****
***

PIN–UP
SPECIAL

SEVEN PORTRAITS

MIES CROWN HALL AMERICAS PRIZE

PHOTOGRAPHY — David Hartt

THE SUBJECTS

01 Seattle Central Library
02 1111 Lincoln Road
03 Mestizo
04 Fundação Iberê Camargo
05 Capilla del Retiro
06 Nelson Atkins Museum
07 Altamira Apartments

INTRODUCTION

Tipping the typical hemispheric orientation of most architectural prizes on its head — East-West to North-South — the Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize, or MCHAP for short, puts the most innovative new architecture in the Americas into the spotlight and under the microscope. Like its namesake S.R. Crown Hall is to the Barcelona Pavilion, the American Mies prize is more about providing a context for research and ideas than pure architectural display. Awarded biennially to a specific project rather than a body of work, the MCHAP celebrates great architecture, but also seeks to understand how these buildings have played out after completion and the effect they've had on the people around them, on the community, and on the cities in which they exist. For its inaugural edition, the Pan-American award was opened up to projects completed since the turn of the 21st century. An initial list of 225 nominees was narrowed down to seven finalists that range in scale and program from large-scale civic institutions to a small rural chapel. For one week PIN–UP followed the artist David Hartt to visit the seven finalist projects — which span the East and West coasts of North and South America — to get a candid glimpse into the day-to-day lives of some of the most significant buildings from the past 14 years. Rather than idealizing architecture in an unadulterated state, the resulting portraits present a momentary encounter with the buildings as they exist today, and of the people whose lives unfold therein.

JURORS

Kenneth Frampton, Jury President
Ware Professor of Architecture at GSAPP, Columbia University, New York, New York

Wiel Arets
Dean of the College of Architecture and Rowe Family College of Architecture Dean Endowed Chair at IIT, Chicago, Illinois

Jorge Francisco Liernur
Architect, Professor at Torcuato Di Tella University, and Researcher of Argentina's National Council for Scientific and Technical Investigation, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Dominique Perrault
Founding Principal, Dominique Perrault Architecture, Paris and Professor at EPFL, Lausanne, Switzerland

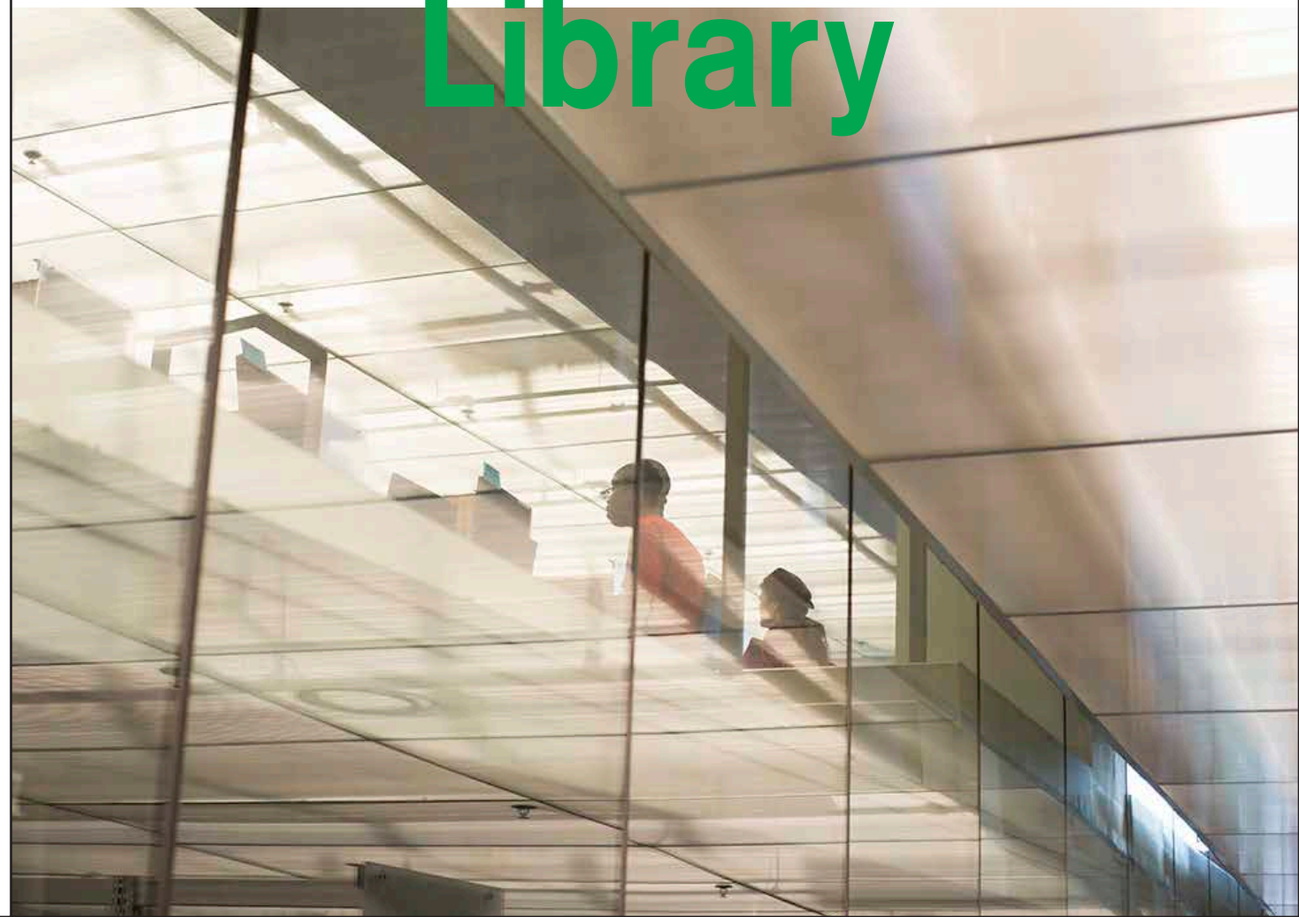
Sarah Whiting
Dean and William Ward Watkin Professor, Rice School of Architecture, Houston, Texas

Seattle, USA

Architect
OMA AND LMN
Client
THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Program
PUBLIC LIBRARY
Completed
2004
Area
412,000 FT²

