

Illuminating Ideas Shooting the Moon Room for the Night

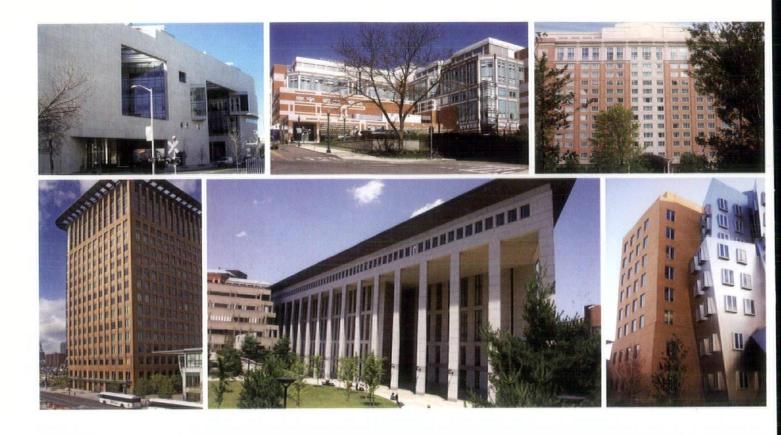
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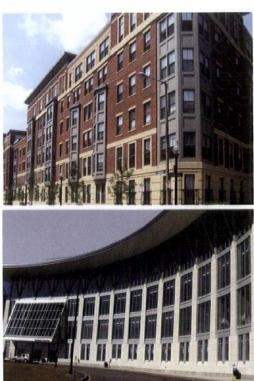
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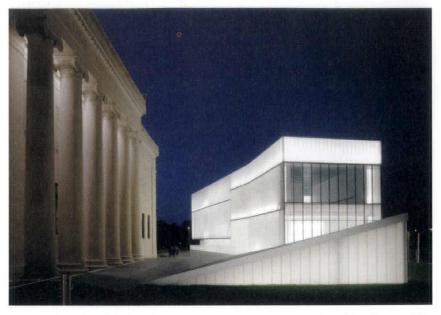
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# night



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#### BY ELIZABETH S. PADJEN FAIA | From the Editor

# Night Moves

ook closely at the photographs of elegantly minimal Modern houses and you'll uncover a blind spot shared by many designers: many of these houses have no draperies. Well, of course, you might be snickering. They're Modern. They're not supposed to have frou-frou add-ons that have gone the way of the antimacassar. But what many designers fail to appreciate is that each house has a life beyond the architectural pursuit of transparency that may have influenced its design. Each house has a night life. When the sun goes down, the views are gone and, with them, a sense of the world beyond. Instead, the occupants are surrounded by walls that might as well have been constructed of black onvx.

Growing up in a Modern house in the woods - one that did have floor-to-ceiling drapery — I became acutely aware of the sun's passage, through the seasons and through the day. It was a passive solar design, with deep overhangs, so glare was not an issue. But at twilight each evening, we closed the draperies - all 14 sets of them. It was habit, not a chore, because the alternative was hard, black reflective glass walls and the uneasy sense that someone could be watching. With the draperies pulled and lights on, the house was instead transformed into a soft, warm enclosure - in every sense, a shelter.

This is not a paean to what is sometimes called the "window treatment" industry. But it is a call to consider more deeply the ways we experience the nocturnal world, both as a distinct design condition and as a place that harbors some of the deepest needs and fears in the human psyche.

We perceive the night world differently, relying on senses and intuitions that we suppress during the day. When light is dim and color is lost, we rely more on peripheral vision, understanding that the oblique view sometimes yields more information than the direct. We listen harder, we breathe in scents more deeply, we use tactile clues to feel our way through the dark and to guard against a heightened sense of vulnerability. And when we are in a populated, well-lit place, we rely on social skills, experience, and instinct to interpret body language and to judge who and what is safe. The night gives license to some behaviors; it is not a coincidence that we refer to antisocial, hurtful, or abusive personality traits as someone's "dark side."

But the nocturnal domain is not only where the monster-underthe-bed lives. These same senses and intuitions can also create a heightened appreciation of the vastness of the natural world, the spectacle of the built world, and the primacy of human connection. The night is when we are most ourselves.

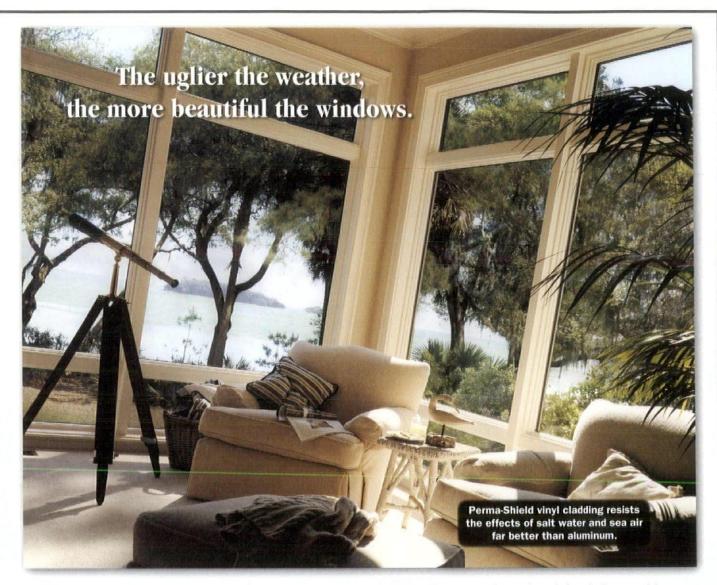
Boston lighting designer Daina Yurkus has commented, "Night light makes you realize how modern we are." She is right; the availability of artificial lighting is certainly one of the factors that most distinguish our lives today from those of our ancestors. A number of experts are exploring the implications of night light, including chronobiologists examining the physiology of light and dark, such as effects on nightworkers and associations with breast cancer; scotobiologists studying effects on animal and plant life; historians studying the premodern phenomenon of segmented sleep patterns broken by middle-of-the-night wakefulness; and scientists and astronomers who worry about light pollution.

Surprisingly, there are few equivalent experts in the architecture field (Dietrich Neumann, the subject of this issue's interview, is a notable exception); after all, the built environment is at the center of these investigations. New materials and lighting technologies have

This is a call to consider more deeply the ways we experience the nocturnal world, both as a distinct design condition and as a place that harbors some of the deepest needs and fears in the human psyche.

the potential to change the character of our buildings and cities and the ways we use them. Sensitivity to the simple need for darkness can create more healthful environments and preserve a natural balance that we don't yet fully understand. And creating appealing night environments - whether in the family home, a restaurant, a theater, or a city street - can foster the social ligatures that bind us together and nourish our lives after hours. Our buildings have a night life too, and we have yet to realize its full potential.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA Editor



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#### Letters Letters Letters

I read the article "Prepared Response" [May/June 2007] and was pleasantly surprised to see this type of discussion in a professional journal. I am an architect (and currently city councilor) in Cannon Beach, Oregon, who has been involved in these issues since 1993, when the State of Oregon changed its building code in the realization that large earthquakes were possible in the state. Learning about the Cascadia subduction zone earthquake and tsunami was a defining event for me. I have since participated in a range of activities from teaching builders and homeowners about seismic upgrades, to being a member of our city's emergency preparedness committee, to lobbying the legislature to implement post-disaster and recovery planning.

We have started this process of "resiliency" in Cannon Beach through a collaboration with a number of organizations and agencies. This approach encourages thinking about these issues before a disaster. Readers who are interested in our community's efforts to date may view our preliminary report at: www.oregonshowcase.org/index.cfm?mode= projects&page=recovery.

#### *Jay Raskin AIA* Cannon Beach, Oregon

I applaud you for tackling the difficult topic of "Fiascos" in the May/June issue. One understands the power of learning from failures by recalling that in the millennia before modern engineering and building science, we progressed in design and construction purely through observations of what we built. We need only note the astounding advances achieved by the builders of the Gothic cathedrals in just over a few hundred years. The flying buttress, for example, is believed to be a direct result of observed mortar cracking in the walls of Notre-Dame de Paris.

Part of our firm's practice involves studying performance problems with buildings and other structures and using the lessons learned to improve design practice. In 1984, I worked with colleagues to form what is today the American Society of Civil Engineers Technical Council on Forensic Engineering, whose goal is to help our profession learn from failures by disseminating case histories of problems with constructed works. In 1987, we started the ASCE Journal of Performance of Constructed Facilities for this purpose. We would welcome more participation from our architectural partners.

George Santayana's admonition applies: "Those who cannot learn from history are bound to repeat it." Good for you for talking taboo!

> Glenn R. Bell PE, CEO Simpson Gumpertz & Heger Waltham, Massachusetts

Thank you for the insightful interview with Henry Petroski on the importance of learning from failures [May/June 2007]. In engineering, failures are scrutinized, debated, and made public so that the profession can avoid them in the future. Sadly, the field of architecture does not promote such healthy debate about building performance. In a public lecture at MIT last year, Pritzker Prize winner Thom Mayne said, "After my buildings are completed, I lose interest in them." What a shame! The actual performance of a building - especially a component that does not work - is an important learning opportunity to improve future designs. As governments around the world demand improved building performance to lower their greenhouse gas emissions, architects have much to learn from the twin failures of high fossil fuel consumption and poor occupant health in many 20th-century buildings. The "Fiasco" issue of ArchitectureBoston should become an annual event.

> *John Ochsendorf* Assistant Professor of Architecture Massachusetts Institute of Technology

I was fascinated to read "Prepared Response" and "Unintended Consequences" [May/ June 2007]. To the catalogue of catastrophes, I submit the 1937 Texas School Explosion. Unfortunately, the same type of decisionmaking that caused that disaster is still common in the design and operation of schools today.

On March 18, 1937, a gas explosion killed 319 students, teachers, and visitors while in the supposed safe haven of a public school in New London, Texas. Following the explosion, the official inquiry discovered a litany of unnecessary economies and shortcuts in the design, installation, and maintenance of the heating system. School officials had decided to switch from steam to gas heat, ignoring the architects' warnings that the school was not designed to vent gas fumes. To save money, the school board hooked up to a free residue gas line while oil company and school officials agreed to look the other way. Despite these problems, the investigation found no one responsible. It concluded that "school officials were just average individuals, ignorant or indifferent to the need for precautionary measures, where they cannot, in their lack of knowledge, visualize a danger or a hazard."

Out of this tragedy came some positive changes. Two months later, the new Texas Engineering Practice Act set professional standards for public buildings to "safeguard life, health, and property and protect the public welfare." Laws were passed requiring an odor be added to natural gas. However, other recommendations have yet to be implemented in most 21st-century schools: to hire technically trained administrators for modern school systems, to conduct more rigid inspections and more widespread public education, and to adopt a comprehensive national safety code.

There is a website (*www.nlse.org*) and a museum dedicated to teaching future generations about the tragedy and its lessons. The story serves as a cautionary tale about the failure to prioritize safety. It also illustrates how painful it is to live with such devastating losses when opportunities to prevent them were overlooked or ignored.

> *Ellie Goldberg MEd* Newton, Massachusetts

Of the many interesting articles presented in your recent "Home Economics" issue [March/April 2007], some housing policy makers might take comfort in reading Anthony Flint's article stating that the high cost of housing is indeed a global phenomenon and not just one that is relegated to Massachusetts. But I'm not one of them.

Mr. Flint's story illustrates to me the relevance of the phrase "Think globally, act locally." By doing that, and by enacting policies to ensure that we don't make the same planning and building mistakes that we see in other parts of the country, if not the world, we will strengthen our economic and competitive edge and make Massachusetts the very best it can be.

Governor Patrick has made housing a top priority, viewing it as both an economic necessity and a moral imperative. By building new housing in and around transit and town centers and other appropriate locations, we can keep our best and brightest, revitalize our cities, retain young professionals, and make the Commonwealth a much more affordable, attractive, and prosperous state for all.

> *Tina Brooks* Undersecretary for Housing and Community Development Commonwealth of Massachusetts

I was surprised to see Deck House given the credit for stimulating the spread of "modernist" prefabs starting in the late 1950s ["Not Your Grandfather's Prefab," March/April 2007]. As someone who has lived for most of the last half-century in the same Techbuilt, I missed a mention of architect Carl Koch's contributions.

If you drive around Boston's western suburbs, you are more likely to see Techbuilt houses of earlier vintage than the Deck House. King's Grant in Weston was all Techbuilts; here in Lincoln half a dozen are visible from the road; even in Lanesville on Cape Ann, there is a small community of Techbuilts. When we were living in Philadelphia in the 1950s, I sent for the Techbuilt portfolio out of sheer admiration for their style and concept. We thought of building one in Germantown but ended up moving back here and were lucky enough to find a Techbuilt for sale in Lincoln. This house was too small for our growing family, and we twice had plans drawn for an addition, but ended up living into old age in the same small but efficient Techbuilt. Our house was built in 1956 by Bob Brownell, who later started Deck House, a fancier version of the post-and-beam Techbuilt (which itself evolved out of Koch's Conantum Village houses in Concord).

So it all started with Techbuilt, which Acorn Structures inherited, and I think Carl Koch's firm should get some credit.

> Adeline Naiman Lincoln, Massachusetts

Please accept my praises on your September/ October 2006 issue. It was a splendid overview of the changes taking place both structurally and socially in East Boston.

On a related note, the East Boston Chamber of Commerce over the last several months has created an initiative known as "One East Boston," This campaign is a collaborative effort among business associations, elected officials, and the police department, reaching out to the previously marginalized business owners (primarily Latino) in the community. The goals are to discover the concerns most important to the business owners, and in the process create relationships and a level of trust and openness between the "newcomers" and the "established community" --- something that has, on the whole, never been attempted before. Our efforts have been extremely successful and well-publicized to date.

> *John Dudley* East Boston Chamber of Commerce East Boston, Massachusetts

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Central commercial district, Harare, Zimbabwe

#### **African Cities: A Photographic Survey**

Harvard Graduate School of Design April 2, 2007–May 23, 2007

David Adjaye is a 40-something, hugely talented, progressive-thinking, Londonbased African-born architect with a portfolio of published work, now teaching at Harvard. With the man comes an exhibition, *African Cities: A Photographic Survey*.

Adjaye takes us on a tour of 10 African cities: Accra, Abidjan, Bamako, Dakar, Ouagadougou, Addis Ababa, Asmara, Nairobi, Harare, Pretoria. Take out your atlases to see where these places are, for on this level, Adjaye does a great service in introducing these cities to an audience typically indifferent to this part of the world, presenting images completely at odds with the PBS view of the continent as an endless safari. Here, often through the windshield (literally), we see what these cities and their buildings look like.

The exhibit left me feeling dissatisfied, short-changed by poor photographs, little substance, and a certain remoteness, with not much help from the accompanying text or data. There was no sense of Ouagadougou and Bamako being the cultural capitals of cinema and music; no sense of the persistent scarification of apartheid planning in the "settler" cities of Nairobi, Harare, and Pretoria; no sense of the journey to and from work that defines life in many of these cities (especially in the rain), for very few of the photographs feature actual people.

Adjaye is deservedly celebrated for his considerable talent. It is unfortunate that Dar-es-Salaam, his place of birth, was omitted from the portfolio since that might have allowed him to give us a more personal insight. As for his visits to cities in other parts of the continent, he seems to be a tourist like the rest of us. Africa deserves better.

Hubert Murray AIA, RIBA is the principal of Hubert Murray Architect + Planner in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and is the president of the Boston Society of Architects. From 1975–1982, he taught at the University of Nairobi and practiced in East Africa.

