



Renzo Piano World Tour 2019 [in progress]

Let's meet again in North America

Third year, third stage, third continent

The American adventure of the six lucky young architects who have been around the world for 35 days now, observing some of the best architecture ever created, has come to an end: more than 220 works visited, 26 of which by RPBW.

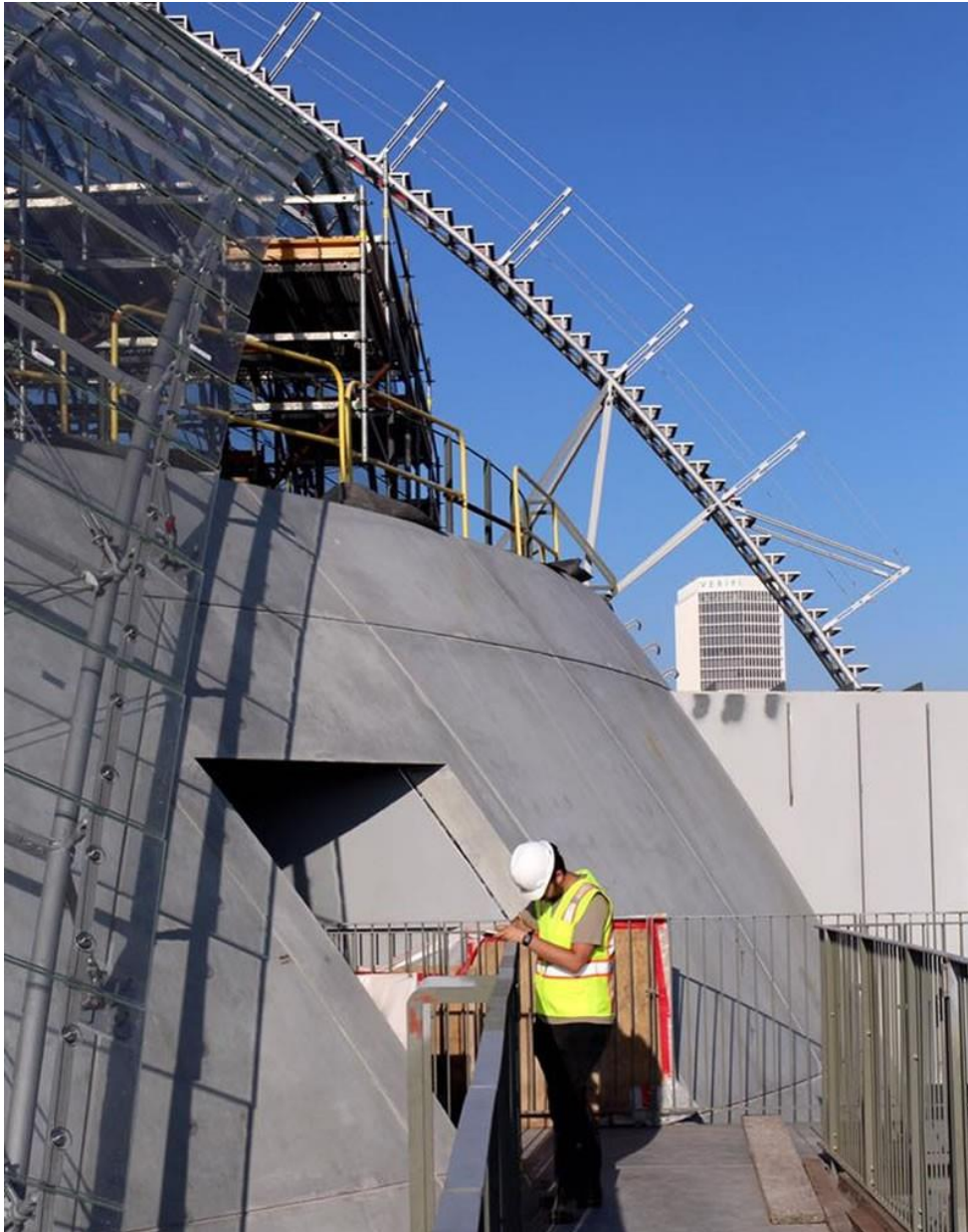
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After previous Asian experiences, respectively in Japan for one group and in Australia and New Caledonia for the other, the trip leads the youngsters to North America, as they continue, divided into the same formations as before. Group 1 - Valentina, Eirinaios and Paul Antoine - headed for San Francisco, Boston, Exeter and New Haven, while Group 2 - Andrea, Raúl, and Lukas—first went to Los Angeles and San Diego, then moved on to Texas, Houston, Fort Worth and finally Dallas.

