

# MODERN HOUSING AT THE MILLENNIUM GWENDOLYN WRIGHT

Housing has been a prime site for experimentation throughout the history of modernism. From the late-19th century reforms of the Arts and Crafts to the early-20th century Siedlungen of European social democracy and the Four Functions of CIAM, domestic architecture has been the most visible expression of modern society's belief in progress – and architects' desire to translate those beliefs into built form. Today, even more than in the past, housing encompasses many domains: market-rate and subsidized multi-family dwellings, shelters for marginal populations, and mass-produced housing. And yet, with the rise of New Urbanism and signature neo-modernism in the last few decades, many prominent architects focus their talents solely on expensive custom designs for single-person or single-family dwellings (often second houses). Sometimes they dismiss housing altogether as inevitably monotonous and confining. Yet this remains the very essence of architecture as a discipline: at once the most elementary kind of construction and a new technological challenge, a universal need for shelter combined with a potentially infinite variety of objects and desires.

their preferred architectural or street designs.<sup>13</sup> It will not be possible to improve this vast residential terrain and devise viable alternatives unless we decode this phenomenon and understand its evolution, diversity, and appeal.

Certainly the health of the body no longer depends on a dwelling that assumes a laboratory imagery of steel fixtures and white walls. Acquiescing to scientific knowledge rather than representational tropes, architects now realize that public and environmental health must become part of their professional responsibility. They show not only a new concern for physical fitness but also for mental health, particularly for negotiating a balance between the stimulus of the new and the psychological well-being that comes with physical comfort and a sense of well-being.

Sometimes the housing unit at issue is no more than a single small room, which, in fact, poses considerable design and public health challenges. Rob Wellington Quigley has built several SRO hotels in the San Diego and Las Vegas areas, each of which is impressive in its enticing disposition of public spaces, vivacious street fronts, and resourceful adaptations to difficult

climates. Rosanne Haggerty's non-profit New York City group Common Ground recently commissioned Gans and Jelacic to develop a handsome, sturdy "flophouse" cubicle that combines modularity with security (a major concern for all these residents), playing industrial materials off against woodsy Adirondack muscle. Working in conjunction with men who live in Bowery flophouses, the project (called First Step) will now consider various ways to arrange groups of cubicles, public spaces, and circulation areas on a typical floor of an existing building the group is now ready to purchase.<sup>14</sup>

Transparency has also become more nuanced with the growing interest in translucent materials, layered skins, screens, and stages of access – corporeal, visual and electronic. The open plan has been superseded by a concern for flexibility which requires subtle adaptations of walls and partitions, along with easy conversions of room designations and uses, rather than the eradication of all differentiating elements.

Transparency today also means legible yet enticing messages, some marketing celebrity status, others generating publicity to elicit new housing ideas or to get some of

the projects built, even in the face of obstacles. The two came together in a recent "collection" of houses in Houston, Texas. The story begins in the 1980s, when developers recognized the prime location of the Fifth Ward, a historic black district next to downtown, and called for extensive slum clearance. Dana Cuff, faculty of the School of Architecture at Rice University, and Stephen Fox began efforts to protect the area and its residents from displacement. In 1996 Michael Bell, then a professor at Rice, initiated a project called "Sixteen Houses." He asked sixteen architects (including Lindy Roy, Mark Wamble, Stanley Saitowitz, and Studio Works) to produce prototypes consistent with the federal government's home-ownership voucher program: limited square footage (900 sq ft), cost restrictions (\$77,000 with armatures), and standard modular components.<sup>15</sup>

Models for these remarkably varied and compelling designs then went on display at galleries in Houston and other cities, generating considerable local and national interest. Bell worked closely with the Fifth Ward Community Development Corporation (FWCRC) to design equally imaginative schemes for financing and constructing houses. The FWCRC has built more than 100 houses: four of these are under construc-



ABOVE: In Horatio West Courts (1919-21) Irving Gill blended real and mythic referents to modernism's cubic volumes, southern California's modern life-style, and the local Hispanic heritage.



RIGHT: El Silencio (1942-45), by Carlos Raúl Villanueva, highlights the modern urbanity and hybrid history of Caracas.

FAR RIGHT: Catherine Bauer's *Modern Housing*, published in 1934, stressed the diversity of European experiments.

