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Houston 2020 Visions

A first-ever collaboration between the City of Houston, The American Institute of Architects and Architecture Center Houston, *2020 Visions* is the inaugural exhibition upon the relaunch of Architecture Center Houston. Featuring 21 innovative and promising proposals, *Houston 2020 Visions* calls for a revision of policies, strategies that consider short and long-term impacts, and innovative thinking to find the "next big ideas" in urban planning.

houston2020visions.org

Exhibition on view by appointment through August 27, 2021 at Architecture Center Houston (902 Commerce St.) Please e-mail Debby at ***debby@aiahouston.org*** *to schedule an appointment.*

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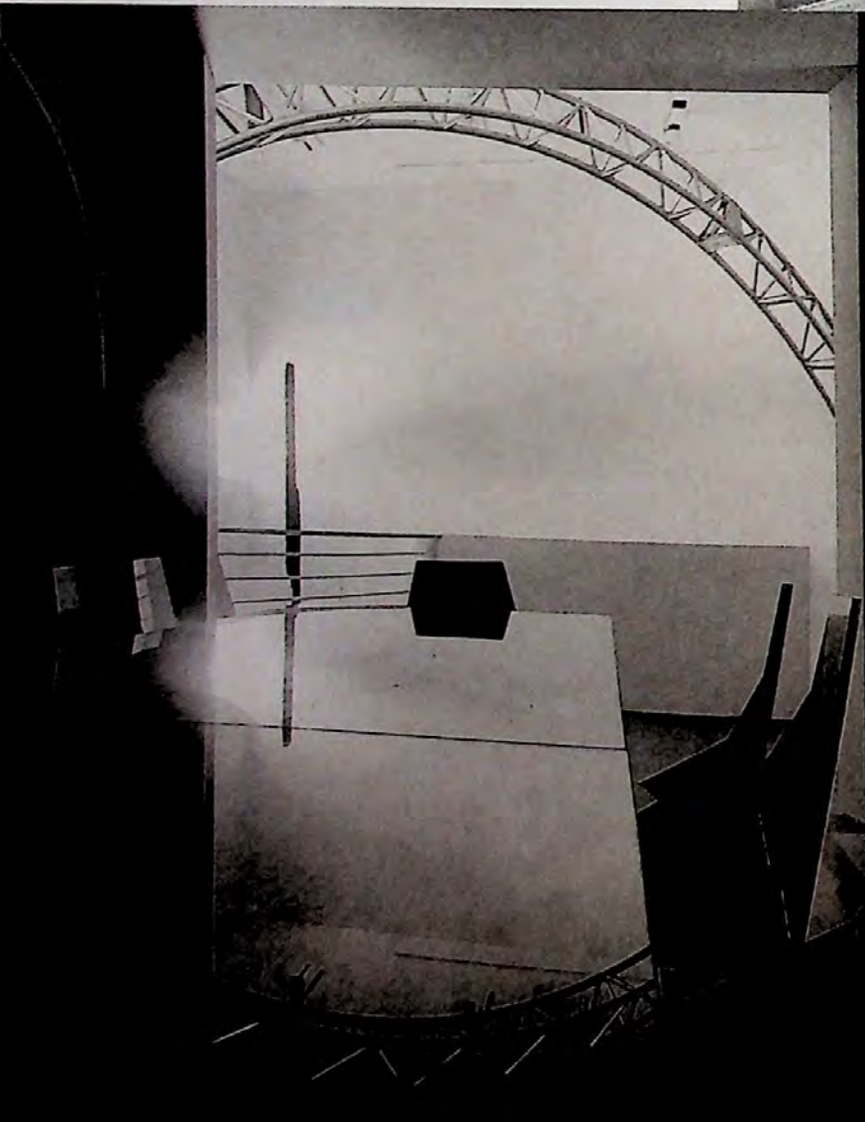

BEING AND EVERYTHING
Works by Dawn DeDeaux

Transart is honored to present works by Dawn DeDeaux, a nationally recognized artist based in New Orleans. The exhibition features selections of her work from the past fifteen years influenced by cataclysmic events. DeDeaux has been at the forefront of envisioning a post-anthropocene world as part of her ongoing *MotherShip* series recently on view at MassMoCA, addressing scenarios like the current pandemic and environmental impact on planetary habitats. Her installations are highly responsive to architecture, and she transforms Transart as though it a portal into a floating galaxtic interior that safeguards our cultural remains. DeDeaux is utilizing her Transart Residency as a lab to complete works for her upcoming Career Retrospective at New Orleans Museum of Art - *The Space Between Worlds* - opening in the Fall 2021 with the city's international triennial Prospect.5.

Through June 21 2021

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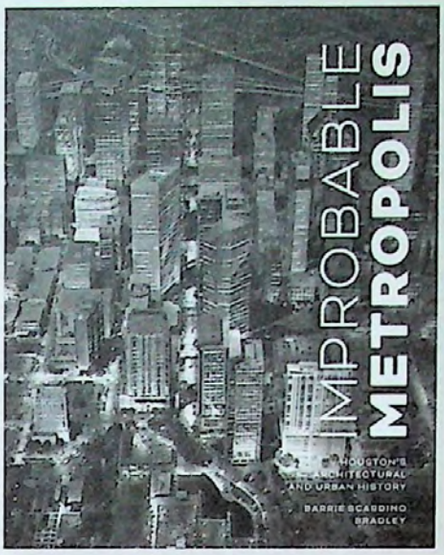

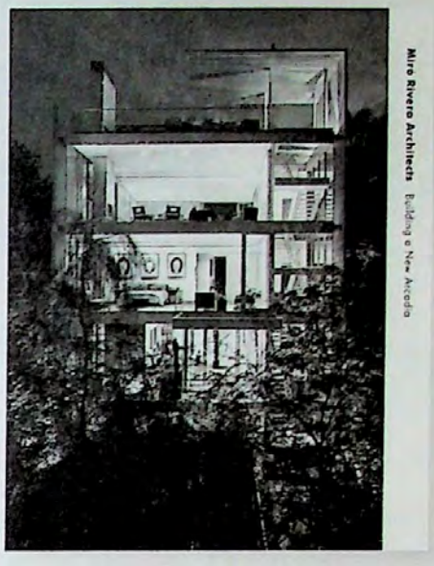

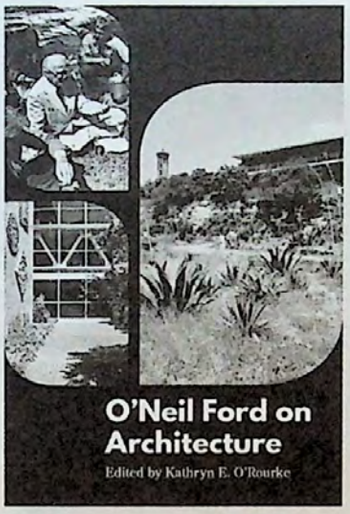

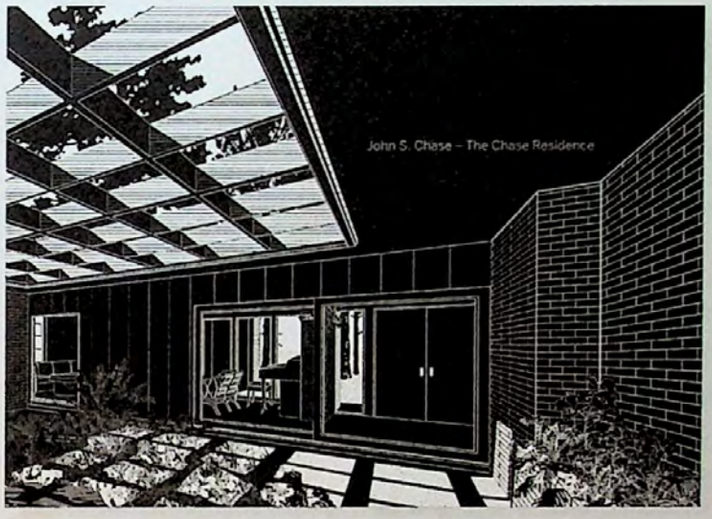

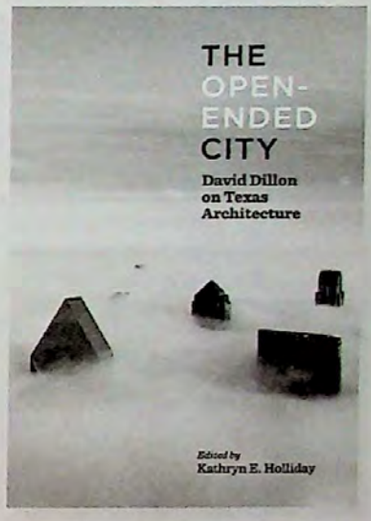

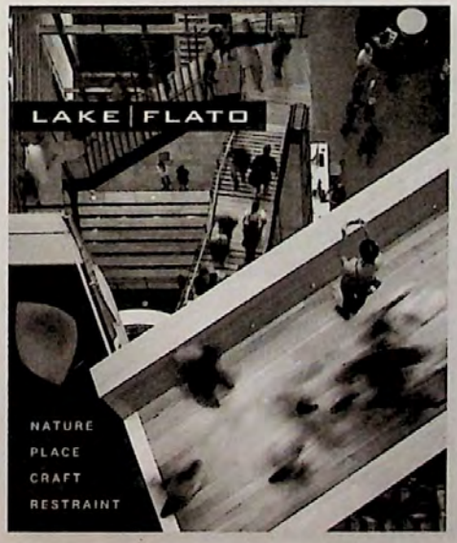

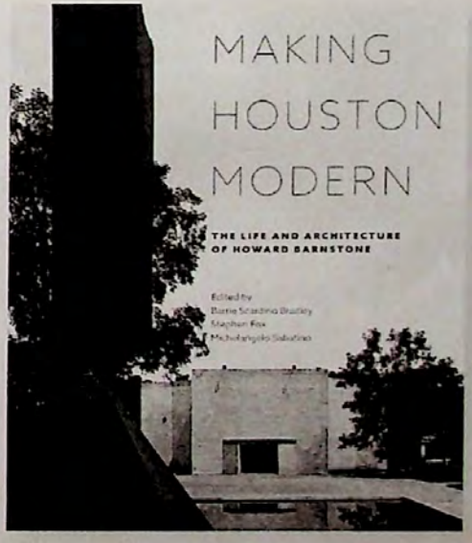

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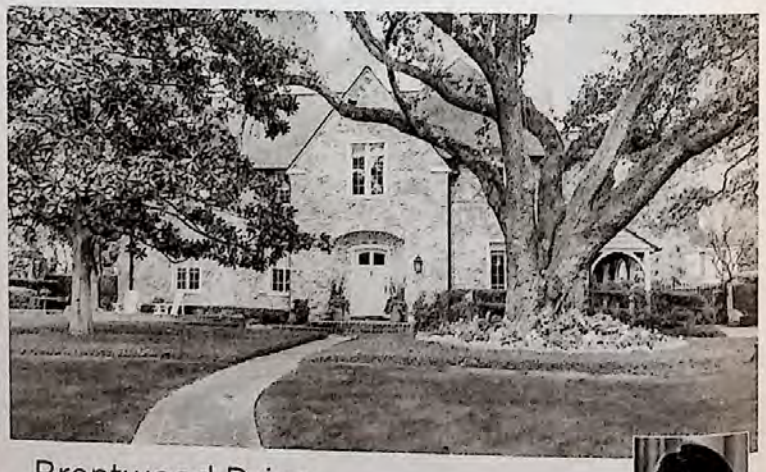

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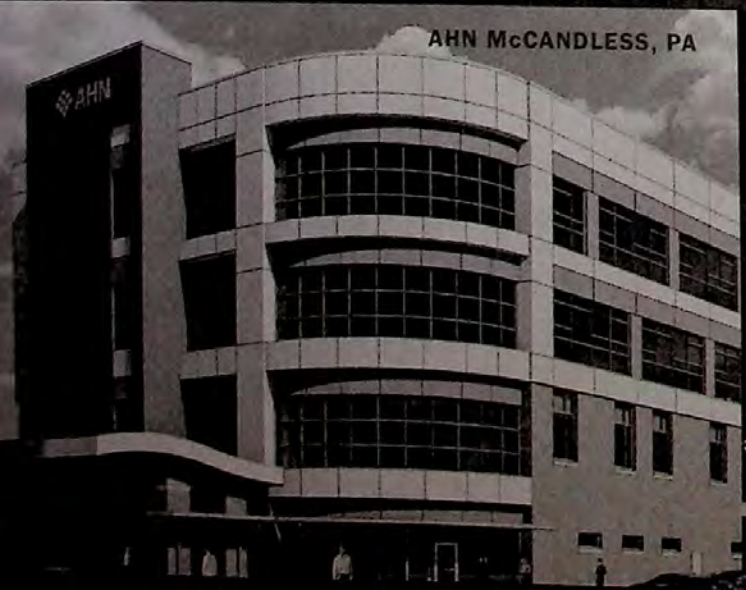

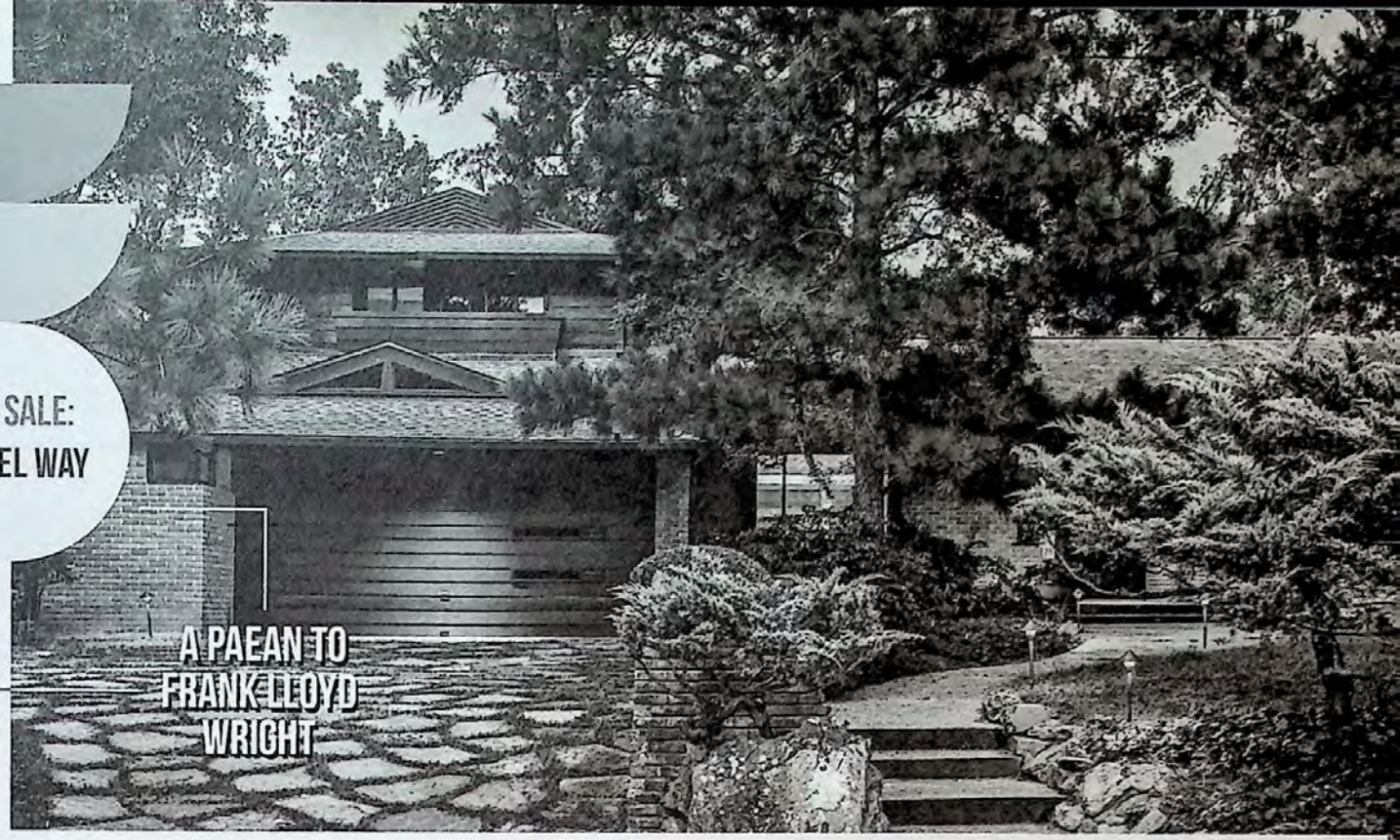

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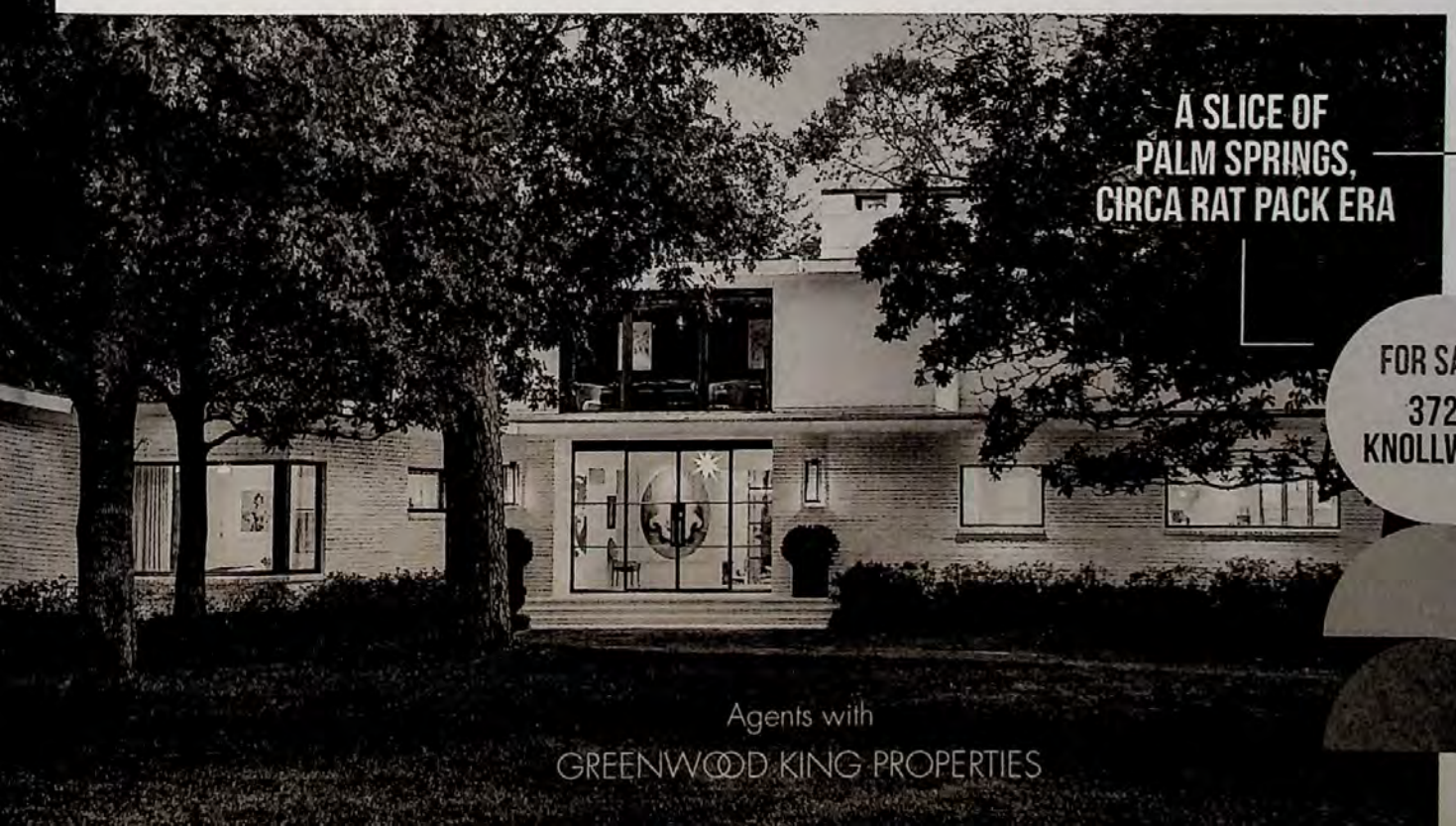

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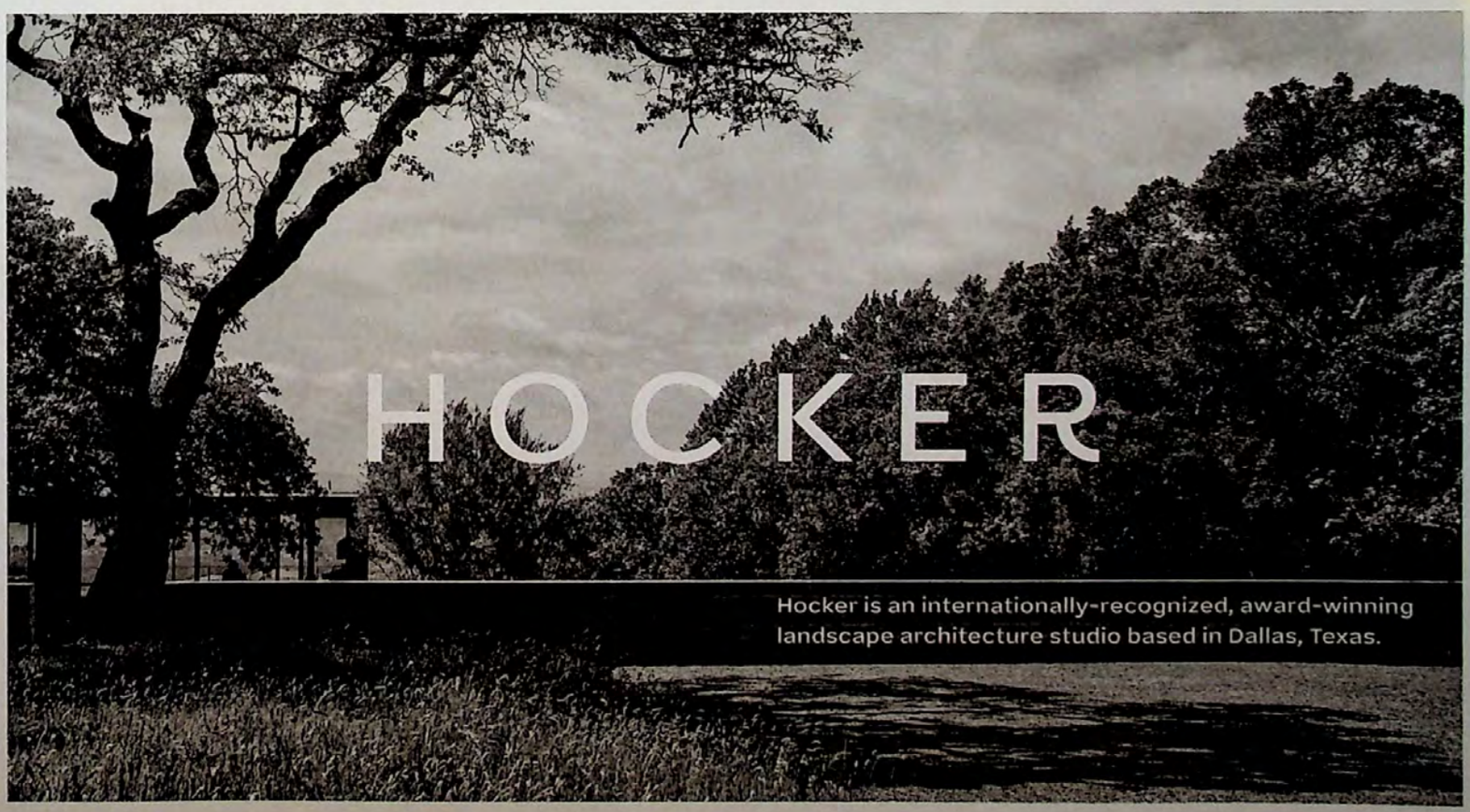

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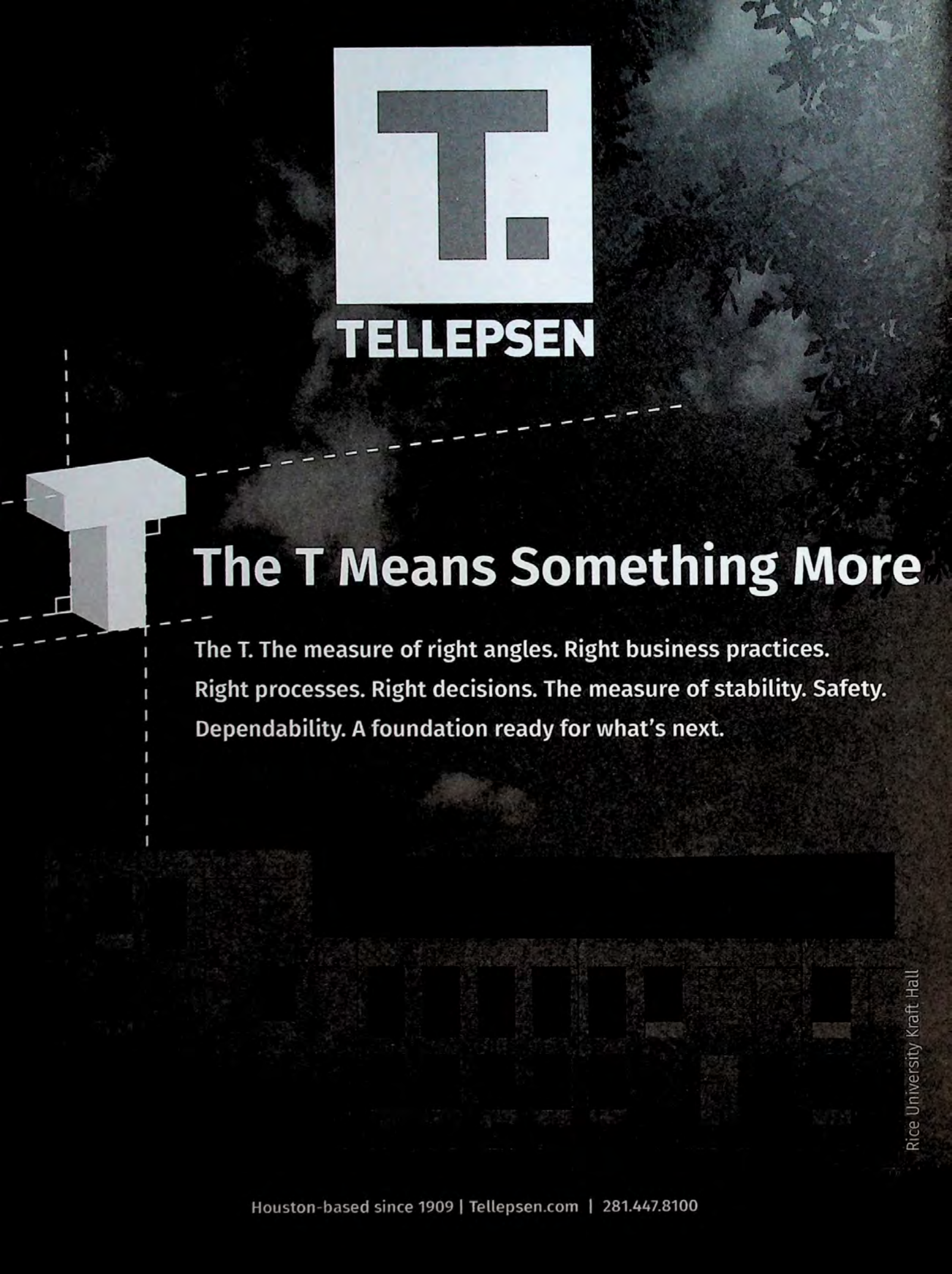
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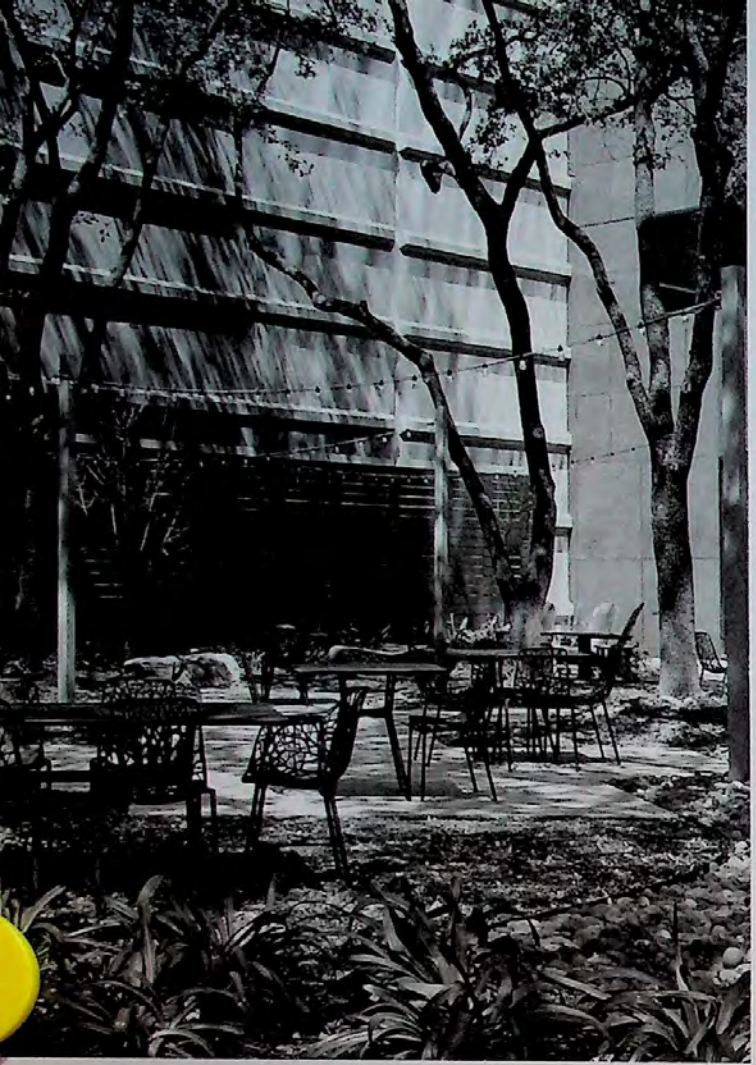

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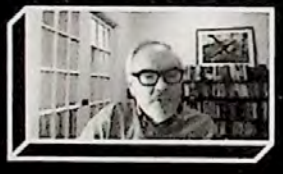

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Eligible programs are noted at the end of their descriptions.

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Cite

The Architecture and
Design Review of Houston

102

Cite 102

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Rice Design Alliance

Rice Design Alliance is the public programs and outreach arm of Rice Architecture. We curate public programs, architecture tours, design competitions and publications that communicate the importance of design in our everyday lives and its ability to make our lives better. We are based at and work from the Rice Architecture school as an advocacy group that believes that multidisciplinary and research-based design can improve our cities and the way we live in them.

RDA was established within Rice Architecture in 1972 by the school's first dean, David Crane, together with alumni and other civic-minded community members who believed that quality design thinking should be available to all in our community and that Houston's citizens—experts and non-experts alike—should feel empowered to act and transform our city through design.

Letter from the Executive Director

Maria Nicanor

A lot has happened since you held the last issue of *Cite*, realized under former *Cite* Editor Raj Mankad's purview and guest edited by Publications Committee Chair Ernesto Alfaro and Marie Rodriguez. Though it's been a while, we gratefully salute Raj's years with RDA, the relationships he forged with our community, and the work he poured into *Cite* over the years. Thank you, Raj!

In our year plus of existing online, we've gathered in many online lectures, conversations, and civic forums; we've celebrated our first online gala, *Who Builds Our City?*, a celebration of those who build our city every day and an event unlike anything RDA had ever attempted before; and in early June we'll host our first architecture tour online with UPWARDS, which explores the benefits of housing density in Houston. In short, this time has been a fruitful metamorphosis from which we continue to learn.

And yet, we haven't seen each other in so long. The second half of 2021 may likely bring renewed hope. Our travel program returns with a late June trip to Santa Fe, and glimpses of in-person gatherings seem possible in the fall. We look ahead the only way we can, with optimism and curiosity.

At the center of it all is *Cite*. The forever fiery soul of RDA. Now under the care of Editor Jack Murphy and with a smart new design by Houston-based designers MG&Co., *Cite* enters the next phase of its trajectory to bring you features about architecture & design in Houston and beyond—the stories, the people, the provocations, and hopefully, some inspiration.

The current number you now hold was started in pre-pandemic times. Its ideas were first sparked by re-reading art historian Linda Nochlin's *Realism*, from 1971: A quote in the book from nineteenth century caricaturist Honoré Daumier (although later spread by painter Édouard Manet) categorically dictates that "one must be of your own time" ("*il faut être de son temps!*"). This idea—being of your own time—is a question that has followed me since. In the book, in essence, it meant this: Stop painting pretty landscapes in a time of extreme social unrest. Show us what you see and discuss *reality*, because it's urgent.

For RDA's work in the current moment, this idea is essential. As a group, RDA has challenged itself to speak up as the world descended into a plethora of crises—notably a global pandemic, the racial justice movement, and the severe effects of climate change. All of these realities have serious spatial and architectural implications that our programming has and will continue to address. Our future lies in being intentional and strengthening our commitment to our community, especially in a time when the roles of architects and designers have seen dramatic shifts.

One overall difficulty that emerges as these crises evolve is our inability to find common ground, or even a common reality. During the pandemic, everyone has been dealt a different hand of cards. It seems, despite appearances, as though we might not be fully equipped to understand our neighbors as well as we might have hoped. With as many realities as there are individuals, there is a change in the fundamental meaning of empathy and trust with each other.

To attempt a cohesive narrative of our current time is elusive, because the times aren't cohesive. *Cite* 102 instead, seeks to make sense of this contemporary strangeness. It captures some ideas that architecture, as a wide discipline that intersects with many others, concerns itself with today. This issue contains a multiplicity of voices, a patchwork of ideas for your reading and appreciation. All are someone's reality, if maybe not always your own, and each contributes to collectively figuring out what "being of our own time" might mean for ourselves and the design disciplines. That meaning, as we all slowly re-emerge into society by the time this issue reaches you, is what we're searching for.

Editor's Note

Jack Murphy

What follows behind this message is the latest—and longest—issue of *Cite*. Assembled before and during our distanced year, these stories remain fresh and relevant.

Cite, as you can see, has a new look. Its handsome print format is the work of MG&Co., led by Noëmi Mollet and Reto Geiser. Informed by *Cite*'s visual history, they delivered a clear framework that will shape future issues.

Cite 102 asks, "What does it mean to be of one's own time?" The issue has two editorial centers. The first is "Being Contemporary," in which guest editors Ajay Manthripragada and Piergianna Mazzocca, both previous Wortham Fellows at Rice Architecture who have advanced to other academic positions, consider of whom and of what they are contemporaries. They gather a community of like-minded thinkers who help establish a critical distance with which we can understand our time. There are conversations with Jeannette Kuo, Giovanna Borasi, and Alysa Nahmias—an architect, a curator, and a filmmaker, respectively—alongside features that invite others to *Cite*'s intellectual table. Scholar Rebecca Siefert shares architect Lauretta Vinciarelli's understanding of type and Celeste Olalquiaga reports on the political upheavals in Chile.

The second center is a series of articles that extend the notion of "the contemporary" to current events and efforts in Houston. Ana Tuazon profiles Lynn Randolph, a Houston artist who's always worked at a distance from popular trends; Zoe Middleton and Libby Viera-Bland chronicle spaces of protest and Black imagination in Houston; and Heather Rowell speaks with Wonne Ickx of PRODUCTORA about the upcoming headquarters for the Houston Endowment. Finally, the architecture of recent museum improvements is closely assessed.

The issue is full, but moments of visual immersion balance the texts. Images by Naho Kubota, Uta Barth, and Will Henry—a photographer and two artists—provide exhibits that pace one's journey. In a series by photographer Leonid Furmansky, we see downtown Houston in 2020, emptied out and deserted. Three crises—the pandemic, Winter Storm Uri, and the dismantling of white supremacy—inform the photographs on the front and inside covers.

Cite's editorial apparatus—nearly forty years young—continues its work in Houston in part through its steady presence on the RDA website. Articles about current events, reviews, interviews, histories and photo essays are all regular features that will coexist with *Cite*'s annual print issue moving forward. The power of the written word remains important in a city with so much construction and demolition and so few outlets for critical engagement. Criticism absorbed through the immediacy of the screen is just as valid as when it is consumed through the permanence of paper. *Cite* 103 already beckons.

As a new editor of this publication, I benefit from Raj Mankad's prior leadership and dedication to *Cite*. He set an example for how *Cite* can be engaged with big conceptual ideas and actionable urban changes simultaneously—all in the service of design that stands to improve the lives of Houstonians.

I'm so pleased to deliver this issue of *Cite* for your attention. I look forward to what we can do together.

WHO BUILDS OUR CITY?

An online celebration of Houston's built environment

On Thursday, January 28, 2021, Rice Design Alliance hosted its first-ever online gala: *Who Builds Our City?* co-chaired by Stan Marek and Mike Holland of MAREK. Although the event itself looked different compared to previous years, the intent remained the same: bringing together leaders in the architecture, construction, design, and engineering communities to celebrate Houston's built environment.

With host Lisa Gray, senior writer at the *Houston Chronicle*, and a special appearance from Mayor Sylvester Turner, *Who Builds Our City?* paid tribute to the diverse range of people and professions that shape our city. Chronicling the history of the construction industry in Houston, RDA shared the stories of those who are often not visible participants in a discussion about building cities, but who are integral to the construction of the built environment.