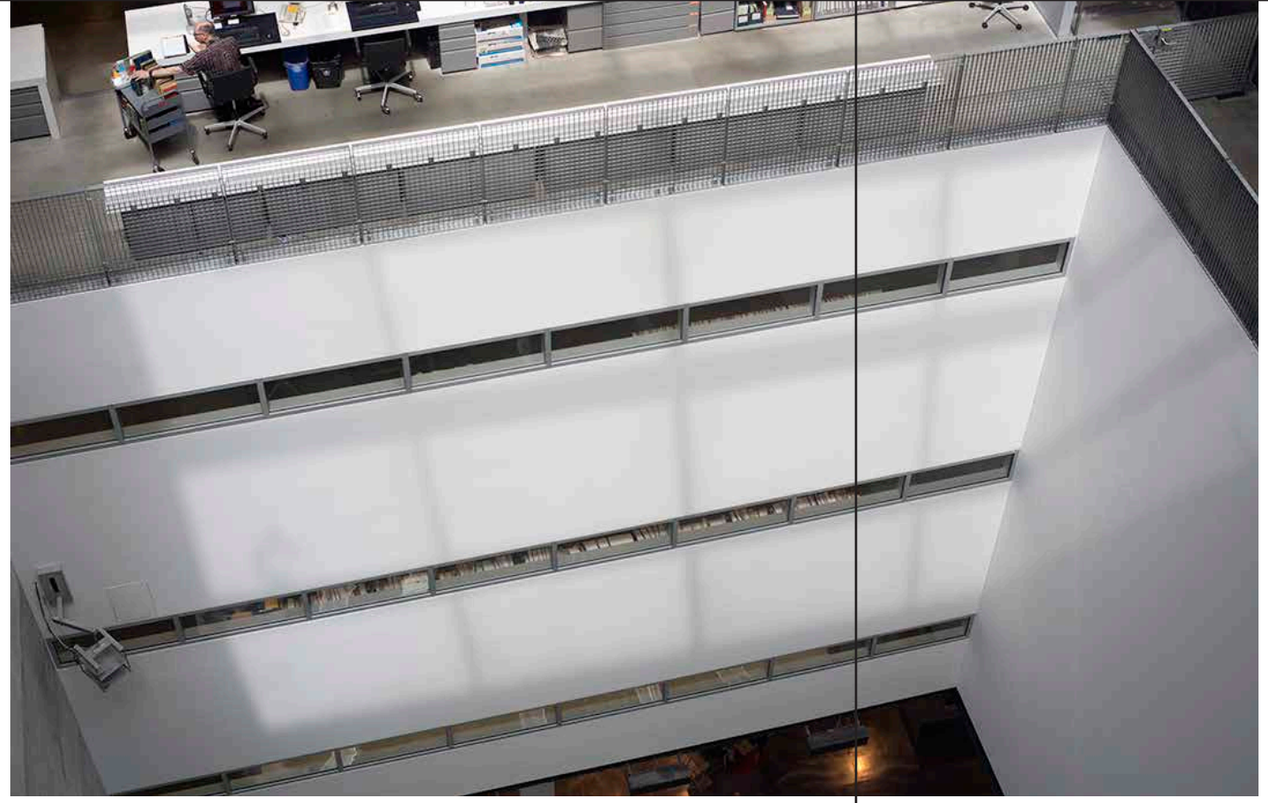


Seattle Central Library



THURSDAY 17 JUNE, 2014

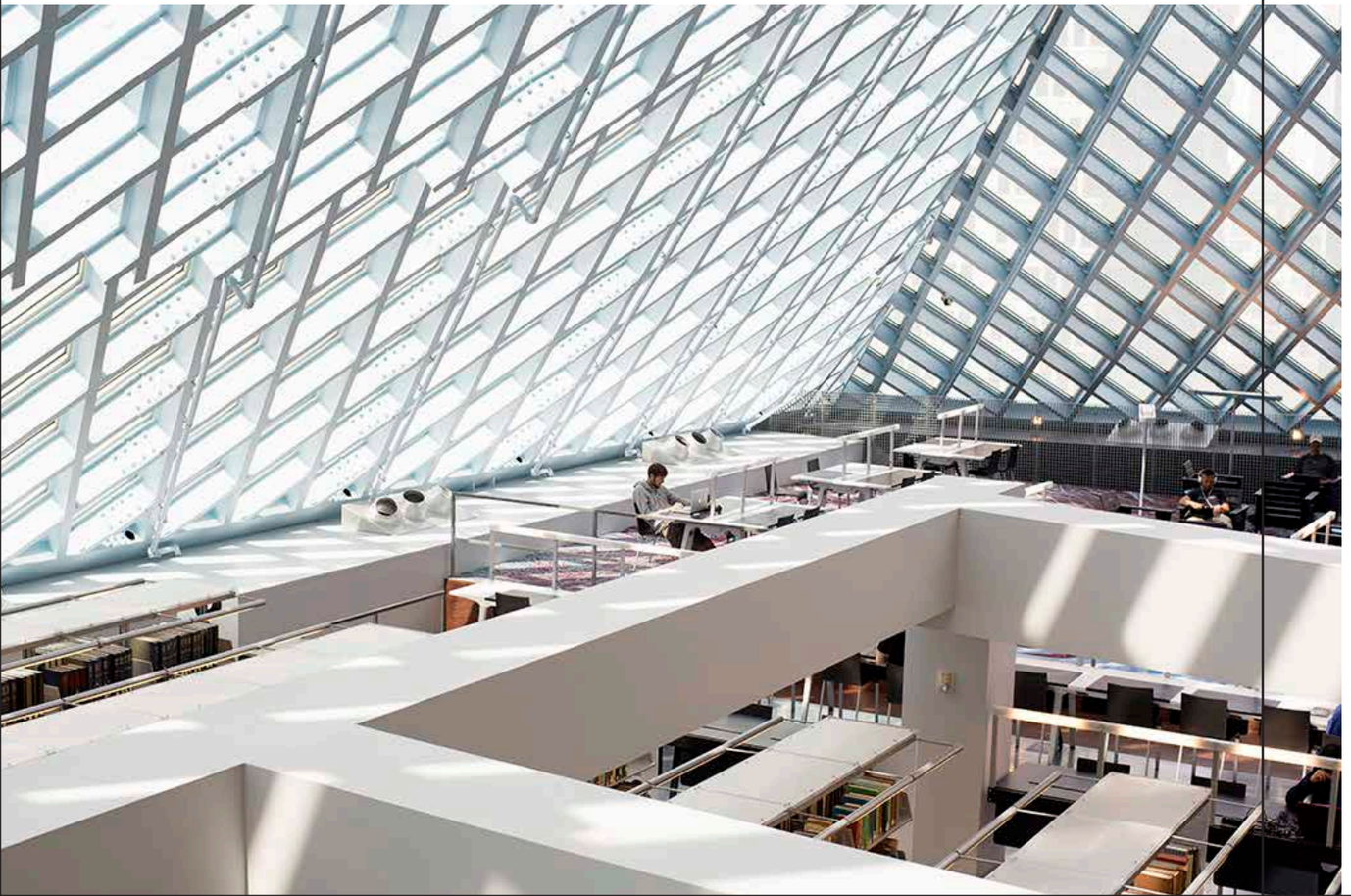
Entering OMA's Seattle Central Library feels a bit like walking into a rehearsal for Rem Koolhaas's fantasy of the 21st century. Cast as extras, a steady influx of tourists exploring the building, as well as locals loitering in the abundant public space, sustain a constant background hum of modern productivity. The fifth-floor "mixing chamber," where the library's computer lab and information services are located, has a trading-floor vibe in sharp contrast to a traditional library's bookish ambiance of solemn oak and heavy silence. Despite all this activity, the original foliage-patterned carpeting by Petra Blaisse's firm Inside Outside at the Fifth Avenue entrance is still in great condition (only the *M2 Landscape* foam chairs had to be replaced recently after close to a decade of service). With denominations like "living room," "meeting platform," and the aforementioned "mixing chamber," the diverse spaces were clearly named by an architect. Come dusk, mechanical equipment and structural columns, colored modeling-foam blue, show through the building's reflective glass façade long past the library's 8:00 p.m. closing time. OMA's Central Library is in fact the third to occupy the site: the original Beaux-Arts Carnegie Library opened in 1906, and was replaced by a larger Modernist building in 1960. While the 21st-century iteration of 1,000 Fourth Avenue has been brought up to speed with the Wi-Fi lives of the venti-soy-latte set, the library's one-million-plus books, shelved in a continuous spiral of stacks, still occupy the building's heart.



"OMA always challenged us to reexamine what we thought it was we were actually doing."

Jodee Fenton











"Libraries are a different place now. We really value transparency: we don't want to hide things, information is open, free, and available to everybody."

Jodee Fenton







INTERVIEW

Jodee Fenton
Managing Librarian
Special Collection

Jodee Fenton started working at the Seattle Central Library over 25 years ago when it was still housed in a 1960s Modernist building. She saw the library through its temporary relocation, was involved in the design process for the new building, and has been working there since its opening in 2004.

PIN–UP

What was it like when you were first getting settled into the building?

Jodee Fenton

Up here on the tenth floor, where I work, it's kind of a magical space because of the height of the ceiling and its finish. When we were moving the collections in, we'd get here really early in the morning, and the ceiling would catch all these beautiful pink and orange colors from the rising sun — the whole surface was just alive with color. It was like, "Where are we? What happened? This is amazing!"

PU The roof is great.

JF It is! The acoustical pillows were designed by Petra Blaisse's firm Inside Outside. They were all custom made from ripstop nylon with a cellulose pillow. Originally the ceiling fabric was going to be purple along with this floor. It would have been really stunning. That was when the external steel was going to be a bronze color, but it all got changed because we couldn't afford the bronzing material. So we went with blue for the steel columns and then the color in here was altered to this nice, soft eggshell shade.

PU It feels a bit like the inside of a moon lander.

JF [Laughs.] Yes! We love it, it's a really nice contrast and texture. It's also really visually compelling when you're down in the reading room and look up and see this whole box, where the headquarters are. It also helps with sound deadening.

PU Were there any things you thought you would have a hard time getting used to when you first moved in?

JF Not really. But there were some interesting challenges. I'd been involved with the design team, so I knew what was happening, and how we were trying to change what the library could do, and how it was going to present itself. One of the things the designers had said was that the building would signpost itself — people would just intuitively know where to go. That didn't quite happen. [Laughs.] People still needed some help to navigate around the building. But at the same time, when someone came up to one of us and told us they were lost, we'd often say, "Well, how lost can you be? You're in a library… This is a really safe, interesting, engaging place — get lost! Enjoy it!" And that was part of the design concept: not to be so intentional every time you come, but to let the library surprise you. And I think the building continues to surprise people.

PU Speaking of surprises, are there any eccentricities you've noticed over the years?

JF I think some of the real surprises are on level four: the red hall — the assembly platform — because of all the different shades of colors there. They are so subtly chosen, and yet when you start seeing them they are so startlingly different. And then you get that view down into the living room from there — it's sort of voyeuristic in that you're not really seen, but you can see everything that's going on in there. Koolhaas loves playing with that idea. I love taking people there because I think that view is very interesting. And then, of course, those red hallways! When we were moving in, we had an elevator operator because we didn't have the certificate of occupancy yet. He would say to us, "What floor do you want?", and we would say, "We're going to level four," and he'd just turn around and say, "Oh, you mean hell?" It was just so red you might as well be visiting the devil! It's shocking. But the point of that color is to shock your brain into a different place. And then you open the door to your meeting room and the colors are very neutral and the ceilings a little lower and you just kind of glide in, and there you are. You get in your chair, and you're ready for whatever's coming. You feel calmer, you feel ready, like you're available for a new idea. It makes for a great transition.

PU What's your favorite detail in the building?

JF I like the concrete wall that rises throughout the entire height of the atrium. It challenges Americans because they always want concrete covered up — they want it painted, they want something on it. But Koolhaas understood concrete as an interesting material in itself. The pours for that wall were done very carefully, so you have this gorgeous subtle layering: gray, variations on gray, and all these beautiful textures.

PU Was that something he had to fight for during the design process?

JF No, I don't think so. The library board, Deborah Jacobs [the Seattle City Librarian who led the capital-improvement program that resulted in the new Central Library], and all the people involved in that process, chose OMA because of what OMA can do. We wanted to guide the process, and make sure the building accomplished our goal. But we didn't want to get in the way. We weren't there to say, "This has to be blue," or, "This has to be this high," or anything like that. There was a presentation of the proposed interiors at a board meeting, and one of the ideas was that the sheetrock wouldn't be painted, it would just be taped and you would see the tape. Koolhaas and his design team really liked that. It looked really cool — so "just built." But the library board was shocked. They said, "The public won't understand, they'll think it's not done and ask what happened to the rest of the money!"

PU I've often heard this building talked about in terms of program and circulation, but what really stands out when you're here is how it looks, which can be really challenging in certain ways.

JF Yeah, I know. We had a building program that all the managing librarians had written years before Koolhaas came. The document laid out guiding principles, and one of them was that the building should reflect the Pacific Northwest. You know, it should have old-growth timber, it should have stones and rocks that are from this area. Then we hired OMA, and gave them this document, and Koolhaas said, "Absolutely not!" He said, "What you value is having the trees in the forest, not cut down and dragged into the city. What you want is a sustainable library that reflects the values you hold about the environment." That was a really good lesson for us. I like that kind of a challenge, and I like the fact that the building says, "Let's look at this in another way. Let's try this new idea and see how that's going to work." All along the way, OMA challenged us to reexamine what we thought it was we were actually doing.

PU Some of the materials have an almost messy quality. In the mixing room, for example, the steel columns are half covered with sheetrock, and then above that you can just see the steel coated in black fireproofing. It looks fantastic, but it doesn't look neat.

JF It's not "neurotic," to use a Rem word. This building is absolutely not neurotic!

PU It also suggests something so different to what libraries traditionally tend towards. Take the original Carnegie Library, for example, where all the materials are so sober and formal. Here things are common, but coordinated so precisely.

JF The Carnegie is from such a different era. To have something so substantial — a library with oak and masonry — sends a different message… It helped the community respect the library. But we've outgrown that. Libraries are different now. We really value transparency, we don't want to hide things, information is open, free, and available to everybody, we're here to help… We're public servants and we take that very seriously. We have Carnegie libraries in our system, and there is some tension about how those buildings can be used and what the expectations are in the 21st century. It's hard to change them because they're very much of their time. Just like this building will be! Architects will design beyond it and do other things, but people will come back to this library and say it represents the transition from the 20th to the 21st century. I think that's OMA's big contribution.

PU Do you imagine this library will remain more or less as it is, or do you think spaces will be changed around to keep it current?