FACING PAGE LEFT: Philadelphia's Carl Mackley Houses (Oskar Stonorov, 1932-34) remains a high point of federal housing.

FACING PAGE RIGHT: Joseph Eichler hired the architects Anshen & Allen to design modern prototypes for post-WWII developments such as San Mateo Highlands.



HOLLAND: THREE VIEWPOINTS ON 'STYLE'  
 a. Cooperative housing in Amsterdam, 1923, by one of the romantic moderns, P. Kramer. b. Reworking a good vernacular tradition: municipal housing in The Hague. c. Shops in a Rotterdam municipal development by J. J. P. Oud, 1921. (Photo: c, *Museum of Modern Art*.)

challenge remains resonant.

The last two decades of the twentieth century have seen many reappraisals of this modernist legacy and its weaknesses. Scholars have examined problematic gender biases, excessive costs, and residents' determined resistance to the homogeneity, the forced collectivity – and the flat roofs. Unfortunately these subtle critiques of heroic invulnerability have been overshadowed by a more virulent attack, captured in Charles Jenck's declaration that "Modern Architecture died in St. Louis, Missouri on July 15, 1972 at 3:32 pm (or thereabouts) when the infamous Pruitt-Igoe scheme, or rather several of its slab blocks, were given the final coup de grâce by dynamite."<sup>5</sup>

This attitude denies the range of efforts subsumed under the label "Modern Architecture" as well as the other factors – racial segregation, isolation from the surrounding community, the lack of social services, poor upkeep, and administrative disregard – that exacerbated problems in St. Louis and elsewhere. Pruitt-Igoe became the apotheosis of what is wrong with all modern housing. For some people it demonstrates the inevitable failure of any public intervention in the market. This relentlessness is itself inflexible, far more so than the modernist ideology it condemns.

So what is modern housing, in the past or the present? Certainly it means something more than a mere formal vocabulary – unadorned asymmetrical planes of white walls, flat roofs, transparent expanses of glass, an open flow of space in tasteful uncluttered interiors – even if critics and advocates alike focus too easily on these elements alone. In terms of location modern housing engages urban, suburban, and rural settings, as well as the amorphous borders between them. It includes prototypes of detached dwellings to be built en masse, clusters of low-rise or medium-rise buildings, mixed-use adaptations of existing buildings, temporary shelters, SRO (single-room-occupancy) hotels, and multi-unit high-rise towers. It encompasses various non-domestic social services, formal and informal economic opportunities, transportation systems, and natural environments. Iconographically, too, some designers incorporate familiar images of "house" and "home," while others define "housing" in terms of alternatives to or overt criticisms of these referents.

The Americas provide many compelling examples, past and present, of the diversity in modern housing that Bauer celebrated. Yet few if any of these have been incorporated into our collective history. During the interwar era, when European housing was

at its height, American architects and builders were creating their own distinct and noteworthy projects: the lively bungalow courts in Southern California by Irving Gill, Rudolf Schindler, and Arthur and Nina Zwebell, together with the bravura of their Miami counterparts, complemented minimalist units with luxuriant outdoor spaces; the intertextual complexity of referents in Carlos Raúl Villanueva's El Silencio in Caracas acknowledged the scale of need and the hybrid cultural life in Venezuela; the site plan of the Harlem River Houses in New York (an interracial project by Archibald Manning Brown and John Louis Wilson) delineated both boundaries and connections with the surrounding community. My personal favorite is Oscar Stonorov's Carl Mackley Houses of 1934 in Philadelphia, a modern composition whose variegated massing and soft muted colors gracefully enhance the surrounding context of brick rowhouses. As in many other projects, this enclave highlighted an intricate mix of public and private with ample community spaces, indoors and out, to accommodate diverse groups and ages. There are even sensitive examples of fast-track mass housing for WWII defense workers by Louis Kahn, Walter Gropius, William Wurster, and others.<sup>6</sup>

Somewhat later, just after World War II,



we can find much to admire in Frank Lloyd Wright's inventive Usonian Houses, including several projects for replications of a unit to be grouped together in crystalline configurations; the sensuous curves of Affonso Reidy's Pedrugulho Quarter in Rio de Janeiro (see page 105); Mario Pani's richly textured Centro Urbano Alemán in Mexico City; and Marquis & Stoller's harmonious St. Francis Square in San Francisco. In addition, several museums, magazines, and private-sector developers explored modern typologies of design and construction for suburbia, most notably Joseph Eichler's comfortable and moderate-cost houses in California, using prototypes designed by Anshen & Allen in the northern Bay Area and Jones & Emmons for the Los Angeles region. Although these did not constitute an adequate large-scale response to housing needs, they do represent significant models for housing production and an engagement with diverse public values, both of which can be built upon.