RDA is grateful to all of the generous supporters who made the event a success. Gala proceeds provide funding for RDA's programming and publications that aim to make architecture and design more accessible.

Watch the entire gala program on RDA's website: ricedesignalliance.org/2020virtualevent.

Stan Marek and Mike Holland
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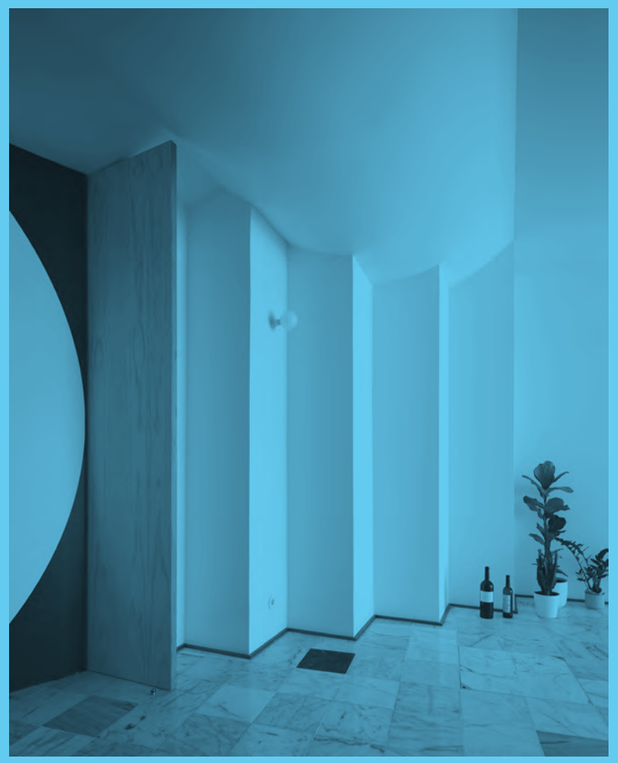


Recent completed projects by fala atelier. Bottom right photo by Ivo Tavares. All other photos by fala atelier. Courtesy fala atelier.

Since 2009, Rice Design Alliance supports and recognizes the work of exceptionally gifted national and international architects in the early stages of their professional career through the Spotlight Award.

fala atelier, the 2020 Spotlight Award awardee, is an architecture practice based in Porto, Portugal. Founded in 2013, the office is led by Filipe Magalhães, Ana Luisa Soares, and Ahmed Belkhodja. The studio prides itself in taking lightness and joy seriously. “Our projects often happen within very limited means and imperfect conditions,” Belkhodja said. “A certain breed of optimism is necessary in such context, and a certain kind of resilient lightness, too. We are thrilled and honored to see these aspects getting international attention.”

In February 2020, fala travelled to Houston to present a lecture titled “Gloriously Repeating” at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Their presentation was split in two sections: The first part reviewed individual commissions while the second sought to unite them into the larger project of the office, which included finding a common representational style, as the language of architecture is important to fala. The office found early popularity through their collages, but the presentation made it clear that the architects are committed to making buildings, as evidenced by the many efforts that they shared.

fala’s approach is in part a response to the economic climate in which they practice. Porto has an intense drive towards both preservation and redevelopment, which means that street façades are maintained, and more creative work happens with interiors and rear elevations. As designer Jonathan Wilkinson assessed when reviewing fala’s lecture for *Cite Digital*, rather than a Portuguese office, “it might be more accurate to see them as a millennial office” as they “are media-savvy; they know the history but aren’t bound by it; they have a desire to build.”

The work of fala atelier shows us that it’s possible to be serious and playful at once—that one can emerge from a mess of constraints with an architecture that’s intellectually ambitious and visually captivating.

RDA

Rice Design Alliance

2021
Architecture Tour
UPWARDS

Online
June 5 – June 19, 2021

More information available on our website: ricedesignalliance.org

UPWARDS

For our 2021 Architecture Tour, RDA is looking UPWARDS and highlighting examples of urban density in Houston's housing stock. This year's residences, featured in a special virtual program, explore our city's gradual transition towards urban densification and some of the different examples of housing types that exist in Houston. The virtual tour locations all champion the denser urban fabric that our city needs as we face population growth and increasing climate challenges. While not the only examples of dense urban living, the homes on our tour offer possible alternative living scenarios—from past and present—that move away from single-family suburban housing and instead showcase the power of collective living.

2020 Houston Design Research Grant

Rice Design Alliance has provided research grants for architecture and design students and faculty since 1999. With the generous support of The Mitsui U.S.A. Foundation, RDA launched the renamed Houston Design Research Grant in 2020 (formerly known as the Initiatives for Houston Grant) to more actively support research that can make a significant contribution to the Houston community through quality design thinking.

Starting in 2020, applications were expanded nationally to students and faculty looking to work on research projects of relevance to Houston's urban environment. The grant now awards $6,000 each to a student and faculty winner who will be invited to present their project at a public lunchtime lecture at Rice Architecture and to publish their research in *Cite*. Every year the grant addresses a different topic.

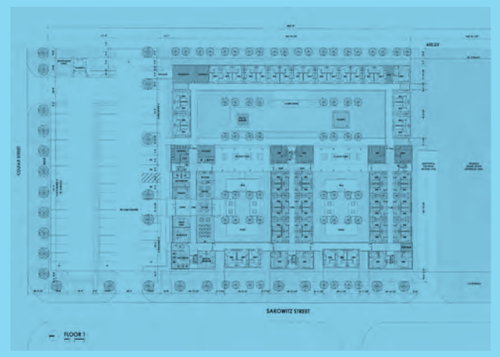
In 2020, the grant focused on housing projects that elevated and expanded ideas about how Houstonians might live together. The 2020 winners were selected by a six-member jury that included Andrew Albers, AIA, Principal, OJB Landscape Architecture; President-Elect, RDA; and Lecturer, Rice Architecture; Jonathan Brinsden, former CEO, Midway; Margaret Wallace Brown, Director, City of Houston's Planning & Development Department; John J. Casbarian, Interim Dean and the Harry K. and Albert K. Smith Professor of Architecture, Rice Architecture; Partner, Taft Architects; Maria Nicanor, Executive Director, Rice Design Alliance; and Jesús Vassallo, Associate Professor, Rice Architecture.

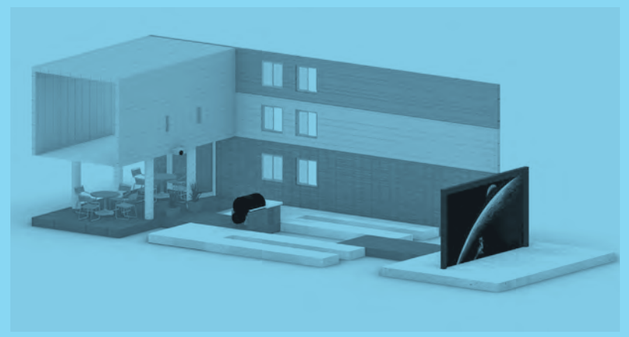
The Houston Design Research Grant is made possible thanks to a generous gift from The Mitsui U.S.A. Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Mitsui & Co. (U.S.A.), Inc. ("Mitsui USA"). Established in 1987, The Mitsui U.S.A. Foundation currently supports more than fifty initiatives across the US in the areas of Education, Community Welfare, Arts and Culture, and Employee Matching and Volunteerism.

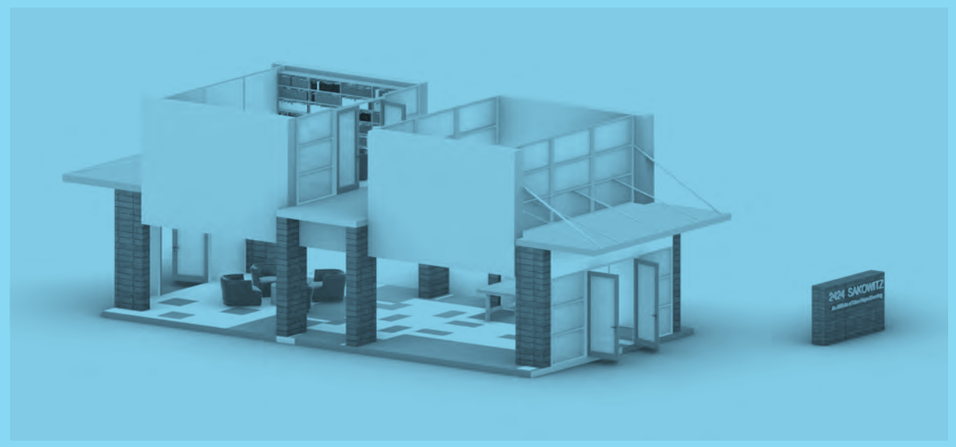
2020 Houston Design Research Grant Faculty Award

De Peter Yi

Moving Rooms: Reimagining Housing through the Single Room Occupancy Model







Top right: Plan of Sakowitz SRO, designed by Val Glitsch Architect, and operated by New Hope Housing. Courtesy Val Glitsch Architect.

Somewhere between a temporary hotel room and permanent housing, single room occupancy (SRO) housing defies simple categorization but has served many diverse groups in need of affordable housing. The promise of the SRO emerges from its marginalization and resistance by necessity to dominant models of market-driven housing over its 150-year history. While the SRO is slippery in definition, the three words reveal how it bypasses our conventional unde standing of architectural typology to instead offer a series of ingredients for what housing could be. The terms "single," "room," and "occupancy" respectively call attention to the agency of the individual, the importance of space making, and the right to claim belonging.

For the past twenty years, New Hope Housing in Houston has been gradually reinventing the SRO to serve the city's in-need populations while pioneering a unique debt-free model to development. The many innovations in their built projects, both ambient and exuberant, give rise to an expanded array of economic and social exchanges within housing beyond those dictated by market demands.

According to New Hope's mission statement, the organization's core purpose is "to provide stabilizing, affordable, permanent housing with supportive services for people who live on very limited incomes." The organization was founded in 1993, when the People of Christ Church Cathedral-Episcopal started a fundraiser in response to the growing homeless population in downtown Houston. Since then, they have built nearly 1,200 units spanning nine properties across the city. Designed in close collaboration with local architects, New Hope's properties display a consistent evolution of shared design features while responding to each localized site. One project emblematic of their approach is their Sakowitz property, which was designed by Val Glitsch Architect and completed in 2010 in the Fifth Ward. The plan of Sakowitz arranges 166 units across both single and double-loaded corridor bars to enclose three courtyards, each with their own outdoor features and identities. The plan grows outward from the individual SRO rooms, which gives the building an intimate scale despite its seemingly large size. Amenity spaces, generous courtyards, and similar soft modes of collectivity in Sakowitz and other New Hope properties transform the typical multifamily housing development configuration into an experience at once familiar and new.

While the aggregation of units in many historic SROs was designed for efficiency, in Sakowitz the spaces between units are generous, and the building in turn feels open while still protected. Walking through Sakowitz, one encounters an assemblage of archetypal architectural exteriors—courtyards and cloisters, stairwells and arcades, overpasses and underpasses. This loosening of spaces, which in essence transforms the building into a village, stands in stark contrast to the rigid and austere forms of the historic SRO. While early SROs re-directed residents' domestic life to the city outside, in Sakowitz it appears that a version of a micro-city has been transplanted within the boundaries of the building itself.

The room has been an area of inquiry and contention from its emergence in modernist architectural thinking to recent discourse around housing. In his essay, "A Short History of the Private Room," Pier Vittorio Aureli critiques the market-driven miniaturization of the dwelling unit—evidenced in the now-ubiquitous urban micro-apartment which packs a kitchen, dining room, living room, and bedroom all in one space—while drawing a comparison to the sanctity of an uncluttered private space, exemplified by Hannes Meyer's *Co-op Interieur*. The SRO unit, in its original form, aligns more closely with the latter. But unlike Meyer's *Co-op*, the SRO has always engaged the question of what exists outside of the room as well, because it is the presence of these exterior services that allows the SRO room to exist in the first place. By simultaneously establishing the room as a given right, while simplifying it to meet the most basic human needs of shelter and privacy, the most salient attribute of the SRO has always been its projection outwards.

In New Hope's properties, looking outside of the private room leads to a discovery of new "rooms" within the expanded plan. A projective broadening of the activities already engendered within these spaces can further empower mutually beneficial relationships between residents and the neighborhoods they inhabit. Rather than being defined solely by program or contiguous planes and enclosures, these new rooms prioritize the exchange of relationships: a pop-up store where residents could build trust with the neighborhood by trading domestic objects, a timeshare event space that can be held in common ownership, a main square for hosting neighborhood gatherings.

These rooms are nascent and open to interpretation. They are blurry and in transition. They can be best described as a set of "moving rooms," ready to migrate from the margins occupied by the SRO to offer new forms of social and financial exchange in housing that can better serve us all.

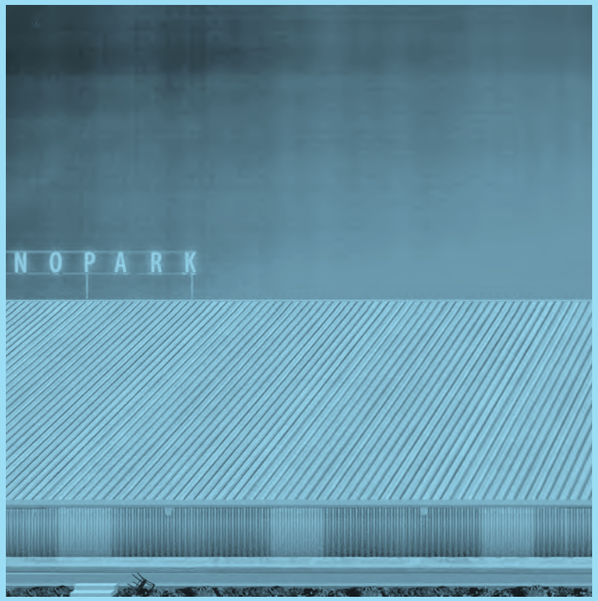
De Peter Yi is a lecturer and the 2018–2019 Walter Sanders Fellow at the Taubman College of Architecture at the University of Michigan. He is the author of Building Subjects*, a recently published book on vernacular housing in China.*

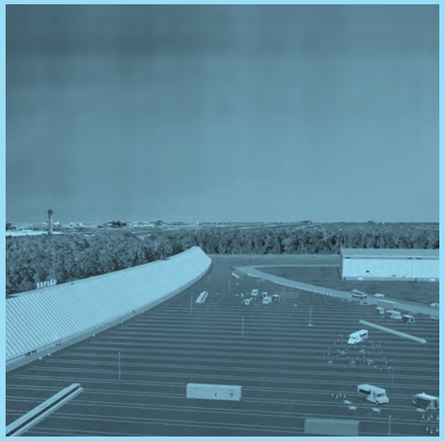
The research team for this effort included Michaela Nam, Tejashrii Shankar Raman, Stephanie Rosas, and Yin To Wong.

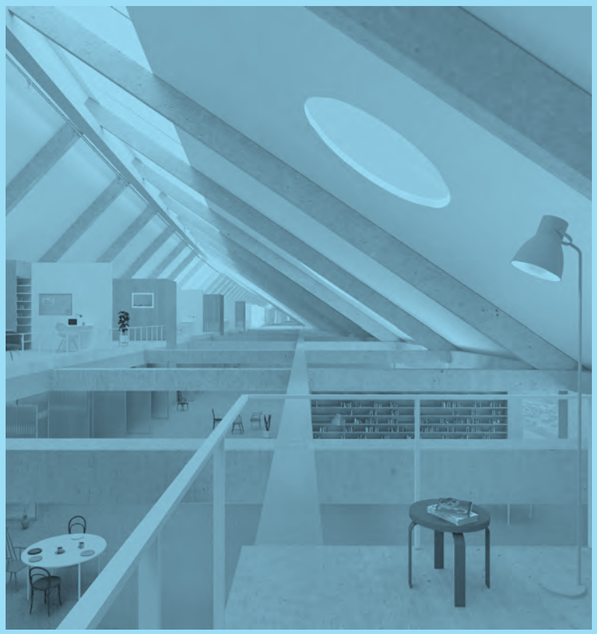
2020 Houston Design Research Grant Student Award

Anna Fritz
Shree Kale
Edward Liew

The Long-Term Motel







The Long-Term Motel is a new typology for affordable housing. It is an infrastructure for the reuse and sharing of amenities. It is a refuge for the in-between resident.

Somewhere between motel and home, the Long-Term Motel proposes a new form of cooperative housing for Houston. Designed for the increasing number of fulfillment center workers in the outer reaches of the city, the project calls for a new typology for affordable housing based on a model of varied-stay inhabitation. It builds on the shotgun house typology, translating it to a scale for a larger collective through a system of sharing, increased density, and prefabricated units, countering Houston's dispersed housing and standard nuclear family structure.

The Context

Companies like Amazon have been recently placed under scrutiny for their monopoly over the digital marketplace and for their exploitative labor conditions. Long hours, poor lighting, and menial labor perpetuate a cycle of exploitation which, for many people, leaves no alternative. Demographically, this model for seasonal and short-term employment, coupled with decreasing opportunities in the U.S. labor market, has attracted people of different ages, races, degrees of education, and socioeconomic backgrounds to Amazon's workforce, creating a uniquely diverse yet ultimately disparate body of workers. It is this spectrum—the seasonal to the full-time employee and the student to the near-retiree—for whom the Long-Term Motel is designed.

The Site

Architecturally, Amazon's supply chains have manifested themselves as "wish-fulfillment centers." They're usually illegible, big-box warehouses situated in barren concrete landscapes on the outskirts of cities. Houston's outer loop region reflects this typology—composed of untouched forests, highways, three (and counting) Amazon fulfillment centers, and other isolated warehouses located far from residential zones and public transportation infrastructures. The Long-Term Motel is situated within this context, on the edge of forested land adjacent to IAH Airport and Amazon's HOU1 warehouse.

The Plaza

A loosely arrayed plaza mediates between the building and the surrounding warehouses. It's open for all activities—from raves, to protests, to drive-in-theaters. Its expanse is navigated by a public bus route system which unites the existing roads and parking infrastructures into an overall landscape. This network ferries workers and visitors from the building to local destinations, transforming the motel and fulfillment centers into a neighborhood of extra-large buildings.

The Building

The curved massing of the building sweeps across the northern boundary of the site. Its blank corrugated metal and polycarbonate façade reflects the vernacular of the surrounding machine landscape, while also acting as a backdrop for activities in the communal plaza. In contrast, the gentle arc and low pitched-roof signify its human program and unify the programs of a motel, apartment, community center, and public amenities under a single, continuous roof—supported by a superstructure of mass-timber columns, beams, and trusses. The form of the building is derived from an arc overlayed by an orthogonal cut; this creates a long public corridor which splits the interior in two. This corridor acts as a porous boundary, distinguishing the private domestic units to the north from the public amenities to the south. Drawing from Soviet worker clubs where programs were meant to facilitate conversations conducive to the formation of labor unions, the building offers public amenities ranging from lounges to libraries, gyms, auditoriums, dining halls, and meeting spaces. These are open to the broader community and make spaces for dialogue and collective gathering.

The Contract

The Long-Term Motel is not only a building but a redesign of the traditional lease agreement. The project offers its residential space not by unit but by room, lowering cost per square foot and allowing residents to flexibly join as individuals or as pre-formed groups through a discounted bundling of rooms. In addition, rooms in the small units are available for lease on a daily or monthly basis (much like a hotel or AirBnB) and rooms in the large units are available on a seasonal to yearly basis with a three-year maximum. These longer-term rooms are not leased but temporarily owned through a non-equity cooperative, wherein residents gain membership and occupancy rights over their specific unit and shared amenities for the duration of their stay, as outlined in an occupancy agreement. This allows inhabitants to occupy a middle temporal space that is neither permanent nor ephemeral and to construct their own terms for living.

The Unit

Three types of residential units—small, medium, and large—vary in size and offer different kinds of shared amenities to accommodate a range of temporalities, kinship structures, and degrees of sharing between individuals, which subvert the standard domestic layout. Each unit is designed as an independent lightweight timber infill that slots between the infrastructure walls and beneath the mass-timber superstructure. The simplicity of construction also facilitates a simplicity and flexibility in plan: Rooms are organized linearly and defined loosely by a series of sliding polycarbonate doors, which can be opened to allow for a view through the entire building to the forest beyond.

The Walls

The infrastructural walls form the literal cores of the project, which contain all the necessary infrastructure for living. All public spaces and residential units are defined through an array of these highly programmed poche walls, designed to conceal an efficient grid of plumbing and HVAC. Tapping into this infrastructure, each infrastructural wall supplies its adjacent space with the fixed appliances and rooms specific to its program and uses a system of color-coding within the cabinetry to easily identify shared versus private use. Within the residential units, these infrastructural walls facilitate the sharing of domestic amenities across units and between residents, using sliding doors to mediate access to the shared laundry, bathrooms, kitchens, and storage spaces. The walls are constructed from a prefabricated kit-of-parts made of standard dimensional lumber and milled plywood sheets, which allow for a diversity of spaces through modular configurations. By taking advantage of an economy of scale, these heavily designed parts form an affordable and easily constructed whole.

The Summary

The Long-Term Motel is a refuge for the in-between resident. Rent and ownership become a flexible arrangement, supported by a collective building layout and system of sharing that allow for an ease of transience. Construction relies on an economy of scale, providing an economical number of amenities to serve more than just a few. The building itself provides a diversity of living opportunities and common spaces that allow for personal connection, community-building, leisure, and beauty in the otherwise isolated and inhuman fulfillment center landscape. The Long-Term Motel is a referendum on Houston's current approach to housing and re-imagines the role that architects might play in designing the seemingly extra-architectural systems that affect the politics, labor, and perceived kinship structures of our everyday lives.

Anna Fritz is a student at Rice Architecture in the B.Arch. program. She is currently completing her year of preceptorship at Thomas Phifer and Partners in New York.

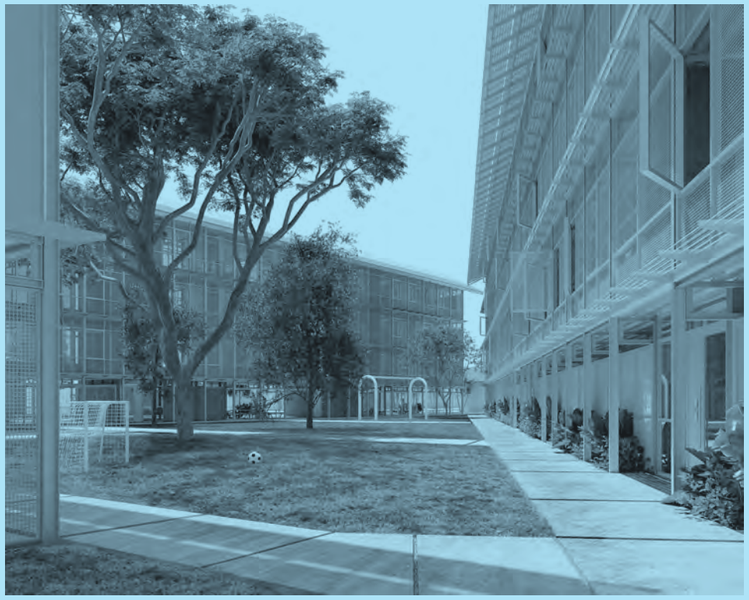
Shree Kale is a student at Rice Architecture in the B.Arch. program. He is currently completing his year of preceptorship at Adjaye Associates in New York.

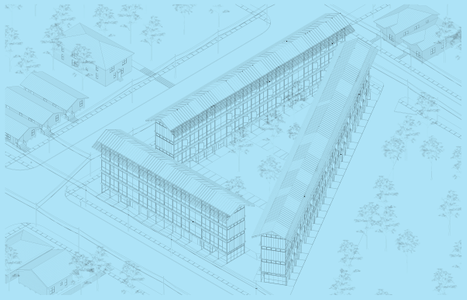
Edward Liew is a student at Rice Architecture in the B.Arch. program. He is currently completing his year of preceptorship at Pei Cobb Freed & Partners Architects in New York.

2020 Houston Design Research Grant Honorable Mention

Sebastián López Cardozo
Lene-Mari Sollie

Affordable Housing in Houston





Suburban deforestation in order to construct streets and parking tarmacs everywhere has created an endlessly uncontrollable surface—a giant wind and waterworks—the setting for the perfect storm.

–*Lars Lerup*, One Million Acres & No Zoning[1]

In his 2011 text, architect Lars Lerup considers the implications of a 500-year storm in Houston, a city whose urban fabric is exposed to the deleterious effects of ever-intensifying environmental events. From Lerup's text, three factors can be deduced that serve as a footing for a new approach to housing in Houston: economy, culture, and climate. In Lerup's prophetic scenario, economic and cultural forces—such as the cost of land and the desire for an individual plot, respectively—collide with and amplify worsening climate events.[2] If urbanization—realized here through the unchecked proliferation of impermeable surfaces—is indeed part of the problem, what role should a new housing model play in mitigating its impact?

Houston is the quintessential laissez-faire city; it lends itself to bottom-up development. Therefore, a successful new housing type must be thought of as a replicable, scalable, model that can be deployed piecemeal by the developer or the private individual. In its replicability, it must contain the solutions to economic, cultural, and climatic problems, by, in order of consideration, increasing density, bringing down the cost for developer and buyer, and satisfying demands for housing away from the floodplain; maintaining the essential spatial and social qualities to which Houstonians are accustomed; and protecting the residents from flooding (physically and psychologically) and re-introducing porous surfaces to the urban landscape to mitigate runoff.

Approaching the fabric of Houston through the lens of the "generational typology"—a term coined by Atelier Bow-Wow—we ask: How can the qualities appreciated by previous generations be maintained in the face of densification, economic stressors, and environmental challenges?[3]

A New Housing Model

Working with the existing housing initiatives found in the *Complete Communities Action Plan for the Third Ward* and the *Midtown Affordable Housing Plan* as part of Jesús Vassallo's Texas Dense studio, we were able to identify and develop schemes for certain tracts of land while also testing their replicability across the Third Ward. Conceptualizing the housing prototype from site-specific instances was critical to understanding and working with the existing urban fabric.

As a starting point, we considered the shotgun house typology, which contains many qualities that Third Ward residents appreciate; in particular, the role of the front porch as a social space for interacting with the neighborhood. We wanted to retain and retool this cherished component of the shotgun typology in a denser setting.

Our first step was to flip the porches from the short end of the home to the long side, which expands this valued condition. This move allowed us to organize the units in a linear formation, which maximizes opportunities for natural light. We wanted to create the experience of a continuous porch that would maximize both social and environmental qualities.

A point-core system allowed us to eliminate the need for corridors. By raising all units off the ground and stacking similar units, we were able to achieve two important things: first, the ground-level space is opened for green areas, parking, and shared amenities; and second, this elevation provides residents with physical and psychological protection from flooding.To enhance the benefit of the porch condition, we provided extensive shading mechanisms (through roof overhangs and sunshades) to create a space that would be comfortable most of the year. This allows for additional usable space in an otherwise compact unit, while keeping the area of mechanically conditioned space smaller.

On the opposite side of the residential unit, an extruded box extends through the units, housing built-in storage, a place for air returns, and a plant ledge above. The units have a simple linear plan, with rooms separated by prefabricated walls.

These walls can be prefabricated off-site in parallel to the construction of the primary steel frame, which shortens construction time for the project. To minimize transportation costs, the modules are envisioned as larger, "chunky" walls that incorporate basic appliances and storage. They would be assembled onsite to produce rooms when placed in an apartment.

In terms of economy of scale, the main elements of the structure are conceived as a kit-of-parts or an architectural product. By reducing variation, we hope to diminish cost and increase the quality and performance of spaces. It is our intent that by utilizing steel structures, local steel manufacturers—plentiful in Houston thanks to the oil industry—could be used as a resource. The choice of the Vierendeel truss was born out of the observation of the grid-like spindle ornamentation on many of the single-family homes in the area.

Notes

1 Lars Lerup, *One Million Acres & No Zoning* (London: AA Publications, 2011), 125.

2 For a study into the effects of urbanization during Hurricane Harvey, see Wei Zhang, Gabriele Villarini, Gabriel Vecchi, and James Smith, "Urbanization exacerbated the rainfall and flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey in Houston," *Nature 563* (2018).

3 The concept of "generational typology" was developed by Atelier Bow-Wow in the context of Japan. It observes that with each generation, an existing lot becomes further subdivided as a result of the inheritance tax, and thus becomes more densified. The appeal to this concept in the context of our search for a housing model is that it allows us to establish a continuity with what was already happening in Houston.

Sebastián López Cardozo is a Master of Architecture candidate at Rice University. In 2020, he was a co-Editor-in-Chief for issues 8.5 and 9.0 of PLAT Journal *and coproduced an architecture podcast series with Rice Architecture's* Tête-à-Tête. *His writing has been published in* Azure Magazine *and Yale's* Paprikal. *Currently, he is working on a book on contemporary Mexican architecture with Jesús Vassallo and also works for Toronto-based Partisans Architecture.*

Lene-Mari Sollie is a Master of Architecture candidate at Rice University. She is the recipient of the Morris R. Pitman Award in Architecture and the Gene Hackerman Scholarship. She received her B.S. in Architecture from the University of Minnesota and has practiced as a project designer in Sydney and Minneapolis.

Member Profile

Daimian S. Hines in Conversation With Tiffany Xu

Left: Daimian S. Hines. Above and following: Images of Jamaica Houses of Parliament proposal. Courtesy Hines Architecture + Design.

TX *You were raised in Jamaica and Detroit and have worked in firms in Chicago, Detroit, and Southeast Asia. You now live and have your own practice, Hines Architecture + Design (HINESAD), here in Houston. Can you speak about your experience and formation as a designer?*

DH My curiosity with the profession started as a child in Jamaica. My grandfather had many jobs, one of which was a shoemaker. In his workshop, I enjoyed the process of watching him convert raw materials into unique objects. One such object included my first pair of shoes. My grandmother had many jobs also, one of which was a seamstress. I was amazed by the process of transforming templates into wearable goods. While living in Detroit, my formal introduction to architecture was through a favorite grade school science teacher. His neighbor, African American architect Mark English, was gracious enough to allow a curious mind to shadow him at his practice.

In college, I admired the work of Le Corbusier, which drove me to further study French to access more literature on his work. Studying abroad in India, I had the fantastic opportunity to visit Le Corbusier's works, including the Mill Owners' Building in Ahmedabad and the government campus at Chandigarh.

Working in Chicago immersed me in a city that celebrates architecture, architects, and the built environment. It also offered an opportunity to be a part of a design community that is truly global. At the time, an abundance of international projects offered designers major opportunities to practice and experiment. It was a time when architectural practice became global, which meant its collaborations were also global. Technology became a significant equalizer in the ability to work on projects in Asia, the Middle East, or South America.

This experience led me to understand design as an intensely collaborative act. At HINESAD, we consistently seek inputs from direct or indirect sources such as historians, artists, community organizers, writers, local and international talent. This approach is essential to how we work. I firmly believe that there are so many resources out there that we typically don't approach or explore for collaborative design opportunities.

On occasion and while reflecting, it is hard not to notice when I am the only Black design architect in the room. I have never been discouraged by this reality and the headwinds it may present. I am still guided and reassured by the words of my immigrant parents, who told me: "You can be whatever you choose." Perhaps this optimistic outlook comes from our formative years in a majority-Black African diaspora Caribbean nation.

TX *In 2019, HINESAD's entry for the Government of Jamaica Houses of Parliament, of which you were lead designer along with executive architect Evan Williams, JIA, from Design Collaborative, was the selected winner for the competition People's Choice award. Can you speak about the role of such a civic space in Kingston today?*

DH Jamaica is the largest English-speaking nation in the Caribbean. The island was subject to British rule from the 1600s until it gained full independence in 1962. The slave trade was outlawed in 1807. Kingston, the country's capital, has heavily invested in technology and has a mission to be a major urban center to attract hoteliers and other commercial developments. In the past, the north coast previously garnered all attention due to the prosperous tourism industry. But with a growing awareness of sustainable urbanization, the citizens of Kingston know that it's important to develop civic and cultural spaces in the city.

It is important to note that Kingston has a series of ephemeral civic spaces, such as the busy intersection known as Half Way Tree. This space is recognized by the world every four years or so when the nation is highlighted for track and field during the Olympics. However, the space remains severely underdeveloped although the opportunity for this location to be a transformational catalyst is apparent.

About a decade ago, Kingston and St. Andrews Municipal Corporation (KSAMC) invested in the redevelopment of Emancipation Park in uptown Kingston to much political and social opposition, but the local government entity pushed forward the creation of this urban and civic space. This civic space is now one of the most celebrated and activated civic spaces in the city. Kanye West recently led a "Sunday Service" performance there. Civic spaces matter.

The selection of our project by both the jurors and the people's choice was significant. Our team was awarded the responsibility of redeveloping one of the most recognizable civic spaces in Kingston. The successful redevelopment of such an important space can fundamentally transform the adjacent communities, instigate opportunities for multi-modal transit, continue to inspire private development, create jobs, contribute to the government's goal to make downtown Kingston the central business district again, and even offer an alternative cultural destination for the country's national treasure, reggae music.

I believe civic spaces have a transformational value beyond the physical boundaries of the site. They can serve as a social, cultural, and economic asset that spur development.

TX *The decision to require that the design lead be a Jamaican citizen was made after local Jamaican designers and planners expressed concern when a Chinese firm was initially selected for the project. With respect to our continued globalizing world and Jamaica's complex history of imported labor, what are your thoughts on the Urban Development Corporation's decision to turn to working with local architects and designers?*

DH The Urban Development Corporation (UDC) is the development arm of the Jamaican government. This think tank and asset management group has guided the rationalization and development of many projects across the nation. The current government has made this particular development a significant component of their vision. In my view, the UDC is a progressive organization exemplified by its embrace of public inputs and dialogue.

A project like this is sensitive, ambitious, culturally important, and challenging. UDC's decision to tap local architects and architects of the Jamaican diaspora was a recognition that the design talent existed. The question then became, how to evaluate it, and the competition facilitated this exercise. Many significant projects include a design competition, so the process was a familiar one. I think the talent and the collective will exists to see this project through completion. We are optimistic and humbled to be trusted with this monumental vision.

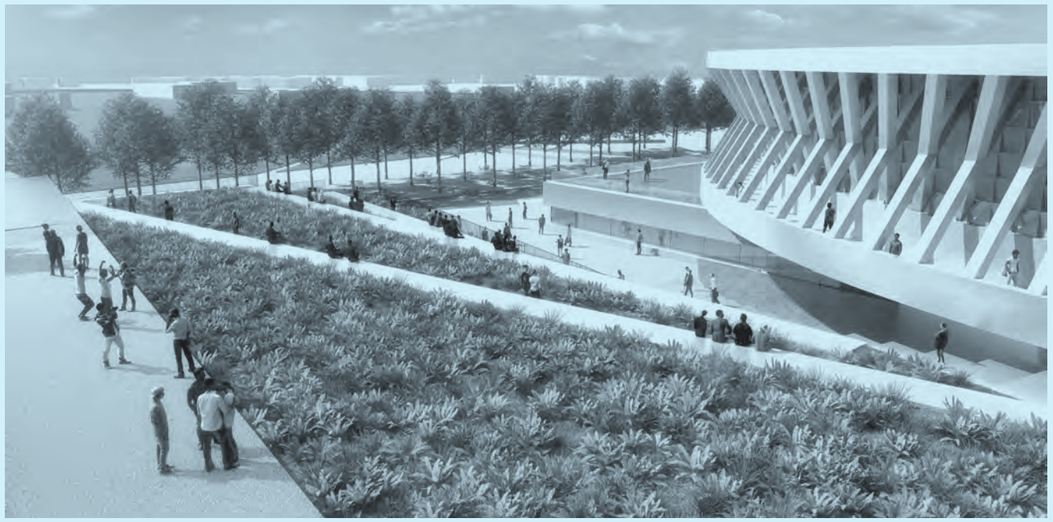
It was generally understood that a permanent home for the country's government has always been mandated by the Constitution. The George William Gordon House, initially constructed for the KSAMC prior to Jamaica's full independence, has been the temporary home of the Jamaican parliament since independence. One could easily miss this inconspicuous building along Duke Street. It has served the country well, but the government requires a modern and functional workplace and an iconic structure that is easily identifiable as the center of its operation.

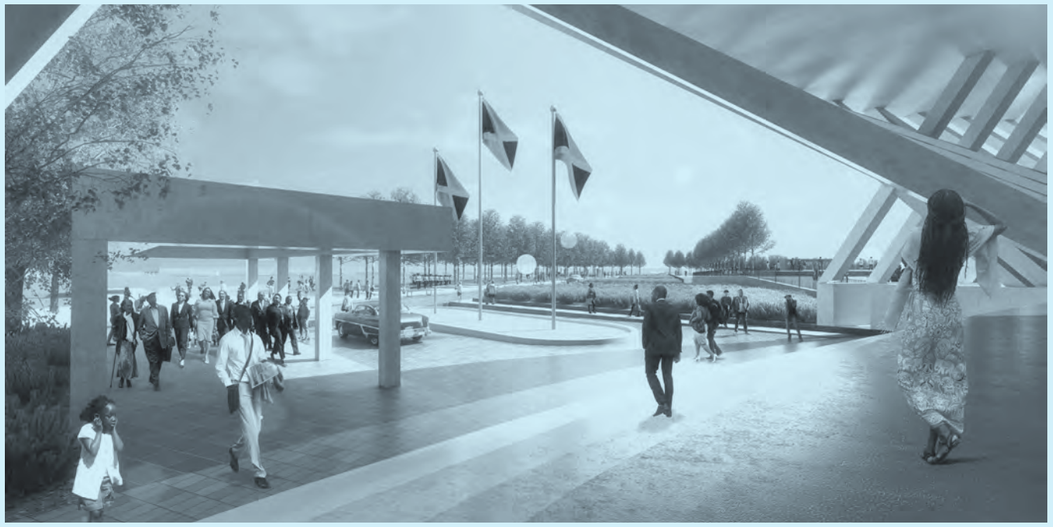
TX *What was the design process for conceptualizing a monumental form for democratic governance in the immediate context of National Heroes Park?*

DH The overall site area is approximately fifty acres in size. It has a storied history. The site was once a British-era horse racing track, hence its shape and adjacent ring road. The competition brief noted that many government ministries would be relocated to land surrounding the park, hence the creation of a new government oval.

