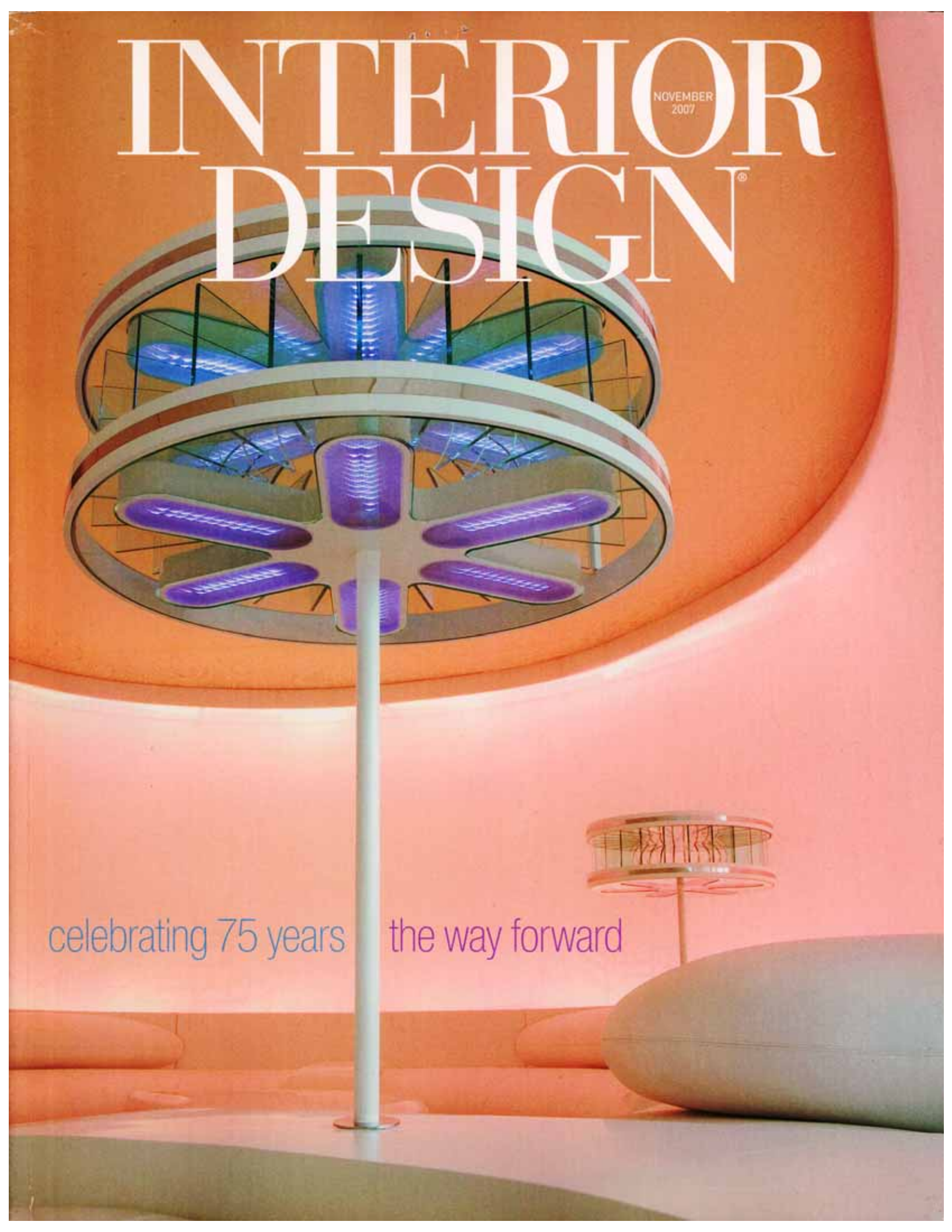


# INTERIOR DESIGN<sup>®</sup>

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## masters of the ephemeral

SOMETIMES DESIGN IS ROCKET SCIENCE. OR SET design. At least for Gaston Nogues, an aerospace engineer's son who spent a decade at the firm now known as Gehry Partners, and Benjamin Ball, who's worked on TV commercials and movies including *The Matrix*. The two architects met at SCI-Arc, formed **Ball-Nogues Studio** in 2004, and have since carved out their own brand of design. It's a cross between installation art and, yes, space exploration—all generated at a studio cum workshop in Los Angeles.

