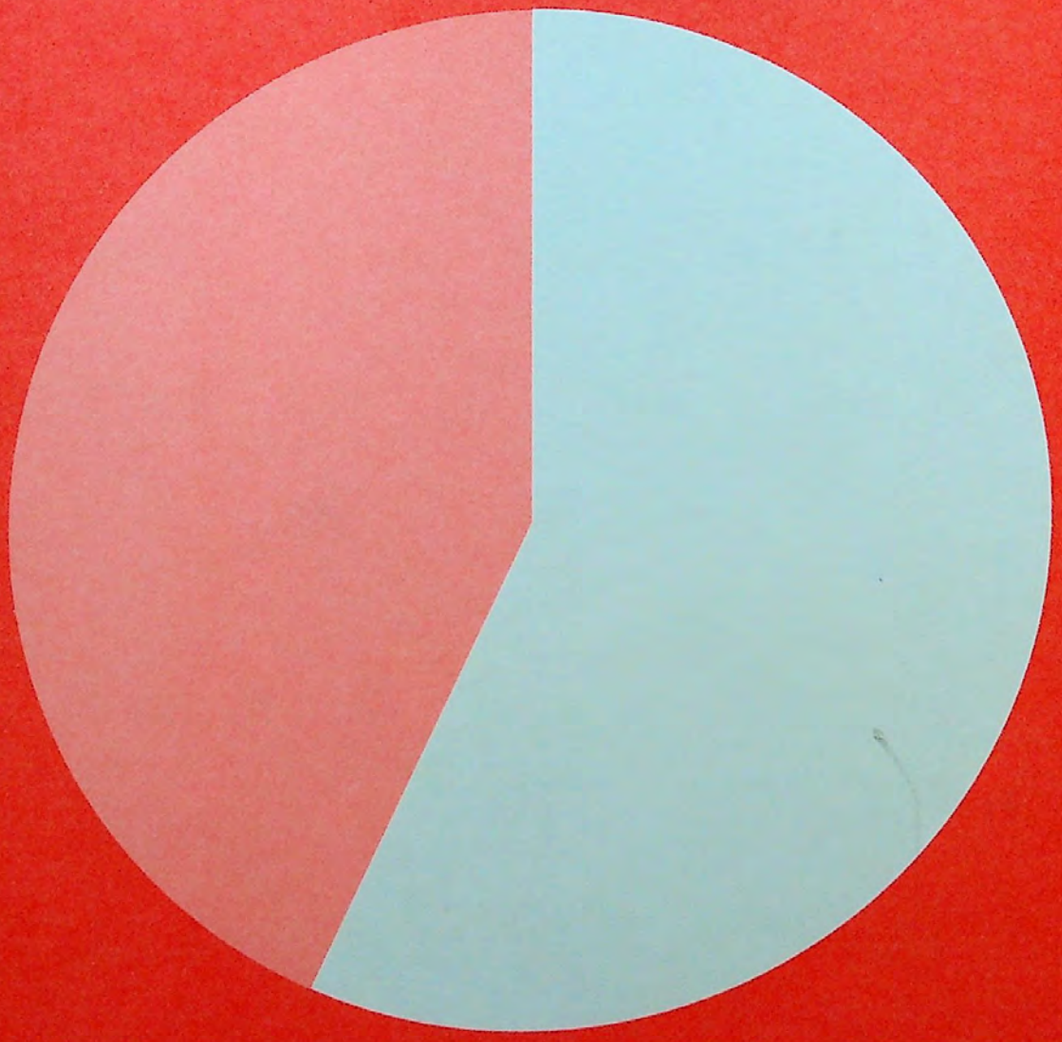
Cite

THE ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN REVIEW OF HOUSTON

30TH ANNIVERSARY
Special Issue



FIND A CITY TO LIVE IN

A SPECIAL ISSUE CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF PUBLICATION BY LOOKING FORWARD AND BACK

STEPHEN KLINEBERG DIGS DEEP IN HIS SURVEY DATA AND PREDICTS AN URBAN RENAISSANCE

GUIDE TO POWER MAPS OUT THE NETWORKS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT SHAPE THE UNZONED CITY

90>
0 74470 93169 0

Classic design...

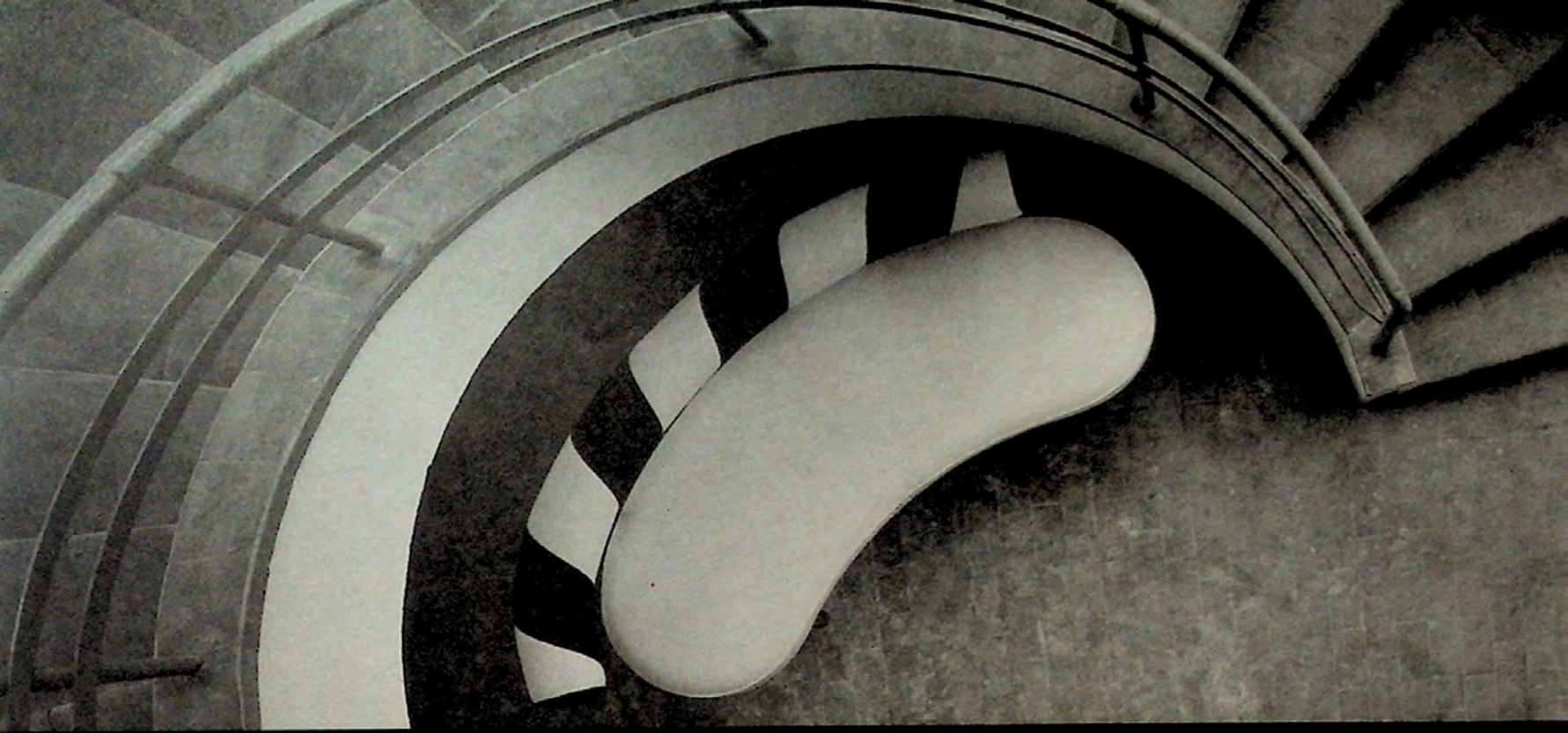
WITH A TWIST

Thank you, Cite Magazine for 30 years
of high design with a fresh perspective.

The OFIS would also like to congratulate Rice Design Alliance
on their 40 year anniversary and
Rice University and their School of Architecture
for 100 years of education and innovation.

The **ofis**

713.629.5599
sales@theofis.com
www.theofis.com



FLEXFORM

internum
& design

3303 Kirby Dr.
Houston, TX 77098
832 242 9470
www.internum.com

Cite

THE ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN REVIEW OF HOUSTON

A PUBLICATION OF THE RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE

90 FALL 2012

Cite (ISSN: 8755-0415) is published quarterly by the Rice Design Alliance, Rice University, Anderson Hall, Room 149, 6100 Main Street, Houston, Texas 77005-1892.

Individual Subscriptions:
U.S. and its possessions: $25 for one year, $40 for two years.
Foreign: $50 for one year, $80 for two years.

Cite is indexed in the Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals.

The opinions expressed in *Cite* do not necessarily represent the views of the board of directors of the Rice Design Alliance. Publication of this issue is supported in part by grants from the Susan Vaughan Foundation, the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance, the Texas Commission for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

ABOUT THE COVER: The pie chart shows data from the Kinder Houston Area Survey. In 2012, 57 percent of respondents outside the Loop, but still in the City of Houston, expressed a preference for living in an urban setting.

CONTRIBUTORS

EMILY BRASWELL is a planning consultant with Reynolds, Smith, & Hills, Inc. and a doctoral candidate in the Urban Planning and Environmental Policy Program at Texas Southern University.

JAY BLAZEK CROSSLEY runs Program Development and Research for Houston Tomorrow.

TERRENCE DOODY is Professor of English at Rice University, and author of *Confession and Community in the Novel* and *Among Other Things: A Description of the Novel*.

JORGE GALVAN is a visual artist and designer based in Houston.

MATTHEW JOHNSON, AIA, is a principal of LOJO Logan and Johnson Architecture and an assistant professor of architecture at the University of Houston. You can see his work at www.loganandjohnson.com.

PATRICK LOPEZ is an illustrator based in Houston who has produced architectural renderings for many celebrated architects.

STEPHEN KLINEBERG is Professor of Sociology at Rice University and a founding co-director of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research. In March 1982, he and his students initiated the annual Houston Area Survey.

ALEX MACLEAN has flown his plane over much of the United States documenting the landscape. Trained as an architect, he has portrayed the history and evolution of the land from agricultural patterns to city grids.

RAJ MANKAD has served as editor of *Cite* since 2008.

BARRY MOORE, FAIA, is Senior Associate at Gensler, where he specializes in educational, theater, and historic preservation projects.

KATIE PLOCHECK has worked for Rice Design Alliance since 2010.

MONICA SAVINO is Principal of Savino Architecture in Houston.

CHRISTOF SPIELER is Director of Technology and Innovation at Morris Architects, Senior Lecturer at Rice School of Architecture, and a METRO board member.

ZAKCQ LOCKREM is Director of Planning for Asakura Robinson Company, an adjunct professor of urban planning at Texas Southern University, and a co-founder of Social Agency Lab.

MATTHEW TEJADA was born and raised in Ft. Worth and lived for six years in Europe before moving to Houston where for five years he has run Air Alliance Houston.

BRUCE WEBB teaches design and urban theory at the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture at the University of Houston.

ALLYN WEST is a writer and graduate student at the University of Houston.

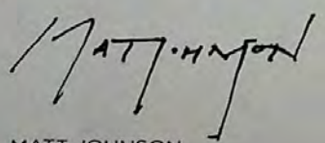
KATIA ZAVISTOVSKI is a PhD student in the Department of Art History at Rice University.

LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITORS

Cite was launched 30 years ago just as a long run of boom years for Houston ended and a more complex global city was bubbling up. Ninety issues and over 1,000 articles later, we arrive at this 30th anniversary issue. Over the years, the magazine has served the function of preserving the historical memory of Houston, promoting speculation about its future, and acting as its design conscience. In a city with a highly informal approach to urbanism, *Cite* has allowed architects, planners, and designers a public forum in which to ask "what if" questions. It frequently proposes a kind of alternate history for the city by imagining Houston in three tenses: past, present, and future.

In this issue, we examine Houston by looking back and projecting forward 30 years. Bruce Webb excavates sundry "fabrications" from the archive. Barry Moore and Raj Mankad focus on 1972, when the community and perspective that gave rise to *Cite* first formed. Pat Lopez presents a stunning what-if scenario in a hand-drawn rendering. Steven Klineberg looks at the rapidly changing demographic landscape of the city. More and more people seem to be interested in a model of walkable urbanism, which has for so long been anathema in Houston. The photographer Alex Maclean revisits his iconic 1976 photograph of downtown Houston and finds it changed for the better. Architects Matt Johnson and Monica Savino map the informal networks of power and influence at work in Houston's myriad public and public/private agencies devoted to economic and urban planning, the environment, and the arts. (What's missing is the immense power that private companies have had to influence the city's development. But that will have to wait for a later issue.) Christof Spieler examines the pros and cons of the METRO referendum that passed, and Jorge Galván illustrates the potential of expanding the Bayou Greenways through Proposition B.

In addition to the specific aims of the articles, this issue also serves to restate the importance of *Cite* in a rapidly growing city. Here, we want to emphasize that it is both engaged in important issues, and could do better. *Cite* has the potential to more forcefully advocate for a vision of Houston's future. If Alex Maclean was able to return to Houston after thirty years to find it denser, greener, and more vital, our hope is that when we invite him back for the 60th anniversary issue of *Cite*, these changes will be exponential, and that *Cite* will have played a role in this future evolution. We predict that Houston will be not only a global city, but a more effective, beautiful, and livable one.



MATT JOHNSON

ZAKCQ LOCKREM

BARRY MOORE

EDITOR
Raj Mankad

GRAPHIC DESIGN
PH Design Shop

ADVERTISING
Katie Plocheck

COPY EDITOR
Polly Koch

GUEST EDITORS
Matthew Johnson
Zakcq Lockrem
Barry Moore

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
Susan Rogers, Chair
Grant Alford
Fernando Bravé
Margaret Culbertson
Terrence Doody
Matthew Johnson
Rich Levy
Zakcq Lockrem
Barry Moore
Monica Savino
Ronnie Self
Nicola Springer

CONTENTS.FALL12

04 CITINGS
GALA 100 100 40 30
BAYOU GREENWAYS
NEWS
CALENDAR
LETTERS
CHARRETTE: Museum District
EVERYDAY ARCHITECTURE: H-E-B Montrose Market
TRANSIT: The METRO Referendum

14 CITE BY THE NUMBERS
Celebrating Thirty Years

16 CITE AND THE CITY
BY BRUCE WEBB
Fabrications of Houston's Past, Present, and Future

20 MORE THAN A GUIDE BOOK
BY BARRY MOORE
A City Without Precedent Calls for an Unprecedented Guide

22 MAINSTREAMING THE MILITANTS
BY RAJ MANKAD
On the Founding of Rice Design Alliance

24 PARALLEL FUTURE
BY PAT LOPEZ AND BARRY MOORE
What If the Price of Oil Hadn't Crashed?

26 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS
BY ALEX MACLEAN
March 1978 to May 2011

27 A GUIDE TO POWER
BY MATTHEW JOHNSON AND MONICA SAVINO
Houston Networks

32 A COLLECTION OF OBSOLETE ARCHITECTURAL INSTRUMENTS
BY BARRY MOORE
Addometer, Rangematic, and Planimeter

34 IS HOUSTON ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE AN "URBAN RENAISSANCE?"
BY STEVEN KLINEBERG AND EMILY BRASWELL
Findings from the Kinder Houston Area Survey (1995-2012)

40 THE FUTURES OF DENSITY
BY TERRENCE DOODY
A Review Essay on *Triumph of the City*, *Arrival City*, and *The Great Inversion*

42 READINGS
BY KATIA ZAVISTOVSKI
Art in the Age of Virtual Currency

44 READINGS
BY JAY CROSSLEY, ZAKCQ LOCKREM, AND MATTHEW TEJADA
Breaking Down the Walls: Taking Stock of the Houston 2040 Talks

45 MFAH SELECTS
New Books on Architecture and Design

52 HINDCITE
BY ALLYN WEST
I'm Just a Civilian: Tom Cobb (1940-2012)

Background image shows linkage pattern from "A Guide to Power," page 29.

RDA GALA

100 100 40 30

A Year of Anniversaries

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE held a superlative gala that will be remembered for years to come.

Nine hundred people gathered in the Centennial Tent on Rice University's Founders Court to celebrate 100 years of Rice University, 100 years of the Rice School of Architecture, 40 years of Rice Design Alliance, and 30 years of *Cite* magazine.

Guests bid furiously at the silent auction, co-chaired by Natalye Appel and Sarah Balinskas, which featured amazing experiences, including conversations with some of Rice University's brightest minds, stays in vacation homes of some of Houston's leading architects, and unique entertainment opportunities showcasing the best Houston has to offer. Many bidders forwent the competition and went straight for the BUY NOW price. Among them was a one-of-a-kind necklace comprising 100 various owl charms designed by Joyce Lander and a dinner for eight at Damian's with Rice Owls Coach Wayne Graham and former Rice Owl pitcher and St. Louis Cardinal Lance Berkman. A dinner for ten with Mayor Annise Parker was won by several individual donors willing to donate $250 each for the opportunity.

Jackson and Company provided a delicious meal of butternut squash soup and filet mignon with vegetable accompaniments. RDA President Lonnie Hoogeboom introduced honoree and Rice sociologist Stephen Klineberg, who took the stage to a standing ovation after guests viewed a short video about his 30-year-plus Kinder Houston Area Survey. After the program, guests proceeded to the Academic Quad where they saw The Spectacle, an amazing creation by the German artists Urbanscreen, especially commissioned by Rice for its Centennial.

Gala chairs Jory Alexander and Jay Baker thanked Fundraising Chairs Sandy Lynch and Doug Combes, whose committee raised nearly $500,000; architect and environment chair Jim Evans, who was responsible for creating the stunning ambience; and Graphics Chair Craig Minor who pulled everything together with a colorful design both in print and video formats.


Stephen and Peggy Klineberg


Linda and Dick Sylvan


Jay Baker and Jory Alexander


Betsy Strauch and Lonnie Hoogeboom

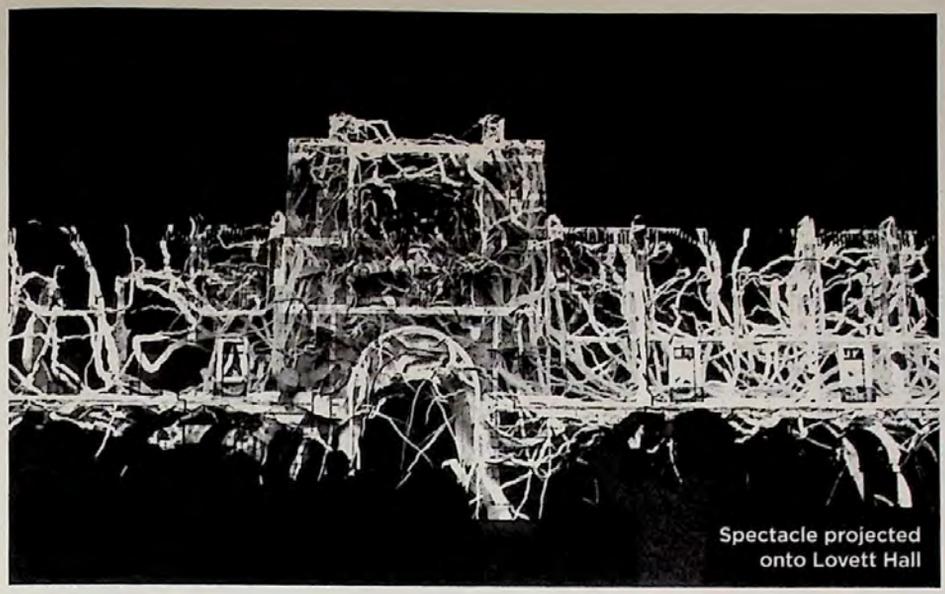

Natalye Appel and Sarah Balinskas


Albert Pope, Kathrin Brunner, Sarah Whiting, and Ron Witte

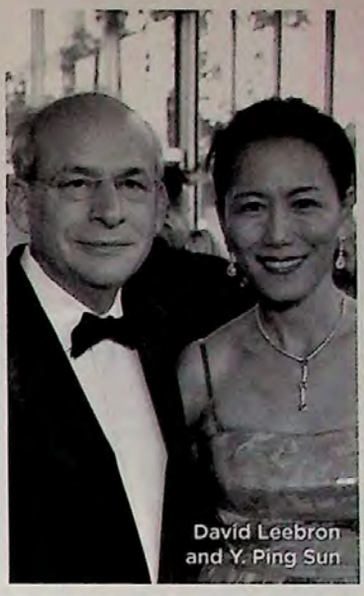

James Evans

Seen in the crowd were Honorary Co-Chair and Rice School of Architecture Dean Sarah Whiting with husband Ron Witte, Larry and Charlotte Whaley, Edwin Friedrichs and Darlene Clark, Laura and George Pontikes, and Dick and Linda Sylvan. The Honorary Committee was also co-chaired by RSA Professor Andy Todd, and it consisted of former presidents of the Rice Design Alliance, including Gwendolyn Goffe, Jim Furr, Larry Lander, Leslie Davidson, David Harvey, Karl Kilian, Bill Neuhaus, Raymond Brochstein, Chuck Gremillion, Barbara Amelio, Kimberly Hickson, Frank Douglas, Nonya Grenader, and RDA's first president Peck Drennan, among others.

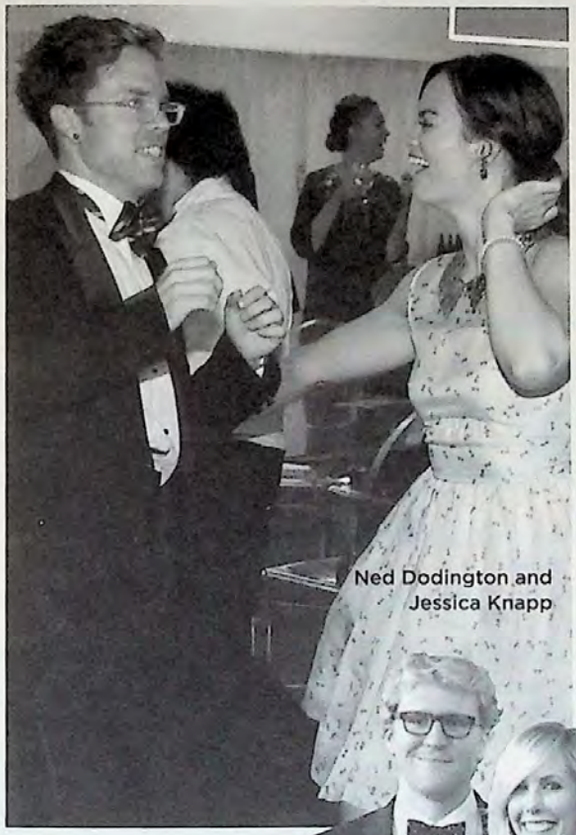
CLAUDIA CASBARIAN AND ROSWITHA VOGLER



Spectacle projected onto Lovett Hall



David Leebron and Y. Ping Sun

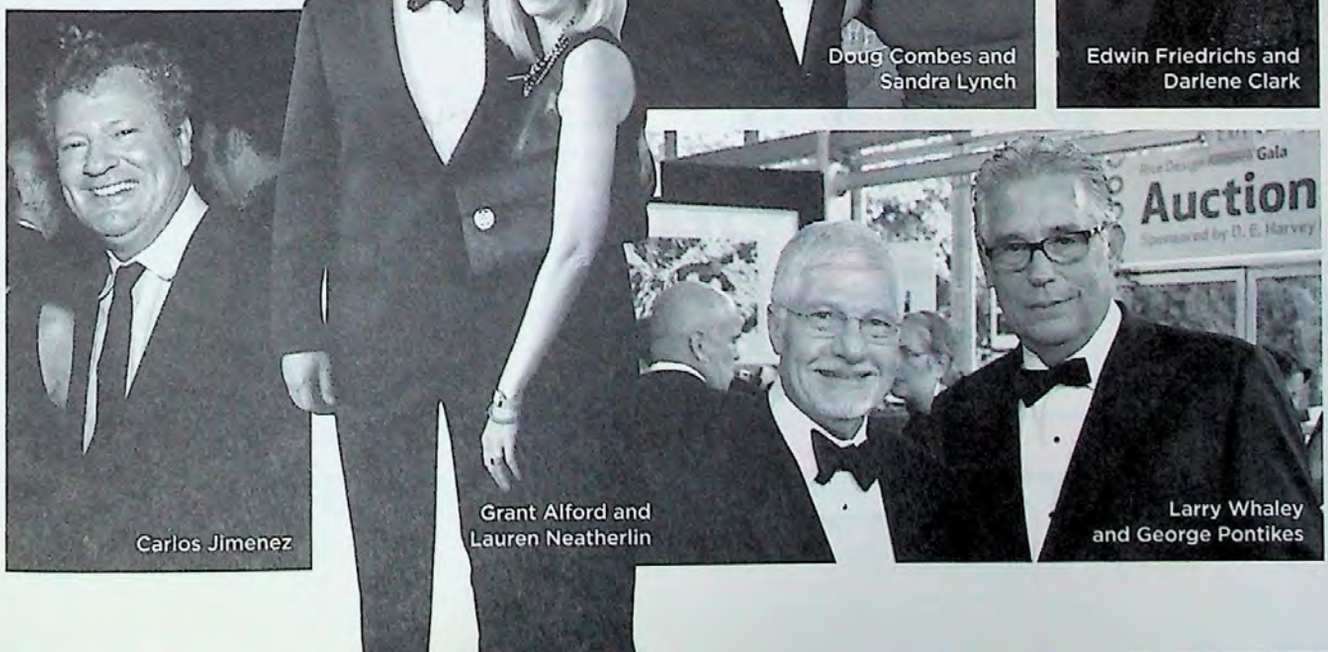


Ned Dodington and Jessica Knapp

Grady Gaines and the Texas Upsetters

Doug Combes and Sandra Lynch

Edwin Friedrichs and Darlene Clark



Carlos Jimenez

Grant Alford and Lauren Neatherlin

Larry Whaley and George Pontikes

2012 GALA SUPPORTERS

CENTENNIAL UNDERWRITERS

D. E. Harvey Builders
Haynes Whaley Associates, Inc.
Satterfield & Pontikes Construction, Inc.

UNDERWRITERS

Walter P Moore

BENEFACTORS

AGC Houston
ARC
Anslow Bryant Construction Ltd.
Austin Commercial
Jay Baker Architects
Balfour Beatty Construction LLC
W. S. Bellows Construction Corporation
Brochsteins
Brookstone, L.P.
The Office of James Burnett
Bury+Partners, Inc.
Cameron Management / Skanska
CenterPoint Energy, Inc.
Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing
Cokinos, Bosien & Young
Susie & Sanford Criner
Debner+Company
JE Dunn Construction
Leslie Elkins Architecture
FKP Architects
FMGi/WAVE
Fretz Construction Company
Gensler
Gilbane Building Company
HOK
Haworth, Inc.
Kendall/Heaton Associates
Dillon Kyle Architecture
Marek Companies
Matrix Structural Engineers
McCarthy
McCoy Workplace Solutions
Morris Architects
O'Donnell/Snider Construction
The OFIS
Office Pavilion
PGAL
Perkins+Will
Planning Design Research Corporation
Putterman, Scharck & Associates
Louisa Stude Sarofim
The Southampton Group
TDIndustries
Telios

2012 GALA SUPPORTERS

Tellepsen
Trammell Crow Company
Transwestern
Trio Electric
Phoebe & Bobby Tudor
Turner Construction Company
Vanguard Environments
The Woodlands Development Co.
Wylie Consulting Engineers
Vanguard Environments
Wylie Consulting Engineers

PATRONS

A & E - The Graphics Complex
acs Flooring Group/Interface
Natalye Appel & Sarah Balinskas
Brave / Architecture
Anne & Peter Brown
ccrd
CRG / Allsteel / Vurè Group
D|G Studios
Energy Architecture
4b Technology Group
Fisk Electric Company
Halliburton
HarrisonKornberg Architects / Jones Engineers/ ASA Dally
Hoar Construction, LLC
Kirksey
MaRS
Milam & Co. Painting, Inc.
Minor Design
PMRG
PageSoutherlandPage / Tribble & Stephens Construction, Ltd.
Rogers Moore Engineers, LLC
SWA Group
Seeberger Architecture / Janna & Chuck Gremillion
Louis H. & Christopher A. Skidmore
Katherine & Frank Smith
StudioRED Architects
Sunset Settings / Carolyn Brewer
WSP FLACK + KURTZ

FRIENDS OF CITE

Anonymous
Betsy Strauch & Lonnie Hoogeboom

TICKET BENEFACTORS

Arch-Con Corporation
BNIM
Daniel B. Barnum, FAIA & Marilyn Lewis
Berger Iron Works, Inc.
Minnette & Peter Boesel
Barbara & Jeff Bryson
Chelsea Architects / Robert Taylor
Melinda Clark & Clark Trantham
Clark Condon Associates
Colby Design
Comfort Systems USA (South Central)
DPR Construction
L. Barry Davidson Architects
AIA, Inc.
Nancy Dunlap
E3 Electric
Helen Winkler Fosdick
Gabriel Architects
Nonya & Jonathan Grenader
Melissa & Albert Grobmyer IV
Jeff Heger Photography
Herman Miller
Rose Cullivan & Carl Hock
Gosia Kinalska
Judy Kugle
Brigette & Chris Larson, Greenwood King Properties
Susan & Bill Merriman
Parra Design Group
Redding Linden Burr Inc.
St. Mark Fine Arts Conservation & Restoration
Bryan Scrivner
Carrie & Ed Shoemake
Smith & Company Architects
Geoffrey Stait
Jane & Gary Swanson
Linda & Dick Sylvan
Wilson Architectural Group
Lorraine & Ed Wulfe
Ziegler Cooper Architects

DONORS

13 Celsius
13 November
AEG Facilities
AIA Houston
Agile OFIS
Jory Alexander
Barbara Amelio
David Andrews
Anvil Bar & Refuge
Marilyn Archer
Armando's
Arnaud's Restaurant
Keiji Asakura
Asakura Robinson Company
Florence and Herve Audinet
Aurora Picture Show
Jay Baker
Sarah Balinskas Fine Framing
Ballroom Marfa
Larry Barker
Joel Barna and Laura Furman
Lance Berkman
Blackberry Farm
Boot Ranch
Jereck Boss
Barrie and Jerry Bradley
Carolyn Brewer
Deborah Brochstein
Susan and Raymond Brochstein
Karin Broker
Peter Brown
Stan Bunting
Larry Burns
David Calkins
Catherine Callaway
Carrabba's Original
Claudia Casbarian
John Casbarian
Central Market
Chinati Foundation
Ben Crawford
Andrea Crawmer
Damian's Cucina Italiana
Leslie Barry Davidson and Robins Brice
Jeff DeBevec
Debner+Company
Divino Italian Restaurant & Wine Bar
Do Bar
El Tiempo Cantina
James Evans
Thomas Flaherty
Four Star Restaurant Group
Stephen Fox
Edwin Friedrichs & Darlene Clark
Jo and Jim Furr
Julie Gauthier & Dallas Felder
Dixie Friend Gay
Gensler
Larry and Karen George
Pablo Gimenez-Zapiola
Liz Glassman
Gwendolyn H. Goffe
Rusty and Ruth Gorman
Wayne Graham
Chuck Gremillion
Nonya Grenader
Kristi Grizzle
D. E. Harvey Builders
Haven
Hay Merchant
Wendy Heger
Hermann Park Conservancy
Hester + Hardaway Photos
Kimberly Hickson
Willard Holmes
Lonnie Hoogeboom
Hotel Monteleone
Hotel ZaZa
Houston Cinema Arts Society
Houston Dynamo
Houston Symphony
Houston Wine Merchant
The Houstonian Hotel, Club and Spa
Molly Hubbard
Jewett Consulting
Judd Foundation
Donna Kacmar
Karl Killian
Stephen Klineberg
Knoll
Knoll Textiles
Charles Mary Kubricht
La Torretta Lake Resort & Spa
Lake/Flato Architects, Ted Flato
Stranded By Joyce Lander
Larry Lander
Laurenzo's El Tiempo Cantina
Tad Lewis
Liberty Kitchen & Oyster Bar
Liberty Station
Victoria and Marshal Lightman
Sandy Lynch
Manhattan Construction
Wayne Marchand
Marfa Public Radio
The MATCH
The Menil Collection
Craig Minor
Mongoose Vs. Cobra
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston / Bookstore
NASA Johnson Space Center
Kay and Bill Neuhaus
Objects by Rame Hruska
The OFIS
Karin Broker
Padre's Marfa
Mayor Annise Parker
Pedal Party
Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects
Adriana Pineda
Pinewood Cafe
Plodes Studio
Laura and George Pontikes
Albert Pope
Raj Mankad
Rice Design Alliance
Michelangelo Sabatino
Saint Arnold Brewing Company
Danny Samuels
Ike and Barbara Schmidt
Linda Shearer
Gayle Smith
Sovereign Services of Houston, Inc.
Sparrow Bar + Cookshop / Monica Pope
Nicola Springer
Studio Red, Bill Neuhaus, Pete Ed Garrett
Sunset Settings
Monica Pope
Tacos A Go-Go
Tadd Tellepsen
Marlys Tokerud
Tre Spa
Treebeards
Phoebe and Bobby Tudor
Uchi Restaurants
Underbelly
United Airlines
Walter P Moore
Wendy Watriss and Fred Baldwin
Larry and Charlotte Whaley
Geraldina and Scott Wise
Sarah Whiting and Ron Witte
Geoff Winningham
The Woodlands Development Co.
Ben Wylie
Wylie Consulting Engineers
Mark Yanke

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTORS

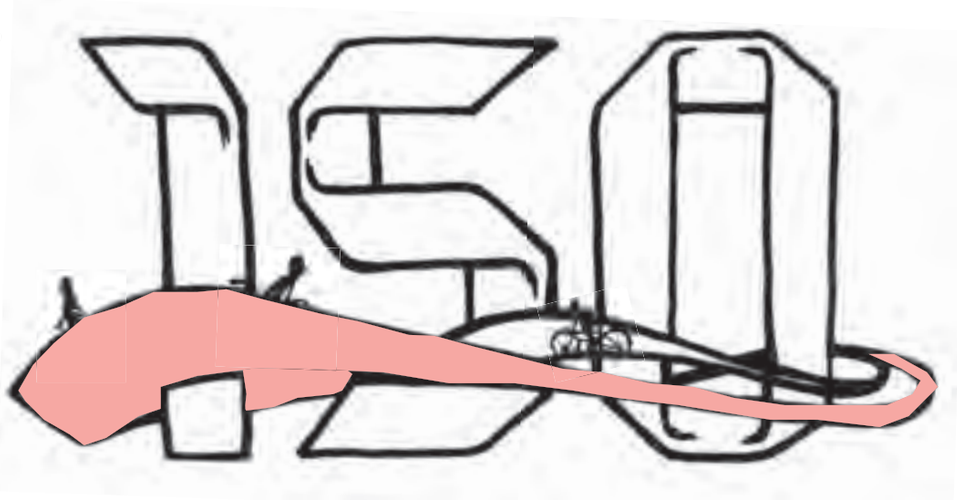
A & E – The Graphics Complex
benjy's in the village
Collaborative Designworks
The Events Company
Jackson and Company
Kuhl-Linscomb
The OFIS
Laura & George Pontikes
Rice School of Architecture
Rice University

Bayou Greenways

AN URBAN PARK SYSTEM
Like No Other

You say you want a big idea. You say that Houston has lost its nerve. Well, here's a big idea that was on the ballot. Proposition B, a $166 million parks bond, included $100 million for the Bayou Greenway Initiative. A public-private effort will match that with another $100 million. Where will that money go?

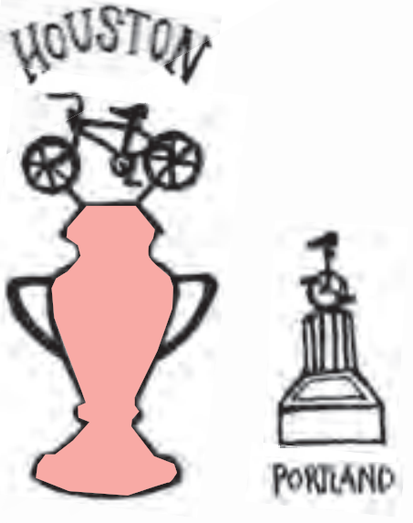
by Jorge Galvan



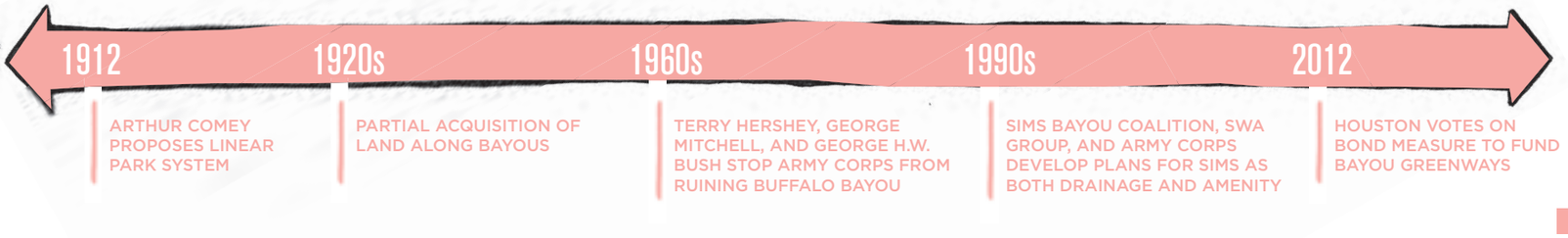
MILES OF CONTINUOUS BIKE TRAILS WILL DOUBLE TO 150.

A WHOPPING 1.3 MILLION PEOPLE—6 OUT OF 10 HOUSTONIANS—WILL BE 1.5 MILES FROM 7 BAYOUS ENHANCED BY AN ADDITIONAL 2,000 ACRES OF EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTED PARKLAND.

A HEALTHIER POPULATION SAVES US ALL MONEY.



THE EXPANSION WILL MOON-SHOT HOUSTON WAY BEYOND PORTLAND'S 79 MILES OF OFF-ROAD PATHS.



ARTHUR COMEY PROPOSES LINEAR PARK SYSTEM

PARTIAL ACQUISITION OF LAND ALONG BAYOUS

TERRY HERSHEY, GEORGE MITCHELL, AND GEORGE H.W. BUSH STOP ARMY CORPS FROM RUINING BUFFALO BAYOU

SIMS BAYOU COALITION, SWA GROUP, AND ARMY CORPS DEVELOP PLANS FOR SIMS AS BOTH DRAINAGE AND AMENITY

HOUSTON VOTES ON BOND MEASURE TO FUND BAYOU GREENWAYS

SOURCE: HOUSTON PARKS BOARD

CITINGS

>> NEWS FROM RICEDESIGNALLIANCE.ORG

FROM LEFT: Alfredo Brillembourg speaks at the MFAH; The Santa Maria de Belém is a stop on the RDA tour of Portugal.

> RESPONSES TO FALL LECTURES

OffCite published several responses to the RSA/RDA Fall 2012 lecture series, NEXT: Four Takes on the Future of Architectural Education.

The first speaker, Michael Speaks, suggested that architectural schools should deploy "design intelligence" in entrepreneurial projects that can provide students with practical experience and yield new funds for universities. In a response titled "Silent Stakeholders," Colley Hodges asks how well partnerships with businesses serve students who pay tuition.

The second speaker in the series, Alfredo Brillembourg, drew impassioned responses from RDA members. Brillembourg made controversial arguments regarding the permanence of slums and the necessity of retrofitting them rather than removal. Alfonso E. Hernandez responded to the lecture with a post entitled "Diagramming the Slum or Slumming the Diagram?" Scott Cartwright and Jenny Lynn Weitz Amaré-Cartwright conducted an in-depth interview of Brillembourg.

More responses are coming and we want to hear from you.

> SPRING LECTURES

The spring lecture series brings together architectural practitioners and thinkers from around the globe who show a commitment to environmental and social issues. Instead of responding to issues like sustainability, however, they pursue new and often challenging projects, aesthetics, and languages that emerge from pressing problems facing our built environments. Ultimately, such practices construct a more nuanced relationship between aesthetics and the social world.

> MOTOWN ROCKS: THE ARCHITECTURE OF DETROIT AND ITS SUBURBS

In May, RDA members will make a four-day visit to the Motor City to learn about its glorious past, difficult present, and hopeful future. The tour will include both the inner city and the suburbs, including Grosse Pointe, Bloomfield Hills, and an entire day exploring and touring the Cranbrook campus. Architectural historian Stephen Fox along with local architects and designers will serve as guides. The tour dates are May 2–5, 2013. For more details, visit ricedesignalliance.org.

> LISBON TO OPORTO: AN ARC OF PORTUGUESE ARCHITECTURE

June 17–24, 2013, RDA members will embark on a seven-day visit to Portugal. The tour begins in Lisbon, Portugal's resplendent capital by the Tagus River, and concludes in Oporto, the country's second metropolis along another great river: the fertile and aromatic Douro. Rice Architecture Professor Carlos Jimenez, along with local architects and personalities, will serve as guides.

> 2013 ARCHITECTURE TOUR: *CENTENNIAL TOUR: 10 HOUSES BY RICE ARCHITECTURE FACULTY*

To commemorate the 40th Anniversary of RDA and the Centennial celebrations of Rice University and the Rice School of Architecture, this annual architecture tour highlights ten significant Houston residences designed by Rice architecture faculty during the past 100 years.

> SAN ANTONIO RECAP

Architect and San Antonio tour-goer Larry Lander documents his time in San Antonio for RDA's spring hometown tour.

Thursday, March 8, 2012 - It's about two hundred miles from the Rice campus parking lot to San Antonio which is a long time for anyone to sit on a bus—even a really nice one like this—so we took a coffee break halfway along our route in downtown Schulenburg. If you get off I-10 and can get past the Dairy Queen, the Sonic, and the gas stations, you should wind your way to Schulenburg's Main Street. It's a page out of small-town Texana history and marked by the iconic Sengelmann Dance Hall.

But they weren't quite ready for our group. It seems our contact at the kolache shop had quit her job a few days before and, in a fit of HR pique, somehow neglected to share the details of our arrival with the colleagues-she-left-behind. So when 30 or so of your closest friends show up with a timetable and a hankering for kolaches and hot coffee—well, it might not end so well ... *Read more of Lander's account at ricedesignalliance.org*.

BRILLEMBOURG PHOTO BY KATIE PLOCHECK; AND BELÉM FROM WIKICOMMONS

LETTERS

SOME ADO ABOUT NOTHINGNESS

I found the basic premise of "Some Ado About Nothingness: Asia Society Texas Center" (*Cite* 89) to be vexing. That a Japanese architect would design buildings following ancient examples of Japanese architecture seems to reinforce one of the many orientalist stereotypes that "Asians" are somehow more spiritual and connected to their cultural past than "Westerners." Essentialist arguments like this usually assume a perfect model (Ise Shrine, Imperial Palace, generally the older, the better) that can never be surpassed, which is also disappointing. It doesn't really allow for new models or true innovation to be established. To continue his logic, I suppose French modern architects must endlessly reinterpret Cistercian monasteries and those in the United States should reference Anasazi Cliff Dwellings if they want to imbue their designs with cultural significance.

Good architecture that is rooted both in tradition and modernism is certainly possible. Wang Shu's work has been celebrated as a "fusion of sensibilities." However, I think that Wang Shu's work is fundamentally different. His hybrid traditional/modern position is a pointed critique of the disagreeable aspects of China's rapid urban development. To that extent the Pritzker Prize jury was making a political statement by not only picking a Chinese architect, but one who makes a point of being beside the mainstream there. It appears to me that the architecture of the Asia Society is about accommodating what appears to be the conservative desires of its patrons, members of the entrepreneurial elite (the Rockefellers!). I don't detect the energizing critical stance of someone like Wang Shu in any of the design moves of that building. Instead Heymann seems to suggest that Taniguchi's choices are determined mainly by aesthetics. Unlike Wang Shu, whose choice of typological models and materials is aimed at questioning the status quo, Taniguchi's materials and cultural references appear only to reinforce the cool, clean global corporate aesthetic that could be built in any cosmopolitan city in the world. To that extent, Asia Society Texas Center is like wasabi-flavored ice cream, an unremarkable product with an exotic ingredient added to increase its appeal in a saturated market. Had Heymann perhaps quoted Taniguchi saying something to the contrary his argument might have been more persuasive.

—Ben Koush

Writer Responds *I certainly agree with the writer's assessment of Wang Shu's work, as well as Taniguchi's. That said, I did not remotely suggest that a Japanese architect should design this way—that was not in any way my "basic premise," as suggested in the letter's first line. I merely pointed out what Taniguchi was doing, and, to the degree that his method added "wasabi" to the "ice cream," it was more interesting to discuss that aspect of the building than merely looking at it, as many have done, as an exercise in generic late-Modern detail. There are certainly many Japanese architects, starting with Ito (and almost everyone coming from his office, like Sejima), who ask far more pointed questions about what the content of Japanese architecture might be. In Ito's case, these questions often have to do with the proper role of architectural monumentality in present Japanese society: see, for example, the extraordinary TAMA Art University Library, in which the irrational grid makes the individual the primary unit in the interpretation of monumental public space.*

—David Heymann

Rice Design Alliance and *Cite* connect you to great design every day and any time through the web. The calendar at ricedesignalliance.org keeps you up-to-date. Missed a lecture? Find the links to YouTube uploads. OffCite.org continues the thoughtful discussions of *Cite* on a weekly basis. "Like" the RDA and *Cite* Facebook pages, which are alive with frequent posts and comments.

