilkins

Borges’s Koolhaas—sometimes in the same post. Generally speaking, most architecture blogs out there. Topics range from underground civilizations to the soundscapes of urban environments. Inhabitat: “Future-forward design for the world you inhabit.” www.inhabitat.com

Inhabitat is my go-to source for green-design and prefab architecture. Strange Harvest

www.strangeharvest.com

Analyzer site with a welcome, broad definition of architecture, written by San Jacobs, director of British architecture firm FAT

Where: “A blog about urban places, plasmak- ing, and the concept of ‘plus.’” www.earthrefurb.blogspot.com

The submit says it all. Really, I only need to add that it’s incredibly well written.

Super Colossal

www.supercolossal.ch

A great Australian blog that has been success fully integrated with the writer’s newly-opened office, Super Colosal
The 2007 AIA/NC Statewide Design Conference convened in Pacific Grove last October. The conference was about sharing ideas and inspiring architects to think beyond their daily practice and to innovate.

The theme was "the Lateral and the Vertical"—vertical is about aspiring to new heights, while lateral is about a design logic that moves beyond the traditional.

The Keynote Speaker was Shigeru Ban, Hon. FAIA, a Japanese architect with a diverse and international practice. Ban spoke about his architecture, his humanitarian efforts worldwide, providing housing to victims of natural disasters, and his design philosophy. He epitomized the Design Conference theme by showing us that both aspire to new heights and provoke us to think beyond the traditional.

Ban first gained international prominence by making architecture out of non-traditional materials such as cardboard tubes and more recently out of shipping containers. By converting these banal and everyday materials into poetic, lyrical forms and spaces, Ban has inspired all of us to think differently, to imagine, and to dream.

After his lecture, Michael Franklin Ross, FAIA, had an opportunity to sit down with Shigeru Ban to discuss his work.

arcCA: You have designed housing for displaced refugees in Rwanda, a paper-tube church for earthquake victims in Kobe, and shelters for victims of natural disasters in Haiti, Africa, and Asia. What moves you to do this?

Ban: Even in disaster areas, I want to create beautiful buildings; this is what it means to build a monument for common people.

arcCA: I noticed you designed a bridge made of cardboard tubes across the Gardon River in the south of France. It is adjacent to the Roman aqueduct Pont du Gard. What was your idea for this bridge?
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Ban: I built this bridge with my students. I brought my Japanese students to work with local students. It’s only up for the summer, for a festival. Afterwards, they dismantled it and rebuilt it next year. It is a very interesting contrast, the Roman stone bridge and the paper bridge. Paper, too, can be strong and bending.

arcCA: It can be dismantled and rebuilt. This reminds me of Japanese Pagodas that were dismantled during the feudal wars and then rebuilt. All the pieces were numbered so they could be re-assembled without the use of nails or screws. Is this Japanese recycling?

Ban: Yes, it is, but I never studied Japanese architecture, so I don’t connect my ideas with Japanese history. You know where I got the Japanese influence? From the Case Study Houses in California, from Craig Ellwood and others who created intermediate spaces.

arcCA: Yes, you also create the flow of space from inside to outside, as in your own house. Certain Wall Houses, where you used an actual curtain inside to outside, as in your now famous Curtain Wall House, where you used an actual curtain. I am interested in the experiments done by these architects. For example, using interesting formwork with concrete or exploring the use of industrial materials. Also, trying different construction methods has had an influence on me. It’s the same as the Farnsworth House idea, making an interesting building with minimal use of materials. As Brion House, More called the glass skin the curtain wall, but removing the wall is cheaper, and it allows the use of an industrial material that is an actual curtain. I am also interested in using materials for multipurpose, like using storage units as structure, so the structure becomes more invisible.

arcCA: I notice you are very interested in structure and work with some of the world’s most innovative structural engineers.

Ban: I studied in Japan with Gengo Matsui. I worked with Piet Oud in the Netherlands, Germany, with Renzo Piano in Paris, and with Cecil Balmond of ARUP on the Pompidou Centre in Metz, France.

arcCA: In 2000, you were able to realize the extraordinary paper tube structure: the Paper Arch at the Museum of Modern Art, AkKy Africa, Rockefeller Sculpture Garden in New York and the Japan Pavilion, in consultation with Piet Oud, in Turin. Do you still have an interest in paper-tube structure?

