

# BLUEPRINT

THE MAGAZINE FOR LEADING ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS

May 2007 £4.75

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WILL  
BRUDER  
AND  
PHOENIX  
DE RIJKE  
MARSH  
MORGAN  
ARNE  
QUINZE

+ SPECIAL FOCUS ON ITALIAN FURNITURE





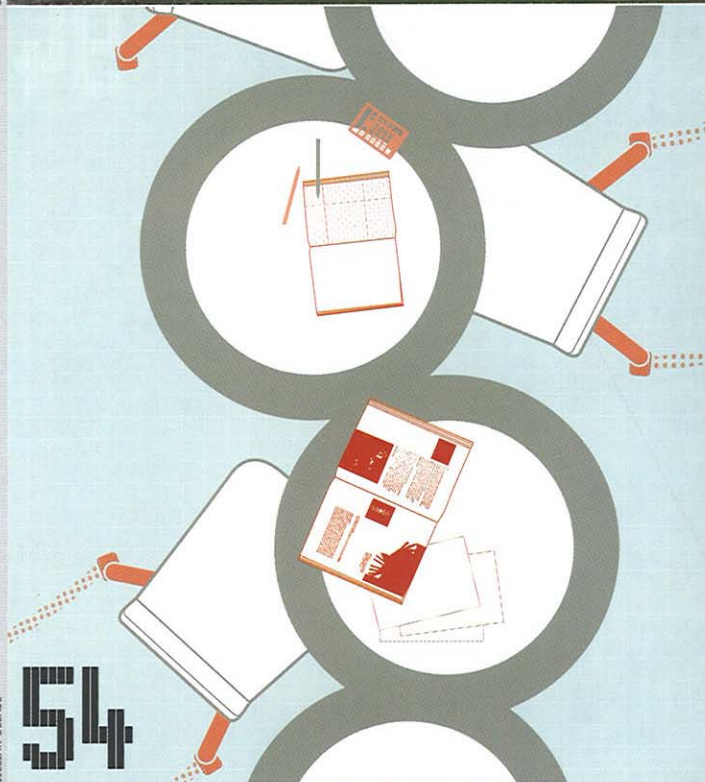
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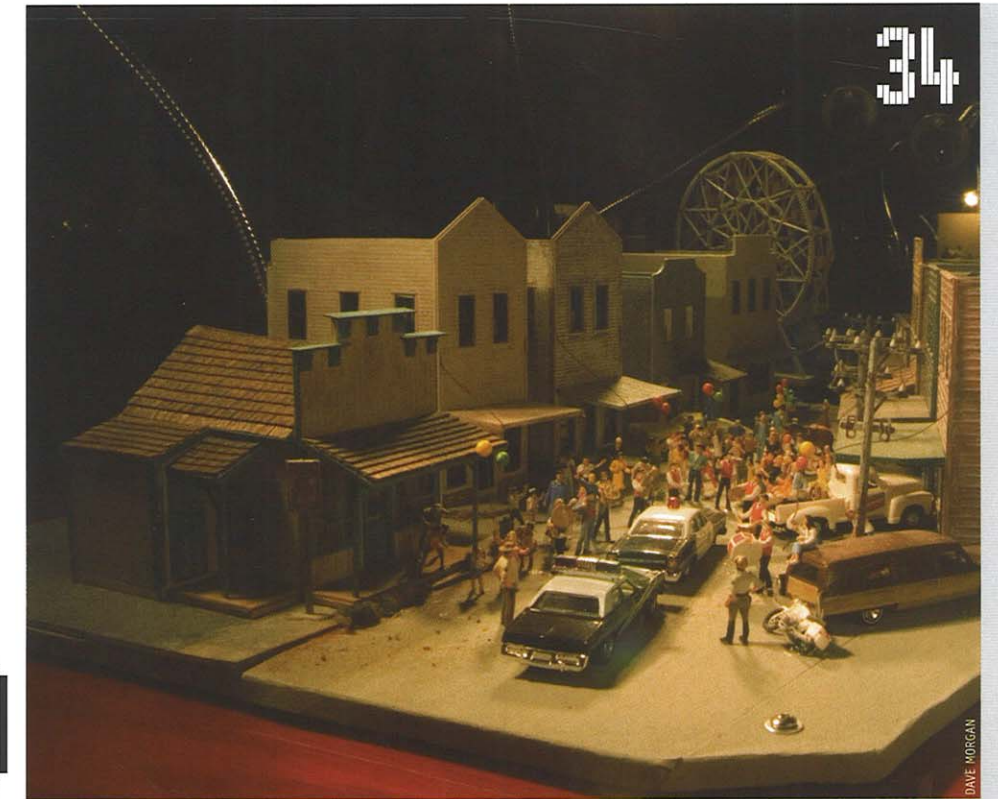
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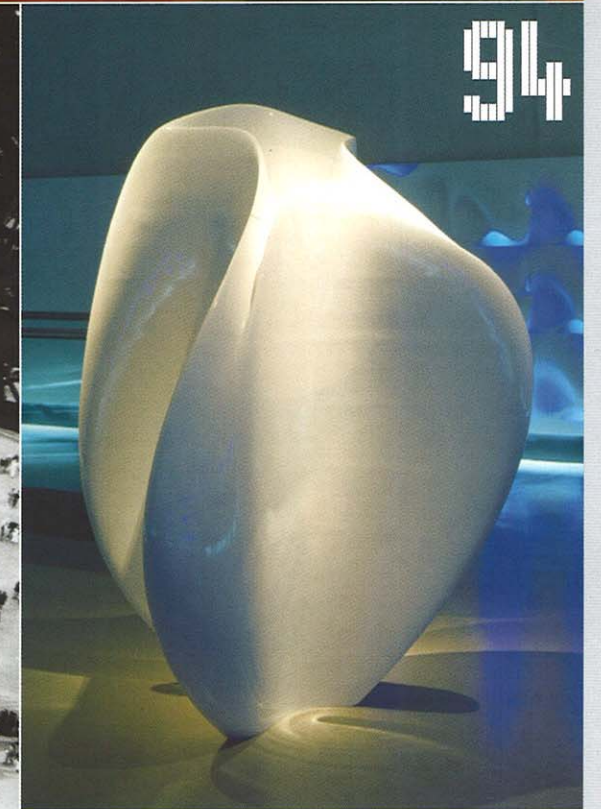
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# PHOENIX IMAGINING A CITY

