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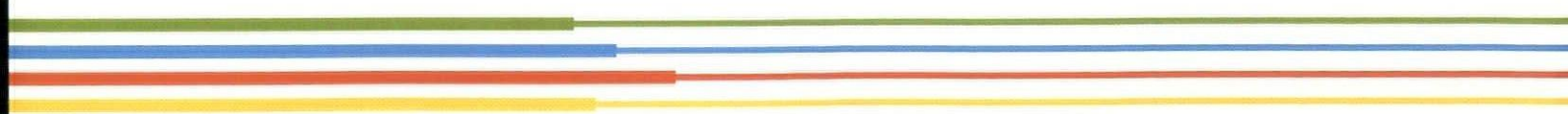
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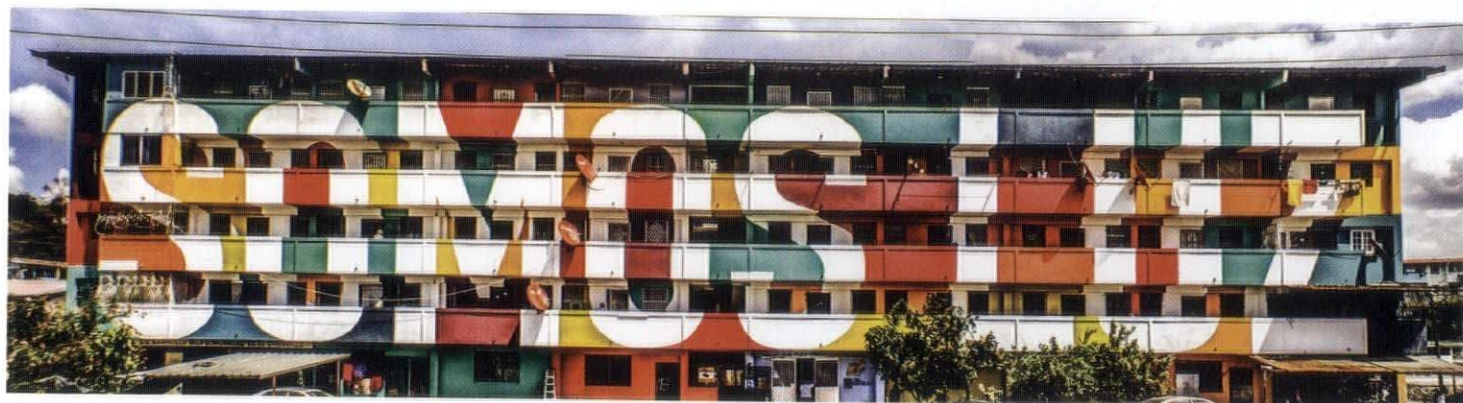
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GLOBAL

ABOVE

Somos Luz (We are light) on the Begonia I building in Panama City, a collaborative art project by the Spanish group Boa Mistura, 2013. Photo: Boa Mistura.

COVER

The Mapparium. Photo: The Mary Baker Eddy Library, Boston.



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truant

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architect STERN MCCAFFERTY
photo Eric Roth



IMPORT, EXPORT, PASSPORT

In Dubai earlier this year, officials tried to encourage the city's commuters to take public transportation by offering prizes of pure gold. Meanwhile in Haiti, donkeys carry volunteers across washed-out roads to scout locations for new health clinics. In China, a contagion of copycat architectural styles is sweeping through massive residential developments with names like Thames Town, complete with Tudor mansions, Venetian canals, and a 300-foot replica of the Eiffel Tower. But in Bloemfontein, South Africa, builders are mixing up a recipe for local brick as they have for generations: red earth, sand, rubble, straw, and water. Mash thoroughly with bare feet until turned into clay.

Such is the range of opportunities—and capacities—that greet US architects working overseas.

The United States pavilion at the 2014 Venice Biennale recorded a global history of architectural practice; it found more US-designed projects in foreign countries over the past two decades than in the century before. The dizzying pace of international development surfaces knotty questions for American designers about materials and aesthetics, about human rights, about global sustainability. And the road map (or flight map, as the case may be) for resolving such questions isn't clear.

Boston firms are strongly represented on the US pavilion's roster, which shouldn't be surprising. Local architects have pursued a series of global gold rushes since the Modernist sensibilities of The Architects Collaborative first appeared at the University of Baghdad in the 1950s. When the Arab oil embargo ended that boom, Malaysia, Singapore, and China became the new frontiers. Today the most lucrative opportunities seem to be in the United Arab Emirates and, again, China. (Apparently, the 18th century wasn't the last time the China trade helped Boston thrive.)

We are told the world is flat—telecommunications, deregulation, and a vastly improved travel infrastructure have nearly eliminated the barriers that once impeded international trade. But designers also can't help noticing a flattening of the architectural aesthetic, especially in emerging economies that consider generic towers of glass and steel a sign of progress. Persuading such clients to learn from the West's mistakes—esthetic, environmental, or social—takes some delicacy. Doing it without condescension takes grace.

Besides, US architects can learn plenty from the reverse commute of ideas. Much of the developing world has become a laboratory for operating within constraints of scarce money and materials, often to the benefit of the environment. In "Advanced Latin," Justin McGuirk takes us on a tour of a continent often at the vanguard of responsible development. Builders using indigenous materials in Africa save on transport miles while preserving the local heritage.

It's hard to consider globalization without thinking about urbanization. According to the United Nations, the world's total urban area is expected to triple by 2030, accommodating (or not) a population of five billion. Today, China has at least 140 cities of a million people or more; the United States has nine. Mass concentrations in urban settings increase the risks of so-called "natural" disasters, whether in Lagos, Banda Aceh, or Port-au-Prince. Architects should consider climate change, population migration, and substandard building practices when they work in dense, fragile settings, helping to prevent disasters, not just repair them.

It's also difficult to be pure in this domain. If architects were to confine themselves to working in societies with a clean bill from Human Rights Watch, the list of no-go countries would be long, indeed (and include the United States). But architects need not be heedless of conditions in their host countries. Too many migrant workers are charged exorbitant entrance fees, live in unsafe housing, have their passports confiscated, or endure physical abuse. It may be too much to ask architects to divest their business from authoritarian regimes entirely, but as Jay Wickersham notes in his provocative essay "Code of Context," debating a universal set of principles could be a good place to start.

The cross-cultural value that global practice affords US architects can't be measured in any currency. Those who want the richest experience should proceed with patience, flexibility, and humility. The American Century, after all, ended in 1999. ■

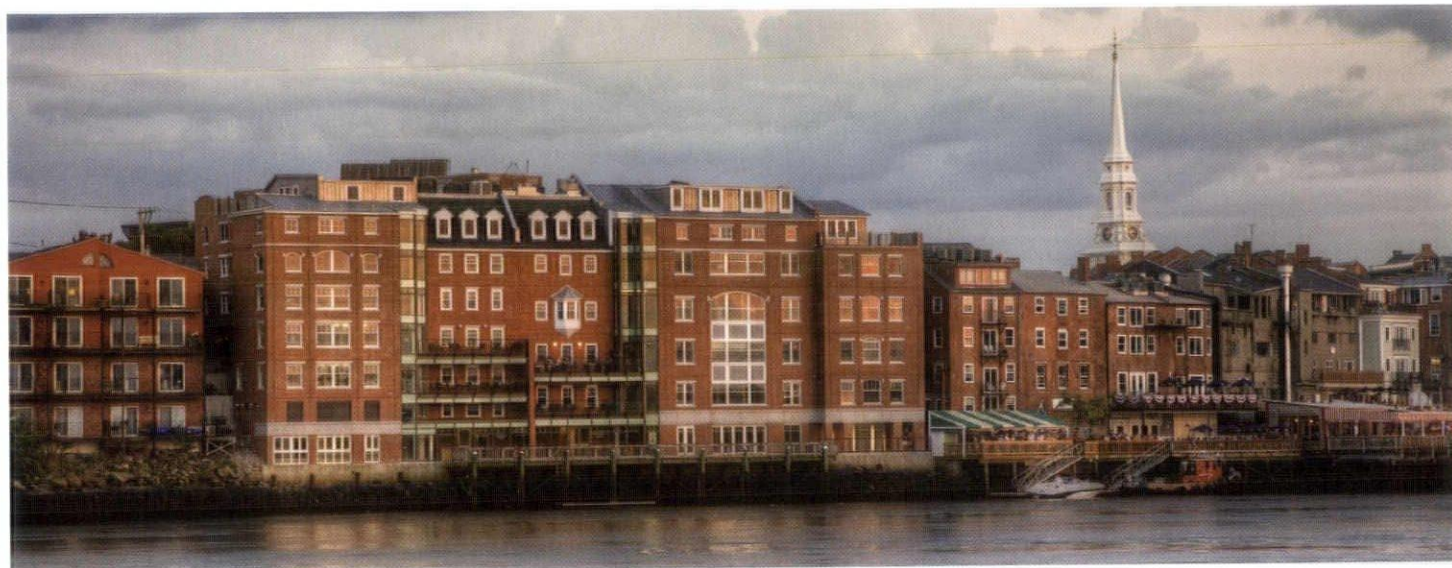
Renée Loth
Editor



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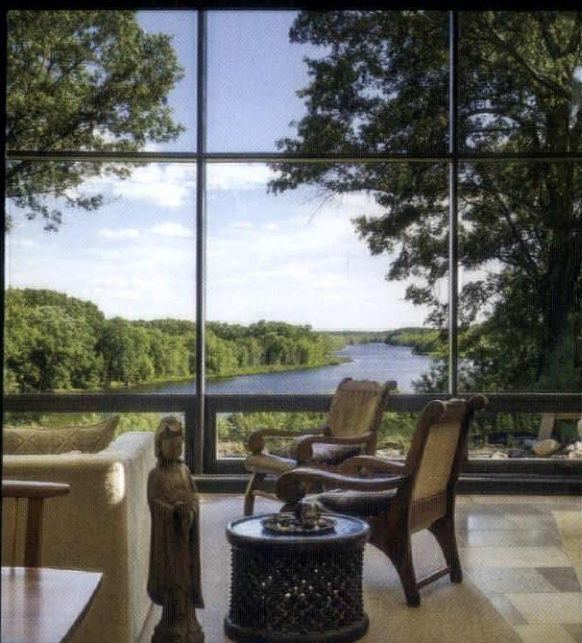
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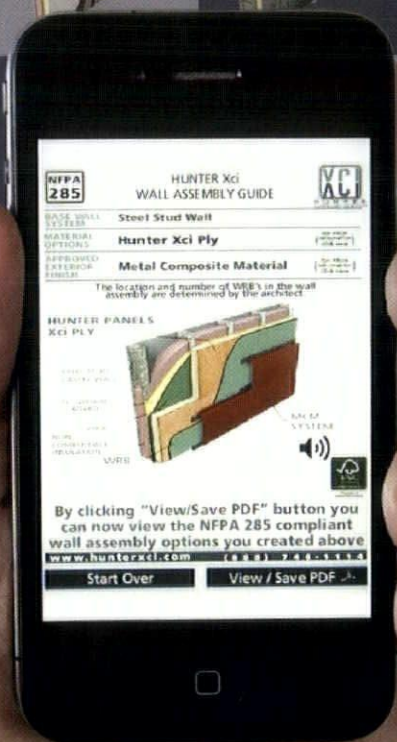
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ON “BODY” (FALL 2014)

In “*Body as mind*,” Craig Edward Dykers calls attention to the connection between the subtle influences that shape architecture and the pushback architecture exerts in return. As architects, the way in which our design impacts the body in motion and at rest lies at the base of our understanding of the built environment. However, we should also aspire to design for the intangible part of the mind that is not fully aware but ultimately has a profound effect on actions and feelings.

An authentic connection between a place and those who will occupy it can come down to the slightest design details, such as the placement of a window or the amount of natural light that is let in. As the study of architecture grows in its capacity of understanding the shared human condition, so, too, should our ability to design for those unconscious receptors that are inherent in all human beings.

MICHAEL ELLIS
5+design
Hollywood, California

Craig Dykers’ timely “*Body as mind*” piece points to the growing trend of considering human intuition and hidden responses to the environment as a factor in design. “Much of how we style our lives is based on unconscious tendencies that are formed by how our bodies interact with their surroundings,” he writes. Indeed, scientists say that 95 percent of what happens in our brain is outside our awareness, and even our conscious thoughts are all subconscious first. With advances in cognitive science and tools such as functional magnetic resonance imaging devices (fMRI), we can now track our brains at work, reacting to the world well before we are aware of it.

Top product designers and computer innovators (think Steve Jobs) have long held that the more we understand human behavior, the better we can design for it. Being aware of key subconscious tendencies—from the fact humans

are a thigmotactic, or “wall-hugging,” species (we tend to avoid the center of places), to the fact we are face-obsessed, with more of our brain engaged in facial recognition than in any other object—has huge implications for understanding our experience.

This sort of information, which previous generations never had, can’t tell us how to design, of course, but it can inform us about the impact of our creative palette; promote better conscious and subconscious conditions; and, we hope, a world that will be more humane.

ANN SUSSMAN AIA

JUSTIN B. HOLLANDER

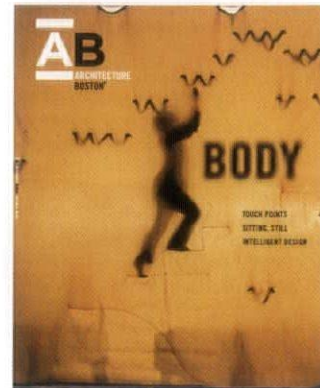
The writers are co-authors of Cognitive Architecture: Designing for How We Respond to the Built Environment (Routledge, 2014)

The “*Body*” issue provided many interesting articles based on art and poetics. But is this all that architecture and design are about? Or is there room in architecture to discuss the role of science related to human biology, psychology, and sociology?

We know from neuroscience that the brain comprises assorted connections that are either strengthened or discontinued through a process of pruning. It’s the demands of our physical and social environments that play a role in the formation or pruning of these connections.

Psychological sciences have demonstrated that we assign meaning to events and situations that take place within select environments. Some adults might recoil at the idea of entering a high school, while the idea may inspire excitement or have no meaning for others. This is because present and future emotions are influenced by past experiences.

There is no doubt that the built and natural environments play an important part in human understanding, comprehension, and performance. However, much of design education, which prepares



the practitioner, lacks subject expertise in physical, biological, and social sciences. Hence, beautiful and poetic justifications based on metaphor, but absent of scientific truths, are used to describe design projects.

Art and poetics are an absolute necessity within a cultured society, though scientific truths are equally important. Designs with specific human outcomes should be discussed and framed within the actual science that can substantiate the claims.

Many articles about design seem to be based on personal inspiration, which is often about poetics and metaphor. Descriptive narratives should thus celebrate the inspiration of the designer(s), and not pretend to be something other. After all, no one can dispute one’s personal meaning, but overgeneralized scientific concepts just don’t bode well.

DAK KOPEC

*Director of Design for Human Health,
Boston Architectural College
Boston*

What most intrigues me about Josh Safdie’s interview with Ellen Lupton [“User friendly”] is the suggestion that good user-centric design brings us closer to thinking about design as something experiential. This is a refreshing perspective that counters so much of what is currently upheld as innovation in design, where the search for novelty puts an emphasis on visual effects and complex formal manipulation. As we acknowledge that our physical environments must be more inclusive of a broad range of users,

it seems critical that we develop new attitudes toward design based on experiencing the physical world through engagement of all our senses, where aesthetic sensibility moves beyond the visual.

Designing environments that are premised on the needs of the physically challenged is actually an opportunity for designers to create more enriching environments for all of us. Thus a ramp has the potential to become the genesis of a design, rather than a necessary appendage to meet code compliance. In the work of Le Corbusier, ramps are a central design feature—a way to enrich the user's experience of a place by revealing its qualities through a sequential movement in time. A great example of this is at the Villa Savoye, where a ramp forms the centerpiece of the design, creating an "architectural promenade" that invites the user to move through the house vertically through a rich sequence of interior and exterior spaces.

As we continue to adopt new technologies that open up new freedoms and possibilities, the virtual environments we create are starting to seamlessly intersect with our experience of the physical world, blurring the boundaries. Perhaps as a result we have an even greater responsibility to create built environments that fully reconnect us with our senses and reground us in physical reality.

JOHAN (JAY) VERSPYCK AIA
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I second Mikyoung Kim's call for greater attention to the nonvisual senses in the work of reimagining the city ["Waiting to exhale"]. Her evocations of Paley Park and Tanner Fountain remind us that in these works, designers managed to call forth ordinary phenomena in extraordinary ways. The ephemeral joys of shade or mist or gurgling sounds can be newly discovered and embraced in these works; they have the power to transform urban experience.

I was reminded of the drenching

moisture and cooling shade of Dan Kiley's crazy bald cypress trees at Fountain Place, in the middle of a very hot Dallas. When you step off the sidewalk and wander into Kiley's imaginary forest, with its watery surface feeling like a rationally ordered bayou, the clatter and heat of a busy city fuses with the memory of what it's like to be in a backwater creek. It's urban bliss, for me.

Much is said about the role of landscape architecture in reorganizing our cities and making them more livable. Our publications are full of countless supposed "urbanisms" these days. We may argue about the semantics, but I'm optimistic that our cities will benefit from more consistently shaded streets, less reflected heat, more songbirds, and drains that turn storm runoff into something useful or beautiful. We should all heed Kim's appeal: Let's not overlook the power to evoke sensation and emotion, and nature itself, inside the city.

Along these lines, it's useful to recall Luis Barragan's wry condemnation of high Modernism's rhetoric, with its tendency for amnesia around sensory matters. In a speech celebrating his Pritzker Prize in 1980, Barragan admonished: "It is alarming that publications devoted to architecture have banished from their pages the words Beauty, Inspiration, Magic, Spellbound, Enchantment, as well as the concepts of Serenity, Silence, Intimacy, and Amazement." Those were exactly the things he wanted to transmit in his work. And even if the jurors couldn't articulate it as he did, and couldn't discover it in their own work, his Pritzker surely honored the human capacity to do so.

These indispensable human experiences are no longer in exile. They're very much in demand.