The two groups spent the 23rd to the 34th day of their very dense itinerary in the USA, on a mile long walk mainly on the West Coast, which ended a few days ago with a reunion on the East Coast, in New York City. An exorbitant number of planes, internal flights, check ins, check outs and Moleskine notebooks full of sketches accompany them on their journey. Tiredness begins to set in, but the American dream is still the American dream!

LA - San Diego - LA

Welcome to Los Angeles! America's most non-city city welcomes the youngsters with its highways, palm trees and glittering architecture. The tour starts from a building—under construction—a symbol of the industry that has made this place the city we all know: the mecca of cinema. Andrea, Raúl, and Lukas visit the **AMMP - Academy Museum of Motion Pictures** – construction site, located directly next to the **LACMA**, also by RPBW. The project consists of an existing building dating back to 1838 to which the new Piano raised sphere is annexed: it houses two theatres, the largest of which is located in the centre of the sphere which is cut above and covered with a glass roof opening out to a view of the Hollywood hills.



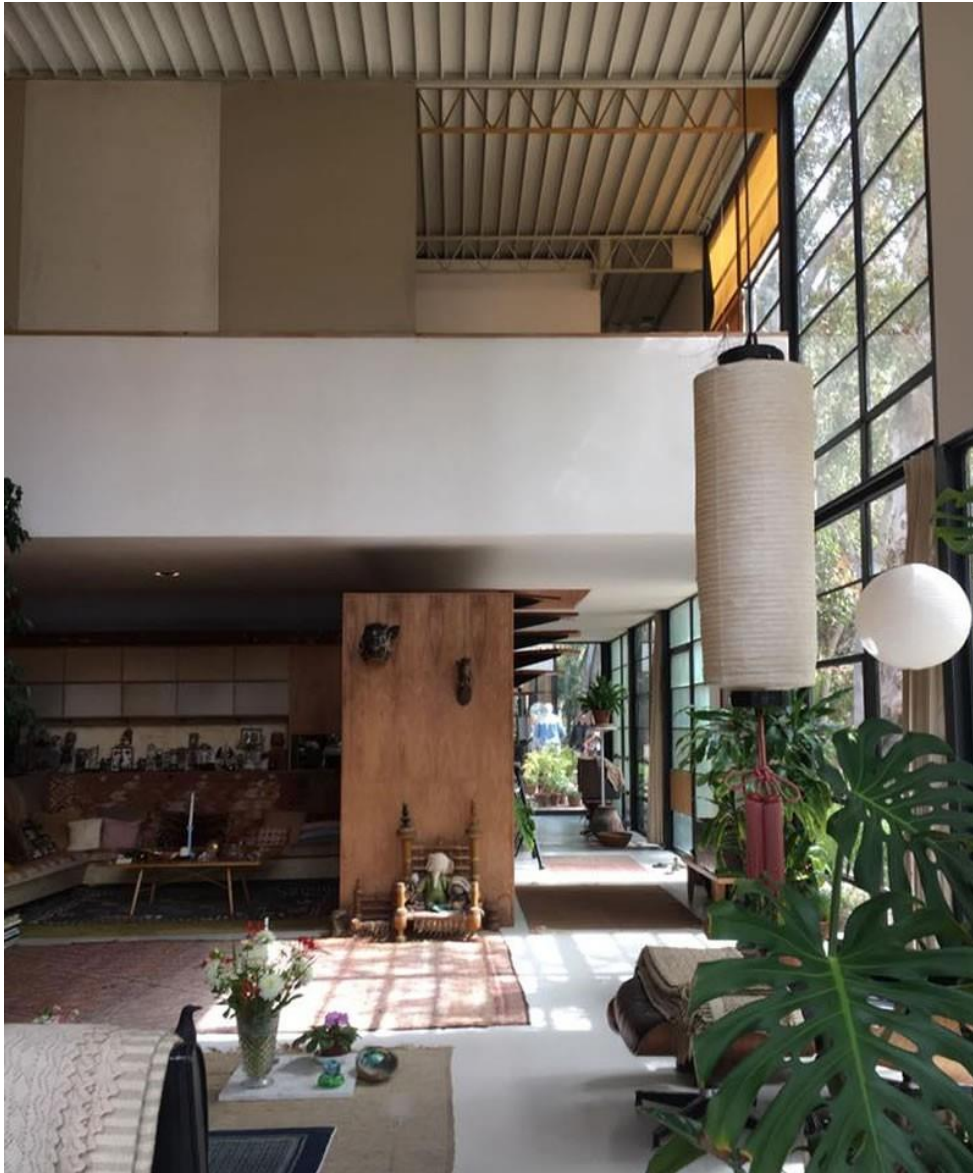
Raúl on the construction site of the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures | RPBW project

