

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

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CONSTRUCTION

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STEVEN HOLL

Lights up the skies
of Kansas City

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\$9.95US \$9.95CAN

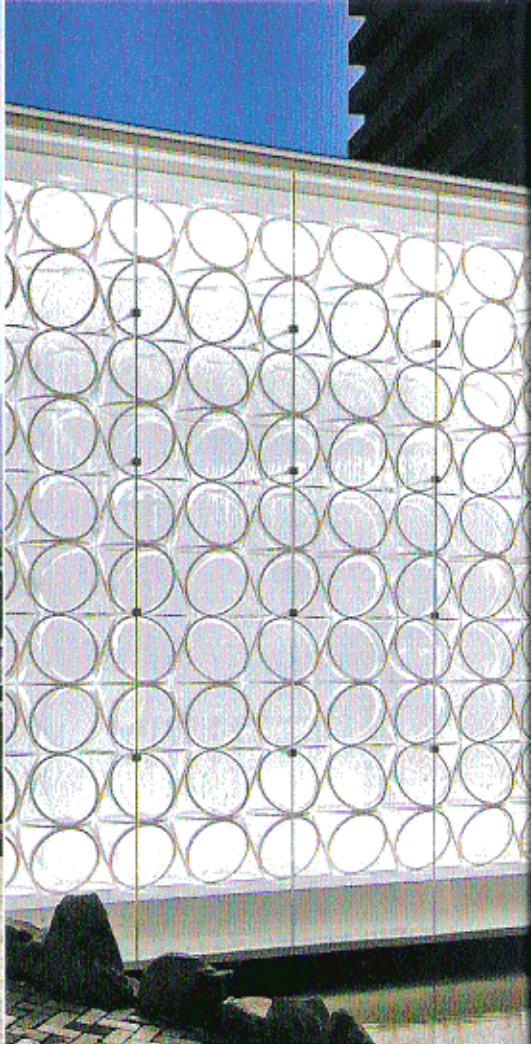
07



RESIDENTIAL SECTION:
Houses That Let the Outside In



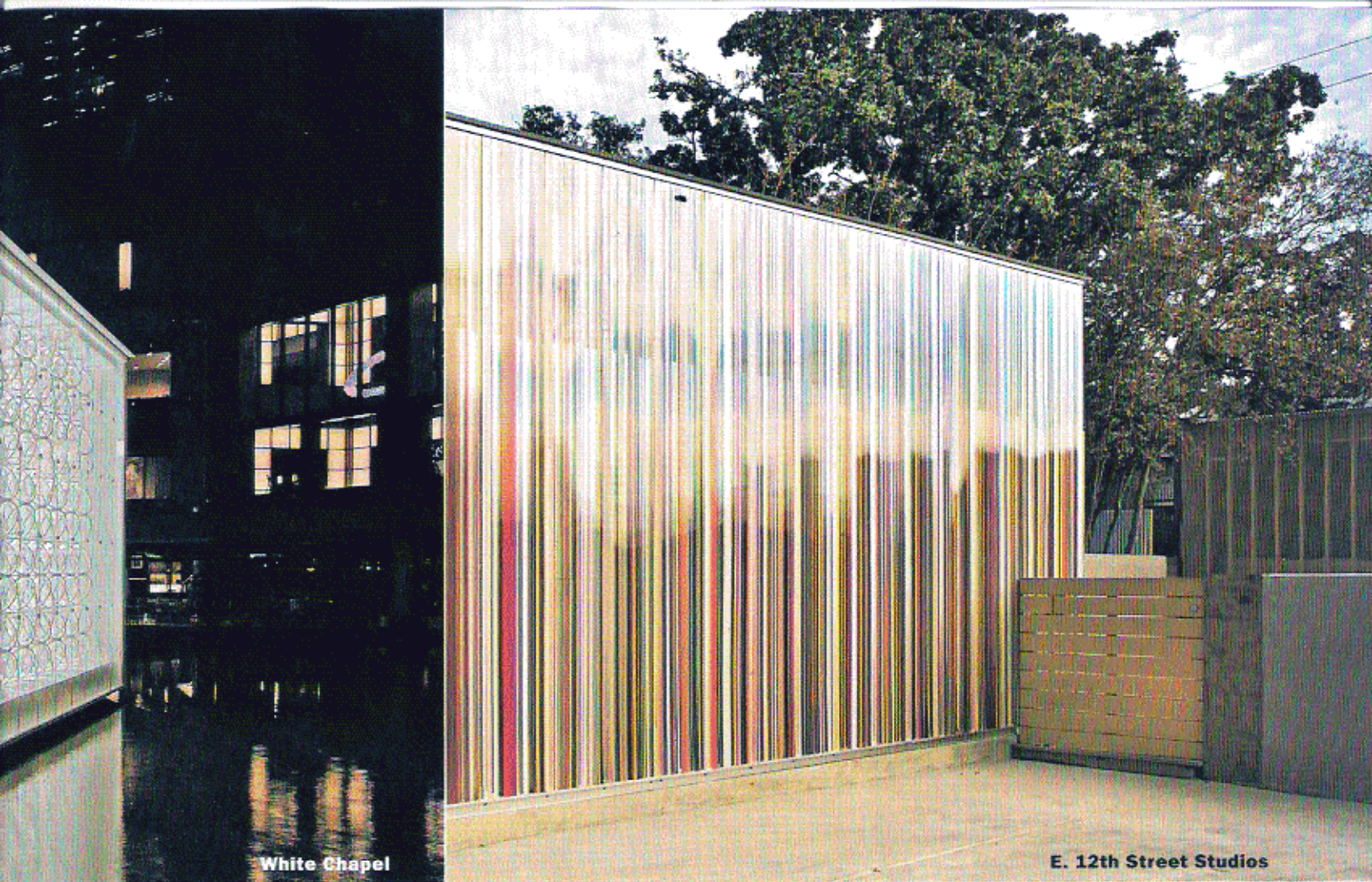
Sonoma Barn



In February, RECORD introduced a serial feature to focus on outstanding—and small—architectural projects [RECORD, February 2007, page 74]. Knowing that such noteworthy buildings may otherwise fail to attract widespread attention, we created a venue to regularly highlight just a few of these remarkable projects. With this installment, we present spaces designed for a broad diversity of users: California agricultural workers, Japanese newlyweds, and Texan architects and artists. The working barn in Sonoma County serves as a landmark for a sprawling 60-acre vineyard, and is an example of fine craftsmanship,

RECORD finds big beauty in three small projects

Made



White Chapel

E. 12th Street Studios

despite its utilitarian building type. The wedding chapel in Osaka elegantly marries ornament and structure with a porous wall made of rings. And in Austin, the collection of small buildings and landscapes made with inexpensive materials provides sustainable, innovative studio spaces for architects and artists.

The designs for each involve experiment and vision, but they are tempered with a careful and tasteful restraint. Trimming unnecessary excess, these buildings underscore the beauty of an architecture made to measure. *John Gendall*

to Measure

E. 12th Street Studios • Austin, Texas • Elizabeth Alford and Michael Young

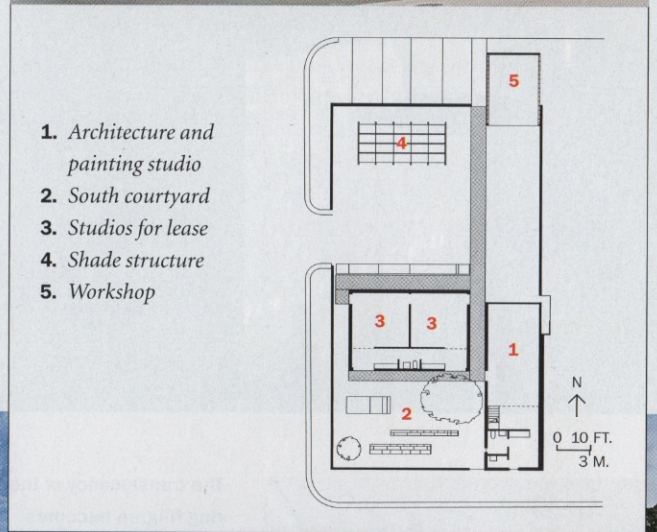
By Ingrid Spencer

At the time they moved from New York City to Austin, Elizabeth Alford and Michael Young wanted to set up a studio for his painting and their joint architecture firm. They longed for a loft to renovate, like the space they'd left behind in Manhattan's Tribeca neighborhood. "Those buildings just don't exist in Austin," says Alford. Undeterred, they searched and found a corner lot with 8,500 square feet of dilapidated buildings on Austin's ethnically diverse east side, an area that's becoming gentrified. Excited by the opportunity to create what they couldn't in New York—structures from the ground up and landscapes integral to the indoors—they designed a cluster of small buildings and courtyards for their needs, plus additional studios to lease. "We were interested in the identity and tactility of materials," says Alford, "in testing and developing large assemblies on-site before construction."