We wanted the project to have a formal expression as viewed from all directions. This would provide an equitable approach to the master planned development of future ministries planned around National Heroes Park.

The Constitution of Jamaica actually stipulates the site location and size of a new Parliament building and grounds. The competition brief identified the prescribed site within the overall National Heroes Park. The southern portion of the site has a significant area of reverence known as the Shrine; this area within and extending beyond its boundaries houses the entombed remains of Jamaican Governor





Generals (the Queen's symbolic head of state), former prime ministers, and national heroes.

The northern portion of the site hosts temporal and ephemeral activities within Kingston. It often transforms to host sporting events for neighboring schools, kite festivals, and national and local celebrations. The competition committee also noted this in the selection of the parliament site within the park.

After discussions with the design team regarding the history of the site and further reflection on our own early memories, we settled on the country's motto as our design directive: "Out of many, one people."

For us, it was also important to understand the overall history of Jamaica's population and to catalogue the Jamaican commonwealth parliamentary process. It was important to consider the interconnected relationship between citizens who vote and their elected representatives who undertake a process known as Parliament, which then creates the laws and policies that govern the nation.

How do we then symbolically translate that system of governance into architectural form-making? At this point, I thought our monumental form should be circular and offset from the center of the site to allow prevailing directional relationships to continue. The X-shaped columns in the façade system form an arcade—a typical and familiar downtown Kingston typology—and represents the interconnected relationship of people and government forming a structure, which is representative of Parliament. Each compound column contains two primary members: a member that serves as a buttress and angles outward. The other segment of the column is a diagonal member that tilts forward, representing a progressive Jamaica that leans north towards the future and the visible mountain range that defines Kingston.

It was also important to articulate the site as a landscape in addition to the building. National Heroes Park is one of the most significant public spaces in Kingston, and it is important that the park be transformed into an enhanced urban space for the surrounding communities and its residents. Hence, there was consideration given to the social sensitivity of the park and allowing existing nearby communities to maintain a sense of ownership while introducing amenities for all visitors.

It was important for us to design moments with familiar typologies yet put forward an overall design that is bold, memorable, and clear in articulation. The site is an urban park, so it was important to formalize some of the existing informal programs and functions. At the same time, we added new and thoughtful elements, such as layering the proposed park continuous walking trail with spaces that disseminate cultural information and knowledge of Jamaica's history.

Design can assist and amplify a sense of the collective. Individuality, multiplicity, and identity can be collectively celebrated through space and placemaking. Projects like the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C. and, locally, the recently completed Houston Holocaust Museum, are contemporary places that support a collective connection to our history.

TX *Freedmen's Town in Houston's Fourth Ward is in the process of being designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. During the Reconstruction period, recently freed former slaves built their homes at this site, and a number of historic row houses remain. Can you speak a bit about HINESAD's engagement with Freedmen's Town and about its history and community?*

DH In 2016 I worked with a developer who was passionate about undertaking a development in Greenwood, Tulsa, Oklahoma. I am embarrassed to say that this was my introduction to the tragic history of Black Wall Street and the violence that took place there.

Through HINESAD's involvement in Greenwood, I then became involved here in Houston and eventually chaired a committee whose mission is to evaluate the merits of UNESCO recognition of Freedmen's Town as a cultural heritage site. At the time I was unfamiliar with the history of Freedmen's Town in Houston. It embodies the history of the urbanization of formerly enslaved Africans in America, after the Emancipation Proclamation, who then created a thriving community in Fourth Ward. Few of the community's non-renewable historic structures and brick streets exist today.

Many similar communities across the United States during the Reconstruction Era existed in part because of the US military's Freedmen's Bureau. These communities offered former enslaved Africans, who were still not citizens, the opportunity to create stable families, successful businesses, pioneering music, and emerging art—all of which significantly contributed to American Black culture. These communities also created many educated Black business leaders, lawyers, doctors, and creatives. A social study of the socioeconomic rise, fall, and now crisis of this often-forgotten part of pre-Civil Rights Era American history is worth knowing and sharing.

There are about sixty remaining and non-renewable contributing structures in Freedmen's Town. This is a considerable reduction from the recorded 600 structures in 1994 when the area know a National Historic Landmark. Unfortunately, this designation offered no significant protection. Many communities and local government entities are stepping forward now in order to preserve the remaining structures and brick-paved streets.

I am now involved with Freedmen's Town as a volunteer and board member of the Houston Freedmen's Town Conservancy. Separately, HINESAD has been contracted by the Fourth Redevelopment Authority to re-imagine the several historic shotgun houses. HINESAD was able to offer its design consultancy services to create a conceptual master plan framework for preserving, infilling, and enhancing Freedman's Town so that our local community feels a sense of pride and that visitors have a memorable experience as they explore the physical history of the place. I am honored to participate as a volunteering individual and as a commissioned architect in the preservation of Freedmen's Town.

TX *In recent years there has been attention around the removal of monuments to Confederate generals; this works a bit more like a positive assertion, to preserve and honor instances of historic contributions and marks of agency in our built environment. Would you say this project to recognize historic built environments from the Reconstruction Era is indicative of a larger effort happening in the American South?*

DH The American South has a long way to go in authentically shaping the narrative of African American history during and after Reconstruction.

In recent years we've had the realization that preserving all of our history is imperative. Many southern cities have struggled with what to do with Confederate statues. Others have suggested those who are offended to construct their own monuments in recognition of their stories.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall; the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama; and the new International African American Museum in Charleston are all examples of large-scale initiatives to formalize the history of Africans in the Americas. These examples are only a few of the many community, local, and regional government initiatives across the South.

Harris County created a committee to identify sites of memory that recognize Blacks who were lynched here. I am honored to be a part of that committee's working group.

We know many other examples, such as the story of the Sugarland 95. We must acknowledge, preserve, and memorialize these histories in order to prevent such atrocities from reoccurring.

These places of cultural importance matter. They are worth preserving and celebrating as foundational assets within our urban communities. Here in Houston, our Freedmen's Town is a critical link to the history of the African diaspora. We owe it to the generations that preceeded us as well as the generations to come to protect our cultural assets.

Daimian S. Hines, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, is Principal of Hines Architecture + Design. Hines has been an RDA member since 2018 and currently serves on its Board of Directors.

Gerald D. Hines and Pennzoil Place.
Photo by Annie Leibovitz. Courtesy Hines.

Remembering Gerald D. Hines (1925–2020)

Stephen Fox

Gerald D. Hines, Houston's best known real estate developer, died on August 23, 2020, at the age of ninety-five. Hines was especially known for his patronage of outstanding architects. Philip Johnson and John Burgee, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Pei Cobb Fried, Roche, Dinkeloo & Associates, César Pelli & Associates, Robert A. M. Stern, and Foster head the list. His firm, Gerald D. Hines Interests (now called Hines), developed such iconic buildings as the Gallerias in Houston (1969–71) and Dallas (1982), both designed by Hellmuth Obata Kassabaum; Pennzoil Place (1976), Transco Tower (1983), and Republic Bank Center (1983) by Johnson-Burgee; the 75-story Texas Commerce Tower (1981) by Pei; major downtown office buildings in twenty-three U.S. cities beyond Texas; and (according to Hines's website) twenty countries outside the U.S.

Hines was a native of Gary, Indiana. He came to Houston as a mechanical engineering graduate of Purdue University but abandoned the air conditioning business to launch a career in real estate. By the early 1960s, Hines was attracting the attention of American architecture magazines with a series of suburban office buildings that architects Neuhaus & Taylor designed for him, featuring a single office floor elevated above ground-level parking to take advantage of small lots initially platted as house sites. Hines's ability to profit by cleverly figuring out how to work around limitations was a hallmark of his long career. Engineering rationality and careful calculation disciplined his developer-driven enthusiasm.

In the second half of the 1960s, Hines jumped scales to undertake the simultaneous planning and construction of Houston's Galleria, the 50-story One Shell Plaza office building in downtown Houston, and the 50-story One Shell Square office building in New Orleans, the last two designed by the Chicago office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. The Galleria, with its mixture of uses and concentration on up-market retail, was the harbinger of a new type of shopping center. SOM's engineering partner, Fazlur Khan, made One Shell Plaza a prototype of Khan's framed-tube construction system, a structural advance that enabled Hines to build it for substantially less than a conventionally framed tower of its height would have cost.

The meteoric expansion of Houston's economy during its Golden Buckle on the Sunbelt era between 1973 and 1983 was when Hines emerged in the consciousness of the U.S. design media as not merely a client but a "patron" of architecture. His "protégé" was Philip Johnson. Together they came up with the twin-towered Pennzoil Place office building in downtown Houston, its sensational diagonal profiles undermining the strict engineering logic of One Shell Plaza but compensating by generating both profit and publicity. Pennzoil Place changed the way office buildings were designed because Hines trusted Johnson's intuition that architectural singularity would be the project's greatest marketing advantage.

With One Shell Square in New Orleans and the Trans World Airlines corporate headquarters in suburban Kansas City of 1971, Hines took his expertise beyond Texas. When the energy economy of Texas crashed in the early 1980s, Hines was able to stay afloat because his company no longer operated in a single market, even though such ambitious undertakings as First Colony, the suburban new town Hines and the Royal Dutch Shell Pension Fund developed in Sugar Land, southwest of Houston, suffered substantial economic losses. Funding a series of architecture exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art between 1985 and 1991 brought Hines's name before New York's cultural elite just as he was building Johnson/Burgee's 53rd at Third office building, the curvaceous Lipstick Building, in Manhattan. By the turn of the twenty-first century, Hines was operating at Diagonal Mar, a spectacular site in Barcelona overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

Gerald Hines may have made his fortune in real estate development, but he made his reputation with architecture. The gift that his son and business partner Jeff Hines made to the University of Houston in 1997 led to the university's college of architecture and design being named for Gerald Hines. In 1989, Hines was honored at the Rice Design Alliance's second gala. He was elected to honorary membership in the American Institute of Architects in 1984 and the Texas Society of Architects in 1973.

Gerald Hines loved architecture. And it loved him in return.

Being

Ajay Manthripragada and
Piergianna Mazzocca
Guest Editors

Contemporary

When starting on this issue, we tried to answer an impossible question: What does it mean to be of our time?

While we would never be able to fully grasp this question's insurmountable layers, we realized that it's not depth which makes the path difficult, but rather the methodological framework necessary to navigate this question with rigor. Surely a survey of contemporary practices, trends, and tropes may have sufficed. But is being contemporary a distinct and identifiable category that we can ascribe to the work of others? Or could a collection of works reciprocally define this quality? Were we willing to let novelty win out over a deeper and more resonate collectivity?

An internet image search for "contemporary architecture" results in a predictable matrix of swoopy and slickly clad forms, a materialization of the "now" or a representation of society's desire for spectacle and singularity. One might assume that academia offers the counterpoint to this narrative. But truthfully, current discourse on the contemporary in the discipline isolates a select set of terms around which intellectual silos are built, offering little opportunity for resistance or a view from without.

The contemporary, as a descriptor, is often invoked, without qualification, to explain away a trend. In effect, it is a simple aggrandizer—if it is contemporary, it must be good. But to define the term before using it applies pressure to it; in limiting those things that fall under its umbrella, we gather a narrower grouping than just all the things that are happening right now. As this issue of *Cite* suggests, this particular qualification of currency might be a disqualifier from our understanding of the contemporary. What value, then, does defining the term bring?

We decided to flip the question and ask: Of what and of whom are we contemporaries? This approach, perhaps as flawed as others, was far more liberating. Since a single univocal direction isn't discernible today, we weren't interested in moving forward. We chose to move sideways.

For us, the philosopher Giorgio Agamben's 2009 essay "What Is the Contemporary?" is both illuminating and obscure. The obscurity comes from the open-endedness of statements such as: "The contemporary is he who firmly holds his gaze on his own time so as to perceive not its

light but rather its darkness" and the alternate proposition that those who are "truly contemporary, truly belong to their time, are those who neither perfectly coincide with it nor adjust themselves to its demands." Meditating on these thoughts yields illumination. Take, for example, the first statement: the "darkness" to which he refers suggests a counterbalance to the flashy events and celebratory discourses that we normally think of as contemporary.

We take Agamben's words as a call to consider contemporaneity as liberation—not as a construction intended to limit the understanding of the world and its forms. The liberating aspect stems from the recognition that "contemporariness is, then, a singular relationship with one's own time." There is not one absolute characteristic of what it means to be of our own time, nor one episodic unity of contemporary thought, but rather many ways in which each individual participates in the present. In other words, Agamben's singular is one of many co-existing singulars. This condition presupposes, in each contemporary subject, a separation from the present in order to read it, discern it, and see its many expressions. In other words, Agamben hints at the idea that total immersion in the present causes a blindness and a resignation to the continuous race for originality and frenzy. In contrast, his position presents "contemporariness" as a perpetual questioning of what it is to be in this time while simultaneously questioning what it is to be at all possible times. A new definition of time is, therefore, inescapable—one that is expressed not by urgency but by relevance.

P.S.

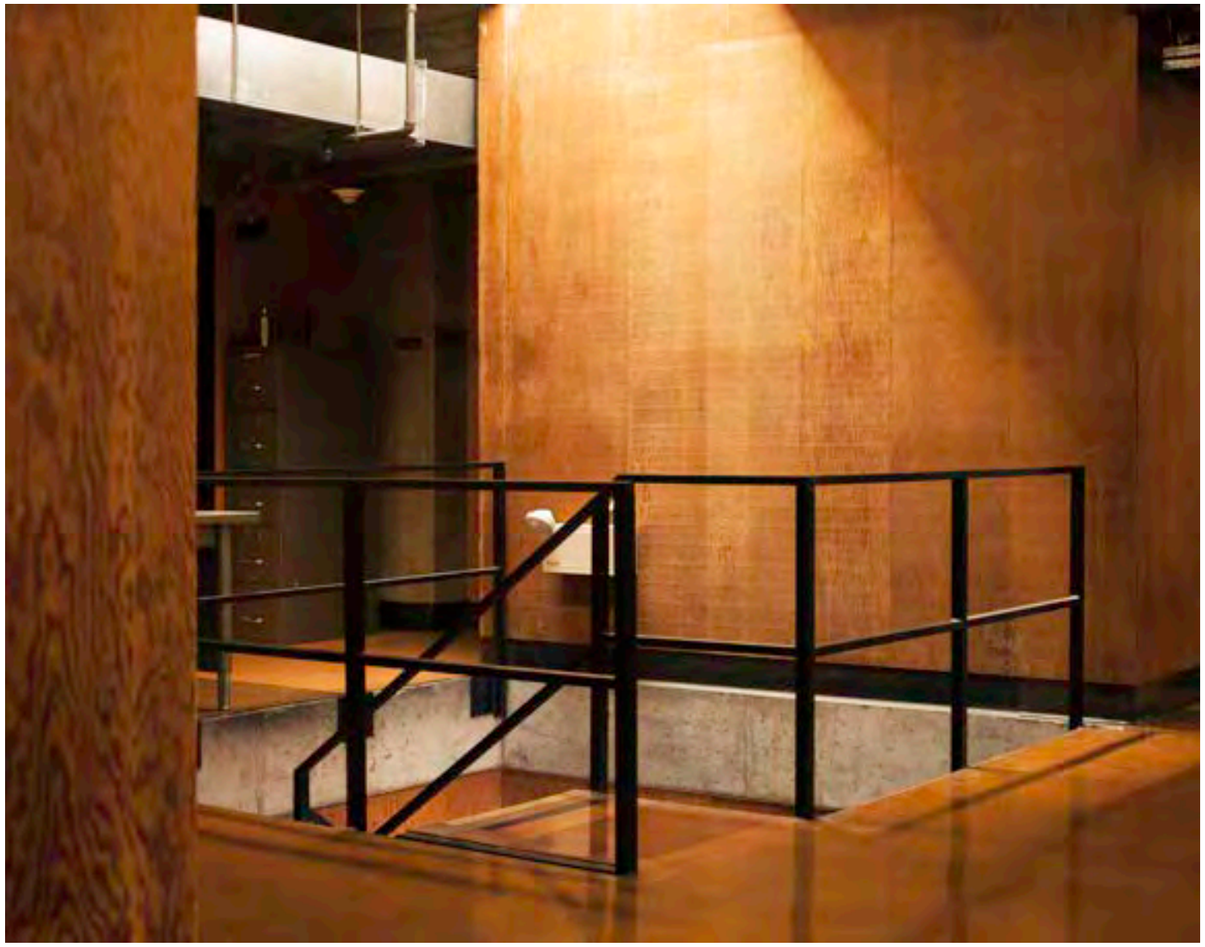
Humbled by the events of 2020 and our inability to control or even comprehend its consequences, how could the realization of this deep intersectionality and interconnectedness truly help us advance the way we see the discipline of architecture? And how can we act within this framework? Reading the statement above at a temporal remove—it was written a year ago—due to the pandemic reveals both naïveté and forethought on our part. Defining the contemporary is intertwined with qualifying time itself, and nearly all of the world was forced into a new relationship with time in the last year.

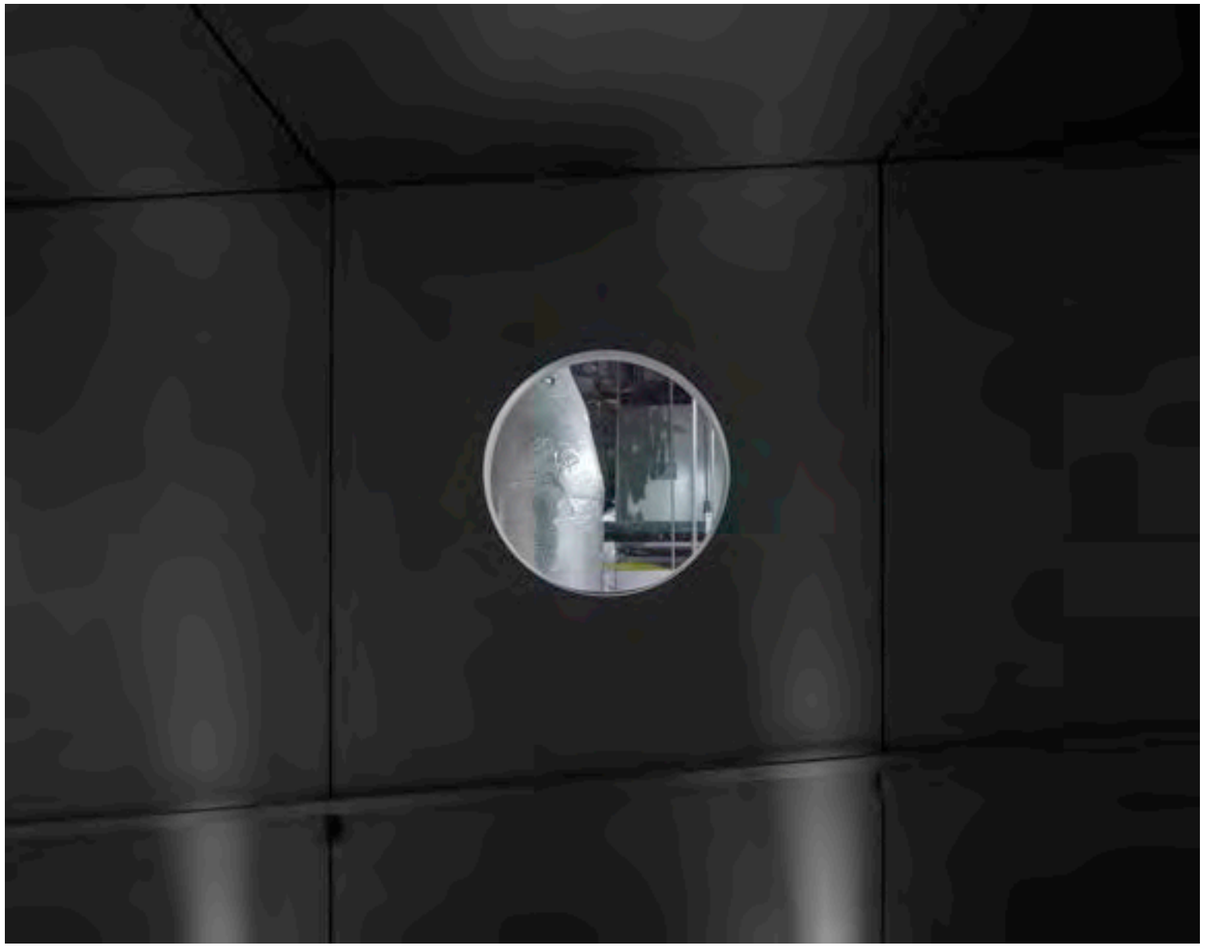
The following essays, images, and interviews are bound together by the notion that, though they might refer to other times, we can see our own time in them. Stepping away from any pretense of being timely, we gathered work and ideas that maintain currency by putting our present concerns in a different but distinct perspective.

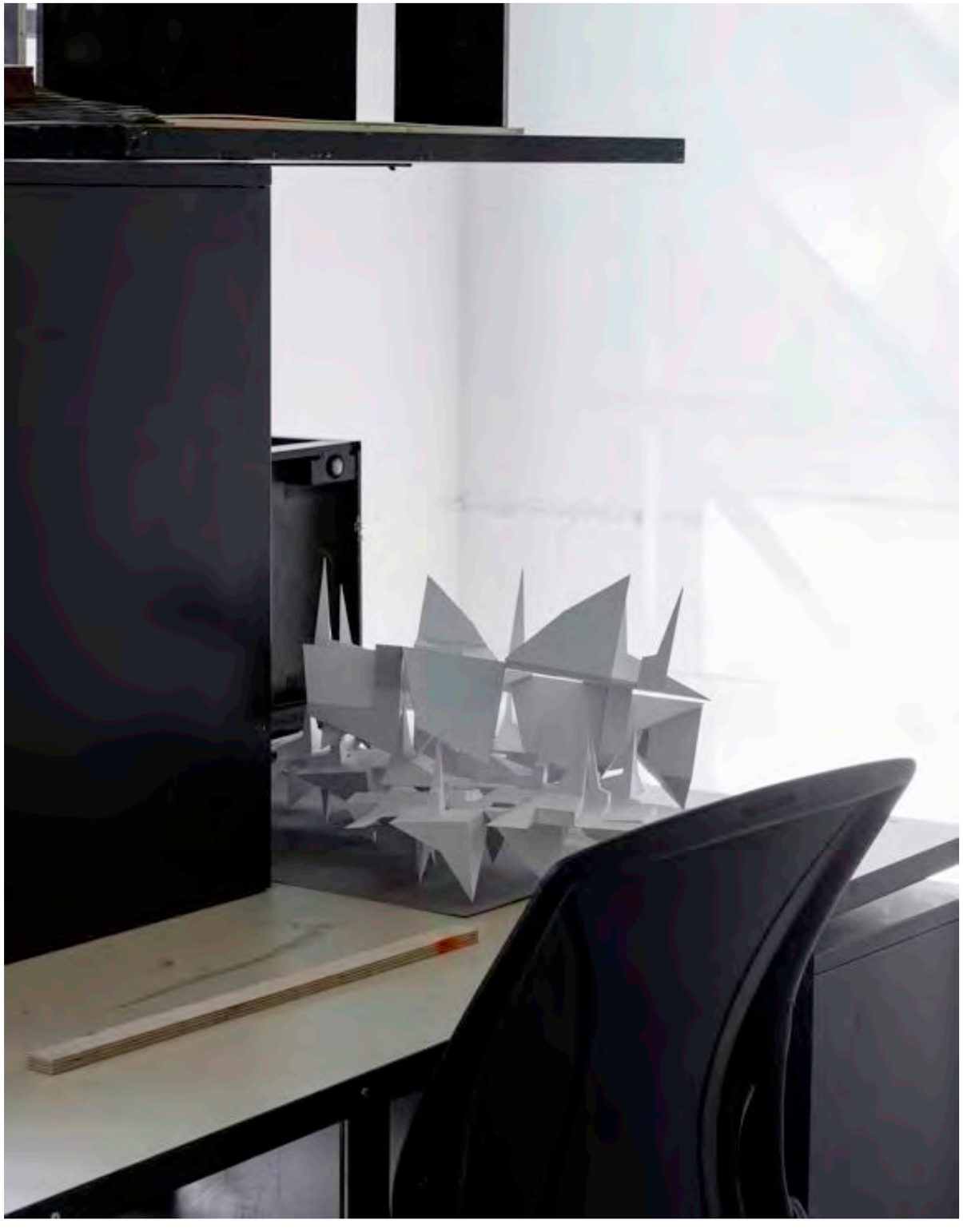
Naho Kubota

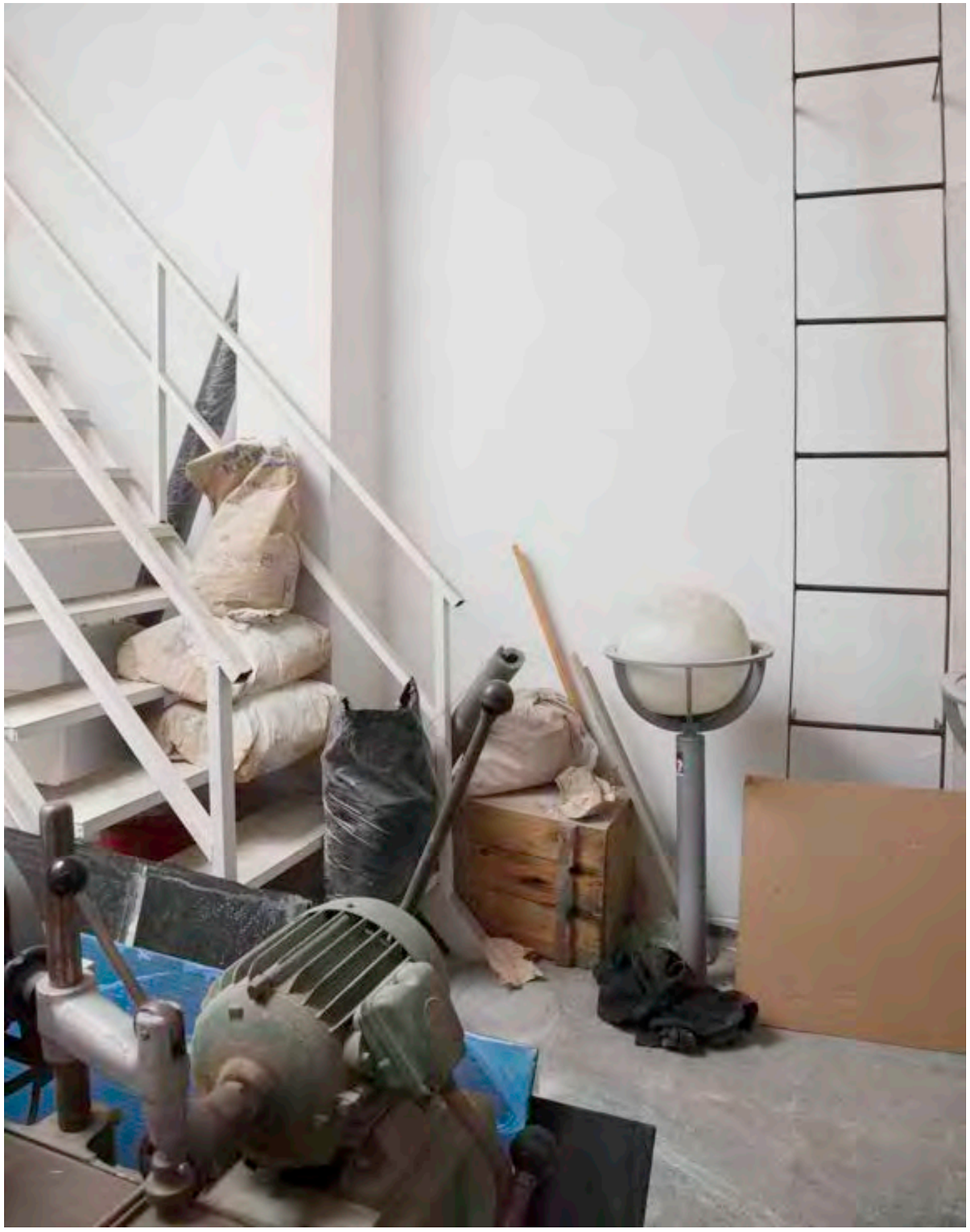
Architecture Schools is an ongoing visual document of architecture's now global educational sphere in North and South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. At once a photographic survey and portrait of the educational process, this project explores the ways in which the institution acts as a changeable landscape that informs and facilitates artistic development across socioeconomic and geographic lines, presenting images of foyers to lecture halls to student workstations, all in an attempt to detail the ephemeral footprints of creative and pedagogic labor. Eschewing the traditional focus on finished exteriors used to document and celebrate architectural innovation, *Architecture Schools* takes a more intimate, lyrical approach, allowing the chaos of the environment to stage itself and opening a window into the minds of architecture's next generation.

45/50 → University of California, Berkeley
46 → Cornell University
47/51 → Rice University
48/49 → Middle East Technical University









A Subtle Revolution

Jeannette Kuo in Conversation with Piergianna Mazzocca

Jeannette Kuo is partner of Zurich-based architecture office Karamuk Kuo, the design architects for Cannady Hall, a new building for Rice Architecture. This interview covers Kuo's approach to design and shares early progress on Cannady Hall. She believes in the idea of the architect as a generalist—as "a conductor at the center of a large orchestra"—and uses the architect's tools to make change in the world.

PM This issue of *Cite* started by posing a very ambitious question: What does it mean to be of our own time? We decided that issues of contemporariness were something that we didn't want to define, but rather we wanted others to describe what in their work can be defined as contemporary and if this concept had driven the way they work in any sort of way. The issue of "being of our own time" appeals to us because we understand how contemporariness is never a fixed category. Categories such as the past, present, or future are, we realize, not empty ones. We are, after all, living in a past future. So it is more about how issues of the past are still embedded in our present and how we are still reacting to them. In your view, how do these reflections manifest in your practice? In what ways do issues of the past and the future frame the way you operate?

Jeannette Kuo and Ünal Karamuk of Karamuk Kuo.
Photo by Angelika Annen. Courtesy Karamuk Kuo.

JK The idea of contemporariness or the idea of being of the moment is much more heightened today than it ever was because of the immediacy of all the media that allows us to interact with the "now." The idea of "now" is a phenomenon that affects every part of our lives.

It also gives us a kind of amnesia. I see it with my students; their relationship to history is very different because we live much more in the present today. To a certain degree, the relationship with the future is also quite different because of this. And for architects, this gets at the core of how we are trained, which has always been about bridging between the past and the future. Everything we do is about building up the knowledge of the discipline and moving that forward because at the same time, we project into the future.

Because it takes so long to build a project—years can pass between initial idea and final completion—there is an inevitable distance between the time in which the first idea was conceived and its ultimate resolution. And if you add to that concerns related to the building's durability, we are also planning for things that are often unpredictable and might arrive far into the future. In that sense, our profession is by nature very much about this bridging of times.

There are aspects of this at play in our work as Karamuk Kuo. When designing, we always strive to think about how a building could last over time. We hope that ten or twenty years later, people will look at our buildings and not think that they are dated or that they are obsolete. Our work shouldn't look like we put a timestamp onto it, even though to a certain degree that is unavoidable. There are influences and styles that come and go. But the works that we are most inspired by and that we enjoy visiting and spending time in are those that are not burdened by a trace of their time. In that sense, our approach is also not so much stylistic—because that is where you tend to fall into the trap of contemporariness—but rather more from how we inhabit space and what that means in terms of the experiences created.

PM You mentioned this idea of reaching a sort of timeless condition. How do you know when you've reached it? Further, how is timelessness approached in your work? How would you characterize it?

International Sports Sciences Institute, Lausanne.
Photo: Laurian Ghinitoiu.

JK It has to do with how we approach a project in general. I mean, we try to start with the most essential elements of architecture.

It's not necessarily minimalism in the sense that it's not that we're trying to be completely austere in the way that we conceive of the building or the spaces. It's more like an economy of means: What are the elements at our disposal, in terms of design strategy? How can those aspects of the building form its experience? I'm talking more about elements like structure or things that may, in the beginning, seem banal. For example, how we service a building, the HVAC system, etc. We also consider things like the program, but I am mostly referring to those hidden elements that in the end will remain part of the functionality of the building and that were previously sidelined as solutions after design.

This dismissal of the ordinary is something that frustrated us as young architects. We started our practice during the exuberance of the late 90s, and early 2000s when Dubai and China were the testing grounds of flamboyant designs. You could say that there was an idea about style informing the way those buildings were designed but not enough attention was placed in caring for the things I mentioned before, which later became additional costs. Of course, these were not just financial costs but also occupational costs as a consequence of how those spaces were built and used. This context led us to reflecting on what it means to build more consciously. Today, in the face of pressing ecological questions, it's not just about using green materials or slapping on some solar panels and calling it a day. Instead, we ought to understand how we should approach design at a more fundamental level. How do we create something that lasts and that remains relevant to the people using it? This also led us into questioning the frivolous use of materials or the use of materials and techniques that essentially take on more resources than is necessary. If a building needs structure to stand, why not use the structure as a means of conceiving the spaces themselves and using that as the conceptual basis of a project? Why must we clad the structure? These were the kind of explorations that we were doing at the beginning. And, of course, this way of thinking continues to evolve in the work that we do right now.

PM I've always found your work and your approach to design to contain a way of fighting the system from within. There's never just the need to satisfy a brief, but there's a constant exploration into how far you can push the limits imposed onto the practice of building. You understand that architecture is regulated by a set of conventions, rules, and standards that are foundational and at the core of professional practice. However limiting these can become, you always find a way of using things that we would typically see as restrictions in your favor. You set your agenda. Would you describe your work in this way? And if so, what are your allegiances?

JK Yes. That's a great way to put it. We operate in a much larger context that often puts conflicting demands on a project. We can be overwhelmed by codes and regulations or we can be creative in maneuvering through them. This is not to say that we break the law but that we try to dig deeper to find the loophole that allows us to abide by it while achieving our own agenda. I think it's also important that we always question the conventions that we take for granted. Some of these are cultural constructs that may not hold true anymore.

We attempt to rethink things on fundamental levels: in terms of relationships of spaces, ways in which people use space, and the subtle architectural cues that highlight or alter daily habits. The International Sports Sciences Institute at the University of

International Sports Sciences Institute, Lausanne.
Photo: Laurian Ghinitoiu.

Lausanne is about bringing together four different public and private organizations that have overlaps in terms of the things they do and their research but that are completely independent of each other. At one point, some of the users were resistant to the idea of sharing spaces with somebody else because they were so used to having their own environment. And now, after the building was built, they are all convinced, excited, and understanding of the potentials implicit in the spaces created for a building like this. They understood that it is about community and collective identity while simultaneously providing privacy. The spatial organization created opportunities to run into others by chance, to not have to make an appointment or cross the city for a meeting. It enhanced the potential for joint projects and collaborations, for casual encounters. For an institution such as this one, to interact in these informal levels changed how they saw themselves within the larger scope of their discipline, which is sport sciences.

Situations like these, in which people interact in unexpected ways, are often taken for granted. Because very often institutions measure space through specific functions and by what people are used to. Often there are all these regulations determining how they are structured and governed. Getting them to change when they don't know anything else depends on having the right leadership with the right vision. But if you understand the basis of those habits and structures, you can perhaps introduce something into them that changes the equation. And people start to act differently, too. They start to open up more and to relate to each other more. In a way, the larger ambitions that we have in our work are also about contributing to the idea that we are part of a collective society.

PM While preparing for this interview, I read a piece in *The Architectural Review* by Jessica Bridger which stated that one of your projects is successful because of "how well it serves its users, how carefully it anticipates needs and desires." Based on your comments on the attention given to daily habits, places of encounter, places for community-making or community recognition, I cannot help but agree with that statement. This observation renders visible something that we all know is at the core of what architecture does—or of what it should be doing but that we, more often than not, can lose sight of. Having this sort of collective forgetfulness as our backdrop, I'm curious to know what your thoughts are on the state of discourse in academia? I see, for example that during architectural reviews, we seem to focus on grand narratives or complex theoretical statements rather than on aspects of everyday life. It has always amazed me how little we talk about the actual drawings that students produce. Having a non-American educational background, I have come to notice these differences between Europe and the United States. You have experienced both too.

JK I do think that there is a big difference between architectural education in Europe and in the US. To be honest, both sides are useful because both aspects—the conceptual and the pragmatic—are necessary. There is beauty in questioning things at more fundamental levels and the need to rethink our approach when dealing with grand narratives—and the courage to do that. The same can be said of a more practice-oriented approach.