GARY HILDERBRAND FASLA
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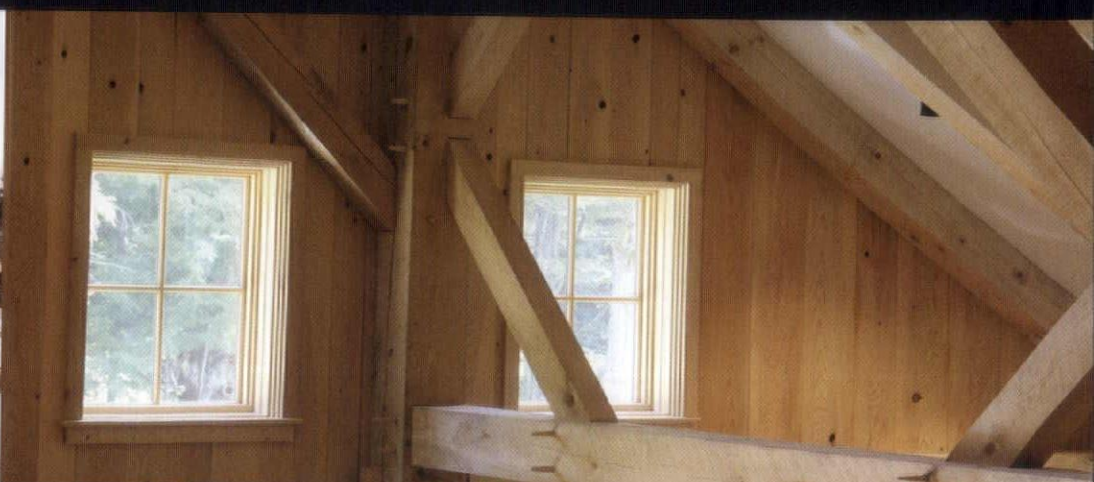
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UNSTRUCTURED

Opinions and Observations



@Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz

San Francisco

Through April 26, 2015

For 20 years on the northern end of Alcatraz Island, “privileged” inmates in the nation’s toughest prison toiled on the factory floors of the New Industries Building under the gaze of guards in a raised gun gallery. Today, visitors can peer down from the gallery onto the colorful portraits of more than 175 prisoners of conscience from around the world. Painstakingly assembled by volunteers from more than a million Lego bricks based on instructions from Ai Weiwei’s Beijing studio, this sprawling series of mosaics, titled *Trace*, is just one of seven ambitious site-specific installations by the famed artist and activist.

Currently forbidden from leaving China, Ai has never visited Alcatraz. These installations were developed remotely with the support of the FOR-SITE Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to art about place, in partnership with the National Park Service and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy.

The exhibition explores the theme of freedom in manners that range from the abstract to the

didactic but that are always poignantly calibrated to the built space. A five-ton mechanical wing remains trapped and flightless on the factory floor; a writhing Chinese dragon kite peers out the entrance toward the ocean; ceramic flowers bloom in hospital bathroom fixtures. Individual and isolation cells resonate with sound installations, bringing visitors in touch with the music and voices of the persecuted through visceral encounters with spaces in Alcatraz not normally opened to the public. Finally, in the prison’s dining hall, visitors are invited to write a postcard addressed to one of the prisoners depicted in *Trace*, transforming the prosaic exit activity at many tourist sites into a moment when we are asked to consider our own responses and our place in the world.

LIAN CHIKAKO CHANG ASSOC. AIA works at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, where she collects, analyzes, and communicates data and information about architectural education.

ABOVE

With Wind, 2014.
Photo: Jan Stürmann/
FOR-SITE Foundation.

5 QUESTIONS

Comfort and joy

Charles A. Birnbaum FASLA is the president and founder of the Washington, DC-based Cultural Landscape Foundation. He spent 15 years with the National Park Service as coordinator of its Historic Landscape Initiative and a decade in the private sector, during which he contributed to the Emerald Necklace Park masterplan from 1984–90.

Are there distinguishing traits about Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace that stand apart from his other designs?

The diversity of the passages of scenery that Olmsted was orchestrating was amplified by the built scenic advantages that the Necklace would pass through. We live in a world where the civic realm is often driven by naming opportunities—museum wings, campus facilities, stadiums, playgrounds, themed gardens. Sometimes these introductions lay lightly on the land; on other occasions they don't take advantage of a site's inherent attributes and values. When Olmsted massaged and melded his design for the Necklace, he created a solution that not only worked in harmony with the site's cultural and ecological systems, but also formed a spinal column from which to organize the city and guide its growth. This sounds like landscape urbanism to me, a century before the term became fashionable.

Is there one perch or spot within those 1,100 acres that resonates profoundly for you?

For me the most bittersweet is the spot [overlooking Jamaica Pond] where the Pinebank Mansion once stood. The first time I arrived at this unrivaled scenic vantage point, I was doing reconnaissance work as part of the masterplan with Patricia O'Donnell, Tony Walmsley, Marion Pressley, and Lydia Lowry in 1984–85. Olmsted clearly intended to take advantage of this panoramic view. I sat amongst the ruins of Pinebank, with its exfoliating terra-cotta tiles and wood. What I would soon learn was that Pinebank was the only pre-existing structure that Olmsted integrated into his design. Here was a happy marriage of a landscape that was at once small and big, rich in its

unrivaled topographic variation, and spoke to the idea that change and continuity under the watchful eye of the landscape architect could be site-specific, practical, and rich in its cultural narrative.

What is your earliest impression of or emotional connection to walking the Necklace's paths and edges?

Doing fieldwork 30 years ago in the Back Bay Fens with clipboard in hand and suddenly realizing that I was not in Kansas anymore—this area, overtaken by invasive phragmites, had become a heavily trafficked gay cruising area. For a sheltered 24-year-old who had not yet come to terms with his own sexuality, this was eye opening.

Can you reflect on its candidacy as a World Heritage Site?

As the first urban greenway in the world, and the progenitor of a typology, it's a worthy candidate. The challenge here is not just the global political climate that goes along with any pursuit for World Heritage recognition, it is also about how locals value their heritage. I often ask,

“Why is it that when Bostonians contribute to the arts—including two Emerald Necklace neighbors: the Gardner Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, which along with the Institute of Contemporary Art have raised \$1 billion dollars over the past decade—that parks like the Necklace, based on giving, are not as successful?”

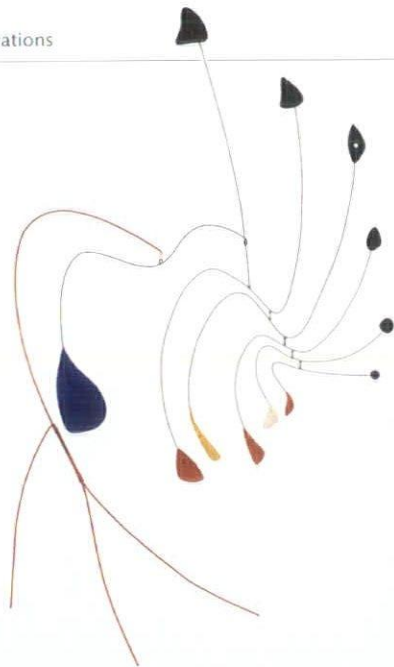
How do you think Olmsted's vision has stood the test of time?

There is a reason there are nearly 200 Olmsted-designed landscapes listed on the National Register of Historic Places, dozens of Olmsted-centric friends groups, more than a dozen biographies, and two documentaries completed over the past few years. Olmsted's legacy has been made visible to millions who live, work, and play in these richly articulated environments that enable individual and collective acts of self-joyfulness. There is a reason why so many people can be found smiling when they are immersed in one of his designs.

BELOW

Jamaica Pond, Boston. Photo: Soe Lin Post.





Calder and Abstraction: From Avant-Garde to Iconic

Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Through January 4, 2015

Shadows on a scrim dance like falling leaves in the softest breeze—that's what you first see when you step inside this spellbinding Alexander Calder exhibition. Behind it is Calder's *Eucalyptus*, all black leaves on wires.

The first great maker of kinetic art, Calder defied expectations about sculpture—starting with its sheer tangibility: mass, volume, gravity. His mobiles float and turn, as ethereal as shadows, their drowsy motion propelled by air currents. “Fed on air, they respire and draw their life from the tenuous life of the atmosphere,” Jean-Paul Sartre wrote.

Calder and Abstraction (organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in collaboration with the Calder Foundation) traces the artist's work from the 1930s, when he gave his heart and his engineer's mind to abstraction, to the late 1960s, his heyday as a public artist.

In startling and winsome early works, biomorphic shapes drift before a panel (*Red Panel*) or inside a frame (*Snake and the Cross*), suggesting paintings come to life. They are kin to Jean Arp's cartoony abstractions. Calder, radically, set the pieces of his compositions adrift.

Using counterbalances, open forms, and flat planes, he devised playful, spirited mobiles and stabiles (which stand on the ground) that moved with enchanting unpredictability. The stabile *La Demoiselle* takes a deep bow and then pinwheels out, its little flats on wires fluttering as if in the wake of that initial bend.

If some of the maquettes for Calder's public works, such as the orange roller coaster *La Grand Vitesse*, feel tired, that's because Calder, along with Henry Moore, set now familiar standards for public art. They take nothing away from the exuberance of his art, which as it moves conveys much in this life that we sense but cannot grasp.

CATE McQUAID is a freelance writer and an art critic for the *Boston Globe*.

ABOVE

La Demoiselle, 1939. Photo: © 2014 Calder Foundation.

SEEN

Landwehrkanal, Berlin

On the Landwehr Canal, which runs along my street in the formerly industrial neighborhood of Kreuzberg, tourist boats fill the narrow and shallow channel. The banks are dotted with people watching them float by, feeding swans, having a nap, having a smoke. Above the Art Deco Admiral Bridge, the city's landmarks are quaintly displayed, as if on a postcard.

Constructed in the mid-19th century, when Kreuzberg did not even exist, the canal was an answer to the problem of water in Berlin. Formerly a swamp (the word *berl* meant swamp in 12th-century Polabian Slavic), this landlocked city is surrounded by lakes, and flooding was always an issue. The Landwehr provided much-needed drainage in an area that at the time was outside the boundaries of the city. It also lightened congestion on the Spree River by redirecting ships carrying wood and other construction materials to various sites, much like a railroad.

Today, the canal is chiefly a way of seeing Berlin and its surrounding landscape from the unique angle provided by boats of all kinds—from canoes and kayaks to rubber rafts and cruise ships—and of being seen by others. While many industrial canals in other cities have become abandoned wastelands, due to polluted waters and toxic soils, this former drainage ditch continues to make Kreuzberg one of the most sought after places to live.

JEANNE HAFFNER is a writer, researcher, urban scholar, and historian. Her book, *The View from Above: The Science of Social Space*, was published by MIT Press in 2013.

BELOW

Photo: Jeanne Haffner.

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MATTER OF COURSE

Architecture in the Islamic World



I have a friend who wishes he had attended only architecture lectures in college. I know what he means: There is no substitute for the aesthetic dream state of watching slides of beautiful buildings parade by in a darkened room. There were many such moments in Nasser Rabbat's Islamic architecture class at MIT, where every session's slide set began—accidentally on purpose, I think—with a glimpse of Rabbat's handsome 11-year-old son, Kinan.

There is a surfeit of beauty in MIT 4.614, which struggles to cover “fifteen centuries and three continents” worth of Islamic architecture, from the reed huts of Sumer to today's Persian Gulf megaprojects, in one semester. (I attended four sessions.) But it isn't beauty that I remember most about the class. What I recall is a course that was simultaneously fascinating and humiliating, for me. To teach Muslim architecture, Rabbat had to teach Islamic history and culture as well, and at times my ignorance overwhelmed me.

From roughly the 8th century well into the modern era, successive waves of Mohammed's followers dominated Mesopotamia—modern-day Iraq and Iran—plus what we call the Middle East; Turkey; North Africa; and, of course, parts of Spain and Sicily. The achievements of the vestigial Islamic state are head spinning. A Muslim cartographer in 12th-century Islamic Sicily created what many view as the first credible map of the world. According to some historians, Al-Azhar divinity school in Cairo was the world's first university. MIT thinks so. Not far from where we listened to Rabbat's lectures, the Institute has erected a bust of Al-Azhar scholar Ibn-al-Haytham, the father of the science of optics.

To explain why the Abbassid caliph built the 8th-century “round city” of Baghdad for his armies, or how the hypostyle (many-columned) mosques emanated eastward, then northward, then westward from Mecca, Rabbat had to explain the spread of Islamic civilization, about which I knew next to nothing. In a conversation after class, Rabbat tried to put me at ease and somehow convinced me that if ignorance isn't a virtue, it certainly isn't rare. “There are four Arabic speakers in the class [out of a dozen undergraduates], and they don't know any more than you do,” he assured me. “Turks learn Turkish history, Persians learn Persian history, but

they rarely see the big picture.”

“Why should you know anything about this period,” he challenged me, “unless you want to go dabbling in the affairs of these places? It's sad that American soldiers are destroying some of these places without knowing what they are doing. But they are not the only ones.”

And here is another leitmotif of the innocent-sounding MIT 4.614: the recurring theme of desuetude and destruction. On the one hand, many of the mosques, palaces, mausolea, ribats (small forts), and hospitals have disappeared more or less naturally under the sands of time. Abu Jafar's Round City has vanished, as have the glorious 10th- and 11th-century Fatimid palaces of Cairo. But many architectural marvels have been forcibly “repurposed” in the name of God. Perhaps the most famous example is the 8th-century Mosque of Cordoba, a World Heritage Site now known as La Mezquita de Cordoba. Here the Catholic Church simply absorbed and integrated the Great Mosque into its Gothic plan.

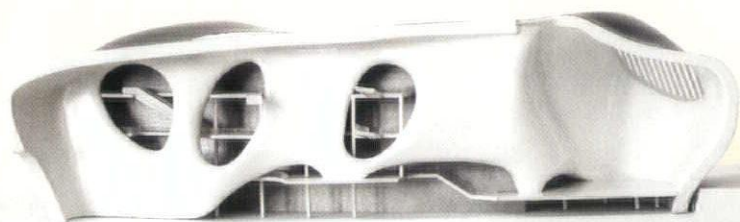
Much of Cordoba's Great Mosque remains standing. Not so ancient Islamic mausolea, destroyed by Wahhabi Muslims in Saudi Arabia who reject the veneration of mortal beings. Not so portions of the 9th-century, 170-foot-tall Malwiya Minaret in Sammara, bombed in 2005 by Iraqi insurgents after US troops stationed snipers on its top floor. While we were sitting in Rabbat's classroom, the destruction of Islamic architectural sites continued apace. Fighting between the Syrian Army and fundamentalist Islamic insurgents destroyed the minaret of the 11th-century Umayyad dynasty mosque in Aleppo, also a World Heritage Site. “It's a huge loss,” the Syrian-born Rabbat told the class.

What did I learn? All of the above, and much more. I learned humility in the face of knowledge. Alas, the more you study, the less you know.

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

ABOVE

Cordoba's Great Mosque. Photo: Tony Castillo.



MAD about architecture

National Building Museum, Washington, DC

September 15, 2014

Picture in your mind's eye the sheer, fog-shrouded rock cliffs depicted in ancient Chinese landscape paintings of the Shan shui style. That's what Ma Yansong, founding principal of Beijing-based MAD Architects, evokes when discussing his contemporary architecture, which is rooted in flowing metal panelized forms. Addressing an audience gathered in the entry hall among the colonnades of the National Building Museum, Ma explained how Shan shui's sloping garden landscapes and elemental approach inspire his current work. He proposes a new building typology consisting of sleek, undulating massive forms to resolve the unique challenges of rapid growth in China. By creating a variety of scale and function, Ma believes cities can grow in a viable, responsible way. A graduate of the Beijing Institute of Civil Engineering and Architecture and Yale University, Ma was the first Chinese architect awarded a RIBA Fellowship in 2010.

As he walked the audience through a series of stunning slides of proposed and built works, he highlighted several major projects, including 2011's Inner Mongolia's Ordos Cultural Center. Ma rejected the lunar-like desert landscape of the site: "This project is a reference to the image of a desert that has been there forever; by placing a metal building on the desert, like a spaceship landing, it does not carry any identity with it. When you put the two together it creates a time gap, neither old or new."

Ma's masterplan for the Nanjing Zendia Himalayas Center refines his approach to scaled communities. This 6 million-square-foot development attempts to solve rapid expansion by proposing clusters of dense urban-like communities. Ma reimagines the scale and diversity of landscapes depicted in Shan shui paintings as a model for large residential development, with the masterplan's towers, streets, and public spaces finding direct parallels in the rock cliffs, footbridges, and gardens common in this ancient artwork. A series of streams crisscross small-scale shops and pavilions that are seemingly tucked into a dense urban forest of trees. It is in this diversity that Ma sees a new typology for urban growth that will flourish apace with the expansion of China, while remaining rooted in a rich cultural past.

SAM COATS ASSOC. AIA is Gensler's firmwide head of intern development and academic outreach.

ABOVE

Ordos Museum model by Fang Zhenning. Photo: MAD Architects.

