

PIN-UP

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Every issue of **PIN-UP** is driven by the desire to introduce the culture of architecture and design to new audiences. Fueled by a healthy curiosity for the fresh and the new, but also the forgotten and the overlooked, **PIN-UP** never shies away from the seemingly superficial — but always with the belief that surfaces are deceptively shallow, hiding surprising depths, and that a less serious approach can often be the more revealing. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the many interviews that have been the cornerstone of the magazine since the first issue in November 2006. These friendly **PIN-UP** chat sessions allow architects, artists, and designers to break out of their formal molds, dropping trade jargon in favor of candid revelation. Here, 57 fascinating creative personalities tell it like it is in plain, straight, unembellished speech. The result is an unorthodox architectural tome that is as funny and fun as it is smart and thought provoking — 448 pages of unadulterated architectural entertainment.

Felix Burrichter
Editor/Creative Director

AC Actually, I was asking about personal style.

BvB You mean how we talk?

AC No, the way you dress.

BvB Ah, Okay. But don't forget that that was not the fault of architects. It was the fashion designers who started that. They came in black, remember.

AC Right, Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons is often credited with starting that.

BvB Yes, and then everyone copied it, including the architects in the 1980s and 90s. I remember when I once came to Columbia University in a black suit, someone came to me and asked, "Why the hell is everyone here wearing black suits? I mean, it's scary." And since then, I never went with a black suit anymore.

AC You're wearing a black suit jacket today.

BvB But with jeans. Can you believe it?

BARCELONA

RICARDO BOFILL

Interview by Felix Burrichter

While most architects spend a lifetime perfecting a signature style, Ricardo Bofill seems to avoid it at all costs. The fascinating 69-year-old Catalan is perhaps best known for the Postmodern public-housing projects he built in France in the 1980s, but his oeuvre spans several decades and creative periods that range from Surrealist-inspired multi-color beach resorts to the glass-and-steel extravaganza of Barcelona Airport's brand-new Terminal 1. On my way to our meeting in the Barcelonan industrial suburb of Sant Just Desvern, we drive by a strange-looking 16-story apartment complex, whose semi-circular balconies seem randomly stacked onto the terra cotta-colored façade, making it appear like a living organism. "This is Walden 7," my cab driver screams excitedly, "It was built by the architect Ricardo Bofill!" When I tell her that is who I'm going to see, she gets even more excited: "He used to be married to Julio Iglesias's daughter," she says, in fact referring to his son, Ricardo Bofill Jr., who works as an architect alongside his father (and has an *¡Hola!*-worthy marital record). But the little mix-up doesn't really matter — it just goes to show that in his native Spain, and especially in Barcelona, Bofill is a household name.

Taller de Arquitectura, as his office is formally known, is located in a former cement factory, which Bofill bought almost 45 years ago and has transformed over the years into a palatial office and living compound resembling an overgrown medieval castle. His apartment is on the top floor, with breathtakingly high ceilings and a rooftop garden (without handrails) enjoying a direct view over Walden 7 on the adjacent lot. A handsome Bofill, in crisp white shirt and black jeans, greets me in a clover-shaped office (four former cement silos knocked together). During the one-and-a-half hour interview at his square desk, he smokes at least half a pack of Marlboro Lights while jovially talking about his early days as an architect, the steady changing of style in his career, and why he hates institutions and loves Catalonia.

Felix Burrichter Converting these premises into offices was one of your first projects I believe?

Ricardo Bofill Yes, it was a disused cement works, I was 24 and it was a very cheap neighborhood, I'd already built houses in Barcelona and wanted to jump up in scale. At that time I'd developed a different working method. I was already interested in a different architecture — I didn't like Le Corbusier, I didn't like Gropius, I was interested in Spanish vernacular architecture, architect-less architecture. And the buildings I designed at that time, like in Sitges, where I built modular housing [*Kafka's Castle*, 1968], or in Alicante [*Xanadu* and *La Muralla Roja*, 1965], were greatly inspired by the vernacular architecture of southern Spain and North Africa.

FB You studied in Barcelona and Geneva, right?

RB Yes, first in Barcelona, and then I went to Geneva because I was thrown out of Barcelona University for belonging to a left-wing student movement. It was at the time of Franco. I stayed two years in Switzerland, and afterwards moved to Paris. And then at one point I decided to go back to my father in Spain. He was an architect and builder, and was building a lot, which allowed me to build very early on — I completed my first house at the age of 19 [in 1960], when I was still a student in Geneva. It was a little holiday home in Ibiza. One of my first projects with my father was a series of town houses built with no money, with cheap local materials such as brick. There was nothing in Spain back then, it was a very poor country.

