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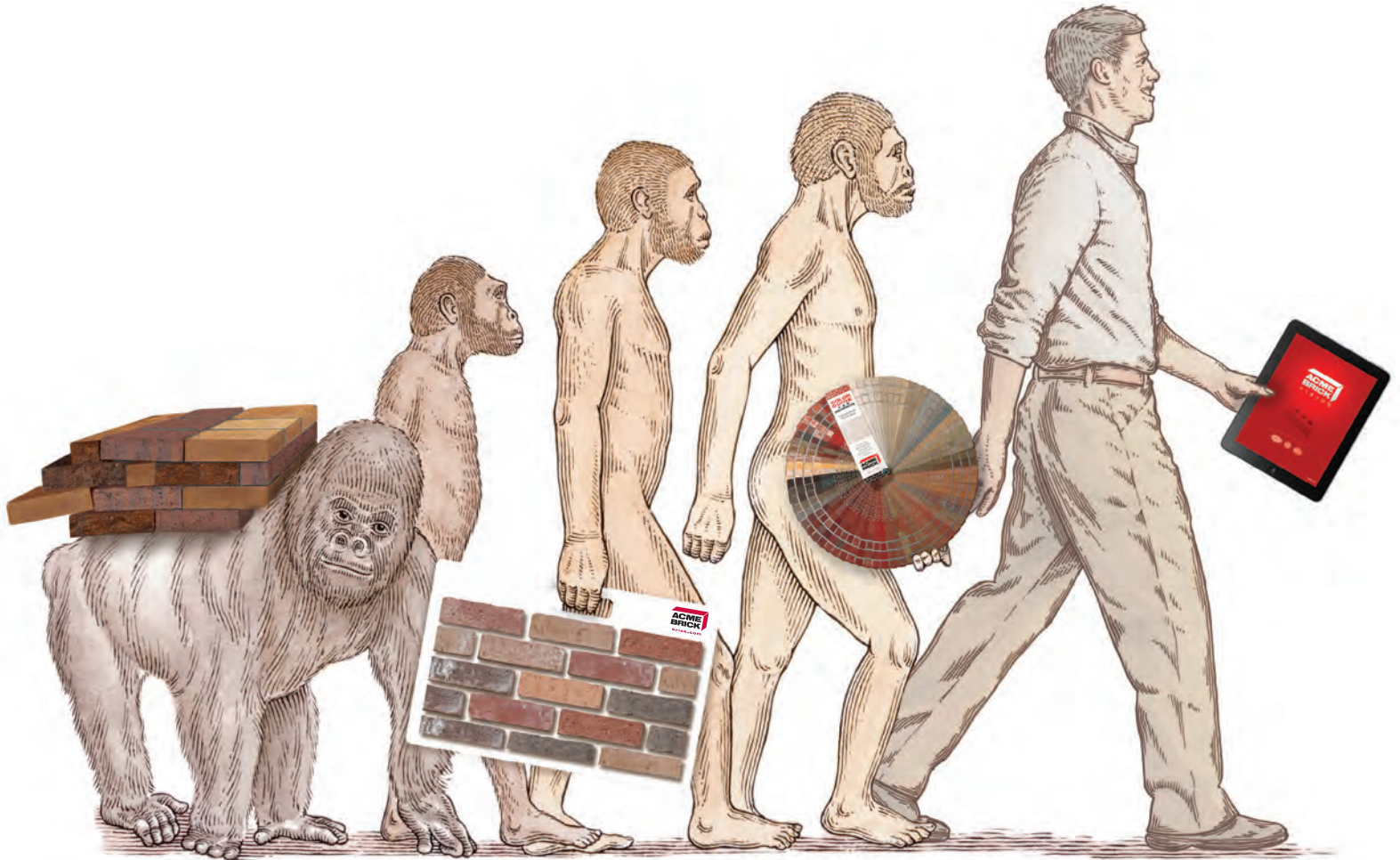


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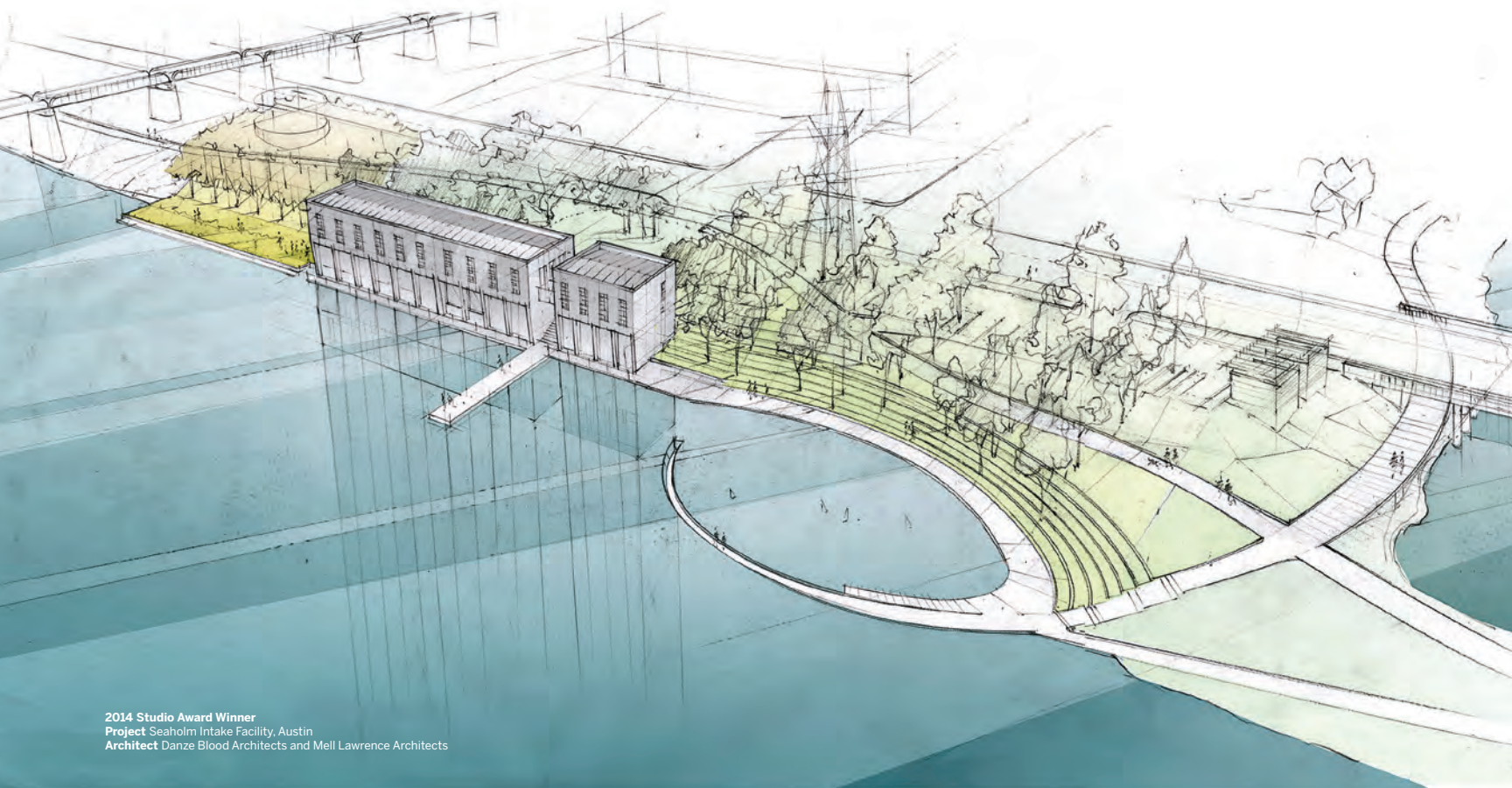
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Project Seaholm Intake Facility, Austin  
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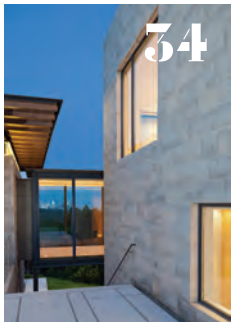
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*Gensler and its partner Chaotic Moon have created a new form of public installation, one that, through the use of light, sound and touch, puts a new spin on the notion of community space.*

## A Pop-Up Orchard, Awash in Color

by Ashley Craddock

**N**o client; no budget; no brief: Such was the greenfield in which the seeds for a prototype of the Orchard Project were planted. Unveiled on March 15 at SXSW, the prototype is a single, stylized, inflatable tree — part mobile art installation, part architectural icon — that stands 30 ft tall. Constructed of tensile white canvas and embedded with a core of digital lighting, the tree whispers, hums, and washes with colored light when touched. Hug it; poke it; lay on multiple hands — the tree will respond differently each time.

The tree is part of the Orchard Project. It is the first instantiation of an ambitious public art project spearheaded by Gensler and its partner, Austin-based software design and development studio Chaotic Moon. The goal was to create an iconic structure “for the city and in the city,” says John Houser, Assoc. AIA, one of the designers behind the project. “We set out to make something part art, part functional that could be broken up into parts and aggregated throughout the city, but then brought back together to make a large pavilion.”

Gensler’s offices are located in the heart of the capital city’s Second Street district, a sun-soaked downtown neighborhood that architect Vineta Clegg, a transplant from Europe, describes as “the complete opposite of what I was used to designing for, when I was in London.” Clegg says that the Gensler team behind the tree (so to speak), which included Clegg herself, Houser, Andy Waddle, and any number of others along the way, hatched the concept based on several distinct influences. The first was the firm’s commitment to civic engagement. The second was the team’s awareness that, in spite of the economic and cultural energy buzzing through Austin, the city lacked significant public art installations to match. The third influence was Austin’s chronic glare.

As the team brainstormed projects that fit the city’s needs and spirit, those elements eventually coalesced into the vision for a pop-up orchard that could be deployed to house events and shelter participants from the elements, as needed. Over the course of the partnership between Chaotic Moon and Gensler, the project morphed in unexpected

ways — an evolution Houser believes will continue. “One of the greatest aspects of this,” says Houser, “is that uses and applications go beyond anything I could dream up. People take things and they run with them in different directions.”

The eventual vision for the Orchard is far bigger than a single tree. Its creators expect companies to sponsor the creation of additional trees and use them as branding devices. They expect the trees to become canvases for digital media artists and programmers. Iconic and calming by day, the first tree of the Orchard Project embodies an architecturally atypical embrace of vivid color by night. Other structures featured in this issue likewise put color to use as a defining element, boldly wielding it to stamp their projects in startling and beautiful ways.

# Contributors



**Ingrid Spencer** is the newly appointed executive director of AIA Austin. For more than two years, Ingrid has been a regular contributor to *Texas Architect*, writing on a variety of topics. In this issue, she interviewed the new executive director of the Waller Creek Conservancy and also found time to write an article about Rand Elliott's work. Read her articles on pages 17 and 48.



**Ryan Flener, Assoc. AIA** is a graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Architecture and Design, where he was influenced by the historical relationships between body and building and music and the craft of montage. Read his article about Perkins+Will's new tower for the Richards Group on page 42.



**Leigh A. Arnold** is assistant curator at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas and a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Texas at Dallas. In addition to her role at the Nasher, Arnold has curated exhibitions at the Dallas Museum of Art; CentralTrak: The UT Dallas Artists Residency and Gallery; Gray Matters Gallery; and The John Wilcox Space. Read her essay about Dallas-based artist Gabriel Dawe on page 29.



**Canan Yetmen** is an Austin-based writer who is celebrating 20 years of hanging around the architectural profession and has no plans to stop any time soon. Read her article about Mell Lawrence Architects' Hollowcat Wild house on page 34.



**Dr. Kathryn E. O'Rourke** is a professor at Trinity University in San Antonio, where she teaches courses on the art and architecture of Latin America and on modern architecture. She is currently completing a book project, "Building History: Modern Architecture in Mexico City," about the influence of Mexican architectural history on modern architecture in the Mexican capital. Read her article about a renovated house in San Antonio's King William Historic District on page 66.



**Ben Koush** is a writer and architect in Houston. He brings his insights to his review of Content Architecture's Bayou Residence. Read his article on page 72.



**Ronnie Self, AIA** is an architect in Houston and associate professor at the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture at the University of Houston. Read his review of the new master plan proposal for The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, on page 11.



**Michael E. Allex, AIA** is a third-generation Valley Rat — Lower Rio Grande Valley Rat, that is. After graduating from Texas Tech University and working in Dallas for three years, Allex returned to his native Harlingen and has practiced architecture there for nearly 25 years. Allex enjoys the best of the Valley: fishing the flats and hunting the ranch country. Read his review of a new performing arts center on page 14.



**Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA** is currently a designer with Balford Architects in Austin. He received his Bachelor of Science in Architectural Design from MIT, where he completed a semester on exchange at TU Delft. Read his article about artist Margo Sawyer on page 79.



**Rachel Adams** is associate curator of the University at Buffalo Art Galleries. A former Austin resident, Rachel recently brought the work of Seattle-based artist John Grade to The Contemporary Austin Laguna Gloria. Read her article about a Hill Country art studio on page 54.



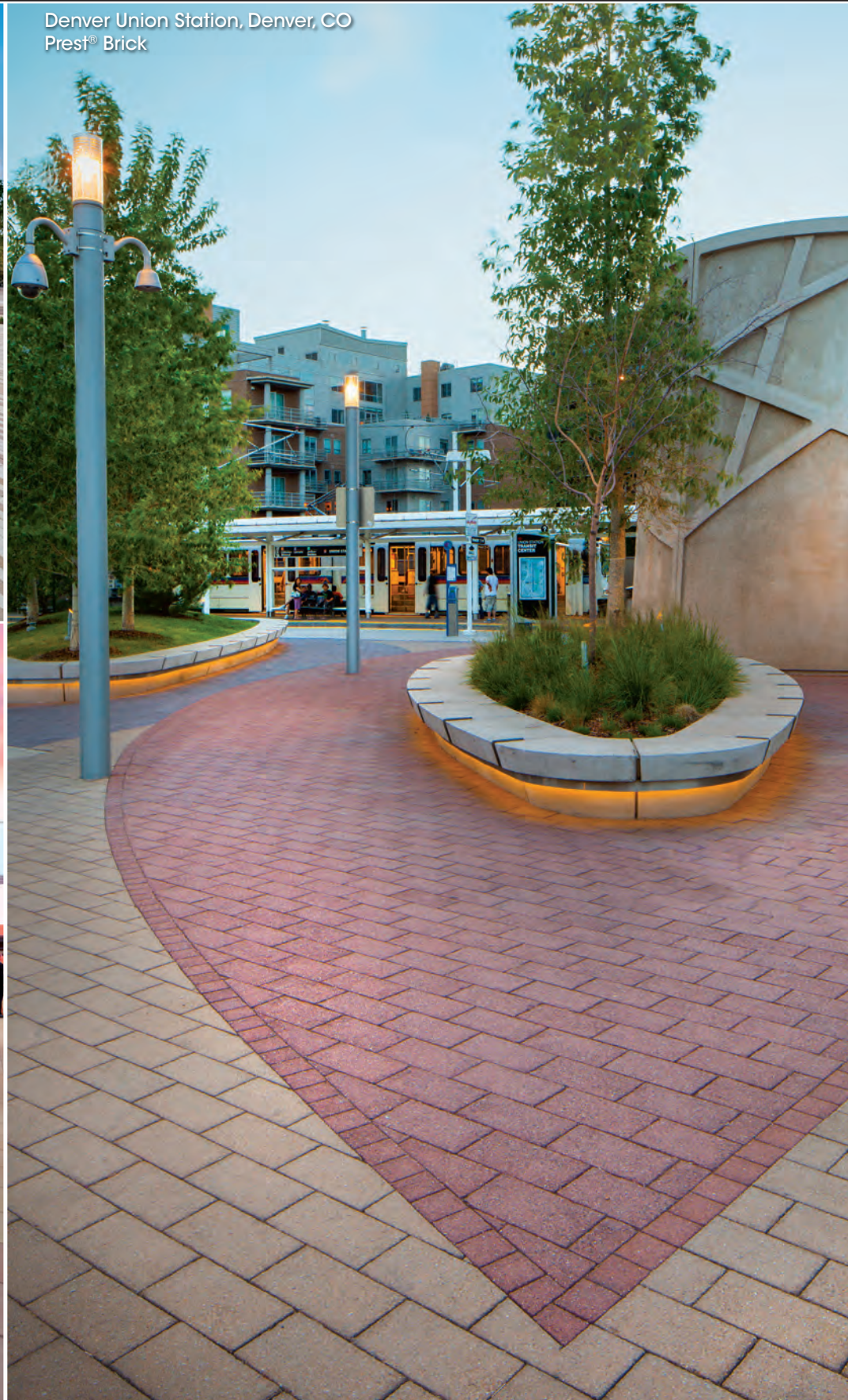
**Rita Catinella Orrell** is our products editor. She has been writing about design for over 18 years, covering architecture, interior design, home furnishings, kitchen and bath design, and building products. She was the products editor of *Architectural Record* for 14 years and was the founding editor of *SNAP*, a quarterly building products magazine. She currently writes about product design at [www.designythings.com](http://www.designythings.com) and [www.architects-toybox.com](http://www.architects-toybox.com). Check out her selection of wall finishes featured on page 26. ■



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*The plan for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston includes the Kinder Building and a new Glassell School of Art. The Kinder's luminous canopy extends a tradition of intriguing roofscapes at the MFAH.*

### **Fourteen Acres and a Holl**

by Ronnie Self, AIA

In terms of the ambitious design that was ultimately approved for the expansion of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), the acquisition of the surface parking lot across from Mies van der Rohe's Brown Pavilion was of utmost importance. Acquiring that humble slab of gray from the neighboring First Presbyterian Church was the critical first step that led to Stephen Holl Architects' grand vision — a master plan to transform the existing archipelago of buildings into a coherent, 14-acre campus.

All three finalists for the project (Steven Holl Architects, Morphosis Architects, and Snohetta) were asked to develop schemes for several unrelated buildings, including a new museum building on the parking lot site, a 10-story parking garage farther to the north, and a renovated

art school building. The winning proposal, by Steven Holl, FAIA, went further, delivering a true master plan rather than just the requested designs. Holl's plan includes a new 80,000-sf building to house the Glassell School of Art (not simply a renovation), as well as a new 164,000-sf Kinder Building (to house all types of works from the collection, from 1900 onward); underground parking for 400 cars (in lieu of the requested parking garage); and new plazas designed to complement the existing Lillie and Hugh Ray Cullen Sculpture Garden, which was designed by Isamu Noguchi in 1986. Holl's master plan is bold and pragmatic at the same time. It transforms the current piecemeal condition into a reasoned whole by responding to specific, localized circumstances and avoiding willful formal gestures. The parking site, transformed by the Kinder Building, is now the keystone that locks the whole together both urbanistically and architecturally.





**From top to bottom** A view of the Kinder Building's interior atrium gallery from the second floor. The Kinder Building entrance and garden view. View of the campus from the rooftop of the Glassell School of Art. View of the Glassell School of Art facade from the new plaza.

The new art school will require the demolition of the existing Glassell School of Art, built by S.I. Morris Associates in 1978. Losing the handsome, glass-block structure, although sad, will allow for the new school building to be pushed to the northern property boundary, liberating more usable pedestrian space within the site. Outdoor spaces along Montrose Boulevard and Bissonnet Street will stitch the various components together and provide a link between the administration building (Carlos Jiménez, 1994), to the northwest of the campus, and the Audrey Jones Beck Building (Rafael Moneo, 2000), to the southeast. The overall site plan, which extends south to the Mecom Fountain, underscores how urban continuity in Houston is more often established through trees and vegetation than through buildings.

Holl's architecture for the MFAH combines many of his ongoing preoccupations, ranging from the glowing glass object, to precast concrete panels, to garden roofs, to the primacy of interior space. His approach for the three-story Kinder Building is one of "complementary contrast," where a concrete structure clad with 30-in-diameter, translucent glass half-tubes simultaneously responds to the glass and transparency of Mies' building and the stone and opacity of Moneo's building. The glass skin also serves as a ventilated cavity or a "cool jacket" as it has been dubbed. More importantly, the building will glow at night — a signature Holl statement.

The Kinder Building plan follows the truncated triangular shape of its site. While Holl's project is taller than Mies' building, its narrowest facade faces its iconic neighbor and is even less imposing than it might be, since an entry courtyard at the corner of Main and Bissonnet Streets diminishes its length. The entry courtyard is one of seven courtyards, indentations in the building mass, which modulate the form on the exterior and bring light to the interior. At ground level, the Kinder Building will be predominantly transparent rather than translucent, with galleries along Main Street on one side and, on the other, a restaurant that offers views to Noguchi's sculpture garden.

The building is topped by the curved forms of the "luminous canopy" roof. Although the moniker might suggest a generalized glass roof to light the gallery spaces below, it in fact describes thin glazed clerestory bands, which will close the openings between the concave roof forms, filtering sunlight into the galleries.