In the US, the trajectory of the profession changed radically. It used to be much closer to what it was in Europe. But things changed dramatically because of the deregulation of the profession in the seventies. That deregulation essentially forced a kind of bifurcation of our profession, as people with smaller offices or medium-sized offices could no longer afford to compete for projects because they were being outbid—or underbid, actually—by large companies that could afford to reduce their fees. This condition favored large corporate practices producing work that was more service-oriented than design-oriented. So people who were design-oriented were pushed into academia because that was the only way they could survive. This polarization, over the years, became a vicious cycle. It pushed both sides further and further apart. Each side essentially rejected the other by saying, "We're better this way because we get to build," or "We're better that way because we rethink what you build." In the end, nobody's talking to one another. But in reality, we need both sides to advance the profession. Architecture in the boudoir doesn't serve us very well if it can't be translated into practice.

When I moved to Europe, part of that decision was about having the opportunity to experiment and question things through starting our own practice. I strongly believe that most of the work that can be done to question or change the way we do things has to happen within the system. Of course, some people will be the revolutionaries doing the flag waving in the front end of things, and we need them to do that, but that's not going to affect the big picture with any immediacy. We rarely have the opportunity to do completely revolutionary things. We can look at all the utopian propositions that have been made and remark upon how little they have shifted the real world of architecture.

My approach to teaching changed a lot after our first built project. Many of the questions that I bring into the studio are generated from practice, and many of them have to do with finding a way out of the polarization between practice and academia so that we can have productive discussions again. We're rethinking how we would like to communicate with and teach our students who are the next generation and the values that we want to instill.

I'm not sure whether it comes from one particular way of working, or rather more about the questions that we ask. There is a bit of a missed opportunity in terms of how we frame projects and the types of projects that we assign to students.

One of the reasons behind the publication of my first book *A-Typical Plan* was my frustration with the attitudes towards the office building. It's a typology that essentially takes up a huge part of our cities and our daily lives, but one that designers have avoided dealing with in the past decades. We had left their fate to corporate offices or the market economy. Sometimes my way of changing things has to do with simple things like not assigning museums as studio projects. Only one percent of architects get to design a museum! Of course, we would all love to do museums, but we need to broaden our engagement to issues that shape our cities on more fundamental levels. In the US this is now also changing. In the last five years, I have seen that a lot of issues that used to be put to the side when I was a student—housing or office buildings, for example—are now being addressed.

We should be making students excited about projects that have to do with how we live in a city. How do we live or work together? What does it mean in terms of typologies that contribute to our collective social condition? I remember that when I was a student people would dread taking a housing studio because they thought it was beneath them. Someone might have remarked, "Why do we need to do that? Why can't we just do fun things like museums and spas?"

That conception of architecture had a lot to do with the generation of starchitects who were role models but whose projects were inaccessible to 90% of working architects. To a certain extent, I believe that it is our responsibility to change that mindset. We need to recognize the ordinary as something meaningful and exciting.

A-Typical Plan, edited by Jeannette Kuo, Park Books, 2013.

PM For the project that is closest to a museum in your work, the Archeological Center at Augusta Raurica, you take a very ordinary problem—a steel structure—and you make a project out of it. An exuberant aesthetic or formal expression doesn't seem to be motivating the project, but rather the reinterpretation of a banal and ordinary structural system. By working on sometimes disregarded typologies, you invite us to read them differently, to find the potential in that which is deemed ordinary. Can you speak a little bit about that?

Archaeological Center interior study model.
Photo courtesy of Karamuk Kuo.

JK When we started that project, we didn't think about it as a building. We thought of it as a system that was meant to house not only the researchers and archaeologists, but also their huge collection of objects—nearly 1.7 or 1.8 million artifacts! All those things had to be easily accessible and the system had to have the capacity for further growth. In an archeological site like this one—with only a very small percentage that was already excavated—growth was not a variable but a constant. The task was then to do a building that essentially has no end. A building that will continue to evolve along with its occupants and its expanding collection. We wanted to design a system that guides that growth, but we also had to keep in mind that this was an institution with tight budget constraints. "Nobody wants to fund old rocks," was something we kept hearing. For the client, it was important to receive the most bang for their buck. This was translated into a building that is never fixed, unlike other museums that house similar artifacts. Instead, if they ran out of money, expansion could stop at any moment and the building would still look complete.

The chosen structural typology quickly arrived to us as the obvious answer to the constraint of how to build lightly on top of these ruins. This system allows for the reconfiguration of every space by following the spatial cues inherent to the system itself. The architecture speaks to you about what might potentially fit in the future and how to accomplish this. The rhythm that we set up with the structure is not just pure repetition; there's an A-B-A-B rhythm that also includes the distribution system. These zones of distribution allow the building to function at all times, even if they change the spaces or make smaller offices. It's all about the idea of flexibility and the creation of subtle limitations that guide it. It's also about the spatial layering and the intensity of the repetition as well as its exceptions.

PM Can we talk about Cannady Hall, your project for Rice Architecture? I'm interested because we've talked about the state of academia, about your interests in both practice and teaching and how you reconcile both in your work. And because you are tasked with designing an extension for a prestigious architecture school. To many, this seemed like the perfect fit. Your office can find and produce magnificent spaces, even with very limiting restrictions. And the Rice University campus has a lot of those. But mostly because you have a multifaceted client: the student body and the university administration on one hand and the entire discipline of architecture on the other. And yet, this is a Karamuk Kuo project, so there is an expectation of what is the typology that you want to reinvent? Is it the architectural studio? Is it the student spaces, the pin-up spaces? I'm curious about those innovations. In what ways do you think you might have room to innovate within the Rice project?

JK How we work today, in architecture schools, is very different than when Anderson Hall was built and even when the addition by Stirling and Wilford was completed in 1981

But even with the Stirling extension, you could argue that, to a certain degree, the teaching areas simply repeated the diagram of the existing building. Take, for instance, the double-loaded corridors: on one side you have offices and on the other side the studios. That is the same in both parts. Sterling's contribution was to add a central figure, Farish Gallery and Jury Room, that united the school on a larger scale. That was already a very different approach relative to what you can find in all the other academic buildings on campus. The buildings on the Rice campus, especially the older ones, are informed by the Beaux-Arts type of learning, where teaching would happen in these very defined and constrained spaces. There's nothing generous about that type of spatial experience. And certainly nothing that fosters collectivity outside of formal learning.

So we've been thinking a lot about the ways an architecture school works today. What do we do inside them? And how do

Cannady Hall massing model.
Photo courtesy of Karamuk Kuo.

Cannady Hall interior study model.
Photo courtesy of Karamuk Kuo.

Cannady Hall interior study models.
Photo courtesy of Karamuk Kuo.

Cannady Hall massing model.
Photo courtesy of Karamuk Kuo.

students engage with design? Because today more than ever, it is no longer a linear process. It's not even about studio space anymore. It's not just about your desk and the things that you produce at your desk, which, for a long time, was how things were done. The studio spaces at Anderson were designed with the idea that everyone would work at their assigned desk and that everything you would produce you could do on that same table, because your Mayline where you drew your drawings was there and your models at a manageable scale would conveniently fit there too.

Today, the way we design and the tools that we have at hand are very different. We're talking about much larger prototypes and ways of working that involve experimenting at 1:1 scale. We're talking about working with different types of media and using different types of machines. And recognizing this state-of-affairs is not to underestimate a past way of working; it simply recognizes the values that drive the discipline today. A lot of the work has moved beyond the individual; beyond the singularity of the project and its assumed single author. Today, it's much more about this collaborative effort of how you conceive of something together. Who are the people with whom you can come up with not just an idea, but something that you can test out in physical ways? I think that this new set of values and the non-linearity of that narrative, do not dictate a start and an end. This means that we have to think about the spaces of learning in other ways. There needs to be a way to approach space beyond the assigned table.

Cannady Hall will provide a large fabrication hall and woodshop as well as a gallery on the ground floor. Above it, with a physical connection from Anderson Hall coming over the existing arcade, will be a sequence of spaces that would complement the dedicated studio spaces in Anderson. These are not meant as additional studio spaces but rather as spaces for collaborative work, informal pin-ups, and temporary galleries. There would also be space for faculty and staff with large open offices that foster collaborative design research.

The greatest challenge was how to add onto part of the historical quad of the campus while recognizing that the scale and function of the activities in Cannady Hall are very different from all that is around it. The organization and form of the design is a direct response to the physical connection to Anderson. A series of staggered bars begins with the extension of the Anderson roof over the existing arcade to become the aggregate roofscape of Cannady Hall. The resulting sawtooth roof is a nod to the more industrial activities within while the staggered volumes produce a more refined and abstract reading of the form. This also allows us to break down the scale of the building and its effect on the site so that the building remains respectful of the context while having its own expression. Most importantly Cannady Hall and Anderson Hall will function as one integrated culture for the school.

PM I'm looking forward to seeing those sorts of inventions at Rice, even if it is just the redefinition of the working table. I think that we both agree that this approach has enormous potential. I'm curious to see how this plays out at Rice.

Thinking about how we work in architecture schools, it seems to me that today there is a tendency in every school—or the academic offerings of architectural school's programs—towards uniformity. All schools seem to offer the same things, especially in terms of facilities. Discursively, this is also apparent in how one school compares itself to others. Everyone wants a lab; everyone wants a bigger and newer fabrication space. In the way you're describing your approach to the Rice expansion, it's not only about getting those spaces and checking them off the list, but rather how these spaces are connected and how these can frame and foster new modes of working and thinking that may or may not already exist.

JK There is indeed a focus over the last ten years of having fabrication labs and having certain types of machinery. Maybe this is justifiable, as schools must evolve with the times and even move ahead of current practice. But at the same time, these types of technology have a lifespan of maybe a decade or so, and then new tools and new ideas come in.

To a certain degree, we're not necessarily designing the Rice Architecture extension for any particular way of working. The approach has mainly been about finding spatial logics that allow these tools and pedagogies to evolve without being constraining. Much of the focus had been on defining the relationship between the large-scale production spaces and the smaller-scale meeting and flexible work areas to provide a stronger spatial identity for the school. The organizational structure is meant to ensure a certain resiliency but also to strengthen the culture of curiosity, making, and experimentation that's already at the school.

PM The technologies that we are now using and implementing as part of any design curriculum tend not only to require a lot of space but also to drastically transform more traditional approaches to design. Can you speak about the uses of technology and in what ways are these technologies informing how we create and think of architecture?

Cannady Hall interior study model.
Photo courtesy of Karamuk Kuo.

JK Technology has certainly opened the door to positive changes in design. The renewed interest in construction—making prototypes, testing large-scale mock-ups—brings a direct relationship between the theoretical and the practical that is very productive. What's quite fantastic about being a designer today is the ability to move quickly between scales and between media, from digital to physical and back. We need to take full advantage of that.

At the same time, a healthy relationship to technology is very important, especially because some form of it has always been part of the profession. It's true, engaging with technologies means rethinking how we design and their impact on the production of space and buildings. We shouldn't forget, technology changes at a much faster rate than buildings do.

How we design at Karamuk Kuo is not informed by any particular technology, but by how we would engage the technology and the philosophy behind it. That's also my approach to technology within the studio environment: I see it mainly as one of many tools towards design. We should not be enslaved by new tools or say that design can only happen because we engage with these items. It's more about how technology opens up opportunities for us to expand our way of thinking.

To that end, that's also why I was very drawn to this project at Rice. I have a very close affinity with how the school is pedagogically structured. The idea of the architect as a generalist—a conductor leading a large orchestra—is something that I believe in because I think that for us to solve larger issues, we must also understand our own discipline to know where we can be effective and where we hit our limits. We can't do everything and we are always in need of others' expertise, especially as projects grow increasingly more complex. One of the main skills that we underestimate—and had in the past overlooked in academia—is the architect's need to communicate with others.

I would like to think that architects can change the world, but that change doesn't often happen in revolutionary terms and is certainly not confined to our disciplinary bubble. We can however exert change within the scope of what we can contribute to society and we can certainly change the way we think and engage with contemporary issues. To do that, we need to understand what it means to design: that the mediums at our disposal are the materials and elements that define space, and that these spaces are part of a larger context and continuity. Then everything else—even technology—is just the way in which we can extend that knowledge further.

Lauretta Vinciarelli, May 1980. Courtesy Judd Foundation. The Lauretta Vinciarelli Papers, Judd Foundation Archives, Marfa, Texas.

Lauretta Vinciarelli and Historical Types as Generative Device

Rebecca Siefert

Lauretta Vinciarelli, an Italian-born artist, architect, teacher, and theorist, inhabited a world of “firsts”: She was the first woman to have drawings acquired by the Department of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1974,[1] she was among the first women to teach architecture studio courses at Columbia University, and she was the first and only woman granted a solo exhibition at Peter Eisenman’s influential Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies (IAUS) in New York. By 1976, she and Minimalist artist Donald Judd had become a romantic and professional pair, and collaborated for over ten years on architecture, furniture design, and printmaking. She was acclaimed as “one of the leading architects of her generation,” exemplary of the sea changes that started to sweep through the discipline of architecture beginning in the late 1960s.[2] In this text I focus on the intersections between her teaching and her collaborative projects with Donald Judd in Marfa, Texas, which both centered on typology as a generative device for design in the 1970s and 1980s.

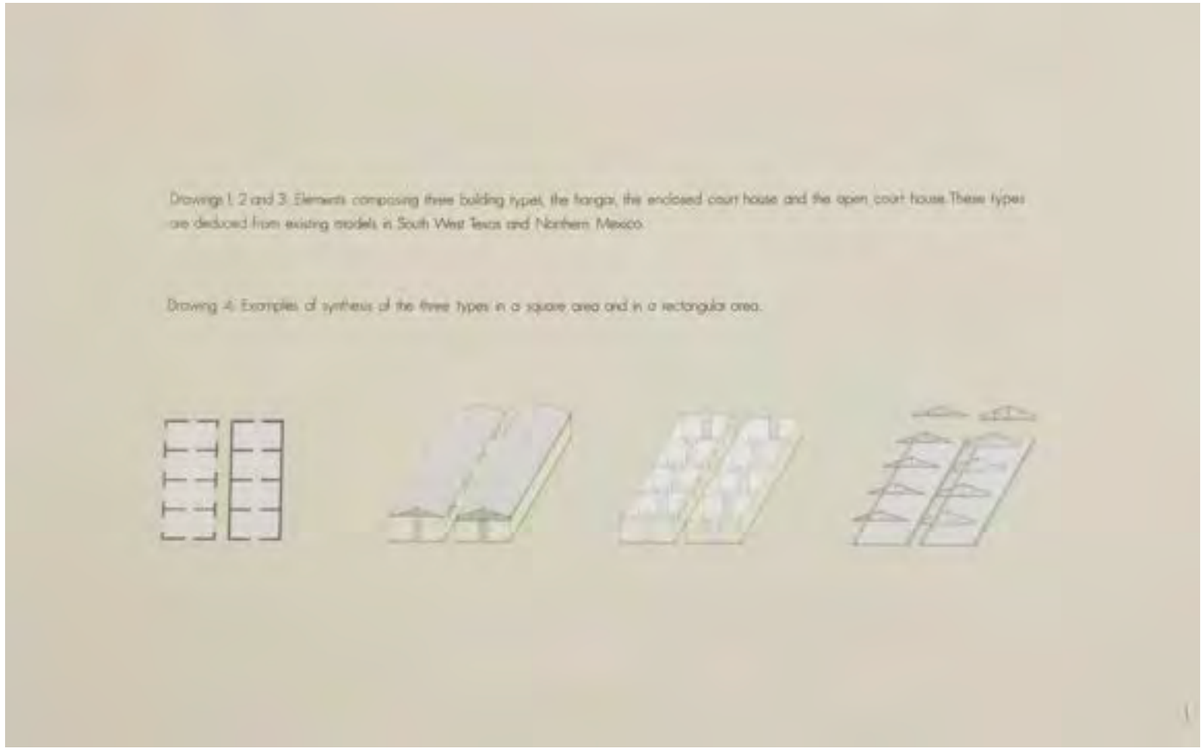
Teaching and Theory

Vinciarelli's teaching career began in the United States at the Pratt Institute in 1975, where she taught design studio ("Concepts of Design") and drawing until 1978 when James Stewart Polshek, the new dean of the architecture school at Columbia University, hired her. Vinciarelli taught as an adjunct faculty member in Columbia's second-year housing studio, as well as in the third- and fourth-year design studios. From 1985–1992 she also taught a drawing course called "Representational Techniques" at City College and was Visiting Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle (1981) and Rice University (1982). When Vinciarelli was hired to teach at Columbia University, she contributed to the development of the newly formed housing studio primarily through her emphasis on typology, the study of architectural types based on a set of shared characteristics. This connected to some of Vinciarelli's key concerns—history and theory as a source for new work, and iterative architectural drawing as an investigative tool—each of which was central to Columbia's curriculum and pedagogy.

Architectural historian (and Vinciarelli's colleague at Columbia University) Mary McLeod credits Vinciarelli with introducing the carpet housing type to Columbia's housing studio when she arrived in 1978.[3] Carpet or "mat" housing is a low-rise apartment type with interlocking modular units, providing an ideal mix of both private and communal courtyards, a form derived from centuries-old Mediterranean villages.[4] The courtyard type endured,but had a particular appeal in postwar Europe for its ability to be multiplied and form an entire urban fabric.[5] Vinciarelli's approach to carpet housing in particular was based on a generative system or "pattern," and the ways architects could adjust that pattern to suit human habitability.[6] James Tice, former associate professor at Columbia, explained that "[h]ousing is arguably the most appropriate arena for typological studies," since, even though other building types have been adjusted to incorporate new technologies or program requirements, "the fundamental problem of dwelling has changed little over the millennia." Residents will always need protection from the elements, a sense of privacy but also community, and access to light and air.

During a 1978 lecture at the New School in New York City, Vinciarelli explained how a type can serve as a "device" that generates the design: "a type is a special scheme," she stated, a "totality" that has been "schematized."[8] Architectural historian (and Vinciarelli's colleague at the IAUS) Alan Colquhoun noted that "one of the many reasons why a typology of forms might have a greater impact on practice in architecture than in the other arts is the inherent reproducibility of architecture and its dependence on prototype."[9] Vinciarelli herself "was not so excited about reinvention, formally or technologically, really," as former student and colleague Claude Armstrong stated.[10] His partner Donna Cohen agreed, noting that Vinciarelli "felt she [...] knew enough to make things new but based on many a more timeless concept."[11] That being said, Vinciarelli did not want to simply—as she put it—"[repeat] the types banally," since architectural types evolve as society continually evolves: "I'm more interested in the evolution of types, which is due to the change of cognitive levels that expresses in societies when they change [...] and I think this should be kept in mind."[12]

Vinciarelli believed that building types were not fixed but rather malleable, adaptable to site and climate. Working within an established set of types offered a sense of familiarity, as she explained: "Architects are asking the question: 'how can we do architecture that people can understand?' (...) And I intend [to ask] this question: in which ways can we do an architecture which is recognizable? And it is my opinion that the adherence to the historical types can help."[13] By diverging from type in subtle ways and creating variations, however, each iteration would take on new meaning. As Vinciarelli maintained, the main focus of her work was "the elaboration of various forms of inhabitable space." She argued that architecture ought to be "the art that transforms space into place."[14] In her work in Marfa, Texas, with Donald Judd, for example, she wanted to explore how types correspond to site and climate and see how far a type could be stretched before becoming something else.[15]

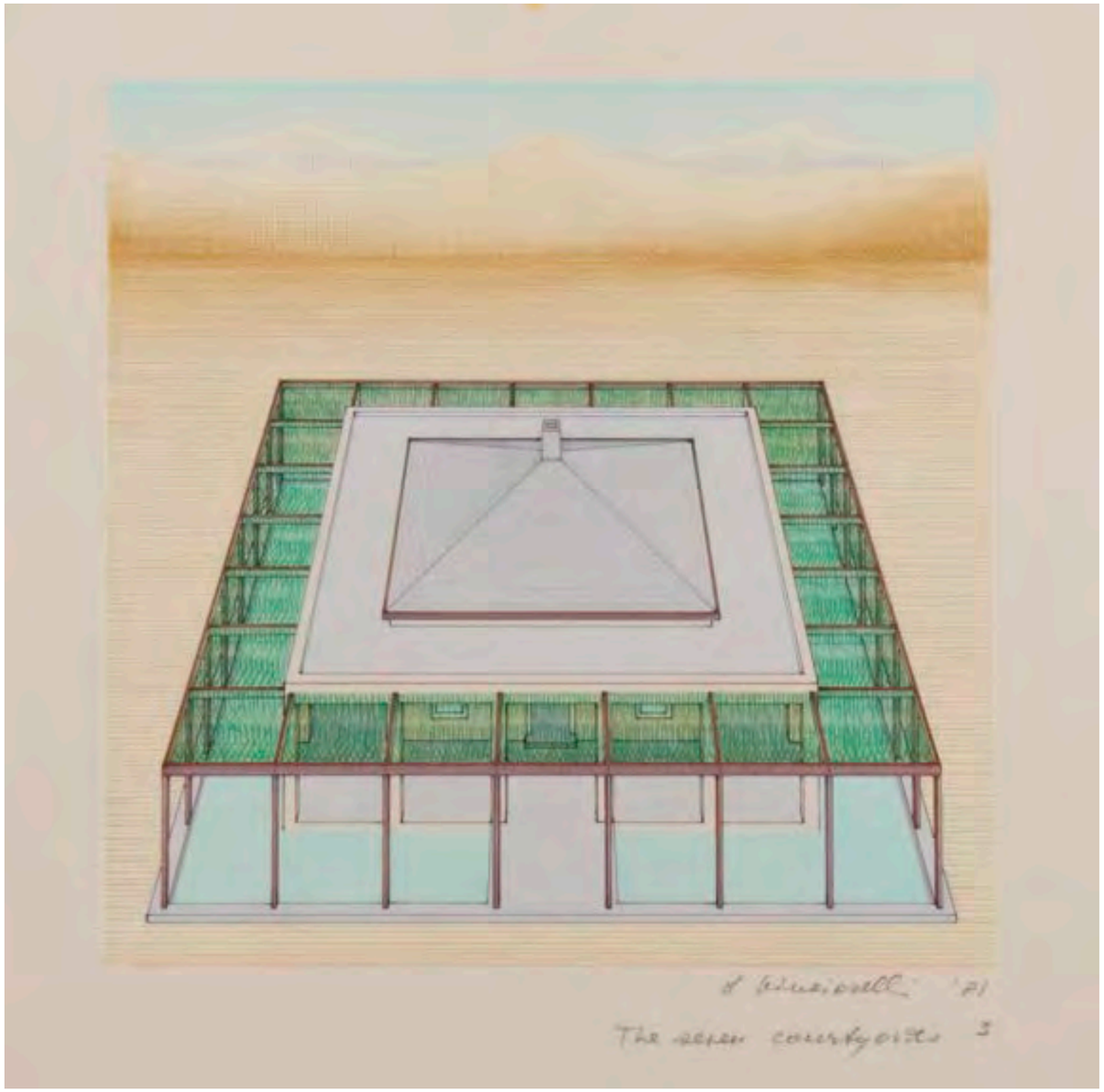


Lauretta Vinciarelli, drawings for *Hangar* and *Courtyard*, 1980, pastel, graphite and ink on vellum, 11½ × 12 in. (29.2 × 30.5 cm). Courtesy Judd Foundation. The Lauretta Vinciarelli Papers, Judd Foundation Archives, Marfa, Texas.

Marfa

Vinciarelli met Judd in 1976, and the two would be involved both romantically and professionally for at least the next decade. During their time together from the late 1970s to the late 1980s, Vinciarelli had a vital impact on Judd's work in architecture and design, collaborating on some of his most well-known architectural projects, including those for Marfa; Providence, Rhode Island; and Cleveland, Ohio. In a 2008 interview with Judd's daughter Rainer, Vinciarelli explained that she and Judd collaborated both "formally" and "informally" during the nearly ten years that they were together.[16] Judd has been hailed as a visionary architect for his interventions in Marfa, notably with Fort D. A. Russell, the abandoned army base that was purchased by the Dia Art Foundation in 1971 to house long-term installations of his and his contemporaries' art. Beginning in 1978, Vinciarelli would spend significant amounts of time with Judd in Marfa, where she worked on a variety of projects that she described as "case studies" for her analysis of the typological approach that she had been exploring in her concurrent work at Columbia University.

Marfa was chosen for its sense of "permanence," she wrote, in which "is inherent a tie of necessity with the place and its richness."[17]



Lauretta Vinciarelli, drawing for *The Seven Courtyards* series, 1981, pastel, graphite, and ink on vellum, 20 × 32 in. (50.8 × 81.3 cm).
Courtesy Judd Foundation. The Lauretta Vinciarelli Papers, Judd Foundation Archives, Marfa, Texas.

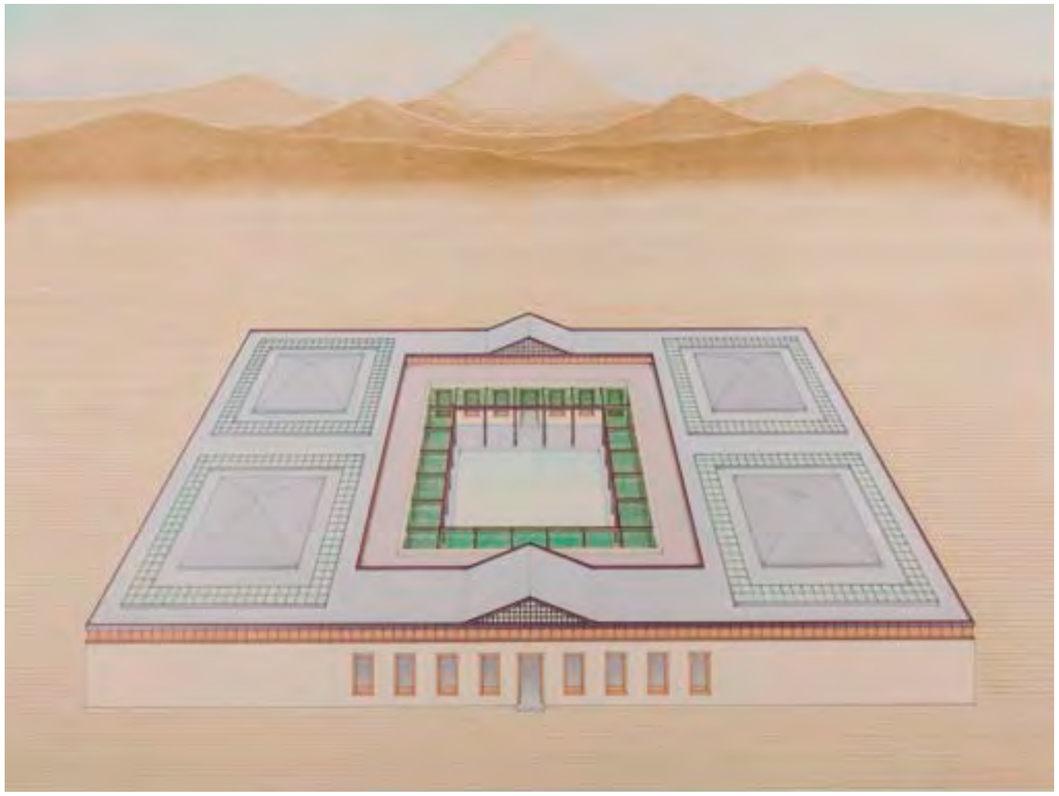
Speaking of the local vernacular architecture such as well houses, she ruminated on issues of scale, emotion, and permanence: "If I consider the town and the landscape in which the town is, these big things are the only human artifacts there which in a way are comparable in scale, and in scale with the desert, and also the level of emotion (…) the landscapes give the impression of the incredible peace and calm, and also these big buildings in a way have this property of serenity, and in a way eternity, because they are so big and basic."[18]

Marfa was also chosen as the site for this case study, she explained, because of "its small size of less than 3,000 inhabitants, for its location in a beautiful mountainous desert which relates to the architecture and the layout of the town, and for the clarity of its architectural tradition which contraposes pitch-roofed houses to Mexican court-houses and domestic buildings to industrial hangars."[19] In fact, in her drawings titled *Hangar and Courtyard* (dated 1980), she mixed these different types—airplane hangar, enclosed court house, open court house—in various combinations, pushing each type beyond its normal definition. Implicit in her architectural statement was the connection between building types and their ability to form a spatial fabric, a synthesis that was vital to the project.

In a 1989 essay on courtyards, Judd wrote: "I've made my place in Marfa into a courtyard and have considered many other kinds of courtyards, open to closed."[20] Indeed, the additions of the courtyard, the so-called *hortus conclusus* (Latin for "enclosed garden"), and the pergola are integral to Judd's architecture in Marfa. These elements are some of the reasons why he has been praised as an innovative architect,[21] especially considering few changes were made to the pre-existing buildings themselves. The *hortus conclusus*, like a courtyard, offers shade and respite from the heat by incorporating elements of water and greenery, all contained by a walled perimeter. The entire Mansana de Chinati, Judd's living quarters in Marfa, is essentially a large, open courtyard surrounded by a thick adobe wall. Within the compound (often referred to as "The Block" since it occupies an entire city block), there is another open courtyard. At the Arena Building, a social hall for meetings and festivities that Judd began to renovate in 1981, the original exterior courtyard was preserved, as was the smaller, enclosed courtyard within. The smaller courtyard's roof was removed, essentially producing an open courtyard within another open courtyard.[22]

To say that the courtyard was a fundamental component of Vinciarelli's work, however, would be a gross understatement. She called on type in her teaching in the housing studio at Columbia and was concurrently investigating the courtyard type in Marfa, as we see in two sets of perspective drawings from the late 1970s and early 1980s: *The Seven Courtyards* and *Courtyard Building for Donald Judd* (published together in *Arts + Architecture* magazine in 1981). As she explained, "These seven drawings [*The Seven Courtyards*], part of my ongoing research on the architectural theme of the courtyard, occupy territory between finished architectural projects and pure architectural statements."[23]

Vinciarelli preferred the courtyard type for its ability to prioritize the human scale: "This form creates a primary nucleus of order and measure at the human scale that counterbalances the order of nature and, at the same time, invites it to participate in the architectural form."[24] At the same time, she explained how the courtyard also had greater potential to connect to the surrounding area by creating a spatial fabric, or at least the "nucleus of a spatial fabric," as it is "the smallest environment capable of carrying the urban idea."[25] The courtyard also corresponds to the "*hortus conclusus*," whose creation Vinciarelli described as an ancient practice: "A garden that is walled [is] something that has been done since humanity started."[26] More importantly,



Lauretta Vinciarelli, drawings for *Proposal for an art museum in Southwest Texas*, 1980, pastel, graphite and ink on vellum, 11½ × 12 inches (29.2 × 30.5 cm). Courtesy Judd Foundation. The Lauretta Vinciarelli Papers, Judd Foundation Archives, Marfa, Texas.

Vinciarelli noted that at that time "these sorts of archetypes and types were very much studied in Italy"—a student of architecture in Italy during the late 1960s, Vinciarelli was well-acquainted with that context.[27]

The Contemporariness of Typology

We must reflect upon the legacy of Columbia University's housing studio and Vinciarelli's exploration of types in Marfa—specifically courtyard-type housing and *horti conclusi*—to understand the impact it had on the history (and historiography) of postmodern architecture. In the United States and Europe alike, postwar architects and urbanists were coming to grips with the awesome responsibility of historic preservation; New York, for example, witnessed the destruction of landmarks like the original Pennsylvania Station and Lewisohn Stadium on the campus of City College, where, among other influential figures, Martin Luther King Jr. once spoke. The preservation movement not only gained the attention of activists like Jane Jacobs, but also the Columbia University faculty (Columbia's Historic Preservation Program, the first such program in the United States, was founded in 1964 by James Marston Fitch). The urgency of historic preservation at that time encouraged architects to look to history as a source for inspiration. However, even as postmodern historicists were gaining popularity for their eclectic application of historical elements (classical columns, broken pediments, and more) as a stylistic counter to the minimalist aesthetic of the Modern movement in architecture, Vinciarelli and others emphasized that time-tested types are perpetually relevant and adaptable even as aesthetic trends ebb and flow.

Courtyard-type housing and *horti conclusi* have made a comeback as of late, in part due to the possibilities for sustainability.[28] However, they have also been called upon for their potential for escapism. The 2011 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, for example, designed by Swiss architect Peter Zumthor as a *hortus conclusus*, was meant to engage the senses and provide a place for rest in an increasingly turbulent world.[29] Considering the social, political, and environmental upheaval we have seen since 2011, I think it is safe to assume that there will continue to be a need for these types in the years to come. This underscores Vinciarelli's belief in the timelessness and enduring appropriateness of historical types despite our constantly fluctuating society. Typology continues to be a useful design tool today, as we address the unique dilemmas of the twenty-first century.

Notes

1 Matilda McQuaid and Terence Riley, ed., *Envisioning Architecture: Drawings from the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2002), 37, n36. Lilly Reich also had work acquired that year, including a lacquered screen. It was not until 1994 that Reich's drawings were researched and catalogued by Matilda McQuaid and Pierre Adler. Charlotte Perriand had furniture acquired by MoMA as early as 1934, but that work was jointly attributed to Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. Information retrieved from MoMA's online collections, https://www.moma.org/collection/ (accessed July 21, 2017) and Terry Riley, "Preface," in Matilda McQuaid and Magdalena Droste, *Lilly Reich: Designer and Architect* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1996), 7.

2 Martin Filler, "Harbingers: Ten Architects," *Art in America* (Summer 1981): 122.

3 Mary McLeod, "The End of Innocence: From Political Activism to Postmodernism," in Joan Ockman, *Architecture School: Three Centuries of Educating Architects in North America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 190.

4 Ruth Rutholtz and Diana Ming Sung, "Carpet Housing," *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, Issue 11: Making Room: Women and Architecture, Volume 3, No. 3: 23.

5 James Tice, "Theme and Variations: A Typological Approach to Housing Design, Teaching, and Research," *Journal of Architectural Education*, 46 No. 3 (Feb. 1993): 163.

6 Gutman and Sparling, interview by author, March 30, 2013.

7 Tice, "Theme and Variations: A Typological Approach to Housing Design, Teaching, and Research," 162.

8 "Lecture: Lauretta Vinciarelli" (1978), Giuseppe Zambonini papers; Open Atelier of Design Lecture Series. *New School Archives and Special Collections Digital Archive*, http://digitalarchives.library.newschool.edu/index.php/Detail/objects/KA0130_OA_14 (accessed January 7, 2015).

9 Alan Colquhoun, "Postmodernism and Structuralism: A Retrospective Glance," *Assemblage* 5 (February 1988): 10.

10 Armstrong and Cohen, interview by author via Skype, April 21, 2013.

11 Armstrong and Cohen.

12 "Lecture: Lauretta Vinciarelli."

13 "Lecture: Lauretta Vinciarelli."

14 Vinciarelli, "Statement on my work" (1986), in *Emerging Voices: A New Generation of Architects in America*, 36.

15 "Lecture: Lauretta Vinciarelli" (1978), Giuseppe Zambonini papers.

16 Lauretta Vinciarelli, interview by Rainer Judd and Barbara Hunt McLanahan, February 25, 2008, New York, NY; transcript, Oral History Project, Judd Foundation, Marfa, TX.

17 Lauretta Vinciarelli, "Marfa 2a," *Précis* 2, "Tradition: Radical and Conservative," 53.

18 "Lecture: Lauretta Vinciarelli" (1978), Giuseppe Zambonini papers.

19 Vinciarelli, "Marfa 2a," 53.

20 Judd, "Horti Conclusi," in *Donald Judd, Architektur* edited by Donald Judd and Marianne Stockebrand (Münster: Edition Cantz, 1989), 40.

21 See Judd and Stockebrand, Donald Judd, Architektur; Marianne Stockebrand, *Chinati: The Vision of Donald Judd* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2010); John Messina, "Principle and Practice: The Ethic and Efficacy of Donald Judd's Interventions at La Mansana de Chinati," *98th ACSA Annual Meeting Proceedings, Rebuilding* (2010): 533-39.

22 Marianne Stockebrand, *Chinati: The Vision of Donald Judd*, 132.

23 Lauretta Vinciarelli, "Courtyard Building for Donald Judd Installations," *Arts + Architecture* 28 (1981): 36.

24 Vinciarelli, "Courtyard Building," 37.

25 Vinciarelli, "Courtyard Building," 37.

26 Vinciarelli, interview.

27 Vinciarelli, interview.

28 Günter Pfeifer, Per Brauneck, *Courtyard Houses: A Housing Typology* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2008); Ulrike Passe, "Sustainable Building typologies: Free Flow Open Space as a Climate technology," the International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic, and Social Sustainability 3 (2008): 15-8; Donia Zhang, *Courtyard Housing for Health and Happiness: Architectural Multiculturalism in North America* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Markus Bulus, Malsiah Hamid, Yaik Wah Lim, "Courtyard as a Passive Cooling Strategy in Buildings," *International Journal of Built Environment and Sustainability*, 4 no. 1 (2017): 48-55.

29 Amy Frearson, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2011 by Peter Zumthor," *Dezeen*, June 27, 2011, https://www.dezeen.com/2011/06/27/serpentine-gallery-pavilion-2011-by-peter-zumthor-2/ (accessed August 18, 2017).

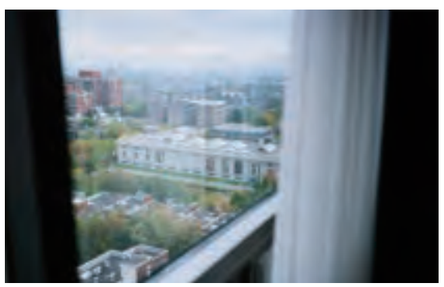
Which Public?

Giovanna Borasi in Conversation with Maria Nicanor

Giovanna Borasi directs the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), one of the world's leading architecture research institutions and museums. In this interview, she speaks about CCA's operations, including its projects, exhibitions, and positions. Also addressed are 2020's twinned crises—the pandemic and a renewed call for racial equity—and how these concerns will shape the CCA in the years to come.

