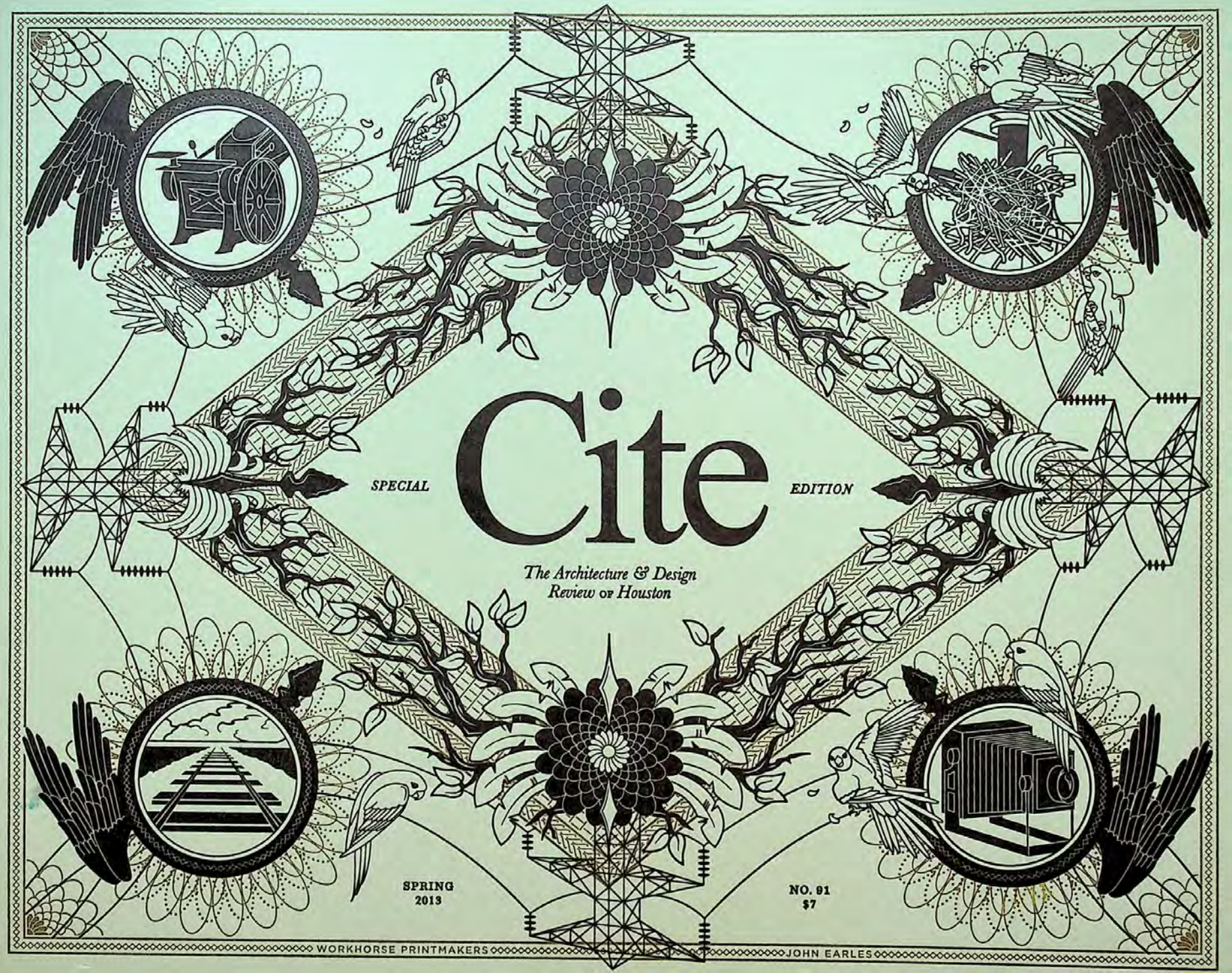
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Cite

THE ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN REVIEW OF HOUSTON

A PUBLICATION OF THE RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE

91 WINTER 2013

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.

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Publication of this issue is supported in part by grants from the Susan Vaughan Foundation, the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance, and the Texas Commission for the Arts.

ABOUT THE COVER: With Kermit Oliver's paintings as inspiration, John Earles illustrated the cover using images that relate to this issue's contents. He then produced the cover on a letterpress that dates back to the 1930s. A co-founder of Workhorse Printmakers, Earles powers the old press by hand.

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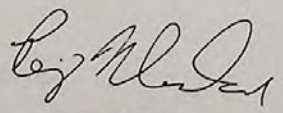
I WANT YOU TO TEAR APART THIS *CITE*. WE INTENTIONALLY PUT together this issue like a notepad. It might fall apart on its own. So tear out and pin up pictures on your cubicle wall or pull a whole article out to share with your best friend or file an article away or photocopy it 100 times or shred it or mold it into a model for a new city to replace this Houston.

We designed this issue as a onetime experiment to breathe fresh life into our use of dead trees. Community engagement is at the core of our mission, and increasing participation is the motivation for this issue's format and content.

In this issue we create knowledge by letting our online readers drive the print lineup. We looked carefully at the statistics of our blog, OffCite.org, for popular posts that deserved the material joy and additional attention that goes into print. For example, the photos in Paul Hester's "Houston by Dart Board" look great on the blog but are a real pleasure to behold in print.

Not all the lineup is blog driven, however. We have included two articles that are too long to read comfortably online—Hank Hancock's piece on the Margaret Austin Center and Rubén Martinez's essay on Marfa. Just as this format makes the handiwork of our printers more visible, both articles make communities more visible by the reframing of architecture and landscape.

Thank you for participating in *Cite*. Send me your thoughts.



RAJ MANKAD, *Editor*
mankad@rice.edu

Ana María Durán Calisto has co-directed the architecture firm Estudio A0 with her partner Jaskran (Jazz) Singh Kalirai since 2002 and the applied research network SAP (South America Project) with Felipe Correa since 2011.

Jorge Galvan is an artist and illustrator based in Houston.

Hank Hancock is a writer living in Houston and the director of DiverseWorks' literary program Slinging Ink.

Paul Hester specializes in photography of art and architecture, teaches at Rice University, and has photographed for *Cite* since it began in 1982.

Rubén Martinez is the Fletcher Jones Chair in Literature and Writing at Loyola Marymount University, Artist-in-Residence at Stanford University, and a past recipient of a Loeb Fellowship from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design.

Sehba Sarwar serves as Artistic Director/Founder of Voices Breaking Boundaries and is 2012-13 Artist-in-Residence at the University of Houston Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts.

Brett Sillers is a photographer living in Houston.

Harbeer Sandhu received a Creative Capital grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation to launch texphrastic.com, a blog covering art in Houston, based in part on his contributions to OffCite.org.

CONTENTS *Winter 2013*

CITINGS

FEATURES

Above: Margaret Austin's daughter Linda at the Chappel Hill, Texas, site where Southcoast designed and built an experimental house in the summer of 1969. Photo courtesy David Cerruti.

Vive Oscar Neimeyer

Brazil Tour Was Great

A group of 41 RDA members was treated to Brazil's most romantic and beautiful city by Rice School of Architecture professor Farès el-Dahdah and architectural historian Stephen Fox. We began our visit by watching the sun set over Rio's Guanabara Bay from high above on Sugar Loaf mountain, with dinner afterwards at the original Fogo de Chão. Rio boasts many works of modernist architects such as Oscar Niemeyer, whose home Casa das Canoas (1951-54) is the background in the group photo, as well as more contemporary practitioners such as Marcio Kogan, who lectured as part of RDA's series on Brazil architecture (2005). Also on the itinerary was Sitio Roberto Burle Marx, a museum of the flora of Brazil. Our second stop was Brasilia, our guide's hometown designed by Lucio Costa... *Read more at ricedesignalliance.org.*

LETTER *to the* EDITOR

The "Guide to Power" (*Cite* 30th Anniversary edition) illustration of networks in Houston is very informative. I teach administrative theory and urban politics at UH, and we emphasize the importance of collaborative or networked arrangements in lieu of hierarchy (i.e., regional government) in order to get something done.

The illustration explains better than narrative why collaboration and collaborative management skills are needed to govern in a metropolitan area, and especially in the Houston metropolitan area.

-James Thurmond, Ph.D.
Director, Master of Public Administration
University of Houston

ERRATA.

1. *"A Guide to Power: Houston Networks," in the Fall 2012 issue of* Cite *(90), did not include the Citizens' Environmental Coalition among organizations devoted to shaping the built environment. Shawn McFarland, interim director of the Citizens' Environmental Coalition (CEC), notes that CEC is "uniquely positioned within the environmental community to be a connector for dialog on current environmental issues."* ***2.*** *The article "Freedom and Architecture: An Interview with Feminist Economist Amartya Sen," in the Spring 2012 issue of* Cite *(88), incorrectly stated that Sen used his Nobel Prize money to start a training program for women journalists in Bangladesh. The prize money launched the Pratichi Trust, which combats illiteracy among Indian girls.*

CALENDAR

HIGHLIGHTS FROM RICEDESIGNALLIANCE.ORG

MARCH 2013

5 TUES 5:30 pm

LLEWELYN-DAVIES SAHNI INNOVATIVE PRACTICE LECTURE

Gregg Pasquarelli, a partner at SHoP Architects in New York, will lecture in Rice School of Architecture's Farish Gallery. The event is free and open to the public.

26 TUES 7:00 pm

SALLY WALSH LECTURE

Jeanne Gang, Principal and Founder of Studio Gang Architects in Chicago, will lecture at 7 p.m. in the Caroline Weiss Law Building, MFAH. A reception begins at 6 p.m. in the Beck building. The event, co-sponsored by Rice Design Alliance, Rice School of Architecture, and Architecture Center Houston, is free and open to the public.

28 THURS 6:30 pm

AFORMAL URBANISM

Jonathan D. Solomon, Associate Dean at the School of Architecture at Syracuse University, will lecture in the University of Houston Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture theater, room 150.

APRIL 2013

6 & 7 SAT/SUN 1-6 pm

RDA ARCHITECTURE TOUR

See opposite page for information.

MAY 2013

4 SAT 8:00 am

ANYTHING THAT FLOATS

At the third annual Anything That Floats competition, teams will design and build boats from donated materials at Sesquicentennial Park, and paddle across the bayou for best time.

SEPTEMBER 2013

4 THURS 6:30 pm

SPOTLIGHT PRIZE LECTURE: GEORGEEN THEODORE

The annual Spotlight Prize honors architects within their first 15 years of professional practice, and the 2013 winner, Georgeen Theodore, will give a lecture at 7 p.m. in the Caroline Weiss Law Building, MFAH.

THE CENTENNIAL TOUR

Saturday, April 6, and Sunday, April 7 | 1-6 pm

TEN SIGNIFICANT HOUSTON RESIDENCES DESIGNED BY RICE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE FACULTY THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL'S 100-YEAR HISTORY WILL BE SHOWCASED. TOUR-GOERS WILL HAVE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON THE CHANGES AND EVOLUTIONS THAT ARCHITECTURE HAS UNDERGONE OVER THE PAST CENTURY. RDA MEMBERS AND THEIR GUESTS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE TOUR. PHOTOS BY PAUL HESTER.

Freedmen's Town Lives!

Residents, Artists, and Activists Draw Strength from International Connections

BY SEHBA SARWAR

9 am DECEMBER 1, 2012: I AM STARING AT A DOME CONstructed from curved metal rods by friends and volunteers before dawn. Behind me are the shotgun houses on Victor Street in Houston's Freedmen's Town and beyond them highrises glint in morning sunlight. We'll decorate the dome with Pakistani and Indian fabrics. In a few hours, Voices Breaking Boundaries (VBB) will start up Homes and Histories, our living room art production. The streets are about to come to life.

VBB has been creating living room art productions in Houston neighborhoods for more than five years. The productions juxtapose Houston histories with those of Karachi, Pakistan, my home city, and we use art to transform homes. We've already worked in First, Third, and Sixth Wards; Montrose; and the East End. Freedmen's Town, established by the first freed slaves of Texas in the mid-1800s, had been on my list for some time, but I knew that the neighborhood would pose challenges since most original residents have had to move away. Townhouses have replaced nearly all of the row houses that once defined the neighborhood. As Lisa Gray noted in a 2011 *Chronicle* article, "Hardly anyone calls it Freedmen's Town or the Fourth Ward anymore. Now it's just Midtown."

The narrow streets are among the only traces of history. I had to accept that we would not be able to find an old house to host VBB's living room art production. But working in a new home in a neighborhood as politically charged as Freedmen's Town would be problematic. So we created a living room, in the street.

We also sought to find strength and perspective in linking the struggles of the Freedmen's Town community to the African Diaspora along Pakistan's coastline. No single name defines that diaspora—Sheedi, Baloch, or Makrani are common labels, depending on whom one talks to—and little substantive research has been done about it. Preparing for the event in Houston required fieldwork.

In July 2012, I visited Sheedi/Baloch neighborhoods in and outside Karachi including Lyari, as well as Tando Bago, the village that's home to Pakistan's largest black community, and another village, Badin, where I met with Iqbal Hyder, a Sheedi activist who has started a non-profit. In Karachi, I spent some time in Lyari, one of the oldest townships, which serves as home to the city's largest Baloch community (as the black community calls itself there). The voices in both the urban and rural spaces echoed the anger one hears from the Freedmen's Town community. Citizens struggle for better health, education, and basic living conditions, while understanding that their concerns are overlooked by governments.

1 pm VBB's team works furiously to cover the dome-tent poles with fabrics. Volunteers set up a food and performance area in the shared driveway of my friend Christine Diaz's townhouse. On the streets, a crew sprays glue on the backs of photographs—historical images shot by Houston's Paul Hester, more contemporary ones by Lyari's Akbar Baloch—to stick them onto the

a Women singing in Tando Bago, Sindh.
Photo Sehba Sarwar.
b Freedmen's Town house, 1984.
Photo Paul Hester.
c Voices Breaking Boundaries VideoDome.
Photo Burnell McCray.

a

asphalt. During the show, audience members will be able to listen to conversations with older Freedmen's Town residents and learn about the brick streets that were laid down over one hundred years ago, and that are now threatened by plans by the City. I also know there will be references to past battles, such as the loss of Allen Parkway Village.

The Gregory School, the first "colored" public school in Houston and now a library that serves as an archive for African American history, opens its doors, as does the R.B.H. Yates Museum. The latter is in a large 1912 home with high ceilings and two entrances—one for residents, and the other leading to a separate room that was made available to black businessmen, musicians, and others visiting Houston who were not served by white-only hotels. The R.B.H. Yates Museum Foundation owns two more historic homes with similar layouts on the corner of Wilson and Andrews Streets, but they have yet to procure funds to restore the spaces.