All of these examples and many more embraced variations in massing, distinctive landscapes, and the innate irregularities of natural as well as industrial materials. The architects drew inspiration from a broad range of existing and potential forms, typologies, and cultural idioms to affirm the value and creative potential of human diver-

sity. Incorporating multifarious histories and rhythms of daily life into their definitions of functionalism, they designed buildings around dynamic patterns of activity and quiet, routines and special events, familiarity and innovation. These settings upheld and enlarged the scope of modern housing.

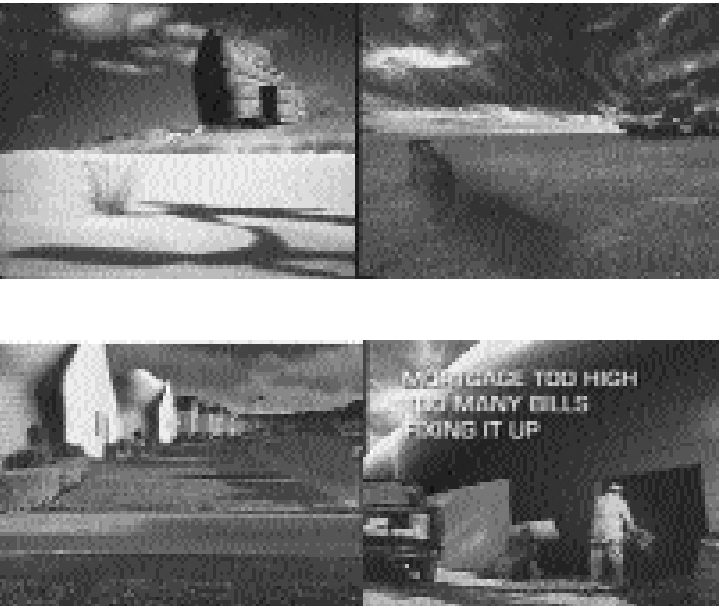
With these multiple legacies in mind, it is easier to discern certain shared characteristics – intentions, forms, and effects – of modern housing in the Americas at the threshold of a new century. Some reaffirm or extend the focus of earlier precedents, while others challenge or even subvert previous icons. To be sure, as before, these trends parallel tendencies in Europe and elsewhere. The themes that come to light on this continent encourage us all to look for creative variations wherever they can be found. Putting aside static positions based on opposing dichotomies (Europe vs. the Americas, neo-avant garde vs. neo-traditional, norms vs. alternatives), the scope of American goals and strategies shows today's housing in terms of a spectrum of experimentation.

For the sake of clarity, more as a convenient device than a code, let me suggest seven themes of continuity and shift.

Peter Rowe's thoughtful book, *Modernity and Housing*, reminds us that modern architecture focuses on how and why something is built, rather than how it looks.<sup>7</sup> Echoing their forbears of the early modern movement, today's architects are intrigued by ingenious construction methods and materials. Some focus on unprecedented computer-generated forms, probing the visual excitement of undulating or colliding walls and roofs. Even if most of these examples remain works on paper or the basis for a handful of singular commissions, their formal and structural experimentation enlivens our collective sense of architectonic possibilities.

Plumbing a different vein, some designers continue to champion the iconic imagery of glass, steel, and reinforced concrete born in the 1920s and 30s; others investigate the potential of the latest plastics and fiberglass resins; many have reclaimed natural materials like wood, stone, and brick as part of the modernist legacy. A fascination with amalgams can extend to housing for the very poor. Fusing construction materials with social commitments, Brazilian housing policy now seeks to improve the illegal shantytowns called favelas, rather than replacing them with expensive modern prototypes that adapt poorly to the residents' daily needs. Metal frame





FACING PAGE LEFT: Stills from a marketing video for “Housings,” a project by Kol/Mac (Sulan Kolatan and William MacDonald) that uses computer technology to explore mass-customization.