RDA CALENDAR

LECTURES

NEW COMMONS: BETWEEN AESTHETICS AND ENGAGEMENT

Peter Gadanho
Curator of Contemporary Architecture at MoMA
Wednesday, January 16

Luis Callejas
LCLAOFFICE, Cambridge
Wednesday, January 23

David Gissen
Associate Professor,
The California College of the Arts
Wednesday, February 6

Xaveer de Geyter
xgga Architects, Brussels
Tuesday, February 19

Lectures will be held at the Brown Auditorium, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Please join us for a pre-lecture reception at 6 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE!

04.6-4.7

THE RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE 2013 TOUR

THE CENTENNIAL TOUR WILL FEATURE TEN HOUSES FROM TEN DECADES.

Write for **Cite**

Cite is Greater Houston's forum for architectural, design, and planning issues. Articles should address a broad audience and include reviews, essays, analyses, and commentaries. Article ideas and proposals are reviewed by the editorial committee and are welcome in one of three forms:

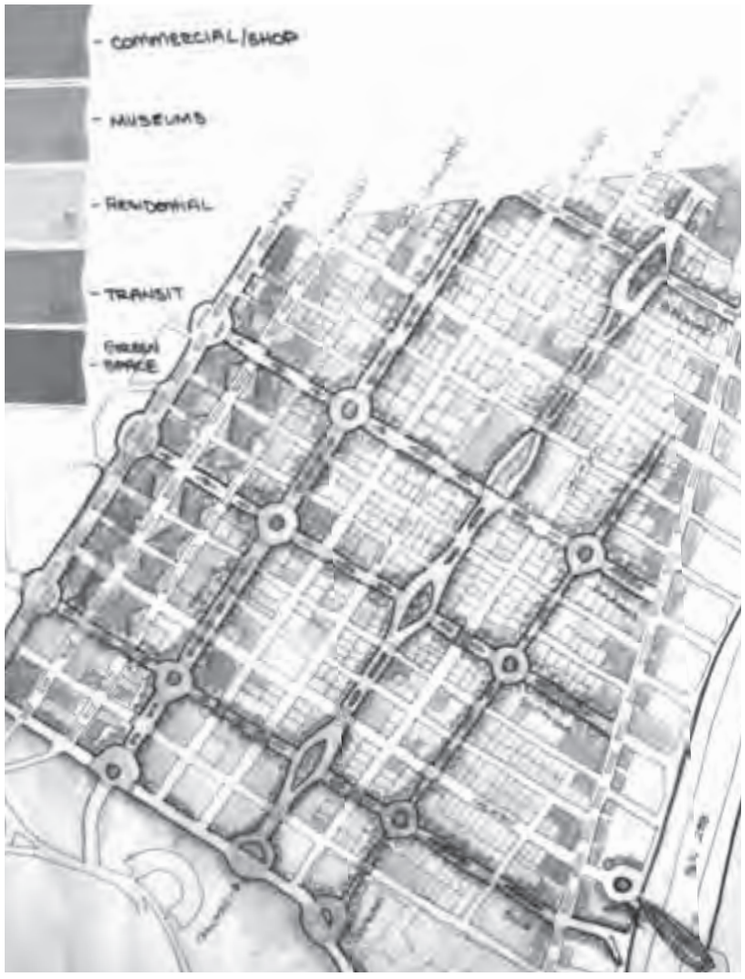
TIPS: Tell us your ideas.

DETAILED ARTICLE PROPOSALS: Include context about the subject, an explanation of why the article would be of interest to the *Cite* audience, and a writing sample.

FULL MANUSCRIPTS: Send manuscripts for consideration by peer-review.

OffCite.org is an additional venue for timely coverage and short pieces as well as an opportunity for writers to start establishing themselves as part of the pool from which the magazine draws. Send all submissions and questions to mankad@rice.edu or to the *Cite* mailing address:

CITE MAGAZINE - MS 51
RICE UNIVERSITY
P.O. BOX 1892
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77251-1892



TOP: The "Best Overall" entry addresses community life along corridors.
ABOVE: The "Honorable Mention" includes an armature on Crawford and Southmore to ease traffic through the neighborhood.

CHARRETTE

A TIGHTER FIT: THE MUSEUM DISTRICT CHARRETTE

WITH TWELVE MILLION VISITORS A YEAR AND SEVENTEEN CULTURAL INSTITUtions within walking distance of one another, Houston's Museum Park Neighborhood has enormous potential. Home to Hermann Park, The MFAH, Houston Museum of Natural Science, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, the Holocaust Museum, and hundreds of residences, the neighborhood could have it all—community, great design, and world-class cultural life. Yet, the very "unzoned" uniqueness of the neighborhood holds back the realization of its full potential. The neighborhood suffers from poor connectivity, fragmented community, broken sidewalks, and overgrown promenades.

The presence of museums alone does not guarantee a vibrant neighborhood. In the Spring 1996 issue of *Cite* (35), Peter Papademetriou lamented that without "a vision that extends beyond the needs of separate institutions" the neighborhood would be doomed to a "loose fit" in which "[y]esterday's back door could be tomorrow's address."

The residential parts of the neighborhood are split awkwardly at points between remnants of historic Third Ward and new townhouses of dizzying stylistic variety. Kathleen O'Reilly, Vice President of the Museum Park Super Neighborhood, sees these disparate realities as an opportunity and contacted rdAGENTS, RDA's young professional group, to vet the area as the focus of the annual design charrette.

On Saturday, August 4, 33 designers came out to conceptualize a master plan for the neighborhood—improving the pedestrian and car realms by widening sidewalks and creating parking spaces, building a cohesive campus by clarifying east/west and north/south routes, enhancing the mixed-use capabilities of the area, and enabling a more livable, attractive urban space through sustainable landscaping.

The entries were then blindly judged by an all-star jury consisting of Buffalo Bayou Partnership Project Manager Guy Hagstette; City Council member Ellen Cohen; Associate Director of Administration at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Willard Holmes; and O'Reilly, who assessed the designs based on which solution addressed as many of the program elements as possible in a manner that was at once creative and realistic.

Bayardo Selva, Neda Izadi, Laura Beth Mertz, Will Denman, and Ray Mora took home the "Best Overall" prize for their design "EnLIVEn." The entry stood out based on the cultural and residential programs created for the north/south and east/west corridors. Community life was addressed with the addition of food markets, spaces for convening, residential signage and graphics, and parking and pathway solutions that extend from Hermann Park.

The Gensler team of Meredith Epley, Suvama Gupta, Al Deliallisi, Marissa Campos, and Ashley Griffin were awarded "Honorable Mention" for the simplicity and practicality of their design, and its inclusion of an armature on Crawford and Southmore, which would ease traffic through the neighborhood. The design took a bold and welcomed leap with its focus on Almeda—a historic thoroughfare on the eastern end of the neighborhood known for its mix of restaurants and retail. Go to ricedesignalliance.org to see images of all the charrette entries. c

- Katie Plocheck

COMMUNITY

EVERYDAY ARCHITECTURE:
H-E-B MONTROSE MARKET

THE NEW H-E-B MONTROSE MARKET PRESENTS A QUANDARY FOR *CITE*. SHOULD WE CRITIQUE A GROCERY store? How do we even approach a building of a type that is not expected to be exemplary? Innovative museums, towers, and houses—that's the stuff of architecture reviews. *Cite*, however, has long considered everything that forms our built environment to be fair game. The first issue of *Cite* featured articles on both the high and the low: a review of Renzo Piano's plans for the Menil Collection and an analysis of Houston's sewage system. (A manhole graced the cover, not Mr. Piano's drawings.)

H-E-B's Montrose Market was completed this year at the intersection of Dunlavy and Alabama on the former site of the Wilshire Village Apartments. The garden apartments, built in 1940 and designed by Daniel Armstrong with Eugene Werlein as architect of record, were the last remaining of three such FHA-sponsored projects in Houston. The buildings had been allowed to deteriorate, supposedly beyond rehabilitation. Vacant units abounded. Many of the remaining tenants were elderly and on fixed incomes. Artists lived there, and apparently a group of "freegans"—people who live off the food and goods others throw out—occupied one building. The complex, in all its spooky weirdness, imbued the neighborhood with a quiet countercultural feel. (My three-year-old daughter detected that vibe and told me that John Tenk, her imaginary friend with rainbow-colored eyes and a rainbow-colored horse with a rainbow mane, lived in Wilshire Village.)

Montrose Market, though, should have a chance to be judged on its own merits. Put the ghosts and spirits of Wilshire Village aside for a moment. The preservationist's lament and the critic's eye have little to do with each other. The new H-E-B is far more pleasing than almost any other big box store in Houston. One would expect as much given that the design is by San Antonio-based Lake|Flato Architects, national winner of the 2004 American Institute of Architects Honor Award for Firm of the Year.

Lake|Flato is known for modern houses that make use of vernacular forms and materials that merge with the landscape. Applying those strategies to large commercial buildings, like Montrose Market, is a challenge.

I normally walk to Montrose Market from the north, down Dunlavy Street. My initial shock at the store's difference in scale from surrounding buildings has worn off. (I suppose that marks me as a Houstonian.) Most big boxes in Houston are set far back and surrounded by a moat of parking, but here the store sits close to the street, which allows the huge mass to define the public realm. This siting, which the Neartown Association rightly celebrates as a victory, required negotiations with H-E-B and a variance from the city. It also saved the maximum number of trees and feels pedestrian-friendly.

The exterior is composed of concrete walls, wood panels, wide expanses of glass shaded by louvers, exposed steel beams, and clerestory windows. The style, both modern and quaint, is certainly more appealing than the clumsy facades of most big-box stores.

And yet Montrose Market is confounding if taken seriously as the design of a leading architecture firm. The two walls facing Dunlavy and Alabama streets are blank. The entrance opens onto a surface parking lot in the "back." Car culture wins again. Of course. Rarely do architects have the opportunity to orient big commercial buildings appropriately to the sun and the street.

Moreover, the influence of the designers seems to have stopped at the entrance. As soon as you pass through the automatic doors, the logic of H-E-B takes over. Vegetables on the near right. Dairy in the far left corner. The middle of the store is stacked high with processed goods. Natural light is often in abundance, a nice change from the usual supermarket pallor, but the light is not handled with Lake|Flato's finesse. Perhaps my criticisms are not fair, but H-E-B has gone so far as to invoke the Menil Collection in its marketing efforts, and Montrose Market inevitably comes up short.

After Wilshire Village was scraped off this earth and before Montrose Market popped up, the sun-dappled site inspired a number of fantasies. David Bucek drew up a plan for a farmer's market. A group called the Montrose Land Defense Coalition held protests calling on the city to use the land as a park. Fantasies they remained. H-E-B presented three façade treatments by Lake|Flato that neighborhood residents voted on, a surface-level democracy in design that mollified opposition.

Maybe if METRO had built the University light rail line down Richmond by now and the city had passed an urban corridor ordinance with teeth, or maybe if the Montrose area had a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone or a robust management district to pay the funds H-E-B said were needed to put the parking under the store and thereby leave a shady park, then Lake|Flato could have turned out a building more worthy of their talents. Maybe if more people shopped at farmer's markets and the federal government put the interests of small farmers before "Big Ag," there would have been the political will to do something different with the property, giving us something other than a big box wrapped in an architect-designed skin.

Montrose Market exposes the inexorable illogic of our booming economy. A Fiesta supermarket was directly across the street from Wilshire Village, and several other supermarkets are within walking distance. Meanwhile, Houston's many food deserts remain parched. Now the Fiesta with its friendly staff, quality wine selection, and good music is closed, to be replaced by midrise apartments.

The historic apartments were torn down for a grocery store and the grocery store will be torn down for apartments. c

- Raj Mankad

Montrose Market at the intersection of Dunlavy and Alabama Streets.

PHOTO BY RAJ MANKAD

TRANSIT

A REFERENDUM OF CONFUSION: TIME FOR LEADERSHIP IN TRANSIT IS NOW

IN THE NOVEMBER ELECTION, HOUSTON VOTERS APPROVED A REFERENDUM THAT MAKES MORE OF THE one cent METRO sales tax available for transit—but that additional funding is specifically allocated so it will not go to rail. A "no" vote would have meant more money for rail—or it could have led to legislative action that would actually cut transit funding or even dismantle METRO. In either scenario, the future of the University Line—which was specifically approved by voters in 2003 to be completed by 2012—is uncertain. The most important new connection in the Houston transit system could be 20 years away.

Meanwhile, other cities are rapidly expanding transit. By 2013, Dallas will have 90 miles of light rail radiating out from Downtown to the suburbs. Salt Lake City just opened two new lines and is completing another to the airport. Denver is adding a fourth light rail spoke to its system and building electric commuter rail to the airport.

So, what's different in Houston?

We've been fighting about rail transit for a long time. The second issue of *Cite* in 1982 was devoted to the implications of an elevated heavy rail down Main Street in Downtown Houston. The proposal *Cite* was discussing went down to defeat at the ballot box the following year. METRO tried again with a series of light rail proposals and in 1988 went back to the voters with a new system plan. That got caught up in its own set of politics: by 1990, it had morphed into a monorail plan, which was then killed by Bob Lanier, elected mayor on an anti-rail platform, in 1992. Rail finally happened in 2000, when the METRO board voted to build the Main Street Line despite Congressman Tom Delay's killing federal funds for it.

In 2003, it seemed as if the issue was settled. Voters passed a massive referendum proposal that was to set the stage for transit for the next 20 years. It included a first stage of four light rail lines, to be complete by 2012, and a master plan for a 65-mile system, to be complete by 2025. But the fights picked right back up after the election. Three of the four lines were changed from light rail to Bus Rapid Transit in 2005, upsetting the neighborhoods they served. The fourth line got bogged down in a new political fight over ridership and cost analysis, as well as the conflict between the majority of Montrose residents, who favored building a section of the line down Richmond Avenue, and businesses on Richmond and residents of Afton Oaks, who disagreed. Soon, Congressman John Culberson was threatening to cut federal funding. In 2007, the METRO board chose the Richmond alignment and, in a bid to build support, changed the other lines back to rail. But in the process, METRO had soured relationships in Houston and Washington, D.C.; six years after the referendum, in 2009, a new mayor was elected promising to clean up METRO.

That brings us to today. We have improved relationships with the Federal Transit Administration enough to get $900 million in federal funding. Three new rail lines are now assured, and construction is 50 percent complete. In 2014, Houstonians can ride the train to the Near North Side, the Theater District, the new Dynamo stadium, the East End, the Third Ward, the University of Houston, and Texas Southern University.

But the 2008 recession left a huge hole in METRO's finances. Instead of continuing to grow, sales tax revenue dropped, and current projections don't show it catching back up. The 2008 projections would have been enough to build the University Line without federal funding; the 2012 projections, however, show enough money to complete and operate three light rail lines while keeping the bus system at its current size, but no more. That leaves us with three-quarters of the 2012 system that voters approved in 2003—and, ironically, the missing line is the one with the highest ridership and the one that connects the most major employment centers.

Even with the 2008 slump, we have ways to get the University Line built. The key political compromise in the 2003 referendum was that METRO would continue sending 25 percent of its sales tax to the City of Houston, Harris County, and several smaller cities to build roads and bridges until 2014. Letting that program expire—or even cutting it by a third—would leave enough money to build rail in Houston. Alternately, the program could be continued, but the City of Houston would agree to pay for the roadwork associated with the new lines. That, plus a bond issue that could easily be supported by sales tax revenues, would fund the University Line.

But through this summer and fall, no matter how hard METRO board members tried to figure out a way to keep the promises of 2003, they couldn't gather enough political support. The 2003 referendum, it turns out, was not a consensus but a truce. Enough political leaders agreed long enough to get it passed, but that coalition did not outlast the election. Anti-transit forces are well organized and well funded; pro-transit groups are able to mobilize people but not money. Political leaders see METRO as a liability. We have regional agreement on roads but not on transit, despite the fact that a majority of the public wants to see rail expansion. Regardless of which way it goes, the 2012 referendum represents a failure to build the kind of consensus it takes to really make good transportation projects happen.

What would it take to get real political agreement?

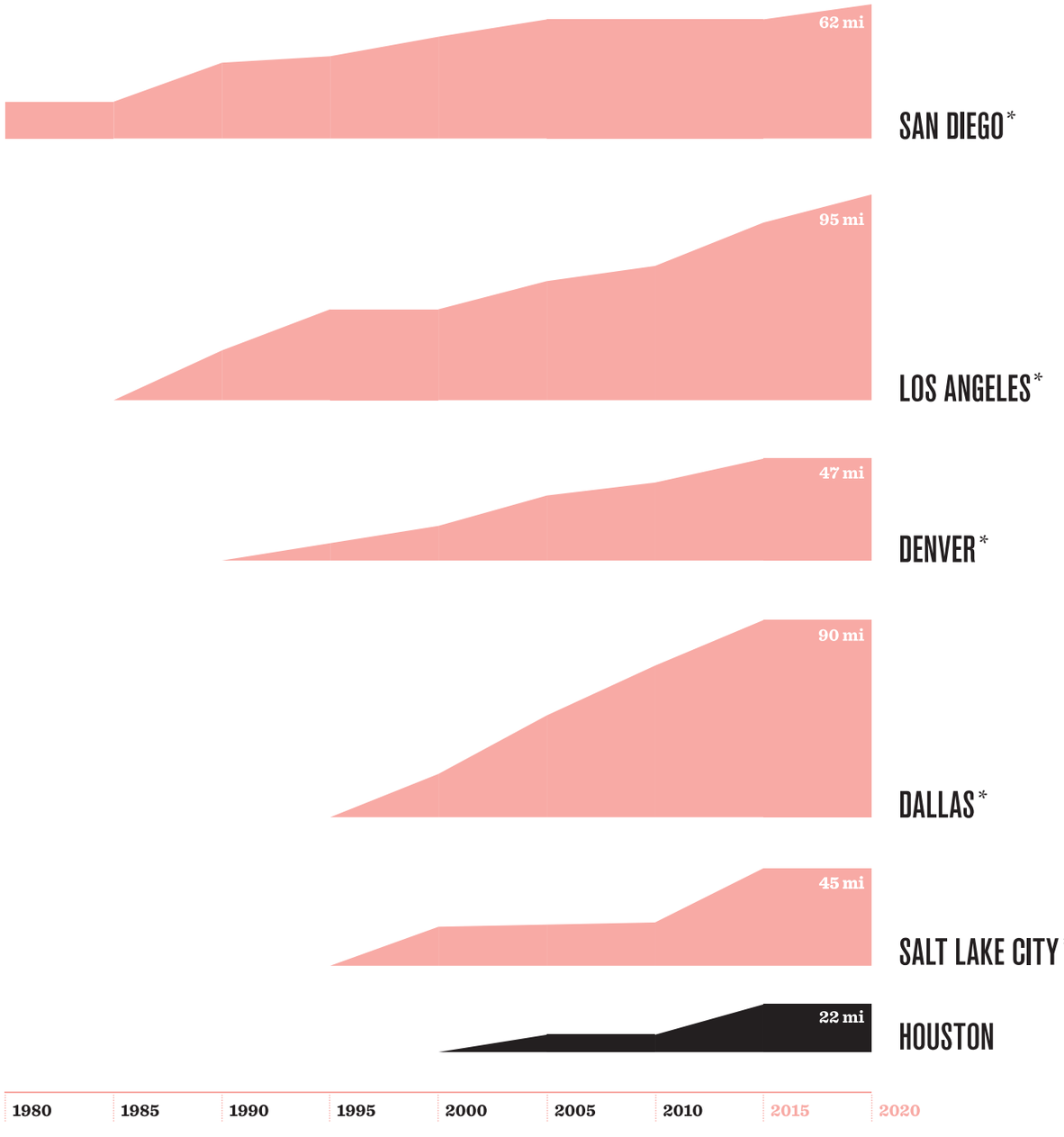
In Salt Lake City, it took Envision Utah, a massive two-year planning effort in the late 1990s that brought together 10 counties, 91 cities, elected officials from the governor to city council members, business leaders, and the public to decide how to accommodate 1.1 million more residents by 2020. That vision included new urban and suburban pedestrian-centered development connected by 10 light rail lines and commuter rail; the region has steadily been building that plan ever since.

In Dallas, it took a partnership among the local cities that have grown up since the 1960s when an agreement was reach between Dallas and Fort Worth to build DFW airport. The map of the Dallas area's DART system reflects this coalition: DART has 13 member cities, and all are on or near a rail line.

In Denver, it took cooperation among multiple transportation agencies. The first expansion of the short "starter" light rail line combined light rail with a grade-separated freight rail line; the second development combined light rail with a major freeway expansion. In both cases, the transit agency worked with the Colorado Department of Transportation: highway funds and transit funds were pooled to build the projects.

In Houston, we have had none of these ingredients. We have talented regional planners in Houston, and we have had rounds of public workshops, but the resulting final plans have been little more than individual agency plans stapled together. The business community has helped fund referendum campaigns,

EXPANSION OF SUN BELT LIGHT RAIL SYSTEMS



*ALSO HAVE COMMUTER RAIL NOT INCLUDED IN TOTAL.

DATA COMPARISON BY CHRISTOF SPIELER

but no prominent business leaders have come out publicly speaking in favor of transit. Because the city of Houston is so big, it has never had to cooperate with other cities around it. And despite a significant improvement in the city-county relationship since Judge Ed Emmett, head of Harris County's commissioners, and Houston Mayor Annise Parker took office, the city and the county still disagree more than they agree.

Transportation agencies have trouble working together: even though the mayor appoints both the city public works director and the majority of the METRO board, historically, the interaction between the city and METRO staff has been more adversarial than cooperative (though it has also improved in recent years). The Texas Department of Transportation rarely considers transit in its highway projects; in fact, current plans for expanding U.S. Highway 290 would actually reduce the number of park-and-ride lots in that corridor.

But perhaps the city-county cooperation that put this referendum on the ballot can lead to a larger agreement, and two years from now, with METRO in better financial shape and new rail lines in operation, it could be the basis for a political coalition to expand transit. And perhaps we can move beyond METRO's funding base by building partnerships; already, there's a plan for the Uptown line to be built as bus rapid transit using funding provided by the Uptown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone.

When we put our minds to it, Houston can get things done. We built a port 50 miles from the ocean, created the world's greatest medical center in the middle of open prairie, and convinced the federal government to base its astronauts in a hurricane zone 870 miles from the launch pad. Each of those achievements—and all the cities that have built successful transit—shares a common element: elected officials have advocated, built public support, and brought the agencies together. Bureaucrats don't build transit; leaders do. c

- Christof Spieler

CONGRATULATIONS ON 30 YEARS *of* Cite

BELLOWS
Since 1914

Gensler

MORRIS
ARCHITECTS

GLASSMAN
SHOEMAKE
MALDONADO
ARCHITECTS

HAYNESWHALEY
ASSOCIATES
Structural Engineering

BARBARA J. AMELIO

HARVEY
Innovation. Quality. Integrity.

S&P
SATTERFIELD & PONTIKES
CONSTRUCTION, INC.

Cite 30TH ANNIVERSARY *Special Issue*

30 YEARS *by the* NUMBERS

NUMBER OF ISSUES

90

NUMBER OF ARTICLES

1,082

NUMBER OF PAGES

3,384

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTORS

OVER FOUR HUNDRED

LONGEST SERVING MANAGING EDITOR

LINDA SYLVAN

15 YEARS

TOP SEVEN CONTRIBUTORS

1 Stephen FOX (54); 2 Bruce WEBB (42); 3 Christof SPIELER (31);
4 Barry MOORE (30); 5 Drexel TURNER (30);
6 William F. STERN (23); 7 Barrie SCARDINO (17).

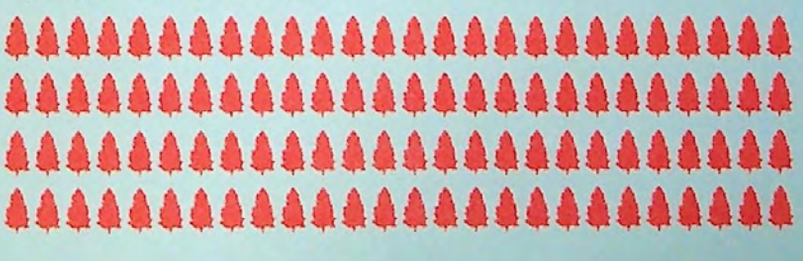
PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN CONTRIBUTORS

WEIGHT OF ONE ISSUE **250g**

WEIGHT OF ALL ISSUES **78,750kg**

WEIGHT OF ONE PINE TREE **731.8kg**

EQUIVALENT TO 108 PINE TREES



MOST COMMON WORDS IN TITLES

1. HOUSTON
2. NEW
3. CITY

PHOTO BY ELLIS VENER

CITE AND THE CITY

FABRICATIONS OF HOUSTON'S PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

By Bruce C. Webb

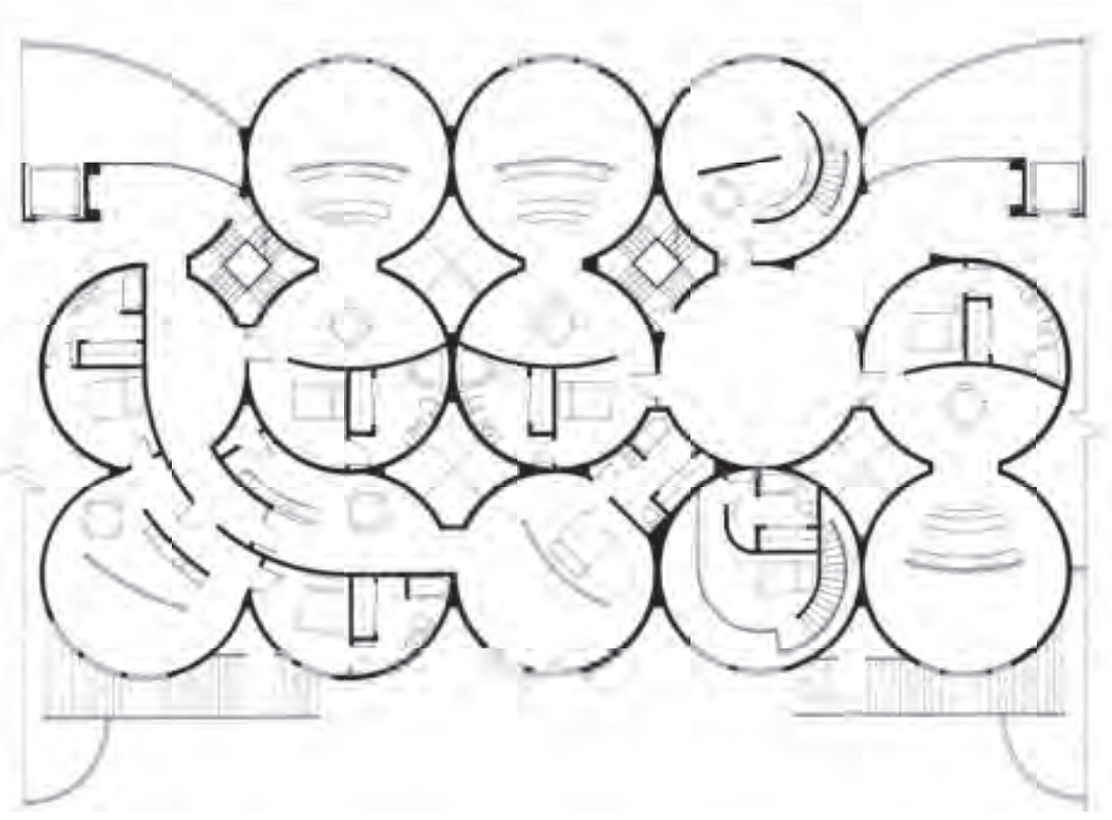
For Houston, a city that remains in a perpetual state of becoming, reinvention is imbedded in its genius loci. The challenges and opportunities of this radical sense of incompleteness have stimulated some of *Cite's* best articles over the years and inspired generations of academic speculations.

Cite has been a consistent critic of Houston's laissez-faire attitude about its past. The city has been a notoriously poor conservator of its history, which is why so few urban artifacts exist to sustain a collective memory—places where new things can be imagined dwelling among the city's ghosts. Barry Moore has commented on how emptiness and those parts of a city no longer useful invite the imagination in. Mourning the imminent loss of the American Rice Industries elevator cylinders (Houston's version of Le Corbusier's modernist touchstone), which used to serve as place markers of both the city's geography and history, Moore observed how they were not simply icons, but a pedagogical resource and prompts for the imagination. "For years," he wrote in "HindCite: American Rice Industries Elevators R.I.P." (*Cite* 36, Winter 1996), "professors and their students had been dreaming up adaptive reuse projects at the ARI site incorporating housing, hotels, corporate lofts, mausoleums—you name it."

One of the recurring themes in conversations about Houston is the city's apparent hostility toward public life—a condition of congenital emptiness that visitors

OPPOSITE
An aerial view from the west of the American Rice Industries Elevators. ARI was a co-op of rice growers and processors, and the size of the silos is an indication of the importance of rice agriculture to the Texas gulf coast, and its reliance on the extensive railroad network in Houston.

RIGHT
The ARI Elevators, demolished in 1996, were like catnip to architectural design professors at the University of Houston. Several studios, no doubt inspired by Le Corbusier's attraction to this iconic American architectural form, challenged the students to imagine re-purposed futures and to solve the problems when traditionally rectilinear rooms are translated into a circular geometry.



RIGHT
Proposals for the adaptive reuse of the Astrodome were published in *Cite* 53 and included a Jurassic Park, an extreme sporting venue, and a city within a stadium, shown here, by Larry Albert and Kerry Whitehead, where the motto is "We'll provide the roof."

RIGHT
In *Cite* 3, Drexel Turner discussed a proposal for Hermann Park by Charles Moore. The section shows an outdoor theater with Luyten-like pavilions and howdah-capped gazebos in the style of Colonial India.

often comment on when they go looking for signs of life in the usual city places. Essayist Philip Lopate, formerly a teacher in the University of Houston Creative Writing Program, offered one of the most acute examinations of this situation in "Pursuing the Unicorn: Public Space in Houston" (*Cite* 8, Winter 1984). With a writer's sensibilities and the conceptual context of someone who lived otherwise in New York City, he pointed out the good, the bad, and the boundlessly indifferent as he affirmed the case for a more expansive public realm in an expanding city that is so innately private. For example, he suggested the cultivation of Buffalo Bayou along Allen Parkway as an urban park, which is coming to pass, and pinpointed what remains problematic—six highway-style lanes cutting neighborhoods off from the park.

Empty and slowly decaying, at some considerable expense to its caretakers, the Astrodome has become a *perennial favorite* for speculators.

UH as a Potential Urban Incubator

Lopate, in the later article "Halls of Lively: University of Houston" (*Cite* 35, Fall 1996), focused on his home turf and found it similarly lacking in place qualities, particularly in its consciousness of the city at large: he viewed the campus as more estranged from, than contiguous with, the city. One of his suggestions—to create a more inviting and active campus boundary with shops and restaurants and other kindred offerings that might attract and hold a crowd (students, teachers, visitors, slackers) of the sort that borders most major universities—would have made a difference. Since then, UH has been making progress in turning what has always been a commuter destination into a place, including several new, far more commodious student apartment buildings, which have engendered a greatly expanded residential population, and more places in which to eat, have coffee, or hang out (including a popular collection of ad hoc food trucks). But the edges of UH, where the campus proper meets up with the city and a curious DMZ of empty land holdings, remain indifferent, dominated by parking lots and a smattering of inchoate, tentative, new developments. The university has invested in several new parking structures, a strategy that should free up some of the acres of parking lots that have traditionally surrounded the campus. And modifications, like the Work AC addition to UH's Blaffer Art Museum, which turned its entrance to the perimeter of the campus, bringing it into alignment with the public parts of other arts buildings in a kind of culture row, are steps to give the campus a more public face upon which a street of allied commercial establishments could be built.

The arrival of METRO rail on the southern edge of campus is also bringing the look and feel of urban connectivity. In "Hindcite: The Train Stops Here" (*Cite* 47, Spring 2000), Dan Searight envisioned the potential for the rail system to create what he called "a journey of delight," engendering a string of active urban places at the train stations. "Transit stops could become ground zero for a new way of looking at the city," he wrote. "The train stops here and when it does what will riders see?" A perfectly reasonable expectation and question, but one that has barely taken hold, at least in terms of catalyzing new developments that build upon the idea of a linear city of imageable, active public places. Certainly at the University of Houston, this kind of development along the METRO line could make a difference.

A Catalogue of Urban Possibilities

Inspired by the potency of the "unabashed commercial eclecticism" noted by *New York Times* architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable, Drexel Turner in "Looking Forward: Thoughts on the Shapes of Things to Come" (*Cite* 46, Fall–Winter 1999–2000) produced a small catalogue of urban possibilities that built upon Houston's multiple realities, place markers that "might also yield picture postcards worth sending home." His proposals included "extra toppings" for the city's tall buildings to enhance the skyline, building on the top decks of parking garages, and rescuing the city's sports venues from the anonymity of ubiquity. (Reliant Park was a case in point; he envisioned it as having a one-of-a-kind façade that celebrated the venue's unique and most influential tenant: the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo.) He also offered broad proposals for making water an urban theme rather than a problem, musing about "what Houston would be like with water pumped around to all sorts of useful and ornamental places."

In "Myth-en-Scene: Proposals for the Monumentation of Allen's Landing" (*Cite* 12, Winter 1985–1986), Turner further enhanced the city's genius loci by foregrounding its nearly forgotten and all but indistinguishable historical point of origin. Turner proposed to populate the semantically empty site with a collection of iconic gestures that were both original and specific to Houston, footnoted in terms of historic examples—a tour de force that showed the writer's exceptional knowledge of both Houston and the history of civic architecture. Desiring to provide pedestrian attractors as well as to encourage public life, Turner proposed that in time the "monuments themselves…[might] provide a rationale sufficient to induce subsequent investment…"

"From Less to Moore: New Proposals for Hermann Park" (*Cite* 3, Spring 1983), another Turner urban excursion, imagined a future for Houston's historic urban park that would "embellish the best feature of the original Frederick Kiesler park plan with a level of art and innovation that corresponds to a city the size of Houston today." Impetus came from a notion to recharge the entrance to the Hermann Park Zoo with a grouping

RIGHT
In *Cite* 12, Drexel Turner proposed a number of monuments for Allen's Landing, drawing on varied examples including Trajan's Column in Rome and a proposal by Charles Moore to mark the zoo entrance with a trio of elephants.

of chrome-plated elephants similar to those in Charles Moore's submission to an exhibit of whimsical facades commissioned by the retail chain Best Products for its anonymous box buildings. The proposal didn't find a place in the reshuffling of the zoo entrance, but it did engender a more ambitious replanning of the entire park by Moore and the Urban Innovations Group from UCLA in which a trio of elephants were given a more exalted role as bearers of the pioneer memorial obelisk in a fountain that occupied a central position in the heart of the park. The elephants spawned a catalogue of Colonial India images from Luyten-like pavilions to howdah-capped gazebos along with other playful, scenographic buildings and set pieces. Though Moore and his team were the architects, Turner's grand exposition of what they were up to suggests he knew the nuances and sources of the scheme as well or better than they did.

Although none of the Moore plan was implemented, despite Turner's energetic lobbying, it did bring heightened attention to problems and potentials of the park. In 1992 the Rice Design Alliance sponsored a competition to redesign the central, formal axis of the park, a tribute to O. Jack Mitchell, longtime dean and faculty member in the Rice School of Architecture. The momentum engendered by the competition led to commissioning a major master plan for the park by landscape architects Laurie Olin Associates. The Olin plan brought many needed improvements to the park and continues to do so, but nothing of the chutzpah of the elephant gates or the whimsy of Moore's postmodern fantasies.

The Astrodome has been a civic conundrum since it was abandoned by its tenants: football in 1996, baseball in 1999, and the rodeo in 2003, the latter event chronicled by Larry Albert in his revealing picture-essay "Last Roundup at the Astrodome" (*Cite* 55, Fall 2002). Before and after it lost these regular tenants, the Dome attracted its share of irregular users: polo matches, concerts, Evel Knievel's long distance motorcycle jump, a temporary city for evacuees from Hurricane Katrina, and Guru Maharaji's three-day "Millennium 73 Peace Bomb" where the guru elevated the Dome into a divine trope: "God is like the Astrodome: if you haven't experienced it personally, you don't know what it is." It was also the only place in town big enough to display a set of full-scale drawings of classical buildings made by University of Houston architecture students.

Empty and slowly decaying, at some considerable expense to its caretakers, the Astrodome has become a perennial favorite for speculators. "Dome Again" (*Cite* 53, Spring 2002) reported on a 2001 RDA charrette, inviting makeovers that included something called "Astrocity," an extreme sporting venue, and Houston's own Jurassic Park. Other proposals have popped up and had their days in the sun: shopping mall, hotel and entertainment complex, science museum, Texas history center, film studio. One proposal that beats them all in terms of simplicity (and sadly seems inevitable) is razing the structure and making some kind of park, plaza, or other empty space in the eye of the multi-acre parking lot. For now it remains the big daddy of speculative sites, one that's a true public place (Houston's piazza counterpart to the "street under glass" at The Galleria) with a genuine public history.

In *Cite's* tenth anniversary issue (30), Joel Barna, the magazine's first editor, commented that the publication was guided by the idea that "Houston is not a thing but an ongoing fabrication." Its true story "lies in structure hidden by surface events." The speculations invited by this ongoing fabrication, the elusive and ephemeral sense of continually becoming, continue to make Houston both difficult and fascinating.

MORE THAN A GUIDE BOOK

A CITY WITHOUT PRECEDENT CALLS FOR AN UNPRECEDENTED GUIDE

By Barry Moore

If you want a 40-year-old time capsule disguised as a book, you should pick through local used bookstores for a copy of *Houston: An Architectural Guide*, published by the Houston chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1972.

By the early '70s, it had become customary for local AIA chapters hosting national conventions to publish architectural guidebooks, ostensibly for attendees, architects on busmen's holidays who could then drive around and see all the good stuff. To that end, the Houston AIA chapter hired Peter Papademetriou, newly arrived from the East Coast, and a few young guns from Rice, including Stephen Fox and Drexel Turner, to do the book.

What resulted was something completely different than a staid architecture guidebook. Sure, the book presented the expected catalogue of the "best of the best" of the city's modern and historic buildings, but it also included a lot of outrageousness, pop culture, roadside jumble, and juxtaposition of the old and the new. The book was a minor scandal in that it addressed the issues the local profession chose to ignore or dismissed as "non-architectural." Just as the young architecture Turks cheered its publication, the older, established practitioners experienced a little buyers' remorse.

As Papademetriou put it, writing a generation later, "We became urban archeologists by looking at physical artifacts. The ultimate nature of Houston was undefined and unclear, like a confusing mix of Corbusier's Radiant City and Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City. It was a poly-nucleated network of high density buffered by areas of low density. It was shocking and energizing." And it helped that he could see it with a fresh newcomer's eyes.

The first surprise is a graphic one: on the cover, a map of circulation routes around and through the region is delineated entirely by words—meaningful, defining words that grew out of the careful observations of the team. The map obviously represented hundreds of miles of reconnaissance around the county. (And Deborah Purdy, who is credited for the maps and cover, must have spent weeks rubbing all that Letraset onto vellum!)

The second surprise is found on the contents page: a map shows the region surgically cut (appropriately in red) along major freeways and highways into 15 segments. Besides the expected chapters on Downtown, South Main, River Oaks, Montrose, and the Heights, Papademetriou added parts of town not normally thought worth a detour in 1972: Lake Houston, Sharpstown, Old Spanish Trail, Baytown, Pasadena, Texas City, Telephone Road, and the Hempstead Highway.

Stephen Fox, in his reminiscences about the book, remembered that "Houston was chaotic yet expansive and welcoming, unpredictably violent, with the accessibility of a small town." And remarking on the 1972 snapshot in light of the present, he continued, "Houston forgets itself—amnesia is an essential cultural attribute. Houston is a mess. That is its scandal and its charm."

This architectural guidebook, 40 years ago, for the first time identified Houston as a city worthy of critical inquiry and debate—doing so in the same year the Rice Design Alliance was founded. In his introduction, Papademetriou defined why Houston challenges typical notions of urban form: "It is flat, with no geographical features to contain development; it had little previous existing context at the time of its booming growth; it lacks distinctive seasons, affecting the scale of time sequence; it has a unique ecology with a mix of climate zones; it is a region, not a city, with ambivalent boundaries—hinterland becomes foreground." In 1972, Houston's 450 square miles were 41 percent undeveloped, demonstrating his point.

The text that accompanies each section is one of the best condensations of regional public history I have seen. Frequently, the story was told in a linear way, as the writer observed the scene from his windshield while traveling toward the imagined edges, much as Charles Moore sliced up Los Angeles along its major arteries and then wrote about what he saw. Some of the highlights of this book include a chronology of the growth to the south down Main Street: from Downtown in 1900 to the Rice Institute of 1912, Hermann Park of 1914, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston of 1924, the Texas Medical Center of 1946, the Shamrock Hotel of 1949, the Prudential Building of 1952, and the Harris County Domed Stadium of 1965. In fact, the Astrodome, still newish in 1972, received special comment: "The Dome is successful because it brings together social groups across the region and because of its form; it creates a reference point across the city—a symbol of Houston itself." That was then.

The role of developers and the part they played in the city's growth is also highlighted in eloquent ways: Oscar Martin Carter built a streetcar line extension down Heights Boulevard in 1891, at his own expense, so he could sell lots in his new development, while Frank Sharp gave the city ten miles of 300-foot right-of-way for the Southwest Freeway in 1954 so he could sell his lots and fill up Sharpstown Mall.

The guidebook's catalogue of buildings is fascinating for what it includes that would ultimately be lost: the Music Hall, YMCA, First City banking lobby, Lowes' State and Metropolitan Theaters, St. Joseph's Hospital maternity wing, Turnverein Building, Shamrock Hotel, Great Southern Life Insurance Building, Goodyear blimp port, Sakowitz on Post Oak, Central Presbyterian Church, and Blue Ribbon Rice Mills.

But an offsetting sense of amazement comes from considering what has been added to Houston over the past 40 years that has made it into a much different place—a renewed Market Square Park and its neighborhood of residents, Discovery Green replacing blocks of surface parking lots, three more professional sports venues, a growing list of restored historic buildings, Williams Tower and the Water Wall, and the far suburbs of Sugar Land and The Woodlands creating new downtowns from scratch. And then there is light rail, all the toll roads, the Northwest Freeway, the 288 Freeway, the Beltway—loops around loops. Most dramatically, in 1972 we didn't have all the taco stands on Long Point, the Korean strip on Blalock, Little Hong Kong on Bellaire, or a white marble Hindu temple in Stafford.

I don't think any of that, however, would surprise Peter Papademetriou. He saw it all coming in 1972 and nailed the future zeitgeist, the urban psyche. Indeed, none of us should be surprised now that Houston's regional population has more than doubled in 40 years, and that income segregation here is the highest of any large metropolitan area. You could have predicted that by reading between the lines in *Houston: An Architectural Guide* back in 1972.

OPPOSITE
Cover of the 1972 guide.

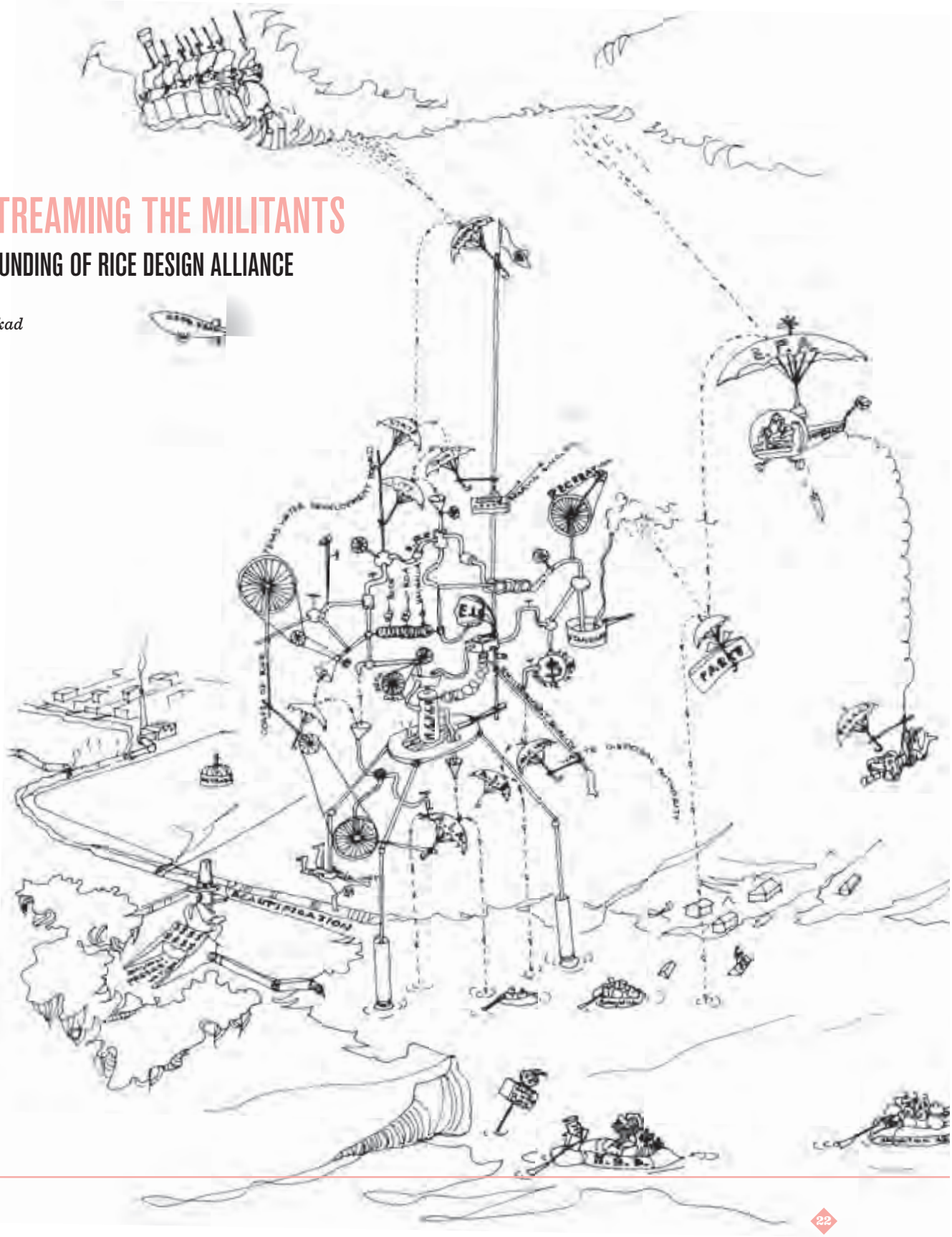
BELOW
Stephen Fox's first guide was published in 1990 and 1999.

BOTTOM
A thoroughly revised edition by Fox is now in stores.

MAINSTREAMING THE MILITANTS

ON THE FOUNDING OF RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE

By Raj Mankad



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY JACK MCGINTY

OPPOSITE
Cover illustration from *The Bayou Strategy*, 1977, by aqui.

TOP
Juanita McGinty, 1934-2007, was a leader in the effort to desegregate Houston schools, the first secretary of the RDA, and its second president.

BELOW
Interior of the McGinty house where the first RDA meetings were held.

Explaining the mission of Rice Design Alliance is like trying to define Houston's allure. Give some examples of activities, throw around some superlatives, and then say, "You have to experience it yourself." Attend the civic forums, the home tour, the lectures, and the charrettes. Read *Cite*. But what does it all add up to? What was the vision that gave rise to all these activities? I spoke with several individuals involved in the founding of RDA forty years ago to get a sense of the original motivations.

"To make a short story long," Jack McGinty begins, "I was on the search committee for a new dean for the Rice School of Architecture with [fellow alumni] Ben Brewer, Raymond Brochstein, and others…[and] David Crane was selected in 1972." Crane came to Houston from the University of Pennsylvania and focused on urban design challenges.

"David Crane's vision was that there should be a critical research and practice arm in the school, which was the Rice Center, and also a civic advocacy and consciousness-raising component which ended up being the Rice Design Alliance," says Drexel Turner. Crane's model for RDA was a public forum at Boston College that successfully brought together elected officials, technocrats, designers, and community leaders. Various sources described Crane as a visionary, an idealistic son of missionaries, and more likely to take action than go through all the steps of proper diplomacy.

"One of the first things he did was get acquainted with a core group of alumni and friends of the school," McGinty says. "He had several ideas to get the school immediately more involved in the community." Whereas the Rice Center and RDA focused on local issues, the Southwest Center for Urban Research (SCUR) took on regional challenges. "He didn't come up with the name [for RDA]," McGinty continues. "It was to be a community engagement in design issues with Rice being the intellectual center of it."

Placing University of Houston architecture faculty on the RDA board was "an early goal," according to McGinty. Furthermore, the appointment of Juanita McGinty, who was not an architect, as the first secretary and second president of RDA underscores the organization's history of broad-based community involvement. She played a key role in setting up the membership model.

An early RDA event, perhaps the first, was a civic forum on the bayous held on November 22, 1973 at the Cohen House on the Rice University campus. Ideas now widely held by mainstream Houstonians were at the time bold and contentious. Legendary activist Terry Hershey, who stopped the concretization of Buffalo Bayou with the help of George H. W. Bush and George Mitchell, introduced the keynote speaker, Major General John W. Morris of the Army Corps of Engineers.

Jack McGinty recalls that at another event focused on the bayous Mayor Louie Welch debated with Hershey. Welch dismissed the idea of treating the bayou system as a recreational and wildlife resource, and stormed out.

O. Peck Drennan, the first RDA president, remembers an event on urban planning where a Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon asked to speak. "He came with a green jacket," Drennan says. "The people from Harvard were terrified. He had a few things to say. It was kind of incoherent." Drennan, however, emphasizes that RDA succeeded in putting together alliances of civic-minded people, including "good old boys" who "came in cowboy boots" and the aforementioned "Harvard architects."

The focus on the bayous was sustained over the first five years, and beyond. The findings of the 1973 forum were published as a short book, *Bayous: Recycling an Urban Resource*. In 1977, RDA published *The Bayou Strategy* under the direction of David Crane, Charles Tapley, and Jim Blackburn.

RDA's formation was only one of several key events in the early '70s that, taken together, mark a watershed moment. Jack McGinty was elected president of the local American Institute for Architects chapter in 1973 and the national president in 1976, thereby tying together the efforts of multiple non-profits, as well as local and national pushes for change. After Crane brought a vision of community-based advocacy for the built environment from the northeast, Houston returned the favor by serving as an incubator for ideas and strategies nationwide.

Looking back at the period of RDA's founding, the number of organizations that were launched is remarkable. In the late 1960s and early '70s, a core group of people formed whatever entity seemed most effective—Citizens for Good Schools, Blueprint for the Future, Houston Urban Bunch, RDA, Rice Center, SCUR, Architects for Hofheinz, Park People, Citizens' Environmental Coalition, Houston Parks Board, and others—that failed as often as they achieved monumental changes. Although the Rice Center disappeared, Central Houston and other area-focused organizations can trace their roots to Crane's vision.

The question remains: Has the vision given way to the perpetuation of an institution for its own sake?

"It's still amazing to me to look at RDA now and to see how not controversial and highly respected it has become," says Barry Moore, one of the founders.

"When we first started, these ideas were kind of radical and revolutionary and outside the mainstream," adds McGinty. "The ideas themselves became more successful as Houston became more sophisticated and began to appreciate good design. The quality of architecture improved with Gerald Hines bringing in the starchitects to design buildings here…It wasn't so much that RDA changed. It rode a wave into being what it is."

PARALLEL FUTURE

WHAT IF THE PRICE OF OIL HADN'T CRASHED?

Illustration by Pat Lopez
Text by Barry Moore

Writer Philip Pullman, in the fantasy trilogy, *His Dark Materials*, imagines an Oxford that looks almost like the Oxford we know, but which exists in an alternate reality —we know where we are, we recognize the landmarks, but things are very much out of phase. Artist Patrick Lopez has been delineating Houston's alternate reality for almost fifty years, through commissions for designers and developers as they sought financing for their ambitious projects. For this anniversary issue, *Cite* asked Lopez to bring together in one birds-eye rendering the Houston that could have been but never happened. Here is an opportunity to see the city we didn't get, a sort of alternative Houston. Imagine a Cullen Center designed by Philip Johnson, a Wilson Morris Crain & Anderson Space Needle as a city gate, Helmut Jahn's Bank of the Southwest Building, a Pennzoil Place by SOM, or a Chase Tower by Welton Becket. Or a highrise park imagined by Llewelyn-Davies Sahni where Discovery Green is today. Our *Dark Materials*, indeed.

1) 1982, Cullen Center, Johnson + Burgee, for Gerald Hines Interests
The Cullen family, with Linbeck, invited Johnson + Burgee, who was paired with Morris*Aubry, to present their scheme for the Cullen Center Building at 1600 Smith. The less than positive feelings for the East Coast firm and its scheme resulted in the commission going to Morris*Aubry alone.

2) 1972, Space Needle, Wilson Morris Crane & Anderson Architects
Kenneth Schnitzer and Century Development's original concept for Allen Center consisted of a cluster of high-rise buildings surrounding a Galleria-type structure complete with skylights and an ice rink. The Space Needle was intended as an iconic gateway to this "new" downtown. The developers ultimately didn't want to go that far and dramatically downsized the scope of the project's master plan.

3) 1984, Bank of the Southwest Tower, Murphy+Jahn Architects
Century Development teamed with hot Chicago architect Helmut Jahn for the BSW Tower, and won the closely watched competition. The plummeting economy of the mid-'80s killed the project, but marked the beginning of a professional relationship between Jahn and Patrick Lopez. Lopez's style of rendering perfectly suited the architect's needs, and they collaborated on many future mega-projects.

4) 1971, Pennzoil Place, Skidmore Owings Merrill Architects, Chicago, for Gerald Hines Interests
Pennzoil chairman J. Hugh Liedtke rejected Bruce Graham's clustered box scheme, looking for a singular architectural image to market the company. (Although SOM didn't get the job, Lopez started a long relationship with the firm because of his renderings produced to sell the scheme.) Johnson and Burgee were hastily brought in by Hines as the second-string replacement. Johnson's first preliminary scheme, with two separate square buildings, side by side, was also rejected for the same reason. At that point, Johnson asked everyone to leave the room "for fifteen or twenty minutes"; when the client team returned, the architect rolled out a sketch for the two towers, complete with the iconic 45 degree geometry, sloping roofs, and glass roofed indoor plazas.

5) 1980, Texas Commerce Bank and Tower, Welton Beckett Architects, for Gerald Hines Interests
Perhaps Hines approached the Beckett firm first because of their successful experience designing the 44-story Humble Building (now ExxonMobil), and because they had a design and production office in Houston. After rejection by bank chairman Ben Love, Hines brought in I.M. Pei, who produced the 75-story tower, the "quintessential skyscraper in the polished gray granite suit," as Stephen Fox describes it.

6) 1984, High Rise Park for an entrance to a new Convention Center, Llewellyn Davies Sahni Architects, for Texas Eastern and Cadillac Fairview Developers
In 1984 there was stiff competition for a site to replace the Albert Thomas Convention Center. Canadian developers offered to give the land for the convention center to the city to enhance the value of their property so that they could ultimately sell it and get out of the Houston market. But because the stalled Houston Center was not directly adjacent, and because the east side of downtown was definitely down-market, Cadillac Fairview had to up their sales pitch. Randhir Sahni's firm was engaged to develop a land plan for commercial development, tying the convention center site to Houston Center—a necessary step to convince the city and Kathy Whitmire's administration that the choice would lead to greatly increased land values (and tax revenues). Discovery Green lay many years in the future.

NOTE: *Renderings of these projects are now in the Houston Metropolitan Research Center. Lopez's collected works were also featured in the exhibit and catalog, "From Rendering to Reality," at the Architecture Center Houston in 2011.*


2
3
4
5
6
6
6
6

HOUSTON
MARCH 1978

Alex MacLean is the preeminent aerial photographer of the built environment. His contribution to the Summer 2000 issue of *Cite* (48), with text by William Stern, is among the high points of *Cite*'s 30 years. Long before that article, in 1978, MacLean captured the east side of Houston's downtown. The Houston Lighting and Power Company's Energy Control Center with its Brutalist cantilevered volume designed by Caudill, Rowlett, and Scott still hangs on. The World Trade Center retains its modern façade and bold vertical lines in the lower right-hand corner. Towers erupt along the periphery. The main event, of course, is the absence of buildings. Huge expanses of surface parking dominate. The concrete is white with the glare of a cloudless Texas sky. Almost nothing of the original Victorian neighborhood remains. In *The See-Through Years*, the first managing editor of *Cite*, Joel Warren Barna, documents the reasons behind this stunning condition—oil prices, lack of preservation controls, tax laws that incentivize demolition, and property speculation by developers who would soon crash.

HOUSTON
MAY 2011

After 33 years, Alex MacLean reshot the east side of downtown at nearly the same angle while flying in for a talk at the Gulf Coast Green conference. Finding points of reference to compare the 1978 and 2011 photographs is difficult. Of the few landmarks remaining in 1978, few survived. The highway in the lower left corner is like a geologic feature that anchors the two landscapes. George R. Brown Convention Center, Toyota Center, Minute Maid Park, Hilton Americas, and Discovery Green are among the major additions funded in whole or part by taxpayers, joined by private investments such as One Park Place and Hess Tower. Make no mistake: in 2011, surface parking lots still abound. Yet, the transformation is plain and undeniable. How is it, in a city without traditional zoning and planning, that such grand undertakings were hatched? In "Big-Ticket Urbanism: Can Money Bring Life to the East End of Downtown?" (Spring 2004, *Cite* 60), Barna tells the story of more than $1.5 billion in pubic funding. Who yields such resources? Open these pages for "A Guide to Power."

A GUIDE TO POWER

HOUSTON NETWORKS

Graphic and Text by Matt Johnson
Data by Matt Johnson and Monica Savino

Who are the groups and agencies who hold power in Houston? Who predicts the future of the city, and who plans the present?

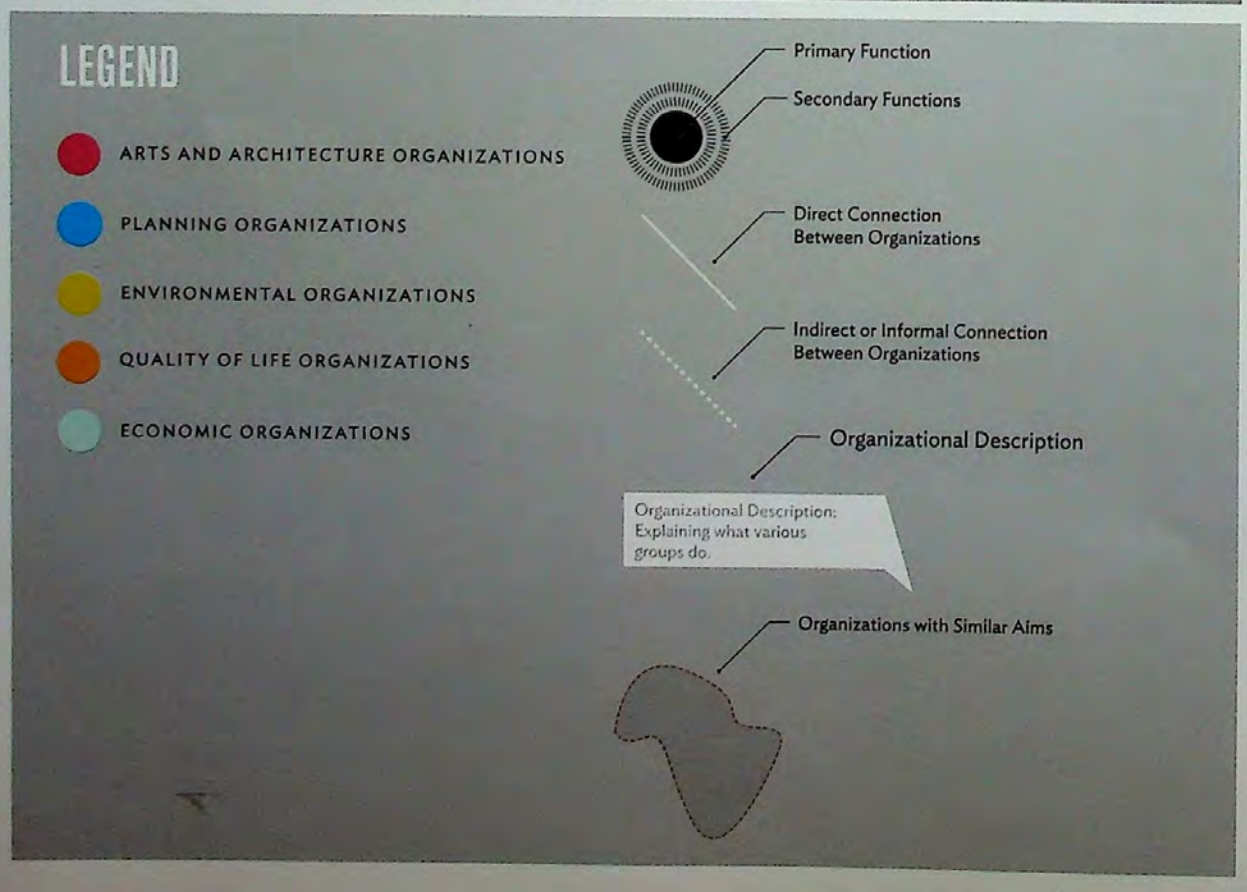
Houston's vast and bewildering array of public and private partnerships can make understanding the city difficult. Here, we attempt to discern the broad outlines of networks of power and influence in Houston. This is by no means a comprehensive map of organizations, only a draft that will hopefully evolve over time.

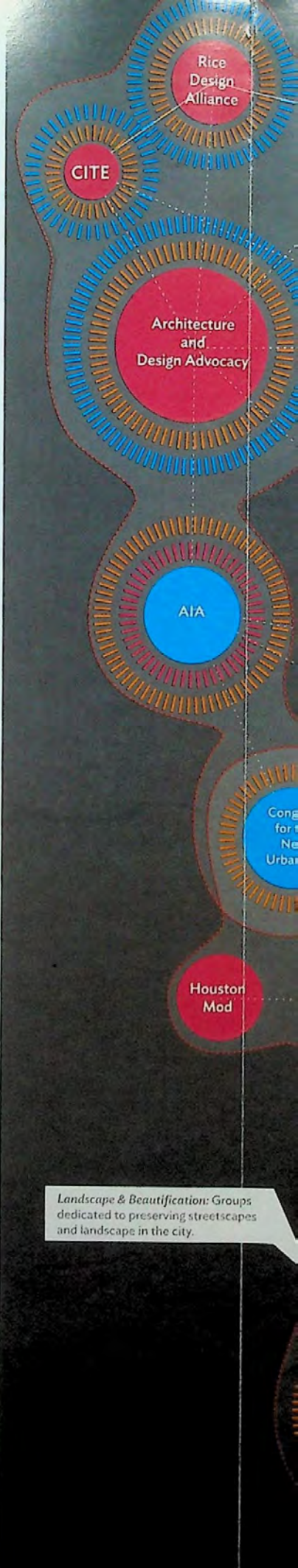
But what this map makes clear is that many organizations exist toward essentially the same purpose, and that stronger or more numerous connections could be formed. It's worth asking whether a lack of connectivity creates a Balkanized condition of fragmented efforts.

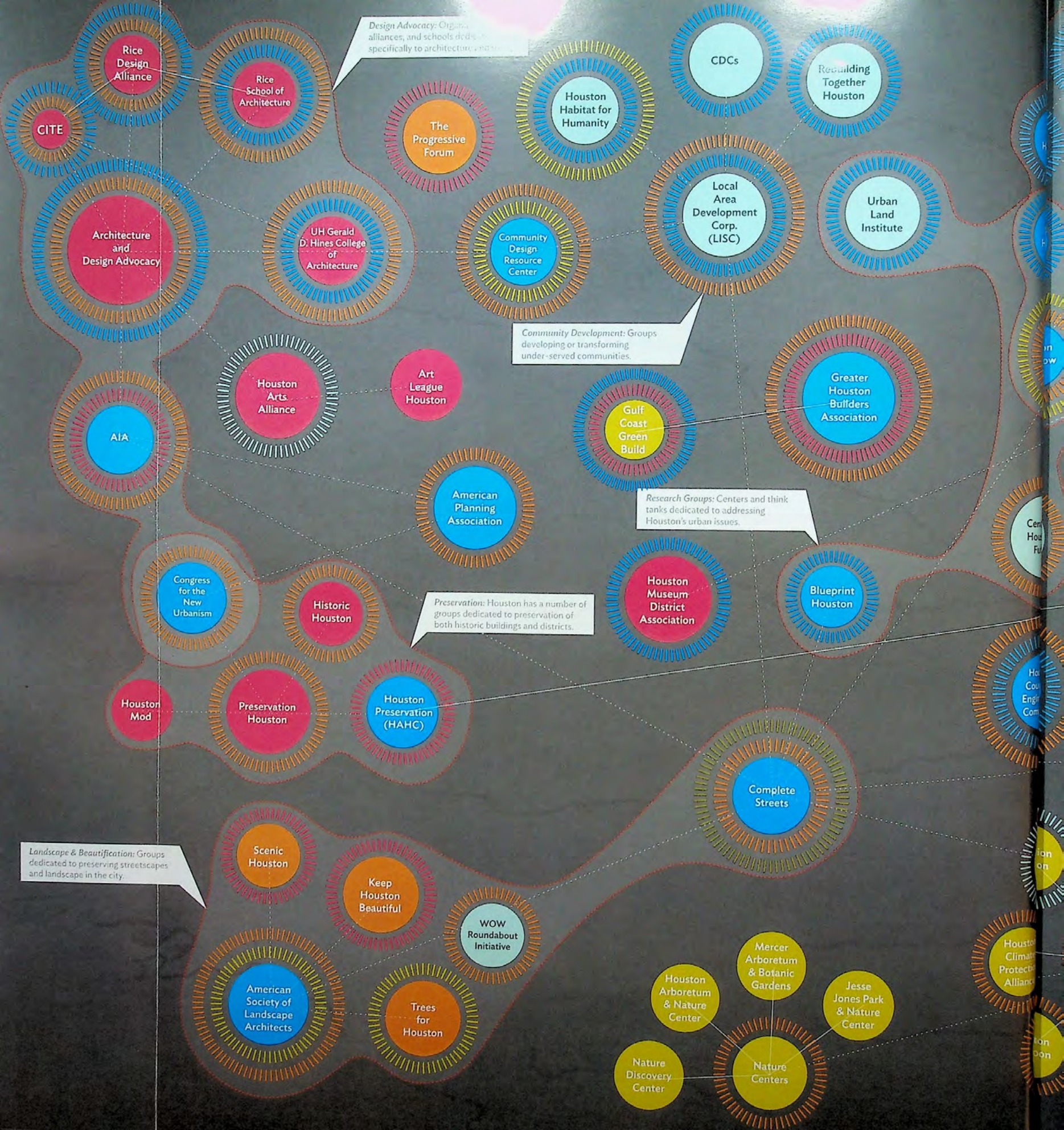
To make matters worse, the City's decades-old official "hands off" policy towards the built environment causes many projects to be built without regard to actual existing conditions—allowing an owner to build whatever they think is the best and highest use of their property. The vacuum created by selective or no planning allows for myriad non-profit and public/private partnerships to resolve planning issues. In theory, this sounds like freedom, but is it?

