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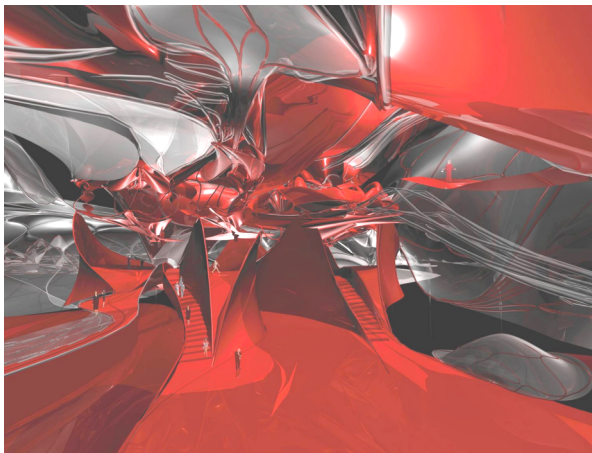
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XEFIROTARCH ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN EXHIBITION

OPENS AT THE ART INSTITUTE

Playful, Radical Designs by Argentinian Architect Hernán Díaz Alonso



Busan Master Plan and Concert Hall (interior), 2003-04; digital rendering; © Xefirotarch 2005

From **July 12 through October 28, 2007**, the Art Institute of Chicago will present an exhibition of the projects by *Xefirotarch*, a Los Angeles-based design firm on the cutting edge of digital practice. Organized by Art Institute curator Joseph Rosa—the John H. Bryan Chair of Architecture and Design, and former Helen Hilton Raiser Curator of Architecture and Design at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art—the

exhibition features selected key projects by Xefirotarch, founded in 2001 by Argentine **Hernán Díaz Alonso**.

Díaz Alonso's baroque designs—resembling animal forms, plant structures, or fungal growths—blur the visual and spatial boundaries between surface, decoration, and structure to create an original and distinctly figurative architectural approach. Díaz Alonso is greatly influenced by much of a broad range of visual practices, including the art of Francis Bacon and Matthew Barney, science fiction films, and digital practices in design, architecture, and art. His aesthetic, always sensual but often grotesque, evolves through a series of conceptually linked projects and experiments, with the ultimate goal of offering not only a spatial experience, as one would expect from architecture, but a

temporal experience as well. Thus the resulting work occupies an as-yet undefined domain that lies between the formal demands of architecture and the narrative possibilities of different uses of space.

Joseph Rosa notes, “Xefirotarch’s refined investigations of form are an example of how digital architecture has matured since the mid-1990s. No longer fascinated by merely producing blob-based structures, Díaz Alonso has expanded the theory and practice of this new architectural approach. His vision, based on constantly morphing geometry, represents flexible arrangement in architectural form rather than stasis. Gathered here, the studio’s most important designs over the last five years suggest organic complexity as a way of redefining concepts of beauty and the grotesque in architecture, offering almost a natural history of this evolving aesthetic.”

The exhibition’s centerpiece, titled *Sangre* (Spanish for “blood”), is a sculptural installation created specifically for this presentation. Finished with patented factory-issue *Ferrari Red* paint, the dramatic undulating fiberglass construction *Sangre* suggests both the sleekness of a manufactured object and the biomorphic oddity of an alien creature. Other designs on display include the monumental, animal-like form *Arach* (a proposed mixed-use complex in Dublin) and the submitted plan for the *Busan Master Plan and Concert Hall* in South Korea, a group of linked “islands” of activity inspired by its own beach environment. The exhibition also will feature six monitors playing DVD animations of the studio’s projects, as well as a number of small-scale models displayed in vitrines.

Xefirotarch is accompanied by a small-format catalogue (48 pages, soft cover, \$16.95) that includes more than 90 full-color reproductions, with an essay by Joseph Rosa and project descriptions by Ruth Keffer, curatorial associate for architecture and design at SFMOMA.

Xefirotarch is organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and guest curated by Joseph Rosa. It is generously supported by Christine and Michael Murray, Nancy and Steven H. Oliver, the LEF Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

The Chicago presentation is funded by the Fellows of the Department of Architecture and Design with ongoing support from the Architecture and Design Society.

Animations by Xefirotarch in collaboration with Imaginary Forces.

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SUMMER HOURS

MAY 31 TO AUGUST 31

10:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

10:30 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Thursday and Friday. Target Free Summer Evenings after 5:00 p.m.

10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Saturday, Sunday.

Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

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Admission: Adults, \$12.00; children 12 and over, students, and seniors, \$7.00; children under 12 free; members always free. Free Evenings are free to all, except for certain special exhibitions that may require full or extra admission fee. City of Chicago residents with Chicago Public Library cards can borrow a "Check Us Out" card from any library branch for free general admission to the nine members of Museums in the Park, including the Art Institute of Chicago. To reach the Art Institute on the World Wide Web, contact us at: <http://www.artic.edu/aic>

The Art Institute of Chicago is a museum in Chicago's Grant Park, located across from Millennium Park.