Holl's luminous canopy perpetuates a tradition of intriguing yet hardly visible roofscapes — including Mies' expressed, fanning structural beams and Moneo's composition of louvered lanterns — at the MFAH.

Inside, the Kinder Building is organized around a full height, three-story interior atrium where the underside of the luminous canopy will be visible upon entering the building. A 200-seat theater will be located at the basement level, and underground pedestrian links connect to parking, the Glassell School of Art, and the Brown Pavilion. At the main level, the galleries are placed to the east, and the restaurant is to the west. A conference center and the loading dock are also housed on this level. A low-slope stair winds up through the atrium to the galleries above, and cylindrically-shaped elevators echo the tube forms of the exterior facade. The central atrium absorbs the more difficult, triangular shape of the plan and allows the galleries (54,000 sf, total) to remain as generally rectangular rooms pushed to the perimeter of the building. The atrium space also displays art works. Visitors will weave among the rooms, courtyards, and the atrium. The roof design is yet to be finalized, but the goal is to obtain 20-ft candles at a height of 5 ft, 6 in from the floor in the upper galleries. It is a challenging task, considering the variations in intensity and quality of light coming from the various clerestories that are oriented in all directions. In a public presentation of the design, Holl mentioned Louis Kahn's Kimbell Art Museum and Renzo Piano's Menil Collection as models for the light quality to be achieved.

The proposed L-shaped Glassell School is very different from the Kinder Building. Its exterior finish is precast concrete panels and glass, and it is meant to be more of an extension of the landscape than a freestanding object: A wedge-shaped walkable platform leads to a garden roof belvedere. The school also includes exhibition spaces and 30,000 sf of naturally-lit studios, a 75-seat auditorium, a café, and an art supply store.

Work begins this year, starting with the Glassell School; delivery dates of the various parts will be staggered. The Glassell should reopen in 2017, and the switch should flip to set the translucent Kinder Building aglow in 2019.

Ronnie Self, AIA, is an architect in Houston and an associate professor at the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture at the University of Houston.





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## Forward Lean

by Michael E. Allex, AIA

The Texas Rio Grande Valley has a unique degree of architectural homogeneity. Economic hardship in this border region tends to move the built environment toward elemental, frugal, and stylistically regional imagery. On the rare occasion when one sees progressive or modern architecture, it is — perhaps in an effort to adhere to the precepts of modernity — strikingly devoid of cultural context.

This is not the case with the 956-seat Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District's Performing Arts Center (PAC), designed by Megamorphosis Architects of Harlingen. Through the use of color and pattern, the architects carefully and subtly infuse refreshing regional and cultural cues into this modern archetype.

John Percy, AIA, designer and partner with Megamorphosis, says the process that led to the design of the 30,000-sf PAC involved close collaboration with a committee of community members. "We asked ... a series of questions," Percy says: "What is this building going to say about us, especially to the state and local community? What will it say about who we are as a school district? How's it going to feel?"

Throughout the process, the Megamorphosis team was careful to avoid questions of "architectural style," instead asking the committee to focus on the qualities and emotions they hoped the building would convey. Should it emphasize progress? Heritage? Something else? Ultimately, committee members "landed on two characteristics," says Percy, "state-of-the-art and forward-thinking. At the same time, they did not want to lose touch with their cultural identity. So, the building's design slogan became, 'who we are, and where we are going.'"

The completed structure has a full fly tower to accommodate scenery and other equipment.



**Top** *The front elevation of the PAC greets you with a playful contrast of structural rigidity and colorful cultural forms.*

**Left** *Multifaceted side baffles provide acoustical purpose and visual dynamics in an auditorium space that is brimming with state-of-the-art technology — all combining to provide the required functionality.*

Diverse architectural elements, including lighting, wood, and especially color, come together to bring the building's slogan to life. Percy says that, "from the standpoint of communicating a feeling, the use of color is a venerable tradition within Mexican architecture." Color is strategically integrated through the use of LED lights that can be fixed on a certain color or cycle through different hues. Housed in light coves in the lobby, these LED colors are synchronized with wall washers that light the exterior walls of the fly tower. In the main performance space, color-changing gobos (physical stencils placed in front of a light source) are used to cast wrought-iron patterns on sidewall baffles. These textures recall the French influence that is readily visible in the historic buildings of

neighboring Brownsville, while wood panels on the lobby's ceiling and walls create refreshing warmth.

Perhaps the most striking feature is the horizontal band of painted stucco on the building's exterior. The colorful, floating graphic features a computer-generated pictorial inspired by Talavera tile. This ornamentation is the best example of how the architects reinvigorated, in a modern way, a beloved cultural cue. "We are The Valley," says Percy, "and we should celebrate it in our architecture, as we do in the PAC—through the practice of symphonic band, jazz, and drama alongside *fólklorico* and *conjunto*. Those are all art forms that, culturally, we do really well!"

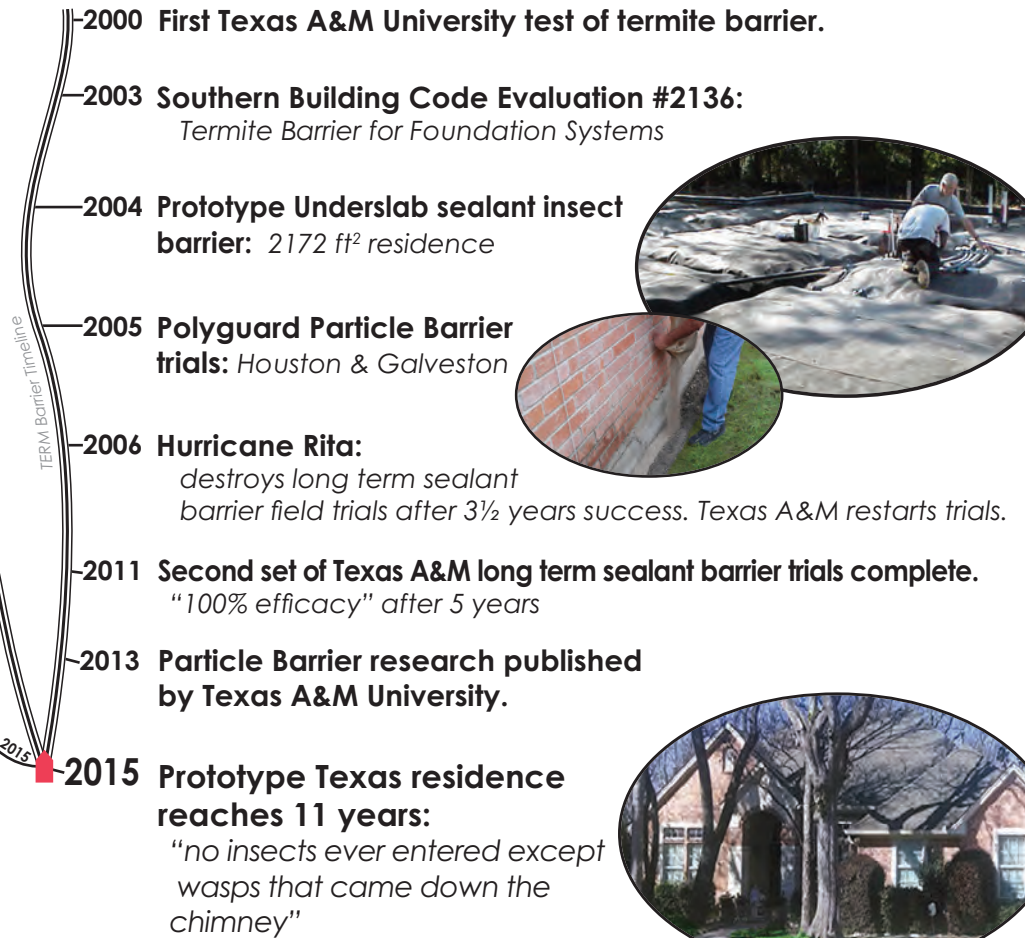
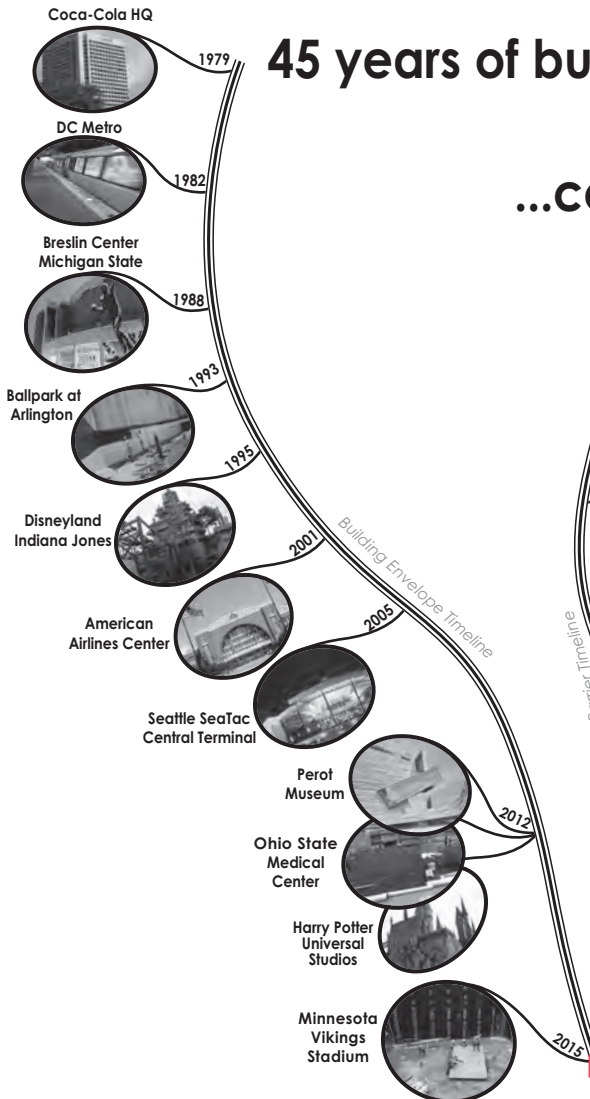
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*A veteran of New York's High Line campaign, Peter Mullan views the effort to restore Austin's Waller Creek as another chapter in his work to reconcile built and natural environments.*



### Nature's Curator

by Ingrid Spencer

Waller Creek Conservancy CEO Peter Mullan graduated from the Yale University School of Architecture in 1997, went back to New York City, and had every intention of changing the world.

Luckily, his first employer and mentor James Polshek, principal of then-named Polshek Partnership Architects — now called Ennead Architects — appreciated that bravado and encouraged Mullan to get involved in local advocacy. The young architect was especially excited when people began to talk about saving the dilapidated rail line known as the High Line. “It started as a preservation project,” says Mullan. “I got involved as a volunteer, working to keep the structure from being torn down.”

As the High Line project went from preservation to full-on development endeavor, Mullan was tapped to shepherd the project as executive vice president of Friends of the High Line. “That project changed my sensibility about what it means to be an architect,” says Mullan. “We were interested in figuring out how to build a community, how to connect the built environment and public space.”

Mullan is ready to do that again, in Austin, with Waller Creek. “There are lots of similarities,” he says. “You need people who are fighters,

who are ready to stand behind their convictions. We have that here in Austin.” Of course, he also sees the differences between Waller Creek and the High Line. Waller Creek is, after all, a functioning waterway with multiple layers of complex organic systems in play. Mullan says it’s the tunnel project the City of Austin is building to control the floodwaters that makes Waller Creek especially fascinating. “From a natural creek to an engineered natural creek, the tunnel will allow us to curate natural processes.”

Would he ever go back to architecture? “I don’t see myself as having ever left architecture,” he says. “I may have left traditional practice, but with Waller Creek I’ve found a way to reconcile all the different forces that combine to create environments. It’s not only how they are, but how they could be. It’s transformation. Austin is an exciting place to be, at this moment.”

Ingrid Spencer is the newly appointed executive director of AIA Austin.

### Calendar

#### AIA Convention 2015

May 14–16

[convention.aia.org](http://convention.aia.org)

With almost 300 opportunities to gain continuing education credits and with former President Bill Clinton as one of the keynote speakers, the AIA Convention in Atlanta promises to set a new standard. The event takes place May 14–16 at the Georgia World Congress Center.

#### Phyllida Barlow at the Nasher

May 30

[nashersculpturecenter.org](http://nashersculpturecenter.org)

This summer, the Nasher Sculpture Center will present a major exhibition of the work of British sculptor Phyllida Barlow. Using commonplace materials — wood, plaster, concrete, cardboard, and strips of colorful cloth or tape — Barlow creates monumental, ramshackle novel sculptural forms. The exhibition will be on view from May 30 to August 30.



#### AIA Sandcastle

May 30

[aiahouston.org](http://aiahouston.org)

For over two decades, teams of architects, designers, and engineers have taken their tools to East Beach in Galveston for a Texas-sized sandcastle competition. The event takes place on Saturday, May 30.

#### Texas Society of Architects 2015 Studio Awards

June 5

[texasarchitects.org/studioawards](http://texasarchitects.org/studioawards)

The Texas Society of Architects Studio Awards recognize innovation and excellence in design. Real or theoretical projects that go beyond the boundaries of architecture by addressing current critical issues are encouraged. The final deadline for entries is June 5. ■



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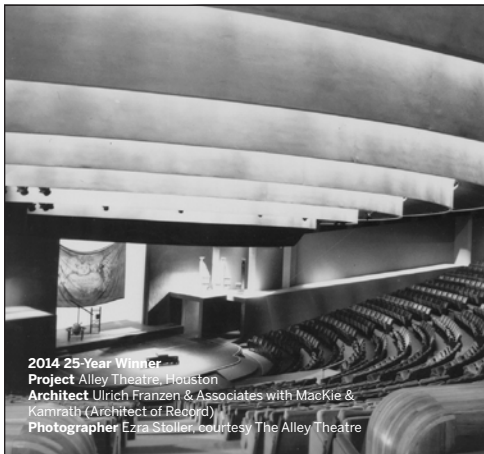
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 Photographer Ezra Stoller, courtesy The Alley Theatre

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 Call for Nominations

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**Entry Deadline**  
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[www.texasarchitects.org/honorawards](http://www.texasarchitects.org/honorawards)



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## 2014 Preservation Texas Honor Awards

Preservation Texas' annual awards program includes the Historic Restoration Award and the Historic Rehabilitation Award. The first honor acknowledges historic resources that have been properly restored to a specific time period, and the second recognizes exceptional rehabilitation projects in which a historic resource is adapted to meet the demands of modern use without compromising the site's historic character. The 2014 award recipients were honored last winter.



### Historic Restoration Awards

- 1 Texas State University Old Main Building, San Marcos**  
BRW Architects
- 2 Dallas ISD Woodrow Wilson High School, Dallas**  
BRW Architects
- 3 Magoffin Home State Historic Site, El Paso**  
Killis Almond & Associates
- 4 500 Fannin, Houston**  
Ziegler Cooper Architects
- 5 The Frie Building, Saint Jo**  
John H. Sickles
- 6 Reverchon Park, Dallas**  
Mesa Design Group
- 7 Fort Treviño, San Ygnacio**  
Frank Briscoe





# Recognition



## Historic Rehabilitation Awards

- 1 U.S. Post Office and Courthouse Building, Dallas**  
Norman Alston Architects
- 2 Harris County Sylvan Beach Pavilion, La Porte**  
Kirksey Architecture
- 3 Fourth Ward Cottage, Houston**  
Houston Heritage Society
- 4 Julia Ideson Building, Houston**  
Gensler
- 5 Historic Elks Lodge Building, Marshall**  
Norman Alston Architects
- 6 Claretian Founding House, San Antonio**  
Fisher Heck Architects







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Acme's Elgin Plant Provides Vocabulary for New Campus's Design Language



When Austin Community College expanded eastward, to Elgin, a natural choice for the new campus's first building was Acme Brick, in six colors, from the hometown Elgin Plant. Open grid elevations in O'Connell Robertson's distinctive design include spandrels with full brick finishes and engineered concealed lintels. ACC Elgin serves 1,500 students with LEED Silver efficiency—thanks in part to Acme's local sourcing and long-term life cycle value. Low maintenance, high visibility brick delivers design flexibility, achieves performance stability, and sets the stage for future expansion as the campus grows. Please contact your local Acme Brick representative to build your next project with our quality brick.

*"We chose local Acme Brick because Elgin is the 'Brick Capital of the Southwest.' Working with O'Connell Robertson, we used brick to fit in to the community we have entered with the first phase of our new campus. We are pleased with the interest and appeal the six different brick selections provide today and the tone they set for the final buildout of a 98-acre master plan that envisions 12,000 students."*

*— Pamela Collier, R.A., Project Manager,  
Austin Community College District*



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Sage Brush velour  
Santa Fe craftwork

Sierra velour  
Desert Sand craftwork

*"We started from Acme Brick itself to represent the local architecture and culture of Elgin's historic streetscape. Our three main colors, with complementary accents, suggest the growth of buildings over time, as different storefronts, to create a design language for the campus. We envision future buildings using the same approach to create a cohesive campus. We made sure all bricks we specified were made in Elgin. Details like concealed lintels were really important, so that we could harken back to loadbearing masonry and that solid feeling in a modern way."*

*– Jarrod Stezinger, AIA, LEED AP  
O'Connell Robertson*



# Paperwork



## Austin

Artist Ellsworth Kelly has designed a site-specific installation for The University of Texas at Austin's Blanton Museum of Art. The 2,715-sf stone building, which Kelly calls "Austin," is singular in the artist's career. Kelly designed the structure, its colored glass windows, a slender wooden sculpture, and an installation of 14 black-and-white marble panels. San Antonio's Overland Partners will act as the architect of record for the project, which will become part of the Blanton's permanent collection. A capital campaign to raise funds for construction is underway.

"'Austin' is part of a journey that began nearly 70 years ago," remarked Kelly in a statement issued by the Blanton. The artist has long been intrigued by Romanesque and Byzantine art and architecture. The simplicity of its forms first sparked his interest when he was an art student in 1947. This new work seeks to convey some of the emotional experience of the works that inspired it. "I hope visitors will experience 'Austin' as a place of calm and light," Kelly said. ■



**Top** Nonreligious in nature, "Austin" was inspired by Romanesque and Byzantine architecture.

**Bottom** The space employs luminous color to inspire contemplation.

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# Products

by Rita Catinella Orrell

**These colorful wall and wall covering options for residential and commercial spaces include back-painted glass, an online tool for custom interior panels, and a wall covering collection inspired by architectural and environmental photography.**



## **Pattern+ Customization Tool**

3form

3-form.com

3form's Pattern+ is an online pattern customization tool that allows designers to choose from a variety of interior panel options. Previously available only in 3form's rigid Infinite Glass material, Pattern+ can now also be specified in the manufacturer's flexible and formable Varia Ecoresin, a resin made of 40 percent post-consumer recycled material. The Pattern+ tool offers infinite possibilities in color, etch, scale, tone, style, and even shape and dimension. Shown here are the Crossed Color Inverse pattern in blue and the Crossed Color pattern in green.



## **Olympus Wallpaper**

Graham & Brown

grahambrown.com

Unveiled at Messe Frankfurt's Heimtextil show in January, Graham & Brown's Superfresco Midas wallpaper collection includes seven new patterns ranging from a coordinating plain to a regal damask. Both contemporary and classic, the collection's Olympus pattern is a curvy ogee that is subtly enhanced with glitter and mica details. Made of expanded vinyl, the washable wallpaper measures 20" wide x 33' long and features a 25" pattern repeat. It comes in seven colorways: hot pink, plum, black/white, gold, gray, green, and turquoise (shown).





**Puzzle Palette**  
Colorhouse  
colorhousepaint.com

Made in a LEED Gold-certified manufacturing facility, Colorhouse's low-odor paints are free of VOCs, chemical solvents, reproductive toxins, toxic fumes, and hazardous air pollutants (HAPs). The company's artist-crafted Puzzle Palette for Spring 2015 includes four new pairings that work for both juvenile and adult spaces alike, including a yellow-orange, a cool gray, a strong graphite gray, and a warm red. Colorhouse's sustainability extends to its recycled content containers, 100 percent post-consumer waste, chlorine-free labels and brochures, and PaintCare drop-off site at their warehouse that allows leftover paint to be recycled.



**Back-Painted Glass**  
Bendheim  
bendheimarchitectural.com

Shown here in Pantone Color Institute's 2015 Color of the Year, Marsala, Bendheim's Color-Coated Glass offers precision-matched custom colors for its extensive line of specialty textured glass and satin-smooth etched glass. Using advanced color technologies, Bendheim can precisely match Pantone colors, paint-chip colors, and corporate or brand colors using UV-resistant, VOC-free, water-based paints. The Color-Coated Glass can be tempered or laminated for additional safety and security for use as wall cladding, feature walls, back-splashes, countertops, and tabletops. It is available in thicknesses ranging from 1/4" to 3/4" and sizes up to 60" x 120".