And afterwards I thought about reworking the process of architecture, and of volume, and I carried out a series of experiments. Then, in 1968, we did a series called "The City in Space," which was an entire conception of the city, a break with the rationalist bloc, a break with the cheap architecture that was being built in Spain at the time. We conducted two experiments, one in Madrid, which was banned by the Franco government, and another, which was the culmination of our research, was Walden, which we completed in 1974. The idea for our housing was based on a modular system, because for me the concept of the traditional family unit, with a father, mother, and two children, is just one case among others: one can also live alone, communally, or in a homosexual couple, for example. The idea was that you could buy one module, two modules, three modules, or however many you needed, horizontally or vertically. It was really a whole other way of imagining urban life and an experiment in communal living. But with Walden 7 it was kind of the end of my research into that. But it was also during this period that I undertook research into the conversion of old ruins, and that's when the conversion of this cement works happened. It's fantastic because it preserves the memory of industrial architecture. Afterwards we spent two years cutting things out, taking away various elements, and then we had to put windows in, and there was already a desire to introduce a historicist architecture — a Catalan architecture,

but transformed. Then we gave it a Brutalist treatment, and there are also the Surrealist elements we left in, all of which correspond to the different periods of my history.

FB You said earlier that when you left university Le Corbusier's architecture didn't interest you...

RB Not only did it not interest me, I was totally against it! I was quite radical when I was young, and for me Le Corbusier and co. were responsible for all the sorry housing projects in Europe and especially in the Soviet bloc. Dividing the city into functions, treating houses like machines — the urban solutions put forward at the time seemed anti-urban to me, the simplification of the city into something other. And I've spent my life hating this Modern movement and trying to find alternatives, trying out other solutions, trying to bring back the spirit of the Mediterranean town, the European town, the mixture of functions, the mixture of spaces, the street, the square, the mixture of social strata.

FB There were no contemporary architects who inspired you at that time?

RB At the time there was only Louis Kahn and Alvar Aalto, and to a certain degree Frank Lloyd Wright. But for me Le Corbusier was the devil! For example, the plan he drew up for Barcelona was just absurd. He was certainly a man with enormous talent and extraordinary force, but his ideas were pretentious and totally monstrous — I think that at bottom he was an evil person.

FB Your projects in the late 60s and early 70s have a Surrealist element to them.

RB Yes, absolutely. At the time, each new project was a tryout for me. In that period, we didn't want to define the final form in advance, but instead let the process produce the project. Each project was different because we didn't necessarily want to produce "beautiful" projects. So we experimented with processes. For example, in plan, the value given to layout-forming elements, or the use of space, or construction materials — we never wanted to predetermine the final result, a bit like, as I was saying earlier, in vernacular architecture. Another big influence was Antoni Gaudí. I've always been greatly inspired by Catalan architecture, and there's obviously no way around Gaudí! He was a genius! But what I learnt from him wasn't the Gaudí style, but his vision of architecture. He was a man who never repeated the same door twice, the same two windows. No! He innovated constantly, and refused repetition. A simple man, but an inventor. He started out as an anarchist, and finished as a visionary traditionalist. So, according to Gaudí, one must never repeat the same door twice. But that's impossible today, we no longer have the same craftsman resources. I transferred that to a contemporary context by saying to myself: "I must never repeat the same two projects. Each project must be different!" That's the great lesson of Gaudí. Moreover, when they began work again on the Sagrada Família, they asked me if I wanted to do it, and I said, "No, it's impossible. If you have a

painting by Picasso, you can't continue it if it's unfinished!"

Another great influence for me was my journeys to Italy, and the study of Italian-Renaissance architecture: Alberti, Brunelleschi, etc. So here we spent nearly ten years with a research team on what you might call our Classical period, which others have called Neoclassical; but actually that's not true, it's a modern Classicism, it's a Classicism with another function, with other materials, with another idea, trying to recreate squares, streets...

FB How did the transition occur from vernacular architecture to experiments like Walden, and then to what you call modern Classicism?

RB Walden 7 was, if you like, a critical response to the entire Catalan, and even European, intelligentsia. It was a critical response because we said: "There! It's a monument in the middle of suburbia, a vertical monument in the suburbs!" And straight away there were critics who said: "One cannot experiment with social housing, with architecture for the poor." Because Walden 7 was a social-housing project, you know, although it isn't any more because there is a law in Spain to the effect that after 20 years buildings lose their social-housing status. But at the time that's exactly what it was, it was a building populated with people of all varieties: trannies, junkies, singers, writers, unemployed people... It was a very interesting mixture, but greatly criticized. But I was expecting that, because I'd put all my research, all my experimental ideas, everything I was talking about earlier, into one single building. I exhausted myself intellectually with Walden, and it's then that I changed. And I tried, with a team of around 20 people, working "word by word" to learn and acquire all the different architectural languages possible. Once I'd studied Classicism, once I'd studied all these architectures, the culture and language of a building became a secondary element. And above all, a non-ideological element, because — especially at that time — if you didn't produce a certain architecture you were a reactionary. Architecture was very ideologized, aesthetics had become something ideological, but I wanted to erase all that. For example, there are great writers, like Céline, who was rather right-wing, and who was a very good writer, or those like Borges, who write in a totally formal, classic way and are very good, and then there are the *nouveaux romans*, which are nice. Personally I think one should know all the different writing styles in order to be able to use them in each particular case one sees fit in the manner one wishes. At the time I hadn't yet learnt this freedom that allows one to change, evolve, and write in a different way with architecture.