Ban: Not only paper tubes. That’s only part of it. I still have an interest, but not particularly in paper tubes. I want to create my own structural system. When we read the history books and see new structural materials, new architecture comes out of it. Otherwise, you are just following the fashion of the period. And I am not really interested in following the fashion.

arcCA: I understand very well. I visited your Nomadic Museums on a pier in New York City and the Nomadic Museum adjacent to the Santa Monica Pier in southern California. The linear space with the paper-tube colonnade was very powerful. Are there going to be more Nomadic Museums?

Ban: The last one is in Tokyo. We rent the container locally, so there is no need to ship the structural elements. Each museum is made to fit into the local situation, and there is no waste. It is very sustainable.

arcCA: I understand you are working with Cecil Balmond and Arup, fellow on the roof canopy for the Nomadic Museum on a pier in New York City. What is the Gengo Matsui Prize. Since you studied with Gengo Matsui, what was he like, and how did he influence your thinking?

Ban: He passed away a number of years ago, but he was the leading structural engineer in Japan. I started working with him on the paper-tube structures. He was the only one at that time who was very innovative in Japan. He designed many timber structures and bamboo structures. So I asked him to work with paper. I said to him, after wood and bamboo, then why not paper? Because he was so famous, it was difficult to approach him with small things. Yet, since he lived alone and was single, he would ask me to come to his home instead of the office, because he knew I could not pay him.

arcCA: With work all over the world, what would you consider to be an exciting project for you in the next few years?

Ban: Obviously, it doesn’t depend on size. I enjoy an innovative challenge and a client who accepts new ideas. It is very enjoyable. I receive many invitations outside of Japan, but you know I have only five residential buildings in Japan right now. The recently completed Nicolas Hays Center for Sweetch Group in Tokyo was a commission not from Japanese but British. I grew up in Japan, and it would be very good to do something experimental in Japan. We have excellent general contractors and craftsmen.
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arcCA: It is a horrible space.

Ban: It was very hot and then it was very cold when people were living inside of the containers. It is a horrible experience in Turkey, after an earthquake.

Ban: He designed the Nakagin Capsule Building, using paper-tube structures.

Ban: Yes, I heard about Kisho Kurokawa. He was very talented architect, but I saw shopping containers in a different way. I had a terrible experience in Turkey, after an earthquake, when people were living inside of the containers. It was very hot and then it was very cold inside the containers. It is a horrible space.

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The twenty-four-hour life of the urban fabric of our communities is affecting not only the natural environment, but human health and well-being. As noted by the U.S. Green Building Council, buildings in the U.S. consume more than 30% of our total energy and 50% of our electricity. The U.S. consumes 3 billion gallons of potable water per day just to flush toilets. A typical North American commercial construction project generates up to 2.5 pounds of solid waste per square foot of floor area. Sustainable design practices can substantially reduce these negative environmental impacts and reverse the trend of unsustainable construction practice, but we must look beyond doing less harm to providing designs that heal the earth.

The California Architectural Foundation challenged architects, students, designers, planners, and all interested individuals to develop solutions to reduce the environmental impacts on our planet, slow urban sprawl, and discover innovative ways to effectively reuse existing resources. The aim of the competition was to examine strategies that not only minimize the footprint created by the construction and ongoing operation of a project but reach beyond to heal the damage inflicted by less sensitive development.

The Brief
The competition sought sustainable solutions for urban infill projects with a zero carbon footprint. The site is an approximately sixty-acre parcel located in Visitacion Valley on the San Francisco Peninsula. Just west of Highway 101, it is bounded by Bayshore Boulevard on the west and Tunnel Avenue to the east. Landmarks in the neighborhood include Candlestick Park on the shores of the Bay to the northeast and the Cow Palace to the west. The area is surrounded by a broad variety of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Only a short distance from both downtown San Francisco and the high-tech environment of Silicon Valley, there are an abundance of resources available for creative development.

A previous study of this site had yielded a planning envelope that outlines a series of mixed-use commercial and residential overlay zones. A current Planning Department study also outlines a conceptual open-space network, to be taken as a guideline and not a requirement — commitment to public access and open space is the underlying issue. Consideration should be given to the scale of the surrounding community and how the proposed development will enhance the area beyond the immediate boundaries of the site. At the same time, it is expected and desired that the development be seen as a new landmark for all who pass on the nearby 101 freeway. Adjustments to scale and density that are supported by analysis based on the ability to better go "off grid" will be assessed to determine the eco-advantage of the increase.

