

FLORIDA

# InsideOut

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

architecture design ideas





# THE MOTEL MAKEOVER

Results come in; six are especially worthy BY LINDA LEE



**THE JUDGES** From left, Eric Silverman, Jeremy Calleros Gauger, Teri D'Amico, Jim Budman and Robin Hill, with Christopher Cawley's urban renewal plan for the motels

In our summer issue, we initiated our first competition, to solicit ideas to make over the motels on Biscayne Boulevard, especially the ones from 59th Street to 79th Street. Once popular tourist stops in the '50s and '60s, when people drove down U.S. 1 (Biscayne Boulevard) to Miami, the motels had fallen on hard times. Although an occasional sign, like that on the South Pacific, was a reminder of the MiMo (Miami Modern) glory that had been, the motels seemed doomed to make way for the inevitable condo towers.

The response to the competition was heartening, with suggestions pouring in from Stuttgart, Germany, to Long Beach, California, from Florence, Italy and especially from Great Britain, where nine students at the Chelsea College of Art and Design submitted their proposals.

Twenty-one entries came in (architects being architects, most of them late) offering plans for recording studios and spas, youth hostels and a kindergarten. We assembled a jury in January, which met at the Little Haiti art studio of Federico Uribe. (Uribe's art, seen above, is made with colored pencils—the actual pencils.) The judges found six projects worthy of publication.



On the jury were Teri D'Amico, an adjunct professor at the Florida International University School of Architecture and the originator of the term MiMo. Eric Silverman, the real estate developer who bought the Vagabond Motel, at 73rd and Biscayne, for \$4 million with the intention of returning it to its MiMo glory, was present too.

Also asked to sit on the jury: Jim Budman, an artist and gallerist from New York, Robin Hill, the photographer whose work appears in *MiMo: Miami Modern Revealed*, and Jeremy Calleros Gauger, who recently finished his architecture degree at the University of Miami and who is working at the new landscape division of Arquitectonica, ArquitectonicaGeo. Gauger was the organizer of the 2004 competition to design new life-guard stands for Miami Beach.

A standout, they all agreed, was Christopher Cawley's urban renewal plan to unify the Biscayne Boulevard motels from 60th Street to 70th street with new street plantings, new intersections and a careful renovation of the Biscayne Inn. "The corridor could become a great collection of motels and furniture, all looking the way it did when our parents saw the street," Silverman said. Cawley, it turned out, is a