Rent a car and throw yourself into L.A. traffic all the way to San Diego? No sooner said than done! The three of them decided that it is necessary to take a look at the **Salk Institute by Louis Kahn**. Designed in close collaboration with Jonas Salk to embody the philosophy of the research centre, it consists of two mirrored structures that flank a large courtyard. Each building is six floors high and contains laboratories and offices. In the middle of the open space, which opens directly towards the ocean, the "river of life" flows between the buildings. Also in San Diego, the young architects were able to take a closer look at the nearby **Geisel Library**, designed by William L. Pereira & Associates, a brutalist building that, with its particular shape — similar to hands holding stacks of books — has become the most recognisable building on the UC San Diego Campus.



photo of Raúl photographing Lukas photographing the Salk Institute by Louis Kahn

Back in town, we stop off at the hidden **Eames House**, also known as **Case Study House 8**, one of 25 built as part of *The Case Study House* program. Designed by the couple of designers to be their home for the rest of their lives, the building is a combination of two modular volumes, the home and the studio, assembled and furnished using only standard parts ordered from catalogues. The geometric facades are iconic; with their black uprights and coloured panels, they resemble and pay homage to a work of art by the Dutch painter Piet Mondrian. Still today, it's an incredibly topical housing example. As is **Gehry's house in Santa Monica**, built by the architect back in 1978 using recycled materials and elements that would gradually become typical of his plastic poetic style.



Eames House | Case Study House 8

These are their words when it's time to leave: *"On our last day in Los Angeles, a friend of ours guided us through the different neighbourhoods, showing us the best hidden architectures of this urban jungle. In the centre we had a quick look at the Walt Disney Concert Hall before climbing up the hills to admire the view from the Griffith Observatory. In the afternoon we continued our tour through Hancock Park and Santa Monica. We had some tasty street tacos, a must-have in Los Angeles. See you tomorrow in Texas!"*

Frisko

Valentina, Eirinaios and Paul Antoine, on the other hand, land in San Francisco. The iconic bridge, the bay, the steep streets of the centre, the many museums. For them, the American grand tour begins at the **California Academy of Sciences, designed by RPBW**, with a guided tour by **Cameron Cooper**, who took part in several phases of the complex project: basically a grassy roof that covers, sewing it up, the open-plan volume composed of four orthogonal nuclei, two hemispheres and a public square that floods the interior with light and air, allowing the entire space to breathe.



