

# 08.11

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At Zaha Hadid Architects's Riverside Museum in Glasgow, racing bikes ride a track looping above the main hall.  
*Photography: Iwan Baan.*

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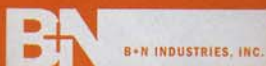


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## RIOS CLEMENTI HALE STUDIOS

"High Contrast," page 146

**PRINCIPAL:**

Mark Rios, FAIA.

**COMPLETED PROJECTS:**

California Endowment, Mark Taper Forum, and landscaping for the W Hollywood hotel, all in Los Angeles; Julius Shulman Institute at Woodbury University in Burbank, California.

**CURRENT PROJECTS:**

NBC Universal, Temple Emanuel, and Grand Avenue Civic Park, all in L.A.; a master plan for Orange County High School for the Arts in Santa Ana, California; landscaping for the Pete V. Domenici U.S. Courthouse in Albuquerque.

**HONORS:** AIA California Council Firm of the Year; AIA Los Angeles Chapter Building Team of the Year.

**COLLECTION:** Rios has amassed 30 pieces of Blenko glass.

**CULTIVATION:** He also cares for multiple "weird" plants.

639 North Larchmont Boulevard, Suite 100, Los Angeles, CA 90004; 323-785-1800; [rchstudios.com](http://rchstudios.com).



## VOELLMY SCHMIDLIN ARCHITEKTUR

"Shifting Gears," page 164

**PRINCIPAL:**

Lukas Voellmy.

**PRINCIPAL:**

Chasper Schmidlin.

**COMPLETED PROJECT:**

A house in Tschlin, Switzerland.

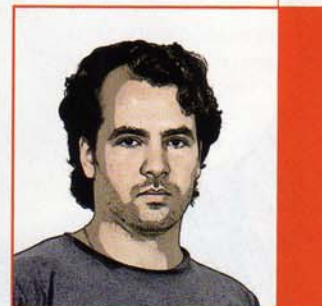
**CURRENT PROJECTS:**

A house in Tschlin; an apartment in S-chanf, Switzerland.

**AVANT-GARDE:** Voellmy scopes out the Art Basel fair's Art Unlimited section.

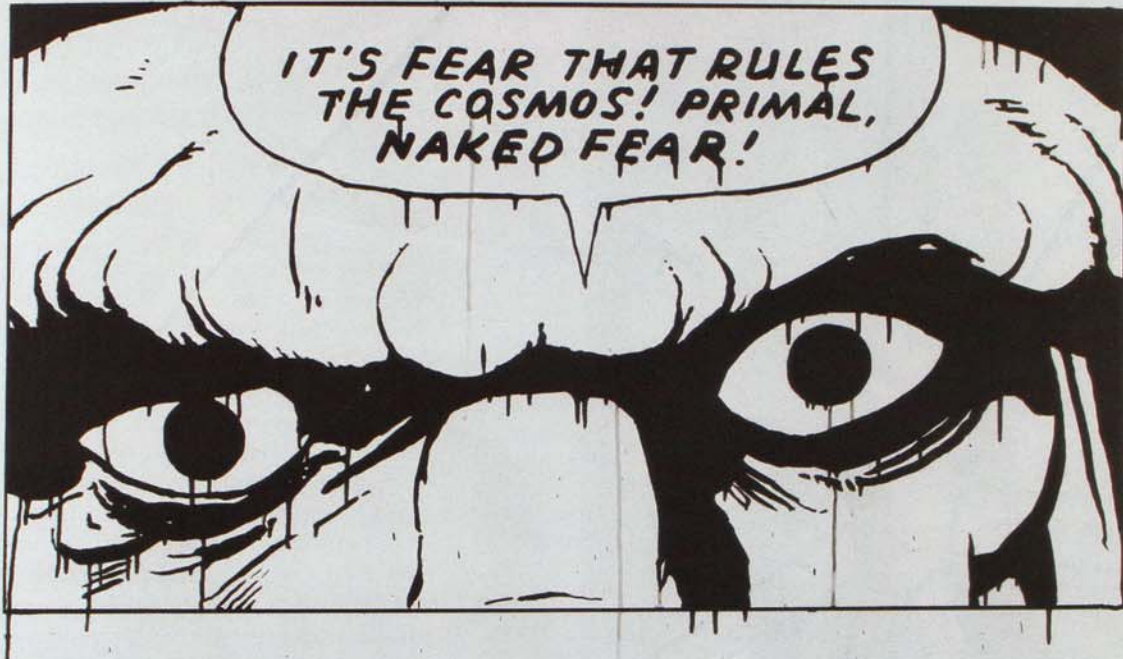
**OLD GUARD:** Schmidlin prefers the modern galleries near St. Moritz.

