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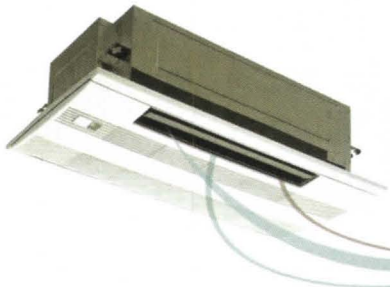


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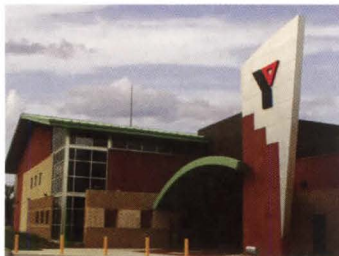
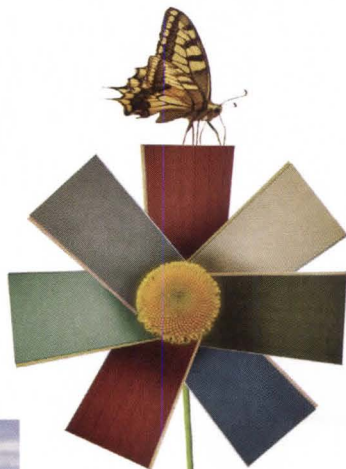


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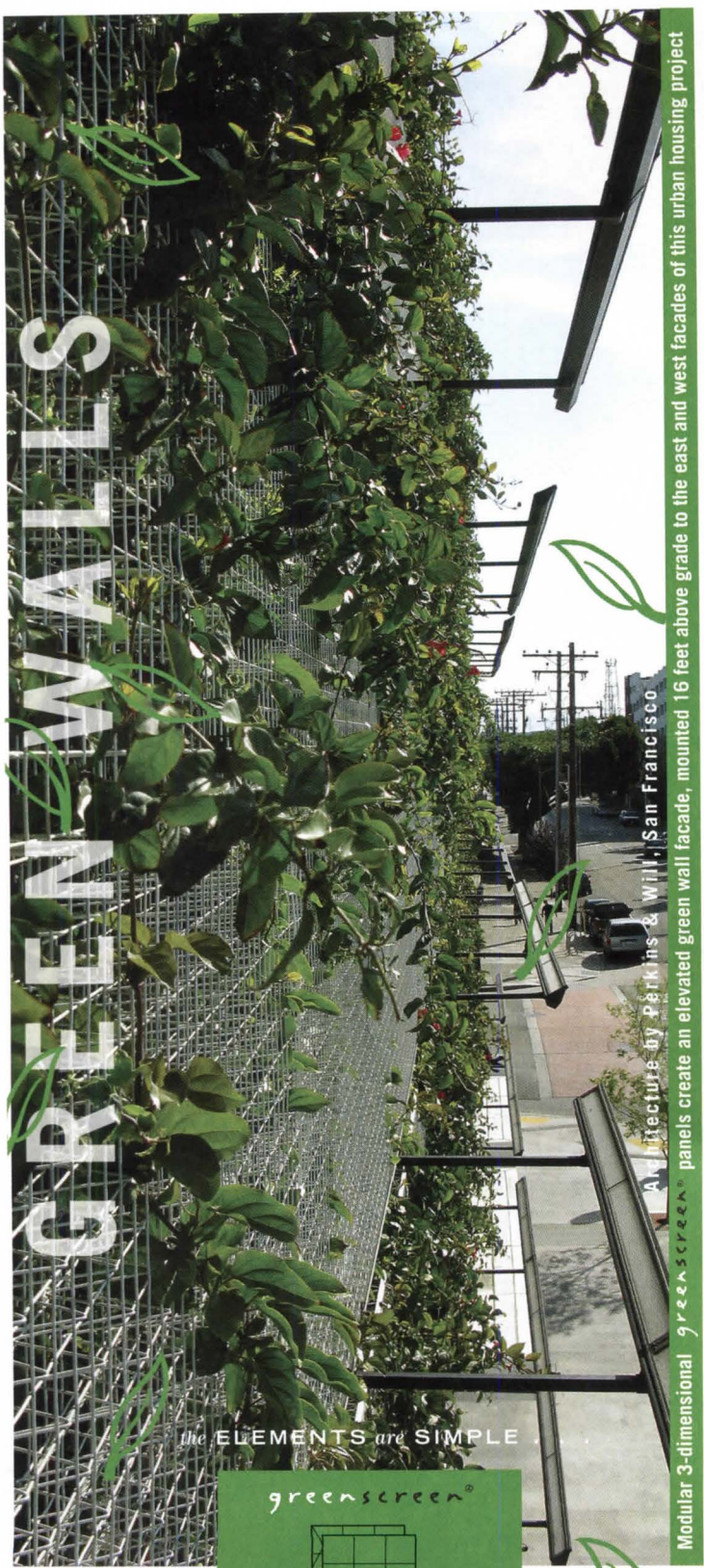
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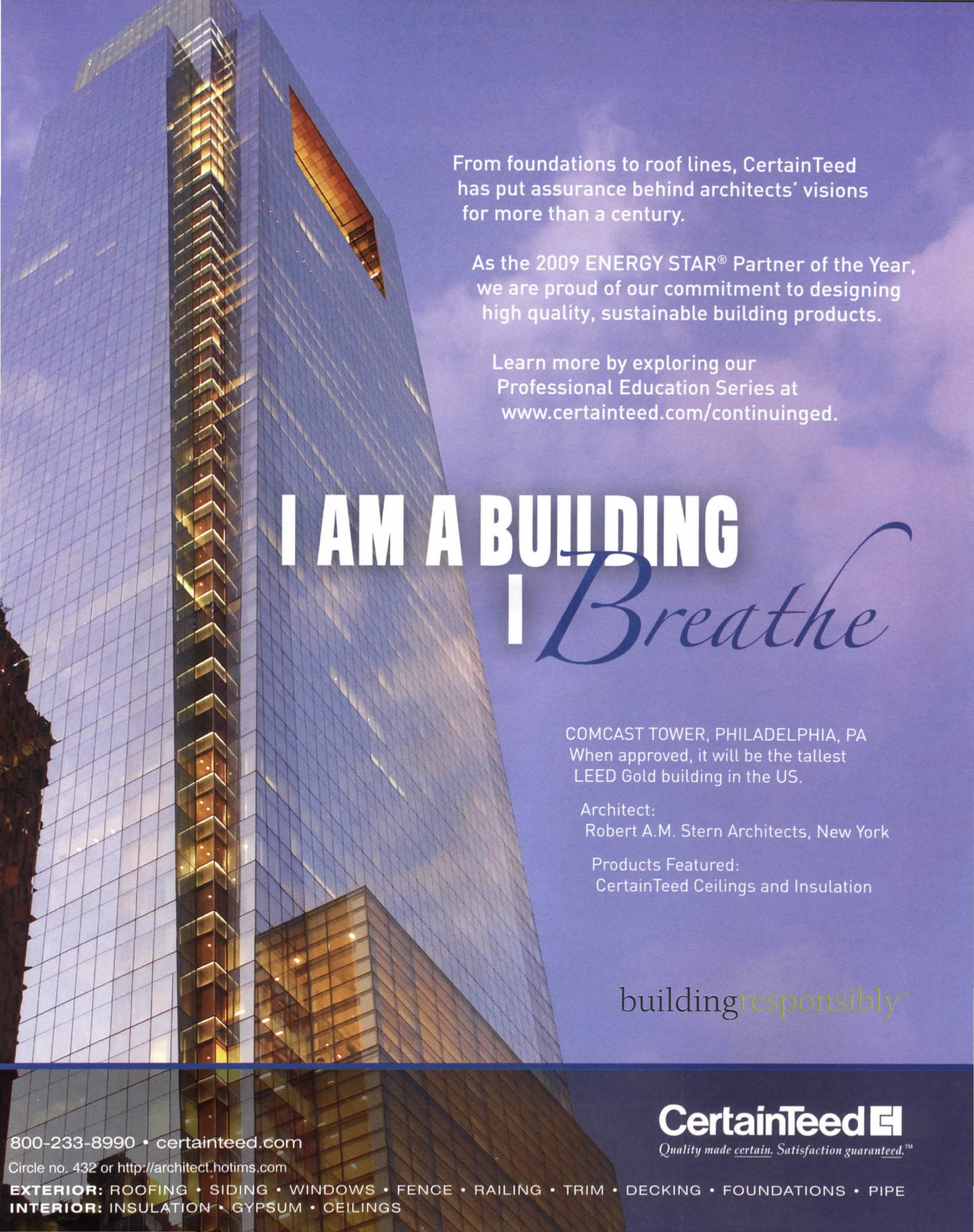
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"I WOULD DEFINE MYSELF AS AN INVENTOR. TO ME, ARCHITECTURE IS AN ACT OF THE IMAGINATION. INDUSTRIAL DESIGN IS AN ACT OF THE IMAGINATION."

**EMILIO AMBASZ**, describing the nature of his vocation, in "The Elusive Mr. Ambasz," page 60.

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I AM AS FAMILIAR WITH ARCHITECTURE AS THEY COME, BUT I HAVE NO LEGAL GROUND TO CALL MYSELF AN ARCHITECT.

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

**I AM NOT NOW**, and never have been, an architect. Why not? I went to architecture school and have spent my entire career in the field. But I have never worked at a firm, designed a building, supervised the construction of one, taken the ARE, or obtained state registration. In brief, I am as familiar with architecture as they come, but I have no legal ground to call myself an architect.

Despite my great respect for the terms and conditions that dictate who is and isn't an architect, I was startled by the volume of letters we received objecting to a specific application of the title in our April 2009 Salary Survey. We broke down the survey according to different career stages, including "Architect (Licensed)" and "Architect (Unlicensed)"—a minor detail, perhaps, but a big no-no for many of our readers.

"If a person is not licensed they are not an Architect, and I am offended that you would even provide them a category in your magazine," wrote Jennifer Showalter, Architect. Not all of our correspondents took the matter personally, but all of them made the same, absolutely fair point: In many states, you can't call yourself an architect unless you've passed the exam and hold a state license. (Never mind that web designers and others have adopted the term wholesale.) The topic sparked a heated debate among members of our LinkedIn group; more than 100 comments flew back and forth.

It's a matter of public record when, why, and where

someone can call themselves an architect. What's unclear is the proper term for those who have graduated from architecture school, work at an architecture firm, and aren't yet licensed. There's no common denominator for people in that situation—a group ranging in circumstance from recent graduates to firm principals. The architects who wrote to defend the exclusivity of their hard-earned titles applied a variety of different ones to their unlicensed counterparts: designer, intern, architect-in-training. Nobody used the term whippersnapper, but it wouldn't have surprised me.

According to the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards website, the proper term is intern: "In the architecture profession, an 'intern' is any person who by means of their education or experience has qualified to enter the IDP [Intern Development Program]." But "intern" hasn't stuck the way "resident physician" has in medicine, and for good reason: To the world at large, an intern is a college student in wrinkled khakis working a summer job, not an adult with an advanced degree. To call such a person an intern sounds narrowly like a put-down. It's time to come up with a better title.

*Reel Crane*

## LETTERS

### THE DEBATE CONTINUES

Terreform ONE, whose work appeared on the March 2009 cover of ARCHITECT and in the article "Urban Renewal" on page 42 of the same issue, writes in response to a letter from Michael Sorkin that appeared in the May 2009 issue.

We believe Michael Sorkin is distributing inaccurate and damaging claims about our organization Terreform ONE.

In 2006, Michael Sorkin and Mitchell Joachim founded a new nonprofit organization called Terreform. This name they mutually agreed upon would represent their partnership and collaboration with others. A year later many of the additional partners believed that the one partner—Sorkin—was not promoting the work of Terreform. He had numerous conflicting agendas including his private practice. He also published our work under his office of 20 years: Michael Sorkin Studio. Our nonprofit was sharing the same space as the profit-driven Michael Sorkin Studio; this is a severe conflict of interest according to IRS 501(c)(3) guidelines.

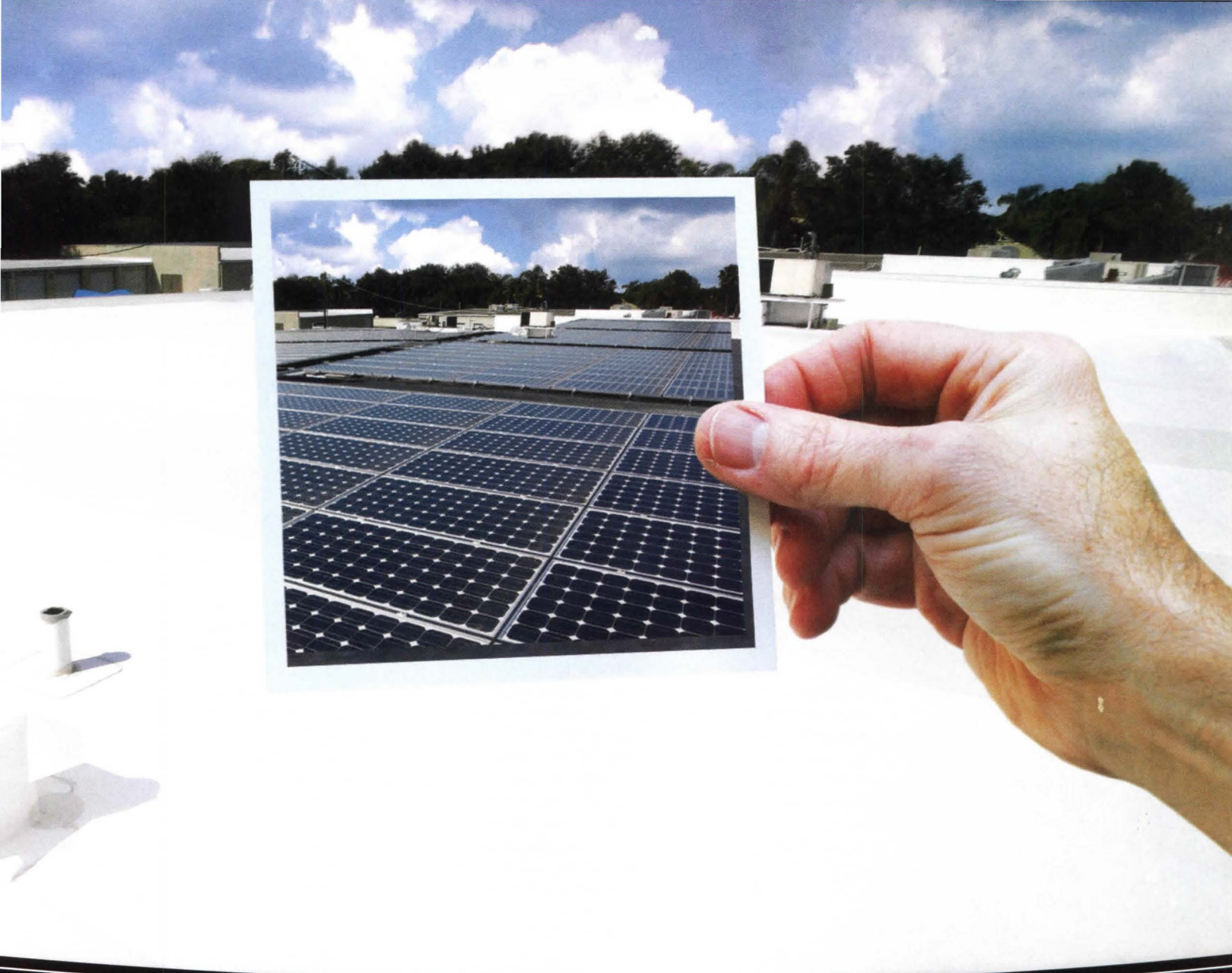
Terreform soon devolved into a classic example of "Founder's Syndrome." We found it impossible to

collaborate with Sorkin as an equal. We were afflicted with one member who wished to solely control our collective mission and redefine it at will. The breaking point occurred when he forcefully introduced a project outside of our charitable goals—a seven-star luxury hotel in China. Therefore, we asked Sorkin to leave Terreform. Since that moment he has continued to pilfer our prior work as his own.

Terreform ONE (Open Network Ecology) has chosen its own direction without Sorkin and within the essence of our original mission statement. His brands of business methods are highly unethical. He has taken our logo and design work without any compensation or permission. We have no relationship with him whatsoever. Our name is trademarked, and we legally operate under the seal of New York State.

Sorkin has used a few of his academic connections to attempt to tarnish our reputation. We are being bullied and threatened by this individual. We are in the business of providing a better future. Sorkin is in the business of promoting himself and battering others as a critic. We are wasting our valuable energy in defense





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## letters

from Sorkin's tirades.

Sorkin should also realize: More nonprofit charities are a good thing. More community schools, hospitals, Habitat for Humanity chapters, etc. benefit society. We are not in competition. In fact the more nonprofit design groups, the merrier.

**Mitchell Joachim, Maria Aiolova, Oliver Medvedik**  
Terreform ONE, Brooklyn, N.Y.

### SLOW ME THE MONEY

Your editorial noting that the AIA's March Billing Index shows that the rate of decline is slowing is interesting ["Seeking Bottom," May 2009, page 10] but in spite of some effort I have been unable to find out what has actually happened to real architectural billings and employment over the last 24 months. My e-mails to the AIA on this subject fall on deaf ears; I get no response. It's obvious nobody really wants to say how bad things are, which I find inexplicable.

How can we expect Congress to pay attention to the long-term effects of a crisis in architectural billings and employment if we don't know what the numbers are? The work we have on the boards today will determine what the contractors have to build in six months. We keep hearing that construction is a critical driver for the economy but nobody seems to be looking at the speedometer.

**Neil P. Hoffmann**  
Francis Cauffman, Philadelphia

### PLUS ÇA CHANGE ...

After reviewing the *ARCHITECT* 50 [May 2009, page 42], I can't help but write you with the following observations:

Your article could have been written in 1895, 1915, 1925, 1955, 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005, or even today. Nothing has changed much in architecture. The *real* money, decent salaries, interesting projects, star recognition, and stable working conditions are still reserved for white men only. No women (who by the way are over 50 percent of the population), no Blacks, almost no Asians, and certainly no dark-skinned Hispanic people are welcome in the ranks of architectural star-power.

Yes, you followed that article with the innovative new African American museum ["National Museum of African American History and Culture," May 2009, page 55]. But let's face it, that is an "ethnic" project that "had" to show some deference to African American or African architects. Nearly every other modern profession—lawyers, doctors, financiers, scientists, even politicians—in North America has luminary senior women and people of color working in mainstream companies or in government.

But, generally speaking, if you are highly educated and licensed and you happen to be Black, female, or brown (i.e. non-white, non-Cuban Latin), you have to go off by yourself into some risky underpaid solo practice or small firm and hope that you may win something like the Freelon Group did. This professional situation is quite "separate" and very "unequal."

**James L. Wells**  
R.E. Frazier & Associates, Miami

### BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

What a great idea! We are honored to be included in your article and list of the *ARCHITECT* 50. In architecture it seems so fitting—and especially in this time—that you have decided to look beyond size. We will be sharing this with our clients and friends, and I am sure others will as well.

**Steve McDowell**  
BNIM, Kansas City, Mo.

### CREDIT WHERE CREDIT'S DUE

Your April 2009 article on the stunning new TKTS booth in Times Square ["Tickets, Please," page 50] neglected to mention the Van Alen Institute, the organizer of the design competition that sparked its creation. Nor did it give adequate credit to the design architects John Choi and Tai Ropiha, who won the competition. This does disservice to the design competition process and the architects who participate in them.

**Abby Hamlin**  
Van Alen Institute, New York



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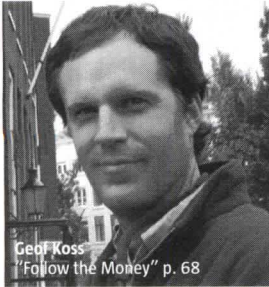
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Katie Gerfen  
"El Dorado," p. 75



Geof Koss  
"Follow the Money" p. 68

### Katie Gerfen

Washington, D.C.-based Katie Gerfen is a senior editor at ARCHITECT. Before joining the staff in January 2007, she worked at *Architecture* magazine in New York. Her love of all things architecture was instilled at an early age by working summers in her father's architecture firm in San Francisco, and continued through her studies of art and architectural history at the University of Pennsylvania, from which she graduated in 2004. Her writing has appeared in *Interior Design*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Contract*, and other publications.

For her profile of El Dorado, Gerfen spent two days observing the El Doradans in their natural habitat of Kansas City, Mo. Her favorite quirk of the firm's office—should she have to choose just one—is the El Dorado coffee, specially blended by a local beanery. A large supply of that beverage fueled the writing of her article.

### Geof Koss

Maryland native Geof Koss writes about the intersection of politics and policy for *CongressNow*, a Washington, D.C., news service. A graduate of Villanova University and the University of Colorado at Boulder, he has worked for newspapers in Colorado and Oregon and is a regular contributor to *Planning* magazine and the acclaimed political newspaper *Roll Call*.

In this issue's feature "Follow the Money," Koss reports on new policy initiatives at the Department of Energy and the Department of Transportation. Having written about energy and environmental policy for much of the presidency of George W. Bush, Koss describes the rate and scope of policy changes being implemented by the new administration as astounding.

Koss has also written for *American History* and *Adventure Cyclist* magazines. He and his wife Jen Daskal live in Washington, D.C.



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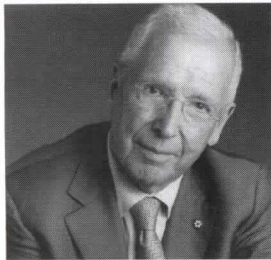
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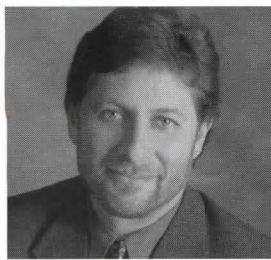
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**Arthur Erickson**, the first Canadian architect to receive an AIA Gold Medal, in 1986, **died on May 20**. He was 84. His U.S. buildings include the Canadian Embassy, in Washington, D.C., and the San Diego Convention Center.



**Clark Manus**, CEO of Heller Manus Architects, will be the AIA's 2010 first vice president and 2011 president. Urban Studio Architects principal Mickey Jacob and Cambridge Seven Associates president Peter Kuttner will serve as 2010–2012 vice presidents.

APRIL 2009  
ARCHITECTURE  
BILLINGS INDEX

↓ **42.8**

- ↑ 41.7 commercial
- ↑ 43.2 institutional
- ↑ 44.2 mixed practice
- ↑ 32.0 multifamily residential

SOURCE: AIA

# Cannon + OWP/P

FIRMS EXPECT TO FINALIZE MERGER DETAILS BY MID-SUMMER.

**M&A ACTIVITY** generally drops during economic downturns, so the news that Cannon Design and OWP/P would be joining forces came as something of a surprise. Was Chicago-based OWP/P, a firm of 275, in financial straits? Was Cannon, whose 800 staff are in 15 offices across the U.S. and elsewhere, looking for a way to offset declining work during a global recession?

Neither, it turns out. The firms' leadership, says

aligned. Cannon CEO Gary Miller agrees: "John and I marveled that our vision statements matched so well."

The transaction, which is expected to be finalized in July, will make Chicago among the combined firm's largest offices, with 325 people. (Both firms have small outposts in Phoenix; the new office there will have 35 staff.) For the next couple of years, says Syvertsen, OWP/P will be known as OWP/P Cannon Design.