ESCHEWING THE USUAL CLICHES ABOUT RISING FROM THE ASHES, THE CITY OF PHOENIX, ARIZONA IS SPREADING ITS WINGS UNDER THE FLAMES OF A DESERT SUN. PETER KELLY EXAMINES THE POTENTIAL FOR A MAGICAL FUTURE

*An aerial view of downtown Phoenix showing landscape architect Christy Ten-Eyck's green masterplan, and the site of ASU's downtown campus*

Phoenix is a city built on a pioneering spirit of experimentation and triumph over harsh desert conditions. It grew out of a native American settlement (dating from around 700 AD) that created hundreds of miles of irrigation channels to make the land suitable for agriculture. The channels remain the main source of water via the modern Arizona Canal, Central Arizona Project Canal, and the Hayden-Rhodes Aqueduct. Its development has been a constant battle with its hot, arid climate. For the world's large urban areas, only cities around the Persian Gulf, such as Riyadh

in Saudi Arabia, and conurbations in Iraq, have higher average summer temperatures. According to Victor Sidy, the dean of the Taliesin West Frank Lloyd Wright school of architecture, 'The most important thing is that Phoenix is a complete fabrication. In the same way that Venice is a city reclaimed from the sea, Phoenix is a city reclaimed from the sun. It relies on bringing water down from the Rocky mountains.'

In the past 50 years, though, its growth has become extraordinary and exponential. Partly because it has always lacked a natural core, and

partly because it's surrounded by a desert, the development has been characterised by an ever-spreading, low-density sprawl. In 1950 the population of greater Phoenix was around 300,000. It is now more than three million in an area of 475 square miles.

Land is cheap and there is no scarcity of room to build. There is a strong feeling that Phoenix is on the verge of a major transformation, from indistinct sprawl into a unique urban setting: 'We're living in Los Angeles in 1950', says Wellington Reiter of Arizona State



University's department of architecture.

The Arizona desert has not simply been a blank canvas for expansion, though. It has also provided a palette of colours, a wealth of materials, and a landscape of unique rocky forms on which artists and architects can draw. With Taliesin West, built from 1937 onwards, Frank Lloyd Wright established an aesthetic and romantic interpretation of Arizona that can be directly traced through the work of Paolo Solari, Vern Swaback, Will Bruder, Wendell Burnett and on into the material-focused design of a current generation that includes Richard + Bauer, Mark Ryan and Blank Studio's Matthew Trzebiatowski. Wright's preference for natural stone and concrete has moved on into the use of the native copper and the rusted metal of the city's agricultural history.