FB So what was the project that followed Walden 7?

RB After Walden 7, I went first to Algeria and then to France. In France I proposed a housing scheme in Cergy-Pontoise which we called La Petite Cathédrale [1971]. It was a French-style Walden if you like, because the French had more advanced techniques for building mega-structures. But it was never realized. And then, on the other hand, in Algeria I built an agricultural village [1980] entirely in brick, which was a very, very inexpensive construction.

re-conversion, but to me it was exciting because she was on the top floor, so instead of the typical idea of putting balconies on the façade to create outdoor space, we just cut a giant hole in the roof and made an interior courtyard. It was a feat to pull off, but it was so interesting even if it was a simple loft interior.

MB You've been quoted in *The New York Times* as saying, "An architect needs to be an activist." Could you explain what you meant by that?

JG Architects have special skills. They are able to connect the dots between different disciplines, and they're able to communicate ideas to the broader public. We are able to project what something could look like in the future, and we're all about making plans. And that is very useful. I think architects should use these skills more to push issues that they care about for the greater good. I don't know if that's activism or advocacy, but to me it's about moving issues forward that are important to all of us, and using the skills we have to make these things happen.

MB Last question: how did you meet and start working with your husband?

JG Well, we actually met at OMA, so we've been collaborating for a long time. When I came back to Chicago to start my practice, at some point I was able to ask him to join me. We work really well together — we always have — so it's great to be in the same space together.

MB How do you balance an intense practice with family life?

JG I have to admit my life is not balanced at all but I enjoy it, so it's not a burden. I like to create, to work with people. It's like a beehive, it's a buzzing beehive where we're all contributing.

MB Great! Is there anything else you would like to add?

JG No. I just want to get the pictures over with. That's the part I really hate! [Laughs.]

L O N D O N

ZAHRAHADID

Interview by Kenny Schachter

In the two weeks I spent trying to arrange this interview, Zaha Hadid traveled to three continents and five cities — it was almost impossible to get hold of her. But after nearly three years working together, I had grown used to her busy schedule. Our collaboration started when I bought a property in London's East End and asked her to design a building for it. Despite my sometimes far-fetched schemes and, to be frank, my trepidation about Zaha's somewhat towering personality, our collaborations have become increasingly frequent. One was the Z-Car, commissioned in 2005, with a design brief that called for a truly modern, sustainable car. In another collaborative venture, we created a large furniture/storage/sculpture object. Shaped like a twisted boomerang, it cantilevers ten feet from its base and contains a storage bin and built-in seats; it now serves as my desk. And then, in 2006, I asked Zaha to design a bespoke pavilion for my gallery, Rove, to display her fascinating paintings and editions of her models; the result, itself a sculpture, was displayed at Art Basel Miami Beach.

All told it's been a whirlwind. Perhaps the best, and only, way to describe Zaha is like mercury given form: hard to grasp, agile and elegant, but always potentially dangerous...

Kenny Schachter Was it a childhood aspiration to be an architect? Was there any other career you ever contemplated?

Zaha Hadid Politics always interested me — as did psychology and mathematics. I also remember wanting to be a singer.

KS Are there any lasting impressions/influences from growing up in Baghdad? Does that color the way you work in any capacity?

ZH Yes, in some obvious ways, but not in others. At that time, Iraq was progressive and liberal. This aspect of growing up in Baghdad definitely influenced me. Your question actually makes me think of a discussion I had with Alvin Boyarsky about how calligraphy influenced abstraction, and later Deconstructivist architecture. Rem Koolhaas was one of the first to make the connection, when he observed that only his Arab and Persian architecture students were able to make certain curvilinear gestures in their work — he thought it came from the calligraphy. The act of making that script — a visual and physical gesture that is an everyday movement for someone writing in these languages, but is not part of Western language — maybe encourages or allows for abstraction of gesture in other ways, or for other understandings. And I think definitely the Russians, Malevich particularly, looked at these scripts. Kandinsky — you can see this in his work. Also, one of my first memories is of the museum in Baghdad—we were allowed into the storage area because one of my teachers in school was married to an archaeologist. It was an incredible experience to see these thousands of glass vitrines, and literally millions of seals — long ones, short ones, Sumerian, Babylonian treasures. Upstairs was modest, but the basement and the storage area were amazing.

KS The distinctions between furniture, design, art, fashion, and architecture are blurring. Good thing? Bad thing?

ZH It's not a bad thing at all. Traditionally, there has always been an overlap at certain historical moments. The Bauhaus or the Arts and Crafts movement of the early 20th century are obvious examples. A lot of what we try to do is create an architecture that translates the intellectual into the sensual by experimenting with completely unexpected immersive environments. We often use smaller design projects to test out ideas, which later become incorporated in our building designs, and we are also working now on a series of projects that look at smaller environments within the whole — the kitchen we have designed for DuPont, for example. We are very concerned with making fluid spaces, where everything works together, both functionally and aesthetically, so the blurring of disciplines is good — it furthers that experiment, or goal.

