

ART

AROUND THE GALLERIES

Monuments to a modern blueprint

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ART CRITIC

Five terrific new large-format photographs by Miles Coolidge use full-scale architectural mock-ups to picture the monumental impact of photographic imagery in constructing modern knowledge. The photographs are imposing, elegant and odd.

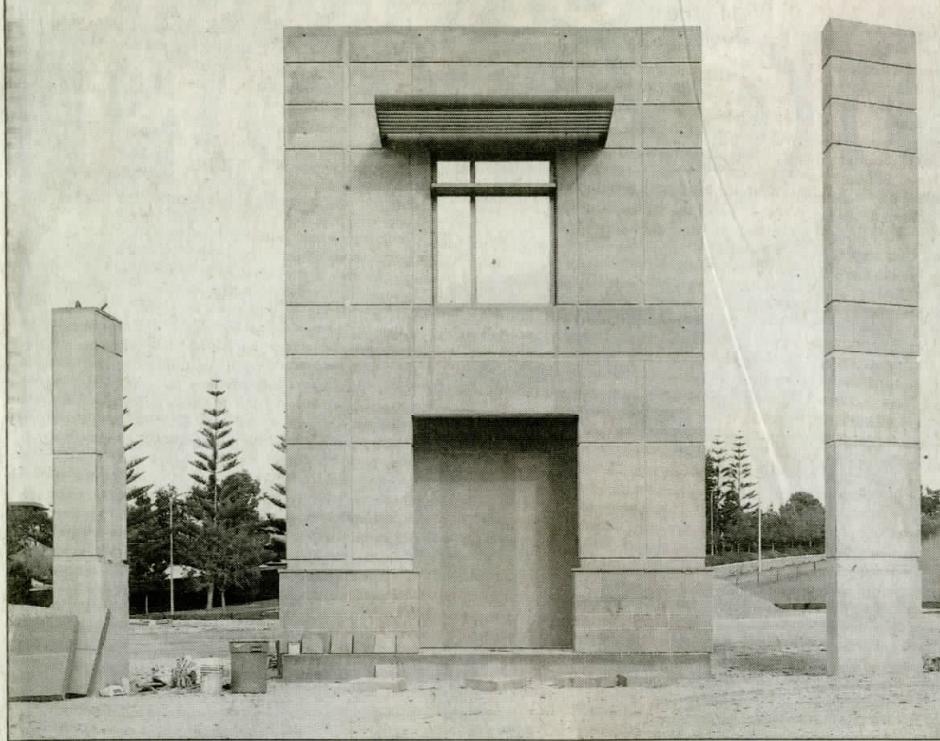
Shot at University of California construction sites, the images show models used to test building materials and motifs. Frontal, symmetrical and foregrounded, the fragments of a stem cell research lab, a humanities

building, framing for an unidentified structure and more use a Modernist tradition familiar from German photographers such as August Sander and Bernd and Hilla Becher. Rather than construct systematic typologies, however, Coolidge dismantles them.

His pictures show facades that are as thin, provisional and temporary as the surface of the photographs that record them. They're also just as imposing — 6-foot-high pictures of mundane academic temples that strain for monumentality. (Think cardboard Karnak.) Doorways are covered and windows frame empty sky,

while weeds and construction debris clutter the ground. Coolidge injects humility into the best-laid plans.

A sixth bracing work is a mural-size triptych showing a huge wall constructed from stacks of hundreds of telephone books. Some still in their plastic shrink-wrap, they form a back-stop to intercept arrows at an archery range. Shredded near the center from the assault of countless arrowheads, the wall records decay in the face of time's onslaught. Analog obsolescence — bow and arrow, telephone, photography — fills the looming [See Galleries, D15]



ACME Gallery

'STEM CELL RESEARCH': Miles Coolidge's large-scale photographs, shot at University of California construction sites, seem to take on a life of their own.

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[Galleries, from D14]
pictorial space.

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