

IN TRANSIT

Patrick Tighe, who self describes as having early on “subscribed to the outsider’s fantasy,” is clearly in transit. For many who start from a perceived position outside, the goal is to arrive, to be inside ... But this, I think, is not what preoccupies Patrick. He seems to be moving from outside to a place that cannot accurately be described as “inside”—perhaps because a notion of inside implies a pinnacle or an end. In analyzing the work and the trajectory of the practice, it is clear that the cultural intransigence of Lowell has been replaced by what so many come west to find: an openness, a sense of experimentation, a freedom to pursue new possibilities. There is none of the gray of Lowell; not in the buildings, not in the imagination, not in the ebullience with which he approaches his projects.

It is interesting that he came to Los Angeles like so many others in our profession, Schindler and Neutra from Europe, Ayn and Eames from the East Coast ... all looking for a place that had yet to calcify, that was still open to experimentation and vision and that, even now, still embraces a stance of looking for its own future. For many of the architects who came in the latter half of the 20th century, Los Angeles delivered on its promise and they stayed and worked here, almost exclusively. Now however, something different is happening. Los Angeles has become more than a springboard, it is a veritable hub for young talent of Patrick’s generation. Patrick Tighe’s work, over the 10 years he’s been in practice, has expanded from Los Angeles to include projects in North Africa, the Middle East and Asia. He is the most prolific of his generation of architects with a prodigiousness of output that is an extraordinary testament to the power of desire and talent. What’s in evidence in this monograph is a most compelling moment in Tighe’s development, where his vast breadth of interests and references are connected to a multiplicity of formal outputs. The diversity of projects in scale, type and complexity range from installations to residential works, from social housing to commercial towers, and seem to demand this diversity and force him to continually access alignments of the formal with broader functional demands of each work.

Whatever it is that brings people to Los Angeles from elsewhere, if they have chosen not to reject the influences of their place of origin, then they are often absorbed and fed creatively by a constant attempt to embrace and resolve dichotomies— much as Patrick does in his work. The East and the West, the right and left, the built and unbuilt, the object and the space in between—are in a constant tension that creates the rudimentary stance from which he, like the city in which he practices, can continually search for himself as he develops his project. And as explicated so well in Stephen Phillips’ essay, it is in seeking a resolution to his extant tensions where ideas of ambiguity, distortion, and enigma live that makes it possible to create an authentic and relevant challenge to perception and legibility— and ultimately move toward a new and unique architectural expression.