**"THE STOCK MARKET WAS ABOVE 13,000 WHEN WE STARTED THIS CONVERSATION." —JOHN SYVERTSEN, PRESIDENT, OWP/P**

OWP/P president John Syvertsen, began discussing a possible union back in January 2008. "We had been working together on a few projects," says Syvertsen, and realized how well the firms—both of which are known for strong healthcare and education practices—

Among the issues still being ironed out: compensation—OWP/P's employee stock ownership plan will be dissolved as part of the deal—and management, both at the executive level and within each firm's practice groups. **BRAULIO AGNESE**

### → FEDERAL UPDATE

## Two Coalitions Work to Get Congress' Attention

HIGH-PERFORMANCE BUILDINGS, TRANSPORTATION POLICY AT STAKE. ALSO: ULI RELEASES TOUGH REPORT ON U.S. INFRASTRUCTURE.

### April 20–24

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposes cutting mercury emissions from portland cement plants—the fourth largest source of mercury air emissions in the U.S., according to the agency.

### April 27–May 1

The third annual U.S. infrastructure report by the Urban Land Institute, "Pivot Point," takes the nation to task for lacking a comprehensive infrastructure development plan

and for not wisely planning the use of stimulus money.

### May 4–8

The High Performance Building Congressional Caucus Coalition—a 60-member group of organizations and companies that acts as Capitol Hill's information clearinghouse on green construction—sends Congress six recommendations for high-performance federal buildings. Among them: integrated project delivery and the use of

building information modeling.

### May 11–15

With the U.S. Department of Transportation holding \$11.7 billion in stimulus funds and Congress debating the next transportation spending bill, a political advocacy platform by Transportation for America—a coalition of mayors, construction industry groups, and others—calls for policy coordination across local, state, and federal lines. **ETHAN BUTTERFIELD**

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**Min | Day's** wheelchair-accessible **residential pool** was one of 20 designs to receive a 2009 AIA Small Project Award.



**SHoP Architects** was named the architecture design category winner in the Cooper-Hewitt's **2009 National Design Awards**.



**Miami Marine Stadium** (1963), designed by **Hilario Candela**, is one of 11 sites on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "Most Endangered Historic Places" list for 2009.



Houston's **Buffalo Bayou Promenade**, by **SWA Group**, received the Award of Excellence, General Design Category, in the American Society of Landscape Architects' 2009 Professional Awards.

# The Academic Shuffle



## CORNELL UNIVERSITY

**Dagmar Richter**, principal of DR\_D, will become chair of Cornell's Department of Architecture, effective July 1. Previously, she was a professor in UCLA's Department of Architecture and Urban Design, where she had taught since 1989.

Richter has also held teaching positions at Harvard's GSD, the Rhode Island School of Design, the Cooper Union, and Columbia University.

## RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

**Evan Douglis**, principal of Evan Douglis Studio, will become dean of Rensselaer's School of Architecture, effective Aug. 1. Previously, he was chair of the



undergraduate department at Pratt Institute's School of Architecture. Before that, Douglis was an assistant associate professor at Columbia University. In 2008, he was awarded a distinguished professorship by the City College of New York.



## UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

**Jennifer Wolch** will become dean of the UC College of Environmental Design, effective July 1. Previously, she was a professor of geography and urban planning at the

University of Southern California. A leading scholar of urban analysis and planning, she was the founding director of USC's Center for Sustainable Cities and also the founding dean of graduate programs for the university's College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences.



## UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

**Kim Tanzer**, a practicing architect and University of Florida architecture professor, will become dean of UVA's School of Architecture, effective July 1. An instructor at UF since 1988, Tanzer has also served as president of the

Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture and was a co-founder and founding director of the Florida Community Design Center.

# Holcim Names Global Award Winners



**THE SECOND CYCLE** of the three-year Holcim Awards for Sustainable Construction ended with the naming of the Global Award winners. Receiving top honors was an urban development scheme for Fez, Morocco (above), by Aziza Chaoui and Takako Tajima. (See ARCHITECT's January 2007 issue for an earlier version of the project, which earned Chaoui a P/A Award.) Learn more at [holcimfoundation.org](http://holcimfoundation.org).

• **Gold Award:** River remediation and urban development scheme, Fez, Morocco; **Aziza Chaoui**, Extramuro, and **Takako Tajima**, Urban Studio.

• **Silver Award:** Low-impact greenfield campus, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; **Kazuhiro Kojima**, Coelacanth and Associates, and **Trong Nghia Vo**, Vo Trong Nghia Ltd.

• **Bronze Award:** Sustainable planning for a rural community, Beijing; **Yue Zhang**, Tsinghua University School of Architecture, and **Feng Ni**, Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning.

• **Innovation Prize:** Day labor station, San Francisco; **Liz Ogbu**, Public Architecture, and **John Peterson**, Public Architecture/Peterson Architects.

• **Jury:** Charles Correa (chair), Peter Head, Enrique Norton, Saskia Sassen, Hans-Rudolf Schalcher, and Rolf Soiron.



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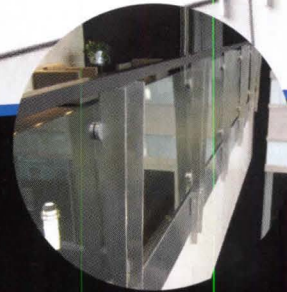
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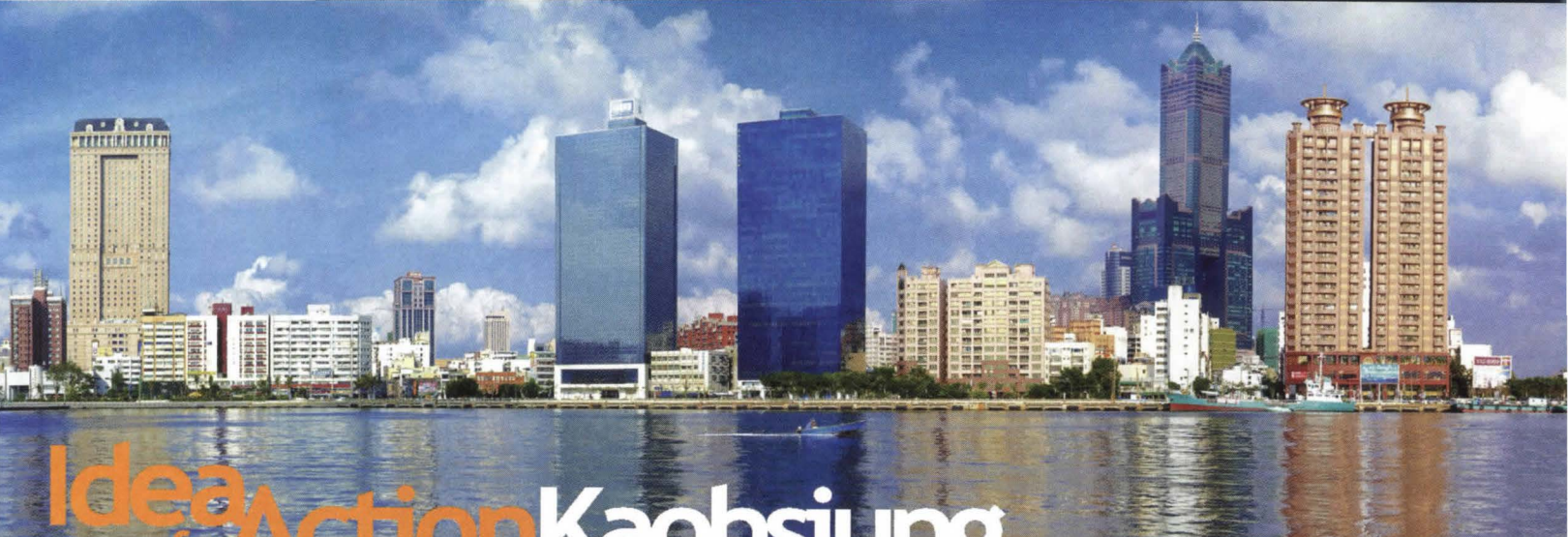
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# Idea for Action Kaohsiung

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In 2009 the World Games and 33rd congress of the International Urban Development Association (INTA) will be held in Kaohsiung city. The "Idea for Action, Kaohsiung" International Competition is organized jointly by the Kaohsiung city government and the International Urban Development Association (INTA). The idea is to invite the assistance of young people with a unique understanding of urban development and governance from around the world. They are encouraged to come up with innovative ideas for the future development of Kaohsiung on the basis of such recent trends as "Redevelopment of Harbor Waterfront", "Strengthening Core Urban Functions" and "Increasing City Habitability".

### **Qualification:**

Anyone born after 1970 (including 1970)

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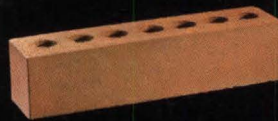
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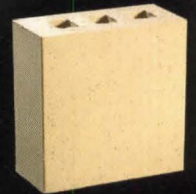
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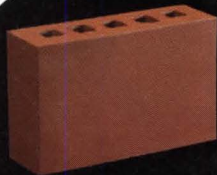
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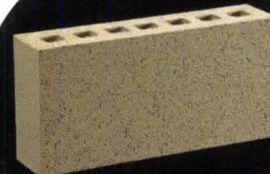
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**DOUBLE UTILITY**  
3<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> X 7<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> X 11<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>



**DOUBLE MONARCH**  
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# BUSINESS



TEXT BY EDWARD KEEGAN  
PHOTO BY MATT GREENSLADE

## → BEST PRACTICES

# Virtual Water Cooler

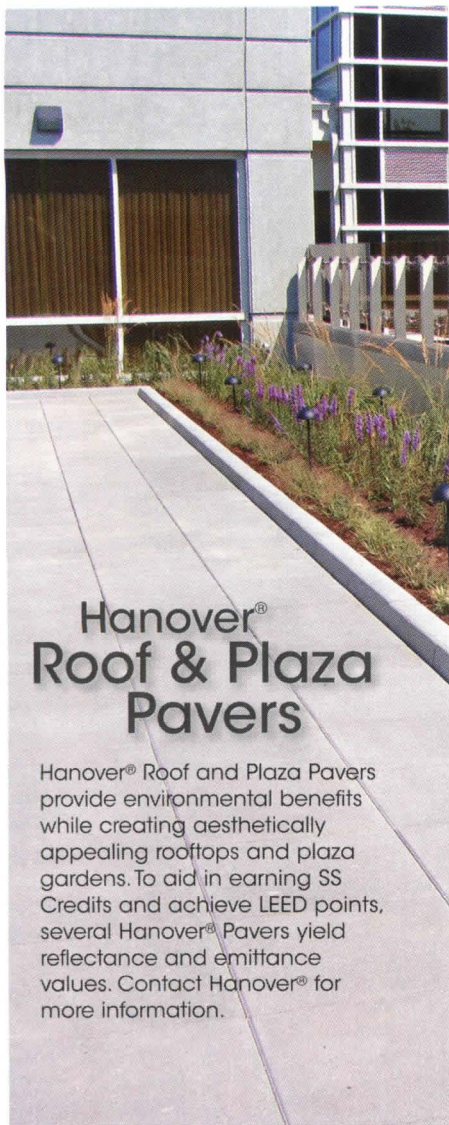
YOUR INTRANET CAN HOST FAR MORE THAN CORPORATE BOILERPLATE AND BENEFITS DETAILS. PERKINS EASTMAN USES ITS SYSTEM TO FOSTER COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION.

**JENNIFER CARREL WAS HIRED** eight years ago by New York-based Perkins Eastman to create the firm's knowledge management department and spearhead the development of its intranet, now known as ORCHARD (Online Resource for the Creative Harvest of Architecturally Relevant Discovery). The Indianapolis native is not an architect but previously consulted

for nonprofits and arts organizations. As director of knowledge management, she heads a staff of five within the 650-person firm. "We're parallel to IT, HR, and operations," she says of her department. "We sit at that same level and work between and with those groups."



Jennifer Carrel, Perkins Eastman's director of knowledge management and manager of the firm's intranet, says her staff comes from IT and internal communications. "It's a customer service role."



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### How are intranets organized?

Most are very transactional—a place where you go to get templates and forms and look up information on your HR benefits.

### What makes ORCHARD different?

It's the homepage when you turn on your computer. Our website designer does the look and feel for ORCHARD. Everybody sees firm news when they log in. There are 11 practice areas, and communities are focused around the practice areas and other areas of interest:

communications, with a couple from IT. It's a customer service and communications role. They need to have a strong background understanding the technology.

### How is ORCHARD related to the Perkins Eastman website?

They are two different systems, but they're tightly integrated. We link back and forth and try not to duplicate information. The press releases on ORCHARD link to the same piece of content on the public website. On ORCHARD,

**“FACEBOOK IS BECOMING AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE WAY WE ALL COMMUNICATE, AND ORCHARD IS THAT FOR THE FIRM. THE WALL BETWEEN PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL IS BREAKING DOWN ON SOME LEVELS.”**

the IDP program, people who are studying for the LEED exam. There are tons of resources, including study groups. It's a forum for communication and sharing.

### Are some communities more successful than others?

Senior living is very active, with three gatekeepers—experts in that area. They're in different offices, so it bridges the geographic gap and gets other people excited and involved. Staff submit questions, and there's a dialogue. Depending on the type of content, it can be built back into the core content, or it can just live as that conversation for future reference.

there is an “About Perkins Eastman” section that goes into a lot more detail than the website. The staff can read the strategic plan, things that are just internal.

### Is it available outside the office?

You can link to it through your BlackBerry, and you have full access via laptop with employee login. We had a team in India give a presentation. After the first meeting, they got feedback [from the potential client] that they needed to focus on other areas. They spent the whole night pulling down information and images on other projects [from ORCHARD] for their second presentation.

### How do you introduce ORCHARD to new staff?

Everybody has access on day one, but there are different levels of access. New-hire ORCHARD orientation for all staff is about two and a half hours. It takes staff through all the resources that are available—codes, MasterSpec, databases, project management, and our communities, which are unique to our intranet—getting them to understand where they can find information. Then you have more-advanced training based on your role.

### How much does ORCHARD cost?

It's not so much a financial commitment as one of staff and culture. There are staff salaries—that's a financial commitment—but in terms of software, we're very lean. We started with basic HTML. It really didn't take much. The main investment is the time and culture commitment. It has to be owned by the staff. Figuring out how to make that happen is key.

### How do you interact with IT?

They're the infrastructure support. If we have ideas or want to implement new technology, we'll talk to them about our research, what we think is best for the user, and what we already have in place.

### How is the intranet evolving?

We're transitioning to a new software system, building in wiki technology and social-networking tools. Facebook is becoming an integral part of the way we all communicate, and ORCHARD is that for the firm. We're adding blogs to the community spaces and getting people connected to other people who can help them. The wall between personal and professional is breaking down on some levels. It will be interesting. □

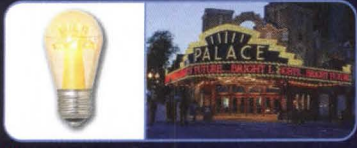
### Are your knowledge management people architects?

No. They're mostly from internal

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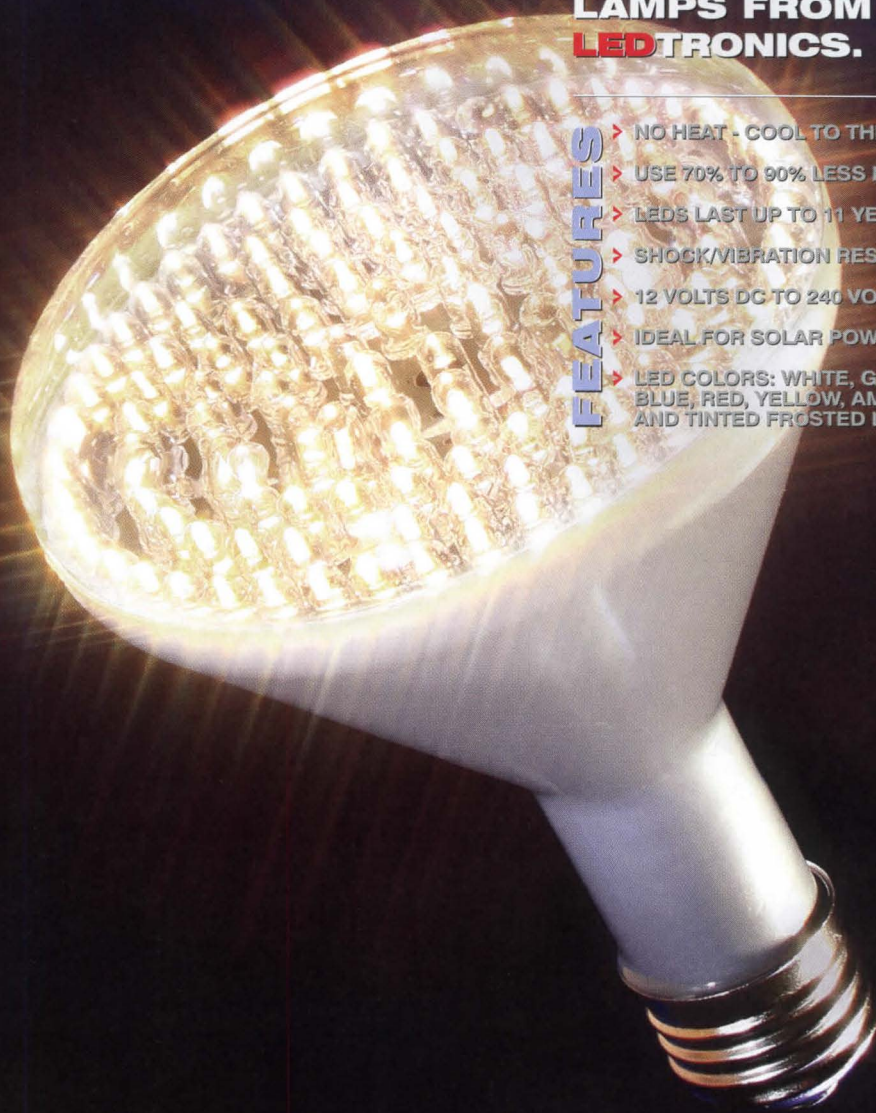
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TEXT BY EDWARD KEEGAN  
PHOTO BY JASON INNES

For Joe Church (left) and Joe Miller, designing for a specific typology hasn't just kept the firm afloat during a recession, it's led to growth: Earlier this year, their firm added two staff members because business is so good.

→ SPECIALIST

# By Tooth and Nail

JOE ARCHITECT'S FOCUS ON DENTAL OFFICES HAS RESULTED IN SMILES ALL AROUND—EVEN IN A DOWN ECONOMY.

**DENTISTRY MIGHT BE** seldom discussed in architectural circles, but it's proved to be a lucrative primary business for the Denver-based firm Joe Architect. Earlier this year the four-year-old, five-person firm expanded to seven—adding another licensed architect and an architectural intern to the staff—because of its specialization in designing offices for dentists and orthodontists.

The firm's genesis began in the mid-1990s, when Joe Miller (a Long Island native) and Joe Church (from Indiana) met while working at Elizabeth Wright Ingraham's office in Colorado Springs, Colo. Miller was a project architect with almost a decade's worth of experience after graduating from Tulane University, while Church was on an internship from Ball State University. Church returned to Ball State to complete his degree, and then worked for firms in Denver and Boston, but the pair kept in touch, with a mind toward eventually teaming up. Miller (the elder Joe) established

his own firm first, in Denver. Although he worked under the conventional moniker of Joseph Miller Architect, he acquired the joearchitect.com domain name several years before the two became business partners.

The dental specialty began with a single project 10 years ago. A well-known Denver pediatric dentist was moving from an 800-square-foot office to a 10,000-square-foot space, and although the new building had a tenant architect, that firm didn't want to provide the level of hand-holding the client desired. Enter Miller, who admits he did the work without any knowledge of the specific demands of dental office design. Learning on the fly, he realized the typology offered opportunities: The work was interesting, the budget was reasonable, and the client was looking for something special.

That project led to two more with the same client—



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and a reputation that spread within the close-knit dental community. Eventually, the Joes teamed up with what they saw as complementary business skills: Miller leads the marketing and networking efforts, and Church deals with business and organizational issues. They adopted the "Joe Architect" name to bring levity to the enterprise, but not without some dispute. "Our attorney was disgusted

dental office, and the Joe Architect team's knowledge of the various cabinet requirements helps it solve these technical requirements while also providing a consistent aesthetic experience and saving money. Dental equipment vendors typically provide a single specialty cabinet for \$8,000 to \$10,000, but Joe Architect can design a custom unit for \$3,500 to \$4,000. "We don't assume that any part of the office should fall outside the realm of design," says Church.

Last year, 80 percent of the firm's projects and

## LAST YEAR, 80 PERCENT OF JOE ARCHITECT'S PROJECTS AND 90 PERCENT OF ITS REVENUE WERE RELATED TO DENTISTRY.

at the idea that we'd call ourselves anything other than Miller & Church Architects," says Church. Miller adds, "He's no longer our attorney."

Church says of dental offices, "It's technically a very dense program." Intricate plumbing provides one challenge—it's needed not just for water, but piped gases as well, including nitrous oxide and oxygen—and separate dental equipment drawings form part of each project's contract document set. While the waiting room would seem to be the primary aesthetic opportunity, Church says it's really the minute differences in how doctors work that affect each design.

Beyond systems, millwork forms a large part of any

90 percent of its revenue were dentistry related; the remainder came mostly from residential and boutique hospitality. Two new project types build on the Joes' dental experience: a veterinary hospital and a mortuary. Like a dental office, these types combine specific technical requirements with a marketing need for some aesthetic differentiation. And despite the current economy, banks are still lending to these businesses, which seldom default on loans. "The money is still flowing," notes Miller.