#### Sir John Soane: An English Architect, An American Legacy

#### **Directed by Murray Grigor**

DVD; 62 minutes (available from Checkerboard Films; www.checkerboardfilms.org)

The American architects claiming the legacy of Sir John Soane (1753-1837) represent a generation that had to become reacquainted with the study of architectural history as a source of inspiration and invention: Graves, Johnson, Meier, Stern, Cobb, Scott Brown, Venturi. The lessons these architects took from the study of Soane and applied to their own work share the spotlight with what is a sympathetic portrait rather than a critical interpretation of Soane's life and work. That tone shapes an exploration of how Soane's complex spatial layering, innovative use of natural light, and his use of history are reinterpreted in such projects as the Getty Center, the Portland Museum, and Philip

Johnson's guest house. Discontinuity and instances of personal grandstanding are offset in this video by its luscious cinematography; its hour-long format offers a tantalizing glimpse of a complex subject, one that would benefit from a more critical approach and treatment in greater depth.

Linda R. Weld AIA is currently a student in the history, theory, and criticism of art and architecture program at MIT.



#### **Emerging Practices**

**Conversations on Architecture** The Boston Society of Architects March 28, 2007

This is my generation: unassuming, forthright, taking on the world through doing. Hansy Better Barraza and Anthony Piermarini AIA are architects for tomorrow. They are devoted academics who pursue social projects with enviable fervor through their firm, Studio Luz. Maybe they have yet to make a dime on their work, but that's not the point. At a recent Conversation, they presented three projects: a collaborative installation at a boys' school in Rhode Island, an urban development in Somerville, and a campus plan for a school on Haiti, the poorest island in this hemisphere. All are built or will be built; all are recyclable or in some way inherently sustainable; all require working with complex organizations, strange countries, or classic bureaucracy. These guys are realistic. Their

ideas happen. They see real life as just another part of the program.

I'm glowing. And then Michael Meredith and Hilary Sample present the work of their firm, mos-office. They have modest clients with low, low budgets who don't know the first thing about design ---and Meredith and Sample don't care! One of their clients found them when he dialed the wrong number. They jump in and design the heck out of the vernacular. The simple gabled house will never be the same. Nor will the houseboat. How about 500 square feet of vacation home? No problem - huge panels on the outside close it up neat and tidy when you're away. Meredith and Sample were finalists in the coveted PS1 competition, with what looked like simple genius to me - their temporary installation was an enormous inflatable silver canopy. It could have worked, and it would have been great. No matter - they got the cover of Architectural Record.

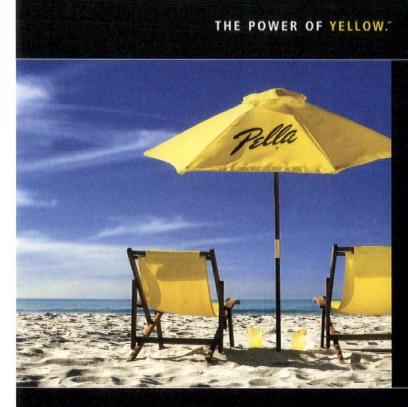
On to Elizabeth Whittaker, Assoc. AIA, who has her lovely minimalist hand in everything not covered above. She has

sophisticated, impecunious clients who want the coolest nightclubs, the hippest bakeries, the hottest nail salons (200 by the end of the year), the sweetest condo lofts. Whittaker's work is so good you don't want her clients to get rich. Look at the amazing things she can do with nothing!

My generation doesn't couch its work in fancy language that doesn't add up. That's not to say that we're not articulate, we just say what we mean. We are the product of another generation's hopes and dreams ---one that wanted the world to change for the better. Our predecessors gave us the tools and the pragmatism (or cynicism?) to just do it. So we did it.

I hope you'll join my generation in our crusade to make great design accessible to everyone. I hope exclusivity is a thing of the past - more than ever before, this damaged world cries out for the brilliance of pragmatic designers, like those I met that night at the BSA.

Rachel Levitt is the home design editor for Boston Magazine and editor of Boston Home.

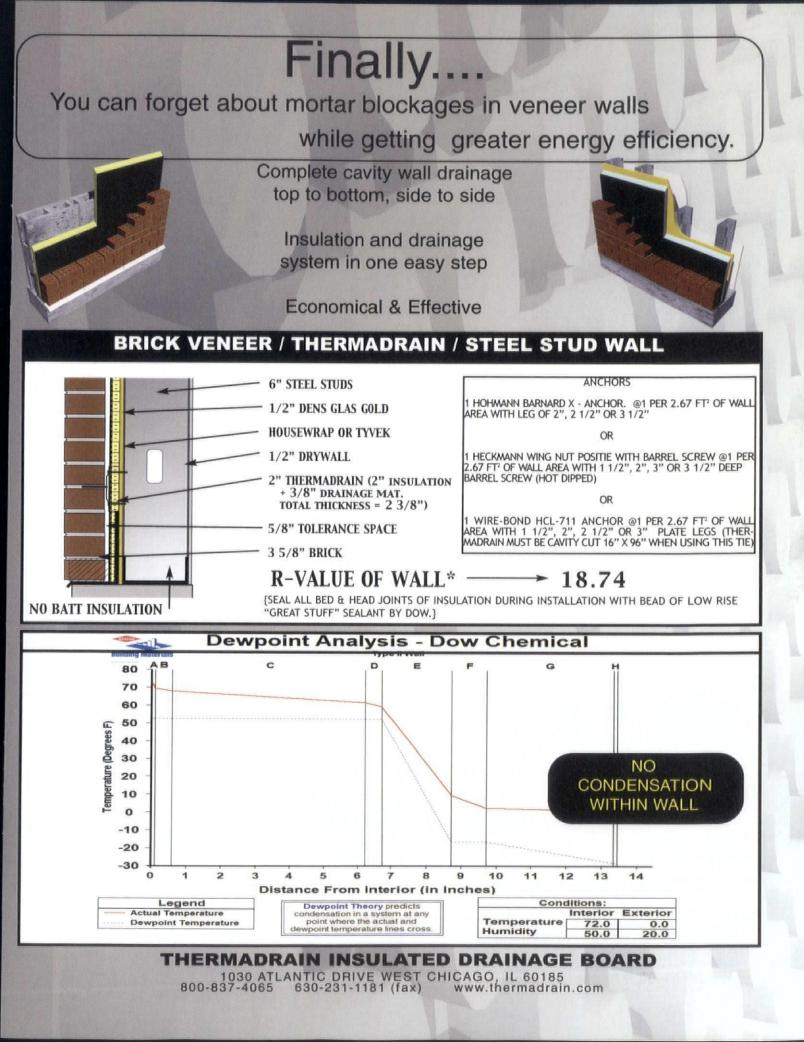


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# The View from the Bus

**The city:** New Orleans. A gentle, sunny afternoon in the French Quarter. Tourists stroll up and down the Rue Royale. A smiling artist in a black bustier, jeans, and a newsboy cap chats with a couple who've stopped to admire her paintings of jazz musicians. A man emerges from a café, looking annoyed. His wife, waiting outside, asks, "Too crowded?" "No," he says. "Just horrible service as usual."

Nearby, a group of architects, in town for a meeting of a professional association, is boarding a bus to tour the damage done by Hurricane Katrina a year and a half before. One of the group went to school with Cliff James, a black architect, planner, and general contractor who has practiced in New Orleans for nearly 40 years, and who will be conducting the tour.

**12:40** The bus stops at the post office so that the group can view a small exhibit inside. Pinned to a couple of folding screens are lists of the names of the dead. Pictures and short tributes memorialize some of the victims. A restaurant owner who died of a heart attack while helping to rebuild houses. A drummer for blues musician Professor Longhair. Two elderly sisters who thought their house would withstand the storm, and who ended up writing "HELP" on a window in lipstick.

**12:53** Back on the bus, driving toward Lakeview, an upscale area hit hard by flooding. A thin wavery mustard-colored stain, about six feet off the ground, runs along the concrete sound barriers beside the highway, marking where the water settled in this part of town after an even higher initial surge.

1:05 Lakeview. An eclectic neighborhood of brick, wood, and stucco houses. Two new modular houses, painted in gentle optimistic pastels. "FOR SALE" signs. Across the road is an empty green esplanade, more than a mile long and 400 feet wide. Cliff says that this is where the rubble was brought after the storm — a scrap heap that eventually rose five stories high.

1:09 All the houses are stained with the watermark. Nearly all are deserted. At first glance, it looks like a summer community during the winter — but it's much more blown out than that. Broken windows and doors. Ravaged gardens. Ripped-up tree stumps. Signs: "HOUSE DEMOLITION." "DUMPSTER SERVICES.""CRIME STOPPERS: REPORT LOOTING." No people in sight. Here and there a FEMA trailer. A few parked cars.

Cliff: "After the storm, people thought they could get a lot for intact houses and were putting them on the market for twice what they would have sold for before. But buyers thought it was outrageous — they'd rather build or move somewhere else."

1:15 The bus crawls along the streets. The houses are nothing more than wrecked flimsy shells, dark and gutted inside. "FOR SALE." FOR SALE." A few of the signs are logoed with the names of realtors, but most are homemade.



"FOR SALE BY OWNER." An unbroken window with "FOR SALE" scrawled on the glass in white paint, along with a phone number.

**1:19** More signs, tacked to telephone poles: "HOME RENOVATIONS — WE DO IT ALL!" And "HOME WRECKERS."

**1:20** A house whose fake leaded-glass front door was once an elaborate web of beveled panes and curlicues. Punched-out baroque shapes of darkness where the glass is missing.

**1:24** At house after house, signs say "NO TRESPASSING,""POSTED: NO TRESPASSING," on what used to be lawns, or inside what used to be windows.

Cliff: "It's hard for people to move back, because you don't know who else is moving back. People don't want to come and find they're the only family on the block. Also, a lot of these people were professionals. Doctors couldn't wait around to rebuild. They had patients who needed services, so they left and got their practices started up again in nearby cities like Slidell and Mandeville. They're not about to disrupt everything a second time to move back here now." 1:30 Back on the highway, near Xavier University. Signs: "WE TEAR DOWN HOUSES," And "THIS AND THAT SALVAGE COMPANY"

1:45 The Lower Ninth Ward, the area hit hardest by the storm; the entire neighborhood was under water for two weeks and flooded again during Hurricane Rita less than a month later. Despite all the clean-up, it's still devastated. Smashed gas pumps. Smashed little houses. Big X's spray-painted on the house-fronts in red or green or orange. In the top quadrant of each X, the date on which the house was reached by rescuers. On the left side, the initials of the agency. On the right, an indication of whether rescuers did or did not enter the house. And in the bottom quadrant, the number of dead found inside.

1:49 A small square house tilted violently forward on its foundation, so that the cube of it is balancing on a single corner. An emphatic sign posted in front:"DO NOT DEMOLISH."

1:55 Wasteland, Blocks and blocks of nothing. Dead wires hanging down from telephone poles. Pipes that aren't connected to anything. Driveways without houses. Houses still lying under the dead trees that crushed them. "BAGHDAD" spray-painted on the side of what's left of a house. Black holes where windows were. A ravaged, faded vard umbrella. A rusted hose rack still mounted on the shell of a house, from when there were gardens here that needed watering. A toilet bowl lying on its side in weeds. Mangled chainlink fences interlaced with dead vines. A bashed-up brick church with a faded sign listing the order of services. A few trees killed by the saltwater but still standing; they look like gigantic pieces of driftwood, bare and twisted and bleached silver by a year and a half of sun. Silence. No birds. No people.

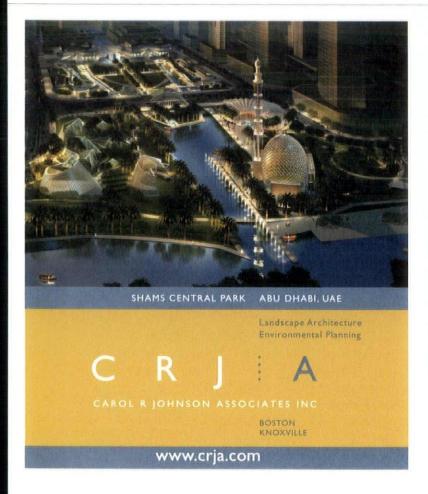
2:10 On the way out of the Ninth Ward, the bus passes a small gray-and-maroon building that seems remarkably intact.

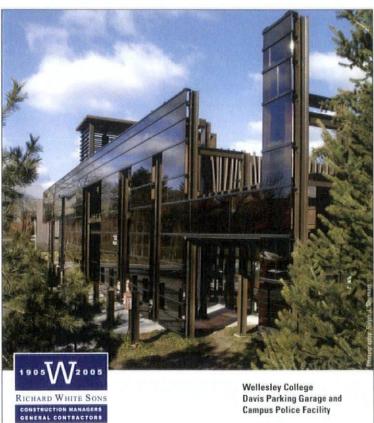
Cliff: "That was a child development center. The first building I ever designed, in 1970."

2:14 Fats Domino's old neighborhood. Holes knocked in roofs. A couple of FEMA trailers parked near houses."That means people have decided to rebuild," Cliff says. A man is standing on a front porch, nailing new house numbers next to his front door. A sign: "WE BUY HOUSES AND LAND. CASH MONEY!"

Cliff mentions that houses originally built on piers, as many of the city's smaller houses were, are relatively easy and cheap to rebuild. "It's the big slab-ongrade houses that cost a lot more in the first place that are harder to rebuild now."

2:25 Back on the highway. A billboard: "GOT MOLD? CALL TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE." A church with a banner hanging out front: "WE ARE BACK. PRAISE THE LORD." Another NOW OPEN."





A CENTURY OF CONSTRUCTION EXCELLENCE WWWRWSONS.COM

Architect: Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects

2:29 Driving by the site of Desire, a grim public housing project from the 1950s that was torn down in 2001. "It used to look like Stalag 17," Cliff remembers. Construction of new affordable housing on the same site started a couple of years ago; following Katrina, the new units sat under 10 feet of water for two weeks and were destroyed.

When asked what's happening now with affordable housing, Cliff says, "Nothing. Inaction. Infighting. People wanting to block a deal if they're not involved." Post-Katrina, he had proposed using the city's many deserted public schools for temporary affordable housing, but the city wasn't interested.

2:35 East New Orleans. Along the highway, ghosts of shopping centers. Huge empty parking lots where buildings have been razed. A ruined medical complex. A big white building on whose front the shadows of missing letters spell out "WAL-MART." Down the road, a jagged piece of lettering, all that remains of another sign: "YS'R'US."

2:40 More upended trees. But bigger houses, more FEMA trailers, more rebuilding going on. A sign: "ASBESTOS AND LEAD ABATEMENT." A basketball court, filled with kids. Across the highway, tattered empty apartment complexes. Cliff speaks again of his frustration: "It's just amazing to me what's not happening. We could have done a lot more for people by taking advantage of temporary housing. That's what you would do if you really wanted people to come back." He pauses. "But now who do they think is going to provide the services in hotels, restaurants? And who's going to maintain the city's character and history? Those things are strongly embedded in black culture here."

Part of the problem, he says, is the well-publicized influx of planners and architects. "There are too many planners and too many plans. They've been arrogant. They're telling people what to do, not soliciting their involvement." Cliff himself is concentrating on building affordable housing in surrounding communities, "so that people can at least live close to the place they love. In terms of building, once you get outside the city, there are fewer obstacles. And when the city is ready, whenever that happens, we'll be here."

**2:44** A sign in the middle of nowhere: "COME BUILD WITH US!"

2:50 Back in the French Quarter. The architects shake Cliff's hand and thank him as they get off the bus. Jazz is coming from somewhere — street musicians a couple of blocks away, or a CD playing through the open windows of a bar. Four young white men, all of them in flip-flops and sunglasses, one wearing a thick white terrycloth hotel bathrobe, stroll down the street, holding plastic cups of beer and snapping their fingers to the music.