**Nexus Collection by Kari Pei**  
KnollTextiles  
knoll.com

For the Nexus Collection, designer and artist Kari Pei created a series of visually textural commercial wall coverings inspired by her own architectural and environmental photography. Printed on high-performance vinyl with a 30-percent-recycled-polyester base, Nexus includes Overlay, a flat print that reads like an embossed texture; Borderline, a large-scale stripe composed of horizontal and diagonal bands; and Tangled (shown), which appears like a series of loose, vertically-dangling intermingled threads. Tangled was created by layering six individual drawings in Photoshop and then printing them using four different rollers on top of a base color. ■



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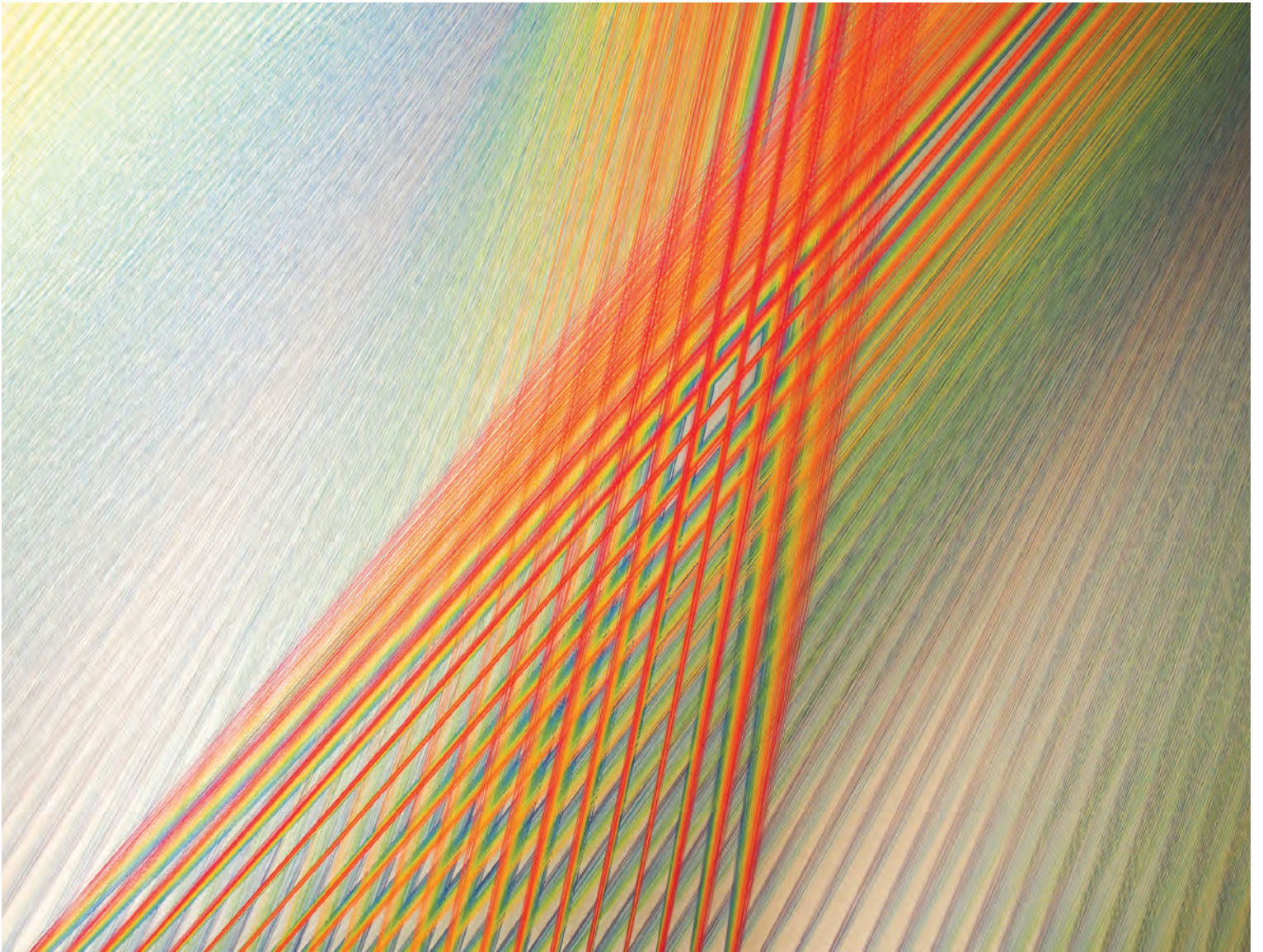
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*Gabriel Dawe, “Plexus c8” (detail), 2013, Gütermann thread, wood, and hooks. Site-specific installation at Gensler Houston.*

## Warp and Weft

by Leigh A. Arnold

In the summer of 2009, artist Gabriel Dawe and architect Gary Cunningham were invited to collaborate on a work of art as part of an exhibition titled “Transitive Pairings: Body Objects.” Organized by Dr. Charissa Terranova at CentralTrak, the University of Texas at Dallas artists’ residency where Dawe practiced, “Transitive Pairings” was inspired by — and it expanded upon — the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art’s 2006–2007 exhibition, “Skin + Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture.” The Los Angeles exhibit examined themes of shelter, identity, and creative process, as well as the parallel stylistic tendencies found between fashion

design and architecture. The Dallas exhibit built on these themes to examine how collaborations between artists and architects might lead to hybrid forms that elucidate the relationship between the human body and inanimate objects.

Terranova’s invitation represented a fortuitous opportunity for Dawe. At the time, he was an MFA candidate working primarily in textiles. He was interested in expanding the scale of his practice, and his collaboration with Cunningham became the catalyst that propelled his work from a focus on small, intimate objects to the large-scale environmental installations for which he is now best known.



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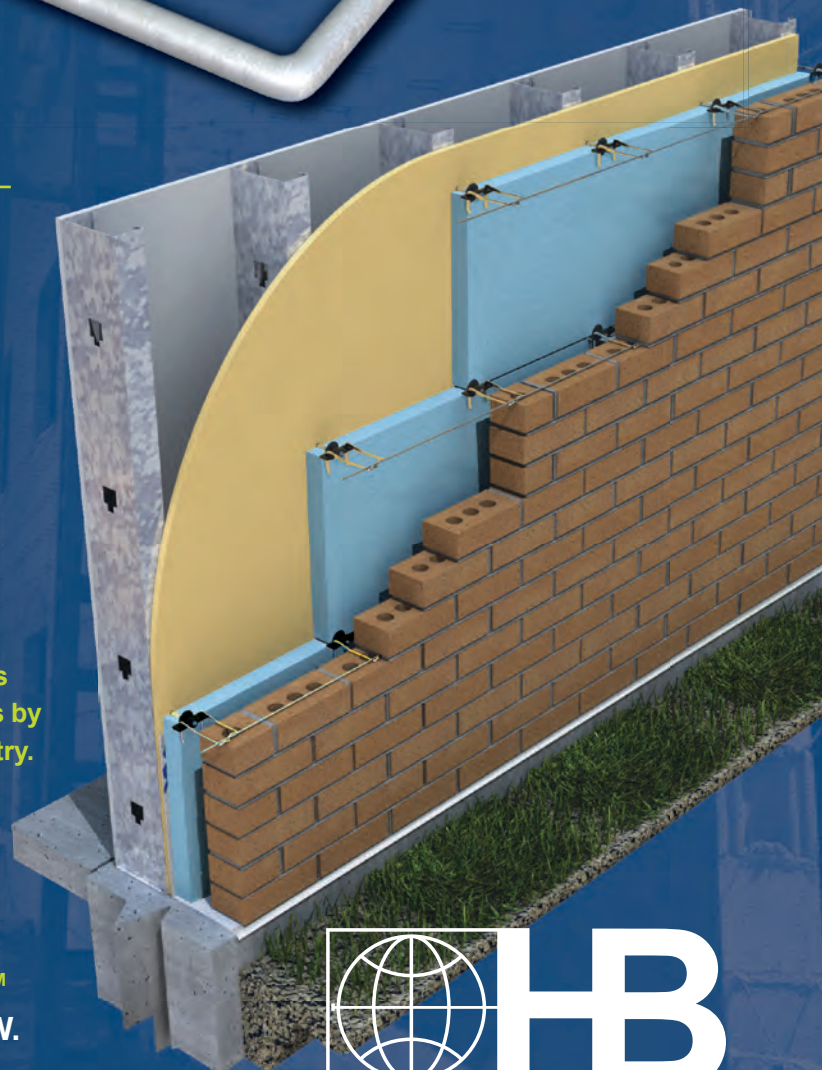
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No matter its scale, much of Dawe's work is an exercise in precision. His early work involved painstaking stitchwork, thread, pins, and articles of clothing sourced from the artist's own closet as well as from local used clothing stores. Works from this period include the "Pain Series," for which the artist pushed hundreds of pins through shirt cuffs and collars, creating garments whose two sides — one glossed with a pinhead sheen like protective armor; the other prickly like a medieval Iron Maiden — represent the painful ways in which fashion informs identity. Other pieces from this era include "Selective Memory," "Fear Series," and "Identity Series." All utilize thread and embroidery and explore the artist's feelings of inadequacy about working with the domestic tools of needles and thread traditionally wielded by women.

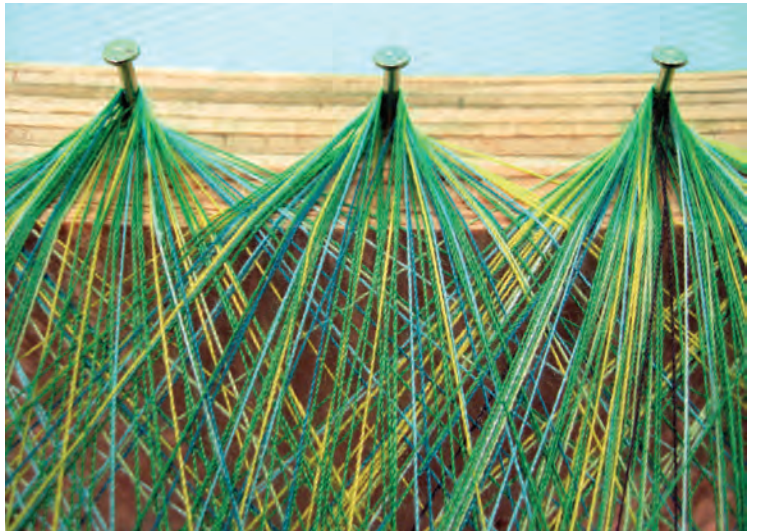
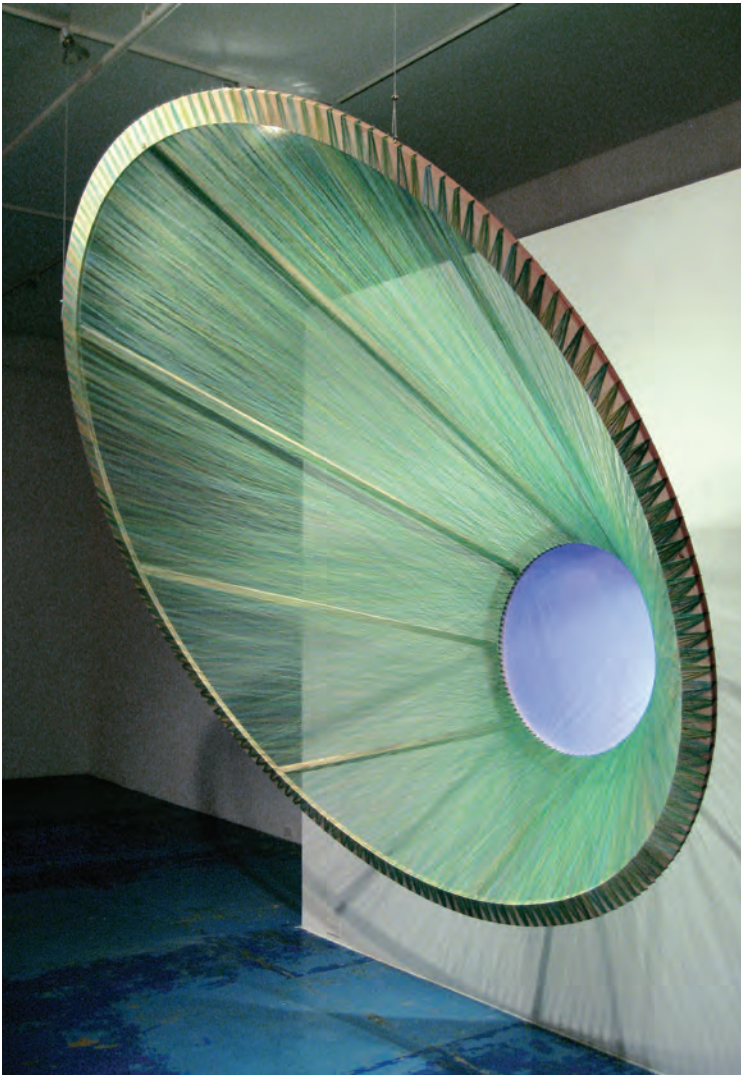
The installations that emerged from Dawe's collaboration with Cunningham represent the most ambitious expressions of his meticulous attention to form and detail. The first of these, the "Plexus" series of architectural thread installations, began as a formal exercise. Working in his CentralTrak studio to develop a method for expanding the scale of his work in preparation for the "Transitive Pairings" exhibition, Dawe created a screen of intricately woven, multicolored thread that covered an entire wall from floor to ceiling. With this installation, Dawe discovered a way to weave the thread to create a subtle yet brilliant gradient of color. He also



**Left** "Plexus no. 19," 2012, Gütermann thread, painted wood, and hooks. Site-specific installation at the Villa Olmo - Agorà Miniartextil.

**Above** "Plexus no. 19" (detail), 2012, Gütermann thread, painted wood, and hooks. Site-specific installation at the Villa Olmo - Agorà Miniartextil.





developed the anchoring mechanism that would be used in the circular eye form he planned for “Transitive Pairings.”

For the exhibition, Cunningham and Dawe created “Eye I” and “Eye II”: A large eye created by Cunningham appeared on the exterior of the gallery and was echoed by one on the inside, designed by Dawe. The two versions connected via a window box that allowed light to pass through the outer eye pupil to the inner eye pupil. The installation incorporated sound and projected video playing on the “pupils,” which were screens. Cunningham was inspired by Stanley Kubrick’s 1971 film, “A Clockwork Orange,” and he took a more literal approach to his form, with dramatic eyelashes appended to the upper and lower eyelids. Dawe’s inner eye, composed of a circular wood frame and woven thread in shades of green, was a more abstract meditation on the form: It sprang away from the gallery wall, activating the negative space.

Exposure to architectural practice allowed the artist to reconsider his textile pieces in terms of their sheltering nature and to transform them into immersive installations that call attention to negative spaces and the way our bodies move through them.

In the years since the exhibition, Dawe has continued working on installations that combine his interest in space, light, architecture, and fashion. In creating architectural installations with the most basic component of cloth — thread — the artist ties together the two seemingly disparate disciplines of fashion and architecture under the overarching theme of shelter. Dawe’s monumental thread installations relate not only to the body and the complexities of our designs, but also to the structures that cover and protect our bodies from external elements.

Leigh A. Arnold is assistant curator at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas.

**Left** Gabriel Dawe, “Eye II,” 2010, thread, wood, nails, paper, and video projection and sound.

Collaboration with Gary Cunningham for exhibition “Transitive Pairings: Body Object.”

**Top right** “Eye II” (detail).

**Bottom right** Gabriel Dawe, “Plexus no. 21” (detail), 2013, Gütermann thread, painted wood, and hooks, 12.5 x 45 x 40 feet. Site-specific installation at the Gutstein Gallery, Savannah College of Art and Design.



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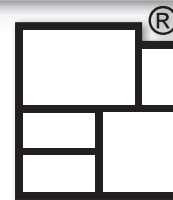
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## Gray Matter

by Canan Yetmen

**Project** Hollowcat Wild, Austin

**Client** Lynn Walton and Bill Witcher

**Architecture Firm** Mell Lawrence Architects

**Design Team** Mell Lawrence, FAIA; Scott Smith; Erin Curtis; Krista Whitson, AIA;

Kim Furlong; Francois Levy, AIA

**Photographers** Whit Preston and Andrea Calo









# Open House



**M**ell Lawrence isn't bound by any obvious book of rules. The Austin architect often gets labels like "whimsical" and "playful" tossed at his work. And yet, while there is a certain spirited quality underlying most of his projects, a keen observer will be drawn to the rigor and intellect that underpin them. In other words, there are rules.

For the Hollowcat Wild residence, the rules focused largely on materials. This mattered because the house is so starkly simple that no gesture goes unnoticed. "The client's interests were very definitely simple modern architecture, things that were daring and dynamic in form, sophisticated and minimal," Lawrence said. "With that in mind, we created a strategy, which turned into a rule, which was to make the materials be consistent." Materials were likewise kept to a mere handful. The palette comprises predominantly limestone, steel, glass, and wood, with each material given a clearly defined role that contributes to the simple harmony of the design.

The site, on a slope in the hills west of Austin, boasts a spectacular view of the city skyline, its landmark buildings strung out like a garland on the horizon.

From there, a low-slung pavilion bisected by a dogtrot appears through the screen of yaupons, juniper, and mountain laurels, which were left largely to their own devices after minor clearing. The dogtrot creates a visual sliver that provides a glimpse from the scrubby forecourt through the pavilion's limestone passage, into the courtyard, to the main house's glass



**Opening spread** *The south-facing glass wall of the guest room is turned away from its neighbors, affording plenty of natural light and views, as well as privacy.*

**Above** *The central plaza organizes the two discrete pavilions and establishes the home's museum-inspired minimalism.*

**Left** *A glimpse of the glass-encased bridge that floats above the landscape, connecting public and private spaces.*





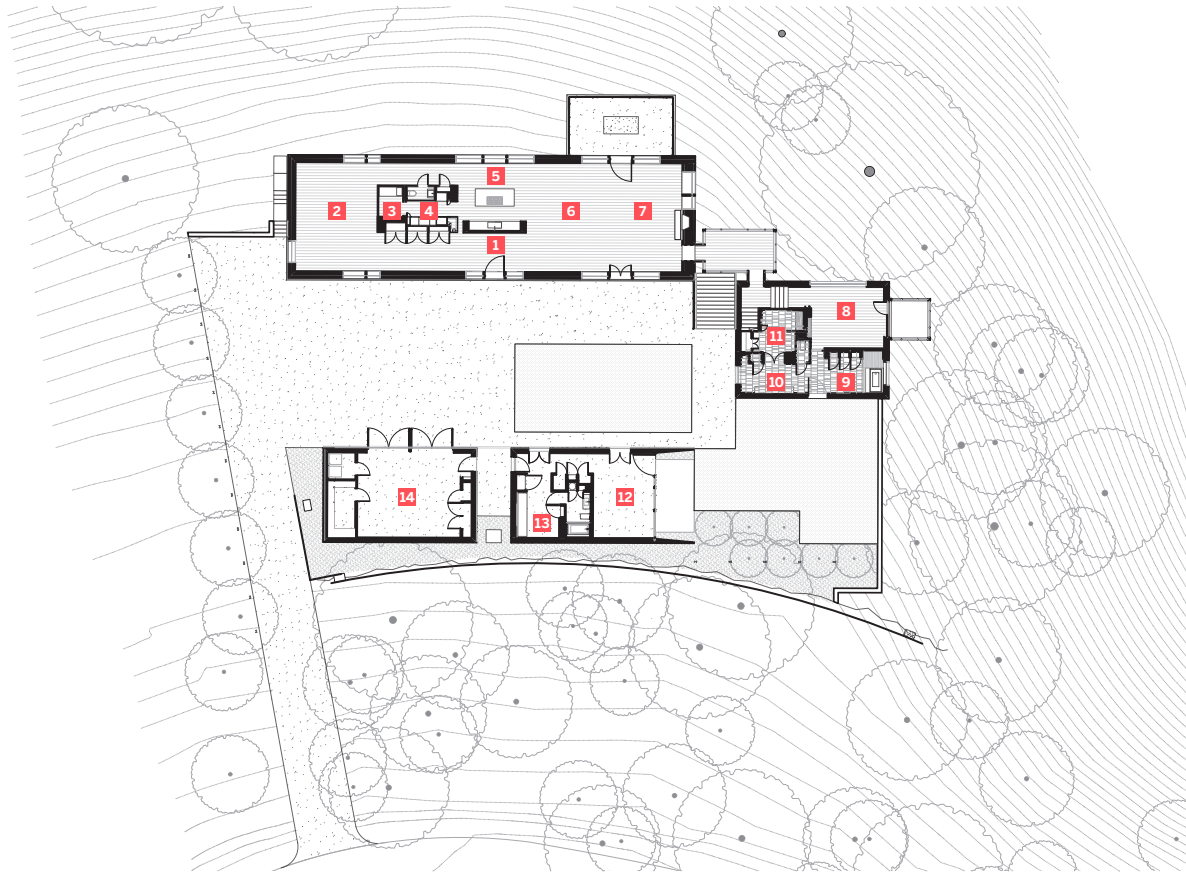
**Left** *The kitchen, defined by “boxes of utility,” is open to the surrounding spaces and to the sweeping views to the west.*