Another benefit is better dental hygiene. Both Joes see former clients for their checkups. Church claims to always have been diligent in caring for his teeth, but Miller admits that these days, "I'm way better at flossing." □

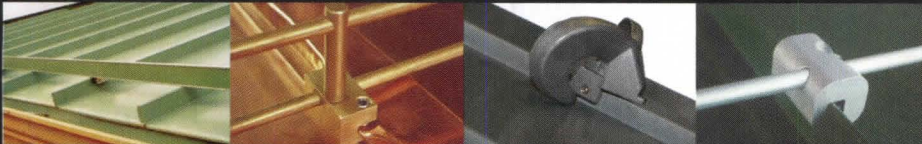
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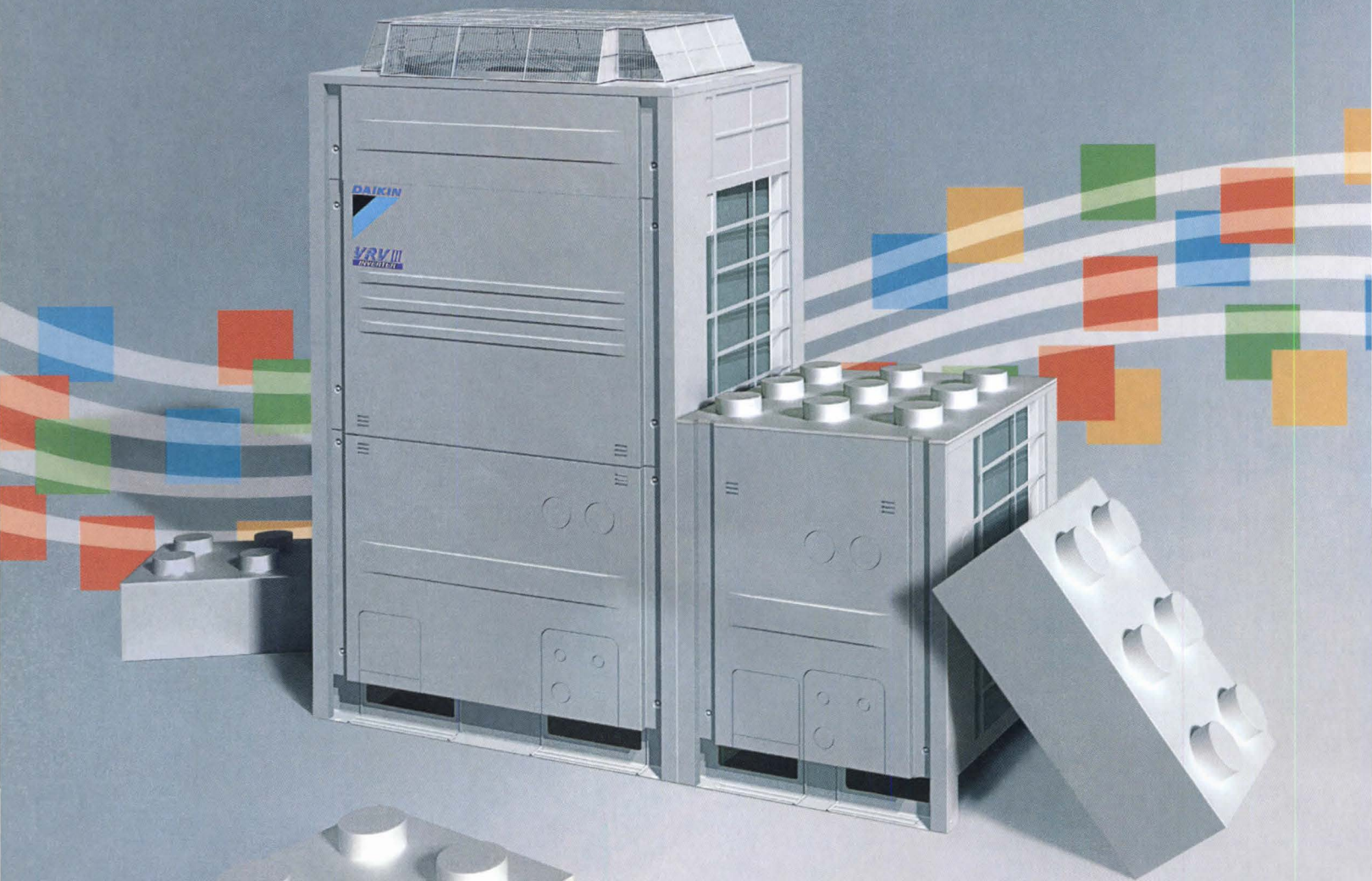
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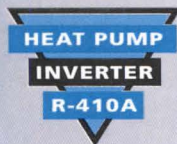
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### → LOCAL MARKET

# Bloomington-Normal, Ill.

TEXT BY MARGOT CARMICHAEL LESTER



#### 1. Bloomington-Normal Bus Facility (Bloomington)

**ARCHITECT:** PSA-Dewberry, Peoria, Ill. **COMPLETION:** 2010. **BRIEF:** Will replace 60-year-old facility. The Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System is requesting \$2.5 million in partial funding from the Recovery Act.

#### 2. Heartland Community College Workforce (Normal) Development Center

**ARCHITECT:** BLDD Architects, Bloomington. **COMPLETION:** 2007. **BRIEF:** First state-funded LEED-certified building, part of \$60 million campus-expansion project. Winner, 2008 Sustainable Design Honor Award, AIA Central Illinois.

#### 3. Multimodal Transport Center (Normal)

**ARCHITECT:** Ratio Architects, Indianapolis. **COMPLETION:** 2011. **BRIEF:** \$23 million transit hub will also have retail and office space. Seeking LEED Gold.

#### 4. Uptown One (Normal)

**ARCHITECT:** Ratio Architects, Champaign, Ill. **COMPLETION:** 2010. **BRIEF:** \$34 million, 171,000-s.f. mixed-use building, first phase of a three-building project. Seeking LEED Silver.

#### POPULATION/EMPLOYMENT

**BLOOMINGTON:** 74,975 residents, up 16% since 2000;  
**NORMAL:** 50,519, up 11% since 2000. Job growth: -2.9%, February 2008–February 2009.

#### RESIDENTIAL MARKET

2008 median home sale price: \$177,194.

#### MARKET STRENGTHS

- Low cost of living
- Excellent education resources
- Robust transportation infrastructure

#### MARKET CONCERNS

- Declining employment
- Controlling sprawl
- Economic uncertainty

#### FORECAST

"We are seeing a renewed commitment to the Normal and Bloomington city centers, from both a commercial and residential redevelopment perspective," says Paula Pratt, director of business development for Bloomington's BLDD Architects, adding, "We are also seeing an improved range of housing options." □

**DESPITE THE RECESSION**, there are shovels at the ready and cranes in the air around Bloomington and Normal, Ill. Both cities—which form a single metropolitan statistical area—have revitalization projects under way, a local college is expanding, and transportation infrastructure is increasing, thanks to population growth. Most of the projects are receiving some form of government funding, including from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"In many cases, these projects will help keep people employed and spending their money locally," says John Bishop Jr., a senior project architect at Bloomington-based Farnsworth Group. "[Some] also help to address deferred maintenance or expansion needed to accommodate infrastructure demands."

The cities, surrounded by farmland, are pushing green design. In Normal, for instance, all new major projects must be LEED certified, says Brooke Weishaupt, director of communications and community relations for the Economic Development Council of Bloomington-Normal, noting that the city's uptown renewal project is a pilot for the LEED for Neighborhood Development rating system. "Normal is starting to set an example for other U.S. cities as a frontrunner of sustainability."

That's all good for local architects like Bishop. "Having a front row seat for [this] is interesting," he says. "And the general commitment toward sustainability is pretty exciting." □



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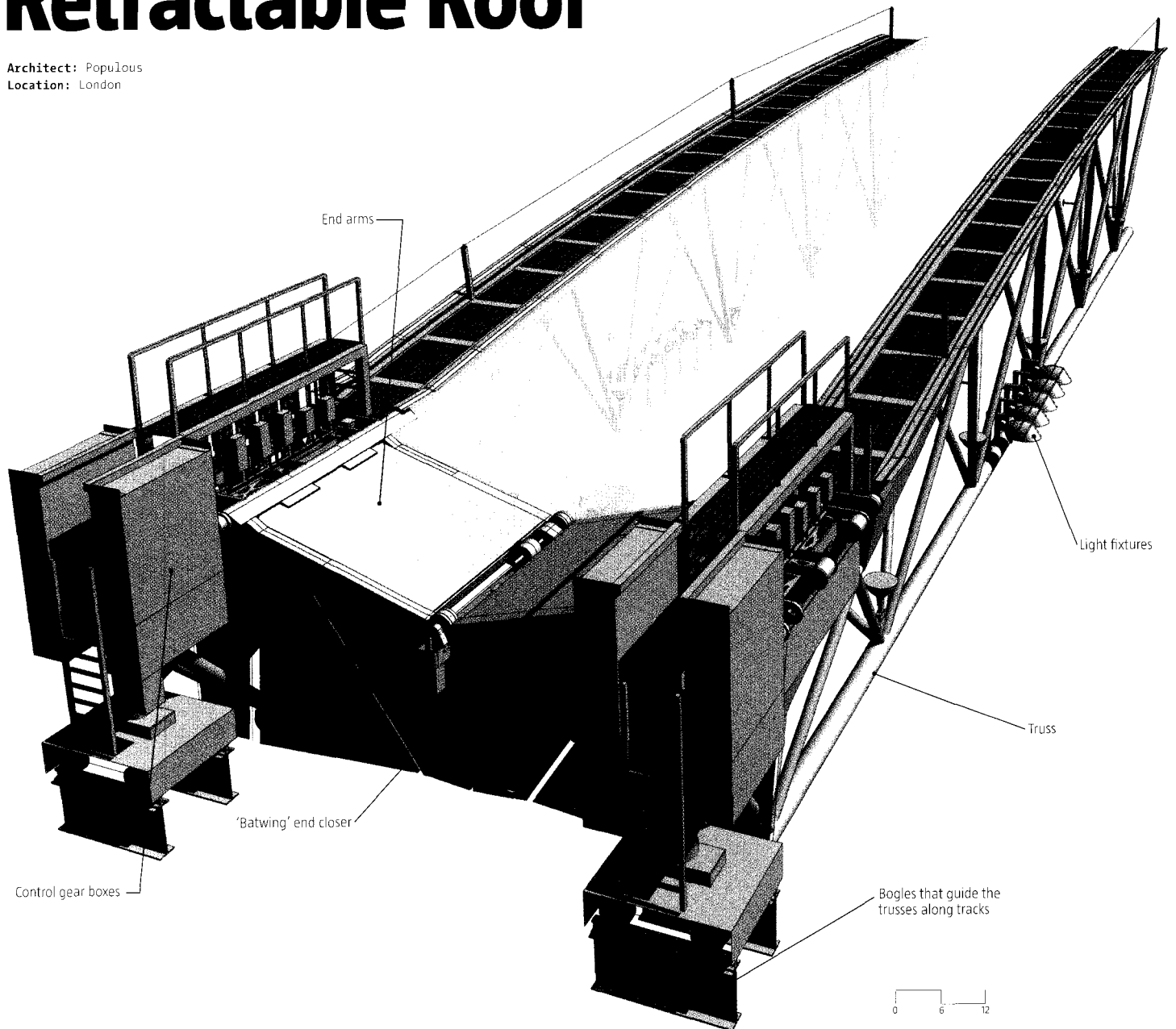
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# TECHNOLOGY

→ DETAIL

## Wimbledon Centre Court Retractable Roof

Architect: Populous  
Location: London





TEXT BY KATIE GERFEN

The renovations to Centre Court at London's All England Lawn Tennis Club, home of the Wimbledon Championships, included the installation of a 56,000-square-foot retractable roof and increased the capacity of the stadium by 1,200 seats.



**"THE GRASS IS SACRED,"** says Populous principal Dale Jennins of the courts at London's All England Lawn Tennis Club. So when Jennins' team was designing a retractable roof for the Centre Court, the main stage of the Wimbledon tennis championship, the most important thing to determine was how not to block the sunlight that feeds the world's most visible patch of grass. The result is a 65-by-75-meter (roughly 213-by-246-foot) hydraulically operated structure of translucent fabric supported by steel trusses. The new roof unfolds across the open stadium should the weather take a turn for the worse during a match.

To determine the proper placement of the roof itself, "it took a couple of years of various computer models," Jennins says. "It was a two-year process working with our graphic consultants to develop models where the light energy was optimized." The result was that the aperture for the roof had to be opened slightly.

Once the optimal aperture was calculated, the design team set about integrating the new roof within the existing structure. Built in 1922, the club has undergone many renovations over the years, some more successful than others. The architects wanted to retain the only original façade, the one on the club's south side. Since most retractable roofs are rigid, and the existing facility was not built to hold such a massive structure, a rigid

roof, when open, would create a massive overhang outside the stadium. Thus it became clear very quickly that a collapsible roof system would have to be devised. Railroad-style tracks were installed on either side of the stadium bowl, and giant steel trusses extended across. The roof covering is made from nearly 56,000 square feet of Tenara fabric from Germany's W.L. Gore & Associates, chosen because of its ability to flex and fold repeatedly without cracking. Most of the time, the roof is parked in the open position, with the trusses stacked tightly together and the fabric folded between. Should weather threaten to delay a high-profile match, the roof deploys, with the trusses moving into place on the tracks, stretching the fabric taut to form a watertight roof.

But in tennis, where the condition of the court or an ill-timed sneeze can make or break a player's mojo, there were other concerns as well. Moisture on the grass can affect a ball's bounce, so to keep humidity down when the roof is closed, over 600 air distributors pump dry air into the space—and they do so in perfect silence. To counter the extra noise that an HVAC system makes when it starts up, the team had to work on both the engineering of the system itself and the acoustics of the enclosed space.

The roof was only one part of a six-year project that included the construction of a museum and offices. But should the roof stave off rain delays in this month's televised broadcast of the championships, it, and not the grass, will be the star of the show. □





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## → LEGISLATION

# NYC Tackles Carbon Output of Current Building Stock

TEXT BY GIDEON FINK SHAPIRO

**NEW YORK CITY LAWMAKERS** have proposed a multifaceted program to reduce the carbon emissions of the city's 1 million existing buildings. The "Greener, Greater Buildings Plan" introduced on April 22, Earth Day, by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Council Speaker Christine Quinn would require all renovations—commercial and residential, public and private—to be green renovations. While signature high-rises such as Foster + Partners' Hearst Tower and Cook + Fox's Bank of America Tower have magnified the image of sustainable architecture, the environmental impact of new construction is limited by the preponderance of older buildings. "It's in existing buildings that the real progress lies," says Rohit Aggarwala, director of long-term planning and sustainability for the Mayor's Office of Operations.

Comprising four energy-related bills and two programs for financing and job training, the plan closes a loophole that has until now allowed renovations to skirt the International Energy Conservation Code if they encompass less than half of the building. Owners of buildings larger than 50,000 square feet, which constitute nearly half of the city's total built square footage, would also be required to conduct an energy audit every 10 years and make efficiency

**"It's in existing buildings that the real progress lies."**

—Rohit Aggarwala, director of long-term planning and sustainability, Mayor's Office of Operations

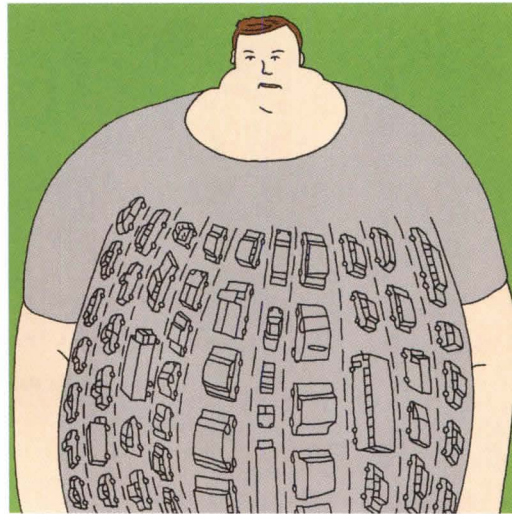
improvements that would pay for themselves within five years. These market-based criteria address a general concern that regulation, in the words of Kohn Pedersen Fox principal Paul Katz, "can sometimes create a disincentive to do what's best." The city will also apply for \$16 million in stimulus funds to help pay for energy-efficient retrofits.

The "Greener, Greater Buildings Plan" is the latest piece of Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC 2030, a comprehensive, 25-year effort, launched in 2007, to reduce New York's carbon emissions by 30 percent. In a press release, the mayor's office said this new program could reduce the city's total carbon footprint by 5 percent—roughly equivalent to eliminating all carbon emissions from Oakland, Calif. A hearing on the plan is scheduled for June 11. □

## → ECO

# Supersize Us

AS AMERICA'S FREEWAYS GET FATTER, SO DO WE.

TEXT BY LANCE HOSEY  
ILLUSTRATION BY PETER ARKLE

**AMERICA'S OBSESSION WITH SUPERSIZING** has ballooned from burgers, sodas, and lattes to SUVs, houses, and now freeways. Cities including Atlanta, Phoenix, and Washington, D.C., propose to widen some freeways to 24 lanes, or 400 feet—enough space for two 747s, side by side. The El Toro "Y" interchange in Orange County, Calif., already has 26 lanes. If this trend continues, you'll need binoculars to find your exit.

How wide can freeways get before paving over entire cities? In the near future, these new "fatways" may actually *become* cities. **A recent report by Arizona State University says U.S. population growth over the next few decades will gravitate toward two dozen superarteries**, such as the nearly 300-mile "Sun Corridor" planned for Arizona. Stretching from Mexico through Phoenix and Tucson with development along the entire length, it will double the area's population—a linear megalopolis.

But even subtle growth can have a dramatic impact. The environmental activist group Friends of the Earth estimates that just 10 miles of a new four-lane highway create the equivalent lifetime emissions of nearly 47,000 Hummers, and the public health implications are equally alarming. **By overfeeding development, highways are fattening up America and Americans at the same time. A Georgia Tech study shows that every hour spent in a car each day increases the likelihood of obesity by 6 percent, while walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods decrease it by 7 percent**, lowering the overall relative risk of obesity by 35 percent. The National Institutes of Health links obesity to decreased life expectancy, so more highways mean more sprawl, more fat, and shorter lives. Our roads are literally killing us.

**Freeway expansion is intended to relieve congestion, but in fact it encourages more commuting and longer distances, so cities are trapped in a vicious cycle, enabling overdevelopment.** The insidious sprawl of my hometown, Houston, was one of the reasons I left; it seemed impossible to do anything without a car, and "pedestrian" was a pejorative term. So imagine my shock when the city began reclaiming its inner-city neighborhoods and installed a light-rail transit system. If Houston can do it, any place can.

Beefing up an overstrained highway system is like force-feeding burgers to a heart-attack victim. A good remedy for both problems is simply to encourage more exercise: less driving, more walking. It doesn't take much to start making communities fitter instead of fatter. □

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Bed time! But have you ever stopped to think what might lurk within the threads of that tufted fabric headboard? If it were crafted of ceramic tile, digitally printed with imagery that looks for the world like elegant satin fabric, the desired aesthetic would be achieved, sans any sanitation issues.

An additional health benefit of tile is its affect on indoor air quality. It's hypoallergenic and is neither an original nor secondary source of pollution, releasing no fibers, gases or toxic byproducts, and absorbing no odors such as smoke, paint fumes or other contaminants. Ceramic tile is a healthier, safer option for pool and spa areas, as well. It inhibits the growth of mold, mildew, fungus and other organisms, as well as providing excellent slip resistance.

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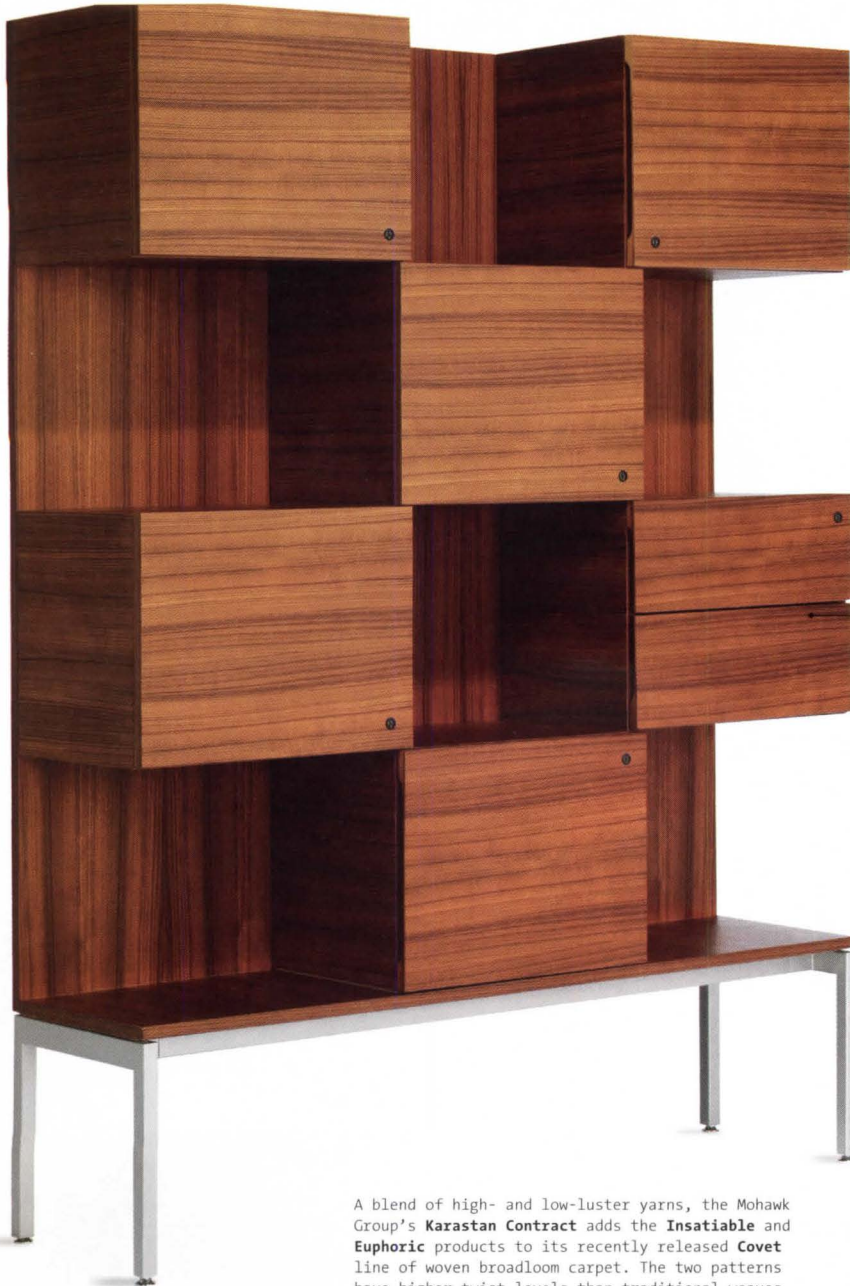
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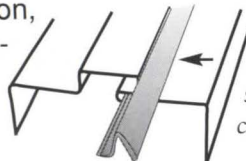
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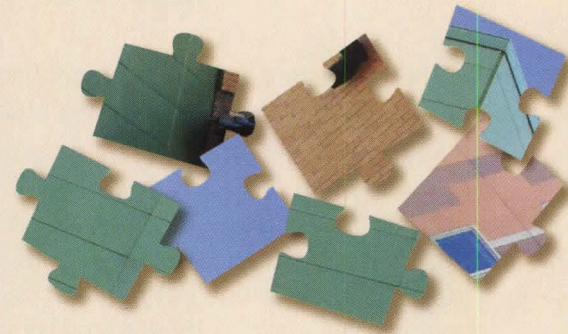
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Haworth's **LIM** (Light In Motion) task light is simple in form, but that simplicity allows it to be used in different ways in open and closed floor plans. Designed by Pablo Pardo and Ralph Reddig, LIM can be used as a desk lamp, floor lamp, or mounted fixture, and it can be installed under a work surface. The sleek LED light is simple to adjust, and uses a minimal amount of materials in its construction. • [haworth.com](http://haworth.com) • Circle 105



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→ PRODUCTS

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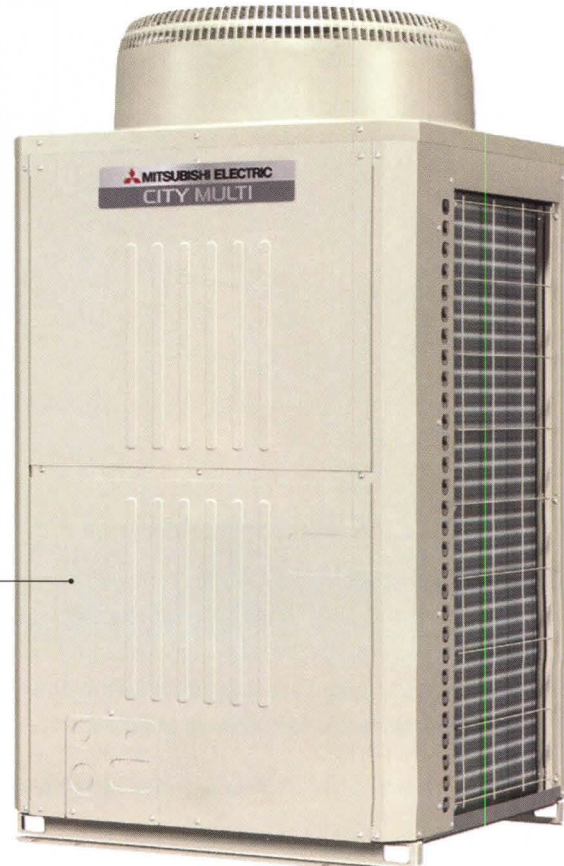