FACING PAGE RIGHT: Koning/Eizenberg’s Fifth Street Family Houses (1998) in Santa Monica, California, celebrate both architectural amalgams and the ordinary activities of domestic life.

FAR LEFT: Handsome public spaces enhance Rob Wellington Quigley’s SRO’s, (Single-Room-Occupancy hotels) such as Campaigne Place in Las Vegas, Nevada (2000).

LEFT: Residents of “flop-houses” along New York City’s Bowery offered valuable advice in the development of a new prototype cubicle by Gans & Jelacic.

Of course, the range of contemporary attitudes about the domestic realm demonstrates inevitable shifts and conflicts in the very nature of modernism. The meaning and relative importance of terms like standardization, work, well-being, family, social class, and community no longer seem stable. Today’s designers strive to take account of this transformation in many different, even idiosyncratic ways, rather than adhering to a single idiom. In addition, while Europe remains an important site for innovative design and government-funded projects, the locus of exploration is gradually being decentered toward the Americas where issues about housing necessarily engage a broad and often fractious gamut of producers, conservative political activists, community groups, real estate developers, and marketing experts, together with architects and governmental policy makers.

For most architects, a few iconic examples of housing built in Europe during the early decades of the twentieth century still embody the formal principles of the modernist heritage and its progressive political and social ideals. Social democracies sought to provide clean, healthy, affordable housing for all citizens, rich and poor; they also believed that modern environments would create modern subjects who would support construction of the new dwellings. Le

Corbusier’s intentionally radical definition of the dwelling – “a machine for living in” – comes immediately to mind, along with his Dom-ino prototype and his dwellings at Pessac. Almost automatically we conjure up a distinguished set of social housing projects, many of them by major architects of the era: the urbane rowhouses of Oud’s Kieffhok in Rotterdam; Gropius’s Zeilenbau rows at Dessau; May’s graceful Praunheim and Rommerstadt estates outside of Frankfurt; Taut’s supple Onkel-Tom’s-Hütte on the edge of Berlin; Ginzberg’s Narkomfin communal housing in Moscow; the monumental spaces of Ehn’s Karl Marx Hof in Vienna; and of course the collective Weissenhof exhibition in Stuttgart. All of these examples proclaimed a set of shared convictions. They did so in part by rallying around a shared aesthetic: new industrial technologies for construction, standardized units with open floor plans, a break with historical styles, an aversion to ornamentation, health of the body through fresh air and hygienic surroundings, and public spaces to express a new collective identity. The prevailing curricula in today’s schools of architecture still celebrate the functionalist Neue Sachlichkeit aesthetic of these canonical examples as “cold and austere and yet at the same time scintillating.”<sup>1</sup>

Catherine Bauer’s Modern Housing like-

wise affirmed the “new form...[and] joyous, extravagant creative élan” of these European housing projects when she presented them to Americans in 1934. Her book addressed an audience that purposefully included not only architects but also political leaders, businessmen, trade unionists, and the educated general public.<sup>2</sup> Equally important, she introduced a distinctive American slant in her judgments. Daring to discuss the relative weaknesses and strengths of specific architectural signatures, unit plans, and community designs, she appraised various dimensions of how each project actually worked. Why, Bauer asked, did one have to take the modern movement as a totality, without the possibility of questions and adaptations? Insisting that there was no “simple formula” for housing, she commended “the innumerable variations, affecting both method and form, which are due to local requirements, habits, limitations or desires.”<sup>3</sup> In doing so she called on American architects to take up the ideas and examples of European modern housing and then create new idioms, responsive to the conditions and possibilities of their own cultures. Here, as elsewhere, architects had to move back and forth between “the line of rational investigation” and “the whole broad history of mass emotion and popular desire.”<sup>4</sup> That

tion, with residents active in job training and community organizing. The project had many goals; prime among them was a commitment to produce new homes, to help strengthen this community, and to re-enchanted housing as an exciting architectural undertaking.

Community identity continues to play a major role in various aspects of modern housing, ranging from façade design to interior and exterior public spaces. Designers and residents alike still firmly believe that architecture affects social life, but they don’t insist on its being a “social condenser,” which required the appearance and siting to isolate any radical new enterprise from contamination by its still backward surroundings.