5:30 pm The performances by KoumanKele dance troupe and Wharton K-8 students have ended, QR coded videos created by Robert Pruitt and Autumn Knight have been viewed, the burlap sack installation by Kaneem Smith has been removed, and Skype conversations about migrations with Babette Niemel, an artist in Amsterdam, are over. We sit on the grass at sunset sharing stories: on one street residents told volunteers to leave the photos glued to asphalt, while on the eastern end, residents asked us to stop littering. As I watch my friends unscrew the dome, I wonder what was learned through the experience. There are many commonalities between the two neighborhoods we explored: distrust of visitors; need for more infrastructure; concern about safety and drugs; and anger at police and government.

b

c

I'm not sure if VBB's show truly gave voice to the communities or if we just scraped the surface of deeper issues. I do know, however, that the process was a learning experience for everyone who participated and attended. While much of Freedmen's Town has either been burned or torn down, it's clear that the community is not gone, its history is not lost, and the struggle is not over.

As we pack, we talk about how the biggest challenge is connecting new residents of Freedmen's Town to the neighborhood's history so there can be a collaborative celebration. In Pakistan, there's an urgent need to create a quota system for the Sheedi/Baloch community so they can gain access to education and basic living amenities. Awareness is important, so for now VBB will launch videos on an interactive website. Freedmen's Town and Sheedi/Baloch members that participated in the project will be offered honoraria. And most importantly, we will stay connected to both communities; there are many more stories that remain untold.

VOICES BREAKING BOUNDARIES HAS SOUGHT TO INCITE SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH ART SINCE 2000. LEARN MORE AT THEIR WEBSITE, VBBARTS.ORG.

Expanded Architecture

Rice School of Architecture students win an international competition with a proposal that imagines a petropolis of offshore oil rigs, agriculture, and recreation.

BY ANA MARÍA DURÁN CALISTO

OIL FRONTIERS ADVANCE RELENTLESSLY AS EXISTING extraction sites are exhausted. The days of company towns built around coal mines have given way to remote extraction sites. The energy industry is penetrating rain forests (at too high a cost), deserts, ice sheets, and oceans. Pure infrastructure dominates with little provisioning for human needs—a world for engineers with no role for architects.[1] But could that change?

A team from the Rice School of Architecture has won the Odebrecht Award for Sustainable Development for proposing an audacious water-based urbanism. They see an opportunity in the veritable archipelagos of oil rigs being built in the water. In Drift & Drive, the Rice team conjures a massive new inhabitable territory: a dynamic, urban, artificial archipelago where industry coexists with schools, libraries, hospitals, houses, novel and well-organized transportation networks, waste management, and agricultural fields (not monocultural, but hybrid and rotational).

The idea of settlement has returned. What had become a mere extraction enclave of minimum provision for human needs is being rethought in terms of inhabitation. This process calls for the re-involvement of the architect.

Drift & Drive should not be dismissed as an outlandish academic exercise. Rather, it is an excellent example of a renewed dialogue between industry and design. The backer of the award, Odebrecht, is a renowned transnational corporation of Brazilian origin that specializes in engineering, construction, petrochemical and bio-energy services. Though the concept is not accompanied by a full business plan, it could catalyze actionable designs in the future.

This type of award helps bridge the gap that has led our transnational cultures to conceive development in generic terms and assume an impossible disjunction between ecology, infrastructure, and city. Drift & Drive is holistic in nature. The Rice University students Joanna Luo, Weijia Song, and Alexander Yuen, who worked under the lead of architect and professor Neeraj Bhatia, broke away from the model of enclaves in order to design a networked urbanism. Moreover, they imagine the project living beyond the period of oil extraction, beyond the ghost town of the "bust" condition, towards a post-oil, low-impact utopia. They imagine beyond insularity. The archipelago is conceptualized as a series of complementary and symbiotic hubs, not as naïve Robinson Crusoe-like aspirations of full isolation.

The project stems from a fact: the need of Petrobras, Brazil's semi-public energy company, to relocate the workforce of its offshore exploration and drilling endeavors in the Campos and Santos basins "as rigs are set up increasingly further from shore." [2]

Drift & Drive is planned at several scales, from its regional reorganization of fixed and floating hubs and thoroughfares, to the walls of the almost medieval fortresses of its main nodes. The vision of an emerging marine urbanism, capable of sustaining a population of 50,000 inhabitants, is rendered in unison with the natural forces that enhance its performance: boats drift from

1. See Felipe Correa, "A Projective Space for the South American Hinterland: Resource-Extraction Urbanism", published in Harvard Design Magazine, *no. 34, April 15, 2011.*
2.Executive summary of the winning entry.

platform to platform on the warm-water Brazil current; sun and tides transform into energy and power the boats as they drive against the current to complete a loop; rig foundations and anchorages become supports for life and aquaculture (coral reef-like); islands turn into metamorphic vessels; and architects play the enlarged role of orchestrators, as they attune diverse degrees and types of expertise in an enlarged architectural project.

Drift & Drive also contributes to the goals of the South America Project, an applied research and design network that aspires to reintroduce the Architect into the projection and construction of large territories, such as those the extraction industry engages in South America. We expect to see analogous, fearless, and innovative images of development for the future.

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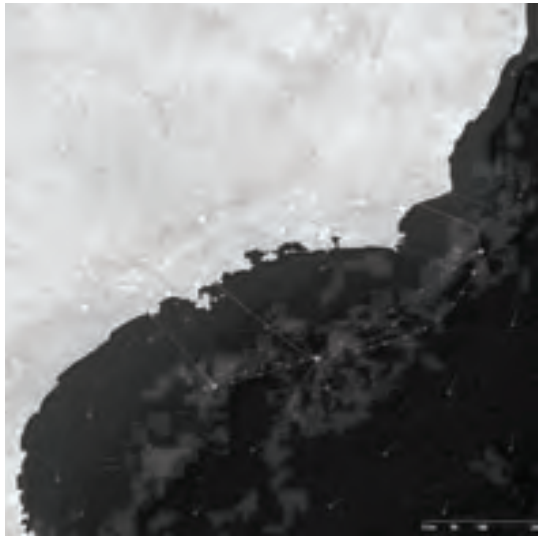

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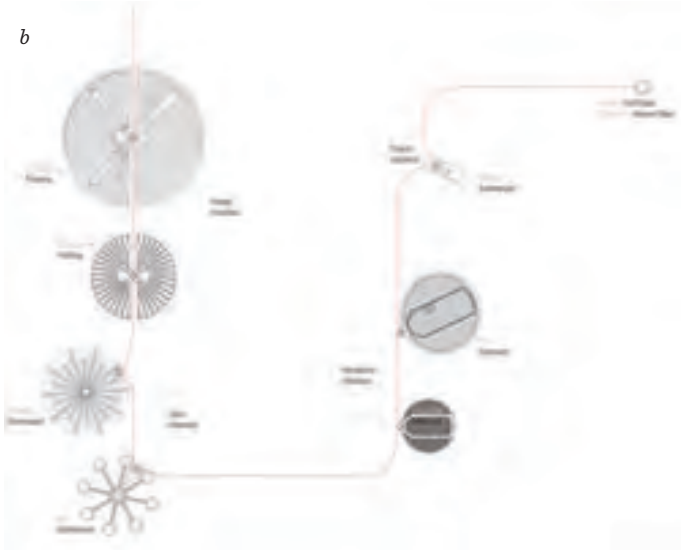

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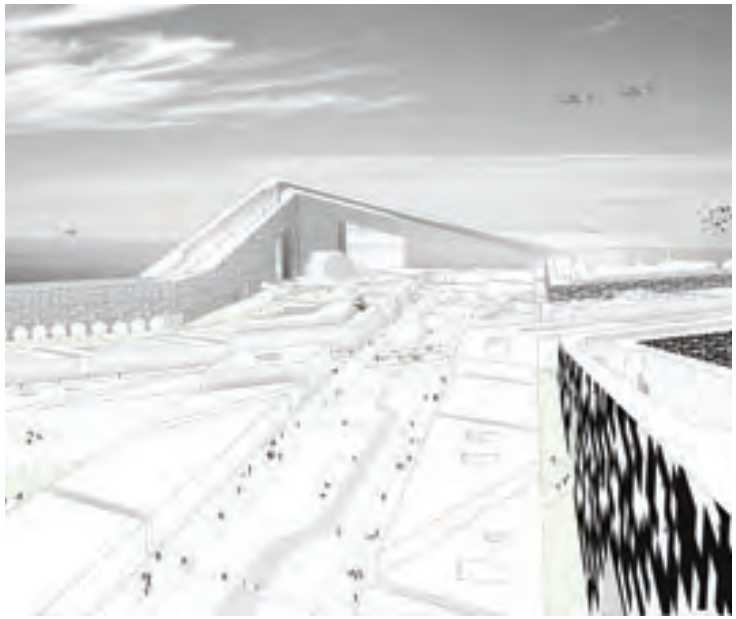

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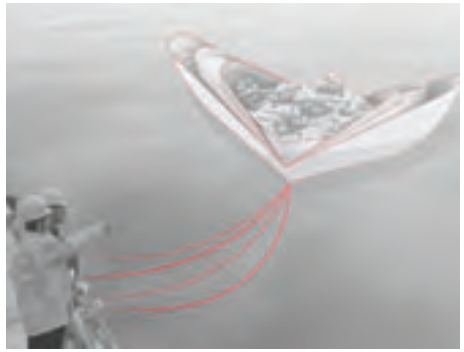


a Masterplan of petropolis along the southeast coast of Brazil.
b Drift Boat interfacing with Agricultural and Energy Islands. Design by Weijia Song.
c Hub Island's central plaza and perimeter of housing. Design by Alexander Yuen.
d Mobile Oil Boat at sea, transporting goods and works from rigs to hubs. Design by Joanna Luo.

Wild Parrots of Houston

An Invasive Species Opens Our Eyes to the Possibilities of the Houston Landscape

BY RAJ MANKAD
ILLUSTRATION BY JORGE GALVAN

FACE IT. HOUSTON IS UGLY. YOU KNOW YOU FEEL IT DEEP in your gut every time you return from some other city. Maybe your own neighborhood is a surprising island of loveliness, but the city as a whole? Vast stretches of infrastructure slice, dice, and gash the landscape to the point of ruin. Parking lots. Endless parking lots!

Beauty can be found, however, in the unlikeliest of places—high-voltage transmission towers. A species of parrots known as monk parakeets, or *Myiopsitta monachus*, builds chambered stick nests over six feet across in the crossbeams of the towers. Descended from birds in the temperate climes of Argentina and Bolivia, they dart in and out of the holes on the underside of their condominiums.

Go to the utility corridor that intersects Bellaire Boulevard between Stella Link and the 610 Loop and you will find some of the oldest and largest colonies of monk parakeets. The corridor is truly Texas sized. Horses graze between the towers. The high-tension lines crackle as they deliver electricity across west Houston, which is alarming to be sure, though no studies have linked even long-term proximity to illness. On a single line, you will see bright green parakeets perched next to grackles and doves. They suddenly break into flight as one flock—black, brown, and green gracefully arcing through the sky in unison. Other hotspots include the University of Houston main campus, El Franco Lee Park, and Highway 3 around Kemah.

"They eat bugs, berries, buds, flowers, nuts, and seeds depending on the life stage," says Dan Brooks, Curator of Vertebrate Zoology at the Houston Museum of Natural Sciences. He adds, "The parakeets occupy a vacant niche that native species do not bother with."

In June 2009, I posted a quick piece on OffCite about the wild parrots, featuring a quote from a *Chronicle* column by Lisa Gray and a map of sightings from ebird.org. Since then, several thousand people have visited the page, making it the most popular post since the launch of OffCite. The charisma of the wild parrots appears to be doing what the carefully researched articles I labored over for hours failed to achieve—draw enough attention to the landscape of our city that, instead of looking away, we find solutions to the fragmentation... *Find maps and other information at OffCite.org.*

"The nest of [monk parakeets] is unique among parrots. It is a large, bulky structure built from dry twigs and placed in the topmost branches of a tree. Preference is shown for thorny twigs, presumably because they bind together better and provide extra protection against predators. Nests with a single chamber and occupied by only one pair are not uncommon, but it is the enormous communal nests occupied by many pairs that are so conspicuous. These are probably formed over a number of years as pairs build their nests alongside or on top of existing nests. Each pair has its own chamber or compartment with an entrance tunnel, and there are no connections between compartments. Nests containing up to twenty compartments have been recorded, and Hudson says that some nests could weigh as much as 200 kilograms."

PARROTS OF THE WORLD
Joseph M. Forshaw, 1977

This Panhandler Is a Poetic Terrorist

EMERGEncy ROOM
MASSA LEMU
PASSAGES FOR THE UNDOCUMENTED
NOVEMBER 1-29, 2012

BY HARBEER SANDHU

WE LIVE IN A TIME OF ACCELERATING CHANGE AND instability. It can also be said that change is the only constant, but with nation-states merging into entities like the European Union, on the one hand, and long simmering "civil" wars that are the legacy of European colonialism splintering nations, on the other hand; with freetrade and borders that are increasingly porous to goods, capital, and human migrants; and with news about all this tumult flooding the 24-hour information stream, we are at least more aware of incessant change than we have ever been before. Solid footing on terra firma is out; surfing liquefied landfill is in.

In this instable context, it is probably foolish to be too sure of anything, and our language reflects these doubts. We hesitate to speak with self-assuredness. In his poem "Totally like whatever, you know?" Taylor Mali observes, "Invisible question marks and parenthetical (you know?)'s / have been attaching themselves to the ends of our sentences? / Even when those sentences aren't, like, questions? You know?" Lacking authority and conviction, our simplest declarations end with the upturned inflection of interrogatories.

Right?

Yet, it is in this very same context that homeless people in Houston brave traffic and climate to display their handmade placards declaring, unequivocally, "Will work for food," and "Disabled vet—anything helps." It is that medium—a homeless person bearing a short, earnest message on a piece of cardboard—that became Massa Lemu's means of expression for two years.

Picture, then, a young, clean, able-bodied black man posing with a cardboard sign on a street corner. You have seen this before. You have a word for it, "panhandler," and the moment your brain applies that word to the person before you, you cease seeing because you are now blinded by your preconceived notions. But this is no ordinary panhandler. This panhandler's sign reads, "Nihilist in search of tenure." On another day, it might read, "No fry zones" or "Plot tectonics" or "In pursuit of fulfailment" or "Those who venture there get immunized." This panhandler is a Poetic Terrorist.

For two years, Lemu, a trained painter and a third-world migrant ("an artist who would probably never get a gallery deal," he says) stood in busy Houston intersections holding the signs for an audience of motorists. For two years, Lemu turned curbs and sidewalks, medians and crosswalks, into a stage for performance art where he attempted to engage an often unwitting, sometimes unwilling, and always fleeting audience with what anarchist theorist Hakim Bey has called "Poetic Terrorism" or PT:

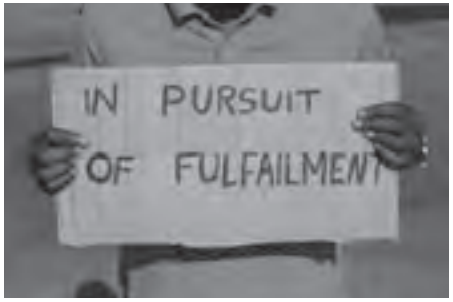
> *PT is an act in a Theater of Cruelty which has no stage, no rows of seats, no tickets & no walls. In order to work at all, PT must categorically be divorced from all conventional structures for art consumption (galleries, publications, media)... Don't do PT for other artists, do it for people who will not realize (at least for a few moments) that what you have done is art. Avoid recognizable art-categories, avoid politics, don't stick around to argue, don't be sentimental.*

Though Lemu was unaware of Bey's essay during the time of his performance, he echoes theories laid out in "Poetic Terrorism." Lemu describes interactions with motorists who tried to engage him in conversation:

> *Every attempt for the motorist to ask questions or for me to explain was unsuccessful because of time... Even communication itself was difficult because of the noise. And also you are shouting to somebody who is constantly looking at the lights and their cell phone. Honestly, I never really worried about explaining to the motorists because I knew that was impossible. Explaining was not part of the deal because the work itself plays with communication and meaning. If somebody read it that was enough. If they started asking questions, that was more. But they were not getting answers. There were times when my presence was acknowledged, when I could tell from facial expressions such as puzzlement, a frown, a smile, or laughter that somebody had read my statement. Some people acknowledged my presence by trying to offer*

PICTURE, THEN, A YOUNG, CLEAN, ABLE-BODIED BLACK MAN POSING WITH A CARDBOARD SIGN ON A STREET CORNER.

a



b

a ***In Pursuit of Fulfailment***, 2012, performance with cardboard and ink. Photos Logan Beck.

b *Genesis: A Concise History of Malawi,* 2012, performance with cardboard and ink. The sign reads, "In the beginning/there was nothing/then it became/a British Protectorate."

me money even when they had not read the statement. There were a lot of averted gazes, too, when people deliberately avoided eye contact with me. The pitiful moments were when people completely shut me out. Those were the moments I felt most invisible.

When pressed about his reaction to being offered money, he says:

I realized that that was an awkward moment for the Good Samaritan when I refused the money. But that was also my opportunity to get more noticed in the confusion.

Rather than use the language of the panhandler wholesale, I was interested in the unstable linguistic space between sense and nonsense, not only to say veiled things but also to focus on communication itself and break boundaries of thought.

The homeless, like migrants, occupy a strange liminal space—they are ubiquitous, yet all but invisible. Though they live under the ever-watchful eye of police enforcing city ordinances that criminalize their presence, the broader public prefers to look past or look through them.

Lemu's signs and performances aim to shake motorists awake from what Salman Rushdie calls "the anesthesia of the everyday" by slipping in his subliminal message using a familiar medium and then sideswiping them with a jolt of confusion. There is freedom, he seems to suggest—of thought, of emotion, of perception even—in that confusion. A chance to reconfigure fixed thinking patterns in their fleeting moment of fragmentation upon shattering.

Like a homeless person who has found a temporary shelter for the night, Lemu's ephemeral, temporal *Passages for the Undocumented* performance briefly found a temporary shelter at Rice University's EMERGEncy Room gallery, where it met a different kind of audience and a different kind of gaze than it was used to. Lemu has no plans to bring back this performance.

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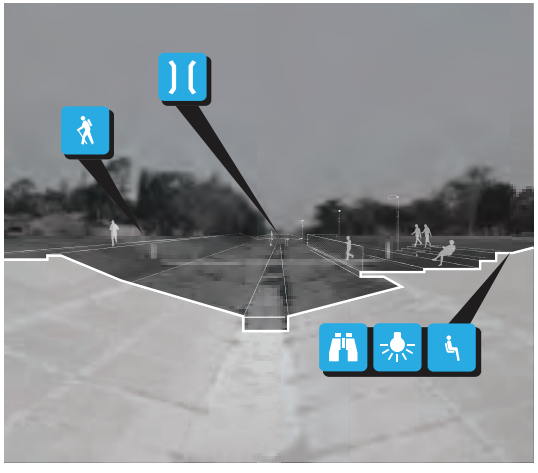

a **DITCH THE DITCH**
In Houston, houses and neighborhoods mostly turn their backs on the 2,500 miles of waterways, bayous, and ditches that wind through the city. The system is not considered an amenity, but instead a nuisance. Thickening our drainage easements by adding amenities like trails, paths, seating, shade, and lighting has the potential to create an alternative pedestrian network that winds through our neighborhoods connecting parks, schools, and housing. Courtesy UH Community Design Resource Center. Montage image by Alex Lara.

b **MILES OF POSSIBILITY**
If drainage systems were proactively planned and designed as an integral element that added value to our communities, instead of turning our backs on these systems, we could embrace them. Houses could face two ways, to the front yard and the street and to the drainage easement. Courtesy UH Community Design Resource Center. Section by Rose Lee.

Reconnecting by Way of What Divides Us

GERALD D. HINES COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE
THICK INFRASTRUCTURE
OCTOBER 4 – NOVEMBER 21, 2012

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMUNITY DESIGN Resource Center (CDRC) recently put on *Thick Infrastrure*, an exhibition of bold visions for Houston's transit centers, park-and-ride lots, drainage ditches, and utility easements.

Team members included Ruqiya Imtiaz-uddin, Alex Lara, Rose Lee, Xavier Vargas, and Susan Rogers. Rice Design Alliance provided $5,000 in funding through the Initiatives for Houston grant program.

"We're looking at how to make better use of existing spaces, how to give things more than one purpose, and how to use resources in an efficient way that adds value to our community," says Rogers, who directs the CDRC and serves as chair of the *Cite* editorial committee.

During the run of the exhibition, Houston voters approved $100 million in bond funding for Bayou Greenways, a 150-mile system of contiguous bicycle trails along the bayous. *Thick Infrastructure* could be seen as an extension or expansion of that grand project, a Bayou Greenways 2.0.

Visitors were invited to write their own visions on postcards that were posted on walls and then sent to the Houston city council. Many cards took the logic of *Thick Infrastructure* further. For example, one card described a woman fainting while waiting in the sun for a bus and demanded better bus shelters. Another card suggested better sidewalks connecting the envisioned networks to "schools, churches, & homes."

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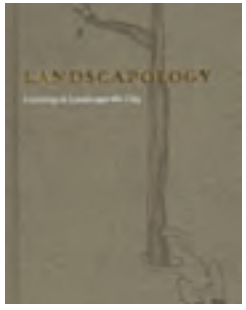

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d

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a **TERUNOBU FUJIMORI ARCHITECT**
EDITED BY MICHAEL BUHRS & HANNES ROSSLER

The sophisticated buildings of Japanese architect Terunobu Fujimori (born 1946) combine the archaic, eccentric, poetic, and the ecological—almost all of them are made of simple, traditional materials such as earth, stone, wood, coal, bark and mortar.

MUNICH, 2012, SOFTCOVER, 240 PAGES
$60.00 / $52.00 FOR RDA MEMBERS

b **LANDSCAPOLOGY: LEARNING TO LANDSCAPE THE CITY**
BY PAUL VAN BEEK & CHARLES VERMAAS

Landscapology is where landscape architecture, urban planning, and ecology are combined in a new profession for a more sustainable world. With a foreword by Charles Waldheim, Chair of Landscape Architecture at Harvard, this book promotes an inspirational vision for the urban landscape.

AMSTERDAM, 2011, HARDCOVER, 479 PAGES
$57.00 / $45.60 FOR RDA MEMBERS

c **MIES VAN DER ROHE: A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY, NEW AND REVISED EDITION**
BY FRANZ SCHULZE AND EDWARD WINDHORST

Franz Schulze's acclaimed 1985 biography was the first full treatment of the master German-American modern architect. This thoroughly revised edition, co-authored with architect Edward Windhorst, features new and extensive original research and commentary, and draws on the best recent work of American and German scholars and critics.

EDWARD WINDHORST WILL GIVE A LECTURE AT THE MFAH ON FEB. 21, 2013. A BOOK SIGNING WILL FOLLOW.

CHICAGO, 2012, HARDCOVER, 512 PAGES
$45 / $36 FOR RDA MEMBERS

d **FROM THE GROUND UP: INNOVATIVE GREEN HOMES**
EDITED BY PEGGY TULLY

In *From the Ground Up*, editor Peggy Tully presents the results of an international competition to create new models for affordable high-performance green homes in urban residential neighborhoods.

PRINCETON, 2012, HARDCOVER, 160 PAGES
$29.95 / $23.96 FOR RDA MEMBERS

e **THANKS FOR THE VIEW, MR. MIES: LAFAYETTE PARK, DETROIT**
EDITED BY DANIELLE AUBERT, LANA CAVAR, & NATASHA CHANDANI

"This beautiful and wonderfully ambitious book tells the comprehensive story of a unique place – Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's magnificent modernist vision built in the midst of a city undergoing the worst of the urban crisis. The story is told through a collage of archival records, insightful essays and, above all, interviews with the residents and photographs of what they have made of Mies. The collision between Mies's purer-than-pure modernism and the realities of Detroit is both comic and tragic – surprising, disturbing and, finally, inspiring." – Robert Fishman, Taubman College of Architecture and Planning, University of Michigan

NEW YORK, 2012, SOFTCOVER, 288 PAGES
$29.95 / $23.96 FOR RDA MEMBERS


HOUSTON
BY
DART BOARD
1
2
3
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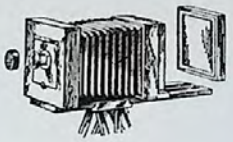
10

BY PAUL HESTER

Mount a map on the wall. Throw a dart. Photograph the quadrant where it lands, but not with the idea of taking pretty pictures. Frame the image to deepen our understanding of the city as it is.

THE view camera is a cumbersome obstacle perched precariously on top of a three-legged metal sculpture. The scene beyond is projected onto a sheet of glass, where it flickers off and on and upside down, difficult to see without a black cloth to shut out the reflections of bright lights and the honking of drivers calling attention to themselves when confronted with this apparition.

Photographers in the last decade of the nineteenth century could buy manufactured plates, sheets of glass sensitized to record the nuances of light gathered by the lens. Before that time, each photographer was a chemist as well as an explorer and artist and businessman. Film was not store-bought. Film didn't exist. Negatives were made on sheets of glass; the glass was not sensitive to light until the photographer/chemist coated it with silver salts. But the salts were only sensitive to light while wet, so the glass was coated in the portable darkroom only after the scene was chosen and the picture determined. It required development before it dried. Pictures were selected with care; deliberation and physical labor determined the successfully captured scenes.



The methodical approach is difficult to imagine in our moment of iPhone rapture. The ecstasy of rapid-fire shutters and immediate results produces billions of instant gratifications, like spawning fish flooding the water with an abundance of eggs.

The beginning photography course in the Department of Visual & Dramatic Arts at Rice University combines the technical instruction necessary to expose and develop film with the aesthetic issues that are connected to the historical changes in the processes. One important way of learning about photography is by doing it. Imitating the styles and subject matter of historical moments introduces the conditioning factors of technical events upon aesthetic decisions. The view camera offers a challenge to our cultural moment of digital convenience. The instantaneous record to which we are accustomed is replaced by the delay of several hours required to locate a suitably acceptable place to set up the tripod and camera, measure the light with a hand-held light meter, frame and focus the upside-down image vaguely visible on the ground glass at the back of the camera, set the mechanical controls of the aperture and shutter speed, expose the film, return to the darkrooms in the Media Center, develop each sheet of four-inch-by-five-inch film in open trays in complete darkness, wait for the film to dry, and then produce a black-and-white version of the half-remembered and misunderstood upside-down vision briefly glimpsed under the black cloth.

This has been the trial by fire ritual of initiation for beginning photography students at Rice for the past 45 years. Geoff Winningham

1

OLD SPANISH TRAIL AND TIERWESTER

Woman at Southeast Transit Center. Photograph by Andrew Stegner.

2

OLD SPANISH TRAIL AND TIERWESTER

Mural by Daniel Anguilu. Photograph by Andrew Stegner.


THE EARTH IS BUT ONE
COUNTRY AND MANKIND
ITS CITIZENS
BAHAI

ALWAYS ASK PERMISSION; REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE INVADING THEIR TERRITORY...

introduced this approach, which he learned at the Institute of Design in Chicago earning an MFA under Aaron Siskind and Arthur Siegel. It was begun in Houston at the University of St. Thomas and continued when the Menil-sponsored program transferred to Rice.

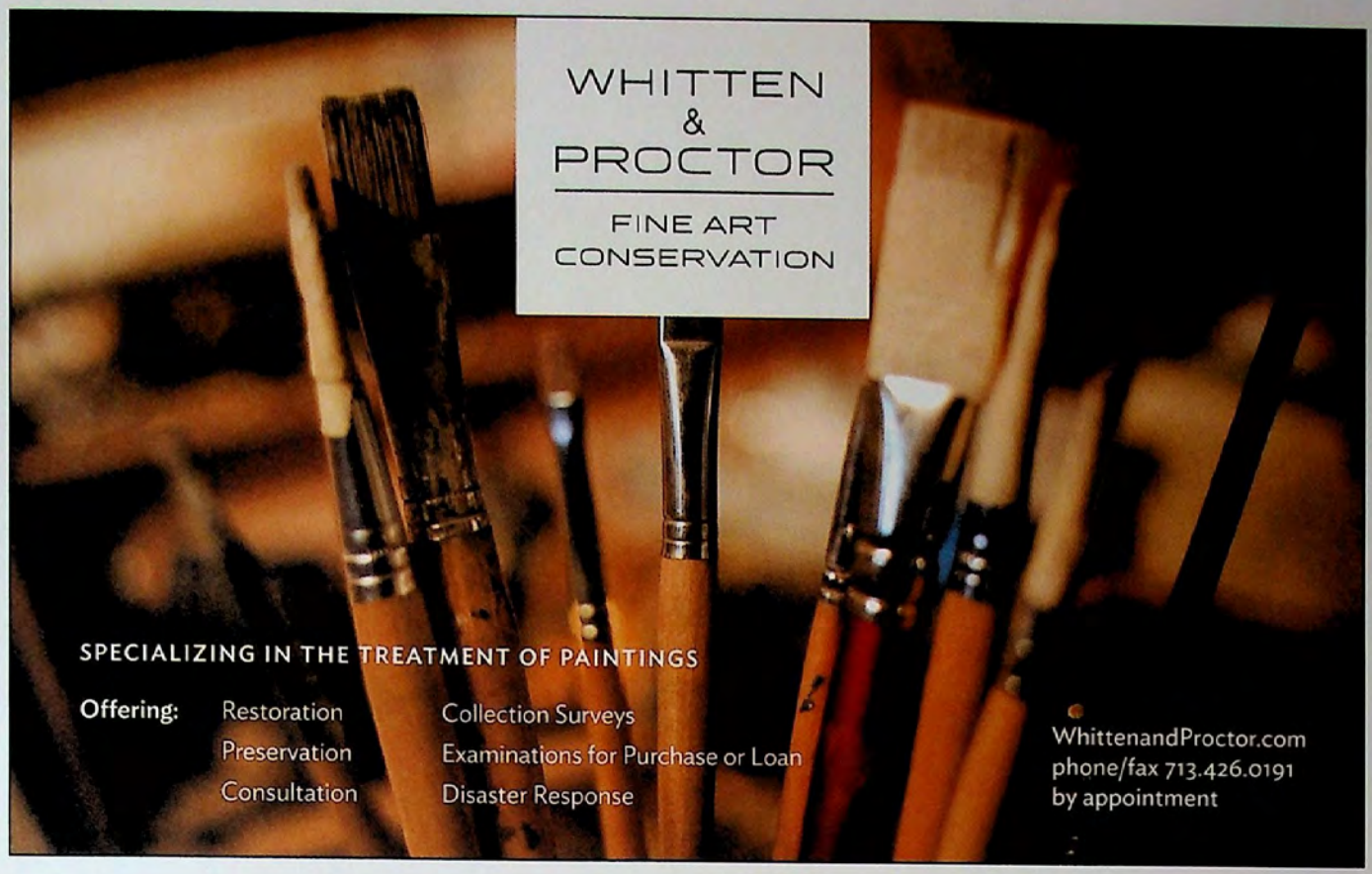
This spring semester is the final beginning course to use the view cameras to introduce students to photography. In the fall of 2013, beginning students will have the option of using 120mm roll film in Holga cameras or go completely digital.

The era of exploration in photography coincided with the geological surveys conducted by the United States government in the Western Territories following the end of the Civil War. Photographers who had learned the trade copying maps, documenting constructions, making portraits, and describing the aftermath of battles headed west to document the wealth and geology and vastness. The assignment in the beginning class forces students to explore parts of the city into which they would not venture on their own. In the beginning, ten years ago, they could only rely on the two dimensions of Key Maps and printouts of the creased and folded Houston street map. Recent classes have turned to Google Maps and Street Views in attempts to predict whether or not a neighborhood is sketchy. Occasionally a student in the class is from Houston and passes along their prejudices about different parts of town. My response to those students is that you don't know the area until you go there, get out of the car, and walk the block. Racial and economic biases are no excuse to avoid uncertainty or the unknown.

A map of Houston is pushpinned to the wall of the classroom, the tack space normally reserved for critiques of their own black-and-white prints. Each student has as many throws as necessary until one sticks. Some consider themselves professional and make a show of announcing their chosen target; others are shy about their lack of this particular skill. Several throw wide of the map and the darts carom toward the fringes of Harris County where nothing is printed on the map to offer any clues of what they might find. There might as well be dragons and sea monsters drawn from ancient seafaring charts. It is all unfamiliar to these inhabitants cloistered within the hedges.

Certain guidelines are emphasized. Do not go alone; make sure your phone battery is charged; if you feel threatened, leave; if a resident is rude or defensive, it is not a reason for you to treat them disrespectfully. Do not trespass; always ask permission; remember that you are invading their territory; consider your privileged status as a representative from an expensive private university; think how it might feel if strangers entered your college domain with these unusual instruments.

Some students restrict their photography to street scenes, commercial structures, parks, and public spaces. Others return with engaged portraits brought forth from genuine social interactions. Some international students are surprised by open ditches and dilapidated shacks and eroding infrastructure. Others seek comfort in the familiarity of suburban house forms. Many discover a different Houston in the interstitial fauna between the glass towers and away from the freeways. The ability of the view cameras to focus very closely on minute details allows the option to ignore the apparent chaos and delineate clarity in peeling paint and the shapes within graffiti. The view on the ground glass is upside-down for a reason; our expectations are inverted. Other Houstons are glimpsed. These students are intellectually curious and visually sophisticated. What do they see in Houston that escapes our tired and habitual eyes? What do you see through their view cameras? C



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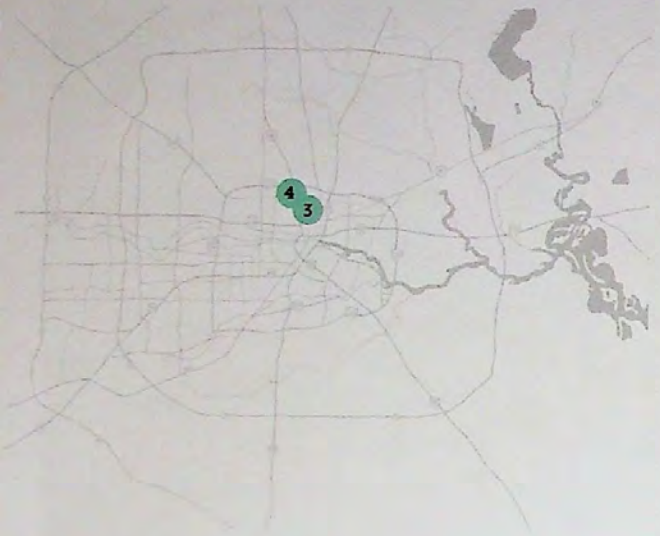


3

CAVALCADE AND FULTON

Light rail construction at night. Photo by Reed Jones.

4

CAVALCADE AND FULTON

Dancing mailbox with googly eyes. Photo by Reed Jones.

5

DURBAN AND CLAY

Opposite: Three boys at a garage sale. Photo by Melissa Fwu.

6

CLINTON AND GREGG

Top Left: Urban Lofts townhouses designed by Larry Davis. Photo by Yoko Hongyui Li.

7

SHEPHERD AND WROXTON

Top Right: Rippling sidewalk under zoohemic canopy. Photo by Jen Woelfel using digital camera.

8

AIRPORT AND LINNET

Middle Left: Mailbox with angled pipe supports. Photo by Nicole Orchard.

9

ADDICKS RESERVOIR AT KATY FREEWAY

Middle Right: A dirt road. Photo by Veronica Burkel.

10

CHESTNUT AND QUITMAN

Bottom: Two boys and a shopping cart. Photo by Caitlin Rexses using digital camera.

MARGARET AUSTIN CENTER

An Experimental House Built in 1969 by a Collective of Architecture School Dropouts Called Gulfcoast Survives Against All Expectations as a Center for Healing and Devotion Sustained by the Sweat and Generosity of Ecumenical Buddhists and Many Others

AS night falls on Margaret's farm an hour west of Houston, the heat lifts just a bit, and the four or five college-age kids who have been out there for months banging away on bare planks and beams are finally calling it quits for the day. It's 1969, late summer, and most of their construction is complete on what they are calling the "Chappell Hill House."

They share a simple meal, maybe a pot of beans and some store-bought sliced bread under the light of a couple of bare bulbs strung from a wire. Margaret Austin has come down from her house at the north end of the property to survey their progress and deliver a bowl of tomatoes picked that day from her garden. Though she is about 50 years old, and the mother of their school friends Linda and Martha, Margaret has never seemed all that parental. She is with it, interested in new ideas, comfortable with freaks, and happy to hang.

Flanked by her two German Shepherds, she takes a seat and a toke from the joint going 'round, and suggests that in a year from now, when all the work is over and done, they all come back for a party. She can't take her eyes off the building, which casts broad shadows under the moonlight.

When the kids finally break for the night, they lay out bedrolls and cots wherever it suits them. One tramps out into the pasture for some time alone. Others crash out on the wood floor of the freaky new building. John Gilbert climbs to the top of it, up two flights of one-foot-by-one-foot stairs to a rooftop deck without a railing, where he can watch the shooting stars.

The building is designed to be Margaret's retreat, and it is so far-out in its conception that it makes people laugh out loud when they see it for the first time. It is made of three cubical volumes, lined up and set on one edge, so the exterior walls stretch out over the ground before making a right angle and meeting again at the apex directly above. The cube on the west has an entrance into one sloping wall without a door and contains a primitive kitchen and a bathroom without any sort of barrier or screen between them. Kelly Gloger, who had learned to shape Fiberglas while building surfboards, has surfaced one corner of the kitchen-cum-bathroom into a large open shower.

The center volume is the largest, with enormous, heavy sash windows on the undersides that have been salvaged from a de-

Opposite: The "Chappell Hill House" as built by Southcoast in 1969. Photo courtesy Pepper Mouser and David Cerruti.

BY HANK HANCOCK

THE BUILDING IS DESIGNED TO BE MARGARET'S RETREAT, AND IT IS SO FAR-OUT IN ITS CONCEPTION THAT IT MAKES PEOPLE LAUGH OUT LOUD WHEN THEY SEE IT FOR THE FIRST TIME.

molished farmhouse nearby. You can see out to the horizon, but the windows face the ground below. The stairway, pitched at 45 degrees–not a problem for the kids, but already a bit of a chore for Margaret–leads to a large landing and a northeast-facing balcony. Huge benches built into the east and west edges upstairs and down make plenty of room for improvised seating or crashing out.

Forty years later, one of the builders, Pepper Mouser, can identify elements of Texas frontier tradition in this central space, with the open windows suggesting a sort of dogtrot or breezeway. Another of the team, John Gilbert, is doubtful that they had any such awareness. "We were just kids."

In 1969, the eastern box is entirely open on the first floor, a stables or a carport, while the second floor, which leads from the center landing, is a closed and quiet space with a built-in bed and room for a stove. This would soon be Margaret's bedroom.

The angled north and south walls, the steep stairwells, and the unguarded landings make for an uncanny experience. You must always be mindful while making your way through this house. Watch your step and watch your head. Take a moment to orient yourself in every corner of every room. Such mindfulness is likely part of Margaret's developing meditative practice.

Immediately surrounding the building, Margaret has planted five pecan trees for shade and is already making plans to add a couple of stands of bamboo, a couple of oaks. The building and the new trees stand alone in the middle of Margaret's 40 acres of pasture.

The entire project is a sort of improvisation, what Mouser calls "a building that happened." The kids call themselves "guerilla builders." They go to a building site, live there, work in charrette, with or without plans, and stay until it's done. In this case, they have a chipboard model to work from, and they draw their designs on the very planks that go into the building, leaving behind precious little other documentation. They pay just $30 a week to anyone who pitches in, plus "room and board," such as it is.

The kids had all met one another, and met Linda and Martha just a few years earlier, at the University of Houston (UH), amid the network of students protesting the Vietnam War. Kenneth Carbajal, only recently graduated from the College of Architecture, became a colleague and motivator. "He was our professor, but we were friends, did things together. It was the sixties, things were getting kind of crazy and interesting," says Pepper Mouser. In January 1967 Mouser and three other students moved into an apartment with Carbajal on Oakdale Street a block south of Southmore Boulevard. Right away, they set to work cutting holes in walls and rebuilding the interior. Soon, the space was featured in a photo spread in *Progressive Architecture*.

Ten to twelve others, including Steve and Susan Jackson, David Cerruti, Galen Hope, and Ben Holmes, lived together in "Alabama House," across the corner from San Jacinto High School. Margaret lived in River Oaks on Wickersham, but had kept her family's previous home on Kipling Street, which she allowed the students to use as a crash pad, darkroom, and staging ground. None of these residents was stable or continuous. Mouser, for one, describes himself in those days as semi-nomadic, staying for periods in various houses.

Opposite (Clockwise from Top Left): First floor interior of the Chappell Hill House; construction in 1969; the "Pumphouse Gang"; and Margaret Austin. Photos courtesy of David Cerruti.

In Carbajal's sophomore design class, he handed out an assignment to come up with a completely new way to design a 50,000-square-foot space. Student Pete Voorhees imagined a box set on its edge, the interior made into a sort of multilevel treehouse.

In May 1968, Carbajal, cognizant of the radical architectural movements erupting all at once in California and the Northeast, and soon to take its momentous stand here in Texas, proposed that their group identify as Southcoast. It didn't take much to incorporate: just a name and a stack of fliers made it real. They took full advantage of the university's offset press and later its Xerox machines.

In the meantime, the architecture school was barely functioning, losing its dean twice in one year, its students up in arms, its accreditation under threat. The one bright spot was the arrival in spring 1969 of Ant Farm provocateurs Chip Lord and Doug Michels. Members of Southcoast went to greet them at the airport in a hearse. As ostensible lecturers, Lord and Michels would grant students credit for attending happenings over the spring and summer at Padre and Freeport where space and time were deliberately set loose by means of parachutes, inflatables, and lysergic acid.

Students went looking outside the university for a meaningful education. John Gilbert went on taking new building projects across the country, regularly interrupting his studies at UH until he was five years late graduating. Mouser and several others just never went back, figuring that an education was something else entirely from a degree.

The members of Southcoast are not found in the UH yearbooks of their day. The Anderson Library at UH has nearly no record of their activity. In fact, Southcoast is archived nearly nowhere. Today, its surviving members retain only their own photos and film and video, and memories. They gave little thought to posterity in those days, so determined were they to Be Here Now.

In summer 1968, Southcoast has moved to Vermont at the invitation of Yale University's David Sellers to work on one of several domestic buildings around Goddard College that will go on to become architectural touchstones for the emerging design/build movement. They bring Voorhees's tilted cube design with them and share it freely.

It is a loose coalition, borrowing and sharing and pitching in. Membership is an informal matter. Their nomadic sensibility means you just have to show up. The key members identified in this article by no means comprise a complete listing.

Martha Austin drives up to New England too, transferring to a college in Boston to study art history. She soon finds out that owning a car in Boston is just a huge hassle, so she begs her mother to come get the car and bring it back to Texas. Margaret brings Southcoast's Tom Morey with her, and on that road trip they begin to sketch out ideas for a new home for her in Chappell Hill, a place where Margaret can retreat from the city, enjoy the quiet and solitude, and meditate. It will take the shape of a series of cubic volumes set on their edges.

The occult relationship between Chappell Hill House and the design/build landmarks around Plainfield, Vermont, and Maine is unmistakable today, though the Chappell Hill House has not so far earned much academic notice. It will follow a rather different trajectory.

The 1968 Vermont project and the 1969 Chappell Hill project both provide on-the-job training, opportunities to experiment and fail and try again. The guerilla builders draw on each other's disparate skills. Tom Morey and his brother Mike know how to build a foundation, Voorhees knows plumbing and electrical systems, Gilbert knows a thing or two about how a frame bears its load. Project runner Mouser, who will go on to work in video sales and installation, brings cameras that everyone takes turns operating. They film one another riding dirt bikes, shirtless, across Margaret's pastures.

As Ant Farm will demonstrate in the following few years, architecture, building, and media comprise an emerging, single enterprise. Southcoast will go on to build a media van to join Ant Farm's fleet the following year.

At some point in Chappell Hill, they dig a septic tank for the flush toilet so they can take down that latrine out in the woods. By the end of summer, the hardest work is done. They come back on weekends through the fall and into winter to attend to details, and to try to fix their mistakes. The ground-facing windows are too complicated, their interlocking sashes too heavy, their Rube Goldberg mechanisms faulty. The sky-facing windows shed water.

Because they are guerilla builders, Southcoast will soon leave the site without a trace. It is a building that happened one summer. A year later, many of them accept Margaret's invitation to a blowsy, sun-drenched party, camping and cooking out, also documented on film belonging to Mouser.

After that they do not come back. They never expect the building to stand for 40 more years.

Opposite: A Southcoast member frames the prairie of Chappell Hill. Photo courtesy David Cerruti.


SOUTH
COAST

Thus begins the unending process of modifying and adding to and fixing up the iconic house at Chappell Hill.

