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Who Will Occupy Boston?
A City Invisible to Itself
Questioning the Authority

Blueprint

FOR A NEW MAYOR

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A photograph of two men in a modern office setting. The man on the left is wearing a white shirt and an orange safety vest. The man on the right is wearing a white shirt and a tie. They are both looking at a large digital display that shows architectural plans and diagrams. The man on the right is pointing at the screen with a pen. The screen displays various diagrams, including a site plan with trees and buildings, and a cross-section of a building with energy efficiency features. The background shows a modern office interior with a ceiling vent and a large window.

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ABOVE
Art by Jazzberry Blue.

COVER
Boston City Hall, plans and design development. Courtesy of Historic New England, Kallmann McKinnell and Wood Collection.



Our fair city

When the *ArchitectureBoston* team was first sketching out the scope of this issue—before we even knew who Boston’s new mayor would be—I gathered a small group of architects and planners for a brainstorming session. I explained that the magazine would be addressing the challenges facing the city’s first new mayor in 20 years but only insofar as they involve urban-design issues: housing, transportation, development, and the like. “So, not anything about the public schools or crime,” I explained.

One person at the table politely pushed back. “But schools *are* a design issue,” she said. “Crime is a design issue.”

Precisely so. This holistic understanding of design—that good architecture can enhance every navigation of daily life and that bad or indifferent architecture can diminish it—is the unspoken theme of this magazine. When it comes to building the kind of city we want Boston to be—safe, open, healthy, beautiful, and fair—every issue is a design issue.

Cities around the United States today are in a far better place than the last time Boston inaugurated a new mayor. From Seattle to Charlotte, cities are enjoying a renaissance few would have predicted during the bad old days of bankruptcies and broken windows. For the first time in years, Boston’s population is growing, and it isn’t beyond imagining that it could regain its peak of 801,000 souls, last reached in 1950. (Indeed, as Stephanie Pollack notes in her article on the transportation crush, if you count commuters, it already has.) Many of Boston’s current challenges are the wages of growth and prosperity: congestion, gentrification, the \$7 million condo, the \$300,000 parking space.

For too many residents, however, such “problems” are a distant rumor. So it’s no surprise that most of the articles in this magazine wrestle with questions of social equity. How can Boston create more housing for the 99 percent? Why do the lowest-income neighborhoods have the longest commutes? What explains the endurance of the informal divisions that keep a dynamic city Balkanized, when neighborhood boundaries are, after all, only lines on a map?

Good design has the answer to these questions, from intelligent zoning and land use to physical and social connectors like bike paths and reliable transit.

Sometimes the dividing lines are not metaphors. On my own street in Brighton, a fence literally separates Boston from the Newton border, preventing through traffic and confounding GPS devices. But the psychological divisions are more insidious. When Boston crows because it lures Vertex Pharmaceuticals from Cambridge, or wails because it loses Partners HealthCare to Somerville, each community suffers. The neighborhood chauvinism that has long defined Boston extends from Quincy to Brookline to Chelsea, with baleful results for public investments in transportation, housing, and economic development. “Regional co-operation” is a phrase that elicits yawns from the most earnest policy wonk, but other cities are much better at it. We should heed Benjamin Franklin’s warning about hanging together or hanging separately.

We need everyone pulling together because it will take public resources to build on the region’s achievements and more broadly share its success. Billions in taxpayer dollars were spent cleaning up Boston Harbor and tearing down the Central Artery, and the dividends have been profound. A fraction of that kind of investment could spell the difference between a vibrant, connected city with a beating heart and a pretty stage set with a brittle core.

Carl Sandburg famously called Chicago the “city of the big shoulders.” Boston is the city of big brains. A trailblazing leader from bifocal lenses to anesthesia to the safety razor to First Night, Boston is poised to reinvent itself into a new city. Let’s make it one where everyone sings the same tune and really means it: Oh, Boston! You’re my home. ■

Renée Loth
Editor



PHOTO: CONOR MACDONALD

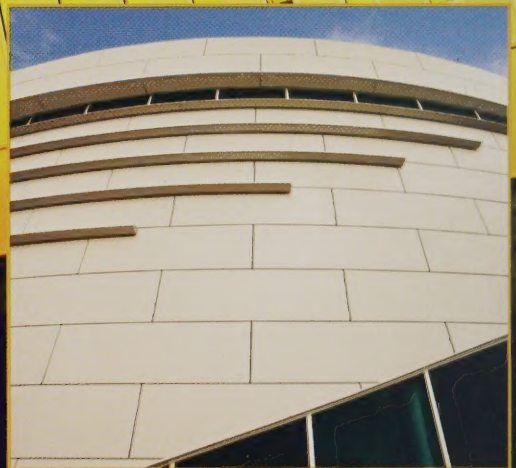
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On “Coast” (Winter 2013)

The flooding of segments of Boston's HarborWalk and waterfront during the January 2014 Nor'easter makes the Winter 2013 issue of *ArchitectureBoston* must reading for Boston's new mayor, Martin Walsh, and his administration. Boston once again missed a close call. Had the storm's surge hit at high tide midday rather than closer to low tide, flooding of waterfront neighborhoods could have been devastating.

Cities such as those cited in “Coast” are looking at the built environment very differently to meet the challenges of sea-level rise and storm surges. Green infrastructure and adaptive buildings will be key to waterfront cities of the 21st century. As he organizes his team and agencies, the mayor has the opportunity to integrate climate-change adaptation into all aspects of city planning and management in an effort to create more resilient neighborhoods and to protect critical infrastructure.

The design community can play an important role in helping to reduce the risks from coastal flooding and sea-level rise. Hopefully, urban development during the Walsh administration will draw on interdisciplinary expertise, involving not only planners and engineers but also architects, landscape architects, and designers.

VIVIEN LI
President, The Boston Harbor Association
Boston

In the “Coast” issue, “adaptable,” “flexible,” “resilient,” and “temporary” are recurring themes used to describe building, public realm, and infrastructure design in our 21st-century world of climate change. These are not words we have used when describing our civic infrastructure for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Great societies build memorials to permanence, stability, and grandeur—or at least that has been the story. Until now.

I see a future where a society's health and

wealth will be measured by its ability to adapt quickly to changing weather, technology, settlement patterns, and social needs. In the 2013 report *Places in the Making*, my research team at MIT found that tactical urbanism, ephemeral events, and temporary interventions that celebrate flexibility and adaptability have great power to shape physical spaces, build communities, and empower people. This power is as great, if not greater, than what comes from the permanent and unchangeable bricks-and-mortar products we have traditionally espoused.

There is a growing alignment here between tactical-urbanism placemaking and climate-change design: Both push back on rigid and often outdated regulations and encourage an embrace of flexible and often unpredictable space design and use. This flexibility will be the key to how our cities and our societies thrive. And much will depend on the ability of public officials, design professionals, and academics to collaborate and cooperate as we envision a new future. May we be up to the task ahead!

SUSAN SILBERBERG AIA
CivicMoxie
Brookline, Massachusetts

The “Coast” issue suggests innovative ways for dealing with rising sea levels: creating spaces near the waterfront that can absorb or accommodate flood waters; building waterfront structures with lower levels designed to flood when necessary; and moving basement equipment, apartments, businesses, and public transportation to higher levels. These solutions seem to be primarily for new construction on waterfronts—after all, the issue is focused on the coast. But Boston, a city with a large amount of man-made land, has a number of low-lying inland areas that are densely covered with existing structures—most notably parts of the South End and Cambridge—that will also flood

with rising sea levels. Solutions need to be proposed for these areas, too.

NANCY S. SEASHOLES
Author, Gaining Ground: A History of Landmaking in Boston
Lexington, Massachusetts

Renée Loth challenges architects to deepen their attention to building design, since “buildings contribute more than one-third of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.” I urge architects also to focus on integrating alternative-energy systems, passive and active, more completely into both residential and commercial building design.

The American Planning Association, in six solar briefing papers, begins to address some of these issues, including the installation of roof and ground-mounted solar systems in historic neighborhoods and on historic buildings. The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources has begun to address siting issues but not design issues. The nearest mention is a requirement to show the location of vegetation or structures for screening solar collectors in a modeling bylaw the department prepared.

Net-zero homes requiring solar orientation with numerous panels on the roof are still not mainstream enough, although some good designs exist. For retrofit of existing homes, groundmount design is driven by the installers and are minimal structures at best. The metal structure supporting the panels on our own household groundmount temporarily caused anxiety among our neighbors. We installed extensive landscaping in response.

We can all do better. A discussion between designers and planners on what constitutes good site and structure design would be an important start. We need to make the existence of solar panels in our neighborhoods an acceptable design feature. There are enough challenges to solar power

regarding financing and subsidies—let's not add to those with poor structural design and difficult siting demands.

CAROLYN BRITT

Community Investment Associates
Ipswich, Massachusetts

The "Coast" issue inspires compelling solutions for rising sea levels that will impact many cities. New ideas for infrastructure set the stage for durable planning solutions and architectural programming. What is the appropriate strategy now, or 50 years from now? What can we learn from cities with similar problems?

Cities like Houston have a history of addressing flood scenarios at different scales. Its flat and geologically soggy coastal disposition has long rendered it vulnerable to flooding from seasonal rain and hurricanes, with storm surges that follow. Houston is well known for its abundance of freeways; a less-advertised characteristic is how the city's subgrade freeway corridors function as storm-surge zones. Local interventions, such as landscaped flood walls and more than 100 floodgates, protect Houston's medical center above and below. The center is also equipped with underground utilities that enable critical functions through a storm. Likewise, Houston's bayous, once a path of trade, are now ecological habitats and recreational zones that function as basins to manage runoff.

Barriers may be the only solution for specific areas. Superstorms and hurricanes do provide an opportunity to test the efficacy of solutions and prioritize zones to determine the scale of intervention. Defining high-priority zones and staging could help a system reconcile with the architecture of the city and create productive benefits in the interim.

AMNA ANSARI

Co-founder, Alloybuild
Boston

ArchitectureBoston's "Coast" issue shows just how far the conversation on climate change has come in Boston; yet it also demonstrates that we still have a long way

to go. We are no longer talking about if the climate changes, but *when*; and what we are doing to prepare for it. Boston is fortunate to have a sophisticated business and design community, as well as research and higher-education institutions, to help us find solutions that not only prepare Boston for climate change but also protect our unique social, cultural, and environmental infrastructure, and make Boston a more competitive city and better place to live.

Boston has been preparing for the impacts of climate change since 2007, when then-mayor Thomas Menino issued his Executive Order on Climate Action. Nevertheless, Hurricane Sandy in 2012 was a clarion call, and we wasted no time devising a course of action.

In the past year, the city has made significant progress in preparing for climate change. All city departments convened to identify municipal vulnerabilities in the new report, *Climate Ready Boston: Municipal Vulnerability to Climate Change*; the Boston Redevelopment Authority adopted new climate-preparedness guidelines for large-project review; and the city worked with the Green Ribbon Commission to contract a report through the Boston Society of Architects that examines strategies existing buildings can take. All this work will contribute to the 2014 Climate Action Plan update, now underway.

We must think long term and collectively. The update will focus on climate preparedness, and we hope to capture many of the ideas mentioned in "Coast," as well as from others in the design community. Together, we can make this city a leader in climate resilience. Share your ideas at engage.greenovateboston.org.

BRIAN SWETT

Mayor's Office of Environmental and
Energy Services
Boston

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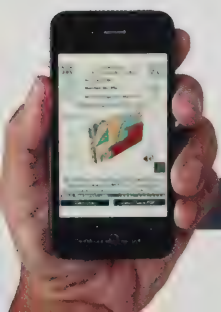
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Barry Alan Bluestone and **Tamara Roy** AIA
("Who Will Occupy Boston?" page 30)

Barry Alan Bluestone, director of Northeastern University's Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy, coauthors its annual *Greater Boston Housing Report Card*.

Tamara Roy AIA, a recipient of the BSA Women In Design Award of Excellence in 2012, is a principal at ADD Inc who designs multifamily housing.

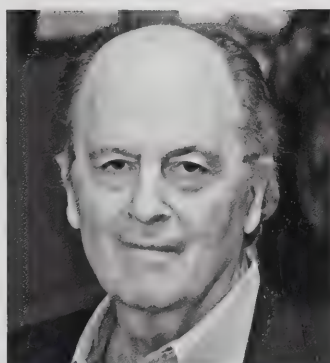
PHOTO Will Dolan



Stephanie Pollack
("Are We There Yet?" page 42)

Stephanie Pollack is associate director of Northeastern University's Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy, where her research focuses on transportation policy, transit-oriented development, sustainability, and equitable development.

PHOTO Sam Brown Photographs



Robert Campbell FAIA
("The Doorknob Census," page 24)

Robert Campbell FAIA, architecture critic of *The Boston Globe*, has received a Pulitzer Prize and a BSA Award of Honor. He's a consultant to cultural institutions, a published poet, and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

PHOTO Conor MacDonald



Karilyn Crockett
("A City Invisible to Itself," page 34)

Karilyn Crockett, who grew up in Dorchester and lives in the South End, is a visiting scholar in MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning.

PHOTO Susan Chailfoux/The Boston Globe



Dan Wasserman
("A Shining City on Some Hills," page 38)

Dan Wasserman started drawing editorial cartoons for *The Boston Globe* in 1985. His work has been reprinted in *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, and is syndicated internationally by the Tribune Content Agency.

PHOTO Asia Kepka



Jill Medvedow
("The Spaces in Between," page 46)

Jill Medvedow, Ellen Matilda Poss Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, creates visionary programs to connect contemporary art, artists, and audiences; build community; and shape public discourse.

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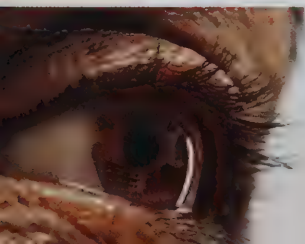
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Opinions and Observations



The 2013 deCordova Biennial

deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts
Through April 13, 2014

The most profound architectural ideas destabilize us one way or another. They cause us to become aware of our bodies in space or challenge our assumptions about verticality. Both forms of architectural instability present themselves in this fine exhibition at the deCordova.

Jonathan Calm's *Scudder Towers Down*, a video loop of the towers' demolition in 1987, shows identical clips of the explosive collapse simultaneously on three progressively larger screens, each one zoomed in closer and closer to the blast, so that the largest (and the implicit viewer) get enveloped by the cloud of dust and smoke. It's brilliant and terrifying, until the video stops and goes backwards, and the building magically re-erects itself. The back-and-forth looping elegantly articulates the futility of many Modernist housing projects that were built in the '60s, only to meet their maker at the end of a failed social housing agenda.

Lynne Harlow's elegant *Rhythm...Distance* explores the audible territory of minimalist light-and-space abstraction, stretching a large field of orange fabric over a looming floor-to-ceiling wedge in such a way that the form pulses with power, an effect made more palpable by an audio track of jazz drummer Paul Corio performing an original work inspired by the intense color. Not only does the viewer get to *feel* the spatial impact of pure orange, she gets to *hear* it, too.

But the most moving piece in this year's Biennial is undoubtedly Petrova Giberson's *Tree Flowers*, which deploys subtly manipulated materials such as suspended thread, old bowed floorboards, and a store-bought quilt that has been cut and painted. These modest objects are hung from the ceiling and attached to walls in the most delicate of ways, casting shadows on the walls and inviting the viewer to enter the spaces they create. I found myself walking ever so carefully, turning, looking up and around. Moving through the space between the hanging plane of delicate threads and the bowing floorboards attached to the wall, one becomes aware of the little breezes we make when we walk, and the old boards reach out to us, as if expressing our body's gravitational pull on the world. *Tree Flowers* brings one into the present moment like no other piece in the show. In so doing, it invites deep reflection, on the delicacy of bodies in space, old things, shadows of the past, perhaps the homes of great-grandmothers long gone. It is profoundly affecting.

The deCordova has mounted a richly varied show of New England artists. Make the trip. You will appreciate the invitation to see things askew.

Dan Hisel is an architect who practices in Arlington and teaches design at Wentworth Institute of Technology.

ABOVE
Installation view of the 2013 deCordova Biennial: visible works include Jonathan Calm's *Scudder Towers Down* screens on the wall (center, background) and Lynne Harlow's *Rhythm...Distance* (right). Photograph by Clements Photography and Design, Boston.

SEEN

The Green Hand

Portland, Maine

BELOW

Photo: Lynn Saville.



MORE ONLINE

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That day in August 2012, I had walked by this corner several times, casually appreciating the quirky bookstore window and the vernacular, small-town architecture. But, as often happens, it was the evening that brought an epiphany. The sudden sense of mystery came from the absence of people and from the presence of artificial light and shadow.

And of course, there was no escaping the backlit green hand that gestured, Stop! Admittedly corny and cartoonish, the hand also represented the intrusion of a fairy-tale reality into an ordinary New England town. Further evidence of an “other” world was the mural across the way, where an imaginary street beckoned under the banner of “Joe’s Smoke Shop.” Together, mural and hand seemed to call into question our everyday sense of reality and scale.

For me, intention and serendipity take part in a dialectic. Sensing an element was missing and wanting to help serendipity along, I asked my husband to walk down the opposite sidewalk. In retrospect, I realized that a single person paradoxically emphasized both the loneliness of the place and the contrast in scale. Another epiphany: Suddenly, the hand was too big and the figure too small; the ordinary had utterly vanished.

Award-winning photographer **Lynn Saville**, author of the monographs *Acquainted with the Night* and *Night/Shift*, specializes in urban night landscapes.



Out of Hand: Materializing the Postdigital

Museum of Arts and Design, New York
Through June 1, 2014

Artists featured in this survey highlight futuristic production methodologies that shape the design and architectural practices of today. Richard Dupont uses modeling software to produce an anatomic data-driven self-portrait while Zaha Hadid creates a table that freezes a water vortex in transparent plexiglass. Both exemplify digital design applications that distort and reinvent the built environment.

Caraballo-Farman’s provocative *Object Breast Cancer* (above) transforms MRIs of Leonor Caraballo’s malignant breast tumor into bronze sculpture and jewelry by using computer imaging technology that allows human beings to view and understand the body on a higher level of sophistication than ever before. An innovation by 3D Systems seamlessly re-creates a missing limb through a nylon prosthetic leg cover that can be customized with patterns, materials, and graphics.

Although this show emphasizes the ease with which we can “materialize the postdigital” with advanced technologies, it does not account for the current state of environmental vulnerability caused by mass production. How can these tools enable us to learn from the past and help protect us from the realities now upon us? It is time to contemplate the *intention* behind the objects currently created for all aspects of the built environment and to use technology to design products that are ecologically efficient, responsive to current needs, and also capable of adapting to the evolving urban landscape.

Lauren Altman is a special project assistant at Van Alen Institute for the federal regionwide Hurricane Sandy initiative, Rebuild by Design, in New York City.

GENIUS LOCI

Haunted harbor

How do you take your ghost towns? Metastasizing (Detroit)? Arid and morose with history (a lot of the American plains)? Densely populated and flamboyantly neglected (insert city here)? I prefer the part-time ghost town. I prefer a place like Fort Point Channel in Boston. The drama of an exorcism is appealing. Fort Point has age and majesty. It has a channel and a fleet of footbridges that step onto the rim of the Financial District. It hosted the Boston Tea Party. Its rows and stacks of lofts once warehoused, among other goods, sugar and molasses. This is true: For two centuries, Boston was America's wool hub and Fort Point's Summer Street its epicenter.

The Boston Wharf Company spent about 70 years building it up. But you know how fortune is. Fickle and all. Business faded, artists materialized amid the abandonment. Nearly everything that made Fort Point what it is now was. It's all vestige. The vintage musks of mercantilism and manufacturing have drawn the developers. By 2000, Boston Wharf, once known as "the company that refused to sell," had sold. A few buildings here. A few buildings there. At some point, the company owned 79 structures. In 2005, when Boston Wharf was 160 years old, it had 17 left. There's nothing to cry about, of course. These were million-dollar deals, many times over. But there's a lingering sadness. The buildings are packed so tight you can't see them holding hands, like siblings who refuse separation.

The Fort Point renaissance is fully, inexorably under way. Barbara Lynch, Ming Tsai, and Joanne Chang all have restaurants (Lynch has several). There are at least three museums—one's for the Boston Tea Party! And the new mercantilism is dot-commy. Someone is calling this place the Innovation District.

When I arrived in Boston in the summer of 2002, I didn't understand Fort Point's transactional history. I didn't even understand the name (it was "Four Point Channel" to me). I just sensed that the ghosts were nervous. Walking along A Street into Fort Point from Broadway Station provided block after block of desolate wonder: "What went on here for so long?" A friend bought a loft in a building on Wormwood. When it was warm, one of her neighbors hosted a movie night in the tiny park across the tiny street. It didn't feel rude to ask who he'd have to scare up to come. Fort Point's loneliness gave it danger. The midday shadows could get to you.

The wrought-iron staircase descent from the elevated part of Summer Street down to A felt transgressive. The empty dining room at Persephone made every meal there feel as if it could be your last. Eventually, it was.

On Fridays, the Blue Wave, on Congress, turned from a so-so restaurant into the best-deejayed R&B nightclub on earth. Every dance there felt like the last. Eventually, it was. Now it's a newish so-so restaurant with a good bar. The early-to-mid 2000s felt both like a first draft and last gasp. Now what you notice walking on A or the pathway that snakes along the Gillette Building is how on so many nights you can still be the only person you see in Fort Point. It's as if the sign on the railed billboard atop the roof of a building—"Boston Wharf Co. Industrial Real Estate"—is glowing red only for you. That can be a strangely romantic feeling.

The ghosts learn to coexist with the cooks and graphic designers and software engineers and lawyers with the people staying at the Residence Inn. They've seen you stagger out of Drink and get sick near Lucky's. They've seen you make out on one of the covered boardwalks along the canal. They don't have a choice. No matter where you wind up, they're not going anywhere.

Wesley Morris is a staff writer for Grantland. He won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for criticism for his work at *The Boston Globe*.

BELOW
Fort Point,
October 2008.
Photo:
George Hoffmann.





Covering the Issues

Leaning in... From Sheryl Sandberg's best-seller to the Harvard Graduate School of Design student petition that went viral, 2013 brought new life to the ongoing discussion of gender, profession, and parity. Despite 18,000 online supporters, the Pritzker Prize powers that be still refuse to recognize Denise Scott Brown's essential creative partnership with her husband and revise his 1991 Pritzker Prize to include her. Architect and author Esther Sperber uses this controversy as her point of departure in "Gender and Genius," *Lilith's* cover story (Fall 2013). Sperber argues that creative work is a collaborative pursuit, and that ideas come from people and situations all around us. Architecture requires collaboration—between designer, builder, and client as well as among the design team. It's time for the Pritzker and the other top design prizes to reconsider their focus on the lone genius.

Looking down... Streets are the most essential public spaces, writes Justin Davidson in "Pavement as Lab" for *New York* magazine (December 23–30, 2013). In this ode to the design details of the street—crosswalk stripes, curb cuts, bollards, benches—Davidson lauds then-mayor Bloomberg's Department of Transportation for infusing the normal work of street repair with social agency. The past 12 years offer an array of terrific experiments, like the placement of a ramp or paint on the roadbed, which influence our ability to cross the street. "Making New York's public spaces safe, civilized, and navigable is a deeply democratic issue," argues Davidson. This is a challenge to the new administration in New York to keep up the good work.

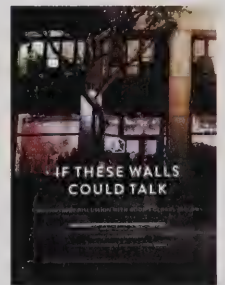
Rethink... *Good* magazine's first (Re)design Issue (Fall 2013) celebrates the ways our daily experiences are designed and encourages readers to take part in that. One of the most inspiring offerings is "If These Walls Could Talk," Casey Caplowe's interview with *Good's* first crop of global fellows: designers and activists from Ghana, South Africa, New Zealand, Mexico, and Brazil who are transforming neighborhoods and engaging kids in design. They participated in a weeklong exchange in Los Angeles that brought their perspectives to bear on local challenges, explored the intersection of physical environment and social behavior, and helped envision an improved future.

Refuel... The city famous for giving life to the suburbs is experiencing great growth along its urban frontier: downtown. "America's Next Great City Is Inside LA," proclaims Brett Martin for *GQ* (January 2014). Driven

by new bars and restaurants, rather than art studios and galleries, Martin reports that Los Angeles' early-20th-century majestic civic architecture—replete with marble lobbies, grand ballrooms, bank vaults—ignored for decades, is now getting renovated and reinhabited by entrepreneurs, residents, and suburbanites seeking a fun evening and who are enjoying walking from place to place. Part restaurant tour, part booster session, part urbanity lesson, Martin offers a strong voice for urban experience. No matter how extraordinary suburbs may be, great cities still need a vibrant downtown and the intoxicating mix of people that physical proximity brings.

Finding links... *The Believer's* Art Issue (November/December 2013) debuts "Pillow of Air," a "monthly amble through the visual world." The name comes from that moment of silence when one stands agape, marveling at a striking new thought without taking a breath. Lawrence Weschler traces curious connections of architectural symbolism between the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca and the ritual stoning of the pillars, the Twin Towers, the events of 9/11, the new memorial, and its pilgrimages. Weschler ends his journey back in Mecca, noting perhaps one of our era's greatest iconic ironies: the Las Vegas-like Royal Mecca Clock Tower apartment building and commercial complex now towers over the holiest of Muslim sites, developed by the Bin Laden family.

Gretchen Schneider AIA is executive director of the Community Design Resource Center of Boston.





Happy City Night

The Guggenheim Museum, New York City
November 2, 2013

When Charles Montgomery implored a roomful of black-clad urbanists to choose an experiment—have their picture snapped with a stranger or suffer through a simulation of a tightly packed train while wearing a sensor cuff—he divided the room into two types: those who hate cameras and those who hate crowds.

The experiments served as the gimmick behind Montgomery's launch of *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design*. In his introductory remarks, the author cited his experiences as a team leader in New York for BMW Guggenheim Lab's "Participatory City" effort as inspiration for the book. The two-year exploration of urban trends also hit the streets of Mumbai, and Berlin, attempting to home in on what makes for happy populaces—as well as what makes them miserable.

Visual interpretations of the takeaways—boiled down to 100 ideas, from "activist citizens" to "local food" to "maker movement"—appeared on video screens and poster boards that circled a second-floor gallery. But attendees paid them little mind, clearly more in the mood for a party than an exhibit; and, indeed, Montgomery seemed more intent on echoing the Lab's experimental nature than really examining these trends in any depth.

Forty-five minutes later, Montgomery presented the unsurprising results of his unscientific forays: Strangers who had smiled together for the camera and shared exchanges about their day were found to be more optimistic than those who had not participated in the photo experiment. And heart rates accelerated as the conditions in the tent that represented a subway car became more uncomfortable.

"The data confirms what we already know," admitted Montgomery, somewhat sheepishly, before adding that "this clearly isn't meant to be peer-review-quality research." There's no question that the night was fun, even exhilarating. But, as with the book, the promise of true inquisition went unfulfilled. One suspects that the Lab's findings might merit more than these rather superficial treatments—but then again, maybe not.

JoAnn Greco writes on the built environment for PlanPhilly.com, TheAtlanticCities.com, *Context*, and *Planning*.

ABOVE
Photo: Chad Heird.

making places memorable

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green roofs
children's play
housing
institutional
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The Doorknob Census

CAPTURING THE ESSENCE OF THE CITY

Boston's Built World

1826

Quincy Market opens

ARCHITECT:

Alexander Parris

MAYOR:

Josiah Quincy III

1837

Boston Public
Garden
established

MAYOR:

Samuel T.
Armstrong

1843

Bunker Hill
Monument
dedicated

MAYOR:

Martin
Brimmer

1849

Boston Athenaeum
building completed

ARCHITECT:

Edward Clarke Cabot

MAYOR:

John P. Bigelow

by Robert Campbell FAIA

Boston appears to be heading into the biggest building boom since the aftermath of the Great Fire of 1872. There's prideful talk about soaring new towers to rival those of other cities. Why we'd want to rival other cities isn't so much discussed. Surely Boston's uniqueness, in a world that's ever declining into sameness, is part of its appeal.

In order to consider the city's architectural future, you have to have some kind of vision of what's Bostonian about Boston. And with new city leadership in place, it seems like an opportune moment. In a changing world, what characteristics of Boston should remain unchanged? Is there maybe some perfume—call it “Essence of Boston”—that we're unaware of because it's always been in the air? How do you preserve a quality you can't quite define?

You could begin by counting doorknobs.

I'm stealing that concept from the late Homer Russell. Homer, who died last fall, was for many years director of urban design at the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). There he created a map of downtown Boston on which he placed a red dot to represent each doorknob you could see from the street.

As it turned out—no surprise, really—the best-loved neighborhoods were the ones with the most doorknobs. The doorknob count proved to be a measure of urban vitality. Doorknobs are a representation of human presence and human scale. They respond to the height of a human hand. And when there are a lot of them, they

OPPOSITE

Period Furniture
Hardware Co. Inc.,
an antique hardware
store on Charles
Street in Beacon Hill.
Photo: Ruth-Ellen
Burack Flanagan

TIMELINE SOURCES

When in Boston by
Jim Vrabel; *Built in
Boston* by Douglass
Shand-Tucci. All
photos courtesy of the
Boston Public Library
except where noted.

1857

Mercantile
Wharf building
erected

ARCHITECT:

Gridley J. F. Bryant

MAYOR:

Alexander H. Rice

Photo: Shuko Tamao

1877

Trinity Church
completed

ARCHITECT:

H. H. Richardson

MAYOR:

Frederick O. Prince

1888

First electric trolley
from Allston to Park
Square

MAYOR:

Hugh O'Brien



suggest, as do crowded sidewalks, the presence of a diverse citizenry.

Doorknobs are an example, too, of the architectural quality of intricacy. As you approach a building, if

Human scale and diversity of use are key ingredients in the essence of Boston. A city needs different kinds of people doing different things at different times of day.

it is to remain interesting, you should be able to notice more and more detail as you get closer. The architecture in this sense is ever changing, ever adapting to your presence.

There are exceptions to every rule. The John Hancock tower is a great building without intricacy, except for the half-visible life you see through the glass or reflected in it. I can't help remembering, though, a friend who suggested that the architect should have sliced off the front 10 or so feet of a Dorchester triple-decker and glued it to the Hancock, thus creating the

only appropriate entrance to a 60-story mirror.

Please, I'm not saying all new buildings should have traditional doorknobs. But I'd like to see us hang on to the qualities they embody.

Take the currently hottest district, the South Boston Waterfront (now saddled with a silly brand name, the Innovation District). There are not a lot of doorknobs here, unless you count car doors. And the area doesn't feel like Boston because it doesn't feel like a city. It looks and feels like a suburban office park. It's served by cars, which occupy roads that are too wide for pedestrian pleasure but which nevertheless choke with traffic at rush hour because everyone's residence is somewhere else. A city needs different kinds of people doing different things at different times of day. A lot of people opening and closing doors.

Not enough people in the Innovation District will be turning the handle of a residential door and walking out to enjoy the city for the evening. That should change.

Paris is a good example. In a typical building, there is maybe a restaurant on the ground floor that's busy in the evening. Above that, perhaps floors with offices of some kind, maybe a dentist or a dressmaker. Then, up

1895

Boston Public
Library
completed

ARCHITECT:
McKim, Mead & White

MAYOR:
Hugh O'Brien

1899

Isabella Stewart
Gardner
Museum opens

ARCHITECT:
Willard T. Sears

MAYOR:
Josiah Quincy

1914

Custom House
Tower completed

ARCHITECT:
Peabody & Stearns

MAYOR:
James M. Curley

1929

United Shoe
Machinery
Building built

ARCHITECT:
Parker, Thomas
& Rice

MAYOR:
Malcolm Nichols



at the top, a couple of floors of residential flats. A layer of residences thus floats above almost the whole city. People use the sidewalks at all hours.

Human scale and diversity of use are the first qualities I'd list as key ingredients in the essence of Boston. Not residences here and offices there and shopping somewhere else, but many kinds of activity mixed together in the same place. Zoning that forbids that kind of mix is a hangover from the smelly factories of the Victorian era. Newbury and Charles streets have long been models of use diversity. (Their success can backfire, of course, when rents go up and pricey boutiques replace useful services such as pharmacies and hardware stores. But that's another issue.)

What's less important is architectural style or material. Red brick is great on Beacon Hill and the South End, but Boston is also built of wood, granite, glass, stone, concrete, and other materials, all of which, when handled with respect for both the material and the urban context, can be wonderful.

The same is true of architectural style. There's no one right style for Boston. It's possible to create good (or bad) architecture in any manner, present, past, or future. Nobody is bothered by the fact that Andrea

Palladio studied and imitated the architecture of ancient Rome. But he was inventive in the ways he adapted past styles to present circumstances, and that's the key to success. Maybe in an older city like ours, built during so many different eras, we should think of diversity itself as the Boston style.

A few more suggestions for Boston as it grows:

"Be wary of the novel, bold, sweeping vision, backed by large piles of money." I'm quoting Homer Russell again. Cities, he thought, should be improved "one small incremental piece at a time." Even a fully planned neighborhood like the Back Bay—where not only the street layout but also the placement of bay windows was specified in advance—was built incrementally over time in various styles.

Honor historic preservation—not just for the aesthetic value of some of the older architecture but to preserve a presence for the past, to keep Boston a city that anchors us in time as well as in place and thus enriches our sense of who we are. The presence of time in the city is another part of Boston's essence. It's a defining paradox: the city preserves the past while it invents the future.

1944

Neon Citgo sign erected in Kenmore Square

MAYOR:

Maurice J. Tobin

Photo: Tom Markham



1962

Design for Boston City Hall awarded

ARCHITECT:

Kallmann McKinnell and Knowles

MAYOR:

John F. Collins

1965

Prudential Center building opens

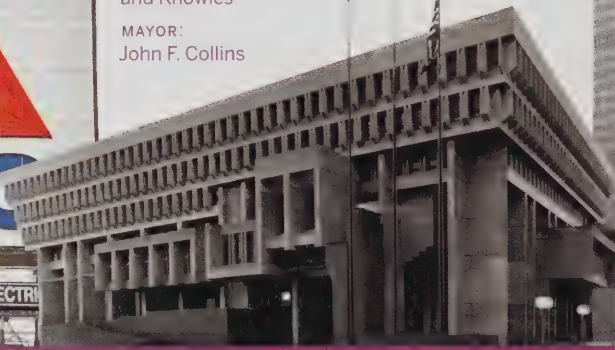
ARCHITECT:

Charles Luckman and Associates

MAYOR:

John F. Collins

Photo: Courtesy the City of Boston Archives



1972

John Hancock tower opens

ARCHITECT:

I. M. Pei & Partners

MAYOR:

Kevin H. White



Make lots of parks, but be sure they're useful. The most important public spaces in a city are the streets. Cities are made of streets, and streets are shaped by buildings. Parks are a wonderful bonus, when they have a reason to exist. When I see a single jogger on the Rose Kennedy Greenway I can't help wondering: What was the per capita cost of this piece of green? Much better would have been a string of small neighborhood parks interspersed with low-rise, mixed-use development.

Simplify the approval process. Bad things happen when the process of getting approvals from the BRA and other agencies becomes too lengthy and onerous. One, the proposed building becomes more expensive, which may engender a cost-saving cut in quality. Two, the building's sponsors may look for ways to subvert the approval process. Maybe an official finds a way to stack the membership of a Citizens Advisory Committee so it will vote right. Three, too many jobs go to the same few architects, the ones who've proved they know the ropes and can handle the process. Less plugged-in architects, such as those from other cities, are less likely to get opportunities.

Give the kids a chance. Find ways to get the bright young graduates of our five schools of architecture to stay in Boston by giving them better opportunities. I'd like to see many more design competitions. That's how architects break through. The design for the White House and for the Capitol were chosen by competition, as was that of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Quit praising the architectural style known as Brutalism (for a while anyway; I know I've been guilty). Most people believe that only architects like these buildings, so they distrust architects and regard them as members of an elitist cult that's out of touch with the larger world. Avant-gardism may be OK for painting, but architecture needs a practical client who's willing to risk money. As Paul Klee put it, "An artist can paint square wheels, but an architect must make them round."

Realize that an architecture school is not the ideal place from which to overthrow the bourgeoisie. Schools vary on this issue, and I'm not going to name names. But there are better places for expressing your political anger and superior taste. There's no need

1987

International
Place opens

ARCHITECTS:
Philip Johnson and
John Burgee

MAYOR:
Raymond L. Flynn

Photo: Chris Harnish

2002

Zakim Bridge opens

ARCHITECTS:
Christian Menn,
Miguel Rosales,
Theodore Zoli, and
W. Denney Pate

MAYOR:
Thomas Menino

Photo: Bill Iott

2004

Boston Convention
Center completed

ARCHITECT:
Rafael Viñoly

MAYOR:
Thomas Menino

Photo: Martin Kalfatovic

to feel you've lost face when you find that the general public actually admires your building.

If possible, don't milk development to fill the public coffers. The problem is that Boston, like other American cities, can't be governed with only the money it gets from taxes and other public sources. In a city that's growing, the obvious way to restock the kitty is to milk the real estate world. Each new building proposal then becomes the subject of a deal. The city, let's say, approves a bigger building than zoning would allow. In return, the developer makes some kind of contribution to the city—for example, to a fund intended for affordable housing. You can call the process corrupt, as some do. But it may be the best system we have; other American cities, lacking this resource, are now flirting with bankruptcy.

One wonders how much is likely to change, even with the new administration. Mayor Martin Walsh was quoted in *The Boston Globe*, back in December, as saying, "If we aren't developing in Boston, the programs that I want to push for probably won't happen."

Keep distinguishable neighborhoods. They're another example of Boston's human scale. You're never

lost in Boston, as you are in Phoenix, somewhere on an endless grid. Our neighborhoods are losing their distinct boundaries, both physical and ethnic, as Boston matures into a holistic city rather than a patchwork of contrasting neighborhoods. But you still usually can tell which one you're in.

Get the Boston Society of Architects involved as an organization in the debate. Take positions. Get people talking and thinking about architecture. Several decades ago, the BSA took a stand against the proposed design of the Hancock tower. The BSA lost that battle, and most would now agree that the BSA was wrong. But in general, Boston architects are too timid about going public. Compare our caution with the fierce attacks on Prince Charles by architects in Britain. Why fear controversy? It's a tonic. ■

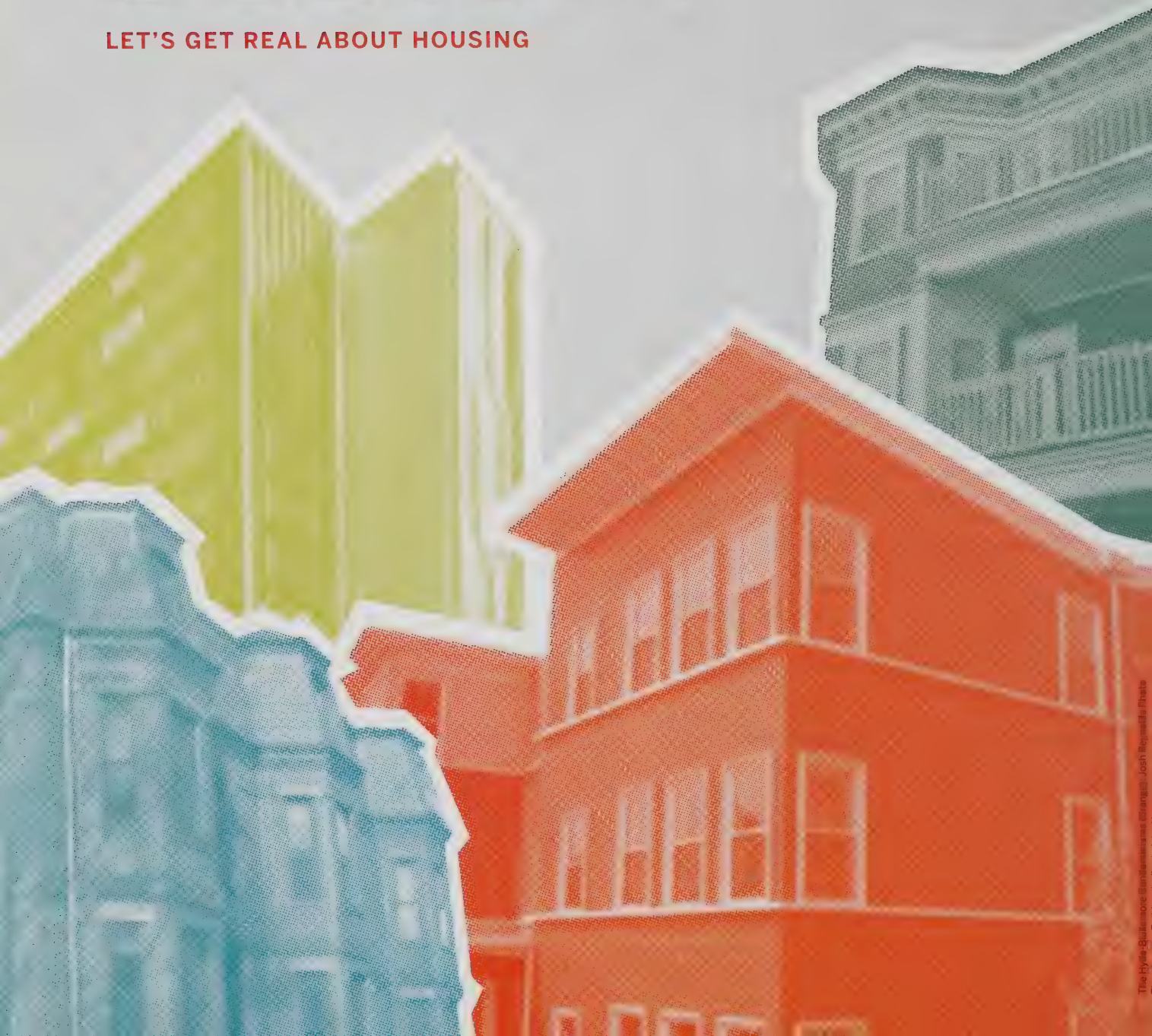


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Who Will Occupy Boston?

LET'S GET REAL ABOUT HOUSING





by Barry Alan Bluestone and Tamara Roy AIA

Class-war dystopias are normally the stuff of science fiction or the movies. One of the most troubling is the recent Suzanne Collins series, *The Hunger Games*, where the world is divided into a central city of “haves” surrounded by 12 districts of “have-nots.” The haves don’t work much and spend their time eating, preening, and being entertained, while the have-nots slave in the mines, grow the food, and man the power plants in squalid conditions under martial law.

When the Occupy Movement pitched tents in Dewey Square in the midst of the Great Recession, it was as if those fictional themes came to life. Criticizing Wall Street’s influence on government, high student debt, low salaries, jobs lost to global competition, unattainable healthcare, and expensive housing, the protesters spoke uncomfortable truths. It seems that our society has become more like *The Hunger Games* than any of us would like to admit.

When it comes to housing policy, Boston needs to take this disenfranchisement much more seriously. New York City Mayor Bill DiBlasio’s main stump speech was a “Tale of Two Cities”—precisely on the theme of haves and have-nots—and it resonated with many people, not just the traditional poor. Analysts believe that much of what got Mayor Martin Walsh elected was the hope that there is still a chance to wrest some social justice out of our market economy, whether it be better education, jobs, or housing that our workforce can afford. Yet how do we get past popular election talking points and find some real solutions?

In the past 20 years, the national economy has gone through three distinct boom/bust cycles, including the most recent recession, where mortgage-backed securities nearly toppled the nation’s credit and froze lending and housing construction. Meanwhile, globalization dispersed well-paying blue-collar jobs

ABOVE AND FOLLOWING “Portraits of Boston,” a project of photos and stories started by Ivan Velinov in March 2013, can be seen at portraitsofboston.com.

away from Massachusetts, and salaries stagnated. When Mayor Tom Menino came to office in 1994, paying less than one-third of household income on rent was the goal; now more than a quarter of Boston residents pay more than 50 percent of their salaries on rent.

Take Matthew, a 28-year-old transplant from Cleveland with a tech job in Kendall Square. He never imagined himself crowding in with four students from China to make ends meet. Or Aeron, a designer, and her husband Reuven, a graduate student at Northeastern. They'd like to find a condo larger than the tiny studio they rent in the Fenway, maybe to start a family—but even one-bedroom units are out of their price range. Or Abby, a 63-year-old with a new healthcare job in Boston. She called the offices of ADD Inc asking for “one of those \$1,200-a-month microunits.” As the baby boom generation ages, families break up in divorce, and boomer children graduate from college, there is an enormous shortage of reasonably priced smaller units for them.

At the risk of beating an old joke, some of our best friends are developers. Many of them don't set out to make luxury housing with rents even they can't afford and parking garages full of Hummers. Most got into the business because they love building things and transforming neighborhoods. Yet here in Boston, because of the most fundamental forces of economics—limited housing supply and deep, pent-up demand—available

land prices have skyrocketed, resulting in projects that are forced to charge luxury rents to recoup the investment in construction, legal fees, and permitting. Anything less carries too much risk. Market-rate developers need to satisfy their investors to have a viable company. But as a result, only New York and San Francisco have higher rents than Boston.

Now, Mayor Walsh could ask for more affordable housing than the current requirement of 13 percent of total units; lately the Boston Redevelopment Authority has pushed some developers toward 20 percent. But would even 20 percent be enough? The math is discouraging. Take the Innovation District: Out of 1,900 new units currently permitted, 1,520 units would be luxury, and 380 would be affordable. (What is “affordable” may be in the wallet of the beholder, but for official purposes it is defined as one-third of the salary of a person earning 80 percent of the area's median income.) That yield won't make a real dent in the demand.

Besides, what is needed is moderately priced housing for cooks, nurses, social workers, teachers, city planners, and creative economy types, for young families struggling with college debt and day care, and for seniors with limited incomes. They don't need—or perhaps even want—to live on the waterfront with luxury amenities. What they do need is an efficient unit in a decent neighborhood.



Unlike other markets such as cars or clothing, where low-price consumer demand can be filled by agile producers (think of the Ford Focus or Old Navy), Boston's high barriers to entry make it nearly impossible for smaller developers to build middle-class housing. Without deep financial pockets to compete for land acquisition and the wherewithal to submit to arduous city and community design review, they have become endangered species.

What has come to fill the gap are a few hardy community development corporations and nonprofits that provide affordable housing, such as Community Builders, Neighborhood of Affordable Housing, Roxbury Tenants of Harvard, and the Asian Development Corporation. Mayor Menino, to his credit, offered discounted or free city land and grants to make their projects happen, in return for 35 to 60 percent of the units being affordable—now that's a better equation.

Still, the former mayor didn't make it easy for non-profits to get through community and design review. Walsh should look at the BRA inventory of city-owned land and offer it to affordable-housing developers rather than the highest bidder. Zoning for those sites should be rewritten for fast-paced approvals, development fees should be waived, and pilot projects should be started immediately.

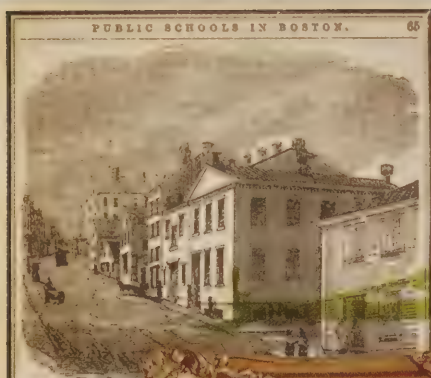
The governor could also jump in here. A new

State Building Authority could crank out much more middle-, moderate-, and low-income housing than any individual nonprofit developer, since it would be free from local zoning and permitting, and could finance with tax-exempt bonds. Sound un-American? Several quasi-public state agencies have already built thousands of affordable units for state college students at little to no cost to Massachusetts taxpayers.

Design thinkers and economists of all stripes need to put their creative minds together to address these very real cost challenges. We can't keep building the same mousetrap. "Innovation"—as overused as it is in today's vocabulary—is necessary to find new solutions to housing more people affordably, whether it is in micro-housing or new-style boarding houses or graduate-student villages. Prefabrication of building skins, bathrooms, or even entire units should be embraced by the construction industry rather than feared. We need to experiment wildly—and quickly—for our city not to be overtaken by the latest wave of luxury housing.

But before any of that happens, we need our elected officials to acknowledge the current *Hunger Games* condition of Boston and commit to doing something more about it than lip service. It will involve true leadership, with the lofty goal of making sure that Boston's success includes everyone, not just the lucky 1 percent. ■





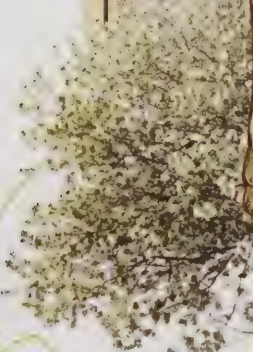
PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN BOSTON.

65

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Established, 1812.

AMBER

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having first granted
Prattus Hall. The year
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Kirkland of Harvard
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WEST ROXBURY



MUSIC.

1812



A City Invisible to Itself

by Karilyn Crockett

Sunny August afternoons on the Boston side of the Charles River are pleasant but unremarkable—unless you happen to bring along a gaggle of neighborhood teenagers who have never been there. Boston is a thriving metropolis, attracting more than 22 million visitors in 2012 alone. Yet on the summer afternoon that I sat along the Charles, eager to detail the region's maritime history, I was stopped cold by the genuine awe of the eight Boston public high school students accompanying me. Their wonder had nothing to do with my attempt as river historian and everything to do with the fact that several had never seen the place up close. They wanted to take off their shoes and feel the water, Instagram its edge, and text multiple selfies to their friends and family members. They were super-tourists in their own hometown.

Boston's civic boosters proudly remind us that in addition to a landscape offering a three-dimensional pop-up of 18th-century democracy, our museums, cultural institutions, and natural attractions are the envy of the world. But what about for the people who live here? Much of what a casual tourist, business traveler, or even a college student knows about Boston remains a mystery for many of its own residents, and particularly its young people. It's as if it is a city invisible to itself.

A visitor on the typical Boston tourist trek could blanch when they learn that the city is 53 percent non-white. "What?!" they might exclaim. "Where?" There are two perplexing issues entangled here: Boston's residents, particularly its nonwhite majority, are not a regular or visible part of the city's public face; and visitors seeking to encounter Boston's real heartbeat, its multiracial resident population, leave town mostly disappointed.

It's a classic Boston story. My own experience growing up in Dorchester echoes this weary theme: once a neighborhood kid, always a neighborhood kid. The upside of this tale is kinship with a set of city blocks bursting with generations of familiar social relationships. The shadow side is too many Boston kids and families who don't fully explore or enjoy the city's many advantages.

I won't rehash Boston's 20th-century land-clearance rush, which displaced long-term working-class and multiracial neighborhoods in the name of modern so-called progress. But it's clear that today we live the result of this history: an urban geographic core that is almost entirely white and high-income.

Don't let the cynics convince you it has to remain this way because it doesn't. The triple-hope cocktail of an incoming centrist mayor, renewed investments

OPPOSITE

Illustration by Laura Tarrish. *Room in Brooklyn* by Edward Hopper, 1932. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The Hayden Collection—Charles Henry Hayden Fund. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

in public transportation (the Fairmount Line through Dorchester; late-night MBTA service), and a school system focused on improving student achievement all signal a city poised to reinvent itself. Add to this mix a restructured Boston Redevelopment Authority potentially focused on increasing the number of moderate- and low-income housing units, and we could really be on to something. So while housing activists, the city's housing chief, and the BRA hammer out a more just housing plan for the future, let's rethink how to address some of the social needs of residents right now.

Of the 17,000 public high school students enrolled in Boston, more than 80 percent are students of color. This young, energetic crowd is the most diverse segment of Boston's population yet too frequently finds itself cloistered behind informal neighborhood lines and school walls. We need civic leaders, planners, and business allies willing to link multiple institutions and resident networks to create bold, cross-city experiences for young people and families who live in the city right now.

Boston's official tourist maps usually stop at the

borders of downtown. A newly drawn cultural map that allows residents and visitors alike to experience Boston's full character would be a revelation. What if the high school graduation requirement for every teenager included attending opening night at Symphony Hall, catching a Red Sox game, sketching at the Museum of Fine Arts, collecting shells from the Harbor Islands, and tracing the slope of Beacon Hill at the Museum of African American History? Imagine the social impact of this experience for young Bostonians—and all the travelers and suburbanites they would encounter along the way.

And despite what we sometimes think, with longing glances at New York or Chicago, Boston is a city rich in cultural institutions and resources. In addition to the well-known organizations in the Back Bay, Fenway, and South End, there are more than 200 cultural organizations in Roxbury, Dorchester, East Boston, and Hyde Park, according to a report by The Boston Foundation.

The real challenge is how to repair a social fabric shredded by 50 years of racialized turf battles over housing, schools, beaches, and everything in between.

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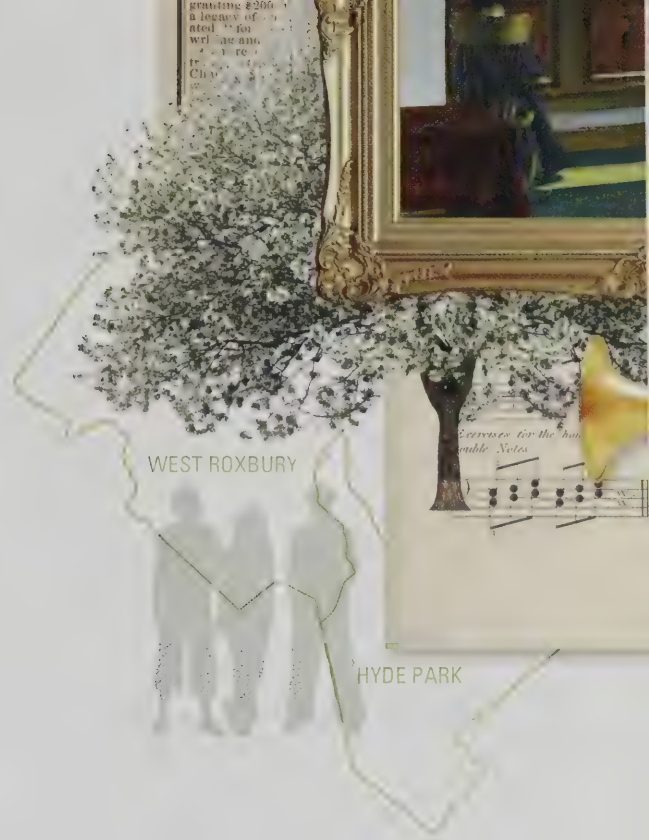
Designed by: Marcus Gleysteen, Robyn Gentile

MGA Marcus Gleysteen, Architects, Boston, MA

These nationally televised fights have damaged the city's collective sense of space for more than two generations. Boston's new mayor, school leaders, city planners, transportation strategists, funders, and each of us have a civic mandate to override the city's many divisions and build a place worthy of its proud and hardworking populace.

I wish I could say that my summer team's surprise encounter with the Charles River was an isolated event, but it wasn't. Again and again as we crisscrossed the city, someone would shout, "I've never been here before!" Walks to the fountained courtyard of the Boston Public Library, the apple-orchard flanked Dillaway-Thomas House in Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain's towering breweries all yielded a new flurry of social media posts. Although the students represented many parts of Boston—including South Boston, Charlestown, Mattapan, Dorchester, Brighton, and the South End—most of them had not visited large chunks of the city or even one another's neighborhoods.

In a city approaching its 400th birthday, this kind of "classic" Boston anecdote needs an official expiration date. ■



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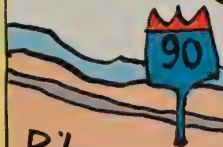
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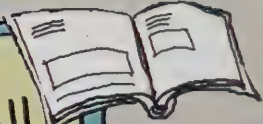
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Questioning

Don't Fix What Isn't Broken

by Rebecca G. Barnes FAIA

Mayors personify a cost-benefit balance

calculation through their actions, decisions, and policies, creating a kind of urban economic ecology. The administration of Thomas Menino wielded the Boston Redevelopment Authority as a principal tool for distributing the benefits of economic development, as have Boston's mayors since the BRA's creation in 1957. Neighborhoods, institutions, and downtown have unquestionably shared the benefits of the city's deployment and stewardship of economic and land-use resources.

One wonders why the BRA is criticized so constantly. In fact, it should be: Its exercise of municipal power deserves watchful oversight. Our democracy works only when we engage each other in dialogue about our goals, our path to realizing those goals, the tools we use on the path, and how well the results embody our values—including equity and wise use of resources. Whether the BRA is the best tool or even a good tool has been scrutinized from its inception without substantial alteration of its charter or practices.

Evidence of this successful balancing act is everywhere in the city. Look at the erasure of the Combat Zone and its replacement with a wide range of housing types and affordability, from Emerson College to Downtown Crossing; the health of the Back Bay, Chinatown, North and West Ends; and the city's crown jewels: its Emerald Necklace, Rose Kennedy Greenway, and Harbor Islands. Consider the focused planned development around new MBTA Silver and Indigo Line stations and continued development of Orange Line station areas. Note the consistent and continued efforts to successfully turn around Dudley Square and improve the vitality of neighborhood business districts as varied as Mattapan, Washington Street, Dorchester Avenue, and Allston.

That the Boston of 2014 is a kinder, safer, and more broadly attractive and accessible city than it ever has been almost goes without saying, but it

shouldn't, because this is the proof of the pudding. The BRA brings together urban-planning and economic-development expertise and engages Boston's civic, business, and community leaders in its effort to shape the city physically, economically, socially, and culturally. Yes, there is politics throughout it all, and sometimes it stinks, but it also has been effectively focused on a vision. For Mayor Menino, it was a vision of all Bostonians sharing in the opportunities and benefits accruing from Boston's renaissance—of neighborhood investment fueled by downtown, Back Bay, Innovation District, and Big Dig investments.

One BRA elder I worked with used to assert that zoning is merely a guideline, believing more in the mitigations or deals that Boston uses to adjust development proposals and address the fine points of neighborhood and economic contexts. For Boston's new leadership, the vision may be articulated by a citywide strategic plan, as some have suggested; it may be articulated in detailed zoning and design review criteria worked out through a public consensus process, as some other cities do.

Still, zoning is but one of the many tools at hand. Good, professional urban planning enhances the city's ability to develop a shared vision and use its resources to achieve it. This requires a sense of mission and service in pursuit of excellence, as it has been within the BRA.

Some might counsel not to try to fix what works pretty well; just update it. Others say that the functions must be separated, isolating planning from development's dominant influence. The trick is to not throw the baby out with the bathwater. Don't imagine that separating development from planning will result inevitably in a better use of resources, fairer outcomes, or a more beautiful and functional city. Those are results gained only from the exercise of political will and a deep understanding of the complex motivations and capacities essential to realizing a shared vision of the next Boston. ■

Rebecca G. Barnes FAIA is university architect and assistant vice provost for Campus Planning at the University of Washington in Seattle. From 2001–2005 she was chief planner at the BRA.

the Authority

What's Wrong with 'As of Right'?

by James G. Kostaras

Just after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, I was invited to MIT to describe the Boston Redevelopment Authority to a large delegation of Russian urban planners led by Dr. Leonid Puterman, director of what was then Leningrad's powerful planning authority. Members of the Russian delegation marveled at the influence and the powers of the BRA—taking private property by eminent domain; buying, selling, and owning real estate; and dictating how private property could be used—all without having to be accountable to anyone except the mayor. They concluded that they could learn a lot from the BRA because it functioned like a former Soviet-era government agency (paraphrasing their words). The irony wasn't lost on me when one of the Russian apparatchiks admiringly referred to the BRA director as the “development czar.”

The BRA is a formidable organization with broad powers to buy and sell property and grant tax concessions to encourage development. Through eminent domain, the BRA has amassed a large real estate portfolio, including the Charlestown Navy Yard, Rows Wharf, and Quincy Market. No city in the United States has an organization like it. More than functioning as the city's planning regulator, the BRA is, in fact, a public-sector not-for-profit developer and real estate asset manager, self-financed by the proceeds from rent, ground leases, and equity from its real estate portfolio (not city taxpayers).

The BRA is also the city's planning and zoning agency, and combines these powers for even greater control over development by “negotiating” zoning. In theory (and in practice in many major cities), zoning dictates what you can build as of right, or under specific conditions, and serves as a tool to implement a comprehensive plan that reflects a public consensus about the city's future. By contrast, today in Boston, the BRA uses zoning as a starting

point for a long, protracted negotiation. Skeptical citizens correctly demand transparency, reject insider deal making, and challenge institutions with concentrated discretionary powers to negotiate the rules—such as zoning. This is an outdated model of governance that doesn't inspire trust or resonate with the aspirations of 21st-century citizens.

It would be a mistake to eliminate the BRA, but it needs a new mission. It has all the right tools for the 21st century: a talented professional staff, financial resources, and a bundle of statutory powers that can be harnessed for the public interest. The BRA is ripe for reform, but unwinding it will require a careful transformation that does not undermine Boston's steadily improving economy.

So here's a road map for a new administration: Have the BRA create a new citywide strategic plan that involves people from every community in the long-term future of the city. Shift the BRA's planning functions into a new, separate city planning department, adequately funded through the city's operating budget, to regulate development and draft as-of-right zoning that reflects the intent of the strategic plan. And reenergize the BRA as a public not-for-profit developer to create jobs, housing affordable to all Bostonians, and entrepreneurial opportunities for economic growth.

A mission-driven BRA would have a big toolbox to jump-start new development in those remaining areas of the city with untapped potential for economic development, such as Dudley Square in Roxbury, Sullivan Square in Charlestown, and the neighborhoods along Dorchester's Fairmount Line. This is how the BRA transformed Boston from a city in economic decline in the 1960s to one of the most vibrant 21st-century cities in the nation—an inspiration for any ex-Soviet apparatchik. ■

James G. Kostaras is a senior consultant at the Institute for International Urban Development. From 1985–2003 he was a senior architect and assistant director for Economic Development at the BRA.





Life is short; commuting is too long

by Stephanie Pollack

Boston won't be a world-class city until it has a world-class transportation system to serve its residents, workers, and visitors. Creating such a 21st-century system will require far more than a few extra hours of late-night service on the T. Everyone—youth and seniors, young professionals and families—needs more and better options for getting around.

Too often, transportation policy discussions in Boston turn into Car Wars: disputes between automobile owners and “others” such as pedestrians and bicyclists. The truth is, most people use different types of transportation at different times and for different purposes. The 60 percent of Boston households that have access to at least one car—as well as the 40 percent without a car—will all benefit from better walking, biking, and transit options. Boston needs to set transportation policies and priorities that help connect the city and its neighborhoods and residents, not ones that pit people against one another.

Everyone loves to complain about the traffic in Boston, but the congestion is largely a sign of economic prosperity. We're all better off with too much traffic than too little—just ask the folks in Detroit. The city's real congestion problem is on the MBTA, which studies by the Urban Land Institute and others have shown lacks the capacity to meet projected ridership growth. The future of Boston depends on securing greater investment in the MBTA, and the new mayor needs to fight hard for better T services. But public transportation is too important to Boston to rely entirely on the T. Like Washington, DC, and Los Angeles, the city should consider operating its own

OPPOSITE
Illustration by
Kyle Nelson

public transportation services—such as local bus or commuter shuttles—to supplement MBTA service.

Some of the needed changes will be difficult and unpopular. Boston has created a nationally recognized guide to building “complete streets” that accommodate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and people in wheelchairs, as well as drivers, but it has yet to do the systematic work to add bike lanes, make sidewalks wider, and otherwise retrofit the streets to make them truly complete. The city has created 120 miles of dedicated bike lanes in the last decade, but it lacks a network that is comfortable for the casual cyclist, usually not clad head to toe in spandex, who is primarily concerned about safety. The city’s proposed Bicycle Network Plan would triple the number of bicycle-lane miles and spend \$30 million in the next five years—a fairly heavy lift. And, in some cases, making room for cyclists and pedestrians will require redistributing urban space as well as reallocating travel lanes and parking spaces.

Indeed, tackling Boston’s antiquated parking policies may be one of the toughest challenges. Somerville

Mayor Joe Curtatone knows it well: He has bravely implemented comprehensive on-street parking reforms in the face of vocal opposition. In Boston, on-street parking is essentially free: Residents get parking permit stickers for free; meters cost next to nothing even in areas where demand for parking greatly exceeds supply. The solution is not to create more parking but to charge more for the limited supply that exists. Cambridge and Somerville residents pay \$25 to \$30 annually for on-street-parking permits, like residents of almost every major US city—except Boston.

Another challenge, but one that aligns perfectly with Mayor Martin Walsh’s commitment to increasing social equity, is improving transportation choices for Boston’s people of color and low-income communities. Research by the Dukakis Center at Northeastern University has found substantial time penalties for “commuting while black”—black bus riders in greater Boston, for example, spend 80 minutes more per week on their work commute than white bus riders. Both Hubway shared bicycles and Zipcar shared automobiles are less likely to be found in the city’s low-income



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and minority neighborhoods, despite the fact that car ownership rates are lower, and residents in those communities would benefit greatly from better access to these services.

The mayor of Boston is, in reality, a chief executive of two cities: One is the permanent city with more than 600,000 residents; the other is a workday city that swells by 40 percent, to 840,000 people. If the transportation system does not meet the needs of these commuters, their employers will not continue to locate in Boston, and developers will not continue to build and renovate to accommodate those companies. The highway network and parking capacity of the city simply cannot accommodate this daily influx unless a substantial number of these workers leaves their cars at home and carpool, use transit, or walk or bike to their jobs. Otherwise, Boston could choke on its own growth.

Boston has not undertaken a comprehensive, citywide transportation plan in more than a decade, and the last truly visionary regional planning effort was the Boston Transportation Planning Review more than 40

years ago. Mayor Walsh should embrace and accelerate plans that were already underway to launch a citywide transportation visioning and planning effort, starting the process early in his first year. In addition, consistent with his pledge to work with other mayors and think regionally, he should launch a parallel regional effort with mayors from neighboring cities and suburbs. The only way to overcome persistent complaints that Boston gets more than its fair share of transportation investment—a hangover of the Big Dig era—will be to work regionally to secure resources that can benefit all Greater Boston communities.

Walsh can simultaneously be a “mayor of the neighborhoods” and the “jobs mayor” by becoming Boston’s “transportation mayor.” Better transportation connects workers to jobs, students to schools, seniors to services, and visitors to restaurants and attractions. Transportation planning and investment is one of the best ways to fulfill campaign promises to continue downtown’s economic growth while spreading jobs, development, and a better quality of life to all of the city’s neighborhoods. ■



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Untitled Monument (2001).
Rachel Whiteread's resin cast of
the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square,
London, inverted and placed on the
plinth. Photo: Walter Rawlings

The Spaces in Between

THINK BEYOND BUILDINGS TO FORGE A NEW CIVIC IDENTITY

by Jill Medvedow

Achieving the delicate balance of power between the private and public realms in any city is equal parts aspirational and daunting. Too often our urban landscape is inspired by civic ambition yet shaped by commercial interests. Forget the number of cranes dotting Boston's skyline these days; it's time to reexamine our definitions of growth and prosperity, look at new measures of success, and create value that extends beyond the properties themselves. This is a moment when we can bring bolder visions—and visionaries—to the built and open spaces that connect and contribute to public life.

Humanity of scale, excellence of design, and the activation of public and open spaces are all demonstrated strategies to build and sustain social capital in neighborhoods. Together, they create a distinctiveness of place that cities like Boston can use to shape a civic identity.

When Boston's Innovation District was first imagined, for example, it was envisioned as an area unique in its combination of natural waterfront resources and space for creative endeavors. It would be distinct from the Financial District or Kendall Square and would symbolize a new, global Boston. Aspirations soared for this diverse new neighborhood, which would add to the city's beauty and architecture, embodying contemporary principles of urbanism, sustainability, and creativity.

As one of the area's first permanent buildings, the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) became a 21st-century architectural triumph for Boston. Its design declares that it could not be anywhere else but on the waterfront. The architecture

Today we have a rare opportunity to recalibrate Boston's buildings, parks, and cultural spaces, adding "Arts" to "Eds and Meds" as the anchor institutions of our city.

deliberately blurs inside and outside, with wood defining both the indoor theater and outdoor seating; its views move visitors through the building with carefully placed reveals of water and cityscape. Its grandstand offers free public gathering places that provide access to the harbor. Although the art is predominantly inside, the entire museum is an invitation to the waterfront.

Its success in attracting thousands to the Innovation District is a testament to the civic and architectural vision of the museum's leaders and its architects, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, and a celebration of public access, strong design, and artistic excellence.

Boston must now leverage new opportunities to create cultural value through new buildings, spaces, and partnerships. New York's High Line, also designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, is wildly successful as urban architecture and as a magnet for millions. Like the ICA, it had a set of visionary supporters who marshaled the political, local, and financial resources necessary to create an overnight landmark and cultural destination. Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway could have been such a distinctive landmark, but it suffers in comparison. Crippled for years by orphan status and the lack of a bold

mandate, it was approached as a problem rather than an opportunity. With great determination, the Greenway is making headway on programs and plantings; think what that perseverance might have generated in partnership with intrepid architectural and political leadership.

The tendency to rely on permanent public art as a design solution to liven up commercial spaces is also often less than visionary. Even in the absence of a formal "one percent for art" set-aside program, public art is frequently mandated as mitigation for permitting large commercial developments. Harvard professor Jerold Kayden has documented the danger in this strategy, showing that privately owned public spaces such as building plazas and parks tend to be underutilized and marginal. The public art placed in these spaces tends to underperform because permanent interventions in private spaces generally depend on bureaucratic consensus—a lowest common denominator often antithetical to big vision and bold art. Anish Kapoor's *Cloud Gate* in Chicago's Millennium Park is an exception, closer to the High Line and the ICA in the political and artistic vision it required.

Today we have a rare opportunity to recalibrate our buildings, parks, and cultural spaces, adding "Arts" to



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“Eds and Meds” as the anchor institutions of our city. Let’s cast a critical eye on where and how the public and private realms meet. We can rethink the spaces between buildings to expand the open spaces on the waterfront, preserving human scale and public access on the water’s edge. It’s time to retire the shortsighted argument that waterfront space is too expensive for anything but luxury condos and high-priced office buildings. From New York City to Seattle to Shanghai, creating vibrant waterfronts has become a successful strategy for building a healthy economy.

With these models in mind, I offer the following recommendations:

- Connect conversations about open space and the environment with those about cultural planning and economic development. The solution to rising tides, for example, can be achieved with the combined expertise of design and technology, and creating equitable, sustainable, and culturally rich communities requires the arts.
- Launch a new approach to “Privately Owned Public Spaces.” New York’s Lower Manhattan Cultural

Council exists for just this purpose. It works with artists; community organizations; and civic, corporate, and cultural leaders to foster artistic growth and long-term sustainability. What is Boston’s version?

- Create a critical mass and distinctive mix of innovators and institutions in the Innovation District. Small parks, one modest-sized museum, and District Hall are simply not enough to balance the private buildings that wall off the waterfront from the public.
- Invest in bold vision and visionaries. The venerable spaces and buildings that capture the civic spirit of Boston value public good over private wealth: the Boston Public Library and Trinity Church bookending Copley Square; Boston Common and the Public Garden; the Emerald Necklace and Esplanade. Each was the work of strong individuals—political, philanthropic, cultural, civic, religious—who believed in the importance of a common good. It is in thinking beyond bricks and mortar that Boston will create real value and lasting prosperity. ■



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DESIGN OBSERVED

Drawing on the suggestions of readers, we've collected a sampling of projects and ideas that exemplify smart design principles. Located in our own backyards, these examples are transformative and transcendent—beyond the beauty of the building or the intelligence of the innovation.

Along with its educational programming for new Bostonians, the **East Boston Public Library** literally integrates immigrants into the fabric of the city with sidewalk pavers that nod to diverse, far-flung homelands.

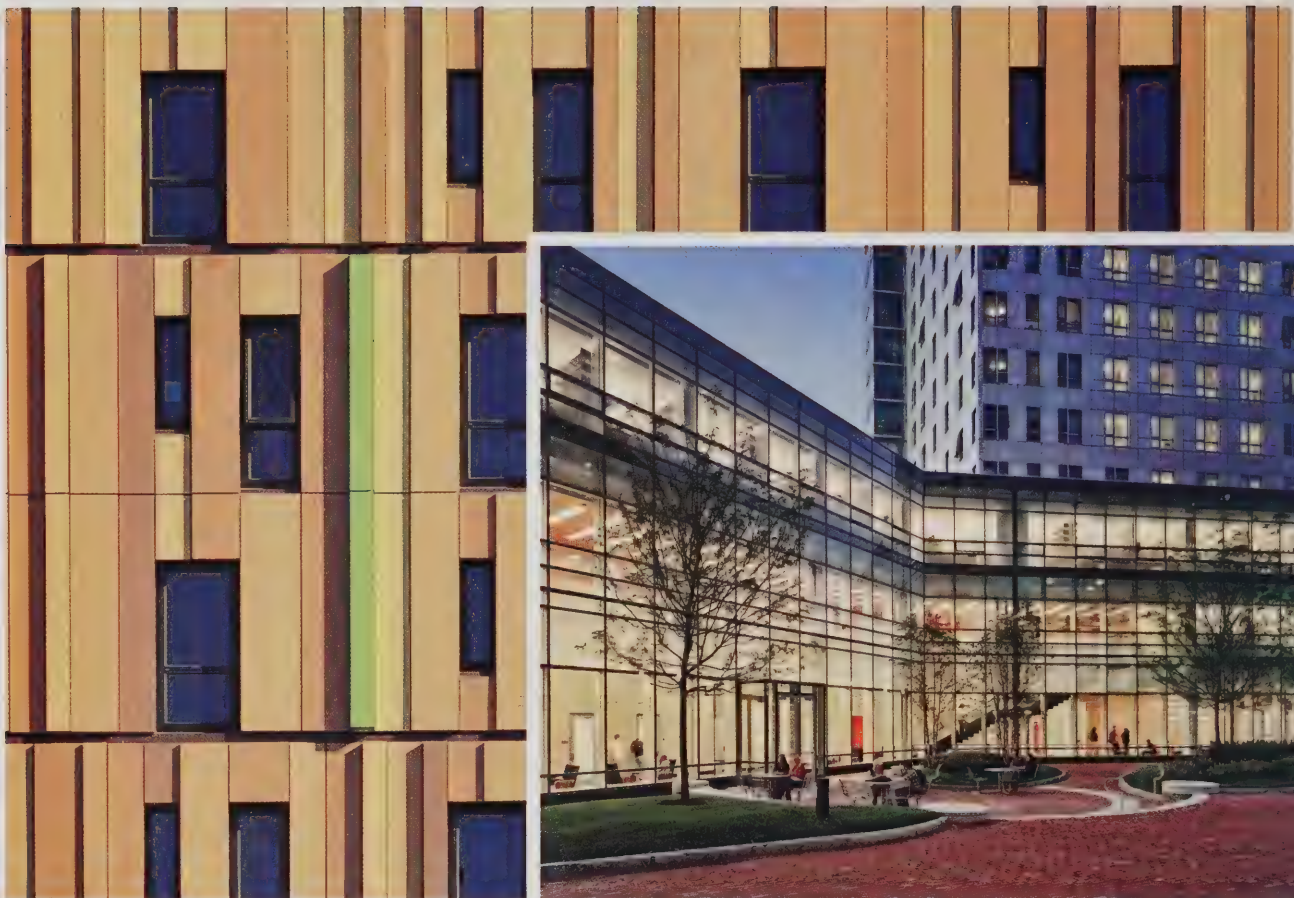
Pedestrian Bridge at Wonderland Station creates a gateway connecting a multimodal public transit station to one of the region's most democratic stretches of public beach. The bridge celebrates the public by providing a safe crossing over automobile traffic to this intensively used amenity.

RIGHT William Rawn Associates, Architects; courtesy of Boston Public Library.
BELOW Architect: Rosales + Partners; courtesy of Rosales + Partners.



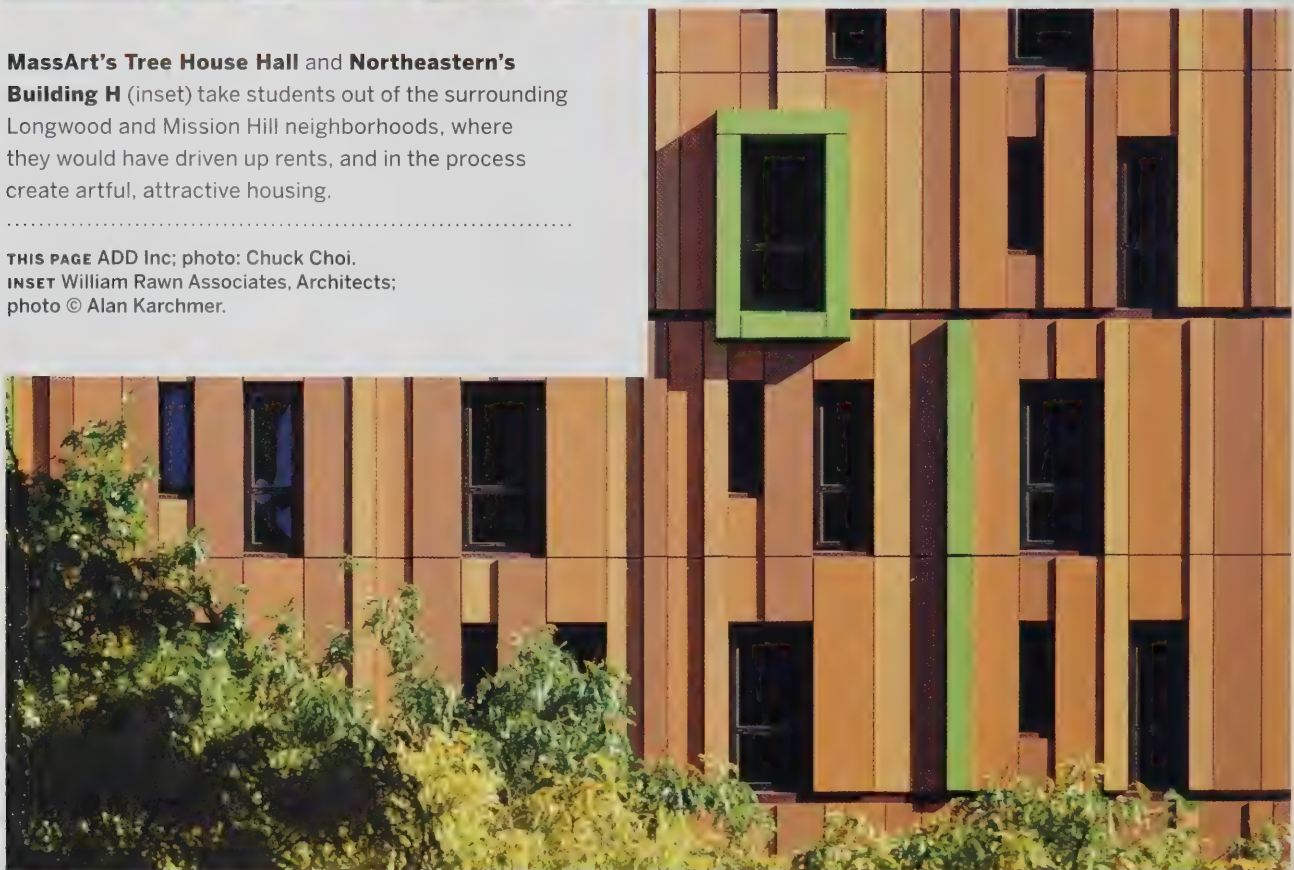
CIVIC ADVANCEMENT





MassArt's Tree House Hall and **Northeastern's Building H** (inset) take students out of the surrounding Longwood and Mission Hill neighborhoods, where they would have driven up rents, and in the process create artful, attractive housing.

.....
THIS PAGE ADD Inc; photo: Chuck Choi.
INSET William Rawn Associates, Architects;
 photo © Alan Karchmer.





Community organizations helped the **Bartlett Yards Bus Depot** in Roxbury's Dudley Square blossom, albeit temporarily, into a mini-oasis of cutting-edge murals and a focal point for urban artists.

Likewise, the **Serpentine Fence** separates tennis courts from a sitting area of a Jamaica Plain park, using ordinary material to create a translucent sculpture with lighting that glows at night.

.....
ABOVE Photo: Jay Hagenbuch.
RIGHT Sculpture by Beth Galston;
 photo: Bartek Konieczny.





The park at **241 Atlantic** is the counter space to the expansive Greenway: lush and intimate. Its subtle elevated ground plane delicately tiptoes around a web of underground utilities and provides a shaded spot to view the Boston Harbor and New England Aquarium.

In Allston, the **Everett Street Greening** project reclaimed a swath of parking-lot asphalt and introduced trees, a rain garden of native plants, and permeable pavestones, preventing stormwater runoff from polluting the nearby Charles River.

ABOVE Architect: NBBJ; landscape architect: Reed Hilderbrand; photo © Charles Mayer.
LEFT Designed by Charles River Watershed Association; photo: CRWA.



Widely regarded as one of Boston's best Art Deco buildings, the **United Shoe Machinery Building** faced demolition in 1981 but is a successful commercial office building today.

Vacant since 1971, the **Roslindale Substation** is a creative adaptive use of a challenging industrial building. The project will restore the exterior, use the interior commercially, and construct adjacent housing.

.....
THIS PAGE Parker, Thomas and Rice with Henry Bailey Alden; photo courtesy the Art Deco Society of Boston.

INSET PCA (Prellwitz Chilinski Associates); rendering by PCA (Prellwitz Chilinski Associates).





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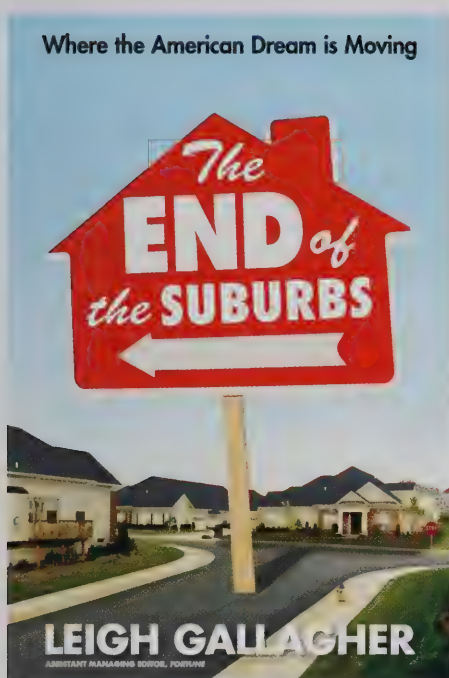
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Books



The End of the Suburbs:
Where the American Dream is Moving
 Leigh Gallagher
 Portfolio/Penguin, 2013
 Reviewed by Ann Sussman AIA

Marshaling an impressive array of facts to show how the American Dream is changing, Leigh Gallagher offers a breezy refresher course in everything you wanted to know about the suburbs but never thought to ask. The certainties Americans had 40 years ago about the ideal life containing “a house, a lawn, a picket fence, two or more children, and a car” are no more. The country has evolved, the birthrate is decreasing, and multigenerational living is becoming more common. Add to this the fact that wealth and new development are moving to cities and that many parts of the country have yet to recover from the recent housing and financial crises, and a recipe for a paradigm shift is set.

On the other hand, Gallagher, a managing editor at *Fortune* magazine, is quick to concede two things: Some people still really like the suburbs, and not all of suburbia is facing certain demise. In fact, as she clarifies early on in the book, the suburbs are not really going away. Rather, the suburbs—as we thought of them in their mid-20th-century

heyday—have ended, but older street-car suburbs—those that are closer to cities, with walkable downtowns—are surging in popularity. There is a new residential development world order that has shifted “away from distance and toward proximity,” she writes. The more urban the ‘burb, the better. As one Washington, DC, transit official puts it, “We’re moving from location, location, location in terms of the most important factor to access, access, access.” The change is not a mere trend but a transformation.

In this inversion, people value their time more and commuting less. Clear losers in the shift are the younger, distant suburbs, many of which, Gallagher says, were “poorly designed to begin with”—spreading people too thinly and too far from their jobs. These towns’ financial health was always questionable because their far-flung layouts required more infrastructure than they could afford with a sparse tax base.

Not only do these municipalities struggle to meet budgets but increasingly their residents do, too. Gallagher cites a Brookings Institution study that found a record 15.3 million residents in metropolitan suburban areas living below the poverty line as of 2010; these figures were up 11 percent from 2009, and 53 percent from 2000. The trend portends poorly for the middle class, Gallagher maintains. And it illustrates her key point: that the suburbs can no longer be counted on to promote the interests of the very group they were originally designed to serve.

Gallagher is at her best when describing how unusual—in fact, downright artificial—the American postwar suburbs were in the first place. She outlines how these developments were not a product of the free market at all but of massive government subsidies and support. Without the government-backed home loans, the home mortgage interest deductions, the subsidized national highway construction projects, and the creation of single-use residential zoning (in a landmark 1926 Supreme Court case), as well as consistent maintenance of gas prices at lower levels than other countries, our suburbs could never have sprung up to become today’s sprawling landscapes.

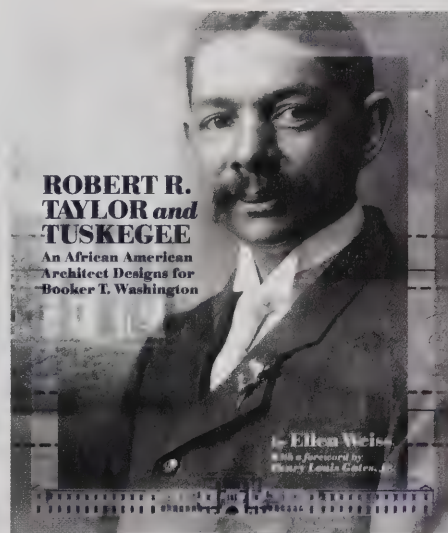
“The government in the past created one

American dream at the expense of almost all others,” Gallagher concludes. “But there is no single American Dream anymore; there are multiple American Dreams, and multiple American Dreamers.”

What Gallagher does not say is that in the new paradigm, however it plays out, we can expect far less federal support. In our partisan age, there is little talk of retrofitting the distant suburbs to stem their decline, such as funding mass-transit improvements to increase access.

Perhaps what has ended is not only our idea of the suburban idyll but also our view of what government is for and whose interests it should champion.

Ann Sussman AIA is an architect and the ArtScape coordinator at Bradford Mill, a studio art and business center in Concord, Massachusetts.



Robert R. Taylor and Tuskegee:
An African American Architect Designs for Booker T. Washington
 Ellen Weiss
 NewSouth Books, 2013
 Reviewed by Ted Landsmark ASSOC. AIA

There are fewer than 2,000 African-Americans among the 100,000 registered architects in the United States. These numbers have risen only incrementally over the past decade, even as enrollments

of diverse students in design programs have increased. Probably the best-known architect of color in the United States today is an Englishman, David Adjaye, designer of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (though his co-designer, Philip Freelon, is also gaining deserved recognition). Apart from midcentury California architect Paul R. Williams, monographs on black American architects are rare, and African-American architects remain essentially invisible.

Ellen Weiss' *Robert R. Taylor and Tuskegee* underlines the challenge faced by a distinguished black architect at the dawn of the American architecture profession. Thomas Jefferson and others declared themselves to be architects early in America's history, but the profession we know today largely came into being after the Civil War, as apprenticeships and the Grand Tour yielded to university-based professional programs.

Robert R. Taylor (1868–1942) was the North Carolinian son of two mixed-race parents: his mother, Emily, was a mulatto foundling raised by a black family; his father, Henry, was a former slave, merchant, carpenter, and builder. Carpentry was a common occupation for free blacks in North Carolina; in the late 1850s, a freeman, Thomas Day, owned the largest cabinet-making business in North Carolina, which used both slaves and white apprentices to produce Day's distinctive furniture.

Taylor attended a Massachusetts-funded missionary "normal school" in Wilmington, North Carolina, where he met faculty who encouraged him to apply to the architecture program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the first in the nation. Taylor performed well and became, in 1892, the first acknowledged African-American graduate of that program. During his final year at MIT, Taylor was approached by Tuskegee University founder and president, Booker T. Washington, who invited the young architect to join the faculty. The mission: tying together academics and industrial education with the goal of "improving the race" by linking intellect and pragmatic

hard work. Taylor declined other offers and became Tuskegee's chief architect and a leading teacher from 1902 into the mid-1930s.

Taylor's work shaped the Tuskegee campus, as he designed the administration building, library, science buildings, dining facility, dormitories, trades buildings, and lecture halls. He directed the largest department; designed, executed, and maintained the buildings and infrastructure; and managed academic affairs behind the scenes as director of industries. While the Ku Klux Klan ranged through Alabama intimidating and lynching "uppity" blacks, Taylor served as a mentor and role model for aspiring black professionals, standing, at one point, on his veranda to face down a Klan parade past the campus. Few American architects have had as much influence in forming a campus community as Taylor did at Tuskegee.

Weiss, a retired professor of architecture at Tulane University in New Orleans, places Taylor's work in the broader context of architectural trends of the period and provides a thorough inventory of his campus work. His designs were hardly radical, following the widely accepted practice of producing dark brick neoclassical buildings that gave Tuskegee a traditional "old campus" look and feel. In light of Tuskegee's largely working-class African-American student body, such a campus setting would have been seen as formal and inspirational, appropriate for the gravity with which the University approached higher education. Even today, as budget cuts have led to much-deferred maintenance, the campus imparts a solemnity that underlines the importance Booker T. Washington and Robert Taylor placed on higher education as a pathway to economic success. This well-researched and extensively illustrated work is must reading for those seeking insights into the emergence of African-American professionals at the beginning of the 20th century.

Ted Landsmark ASSOC. AIA is president of the Boston Architectural College and past president of the National Architectural Accrediting Board.



**Made for Walking:
Density and Neighborhood Form**

Julie Campoli

Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2012

Reviewed by Justin Crane AIA

Increasing the density of American neighborhoods can be a hard sell. Yet architecture and planning literature that tackles the issue remains strangely rare. In her previous book titled *Visualizing Density*, Julie Campoli worked with aerial photographer Alex MacLean to show that dense neighborhoods are not all bad or, for that matter, all alike. *Made for Walking* takes the next step, not only describing density as highly variable but also as the most responsible environmental choice.

The book is organized around 12 case studies of dense neighborhoods, covering a wide geographic and typological range, from well-known examples such as Greenpoint, Brooklyn, to more obscure places like Short North in Columbus, Ohio. The case studies are well documented through comparative planning diagrams and—in a departure from her previous partnership with MacLean—pedestrian-level elevations attempting to simulate the experience of walking along a street in each neighborhood. The reading and graphics are straightforward. Although many professionals might find the book's planning principles reductionist, the reality is that the case for density faces a fierce political headwind. The ability to state the case for density as simply and clearly as Campoli does is a necessary first step toward remaking our metro areas.

Yet Campoli herself presents us with statistics suggesting that we may no longer need to make the intellectual argument.

Recent surveys show a distinct preference for lots comprising fewer than 7,000 square feet; retiring baby boomers are looking to trade their large suburban homes for smaller dwellings; and three-quarters of Millennials are living (or plan to live) in urban cores. Economics and demographics imply an inevitable move toward increasing density in existing neighborhoods.

All of which suggests that the most important current question for dense urban neighborhoods is not why but how—a question not answered by Campoli's book. As many of the case studies in the book demonstrate, boosting neighborhood population is easier when brownfields are available for development. Increasing density in existing neighborhoods with an established identity and architectural grain is much more difficult. Integrating density using a contemporary architectural language is harder still. Though Campoli describes this happening in Toronto's

Little Portugal or Miami's Flamingo Park, she doesn't make the case for it with her images, as the photos mostly capture the quaintness of the historic buildings in these communities. (The case study that shows an integration of old and new buildings on the same blocks is Kitsilano in Vancouver, British Columbia, where new buildings aren't large enough to meet demand and the neighborhood has trouble creating housing for a range of incomes.)

Campoli's book would be more useful had it documented contemporary developments that set inspiring examples of either community process or architectural design. Stories of how projects successfully navigated the typically contentious community process to make neighborhoods denser would have been welcome. Furthermore, the contemporary buildings shown in *Made for Walking* tend to be uninspired. University Park in Cambridge is one of the better-looking examples of new

construction featured in the book (compare it to, say, Eisenhower East in Alexandria, Virginia); however, it receives little love from the local community. Admittedly, this is partly the result of the large lot sizes that arise from repurposing old industrial districts; however, several projects overseas, such as Borneo Sporenburg in Amsterdam, have done an exciting job of breaking down the scale of large contemporary developments. Describing the genesis of several such examples could go a long way toward making our increasingly (and, apparently, inevitably) dense neighborhoods both environmentally responsible and well loved. Campoli's writing and awareness of the subject matter is clear; the next step is showing that we can build architecture worthy of our renewed love affair with urbanity.

Justin Crane AIA is an associate at Cambridge Seven Associates.



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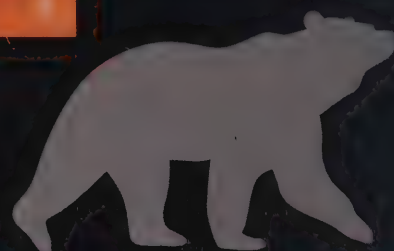
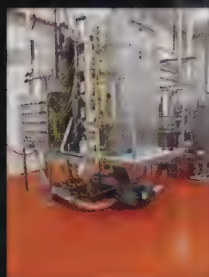
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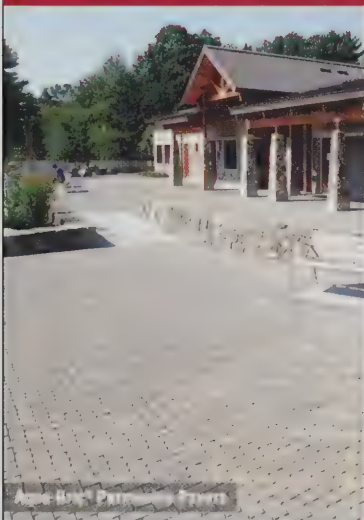
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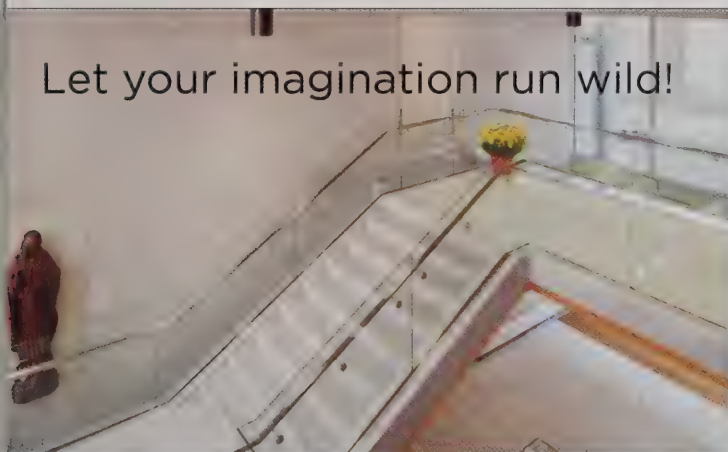
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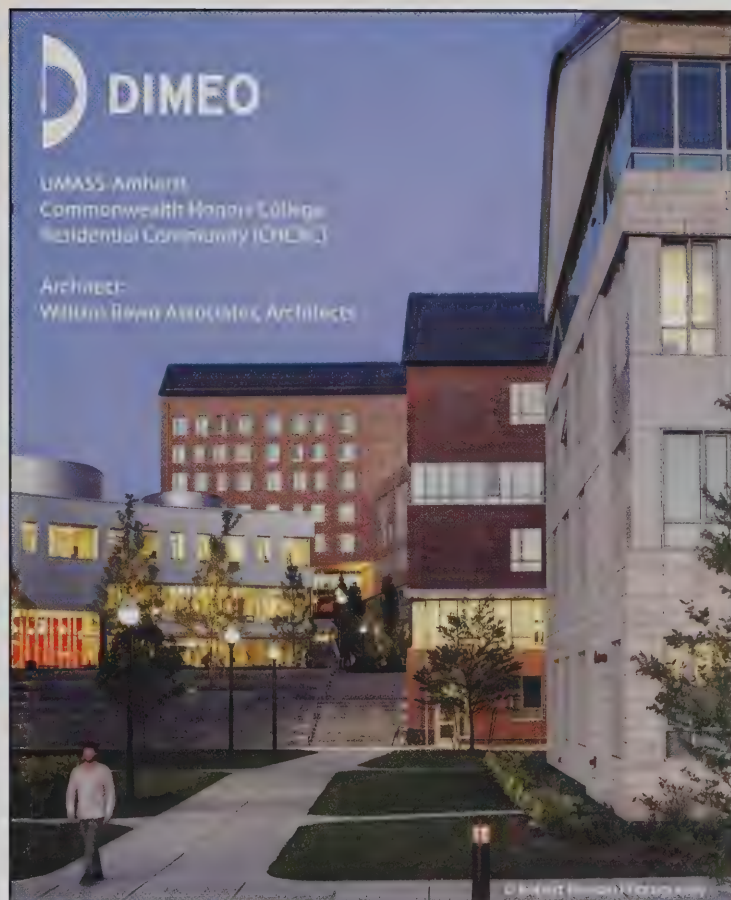


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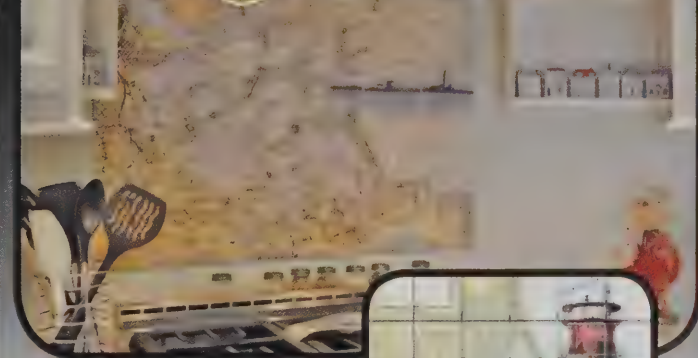
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The View From Here

Deborah Weisgall

writes about the arts and literature for national publications. Her latest book is *The World Before Her*, a novel about George Eliot.

ABOVE

Colorized image based on photo by Rebecca Kennison, 1993.

By the time you read this, the ice will be melting on Walden Pond, which is about 4 miles from my house in Lincoln. When it's warm enough, I swim in Walden; sometimes I start before it's warm enough. In the deep middle of the pond, I imagine Thoreau in a canoe with his friends Bronson Alcott and Waldo Emerson, or his students the Alcott girls. Louisa May first made me love this part of the world.

Those Transcendentalists thought nothing of walking the 15 miles to Boston and back. This gentle landscape, its glacial terrain, its drumlins and ponds, and its slow river had a hold on them, as it does on me. For much of her adult life, however, Louisa May Alcott lived not out here but in Boston. Although she wrote *Little Women* while living at home, its success enabled her to move out.

Sometimes I wish I lived in Boston, too, or at least Cambridge. I would like to walk to a meeting or to see friends—but I lack Emersonian stamina. For that matter, I'd like to be able to buy a cappuccino or a pair of pliers without having to drive several miles. Often there are times when I would trade peace for raw bustle, beauty for the abrasions of the city.

Lincoln in many ways is a good compromise: as long as it's not rush hour, it's 20 minutes to Cambridge, half an hour to Boston. It feels less like a suburb than a country town, and it has made a commitment to maintain that rural character. More than half of the land is in conservation, accessible by a large network of trails.

Into the 20th century, Lincoln was a summer retreat for wealthy Bostonians; in 1937, one of them, Helen Storrow, gave Walter Gropius 4 acres for a house. As a result, the town's architecture is divided between farmhouses and Bauhauses. Historic New England, the architectural preservation society, owns two properties here: Codman House, an 18th-century manor decorated

by Ogden Codman, Jr., Edith Wharton's partner in design, and the Gropius House. Despite a recent, and often contested, outbreak of McMansions, open land here still counts more than square footage.

We have an OK supermarket; a lovely gift shop; a bank; a notable art gallery; and a disproportionate share of culture, history, and vegetables from three organic farms. It took many years of agitating before the town permitted the sale of liquor, but finally a terrific restaurant opened in town.

You depend on a car, unless, like some of my friends, you do errands on a bike. There is a train, but it can double the time it takes to commute. When the power goes out, which it does often, it stays out for days. The rumble of generators could be the town anthem.

Lincoln is also mostly white and populated by nuclear families. My daughter reminds me that when she was 6 or so and got tired on our walks, I would leave her to play with the dog beside a brook while I made a longer loop in the woods. "I could have gotten so kidnapped," she laughs. But the woods were benign. When she turned 10, we sent her to school in Boston; we didn't want her to grow up a coddled country mouse.

A red-tail hawk patrols the field below our house and munches its voles in an oak tree. Fishers, woodchucks, coyotes, deer: their tracks crisscross the snow. I live with winter's barrenness and spring's rush of blooms, near the site of this country's literary flowering. But working can get lonely, listening to the birds all day. The city beckons. We think about it.

The other night, I came back from dinner in Cambridge and took the dog out. To the east, the city paled the stars. In the northern sky, aurora borealis flickered: faint, but there. I turned out all the house lights and went back outside to the freezing, shimmering night. ■





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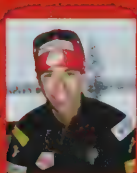
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BOOKS

ABOVE

Book Shelf, by Daniel Eatock, 2010.

LOWER RIGHT

Three Love Problems,
from George Eliot's *Middlemarch*,
by Stephen Doyle.
Photo: Stephen Doyle.

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Hypertext, by Stephen Doyle.
Photo: Stephen Doyle.



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The Disappearing City:

Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacres

Reviewed by Sarah L. Courteau



A large, two-story white house with a wide wooden deck and a large tree in the background. The house has a prominent chimney and a large window on the right side. The deck is made of dark wood and is furnished with a large sofa, a coffee table, and a grill. The tree is a large, leafy green tree that dominates the left side of the image. The sky is blue and clear.

truant
CONSTRUCTION
MANAGERS

GET OUT YOUR HAMMOCKS

The “summer reading” issue is a hardy perennial for popular magazines, from *Oprah* to *The New Yorker* to *The Economist*. No wonder: Few delights compare to lingering with a fine book in the long light of a June evening. And few satisfactions are as great as finding and recommending the perfect match of title to friend. The meditative absorption of sitting alone in a cone of lamplight, lost to time and responsibility; the sense of entering an alternate world, of new ideas flooding in—the pleasures of reading remain unchanged since the days of Gutenberg.

Or do they? The advent of digital media has altered the reading experience in profound ways, and not just with 24-hour free shipping. In a scant decade, we have developed algorithms that predict our preferences with eerie precision, cross-media mash-ups that incorporate video and sound into text, fan fiction that allows readers to write their own alternate endings, and seminars that offer paid access to authors and their expertise. All these innovations tear at the exclusive relationship between reader and page.

A few years ago Penguin Books released an “amplified” edition of Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* for the iPad, whereby readers can click through for audio clips of Kerouac interviews, pages from his journals, correspondence with his editors, and previously unseen family photos. They can view the original scroll Kerouac used to write his manifesto, and even follow the route of Kerouac’s merry band on an interactive map. As of this writing, *The New York Times* best-seller list includes three titles that languished in relative obscurity until they became TV shows or films.

We can lament how these disruptive technologies are destroying our attention spans, to say nothing of the independent bookstore. But one trend, toward so-called visual literature, offers important new opportunities for architecture and other graphic domains. In “Digital doorway,” Anne Whiston Spirn lauds the experience of e-publishing her latest collection of essays and photographs, seeing a renaissance for the richly illustrated book.

The Internet’s infinite, democratic space is posing a challenge to the familiar—and costly—professional journal, whether in medicine or business or architecture. According to the trade magazine *Publishers Weekly*, “the upstart online journal ArchDaily recently surpassed the leading print publications and became the venue of choice for the world’s

top practitioners to display their work.” The proliferation of design blogs, some of them excellent, is upending traditional architecture criticism, giving us more opinions but less consensus.

What’s happening is a kind of deconstruction. Social media sites have made possible the linking and sharing of snippets of text, excerpted and annotated sometimes within hours of the original publication. The unmediated experience, once the only way to read, now takes a special effort. Fittingly, some of the visual artists whose work we feature in this issue use books as a medium, slicing and dicing them into new sculptural forms.

Since this is *ArchitectureBoston*, we review several books on the topic. But our summer reading issue is also very much about space. We examine favorite reading rooms, the surprising resilience and evolving architecture of the public library, how an author builds a structural arc of theme and plot. Russell Maret, in “A note on the type,” limns the relationship between solid and void.

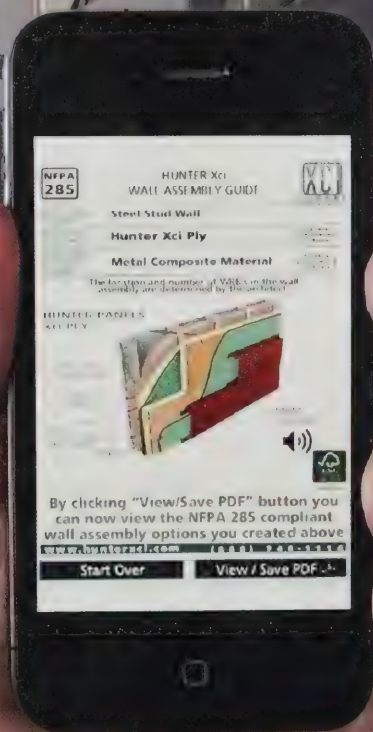
Of course, the most important space is inside our heads. Opening the mind to new ways of thinking matters far more than whether the ideas are delivered by pixel or page. Distractions have always been a temptation; it isn’t fair to blame technology for our own lack of focus. Summer is a time to unplug, slow down, eat raspberries fresh off the vine. Only we can give our thoughts the time and the space they need to ripen. ■

Renée Loth
Editor



PHOTO: Iliet Seager

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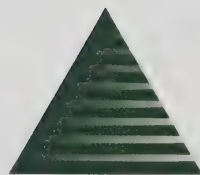
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ON “BLUEPRINT FOR A NEW MAYOR” (SPRING 2014)

“**Blueprint for a New Mayor**” contained sound advice for Mayor Martin Walsh, with thoughtful ideas on transportation, housing, neighborhoods, and how to manage the Boston Redevelopment Authority. I liked in particular Robert Campbell’s last point [“The Doorknob Census”], which was “get people talking about architecture.” I might have put that thought at the head of my list and added “talking in a very public way about how architecture makes real and discernible differences in peoples’ lives.” The proposals in *ArchitectureBoston*, thoughtful as they might be, are still in essence a dialogue among ourselves, while the general population is neither privy to nor engaged in this conversation. Worse still is the nagging suspicion that real community power brokers—owners, politicians, inspectors, planning board members—see design and design professionals as something akin to a minor specialty: nice, but only if you have the budget to bother with it.

It is a sad fact that the majority of people in the Commonwealth have no recognizable connection to architects or architecture. Legislators—who write and pass bills that have profound implications for the built environment and architecture as a profession—know fire marshals, police chiefs, building commissioners, and developers but would be hard pressed to name a single architect or design professional in their district. Without those connections, the public will never accept the notion that design can and does make a difference, and the legislative process will continue to whittle away at the practice of architecture in favor of more engaged professions.

The BSA Space on Congress Street shows promise in bringing interesting, challenging ideas into a more public venue and by hosting forums like mayoral debates; the first because it brings these ideas closer to the public, the second

because it indicates to candidates (and a future mayor) that the design community is interested and engaged.

Bringing design thinking to the mayor is a great idea; more important to the Commonwealth would be bringing political thinking to the design profession.

CHRIS WALSH AIA
State Representative,
6th Middlesex House District
Framingham, Massachusetts

Robert Campbell’s article leaves the impression that the Rose Kennedy Greenway is underused. Since opening in 2008, the Greenway has become a popular destination and the walking spine of our city for tourists, residents, and commuters as they explore downtown and the waterfront. In March, Boston.com published the Greenway’s 2013 visitorship: 853,000 visitors, plus millions more who casually enjoy Greenway plazas and paths.

I invite Mr. Campbell to take a walk with me to see lawns and benches full of individuals reading, chatting, and relaxing in the North End Park; the delighted families spinning on the carousel; the diversity of kids cooling off in Rings Fountain; Financial District workers and shoppers lining up at food trucks; and visitors of all ages attending one of the Greenway’s 300 free annual events. And we look forward to more reasons to visit the Greenway District, such as rotating exhibitions of contemporary public art like the murals at Dewey Square Park and terrific additions like the development of the adjacent Boston Public Market.

JESSE BRACKENBURY
Executive director,
Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy
Boston

The landmarks diagram accompanying Robert Campbell’s enlightening article is lacking in accuracy with regard to one of the projects referenced: The Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge.

The graphic lists Miguel Rosales as an “architect” of the project, but at the time of his involvement, Rosales was an unlicensed designer at Wallace Floyd Associates (WFA) and only one member of a large team; these individuals were charged with Big Dig projectwide community liaison, planning, urban design, and architecture for one of the most important public works projects in Boston’s history. However, the Charles River Crossing proved to be one of the most divisive and challenging aspects of the project from the perspective of every one of those disciplines.

In 1991 state officials formed the Bridge Design Review Committee (BDRC) to break the logjam. We at WFA helped the Review Committee bring famed Swiss bridge engineer Christian Menn on board as an adviser to evaluate the highway river-crossing alternatives and to select a recommended alternative. WFA assigned Rosales to assist Menn in the making of bridge models and drawings for presentations to the BDRC. Ultimately a scheme was recommended, and Menn pulled it all together and is the sole creator of the new bridge—with assistance from WFA, the BDRC, and Big Dig engineers. (I have been in touch with Menn and he fully agrees with my assessment.) Any assertion otherwise does a disservice not only to Menn and former colleagues at WFA but also to the collaborative design process that made the Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge possible.

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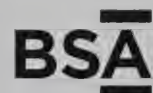
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PLEASE
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MAGAZINE



Our friend Robert Campbell has it pretty much right: Paris is a good example. But there are very few doorknobs here—it's mostly electronic DigiCode locks, "armored doors," and steel grilles. For many, this still great and still eminently livable city is also a place of stress and not a little menace (if mostly petty crime). We, too, have a new mayor after many years, and *she* will face some of the same issues and challenges your fine spring issue cited for Boston.

THOMAS VONIER FAIA
Paris, France

This provocative issue clearly articulates the challenges facing the city. However, the message should not be directed solely to City Hall but also to the Boston Society of Architects and its affiliate members who are charged with guiding the public and private sectors in addressing pressing as well as long-term issues.

Certain themes reappear throughout the articles: social equity, identity, infrastructure, policy and regulatory process reform (or not). Surely there is no simple "blueprint" for addressing these complex questions. Resonating among the challenges is Robert Campbell's call to the leadership to make sure that the city holds on to and builds on the characteristics that define Boston's "essence"—a powerful yet hard-to-define sentiment. The question for the design and planning community is: How best do we assist the mayor in continuing the momentum of Boston's urban renaissance while ensuring that the benefits of the city's success are more widely available?

Although many issues require a civic response, there are a few that demand attention to ensure long-term social, economic, cultural, and physical resilience to this city: notably, providing affordable housing and high-quality educational opportunities for all; improving and integrating multimodal transportation networks; promoting symbiotic relationships between cities and communities beyond city boundaries, and embracing and planning for

increased density as the city's daily and permanent population continues to grow.

PAUL LUKEZ FAIA, *Paul Lukez Architecture*
PATRICK TEDESCO AIA, *NBBJ*
MEERA DEEAN, *Utile*
BSA Urban Design Committee co-chairs

Boston, with its 53 percent residents of color, is a "majority minority" city. Yet it continues to baffle me how invisible that community is in discussions of the travails of professionals who can't find housing within their reach ["Who Will Occupy Boston?"]. Where are they looking?

It seems that downtown, Back Bay, South End, Charlestown, Cambridge, Jamaica Plain, and South Boston are unreachable for professionals seeking to buy homes and put down roots. One is led to believe they have no other choice than to leave the area or move to the exurbs... really?

What is not in the discussion is the consideration of opportunities in neighborhoods like Roxbury. It is centrally located, with relatively convenient transit options, interesting building stock, and a fair amount of vacant buildings and lots. One could develop units at multiple price points in a combination of rehabilitated structures throughout Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. This involves getting past negative stereotypes exacerbated by the fact that we remain a largely residentially segregated nation. And the specter of "gentrification" remains a formidable barrier. That said, I believe most discussions about gentrification are simplistic and lack nuance and depth.

Thoughtful persons on both sides of the issue need to be brought to the table by the new mayor to hammer out ways to reinvest in these neighborhoods that are equitable for current and future residents. If someone renovates a dilapidated building, shouldn't there be a way to make that a win for everyone?

M. DAVID LEE FAIA
Stull and Lee Architects
Boston



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Aamodt Plumb Architects. The Beach House in Quogue, New York. Photo by Jane Messenger.

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IN THIS ISSUE

PHOTO Colleen Baker



Jay Wickersham FAIA ("In novels, a character flaw," page 32), an architect and lawyer, practices architectural and environmental law with the Cambridge, Massachusetts, firm Noble & Wickersham. He is Associate Professor in Practice at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he teaches courses in the history, law, and ethics of architectural practice.

PHOTO Mariam Fayek



Ian Baldwin ("Big glass," page 34) has practiced architecture on projects from a large transport hub in Manhattan to conference-room renovations. He has written about architecture and urban design for more than a decade and received the Douglas Haskell Award from AIA New York for architectural journalism. He currently teaches studio and history/theory seminars at the Rhode Island School of Design and Brown University. He lives in Providence.

PHOTO Maurizio Micheli



Matteo Pericoli ("The laboratory of literary architecture," page 38) is an architect, illustrator, teacher, and author. His books include *Manhattan Unfurled*, *The City Out My Window: 63 Views on New York*, and the upcoming *Windows on the World: Fifty Writers, Fifty Views*.

PHOTO Detroit Free Press



John Gallagher ("Don't forget the Motor City," page 40) is architecture critic for *The Detroit Free Press*. His most recent book is *Revolution Detroit: Strategies for Urban Reinvention*, and he is coauthor of *AIA Detroit: The American Institute of Architects Guide to Detroit Architecture*. John was born in New York City and joined the *Free Press* in 1987. He and his wife, Sheu-Jane, live along Detroit's east riverfront.

PHOTO Annie Schlechter



Russell Maret ("A note on the type," page 42) is a private press printer and self-taught type designer working in New York City. He won the 2009 Rome Prize in Design from the American Academy in Rome, is the vice chairman of the Fine Press Book Association, and is a former trustee of the American Printing History Association. Maret's books and manuscripts are in public and private collections throughout the world.

PHOTO Donna Coveney



Anne Whiston Spirn ("Digital doorway," page 48) is a professor of landscape architecture and planning at MIT. Her books include *The Granite Garden*, *The Language of Landscape*, *Daring to Look*, and *The Eye Is a Door*. In 2001, she received the International Cosmos Prize for "contributions to the harmonious coexistence of nature and humankind."

PHOTO Paul Lenke



Mimi Love ("House of straw, house of stereotype," page 52) is a principal at Utile, where, among other projects, she is collaborating with Reed Hilderbrand on a masterplan for the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in Lincoln. She coauthored *Color Space Style*, a reference book on interior design. She lives with her husband, Tim, and their two children in South Boston.

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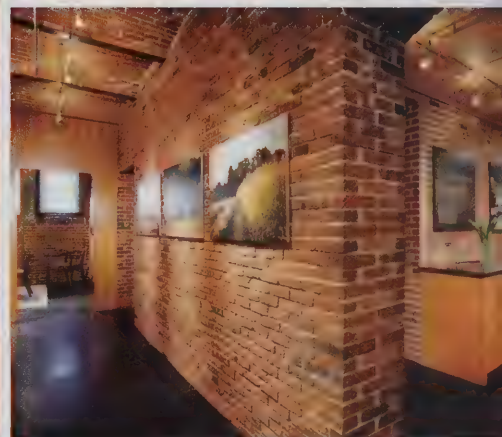
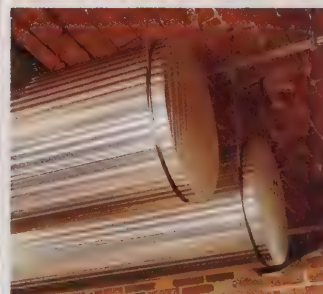
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Opinions and Observations



California Design, 1930–1965: Living in a Modern Way

Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. Through July 6, 2014

California is a mythical place, and though opinions vary on the quality and direction of its leadership, that it continues to be in the vanguard of many if not most of the lifestyle trends that drive the evolution of our culture has never been in dispute. So it's only appropriate that *California Design 1930–1965*, assembled by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) under curator Wendy Kaplan, should be focused on objects designed to create and define personal identity—houses, cars, furniture, housewares and appliances, and clothing—in the context of the culture of midcentury Modernism.

The exhibition is organized thematically around the ideas of Shaping, Making, Living, and Selling. California was beginning to grow rapidly in the 1920s, and though Modern architecture and design was still a relative anomaly, by the 1930s a combination of evolving taste, demand, and emerging industrial capacity began to shape the outlook of what had been a craft-based design community to one that was geared to larger volume. The explosion of industry during World War II evolved into satisfying the pent-up demand for housing and furnishings. Most important at this time was the acceptance of Modernism as a way of life that embodied everything that a prosperous, democratic, socially progressive nation should be.

One of the most striking features of the exhibition is its eclecticism—the spare, often minimalist architecture provides an armature for a broad and loose range of furnishings, housewares, and decorative arts. The show includes a fascinating collection of clothing—particularly bathing

suits—and a range of objects from jewelry to cars, including Raymond Loewy's sublime Studebaker Avanti. Unfortunately, the iconic manifestation of the unique blend of the simple rigor of the houses and the colorful, diverse range of furnishing is missing: The living room of the Eames House in Pacific Palisades, removed from the house in the course of an ongoing renovation and assembled at LACMA, did not make the trip across the country.

My only regret is that more could not have been shown at the Peabody Essex; it is unfortunate that many large pieces could not make the trip—they could have made a very good show a great one. It would also have been nice to compare some of this work with what was happening contemporaneously elsewhere in the world, particularly Scandinavia, where we see many similar lifestyle trends in a very different physical climate. This can be fodder for a future exhibition. In the meantime, go see this one.

DAVID FIXLER FAIA, a historic preservation expert at EYP Architecture & Engineering in Boston, is president of the New England chapter of Docomomo (Documentation and conservation of buildings, sites, and neighborhoods of the Modern Movement).

ABOVE

Raymond Loewy's Studebaker Avanti, 1964. Photo: Walter Silver/PEM; Greta Magnusson Grossman's lamp, c. 1949. © 2011 Museum Associates/LACMA; Margaret De Patta's pin, c. 1946–57. © 2011 Museum Associates/LACMA.

SEEN

Il Duce

Rome

Picture the bridge from Kenmore Square to Fenway Park as a pedestrian way, covered in mosaics declaring the glory of the Confederacy or the tremendous victory over Native Americans or the magnificence of slavery.

That might give you a sense of the loaded political messages of Rome's Foro Italico and its mosaic pedestrian mall. Walked on by tens of thousands of people every day that Roma plays a home game in its football stadium, this, the largest mosaic project since the Roman Empire fell, was built for one purpose: to declare the glory of Benito Mussolini and his plans for returning Roman glory to modern Italy through a combination of empire building (he invaded Ethiopia in 1935), suppression of political opposition, imposition of race laws, and alliance with Nazi Germany.

The complex not only hosts soccer and rugby competitions but also is home to a major track facility (ringed by gargantuan statues of naked men with no-nonsense looks), a swimming pool, and tennis courts. Stone slabs declare the steps on the "advancement" of Italy under Mussolini, who staged a violent takeover in 1922 and remained dictator until 1943. The mosaics repeat over and over again the name of The Leader: "Il Duce, Il Duce, Il Duce."

Today, few of those fans know the story of the complex or what they are walking on. More disturbing is that, in a nation and continent enduring an ongoing economic crisis and a resurgent right wing, fans are being encouraged to remember Il Duce—and to miss him.

MAX PAGE is a professor of architecture and history at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst. During the spring semester, he was a fellow at the American Academy in Rome.



LEFT

Photo: Max Page



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You Are Here

Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts
Through August 31, 2014

It's ironic that some of the objects most attuned to space in *You Are Here*, a sharp and often unsettling exhibition, also make minute and intimate references to the body. The show, organized by Worcester's crackerjack curator of contemporary art, Susan Stoops, examines the body and its boundaries through allusions. Not a single figurative work is on display, but every piece is a stand-in for the figure. That strategy collapses our sense of where the body begins and ends. Consequently, the surrounding space feels tentative and charged.

Annette Lemieux conflates the self and architecture in her teasing sculpture *Moveable Obstacle #2*, a low platform on casters covered in black roofing tiles. The tiles refer to those on Lemieux's childhood home; the obstacle embodies any hurdles that hinder our path, which might be easier to move than we anticipate.

In *Blue Monday*, Jim Lambie takes the most delicate of body parts—eyelashes—and blows them up in bright blue aluminum to the size of a bicycle, suspended by glittery silver chains. It's an all too human wink, but placed overhead, it dwarfs the viewer and fills the gallery with a flirtatious energy usually reserved for one-on-one exchanges.

Alice Channer ramps up the tension between body and space with *Backbone 1*, a series of aluminum and resin forms cast from stirrup pants. Each rises to a hump like a giant inchworm and crawls in a zigzagging line over aluminum rods on the floor. They might be vertebrae, even as they cling to their source as clothing (more echoes of intimacy). Yet their size, their meander, and indeed their humps cast them as impudent, as if they might dart into your path and trip you.

You Are Here triumphs because it slyly dislocates viewers. We don't know if we're within or without—or floating somewhere in between.

CATE MCQUAID is a freelance writer and an art critic for *The Boston Globe*.

ABOVE

Blue Monday, by Jim Lambie, 2003. © Jim Lambie.
Image © Worcester Art Museum.



GENIUS LOCI

Down by the riverside

I live close to the Charles River in Watertown and my “personal” territory extends from the dam in Watertown Square to the North Beacon Street Bridge in Brighton. It’s not a pristine stretch of the river, having been a site of factories and farms for well over 300 years, but it’s much wilder and less heavily used (and abused) than the lower Charles River Basin. On the Newton side, Nonantum Road hugs the river tightly, and boat docks and athletic facilities occupy the remainder of its shore. But the Watertown side is another matter. Located farther away from the edge, Charles River Road has much less traffic, leaving plenty of room for a pleasant walk where nature takes center stage.

My interest in this stretch of the river peaked in 2008, when I was deeply immersed in producing the photographs for my book, *Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast* (2010, Cornell University Press). Early in the morning I would walk my standard poodle, Lily, down to the river to see what was coming up, and then go back later in the day to take pictures. It was an interesting exercise to observe, in detail, how the vegetation on a single piece of ground changed over the course of the seasons. What I found was a cosmopolitan mix of species including native oaks, black cherries, beech, maples, elms, and white pines along with exotic Norway maples, glossy buckthorns, and trees of heaven. Most of the herbaceous grasses and forbs that grow along the sunny parts of the path originated in Europe, and many of the shade-tolerant shrubs—including multiflora rose and Japanese barberry—were brought to America from Asia. There are also a lot of vines along the river, including poison ivy (you’ve been warned), sweet autumn clematis, and oriental bittersweet, all of which flourish under the minimal maintenance regimen the site receives.

Beginning with the tiny, ephemeral mustards that sprout up along the soggy edge of the basketball court in April and ending with the New England hawkweeds that bloom in October, there’s a procession of flowering plants that few people pay any attention to. I certainly would have included myself in this group until, in the course of working on my book,

I became obsessed with the question: “What’s the name of that plant?” It wasn’t until I got down on my hands and knees to look closely that a hidden world opened up to me. I was amazed at the diversity—both native and non-native—that emerged from what, at first glance, seemed like a backdrop of green “weeds.” When one actually takes the time to look carefully at one’s surroundings, the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

There’s also a lot of wildlife along the river that is much more visible than it is in the lower basin, mainly because of less vehicular traffic and more vegetation cover. Canada geese are ubiquitous residents throughout much of the year, along with mallards and an array of other ducks that are migrating to locations north or south of Boston. Cormorants and herons and a small flock of white swans also periodically come upriver from their home at Magazine Beach in Cambridge. A particularly striking show takes place from mid-May through mid-June, when the alewives are running. That’s when hordes of seagulls show up to feed on the fish that get stuck at the base of the Watertown dam. It’s a noisy, chaotic scene as the birds gorge themselves and fight for the best-positioned rock in the river.

Unlike the lower Charles River Basin, with its majestic views and roaring traffic, the upper basin in Watertown is a softer, calmer river, where the unkempt face of nature triumphs over the hard edge of urban infrastructure.

PETER DEL TREDICI is an associate professor in practice of landscape architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he has taught since 1991. He recently retired from the Arnold Arboretum after 35 years of service.

ABOVE

The Watertown Dam, October 2010. Photo: Youvathana Sok.



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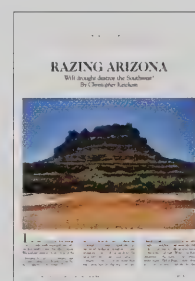
Covering the issues

Design matters... “What can’t design do?” posits *Bloomberg Businessweek* at its second annual design conference and corresponding magazine issue (March 24–April 6, 2014). Design can provide shelter, food, clean water, genetic maps, engrossing pastimes, fashion that fits well. The editors offer 20 perspectives on design’s ability, from the architects of the world’s tallest building to designers making government websites simple and pleasurable to use. Most interesting are those who mix approaches, like the synthetic biologist working with AutoCAD to build models of living things. This is design at its democratic best, improving the lives—and futures—of the 99 percent in ways both fashionable and profound.

A river runs through it... In the Northeast, we’re preoccupied with solutions for dealing with too much water: What happens when the next Sandy hits? In the Southwest, the consideration is the opposite. The country’s fastest-growing region depends on water from one river—the Colorado—and less and less flows every year. At current consumption levels, Lake Mead will drop below the lowest outtake level in about two decades. Christopher Ketcham floats down the Colorado with a cast of Western water professionals in “Razing Arizona” for *Harper’s* (April 2014) and discusses the current state of water use and their varying roles in it; the history of hydraulic empires; land use, consumption, and a sense of right-to-use that’s been engrained for generations. The 19th-century adventurer/activist John Wesley Powell argued that development should be driven by the Colorado’s carrying capacity, not client demand. Perhaps it’s finally time to listen.

Urban outfits... In its April 2014 issue, *The Atlantic* offers variations on the theme of the built environment and urban vitality. Nathaniel Rich spotlights “Hitler’s Airport”—Tempelhofer Freiheit—which, unlike most Nazi-era architecture, has been repurposed as a popular and huge (and somewhat odd) public park, with the terminal soon to be renovated. Coming from a different direction, James Fallows visits two small American cities on opposite ends of the political spectrum that both enjoy vibrant open spaces and strong redevelopment. He makes “The Case for Strong Mayors,” arguing that Greenville, South Carolina, and Burlington, Vermont, follow successful and similar redevelopment strategies, providing examples of “Why cities work even when Washington doesn’t.” The key? Cooperation.

GRETCHEN SCHNEIDER AIA is executive director of the Community Design Resource Center of Boston.



AHEAD

Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts. July 4

After a 12-year project that adds more than 13,000 square feet of gallery space, the Clark will unveil its renewed 140-acre campus on Independence Day. The expansion unites a new visitor center designed by Tadao Ando with a renovated museum building and research center, designed by Selldorf Architects. “I have tried to express a deep respect for the landscape outside and an equal reverence for the art inside,” says the Pritzker Prize winner. The buildings surround a three-tiered reflecting pool, designed by Ando and landscape architects Reed Hilderbrand, that highlights a rethinking of Clark’s topography, draws a link to surrounding woodland, and serves as a water-management system. Gensler served as executive architect for all phases of the project. Fittingly, one of the inaugural special exhibitions is titled *Make It New*.





The Disappearing City: Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacres

The Museum of Modern Art, New York City. February 22, 2014

Frank Lloyd Wright may be best remembered for his Prairie Style houses, but the scale of his most ambitious dreams, conceived as America's cities evolved during the 20th century, was grander. This winter the Museum of Modern Art unveiled *Frank Lloyd Wright and the City: Density vs. Dispersal*, devoted to Wright's designs for commercial and apartment buildings, as well as a utopian landscape he called Broadacre City.

At the first of several informal lectures devoted to the exhibition, Jennifer Gray, a MoMA educator and architectural historian at Columbia University, walked a capacity crowd through the gallery, ending with a contemplation of a 12-by-12-foot model of Broadacres. Beginning with the San Francisco Call Building, designed in 1912 but, like a number of his commercial projects, never built, Gray showed how Wright's thinking about the American city developed in sometimes contradictory directions. For example, he repurposed his design for St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie Towers (1927–31), a Manhattan apartment complex, into a tower-in-the-park concept simply by superimposing trees on the buildings he had originally drawn around the structure.

At the same time that he was designing skyscrapers, Wright proposed Broadacres, a comprehensive plan of the American landscape that he conceived of in the 1930s and elaborated on during the course of his life. It allotted each household at least an acre of land, and Wright envisioned inhabitants zooming around via helicopter. "He could be so futuristic and far-thinking," Gray said, "but also anachronistic and hokey."

The establishment of Broadacres would have required a radical redistribution of property, though the resulting homesteads would have been private. Amid the current debates about socioeconomic inequality, it's impossible to gaze on the model of Broadacres without imagining alternatives for reordering the American landscape, no matter how fanciful Wright's conception may seem.

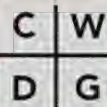
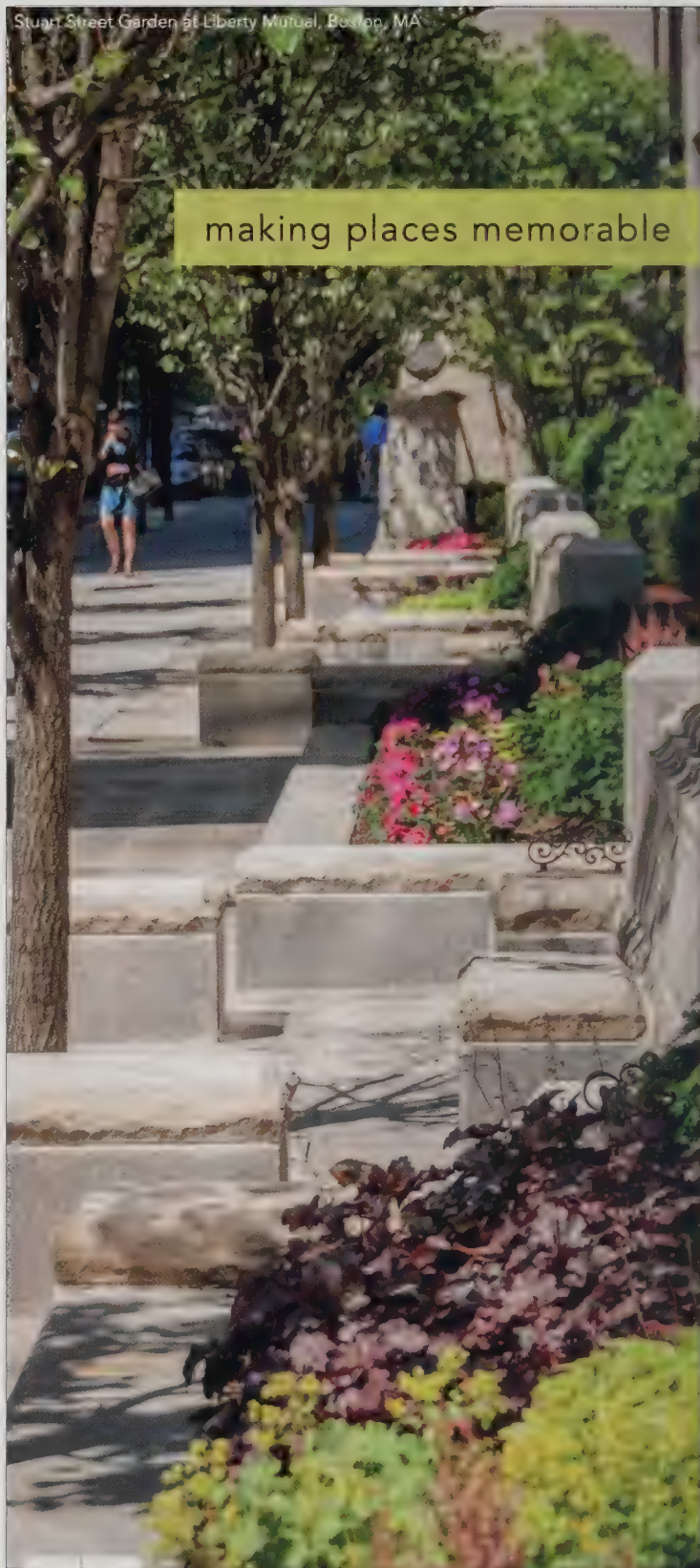
SARAH L. COURTEAU has written for *The New York Times*, *The Oxford American*, *The Wilson Quarterly*, and other publications.

ABOVE

Broadacre City Project, by Frank Lloyd Wright. Model in four sections: painted wood, cardboard, and paper. Courtesy MoMA.

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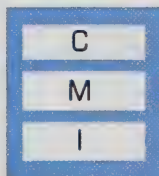
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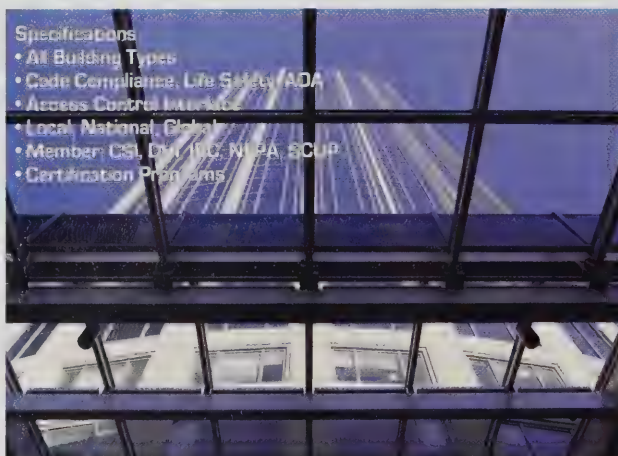
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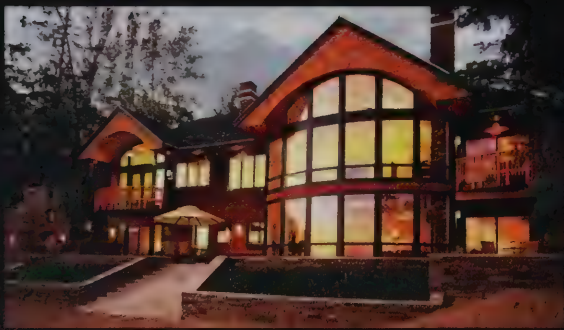
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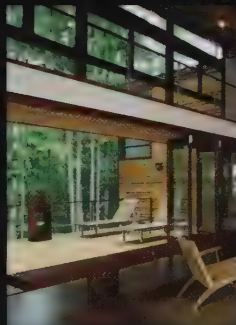


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READING ROOM

Meditations on the page-turning experience

RIDING THE BUS WITH SHERLOCK

by Diane Georgopoulos FAIA

A curious feature of humans is how we can simultaneously feel two diametrically opposite things. It was 1972, and I was a student in cold and damp London. I was assigned the largest room in a hall of residence on Stanhope Street in Highgate, which overlooked the garden. Lest you be impressed, it was also the most expensive room to heat and light. I observed in myself the switch from initial shock of surrealistic oddities, like the small sink in my room, to regarding this innovation as an intelligent amenity. It had a little tank attached to it that required shillings to produce hot water. The heat and lights operated on the same diet of coins. I wore out pockets in sweaters and jackets from the weight of coins I needed to keep on hand. In a country that invented the concept "rising damp," my strategy was simple: stay warm and dry, and carry a pocketful of shillings.

In my travels to University College London, I went back and forth on the bus, which was cheaper and cleaner than the London Underground. I found that if I got the seat closest to the heater on the upper deck, I would be warmer than I would have been in my room. I usually had a book. The other passengers were always

politely respectful of reading as a signal for privacy. A book on a bus was as good an insulator against uninvited conversations as a woolen sweater was against the cold.

On weekends, I took day trips that I could reach by public transit. I recall one excursion to the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, southwest of London. The ride was more than an hour from my digs in north London and a huge bargain in terms of cost because of the sights that could be seen along the way in relative coziness. We snaked through narrow streets in a staccato rhythm of lurches and stops. My traveling companion that day was a collection of Sherlock Holmes stories. They were so absorbing and full of intensely descriptive, minutely detailed, and vividly reflective scenes of a London that I could observe by merely lifting my eyes off the page.

At the end of the ride I arrived at the fertile ferneries of the Victorian greenhouses at Kew. No one could be impassive to the opulent eccentricity of this tropical paradise under glass. Shielded from the gray day outside, luxuriant orchids and exotic foliage flourished incongruously under the iron ribs of the elephantine enclosure. I sat on a bench that was nestled under giant fronds in the Palm Court, blanketed by warm air. While reading, I could hear the dew drops from the ferns landing as soft thuds on the moss. Later, as I made my exit from this giant terrarium, it was only to be slapped in the face by the cold and wet, the rain like needles against my cheeks.

When the bus came, I snuggled into my favorite seat to devour the last two stories. Every few pages, I'd lift my gaze to the slick black streets and asphalt skies punctuated by yellow halos of sodium vapor street lamps. I could imagine Sir Arthur's tall, thin figure in his deerstalker hat appearing and then vanishing like smoke. To this day, that ride with Sherlock Holmes is one of my warmest memories of my time in London. ■

DIANE GEORGOPULOS FAIA is the manager of the Design and Construction Department of MassHousing, the Commonwealth's leading affordable housing lender.

BELOW
Psilogica Biologica,
by Barbara Wildenboer, 2012.



DMS

SHELTER FROM THE STORMS

by Peter Miller

I remember the first phone booth I went into that had been defiled. Until that moment, in 1963, it was understood that a phone booth was publicly private. You would shut the folding door and know that you had a moment to talk. It was a public refuge. No one felt so disenfranchised that he or she would violate such a simple luxury. That time, of course, has not only passed but itself has been defiled.

It may seem that a place to read a book is in the same, though perhaps slower-moving, danger. Picture a photograph of a high-tech entrepreneur seated in front of a bookcase with a can of Coke, perhaps a game manual, and even a Slinky on it. But no books—the lad is moving too quickly, too nimbly to be burdened by the pace of binding and pages. He is after faster game than that.

It is a noble, subtle warrior, the book. It has a touch, a smell, a breath, a texture, and a thousand other particles of itself that swirl about, like the swirl of spring or the flick of stars.

Years ago in my shop, I pulled out a book on the construction of Indian tepees in Oklahoma and thought about how abandoned the book seemed. That afternoon, a man came in, went to the book, and bought it immediately. No one had looked at it in years.

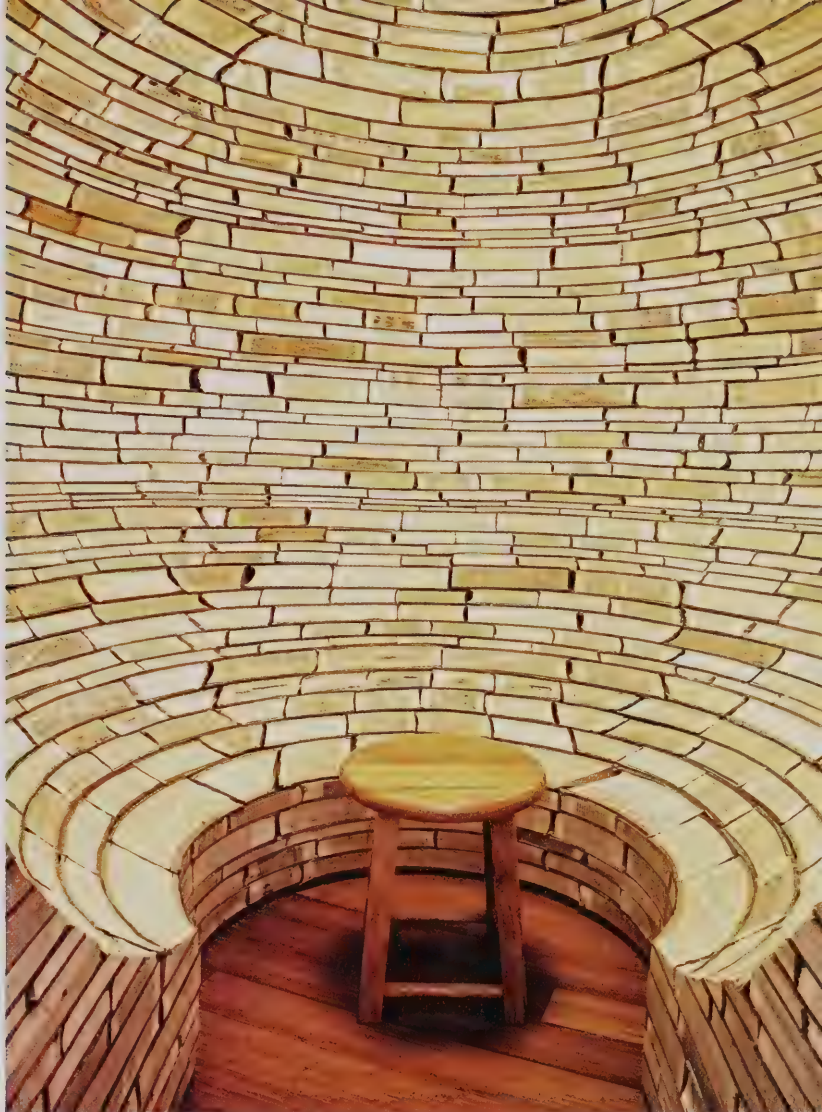
The book is the proud source, the tree trunk, the glacial rock and till of word and image. E-books are a TV dinner alternate. E-books may, in fact, save the very privilege and heritage and life of books. One will have a battery, and one will be a book. One shall serve and take up slack, and one will push on.

Fear not for the book; you may as well fear for trousers and shoes, collars and pillows. But it is no longer a given that the conditions for reading will remain. You need a place to read, a shelter from electronics, bells and whistles, blinking lights and tinkling keys, pop-ups and alerts. There are a million commercial flickers out there, and as many more on their way, all vying to catch your eye, your thought, your interest.

I have books all over my house, shelved or in small piles, and some titles may take years to make a connection. If I have books near a good light and a good seat, away from any draft, offline from obvious noise, then my odds get much better. If I don't hold off the body snatchers of 1,000 original television serials, nothing will get read.

In a sense, reading, or writing, or drawing, is your only alternate to the electronic army. It is the only other—no one can go with you; it is your privacy. You must be able to concentrate and be alone, and it is not easy to be alone anymore; we have not the habit of it.

If a plane was late or a ferry missed, if a train had miles to go or a heart was broken, then, for a moment, you were alone. But now, at the first flicker of alone, we reach for the cell phone and the isolation vanishes. One day, we will try to measure what was lost when much of the world was no longer forced to ponder, to gaze, to be alone. Once, it was a habit to read and rooms were naturally private. For now, we must be careful to save a little privacy, for our own time. Come, you can sit next to me. ■



PETER MILLER owns Peter Miller Books, an architectural and design books and supplies store in Seattle. His book *Lunch at the Shop: The Art and Practice of the Midday Meal* was just published by Abrams.

ABOVE
Building Houses, by Aaron T. Stephan, 2007.

INTO THE WOODS

by David Macy

In 1907, the MacDowell Colony was founded to offer artists time and space to create. Today, 32 studios are scattered across hundreds of acres, each well lit and simply appointed to suit various modes of creativity. Nestled in the woods or on the edge of a meadow, the studios, whether half-timbered or built of fieldstone, are organic architectural products resulting from a century of trying to create the ideal workspace.

The only adornments on studio walls are rows of pine tablets, some age-darkened beyond legibility, filled with handwritten names of those who've previously animated the space. Leonard Bernstein said that in winter the studio quiet was so complete that he could discern the sound of snow falling from upper branches of the white pines onto those below. While writing *The Skin of our Teeth*, Thornton Wilder stepped out of his MacDowell studio to find diligent ants constructing a new anthill, a sight that brought tears to his eyes. The structural autonomy provided to the artists—and the three meals a day—afford freedom to observe and refine praxis, to seek a natural rhythm.

Poets', novelists', and playwrights' studios include two desks and cork walls for storyboarding. Composers are offered a baby grand piano. Interdisciplinary artists, filmmakers, and animators can request blackout capability. Visual arts studios—also used by architects and interdisciplinary artists—have high ceilings, northern light, and generous wall space. A few studios are specialized, providing essential tools for photographers, printmakers, and sculptors. And if enclosed space constricts, most studios include a screened porch, a daybed, and a chair: places to read.

Artists often ship their books in advance of arrival, planting a flag before taking up residence. A fellowship of less than eight weeks focuses the mind: how to prioritize creative work, research, and participation in the community. Looking at many artists' experience collectively, a typical arc describes the use of time and space:

DAY ONE

Thrill of validation (Willa Cather wrote at this desk!) tinged with fear of failure-to-launch.

Wary first-dinner interactions at Colony Hall; protective veneer in place regarding self and intended project, possibly related to fear of failure.

Retire to bed soon after dinner to finish the book begun in transit, bedroom door bolted and lights burning against the rural darkness.

DAY SEVEN

Anxiety set aside as surprising volume of new and exciting work mounts in the studio (or, minimally, a contact high drawn from peers' after-dinner presentations).

Raucous dinner conversations and meetings of minds in the library.

Creative studio work in overdrive; reading mostly confined to lunch (soup-stained pages a small price to pay).

DAY FOURTEEN ONWARD

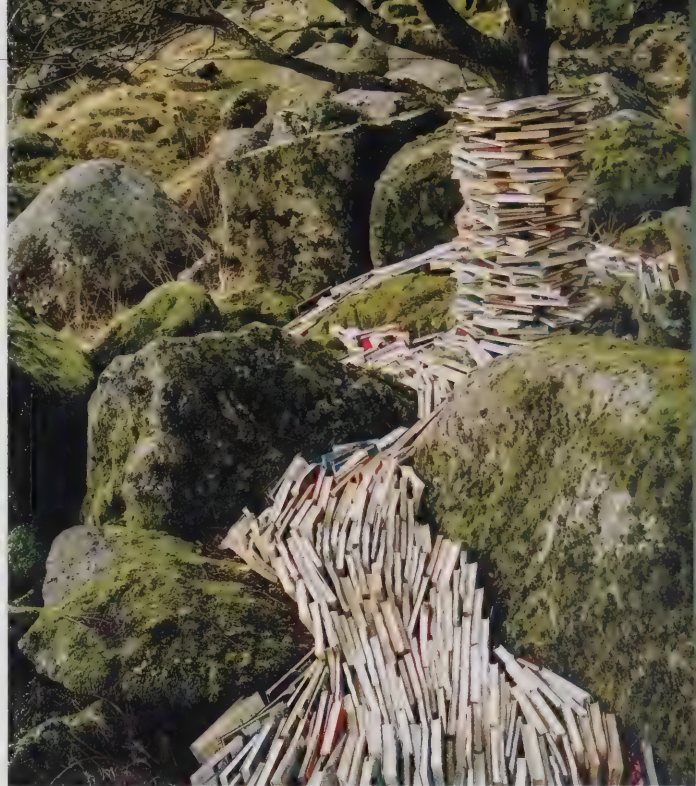
Vulnerability becomes a friend in the studio during seemingly endless workdays.

Appearing as if by magic, new friends and books provide insights that are plowed directly into the work. Nightstand crowded with books recommended or written by dinner companions; unhelpful books and people set aside without regret.

LAST THREE DAYS

New topic creeps into conversations with brand-new/age-old friends: How to connect post-MacDowell? Books already boxed. (Note to self: Borrow packing tape from front office.)

MacDowell concentrates two circumstances that are increasingly scarce in contemporary life: a banishment of distractions and a manifest respect for artists in the act of making. Though the woodland silence surrounding the studios is perfectly suited for reading deeply, there is too much work to be done when you finally hear yourself think. ■



DAVID MACY is resident director of The MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, where for 20 years he has worked with artists, architects, builders, and board members to improve the quality of the residency program.

ABOVE

It's common knowledge, by Rune Guneriussen, 2009.

SPACES OF THE IMAGINATION

by Lian Chikako Chang ASSOC. AIA

I'd like to say that I read in a conservatory, with the earthy tang of tomato plants hanging in the air; or on a shaded terrace overlooking some tranquil body of water; or by a fireplace, with my feet warming on the hearth. But the last time I opened a physical book, it was wedged in front of my laptop at the edge of my desk, its pages held in place with my forearms as I hunched over, skimming passages and typing out notes.

This is not reading so much as scraping for citations. For more open-ended encounters with texts, I'm rarely at my desk. I don't have a favorite place for reading; rather, I read to remove myself from place and time. I might be squeezed into an airplane seat, in line at the grocery, or wide awake in bed. Everywhere I go I have my phone, and with it, reading material ranging from text messages to Twitter to e-books.

I recently went shopping for an armchair. I tested tasteful and comfortable chairs, chairs that invite you to settle into a posture of composed comfort with a hardcover book or a genteel interlocutor. I didn't end up buying. I decided that such a chair would see little use, except as an aspirational placeholder.

As a child, my family was fortunate enough to have both armchairs and books, and I often read, but I did so on the carpeted floor of my room, or perched at the dining table among stacks of encyclopedia volumes, or in the washroom, where there were always issues

of *National Geographic*. Now, as then, I read in a range of postures and places. A glance at my smartphone can pull me into a journey, away from the tedium of a doctor's office or the awkwardness of a standing-room-only subway car.

The space of the phone is reassuring and inviting: always the same, but with the possibility of going anywhere. Jonathan Zittrain, professor of Internet law at Harvard, has suggested that our habit of withdrawing to the familiar space of digital devices may result in us asking less of our built environment. I can see this happening: I check a hotel's Wi-Fi before I concern myself about lobby amenities, and I often consult my phone for navigation before turning to physical landmarks and the position of the sun. I know that technology can addictively fill every empty moment when we might do better to just breathe.

In other ways, I'm not so sure that everything has changed. I remember reading paperback novels as a child while riding the bus or walking down the street; and I remember being told to put down my book at dinnertime. The power of reading, whether the text is printed on a physical page or glowing from a smartphone screen, is that it can transport us to different times and places. These spaces of the imagination are my favorite places to read, and they are just as virtual, and just as real, as they have ever been. ■

LIAN CHIKAKO CHANG ASSOC. AIA graduated in 2013 with a Master in Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She works at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, where she collects, analyzes, and communicates data and information about architectural education.

BELOW

Moon Pops: 8 Haiku, Jack Kerouac,
by Vince Koloski, 2007.



IN NOVELS, A CHARACTER FLAW

by Jay Wickersham FAIA

Why are there so few convincing architects in fiction? Lawyers and doctors abound, for obvious reasons: their professional lives are filled with conflicts and mortal outcomes. It's harder to summon drama out of long hours seated at a drafting board or a computer screen; and confrontations over zoning approvals or cost overruns lack the excitement of a murder trial or a deathbed scene.

Faced with this challenge, few writers try to depict what architects actually do. In books, as in movies and television shows, a character is often labeled "architect" as shorthand for "talented sensitive male." Querry, the protagonist of Graham Greene's *A Burnt-Out Case*, is a famous architect who has renounced his art and taken refuge in an African leper colony—but he could just as easily have been a concert pianist or experimental physicist. Donald Barthelme's *Paradise* starts with some acknowledgment of practice. The protagonist is obsessed with Louis Kahn, his former teacher; he even fantasizes that a car-bomb discovered under his Volvo was planted there by Kahn's jealous ghost. But the novel turns into an exercise in anomie and soft porn. (Three lingerie models move in with an out-of-work 53-year-old architect? Really?)

Equally unconvincing is the other extreme, the architect as larger-than-life hero, flailing against an uncomprehending society (i.e., Frank Lloyd Wright). This is the theme of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, and of Wright's own *Autobiography*, which may well be considered a work of fiction for its evasions, deceptions, and flat-out lies about his actual sources of inspiration and methods of practice.

Even Thomas Hardy, the greatest writer ever to have practiced architecture, couldn't create a believable architect-hero. Hardy, who lacked the money or connections to attend university, pursued architecture as an alternative path into the professional classes. He continued to practice into his early 30s, mostly as a

restorer of rural Gothic churches, until the success of his books allowed him to write full time. Yet his novel *A Laodicean*, which depicts the relationship between a rising architect and the rich young woman who is his client and his beloved, manages to be simultaneously melodramatic and dull—it has none of the passion and drive of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*.

I have found three memorable portrayals of architects in fiction, one from the 19th century and two in recent books. Each writer explores the inherent tension in the roles of architect and client, looking at questions of agency and control: Whose building is it?

When William Dean Howells wrote his 1885 novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, he drew on an intimate knowledge of practice (his brother-in-law was William Mead, of McKim, Mead & White) to create a slyly satirical depiction of the architect-client relationship. Silas Lapham, a rich but uncouth paint manufacturer, is building a mansion in Boston's Back Bay:

"He [the architect] entered into that brief but intense intimacy with the Laphams which the sympathetic architect holds with his clients.... He knew just where to insist upon his own ideas, and where to yield. He was really building several other houses, but he gave the Laphams the impression that he was doing none but theirs."

The architect simultaneously elevates his client's taste (elegant white-painted trim, rather than heavy black walnut) and incites him into doubling his budget. The rising cost alarms Lapham's wife, but Lapham, who has made big profits in the stock market, is intoxicated: "He had come to feel almost as intimately and fondly as the architect himself the satisfying simplicity of the whole design and the delicacy of its detail. It appealed to him as an exquisite bit of harmony appeals to the unlearned ear..." Yet Howells' architect is only an agent in the story, not its central character. The drama revolves around the client, Lapham; the house comes to



SHELF LIFE
OUR PICKS:
FICTION

The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton

Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino

Let the Great World Spin
by Colum McCann

Building Stories by Chris Ware

Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House
by Eric Hodgins

House of Earth by Woody Guthrie

Loving Frank by Nancy Horan



symbolize his aspirations, his temptations, his rise and implied fall.

Amy Waldman, in her 2011 novel *The Submission*, imagines the political furor if the competition for the memorial at the World Trade Center site had been won by an architect with a Muslim name and heritage. The story moves briskly, though with relatively few plot surprises. Its real strength is the evolving portrayal of the architect. When he wins the competition, Mohammad Khan—"Mo" to everyone who knows him—thinks of himself as entirely secular and American. Khan is an ambitious designer working for Emmanuel Roi, a Frank Gehry–like starchitect ("he molded paper, or cardboard, or tin from which his young architects generated computer images"), and he hopes his victory will propel him to a comparable level of professional success. Instead, Khan feels a mounting rage and despair, as the political maneuverings rob him of control over both the execution and the meaning of his own design.

Simon Mawer undertakes a more profound historical reimagining in *The Glass Room*, published in 2009. He depicts a real building—Mies van der Rohe's Tugendhat House, built in Brno, Czechoslovakia, in 1930—and invents a fictional architect and clients. Loosely following actual events, the novel tells how the Jewish industrialist Viktor Landauer and his wife, Liesel, work with the Modernist architect Rainer von Abt to create a work of voluptuous austerity. We experience the flight of the Landauers and von Abt to America

upon Hitler's rise to power, followed by the expropriations and new uses imposed on the house under the Nazi and Communist regimes. The one note in this very fine book that didn't always ring true for me was the characterization of the architect. I found myself impatient with von Abt's spouting of Modernist manifestos, comparing him unfavorably with Mies, who was reticent about theory with his clients and more attentive to their functional needs.

Yet I came to appreciate that in the context of the novel, these passages serve an essential purpose. The house ultimately becomes the book's most complex and enduring character. For all of von Abt's blather about transparency in architecture, the house's fate shows the power of privacy, secrecy, and lies; for all his brave talk about how Modernism will free us from the past, over time the house becomes a receptacle for the tragic weight of history.

And what is true of *The Glass Room* is true of literature in general. There may be few convincing architects in fiction—but there are innumerable great works of fictional architecture, from *Manderley* to the *Little House on the Prairie*, from the *Tower of Babel* to the *House of Usher*. In novels as in life, buildings free themselves of their architects and owners. They endure vicissitudes of fate, accumulate meanings that their makers may never have intended. They offer themselves to us, their readers, their inhabitants. We step inside these fictional buildings; we explore them, occupy them, make them our own. ■

BIG GLASS

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY'S EVOLVING TYPOLOGY





by Ian Baldwin

In Providence, a glass cube springs from the wine-colored bricks of a small neo-Georgian building and squares up to the street. Behind the curtainwall is a deep void lined with book stacks; in front is a cherry-red sign announcing a local library.

What else could it be, this floor-to-ceiling volume of glass halting the march of vinyl-sided domestic boxes along a residential street? The library is not much bigger than the neighboring houses, but its façade is a billboard announcing openness, modernity, and a world beyond the triple-decker.

The playwright and *New Yorker* journalist S.N. Behrman, growing up in an immigrant family in Worcester, wrote of the “exaltation” he felt going downtown to the public library, “an outlet to the universe.” Ray Bradbury told *The New York Times* in 2009, “Libraries raised me. I don’t believe in colleges and universities . . . I went to the library three days a week for 10 years.”

As an outlet to the universe and an inlet for all, the public library is the typology that most clearly asks: What is the architecture of *civitas*?

The public library lays first claim to the mythical power of American self-improvement, so it suits that it is a New England invention. The athenaeums of Boston and of Newport and Providence, in Rhode Island, were among the earliest subscription libraries, and the first, the Library Company of Philadelphia, was founded by Benjamin Franklin. The world’s first true public library, tax-supported and free to use, belongs to Peterborough, New Hampshire (1833).

H.H. Richardson’s libraries in Woburn, North Easton, Quincy, and Malden, built from the mid-1870s to the mid-1880s, are instantly recognizable for their Romanesque features: rough-faced ashlar masonry, semicircular arches, and asymmetrical massing. Richardson’s interiors created a formula that established the library as a distinct architectural type: An offset entry leads into an expansive reading room with a large hearth, with books stored in alcoves off a two-story barrel-vaulted hall.

These libraries were “free” but not quite “public,” birthed by the philanthropy of Richardson’s clients rather than the coffers of their towns. Historian Dell Upton has analyzed them

as an example of “elite self-assertion,” where donors’ portraits surveyed the reading room from above the fireplace, and the patron had to ask a librarian (“the donor’s surrogate”) to dispense books from closed stacks.

Like two other civic typologies emerging from the 19th century, the museum and the public park, the library assumed a lead role in acculturating the middle class and uplifting the working class. Chiseled into the north façade of McKim, Mead and White’s Boston Public Library is this: “The Commonwealth requires the education of the people as the safeguard of order and liberty.”

Thus the public library was understood as nothing less than a civic monument. Whether Romanesque brio, Beaux-Arts bombast, or concrete Brutalism, the library projects the self-image of the time and place it was built to serve.

This explains why a town like Bolton, Massachusetts, proud of its traditional New England appearance, reaches back to the eclecticism of the 19th century for its new library addition featuring a steeply pitched, red-tile roof. It also explains why Foxborough, enlarging its Brutalist Boyden library, favored an unabashedly modern, glass-fronted staircase to celebrate the ascension to the new volume, floating above a parking area. (Both projects were designed by the same firm, LLB Architects of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.)

The postwar library’s struggle with architectural identity mirrors Modernism’s larger struggle with monumentality. Concrete’s plastic and monolithic qualities made possible big, muscular 1960s works like William Pereira’s Geisel Library

OPPOSITE

Vennesla Library and Cultural Centre, Vennesla, Norway.
Helen & Hard Architects. Photo: Hufton+Crow.

ABOVE (LEFT TO RIGHT)

Thomas Crane Public Library, Quincy, Massachusetts. H.H. Richardson. Photo © Edward Jacoby; Boyden Library, Foxborough, Massachusetts. LLB Architects. Photo: Bruce T. Martin; Cambridge Public Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts. William Rawn Associates, Architects. Photo: Robert Benson Photography.



FAR LEFT
Durham County Libraries,
South Regional in North
Carolina. Perkins+Will. Photo
© Mark Herboth Photography.

CENTER
Kirkwood Public Library,
New Castle County,
Delaware. ikon.5 architects.
Photo: James D'Addio.

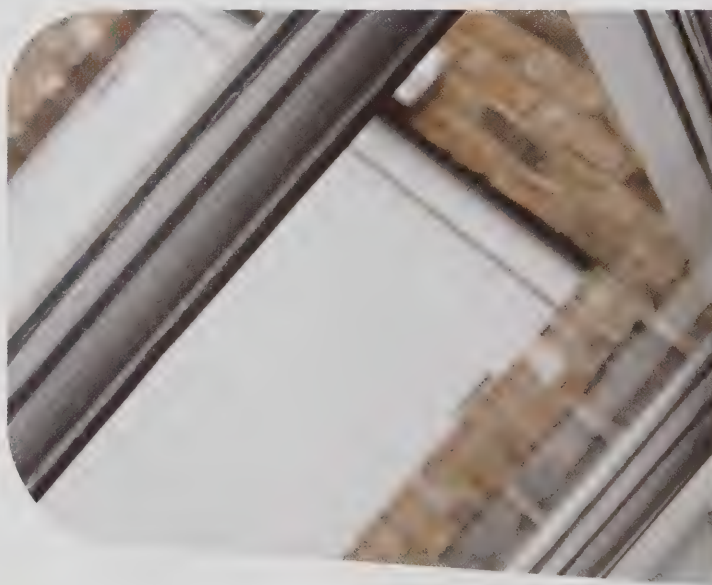
RIGHT
Hyde Park Branch Library, Boston
Schwartz/Silver Architects.
Landscape Design by
Richard Burck Associates.
Photo: Steve Rosenthal
Photography.

in San Diego and John Johansen's Orlando Public Library in Florida. But intense formalism of that sort was rarely attempted in libraries of smaller scale before it passed from fashion.

Float glass provided a far less aggressive link between modern materiality and the library program. No less a Brutalist than Eduardo Catalano, in his 1970 Charlestown branch library, folded a concrete mantle around a two-story glazed façade fronting the reading room within. Here the transparent curtainwall, synonymous with the bland corporate conformity of the office tower, scales down to announce the last redoubt of public space, at least, the only noncommercial interior public space available to all.

The typology of the library and the technology of the curtainwall continue to evolve in tandem. As glazing gets better at handling ultraviolet light and water ingress (conditions that may be obnoxious to humans but are fatal to books), the glass plane becomes a common—if not default—solution to lighting and lightening the library. The nighttime glow from within expresses perfectly the library's status as a neighborhood focal point. In the era of Big Data, library architecture is more and more one of Big Glass.

As a façade strategy, of course, Big Glass is hardly limited to libraries. It is everywhere in contemporary design. But as steward both of worldly knowledge and democratic



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neighborliness, exterior transparency matches the library's symbolic and programmatic functions. The curtainwall also satisfies the Modernist brief for interiors: technologically advanced, spatially rich, and suffused with light.

William Rawn's library branches in East Boston and Cambridge place large-scale glazed façades at the edge of an open lawn to unambiguously announce a civic beacon. Cambridge's façade, two separate layers containing a three-foot-deep airspace, is also an advanced environmental solution to provide fresh air and control glare.

The same firm's four-story glass façade for Northeastern University's College of Computer and Information Science, by comparison, is contemporary cliché. Big Glass runs continuously from the busy, broad Huntington Avenue side to the back, where the unrelenting glass all but overwhelms a small plaza. The curtainwall reveals the meanest of atria: a triple-height corridor backed by a blank wall, no civic room to contain and counter the city's reverberations. The only thing inside this private display case is the to-and-fro of students and staff.

The local library is the factory for the everyday production of that oft-praised commodity, "community." It is where the same space must contain a knitting circle of middle-aged women, Facebook-surfing preteens, and an author reading to a small audience. Libraries now see community service as their central role, with book lending only one component. Richardson's libraries, in their paternalistic way, acknowledged

"community" by incorporating picture galleries and small museums. Today it is the demand for meeting space, not the incursion of digital media, which has reduced the stock of print in some libraries.

Public libraries are not about books (nor e-readers). They are about space. The space to read, browse, daydream, run into neighbors, go online, attend events. The glazed expanse serves, then, as exterior code for an interior devoted to open participation and information access: Big Glass marks Big Community. But the curtainwall is still, in Columbia University historian Reinhold Martin's phrase, a mass medium carried over from midcentury corporatism. It remains for the public library to distinguish itself from the common and thoughtless abuses of Big Glass by further articulating the spaces deployed on the inside.

The best example I've come across is Helen & Hard Architects' town library in Vennesla, Norway (ah, for Scandinavian public-sector budgets!). The central hall tunnels through a city block, from a side street to the main public square, fully glazed at both ends. Structural and service-carrying ribs articulate this two-story volume, suggesting the inside of a whale. At their bases, the ribs become bookshelves and shelter reading desks in the gaps in between. It's a brilliant arrangement that bridges individual repose and grand civic gesture in a single space, and for that it looks like a sketch for the future of *civitas*. ■



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THE LABORATORY OF LITERARY ARCHITECTURE

by Matteo Pericoli



ABOVE

Project by Luca Vallesse, based on Beppe Fenoglio's *Una Questione Privata* ("A Private Affair"). In collaboration with Andrea Revello and Giulia Di Marco. Photos courtesy of the Laboratory of Literary Architecture. (For more information, visit LabLitArch.com.)

I have always marveled at the ability of great architects to envision construction in terms of pure space. Shapes, materials, and technology are all elements necessary to define emptiness—what we, the visitors, ultimately perceive. Just think of the Pantheon in Rome and its monstrous empty space “covered” by the open eye above; or imagine any building designed by the Italian structural engineer Pier Luigi Nervi, in which you can almost see the physical effort made by its trusses to expand the sensation of space. These structures make us feel enclosed, liberated, or suspended. They lead us through space, making us speed up or slow down in order to contemplate. Great writers, in devising their literary structures, do the same.

When we read a novel, a short story, or a piece of nonfiction, there is often a moment when we have the feeling that we have entered a structure built, knowingly or unknowingly, by the writer. I am not talking about our ability to picture in our minds the locations or the architectural settings described in the text but rather the sense of being immersed in a space designed by someone else.

A concatenation of words doesn't feel like something solid at first, but anyone who reads a lot or has ever attempted to write knows that “constructing something” is an accurate metaphor for the sort of building one does when trying to put words one



next to another. Every writer recognizes the sense of satisfaction that comes when a paragraph finally “stands up” by itself.

Five years ago, I was asked by the Scuola Holden, a creative writing school in Turin, Italy, to come up with a new course. Given my architectural background, combined with my curiosity about the writing process, I started to wonder about the role that structural, wordless thought plays in writing *before* the writer actually writes, or *in lieu of* writing. So I replied: “Why don’t we ask students to create a piece of architecture that embodies the structure of a literary work they admire?”

Each student brings to class a novel, a story, or an essay whose inner workings he or she knows intimately. We start by discussing the story, the plot, the subject, or simply a feeling the student has about the text. We break it down into its most basic elements and analyze the relationship of each part to the overall structure, making sure to avoid any literal spatial translations of settings, locations, places, or architecture.

We deal with questions that architects must always address: What is space? How does one design and build using the void as a construction material? How do we perceive space? And how does it affect us?

It is a process of reduction toward a wordless spatial structure. As in architecture, once you remove the skin—the “language” of walls, roofs, and slabs—all that remains is sheer

space. In writing, once you discard language itself, what’s left?

Since the students are not expected to have any previous experience in design or building models, halfway through the course we bring in architecture students to help the creative writers construct their designs in three dimensions. Each time I have taught the class, this moment has had an element of magic: two very different disciplines coming together, sharing a language they now both understand, knowing exactly where to meet, and why. They discuss spatial relationships, repetition, reflection, sequence, transparency, tension, pacing, chronology, and so forth. Any architectural issue is resolved from a literary point of view and vice versa: Any literary issue must be addressed by a spatial idea. There is no room for arbitrary moves.

For someone like me, who was trained and has practiced as an architect, but has spent much of his life drawing, reading, and occasionally writing, there is great pleasure in watching the students nervously approach the early moments of the course—when paper, cardboard, scissors, and pencils sit neatly untouched on a side desk—then end up not only making the tangible out of the intangible but also mastering highly sophisticated design decisions with liberating fun. For someone who uses words all the time, being able to think wordlessly about literature, at least once, must feel refreshing, revealing, and even empowering. ■

DON'T FORGET THE MOTOR CITY

by John Gallagher

Detroit has been reinventing itself from the beginning. From its founding as a French colonial fur-trading outpost, the city morphed to a British military strongpoint on the Great Lakes, then an American farming town. It burned to the ground in 1805, came back strong as a shipping center and banking hub for the timber industry, pivoted again around 1900 to grow into the world's car capital. Then came the long, dire, postwar decline created by industrial flight, suburban sprawl, and toxic race conflicts.

Today, Detroit bleeds from a thousand wounds, its woes chronicled daily in news reports, documentary films, and books. Yet determined residents and forward-looking urbanists are working to craft a new beginning for this iconic American city. Three recent books help us capture Detroit's buoyant past, its distressed present, and its possible future.

Thanks for the View, Mr. Mies focuses on one of the brighter spots from Detroit's recent history, the story of Lafayette Park, a 1950s-era urban renewal project that escaped the dreary fate of most such projects through excellent design. With Ludwig Mies van der Rohe designing low-rise townhomes and high-rise apartment towers, and planners and landscape artists Ludwig Hilberseimer and Alfred Caldwell crafting a lovely tree-shaded "super block," Lafayette Park instantly became an oasis of gracious middle-class living in the midst of the city. It remains so today, an integrated community of public-spirited residents with good educations and the desire to live in a walkable city offering urban

amenities in a serene, tranquil setting.

This book itself is less a unified history than a smorgasbord of essays, snapshots, newsletter clippings, interviews with residents, and other ephemera. But it helps to recall the day, not so long ago, when Detroit thrived not only as the world's car capital but also as one of America's architectural hubs, with Eero Saarinen, Minoru Yamasaki, Gunnar Birkerts, and others working there, turning out designs that softened and humanized the too-often-chilly International style. Lafayette Park remains a potent reminder that urban success is possible even in a city as distressed as Detroit.

That other Detroit comes into full view in Mark Binelli's *Detroit City Is the Place to Be*. A native Detroiter now living in New York, Binelli returned to Motown a few years ago to survey the city. He found what residents experience every day: a place where metal scrappers pick apart abandoned buildings in broad daylight with no fear of anyone stopping them; a place where at least one-third of the city's streetlights don't work; where a thriving downtown lies surrounded by neighborhoods where so many structures have been razed that streetscapes more often resemble rural Alabama than a northern industrial capital. Is this America's first Third World city? A postapocalyptic vision where the likes of RoboCop would feel at home? Or is it a creative hub where techno-music raves flourish in abandoned buildings and where a thriving entrepreneurial base is repurposing vacant factories in new and creative ways? Detroit is all these things and



more, an everyday blend of the hopeful and the tragic, which is why, prostrate though it may be before history, it remains one of America's most fascinating places.

And of the future? Urbanists Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley offer a hopeful glimpse in *The Metropolitan Revolution*. Detroit is just one city in which a new generation of leadership has stepped forward to promote an innovative model of partnerships to create jobs and revitalize downtowns. The days are long gone when big-city mayors (Richard Daley in Chicago, James Michael Curley in Boston) wielded power through efficient, if often corrupt, machine organizations. Today, business leaders, university presidents, foundation executives, and neighborhood activists partner with Detroit's much-weakened political class to create hybrid strategies to deliver services.

The way Detroit is paying for its planned M-1 Rail streetcar line downtown, set to begin construction this year, is a good example. Instead of a city's transit department carrying out the project, a nonprofit entity funded by foundations, corporations, and private philanthropists—plus some government dollars—will build and operate the line. It's a jury-rigged system for sure, and perhaps hardly ideal, but it's the sort of

new partnership that Katz and Bradley celebrate as the antidote to the collapse of traditional metropolitan political power.

Detroit's 313-year history and its current landscape remain far too complex for any one book, or even collection of books, to capture. But those who say Detroit is at the end of the line, that its final chapter has been written, fail to grasp the nature of history. History is what *Breaking Bad*'s Walter White said of chemistry: It's change, a process of birth, growth, decay, transformation.

Like clockwork, Detroit has reinvented itself every hundred years or so. Its car century ground to a symbolic end in 2009 when General Motors and Chrysler filed for bankruptcy, and though both companies have recovered, Detroit is evolving a new identity for a new age. That identity is part urban agriculture, part digital entrepreneurialism, and part music and food and sports and new political forms. Visitors come to the city expecting to find despair and are often astonished at the level of optimism residents show. Detroit may have suffered as much as any American city ever has, but the events that will shape its next chapter lie in the future, not the past. ■



SHELF LIFE
OUR PICKS:
URBAN PLANNING

The Death and Life of Great American Cities by Jane Jacobs

American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America by Colin Woodard

Design After Decline: How America Rebuilds Shrinking Cities by Brent D. Ryan

The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic—and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World by Steven Johnson

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A NOTE ON THE TYPE



by Russell Maret

The British typographic historian Harry Carter opened his seminal series of essays, *A View of Early Typography*, with the simple, concise statement, “Type is something that you can pick up and hold in your hand.” At first glance the statement seems self-evident: Carter was writing during the metal type era, and metal type is a physical object. But Carter’s intention was not so much physical as ontological: an attempt to locate the specific attribute that differentiates the typographic letterform from other—particularly calligraphic—letterforms. This signal characteristic, as Carter saw it, is type’s physical mass, meaning that although the *printed* image of a typographic letter can be made to look like the written image of a calligraphic one, the typographic letter is distinct from the calligraphic in that it is subject to the restrictions of its physical body.

A piece of type has edges and corners that line up with the edges and corners of other pieces of type. Together, they are locked into a grid and printed. Without extraordinary effort or expense, the typographic letterform cannot be made to break

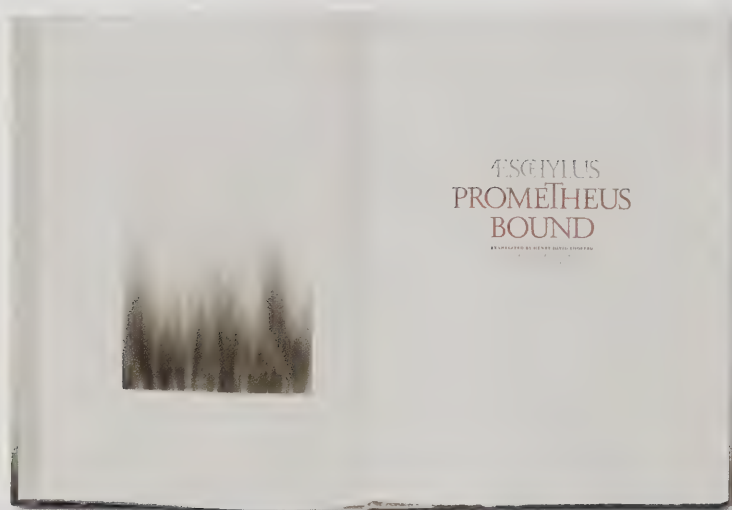
LEFT

W.H. Auden quote in Russell Maret’s Cancellaresca Milanese caps set amid his Roma Abstract alphabet, from *Specimens of Diverse Characters*.

ABOVE

Binding and box of the standard edition of *Specimens of Diverse Characters*. The cover pattern is set in Lisbon Ornaments.

All photographs by Annie Schlechter.



ABOVE

Title spread from *Prometheus Bound* (title lettering designed by Maret, text set in Fred Smeijers' Quadraat). The frontispiece is drawn with candle smoke directly onto the handmade paper; T for Truth from *Æthelwold Etc.*, with the text of the final stanza of *Ode on a Grecian Urn* by John Keats circulating through the letter, set in *Gotica Italica*.

RIGHT

Tom-A-Bedlam's Poem, set in Hybrid Two, from *Specimens of Diverse Characters*.



free from the grid, while the calligraphic letter does so with ease. It is precisely these physical restraints that grant typographic letters their unique status as a category of lettering.

As a letterpress printer who designs his own type, I have spent a lot of time thinking about Carter's deceptively simple epigram. I design my type on a computer and, with few exceptions, print from photographically processed, relief printing plates. For most of the books that I print, and sometimes for single poems or passages, I design a new typeface that is custom tailored in some way to the text. The "T" from *Æthelwold Etc* has a typeface inside it that was designed only to exist there. My process is not that unusual within the context of the DIY zeitgeist, but it stands in direct conflict with the methods by which my 500-year-old craft has been defined for most of its existence.

Historically, printers have used relatively few typefaces. (There are some notable exceptions to this reality, particularly the great Giambattista Bodoni.) It is simply too expensive, time consuming, and burdensome to produce and store multiple metal typefaces—a single page of metal type can weigh upwards of 10 pounds—so most printers remained content with the few types at their immediate disposal. By contrast, I can attach 20 of

my typefaces to an email without overburdening its memory capacity. My typefaces can conform to a grid or they can blithely ignore it, their forms subject to my imagination rather than the mechanical considerations of metal type.

This distinction is precisely what Carter was getting at in his text. To follow his idea to its logical conclusion: By Carter's definition of type, the alphabets that I design are not typefaces at all but some other, as yet unclassified, category of lettering. Just as metal type can be made to look like calligraphy, my alphabets can be made to look like metal type; but because my alphabets are not subject to the same physical restraints as their typographic models, they are ontologically distinct from them. My alphabets are not metal but ether; they are digigraphic rather than typographic. They look like type, but they do not have to act like it.

I realize that distinctions such as these can seem like academic parlor games, and it is true that while drawing letters I am rarely troubled by whether I am making type or not. I try to draw the finest letterforms that I can and put the philosophical debates aside for as long as possible. But when I begin to assemble my letterforms into typefaces (or whatever they are), my perspective on what I am doing changes dramatically. However fine

FROM THE HAG AND HUNGRY GOBLIN
THAT INTO RAGS WOULD REND YE • AND
THE SPIRITS THAT STAND BY THE NAKED
MAN IN THE BOOK OF MOONS • DEFEND
YE • THAT OF YOUR FIVE SOUND SENSES
YOU NEVER BE FORSAKEN • NOR WANDER
FROM YOURSELF WITH TOM • ABROAD
TO BEG YOUR BACON • WITH A THOUGHT
I TOOK FOR MAUDLIN • AND A CRUSE OF
COCKLE POTTAGE • WITH A THING THUS
TALL • SKY BLESS YOU ALL • I FELL INTO
THIS DOTAGE • I SLEPT NOT SINCE THE
CONQUEST • TILL THEN I NEVER WAKED •
TILL THE ROGUISH BOY OF LOVE WHERE
I LAY ME FOUND AND STRIPPED ME
NAKED • WHEN I SHORT HAVE SHORN
MY SOW'S FACE AND SWIGGED MY HORNY
BARREL • IN AN OAKEN INN I PAWN MY
SKIN AS A SUIT OF GILT APPAREL • THE
MOON'S MY CONSTANT MISTRESS • AND
THE LONELY OWL MY MARROW • THE
FLAMING DRAKE AND THE NIGHT-CROW
MAKE ME MUSIC TO MY SORROW • I
KNOW MORE THAN APOLLO • FOR OFT •
WHEN HE LIES SLEEPING • I SEE THE STARS
AT MORTAL WARS AND THE ROUNDED
WELKIN WEEPING • THE MOON EMBRACE
HER SHEPHERD • AND THE QUEEN OF LOVE
HER WARRIOR • WHILE THE FIRST DOTH
HORN THE STAR OF MORN • AND THE
NEXT THE HEAVENLY FARRIER • WITH AN
HOST OF FURIOUS FANCIES WHEREOF
I AM COMMANDER • WITH A BURNING
SPEAR AND A HORSE OF AIR TO THE
WILDERNESS I WANDER • BY A KNIGHT
OF GHOSTS AND SHADOWS I SUMMONED
AM TO TOURNEY TEN LEAGUES BEYOND
THE WIDE WORLD'S END • METHINKS IT IS
NO JOURNEY • TOM-A-BEDLAM'S POEM



RUBRICATED INITIALS FROM 12TH CENTURY ITALIAN MANUSCRIPTS

In the mediæval calligraphic world there were three principal artisans: the Illuminator, responsible for illustrative or historiated initials in gold and multiple colors; the Rubricator, responsible for decorative initials in red, blue, or green; and the Scribe, who wrote out the body text and instructed Rubricators and Illuminators where to insert their initials.

Although there is a much deeper reservoir of potential form here, the structural motivations of the Round Gothic capital grew directly out of Romanesque rubricated initials.

my individual letterforms may or may not be, a typeface is more than a collection of well-drawn images. A typeface is an aggregate image in flux, one whose final form is variable, determined as much by the words and language it is used to set as by the individual letterforms of which it is composed. How letterforms act and interact when assembled into words is the true measure of their success within a typeface.

Like many type designers, I spend a lot of time looking at and trying to re-create historical typefaces. Most type foundries offer a complete “set” of historical revivals in their catalogues, in addition to whatever original designs they might publish. Enter the keyword “Baskerville” into myfonts.com’s search engine, for instance, and 83 typefaces come up. Some of the results are purposefully ridiculous, but many of them are serious attempts to redraw the letterforms used by the printer John Baskerville in 18th-century England.

Where many of these typefaces fall short is that they re-create the surface image of the historical *letterforms* without replicating the actions of the historical *typeface*. The resulting types are strange pantomimes of history, like suburban condominium developments designed in the English Tudor style. They might approximate

a pre-Industrial form, but all their lines are perfectly straight, the same weight, equidistant from one another, and aligned; all of which were practical impossibilities in pre-Industrial manufacturing.

In my own work with historical revivals, I try to keep Harry Carter’s adage foremost in my mind. More than a specific reference, Carter’s statement can be interpreted as a broader admonition to understand the medium in which one is working. I design typefaces specifically to print them letterpress. If I design a typeface inspired by metal type, I try to make it act as if it were metal because I am printing it as if it were metal. This approach would not work if I were designing for smartphones or computer screens. (Most of my typefaces are barely legible on a computer screen.) When designing my typefaces, I build invisible edges and contours around the letters as if they were sitting on a metal body, with the hope that they will bump into other letters in serendipitous ways. It is in these unexpected combinations of letterforms, in the complex relationship of line and white space, that the beauty of the printed page resides. The most effective method I have found to capture some of that printed beauty is to design type as if it were something I can pick up and hold in my hand. ■

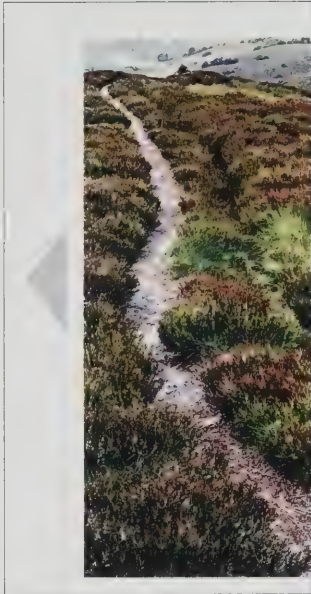
LEFT

Page from *Swan & Hoop 1: Mediæval in Padua* showing rubricated initials from 12th-century Italian manuscripts. Set in Baskerville Great Primer (body type) and Seria Sans Italic, designed by Martin Majoor.

BELOW

Back cover and spread from *Interstices & Intersections or, An Autodidact Comprehends a Cube*. Set in Gremolata, Cancellaresca Milanese, Saturn, and Texto Portuguez.



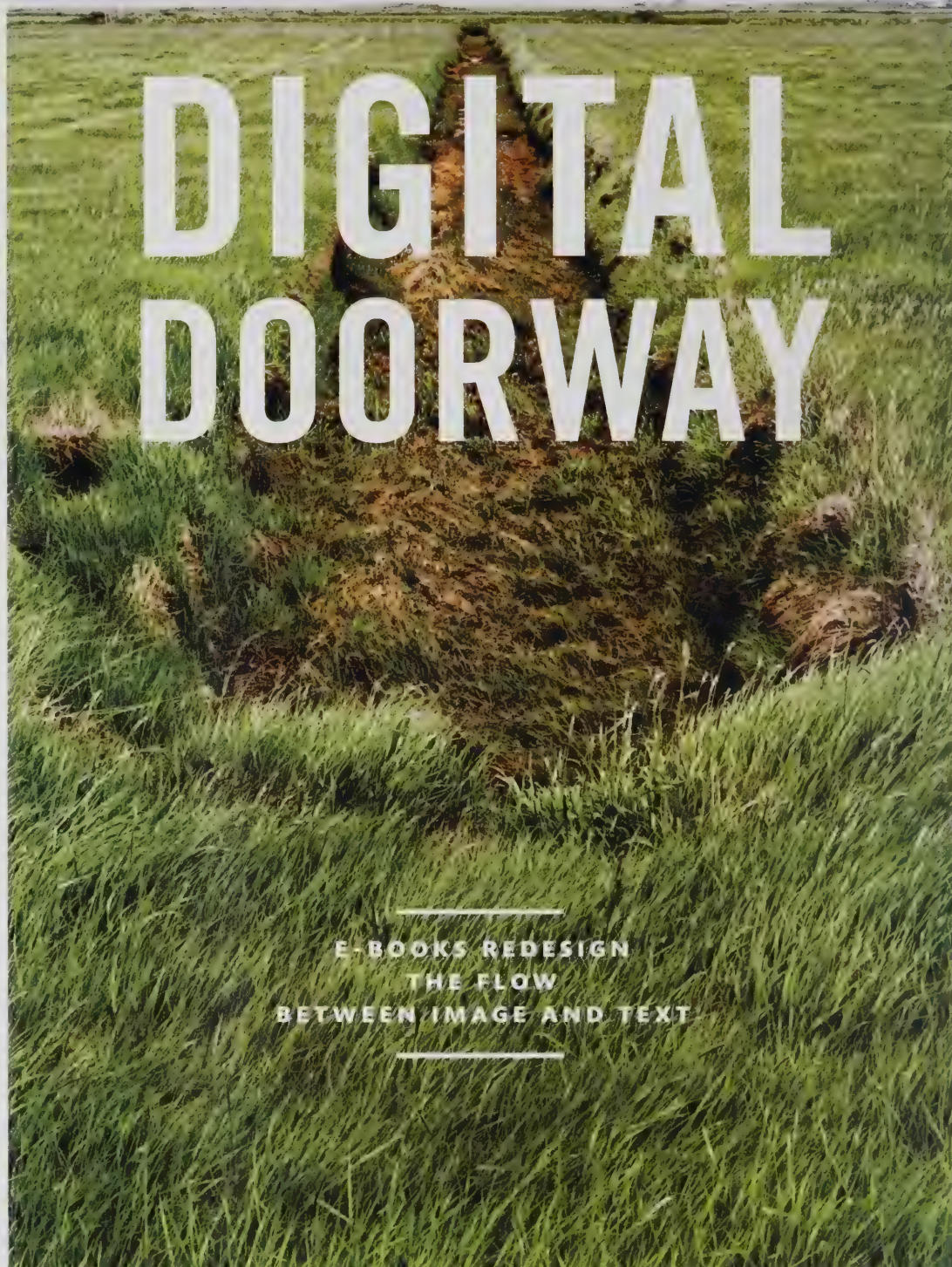


Photographs by
Anne Whiston Spirn,
from *The Eye Is a Door*.

ABOVE
Heath Memorial, Kongenshus,
Denmark. May 1990.

RIGHT
Njal's Farmstead, Bergþórshvoll,
Iceland. May 2008.

OPPOSITE
Grove of Grass, Saiho-ji, Kyoto,
Japan. October 2001 (left).
Andromeda, Nahant, Massachusetts.
March 2002 (right).



DIGITAL DOORWAY

E-BOOKS REDESIGN
THE FLOW
BETWEEN IMAGE AND TEXT



by Anne Whiston Spirn

It was late in 2010, and I had just gotten bad news about my manuscript for *The Eye Is a Door: Landscape, Photography, and the Art of Discovery*. My publisher had asked two people to review it. One, a photographer, admired the images but wanted no words from the artist. The other, a scholar of visual culture, thought the insights “rich” and “provocative” but recommended a more academic text. Perplexed by this mixed response and daunted by the high cost of printing the book’s color photographs, the publisher deemed its market too uncertain and rejected it.

The publisher had been encouraging at first, but even then, the terms were daunting. To offset printing costs, they would demand a \$20,000 subsidy from the author (a common requirement for richly illustrated books), yet the book would still cost \$60 in hardcover. At that price, it would not reach the readership my previous books had enjoyed.

A few weeks later, I attended “Why Books?” a symposium at the Radcliffe Institute that examined the fate of the print book in a digital age. Listening to the speakers, I was struck by their focus on words—and neglect of visual images—as a medium of thought. The printed book was an extraordinary invention, which advanced the sharing of knowledge, but the economics of print publishing has stifled the dissemination of the visual argument, where ideas are embodied in, and expressed through, images.

Could the e-book hold a solution to this

conundrum? The technology was there. The first iPad had been released earlier that year. Color on its high-resolution screen was gorgeous, nothing like the dull black and white screen of the Kindle. The iPad, and the tablets that soon followed, greatly expanded the audience for the illustrated e-book. I left the symposium determined to explore the potential of this medium and decided to publish *The Eye Is a Door* as an original e-book, setting the price at \$4.99, a cost that even a struggling student could afford.

The Eye Is a Door is about seeing as a way of knowing, and photography as a way of thinking. I see most acutely through the frame of the camera’s viewfinder and think most fluently through images. The book invites the reader to join in this process of seeing, thinking, and discovery; designing *The Eye Is a Door* as an e-book permitted a fluid relationship



between image and text, where neither dominates the other. The reader encounters the same image within the context of both visual and verbal essays, and a single image may appear in the text at several different points. Rather than paging back and forth, the reader can simply touch an icon at the end of a sentence, and the associated image fills the screen. The eye rests on the image, undistracted. Touch again and return to the text. A new kind of reading.

There are additional advantages to the e-book. To search for a word or phrase, just type it in the search box. Move directly from text or image, through embedded links, to referenced websites. Customize font type and size in books with "reflowable" text. Read the e-book across platforms from computer to tablet to smartphone. Since *The Eye Is a Door* has reflowable text rather than a fixed format, it works well on a mobile phone, easily

carried as a reference in the field.

Despite its advantages, the electronic format imposes constraints. Especially infuriating are those imposed by Amazon's inferior e-book platforms, known as MOBI and KF8, which are far less flexible (especially in handling graphics) than EPUB, an open-source platform used by iBooks and other online retailers. Many authors and publishers of illustrated e-books avoid Amazon and release their works solely on iBooks. But Amazon sells more than half of all e-books, so this isn't an option for the author who wants to reach the widest possible audience.

Amazon may ultimately catch up or lose market share, and other limitations may soon disappear. In the meantime, constraints can provoke a rethinking. *The Eye Is a Door's* original design called for images referenced within the text to



appear when called up, then to vanish. EPUB permits this, but MOBI and KF8 do not. Our solution is to treat these images as footnotes, which means that they all must appear at the back of the book in the order in which they were cited: not ideal, since some images appear more than once, and the sequence seems haphazard; and yet appropriate, for those images are, in fact, citations, footnotes of images rather than words.

This solution inspired the design for new e-editions of my books now in production: *The Language of Landscape* and *The Granite Garden*. These new e-books will consist of two parts, where the parts can be read both separately and interactively. In the first part, the reading experience will be similar to the text portion of *The Eye Is a Door*. The second part will consist of all those images cited in the text, composed

deliberately as sequenced essays of images and captions, where each image links back to associated text. The reader may then choose whether to start by reading essays of text (with links to the images) or by reading essays of images (with links to the text): a new kind of book that serves both visual and verbal thinkers.

We are in the midst of a Gutenberg moment, with e-publishing comparable to the invention of the printing press. The technology is in its infancy. Design, production, marketing, and distribution—all are being reinvented. For designer-authors, the e-book offers new frontiers: from the publication of visual ideas and arguments to outreach to a wide new audience for those ideas to the design of the reading experience itself. Those who embrace the e-book may open the eye to new visual worlds. ■

FAR LEFT
Isle of Doagh, Inishowen, Ireland.
May 2001.

CENTER
The Ridgeway, Avebury, England.
June 1984.

ABOVE
Alvar Aalto's Studio, Helsinki. May 1990.

HOUSE OF STRAW, HOUSE OF STEREOTYPE

by Mimi Love



It has been a while since I read a children's book, but I can honestly say that even while I was in the thick of reading bedtime stories to my children, I never once was tempted to read stories written from a layman's perception of what designers, architects, and planners do. Not once! Reviewing our shelves, we have received a few books from relatives (grandparents can't resist) with architectural themes that are so annoying they make my eyes roll back into my head. I chose three storybooks to review, all for ages 4 through 8, to make my case that architecture-themed storybooks are often pretentious and misguided, and might even negatively shape the minds of our vulnerable children.

The Three Little Pigs: An Architectural Tale, written by Steven Guarnaccia in 2009, is a spin on the classic story, but instead of houses made out of straw, sticks, and brick, the pigs live in architectural masterpieces. The book starts with the pigs leaving their childhood home, which happens to be the Gamble House by Greene & Greene. Each pig is personified as a well-known architect: Frank Gehry, Philip Johnson, and Frank Lloyd Wright. Pig Gehry builds a house out of scraps (Gehry House), pig Johnson builds a house out of glass (the Glass House), and pig Wright builds a house out of stone and concrete (Fallingwater). As in the classic tale, the wolf blows the first two houses down (the ones made out of scraps and glass), leaving pigs Gehry and Johnson

to retreat to pig Wright's house made of stone.

As the wolf is unable to blow down Fallingwater, he lures the pigs to meet him at various other locations, and this is where the story goes off course. Throughout the book, the author and illustrator pepper images of famous pieces of architecture and design, from Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome to Aldo Rossi's espresso pot. Although I can't imagine a child humored or truly engaged by the inclusion of these design classics, I suppose they are there to entertain the adult reader, like a version of *Where's Waldo?*. Perhaps if there were more irony, humor, or inventiveness with the story line, it would appeal to the ever-so-expansive field of architects and designers who raise children, which then begs the question: Why mess with a classic story to appeal to a microcosm of humanity?

Next on the shelves is *Iggy Peck, Architect*, written in 2007 by Andrea Beaty and illustrated by David Roberts. It is the story of a very young boy who loves to build structures out of various media (diapers, pancakes, chalk, etc.) and is egged on by his very fashionable parents. His mom wears Pucci-influenced mini-dresses and gowns, and his father wears tuxedos, but I digress. When Iggy reaches second grade, he meets a soul-sucking teacher who suppresses his passion for architecture and forbids him to build



SHELF LIFE
OUR PICKS:
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

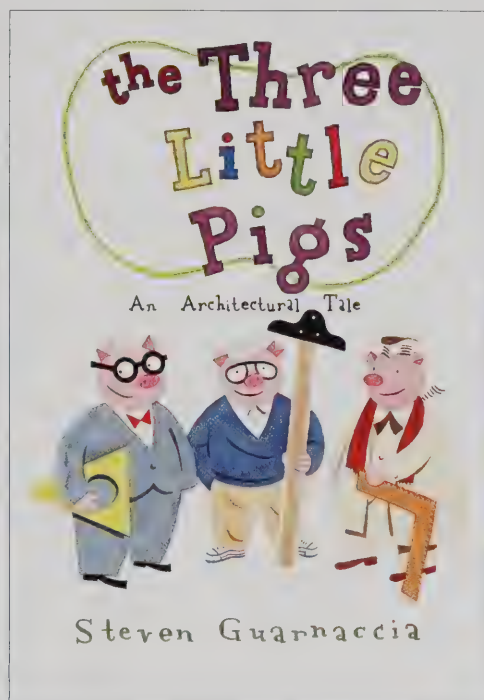
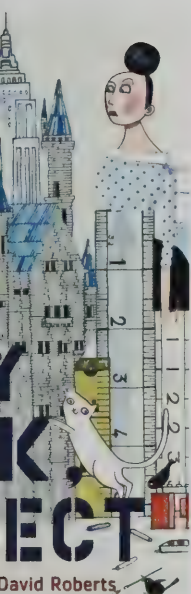
The Three Little Rigs by David Gordon
Architecture According to Pigeons
by Stella Gurney

The Dark by Lemony Snicket;
illustrated by Jon Klassen

Monkey with a Tool Belt written
and illustrated by Chris Monroe

In the Night Kitchen
by Maurice Sendak

***Cathedral: The Story of Its
Construction*** by David Macaulay



structures or read books about architecture. Without being able to pursue his passion, Iggy becomes a typical bored second grader.

The story takes odd twists and turns, but you can rest assured that Iggy saves the day by building one of his structures in a moment of crisis and is never denied his passion for architecture again. This storybook left me wondering: When has an architect ever been a superhero? Call me cynical, but nothing pops to mind.

Although I'm not buying the story line, I do think that the illustrations are fantastic. I am particularly fond of the outfits that are rendered as if they are collaged onto the characters in the book and the inventiveness of Iggy's tower constructions. Surprisingly, the buildings illustrated in the book are shown as generic office structures in black and white, and are merely a backdrop to the vibrantly rendered characters.

The classic children's book, *The Little House*, written by Virginia Lee Burton, portrays the evils of the city, which probably was the dominant sentiment when it was written in 1942. The story is about a house built in a bucolic setting. The owner loves this house so much that he sets a condition that it can never be sold by any of his relatives. The house is personified as a "she" who observes the rising and setting of the sun, change in seasons, and the transition from horse-drawn cart

to automobile. Next she observes a surveyor lay out a major road to connect the countryside to the city. The road is followed by an explosion of development that surrounds and engulfs the house with mid-rise buildings, high-rise buildings, elevated trains, and subway lines, leaving the house in a plume of fumes.

This story leads the young reader to believe that the city is a toxic place, void of any substantial qualities of life; yet, ironically, with every turn of the page, the value of the land the house sits on increases. If written today, the house would be portrayed as a pot of gold, a lucky landowner in the middle of a noble transit-oriented development site. No doubt today's versions would also do away with the carbon emissions and would illustrate green energy strategies such as wind turbines, photovoltaic panels, and a vertical farm.

Still, *The Little House* is an engaging story and much better than the two contemporary books, partly because it is about issues we are still wrestling with today—urban density and sprawl—and doesn't name-drop or portray architects as stereotypes. But of all the annoying characteristics of architects in these depictions, what really gets my goat is that they are *all* portrayed as men, which is the most dangerous and damaging perception of all; leaving me to wonder what stereotypes we are communicating and reinforcing when we read these stories to children. ■



SHELF LIFE

We asked readers for their favorite books related to architecture or design. Here are their recommendations:

Bookwork: Medium to Object to Concept to Art by Garrett Stewart. An inventive and sophisticated study of the book form as sculptural medium. These “bibliobjects,” as the author calls them, reside at the nexus of artists’ books and conceptual art and point to new modes of literacy. Good Dada-fun: Duchamp meets Buzz Spector!

MARTIN ANTONETTI, curator of rare books and director of the book studies concentration, Smith College Libraries

Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture by Justin McGuirk. Some cities in Latin America have become paradigms of urban renewal, with design, architecture, and politics at the core of positive transformation. McGuirk renders a portrait of a complex continent that is so hard to get to know, but that we can learn a lot from.

PAOLA ANTONELLI, senior curator, Architecture and Design, The Museum of Modern Art

House by Tracy Kidder. Published 30 years ago, *House* remains an outstanding narrative about the design and construction process, and about the birth of an architecture firm.

STEPHEN SCHREIBER FAIA, program director in Architecture + Design, University of Massachusetts/Amherst

Matter: Material Processes in Architectural Production edited by Gail Peter Borden and Michael Meredith. Offers an expanded architectural design practice and education—one that tests spatial and material ideas through

fabrication at multiple scales, in new time frames, to reimagine architecture and our experiences.

KAREN NELSON, head of the School of Architecture, Boston Architectural College

Sir Banister Fletcher’s A History of Architecture The foremost history of Western architecture, extensively illustrated.

A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction by Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein. A compendium of pieces that, when linked through examination of the natural world, create wholes, to the delight of the people who use buildings.

The Architecture of Happiness by Alain de Botton. A small and personal analysis of the features of architecture that bring joy into our lives.

The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment by Lawrence Halprin. Architecture as the choreography of people in the built landscape.

DIANE GEORGOPULOS FAIA, MassHousing

The Shingle Style and the Stick Style by Vincent J. Scully, Jr. Changed how we see 19th-century architecture and how we design in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The Highway and the City by Lewis Mumford. Passionate and eloquent essays; why don’t we write and argue about architecture like this today?

The Power Broker by Robert A. Caro. The best book ever written on how the American city is built and unbuilt.

Hav by Jan Morris. A tantalizing travel guide to a city you never heard of.

Up in the Old Hotel by Joseph Mitchell. Nobody looks more closely, listens more carefully, or writes better about New York.

JAY WICKERSHAM FAIA, Noble & Wickersham

Chicagoisms: The City as Catalyst for Architectural Speculation by Alexander Eisenschmidt and Jonathan Mekinda. That rare book able to interest both academics and nonarchitect city lovers, “Chicagoisms” is a catalog of smart, readable essays and illustrated interludes uncovering the city’s appetite for the spectacular (Ferris’ wheel, Burnham’s Plan, Kapoor’s *Cloud Gate*), balanced with fascinating new scholarship on, among other things, Chicago’s surprisingly large influence on European urban theory.

Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan by Rem Koolhaas. Before S, M, L, XL, there was *Delirious*, the book that made Rem’s name. In his hands, New York becomes remythologized as a gridiron palimpsest of architectural capitalism.

From Bauhaus to Our House by Tom Wolfe. Wolfe’s retelling of the Modern Movement is acerbic, hilarious, and often wrong, but a useful reminder to architects of the suspicion Modernism still arouses in America.

Architecture in the United States by Dell Upton. Less a comprehensive history than a project to reclaim architecture from architects, Upton’s wry prose casts a gimlet eye onto the pretensions of

“art-architecture” from the colonial era to the present.

The Details of Modern Architecture, Volumes 1 and 2 by Edward R. Ford. As the pioneering Modernists were inventing new forms, so were they inventing new constructional methods. Ford’s astonishingly researched study, illustrated with invaluable drawings, reveals the ingenuity of this ad hoc tectonic, as well as its misalignment with Modernist rhetoric.

IAN BALDWIN, *lecturer at Rhode Island School of Design*

A Guide to Archigram 1961–74 by Dennis Crompton. The impact of the Archigram project was in shifting the architectural site of inquiry from the building and urban scale to a smaller human scale and then scaling up again. In 1994, when the first edition of this monograph was released, students were still wrestling with Deconstruction and the fallout of Postmodernism. Archigram filled a void that many of us felt in attempting to engage architecture at a more human, visceral level—one where the human/user was integral to a larger system of factors and networks.

Incorporations (Zone 6) by Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter. What Archigram seemed to prefigure in technological and mechanical terms at the scale of the body, *Incorporations* more deeply addressed through explorations in biology, neurology, art, and film. This edited collection of “dossiers” spoke directly to the idea that the body was not necessarily becoming a site of architecture, but that organism of the body, in all its complexity, was precisely the site of architecture. At a deeper level, the book planted the idea that a failure to think this way was quickly becoming a failure to think architecturally at all.

LEE MOREAU, *principal at Continuum*

The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses by Juhani Pallasmaa. The first

half is the history of how we have developed, since the Greeks, as a culture around sight; the second half is about how architecture (together with landscape) can awaken our other senses—smell, touch, hearing. Written by a Finnish writer/philosopher with great examples that span art, design, and buildings.

TAMARA ROY AIA, *principal at ADD Inc*

Riding the Iron Rooster: By Train Through China by Paul Theroux. Experience the lesser-known China by rail at the juncture of socioeconomic upheaval, through the eyes of a prolific travel writer who details people, places, and ambiance with brutal honesty.

Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino. Imaginary conversations between the Venetian traveler Marco Polo and the aged Mongol ruler Kublai Khan frame approaches to thinking about cities and the forms they might take.

SHO-PING CHIN FAIA, *principal at Payette*

Design with Nature by Ian L. McHarg. Post-Katrina and Sandy, McHarg’s vision of communities hugging the high ground while floodplains are used to manage water flow and provide productive land for agriculture is more relevant than ever.

TASCHEN’s Architecture Now! series by Philip Jodidio. Essential catalogs of the best work globally, these inspiring books represent an efficient means of instruction across the design professions.

CHARLOTTE KAHN, *former research analyst at The Boston Foundation*

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Why Architecture Matters by Paul Goldberger. Raises awareness of proportion, scale, space, texture, materials, shapes, light, and memory; in doing so, readers appreciate and experience the built world anew.

Fifty Typefaces That Changed the World by John L. Walters. A witty discussion about the meaning and influence of type, from the ancient world to the digital future.

A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America’s Domestic Architecture by Virginia Savage McAlester. An invaluable easy-to-use resource for everyone who wants to know more about the culture and history of their own homes and communities.

The Elements of Typographic Style by Robert Bringhurst. A typographer-poet combines the practical, theoretical, and historical in this masterful style guide.

The Library: A World History by James W. P. Campbell; photographs by Will Pryce. Each age and culture has reinvented the library, and this combination of authoritative text and stunning photography illuminates the story in a single volume.

The Devil in the White City by Erik Larson. This irresistible, deeply researched true story parallels Daniel H. Burnham’s meticulous construction of the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair with the diabolical building plans of H.H. Holmes, a fraudster and serial killer who exploited the fair for riches—and victims.

Design Writing Research: Writing on Graphic Design by Ellen Lupton and J. Abbott Miller. This beautifully illustrated study is a vital source on the art and history of books, letter forms, symbols, advertising, and theories of visual and verbal communication.

101 Things I Learned in Architecture School by Matthew Frederick. A jargon-free zone of clarity and utility. Not a substitute for a master’s degree, but an invaluable supplement.

For more recommendations, visit architectureboston.com, or email editor@architects.org to send us your picks.

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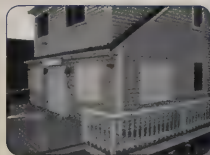
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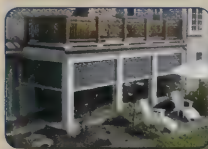
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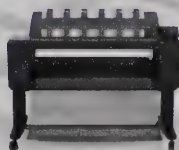


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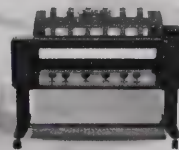
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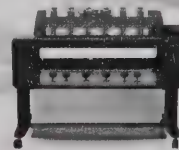
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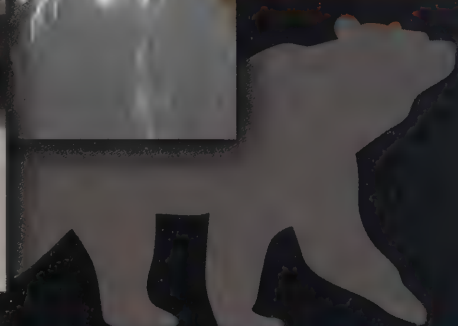
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IN A DEEPENING ROOM

ROBERT PINSKY is former poet laureate of the United States.

BELOW

A man reads in a mosque in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, 2006.
© Steve McCurry/Magnum Photos.

Long ago I had a friend, an English professor, who as a child read every book in the one-room public library of her small town. That little town in the South, to its credit, appointed the child to be town librarian and gave her a budget for buying new books. One day—her birthday, as it happened—she had agreed to give a lecture for some rich donors to the college where she was teaching. Most of those people were supporters of the not-yet-disgraced Richard Nixon, who was about to be reelected president of the United States. It seemed an awful way to spend a birthday, but she gave it her best effort. I wrote *Library Scene* for her.



Library Scene

To P.S.

Under the ceiling of metal stamped like plaster
Under the ceiling fan, in the brown luster

Someone is reading, in the sleepy room
Alert, her damp cheek balanced on one palm,

With knuckles loosely holding back the pages
Or fingers waiting lightly at their edges.

Her eyes are like the eyes of someone attending
To a fragile work, familiar and demanding—

Some work of delicate surfaces and threads.
Someone is reading the way a rare child reads,

A kind of changeling reading for love of reading,
For love and for the course of something leading

Her child's intelligent soul through its inflection:
A force, a kind of loving work or action.

Someone is reading in a deepening room
Where something happens, something that will come

To happen again, happening as many times
As she is reading in as many rooms.

What happens outside that calm like water braiding
Over green stones? The ones of little reading,

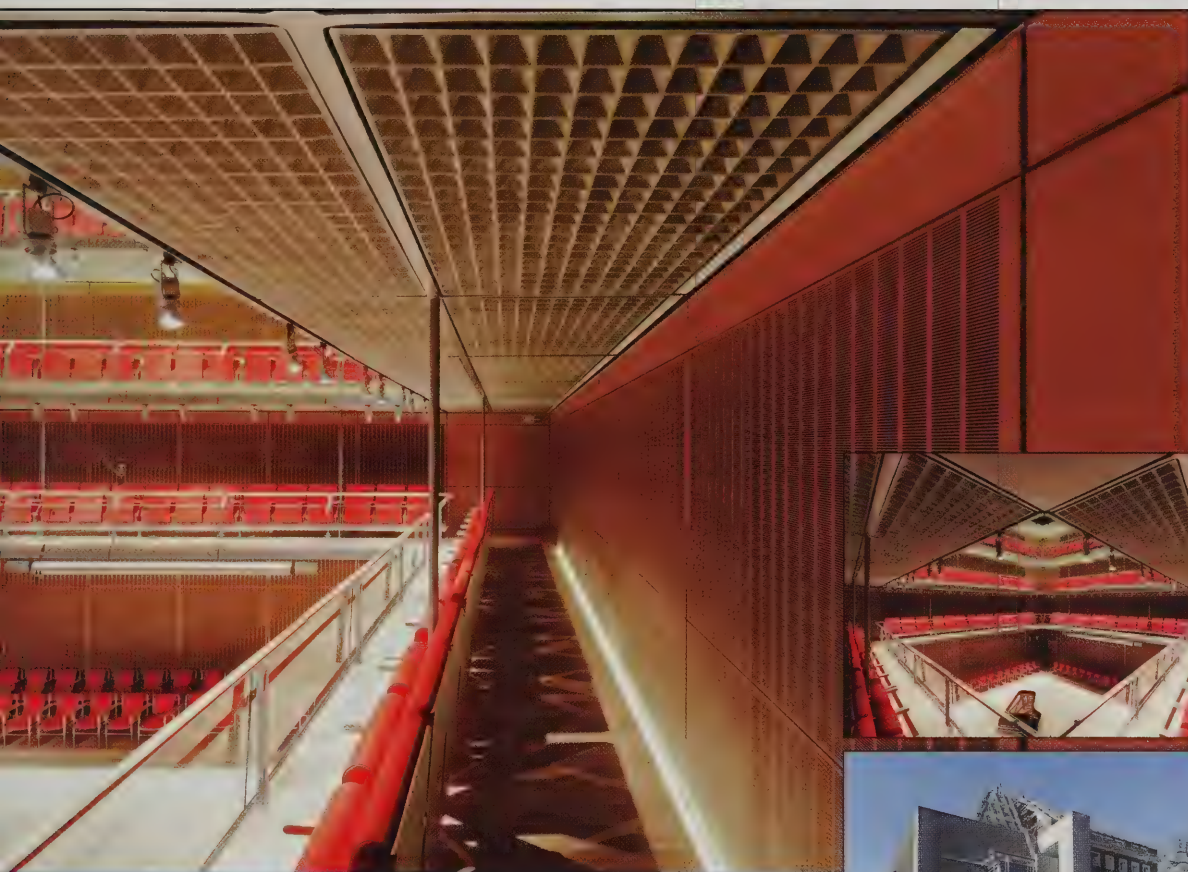
Or who never read for love, are many places.
They are in the house of power, and many houses

Reading as they do, doing what they do.
Or it happens that they come, at times, to you

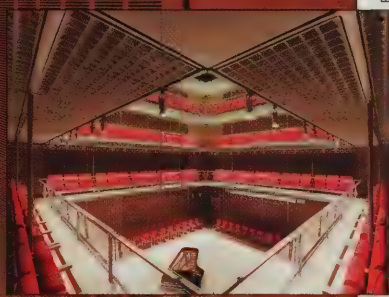
Because you are somehow someone that they need:
They come to you and you tell them how you read. ■

“Renzo Piano is an absolute master of light and lightness. His structures are very elegant, very humanistic. They grow out of understanding how buildings go together and how light comes through them.”

Richard Rogers, Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners LLP



Photos, top: ©Benjamin Johnson/Shawmut Design & Construction



Photo, inset above: Peter Vanderwerker



© Payette. Photo: Rashad Boniabbasi

Crafted by Mark Richey Woodworking. Top: Calderwood Hall, The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Rift white oak acoustical panels. Bottom: The Harvard Art Museums, during renovation and expansion, showing the new addition. Facade and sliding wood panels crafted from Alaskan yellow cedar. Moveable panels on north and south sides control the flow of natural light.



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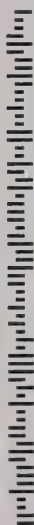
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A photograph of three people—two men and one woman—leaning over a table, intently studying a large set of architectural blueprints. The man on the right, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, is pointing at a specific section of the plans. The woman in the middle, with blonde hair, is looking on with focus. The man on the left, wearing a plaid shirt, is also looking down at the documents. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an office or construction site environment.

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BODY

ABOVE

The Measure(s) of Man, 2011, from *Beautiful Users*. Courtesy of the designer, Thomas Carpentier.

COVER

Cocoon, Tanya Shukstelinsky's 2012 project at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, defines the space between two sheets of cloth with stitches to create a multistory dwelling for dense urban spaces. Photo: Tanya Shukstelinsky.



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truant
CONSTRUCTION
MANAGERS

architect STERN MCCAFFERTY
photo Eric Roth

BUILT FOR COMFORT

Earlier this year, the Royal Academy of Arts in London mounted an ambitious show called *Sensing Spaces: Architecture Reimagined*. Covering 23,000 square feet, it featured large-scale installations from seven global design firms, all investigating how architecture engages the senses and affects the human spirit. The show was well received: Reviews described the installations as provoking the impulse to explore, creating a sense of freedom, or playing with notions of memory and perception. Still, it seems odd that a blockbuster exhibition would be needed to remind us what we already know, quite literally, in our bones: that without our bodily selves to experience it, a built space is only a box of stale air.

This issue of *ArchitectureBoston* explores the relationship between the human body and the world it lives in. Many of the articles gently prod designers to think more deeply about the people who will inhabit a space: how they will move through it, how it will make them feel. In “Body as mind,” Craig Edward Dykers of Snøhetta explores the way certain design choices work on our subconscious, nudging us toward civility, reflection, or action. Landscape architect Mikyoung Kim hails successful public spaces that enlist all the human senses, not just the visual. The five opening essays comprising “Touch points” all in some way look at the performative aspects of the body: In dance, sculpture, yoga, urban design, and fashion, the built environment can be a catalyst—or an obstacle.

Too often architecture serves masters other than the people—the imperatives of the site, the demands of clients, the bottom line. Bodies are almost an afterthought, mere smudged figures on a rendering, barely more animated than the benches or trees. When designers forget about the people, the results can be humbling. Think of the informal “desire lines” that pedestrians create by bushwhacking their way to a destination, defying neat theories about “circulation.” The best-laid grids of architects and planners go astray.

Perhaps the problem lies in nomenclature. We speak of the human *form*, but this is an abstract, even fossilized way of looking at the body. It is

never fixed or static; even when a person “holds” a yoga pose, the body is making constant micro-adjustments. As architecture professor Galen Cranz notes in her illuminating article on the chair (“Sitting, still”), the rigid, right-angle posture is deeply inhuman. There are no straight lines in the body. And yet architecture is mostly straight lines.

One good way to reconcile a body’s curves with a building’s angles is through movement. Designing for movement is sometimes head-smackingly obvious: Add sidewalks, make the stairs bright and inviting, employ movable furniture. (Being able to pick up a café chair and choose where to sit—out of the sun or away from a band of noisy teenagers—helps people feel more in control of their environments and therefore safer.) Sometimes the design is so subtle as to be nearly invisible: clear sightlines, paving materials, the placement of a stair or counter can do more to orient a person than any sign reading “This way.”

The advent of the Americans with Disabilities Act has compelled architects to think pragmatically about how bodies will move through their spaces, but as Ellen Lupton and Josh Safdie discuss in “User friendly,” we are all “differently abled” at one time or another, whether we are left-handed, using a wheelchair, nearsighted, or short. That’s the profound idea behind universal design.

Objects—a spoon, a handle, a keyboard—can be beautiful but must be functional. Buildings are more complicated. They need to stand up straight. But they also must be agile, to function for countless diverse users: employees, visitors, neighbors, children. It isn’t always rational or neat: People can be unruly. But isn’t that the joy of designing? A building occupies a space. Only the addition of people make it a place. ■

Renée Loth
Editor



PHOTO: BERT SNAIGER



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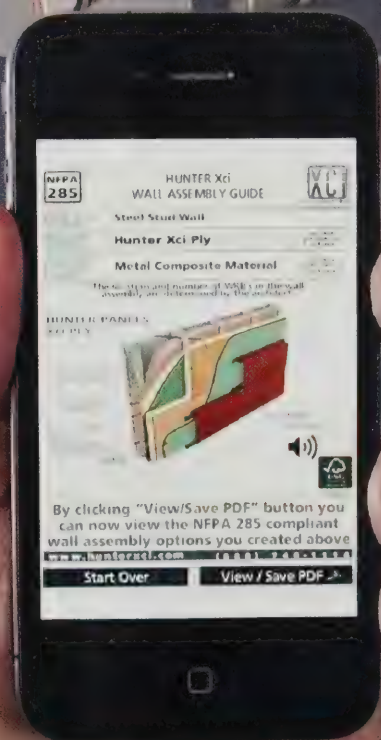


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ON “BOOKS” (SUMMER 2014)

For many years it has been clear that the way people read, think, learn, and teach is being redefined, and libraries everywhere are at the forefront of such change. Ian Baldwin’s “Big Glass” article challenges readers to think about libraries’ architectural identity, now and into the future. The traditional role of libraries simply as a place with books and furniture is being transformed. In Ray Bradbury’s words, a library is indeed an “outlet to the universe.”

At the Boston Public Library, where a major renovation is under way in the Johnson building at the Central Library in Copley Square, the BPL team has joined with the community to think about our own transformation of library services; it is our services that drive the design of our space.

Through in-person meetings, blog posts, social media, and other conversations, the questions that emerge are wide ranging: How does a public library’s physical building welcome people of all ages and from all walks of life? How does the program balance protection of unique, rare materials while fostering unfettered access to scholarly works? How can the design of a children’s area nurture brain development and the joy of reading? How prominent are digital images and interactive art displays? These discussions have informed the progression of the building’s architectural identity.

As the transformation of the Central Library progresses, the most important partnership is the one forged among the architect, the library, and the public. As Baldwin writes, the local library is about the “oft-praised commodity, ‘community.’”

AMY E. RYAN

President, Boston Public Library
Boston

In “Big Glass,” Ian Baldwin observes a trend in contemporary library design, where the curtainwall is used as “exterior code for an interior devoted to open participation and information access.” He draws a parallel between the use of glass and corporatism, and implores the public

library to “distinguish itself from the common and thoughtless abuses of Big Glass by further articulating the spaces deployed on the inside.”

When architects talk about glass in the contemporary context, we often use terms like “open,” “transparent,” and “welcoming” and, in contrast, words like “corporate,” “cold,” and “mean.” Regardless of how it is described, glass has become a fallback to suggest something contemporary—a departure from what’s already there or a new beginning on a blank canvas. Working in historic contexts and attempting to break the traditional mold by doing something glassy and transparent has become a bit of a trope. It’s easier to imagine a glass box than it is to design something original that both responds to and departs from its context. In truth, glass is not necessarily welcoming. For most of the day, it’s reflective, and at night, it puts the inhabitants on display.

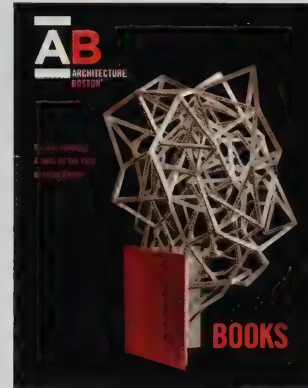
This doesn’t mean that glass is bad, but the way architects typically talk about it is fraught. There are also many examples of welcoming and transparent buildings that do not rely entirely on glass or use it differently. Maybe the issue is that, as architects, we’ve bought into Bruno Taut’s exclamation too wholeheartedly, without looking at the implications critically: “In the distance shines our tomorrow. Hurray, three times hurray for our kingdom without force! Hurray for the transparent, the clear! Hurray for purity! Hurray for crystal!” (*Down With Seriousism!* 1920).

Library design should first take into account the strategy and mission of the library. How will the library be used by patrons? Is its role one of civic prominence? Openness? Quiet retreat? All of these?

Design solutions, including volume and material, must serve these values first. Each project, while not immune from trends in library design, is unique and must be treated as such.

TAD JUSCZYK AIA

MARY HALE ASSOC. AIA
Shepley Bulfinch
Boston



Many thanks to Mimi Love (“House of straw, house of stereotype”) for drawing attention to the current state of design books for children. Reading is a place where adults and children come together, architects and nonarchitects alike. We need books that make sense to both groups, not in-jokes aimed at hipster parents or infantilizing tales of damsels in distress. The danger in some contemporary books is not just that stereotypes will be furthered (though this is certainly the case with *Iggy Peck, Architect* and its sequel, the tale of his anxiety-ridden classmate *Rosie Revere, Engineer*) but that the built environment won’t be explored together, won’t become a topic of bedtime conversation or of childhood imagination.

Children’s books, in architecture and other fields, need to satisfy children and adults, but such texts also need to be honest about how we interpret the history of the built environment today. David Macaulay’s *Cathedral*—wonderful in its own way, but now more than 40 years old—leaves the impression that women barely existed in medieval France. Newer publications, like Peter Brown’s *The Curious Garden* and Melissa Sweet’s *Balloons over Broadway* (the former is a story of a boy who dreams of a High Line–like urban park; the latter, an illustrated biography of the puppeteer who designed Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade) are outside the narrowest definition of architecture, but they both show children and young adults reimagining the city around them in a creative and engaging manner. Both tales encourage readers to imagine

themselves invested in the design and use of the built environment and of civic life. These are the kinds of books we need, for boys and for girls. Architecture should follow suit.

