

Form and Dichroic Light

Scott Hall at Carnegie Mellon University



Michelle LaFoe and Isaac Campbell
OFFICE 52 Architecture

Foreword by Cesar Pelli, FAIA
Introduction by Michael J. Crosbie, FAIA



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Foreword

by Cesar Pelli, FAIA

Architecture is a marvelous profession that has the potential to be one of the great arts with the opportunity to create moving relationships with inert materials. Architects can work towards practical yet sublime results, with a depth of emotion provoked by the architecture itself. The creative act is in the process that unfolds in the design studio, where one practices architecture. My first experience with this process was during the ten years I worked with Eero Saarinen, the son of the prominent Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen and textile designer Loja Saarinen. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to pass this lineage along to the many designers who have worked with me in my office.

One of the great joys of teaching is that we are always learning, and one of the greatest pleasures I have had as an educator and practitioner has been to work with younger designers and see them develop into mature, talented and thoughtful architects. Some have moved on to start their own firms, and through their work, they demonstrate a continued exploration of ideas and the fundamental beliefs that shape us, our buildings, and our cities, the principal factors for which I have been looking at for years in my practice.

Isaac Campbell and Michelle LaFoe are two such designers that continue this lineage. Both are graduates of the Rice School of Architecture, and they each made their way to New Haven, Connecticut through different paths and worked with me for a number of years on various design projects. Isaac was talented and industrious and soon demonstrated an ability to lead teams and interface with clients. Michelle, who also has a background in Fine Arts, was an intuitive and creative designer who worked with me to give sculptural form to many projects, one in particular being the complex entry for the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Osaka, Japan.

It was with pleasure that I learned in 2010 that they had opened their own firm, OFFICE 52 Architecture, and that soon thereafter they had won a national competition to design Scott Hall, the new Nano-Bio-Energy Technologies Building at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Scott Hall recently opened, and Michelle and Isaac continue the evolution from Saarinen's design process to my own, with a focus on the importance of the physical model to study the form, texture and color of the architecture and the spaces they've created. Within their design, I see a continuity of the formative studio conversations we had in New Haven about the fundamental values and principal factors affecting the art of architecture.

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