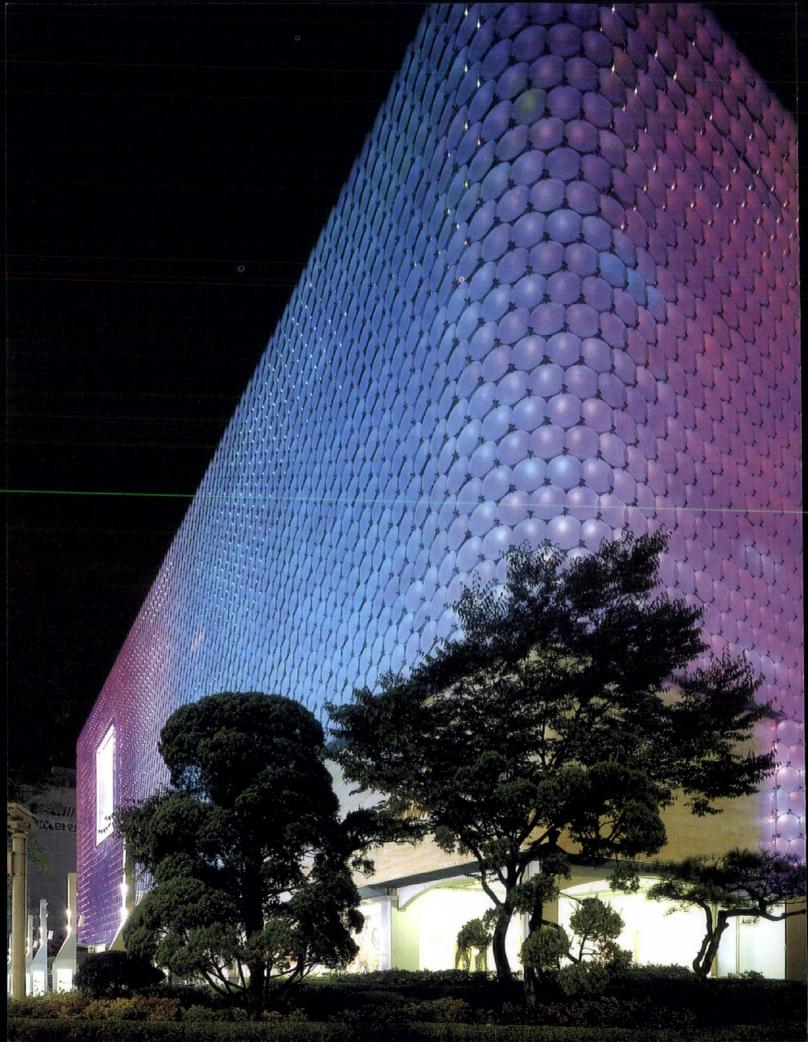
Joan Wickersham is a writer in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her new book will be published by Harcourt in 2008.

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# ILLUMINATING IDEAS

LIGHTING AND THE NOCTURNAL LIFE OF BUILDINGS DIETRICH NEUMANN TALKS WITH SUSANNE SCHINDLER



**Dietrich Neumann** is a professor of architectural history at Brown University and currently Vincent Scully Visiting Professor at Yale. He is the author of Architecture of the

*Night* (Prestel, 2002) and editor of *Luminous Buildings* (Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2006), the catalogue accompanying the exhibition *Luminous Buildings*, which opened at the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart in 2006 and traveled to Netherlands Architecture Institute in Rotterdam in early 2007. He was also editor and co-author of *Film Architecture: Set Design from Metropolis to Blade Runner* (Prestel, 1996). He was previously interviewed in the "Theater" issue of *ArchitectureBoston* (Winter 2001).



Susanne Schindler is a designer at Utile, Inc. in Boston. She previously practiced in New York City, Zurich, and Berlin, where she was an editor of *archplus*. She writes

frequently for architectural publications and is currently working on a book, *Growing Urban Habitats*, with Bill Morrish and Katie Swenson.

Galleria Hall West, Seoul. Architect: UNStudio Susanne Schindler: You have written extensively in recent years about the architecture of the night — the confluence of building, lighting, urbanity, and culture — and recently curated an exhibition on the subject that was on view in Stuttgart and Rotterdam. Your focus is architecture, but it's also the historical development of lighting as a form in architecture. Designers first started to think of lighting in those terms in the 1920s. What makes it still interesting to you?

Dietrich Neumann: We're now in a very exciting phase in this long history. A shift has occurred over the last few years as a result of new technological developments and technicians, lighting designers, and architects have rediscovered the possibilities that electric light offers. It's much easier now to provide colored lights, to change colors in light, and to plan for artificial light as an architectural element. Now, when we see plans for new building projects, we are regularly given nocturnal perspectives showing what the building will look like after dark. That is a fairly new development: while light has been discussed as a great opportunity, it had not previously reached the architectural mainstream as much as it has today.

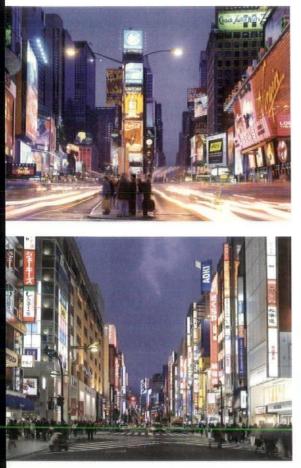
**Susanne Schindler:** What do you think is driving that motivation to think of light as a central element in design?

**Dietrich Neumann:** Even long before the development of the electric light, light always had the power to attract people at night. Now it has been rediscovered as an essential element in making cities more interesting, more lively, more photogenic. It has been used, especially in the United States, to enhance the visual attraction of cities and draw people back into urban centers. That's part of a very healthy trend, because attractive urban centers will help to rein in urban sprawl and all the economic and environmental problems that go with it.

**Susanne Schindler:** With this rediscovery, do you see any changes in the way cities are thinking about lighting?

Dietrich Neumann: Many cities in Europe and the United States have developed lighting plans to coordinate the way the city looks at night, by setting aside funds to illuminate public buildings, encouraging business owners to light their buildings, and getting architects and lighting designers to collaborate in considering the skyline as a cohesive luminous image. Municipal leaders have realized that light has become an important factor in bringing life back into the cities.

**Susanne Schindler:** So the increased consideration of the city's nocturnal appearance is frequently rooted in economic development.



Above: Times Square, New York City. Below: Shinjuku, Tokyo.

Dietrich Neumann: Yes. But it's also a strategy that has been enabled by technological developments that make spectacular lighting much more affordable. The new lighting devices are cheaper to purchase and cheaper to run - LED lights in particular are now much more affordable and use much less energy than the old neon and flood lights. And of course LEDs are now so sophisticated that you can program them to change colors and show moving images. We are seeing applications that were not feasible, or even imaginable, just a few years ago. Examples include the new gigantic media screens. In a way, these screens play the role of cinema in an outdoor environment, drawing people into public spaces and engaging them in a shared experience. Interestingly, the concept of such devices was discussed long before they became technically feasible.

**Susanne Schindler:** Times Square comes to mind as one example of such a public space — it must be one of the largest installations of media screens in the world.

Dietrich Neumann: Yes, that is correct. But Times Square is actually not such a great example of the potential of these devices, simply because there are so many media screens there. In Times Square, advertising billboards and screens became mandatory as part of the campaign to revive the area in the early 1990s. Now it has so many media screens and moving images that their messages are probably not very effective any more. It's just a moving, colorful environment without any specificity.

But I've seen a square in Tokyo with only one big media screen, where people stood and watched the short films that ran on it. Media screens are now so bright that they work during the day, so the architecture of the night that originally fascinated me is actually morphing into something else — an ephemeral, moving, media-generated architecture of the day.

Susanne Schindler: What effect does that have on new buildings? A media screen can be free-standing or applied to a building which perhaps renders the building behind it less important. How do these technologies then allow designers to generate new architecture?

Dietrich Neumann: That is an astonishingly old question that is still right at the heart of the matter. The integration of advertising and architecture and the problems it poses have been talked about since at least the 1920s, if not before. There were heated debates at that time about the scaffolding that held those big advertising images in Times Square, which was, during the day, a rather unsightly addition to the buildings. Today, especially in Times Square, we have many cases where the media screens were attached to a façade after the fact and therefore obscure the building, as well as darken the rooms behind them. The great task for architecture now is to come up with an interesting integration of architecture and advertising, especially in the form of these media screens. Sometimes that happens in very intelligent ways.

WE ARE SEEING LIGHTING APPLICATIONS THAT WERE NOT FEASIBLE, OR EVEN IMAGINABLE, JUST A FEW YEARS AGO.

– DIETRICH NEUMANN

**Susanne Schindler:** Can you give an example?

Dietrich Neumann: Peter Marino did a wonderful store for Chanel in Tokyo's Ginza district, where the façade, or rather the "anti-facade," is a gigantic media screen. They commission artists to produce films that run during the night. During the day, however, this media screen is translucent, so the offices behind it get daylight. One can also look at the Lehman Brothers building just up from Times Square, which integrates the media screens into the facades, on the spandrels between the horizontal windows, so that they are perceived as part of one unified image. There are many other possibilities, and that's where interesting options for architecture lie.

One could argue that these kinds of devices are fulfilling the 1920s' vision of Modern architecture, that eventually it would be entirely dissolved into light and air. This ephemeral quality of modernity that Baudelaire had already famously referred to is something that seems close at hand in these examples.

Susanne Schindler: Many of the current applications of lighting, media façades and images seem to contrast with what Modern architecture stood for, which included an honest display of structure and material, and an honest expression of function. Accordingly, old debates in about the use of color, for instance. For years, Modern architecture was perceived and created in black and white, which was largely due to the nature of photography. Now, color is back. One example is Jean Nouvel's Agbar tower in Barcelona, for which the lighting artist Yann Kersal designed a colored LED system that reinforces Nouvel's colored aluminum

panels. On the other hand, in your writings, you point to the fact that in the 1920s, light was used to soften, or perhaps make more palatable, the harshness of Modern architecture. It returned elements of surprise, of magic and playfulness to it.

Dietrich Neumann: Yes. Nocturnal illumination was sometimes seen as a corrective to the stern radicalism of Modern architecture. And you are right about color in Modern buildings, although there were of course some uses of it at the Bauhaus and in the work of LeCorbusier. Interestingly, European architects and lighting designers at the time considered the use of color in the illumination of buildings in the United States to be rather kitschy. Buildings in Berlin, for example, might have white or beige light, but not the rainbow range that American designers favored. When Europeans visited the US, they were often completely perplexed by the use of colored terra cotta or colorful floodlighting on the top of skyscrapers in New York and Chicago. One of them, the German modernist Wassilij Luckhardt, went as far as critiquing this approach as too feminine, as too concerned with superficial beauty and thus emasculating the skyscraper.

**Susanne Schindler:** What's your sense of the key differences between European, Asian, and American approaches today?

Dietrich Neumann: It's an interesting question because there are so many new developments on a global scale today. Since the 1920s, the idea of nocturnal advertising that was born in Times Square has been exported all over the world. But of course it has been adopted in different ways. Tokyo's central business district Shinjuku looks far different from Times Square at night. It is much more language- and sign-oriented, and seems more ordered and regulated. There is strong use of color, which is very well integrated into the architecture, there is very little imagery and very few media screens. That's very much in tune with prevailing Japanese design preferences. In contrast, if you look at new developments

## LIGHT BOSTON

A band of Boston community activists throws some light on the subject

#### **By James McCown**

Light Boston promotes the nighttime illumination of Boston landmarks and envisions a "Diamond Necklace" as a nocturnal complement to Frederick Law Olmsted's beloved Emerald Necklace.

It might seem like an inauspicious time for such an organization. In an age of energy conservation, isn't the lighting of buildings a self-evidently wasteful and decadent act? Not necessarily, say advocates of Light Boston, who point to the economic, security, and spiritual benefits of beautifully lit urban buildings, and say their efforts mesh with concerns about light pollution.

"Half of what we're doing is lighting up buildings," said Boston architect Todd Lee FAIA, who co-founded Light Boston with Anne B.R. Witherby in 1996. "The other half is calling attention to bad lighting. Sometimes developers get into competition and you have this lighting arms race."

For a city whose history is so tied to light in buildings — One if by land, two if by sea! the idea of architectural lighting came late to Boston. The gold-domed Massachusetts State House, while sporadically lit over the years, received professionally designed lighting commensurate with its historic and architectural value only after a major renovation that began in the late 1990s.

Light Boston partners with corporations, foundations, and individuals to support the lighting of churches and other buildings owned by nonprofit organizations. The Light Boston website (*http://lightboston.org*) proudly points to success in lighting landmarks such as the Old State House, King's Chapel, the Cathedral Church of St. Paul (*photo, right*), and the Chinatown Gate. In addition to lighting monuments, the group works with developers and neighborhood organizations on street lighting and related issues.

"If you take the view that it's all about aesthetics, then it's hard to justify," said Frank McGuire AIA, who also serves on the board of Light Boston. "But we're seeing a relationship between lighting and security, as in Mission Hill where light needs to be adjusted for the elderly residents. There's a sense of insecurity that comes with darkness. We helped light up the Frog Pond on the Common, and now there's all this activity in a place that used to be foreboding."

Light Boston enjoys an informal role as advisor to the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). "When a developer gets a go-ahead on a project, we help direct linkage money toward the lighting of some adjacent building or spaces," McGuire said.

"It's a double-edged sword," said Prataap Patrose, deputy director of urban design at the BRA. "We encourage developers to light their buildings, but it has to be



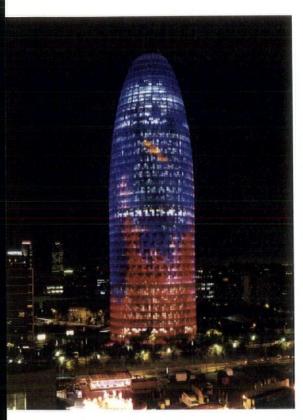
done in an energy-conscious way. I think there's a lot of potential for the big lighting companies to develop technology that can power itself, such as with solar panels."

"Let there be darkness," comes the cry from the Dark Sky movement, which is concerned that the glare of urban light obscures the stars and the planets. But is viewing an exquisite human creation, lit up in all its nocturnal glory, any less thrilling than stargazing?

As anyone who has visited Paris in the last decade knows, the city, flush with nuclear energy, has embraced landmark lighting with a gusto. Its chief lighting engineer has a staff of 30, and the city spends more than \$260,000 per day on electricity to light its glorious architectural patrimony.

"Urban lighting is not just about being practical," McGuire said. "It's about human well-being, too."

James McCown is director of communications at Sasaki in Watertown, Massachusetts.



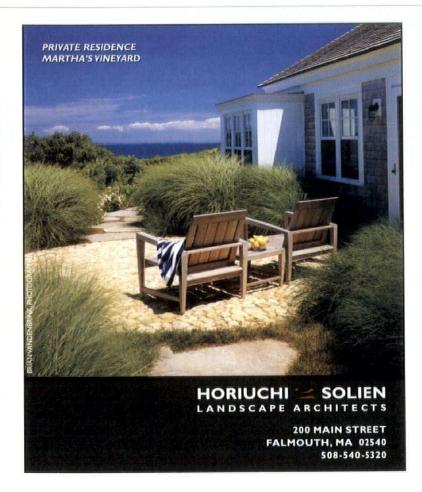
Agbar Tower, Barcelona. Architect: Ateliers Jean Nouvel

in, let's say, Shanghai or Beijing, you find a sort of visual and luminous exuberance that goes beyond anything that you might have seen in the United States. But as far as I can tell, the most sophisticated new approaches to lighting are happening in Europe at the moment. Despite excellent firms in the United States, such as Schuler Shook in Chicago, Howard Brandston and OVI in New York, Color Kinetics in Boston, and many others, I think European designers are more often progressive in their attempt to integrate light and architecture and move toward a new, more ephemeral, more successful Modern architecture. And that seems to occur at very early stages in design in collaborations between the lighting designer and the architect.

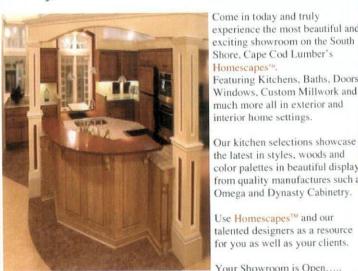
Susanne Schindler: What do you think is guiding that trend?