**Element**, a new offering from **Big Ass Fans**, brings air movement technology from large industrial buildings down to the scale of commercial spaces. Working with a building's existing HVAC system, Element moves cooled air around, eliminating hot and cold spots. The oil-free, permanent magnet prime mover that powers the 12'-diameter fan runs silently and is constantly monitored by an onboard control system. Available with blades in nine standard colors. • [bigassfans.com](http://bigassfans.com) • Circle 108



**Onset** has released a suite of five plug-in AC current sensors by Veris, self-powered transducers that plug directly into the external input jacks of Onset's HOBO U12-006 data loggers to measure current and amperage, information which can then be analyzed by the company's HOBOware software. The sensors range in price from \$90 to \$115, the U12-006 data logger is \$105, and the HOBOware software is \$45. • [onsetcomp.com](http://onsetcomp.com) • Circle 110

The new **Y-** and **R2-Series** outdoor units from **Mitsubishi Electric** are designed to be more flexible, smaller, and easier to maintain than previous HVAC units. Both are shorter and narrower than previous models to facilitate installation, are enclosed in metal panels to minimize noise pollution, and feature piping connections and a control box located at eye level to make maintenance easier. The modules come in sizes from 6 to 10 tons, can be combined to form a system up to 30 tons, and use the company's Variable Refrigerant Zoning System to control as many as 50 separate zones. • [mehvac.com](http://mehvac.com) • Circle 109







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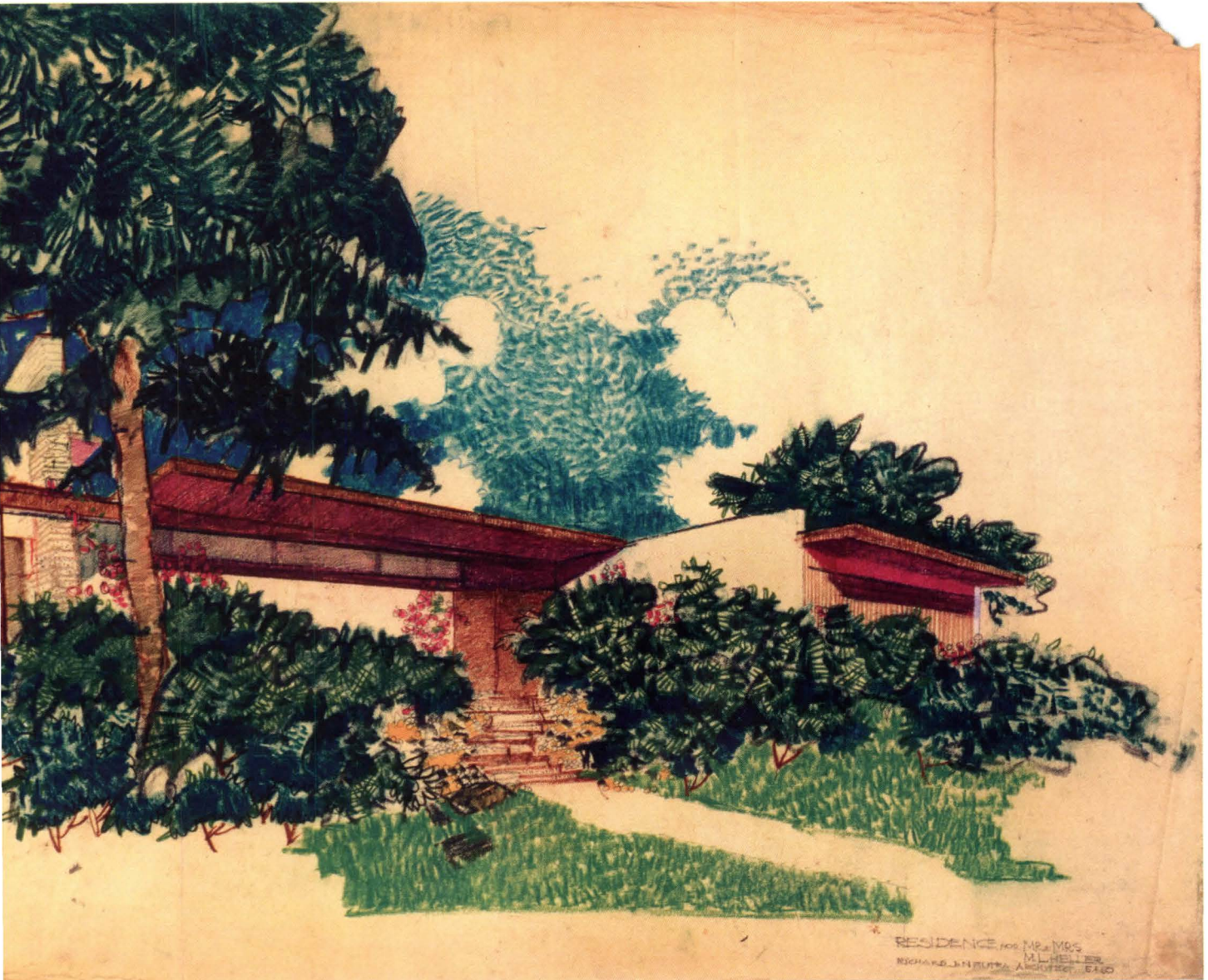
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# CULTURE



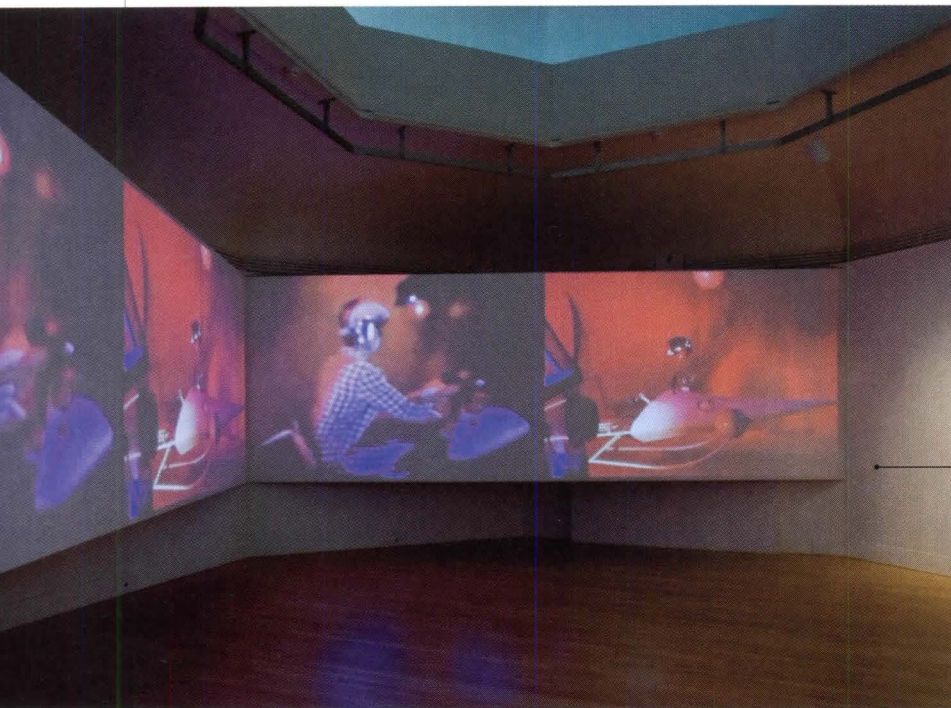
## → EXHIBIT

Famous for the architecture he designed, **Richard Neutra** also made art of what he saw, documenting the world around him with pen, pencil, and watercolor brush from the time he was an itinerant student in 1913 until his death in 1970. The **Central Library in Los Angeles** presents an exhibition of a lifetime's worth of the architect's travel sketches, figure drawings, and building renderings—including the Heller House (above), from 1950. Through Sept. 6. [lapl.org](http://lapl.org)



→ EXHIBIT

After showings in France and Spain, **Jordi Colomer's** solo exhibition makes its final stop at the **Laboratorio Arte Alameda** in Alameda, Mexico. The Spanish artist's *Anarchitekton* videos follow a man running through four different cities—Barcelona, Brasilia (above), Bucharest, and Osaka—with cardboard models of local buildings. And in an ongoing study of architectural simulacra, Colomer has photographed miniature houses in cemeteries in the Chilean desert. Through July 19. [www.artedalameda.bellasartes.gob.mx](http://www.artedalameda.bellasartes.gob.mx)



→ EXHIBIT

Richard Wagner's plea for *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total art) in 1849 echoed through subsequent generations, including a period in the 1960s and '70s when Montreal artists, architects, and intellectuals called for "**Total Environment.**" They envisioned mankind's liberation through information technology and celebrated it with inflatable environments, underground discotheques, and inhabitable sculptures—multimedia experiences that have nothing in common with the dreary reality of I.T. today. Vestiges of these optimistic times are on view at the **Canadian Centre for Architecture** in Montreal through Aug. 23. [cca.qc.ca](http://cca.qc.ca)

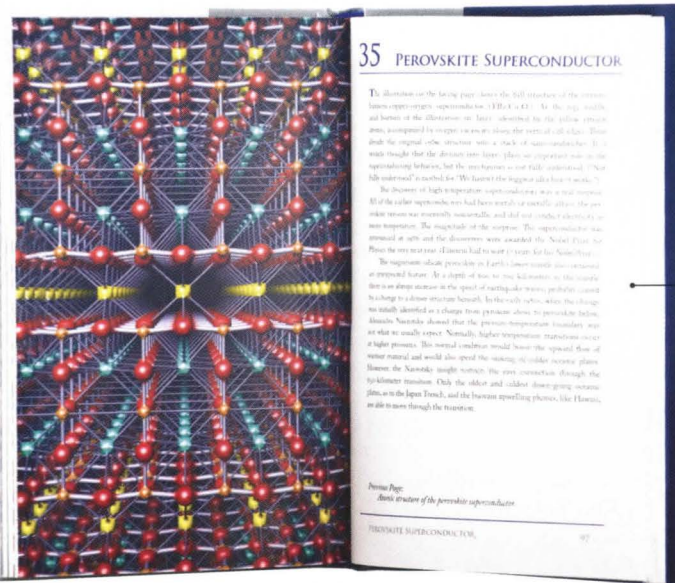
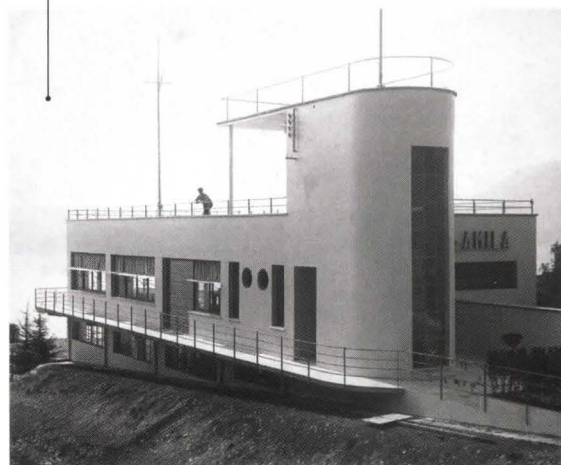


→ EXHIBIT

The **Brittany Museum** in Rennes, France, presents a major exhibition on the French mosaic tile company **Odorico**, which brought color and an Art Deco signature to towns throughout France from 1882 to 1978. Long before it was fashionable, Odorico branded its designs and developed a prefab manufacturing and installation process that maximized profits. Through Jan. 3, 2010. [leschampslibres.fr](http://leschampslibres.fr)

→ EXHIBIT

If it's possible to trace the origins of the symbiosis between architecture and photography, the 100 period photos in "**Framing Modernism: Architecture and Photography in Italy**," at the **Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art** in London, show cameras capturing a playground of reflection, contrast, and abstraction in 1920s Italian Modernism. In the early issues of *Domus* and other magazines also on view, such photos helped carry the style across borders and oceans. Through June 21. [estorickcollection.com](http://estorickcollection.com)



→ BOOK

Princeton geology professor **Kenneth Deffeyes** and his son, illustrator **Stephen Deffeyes**, have combined their respective talents in the book **Nanoscale: Visualizing an Invisible World**. In it, they reveal the atomic architecture of things most people take for granted, like air, and some most people don't even know about, like perovskite (left), a mineral found at the center of the Earth. The younger Deffeyes presents the structures in 3D illustrations that occasionally verge on the psychedelic. Brief essays—surprisingly engaging for quantum mechanics—explain each substance's significance, which is sometimes as simple as pure beauty of form. \$21.95; MIT Press • HANNAH MCCANN



TEXT BY JOHN HILL

→CRIT

# Of Ducks & Sheds

A NEW ASSESSMENT OF *LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS* CLAIMS THE BOOK HAS RELEVANCE FOR TODAY'S CRITICAL ISSUES.



John Hill, a New York City-based architect and writer, blogs at A Daily Dose of Architecture ([archidose.blogspot.com](http://archidose.blogspot.com)). He received his B.Arch. from Kansas State University and a master's in urban planning from the City College of New York.

**ROBERT VENTURI, DENISE SCOTT BROWN,** and Steven Izenour's classic, *Learning From Las Vegas*, famously pitted the Decorated Shed—the conventional structure with applied symbols—against the Duck—the building that is itself a symbol. In the years following the book's 1972 publication, the Decorated Sheds vanquished the Ducks, as Postmodernism displaced heroic Modernism as the prevailing architectural style and pedagogy. Uniform glass boxes gave way to pop whimsy rendered in plaster. Form-based meaning was supplanted by sign- and symbol-based meaning—only to lose favor in the booming '90s and the early 21st century in an orgy of complex formalism on an unprecedented scale, notably evident in the development of Las Vegas itself.

Ohio State art historian Aron Vinegar wants to remedy the belief—entrenched in the minds of architects and academics—that a dichotomy exists

between Ducks and Decorated Sheds. The title of his new scholarly analysis of *Learning From Las Vegas* comes from one of that book's best-known illustrations, "Recommendation for a monument." In it, a billboard atop an anonymous, boxy building loudly proclaims, **I AM A MONUMENT.**

This image would seem to reinforce the traditional either/or interpretation of *Learning From Las Vegas*, but Vinegar paints a picture that is more complex, dealing with ethics as well as visual communication. Via a thorough, philosophical reading of the 1972 original and the 1977 revised editions, ***I Am a Monument* aims to restore the book from its lonely place as a historical marker of the shift between Modernism and Postmodernism to the center of current debate.**

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So how could a book arising from an architecture studio at Yale in 1968, about a specific place, at a specific time, be more than a historical record? Or more than a dusty polemic against the Modernist architecture prevalent at the time? Vinegar's arguments for the book's relevance today start with his rereading of *Learning From Las Vegas* as words and images on a page, removed from historical context. This approach largely overrides both Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour's authorial intent and subsequent critical responses to the book.

Vinegar's analysis is filtered through the lens of 20th century philosophers—primarily Stanley Cavell, whose writings explore the ordinary, its expression through language, and its interpretation. Vinegar seems to have a deep understanding of *Learning From Las Vegas*, but his use of Cavell's peculiar terminology makes it difficult to grasp. For example, Cavell's interpretation of "skepticism" expands the word's common meaning, doubt of the unknown, to include being unaware of what we already know, a near inversion of the term.

What is clear is that Vinegar sees the Duck and the Shed not as oppositional and exclusionary concepts, but as intertwined ones. This extends to what he postulates as *Learning From Las Vegas*' primary themes: the dialogue between skepticism and the ordinary—the common life and language we share—and their mutual dependence on expression. As Vinegar writes, "together the Duck and the Decorated Shed are entwined as a figure of attempting to overcome [others'] skepticism."

Overcoming skepticism and acknowledging others—as Venturi,

Scott Brown, and Izenour did in analyzing the populist Sin City—leads to investigation and a desire to learn, as opposed to an outright dismissal of others' views. This idea stands out from the rest of Vinegar's analysis as the position most relevant to our contemporary situation. An acknowledgment of others, and a willingness to learn from them, would ideally lead to more ethical and responsible buildings, counter to today's predilection for outsize Ducks. *Learning From Dubai* might be a suitable extension of the original to today's condition, an analysis of another place of excess, shaped by many architects and occurring at a time of environmental crisis. The Strip gives way to Sheikh Zayed Road.

But are Vinegar's new avenues into *Learning From Las Vegas* successful enough to override the traditional interpretations of the book—namely, the acknowledgement of architecture's role in communication systems and the appreciation of vernacular environments? While Vinegar arms the architect with a new vocabulary and new ideas, they do not hold as firmly as the judgments already rooted in architects' minds—ones that, it should be noted, are fairly accurate readings of Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour's book. The authors' intentions Vinegar chooses to ignore may be too hard to shake from people's understanding of *Learning From Las Vegas*.

Vinegar's ideas add a layer to *Learning From Las Vegas*' long-held meanings, but do not displace them. Yet *I Am a Monument* is an admirable, deep analysis that points the way for other potential "books on books on architecture." Who will illuminate such classics as Rem Koolhaas' *Delirious New York*, Bernard Tschumi's *The Manhattan Transcripts*, or Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City*? □

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TEXT BY MIMI ZEIGER  
PHOTO BY SIOUX NESI

Ajmal Aqtash (left), 31, and Richard Sarrach, 34—shown here in a classroom at Pratt Institute, where both are instructors—work and play in the academic and professional realms of architecture. Their website does the same.

**AJMAL AQTASH AND RICHARD SARRACH** sit down over beers at a Brooklyn, N.Y., café near Pratt Institute, where both are design studio instructors. As they describe their website, [core.form-ula.com](http://core.form-ula.com), the conversation runs the gamut: the role of the academy in digital design, performative architecture, engineering, art, science. Posts on the site reflect the same broad approach—a profile of artist Tomás Saraceno, known for his air-filled sculptures, follows news of a handbook for the modeling program Grasshopper. A beta version of the site was launched in 2005, but the current version went live in July 2007. Since then, readership has grown steadily, with over 200,000 views in March, up 30 percent from February.

With one foot in academia and one in the profession, Aqtash—part of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Performance Design Group—and Sarrach—whose firm, [form-ula](http://form-ula.com), focuses on computer-aided design and fabrication technology—are two of a growing breed of architects split between worlds. Both use teaching and research to inspire practice, and their findings often end up on the site, a way to track changes in parametric design. "Core.form-ula is an opportunity to supplement the educational system," Sarrach notes, "but it can also service the professional world."

The site showcases student work—design studio briefs and projects from architecture schools (Pratt, the University of Pennsylvania, and SCI-Arc) pushing the boundaries of digital design. In addition to essays, videos, and visual stimulation, the site serves as a community library for the scripts, plug-ins, and other software tools needed to tweak standard CAD and modeling programs. As a resource, [Core.form-ula](http://core.form-ula.com) is still growing; expect hardware and sustainability sections in the months to come. "We're still experimenting," Aqtash says. "Multiple types of content fuse together, which gives a glimpse at the future of architecture." □

## LINKS

### [sahara.artstor.org](http://sahara.artstor.org)

The Society of Architectural Historians and ARTstor—an image library for researchers and educators—have joined forces to create the Society of Architectural Historians Architecture Resources Archive, or SAHARA. Launched in April with 10,000 images, the site is a place for SAH members to upload their own digital photographs and QTVR (360 degree) panoramic images or download those of other members. Learn more, and become a member if you aren't already, at [sah.org](http://sah.org).

### [wjmarchitect.com](http://wjmarchitect.com)

#### [/econofunctionalaesthetic.htm](http://wjmarchitect.com/econofunctionalaesthetic.htm)

New Jersey architect William J. Martin developed a formal architectural design philosophy for himself back in 1991, shortly before he opened his eponymous firm. Called "The Equilibrium of Appropriate Balance and Econo-Functional Aesthetic Balance," it is, in his words, an attempt to formulate an "architectural gestalt."

### [type.fwis.com/koolhand](http://type.fwis.com/koolhand)

Graphic designer Chris Papasadero has created a display typeface based on Rem Koolhaas' architectural forms. Not an actual font, per se, but an image file you can download.

### [zoomprospector.com](http://zoomprospector.com)

Developed by GIS Planning, a pioneer in the business of web-based geographic information systems (GIS) for economic development, Zoom Prospecter makes it easier for companies to find the best site in the U.S. for expansion or relocation.

### [chicagopublicradio.org](http://chicagopublicradio.org)

#### [/Content.aspx?audioid=34219](http://chicagopublicradio.org/Content.aspx?audioid=34219)

ARCHITECT editor at large Edward Keegan tours the recently opened Modern Wing of the Art Institute of Chicago with its designer, Renzo Piano.

### [mycommutesucks.org](http://mycommutesucks.org)

Every six years, the U.S. Congress writes a transportation spending bill, and this is the year lawmakers will hash out the newest version. If you've had it with congested, crumbling highways; crowded buses, trains, and subways; and streets that make biking to work a hair-raising adventure, let Capitol Hill and the rest of the world know it.

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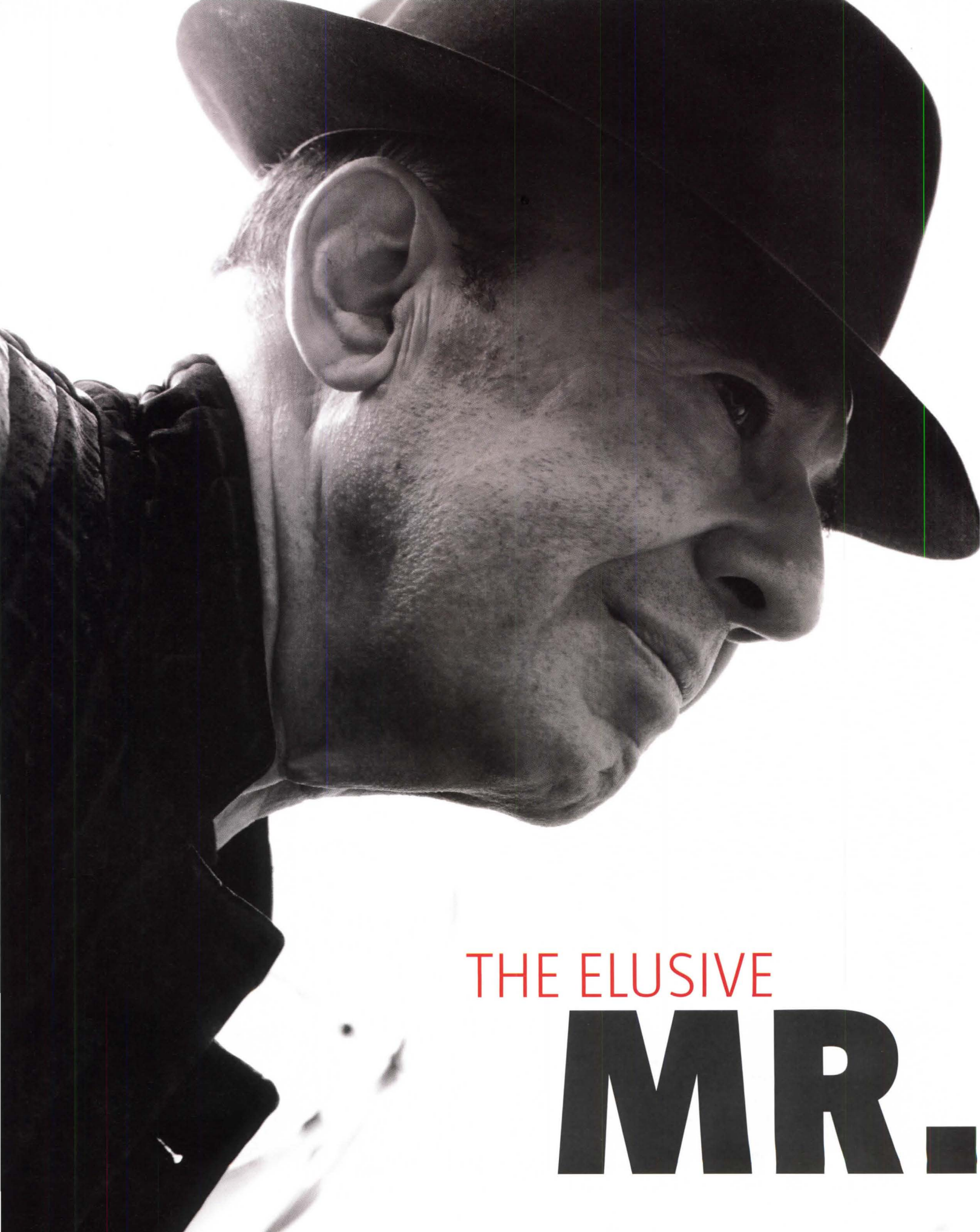


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THE ELUSIVE

**MR.**

---

TEXT BY VERNON MAYS  
PHOTOS BY SIOUX NESI

GREEN ARCHITECTS SEE HIM AS A SPIRITUAL FATHER OF THE SUSTAINABILITY MOVEMENT, AND ANY DESIGNER WOULD ENVY HIS RÉSUMÉ: A MOMA CURATORSHIP AT 25 AND A HOST OF ACCLAIMED BUILDINGS AND PRODUCT DESIGNS. DESPITE THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, **EMILIO AMBASZ** REMAINS A FIGURE OF MYSTERY, LARGELY UNKNOWN OUTSIDE THE PROFESSION.

