

TURN UP THE VOLUME, THIS IS GOOD MUSIC

Celine Pinet

I am listening and getting all revved up. Volume5 presents art, architecture, and construction like parts of a concert. Created by Eyespeak, the site is jam packed with excellent discussions, fun digital images, and the loud, wonderful voices of experts and up and coming talent (www.volume5.com).

I laughed hearing Frank Gehry explain that clients are sometimes kind of goofy. I got excited about Michael Maltzan's discourse on public versus private shown in his design of a house (displayed at the "Un-Private House" exhibit at MoMA New York - see figure 1). I savored Pierre Picot's comparison of the design process for furniture building (see figure 2) versus that for 2D painting.

Though this whirlwind of discussion is thrilling, Volume5 grabs you in other ways as well. Rather than focusing on the mere reporting of information, the site orchestrates dynamic exchanges between visitors via chat room, posting boards, and multiple links. Volume5 thereby serves as an open forum for the design and construction community.

All of this is jazzed up with tons of images in a student friendly framework. Students are encouraged to submit images, portfolio links and articles (see fig. 3, 4 and 5). A special College Book Bag Page provides book reviews along with links to help you find a wonderful variety of resources on Art and Design education. Young talent is publicized in a variety of ways. The site also comprises tutorials designed by educators. Students grab your chance – go connect with this Web Site.

For the delight of ACADIA members, a full section of the Web Site is devoted to Digital Design and Construction. The discussion focuses on how computers change the means by which structures are created and built. For example, an Interview with Brian Cantley elaborates on making forms that are specific to the computer and can only exist in digital data.

Cantley asks students to bring in a song they are emotionally tied to and to decompose the song into isolated components (frequencies, number of instruments, and so on). Students enlarge these components and transform them into graphical data. As a result, music takes shape in another dimension (fig. 6 and 7). Scott Parker pursues a similar tack by creating a design composition constructed from notes in a jazz piece. The music dictates the object to be used and its placement in the design composition.

This provides examples of how Volume5 addresses music interwoven with architecture in various areas of its Web Site. In a way, music is weird stuff. Folks use it to communicate ideas and things—mostly their emotions. When music is allied to speech (as in a song), it turns into a powerful means of communication. Volume5 editors and authors tap into this power by exploring how it can be paired with architecture. Pairing music with architecture results in a magnified language for buildings, design details and aesthetics.

Though it explores a variety of paths and thought-provoking reflections, the site does have its pitfalls. I do wish the editors would get away from their narrow focus on Los Angeles' local talents and widen their scope to include talents from other areas of the world. I also wish the site's front page followed a less journalistic approach to web design. As it is, the front page feels crowded and crammed up with materials, too many fonts, images, graphics, and colors. It is difficult to find your way around and understand how the site is organized. A cleaner, simpler, more harmonious and organized front page would work better.

All in all, this remains a good site. It is full of information and inspired discussions. Though the site focuses on Los Angeles, it provides some global connections with links to a number of study abroad programs and international sites. This leads to a fuller use of the Internet as a media expanding to reach the global market. The wonderful book reviews serve as another means of stretching our cultural reach through Volume5.

The book review on "The Computer in the Visual Arts" by Anne Morgan presents a delightful understanding of opportunities technology brings us. Instead of canvas and paint, we now have software that holds instructions about how and where to place paint. The work is processed through the "instructions to make." As a result, design tasks that are better understood generate a better outcome. The tools are the software and hardware and the most important software is your own intelligence.

On this note, am I going to visit Volume5's chat room to hear what others think about how our work is influenced by "the instructions to make." Does it really force us to better understand the design process every step of the way? Please join me in the chat and come share your thoughts. I'll see you there.

Credits - Interview with Frank Gehry: Jennifer Minasian, Mark Dillon and Bernard Zimmerman

Credits - Interview with Michael Maltzan: Jennifer Minasian

Credits - Interview with Pierre Picot: Courtney Gregg, Joan Hacker

Credits - Interview with Brian Cantley: Interview with Joan Hacker

Credits - Article by Scott Parker: Author Scott Parker, Producer Cary Bellaflor and Mark Dillon

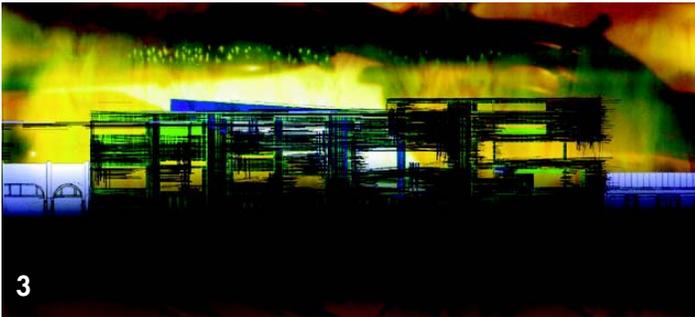
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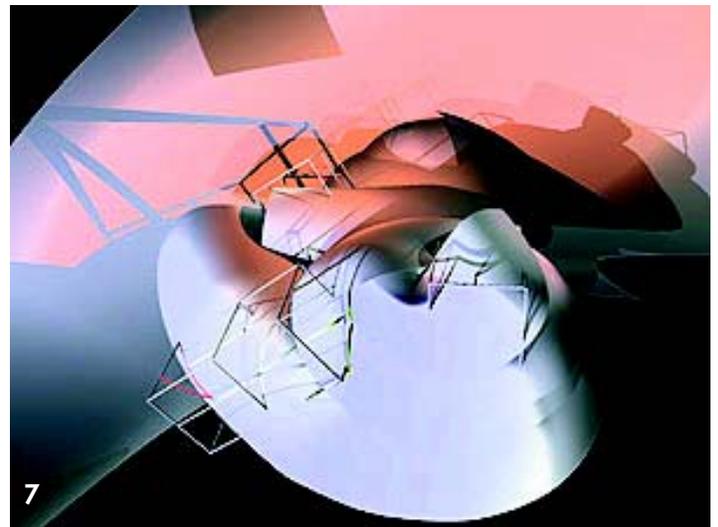
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Fig 1. By Michael Maltzan. Hergott/Shepard's Residence. View of entry from the street. Project completion: 1999.

