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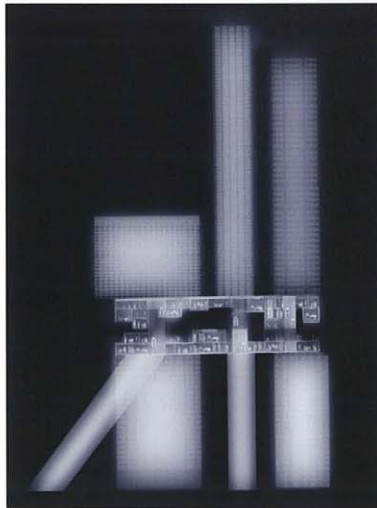
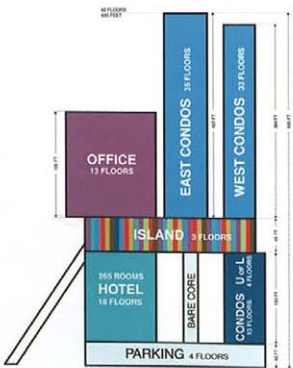


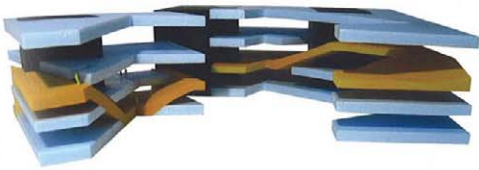
PALADIN

The work of Joshua Prince-Ramus and his firm, REX, cannot be separated from that of Rem Koolhaas and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). Prince-Ramus was a founding partner of OMA's New York office in 2001, and in 2006 he left to establish REX with architect Erez Ella, also formerly of OMA. In contrast to other architects like Winy Maas or Alejandro Zaera who cut their teeth at the Dutch OMA office to later follow independent careers, Prince-Ramus, as a partner in the US office, negotiated an agreement that guaranteed him credit for works completed at OMA like the Guggenheim Las Vegas or the Seattle Central Library, and received some in-house commissions such as the Wylly Theater in Dallas and Museum Plaza in Louisville, Kentucky.

The Pop imagery of the Guggenheim Las Vegas has clear references to Koolhaas's interest in Venturi, and the stealth aesthetic of the Seattle Central Library cannot be understood in isolation from OMA's Casa da Música or House Y2K. But despite the evident references to OMA, the sense of purpose and leadership strength of the office, which believes in collaborative work, contractual accountability, and performance-oriented design processes, signal that REX is distinguishing itself as a significant firm. This is already apparent in its pragmatic handling of its first independent commission, the Vakko Headquarters in Istanbul, where REX manages to extend OMA's hardcore realism in a business-oriented environment. Prince-Ramus is building up his profile, orchestrating the work of REX with his individual (re)presentation. Even though the firm still lacks a group of completed works that establishes an unmistakable identity, the charisma and drive of Prince-Ramus promise a prominent practice in the near future.

// Luis Fernández-Galiano



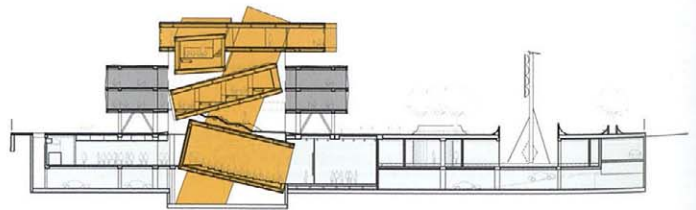
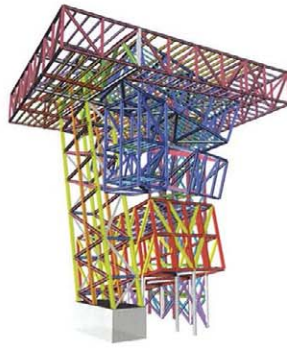


Museum Plaza, Louisville, Kentucky, USA, 2005–11. This 62-story skyscraper on the banks of the Ohio River contains a contemporary art institute, the University of Louisville's Master of Fine Arts program, a 250-room hotel, 98 luxury condominiums, 117 lofts, office space, restaurants, shops, parking for 800 cars, and a sculpture garden. An "island" that bridges the two towers twenty-four stories above ground level contains the public art institute, with the other programs distributed above and below.





Vakko Headquarters and Power Media Center, Istanbul, Turkey, 2007-9. Vakko, Turkey's preeminent fashion house, and its sister company, Power, commissioned REX to design their new headquarters using a preexisting, four-story concrete skeleton. The outer ring is clad in a thin sheath of self-supporting slumped glass panels that render traditional window frames unnecessary. Embraced by the ring is a cluster of steel volumes that house Vakko's large program of unconventional spaces, including offices, showrooms, conference rooms, an auditorium, television studios, radio production facilities, screening rooms, and a museum.



Dee and Charles Wylie Theater, Dallas Center for the Performing Arts, Dallas, Texas, USA, 2001-9. The Wylie Theater repositions traditional front-of-house and back-of-house functions below-house and above-house and, in the process, redefines the traditional theater. Exposed on all sides, the perimeter of the theater's chamber can directly engage the city around it. No longer shielded by transitional and technical zones—lobbies, ticket counters, and backstage facilities—theater and reality can mix when and where desired.