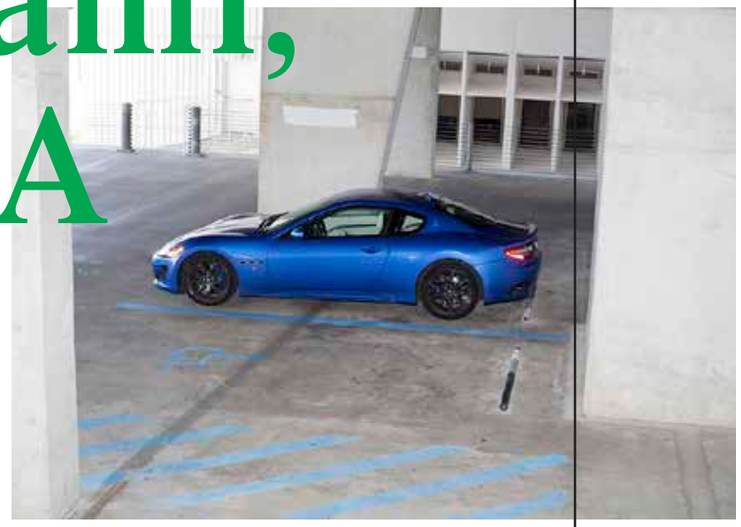
JF You know, this building is pretty bossy. It likes to be what it is and it's hard to change it. During the design process, Koolhaas actually wanted to make sure we couldn't change it around too much. One of the problems he saw in our previous library, and in other libraries he'd studied, was that a modular system would always end up being changed to make more room for staff or collections, resulting in less and less public space. He wanted this library to stay public, so the spaces designed to be public are pretty hard to alter. He thought he was really helping us by making it solid like that. I'm not so sure. There are probably two ways to look at that issue. Right now we're kind of struggling with the changes that are coming in the library world and how we're going to make this building work while being respectful of it. The ramp, for example, in the spiral where all the stacks are — what else can you put in there other than what it's designed for? I'm not sure what the solution is going to be.

PU There's a lot that's very provocative in this building. Were there every any problems with the city?

JF The Seattle Design Commission reviewed the plans, but, to be honest, Koolhaas was very uninterested in having his designs reviewed by anybody. So he would go through this process, and they would say, "The building has to communicate with the sidewalk," or, "It has to communicate with the buildings around it," and he would have none of that. He said, "The American public library is the last and only institution of its kind on the planet. It needs to have its own character, and it needs to push back at all of this commercial office crap that's here." So I think that willingness to be really provocative in the design is a way of saying, "This is an identifiable building, and something other than anything else in the area." And it is. You can't mistake it. That's why people come from all over the world to see it. He really had a lot of respect for the American public library. And that made us feel really good. You can take some risks in design when you know your designer really appreciates what you're trying to do. Even though you might have different ideas about what that's going to look like, you feel safer, and you feel like you've got a partner in that imagination trip.

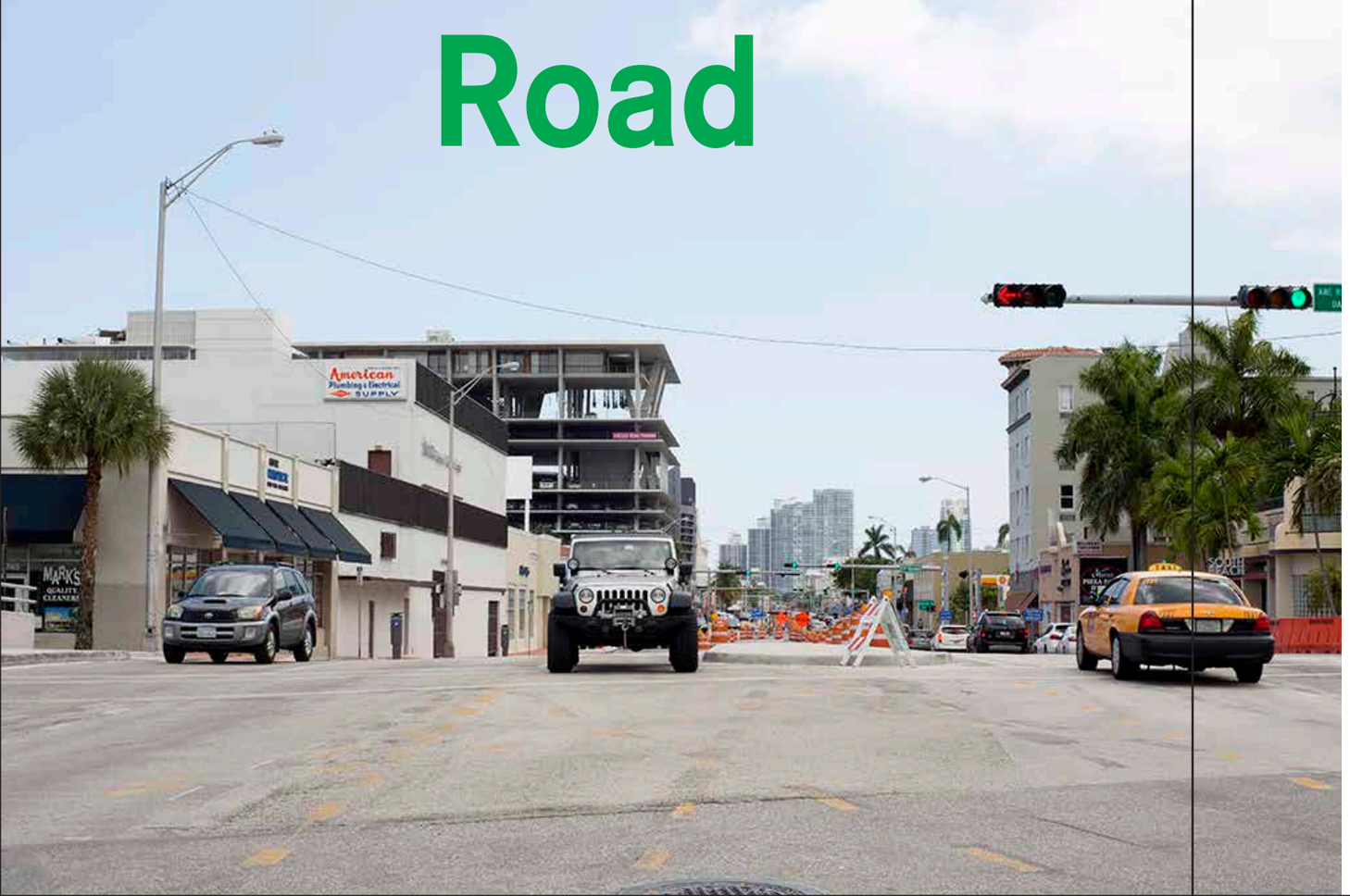
Architect
HERZOG & DE MEURON
Client
ROBERT WENNETT AND
THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Program
PARKING GARAGE,
COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL
Completed
2010
Area
243,000 FT²

Miami, USA





1111 Lincoln Road



"This is the only job I've ever had for this long, and it's because of this building."

Jen Court



SATURDAY 19 JUNE, 2014

Depending on your perspective, 1111 Lincoln Road is either an innovative re-imagination of a cumbersome piece of urban infrastructure, or an elaborate pretext for a South Beach penthouse with a view. In addition to 263 parking spaces (many of which boast generous double-height ceilings), the mixed-use seven-story structure designed by Christine Binswanger of Herzog & de Meuron features ground-level retail, a luxury boutique wedged in the middle of the garage between the fifth and sixth floors, and a rooftop residence for the project's developer Robert Wennett (accessible by private elevator). The garage, which has already become somewhat of an icon for South Beach, also functions as an event space and has been rented out to corporate clients including Ferrari and Nike. With its open concrete floor plates stacked atop angular slab columns, the building resembles a bespoke ruin, compounded by the vines hanging down from the penthouse's rooftop garden, which give the construction a prehistoric air. The garage is automated, so there is usually only one attendant staffing the building. When we visited, Jen Court was on shift. She explained that what she appreciates most about the garage is the openness and the perspective on nature that the architecture provides. Juan, another attendant, observed that, "Some people come here to park specifically because of the architecture. Others just complain about the prices — but they keep coming back even though there are other places nearby where they could park.

INTERVIEW

Jen Court
Parking Attendant

Originally from Chicago, Jen moved to South Beach ten years ago and started working at the garage in 2011, a year after it opened.

PIN–UP

What was your first impression of the garage?

Jen Court

I was actually a bit concerned when I first saw the construction. But I was surprised — now I think it looks 1,000 times better. When I was training here they told me that they weren't getting very many customers because people thought it was still under construction. My mom came to visit me and asked, "Is it done?" I had to tell her, "Yeah it's done, it's just different." And now she comes here and thinks it's great.

PU Is it open to the public? Can someone just come in off the street and look around?

JC It's private property, technically, but we allow people. A lot of locals come here. Actually a lot of people come here if friends are visiting — it's something they want to show them. We get a lot of architecture students. The only thing we try to avoid is when people start laying down and like, chilling. When we first opened, homeless people would come to the third and fourth floors and put their clothes out to dry when it rained. The strangest thing I saw was some high school-kids having sex on the cement stairs between the sixth and the seventh floor, right in front of where the elevator opens.

PU What are some of the building's unique features?

JC Well, the fact that there's a penthouse apartment and also retail in the middle of the garage on the fifth floor. But there are less obvious things like the restroom on the sixth floor — it's something a parking garage wouldn't normally have, but there has to be a place to go to the bathroom for when they do events. And the parking blocks can all come out — since I started working here I've thought it's a great idea to use garages for events, but other garages have cement bumpers that are permanently in the ground so it's really hard to do anything there except park. And then the windows in the penthouse are hurricane glass, so if there's an event down here Robert [Wennett] can close them up and not hear anything. I know that Robert wanted to switch up the whole parking idea, and I think he's done that.

PU Has working here changed the way you feel about what you do?

JC Yeah. This is the only job I've ever had for this long, and I think it's because of this place. Usually I'm at a job for six months to a year and I get bored, or it gets too easy — you meet someone who's a lifer and you're like, "Whoa, I don't want to do this for the rest of my life!" But here, I'm okay.

PU What is it you most appreciate about the garage?

JC You can breathe here, and that openness is not something you normally find in a parking garage. You can see the bridge to Miami from here, and on a stormy day you can watch the bridge disappear as the storm comes towards South Beach. At sunset too, the way the water is, it almost has two different textures.









"You can breathe here, and that openness is not something you normally find in a parking garage."