Fig 2. Example of furniture design by Pierre Picot.

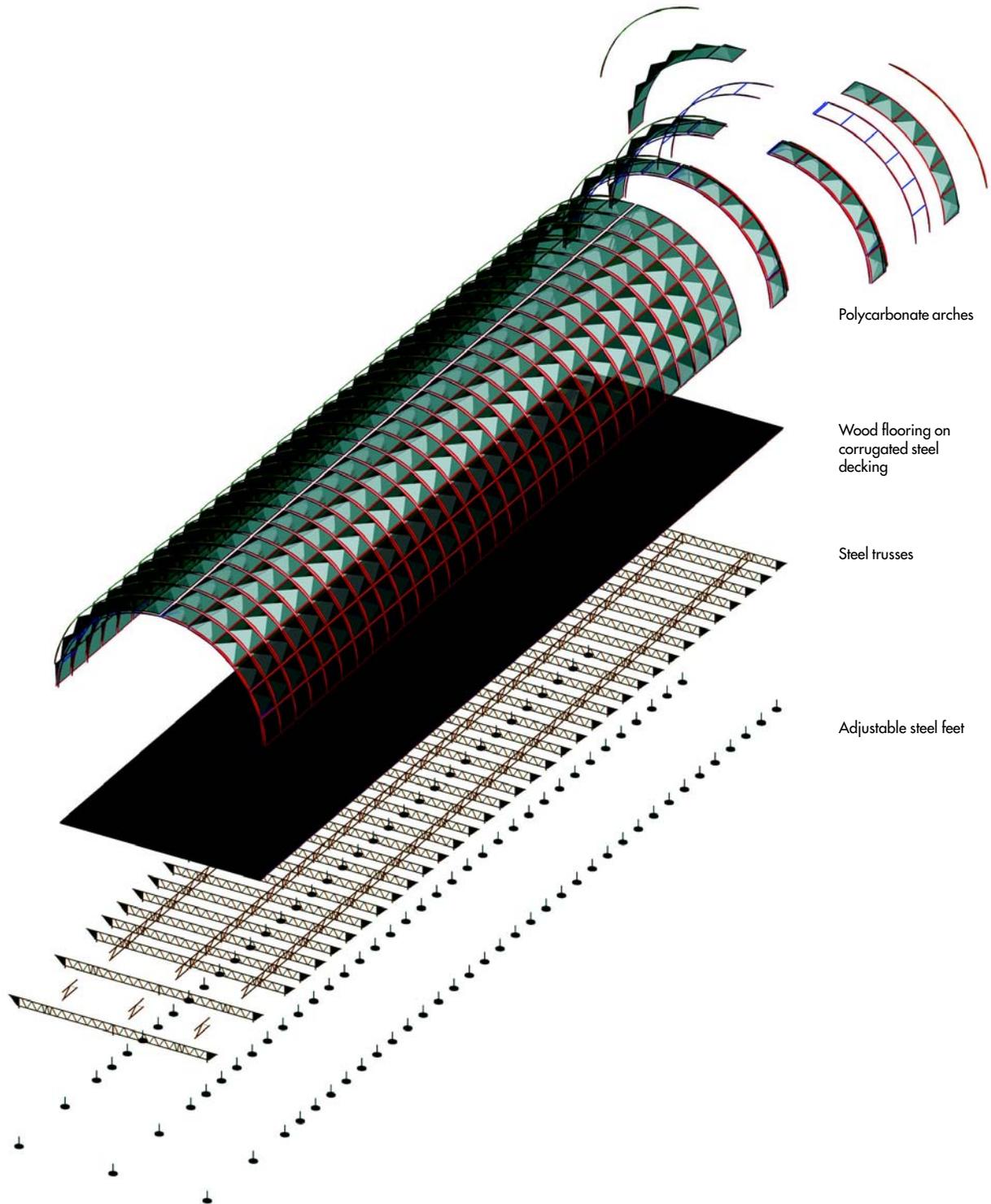
Fig 3. By K. Anja Malling. Image executed for the Imagery and Expression class. Instructor: Scott Parker, Otis College. Purpose: Transformation of two ordinary objects without using the eye as the primary design source. Accomplished using the computer as a medium.

Fig 4. Carved Wood Door in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, India. Image by Santosh. Image Posted in the Image Gallery.

Fig 5. By Emette Rivera. Image executed for the Imagery and Expression class. Instructor: Scott Parker, Otis College. Medium: Computer.

Fig 6. Andrea Reekstin. Equational Space model: Extremeview. Class taught by Brian Cantley at Cal. State Fullerton.

Fig 7. Andrea Reekstin. Equational Space: Mathematical Analysis/ dimensional diagram. Class taught by Brian Cantley at Cal. State Fullerton.



Polycarbonate arches

Wood flooring on
corrugated steel
decking

Steel trusses

Adjustable steel feet

Structural System
IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano