

MONUMENT

THE NEW FACE OF HUMANE ARCHITECTURE
MICHAEL MALTZAN DELIVERS AN AMBITIOUS
VISION FOR SOCIAL HOUSING



+ DURBACH BLOCK JAGGERS,
BAK ARQUITECTOS, SAM JACOB
AND STEFAN SAGMEISTER

102

ISSN 1320-1115 • AU\$18.50 • NZ\$19.50
Print Post Approved PP 233867 00013



A Norman Day double-bill on two very
different schools Architecture and
design à la LA An urban shade structure
like no other The Zen of Elliot Rich
Mury Architects designs for autism



Aggregated from a cluster of towns and villages, Los Angeles has grown into one of the biggest presences on the world stage. Although it is typified and shaped by, among other factors, its urban sprawl, car-dependency and film industry, architects have a lot of love for the city partly for these very reasons.

Cult architecture critic Reyner Banham declared his adoration for the city ("I love the place with a passion that goes beyond sense or reason"), and in his 1971 publication *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* proposed Los Angeles as a model for a post-urban future. Perhaps incidentally, Los Angeles is home to radical Pritzker Prize-winners Thom Mayne and Frank Gehry (whose Walt Disney Concert Hall is pictured in the opening spread).

There is space here for architects to experiment, and the city has long encouraged this. Los Angeles embraced the pioneers of Modernism, such as Rudolph Schindler and Richard Neutra, with open arms. The city hosted most of the Case Study Houses including #22, Pierre Koenig's Stahl House, which famously looks out across the city spreading out below it.

A new generation of architects is innovating with form and fabrication and making the most of the city's resources, such as the aerospace, automobile and entertainment industries. At the centre of the architectural scene is the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc), an independent, non-profit school in the eastern side of Downtown Los Angeles. SCI-Arc's impressive campus occupies a 400-metre-long former freight depot and is a hub for Los Angeles' expanding Arts District. Walking through the studios and exhibition spaces it is clear that digital design and technology rules. Most of the interesting architects in Los Angeles are either graduates or teachers here.

Los Angeles has become denser over the past 20 years. As a result, rather than a vast city connected by freeways, it is slowly evolving into a collection of smaller enclaves. Often it is the freeways that help shape and define these places, enclosing creative communities that cross-pollinate and influence each other. There is a tradition of cross-over and collaboration between artists and architects, supported by local organisations.

The architect Fritz Haeg ran salons in his home – a geodesic dome – with contributions from architects, artists, choreographers, musicians and other creative disciplines. Vienna's MAK Museum for Applied Arts has an outpost in the Schindler House, and runs a residency program for international artists and architects, encouraging shared discussions and collaboration. The MAK Center also

BALL-NOGUES STUDIO

Gaston Nogues and Benjamin Ball, SCI-Arc alumni, joined forces in 2004 to create a practice that intersects architecture, art and product design. Ball-Nogues Studio's experimental installations combine research into digital design and fabrication with traditional materials and forms of production. "Sometimes the mundane can be liberating," says Nogues.

Cradle (2010), a public art project in Santa Monica consisting of over 300 mirror-polished stainless steel balls (above right), operates structurally like an enormous Newton's cradle. A recent commission for LA's MoCA, *Feathered Edge* (2009), explores the convergence of digital technology and craft to create ephemeral architectural forms. An astonishing 3,604 individual lengths of twine were dyed, cut and suspended from the gallery's walls and ceilings. Nogues considers temporary installations as building projects. "We like to challenge the notion that the limited life spans of some of our work disqualifies it as architecture."

Ball-Nogues Studio began operating in a garage space behind Nogues' house. It is now moving to a new 1,000 square-metre studio to deliver future projects, including a permanent public commission for Los Angeles International Airport. ball-nogues.com

programmed the recent *How Many Billboards?* urban exhibition, featuring 21 commissioned works by contemporary artists, which were presented on billboards across Los Angeles.

Los Angeles still poses challenges for architects and urbanists, but improvements are starting to be felt. While Los Angeles will remain car-dependent for the foreseeable future, the city is now investing in its public transport infrastructure including bus rapid transit, light rail and subway. People are moving back into the heart of the city and populating the Downtown streets.



Gaston Nogues (left) and Benjamin Ball in their studio.

(THE)
**DESIGNER
INSIDER**

LOS ANGELES

THE TOP PICKS OF LA'S EATING, SHOPPING AND SLEEPING DESTINATIONS, BY ELIAS REDSTONE.



(SHOP)

PRADA EPICENTER

Miuccia Prada's love affair with contemporary architecture is celebrated in this OMA-designed showroom (above), which features a removed street facade, allowing the luxury store to open directly on to the street.

343 RODEO DRIVE
BEVERLY HILLS

USA.PRADA.COM/EN/US/E-STORE

OPENING CEREMONY

This fashion retailer opened its LA store in Charlie Chaplin's former dance studio, with its sprawling 930-square-metre interior – a maze of hallways and separate rooms – inspired by Los Angeles' freeways.

451 NORTH LA CIENEGA BOULEVARD
WEST HOLLYWOOD
OPENINGCEREMONY.US

EAT

CLIFTON'S CAFETERIA

Gaston Noguez of Ball-Noguez Studio shares his tip for LA-style sustenance.



"Dining in LA can be quite diverse. We have everything from Hollywood fancy, where one might see movie stars, to Mexican food carts where you'll only see starving actors.

"Clifton's Cafeteria in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles is a southern California gem. It has withstood the ravages of time and today its interior, modelled after Californian redwood groves – right down to a babbling brook with a waterfall – is pretty much the same as it was when it opened in 1935. My favourite table is made from a giant redwood slice, and I can't get enough of the dark wood panelling decorated with saws. The place is enormous to boot, so for a while it was the official Ball-Noguez eating spot – until the vegetarians in the studio put a stop to that!"

Gaston Noguez

Sleep

CHATEAU MARMONT

Refurbished in the 1990s, Chateau Marmont is where celebrities stay when in LA. As Harry Cohn, then head of Columbia Pictures, said back in 1939, "If you must get into trouble, do it at the Chateau Marmont."

8221 SUNSET BOULEVARD

HOLLYWOOD

CHATEAUMARMONT.COM

STANDARD DOWNTOWN

André Balazs' second LA Standard hotel opened in 2002 in the 12-storey office originally built for Superior Oil. Leading the charge to revitalise Downtown, the hotel's highlight is the rooftop pool surrounded by tower blocks.

550 SOUTH FLOWER AT SIXTH

STREET LOS ANGELES

STANDARDHOTELS.COM

BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL

Built in 1912, before Beverly Hills was even developed, 'The Pink Palace' is as famous for its pink stucco facade and signage as it is for its status as a hideaway for Hollywood stars. In 2011 the hotel is opening two Presidential Bungalows, the largest suites in LA.

9641 SUNSET BOULEVARD

BEVERLY HILLS

BEVERLYHILLSHOTEL.COM



To see Johnston Marklee's pick of shops and restaurants in LA, go to monumentmagazine.com.au/102