Jen Court



Architect
SMILJAN RADIC
Client
COMER Y BEBER S.A.
Program
RESTAURANT
Completed
2007
Area
7,000 FT²

Santiago, Chile

Mestizo





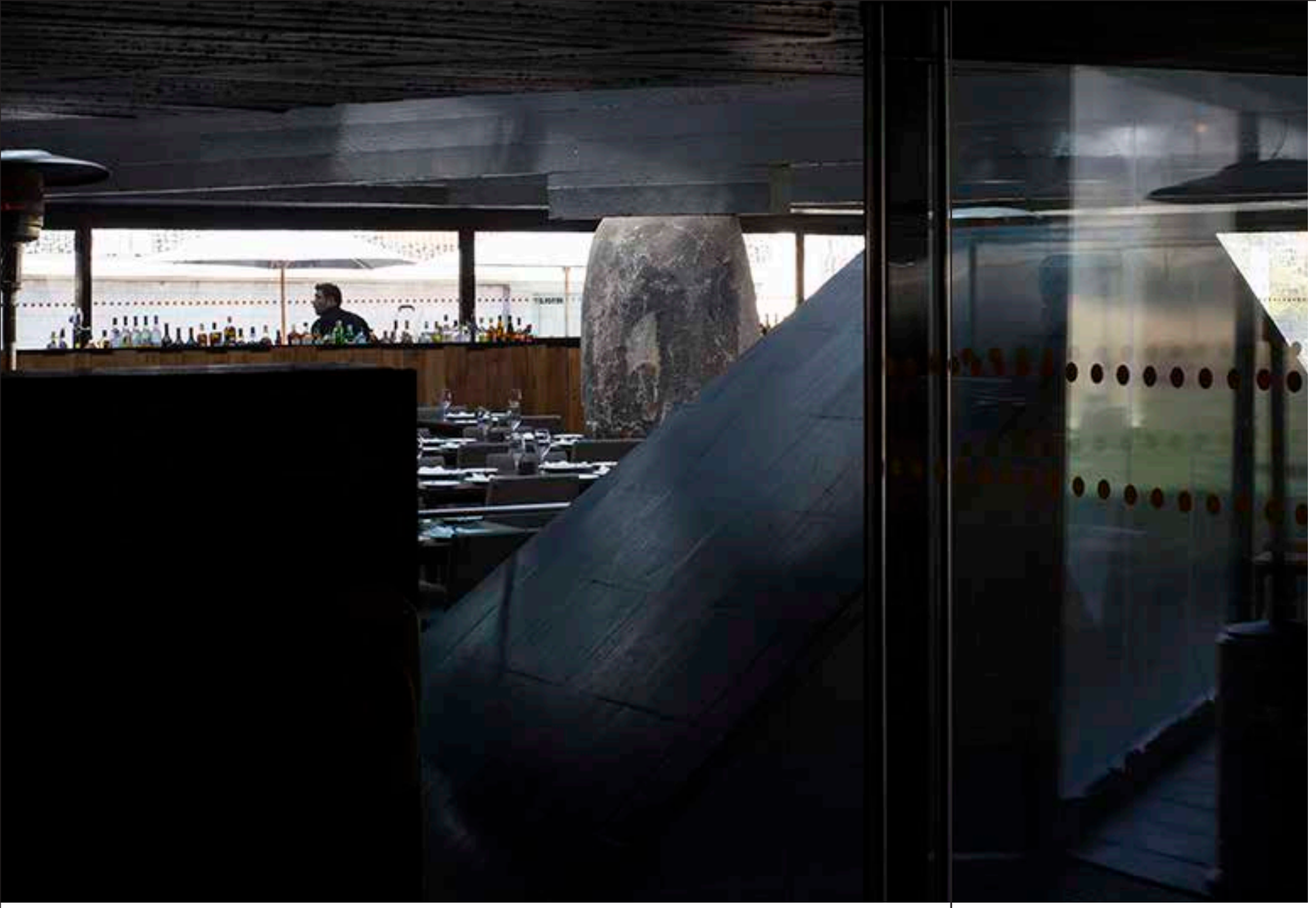
"It's like a ruin in the middle of the park, and all of the tables and decoration are just accessories, but the ambiance really comes from the architecture."

Smiljan Radic

THURSDAY 24 JUNE, 2014

Located in Santiago de Chile's new Parque Bicentenario (designed by Chilean architect Teodoro Fernández), Mestizo is a spectacular restaurant by Smiljan Radic that features natural, rustic elements, such as granite boulders supporting the roof, held in interdependent equilibrium with a more Modernist vernacular. The result of a design competition held by the local authorities, Mestizo is the second restaurant Radic has built in his hometown for the same client, the designer turned restaurateur Arturo Murua, whose son Ignacio is now the CEO of the company that owns and runs Mestizo. We arrived at opening time on a Wednesday evening, and within half an hour the restaurant was packed. Its constantly changing menu is only available in Spanish. "We should probably have them in English," Ignacio admits, "but the name Mestizo refers to the mixing of cultures, and I think it's good for Americans to learn some Spanish." The next afternoon the outdoor terrace was filled with Brazilian tourists on ski vacation sipping frothy pisco sours out of earthenware cups, while a few feet away a couple tinkered with a drone to get aerial images of the park's flamingos. Ignacio, who also co-directs a gallery and project space in Santiago, likens the restaurant to a church. "On the outside, it's just a building, but on the inside is all the ritual. All the things that happen inside are as important as the building — all the ceremony of the food, and the stories. You come here because they've hired you or fired you, you come here to get drunk and to celebrate. It's like a temple in the end."







"It was important for me for the structure be honest and that the granite boulders actually support the roof."

Smiljan Radic

INTERVIEW

Smiljan Radic
Architect

Smiljan Radic recently drew international attention with his design for the 2014 Serpentine Pavilion in which an inhabitable fiberglass torus rests on top of scattered boulders. It's a structural concept that the 49-year-old Chilean architect traces back to his use of granite boulders as columns in his design for Mestizo, where Radic still occasionally dines. He highly recommends trying their tuna.

PIN–UP

Is it true you used to work for Teodoro Fernández, the designer of the Parque Bicentenario?

Smiljan Radic

Yeah. Teodoro was a master for me. He taught me a lot.

PU Development of the park and the restaurant overlapped — were you and Teodoro in conversation while you were designing Mestizo?

SR No, I didn't ask him anything because I expected he would be on the final jury [for the public competition for the restaurant]. But I know how Teodoro works, and I wanted to be really quiet with my design and not do anything that would damage that part of the park. Teodoro did sit on the jury, so I guess he thought it was okay.

PU Has the area changed much since the restaurant and the park opened?

SR When Mestizo first opened the road that runs in front of it now didn't exist. Not very many people passed by here and it was very isolated. When we were designing the restaurant, we decided we had to do something very powerful so that people would come. Now it's on the path, and you can see it from the road, so people pass by it anyway and everybody knows about it. But at the beginning the project needed to have a really strong atmosphere to get people to come here. This was the first project in this area, and it was important because it created a strong focus.

PU What do you think is the civic role for a place like this?

SR It's not a museum, it's not a church, it's a business, and it has a very commercial drive. There are a lot of different people who come to the restaurant. About half come for the food, and half come for the space. A terrace restaurant in the middle of a park like this isn't something you really find in Chile — I don't know why, because we have very good weather, and from November to March you don't really need shelter. The problem Mestizo now has is that they've had a lot of success and there's pressure to add more capacity. It's not something I could have designed for, because the local government wouldn't allow it at the time. There are things we couldn't have done at the beginning — like covering the terrace — that are in place now because the restaurant has been so successful. They get, I don't know, 300 people a day. In my student days I worked in a restaurant, so I know how many people 300 are. I think it's too much for any restaurant.

PU Where did the idea for the granite boulders come from?

SR We wanted to work with granite rocks because they're something you could find in a park, so you understand them in relation to the park. We thought that if we used them as structural supports we could bring the park inside the pavilion and create the sensation of being in an interior space while at the same time feeling like you're in the middle of the park. The restaurant is like a big pergola: there's a glass roof, which casts a shadow on the ground, and you have this beautiful landscape in front of you framed by dark concrete. It's more a part of the park than a separate building. It's just simple elements that have been put together. But the important thing for us was that the structure be honest and that the granite boulders actually support the roof. In Chile, these types of buildings tend to feel more ephemeral — all about lightness and transparency — but we wanted to do something where you can feel the density of the materials and that physical resistance.

PU What did you learn from working on this project?

SR When you're working with these big natural elements it's hard to get the exact dimensions. I could never say exactly how the composition would come together ahead of time so I had to work more with the atmosphere of the space. There's also a lot of risk in this kind of project, and it was really hard to convince the engineer to use the granite rocks for the structure because we get strong earthquakes in Chile and everything needs to be tested.

PU It's already been through a big earthquake, right?

SR Yes, in 2010 there was an 8.8-magnitude earthquake. I was traveling with my daughter in Costa Rica when it happened. We were getting ice cream in a small shop when the news started coming through on the T.V. They said "8.2… 8.6… 8.8..." And I thought, "Oh my god!", immediately worrying how Mestizo would be after the earthquake. But it was totally okay, apart from some ceramic on the walls that fell down.

PU Do you go back to the restaurant often?

SR I try not to go too much. But when I meet with Ignacio, Arturo, and Guillermo Murua we go there. It's nice to meet friends and eat, rather than being there as the architect. I don't want to see how the building is, or question why they're doing something a certain way. I really don't care too much.

PU Really?

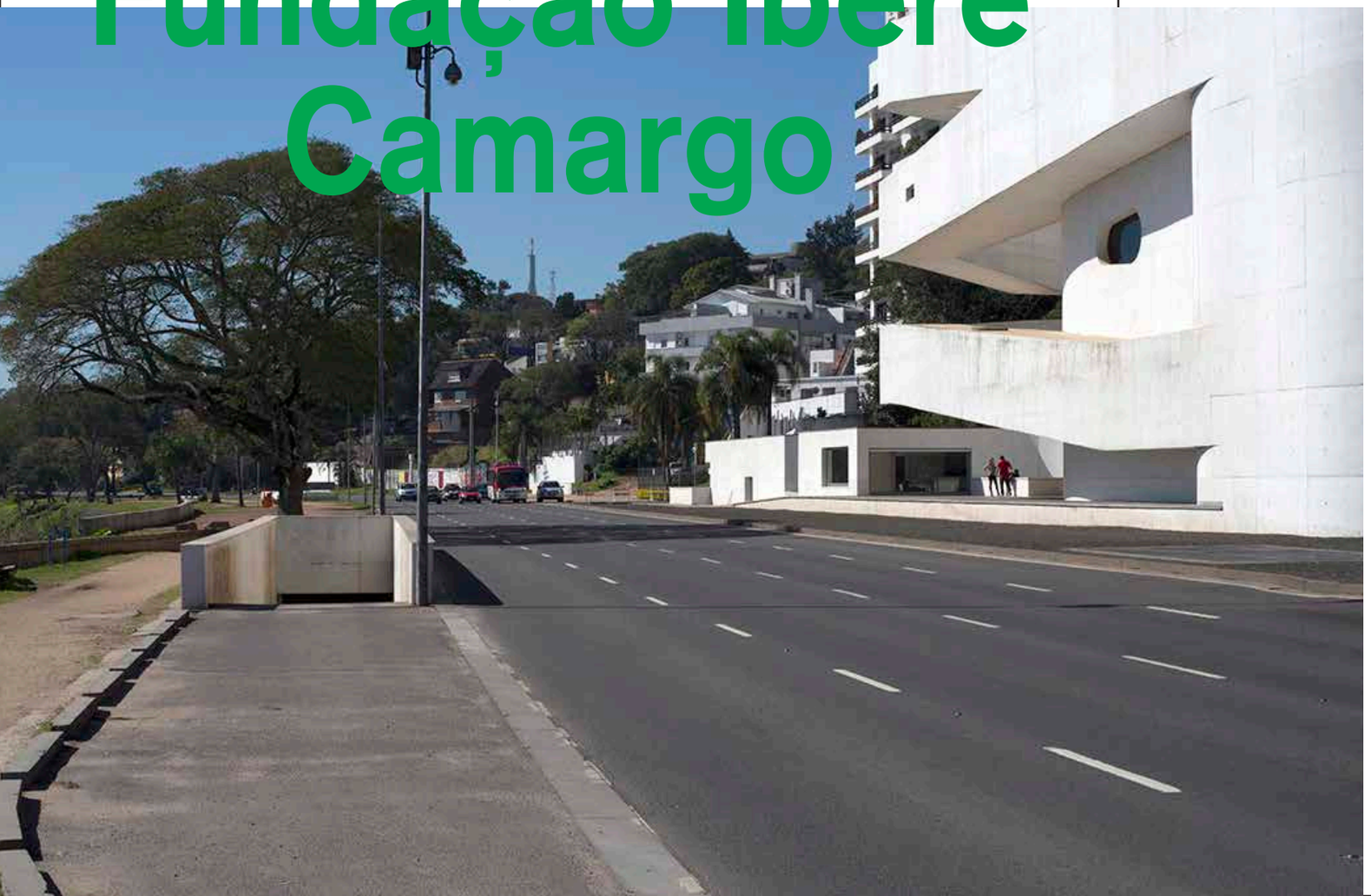
SR My relationship with my projects isn't that they're mine forever. I finish the project, and from then on it's the owner's. It's not my business. My business is to do the building, and the building's business is to make money. Once it's finished, you have to keep it out of your mind. I think the important thing for these kinds of projects is that the structure and the architecture be strong enough that, even if things get changed, ten years later you can still find the real restaurant, and if you wanted to refurbish it you'd know where you have to stop. Mestizo is like a ruin in the middle of the park, and all of the tables and decoration are just accessories, but the ambiance really comes from the architecture. A restaurant is a big machine that is always changing and you can't predict what will actually happen during its day-to-day operation. Sometimes I think the changes are making the building better, sometimes not. But it's all part of the architecture.