# AMBASZ



1976: Vertebra armchair



1976: The Taxi Project exhibition at MoMA, organized by Ambasz and featuring new taxi prototypes



1985: Flexibol pen

**IN THE MIST OF** a two-hour conversation in his book-lined study, Emilio Ambasz slowly lobs a remark that lands with the bluntness of a lead pipe. “I am, honestly, an image maker,” he confesses. The statement—a gross oversimplification—lies somewhere in the murky realm between fact and fiction. The same can be said of the enigmatic persona Ambasz has created for himself.

After decades being celebrated as a student, curator, educator, architect, and industrial designer, has Ambasz crafted memorable images through his visions for buildings and mass-produced products? Absolutely. Can the totality of his wide-ranging career be summed up in such a distilled phrase? Hardly.

For testament to that fact, simply look at the validation accorded to Ambasz by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, 40 years after Ambasz was hired as a curator there. At a panel discussion held in April at the museum, scholars and veteran designers assembled to discuss the significance of the acclaimed 1972 exhibition “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape,” organized by Ambasz. A companion show this spring at Columbia University brought together for the first time since 1972 the entire set of films produced for the portion of the exhibition that focused on a series of designed “Environments.” And in October, MoMA will stage another conference to revisit Ambasz’s “Universitas” project, an unrealized effort to create an experimental university.

“‘Universitas’ was the most ambitious [of Ambasz’s curatorial projects], involving the projection of a type of university in which issues of environment and design would be central disciplinary structures,” says Barry

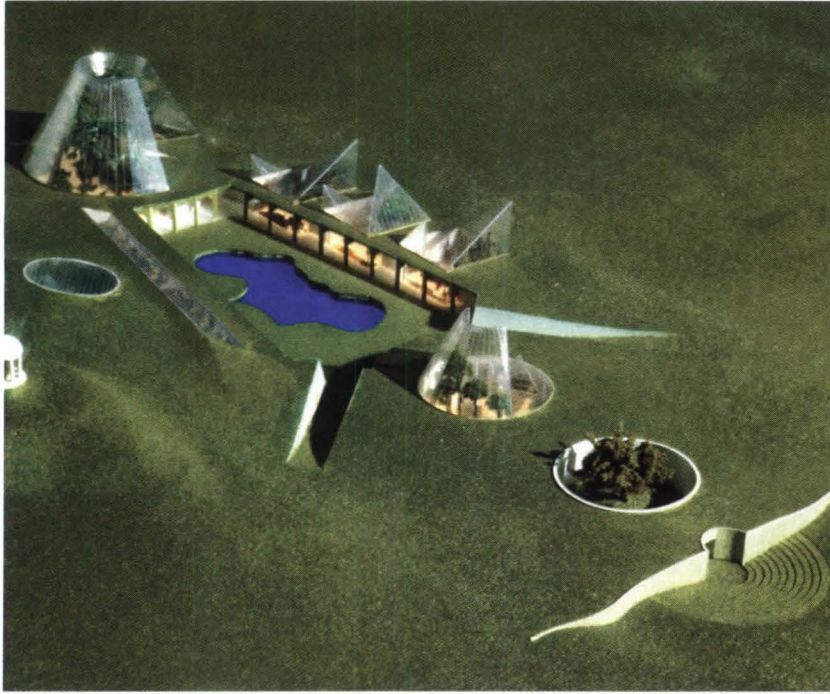
Bergdoll, MoMA’s current chief curator of architecture and design. In coming back to it, Bergdoll says, “it is our aim ... to launch a new debate at precisely a time when worldwide universities are either in a state of crisis or actively exploring what a university needs to be in the next generation and in the rest of the century.”

Since Ambasz left the museum in 1976 to pursue an independent career as a designer, he has twice been the subject of MoMA exhibitions—the first one in 1989 highlighting his architectural projects and the second, in 2005, featuring a single residence, La Casa de Retiro Espiritual in Spain.

Yet in spite of the attention lavished on him by those with a theoretical bent, as well as countless national and international honors (including three P/A Awards) and the publication of his work in international journals and in monographs, he has somehow eluded popular acclaim—and so is little known by contemporary students, is underappreciated by his colleagues in the architectural profession, and is lost in the media blur that scatters random perceptions of architecture and design among a largely unaware public. “Emilio *who?*”

### A quick study

Ambasz in person—an engaging combination of good manners, easy self-confidence, and an impish sense of humor—forms an immediate impression on the visitor to his office in a commodious Upper West Side apartment in New York. Set in contrast to the traditional domestic space are characteristic signs of a resolute modernist, from the glass-topped conference table to the sleek coffee service. Ambasz appears through the door wearing a



1988: Lucile Halsell Conservatory, San Antonio Botanical Garden



1994: Mycal Cultural and Athletic Center, Hyogo, Japan

brown pinstriped jacket over a black T-shirt. A burgundy-and-navy handkerchief peers out from the breast pocket as he extends a welcoming hand.

Born in Chaco, a subtropical province of Argentina, Ambasz says he knew he wanted to be an architect from the time he was 11. "When I was 13 years old, 14 at the most, I designed a house for a couple who were teachers of mine on a little plot of land. It was a cubist building with two cuts in the façade." By the time he was 16, Ambasz found a job in the Buenos Aires office of architect Amancio Williams, whose work he still admires. He attended high school classes at night in order to work for Williams during the day.

As the minutes drift by, Ambasz weaves stories colorful enough to invite skepticism. He claims not only to have audited architecture classes in the university as a teenager, but to have taught himself English—"a forbidden imperialist language during the rule of Juan Perón"—by reading books and watching American movies on TV. Ambasz says he watched so many American westerns that when he moved to the United States, he was ridiculed by a girlfriend for sounding like Gary Cooper.

What we know for certain is this: Ambasz entered Princeton with a rare intelligence and a passion for architecture. After two years there, he was awarded both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree. "Emilio was briefly a student of mine, if I can say that," says Kenneth Frampton, now Ware Professor of Architecture at Columbia. "But I hardly can. I mean, he was already a very precocious person and very self-competent, and there wasn't very much I could contribute."

Virtually overnight, Ambasz advanced from student to teacher at Princeton. But it wasn't long before he caught the eye of Arthur Drexler, director of the Department of Architecture and Design at MoMA. At age 25, Ambasz joined the museum's staff as a curator. "Like Thomas à Becket, I thought MoMA was a higher calling, mainly because there were no compromises there," he says now.

### MoMA years and "inventions"

From 1969 to 1976, Ambasz directed and installed numerous influential exhibitions on architecture and industrial design at MoMA, including "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape" and "The Architecture of Luis Barragán." The first of these challenged established notions of industrial design and introduced new social and political dimensions to the discussion; the second was important for its pioneering effort to bring Barragán's work into focus.

While these two exhibits—and another called "The Taxi Project"—were critical successes, Ambasz's most visionary effort at MoMA was the project to develop a new university suited to a post-technological society, his so-called "Universitas."

It was an unusual program for MoMA to undertake, an ambitious research project questioning the adequacy of prevailing institutions to deal with the increasingly complex problems of the manmade environment. More than a dozen of the world's top thinkers, including sociologist Henri Lefebvre and political theorist Hannah Arendt, assembled in New York for a symposium in January 1972. But the hopes for quick action and public

"DESIGN IS AN ACT OF **THE LONELY JUMP**. IT IS NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN DO DEDUCTIVELY."



**1994:** ACROS Fukuoka Prefectural International Hall, Fukuoka, Japan



**2008:** Venice-Mestre Hospital, Veneto, Italy



Venice-Mestre Hospital atrium

funding went unfulfilled, and MoMA did not publish the proceedings (all 500 pages of them) until 2006.

Ambasz still holds tight to the vision. “We now need a university concerned not only with measuring nature as found, but dealing with the fact that in the process of mastering nature, we are creating a new manmade nature,” he says today. “Design is an act of the lonely jump. It is not something you can do deductively. It is an inductive production, and you need different systems of thought.”

Eventually his curatorial explorations led Ambasz to delve deeper into industrial design. After seven years at MoMA, he left to pursue this new direction. Soon he brought to market his *Vertebra*, an automatically adjustable office chair he designed in collaboration with Giancarlo Piretti. The first of its kind, the *Vertebra* gave rise to an entire industry in ergonomic seating. A testament to its significance: the chair resides in the collections of both MoMA and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

A sequence of successful products followed, including a toothbrush, a watch, an electric shaver, a telephone, and a pocket-sized, folding TV. A favorite was the *Flexibol* pen made by Pentel. Designed for schoolchildren, the brightly colored ballpoint pens were made to flex, not break, when placed in a child’s pocket. But when the pen body was twisted to expose the tip for writing, its housing adjusted to create a rigid writing instrument.

The conception and detailing of these objects revealed what critic Michael Sorkin referred to as Ambasz’s “graceful tinkerer’s sense of mechanism”—

pre-electronic and decidedly non-virtual. “I have a flair for solving problems,” agrees Ambasz. “Many years ago, Alessandro Mendini, who at the time was the editor of *Domus*, asked me how I would define myself professionally. And I said I would define myself as an inventor. To me, architecture is an act of the imagination. Industrial design is an act of the imagination.”

### Built works

By the late 1980s, Ambasz was turning heads with his proposals for buildings, many of which were rendered like fantasy environments striving for a harmonious integration of building and nature. A previously little-known botanical society in San Antonio took a gamble when it commissioned Ambasz to design the Lucile Halsell Conservatory. The risk paid off: His vision of a sunken courtyard surrounded by abstract glass structures celebrating the passage from earth to sky and darkness to light was an immediate sensation. In 1989, the year after the conservatory opened, Ambasz was featured with Steven Holl in a two-part exhibition at MoMA.

There’s no doubt that the Halsell Conservatory, along with other designs such as the 1994 ACROS Fukuoka Prefectural International Hall and the 1994 Mycal Cultural and Athletic Center (both in Japan), began to reinforce his reputation for independence from the in-crowd. Why, at the height of Postmodernism, when celebrated architecture was primarily about formalism and little about tectonics, did he play a different tune?





2008: Banca dell'Occhio (eye center), Veneto, Italy



2010: Museum of Modern Art and Cinema, Buenos Aires, Argentina

"Maybe because I was a modernist," he offers. "I felt that the postmodernists were answering a need, but they were giving the wrong answer. They were acknowledging a real need for ornament. I wanted ornament too, but not in that way. My way of doing ornament is by using nature."

Ambasz is sometimes credited as a forerunner of today's sustainability movement. After all, he was pioneering green architecture before it was fashionable. But while he is sensitive to the user benefits of earth-sheltered housing, for example, the emphasis for him is not on building performance, but aesthetics. He freely admits that when he attends sustainability conferences, he feels like an interloper among the techno-savvy. "I use the science to check what I have conceived," he says. "But I don't conceive buildings in those terms. My notion is I have to create images that move the heart. If you don't move the heart, what is the point of building?"

Today Ambasz divides his time among many places—three months a year in New York and much of the rest of the year in Italy, where he maintains homes in Bologna, Venice, Milan, and Florence. Working from so many locales, he continues to build in far-flung places. In Venice, he recently completed a 680-bed hospital that includes a large "winter garden" and an adjacent ophthalmological center with a stepped green roof. His Museum of Modern Art and Cinema in Buenos Aires is scheduled for completion in 2010. Other works-in-progress include an apartment building in Switzerland, a hotel and residential development in Malaysia, and a large hotel in upstate New York. For such a small

boutique firm, the output is astounding.

What helps is that, in most cases, Ambasz's clients are other architects. Ambasz—who has an Argentinian architectural license and the designation of Hon. FAIA—is called in to do the preliminary design and design development drawings, or sometimes as little as a sketch, and the local registered architect does the working drawings and supervises construction. "I do not have legal power," Ambasz explains. "But I have moral power to control the project."

Ambasz's incredible intellect and breadth of production put him in rare company. So how has he avoided celebrity status? Why, in spite of the accolades, does one sense that he is content to operate on the fringes of professional culture?

The answers are as elusive as the man himself. One comes from Alessandro Mendini, who suggests in a passage on Ambasz's own website that his "very large and complex body of work doesn't seem to seek the friendship of the academy, nor care to contribute to the canonical history of architecture, design, and language."

Another possibility emerges in conversation with Kenneth Frampton, who hastens to describe Ambasz as warm, witty, and just, but acknowledges his lingering inscrutability. "The stories he tells you about his life are sometimes preposterous, in a way, given what you know of his life history. But I've never had any reason to disbelieve anything he ever said to me. In that sense, he remains a bit of a mystery. And he likes to remain a mystery." □

"I WANTED ORNAMENT TOO, BUT NOT IN [THE POSTMODERN] WAY. MY WAY OF **DOING ORNAMENT** IS BY USING NATURE."



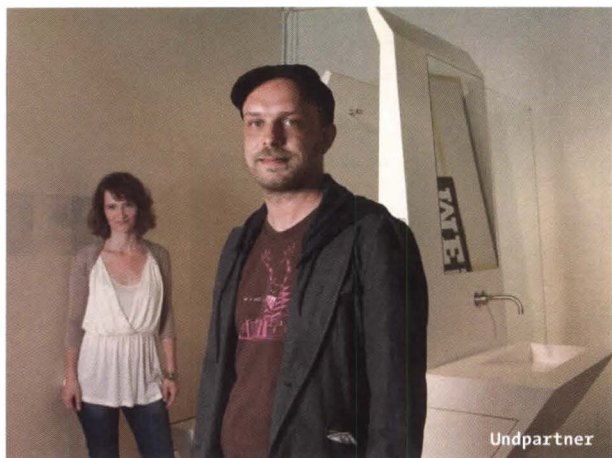
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TEXT BY JULIE TARASKA  
PHOTOS BY CARLO BEVILACQUA

AT THE ANNUAL **MILAN FURNITURE FAIR**, THE WORLD'S TOP MARKETPLACE FOR PROGRESSIVE DESIGN, THE ÜBER-COOL KIDS MEET AT THE SALONE SATELLITE, WHERE INDIE DESIGNERS EXHIBIT THEIR WARES. MEET FOUR OF THIS YEAR'S MOST DISTINCTIVE VOICES.



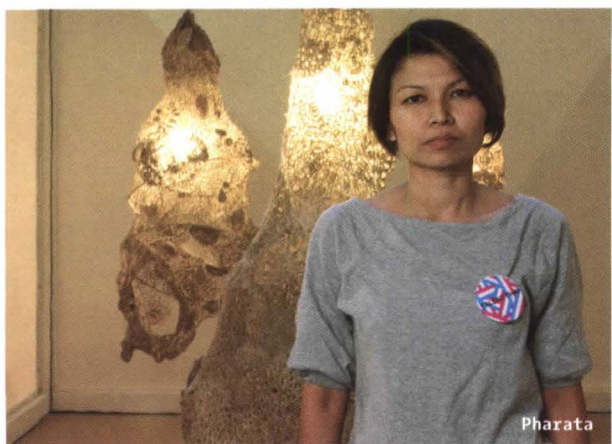
In Every Tree



Undpartner



1+1 Studio



Pharata

### In Every Tree Phonohorn

"Loudspeakers today are so minimal," says Maria Larsson, 32 (at left), of the Swedish duo In Every Tree. "We wanted ours to be a sculpture with sound." "We also wanted to take memory into the present," chimes in partner Maria Olevik, 35, a self-confessed vinyl junkie. The result, the Phonohorn, a bone-china loudspeaker shaped like a Victrola's bell, allows listeners to experience 21st century music in 19th century style. The horn, which measures 55 by 60 centimeters and weighs 2.5 kilos (about 5.5 pounds), hooks up to an amplifier with stereo wire. The Marias cast each Phonohorn themselves using a slip mold technique, then fire it in their studio inside an old ceramic factory in the town of Lidköping. [ietworld.se](http://ietworld.se)

### Undpartner Panay

A shower, bathtub, and washbasin combined into a single unit, Panay embodies the trend of bathrooms that look good enough for the living room. Its production is a family affair. Barbara Gollackner, 27, and Michael Walder, 29, run Austrian studio Undpartner. When Gollackner's brother and father, both wood joiners, wanted a signature item for their company, Tischlerei Gollackner, the four collaborated on Panay. Aside from tools for ablution, the unit offers thoughtful amenities like a built-in bench, electrical sockets, and towel hooks. "We never could have afforded to have someone else construct it," says Gollackner. "And [my brother and father] never could have afforded a designer to design it." [undpartner.at](http://undpartner.at)

### 1+1 Studio Vittorio

For those who love modern furnishings but have a soft spot for antiques, Vittorio provides the perfect solution. Able to serve as a bookcase, commode, or room divider, the lacquered-wood unit has cutouts that extend through the piece. Each cutout is matched with a two-faced drawer that has a traditional chromium-plated pull on one side and a clean, contemporary front on the other, allowing the drawer-fronts to be mixed and matched. Or the drawers can be foregone entirely, with the cutouts filled by tomes or objects. "You can change its face in an infinite number of ways," says Federico Zamagna, 37, of Vittorio, which he designed with Francesca Ciaccasassi, 36, his partner in the Italian design firm 1+1 Studio. Vittorio is part of the four-year-old company's no. old collection, and is available with a beveled-glass or marble top and in a variety of hues. [www.oneplusone.it](http://www.oneplusone.it)

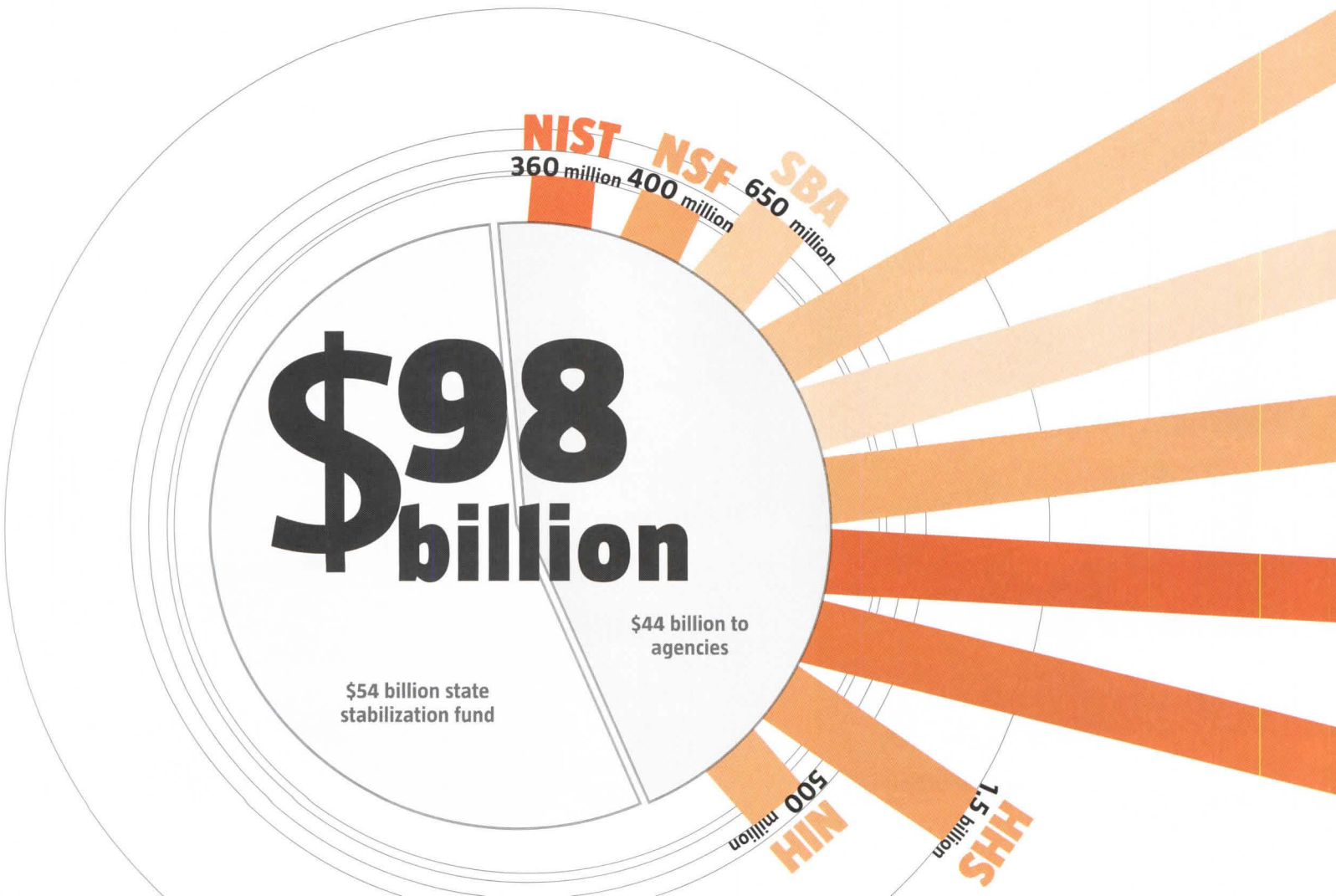
### Pharata Makkalee

Inspired by the Makkaleepon fruit, which resembles a woman's body in profile and features heavily into Thai mythology, the Makkalee pendant lamp puts traditional craft to a modern use. Bangkok-based Pharata Sri-onnlha, 35, designed the cascading shades, which are crocheted by artisans in the north of Thailand from fibers derived from the native yai kancha plant. Each shade comes with a removable internal metal frame and can be made in any size. Makkalee is not Sri-onnlha's first experiment with textiles: At last year's Salone Satellite she exhibited Lazy Cat, a steel-framed chair upholstered with synthetic string, and The Gang, a family of wayward dolls made from scraps of fabric. [pharata.com](http://pharata.com)