VICTORIA SOLAN

*Society of Architectural Historians,
New England Chapter
Brookline, Massachusetts*

In "Digital doorway," Anne [Whiston] Spirn suggests that "[w]e are in the midst of a Gutenberg moment, with e-publishing comparable to the invention of the printing press." Spirn's comparison is common these days, largely because of its undeniable appeal. In her seminal study of the impact of printing technology in the Renaissance (*"The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe"*), historian Elizabeth Eisenstein argues that the greatest change was not the enlargement of the reading public, but the transformation of *how* people read. Printing technology catalyzed the emergence of a new kind of reader, and it was not coincidental that these new readers developed a voracious appetite for books on architecture (among other subjects seldom treated in earlier epochs).

Today we see our own reading practices undergoing a similar metamorphosis, and we squint, hoping to discern a dim outline of the readers we are becoming. Spirn's sensitive comments on the interplay among words, images, and digital technology shed useful light on our path forward—a light made brighter and richer when partnered with a fuller understanding of the fragile historical conditions that have made architecture a bookish concern.

JONATHAN POWERS

Montreal

This morning I downloaded a copy of the e-book title on Shoei Yoh's Odawara Gymnasium, published by the Canadian Centre for Architecture.

It's part of a series initiated on its exhibition *Archaeology of the Digital*, which documents the rise of digital architecture. Its editing, design, and distribution is a potent expression of the hopes that we have for [the] future of the book—that it participates in the exchange of ideas where they are occurring so that their access is maximized—but also points out some qualities inherent to the medium in its current state. I notice images being limited in size, which in the case of plans or sections is troubling, but this is partially a function of the device size; some tradeoffs are made for portability. On the other hand, the inclusion of an introductory video interview with Yoh increases intimacy with the ideas and is a major qualitative addition. I've read the book at home, on the subway, and sitting in the park, moving back and forth between a tablet and a phone. This book (and many, many others) can be with me all the time. Opportunities, indeed.

So there are pluses and minuses that the medium creates, making it really no different than any other medium. (In other words, no monsters here, just qualities to recognize.) What we need to do is continue to explore those potentials that will give us the ability to document, communicate, and archive the pursuit of architecture. My work as a book designer and in my Yale School of Architecture seminar, "Books and Architecture," is to find and intensify the linkages between architecture and the book. Until now, our work has largely been pursued in the form of printed matter, but I know now more than ever we should shift some of our focus to the many potentials of the screen. If we can say that design is about projecting in the future, then it seems only logical to engage in emerging technology.

There will always be a place for the printed book—we love objects—but to pursue only them would be to lose an opportunity.

LUKE BULMAN

Thumb

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IN THIS ISSUE



PHOTO: Alan Humphreys

Matthew Bronski PE ("Intelligent design," page 40) is an engineer and associate principal at Simpson Gumpertz & Heger in Waltham. His work involves diagnosing the causes and consequences of structural and envelope problems in historic buildings, and designing sensitive and appropriate repairs and restorations to solve those problems. In 2009 he received the National Endowment for the Arts Rome Prize in Historic Preservation and Conservation.



PHOTO: Marlynn Morhead

Galen Cranz ("Sitting, still," page 36), a professor of architecture at the University of California at Berkeley, is a PhD sociologist, designer, and advocate for body-conscious design. She is a certified teacher of the Alexander Technique system of postural education and author of *The Chair: Rethinking Culture, Body, and Design*.



PHOTO: Snøhetta

Craig Edward Dykers AIA ("Body as mind," page 32) is a founding partner of Snøhetta. He has led many of the office's projects, including the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet, the National September 11 Memorial Museum Pavilion, the redesign of New York City's Times Square, and the expansion of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. His interest in design as a promoter of social and physical well-being is supported by ongoing observation and development of an innovative design process.

Josh Safdie ASSOC. AIA and Ellen Lupton ("Conversation," page 44)



PHOTO: Courtesy of Josh Safdie

Josh Safdie ASSOC. AIA selects and manages architectural and multidisciplinary consulting and design projects as director of the Institute for Human Centered Design Studio in Boston. He has lectured in the United States and abroad on the intersection between social interaction and architectural space.



PHOTO: Sally Foster

Ellen Lupton, a writer, curator, and graphic designer, is director of the Graphic Design MFA program and the Center for Design Thinking at Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. She is also the senior curator of contemporary design at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum.

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Opinions and Observations



GENIUS LOCI

Turkish delights

Although architects obsess over individual buildings, all of us quietly concede that no one project makes a civic space. We understand that the spaces between and the accretion of small infill projects, additions, and activities make the urban community coalesce. However, buildings do play certain roles, as edifice or infrastructure. For me, an important aspect has long been how they talk to one another.

In Boston we have several interesting architectural conversations taking place. The gentlemanly John Hancock tower suavely stands at Copley, waiting while Trinity Church sits demurely at the table. Our somewhat overbearing and bureaucratic Boston City Hall looms ponderously across Congress Street, attempting to intimidate the very democratic Faneuil Hall. Along the high spine, the Prudential Center and 111 Huntington politely tip their architectural hats to the Mother Church. Elsewhere across Back Bay, the flocks of smaller Victorian brownstones all speak with one another in the special language of siblings. That family is our city, and the conversation continues.

It's always been something of a cliché for an architect to say he or she was inspired to the profession through a building, but it does happen. For me, it was high school in Turkey, after General Electric sent my family to live in Istanbul. My art instructor, on hearing about my interest in mathematics or physics, decided to introduce me to architecture. Special teachers sometimes take that

extra step. He accompanied me on a visit to the dean at the Technical University. The dean in turn insisted I visit Ayasofya (Hagia Sophia) and Sultan Ahmed Mosque (Blue Mosque), architectural masterpieces facing each other across a green park inside the city walls of old Stamboul.

What a conversation! For the architect who tends to the heroic, they provide two iconic structures, each the epitome of an architectural era. From a cultural perspective, they expose the complexities of great religions and of decorative styles. Through a political lens, they illustrate the clash of empires between Europe and Asia. These two have a lot to say.

Ayasofya started this very diverse dialogue. From its construction in 537, it was an Eastern Orthodox cathedral. After the Fourth Crusade in 1204, it became a Catholic cathedral for 57 years and then went back to being the seat of the Patriarch of Constantinople. With the Ottoman conquest by Sultan Mehmet II in 1453, it became a mosque. Originally, Roman Emperor Justinian I had this solid edifice designed by a Greek mathematician and a physicist (!), and for nearly a thousand years, it was the largest dome of any cathedral in the world.

Across the park, the elegant Sultan Ahmed Mosque joined the discourse 150 years after Ayasofya became a mosque. It is pure Ottoman and considered the last great mosque of the Classical period. It is unique in proudly displaying six

minarets and enjoys its own landscaped internal courtyard; and its enormous interior volume is covered in rich blue Iznik tiles, giving the Blue Mosque its popular name.

However, the surprise that captured my teenage attention was Topkapi. Just behind the bold banter between these two religious giants is this sprawling palace, home for 400 years to captivating Ottoman sultans. Topkapi was established first, appearing well before the current more flamboyant and monumental buildings. Much of the 600-year Ottoman empire (from the mid-400s to the mid-1800s) was spent adding and aggregating to this complex.

Unlike my Western palace preconceptions, Topkapi was chaotic and full of the sense of life. I loved that it was such a mash-up of styles and impossible to see all of it together. Through the asymmetrical courtyards, unrolling into the harem, hospital, mint, dormitories, counsel chambers, and all the everyday "stuff" needed for a population of nearly 4,000, Topkapi was a delight to explore. This sense of surprise and discovery turned out to be the very public conversation I wanted to get in on.

PETER KUTTNER FAIA, president of Cambridge Seven Associates, is currently working on museums in China and the Middle East. He recently returned to the gates of Topkapi.

ABOVE
Illustration: Peter Kuttner.

SEEN

Elk, Texas, 2011

We had flown to Waco, Texas, for my wife's sister's wedding. The day before the big event, I was sitting around bored while the families visited. Since I had always wanted to see the site of the Branch Davidian compound east of Waco, I grabbed my nephew and headed out, knowing only the general direction in which it was located. Through the towns of Bellmead and then over to Axtell, and finally to the village of Elk, I made a number of images that afternoon, but this old store in Elk stood out to me. These structures represent a time when our culture had a more enduring, simpler, and slower pace of life. Most old buildings are obscure and transitory, not hidden, but are seldom noticed by the passerby. It's out on these back roads, identified by William Least Heat-Moon in his book, *Blue Highways*, that I find the signs and symbols of man combine with the ever-present and ever-changing symbols of nature to reveal an enigmatic picture of life.

Landscape photographer **FRANK ARMSTRONG** teaches digital and analog photography at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts.

BELOW

Photo: Frank Armstrong.



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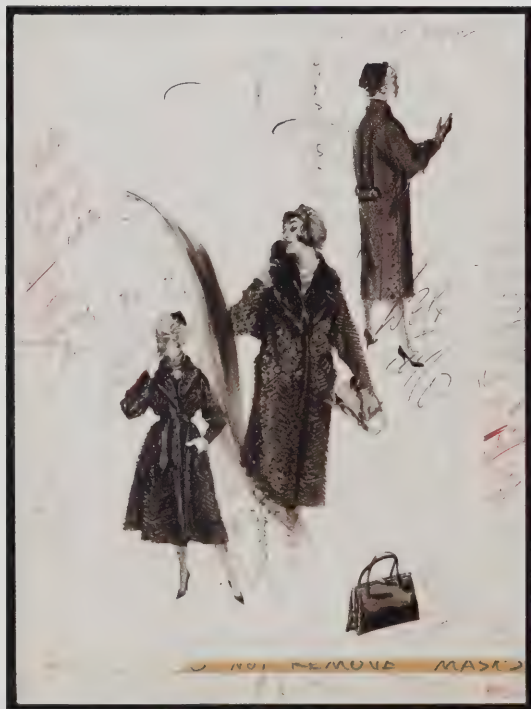
How can something with only 26 letters reveal the MFA's encyclopedic collection and also illuminate nearly 500 years of the design process? Curator Meghan Melvin tackles this mind-bender in *D Is for Design*, an exhibition of European and American design drawings on display in the Clementine Brown Gallery.

There is a lovely resonance between the changing experience of the physical gallery—at times humming with visitors and in other moments quite hushed—and the vastly different, mostly two-dimensional, works on display. On only four walls and in 30 works, Melvin captivates our attention with a modest exhibition that feels supersized.

The exhibition is arranged from “A,” for Arts and Crafts designer C.R. Ashbee, to “Z,” for silversmith Franz Zwollo. With thousands of works from the collection to choose from, a magazine cover design by Frank Lloyd Wright for “W” and a border design for a printed volume of picturesque voyages by architect and theorist Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc for “V” emerge as astute selections of not-so-familiar work from some quite familiar individuals. Particularly thoughtful is the “un-framing” of some works: For Ilya Bologtowsky's sketch of a 350-square-foot Works Progress Administration–commissioned mural, the curator has pulled back the mat, revealing handwritten annotations that bring us further into the individual artist's design process.

The experience of moving through the gallery—whether examining violin design, set design, or something as small as a brooch to as large as an entire city block—was like tasting one amuse-bouche after another. Using the wall text as a guide, you will enjoy a bit of history, a bit of biography, and a bit of context with each visual morsel.

IRENE HWANG is the director of exhibitions and publications at Massachusetts Institute of Technology's School of Architecture and Planning.



LEFT

Three models wearing winter coats, by Alice Yuskowski, in graphite pencil, blue pencil, marker, watercolor, gouache; gift of Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts.



Public Space? Lost & Found

Lobby, MIT Media Lab

Through October 30, 2014

Public space occupies multiple places in our collective consciousness of the city. Prosaically, it permits shopping, relaxing, or simply passing through, whether on foot or in a car. Urbanists often see a design opportunity to reshape public activity and city form. And the civic-minded see a building block of democratic society, whether through protest or simply speaking freely.

Public space is all those things, but it is also much more. The current exhibition *Public Space? Lost & Found* in MIT's Media Lab shares contemporary perspectives on public space through the eyes of professor of practice Antoni Muntadas, recently retired, and several years of student projects from his seminar “Public Space.” The exhibition's direct questions—Who? What? Where?—are answered by projects ranging from performance to narrative, from video to installation. Some annotate iconic public spaces; others occupy modest, generic, or virtual space.

Animating many projects is a conviction of public space's ability to communicate additional and multiple meanings beyond its current range. Some are didactic; public space should say this, one must be aware of that. But this hardly diverts from the esthetic and intellectual generosity of Muntadas and his students' enterprise or its outcomes.

The exhibition design by professor Gediminas Urbonas shares public space's semiotic quality. Its billboards are cheerful signs livening up a minimalist space and providing ample room for additional content and interpretation behind. The exhibit's location in a quasi-public lobby provides diverse passersby the chance to experience public space's many meanings.

BRENT D. RYAN is associate professor of urban design and public policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His book, *Design After Decline*, was published in 2012.

ABOVE

Installation view of *Public Space? Lost & Found*. Photo: John Kennard/MIT.

MATTER OF COURSE

The House: Regionalism in a Global Environment

I love to attend architecture lectures. Not so long ago I scored a difficult-to-obtain ticket to a Moshe Safdie talk at the Museum of Fine Arts. That featured an insider's explication of his new Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas and ended with an immodest reading of the maestro's poetry. Which wasn't half bad.

A great architecture talk can resemble a perfect movie, that is, beautiful images interacting with an erudite script. So here is my review of what felt like a festival of Oscar-nominated shorts: Jeremiah Eck's summer seminar at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, devoted to the humble building block of architecture, the house. This year's theme, sometimes addressed, occasionally ignored, was "Regionalism in a Global Environment."

A successful architect and landscape painter who exudes a folksy, patrician air, Eck runs the seminar like a lion tamer. He balances the considerable egos of his accomplished lecturers with judicious questioning, and solicits—and gets—participation from the audience of about 60 architects.

Eck kicked off this year's seminar with a question: Does regionalism still play a role in residential housing, or have we sunk to building "a sort of iHouse, that is universally accepted and app-adapted to [a] particular place or set of needs?...Isn't a sense of place, or a sense of region, the most important attribute a house can have?"

Architect Matthew Elliott of Blue Hill, Maine, answered that question with a resounding yes. Elliott showed one of his early home designs, a pretty baby-blue shingled job that might be found anywhere in the Northeast. Then he veered into more interesting work, inspired by the serial layout of the traditional Maine farm—main house, summer kitchen, barn, outbuilding—and showed how he used that template to transform a small Cape from a claustrophobic, inward-facing box into a bright daisy chain of garden-facing rooms.

Elliott also showed us a dramatic, over-the-water footprint he inherited for a residential home makeover on Mount Desert Island, called the Pond House. Here, the Elliots—he practices with his wife, Elizabeth—channeled the layout of Maine's ubiquitous wharf buildings, with freestanding structures (a sail loft, a repair shop) perched above a tidal flat. The Elliots' client agreed to have the living area in a separate building from the sleeping quarters, so it was not uncommon for family

members to dash through a driving rainstorm or winter squall to get to their bedrooms. "They saw it as a character-building exercise," Elliott deadpanned.

Michael Imber, born on the barren flatlands of West Texas, proved to be a second powerful voice for regionalism. An avid sketcher and an accomplished watercolorist, Imber, now based in San Antonio, showed many of his Western-themed homes, almost all of them style-checking adobe construction, hacienda towers, stockyard gates, or other key components of Spanish and/or cowboy vernacular.

One of his most successful and understated creations was the Butcher House, a one-room-wide ranch home closely modeled on the 19th-century German "Sunday house." That was a small, second home that many rural farmers built to accommodate their weekend supply-purchasing trips into town. The Butcher House, Imber's first residential commission, won an AIA Honor Award in 2005.

Noting the succession of Western- and Spanish-themed slides, Eck playfully asked Imber: "Do you think you could do a house in Ohio?"

"Ohio would be hard," Imber replied.

A great movie has a great ending, in this case Peter Bohlin's two-hour-long bravura presentation of recent work. Bohlin, best known for designing Apple's distinctive US retail stores, and Bill Gates' Lake Washington mansion in Seattle, showed homes from such diverse locales as Lake Michigan; Aspen, Colorado; Block Island, Rhode Island; and the Rhode Island seashore.

Bohlin's portfolio, which he generally categorized as "soft Modernism," reminded the audience of one architectural ingredient that transcends regionalism in the bespoke residential marketplace: wealth. Although Bohlin did display a charming 1,100-square-foot cabin he was building for a friend outside Seattle, more typical of his work was a massive, James Bond-style aerie he recently completed for a London-based financier in Whistler, British Columbia.

When he showed the home's infinity pool cantilevered above a 60-foot precipice, Bohlin asked out loud: "Is this moral? I don't know." I don't know, either. But it was an interesting question and a provocative end to a great show.

ALEX BEAM'S book *American Crucifixion*, about the death of Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, was published this year.

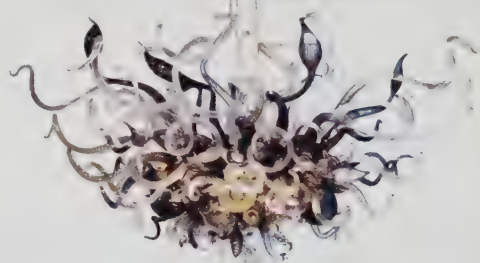


ABOVE FROM TOP

A 19th-century Cape Cod footprint in Maine reinterpreted for modern minimalism by Matthew Elliott. Photo: Wayne N. T. Fuji'i/Fuji'iMage.

Pond House, in Maine, also by Matthew Elliott, was inspired by fishing shacks and wharf architecture. Photo: Tom Crane Photography.

Butcher Ranch in Texas, by Michael Imber, was modeled on 19th-century German second homes. Photo: Erik Kvalsvik.



The Radeke Restoration Project

The Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence

June 12, 2014

With the opening of the Donghia Costume and Textile Gallery and rooms that house collections of Asian and Middle Eastern art, the RISD Museum wrapped up an \$8.4 million renovation and modernization process begun in 2006.

So, on a warm Thursday evening, museum members were invited to visit rooms closed to us for more than a year. We walked through newly organized, climate-controlled, neatly detailed spaces. Prosecco and hors d'oeuvres were served in the stairwell, under the renovated laylight. (No food or drink in the galleries, please.)

The highlight of the evening, and the purpose of the event, was a series of descriptive talks given by members of the curatorial staff. Here, the logic behind the organization of the collections and the display of objects was presented. Keep in mind that RISD is a design school, with a museum attached. And here, in the museum galleries, filled with objects made by past artists and designers, pedagogy is paramount. "Art in the new galleries," says Sarah Ganz Blythe, the museum's director of education, "is arranged in such a way that the role of the artist and the act of making take center stage."

So the emphasis is on materials and on historic art, traditional questions, and possible modern answers. An example: In a small case in the center of a room filled with Egyptian artifacts are five small objects, each representing a different material and craft. (An ancient paint box is one.) This display is an introduction to the art around it, intended to demystify the creative process for the RISD students who visit and who will all face the same problems in one way or another.

Perhaps the most enjoyable moment of the evening occurred during a discussion of a newly displayed Egyptian mummy case, its provenance (the mummy's grandfather is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art), and its location in the room. Pointing to a lighting fixture in the hallway made by former RISD student and teacher Dale Chihuly that appears to be an enormous, writhing nest of asps, the curator ended his talk. As finally positioned, the objects were engaged in a dialogue, the ancient with the modern. One could almost hear Indiana Jones saying: "Snakes. Why'd it have to be snakes?"

JAMES HADLEY AIA, an architect and cartoonist in Providence, has worked in New York City and in Orleans, Massachusetts.

ABOVE

Gilded Frost and Jet Chandelier, 2008, by Dale Chihuly.

Photo: Courtesy of the RISD Museum.

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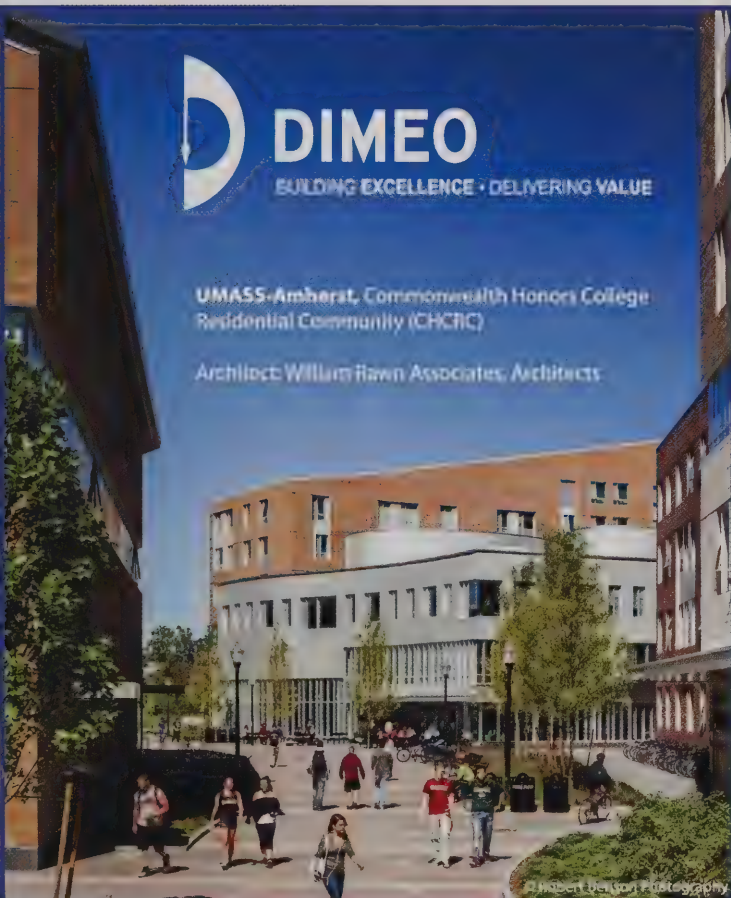


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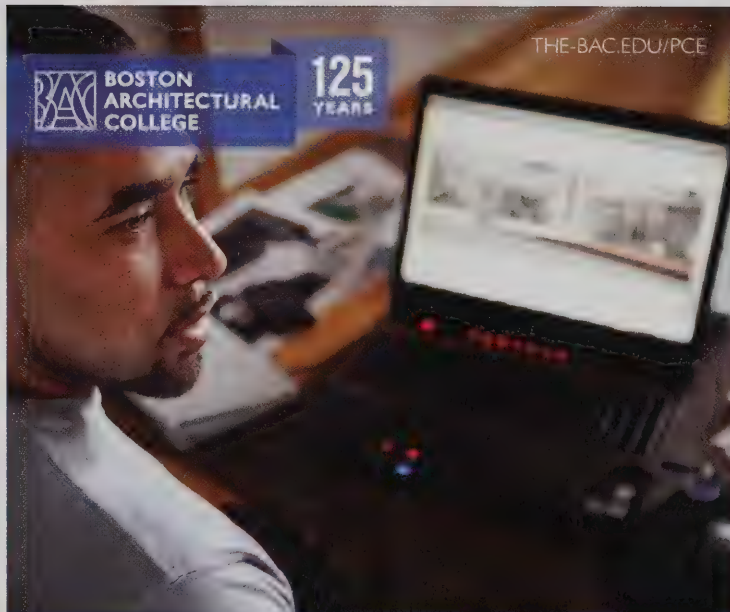
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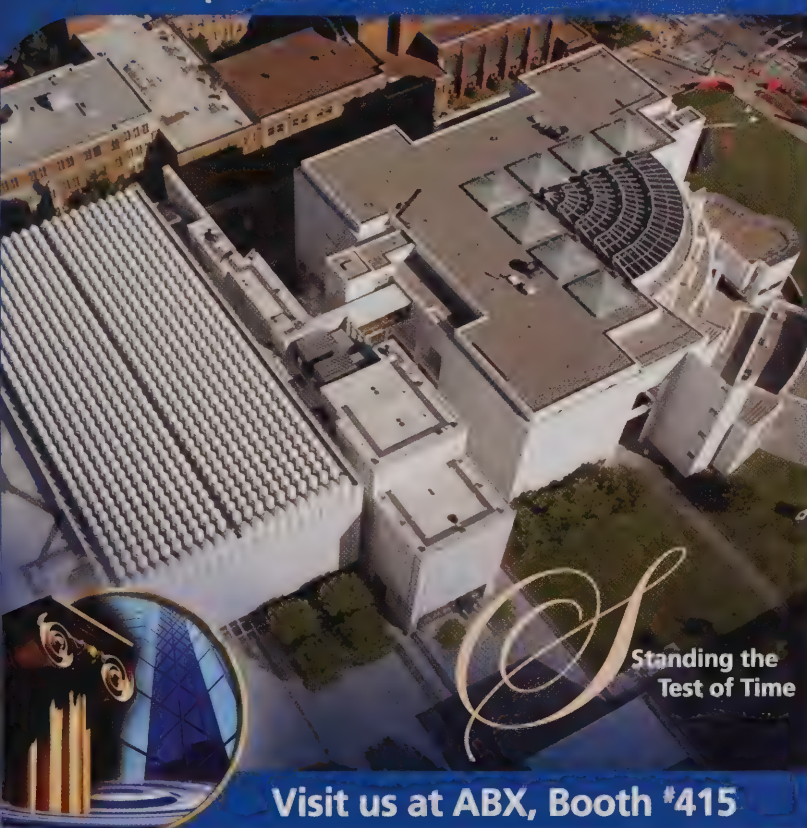


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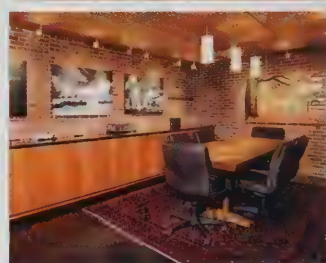


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TOUCH POINTS

You don't have to be Marcus Vitruvius to consider the architecture of the body, its functionality, and its beauty. Artists, designers, body workers, and architects must all pay attention to questions of symmetry and proportion, to the challenge of how bodies navigate through space. When our subconscious softens its reactivity to the dictates of perfection, the body emerges as gloriously imperfect and necessarily mysterious. In contemplating the human form, these five essays find grace in celebrating both internal journeys and external contours.





ARNO RAFAEL MINKKINEN is a Finnish-American photographer and professor at the University of Massachusetts/Lowell. Exhibited, published, and collected worldwide, his reality-based self-portraits in the urban and natural landscape span more than four decades. Photographs courtesy Robert Klein Gallery, Boston.



PUBLIC ART

UNSUSPECTING BODIES, UNEXPECTED INTIMACY

by Katarzyna Balug

I'll never forget the man standing on the platform with his back to the opening door, but I bet everyone else who was on the train has. He braced himself before pushing his way backwards, squishing through shoulders and hips. In Mexico City at rush hour, people were so tightly packed together that his was the only method imaginable to squeeze on board.

Every body follows a conditioned protocol when negotiating space, which differs from place to place. In Mexico, the man's entrance was unremarkable; in Boston, where the sphere of personal space is greater, it may have been unexpectedly "touchy." We move from point A to B lost in thought or our electronic devices, minimally aware of our body in the familiar context. That context, the norms of the world around us, are meant to be ignored.

As an artist, I create situations that produce moments of unexpected intimacy among unsuspecting bodies. Through play and performance, I interrupt the pattern of expected behavior, pulling the public into suspended time. Public space becomes a place to engage with the unknown, to be curious during a moment of fleeting exchange. Here, the regular script pauses, and interaction follows a new rhythm that can transform anonymity into empathy.

In Poland, I created an installation on a truck platform that traveled the postindustrial city of Lodz. Dressed as the forewoman of my mobile *City Factory*, I invited the public to "work" on unproductive tasks requiring collaboration. "Stand back-to-back with a mirror. Walk away until you lose each other's reflections." Strangers who completed the assignments often engaged in conversation, continuing to share the intimate moment that surprised both.

In Boston one winter night, a group of friends and I transformed a busy crosswalk into a momentary stage. Car headlights provided lighting for a canvas as puppets blended with pedestrians, whose shadows became part of the performance. Drivers who caught on turned on their high beams. Pedestrians watched or picked up a puppet, joining the spontaneous show on their way across the street. The city was the stage; its infrastructure, the material that fueled the play.

A body in public space is an instrument, one whose performance is subject to observation, interpretation, intervention. Through mass-transit counters or surveillance cameras, our bodies leave traces; these data points inform algorithms that predict traffic flow or security needs. We curate our experience virtually, geo-tagging our movements and performing "selfies" via smartphones. We people-watch, reveling in the variety of bodies in dense urban centers.

Today we live in closer proximity than ever to people who follow different social and cultural protocols. Public space is where the city's diverse bodies clash. In negotiating the terrain that this diversity brings, we attempt tolerance and a laissez-faire attitude toward the unfamiliar. But is this sufficient?

Art in the public realm produces wrinkles in which norms can be questioned in a way that would be unthinkable in another context. By transforming my body through a costume, an action, or an installation, I provoke you to reflect on yours, to feel yourself in relation to other bodies. Public space becomes a stage to negotiate what it is to be a human with agency. ■

KATARZYNA BALUG is an artist and civic engagement consultant whose toolkit ranges from inflatables to touchscreens to performance. She holds a master's degree in planning from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

OPPOSITE

Kivisaari, Hirvensalmi, Finland, 2007.
© Arno Rafael Minkinen.

ABOVE LEFT

Fosters Pond, 1993.
© Arno Rafael Minkinen.

ABOVE RIGHT

Hirvensalmi, Finland, 2001.
© Arno Rafael Minkinen.

DANCE

RELISH THE SPACE BETWEEN WALLS

by Rozann Kraus

Arms outstretched at her sides, head thrown back, chest open to the sky as she twirls joyously, singing, “The hills are alive...” That scene from *The Sound of Music* resonates because we know how she feels. Open space, pure joy; we dance with her.

Even on a hilltop, Maria’s body defines the infinite potential and majesty of the mountains, the sky, the universe surrounding her. Dance happens in space, any space; its participation helps clarify the potential of the physical boundaries. Dance establishes the here, the focus, the energy, the rhythm; it is the Now.

Dancers both deny and embrace the realities of a defined area. We are tethered by gravity, even as we develop the ability seemingly to defy it. The focus of our movements, both in direction and intent, is affected by where we are. Although a proscenium is demarcated by its three sides, we often bring our own “fourth wall.” Downstage is intimate—the location with the most exposure. Here we share secrets and humor; we are almost part of the audience. Upstage is safe, removed, with all that can be experienced discreetly. Moving diagonally has power and strength with even the simplest of steps or gestures. Our energy and our intent can be huge, but it must be met at that edge, the fourth wall, by a willingly engaged audience.

The size of a space also informs our work. When options are restricted, more effort is needed to be expansive. As in design, limitations become points

of clarity for the creative process, the option to see things in unique and provocative ways.

Relative or perceived size is a reflection of how many other bodies share the same area. Culturally, we’re programmed to respect one another’s personal space. In any dance class, you’ll see how uniform the distance is between the dancing bodies. On the floor or at the barre, though scantily clad, there is no intimacy; we’re there to work.

It’s that standard that adds excitement to much of dance. Ballroom feeds on the intensity of two people connecting through the distance between their bodies. Contact improvisation is a free-form technique that exploits the trust and momentum of sharing body space and weight. Folk dances, as community activity, use steps, rhythms, and floor patterns for diversity. The separation between dancers seldom varies; there is no threat to social propriety. Dance, like all human action, relishes the infinite variations of time and space.

Artists of all disciplines are called to expand boundaries. Recognizing limitations is not accepting them; dance is fierce in its occupation of any space. We believe our energy adds spirit to each venue, helping to define and interpret what is happening between the walls. Using rhythm, theater, psychology, and sounds, for a moment, we master time.

The dance ends, yet the walls remain. The most ephemeral of the arts, dance trusts its endurance to kinetic and emotional memories, forged in a finite time and space. ■

ROZANN KRAUS is resident choreographer for the Underground Railroad Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Founder of The Dance Complex, she has taught at Yale’s School of Drama, New England Conservatory, and Boston University.

BELOW

M as in Megunticook, Lake Megunticook, Maine, 2010. © Arno Rafael Minkinen.





SCULPTURE

IMAGINATION CASTS A DAYDREAM

by Tory Fair

There are moments when my body seems to disappear a little bit, and I enter into my imagination. Call it spacing out, getting into a zone, or losing oneself—these are times when my perception is heightened, and I seem to exist outside myself. The imagination transports, and I have learned to trust it as a way to expand my ability to interact with the world—a sixth sense, so to speak.

This dynamic between the body and the imagination has been an overarching theme in my work as a sculptor. In the most fleeting moments of the day I find potential: staring at a stop sign, in the shower, driving, watching television, or simply doing the dishes. I have created several sculptures using my body to represent these mundane moments, when I find myself slipping into the fertile ground of the imagination. I am present but immersed in a state of perception that glances inward and reveals certain clarity. For example, for *Driving*, I cast myself seated with my hands on the wheel and foot on the pedal. Once I captured the gesture in plaster, I contrasted this literal representation of the body by sculpting flowers and stems that grew outward to support the form hovering in the air. The flowers are symbolic, there to express the potential of ideas to emanate and grow from within. They also act as an aura surrounding the figure. Hybrid in nature, the finished sculptures are cast in rubber and resin; body and bloom suggest the blurred boundary between exterior form and inner life.

In my current work, the body remains a persistent theme and is triggered by objects that we interact with on a daily basis. Recently I cast a full-length mirror in grey resin, creating a sculpture that draws you in: Look past the surface to find hidden textures within; is that a field of flowers? An ordinary moment of looking for your reflection in a mirror becomes one where you are nudged into a different perspective, as though you are lying down in a field of daisies. The mirror acts as a portal, and the viewer is placed to dream beyond the fact of the object.

For me, sculpture has an advantage because its physicality explores things that are not physical at all. So I welcome confusion between what is real and what is imagined, what is physical and what is felt or sensed. How can I cast a daydream? How do I fabricate a state of mind? If I ground my practice with a recognizable source, as the body has become in my studio practice, I can then move to more immaterial notions that are difficult to name.

My intention is to compose an accessible experience that draws the viewer in to investigate past the appearance of the sculpture. You become my proxy. What I hope remains is a sensual journey that instigates the imagination in a tangible way, one that's unique to each individual. In both the making and the viewing, there is opportunity to challenge our ability to engage and, by doing so, to reimagine the body in confrontation with the everyday. Can a mirror become a portal? ■

TORY FAIR is an associate professor of sculpture at Brandeis University. Her work has been exhibited at the Worcester Art Museum; the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts; and The Drawing Center in New York City.

ABOVE LEFT
Asikkala, Finland, 1992.
© Arno Rafael Minkinen.

ABOVE RIGHT
Self-portrait with Laurence, St. Lawrence, Gozo, Malta, 2002.
© Arno Rafael Minkinen.

 **MORE TORY FAIR ONLINE**
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YOGA

LAYING FOUNDATIONS FOR AN INTERNAL JOURNEY

by Peter Crowley

At home, in a square bedroom bordered by white walls and a bank of large windows, I do my daily yoga practice. An architect by education, I developed an early awareness of context and environment. In this room, in my modern house, I focus this sensitivity inward. I spend mornings moving from pose to pose—or just sitting still. In self-study, I formulate an internal inquiry.

What is it? What is happening? In the most secular of terms, yoga is the process of staying attentive to an object or pursuit, undistracted, for some amount of time. It's an ever-evolving renovation of the mind and body that incorporates breath, postures, and concentration practices. Time in a physical posture is time well spent studying the network of strength and space that exists below the skin. With an awareness of these sensations one can construct a mental map, a meditation on where body and breath feel effortless, and where there is struggle. Sites of conflict need attention because they can hold captive physical or emotional scars. An immersion in this ongoing process demands patience. By quelling reactivity and shedding self-imposed expectation, we learn to be better, more up-to-date versions of ourselves.

Who do you want to be? Since I was six, I planned to be an architect. In my childhood bedroom, I spent many solitary hours fashioning models of famous buildings out of cardboard. I would construct a crude likeness, then break it apart to build it better, with ever more exacting standards. This iterative process resulted in whole cities I would lay out on my floor. I told myself stories about them, connecting separate narratives with construction-paper roads and rivers.

At one point, the entire perimeter of my bedroom surrounded me with fantasy architecture. Years later, in design school, I aimed to entice the most critical of my peers and professors by posing a thesis and provoking a response.

How does this feel? Under the burden of professional demands and personal challenges, my early 20s were physically and emotionally painful. A dear friend suggested yoga to ease the reactive revolt taking place in my disordered body. At the urging of my first teachers, I studied what held me back, what locked me up. Why was my body shaking? The postures, crude in their initial execution, helped me examine, liberate, and redevelop the structure beneath my skin. My job as a yoga teacher is to present and pass down what I have discovered. Holding space for my students to immerse themselves in self-study, I use narrative to describe a journey through the body. I pose a thesis, and yoga provokes a response. Students comfortably sit with an internal space of their own design.

Who designed that? Turning concepts into felt experience plays out in every yoga practice. The best architecture develops out of a streamlined thesis and a cumulative body of knowledge. Discipline and love for development through process reveal themselves in the design of a great building or a focused approach to yoga practice. In my body and in that of others, experience and repetition help lay these foundations. By paying attention, we feel tension dissipate, as strength and space support our structure. We dwell in the body, confident in our creation, comfortable with our circumstances. ■

PETER CROWLEY, a designer turned yoga teacher, lives by Walden Pond with his partner and two dogs in a midcentury home they've been renovating since 2011.

ABOVE LEFT
Oulujärvi Afternoon, Paltaniemi, Kajaani, Finland, 2009.
© Arno Rafael Minkinen.

ABOVE RIGHT
A Man and His Dog, Exconvento de Santiago, Cuilápan de Guerrero, Mexico, 2007. © Arno Rafael Minkinen.

FASHION

ADAPTING TO EACH NEW WAVE

by Coco Raynes

Fashion and architecture enjoy a symbiotic relationship. After all, they have similar functions: They envelop and protect our body. And like the architecture of our time, our clothes say who we are, culturally as well as individually. Sometimes they go hand in hand, one mirroring the other, but when in conflict, fashion will prevail. In the salons of Versailles, the majestic double doors were designed not for grand entrances but to accommodate the court dresses with panniers and the height of wigs and plumes.

What about the body? It changes to adapt itself to each new wave. Like chameleons, we conform and blend to better wear the imposed garment of the moment, while trying to retain our originality. In 1900, we see stern-looking ladies with tiny corseted waists, ample busts and hips. In architecture, 1900 is also the apogee of Art Nouveau. Hector Guimard's exuberant arabesques on his cast-iron façades, metro structures, and furniture recall the women's exaggerated curves.

In 1920, the waist disappeared! Linear dresses adorn flat-chested, liberated women. It is the beginning of the Art Deco period: straight lines with geometric adornments are also found in dazzling jewelry of contrasted colors. The same zigzag and chevron patterns also appear on the stepping façades of different heights, the most magnificent being at the Empire State Building.

The Bauhaus movement brings to architecture the industrial aspect, boldness, and with it, the

concept of mass production. In this interwar period, women start wearing dark suits, echoing army uniforms. By the '40s, all frills are gone and the shoulders are oversized (an armor for protection?). At the end of the war, the industrial era emerges. There is a boom in steel construction to house the waves of immigrants, and clothes can now be bought ready-to-wear.

In the '60s miniskirts went higher and higher, and suddenly legs became longer and longer. (I wish it had happened to me!) Our scandalized mothers thought that it would pass, but miniskirts are still here, now paraded by baby giraffes who have grown even slimmer and taller. So have our skyscrapers. Contemporary interiors become sparse, and furniture is no longer individually crafted but mass-produced with metal or plastic added to the palette of possibilities, even cardboard. Dresses can be designed by a couturier or made of paper. We have entered the age of consumption and freedom.

The canons of beauty keep changing, dethroning the belles of yesterday, while many examples of our past architecture have survived the test of time. *The River* by Aristide Maillol (1861–1944) who frolics at the end of the Museum of Modern Art pool, is by today's standards a big mama. However, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace* (2nd century BC) who gloriously flies from the grand staircase of the Louvre, or any Greek goddess whose drapes recall the fluted shafts of the temple's columns, have escaped the curse. ■

COCO RAYNES is a leader in the field of environmental graphics and universal design. Since 1969, her multidisciplinary firm has developed numerous signage programs worldwide.

BELOW

Cathedral of the Three Saints, Vilnius, Lithuania, 2007.
© Arno Rafael Minkinen.



BODY AS MIND



MEMORY, MOVEMENT, AND THE SPACE TO BE HUMAN

by Craig Edward Dykers AIA

It seems reasonable to think that our capacity to interact with the world is tied exclusively to the activity of our mind. Our thoughts seem to be the great managers of who we are. Aren't humans fundamentally conscious creatures? Certainly the mind manages many activities, yet the mind is also controlled by the body.

Another way of seeing this is to recognize that the body is a type of a brain. Our unconscious, which can also be thought of as our body's mind, manages more than what is ordinarily managed by our conscious self. It is important to think with our body as well as with our mind.

Most of us have the luxury of memory. We think that if we visualize a memory, this constitutes knowledge. But our bodies have memory also. Bodies are a material, mostly rubbery and moist, and they crystallize over time. This materiality has relevance to what we remember and how we act.

Materials can be taught to do things. They react to their environment, though materials may have no cerebral cortex. For example, steam a piece of straight wood, and it can be bent without breaking. Hold the wood in the bent position long enough, and it will learn how to stay curved at rest. If the wood is thin enough and has some plasticity, you can try to flatten it again and it will spring back to being curved, even if it began life straight. It has memory. It can do this on its own. If the wood finds itself in a humid place when its home is normally dry, it will learn to curve by itself.

Our bodies are a bit like these pieces of wood. Dancers and performers often speak of "body memory"; this is no metaphor. Bodies and minds alike are reactive to environments and to themselves.

Many of the places and things we make using our bodies and minds—the buildings, cities, benches, landscapes—are teaching our bodies as much as they teach our minds. They stretch us, bend us, or stiffen us each day. Our eyes are useful for navigation, but the unconscious world often guides us. The body often provokes decisions, and we move happily on our way, thinking our mind is hard at work, not recognizing that it has many partners along the way.

Try to remember everything about a moment 30 minutes ago. For most of us, it's a challenge to conjure that moment with complete accuracy. That's because the mind isn't the sole provider of memory. While the mind focuses on registering key components of an experience, the body is hard at work

remembering its positions, temperatures, flexibility, weight, relative reactions to light and dark, and so on. The body will not necessarily provide you with a visual memory; instead, it logs in data, interprets, and simulates, while the mind generates ideas. Together the two build a memory, some of which is visual and some visceral.

I like to think about this when I design. My thoughts move back and forth between what is apparent and what is less obvious, what is rational and irrational, what is happening

What if we could manage our surroundings in a way that supports better conscious and unconscious choices, promoting healthier living conditions? What can a healthy or civil space be like?

versus what is being made to happen. Inside of this dichotomized world I see a spectrum of characteristics; I try not to focus on the poles themselves.

What happens when a situation is not constructed? What can challenge people to create alternative understandings of a place? What can make people forget or remember? These are concepts that can guide a design intention.

Memories or imaginations of places tend to emphasize how things appear in relation to other things at a moment in time. Contextualizing how things look is natural, but it can be overemphasized. When we say old-fashioned, new-fashioned, modern, or historical, we defer to categorizations of what we see fitting into the zeitgeist. But these descriptions are not necessarily about how we physically interact with things.

Our work at Snøhetta often tests this manner of thinking in projects that manifest a condition of physical movement or connectivity to place. At the National September 11 Memorial Museum in New York City, a delicate space for memories that are all too fresh for many, we have created a series of curatorial moments, allowing the mind to remain open. Our entrance pavilion features a tilted reflecting façade that invites visitors to see themselves in a different way as they approach the

OPPOSITE

Pilobolus dancers Andy Herro and Renee Jaworski.
Photo: John Kane.



building. Expansive and unusually tilted window frames ask visitors to draw closer, peer inside, and touch the building. Through the glass they might be surprised to see others inside the building looking back at them. All this occurs around a meandering staircase connecting the aboveground areas with the museum below, inviting pause and introspection within a space defined by an edgeless skylit atrium.

Much of how we style our lives is based on unconscious tendencies that are formed by how our bodies interact with their surroundings. Just ask a polar bear at the zoo; “lifestyle”

is not a figure of speech. A cage may look like a natural environment, but all the characteristics remain alien to the actual needs of the bear. The stress becomes apparent in the animal’s pacing and erratic behavior.

What if we could manage our surroundings in a way that supports better conscious and unconscious choices, promoting healthier living conditions? What can a healthy or civil space be like? What kind of space represents what it seems to be human and also helps us to be human?

To answer these questions, be introspective and



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FAR LEFT
Tilted window frames at the National September 11 Memorial Museum in New York City.
Photo: Jeff Goldberg/ESTO.

LEFT
The five-story stairs at the James B. Hunt Jr. Library in Raleigh, North Carolina.
Photo: Jeff Goldberg/ESTO.

empathetic. Take the time to observe unguarded moments. Look at details: how our hands are held when we are seated or standing, the range of eye contact used, the lines of dirt that trace the movement of a shoe, changes in stance, engagement between light and dark, levels of voice.

At the James B. Hunt Jr. Library in Raleigh, North Carolina, we created a series of stairs that connect pivotal locations, allowing visitors to engage with their surroundings. These characteristics provide a sense of ownership and physical memory. A bright yellow color provides focus, while the

meandering plan of the stair allows for ongoing surprise, inviting use, despite rising for five stories. This deceptively simple design decision helps visitors choose a healthy alternative to the elevators.

Despite its multitude of visitors, New York City's Times Square is a civic space that remains uncomfortable and elusive for most people. Our work redesigning this "crossroads of the world" first focused on removing impediments. We then introduced such elements as large benches and a reflective paving pattern that help orient the north/south alignment of the square, while erasure of the curb lines helps complete the design as a familiar yet new place. The simple, monolithic character of these new elements might not inspire critical raves, but it provides balance to the kinetic marquees that define Times Square.

Consciousness is a spectrum, and its layers are defined by interactions between the body and the mind. The myriad details that define our lives profoundly determine our actions and reactions within this spectrum. The voice of our body makes it possible to better understand the needs of the environments we create. We need only listen. ■

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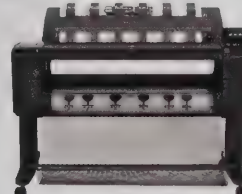
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SITTING, STILL

HOW DO WE SOLVE
A PROBLEM LIKE THE CHAIR?



by Galen Cranz

With a back, seat, legs, and arms, the chair is anthropomorphic; we like chairs because they remind us of ourselves. Architects in particular have an enduring fascination for this ubiquitous item. From Charles Eames to Shigeru Ban, they have created a succession of models, as sculptural statements and as solutions to design problems.

It's easy to see why: A chair doesn't take up as much space as a building, yet it is three-dimensional, unlike paper drawings, so it's a useful full-scale problem for studios in architecture and design schools. It combines issues of comfort, utility, style, price, and craftsmanship, so it miniaturizes many of the problems of architectural design. Construction experts can simply focus on joinery, while those interested in symbolism can look for ways to express artistic values. When the assignment is full scale, the body can test it for sturdiness and comfort.

It is a complex problem and therefore a challenge. As Ludwig Mies van der Rohe said, "A chair is a very difficult object. A skyscraper is almost easier. That is why



THIS SPREAD

Myrtle chair, by the Irish artist Aleana Egan, 2014.

Photo: Courtesy the artist and Kerlin Gallery, Dublin.



BACCHUS THRONE

Marble throne of a high priest of Bacchus, 18th-century reconstruction of a copy of Roman sculpture using antique items, Italy. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photo: DeAgostini/Getty Images.



STROZZI PALACE CHAIR

Chair (Sgabello) attributed to the Workshop of Giuliano and Benedetto da Maiano, Florence, 15th century. Photo: © Metropolitan Museum of Art.



WASSILY CHAIR

Inspired by the tubular steel of his bicycle frame, Marcel Breuer's chair was named for his friend Wassily Kandinsky. Photo: Knoll, Inc.

Chippendale is famous.” In my book *The Chair: Rethinking Culture, Body, and Design*, I identify a slew of such difficulties: Should the seat pan be flat, canted backward to stop forward slide, or tipped forward to protect the lumbar spine from rounding incorrectly? How high should the chair be to serve both tall and short people? Is a chair back necessary if most people bend forward over their work and their food? Should there be lumbar support or a hollow for the pelvis? Decisions made about any one of these factors affect the others.

Over time, “adjustability” became the way out of the contradictions posed in trying to create a chair for everyone. The epitome of this reasoning may well be Niels Diffrient’s Freedom Chair and Don Chadwick and Bill Stumpf’s Aeron Chair, which developed synchronized adjustability. Yet assumptions about the right-angle seated posture remained mostly unchallenged. At the Aspen Design Conference in 2001, I explained to Diffrient why he could no longer squat: It was the atrophy and tightness in his pelvis, legs, and spine—produced by a lifetime of sitting in chairs.

The designers at the main office-furniture manufacturers—Steelcase, Haworth, Knoll—knew as early as 1999 about the limitations of lumbar support, which artificially creates an external fix to an internal problem. But they claimed that “the market” wasn’t ready for the idea of a chair without a back, or other forms of autonomous seating, which would include sit-stand options. I suspect that architects are drawn to the challenge of solving these problems much the way that generations of mathematicians might keep circling around an equation that has never been solved.

There has been so much social status associated with chairs over the course of their historical development that we have not been able to conceptualize the problem objectively. Most furniture historians believe the pharaohs of Egypt and kings of the Fertile Crescent were the earliest adopters, but evidence from Neolithic villages indicate that chairs are 5,000 years

older than we thought. Small kiln-fired figures of women seated on chairs have been discovered in the graves of women in villages that date back to 7,500 BC in the former Yugoslavia.

We may never know the precise origin of a seat raised off the ground for one person, but we can assume that it denoted some kind of role differentiation: Chairs were for pharaohs, kings, and perhaps wise crones. Ancient Greek civilization developed the *clismos* chair for domestic use, and Romans kept both the throne and the *clismos* but relied much more on the pallet for resting and entertaining while reclining horizontally. Banquets were held in a special U-shaped structure called a triclinium. Guests lay semi-reclined on large bolsters with their heads toward the center of the U, where food and wine were served. The Last Supper was held in a triclinium, where Lazarus lay in the bosom of Jesus, but as our culture changed, artists have mostly represented the Last Supper as a chair and table banquet.

Furniture was less prominent during the so-called Dark Ages. The chair was reinvented as a throne for kings, while commoners sat on overturned bushels or knelt directly on the ground. Storage boxes used in feudal halls, pushed up against walls, inspired the design of some chairs. The church choir stall included a flip seat on a hinge that could be used to sit at a right angle or to perch with the thighs halfway between sitting and standing. In Renaissance Italy, three-legged chairs were created for the Strozzi Palace in Florence.

Until the 18th century, chairs remained relatively rare, high-status items. All that changed with industrialization. Spring coil upholstery was invented, and upholstery also became cheap compared with hand-loomed textiles. Enter the overstuffed armchair of the 19th century. Further, society evolved to include clerical work, and the office chair was born.

In the 20th century, designers experimented with materials and new industrial processes. Marcel Breuer took advantage of the strength of steel tubing used to make bicycles to design



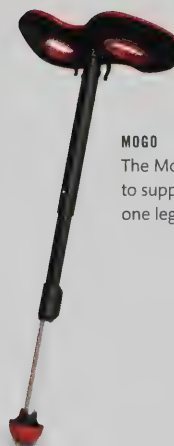
TULIP ARMLESS CHAIR

Working in molded plywood and plastic resin, designer Eero Saarinen vowed to address the “slum of legs” under the dining room table. Photo: Knoll, Inc.



FREEDOM TASK CHAIR

Niels Diffrient's synchronized adjustable desk chair, an attempt to create a chair for everyone. Photo: Humanscale.



MOGO

The Mogo portable seat requires sitters to support themselves by providing just one leg. Photo: Focal Upright.

the Cesca chair (named after his daughter Francesca) and the Wassily (named after his painter friend Wassily Kandinsky). Mies Van der Rohe designed a steel X to support a seat and back of leather upholstery. Eero Saarinen molded plywood and plastic resin, and others eventually experimented with inflatable plastics. In no case was the human body the focus of these experiments. Many architects find them “beautiful” sculpturally, but I can no longer see them that way, since I see the discomfort that is built into them.

The fundamental problem in chair design is the right-angle seated posture. No amount of ergonomic tinkering will solve the problem. The right-angle paradigm itself needs to be challenged. My book described the biomechanical problems associated with chair sitting, but recently, epidemiological studies have determined that there are even more serious metabolic problems: Sedentary behavior is associated with premature death from heart attack, stroke, and cancer. This is what people mean when they say “Sitting is the new smoking.” Sitting still means muscles are not firing, which means the pancreas does not get the message to produce lipase, the enzyme needed by the liver to digest fats.

So now people “sit up and take notice.” Actually, they’re looking for more ways to stand up, and many furniture manufacturers are designing sit-stand options. Steelcase is even producing treadmill workstations, something unheard of 10 years ago. Since 2012 Focal Upright of Rhode Island has an active workstation that involves perching (halfway between sitting and standing) on a tractor-shaped seat that pivots on a single rod while the legs and feet are active as the other two parts of a tripod. The perch position is biomechanically better for the spine than the classic right-angle seated posture, and it may also be much better metabolically because active leg muscles signal the pancreas to produce lipase.

A Scottish study in 2006 got a lot of attention when it seemed to show that—contrary to what we were all told as

children—slumping might be more beneficial than sitting up straight. However, *slumping* is completely different than *slouching*, or rounding forward. The new research showed that strains on the lumbar vertebrae and discs were reduced when slouching back, with pelvis and legs thrust forward. This posture produces the open angle between thigh and trunk that takes pressure off spinal vertebrae. Rounding forward over our work is a completely different story. This compresses the front edge of the vertebrae, pressing discs backwards and setting us up for slipped discs and a host of other problems in the neck, shoulders, pelvis, and legs.

But whether slumping or collapsed, sitting still remains a problem. Yes, I intend that double meaning: Sitting still is *still* a problem. Is it possible to design a chair that is not deadly? Probably not. It is more important to design for a series of postures. Every posture carries with it some physiological strain. We need to move that strain through the body in the course of a day or an hour.

How do we design for movement? Think of offices as parcourses. In my seminar on body-conscious design, I ask my students to design rooms that support the body in five or six different postures. What if each room had a place to stand, another to perch, another for lounge position, sitting cross-legged, kneeling, and lying down? The Finns were the first people to uncouple the computer keyboard from the screen and hold the keyboard on their laps while in a lounge chair with their feet up. Today a bicyclist might lock his bike in place in front of a tall table that holds his computer so that he can spin in place while working.

The next step is to think about the relationships among these postures, so as to create a kind of choreography of work. Among other things, this means that no person should do exactly the same task for eight hours a day. As Peter Opsvik, the Norwegian designer of the Tripp Trapp, Balans, and Capsico chairs, has put it, succinctly: “The best posture is the next posture.” ■

1

2



INTELLIGENT

ON THE ORIGIN OF ARCHITECTURAL SPECIES

by Matthew Bronski PE

The oft-invoked analogy of the modern building to the human body (structural frame to skeleton, building enclosure to skin, mechanical systems to respiratory systems) is as apt as it is clichéd. Yet it falls short in that the body rather vaguely described—skeleton, skin, respiratory system—isn't specifically human, nor even specifically mammalian. The typical analogy stops short because it doesn't begin to account for the vast differences in the bodies and forms of various species of animal—or building.

In his revolutionary treatise of 1859, *On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin explained his powerful theory of the evolution of animal species. By Darwin's elegant algorithm, A) if individuals within a group are subject to variation, and B) if the environment results in a struggle for survival, and C) if individual characteristics are passed from one generation to the next, then D) over many generations, a species will evolve by a process of natural selection, that is, "survival of the fittest."

Buildings, too, evolve to meet environmental conditions, with certain architectural forms, details, and materials more suited to a given climate, site, or use. And, like the animal species Darwin studied, architectural forms must either adapt to their conditions—or perish.