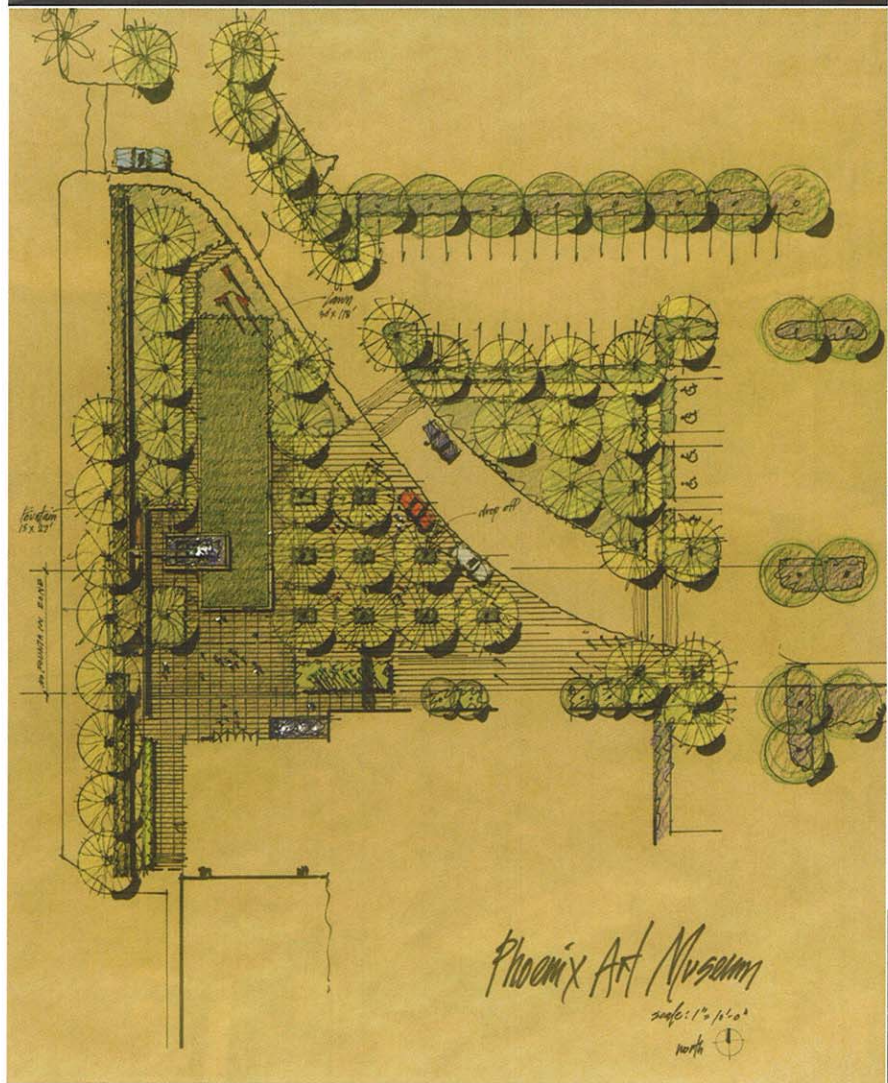
A less tangible legacy of Wright is that of the fascinated-but-dissatisfied outsiders: so much of the current population has moved in from other major American cities, that there is a sizeable group who love the landscape, but think things can be organised better. As a result, this is a place where artists and architects, at whatever stage in their career, engage in Phoenix's development with sophistication and enthusiasm. A fascination with the sprawl and the city's – extremely nascent – densification is now becoming part of the inspiration for artists and architects.

One example is Matthew Moore, an artist and farmer in Phoenix, whose extraordinary aerial photos of his own shrinking farmland, and the outlines of future developments in his crops, highlight the extreme pace of Phoenix expansion. Another is Christy Ten-Eyck, a landscape architect whose work crosses through art, architecture and urban planning.

Originally from Dallas, Ten Eyck says that she became entranced by the Arizona landscape 20 years ago while rafting through the Grand Canyon. Its ecology and aesthetic have had an enormous effect on her landscape architecture: 'Our big thing is connecting the urban dweller with nature. We like to bring nature back into the city.' Working on a mix of public, residential and hospitality projects, she designed the uniquely Phoenix