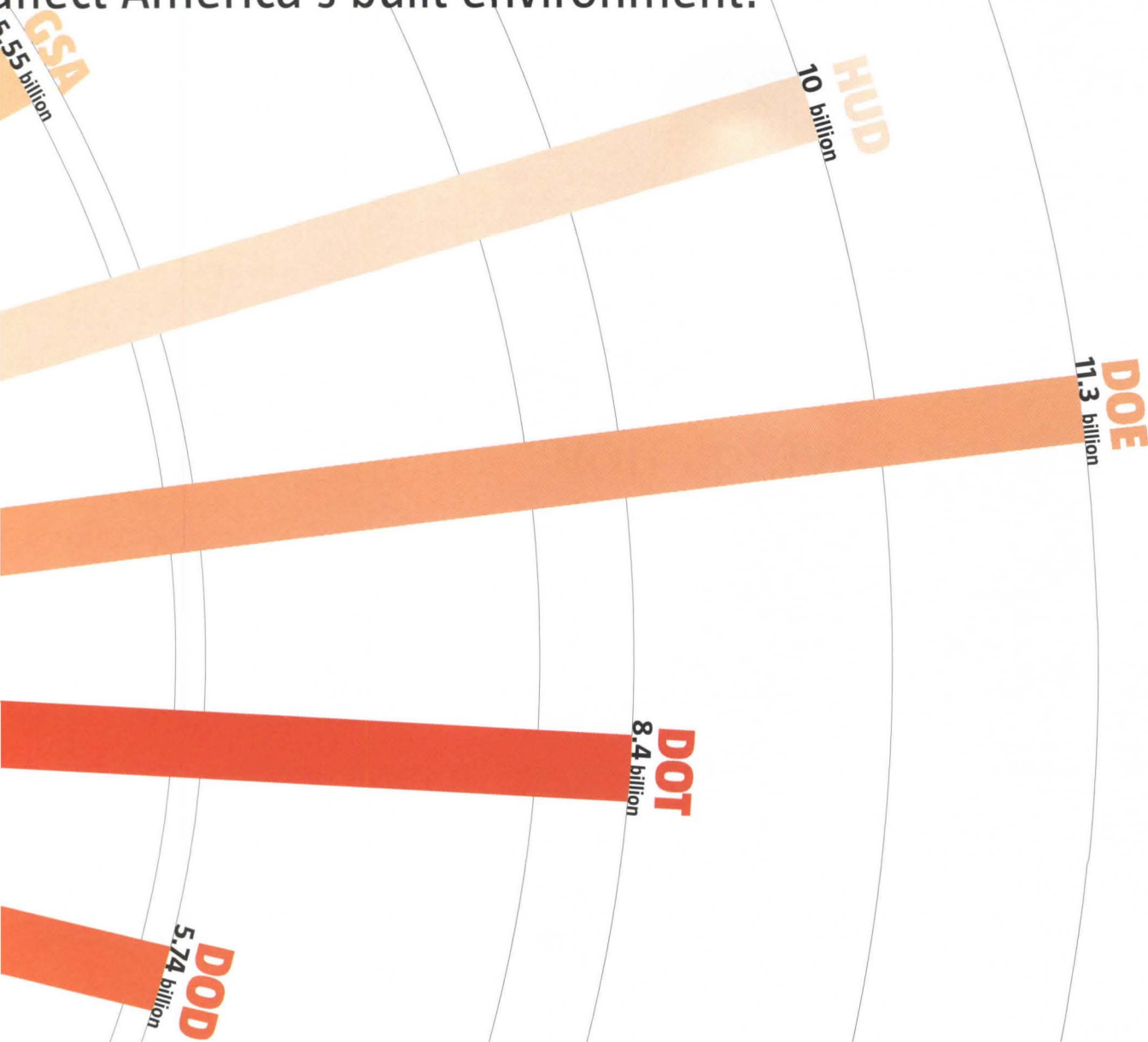
# follow the money

Who isn't excited about the Obama administration's spending all that money in your mind, let's take a **\$287 billion** for tax breaks. Then subtract **\$59 billion** **\$81 billion** for entitlement programs, and on and on **billion** or less. Here's where it's going, and how it will

TEXT BY AMANDA KOLSON HURLEY,  
GEOF KOSS, AND BRADFORD MCKEE



**\$787 billion** stimulus package? But before you start closer look at where it's actually going. First, deduct for healthcare, **\$53 billion** for education and training, According to the AIA, what's left for architecture is **\$98** affect America's built environment.



# what the agencies are getting

KEY PROVISIONS FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND

## \$5.74 BILLION

### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

**\$4.2 billion** to upgrade Department of Defense facilities, including energy-related improvements

**\$1.3 billion** for military construction for hospitals

**\$240 million** in military construction for child development centers

## \$11.3 BILLION

### DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

**\$5 billion** for weatherization of low-income family homes

**\$3.2 billion** for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program

**\$3.1 billion** in grants and funding provided to states for energy-efficiency and renewable-energy projects

#### Policy at the DOE

The Obama administration is laying the groundwork for a sweeping energy and environmental agenda that will transform the way Americans produce and use electricity. At the top of the list are the lofty—not to mention politically tricky—goals of capping greenhouse gases and doubling renewable energy production within three years.

Administration (GSA)—the federal agency that manages government buildings and is among the nation's largest landlords—established an Office of Federal High-Performance Green Buildings.

All told, the stimulus funds represent at least a tenfold increase in funding for efficiency and green building programs, says Jason Hartke, the director of advocacy and public policy for the nonprofit U.S. Green Building Council. The ARRA spreads building funds far and wide across the government: The DOE's funding streams include \$5 billion in weatherization assistance for low-income families as well as \$3.1 billion in grant money for clean energy and efficiency projects for state and local governments.

Stimulus funds are also trickling down to the DOE's commercial building technology program, nearly tripling its roughly \$75 million annual budget, says Drury Crawley, the DOE's commercial buildings team leader. "They've been quite supportive so far," he says of the renewed vigor the Obama administration has brought to the effort.

That's given a boost to the program's Net-Zero Energy Commercial Building Initiative, which coordinates with the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and other federal agencies to promote energy-efficient building technologies through technical assistance, joint bulk procurement, and other measures.

The initiative boasts a diverse membership of corporate participants, including Wal-Mart, Best Buy, and Whole Foods Market, as well as professional associations such as the American Society of

## DOE's Net-Zero Energy Commercial energy savings now, with the goal of

With the passage of the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in February, the agenda was frontloaded with billions of dollars for an area that sparks little controversy but holds huge potential for both energy independence and climate change: improved building efficiency.

"Energy efficiency and conservation is where the greatest gains will be," predicted Steven Chu, the Nobel Prize-winning physicist selected by President Barack Obama to lead the Department of Energy (DOE), to reporters in April. "As we retrofit commercial and residential buildings, as we build new ones ... we're really talking about 50, 60, 70 percent reductions in energy over the coming decades. That's a huge amount of energy that we can be saving."

Inefficient buildings account for roughly 40 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, a fact that has increasingly caught the attention of lawmakers and the federal government in recent years. The DOE has been *working with builders* for years on new technologies and practices, and last year, at Congress' behest, the General Services

Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). In April, the DOE also announced a new component—the Commercial Real Estate Alliance, which includes the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties and the Real Estate Roundtable.

The program's goal is to make net-zero buildings (which generate as much energy as they consume, through efficiency and on-site power generation) marketable nationwide by 2020 through building codes and advanced energy design principles. In the interim, Crawley's initiative is seeking 50 percent energy savings now, with the target increasing roughly 10 percent every four years.

Ed Pollock, team leader of the DOE's complementary initiative for residential building, says the stimulus boost is supporting critical new research into the retrofitting of existing homes—an area of investigation previously limited by funding constraints. The infusion of cash for buildings has Pollock, an 18-year DOE veteran, even rethinking his retirement plans. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do some good," he says. **GEORGE KOSS**

# (and passing on to you)

REINVESTMENT ACT, AS IDENTIFIED BY THE AIA.

## \$8.4 BILLION

### DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**\$6.9 billion** for capital assistance to transit agencies

**\$1.5 billion** in grants to state and local governments and transit agencies for capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure

#### Policy at the DOT

The federal government-wide policy reforms introduced by President Obama range far and wide in their complexity and scope. But at the Department of Transportation (DOT), this administration's guiding philosophy is embodied in a single word: livability.

Since taking office in January, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has made clear that the department is aiming for a break from the policies of the past by emphasizing an improved quality of life for Americans through better transportation planning at all levels of government.

"Livability can help transform the way transportation serves the American people and the contribution it makes to the quality of life in our communities," explained LaHood, a former Republican congressman from Illinois, to senators at his confirmation hearing.

In a nutshell, the new administration wants to foster livability by

Andrew Goldberg, senior director for federal relations for the AIA.

The administration is off to a busy start. Days after being sworn in, LaHood announced a departmentwide "Livability Initiative" to improve coordination among the many existing DOT programs that focus on elements of the livability agenda. And in March, LaHood and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan announced a sustainable communities partnership that will attempt to integrate housing, transportation, and land-use planning at both agencies.

The Obama administration is also working hand in hand with Congress to implement transportation reforms, starting with the stimulus bill, which contained tens of billions of dollars for transportation programs. While the bulk of the money—about \$30 billion—was dedicated to road building, \$8.4 billion was steered toward public transit and another \$8 billion toward high-speed rail, reflecting the administration's new priorities. Despite the administration's ambitions for high-speed rail, critics have countered that \$8 billion is not enough to build a single rail system, and that the feds define "high-speed" as over 90 miles per hour, a far cry from European and Japanese trains that travel 120 mph or faster.

The biggest reform push is yet to come. Congress is now developing a \$500 billion transportation reauthorization bill, which will map out spending for federal transportation programs for the next six years. And naturally, LaHood wants livability to be a "centerpiece" of the legislation. **GEORGE KOSS**

# Building Initiative is seeking 50 percent net-zero buildings by 2020.

better integrating alternative transportation modes—such as public transit, walking, and bicycling—into the current system. It's also pressing for improved coordination between land-use and transportation planners at the local level, or what DOT Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy David Matsuda terms a more "holistic" approach.

"We think that livability really forces you to take a step back and take a broader look at what the problems are," he says. The end goal is a safer, healthier and more environmentally friendly transportation network that's more accessible to all Americans.

The Obama administration's livability emphasis contrasts markedly with the transportation policies of past administrations, which Matsuda said largely have focused on easing traffic congestion. "Our goal should not be just to get traffic moving freely on the highways," he says.

That's a position supported by the AIA, which has called for a new emphasis on community planning in federal transportation policy. "There's a chance here to rethink how we deal with urban policy and the built environment, and we don't want to miss that opportunity," says

## \$5.55 BILLION

### GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

**\$4.5 billion** available for converting GSA buildings to high-performance green buildings

**\$750 million** for the design, construction, and modernization of federal courthouses

**\$300 million** to build and renovate border stations and land ports of entry

## \$1.5 BILLION

### HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Available for grants for construction, renovation, and equipment, and the acquisition of health information technology systems for health centers

## \$10 BILLION

### HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

- \$4 billion** for energy-efficient modernization and renovation of public housing
- \$510 million** for energy-efficient modernization and renovation of housing maintained by Native American housing programs and development of sustainable communities
- \$2.25 billion** for special allocation of HOME funds to accelerate production and preservation of tens of thousands of units of affordable housing
- \$1 billion** for community development block grants
- \$2 billion** for rehabilitation of foreclosed properties
- \$250 million** for energy-efficient modernization and renovation of HUD-sponsored housing for low-income, elderly, and disabled persons

making it more energy efficient, with \$760 million more for modernizing and making energy improvements to housing for Native Americans, the elderly, and the disabled.

The allocation of remaining stimulus money should please longtime advocates of affordable housing and community development. HUD will fund billions of dollars in grants to states for affordable rental housing, community development block grants, and Section 8 assistance. And in a sign of these particular times, billions more are slated to help shore up neighborhoods ravaged by the foreclosure crisis and to prevent homelessness among people who, given the economic meltdown, may suddenly find themselves looking worriedly toward the curb.

HUD itself is in need of major rehab. At Donovan's confirmation hearing, Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.), chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, said that the agency in recent years has been "mismanaged and ridden with scandal." During the Bush years, the agency was all but ignored. More than once since his nomination in December, Donovan has spoken of his department joining "the grown-ups' table" during the

# More than once, Donovan has spoken of HUD joining "the grown-ups' table."

#### Policy at HUD

At last, architects: President Obama has picked one of your own, Shaun Donovan, to run the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). And his résumé shows a solid background in—get this—housing. And urban development! He is by all accounts a lifer in this field, not a politician like Henry Cisneros or, more ostentatiously, Andrew Cuomo, who hoped to be New York's governor. Nor is his key credential a close friendship with his boss, as was the case with his predecessor, Alphonso Jackson, who left the department in March 2007 to spend more time with his attorneys on two federal criminal investigations into his alleged favoritism in the awarding of HUD contracts.

HUD "suffered mightily in the past 10 years under people who were not good leaders or did not know housing," says Sheila Crowley, president of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, in Washington, D.C. "Now we have a secretary who has a very, very deep expertise about all the issues there, and is a very talented, bright, committed person. He's not there because he's looking for a stepping stone to something else."

Donovan has arrived, however, at an agency whose acute recent changes dwarf the standard shifts that occur whenever the White House switches parties. HUD's historic mandate has been to provide shelter to the chronically poor and homeless in the nation's inner cities. But the vast foreclosure crisis is forcing the agency to try to keep as many as 9 million homeowners, many of them suburban and, until recently, middle class and employed, from losing their homes. Through the Obama administration's new \$75 billion housing rescue plan, called Making Home Affordable, HUD is trying to modify or refinance the mortgages of those troubled households to levels they can handle.

In addition, HUD has \$13.6 billion in stimulus money to spend (\$10 billion of which the AIA has flagged as architecture-related)—three-quarters of which, the agency reports, was handed out to state and local recipients eight days after the act became law. "We are moving swiftly," Donovan said upon its release. The direction of these funds provides an early outline of the kinds of initiatives that Donovan's HUD might pursue on a normal day. Energy conservation is high on the list. One of the biggest single chunks, \$4 billion, goes to renovating public housing and

Obama administration. But given the department's status during the Bush administration, first it needs to be let in out of the rain. BRADFORD MCKEE

## \$500 MILLION

### NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

To fund high-priority repair, construction, and improvement of National Institutes of Health facilities

## \$360 MILLION

### NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY

Provided for the construction of research facilities, half of which is dedicated to a new competitive construction grant program for research science buildings

## \$400 MILLION

### NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Provided for major research equipment and facilities construction

## \$650 MILLION

### SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

**\$375 million** for existing Small Business Administration loans, for temporary fee reductions or eliminations

**\$275 million** for business stabilization loans, to help small businesses meet existing debt payments



# the stimulus in 10 minutes

WE TRY TO ANSWER SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

## Is there much work for architects in the stimulus? I thought it was construction-oriented.

It's true that the push for "shovel-ready" projects has skewed the stimulus toward construction rather than architectural services. But business consultant Hugh Hochberg, of the Coxe Group, argues that given the staggering amount of money in the Recovery Act, even the small share that's available to architects constitutes "a significant number." The AIA has identified nearly \$100 billion in ARRA provisions that will directly affect the built environment—some requiring an architect's services, others not.

## Do you need government experience to get your foot in the door?

Not technically, but it helps a lot. There are firms that can leapfrog over less-experienced competitors by, for instance, already having an IDIQ contract (indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity) or being old hands at filling out the Standard Form 330, used across agencies for submitting architect-engineer qualifications.

Robert Siegel Architects in New York won a nationwide IDIQ under the GSA six years ago, and partner Robert Siegel recently interviewed for a land port of entry project in the range of \$85 million and funded through the ARRA. Because the agency looked to three prequalified IDIQ firms, Siegel says, the project should be in design—to whoever ends up winning it—within four to six months, rather than the standard year and a half. Such speed is of the essence because under many provisions of the law, funds must be obligated by Sept. 30, 2010.

## I haven't started to pursue this yet. Am I too late?

"Firms are definitely not too late, but the clock is ticking," says the AIA's Andrew Goldberg. If you haven't met with people in the agencies you're targeting, do so now, and keep a close eye on FedBizOpps.gov, the online clearinghouse for government contracting. Many firms have been prepping for this for months: Even before the bill passed, SmithGroup charged staff members around the country with visiting their local GSA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Naval Facilities Engineering Command outposts, "to get a sense of what might be on the list of projects they wanted to do," says Sally Lee, a principal in the firm's Washington office. (SmithGroup is already at work on two Recovery Act projects.) Similarly, Kansas City, Mo.'s BNIM hosted a charrette to discuss the ARRA.

There are still opportunities at the state level, says Goldberg. Although states are "in very different places," with a few still debating whether to accept the funds at all, "most states have a pretty clear ... sense of where the money is going to go," Goldberg notes. Chris Taylor,

chief marketing officer and leader of the government market for HMC, a California firm that does a lot of state work, advises, "You're best positioned for work that's near you."

One big unknown for architects is the act's \$54 billion state stabilization fund, 83 percent of which will aid local school districts. Given the perilous financial situation of many states, a lot of that money may go toward saving teachers' jobs—but Goldberg believes that some of it will be spent on facilities.

## How much of the money has been spent already?

Very little. As of mid-May, *The Wall Street Journal* was reporting that only 6 percent of stimulus funds had been spent. Yet some agencies are moving quickly to allocate funds and award contracts, at least: The GSA was one of the first out of the gate, with a detailed spending plan for its \$5.5 billion ready by the end of March.

## Is there a lot of competition for these projects?

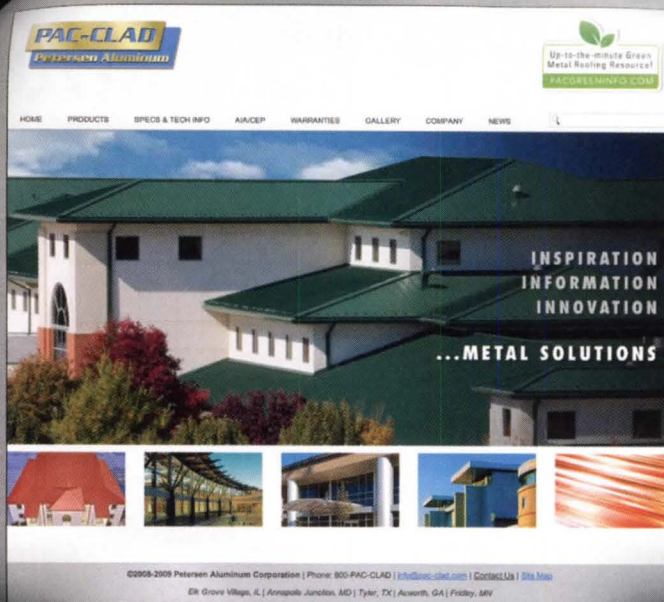
Yes. "I've talked with federal agencies who said they've been bombarded" by inquiries, says Kevin Baur, Lee's colleague at SmithGroup and the director of the firm's federal studio. Likewise, Dennis Cusack, a principal at SRG Partnership in Portland, Ore., says his firm is helping institutional clients secure research funding from the National Institutes of Health, but he knows what they're up against: There will be "literally thousands of applications," he predicts.

Tammy Eagle Bull is the president of Encompass Architects, a Native American-owned firm that does 80 percent of its work with tribes. The Recovery Act designates billions for tribes—including nearly \$1 billion for construction—and accordingly, Eagle Bull has noticed "a huge interest in tribes from other [non-Native] architects. Now there are 30 firms showing up for these projects, and it used to be us and two or three others." She also gets about 10 calls a week from non-Native firms offering "to quote-unquote help me with my clients."

## Will the stimulus lead to a hiring wave at architecture firms?

Based on the interviews for this story, probably not. Although Siegel is sorting through résumés, others say that if their bids (or their clients') are successful, they'll spread the work among existing staff and maybe hire one or two extra people. Staying stable is the order of the day.

AMANDA KOLSON HURLEY



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# → BUILDING

## PORTFOLIO



David Dowell, principal



Douglas Stockman, principal



Josh Shelton, principal



Dan Maginn, principal

TEXT BY KATIE GERFEN  
PORTRAITS BY ART STREIBER  
BUILDING PHOTOS BY MIKE SINCLAIR

# EL DORADO

KANSAS CITY, MO.

**IT'S HARD NOT TO LOVE EL DORADO**, for being smart, ethical, attractive, well-built ... and that's just the architecture. El Dorado is practical: The 12 people who make up the Kansas City, Mo.-based practice see design as being less about the creation of beautiful objects—though they do that very well—and more about the solving of clients' problems. El Dorado is hard-working, producing an average of 15 projects a year while also maintaining a fabrication shop where the firm builds out many of the details of its projects. And its leaders are humble, having figured out how to grow a practice without taking themselves too

seriously or letting their work cross the line between well-crafted and precious.

Oh, yeah, and they're funny. Depending on who you ask, the name El Dorado either came about because of a shared love of the story of Don Quixote; an ill-advised evening stopover in Eldorado, Texas; "because we could have been Skid Plate"—or any other obscure part on a Cadillac Eldorado, for that matter; or (in the by-the-book, albeit tongue-in-cheek version) because the





name suggests a serious but lighthearted quest for the indefinable “something more” in architecture.

The practice began as a hobby when, in 1996, three employees of BNIM—Douglas Stockman, Dan Maginn, and Jamie Darnell—and some like-minded colleagues, leased 10,000 square feet in Kansas City’s waning industrial district, the Crossroads. Their plan was to make a place where they and other architects could get back in touch with craft in the off hours. Half of the space was dedicated to a gallery, called El Dorado, for the display of the furniture and other fabrications that they and their friends had made. The other 5,000 square feet, in the basement, were devoted to a workshop—a dicey proposition, considering that low wood-beam ceilings and welding sparks are a nail-biting combination.

In 1997, the gallery closed its doors and, after a soul-searching moment and some good advice from their mentors, the three principals transitioned to a full-time practice by the same name. “I went to ask for a leave of absence [from BNIM],” Maginn says. “And instead of denying me, they said, ‘Go. You have to do this.’” In 1998, David Dowell joined as a principal, and Josh Shelton followed in 2002. At first, the firm underwent a bit of an identity crisis: With a growing number of commissions for furniture, were they fabricators or were they architects? And they suffered the typical growing pains of figuring

repeating them back so that the client is certain of the direction. “We are continually surprised by how right the client is,” Maginn says. “But we would run into problems if we tried to project onto them what is right.” When the time comes for design, a project team made up of two principals (with one as a lead) and staff designers will boil down the client’s complex problem to a first move. “We’ve developed a bit of intuition,” Maginn says. “Intuition and intellect help us to make decisions, but the underlying theme is always striving for simplicity.”

Now, 12 years after it started, El Dorado has made a name for itself in Kansas City. The firm has done so many projects in the Crossroads neighborhood that walking to get a coffee is like flipping through the firm’s portfolio. From one street corner, one can see El Dorado’s exterior rehabilitation of the TWA Corporate Headquarters; Pizzabella, a restaurant interior the firm designed; and a spec office building where it collaborated on a light installation with artist James Woodfill. The architects are proud of their prominent role in transforming the neighborhood, but they never come across as complacent.