It is 2012 when Susan Jackson attends a yoga retreat in out-of-the-way Chappell Hill, at a place called the Margaret Austin Center. Over a weekend of contemplation and held poses, Susan recognizes the cantilevered walls and ceilings of the bunkhouse attached to the main kitchen. She lives with her husband Steve just minutes away from there, so she soon brings him back with her to see what has become of Chappell Hill House.

Margaret Austin started to call her building the "Funny House" once the Southcoast kids had departed. Others would call it "Crazy House" or "Hippie House."

In the early 1970s, Margaret had the open stables/carport beneath her bedroom enclosed to make a primitive kitchen shed, thus unburdening the bathroom on the other, west end of the building of its dual program. She installed a deck on the south side of the building and set out a big metal tub where she could bathe under the open sky.

She drove out from Houston each spring and fall to enjoy the quiet and calm, to meditate, to paint and play guitar, and to care for her horses. She would stay in Funny House, struggling with the drafts and the leaks. The building was constructed out of 1-by-12-foot cedar planks nailed to hand-built frames, without any sheathing, without much consideration at all for heating or cooling. She went to some effort to winterize the building, and moved an ornate Swedish woodstove into her room to keep warm.

She began to share her space with friends, inviting small groups up for weekends of quiet contemplation. Having developed deep friendships within Houston's meditation community, Margaret hosted the first of an ongoing series of informal meditation retreats in 1980, led by teacher Steve Levine and organized by Lex Gillan of the Yoga Institute of Houston, with an invitation open to all.

Margaret moved out to Chappell Hill permanently in 1981 with plans to build a new house for herself, one more suitable for all seasons. She'd had enough of the leaks during every rainfall, the awful heat for five months of the year, and the occasional freezing damp of winter.

But first she collaborated with Steve Bartha, one of her meditation fellows, to design and build a meditation hall for the large groups she was starting to host. It was a simple but inspiring shelter, facing east across the open pasture like a shadow box in reverse, initially open to the air on three sides, out of the sun except in the early mornings. The north and south walls and the roof converged from the open east end to a small western wall comprising a hand-crafted colored-glass panel. The meditation leader would sit on a low wooden platform at this focus-point and guide the visitors through a practice of insight and healing, aided by a setting both expansive and intimate, just right for a meditative practice committed to the natural environment, the sun and the wind and the rain. And the rain came in, leaking during heavy storms on the heads of the silent sitters.

In 1983, Margaret's friend Doug Sprunt designed a small house for Margaret based on a sketch by architect Edward Rogers. It was built next to Funny House with a space for a small modern kitchen and bathroom. It had the pitched roof and sheltered porches of a traditional Texas farmhouse, and except for its clustered utilities, it was just a single large room with windows on all sides. Funny House became a commons for Margaret's guests, and a home for a couple of years to her daughter Martha and her family. Retreat leaders sometimes boarded there. Most often, though, especially during the tough summer and winter months, it went unused.

In a couple more years Artie Kahn designed a second house to go next to Margaret's, almost a mirror image of the first, with a doorway connecting the two. Local builder Willie Hayes handled much of the construction for these projects.

BECAUSE THEY ARE GUERILLA BUILDERS, SOUTHCOAST WILL SOON LEAVE THE SITE WITHOUT A TRACE. IT IS A BUILDING THAT HAPPENED ONE SUMMER.

The meditation retreats continued somewhat regularly, typically once in fall and once in spring. Occasionally, they held mid-winter retreats for the hardiest among them. The amenities were spare. Invitations, signed by Margaret, routinely advised guests to bring their own bedrolls and cots, and to bring their own food. No cooking was allowed at most retreats. Margaret would rent portable toilets for the weekend. Visitors mostly camped in tents. For the silent retreats, visitors were discouraged from bringing small children.

Noted spiritual teacher Ram Dass led a number of retreats over the years, which Margaret enjoyed immensely, preferring his light touch to the rather somber atmosphere of the silent retreats. He once drew around 400 visitors to the farm, teaching under a tent under the pecan trees before the meditation hall was built.

Margaret often arranged to cover the costs of the visiting teacher's travel expenses. At first visitors were freely admitted. Then they were encouraged to contribute funds to defray costs. In a few years, Insight Meditation Houston, a sangha founded in 1985 by Rodney Smith, took up the effort of organizing and operating the retreats. Margaret signed the invitation letters until 1988. But by then Insight Meditation Houston needed logistical and clerical facilities in Houston to manage a growing and active membership. They committed to keeping costs low, charging a very nominal fee for their retreats thereafter.

The meditation communities that had grown together at Margaret's farm organized occasional work retreats to tackle ongoing repairs and maintenance to the facilities. Volunteers cleared vines and overgrowth from the meditation hall, since named "the Zendo." The bamboo stands had to be cut back regularly. Brick pathways were laid between buildings. Their emotional investment in Margaret's farm was matched by considerable sweat equity.

Margaret's last building project on the farm was a dining hall and kitchen, attached to the southeast end of Funny House. Architects John Sieber and Edward Rogers, both now longtime guests at Margaret's farm, designed a dining hall in 1983 to seat up to 40 people, with glass doors on three exposed faces for continuous views of the pastures south of Funny House. Topped by two parallel and steeply peaked rooftops, the attachment honored the eccentric lines of the original structure, now more than 20 years old. Margaret sold her antique green Rolls Royce to pay for the project, her last gift to the community that she had nurtured and accommodated for so long.

Margaret's farm had been a site of giving and sharing and exploration for 23 years by the time she died on September 9, 1992, at 74 years of age. With the permission of Martha and Linda, now far from Texas, Insight Meditation Houston forged ahead with their regular retreats while figuring out how they might hold onto a space that had become sacred to them. In a compilation of written memorials to Margaret that is kept at the center today, several committed members describe a perceptible difference in the atmosphere around Margaret's farm, a sense of holiness and peace, something wrought by years of intense spiritual practice. You can feel it when you come through the gate.

In less than a year, Insight Meditation Houston, joined by a group called Houston Zen Community, led the effort to raise funds, incorporate a board of directors, and founded the Margaret Austin Center as a non-profit organization. Their mission would be to open Margaret's farm to other small groups in need of a rural retreat center specially suited for spiritual reflection and healing. Many sources credit Jane Elioseph for steadfast leadership and vision. Brad Morris played a key role in the process of incorporating the organization.

It was a daunting prospect, somewhat perilous in its implications. All the informal and voluntary networks and efforts that had gone into sustaining their retreats would have to be formalized. They would have to hire staff. They would have to invite many, many more guests into their cherished space, one weekend after another, if they hoped to generate sufficient revenue to stay afloat. They would have to charge substantially larger fees than they ever had before, while insisting at the same time a central tenet of their mission was to be accessible and affordable. (Today their fees are still quite low.) And they knew that soon they would have to improve and enlarge the physical plant to accommodate more guests at a time. Newer retreat groups would not likely accept primitive camping conditions as a salubrious part of their weekend retreats.

But first they had to raise money. They could not secure foundation grant funding because the charitable purpose of Margaret Austin Center did not much apply to the needs of the poor or disadvantaged. A retreat center for middle-class folks needs middle-class folks to support it on their own. They sought funding from Margaret's old friends in Houston and mostly from among the membership of Insight Meditation Houston and the Zen Community.

A sequence of gifts made the Margaret Austin Center possible, beginning with a single anonymous cash donation that inspired the community to finish what had quickly begun to seem unlikely. Then Martha and Linda, though they had a competitive offer from another buyer, delayed a sale until the Margaret

May 26, 1969
prilim. cost breakdown

structure "A"

Siding	5000 sq. ft.	@ 25¢	1250.00
Roofing	1300 sq. ft.	@ 16¢	208.00
Styrofoam	70 pcs.	@ $2/e	140.00
Insulation	3000 sq. ft.	@ 5¢	150.00
Floor			100.00
2x4's	4000 lin. ft.	@ 12¢	480.00
			2328.00

Concrete
Plumbing
Elec.
Hardware
Doors and Glass — 492.00

Total Material cost 3000.00

Labor — 1000.00

Total, Struct. "A" 4000.00

Structure "B" breakdown not available at this time.

Opposite: A Southcoast member nails down flashing on the "Chappell Hill House." Photo courtesy David Cerruti.

Clockwise from Top Left: Budget proposal from Southcoast to Margaret Austin; Zendo at dawn; Pepper Mouser at 2012 reunion; window cut into "Chappell Hill House" to dining hall; and dining hall interior.

Austin Center could get on its feet. Finally, they agreed to sell the property to the center at a greatly reduced cost and on very generous terms. In less than two years, the Margaret Austin Center was taking reservations. In about five more years they were able to match costs with revenue.

All along, the center continued to address physical improvements, often led by John Sieber and Edward Rogers. Sieber, who passed away in 2011, left behind a trove of papers for each repair and addition, all with recorded notes of conversations with board members and others committed to the center. It is obvious from these records how seriously he took a collaborative and consensual approach to new building at the Margaret Austin Center. The center's Board of Directors also lent a stable, guiding vision over the years. A number of changes have taken place: as Margaret's house became a caretaker's quarters, bunk beds were installed in the Funny House renamed Edgar House, the horse stables were converted to a bunkhouse, a masterplan was developed, leaky windows replaced, decks removed and added, staircases replaced, bathrooms split, wheelchair access partially addressed, and land regraded.

Though Edgar House has retained its iconic stature at Margaret's Farm, its character and purpose have undergone many changes, and will continue to. Despite its remarkable architectural significance (so far undocumented in the academic literature), its survival was in doubt for years. More than one contractor came to evaluate Edgar House and judged the building a shambles, impossible to sustain into the new century. Giselle Ostman, the Margaret Austin Center's retreat manager, credits Steve Jackson, one of the original Southcoast members, with turning that dour assessment around.

In the six short months since Jackson had returned to Margaret's farm to see what had become of it, he offered to repair the Zendo at cost, in effect another gift to the center. In a very brief period in the summer of 2012 between scheduled retreats, using a sort of expedited project delivery at a small scale, he built an entirely new structure, in appearance identical to the original Zendo. With adequate planning this time around, it is completely sealed with new, properly functioning air-conditioning.

For the commemoration and the presentation of a plaque honoring his generous efforts, the Margaret Austin Center reached out to the surviving members of Southcoast–now in their sixties–to invite them to return to the site of their improbable achievement. Along with Martha Edgar–after whom they renamed Funny House– they converged at the center to share their stories and their memories of Margaret with their successors, the ecumenical Buddhists. Just a year earlier, such a gathering would have been impossible. Southcoast had been largely lost from the collective memory of the center. Today, that lineage is being restored.

By means of an oddball improvisation more than 40 years ago, an idea took shape in a wooden building made of strange angles, with more space inside than one might expect from its narrow footprint, yet offering cozy comfort in its corners and shared spaces. That building became an icon for a devoted community, an emblem of generosity of spirit, of selfless contribution, and of sharing one's bounty with others. Decades of custodial care have kept this idea and its emblem intact.

Today, the Margaret Austin Center is raising funds to address the challenging prospect of making over the Edgar House, starting with replacing its skirting and its roof. More needs may present themselves when the contractors explore the hidden spaces within. Construction begins this summer.

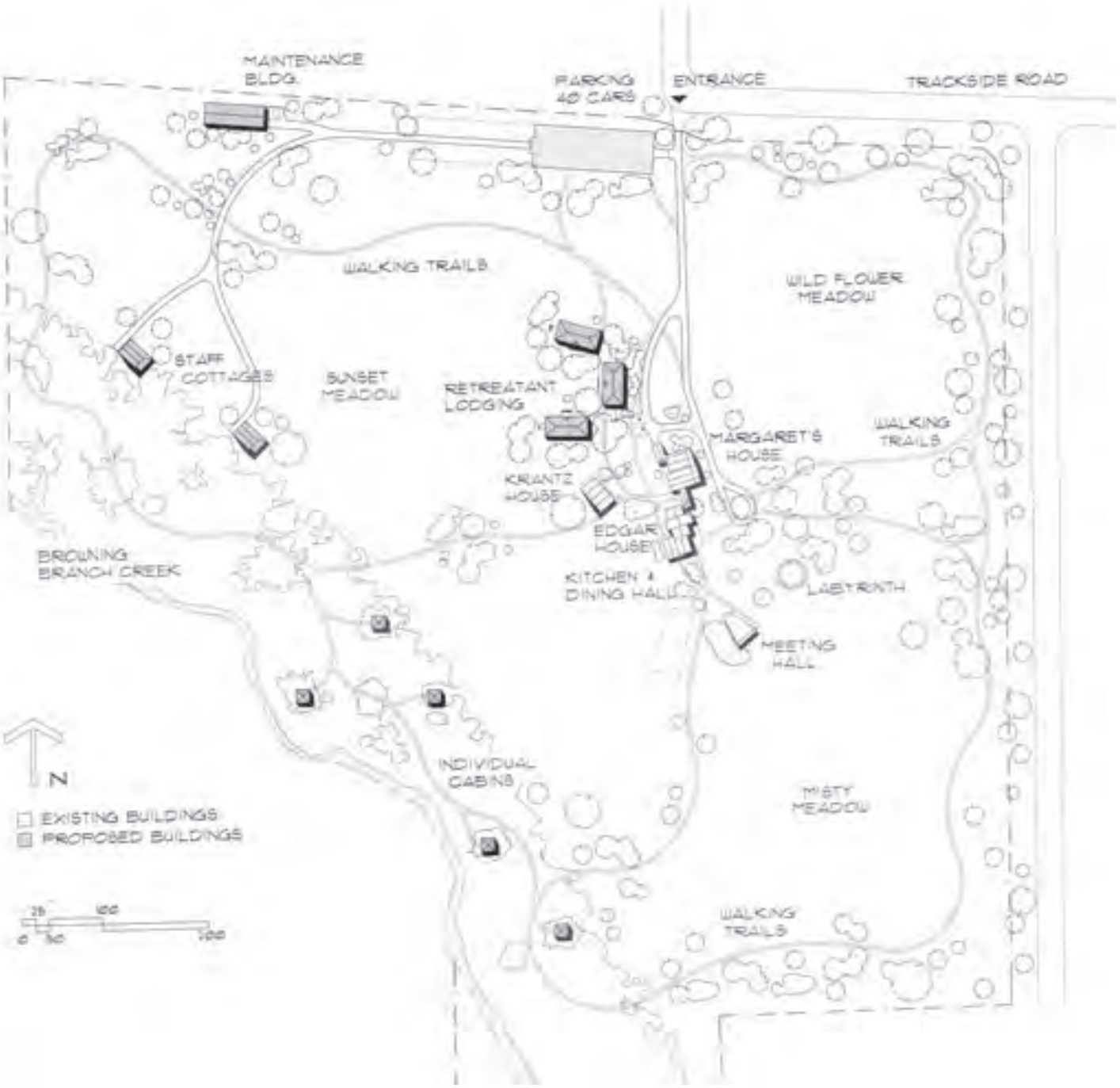
The center looks forward with new hope to continuing its mission, buoyed by the return of Steve Jackson and his obvious compassion for the center's needs and commitments, born from their common origin in Margaret Austin's open-heartedness.