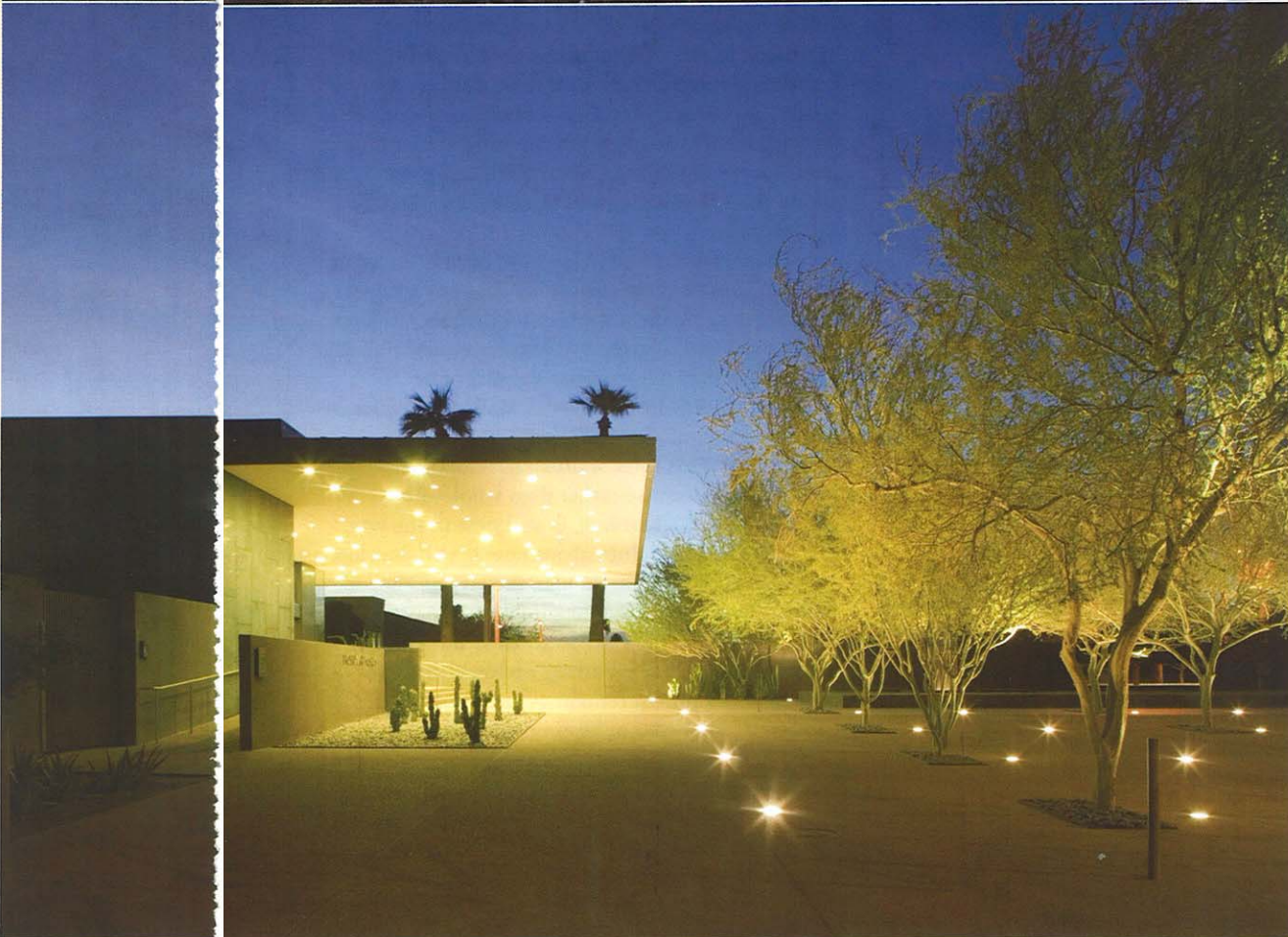
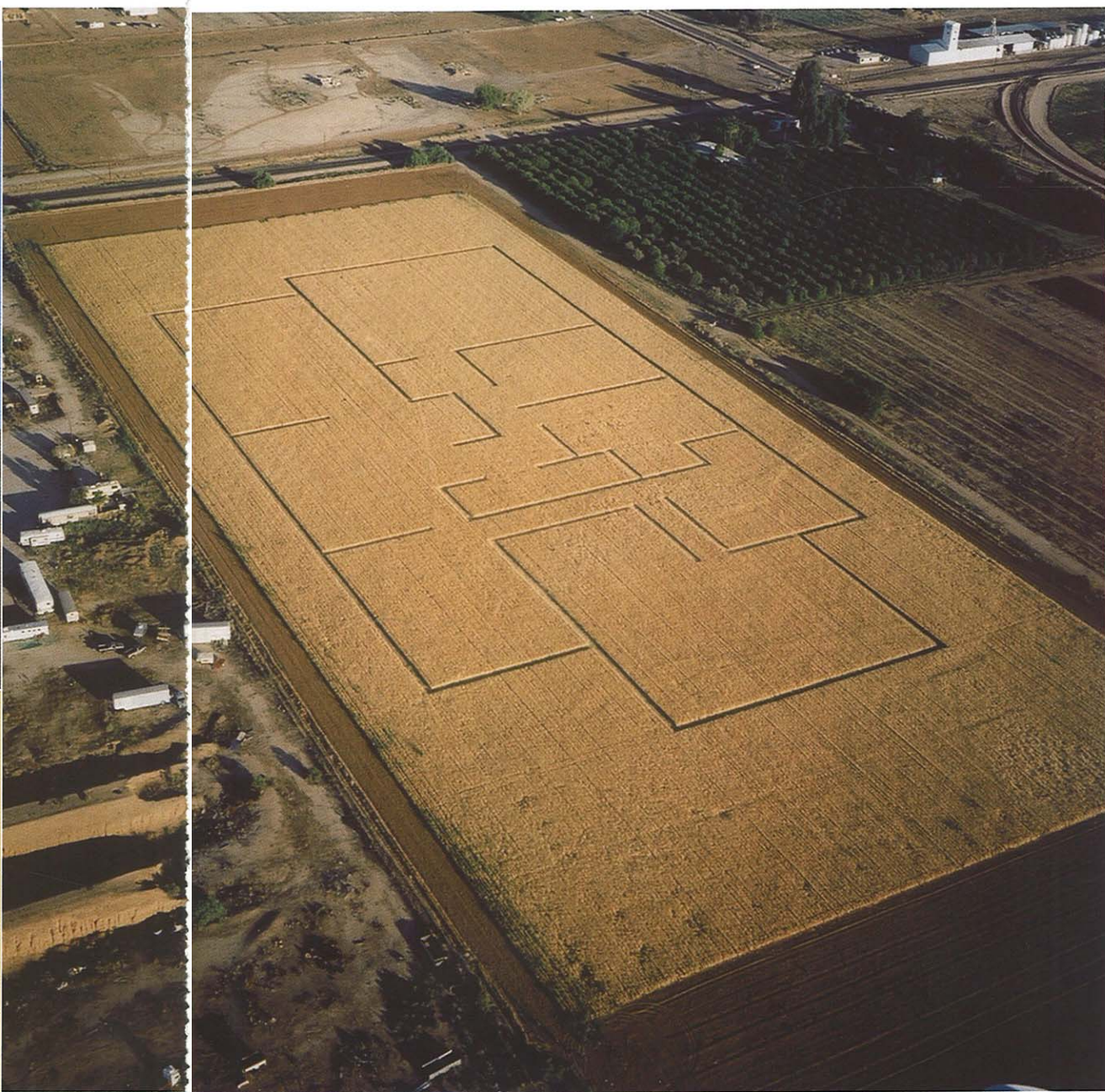
Above: Ten Eyck's sketch for landscaping the new Arizona State University campus in downtown Phoenix  
Above right: Ten Eyck's drawings for the landscaping of the extension to the Phoenix Art Museum



Far right: The realised landscaping for the Phoenix Art Museum. Ten Eyck took a characterless car park and turned it into dramatic entrance to the museum