**Below** *The living area at the southern end of the main pavilion connects to a generous outdoor terrace that looks to the Austin skyline on the horizon.*



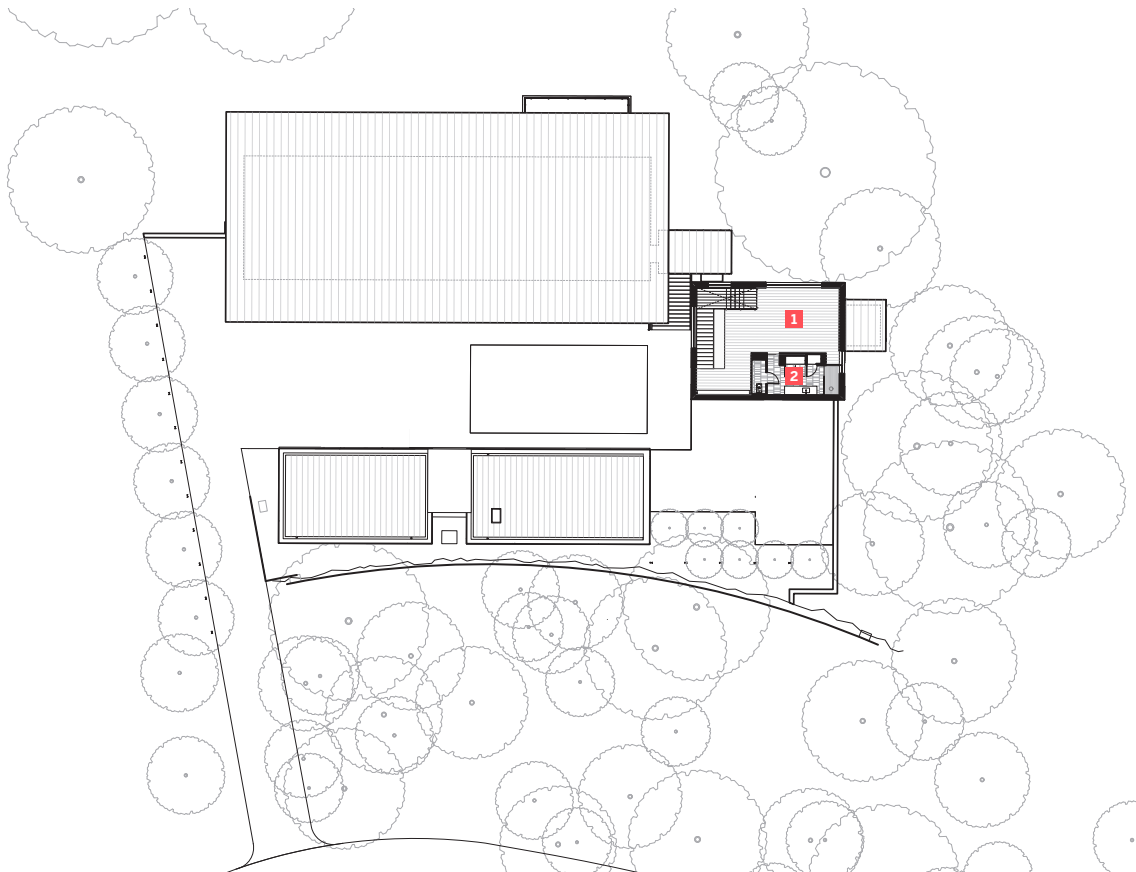


# Open House



## SITE/FLOOR PLAN

- 1 ENTRY
- 2 MEDIA
- 3 LAUNDRY
- 4 PANTRY
- 5 KITCHEN
- 6 DINING
- 7 LIVING
- 8 MASTER BEDROOM
- 9 BATH
- 10 DRESSING
- 11 CLOSET
- 12 GUEST
- 13 OFFICE
- 14 GARAGE



## SECOND LEVEL

- 1 DEN
- 2 BATH





*Lueders limestone, the dominant material used throughout the structure, is softened by patterning that refines the stone's heaviness. Clerestories accentuate the deliberate separation of elements.*

front door, and out the other side. The layers give an immediate sense that this house is no monolith but rather a series of discrete spaces, defined as much by their separation as by their monochromatic unity.

The owners had found the perfect elevation mark that allowed them to crop out the the roofs of neighboring houses in the foreground and still see the city in the distance. Because the desire was for a one-story house, that predetermined level became the open courtyard. The mark happened to be low enough to allow the street view to pass right over the house, so that the roofscape — gently arched metal panels floating above the stone volumes — became the home's understated, unobtrusive street presence.

As one descends into the courtyard, the house is revealed as separated pavilions, pulled-apart boxes that create the arrival sequence. Separation is essential to the design's vocabulary; even on the plaza, grass, stone, gravel, and concrete coexist in segmented geometries that break down the expansive scale. Lueders limestone, the most gray of the variety (a color said to be achieved from eons of soaking in petroleum and minerals) establishes the defining and dominant color palette. Materials are allowed to be, simple and without augmentation.

The clients asked for a house that embraced the serene and neutral qualities of an art museum, and the kinship is immediately apparent in the home's main room, a 2,700-sf living, cooking, and dining space. Here, the limestone walls provide a backbone for punched openings that frame far views to the west, and close, intimate courtyard scenes to the east and south. The functional spaces of the kitchen sit, Judd-like, in the open space,

*“We created a strategy, which turned into a rule, which was to make the materials be consistent.”*

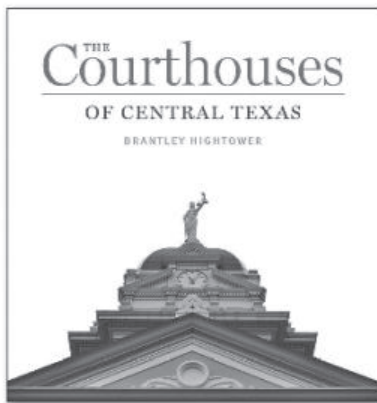
with dining and living rooms and large views to one side, and enclosed television and reading space to the other. These lighter “boxes of utility” within the larger space further enhance the sense of separation; they reappear as closets and bathrooms in the private spaces.

Thanks to Lawrence's deft hand with light and patterning, the vast space is deeply pleasing, even soothing, to experience, imbued with what architect and author Christopher Alexander called “aliveness.” A sense of wholeness and grace makes even the heavy stone walls seem energized, boosting the white plaster ceiling that appears to be taking flight, hovering in the tree canopy above a perimeter clerestory.

In contrast to the tethered quality of the public space, the two-level private quarters are fully released into the trees and the sky above. Moving through a glass-encased bridge to reach the bedrooms, the energy shifts from earth to sun, and the house begins to take off. Light is everywhere. It changes constantly, reflecting off the landscape, glimmering on the edge of the roof and purlins of the public wing, and casting living shadows on the white oak floor. This light quality is reinforced by the gentle separation of wall from floor, wall from wall, and wall from ceiling. “It allows the objects to be,” said Lawrence. “And it's a way to let the space complete itself.” The deliberately neutral palette of the house was intended to provide a backdrop for art, but its effect on the owners has changed their minds. Instead, only minimal accessorizing is evident, and any bursts of color pop mostly from the covers of the books and magazines on display. Absent any other distractions, the architecture is allowed come to the fore.

Canan Yetmen is an Austin-based writer.



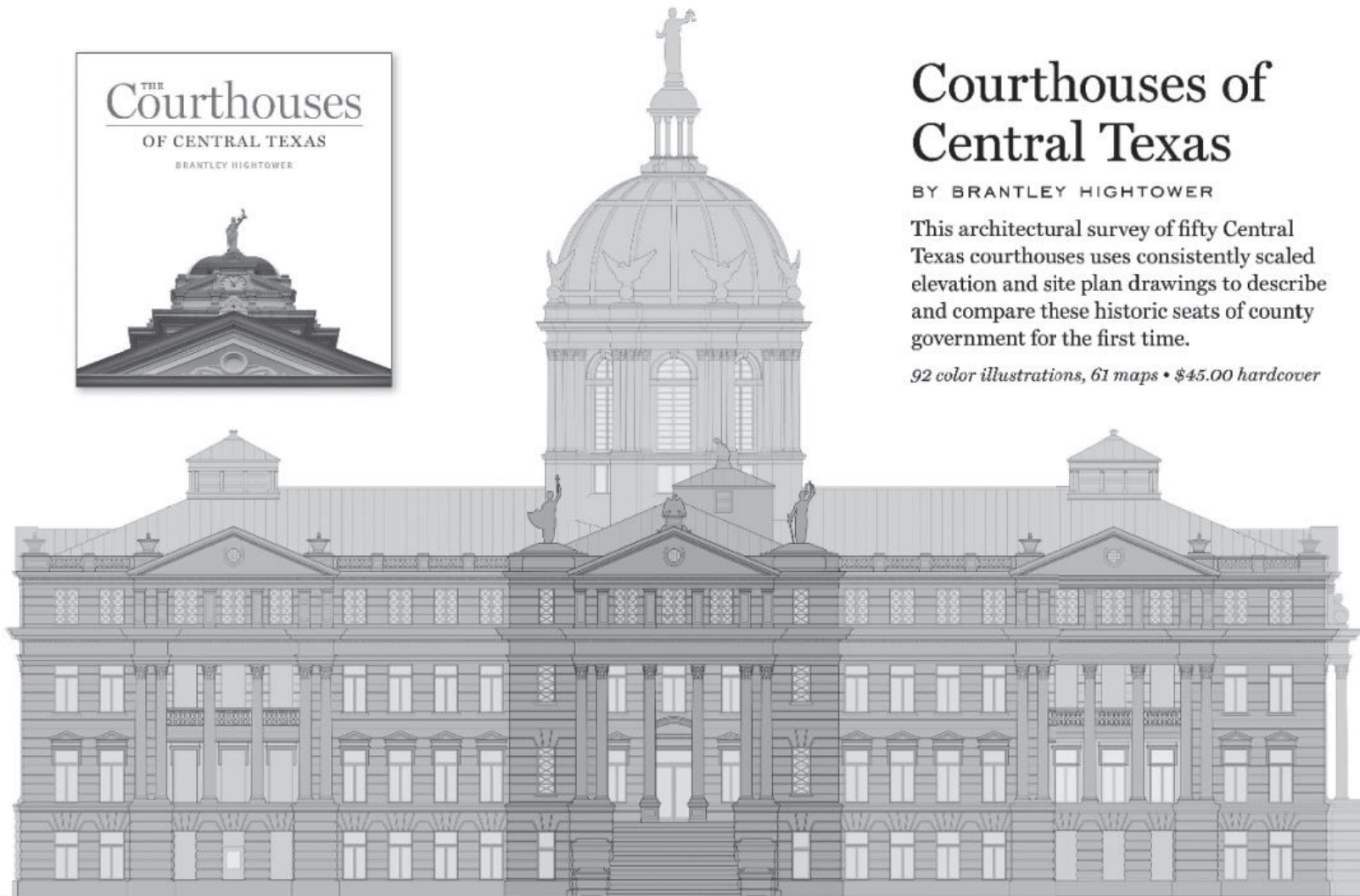


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BY BRANTLEY HIGHTOWER

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## Sanctioning Modernism

*Architecture and the Making of Postwar Identities*



SANCTIONING MODERNISM



ARCHITECTURE AND THE MAKING OF POSTWAR IDENTITIES



Edited by Vladimir Kulić, Timothy Parker, and Monica Penick  
Illustrations by Frederick Sottare

EDITED BY VLADIMIR KULIĆ,  
TIMOTHY PARKER, AND  
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BY EDWARD R. BURIAN

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THE ARCHITECTURE AND CITIES OF NORTHERN MEXICO FROM INDEPENDENCE TO THE PRESENT

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# Color

Color, an often underutilized implement in the architectural tool set, can nonetheless be powerful when wielded with care. This issue looks at bold use of color in several diverse projects. The glazed skin of The Richards Group's newly built headquarters in Dallas reveals a stunning array of interior colors each night. Rand Elliott's use of color, on full display in a series of parking structures in his home state of Oklahoma, is both restrained and striking in the Marfa Contemporary. Red is a signature statement in artist Daryl Howard's tiny gem of a Hill Country studio. In an Austin office lobby, the blues and greens of the city's skyline are brought to life by CNC-cut felt murals.



PHOTO COURTESY STEINKAMP PHOTOGRAPHY.

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*Architecture*

*Catherine Gavin*









# Coloring the Gap

by Ryan Flener, Assoc. AIA

**Project** The Richards Group Headquarters, Dallas

**Client** The Richards Group

**Architecture Firm** Perkins+Will

**Design Team** Ron Stelmarski, AIA; Phil Callison, AIA; John Strasius, AIA; Andrea Kabala, AIA; Eileen Jones; Joe Connell; Gardner Vass; Greg Estes; Lauren Love; Ryan Roettker; Michael Edwards, AIA

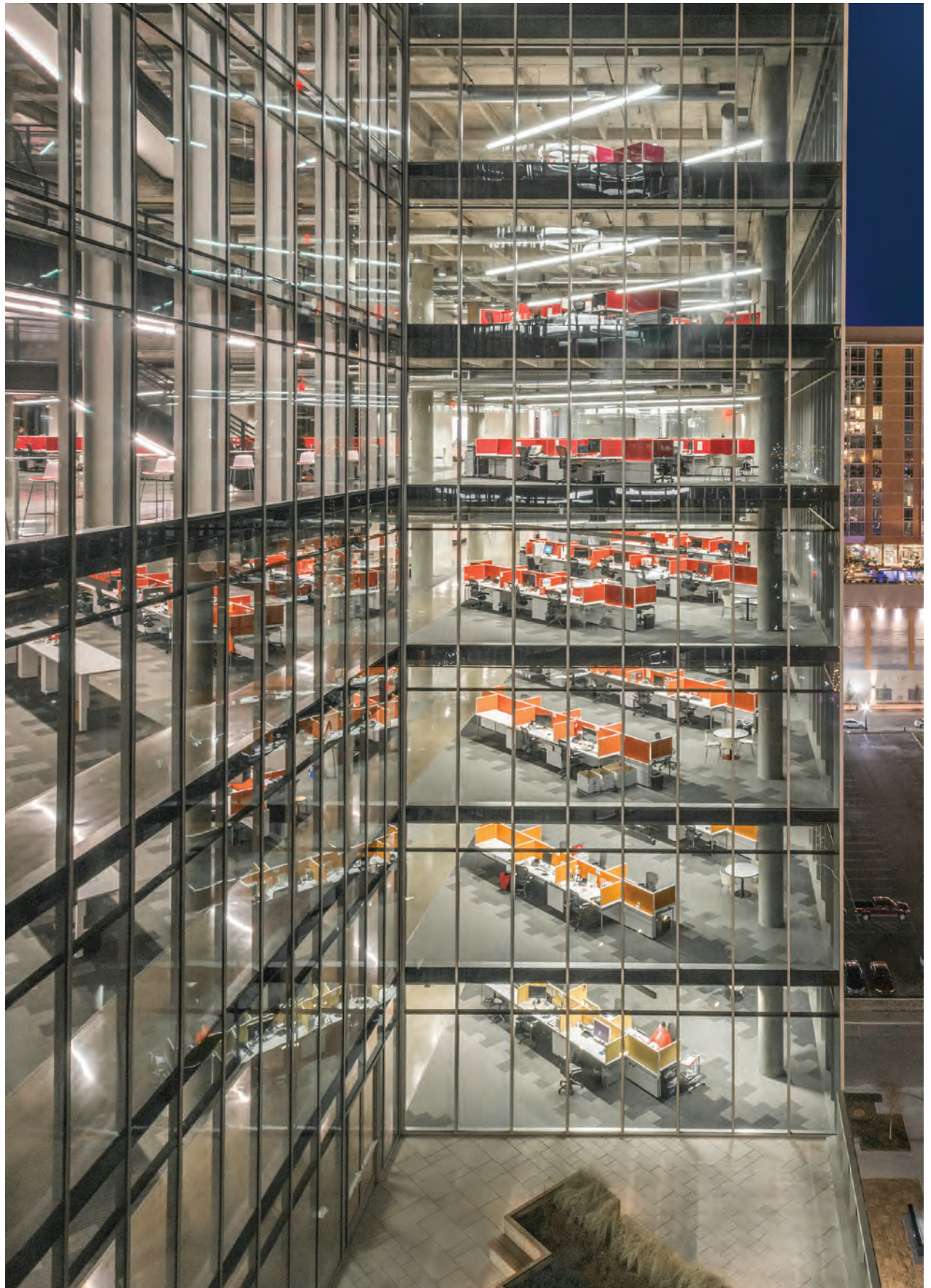
**Photographers** Steinkamp Photography and Barth Tillotson

**A**t what point did advertising become so relentless? Everywhere you look, there's a message about how to dress or what to eat and whom to trust — or not. Ads appear on everything from fruit stickers to 20-story canvases on otherwise blank urban walls, on digital screens as small and intimate as watch faces and as large and public as stadium jumbotrons. Setting oneself apart in the advertising world requires discipline, focus, and an obsession with the creative environment. These things just happen to be Stan Richards's specialty.

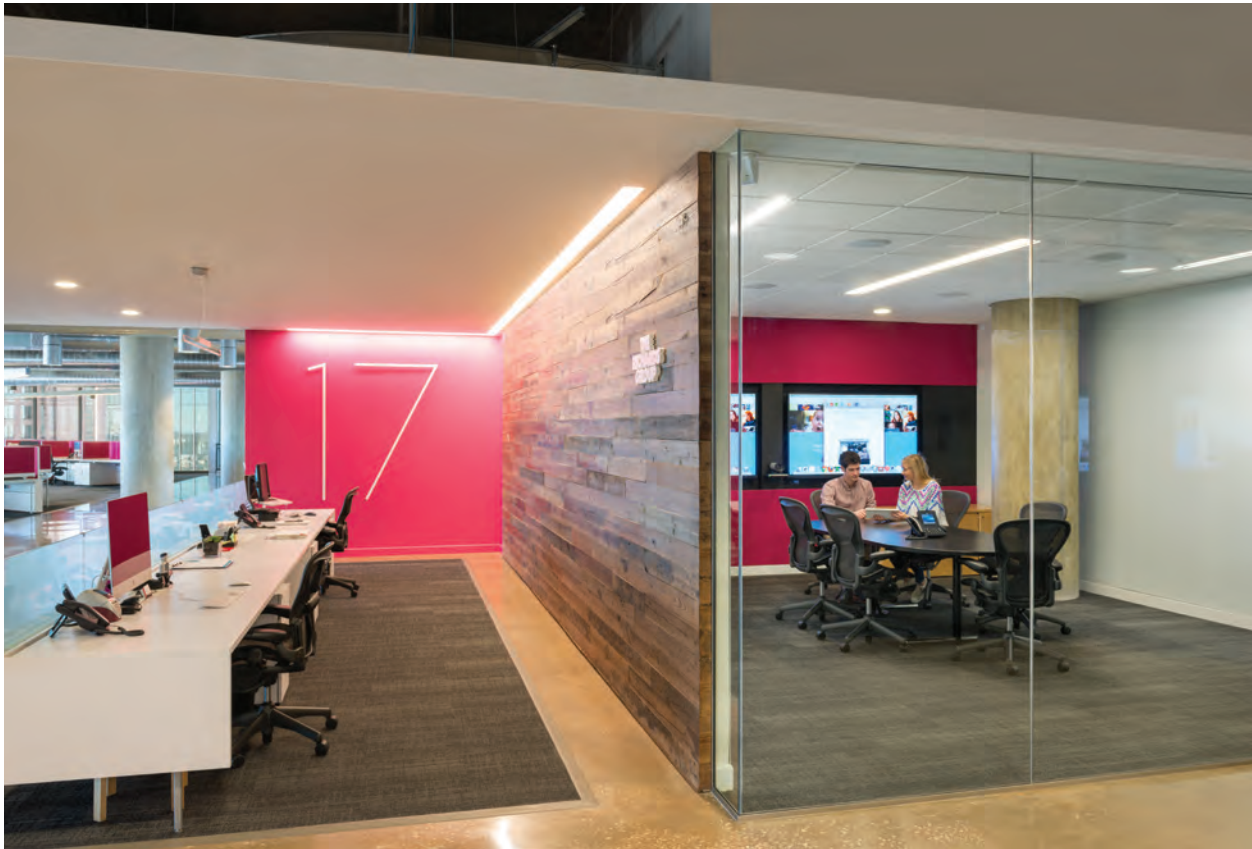


**Opening spread** *Frequent I-75 commuters can observe the full spectacle of the Richards Group building, which continually transforms itself as the quality of light changes throughout the day.*

**This page** *The building's glazed skin reveals the goings-on and attention to detail inside. Tack-boards at each bench station are color-coded by level, creating a gradient of color against the neutral building materials.*







**Left** A combination of natural materials interspersed with highly specific applications of color provides a fresh outlook on orientation and organization.