In more than 150 years, not a single flaw has been found in Darwin's logic. His theory has proven powerful not only for understanding how the natural world all around us came to be but also for forming a cornerstone for entirely new lines of

research and fields of study, such as modern genetics, that Darwin never imagined.

Given the importance of Darwin's theory to modern scientific thought and to cutting-edge scientific research, it is well worth considering the architectural parallels to his theory. Why do certain highly evolved building forms look the way they do, and what can we learn from this to further the state of cutting-edge architectural design today?

This parallel architectural theory of evolution, which I call Architectural Darwinism, is most evident in vernacular building forms, particularly those in harsh climates, where the practical considerations of creating shelter that worked with its environment were paramount. In vernacular architecture, these overriding concerns did not yield to stylistic predispositions or preconceptions, as they occasionally did in more formal architecture.

In Darwinian biology, the primary mechanism for the evolution is entirely involuntary (natural selection), whereas in Architectural Darwinism, the mechanisms are both voluntary and involuntary. The involuntary mechanism occurs where buildings with more advantageous variations and traits are more likely to survive over the centuries, and those buildings that were not as durably designed and constructed tend to fall prey to the effects of time and weather. The voluntary mechanism occurs where humans have carefully observed what has worked and what hasn't, and affirmatively designed the next building

3

4



DESIGN

THIS SPREAD

Galapagos finches by John Gould, from Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle*, 1845.

with the individual variations that have empirically proven to work well—a certain chimney location, a certain roof eave framing detail, a certain overall building form. In this way, the advantageous variation or trait is typically passed to the next generation of vernacular buildings.

Sometimes the technical logic behind the advantageous trait, and hence the evolution of a vernacular species, is fairly obvious. Second period (1725–75) “colonial” houses in New England were virtually the same as those in the South, except the northern version of the species had a very large central chimney to retain as much heat as possible within the house, and the southern version had the chimney on an outside wall, to cast off as much heat as possible to the exterior.

Just as obviously, antebellum plantation houses in hot, humid, flood-prone Louisiana were often raised on brick piers with an open ground floor, so that floods could wash through without damage. Further, a veranda wrapping all around the house shaded windows from the sun while allowing breezes through, tall windows and a square floor plan promoted cross breezes, and louvered attic dormers or a cupola passively vented and exhausted naturally rising hot air. All these advantageous characteristics evolved long before “resiliency” or “sustainability” or “passive design” became buzzwords.

More often, the logic is not obvious, and highly evolved technical details are mistaken for mere stylistic or ornamental traditions. At first glance, the use of large diamond-shaped slate roof shingles in the vernacular architecture of the Alps (as opposed to smaller, rectangular slate shingles common in the United States and England) may seem a stylistic tradition rather than a technical evolution. However, on closer examination and

analysis, the larger, diamond-shaped shingles are far more efficient in their use of material and in their resistance to wind-driven rain than their rectangular counterparts (Fig. 1).

Similarly, the highly evolved technical logic of the traditional roof eave framing detail found in Rome is not readily apparent, and this beautiful detail could easily be mistaken for the purely ornamental (Fig. 2). The detail transcends vastly different architectural periods and styles, from antiquity through the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque, to late 19th- and early-20th-century Neo-Classicism, a strong clue that it is not merely stylistic. Its track record of durability is truly remarkable. Many examples, several hundred years old, constructed of relatively nondurable wood species such as pine, survive outdoors—unpainted, untreated, in a relatively rainy climate.

The triangular form of the projecting beam end is exactly “what it wants to be” structurally. The triangular cut not only eliminates the portion of the beam end that is not needed structurally but also eliminates the portion that would tend to rot (via wicking of moisture through the exposed end) if the beam were simply cut at 90 degrees. The deep overhang of the roof over the beam protects it from moisture under all but the most severe wind-driven rain events. When rain does occasionally wet the beam, a series of beautiful but entirely functional cuts along the diagonal edge of the beam create drip edges to shed water at regular intervals. With such thoughtful, durable design, it is no wonder this detail has survived so well for centuries, despite the vulnerability of pine to rot in the humid, rainy climate of Rome.

Like the Roman eave detail, other highly evolved vernacular details and forms use local materials that are not, in and of



Figure 1 Diamond-shaped slate roof shingles in the Alps are more technically evolved than rectangular shingles because they use the material more efficiently and are more consistently watertight
Photo: © iStock.com/koufax73.

themselves, durable within the local climate but have become durable through good design. The half-timbered buildings of England and central Europe are remarkable for the way the building form makes materials that degrade quickly with moisture perform durably even in a rainy climate. The materials they are built from, wattle (wood wicker) and daub (lime or clay plaster) degrade quite rapidly if left out in the rain, but the overall building form of an inverted stepped pyramid with cantilevered overhangs (known as jetties) at each floor serves to make the construction durable, even in the rain. The jettied overhangs shelter the walls from rain and shed water directly to the ground (not to the wall below), thus reducing the maximum possible accumulation of moisture at any point on the wattle and daub.

Darwin's revolutionary theory of evolution was based in part on his careful observation, documentation, and consideration of apparently ordinary things he saw around him on his voyages—for example, the slight differences in the shapes of the beaks of finches or in the thickness and

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shape of the shells of tortoises on the various islands of the Galapagos. The highly evolved vernacular forms of the English half-timbered, jettied building; the Alpine Swiss chalet; the antebellum Louisiana plantation house; and countless others are analogous to Darwin's finches and the Galapagos tortoises. Though none is immortal or invulnerable, each evolved to be particularly well suited to survival in its respective environment.

Darwin's masterful theory has been hailed as "the greatest idea anyone ever had" and continues to enable cutting-edge scientific research 150 years later. But his method—careful observation of the details all around us, and clear, simple analytical reasoning—is available to us all. In this age of global climate crisis, it has never been more important to analyze the details of highly evolved vernacular forms for the broad lessons they have to teach us about resilient, durable, sustainable design. If we can incorporate these lessons into our conception of the overall forms and details of building designs, we'll be far more responsive and responsible in meeting the formidable environmental imperative confronting us today. ■

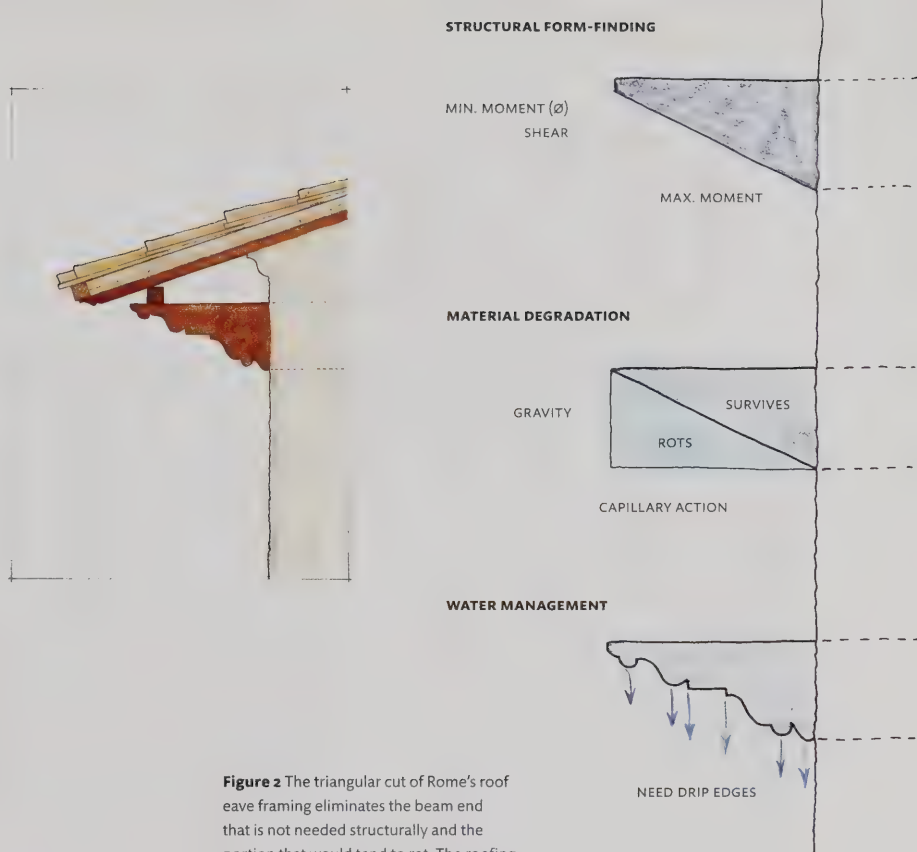


Figure 2 The triangular cut of Rome's roof eave framing eliminates the beam end that is not needed structurally and the portion that would tend to rot. The roofing protects the beam from rain, and a series of functional cuts create regular drip edges to shed water. Illustration: Matthew Bronski PE.



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- Patrick Ahearn, Architect

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USER

JOSH SAFDIE ASSOC. AIA
SPEAKS WITH ELLEN LUPTON

FRIENDLY

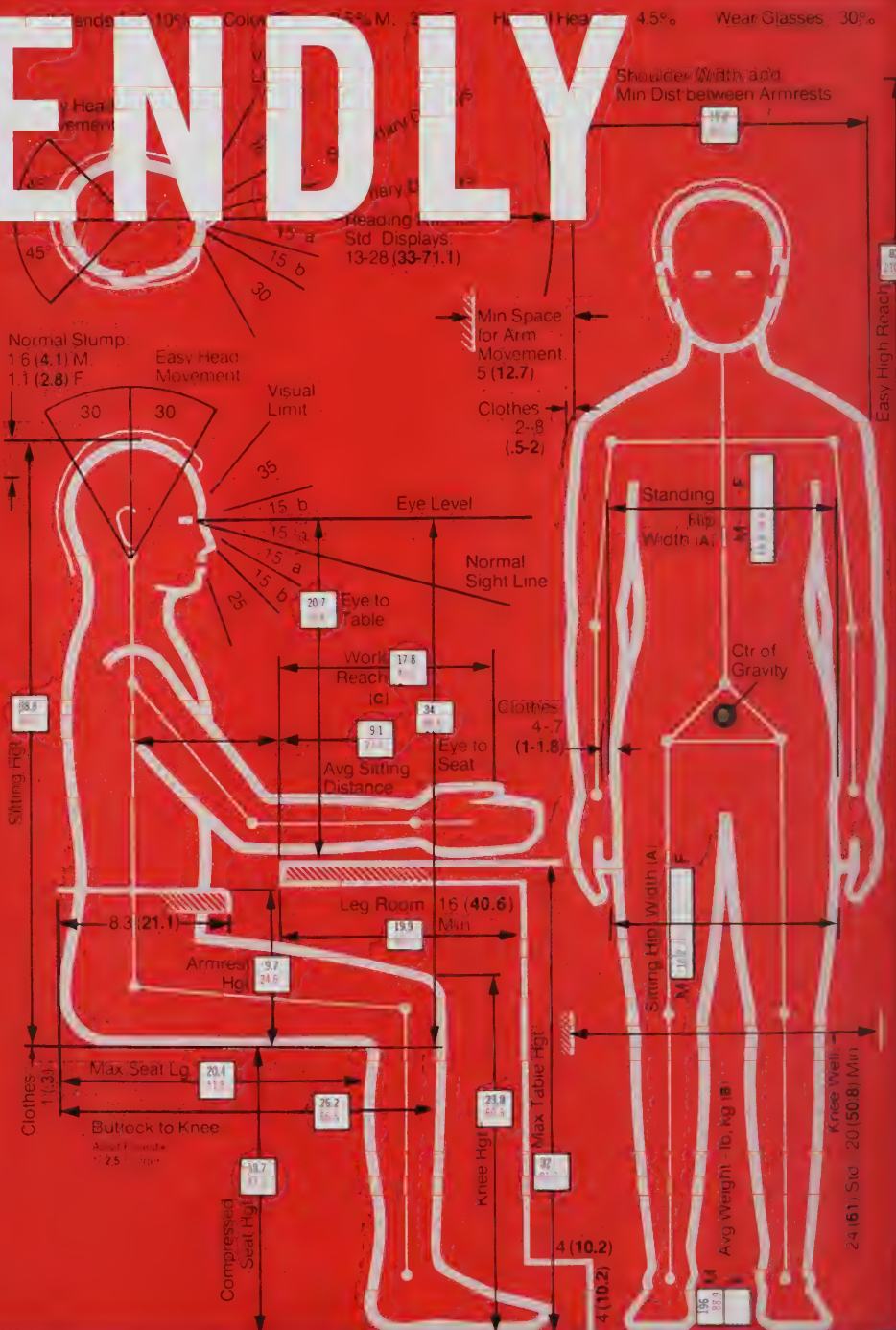
Standing Height of U.S. Youths

Age	Sex	2.5%ile in	50%ile in	97.5%ile in	cm	cm	cm
17	M	63.7	65.8	68.1	161.8	167.3	173.0
	F	59.4	60.9	62.8	150.9	155.0	160.0
16	M	62.6	64.6	66.8	159.0	165.1	171.1
	F	59.2	60.7	62.6	150.4	154.5	158.6
15	M	61.3	63.3	65.5	155.7	161.8	167.9
	F	58.0	59.5	61.3	147.4	151.5	155.6
14	M	58.3	60.3	62.5	148.1	154.2	160.3
	F	58.2	59.7	61.5	147.8	151.9	156.0
13	M	55.4	57.4	59.6	140.7	146.8	152.9
	F	56.6	58.1	59.9	143.8	147.9	152.0
12	M	52.6	54.6	56.8	133.6	139.7	145.8
	F	55.1	56.6	58.4	139.7	143.8	147.9
11	M	51.5	53.5	55.7	130.8	136.9	143.0
	F	53.1	54.6	56.4	134.6	138.7	142.8
10	M	49.1	51.1	53.3	124.7	130.8	136.9
	F	50.1	51.6	53.4	127.3	131.4	135.5
9	M	47.3	49.3	51.5	120.7	126.8	132.9
	F	47.3	48.8	50.6	120.1	124.2	128.3
8	M	44.9	46.9	49.1	114.0	120.1	126.2
	F	45.6	47.1	48.9	115.8	119.9	124.0
7	M	42.9	44.9	47.1	109.0	115.1	121.2
	F	42.8	44.3	46.1	108.7	112.8	116.9
6	M	40.1	42.1	44.3	101.9	108.0	114.1
	F	40.5	42.0	43.8	102.9	107.0	111.1
5	M	39.4	41.4	43.6	100.1	106.2	112.3
	F	38.5	40.0	41.8	97.8	103.9	109.0
4	M	37.2	39.2	41.4	94.5	100.6	106.7
	F	37.2	38.7	40.5	94.5	100.6	106.7
3	M		37.5	39.7		95.3	
	F		37.5	39.7		95.3	
2	M		34.0	36.2		86.4	
	F		33.7	35.9		85.6	
1	M		29.5	31.7		74.9	
	F		28.8	31.0		73.2	
Birth	M		19.9	22.1		50.5	
	F		19.8	22.0		50.3	

Standing Height of Adults in Other Nations

Nation	Sex	2.5%ile in	50%ile in	97.5%ile in	cm	cm	cm
Illustrata	M	64.2	66.2	68.2	163.0	167.3	172.4
	F	60.3	62.3	64.3	153.3	157.6	162.7
Canada	M	63.3	65.3	67.3	160.8	165.1	170.2
	F	57.3	59.3	61.3	145.5	149.8	154.0
France	M	60.8	62.8	64.8	154.4	158.7	163.0
	F	57.9	59.9	61.9	147.1	151.4	155.7
Germany	M	61.7	63.7	65.7	156.7	161.0	165.3
	F	57.9	59.9	61.9	147.1	151.4	155.7
Great Britain	M	62.2	64.2	66.2	158.0	162.3	166.6
	F	58.2	60.2	62.2	147.8	152.1	156.4
Italy	M	62.4	64.4	66.4	158.0	162.3	166.6
Japan	M	62.1	64.1	66.1	157.5	161.8	166.1
	F	56.6	58.6	60.6	142.9	147.2	151.5
Norway	M	64.6	66.6	68.6	164.1	168.4	172.7
	F	60.6	62.6	64.6	153.9	158.2	162.5
Russia	M	63.3	65.3	67.3	160.8	165.1	170.2
	F	59.3	61.3	63.3	150.8	155.1	159.4
Turkey	M	62.3	64.3	66.3	158.2	162.5	166.8

* Body proportions vary among races. The sitting height of the average Japanese is about the same as the average American, although their standing height is less.



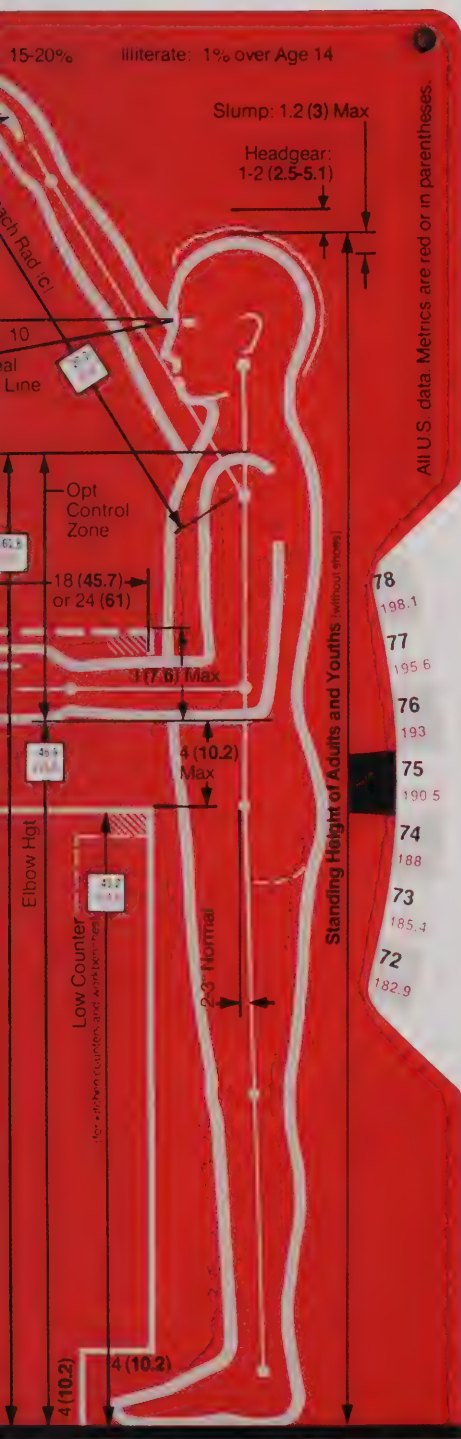
1a Humanscale Body Measurements

Designed by Henry Dreyfuss Associates

Note A: Girls taller than 60 (152.4) have a smaller hip width than women; therefore subtract about 5-1 (1.3-2.5).

Note B: Girls taller than 53 (134.6) weigh less than women; therefore subtract about 40-50 lb

(18.1-22.7 kg). Boys taller than 59 (149.3) weigh less than men; therefore subtract about 13.6-18.1 kg. Average weights are determining loading estimates, not to be used for health purposes.



“Designing for people,” a phrase coined by industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss after World War II, is central to Ellen Lupton’s belief system. The senior curator of contemporary design at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, Lupton is the editor of *Beautiful Users*, which explores the changing relationship between designers and the human beings whose needs they address. In a video interview with Josh Safdie, director of the studio at the Institute for Human Centered Design in Boston, Lupton talks about how, as she puts it in the book’s opening essay, organizing the design process around bodies of diverse sizes and abilities is “a vital vein of contemporary practice.” Today, a well-informed public is an increasingly dynamic force in the evolution of user-centered design.

Josh Safdie: Tell me about the book and what you think people might get out of it.

Ellen Lupton: The book is being published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title, organized by Cooper Hewitt; the exhibition is one of a series that introduces the public to what design is, through different themes and focus topics. We felt this was a great theme to start with: One of the ways that design is different from engineering or from art is that it always has a user in mind. And designers can have different points of view about that user, but it is a strong philosophy within design, since the mid-20th century, to really think of the user as almost a subject of what we do. That the user makes possible our work. That the user brings design to life.

Josh Safdie: My perspective in thinking about these issues within the built environment is that, more often than not, they are overlooked or not prioritized by architects and other designers of physical space. So it's interesting to hear you say that this is really at the center of the definition of design that you want to put forward. Do you think that people would find this a departure from other experiences at the Cooper Hewitt or other exhibitions?

Ellen Lupton: It's a point of view that we have espoused for quite some time, that the user is key to design. We haven't done an exhibition with that as a focus since the mid-'90s, so it's definitely time to bring that camera back and to put the user and the designer's relationship into focus. We think it is helpful to think about that as one of the things that distinguishes design from other disciplines. We talk about design as utilitarian, design as a function, but that function is for people, right? It's directed at people.

LEFT

Humanscale Body Measurements template, 1973,
by Henry Dreyfuss. Photo: Henry Dreyfuss Associates.



LEFT
Leveraged Freedom Chair
Prime Prototype, 2012.
Photo: Courtesy of Continuum LLC.



RIGHT
Leveraged Freedom Chair, 2013.
Photo: Courtesy of GRIT.

Josh Safdie: You also teach at the Maryland Institute College of Art. I'm curious, partly because I teach at a school of art as well, if this way of thinking finds its way into your teaching? If so, how?

Ellen Lupton: Absolutely. I teach graphic design at MICA, in Baltimore. One of my courses is on design theory and practice, where we look at different paradigms for how the design profession views itself and functions. We talk about experience design. We talk about sustainability. We talk about the psychology of design and affordances [an object's capacity to support human action], and how design triggers behaviors in people. So it's very much part of our dialogue in talking about the design process. It's fairly recent to have that emphasis, especially in a graphic design program.

Josh Safdie: [Engineer] Alvin Tilley's drawings of "Joe" and "Josephine" [depicted in Henry Dreyfuss' 1955 book, *Designing for People*] were meant to represent a typical American couple and their use of products and spaces; the idea was that these norms address most of the population. But they exclude a majority of people from a lot of the conversation. So do you bring users, particularly users at the edges of the spectrum, into the equivalent of a design studio to work with students?

Ellen Lupton: [Yes,] in our special design program, a master's program that works with the community around Baltimore. Students do projects with Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and other divisions of Hopkins. We work directly with people in the community.

Josh Safdie: Some of the most exciting moments for me as an instructor are when students' eyes are opened—through sharing lived experience with people who have bodies and abilities that are very different from theirs. It's one thing to read the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities

Act or a book about a paraplegic or a person with limited vision. It's another to actually walk through the world alongside them and understand their interaction with architecture or the built environment. Taking these experiences, even within the form of the exhibition, and putting it in front of people coming to the museum is an analog for doing that. How much interaction between the public and these ideas will happen in real time? Is it a static exhibit or one that will give them the opportunity to experience things firsthand?

Ellen Lupton: You mean to touch and to try products?

Josh Safdie: Yes.

Ellen Lupton: One of the projects that we're featuring is the Leveraged Freedom wheelchair, which is designed in Cambridge [at MIT's Mobility Lab]. It's a wheelchair created for rough terrain. This is a typical circumstance for wheelchair users around the world. Here in the US we take for granted, which we shouldn't, things like ramps and paved roads. But in most parts of the world, that's not available. So the Leveraged Freedom chair uses a unique gear-shifting technology to maximize the power exerted by the user, [resulting in a product] that can be used on diverse terrain and actually gets people out of their houses. It's not just a wheelchair they can use inside their dwellings but out in the world that they live in. Visitors to our exhibition will be able to get in the wheelchair and play with the gears... to experience the chair. An interesting fact about the chair is it's rather small compared to a US wheelchair because it's created for smaller people. And that will be a kind of lesson in itself of the difference between body scales in different parts of the world.

Josh Safdie: When I read through the chapter you wrote for *Beautiful Users*, one of the things that piqued my interest was [design historian] Bess Williamson's critique that if we

integrate features related to disability into mass-market products, we're in some ways ignoring or hiding or making less apparent the differences in people's abilities. What are your thoughts about that?

Ellen Lupton: I was very interested to read her essay. It's a remarkable history of the universal-design movement that is affirmative of universal design but also casts a questioning eye: that we can't have truly universal products because people aren't all the same, and no product environment is going to satisfy literally every user. That's something we all know. But I found her notion of encouraging designers to create products that actually celebrate and magnify difference, as opposed to assimilating difference, very interesting and in a sense an idea that comes out of multicultural studies and bringing that to play in relation to universal design. In our exhibition, we feature a number of prosthetic devices, which are quite remarkable as pieces of sculpture and design. In no way do they look like "natural limbs." They're not about pretending that someone has all their limbs. They're about creating something new that has its own appearance, its own function. I find that a really interesting point of view.

Josh Safdie: When people try to figure out what universal-design approach means, the easy example is when you renovate a historic building, if you can put the ramp entering the front door next to the historic steps, then everybody's sort of coming through the same place. Things are somewhat equalized without calling attention to your particular mode of entering the building. But it's interesting to think about something like a prosthesis and the design of it, and the celebration of it, as opposed to trying to pretend to be an arm or a leg. That can be an act of design, but it can also be, in some ways, a social act or a political act, right? You're not trying to hide things.

Ellen Lupton: I think often the hiding of disability is for the benefit of the abled people: The idea of preventing that discomfort or shock or surprise of seeing something that's different.

Josh Safdie: We talk a lot in our work about the idea that disability is often viewed as a binary thing. There are people who are disabled and then there is everybody else in the world. In reality, it's much more of a spectrum of ability. The United Nations and the World Health Organization have said that disability is a universal human condition. Everybody experiences changes in their ability at some point in their lives, even if it's just being underwater and needing the assistive technology of SCUBA gear to be able to breathe in that environment.

Ellen Lupton: Or being a child.

Josh Safdie: Exactly. I gave a lecture a couple of years back at a design school right after I had had surgery to reconstruct

my ACL after a soccer injury. I was presented with an inaccessible stage when I got there. It was a great firsthand lesson for the students: Here is a young guy, he's active, and yet he's experiencing disability for a short period of time. The other thing that comes to mind is assistive technology that has been totally normalized, like eyeglasses. The choice of your eyeglasses is a personal expression. It's seen in a very different way than something that's compensating for a disability, so it's not something that we try to hide.

Ellen Lupton: Now with Google Glass, we have sort of bionic eyeglasses, and perhaps other types of prosthetics and assistive devices will also make people even better.

Josh Safdie: The way you closed your chapter was interesting to me, talking about [industrial designer, IDEO cofounder, and director of Cooper Hewitt from 2010–2012] Bill Moggridge and the idea of the limits of user-centered design. I'm curious where you stand on this idea that user-centered design may be too narrow or limiting.

Often the hiding of disability is really for the benefit of the abled people: The idea of preventing that discomfort or shock or surprise of seeing something that's different.

Ellen Lupton: I think the term "user-centered" at some point became human-centered, which is less looking at people as consumers but looking at the broader spectrum of human need and human experience. Of course, if we only focus on the needs of people, that's at the expense of other creatures and other systems. So there is a limit to any kind of human-centered view of life or systems. If universal design itself requires systems in order to really function, all the design that we create also has these other impacts. And we really have to look at the life cycle of an entire product, not just how people use it, but what happens to it when we're done with it. That's a subject for another exhibition. But it's important to acknowledge that we have to look beyond only human needs. In fact, designers have been broadening their understanding of what a user is, but also broadening their understanding of the bigger impact, the larger systems in which humans live.

Josh Safdie: That makes a lot of sense, the idea that ecology is at the top of the list of things that we're trying to serve. Certainly within architecture and construction, the origins of the universal-design movement are shared very much in the cultural zeitgeist that gave birth to the green movement as well. The first *Whole Earth Catalog*, if you want to go back that far, came out at the same time that the first accessibility regulations were passed in the US. For those of us who are

focused on the human-centered design part of the profession, we have seen green really take off.

Ellen Lupton: And LEED certification. It's become a prestige piece for developers and architects.

Josh Safdie: Interesting to see the joining of ecological and user-centered or human-centered considerations within different design disciplines, coming from my perspective of architecture and the built environment. Maybe the idea is that we're looking at user-centered design as one of the many lenses that you need to bring to the design process.

Ellen Lupton: Exactly.

Josh Safdie: But that it might not be an end unto itself.

Ellen Lupton: Some companies, I think, when they say that all their decisions are driven by creating a better user experience, that can actually backfire, right? If you look at Amazon and what's going on with [its] conflict with the publishing industry, there's a trade-off when you try to offer your consumers cheaper and cheaper goods. There's also the damage that happens to the content-providing community,

all of that. Or if Wal-Mart wants to provide ever-cheaper goods to its customers—that can have a negative impact on other systems.

Josh Safdie: I'm going back to something from your chapter: the Princess phone, which was sort of the first departure—speaking of consumers and products and trying to sell things—for Bell Telephone from the very utilitarian phone, which was standard for everybody, to one which might be marketed to a particular demographic. You described it as something that moved more toward consideration of human habits and anatomy as opposed to just an abstract play of angles and curves. That was an interesting juxtaposition.

Ellen Lupton: It's really the middle phone, the 500-series phone. That was the result of this intensive ergonomic and psychological research. The Princess phone uses the same handset but creates a new body for it. That body is feminine and elongated and has a little light in it and is lightweight, so you can carry it around your bedroom. It does speak to new habits, to the discovery of teenaged girls as consumers and people who love phones and who want privacy in their bedrooms. But it's definitely moving away from the kind of universal utilitarian artifact that the 500-series phone had

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aspired to, toward something focused on a narrower user, a more specific user.

Josh Safdie: That's interesting, though, the idea of a specific user. It's marrying an aesthetic agenda or an aesthetic desire, which is geared toward marketing to a particular demographic, and the designer's own idea of beauty or form. But it still retains important user-centered attributes, which came from the earlier version.

Ellen Lupton: Yes, right.

Josh Safdie: I'm thinking about the limits of user-centered design as a means to an end. Does the progression you describe in the Bell phones point to something, which is that it needs to be one of the considerations but not the only one?

Ellen Lupton: That there are even different ways to think about users. The notion that everybody gets his or her own phone in creating specific products that are geared toward ever-narrower demographics, versus creating something "universal" that everybody can use. They're both user-centered, but they take a different perspective. They both have value. What we're seeing now are things like the iPhone, where the shape is completely

standard for everyone, but people have a great degree of freedom in terms of customizing how the thing works. But the shape has nothing really to do with the body and is not specific or changeable in any way. It's generic. The product is infinitely customizable.

Josh Safdie: From our perspective [at the IHCD], we've spoken with lots of people with disabilities who have told us that they're throwing out tens of thousands of dollars' worth of assistive technology and replacing it with apps on their phones.

Ellen Lupton: That's fantastic.

Josh Safdie: It's a great thing, and it probably points to Apple's intention from the beginning of considering the user experience and also of considering diverse abilities as part of what the user experience is meant to be.

Ellen Lupton: [Apple is] creating a platform in which it's affordable to create narrower apps for people. Apple doesn't have to create all those apps; specialists and communities that know what is needed can create them. It can be done and it's affordable, using this universal platform. I think that's a very interesting development. ■



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LASTING IMPRESSIONS

In an era of technological hyperdrive and virtual communities, it's all too easy to take human presence for granted. But as Norman Foster put it, architecture is at its core a social art; it's about "the beauty of a space and the poetry of the light that models it." The images in this gallery quietly demand that the body not be denied: Here, years of wear and tear have left their calling card—in the negative spaces created by treads on the stairs of a medieval château, weathered seats at a beloved ballpark, or the swath of a London park's desire line.



LEFT

Worn staircase in the Château de Gratot, Normandy, France. Photo: Steve Kersley.

TOP

John Harvard's toe, polished to a shine by passersby seeking good luck. Photo: Curt Milton.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

A set of well-used pencils.
Photo: Liz Saunders.

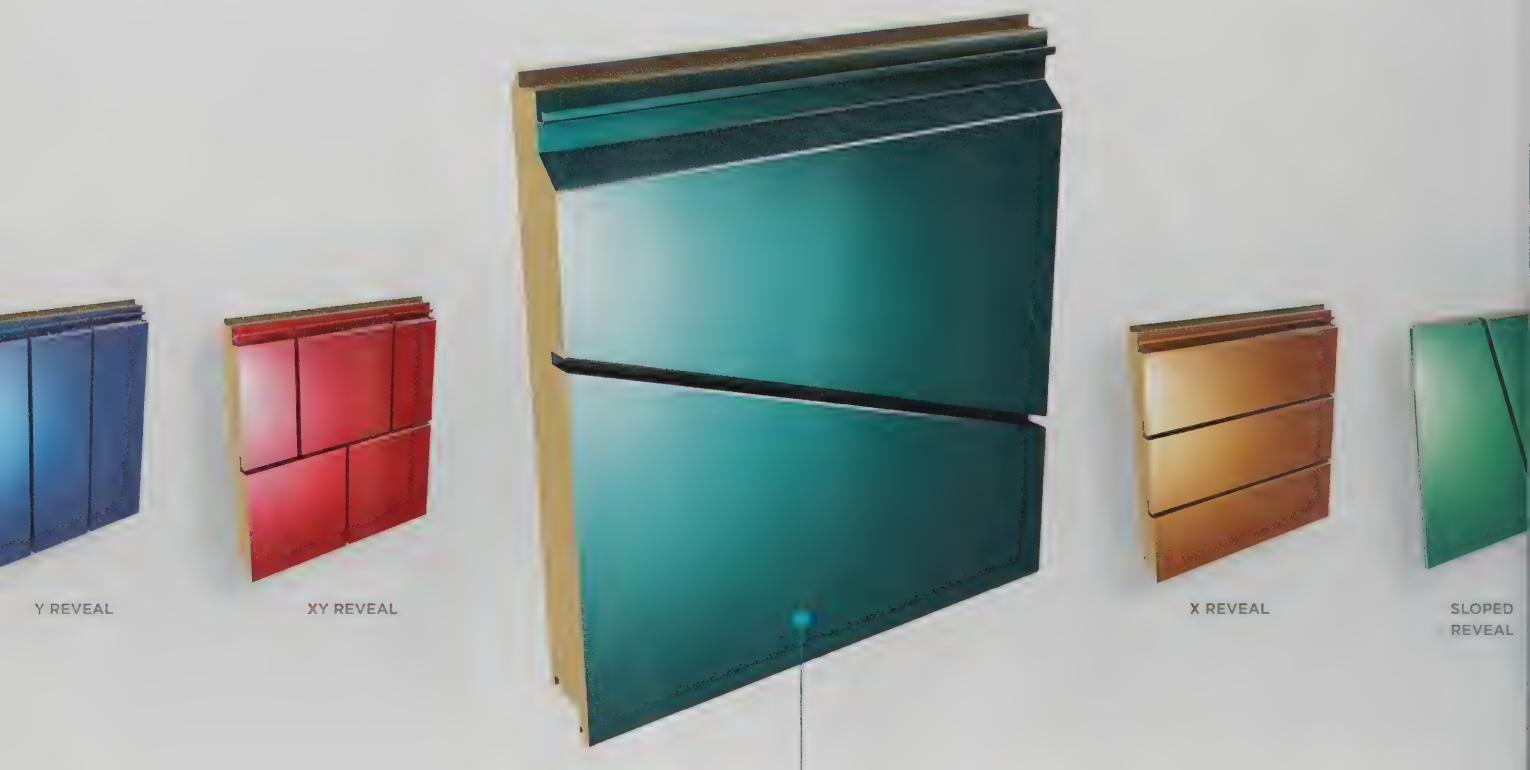
Piano at Young's Chapel in Ben Hill
County, Georgia. Photo: Scott Farrar.

Desire path created by pedestrians
leading to the Brandon Estate, in
London's Kennington Park.
Photo: Stefan Szczelkun.

Fenway Park's well-seasoned seats.
Photo: © dana lynne photography.

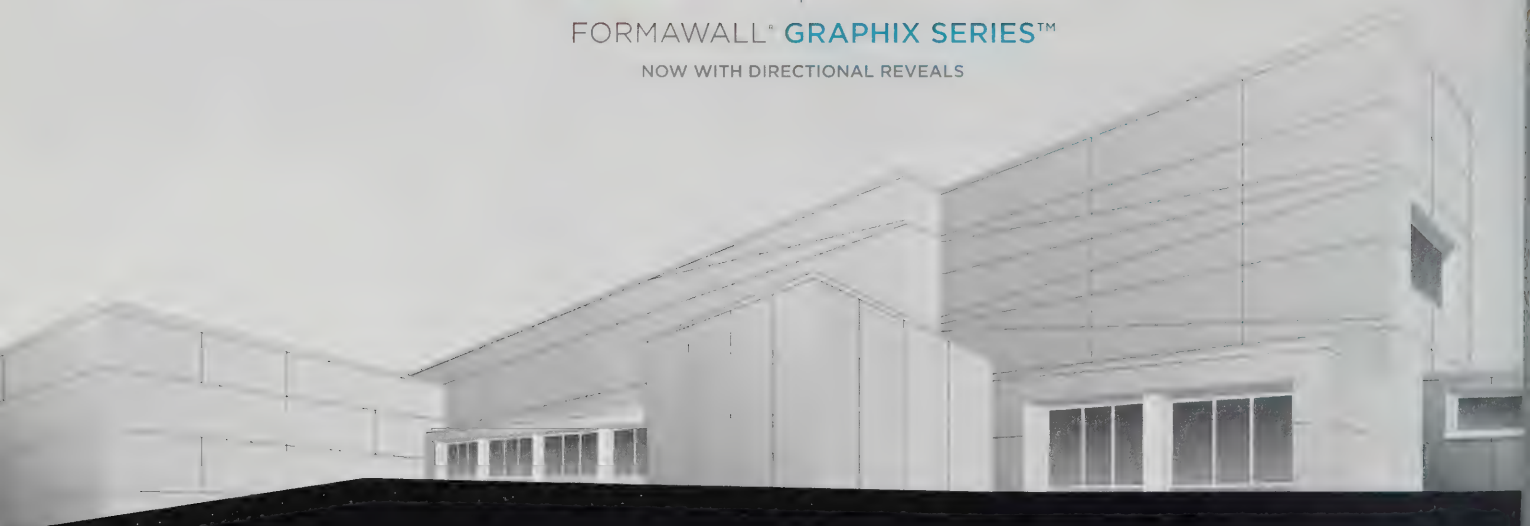
The wallet-worn back pocket of
a favorite pair of Levi's.
Photo: Erica Zabowski.

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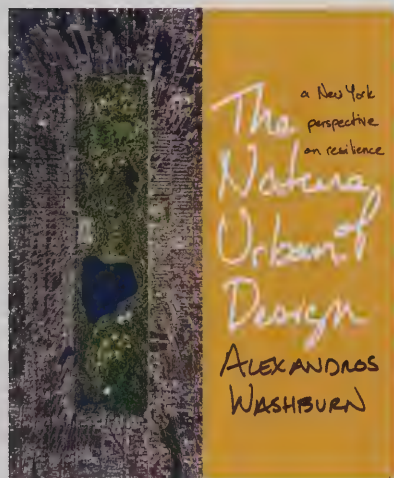
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BOOKS



The Nature of Urban Design: A New York Perspective on Resilience

Alexandros Washburn

Island Press, 2013

Reviewed by Steven J. Brittan ASSOC. AIA

In the wake of the abrupt arrival of climate change, wreaking unimaginable havoc on our cities, Alex Washburn writes his book on resilience and urban design. Sparked, it seems, by his personal encounter with Hurricane Sandy flooding his building in Red Hook, Brooklyn, Washburn provides up-to-the-minute observations of the damage and process of cleanup and repair that followed. This book reads as part diary of the author's life experience (he is chief urban designer for New York City), part almanac for the novice urban designer, and part guide for what major cities such as New York should be doing—not just to adapt, but to prepare for the next storm.

Daily reminders of hurricanes, flooding, and drought at a global and local level leave us with no other choice than to think of self-preservation. In Washburn's view, we haven't even begun to master sustainability, so our ability to be resilient is made even more difficult. Resiliency can be understood as a kind of shock absorber, and even a way to bounce back. Our fragile state has spurred numerous responses at social, political, and environmental levels, all aiming to

slow humanity's carbon footprint and regain some form of equilibrium.

Washburn notes that urban designers do not design cities—rather they design the tools that change cities. These are in the form of “rules,” “plans,” and “pilot projects” that have the potential to transform whole neighborhoods. More than once, Manhattan's High Line is cited as an example. New York City is Washburn's laboratory of urban design and a model of resiliency for being global and coastal, despite boasting a carbon footprint measuring almost 50 million tons of greenhouse gases.

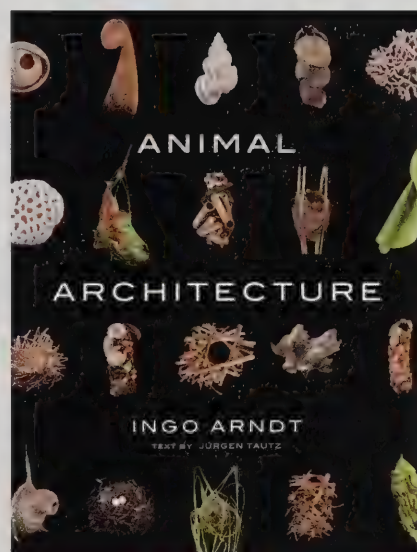
The city's memorable history and transformation is made possible by what Washburn affectionately calls his “three bosses and the greatest urban designers” in New York: Jane Jacobs, Robert Moses, and Frederick Law Olmsted. Washburn deftly weaves in their past ideologies and skills, and ponders what they might have done today in the face of climate change.

So, what are the lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy? What are specific examples that urban design offers us to make us more resilient? Washburn offers current strategies such as mitigation (changing our behavior to consume less) and adaptation (protective measures to reduce our vulnerabilities based on risk). Increasing density, improving mobility, mass transit, and maintaining open space are all tools of mitigation, as is making buildings not just reduce energy but replace it.

Three tactics for adaptation are offered: fortification (hardening the edges), resilience (to bend but not break), and retreat (moving out of harm's way). He uses examples from all over the world, including Istanbul, where neighborhoods have built-in flood plains; or Kibera, a neighborhood in Nairobi, Kenya, where waste and composted sewage is converted into new soccer fields; or HafenCity, the district in Hamburg, where building lobbies are built one floor up in areas prone to flooding.

Near the end of this richly illustrated guide, Washburn returns to his home in Red Hook, designing his apartment to a new height to adapt to flooding. Ironically, he runs up against government bureaucracy when requesting necessary approvals to improve his building's resiliency. The underlying theme of the book is that the application of urban design principles entwined with “civic virtue” will ultimately solve many of the problems of climate change and make cities more livable. It offers an educational framework of the complexity of urban design, how to “crack open the status quo,” and help manage change in an increasingly unpredictable world.

STEVEN J. BRITTAN ASSOC. AIA is a principal at Sasaki Associates, where he is focused on the integration of technology and design.



Animal Architecture

Ingo Arndt (photographs)

and Jurgen Tautz (text)

Harry N. Abrams, 2014

Reviewed by Genevieve Rajewski

Those interested in biomimicry—the science of looking to nature to inspire inventions—like to consider how the “technology of biology” can be applied for

human purposes. Through a collection of stunning photographs, *Animal Architecture* invites readers to instead simply marvel at how nonhuman animals design and build to meet their own ends.

Ingo Arndt—an internationally renowned nature photographer for *National Geographic*, *Geo*, and *BBC Wildlife*—went to considerable lengths to illuminate the complexity and functionality of constructions by birds, insects, arachnids, rodents, corals, bivalves, and snails. As his entertaining endnotes reveal, he shot red ants outside his front door, built a leafy hut to camouflage his work among bowerbirds in West Papua, Indonesia, and waded waist-deep into a beaver pond at Yellowstone National Park. He also shot from helicopters and planes, as well as against a classic black backdrop in the studio. The result is a truly impressive range, one that's often hard to believe is the work of a single photographer.

Arndt's minutely detailed studio portraits of birds' nests reveal the unexpected patterns, textures, and shapes achievable with the use of humble materials such as reeds, grass, clay, and even electrical scraps. Those who care about designers as much as their creations will relish the insider's view of the animal architects in action, either at work building or enjoying the fruits of their labor. Other pictures put some of the larger structures in context: for example, showing expansive landscapes dotted with the 10-foot towers of the compass termite. The most successful sections of the book combine these aspects to give a multidimensional look at the creators and their brand of architecture.

An obvious assumption about animal architecture is that, as photographer Jim Brandenburg writes in the foreword, "form follows function" and there's "no need to express beyond practicality." However, Arndt's photos reveal that some species besides humans also incorporate materials that serve a decorative purpose. To lure

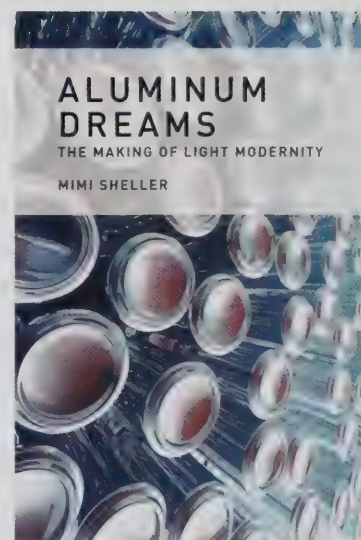
their mates, male gray bowerbirds in Australia artfully weave an elaborate arbor from sticks and then tile its floor with snail shells, pebbles, and other ornamental objects. And in western New Guinea, male Vogelkop gardener bowerbirds likewise build towering arbors, then go wild with color—decorating their yards with flowers, fruits, mosses, and even human-discarded items such as soda cans.

This book shows that humans hardly have the market cornered on building technologies. Termites construct an elaborate system of ducts and chimneys that exhausts dirty air and imports fresh air for pristine indoor air quality. And Passive House practitioners will appreciate how compass termites build their 10-foot flat-sided towers in precise north-south orientation to capitalize on the sun's position throughout the day for heating and cooling. Those interested in building enclosures will marvel at how red wood ants construct virtual skyscrapers that offer complete moisture protection and ideal indoor temperatures across seasons.

The book's one shortcoming is that it illuminates just a taste of so many other species' architectural achievements. However, the photographer and author team has portrayed these constructions and their designers so respectfully that the reader is left wanting a much larger volume dedicated to the commonality of design among all living things. The lasting impression is how human and nonhuman animals alike can all build to protect themselves from the elements, create optimal indoor universes for their families, and even fulfill a fundamental desire for beauty.

And, as Brandenburg wisely notes in his foreword, craftsmanship is what makes the difference between success and failure.

GENEVIEVE RAJEWSKI is a Boston-based freelance writer who covers animals, science, nature, and more for national magazines and newspapers.



**Aluminum Dreams:
The Making of Light Modernity**

Mimi Sheller

MIT Press, 2014

Reviewed by Jennifer Weeks

Aluminum is everywhere in our daily lives: It is used in cars, airplanes, electrical transmission systems, packaging, appliances, consumer goods, and modern buildings. Many well-known Boston office buildings feature aluminum components, from the Federal Reserve Plaza to Fumihiko Maki's expanded headquarters for the MIT Media Lab. Aluminum mullions support glass window panels in the curtainwalls of countless postwar office buildings, including the John Hancock tower.

In *Aluminum Dreams*, Drexel University sociologist Mimi Sheller tells the story of this lightweight metal and shows how corporations have marketed it as a symbol of speed, lightness, and progress. She also describes aluminum's darker side—the heavy environmental impacts of bauxite mining and hydropower development. (Many rivers have been dammed in the United States and elsewhere to provide the huge quantities of power needed for aluminum smelting.) In her words, aluminum is “a superficially lightweight topic with a surprisingly heavy history.”

Aluminum's ubiquity reflects its useful qualities. It is lighter than many other metals; extremely malleable; conducts heat, cold, and electricity well; and resists

corrosion. When two 23-year-old researchers (one French, one American) simultaneously discovered an electrolytic process for smelting aluminum from bauxite ore in 1886, they triggered a shift from the first industrial revolution—powered by coal, iron, and steam—to a second industrial revolution based on electricity; lightweight metals; and later, plastics and synthetic fibers. Sheller calls this new age “light modernity.”

Using commercial ads, Sheller shows how large companies such as Alcoa, Bohn, and Kaiser marketed aluminum goods as symbols of a bright future where things were smooth, fast, and streamlined. Some products that date back as far as the 1930s have become icons of 20th-century design, from Airstream trailers to consumer goods like rounded toasters and school lunch boxes. In the 1960s and ’70s, consumer interest waned, and mass-produced goods such as aluminum siding came to be seen as artificial and disposable.

But now aluminum is resurging. Design magazines such as *Dwell* have revived the idea of prefab housing, and many green buildings contain aluminum components, which are recyclable and typically contain a high fraction of recycled content. The embodied energy savings in aluminum components help builders earn LEED points.

But Sheller also surveys the global effects of bauxite mining and smelting. Key supplier countries such as Jamaica, Suriname, Guinea, and India have struggled to win royalty payments and benefits from multinational companies. Indigenous communities have been displaced for mines and dam construction. Mined-out areas are marked by “deforested mountains and lakes of red mud.” Today Guinea is one of the world’s largest bauxite producers and also one of the world’s poorest countries.

With this record, is aluminum really a green material? On one hand, it reduces

weight in cars and planes, which saves fuel. It also is recyclable: Producing new items from recycled aluminum uses only about 5 percent of the energy required to make them from virgin material. But many aluminum products are not recycled, and Sheller argues that the industry’s continuing investments in primary mining and smelting are far larger than the resources companies devote to recycling.

Sheller’s conclusions are fairly obvious: Modern societies should use fewer resources, recycle more of them, and pay more attention to the effects of resource extraction. Her writing can be clunky, and she creates a choppy effect by overusing quotations for information that could be paraphrased. Despite these flaws, *Aluminum Dreams* is a timely look at a material that is pervasive in our lives. For maximum impact, read it on your MacBook Air or iPhone—made with recycled aluminum.

JENNIFER WEEKS is a freelance journalist in Watertown, Massachusetts, who writes about the environment, science, and health.



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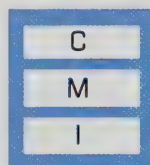
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WAITING TO EXHALE

Over the past decade, research has shown that bodily experience of the natural world regulates the electrical circuitry of our brain function, blood flow, and the mechanical tension of our muscles. These findings reveal what we already intuitively know: The dappled light through the forest canopy, the cooling mist from a stream, and the rhythms of the ocean tides are like a rejuvenating tonic to our stressed bodies and minds. In the process of design, landscape architects engage our external senses to return balance to our inner well-being. Our most beloved urban spaces bring healing by provoking our natural responses within the metaphors of the city; they can even bring joy by awakening our sense of whimsy and offering tangible impressions of sound, touch, and sight that transform into internal comfort, diverting from the hustle of urban surroundings.

This inner restoration can be experienced at Paley Park, designed by Robert Zion of Zion and Breen, in midtown Manhattan. Despite the challenging site conditions, wedged between high-rise towers with a dearth of natural light, the park provides the feeling of an oasis. This urban space offers a calm intimacy, contrasting with the cacophony of traffic and intense pedestrian movement that frames this pocket park. The tactile and sonic sensations of this microclimate—with its simple but effective water wall and grove of trees—acoustically transforms this dark space into a copse nestled in a concrete jungle. During the heat of summer, echoes of the sound of moving water, the cool mist on the face, and compact boundaries of the location combine to evoke a feeling of sanctuary.

In an analogous way, Tanner Fountain, located adjacent to Harvard Yard in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and designed by Peter Walker, encourages the remembrance of childhood play along a stream embankment. Natural stone outcroppings are arranged in Walker's concentric circles that visually and haptically stimulate the sense of rhythm and movement. The sensation of action becomes more intense as children are in perpetual motion in the center, where misting water both sprays and cools the skin, providing a refreshing tactile experience. All this occurs as life moves around and beneath this plaza, with intense pedestrian activity adjacent to the fountain and vehicular traffic in the tunnel below: The sounds of the children and the fountain merge with the urban sounds of community. By using complex sensual feelings in effective ways, the design recalls youthful engagement with intimate moments in the natural world, rejuvenating the urbanite.

From gentle playfulness to frank wonder: In 2004, Jaume Plensa, a Catalan artist, envisioned the Crown Fountain in Chicago's Millennium Park as a landscape experience that evokes the emotions of surprise and amazement. Faces of Chicago residents emerge from LED screens that are housed within a pair of glass block towers. These digital towers frame a central reflection pool that invites bodily engagement.



As these expressive facial images transform, their lips occasionally purse and emit a fountain like a digital gargoye. Activity scatters to the periphery of this plaza as children and adults alike scamper and dart from one side to the other, chasing these fountains as they reveal themselves. The project displays an uncanny ability to use contemporary technology while providing a multisensory engagement that mesmerizes its audience. Like Tanner Fountain, the project immerses the senses and allows people to free their bodies from the standardized movement of the city, providing a moment to exhale.

Within the small confines of the urban realm, these visionaries have improved the physical and emotional health of city dwellers by simulating and abstracting natural effects on all our senses. Their designs incorporate a sophisticated understanding of the physical response to complex patterns, choreographing a unique experience that engages the senses of touch, sound, and sight in a way that effectively restores the natural balance of the human mind and body. Paley Park evokes the feeling of sanctuary in the forest; Tanner Fountain invokes the sentiment of play at an eddy along a stream; the Crown Fountain kindles the reactions of surprise and playfulness similar to a natural geyser. However different the emotions that these designers attempt to awaken, they address us as complex multisensory beings, while alloying restorative processes and bringing rejuvenation and whimsy to our experience of the urban landscape. ■

MIKYOUNG KIM FASLA is a landscape architect and artist whose work reflects a deep commitment to culturally significant designs that serve as a powerful tool to heal and enliven the public realm.

ABOVE

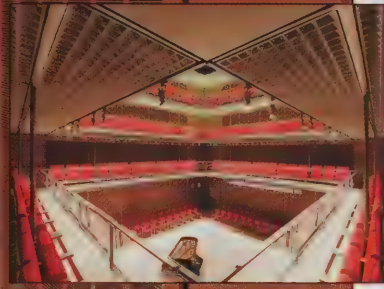
Crown Fountain, in Chicago's Millennium Park. Photo: Charles Cook/Getty Images.

“Renzo Piano is an absolute master of light and brightness. His structures are very elegant, very humanistic. They grow out of understanding how buildings go together and how light comes through them.”

Richard Rogers, Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners LLP



Photos, top: ©Benjamin Johnson/Shawmut Design & Construction



Photo, inset above: Peter Vanderwarker



© Payette. Photo: Rashad Baniabbasi

Crafted by Mark Richey Woodworking. Top: Calderwood Hall, The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Rift white oak accoustical panels. Bottom: The Harvard Art Museums, during renovation and expansion, showing the new addition. Facade and sliding wood panels crafted from Alaskan yellow cedar. Moveable panels on north and south sides control the flow of natural light.