Top, left: Matthew Trzebiatowski is a relative newcomer to Phoenix who has responded to the desert environment by using such distinctive local materials as oxidised steel

Top, right: Matthew Moore's immense artworks on his own farmland, tracing out the expansion of suburbia over agricultural land



THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT PHOENIX IS A COMPLETE FABRICATION. IN THE SAME WAY THAT VENICE IS A CITY RECLAIMED FROM THE SEA, PHOENIX IS A CITY RECLAIMED FROM THE SUN. IT RELIES ON BRINGING WATER DOWN FROM THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

water-harvesting garden entrance to the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, and a bosque (oasis-inspired planting) at Arizona State University's Biodesign Institute in nearby Tempe. Most recently she provided the landscaping for the expansion of the Phoenix Art Museum, designed by Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, with Mark Ryan Studio.

What is distinctive about her work is that she has an ambitious, planner's-eye view for the city, while retaining Phoenix's traditional connection to its desert landscape. In her projects, Ten-Eyck uses native plants and natural materials, but in larger scale planned projects wants to use reclaimed water for irrigation and sculptural pieces. Recent projects include a plan for the virtually central, downtown area of the city in which linked oases of plantings are fed by urban air-conditioning run-off.

Self-initiated, ambitious and focused projects such as this are what mark Phoenix out from many other cities proclaiming themselves to be creative centres. In its transition from small town to an established big city, Phoenix is trying to stake its place in the 'knowledge economy': its large and rapidly expanding academic and scientific populations give it a head start.

Given the city's pioneering history, it is appropriate that Phoenix is being promoted as a centre of scientific progress. It has an established series of tissue banks that have attracted some of the largest biological research organisations in the world. Where once cattle, copper and citrus formed the basis of the state's wealth, brains, kidneys and prostates may become the building blocks of Arizona's economic future.

The Translational Genomics Research Institute (aka TGen) – an organisation vital in the race to map the human genome – and the International Genomics Consortium opened its worldwide headquarters in 2005. It forms the cornerstone of the Phoenix Biomedical Center, a planned bioscience and medical research campus located in downtown Phoenix that will encompass International Genomics Consortium, University of Arizona College of Medicine, Arizona Biomedical Collaborative, and Phoenix Union Bioscience High School – all of which have been attracted to central Phoenix in just the past two years. >>

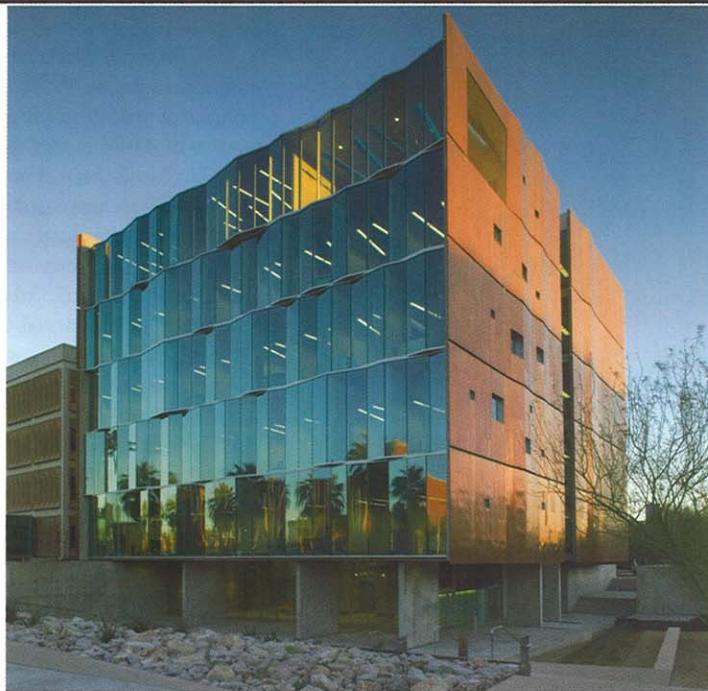


Right: Architects have become interested in ideas of densification and the re-use of buildings – Mark Ryan has inserted his studio inside an existing warehouse building

Below and bottom: Architects Richard + Bauer has developed the recognisable desert aesthetic of Phoenician architecture to suit the growing number of scientific research buildings (below is the Interdisciplinary Science and Technology research building; bottom, the Meinel Optical Sciences Laboratory)



UPHILL THE VIEW IS INTO THE WILD RAGGED GROUND AND THE SOLID SCULPTURAL FORMS OF THE BUILDINGS PROJECTING FROM IT. DOWNHILL IS THE EXPANSE OF A RURAL PLAIN, DOTTED WITH FARMS, DISTANT LAKES AND THE SILVER SLIVER OF GALWAY BAY ON THE HORIZON



As Nan Ellin, professor of architecture and author of *Integral Urbanism*, says: 'The Arizona State University is one of the driving forces of the development of Phoenix.' The university aims to have 15,000 students in the downtown area by 2015, and it is impossible to overstate the impact this could have on the city in terms of attracting amenities and producing a more pedestrian-focused feel to the downtown area.

Some of the most advanced thinking about the future of the city emanates from the Phoenix Urban Research Laboratory (PURL), a spin-off from ASU's College of Design. As such, it is a direct extension of the mission of the College of Design and the city itself: part think-tank, part advocacy centre, part project-development office. It's rare to find academics connected so intrinsically with developers – and being able to work in a place where their research can be translated so directly into reality.