KS Were you always into fashion from an early age?

ZH Yes.

KS Musicians reference art (Sonic Youth wrote an album about a Richard Prince painting); your works have been compared to Russian Constructivism. Do things like art and music truly influence your designs?

ZH You can't design — or exist, for that matter — in a vacuum, so of course. Malevich was an early influence as a representative of the modern avant-garde intersection between art and design. The liberation from given typologies and the conquest of the realm of freedom of creation offered by the world of abstract art was appealing.

KS Are you very mathematically inclined? Do you have to be to be an architect?

ZH I am. Mathematics and philosophy are very useful for architects, but not the way most believe them to be. I studied mathematics at university in Beirut before going to the Architectural Association, so yes, I have a certain level of knowledge. I think it is important for architects to have these skills. Obviously, buildings would not be built without engineers. Architects need them. But by the same token you can't just hand a sketch to an engineer and expect that they'll run off and build it. You need to know what you're doing structurally and technically in order to design any building. Maybe not always the small details, but the bigger picture.

KS You exude a Nietzschean sense of self-determination. Were you always so self-assured?

ZH Yes.

KS Is there a place for humor in architecture?

ZH Yes.

KS Could you live anywhere besides London?

ZH Yes.

KS Any thoughts on London's mayor, Ken Livingstone?

ZH No.

KS What do you hate about London?

ZH London is still too conservative in its architecture. There is also too much of a brotherhood in almost every aspect of the city. But it also has been my home for over 30 years, and I have no plans to change that.

KS You have designed shoes, are working on a handbag, have done tea sets, furniture, kitchens, etc. Is there a hierarchy of importance for you with regard to the disparate design works you are presently undertaking?

ZH The idea for a building or an object can be just as immediate as each other, but there is a huge difference in the process that follows. The satisfaction of design is that the production process between idea and result is so quick and uncomplicated compared to a building. In terms of form, though, design and architecture interest me equally — there is a useful dialogue between

the two. You might say that design objects are fragments of what could occur in architecture.

KS Black and white have figured prominently in your design work and dressing mode. Is there a wider role for color in your present or future work?

ZH Of course.

KS Is black your favorite color? I know that sounds asinine but it's still interesting!

ZH Clear, or transparent, is my favorite — it's not really a color, but then, neither is black.

KS You have crashed through the cement ceiling becoming the very first internationally acclaimed female architect. Do buildings reflect gender in any discernable capacity?

ZH I don't think so.

KS This interview is in PIN-UP, so I will briefly touch upon issues of sexuality: can buildings contain some notion of sexuality within the design (other than Norman's pickle)?

ZH What?

VENICE

REM KOOLHAAS

Interview by Francesco Vezzoli

In the world of architecture, Rem Koolhaas is as close as there is to a household name. Since co-founding the architecture firm OMA, in 1975 the former scriptwriter and journalist has left his mark on virtually every aspect of architectural discourse. His books and research tomes are staples at architecture schools around the world, and OMA's designs have repeatedly challenged established architectural archetypes. Sharp-witted and possessed of an almost encyclopedic knowledge, he is in high demand as a speaker, drawing crowds more akin to those of rock concerts than university lectures. So who better to go *mano a mano* with architecture's rebel superstar than Francesco Vezzoli, the 40-something Italian artist who has extensively investigated the world's collective (and his very personal) fascination with celebrity, in all sorts of media, including film, painting, photography, and even needlepoint. Vezzoli and Koolhaas have known each other for years, sharing close mutual friends in the fashion designer Miuccia Prada and the late Herbert Muschamp, architecture critic of *The New York Times*. But it wasn't until PIN-UP invited them for an early morning breakfast in Venice that they found time to have a more personal one-on-one. On a quiet terrace overlooking the Grand Canal, Koolhaas and Vezzoli took a break from the hustle and bustle of the Art Biennale to talk about the nature of friendship, different layers of judgment, and the importance of passing on knowledge to new generations.

Francesco Vezzoli Herbert would have loved to know we're having this conversation in Venice. It was his favorite place.

Rem Koolhaas However, the city is very different now from when Herbert was here...

FV Yes, but he would have loved anything that put Venice back on the map. I guess Venice was his idea of multiculturalism. Like at the moment, during the Biennale.

RK Our relationship was complicated: since he was a critic and I'm an architect, our friendship was never official, it was always something in between. Instead, you had a kind of more complete friendship with him.

FV It's true. But Herbert had a larger-than-life personality. I always feared and suffered his intellectual judgment. Had he disapproved of somebody I'd had dinner with, he wouldn't have talked to me for two or three months...

RK Have you always been attracted by these extreme personalities?

FV I guess so. I think it comes from my childhood. All my parents' friends were serious academics and professors and, at their own small provincial scale, they never took my creativity as a child seriously at first, and then my teenage desires of escaping and finding my own way.

RK So you were looking for new parents who would approve of you?

FV Yes, I think that created in me the need to seduce and conquer the complicity of people who belong to older generations.