Dietrich Neumann: It's several strands that come together. One is certainly fashion, the wave of the moment. We've seen several of these waves come and go, in the '20s, '50s, and '60s. Then there was a big break because NOCTURNAL ILLUMINATION IS ACTUALLY ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE TOTAL **ENERGY CONSUMPTION** OF OUR BUILDINGS. - DIETRICH NEUMANN

of the energy crisis in 1973, when all the lights were literally extinguished. The Postmodern movement in the '80s revitalized interest in lighting as part of the nostalgia for the '20s and '30s. Now we have a general interest in urban environments that coincides with the rediscovery of these tools, together with the broad availability and much greater affordability of new lighting technologies. And the possibility of putting a building on the map - or into the skyline at night — through the use of lighting is of course very seductive. Lighting can make up for a design that isn't particularly remarkable during the day - after dark,







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the building can suddenly stand out in time and in place, and for very little money. All these trends are coming together to create this surge of creativity.

Susanne Schindler: Of course, there are several reasons not to encourage more lighting. The energy crisis of the '70s could very well happen again. I recently found a grim, if rather imprecise, statistic: between 100 million and one billion birds a year die from flying into buildings, many of them hitting illuminated buildings at night. Some cities are trying to mandate switch-off times to reduce those numbers.

Dietrich Neumann: You are absolutely right. The likelihood of another energy crisis coming soon is rather substantial. One thing to remember is that the new lighting uses much less energy than older technologies. Nocturnal illumination is actually only a small part of the total energy consumption of our buildings. Of course it is extremely important that architects consider what happens aesthetically to a building when those integrated media

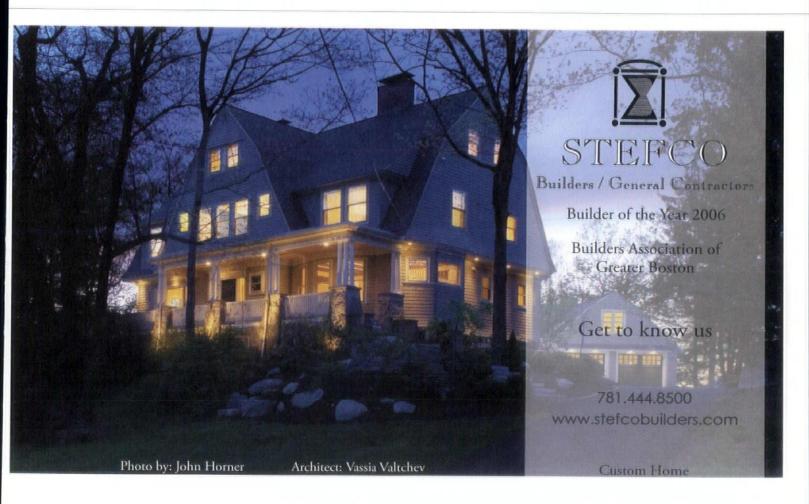
screens are turned off one day.

The problem with migratory birds is something that has not been successfully solved; I wonder if there is something one can do in terms of switching lights on and off at certain times and regulating it very clearly. Another legitimate concern is the growing inability to see the nocturnal sky, which has been a particular concern to astronomers and growing numbers of citizens. An organization called the Dark Sky Association is leading an effort to decrease urban lighting to make it possible to see the night sky again. Here, too, the new technologies make it much easier to contain light very precisely to a facade or a sidewalk and not have it spill out into the night sky. But these kinds of concerns often lead to interesting new ideas and solutions, so it's good to face them head on.

I'm very excited about Renzo Piano's New York Times tower, which is almost complete. The facade was designed in collaboration with the lighting designer Enrique Peiniger and his firm OVI in New York. The façade has a screen of terra-cotta tubes in front of it, which will be illumi-

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Blinkenlights, Berlin. **Designer: Chaos Computer Club** 





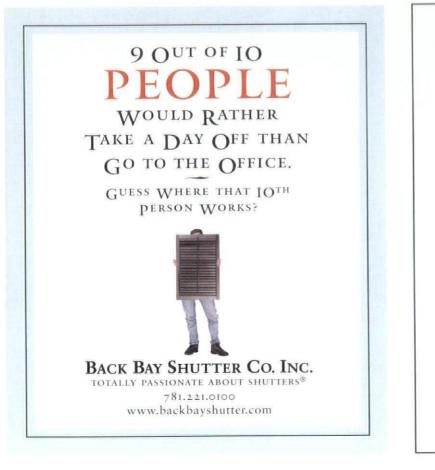
BIX installation, Kunsthaus, Graz, Austria. Designer: Realities:United Architect: Spacelab Cook-Fournier

nated by floodlights. The placement of the horizontal tubes will allow office workers to have views out and yet be shaded from the sun, and at night, the building will turn into a different, ephemeral object, its brightness decreasing as you go up, its top fading into the night sky. And it also offers a potential solution to the problem of migratory birds — as they approach the façade, they can alight in the gaps between the terra-cotta elements and perhaps be deterred from hitting the glass. It's an example of a very interesting architecture, a new form of luminous architecture, that addresses a number of these problems in an intelligent way.

**Susanne Schindler:** Will your work continue to explore the relationship between light and building?

Dietrich Neumann: Yes. I'm interested, for example, in individual lighting designers, such as Richard Kelly, who designed the lighting for the Seagram building and worked with Philip Johnson, Louis Kahn, and Richard Neutra. But I'm also interested in the integration of advertising and architecture and want to pursue that further. The new "urban screens" are a development worth watching, because they have enormous potential influence on the way we understand architecture, structure, and iconography. I wonder, for example, what the implications are for an architectural medium in which the language that is spoken and the images that are shown can change so quickly and can be programmed by those who rent the space and pay for minutes on screen. We're seeing a growing interest in these urban screens, with some proposals to require that a certain percentage of time be devoted to uses other than advertising, such as artists' projects — similar to the percent-for-art that we often require in public projects. I find that exciting imagine exhibitions of photography or short video clips on these big screens, bringing art and life to urban spaces.

Susanne Schindler: There's also the possibility for interaction by the public with the lighting of a building: in the project "Blinkenlights" by Chaos Computer Club in Berlin, people could use their cellphones to play Tetris and other games on the gridded facade of a 1950s building slated for major renovations [www. blinkenlights.de]. But then questions come up regarding the programming of the lighting. An interesting example is the Kunsthaus, the art museum in Graz, Austria, by Peter Cook and Colin Fournier, which has a long, double-curved, acrylic



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glass façade with a digital light installation — *BIX*, designed by Realities: United. Some museum people thought the display skin should be used to announce museum exhibits — they wanted to make it a big banner. Others, including the designers, insisted that it was for art, for more abstract applications and, so far, they have won out.

Dietrich Neumann: Obviously many of these developments in lighting are initially driven by commerce, but if we manage to get artists involved, then something fruitful can result. I'm a great fan of the work of Jan and Tim Edler, the founders of Realities: United, the Berlin firm you just mentioned. At the Kunsthaus, they decided to work with a simple media façade with very rough, large "pixels," so to speak, incorporating only black-and-white imagery, almost reminiscent of early silent film. It was a conscious decision to create something that didn't have the light, speed, and precision of the new media screens. Their installation makes you aware of the potential of this medium and the need to step back far

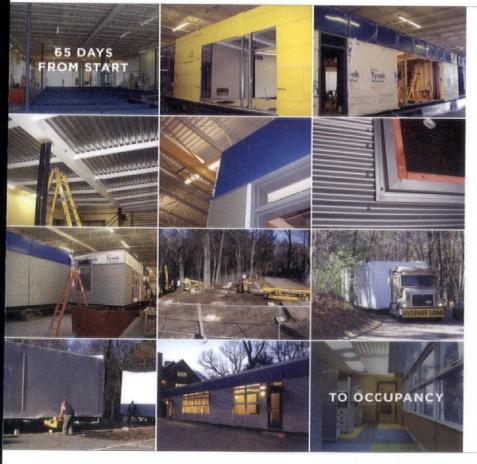
enough to see the larger context, to think about values of brightness and the nature of imagery. It's very thoughtful work.

Susanne Schindler: It's unique because it's so low-tech. Realities: United used standard fluorescent, round-tube lights — each one being one pixel. The project raises another basic question: who is driving what? At Graz, Realities: United came in late in the design process — but I would say that their light installation gave the building depth and made it whole. But how can designers use the technologies that are out there to generate new building form, not just to react to a form already created? Generally speaking, media screens are big, flat two-dimensional planes. *BIX* points to other options.

**Dietrich Neumann:** But dissemination of these ideas will lead to new architectural forms and experiences. Of course, it's technically possible to apply those tiny LED light bulbs to any surface or form and do whatever you like with them. At the Cultural and Sports Center, designed by Burckhardt + Partner for the Beijing Olympics, all four sides will consist entirely of gigantic media screens, so people can just stay outside and watch what is happening inside. I think that's where the greatest potential for new architectural development lies at the moment.

**Susanne Schindler:** Even greater than structural techniques or digital devices in architecture?

Dietrich Neumann: That is a question of interpretation. Frank Gehry's Disney Hall in Los Angeles and his proposed Vuitton Museum in Paris, for example, are very exciting and are possible only because of computer-based design and construction methods. Despite their innovative forms, those buildings represent the evolution of traditional architecture. But the new lighting technologies, the growing application and development of media screens, and the opportunity to meld images and messages with the built form suggest that we may be on the brink of an entirely new architecture.



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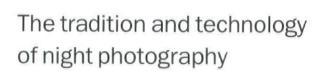
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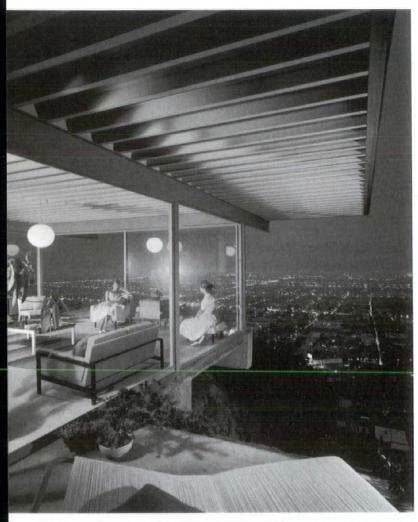
# Shooting the Moon



by Lance Keimig

Photographers have long embraced the literary and artistic tradition of the night as both theme and subject in their work. The romantic notions and sense of mystery associated with the night, as well as the transformation from the mundane world to the unknown, provide ample material for exploration. Tim Baskerville, founder of the night-photography organization the Nocturnes, has said, "Surrealism, the mystery of place, solitude, and a heightened sense of the nature of things — night photography seems a worthy vehicle, a ritual to express these themes."

Night had been established as a theme in art long before the advent of photography. Artists as far back as the 15th-century Flemish painter Hieronymus Bosch played off the instinctive fear of darkness and the night, as in Bosch's rendition of hell in his masterpiece, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. The 16th-century Dutch engraver and painter Lucas Van Leyden and the German printmaker Albrecht Dürer repeatedly explored the night in their work. Rembrandt famously relied on dark tones and deep shadows to evoke powerful emotions in his work. James McNeill Whistler painted a series of night and twilight scenes entitled *Nocturnes*.



Case Study House 22, 1960, Julius Schulman.

Night photography became technically possible in the mid-19th century as photographic materials became increasingly lightsensitive. When the daguerreotype process was introduced in 1839, exposure times of 10 minutes or more were required to take a photograph in bright sunlight. While exposures were reduced to 5–10 seconds within a few years, photographing at night in the weak artificial light of the time or by moonlight was impossible. The wet-plate collodion process was a tremendous technical advance over the daguerreotype, but because collodion plates had to be exposed before the emulsion dried on the plate, the lengthy exposures required at night made nocturnal photography exceedingly difficult. It was the introduction of the dry gelatin plate in the late 1880s that once and for all opened the doors of the creative potential of night-time imagery to photographers.

Many photographers experimented with night photography

Night transforms our experience of the world from one of routine certainty to one of mysterious unknowing. The interplay of light and shadow and extremes of contrast heighten this transformation.

and, throughout the 19th century, photographs were often manipulated to appear as though they were taken at night. It wasn't until William Fraser and Alfred Stieglitz in New York, and Paul Martin in London began to photograph at night in the last decade of the 19th century that anyone produced a significant body of night images. Stieglitz would go on to inspire his colleagues at the New York Camera Club to venture out into the night with their cameras. Edward Steichen, Alvin Langdon Coburn, Karl Struss, and Paul Haviland all created significant numbers of night photographs between 1900 and 1910.

As Mary Woods has noted in her essay, "Photography of the Night: Skyscraper Nocturne and Skyscraper Noir," this work was produced at the exact moment when the pictorialist sensibilities of romantic Impressionism gave way to the more hard-edged and sharply defined aesthetic of Modernism. The shift from soft-focus pictorialist images to crisply focused Modernist photographs is evident in the work of each of these photographers, and it seemed an appropriate response to advances in technology and changes in attitude that came with the new century.

As night photography continued to evolve throughout the 20th century, night photographers were increasingly drawn to the built environment for subject matter, which remains a source of fascination for many contemporary night photographers. Night transforms our experience of the world from one of routine certainty to one of mysterious unknowing. The interplay of light and shadow and extremes of contrast on the buildings and structures of the urban environment serve to heighten this transformation.

Brassai's photographs of the seedy underbelly of Paris nightlife in the '30s, Bill Brandt's night photographs of London in the '30s and '40s, and O. Winston Link's famous images of the last operating steam railroad in America in the mid-'50s all mark time and place in a distinctly human world. Berenice Abbott's aerial view, *New York at Night, ca. 1935* conveys the dynamic vitality of the growing city at night. Other notable examples of the night photographer's attraction to architectural subjects include Julius Schulman's iconic image, *Case Study House 22* (1960) which shows architect Pierre Koenig's futuristic house seemingly hovering over Los Angeles, and George Tice's *Petit's Mobile Station* (1974), in which the dark hulking structure of a water tower lurks menacingly in the shadows behind a gas station.

Unquestionably, the most significant night photographer of the second half of the 20th century is Michael Kenna. Early in his career, Kenna retraced the footsteps of Bill Brandt, who documented the industrial cities and mill towns of northern England in the 1940s. Kenna became more widely known after the publication of his photographs of Ratcliffe Power Station in Nottinghamshire, also in the industrial north of England. Later, Kenna would go on to photograph extensively in France and Japan, often at the intersection of the manmade and natural worlds. In an interview with Tim Baskerville in his monograph, Nightwork, Kenna says, "The underlying subject matter is the relationship, confrontation, and/or juxtaposition, between the landscape ... and the human fingerprint, the traces that we leave, the structures, buildings and stories. Sometimes the emphasis in the image will be the landscape, the human influence will be slight, but it is always there. At other times, the urban scenery or industry will be more dominant and the landscape will be barely visible, shown only by a passing cloud, moving water, or a veil of mist."

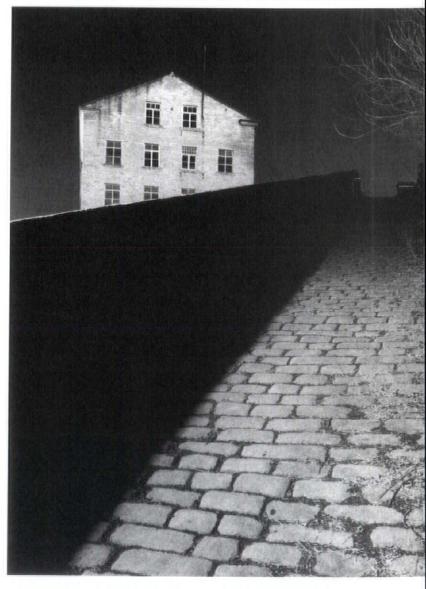
Time is another element that is central to night photography. Due to the lower light levels at night, longer exposures are required to produce an image. Many night photographers have spoken about the camera's ability to record what cannot be seen with the eye. Time accumulates on film (or nowadays on a digital sensor) in such a way that it is presented as a single image. All that has transpired during the exposure is recorded in the photograph. The movement of clouds, the moon, the earth, people, and vehicles passing through an image are frozen in time. Unlike the instantaneous daytime exposure that extracts an instant from the continuum of time, long-exposure night photographs record movement in surreal ways that we cannot perceive with our own senses.