**Below** Massive windows provide employees with magnificent views of downtown and the surrounding area.

Richards, founder and head “creative guy” at his namesake advertising agency in Dallas, has spent a lifetime fine-tuning a rigorous, egalitarian approach to management. Though Richards is a stickler for clocking in by 8:30 a.m. and billing work in 15-minute increments, his agency stands apart from its peers not just in terms of creativity, but also in terms of staff loyalty: The Richards Group has had the lowest turnover rate of all major ad agencies for several years running.

For its new 250,000-sf headquarters in Dallas’ West Village (550,000 sf, including parking), Richards wanted an architectural team that could deliver on his vision. He wanted a building that would reflect his agency’s democratic ideals and deliver the most effective work environment possible for its staff of 700. The architects at Perkins+Will fit the bill. From start to finish, the project unfolded as a 22-month race to the finish line.

Ron Stelmarski, project designer and design director at Perkins+Will’s Dallas office, might have turned gray had the clients on the other side of the table been anyone else, but The Richards Group “is just as familiar with meeting absurd deadlines as architects are, which can be a scary situation to walk into,” says Stelmarski. “Stan and his team were absolutely wonderful to work with, always bringing fresh ideas. We just had to keep up and continue to push the level of creative thinking. A client like this makes all the difference to the success of a project.”

The end result of the creative one-upmanship is a building that is a simple and clear representation of what The Richards Group believes in: truth, transparency, and the discipline to bridge the gap between art and commerce. If you’re one of the thousands of commuters into Dallas each morning, the shadowy cubic mass, situated on a triangular site between West Village and Central Expressway, is difficult to miss. You can’t help but notice the gaping void in the north facade as your eye flickers toward







*“Stairwell meetings,” as they are called, ensure all employees hear important news and updates at the same time. At one such meeting, Stan Richards delivers a message to the company’s staff of 700.*

the roof terrace eleven stories up. It’s that familiar “hook” moment you get in a commercial or a song, where you begin to scale down the litter of information to an identifiable whole.

During the evening hours, the dark figure blossoms into a cheerful gradation of colors, affording the commuting masses a glimpse of what the

*The atrium is an exemplar of The Richards Group mantra and Stan Richards’ progressive management style: a place where everyone can receive information at the same time.*

future holds in store for new office buildings and up-and-coming productive spaces. The transformation from the interior is just as phenomenal, as the blues, browns, and greens of the north Texas prairie slowly fade and darken, and the streaming freeway lights move fluidly among spotted yellow luminaries in the distance.

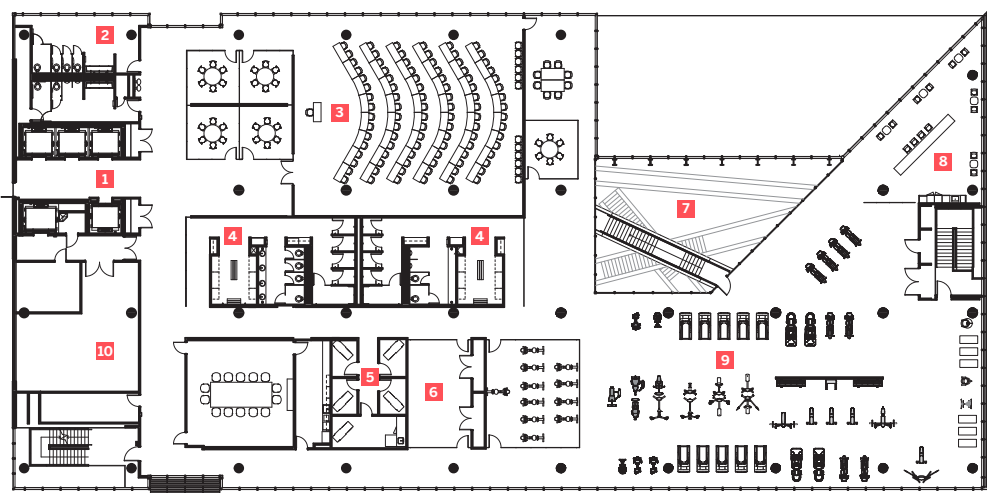
The building comprises 10,000 square feet of retail space, a lobby, and a garage entrance at the ground level that leads to nine levels of parking. The Richards Group office space occupies the upper eight stories, the topmost being the exercise floor — a gift from Stan to his employees, housing every piece of workout equipment imaginable as well as yoga studios and nap rooms. At The Richards Group, respect for mental health and family life, which has proven to augment creative focus during the day, is of utmost importance. That’s why Stan Richards holds everyone responsible for clocking in by 8:30 every morning: This schedule allows staff to leave work at a manageable hour in order to be around the things — and people — they love most.

The office space is energizing and spirited. Employees at all levels of seniority work alongside each other and move around often, as there are no offices. The CFO has the only private office in the space. A benching system, selected over cubicles, is arranged at a diagonal orientation to break up the monotony of the typical cube-in-box layout. For private meetings, or large creative ones, there are various conference rooms at each level, easily identified by reclaimed wood walls beyond floor-to-ceiling glass partitions. For larger, more public announcements, the interior incorporates a four-story atrium and sculptural staircase, where Stan can have his 700 employees gather in a matter of minutes. Known as “stairwell meetings” — and associated more broadly with “stair culture” — the atrium is an exemplar of The Richards Group mantra and Stan’s progressive management style: a place where everyone can receive information at the same time.

The Richards Group building is perhaps the newest, best billboard for architecture in Dallas, a symbol of hope for the future of workplaces and democratic ideals, and a rejection of our outdated mentality of “thinking big,” with the white-collar tribalism that it engenders. The building’s monochromatic emphasis speaks to beauty in structure and impartiality to any specific color, and, by way of its brightly tagged accents, projects creativity from the inside out. It stands as a beacon on the unruly landscape of a car-dependent society, reaching to connect people from miles away and merging into its environment no less naturally than the prairies in the distant view.

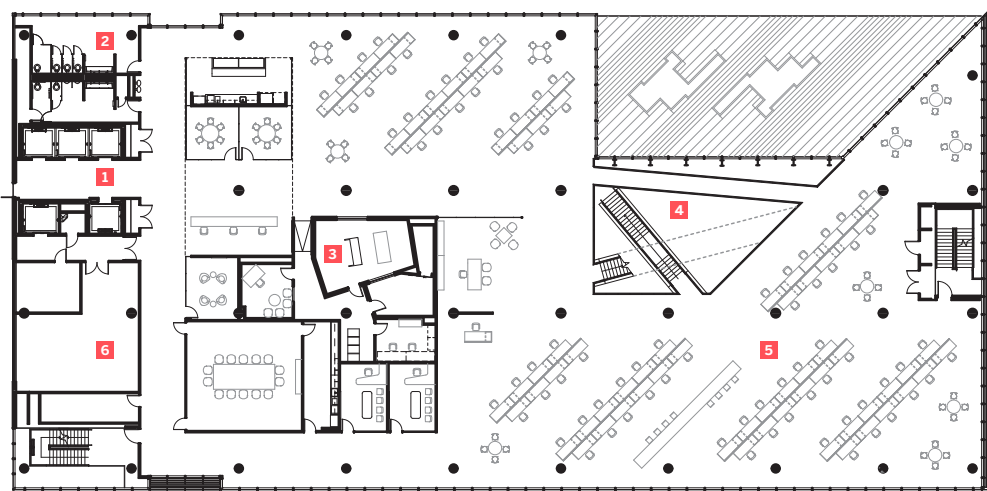
Ryan Flener, Assoc. AIA, is a senior project coordinator with Good Fulton & Farrell in Dallas.





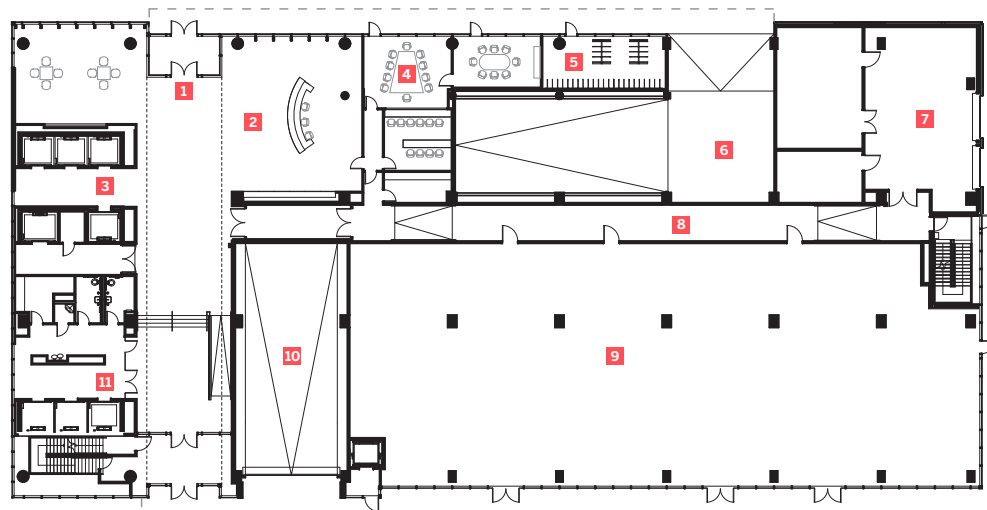
**LEVEL 18 FLOOR PLAN**

- 1 LOBBY
- 2 RESTROOMS
- 3 ASSEMBLY
- 4 LOCKER ROOMS
- 5 NAP ROOMS
- 6 YOGA
- 7 STAIRWELL ATRIUM
- 8 JUICE BAR
- 9 FITNESS
- 10 MECHANICAL



**LEVEL 16 FLOOR PLAN**

- 1 LOBBY
- 2 RESTROOMS
- 3 AUDIO RECORDINGS
- 4 STAIRWELL ATRIUM
- 5 WORKSTATIONS
- 6 MECHANICAL



**LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN**

- 1 LOBBY
- 2 RECEPTION
- 3 OFFICE ELEVATORS
- 4 FOCUS ROOMS
- 5 BICYCLE STORAGE
- 6 RAMP TO PARKING LEVELS
- 7 SERVICE AREA
- 8 SERVICE CORRIDOR
- 9 RETAIL
- 10 RAMP TO BASEMENT PARKING
- 11 PARKING ELEVATORS









# Between Green and Violet

by Ingrid Spencer

**Project** Marfa Contemporary Gallery, Marfa

**Client** Marfa Land & Cattle Co.

**Architecture Firm** Elliott + Associates Architects

**Design Team** Rand Elliott, FAIA; Brian Berryhill, Assoc. AIA

**Photographers** Scott McDonald and Hedrich Blessing



It's easy to fall in love with Marfa, Texas. The effort of getting there is rewarded by the treasures revealed — Donald Judd's perfect metal boxes, his Chinati Foundation's rows of barracks filled with world-class art, the galleries and art studios. There's the historic town square with its Second Empire style courthouse, and the beauty of the landscape — the desert; the scrubby plains; the crisp, clean air; the darkest of dark skies at night; and the unyieldingly bright sun by day — it's a unique experience.

For architect Rand Elliott, FAIA, who lives and works in Oklahoma City but is licensed in Texas as well, the Marfa experience is powerful. He and his wife Jeanette have been going back and forth to Marfa for some 20 years, he says, and it was at his suggestion that his friend Christian Keese came to the town to evaluate it as a place to locate a first satellite extension of the Oklahoma Contemporary Art Center (OCAC), which he founded. Keese was smitten. "It was just right," says Elliott. "There is a legacy of great art in Marfa, and a kind of independence."

Those attributes were channeled into the OCAC's Marfa Contemporary, a 4,720-sf adaptive reuse of an old gas station building. Located at one corner of the only spotlight in this 2,000-person town, the 1940s Gulf gas station/Chrysler dealership was transformed into a 2,156-sf gallery, administration offices, an artist-in-residence studio, a pizza restaurant, a small car-sharing rental office, and indoor and outdoor dining areas. Elliott is no stranger to adaptive reuse, and he chose to embrace the raw qualities of the original structure. "It's a simple building," he says, "and without working too hard we wanted to show something new and non-intrusive."

The interiors very much retain their auto-shop feel, especially in the gallery, which juxtaposes roll-up doors and modified bitumen roof, along with a single-slope linear skylight, against the modern art on the walls. Lighting was carefully placed to allow the sun to do most of the work without damaging the art. The place shows art by respected contemporary artists both local and global, including photographs by Canadian rocker and artist Bryan Adams and Marfa-based painter Ann Marie Nafziger. The quirky building somehow makes the ultra contemporary artwork seem less precious, which Keese says is his intention, as educating the public about modern art without pretension is the organization's goal. "It is important that Marfa Contemporary be totally non-intimidating and 100 percent accessible," he says, "both from the obvious perspective of a visitor who may have some type of physical challenge, but also from the point of view of a visitor who has never visited an art gallery before. Rand's design is forward thinking, clear, crisp and uncluttered. The reuse and reinterpretation of the building fit with the style of the organization, but also are in keeping with the minimalist aesthetic of Marfa."

Honoring the building's past lives was important to the project. Elliott incorporated the old Gulf station's original blue and orange into the design, leaving the orange door where it was on what is now the artist studio, and incorporating blue accents throughout the exterior, including a translucent blue polyurethane canopy over the entry. "The light in Marfa is overbearing," says Keese. "Especially in the summer when the sun is so intense, I sometimes wish I could wear two pairs of sunglasses. The entry cover lets in some sunlight but also casts a magnificent blue hue over the area. It's good-looking."

In architecture and beyond, Elliott's creative vision is wide ranging. He finds poetry in everything he does — he's published a book called "Word Paintings," full of eloquent musings on form and beauty and, yes, color — but he says the architecture he designs always comes from a place of intention. "I'm not a free-form creator," he says. "I'm not Zaha Hadid. Those



*"The light in Marfa is overbearing. Especially in the summer when the sun is so intense, I sometimes wish I could wear two pairs of sunglasses. The entry cover lets in some sunlight but also casts a magnificent blue hue over the area. It's good-looking."*





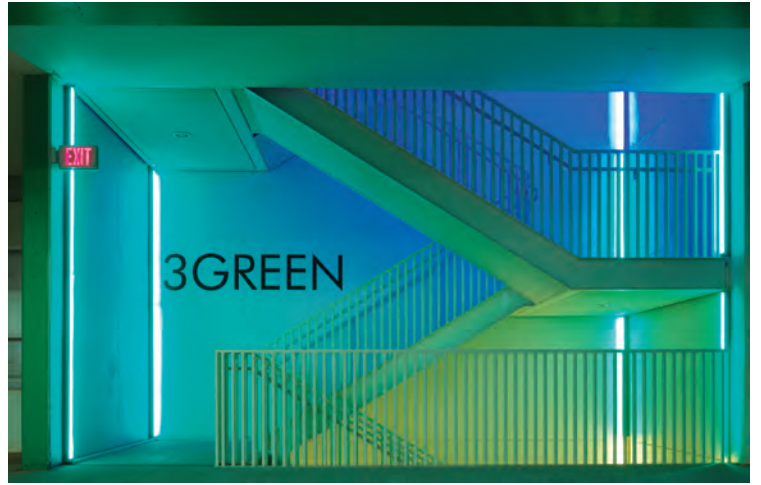
**Opening spread** *It's the Gulf station of the 1940s — only better. Gulf's blue-and-orange color scheme survives in details such as the building's doors and a blue polycarbonate overhang that blocks the harsh sun and illuminates the entrance.*

**Opposite page, top** *Shades of a bygone era: Elliott modeled signage after the earliest days of the Gulf filling station.*

**Opposite page, bottom** *The translucent blue canopy plays to the building's desert setting, delivering a jolt of blue that echoes the saturated sky above.*

**This page** *The building has been reinterpreted to create a gallery stripped of pretension; original details such as roll-up doors are juxtaposed with contemporary art.*









**Opposite page, clockwise from top left** *Car Park 3, like the other parking garages on the Chesapeake Corp. campus, uses cold cathode lights to define each floor, turning the anticipated concrete cave into a surprisingly pleasant experience. The view from the southeast stair at the third level in Car Park 1 shows how each floor is identified by color. The main entrance to the Central Park car park leads you up a two-story central ramp. Colored light identifies the floor level in one of four stairways in Car Park 4.*

**This page** *The view from the atrium of Car Park 2.*

buildings are works of art.” Elliott never uses color “for the sake of decoration,” he says, “but always to accomplish a certain thing. It’s purposeful.” The architect’s considered approach to color is a thread that runs through the course of his career. “My thesis in college at Oklahoma State University was called ‘Form, Color, and Structure,’” he says; “the use of color has always been important in my work.”

In fact, the Marfa Contemporary, with its brilliant but monochrome presence, barely hints at Elliott’s simultaneously whimsical and pragmatic use of color in other projects. The four parking structures he recently designed for Oklahoma City-based oil and gas company Chesapeake Corporation provide a startlingly modern contrast. Parking structures are, as a rule, dark and scary — unattractive afterthoughts to the main structures they accompany. Not so, the five parking garages (or “car parks”) decorating the 120-acre headquarters campus of Chesapeake Corporation. Through thoughtful application of dramatic lighting in the structures, Elliott fully transforms a building type that’s usually functional at best. The car parks have been described as “uplift-

ing” and “surprising” by visitors, which is just what Elliott intended. With central atriums that direct air circulation through the buildings, the five parking structures use high-efficiency fluorescent lighting on the interiors. Cold, cathode lighting serves a practical purpose, separating floors by color to make wayfinding easy — creating, in addition, an architectural phenomenon.

“My work is very purposeful,” he says, “with a point of view involved.” In his Chesapeake car parks, Elliott’s point of view about the value of color, both aesthetically and functionally, is abundantly clear. He deploys color as wayfinding mechanism, as an impression-builder, and as a way to make you smile. “It’s never color for the sake of decoration,” he says, “but always to accomplish a certain thing.”

The Marfa Contemporary, so different in spirit and execution from the Oklahoma car parks, displays both that discipline and its brilliant execution — hallmarks of Elliott’s approach — in action.

Ingrid Spencer is the newly appointed executive director of AIA Austin.







# Red Zone

by Rachel Adams

**Project** Daryl Howard Art, Austin

**Client** Daryl Howard

**Architect** Kinneymorrow Architecture

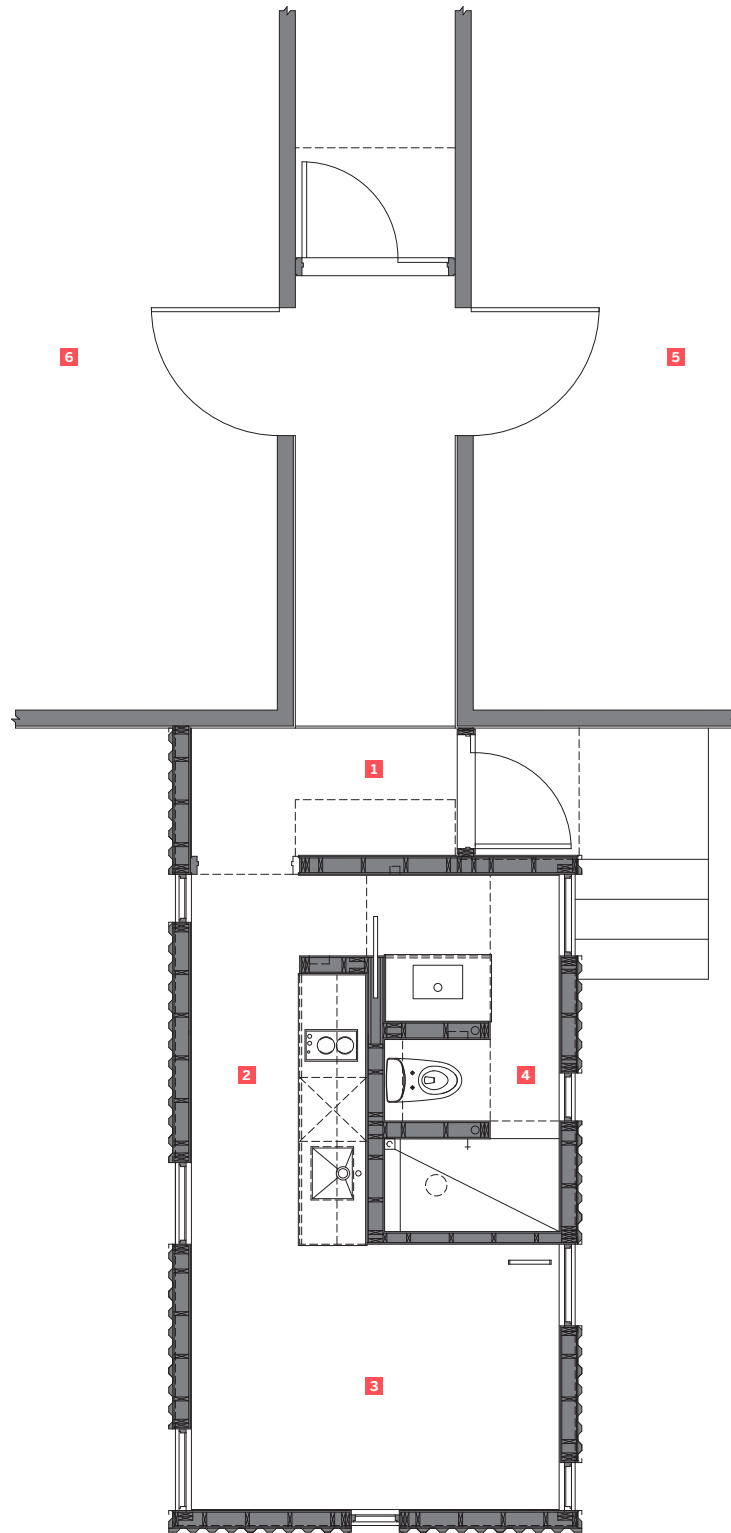
**Design** Team Taryn Kinney, AIA; Michael Morrow, AIA

**Photographer** Luis Ayala, AIA

**D**aryl Howard's ranch is more noticeable from the road than are its Dripping Springs neighbors. The bright red gate and red steel carport signal the color's importance to Howard, an artist classically trained in Japanese woodblock techniques. The color wraps through the ranch and is of particular significance in a new work complex designed by Kinneymorrow Architecture.