Architect
ÁLVARO SIZA
Client
FUNDAÇÃO IBERÊ CAMARGO
Program
MUSEUM
Completed
2008
Area
88,000 FT²

Porto Alegre, Brazil



Fundação Iberê Camargo







MONDAY 21 JUNE, 2014

For its opening party in 2008, the Fundação Iberê Camargo packed 2,000 guests into its parking garage, which is tucked neatly underneath Porto Alegre's Avenida Padre Cacique. There's a straightforward explanation: the garage is the building's largest uninterrupted space, but it also speaks of Álvaro Siza's unrelenting attention to detail — flanked by rows of columns, the garage is stately, immaculate, and more than suitable for a large gathering. Siza's precision continues inside the foundation proper, where everything from the main gallery spaces to temporary storage areas seems to be treated with the same care and finish, although subtle signs of wear and adaptation are starting to appear. During our visit, a workman was carefully sanding down plaster after installing a brise-soleil over a window in the foundation's northwest façade to keep the low winter sun from shining directly onto paintings in the lower gallery. From the street, the building's massive white concrete volume with its muscular protruding ramps appears closed and monolithic, but inside openings frame views over the landscape out front and internal courtyards provide light and air to the generous spaces for staff, educational programs, and the print workshop. From the foundation's sunken cafeteria you can watch joggers and cyclists pass by at eye level through a massive picture window that gives onto the pathway running along Lago Guaíba. Built around the collection of one of Brazil's most famous expressionist printmakers and painters, the foundation is the first building in the state of Rio Grande do Sul to be designed expressly as a museum. And while the caliber of its architecture has helped the institution establish itself, the emphasis is now shifting to the programming. "We wanted to have an important architect make a very special building, because a cultural project alone would not have the force to shift the focus from Rio or São Paulo, but it's the cultural project that is our focus now. The building is a tool, but we don't expect it to do everything," explains Camila Monteiro, a member of the foundation's educational team. The museum is free and the upper two floors house temporary exhibitions, which change about every three months, while the lower gallery is reserved for curated exhibitions of Camargo's work. But a lot of people in Porto Alegre simply come here for the beautiful view of the sun setting over the lake.

Eduardo Haesbaert is an artist and was a longtime friend of Iberê Camargo's. He currently works as the Collections and Printmaking-Workshop Coordinator at the foundation.

"Before Iberê passed away, he and his wife Maria had talked about creating a foundation to preserve his works, which is what happened in 1995, a year after his death. One of the first things they thought about was transitioning from Iberê's former workshop studio into a new building. Jorge Gerdau Johannpeter, CEO of the company Gerdau, the foundation's main sponsor, rallied around the idea of making the building, and an invitation was sent out to five or six architects to propose ideas. Maria was very happy that Siza got selected because her family came from Porto, in Portugal, where Siza is from. Siza spent time working with me in Iberê's studio in order to understand his methods. He was always mindful of the necessities of Iberê's works — so much so that the completed building is sometimes not ideal for temporary exhibitions because Siza was not necessarily thinking of other artists' work. Maria was in every meeting, putting pressure on people to do everything quickly and effectively. The city council had donated a piece of land for the building, located right between our office and her house. Every single time we passed in front of the future building site she would make me call to have the vegetation removed and start preparing the land for the building. [Laughs.] They had the ground-breaking ceremony in 2001, and then it was under construction until 2008. Maria was 92 when the building opened — she passed away this year at 98 — and of course she was very excited. But I think she was also relieved that she got to see the building completed before she died. It's not something that happens very often, to have an idea like this and to see it come to fruition 20 years later. Porto Alegre never had a building with this much detailing, at this scale, with these kinds of materials. It has even affected my work as an artist, just from seeing the way Siza structured this building."

"Siza is very particular about every detail. For him it doesn't matter if it is a cargo area, an emergency area, or parking."

Pedro Mendes



Pedro Mendes
Cultural Management
Fundação Iberê Camargo

"Siza is very particular about every detail. For him it doesn't matter if it's a cargo area, an emergency area, or parking — he'll treat it with as much care as any other part of the project. The emergency stairs, for example, are made of marble and the detailing of the railing and the lighting is the same as in the main stairs. Some people even say the emergency stairs are prettier than the main stairs. [Laughs.] This also reflects the liberty Siza had on this project: no one on the foundation's board told him he had to do the cargo or administrative area more cheaply, or more quickly. The attitude was that if this is how it has to be done, we will do it properly. Siza also did all of the furniture, from the lighting to the benches, and even the symbols for the restrooms and the fire exits, which we had to get special approval for."







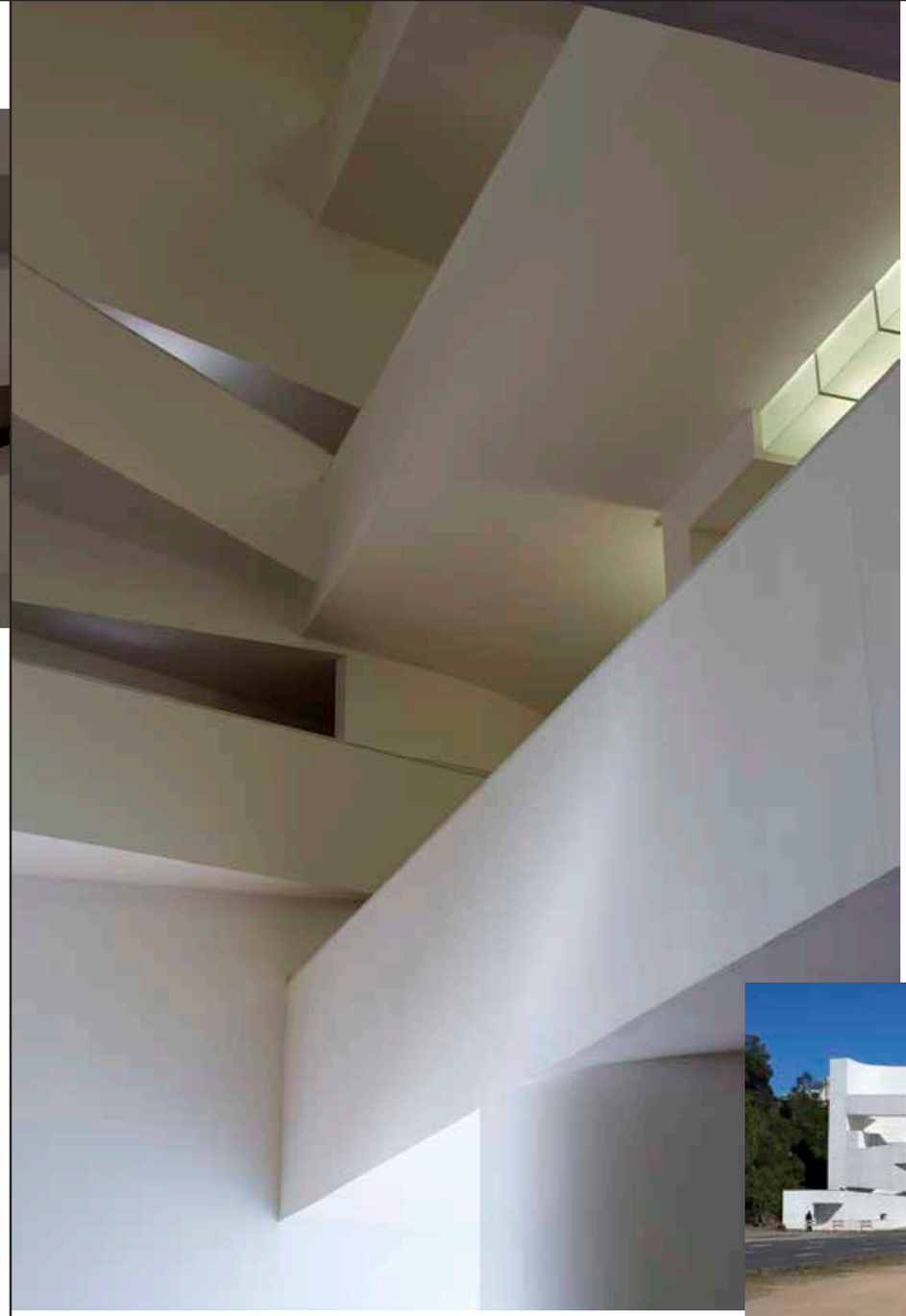
Marcelo Lunardi is a 29-year-old printmaker who has been involved with the Fundação Iberê Camargo since he was a child.

"My mother Helena was the main model Iberê worked with for his paintings, so I grew up around him. Since I was five years old I was in the studio with Iberê and Eduardo while they were making prints, and now it has also become my craft. My job is to work with the artists that come here on the visiting-artists program, which is part of the foundation's mandate to keep Iberê's thought and production processes alive. A lot of the artists who come here have never made prints before, so Eduardo and I will work with them to show them the techniques. We use the same printing machine and the same materials that Iberê worked with.