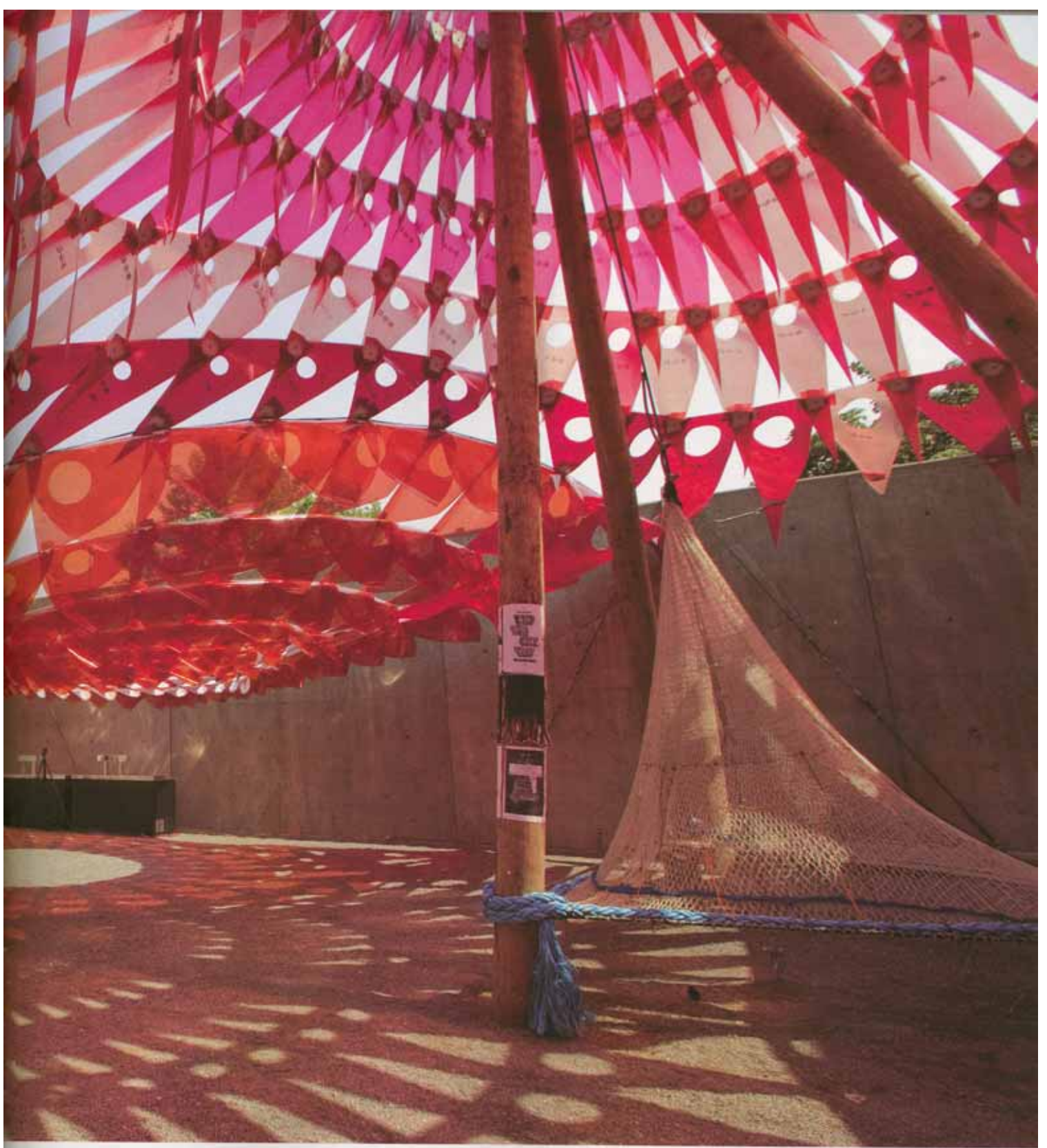
So far, the firm's built work has been temporary, from the carnivalesque "Liquid Sky" at the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in Long Island City, New York, to the sculptural "Rip Curl Canyon" at the →



Top, from left: Gaston Nogues and Benjamin Ball produce their designs in a 540-square-foot studio cum workshop in Los Angeles. "Liquid Sky" was chosen for this year's Young Architects Program at the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in Long Island City, New York. Bottom, from left: Tents of tinted Mylar polyester-film panels were supported by 30-foot-tall pine utility poles. Water fell from pipes at the top of a pole structure outside the tents. The eight tents filled P.S.1's front courtyard.









Rice Gallery in Houston and the woven canopy "Skin and Bones" and Mylar vortex "Maximilian's Schell" for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and L.A.'s Materials & Applications exhibition space, respectively.

"We don't approach design as shelter. We're interested in modulating space," Ball explains. Computer-aided design facilitates lengthy investigations as well as fabrication, with numerous mock-ups in between. "We're like the general contractor," Nogues adds. "We control it all." That also goes for the hands-on aspects that even the most complex digital job requires—take the polycarbonate rivets that held together the golden Mylar segments of "Maximilian's Schell."

The fleeting nature of Ball-Nogues's work is a "function of circumstance," Ball continues. Sure, temporary projects tap into an interest in experimentation. They →



*Clockwise from left: The Rice Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, commissioned "Rip Curl Canyon," a landscape in laminated cardboard. Polycarbonate rivets held together the tinted Mylar of "Maximilian's Schell" at Materials & Applications, Los Angeles. The installation cloaked this nonprofit research center's outdoor exhibition space.*





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also require the architects to think ahead: dismantling in addition to putting together.

Up next is a tepee-inspired idea in Woodstock, New York. Ball and Nogues are thinking green, literally, perhaps with moss or lichen on cast glass. The owner isn't exactly sure yet what he's going to use the tepee for. One thing's for certain, though: It'll be permanent.

—Edie Cohen

*From top: This canopy of clothing scraps was up for a single night only, the opening of "Skin and Bones, Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture" at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Visitors to "Rip Curl Canyon" were meant to study, snooze, or play on the cardboard terrain.*