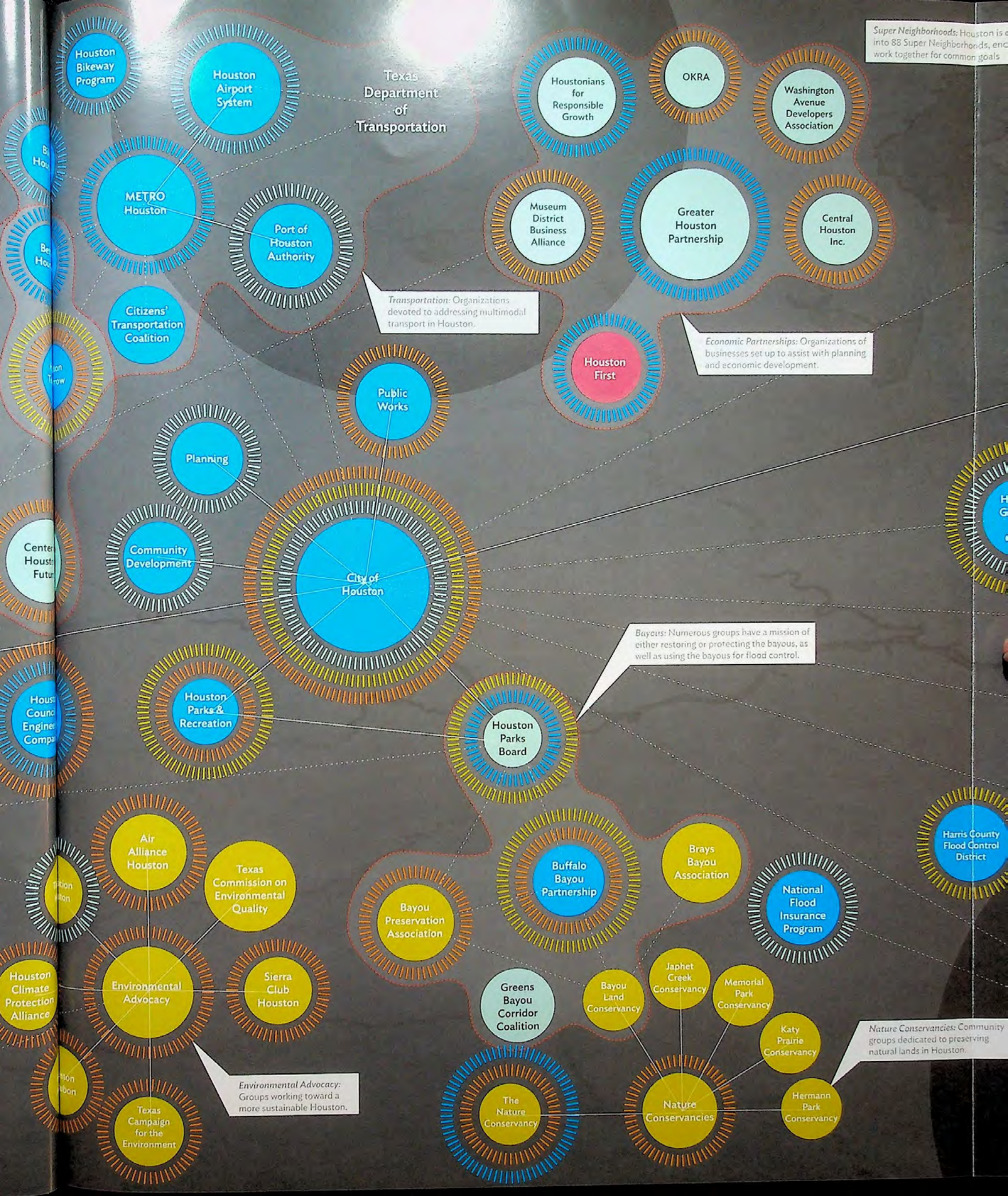
A disclaimer: this graphic is based only on publicly available information and may not reflect very real, but perhaps hidden, connections between organizations. All the information gathered here is readily available in the public record: partnerships and collaborations listed on websites and promotional materials. Many other channels of power exist—both direct and indirect, public and hidden. Groups like Houston Parks Board could be shown in multiple clusters.

In addition, this guide does not attempt to list every public, private, and non-profit organization operating in Houston. For instance, we did not map foundations, simply because they are too numerous and diverse in their missions. Likewise, we didn't examine health care, social services, or private/for-profit companies. Many housing and urban development and arts organizations were left off. And we may have inadvertently left off key organizations that should be represented. For that, we apologize in advance. Future iterations and future guides will hopefully contain a more complete map of these organizations.






Design Advocacy: Organ... alliances, and schools dedi... specifically to architecture and...
Rice Design Alliance
Rice School of Architecture
CITE
The Progressive Forum
Houston Habitat for Humanity
CDCs
Rebuilding Together Houston
Local Area Development Corp. (LISC)
Urban Land Institute
Architecture and Design Advocacy
UH Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture
Community Design Resource Center
Community Development: Groups developing or transforming under-served communities.
Houston Arts Alliance
Art League Houston
AIA
Gulf Coast Green Build
Greater Houston Builders Association
American Planning Association
Research Groups: Centers and think tanks dedicated to addressing Houston's urban issues.
Congress for the New Urbanism
Historic Houston
Houston Museum District Association
Blueprint Houston
Preservation: Houston has a number of groups dedicated to preservation of both historic buildings and districts.
Houston Mod
Preservation Houston
Houston Preservation (HAHC)
Complete Streets
Landscape & Beautification: Groups dedicated to preserving streetscapes and landscape in the city.
Scenic Houston
Keep Houston Beautiful
WOW Roundabout Initiative
American Society of Landscape Architects
Trees for Houston
Houston Arboretum & Nature Center
Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens
Jesse Jones Park & Nature Center
Nature Discovery Center
Nature Centers


Houston Bikeway Program
Houston Airport System
Texas Department of Transportation
Houstonians for Responsible Growth
OKRA
Washington Avenue Developers Association
METRO Houston
Port of Houston Authority
Museum District Business Alliance
Greater Houston Partnership
Central Houston Inc.
Citizens' Transportation Coalition
Transportation: Organizations devoted to addressing multimodal transport in Houston.
Houston First
Economic Partnerships: Organizations of businesses set up to assist with planning and economic development.
Public Works
Planning
Community Development
City of Houston
Houston Parks & Recreation
Houston Parks Board
Bayous: Numerous groups have a mission of either restoring or protecting the bayous, as well as using the bayous for flood control.
Air Alliance Houston
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Buffalo Bayou Partnership
Brays Bayou Association
Harris County Flood Control District
Bayou Preservation Association
National Flood Insurance Program
Houston Climate Protection Alliance
Environmental Advocacy
Sierra Club Houston
Greens Bayou Corridor Coalition
Bayou Land Conservancy
Japhet Creek Conservancy
Memorial Park Conservancy
Katy Prairie Conservancy
Environmental Advocacy: Groups working toward a more sustainable Houston.
Texas Campaign for the Environment
The Nature Conservancy
Nature Conservancies
Hermann Park Conservancy
Nature Conservancies: Community groups dedicated to preserving natural lands in Houston.
Super Neighborhoods: Houston is d
into 88 Super Neighborhoods, eng
work together for common goals

Super Neighborhoods: Houston is divided into 88 Super Neighborhoods, encouraged to work together for common goals

Super Neighbor-hoods

OKRA

Washington Avenue Developers Association

Greater Houston Partnership

Central Houston Inc.

Houston First

Economic Partnerships: Organizations of businesses set up to assist with planning and economic development.

TIRZs: A Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone used to improve an otherwise underdeveloped section of a community.

TIRZs

Greenspoint

Gulfgate

Market Square

City Park

Hardy/ Near Northside

Fourth Ward

Lake Houston

Old Sixth Ward

Fifth Ward

Eastside

Memorial City

Midtown

Harrisburg

OST/ Almeda

Southwest Houston

East Downtown

South Post Oak

St. George

Upper Kirby

Uptown

Memorial Heights

Leland Woods

Village Enclaves

Foundations: Foundations in Houston are diverse and dedicated to a variety of issues - and were not included here.

Foundations

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Municipal Utilities

Near Northwest

Greater Northside

Greater Greenspoint

Baybrook

Spring Branch

Greater East End

East Downtown

Memorial City

Management Districts

Houston Downtown

Brays Oaks

Greater Southeast

Westchase

Energy Corridor

Sharpstown

Midtown

Uptown

Bayous: Numerous groups have a mission of either restoring or protecting the bayous, as well as using the bayous for flood control

Harris County

Harris County Storm Water Quality

Harris County Watershed Protection

Harris County Flood Control District

Harris County Public Infrastructure

Brays Bayou Association

National Flood Insurance Program

Bayou Land nservancy

Japhet Creek Conservancy

Memorial Park Conservancy

Katy Prairie Conservancy

Nature Conservancies

Hermann Park Conservancy

Nature Conservancies: Community groups dedicated to preserving natural lands in Houston.

Management District: A Board set up to manage planning and economic development for urban districts.

Public Improvement District (PID): A district designed to improve economic development for urban districts.

Public Improvement Districts

Aldine

Houston Downtown

Airline

Sharpstown

Harris County #2

Lamar Terrace

Upper Kirby

Federal Government

THE HARVIN C. MOORE COLLECTION
of Obsolete Architectural Tools from 1972

These artifacts are from the office of Harvin C. Moore, FAIA. Representing handy new technologies shared by the architectural and engineering professions, these tools are now extinct, having served as transitional objects between pencils, pads, and measuring tapes and the computers that drive the design industry today.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENNON EVETT

ADDOMETER

Mechanical calculators were developed in the 18th century and reached widespread use among engineers, architects, and others from the turn of the nineteenth century until the 1960s and '70s. The Addometer permitted users to add feet and inches. Users turned the dials clockwise for addition and counterclockwise for subtraction with a metal stylus. A metal slide zeros the dials with a satisfying click and snap.

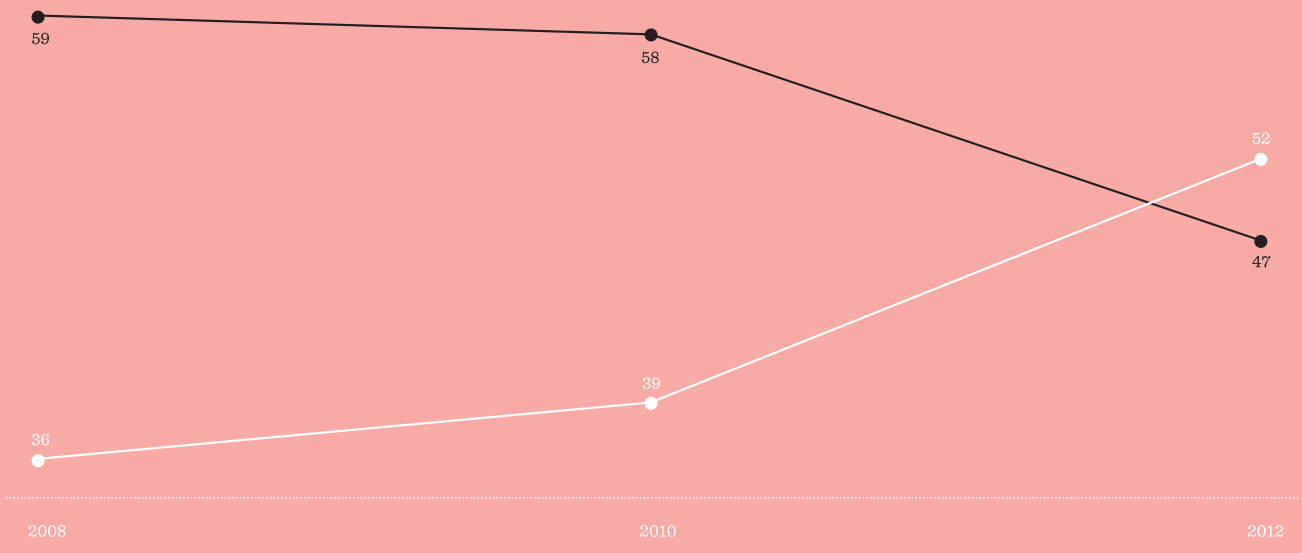
RANGEMATIC

The Rangematic allowed architects to estimate distances on site. The user sees two overlaid images and turns the dial to match them up, thereby generating the calculated distance.

PLANIMETER

By dragging the Planimeter across paper, architects could measure distances on scale drawings.

BIG HOUSE AND YARD VS SMALL HOUSE WITH SHOPS NEARBY



IS HOUSTON ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE AN "URBAN RENAISSANCE"?

FINDINGS FROM THE KINDER HOUSTON AREA SURVEY (1995-2012)

By Stephen L. Klineberg and Emily Braswell

Almost wherever you look these days, scholars and journalists claim that a new interest in city living is beginning to displace the lure of the suburbs. A "great inversion," according to urban scholar Alan Ehrenhalt (2012), is under way, a re-urbanization of the American city that is rearranging living patterns across almost all metropolitan areas in the country. The most recent findings from the annual Kinder Houston Area Survey suggest that this nationwide shift in living preferences may be occurring here as well, in Houston—arguably the most sprawling, least dense, most automobile-dependent major urban region in the country.

During the past decade and a half, survey respondents living in the suburbs have become more likely to express an interest in moving to the city, while interest among city dwellers in moving to the suburbs has fallen. The research points to two major factors that seem most clearly to be influencing this shift in preferences: the ongoing improvements in the amount and quality of Houston's urban amenities, and area residents' increasing comfort with the region's burgeoning diversity.

The "great inversion"

In 12 surveys conducted over the past 15 years, the respondents from Harris County who said they lived in the city were asked how interested they would be in moving to the suburbs, and those in the suburbs were asked about moving to the city. Back in 1999, when the question was first asked, 52 percent of Anglos living in the city said they were "very" or "somewhat" interested in moving to the suburbs, compared to just 26 percent of those in the suburbs who said they would like to move to the city.

In 2004, the surveys recorded a sudden surge (from 20 percent in 2003 to 33 percent in 2004) in the number of Anglo suburbanites who said they would like to move to the city (Klineberg and Fitzmorris 2004). That was the year when the Super Bowl was played in Houston's brand-new Reliant Stadium and the seven-mile light rail line opened to widespread celebration. In the survey the following year, the number of respondents who said they were interested in moving to the city dropped back into the realm of earlier figures (at 22 percent).

Somewhat to our surprise, the urban allure continued to grow during the ensuing years, while interest among city dwellers in moving to the suburbs gradually declined. The earlier figures are now reversed: In the 2012 survey, 33 percent of Anglo suburbanites expressed an interest in moving to the city, but only 28 percent of city residents said they were "very" or "somewhat" interested in moving to the suburbs.

These same years have seen no statistically significant increase in the city's attraction for African-Americans living in the suburbs, and no meaningful decrease in the percentage of Hispanics in the city who said they would like to move to the suburbs. Why did the largest and most consistent shift in living preferences occur among the Anglo residents of Harris County, and what does that change portend for the region's future?

Of the seemingly obvious and logical explanations for the city's new allure, many turn out not to be true. The surveys reveal that the Anglo suburbanites who named traffic as the biggest problem facing people in the Houston area were no more likely to want to move to the city than those who mentioned the economy, crime, pollution, or other concerns. Those with the longest commutes were no more eager to move than those who lived closer to work. Suburban Anglos whose jobs were in the city were not significantly more interested in moving to the city than those whose jobs and homes were both located in the suburbs. Having school-age children showed no consistent relationship with an interest in

moving from suburb to city, or vice versa, nor did living in a single-person household.

If changes in family structures, work-related issues, and traffic woes are not reasons for the growing interest in city living, then what is? If Anglos in the suburbs are not being "pushed" by suburban frustrations, what then are the forces that now seem to be "pulling" more of them into the urban core? The surveys underscore two quite different bases for the city's new allure.

Urban amenities

In the years since 1995, Downtown Houston has been transformed from a business-only activity hub during the day and a largely deserted urban landscape in the evening into a vibrant blend of business, entertainment, and the first signs of attractive new residential venues (Klaasmeyer 2012). The seven-mile light rail system along Main Street opened in January 2004, linking Reliant Park (2002) with the Texas Medical Center and Downtown Houston, and into the viciniy of Minute Maid Park (2000), the Hilton-Americas Hotel (2003), the greatly expanded George R. Brown Convention Center (2003), and Toyota Center (2003).

That same time period saw the opening of the Bayou Place entertainment complex (1997), the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts (2002), the Downtown Aquarium (2003), Main Street Square (2004), Root Memorial Square Park (2005), the Buffalo Bayou Sabine Promenade (2006), Discovery Green (2008), the Lee and Joe Jamail Skatepark (2008), Houston Pavilions (2008), One Park Place apartments (2009), Market Square Park (2010), the Houston Ballet Center for Dance (2011), and the Dynamo Stadium (2012)—all (and much more) part of a remarkable and continuing revitalization process.

In the past three decades, Downtown Houston added 6.3 million square feet of office space, 2,700 hotel rooms, 2,200 residential units, and over 70,000 theater and sports facility seats (Eury 2012). The metropolitan center is now home to more than 140,000 jobs, with 4,500 residents in the urban core and another 50,000 living in areas immediately adjacent to Downtown (Van Ness 2012). Nightlife is flourishing as new restaurants, bars, clubs, and entertainment venues proliferate. With almost $6 billion in new construction since 1995 alone, the city's urban space is being refashioned in ways not seen since the 1970s, when some of the world's most gifted architects (Philip Johnson, Renzo Piano, and Cesar Pelli) used this city to showcase their talents.

Have all these new amenities influenced the living preferences of area residents? In 2012, the survey respondents were asked how often they visited Houston's museums or live theaters, made use of the city's downtown restaurants or nightlife, and attended professional sporting events. Consistently and unmistakably, the Anglos residing in the suburbs who made more frequent use of these urban venues were far more likely to be interested in moving to the city.

As indicated in the accompanying table, all three types of amenities appear to be equally powerful in luring people to city living. Combining them into one

DIFFERENCES AMONG SUBURBAN ANGLOS BY THEIR INTEREST IN SOMEDAY MOVING TO THE CITY (2012)

		NOT INTERESTED IN MOVING TO THE CITY	INTERESTED IN MOVING TO THE CITY
How often make use of Houston's downtown restaurants or nightlife?	Never	**47.3%**	11.9%
	Several times a year	26.6%	**50.0%**
How often visit Houston's museums or live theaters?	Never	**14.2%**	3.6%
	Several times a year	35.5%	**54.2%**
How often attend professional sporting events in Houston?	Never	**36.7%**	27.7%
	Several times a year	25.5%	**39.7%**
Increasing diversity will eventually become:	Growing problem	**45.6%**	7.2%
	Source of strength	54.4%	**92.8%**
Relations among ethnic groups in Houston area?	Fair or poor	**56.4%**	34.9%
	Good or excellent	43.6%	**65.0%**
Most who receive welfare benefits are:	Taking advantage	**78.1%**	35.8%
	Really in need	21.9%	**64.2%**
Allowing gays to serve openly in the military:	Against it	**44.0%**	16.9%
	For it	56.0%	**83.1%**

Feelings of **ease and solidarity** with people of different ethnicities, socioeconomic circumstances, and ***sexual orientations*** consistently differentiate the potential movers in the suburbs from those who would prefer to stay where they are.

overall measure, the data indicate that fully half of all the Anglos in the suburbs who reported that they often take advantage of Houston's museums, theaters, nightlife, or sporting events said they would be interested in moving to the city. In sharp contrast, only a fifth of the suburban residents who make little use of these amenities thought they would be interested in such a move. The ongoing urban revitalization has clearly played a role in setting the stage for Houston's "great inversion."

Comfort with diversity

The second lure derives from the very nature of urban living itself. Suburbanites who are interested in moving to the city are expressing a preference for social lives that, as Ehrenhalt observed, "will be lived in a public realm, not a closed-off private one, in a more active and vibrant streetscape and in parks and other public spaces. They will have to do with less private living space and more shared urban territory" (2012: 14).

The willingness to share urban territory with unknown others presupposes a relatively high level of comfort with Houston's burgeoning diversity across its manifold dimensions. Feelings of ease and solidarity with people of different ethnicities, socioeconomic circumstances, and sexual orientations consistently differentiate the potential movers in the suburbs from those who would prefer to stay where they are.

As seen in the table, suburban Anglos who are interested in moving to the city are far more likely (at 93 percent) than those who are happy to stay where they are (54 percent), to believe that Houston's increasing ethnic diversity will eventually become "a source of great strength for the city," rather than "a growing problem for the city." The Anglos who are attracted to urban living (by 64 to 22 percent) are more likely to believe that most people on welfare are "really in need of help," rather than "taking advantage of the system." By 83 to 56 percent, they are more likely to be in favor of allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military.

Each of the two distinctive "pulls" has a separate and cumulative impact. Anglo suburbanites who are uncomfortable with the ethnic diversity and feel little empathy for people who are poor or gay are nevertheless eager to move to the city if they are frequent users of Houston's urban amenities. Those who rarely make use of the city's recreational and cultural venues are more interested in moving to the city if they feel a sense of solidarity and comfort with the diversity of the urban scene. On the other hand, as we have seen, neither traffic woes and long commutes nor family structures are demonstrably responsible for "pushing" them out of their suburban homes.

The increasing interest in recent years among Anglo suburbanites in moving to the city may well reflect, therefore, not only the increasing quality and variety of amenities and residential opportunities that are becoming available in Downtown Houston, but also a growing comfort with the region's flourishing diversity. The surveys have amply documented that change:

- The proportion of Harris County residents who thought the burgeoning ethnic diversity in Houston will eventually become "a source of great strength for the city" grew from 55 percent in 1996, to 61 percent in 2006, to 69 percent in 2012. In the most recent survey, 49 percent rated the relations among ethnic groups in the Houston area as either "excellent" or "good"—a higher number giving positive ratings than ever before in all the years of this research (affirmative evaluations of ethnic relations were given by only 42 percent in 2011, 37 percent in 2007, and 28 percent in 1997).
- In the 2012 survey, 41 percent said that most people receiving welfare benefits are "really in need of help," up from 30 percent two years earlier. In 2011, 72 percent believed that most poor people in the U.S. today are poor because of "circumstances they can't control," rather than because "they don't work hard enough," up from 66 percent in 2007 and from 49 percent in 1999.
- Virtually every measure of support for gay rights has also increased significantly in recent years. The number in favor of "homosexuals being legally permitted to adopt children" grew from 17 percent in 1991, to 35 percent in 2002, to 43 percent in 2012. Support for "allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military" increased from 54 percent in 2000 to 66 percent in the most recent survey. The belief that homosexuality is "morally acceptable" or that it depends on the circumstances, rather than being "morally wrong," grew from 39 percent in 1997 to 61 percent in 2011.