This building forces you to look at the landscape from unusual angles. Here in the print shop we have very high ceilings, so we're always looking at the landscape from below. It's very interesting for artistic production. It never becomes tiring or monotonous because you always find a different angle you hadn't noticed before."

"Working in the building never becomes tiring or monotonous because you always find a different angle that you hadn't notice before."

Marcelo Lunarde



"I'm not sure if it was vision or if it was just luck, but the area to the South of the Foundation is now one of the fastest growing in Porto Alegre."

Camila Monteiro





Camila Monteiro
Educational Team
Fundação Iberê Camargo

"In the beginning we suffered a bit because the foundation was in a very isolated area. I'm not sure if it was vision or if it was just luck, but now the area to the South of the Foundation is one of the fastest growing in Porto Alegre. As a result the foundation is going from being set in a very isolated place to what is becoming the best area in the city. We're right on the river, and now there is a huge project to urbanize the whole riverfront and they've started building more bike paths. About two years ago all of the educational staff started getting thinner because everyone started biking to work. [Laughs.]"

Architect
CRISTIÁN UNDURRAGA
Client
CASA DE ESPIRITUALIDAD
SANTA TERESA
DE LOS ANDES S.A.
Program
CHAPEL
Completed
2009
Area
6,500 FT²

Auco, Chile



Capilla del Retiro



WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE, 2014

Sixty miles north of Santiago de Chile, in an area of stunning natural beauty, lies the Santuario de Santa Teresa de Los Andes, where pilgrims travel to venerate the remains of Chile's first saint, who was canonized in 1993. Families and groups come here on retreats, and it is for them that the Capilla del Retiro was built, but it has since become a site of pilgrimage for architects too. To enter the chapel, you follow a long ramp that descends into the earth and passes underneath the orthogonal concrete structure. A glass corridor leads into the main space, which sits underneath a massive wooden box levitating above a ribbon of glass. The door into this space is off center, but the day we visited the pews had been arranged symmetrically either side of the main axis; when Cristián Undurraga, the chapel's architect, arrived shortly after, he immediately started moving the pews back in line with the entrance. It didn't seem like the first time he had done this, and he conceded that the nuns liked the symmetry. "They always ask why we didn't place the entrance in the center. But if you move the center, you have a completely different approach to the space, and that's what we were searching for throughout this project." Undurraga, who employs about six people in his Santiago-based office Undurraga Devés Arquitectos, worked on the design for the small chapel with a team of three. "One member of the team got married while we were working on the project and had a baby around the time the chapel was completed, so they baptized the child here — it was the first and only baptism in the chapel's history!"





"I liked the simplicity of the building. Everything that is there is something you need. There is nothing superfluous."

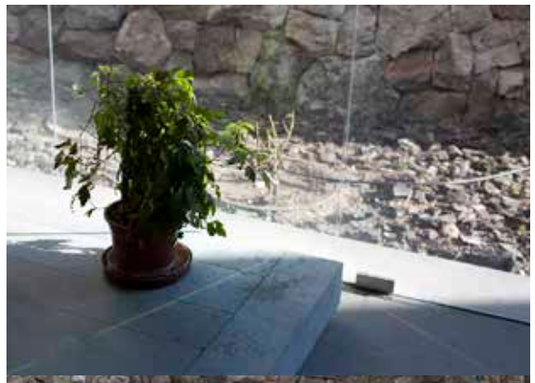
Sister Angela





"In the chapel, the light is coming from the people level, not the God level."

Cristián Undurraga







INTERVIEW Cristián Undurraga
Architect

Cristián Undurraga is a 59-year-old Chilean architect based in Santiago. He is not a practicing Catholic, but since the chapel has won him so much recognition the nuns at the convent have been trying to convince him to renew his faith.

PIN–UP
Can you tell me about your original idea for the building?

Cristián Undurraga
In the Catholic church-building tradition light comes in from above, representing God. With the Capilla del Retiro, we were looking to do something new. We discovered that we could make this huge box of wood float by hanging it from four beams. Not only do the beams carry the box, they also express the Catholic tradition of the cross. There is a little bit of light that comes in around the edge of the ceiling that helps you understand the form of the box — a very thin line around it — but most of the light is coming from below. It's connected with reality, with life, with people, because the light is coming from the level of the people, not from the level of God.

PU How do the nuns feel about that symbolism?

CU I think the Catholic religion has moved on from this idea of something far away in the upper part of nowhere — God — towards a closer relationship to the people, more involved with their everyday pains, suffering, and dreams. I think this chapel is very connected with that kind of church. Of course there are some people who come here and don't like it, particularly people from more traditional parts of the Catholic Church. This is not a traditional church, but if you were to take out the sculpture of Jesus you would still feel you were in a sacred space.

PU Did the nuns give you any feedback when you were working on the design?

CU The nuns weren't actually involved in that part of the process, but I think they understand all of this perfectly well. There was a competition for this project and there was a lot of discussion about what this chapel should be. After we won the competition there were no difficulties for us — the completed building is exactly what we designed for the competition.

PU Is designing a church very different from designing a non-religious building?

CU Even though this is a sacred space, in the end you're always designing for people. Our idea of architecture is that it is the art of built hospitality. What we did here was to design a chapel for hospitality.

PU Did you design the furniture in the chapel as well?

CU We designed everything except the altar, the benches for the priests, and the tabernacle — those incredible pieces are in stone, and were made by José Vicente Gajardo, one of Chile's greatest sculptors. He's not Catholic, but he's a very spiritual person and he understood the interpretation of the Catholic spirit in this church very quickly. For us, the design of the furnishings was part of a concept of something very simple.

PU Minimal?

CU Not minimal. Minimal is an artistic approach to a problem. Our approach is related to the people. Nothing here is overdesigned — just what you need, and no more than that.

PU How did you decide on the materials?

CU I think the old railroad ties we used on the interior are something that gives you a very direct connection with the building. When one of the nuns first saw it she thought that each piece of wood represented one person — that people's lives, suffering, and dreams were located all around the top of the chapel.

PU How do you feel about other people's interpretations?

CU A lot of people come up to me and tell me them. It's interesting in the context of the MCHAP award, which is about how you build a new city for tomorrow, because this is a chapel outside of the city. In our practice, the city and social problems are our expertise, and this chapel is a break from that. But it does give you an opportunity to think about those issues. When I heard the nun's interpretation of the railway ties, it made sense, because now when I come here I see the people and the social problems. This chapel was built in the middle of Chile's biggest economic crisis in recent history, and in this noisy world you need a little silence. It's very difficult to build a space where you understand that you are out of this world, and it's nice to be able to provide that break that allows you to think — to build silence.

INTERVIEW Sister Ángela
Nun

A member of the Orden de Carmelitas Descalzas de Chile, Sister Ángela has lived at the Monasterio del Espiritu Santo at the Santuario de Santa Teresa de Los Andes since December of 2012. She is originally from Viña del Mar, about 75 miles west of Valparaiso.

PIN–UP
What was your reaction when you first saw the chapel?

Sister Ángela
The first time I came here, I felt how immense the space was. It reminded me of the sense of hugeness I'd felt when I visited some of the chapels in Rome. I liked the feeling of walking down the ramp and having the space open up as you enter. I liked the simplicity of the building. Everything that's here is something you need. There's nothing superfluous. There are no hanging images, no ornaments. And the statue of Christ is not on a cross, but is resting on the railroad ties that make up the building. The other thing I really like is the stone wall surrounding the chapel — all the freedom you have on the outside — and the relationship it has with the box inside, and the glass in between them. The chapel is a construction inside another construction.

PU Do a lot of people visit the chapel?

SA There are more than before, because we are more open to people. There are a lot of groups. There are also families that come here on their own. There are two chapels here, the smaller old one and this bigger new one. A lot of people are starting to ask for the new one because they're learning to understand it.

PU Do people mainly use the new chapel for Sunday mass? Or is it also open at other times of the day?

SA Sunday mass is actually held in the old chapel. This chapel is used at all times. For example, there's a group coming late this Friday, so there'll be a service at night. The chapel is beautiful at night — you feel embraced by it.

PU What do you think attracts people to it?

SA They like to be here and to feel the complexity, a new sense of space. People are immediately astonished by the floating box, and then the silence becomes so strong. It's a special sensation. At the beginning they don't understand how the ceiling can be hanging like that — a lot of people look for the structural support. We always take the time to explain how it works and what it means, how it relates to God, how He supports the people, and they start to understand, and start to like it, and to feel it. Then they ask about the railway ties, and we give an explanation of how life is going through everything. Everybody asks why the pews are in rows of four and two, why the entrance is not in the center. There's a lot to discover, and it's a new thing for people, it's a rich experience. It makes people think, and it's a very special place to think.

Architect
STEVEN HOLL
ARCHITECTS AND BNIM
Client
NELSON-ATKINS
MUSEUM OF ART
Program
MUSEUM
Completed
2007
Area
165,000 FT²