Los Angeles-based industrial and architectural photographer Tom Paiva says, "My work rarely shows people. Five-minute to hour-long exposures do not record fleeting shapes moving through the image. I like to think that night photography can somehow stop time: inanimate objects are sharp, but people, moving grasses, and cars slip through the frame smoothly." Like many architectural photographers, Paiva often photographs at twilight for commercial assignments, during the brief window when ambient natural light is balanced with the artificial lights in the scene he's photographing. This popular technique can yield spectacular results, but it is different from true night photography in that these images often compromise the sense of mystery and time of a night photograph for the technical perfection of an exact exposure, as required by a commercial assignment. Christian Waeber, a Boston-based architectural photographer who is best known for his night photographs of the Big Dig, wrote in an October, 2004 article for View Camera magazine, "When photographing at night, I am trying to find the way that I used to perceive objects in the dark as a child: the most harmless objects become monsters, the sense of space and proportion is altered." Waeber's night-time Big Dig photographs seem to do just that: the hulking forms of the freeway structure become a surreal

playground of light, color, shape, and form where anything is possible.

With the proliferation and advancement of digital photography, night photographs have become increasingly common. The instant feedback afforded by digital cameras makes determining exposures at night much easier, something that has always been one of the greatest technical challenges of night photography. Digital sensors do not suffer from reciprocity failure as film does, allowing considerably shorter exposure times. While these advances certainly make night photography more accessible, they do not necessarily make it better. With some exceptions, night photographs taken with digital cameras lack many of the qualities that make nocturnal images so appealing. Each

Bill Brandt's Snicket, Halifax, Yorkshire, England, 1986, Michael Kenna.



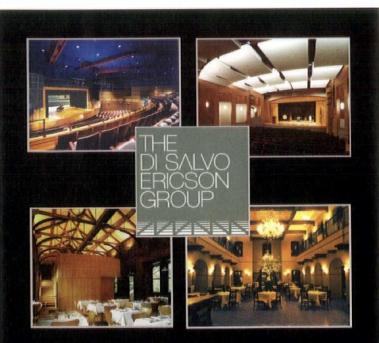


Andrew Holden's Shadow, 1979, Steve Harper.

Night photography is essentially a solitary experience that allows the photographer to disconnect from the frenetic pace of modern life and to reconnect with the physical world.

individual film reacts differently to time exposures and has its own unique personality or signature. Digital sensors behave with relative consistency regardless of exposure length and, as a result, digital night photographs often lack the sense of time that is so important in night photographs. They have more to do with substance and subject than impression and inference. The digital night photograph is more about *place* than *sense* of place.

A quick search of the online photo-sharing site Flickr (*www.flickr.com*) reveals that literally hundreds of people have embraced this new technology and that night photography is no longer an obscure and rarefied curiosity enjoyed by a few pensive



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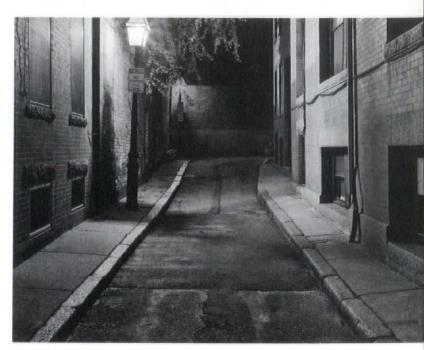
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night owls. It is now possible to take college-level courses in night photography, something pioneered by photographer Steve Harper at the Academy of Art College in San Francisco in the 1980s. Tim Baskerville of the Nocturnes, an alumnus of Steve Harper's classes, now offers night-photography classes and workshops in California, and the New England School of Photography in Boston offers classes on the subject. With the increased awareness of night photography as a theme, with more people creating nocturnal imagery, and with ever-increasing numbers of night-time images appearing in popular media and culture, photographers continue to expand the boundaries and potential of photography after dark. Despite all of this, night photography is still essentially a solitary experience that allows the photographer to slow down and disconnect from the frenetic pace of modern life, and to reconnect with the physical world and all of its wonders.

Lance Keimig is a photographer based in Pembroke, Massachusetts (*www.thenightskye.com*). He has taught photography at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the New England School of Photography, and leads workshops in California, Massachusetts, Ireland, and Scotland.



North End, 2003, Lance Keimig.

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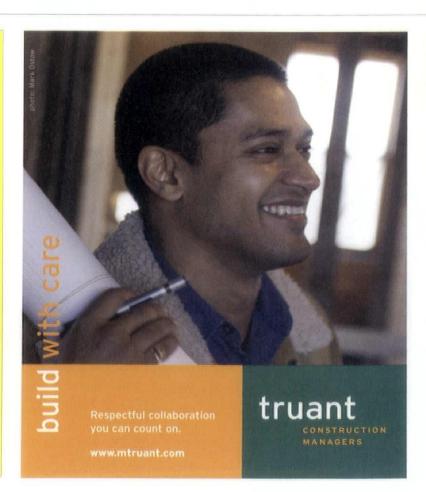
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# HOW HOTELS BECAME 24-HOUR PAMPER PALACES

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# **By Williston Dye AIA**

rom the very beginning, hotels ments to travelers, new features often whether we knew we had them or not. And while the history of the hotel has had many defining evolutionary

The earliest hotel operators owned modest accommodations that provided ancient travelers-by-day a safe shelter to sleep at night. The very first guests were traders plying the ancient trade routes, but as the inevitable military incursions put lots of people on roads across the Middle East and Asia, post houses and caravansaries, as they were called, sprang up. (These travelers were true road warriors.) Located every 25 to 40 miles along major routes, these post houses, both simple and palatial, became important anchors for the development of villages and towns. For the first time, the location of

have successfully provided enticemoments, the single best idea hotel operators ever had, bar none, was when they simply threw out the clock - in other words, when they decided hotels should become 24-hour pamper palaces.

OK, so it didn't happen in one single aha! night. It was a slow, gradual process that took thousands of years. And it went something like this:

Burj Al Arab Hotel, Dubai. Architect: W.S. Atkins & Partners

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accommodations influenced community settlement and placemaking. During the years of Roman rule and into the Dark Ages accommodations were minimal, efficient, and sparse. Monasteries also often served as shelter; the religious motives of medieval pilgrimages required only the most spartan of resting places.

Social change and broader formal education brought about the next evolution: the cozy wayside inn and tavern of Chaucer's Canterbury and Glastonbury. Well-furnished guest rooms (even if they were often shared with strangers), libations, sustenance, and celebration were quickly associated with the sturdy, welldetailed, and easily identifiable buildings that proliferated across the countryside. The inn became the social hub of the town. Minus the cockfighting, it was the progenitor of today's hotels.

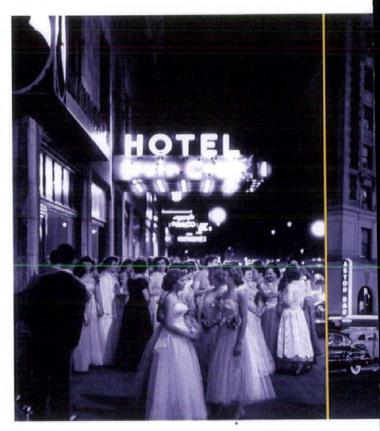
Although the first "hotel" in this country, the City Hotel on Broadway in New York, was built in 1794, the beginnings of the boom in hotels as we know them occurred in the 1820s, corresponding with economic growth and, especially, better roads and conveyances. Travel had become a much more enjoyable, comfortable experience, and as a logical evolution of the inn, the urban hotel — built for longer stays and to accommodate larger numbers of guests — became a base for visitors to explore the city and conduct business. In contrast to the old post houses, the attractions of the place now established the need for accommodations. In *New Hotels for Global Nomads*, Donald Albrecht notes

Hotels began to offer something new in the fabric of the city: a social center that was accessible to the public — and that offered a new kind of urban nightlife.

that Boston's Tremont House, which opened in 1829, became the model for the modern urban hotel. It certainly set the precedent for offering new technologies and new services to attract guests: it introduced locks on guest-room doors, in-room washbowls, complimentary soaps, and an á la carte menu. But other hoteliers were no slouches: the City Hotel in Baltimore was the first to use gas light, and Holt's Hotel in New York later was the first to offer a service elevator.

It was also during the 1820s that real-estate developers, especially in New York, began to see the hotel as an attractive investment and economic stimulus. The City Hotel had sparked a hotel boom along Broadway, part of a decades-long transition from fashionable residences to "trade." (The New York Public Library documents this transition in its online exhibition, *Moving Uptown*.) But it was John Jacob Astor's luxury Astor House that really generated excitement when it opened in 1836, with its indoor carpeting, walnut interiors, and excellent cuisine. The outrageous two-dollar-a-night room tariff conveyed a very clear message to the public: *You can't afford it!* The hotel became one of the first exclusive hot-spots for the wealthy and the elite: businessmen, politicians, artists, actors, and celebrities. Thanks to the paparazzi of the day—the hyperactive New York City press—the public's fascination with hotels was ignited.

By now, hotels had begun to offer something new in the fabric of the city: a social center that was accessible to the public — and that offered a new kind of urban nightlife. Social functions found a place outside the domain of the private home or club and, in the process,



High-school girls gather for a dance at a hotel, circa 1950s.

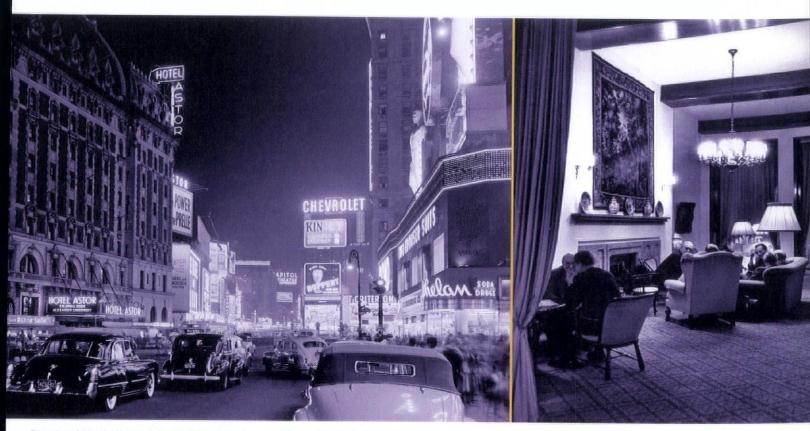
became a form of public spectacle. Soon, the hotel-as-communitycenter would cater to weddings, charity events, political gatherings, business meetings and, of course, games of chance. As hotel operators realized that dining could be an attraction in itself, they competed to offer the finest cuisine, attracting city dwellers as well as hotel guests.

The development of the railroad system only accelerated the hotel boom. Between 1850 and 1854, 19 new hotels were built on Broadway. Elsewhere, railroads contributed to the rise of the destination resort hotel, often located in remote, naturally beautiful locations. But it was the luxury city hotel that brought a new dynamic of sophistication, style, and pride to the city. As the Industrial Revolution brought increased personal wealth toward the end of the century, the emerging hotel industry responded with new levels of service, comfort, and hospitality. Hoteliers and restaurateurs such as César Ritz, Eduard Sacher, and George Auguste Escoffier themselves became celebrities. The years between 1890 and 1910 saw the construction of an astonishing number of extraordinary luxury hotels, many still among the most successful hotels in the world, such as the Paris Ritz (1898), the Savoy in London (1889), the Copley Plaza in Boston (1912), the Waldorf-Astoria in New York (1893, rebuilt 1931), and the Willard in Washington, DC (1904).

In the 20th century, three specific factors revolutionized what was to become known as the hospitality industry: the Three M's —

Resorts in the Caribbean and Hawaii were suddenly economically feasible. Howard Johnson and Holiday Inn responded to postwar highway construction with chains of motels, which offered standardized, familiar comfort. J.W. Marriott opened the first "motor hotel" next to the airport in Washington, DC, containing all the amenities of a full-service hotel with the appeal of the motel's street-level access to rooms.

The third M came courtesy of the Marketing department. The 1980s — a period of prosperous economic circumstances —



Exterior of Manhattan's Astor Hotel and the lounge at Dusseldorf's Hof Hotel, circa 1950s.

Money (1920s), Mass Transportation (1950s), and Marketing (1980s). In Boston, the economic prosperity of the '20s brought the Ritz Carlton in Boston (now the Taj Boston) and the Statler (now the Park Plaza). As the industry matured, it also became more professional. The Cornell Hotel School was established in 1922. Hotel owners hired specialty architects, as the component functions and management of hotels were by now numerous, complex, and costly. Among the best known was the firm Schultze and Weaver, a partnership formed by an architect and a sociallyconnected real-estate developer, whose work included the Waldorf-Astoria, the Pierre, the Park-Lane, and the Sherry-Netherland in New York; the Breakers in Palm Beach; and the Biltmore hotels in Los Angeles and Miami.

The second M, Mass Transportation, meant the automobile and the airplane, which now provided easy, quick access anywhere around the world. As had the railroads a century before, the highways and the airplanes created new demand for lodging. created the evolution, strategic refinement, and invention of over 40 hotel typologies — new business models such as the extended-stay hotel, the business hotel, and time-share ownership. The ease and affordability of business travel and the relative wealth of baby boomers (and their parents) with the desire to see the world created a windfall for hotel chains and developers alike. Hyatt reintroduced the grand hotel atrium in many cities around the United States, fulfilling a desire for spectacular visual experiences. Marriott International separated what was now known as the hotel "product" into market tiers: luxury, full service, and limited or "select" service, thus maintaining control of the market while also controlling business factors such as locations, quality, design, and management. Marketing departments introduced guest surveys and focus groups to determine functional needs and amenities.

The '80s also saw new proponents of hotels: city planners, urban designers, and politicians who saw hotels as cornerstones

of urban economic development and an opportunity to build on the momentum of the back-to-the-city trend that had begun in the '70s with projects such as Boston's Quincy Market and the Baltimore Inner Harbor. Hotels were key to the increasing emphasis on tourism as a "clean industry," which also spawned the rise in convention and conference centers. Hotels lured both out-of-towners with money to spend and elusive suburbanites drawn by excellent restaurants as well as cultural and social events. Hotels brought prestige and economic activity, and served as the underpinning of the 24-hour (or at least 18-hour) city that increasingly was seen as the measure of urban vitality. As had the post houses of the ancient trade routes, hotels once again were seen as catalysts for place-making.

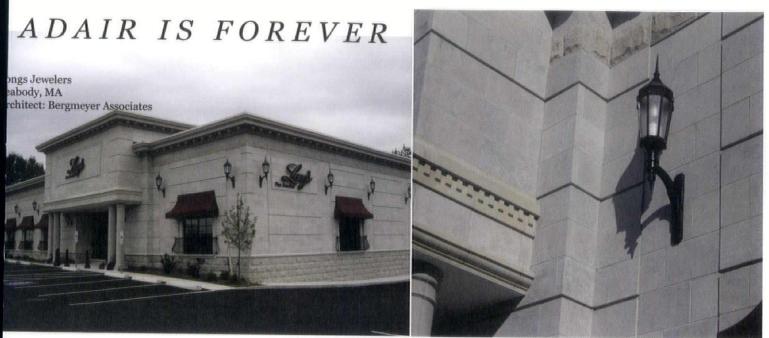
But with the rising influence of marketing, the selling of formula-driven consistency and value dramatically standardized the hotel industry. Design quality and contextualism, as well as the regionalism that had previously influenced everything from architecture to hotel menus, was rendered almost extinct. A predictable backlash occurred in the following decade, a renaissance of historic inns and classic urban hotels as well as new developments such as boutique hotels and eco-hotels.

