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# FLORIDA DESIGN

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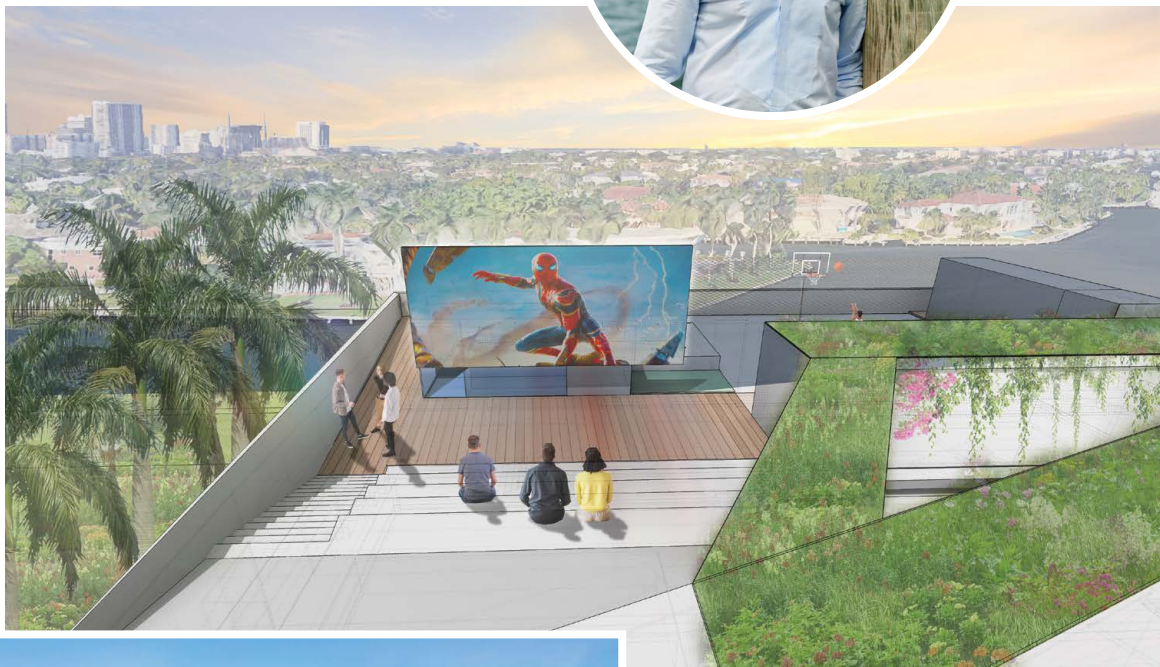
# STRUCTURE POETRY

ARCHITECT RENE GONZALEZ BRINGS A LYRICAL APPROACH TO HIS CRAFT



LEFT: Rene Gonzalez

When asked if he's a forward thinker, architect Rene Gonzalez doesn't take long to come up with an answer. "One thing I know about myself and my work is that I am never nostalgic, nor do I rely on any notions of what a project should be," he says. "Instead, I search out a fresh expression that is generated from exploring ideas unique to each project. I then distill those ideas to find the essence, the seed, of each concept, which then generates the architecture." Those who follow Gonzalez's work know it's tactile, holistic, and sensual, with an interest in blurring the lines between architecture, nature, and art. It's also actively committed to the latest sustainable practices. Those qualities, coupled with Gonzalez's keen understanding of his role, have served him well since he opened his practice in 1997, which has led to multiple projects



ABOVE: Rene Gonzalez's reinvention of the Galt Estate into a modern private residence will include various areas for leisure, including a rooftop garden.

LEFT: The Galt Estate's new design calls for angular planes and glass walls, two hallmarks of Gonzalez's architecture.



BELOW: Surf Row in Surfside will be comprised of eight beach homes at 8000 Collins Avenue.

all over the world. Two of his most recent commissions are right here in our backyard, however. For the Galt Estate in Fort Lauderdale, Gonzalez has been tasked with reinventing what was once known as La Maison Blanche, a 1936 structure that's long been considered one of the most iconic trophy properties in the state. "We've been charged with completely reinterpreting the three lots into one unified compound with multiple structures, waterfalls, pools, and lush landscaping," says Gonzalez of the kind of renovation that awards and shelter magazines love. Also on his to-do list: Surf Row at 8000 Collins Avenue in Surfside, a residential complex with eight beach houses that will rise directly opposite the site where Champlain Towers South once stood. "These homes utilize light and nature to inspire," says Gonzalez. "They connect us with the environment." In addition to these two endeavors, Gonzalez is also collaborating with the publishing house Arquine on a book on his Prairie Residence and hopes to be involved in a center for Cuban culture in the near future. "Since COVID I've made a conscious decision to work on fewer projects, which allows me to have a more intimate relationship with my clients," says Gonzalez. "And I'm only going to work on projects that I am extremely passionate about." [renegonzalezarchitects.com](http://renegonzalezarchitects.com)