Kansas City, USA

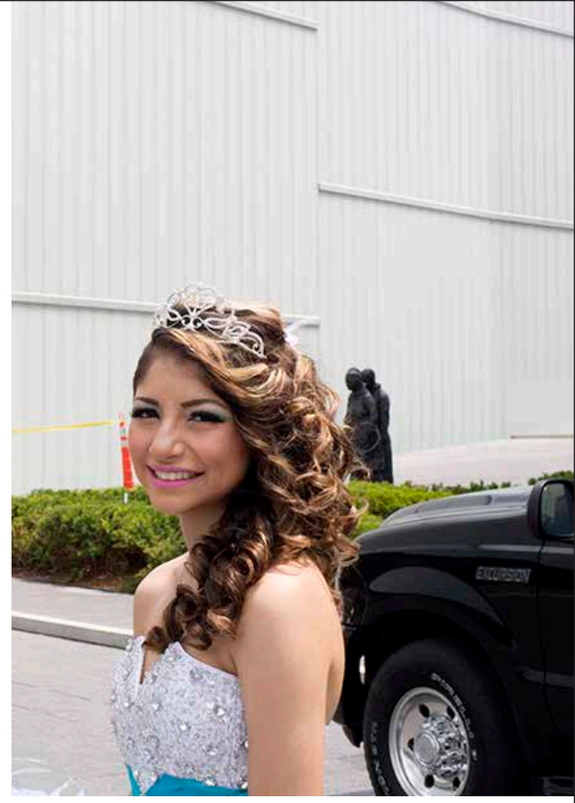


Bloch Building, Nelson-Atkins Museum



FRIDAY 18 JUNE, 2014

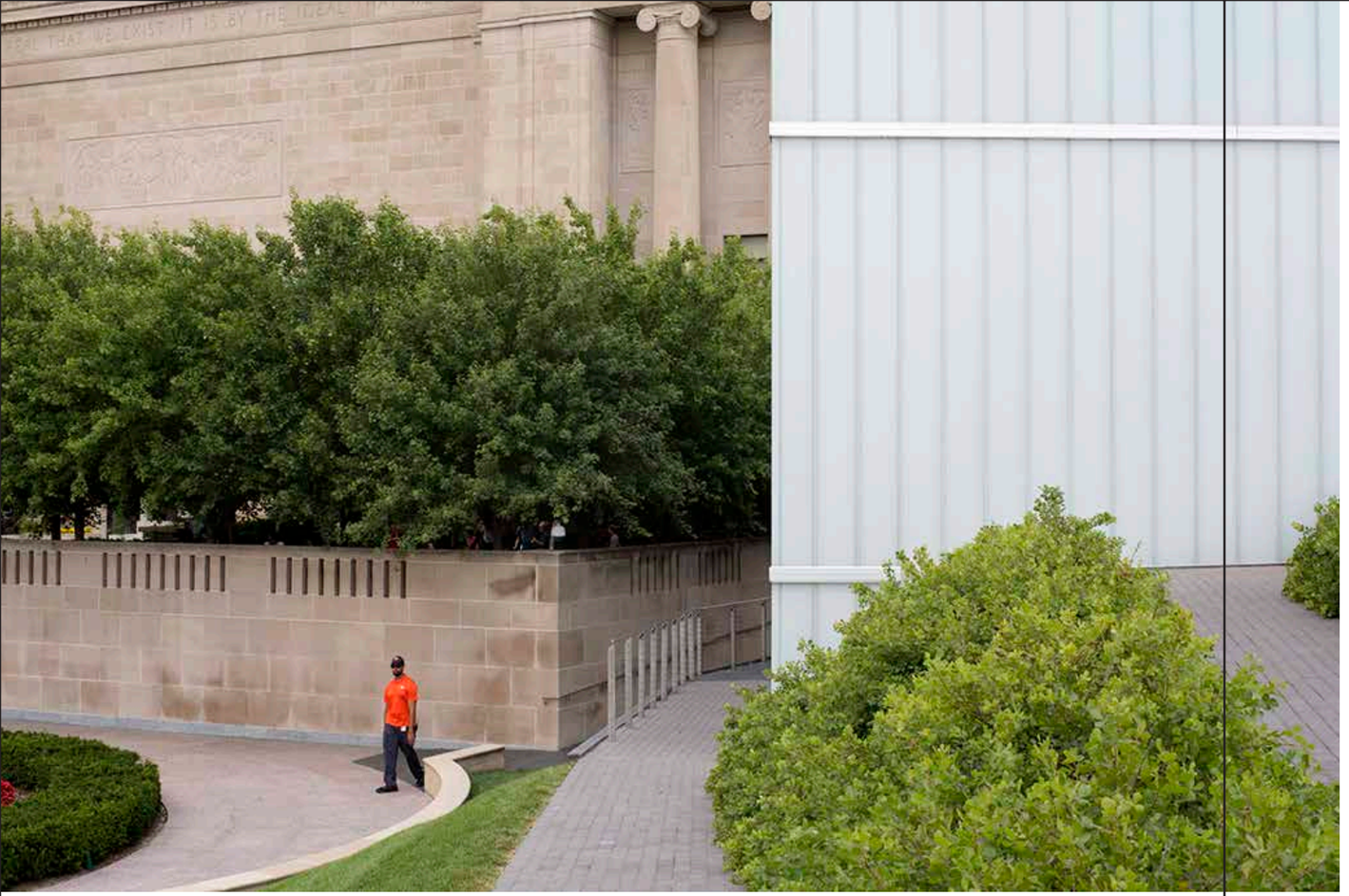
When we arrived at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, a girl in a light-blue quinceañera dress was posing for photographs in front of the Bloch Building's translucent main entrance hall. We were told that the previous weekend the museum had hosted seven weddings. Downstairs, a children's chamber orchestra was playing to an impromptu audience of museum visitors. An addition to the Nelson-Atkins's original 1930s galleries, Steven Holl's Bloch Building houses the museum's contemporary- and African-art collections. Thanks to this extension, 18–20 percent of the museum's collection of about 33,000 objects can now be viewed at any one time, and the Bloch Building also provides additional space for temporary exhibitions. The bulk of Holl's design — including the galleries and the considerable storage, archival, and office space — is buried, hidden under a landscaped roof, but his five distinctive Okalux-glass "lenses" strongly mark their surroundings. The museum is free of charge, and visitors can come and go as they please through four separate entrances. Rooftop walkways connect the building with the lawn and sculpture park to the south, while stairs cutting along the building's east slope step down to street level and are frequently used by neighborhood residents walking their dogs. Within the sleek, clean lines of the gallery spaces are beautifully crafted details, such as expressive arches and Venetian plaster walls, while the entrance hall is an essay in natural light and "pure architecture." However, with the recent hanging of Ghanaian artist El Anatsui's giant wall tapestry Dusasa I (2007) there, Holl's architecture has now found a worthy competitor for attention.





"The garage is actually really beautiful and unusual, with the wave tee-beam ceiling and the Walter de Maria installation — you're already at the museum when you're driving in to park."

Steve Waterman



Elisabeth Batchelor
Director of Conservation
and Collections Management
Nelson-Atkins Museum

"When the original Nelson-Atkins building opened in the 1930s, it was only half full. So when every nook and cranny had finally been filled, the museum worked out a basic architectural program and started raising money. Without any plans or an architect, they raised $120 million! The museum held a competition for the design and most of the architects made plans for the north side because they didn't want to affect the old building, and because the view over the south lawn is sacrosanct. Steven Holl was the only one who said, 'To hell with that! I'm going to bury it in the ground on the side.' And it was so obvious to everyone that he was the winner.

We had staff committees working on all different levels. It meant that things took a little longer, but it made for a better project and it also made it easier for people to buy into it, because they felt like they helped design it. One of the first things we did was to have a roundtable with the truckers. They cased the joint and figured out what was the best approach. The first design had the truck entrance on 45th Street, which meant that trucks would have had to make a really sharp corner, so they asked if we could move the entrance to the south, and that just turned everything around. The original design also had ramps downstairs in the staff area, and we couldn't convince Steve that ramps wouldn't be good for moving art. So we thought, "Okay we'll show you then," and we built a ramp outside to test it out. Down in the offices it was basically up to us how we wanted them. I didn't mind having tall ceilings and seeing the ductwork, but in the registration office next door they wanted a false ceiling. We also came up with some things ourselves. In the storage room, for example, there's a built-in mezzanine, which, since it's considered furniture, doesn't count towards architectural square footage. I always introduce it as architectural trickery, because it's like we got twice as much space, but only paid for so much square footage.

It was a very slow process in terms of evaluating each material. We actually had to bring someone back from retirement who still knew how to do Venetian plaster for the gallery walls. We had a half-size mock-up of one of the lenses in the parking lot. Lying down on the floor of the model you got a sense of what it was like in the gallery. It was designed so that the natural light is for the architecture, and then below a certain level there's artificial light for the paintings. At dusk, when the light in the lenses comes on, it's like these Japanese lanterns tumbling down the hill."





"This is a free museum, which is a pretty unique because you don't have to have everyone come through the same door to pay admission. You can have people come in in eight different ways."

Steve Waterman

Steve Waterman
Director of Presentation
Nelson-Atkins Museum

"I like to think of this building as a 67-story skyscraper turned on its side and mostly buried. When working on projects for places like Kansas City, architects will sometimes try to ignore the fact that they're driving communities and pretend they're doing a building in New York where there is more of a pedestrian culture. But in reality, more than 90 percent of our museum visitors come through the parking-garage entrance. Steven [Holl] gave us the aspirational pedestrian entrance above but also the 'what we know the world to be today' parking garage below. And the garage is actually really beautiful and unusual, with its wavy ceiling and Walter de Maria installation [skylights at the bottom of a pool that allow rippled reflections to filter down into the garage] — you're already at the museum when you're driving in to park."





