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FRENCH ARCHITECT IS NAMED 2008 PRITZKER PRIZE LAUREATE

JEAN NOUVEL HAS ARRIVED



On March 31, the chairman of the Hyatt Foundation, Thomas J. Pritzker, announced that the 31st winner of the Pritzker Architecture Prize is Jean Nouvel. The award comes with a \$100,000 purse that will be presented at an awards ceremony on June 2 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

The French architect's career started in the

early 1970s with the design of various houses and a kindergarten in provincial France, came roaring to public notice with the blinking steel facade of the Arab World Institute in Paris in 1981, and has continued to hit high marks over the past two decades with the Lyon Opera House (1993); the Cartier Foundation for

continued on page 8

PROPERTY OWNERS WORKING TO ESTABLISH INTERNATIONAL GREEN RATING SYSTEM



GREEN GOES GLOBAL

The British Property Federation (BPF) would like to make it easier for property companies around the world to rate the sustainability of their holdings for comparison's sake. To this end, during a March 12 meeting, 20 property chiefs from the

UK, Japan, Germany, Italy, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and the USA agreed to help develop a global index. Unlike systems like Britain's BREEAM or America's LEED, which are used by architects during construction and design, this system

FXFowle's Sixth Crossing bridge in Dubai uses LEED as a framework but will adjust it to local conditions.

would evaluate the environmental standards of buildings both old and new in a company's entire portfolio. It is intended for use by clients, landlords, and occupants, and would be agreed upon by a collection of international trade associations.

BPF Chief executive Liz Peace explained in an interview with *AN* that the system will be useful for both small companies with a few properties and large ones with many national offices, and that companies would find the ratings valuable in competitive reporting such as annual reports. So far, Australia has been key to the

continued on page 10



TISHMAN SPEYER BID SELECTED, BUT DESIGN LIKELY TO CHANGE

HOW THE WEST WON'T BE ONE

When Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Governor David Paterson joined developer Jerry Speyer at a March 26 press conference announcing Tishman Speyer's \$1 billion-plus bid to lease the Hudson Yards from the MTA, everyone gathered around the Plexi-enclosed model and smiled for the cameras. The model depicts nine towers, many with porches over the High Line, and a public forum with a big staircase. But this diorama, a master-plan by Murphy/Jahn and Peter Walker and Partners, is simply a placeholder: the western half of the railyards has to go through a rezoning that will shape building heights and masses, all of this after Tishman invests \$2 billion to build a platform over the yard and **continued on page 10**

GEHRY DESIGNING THIS SUMMER'S SERPENTINE PAVILION IN LONDON

CHEERS, FRANK

Frank Gehry seems to have a major commission in every world capital, but he's somehow missed London, one of today's architectural hotspots—until now. In January, he was chosen to design this year's Serpentine Gallery pavilion, a temporary structure that goes up every summer adjacent to London's Serpentine Gallery, a well-known space for art exhibitions and galas in London's Kensington Gardens. The pavilion series, now entering its ninth year, has included fantastical projects by the likes of Oscar Niemeyer, Daniel Libeskind, **continued on page 12**



COME AND GET IT!

SPECIAL RESTAURANT ISSUE: LATEST DESIGNS, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND POWER PLAYERS PAGES 30-39

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AIA BILLINGS INDEX SHOWS SHARPEST 2-MONTH DECLINE SINCE 1995

PREPARING FOR THE R-WORD

From Pennsylvania coal miners to New York City investment bankers, everyone is worried about the economy, and architects are no exception. "People are waiting to see what happens," said Richard Rosan, president of the Urban Land Institute. "Everyone I've talked to has more work than they can handle." But, he added, "everyone is nervous."

Many architects speak of yearlong backlogs and having **continued on page 14**

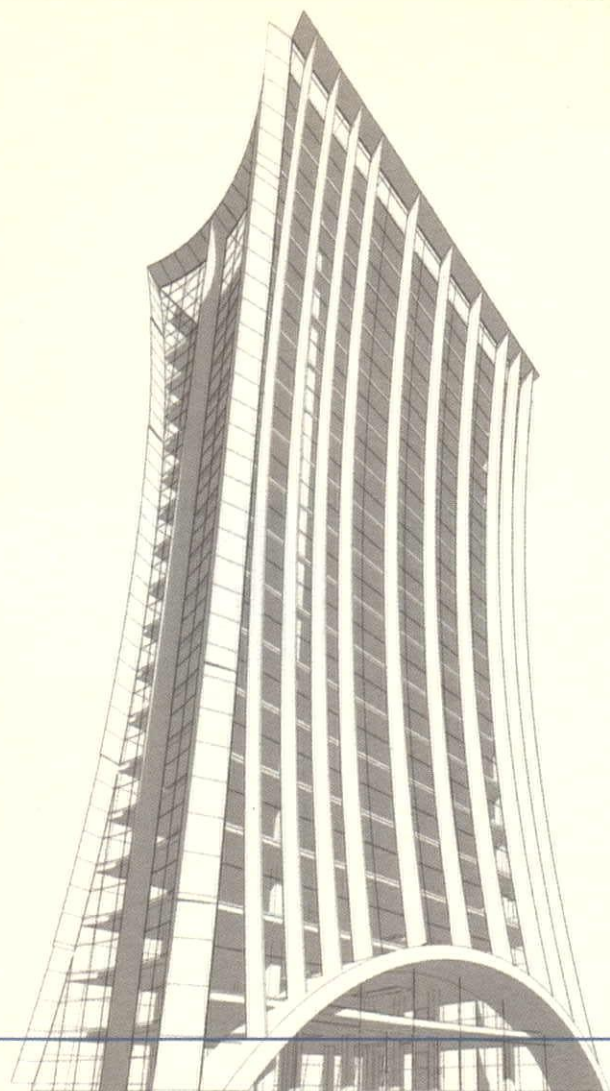
STEVEN HOLL GETS PHILOSOPHICAL. SEE PAGE 14



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From the ubiquitous take-out counters serving harried New Yorkers, to the rarefied dining rooms where a meal can cost a week's pay, restaurants are a huge part of the city's daily life. But they can also be laboratories for an architect's innovative design or precursors of change in a neighborhood, and this is why we decided *AN* should devote its AIA issue to food.

Restaurateur Danny Meyer and architect David Rockwell sat down to talk to us all about restaurants, from the scale of salt-shaker to the city block (see page 30). But one part of their fascinating conversation really struck a nerve: The rise of public/private partnerships that turn into caretakers of civic projects, and the community opposition these arrangements sometimes engender. Meyer said, "Any question that begins with 'What does the community want?' is a fascinating one for me, because it always then leads me to wonder, Who is the community and who is the spokesperson?"

The reality in New York City today is that these partnerships are the way of the future. It seems that every month, another one comes into the public eye because different constituencies want different things for a beloved public space. The Related Company gave up its \$600 million bid for Pier 40 because it couldn't get the extended lease it said it needed to finance open space. The State Supreme Court voided a deal between the city and a coalition of private school parents who had raised \$44.7 million toward new and improved playing fields at Randall's Island. The parents wanted first dibs on the fields for their kids, everyday between 3 and 6 p.m., for 20 years. Not surprisingly, some East Harlem parents and advocates of public space objected. At Union Square, the battle lines over whether the redesign of the northern end of the park should or shouldn't include a seasonal private restaurant were drawn many years ago between the Union Square Partnership (the city's oldest BID, and on whose board Meyer serves) and the Union Square Coalition, and have barely budged since. One of the more curious private initiatives comes from David and Jane Walentas, the developers, arts patrons, and Dumbo landlords who would like to procure a home in Brooklyn Bridge Park for a \$22 million refurbished carousel; *New York* magazine recently reported that it now could come in a Jean Nouvel-designed gift box. But the park plan has raised community resistance because it is financed by revenue-producing luxury condos, and some think these will stand as forbidding sentinels over the 85-acre waterfront park.

There's no doubt that New York development thrives on strange bedfellows, but perhaps a different approach is needed. Harvard lawyer Gerald Frug, author of *City Making: Building Communities without Building Walls* (Princeton University Press) worries about the impact of increased privatization and control on the public life of urban communities. Treat development like a business problem, he says, and you will get solutions geared toward the pleasures and preferences of the one narrow slice of the population: the congenitally pro-business upper-middle class. The need, Frug contends, is not to come up with better urban designs but "to design a good mechanism for decision-making about what to build." He concludes that while community groups have a default position that is too often local, narrow, and defensive, the DNA of business is to be dynamic, flexible, and global. In the last few weeks, with the Dolans walking away from a deal at Madison Square Garden that would bring Moynihan Station back to life, and City Council speaker Christine Quinn revealing that the only way to support worthy causes, including one of our own favorites, the High Line, is to stash the cash in phantom operations, it looks like the machinery for decision-making in the city truly needs a serious tune-up. **JULIE V. IOVINE**

MAYOR'S CONGESTION PRICING
PLAN DEFEATED BY ASSEMBLY DEMS

DEAD END

It has been a long, winding road this last year for Mayor Michael Bloomberg's congestion pricing plan. But after passing numerous speed bumps on its way to Albany, the plan has been pulled over again by Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver.

With a midnight deadline set by the Department of Transportation to pass the plan or forgo \$354 million in federal funds, Silver announced on April 7 that he would not bring the mayor's proposal to a vote, thereby killing it.

After the City Council supported the mayor's plan on March 31 by an unusually close vote of 30 to 20, the question all week was whether it would gain the necessary support from Silver and Assembly Democrats, who put a hold on it last summer. That reluctance never broke.

"The conference has decided that they are not prepared to do congestion pricing," Silver said in Albany, according to *The Associated Press*. "Many members just don't believe in the concept. Many think this proposal is flawed. It will not be on the floor of the Assembly."

This leaves the proposal's many supporters, and even some of its critics, preparing for the next step. Though many did not support one or another aspect of the plan to charge cars \$8 and trucks \$21 to enter Manhattan south of 60th Street during the weekday, those critics insisted throughout that they were not opposed to fighting congestion or improving the environment.

"The people that opposed this plan can't go off and gloat and the people that supported it can't go off and sulk," Councilmember Lew Fidler, who falls squarely in the former group, said. "We can't turn our backs on each other. We have to find a fair and equitable solution."

Those who supported the plan sounded a solemn note but promised to persevere. "I don't think anything will be as immediate or effective as congestion pricing, but I have a laundry list of ideas," Straphanger's Campaign attorney Gene Russianoff said.

In a statement, Mayor Bloomberg could barely conceal his anger and frustration at being thwarted again by Silver, who also killed his plans for a stadium for the Olympics and Jets on the Far West Side. "It takes true leadership and courage to embrace new concepts and ideas and to be willing to try something," Bloomberg said. "Unfortunately, both are lacking in the Assembly today."

The mayor's plan had gained the support of Governor David Paterson and the leader of the Republican-led Senate, Joseph Bruno, though there were rumors that the plan was also due to fail in that house if it came to a vote. In an attempt to save the plan and burnish his credentials, Paterson called an emergency meeting of the leadership, but after an hour-long session, Silver said that he had not been swayed.

Part of his reasoning was the apparent pomposity of the Bloomberg administration. "The city never responded to our requests for meetings or information or anything," Assembly member Richard Brodsky said. Brodsky, a member of the state's Congestion Mitigation Commission, said 80 percent of his democratic colleagues did not support the plan.

Russianoff hopes this is not the end but rather the beginning of a new debate. "Too much work, and too much good work, has been done," he said. "Traffic is often treated by New Yorkers like the weather. We have to change that. They have a future, and that future is without congestion." **MATT CHABAN**

LETTERS

CASHING IN ON CORB

Your editorial on Renzo Piano's project at Ronchamp ("Pilgrims at Ronchamp," *AN* 03_02.20.2008) seems rather lukewarm and happy with the crumbs. Does anyone think Le Corbusier would have dug in cells of individual communion, just to spare the view of his masterpiece?

Ronchamp was no monument to mathematical form. Le Corbusier's goal, I submit, was to support a living mathesis—a process to make life freer and more beautiful. Patience surely should be expected from the throngs of consumers of architectural masterworks and those eager to cash in on this flow. These tourists are guests in a place whose purpose is self-cultivation, not the celebration of spectacular form.

There is little question that Le Corbusier would have put life first. His works show deep respect for the achievements of his ancestors, but his forms spring from life as lived in the present. Adulation that fixes a work in time turns it into a coin.

JOHANNES KNEISL
WINSTON-SALEM, NC

MINDLESSLY NEO-MODERN?