Howard bought the ranch in the late 1980s and quickly plopped a doublewide trailer on the lot for use as a temporary studio. The doublewide remained in place for over 30 years. In the summer of 2013, Howard commissioned Taryn Kinney and Michael Morrow to replace it with something new and better: a printing studio that would connect to prefabricated storage building already on site. The architects proposed connecting the two via a small but versatile structure that would serve multiple functions — as an office for Howard's assistants, as an exhibition space, as a small workshop, and as a welcoming environment for serving tea to visitors.





- FLOOR PLAN**
- 1 ENTRY
  - 2 KITCHEN
  - 3 LIVING
  - 4 BATHROOM
  - 5 PRINT STUDIO
  - 6 STORAGE





**Previous spread** A small, light-filled space connects artist Daryl Howard's new studio to an existing storage building, and serves as a highly functional common area.

**Above** A corner view of the kitchen where it intersects with the bathroom. The architects kept everything simple, with red highlights throughout emphasizing a stylistic nod to traditional Japanese style.

**Right** Howard assesses color choices for a new work.

**Far right** A noticeable wood grain pattern imprinted in the poured concrete walls creates a visible connection between the artist's medium and the structure itself.







In working with Howard, Kinney and Morrow sought to showcase her sensibility, including a deeply personal love of the color red. Its presence is something the artist seems to experience almost at the level of a need; red was her favorite color as a child, and she now views it as representing power. Red is also the color of the sun in the flag of Japan, where she lived and trained for many years. Howard views red as, among other things, the “color of culture.”

The architects also sought to create a seamless transition from the existing storage structure. Both inside and out, Kinneymorrow’s re-imagination of simple agricultural building materials and scale intersects with Howard’s Japanese background and specific color influence. The result represents a true collaboration between architect and client. The studio space, housed in a prefabricated structure that mirrors the pre-existing storage structure, is highly functional. As modified by Kinneymorrow, the new building addresses a range of artistic needs, accommodating large equipment such as the artist’s press on the one hand, while on the other allowing for a glimpse of the inspiring ranch landscape and shifting light conditions as natural light spills through a large, glazed garage door at the end of the building. The studio also features storage cabinets for the hundreds of wood blocks, a large worktable and viewing area, and display walls that can stretch across the room as needed, for events such as collectors’ visits or studio exhibitions.

*Both inside and out, Kinneymorrow’s re-imagination of simple agricultural building materials and scale intersects with Howard’s Japanese background and specific color influence.*

The smaller transitional structure that links the studio and storage space is T-shaped in plan and is situated behind the studio area. While diminutive in terms of square footage, the addition feels cavernous and is full of light, thanks to a vertical dimension that feels as expansive as the ranch views it frames. The poured concrete of the floors extends three feet up the walls. Designed to address the sloping ground at the site, the concrete also offers a well-positioned ledge that supports a series of tall windows, allowing the rich Texas light to spill in. Pressed into the poured walls is a noticeable wood grain pattern, which was imprinted when the concrete set in wooden molds. This feature creates a direct and visible connection between the structure and the artist’s medium.

Inside the transitional area, the color “Safety Red” by Sherwin-Williams is prominent. It pops from the doors and doorways to the cabinetry and counters in the kitchenette to the steel ladder leading to the loft. It can be seen around every corner, contrasting with the gray of the concrete and the white of the walls. Outside the new structure, the architects employed light-gauge metal sheathing that is slightly different in patterning from the pre-existing metal of the studio building. The juxtaposition of the heaviness of the concrete base and the light-reflective sheathing encourages the eye to travel up to the sky above.

The synergy between the architects’ approach and their client’s artistry is apparent at every level. For instance, Kinneymorrow cast a sequence of Howard’s woodblock prints, featuring a persimmon, into the concrete of the outdoor base. This detailing, along with the Kanji seal on the north side of the structure, fuses Kinneymorrow’s style and Howard’s artistic practice. The overall result is a small gem that is compact and efficient, yet expansive and unique.

Rachel Adams is an associate curator of the University at Buffalo Art Galleries at the University of Buffalo.







**Opposite, top and bottom** A detail from the exterior of the structure. A ladder leads to a small sleeping loft above the kitchen.

**Left** A series of tall windows and details embedded in the concrete base distinguish the new structure from the prefabricated building to which it connects.

**Below** Red, a signature color for the artist, is strategically embedded throughout the space, both inside and out.











# Setting the Stage

by Catherine Gavin

**Project** University Park, Austin

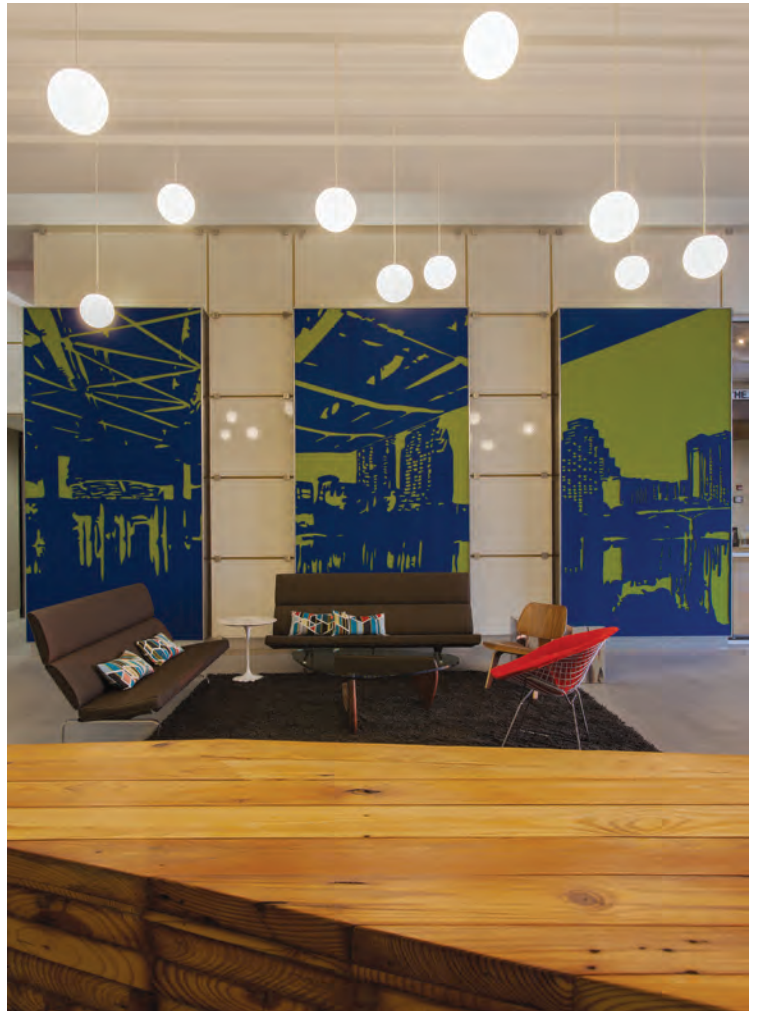
**Client** Anonymous

**Architect** Michael Hsu Office of Architecture

**Design Team** Michael Hsu, AIA; Maija Kreishman; Sophia Razzaque, Assoc. AIA

**Photographer** Ryan Farnau





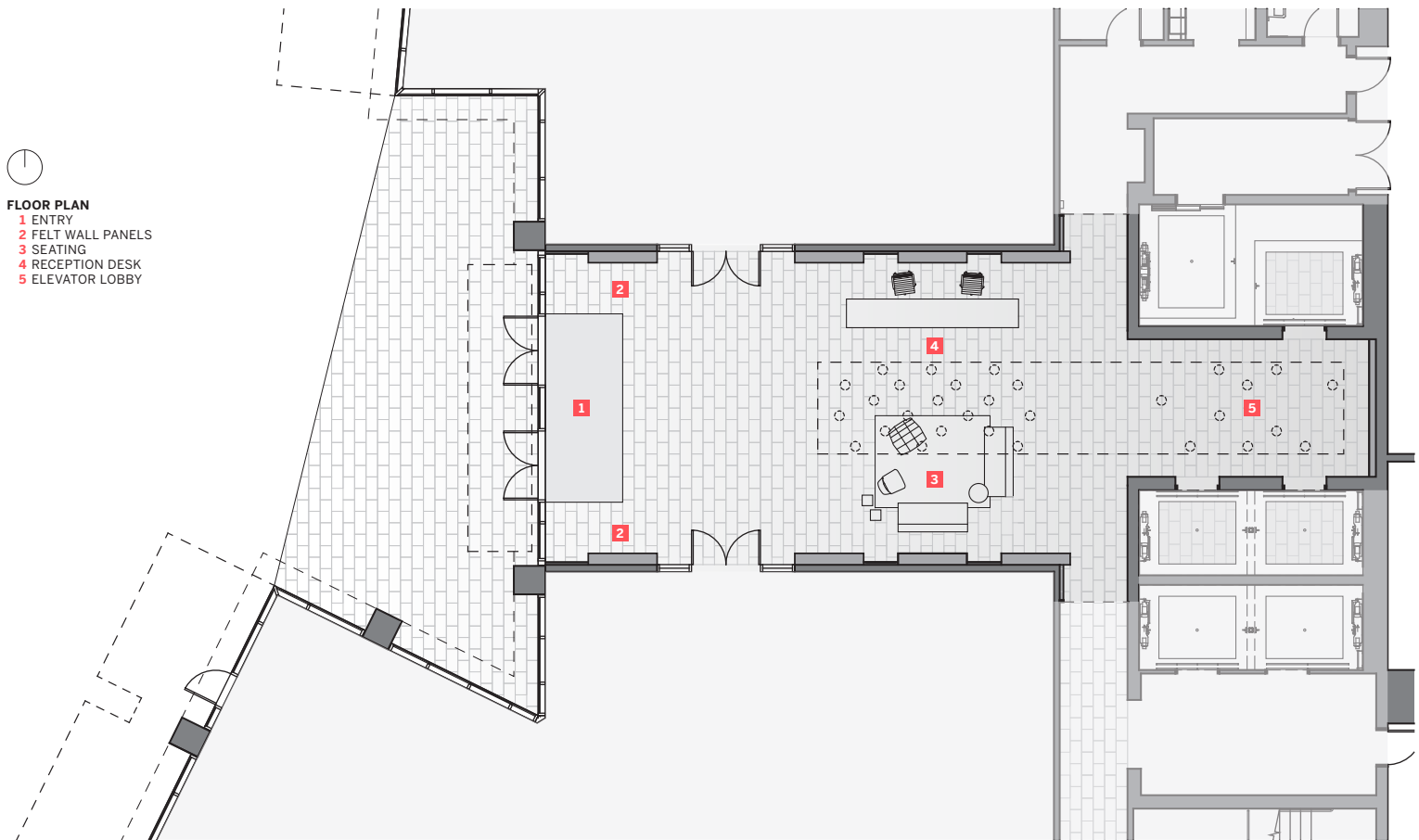
**Previous spread A**  
*remodel of a University Park office in Austin employs texture and color to create a space that will, at a glance, speak to the city's influx of creative entrepreneurs.*

**Above** *Felt panels feature graphics made by using two layers of CNC-cut blue and green fabric. They depict the city skyline and the bats that have become an iconic local symbol.*

**Right** *Yellow and gray felt super-graphics note the floor numbers; MDF panels feature customized vintage typewriter patterns.*







According to the Austin Business Journal, Texas' capital city ranks fifth in the nation for the number of technology start-ups per capita. Recognizing the trend, building owners are seeking new ways to secure the interest of members of the creative class as soon as they walk through the door.

Hoping to appeal to the city's creative-cum-business community, one national real estate investment company enlisted Michael Hsu Office of Architecture to revamp the ground-floor and common lobbies of its University Park office. Michael Hsu, AIA, and his team transformed the 2,040-sf main lobby and two of the 1,332-sf upper-floor common lobbies using wool felt, precisely cut into bold graphics of greens, blues, grays, and yellows.

"We knew we wanted to change the overall feel, and liked the idea of using a material that would soften the space, make it more interesting and also somehow more approachable," says Hsu. "Felt has many inherent qualities that make it an exciting material to work with, such as inherent durability and ease of manipulation with simple fabrication methods."

The main lobby connects the building's two wings and links the street-facing plaza to the parking garage located in the rear of the building. It is the primary point of security for the tower and the building's entry. The existing limestone flooring and wall finishes were all incorporated into the new design. "When we started the project, we were mindful of keeping the finishes that were of high quality that could still act as a backdrop to the space we intended to create with a bolder, more textural palette," says Hsu.

Two new murals, made up of four felt panels installed on each of the long lobby walls, define the space. Each panel measures more than six feet by eleven feet and is composed of two layers of CNC-cut blue and green fabric. Contrast stitching emphasizes the distinct layers. The silhouetted

images, which are loosely based on photographs, depict the Austin skyline from underneath the Congress Avenue Bridge on one side of the lobby and the iconic flight of the bats from the bridge on the other.

The bold colors and soft texture enhance the graphic quality of the images, and also balance what Hsu calls the "organic-ness" of the custom-designed, reclaimed longleaf pine security desk. This deliberate tension is emphasized by the shine of the white glass wall panels, the silky black plaster walls, and the sleek mid-century furniture. Hsu's office created a tenant directory inspired by a vintage train depot sign and added globe light fixtures, custom-mounted onto painted steel-tube raceways.

The felt is carried into the design of the upper-floor lobbies. Hsu's office completed the third and fifth floors as part of the original scope of work. Yellow and gray felt super-graphics note the floor numbers, and details such as the custom CNC-routed medium-density fiberboard (MDF) panels, marked with vintage typewriter patterns, add interest to the otherwise straightforward space, while also continuing the contrast of textures set up in the ground-floor design. "We wanted to create something that had a relationship to the ground-floor lobby, but that was also playful and customizable per floor," says Hsu.

The main lobby sets a stage for what is to come upstairs, combining hand-crafted qualities with high-design features and putting color and texture at its center. By their nature, tech start-ups are fascinated with innovation and design; smart building owners will increasingly call on firms like Hsu's to keep up with the rising expectations and demands of future tenants.

Catherine Gavin is editor of *Texas Architect*.



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CASE STUDY





# Portfolio: Renovation

**66**

**The Old House,  
and the New**  
Poteet Architects  
*Dr. Kathryn O'Rowke*

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**Welch 2.0**  
Content Architecture  
*Ben Koush*

Two houses, one in the iconic King William Historic District of San Antonio and the other by renowned Texas architect Frank Welch, FAIA, demonstrate the opportunities and challenges of working with historic properties.





## The Old House, and the New

by Dr. Kathryn E. O'Rourke

**Project** Condon Residence, San Antonio

**Client** Private

**Architecture Firm** Poteet Architects

**Design Team** Jim Poteet, FAIA; Brett Freeman; Isadora Sintes; Kristen Weber; Siboney Diaz-Sanchez; Chris Currie; Jesus Pineda

**Photographer** Ryann Ford

Simultaneously private and public, houses are particularly charged repositories of aspiration and association. In the best projects, an architect responds to a client's wishes by designing a work whose integrity is rooted in a frank engagement with the circumstances of daily life, the facts and figures of the commission, and the material and technical possibilities that architecture offers at that moment in time. When these concerns are harnessed by a strong idea and executed by a steady hand confident enough to leave room for the unscripted, the results are often felicitous, and occasionally revolutionary.

Jim Poteet's renovation of, and addition to, the Condon Residence in San Antonio is not revolutionary, but it is excellent, and it belongs to modernism's best tradition of identifying the particulars of the task and then expressing a core idea forthrightly. Poteet's attention to detail, insistence on technical perfection, and respect for history come together in this unusual project to make a work that is compelling because of the unsentimental, honest ways it brings together old and new.

Poteet's brief was straightforward enough: create a house for a couple and their four young children; provide comfortable spaces for out-of-town guests and others that can be used flexibly for work and play. The challenges and opportunities lay elsewhere. The Condon Residence stands on one of the best pieces of property in San Antonio — three lots put together at the quiet end of a bucolic King William District street. The house faces the San Antonio River; Walsh-Burney & Moore's 1928 pony-truss Arsenal Street bridge is visible from the living room. Through east-facing second-story windows, you can see some of the San Antonio skyline.

But the house has not always afforded such views.

The story of the Condon Residence begins in 1896, when the main part of the house was built on a large lot in what was then a northern suburb of the city. The property was at the southwest corner of East Elmira and Lexington Streets and had originally been part of a Spanish land grant. Early in its life, the house was faced in yellow brick and had white columns and balusters; it





**Opposite** *The view of the east facade from the garden reveals Poteet's clear distinction between the addition and the original house.*

**Left** *An enlarged porch defines the main facade and runs along the east side of the house.*

**Below** *Restored woodwork, clean lines, and a subdued palette give the entry hall character and crispness.*





had a one-story porch that wrapped from its north-facing front around the east side. Bought and sold several times in its first fifty years, for a short period the house was used as a restaurant and nightclub. In 1951, the City of San Antonio acquired the property and sold the structure to Domingo Ramírez, who moved it to its present location. Authorities then plowed Interstate 35 through the old site.

Ramírez transformed the house considerably, removing the side porch, stuccoing the exterior walls, adding an ashlar chimney, and building a large Irving Gill-esque arcade across the front. Another half-century later, in 1998, new owners turned the arcade into a two-story porch and clad the building in clapboards in an attempt to make it look more like some of its neighbors. By 2011, when Poteet's client acquired the house, water damage and systemic rot had left little to salvage. The architect stripped the house to the frame and rebuilt the foundation and roof.