University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

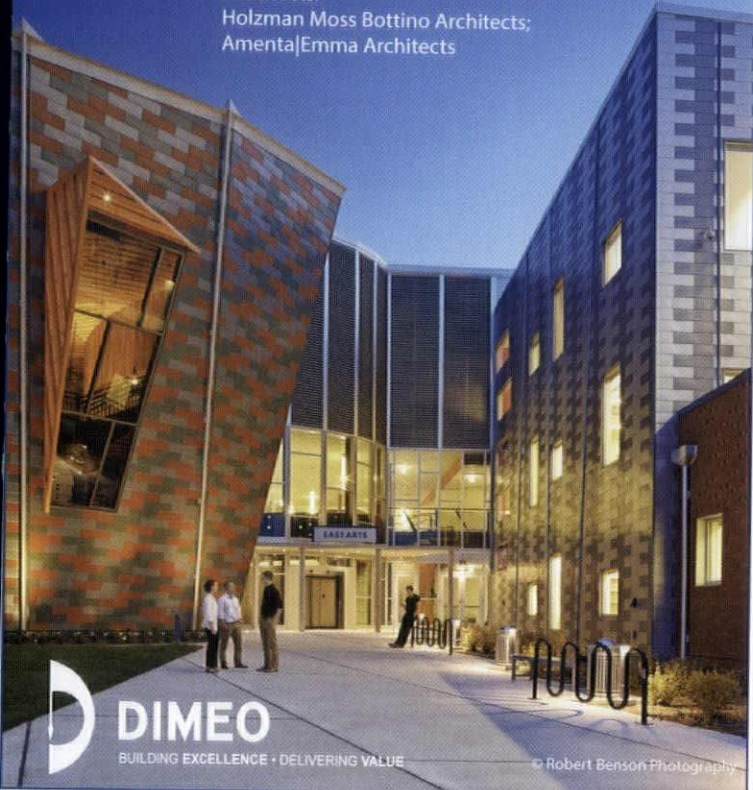
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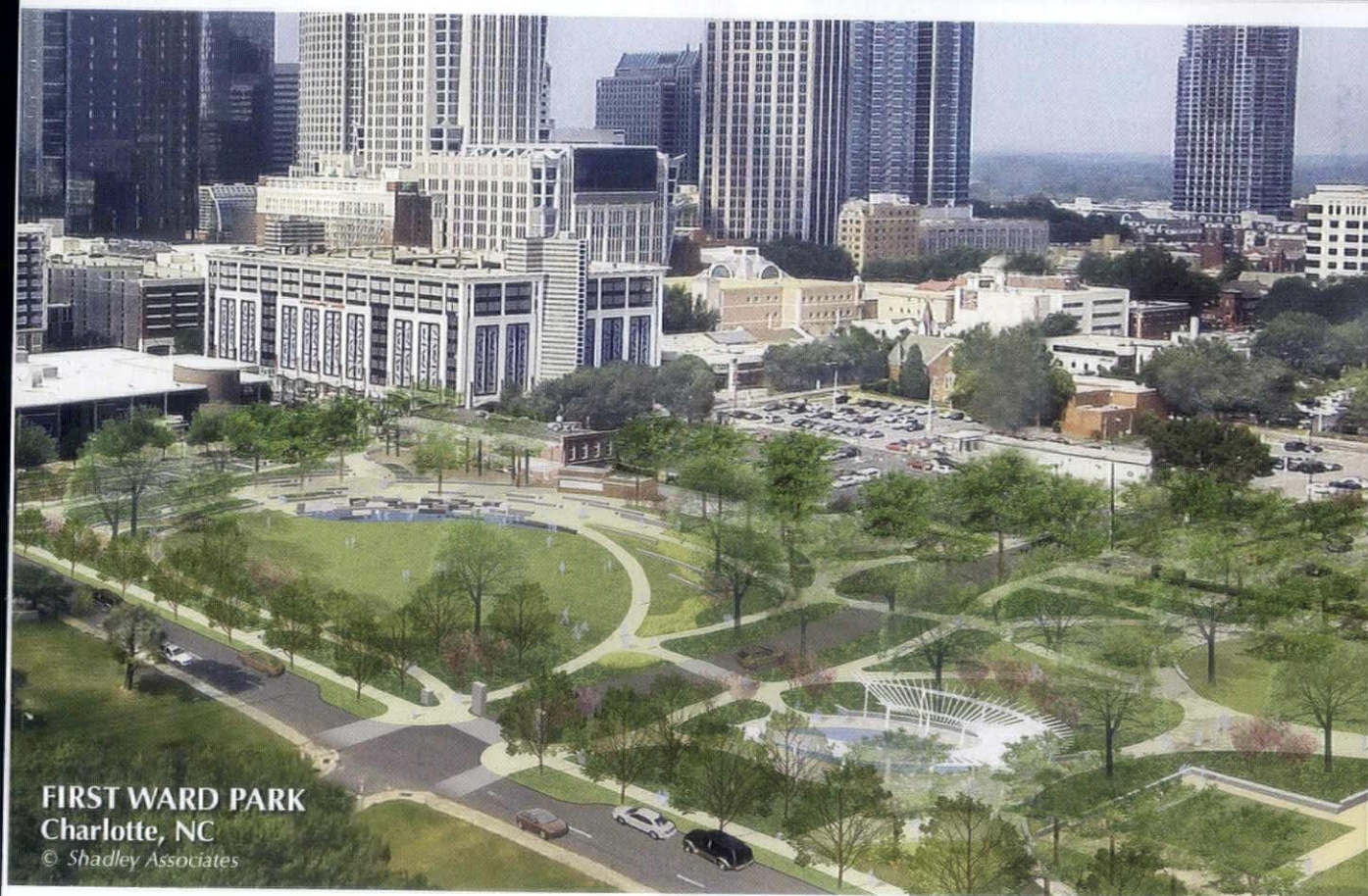
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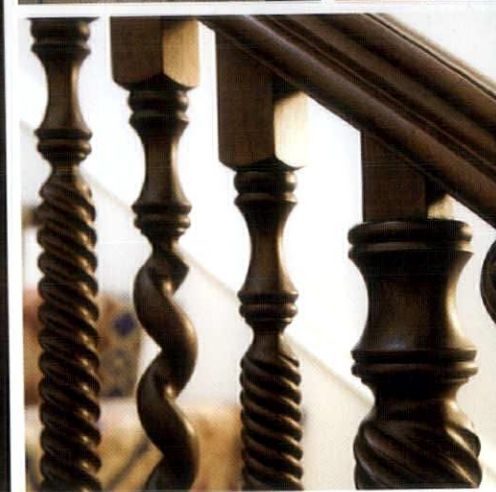
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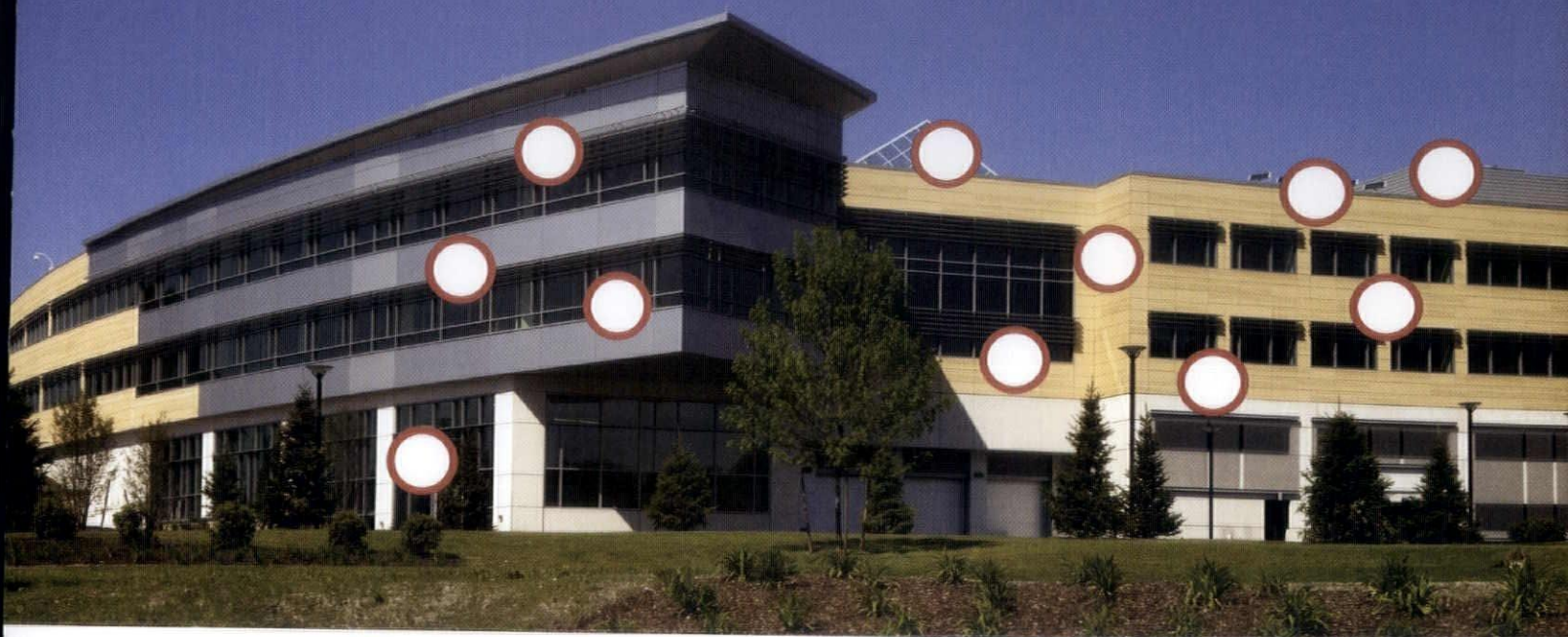
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FOUND IN TRANSLATION

An abstract blue line drawing of a globe, composed of numerous thin, intersecting lines that form a complex network, suggesting global connectivity or data flow. The lines are more densely packed in some areas, creating a sense of depth and complexity.

With more architects working on projects overseas, how does this dispersal of talent affect practice? The appetite for shiny new objects must be balanced with a kit bag of concerns: flash versus function, desire for progress versus respect for indigenous design, imported notions about identity versus local cultural values. In reconciling these seemingly oppositional issues, designers need to interpret context and discover a new vernacular. In doing so, they lay the foundation for a more enlightened global landscape.



INDIA

SOFTENING THRESHOLDS

by Rahul Mehrotra

India's kinetic urban landscape mirrors its society, a complex emerging fabric of multiple aspirations. The high-tech center of Hyderabad in South India has grown tremendously, rivaling Bangalore as an information technology hub. But as you traverse the landscape of Hyderabad, the social inequity is striking. Architecture often is an instrument in exacerbating these inequities—a tool to separate people rather than bring them together.

The work we are doing in India is inspired by this concern. In designing the headquarters of KMC, an infrastructure company in Hyderabad, we were able to challenge this social hierarchy, and in a corporate office where these divisions are even more acute. The project, completed in 2012, involved questions of identity but also of function: We needed to keep the building cool in this hot, dry climate. We devised a green wall, but not in the common way we have come to think about sticking green on walls. Instead, we employed a double skin: The inner façade is reinforced concrete with operable windows; the outer skin, about three feet away, is a custom-cast aluminum trellis outfitted with blooming plants that grow in hydroponic trays with a drip irrigation system that also cools the building with a fine mist.

The greenery is so central to the building's identity and function that the gardeners who maintain it have become much more important. Rather than the usual scenario of the gardeners toiling in the hot sun while the executives drive by in their limousines not making any eye contact, now they are part of the corporation. They freely traverse any part of the building via the green wall that they are charged with maintaining. The success of KMC's

corporate identity is dependent on the success of the lowest-paid employees who upkeep the façade—true green jobs!

None of this was articulated to the client as “Here is our social agenda.” We were operating intuitively, slowly becoming conscious of the possibilities of the design and engaging the client and users of the building in these discussions as they evolved. I believe if you embed your own concerns and values in your practice, you push the envelope as these values resonate in design decisions. I use the metaphor of a threshold: They tend to get hardened by economic and social differences and played out in the way we articulate our buildings. So the design of the double façade was not only a performative element of the building but also softened the threshold: Different social classes became aware of one another, through their sheer presence.

When we first got the commission for the KMC project, Hyderabad was torn by social unrest. Ethnic and communal tensions had been stoked by a government debate over whether to split the state of Andhra Pradesh in two. The ostentation of the glass skyscraper as a symbol of global capital was an irresistible target for protesters throwing rocks. Everywhere we went, the buildings were covered in fish netting to protect the glass. It's interesting that the glass skyscraper is so compelling a symbol of wealth and power that corporations insist on them even though they aren't appropriate to the meteorological climate of South India or, as we saw, its political climate. The headquarters at KMC offers an alternate design approach—one which is also a response to an important social issue. Even if it is only a gesture, it's a beginning. ■

RAHUL MEHROTRA is chairman of the department of Urban Planning and Design at Harvard's Graduate School of Design and founding principal of RMA Architects, with studios in Mumbai, India, and Boston.

ABOVE
KMC Headquarters, Hyderabad, India.
Photo: Robert Stephens.

OPPOSITE
World airline routes.
Illustration: John O'Sullivan.

QATAR

GRAPPLING WITH IDENTITY

by Kelly Hutzell AIA

I don't cover my head. I teach my courses in English. I can drive a car. These are answers to questions that I frequently face from Americans about what it's like to be a woman in the Middle East. The political and cultural nuances of the Arab world—from the ultraconservative society and hijabs of Saudi Arabia to the cosmopolitan glamour and high heels of Lebanon—are lost to many. In Qatar, local women wear hijabs *and* heels. I wear neither.

Qataris account for only one-fifth of the total population of the country (which has tripled in 10 years), and men outnumber women three to one. Interestingly, the enrollment in the beginning architecture elective courses that I teach at Carnegie Mellon University's branch campus is overwhelmingly female. When I first started teaching, I was surprised to find that Qatar University, with segregated campuses for men and women, offers the only Bachelor of Architecture degree in the country, and to women only. Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering degrees are offered only to men.

In my classes, I use our campus, a multiversity called Education City, as a laboratory. With buildings designed by Arata Isozaki, Legorreta + Legorreta, Antoine Predock, and OMA, among others, it offers valuable lessons. This past spring my class donned hard hats and orange vests to visit the construction site of the ambitious new Faculty of Islamic Studies building by Mangera Yvars. It's certainly no accident that the building is the most avant-garde on campus; it speaks to Qatar's ambition to play a major role in

defining contemporary Islamic identity and culture. While the students marveled at the soaring and fluid forms that referenced Arabic calligraphy, they lamented the absence of color, stating that "white is so boring."

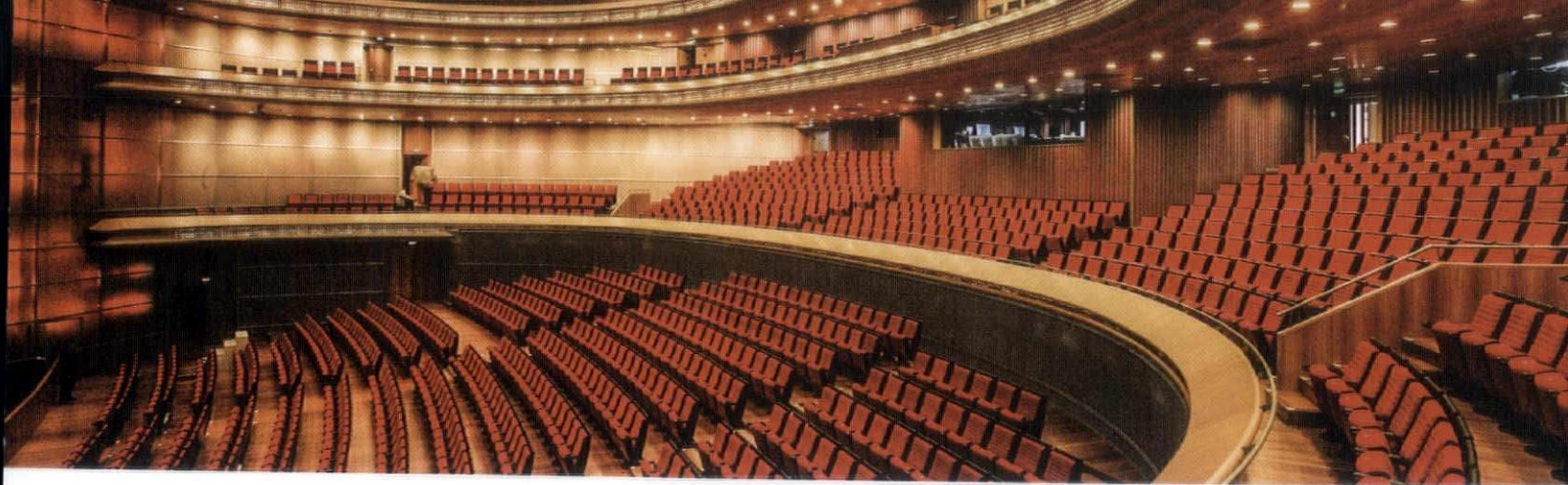
On a recent field trip to Msheireb, the massive mixed-use regeneration project intended to bring locals back into the heart of Doha, my students admired the project's ambition yet commented that they would never live there. Most Qataris left the clusters of extended family courtyard houses in the city center a generation ago, choosing to live dispersed in suburban villas behind walls and gates. With this physical atomization of the community unit, the value placed on privacy intensified. What I saw as the benefits of density, my students viewed as an invasion of personal space. It's yet another reminder of how different their context is from mine.

My time spent teaching at Carnegie Mellon Qatar has afforded me greater access to the culture than most expatriates. As an architectural educator and researcher, I have had a front-row seat to Doha's physical transformation. It is a city that erases and rewrites itself often; for as many buildings that are built, it seems that just as many have been demolished. The issue of identity—whose identity?—takes on great importance when talking about everything from fashion to architecture. Teaching—and learning—in the Middle East has allowed me to see beauty in what others may merely see as black and white. ■

KELLY HUTZELL AIA teaches in the fall at the Carnegie Mellon University campus in Pittsburgh and in the spring at the branch campus in Doha, Qatar, where she also works on projects for the Boston-based firm over,under.

BELOW
Education City, Doha, Qatar.
Photo: Osama Saeed.





CHINA

LET'S NOT FORGET FUNCTION

by Rose Mary Su

China is developing at a dizzying speed, but in its haste to showcase its progress to the world, some design vision is lost. One place where this is particularly obvious is the country's program for new performing arts centers.

In preparation for the 2008 Olympics, the government poured generous funding into the construction of the National Grand Theater in Beijing. This venue consisted of three spaces: a large opera house, a major concert hall, and a smaller theater. The theater was designed by Paul Andreu, a French architect known more for his airports than performing arts centers, but he achieved what most Chinese view as progress: a Western-style monumental architecture that is a standout building in modern Beijing.

With more government funding, the rush to build performing arts venues continued to other cities, including smaller ones. Many of these cities do not have an existing facility nor resident artists who would use such a space. The government's strategy seems to be "build it and they will come."