A typical residential density in San Francisco is approximately 25 dwelling units per gross acre or 52 dwelling units per net acre. To achieve eco-effectiveness at a neighborhood scale, it was anticipated that the site might trend more toward the 50 to 60 dwelling units per gross acre density. A typical project in this area might be required to park the site at a ratio of 5.5 to 2 cars per dwelling unit on site; the competition developer was permitted, as an environmentally friendly designer, to work with a reduced parking requirement of less than 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit on site. That requirement could be further reduced with justification and narrative regarding how transportation will be handled through alternative means.

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Achieving a "zero carbon footprint" is difficult on an individual dwelling or business scale. It becomes increasingly achievable as the design approaches a neighborhood scale. There is, no doubt, a tipping point where the density of development goes beyond the eco-advantages and slides toward over-development. It is incumbent upon the submissions to find that optimal point and to describe the way in which it can be quantified.

Eligibility
The competition was open to any California resident (including students who attend school in California, but may not be official residents of California).
Off Grid Ideas Competition
The William Turnbull, Jr. Environmental Prize

Sponsored by the California Architectural Foundation
In conjunction with the 2007 AIACC Monterey Design Conference

The twenty-four-hour life of the urban fabric of our communities is affecting not only the natural environment, but human health and wellbeing. As noted by the U.S. Green Building Council, buildings in the U.S. consume more than 30% of our total energy and 40% of our electricity. The U.S. consumes 3 billion gallons of potable water per day just to flush toilets. A typical North American commercial construction project generates up to 2.5 pounds of solid waste per square foot of floor area. Sustainable design practices can substantially reduce these negative environmental impacts and reverse the trend of unsustainable construction practice, but we must look beyond doing less harm to promoting designs that heal the earth.

The California Architectural Foundation challenged architects, students, designers, planners, and all interested individuals to develop solutions to reduce the environmental impacts on our planet, slow urban sprawl, and discover innovative ways to effectively reuse existing resources. The aim of the competition was to examine strategies that not only minimize the footprint created by the construction and ongoing operation of a project but reach beyond to heal the damage inflicted by less sensitive development.

The Brief
The competition sought sustainable solutions for urban infill projects with a zero carbon footprint. The site is an approximately sixty-acre parcel located in Visitacion Valley on the San Francisco Peninsula. Just west of Highway 101, it is bounded by Bayshore Boulevard on the west and Tunnel Avenue to the east. Landmarks in the neighborhood include Candlestick Park on the shores of the Bay to the northeast and the Cow Palace to the west. The area is surrounded by a broad variety of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Only a short distance from both downtown San Francisco and the high-tech environment of Silicon Valley, there are an abundance of resources available for creative development.

The California Architectural Foundation invited participants to consider the immediate boundaries of the site. At the same time, it is expected and desired that the development be seen as a new landmark for all who pass on the nearby 101 freeway. Adjustments to scale and density that are supported by analysis based on the ability to better go “off grid” will be assessed to determine the eco-advantage of the increase.

Definitions of “sustainable design” vary and are subject to interpretation. To help clarify the most important principles, the AIA Committee on the Environment has developed its “Top Ten” measures for sustainable design, which entrants may use as a loose guideline: “Great design includes environmental, technical, and aesthetic excellence. Stewardship, performance, and inspiration are essential and inseparable.” (See the AIA Top Ten Green Project Metrics at http://aiatopten.org.)

The competition was open to any California resident (including students who attend school in California, but may not be official residents of California).

Criteria
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The AIA Top Ten Green Project Metrics:

1. A typical residential density in San Francisco is approximately 25 dwelling units per gross acre or 50 dwelling units per net acre. To achieve eco-effectiveness at a neighborhood scale, it was anticipated that the site might tend more toward the 50 to 60 dwelling units per gross acre density. A typical project in this area might be required to park the site at a ratio of 1.5 to 2 cars per dwelling unit on site; the competition developer was permitted, as an environmentally friendly designer, to work with a reduced parking requirement of .75 spaces per dwelling unit on site. That requirement could be further reduced with justification and narrative regarding how transportation will be handled through alternative means.

2. Achieving a “zero carbon footprint” is difficult on an individual dwelling or business scale. It becomes increasingly achievable as the design approaches a neighborhood scale. There is, no doubt, a tipping point where the density of development goes beyond the eco-advantages and slides toward over-development. It was incumbent upon the submissions to find that optimal point and to describe the way in which it can be quantified.