RK Is it the same now or has it changed over the years?

FV Recently, I must admit I am exhausting this kind of desire. I'm starting to feel that I have already met all the important people of the older generations who were really significant for my range of ambitions. I've collaborated with great thinkers like Gore Vidal, the most glamorous icons of the past like Helmut Berger and Marisa Berenson, the most renowned movie directors like Lina Wertmüller and Roman Polanski...

RK Is there someone you haven't met yet?

FV Actually, I've never had the occasion to know Pedro Almodóvar, who is probably my favorite living director. But I don't want to spoil the pleasure of watching his movies with innocent eyes.

RK What is your relationship with younger generations?

FV Well, recently I've made a point of only hanging out with people who are at least ten to 15 years younger than me. In a way, I learnt this from Herbert as well. And I guess he got that from a wide range of people from his past, like Andy Warhol or Diana Vreeland.

RK There is one thing in which my and Herbert's generation was very lucky:

we've never been obsessed with what people thought of us. We didn't feel that anyone was judging us like our parents. We didn't live our youth with that kind of pressure, fearing the parental judgment.

FV Is it because you are the generation that for the first time went either politely, or aggressively, against the rules of your fathers?

RK From my experience, it was just because I was very independent from the beginning. But for my generation, it probably came from before. We were born close to the war, and after we lived in a period of anarchy, when even parents weren't really interested in judging. They were all drowned in a very unstable environment, living through incredibly radical innovations. The opinions were different and ever changing.

FV In my country that was even more evident. Italy was coming from fascism when almost everyone was somehow linked to that dark power. So, for the next generation, that of my parents, it was easy and inevitable to go against their fathers. Whereas the kids of my generation have generally never thought of fighting them. On the contrary, looking at the city where I was born, most of my schoolmates decided to follow in their parents' steps, doing the same job, having very bourgeois marriages...

RK Maybe somehow that is the ironical effect of forgetting history and all the differences between generations...

FV In my experience the generation after mine seems to be uninterested in the judgment of those before them. They have almost no sense of respect or fear for the older generations, their achievements, or their power. For me, it's a very awkward attitude as I was educated to look up to the past, to listen to and learn from people who are more experienced than me.

RK Don't you think your attitude of respect could be a sort of tool? A way to know them to the point you can undermine their power and put it behind you?

FV Well, I think it's more of a research method. As a child, I wanted to be a journalist. Somehow I have fulfilled that aspiration, as that has been the nature of my work as an artist for a long while; sometimes I feel as if my older works were just glossy profiles of people I have deeply admired...

RK There's clearly more than that. In your work you openly over-invest in taking things seriously, to the point where it almost becomes a sort of criticism. It makes you really realize where the strengths are and especially where the weaknesses lie.

FV Well, I can't say I've found out what your weaknesses are yet! I have never seen you betray yourself. And Herbert always spoke greatly of you. That's the only problem I have with younger generations: that I don't see anyone being as courageous or radical as people like you, or Herbert, or, talking about fashion, Miuccia.

RK Well, it's not that true. Architects work with younger generations. In my

office there are a lot of incredibly young people. So, if you look at what we are doing, it's very difficult to say which generation is talking. It's not purely my voice, it's more of an orchestration.

FV I understand, but what I was trying to say is that when I see a young voice emerging, I notice, most times, there is a tendency towards reactionary concepts. And that involves many fields, like fashion and art as well.

RK I think this is probably due to the times we're living in more than to the younger generation per se. This is not exactly a time that encourages confidence or challenges. There is very little appetite in the world for courageous ideas. Almost none, I would say.

FV Somehow I'm more forgiving about an architect's lack of courage, since he has to deal with such a broad range of people from politics and public administrations, both of which are notoriously unsophisticated. On the contrary, I don't justify young artists for their lack of edge. They should keep up with a past when artists were really wild.

RK I don't think it's only a matter of courage. The current political situation is so bad that there is not even the possibility of perceiving something as courageous. So there is no difference anymore.

FV Do you think this applies to any field of creativity?

RK I'm afraid so. Generally, there is no sophisticated perception or layered system of judgment.

FV Don't you think that this has to do with the younger generation's serene obliviousness to the past and its weight?

RK No, mainly because they aren't taking decisions and making the difference yet. At the moment, in every country, on every continent, the power is in the hands of older demographics. In America, the culture world is represented by people in their 70s and 80s; in Europe, it's about people in their mid 40s and mid 50s; in Asia, people between 25 and 35. So I cannot say that younger generations in their obliviousness are responsible for this kind of situation. However, I agree that the new voices appearing on the horizon are not manifesting a critical challenge.

FV I strongly feel this lack of edge especially in the generation of 30-year-olds, above all in fashion and art. No bravery, or vanguardism, or consciousness of the past.

RK Could this be a deliberate choice?

FV I think they're simply like that. I noticed that my young friends look at art mostly through Google: an endless flow of images, without any critical hierarchy. It goes back to what we were talking about at the beginning of this conversation, the meaning of belonging to a generation which usually keeps an eye on the past. I always think, "What would the people who I look

up to say about my work? What would Herbert say?" It seems there are a lot of people who don't worry too much.