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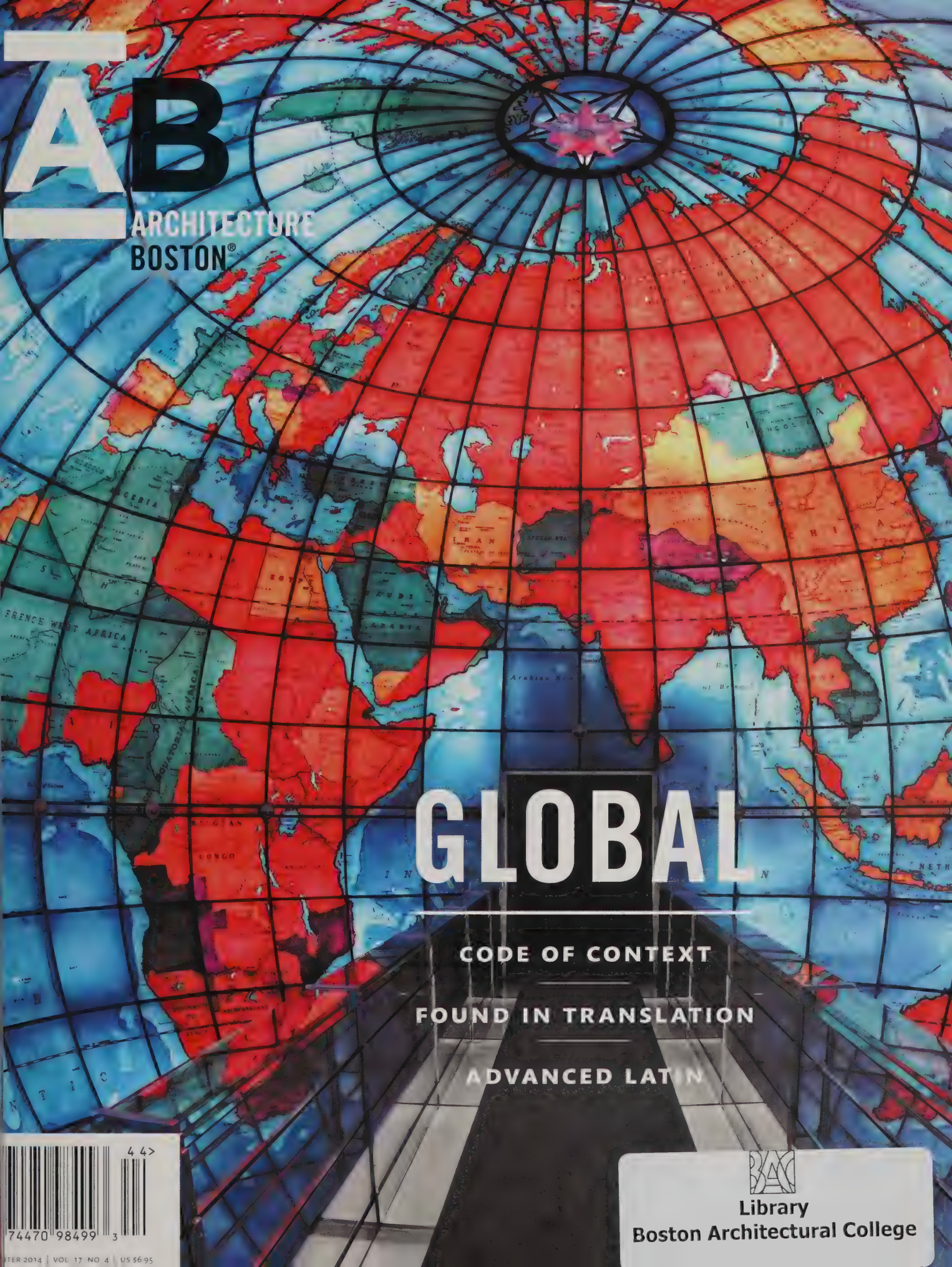
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ABOVE

Somos Luz (We are light) on the Begonia I building in Panama City, a collaborative art project by the Spanish group *Boa Mistura*, 2013. Photo: *Boa Mistura*.

COVER

The Mapparium. Photo: *The Mary Baker Eddy Library*, Boston.



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IMPORT, EXPORT, PASSPORT

In Dubai earlier this year, officials tried to encourage the city's commuters to take public transportation by offering prizes of pure gold. Meanwhile in Haiti, donkeys carry volunteers across washed-out roads to scout locations for new health clinics. In China, a contagion of copycat architectural styles is sweeping through massive residential developments with names like Thames Town, complete with Tudor mansions, Venetian canals, and a 300-foot replica of the Eiffel Tower. But in Bloemfontein, South Africa, builders are mixing up a recipe for local brick as they have for generations: red earth, sand, rubble, straw, and water. Mash thoroughly with bare feet until turned into clay.

Such is the range of opportunities—and capacities—that greet US architects working overseas.

The United States pavilion at the 2014 Venice Biennale recorded a global history of architectural practice; it found more US-designed projects in foreign countries over the past two decades than in the century before. The dizzying pace of international development surfaces knotty questions for American designers about materials and aesthetics, about human rights, about global sustainability. And the road map (or flight map, as the case may be) for resolving such questions isn't clear.

Boston firms are strongly represented on the US pavilion's roster, which shouldn't be surprising. Local architects have pursued a series of global gold rushes since the Modernist sensibilities of The Architects Collaborative first appeared at the University of Baghdad in the 1950s. When the Arab oil embargo ended that boom, Malaysia, Singapore, and China became the new frontiers. Today the most lucrative opportunities seem to be in the United Arab Emirates and, again, China. (Apparently, the 18th century wasn't the last time the China trade helped Boston thrive.)

We are told the world is flat—telecommunications, deregulation, and a vastly improved travel infrastructure have nearly eliminated the barriers that once impeded international trade. But designers also can't help noticing a flattening of the architectural aesthetic, especially in emerging economies that consider generic towers of glass and steel a sign of progress. Persuading such clients to learn from the West's mistakes—esthetic, environmental, or social—takes some delicacy. Doing it without condescension takes grace.

Besides, US architects can learn plenty from the reverse commute of ideas. Much of the developing world has become a laboratory for operating within constraints of scarce money and materials, often to the benefit of the environment. In "Advanced Latin," Justin McGuirk takes us on a tour of a continent often at the vanguard of responsible development. Builders using indigenous materials in Africa save on transport miles while preserving the local heritage.

It's hard to consider globalization without thinking about urbanization. According to the United Nations, the world's total urban area is expected to triple by 2030, accommodating (or not) a population of five billion. Today, China has at least 140 cities of a million people or more; the United States has nine. Mass concentrations in urban settings increase the risks of so-called "natural" disasters, whether in Lagos, Banda Aceh, or Port-au-Prince. Architects should consider climate change, population migration, and substandard building practices when they work in dense, fragile settings, helping to prevent disasters, not just repair them.

It's also difficult to be pure in this domain. If architects were to confine themselves to working in societies with a clean bill from Human Rights Watch, the list of no-go countries would be long, indeed (and include the United States). But architects need not be heedless of conditions in their host countries. Too many migrant workers are charged exorbitant entrance fees, live in unsafe housing, have their passports confiscated, or endure physical abuse. It may be too much to ask architects to divest their business from authoritarian regimes entirely, but as Jay Wickersham notes in his provocative essay "Code of Context," debating a universal set of principles could be a good place to start.

The cross-cultural value that global practice affords US architects can't be measured in any currency. Those who want the richest experience should proceed with patience, flexibility, and humility. The American Century, after all, ended in 1999. ■

Renée Loth
Editor



PHOTO: Bert Seager



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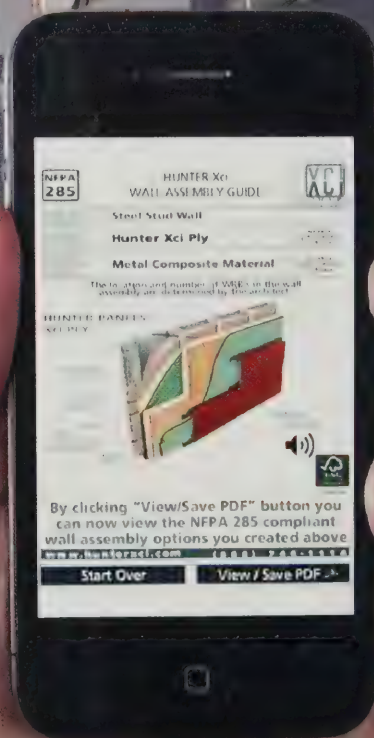
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ON “BODY” (FALL 2014)

In “**Body as mind**,” Craig Edward Dykers calls attention to the connection between the subtle influences that shape architecture and the pushback architecture exerts in return. As architects, the way in which our design impacts the body in motion and at rest lies at the base of our understanding of the built environment. However, we should also aspire to design for the intangible part of the mind that is not fully aware but ultimately has a profound effect on actions and feelings.

An authentic connection between a place and those who will occupy it can come down to the slightest design details, such as the placement of a window or the amount of natural light that is let in. As the study of architecture grows in its capacity of understanding the shared human condition, so, too, should our ability to design for those unconscious receptors that are inherent in all human beings.

MICHAEL ELLIS
5+design
Hollywood, California

Craig Dykers’ timely “Body as mind” piece points to the growing trend of considering human intuition and hidden responses to the environment as a factor in design. “Much of how we style our lives is based on unconscious tendencies that are formed by how our bodies interact with their surroundings,” he writes. Indeed, scientists say that 95 percent of what happens in our brain is outside our awareness, and even our conscious thoughts are all subconscious first. With advances in cognitive science and tools such as functional magnetic resonance imaging devices (fMRI), we can now track our brains at work, reacting to the world well before we are aware of it.

Top product designers and computer innovators (think Steve Jobs) have long held that the more we understand human behavior, the better we can design for it. Being aware of key subconscious tendencies—from the fact humans

are a thigmotactic, or “wall-hugging,” species (we tend to avoid the center of places), to the fact we are face-obsessed, with more of our brain engaged in facial recognition than in any other object—has huge implications for understanding our experience.

This sort of information, which previous generations never had, can’t tell us how to design, of course, but it can inform us about the impact of our creative palette; promote better conscious and subconscious conditions; and, we hope, a world that will be more humane.

ANN SUSSMAN AIA
JUSTIN B. HOLLANDER

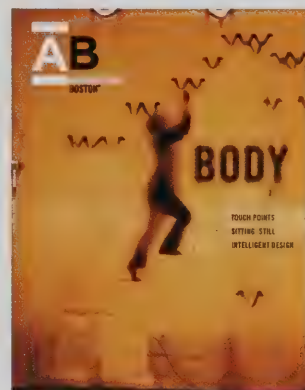
The writers are co-authors of Cognitive Architecture: Designing for How We Respond to the Built Environment (Routledge, 2014)

The “**Body**” issue provided many interesting articles based on art and poetics. But is this all that architecture and design are about? Or is there room in architecture to discuss the role of science related to human biology, psychology, and sociology?

We know from neuroscience that the brain comprises assorted connections that are either strengthened or discontinued through a process of pruning. It’s the demands of our physical and social environments that play a role in the formation or pruning of these connections.

Psychological sciences have demonstrated that we assign meaning to events and situations that take place within select environments. Some adults might recoil at the idea of entering a high school, while the idea may inspire excitement or have no meaning for others. This is because present and future emotions are influenced by past experiences.

There is no doubt that the built and natural environments play an important part in human understanding, comprehension, and performance. However, much of design education, which prepares



the practitioner, lacks subject expertise in physical, biological, and social sciences. Hence, beautiful and poetic justifications based on metaphor, but absent of scientific truths, are used to describe design projects.

Art and poetics are an absolute necessity within a cultured society, though scientific truths are equally important. Designs with specific human outcomes should be discussed and framed within the actual science that can substantiate the claims.

Many articles about design seem to be based on personal inspiration, which is often about poetics and metaphor. Descriptive narratives should thus celebrate the inspiration of the designer(s), and not pretend to be something other. After all, no one can dispute one’s personal meaning, but overgeneralized scientific concepts just don’t bode well.

DAK KOPEC
*Director of Design for Human Health,
Boston Architectural College
Boston*

What most intrigues me about Josh Safdie’s interview with Ellen Lupton [“User friendly”] is the suggestion that good user-centric design brings us closer to thinking about design as something experiential. This is a refreshing perspective that counters so much of what is currently upheld as innovation in design, where the search for novelty puts an emphasis on visual effects and complex formal manipulation. As we acknowledge that our physical environments must be more inclusive of a broad range of users,

it seems critical that we develop new attitudes toward design based on experiencing the physical world through engagement of all our senses, where aesthetic sensibility moves beyond the visual.

Designing environments that are premised on the needs of the physically challenged is actually an opportunity for designers to create more enriching environments for all of us. Thus a ramp has the potential to become the genesis of a design, rather than a necessary appendage to meet code compliance. In the work of Le Corbusier, ramps are a central design feature—a way to enrich the user's experience of a place by revealing its qualities through a sequential movement in time. A great example of this is at the Villa Savoye, where a ramp forms the centerpiece of the design, creating an "architectural promenade" that invites the user to move through the house vertically through a rich sequence of interior and exterior spaces.

As we continue to adopt new technologies that open up new freedoms and possibilities, the virtual environments we create are starting to seamlessly intersect with our experience of the physical world, blurring the boundaries. Perhaps as a result we have an even greater responsibility to create built environments that fully reconnect us with our senses and reground us in physical reality.

JOHAN (JAY) VERSPYCK AIA
Shepley Bulfinch
Boston

I second Mikyoung Kim's call for greater attention to the nonvisual senses in the work of reimagining the city ["Waiting to exhale"]. Her evocations of Paley Park and Tanner Fountain remind us that in these works, designers managed to call forth ordinary phenomena in extraordinary ways. The ephemeral joys of shade or mist or gurgling sounds can be newly discovered and embraced in these works; they have the power to transform urban experience.

I was reminded of the drenching

moisture and cooling shade of Dan Kiley's crazy bald cypress trees at Fountain Place, in the middle of a very hot Dallas. When you step off the sidewalk and wander into Kiley's imaginary forest, with its watery surface feeling like a rationally ordered bayou, the clatter and heat of a busy city fuses with the memory of what it's like to be in a backwater creek. It's urban bliss, for me.

Much is said about the role of landscape architecture in reorganizing our cities and making them more livable. Our publications are full of countless supposed "urbanisms" these days. We may argue about the semantics, but I'm optimistic that our cities will benefit from more consistently shaded streets, less reflected heat, more songbirds, and drains that turn storm runoff into something useful or beautiful. We should all heed Kim's appeal: Let's not overlook the power to evoke sensation and emotion, and nature itself, inside the city.

Along these lines, it's useful to recall Luis Barragan's wry condemnation of high Modernism's rhetoric, with its tendency for amnesia around sensory matters. In a speech celebrating his Pritzker Prize in 1980, Barragan admonished: "It is alarming that publications devoted to architecture have banished from their pages the words Beauty, Inspiration, Magic, Spellbound, Enchantment, as well as the concepts of Serenity, Silence, Intimacy, and Amazement." Those were exactly the things he wanted to transmit in his work. And even if the jurors couldn't articulate it as he did, and couldn't discover it in their own work, his Pritzker surely honored the human capacity to do so.

These indispensable human experiences are no longer in exile. They're very much in demand.

GARY HILDERBRAND FASLA
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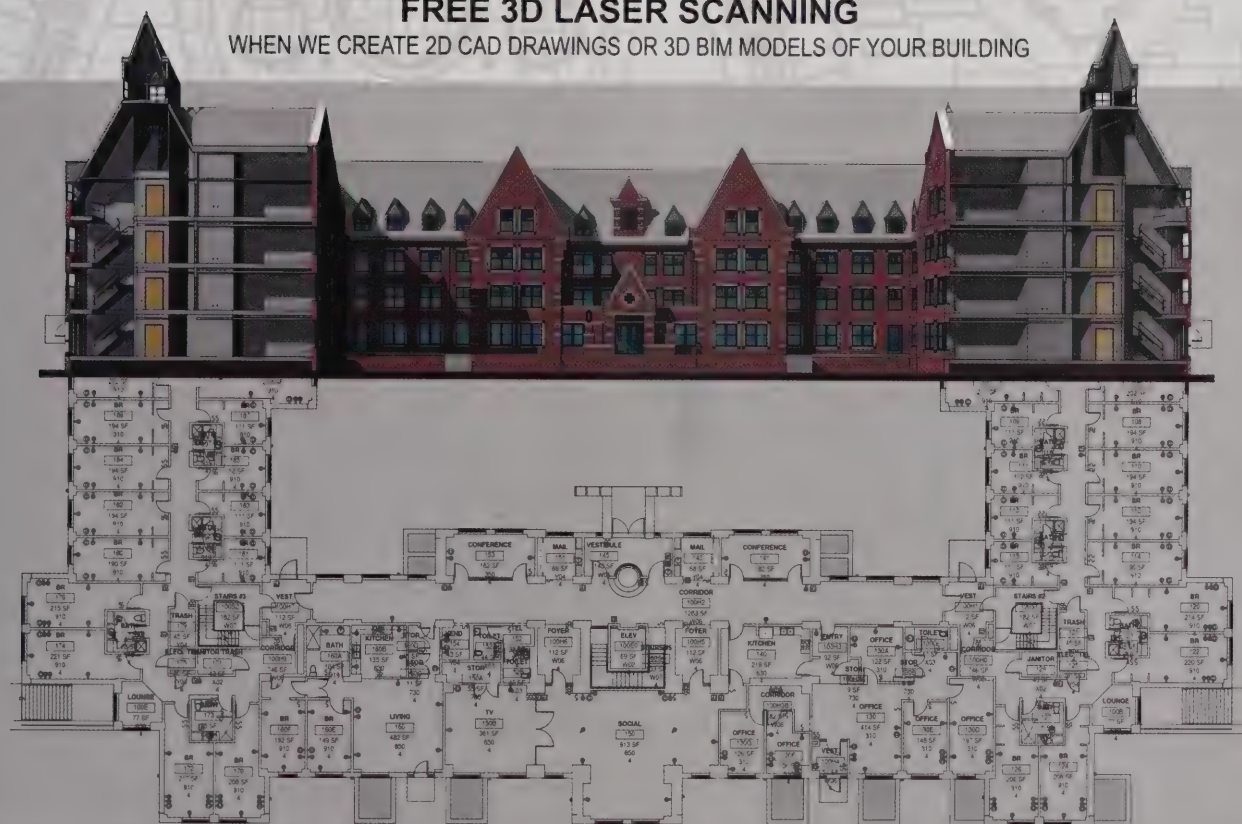
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IN THIS ISSUE

Eric J. Cesal and Audrey Galo ASSOC. AIA

("Big design, small planet," page 36)



PHOTO Yuko Okamura



PHOTO Yuko Okamura

Eric J. Cesal is executive director of Architecture for Humanity, a global humanitarian design nonprofit with chapters in 59 cities. Since 2010 he has led post-disaster programs of every type and scale across the world. His book, *Down Detour Road: An Architect in Search of Practice*, was published by the MIT Press in 2010.

Audrey Galo ASSOC. AIA is program coordinator at Architecture for Humanity, which she joined in 2011 to design and manage postdisaster reconstruction and resiliency programs throughout the world. She holds an undergraduate degree in architecture from the Illinois Institute of Technology and a master's degree in urban design from the California College of the Arts.

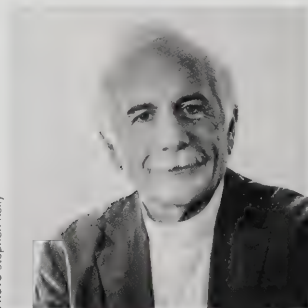


PHOTO Stephen Kelly

Moshe Safdie FAIA ("Conversation," page 44) is an architect, urban planner, educator, theorist, and author. Born in Haifa, Israel, in 1938, Safdie graduated from McGill University in 1961. Over the past 50 years, Safdie has realized projects all over the world, including Habitat '67, Montreal; Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum, Jerusalem; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; United States Institute of Peace Headquarters, Washington, DC; and Marina Bay Sands Integrated Resort, Singapore.



PHOTO Sarah Glaser

Yuriko Saito ("The gifts underfoot," page 64)

has been a professor of philosophy at the Rhode Island School of Design since 1981. She teaches courses in everyday, environmental, and Japanese aesthetics as well as introductory courses in philosophy. Her book *Everyday Aesthetics* was published in 2008 by Oxford University Press.



PHOTO Daniel Schwartz

Justin McGuirk ("Advanced Latin," page 40)

is a writer, critic, and curator based in London. He has been the design critic of *The Guardian*, the editor of *Icon* magazine, and design consultant to *Domus*. In 2012 he was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale for an exhibition he curated with Urban Think Tank. His book *Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture* was published by Verso.



PHOTO Colleen Baker

Jay Wickersham FAIA ("Code of context," page 32) an architect and lawyer, represents design firms in projects worldwide with the Cambridge, Massachusetts firm Noble, Wickersham & Heart. He is associate professor in practice at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he teaches courses in the history, law, and ethics of architectural practice.

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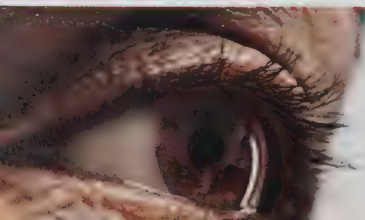
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UNSTRUCTURED

Opinions and Observations



@Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz

San Francisco

Through April 26, 2015

For 20 years on the northern end of Alcatraz Island, “privileged” inmates in the nation’s toughest prison toiled on the factory floors of the New Industries Building under the gaze of guards in a raised gun gallery. Today, visitors can peer down from the gallery onto the colorful portraits of more than 175 prisoners of conscience from around the world. Painstakingly assembled by volunteers from more than a million Lego bricks based on instructions from Ai Weiwei’s Beijing studio, this sprawling series of mosaics, titled *Trace*, is just one of seven ambitious site-specific installations by the famed artist and activist.

Currently forbidden from leaving China, Ai has never visited Alcatraz. These installations were developed remotely with the support of the FOR-SITE Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to art about place, in partnership with the National Park Service and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy.

The exhibition explores the theme of freedom in manners that range from the abstract to the

didactic but that are always poignantly calibrated to the built space. A five-ton mechanical wing remains trapped and flightless on the factory floor; a writhing Chinese dragon kite peers out the entrance toward the ocean; ceramic flowers bloom in hospital bathroom fixtures. Individual and isolation cells resonate with sound installations, bringing visitors in touch with the music and voices of the persecuted through visceral encounters with spaces in Alcatraz not normally opened to the public. Finally, in the prison’s dining hall, visitors are invited to write a postcard addressed to one of the prisoners depicted in *Trace*, transforming the prosaic exit activity at many tourist sites into a moment when we are asked to consider our own responses and our place in the world.

LIAN CHIKAKO CHANG ASSOC. AIA works at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, where she collects, analyzes, and communicates data and information about architectural education.

ABOVE

With Wind, 2014
Photo: Jan Stürmann/
FOR-SITE Foundation

5 QUESTIONS

Comfort and joy

Charles A. Birnbaum FASLA is the president and founder of the Washington, DC-based Cultural Landscape Foundation. He spent 15 years with the National Park Service as coordinator of its Historic Landscape Initiative and a decade in the private sector, during which he contributed to the Emerald Necklace Park masterplan from 1984–90.

Are there distinguishing traits about Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace that stand apart from his other designs?

The diversity of the passages of scenery that Olmsted was orchestrating was amplified by the built scenic advantages that the Necklace would pass through. We live in a world where the civic realm is often driven by naming opportunities—museum wings, campus facilities, stadiums, playgrounds, themed gardens. Sometimes these introductions lay lightly on the land; on other occasions they don't take advantage of a site's inherent attributes and values. When Olmsted massaged and melded his design for the Necklace, he created a solution that not only worked in harmony with the site's cultural and ecological systems, but also formed a spinal column from which to organize the city and guide its growth. This sounds like landscape urbanism to me, a century before the term became fashionable.

Is there one perch or spot within those 1,100 acres that resonates profoundly for you?

For me the most bittersweet is the spot [overlooking Jamaica Pond] where the Pinebank Mansion once stood. The first time I arrived at this unrivaled scenic vantage point, I was doing reconnaissance work as part of the masterplan with Patricia O'Donnell, Tony Walmsley, Marion Pressley, and Lydia Lowry in 1984–85. Olmsted clearly intended to take advantage of this panoramic view. I sat amongst the ruins of Pinebank, with its exfoliating terra-cotta tiles and wood. What I would soon learn was that Pinebank was the only pre-existing structure that Olmsted integrated into his design. Here was a happy marriage of a landscape that was at once small and big, rich in its

unrivaled topographic variation, and spoke to the idea that change and continuity under the watchful eye of the landscape architect could be site-specific, practical, and rich in its cultural narrative.

What is your earliest impression or emotional connection to walking the Necklace's paths and edges?

Doing fieldwork 30 years ago in the Back Bay Fens with clipboard in hand and suddenly realizing that I was not in Kansas anymore—this area, overtaken by invasive phragmites, had become a heavily trafficked gay cruising area. For a sheltered 24-year-old who had not yet come to terms with his own sexuality, this was eye opening.

Can you reflect on its candidacy as a World Heritage Site?

As the first urban greenway in the world, and the progenitor of a typology, it's a worthy candidate. The challenge here is not just the global political climate that goes along with any pursuit for World Heritage recognition, it is also about how locals value their heritage. I often ask,

“Why is it that when Bostonians contribute to the arts—including two Emerald Necklace neighbors: the Gardner Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, which along with the Institute of Contemporary Art have raised \$1 billion dollars over the past decade—that parks like the Necklace, *based on giving*, are not as successful?”

How do you think Olmsted's vision has stood the test of time?

There is a reason there are nearly 200 Olmsted-designed landscapes listed on the National Register of Historic Places, dozens of Olmsted-centric friends groups, more than a dozen biographies, and two documentaries completed over the past few years. Olmsted's legacy has been made visible to millions who live, work, and play in these richly articulated environments that enable individual and collective acts of self-joyfulness. There is a reason why so many people can be found smiling when they are immersed in one of his designs.

BELOW

Jamaica Pond, Boston. Photo: Soe Lin Post.





Calder and Abstraction: From Avant-Garde to Iconic

Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Through January 4, 2015

Shadows on a scrim dance like falling leaves in the softest breeze—that's what you first see when you step inside this spellbinding Alexander Calder exhibition. Behind it is Calder's *Eucalyptus*, all black leaves on wires.

The first great maker of kinetic art, Calder defied expectations about sculpture—starting with its sheer tangibility: mass, volume, gravity. His mobiles float and turn, as ethereal as shadows, their drowsy motion propelled by air currents. “Fed on air, they respire and draw their life from the tenuous life of the atmosphere,” Jean-Paul Sartre wrote.

Calder and Abstraction (organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in collaboration with the Calder Foundation) traces the artist's work from the 1930s, when he gave his heart and his engineer's mind to abstraction, to the late 1960s, his heyday as a public artist.

In startling and winsome early works, biomorphic shapes drift before a panel (*Red Panel*) or inside a frame (*Snake and the Cross*), suggesting paintings come to life. They are kin to Jean Arp's cartoony abstractions. Calder, radically, set the pieces of his compositions adrift.

Using counterbalances, open forms, and flat planes, he devised playful, spirited mobiles and stabiles (which stand on the ground) that moved with enchanting unpredictability. The stabile *La Demoiselle* takes a deep bow and then pinwheels out, its little flats on wires fluttering as if in the wake of that initial bend.

If some of the maquettes for Calder's public works, such as the orange roller coaster *La Grand Vitesse*, feel tired, that's because Calder, along with Henry Moore, set now familiar standards for public art. They take nothing away from the exuberance of his art, which as it moves conveys much in this life that we sense but cannot grasp.

CATE McQUAID is a freelance writer and an art critic for the *Boston Globe*.

ABOVE

La Demoiselle, 1939. Photo: © 2014 Calder Foundation.

SEEN

Landwehrkanal, Berlin

On the Landwehr Canal, which runs along my street in the formerly industrial neighborhood of Kreuzberg, tourist boats fill the narrow and shallow channel. The banks are dotted with people watching them float by, feeding swans, having a nap, having a smoke. Above the Art Deco Admiral Bridge, the city's landmarks are quaintly displayed, as if on a postcard.


Constructed in the mid-19th century, when Kreuzberg did not even exist, the canal was an answer to the problem of water in Berlin. Formerly a swamp (the word *berl* meant swamp in 12th-century Polabian Slavic), this landlocked city is surrounded by lakes, and flooding was always an issue. The Landwehr provided much-needed drainage in an area that at the time was outside the boundaries of the city. It also lightened congestion on the Spree River by redirecting ships carrying wood and other construction materials to various sites, much like a railroad.

Today, the canal is chiefly a way of seeing Berlin and its surrounding landscape from the unique angle provided by boats of all kinds—from canoes and kayaks to rubber rafts and cruise ships—and of being seen by others. While many industrial canals in other cities have become abandoned wastelands, due to polluted waters and toxic soils, this former drainage ditch continues to make Kreuzberg one of the most sought after places to live.

JEANNE HAFFNER is a writer, researcher, urban scholar, and historian. Her book, *The View from Above: The Science of Social Space*, was published by MIT Press in 2013.

BELOW

Photo: Jeanne Haffner.

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MATTER OF COURSE

Architecture in the Islamic World

I have a friend who wishes he had attended only architecture lectures in college. I know what he means: There is no substitute for the aesthetic dream state of watching slides of beautiful buildings parade by in a darkened room. There were many such moments in Nasser Rabbat's Islamic architecture class at MIT, where every session's slide set began—accidentally on purpose, I think—with a glimpse of Rabbat's handsome 11-year-old son, Kinan.

There is a surfeit of beauty in MIT 4.614, which struggles to cover “fifteen centuries and three continents” worth of Islamic architecture, from the reed huts of Sumer to today's Persian Gulf megaprojects, in one semester. (I attended four sessions.) But it isn't beauty that I remember most about the class. What I recall is a course that was simultaneously fascinating and humiliating, for me. To teach Muslim architecture, Rabbat had to teach Islamic history and culture as well, and at times my ignorance overwhelmed me.

From roughly the 8th century well into the modern era, successive waves of Mohammed's followers dominated Mesopotamia—modern-day Iraq and Iran—plus what we call the Middle East; Turkey; North Africa; and, of course, parts of Spain and Sicily. The achievements of the vestigial Islamic state are head spinning. A Muslim cartographer in 12th-century Islamic Sicily created what many view as the first credible map of the world. According to some historians, Al-Azhar divinity school in Cairo was the world's first university. MIT thinks so. Not far from where we listened to Rabbat's lectures, the Institute has erected a bust of Al-Azhar scholar Ibn-al-Haytham, the father of the science of optics.

To explain why the Abbassid caliph built the 8th-century “round city” of Baghdad for his armies, or how the hypostyle (many-columned) mosques emanated eastward, then northward, then westward from Mecca, Rabbat had to explain the spread of Islamic civilization, about which I knew next to nothing. In a conversation after class, Rabbat tried to put me at ease and somehow convinced me that if ignorance isn't a virtue, it certainly isn't rare. “There are four Arabic speakers in the class [out of a dozen undergraduates], and they don't know any more than you do,” he assured me. “Turks learn Turkish history, Persians learn Persian history, but

they rarely see the big picture.”

“Why should you know anything about this period,” he challenged me, “unless you want to go dabbling in the affairs of these places? It's sad that American soldiers are destroying some of these places without knowing what they are doing. But they are not the only ones.”

And here is another leitmotif of the innocent-sounding MIT 4.614: the recurring theme of desuetude and destruction. On the one hand, many of the mosques, palaces, mausolea, ribats (small forts), and hospitals have disappeared more or less naturally under the sands of time. Abu Jafar's Round City has vanished, as have the glorious 10th- and 11th-century Fatimid palaces of Cairo. But many architectural marvels have been forcibly “repurposed” in the name of God. Perhaps the most famous example is the 8th-century Mosque of Cordoba, a World Heritage Site now known as La Mezquita de Cordoba. Here the Catholic Church simply absorbed and integrated the Great Mosque into its Gothic plan.

Much of Cordoba's Great Mosque remains standing. Not so ancient Islamic mausolea, destroyed by Wahhabi Muslims in Saudi Arabia who reject the veneration of mortal beings. Not so portions of the 9th-century, 170-foot-tall Malwiya Minaret in Samarra, bombed in 2005 by Iraqi insurgents after US troops stationed snipers on its top floor. While we were sitting in Rabbat's classroom, the destruction of Islamic architectural sites continued apace. Fighting between the Syrian Army and fundamentalist Islamic insurgents destroyed the minaret of the 11th-century Umayyad dynasty mosque in Aleppo, also a World Heritage Site. “It's a huge loss,” the Syrian-born Rabbat told the class.

What did I learn? All of the above, and much more. I learned humility in the face of knowledge. Alas, the more you study, the less you know.

ALEX BEAM's book *American Crucifixion*, about the death of Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, was published this year.

ABOVE

Cordoba's Great Mosque. Photo: Tony Castillo.





MAD about architecture

National Building Museum, Washington, DC
September 15, 2014

Picture in your mind's eye the sheer, fog-shrouded rock cliffs depicted in ancient Chinese landscape paintings of the Shan shui style. That's what Ma Yansong, founding principal of Beijing-based MAD Architects, evokes when discussing his contemporary architecture, which is rooted in flowing metal panelized forms. Addressing an audience gathered in the entry hall among the colonnades of the National Building Museum, Ma explained how Shan shui's sloping garden landscapes and elemental approach inspire his current work. He proposes a new building typology consisting of sleek, undulating massive forms to resolve the unique challenges of rapid growth in China. By creating a variety of scale and function, Ma believes cities can grow in a viable, responsible way. A graduate of the Beijing Institute of Civil Engineering and Architecture and Yale University, Ma was the first Chinese architect awarded a RIBA Fellowship in 2010.

As he walked the audience through a series of stunning slides of proposed and built works, he highlighted several major projects, including 2011's Inner Mongolia's Ordos Cultural Center. Ma rejected the lunar-like desert landscape of the site: "This project is a reference to the image of a desert that has been there forever; by placing a metal building on the desert, like a spaceship landing, it does not carry any identity with it. When you put the two together it creates a time gap, neither old or new."

Ma's masterplan for the Nanjing Zendia Himalayas Center refines his approach to scaled communities. This 6 million-square-foot development attempts to solve rapid expansion by proposing clusters of dense urban-like communities. Ma reimagines the scale and diversity of landscapes depicted in Shan shui paintings as a model for large residential development, with the masterplan's towers, streets, and public spaces finding direct parallels in the rock cliffs, footbridges, and gardens common in this ancient artwork. A series of streams crisscross small-scale shops and pavilions that are seemingly tucked into a dense urban forest of trees. It is in this diversity that Ma sees a new typology for urban growth that will flourish apace with the expansion of China, while remaining rooted in a rich cultural past.

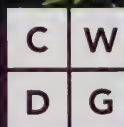
SAM COATS ASSOC. AIA is Gensler's firmwide head of intern development and academic outreach.

ABOVE

Ordos Museum model by Fang Zhenning. Photo: MAD Architects.

University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

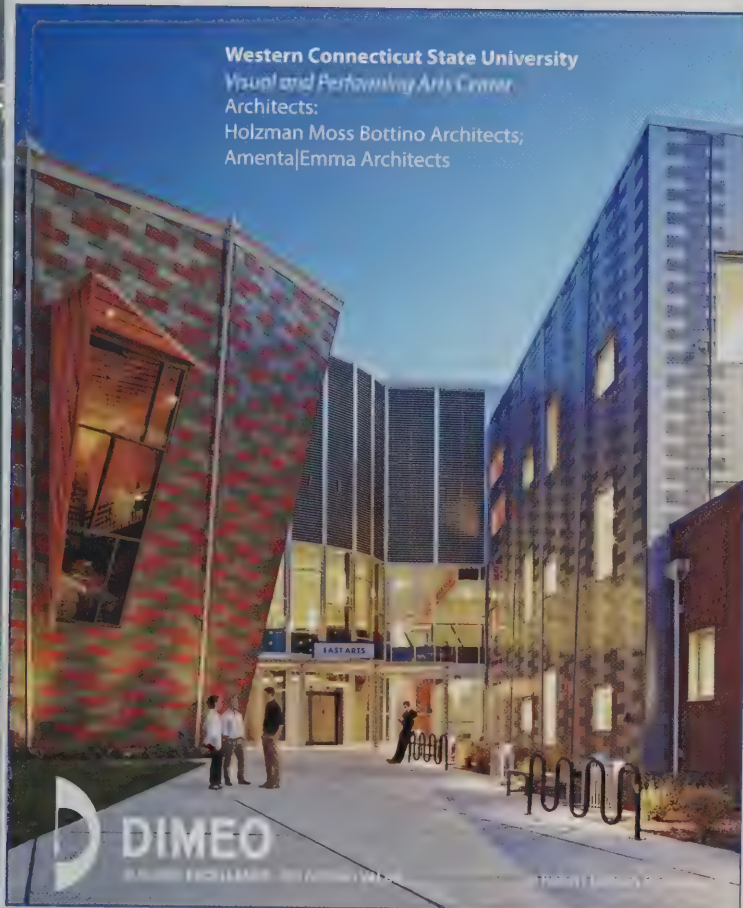
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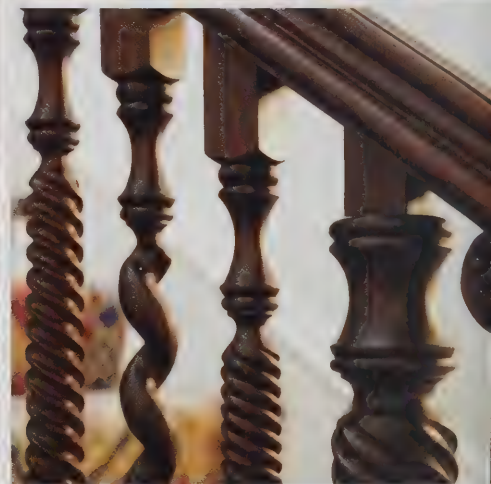
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FOUND IN TRANSLATION

An abstract blue line drawing of a globe, with numerous thin lines radiating from various points on its surface, suggesting a global network or communication system. The lines are more densely packed in some areas, creating a sense of connectivity and movement across the globe.

With more architects working on projects overseas, how does this dispersal of talent affect practice? The appetite for shiny new objects must be balanced with a kit bag of concerns: flash versus function, desire for progress versus respect for indigenous design, imported notions about identity versus local cultural values. In reconciling these seemingly oppositional issues, designers need to interpret context and discover a new vernacular. In doing so, they lay the foundation for a more enlightened global landscape.



INDIA

SOFTENING THRESHOLDS

by Rahul Mehrotra

India's kinetic urban landscape mirrors its society, a complex emerging fabric of multiple aspirations. The high-tech center of Hyderabad in South India has grown tremendously, rivaling Bangalore as an information technology hub. But as you traverse the landscape of Hyderabad, the social inequity is striking. Architecture often is an instrument in exacerbating these inequities—a tool to separate people rather than bring them together.

The work we are doing in India is inspired by this concern. In designing the headquarters of KMC, an infrastructure company in Hyderabad, we were able to challenge this social hierarchy, and in a corporate office where these divisions are even more acute. The project, completed in 2012, involved questions of identity but also of function: We needed to keep the building cool in this hot, dry climate. We devised a green wall, but not in the common way we have come to think about sticking green on walls. Instead, we employed a double skin: The inner façade is reinforced concrete with operable windows; the outer skin, about three feet away, is a custom-cast aluminum trellis outfitted with blooming plants that grow in hydroponic trays with a drip irrigation system that also cools the building with a fine mist.

The greenery is so central to the building's identity and function that the gardeners who maintain it have become much more important. Rather than the usual scenario of the gardeners toiling in the hot sun while the executives drive by in their limousines not making any eye contact, now they are part of the corporation. They freely traverse any part of the building via the green wall that they are charged with maintaining. The success of KMC's

corporate identity is dependent on the success of the lowest-paid employees who upkeep the façade—true green jobs!

None of this was articulated to the client as “Here is our social agenda.” We were operating intuitively, slowly becoming conscious of the possibilities of the design and engaging the client and users of the building in these discussions as they evolved. I believe if you embed your own concerns and values in your practice, you push the envelope as these values resonate in design decisions. I use the metaphor of a threshold: They tend to get hardened by economic and social differences and played out in the way we articulate our buildings. So the design of the double façade was not only a performative element of the building but also softened the threshold: Different social classes became aware of one another, through their sheer presence.

When we first got the commission for the KMC project, Hyderabad was torn by social unrest. Ethnic and communal tensions had been stoked by a government debate over whether to split the state of Andhra Pradesh in two. The ostentation of the glass skyscraper as a symbol of global capital was an irresistible target for protesters throwing rocks. Everywhere we went, the buildings were covered in fish netting to protect the glass. It's interesting that the glass skyscraper is so compelling a symbol of wealth and power that corporations insist on them even though they aren't appropriate to the meteorological climate of South India or, as we saw, its political climate. The headquarters at KMC offers an alternate design approach—one which is also a response to an important social issue. Even if it is only a gesture, it's a beginning. ■

RAHUL MEHROTRA is chairman of the department of Urban Planning and Design at Harvard's Graduate School of Design and founding principal of RMA Architects, with studios in Mumbai, India, and Boston.

ABOVE
KMC Headquarters, Hyderabad, India.
Photo: Robert Stephens.

OPPOSITE
World airline routes.
Illustration: John O'Sullivan.

QATAR

GRAPPLING WITH IDENTITY

by Kelly Hutzell AIA

I don't cover my head. I teach my courses in English. I can drive a car. These are answers to questions that I frequently face from Americans about what it's like to be a woman in the Middle East. The political and cultural nuances of the Arab world—from the ultraconservative society and hijabs of Saudi Arabia to the cosmopolitan glamour and high heels of Lebanon—are lost to many. In Qatar, local women wear hijabs *and* heels. I wear neither.

Qataris account for only one-fifth of the total population of the country (which has tripled in 10 years), and men outnumber women three to one. Interestingly, the enrollment in the beginning architecture elective courses that I teach at Carnegie Mellon University's branch campus is overwhelmingly female. When I first started teaching, I was surprised to find that Qatar University, with segregated campuses for men and women, offers the only Bachelor of Architecture degree in the country, and to women only. Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering degrees are offered only to men.

In my classes, I use our campus, a multiversity called Education City, as a laboratory. With buildings designed by Arata Isozaki, Legorreta + Legorreta, Antoine Predock, and OMA, among others, it offers valuable lessons. This past spring my class donned hard hats and orange vests to visit the construction site of the ambitious new Faculty of Islamic Studies building by Mangera Yvars. It's certainly no accident that the building is the most avant-garde on campus; it speaks to Qatar's ambition to play a major role in

defining contemporary Islamic identity and culture. While the students marveled at the soaring and fluid forms that referenced Arabic calligraphy, they lamented the absence of color, stating that "white is so boring."

On a recent field trip to Msheireb, the massive mixed-use regeneration project intended to bring locals back into the heart of Doha, my students admired the project's ambition yet commented that they would never live there. Most Qataris left the clusters of extended family courtyard houses in the city center a generation ago, choosing to live dispersed in suburban villas behind walls and gates. With this physical atomization of the community unit, the value placed on privacy intensified. What I saw as the benefits of density, my students viewed as an invasion of personal space. It's yet another reminder of how different their context is from mine.

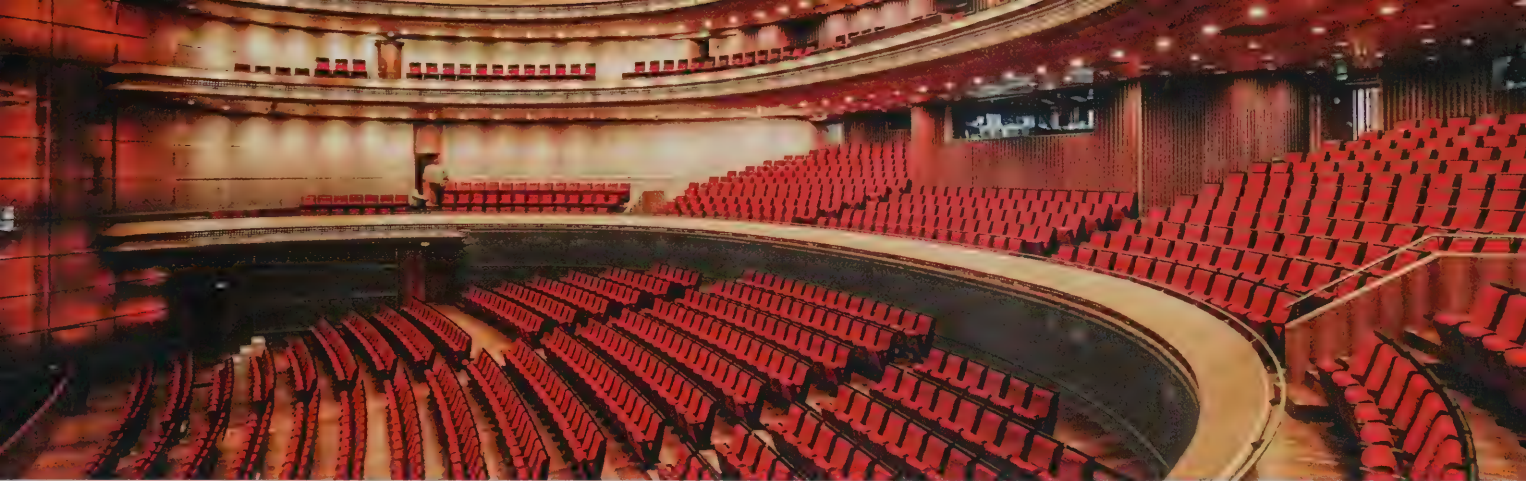
My time spent teaching at Carnegie Mellon Qatar has afforded me greater access to the culture than most expatriates. As an architectural educator and researcher, I have had a front-row seat to Doha's physical transformation. It is a city that erases and rewrites itself often; for as many buildings that are built, it seems that just as many have been demolished. The issue of identity—whose identity?—takes on great importance when talking about everything from fashion to architecture. Teaching—and learning—in the Middle East has allowed me to see beauty in what others may merely see as black and white. ■

KELLY HUTZELL AIA teaches in the fall at the Carnegie Mellon University campus in Pittsburgh and in the spring at the branch campus in Doha, Qatar, where she also works on projects for the Boston-based firm over,under.

BELOW

Education City, Doha, Qatar.
Photo: Osama Saeed.





CHINA

LET'S NOT FORGET FUNCTION

by Rose Mary Su

China is developing at a dizzying speed, but in its haste to showcase its progress to the world, some design vision is lost. One place where this is particularly obvious is the country's program for new performing arts centers.

In preparation for the 2008 Olympics, the government poured generous funding into the construction of the National Grand Theater in Beijing. This venue consisted of three spaces: a large opera house, a major concert hall, and a smaller theater. The theater was designed by Paul Andreu, a French architect known more for his airports than performing arts centers, but he achieved what most Chinese view as progress: a Western-style monumental architecture that is a standout building in modern Beijing.

With more government funding, the rush to build performing arts venues continued to other cities, including smaller ones. Many of these cities do not have an existing facility nor resident artists who would use such a space. The government's strategy seems to be "build it and they will come."

Such a rush for progress comes at a price. Unlike first-tier cities where there are three performance halls within each Grand Theater, many of the smaller cities have one multipurpose hall that must accommodate all types of uses. The programming of these spaces can be an afterthought because the primary goal is to provide showstopping exterior architecture to attract tourists (inviting comparisons to Sydney). This makes it extremely challenging to satisfy the acoustical and operational needs of a wide range of performances, in particular those that rely heavily on visiting performers. Maintaining and operating these monumental halls can also be

a challenge, as the funding is left up to the local authorities rather than to Beijing.

What types of performances occur in these venues? Since the Cultural Revolution, traditional Peking opera, with its more intimate courtyard-style setting, has been replaced by propagandistic operas more akin to a heavily amplified Broadway show, with casts of hundreds, including dancers, acrobats, choruses, and sometimes even soldiers. Such extravaganzas require a huge stage. At the opposite end of the spectrum, a traditional Chinese instrumental ensemble playing in the pentatonic scale ideally would perform in a more intimate setting more comparable to a Western recital space. I once heard a *guzheng* ensemble (*guzheng* is a type of Chinese zither) in a multipurpose hall; the musicians were heavily amplified, and the performance was not memorable. On another visit to Beijing, I went to a *guzheng* maker's studio. With a more intimate setting, I was able to appreciate the timbre of this string instrument.

As the composer Tan Dun has said, "China is learning fast, but it has missed the point by building concert halls that are houses for rent instead of institutions with resident companies, production budgets, and a management team." The funding granted to these cities focused mainly on designing and building the venues, not on the continuing production of the events. As architects and acousticians, it is our responsibility to guide our clients and not simply use the opportunity to design a facility that is flashy but not functional. One hopes that as China races to build these once-in-a-lifetime performing arts facilities, it will make time to pause and plan out programs for the next generation. ■

ROSE MARY SU is an acoustical consultant for Acentech, specializing in performance space design and noise control. A native of Taiwan, she has a lifelong love of music.

ABOVE
National Grand Theater, Beijing.
Photo: Paul Maurer.



KUWAIT

THE POWER OF STORIES

by Peter Kuttner FAIA

Although aquariums, science centers, and children's museums are almost uniquely US exports, making learning meaningful to children is part of every culture. To engage families in exploring the familiar with new eyes, a museum and the stories it tells need to be both exciting and new, while welcoming and comfortable. Communities everywhere can take a measure of pride in their own stories.

In 2000, we designed The Scientific Center, a multiuse educational center including an aquarium, IMAX theater, and Discovery Place—Kuwait's first children's science museum. We worked with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, an institute committed to returning science education to Kuwait in a meaningful way. Because we are involved in the design and programming for both the building and the exhibit experience, a broad cultural awareness is crucial to the project's overall success, beyond the typical incorporation of local architectural motifs.

Kuwait has a unique setting at the head of the Persian Gulf. It follows the coast, where the desert meets the sea. So it has a vibrant history of trade, reinforced by its geography. Kuwait City is a strategic port, with a culture informed by the Bedouin caravans traversing the desert and the Persian sailors crossing the Gulf in their trading ships called dhows.

Tradition shapes The Scientific Center, both literally and in allusion. The plan is based on the Arab souk, with the different exhibits arranged as shops along the spine. Architecturally, traditional building elements such as arched entries and *mashrabiya* (wood screens which shade openings) control the light; local tile patterns set the interior flavor. Perhaps more as a metaphor, the fabric sun

panels above the souk skylights are reminiscent of the sails of the dhows out on the horizon, and the sun protection along the waterfront recalls the Bedouin tents in the desert.

For the exhibit experience, we tell local stories, based on the geography and history of the country. Discovery Place is organized around Desert, Gulf, and Coast galleries, interpreting science as local. While the children's science exhibits are museum classics—like a flow table to study currents or a flotation cylinder to understand pressure—they use local details to connect with Kuwaiti children: In this case, the water flows from an Arabic teapot, or the pressure causes a Persian pearl diver to rise or fall.

As Western designers, we also needed to understand the role of Islam in learning. In the United States we place an emphasis on the predictability of scientific experimentation, but much of what devout Muslims—as believers of divine intervention—experience is interpreted as God's will. Although Kuwaiti educators appreciated participatory learning, illustrating cause-and-effect with hands-on activity caused discomfort for some Muslims. As it was explained to us, Allah has created an order to the world around us, and science does not solely live in a secular realm.

To find some common ground, but still promote self-directed exploration, we moved our focus to the “sense of wonder” inherent in all nature and science. For instance, the exhibit *What's Under Kuwait* lets children lift portions of the earth, discovering the geological formation of the Arabian Peninsula (including oil, of course!) without dealing directly with the planet's creation stories. Appreciating the world around us has always been the first step in understanding science, in any culture. ■

PETER KUTTNER FAIA is president of Cambridge Seven Associates, serves on the BSA board, and is currently working on science centers in China and Saudi Arabia.

ABOVE
The Scientific Center, Kuwait.
Photo: © Gustavo Ferrari.

RWANDA

MEMORY AND MODERNITY

by Michael Murphy

In 2007, I rode down National Highway 4 outside Kigali, the capital city, toward the eastern lowland countryside in Rwanda. Lining the highway were small shops and homes, largely built in mud—either wattle and daub or mud block. Tin roofs, shed roofs, lean-tos. The older roofs were clay-tiled, fired in local kilns, made by hand, and green from the wet and rainy months behind us. Below the roofs were small windows with wooden shutters, and next to those, large red X's spray-painted on the walls; a reminder that eminent domain, along with the stench of progress, was upon them. I asked Bruce, my Rwandan colleague, why so many of these were to be torn down. "The government wants progress," he said. "They want modern buildings."

As a sophisticated economy began to emerge in Rwanda in the early 2000s, glass and steel construction filled Kigali's woven streets. Shopping malls replaced marketplaces; blue-glass-gabled monstrosities came flat-packed from China; meanwhile swaths of self-built houses—the filth of the informal—were swept clear under the tabula rasa of modernity and progress, the perception of development.

The Rwandan "modern" need not be overly nostalgic for a past that few have an interest in preserving. Colonized, butchered, forgotten, ignored, Rwandan progress was a sight to behold. I wondered, however, staring at these new fields where thousands once lived, what was lost? What were we all trying to forget?

Later that summer, I visited the school that my team and I had spent the previous few years

designing and building in Kigali, a school that weaves into the landscape like so many Rwandan baskets weave between the folds of fingertips. The materials were simple, brick and tin roofs extended to shelter and collect. I stood on a hill opposite the school and watched students bolt for play, cascading along the hill. Staring there, pleased with what we had built, three other buildings stood out that I had not seen before: small enclosures perched next to the school campus, built on our neighbor's property long before we started this project, long before I had thought about what a school in Rwanda might look like.

These were not so much buildings as sheds—cowsheds. Simple, small, enclosed rooms made from woven reed that store grain and house cows in the evening. Above those enclosures are tin roofs that extend far beyond, held up by stick columns that provide shade and protection and a semblance of ownership. Cowsheds protect the sacred. They are more than banks or safes or even hidden wads of cash stuffed under mattresses. They are the physical manifestation of the future, the hope of prosperity, an investment.

Standing there, seeing our own designs under this new light, I realized the race toward modernity is not always forward but cyclical, and the tendrils of culture not so severable as the many mud blocks, clay tiles, or self-built walls we mourn for and admire. Their memory is our architecture, is our modernity. ■

MICHAEL MURPHY is the CEO of MASS Design Group, an architecture and design firm based in Boston and Kigali, Rwanda.

BELOW

The Umubano Primary School, Kigali, Rwanda. Photo: Iwan Baan.

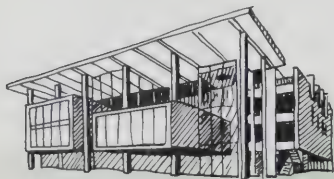


CODE OF CONTEXT

THE UNEASY EXCITEMENT
OF GLOBAL PRACTICE

BOSTON DIASPORA

Local firms increasingly are leaving their imprint on plans and structures across the globe. Here we offer a sampling of projects, all from this century, that bring a contemporary meaning to the term "International Style."



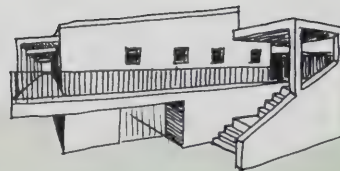
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OVER, UNDER / HARRY GUGGER STUDIO

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Guatemala City



PAYETTE

St. Boniface Hospital
Fond des Blancs, Haiti



KENNEDY & VIOLICH ARCHITECTURE

IBA Soft House
Hamburg

SOURCE: Mark Careaga AIA, co-chair, BSA Global Practice Network

ILLUSTRATION: Kyle Nelson / Stoltze Design

by Jay Wickersham FAIA

The signs of architecture's globalization are all around us. Foreign students flock to Boston to study architecture, prominent buildings are designed by foreign architects, American firms build practices around international projects. Globalization has allowed architects to work outside their own regions and cultures, at a scale and with a freedom of design they might never enjoy at home. But beneath the excitement and glamour of international practice, I sense an unease. Are we creating vital and original new architectures, or are we homogenizing cities and landscapes and obliterating regional differences? Are architects helping to strengthen and develop the economies of host communities, or are they acting as unwitting tools of inequality and repression?

Before we tackle these questions, a brief look backward may help explain our current condition. The globalization of architecture is not new. Here in Boston, the architectural community was transformed by two European émigrés, Walter Gropius and Josep Lluís Sert, in their roles as teachers and practitioners. The firms they helped found, The Architects Collaborative and Sert, Jackson & Associates, were designing projects all over the world from the 1950s onward.