3. The jury reviewed each submission on the basis of the multi-dimensional impact the ideas offer for re-shaping the way in which we create our communities. While components and systems need not have been wholly drawn from existing technologies, it was expected that the concepts are realizable within the near term. Inclusion of concepts drawn from ongoing research and the application of previously theoretical elements was encouraged. The goal was to stretch the imagination of all who are exposed to the concepts that emerge, leading our profession toward a carbon neutral future.

Eligibility
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JURY
Lance Bird, FAIA
La Canada Design Group, Inc.
Costa Mesa
Mary Griffin, FAIA
Turnbull Griffin Haesloop
San Francisco
Harrison Fraker, FAIA
Dean, College of Environmental Design
UC Berkeley

WINNERS
1ST PRIZE:
Commendation Award
($2,500 plus $5,000 to the architecture school of the winner’s choosing, the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo)

“Cascading Energy”
DES Architects + Engineers
Redwood City

Design Team:
Candice Lui
Steph Wong
Howard Kwok
Chi-Wing Wong
Ginny Yi
Waibun Lee
Enoc Lira

Cascading Energy is energy transferred. Wind becomes electricity. Electricity converts to a social vigor. Social vigor sustains an economic life. This new development is about creating, conserving, and sustaining energy in all its forms.

Visitacion Valley is the gateway to the City of San Francisco. At the threshold of this entry is a new architectural billboard declaring to the world that a sustainable urban community is possible and preferable. A dual-pronged approach is used to both generate energy and reduce consumption to neutralize the carbon emissions and environmental impact of the site.

The site tells us what it wants to be. It wants to be tall to take advantage of the high winds. It wants to be compact in design to reduce energy consumption. It wants to pay homage to its past as home of the former Schlage Factory. It wants to be connected to adjacent neighborhoods. It wants to use its open space to unite the community in festivals, to grow its own food, and to filter its own pollutants.

Energy transforms from a physical state to a communal vibrance to a cultural enterprise. The flow continues and energy cascades.
2009
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DES Architects + Engineers
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Design Team:
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Hancen Frank
Dr. Ping Wang
George Yi
Walter Lee
Nick del Moral
Mary N. Osmancio
Bryan C. Wong
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Architecture is in the midst of a revolution. In order to continue to prosper as a practice, we must strive to meet the needs of a rapidly changing environment. Seeking a carbon-neutral existence using solutions that employ established technology allows scientists to determine the future of habitation while leaving architects within the dated modernist envelope.

Architecture as a static object defies all notions of a sustainable system, and thus the use of the empty box approach to versatility fails. A sustainable system must not only draw on material technology but must be systemically as well as spatially adaptable, relieving pressure from material sourcing, waste creation, and decay.

Our current building system is artificial and inefficient, pitting man against nature. But for true solutions to these problems, we need only look to the natural world. Systems biology tells us that as cellular specialization increases within an organism, regenerative and adaptive capacity decreases proportionally. Therefore, the proper mimetic system for a fully adaptive architectural system is a colony of non-differentiated cellular units. These units can be removed or added without compromising the integrity of the system.

In this investigation, each cell contains all necessary pieces for survival. The networks created by each system overlap and interact to form a fully redundant, deconstructed, complex organism. Natural systems inform the architecture in terms of efficiency of primary structure, the employment of redundancy, and the use of complex, non-static, adaptive or cybernetic structural systems.

We can no longer afford to imagine ourselves as the commanders of nature, and our current model cannot be changed to accommodate this new strategy. Only by engaging drastic changes, creating architecture as a living, organic insertion, participating in the natural cycle, will we be able to regain balance.
Architecture is in the midst of a revolution. In order to continue to prosper as a practice, we must strive to meet the needs of a rapidly changing environment. Seeking a carbon-neutral existence using solutions that employ established technology allows scientists to determine the future of habitation while leaving architects within the dated modernist envelope. Architecture as a static object defies all notions of a sustainable system, and thus the use of the empty box approach to versatility fails. A sustainable system must not only draw on material technology but must be systematically as well as spatially adaptable, relieving pressure from material sourcing, waste creation, and decay.