The university and PURL have been involved in the one particularly key, on-going downtown project – the redevelopment of the Capitol Mall area, which accommodates the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state government. Because of its proximity to downtown, Capitol Mall is poised for an ambitious revitalisation and redevelopment programme. This kind of urban development, which looks at re-use rather than wholesale demolition and rebuilding, is still new in the city, and provides some clues about how it will develop.

Alongside all this, though, the city of Phoenix will continue to expand inexorably – it may double its population in the next 10 to 20 years. Though the many strands of its urban, architectural and artistic development remain as dispersed as the city itself, what cannot be doubted is the number of people thinking about the city at a sophisticated level. However, there is an urgency to their work – building developers whose only motivation is a quick buck have their own vision. It's Phoenix's distinctive architectural and artistic tradition combined with the competition between a planned aesthetic and a fast financial return that make it a fascinating city to watch for the future ■



# WILL BRUDER + PARTNERS

THE ARCHITECTURE OF WILL BRUDER HAS STRONG LINKS TO THE DESERT LANDSCAPE AROUND HIS HOMETOWN OF PHOENIX. BUT WHILE HIS PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THE CITY IS A LANDMARK, A GROWING INTEREST IN PROJECTS BEYOND THE STATE LINE IS SEEING HIS 'SPIRIT OF PLACE' PHILOSOPHY PUSHED TO THE LIMITS, SAYS PETER KELLY



To outside impressions Will Bruder seems something of a monument in the architectural scene of Phoenix. He has been building here for almost 40 years, and takes an understandable pride in the number of respected architects in the area who got their break working for him. These include Wendell Burnette and Rick Joy who are now, in turn, spawning protégé of their own. His Phoenix Public Library, completed in 1995, was part of a boom in public construction projects in the mid-Nineties – including a courthouse by Richard Meier, and a science museum designed by Antoine Predock – and cemented his status in the city's life. It remains an outstanding centrepiece of Phoenix.

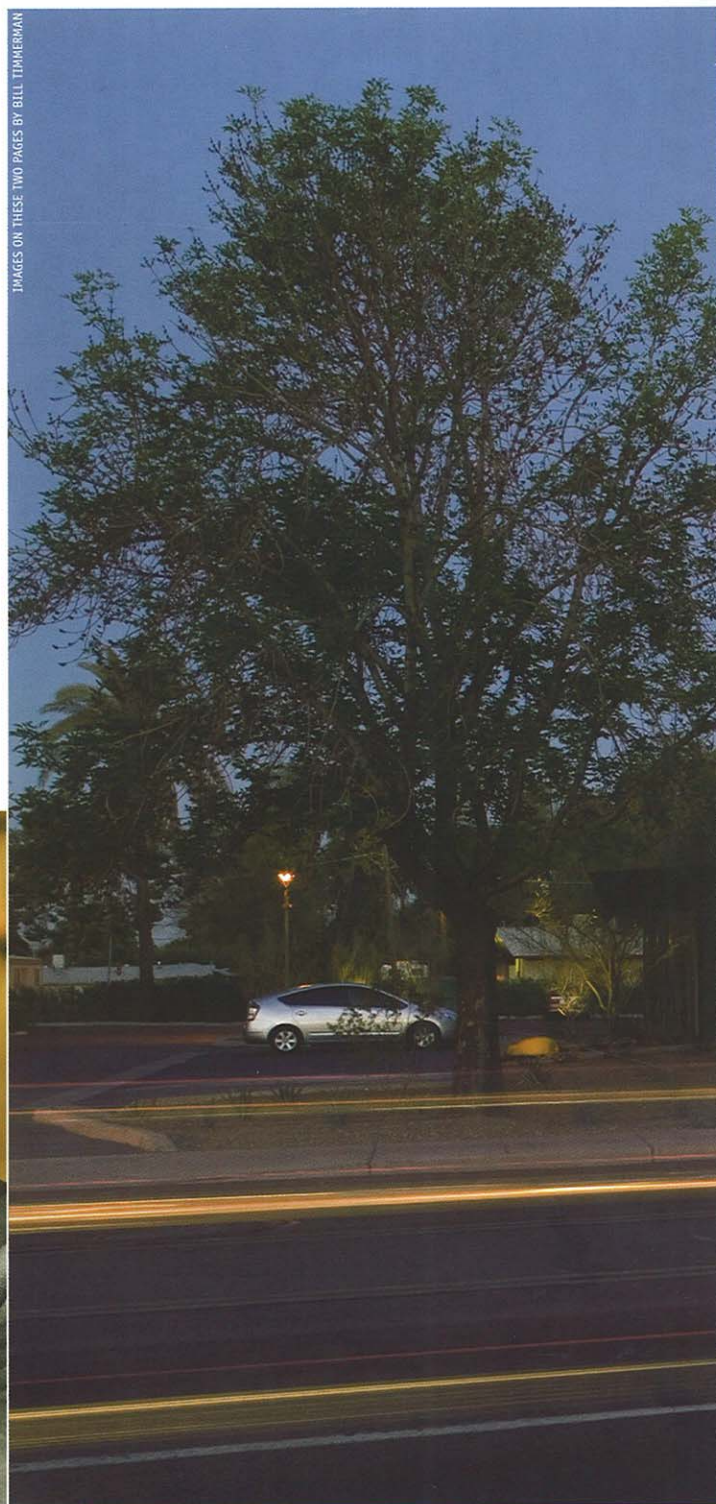
This godfatherly status, however, could be misleading. With a move into a new studio that has ample space for expansion, his fascination with the development of Phoenix, and his growing interest in international projects, there is

a tangible dynamism and ambition about this stage in Bruder's career.