Today’s linkages do not necessarily require the seamless flow of contextual imagery, nor an erasure of all borders. A better metaphor might be an irregular yet constant syncopation of movements, repetitions, bridges, and surprises along the edges between different settings. For example, Michael Pyatok emphasizes garages, driveways, and parking areas as key public spaces that have typically been neglected by designers and censored by zoning officials. These are true work/live spaces,

necessary for income as well as social life, especially for ethnic working class people.<sup>16</sup> Yes, most busy professionals work inside their homes and apartments. How can this pattern, encapsulated in the vogue for lofts, generate necessary changes in land-use zoning where it is most needed?

Advocates for housing reform also stress the need for support services as well as shelter, whether the clients are homeless men, single parents or working families, a point explored with great depth in Joan Forrester Sprague’s More Than Housing.<sup>17</sup> These services need architectural expression. Bold and inviting public spaces at the entry to a housing project can enliven the threshold. David Baker’s exuberant Pensi-one Esperanza, an SRO in San Jose, California, provides a case in point, combining color, transparency, safety, and witty references to the neon world of hotel history. Sometimes, in contrast, it’s necessary to respect residents’ wariness to seek help by placing such services in discrete places. None of us can generalize from our own associations and emotions.

The design process itself requires ongoing engagement between architects, residents, neighbors, and other groups. The best intentions and architectural skill cannot fully substitute for residents’ participation and the emotional engage-

ment this fosters. This is not to say that architects should be mere scribes, dutifully taking down orders – in fact, quite the opposite. Unforeseen ideas, unimagined associations, and unexpected problems will be put forward, each of which complicates the original design and requires imaginative reconfigurations. And yet, since contingency and flux are the principal tropes of today’s architectural discourse, surely housing design is the place to implement those words. Perhaps we might even redefine this process rather than the architectural product, as the “social condenser” of our times.

In the end modern housing cannot solve major social problems, but it can speak to them, energizing people to forge new ways to use resources, to imagine better futures – or simply to withdraw into their private retreats. Façades, surfaces, materials, floor plans, site plans, relations with or separation from one’s surroundings, all of these unquestionably have effects. They can facilitate or limit, inspire or denigrate – though no one can proffer a sure formula about exactly what, where, or how. Imaginative visions are essential, for they can enhance both established and as yet unrealized scenarios. Sometimes such visions are startling, unprecedented, even disconcerting; other times they draw from existing reali-

and concrete are combined with load-bearing brick to produce simple housing and recreational plazas. In the southern U.S. Sam Mockbee uses hay bales, rammed earth, and oil barrels to create remarkably poetic testimonies to the lives and dreams of destitute farm families.

These composites manifest a desire to mix materials and technologies from different eras and experiences of modernity. Such self-consciously creolized approaches affirm the heterogeneous realities of the past and the present rather than insisting on any singular expression of our time. They incorporate Ernest Bloch's non-synchronicities into the domain of material production.<sup>8</sup>

Standardization has been discarded by all but the most resolute guardians of the modernist legacy, replaced by explorations of the variety inherent within any given type or technology. Designers such as Kolatan/MacDonald or Doug Garofalo (see page 56) use the concept of mass-customization to reassert the avant-garde's commitment to defamiliarization. (Christopher Reed has recently identified this phenomenon as the avant-garde's "Suppression of Domesticity.")<sup>9</sup> The unlimited, sometimes startling variations of their housing proposals proclaim a fusion of personal choice with radical forms. The imagery of unexpected, unleashed desires becomes their challenge to the existing standards for domestic space.

Others view personalization and expectations in quite different terms. They emphasize the need to respect conventions, especially among populations that feel real instabilities about family, work, economic investments, or social acceptance. Duany Plater-Zyberk see their neo-traditional forms as a camouflage to soften resistance to higher-density, mixed-use, residential developments. The infill projects of Michael Pyatok, Joan Goody, and William Rawn are based on subtle variations of local building typologies that reaffirm the perceived "nature" of a given city, neighborhood, and group. The familiar façades show not a paucity of imagination, but a conscious effort to make new housing for low and

moderate-income families more appealing to both the residents and their often wary neighbors.<sup>10</sup> Rather than stirring things up, this architecture stabilizes a set of common standards for diverse social and family needs.