Describing their practice as “post-pubescent,” the four principals (Darnell left earlier this year) outline a clear goal for the future: to diversify their geographical portfolio and move on to bigger-scaled projects, while maintaining a thorough and thoughtful approach to their work. To that end, the firm has opened a satellite office in Wichita, Kan., to pursue public works projects. “Wichita is going through

## “THE UNDERLYING THEME IS ALWAYS STRIVING FOR SIMPLICITY.”

—Dan Maginn, El Dorado

out how to run a business: “[Stockman] is our director of finance, because at the time, he was the only one who balanced his check book,” Shelton says. But they quickly realized that if the things they cared about—fabrication, public art, design—were funneled through architecture, they could create a solid brand.

El Dorado approaches each new project with a discovery phase, listening to the client’s needs and then

its urban renewal,” Stockman says. “There is an arts community there that is isolated within their downtown, but it is easy for our clients to hire us because of our experience [with the Crossroads redevelopment in Kansas City].” A map of proposals sent out in the last month show projects as far away as Arlington, Va. However far the firm expands, its projects are worth following. And not just because we love El Dorado, but because you should, too.

## an abridged history of El Dorado, according to El Dorado

TIMELINE PHOTOS COURTESY EL DORADO

1995

Jamie Darnell, Dan Maginn, Douglas Stockman, and cohorts Chris Kelsey and David Murrell take night welding classes at Vo-Tech High School.



1995

“El Dorado” first uttered as potential firm name. Within minutes, origin of name immediately disputed.

1996

4 Tangents: first art show in El Dorado gallery (first collaboration with Anne Lindberg).



1996

El Dorado architectural studio/art gallery/shop founded.



Patio and event space

# DRUG FREE SPORT

EL DORADO INJECTS A SENSE OF WHIMSY INTO A SOBER PROGRAM: A DRUG-TESTING CENTER FOR ATHLETES.

1996

James Woodfill solo show at El Dorado gallery.



1997

Firm moves upstairs to fourth floor "Dickensian hovel" at 1712 Main. Survives cold winter by huddling around underperforming propane heater.



1998

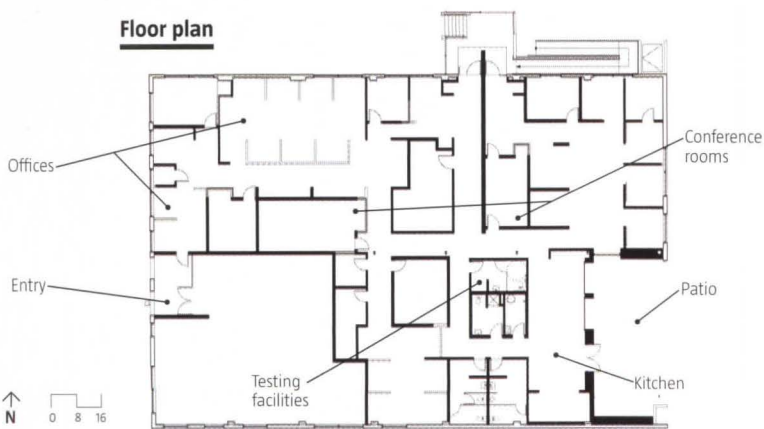
First tenant finish project, M Studio, is completed.



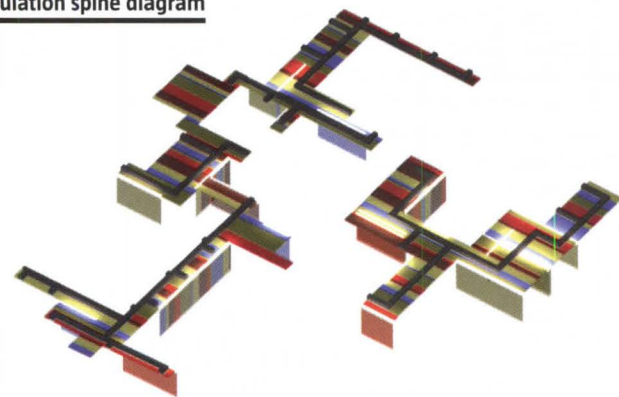


Office pod and circulation spine

**Floor plan**



**Circulation spine diagram**



**2000**

El Dorado writes first business plan.

**2000**

Light Fixture LF1 developed.



**2000**

Trash Can TC1 developed and installed at Freighthouse streetscape.



**2001**

Moving In/Moving Out art show at Flex Self Storage.

**CHEERFUL COLORS** and whimsical artwork are probably not the first things that come to mind when one considers drug testing for professional and collegiate sports. In fact, according to Drug Free Sport president Frank Uryasz, one of the most frequent comments that first-time visitors to the company's 12,000-square-foot Kansas City, Mo., headquarters make is, "This doesn't look like a drug-testing facility." His response? "Well, what do you think a drug-testing facility should look like?"

El Dorado took an existing brick community center building and turned it into a light-filled double-height space for office workers and lab technicians. The work areas are split into four pods—one for executive and administrative offices and one each for institutional clients, professional sports, and the NCAA. To maintain client privacy, none of the staff or files can cross-pollinate, so areas are separated by walls and conference rooms.

During demolition, the team resurrected a double barrel-vaulted ceiling and cut a skylight between the two truss systems to bring light into the center of the building. Clerestory windows in interior walls offer privacy but allow light to penetrate further into the space. A mechanical and electrical delivery system—painted with bright stripes of varying widths—runs through the space at single-story ceiling height. It doubles as a circulation spine, guiding people through the mazelike hallways. "It's a space you can really explore," says principal in charge Josh Shelton. "You turn a corner, and your eye starts to explore the whole volume."

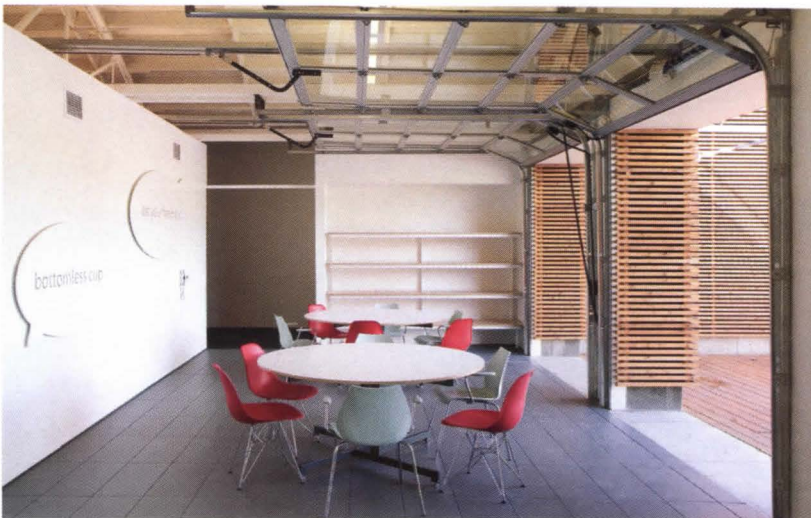
That exploration involves seeing all of the art in the building, the result of a collaboration with the Charlotte Street Foundation, a local nonprofit of which both Shelton and principal Dan Maginn are board members. Artist May Tveit developed a series of speech bubbles with icons and sayings on them; in the bathroom where samples are collected for drug testing, happy and sad faces foreshadow the two possible results. Another artist, James Woodfill, created light installations, including a canopy of lights on the patio outside the lunchroom and over-table fixtures in the conference rooms.

In a second phase of the project, which is nearly complete, El Dorado will fit out the reception lobby and install more artwork—including a psychedelic video installation by Barry Anderson that will make even the most sober of visitors feel trippy.

**Project** National Center for Drug Free Sport, Kansas City, Mo. **Client** A&F Real Estate **Architect** El Dorado—Josh Shelton (principal in charge); Sean Slattery (project architect); Brady Neely (design support and prototyping) **M/E/P Engineer** IDEA **Structural Engineer** Structural Engineering Associates **Code Consulting** Code Consultant Services **Site-Specific Art** Jim Woodfill, May Tveit **General Contractor** Turner Special Projects **Size** 12,000 square feet **Completion** Phase I, April 2007



Restroom with artwork by May Tveit



Lunchroom and patio



Conference room

2001

Willoughby Barn completed in Weston, Mo.



2001

Flex Self Storage Facility completed in Topeka, Kan.



2002

First (and only) annual Caulk-Off "won" by Josh Shelton.





Exterior at night

# THE BOTWIN BUILDING

A GROUND-UP, GREEN-MINDED BUILDING FILLS THE SHOES OF A LOST KANSAS CITY ICON.

**2002**

El Dorado named as finalist in Papago Trail competition in Phoenix, Ariz.

**2002**

Taylor Pavilion completed in Edgerton, Mo.



**2002**

Artist James Woodfill lights sparkler, nearly sets fire to himself.



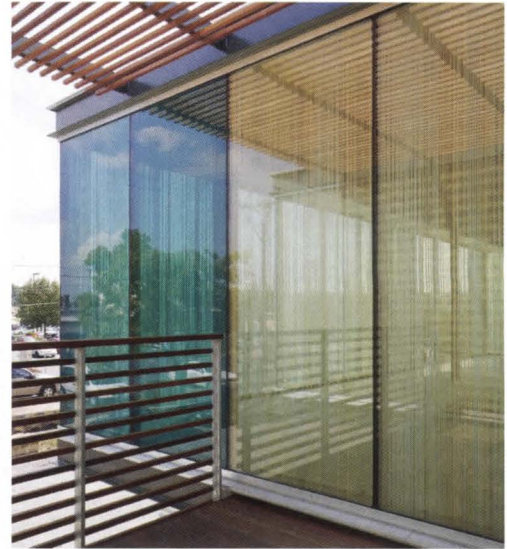
**2003**

Graphic identity updated and website created by Willoughby.



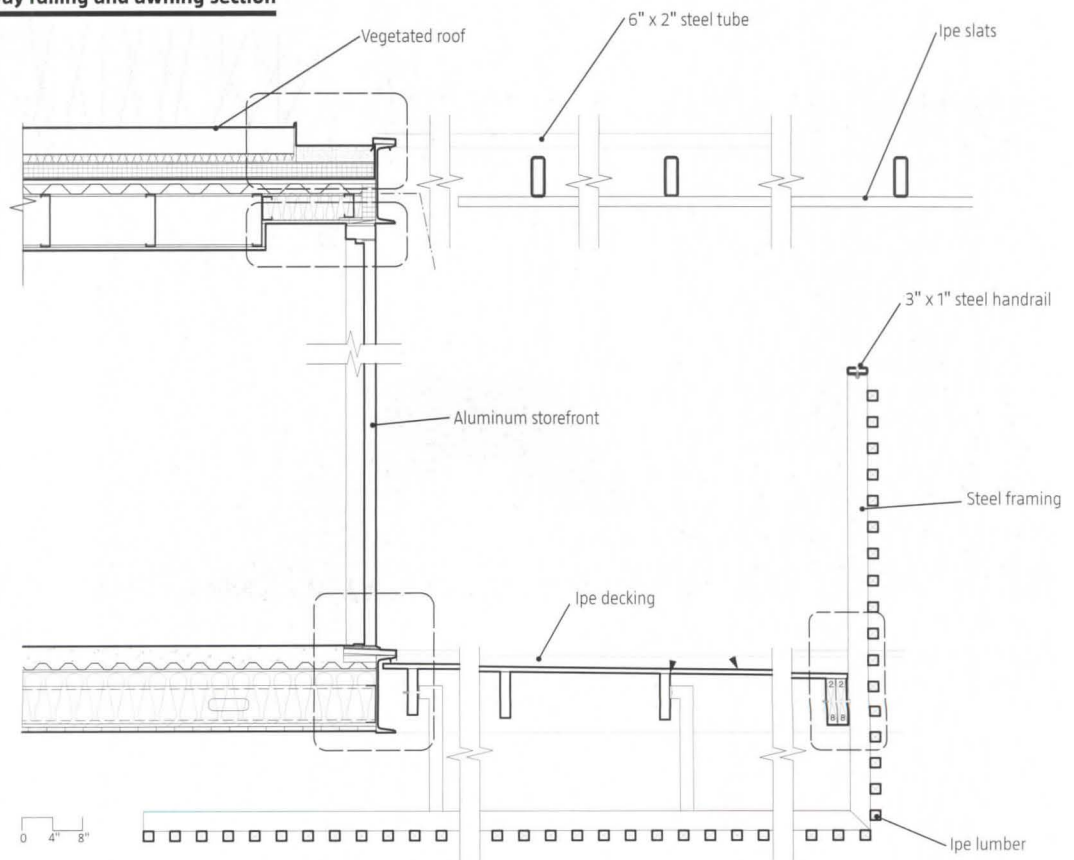


Vegetated roof



Breezeway

**Breezeway railing and awning section**



**2003**  
Pulse, a large-scale public art collaboration with James Woodfill, completed.



**2003**  
BaDDaSS Mardi Gras float introduced (Bacon Distribution Device and Salzer Spinner).



**2004**  
First high-rise multifamily housing project completed: 21 Ten Condominiums.



## EL DORADO

**WHEN DEVELOPER** Diane Botwin stood on a Kansas City, Mo., street corner in February 2007 and watched her flagship building—purchased by her parents 34 years earlier—burn down, she had to balance her own emotional loss against that of her tenants. She also had to figure out how to proceed: Rebuild the original 1923 structure, beloved flaws and all, or start fresh. It was not an easy decision to build an entirely new, modern, and sustainable building in what Botwin calls the “goofy, challenging, and creative” neighborhood of Waldo, but the decision to use El Dorado wasn’t hard at all. “When they found out [what happened], they came running and put their arms around me and said it would be OK,” Botwin says. “This project started that day.”

The new glass-and-metal structure may look nothing like the terra-cotta-clad, lath-on-slat original, but it serves the same function, at least in spirit: a mixed-use space for community gatherings. “One thing they got exactly right,” Botwin says, “was the scale of the building.” The two-story, 12,500-square-foot space was designed to hold four commercial tenants. A cantilevered second story shades ground-floor patios with outdoor seating for restaurants and coffee shops. A collaboration with local artist Anne Lindberg—whose work focuses on the character and weight of drawn lines—resulted in a 200-foot-long glass public art installation. Working with glass manufacturer Viracon, Lindberg’s line drawing was fritted onto glass panels that make up the second-floor glazing. In addition to providing aesthetic value, the pattern also provides sunshading by filtering the light into the tenant spaces.

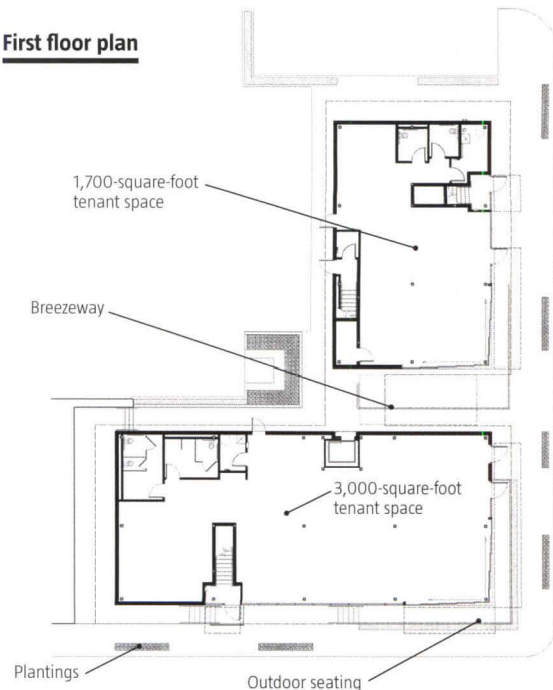
To combat issues of stormwater runoff on the site—a common problem in Kansas City, where the sewer system is antiquated—El Dorado added a vegetated roof to absorb rainwater and remove it from the public system. Though the building is not LEED certified, the firm made sure it met the standards. El Dorado prepared a report that broke down all possible LEED points and offered three tiers of options on how to proceed, with cost outlays and repayment estimates so that the client could see what was and was not within her grasp. “As a property owner, I don’t care about the certification,” Botwin says. “What matters to me is that I am doing in my value system the right thing.” And the concern about change from the good citizens of Waldo? By the size of the Friday night dinner crowd at Kennedy’s Bar & Grill on the ground floor, they’ve welcomed it with open arms.

**Project** The Botwin Building, Kansas City, Mo. **Client** Diane Botwin, Botwin Family Partners, LP **Architect** El Dorado—Josh Shelton (principal in charge); Steve Salzer (project architect); Brady Neely (design support and prototyping) **Structural Engineer** Bob D. Campbell **M/E/P Engineer** Lankford + Associates **Lighting** Derek Porter Studio **Site-Specific Art** Anne Lindberg **General Contractor** Hoffman Cortes **Size** 12,500 square feet **Completion** September 2008



Illuminated art glass

### First floor plan



#### 2004

Civic attitude/philosophy clarified: Sanctioned Meddling™.

#### 2005

5 Delaware lofts completed.



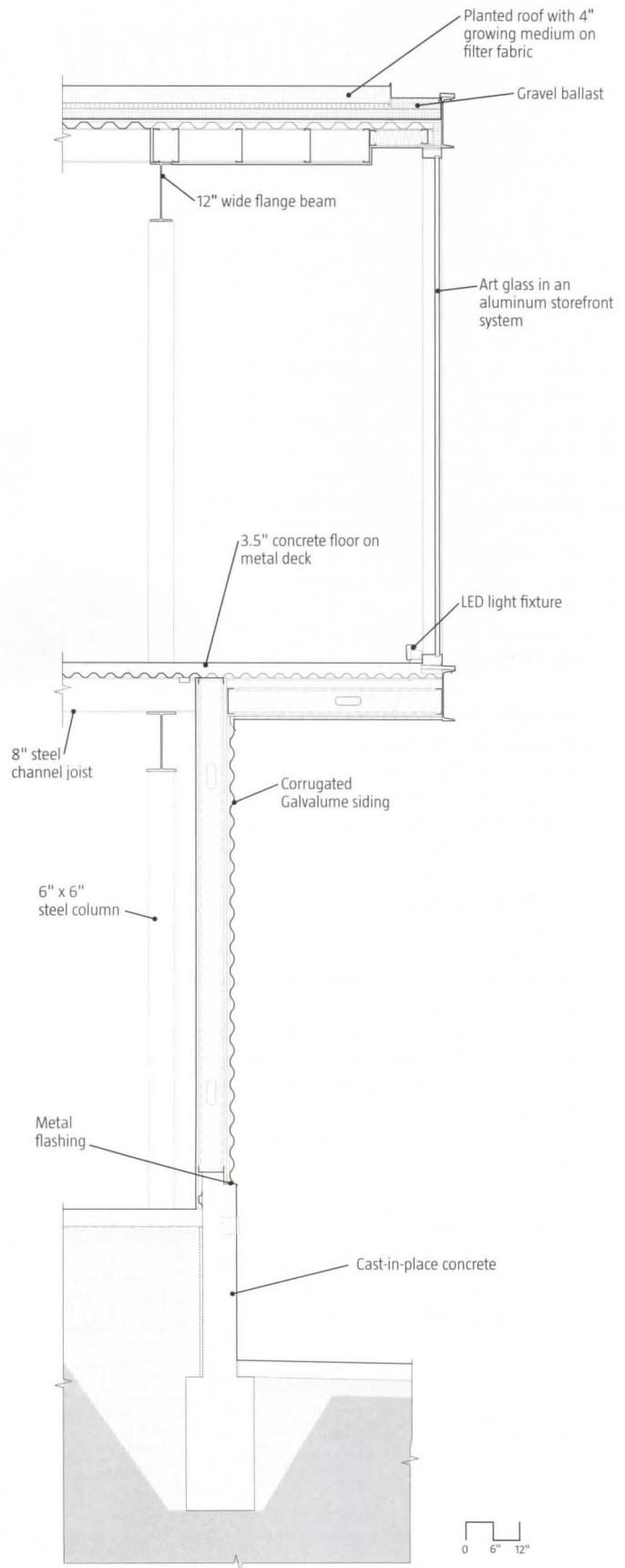
#### 2005

Josh perfects margarita recipe at annual quasi-illegal street party.





**Wall section at art glass**



Rear building access

2005

David and Douglas deliver Bryant Lecture at Kansas State University.

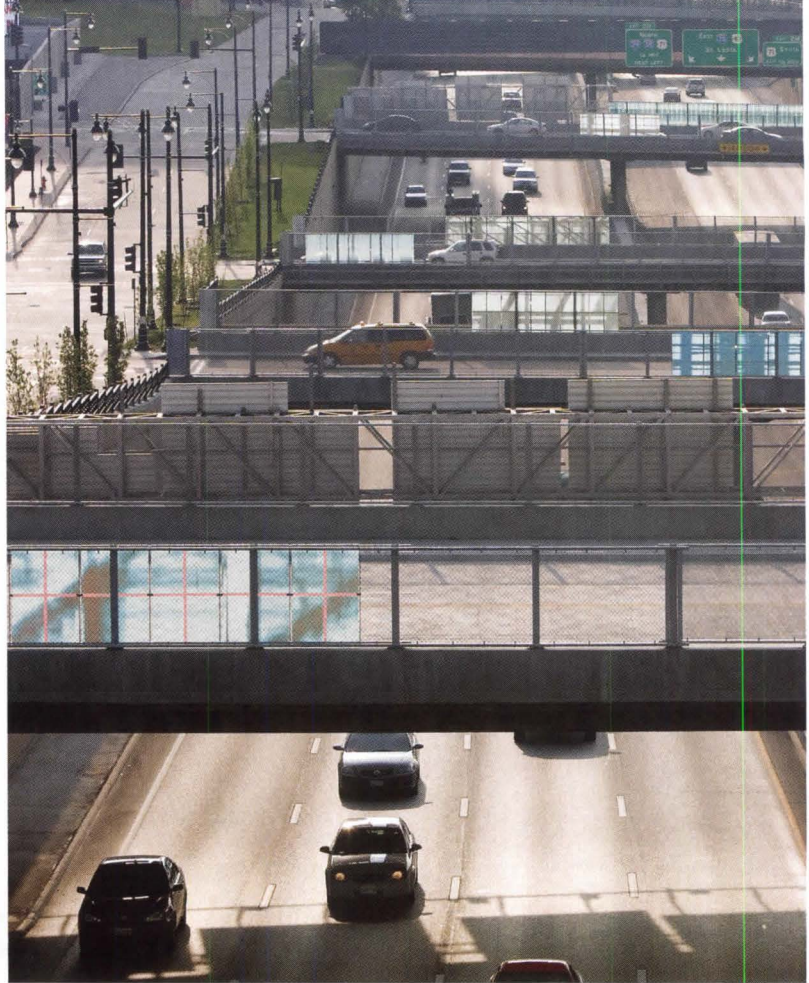
2006

Building renovation completed for motion graphics firm that is far cooler than El Dorado: MK12.





Glass panels



The four overpasses of Pedestrian Strands

# PEDESTRIAN STRANDS

PUBLIC ART LINES HIGHWAY OVERPASSES IN KANSAS CITY.

**A COLLABORATION WITH** artist James Woodfill, Pedestrian Strands is a permanent installation on four bridges over I-670 that connect downtown Kansas City, Mo., to the Crossroads neighborhood. Glass panels printed with abstracted photographs of surrounding architecture are mounted on a metal support frame—designed and fabricated by El Dorado—and are lit at night by integral strips of LEDs. As pedestrians walk across each bridge, the muffling quality of the glass, alternated with the open spaces between each panel, transforms the din of traffic from the highway below into a rhythm of sounds. Layered expanses of a fine-

weave chain link fence serve as the backdrop, and the juxtaposition of car headlights, highway signage, and noise interacts with the glass panels to create a vivid urban fabric.