A preference for urbanism

Meanwhile, the evidence of an increasing preference for urban living is further confirmed by answers to another question the surveys have been tracking. In 2008, 2010, and 2012, Harris County residents were asked what they would choose if they could live anywhere in the Houston area. The proportion who said they would like to live in "a single-family home with a big yard, where you would need to drive almost everywhere you want to go," dropped from 59 percent in 2008 and 58 percent in 2010 to just 47 percent in the 2012 survey. In 2008 and 2010, 36 and 39 percent said they would opt instead for a "smaller home in a more urbanized area, within walking distance of shops and workplaces." In 2012, the percentage of Harris County residents who would choose the more urban lifestyle jumped decisively to 52 percent.

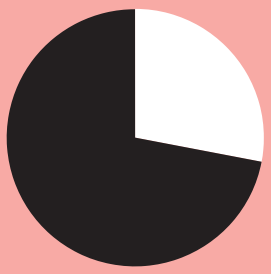
Not surprisingly, such living preferences differ according to where the respondents are actually living. Fully 69 percent of the respondents in 2012 whose homes were inside Loop 610 expressed a preference for the more urban alternative, compared to 57 percent of those

THE "GREAT INVERSION"

ANGLOS LIVING IN THE CITY WHO WANT TO MOVE TO THE SUBURBS

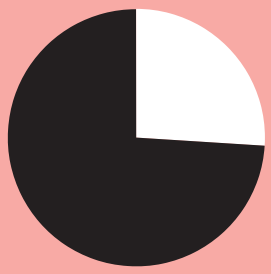
1999

2012



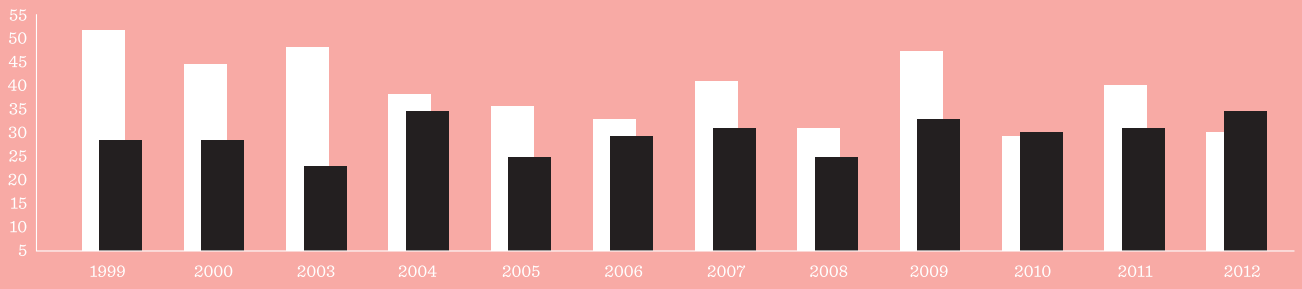
ANGLOS LIVING IN THE SUBURBS WHO WANT TO MOVE TO THE CITY

1999



2012

INTEREST AMONG ANGLOS IN MOVING FROM SUBURBS TO CITY AND FROM CITY TO SUBURBS



SINCE 1982, DOWNTOWN HOUSTON HAS ADDED

6.3 MILLION SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE SPACE

2,700 HOTEL ROOMS

2,200 RESIDENTIAL UNITS

70,000 THEATER AND SPORTS FACILITY SEATS

"ETHNIC DIVERSITY IS A SOURCE OF GREAT STRENGTH"

1996

2012

"PEOPLE ON WELFARE ARE REALLY IN NEED OF HELP"

2010

2012

"GAYS AND LESBIANS SHOULD BE LEGALLY ALLOWED TO ADOPT CHILDREN"

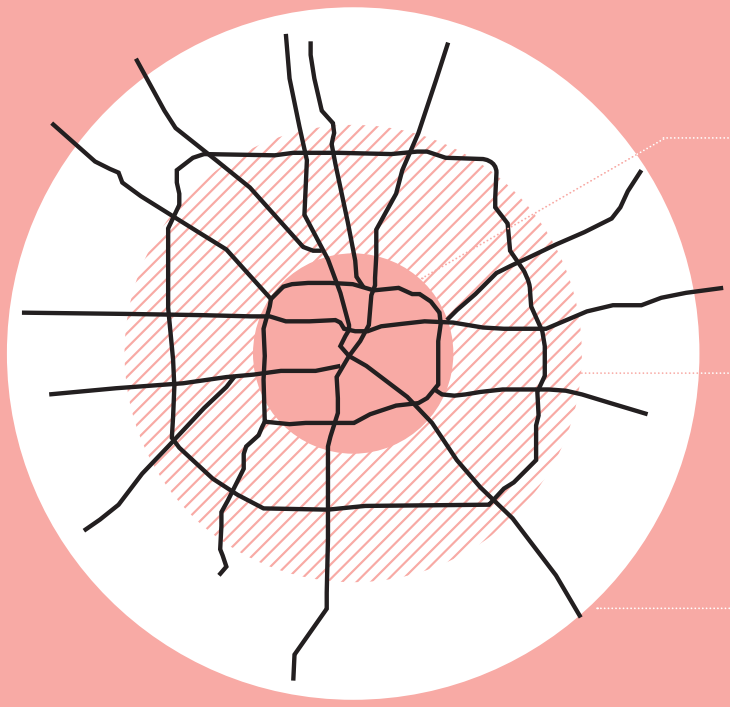
1991

2002

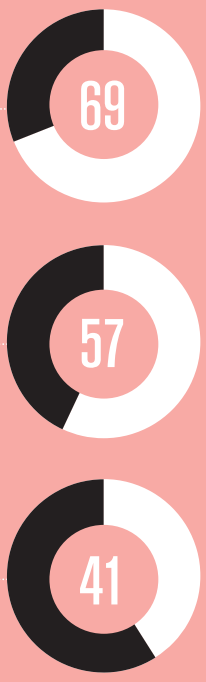
2012

MAP OF PREFERENCES

Where respondents live



Percent that prefer a more urban lifestyle

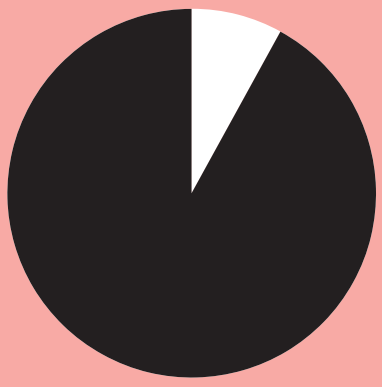


OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS, HOUSTON WILL ADD

3.5 MILLION PEOPLE

1.5 MILLION JOBS

OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS, HOUSTON ADDED 1.8 MILLION RESIDENTS,

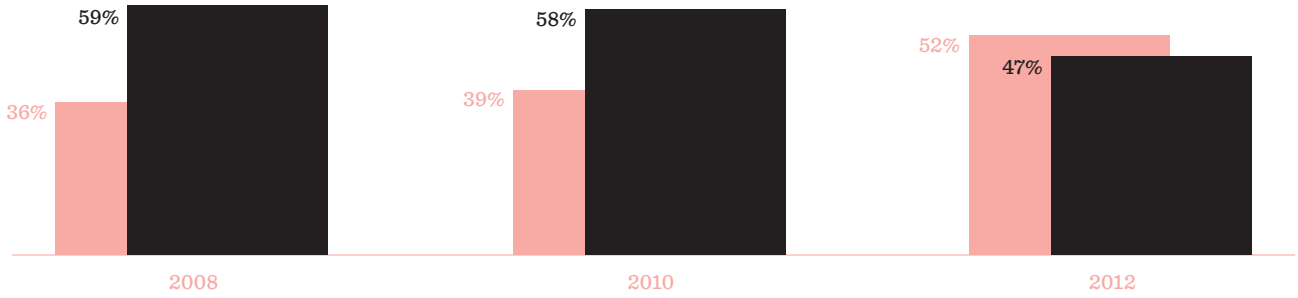


92%

MOVED TO THE SUBURBS

Many of these new residents clearly preferred the suburban lifestyle, but many others would surely have opted for more pedestrian-friendly urban alternatives *if they had been given that choice.*

RESIDENTIAL PREFERENCES (2008-2012) - *Single family home with big yard vs. Smaller home in more urbanized area*



living outside the Loop but still in the City of Houston and to 41 percent of those who were residing in the unincorporated areas of Harris County outside the city limits of Houston. Among the survey participants in the nine surrounding counties, the number who would choose the opportunity to live "in a more urbanized area" was virtually identical (40 percent). These are remarkably high numbers in this sprawling, car-dependent city of ours, further underscoring the large and growing demand for more urban lifestyles that now cuts across the entire metropolitan region.

During the next 20 years or so, the Houston-Galveston Area Council forecasts that the Houston metropolitan area as a whole will add another 3.5 million people and 1.5 million jobs (Taebel 2009). How will the region accommodate that growth? According to the U.S. Census, during the past 10 years the Houston metro region added 1.8 million residents, and 92 percent of them moved into the suburbs. Many of these new residents clearly preferred the suburban lifestyle, but many others would surely have opted for more pedestrian-friendly urban alternatives if they had been given that choice.

As some one million additional residents move into Harris County in the course of the next 20 years and if meaningful alternatives to car-centered suburban sprawl are not more widely available, much of the remaining farmlands, prairies, forests, and marshes in the peripheral areas will disappear into subdivisions and parking lots; traffic congestion as well as air and water pollution will worsen; and the region's overall quality of life may well deteriorate in irretrievable ways. If that happens, can anyone doubt that the prospects for sustained economic prosperity will deteriorate as well? The challenge, as Ehrenhalt and others have observed (Brown 2012), is not in finding people who want to live in more compact, urbanized communities, but in building places that can accommodate them.

As Harris County's residents are provided with expanded opportunities for urban living, Houston will be in a better position to capitalize on its burgeoning ethnic and cultural diversity. Its citizens will demand and support continuing improvements in the area's recreational, artistic, and educational resources. The increasing numbers interested in city living are calling not only for additional amenities in Downtown Houston, but also for the more urban lifestyles becoming available in the new "town centers" that are gradually refashioning Houston's suburban areas as well (The Woodlands, Sugar Land, and Pearland). If Houston's business leaders, elected officials, architects, developers, engineers, and neighborhood organizations can capitalize on the new city allure to build attractive and stable multi-ethnic, mixed-use, and mixed-income urban communities throughout the region, these trends bode well for the future of Houston.

Brown, Peter. 2012. "Houston Reaches a Crossroads." *Houston Chronicle*, 10 August.

Ehrenhalt, Alan. 2002. *The Great Inversion and Future of the American City*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

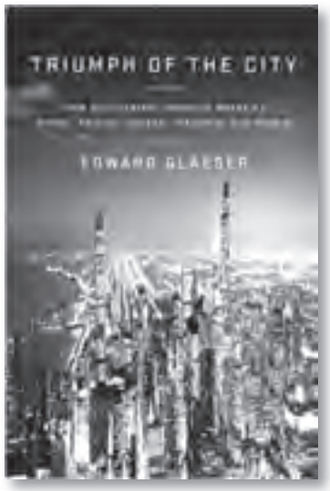
Eury, Robert M. 2012. "Downtown by the Numbers." Houston: Central Houston, Inc. Retrieved September 3, 2012 http://www.central-houston.org/Home/DowntownHouston/Timeline1.

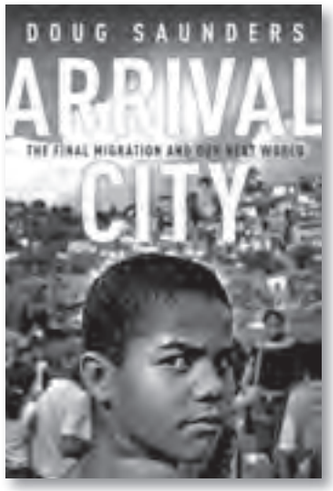
Klassmeyer, Kelly. 2012. "An Honest Look at Downtown." *Cite*, Spring, pp. 18-24.

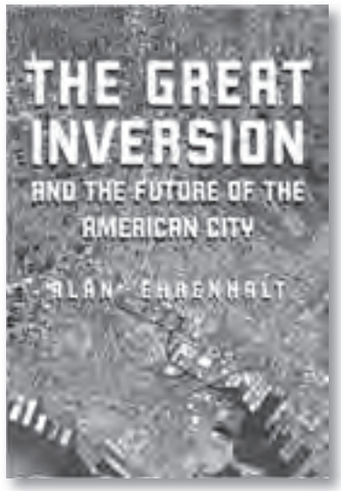
Klineberg, Stephen L. and Laura C. Fitzmorris. 2004. "Houston Matters: Why Anglo Suburbanites Are Coming Back to Town: The Twin Lures? Ethnic Diversity and Inner-City Amenities." *Houston Chronicle*, 11 July, Outlook Section, pp. D1, D4.

Taebel, Jeffrey. 2009. "Houstopia 2035." *Cite*, Fall, pp. 10-17.

Van Ness, Laura. 2012. "Why Downtown?" Houston: Central Houston, Inc.







THE FUTURES OF DENSITY

EDWARD GLAESER, ***THE TRIUMPH OF THE CITY*** (NEW YORK: PENGUIN, 2011)

DOUG SAUNDERS, ***ARRIVAL CITY*** (NEW YORK: PANTHEON, 2010)

ALAN EHRENHALT, ***THE GREAT INVERSION*** (NEW YORK: KNOPF, 2012)

By Terrence Doody

In *The Triumph of the City*, Edward Glaeser argues that the city has triumphed because it has made all of us richer, smarter, greener, healthier, and happier. Glaeser is a Harvard economist who writes the "dull science" with unusual enthusiasm, and he surveys the city's success and the historical reasons that produced it. If there is a single urban quality essential to this progress, he suggests that it is density, a complex condition with many possible effects, both good and bad.

Density is at the core of Doug Saunders' *Arrival City*, his account of "How the Largest Migration in Human History Is Shaping Our World." Saunders is a British journalist, and his argument is that the world's rural poor are leaving the countryside in such numbers that population growth will soon end and, in the near future, we will be able to create "a permanently sustainable world." This is a very large claim, one that trumps the advantages of being merely richer, smarter, and happier.

What's happening in the American cities that the political writer Alan Ehrenhalt studies in *The Great Inversion* is that people are moving back into city centers on a scale that is much more than mere gentrification. He claims that this shift will make our older cities more like the great capitals of the nineteenth century—Paris, London, Vienna—than the cities they were before manufacturing shrunk, the suburbs grew, and Americans began to marry later and live in better health for a much longer time.

All three books are optimistic toward the future, but the most difficult avenue into that future comes through Saunders' *Arrival City*. "Arrival cities" are the great slums that metastasize at the edge of big cities, especially in the Third World, and pack the migrant population into unimaginable squalor. But for Saunders these places are actually dynamic mechanisms of transformation that connect villages and cities to the advantage of both. The money the migrants send home makes a great difference in the quality of village life, and they can make

Arrival cities fail not when more poor arrive, but when **governments impose policies** to regulate them. In China, for example, there are millions in a "floating population" whose papers identify them with their original villages and not the cities they live in "illegally," places where they are ***denied rights and services***.

the money they do because the social networks and small-scale manufacturers of the arrival cities do not depend on the established cities' economic orders. These places can be lawless and chaotic, but they have a freedom and mobility that reward the immigrants' adaptability, discipline, and great courage.

Arrival cities fail not when more poor arrive, but when governments impose policies to regulate them. In China, for example, there are millions in a "floating population" whose papers identify them with their original villages and not the cities they live in "illegally," places where they are denied rights and services. In South America, on the other hand, the arrival cities have been better managed. The Santa Marta district of Rio de Janeiro, for instance, has flourished because the government has upgraded the infrastructure without feeling the need to change it, granting its occupants birth certificates and street addresses. It is no coincidence that Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the former President of Brazil, grew up in a São Paulo slum himself, and no surprise that the citizens of Santa Marta aren't too happy now about paying taxes.

Glaeser also writes about the great slums as steps to the city's triumph, but he is less detailed and more provocative: some of his chapter titles are "Why Riot?" "What's Good about Slums?" "Is There Anything Greener than Blacktop?" and "How Policy Magnifies Poverty." Saunders has done the kind of research Glaeser has and knows the statistics, but he works best through individual portraits and cases, playing similarities and differences off each other in a way that inhibits most generalizations. This kind of patience also characterizes Ehrenhalt's method, and there is no more effective part of his argument than his opening studies of three very different neighborhoods that all exemplify the shift he calls "The Great Inversion."

The first of these is the Sheffield neighborhood of Chicago, the second is Wall Street, and the third the Bushwick section of Brooklyn. Sheffield is an established neighborhood of undistinguished middle-class houses a mile from Lake Michigan and close to Wrigley Field. Small-scale retail supports the street life it needs; the neighborhood has an established music scene; and the El means easy transportation into downtown. Sheffield had significant trouble with gangs in the 1970s, when the median value of its houses was $23,800. But its median family income in 2009 was $201,125, and the median home price was over a million. "It is easier to demonstrate that Sheffield is rich than to explain why," Ehrenhalt writes; and it is impossible to see its wealth as you drive through.

Whether Sheffield's story is more unlikely than the recent settling of Wall Street is hard to decide. On 9/11, about 15,000 people lived south of the World Trade Center. By 2008, over 50,000 lived there in what had not been a neighborhood for a very long time. The average Wall Street household is larger than that of the rest of Manhattan, but despite the unusual number of baby strollers on the street, there is not much retail to stroll to.

The Bushwick section of Brooklyn couldn't be more unlike either Wall Street or Sheffield. It has been settled by hipster artists because Williamsburg has become as chic and expensive as downtown Manhattan. Bushwick borders on Bedford-Stuyvesant, and it is still poor, dirty, and filled with crime. But one of its activist citizens says it is "CHEAP." Its new density is not gentrification.

Ehrenhalt studies suburbs that want to urbanize themselves with fake downtowns—Sugar Land, The Woodlands—and cities like Phoenix that want to create a core they never quite had. He also pays close attention to Houston's Third Ward and the efforts of State Representative Garnet Coleman, who buys up land with money from a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone and "banks" it to keep developers from doing what they did in the Fourth Ward. Coleman has three goals: to keep people in place, provide affordable housing, and prevent gentrification even by affluent blacks. Ehrenhalt says, "There is no one quite like him in any inner-city neighborhood in America."

"One thing we have learned about the modern city," Ehrenhalt also says, "is that even the smartest of observers, trying to predict the possibilities for revival and change in almost any urban neighborhood, are likely to be wrong." The triumph of Glaeser's established city, the world-transforming dynamics of Saunders' arrival city, and the pleasing Darwinian mysteries of Ehrenhalt's evolving neighborhoods have two aspects. They tell a similar story of the city's steady success, and they differ so greatly that it is very difficult to plot with any clarity the course from Santa Marta, to Sheffield, and then back to the ideal of nineteenth-century Paris, which was an arrival city itself and still is.

Density has not alleviated Paris' current immigration problems, and density itself does not simply cure poverty or prevent suffering and exploitation. Saunders argues that the French Revolution had more to do with Paris' impoverished workers than with the ideas of Enlightenment philosophers, and that the Iranian revolution became a religious movement only after the Ayatollah had galvanized the poor of Tehran. There are countless arrival cities whose futures are still uncertain. And in light of them, Glaeser's triumph looks shallow and Saunders' hope for a "permanently sustainable world" seems premature.

Ehrenhalt thinks about cities on a much smaller scale, and he thinks modestly. His chances of being right about the future seem better. Still, I don't expect Houston to seem like Paris real soon.

ART IN THE AGE OF VIRTUAL CURRENCY

EMERGEncy Room
Mike Beradino, *Lode Runner* (2012)
September 13 – October 18, 2012

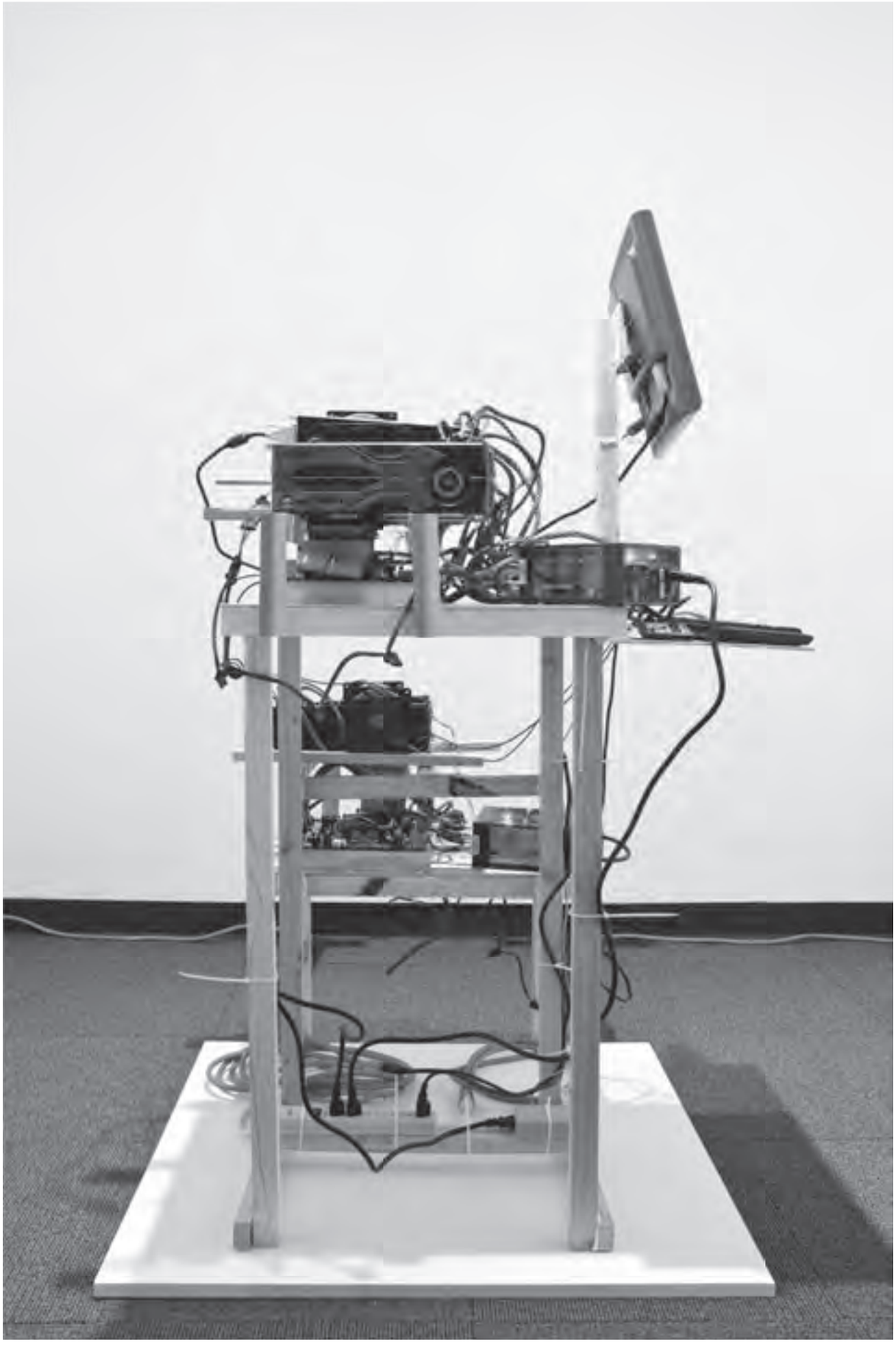
by Katia Zavistovski

MIKE BERADINO'S *LODE RUNNER*—A REFERENCE to the 1983 video game–presents a computer the artist built from salvaged parts, shown this fall at EMERGEncy Room, a small exhibition space at Rice University. The installation is essentially a money-making machine; it produces digital currency called "Bitcoin" through "bitcoin mining." The digital currency is then converted into U.S. dollars, which are used to purchase unrefined gold. The resulting lump of gold, which accrues over the duration of the exhibition, sits atop the computer stand crudely made out of plywood and held together with glue and a few nails.

