

Tuesday, March 22, 2011

Reinhold Martin, Director
Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture
Columbia University GSAPP
1172 Amsterdam Avenue MC0393
New York, NY 10027

Dear Mr. Martin,

We are pleased to have the opportunity to submit our work for consideration as team leaders in the upcoming exhibit and workshop, *Foreclosed: Rehousing the American Dream* at MoMA. Enclosed you will find a portfolio of select projects that we feel are representative of our combined political and material approaches to architecture, as well as a CV and list of the diverse and internationally recognized associated team members we propose.

As California-based architects, we are acutely aware of the recent housing crisis. *Newsweek* considered the Bay Area “ground zero” of the failed housing market, where housing prices soared and rapid foreclosures swept through surrounding Modesto, Merced, Bakersfield, Fresno, Visalia and Stockton (also known as the foreclosure capital of America). As practitioners and educators we have made it a priority to take on difficult and politically fractious issues through novel reformulations of the perceived problem. Our proposition for *The Bayline*, which sought to convert the eastern section of the San Francisco Bay Bridge into a park, also included housing for 5,000 occupants—thereby responding to the housing crisis by bridging two of California’s most unaffordable cities with diverse affordable housing options.

The Bayline, is exemplary of our conceptual approach to architecture—we radically reconsider existing conditions. Our work exposes abandoned, fallow and underutilized situations and spaces as public infrastructural building blocks, rich with latent potential. Instead of engaging in the conversation of when, how, or if, the bridge should be dismantled, *The Bayline* focuses on the great load bearing span as a yet undetermined scaffolding, primed to receive programs and amenities already in demand in the Bay region. The historic bridge structure emerges as a means to address the need for lower cost housing and density within the city as well as providing continuous bike connectivity within the larger region through the inclusion of bridge bike paths.

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This approach is also very evident in our proposal for the adaptive reuse of the security fence along the U.S./Mexico border, and in our stance towards rapid prototyping technologies. In each instance, the status quo is subverted in order to get at the un-obvious potential of the artifact or process. *Borderwall as Architecture* is not about immigration, national security, or if you agree or do not agree with the fence as a security infrastructure, but rather it focuses on establishing methods for divided communities to co-exist with a new *productive* public infrastructure that can itself provide opportunities for the space to re-knit after the fence comes down. Our hacking of rapid prototyping technology expands the use of these machines to make them more accessible, affordable and rich through the advent of alternative, long lasting materials, which have growing potential within a paradigm we understand as *mass contextualization*. Instead of resigning this powerful technology to simply prototyping, our practice has focused on manufacturing performance-based architectural components that are durable, cost effective and open-source.

If selected, we would have three clear approaches: to consider the spaces and physical/economic landscapes of foreclosure as a nexus that is pregnant with possibilities and to develop sustainable systems for food, energy, transportation and social infrastructure—four components critically missing from suburbia today. Our proposal would also envision the rapid manufacturing techniques we are developing as a scalable technology that could be deployed as the catalyst for the production of efficient and hyper-responsive solutions. We are one of the few young architecture offices in the country that effectively connects social issues and cutting edge digital processes with results that are haptic and entropic. We would continue this approach in the workshops and exhibition.

Sincerely,

Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello

cc. Barry Bergdoll, The Museum of Modern Art

PRODUCTION TEAM

Rael San Fratello Architects (team leaders)

Rael San Fratello Architects, established in 2002 by partners Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello, is an internationally recognized award-winning firm whose focus on emerging technologies and ecological design lies at the intersection of architecture, art, culture, and the environment. As practitioners and academics, we seek to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of ecological thinking through design and are committed to innovation through research, analysis and artistry. Rael San Fratello Architects are recognized for their commitment to the integration of digital practice with the social project.

Key personnel: Ronald Rael, Co-Principal
 Virginia San Fratello, Co-Principal
 Emily Licht, Associate
 Timothy Kim, Designer

David Fletcher Studio

Fletcher Studio is an innovative and award winning collaborative practice based in San Francisco and Los Angeles. The firm provides comprehensive professional services in Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, and Environmental Planning. The firm is committed to a collaborative and contextual approach to spatial design practice and to the planning of unique and sustainable landscapes, urban spaces, and living infrastructures. Design and planning solutions come from the interaction with the many people, processes, histories, policies, economies and ecologies that are specific to a place.

Founding Principal David Fletcher is an Urban Designer and Landscape Architect, professor, and writer. His work addresses process, void, symbiosis, alternative transportation networks, green infrastructure, and post-industrial urbanism.

Key personnel: David Fletcher, Principal
 Haley Waterson, Design Associate

Dr. Mark Ganter

Professor Mark Ganter is a mechanical engineer involved in applied computational geometry, solid modeling and computer graphics. His main research activities focus on application of computational techniques to engineering problems and artistic applications. Current work focuses on 3D volume (voxel) space representations, object segmentation (including biological), wavelets representations of volume data. Ganter has successfully developed several new materials and processes for 3D printing and 3D printing systems including ceramic and glass printing materials. His Solheim Rapid Prototyping Lab at the University of Washington will be a key production site of exhibition materials.

CONSULTANT TEAM

John Quigley

John Quigley is the I. Donald Turner Distinguished Professor of Business at the Haas School of Business, Chancellor's Professor of Economics in the economics department, professor of public policy at the Goldman School of Public Policy and director of the Berkeley Program on Housing and Urban Policy. Quigley is an expert on the integration of real estate, mortgage and financial markets; urban labor markets; housing; spatial economics and local public finance. He has served as vice president of the Association for Policy Analysis and Management and as president of the American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association.

Dr. Margaret Crawford

Margaret Crawford teaches courses in the history and theory of architecture, urbanism, and urban history as well as urban design and planning studios focusing on small-scale urbanity and postmodern urbanism. Her research focuses on the evolution, uses, and meanings of urban space. Her book, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns*, examines the rise and fall of professionally designed industrial environments. Crawford is also known for her work on Everyday Urbanism, a concept that encourages the close investigation and empathetic understanding of the specifics of daily life as the basis for urban theory and design. In 2005, Doug Kelbaugh characterized Everyday Urbanism as one of three contemporary paradigms of urbanism on the cutting edge of theoretical and professional activity.

Her interest in Los Angeles urbanism, led to the publication of *The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment and Daily Urban Life*, edited with transportation planner Martin Wachs. She has also published numerous articles on immigrant spatial practices, shopping malls, public space, and other issues in the American built environment.

Michael Pollan

Michael Pollan is the author, most recently, of "In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto." His previous book, "The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals", was named one of the ten best books of 2006 by the New York Times and the Washington Post. It also won the California Book Award, the Northern California Book Award, the James Beard Award for best food writing, and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. He is also the author of "The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World", "A Place of My Own", and "Second Nature". A contributing writer to the New York Times Magazine, Pollan is the recipient of numerous journalistic awards, including the James Beard Award for best magazine series in 2003 and the Reuters-I.U.C.N. 2000 Global Award for Environmental Journalism. His articles have been anthologized in Best American Science Writing, Best American Essays and the Norton Book of Nature Writing. Pollan served for many years as executive editor of Harper's Magazine and is now the Knight Professor of Science and Environmental Journalism at UC Berkeley.