As they plan for the upcoming improvements, carrying on a decades-long tradition of fixing and trying it again, they also will be looking to introduce future generations to their mission. They will be searching for young people committed to spiritual reflection and peace, searching for a sacred space to do their contemplative work, and willing to pour their own energy into a rewarding enterprise. We shall see who takes up the challenge. C

VISIT OFFCITE.ORG FOR ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS, MASTERPLANS, AND VIDEO TAKEN IN 1970.

Below: Exterior of dining hall designed in 1983 by Edward Rogers and John Sieber, and paid for by the sale of Margaret Austin's antique green Rolls Royce.

MARGARET AUSTIN CENTER MASTERPAN



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WHERE THE


RIVER BENDS

A young man, during a long trip west from Alabama to Los Angeles en route to a military deployment, stops in Marfa. The year is 1946. He returns three decades later, fleeing what he calls the "harsh and glib situation within art in New York." What has become of Marfa and how we see the landscape after Donald Judd?

Previous Page: A sweeping view of the Chihuahuan desert and the silhouette of the Crowley House. Photo by Paul Hester.

I wrote a good part of my book *Desert America* during my stay in Marfa as a fellow of the Lannan Foundation. Established in 2000, the program is itself a sign of the town's transformation. The foundation bought five houses and a storefront in Marfa, keeping the exteriors quaint and rustic while renovating the interiors with modernist precision: white walls, blond cabinetry, stainless steel appliances.

By the time of my residency, I had already visited Marfa and the Big Bend region several times, drawn by the fantastic light and space of West Texas, and by its proximity to the border. Like most of the art colonies in the region, its roots were in the Old Western economy (cattle ranching, oil). Hollywood had put the town on the map when it came calling in the 1950s to shoot *Giant*, the cast and crew moving into the Hotel Paisano, where there is still an Elizabeth Taylor Suite. But the origin of the colony itself came with the arrival in 1979 of Donald Judd, the legendary "nonrelational" artist, a minimalist master who has become so revered that "WWDJD?" (What Would Donald Judd Do?) bumper stickers and buttons have become a kind of Masonic handshake in the art world.

Judd perfectly fit the role of art colony pioneer. He started his career in New York, establishing a studio in SoHo long before it was branded with high-end galleries. Colony founders must be iconoclasts, and after two decades of promoting himself to the top of the art world—he garnered a retrospective at the Whitney before he was forty—he was ready for a turn as a visionary.

In the 1970s, Judd marveled at the real estate prices, which, compared to those in lower Manhattan, were astonishingly cheap. Marfa, like the ranching that had sustained it, was well past its prime, and its population was in steep decline. Judd snatched up some 40,000 acres of ranchland with the help of the Dia Art Foundation—bankrolled by the Houston oil heiress Philippa de Menil and her husband, Heiner Friedrich, a German art dealer. And in the town itself he bought property that had once comprised Fort D. A. Russell and earlier military facilities dating back to 1911. After a successful suit against Dia for breach of contract, the land became his.

The counterculture at the time revered such acts of "dropping out," and Judd was simultaneously dipping into some of the oldest tropes of the American colonial imagination: the trip west, the close encounter with a hard land and its ghosts, the lonesome figure on the far plain.

In Marfa, Judd created permanent works that he meticulously sited on the land, most notably, an array of aluminum boxes in an old military installation. In his will he stipulated that they never be moved. There is no evidence that he considered the possibility that his work, and the fulsome attention it generated, would result in a wave of gentrification that re-created in Marfa the very atmosphere that drove him from New York in the first place.

When I came to Marfa, the Chinati Foundation, which Judd founded after his feud with Dia, was a bona fide site of interna-

BY
RUBÉN
MARTINEZ

An excerpt from *Desert America: Boom and Bust in the New Old West* (Metropolitan/Holt, 2012).

tional art pilgrimage. An independent bookseller, the Marfa Book Company, had established itself in a smartly rehabbed building next to the town's only stoplight. A high-end restaurant called Maiya's had snagged a Rhode Island School of Design graduate for a chef. Galleries with brilliant white walls and track lighting displayed lots of canvases with anything but a recognizable figure on them. And hot young kids were hanging out, some of them with real money and some of them flirting with it.

Marfa's second boom began slowly after Judd rolled into town; his arrival brought a few other artists, who also bought up land on the cheap. The newcomers were romanced by the signs of the past. There were railroad tracks, upon which trains clacked through a couple of times a day, meaning you could hear train whistles. The tracks, of course, also meant that there was another side of them. (More on that later.)

So: lots of land, lots of old adobes, lots of light and space, and lots of "characters"—the salt of the earth working farms and nurseries, crusty ranchers and ranch hands, guy-guys. And the Rio Grande was just below the plain, John Wayne and John Ford's Great River, on the other side of which was Mexico.

All Marfa needed to really take off was a major piece of journalism in a national medium. *The New York Times* obliged, publishing an article in 2005 by a writer named Julia Lawlor, who authored several travel-and-real-estate pieces for the paper during the boom. Most of her stories sold destinations and properties to the gentry of what the *Times* itself heralded as the New Gilded Age.

The story begins with Mary Farley, a Manhattan psychotherapist, buying three "decrepit one-story adobe buildings" whose only inhabitants were a "family of bats." Farley plans to renovate all three, keeping one as her residence and converting the others to art studios. There follows a quick cautionary tale about fellow Manhattanites Tom Rapp and Toshi Sakihara, who buy an adobe without looking inside it only to discover structural disaster. But the couple, who eventually open Marfa's toniest restaurant, turn the property around to another second-home seeker, for a $30,000 profit.

The story includes a brief mention that the newcomers are arriving in a town with severe social schisms: "Marfa real estate is beyond the means of lower-income residents, many of them Latinos who make up about 60 percent of the population."

The final paragraph contains a classic of the genre: the older gentry's lament about the new. Two early investors talk about arriving when Marfa was still an "unspoiled beauty." One of them is Eugene Binder, a New York art dealer. "I liked it the way it was," he says. "I got here before they put in street signs." Binder spends four months of the year in Marfa. The other grump is Aedwyn Darroll, another New York artist, who moved in not long after Judd's death. "There's all the phoniness of the art world," he laments, "the art-speak stuff. It's exactly what I was trying to get away from in the city."

It was, of course, the likes of Judd, Binder, and Darroll who brought the art world they're now lamenting when others followed them.

The town's population has remained stable, at about twenty-five hundred, which means that, generally speaking, for every person moving in there is another moving out—outlanders replacing the natives, largely the creative class replacing ranching families.

Native-born Valda Livingston is facilitating much of this movement as a real estate agent, but even she's ambivalent about the new money pouring in from the "fat cats." Not the ones she's selling Marfa to, but the really rich ones, like Austin gazillionaire Steve Smith, who pumped $100 million into the Lajitas Resort, on the banks of the Rio Grande just north of Big Bend State Park. Previous to Smith, the land included a nine-hole golf course and an RV park. Smith bought in 2000, and what he wrought here was an outsized variation of what the new haute classes were doing all over the country: the nine holes became eighteen; he built the exclusive Ultimate Hideout, a ninety-two-room luxury hotel specifically with burnt-out CEOs like himself in mind, those men hard at work making and remaking the world; and he envisioned selling lots and homes on the 27,000-acre holding.

ALL MARFA NEEDED TO TAKE OFF WAS A MAJOR PIECE OF JOUNALISM IN A NATIONAL MEDIUM.

But Lajitas is on the border. Wherever you go on the resort, you have a view of Mexico and Mexicans, which means that Smith's hideout couldn't avoid being in the known world, after all. Lajitas never turned a profit and ultimately declared bankruptcy. There was another uber-resort in the area. Cibolo Creek Ranch was reserved for A-list Hollywood and rock 'n' roll royalty. Valda just wishes they'd go back to where they came from.

Borunda's Bar is one of the few places in Marfa these days that is not haute. When I walk in, there is no one around but the proprietor, Pancho Borunda, and a cardboard cutout of a trio of Budweiser girls in black minidresses. Pancho cuts a Falstaffian-biker figure, with a long, gray-and-white beard. The first thing he wants me to know is that he does not serve specialty drinks.

"I have people coming in all the time asking me for mineral water with lime," he says, rolling his eyes. "They even ask me what I cooked my beans in."

The "artsy-fartsy types," he says, are disappointed to learn that he uses "manteca"—lard. "You want Mexican beans? You have to use lard," he says.

Pancho's aunt ran a restaurant in town for years. She cooked on a woodstove. There was one hard rule if you ate at her place: no spirits. She allowed her patrons to bring in two beers and no more. If anyone was caught nipping, Tía would come running from the kitchen with a frying pan.

Pancho says he left town for the navy, was stationed in Spokane, and led a whole life up there, twenty-three years. He returned to Marfa ten years ago, "before all this happened." When he left Marfa, the town was barely emerging from segregation.

"The Mexicans couldn't go across the railroad tracks after ten at night," Pancho tells me.

And the only place the Mexicans could swim was a little sliver of Alamito Creek that wasn't fenced in—a miracle in these parts, where there is so little public land and every inch of the private is fenced off.

If Valda Livingston were in the bar right now, there would be a great reality-TV moment, because a fight would break out. When I asked her about Marfa's segregated past, her cheeks reddened. "I don't think there was any discrimination until someone put that in their heads," she said. "They had the same opportunities as everyone else."

Notwithstanding Livingston's claims of equal opportunity, the town was and is neatly divided by the railroad tracks. Long past *Brown v. Board of Education*, Mexican students could only attend the Blackwell School from kindergarten through eighth grade; Marfa's movie theaters and churches were also segregated.

I go to visit Judd's boxes at the Chinati Foundation. In the visitor center there is merchandise for sale. Judd books, Judd T-shirts, Judd coffee mugs. Our tour guide introduces himself by his first name only. "Chris" is every inch an art student, aloof and laconic.

We head straight for the main attraction, the Quonset huts that house the boxes. Chris gives us a thumbnail history. In 1911, he says, Camp Marfa, the precursor to Fort D. A. Russell, was established here in response to the ferment of the Mexican Revolution spilling over the border; the fort was commissioned in 1930. During World War II, prominent German POWs were held here, some of them assisting the United States in conducting research on chemical weapons. The base was decommissioned in 1946.

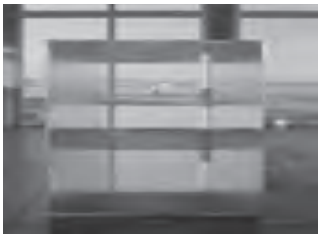
Chris leaves out a crucial part of the history: in 1924, with anti-Mexican sentiment boiling after years of refugees streaming across the border—and with Prohibition-era smuggling in full swing—the United States established the modern Border Patrol. Facilities for personnel in the area moved several times over the decades, but various parts of the complex have been used continuously by the BP since it was founded. The building that houses the Marfa Sector Headquarters, which coordinates twelve stations and substations in its 135,000-square-mile area of operations, remains on land that was once Fort D. A. Russell.

Chris opens the door to the first Quonset building. Corrugated tin arches above simple brick-and-mortar walls. Evenly spaced vertical concrete pylons support a series of horizontal concrete pylons to hold the ceiling in place. The floor is a grid of plain concrete slabs. An even number of windows on the long sides of the building bring in magnificent natural light.

Here are the boxes. I am shocked at my first glimpse of them, even though I've seen photographs. What astonishes is the repetition, an array radically focused on four-sided forms. They are not literally all "boxes" but dozens of permutations of rectangles fitted together with industrial rivets. There are boxes within boxes, boxes divided by slanted panels, boxes that look like IKEA entertainment-center hutches.

The effect of so many rectangles is overwhelming, and not just because of the boxes themselves. The windows, the doors, the support columns, the ceiling panels, even the rectangles of light pouring through the rectangles of windows onto the rectangular slabs of concrete that make up the floor create a rectilinear universe of frames and of frames within frames. I notice that the bricks in the walls are rectangles. Now I see rectangles in the space between boxes. Is Judd messing with the viewer? Daring you to relate his nonrelational art to some kind of, any kind of, human narrative?

Previous Page: Railroad tracks stir romance and nostalgia even as they mark a segregated past. Photo by Amanda Valentine.



These photos were taken by Paul Hester for an article by William F. Stern published in the Spring-Summer 1988 issue of *Cite*. At the time, Donald Judd still lived and worked in the compound that would become the Chinati Foundation.

Clockwise: Exterior of the compound; arena courtyard looking toward the barracks; milled aluminum piece; and interior of the Artillery Shed with milled aluminum pieces.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No, Judd would insist, it is just form. Purely, simply, grandiosely, and maddeningly form. He would probably have been irritated by any critic attempting a historical and social contextualization.

But then why did Chris tell us that German POWs were held here? Surely I'm not the only one who immediately thought of repetition being an element of fascist architecture. Above the entryway there is an inscription in German that is also inextricably part of the tableau, a message to the POW chemical weapons techs: "It is better to use your head than to lose it."

Here is all this narrative creeping across the horizon of form. How can we not relate the art to the war that defined Judd's generation and set up the Cold War, which sent Judd to Korea via a cross-country trip with a stop in Marfa?

Judd had strong ideas about the importance of setting for his art: "Frequently as much thought has gone into the placement of a piece as into the piece itself." And so I look. The windows! Hundreds of frames bring in the light of the Marfa Plain, which is anything but a plain form: a landscape sculpted by cultural memory and the modes of production that have exploited it—ranching, drugs, oil, Mexicans, Hollywood.

Outside, mesquite and hard earth. The sprawling complex, set amid the immensity of the Marfa Plain, summons the idea of owning the vastness: Judd, the mad emperor of the rectangles filled with the soul-stirring vistas of the Chihuahuan Desert, the beauty that lured him and would become the object of desire of the kind of money Judd became worth only in death. (Christie's auctioned thirty-six of his sculptures for $20 million in 2006.)

As the tour winds down, a white Chevy pickup truck pulls up outside the Arena, another massive tin-roofed building, formerly an indoor rodeo at Fort D. A. Russell. A Mexican landscaper jumps out of the cab and pulls an industrial-sized weed whacker from the pickup's bed.

"Thank you for visiting the Chinati Foundation," Chris shouts above the sudden noise as the Mexican tames the weeds. The great whir and whine of the machine reverberates wildly inside the cavernous Arena, which now buzzes like a billion bees.

THE SPRAWLING COMPLEX,SET AMID THE IMMENSITY OF THE MARFA PLAIN, SUMMONS THE IDEA OF OWNING THE VASTNESS

The local boom began with the arrival of people like John F. "Jeff" Fort III, the former CEO of Tyco Industries. Yes, that Tyco Industries, whose onetime CEO Dennis Kozlowski was at the heart of the first wave of executive pay scandals, in the early 2000s. Kozlowski is serving a prison sentence of up to twenty-five years on convictions of grand larceny, conspiracy, violation of business law, and falsifying records. But Fort had nothing to do with any of that; he'd retired long before the scandal broke. If anything, he stood for the old-school patrician style of wealth antithetical to the Gordon Gekkos of the New Gilded Age.