Significantly, hoteliers also learned to distinguish their products from the competition with ever-increasing levels of luxe. The pamper palace was born. The minibar, in-room rental movies, and complimentary shampoo were no longer enough. Internet access for today's road warriors, exercise rooms, pools, and full-service spas — many available to the public — have become *de rigeur*. Hotel restaurants featuring celebrity chefs are promoted energetically. Thread-count, luxe bathrooms, and even accommodations for the equally pampered pooch are part of the package. And significantly, hotels have pursued mixed-use strategies, either through adjacent uses such as movie theaters and shopping, or through ownership structures, such as the condo-hotel and jointly developed condominiums with full access to hotel services such as housekeeping and room service (in Boston, the Heritage on the Common, Millennium tower, and the upcoming Mandarin Oriental).

The forces that led to the development of hotels over the centuries are still at play today — economics, culture, transportation, politics, and pleasure-seeking — and those forces are more powerful than ever. Over 1,000 hotels of all types opened around the world just last year. As the world changes, so too will the hospitality industry. For now, it seems that the future of hotel development is in the hands of the 24-hour pleasure-seeker — and there is at least a little of that person in all of us.

Williston Dye AIA is the principal in charge of the KlingStubbins Las Vegas office. He is the former director of architecture at Walt Disney Imagineering and former director of design management at Marriott International. He is also the author of *Five Potatoes: Things are as Clear as Vichyssoise*.





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# Night

The invisible world of nightworkers Text and photographs by Peter Vanderwarker

**The important thing to** remember about night work is not that it happens, but how messed up everything gets if the work goes wrong. We all want T dispatchers, pressmen, telephone linemen, and baseball pitchers to do it *right* so that tomorrow we can take the train to work, read the papers, and talk on the phone about how the Sox won again.

The world of nightworkers is mostly invisible to the rest of us not only because we are preoccupied with our own lives away from work, but also because so much nocturnal work space is literally locked away, under the watchful eye of security cameras. These people are often responsible for the infrastructure of our lives as well as our cities. They keep things running, and we happily, obliviously, leave them to it.

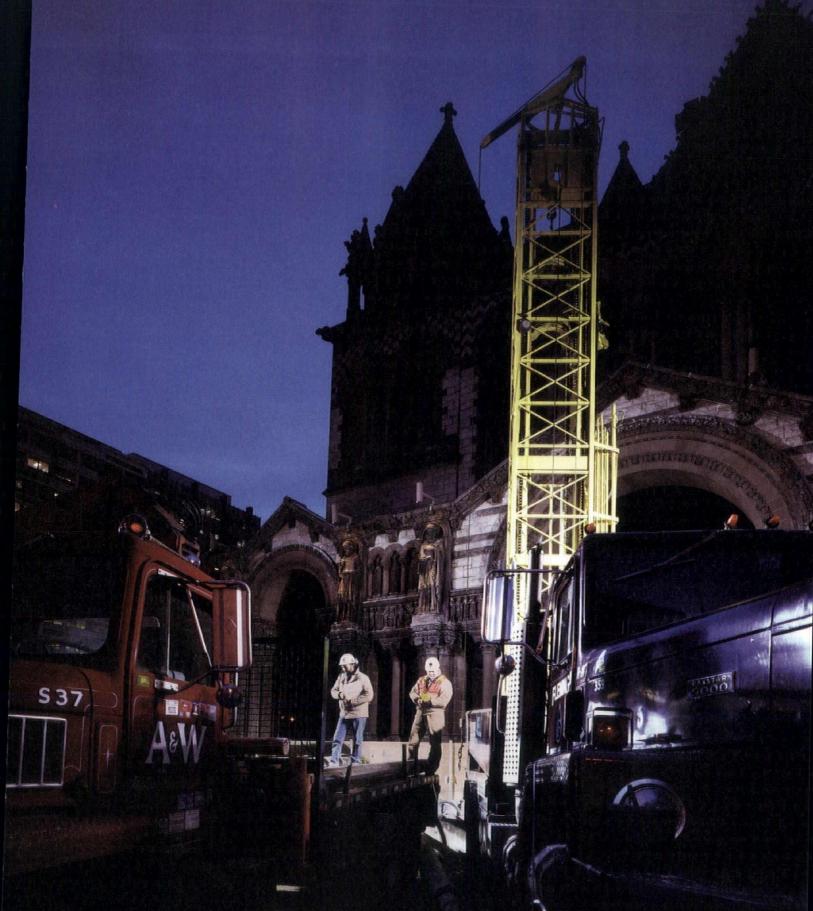
The glamorous night jobs — the ones that keep us entertained are often the toughest. The chefs at the very best restaurants must do precision work in a hot and crowded environment, while waiters howl for that osso-buco order. Our \$50 million pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka got shelled for five runs in the first inning of a very long game against Seattle on May 3 — you may think that's glam work, but one look at his face proved that a bad night at work is the same as a bad day at work.

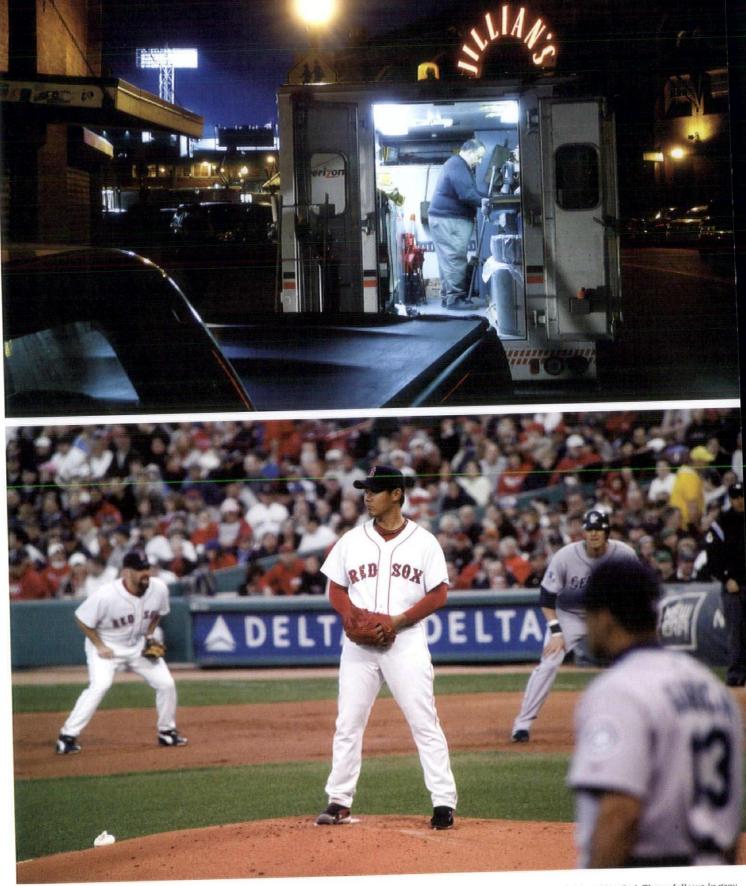
Late-night work can be desperately lonely when your personal time-zone is at odds with the world of friends and family, when your work socialization is limited to a skeleton staff of co-workers. A glance out the window doesn't connect you to the buzz of the daytime work world. Without the movement of the sun to subliminally mark the passing hours, a night work shift has an oddly timeless quality to it that can heighten the sense of isolation.

Even the physical world of nighttime workspaces is different. Some workers are always outside, in workplaces that are always changing — construction workers who move from site to site; Verizon repair people whose trucks are rolling workshops that are a model of efficiency. For those who work inside, physical isolation becomes more apparent. Windows are rare in the operation centers and equipment rooms that are the focus of many nocturnal workplaces, and when they do exist, they only reflect your own image. It's a world of artificial light, often disconnected from weather and the environment. Nightworkers don't spend their breaks grabbing a few minutes on a park bench to eat a sandwich. For many denizens of the night shift, work life is spent tending to the equipment that keeps our world running: old-fashioned equipment like pumps, engines, boilers, presses; and the devices of the digital age like servers, computers, and controls.

By the time you read this, we will all know how well Dice K is doing at his night job. Even if other night workers do their jobs perfectly, we will probably never notice.

Peter Vanderwarker is an architectural photographer in Newton, Massachusetts.





Above: The game is still going on at Fenway, and Ralph DiMatteo toils away

Below: Here is Dice K during a long night on May 3rd. Those fellows in gray shirts are Seattle Mariners who have loaded the bases off Dice K. Matsuzaka





Above: These guys are *supposed* to read the *Globe* at work. Steve Sferrazza runs *The Boston Globe* pressroom and his men must look for proper color registration and inking on every edition. They also print *The New York Times* and the *New York Post*. Sometimes what looks like goofing off is really work.

Below: Yes, these guys are working. Perhaps they are inventing the Next Big Industry to drive the Massachusetts economy. Scientists swap theories (or play foosball) in the conservatory at MIT's Picower Center for Brain and Cognitive Sciences. (Architects: Charles Correa Associates and Goody, Clancy)

# The world is a different place of the use of

#### Twilight BY JOHN POWELL



We are privileged to experience twilight twice each day: once, when our side of the world emerges from the shadow of night, and the other, when we enter it. Both are times filled with speculation, dislocation — and decision.

Despite its frequency, I feel I have really seen twilight just twice, both times in northern brick cities, Boston and Copenhagen. The Boston experience occurred in the early '80s. I woke up before dawn one morning to go out to Peddocks Island, one of the Boston Harbor islands just off the town of Hull. Back then, to get to the island, you had to rent a skiff with an outboard from a pier in Hull. It cost \$15 for the day and came with a can of gas. I promptly got the painter (the piece of rope attached to the front of the boat) wrapped around the prop shaft (and got it clear before anyone noticed). When I was finally out on the water, my shadow and the shadow of the mist that surrounded me and the boat ended in the water with a spectral haze that seemed independent of the skiff and me. As the dawn brightened, the deepening shadow and the glow of the sun gradually took over and revealed the water, boat, and island. I felt as if I had come out of nowhere. Now I sail the harbor often, often passing through the Hull gut, but I've never experienced a similar feeling of dislocation.

In Copenhagen, I was walking along the water's edge (easy to do because the water is everywhere) one evening in late winter. It was misty, and the sun had been down for an hour or two, but there was still a bluish glow to the air. The small sodium streetlights, which were suspended over the middle of the street rather than mounted on poles, hadn't quite taken over from the sky yet. I almost walked into an enormous black cast-iron bollard - a real one, put there for a purpose, to moor a barge or a ship. This one even had a hawser around it, at least 10 inches in circumference, evidence that it had been put to use. Gradually, as if my eyes were learning to see in the twilight, I noticed the prow of a 19th-century Danish trading schooner. Nothing particularly unusual in that, except the ship was still in the last of the twilight from the sky, and the bollard and I were in the street light. Nothing particularly unusual in that either, and in this context, nothing even particularly romantic about it. But I stopped. The 19th-century object, the ship, was in sky-made twilight. The 20th-century bollard and I were in 20thcentury streetlight-made twilight. They balanced each other for a while, then the sky faded and the ship became a bland orange silhouette.

Twilight is an essential aspect of the experience of the night, its in-between condition marking the passage of light. On the one hand, light acts like a palpable material; on the other hand, light reveals itself as the designator of space and time. Where we sit in this world of perception and physical phenomena is the perpetual twilight and morning of thinking and seeing and understanding.

John Powell is an internationally recognized light artist in Boston (www.lighttimeinspace.com).

#### The Place of Elephants BY ROBERT COWHERD PHD, ASSOC. AIA

Like all visions worthy of changing the course of a life, this one began with a story. It was the story of a place so far away that it mattered not if you flew east or west, and so sophisticated yet utterly unfamiliar as to resemble speculation on what intelligent life on another planet might be like. And there was a photo of an enormous gate at the end of a narrow street. I never learned whether elephants had ever actually been kept in the shady courtyard visible through the open doorway or if the name Gajahan (place of elephants) was just a poetic reference to its enormity. Five years and a research grant later, a bicycle taxi driver pedaled softly down the lane and delivered me under the sheltering eaves of the Gajahan gate.

Neglect of the former royal mansion had been rewarded with a towering canopy of tropical foliage emitting a cacophony of exotic birdcalls. At unpredictable intervals, seedpods crashed onto corrugated steel covering cracks in the teak shingle roofs too expensive to repair, given expectations of imminent redevelopment. In this place, the equatorial sun drops below the horizon with the suddenness of a light switch, dividing the world into precisely 12 hours each of blinding glare and total darkness. The birds give way to bats and a nocturnal cat-like creature that no one seems to have ever seen.

Most long-term visitors vividly recall their first night in Java with some combination of disparagement and romance directed at the call to prayer. It starts long after midnight and way before dawn as a distant cry reaching out over the rooftops, soon joined by another at a different pitch and motif somewhere closer. Within minutes the transparent layering of insistently autonomous microphone-wielding *muezzin* builds to a wall of Ivesian caterwauling. Then the biggest and closest megaphone of all displaces all competitors audible now only in the pauses between phrases. It trails off and ends as it began, one by one as if offering a measure of the city.

Precisely nine years later, I am back in Gajahan for the last all-night shadow puppet play before the new owner takes possession of the complex. This time, my baby boy lies sleeping on the cool polished concrete floor. For centuries, the Javanese shadow play has enjoyed the popularity and magic akin to movies in the West, but imbued with an unmatched spiritual power and cultural significance. In recent decades, the shadow side of the screen has been abandoned in favor of the color, flash, and intrigues between the puppeteer, flirtatious singers, and a general buffoonery of the orchestra and audience. The drama plays out in parallel realms on and off the screen. The juxtaposition of the metaphysical and the scatological disturbs our romantic projections even as it exposes the Javanese matter-of-fact confluence of high-low, good-evil, life-death, lightdark. On the shadow side of the screen, the full magic of the story unfolds as floating figures swell, dart, pulse, sway,

and quiver in simple shadow and light. The interplay of shimmering tones of the *gamelan* orchestra, the disembodied singers, the whine of the bowed fiddle, the late hour, and a toxic brew of rice wine all contribute to a meditative dream-state.

Rousing me, my wife indicates that it's time to gather our baby and seek out our bed. As our bicycle taxi passes through the giant doors of the elephant gate, an explosion of hammered bronze, crashing cymbals, and drums behind us signals a mortal battle has just erupted on screen. As the war cries recede down the narrow lane, the first distant sound of the call to prayer reaches out to us over the low rooftops.

Robert Cowherd PhD, Assoc. AIA is an associate professor of architecture at Wentworth Institute of Technology. He lived and worked in Indonesia for five years. Audio files of a puppet play and call to prayer are available at: www. architectureboston.com/puppetshow\_ audio and www.architectureboston.com/ calltoprayer\_audio.



#### The Park BY PAMELA DE OLIVEIRA-SMITH

There's fur at the edge of any park at night, a palpable extra atmospheric film for a visitor to walk through before daring to push on. Sometimes parks are illuminated at night, but mainly for sports events that invite the great searing intrusion of field lights over one surgically precise spot against a city's low horizon. And sometimes packs of people invade parks at night, insistent in a contrived togetherness that emboldens their spirits and bolsters their courage to confront the dark. Sometimes there are candlelit celebrations of the solstice, Halloween, or some whimsical civic event. And when angry citizens protesting an insurgence of violence against women band together, they meet after

dark carrying candles and flashlights, chanting, "take back the night."

As if we ever could.

In Boston's Franklin Park, Forest Hills Cemetery, and Arnold Arboretum, it isn't so much that we fear lions and tigers and bears, or even ghosties and ghoulies and long-legged beasties, although there is a bit of that. It is more the fear of coyotes, raccoons, and muggers. And the unknown. Especially the unknown.

How can we not fear it? Who knows what goes on at night behind those highly manicured topiaries or what wickedness muscles through the thistled paths that lead to deserted picnic tables, empty athletic fields, or rhododendron groves? We can only imagine that if humans are on the prowl through the woods, they are up to something unwholesome. We do not imagine that the footsteps rustling through the undergrowth are Cub Scouts on a campout, amateur astronomers yearning for a glimpse of Mars, or even the benign homeless settling in for the night.