Such a rush for progress comes at a price. Unlike first-tier cities where there are three performance halls within each Grand Theater, many of the smaller cities have one multipurpose hall that must accommodate all types of uses. The programming of these spaces can be an afterthought because the primary goal is to provide showstopping exterior architecture to attract tourists (inviting comparisons to Sydney). This makes it extremely challenging to satisfy the acoustical and operational needs of a wide range of performances, in particular those that rely heavily on visiting performers. Maintaining and operating these monumental halls can also be

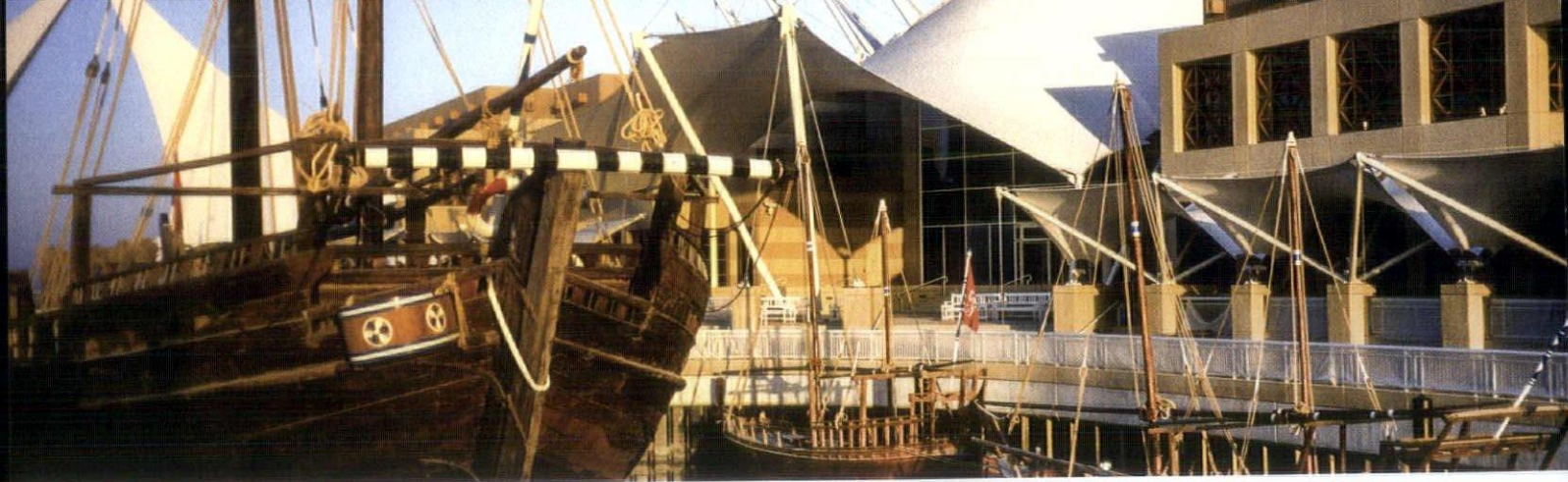
a challenge, as the funding is left up to the local authorities rather than to Beijing.

What types of performances occur in these venues? Since the Cultural Revolution, traditional Peking opera, with its more intimate courtyard-style setting, has been replaced by propagandistic operas more akin to a heavily amplified Broadway show, with casts of hundreds, including dancers, acrobats, choruses, and sometimes even soldiers. Such extravaganzas require a huge stage. At the opposite end of the spectrum, a traditional Chinese instrumental ensemble playing in the pentatonic scale ideally would perform in a more intimate setting more comparable to a Western recital space. I once heard a *guzheng* ensemble (*guzheng* is a type of Chinese zither) in a multipurpose hall; the musicians were heavily amplified, and the performance was not memorable. On another visit to Beijing, I went to a *guzheng* maker's studio. With a more intimate setting, I was able to appreciate the timbre of this string instrument.

As the composer Tan Dun has said, "China is learning fast, but it has missed the point by building concert halls that are houses for rent instead of institutions with resident companies, production budgets, and a management team." The funding granted to these cities focused mainly on designing and building the venues, not on the continuing production of the events. As architects and acousticians, it is our responsibility to guide our clients and not simply use the opportunity to design a facility that is flashy but not functional. One hopes that as China races to build these once-in-a-lifetime performing arts facilities, it will make time to pause and plan out programs for the next generation. ■

ROSE MARY SU is an acoustical consultant for Acentech, specializing in performance space design and noise control. A native of Taiwan, she has a lifelong love of music.

ABOVE
National Grand Theater, Beijing.
Photo: Paul Maurer.



KUWAIT

THE POWER OF STORIES

by Peter Kuttner FAIA

Although aquariums, science centers, and children's museums are almost uniquely US exports, making learning meaningful to children is part of every culture. To engage families in exploring the familiar with new eyes, a museum and the stories it tells need to be both exciting and new, while welcoming and comfortable. Communities everywhere can take a measure of pride in their own stories.

In 2000, we designed The Scientific Center, a multiuse educational center including an aquarium, IMAX theater, and Discovery Place—Kuwait's first children's science museum. We worked with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, an institute committed to returning science education to Kuwait in a meaningful way. Because we are involved in the design and programming for both the building and the exhibit experience, a broad cultural awareness is crucial to the project's overall success, beyond the typical incorporation of local architectural motifs.

Kuwait has a unique setting at the head of the Persian Gulf. It follows the coast, where the desert meets the sea. So it has a vibrant history of trade, reinforced by its geography. Kuwait City is a strategic port, with a culture informed by the Bedouin caravans traversing the desert and the Persian sailors crossing the Gulf in their trading ships called dhows.

Tradition shapes The Scientific Center, both literally and in allusion. The plan is based on the Arab souk, with the different exhibits arranged as shops along the spine. Architecturally, traditional building elements such as arched entries and *mashrabiya* (wood screens which shade openings) control the light; local tile patterns set the interior flavor. Perhaps more as a metaphor, the fabric sun

panels above the souk skylights are reminiscent of the sails of the dhows out on the horizon, and the sun protection along the waterfront recalls the Bedouin tents in the desert.

For the exhibit experience, we tell local stories, based on the geography and history of the country. Discovery Place is organized around Desert, Gulf, and Coast galleries, interpreting science as local. While the children's science exhibits are museum classics—like a flow table to study currents or a flotation cylinder to understand pressure—they use local details to connect with Kuwaiti children: In this case, the water flows from an Arabic teapot, or the pressure causes a Persian pearl diver to rise or fall.

As Western designers, we also needed to understand the role of Islam in learning. In the United States we place an emphasis on the predictability of scientific experimentation, but much of what devout Muslims—as believers of divine intervention—experience is interpreted as God's will. Although Kuwaiti educators appreciated participatory learning, illustrating cause-and-effect with hands-on activity caused discomfort for some Muslims. As it was explained to us, Allah has created an order to the world around us, and science does not solely live in a secular realm.

To find some common ground, but still promote self-directed exploration, we moved our focus to the “sense of wonder” inherent in all nature and science. For instance, the exhibit *What's Under Kuwait* lets children lift portions of the earth, discovering the geological formation of the Arabian Peninsula (including oil, of course!) without dealing directly with the planet's creation stories. Appreciating the world around us has always been the first step in understanding science, in any culture. ■

PETER KUTTNER FAIA is president of Cambridge Seven Associates, serves on the BSA board, and is currently working on science centers in China and Saudi Arabia.

ABOVE
The Scientific Center, Kuwait.
Photo: © Gustavo Ferrari.

RWANDA

MEMORY AND MODERNITY

by Michael Murphy

In 2007, I rode down National Highway 4 outside Kigali, the capital city, toward the eastern lowland countryside in Rwanda. Lining the highway were small shops and homes, largely built in mud—either wattle and daub or mud block. Tin roofs, shed roofs, lean-tos. The older roofs were clay-tiled, fired in local kilns, made by hand, and green from the wet and rainy months behind us. Below the roofs were small windows with wooden shutters, and next to those, large red X's spray-painted on the walls; a reminder that eminent domain, along with the stench of progress, was upon them. I asked Bruce, my Rwandan colleague, why so many of these were to be torn down. "The government wants progress," he said. "They want modern buildings."

As a sophisticated economy began to emerge in Rwanda in the early 2000s, glass and steel construction filled Kigali's woven streets. Shopping malls replaced marketplaces; blue-glass-gabled monstrosities came flat-packed from China; meanwhile swaths of self-built houses—the filth of the informal—were swept clear under the tabula rasa of modernity and progress, the perception of development.

The Rwandan "modern" need not be overly nostalgic for a past that few have an interest in preserving. Colonized, butchered, forgotten, ignored, Rwandan progress was a sight to behold. I wondered, however, staring at these new fields where thousands once lived, what was lost? What were we all trying to forget?

Later that summer, I visited the school that my team and I had spent the previous few years

designing and building in Kigali, a school that weaves into the landscape like so many Rwandan baskets weave between the folds of fingertips. The materials were simple, brick and tin roofs extended to shelter and collect. I stood on a hill opposite the school and watched students bolt for play, cascading along the hill. Staring there, pleased with what we had built, three other buildings stood out that I had not seen before: small enclosures perched next to the school campus, built on our neighbor's property long before we started this project, long before I had thought about what a school in Rwanda might look like.

These were not so much buildings as sheds—cowsheds. Simple, small, enclosed rooms made from woven reed that store grain and house cows in the evening. Above those enclosures are tin roofs that extend far beyond, held up by stick columns that provide shade and protection and a semblance of ownership. Cowsheds protect the sacred. They are more than banks or safes or even hidden wads of cash stuffed under mattresses. They are the physical manifestation of the future, the hope of prosperity, an investment.

Standing there, seeing our own designs under this new light, I realized the race toward modernity is not always forward but cyclical, and the tendrils of culture not so severable as the many mud blocks, clay tiles, or self-built walls we mourn for and admire. Their memory is our architecture, is our modernity. ■

MICHAEL MURPHY is the CEO of MASS Design Group, an architecture and design firm based in Boston and Kigali, Rwanda.

BELOW

The Umubano Primary School, Kigali, Rwanda. Photo: Iwan Baan.

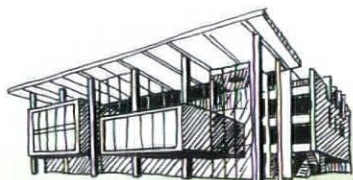


CODE OF CONTEXT

THE UNEASY EXCITEMENT
OF GLOBAL PRACTICE

BOSTON DIASPORA

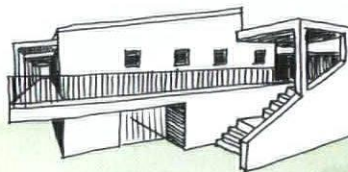
Local firms increasingly are leaving their imprint on plans and structures across the globe. Here we offer a sampling of projects, all from this century, that bring a contemporary meaning to the term "International Style."



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Hamburg

by Jay Wickersham FAIA

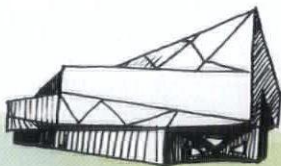
The signs of architecture's globalization are all around us. Foreign students flock to Boston to study architecture, prominent buildings are designed by foreign architects, American firms build practices around international projects. Globalization has allowed architects to work outside their own regions and cultures, at a scale and with a freedom of design they might never enjoy at home. But beneath the excitement and glamour of international practice, I sense an unease. Are we creating vital and original new architectures, or are we homogenizing cities and landscapes and obliterating regional differences? Are architects helping to strengthen and develop the economies of host communities, or are they acting as unwitting tools of inequality and repression?

Before we tackle these questions, a brief look backward may help explain our current condition. The globalization of architecture is not new. Here in Boston, the architectural community was transformed by two European émigrés, Walter Gropius and Josep Lluís Sert, in their roles as teachers and practitioners. The firms they helped found, The Architects Collaborative and Sert, Jackson & Associates, were designing projects all over the world from the 1950s onward.

In the last quarter century, changes in politics, economics, and technology have dramatically expanded and accelerated the process of globalization. The end of the Cold War and the creation of the World Trade Organization removed trade barriers and opened up enormous new markets to Western investors and architects. The transmission of digital designs via the Internet made it possible



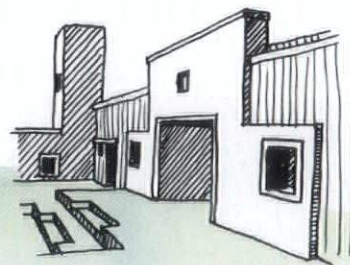
MASS DESIGN GROUP
Umusozi Ukiza "Healing Hill"
Doctors' Housing
Butaro, Rwanda



PRESTON SCOTT COHEN
Tel Aviv Museum of Art
Tel Aviv, Israel



CBT ARCHITECTS/CRJA-IBI GROUP
Al Marasy, residences
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates



RMA ARCHITECTS
Tata Institute
Tuljapur, India

for architects to design large and complex buildings from the other side of the world, without having to set up a local office.

Here are a few illustrations of the resulting shifts in practice:

- Major local buildings have recently been designed by architects from England (Norman Foster, Museum of Fine Arts), Italy (Renzo Piano, Isabella Stewart Gardner and Harvard Art museums), Germany (Behnisch Partners, Genzyme Center), Spain (Rafael Moneo, Harvard engineering laboratory), Uruguay (Rafael Viñoly, Boston Convention and Exhibition Center), India (Charles Correa, MIT Brain and Cognitive Sciences Complex), and Japan (Fumiko Maki, MIT Media Lab).
- The percentage of foreign students studying architecture has reached 36 percent at Harvard and 43 percent at MIT.
- *Engineering News-Record* reported in 2014 that the 15 largest US architectural firms all earn at least 15 percent of their revenues from international projects—with the share for foreign work going as high as 45 percent (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill), 63 percent (RTKL), and even 76 percent (Kohn Pedersen Fox).

These unprecedented opportunities to practice abroad can give architects the chance to design with greater freedom, unencumbered by landmark and environmental codes and protesting neighbors. Should we rejoice, or worry, that today just about anything can be designed and built just about anywhere? What is the impact of globalization on design?

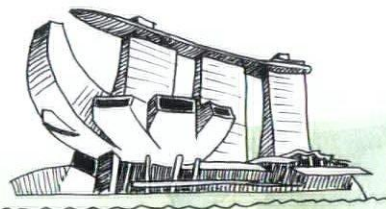
In 1984, architectural historian Kenneth Frampton published a premonitory essay calling for a “critical regionalism.” Frampton worried that architects were no longer proposing new social models of community, becoming instead the tools of large-scale real estate development—designing new skyscrapers and shopping malls that looked like they could

exist anywhere. Frampton called for “an architecture of resistance” that would fight back against this placeless, universal tendency of Modernism. He didn’t mean that architects should imitate preindustrial forms and ornament. He meant that they should develop a Modernism rooted in an understanding of regional ecologies and cultures, regional building materials and techniques.

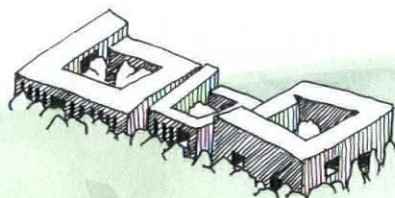
Critics like Frampton tend to talk about homogenization in terms of appearance—the problem is that buildings in different countries and regions start to look the same. But it is hard to see how a foreign architect, spending a few days at the site of a new project, can ever develop the depth of historical and cultural knowledge of a place that could truly inform the design. It may be that our best protection against global homogenization lies not in the realm of the visual or the historical, but rather in the idea of sustainability.

Environmental design strategies have always shaped architectural cultures in very specific ways. There are good reasons why buildings in hot, dry places, for example, have been organized and built differently from those in temperate wet places. Even in the first half of the 20th century, much of the playful experimentation of modern architects was driven by responses to regional climates. Look at the solar orientations of European social housing from the 1920s. Look at the sunshades and breezeways of Le Corbusier’s work in the Mediterranean, Brazil, and India. Look at the lightweight, light-on-the-land houses of Paul Rudolph in Florida and Richard Neutra in California.

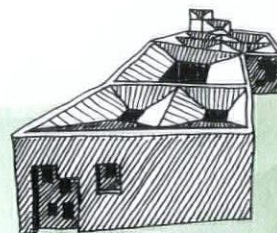
This ecological side of modern architecture has been neglected and largely forgotten in recent decades. Among the mixed blessings of globalization has been access to cheap fossil fuels and air conditioning—leading, in turn, to the worldwide spread of buildings designed as sleek, sealed, climate-controlled containers. We are slowly, painfully learning that this approach to design is no longer sustainable ecologically,



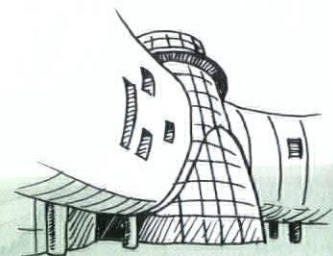
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Activity Center
Guangzhou, China

financially, or ethically. Architects working abroad have a responsibility to study the ecology and climate of the site. This knowledge can inspire designs that respond to the character of a particular region and place. By focusing on a building's environmental performance, an architect may achieve the visual and spatial sense of fit that Frampton was calling for.

Architects working abroad face a further challenge, perhaps even more complicated and confusing: making sense of the social and political context of the projects in which they are involved.

The AIA Code of Ethics says that architects "should uphold human rights in all their professional endeavors." What does this mean for a project in a foreign country? What if the building is to be located on a site where poor residents were unfairly evicted, or a historic landmark was demolished? What if the building is for a repressive government agency? What if it is to be constructed by underpaid laborers, working under unsafe conditions and denied basic legal and political rights?

I'm not going to trivialize the ethical challenges of international practice by pretending that there are easy answers to these questions. An architect does not pick a project's location or determine its use or control the pay and safety of the construction workers, so is it really fair to hold the architect responsible for these outcomes? Even in one's own country, it can be hard enough to figure out the client's real needs and desires, and decide whether a project is a good fit. Working abroad, the difficulties of getting good information are magnified. And the competitive pressures of the marketplace can be overwhelming. Practicing architecture at any scale requires a firm, and firms need a steady flow of new projects so they can keep their staff employed, pay the rent, and meet all the other demands of running a business.

But instead of ignoring these ethical questions and pretending that architects are apolitical artists or technicians, perhaps we can identify some ways to discuss and address them.

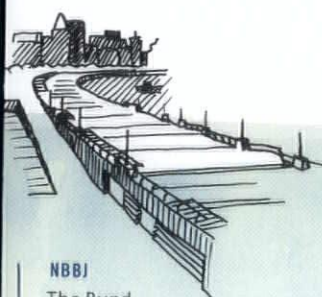
Architects do have professional choices. An architect is not like a court-appointed lawyer who must defend an accused

murderer, or a doctor who must treat every patient no matter how morally repugnant. An architect can always investigate a potential client and project, and either accept the commission or turn it down. There are international nonprofits, such as Human Rights Watch and Transparency International, that issue reliable reports on the status of civil liberties and political corruption in different countries.

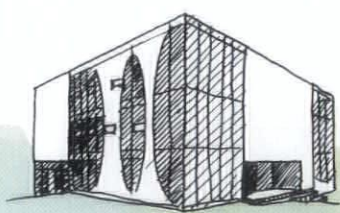
Under certain circumstances, foreign architects can develop active partnerships with local designers and builders. A particularly inspiring model is the one developed by the medical nonprofit Partners in Health; it views the delivery of health-care services in developing countries as an opportunity for economic development. The Boston-based architectural firm MASS Design Group has applied this model to projects in Rwanda and Haiti by finding ways to transfer skills and develop experience within the host community. Under this model of foreign practice, how the project is built, and by whom, is as important as the physical building itself.