MN I always like to know more about how friends and colleagues got into architecture and design. Often times the path to an architecture-related field is not a straight one. You're trained as an architect but have spent most of your career as a curator and writer. After first joining the CCA in 2005, you were appointed as its new Director last January following Mirko Zardini's tenure. Where did you grow up and what experiences shaped your journey towards an interest in architecture and the built environment?

Giovanna Borasi in Buenos Aires during the launch of the third iteration of the *CCA c/o* program, in March 2020.
Photo: Patricio Pidal.



View of the CCA from a window of Hôtel du Fort, Montreal. Photograph by Naoya Hatakeyama. Collection CCA. Gift of the artist.
© Naoya Hatakeyama.

GB It's nice indeed to look back at how and why things happened the way they did, even if initially planned differently. I was drawn to study architecture because it is a precise discipline. At the same time, it is responsive to daily life and societal change. I like the struggle between precision—building with a larger purpose and planning for the long-term—and, at the same time, this need for improvisation, as you're constantly challenged by life in and of itself.

While I was studying architecture with Pierluigi Nicolin, who was and still is the Editor-in-Chief of *Lotus*, I decided to work for the magazine. I thought this was a good experience before launching myself into the practice. Eventually, Pierluigi invited me to stay another year, as *Lotus* published only four issues per year and I had worked only on two issues. Every year I asked myself whether I should go back into practice. In the end I stayed eight years. That's also where I met Mirko Zardini, who then was an editor at the magazine. *Lotus* was a thematic magazine, and each issue proposed a theme for discussion. The idea of approaching architecture through lines of investigation or themes clearly comes from that experience.

The passage between editorial and curatorial work was smooth for me. The first show I really assisted in for the research and curatorial direction was *Asphalt: The Character of the City* in 2003, curated by Mirko for the Triennale di Milano. It was a learning experience about unexpected ways of looking at society through the lens of the banal.

Following that exhibition, which relied a lot on archival material from the CCA, the institution asked Mirko to rethink the show for presentation in Montreal. He came up with the idea for *Sense of the City*, and I worked on that through contributing to research and the definition of the curatorial concept. Between 2004 and 2005, I travelled several times to the CCA and eventually applied for the position of Curator, Contemporary Architecture. Since then, I have been continuously connected to the CCA, rethinking and contributing to different sets of thematic investigations that I explored with Mirko since my arrival in 2005. In our 2019 publication *The Museum Is Not Enough*, we call these topics "grey zones"—unexplored areas in society that we address through the lens of architecture. It's a way to bring architecture back into the current discussion on contemporary issues and to consider its role in responding to societal issues.

As for my interest in architecture and the built environment, what initially drew me to architecture is how it can be used to understand society. Whereas anthropology is focused on the study of society and social formations, I think that architecture has the capacity to go beyond this. Architecture isn't simply a lens through which to understand the contemporary world; it has the capacity to foresee different approaches to the future. Therefore, I see a lot of my curatorial work as almost architectural projects. Every show I work on not only raises questions about a topic, but also offers a proposal or activist agenda for possible ways of framing or tackling the issue.

MN The CCA was founded in 1979. Phyllis Lambert conceived of it as a bit of an outlier, as a different kind of organization from which to discuss architecture. How do you keep that sentiment alive today? How does the CCA remain "of its time," in a moment where there are many more channels through which architecture is discussed and presented than back then?

The Museum Is Not Enough (Front cover). This publication was conceived as the first volume of a yearly magazine, with which the CCA explores urgent questions defining its curatorial activity. Co-published in 2019 with Sternberg Press. Graphic design by Studio Jonathan Hares © CCA.

GB The CCA was created to be a new form of institution. At once museum and knowledge-producer, with its own publication and research departments supported by the collection, all working together to create a place where ideas are formed, discussed, and questioned. Since the beginning, the idea of being an international center was a way of acting as a point of reference to a diverse and dispersed audience—even in a pre-digital era when sharing ideas was limited to publications and travelling exhibitions.

Being an international center gives us the opportunity to ask ourselves how to be relevant, not only in relation to the time and place we live in, but also in the sense of questioning for whom—which public—we are working. The CCA's insistence on building a dialogue with a larger audience than a local or national one, compels us to constantly ask ourselves how to be relevant and how to be connected with the times we live in.

There are more channels and platforms today where architecture is presented, but to me only a few of them have clarity in their efforts. If in the past architectural magazines or architectural schools or other sorts of institutions were authoritative in some of their answers, I now find the territory very blurred. I think we've passed from institutions to individuals that have become a sort of reference. In today's world, the impact of your voice is no longer related to the scale of your institution: you can make your message heard independently regardless of who or where you are. Still, I remain fond of institutions, even if I think that institutions don't exist *per se*—institutions are always comprised of people. I believe in the capacity of institutions to ask—and even sometimes to answer—big questions.

The CCA is also in dialogue with the practice of architecture, and it has two ways of dealing with this. On the one hand, we observe what architects and practitioners are working on; we don't theorize, but instead we gather the different ideas we find and re-frame them in a set of questions that go beyond the practice. And on the other hand, we observe what's inside these questions on a societal level to reinsert architecture into the discourse.

If I think about being timely as a question of curatorial and editorial practice, or research for example, we need to be much more anticipatory. We need to collect things today that we think will be relevant in ten years. We need to anticipate what the requests and aspirations of researchers and scholars might be in ten years, in order to be "on time" for them. It is an interesting game to constantly pass between current and future needs, while acting today. At the same time, the CCA's forty-year legacy and the long history of its collection allow us to look at the past to understand what is relevant to look at today.

MN The work you do at the CCA is framed within a large institution at a national level that has a global curiosity and output. RDA, for instance, operates at a much smaller, yet very crucial scale, and from within the framework of an academic institution, as we're the public programs and outreach arm of an architecture school.

Larger institutions can achieve certain things, while smaller organizations, can play very different roles. Where do you see these smaller organizations in the larger picture as conveners of many with an interest in the built environment? What can they achieve for their communities that larger institutions can't? And how do you see the balance of local vs. global content in places like CCA in Montreal, or the RDA in Houston?

Film still from Untitled (The Things Around Us), 2020, of an exurban garbage dump in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The film was conceived by Francesco Garutti and Irene Chin as part of the exhibition *The Things Around Us: 51N4E and Rural Urban Framework*. Photo: Nomads Meets the City (2020), © Anji Sauvé Clubb.

What It Takes to Make a Home (2019 | 29 min), conceived by Giovanna Borasi and directed by Daniel Schwartz, is the first of the three-part documentary series produced by the CCA: an exploration of intersecting social conditions—loneliness, migration, segregation, and aging—that are reconfiguring contemporary cities. Focusing on some causes and conditions of homelessness, the film questions the role architects can play toward overcoming the stigmatization of people experiencing it, in order to build more inclusive cities. Graphic design: Studio Christian Lange. © CCA.

When We Live Alone (2020 | 27 min), conceived by Giovanna Borasi and directed by Daniel Schwartz, is the second of the three-part documentary series produced by the CCA. The film explores the ways in which we live alone together in contemporary cities. The unprecedented rise of urban dwellers living on their own challenges normative ideas about home and raises questions about how this change in social structure and lifestyle affects cities as a whole. Graphic design: Studio Christian Lange. © CCA.

GB The question of scale is key to an institution. I really like the scale of the CCA because it's big enough to take on an ambitious project. When I say big, I don't refer to the number of people, the resources, or time we have, but to the diverse expertise involved in undertaking a large project with confidence. At the same time, we are small enough to avoid typical institutional issues like siloed mentalities, departmental territories, and things like that. Some of our units consist of only two or three people. Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we all worked on the same floor in the CCA's six story building; for now we work from home. We operate at a scale where discussions and decisions can happen at a meeting of just two or three people. These are all healthy proportions for capability and performance.

Smaller institutions always maintain a certain curiosity, humbleness, or nimbleness. They have a desire to do more. It's a very good state of mind to push the institution and push everyone to accomplish something special. But it's not only the scale, it's also the culture of the place: not being self-congratulatory or resting on our laurels is also part of the success of the institution and its smaller scale.

We have no other choice than to consider our work for a community that is larger than the one in Montreal or in Canada, simply because of the variety of issues we are addressing.

We are working with formats that are new to us to expand the way we produce, reflect, and distribute knowledge. For example: together with two invited architectural practices, Rural Urban Framework in Hong Kong and 51N4E in Brussels, we've realized *The Things Around Us*, which addresses the question of context and the new "ecology of practice," to use the words of Francesco Garutti, the project's curator.

Another effort is *CCA c/o*, a series of temporary initiatives that are locally anchored in different cities worldwide. The effort partners with independent curators, architects, journalists, and editors from these different geographies. These actions are a tool to reveal issues of general relevance that emerge from different contexts. In two versions we've collaborated with Kayoko Ota, a curator in Tokyo, and Martin Huberman, a curator in Buenos Aires, to establish a research practice that connects us to communities that we would not otherwise be able to reach and ideas that go beyond our Western worldview. And with a collection that spans from the Renaissance to born-digital material, we are in conversation with scholars that have very different priorities and who are writing different histories of architecture.

Because of the CCA's mandate to work with a range of formats and to address a variety of subjects, albeit very niche ones, we will never be able to limit our dialogue to the local public in Montreal. Rather, we must always address a dispersed audience of researchers and collaborators.

In contrast to many other institutions, the CCA does not consider itself an educational institution. We don't even have an education department anymore. We don't need and don't want to teach or educate anybody. This relieves us from any kind of service to the local community. That said, we have plenty of free public programs for students and families, and we invite and welcome any kind of visitor to do research on the collection. But I think the idea behind what we do is a way of connecting to a broader audience.

For example, consider the new series of three documentaries we're working on now: the first one addresses homelessness (*What It Takes to Make a Home*), the second one (*When We Live Alone*) is about single people and the rising number of people living alone, and the third forthcoming one will be about the issue of an aging society. In doing something like this we want to talk to a larger audience beyond the one in Montreal. But at the same time, homelessness is an issue in Montreal. So we address a topic and broaden the question, but we also try bring it back to the core of what we do and analyze from that point of view.

Maybe this is just how everyone operates now. To me, it's very clear that you shouldn't separate publics. You shouldn't assume that in Houston you do one thing and then in more broadly in Texas or the United States you ask other questions. As an institution you might not have the energy and the resources to do this. But I think you have to continuously zoom out from your local context and then zoom back in—it's a constant dialogue. That's how we live in our hybrid physical-digital world today.

MN I'm very interested in formats and the ways in which we all engage with and learn about architecture, design, and our cities. Some people will learn more from a party or a program carried out with humor, while others take more out of a traditional lecture or formal symposium, for instance. Can you tell us more about the formats you work with and how you approach content in unconventional ways? This is especially important in our culture of constant entertainment and experiential distraction. Inevitably our exhibitions, publications, and programs compete for attention with other mainstream channels.

Charles Moore drafting live during a television broadcast of Roanoke Design '79, while host Ted Powers and Floyd address the camera. 1979. Design-A-Thon. Centerbrook Architects and Planners Records. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library © Centerbrook Architects and Planners.

GB I agree. Formats can be interesting tools with which to develop architectural discourse and to engage people. I think the question of formats can be considered from two points of view.

One relates to ways of learning; this is something we reflected upon at the CCA when we worked on an exhibition about The Open University and the experiments they did on television in collaboration with the BBC. This relates to the use of TV as a format for design by Charles Moore, an example I also researched when working on *The Other Architect*. Through using TV programs to teach the history of architecture and by taking the perspective of the viewer, the program wasn't about how you teach, but about

Left: Hacker RP37A radio with Open University logo, ca. 1971, as part of the CCA exhibition The University Is Now on Air: Broadcasting Modern Architecture, 2017, curated by Joaquim Moreno. Courtesy of Paul King.

How to is a series of accelerated annual residencies that bring together small teams at the CCA to make a new tool to address a specific opportunity or need. In 2019 How to: disturb the public produced a cookbook of eleven recipes for new event formats, here, recipe 10. Institutional Performance Festival. Directed by Lev Bratishenko, CCA Curator, Public, and Mariana Pestana, architect, independent curator, and co-director of The Decorators. © CCA.

how you learn. So, this idea of learning is crucial when we think about formats.

Clearly formats can also be used as a productive way of framing an argument, or focusing only on an aspect of it; to inform, to provoke a discussion; or to let people think for themselves when they leave the format itself behind. The expanding role of curators is not only about curating the content but also about curating the format itself. This can be a very sophisticated way of shaping content.

At the same time, it's fundamental to pair the right format with the right content. I don't believe that formats are good *per se*. I think that they can be appropriate for a certain scope. At the CCA, we are constantly exploring formats, and when we're not inventing new ones, we are diversifying the ones we have. I think we use all the curatorial opportunities available to us between exhibitions and publications, short, long, digital, or not.

The questions are always: what public do you want to reach? What reaction do you want to elicit? What content do you want to communicate? Then there is the question of timespan, how will the content be used in the long-term, and in which context. It's a fantastic opportunity to consider and to explore, in order to advance the content even further.

Sometimes it makes sense to go back to very simple formats, like informed guided tours or well-researched and constructed bibliographies. I don't think we should reject past formats as uninteresting because they might lack the entertainment value of more recent or experimental formats.

We're also constantly re-examining our own approaches. Last year Lev Bratishenko, the CCA's Curator, Public, led a program called *How to: disturb the public*. The program invited a group of young aspiring curators, researchers, and architects to think about ironic ways of challenging institutions and to consider new ways of actively engaging the public. The group created a "cookbook" that can be used by other institutions to shake up their formats. We'll be using one "recipe" to open up internal meetings to the general public. We just finished the latest installment of *How To* with *How to: reward and punish*, a program that looked at architectural prizes, their legacy, and how to repurpose them to possibly build a different framework for architectural discourse.

Formats are useful if you consider them as tools, and if you always keep in mind what you want to accomplish with them. It's not a question of whether they are good or bad, but of whether they are the right tools for what you want to do.

MN We all live in cities and in spaces, and so we all have opinions about them regardless of our background and expertise. In that sense, our work as architects, designers, curators, engineers, should aspire to a meaningful engagement with the public. In your view, what role should architectural organizations play in discussing the public, societal changes that are defining our era? These might not necessarily seem like architectural problems in the traditional sense of the term. Is architecture/design uniquely placed to solve some of those problems? Or can we merely ask questions?

GB This is something that we're trying to do at the CCA: to show the relevance of architecture and urbanism to everyone—to show that everyone has a stake in it. But I am not sure it is right for every institution, or if they should do so to the same degree. It depends on the priorities of the institution. There are valuable institutions that have a very specific focus but still manage to have a broader reach. The Center for Land Use Interpretation, is one example; it responds to contemporary issues, but it also has a long-term focus and span to its work. I really like what they do. Sometimes they ask questions about social events, but that's not their focus. I think we need a diversified institutional landscape in which each organization helps us diversify how we look at architecture and engage with topics in different ways.

We should draw a distinction between architectural institutions and the practice of architecture. I think the responsibility of an architectural institution like the CCA is to be in a place of friction between a society that is organized in a certain way, or requires certain forms of care, on the one hand; and, on the other, architects, policymakers, or decision-makers that are meant to deliver on these requirements. By occupying the middle space between these two sides, the institution can play an interesting role in pointing to what is relevant, asking the right questions, and provoking people to think differently.

Then there is architecture itself. Does it need to ask these questions? I'm not sure. I think it should deliver some answers or some paths to enable others to arrive with some answers. I think architecture has a projective opportunity, and in doing so somehow it also poses questions. Ultimately a project has to imagine a future scenario besides the brief that is given. In putting a future scenario on paper you are forced to ask these questions at the same time as you deliver answers. These answers become the object and the subject that another institution can reflect upon—not to judge whether they are right or wrong, but to indicate possible directions.

When tackling societal issues, for us it's always important to always do it through the lens of architecture. Which of its diverse tools can architecture put in place to address societal issues? Answers still come from the capacity to read a place, the capacity to work with the resources available, to work with different materials to create a space or a form that has embedded societal values, and the capacity to create rituals. All of this is connected to space. There is—or there should be—a great sense of responsibility in architecture in that it has the capacity to influence societal issues. These issues are always embedded in architecture, even if they aren't addressed directly.

MN We started this conversation some months ago prior to the current pandemic the world is experiencing. Now, in the midst of it, what can you tell us about how the pandemic has affected you and your institution, both operationally and curatorially?

GB The pandemic challenged everyone on a personal level and on an institutional level. Certainly for me it has been an adjustment as I assumed the position of director only a few months prior. However, I can say with certainty that the CCA was prepared for some of the immediate consequences of the pandemic.

We were able to smoothly transition to remote working. Transitioning our curatorial work online has been a project of the CCA even before the pandemic. For the CCA, the institution's online presence is referred to as a "second building," an independent, curated entity. The "first building" is the physical building in Montreal, an idea introduced by Mirko years ago, which has been a helpful conceptual framework for the institution. I intended to evolve this notion in January 2020, to move it from two divided but connected buildings to "one CCA." Meaning: the CCA's digital output will be integrated into and become another significant way to express the curatorial voice of the institution, rather than simply being a way of communicating and distributing content. This is why new media, video, films, documentaries, the web as an editorial platform, and the use of social media as content platform became fundamental for us. I think the pandemic accelerated this move with no hesitation, with a spirit of experimentation and a willingness to take risks.

If other institutions compete for "foot traffic" or "likes," I'd like to think we're better off, as we search for eyes and brains. We've always counted on a curious but dispersed global online public, which over the last fifteen years has created possibilities for new encounters with different publics beyond geographical or temporal limitations.

Our strength resides in curatorial formats, but I must admit that we initially struggled as an institution to translate the nuance of our research and its processes done for exhibitions into a digitally coherent entity. The last thing we wanted to do was give virtual tours of our physical space. So a challenge for 2021 is: How,

through digital formats, do we more effectively share knowledge, content, and ideas which stoke curiosity and engagement from our publics? If we succeed, I think this will be a good step forward for the CCA, especially in our eventual post-pandemic reality.

Going digital has its limits. The pandemic has brought attention to the inequity of access and opportunities, but also the limits the digital world imposes on conducting research with primary sources. On our side, we tried to support scholars and researchers work by organizing Zoom sessions in our vaults to allow access to our materials, which were then digitized. In the future, digitizing primary sources will increase to support research-at-large and provide greater access to this resource. As a response, this year we are launching a new experimental digital fellowship that considers how we could take down geographical barriers and grant more access to our collection to a diverse set of scholars. Although it was born in these odd circumstances, this will be a long-term program.

MN At the same time, there has been a renewed movement for racial equity at large in society, but also within the realms of architectural practice, education, and media. Has your institution had conversations about this? How might ideas of race and its difficult relationship to architecture and its history be addressed at the CCA? I'm wondering how this might affect not only the exhibitions and programming, but also how the museum collects and archives material from architects in Canada and around the world.

GB Certainly, the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests that followed around the world have impacted us deeply. The act of collecting, describing, and showing in collections and museums all involve a set of choices that inherently include and exclude histories, which has disproportionately erased, disvalued, and excluded contributions and perspectives from people of color. The weight and implication of these actions, more than ever, can no longer be ignored. Once viewed as a seemingly basic action, collecting is now rightfully under intense scrutiny.

Together with questions of equity, diversity, transparency, and decision-making, I would say the way governance is understood inside this institution has been questioned, and there's a desire for change. Like many institutions we are doing the work of self-rediscovery and awareness as we reconsider many of the decision-making processes and ask how we could be more open, transparent, and inclusive. CCA is a Canadian institution, and Canada has its own history and ongoing issues with systemic racism and colonization that have not been properly addressed. We should acknowledge the limited effort done up until now to open up the CCA to Black and Indigenous scholars, to diversify material in the collection, and curatorial programming.

In the last years, the CCA has committed to actively expanding its perspective beyond a white, male, and Western framework. This happens through acquisitions and research that embrace stories from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The institution is focused on expanding these areas, engaging with scholars and curators who could bring forward more diverse stories, and introducing its own narrative and complex set of questions in architectural discourse.

However, this work shouldn't be done in an encyclopedic way, in an attempt to fill all identifiable gaps: the CCA has never imagined the collection as a flat body that covers a universal story. Instead, it has focused on shifts and transitional moments in history and subsequently their related geographies and figures. So, the growth and expansion should follow this core principle. New future inclusions should reflect new modes of operating in accessing materials. The collaborative acquisition of the Álvaro Siza fonds with two Portuguese institutions (the Serralves Foundation and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation), for example, was the best answer in managing the legacy of both a local and global figure in a non-disruptive way. This stokes new questions in how to diversify the collection and how to approach archives or projects without repeating a colonial model of extraction of knowledge and resources from their contexts.

Mellon Researchers in discussion, a part of the CCA's Centring Africa: Postcolonial Perspectives on Architecture, which is a collaborative and multi-disciplinary research project on architecture's complex developments in sub-Saharan Africa after independence. This research initiative is funded by Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, CCA 2019. © CCA.

A new project in 2022 will focus on the circumpolar North. For this project we shifted away from the mono-vocal curatorial approach and are facilitating a team of co-curators; two are Inuit and one is Sámi. This multifaceted approach will critically look at the colonization of the North and how it has been enabled through architecture and infrastructure-building. But it will also inspire new ways of looking at these territories from within and support forms of Indigenous sovereignty.

MN What lies ahead for the CCA—and for you?

GB We will continue to investigate the connection between architecture and society by tackling questions about how architecture could better care for society as its needs change.

Our work in 2021 is anchored in a series of initiatives all under the title *Catching Up With Life*. This hones in on how society is changing in respect to family, love, friendship, work, labor, governance, ownership, debt, consumerism, fertility, death, time, retirement, automation, and digital omnipresence. Surveying this societal shift, we ask and question how architecture and urban design could better understand and support new ways of life. While contemporary values are rapidly reshaping the built environment, architecture should not only be responsive—it should try to anticipate and even influence the direction of society through spatial endeavors. The output for this will be varied: an exhibition, a book, two web issues, a podcast, and a dedicated Instagram account. As I mentioned before, a strong and purposeful digital content will hopefully offer the opportunity for different voices to take part and contribute to advance the thinking on these issues. A part of this research is the trilogy of documentaries, which I mentioned earlier, that focus on current societal changes that present challenges in cities.

We will continue our work on *Centring Africa: Postcolonial Perspectives on Architecture*, a collaborative and multi-disciplinary research project on architecture's complex developments in sub-Saharan Africa after independence. We will also start a new thematic research initiative called *The Digital Now: Architecture and Intersectionality*. This will focus on how digital design simultaneously intersects and relates with race, class, gender, ableism, and sexuality.

Jamie Diamond, Cuddle Party, 2019. Photography, 95.3 cm × 127 cm. © Jamie Diamond.

Revisiting cataloging and how objects within a collection are described is a fundamental way to open-up material to diverse stories and readings. I have always thought that the limit for our collection, which is mainly visual media, is that the search in our databases is still done through words. So, we have begun to seriously ask: how do we describe the current collection in a way to make it both more discoverable and invites more diverse and critical perspectives? Increasing tagging and adding information around the project, such as including information about collaborators for architectural projects when possible, also helps both enrich discourse and potentially reveal unknown actors influencing a project. Certainly, this effort is something we have already started and will be continued for many years.

The CCA is a relatively young institution, but in the last forty years it has become a reference in the field of architecture for its thorough research and convincing ideas in museology, stimulating curatorial voice, and the consistent scope of its broad collection—although admittedly it's predominately composed of a Western, white perspective. It's imperative for the CCA to continue to put forward compelling curatorial ideas, inquire within overlooked fields of research, and grow and diversify the collection to best respond to future investigations and pressing questions.

As for myself, beside contributing to some of the curatorial endeavors, I will continue to learn how to do this job. Curating an institution is a very complex task, especially for a place like the CCA, which is a nimble, curious, and provocative institution. We always want to anticipate what comes next.

In the Light and Shadow of Morandi

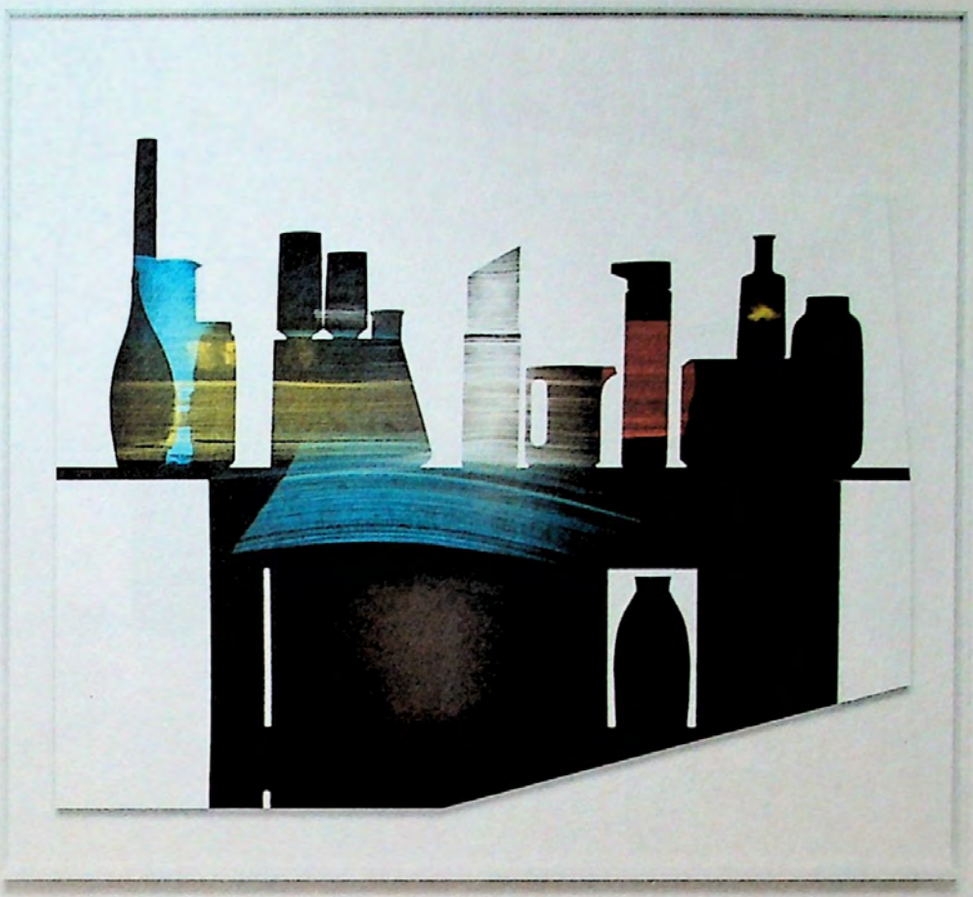
The present moment and the presence of the moment have always structured Uta Barth's photographs of light in ordinary domestic spaces. In this recent series, Barth simultaneously moves further into the fleeting nature of that moment and further away from its snapshot-like recognizability. The formal, frontal vantage point of the images, the figures in silhouette filled with polychrome refractions, and the manipulation of the framed edge, are all, in their abstractions, in tension with the absolute familiarity of the scene. In this way, Barth is a contemporary par excellence: she operates just outside what we know to be true and shows us what we otherwise cannot see.

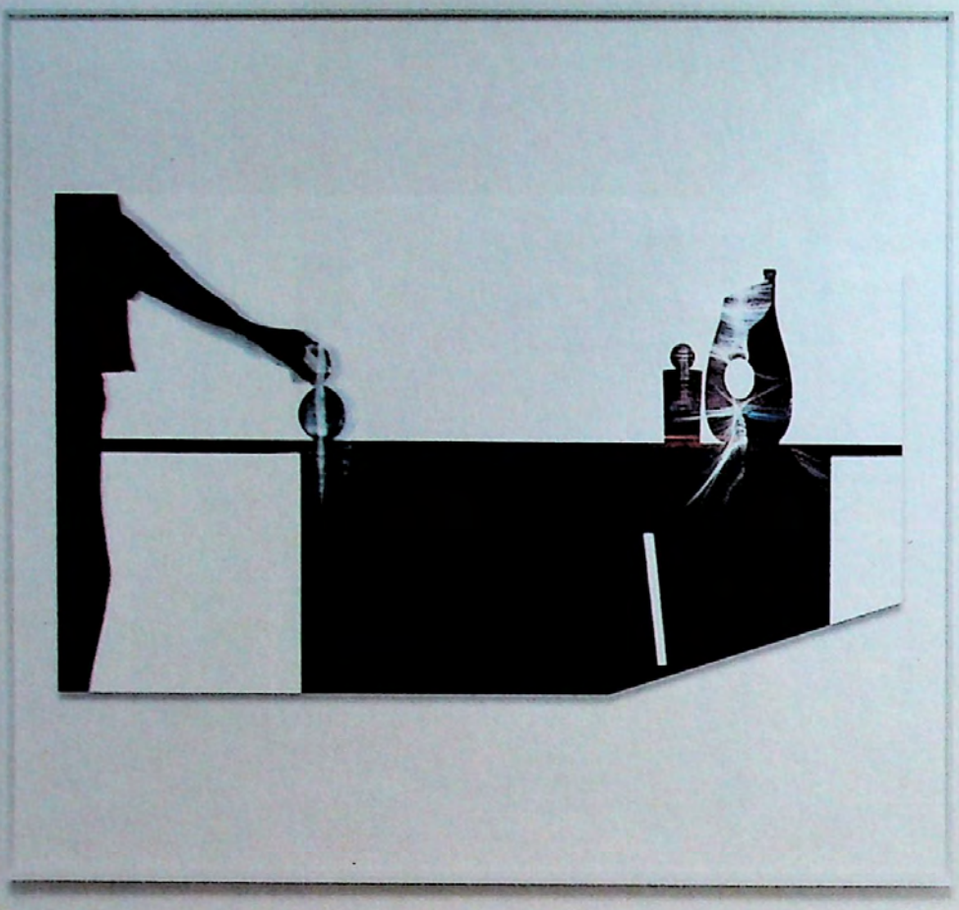
—Ajay Manthripragada

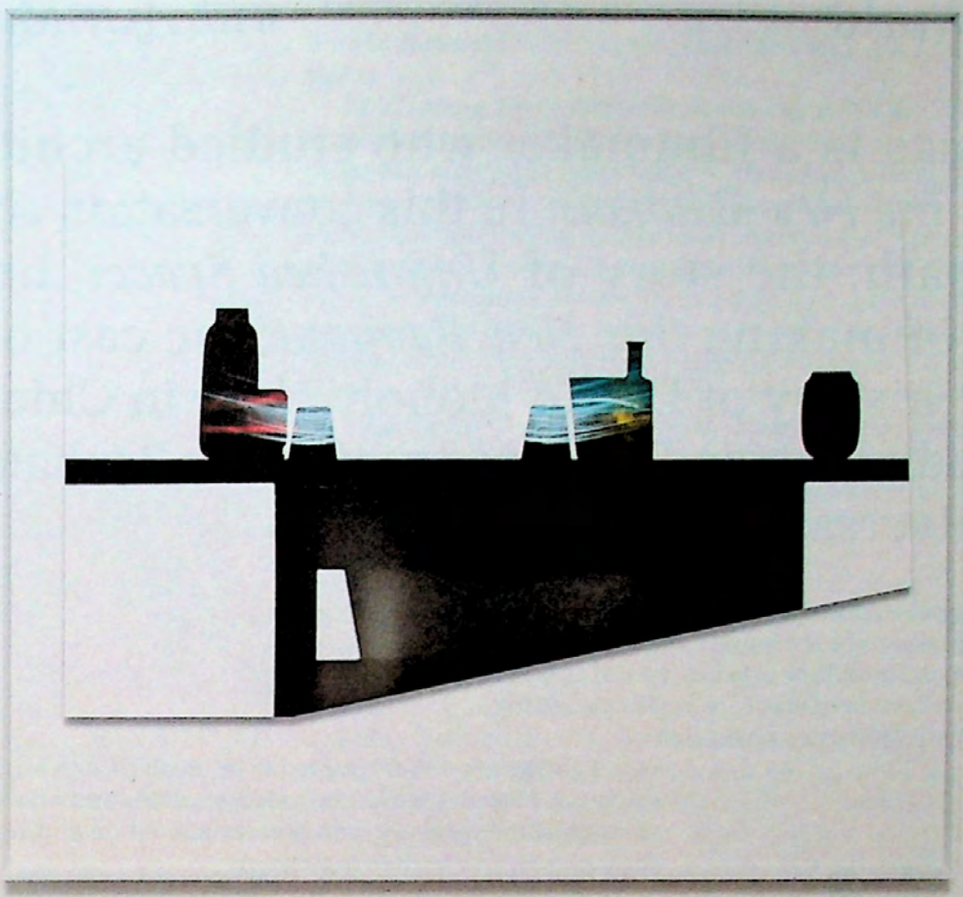
69 → *In the Light and Shadow of Morandi (17.03)*, 2017
Raised, irregular shaped, face-mounted archival pigment print in artist frame
48.75 × 52.75 × 1.75 in. (123.8 × 134 × 4.4 cm).

70 → *In the Light and Shadow of Morandi (17.05)*, 2017
Raised, irregular shaped, face-mounted archival pigment print in artist frame
48.75 × 52.75 × 1.75 in. (123.8 × 134 × 4.4 cm).

71 → *In the Light and Shadow of Morandi (17.12)*, 2017
Raised, irregular shaped, face-mounted archival pigment print in artist frame
48.75 × 52.75 × 1.75 in. (123.8 × 134 × 4.4 cm).







Changing the Way You See the World

Alysa Nahmias in Conversation with Ajay Manthripragada

Alysa Nahmias is a filmmaker who studied architecture. Her latest film is *The New Bauhaus*. In this conversation she addresses her career path; the story of *Unfinished Spaces*, her first film; the process of making *The New Bauhaus*; the cast of characters involved; the history of László Moholy-Nagy in Chicago; and his legacy as an educator and artist today after the Bauhaus celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2019.

AM Having met you in architecture school, I want to start by asking if you can speak about your background before you started making films. Could you talk about how that led to making films about design and design culture generally? I was also pleasantly surprised to learn about your Houston connection.

The New Bauhaus film poster.
© Opendox.

AN I always knew that I wanted to be involved with art. I'm definitely one of these people who's always making and who loves the ways in which the world can be commented on and re-shaped through visual or written expression.

Houston played a role in my early awareness of architecture and urbanism. My father and my stepmother lived out by Pasadena and Clear Lake, so I spent a lot of my childhood in Houston. We went into the Loop sometimes, or to Rice Village, so there were moments when we left the industrial and post-industrial landscape where they lived, and I saw how the built environment was vastly different in various neighborhoods.

As an undergraduate I studied art history, studio art, and literature at an interdisciplinary college called the Gallatin School at NYU. During the last semester of my undergraduate studies at Gallatin, I enrolled in a course that involved a study trip to Cuba. I thought I wanted my project to center on Cuban art history, but a professor of Latin American art told me, "If you're going to Havana, study the architecture. It's a museum of architecture. You'll never get that opportunity anywhere else." Honestly, my first reaction was dubious and symptomatic of the "Old Master"-centric art historical education I'd been engaged with up to that point, "Architecture?" I thought, "That's boring in comparison to painting and sculpture." But it was boring because nobody had unlocked it for me yet, and this professor's excitement about it was enough to spark my curiosity enough to take a chance that I'll never regret.

When I was in Cuba, my professors introduced me to Roberto Gottardi, one of the architects who had designed the Cuban National Art Schools. That's when I became more seriously interested in architecture. Roberto insisted on taking me to the schools. I was in front of this building with the architect who'd designed it, in this very different place from my own home and this building (all five buildings, actually, as we walked through each of them) really expanded my awareness so much: the history of the place; a relationship with this person, who would become a mentor for me; and also what the potential of architecture is; and how it can relate to site, history, politics, social change, and individual expression. I totally fell in love. I said to Roberto, "Someone should make a film about this," and he responded, "Well, why don't you do it?" had no idea what that would entail yet but I said, "Okay."

I finished that class by writing a paper about the art schools, but the film kept haunting me. I couldn't let it go; I knew I just had to do it.

After school, I was offered an internship at Dia Art Foundation. I was at Dia at a really interesting time, which is relevant here because it relates to Houston again. One of my jobs at Dia was to reorganize the press and image archive, so I was also the archivist. I went through all of the institutional archives, and part of that was attempting to understand how Heiner Friedrich and Philippa de Menil, who founded Dia Art Foundation, had come to encounter conceptual art, land art, and begin to build their minimalist art empire, which later would also include the Menil Collection in Houston. Dia and the Menil are sister institutions, in a way.

Simultaneously, while I was at Dia seeing the process that the architects at Open Office were leading to create Dia:Beacon, I was also working on this idea for my film project about architecture in Cuba. Then I just had the idea that I should go to architecture school.

The point I'm trying to make is that, for me, all this was really nonlinear. It's almost like I sought out a space that was both architecture and film. It was about how art could be both formally and socially engaged. I saw both of these mediums having that kind of potential in ways that were really exciting.

I also love the large-scale collaborative processes that both disciplines require. I'm a pretty social being, and I'm naturally collaborative in my creative process, so for me the hard part about being a painter or sculptor was the idea of just going to a quiet studio every day. Additionally, I didn't like the idea of selling singular art objects to someone who may or may not share them with the rest of the world; that would've been hard for me. Whereas with film, or writing, or public architecture projects, you never have to let it go in the same way as you do when selling a painting, because the work can always be reproduced or inhabited.