Concrete walls 5½ feet high wrap the lot's corner, enclosing 2,600 square feet of indoor space and 5,900 square feet outdoors, and opening to the street by a rolling slatted-wood door. The buildings include a 1,400-square-foot painting studio for Young with mezzanine space for the couple's firm, two 400-square-foot artists' studios for lease, a workshop, a shade structure with photovoltaic panels, and two courtyards with sustainable landscapes—all of which became a testing ground for assembling and detailing inexpensive materials for a cost less than \$200 per square foot. For Young's studio, built from

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Different colored sand poured in between polycarbonate sheets creates a vibrant, striped pattern on the studio's wall.



Each of the buildings opens onto one of the two sustainably designed courtyards.



The architects lifted the roof to create a large painting studio and a mezzanine office. Polycarbonate sheets bring in much light.

the remnants of a concrete-block building (previously housing a laundromat, guitar-maker's store, and contractor's shop), Alford and Young lifted and leveled the existing pitched-pine roof, creating clerestory windows and transforming a storage loft into Alford's office. The treated plywood walls have built-in, orange powder-coated steel bookshelves. For the studio's north wall, the couple sandwiched polycarbonate sheets over a structural stick frame, letting in diffuse light. Young, whose art often involves sand, created a striped pattern by filling the voids between the sheets with 1,000 pounds of colored sand. "It insulates, and we like the look," Young says, insisting that pouring the grains by hand into the narrow voids was not as time consuming as it sounds.

The two rental studios open to another sustainable courtyard on the southern side through large, rotating doors (below right). Custom steel planters with a variety of succulents, gravel, and ipé decking along the buildings' perimeter help define the landscape. The resulting effect is a peaceful desert garden—a kind of inverse oasis—in contrast to the unkempt greenery of neighboring yards. In the larger, north courtyard, the shading structure provides an outdoor workplace and a perfect party spot. "This effort has been a real building workshop for Michael and me," says Alford. "It's gratifying that the neighborhood has welcomed it." Next, the duo will develop a mixed-use live/work building on an adjacent property, allowing them to experiment further with materials, dynamic spaces, and sustainable landscapes. ■