Some strategies emphasize sequences to accentuate changes in the middle grounds between two cultures, especially for ambiguous sites. For example, the non-profit firm of Casa Familiar has designed a three-stage plan for the border town of San Ysidro, California, across from Tijuana; a cleared space will first become a community garden; a concrete-frame on the site will then serve as a public gathering place and market; a few years later, affordable housing units will be incorporated atop, under, and around the frame.<sup>11</sup> (See page 28)

Ernst May's spartan Existzminimum is no longer an ideal for all modern architects (no more so than it ever was for residents), though once again the responses encompass many points along a broad bandwidth. For the most part, positions are defined in terms of expensive custom dwellings, then dilated to suggest new standards for all housing. Herzog & De Meuron and Enrique Norton endorse an elegant, expensive, minimalist aesthetic for residential design. In partial contrast, Thom Mayne and Greg Lynn reverse minimalism to promote representations of chaotic complexity and destabilizing ambiguity, while the Hariri sisters and Bernard Tschumi stress the continuous voyeuristic presence of technological communication.

The recent inflation of square footage and opulent fittings for new houses in the United States has generated a call for moderation among many architects. A widespread distaste for consumers' unseemly appetites has fueled efforts to reduce, refine, and restrict. Some designers simply elect to hide people's "stuff" with ingenious storage walls and built-in cabinetry. Others rally around a sublime elegance of materials and design that intentionally casts shame on ordinary objects.

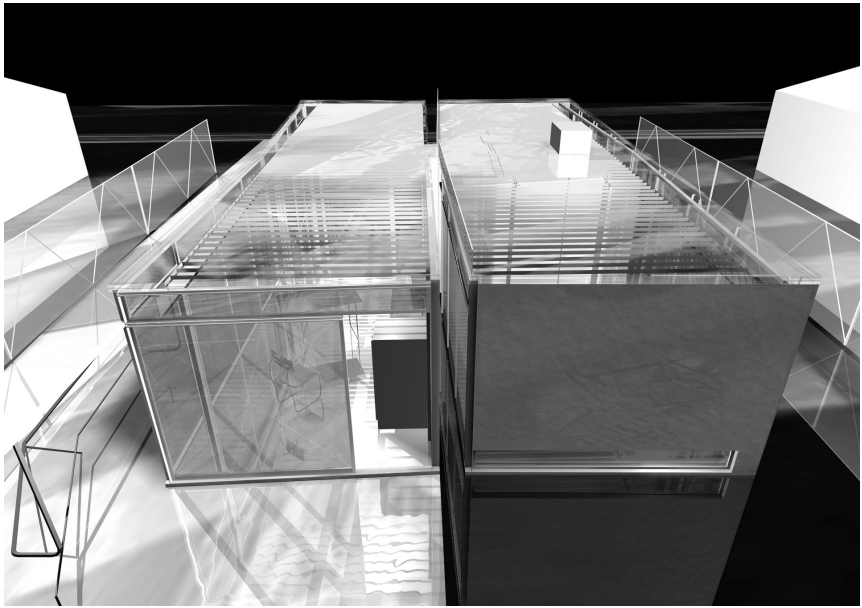
At a more fundamental level we still need to reexamine terms like "modern," "avant-garde," "minimalist," perhaps even "criti-

cal." These words function as useful codes, of course, in that they affirm deeply felt beliefs, but they can also intimidate and misrepresent. As a kind of shorthand among architects, they imply that we all agree on their meaning, as if there was an underlying universal essence. This denies the ambiguities of all language, verbal and visual.

Declarations of the need to break definitively with the past and disdain for local contexts as inherently parochial have not disappeared from modernist discourse, but they too are no longer such rabid assertions. We have gradually come to recognize that the very concept of "tradition," as well as any effort to preserve or defeat it, is, in fact, a fundamental aspect of modernity. Thus an homage to admired buildings and typologies from the 1920s or 30s on the part of architects like Richard Meier or Peter Eisenman can be understood as a distinct variant of neo-traditionalism.