His roots as an architect are embedded in the desert landscape. In 1968 after graduating in fine arts – he specialised in sculpture – Bruder began working and studying under Paolo Soleri with whom he acquired hands-on experience in woodwork, metal work and masonry. Through apprenticeship, he obtained registration as an architect and opened his practice in 1974. He initially built his reputation through designing houses throughout Phoenix, on a small scale and with a dedication to the rough beauty of the desert. The weighty physicality and the delight of using raw materials with precision that comes from his construction experience is still in evidence throughout his present work.

For some time in the Nineties he demonstrated his love for the landscape by moving into a small studio in the desert. In 2000, however, he returned to the city and from his new studio in the heart of Phoenix

IMAGES ON THESE TWO PAGES BY BILL TIMPHEMAN



Left: Will Bruder

Main picture: Bruder's new studio which coincides with the adoption of new name Will Bruder + Partners

Below left: The Vale, a example of new high-density living for Tempe, in Greater Phoenix. It also shows that Bruder is not afraid of some vibrant colour

Below right: The Loloma apartment block in Phoenix, which Bruder designed and lives in



Bruder is putting down even deeper roots, and increasingly affirming his interest city life. 'Frank Lloyd Wright was wrong to embrace the rural. Urbanism is about celebrating our lives,' he says.

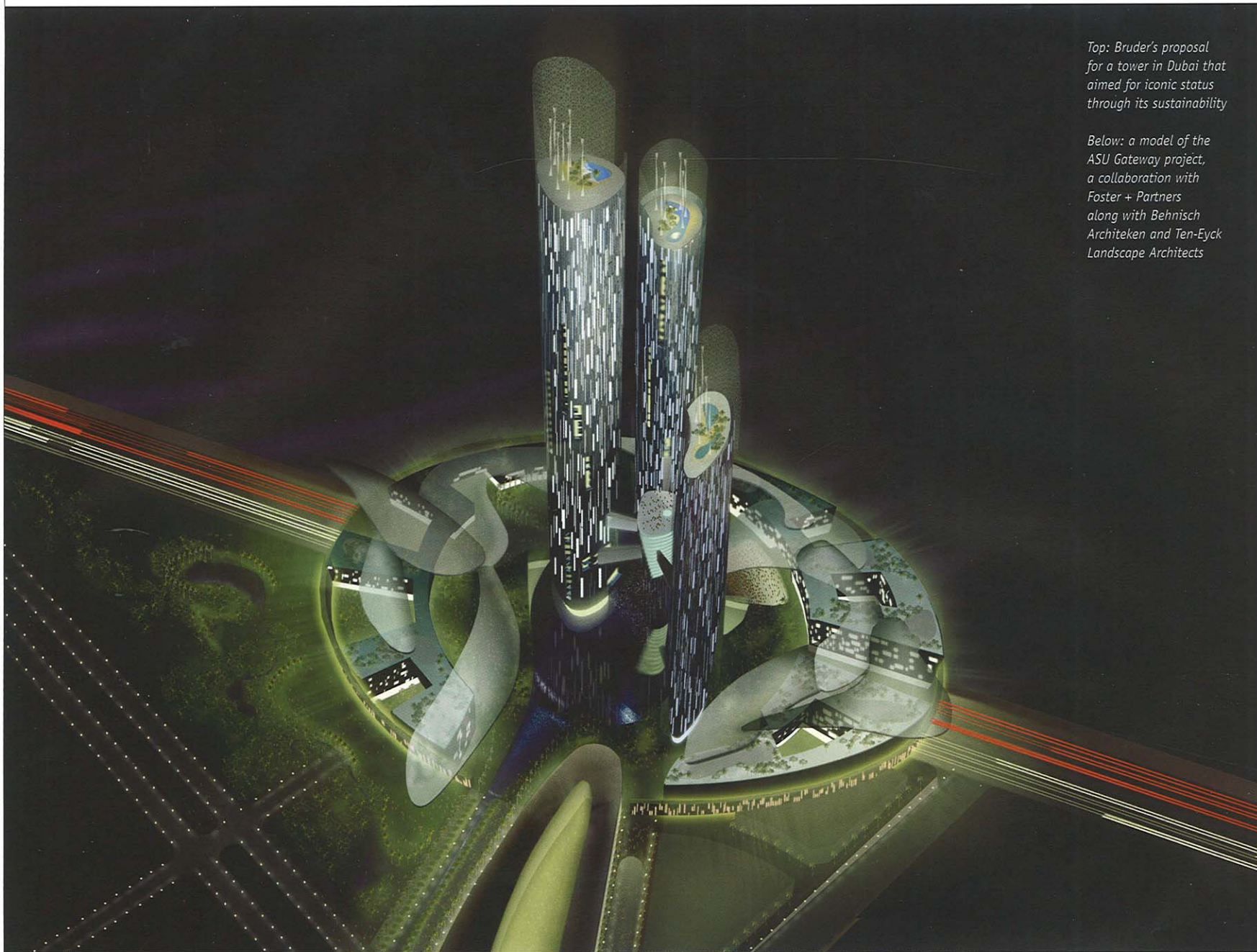
The design of his new studio is also something of a personal statement. Bruder has turned a bland, lightweight building – originally a dance studio – into something of solidity and permanence. Original faded pink tiling has been painted a stern charcoal grey, while the building is wrapped in robust, alternating strips of solid and gridded metal. These both filter the intense sunlight for the staff, and create a dramatic effect at night when the internal lights seem to glow through the facade. Equally dramatic is the sculpted metal canopy over the entrance, and landscaping by Christy Ten-Eyck that reuses concrete from the original driveway. While its low-rise scale is in keeping with the surrounding houses, it contrasts significantly with their light, suburban feel.

