

FORM

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TALENT

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Often we approach the idea of talent as a spontaneous manifestation, celebrating the “next big thing” as if they appeared out of thin air. Those who work hard to develop a practice know otherwise. Establishing one’s unique voice takes a cocktail of time, energy and, above all, inspiration. Too much of one and too little of another ingredient can leave one shaken with disbelief not stirred with emotion.



Alexi Drosu

In a time when the economy is still getting its groove back, talent becomes a commodity to employers and employees alike: talented employees get to keep their jobs and employers can choose the most talented from a surplus of candidates. In this issue’s “10 in 20” column (p. 16) we asked 10 well-known architects the question on everyone’s mind: how to weather the economic storm? Recent graduate students are finding it particularly humbling to enter the workforce during these times and offer a fresh perspective on the future of the profession in “Generation Next,” (p. 36). But who are the designers making their mark on architecture today? We polled more than 100 experts to whittle down the list to five, revealed in “5 to Watch,” (p. 30). Each designer brings their own distinctive sensibility to the trade but all have one trait in common: they have dedicated themselves to their practice through years of hard work and refinement.

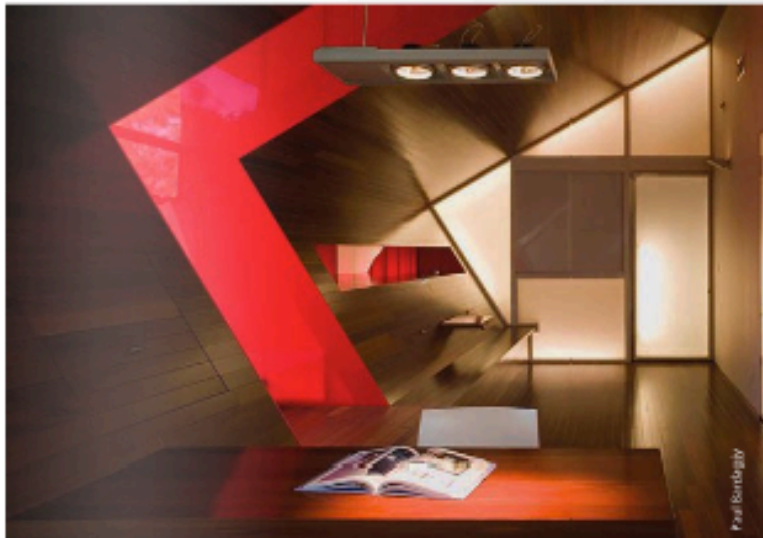


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5 TO WATCH

We canvassed more than 100 architects and industry experts, asking them to nominate firms that embodied emerging talent. After sifting through the candidates, we narrowed the list to five, examining their design philosophies and developing portfolios. Keep an eye on their work; you’re bound to hear these names repeated over the next decade.

BY INA DROSU



TOP AND RIGHT: Glass and reflection of light energize the inner core of Peninsula Residence on Lake Austin; BOTTOM LEFT: The Beverly Skyline Residence is a meditation in regenerative transformation and optimizes recycling, site integration and preservation.



BERCY CHEN STUDIO

Austin, TX and Taipei, Taiwan | www.bcarc.com
Principals: Thomas Bercy & Calvin Chen | Established: 2001

Multiple-award winners Thomas Bercy and Calvin Chen form a partnership that brings to the firm a crucible of historical, contextual, morphological, and technological concerns. Given their European and Asian backgrounds, and being situated in Texas, where Native and European cultures merge, Bercy believes “there is a real intelligence in vernacular solutions, so we study indigenous cultures in order to learn from their experiences.” Their frequent travels abroad preserve their rooted connection to the cultural fulcra that bear such sway on their work. The significant overlapping spheres of numerous cultures have fostered “a unique interest in celebrating craftsmanship. There is also an appreciation

for the layering of history, both physically and psychologically,” says Bercy. “Our collaboration is the collision of these diverse experiences applied first to Texas, and increasingly to North America and Mexico.”

For Bercy Chen sustainability and site sensitivity sport a capital “S”—and this, at no cost to a sophisticated aesthetic. According to Bercy, “we try to internalize this understanding about nature, climate and materials and to recast them in response to contemporary ways of living and building.” For example, the Gibbs Hollow Residence boasts a roof structure that parallels the vernal pools of central Texas geology; the collection of rainwater, amplified by photovoltaic and solar hot-

water panels, serves to power the heating and cooling system of the compound, which is outfitted with radiant-heat coils and a geothermal pump.

The complex remodel of the Peninsula residence on Lake Austin, likewise, makes ample use of passive light penetration through extensive glass and reflective surfaces, while featuring a roof garden, a solarium, and pools which transition the house to the lawn. “We employ our own construction crews,” says Bercy, “which has allowed us to take on increasingly complex tasks to the point where we are now designing and building our own glazing systems, green-roofs, water features and pools, photovoltaic arrays.”