Even as he pulled it apart, Poteet studied the building's history and used it as his point of departure to create an innovative blend of new and old that materially acknowledges various aspects of the house's past. His crucial realization was the importance of restoring the wraparound porch. Doing so allowed him to shift the main entry of both the property and the porch to the northeast corner of the house, a move that subtly but insightfully orients the house toward the city and the bridge. The new side porch functions as a veranda and introduces a strong longitudinal axis that tightens the design as a whole, and announces that something important lies deep

*Even as he pulled it apart, Poteet studied the building's history and used it as his point of departure to create an innovative blend of new and old that materially acknowledges various aspects of the house's past.*

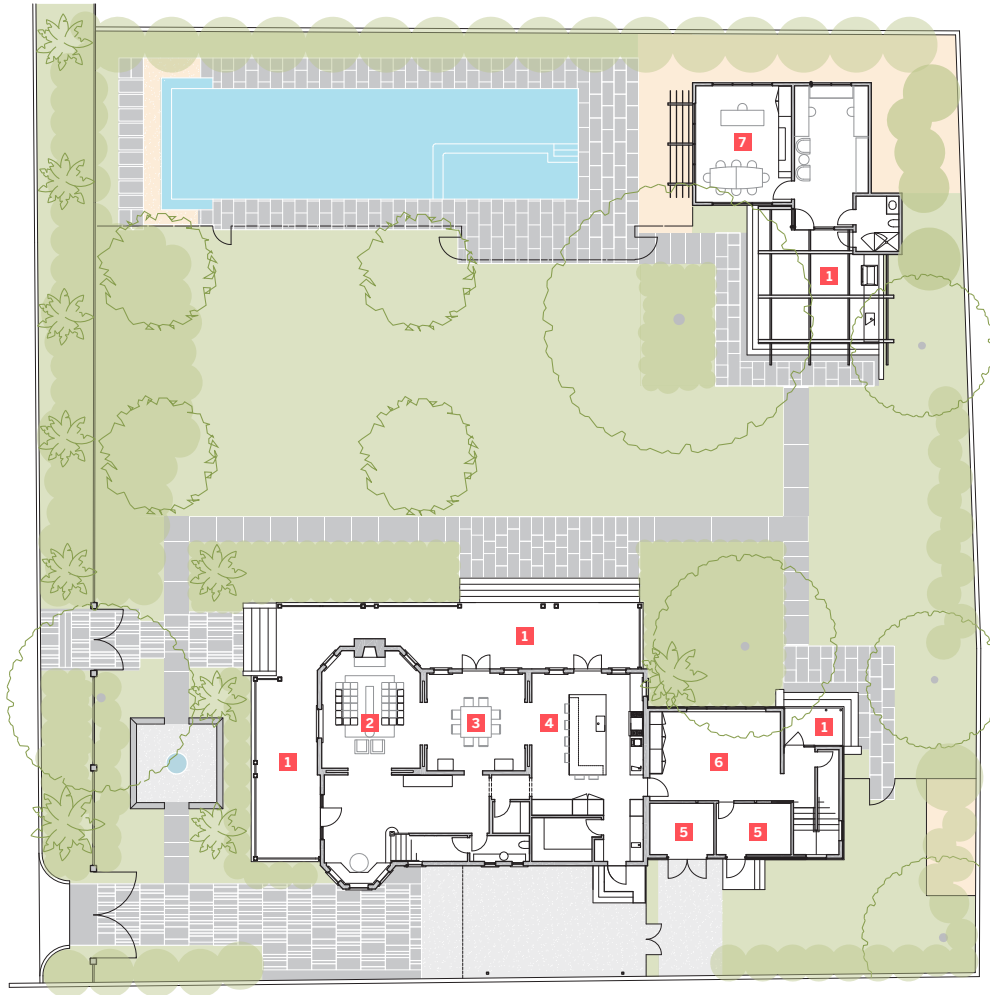
in the site. Double doors open from the dining room and kitchen, and wide steps lead to a large yard and an elegant lap pool surrounded by a sleek glass fence. Poteet also simplified the lines of the front porch, as he did throughout the original house, without compromising any grace. The building's essential tranquility and unifying



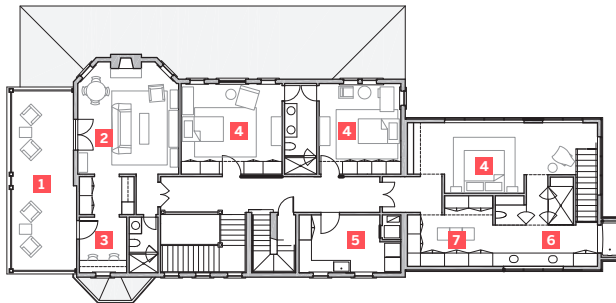
**Above** A disciplined interplay of line, surface, and materials combines with restrained use of color in the master bath.

**Left** Mirrored panels in the ground floor gymnasium conceal a television and reflect light from the garden.

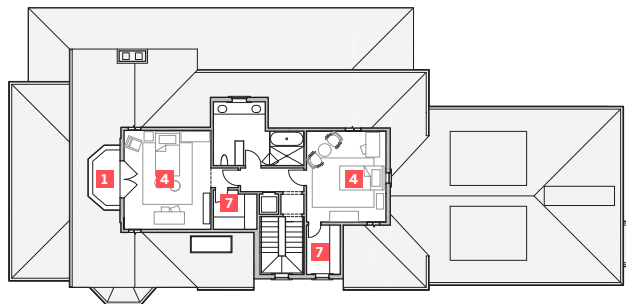




- SITE/FLOOR PLAN**
- 1 PORCH
  - 2 LIVING
  - 3 DINING
  - 4 KITCHEN
  - 5 UTILITY
  - 6 GYM
  - 7 OFFICE/GUEST



- FLOOR PLANS, LEVELS 2 AND 3**
- 1 PORCH
  - 2 MEDIA
  - 3 STUDY
  - 4 BEDROOM
  - 5 UTILITY
  - 6 MASTER BATH
  - 7 CLOSET







**Clockwise from top left** A large island dominates the spacious kitchen. The exquisite detailing of the wooden floor is highlighted in Poteet's excellent renovation. The architects repositioned windows in the stairwell and added a skylight.

**Opposite** The detached office, which also serves as guest quarters, overlooks the swimming pool and has an outdoor dining terrace.



colors are introduced on the exterior in the gray stucco walls, white trim, and perfectly aligned, gray wooden floorboards on the porch.

The spacious entry hall quietly but firmly communicates the governing principle of the house. With its crisp lines, white walls, restored woodwork (painted gray), an exquisite original wooden floor (the orange tones of which the architect muted somewhat), three slightly repositioned windows, and a new skylight, it is a case study in how to clean up history and not lie. No faux historic details detract from the clarity of the space or the richness of its materials. The living room and dining room, arranged enfilade, to the east, are of the same sprit. The kitchen, anchored by an enormous island, is beyond the dining room. In this sleek space, appliances and cabinets disappear behind meticulously crafted panels of gray-stained veneer and aluminum. Spaces to contain what is never quite tidy — car keys, backpacks, school artwork, even coffee grounds — are tucked at the kitchen's perimeter.

Upstairs is a large media room that can become a guest suite. Located down the hall and upstairs on the third floor in a converted attic, the children's rooms are conceived as pairs with shared baths. At the south end of the wide corridor on the second floor is the entirely new loft-like master suite. Here, warm and cool are held in delicate balance. Natural-finish cypress, picked up from the exterior where it forms part of a rain screen, clads the ceiling and enriches the room's complex geometries and clerestory window. Exposed gray steel trusses remind the viewer that this is all new, and poetically recall the bridge just beyond the yard below. Large windows open the room to views of the garden; opposite, gray leather panels form a built-in headboard on the bedroom side of the bathroom core. While the bedroom seems spacious because of its ceiling and windows, it is intimately scaled and also feels tucked away. Its relative smallness, the built-in bookshelves, the way the bed — its head anchored in a niche — relates to the windows, and the luxurious approach to materials and views together

recall Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.'s bedroom in Fallingwater and, more generally, modernism's legacy of thoughtful planning for everyday life.

Stairs at the far end of the room lead to a gymnasium below. Across the yard is a separate office/guest house with a terrace for outdoor cooking. This building resembles the new wing of the house in its materials, form, and fenestration. Looking back at the main house from the yard, one can perhaps best appreciate Potcet's vision. He connects old and new using color, rigorous geometries, and the roof, but otherwise steadfastly maintains the distinctions between the original house and the additions. The new wing is set back slightly from the main volume, and at a considerable distance from the edge of the porch. Respect for the old is conveyed, not through imitation, but through forthright expression of what is different and a willingness to yield. This is admirable.

Dr. Kathryn E. O'Rourke teaches architectural history at Trinity University.





## Welch 2.0

by Ben Koush

**Project** Bayou Residence, Houston

**Client** Private

**Architecture Firm** Content Architecture

**Design Team** Jesse Hager AIA; Heather Rowell; Seth Borland; Eric Hughes

**Photographers** Peter Molick and Nick Johnson

In Houston, no architectural monuments are sacred. The city's architectural environment is characterized by its metabolic rate of change; buildings are continually being demolished and replaced, or dramatically reshaped. In fact, it often seems that the more architecturally distinguished a building is, the more susceptible it is to change. Case in point: Content Architecture's recently completed, radical reconfiguration of the former John Welsh House (1972) in a posh residential pocket just north of the Galleria shopping center.

John Welsh, born in Philadelphia, went to boarding school in Rhode Island and graduated from Princeton. In 1952, after a stint at Shell Oil, he founded Welsh Oil & Gas. Welsh and his wife, Phoebe Cook, were exceedingly proper — a characteristic which may have affected their choice of architect. The man they ultimately selected to design their sprawling, 8,000-sf single-level home was Frank D. Welch, FAIA, a

Texan who had the “right manner” to appeal to the peripatetic Texas oilmen and ranchers who made up the bulk of his clients during the early years of his career.

Houston architect and former colleague Anderson Todd, FAIA, describes Welch as cosmopolitan, engaging, and able to tell “New Yorky” jokes. At the same time, he was a native son of small-town Paris, Texas and remained deeply committed to regional architectural expression. Welch honed his craft in the offices of another master of regional modernism, O’Neil Ford, FAIA, for several years in the late 1950s before striking out and opening his own small firm in Midland in 1959.

Over the course of his more than 50-year career, Welch consistently and creatively incorporated traditional building materials and forms into the modern buildings he produced. That work earned him renown. In a special, 1978,





**Opposite** Exterior elevations have been re-clad with a mixture of stucco and wood siding.

**Left** A new steel and wood screen separates the dining area from the entry.

**Below** Dark painted steel beams articulate the family room, whose rear wall is clad with limestone.





Texas-themed issue of the venerable British publication *Architectural Review*, writer Jim McDonald declared that Welch exhibited the most “Texasness” of his cohort, which included W. Irving Phillips, Jr., FAIA; William T. Canaday, FAIA; Charles Tapley, FAIA; Ken Bentley, AIA; and James Coote, AIA. Of the Welsh House, McDonald wrote: “The loose quality of the floor plan indicates the fragmentation of the building, and the appearance of flat roofs defines the exploration of new territory for Frank Welch. ... Stylistically, this house comes as close to mainstream International Style as most Texas architects are willing to get.”

By 2010, however, when a new set of owners acquired the Welsh house, the once-cutting-edge design, with its sloped, greenhouse glazing and ski-slope-like, tall shed roofs, seemed passé.

Welch’s preference for simple, wide gallery-like corridors connecting classically proportioned rooms — more Louis Kahn than Frank Lloyd Wright — may also contribute to this feeling of datedness, making the spatial aspects of Welch’s work harder to appreciate as time passes. Whatever the case, the new owners of the Welsh House wanted to open up the floor plan and create more interconnected spaces. They also wanted more variety in finishes and textures. The house was originally clad mostly in vertical wood siding. Content Architecture replaced that with a combination of dark-toned Massaranduba, chalk-colored limestone, and charcoal gray stucco.

*When a new set of owners acquired the Welsh house, the once-cutting-edge design, with its sloped, greenhouse glazing and ski-slope-like, tall shed roofs, seemed passé.*

Because the house lies in a floodplain, its footprint could not be altered. However, Content made the interior reorganization visible from the exterior through the insertion of two heroically scaled, partially free-standing limestone-clad walls. The architects loosely divided the private and public areas of the house, indicating each on the exterior by choosing wood siding or stucco. Interior walls in the main living areas were systematically cut away, and the plans of the bedrooms, baths, and kitchen were completely reworked. Content also made much-needed updates to the chaotic and



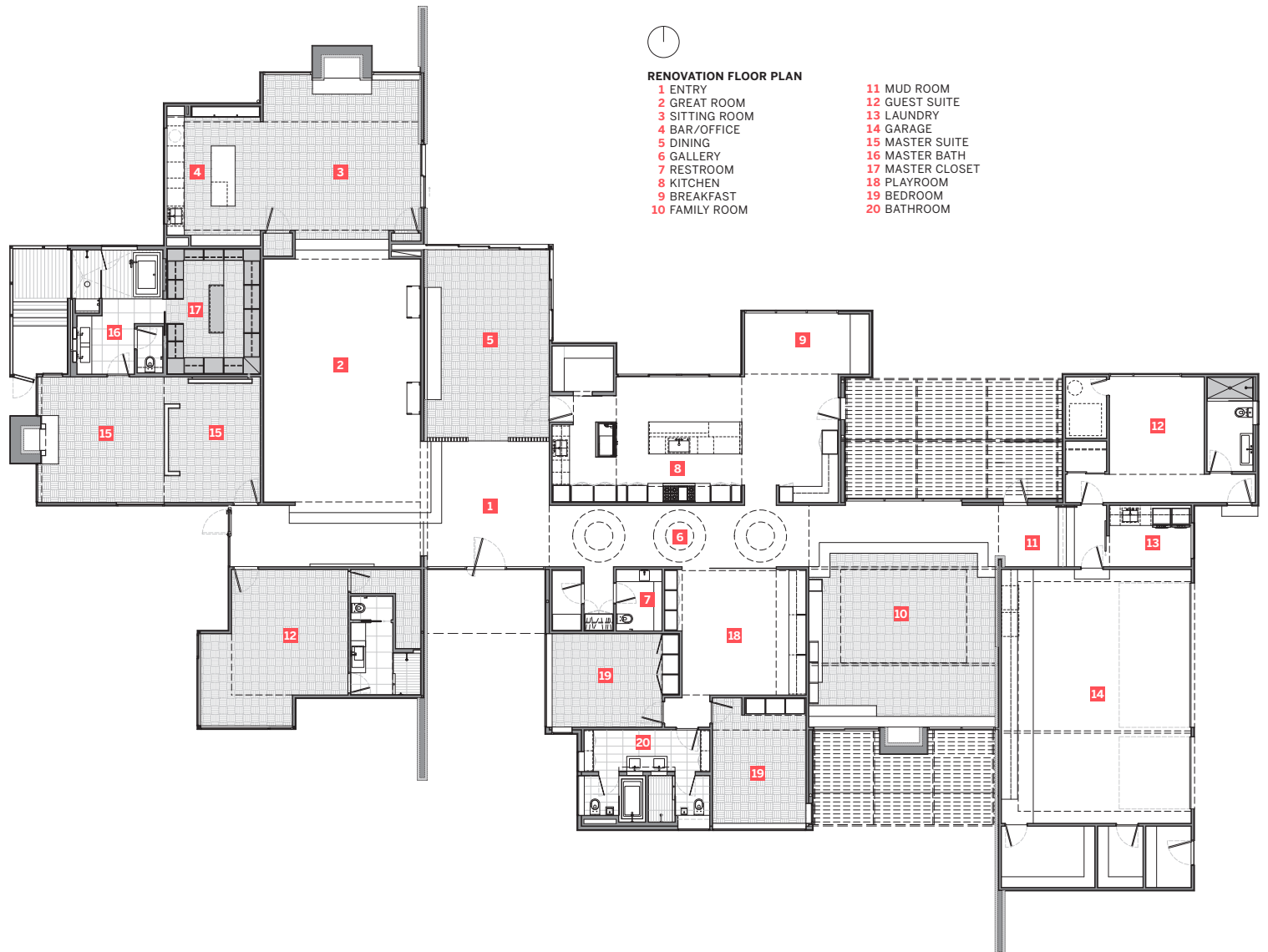
**Above** A sliding glass door in the master shower allows it to open, literally, to the outdoors.

**Right** Before and after images show the extensive changes to both the exterior and interior spaces.













inefficient air conditioning system, which ran through dropped soffits that were removed to increase ceiling heights in many places. (Tellingly, back in 1978, McDonald wrote: “As might be expected in this energy-rich place, the energy crisis seems a long way off. Texans hesitate to reduce air conditioning loads, and hope that alternate technologies will run the compressors before someone actually turns out the lights.”)

The renovation extended out into the landscape, which originally was left heavily wooded — so much so that only oblique glimpses of the exterior were possible. The new landscaping, designed by McDugald-Steele, cleared away many of the trees in front of the house to create a flat forecourt “planted” with evergreen artificial grass and beds of dark gray gravel and accented by round-leaved dwarf Natal plum in steel-edged, rectangular planters sunk into the earth.

To their credit, the team at Content discussed their initial design schemes with Welch, who has perhaps grown philosophical about changes made to his buildings; over the years, he has seen many of his other significant houses

in Houston altered and demolished. His first built work, the Smith House (1956), located in the Memorial-area Sandalwood subdivision, was radically altered in 1974. The renovation by Howard Barnstone, FAIA, won a Texas Society of Architects 1975 Design Award. The Rice University-area Graves House (1965), a fascinating exploration of both the dogtrot and the more formal, central-hall house, was demolished in 2007. Even the aristocratic River Oaks house (a 1972 Texas Society of Architects award-winner) that Welch designed for billionaire art collectors Louisa Stude and Faye Sarofim was ultimately torn down.

The storied architect told Content to do what they and the client thought right. The firm’s design for the former Welch residence is nothing if not bold and spirited. This, coupled with the house’s quality of finished execution, earns the firm distinction as a new Texas architectural practice to watch. We can only be eager to see what they produce next.

Ben Koush is an architect in Houston.

**Opposite** *The master bedroom retains its modest dimensions. The newly reconfigured dining area.*  
**Above** *A drone’s-eye view of the residence shows the new landscaping in the entry court designed by McDugald-Steele.*





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## Field With No Center

by Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA

PHOTO BY JEFF WILSON.

On a bright Wednesday in February, artist Margo Sawyer stands on the mezzanine at the Austin Convention Center and surveys her piece, “Index for Contemplation.” The elevated walkway, a recent addition to the building, allows viewers to closely inspect the work — “just like I saw it on the scissor lift while installing,” muses Sawyer, pleased with the view.

The piece, unfolding over six interior bays, is a constellatory jumble of colors and finishes. Its organizing grid references the mullions below. Boxes protrude from the wall’s surface in different thicknesses, and recessed voids mix the required HVAC vents with dummy panels, incorporating the blank wall as part of the piece. The resulting visual impact is astounding: One surveys the murmuration of hues and is momentarily lost.

“Index for Contemplation” captures the intent of Sawyer’s work: systematic organization in the service of emotional response. Her sculpture is more concerned with atmosphere than object. Typically large and decentralized, her works summon an environment of meditative examination.

Born to an American father and British mother in Washington, D.C., Sawyer was raised and educated in England before studying for an MFA in sculpture at Yale. An early 1970s trip to Egypt proved influential, as she became interested in the way architecture, sculpture, and painting were combined to realize the Pyramids. After travels and time at the American Academy in Rome, she landed in Texas in 1988 as a professor at the University of Texas at Austin, and has been based here since.

*Typically large and decentralized, Sawyer’s works summon an environment of meditative examination.*

Sawyer is quick to acknowledge the influence of another Texas transplant, Donald Judd. The two met when Judd lectured at Yale, and she later visited him in Marfa. Judd’s multicolored works set an immediate precedent for Sawyer’s aggregations. One could posit that Judd’s work, in its rigidity and unity, is more masculine, while Sawyer’s is more feminine, as it integrates the wall itself or, in other works, organizes materials into an abstract landscapes.

Judd’s influence extends to Sawyer’s lifestyle: She lives in a renovated brick building close to



# Profile

**Opening page** *With an aesthetic that's both restrained and joyful, Margo Sawyer shares interests and sensibilities with artists and craftsmen of all types, from minimalists like Donald Judd to powder-coat specialists and populist car painters.*

**Right** *The red volume at Discovery Green in Houston mixes a range of colors to generate the viewer's understanding of red.*

**Below** *Sawyer meets with Austin-based woodworker Mark Macek to study details for her installation at the Torcasso residence. On the far right, Sawyer is on site, installing the piece.*



the railroad in downtown Elgin. Her Bright & Early building, formerly a hotel, is a three-story structure with a studio on the first floor and living quarters above. The upper loft is an airy, largely empty floor where furniture, plants, and art pieces are framed by white walls and the small town's skyline beyond. As at Judd's Chinati Foundation, a gang of cats ambles about the property. Sawyer owns a nearby building that recently collapsed; its structural clay tile walls provided material for part of her piece "Reflect: Pyramid, Circle, and Floor," installed last year at the Umlauf Sculpture Garden in Austin. The open slab now stores materials for future artwork and is home to a small Thai food truck. In Sawyer's corner garden, mirrored spheres dot the tips of the agaves.

Extended trips to Japan and India provided Sawyer with opportunities to study ancient structures and gardens that often directly inspire her work. In "Blue," the blue rooftops of Jodhpur, India are echoed in a large floor piece, where painted blocks and boxes become a powerful meditation on the color. Hues range from dark aquatic tints to robin's-egg blue and shades of white. Remote swatches of red, yellow, and green don't distract, but reinforce, by contrast, the blueness of it all. "Elysian Fields," developed in Japan, was a floor piece of colored boxes reminiscent of prayer flags, metal planes, and a sea of pachinko balls. Like the Zen gardens Sawyer studied, the piece is meant to be viewed from the exterior and "walked" with one's eyes.

IMAGES COURTESY MARGO SAWYER.

