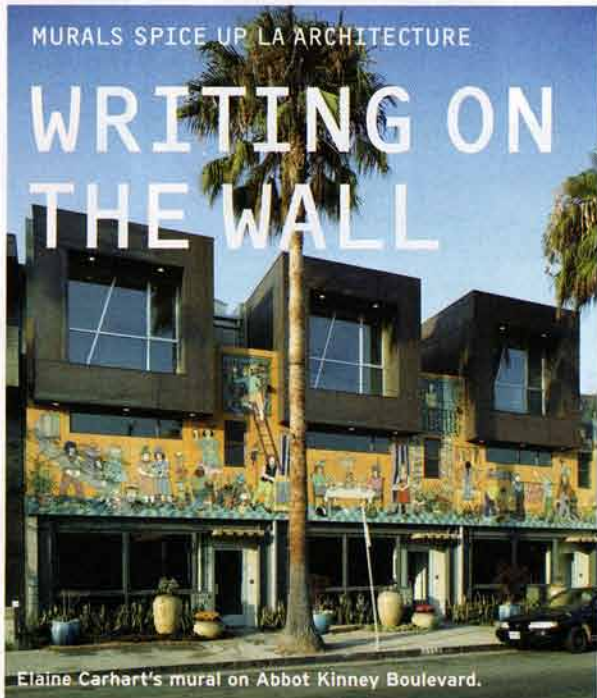


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COURTESY VENICE COLLABORATIVE

Elaine Carhart's mural on Abbot Kinney Boulevard.

Art and architecture dance around each other in subtle ways all the time in Los Angeles, but lately, a few new architectural projects have brought art to the forefront.

Venice developer Frank Murphy recently opened three artist lofts by Culver City-based Equinox Architecture at 1212 Abbot Kinney Boulevard, in the midst of the street's trendy retail area. The most notable detail is a striking mural by artist Elaine Carhart that spans the 60-foot facade of the building.

Carhart's colorful mural, with its orange background and celebratory images, depicts "the pastimes that make for the material good life." Her influences include traditional Portuguese and Turkish tilework along with Japanese Ukiyo-e prints, which tell stories. Equinox's Jim Gelfat designed the 3,500-square-foot modern boxes with a nod to raw materials. The steel and glass exterior mirrors the interior space, which includes industrial steel staircases, second-floor catwalks made of steel

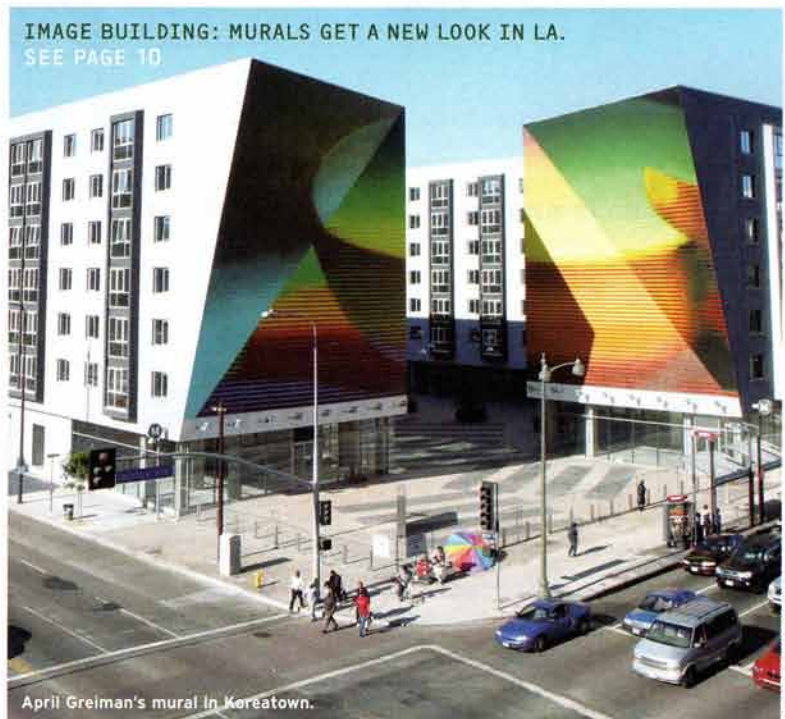
grates, and polished concrete floors. The upper levels have bamboo flooring, a gas fireplace, and solar panels. On the street level, giant glass windows were designed to pivot horizontally and open onto the street, creating a relationship with life on the buzzing sidewalk.

According to Murphy, who has commissioned artists for many buildings, the art has caused more of a stir than usual. "I got more calls about this mural—people either loving it or hating it," he admitted. "I like to create that sort of tension between the art and the architecture. And I love it when the community weighs in. It means we've done something right." Murphy's buildings are unusual in an era where committees and boards often qualify art that is incorporated into new buildings. Both the architect and artist sign a contract, which makes them mutually exclusive. "I'm the builder and it feels good to make a canvas where someone can create art with complete creative freedom.

The architect has no say, and vice versa," he added.

Across town, in the heart of bustling Koreatown, April Greiman's oil painted video image covers 8,200 square feet on two sides of Arquitectonica's newly completed six-story mixed-use building on Wilshire Boulevard. The piece is a Percent for Art project through LA's Department of Cultural Affairs. The image was derived from video footage shot in the surrounding neighborhood. From a distance the geometrical orange, red, green, and blue work spans across two buildings and subtly reveals itself as a bowl of rice. Unlike the mural in Venice, the piece was a collaboration. "April was fabulous. We're very pleased with her concept and technical execution," said Dan Rosenfeld of Urban Partners. "All the ingredients, the artist, the architect, our business requirements, and the Koreatown community made for a fascinating process."

KIMBERLY STEVENS



April Greiman's mural in Koreatown.

COURTESY MADE IN SPACE