

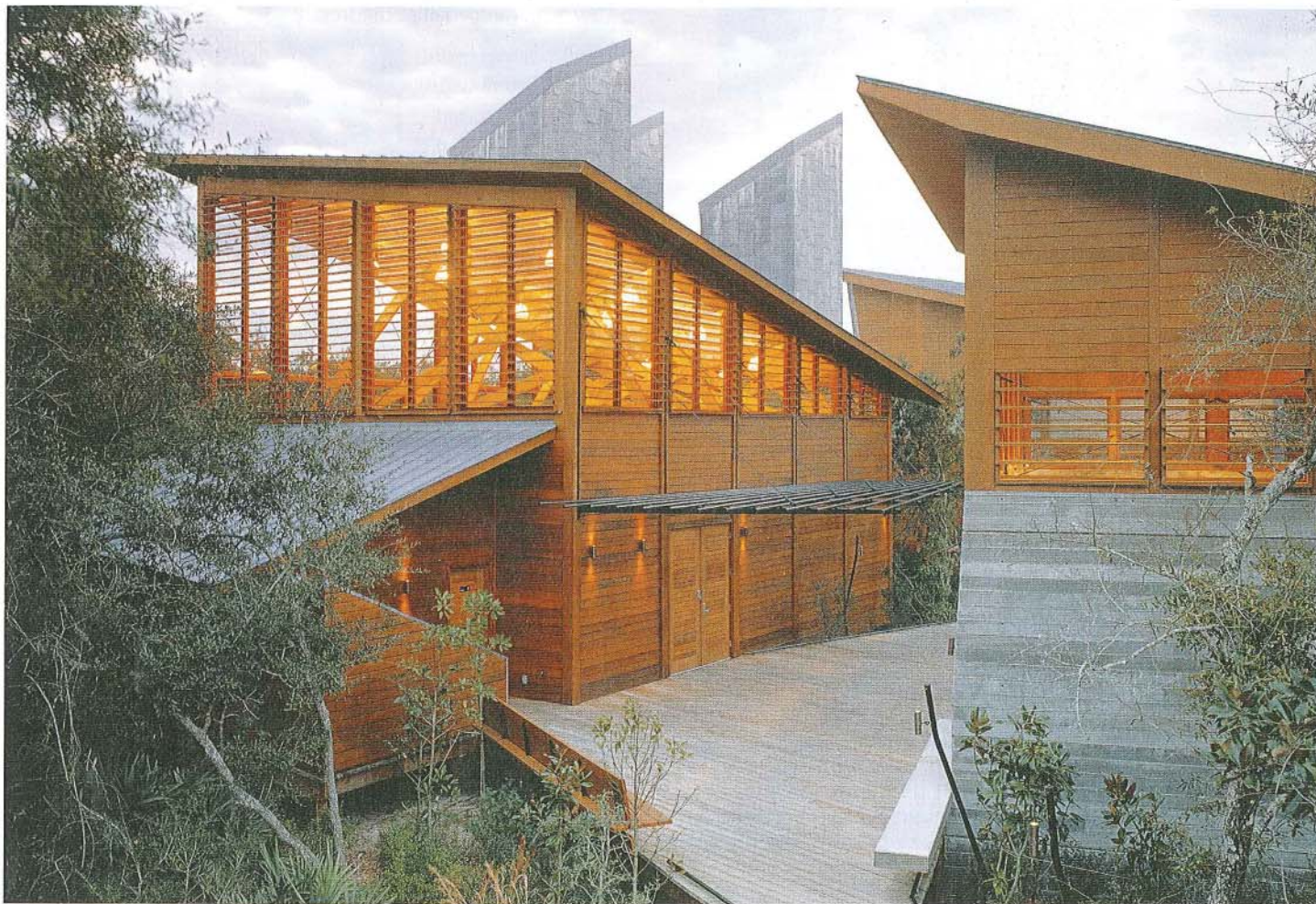
ARCHITECT

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→1995 P/A AWARD CITATION

TREADING LIGHTLY ON THE FLORIDA EARTH

ARCHITECTS THOMPSON AND ROSE DISPERSED STUDIOS
FOR THE ARTS WITHIN A LUSH SUBTROPICAL SETTING.



TEXT BY JOHN MORRIS DIXON, FAIA

1995 P/A Awards Jury

Michael Dennis
Merrill Elam, AIA
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Emanuel Kelly, FAIA

HOW DO YOU sensitively slip a complex for studying the arts (from painting to dance) into a prized patch of indigenous growth? How do you accommodate facilities for visual and performing arts in the climate of central Florida with the least possible reliance on artificial lighting and air conditioning?

These were the challenges taken on by Thompson and Rose Architects, from chilly Massachusetts, in their design of the Leeper Studio Complex at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, Fla. (That firm's partners now head separate firms: Maryann Thompson Architects and Charles Rose Architects.) Their solution was to array six wood-framed structures of various sizes along a meandering boardwalk, which serves for both circulation and outdoor gathering. The design strove to yield the effect of "moving along a jungle path," so that

the complex is revealed a little at a time.

The buildings include studios for painting and sculpture, dance, recording, a library, and a black-box theater. Solar input is controlled and natural ventilation facilitated by wide overhangs, wood and glass louvers, and rooftop wind scoops. All spaces, however, are necessarily served by air-conditioning and heating systems, adjustable depending on occupancy. For some of the center's working materials and equipment—pianos, for instance—continuous humidity control is essential.

The complex serves as a retreat where midcareer artists—painters, poets, actors, musicians, and others—are accepted for three-week residencies with leaders in their fields. The center's administration reports that participants regularly cite the architectural setting as a positive influence on their work. □