

PIN-UP

MAGAZINE FOR
ARCHITECTURAL
ENTERTAINMENT

ISSUE 9



THE L.A.
SPECIAL

Featuring
THOM MAYNE,
JOHNSTON
MARKLEE,
GREG LYNN,
RETNA, and
HEDI SLIMANE

FALL
WINTER
2010/11

Also
At home with
JEFFREY DEITCH,
JESS HARNELL,
LISA EISNER,
and NORWOOD
YOUNG

ISSN 14339755



9 771933 975000

USD 15.00

Plus
THE PIN-UP
CASE STUDY
HOUSES



MY DOWNTOWN BY BALL NOGUES

With their office located on the corner of South Spring and West 4th Street, Ball Nogues Studio, one of the city's most experimental architecture firms (see also PIN-UP No. 4), is right in the heart of downtown L.A. So it comes as no surprise that its principals, Benjamin Ball and Gaston Nogues, know their hood inside out — including the best places for looking at art, buying bongs, and enjoying public fellatio.

NIGHT GALLERY
204 South Avenue 19
Los Angeles, CA 90031

Few building types have inspired as much contempt as the mini-mall. The dark days of the OPEC oil embargo provoked a spate of filling-station failures, opening street corners to nearly unfettered mini-mall proliferation throughout Southern California in the mid-1970s. While this rash was spreading across Los Angeles and the rest of the U.S., Rod Sterling was hosting *Night Gallery*, an anthology television series on NBC. Featuring stories of horror and the macabre, each episode began with Sterling discussing a dreary painting hanging in an art gallery. Today, in Lincoln Heights, just east of downtown, is a contemporary-art gallery called Night Gallery. It opens at 10:00 p.m. and makes no apologies for its dilapidated mini-mall setting. Combining the perturbation of urban dereliction with Sterling's macabre tastes, Night Gallery is neither an ironic swipe at the commercial gallery system nor a lowbrow showcase. Artist Davida Nemeroff's programming tends toward video from promising young artists. When situated against the jet-black gallery interior, window security bars, and trash-strewn parking lot, the works stimulate a palpable sense of the creepy.

**THE SEATING PODS
AT HOTEL BONAVENTURE**
404 South Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90071

The towering concrete lobby of the Hotel Bonaventure (John C. Portman, Jr., 1974–76) is not a Brutalist masterpiece; it is an expansive five-story atrium-cum-dead-mall hosting divorce lawyers, psychics, and unexceptional Japanese fast-food places in a general ambiance of despair. Although it failed to become the thriving city-within-a-city that Portman promised, its three-dimensional circulation system of bridges and outcroppings suggests a Piranesian prison that might offer opportunities for illicit adventures provided one plays it cool with the roving hotel security staff. Most notable are the oval banquettes that cantilever four stories above the lobby. If Portman believed these would serve as conversation booths, I'm astonished — today some house exercise equipment (which never gets used) while others occasionally host a sleeping businessman. I challenge any visitor to indulge in fellatio, cunnilingus, or bong hits in these personal party pods. My guess is you won't get caught.



HM 157
3110 North Broadway
Los Angeles, CA 90031

Frank Lloyd Wright famously said, "Tip the world over on its side and everything loose will land in Los Angeles." Tip Los Angeles over on its side and every unglued performer, musician, anarchist, and delightful oddball will land in HM 157 and put on a show in the living room. Architecturally speaking, HM 157 is Historic Monument 157 (a designation bestowed by the State of California), a dilapidated Victorian farmhouse located across a six-lane street from a McDonald's Playland and next to a Mexican seafood restaurant. The semi-urban surrealism is enhanced by a gigantic "for sale" sign in the front yard (a relic of the house's former function as a Korean real-estate office) that stands amid an organic vegetable garden and palm trees. Anything can happen here — fashion, performance, musical events, workshops. Maestro Charon Nogues (full disclosure, my partner Gas-



ton's wife) is full of aphorisms you will absorb via osmosis after a few visits, such as, "Fashion Mother Nature's laws of adaptation into the trend-worthy," or, "Being bad has been done to death (yawn)." It is a place "dedicated to the propagation of all positive possibilities." Sound a little utopian? Sure it does, but utopian ideals are necessary to put a reunion show by pre-punk aliens Zolar X on the same stage as a birthday clown named Laffypants, then follow up the next week with "square-dancing revolutionary" Ms. Cory Marie Podielski. Through the generous act of goofing around, HM 157 does what Los Angeles is bad at: cultivating community.

CAMP FASHION DISTRICT
delineated by Hill Street,
7th Street, and 10 Freeway
Los Angeles, CA 90071

The downtown fashion district is a campground at night. At the end of each day, after the shops close, transient people set up Nordic dome tents and refrigerator boxes in neat rows along the sidewalks. They assemble their dwellings in groups of three to five, perhaps for mutual protection. Some of the campers don't have tents, only sleeping bags, which they align in even rows with their feet pointing



toward the street. A consistent-sized territory surrounds each of them — a tight order that reminds me of beds in military barracks. They camp beneath the awnings of stores with names like Parisian Dreams. By 10:00 p.m. the campsites are motionless, the campers asleep. They wake at sunrise, disassemble their homes, pack them into shopping carts and disappear before the street sweepers arrive to clean up the trash.

BONG ROW
3rd Street
between Wall Street and
San Pedro Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Skid Row, the ground zero for all things homeless in L.A., lies a few blocks from a district I dubbed Bong Row. A collection of approximately one-dozen storefronts along a single block on Second Street, Bong Row is where wholesale of various "tobacco"-



smoking products occurs. The shop owners, mainly from central Asia, peddle a staggering array of hookahs, glass pipes, vaporizers, and other paraphernalia. Downtown L.A. also hosts production facilities for these items, and I was recently invited to observe craftsmen blowing and revolving the bongs by hand. Craft theorist Howard Risatti might describe the process as conception and execution integrated in a subtle feedback system, the physical properties of the materials encountering conceptual form and conceptual form encountering physical material; thinking and making, visualizing and executing going hand in hand. The new generation of glass bongs is formally intriguing, with contorted tubes suggesting segments of intestine plucked from the abdomens of Hajime Sorayama's fantasy cyborgs. Does the Museum of Art and Design have any bongs in its collection?