And architects can act collectively. Since 2011 the international artists group Gulf Labor has been pressuring the Guggenheim Museum to improve workers' conditions at the construction site for its new building in Abu Dhabi or else the artists have threatened to boycott exhibits at the museum. Architects could similarly work together, in informal groups or through organizations such as the AIA and Britain's RIBA, to develop communal standards for global projects and practices that support international norms of human rights, and by which architects would agree to abide.

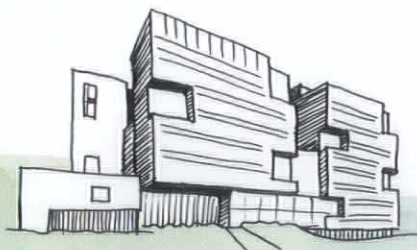
The globalization of architecture can feel like a runaway horse, beyond anyone's control. But though we cannot stop change, we can try to steer it in certain directions. As architects debate these questions about design, sustainability, and ethics in international projects, we may start to define a shared set of principles and behaviors, which can help guide global practice in the future. ■



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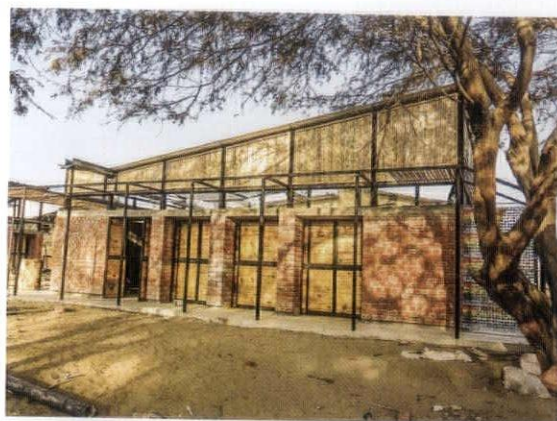
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TALARA SCHOOL PROJECT, PERU

The Santa Elena de Piedritas School, with exterior shading structures; model-making workshop for the new building; a weaver with a bottle-cap mural. Photos: Jesús Porras.

OPPOSITE

The view of the bay from the community center in Maeami Hama, a fishing village in Ishinomaki, Japan, devastated by the 2011 tsunami. Photo: Michael Steiner.

by Eric J. Cesal and Audrey Galo ASSOC. AIA

As the world shrinks, the importance of design grows. And yet the rude truth is that design remains invisible to many. The effort put in by designers to make our cities beautiful, safe, and functional is frequently misunderstood.

Perhaps you have had this experience: You find yourself walking the High Line in New York City at sunset, or looking up in an atrium to find the perfect vantage point. In that moment you recognize the precision, consideration, and intention that elevate these spaces to a list of all-time favorites. You embrace a deep feeling of appreciation for design and look around, thinking that others must be as elated as you are. Instead, a set of confused faces stare back angrily, wondering why you'd choose to stop and space out at the most inopportune time in an area of high foot traffic.

Through our work at Architecture for Humanity, we aim to put to rest any doubt about the value of design. In the communities where we work, stretching to the corners of the globe that have never seen an architect, designers are asked to solve pressing questions: How can we capture drinking water? Where can my children play safely? How do I make my house safe in a storm? We solve these questions through design. Among the results are children who no longer hide on school days because their new classrooms are filled with light and fresh air, teenagers who work against gender inequality by

playing co-ed soccer on their new pitch, and small-business owners building back better following a devastating storm.

As designers working on a global scale in communities of need, the challenges we face are growing in severity and complexity. We are asked: How will we respond to climate change? Can we provide adequate housing while rates of urbanization accelerate? How do we put an end to substandard building practices? The needs and pressures in vulnerable communities are urgent.

Increasingly, designers are answering this call to action, eager to work abroad and contribute to the safety and resilience of the world. It's no easy feat to work in places far from our own homes; cultural divides require caution and adaptability—and a sense of humor. In the 15 years of Architecture for Humanity's existence, we have learned to be comfortable in our own skin, in the places we work and with the people we hope to serve.

EMBRACE PLACE

Jesús Porras spent a year with residents of the town of Talara in the Piura region of Peru. Jesús is an architect who chose to immerse himself within this community to rebuild the only school facility in Talara. The school, Santa Elena de Piedritas, sits within a remote rural desert community and serves more than 100 students. Jesús was not exempt from the town residents'



ISHINOMAKI, JAPAN

Clockwise from left: Architects show local fishermen a model of the Maeami Hama community center, photo: Akinobu Yoshikawa; a detail of the exterior of the new center; the center at night, photos: Karl Johnson.

living conditions; he faced the problematic shortage of water in the arid land. He was also privy to the economic hardships of many families with whom he shared meals and met with extended family members during community workshops. He discovered the lack of reliable jobs for women and imaginative spaces for children to play. He was not apart from their experience; their home became his home, and their challenges became his challenges.



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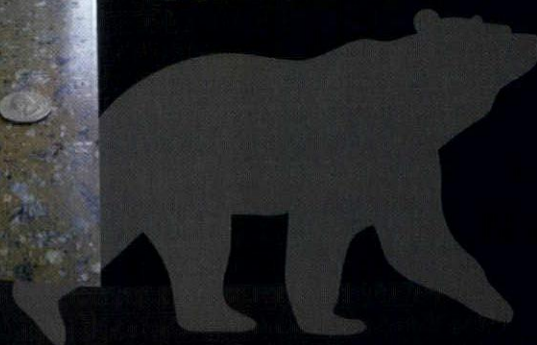


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During Talara's school reconstruction project, Jesús seized opportunities to capture multiple layers of the community's concern and applied his creative problem solving. The dusty lot adjacent to the school was transformed into a playground, built from a decommissioned boat transported through the generosity of a neighbor's truck. And when the school grounds were in need of decorative elements, Jesús rallied the students to collect hundreds of colorful bottle caps. With the help of Talara's female leaders, beautiful woven bottle-cap murals were created and displayed throughout the buildings. The "bottle-cap weavers" adopted the craft and now rely on their art as a source of income for their families.

TAKE MEASURE

In 2011, following the great earthquake and tsunami in East Japan, we encountered the disappearance of entire communities; buildings washed kilometers away in scattered piles of debris. Ishinomaki was one such community. With the help of our Tokyo chapter, we set up shop and asked ourselves: How would we bring back dignity and restore hope for this generation and the next? The focus turned to the people and places that exemplified the strength and courage needed to push the recovery of Ishinomaki forward.

As a result, we chose to work on projects that could spur continued rehabilitation of the region and contribute to the healing of all its residents. The search began with town

heroes—the women and men who continued to champion the spirit of the place—the fishermen, cooks, craft makers, and teachers. In the first year of recovery, we completed a sports field with the help of a generous farmer. The farmer donated an asparagus field so it could become the home of a new football pitch for young athletes, complete with team uniforms for the "Asparagi" team. We completed these unconventional projects because they were instrumental to the community's future. We designed and built a noodle shop, home, and work studio for a women's craft cooperative, and even a grocery market that includes an after-school children's center.

COME FULL CIRCLE

The experience of working around the world on community-level projects is exciting work. It's a job that provides a lens into how as designers we can serve others and set forth a positive direction for a community's success. During the journey, while we witness and experience how design can change a tiny slice of the world, our minds should also turn to the places we call home. Let's imagine what we could accomplish by bringing this commitment and passion for design to places that surround us every day, near or far. When we can do so, the question of how to design "over there" becomes semantic; every design is approached with compassion, vigor, and heart. ■



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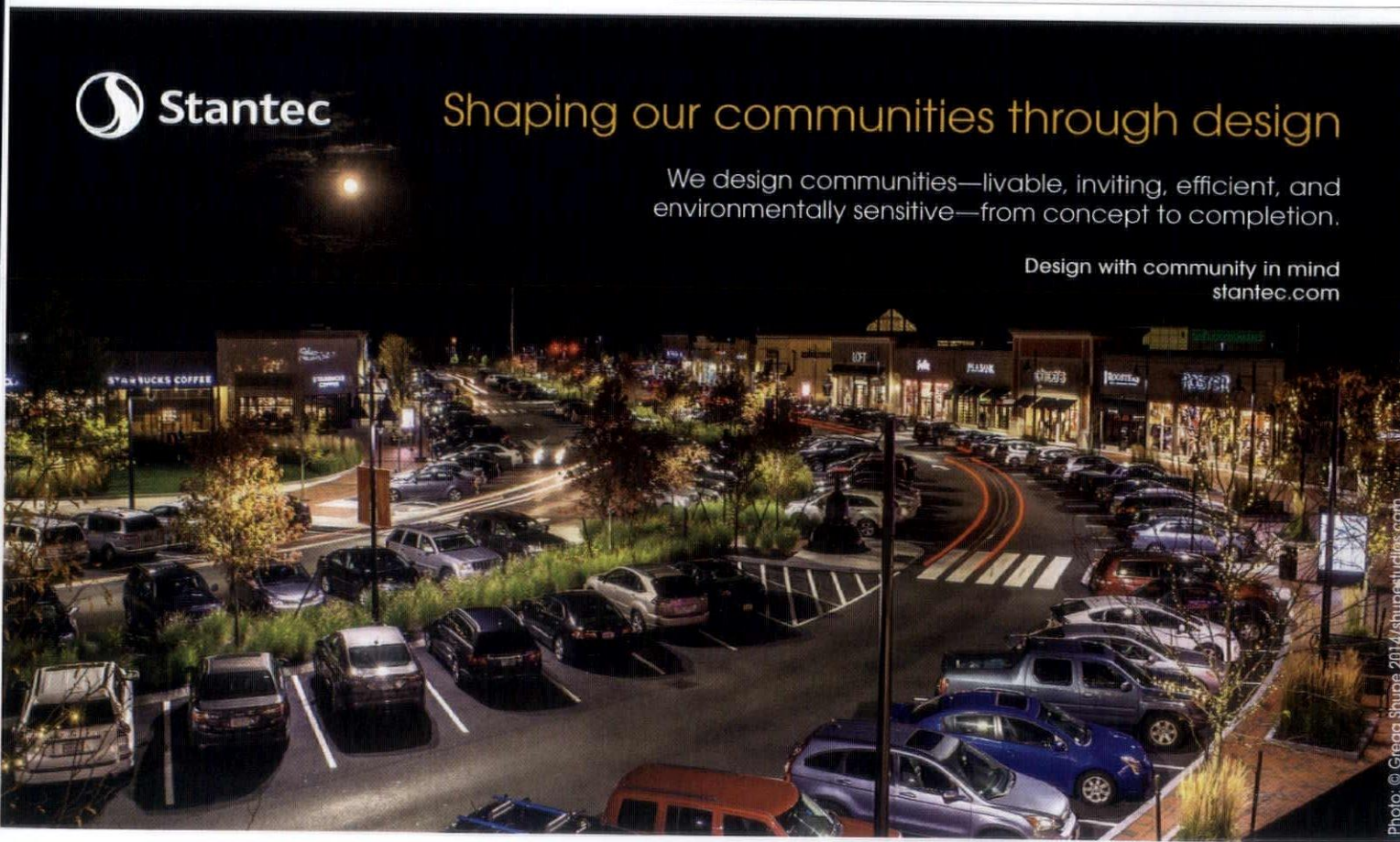


Photo: © Gregg Shupe 2014/shupetudios.com

ADVANCED LATIN

IDEAS FOR BREACHING
THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE



by Justin McGuirk

In 1955, the Museum of Modern Art in New York held an exhibition titled *Latin American Architecture Since 1945*, marking a period when Latin America was viewed as having the most exciting architectural culture in the world. With its flair for reinforced concrete, the region was seen as embracing modernity with a zeal that MoMA's visitors were expected to envy. In the spirit of the times, the curators celebrated individual genius and, above all, style.

Six decades later, Latin America has far more useful lessons to impart, but about strategy rather than style. No other region of the world has demonstrated the kind of collective effort and imagination that Latin America has in addressing the chronic symptoms of rapid unplanned urbanization. Whether it is in housing, crime, transportation, segregation, or the lack of political participation, this continent has set precedents that could have a transformative effect in other parts of the developing—and, indeed, the developed—world.

Having experienced mass urbanization from the mid-20th century—long before the current hot spots of China, India, and Africa—Latin America was forced to become a testing ground of radical urban strategies. This is a region that has been trying to deal with extreme urban inequality for decades, with some success.

In fact, some of the ideas developed in Latin America, both political and urbanistic, have already been adopted in the

developed world. In 1989, for example, the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre began an experiment with participatory budgeting, which allows citizens to have a direct say in how public money is spent. It was designed to help tackle extreme social inequality by redirecting a portion of public finances toward social amenities in the slums. Today it is a feature of municipal governance from New York to Paris. Earlier this year, Boston became the first city in the United States to launch a youth participatory budgeting scheme, giving young people a chance to have a direct say in spending \$1 million of the city's capital budget to improve their communities.

One of the key lessons of Latin America is that divided cities need to be brought together. The distance between a slum-dweller's home perhaps two hours out on the city fringes and her job in the city center needs to be bridged by effective public transportation. And in economies where metro lines are simply too expensive, buses have proved transformative. Again it was a Brazilian city that led the way. In 1974, under mayor Jaime Lerner, Curitiba created the bus rapid transit (BRT) system, a metro-style network with dedicated lanes to bypass traffic. That idea has since spread across the world. It was introduced to particularly good effect in Bogota in 2000 by Enrique Peñalosa, a mayor who understood the social power of public transport. His TransMilenio BRT, combined with bike lanes and proper pedestrian pavements, became a global





IMAGES

Pensar/Sentir (Think/Feel).
A project at the Ciudad del Saber, Panama City, 2014, by the Spanish public art group Boa Mistura.
Photos: Alegre Saporta (this page), Boa Mistura (previous page).

symbol of how public transportation can reduce the effects of social inequality. He is fond of saying, "An advanced city is not a place where the poor move about in cars; rather, it's where even the rich use public transportation."

Subsequently, BRTs have been introduced not just in Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town, and other developing world cities, but also in the North. Los Angeles, the quintessential case of car-led urban sprawl, now has 40 miles of dedicated bus lanes as part of its Metro Liner network. Given that LA has some of the worst air pollution in the United States, there are other incentives for extending the public transportation network aside from it being a social leveler, and the same goes for cities across the globe.

Colombia has other lessons for cities that face problems with severe poverty and crime. Its second city, Medellín, makes a fascinating case study. In the 1990s, the city was in the grip

of warring drug cartels; it was the murder capital of the world. Beginning in the early 2000s, however, a major program of new public buildings and public spaces helped transform the city, returning a sense of normality and civic pride. These architectural treasures have been widely praised, but it would be a mistake to think that architecture alone was the solution. First came transportation links to hillside barrios in the form of a cable-car network. These coincided with major investment in education, and the seeding of those barrios with new schools, libraries, and parks. Architecture was only what made such social policies so visible.

Perhaps the key lesson of Medellín's "social urbanism" was the way different stakeholders in the city collaborated. It was the concerted effort of politicians, a civic movement, architects, and the business community that brought about these changes.

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And one thing that proved instrumental is that Medellín has a municipally owned energy company, Empresas Publicas de Medellín (EPM). It was the \$450 million fed into the city coffers every year by EPM that funded these improvements. If Medellín is not an object lesson in the reasons why natural resources should not be privatized, I'm not sure what is.

Not all Latin America's innovations can or should be imported to other climes. With cable cars enjoying a modish moment, London's mayor Boris Johnson commissioned one across the River Thames at Greenwich. Like many of Johnson's urban gestures, it is fairly pointless, more of an excuse to advertise the sponsor, Emirates Airline, than anything else.

Finally, the "informal cities" of the south hold valuable lessons in how to extract the most social value out of urban land. San Diego architect Teddy Cruz has long been interested in how the productivity of Latin American barrios might be imported into the rigidly zoned neighborhoods of his own city. One of the defining features of the informal city is how it maximizes the use of tiny spaces, turning a front room into a shop or restaurant, or a narrow street into a marketplace. Cruz's own strategy is to slice up a couple of San Diego city blocks into micro-zoning that accommodates housing, culture, and commerce all on the same plot. As Cruz often says in his lectures: "We need a new concept of density. Density is still measured as a number of *things*—units—per acre. Why not

measure it as a number of social and economic exchanges per acre?"

This is a key lesson for US cities that have been zoned into a state of sterility, where the suburban house is several miles, by car, from the office. Take a place like Dharavi, Mumbai's most famous slum, and you'll find that the average resident is working as a craftsman downstairs and living upstairs in a two-story "tool-house." Before industrialization, and the separation of living and working, that was the norm even in the United States or Europe. And in our postindustrial economies, it is easy to imagine such practices returning. Indeed, we may not even be aware of the ways in which our working lives are already taking on the traits of cities in the global South. The flex-time lifestyle of the post-industrial worker—with its irregular hours, often in multiple jobs simultaneously—is a common feature of the informal economy.

If Westerners can overcome their preconceptions of undeveloped "slums" (and if one can solve the obvious privations), it might be possible to recognize their certain merits. They are productive, sustainable neighborhoods with a strong sense of community. Embracing that may be too much to ask. But there is no denying that these Latin American strategies for bringing the slums into the fold of the city represent an important step in tackling urban inequality. And as Northern cities continue to polarize at an alarming rate, we might ask ourselves if there's anything more we can learn from the South. ■

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CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

RENÉE LOTH SPEAKS WITH MOSHE SAFDIE FAIA

Born in Israel, raised in Canada, Moshe Safdie is a frequent flyer: A wide-ranging designer with imprints from Singapore to India to Washington, DC. This fall, *ArchitectureBoston* editor Renée Loth met with Safdie in his Somerville office to discuss architecture's role and reach within an increasingly global marketplace.

IMAGES

Hans-Georg Esch is a freelance architectural photographer. These images are from his *Megacity* installation and exhibition series, which depict façades of urban architecture worldwide.



Renée Loth: As you know, the theme of this issue is “global,” examining the challenges and opportunities of architects practicing overseas. You’ve worked all over the world, so how do the vast cultural differences of these places influence your design decisions?

Moshe Safdie: The notion of “global” presents a paradox. On one hand, everything I’m learning about architecture is that we must search for the particular, and through the particular we are able to make an architecture that belongs to a place. By belonging, I mean a wide array of issues: that it fits climatically, that it fits the land, that it fits into the traditions of building technology and construction, that it fits into the history and heritage of a place in terms of how it resonates in people’s minds.

But a lot of architects’ practices are becoming global; the two contradict each other. In the traditional sense, the particular was understood best by the local and vernacular architecture. People were not even trained yet created wonderful buildings, the language of which evolved over time, with local materials.

Today, most of us are not trained or inclined to get into the particular. What you’re getting worldwide is the problem of architects who don’t have enough knowledge of the local building at a very large scale. Then there are rare examples where there is an attempt to understand and evolve a design out of that understanding of the local. I guess I consider myself in the last category. My background prepared me for it because I grew up in one culture, then got transplanted, so I spend a lot of time trying to understand it, and the architecture grows out of that search. It will take some time before architects practicing in places strange to them really focus on this business of belonging.

Renée Loth: Architects need to have a concern and sensitivity

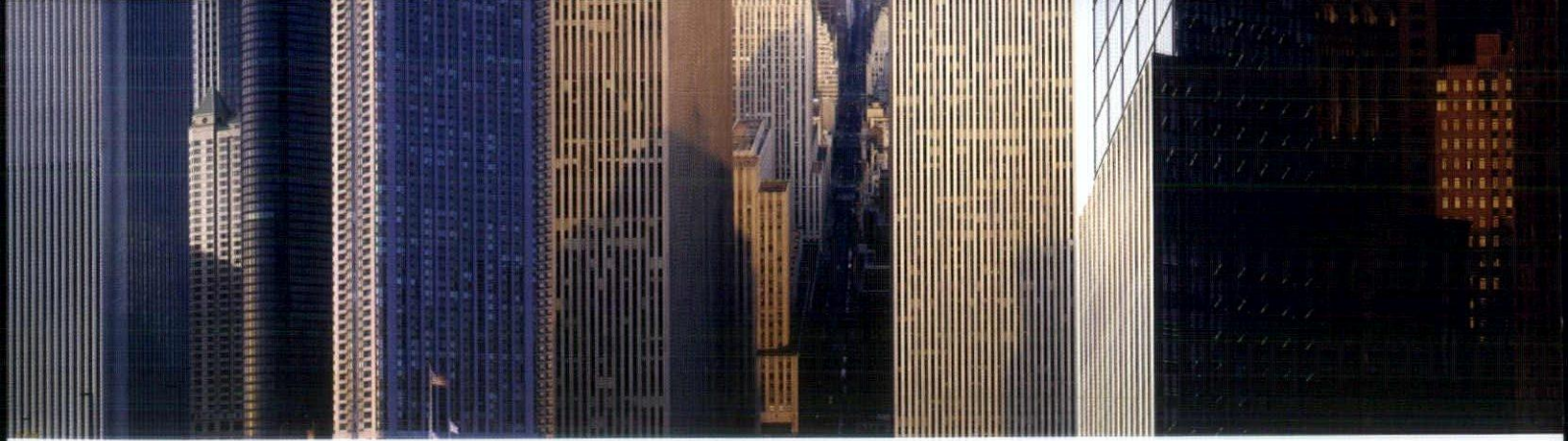
for the local, but clients sometimes present a difficulty, by having an idea of what suggests “success.” How do you negotiate that delicate question with a client who may not have the same respect for the local that you do?

Moshe Safdie: It’s true in large-scale commercial development but also in institutional building, in let’s say culturally emerging countries, where they might be highly advanced technologically. But if they are going through a transition of urbanization, there is a tendency amongst clients to look at architecture beyond its immediate mission, as something that establishes the image of a country and that the projected image has to be one of progress. Progress is then associated with contemporary, modernistic, and sought after—not the local and the particular.

I’ve had both experiences. With the Khalsa Heritage Centre in Punjab, India, there were those who wanted every production of the house architecture of the temple—just give us what we know. I’m now involved in a project in the Middle East with several architects; some are producing mimics of medieval Muslim architecture, others are proposing buildings that have nothing to do with the climatic and cultural context. These are immediate, live issues. They engage both clients and architects, and there’s a wide variety of sensibilities in both camps.

Renée Loth: At a recent discussion on global practice [“Grounded Visionaries” at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design] you drew a contrast between China and Singapore as places to practice, about their different approaches to planning. How do these manifest themselves in the outcomes?

Moshe Safdie: In Singapore, planning, urban design, and landscape design have had extraordinary credibility and have



become tools of government in guiding growth. Much of the land that's made available for development is landfill created by the government; as a condition of the sale of the land, it attaches guidelines it sees fit. But there is a learning curve. The housing developments the government built in the '60s and '70s repeat the stereotypes: Modernist lining up of identical towers and anonymous space. They basically wiped out the vernacular. It was extreme, much was learned, so there is now a greater sensitivity to conservation. There's an understanding of the public realm and an attempt to create meaningful spaces that transcend individual approaches. That's the main agenda of dense urbanism: to recapture a meaningful public realm.

The Chinese have not begun with the idea of intervention at that scale. Their starting point was development as fast as possible. Certain cultural traditions, such as urban landscaping, are a big deal and happened well before the urbanistic explosion. When I was there in '73, even with Mao and the Communist regime, boulevards and railroad lines were planted. But the idea of intervening with private development was strange. At this point, we're getting big planning interventions in the new eco-cities. But if you look at Shanghai and Beijing, it's still the private sector doing their thing, and the public realm is suffering. In our approaches in China, we've got to go out of our way to insist on trying to connect the public realm to its surroundings, and we, not the municipal authorities, are the ones fighting for it. It's completely different from Singapore in that sense.

Renée Loth: That's fine for a place like Singapore, with its strong authoritarian government. But how does this translate to a messy democracy? I'm thinking of India's, for example.

Moshe Safdie: I think "messy" and "democracy" in India should be used separately. India is messy, and it's sort of a democracy, although a corrupt one. For Singapore, infrastructure and the public realm are cultural and economic priorities in terms of the government and now the people. Singaporeans do not throw a piece of paper on the ground. You could say there's a big fine if they do it, but it's already become part of the culture. In India, infrastructure hardly exists. When they do build it, within five years it looks like it's 100 years old. There's no culture of maintenance, except for the temples and fancy five-star hotels. There's no culture of landscaping. You go into a village, and the fact that the water is running on the sidewalk

and there's no drainage has nothing to do with resources; we're talking about differences between administrations and countries. India has deep problems with the urban environment.

Renée Loth: In Japan, nobody throws a piece of paper on the ground, either, but it's not because there's a fine waiting for you if you do.

Moshe Safdie: That is because Japan was a much more cohesive society that developed these norms hundreds of years ago. There must have been a day when it was a matter of policing. Singapore is a more mixed, pluralistic country that just came to being. Luckily enough, they had the leadership that figured that's important, so they made it part of the agenda. I come from Israel, and when I go there, I'm sick about the filth. Jerusalem is filthy. Tel Aviv is filthy. It shames me, annoys me. The public realm fares terribly because of neglect. People might have the most meticulously clean apartment, then you go into the common stair and it's disgusting. Some cultures value the public realm from the edge of private ownership outwards; others don't.

Renée Loth: Does architecture have anything to say about this?

Moshe Safdie: Architecture and urbanism are intertwined, and you can't separate them because our environment is made up of the collective of many individual buildings. The design I make in countries that I know have maintenance is fundamentally different from the design I would make in countries that have no maintenance culture.

Renée Loth: Can you give me an example of that?

Moshe Safdie: I wouldn't in my right mind do a building in India that demanded painting every five years. In Singapore, I wouldn't think twice; I know they're going to paint it every five years. In India, stone, hardy landscape, light fixtures, anything that's indestructible becomes part of your thinking, because you want to be able to come and visit five years later.

Renée Loth: Can architecture and urban planning and design nudge a culture to be more respectful of the public realm?

Moshe Safdie: I would ask: Can an architect have an impact



in the world, as a force of education? Absolutely. It's as much educating when you do a building in the United States as when you do one in India; it's just that the issues are different. You work on a museum, and you've got to enlighten clients about the value of daylight because the mindset is that light is bad for the art. That sense of enlightening those you work with, from the client to the broader community to the city, is part of any practice in which there's conviction. As an architect, if you're opinionated and you have conviction, then there's an intense dialogue which involves learning on one side. Why are they objecting to something I'm proposing? Why do they feel so strongly that that's not going to work? You've got to ask yourself that. But at the same time, you have to push.

The biggest fights I've had have been the most rewarding. Mamilla, the project I did in the urban center of Jerusalem, took four years to build. The developer wanted to air-condition it. I said no, you can't; it's got to be open streets. If you air-condition it, you privatize it. If you privatize it, the Arabs won't come, the religious won't come. But keep it open, it will be part of the street. And sure enough, it works. The Arabs come, and the religious come. The payoff for the city is so universally acknowledged that it gives you a lot of satisfaction. When there is conviction, you've got to fight for it.

Renée Loth: Conviction. Is that what you mean when you say that architecture should make a social, economic, or political statement?

Moshe Safdie: I don't think the statement is the emphasis; it should be driven by social convictions. Your design process must be informed. It's not the statement as much as the basic result. You need to be socially alert and therefore responding to issues as you understand them. That also means economically; if you're building for a certain group and you make something that's beyond their means, what's the point? If you're building in a country that doesn't have a maintenance tradition and you create a building that's beyond their ability to maintain, what's the point?

At that GSD session, somebody asked: "Where does self-expression come in relationship to the program of a building?" I would rephrase the question: If there's a conflict between what the building wants to be, in the way Lou Kahn used the term, and what you want the building to be, because of your

baggage and obsessions, how do you resolve that conflict? [If we] assert our taste and formal sensibility and are not open to what the thing "wants to be," that's when you get caricature architecture or distortions.

Renée Loth: Habitat '67 is now almost 50 years old. It was so prescient in its recognition of the need for urban density in housing a growing population. The world population is almost seven billion now, twice what it was in 1967, and two-thirds of us live in cities. What are the lessons of Habitat for the megacity? How do we make places like Lagos or Mexico City habitable?

Moshe Safdie: Through our office's research fellowship, where we work on a set of nonpractice issues, we revisited Habitat five years ago: What would we do today, 50 years later? The first thing we established was that Habitat would have to have 10 times the density. The other thing we concluded is that mixed use is the order of the day. One doesn't build just housing in the city; now it's mostly retail and office and housing together. How do you satisfy the quality of life that we implied in Habitat in that context? We did a series of schemes, and the results immediately had application to our actual projects: Singapore's Bishan Sky Habitat and China's Golden Dream Bay development Qinhuangdao [reflect] some of that thinking in real-life situations.

Habitat showed that there are ways of rethinking the apartment building. Everybody who visited exclaimed, "I'd love to live there." In the next 20 years we couldn't get another one built because of economics, codes, resistance. Then there was a period in which the thrust of architectural thinking turned away. There was Postmodernism, deconstructivism, but it has come full circle. Students in schools today are really into Habitat and the thinking behind it. We weren't looking at housing and urbanism and high density for many years, but now it's becoming the center of attention. As I see it, Habitat is an idea whose time is yet to come.

Renée Loth: It's hard to have a discussion about international practice without talking about the International Style....

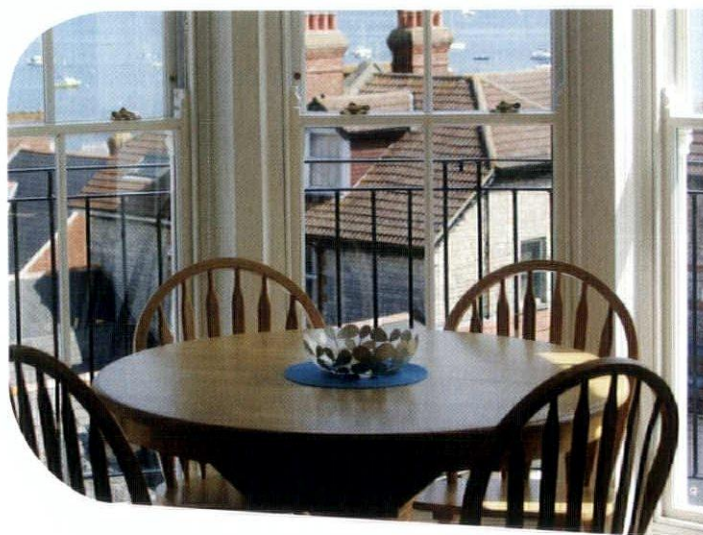
Moshe Safdie: I have a lot to say about that. I grew up in Haifa and Tel Aviv, the white cities of the International Style. It was



a new chapter in looking at architecture, but it was never conceived as an “International Style.” The open plan, the surface as it was applied—it was completely regional in its application to other Mediterranean cities. The one who called it International Style was Philip Johnson, the corrupter of architecture, who, instead of looking at its essence in terms of the kind of space and urbanism that it suggested, looked at it stylistically as a fashion. Later on this would be picked up by, for example, Richard Meier, who translated it to sort of contemporary: Instead of plaster, it was metal panels. But “International Style” was a corrupting term; at its best, it was regionally sensitive evolutionary Modernism.

Renée Loth: Is there a tension between the idea that there is a universal approach to building and that there also should be a respect for regional aesthetic or style?

Moshe Safdie: The tension is there. There is today, for example, an international style: the all-glass envelope curtain wall office building. All the variations—twisted, stepped, ziggurat—don’t matter. It’s a formula. It’s associated with certain ideas of progress. It’s relatively cheap to build. It’s economical in the sense of cost/benefit of construction today. It is ecologically blind. The best examples we see are when whatever that represents is seriously adapted to local conditions. And the



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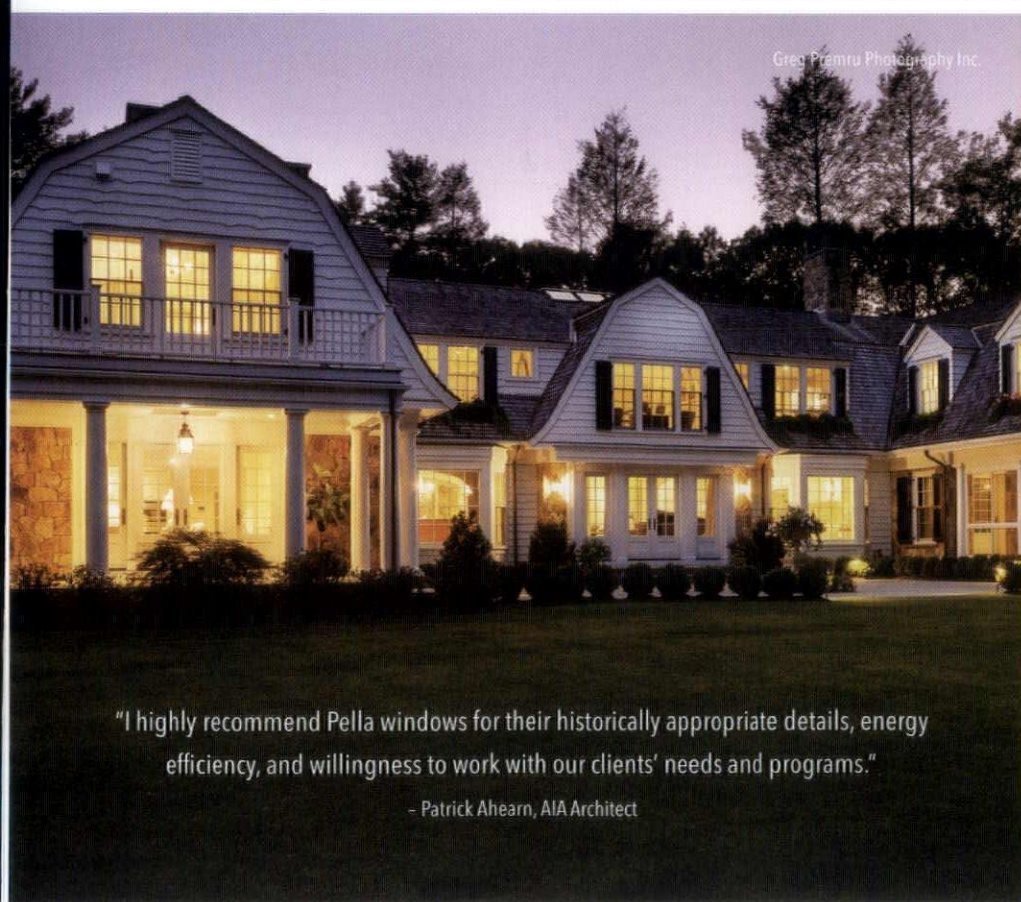
worst we see—I put a bit of blame on Mies van der Rohe and [Gordon] Bunshaft—is perfecting the glass office building and sending the message that that is a universal solution. The Seagram Building is a great building, but it's not a great model.

Renée Loth: What is your favorite country to work in?

Moshe Safdie: In Canada, I found extraordinary opportunities to apply my thinking. Beginning with Habitat—what other country would have built it with a 25-year-old kid who'd never built anything?—on through the National Gallery and the library in Vancouver, I was able to push limits. When I came

to the United States, I was able to do wonderful things for good clients, both institutions and public bodies. I'm proud of my courthouse in Springfield [Massachusetts], which was done with the government as client. At the big urban scale, the best experience was definitely Singapore. [Marina Bay Sands] got built because [the client's] objectives and my objectives as an architect resonated. So I'd say Singapore, Canada, the United States.

