

LECTURE SERIES:

LATIN AMERICA NOW

This lecture series was devoted to the new generation of Latin American architects who demonstrate the same energy and inventiveness that characterized the region's architecture in the forties, fifties, and sixties. While contemporary international design trends such as abstraction and simplicity are also dominant in Latin America, a temperate climate, easy availability of labor and materials, and design culture that combines aesthetic traditions with progressive Modernism, has resulted in architecture with a particular vitality and sense of excitement. One of the major differences between contemporary Latin American architecture and that of the earlier period which adopted the credo of the International Modern Movement to reform society, house the masses, and break with the past, is the more humble ambition of solving and servicing immediate building needs without the burden of responding to the ideological underpinnings of the initial era. This transformation can be seen in the shift in patronage from mainly government to a larger number of private clients and also in terms of scale from large heroic projects to smaller more localized interventions. New Latin American architecture has also emerged in a context where the daunting distances of the continent have been overcome by more accessible modes of travel and

the internet, thus promoting a new dialogue between architects in the different countries. Equally important is the urban culture of the region that remains a vital generator of ideas, in spite of the surfacing of gated communities, the continuous existence of social disparity, segregation, and racism. While some may argue that Latin America continues to remain at the periphery of other global cultural centers such as Europe and the United States, the contemporary design environment swells with opportunities for experimentation, creativity, and inventiveness. Indeed, Latin America's potential for contributing to a global design discourse and to the quality of the world architectural scene is borne out by examples such as the recent Pritzker Prize recipient Paulo Mendes da Rocha.

The Fall 2006 Lecture Series, "Latin America Now," included lecturers such as: Angleo Bucci (Brazil), Keith Eggner (University of Missouri), Giancarlo Mazzanti (Colombia), Enrique Norten (Mexico), Rafael Iglesia, Mariel Suarez (Argentina), Carol Reese (Tulane University), Alejandro Aravena (Chile), Barklay-Crouse (Peru), Pablo Castro, Jennifer Lee (New York), and Solano Benitez (Paraguay). In addition the work of Pritzker Prize winner Paulo Mendes da Rocha was exhibited in Berkeley during October 2006. ^{FW}



Mendes da Rocha Exhibit

The lecture series was organized by Professors Roddy Creedon, René Davids, and Andy Shanken.

PORTFOLIO:

DAY LABOR STATION



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Wurster Society member Ryan Associates contributed labor and materials to construct a full-scale section of Public Architecture's Day Laborer Station, which was displayed at Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York this past May through September. The installation was part of the Cooper-Hewitt's "Design for the Other 90%" exhibition, showcasing the design community's burgeoning commitment to address the needs of the world's population not traditionally served by design professionals.

Public Architecture's project confronts the plight of day laborers in this country, who gather daily at informal roadside sites awaiting hire. Addressing day laborers as clients, Public Architecture designed the Day Labor Station using simple architectural forms and largely sustainable materials. The structure, which is solar-powered and intended to operate off-the-grid, provides a basic set of amenities for the workers (shelter, water, and toilets) and can serve a variety of functions (employment center, meeting space, and classroom). Public Architecture is now working to identify permanent sites for the first few Day Labor Stations. The exhibition is accompanied by a media and public relations campaign, including a book and web site.

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Public Architecture is the brainchild of architect John Peterson and is directed by John Cary (M. Arch '03). Supported by grants and donations, Public Architecture takes a leadership position in defining and creating design solutions for significant social problems, most often without a traditional paying client. Visit www.publicarchitecture.org to learn more.

Ryan Associates collaborated on this important project as part of their commitment to supporting the communities in which their associates live and work. Through their corporate charitable giving program and associate's individual volunteerism, Ryan Associates supports leading organizations committed to the arts, craft, design, education, humanitarian relief, and other social services.