Why do we fear the shadows? When we do brave the night, if there are moments when we can immerse ourselves in darkness without the Greek chorus called Anxiety draining all of our attention, there's something magical to discover. The world as we know it and all its elements are there, but our visual senses are gobstopped. It's a world of blacks, indigoblues, and grays. Murderers and rapists

aside, maybe it is our strange initial inability to interpret the familiar yet sudden otherworldliness of our surroundings after dark that causes gooseflesh, at least until our eyes adjust fully to the dark.

Do landscape designers dream of the moonlit midnight urban world of their wild or precisely groomed lawns and gardens? What would happen if planners took more tips from the builders of astronomical phenomena like Stonehenge or Chaco Canyon and gave meaning to what we see and how we see it during both day and night? Perhaps our collective urban experience of what it means to be outside at night would grow to encompass the park systems both nocturnally and diurnally.

The more people wander out together, the safer we are, and the more we experience our world in its grand entirety, the richer we make our souls.

Pamela de Oliveira-Smith is the managing editor of *ArchitectureBoston* and director of communications and marketing for the BSA.



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#### Combat Zone, Boston, circa 1969 BY JONATHAN TUDAN AIA



Dusk drops a veil over the scene, making the lights of the marquees burn that much brighter. I feel a charge of excitement as I step onto Washington Street and blend into the flow. The sidewalks are brimming with men of all shapes and colors eager to tap into the sexual fantasia that pours from the strip clubs as easily as the liquor and the beer inside. Many travel in packs of threes and fours; a few are in uniform; the majority are your average, loud-mouth, boozing, adolescent rednecks, office creeps, and college boys. They all share one common fascination: female subjugation. Local scammers, pimps, and drug dealers troll the gutters, feeding on innocence, pleasure, and greed. Black musicians - romantics and entrepreneurs - walk the street with an air of confidence and superiority, affecting an attitude that is suave, urbane, and debonair. Affecting no attitude at all, except maybe boredom, are the bartenders, bouncers, and capitalists living off the local entertainment.

And then there are the girls...

You can clearly discern the various patterns of female life in the Combat Zone. Three classes distinguish the ladies. The first group - the Entertainers - make up the majority. They include strippers, dancers, and cocktail waitresses. The second is the Girlfriends. They consist of women who are along for the ride with the men in their life; the men are definitely behind the wheel. And finally there are the Hookers. They are further distinguished by two subclasses: the Winners and the Losers. The Winners are semi-successful, work out of their apartments, and service a steady customer base. At the bottom of this sexual swamp are the Losers, the ones who hang out in the street, often alone. But don't under-estimate their power. They can be the most dangerous, mostly because they've got nothing left to lose. One in 30 people out tonight is a woman, and 100 percent of the women fall into one of these

three categories.

At the entrance to the Normandy Lounge, a middle-aged man in a white shirt and tie and neatly combed hair is standing on the edge of the sidewalk reading from a Bible. The guy reminds me of my high-school vice-principal. He's preaching repentance and salvation to a world that has ignored his existence.

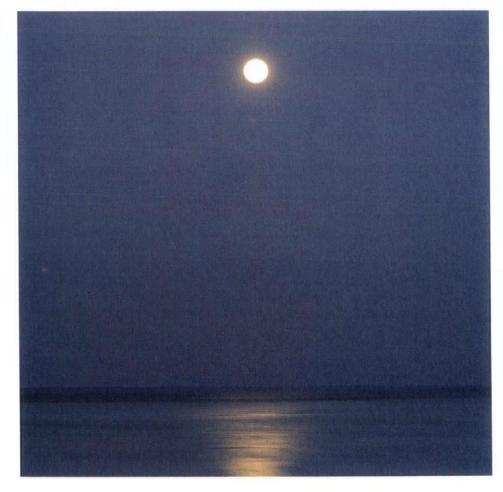
*"Jesus loves you!"* the vice-principal shouts into the face of a wino shuffling by clutching a paper bag. The top of a green bottle pops out from the bag like the head of a turtle.

"Whiskey loves you!" the wino shoots back, raising his turtle in the air.

Jonathan Tudan AIA is associate campus architect at the University of California, Irvine. He lived in the former Combat Zone district of Boston and is writing a memoir from which this essay is adapted, *Lovers*, *Muggers*, and Thieves: A Boston Memoir. At night, far from land, people, and the infrastructure that humans have developed to control their environment, the sea is a place of constant change that tests sailors' physical and mental endurance. The cold, the dark, and the damp are frequently what you might imagine. What you might not imagine is how often the loneliness of the nocturnal sea is broken by natural spectacle and the pervasiveness of human presence.

Since 1990, I have sailed on two voyages with Bill Biewenga and one with Rich DuMoulin, challenging and breaking three clippership sailing records set in the 19th century. With deliveries and two Atlantic roundtrips added in, we have sailed 80,000 nautical miles over 340 days at sea. Put another way, we have sailed 40,000 miles in the dark of night. In 1993, after rounding Cape Horn en route from San Francisco to Boston, we headed north past the Falkland Islands. The cold night necessitated stocking caps, neck warmers, and ski gloves, to go with normal foul-weather gear. Aboard our trimaran *Great American II*, we were making 12 knots. On the horizon ahead appeared a small, odd, white glow, not the normal pinpoint light of a ship. Then another appeared, then another. Rocketing closer, we seemingly sailed toward a dozen Fenway Parks, lit brilliantly against the blackness. What were they?

I steered for the edge of the first glow. A ship slowly defined itself. Bow to stern, banks of lights were mounted over the side, aimed downward, with continuous reels of fishing wires dipping into and out



of the water. The lights attracted squid, and the reels of fish wire pulled them in.

Cutting close behind the stern of one ship, I ran to the windward pontoon, waving both arms high overhead in greeting. A dozen fishermen ran to their stern, waving and wondering in return what apparition we were, as we loomed, then disappeared into the night.

Like the clipper *Mandarin* 150 years earlier en route from New York, we had made landfall at Cape Otway, south of Melbourne. Another 24 hours and we'd finish. A large cloud swept overhead, dropping light rain. When it retreated, a white rainbow suddenly appeared from the light of the moon in the dark of night — a "moonbow."

Sailing in the South Atlantic just after midnight, I thought I saw a faint light loom over the horizon. On a chance, I called on the radio, "Is anybody there?" A hail came back, a fishing vessel bound for St. Helena Island, where Napoleon was exiled. It was a New Zealand captain, with crew of Namibians, Taiwanese, Hong Kong Chinese, Singaporeans, and Australians. We had an hour's friendly conversation with a mini-UN just a few miles away.

Deep in the southern Indian Ocean, I trimmed sails in a moonless, cloudless night. Gradually, a low arc of bluish white light appeared, spanning 150 degrees of horizon and reaching 30 degrees of altitude — the Aurora Australis! Without the shooting color and shimmering backdrop of the Aurora Borealis — its Northern hemisphere counterpart it was steady and bright, so bright that I could have easily read a newspaper in the cockpit.

Peering forward in the dark, my headlight dimly lit the jib. I ground the winch slowly, refining the sail's set. Suddenly,

#### Porches BY ROBERT CAMPBELL FAIA

whump! — something hit me hard in the chest, like a thrown baseball. I recoiled, thinking a block or line had broken. I heard a *flap*, *flap*, *flap* at my feet. Looking down, I found a flying fish, about a foot long, with a 10-inch wingspan. They leap out of the water to escape predators (or boats) and can glide for 100 yards. I picked him up gently by his tail and tossed him back in, wondering who was the more surprised.

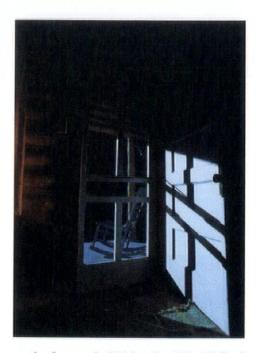
The sea is populated with disembodied sailors - voices over the radio, the phantom presence of those who have gone before. The enormous Pacific feels like a neighborhood inhabited by the great captain James Cook, Captain Bligh, the mutinous Fletcher Christian, Charles Darwin, Ferdinand Magellan, and Captain Freeman Hatch, whose clipper Northern Light, bound with Gold Rush cargo for Boston, set a record in 1853. It was the clippership captains whose presence was always with us as we raced them across time. En route from Hong Kong to New York, in the Indian Ocean, we had finally caught the logbook position of the legendary clipper Sea Witch, Captain Robert"Bully"Waterman in command. Her 1849 voyage had led ours by three days, and we had sailed like madmen to overtake her. Sea Witch had then poured on the speed with a nine-day average of over 11 knots. We couldn't maintain that pace. On the night that Sea Witch passed us, I glanced over my shoulder and could swear that in the billowing clouds in front of a brilliant moon, I saw that huge clipper billowing her own white clouds of sail as she charged past, with the keeneyed Captain Waterman overseeing his world from her windward rail.

Rich Wilson is president of sitesALIVE! in Gloucester, Massachusetts (*www. sitesalive.com*). He is currently preparing for the 2008 Vendée Globe, a singlehanded, nonstop, 'round-the-world race. The spaces I have always loved best are the ones that are neither indoors nor outdoors, but which hover between those poles. They never feel quite as bright as day nor quite as black as night, but seem magically, motionlessly suspended between those extremes.

When I was growing up, my family spent summers in my grandparents' house on the shore of Lake Erie, not far from Buffalo, my home town. It was a house with three screened porches, none of which ever felt quite inside or quite outside. The least interesting was the back porch, but even there, I could spend a long summer afternoon, lying on my back reading on the gently swaying swing-sofa. The kitchen was on one side of the porch and the outdoors on the other, a perfect pairing for a boy.

Perhaps it was least interesting because I rarely used it at night. Sounds and smells are especially strong at night, when there is less to see. And they seem more intense on a screened porch, maybe because you're not expecting to meet them in a place that is semi-indoors. Our second porch was a sleeping porch, perched high up on the rear of the house. I can still distinctly recall the smell of the crushed stone of the driveway below (stronger when it was wet) and the smell of the day's sunshine stored in the thickness of the blankets on the beds. You heard the soft rustle of wind moving among the trees, or maybe the beginning patter of rain, or the barely perceptible ghost sound of a radio in the living room downstairs. Radios were bigger and brighter then. In the night air on the darkening porch you imagined the adults gathered around as if at a campfire.

The best porch was the front porch. It remains, for me, the most important room in the world. Its screens, like those of the other two porches, did not come down to the floor but only to sill height. For me that's an essential detail. Screens that come to the floor make a space feel undefined. It fails to contain you. Our porch was almost the full width of the house, maybe 30 feet, room enough for both a Monopoly game



on the floor at the kids' end and the clink of highballs at the grownups' end. The porch's inner wall was the outer stucco wall of the house, declaring the fact, most palpable at night, that you were not inside. Wicker chairs creaked pleasantly as people settled into them, and another swing-sofa squeaked rustily.

What made the room so great was its place in a layered series of spaces. Behind it was the living room, wood-paneled, cavelike, with a stone fireplace; then came the porch with its indoor-outdoor light; then the front yard, with acorns that stung your bare feet; then the wide sandy beach; then Lake Erie, flecked with the sailboats of a nearby Lightning club; and finally, when the weather was clear, the low gray line of the American shore, with maybe the silhouette of a freighter moving against it. As a kid, I would race from the living room to the lake, and the stages I passed through were like the growth of a person from womb to world, each stage bigger, brighter, and more public than the last.

Robert Campbell FAIA is the architecture critic for *The Boston Globe*.

#### Periodical Roundup |

BY GRETCHEN SCHNEIDER, ASSOC. AIA

# Covering the Issues

High life on the High Line ... In New York magazine's cover story (May 7, 2007), Adam Sternbergh tells the story of this new park in the sky. The High Line was an elevated railroad serving warehouses on Manhattan's Lower West Side. Abandoned in 1980 and left (literally) to go to seed, this potentially bucolic landscape-in-the-sky has been the stuff of many dreams, but Joshua David (a journalist) and Robert Hammond (an artist) actually managed to sell the city on their vision. An international design competition was held, and construction is underway. Speculators have followed, with 10 new buildings under construction and 15 more planned. Sternbergh outlines the alignment of powerful architects, planners, politicians, and celebrities who conspired to support the project and speculates on why the idea caught on. Makes you think about Boston's former Central Artery and new Greenway.

No, not that Glass House... Paul Goldberger previews *The Glass House* in *The New Yorker* (April 30, 2007), an upcoming play about the Farnsworth House — Mies Van der Rohe's masterpiece in Plano, Illinois. "It is a play about architecture only in the sense that *A Streetcar Named Desire* is a play about public transit," writes Goldberger. The story explores the relationship between the great architect and Dr. Edith Farnsworth, his client — a tale of ambition, seduction, and the struggle over whether a client may select her own furnishings.

In the same issue, Goldberger gives a glowing review of what promises to become a contemporary masterpiece, Steven Holl's luminous new addition to the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City a decidedly 21st-century glass addition on the front lawn of a supposedly sacrosanct Beaux-Arts temple of a building. Maybe there's hope for Boston City Hall after all.

Good news... "Good is for people who give a damn" announces this new magazine. And with Natalie Jeremijenko as cover girl - the artist/environmental activist who created Mass MoCA's upside down trees-I had to take a look (Issue 004, May/June 2007). In the midst of frustratingly brief articles, Josh Jackson offers substance in "Decongestion," a look at successful transportation innovations. Among the less familiar: In Copenhagen, bike lanes are placed between parked cars and the curb. In Amsterdam, ample parking for all types of personal vehicles (bikes, cars) means that intermodal systems are used more often. Most radical are the "naked streets" in the Netherlands, where traffic lights, curbs, and signs have been stripped, resulting in 50 percent slower traffic speeds. Jackson provides a primer of innovative street design.

Hey buddy, want to buy a bridge?... In a Business Week cover story (May 7, 2007), Emily Thornton writes about the appetite that banks and private investment firms have recently acquired for buying public infrastructure. The Indiana Toll Road and the Chicago Skyway have already been sold, while the Tappan Zee Bridge, Pennsylvania Turnpike, and Midway Airport are under consideration. Could the Mass Pike be next? Private investors like these projects for their "rich cash flows and the monopolistic advantages," while chronically strapped-for-cash public agencies and authorities find the deals too good to pass up. But with for-profit firms in charge, Thornton worries about problems like potentially huge toll hikes, as well as the larger societal question of whether private companies should control public needs. Then there are the big issues she doesn't name: is this a return to the 19th-century pattern of privately owned



infrastructure, such as the Boston and New York City subways once were? And if transportation (and ease or lack of access to it) drives development, how might this affect smart-growth planning and the future face of our cities?

Earth Day, Every Day... Outside magazine jumps into the sustainability fray with "179 Solutions for a Hot Planet" and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on the cover (April 2007). Newsweek's Earth Day issue (April 16, 2007) offers the same cover governor and a report by Anne Underwood on efforts by 435 US mayors to pledge their cities to meet their own climate agreement — the Kyoto Protocol adapted for cities. Vanity Fair jumps in with its "Second Annual Green Issue" (May 2007) — the most substantive, outspoken, and critical of this green trifecta. Better still, no cover governor.

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, is a designer with a practice in Boston.

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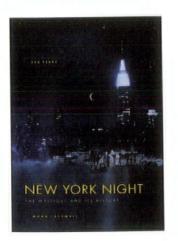
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#### Books Books Books |

MORE THOUGHTS ON NIGHT



#### NEW YORK NIGHT: THE MYSTIQUE AND ITS HISTORY By Mark Caldwell Scribner, 2005

**Every afternoon**, as the sun lowers slowly to the horizon, New Yorkers make a choice: work, pleasure, or rest? This book completely ignores the last. Instead, Mark Caldwell details the waking lives of New Yorkers after dark. His history of Manhattan's nighttime activities begins in Peter Geraerdy's tavern in 1643, and ends with the author's visit to one of the few remaining strip clubs in Times Square in 2004, covering much ground between the two.

Starting at the base of Broadway, Caldwell works his way northward as New Amsterdam grows into a major metropolis, following its dwellers and transients after the sun goes down. Examining Manhattan nightlife over the course of 362 years, the Fordham University English professor studies an urban fabric constantly in flux in a city that is always reinventing itself. On an island with limited space, current residents will recognize the addresses and the attitudes of 1800s entertainment, but buildings burn down, fall out of fashion, or transform to follow the next trend, so few physical reminders are visible today.