In the last quarter century, changes in politics, economics, and technology have dramatically expanded and accelerated the process of globalization. The end of the Cold War and the creation of the World Trade Organization removed trade barriers and opened up enormous new markets to Western investors and architects. The transmission of digital designs via the Internet made it possible



MASS DESIGN GROUP

Umusozi Ukiza "Healing Hill"
Doctors' Housing
Butaro, Rwanda



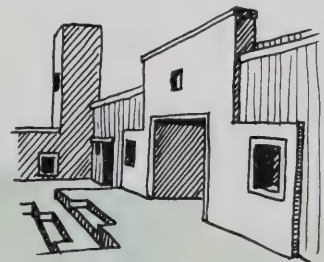
PRESTON SCOTT COHEN

Tel Aviv Museum of Art
Tel Aviv, Israel



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Al Marasy, residences
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates



RMA ARCHITECTS

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for architects to design large and complex buildings from the other side of the world, without having to set up a local office.

Here are a few illustrations of the resulting shifts in practice:

- Major local buildings have recently been designed by architects from England (Norman Foster, Museum of Fine Arts), Italy (Renzo Piano, Isabella Stewart Gardner and Harvard Art museums), Germany (Behnisch Partners, Genzyme Center), Spain (Rafael Moneo, Harvard engineering laboratory), Uruguay (Rafael Viñoly, Boston Convention and Exhibition Center), India (Charles Correa, MIT Brain and Cognitive Sciences Complex), and Japan (Fumiko Maki, MIT Media Lab).
- The percentage of foreign students studying architecture has reached 36 percent at Harvard and 43 percent at MIT.
- *Engineering News-Record* reported in 2014 that the 15 largest US architectural firms all earn at least 15 percent of their revenues from international projects—with the share for foreign work going as high as 45 percent (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill), 63 percent (RTKL), and even 76 percent (Kohn Pedersen Fox).

These unprecedented opportunities to practice abroad can give architects the chance to design with greater freedom, unencumbered by landmark and environmental codes and protesting neighbors. Should we rejoice, or worry, that today just about anything can be designed and built just about anywhere? What is the impact of globalization on design?

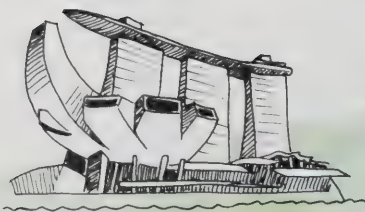
In 1984, architectural historian Kenneth Frampton published a premonitory essay calling for a “critical regionalism.” Frampton worried that architects were no longer proposing new social models of community, becoming instead the tools of large-scale real estate development—designing new skyscrapers and shopping malls that looked like they could

exist anywhere. Frampton called for “an architecture of resistance” that would fight back against this placeless, universal tendency of Modernism. He didn’t mean that architects should imitate preindustrial forms and ornament. He meant that they should develop a Modernism rooted in an understanding of regional ecologies and cultures, regional building materials and techniques.

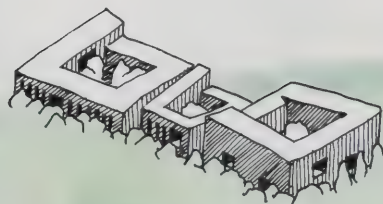
Critics like Frampton tend to talk about homogenization in terms of appearance—the problem is that buildings in different countries and regions start to look the same. But it is hard to see how a foreign architect, spending a few days at the site of a new project, can ever develop the depth of historical and cultural knowledge of a place that could truly inform the design. It may be that our best protection against global homogenization lies not in the realm of the visual or the historical, but rather in the idea of sustainability.

Environmental design strategies have always shaped architectural cultures in very specific ways. There are good reasons why buildings in hot, dry places, for example, have been organized and built differently from those in temperate wet places. Even in the first half of the 20th century, much of the playful experimentation of modern architects was driven by responses to regional climates. Look at the solar orientations of European social housing from the 1920s. Look at the sunshades and breezeways of Le Corbusier’s work in the Mediterranean, Brazil, and India. Look at the lightweight, light-on-the-land houses of Paul Rudolph in Florida and Richard Neutra in California.

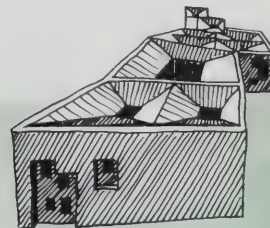
This ecological side of modern architecture has been neglected and largely forgotten in recent decades. Among the mixed blessings of globalization has been access to cheap fossil fuels and air conditioning—leading, in turn, to the worldwide spread of buildings designed as sleek, sealed, climate-controlled containers. We are slowly, painfully learning that this approach to design is no longer sustainable ecologically,



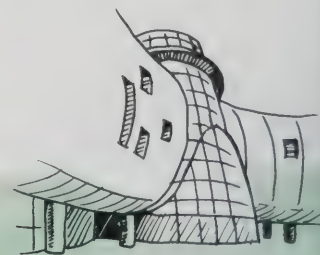
SAFDIE ARCHITECTS
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Singapore



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Activity Center
Guangzhou, China

financially, or ethically. Architects working abroad have a responsibility to study the ecology and climate of the site. This knowledge can inspire designs that respond to the character of a particular region and place. By focusing on a building's environmental performance, an architect may achieve the visual and spatial sense of fit that Frampton was calling for.

Architects working abroad face a further challenge, perhaps even more complicated and confusing: making sense of the social and political context of the projects in which they are involved.

The AIA Code of Ethics says that architects "should uphold human rights in all their professional endeavors." What does this mean for a project in a foreign country? What if the building is to be located on a site where poor residents were unfairly evicted, or a historic landmark was demolished? What if the building is for a repressive government agency? What if it is to be constructed by underpaid laborers, working under unsafe conditions and denied basic legal and political rights?

I'm not going to trivialize the ethical challenges of international practice by pretending that there are easy answers to these questions. An architect does not pick a project's location or determine its use or control the pay and safety of the construction workers, so is it really fair to hold the architect responsible for these outcomes? Even in one's own country, it can be hard enough to figure out the client's real needs and desires, and decide whether a project is a good fit. Working abroad, the difficulties of getting good information are magnified. And the competitive pressures of the marketplace can be overwhelming. Practicing architecture at any scale requires a firm, and firms need a steady flow of new projects so they can keep their staff employed, pay the rent, and meet all the other demands of running a business.

But instead of ignoring these ethical questions and pretending that architects are apolitical artists or technicians, perhaps we can identify some ways to discuss and address them.

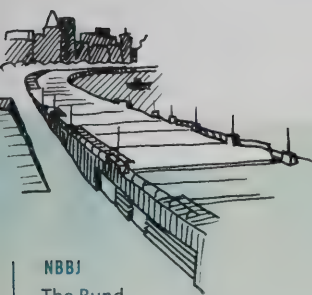
Architects do have professional choices. An architect is not like a court-appointed lawyer who must defend an accused

murderer, or a doctor who must treat every patient no matter how morally repugnant. An architect can always investigate a potential client and project, and either accept the commission or turn it down. There are international nonprofits, such as Human Rights Watch and Transparency International, that issue reliable reports on the status of civil liberties and political corruption in different countries.

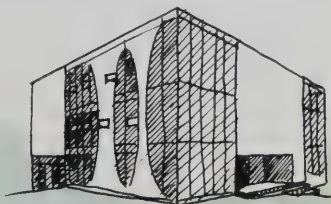
Under certain circumstances, foreign architects can develop active partnerships with local designers and builders. A particularly inspiring model is the one developed by the medical nonprofit Partners in Health; it views the delivery of health-care services in developing countries as an opportunity for economic development. The Boston-based architectural firm MASS Design Group has applied this model to projects in Rwanda and Haiti by finding ways to transfer skills and develop experience within the host community. Under this model of foreign practice, how the project is built, and by whom, is as important as the physical building itself.

And architects can act collectively. Since 2011 the international artists group Gulf Labor has been pressuring the Guggenheim Museum to improve workers' conditions at the construction site for its new building in Abu Dhabi or else the artists have threatened to boycott exhibits at the museum. Architects could similarly work together, in informal groups or through organizations such as the AIA and Britain's RIBA, to develop communal standards for global projects and practices that support international norms of human rights, and by which architects would agree to abide.

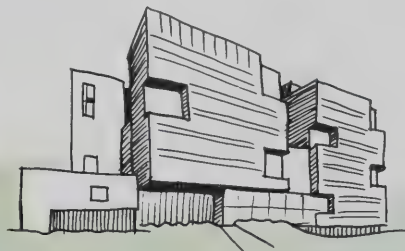
The globalization of architecture can feel like a runaway horse, beyond anyone's control. But though we cannot stop change, we can try to steer it in certain directions. As architects debate these questions about design, sustainability, and ethics in international projects, we may start to define a shared set of principles and behaviors, which can help guide global practice in the future. ■



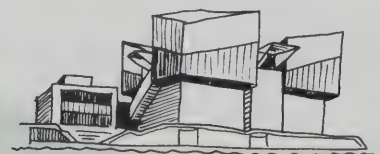
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The Bund
Shanghai



SsD
White Block Gallery
Heyri, Korea



KYU SUNG WOO ARCHITECTS
KAIST IT Convergence Building
Daejeon, Korea



CAMBRIDGE SEVEN ASSOCIATES
Aquarium Kaiyukan (Ring of Fire)
Osaka, Japan

BIG DESIGN, SMALL PLANET





TALARA SCHOOL PROJECT, PERU

The Santa Elena de Piedritas School, with exterior shading structures; model-making workshop for the new building; a weaver with a bottle-cap mural. Photos: Jesús Porras.

OPPOSITE

The view of the bay from the community center in Maeami Hama, a fishing village in Ishinomaki, Japan, devastated by the 2011 tsunami. Photo: Michael Steiner.

by Eric J. Cesal and Audrey Galo ASSOC. AIA

As the world shrinks, the importance of design grows. And yet the rude truth is that design remains invisible to many. The effort put in by designers to make our cities beautiful, safe, and functional is frequently misunderstood.

Perhaps you have had this experience: You find yourself walking the High Line in New York City at sunset, or looking up in an atrium to find the perfect vantage point. In that moment you recognize the precision, consideration, and intention that elevate these spaces to a list of all-time favorites. You embrace a deep feeling of appreciation for design and look around, thinking that others must be as elated as you are. Instead, a set of confused faces stare back angrily, wondering why you'd choose to stop and space out at the most inopportune time in an area of high foot traffic.

Through our work at Architecture for Humanity, we aim to put to rest any doubt about the value of design. In the communities where we work, stretching to the corners of the globe that have never seen an architect, designers are asked to solve pressing questions: How can we capture drinking water? Where can my children play safely? How do I make my house safe in a storm? We solve these questions through design. Among the results are children who no longer hide on school days because their new classrooms are filled with light and fresh air, teenagers who work against gender inequality by

playing co-ed soccer on their new pitch, and small-business owners building back better following a devastating storm.

As designers working on a global scale in communities of need, the challenges we face are growing in severity and complexity. We are asked: How will we respond to climate change? Can we provide adequate housing while rates of urbanization accelerate? How do we put an end to substandard building practices? The needs and pressures in vulnerable communities are urgent.

Increasingly, designers are answering this call to action, eager to work abroad and contribute to the safety and resilience of the world. It's no easy feat to work in places far from our own homes; cultural divides require caution and adaptability—and a sense of humor. In the 15 years of Architecture for Humanity's existence, we have learned to be comfortable in our own skin, in the places we work and with the people we hope to serve.

EMBRACE PLACE

Jesús Porras spent a year with residents of the town of Talara in the Piura region of Peru. Jesús is an architect who chose to immerse himself within this community to rebuild the only school facility in Talara. The school, Santa Elena de Piedritas, sits within a remote rural desert community and serves more than 100 students. Jesús was not exempt from the town residents'



ISHINOMAKI, JAPAN

Clockwise from left: Architects show local fishermen a model of the Maeami Hama community center, photo: Akinobu Yoshikawa; a detail of the exterior of the new center; the center at night, photos: Karl Johnson.



living conditions; he faced the problematic shortage of water in the arid land. He was also privy to the economic hardships of many families with whom he shared meals and met with extended family members during community workshops. He discovered the lack of reliable jobs for women and imaginative spaces for children to play. He was not apart from their experience; their home became his home, and their challenges became his challenges.



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During Talara's school reconstruction project, Jesús seized opportunities to capture multiple layers of the community's concern and applied his creative problem solving. The dusty lot adjacent to the school was transformed into a playground, built from a decommissioned boat transported through the generosity of a neighbor's truck. And when the school grounds were in need of decorative elements, Jesús rallied the students to collect hundreds of colorful bottle caps. With the help of Talara's female leaders, beautiful woven bottle-cap murals were created and displayed throughout the buildings. The "bottle-cap weavers" adopted the craft and now rely on their art as a source of income for their families.

TAKE MEASURE

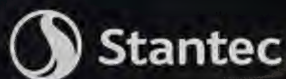
In 2011, following the great earthquake and tsunami in East Japan, we encountered the disappearance of entire communities; buildings washed kilometers away in scattered piles of debris. Ishinomaki was one such community. With the help of our Tokyo chapter, we set up shop and asked ourselves: How would we bring back dignity and restore hope for this generation and the next? The focus turned to the people and places that exemplified the strength and courage needed to push the recovery of Ishinomaki forward.

As a result, we chose to work on projects that could spur continued rehabilitation of the region and contribute to the healing of all its residents. The search began with town

heroes—the women and men who continued to champion the spirit of the place—the fishermen, cooks, craft makers, and teachers. In the first year of recovery, we completed a sports field with the help of a generous farmer. The farmer donated an asparagus field so it could become the home of a new football pitch for young athletes, complete with team uniforms for the "Asparagi" team. We completed these unconventional projects because they were instrumental to the community's future. We designed and built a noodle shop, home, and work studio for a women's craft cooperative, and even a grocery market that includes an after-school children's center.

COME FULL CIRCLE

The experience of working around the world on community-level projects is exciting work. It's a job that provides a lens into how as designers we can serve others and set forth a positive direction for a community's success. During the journey, while we witness and experience how design can change a tiny slice of the world, our minds should also turn to the places we call home. Let's imagine what we could accomplish by bringing this commitment and passion for design to places that surround us every day, near or far. When we can do so, the question of how to design "over there" becomes semantic; every design is approached with compassion, vigor, and heart. ■



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ADVANCED LATIN

IDEAS FOR BREACHING
THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE



by Justin McGuirk

In 1955, the Museum of Modern Art in New York held an exhibition titled *Latin American Architecture Since 1945*, marking a period when Latin America was viewed as having the most exciting architectural culture in the world. With its flair for reinforced concrete, the region was seen as embracing modernity with a zeal that MoMA's visitors were expected to envy. In the spirit of the times, the curators celebrated individual genius and, above all, style.

Six decades later, Latin America has far more useful lessons to impart, but about strategy rather than style. No other region of the world has demonstrated the kind of collective effort and imagination that Latin America has in addressing the chronic symptoms of rapid unplanned urbanization. Whether it is in housing, crime, transportation, segregation, or the lack of political participation, this continent has set precedents that could have a transformative effect in other parts of the developing—and, indeed, the developed—world.

Having experienced mass urbanization from the mid-20th century—long before the current hot spots of China, India, and Africa—Latin America was forced to become a testing ground of radical urban strategies. This is a region that has been trying to deal with extreme urban inequality for decades, with some success.

In fact, some of the ideas developed in Latin America, both political and urbanistic, have already been adopted in the

developed world. In 1989, for example, the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre began an experiment with participatory budgeting, which allows citizens to have a direct say in how public money is spent. It was designed to help tackle extreme social inequality by redirecting a portion of public finances toward social amenities in the slums. Today it is a feature of municipal governance from New York to Paris. Earlier this year, Boston became the first city in the United States to launch a youth participatory budgeting scheme, giving young people a chance to have a direct say in spending \$1 million of the city's capital budget to improve their communities.

One of the key lessons of Latin America is that divided cities need to be brought together. The distance between a slum-dweller's home perhaps two hours out on the city fringes and her job in the city center needs to be bridged by effective public transportation. And in economies where metro lines are simply too expensive, buses have proved transformative. Again it was a Brazilian city that led the way. In 1974, under mayor Jaime Lerner, Curitiba created the bus rapid transit (BRT) system, a metro-style network with dedicated lanes to bypass traffic. That idea has since spread across the world. It was introduced to particularly good effect in Bogota in 2000 by Enrique Peñalosa, a mayor who understood the social power of public transport. His TransMilenio BRT, combined with bike lanes and proper pedestrian pavements, became a global





IMAGES

Pensar/Sentir (Think/Feel).
A project at the Ciudad del Saber,
Panama City, 2014, by the Spanish
public art group Boa Mistura.
Photos: Alegre Saporta (this page),
Boa Mistura (previous page).

symbol of how public transportation can reduce the effects of social inequality. He is fond of saying, “An advanced city is not a place where the poor move about in cars; rather, it’s where even the rich use public transportation.”

Subsequently, BRTs have been introduced not just in Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town, and other developing world cities, but also in the North. Los Angeles, the quintessential case of car-led urban sprawl, now has 40 miles of dedicated bus lanes as part of its Metro Liner network. Given that LA has some of the worst air pollution in the United States, there are other incentives for extending the public transportation network aside from it being a social leveler, and the same goes for cities across the globe.

Colombia has other lessons for cities that face problems with severe poverty and crime. Its second city, Medellín, makes a fascinating case study. In the 1990s, the city was in the grip

of warring drug cartels; it was the murder capital of the world. Beginning in the early 2000s, however, a major program of new public buildings and public spaces helped transform the city, returning a sense of normality and civic pride. These architectural treasures have been widely praised, but it would be a mistake to think that architecture alone was the solution. First came transportation links to hillside barrios in the form of a cable-car network. These coincided with major investment in education, and the seeding of those barrios with new schools, libraries, and parks. Architecture was only what made such social policies so visible.

Perhaps the key lesson of Medellín’s “social urbanism” was the way different stakeholders in the city collaborated. It was the concerted effort of politicians, a civic movement, architects, and the business community that brought about these changes.

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And one thing that proved instrumental is that Medellín has a municipally owned energy company, Empresas Publicas de Medellín (EPM). It was the \$450 million fed into the city coffers every year by EPM that funded these improvements. If Medellín is not an object lesson in the reasons why natural resources should not be privatized, I'm not sure what is.

Not all Latin America's innovations can or should be imported to other climes. With cable cars enjoying a modish moment, London's mayor Boris Johnson commissioned one across the River Thames at Greenwich. Like many of Johnson's urban gestures, it is fairly pointless, more of an excuse to advertise the sponsor, Emirates Airline, than anything else.

Finally, the "informal cities" of the south hold valuable lessons in how to extract the most social value out of urban land. San Diego architect Teddy Cruz has long been interested in how the productivity of Latin American barrios might be imported into the rigidly zoned neighborhoods of his own city. One of the defining features of the informal city is how it maximizes the use of tiny spaces, turning a front room into a shop or restaurant, or a narrow street into a marketplace. Cruz's own strategy is to slice up a couple of San Diego city blocks into micro-zoning that accommodates housing, culture, and commerce all on the same plot. As Cruz often says in his lectures: "We need a new concept of density. Density is still measured as a number of *things*—units—per acre. Why not

measure it as a number of social and economic exchanges per acre?"

This is a key lesson for US cities that have been zoned into a state of sterility, where the suburban house is several miles, by car, from the office. Take a place like Dharavi, Mumbai's most famous slum, and you'll find that the average resident is working as a craftsman downstairs and living upstairs in a two-story "tool-house." Before industrialization, and the separation of living and working, that was the norm even in the United States or Europe. And in our postindustrial economies, it is easy to imagine such practices returning. Indeed, we may not even be aware of the ways in which our working lives are already taking on the traits of cities in the global South. The flex-time lifestyle of the post-industrial worker—with its irregular hours, often in multiple jobs simultaneously—is a common feature of the informal economy.

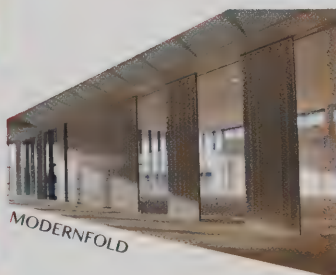
If Westerners can overcome their preconceptions of undeveloped "slums" (and if one can solve the obvious privations), it might be possible to recognize their certain merits. They are productive, sustainable neighborhoods with a strong sense of community. Embracing that may be too much to ask. But there is no denying that these Latin American strategies for bringing the slums into the fold of the city represent an important step in tackling urban inequality. And as Northern cities continue to polarize at an alarming rate, we might ask ourselves if there's anything more we can learn from the South. ■

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CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

RENÉE LOTH SPEAKS WITH MOSHE SAFDIE FAIA

Born in Israel, raised in Canada, Moshe Safdie is a frequent flyer: A wide-ranging designer with imprints from Singapore to India to Washington, DC. This fall, *ArchitectureBoston* editor Renée Loth met with Safdie in his Somerville office to discuss architecture's role and reach within an increasingly global marketplace.

IMAGES

Hans-Georg Esch is a freelance architectural photographer. These images are from his *Megacity* installation and exhibition series, which depict façades of urban architecture worldwide.



Renée Loth: As you know, the theme of this issue is “global,” examining the challenges and opportunities of architects practicing overseas. You’ve worked all over the world, so how do the vast cultural differences of these places influence your design decisions?

Moshe Safdie: The notion of “global” presents a paradox. On one hand, everything I’m learning about architecture is that we must search for the particular, and through the particular we are able to make an architecture that belongs to a place. By belonging, I mean a wide array of issues: that it fits climatically, that it fits the land, that it fits into the traditions of building technology and construction, that it fits into the history and heritage of a place in terms of how it resonates in people’s minds.

But a lot of architects’ practices are becoming global; the two contradict each other. In the traditional sense, the particular was understood best by the local and vernacular architecture. People were not even trained yet created wonderful buildings, the language of which evolved over time, with local materials.

Today, most of us are not trained or inclined to get into the particular. What you’re getting worldwide is the problem of architects who don’t have enough knowledge of the local building at a very large scale. Then there are rare examples where there is an attempt to understand and evolve a design out of that understanding of the local. I guess I consider myself in the last category. My background prepared me for it because I grew up in one culture, then got transplanted, so I spend a lot of time trying to understand it, and the architecture grows out of that search. It will take some time before architects practicing in places strange to them really focus on this business of belonging.

Renée Loth: Architects need to have a concern and sensitivity

for the local, but clients sometimes present a difficulty, by having an idea of what suggests “success.” How do you negotiate that delicate question with a client who may not have the same respect for the local that you do?

Moshe Safdie: It’s true in large-scale commercial development but also in institutional building, in let’s say culturally emerging countries, where they might be highly advanced technologically. But if they are going through a transition of urbanization, there is a tendency amongst clients to look at architecture beyond its immediate mission, as something that establishes the image of a country and that the projected image has to be one of progress. Progress is then associated with contemporary, modernistic, and sought after—not the local and the particular.

I’ve had both experiences. With the Khalsa Heritage Centre in Punjab, India, there were those who wanted every production of the house architecture of the temple—just give us what we know. I’m now involved in a project in the Middle East with several architects; some are producing mimics of medieval Muslim architecture, others are proposing buildings that have nothing to do with the climatic and cultural context. These are immediate, live issues. They engage both clients and architects, and there’s a wide variety of sensibilities in both camps.

Renée Loth: At a recent discussion on global practice [“Grounded Visionaries” at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design] you drew a contrast between China and Singapore as places to practice, about their different approaches to planning. How do these manifest themselves in the outcomes?

Moshe Safdie: In Singapore, planning, urban design, and landscape design have had extraordinary credibility and have



become tools of government in guiding growth. Much of the land that's made available for development is landfill created by the government; as a condition of the sale of the land, it attaches guidelines it sees fit. But there is a learning curve. The housing developments the government built in the '60s and '70s repeat the stereotypes: Modernist lining up of identical towers and anonymous space. They basically wiped out the vernacular. It was extreme, much was learned, so there is now a greater sensitivity to conservation. There's an understanding of the public realm and an attempt to create meaningful spaces that transcend individual approaches. That's the main agenda of dense urbanism: to recapture a meaningful public realm.

The Chinese have not begun with the idea of intervention at that scale. Their starting point was development as fast as possible. Certain cultural traditions, such as urban landscaping, are a big deal and happened well before the urbanistic explosion. When I was there in '73, even with Mao and the Communist regime, boulevards and railroad lines were planted. But the idea of intervening with private development was strange. At this point, we're getting big planning interventions in the new ecocities. But if you look at Shanghai and Beijing, it's still the private sector doing their thing, and the public realm is suffering. In our approaches in China, we've got to go out of our way to insist on trying to connect the public realm to its surroundings, and we, not the municipal authorities, are the ones fighting for it. It's completely different from Singapore in that sense.

Renée Loth: That's fine for a place like Singapore, with its strong authoritarian government. But how does this translate to a messy democracy? I'm thinking of India's, for example.

Moshe Safdie: I think "messy" and "democracy" in India should be used separately. India is messy, and it's sort of a democracy, although a corrupt one. For Singapore, infrastructure and the public realm are cultural and economic priorities in terms of the government and now the people. Singaporeans do not throw a piece of paper on the ground. You could say there's a big fine if they do it, but it's already become part of the culture. In India, infrastructure hardly exists. When they do build it, within five years it looks like it's 100 years old. There's no culture of maintenance, except for the temples and fancy five-star hotels. There's no culture of landscaping. You go into a village, and the fact that the water is running on the sidewalk

and there's no drainage has nothing to do with resources; we're talking about differences between administrations and countries. India has deep problems with the urban environment.

Renée Loth: In Japan, nobody throws a piece of paper on the ground, either, but it's not because there's a fine waiting for you if you do.

Moshe Safdie: That is because Japan was a much more cohesive society that developed these norms hundreds of years ago. There must have been a day when it was a matter of policing. Singapore is a more mixed, pluralistic country that just came to being. Luckily enough, they had the leadership that figured that's important, so they made it part of the agenda. I come from Israel, and when I go there, I'm sick about the filth. Jerusalem is filthy. Tel Aviv is filthy. It shames me, annoys me. The public realm fares terribly because of neglect. People might have the most meticulously clean apartment, then you go into the common stair and it's disgusting. Some cultures value the public realm from the edge of private ownership outwards; others don't.

Renée Loth: Does architecture have anything to say about this?

Moshe Safdie: Architecture and urbanism are intertwined, and you can't separate them because our environment is made up of the collective of many individual buildings. The design I make in countries that I know have maintenance is fundamentally different from the design I would make in countries that have no maintenance culture.

Renée Loth: Can you give me an example of that?

Moshe Safdie: I wouldn't in my right mind do a building in India that demanded painting every five years. In Singapore, I wouldn't think twice; I know they're going to paint it every five years. In India, stone, hardy landscape, light fixtures, anything that's indestructible becomes part of your thinking, because you want to be able to come and visit five years later.

Renée Loth: Can architecture and urban planning and design nudge a culture to be more respectful of the public realm?

Moshe Safdie: I would ask: Can an architect have an impact



in the world, as a force of education? Absolutely. It's as much educating when you do a building in the United States as when you do one in India; it's just that the issues are different. You work on a museum, and you've got to enlighten clients about the value of daylight because the mindset is that light is bad for the art. That sense of enlightening those you work with, from the client to the broader community to the city, is part of any practice in which there's conviction. As an architect, if you're opinionated and you have conviction, then there's an intense dialogue which involves learning on one side. Why are they objecting to something I'm proposing? Why do they feel so strongly that that's not going to work? You've got to ask yourself that. But at the same time, you have to push.

The biggest fights I've had have been the most rewarding. Mamilla, the project I did in the urban center of Jerusalem, took four years to build. The developer wanted to air-condition it. I said no, you can't; it's got to be open streets. If you air-condition it, you privatize it. If you privatize it, the Arabs won't come, the religious won't come. But keep it open, it will be part of the street. And sure enough, it works. The Arabs come, and the religious come. The payoff for the city is so universally acknowledged that it gives you a lot of satisfaction. When there is conviction, you've got to fight for it.

Renée Loth: Conviction. Is that what you mean when you say that architecture should make a social, economic, or political statement?

Moshe Safdie: I don't think the statement is the emphasis; it should be driven by social convictions. Your design process must be informed. It's not the statement as much as the basic result. You need to be socially alert and therefore responding to issues as you understand them. That also means economically; if you're building for a certain group and you make something that's beyond their means, what's the point? If you're building in a country that doesn't have a maintenance tradition and you create a building that's beyond their ability to maintain, what's the point?

At that GSD session, somebody asked: "Where does self-expression come in relationship to the program of a building?" I would rephrase the question: If there's a conflict between what the building wants to be, in the way Lou Kahn used the term, and what you want the building to be, because of your

baggage and obsessions, how do you resolve that conflict? [If we] assert our taste and formal sensibility and are not open to what the thing "wants to be," that's when you get caricature architecture or distortions.

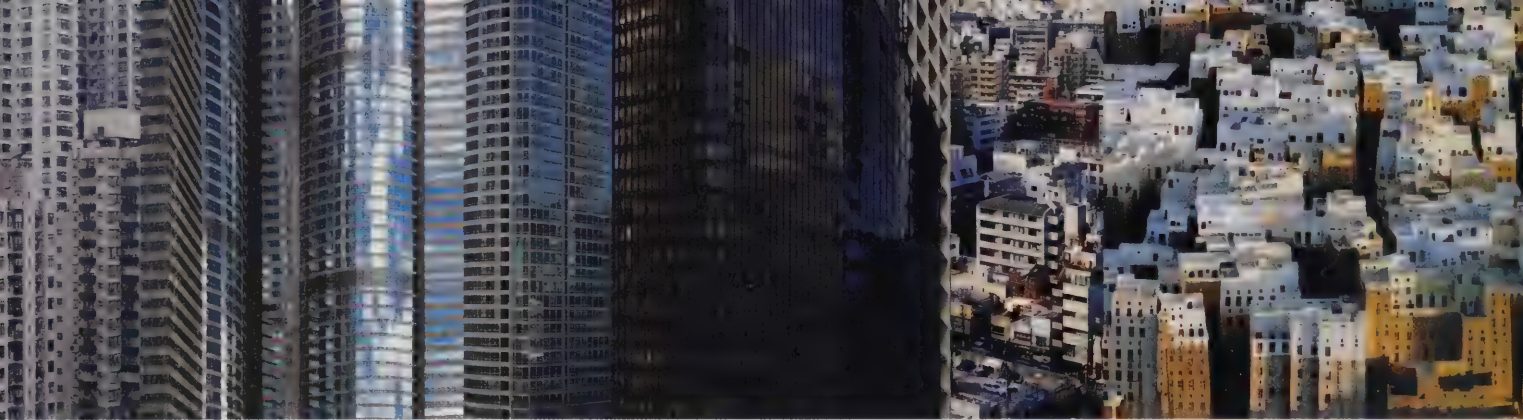
Renée Loth: Habitat '67 is now almost 50 years old. It was so prescient in its recognition of the need for urban density in housing a growing population. The world population is almost seven billion now, twice what it was in 1967, and two-thirds of us live in cities. What are the lessons of Habitat for the megacity? How do we make places like Lagos or Mexico City habitable?

Moshe Safdie: Through our office's research fellowship, where we work on a set of nonpractice issues, we revisited Habitat five years ago: What would we do today, 50 years later? The first thing we established was that Habitat would have to have 10 times the density. The other thing we concluded is that mixed use is the order of the day. One doesn't build just housing in the city; now it's mostly retail and office and housing together. How do you satisfy the quality of life that we implied in Habitat in that context? We did a series of schemes, and the results immediately had application to our actual projects: Singapore's Bishan Sky Habitat and China's Golden Dream Bay development Qinhuangdao [reflect] some of that thinking in real-life situations.

Habitat showed that there are ways of rethinking the apartment building. Everybody who visited exclaimed, "I'd love to live there." In the next 20 years we couldn't get another one built because of economics, codes, resistance. Then there was a period in which the thrust of architectural thinking turned away. There was Postmodernism, deconstructivism, but it has come full circle. Students in schools today are really into Habitat and the thinking behind it. We weren't looking at housing and urbanism and high density for many years, but now it's becoming the center of attention. As I see it, Habitat is an idea whose time is yet to come.

Renée Loth: It's hard to have a discussion about international practice without talking about the International Style...

Moshe Safdie: I have a lot to say about that. I grew up in Haifa and Tel Aviv, the white cities of the International Style. It was



a new chapter in looking at architecture, but it was never conceived as an "International Style." The open plan, the surface as it was applied—it was completely regional in its application to other Mediterranean cities. The one who called it International Style was Philip Johnson, the corrupter of architecture, who, instead of looking at its essence in terms of the kind of space and urbanism that it suggested, looked at it stylistically as a fashion. Later on this would be picked up by, for example, Richard Meier, who translated it to sort of contemporary: Instead of plaster, it was metal panels. But "International Style" was a corrupting term; at its best, it was regionally sensitive evolutionary Modernism.

Renée Loth: Is there a tension between the idea that there is a universal approach to building and that there also should be a respect for regional aesthetic or style?

Moshe Safdie: The tension is there. There is today, for example, an international style: the all-glass envelope curtain wall office building. All the variations—twisted, stepped, ziggurat—don't matter. It's a formula. It's associated with certain ideas of progress. It's relatively cheap to build. It's economical in the sense of cost/benefit of construction today. It is ecologically blind. The best examples we see are when whatever that represents is seriously adapted to local conditions. And the



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worst we see—I put a bit of blame on Mies van der Rohe and [Gordon] Bunshaft—is perfecting the glass office building and sending the message that that is a universal solution. The Seagram Building is a great building, but it's not a great model.

Renée Loth: What is your favorite country to work in?

Moshe Safdie: In Canada, I found extraordinary opportunities to apply my thinking. Beginning with Habitat—what other country would have built it with a 25-year-old kid who'd never built anything?—on through the National Gallery and the library in Vancouver, I was able to push limits. When I came

to the United States, I was able to do wonderful things for good clients, both institutions and public bodies. I'm proud of my courthouse in Springfield [Massachusetts], which was done with the government as client. At the big urban scale, the best experience was definitely Singapore. [Marina Bay Sands] got built because [the client's] objectives and my objectives as an architect resonated. So I'd say Singapore, Canada, the United States.

Israel is a complex place. I had a hard time there, yet some of my most important achievements are in Israel, [including the Holocaust memorial] Yad Vashem, which is probably the most important cultural building I've done. ■



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HOME / AWAY

Against today's backdrop of globalization, Do Ho Suh's artwork contemplates notions of identity and place: What does home mean? Where do you belong? The London-based Suh studied art in his native Korea as well as in the United States. Whether wrestling with the armature of clothing or of the homeland, he mines decidedly architectural terrain. His creations provoke us to question the boundaries of space and the geography of expatriation.





All photos: © Do Ho Suh. Courtesy of the artist
and Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York and Hong Kong.

OPPOSITE

Home within Home— $\frac{1}{11}$ th Scale—Prototype, 2009.

THIS PAGE

Detail of Home within Home— $\frac{1}{11}$ th Scale—Prototype, 2009.

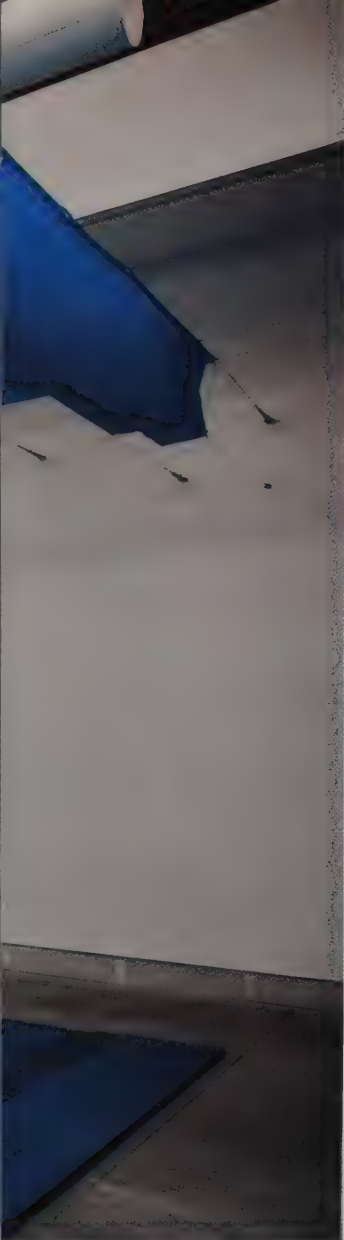


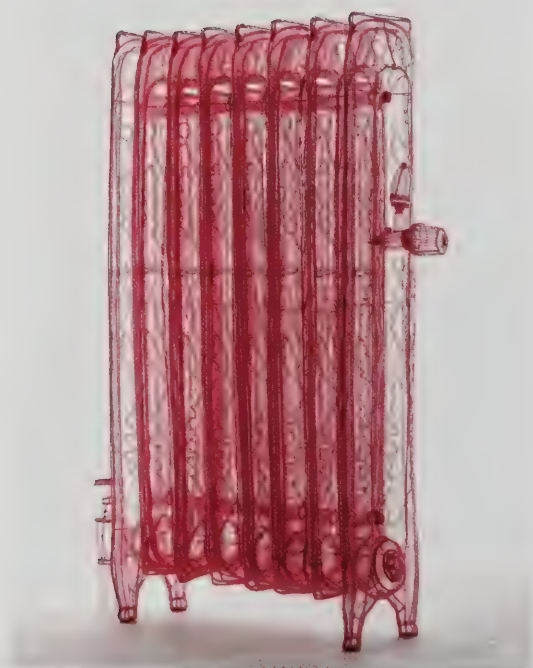
CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE

Blueprint, 2010. Installation view at the main exhibition of Venice Biennale 2010, 12th International Architecture Exhibition.

Specimen Series: Refrigerator, Apartment A, 348 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011, USA, 2012.

Specimen Series: Bathtub, Apartment A, 348 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011, USA, 2012.





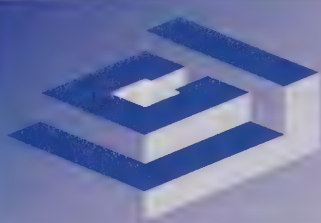
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

Specimen Series: Radiator, Corridor, Apartment A, 348 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011, USA, 2012.

Staircase, 2008. Installation for Psycho Buildings: Artists take on Architecture, Hayward Gallery, London.

Home within Home within Home within Home within Home, 2013. Installation view of Hanjin Shipping The Box Project: Do Ho Suh, at National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea.





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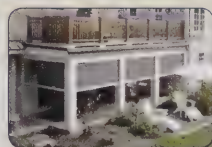
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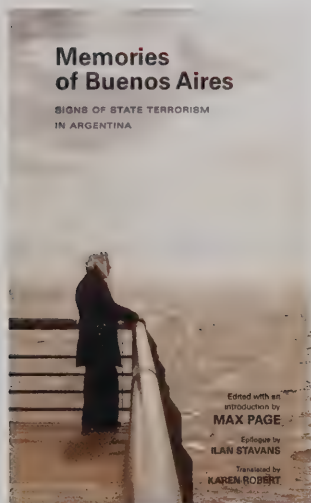


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BOOKS



Memories of Buenos Aires

Edited by Max Page

University of Massachusetts Press, 2013

Reviewed by Matthew J. Kiefer

The devoted ambler visiting a foreign city yearns to decipher the myriad messages the city unconsciously sends. This is a particular challenge in Buenos Aires, home to one-third of Argentines and the compelling yet bewildering capital of a country with a complicated past.

The usual way to start is with a guidebook. The special genius of *Memoria Abierta* ("Open Memory"), a nonprofit founded in 2000 to foster social memory about Argentina's "Dirty War," was to publish a literal street guide to the country's darkest chapter. Argentines still wrestle with this terrible episode, not really a war but a largely secret and systematic oppression of leftists during the military dictatorship of 1976 to 1983. Some 30,000 people were kidnapped and tortured or killed.

Framed by an incisive introduction by Max Page, an architectural historian at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, and a provocative epilogue by Ilan Stavans, a professor of Latin American cultural studies at Amherst College, the heart of this book is organized like a conventional guide. Thoroughly researched (family members of the victims were consulted),

it divides the city into nine sectors and describes 240 sites with maps, clear-eyed descriptions, and photos.

Commemorative sites such as plaques, *baldosas* (street tiles marking the homes of the disappeared), and more spontaneous memorials by grassroots activists are interspersed with the everyday loci of state terror: secret prisons and other clandestine detention sites. (These are astonishingly numerous.)

In the immediate aftermath of the dictatorship, Argentine leaders tried to erase its memory, much as the dictatorship had tried to erase its enemies. Inspired by the persistent defiance of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*—a self-organized group of mothers of the disappeared, who have marched weekly in front of the presidential palace since 1977—*Memories of Buenos Aires* seeks to "reveal the suppressed history buried in every location where the last dictatorship focused its reign of terror."

Visiting Buenos Aires today, it seems deeply incongruous that the "Paris of South America" could be the scene of such recent barbarism. Mapping it with this degree of precision raises provocative questions about the role of physical place in preserving memory. And why preserve the memory of atrocities at all?

For many, the struggle to come to terms with tragedy is rooted in place. Witness the "ghost bikes" placed at the site of bicycle fatalities or the spontaneous Boston memorial to the actor Robin Williams that appeared on the Public Garden bench he occupied in a memorable scene from *Good Will Hunting*.

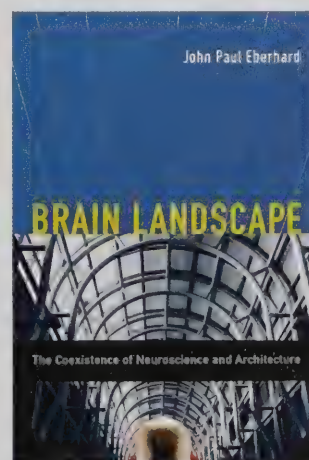
When the tragedy is an organized one, the struggle to understand it is necessarily a public one. The impulse to reveal the physical places where tragedy occurred and let them speak for themselves has similar resonance to marking an actual locus with a memorial. It socializes individual memories and helps them endure beyond the lives of those who experienced the events.

Like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC,

and the Holocaust memorials in many US cities, this is memory with a purpose. In addition to honoring the victims and their families, in Argentina, building awareness of these sites has fostered a political climate of support for reparations and for bringing those responsible to justice at long last.

In his epilogue, Stavans asks whether memorials institutionalize and thereby trivialize the past, making it harder to face the present forthrightly. But using this guidebook in Buenos Aires, he found that it gave order to the "chaos of memory," concluding that "the act of remembering is a duty we all share, no matter where we live." We can only hope it will make it harder for history's mistakes to be repeated.

MATTHEW J. KIEFER is a land use attorney at Goulston & Storrs in Boston.



Brain Landscape: The Coexistence of Neuroscience and Architecture

John Paul Eberhard

Oxford University Press, 2009

Reviewed by A. Vernon Woodworth FAIA

The social, physical, financial, and political investments in great works of architecture defy easy explanation. Take Gothic cathedrals, for example. Can these magnificent structures be explained in terms of religion, or pedagogy, or civic pride alone? How do we understand the

sense of awe, of being transported, that cathedral space so predictably inspires? Were the master builders experimenting as a form of one-upmanship for artistic expression, or was there another motive informing their manipulation of space and light? Could their concerted effort to master the spatial harmonics of worship have been deliberately intended to produce specific neuronal responses in the human brain—responses at a primal level that alter mood, evoke emotion, and restore a cohesive sense of identity in relationship to the world?

An exploration of how the brain works through the discipline of neuroscience has, over the past few decades, allowed scientists to determine the biological source of memory, emotion, and perception. This extraordinary field of discovery came to the attention of architect John Paul Eberhard in 1995 when he was the “director of discovery” at the American Architectural Foundation. Eberhard went on to become the founding director of the Academy of Neuroscience for Architects, and he remains the only architect member of the Society for Neuroscience, the world’s largest organization of scientists and physicians dedicated to understanding the brain. In 2006 Eberhard published *Architecture and the Brain: A New Knowledge Base from Neuroscience*, outlining the neurological bases of sensory experiences as well as emotions and behavior in architectural settings.

Brain Landscape continues down the same path, describing implications for the design of educational spaces, the workplace, and facilities for the aging. Eberhard is clear that he hopes to entice neuroscientists to explore the relationship of the brain to the built environment, but he also intends to promote an understanding of neuroscience within the design professions. He sees this as an antidote to the disintegration of a coherent architectural paradigm, as evidenced in “starchitecture” and the vanities of Postmodernism. His goal is to make the findings of neuroscience a centerpiece in evidence-based design: the use of scientific methods to predict and measure

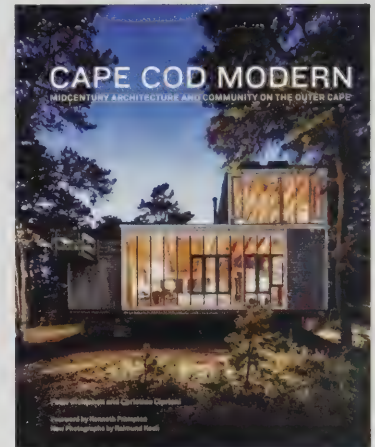
outcomes such as user satisfaction, physical comfort, learning, and healing. Eberhard believes that this could lead to a momentous shift in our approach to the design of the built environment. But he also suspects that a deeper understanding of our synaptic responses to environmental stimuli will uncover the bases for our aesthetic responses, intuitively manipulated by artists and architects since the dawn of civilization.

The implications of Eberhard’s inquiry are infinite. If understanding neuroscience can make patients heal more quickly with fewer complications, if it can increase productivity in the workplace and learning in the classroom, then could it not facilitate creativity, promote positive social interaction, and improve our overall sense of satisfaction with our lives? The answer is a qualified yes, but a yes all the same.

We can understand the impact of the urban environment in a new way through the lens of neuroscience. The synaptic dynamics of exercise, meditation, and psychopharmacology can also be manipulated through light and space, form and composition. Classroom design has the potential to address learning disabilities. Nursing home design can minimize cognitive decline. The workplace can be an inviting space for creative collaboration.

Master builders of the past likely understood the neurological impact of architecture at an intuitive level; now a sound scientific understanding can inform every aspect of the design profession. Along with the tenets of sustainability and physical health in the built environment, neuroscience has the potential to inform an architecture of substance in a challenged world. If this should come to pass, John Eberhard will be among those to have made it possible.

A. VERNON WOODWORTH FAIA is a code consultant with AKF Group in Boston and a faculty member at Boston Architectural College. He co-chairs the Boston Society of Architects’ Committee for the Advancement of Sustainability.



Cape Cod Modern: Midcentury Architecture and Community on the Outer Cape

Peter McMahon and Christine Cipriani
Metropolis Books, 2014

Reviewed by Joseph P. Kahn

Outer Cape Cod in the 1950s and '60s attracted an eclectic mix of artists, writers, shrinks, and academics. One subset of this summer migration was a group of architects and designers for whom the landscape held a powerful attraction. Drawn to its beauty and remoteness, and because real estate was relatively cheap, they built scores of houses there, creating a community of like-minded intellectuals pursuing a free-spirited lifestyle.

Although the houses were as idiosyncratic and whimsical—as their creators, they shared several noteworthy characteristics. Inexpensively built (many costing less than \$10,000), they employed low-slung, modular designs that opened up interior spaces to the natural elements, relied on readily available materials, and incorporated majestic views of the sea-scapes and kettle ponds that lend the Outer Cape its rustic charm.

These houses seemed to float above the land rather than be anchored to it. Living in one such '50s-era Modernist house, tucked deep in the Wellfleet woods, was “like being on a ship in the forest,” one summer resident later recalled.

Over time, many of these dwellings fell into disrepair—if not completely off the architectural map. In *Cape Cod Modern*,

a meticulously researched, lavishly illustrated book, their historical and aesthetic legacies get a richly deserved reconsideration.

The book begins with a history of Cape architecture from the 1600s onward, then shifts to the 1940s and '50s, when construction of Route 6 opened the Outer Cape to vehicular traffic. With the arrival of Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, among others, the Modernist movement was under way.

Following in their footsteps came the so-called Brahmin Bohemians, among them Jack Phillips, a Harvard-educated artist who inherited 800 acres of land in the Truro-Wellfleet area; Jack Hall, a self-taught architect, painter, and carpenter; and Nathan Saltonstall, a blue-blood architect who designed The Colony, a grouping of Wellfleet cottages that survives to this day.

The Europeans who landed on the Outer Cape were artistic pilgrims of

another stripe. Among the most colorful was British expat Serge Chermayeff, a teacher and designer whose property became "a laboratory for design experiments," the authors note, including his own boldly imaginative use of chromatics. His mini-biography is one of several that give *Cape Cod Modern* its piquant flavor, elevating it beyond a mere compendium of projects and buildings. Chermayeff, the authors write, was "obsessed with noiselessness," yet was himself a "walking volcano, often demanding peace for himself while shattering it for others." Writerly touches such as these, coupled with dozens of architectural renderings, period photographs, and up-to-date color plates, give readers a nuanced sense of the personalities behind the movement.

Beginning in 1961, nearly 45,000 acres of Outer Cape land were put under federal protection by the Cape Cod National Seashore Act. Houses built

between 1959 and '61 were granted a 25-year lease, then threatened with demolition—until preservationists such as McMahon came along and rallied to save many of these structures. By then, the movement had seen its last phase come and go, led, in the late '60s and '70s, by figures such as Charles Zehnder, a maverick, self-taught architect, and Charles Jencks, a leading theorist of architectural Postmodernism.

Cape Cod Modern ends on a wistful note, recalling a landscape now largely grown over and an era before the Outer Cape building boom fell victim to what the authors call "richification." These days, they write, "Nearly everyone wants a nice kitchen." Thankfully, a half-century ago other, more interesting priorities took precedence.

JOSEPH P. KAHN is a freelance writer who spent his childhood summers in the 1950s and '60s on the Outer Cape.

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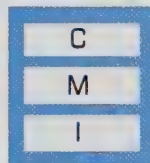
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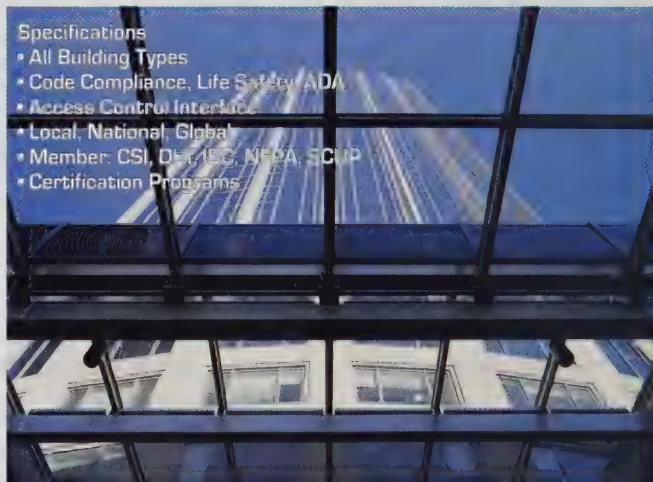
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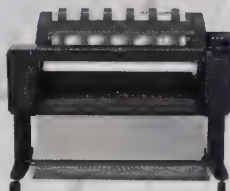


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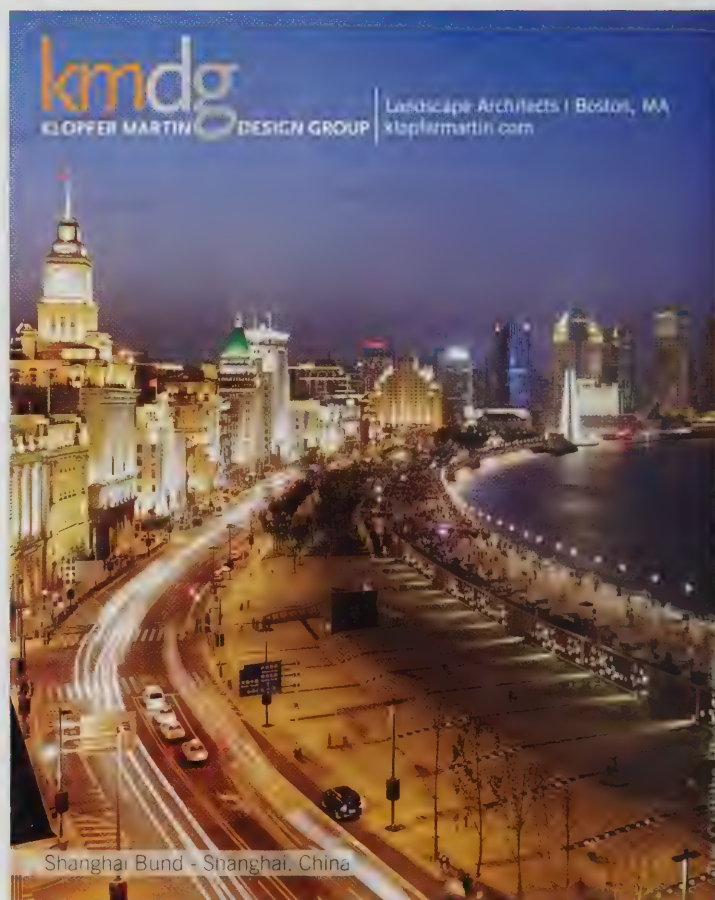
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THE GIFTS UNDERFOOT

by Yuriko Saito

Although I was born and raised in Japan, I have spent more than half my life in the United States. My academic work in aesthetics and experience living outside my homeland have given me a new insight into my native culture. In particular, I have come to appreciate the way in which Japanese aesthetic sensibility embodies an attitude of respect, consideration, and thoughtfulness. Now, every time I go back to Japan, I discover new gems that had remained invisible to me because of their very mundane nature. One such dimension is the aesthetics under our feet.

For me, a fond childhood memory is when my family changed our tatami mats every several years. After the craftsman completed his job, I would inhale the fragrance of fresh straw emanating from newly woven green mats, a dramatic transformation from the worn, brownish ones that had ceased to grace the air with scent. And the texture! The new mats' springy feel was so pleasant on the bare sole.

Wooden verandas and corridors of old castles and temple buildings offer an equally thrilling sensory experience. Their raw surfaces feature prominent grains, showcasing materiality as well as natural aging accelerated by human use. Walking on wood produces a heightened tactile experience, accompanied by the chirping sound of the "nightingale corridor" originally designed to deter intruders.

Japanese garden paths often meander, marked by stepping stones and pavements. Their arrangements often illuminate and enhance the native characteristics of the material by juxtaposing rocks of contrasting colors, shapes, and textures. They are also placed irregularly, so the visitor needs to slow down and pay attention to what she is stepping on, providing another layer of aesthetic experience. Finally, the meandering and often gently curving pathway is enticing: a constantly shifting viewpoint provides a multidirectional perspective of the garden and enriches the walker's experience. In

comparison, a utilitarian-oriented straight walkway, more common in Western landscapes, tends to make us focus only on the destination. Although this kind of thorough attention to the design of pathways is most prominent in gardens, the same sensibility can be seen in more quotidian spaces today, such as an entrance to a condominium.

One of my favorite subway stations in my hometown of Sapporo is located near a zoo. Its long underground corridor connecting to the terminal for a zoo-bound bus features a floor that has inlaid design of various animals. What fun and anticipation this floor generates for children, whose line of sight is close to the ground. Adults cannot help but appreciate this heartwarming design, knowing that its creator got down to the children's level, both literally and figuratively, to create this special gift underfoot.

I continue to marvel at how seemingly simple design features go a long way toward shaping our aesthetic experience as well as cultivating a certain attitude. When we feel that our experiences are honored and attended to, we are more inclined to "pay it forward," by acting thoughtfully and respectfully. On the other hand, if we are surrounded with objects and environments that do not reflect any care or consideration for our experience, we tend to become demoralized and indifferent. We may treat objects and environments callously, with no regard for how other people's experience is affected by our actions.

It is not enough for a society to promote justice, freedom, equality, economic security, opportunity, and health. We also need to be able to experience through tangible evidence that our needs and interests are taken seriously and attended to. Designers play a critical role in shaping a better world, not only through their literal creations but also by encouraging moral virtues and civic attitudes in all of us. As such, their power is awe-inspiring, as much as their responsibility is humbling. ■



ABOVE

Tatami mats on the floor of a Japanese room.
Photo: Masahiro Hayata.

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Interior of the
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