Fort was married to Marion Barthelme, widow of the famed fiction writer Donald Barthelme and a writer in her own right. She was also a major patron of the arts in Houston, where I teach during the early years of the Iraq War, which is just when we are ramping up the boom. In Houston my story glancingly intersects with Judd's. The Menil Foundation—established by the parents of Philippa de Menil, who headed the Dia Art Foundation, which initially bought the old army base in Marfa for Judd—is an early supporter of the University of Houston's creative writing program. I rent a house once owned by the Menil Foundation.

I meet Jeff at a Houston fundraiser, and we get to talking about northern New Mexico—Jeff and Marion have another house in Santa Fe—and then he mentions Marfa. I tell him I am interested in visiting, and he extends an invitation for me to see his spread, which, with its several properties, comprises a quarter of a million or so acres of land. The next time we're both in New Mexico, he says, we will fly to Marfa by plane, his private plane.

When I meet him at Million Air, a private airstrip outside Santa Fe, Jeff is wearing a white shirt with light blue stripes and pearl buttons. In his lap he holds his cowboy hat, of tightly wound pale yellow straw, ringed by a leather band encrusted with half a dozen five-pointed stars. He has thin brown hair and brown eyes and a long face, both plain and plaintive. Well into his sixties, he stands about five foot nine, has a fair amount of

hair on his chest, and, as I will soon discover, is in excellent physical shape.

The plane is a Beechcraft Beechjet 400. Beige suede walls, gray leather seats, brass cup holders on the armrests. There are four seats in the main cabin, plus a jump seat in the bathroom and the seats for the pilot and copilot, who are hired hands.

Jeff did not start out as a cowboy. He appears to have had the perfect launching pad of a family. His father was a Manhattan lawyer who moved the family to what was then a rural suburb outside of Washington, D.C. It was a segregated area, Jeff says, and he has childhood memories of walking by a black Baptist church. He never went in, of course. "But my God," he says, "the sound coming from in there!"

He graduated from Princeton and was granted a deferment from the military when he enrolled in grad school at MIT. In the early 1960s he began working for a communications cable firm called Simplex that held military contracts in Southeast Asia—a lucrative market back in those days of the buildup to full-scale American intervention. So instead of going to Vietnam in a grunt platoon, because of his smarts and connections, he got a job laying cable far from the war zone. Returning to the States, he took the helm at Simplex, a wunderkind. A few years later, the industrial giant Tyco acquired Simplex, and then Jeff topped Tyco. During his tenure, the company became a vast multinational through a dizzying run of acquisitions.

He retired at the age of fifty-one in 1992, breaking away from a life he says was killing him. He quit smoking. He got in shape. He started climbing mountains, tall ones, all over the world.

In 2002 the Kozlowski scandal broke at Tyco, and it nearly sank the company. Stock and morale plummeted. A corporation, a brand, a tradition—and the livelihood of thousands of families—all of that was on the brink. The board asked Jeff to return. He righted the ship even as Tyco and Kozlowski continued, for the next several years, to remain in business news headlines and became enshrined as a symbol of corporate cupidity. (Kozlowski spent $6,000 on shower curtains and $1 million on a birthday party in Sardinia for his wife; in all, he stole $400 million from the company and the shareholders.)

Highland Avenue, Marfa, Texas, and the 1886 Presidio County Courthouse. Photo by Paul Hester.

"The CEOs these days!" says Jeff. "The ones who take those crazy bonuses—I don't understand them." In 2007, Tyco claimed nearly $19 billion in revenue. Jeff remains an adviser.

He arrived in Marfa in the early 1990s, and the landscape seduced him immediately. "I walked around for a couple of days," he says, "and my jaw dropped."

On one trip Jeff noticed a place for sale, which turned out to be a piece of Judd's property. He and his wife, Marion, were friendly with Tim Crowley and Lynn Goode, fellow Houston sophisticates; they also happened to be looking for rural property in Texas, and Jeff told them to come to Marfa. At least that is Jeff's version of the genealogy; most published accounts credit Crowley and Goode with the founding of the new colony. Jeff is largely absent from the recent journalism on Marfa, which is curious given that he became, in a matter of a few years, one of the biggest landholders in West Texas.

After Judd's place, Jeff bought another parcel

A storm seen from the Crowley House.
Photo by Carlos Jiménez.

up by Fort Davis, and then a house in town. Crowley and Goode also went on a shopping spree, purchasing a good portion of downtown Marfa as well as rural property. Then Jeff bought the legendary Chinati Hot Springs, which Judd had previously owned and had closed off to the public for the first time in recorded history, causing tremendous ill will among locals and countless regular visitors.

We arrive at the springs and ponder the hubris of the artist who fenced them off. Jeff opened them back up to the public, spruced the place up a bit. The handful of guest rooms and barely rustic pools make up the most modest resort in the area. Camping is $15 a night, including use of the springs; the cheapest room is $75. A communal kitchen is available; everyone packs in and prepares their own food.

Now that the boss has arrived, there is a whirl of activity. A big Western meal is prepared for the tired travelers: chicken and beef fajitas, flour tortillas, fire-roasted chipotle salsa (bottled, from Dallas), and a thick pineapple upside-down cake for dessert. All cooked up by Dave and Krissy Sines, an art couple from Dallas who recently made the trip west themselves. There are no stores or restaurants for dozens of miles.

It is drizzling at dawn, the remnants of an overnight monsoon downpour, and water drips from the eaves of the old adobe of the inn. Sparkling beads hang from the tips of the tamarisk needles.

Jeff needed a West Texas native to teach him about the land he now owned and found the perfect mentor in Jason Sullivan. In his thirties, Jason is a cowboy's cow-

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boy, tall and lanky. He wears a dark brown suede hat with the rim curled tight and high, a long-sleeved blue denim shirt, and Wranglers, with a pistol in a leather holster on his right hip. Jason starts up the "quad," a Polaris Ranger high-end ATV with massive shock absorbers. There are two seats in front and a crash bar that a third person can hang on to standing up in the back, which is what I eagerly volunteer to do, to no complaint from Jason or Jeff.

The road leading out of the canyon where the spring is hidden heads west for a few miles, leaning down toward the bottomland, where the river has been cutting the canyon for millennia, before hitting another road, which will take us north and deep into Jeff's parcel. Jason steps on the gas and soon we're flying down the pebbly path at thirty, maybe thirty-five miles an hour. Rain slaps my face, a cool, sweet sting.

I look toward Mexico. Dim flashes of lightning. Several layers of gun-gray clouds swirl along the stratified mesa-mountains. One lone low cloud, foglike, hangs over the Rio Grande. The rain comes harder, just as the sun breaks through a bank of clouds in the east. Sunrise comes in a sudden silver flash that illuminates the mesas. A rainbow erupts, a wide band of yellow rising from the pot of gold in Mexico. The arc hurls itself across the zenith and into American sky. Now another rainbow comes, concentric, slightly less brilliant, an echo to the first.

Just like Jeff's, my jaw drops.

We are out all day on the land, along the dirt roads and off them, covering dozens of miles. There are dome hills and spires and rocky rims. For most of the day, everything we can see, unto the horizon, belongs to Jeff.

We are out "messing around," as Jeff puts it, which amounts to looking.

We arrive at one of the casitas the artist once used. Rustic minimalism, modest touches of cowboy, Mexican. Jeff delights in telling Judd stories, the kind of lore writers and artists of a certain school spin around themselves consciously or not and that ultimately sells more books or paintings. This type of character we can call "artist as lout," though some would insist on "artist as free spirit." One story has Judd, bottle in hand, stripping his models like the photographer in Antonioni's *Blowup*. Others cast Judd in a demonic light, appropriate to the devil mythology in nearby Ojinaga across the border, where the Evil One is said to be holed up in a mountain cave. Legend has it that when they tried to dig Judd's grave on this very ranch, at a site with an arresting view of the land's decline into the riverbed, the ground was impossibly rocky and the workers needed heavy tools to break it. The Mexicans said (in a romantic variant of the lore) that this was because the earth itself did not want the likes of Judd. Still another tale is about the dirt of his burial mound sinking because, apparently, his casket had imploded. (Maybe the Devil himself pulled Judd down to the only place hotter than the Chihuahuan Desert.)

ONE STORY HAS JUDD, BOTTLE IN HAND, STRIPPING MODELS LIKE THE PHOTOGRAPHER IN ANTONIONI'S *BLOWUP*. OTHERS CAST HIM IN A DEMONIC LIGHT...

Few people get access to this particular Judd site (he owned three large holdings in the region). It's not that Jeff doesn't want to show it to the world; it's the sheer inaccessibility of the place. Pinto Canyon itself is no road for old men, but the path up from the springs is barbaric, fit only for a Polaris and guys like Jeff with guides like Jason.

Here, too, Judd made art. With dark volcanic rocks the size of shoe boxes, fitted perfectly to one another and forming—what else?—rectangles. Stone walls of rectangles. Because of the scale and the technical difficulty of his projects, Judd almost always worked with assistants. A man named Jesús Vizcaíno helped him build the walls. As for the setting—oh, the land! We have scaled a rocky promontory with a fantastic view of the rolls and folds and domes and crags and strata, the vicious flora somehow attached to it all, the perfectly spaced cumuli glaring white in a hard blue sky. Look up toward the rim, look down to the river. Where land and sky meet is the most painful edge. There is no relation whatever between them, their border utterly fixed, their difference absolute.

The biggest of Judd's structures here forms a corral—that is, a simulacrum of one, with ornamental touches like arches and even a faux trough. I am more moved by this piece than any box I've seen at the Chinati Foundation. Here, the rectangles look human. Out here, where no one can see him, Judd is no mid-twentieth-century American modernist messiah. He's just the guy who raised up these pretty walls of stone and was ultimately swallowed by the unyielding earth they sprang from.


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This low-slung house designed by Carlos Jiménez (2000-2004) for Tim Crowley and Lynn Goode stands apart from the landscape without overwhelming it. Windows, courtyards, and patios frame the land.

Jeff calls on his old friend Lynn Goode at her house on the outskirts of town.

It is the only house I've ever visited that has a two-mile driveway between front gate and front door, a straight-arrow road where Tim Crowley occasionally lands his plane.

The house was designed by Carlos Jiménez, a renowned Rice School of Architecture professor. The house establishes itself with long, low-slung rectangles that seem as if they're partially submerged in or emerging from the Marfa Plain. The exterior is a chalky Mediterranean white trimmed with tile speckled like quail eggs. Judd himself could have placed the magnificent windows with their dramatic angles and views.

Lynn is young in the way of the new middle age, blond and tan and fit. She ran a successful art gallery in Houston before moving to Marfa with Tim. Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, she came to the desert, as so many of us did, thinking of it as a place of healing.

WHAT DOES A MAN WHO OWNS A GOOD PART OF FAR WEST TEXAS DO WITH IT? HE LOOKS AT IT.

But the couple did not come out here to hide. They began remaking the town center. Lynn's Marfa Book Company stocked coffee-table editions of art and architecture, a smattering of serious fiction and poetry, and a strong section on scholarship about the Big Bend region; WWDJD bumper stickers were for sale next to the cash register. Another major rehab project in downtown Marfa transformed an old feed store into the Goode Crowley Theater, a space for avant-garde performances.

What else did Marfa need?

A public radio station. Far West Texas was the last NPR "black hole" in the Lower 48. And haute cuisine, for the foodies. Forthwith Maiya's, with its fennel tartlets and petits plats de fromage.

And millionaires. Crowley and Goode had friends, and they invited them over and said you should buy and they did.

All this happened in roughly a decade, during which time an old adobe in town that might have sold for $30,000 in 1994, the year of Judd's death, commanded $300,000 in 2005, the year *The New York Times* became the town's biggest booster.

Lynn and Jeff greet each other warmly, like the old friends they are.

The first stop is the kitchen, with its immense island, upon which are strewn the many wine openers Lynn has tried (including one that looks like an intergalactic weapon), without success, to open a red with. Jeff lends a hand.

Since my hepatitis C diagnosis, I have spent a lot of mental energy trying to negotiate my way out of quitting alcohol, accepting anecdotal, nonprofessional advice that says cutting down is good enough. I can no longer drink without thinking about drinking, but I still drink.

The red Jeff opens is good.

Glasses in hand, we head to the living room, passing back through the entry, where a skylight focuses the last of the day's light on a mini-exhibit curated by Lynn, including a word sculpture by Jack Pierson (four letters, of different fonts and sizes, spelling "fate").

Van Morrison is on the stereo with "Did Ye Get Healed," a number with a bright, bouncy horn riff doubled by female backup singers that is instantly recognizable and an excellent accompaniment to the art, the wine, the sophisticated company.

I am alone on a long sofa that could seat ten, and still I have to move several throw pillows to get comfortable. The living room is a huge vault of a space drawn toward the picture window, which is divided by muntins into horizontal thirds, the top and bottom panels further divided into vertical thirds. The middle frame is the largest and produces a colossal Western view. This is what money does in Marfa: it sets you up to view the land in high-def, in 3-D, in vistas that would have made John Ford's jaw drop. A fantastic amount of money met a fantastic amount of space, and framed it. One's house is more vantage point than living quarters.

I am drunk. I was going to allow myself one glass. That was three glasses ago. Or was it four?

Lynn asks me where I live, and I give her a complicated answer: teaching in Houston part of the year, commuting from northern New Mexico, I'm from Los Angeles, worked a lot on the border in southern Arizona, over the last decade spent a lot of time in Joshua Tree . . .

"Joshua Tree!" Lynn exclaims. "The next Marfa! And Marfa," she says, "is the next South Beach."

I ramble on: I spent a lot of my twenties in Central America, writing about the wars. I was inspired by liberation theology, you know, the priests who married Catholicism and Marxism . . . A dim self-awareness arrives: I've just used the M-word. But maybe that is precisely what my hosts want of me: to show them the margins, bring them a whiff of the authentic life out there on the far plain where

the water jugs run empty, touch some troubled place in their consciences.

And just what is it that I want from them? To stick, as the late Texas governor Ann Richards said all those years ago of Bush senior, their silver feet in their mouths? Reveal their inner racists? Confess their business crimes? Become my literary patrons? Maybe I just want them to want me, in the way I've felt desired by white liberals most of my life.

Lynn breaks in.

"Let's talk about movies!" she says, and she mentions that she hosted the Coen brothers while they were shooting *No Country*. "The older one was creepy. The younger one is okay." And she also caught sight of Daniel Day-Lewis in sweats, jogging around the town, muttering to himself in character, preparing for scenes in *There Will Be Blood*.

I ask if anyone saw *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, which was also shot in the area.

"It was a bit of a mess," Lynn says. "But I liked it because of the landscapes."

Yes, it does begin with the landscape of Far West Texas. But the film is about a body upon the land. Tommy Lee Jones's American ranch hand Pete is best friends with his homologue from Mexico, Melquiades Estrada. Most of their relationship is played against Old Western type—tenderly, including tears, edging up to homoeroticism, very New Western. Fate places Julio Cedillo's warm Mexican cowboy, Melquiades, and Barry Pepper's icy, alienated Border Patrol agent together at the wrong place and time, resulting in Melquiades's death. Tommy seeks justice for his friend from the town sheriff (played as an oaf by Dwight Yoakam), but there is none to be had. So Pete kidnaps the patrolman and forces him to dig up Melquiades from a potter's field grave and haul him back to his old pueblo across the border. Most of the film has the two riding burros across the borderlands and ultimately deep into Mexico, Melquiades's body steadily decomposing along the way, recalling Sam Peckinpah's exquisitely morbid *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*. Melquiades's fetid corpse symbolically carries the thousands of migrants who've died in the deserts. It is a work of fiction with a strong historical core: the killing of Esequiel Hernández, an eighteen-year-old native of Redford, a small town south of Marfa on the Rio Grande, who was out herding his family's goats and got caught in the crosshairs of a Marine patrol unit on reconnaissance for drug smugglers.