There are even fewer remnants of the earliest nights passed in the Dutch colony, but the drinking, sex, and scandal are familiar enough to today's readers. Theater, food service, and class tension came later, as Broadway pushed north. While the "Lights of Broadway" are best known and still visible in Times Square, P.T. Barnum first cast the street in the bluish glow of a Drummond lamp — now known as a limelight — just outside his American Museum and visible a full mile away. Horse-drawn omnibuses dropped revelers at the corner of Ann Street and Broadway, now only a block from Ground Zero's white spotlights.

Caldwell lingers on the nightlife of a pre-Revolutionary War colony for somewhat longer than he has stories to tell about it. There is a distinct shift in pace once he has first-hand accounts from newspapers and diaries, and the book moves briskly through riots, theater openings, murders, and jazz singers until its ending point, shortly after the raid on the Stonewall Inn in June 1969.

In his final pages, Caldwell retreats down Broadway, retracing the densely packed history and finding office towers and chain stores where grand homes and theaters once stood. As he walks, he notes, but does not mourn, the absence of nightlife on this storied street, which had played host to so many influential characters in the history of New York City.

But as Caldwell demonstrates, the city's nightlife is a moveable feast, and today it has moved far beyond the bounds of Broadway. Every night, New Yorkers venture out to find Indian food in Jackson Heights, work a latenight delivery shift in Hunts Point, or attend a gallery opening in Williamsburg. They will all agree with Caldwell's sentiment that our tiny urban apartments are just "quiet corners in one's real home, the city."

Raheli Millman is an editorial assistant at John Wiley & Sons in New York City.

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#### PARIS AFTER DARK

Containing a Description of the Fast Women, Their Haunts, Habits, Etc., to Which Is Added a Faithful Description of the Night Amusements and Other Resorts, Also All Particulars Relating to the Working of the Social Evil in the French Metropolis, the Only Genuine Correct Guide for Gentlemen Printed by Jules Boyer, 1877

"Prostitutes are often under-appreciated as the nocturnal counterpoint to the architecture of a great city seen in daylight." This sounds like the opening of a poorly conceived undergraduate thesis that looks for the literal dark side of Paris, but how does one begin a review of a night-time Baedeker like this? A lingering sense of selfrespect, substantially damaged though it is by being considered the right sort to review a book like this, precludes many approaches. "When did you stop beating your wife?" rivals "was the advice on harlots accurate, the reviews well done?"— at least when one appears in print.

In Victorian fashion, an Aristotelian taxonomy of "nymphs of the pavement" is first presented by our anonymous 19thcentury author. Bad enough to have the French insulting your accent, let alone your choice of vocabulary.

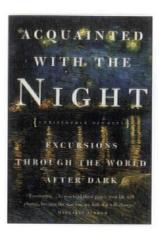
At the apex, we find *lorettes*, named after Notre-Dame-Des-Lorettes, more than a little ironically a Marianist church near rue Pigalle. A woman reaches this status by serving apprenticeship as a *crevette*, we are reassured, the guild ladder implying craftsmanship of a sort. *Grisettes*, the poor shopgirls socializing in the Latin Quarter and acting in Bohemian fashion by *dancing*, are seen as the inexorable starting point of a young woman's professional march.

We hear the tale of poor Hortense. "One day her mother sent her on an errand, and Hortense never returned. She heard the music as she passed the gate of the Closerie [-des-Lilas] and attracted by it and the gaiety of the scene, was constrained to enter."

While dance is the path to doom for a young woman, what the hell, that means dancing-saloons are a great place to look for your "inamorata." And so follows a rather substantial list of dancing halls scattered across the city, with short commentary akin to an AAA travel guide, highlighting recommended establishments, as well as the tricks they will play upon their new acquaintance in further separating him from his money. It takes a sense of shame for these tricks to be effective, and so most would strike a modern reader as being sadly ineffective. The locations of these pleasure domes cluster, not surprisingly, around rue Pigalle and throughout the Latin Quarter, showing the persistence and consistency of the tourist's impulse over time.

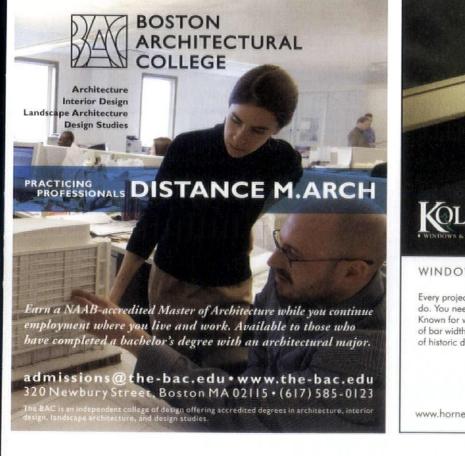
Still, one piece of urban planning wisdom escapes at the end. The author notes that a walk at evening in Paris compares favorably with one taken in London, the former accepting and regulating all manner of activities ostensibly suppressed in the latter: "Such comparison offers the best argument in favor of the continental system." Just in case the reader disagrees with this assessment, the same publisher offers a companion guide to London.

Mark Slater is the president of the Bay Village Neighborhood Association in Boston.



#### ACQUAINTED WITH THE NIGHT: EXCURSIONS THROUGH THE WORLD AFTER DARK by Christopher Dewdney Bloomsbury USA, 2005

**Insomniacs: relief is at hand!** Christopher Dewdney, a writer based in Ontario, has

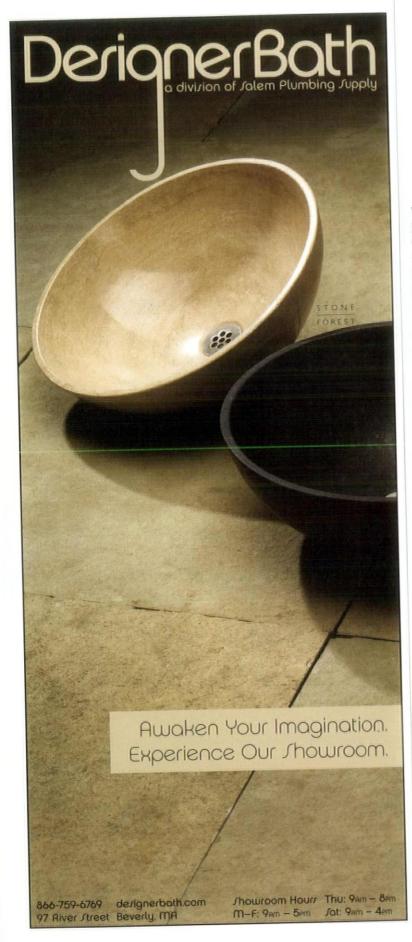




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written a real snorer on the subject of night. The enticing premise — 12 chapters based on the 12 hours of a proverbial equinox evening through which to explore different themes of the night — could have been a great book. The method, too, is promising: through storytelling, science, mythology, and personal anecdotes he expounds on terminology, scary movies, and night insects — in short, anything to do with the dark.

While artistes may toil through the wee hours to capture night's disquieting essence ("Acquainted with the Night," for example, is the title of a poem by Robert Frost published in 1928), Dewdney has a real knack for explaining the obvious in the most banal way, an achievement few writers can pull off in today's market. "If you could travel back in time a billion years," he writes, "the earth would appear very different." Let's hope so. Elsewhere he writes, "If travelers from another planet had arrived at earth's night side five thousand years ago they would have seen no lights..." The notable fact that he's setting up is the obvious observation that there were no electric lights a few millennia ago, so again, start skimming.

Dewdney touches on a healthy variety of topics including a history of street lighting and its relationship to crime, how night pollution affects our diurnal rhythms, the stages of sleep, and the physics of sunset, but only lightly, and with distractingly florid subjectivity. Billed as a poet, he produces prose that is intended to be the book's greatest strength, yet at the precise moment when he should soar, he goes down in flames. "A sensational sunset — and we have all probably seen at least one - is a visual extravaganza," he writes, inadvertently leading his readers to question their own sunset experiences. "It is monumental, almost grandiose ... Some evenings the sky resembled a vast surrealist hallucination drenched with pigment ... "Such poetics permeate every chapter. You could skim these multiple page prose-poetry passages, but at the risk of missing those interesting facts that you bought the book for in the first place. On the other hand, it is doubtful that any sentient person will glean something new from between these covers.

If you get through the first hundred pages and are still awake, you will encounter a chapter written just for you: insomnia. It is here that he is most perceptive: "To sleep at night is a natural thing, something most of us can count on every night," he writes. "In fact, many of us have trouble keeping awake when we're tired." Or, I might add, when reading this book.

Rachel Levitt is the home design editor for Boston Magazine and editor of Boston Home.

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Horiuchi Solien Landscape Architects www.horiuchisolien.com	20
International Masonry Institute (IMI) www.imiweb.org	inside front cover
Marc Truant & Associates, Inc. www.mtruant.com	29
Nemetschek www.nemetschek.com	8
North Atlantic Corp. www.northatlanticcorp.com	51
O'Brien & Sons Incorporated www.obrienandsons.com	24
Pella Windows & Doors, Inc. of Boston www.boston.pella.com	10
Quality Stone Veneer www.qualitystoneveneer.com	7
Richard White Sons www.rwsons.com	14
Salem Plumbing Supply www.salemplumbing.com	52
Shadley Associates www.shadleyassociates.com	34
Stefco Construction www.stefcobuilders.com	21
Studio Verticale www.studioverticale.com	12
The Boston Architectural College www.the-bac.edu	51
The Di Salvo Ericson Group, Structural Engineers, Inc. www.tdeg.com	28
Thermadrain Insulated Drainage Board www.thermadrain.com	11
Thoughtforms Corporation www.thoughtforms-corp.com	backcover
Toto USA www.totousa.com	inside back cover
Friumph Leasing Corporation www.triumphleasing.com	23

#### **BOSTON 24**

#### www.boston-online.com/boston24

If you're up all night, you might need food, coffee, aspirin, gas. Heck, you might want to go bowling! This Google"mash-up" lists all-night sources for all those things and more, with a handy clickable map.

#### SUNRISE, SUNSET CALENDAR

#### www.sunrisesunset.com

An easy-to-use astronomical almanac in calendar form. Use the custom function to select your town and display sunrise and sunset times - as well as moon phases and twilight times.

#### LUCI ASSOCIATION

#### www.luciassociation.org

Lighting Urban Community International is creating "an international network of cities of light" and encouraging cities everywhere to make better use of light in urban environments. The site's photo gallery features images from some of the 60 member cities, which are mostly in Europe and Asia. The only US member city? Philadelphia.

#### INTERNATIONAL DARK-SKY ASSOCIATION www.darksky.org

Astronomers may have been the first to raise the alarm about light pollution, but the dark-sky movement has grown to include ecologists, environmentalists, lighting professionals, urban planners, and community activists. The IDA website includes a directory of "darksky friendly" lighting fixtures, a model lighting ordinance, even a Dark Sky Finder to locate good spots for stargazing. Don't miss the Ratings page to view and rate photos of outdoor lighting applications.

#### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - NATURAL LIGHTSCAPES www2.nature.nps.gov/air/lightscapes

The protection of starry night skies and natural darkness is now part of the mission of the National Park Service, which monitors night-sky conditions in many parks in the West. Go to the Monitoring and Data page for data and images. It may not surprise you to learn that the lights of Las Vegas can be seen from the Mojave Desert, 100 miles away.

#### EDWARD HOPPER'S NIGHTHAWKS

#### http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nighthawks

Maybe you're a Wikipedia skeptic, but you can't beat it for its pop-culture-references lists. Explore the myriad imitations and parodies of Hopper's most famous work. Better yet, see the real thing: The iconic painting is on display through August 19 at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts as the centerpiece of a major Hopper exhibition.

We're always looking for intriguing websites - however opaque the connection to architecture. Send your candidates to: epadjen@architects.org.

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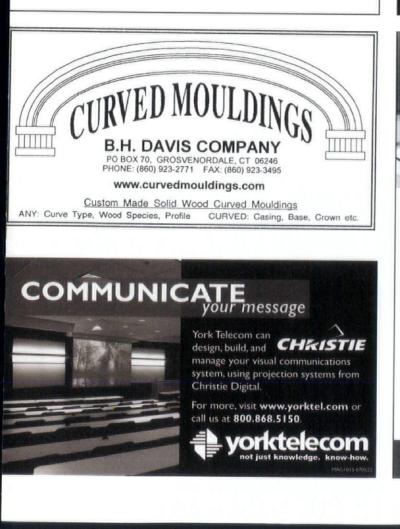
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## The Dessert Café

It was not much to look at from the outside: a mid-block building with tired aluminum siding and two medium-size windows. But for four years, this raspberry-walled café served as one of those "third places" hailed by Ray Oldenburg in his book *The Great Good Place*. Neighbors gathered at Dessert, as it was called, for candlelit conversation and board games while savoring French pressed coffee and the best sweet treats in Philadelphia.

The food wasn't even the point when my best friend Greg and I decided to open Dessert. We just wanted to fill a void in our mixed-use gentrifying neighborhood, a square half-mile bracketed by the ragtag Italian Market, with its red-gravy eateries and produce stands, and funky South Street, 10 blocks of bars and tattoo shops. We designed the place we wanted from scratch, hanging five-panel doors sideways to create wainscoting, crafting brass sconces from a disassembled chandelier, and hunting all over for three-legged table bases — the only kind that don't wobble.

We wanted a place where the bleats of Miles Davis segued into the murmurings of Frank Sinatra. A place for adults, with real china, and table service, and no floppy sofas. Where it was assumed everything was "to stay," not "to go."

The idea of a late-night public place in urban America is, I think, primarily relegated to the bar or the nightclub. I'm not much of a fan of either. But I've always loved to wander about in the evening in search of dessert, either because I've eaten in and gotten restless around 9:30, or because I've dined out and am having too good a time to go home and sit in front of the television.

It turned out that not as many souls are as simpatico with this notion as I thought. Our evenings-only, dessert-only café confused the neighbors, who asked why we were "always closed" when they strolled past on their way to work. We were confused, in



turn, whenever someone opened the door, took a look around our empty room and asked, "Are you guys still open?" *Still?* It was only 7:30 at night.

The folks who did get it came late and stayed late. They came for soufflé and bread pudding and real strawberry shortcake. They came to talk to one another: no one ever opened a laptop. That was for the daytime, half-decafskim latte-chai-moccachino set.

This set liked classic games. I discovered that many people had a long-neglected fondness for the card game Mille Bornes and that some were really, really bad at Trivial Pursuit. I watched as a young man with hanging ropes of dreads played his first-ever chess game, then his second and his third. He soon sadly retired, defeated by his late start in life.

We got to know the backstories of these regulars. On our final night, I asked some of our best customers to sign a journal. A couple, whose life arc we'd closely followed, noted "we've consulted with you on wedding plans, honeymoon destinations, real estate, and baby names." (I still think they should have gone with Sebastian over Luca.) The most memorable customers, though, were the soloists. These folks returned again and again, gradually creeping closer and closer to "our" table to chat more comfortably. "Adventure Dave" traveled for months into the wilds of South America, then dropped by with photos and stories. "Tall Dan" hunched his lanky frame over a pot of vanilla tea and bemoaned his expensive home renovations. "Sue Dogwalker" shared her love of chocolate, books, and Buddy the St. Bernard.

Our first regular, a rumpled older gent who rode more than an hour each way by bus to say hi and knock out the hardest puzzles in *The Atlantic Monthly*, never received a nickname. But even long after he'd moved, we referred to "Steve's table." I may never see him again, but the ones who live in the neighborhood are flâneurs like me. The types who love to be alone in a crowd. I know we'll encounter each other one evening soon, at a free concert in Rittenhouse Square, at a bookstore reading...or maybe just enjoying a late-night espresso at the next "great good place."

JoAnn Greco is a freelance journalist in Philadelphia. Her favorite dessert is key lime pie.