Architect
RAFAEL IGLESIA

Client
CONYSTAR SRL

Program
MIXED-USE APARTMENT BUILDING

Completed
2007

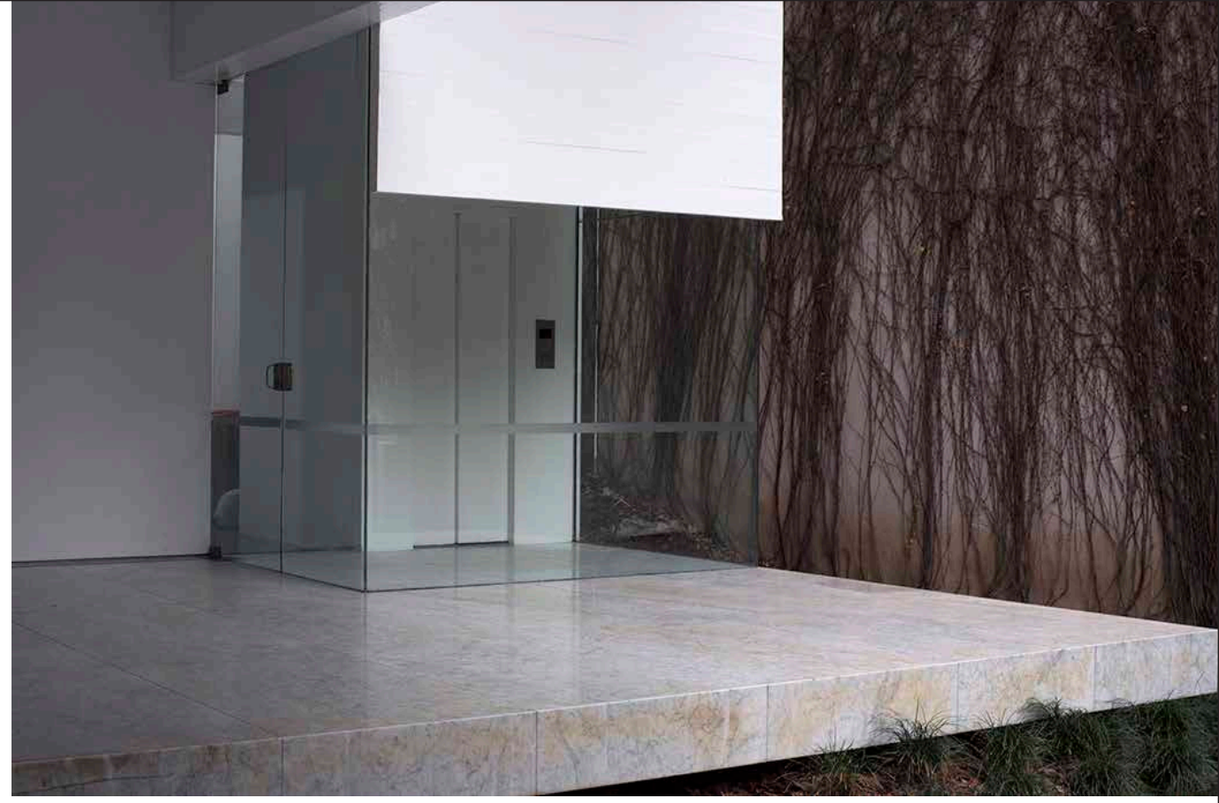
Area
12,700 FT²

Rosario, Argentina



Altamira Residence





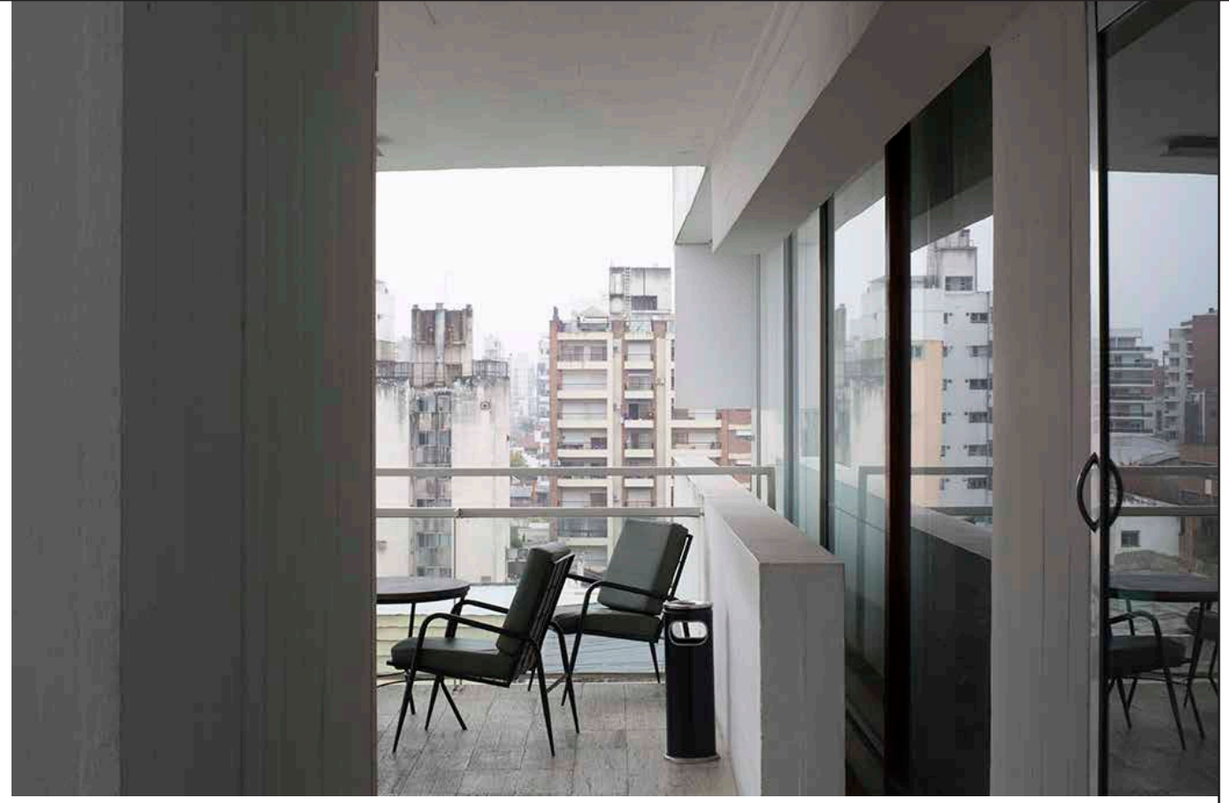
TUESDAY 22 JUNE, 2014

The white-concrete façade of Rafael Iglesia's Altamira apartment building rises above the streets of downtown Rosario like a twelve-story skeleton. And a skeleton was about all it was for six years, due to Argentina's 2001 economic crisis which halted construction at the eighth floor. Still, even in this barebones state, Altamira's essence was already explicit. "The character of this structure is a canvas for many things to happen inside," explains Guillermina Iglesia, who, as daughter of the developer and niece of the architect, grew up with the project, and now practices as an architect herself. Altamira's clever design combines openness, light, and enough flexibility to let people do their own thing inside. For Guillermina, the intricate stairwell at the rear is among the building's most remarkable features, thanks to the way it elegantly interweaves public and private stairs. It's a point that is lost on most tenants, who prefer to use the elevator, which opens onto an outdoor patio on each floor. Another feature that makes Altamira stand out from the majority of apartment buildings in Rosario is its open ground level, which Rafael envisioned as a garden for the city. The building is designed to accommodate a variety of possible layouts and, although intended as primarily residential, has attracted a diverse array of business tenants, from animation studios to biodiesel labs.



"Even if this building becomes a ruin one day, it will still be alive because the architecture is in the structure."

Maria Eva Contesti









"It's great architecture, with great questions about a lot of architectural principles and opinions, and that's what I appreciate most about it."

Guillermina Iglesiai

INTERVIEW

Maria Eva Contesti and Guillermina Iglesia Architects

Guillermina Iglesia's father Juan Carlos is the investor behind the Altamira apartment building, and her uncle Rafael Iglesia is its architect — and her former boss. Guillermina has an office on Altamira's second floor, which she shares with fellow architect Maria Eva Contesti, her partner in their firm 2 (A) Dos Arquitectas. Guillermina's parents live upstairs in a duplex on the eleventh floor.

PIN–UP

Can you tell me how the Altamira project started?

Guillermina Iglesia

It was really the dream of two brothers. Rafael and my father are not from Rosario, but they came here when they were young and lived together. My father is actually a lawyer and doesn't know much about architecture — if you saw his apartment here, he has all the wrong furniture! [Laughs.] But he really trusted his brother, and gave him freedom. Rafael is a very talented architect, but he hadn't built very much before doing this building. He and my father created a small family company just to build it. I was in high school when they cast the main structure, but when the economic crisis hit they'd only gotten as far as the eighth floor. Construction started in 1999 and wasn't completed until 2007.

Maria Eva Contesti

Altamira was not financially successful. The plan was that it would be the first of many other buildings, but so far it's the only one. During construction, Rafael actually had nightmares that the stairs would stop at some point and go nowhere!

PU Were the other buildings going to be like Altamira?

MEC Not exactly like this building, but of this quality and trying to push similar architectural principles. There are some concepts that are pretty unique for Rosario, like having a very open ground floor with a direct relation to the sidewalk, or how on each floor the elevator opens onto a terrace so that you enter each apartment from outside.

GI Rafael wanted to bring back the idea of a house where you enter from the outside. Balconies are usually a space we don't use other than to store stuff, but this way you make use of it, and you also have the feeling of living in your own house. Rafael told me that you have to think with actions instead of objects: "Don't say 'door,' say 'to enter.'" That's why doors and everything are always abstract in his projects, because he wants to rethink everything. He also questions the typical program of an apartment with a master bedroom for the parents and smaller bedrooms for the boys and girls. Society has changed a lot, and the typical family is not the majority anymore, but nobody seems to have noticed that. He wanted to provide a more flexible space. For example, the pipes are placed so that you can choose where to put the bathroom based on the configuration you want. It's a pity that hasn't been explored more here yet.

PU How many times have different floors been changed?

MEC Not a lot, twice maybe. I think the MCHAP jury came here expecting to see more variety, like a one-bedroom apartment, a two-bedroom apartment, an office, a loft, a combination of three duplexes, etc., and instead they found mainly offices and a couple of apartments.

GI I think they were a little bit disappointed with the finishes the tenants had put in. It was a pity because the jury members really liked the building, but they thought it wasn't well taken care of. Wiel Arets made a comment that it's a building that will have five lives.

MEC That was a nice observation, because the building is just structure. Even if it becomes a ruin one day, it will still be alive because the architecture is in the structure. It will go through many transformations and be renovated over and over again, but as long as the structure remains the building will survive.

PU Do you think many of the current tenants moved in because of the architecture?

GI None of them! I think that's why the building is the way it is today. We seem to be the only ones who really appreciate it for what it is. Rosario is a big city, but it's a small town in its way of thinking. People are not ready to understand a building that might be a bit ahead of its time.

MEC In Rosario, like in the majority of Argentinian cities, there is no culture of architecture. Regular people don't necessarily appreciate architecture — it's not part of our lives at all. I always tell this story about taxi drivers' reactions when I tell them I'm going into this building. They stop and look and think, "This building isn't finished, why did they leave it like that?" As architects, we love it of course, we think it's the best building in Rosario, but it can be difficult for the general public to understand. It questions our everyday way of living, and if you get that, then you fall in love with it, but otherwise maybe not.

PU You seemed reluctant about the renovation your parents had you do of their apartment. Did Rafael have anything to say?

GI No, Rafael isn't an architect who is attached to his work in that way. On the ninth floor there's a guy with all this classical French furniture, and Rafael even helped him arrange it. He thought it was amusing, not like a typical architect who might think, "Oh, he ruined my work!"

PU What is Rafael's background?

GI He's not a scholar, he believes more in experimentation than knowledge. Rafael reads a lot of Borges and Benjamin and is really inspired by literature. He always says that Borges taught him more about space than any architect. He also only really started practicing when he was 40. Before that he worked for the municipality and was kind of a bohemian artist.

PU What was his job with the city?

GI He was an inspector for private buildings, so he knew the regulations better than anyone, and he was able to play with them when he designed Altamira.

MEC Two weeks ago at a PhD seminar I took part in, one girl who didn't know me said that the Altamira building wasn't approved for residential use! [Laughs.] People have very strong feelings about this building — it was a real controversy. To this day people make up stories about it.

PU Why do you think that is?

MEC Architects are really conservative here, but Rafael is also very outspoken. He writes a lot for the newspaper with his opinions on the city and he gives T.V. interviews. He's not in the university so is kind of an outsider, and he's very critical of urban policy. He's criticized a lot in the university. It's really crazy because now with this prize they have to recognize that he has done something interesting, but it took many years for them to acknowledge that.

PU Do you think this will help change the way people here think about architecture?

GI It's really weird because people come from all over the world to Rosario to see Altamira, but then most people in Rosario don't appreciate it. I always like to refer to it as a *Where's Waldo*? building, because it's a very special building, but when you see it in the homogenous fabric of the city it's sort of camouflaged.

MEC It's a quiet building, it's not calling out for attention. That's what I appreciate most about it. It's great architecture, with great questions about a lot of architectural principles and opinions, but it's not shouting in your face saying, "I'm great!", like some others.

Seven Portraits is a collaboration between the artist David Hartt, PIN–UP Magazine, and the IIT College of Architecture, Chicago, on the occasion of the inaugural Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize.

PHOTOGRAPHY	David Hartt
EDITOR	Stephen Froese
ART DIRECTION	Dylan Fracareta
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	Andrew Ayers
EXECUTIVE EDITOR	Felix Burrichter

David Hartt is represented by David Nolan Gallery, New York and Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago.

PUBLISHED BY	FEBU Publishing LLC
PRINTED BY	Die Keure, Belgium

PIN–UP © 2014 All rights reserved