California Academy of Sciences by RPBW

Right in front of it, there is the **De Young Museum, by Herzog and de Meuron**, whose tower stands out on the park skyline, also thanks to its unique cladding, a perforated copper shell that surrounds a multitude of exhibition spaces. "One of the most interesting aspects of the building - they tell us in their travel diary - is the landscape, the various gardens and the different paths between the spaces, which manage to blur the boundary between inside and outside."

Then there is the **Contemporary Jewish Museum by Daniel Libeskind**, which, faithful to his deconstructivist style, adds the form of two large cubic objects in blue stainless steel that protrude from the old building. The trio then heads to the **SFMOMA by Mario Botta and Snøhetta**. Opened to the public in 1995 in the South of Market, the Botta building is a landmark in the urban landmark, to which, in 2016, was added a significant annexation designed by Snøhetta to double the museum space. The different flow designed for this building offers a linear distribution that connects all the exhibition spaces and, at the same time, offers visitors a direct dialogue with the city.

Texas

The warmth of Texas welcomes Andrea, Raúl, and Lukas. First stop: the **Menil Collection**, in the residential suburbs of Houston, a museum created by RPBW to house the large private art collection belonging to the Menil couple. Completed in 1987, the building remains one of the unsurpassed examples of museum architecture: not so much for the exteriors—simple geometric volumes connected by a shaped canopy—as for the interiors, where the galleries are animated by "bright light" thanks to a system of special ferrocement sunshades that filter light from the north, creating natural lighting that varies according to the time, the time of day and the season.

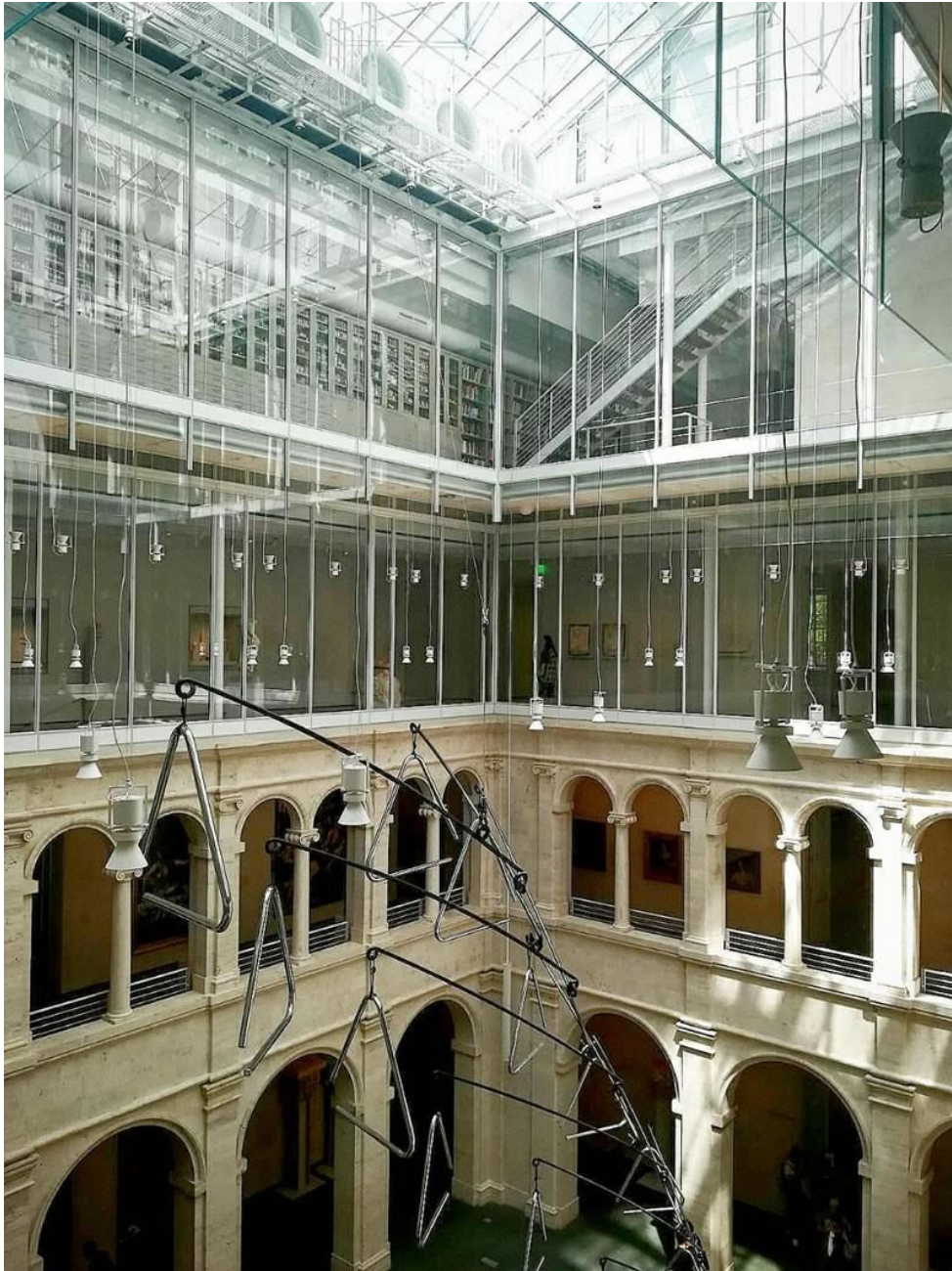
Next is Fort Worth, at the **Kimbell Art Museum**, a museum consisting of an original body designed by Louis Kahn (home to the permanent collection) and a pavilion designed by RPBW in 2013, which houses temporary exhibitions. Divided by a garden of elms and red oaks, the two buildings almost 'speak' to each other, functioning as a single museum. In the afternoon they return to Dallas to visit the **Nasher Sculpture Center**: RPBW designed this space taking inspiration from Roman ruins, which evoke the image of an archaeological find in the centre of Dallas.