RK It's just that we always put ourselves in a historical perspective with regard to our profession, while younger generations don't do that at all.

FV Have you ever asked yourself, while you were working, "What would Herbert think?"

RK No. At least not while he was alive.

through the book like you're doing now; you're flipping the pages without looking! To answer your question, it's right here in your hands! You don't realize what you're seeing. There are thousands of books available for young architects today that have important stories from the past for them. Benedikt Taschen said in the essay he did for this monograph, he made a statement... Here, open that book, look at the index...

FH Here it is, page 30: "The Living Memory of Modernism."

JS Yes, exactly, that is what he says in the preface, that through these books young architects can learn what was done before them, what they can gain by understanding what happened before they were born...

At the end of our conversation, he showed me photos he had taken throughout the years. We lingered on one in particular, a photo taken from a neighboring roof looking into the large windows of a modern high-ceilinged living room below, with fireplace aglow. He realized that this was the "Santa Claus" view of the house — this really got him excited. He said that he had looked at this photo hundreds of times and never thought of this before. He got out a pen and paper and made a note of the page number to have an assistant make a slide of this image for his next lecture. He wanted to say to any children that might be in the audience, "Hey kids, this is Santa Claus's view when he parks his deer on the roof, and gets ready to go down the chimney to deliver the presents." Throughout my three-hour visit, this was probably the most animated I had seen him.

LOS ANGELES

HEDI SLIMANE

Interview by Pierre Alexandre de Looz

An elected son among chieftains like Lagerfeld and Saint-Laurent, Hedi Slimane is nonetheless something of a lone ranger. With a talent as natural and crisp as grass off the plains, he charted an unconventional trail all the way to the helm of Dior Homme, unfurling a slender trademark look with sharp-shooter precision that included everything from suits and cosmetics to furniture and interiors. It was Ziggy Stardust at the Bauhaus; Rimbaud in black-tie; his native Paris resurrected in smoked glass and fluorescents — and it captured the zeitgeist of most of the noughties. There was much for the design world to envy and, most importantly, Slimane won the heart of fashion. Then, three years ago, he rode off into the sunset, or the next best thing, starting a new chapter just off Sunset Boulevard, CA, in a Modernist Beverly Hills rancho. For Slimane, who has made a career out of elegant ambiguity — dressing cowboys as Indians as it were — Los Angeles is less home than an occasional perch for his poetic verve, roving eye, and, as PIN-UP learned, burgeoning car collection. He continues to translate his vision through an online diary, curatorial projects, and photographic essays. For PIN-UP, Slimane reveals the details of his pool policies, his picks of the L.A. art scene, and why he may never renovate another home.

- Pierre Alexandre de Loos** After living and working in Paris all your life, was it an aggressive move on your part to relocate to L.A.?
- Hedi Slimane** This was not really a move, technically. Spending more time here this year came naturally. Besides, I always wanted to have a house in Los Angeles, and always had a feeling for it. Unfortunately, I'm not in Los Angeles that often, to say the least — it's more like a sort of occasional retreat.
- PAdL** What kind of freedom can you find in L.A.? How does the city compare to Paris, New York, or Berlin, where you've also spent a lot of time?
- HS** In no way can it be compared to any urban circuit. L.A. is like an ethereal, mythical space, overwhelming nature all around, threatening and inviting at the same time. Space is obviously freedom — being remote, as opposed to isolated, is also a relief.
- PAdL** Do the city's architecture and spaces affect you?
- HS** They totally affect you, as well as the absence of architecture, the chaos in absurd juxtaposition, the linear, reduced, sometimes abstract feel, the cardboard nothinghouses, the décor of it all, elongated palm trees in shadow, all shining in the sun.
- PAdL** How has L.A. informed or changed you or your work? Is it easier for you to work here?
- HS** I can work anywhere, but when I can, I love working in Los Angeles because I feel appeased and focused, outside any distraction, or any disturbing environment. I don't know if it does or did change anything really. It just makes what I do quieter, gives a distance, or implies some sort of dissociation.
- PAdL** In your work as a designer, and now as a photographer, you're mostly known for black and white, and gradations of gray. Has the palette of your new hometown changed your idea of, and approach to, color?
- HS** Not really. Black and white is strictly the expression of light and shadow. California light and sun end up readable for me, unmistakably, in black and white, as others may perceive them in color. My pictures are lit differently, and of course the subject reflects the specificity of it all.
- PAdL** Is art more powerful in L.A. than in New York or Paris?
- HS** There's an interesting, and strong, historical scene here, beside New York. Paris, I'm afraid, lost it for too long, and is certainly irrelevant internationally, with the exception of a few renowned galleries.
- PAdL** Do you have a favorite museum in L.A.? Do you have a favorite artist?
- HS** I'm not too fond of the museums here, although there's a group of great

new curators now, but I do like the galleries, and both the historical and the emerging art scene, which is very strong and vibrant. I always felt for John McCracken, and I follow most of the new generation. I'm currently curating a show about California called "California Dreamin' — Myths and Legends of Los Angeles," to be held at my gallery, Almine Rech, in Paris in February 2011. The show will be about a reduced iconic representation of L.A., and will feature works by Ed Ruscha, Chris Burden, Raymond Pettibon, hopefully Mike Kelley, Jim Shaw, but also younger artists, such as Sterling Ruby, Aaron Young, Joel Morrison, and Patrick Hill, among others.