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Passive Energy Conservation Building Strategies
- South side overhangs
- High narrow windows to admit more useful daylight
- Minimizing energy intensive commercial zones
- Operable windows
- Openings oriented towards the prevailing summer breezes
- Taller buildings on the south side provide shading during the summer months
- Natural ventilation

Rapidly Renewable and Innovation Building Materials
- Bamboo floors and other finishes
- Recycled PET Carpet with low VOCs and lower impact dye process
- Bonded Logic Ultra touch denim insulation, made of recycled jeans
- Double-paned, Low-E, argon filled glazing
- Use of recycled and locally sourced materials
- Reuse existing site materials

Green Construction Practices
- Modular construction to reduce the waste generated on site
- Recycling all waste, including day-to-day worker lunch trash
- Site soil erosion prevention plan

Promotion of Energy Efficient Transportation
- No inefficient cars will have parking on-site; limited parking provided for hybrid vehicles
- Land-a-bike system
- Ease access to local mass transit such as the MUNI and Cal Train
- Create an education program to bring green transportation to the tenants

Efficient Resource Management
- Low-flow fixtures and waterless urinals
- Rainwater harvesting
- Drought resistant flora
- Gray water reclamation and reuse
- On-site wastewater treatment before discharging to the sewage system
- Recycling center
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“How do you get to Carnegie Hall…?”

“How do you get to Carnegie Hall…” typically features an unnoticed, underappreciated, and unheralded project, building, or construction. Given the unique subject of this issue, we thought it appropriate to feature, on this occasion, a practice instead of a thing. And the term “practice” can be taken quite literally when used to describe architect and designer Rob Ley’s exhibition **Serial Departure** in L.A.’s Material and Applications Gallery and his installation for a private home in Atwater. Together, these projects represent the advancement of a technique, development of a method of investigation, and construction of a formal philosophy that will probably be the building blocks for Ley’s practice for years to come.

**Serial Departure** is Ley’s attempt to challenge how practitioners interested in Computer Aided Design and Computer Numerically Controlled fabrication conceive material, connection, detail, and effect. His desire was to depart from what were becoming canonized methods of material translation from digital modeling—CNC milling, 3D printing, laser cutting, and vacuum forming—and to look at how traditional means of construction could be mobilized to describe the same complex systems. He started with a standard building block: a 5” x 24” inch strip of bent acrylic, and a simple detail for connection—two stainless steel Phillips head screws that fasten one end of the acrylic strip to a furred wall. With this material and method he constructed a 9’ high by 52’ long, running bond, bent acrylic screen.

Installed against an exterior wall in the gallery’s forecourt, Ley’s piece stood as a low-tech translation of the high-tech processes of systems modeling and animation. As with his computer model, his installation offered, within an indifferent field, moments and eruptions of variation achieved by either varying the length and connection detail of his module, or by introducing an aggregation of new material and forms: steam-bent wood strips, which allowed his relatively contained piece to appropriate space and challenge the sanctity of the court.

For the Atwater Residence, Ley was essentially asked to reproduce the screen wall he had completed for the M&A. Fortunately, he was able to convince the client that a new context and program would require a reconsideration of the method of production and a unique and specific investigation into effect. Starting with a simple acrylic module, the problem of domestic space led to a variable system, allowing for differences of privacy or porosity required by the program adjacent to each section of the screen.

The method devised to solve the problem was a departure from **Departure**, since the system required a means of regulating density to control views; it could not be screwed down, as was the case in the gallery. As a result, the connection method for Atwater became a system of interlocking acrylic pieces with the capacity to slide into one another, allowing greater or lesser porosity depending on how tightly or loosely spaced the pieces are. With this simple detail, Ley was able to regulate on-the-fly the relationship of one space to another as the serpentine screen meandered through the home, organizing and accommodating domestic space specifically to its need.

“Practice” is all too often used in our profession as a noun, interchangeable with “office,” or “firm.” Ley’s work shows that the term is still an action verb and can still be used to describe the process of an architect’s growth towards maturity. **Serial Departure** and the Atwater Residence are similar with respect to their overall form and material, yet each satisfies specific needs for specific site conditions and programmatic requirements. One practice, one project, two sites.
“How do you get to Carnegie Hall…?”

“Under the Radar” typically features an unnoticed, underappreciated, and unheralded project, building, or construction. Given the unique subject of this issue, we thought it appropriate to feature, on this occasion, a practice instead of a thing. And the term “practice” can be taken quite literally when used to describe architect and designer Rob Ley’s exhibition Serial Departure in L.A.’s Material and Applications Gallery and his installation for a private home in Atwater. Together, these projects represent the advancement of a technique, development of a method of investigation, and construction of a formal philosophy that will probably be the building blocks for Ley’s practice for years to come.