heading towards New York

The path of approach—and reunion—between the groups proceeds smoothly, without any respite. After San Francisco, Valentina, Eirinaios and Paul Antoine continue towards the east coast, in New Hampshire: Exeter and New Haven. Here they can delve into a great architectural classic, the **Phillips Exeter Academy Library**, a library designed by Kahn, completed in 1972. An anonymous brick box contains evocative interiors in wood and cement, flooded with zenith light and imagined as a true temple for learning in which the proportions between the geometries are the fulcrum of the composition.

Next stop is the Harvard Campus in Boston, where the youngsters met the architect Justin Lee at the **Harvard Art Museum**. The renovation of RPBW in 2014 and the extension of the existing building made it possible to bring the various collections together under one roof. Staying with the theme of university campuses, from Harvard we move on to Yale, walking among the works of **Louis Kahn**, **Paul Rudolph**, **Eero Saarinen** and **Philip Johnson**, among others. It begins with the Rudolph Hall; now home to the University's Faculty of Architecture.

And then, again, two more works by Kahn: the **Yale Art Gallery**, built in 1953, 4 levels of "brutalist" and flexible exhibition space, where the only fixed planimetric element is a central core that contains the service spaces for technical and functional needs. A similar concept can be found in the **British Art Centre** opposite, one of Kahn's last works, completed in 1974, organised around two central empty spaces that traverse the entire height of the building, creating a separate inner courtyard, on which there are exhibition spaces in succession, a square mesh structural grid.



Boston, Harvard Art Museum | by RPBW

and finally... The Big Apple!

After 23 days, the two groups meet for the last part of the journey, which starts from New York. In their own words: *"New York has welcomed us with its incredible skyline and an unbelievably warm climate. Today is the first day we have met with Renos, Paul-Antoine and Valentina, and from now on we will continue our journey together once more!"*

Here everything is blossoming; there are so many things to see, the city is in turmoil, scattered with skyscrapers and construction sites, either just finished or in progress *"New York, New York, New York, so much to see in this city."* The sextet then launches unhesitatingly to discover some of the best achievements of architecture, many of which carried out by the RPBW studio (where its soft tech, elegant and all-Italian style is considered unattainable).