PAdL Two of the most important things in L.A. are cars and houses. Where and how do you live? What is your vehicle of choice?

HS I live in the only area I would ever consider, my truly favorite by far, which is the Trousdale Estate, a protected early-60s neighborhood in Beverly Hills, just off Sunset, hidden just behind the last of the Hollywood Hills. The house is a classic Beverly Hills mid-century-Modern glasshouse, built by Southern architect Rex Lotery in 1962. It is very architectural, but somehow has a certain quality to it that I always appreciate in West Side houses. As for cars, I can only drive classic cars, since I still don't get contemporary testosterone-overweight car design at all, destroyed by software applications. So I drive very archaic vintage Rolls Royces.

PAdL What do you listen to when you drive?

HS Oh it's quite eclectic, from old Stones or Bowie to classic Soul from the 60s, to current English Rock. Sunday early morning, when the streets are empty, and the air is still fresh from the night, might be the most appropriate time to play all-time favorite tunes.

PAdL What is your favorite room in your house? What do you do there?

HS The T.V. room — because I'm obsessed with the T.V. application from Netflix, by far my favorite website in the world. Watching movies with my friends is the most comforting thing for me.

PAdL What's the best thing about having a pool and a garage?

HS I have to admit that I don't use my pool nearly as much as my friends do, since I'm always working on something. I do like the garage a lot, though. But I still need more space, and more cars. In fact, cars are the only things I would really like to collect.

PAdL Do you enjoy having guests?

HS I usually don't, but in Los Angeles I do. The house is really quiet and peaceful. And has beautiful trees.

PAdL Did you remodel your house after buying it?

HS I heavily remodeled it — I reduced it to its purest, plainest expression, trying to bring it back to a "silent," mid-century-Modern, untouched, vintage state.

I also landscaped the whole thing, picking up each plant, over many trips to L.A., in a dozen nurseries around the city. The remodeling was a total nightmare, and I will never do it again in California. I am traumatized by it, literally. I strangely had the worst experiences with it, dealing with the worst people in the construction world. It was all quite unnecessary, too. The house, though, is the only house I could have bought. It was as if it had chosen me. I redesigned it in 3D prior to the remodeling, and it now has integrity again, as a pure and classic 60s Trousdale house. It has already aged and faded very nicely. I also wanted to discover an architect I didn't know through this project — the last thing I wanted was a generic coffee-table-book signature house. Rex Lotery only built a few houses, and it's pretty rare to see one on the market. I found out that for a while he was associated with the architect Ray Kappe. I always wanted to contact him about it, but I haven't gotten around to it yet. I don't collect really, but I did give it a European Bauhaus/De Stijl feel, which is not exactly the local taste, I guess.

PAdL Back in 2007, you designed a line of furniture. Would you consider going further into interior design, decoration, or architecture?

HS I always did these things quite naturally, as I was designing all the stores for Dior Homme when I was there, but also all the cosmetics corners and displays. Design for me is in fact a holistic matter, 360 degrees.

PAdL Should architecture be vulnerable?

HS It is by nature, but Los Angeles architecture is far too vulnerable, and left unprotected. The city of Beverly Hills, for instance, has many building-code rules, as they should, but they completely lack a committee that protects classic architecture with respect to the original feel when remodeling is done. I'm quite concerned as to what would have become of this house if I hadn't bought it. And I tried my best to restore it, respectfully, to its original state. I don't understand why California in general doesn't protect its history, and in particular the unique quality of its architecture, which is so renowned and revered around the world.

PAdL Do you have a favorite architect, designer, style, or period?

HS Mies van der Rohe, I guess — and obviously the early ages of Modernism, the Bauhaus school, and its descendant in post-war Germany, the Ulm School of Design. On a different note, I'm also fond of the extreme Classicism of the French 18th century. Beyond my personal taste, I'm always responsive to each city's respective architectural legacy.

PAdL Are quintessential cities like New York and Paris over?

HS Any city goes through cycles, both creatively and culturally. New York or Paris will have better times again in the future.

PAdL Does L.A. have a gender? A smell?

