

# CONTEMPORARY DOORWAYS

ARCHITECTURAL ENTRANCES, TRANSITIONS, AND THRESHOLDS  
CATHERINE SLESSOR

MITCHELL BEAZLEY





# WILL BRUDER

SCOTTSDALE CENTER FOR THE ARTS, ARIZONA, 1999



Scottsdale, in the Phoenix conurbation in Arizona, might not yet be renowned as a great regional centre of art, but its citizens are trying in a modest way to implement a programme for new cultural buildings. One successful project is Will Bruder's transformation of a 1970s multiscreen cinema into a Museum of Contemporary Art. The main alterations to the building have been on the east side, where with great thought and sensitivity Bruder has created a front that is gently curved in plan, intended to attract visitors into the building. While the cinema building was executed in drab, dusty stucco, the new façade glitters and shimmers. It also bulges at each end, in homage to the neighbouring Center for the Arts. Unlike many contemporary designers, Bruder has created a museum that encourages the art and its custodians to

speak and does not try to overwhelm them with the power of his architecture.

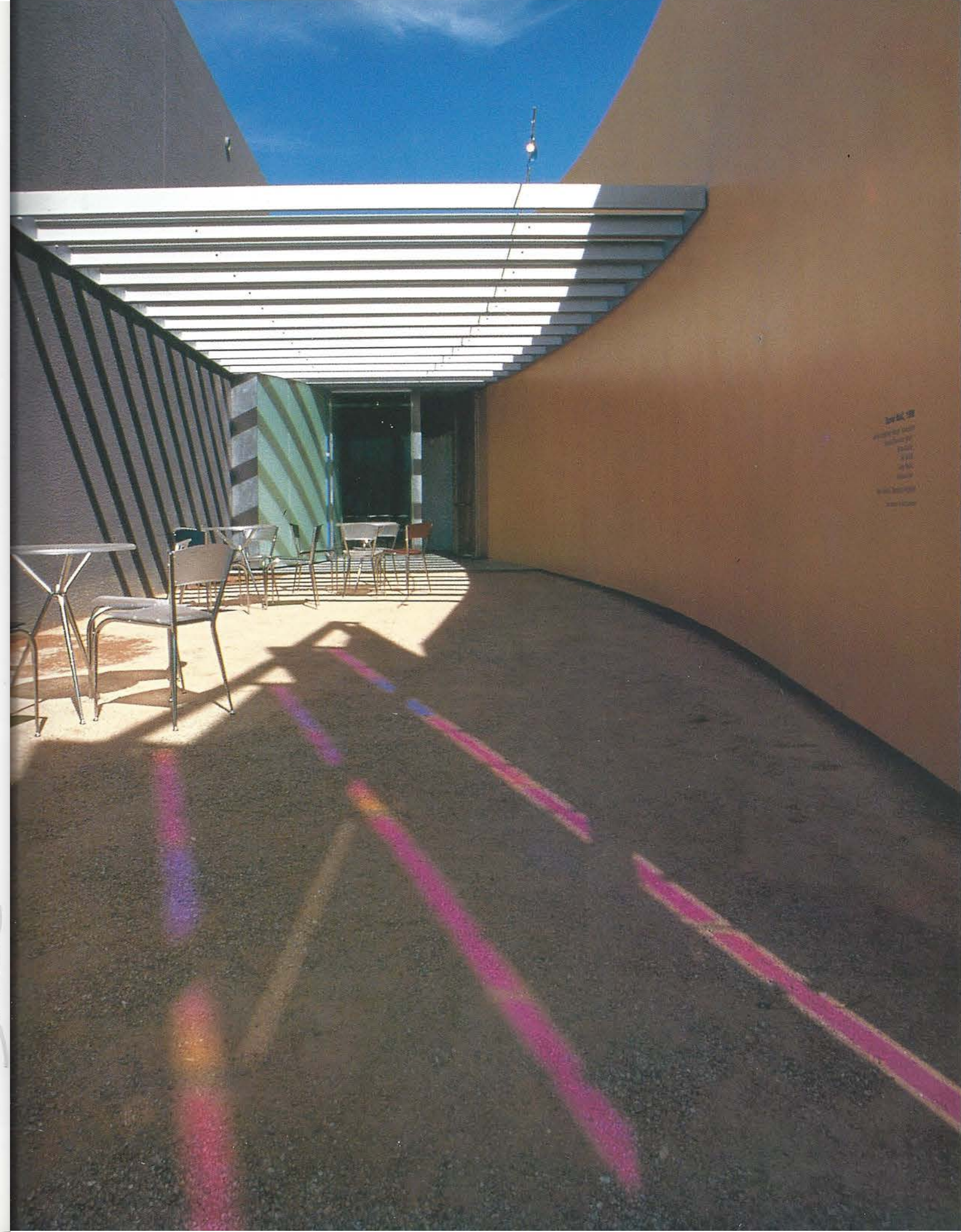
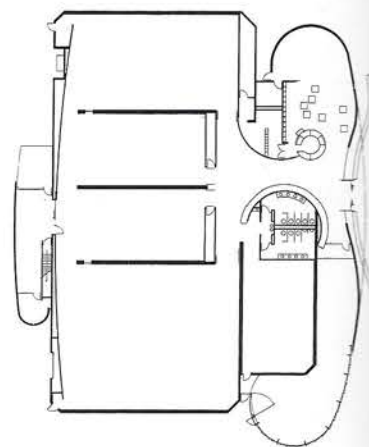
The south end of the new façade is conceived as a huge glass sculpture by the artist James Carpenter. Large sheets of dichroic glass enclose a small sculpture court filling it with ever-changing bands of ravishing green, blue, red and purple light. The rest of the new part, in an attempt to create what Bruder describes as something reminiscent of a handmade quilt, is clad in panels of silver galvanized steel in assorted sizes. Like Carpenter's glass, the metal seems to ripple and iridesce in the clear desert light. Behind the façade, the old building is painted a muted purplish grey.

On entering, you are drawn down the main axis by curves towards the gallery spaces at the rear of the building. These are equipped with differently sized roof lanterns so that the curators can choose to let in shafts and pools of daylight which can be inflected, coloured or simply obscured. But on a sunny day, visitors cannot fail to be drawn to Carpenter's sculpture court. To the left of the main entrance, a crisply detailed steel-and-glass door leads out into the space. Part of the new curved wall extends from inside to wrap around the existing building. A slatted pergola creates a sheltering porch at the sculpture court entrance and Carpenter's enclosing glass wall casts magically coloured shadows through the space, energizing and animating the entire building.

**left** The new entry pavilion for the Scottsdale Centre for the Arts is clad in shiny galvanized steel, reflecting the colours and light of the city. The façade curves gently inwards from both ends, encouraging visitors to enter the building.

**right** At one end of the entry pavilion, sheets of dichroic glass are suspended above a small sculpture court, refracting patterns of coloured light onto the ground.

Floor plan





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