Israel is a complex place. I had a hard time there, yet some of my most important achievements are in Israel, [including the Holocaust memorial] Yad Vashem, which is probably the most important cultural building I've done. ■



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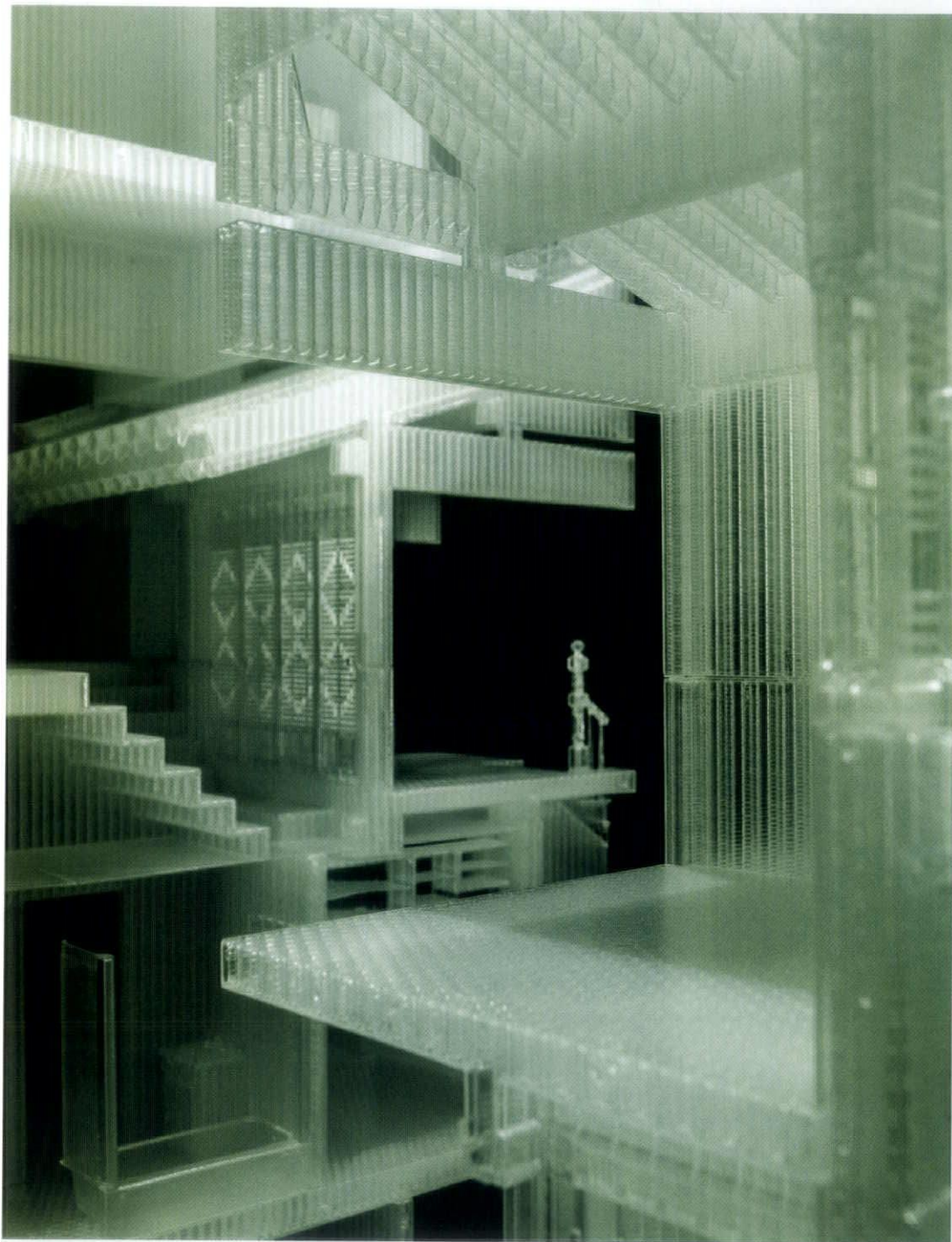
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HOME / AWAY

Against today's backdrop of globalization, Do Ho Suh's artwork contemplates notions of identity and place: What does home mean? Where do you belong? The London-based Suh studied art in his native Korea as well as in the United States. Whether wrestling with the armature of clothing or of the homeland, he mines decidedly architectural terrain. His creations provoke us to question the boundaries of space and the geography of expatriation.





All photos: © Do Ho Suh. Courtesy of the artist
and Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York and Hong Kong.

OPPOSITE

Home within Home—1/11th Scale—Prototype, 2009.

THIS PAGE

Detail of Home within Home—1/11th Scale—Prototype, 2009.

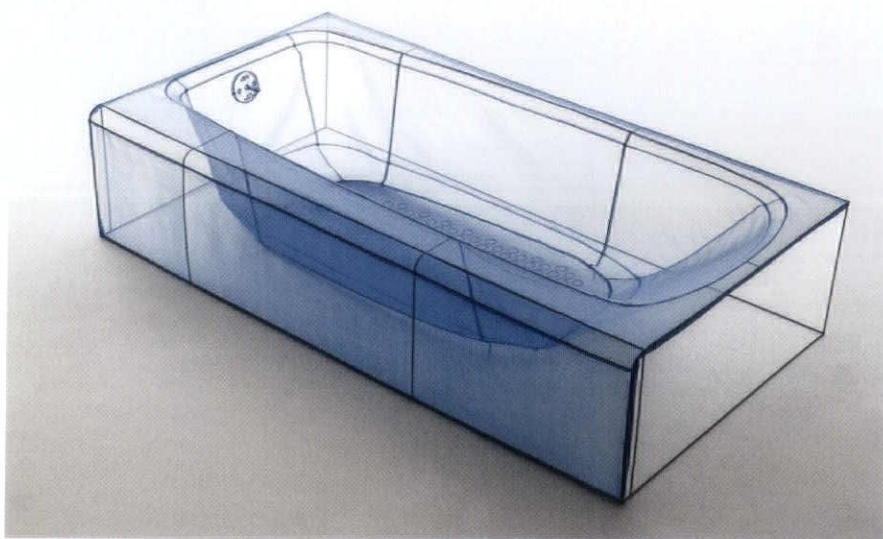
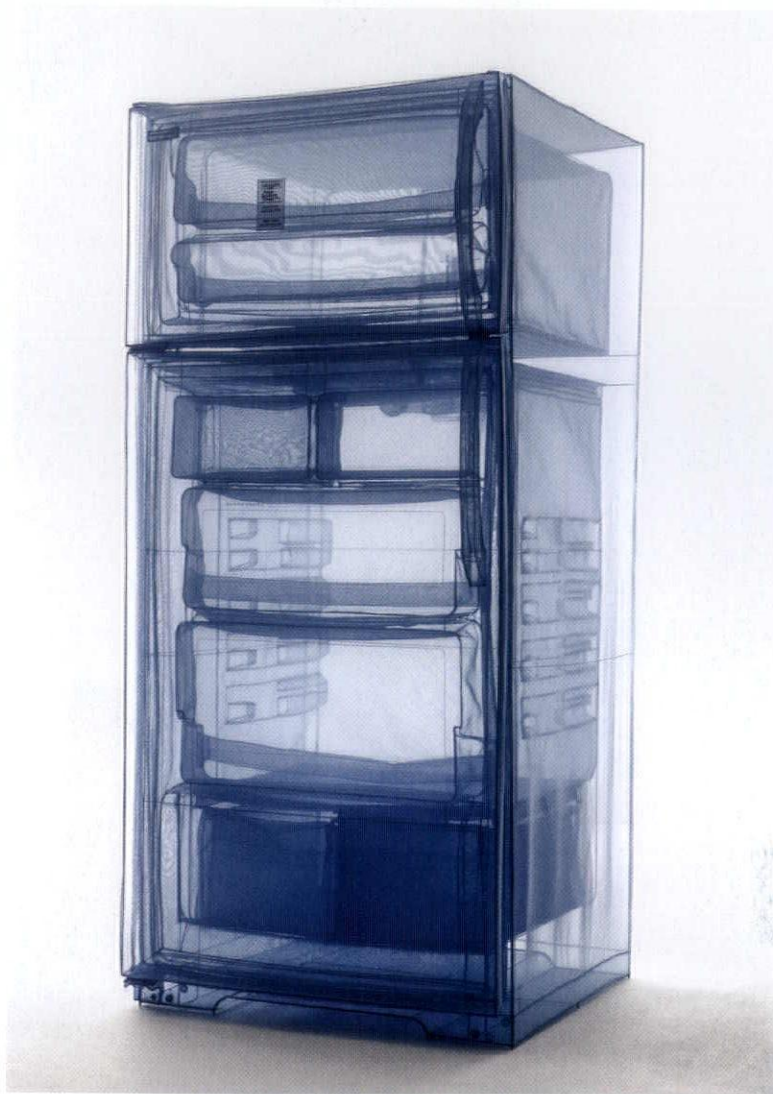


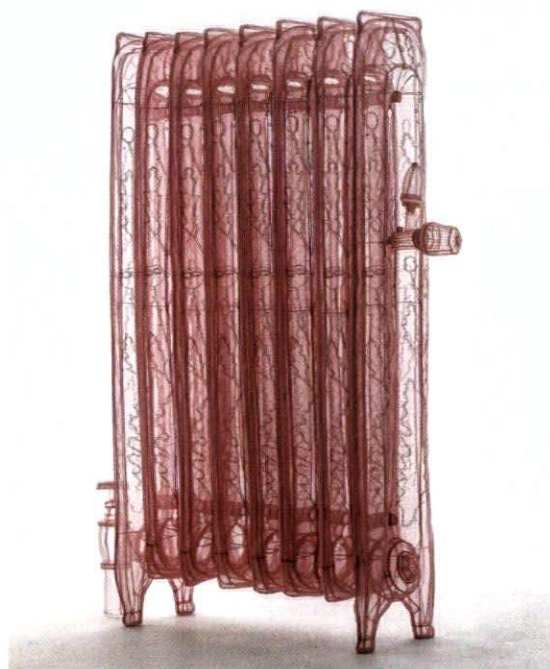
CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE

Blueprint, 2010. Installation view at the main exhibition of Venice Biennale 2010, 12th International Architecture Exhibition.

Specimen Series: Refrigerator, Apartment A, 348 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011, USA, 2012.

Specimen Series: Bathtub, Apartment A, 348 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011, USA, 2012.





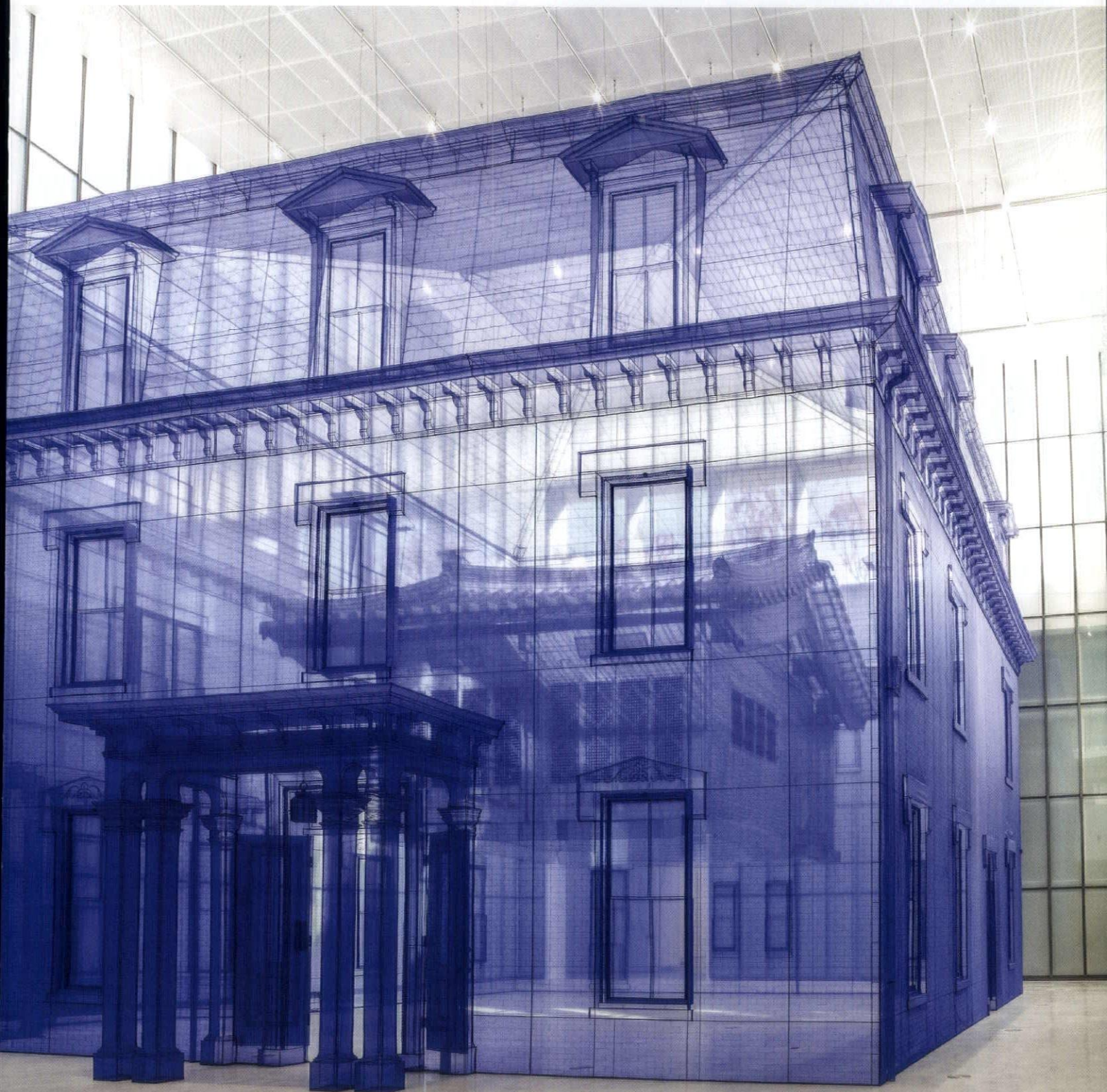
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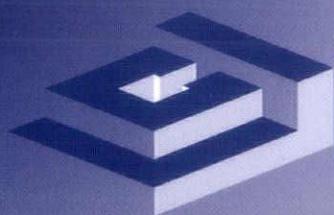
Specimen Series: Radiator, Corridor, Apartment A, 348 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011, USA, 2012.

Staircase, 2008. Installation for Psycho Buildings: Artists take on Architecture, Hayward Gallery, London.

Home within Home within Home within Home within Home, 2013. Installation view of Hanjin Shipping The Box Project: Do Ho Suh, at National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea.







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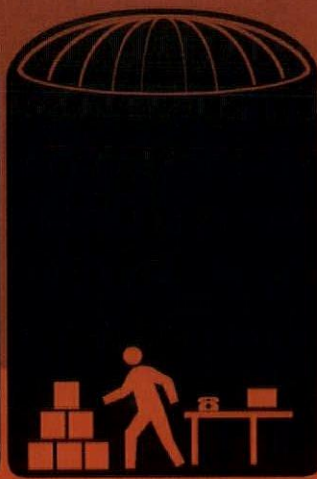
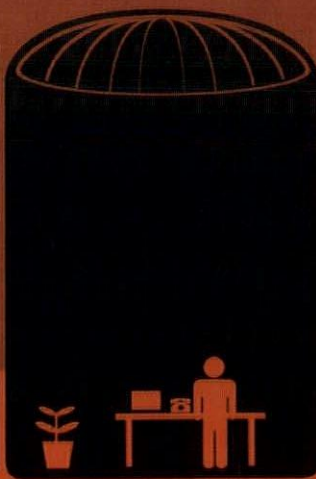
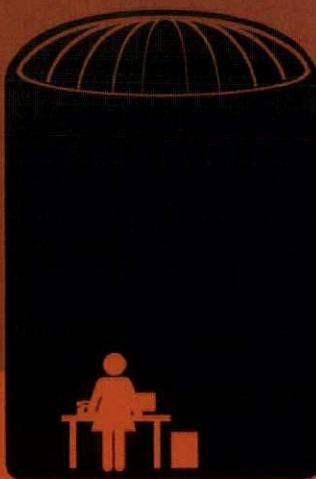


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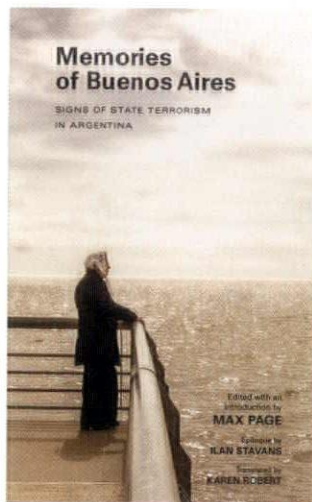


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BOOKS

**Memories of Buenos Aires**

Edited by Max Page

University of Massachusetts Press, 2013

Reviewed by Matthew J. Kiefer

The devoted ambler visiting a foreign city yearns to decipher the myriad messages the city unconsciously sends. This is a particular challenge in Buenos Aires, home to one-third of Argentines and the compelling yet bewildering capital of a country with a complicated past.

The usual way to start is with a guidebook. The special genius of *Memoria Abierta* ("Open Memory"), a nonprofit founded in 2000 to foster social memory about Argentina's "Dirty War," was to publish a literal street guide to the country's darkest chapter. Argentines still wrestle with this terrible episode, not really a war but a largely secret and systematic oppression of leftists during the military dictatorship of 1976 to 1983. Some 30,000 people were kidnapped and tortured or killed.

Framed by an incisive introduction by Max Page, an architectural historian at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, and a provocative epilogue by Ilan Stavans, a professor of Latin American cultural studies at Amherst College, the heart of this book is organized like a conventional guide. Thoroughly researched (family members of the victims were consulted),

it divides the city into nine sectors and describes 240 sites with maps, clear-eyed descriptions, and photos.

Commemorative sites such as plaques, *baldosas* (street tiles marking the homes of the disappeared), and more spontaneous memorials by grassroots activists are interspersed with the everyday loci of state terror: secret prisons and other clandestine detention sites. (These are astonishingly numerous.)

In the immediate aftermath of the dictatorship, Argentine leaders tried to erase its memory, much as the dictatorship had tried to erase its enemies. Inspired by the persistent defiance of the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*—a self-organized group of mothers of the disappeared, who have marched weekly in front of the presidential palace since 1977—*Memories of Buenos Aires* seeks to "reveal the suppressed history buried in every location where the last dictatorship focused its reign of terror."

Visiting Buenos Aires today, it seems deeply incongruous that the "Paris of South America" could be the scene of such recent barbarism. Mapping it with this degree of precision raises provocative questions about the role of physical place in preserving memory. And why preserve the memory of atrocities at all?

For many, the struggle to come to terms with tragedy is rooted in place. Witness the "ghost bikes" placed at the site of bicycle fatalities or the spontaneous Boston memorial to the actor Robin Williams that appeared on the Public Garden bench he occupied in a memorable scene from *Good Will Hunting*.

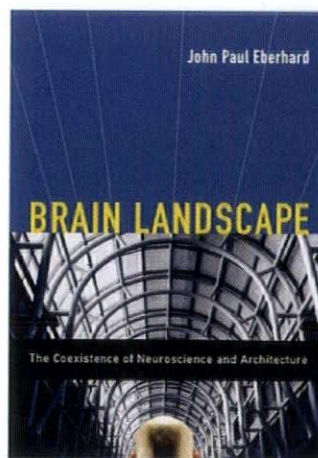
When the tragedy is an organized one, the struggle to understand it is necessarily a public one. The impulse to reveal the physical places where tragedy occurred and let them speak for themselves has similar resonance to marking an actual locus with a memorial. It socializes individual memories and helps them endure beyond the lives of those who experienced the events.

