

# FACTS | VERSATILITY OF CONTAINERS IN TODAY'S ARCHITECTURE



INVENTED MORE THAN FIVE DECADES AGO, THE MODERN SHIPPING CONTAINER IS THE LINCHPIN IN OUR GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION NETWORK OF PRODUCTS. IN THE CONTAINERS GO TOYS FROM CHINA, TEXTILES FROM INDIA, GRAIN FROM AMERICA AND CARS FROM GERMANY. IN GO ELECTRONICS, CHOCOLATE AND CHEESE.

WHILE A NUMBER OF RESOURCEFUL PEOPLE HAVE CONVERTED SHIPPING CONTAINERS TO MAKESHIFT SHELTERS AT THE MARGIN OF SOCIETY FOR YEARS, ARCHITECTS AND GREEN DESIGNERS ARE ALSO INCREASINGLY TURNING TO THE STRONG, CHEAP BOXES AS SOURCE BUILDING BLOCKS. SHIPPING CONTAINERS CAN BE READILY MODIFIED WITH A RANGE OF CREATURE COMFORTS, AND CAN BE CONNECTED AND STACKED TO CREATE MODULAR, EFFICIENT SPACES FOR A FRACTION OF THE COST, LABOR AND RESOURCES OF MORE CONVENTIONAL MATERIALS.

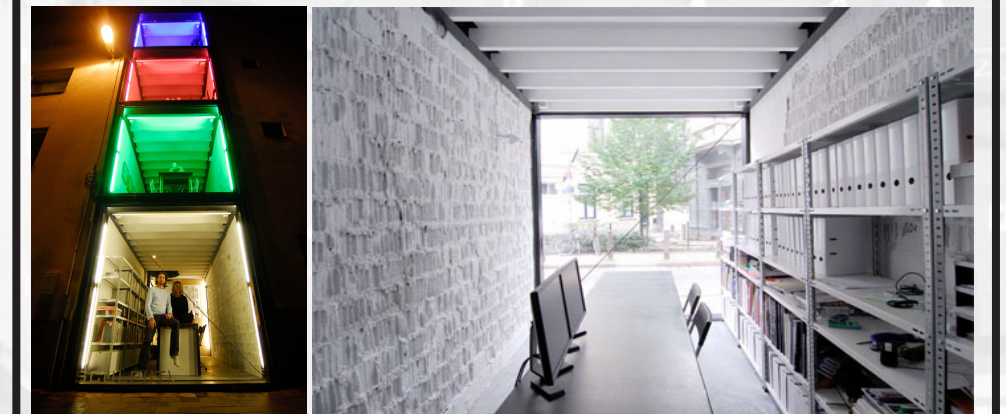


PROJECT: REDONDO BEACH HOUSE  
CLIENT: ANNA AND SVEN PIRKL  
LOCATION: REDONDO BEACH, CA USA  
DISTINCTION: 2007 AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN - INNOVATION AWARD

## DE MARIA REDONDO HOUSE

THE HOUSE IS MADE UP OF EIGHT CONTAINERS OF VARYING SIZES BOUND TOGETHER BY CONVENTIONAL BUILDING METHODS. THE METAL CONTAINER WALLS DEFINE SERVICE SPACES WHILE WOOD AND STEEL FRAME THE LIVING SPACES, INCLUDING AN ARTIST'S STUDIO, MASTER BEDROOM, AND SPACIOUS LIVING ROOM WITH 20-FOOT CEILINGS. A SMARTLY PLACED BELOW GRADE CONTAINER FORMS A SWIMMING POOL. DOORS AND WINDOWS ARE CUT THROUGH THE WALLS, BUT BEYOND THAT NO EFFORT IS MADE TO CONCEAL THE INDUSTRIAL AESTHETIC OF THE CONTAINERS. ACCORDING TO THE ARCHITECTS, THE MODIFIED CONTAINERS ARE "NEARLY INDESTRUCTIBLE," AS WELL AS RESISTANT TO MOLD, FIRE, AND TERMITES. SEVENTY PERCENT OF THE BUILDING WAS EFFICIENTLY ASSEMBLED IN A SHOP, SAVING TIME, MONEY AND RESOURCES.

IT'S HARD TO CONTAIN ONE'S ENTHUSIASM FOR DEMARIA DESIGN'S REDONDO BEACH HOUSE. THE HOME, CONSTRUCTED WITH A COMBINATION OF PREFABRICATED SHIPPING CONTAINERS AND TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS MATERIALS, IS A STUNNING BEACHFRONT RESIDENCE. IT IS THE FIRST IN A LINE OF HOMES THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM DEMARIA DESIGN'S "PACKAGED ARCHITECTURE" AFFILIATE, LOGICAL HOMES. DEMARIA HAS SAID THAT HE CONSIDERS SHIPPING CONTAINERS THE ICONS OF THE GLOBAL AGE: "STACKED CONTAINERS CREATE A POWERFUL IMAGERY ON THE LANDSCAPE."



WITH THE GREEN PREMISE GROWING IN POPULARITY ACROSS THE GLOBE, MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE TURNING TO CARGO CONTAINER STRUCTURES FOR GREEN ALTERNATIVES. THERE ARE COUNTLESS NUMBERS OF EMPTY, UNUSED SHIPPING CONTAINERS TAKING UP SPACE. THE REASON FOR THIS IS THAT IT'S TOO EXPENSIVE FOR A COUNTRY TO SHIP EMPTY CONTAINERS BACK TO THEIR ORIGIN. IN MOST CASES, IT'S JUST CHEAPER TO BUY NEW CONTAINERS FROM ASIA. THE RESULT IS AN EXTREMELY HIGH SURPLUS OF EMPTY SHIPPING CONTAINERS THAT ARE JUST WAITING TO BECOME A HOME, OFFICE, APARTMENT, SCHOOL, DORMITORY, STUDIO, EMERGENCY SHELTER, AND EVERYTHING ELSE



ONE MAN'S INSPIRATION FOUND IN TRASH RESULTED IN ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN - HOUSES MADE INSIDE SHIPPING CRATES