I ended up at Princeton to do my M.Arch—where I met you, Ajay—and while there I was quietly working on *Unfinished Spaces*, the film about Cuban architecture. When I finished the film, only a few people at the school knew about it. But after I graduated and the film came out, I saw Liz Diller and Ric Scofidio at a screening. Liz came up to tell me how much she enjoyed the film, and asked, "Why didn't you tell me about this while you were my student?" But it wasn't a student project, it was this thing that I was doing professionally while simultaneously pursuing my degree. I sort of also wanted to tell her, "I am not sure if you would've cared." Not because of her, really, but because until you've done something, there's no reason for anybody to care. You have to sort of cut your teeth and prove to yourself and others that you can follow through with real-world projects.

Unfinished Spaces was the launchpad for me. After that I started to make more films. I've done various types of films, mostly documentary, but also one scripted feature as a producer. And even the scripted feature was improvisational and documentary-like, involving no script and lots of non-actors.

Exterior of The New Bauhaus School of Design in Chicago, 1938.
Photographer: Unknown.

AM Tell me a little about *The New Bauhaus* and how it came to be—it seems like a very different set of circumstances, having in part to do with the resources now available to you as a more established filmmaker.

AN *The New Bauhaus* is an odyssey through the life and legacy of László Moholy-Nagy, the innovative artist and educator whose pioneering approach to integrating technology into design continues to influence and inspire. The film took three years to make. Together with my fellow producer, Petter Ringbom, and executive producer Marquise Stillwell, who I had worked with previously, we pitched the idea to make a film about Moholy's final decade in Chicago. This was 2015. We knew the hundredth

anniversary of the Bauhaus was approaching—it opened in Weimar in 1919—so we talked with the Institute of Design at IIT in Chicago to gain access to their archives and to have their blessing to tell some of the story. We brought on producer Erin Wright and co-producer Ashley Lukasik onto our team.

Then we talked with the Moholy-Nagy estate. We met Hattula, Moholy's daughter, who appears in the film. When I met her, I realized that we have something that's not just going to be archival. There will be a guide in the present day, and a literal connection to Moholy.

AM This is interesting relative to what you said about *Unfinished Spaces*, which emerged in your head slowly and was something you didn't know you would finish when you started. With this film, it was a more definitive, "Yes, I can make that happen."

László Moholy-Nagy, Self-Portrait, 1925. ©Moholy-Nagy Foundation. Photographer: László Moholy-Nagy.

AN *The New Bauhaus* is a different kind of story. It's even more archival than *Unfinished Spaces*.

I knew from the beginning that conjuring this ghost of Moholy would be tricky, because only a few minutes of video footage of Moholy exists, and it's all silent, and we don't have recordings of him speaking English. But he wrote a lot. Much of his writing is dense, but we were able to isolate certain amazing quotes. I knew Moholy's words would be in the film, but I wasn't sure if it would be graphic treatment of text, or if there would be an actor performing Moholy's voice, or if there would be a narrator of some sort. I was open to possibilities during production. First of all I knew that I had to get the structure of the film right and then figure out which quotes needed to be included.

Once that was clear and we had a rough cut, it became about experimentation. Moholy was all about experimentation. We tried text on screen. Then we had a scratch voiceover recording done by a friend. Then we ended up talking with a casting agent and were thinking of casting a Hollywood actor, but this wasn't going to work out within our timeframe, and the more I thought about it, the less I liked it conceptually, so I had many discussions with my team about other possibilities. As a director, your job is to come up with ideas, but ultimately, you have to be able to identify the best ideas, wherever they may arise.

My producer Erin Wright knew Hans-Ulrich Obrist through a friend in the art world and threw his name out there. It was a great match. He has Moholy-like energy, but he also has a long-term project on artists' quotes and does countless interviews with artists. So to have him reading Moholy's words in a documentary is fitting, even though he's Swiss German and not Hungarian. The idea is that Hans-Ulrich is not an actor playing Moholy, but rather that he's reading Moholy's words and conveying them to the viewer. The direction to him was, "Don't be Moholy, be yourself." It became an opportunity to break the fourth wall in the film, exposing the artifice of documentary filmmaking by showing Hans-Ulrich on screen, including the microphones, script, and other production gear in the frame with him.

AM I think that aspect brings the film into our current moment and makes it contemporary. The film provokes the idea that the way Moholy's schools were structured is very much alive in today's thinking about pedagogy. This includes the question of interdisciplinarity in the arts. Many of the techniques addressed, like montage, have had a resurgence as modes of representation as they migrate across disciplines, especially into architecture. Perhaps those techniques were never fulfilled in terms of their promise, and now we have tools that have enabled those things to happen. It seems relevant that these things are coming back or are now finally able to exist to their full potential.

AN Moholy was ahead of his time. In the 1920s, he said things like, "The illiterate of the future will not be the one who can't read, but the one who can't read images." This is a prophecy of 21st-century digital image culture, where memes are all over the place and anyone can transform images using Photoshop. Moholy knew we'd need to be able to think critically about visual information. But what you're saying about the Bauhaus pedagogy is interesting too, because you're probably teaching in a Bauhaus lineage whether you know it or not.

AM I was likely formed in the Bauhaus lineage, so that's the way I teach. But I try to understand its successes and pitfalls. Some today are against the idea of a foundation course—or think that a foundational course is irrelevant. "It's too specialized, disciplinary, internal, or autonomous," they might say. But I can't think of how we teach students to engage the world without being experts first. And I think that's absolutely a Bauhaus thing. It's an interesting thing that you bring up, because in this situation I'm defending the Bauhaus lineage, in a way.

Moholy's project might ultimately be a pedagogical one. The film is about him as a teacher, and at the end it posits the reason why he's not a household name is perhaps because his most significant project is his teaching project.

Top Right and Above: Light-Space Modulator, László Moholy-Nagy, 1922–1930. Photographed at the Art Institute of Chicago. Image from *The New Bauhaus* courtesy of Opendox. Art courtesy of the Moholy-Nagy Foundation. Director: Alysa Nahmias. Photographer: Petter Ringbom.

Design and artwork by László Moholy-Nagy. Photographed at the Art Institute of Chicago. Image (detail) from *The New Bauhaus* courtesy of Opendox. Art courtesy of the Moholy-Nagy Foundation. Director: Alysa Nahmias. Photographer: Petter Ringbom.

AN Teaching is not about fame, it's about rendering yourself unnecessary so that the students can learn to surpass the teacher's knowledge and rely on their own experiences and abilities. I think that was part of Moholy's philosophy of teaching. As much as he did want to be famous, as Hattula says on screen in the film, he also essentially eschewed the commercial gallery system and remained independent. He didn't take a job for another institution, but rather strove to create his own institution. He was willing to do anything to enable his students to find the inherent talent within themselves. I think it gave him great joy to see them flourish, and that made him a great teacher with a tremendous legacy. His legacy isn't fame or fortune during his lifetime, but perhaps more significantly it's his presence in the DNA of the creative processes of future generations of artists and designers.

I think he believed in a utopian project, and I don't mean utopian in a disparaging way. I think ideals have value. If we lose that, then there's no chance things will change. I think Moholy really believed that, too. He believed in the pure potential of each person, and in the universal value of human creativity. That was a driving principle that kept him going, even in tough times for the school, or for himself.

What is the power of art? This is something that interests me thematically. Art gives us an ability to create something from nothing, and that something is actually quite powerful— it's sometimes even dangerous to the status quo. When we're talking about design education, or arts education, that's what we're teaching people to do—to harness their inherent power for positive change.

I love when, in the film, Joyce Tsai, an art historian, says this about abstract art: "It might seem crazy that circles, lines, and squares were going to change the world, but it's not about the circles and lines, and squares, it's about changing the way you see the world, how you understand relationships." If you're a designer, you understand how these things have tremendous impact down the line. The way that we conceptualize something, the kind of drawing we make, the kind of painting we make—or what we're allowed to make, and what we're not allowed to make—actually shapes our ability to see beyond what exists right now.

I knew that quote would be in the film as soon as Joyce said it in her interview, because it's emblematic of what Moholy and other abstract or conceptual artists stand for. When I'm telling a story in a film, it has to be entertaining, it has to be engaging, and it has to be universal—there has to be a human story that I'm following, not just a concept like Bauhaus or a straightforward biography. This statement by Joyce is one of those moments that brings art theory down to earth in plain language, and she shares this wisdom in a very relatable way. It allows the audience to really feel how Moholy's art is relevant beyond his own individual story.

At one point I wondered about the title of the film versus something that includes Moholy's name, but I think this answers that

question. It's about a broader set of themes and interests that orbit a single figure, but it's not just about him.

The New Bauhaus was the name of the school that Moholy founded in Chicago in 1937. It was something that came up early on as a title, and it stuck. Why didn't my producers and I hear about this New Bauhaus in Chicago during our design educations? Is it because Walter Gropius, Josef Albers, and Mies van der Rohe got all the love when it came to histories of Bauhaus in America?

AM I don't know. Clearly The New Bauhaus had an influence on other architects in Chicago, right? Mies arrived after...

Exterior of The New Bauhaus School of Design in Chicago, 1938.
Photographer: unknown.

AN Well, the school was influential later, but it wasn't the case that Moholy drew Mies to Chicago; Mies arrived on his own. In 1937, Mies came to become a professor at the School of Architecture at Chicago's Armor Institute of Technology, which became the Illinois Institute of Technology. What happened is that the New Bauhaus School of Design soon afterwards became the Institute of Design, and then it merged with IIT.

After Moholy died, the Institute of Design was housed in the basement of Mies's Crown Hall. So Moholy's school was literally put underneath Mies. Mies was teaching his students on the main floor, and Moholy's school was in the basement. But it made sense because ID needed a darkroom. There were many photography students, and I've heard they were basically content to be in the basement. But metaphorically, you have Moholy shoved underneath Mies in Crown Hall. The Institute of Design students were, I've been told, the artier, less conventional types—in a good way as far as I'm concerned. Meanwhile the more uptight architecture students (and I say that lovingly as a former architecture student myself) were up top in the glass jewel box that is Crown Hall frying in the sun and freezing in the snow.

AM There is this cast of characters, which includes people who went through the school: what was it like to research them? How did you choose them? And of course, Moholy's daughter, Hattula, is a beautiful presence throughout the movie.

AN Hattula is a gem. As soon as I met her, I wanted to film her. I think she has such an interesting relationship to her father, especially since he died tragically when she was young, yet he's been a major force in her adult life through the foundation she founded. Her character ties in with a central theme in the film about legacy, right? Not just creative legacy, but the legacy that he left her with, and how she's managing that.

Hattula Moholy-Nagy with a photograph of her father and Walter Gropius.
Image from *The New Bauhaus* courtesy of Opendox. Director: Alysa Nahmias.
Photographer: Petter Ringbom.

Hattula knew people who were associated with the school. Many of them have passed away, but some were still with us and willing to do an interview, and thankfully still as charismatic as ever. I wanted to showcase a diversity of work and experiences among the alumni of the school. We interviewed more people than appear in the film. We actually interviewed Dirk Lohan, Mies's grandson. Mies was going to be in the film, but his footage was left on the cutting room floor as we realized that the documentation of any connection between the two men wasn't enough to sustain a storyline. Dirk was, not surprisingly, incredibly gracious and supportive about all of the choices made to arrive at the finished film.

And then there are the artists who featured at the end of the film, whom I call the "indirect disciples"—the people who are representative of the many artists who didn't go to the school or know Moholy directly, but who are influenced by Moholy's work. We spoke with Jan Tichy, Barbara Kasten, and Olafur Eliasson. I think Eliasson is genuinely inspired by Moholy and was pleased to have a chance to be in a film about such a giant of 20th century art and design.

AM My other interest here lies in the techniques of making the film itself. There's a clear nod to Bauhaus aesthetics and values, but then there's invention. It looks contemporary, but at the same time there's a relationship to historical graphic design techniques. The animations were particularly inventive.

Exterior of The New Bauhaus School of Design in Chicago, 1938.
Photographer: unknown.

AN I appreciate you watching the film with this level of aesthetic attention. The moments of invention in the film are perhaps the most significant nod to Bauhaus values, and of course there are some literal aesthetic echoes as well. The film is comprised of several visual elements: there are interviews and original shooting in Chicago. We also have archival imagery, which is photographs or footage that's sourced from third parties, including the archives at ID and other institutions. Within this category is Moholy's own footage. For example, when we land in Berlin in the 1920s, the images on screen are Moholy's own films that he made in Berlin. My approach was always to try to visualize Chicago, Berlin, Dessau, and the other cities through the eyes of artists. If we had images that Moholy made of the places, we used them. If we had images that other artists in his circles had created, we used those.

Once in a while we had to fill in a scene with some footage from a more general source, but even when we sourced images—say of Chicago in the 1930s, or during the war—a lot of the material I chose was made by artists independently, for commercial companies such as Container Corporation advertisements, or for the WPA. We were always trying to look at the world through the eyes of artists.

There are also the animations and artwork. There were a couple of things we did with artwork. There are certain instances where Moholy's montages are manipulated by animator Petter Ringbom and not Moholy. We did these to suggest how a viewer might imagine a narrative of the construction and conceptual underpinnings in some of these images of Moholy's photocollages or photograms.

AM Even the choice of Futura as the typeface works; it's clearly of that era, but it performs well when overlaid onto newer images. The results are synthetic in a way that I wouldn't have expected but that speak to the lasting power of the original material.

AN It's the Bauhaus. You're not going to compete with Bauhaus typography, and you shouldn't imitate, but you do have to be thoughtful about these choices, especially in this context.

But also, Moholy was messy and improvisational at times. By the end of the film, I think you understand that he was both messy and precise. His paradoxes were part of what made him complex, and this makes him a rich figure for us to think about nowadays.

AM I think this film will resonate with designers and artists because paradoxes are such a large part of our work and existence. Who else do you hope to reach with this film?

AN Hopefully this film's story is inspiring for educators, too. It's so important that we celebrate great educators, and understand how valuable they are, because often their praises go unsung.

Mies had a lot of imitators, but was he a great teacher? I'm not sure. Moholy didn't have a lot of imitators; does that speak to how good he was at teaching?

AM That's an interesting point about teaching and imitating. This might be true of other visual disciplines as well, but in architecture, in the last ten years or so, there has been a real shift for some young faculty to produce themselves through their students. There are some drawbacks to that model—it seems Moholy had different priorities that began with a focus on the students.

László Moholy-Nagy photographed in Finland by Alvar Aalto ©Alvar Aalto. Photographer: Alvar Aalto.

AN That's interesting about Moholy, right? His motivation for teaching was to create a better world, and you do that through teaching the whole person. He really cared about the whole person. He believed that everyone is talented. He understood that to be an artist you must have the capacity to work collaboratively, to adapt to new circumstances and technologies, and to consider how your artwork or design will operate in the world and shape you just as you give form to it.

The Street Won't Shut Up. Photo by @murodespierto, 2019. All photos of graffiti shown here were taken in Santiago, artists will be indicated where known. Fire has been an icon of the protests since the beginning, as the call to "burn everything down" aired the people's discontent with the government and the system at large.

The Writing on the Wall
Street Politics and Combat Graffiti

Celeste Olalquiaga

Every epoch not only dreams the next, but, while dreaming, impels it towards wakefulness.
— Walter Benjamin, "Haussmann, or the Barricades" (1935)

An urban figure has emerged front and center on the political scene in the last few decades. It is a collective singular, something we refer to as one although it is many. It has no face—only a long, hard body that swells and shrinks, coming alive abruptly and then disappearing into the background. Inert yet organic, urban and human, it is one of those binary-breaking phenomena that define the twenty-first century. It is the *street*—as in, the street has come down, the street demands, the street is on fire. Built for vehicles yet overtaken by bodies, the street has become a social agent, a gateway for freedom, a stage of political repression, the last analog platform. The street can make you, the street can kill you, the street speaks.

Street uprisings can be traced as far back as the first urban settings, but in the last two centuries what was originally a pathway has morphed from a place where things happen, a *locus*, to an anthropomorphic vehicle of popular disruption, a voice that speaks, a *logos*. One of the first embodiments of the street as human subject is Eugène Delacroix's famous *La liberté guidant le peuple* (*Liberty Guiding the People*), painted the same year as France's July revolution in 1930, in which a bare-breasted Liberty leads the charge over barricades and fallen bodies. This is Marianne, a symbol of freedom against oppression that personifies the French Republic since its revolutionary foundation in 1789. The painting has inspired artists worldwide, with freedom not as a given, but as something that must be fought for. The Roman goddess Liberty never appears topless in ancient depictions; she carries a helmet and often a shield and sword too. But Delacroix discarded the female warrior in favor of a maternal Marianne, mother of the République. Far more attuned to the urban reality of his topic than to female representations, he wrote in a letter to his brother: "I've embarked on a modern subject—a barricade. And if I haven't fought for my country, at least I'll paint for her [sic]."

The use of barricades in a labyrinthine Paris helped the popular uprisings that the city would endure in the next half-century. Many urbanists and historians claim that the 1853–1870 modernizing of the city under George Eugène Haussmann was due in part to allow swift military displacements against such rebellions. The most well-known among these, the 1871 Parisian Commune, built almost one thousand barricades on Haussmann's boulevards. This revolution's bloody end, *la semaine sanglante*, was visually recorded by a nascent photography: as the national army enters Paris, the Communards attempted to protect themselves behind barriers of sandbags and paved stones, scant matches for an army that outnumbered them five to one. The revolutionaries were egalitarian and pro-women's rights: the Commune's female soldiers wore uniforms and were known as *pétroleuses*, incendiaries, and there were several women's rights advocates among the Communards. Though short-lived, the two-month Commune inspired Marx's famous manifesto and has remained an urban milestone and myth.

150 years later, national armies and police are still fighting popular uprisings, now huge mass mobilizations, and the street has become an arena where both public space and political identities are shaped. This happens literally, for fighting on the streets of

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A *El vestido chileno* (the Chilean dress) by @jacqueline_fresard, 2019. This Chilean version of Liberty upholds a pan in reference to the *caceroleo*, or pan-banging, used in protests since 1973. She wears the traditional Trarilonko silver headdress of the Mapuche (native Indian) women, while the Mapuche flag is waved above the Baquedano monument in the upper left section. To the right is the Torre Costanera Center, the quintessential emblem of Chilean neoliberalism.

B Barricade Rue Royale, 1871. Photographer unknown. Public Domain via Wikicommons. The barricades of the Parisian Commune created a temporary architecture of resistance.

C Hic Meus Locus Pugnare Est Et Hinc Non Me Removerunt. Art by several artists along the Mapocho River, 2018. Photo by @celeste_olalquiaga, 2019. The walls of the river are a canvas for extensive graffiti and the riverside a place to bike or escape from the police. On October 2, 2020, a protester was thrown down to the dry riverbed from a bridge by a Carabinero and remains hospitalized.

D Thanks for So Much! Photo by @murodespierto, 2020. Chilean high schoolers ignited the 2019 protests by striking against the public transportation fare rise. The blood pouring from their eyes indicates the outstanding number of ocular lesions produced by police rubber bullets and/or teargas grenades.

E Photo by @celeste_olalquiaga, 2019. Jumping the turnstiles was the initial way high schoolers protested the transportation fare rise. It is also known as "evade" (to evade) and extended to evading the system at large. Here the reference is to jump over the 1980 Pinochet Constitution that hand-tied the country to private interests.

the *polis*, the city, is to make politics with the body, to enact a new form of citizenship that has less to do with national origins than with the struggle for equal opportunities and rights across class, gender, race, and age. Citizenship in the twenty-first century is defined by where you find yourself and are at home with others; belonging is no longer an issue of birth—an outdated essentialism—but rather about experience and choice. 2020, a year of major global changes, started with Hong Kong's ongoing confrontation of China's iron hand, continued with millions of women marching worldwide on March 8 against male violence, and went on to African Americans taking the streets of the United States to demand racial justice, among other protest movements. The year was marked by a spontaneous worldwide rebellion against neoliberalism's savage version of capitalism, as well as for the recognition of the rights of immigrants, native nations, transgender peoples, and organic beings.

COVID-19 forced us to realize the limits of our bodies and health systems. It accelerated a large part of the world's urban population into the digital era through cultural changes that normally would have taken decades, a transformation that arrived in tandem with a moment of global resistance and change that is moving towards an era of social awareness and solidarity. The conservative push-back has been relentless, with fanatic crowds and their leaders violently attacking protesters and police forces deploying an unheard-of level of partisanship and repression.

During urban political protests, the street itself becomes a body, a *corpus* of slogans, writings, and images that shouts social injustices and demands, exposes governmental and police abuses, makes fun of political contradictions, and questions established truths—it simultaneously celebrates peace and chaos, love and hate. Unlike digital media, where things are seen once and then vanish instantly, street walls and furniture provide a tactile, material surface where messages are written, drawn, and painted, then whitewashed or wiped out only to reappear anew.[1]

These processes of marking or defacing the *façade*—the face of the city—by inscribing and re-inscribing its skin, are both acts of urban resistance and their traces. They are the city's tattoos, its scars, the signs of its experience and history, and date back over two millennia to the urban tradition of *graffiti*. Originally from the Greek γράφειν (*graphein*, to write), the term *graffiti* is the plural for the Italian *graffito* or scratch (*rayado* in Spanish) and refers to public drawings and writings on walls. Anonymous, mordant, and full-on, graffiti were plentiful in ancient Egypt and Rome, where they were usually related to power and money in their most blatant forms: sex and politics.

Associated in the modern West with New York City's 1970s street art scene, graffiti have come to mean contemporary street art and large colorful name tags. Yet graffiti's main cultural value, now as two thousand years ago, lies in their multiple subversion of codes. For graffiti not only quite literally *scratch* over laws that forbid writing on public or private property, but also test the boundaries of what is considered art, bypassing an aesthetic discourse bound to art institutions, including print and digital media. Political graffiti include different supports like stencils and posters. With these tools, posting messages are quickly be understood, circulated, and identified with. Condensed, creative, and humorous, this is, quite literally, the writing on the wall.

Having spent most of my adult life in New York City, I was amazed by the styles, moods, and incredible abundance of graffiti every time I visited Chile, my native country. In cities like Santiago and Valparaíso, entire blocks are covered by political and ethnic paintings, spiritual worlds, cats (many, many cats!), ancient and futuristic characters, poetry, and messages of love. In the city's periphery and its poorest areas, graffiti cover the walls and serve as time capsules, canvases from different time periods.

Along the edges of the Mapocho river in Santiago, the poem "Guárdame en ti" ("Keep Me Within You") by the Chilean poet Raúl Zurita unfolds over a couple of miles. It is part of the 2018 festival La Puerta del Sur, which commissioned thirteen graffiti artists and Zurita to stamp their creations on the river's walls.[2] Above the poem, a brief Latin inscription is a paradoxical reminder of the Southern Cone's 1970s and 1980s dictatorships, a cruel ghost that has come back to haunt contemporary Chile: "Here is my fighting place and from here I will not be removed," or "This is my fighting ground and from here I will not be taken." Located near the "zone zero" of the Chilean protests in Plaza Dignidad (formerly Plaza Italia or Plaza Baquedano, the boundary between uptown and downtown Santiago), this phrase used to hang over the Argentinian writer and intellectual Haroldo Conti's desk before he was kidnapped and disappeared by his country's military in 1976.

When the "Chilean Spring" (locally called "the social explosion") broke out in fall 2019 and citizens denounced decades of a neoliberal abuse written and sealed by the Pinochet dictatorship's 1980 Constitution, the street became the main organ, battleground, and voice of popular protest. After a twelve-day public transportation fare-evasion strike by high schoolers escalated to confrontations with the national police (Carabineros de Chile) and damages to several Metro stations, President Sebastián Piñera's government (Chile Vamos, a center-right coalition) shut down the entire subway system in the late afternoon of Friday, October 18, 2019. This unexpected measure left tens of thousands stranded on the street and ignited a whirlwind chain of events that included the burning of several subway stations later that night. A one-week military curfew was established the next day, which in turn backfired as massive protests against both the fare hike and the curfew expanded into major socio-economic demands.[3]

These protests were a wake-up call. "*Chile despertó* (Chile Woke Up)" became a popular slogan against an economic system that drastically eroded the middle class and sent the poor into misery over the last forty years. Piñera's swift appeal to the military, as well as the restriction of public circulation and meetings, were violent *déjà vus* of the Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990) and massively

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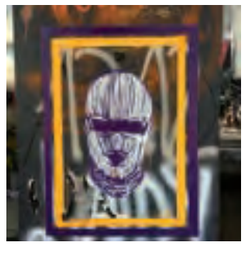

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F Never Again in $hile. Photo by @murodespierto, 2020. The protests centered on the savage neoliberalism that drove a huge wedge between rich and poor, making Chile into the country with the highest class disparity in Latin America.

G Let's Not Fall Asleep. Photo by @celeste_olalquiaga, 2019. The protests were considered a wake-up call for Chile after forty years of submission to the neoliberal system. *Chile despertó* (Chile Woke Up) became a popular slogan.

H Photo by @celeste_olalquiaga, 2019. Piranha is a nickname for Piñera's voracity.

I *Matapacos* (copkiller). Photo by @celeste_olalquiaga, 2019. The *matapacos* became a sacred emblem of street fighters.

J Anti-cops. Art by @violeta_delfin. Photo by @celeste_olalquiaga, 2019. Hello Kitty and an anti-cop kitty holding a Molotov bomb unite in street fight.

K Suicide City. Art by @aallaan.n. Photo by @celeste_olalquiaga, 2019. @aallaan.n has an ongoing series of crying kitties that go from sad to furious in a wide range of styles and covering a large swath of the city to the south of Plaza Dignidad.

L Kill your Inner Cop. Photo by @celeste_olalquiaga, 2019. Spanish distinguishes between male and female nouns, privileging the male noun as universal. There is a huge backlash against this by using X, @, or E to break away from these binary conventions.

M Piñera You're Lost (above) and Assassin State (below). Photo by @murodespierto, 2019. As the March 8 marches grew closer and the Las Tesis hymn resonated on the streets, images of female protesters—here banging pots and covered against teargas—began to multiply.

N Hooded protester. Photo by @murodespierto, 2020. Hoods (*capuchas*) became a symbol of protesters, who used them to protect their identities and cover themselves from teargas. The design here is a reference to Chilean indigenous peoples who painted their bodies with geometric designs. Many graffiti were "framed" to indicate their artistic character for a State and a society that disqualifies them as vandalism.

repudiated by both young protesters and older generations. As the opposition formed an emergency coalition with the government to call an October 2019 plebiscite for a new constitution (one of the main popular demands), the voice of the street denounced backstage political agreements; the government's consistent dismissal and quick makeovers of urgent social needs; and an ongoing and brutal repression against peaceful protesters.[4] The plebiscite, finally held in April 2020, was a tremendous success for the protest movement, as 80% of the voters approved the writing of a new Constitution, leaving the government and those who support it as an outdated minority.

At the onset of the protests, barricades were set up and statues of colonial heroes decapitated and defaced as waves of violence, both unofficial and official, hit urban areas for several days in a row. In downtown Santiago, graffiti popped up like mushrooms, denouncing governmental figures—mainly Piñera and his cousin Andrés Chadwick, the now-constitutionally ousted head of the Interior Department—for corruption and human rights abuses. Past political icons, in particular the overthrown Socialist President Salvador Allende (1970–1973) and Camilo Catrillanca (a *Mapuche*, or native Chilean, leader murdered in 2018 by the national police) reappeared as martyrs. As police repression intensified, stencils and posters with faces of mutilated, assaulted, and dead youngsters created a dark album of the protesters' daily struggle. The memory of the military dictatorship, only half-buried in this country's collective psyche, came out with full force, denouncing the well-known relationship between Pinochet and Piñera in overlapping terms: there was Pinochet or *Pinocho* (the liar) alongside Piñera or *piranha* (the voracious).

Along with these recurrent political figures, a lore of popular characters appeared, most prominently Negro Matapacos, a black stray dog that became famous in the 2010s for running with protesters and barking only at cops (*pacos*), earning the fame of being a "black copkiller," although apparently he only bit one officer and died of old age. Elevated to the category of saint—"the saint of protesters and street dogs"—Negro Matapacos first reappeared on walls and then on t-shirts, stickers, scarves, and other protester items, contributing to a street vendor market of food, beverages, hats, gas masks, goggles (the last two for protection from tear gas and rubber bullets), and lasers (to take down police drones) which flourished along the protests.

Less well-known but equally fierce is the warrior Hello Kitty that showed up mainly in Barrio Bellavista, a former artistic hub that became a restaurant and tourist spot. This *antiyuta* kitty (*yuta* is slang for the police force) raises her fist angrily, looking at spectators straight in the eye as she stands up for women's rights, and sits over burning vehicles. Simultaneously, a crying version of the pink feline appeared along the walls of central and southwestern Santiago, showing varying degrees of sadness, anger, and frustration. Uniting the ubiquitous street tradition of cat graffiti with the feminist demand for equal rights in a country where divorce became legal as late as 2004 and abortion, punishable as a crime until 2013, is possible only in cases of rape, danger to the mother, or non-viability of the fetus, Hello Kitty was rewritten as a fighter in Santiago. Feminism has been gaining substantial traction in this country, where last year the March 8 Women's Day demonstrations almost reached two million.[5] The 2019 street performance of Las Tesis (The Theses), an art collective that staged *Un violador en tu camino* (*A Rapist in Your Path*) to world-wide acclaim and reenactment in many languages, states it openly:

> Patriarchy is a judge
> that judges us for being born,
> and our punishment
> is the violence you don't see.
>
> Patriarchy is a judge
> that judges us for being born,
> and our punishment
> is the violence you now see.
> It's femicide,
> Impunity for my killer.
> It's disappearance.
> It's rape.
>
> And it's not my fault, nor where I was, nor what I wore (4×)
>
> The rapist was you
> The rapist is you.
> It's policemen,
> Judges,
> The state,
> The president.
>
> The oppressive state is a rapist man (4×)
>
> The rapist was you
> The rapist is you.

Stray dogs and warrior cats may seem unlikely protest emblems, but the former are a staple of Santiago's streets (people often knit sweaters for these pooches in the winter), and the latter are a universal symbol of independence which several Latin American artists have made popular on walls.[6] With their usual creativity and wit, some artists have taken to "framing" political graffiti so that they are recognized as art, an action that highlights the importance of preserving the visual testimonies, which many still consider acts of vandalism instead of manifestations of popular discontent.

The conflation between protests and acts of random or intentional violence also happens with the *primera línea*, the first line of protesters who clash with the police. Called *encapuchados* for covering their heads and faces with hoods or *capuchas*, they are stigmatized as *lumpen* (literally!) even though many are high school and university students. Chilean mainstream media promote this conflation by blending the *encapuchados* with the looters that use the marches to violently destroy and steal public and private property, which damages the protesters' image. Yet distinction is fundamental, as these barriers, or human walls, have often shielded pacific

O

P

Q

O No Justice No Peace. Photo by @murodespierto, 2020. An *encapuchado* (hooded protester) lights a Molotov bomb at night. The "No + AFP" flyer refers to the privately held public pensions that make enormous profits while keeping the pensions under $400/month.

P To the Barricades. Photo by @murodespierto, 2020. An *encapuchado* holding a Mapu che flag and a Molotov bomb.

Q The Street Doesn't Lie. Photo by @murodespierto, 2019.

protesters from the ongoing police attacks, and are as self-directed as the graffiti which accompany, portray, and explain the street struggle. The disproportionate use of force between an armed-to-the-teeth police force and a first line that confronts them with rocks and homemade Molotov bombs is one of the thorniest issues facing the Chilean opposition. Many of these kids have been imprisoned without legal recourse for over a year, while the Carabineros continue to hurt and maim without any penalties and at an all-time approval record of 13% (Piñera is barely at 8% as of this text's writing).

There are many kinds of streets and walls in the extremely segregated city of Santiago. Some streets are just express lanes for business and luxury neighborhoods, others are unpaved roads where poverty is brushed aside from public view, literal dead-ends that belie the glaring image of the Chilean neoliberal "miracle" that the crisis forcefully exposed. This is the jist of "El baile de los que sobran" ("The Dance of Those Who Are Leftover"), the 1986 hit song by the Chilean rock band Los Prisioneros (The Prisoners) that became a hymn against inequality during the dictatorship:

> Join the dance, of those who are left over
> Nobody will miss us / Nobody really wanted to help
> […]
> Hey, I know some stories / about the future
> Hey, when I learned them / times were safer
> Under the shoes / mud and cement
> The future is none / Of the promised in the 12 games
> Others were taught / secrets that you weren't
> Others were given that thing called education
> They asked for effort, they asked for dedication
> And what for?
> To end up dancing and kicking rocks

It is now being sung again by three different generations of protesters.

Street barricades are raised to break the city's flow. They disrupt daily life and business as usual in order to bring attention to fundamental inequities, just as strikes do. Street barriers also go up to resist and confront a police force that has systematically abused human rights in Chile's urban centers since October 20, 2019. Rather than recognize these abuses, the Chilean government has upped the ante by issuing an anti-barricade law that went into effect in January 2020. To no avail: barricades will continue in the long process that awaits Chileans, which after the public approval of a new constitution, still has to elect the people who will write it and then go to a second plebiscite to approve the final version. No one knows where this process will lead and how many forms and shapes it will take along the way. For many, a new Chile will rise from the ashes of the old one. For others, this new Chile is the end of the world as they knew it, and they will do everything to stop it from happening. But the testimony being left on the monuments and walls must be salvaged as part of this unique moment in Chile's history, just as it did in ancient times, leaving a major document for the evolution of Classic Latin into Romance languages. In contemporary streets, graffiti help turn *locus*, place, into *logos*, word—that is, into a body that, now more than ever, needs to be valued as part of a non-digital human reality.

Notes

1 All translations are mine unless otherwise stated. Thanks to the many graffiti artists whose work I show and to Instagram user @murodespierto, who kindly allowed me to use her photos for this piece.

2 Zurita first published the poem in 1994 and then added a few verses for the 2018 version. For more information about the festival and the street artists, see https://www.elmostrador.cl/cultura/2018/10/18/los-versos-de-raul-zurita-y-los-murales-disruptivos-en-el-rio-mapocho/.

3 The burning of the subway stations remains a mystery over one year later. Six were fully burned down, fourteen partially so, and another fifty-six stations from the 136 total were damaged. There are many claims that the government caused in a botched attempt to preempt the student protests.

4 As of January 31, 2020, there were twenty-six people dead and 3,746 wounded, including 427 with ocular lesions, 192 claims of sexual abuse, and 418 claims of torture and inhuman abuse. For more information, see the Chilean National Institute for Human Rights' 2019 annual report, available online here: www.indh.cl. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this institution's 2020 report focused on human rights and pandemic management, so no official figures for the protests since September 2020 are available as of January 16, 2021. The 2019–2020 human rights crisis in Chile was denounced by several international agencies, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the UN's Child Rights Committee.

5 This is the estimate by the organizer Coordinadora 8M, a figure which was reduced to 10% by the police's count during the 2019 protests.

6 During the protests I started a photographic record of feline *rayados*, mostly political, which are documented on the Instagram account @miauguerrilla. An independent publication under that name appeared in Santiago in January 2021.

Will Henry

Speaking in Tongues

Will Henry's recent paintings layer old and new histories, placing them in dialogue to produce a new aesthetic language. On the one hand, their backgrounds evoke a legacy of nineteenth-century landscape painting and the virtuosity it entails. On the other, an overlay of patterns, marks, and smears in contrasting colors offers a critique of the former tradition through their pop-like material immediacy. An image of the contemporary emerges in the uncanny occupation of these two identities in the singular space of the canvas.

—Ajay Manthripragada

95 → *Nightlite*, 2019
Oil on linen
24 × 30 in.

96 → *Party Line*, 2018–2020
Oil on canvas and linen
59 × 108 in. (2 parts: 59 × 36 in. and 72 × 36 in.)

97 → *Psychic Carwash*, 2020
Oil on canvas
60 × 48 in.

Me Waxing (detail), 1985, oil on canvas, 31 × 27 in.

To Be a Vessel for the Invisible

Ana Tuazon

Lynn Randolph's deeply personal and surreal artwork uses metaphor as a tool for spiritual healing.

"Mine is a metaphoric world," Lynn Randolph says, "a chance to reinvent reality in ways that express values and beliefs, through the power of love, empathy, and desire for the common good." The longtime Houston artist was telling me about her most recent body of work, a series of supernatural paintings titled *Unmoored* that began to emerge after the election of Donald Trump in 2016. It wasn't the first time that Randolph had made work in response to a Republican presidency: In 2004, her painting *The Coronation of Saint George*—a nod to late Medieval art depicting George W. Bush as an (un)holy icon surrounded by winged, clawed versions of his political allies—was featured on the cover of *The Nation* during the Republican National Convention. That work's satirical playfulness is tempered by a small but instantly recognizable image that defined the Bush years—an Abu Ghraib prisoner being tortured. It's a detail that contains the brutal directness of some of Randolph's other paintings on death, war, and human trafficking, though such dark realities lie far from the universe of *Unmoored*. Here, human figures are shown adrift in the cosmos, communing with mysterious specters on a backdrop of star-studded nebulas and galaxies.

Lynn Randolph was born in 1938 in New York and raised in the Gulf Coast refinery town of Port Arthur. From an early age, she wanted to escape Port Arthur's cultural homogeny and "mutate" into a new kind of person, which led her to the University of Texas at Austin. Though the city granted her the new, life-giving freedom she had been after, Randolph felt hindered by UT's art department. "There was an art school style, and I refused to paint like that," she explains to me during a phone call. "Abstract expressionism dominated everything. It meant nothing to me." Like many women artists of her generation, she rejected a formalist mold and crafted her own style of expression over the years that followed.