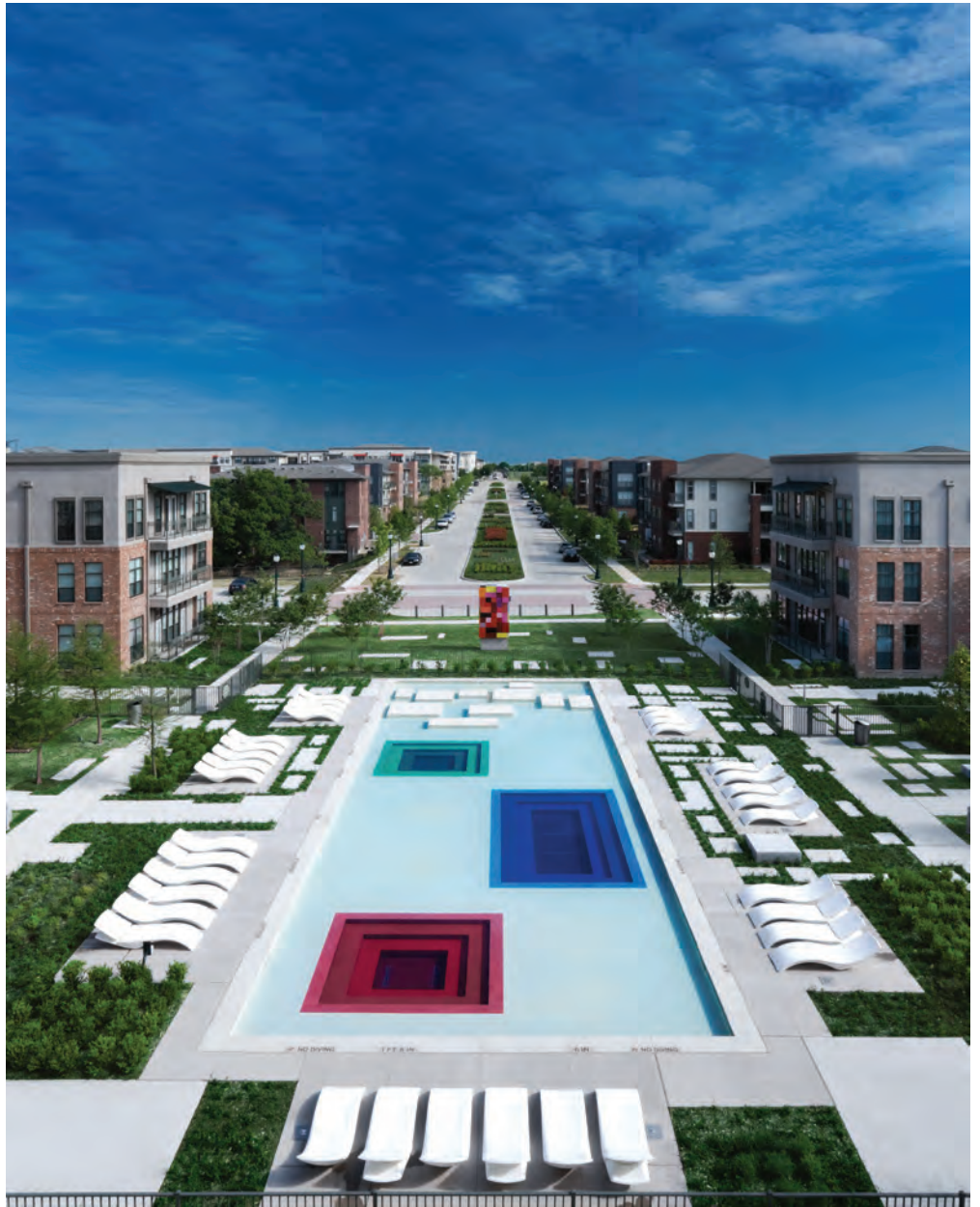




Collaboration is crucial for Sawyer. She engages with architects, engineers, metal fabricators, glass manufacturers, powder-coat specialists, and car painters — “we’re both interested in eye candy,” she notes — to visualize, fabricate, and install her work. Perhaps her most recognizable piece, “Synchronicity of Color Red/Blue” at Discovery Green in Houston, was realized when she was part of the design team, led by Larry Speck, FAIA, for the project. (Speck has worked with Margo for more than a decade. Additional examples of their efforts can be seen in Page’s Torcasso residence, featured in the May/June 2014 issue of *TA*.) The mosaic forms, dominated by reds and blues, are a visual attraction for the park; they also conceal and internally illuminate exit stairs for the parking levels below. Margo’s recent projects continue at a similar scale, and include a proposal for a university building in Victoria, Texas as well as a series of pools (and accompanying sculpture) that serve as the recreational centerpiece of Austin Ranch, a Plano subdivision.

For Sawyer, color is ultimately a material property. She selects colors through a long, almost mystical process of acquisition, evaluation, and comparison, and then scatters them into a universe of chromatic radiation: Powder-coated and anodized metal (steel, aluminum) boxes, chameleon paints, dichroic glasses, mirrors, thick acrylics, tiles, wood blocks, and cast glass swirl together in an expansive field, joyfully capturing the world’s moment-to-moment *everything*.

Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA, is currently a designer with Baldrige Architects in Austin.



**Top left** One of Sawyer’s trademark sculptures was installed at Austin Ranch, a Plano subdivision.

**Above and right** Influenced by India’s step wells, the artist’s design for a pool at Austin Ranch features inset colored rectangles. Even the subdivision’s landscaping bears the imprint of Sawyer’s vocabulary.



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**Consultants** **LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** David Peese Design; **STRUCTURAL:** Structures; **ARBORIST:** Oak Wilt Management; **SEPTIC:** J Dunkelburg

**Resources** **STONE:** Architectural Tile & Stone, Continental Cut Stone; **GLASS:** Anchor Ventana Glass; **HARDWARE:** Alexander Marchant; **KITCHEN:** bulthaup Dallas; **KITCHEN AND LAUNDRY:** Wilson A/C & Appliance; **FURNISHINGS:** Scott + Cooner; **PLUMBING:** Moore Supply & Co, B&B Eagle Plumbing; **HEATING, VENTILATING, AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC):** Thomas A Shubert; **MECHANICAL:** Kent Browning; **OPERABLE SHADES:** Texas Sun & Shade; **LIGHTING:** Studio Lumina

## The Richards Group Headquarters, Dallas

**Contractor** Manhattan Construction

**Consultants** **CIVIL ENGINEER:** Pacheco Koch; **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Thornton Tomasetti; **MEP ENGINEER:** JJA; **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Talley Associates; **AV/IT:** GAP Solutions Group; **ACOUSTICAL DESIGN:** Russ Berger Design Group; **SMOKE CONTROL ENGINEERING:** Hughes Associates; **ENERGY MODELING:** TLC Engineering

**Resources** **CONCRETE:** Manhattan Construction; **CMU:** ACME Brick; **STRUCTURAL STEEL, STEEL DECKING & METAL STAIRS:** American Steel & Aluminum; **COLD-FORMED METAL FRAMING:** CEMCO; **SPECIALTY WOOD PANELING:** Urban Woods; **PLASTIC LAMINATE-FACED CABINETS:** Formica, Wilsonart, Nevamar (Lundy Services); **TERRA COTTA PANELS:** Terreal North America (Dee Brown Masonry); **THERMAL INSULATION:** Owens Corning; **ALUMINUM COMPOSITE PANELS:** NOW Specialties; **GLAZED ALUMINUM CURTAIN WALLS:** Kawneer (Oak Cliff Mirror & Glass); **GLAZING:** Guardian Sunguard (Oak Cliff Mirror & Glass); **LOUVERS:** Ruskin; **ACOUSTICAL PANEL CLGS:** CertainTeed Saint-Gobain; **TILE CARPETING:** Shaw Contract Group; **GYPSUM BOARD:** Georgia-Pacific USA; **TOILET ACCESSORIES:** Bradley; **TOILET PARTITIONS:** Accurate Partitions; **RESIDENTIAL APPLIANCES:** Sub-Zero, True Food Service Equipment; **ENTRANCE FLOOR GRILLES:** Kadee Industries; **ROLLER WINDOW SHADES:** Lutron; **ELECTRIC TRACTION ELEVATORS:** Otis; **FIRE SUPPRESSION:** Northstar Fire Protection of Texas

## Marfa Contemporary Gallery, Marfa

**Contractor** Smith & Pickel Construction

**Consultants** **ENGINEERING:** Alvine Engineering

**Resources** **CONCRETE:** Glen Perkins Construction; **METAL DOORS:** CURRIES Company (All Commercial Openings); **HARDWARE:** Designer Hardware by Faye; **WOOD DOORS:** Marshfield Door Systems (ABS Wood Specialties); **CABINETWORK/CUSTOM WOODWORK/MOBILE WALLS:** Contemporary Cabinets; **OVERHEAD DOORS:** Haas Door (Texas Overhead Door); **SKYLIGHTS:** Lubbock Skylight Manufacturing (Harrison Roofing Company); **RADIUS AIR DINING TABLE AND BENCH:** YDesign Group; **OUTDOOR TABLE AND BENCHES:** Lancaster Concrete Designs; **PLUMBING:** Barmore Plumbing; **LAVATORY:** Duravit; **TOILETS:** Kohler; **FIXTURES:** Toto USA; **INTERIOR AMBIENT LIGHTING, DOWNLIGHTS:** Lithonia Lighting; **TASK LIGHTING:** ConTech Lighting; **EXTERIOR LIGHTING:** HK USA Lighting Group; **DESIGN SOFTWARE:** Autodesk Revit 2012, Autodesk Architecture 2012

## University Park, Austin

**Contractor** Burt Watts

**Consultants** **MEP:** Bay & Associates

**Resources** **CARPET TILE:** Shaw Contract Group (Rockford Business Interiors); **STONE FLOORING:** Alkusari Stone; **ACOUSTIC CEILING TILE:** Hunter Douglas (Specified Interiors); **CERAMIC TILE:** Daltile; **BASE:** Fry Reglet; **PAINT:** Sherwin-Williams; **CUSTOM WAYFINDING SIGN/CUSTOM LOBBY LIGHTING:** Ion Art; **CUSTOM RECLAIMED LONGLEAF PINE DESK/CUSTOM ROUTED MDF WALL PANELS:** Vintage Material Supply; **CUSTOM FELT WALL PANELS:**

Filz Felt; **LOOSE FURNITURE & RUGS:** DWR; **LINEAR FLOURESCENT:** Zumtobel (Spectrum Lighting); **CONCAVE DOME LIGHTING:** Kurtzon Lighting (Spectrum Lighting); **WALL WASH CAN LIGHTING:** Lithonia (Spectrum Lighting)

## Daryl Howard Art, Austin

**Contractor** Bear Creek Homes

**Consultants** **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Duffy Engineering

**Resources** **METAL:** MBCI

**Resources** **FOUNDATIONS AND CONCRETE:** Tex-Sun Concrete; **METAL SIDING AND ROOFING:** MBCI, Bill Sibera; **WINDOWS:** Ram Industries; **SKYLIGHTS:** Velux; **PLUMBING:** Blanco, American Standard, Advantage Plumbing; **HVAC:** Mitusbishi, Trane, Ehrlich Mechanical; **MILLWORK:** AAA Mill Incorporated; **PAINT:** Sherwin-Williams, MCH Painting; **COUNTERS:** Silestone; **INDUCTION COOKTOP:** Summit Appliance

## Condon Residence, San Antonio

**Contractor** Rubiola Construction Co.

**Consultants** **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** A1 Engineering

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**CEILING FAN:** Big Ass Fans (Francis Electric); **ELECTRONIC SAFETY AND SECURITY:** Alarm.com (Dominion Design & Integration)

## Bayou Residence, Houston

**Contractor** Mainland Construction

**Consultants** **STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING:** INSIGHT Structures; **LANDSCAPE:** McDugald-Steele; **INTERIOR DESIGN:** Chili Designs

**Resources** **CONCRETE TOPPING:** Ardex (Dungan Miller Fine Concrete Finishes); **DECORATIVE STEEL:** Wishbone Welding; **MAS-SARANDUBA SIDING:** US Lumber Brokers; **WINDOWS:** Ram Industries; **SLIDING DOORS:** Fleetwood (Ram Industries); **MILLWORK:** Architectural Design Cabinet Works; **TILE:** La Nova Tile; **PLUMBING:** Dornbracht, Altmans (Westheimer Plumbing and Supply) ■



**Project** Prospect House, Hill Country  
**Architect** Max Levy Architects  
**Photographer** Max Levy, FAIA



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July/August 2015

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**Baldrige Architects, Austin**  
Baldrige Architects

**Small Stuff**  
LOJO Architecture; MF Architecture; MetaLab

**thinkEAST: Edible Architecture Materials Lab, Austin**  
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**Prospect House, Hill Country**  
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*Long-time TA contributor Ingrid Spencer recently joined AIA Austin as the organization's new executive director.*

## AIA Austin Welcomes Ingrid Spencer as New Executive Director

In March, AIA Austin announced the appointment of Ingrid Spencer as its new executive director. Spencer joins AIA Austin with over a decade of involvement in the architecture and design communities — supporting architects from the Austin area and beyond through her roles at Contract Design Magazine, Architectural Record, the Austin Modern Home Tour and the Waller Creek Conservancy's Creek Show.

Before moving to Austin in 2004, Spencer began her career in New York as the managing editor of Contract Design Magazine, and then of Architectural Record, which has been the preeminent architecture and interior design magazine for over 120 years. In her role at Architectural Record, Spencer discovered her love and appreciation for architecture of all types; she hasn't left the design world since. Upon moving to Austin, Spencer continued writing for Architectural Record as a contributing editor. She also curated the Austin Modern Home Tour for seven years and engaged with a number of Austin architects and landscape architects through the Waller Creek Conservancy's Creek Show installation series.

"I've been involved with the Austin architecture community since I moved here 11 years ago, and I am looking forward to becoming more intimately involved at AIA Austin," Spencer said. "This is an exciting time to be an architect in Austin. With all the changes and growth here in Austin in the past decade, AIA Austin members have an important role to play in the growth of the city. They have the training and the skills to offer solutions to the problems the city is facing: transportation, homelessness, climate change, sprawl, density — all of these issues. AIA Austin can make a difference, and one of my goals is to make sure the architects of Austin are a part of those conversations."

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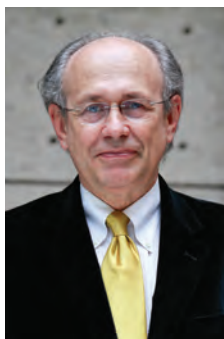


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## Trends of the Trade



### Alex Krieger, FAIA, to Speak on Waterfronts

Alex Krieger, FAIA, has combined a career of teaching and practice, dedicating himself to understanding how to improve the quality of place and life in our major urban areas. Krieger will be in Austin as part of the Texas Society of Architects 2015 Design Awards Jury on May 7-8. Prior to the jury session, Krieger will speak on Wednesday, May 6 at the Emma Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center. Attendees will earn AIA learning unit credits.

*Alex Krieger, FAIA, will be in Austin to discuss urban riverfront planning in May.*

Krieger's lecture, "Principles for Remaking the Urban Waterfront," will focus on riverfront planning and on Krieger's award-winning work in Boston, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Louisville, Washington, D.C., and Shanghai. A professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Krieger served as chairman of the school's Department of Urban Planning and Design, 1998-2004 and 2006-2007; as director of the Urban Design Program, 1990-2001; and as associate chairman of the Department of Architecture, 1984-1989. Krieger is also a principal at NBBJ, a global architecture and planning firm, focusing primarily on educational, institutional, healthcare and public projects in complex urban settings. For details see [www.austintexas.gov/waterfront](http://www.austintexas.gov/waterfront).



### AIA National Convention Atlanta

The AIA Convention is one of the largest annual gatherings of architects and design professionals in the U.S. The 2015 convention will take place at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, May 14-16, and promises in-depth seminars as well as more than 800 exhibitors displaying new materials and technology. Former President Bill Clinton is on the bill as the first keynote speaker. He is followed by Day 2 keynote speakers Welby Altidor, executive creative director of Cirque du Soleil, and Julie Dixon, an expert in the artistry of compelling communications. More than 40 educational tours will be offered, including a visit to the historic Herndon Home, a walking tour of the city of Decatur, and the moving and meaningful ATL Civil Rights tour. A Zombie tour will add some zing to the proceedings.

*The 2015 AIA convention takes place in Atlanta, May 14-16.*

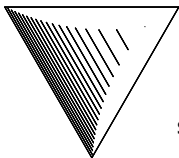
## 2015 Grassroots Leadership & Legislative Conference

The 2015 Grassroots Leadership & Legislative Conference wrapped up in March. AIA members from across the country descended on Washington for visits to Capitol Hill. Action items that architects discussed with their representatives included:

1. protecting and enhancing the federal historic tax credit (HTC);
2. cosponsoring the Safe Building Code Incentive Act, which encourages states to voluntarily adopt and enforce nationally recognized model building codes for residential and commercial structures, in order to qualify for additional post-disaster FEMA grants;
3. cosponsoring the National Design Services Act, which extends debt relief to architecture graduate students in exchange for work in underserved communities.

The agenda emphasized component leadership and included a dynamic legislative conference and workshops designed to help component officers and aspiring leaders become effective chapter and civic leaders. ■

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**Right** *The City of Austin's Art in Public Places program awarded Thoughtbarn with a commission to design the first "artist-led community garden" in Austin.*

**Below** *The aesthetic qualities of the garden created considerable buzz in the neighborhood and resulted in ample community participation during construction and after. Gardeners include elderly residents of nearby apartments, young families, chefs, girl scouts, and refugees.*



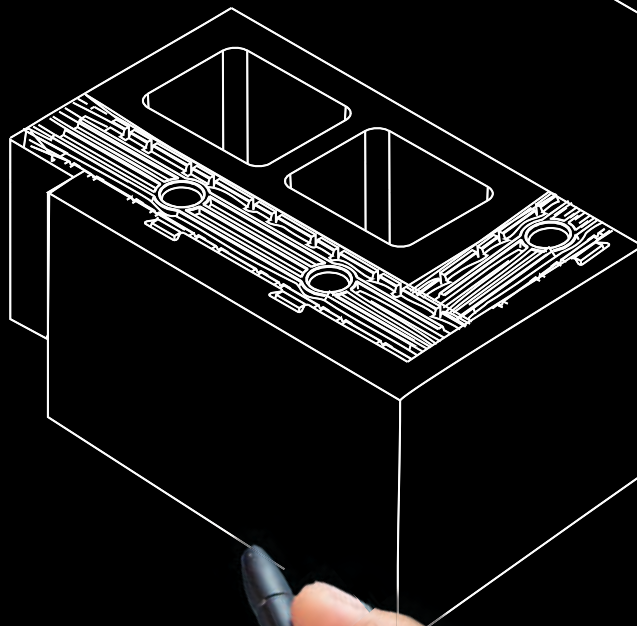
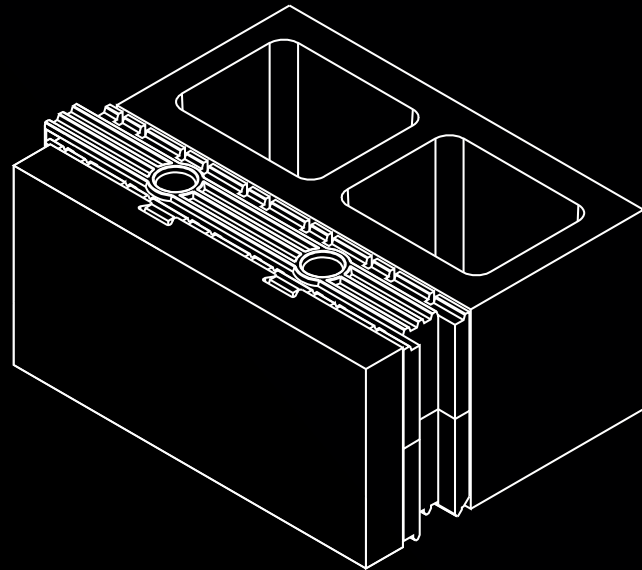
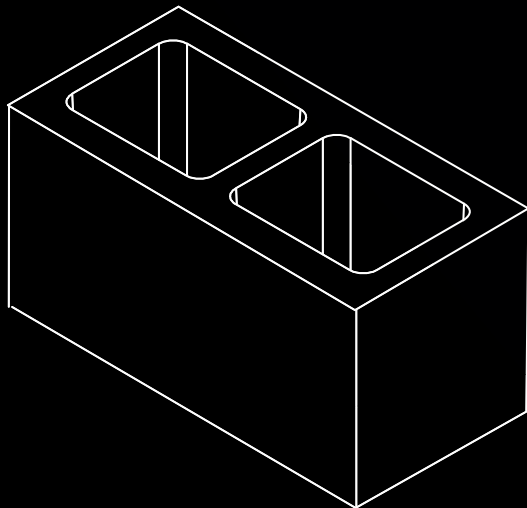
## Colors in the Garden

**T**he new YMCA Community Garden in north Austin is a statement on sustainability and placemaking. Designed by Thoughtbarn, the 25,000-sf radial site plan has an Arizona ash at its center and is divided programmatically into distinct pies. The sections include 50 ADA-accessible beds for individual members, teaching and demonstration plots, an orchard, a composting area, and a playground. A shade structure and adjoining toolshed mark

the entry to the garden, and the colorful sculptural fence encloses the area dedicated to the member beds. The garden supports a sustainable ethos; members must adhere to organic practices and water for irrigation must be harvested from the 25,000-sf roof of the nearby YMCA. In the spring of 2014, when registration for the plots opened, all 50 were claimed within hours. An approved master plan includes a teaching pavilion, which will be constructed during the project's second phase. ■

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*— Fernando J. Andrade, AIA, Principal  
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