L O N D O N

BETHAN LAURA WOOD

Interview by Caroline Roux

She's only five feet 1¾ inches tall, and always wears flats, but Bethan Laura Wood stands out in any crowd. With her flamboyant vintage outfits — colorful layered 1970s caftans with Peruvian-printed scarves, oversize capes, novelty hats, and lots and lots of jewelry that she either buys at flea markets or makes herself — and luminous makeup (including a glistening pink dot on each cheek) she appears like the love child of Zandra Rhodes and Ettore Sottsass. But in 2012 the 20-something Royal College of Art graduate was also one of the youngest furniture designers ever to be granted a show at the prestigious Nilufar Gallery in Milan, alongside masters such as Andrea Branzi and Jurgen Bey. Much like her wardrobe choices, Bethan's designs show an obsession with detail and accumulation. Her new multi-component lights made out of super-light Pyrex, wooden cabinet surfaces exquisitely decorated with laminate marquetry composites, to foldable tables all combine a modern aesthetic with an old-fashioned appreciation for craftsmanship. Her studio in Homerton, which she shares with three traditional cabinet makers, is in full production for the pieces that will soon be shipped to Milan, so she invites me for tea at her home in East London, a magic treasure trove of clothing, vintage furniture, patchwork covers, and random objects.

Caroline Roux That's quite the nice bike you have there. Where did you find it?

Bethan Laura Wood Oh, my baby Penny Farthing. I got that for my 25th birthday I think, or 26th.

CR Do you ever ride it?

BLW I do! It's very slow, though. I've cycled to Soho before but I don't think I'll do that again. I do like the rhythm of it, so if I'm just trying to relax or hang out, it stops me from speeding everywhere too fast.

CR It's got quite beautiful lights, too.

BLW That's why I bought it.

CR You bought it for yourself for your birthday?

BLW Yeah, that was my excuse — and how I could afford to buy it! [Laughs.]

CR How much was it?

BLW Ooh, a lady never tells these things...

CR It's your age you're not meant to tell, not how much your bike cost!

BLW [Laughs.] Oh no, I can tell my age but I'll never say how much I pay for things.

CR So how old are you now?

BLW 27. I will be 28 on September 7.

CR You're 27 years old and you're about to show with one of the most important design galleries in Italy. How does that feel?

BLW Weird. And good. I'm very, very, very excited about it, and very nervous. When I met Nina Yashar, who runs Nilufar, we talked about laminate for two hours. It was amazing to find someone who wanted to do that — and who knew so much about it. She has an amazing eye, and such an amazing archive [which includes several thousand 20th-century pieces in various reserves around Milan]. Now I can go to the gallery and the reserves and touch lots of pretty things and not be told off because I look a bit strange and I'm not buying them.

CR Since you mention it, let's talk about the look, Bethan. You really do love to dress up, don't you?

BLW [Laughs.] I think I started making a conscious effort around 13 or 14. I was never part of a clique at school and even my best friend left me for the cooler people. I was like, "If I'm not going to fit in, I'll give you a really good reason." It also didn't help that I took my GCSE art two years early [GCSEs are usually taken at 16] so I spent my lunchtimes alone doing charcoal sketches from Degas.

CR Do you ever not wear makeup?

BLW You can usually tell how stressed I am by the composure of my makeup. If I'm going out, or am at home having time for me, then I like to do it because it's what I like to look at. But I have learnt a little bit about the proper place for clothing restraint. If I'm busy and need to get to the workshop, I don't put silly things in my hair — I'd end up attached to a band saw and killing myself. The technicians at Brighton [where she did her B.A.] gave me a boiler suit because I'd come in a tutu, which isn't really the thing to wear to a metalwork induction. [Laughs.]

CR The first time I met you, when you were still a design student in Brighton, you were wearing an ankle-length dress with a belt somehow fastened around the calf area. I spent the whole time wondering how you'd be able to go up and down stairs. The next time, it was a shiny black-and-white striped Pierrot-ish garment with a ruffled collar. How would you describe your current look?

BLW It's very Russian doll: layer upon layer until you hardly see my head.

CR Very Viktor & Rolf.

BLW Yes. I love Viktor & Rolf.

CR Are you part of the artwork?

BLW I actually used to be very militant about the fact that the way I dress had very little to do with my work. But now that I've started doing this very patterned, very color-based work in laminates, I can't really deny the connection. I now even dress in my own work, with the fabrics that I design.

CR Would you gender your work? Do you think it's feminine?

BLW I'd like to say no, but I know that it is. I try quite hard to not let my work go too much one way or too much the other, but at the same time I am a woman, and there aren't so many of us out there in the design world, so it's important that my work reflects that on some levels. The most important part is that it's made by me, and that it has my mark.

CR You're having quite an Italian moment right now, aren't you? Even before your show with Nilufar in April, you spent a lot of time in Italy last year, working with artisans.

BLW Yes. First I was in Venice at the Fondazione Claudio Buziol, and then in Vicenza, where I worked with the famous glassblower Pietro Viero. I also worked with an incredible lacemaker in Venice. Her name is Lucia and she feels very, very, very strongly about her craft, and what constitutes lace and what doesn't. She's also very passionate, and she will shout at people, and she only ever works on things she likes, "Because it takes me so long to make it!", she'd say. I made these confetti pieces with her, based on the confetti that was everywhere during the couple of weeks before and after the *Carnevale*. I got obsessed with it — it's the most beautiful rubbish

PIN-UP Interviews

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