Valentina, Paul Antoine, Andrea, Raúl and Eirinaios and The Vessel

It starts with one of the studio's rare residential works, the elegant condominium, **565 Broome Soho**, featuring symmetrical glass towers with rounded edges, in the company of Toby Stewart. Then, passing through SoHo, to Harlem, the site of the masterplan for the development of the area and the recently completed phase 1 of the **New Manhattanville Campus of Columbia University** + the **Center of the Arts**, the **Science Center** and the **Forum** completely in concrete, steel and glass (kindly accompanied by Serge Drouin). But also the extension of the **Morgan Library** or the **New York Times building**.

Again alternating between modern and contemporary, the young architects continue their exciting tour visiting both the **MoMA PS1 Warm Up**, a former public-school building on Long Island now home to events and artistic performances, and the gem of a museum that was, is and always will be the **Solomon R. Guggenheim by Frank Lloyd Wright**, opened in 1959 on Fifth Avenue. The iconic spiral morphology that accompanies the exhibition ramp (a veritable architectural promenade) while giving rise to various problems at an exhibition level, has made the museum an unsurpassed masterpiece. And so, onwards, moving on from the scalar structure of the **MET Breuer** to the "stacked" structure of the **New Museum of Contemporary Art of the Japanese SANAA** (Kazujo Sejima and Rue Nishizawa) in lower Manhattan.

Then, there is also the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts and the Seagram Building by Mies Van der Rohe.

Finally, you can't miss going up along the Hudson River: the **BIG** residential complex, **Via 57 West**, a pyramid with a dynamic twist to give everyone the same view of the water. Or even the sculpture-building of Escherian memory **The Vessel**, a highly instagrammable panoramic platform by **Heatherwick Studio**, which created it using only Italian carpentry from Monfalcone. On the High Line super route, the whole expansion (the biggest real estate operation the city remembers, after the Rockefeller Center) of Hudson Yards is interesting, including **The Shed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro**, a semi-mobile container for performing arts.

Continuing onwards by foot, a little further down, the **9/11 Memorial on Ground Zero**, wounded heart of the city and focal point of the journey (for its idea of rebirth through contemporary architecture) where they can see the **World Trade Center, the Fulton Center and Oculus aka the White Dove**, designed by Santiago Calatrava. Sharing spaces designed not to be forgotten.

"We had the best end of our day walking along the Brooklyn Bridge at sunset, and taking a look back at the city under the starry sky."

by Giulia Mura





The New York Times Building | RPBW

Architectures RPBW visited

SAN FRANCISCO - [California Academy of Sciences](#) [2000 - 2008]

HOUSTON - [The Menil Collection](#) [1982 - 1986]

CAMBRIDGE - [Harvard Art Museums](#) [2006 - 2014]

FORT WORTH - [Kimbell Art Museum](#) [2007 - 2013]

DALLAS - [Nasher Sculpture Centre](#) [1999 - 2003]

NEW YORK

- [565 Broome SoHo](#) [2014 - 2019]
- [Manhattanville Campus Plan](#) [2002 - 2007]
- [Lenfest Center for the Arts](#) [2010 - 2017]
- [Jerome L. Greene Science Center for Mind Brain Behavior](#) [2007 - 2016]
- [The Forum](#) [2011 - 2018]
- [The Morgan Library](#) [2000 - 2006]
- [The New York Times Building](#) [2000 - 2007]

the journey continues...

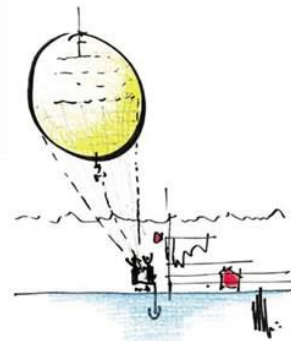
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RENZO PIANO WORLD TOUR 2019

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RPWT 2019
Renzo Piano World Tour in 40 days
Award Art of Construction: the importance of structural details



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