

P. 126
Cheer Up

HAPPINESS IS CONTAGIOUS

P. 49
Top Gear

NEW GADGETS, TESTED+RATED

How **NETFLIX**
Invented the
Infinite Video
Universe

WIRED

sign of the times | oct. 2009

THE SMART

LIST 2009



WARNING!
**Dangerous
Ideas Ahead**

**CLONE HUMANS | PURGE THE PRISONS | ABOLISH THE NFL
CUT AFRICA LOOSE | FORGET PRIVACY and more**

PLUS Defense Secretary **ROBERT GATES** and His Battle to Remake the Pentagon



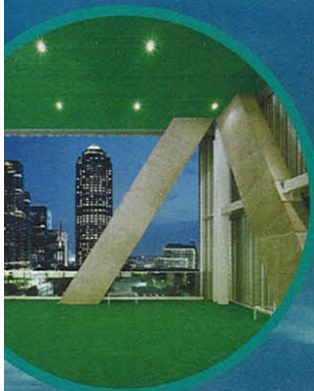
\$4.99 US | FOR

Performance Enhancement

A modular theater in downtown Dallas takes a flexible approach to staging plays.

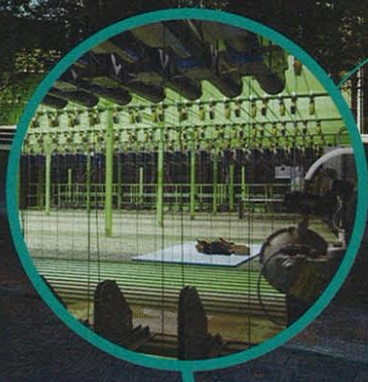
Aluminum Siding

The Wyly is sheathed in aluminum tubes whose cylindrical profiles deflect the infamous Dallas hail. For nicer weather, there's a partially enclosed deck with a killer view.



Adjustable Balconies

To accommodate different stage layouts, the balconies move up and down, hoisted by the same winches that raise and lower stadium scoreboards.



Underground Back Stage

Because a traditional back stage would interfere with the four-sided open plan of the performance space, engineers secreted all the standard theatrical machinery—and then some—belowdecks.

Magic Spelling

The new Nintendo DS title *Scribblenauts* packs a lot of innovation into an unassuming package. To solve puzzles,

players summon useful objects by typing or scribbling words on the touch-screen (spell out "ladder" and—poof!—a ladder appears). Sounds simplistic, right? Until you realize how vast the game's vocabulary is. "There are tens of thousands of objects—pretty much anything that's not copyrighted or vulgar," says Jeremiah Slaczka, creative director at game developer 5th Cell. "Forks, tables, hang gliders, night-vision goggles, tractor beams, pyromaniacs, the Grim Reaper..." Such intoxicating creative freedom leads players to dream up ever more convoluted and absurd ways to win. —Chris Baker

Type Your Way to Victory



The Objective

Scribblenauts offers missions—like getting a star out of a tree—that have a near-infinite array of solutions.



Jump Up to It

Type "bed" and a bed appears, allowing you to bounce to the star. But that's boring! Get more inventive.



Chop It Down

Spell "beaver" and a flat-tailed rodent gnaws at the tree. "Ax," "lumberjack," and "chain saw" also work.



Go Evel Knievel

If you can't reach the star with a ramp and a unicycle, don a stovepipe hat glued to an umbrella for extra lift.

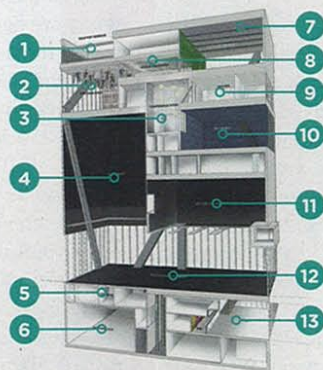


What Objective?

Screw the damn star. Make up your own objectives: Summon God and make Him battle longcats and ninjas.

The Dallas Arts District Theater was a magnificent piece of crap. Affectionately dubbed the Shed, the junky, corrugated-steel construction looked more warehouse than Koolhaus, but it was basic enough that wild-eyed visionaries would routinely rip out and rearrange seats to fit whatever the current show demanded. Then, in 2005, the Shed was torn down. ¶ Fortunately, its replacement, which hosts its first production in October, is a worthy successor. The Dee and Charles Wylie Theatre was designed by New York megafirm Rex to be an enormous Transformer that can suit almost any directorial whim. ¶ The seating, for example, shifts easily to accommodate changes in stage design: Movable balconies hang from the ceiling; cylindrical jacks can tilt and shift the downstairs chairs in response. ¶ The theater is also surrounded by floor-to-ceiling glass panels that pivot open for al fresco drama. Audiences can then wander in from all sides; the Dallas skyline can serve as a backdrop. It takes as little as 15 minutes to reconfigure the theater, and so far Rex has come up with eight variations. More are sure to come. The Shed lives on, in spirit. —Cliff Kuang

DESIGN



The Wylie Theatre

1. Rooftop terrace
2. Costume shop
3. Conference room
4. Fly tower
5. Back stage
6. Mechanicals
7. Outdoor terrace
8. Education center
9. Offices
10. Sky studio
11. Balcony fly space
12. Performance chamber
13. Lobby/bar