**Project** Pedestrian Strands **Client** City of Kansas City, Mo., Department of Public Works **Benefactor** Gary Dickinson Family Foundation **Architect** El Dorado—David Dowell (principal in charge); Josh Shelton (principal); Chris Burke (fabrication and design support) **Artist** Jim Woodfill **Structural Engineer** Genesis Structures **M/E/P Engineer** Lankford + Associates **Steel Fabrication/Installation** El Dorado **Installation** Collins and Hermann (steel); Carter Glass (glass) **Electrician** Westhues Electrical **LED Light** Wild **Size** 1,200 linear feet **Cost** \$835,000 **Completion** 2008

2006

Common sense “green” philosophy clarified: Sustainaffordability™.

2006

El Dorado buys and renovates building at 510 Avenida Cesar E. Chavez.



2006

Steve Salzer “wins” Mardi Gras egg-eating contest.



2007

Most expensive fabrication error in El Dorado history (3'-6" > 36" = oops): Holbrook Residence.



Elevator placards



Floor signage



Signage over parking spaces

# OAK STREET GARAGE SIGNAGE

NEW SIGNAGE COOLS HEADS AT A CITY GOVERNMENT GARAGE.

**THE TEAM AT** El Dorado completed two projects for the Oak Street Garage—Pulse, a grid of blue LED train signal lamps that react to movement on two staircases, which was completed in 2003 (see timeline, page 81), and a wayfinding and signage system, completed in 2009, to help visitors navigate the 10-story garage's confusing double-helix layout. In collaboration with graphic design firm Willoughby, the El Dorado team created a system of signs and placards that combine four visual cues—color, numbers, faces, and names—to help imprint the location of each visitor's car. Placards on each floor and in each elevator cab depict either male names and

faces—starting at infant (ground floor) and moving up to octogenarian (roof level)—on a green background, or female names and faces on an orange background, depending on which side of the building the visitor is parked. The hope is that including four visual cues will trigger visitors to remember at least one, meaning fewer lost cars and frustrated drivers.

**Project** Oak Street Garage Signage **Client** City of Kansas City, Mo.—Ingrid Bunn (project manager) **Architect** El Dorado—Dan Maginn (principal in charge); Sean Slattery (project manager); Brady Neely (design support and prototyping) **Graphic Design** Willoughby **Electrical Engineer** Lankford + Associates **Structural Engineer** Leigh and O'Kane **Cost** \$230,000 **Completion** April 2009

2007

Most elaborate stair in El Dorado history: Holbrook Residence.



2007

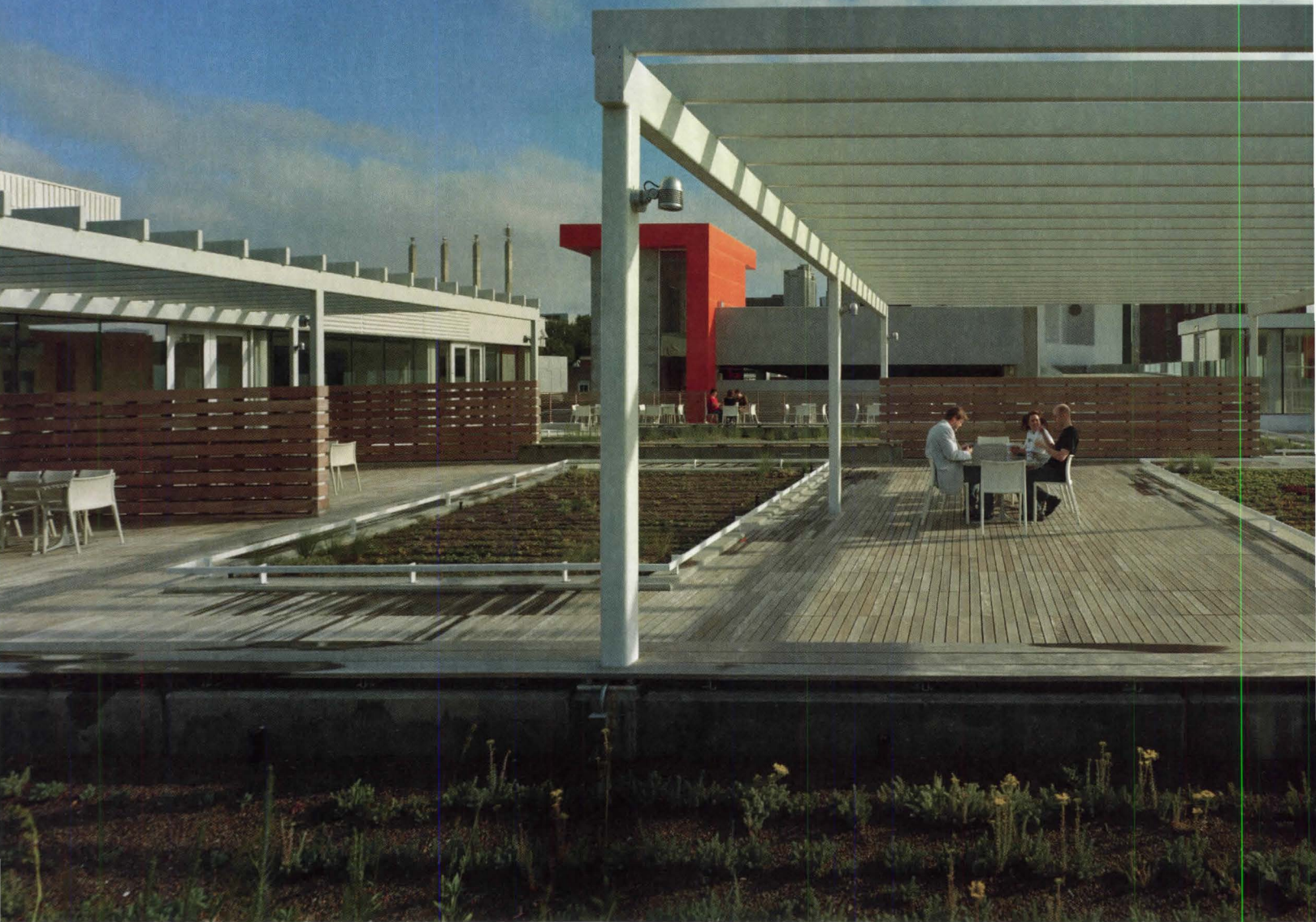
El Dorado underwrites Knock Outs female roller derby team.



2007

Cox Communications completed in Topeka, Kan.





Roof garden

# TWA BUILDING RENOVATION

A GREEN ROOF AND A REIMAGINED FAÇADE RESTORE A HISTORIC BUILDING TO PROMINENCE.

**2007**

Public Art Milestone: 20th art project completed (1737 Main collaboration with James Woodfill).



**2008**

Seemingly hilarious term "El Doradon't™" declared "not that funny."

**2008**

Hodgdon Powder facility completed in Herington, Kan.



**2008**

Yearlong educational presence established: studios at Washington University in St. Louis, University of Kansas, Lawrence Technological University, and a workshop at Tulane University.

AT 135,000 SQUARE FEET, the TWA Corporate Headquarters Building in Kansas City, Mo., is the largest project that El Dorado has completed to date, and the only one already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Originally constructed in 1956, the cast-concrete and metal façade subsequently had been covered by a layer of mud-brown stucco. El Dorado restored the white-and-red exterior color scheme (using the original concrete panels and replacing the red metal panels with back-painted glass) and enclosed an alleyway that bisected the building.

The project's most arresting new feature is an expansive green roof that manages stormwater runoff. The team chose a system by American Hydrotech that has continuous waterproofing running underneath planted and nonplanted tiles (made from ipe planks). This allows the vegetated area to be complemented by pathways and patios that the building tenants can use for events and meetings. The vegetated sections have three inches of soil planted with tall grasses and native plants. "We wanted to explore the idea of bringing the prairie to the top of the building," principal David Dowell says.

The interior—now an advertising agency—was fitted out by another firm, but El Dorado designed an underfloor system for airflow and data distribution, installed energy-efficient elevators, and designed the stairwells and bathrooms. The entire project was completed for \$72 per square foot and came in \$500,000 under budget. The cost of the green roof was offset by using effective but very inexpensive corrugated plastic to cover the rooftop HVAC units. Dowell notes that the material's most common application is on the kitchen vents on Wendy's franchises, and jokingly worries about a price hike if higher-end use of the product takes off.

The roof is also graced with a new version of the original building's iconic Moonliner II rocket—modeled after the 80-foot-tall version at Disneyland. But that is not the only art integrated into the project: In an adjacent alley that connects the building and the neighboring parking garage is an installation of moving metal pieces by artist James Woodfill. This space also features benches, stair rails, and movable gates fabricated by El Dorado.

The TWA building is more than just another project in the El Dorado portfolio; it marks a new direction for the firm and represents the type of bigger, higher-profile projects that it hopes to do more of in the future.

**Project** TWA Corporate Headquarters Building, Kansas City, Mo. **Client** TWA Lofts—Brad Nicholson (developer) **Architect** El Dorado—David Dowell (principal in charge); Steve Salzer (project architect); Brady Neely (design support and prototyping) **Structural and Civil Engineer** Norton and Schmidt Consulting Engineers **M/E/P Engineer** Lankford + Associates **Code Consultant** Code Consultant Services **Landscaping** Off the Grid **General Contractor** Harris Construction **Size** 135,000 square feet **Cost** \$9.6 million **Completion** 2006



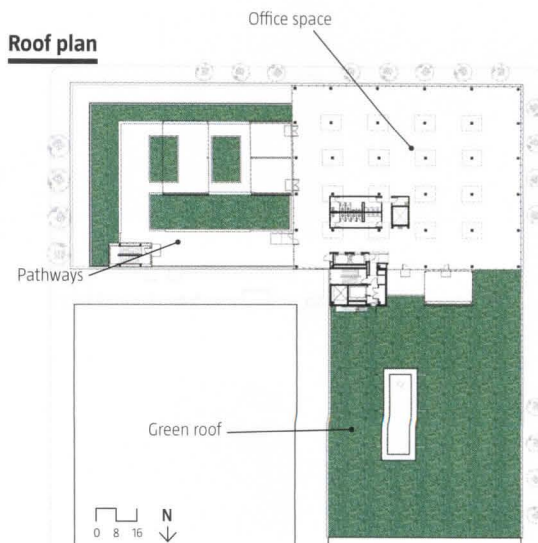
Original 1956 Building



Exterior circa 2002



El Dorado retrofit



2008

Pizzabella completed



2008

Firm selected as one of eight Emerging Voices by Architectural League of New York.





**The faces of El Dorado.** Back row: Douglas Stockman (principal); Jenn Whiteford (receptionist); Chris Burk (project manager); Nancy Woodfill (administrative controller); Dan Maginn (principal); Brady Neely (fabrication manager); David Dowell (principal); Steve Salzer (project manager). Front row: Clint Wynn (technology manager); Josh Shelton (principal); Katie McCurry (marketing & business development manager); Sean Slattery (project manager).

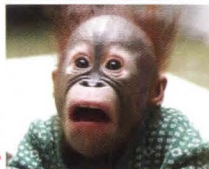
#### 2009

Groundbreaking at Vehicle Processing Facility for Kansas City Police Department.



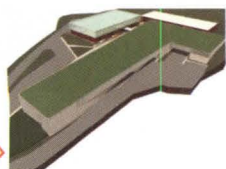
#### 2009

Dan presents idea to unleash herds of orangutans in downtown Kansas City as an urban planning exercise to befuddled CEOs for Cities conference-goers.



#### Ongoing

Trabon Printing & Solutions Facility project is nearing final stages. Construction documents were completed earlier this year.





# LEXICON

A FEW EXAMPLES OF "ELDO-SPEAK" FOR THOSE IN THE KNOW—OR WHO WANT TO BE.

**BEACH BALL (N):** systemwide computer network lockup.

**BURKED (V):** a subtle correction to whatever you're doing by super-employee Chris Burk.

**DUMBTH (N):** a state of profound straightforwardness.

**FATTY (N):** dual-sided spatial partition with functional elements programmed into both faces.

**FUR (N):** any landscape material used on a building project.

**JUNK (N):** any caffeinated beverage.

**THE LEEDS (N):** shorthand for the USGBC's LEED Certification Program.

**LONGBEAN (N):** Money.

**PRECIOUS (N):** tightly radiused  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " steel tube, rarely stocked by American steel suppliers.

**RADICAL PRAGMATISM (N):** a design strategy emphasizing the unique potential of a constraint-based problem-definition process.

**REVERSE ABE LINCOLN (N):** a mechanized building detail that performs counterproductively when operated.

**SANCTIONED MEDDLING (N):** a tendency to covertly incorporate benevolently mischievous constructions into unlikely civic situations.

**SASSAFRAS (N):** incomprehensible but intelligent-sounding design-related mumbo jumbo.

**SAZERAC (N):** any alcoholic beverage.

**'SM (ADJ):** guttural vocal response denoting approval of someone else's idea.

**SUSTAINAFFORDABILITY (N):** a common sense sustainable design strategy that balances initial capital costs with long-term operational savings.

**WHANG (N):** a desirable cantilever.

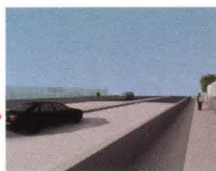


## Ongoing

Needing caffeine to fuel its massive productivity, El Dorado will continue to order more coffee from its supplier than all but three of the company's restaurant clients.

## Ongoing

Troost Bridge art project still in final design stages. Construction documents were completed in 2009.



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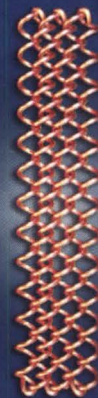
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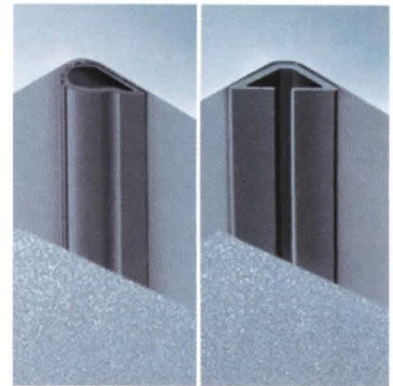
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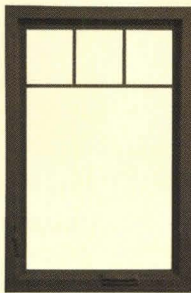


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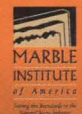
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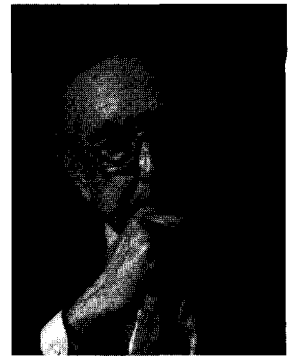
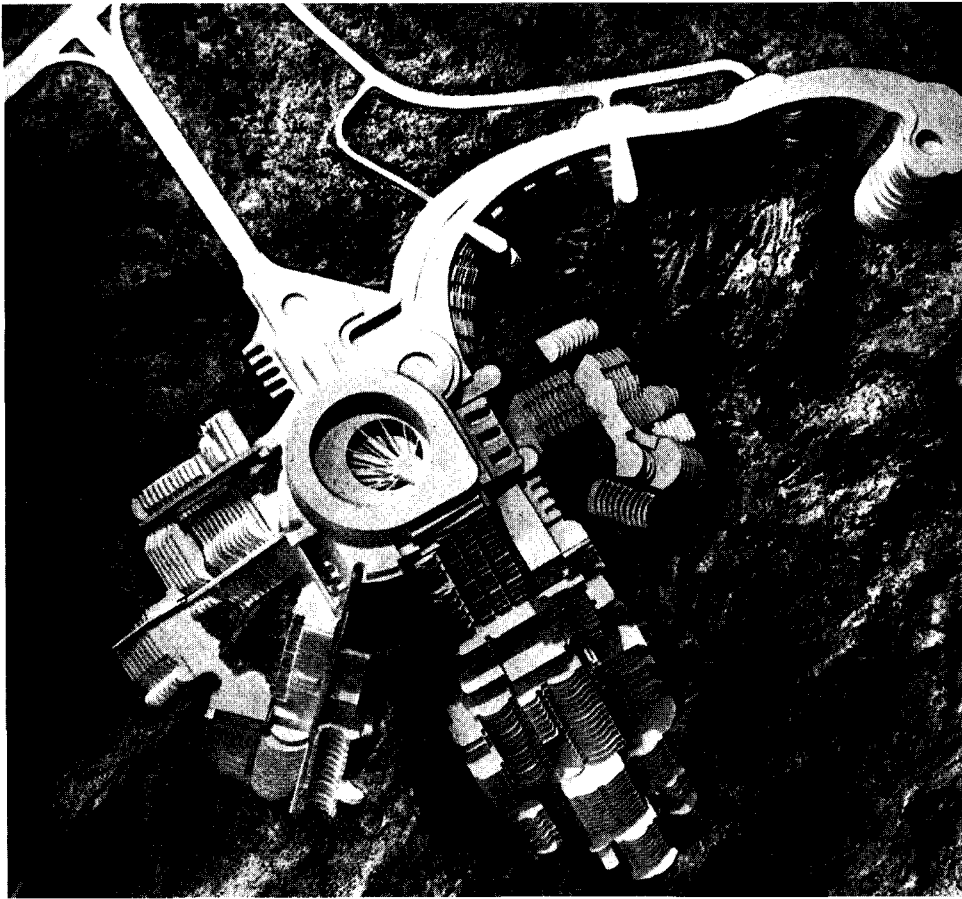
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TEXT BY THOMAS FISHER

→ 1966 P/A FIRST AWARD

# ARCHITECTURE AS INFRASTRUCTURE

ARCHITECT JUNE 2009



Cesar Pelli

THE PROPOSAL FOR THE **URBAN NUCLEUS AT SUNSET MOUNTAIN PARK** NEVER BROKE GROUND, BUT NOW MIGHT BE THE TIME TO RECONSIDER THAT PLAN, AND OTHERS.

**1966 P/A Awards Jury**  
 E. Charles Bassett  
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 Kevin Roche  
 Vincent Scully

AS ECONOMIC STIMULUS money has begun to flow to infrastructure, as our ecological footprint has become a major concern, and as suburban sprawl has started to run out of steam, few projects have as much newfound relevance as the First Award winner in the 1966 P/A Awards program: Daniel, Mann, Johnson & Mendenhall (now AECOM)'s Urban Nucleus at Sunset Mountain Park in the Santa Monica Mountains in Los Angeles. Designed by a young Cesar Pelli and Tony Lumsden for the Sunset International Petroleum Corp., the unbuilt design represented an alternative to suburban sprawl by leaving most of the 3,550-acre site undisturbed. It concentrated thousands of dwelling units in a series of concentric, concrete terraces that cascaded down the site's steep slopes from a mountaintop urban center that contained parking and a full range of public

and private programs. With inclined funiculars and pneumatic supply tubes serving each unit, the design mixed uses, transportation modes, and urban density with proximity to nature.

Megastructures have long gone out of fashion because of their sometimes overtly utopian or overly authoritarian solutions to urban life. And the substantial up-front investment and political will needed to get them built often doomed them before they began, as happened here. But times have changed. We now recognize the need to preserve open space, reduce suburban sprawl, strengthen our communities, and rebuild our infrastructure, and there may be no project more worthy of reconsideration than the Urban Nucleus as a model of what a compact, low-impact, building-as-infrastructure might be. □



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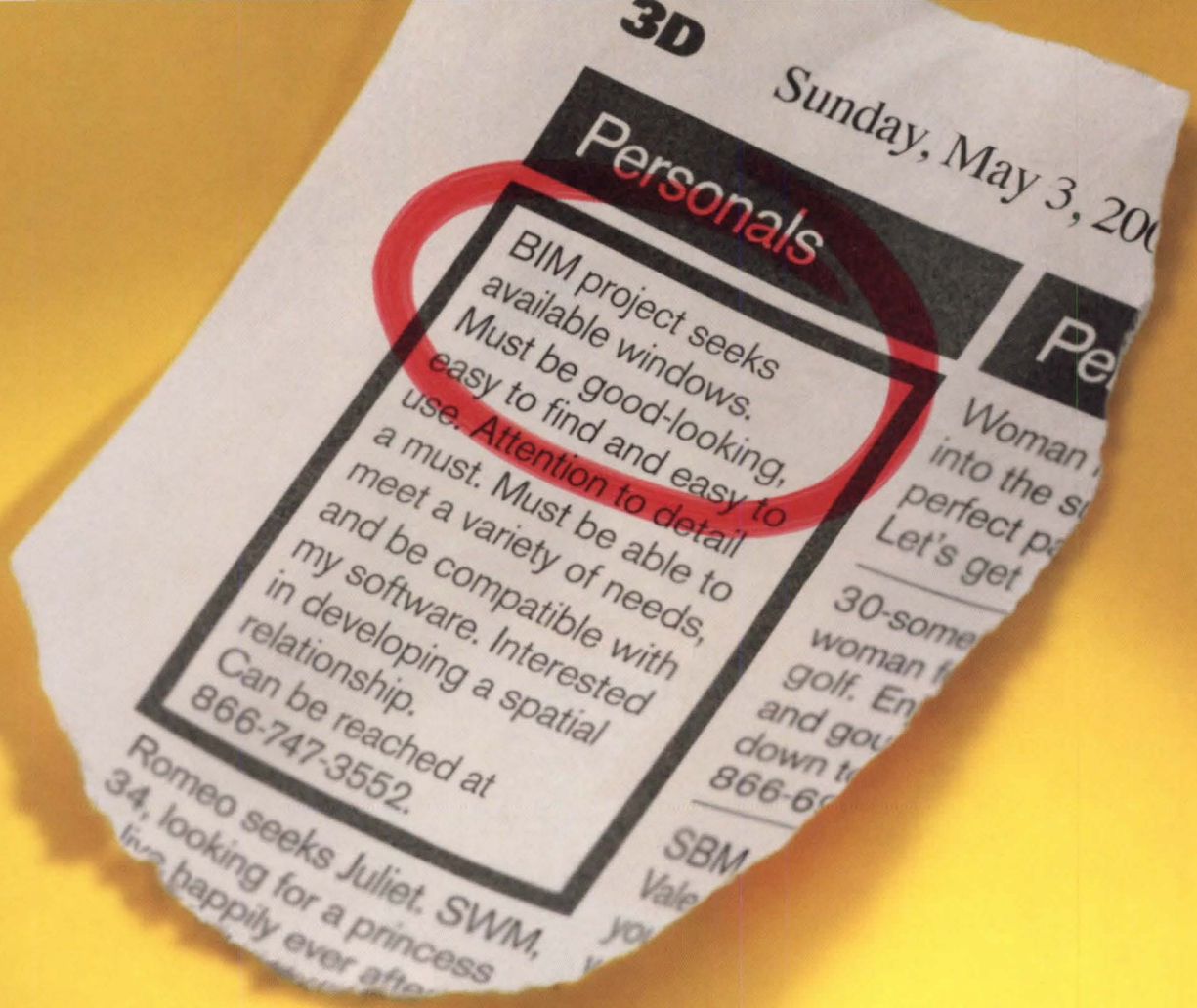


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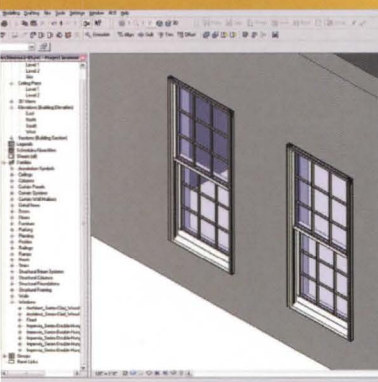
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