Not all modern architects insist upon an unqualifiedly "modern" vocabulary for their housing. It's no longer considered kitsch to incorporate vernacular references, especially when this goes beyond the imagery of façades to include cultural traditions in the use of private and community space. Southern California has seen especially inventive interventions, many from non-locals. Koning and Eizenberg rework the basic principles of the Los Angeles dingbat and bungalow court to create enclaves that are at once embedded in their locales and joyfully original - as Los Angeles has always tried to be. Davids and Killory embrace and transcend the Hispanic heritage of the Southwest (as interpreted by Irving Gill); their compact unit plans and the commodious outdoor spaces provide a lyrical counterpoint between symbol and abstraction. Colton Palms by Chicago's Valerio Associates sought a "vaguely familiar" presence, varying the apartment units and playfully accentuating the visibility of public buildings.<sup>12</sup>

The suburbs are perhaps the most pervasive and problematic aspect of American history with which architects must come to terms. Here the New Urbanists have done considerable work that is worth study, without any obligation to accept



NOTES

1. Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), p. 137.
2. Catherine K. Bauer, *Modern Housing* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1934), p. 14. For a more extended discussion see Gwendolyn Wright, "A Partnership: Catherine Bauer and William Wurster," in Marc Treib, ed., *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 184-203. It is striking that Bauer's first article on May's housing appeared in *Fortune* magazine.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 148, 157, 141.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-116, 253.
5. Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977), p. 9.
6. For examples see Elizabeth Mock, *Built in U.S.A. - since 1932* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1945). Several of these examples were featured in postwar European publications such as Albert Roth's *USA Baut* (Winterthur: Buchdruckerei, 1945) and *La nouvelle architecture/Die Neue Architektur/The New Architecture* (Zurich: Les editions d'architecture, 1946).
7. Peter G. Rowe, *Modernity and Housing* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993).
8. Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times*, tr. Neville and Stephen Plaice (1962; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). The phrase *Ungleichzeitigkeit*, which Bloch penned in the mid-1930s, has also been translated as "non-contemporaneity" and "non-simultaneity." It seeks to emphasize a "multileveled" dialectic and, by extension, the inevitable mixture of experiences and identities for all individuals, groups and cities, rather than a single nature of the modern era. Also see Frederic J. Schwartz, "Ernst Bloch and Wilhelm Pinder: Out of Sync," *Gray Room* 03 (Spring 2001): pp. 54-89.
9. Christopher Reed, ed., *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996).
10. For compilations of this work see Tom Jones, William Pettus and Michael Pyatok, *Good Neighbors: Affordable Family Housing* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995) and Sam Davis, *The Architecture of Affordable Housing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

11. "Award," *Architecture* (April 1901), pp. 102-7.
12. Jim Murphy, "Vaguely Familiar," *Progressive Architecture* (February, 1992), pp. 84-92.
13. See, in particular, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (New York: North Point Press, 2000) and John A. Dutton, *New American Urbanism: Re-forming the Suburban Metropolis* (Milan: Skira, 2000). Dutton's introduction cites Ellen Dunham-Jones's frustration with the "odd disconnect between what is exciting about the ambitious New Urbanist agenda and the places New Urbanists claim as success." ("New Urbanism as a Counter-Project to Post-Industrialism," *Places* 13 [Spring 2000], p. 28, cited on p. 12.)
14. See [www.commonground.org](http://www.commonground.org).
15. Originally called Freedmen's Town, the Fifth Ward was first settled just after the Civil War by former slaves who built classic Southern vernacular "shot-gun houses;" because of segregation it also contained the city's first public housing project built during World War II. On this project see Shaila Dewan's article in the *New York Times*, available in [www.houstonpress.com/issues/1998-11-19/art.html](http://www.houstonpress.com/issues/1998-11-19/art.html) and "PA Design Awards," *Architecture* (April 2001), as well as Bell's forthcoming book, *16 Houses* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2001).
16. Michael Pyatok, "Martha Stewart vs. Studs Terkel: New Urbanism and Inner Cities Neighborhoods that Work," *Places* 13 (Winter 2000): 40-43; *idem.*, "Neighborhood Development in a Democratic City: Toward a 'Real' Urbanism," *Arcade* 15 (Winter 1996): pp. 6-8, 45.
17. Joan Forrester Sprague, *More Than Housing: Lifeboats for Women and Children* (Boston: Butterworth, 1991).



ABOVE LEFT: Michael Bell's "Glass House @ 20" is one of the 16 innovative low-cost designs Bell commissioned for an impoverished neighborhood in Houston, Texas.

ABOVE: Bold color and prismatic transparency enliven the main façade of Pensione Esperanza, a 1996 SRO in San Jose, California by David Baker.

LEFT: Michael Pyatok's recent Gateway Commons in Oakland, California encourages residents to use the front living rooms and porches of their homes for small businesses.