**THE SMART MOTEL** by Mark N. Philips and Claudia Wald



**ERIC SILVERMAN, MOTEL OWNER**

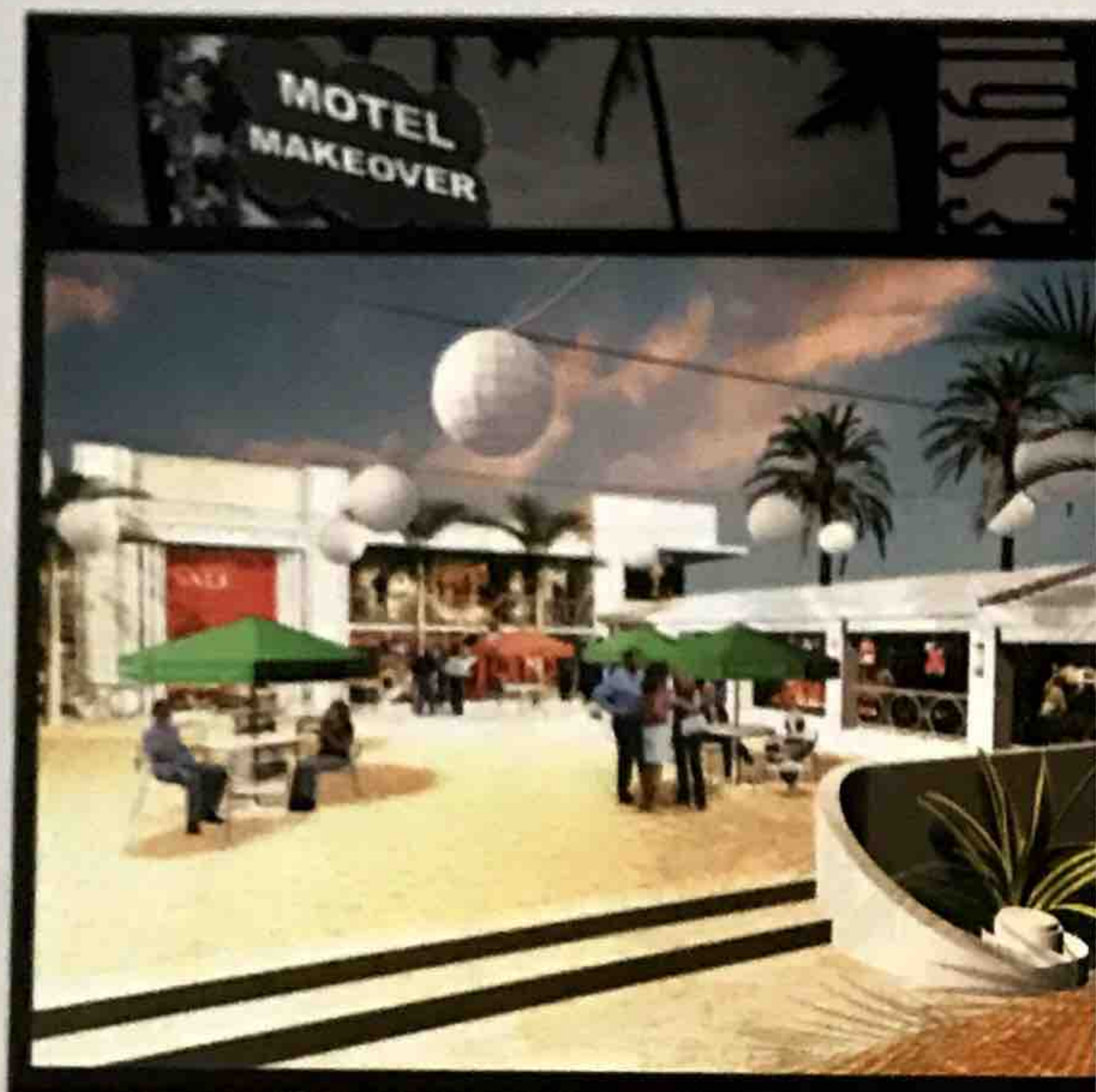


**AN ORGANIC MARKET** by Hee Yun Ma



**DAY-CARE CENTER** by Rosie Lyal and Samera Ameer





**MARCELO GOMEZ**  
Bringing cafés and stores to the Vagabond motel

## Vagabond Motel

7301 BISCAYNE BLVD.

MIAMI, FL.

ARO. B. ROBERT SWARTZBURG

What next—a day-care center, a gourmet market, a MiMo revival?

landscape architect who works primarily on Art Deco places in Miami Beach and projects throughout Miami-Dade. He is currently on the architectural review board of the Village of Bal Harbour.

A polished presentation by Marcelo Gomez, another Florida resident, showed a way to turn the Vagabond Motel (the one that Silverman just bought) into a space for outdoor cafés and stores. D'Amico was immediately impressed that the design retained the U-shaped courtyard, a hallmark of the motels of that era, and the delta wing support for the sign on the front. Hill noted, "This is a very modern way of looking at the delta wing. The Royal Motel and the South Pacific have the delta wings too." The plan for the Vagabond included designer shops, sculpture and a café-bistro. Gomez, who was born in Buenos Aires, and settled in Miami in 2001, is on staff at the Nyarko Architectural Group in Miami Lakes.

Mark N. Phillips and Claudia Wald, architects based in Stuttgart, Germany, came up with a way to turn the Bay's Inn at Biscayne and 35th Street into a Smart Motel, bringing the tiny Smart Car to America with a "rent-a-Smart" center, and offering rooms equipped with Smart fridges and Smart accessories. Gauger said, "This captures the car culture in Miami. This is a real motel, but it updates the concept."