Viewers (such as myself) who might be less versed in the language of computer programming and cryptographic technologies may ask, what is a Bitcoin? Bitcoin is the first decentralized digital currency. Bitcoins are not government-issued, and the software used to produce them is completely open source. Thus, they can be transferred directly from person to person via the Internet without going through a bank or clearing house. Much like our more familiar economic system, the value of Bitcoins varies daily, and the network automatically adjusts the amount of computational work required to "mine" them so that they are produced at a predictable and limited rate. Considering the current economic exchange rate and the amount of power Beradino's computer uses, he has estimated that *Lode Runner* would earn approximately $300-400 during the run of the exhibition. A graphic on the desktop monitor represents the increasing account balance in his Bitcoin "wallet." As bewildering as this new world of virtual finances may seem, the actual, raw gold is tangible.

Simultaneously calling attention to the shift away from the gold standard and drawing focus to physical currency—albeit of a type that is nearly obsolete—*Lode Runner* considers the relationship between the immateriality of the digital economy and the materiality of consumerism. By bridging the gap between the analog-digital divide, Beradino's work mines the rich possibilities for exchange. c

PHOTOS BY LOGAN BECK



BREAKING DOWN WALLS: TAKING STOCK OF THE HOUSTON 2040 TALKS

by Jay Crossley, Zackq Lockrem, and Matthew Tejada

HOUSTON MIGHT BE THE QUIRKIEST, MOST mixed up and oftentimes unnerving city in the United States. It is one of the largest cities in the country both in terms of sheer size and population and has no zoning and only limited planning. It is one of our most demographically diverse cities—even more so than New York. And it is in the heart of one of our continent's most extraordinary and fragile ecosystems which contains hardwood and evergreen forests, inland and coastal prairies, marshes, swamps, bayous, and river plains.

In short, Houston is full of challenges and treasures, but the intensity of its diversity and the helter-skelter arrangement of its resources can tend to highlight the problems and obscure the benefits to living here. Such a landscape naturally provides fertile ground for organizations and citizens to positively impact our community through advocacy and regular civic engagement. Like most other metropolitan areas around the country, however, all too often the citizens who are willing to get out and make a difference tend to define their interests and activities in very narrow categories such as environmentalists, planners, conservancies, and transit lovers. Even in the most progressive of cities, such rigid delineations negatively cut short opportunities for collaboration and mutual support toward what is ultimately the goal of all the different interest groups—making our home a better, cleaner, safer, more enjoyable place to live.

In January 2010, several organizations in the Houston area had the idea of breaking down those walls and building support, awareness, and camaraderie through the very Texas pastime of having a beer and shooting the breeze. Every month, Air Alliance Houston, Houston Tomorrow, the Citizens' Transportation Coalition, and Social Agency Lab have jointly organized an informal meeting where all of the supporters of our various organizations are invited to come hear about what is happening in our greater community.

We call this meeting My Houston 2040. As it started in 2010, we wanted to frame the entire conversation not in terms of how we can improve city planning ordinances, choose better bus lines, or reduce levels of particulate matter, but rather how we all collectively want our community to evolve over the next three decades into a better place for all. Every month we invite two speakers, the first of which gives a topical presentation on a project or initiative that is relevant to making our city a better place. Over time, the conversation has evolved to cover all types of issues relating to urban life in Houston, from the arts to restaurants to music to transit.

The second speaker every month is a notable Houstonian who is asked to answer three questions: What do you think Houston will be like in 2040? What do you want Houston to be like in 2040? What do you think we need to do to make Houston like you want it to be in 2040?

The best answers to these questions have come from speakers who truly engage with their current efforts and how they should positively impact a larger vision for our home in the future.

The impact of hearing different Houstonians speak on their visions for the future of Houston is to see the cultural shift occurring in the city. Month after month, the diversity of those who are remaking the city, with infrastructure and culture, is truly staggering.

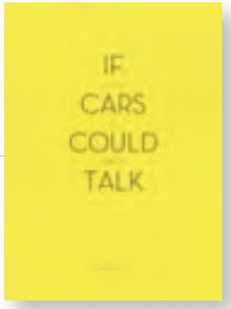
Some of the best speakers over the past couple of years have dealt with an issue that is coming to a pinnacle of importance this fall in the Houston area–transit. Current METRO CEO George Greanias, who opted to engage with our questions and the audience in an almost improv style, spoke from the heart and from his experience about how the choices we make right now will have a decades-long impact on our community's future and growth as well as the health and happiness of the people who reside here.

My Houston 2040 has showcased projects that are completely reconstructing huge sections of our city in an effort to encourage density and sustainability followed the next month by projects which guide Houstonians on walking tours through historic though under-appreciated neighborhoods. We have talked about development of parks one month and next dealt with the frustration of living in a place where officials have little power to regulate businesses which negatively impact the health and environment of their local community. We've learned about Galveston Bay and the health of the waters and marshes that define us as a coastal community. Michael Skelly explained why Texas has an abundance of wind energy but why the nation as a whole has a huge problem in taking advantage of such power. Omar Afra talked about stamping out the child sex trade. We heard about efforts to create an artist community using repurposed shipping containers on Buffalo Bayou and have learned from Bob Sanborn and Natasha Kamrani about the reality of receiving a basic education in Houston. City Council Member Stephen Costello argued the necessity of the City's "flood" tax and Stephen Klineberg updated us on his Houston Area Survey. We've discussed the impact of global climate change on our region and learned how to use a balloon and a digital camera to map things such as a landfill. The subjects and visions, themes and aspirations run the gamut of possibilities, typifying the diversity that a Houstonian would expect to hear.

My Houston 2040 averages between forty and fifty attendees every month. What is more important is that on average about half of those attendees are there for the first time. Some are wearing suits and have obviously just cruised down Allen Parkway to Montrose from their office downtown. Others show up with their cuffs tucked and shirts wet with sweat from the bike ride across the bayou from the Heights. Houston can be a difficult place to learn and to love, but is also a fascinating and rewarding community in which to work, live, and grow. Our audience composition speaks to a desire in Houstonians—new arrivals and lifelong residents—to find out more and be a part of making this an even greater place to live. It's our hope that My Houston 2040 gives our fellow Houstonians the chance to celebrate our diversity, face our challenges, and make our home a more enjoyable place for us all. c

PHOTO BY ZAKCQ LOCKREM

THE MFAH BOOKSTORE WISHES A HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO *CITE* MAGAZINE



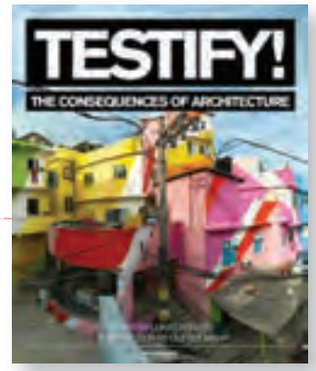
IF CARS COULD TALK: ESSAYS ON URBANISM

BY WILLIAM H. FAIN, JR.

If Cars Could Talk presents a call to action to city builders everywhere that major issues threaten our cities and failure to confront them will diminish the quality of life for a majority of the human population. Fain is neither a professional writer nor an academic: he is a practitioner. He practices what he preaches. The book is graphically exquisite.

$35 / $28 FOR RDA MEMBERS

MFAH BOOKSTORE: 5601 Main Street, Houston, Texas.
Contact: Bernard Bonnet
713.639.7360 | mfah.org/shops



TESTIFY! THE CONSEQUENCES OF ARCHITECTURE

EDITED BY LUKAS FEIREISS

This NAi (Netherlands Architecture Institute) publication gathers 30 examples of community-centered architectural projects from all five continents, to demonstrate how architecture can transform the quality of our lives. This is architecture that reveals unexpected possibilities for growing food in urban environments, for creating healthy and sustainable environments, nourishing social networks and establishing real estate value based on new revenue models. As sustainability issues intensify the public stake in the built environment, *Testify!* brings good news from the frontlines of contemporary architectural practice.

$39.95 / $31.96 FOR RDA MEMBERS

HOW TO MAKE A JAPANESE HOUSE

BY CATHELIJNE NUIJSINK

Nowhere in the world have architects built homes as small as in Japan, and nowhere have they done so with such ingenuity and success. *How to Make a Japanese House* presents 21 lessons in how to design a single-family home from three decades of architectural practice. Through a rich array of research, interviews, drawings and photographs, *How to Make a Japanese House* demonstrates that Japanese homes present a radically different way of thinking about architecture, and provide inspiration for dwelling on a smaller scale.

$55 / $44 FOR RDA MEMBERS

CONCRETE AND CULTURE: A MATERIAL HISTORY

BY ADRIAN FORTY

Focusing on concrete's effects on culture rather than its technical properties, *Concrete and Culture* examines the ways concrete has changed our understanding of nature, of time, and even of material. Adrian Forty concentrates not only on architects' responses to concrete, but also takes into account the role concrete has played in politics, literature, cinema, labor-relations, and arguments about sustainability.

$40 / $32 FOR RDA MEMBERS

RDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Lonnie Hoogeboom

President-Elect
Doug Combes

Vice-President
Carrie Glassman Shoemake

Treasurer
Thomas W. Flaherty

Secretary
Laurence C. Burns, Jr.

Past President
David Harvey, Jr.

Grant Alford
Barbara Amelio
David L. Andrews
Larry N. Barker
Laura Bellows
Jereck Boss
Deborah Brochstein
Stan Bunting
David J. Calkins
Catherine Callaway
Chip Clarke
Thomas M. Colbert
Benjamin F. Crawford
Andrea Crawmer
Juliè A. Gauthier
Daniel M. Gilbane
Chuck Gremillion
Kristi M. Grizzle
Wendy Heger
Christopher Hight
Willard Holmes
Tad Lewis
Rafael Longoria
Sandra C. Lynch
Bill Maguire
R. Wayne Marchand
Kelie Mayfield
Craig Minor
Dave Mueller
Susan Rogers
Michelangelo Sabatino
Gayle Smith
Christof Spieler
Nicola Springer
Tadd Tellepsen
Phoebe Tudor
Larry Whaley
Sarah Whiting
Benjamin C. Wylie

RDA STAFF

Executive Director
Linda Sylvan

Associate Director, Membership
Mary Swift

Assistant Director, Programs
Mary Beth Woiccak

Marketing & Communications Specialist
Katie Plocheck

Accounting Assistant
Cathy Bauer

Staff Assistant
Raquel Puccio

RDA Tour Director
Lynn Kelly

RDA, established in 1972 within the Rice School of Architecture, is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of architecture, urban design, and the built environment. Through its lecture programs, civic forums, tours, and *Cite*, RDA creates a public forum to stimulate discussion, involvement, and cooperation among the many groups of citizens who are able to improve the quality of life within Houston and its environs. Membership is open to the public.

ricedesignalliance.org

RiceDesignAlliance
ENGAGING PEOPLE SHAPING PLACE

RDA CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

CENTENNIAL UNDERWRITERS $15,000
D. E. Harvey Builders (8 years as a member)
Haynes Whaley Associates, Inc. (24)
Satterfield & Pontikes Construction, Inc. (10)

CORPORATE UNDERWRITERS $10,000
Walter P Moore (24 years as a member)

CORPORATE BENEFACTORS $5,000
AGC Houston (22 years as a member)
ARC (24)
Anslow Bryant Construction LTD (6)
Austin Commercial (6)
Balfour Beatty Construction (11)
W.S. Bellows Construction Corporation (27)
Brochsteins (31)
Brookstone, LP (15)
The Office of James Burnett (15)
Bury+Partners, Inc. (2)
CenterPoint Energy, Inc. (11)
Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing (4)
Cokinos, Bosien & Young (11)
Susie & Sanford Criner (1)
Debner+Company (22)
JE Dunn Construction (14)
Leslie Elkins Architecture (5)
FKP Architects (14)
FMGi/WAVE (1)
Fretz Construction Company (16)
Gensler (29)
Gilbane (19)
HOK (24)
Haworth (5)
iOffice, Inc. (2)
Kendall/Heaton Associates (23)
Dillon Kyle Architecture (5)
Marek Companies (20)
Matrix Structural Engineers, Inc. (16)
McCarthy Building Companies, Inc. (3)
McCoy Workplace Solutions (26)
Morris Architects (27)
O'Donnell/Snider Construction (13)
The OFIS (14)
Office Pavilion (20)
PGAL (21)
Perkins+Will (9)
Planning Design Research Corporation (16)
Putterman, Scharck & Associates, Inc. (2)
Rosenberger Construction LP (6)
Louisa Stude Sarofim (21)
The Southampton Group (6)
Telios (3)
Tellepsen Corporation (19)
Trammell Crow Company (12)
Transwestern (6)
Trio Electric (3)
Phoebe and Bobby Tudor (7)
Turner Construction Company (13)
Vanguard Environments, Inc. (20)
The Woodlands Development Co. (9)
Wylie Consulting Engineers (18)

CORPORATE SPONSORS $1,500
A & E - The Graphics Complex (21 years as a member)
Abel Design Group (1)
Anchorage Foundation of Texas (29)
Avadek (4)
Behringer Harvard (4)
Berger Iron Works, Inc. (16)
Builders West, Inc. (9)
ccrd partners (16)
Melinda Clark & Clark Trantham (2)
Colliers International (1)
Leo A Daly (20)
Durotech, Inc. (1)
Fast Track Specialties, Inc (1)
HBL Architects (5)
Herman Miller Inc. (18)
Mary Haus and Willard Holmes (1)
Lonnie Hoogeboom and Betsy Strauch (4)
International Facility Management Association (1)
Jackson & Ryan Architects (16)
Kirksey (14)
The Mathis Group, Inc. (7)
McKinnon Associates (7)
MetroNational (10)
Miner-Dederick Construction, LLP (17)
Minor Design (9)
Mission Constructors, Inc. (12)
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (26)
PMRG (1)
PageSoutherlandPage (9)
Paradigm Consultants, Inc. (1)
Pickard Chilton Architects (3)
Poggenpohl (1)
Project Control Houston (4)
Rogers Moore Engineers LLC (2)
Karen Rose Engineering & Surveying (10)
Seeberger Architecture (2)
Smith & Company Architects, Inc. (1)
Steelcase Inc. (16)
TMS Contractors LLC (1)
TimberSIL of Texas (1)
UT MD Anderson Cancer Center (1)
Kaki and Tom Vallee (2)
Windham Builders (22)
WorkSpaces LLC (1)

CORPORATE MEMBERS $1,000
ACS Flooring Group, Inc. (5 years as a member)
Affiliated Engineers (4)
BNIM Architects (8)
benjy's Restaurant (6)
BRAVE / Architecture (5)
Clark Condon Associates (11)
Crescent Real Estate Equities, LLC (9)
Curry Boudreaux Architects (5)
Curtis & Windham Architects (7)
D|G Studios (14)
L. Barry Davidson Architects AIA, Inc. (25)
Fixtures International (3)
Graves Mechanical Inc. (9)
Greenwood King Properties (23)
Halliburton (3)
Hensel Phelps Construction Co. (9)
Hoar Construction (8)
Humphries Construction Corp. (5)
KUHF Houston Public Radio 88.7FM (10)
Lighting Unlimited (8)
MGC Inc. (5)
McDugald-Steele (19)
Milam & Co. Painting, Inc. (15)
I. A. Naman + Associates (14)
PSI (8)
Parra Design Group, Ltd. (7)
Porter & Hedges, LLP (5)
Redding Linden Burr Inc. (9)
Schenck and Company (16)
Robert Shaw Architectural Woodwork (12)
Tribble & Stephens Constructors, Ltd. (7)
United Airlines (16)
Wade Architectural Systems (5)
Ziegler Cooper Architects (7)

THE RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE ACKNOWLEDGES THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF ITS **2012 GALA UNDERWRITERS.**

HAYNES WHALEY ASSOCIATES

Structural Engineering

HARVEY

Innovation, Quality, Integrity

S&P

SATTERFIELD & PONTIKES CONSTRUCTION, INC.

WALTER P MOORE

I'M JUST A CIVILIAN:
THE EXTRAORDINARY ORDINARY RDA MEMBER

Tom Cobb (1940-2012)

IT WAS A FLAT ROOF IN LONGVIEW, TEXAS, THAT introduced Tom Cobb to architecture. Growing up in nearby Upshur County in the 1940s, Cobb was used to houses built as children draw them—with pitched roofs and "chimneys belching smoke," he said. Seen on a country drive with his father, the flat roof of what he learned later was a B.W. Crain house, he said, "blew my little mind."

The Cobbs moved to Houston in 1955. It was here that Cobb's relationship with architecture became much less accidental. "I was a tenderfoot," Cobb said. "I had just graduated from Bellaire." His father had a business downtown, and Cobb rode the bus to and from to help with odd jobs. "We're good at bulldozing the past," he said. "But I watched a number of skyscrapers go up then. The Bank of the Southwest [910 Travis Street] was the most modern building downtown. That impressed me to no end. And the Tennessee Gas Transmission, which became the Tenneco Building. It's now been remodeled. Philip Johnson said it was the finest skyscraper in town. But the big blockbuster and the big eye-opener was the First City National Bank project [by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)]. I loved that building. It was 32 stories. It was covered with white marble. It was a passive solar structure. I was just awed with that."

Later, Cobb traveled to California to see a friend who was studying at UCLA. On a whim, they went up to San Francisco and stumbled upon the Crown Zellerbach Building, which had been designed as well by SOM. "In those days," he said, "you could walk into the lobby and not be shaken down and strip-searched. And I saw 'Skidmore, Owings & Merrill' [in the lobby directory]. So we punched the [elevator] button, and we went up, and the receptionist looked like she'd been designed by SOM. And we said, 'We're just a couple of country boys from Texas, but we love SOM. Any chance we could get a tour?'"

Cobb passed away this October. He was 72. He never lost his guileless reverence for the built environment. You might not be able to take the country out of the boy, as that chestnut goes, but you can certainly take the boy out of the country—and show him the architecture of the world. Cobb told me about his favorite buildings—including the First Baptist Church in Longview and the Latin American Tower in Mexico City—the way other people reminisce about childhood playmates or beloved authors. Seeing these buildings as a boy, he told me, were indelible experiences that made him "predisposed" to join Rice Design Alliance (RDA).

He was a member for almost 20 years. He and his wife volunteered as docents for RDA and American Institute of Architects (AIA) house tours. He was always proud, he said, that RDA values education. He looked forward to the civic forums and lectures, where he could ask the questions prompted by his voracious reading. "I do my homework," he said—which, as we talked, became an obvious understatement. Cobb read to me from the book he brought with him, a collection of letters between Frank Lloyd Wright and Rose Pauson concerning the construction of the Rose Pauson House in Phoenix. And he shared anecdotes about Wright, Johnson, E. Fay Jones, and other architects as though he knew them personally. At the time of his death, he had been to ten Wright houses. And one of his fondest memories, he said, was staying up late on Sundays to watch *Night-Beat*, an interview program with Mike Wallace. "There'd be this cloud of [cigarette] smoke," Cobb recalled. "It gave you the feeling, 'Boy, you're on the inside of something. These are going to be to the point.' And [Wright] came twice. I was so taken with [him]."

Cobb never sought to become an architect—he never had the talent, he said—but he became the kind of citizen whom architects are lucky to design for. He taught history in the Houston Independent School District and served as a librarian at Johnston Junior High (now Middle School), and he tried to find ways to include his favorite subject at school. "I was promoting an interest all along," he said. "I actually would do an [enrichment program] … and it would be on architecture. I was treating it like a real class. We had a field trip to the University of Houston. We would have tests. To my abject horror, many of the kids had no interest. Some of them were ready to revolt," he said.

"Then I started an architecture club. Clubs were a big deal back then. We had a model rocket club. But we did architecture. We were given a model of a bank building in Galveston and we brought that back to school. The firms were very generous and appreciative of having the students come. Later [AIA] had a program, 'Architecture Is Fun,' and we plugged into that. And I was very proud and gratified that out of that club two of the kids became architects."

We talked in the Brochstein Pavilion, which Cobb named as one of his favorite buildings—ever—in Houston. "It's up there with Mies' Law Building [at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston]," he said. He looked around and marveled at the cantilever, the walls of glass, the organic origins of the building. "What I love about RDA," Cobb said, "is the architect, Thomas Phifer, came and spoke one year, and I got to ask him a question."

"I admire creativity," Cobb said. "I'm not a trained professional. I'm just a *civilian*. But that was the exciting aspect of RDA from the beginning. They accepted those of us who were not in the design community but had a great love of architecture. I look at [RDA] as [I do at] the audience for the Houston Symphony, the Alley Theatre, the Ballet. They all deserve an appreciative audience."

As our conversation came to a close, Cobb lowered his voice, nodded over my shoulder, and said, "And there's Stephen Fox."

We were too shy to introduce ourselves. Instead we gushed about Fox, Houston's resident architectural conscience, a reference library unto himself, as he read just a few tables away. Cobb told me how much he loved Fox's tours and how frequently he brought up his work, especially the *Houston Architectural Guide*. "It's not a Chamber of Commerce book," he said. "It has his personal opinion."

As Cobb stood to leave, as though he's still a country boy in awe, he said, "Maybe I can get his autograph." - *Allyn West* c

ILLUSTRATION BY MASSA LEMU

Rice University
Rice Design Alliance - MS 51
P.O. Box 1892
Houston, Texas 77251-1892

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Houston, Texas
Permit No. 7549

P-1 P81**********AUTO**5-DIGIT 77025
MR. DAVID J. FITTS
8503 BLUEGATE ST
HOUSTON TX 77025-3803