Randolph married while still a student and moved to Houston in 1963 when her husband found work here. Viewed as a wife and mother first, many did not take her work seriously. A notable exception was Jim Harithas, who directed the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston during the mid-1970s and became a champion for the city's emerging artists. Harithas conducted studio visits with Randolph, included her in her first museum group show, and even introduced her to the feminist art and politics journal *Heresies*. Harithas, Menil Foundation curator Walter Hopps, and influential feminist critic and curator Lucy Lippard all helped Randolph's work gain more exposure with audiences outside of Houston in the 1970s and '80s. Lippard included her in *Acts of Faith: Politics and the Spirit*, a 1988 exhibition at Cleveland State University, with a number of buzzed-about '80s artists including Julie Ault, Jimmie Durham, Andres Serrano, and Martin Wong.

Establishing herself outside of Houston was always an uphill battle, as it was for many artists outside of the New York circuit pre-Internet (and still is). Randolph is critical of the ways so-called "regional" artists are ignored, or pigeonholed, by the institutional art world. She put her energy into building local support for women artists as a member and, eventually, the president of the Houston chapter of the Women's Caucus for the Arts (WCA). The caucus got its start in early 1978 after the landmark National Women's Conference (and with it, the national chapter of the WCA) came to Houston. The conference, with tens of thousands in attendance, was considered a historic moment for American feminism generally, but it particularly resonated with women in its host city. Randolph describes the collective spirit that emerged in the Women's Caucus as "one of the most powerful experiences of my life," adding, "I went from total isolation to going to meetings, lobbying for shows, putting panels together, [...] all the things that are so difficult to do if you're just sitting isolated."

The Houston WCA, which local historian Pete Gershon labels "the conscience of the Houston art community" during its time, is one of likely several instances of feminist organizing in the U.S. that transformed the conditions of a regional art scene and empowered individual women artists while remaining mostly unknown within accounts of the larger feminist art movement. Randolph's work has long dealt with the themes associated with more recognizable names in feminist art—like the spiritual/sexual ecstasy in Carolee Schneeman's work or Nancy Spero's depiction of the horrors of war and violence against women. Randolph's formal approach was, for a time, not aligned with contemporary trends. Feminist artists tended to avoid painting in favor of new experimental forms, while a male-dominated "contemporary realist" movement focused on domestic scenes and figure studies. Randolph's self-labeled style, "metaphoric realism," developed through years of experimentation with figurative painting and her research into pre-modern styles of visual allegory. Her figurative rendering blends the immediate recognizability of realism with deeply personal, symbolic, and surreal interventions into lifelike images, often showing the human body merging with or in relationship to

Elsewhere in the Tadpole Nebula, 2018, oil on canvas, 46 × 58 in. Photo by ShauLin Hon.

The Coronation of Saint George, 2004, oil on canvas, 48 × 36 in.

Lynn Randolph in her studio, 2020. Photo by ShauLin Hon.

Cyborg, 1989, oil on canvas, 36 × 26 in.

The Laboratory, or The Passion of OncoMouse, 1991, oil on board, 10 × 7 in.

non-human beings, and often using herself as a subject in the work.

To younger generations of artists, self-constructing a visual language and prizing personal expressions of meaning over insular ideals of "taste" and art historical progress is common convention, but this wasn't always the case. Consider the 1978 New Museum show *Bad Painting* curated by Marcia Tucker, which featured painters who "reject traditional concepts of draftsmanship in favor of personal styles of figuration." The name was meant to be tongue-in-cheek, of course, but some critics didn't see the irony. In more recent years, this kind of painting has ascended so noticeably that it's now being criticized as a market-driven trend. The rising popularity of figurative painting surely accompanies deeper shifts that are occurring in the collective unconsciousness of artists: the desire to turn inwards, to tell stories and construct myths, to reveal visions of other worlds. This attitude, a long-held one for Randolph, considers the canvas as a window into that story rather than a plane of pure aesthetics.

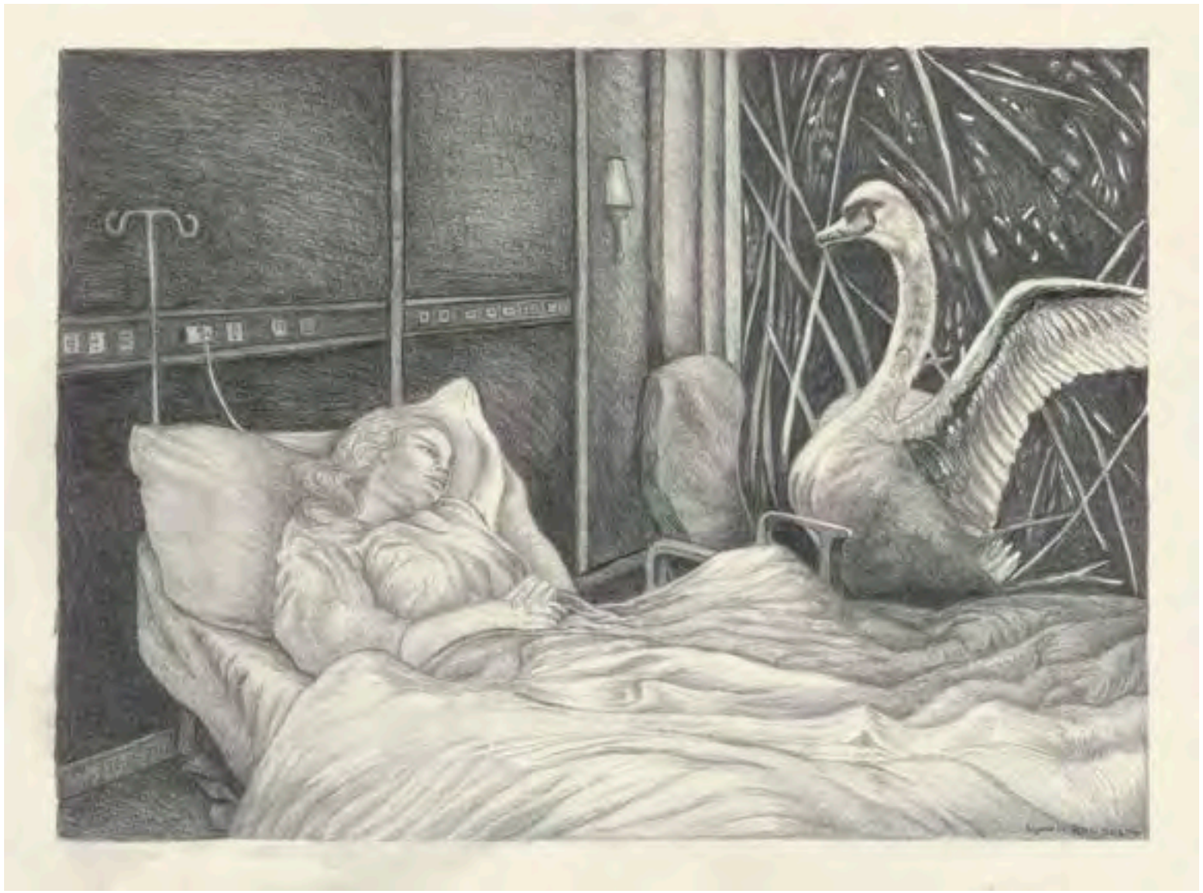
In the 1990s, Randolph's correspondence with the feminist theorist Donna Haraway became a years-long exchange that significantly influenced the work of both women. After hearing Haraway speak at Rice University, a friend gave Randolph a copy of her newly published essay "A Cyborg Manifesto." Randolph decided to create a cyborg painting and send a slide image to Haraway, who was so taken by the work that she phoned Randolph to ask if she could put it on the cover of her forthcoming book *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, which expanded on the central ideas of her manifesto and soon became an instant classic in feminist and posthumanist studies. Randolph's painting imagines its titular, mythical subject, depicted at first glance as a woman typing on a keyboard. But computer circuitry is housed within the woman's body and embedded in the surrounding landscape, blurring the boundaries between human, nature, and machine, suggesting, as Haraway theorized, "a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves."

During their six-year collaboration, Randolph illustrated concepts from essays and manuscripts Haraway sent, most extensively for a book on feminism and technoscience titled *Modest_ Witness@Second_ Millennium.FemaleMan©_ Meets_ OncoMouse*™. Within this project, Randolph can't be reduced to an illustrator in the traditional sense—it would be more accurate to think of her as a kind of visual translator, one whose interpretations ultimately shaped the evolution of her source text. Her painting *The Laboratory, or The Passion of Onco-Mouse* informed Haraway's own thoughts on the laboratory mouse (the first patented mammal) and she referenced Randolph's works in her lectures, projecting images for the audience. In letters to Randolph, Haraway described their collaboration as "dialogic visual and verbal troping," a "splicing" of ideas, and a "braided argument." In a talk Randolph gave on their work together, she regards their dialogue as "feminist" rather than "Socratic," a dance that was only possible in the absence of a dominant agenda: "Neither dancer led nor followed. There was no set choreography." Though no longer active, their exchange offers a rare example of how the production of art and the production of knowledge might mirror one another, resisting the usual binaries and hierarchies that tend to isolate artistic disciplines from scientific ones.

In more recent years, another kind of unconventional collaboration has defined Randolph's life and practice. Through a long-term artist residency in the MD Anderson Cancer Center's palliative care unit, she has created art in collaboration with terminally ill patients. Randolph's work at MD Anderson is sponsored by a nonprofit organization called Collage: The Art for Cancer Network, but the role she has taken on is entirely of her own invention. She sees it as a way to extend the therapeutic nature of her image-making to seriously ill patients. "My job is to go into those rooms, very gently and soft-spokenly," she explains, "and turn myself over to whoever that sacred person is." She will draw whatever a patient asks her to draw, and while the subject matter might often be predictable ("You don't know how many times I've had to draw Jesus," she tells me), she is grateful for these experiences and sees them as spiritual lessons. One time a patient requested she draw Mickey Mouse in the arms of an angel. "It would have meaning for no one but her," Randolph suspects. For that patient, though, the Disney character was a very dear imaginary friend. Randolph understands how real these images are for a person nearing the end of life, and in this work intends "to be a vessel for what is invisible, and to try to make that visible for them in a meaningful way." Sometimes she takes photos of the drawings she creates with patients and later refers back to them for inspiration to add to her series *Between Worlds,* which features some of her most transcendent work. She hopes to publish a book about this project, and wonders if it could even be considered a new form of art.

Randolph thinks of drawing or painting like this as creating a "soul map," which she defines as a guide beyond one's everyday experience and waking comprehension. It's not necessarily a means to escape reality, but to reinvent it in one's unconscious—a form of spiritual art therapy, if you will, to contend with the darkness of the current moment. We often returned to that topic during our phone conversations, during which Randolph lamented "the horror of the greedy, materialistic world of extreme narcissism that we're currently living in." But she also

Annunciation of the Second Coming, 1995, oil on canvas, 58×46 in.



Her Soul's Visit, 2015, graphite on paper, 16 × 22 in. Photo by ShauLin Hon.

called the Black Lives Matter movement "one of the most hopeful events I've witnessed in a long time," saying she is certain it will transform our future. "We need the imagination, more than we need any other tool right now," Randolph tells me, "it is a sense organ for perceiving the unknown."

Randolph is not alone in her belief that we are living through a dark age. She didn't make a satirical painting with Donald Trump as a subject, as she had with Bush, because she viewed Trump as a darker, more serious sign of societal illness. But even Trump's exit from office can't heal the brokenness of the deeply divided nation that came into view during his term, which in its final defining moment allowed the COVID-19 crisis to readily expose the cruelty of American capitalism. Some wonder how (or if) art can respond to such dire and unprecedented instability. For Randolph, a simple answer has arrived: turn your art practice into your spiritual practice and your healing practice, and find a way to help others heal, too. Paintings are soul maps, or perhaps a tool for astral projection, becoming, she tells me, "a way to get elsewhere, to begin something new—a new world." At the start of our first conversation, she shared an artist statement with me that touched on the ideas behind her recent series, but she read this with the conviction of someone issuing a call to action, and so it became that, too. "When the fabric of our institutions is torn and shredded, and we've become unmoored," she began, "I believe we must call upon our imaginations to construct new architectures of consciousness."

Protesters at City Hall during the George Floyd protest on June 2, 2020. Photo by Mark Felix.

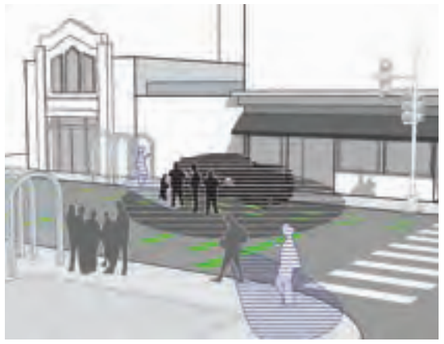
Protest

Inclusion
Exclusion

Return

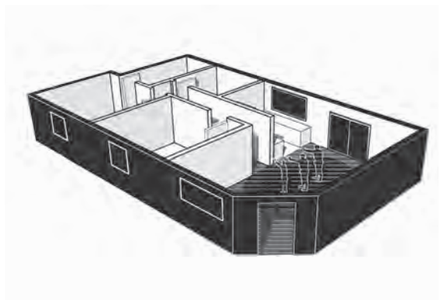
Zoe Middleton and
Libby Viera-Bland

After the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, the City of Houston, like the rest of the nation, was yet again confronted with a discussion of Black humanity and public space. Floyd, who grew up in the Third Ward, was murdered in the public right-of-way, on the asphalt of the bicycle lane at East 38th Street and Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis. He was removed from the privacy of his vehicle and forced into the public realm, where officer Derek Chauvin of the Minneapolis Police Department kneeled on his neck for eight minutes, forty-six seconds. As the murder occurred, three other officers surrounded the two men, attempting to block the violence from view. The act occurred in public space. It quickly became yet another example of how a neutral space can be transformed to a place of violence and exclusion based on the will of those in power. An everyday place can terrifyingly become a place where one is stripped of power, agency, breath, and life in less than ten minutes.



The public right-of-way in Minneapolis where George Floyd was murdered.

While Floyd was executed in public, Breonna Taylor was murdered by police in the assumed privacy of her home. In both cases, Black bodies were stripped of their humanity with blatant disregard for the value of their lives. Videos of Floyd's murder entered the incident into public imagination. While video footage made its voyeurism easier by acting as a digital lynching postcard, Taylor's murder did not receive the same level of attention. There are several possible reasons why mourners and protesters had to work hard to bring attention to her killing. First among them is the pervasive *misogynoir*[1] of American society, and the second is the privacy of the space in which she was killed. She was murdered in her bedroom when a group of Louisville police officers forced their way into her home in the middle of the night, despite having no evidence to suggest that she would be a threat. The privacy in which Taylor was killed—from bullets that passed through a wall—meant her murder lacked the imagery that would enable the nation to respond to direct pictures of this violence. Instead, the movement that seeks justice for her murder has relied on photos and drawings of her as a living and vibrant person with a life worth living—a story about a Black woman that is impossible for many Americans to sympathize with, even without the facts of her murder.



Breonna Taylor's apartment in Louisville where she was murdered.

Understanding how a space is designed to function is too static a frame of analysis for the current moment. The agency of Black humanity in both public and private space must be understood as a relationship that is in constant contention with those who claim power over Black bodies.

In Houston, the transformation of neutral spaces and places of inclusion into spaces of exclusion and oppression has been particularly pronounced during times of protest. The sixty-thousand person protest last summer in response to George Floyd's murder and the subsequent mass arrests of protesters are examples of how public space is transformed into an exclusionary zone of control. This and earlier protests and spatial disputes throughout the city further demonstrate the fraught relationship between Black bodies and civic space in Houston.

Spaces of Protest

2014: Mike Brown protests at the Galleria

On August 9, 2014, Michael Brown Jr., an 18-year-old Black man, was killed by Darren Wilson, an armed police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, just outside of St. Louis. Brown's murder, like Floyd's six years later, resulted in days of protests around the nation. Members of the group now known as Black Lives Matter Houston (BLM HOU) traveled to Ferguson to participate in direct actions there.

At that time, organizers in Houston didn't target local symbols of state power. Instead they turned their attention to the hyper-capitalist, hyper-visible space of the Galleria, which was the site of two marches. Unlike many parts of Houston, Uptown has well-maintained wide sidewalks for protestors to move along and the mall itself is located just off I-610. Secunda Joseph, a local organizer, traces the beginning of her organizing work to a march here. She notes that one difference between this march and other actions that have taken place around the Galleria was that protesters activated the sidewalks usually reserved for ferrying shoppers, nearby office workers, and Galleria employees to and from their cars. The group then marched inside the mall during the winter holiday rush to perform chants and stage a die-in.

Reflecting on this action, Cassandra Jones with BLMHTX, a mutual aid coalition, shared: "I think about that time and then this last protest in the city, with cops intentionally kettling folks in that downtown area and an escalation of aggression on the side of police officers in the city in response to protest. I feel like now since that last protest there are physical and real reasons why I don't feel safe going to a protest in the city of Houston." Despite the lack of arrests, the tactics used have discouraged her from attending direct actions.

2016: White Lives Matter at the Third Ward NAACP

Less than two years later, as the 2016 presidential election was in full swing, in late summer a white supremacist group calling itself "White Lives Matter" protested outside the Houston branch of the NAACP in the Third Ward, a neighborhood that has been majority Black for two generations. The protesters specifically mentioned urban space in speaking to the press, folding the preservation of cities into their cause. One of the attendees told the *Houston Chronicle* that they "came out here specifically today to protest against the NAACP and their failure in speaking out against the atrocities that organizations like Black Lives Matter and other pro-Black organizations have caused the attack and killing of white police officers, the burning down of cities and things of that nature."[2] Over the course of an afternoon the action attracted counter-protesters as well as police on horseback and the use of barricades.[3] By the close of the action, national attention had been garnered on media and counter-protesters outnumbered the white supremacists. Joseph, who attended both the Mike Brown protest and the NAACP counter-protests, stated that she felt police were not there to protect counter-protesters or the property so much as to observe counter-protesters for signs of agitation, a role evidenced by the fact that officers at the scene frequently stood towards counter-protesters, whose movements were also restricted by barricades.

The NAACP headquarters in the Third Ward where protests and counter-protests took place in 2016.

2020: George Floyd protests, including Discovery Green

There were many actions including marches and vigils across Houston, George Floyd's hometown, to protest police brutality and to honor his memory. Many protesters we interviewed attended multiple marches over the days leading up to and after his funeral. Notably, in interviews, they indicated which protests they were discussing not by date, but by the public space from which the protest began (e.g. "the one at Emancipation Park").

On the afternoon of Tuesday, June 2, 2020, approximately sixty-thousand Texans gathered to march from Discovery Green to City Hall along Walker Street. One protester, Neil Goldberg-Aquino, noted that while the urban realm felt greatly expanded as thousands of people gathered together in the street with no vehicular traffic, what he felt most acutely was "restriction," as the protest route was tightly confined and controlled by the police. He also noted that while he felt very connected to the other protesters there was also an awareness of the dangers of the COVID-19 virus that forced protesters to keep their distance from one another as much as the crowd permitted.

As the protest carried on at Discovery Green, another protester, Felix Kapoor, sensing the changing mood of the police as the event continued, noted that "it was really strange to [him] that they allowed all of that [protester] traffic to happen, because there was no curfew." Meaning: An end time for the action wasn't set by local officials before the protest began. At that point Houston was the country's largest city without a curfew in place. As the event continued, Kapoor noted that protesters were not given instructions to clear the streets or vacate the park until 6:30 p.m., when there was suddenly an announcement made that the protest was officially considered a "riot" from that point forward.

As the night continued, the controlled nature of the "expanded" space of the vehicle-free streets became more evident. Behind the George R. Brown Convention Center, Chris González noted that dozens of police officers who had been waiting in parking lots along Gray Street when he arrived began funneling protesters away from the convention center by walking in formation and creating blockades with police vehicles. At this point, González recorded videos of tear gas canisters being shot at protesters at least twice. At the corner of Chartres and Dallas Streets, he noticed that the police were using their batons to hit and push protesters in an attempt to box people into private parking lots to make it easier to detain and arrest them—a Houston variation on the practice called "kettling."

Yasmeen Dávila was one of the protesters who was who arrested through this method of crowd control. They described the rapidly changing directives from a nearby officer who initially directed them to not stand on the streets, and then to not stand on the side-walks, and then to not stand on the grass next to the sidewalks—until eventually they and other protesters were pressed into a fenced-in parking lot where they either had to jump the fence or be detained by police. As the sun set, the expansive public realm where a community formed to protest police brutality was quickly deflated to a slim margin against a chain-link fence. As those who were arrested were corralled on buses to be taken to jail, it also became clear that several people had just been walking or biking past the downtown area without involvement in the protest—but had been detained all the same.

Spaces of Inclusion and Exclusion

Inclusive spaces

In discussing Black spaces, the tenuousness of the concept itself must be acknowledged. Black communities across the diaspora have been displaced and separated for many reasons: the slave trade, the Great Migration, urban renewal, mass incarceration, and gentrification. The policing of Black bodies results in the erasure of Black humanity and memories; it dissolves the knowledge that is otherwise built and supported through community.

Jaison Oliver, a digital activist and social griot, creates Black spaces that combine the digital and the physical. He makes space—or, more aptly, "belonging"—for Black Houstonians. Oliver is interested in curating and building spaces for people who would not normally meet or have access to Black futurist thinking. "We've got so many people in this city who are thinking about or are interested in speculative ideas around Blackness but who don't have a place to come together because Houston is so siloed," he says. "How do we create a space for this?"

Across his various events, Oliver looks to create spaces to which participants long to return and can revisit without using their physical bodies. When those events are in person and organized by Oliver or other members of the BLMHTX collective, they usually take place at venues that, public or private, are previously vetted and known to be Black-owned

Images and messages from protesters, assembled by the authors.

or Black-friendly. Collective members were quick to point out though that when they are invited to speak, the spaces and institutions they are invited into are not always welcoming by design, regardless of if an ally or comrade extends the invitation.

When discussing the inner loop spaces of Rice University, Fourth Ward (now Midtown), and Third Ward, Joseph , the organizer, notes that

> there are so many spaces that are unwelcoming, but you get used to moving through it when you have to. For example, we've spoken in classrooms at Rice a lot. Black and brown scholars and students have brought us in and are active, but it's not a place that's welcoming to Black folks. You need a credit card and your credit card needs money on it just to park. It's hard when you get lost on that campus.

Another collective member noted that many of the spaces that they travel between (often by car) are walking distance from one another, if not walkable. But once spaces that have experienced or are experiencing gentrification are entered, "you barely see the remnants of Black and brown folks. The more they build, the more other people shrink."

Exclusionary Spaces

BLMHTX members note that the more formal the space is, the greater the likelihood that it will be unwelcoming. While formal in its campus plan and high in social capital, Rice University's exclusion of Black folks is notable when compared to other seemingly public spaces in Houston. While Houston's population was estimated to be nearly 23% Black in 2019, in the fall of that same year, 9% of Rice's population identified as Black.[4]

Houston's strong-mayor style of government along with a cultural bias towards closed-door, pro-market policymaking has a long history. Formal, public-facing proceedings including marches sanctioned by local government and, more mundanely, public comment sessions are controlled for tone as much as they are for substance. As such, spaces that are intended to be inclusionary frequently silence Black voices through displays of masculine defensiveness, jargon, and logistical hurdles.

Even places that are informally understood as Black can be litigated into exclusionary spaces. In 2015, city officials initiated an injunction in civil court to ban ninety-two people from entering the Southlawn region of Third Ward with no input from the community.[5] This action, which largely targeted Black men, would have removed these community members from their neighborhood while also marking them as undesirable for any community to which they might be forced to move. Many of the men who were served in the course of this civil proceeding had no known criminal activity and were being selected purely because of their proximity to an under-resourced community suffering from a high crime rate. Oliver recalls that, "[these men] were being labeled as gang members explicitly because of place—where they came from—and nothing else." When the decision was made public and shown to have little merit, the community successfully pressured the District Attorney to dismiss the suit.

Spaces of Return

In conversation, Jones, an activist with BLMHTX, addressed the future of her Black neighborhood in southeast Houston. She described the gap in knowledge and trust that white teachers whom she has worked with often have for Black students and their parents. The fantasy that poverty and Blackness are indelibly linked with abuse and violence isn't grounded in reality, but still the projected fear of white people is strong enough to have Black children removed from their homes or given permanent records. The white imagination of what Black bodies do in Black spaces doesn't leave room for the lived reality of Black people, so these actual Black bodies are under constant surveillance and attack. Black people who are trying to move about through the city are then forced to contend with whatever fantasy has superseded them in a particular space.

Conversely, Black people are forced to contend with the specter of displacement. In any Black community where new construction is occurring, people are constantly looking over their shoulder to figure out for whom these new resources are actually intended. Communities that have been redlined, starved for resources, or cut off from efficient transportation know that they are being actively erased from the city. Black people know that whe ever they venture outside of where the city's narrative comfortably has them situated, they are entering a space of psychospatial confrontation.

Notes

1 Queer Black feminist Moya Bailey coined the term *misogynoir* in 2010 to describe the intersectional misogyny and anti-Black racism that Black women experience.

2 Jessica Hamilton Young, Darla Guillen, "White Lives Matter group protests outside NAACP in Houston's Third Ward," *Chron.com*, August 21, 2016, updated January 30, 2018, https://www.chron.com/houston/article/White-Lives-Matter-group-protests-outside-NAACP-9176142.php.

3 John Nova Lomax, "Let's Talk About The White Lives Matter Protest Outside The Houston NAACP Office." *Texas Monthly*, August 23, 2016, https://www.texasmonthly.com/the-daily-post/lets-talk-about-the-white-lives-matter-protest-outside-of-the-houston-naacp-office/.

4 "QuickFacts, Houston city, Texas" United States Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/houstoncitytexas. "Enrollment Demographics," Office Institutional Research, Rice University, https://oir.rice.edu/students-scholars/enrollment/enrollment-demographics.

5 Cindy George, "Suspected gang members unfairly targeted in Southlawn lawsuit, lawyers charge," *Chron.com*, February 18, 2016, updated February 18, 2016, https://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Suspected-gang-members-unfairly-targeted-in-6841086.php.

Pragmatic Geometries

Wonne Ickx in Conversation with Heather Rowell

Wonne Ickx is a co-founder of Mexico City-based architecture practice PRODUCTORA. During the Spring 2020 semester, he was the Rice Architecture Cullinan Visiting Professor and taught a studio course titled Pyramid Schemes with Heather Rowell. Their conversation covers the internal operations of Ickx's office, his trajectory as an architect, and PRODUCTORA's collaboration with Kevin Daly Architects on the new headquarters for the Houston Endowment.

HR Your growth as a professional and an architect has been an international one. You've studied and worked around the world. You were born in Belgium, studied civil engineering and architecture in Ghent and Madrid before hopping continents and continuing urban studies in Guadalajara. You decided to establish a practice in Mexico City in 2006. For several years you operated a satellite office in California while teaching at UCLA. At the time of this interview, you and your family are based in Mexico City, but teaching and collaborations bring you to Houston and Los Angeles nearly every week. These three cities—Mexico City, Los Angeles, Houston—are distinct places, but one can draw many common threads between them. Could you speak to how dividing your time between these cities informs your work and your life?

WI I never wanted to be a sort of global travelling architect who's always on airplanes. In a certain way, we're not really a global firm in the sense that we've basically made all our projects and our careers in Mexico. We started out with very simple projects, like housing, houses, and remodels. Actually, it's only after eleven years of working together—and also after ten previous years of working myself—that we had our first small remodel in Los Angeles.

But it's a little bit of circumstance that made that happen. We moved to LA because of my wife, who works in contemporary art. We lived in LA for six and a half years. There's a really interesting history of exchange between Los Angeles and Mexico, especially around the time of the Case Study Houses and the writer Esther McCoy. Travelling back and forth, she exported Californian modernism to Mexico and promoted Mexican architects in California.

Now we're starting to work in Houston, which is also a bit of a coincidence. I was offered a teaching position here at the same time we engaged with Kevin Daly, a good friend and colleague from UCLA, to do the competition for the Houston Endowment. PRODUCTORA operates differently than a truly global office—we aren't constantly doing competitions in Seoul and Tokyo, for example. But of course we accept every opportunity to lecture abroad and we're happy if we're able to participate in a competition in Belgium. We still know our point of gravity is Mexico City, but also understand that our roots in Mexico City extend to Latin America, Houston, and Chicago as well.

HR Why did you decide to set up your practice in Mexico City?

WI Circumstance, again. After studying architecture and urbanism at the University of Ghent, I studied urban studies in Guadalajara, where I was reading and writing about the Latin American metropolis. Since then I've had very close ties with Mexico City and during my travels I met the friends that became my partners in PRODUCTORA. There are two Mexicans—Carlos Bedoya

Headquarters of Houston Endowment, Houston, TX, USA. Images from Design Development, November 2020.
Visualization: Courtesy of KDA and PRODUCTORA.

and Victor Jaime—and Abel Perles, from Argentina. I also met my wife in Mexico. It just happened. It's not like I left school in Belgium and said, "My next step is to move to Mexico and start an office with three partners in Mexico."

HR A consistent theme is that you adapt to the circumstances and the opportunities that you're given.

WI I think about architecture in the same way a little bit. We started an office sort of out of pragmatic need. The four of us were working independently and sharing an office, but we were constantly doing projects together and helping each other out. At a certain moment we said, "Let's call ourselves an office." I believe that that pragmatic outset, gave us strength over time. Ideologies and points of view change over time and if your partnership is based on sharing the same ideology, then changing your perspective can be problematic.

Then, after working together for a while, you start to share a common vocabulary, a common way of looking at things. You become something you never could have anticipated before, so there could never have been shared values as a starting point. That's nice because in one way or another our office is always grappling with what we really stand for and what PRODUCTORA really does. We generate a very specific type of architecture when the four of us work together. All four of us are simultaneously surprised and satisfied with the results as it is not something generated by a single person. Something extraordinary happens when architecture comes together as sovereign solution detached from our individual personalities.

HR PRODUCTORA was awarded by the Architectural League of New York with the Young Architect's Award in 2007 and the Emerging Voices award seven years ago. You have participated in biennales in Beijing, Venice, and Chicago six times over the span of eleven years. Yet even with a recognized portfolio spanning fourteen years, you're still referred to as an Emerging Voice in International Architecture. A "dog year" is seven years, but what is an "architect year"? How do you understand this slow drip toward notoriety or recognition as a firm?

WI This gets at the specifics of our profession, which is a complex one. It requires slow learning and growing. It's not uncommon to say that many recognized architects did their first building at a later age. It's very different than, for example, top models or ballerinas or sports people that peak in their career at 18 or 20. Actually, I always found it very comforting being an architect and to know that you're continually learning and that maybe you will make your first decent building ten years from now.

We're both practicing in a cultural moment of accelerated globalization that demands novelty in everything. We have to learn to accept the fact that we need to learn and mature and that some time might pass.

HR Right, some projects can take three years from the moment you're engaged as a firm, through design and construction drawings, until the project's complete—sometimes the process is even longer.

WI Sometimes young architects are annoyed by the fact that they can't land big projects. But I think it's logical. It's a slow profession in which you prepare yourself by doing smaller projects, building houses, and gaining trust of your patrons. I don't have a problem with it.

HR I know that teaching is important to you and your development as an architect. I also know that it's through teaching at UCLA that you developed your relationship with Kevin. Could you talk more about this overlap between office and academia? How does it affect the conversations you have in the office? And in the other direction, why is it important to remain active in the academic world?

WI My first reaction is that there's no connection between the office and our pursuits in academia because we run the office as a tight-knit group of four people, and our academic work is where

Headquarters of Houston Endowment, Houston, TX, USA. Images from Design Development, November 2020.
Visualization: Courtesy of KDA and PRODUCTORA.

we can pursue our interests as individuals. We invent our own studio briefs and explore certain personal obsessions. However, with the example of the Houston Endowment you just brought up, it shows that the opposite is true also.

You're right that I met Kevin through teaching at UCLA. For several years we taught core studios together in collaboration with other colleagues. I'm not drawn to Kevin because we make the same "type of work" or we have the same ideas of what architecture is about. But through doing things together—teaching, in this case—I knew that I could have an enriching and enjoyable dialogue with him. That's when a collaboration becomes really interesting.

Fleischmann House, Los Angeles, California, USA, 2017.
Photograph: Rory Gardiner.

As I've said, many of the buildings we produce at PRODUCTORA are collective efforts. They're produced outside all of us as individuals and they become something new. In retrospect, I'm happy to see that same thing is true for the building we did for the Houston Endowment. If you compare it to Kevin's work, I would say it's not really "a Kevin Daly Architects project," but it's also not really "a PRODUCTORA project." It's a proposal that came out of many months of discussion and work rather than from a pre-established idea of what architecture should be. So this feels very good. It's surprising. It's a result that we could not have anticipated.

HR That's interesting because my next question concerns how PRODUCTORA works. There is often a big idea—a formal intent that people recognize in the project. In some ways, when you work that way, it requires you to be precise and intentional as the project develops so that idea doesn't get watered down, and so that concentrated force you agreed upon at the beginning doesn't get lost along the way. How does that work when you're working with another firm? Maybe it gets back to you talking about how it's a surprise, or that there has to be some adaptability in the way the process evolves when you're working with another firm.

WI I've been thinking about it, and the reason why many of our projects are so driven by geometry at PRODUCTORA is because we have to find the tools that allow us to arrive at an agreement. When you draw a freehand curve, it's about personal expression. But when you design a geometric straitjacket for your project—one that's about rules and systems—the constraints are non-negotiable. The design premises then become a precise "descriptive" language allowing all to understand the rules that generate a building. These rules usually emerge after we do some initial sketches, test models, try outs, and failures. That process of emanation is interesting. I really like it. Again, it puts decision-making outside of your own persona and into an organizational system.

HR Let's talk about Houston. You're spending a lot of time here now between teaching and your involvement with the Houston Endowment. As you were working on the competition entry, what do you remember from visits to Houston that informed the concept?

WI I had visited Houston several times before the Houston Endowment competition, and I had been to Rice a few times for reviews too. It's never really clear how influence works, but today I understand how much of the Menil Collection and Houston itself we pushed into the Houston Endowment project. I think Kevin always grasped that aspect very well, as he lived in Houston for a long time. While we worked on the project he always understood the presence of the canonical architecture of Houston, but also the oak tree canopies of Rice's campus, for example. During the competition's design process he did several things very consciously; while I understood them intuitively at the time. Now I'm starting to discover them in retrospect.

HR That's interesting because when I saw the competition entry it was exciting, new, and fresh to the Houston architectural landscape but at the same time it's familiar. There's something about it that seems comfortable for Houstonians.

WI I believe you could say that about everything we do at PRODUCTORA. I'm super interested in making buildings with

that kind of quality, such that there's a provocative aspect of a building for those who like to read between the lines, but for people who are just passing by, it feels very common and natural to use this building. Several projects that we've done share that quality. For example, the remodel we did in Los Angeles that reads like a basic LA bungalow from the street and the performance hall we did in Teopanzolco, which feels like a sturdy, geometric mass much like the neighboring archeological site.

Teopanzolco Cultural Center, Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico, 2017.
Photograph: Jaime Navarro.

HR How did the Houston Endowment competition process work? What can Houstonians expect from this new addition to the city?

WI It was a well-organized competition. It was for a client that required new headquarters, and that had a very clear idea of why they wanted it. They also understood that they would not be able to choose the right architect without outside help, so they went to a professional team in London, Malcolm Reading Consultants, to operate the competition. It has been a pleasure to work on the competition first and now on the development of the building. The second question about what Houstonians can expect from the building is much more difficult.

HR Maybe a better way to phrase the question is: What do you have planned for us? What can you tell us about your winning entry and what you want to achieve with it?

WI We understand that although we are working for a private client, our building must add value to the public realm. That has been the leading premise of our competition entry. During the first stage we are designing now, we look to resolve everything on our site (the building, parking, landscape), but always visualizing and planning towards a future connection to the larger park. Then, in dialogue with the city, we will weave that project together with the infrastructure of the park, which is basically our goal. It's not always so easy; you don't just erase the line between public and private. But we believe that divisions between the public and private land in Spotts Park can be mediated through architectural operations.

HR It's very smart that you recognized the blurring of those boundaries. Maybe that's why your entry won.

WI It's the same condition that the Houston Endowment embraces in its daily operation. In the end, the Endowment is a private institution, but it's so intimately related to public life in Houston. It has the same complex public/private relation as the building site has with the city in terms of land use. We are looking for a soft and two-sided relationship between the private property and the public areas of Spotts Park. This openness also relates to the inside of the building. We're not only blurring the boundaries between public and private, but also the boundaries between specific parts of the building. This has been the guiding principle for the project.

Leonid Furmansky

Oil Towers

“There’s something beautiful about an empty city,” Furmansky wrote to me recently. In the photographs included here, part of a larger portfolio, downtown Houston appears illuminated but uninhabited. The allure of these flat, layered scenes is cut with their eeriness. The quiet is the result of COVID-19, which has caused most everything to seem on pause—the future looms ahead, uncertain but eagerly awaited. Furmansky’s evocative images depict places we know but now see in a different light. In that sense, they’re deeply contemporary artifacts of our pandemic year.

—Jack Murphy


Scotiabank


Kiam

Rothko Chapel interior and benches.
© Paul Hester.

Museum

Roundup

Jack Murphy

In the winter of *Cite's* production, two leading art museums in Houston—the Menil Collection and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston—realized major new buildings, while the Rothko Chapel restored its space and added a small building, and the Contemporary Art Museum Houston renovated its spaces. The efforts at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston concluded a lengthy building campaign. Meanwhile, the Rothko Chapel anticipates a second phase, and the next steps in the Menil Collection's master plan await. This text reviews these efforts to improve the institutional core of Houston's art scene.