The studio was originally part of a



Top: Bruder's proposal for a tower in Dubai that aimed for iconic status through its sustainability

Below: a model of the ASU Gateway project, a collaboration with Foster + Partners along with Behnisch Architekten and Ten-Eyck Landscape Architects



larger complex of buildings, and Bruder is in the process of trying to acquire the other sections so that he can create a mixed-use development around his studio which could accommodate other architects and artists. It stands as a joyful critique of the two standard architectural procedures in Phoenix: demolishing buildings rather than reusing them, and building further and further out into the desert.

It is just a small part of Bruder's broader mission for Greater Phoenix. He is currently working on a set of apartments called The Vale, which is intended to be a gateway to nearby town of Tempe. The development of this 7,300 sq m site consists of a series of mixed-use and residential buildings comprising office and retail space and 46 dwelling units with underground parking and private individual garages. It is typical of the type of project that Bruder feels the area needs in order to develop healthily.

His fascination with Phoenix, however, has not prevented him from pursuing major projects outside of Arizona, including the Nevada Art Museum in 2003, and a forthcoming library for Portland, Maine: 'You ask better questions as an outsider;

you have the opportunity to redefine a place,' he says. What has always marked out his work though, particularly among American architects, is his concern with specific locality regardless of exactly where his buildings are sited. His Teton County Library in Wyoming, completed in 1997, for example, involved a raw use of log and wood construction that reflected the indigenous architecture and history of the region. It is part of his commitment to 'buildings that grow out of the spirit of a place' he explains.

Equally, though, going away allows him to return to Phoenix with a renewed vigour. While the construction of a new studio represents the continuing growth of Bruder's operations – he currently has around 20 full-time staff, while the new building could comfortably accommodate 40 – it also demonstrates a reinvigorated commitment to the city that fostered his reputation.

Despite having become such a figurehead of the city's architecture, Bruder has not quite attained the celebrity status of some of his architectural peers. He remains impatient and slightly mystified by the deification of the jet-setting league of



**WHAT HAS ALWAYS MARKED OUT BRUDER'S WORK, PARTICULARLY AMONG AMERICAN ARCHITECTS, IS HIS CONCERN WITH SPECIFIC LOCALITY REGARDLESS OF EXACTLY WHERE HIS BUILDINGS ARE SITED... IT IS PART OF HIS COMMITMENT TO 'BUILDINGS THAT GROW OUT OF THE SPIRIT OF THE PLACE'**

icon-builders. He has shared juries with Frank Gehry but makes no secret of his disdain for Gehry's buildings: 'That hotel in Rioja is one of the worst I've ever stayed in' and has barely concealed contempt for the arrogance of Rem Koolhaas, who visited the Phoenix Public Library when doing research for his Seattle Public Library. According to Bruder, he was too grand to even stay the night in Phoenix or even introduce himself to the building's architect. He feels he has the last laugh, however: 'I have a friend who loved the SPL. I just told them to try and find a book in there and take it to the counter. It's impossible!'

All this makes his collaboration with Foster + Partners for the ASU Arts and Business Gateway very intriguing. It is a major project: a 278,000 sq m development on a 5.25ha site, which Bruder describes as 'a response to the aspirations of both a university and a community'. The involvement of Foster is explained as bringing a global outlook to a building 'rooted in the needs of the ASU'. While the inspiration for the form of the development is said to have come from the canyons of Arizona, its design is undeniably more ostentatious than Bruder's usual work.

Even more surprising is a recent competition entry to design an iconic tower in Dubai – as if there is a shortage – which demonstrates the tension between his devotion to locality and his ambition as an architect. According to Bruder, he won the competition against an extremely high-profile list of competitors by proposing a tower that was 'iconic because of its sustainability', but withdrew after having visited the emirate and being horrified by what he saw happening: 'Dubai has no cultural "self", no qualities of space, no public realm. There is a complete lack of responsibility about the way it is developing.'

Bruder says that the scale of that project should come as no surprise: 'I have always wanted to work on tall buildings. Phoenix doesn't have enough of them. The essence of architecture is the way it grows from the ground and the way it kisses the sky.' These projects do, however, seem to herald a significant shift in the character of his work – from rawness to an increased slickness. It is unlikely that Bruder will be held back from major international projects for too long. The Godfather of Phoenix architecture is clearly ready for the global stage ■

Above: A classic piece of monumental architecture from Bruder that looks like a solid rock in the landscape, the Nevada Art Museum, completed in 2003