118 Zurlindenstrasse, 8003 Zurich, Switzerland; 41-43-268-44-05; [voellmyschmidlin.com](http://voellmyschmidlin.com).



# headliners





# high contrast

Mark Rios cast opposites in  
starring roles at Act 4  
Entertainment, Los Angeles

text: *edie cohen*  
photography: *art gray*





**A white-shoe lawyer**, then a venture capitalist, now a producer. That's the arc that David Johnson's career has followed. Add his title as cochairman of the board of trustees at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, to that résumé, and you've got one of the reasons he named his new production company Act 4 Entertainment. Not out to make blockbusters, he's a man with a mission. His goal is to create thoughtful, socially conscious film, television, and theater. "To spur people to action," he explains. His documentary *The People Speak*, for example, looks at the history of war, class, race, and women's rights in the U.S., as narrated by Matt Damon, Morgan Freeman, Marisa Tomei, and other A-listers. When Johnson bought a Victorian house in Santa Monica for Act 4's headquarters, he returned to the architect who had renovated his Brentwood home by Frank Lloyd Wright, Jr., a decade ago: Mark Rios of the do-it-all Rios Clementi Hale Studios.

One of Santa Monica's oldest buildings, the 1880's house came with a 1980's garage for a total of 4,250 square feet. Sure, the property needed work. A prior renovation had infused the interiors with faux Victoriana: dark wood, ersatz glass globes, and all. And the glorious garden—now ablaze with a composition of annuals in stripes that takes cues from color-field paintings, set behind a postcard-perfect white picket fence—started out as a parched lawn centering on an ungainly fountain. Still, the site was superlative when it came to real estate's irrefutable *location, location, location*. In this case, that meant across the street from the beach.

"Our job was to edit architecturally, to let the art take the lead," Rios starts off. "Because the place is so stripped-down, it becomes a mental escape." That journey begins with the uncharacteristic slate-blue exterior paint job. "A big move for the preservationists," he notes—not to mention a favorite photo op for tourists. But the real jolt occurs when the otherwise quaint shingles, porch, and turret give way to an interior that can be read only as contemporary, in several subtly different shades of gleaming white. Yes, there are period moldings, spandrels, and screens. Handled by Rios, however, they seem sleek not fussy. Fireplaces look all-but-new, too, thanks to their white glass-lined fireboxes and white lacquer.

He made almost no changes to floor plans. That's because spatial arrangements suited Act 4's needs. The entry hall offers a seating alcove in lieu of a corporate reception area. Next up is a front conference room, where the blue underside ➤

**Previous spread, left:** For the front garden at Act 4 Entertainment in Los Angeles, Rios Clementi Hale Studios planted zinnias, celosias, petunias, and lobelias.

**Previous spread, right:** Gardar Einarsson's *Fear*, an acrylic on canvas, hangs in the kitchen.

**Opposite:** The acrylics on canvas of Dave Muller's *The New York Times Sunday, October 2, 2005 Arts & Leisure Star join an ink drawing with foil*, Monica Bonvicini's *Malcontent*, in the garage's office area. Photography: Dominique Vorillon.

**Top:** Birgir Andr sson's *Black and White Classics, The End*, in oil on canvas, is mounted by the stairs up to the founder's office. **Bottom:** The house dates to the 1880's.





**Top:** On the garage, satin-vinyl letters compose Lawrence Wiener's All the Above. **Bottom, from left:** Josh Smith's mixed-media work overlooks chairs by Charles and Ray Eames and a table by Oscar and Gabriele Buratti in the conference room. The founder's office features a sofa by Antonio Citterio, a chair by Arne Jacobsen, and a table by Ricardo Bello Dias.

**Opposite:** Composition Suite, three ink drawings by Paul Sietsema, and Untitled (Target Areas), four ink-jet prints by Einarsson, are installed by the desk in the founder's office.



of the porch roof is visible through the windows, and Aluminum Group chairs by Charles and Ray Eames, covered in offbeat hot-pink leather as well as midnight blue and espresso, surround a Donald Judd-inspired table, its mirrored base almost dematerializing. In the lounge that follows, Rios specifically picked up on the mottled colors of a monumental Sterling Ruby painting, choosing a fuchsia ombré Missoni fabric to reinvent the 1960's-style chairs.

Otherwise, pieces from Johnson's collection can be easily switched in and out, so an upstairs office might feature an op art canvas with Mae West curves or something vaguely abstract-expressionist. Soon, we're noticing a black-and-white theme. It's both pervasive and intentional, according to Johnson. In the kitchen, the chiaroscuro extends from the art to the combination of the icy-white lacquered cabinetry and the charcoal-gray quartz-composite counters.