I am not quite drunk enough to make a scene, but in my head I'm pointing at the center of the dinner table and shouting, "Don't you see the body?! It's Melquiades, you decadent bourgeois! Don't you smell him? And the stench of thousands of bodies more, the border dead, deaths in which you are all complicit!"

Soon enough I'm enjoying dessert, a classy whipped ricotta dribbled with honey. For the first time I become aware of the darkness in the living room windows. There is not a single light out on the plain. Now the frame is like one of Mark Rothko's black canvases hanging in the famous chapel in Houston. A picture of nothing. Or of everything you are haunted by or long for. As we leave, it is storming outside. The monsoon. In El Paso they are evacuating flood-prone areas along the river. The Rio Grande is about to crest the levees.

My writer friend, Denise Chávez, says I absolutely must meet with her cousin Enrique, who lives about an hour's drive from Marfa. He is a living encyclopedia of border history, "*muy especial*." Over the phone she says that he likes sweets. "Bring him something *dulce*."

THIS IS WHAT MONEY DOES IN MARFA: IT SETS YOU UP TO VIEW THE LAND IN HIGH-DEF, IN 3-D, IN VISTAS THAT WOULD HAVE MADE JOHN FORD'S JAW DROP.

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Enrique Madrid lives in Redford, Texas, amid a massive collection of books about the border and beyond. Photo by Angela Garcia.

I pick up a dozen sweet rolls, the kind with heavy icing and a list of unpronounceable ingredients. From Marfa I take Highway 67 through the ghost-mining town of Shafter, to Presidio, on the Rio Grande. The road begins on the high, grassy plain and plummets a few thousand feet to the valley floor. There are only a handful of villages in the area. Presidio County, which includes Marfa, comprises 3,855 square miles and has a population of barely seven thousand people. It is also one of the poorest counties in the United States. That poverty is largely invisible, lost in the immensity of both the land and the Western mind that imagines it. The county seat of Presidio is a small American border town, and like all such towns it is filled with Mexicans—about 95 percent of the population.

The lowlands hugging the river are an inferno compared to Marfa's temperateness—"*tierra caliente*," as they say in Spanish—and the river helps create the perfect storm of heat, humidity, and mosquitoes. The grasses of the plains give way to the spiny reeds of the ocotillo and tall stalks of sotol. The draws that drain the higher country give the impression that the land is being sucked down into the river valley, as if a hand is pulling a sheet off a bed, down toward the floor.

This is Enrique's country: Redford, Texas, population 136.

Enrique is home when I arrive. He almost always is. When he's not, he's at the post office—he is the town's postmaster—just a few dozen yards away. He lives on the main road, in a house whose rooms would feel spacious if the space weren't taken up with Enrique's collection. Almost every wall is lined with bookshelves, sometimes two deep, floor to ceiling, every inch filled with books and magazines and photocopied articles.

He receives the tray of sweet rolls with a smile. He invites me to sit, and I wait for him to carve out a space on the sofa, which is also piled high with books and papers. The dogs sniff my shoes. A cat leaps onto the sofa through a hole in a window screen.

Enrique wears a red guayabera detailed in white, probably the least common color scheme in the guayabera genre. Reading glasses hang from a chain around his neck. He has a full head of hair beginning to gray; a band of thick strands slices across his forehead and bushy eyebrows.

There is not much time for small talk—or for my questions, for that matter. The presentation, the performance begins.

He drops a book in my lap: *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978–1992: Low-Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home*, by Timothy J. Dunn. The book is open to a particular page, and Enrique points out a paragraph. He reads part of it out loud, from memory and verbatim, as I read along:

> The image of the U.S.-Mexico border region that emerges from . . . alarmist portrayals is that of a vulnerable zone in urgent need of numerous, serious security measures, to repel an "invasion" of "illegal aliens," to win the War on Drugs, and even to counter the threat of terrorism. Complex international issues such as undocumented immigration and illegal drug trafficking were reduced to one-sided, domestic border control problems and framed as actual or potential threats to national security, which in turn required strong law enforcement, or even military responses.

Before I can go further, on top of the open book he places a clipping from the *Denver Post*, October 13, 1991. It is an article about the war on drugs, the theater of which is imagined to be on the border (out in the desert, where Cormac McCarthy conjures his darkness, where Mexicans slither across the sand at night) rather than in the typical American living room where the drugs are consumed. As I read, Enrique quotes, again verbatim, one Michael Lappe, a U.S. Customs officer, who says that Redford, Texas, is "the drug capital of the Southwest."

On top of the *Post*, Enrique places a copy of the *Big Bend Sentinel*, the paper of record in Far West Texas. The lead article details the killing of Esequiel Hernández by U.S. Marines on patrol with a unit called Joint Task Force 6, charged with drug interdiction efforts on the border, near Hernández's house in Redford; this is the event that *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* is based upon. The tragedy occurred in the wake of a key point of escalation of the war on drugs ordered by President George H. W. Bush.

Now an issue of *National Geographic* is added to the pile in my lap. The writer, a man named Richard Conniff (who on another assignment swims with piranhas in the Amazon), gets himself and us close to the danger at hand. In a helicopter flyover of the region he describes how the people of this fallen corner of the world live. Enrique recites: "The homes looked like a scattering of rotten teeth in a damaged old mouth."

He repeats the phrase three times.

"So," Enrique asks, his voice rising, his mouth dry, "what kind of people live on the border? Cavity people? Pus people? What do you do with rotten teeth? You pull them out and destroy them."

There are indeed rotten teeth on the border, Enrique says, but they are not the subject of Conniff's article. Who could be more rotten than former Presidio County sheriff Rick Thompson, who was caught hiding tons of cocaine in a horse trailer on the Presidio County Fairgrounds? The Marines who trained for the assignment that resulted in Hernández's killing were given the same imagery and ideas as the magazine's readers, to justify their operation on the border. Not only were they told that Redford was the "drug capital of the Southwest," they were also informed that 75 percent of Redford residents were involved in drug trafficking.

"Seventy-five percent," Enrique repeats. "One hundred people live in Redford. That means that seventy-five of us are drug smugglers."

Off a shelf comes a General Accounting Office report on the border region, a profile of the place and its people. Enrique recites as I read, an eerie echo: "1/4 of the population on the U.S. side lives in poverty. Along the line in Texas, 35 percent live in poverty." Nearly half of children and seniors live in poverty. In Redford, the per capita annual income is $3,577, with over 80 percent of the population living under the poverty line.

"If seventy-five percent of us are drug smugglers," Enrique says, "we better get in another line of business."

The Marines that killed Esequiel Hernández were not in Europe or in Vietnam or in Iraq, or in Mexico with General John Pershing's Mexican expedition, Enrique says.

Esequiel Hernández was American. His death was the first instance since Kent State in which American military personnel killed an American on American soil.

Esequiel Hernández was herding the family's goats on a bluff above the river. He carried his .22 with him—of World War I vintage, a single-shot rifle.

Unbeknownst to him—indeed, to all of the residents of Redford—a four-man Marine unit was on reconnaissance duty in the area. They were dressed in Special Operations Reconnaissance ghillie suits.

"This is what they looked like," Enrique says, handing me the G.I. Joe version, still in the box with the clear plastic window. The doll went on sale four months before the Marines arrived in Redford. The Hasbro Corporation had composed the following pitch for its new line: "The U.S. Marine Corps Sniper must be a superb marksman and a master at field craft and aggressive tactics. Outfitted in a ghillie suit, this G.I. Joe soldier carries a Remington 7.62MM M40A1 sniping rifle, and a Colt arms assault rifle. He also comes with binoculars to spot his target."

Esequiel was standing by an old dry well, the goats nearby. On the bluff he was within sight of his family's home. Nobody knows exactly what Esequiel Hernández saw in the minutes before he was hit with a single round from Corporal Clemente Banuelos's rifle. Maybe movement in the matorrales. A bushy thing amid bushes. One green against another.

Or worse: a hulking, stringy Medusa. It was 1997, and the chupacabras was center stage in the folklore of the moment.

The Marines were two hundred yards away, a distance that remained constant until just before the fatal shot was fired, when the Marines closed the gap to 140 yards.

The Marines did not see a human form, either. They saw a drug smuggler, because they'd been told that 75 percent of Redford residents were drug smugglers and that Redford was the drug capital of the Southwest.

Esequiel fired his rifle once, maybe twice. What direction he fired in later became a point of contention. Whether he readied to fire a second or third time, as Corporal Banuelos claimed, was also a point of contention. Another man in Banuelos's unit first testified that he did not see Hernández aim in the direction of the Marines, but he later changed his story and corroborated Banuelos's version of events.

The autopsy established that Esequiel had his back to the Marines when the fatal shot was fired. Investigators also determined that at no time did he advance on their position. From the moment visual contact was made, he was moving away—almost certainly because he feared whatever it was that was lurking in the matorrales.

The Corps' own internal investigation found "systemic failures at every level of command." The Marines never offered Hernández medical aid. Forty minutes elapsed between the shooting and the arrival of a rescue helicopter. The forensic examination established that Hernández would have died of his wounds regardless. But, according to the Marines' report, that should not have mattered to Banuelos and his men. It was a "basic humanitarian responsibility" to offer aid in such a situation. The report found that the Marines had not been adequately trained to do so.

Corporal Clemente Banuelos was a Mexican-American only four years older than Esequiel Hernández, a young man who had much in common with the man he killed, but on the day they came together on the hard red earth on the bluff above the Rio Grande, neither recognized the other. Esequiel probably saw a monster, and that is certainly what Banuelos saw, manufactured masks obscuring the truth that when he pulled the trigger, Banuelos was shooting at himself.

On another visit, I notice that some of the books and articles Enrique piles on my lap have passages highlighted in yellow marker—a concession to his weakening eyesight.

"WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS?" "YOU TALK TO THEM," HE SAID, NOW IN A GENTLE VOICE. "YOU LOVE THEM. YOU MARRY THEM. YOU BECOME THEM."

Today we begin with geography.

"The border," Enrique says, "is two thousand miles long." And it is much wider than the line that represents it—because of free trade, because of migration, because of the intricate commercial and human relationships between the towns on either side of it. The

border, Enrique says, is a vast realm.

The population of this place—communities on both sides within sixty miles of the line—was 10.5 million in 1997. By 2017, it will have doubled. No border, Enrique says, can remain one given that fundamental demographic fact. "And what do they bring us here in Redford?" Enrique says. "The National Guard. Army Reserve."

They have returned. This is an unthinkable reversal for Enrique. Largely because of the brilliant activism he and his cohort waged following Esequiel Hernández's death, all military personnel were pulled off the line. But ten years have passed since then, and it seems that the memory has faded enough for the troops to return with the same justification as before, embellished with post-9/11 paranoia. Six thousand National Guard troops were dispatched to the border as part of Operation Jump Start to offer tactical support—to staff observation posts, install new fencing and vehicle barriers, build new roads and Border Patrol stations. But at several points along the line, they are allowed to carry arms. According to the authorities, the weapons are for self-defense.

"That's what they said the last time," Enrique remarks.

Now he is weaving together big historical moments, the Nuremburg Trials, Kent State. Then he looks to passages in the Old Testament that spell out the ethics of hospitality. He thunders and shudders like a fire-and-brimstone preacher. He leans in toward you, gets uncomfortably close; spittle flies from his lips.

"It's racist blindness!" he shouts.

It is as if he seeks, with the stories, the numbers, the arguments, the lives at stake, to raise the body of Esequiel Hernández, a son of the border, named for the Old Testament prophet who in a vision saw the Valley of Dry Bones—the place where the dead took on flesh when Ezekiel spoke the Word.

After such an outburst Enrique sits down heavily, with a grunt. He might walk out of the room for a long while, pace the kitchen in the terrible heat, or sit with his head bowed over his hands, his elbows splayed on the table.

He carries the pain of the border in his head.

Another article in my lap. From an essay by Richard Rodriguez: "To placate the nativist flank of his Republican Party, President Bush has promised to brick up the sky. But that will not prevent the coming marriage of Mexico and the United States. South and north of the line, we are becoming a hemispheric people—truly American—in no small part because of illegal immigrants."

"This is the future," Enrique says. He believes that 9/11 was just a brief parenthesis in the process of integration. This coming together is more than trade and politics. He hands me a study of border DNA. Literally. Samples were taken from residents of Ojinaga, and the typical resident was determined to be 5 percent African, 3 percent European, and 91 percent Native American.

"This is our genetic history," Enrique says. "We're still Indians."

He is now lobbying for his people—the Jumano Apache—to become a federally recognized Native nation. The name of his tribe is spelled out in branches of mesquite lashed together on the roof of his house.

Enrique veers back and forth from his grand vision of continental integration—so Whitmanesque, so Bolívaresque—to the moment Banuelos pulled the trigger, the negation of integration.

He puts a Bible in my hands, open to Leviticus.

He recites chapter 19, verses 33 and 34, from memory: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

"You have to be hospitable in a desert culture," Enrique says.

The millions of words in Enrique's house on the border, and the connections he tries to make among them all add up to fragmented madness. To a search that ends where it started, to a senseless death in the desert, to a man who has become his library. Yes. And it is also more than that; there is a truth amid the clashing signs. The desert Enrique Madrid lives in is not the Big Empty, not the "spiritual" place of gilded clouds, not cowboys and cacti in silhouette, the desert of the Western or the Travel section or the hip art colony. Enrique's desert is crammed with history. An emptiness filled to bursting with stories in search of voices, ghosts in search of bodies.

The last time I saw Enrique was at a conference organized by the ReViva Collective. His right leg had been amputated at the knee, the pant leg folded and held in place with paper clips. Diabetes. I remembered Denise Chávez telling me that I should take her cousin Enrique something sweet. For the next two and a half hours he wheeled himself around the table, picking up texts, reading, weaving.

"What do you do with your neighbors?" Enrique asked. "What do you do with your neighbors?" he asked again. And once more, shouting: "What do you do with your neighbors?" "You talk to them," he said, now in a gentle voice. "You love them. You marry them. You become them." C

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"BETWEEN THE TWO STRETCHES OF GRAND PARKWAY SEGMENT E, AT THE CENTER OF THE GAP, WAS THE EXCAVATION OF HUMAN REMAINS. THOUGH DESIGNATED AN 'AREA OF INTEREST' AND ELIGIBLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES SINCE 1996 BECAUSE SPEAR POINTS HAD BEEN FOUND THERE, IT APPEARED AS IF TXDOT HAD AIMED THE 15-MILE-LONG HIGHWAY SEGMENT DIRECTLY AT THE BURIAL GROUND."

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