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Most heavily published architects in the ’90s
Mario Botta and Tadao Ando, with over 50 titles each

www.stoutbooks.com

Architecture and design magazines that ceased publishing in the ’90s
Progressive Architecture (’96)
Design Quarterly (’98)

www.library.cca.edu

Magazines that launched in the ’90s
Harvard Design Magazine (’96)

www.library.cca.edu

California architecture programs launched in the ’90s
California College of the Arts (San Francisco)
NAAB Accredited 1992

University of California (San Diego)
Opened 1992 / Closed 1993

Woodbury University (Los Angeles)
NAAB Accredited 1994

New School of Architecture (San Diego)
NAAB Accredited 1998

www.naab.org

Some early ’90s AIA Gold Medal winners
Fay Jones (’90)
Charles Moore (’91)
Benjamin Thompson (’92)
Kevin Roche (’93)

www.aia.org

Some ’90s Pritzker Prize winners
Aldo Rossi (’90)
Alvaro Siza (’92)
Christian de Portzamparc (’94)
Sverre Fehn (’97)

www.pritzkerprize.com

AIA-CALifornia Council Firm Award 1990-99

www.aiacc.org

Pulitzer Prizes for Architectural Criticism in the ’90s
Allen Temko, San Francisco Chronicle (’90)
Robert Campbell, Boston Globe (’96)
Blair Kamin, Chicago Tribune (’99)

www.pulitzer.org

Architectural Record | Record Houses 1992
House on a Ranch, Petaluma, CA
David Morton Thomas Cordell Architects

Ortiz House, Mexico City
Taller de Enrique Norten y Asociados

Dennison/Peek House, Monkton, VT
Brooks & Carey Architects

Root Guest House, Ormond Beach, FL
Steven Harris & Associates Architects

House for a Film Producer, Los Angeles, CA
Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects

Wright House, Lone Ranch, WY
James Corner Architect

Conran-Hansen House, San Francisco, CA
Samantha Leather/Beach Stairs Architects

Burlton House, Madison County, MS
Woodard/Nordell Architects

www.library.cca.edu

AIA Firm Award 1990-99

www.aia.org

American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS)
President 1990-99
Kris Parish (*), Teresa Stoner (*), Courtney Miller, Garen Miller, Dee Christy Briggs, Robert Rowen, Raymond Dehn (*), Robert Morgan, Jay Palu (*)
(*): current AIA members

www.aias.org

AIAS Forum Cities 1990-99
San Francisco, Miami, Buffalo, Phoenix, Lexington, Portland, Washington DC, Denver, Fort Lauderdale, Toronto

www.aias.org

AutoCAD version introduced in October 1990
Release 11 (current version is Release 21)

www.autodesk.com

1994
Year that Yahoo! was founded by two Stanford graduate students
www.yahoo.com

1995
Year that Amazon’s site was created
www.amazon.com

1998
Year that Google’s search engine was released
www.google.com
Responding to the preceding issue of arcCA, “Prefabiana,” Harry Newman, AIA, of Thousand Oaks, sent us an article from the Chicago Sun-Times, written by architecture critic Rob Cuscaden and dated August 8, 1971. The article describes Newman’s proposal for a prefabricated high-rise apartment building. We excerpt a portion of the article here.

“High-rise buildings today are still essentially handicrafted products,” says young Chicago architect Harry Newman. “They’re produced piecemeal in the field and under adverse conditions. And as they become increasingly expensive, the amount of living space is reduced accordingly.”

Newman’s plan is to attack the problem head-on by radically altering the whole structural concept of the high-rise, which has basically remained unchanged during the past five decades, except for facing materials. It is still a massive, usually rectangular, structure supporting huge dead loads of materials, its bulk designed to combat the tremendous wind pressures that build up against the face of the structure.

Newman would do away with the “permanent building” concept and replace it with a structural frame consisting of three vertically extended hollow core members, which would include elevators, stair, fire and utilities. This triangularly-figured frame would receive and support individual, self-contained living units, or pods, which when mounted in place become a part of the building.

The three cores are made of prestressed concrete or structural steel sections and may be prefabricated and assembled at the site, or poured in place if concrete. The framework would include platforms that can extend outwards to receive the pods, which are delivered by helicopter and wrenched into place. The pods are then secured and the services quickly plugged in.

“And think of the travel and moving possibilities,” enthuses Newman. “A vacation or job transfer would simply mean unhooking your pod, having it airlifted wherever it was needed, and attaching it into a similar structure…. You could move your complete home from Rogers Park to Hyde Park in a matter of hours—without lifting a single chair!”