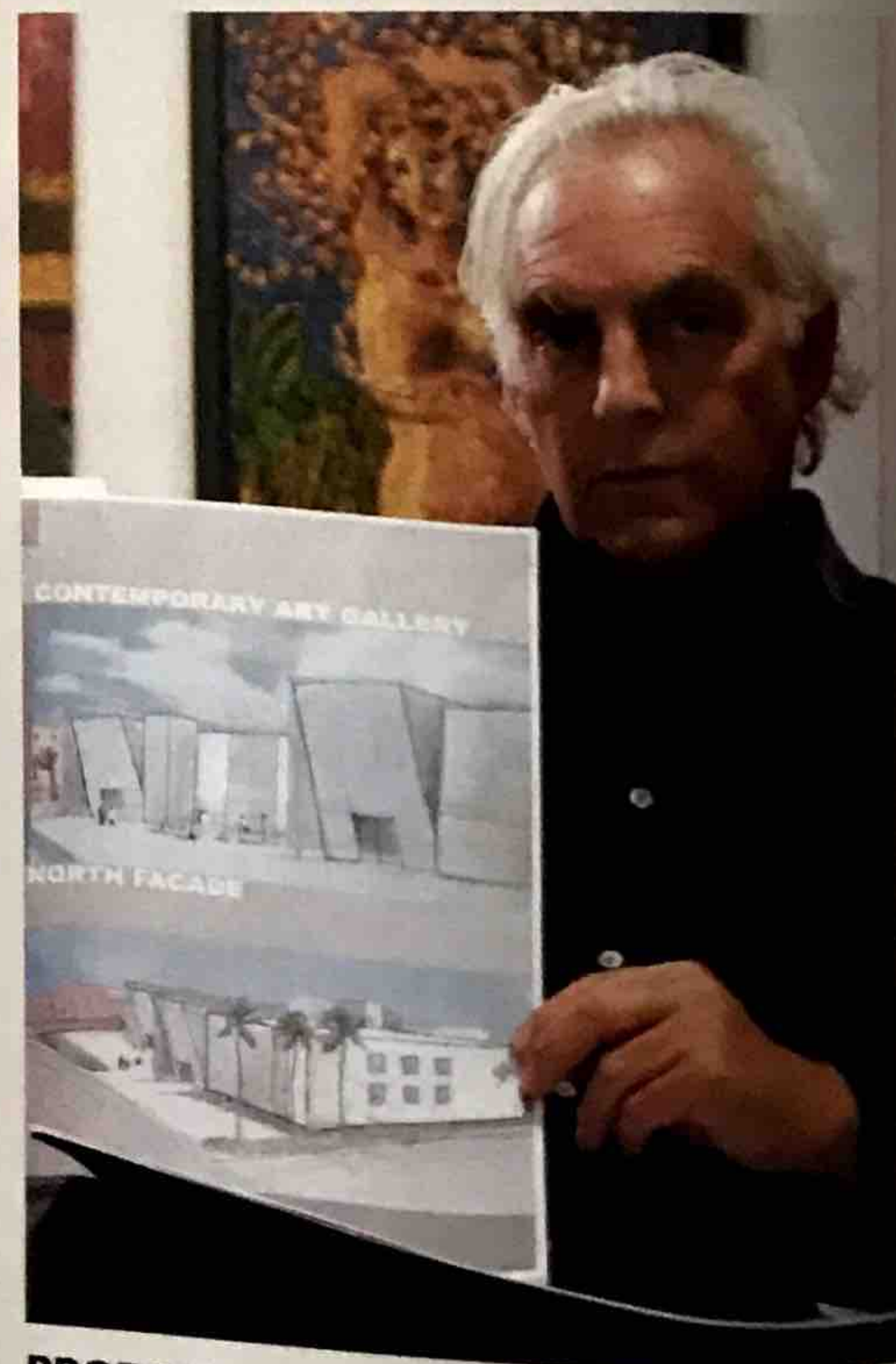
Hee Yun Ma, a student at Chelsea College, envisioned a market offering stalls for

antiques, accessories and toys on one floor, and fresh fruit, health food, flowers and organic beauty products on another. It was not so much the design that caught the judges' attention—it was rendered both as plans and as a wooden model shown in photographs—but the concept. "There's a big need for a market there," Hill said. "It would be great to pull up to an old motel and get your organic milk."

Budman was strongly in favor of Ewa Weronika Ullman's proposal for an art gallery on Biscayne. "This is what is needed," he said. "There should be galleries all over." Hill said, however, that the design was "kind of International style, Mies, Corbu—if it was 1928, it would be daring." Ullman is again from the Chelsea College of Art and Design in London.

And for the final selection: Rosie Lyal and Sameera Ameer's plan for a day-care center. The plan allowed for a creche for infants, a parking area for strollers, an elevator to take toddlers and parents upstairs and colorful walls throughout. Lyal and Ameer, who are also Chelsea College students, were worthy of inclusion, the judges felt, because their design offered a practical and unique suggestion for an old motel.

Silverman had the last word. "There's so much that could be there," he said. "One could be an antiques store, some fashion, some food, a day-care center, a medical center. The worst thing would be if a Pottery Barn came in." ■



**PROPOSED: A MUSEUM**  
Jim Budman, one of the judges, and Ewa Weronika Ullman's design for a gallery on Biscayne