Like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC,

and the Holocaust memorials in many US cities, this is memory with a purpose. In addition to honoring the victims and their families, in Argentina, building awareness of these sites has fostered a political climate of support for reparations and for bringing those responsible to justice at long last.

In his epilogue, Stavans asks whether memorials institutionalize and thereby trivialize the past, making it harder to face the present forthrightly. But using this guidebook in Buenos Aires, he found that it gave order to the "chaos of memory," concluding that "the act of remembering is a duty we all share, no matter where we live." We can only hope it will make it harder for history's mistakes to be repeated.

MATTHEW J. KIEFER is a land use attorney at Goulston & Storrs in Boston.

**Brain Landscape: The Coexistence of Neuroscience and Architecture**

John Paul Eberhard

Oxford University Press, 2009

Reviewed by A. Vernon Woodworth FAIA

The social, physical, financial, and political investments in great works of architecture defy easy explanation. Take Gothic cathedrals, for example. Can these magnificent structures be explained in terms of religion, or pedagogy, or civic pride alone? How do we understand the

sense of awe, of being transported, that cathedral space so predictably inspires? Were the master builders experimenting as a form of one-upmanship for artistic expression, or was there another motive informing their manipulation of space and light? Could their concerted effort to master the spatial harmonics of worship have been deliberately intended to produce specific neuronal responses in the human brain—responses at a primal level that alter mood, evoke emotion, and restore a cohesive sense of identity in relationship to the world?

An exploration of how the brain works through the discipline of neuroscience has, over the past few decades, allowed scientists to determine the biological source of memory, emotion, and perception. This extraordinary field of discovery came to the attention of architect John Paul Eberhard in 1995 when he was the “director of discovery” at the American Architectural Foundation. Eberhard went on to become the founding director of the Academy of Neuroscience for Architects, and he remains the only architect member of the Society for Neuroscience, the world’s largest organization of scientists and physicians dedicated to understanding the brain. In 2006 Eberhard published *Architecture and the Brain: A New Knowledge Base from Neuroscience*, outlining the neurological bases of sensory experiences as well as emotions and behavior in architectural settings.

Brain Landscape continues down the same path, describing implications for the design of educational spaces, the workplace, and facilities for the aging. Eberhard is clear that he hopes to entice neuroscientists to explore the relationship of the brain to the built environment, but he also intends to promote an understanding of neuroscience within the design professions. He sees this as an antidote to the disintegration of a coherent architectural paradigm, as evidenced in “starchitecture” and the vanities of Postmodernism. His goal is to make the findings of neuroscience a centerpiece in evidence-based design: the use of scientific methods to predict and measure

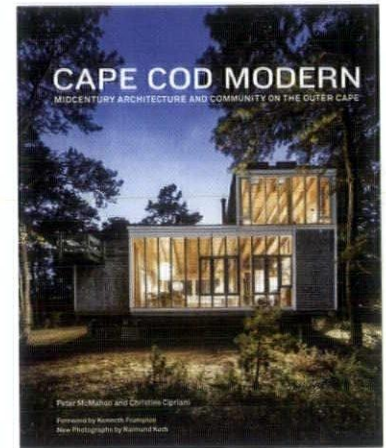
outcomes such as user satisfaction, physical comfort, learning, and healing. Eberhard believes that this could lead to a momentous shift in our approach to the design of the built environment. But he also suspects that a deeper understanding of our synaptic responses to environmental stimuli will uncover the bases for our aesthetic responses, intuitively manipulated by artists and architects since the dawn of civilization.

The implications of Eberhard’s inquiry are infinite. If understanding neuroscience can make patients heal more quickly with fewer complications, if it can increase productivity in the workplace and learning in the classroom, then could it not facilitate creativity, promote positive social interaction, and improve our overall sense of satisfaction with our lives? The answer is a qualified yes, but a yes all the same.

We can understand the impact of the urban environment in a new way through the lens of neuroscience. The synaptic dynamics of exercise, meditation, and psychopharmacology can also be manipulated through light and space, form and composition. Classroom design has the potential to address learning disabilities. Nursing home design can minimize cognitive decline. The workplace can be an inviting space for creative collaboration.

Master builders of the past likely understood the neurological impact of architecture at an intuitive level; now a sound scientific understanding can inform every aspect of the design profession. Along with the tenets of sustainability and physical health in the built environment, neuroscience has the potential to inform an architecture of substance in a challenged world. If this should come to pass, John Eberhard will be among those to have made it possible.

A. VERNON WOODWORTH FAIA is a code consultant with AKF Group in Boston and a faculty member at Boston Architectural College. He co-chairs the Boston Society of Architects’ Committee for the Advancement of Sustainability.



Cape Cod Modern: Midcentury Architecture and Community on the Outer Cape

Peter McMahon and Christine Cipriani

Metropolis Books, 2014

Reviewed by Joseph P. Kahn

Outer Cape Cod in the 1950s and '60s attracted an eclectic mix of artists, writers, shrinks, and academics. One subset of this summer migration was a group of architects and designers for whom the landscape held a powerful attraction. Drawn to its beauty and remoteness, and because real estate was relatively cheap, they built scores of houses there, creating a community of like-minded intellectuals pursuing a free-spirited lifestyle.

Although the houses were as idiosyncratic—and whimsical—as their creators, they shared several noteworthy characteristics. Inexpensively built (many costing less than \$10,000), they employed low-slung, modular designs that opened up interior spaces to the natural elements, relied on readily available materials, and incorporated majestic views of the sea-scapes and kettle ponds that lend the Outer Cape its rustic charm.

These houses seemed to float above the land rather than be anchored to it. Living in one such '50s-era Modernist house, tucked deep in the Wellfleet woods, was “like being on a ship in the forest,” one summer resident later recalled.

Over time, many of these dwellings fell into disrepair—if not completely off the architectural map. In *Cape Cod Modern*,

a meticulously researched, lavishly illustrated book, their historical and aesthetic legacies get a richly deserved reconsideration.

The book begins with a history of Cape architecture from the 1600s onward, then shifts to the 1940s and '50s, when construction of Route 6 opened the Outer Cape to vehicular traffic. With the arrival of Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, among others, the Modernist movement was under way.

Following in their footsteps came the so-called Brahmin Bohemians, among them Jack Phillips, a Harvard-educated artist who inherited 800 acres of land in the Truro-Wellfleet area; Jack Hall, a self-taught architect, painter, and carpenter; and Nathan Saltonstall, a blue-blood architect who designed The Colony, a grouping of Wellfleet cottages that survives to this day.

The Europeans who landed on the Outer Cape were artistic pilgrims of

another stripe. Among the most colorful was British expat Serge Chermayeff, a teacher and designer whose property became "a laboratory for design experiments," the authors note, including his own boldly imaginative use of chromatics. His mini-biography is one of several that give *Cape Cod Modern* its piquant flavor, elevating it beyond a mere compendium of projects and buildings. Chermayeff, the authors write, was "obsessed with noiselessness," yet was himself a "walking volcano, often demanding peace for himself while shattering it for others." Writerly touches such as these, coupled with dozens of architectural renderings, period photographs, and up-to-date color plates, give readers a nuanced sense of the personalities behind the movement.

Beginning in 1961, nearly 45,000 acres of Outer Cape land were put under federal protection by the Cape Cod National Seashore Act. Houses built

between 1959 and '61 were granted a 25-year lease, then threatened with demolition—until preservationists such as McMahon came along and rallied to save many of these structures. By then, the movement had seen its last phase come and go, led, in the late '60s and '70s, by figures such as Charles Zehnder, a maverick, self-taught architect, and Charles Jencks, a leading theorist of architectural Postmodernism.

Cape Cod Modern ends on a wistful note, recalling a landscape now largely grown over and an era before the Outer Cape building boom fell victim to what the authors call "richification." These days, they write, "Nearly everyone wants a nice kitchen." Thankfully, a half-century ago other, more interesting priorities took precedence.

JOSEPH P. KAHN is a freelance writer who spent his childhood summers in the 1950s and '60s on the Outer Cape.

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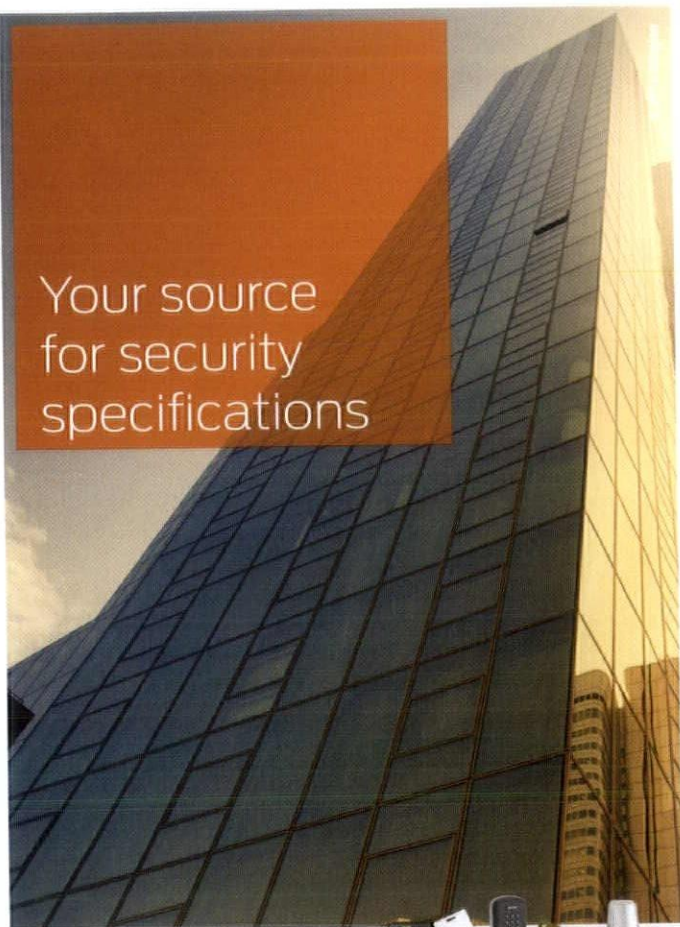


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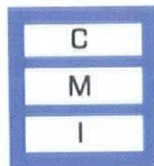
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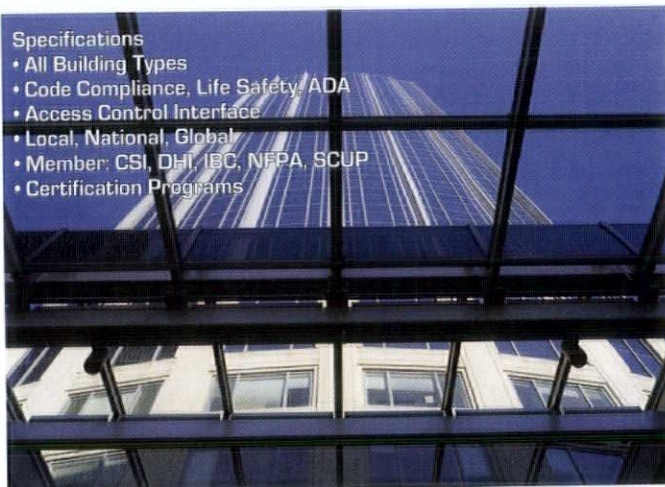
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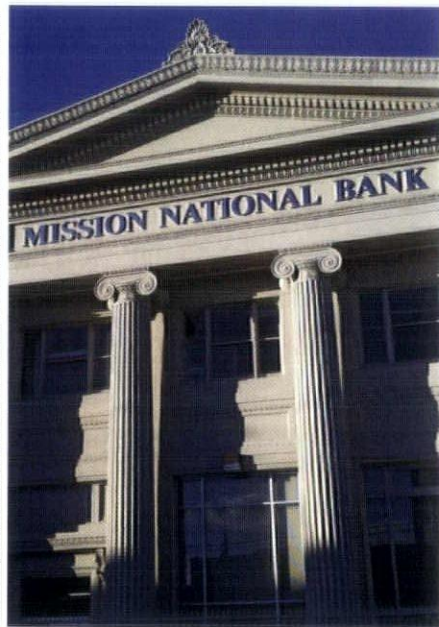
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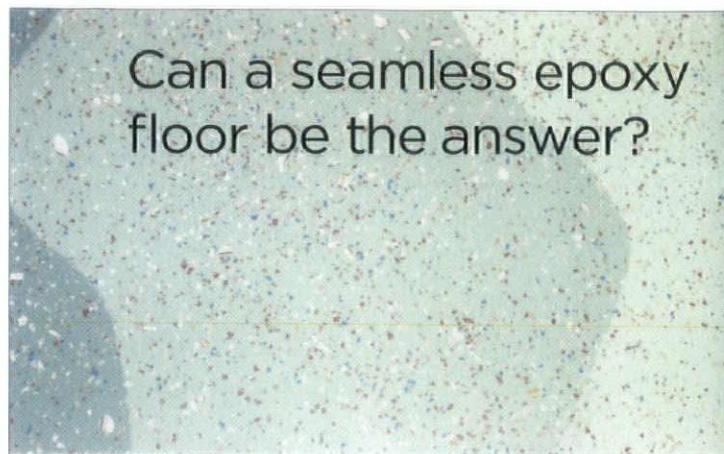


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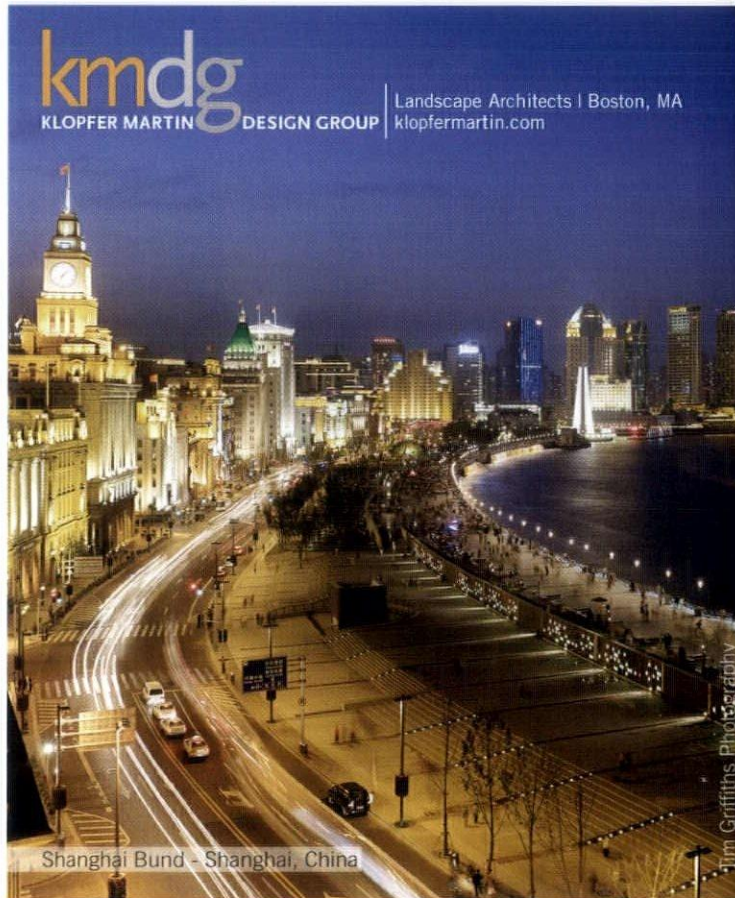
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THE GIFTS UNDERFOOT

by Yuriko Saito

Although I was born and raised in Japan, I have spent more than half my life in the United States. My academic work in aesthetics and experience living outside my homeland have given me a new insight into my native culture. In particular, I have come to appreciate the way in which Japanese aesthetic sensibility embodies an attitude of respect, consideration, and thoughtfulness. Now, every time I go back to Japan, I discover new gems that had remained invisible to me because of their very mundane nature. One such dimension is the aesthetics under our feet.

For me, a fond childhood memory is when my family changed our tatami mats every several years. After the craftsman completed his job, I would inhale the fragrance of fresh straw emanating from newly woven green mats, a dramatic transformation from the worn, brownish ones that had ceased to grace the air with scent. And the texture! The new mats' springy feel was so pleasant on the bare sole.

Wooden verandas and corridors of old castles and temple buildings offer an equally thrilling sensory experience. Their raw surfaces feature prominent grains, showcasing materiality as well as natural aging accelerated by human use. Walking on wood produces a heightened tactile experience, accompanied by the chirping sound of the "nightingale corridor" originally designed to deter intruders.

Japanese garden paths often meander, marked by stepping stones and pavements. Their arrangements often illuminate and enhance the native characteristics of the material by juxtaposing rocks of contrasting colors, shapes, and textures. They are also placed irregularly, so the visitor needs to slow down and pay attention to what she is stepping on, providing another layer of aesthetic experience. Finally, the meandering and often gently curving pathway is enticing: a constantly shifting viewpoint provides a multidirectional perspective of the garden and enriches the walker's experience. In

comparison, a utilitarian-oriented straight walkway, more common in Western landscapes, tends to make us focus only on the destination. Although this kind of thorough attention to the design of pathways is most prominent in gardens, the same sensibility can be seen in more quotidian spaces today, such as an entrance to a condominium.

One of my favorite subway stations in my hometown of Sapporo is located near a zoo. Its long underground corridor connecting to the terminal for a zoo-bound bus features a floor that has inlaid design of various animals. What fun and anticipation this floor generates for children, whose line of sight is close to the ground. Adults cannot help but appreciate this heartwarming design, knowing that its creator got down to the children's level, both literally and figuratively, to create this special gift underfoot.

I continue to marvel at how seemingly simple design features go a long way toward shaping our aesthetic experience as well as cultivating a certain attitude. When we feel that our experiences are honored and attended to, we are more inclined to "pay it forward," by acting thoughtfully and respectfully. On the other hand, if we are surrounded with objects and environments that do not reflect any care or consideration for our experience, we tend to become demoralized and indifferent. We may treat objects and environments callously, with no regard for how other people's experience is affected by our actions.

It is not enough for a society to promote justice, freedom, equality, economic security, opportunity, and health. We also need to be able to experience through tangible evidence that our needs and interests are taken seriously and attended to. Designers play a critical role in shaping a better world, not only through their literal creations but also by encouraging moral virtues and civic attitudes in all of us. As such, their power is awe-inspiring, as much as their responsibility is humbling. ■



ABOVE
Tatami mats on the floor
of a Japanese room.
Photo: Masahiro Hayata.

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