A Good Porch is Hard to Find

The Menil Drawing Institute (MDI) opened in November 2018. It was designed by Johnston Marklee (JM), an office based in Los Angeles led by Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee. Following the completion of a masterplan by David Chipperfield Architects, the MDI and a new mechanical services plant were the first new buildings to be realized. The roughly 30,000-square-foot MDI is indicative of the Menil Collection's purpose and style, but JM provides its own take on the relevant precedents. The office is interested in similarity over sameness; their efforts result in work that is deeply rooted in architectural history but simultaneously searching for something new.[1] In *Cite* 96, architecture critic Christopher Hawthorne reviewed the masterplan and proposed MDI design, noting its "institutional caution and architectural ambition."[2]

The MDI is situated at the edge of the bungalow fabric of central Montrose that is now owned and preserved by the Menil Foundation. In their scheme, secured via an international competition, JM aggregated "discrete programmatic volumes under one roof," a model seen in the project's diagrams.[3] An infrastructural basement is where artwork is stored, with appropriately intense flood protections. The building is largely private, in the sense that most of its area is dedicated to staff operations.

As Hawthorne notes, the angled ceilings of the porches join to form a gabled ceiling inside—the recognizable shape of a "housey-house."[4] The public can visit the gallery, hall, and bathrooms, whose waiting area is furnished with a low polygonal bench copied from one in the home of the de Menils. The long connecting hall is empty save for a desk and the long walls, which host large drawings. The single gallery can be divided with partitions. The space relative to the supporting back-of-house infrstructure might seem like a small payoff for the effort, but that ignores the medium at hand—drawings. If you take the task seriously, circulating the room to look closely at intricate works requires enough effort that even after one lap it's useful to venture outside and rest your eyes.

The exterior is two-toned, split between the angled steel soffits of the white ceiling and the dark stained vertical wood cladding. The limitations of Texas construction show. Outside, one can detect a shadowy registration in the finished surface between its interior supports, a slight distraction from the otherwise continuous surfaces.

The two courtyards, on either end of the building, precede entry into the gallery. *Courtyard* feels like the wrong architectural term—they're really more like *porches*. Whereas a courtyard is defined to be "completely or mostly enclosed," a porch is "a covered shelter projecting in front of the entrance of a building." The distinction changes how the space is delivered to the public and what its potential occupations might be. Apart from the art itself, these spaces are the most unique aspect of the MDI.

The porches are open on their corners and a side. The central planted areas, designed by Michael Van Valkenburg Associates, are populated by hunks of stone and selected trees. They're contemplative spaces until they're commandeered for wedding photos or group selfies. They're also nice in the rain when water spills into the planter, forms a vertical surface, and seals you into the space for a time.

The MDI reveals one interest of JM: to make the generic specific. They use everyday means and methods of construction to make something that's just a bit *off*. Their strangeness is deliberate and strategic, but it's never an outright assault. But the dialectic is a two-way street: JM is also interested in making the specific generic. They do this with equal skill, somehow turning odd crystalline forms with big openings into normal things through the application of their architectural expertise.

In the 2018 *El Croquis* about JM, Stan Allen addresses their attitude towards history in architecture as one that is cumulative, though not necessarily progressive.[5] Allen establishes that the firm participates in history while not being bound by it. He connects the dots between the firm's self-acknowledged references and additional figures like Álvaro Siza, writing that "what Siza and Johnston Marklee share is a plastic sensibility in which solid and void interpenetrate uninhibitedly, and in which transitions from surface to surface, material to material, or space to space, are always seamless."[6] Siza has offered that "architect's don't invent anything, they transform reality," an aphorism that syncs with JM's attitude that nothing comes from nothing—that a search for "new" form *ex nihilo* is exhausting and unproductive.[7] The outer ring of covered space around the original Menil building is a notable prece-dent for the MDI, but these entry spaces feel different: They're lower, more compressed, more integrated into the form of the building. Where did these porches come from?

In *2G*, R.E. Somol riffs that JM are both bureaucrats and phenomenologists: They accept constraint and are also deeply concerned with embodied experience.[8] A similar preoccupation occurs in Donald Judd's sculptures, spaces, and writings. The spaces he renovated for his life and work exhibit similar qualities. JM has absorbed Judd's pragmatism in serious ways, which makes sense as the duo got their start in Marfa, where their earliest projects were realized. When introducing JM's work in the 2015 newsletter of the Chinati Foundation, Karen Stein wrote that "the anti-heroic model of Chinati itself has become a recurring theme in Johnston and Lee's work."[9] In a 2014 lecture, Johnston remarked that they

> feel so fortunate that our first projects were here in Marfa, and many friends have been important to us here for almost twenty years. As we were putting together this talk, we were thinking about beginnings and how much Chinati and our experience here in Marfa—the artists we've met, the history of the place—have informed our thinking as architects as we began to expand our practice beyond Texas.[10]

Mark Lee, in the same lecture, already detected the beginnings of their interests even in the small works they made in town. They present the work of the office, which concludes with the MDI. The passage is a useful window into the architects' understanding of this work. Remarking about the MDI's ambiguity, Johnston said that they "have an interest in a kind of in-betweenness: between building and garden, inside and outside, day and night, light and dark, dark and light. That sort of ambiguity through contrast is something that we're really interested in."[11] Lee followed up with a revelation:

> I think that many of the things we've used with [the MDI] were things we first learned here. Really thinking about the specificity of the art environment, understanding the intimacy of scale, dealing with the existing pre-war houses, are things that we first learned from Marfa, working on these West Texas houses. And for us this project marks a return to Texas. We started in Texas and we end in Texas. So after this project, we should retire.[12]

Here is a clear origin for the MDI's porch in JM's referential architectural vocabulary. This architectural element plays an important role at Chinati. The former barracks of Fort D.A. Russell are U-shaped buildings ringed on their interior three sides with porches. These spaces provide shelter from the elements but also collect visitors before and after they circulate through the interior. On a tour of Chinati, it's normal to find people gathered on these porches chatting, looking across to the opposite porch across the gravel, or circulating around them from side to side. They are important transitional spaces between the exterior environment and the interior realm of artistic experience.[13]

The connection between the contextual work of being a young architect in Marfa and the realization of the MDI closes a loop in JM's thinking over the past decades. It "brings them back home," in a way.

With multiple buildings in its campus, the exterior environment is an important part of the Menil experience. The sidewalk north to the main building from the MDI is now a busy thoroughfare and is lined with donor signage designed by MG&Co. The outdoor areas provided an essential service during the pandemic: The lawn blossomed with blankets and the furnished wooden patio next to the MDI was a welcome place for take-out dinners. The spaces also received a bump when Tobe Nwigwe, a rapper from Alief, and Lil' Keke recorded the video for "Purple Rain Thing" at the building. Moments like this showcase how the MDI has quickly been absorbed into the cultural life of the city.

The main entrance of the Menil Drawing Institute by Johnston Marklee.
©Takudzwa Tapfuma, Rice Architecture.

When the inevitable development arrives south of the MDI, the campus will again change: Chipperfield's masterplan allows for buildings up to eight stories along Richmond Avenue. Beyond Flavin's Richmond Hall, the institution might have major frontage that may form an urban wall. Once that happens, the MDI will perform even more like a gateway, as it will be the interior entry point from the new (commercial) buildings into the Menil campus. The MDI's deliberate design as a place of in-betweenness will only grow more useful. It will become an even better porch.

Portions of this text were originally written for an assignment in ARCH 655: Contemporary Practices, a course taught at Rice Architecture during the Spring 2019 semester by Assistant Professor Scott Colman and former Dean Sarah M. Whiting.

An Icon, Restored

There are two kinds of people in this world: people who appreciate the Rothko Chapel, and those who, upon entry, scratch their heads and wonder what's for lunch. The interior is a test: Are you willing to open yourself to what might happen if you sit and quiet the mind? Many beloved churches exist in the world, but few capture the dull throb of existence and the possibility of redemption like this space.

This year, the Rothko Chapel celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. Opened in 1971, the chapel quickly became an icon in Houston. Nestled under oaks between the Menil Collection and the University of St. Thomas—all here in part thanks to the founding philanthropy of John and Dominique de Menil—the brick-clad building is an understated, brooding thing. It could be mistaken for a mechanical plant, but this geode-like quality heightens the thrill of finding out what's inside.

The chapel is cross-shaped in plan, but the interior is octagonal. Fourteen large canvases hang on its walls. Their blue-black expanses are portals; they absorb time, light, and attention. The chapel's design was led at first by Philip Johnson, but his flashy proposal was soon tossed out and Rothko then dealt with local architects Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry. Barnstone was hospitalized for mental illness in 1968, which left Aubry to finalize the design. Johnson returned to help with the entrance and the location of the reflecting pool.[14] Mark Rothko never saw the project completed; he committed suicide in 1970 just days after giving the final approval for the completion of the chapel. His son Christopher Rothko has been instrumental in leading this current restoration; he is also on the Board of Directors for the organization.

The simple building's pyramidal skylight flooded the interior with light, washing out the artworks and frying observers. Already by 1974, scrim had been stretched across the oculus, and by 1978, a baffle had been installed that cast light across the ceiling, noticeably dimming the interior. A second attempt was made in 1999, darkening the chamber. The gloom settled in, making it hard to discern the intricacies of the canvases. The baffle "sent raking light across the ceiling, so all of a sudden the brightest surface in the room was the ceiling," said George Sexton of George Sexton Associates, who masterfully handled the lighting design. "One of the things that we were trying to achieve was to make the plane on which the art was hung the brightest surface. And I think we did that."

The renovation of the chapel, led by New York-based Architecture Research Office (ARO), is a serious improvement of the chapel's sacred space. But it's also an expansion of the institution's important work. A master plan extends the campus across Sul Ross Street and will ultimately add three new buildings with spaces for guests, programs,

Suzanne Deal Booth Welcome House by Architecture Research Office, seen from the new courtyard on the new North Campus. © Paul Hester.

Aerial view of the Nancy and Rich Kinder Building at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston by Steven Holl Architects. Photo: Iwan Baan.

offices, mechanical services, and an archive. This effort was carried out with a close reading of the neighborhood's scale and materials. There's a "directness with which you experience this special place in your everyday life," Adam Yarinsky, Principal at ARO, said. "This is something that we wanted to preserve in the new buildings landscape, and the master plan."

The new buildings are designed to blend in with their surroundings. The first phase saw the completion of the Suzanne Deal Booth Welcome House, finished in light brick (matching the chapel), light wood, and gray metal. An actual M.E.P. building sits at the back of the lot; it will make more sense once the second phase of the master plan is complete.

Looking ahead, a forthcoming larger building for gathering is pushed to the back of the lot to preserve the scale of the street, and another building with offices and an archive that exactly matches the width of the chapel's apse will be constructed perpendicular to the street. An existing home will be moved and converted to guest housing for visiting lecturers or artists. Immediately west of the chapel, a bungalow will be relocated, and a meditation garden will be built.

The new landscape, designed by Nelson Byrd Woltz, provides an open area next to the fountain and smaller "rooms" created by rows of trees. These are places to gather and sit during Houston's nice days; they're a welcome spot for lounging during the pandemic. The campus's lighting design uses the landscape and exterior finishes to prepare one's eyes for the interior of the chapel, Sexton said. The most dramatic change is the lighting of *Broken Obelisk*. Instead of being uplit, it's now illuminated using theatrical projectors discreetly mounted on poles. At night it appears to hover in space, glowing like a molten steel prism.

The renovation both stays close to the original design of the Rothko Chapel and makes significant improvements. During this restoration process, the chapel's exterior brick has been cleaned and repointed, and new paving was installed. Resiliency was also important: A flood gate can now be dropped in before a storm, the new buildings are built two feet above the curb, HVAC was relocated to the mechanical building across the street, and an emergency generator was installed.

In the vestibule, the desk, pamphlets, and other distractions that had accumulated are gone, leaving just a darkened entry chamber that disassociates the viewer from the world. The gray walls are slightly darker than the main space, which reinforces this compression. In the worship space, the walls are still gray, but looking up, the ceiling is flat—a big change from the previous pebbly popcorn acoustical finish.

The new skylight, designed by George Sexton Associates, uses louvers and laminated glass to illuminate the artworks. Sexton used large physical models to get the design right and checked his work with computer simulations. The interior octagonal walls of the skylight drum have been refinished, and a deep reveal provides a place for technology, including concealed projectors that require their own ducted systems for cooling and are isolated to reduce noise. Their beams reflect on the floating trapezoidal planes, illuminating the paintings on overcast days.

The effect of this infrastructural work is striking. Now the room has even more power. It's like the axis mundi, Yarinsky said: "The Pantheon in Rome didn't have a baffle under the oculus." It's much brighter inside, which allows the canvases to come alive. Once your eyes adjust, they can see a broader range of the colors and textures within the art's surfaces, qualities that were missed by casual viewers under lower lighting. The same wooden seating and dark floor anchors the room, which is now slightly smaller: The wall of the main niche was moved six inches inward to avoid a shadow hitting the top of the canvases.

Throughout, the construction by Linbeck is precise and clean. They did an amazing job "because they took the time to understand what the goal was," Cassell said. They "realized the need for mock-ups and sometimes the need to redo something. They were deeply embedded in the process."

Led by Executive Director David Leslie, this careful work, years in the making, expands the chapel's mission to "create opportunities for spiritual growth and dialogue that illuminate our shared humanity and inspire action leading to a world in which all are treated with dignity and respect." This charge is even evident in the dedication of *Broken Obelisk*, by sculptor Barnett Newman, to Martin Luther King, Jr.[15] Over the years, rallies and gatherings have been staged outside, and inside, ceremonies from manyfaith traditions are regularly practiced. It's a spiritual vortex of nothingness within the city's sprawling emptiness. It remains one of Houston's quintessential places.

Important activations continue. The chapel is where Solange chose to open the film version of her album *When I Get Home*. Last month, the Rothko Chapel's 2021 Annual MLK Birthday Celebration featured a lecture from scholar Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. A series of online events took place to mark the 50th anniversary of the chapel, including a panel discussion about the restoration featuring Yarinsky, Sexton, landscape architect Thomas Woltz, and conservator Carol Mancusi-Ungaro.

This restoration is recognized in print by the release of *Rothko Chapel: An Oasis for Reflection*, published by Rizzoli Electa. An essay by Stephen Fox establishes the architectural history of the chapel, while a text by art historian Pamela G. Smart reviews the landmark's artistic and ecumenical aspects, supplemented with excerpts from its guest book. An extended portfolio of images by Paul Hester showcases the campus's improved grounds, new Welcome House, and restored chapel. His expert eye and lens captures the solemn power of Rothko's interior.

As we slowly emerge from the pandemic, it's clear that the dismantling of systemic racism and the seeking of unity must continue. This makes the chapel's spiritual work more meaningful now than ever.

An extended version of this article appeared on Cite Digital *on February 26, 2021.*

A Beautiful Series of Tubes

The Nancy and Rich Kinder Building at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH) was designed by Steven Holl Architects (SHA) with support from Kendall/Heaton Associates. It integrates a number of compelling spatial ideas into its design. Built by McCarthy, the result is a dynamic and lively space for art. The museum is nearly 240,000 square feet, with over 100,000 square feet of exhibition space that services an impressive collection of modern and contemporary art. Holl's building is a success. It combines established ideas from the office with an entirely new one—the glass tube façade.

The building's shape comes from an offset of the site at Main Street and Bissonnet in Houston's Museum District, with allowances for live oaks. Porosity is a key concept for Holl's work, so seven courts are cut into the perimeter. These voids break up the mass of the building and separate the galleries that ring a central interior forum. This is a similar strategy to Holl's Visual Arts Building at the University of Iowa, completed in 2016. These court cuts are pulled through to the central atrium, providing light and a visual respite from viewing art. Gallery entrances are through large portals or carved corners, making for layered views through the spaces and across the forum. The sequencing through these rooms is skillfully balanced between close immersion and wide observation.

Above, the ceiling bends and peels apart, allowing sunlight into the top galleries and atrium. Guy Nordenson and Associates and Cardno Haynes Whaley provided the structural engineering for this feat. On the outside, the roof reads as a landscape of waves. It looks like no other roof in the city. While it's similar to the Winter Visual Arts Center at Franklin & Marshall College, also completed this year, the lighting strategy differs—the Kinder's is more complex. The petals curl in pleasing ways. The lighting was tested through software

Exterior view of the Nancy and Rich Kinder Building at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston by Steven Holl Architects. Photo: Iwan Baan.

Interior view of the Nancy and Rich Kinder Building at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston by Steven Holl Architects. Photo: Iwan Baan.

and large physical models, so the design's translation to a ceiling that retains qualities of a paper study model is remarkable. In reality the resulting light, supported by bounced LED light, is even and majestic.

Upon entry, one is quickly in the central open forum. The ground floor contains two storefront galleries, a café, restaurant, and spaces for immersive installations. A boomerang-shaped feature stair leads upwards, tapering at the top. The second-floor galleries have lower ceilings, making for more intimate rooms for encountering art. Here the expertise of lighting consultant L'Observatoire International shines. The third-floor rooms are taller and illuminated by daylight, though the ceilings vary in height and amount of light admitted.

In many of the building's finishes, the expertise of Houston artisans is on full display. Brochsteins produced the walnut linings of the conference room and theater and the black limba interior of the restaurant. The terrazzo was installed by Southern Tile & Terrazzo, who also did the original sage-colored terrazzo in Mies's Brown Pavilion in 1974. The new floor mix matches the same large pieces of marble, but with gray mortar instead of green. There are some gaps in resolution of the new building's details, but these items shrink when considering the overall architectural effort.

The museum invites references to canonical works. The centrifugal rotation of the atrium distantly summons Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim rotunda: one region of rooms is even set a couple feet below the others, introducing a slight spiraling vertical movement. The wood floors are stained dark like the Menil's, but their endgrain pattern recalls the flooring under the pews at Le Corbusier's chapel in Ronchamp, a connection reinforced by the billowing ceilings, here not cast in concrete but sheathed in drywall by MAREK. It's easy to make comparisons to masterpieces of the 20th century and to marvel at how far construction has come, but also how consistent our inspirational concepts have remained.

The exterior is the most innovative and compelling part of the building. It advances a dialogue of "complementary contrast" with the two existing buildings: Distinct from Mies's thin transparency (1958/1974) and Moneo's thick opacity (2000), Holl's scheme explores thick translucency. The outer perimeter is clad in laminated glass half-cylinders, 30" in diameter, with some approaching 20' in length. There are three sections of these tubes on each of the long elevations. The tubes capture and thicken light; they push what glass can do as a material. At times they're reflective white, at others they go flat baby blue; the shadows also vary widely. The tubes have concealed attachments, so they float, balancing out the thick concrete walls that run back into the building. For the curious, there's one section of clear glass near the café outside where all joinery questions are answered. The overall effect conceals the true size of the building and provides a repetitive, convex, muted façade that's refreshingly abstract.

The tubes come together at six corners, but the outer corner of the building on the plaza inadvertently pays further tribute to Mies: Its inverted corner, with a single concave column of tubes, references the invisible corner refined over decades by Mies in his American works.

At night the tubes glow in a range of illumination patterns, from cooler linear lights to warmer rectangles of light that suggest interior rooms. This consideration connects the new building to Holl's extension at the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, which emits a similar glow, an aspect which Jeffrey Kipnis takes up in his writing about that project's "magic." The tubes, set off from the concealed walls, work as solar chimneys and notably reduce solar heat gain, but their aesthetics are primary. Chris McVoy, partner at SHA, described how, during the competition process in 2011, someone sliced an acrylic tube in half, illuminated it from behind and stood back, transfixed by its glow. This sensual quality is retained in built form. As with the interior ceiling, the conceptual intent remains clear

Exterior view of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.
Photo: Leonid Furmansky.

despite the tribulations of building making. This is the mark of a skilled architectural team.

Lately, a cool material palette dominates Holl's projects: steel, other metals, painted grays, translucent glass, concrete, and bright white drywall. Similar to the exterior of the Hunter's Point library in New York City, the exposed concrete walls at the MFAH are painted silver, a move suggested late in construction by Director Gary Tinterow. This is a win. Inside and out, the treatment is muted, unless hit by direct sun, in which case it shines. The color unites the wall with service items like fire stairs and elevator doors; it encourages these bits to recede. The platinum is stylish and generic at once, even nostalgically futuristic. Moments of warmth come from the lighting, including cast glass lamps designed by Holl, and the art.

The Kinder Building completes a MFAH initiative that has realized four new buildings since 2012: two by Holl, Lake|Flato's Blaffer Conservation Center, and an art storage facility.[16] The Glassell School of Art, also designed by SHA, opened in 2018. It's characterized by its L-shape, which makes a plaza; its sloping, walkable roof; and its method of construction: precast concrete shapes form its façade and support the interior floors. This tectonic experiment is the most notable aspect of the building and gives it its rough character, inside and out. While the building doubled the space for the school, it's clear that the budget was tight, as numerous construction issues became apparent, most visibly the rooftop trellis, which provided no shade and had to be retrofitted. Still, the plaza is growing in nicely: It shaded grove offers a nice place for a meal, phone call, or conversation.

An additional improvement is the reinvigorated Lillie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden, which benefits from the increased traffic between buildings. When the pandemic breaks, the interface between the garden and Kinder Building will be a lively place to meet and eat.

Holl's building and the vast collection are the results of Houston's tradition of philanthropy. This effort concludes The Campaign for the Museum of Fine Arts, initiated in 2012, which raised more than $470 million for construction and operating expenses. Jawdroppingly, the Kinder building opens with *no debt*. There's a nice alignment between a building faced in tubes named for a couple whose wealth comes in part from pipeline construction. As of January 2021, the Kinders, through their family foundation, have given over $468 million in gifts and pledges to local causes that champion urban green space, education, and quality of life. For a moment, at least, any planetary anxiety about the long-term effects of fossil fuels can be paused to recognize that Houston is undeniably a better place thanks to the Kinders' generosity.

The Kinder Building is a commendable achievement for Steven Holl Architects, an office that has pursued the tactile realization of rich spatial experiences in its buildings worldwide. Now, we have two in Houston. In video remarks, Holl described the Kinder Building as a "gift to the future." I agree.

An extended version of this text appeared online on Cite Digital *on November 20, 2020. An edited version of this text appeared in the* Houston Chronicle *online on November 25, 2020, and in print on November 29, 2020.*

A Reinvented Museum

In 1972—the same year that Rice Design Alliance was founded—the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH) moved into a new building on the northwest corner of Montrose and Bissonnet. Designed by Gunnar Birkerts, the building is a parallelogram in plan, with sharp edges on the northeast and southwest corners. This leaves space for a plaza facing in front and, in back, space for loading access to the lower level and *Mel Chin's Manila Palm: An Oasis Secret* (1978). The exterior is clad in reflective metal siding, perhaps a nod to Rice's beloved Art Barn and anticipating Houston's tin house craze. One enters through a tall slot cut in the façade and moves under a low ceiling until the room "opens up" into the main gallery. Save for three square skylights whose light bounces off the entry hood, there is no natural light, which, combined with its column-free interior, makes for a flexible space for art.

CAMH is a non-collecting museum. Instead, over the years its interior has hosted major exhibitions by international and local artists alike: Uta Barth (whose images appear in this issue of *Cite*), John Chamberlain,Vito Acconci, Bill Viola, Frank Stella, Tony Cragg, Ann Hamilton, Stan VanDerBeek, Trenton Doyle Hancock, and Christopher Knowles, among so many others. CAMH's programming is forward-thinking and proceeds with a nimbleness that isn't possible at larger institutions.

Such active use wore on the building. A storage/loading room was inserted into the main gallery, and windows were covered on the basement level where a small gallery, shop, offices, and meeting rooms are located. There was a plan in place for improvements, but the museum's closure due to COVID-19 provided an opportune moment to make changes.

Led by Executive Director Hesse McGraw, who joined CAMH in January 2020, the museum has moved quickly to renovate before its reopening in early 2021. According to McGraw, the pandemic has allowed the museum "to both accelerate and expand our renovations, and to think deeply about the internal ecosystem of the museum." The layered crises of the moment "have prompted a needed and profound consideration of the ethics and values of the Museum," he said via email.

The constructive effort has been guided by Dillon Kyle Architects for architectural improvements, McDugald Steele for the landscape, and Lance Gandy for the lighting (Kyle himself is Chair of CAMH's Board of Trustees). Inside, the Brown Foundation gallery now has new flooring, walls, and LED lighting, along with a re-imagined front entry experience. The offending aforementioned storage room has been removed; its function will be accounted for with an exterior loading dock that has yet to be constructed. On the lower level, windows and cast-in-place concrete have been exposed, and new rooms have been added. Invisible but important updates were also taken to maintain the building, which is nearly fifty years old. All these items are light touches, but they make a difference.

The largest change is the redesign of the exterior plaza. Its expanse has been covered in gravel, which can be programmed with events. Steps down to the plaza and a long bench was added next to the approach ramp. Parallelogram-shaped benches/bollards define the eastern edge of the communal space along Montrose, where new signage and sidewalks were installed. A new line of uplights illuminate the metal façade at night. McGraw said CAMH is "thrilled to explore the potential of this space, in a moment where so many are connecting to the public realm in new ways." The plaza was already used for outdoor concerts in 2020: during one warm November afternoon, people gathered, masked, to listen to a DJ set. I hope there are more moments like this to come in 2021.

Last year was still an opportunity for artistic engagement. The museum was active on social media through a series of take-overs, residencies, and conversations. Onsite, the building's construction fence hosted Nathaniel Donnett's *Acknowledgement: The Historic Polyrhythm of Being(s)*, an effort that clad the fence in images of Houston's Black communities. Local children exchanged old backpacks for new ones stocked with supplies in preparation for the upcoming school year, and the collection of acquired items was displayed on the fence. According to the museum's text about the art,

> this project engages the youth's social imagination by uplifting everyday objects as material for the artwork, and the exchange as a gesture of human kindness. The exchange seeks to inspire youth around the value of education, through the gift of a new backpack and by highlighting the inner resources and strength of Houston's Black community. The multi-faceted nature of this artwork emphasizes the power of direct action and social exchange.[17]

CAMH's engagement with and support of Houston's Black communities is notable, and especially so after last summer's protests following the murder of George Floyd. Floyd, who grew up in Third Ward's Cuney Homes, was known in hip-hop circles as Big Floyd and rapped with DJ Screw. Now that the museum has reopened, *Slowed and Thowed*, CAMH's exhibit on DJ Screw, is open too; this program has led to a larger agreement with Screwed Up Records & Tapes to help preserve DJ Screw's legacy. Upstairs, *Wild Life*, a two-person show with work from Elizabeth Murray and Jessi Reaves, is installed. The life of the museum goes on.

McGraw said that CAMH's mandate is to "be present, to engage directly in the complexity and challenges of our present moment"—the institution leans forward. This hard year has also served as McGraw's introduction to Houston, a city that "can invent the future. It's a place of energy, uncertainty, and wildness," in his view.

Looking ahead, CAMH's future is bright. There are partnerships and collaborations that will be announced throughout 2021. McGraw said the pandemic has changed both the museum's "internal structure and how [they] engage audiences here and elsewhere." He continued: "I like to think of CAMH as a ship of Theseus—we're in the midst of a total transformation."

Notes

1 Reto Geiser, "Specific Indeterminacy," in *House is a House is a House is House is a House*, ed. Reto Geiser (Basel: Birkhauser, 2016), 41.
2 Christopher Hawthorne, "Radically Understated," *Cite* 96, Spring 2015, 19.
3 Geiser, 39.
4 Hawthorne, 22.
5 Stan Allen, "Folding Time: Johnston Marklee's Plural Temporalities," *El Croquis 198: Johnston Marklee (2005-2019)* (2018), 263.
6 Allen, 269.
7 Allen, 269.
8 R.E. Somol, "Grind Houses," in *2G: Johnston Marklee*, no. 67 (2013), 11.
9 Karen Stein, "All Roads Lead to Marfa," *Chinati* newsletter vol. 20 (2015), 39.
10 Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee, "Johnston Marklee, Architects: An Overview," Chinati newsletter vol. 20 (2015), 40.
11 Johnston and Lee, 51.
12 Johnston and Lee, 51.
13 Full disclosure: I know this from personal experience, as I was an intern at the Chinati Foundation in 2010.
14 Barrie Scardino Bradley, "A Constructive Connection: Barnstone and the Menils," in *Making Houston Modern: The Life and Architecture of Howard Barnstone*, ed. Barrie Scardino Bradley, Stephen Fox, and Michelangelo Sabatino (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2020), 150.
15 For an in-depth account of this history, see "Broken Obelisk and Racial Justice in Houston" by Amanda A. Douberley, published on *Cite Digital* on September 9, 2020.
16 David Heymann's earlier appraisal of the scheme also appeared in *Cite* 96, an issue themed on museums in Texas.
17 Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, "Nathaniel Donnett | Acknowledgement: The Historic Polyrhythm of Being(s)," https://camh.org/event/donnett-acknowledgement/.

Contributors

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GIOVANNA BORASI is an architect, editor, and curator. She joined the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) in 2005, first as Curator of Contemporary Architecture (2005–10), then as Chief Curator (2014–19). She has been the Director of the CCA since January 2020. Borasi's work explores alternative ways of practicing and evaluating architecture, considering the impact of contemporary environmental, political and social issues on urbanism and the built environment. She studied architecture at the Politecnico di Milano, worked as an editor of *Lotus International* (1998–2005) and *Lotus Navigator* (2000–2004) and was Deputy Editor in Chief of *Abitare* (2011–2013).

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WILL HENRY is an artist based in Houston. He received his BFA from the University of Texas at Austin in 1997. His work has been included in exhibitions throughout Texas over the past twenty years, including solo exhibitions at Hiram Butler Gallery, Houston; the Southwest School of Art, San Antonio; and the Old Jail Art Center, Albany. Henry was a finalist for the Texas Prize in 2012 at the Austin Museum of Art. His work is in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Old Jail Art Center, Albany. He is represented by Hiram Butler Gallery in Houston.

WONNE ICKX is a cofounder of PRODUCTORA an award-winning architecture studio, and of LIGA, Space for Architecture, an independent platform that promotes Latin American Architecture, both based in Mexico City. He has taught architecture at Harvard, IIT, UCLA, Rice, and several universities in Mexico.

NAHO KUBOTA is a Japanese visual artist based in New York. Her recent exhibitions and participations include *Add to the Cake: Transforming the roles of female practitioners* at Kunstgewerbemuseum Dresden in Germany in 2019; RISD Architecture Triennial 2019 in Providence, Rhode Island; Architecture Schools during the 4th Istanbul Design Biennale in Turkey in 2018; and *Work in Progress* at Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York in 2016. Her work has been exhibited at galleries including powerHouse Arena in New York and The Artcomplex Center of Tokyo in Japan.

JEANNETTE KUO is partner of Zurich-based Karamuk Kuo which she co-founded with Ünal Karamuk in 2010. The office works on projects across a range of scales, from collective housing to cultural and institutional projects and has been featured in numerous international publications including *Archithese, Metropolis, Architectural Review, Werk Bauen + Wohnen*, and *Casabella*. In 2018, their work was also featured in a monograph by *El Croquis*. Since 2016, Jeannette is Assistant Professor in Practice for Architecture at Harvard Graduate School of Design. Prior to that, she taught at MIT, UC Berkeley, and EPF Lausanne, where she edited two volumes of research on workspace typologies: *A-Typical Plan* (2013) and *Space of Production* (2015).

AJAY MANTHRIPRAGADA founded his studio in 2014 after working in various architecture firms in Paris, New York and San Francisco. Based in California, the office's work has been exhibited at MoMA, the Graduate School of Design at Harvard and the School of Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology. In 2018, Manthripragada was nominated for the Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize as an emerging practitioner. Manthripragada is an Assistant Professor of Architecture at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. He was previously the Harry K. and Albert K. Smith Visiting Critic and a Wortham Fellow at the Rice Architecture. He has taught at California College of the Arts, UC Berkeley and Rhode Island School of Design. Manthripragada holds a Bachelor of Arts from UC Berkeley and a Master of Architecture from Princeton University.

PIERGIANNA MAZZOCCA is an architect and researcher whose work focuses on architecture's enduring relationship to biopolitics and its associated aesthetic paradigms. Piergianna graduated as an architect from the University of the Andes in Merida, Venezuela, after which she co-founded Taller de Arquitectura Singular, directing the office from 2011 to 2015. In 2016, she received her postgraduate masters at The Berlage Center for Advanced Studies in Architecture and Urban Design at the Delft University of Technology in The Netherlands. She is the 2019–2021 Emerging Scholar in Design Fellow at the School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin; she was the 2017–2019 Wortham Fellow at Rice Architecture.

ZOE MIDDLETON is interested in how space, language, and policy are used to broaden or limit the political imagination, especially in moments of crisis. She serves as the Houston-based co-director

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ALYSA NAHMIAS's debut feature documentary *Unfinished Spaces*, won a 2012 Independent Spirit Award and numerous festival prizes, and it is in the permanent collection of MoMA. Her work as a director and producer has premiered at Sundance, SXSW, Sheffield Doc/Fest, and the Berlinale. Nahmias is a 2019 Sundance Momentum Fellow and an advisor at Sundance Catalyst Forum and Film Independent Global Media Makers program. She holds degrees from New York University and Princeton University and is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Her production company Ajna Films is based in Los Angeles.

MARIA NICANOR is Executive Director of the Rice Design Alliance. She is an architecture curator and architectural historian with an interest in the ways that cities and people interact through the lens of design. Formerly, she was the inaugural Director of the Norman Foster Foundation in Madrid. She has been a Curator at the Design, Architecture, and Digital Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and an Associate Curator of Architecture and Urbanism at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, where she was also a Curator of the BMW Guggenheim Lab project. She holds a BA in Art and Architectural History and Theory from the Autónoma University of Madrid and Sorbonne University Paris, and an MA in Museum and Curatorial Studies from New York University.

CELESTE OLALQUIAGA is a cultural historian dedicated to the contradictions and leftovers of modernity, in particular modern ruins and kitsch. She has a PhD in Cultural Studies from Columbia University. Her books *Megalopolis* (1992) and *The Artificial Kingdom* (1998) have been translated to several languages. In 2013 she founded Proyecto Helicoide, dedicated to the modernist structure of El Helicoide in Caracas. The project produced award-winning exhibitions and the book *Downward Spiral: El Helicoide's Descent from Mall to Prison*, co-edited with Lisa Blackmore (2018). A NYC resident, Celeste is on temporal loan to her birth city, Santiago de Chile, where she recently published *@miaugraffiti* (2021), a visual register of cat political graffiti made with Angela Cura Méndez. Celeste has won Guggenheim and Rockefeller awards and was a 2019 Clark Art Institute Fellow.

HEATHER ROWELL, a Houston-based architect, co-founded HR Design Dept in 2018. She received her Master of Architecture degree from Rice Architecture and has taught design studios at Rice Architecture and the University of Houston Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design. Prior to founding HR Design Dept, she was a principal owner of award-winning Content Architecture in Houston for 7.5 years. She currently serves as Secretary of the Rice Design Alliance. She is also involved in AIA Women in Architecture and the Rice Architecture Mentorship program.

REBECCA SIEFERT is an Assistant Professor of Art History at Governors State University in Chicago's South Suburbs. Her research centers on women in architecture, and her recent publication, *Into the Light: The Art and Architecture of Lauretta Vinciarelli* (Lund Humphries, 2020), presents a comprehensive study of the interdisciplinary work of this Italian-born artist, architect, teacher, and theorist.

ANA TUAZON is a writer and independent curator. Her writing often focuses on the intersection of American art and social movements and how radical political imaginaries are generated through art and cultural production. She recently organized the exhibition *Rewrite the World* as a critical studies fellow in the Museum of Fine Arts Houston's Core Program and has written for publications such as *Art in America, Frieze, Hyperallergic,* and *Temporary Art Review*.

LIBBY VIERA-BLAND, AICP, came to planning and design through a passion for understanding how the narratives of place differ based on whose voice is prioritized. Currently, she is Libby is the Neighborhood Development Project Manager for Project Row Houses, Row House CDC, and PRH Preservation where she is working to preserve and expand opportunities for affordable housing in the Third Ward. She is also a Culture of Health leader through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She completed concurrent master's degrees in Architecture and City and Regional Planning with a focus in Community and Economic Development at the University of Pennsylvania.

TIFFANY XU (M.Arch 2020, Rice Architecture) is a designer and writer based in Oakland, California.

Black Lives Matter

When this issue of *Cite* is published, a year will have passed since the murder of George Floyd. A few days after, Houstonians took to the streets to make their voices heard, as seen in the image at right. The sea of people—a rare image during the pandemic—gathered to contest that injustice and others, including the fates of too many Black Americans whose names we now know and those whose experiences we will never know.

We also remember and condemn the fatal shootings in Atlanta in March, which targeted Asian women. This act yet again laid bare the violent, racist legacies of our country's history.

Issues of inequality, of the right to protest, and of health and safety are serious concerns for our community, as is the ability to lead collective efforts that can combat today's rampant individualism.

It's an uncomfortable truth that the design of the built environment at times enables systemic racism, which is more broadly perpetuated by spatial practices and social behaviors. As thinkers, researchers, and professionals of many varieties, this hard issue requires our attention.

RDA stands with those in our community and beyond who are affected by the traumas of the past year. With renewed optimism and resolve, and grounded in the restorative power of knowledge, we are committed to using our voices to dismantle systems of oppression.

Cite promotes design that results in a more beautiful, inclusive, and just built environment. This shared goal will continue to guide RDA's programs and publications moving forward.

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