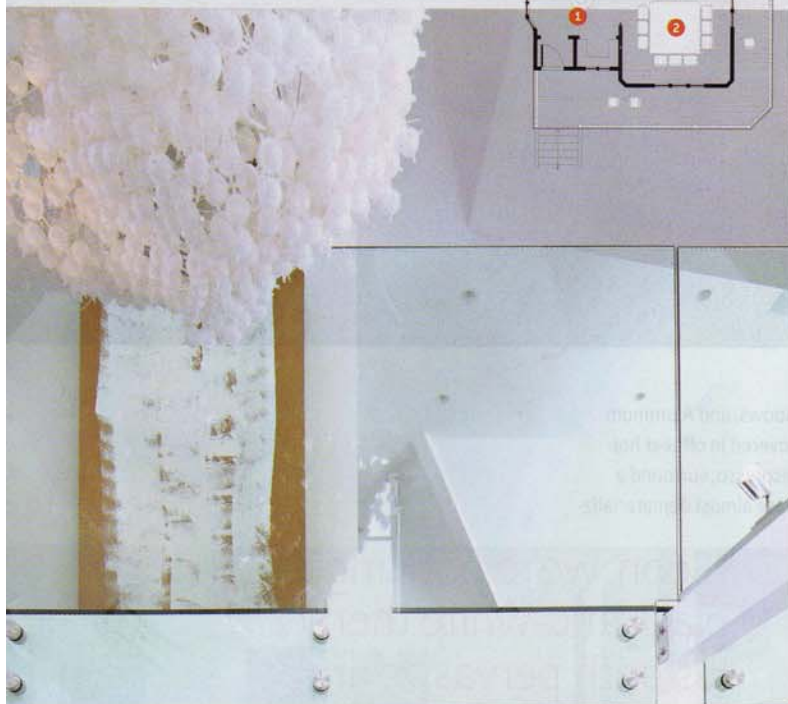
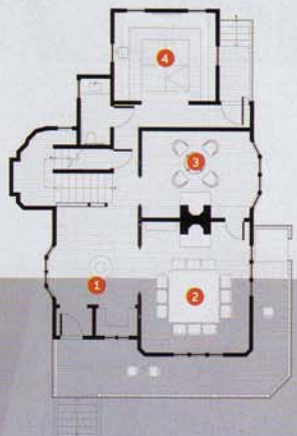
Johnson's office occupies the garage's mezzanine. "With light from the north, south, east, and west, it's comparable to the greatest rooms in the world," Rios says. He set it up as a contiguous work space and lounge. On one side, Eames chairs in pumpkin-colored leather surround a glass-topped table, used as a desk. The other side hosts a persimmon Antonio Citterio sofa and a deep-purple Arne Jacobsen chair. For a break from scripts or budgets, Johnson can stroll through his personal gallery—artworks, again black-and-white, include an unsettling quartet of ink-jet prints of two men and a nightstick. Or he can hang over the glass parapet and almost touch the most curious piece in the place. What looks like a cloud of Ping-Pong balls consists, in reality, of white plastic ➤

**"Soon, we're noticing a black-and-white theme. It's both pervasive and intentional"**



- 1 ENTRY
- 2 CONFERENCE ROOM
- 3 LOUNGE
- 4 KITCHEN
- 5 PANTRY

0 5 10 20



**Left:** A hallway separates the pantry in the garage from Tokyo, an oil on canvas by Wilhelm Sasnal.

**Opposite top, from left:** Mae West, Philippe Decrauzat's acrylic on canvas, in an office. An oil and acrylic on canvas by Blake Rayne. Tables by Marc Thorpe in the entry.

**Opposite center, from left:** Richard Schultz furniture on the courtyard's Carrara marble plinth. Karl Haendel's 4th Abstract Group of C-prints and pencil drawings. In-Coherent Extensive Diagrams Perturbations, Laris Cecchini's sculpture of plastic orbs and aluminum chairs suspended on steel wire in the garage. **Opposite bottom, from left:** Sterling Ruby's SP20, an acrylic on canvas, in the lounge; photography: Dominique Vorillon. An office's mixed-media Seditionaries No. 7 by Michael Wilkinson. A Rirkrit Tiravanija mirror piece in a bathroom.

orbs and six aluminum chairs suspended from the sloping ceiling. Directly below, facing staffers' simple white desks, is the runner-up for unusual, an asterisklike formation composed of seven slim paintings referencing the *New York Times* Sunday arts pages.

In the courtyard between the house and the garage, Rios's landscaping is an installation in its own right. He inserted a Carrara marble plinth over gravel and concrete, then

artfully arranged Richard Schultz furniture on top. A shallow pool, also marble-lined, "makes the water look really bright," Rios notes. Overlooking this scene is a site-specific work by Lawrence Weiner: the words *All the Above* emblazoned in bright red satin-vinyl letters on the slate-blue garage. The underlying meaning? Johnson smiles and says it's up for interpretation. With an *American Psycho* musical Broadway-bound, a spy thriller slated for a September release, and a TV series on the financial world in development, he's earned the right to be enigmatic. 

**PROJECT TEAM**

**JENNIFER SCHAB; MARK MONTONAGA; AIMEE LESS; DANIEL TORRES; SIOBHAN BURKE; BLAIR PETTIGREW; DAVID HEIKKA:** RIOS CLEMENTI HALE STUDIOS. **E2 LIGHTING DESIGN:** LIGHTING CONSULTANT. **REISS BROWN EKMEKJI:** STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. **CHARLES GEMEINER CABINETS:** WOODWORK. **GEMINI CONSTRUCTION:** STONEWORK. **HAROLD JONES LANDSCAPE:** LANDSCAPING CONTRACTOR. **HAMMER GROUP:** GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

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