Hey, as long as it's neo-modernist, who cares about the logic, right? In "Queens Theater in the Park," (*AN* 04_03.05.2008) Sarah Caples says, "We built on the different circular fantasies present in Johnson's pavilion." In the same issue, Jonathan Marvel says of his addition to the Battery Maritime Building, "We want the new to be new and the old to be old." How would you have reacted if Caples had designed a Beaux Arts structure next to the Modernist ruins of the New York State Pavilion to clearly differentiate the "new" addition from the "old"? It would have been just as ridiculous as the neo-modern glass walls behind the Battery Maritime Building. Take off the neo-modern blinders, guys!

MICHAEL MEKEEL
OFFENHAUSER/MEKEEL ARCHITECTS
LOS ANGELES

UNAFFORDABLY NEW YORK

The article on the 80-story luxury hotel/condo tower developed by Larry Silverstein and designed by Robert A. M. Stern ("A

Tall Order," *AN* 03_02.20.2008) focuses on the massing and the new tower's relationship to the Woolworth Building. But for many of us who work in lower Manhattan, the building represents a giant nail in the coffin of a livable city. While normally a staunch contextualist regarding urban design, I cannot see the importance of whether Stern's design dwarfs or defers to the Woolworth Building. Why don't we ask if we even need a tower like this in a city where "affordable housing" is a contradiction in terms?

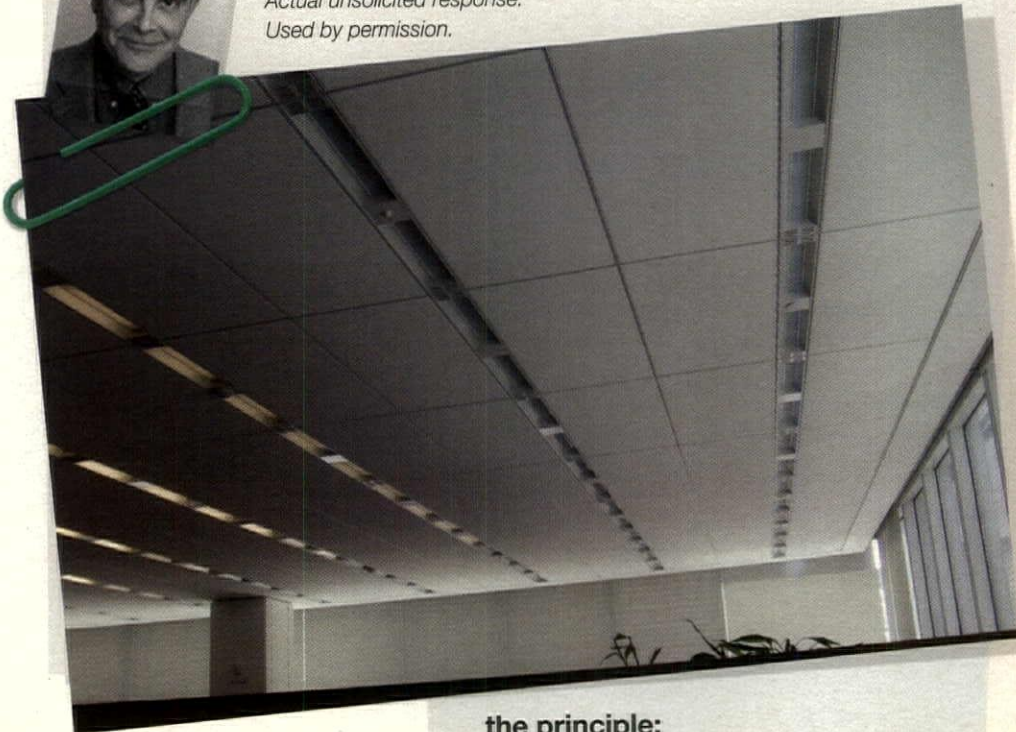
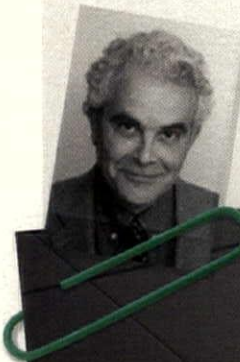
Form follows finance, and whether Stern's design is higher or lower than the Woolworth Building, clad in glass or masonry, or rectilinear or free form, when the dust settles we'll be left to wonder: How many units of affordable housing does the cost of this tower represent? How many clinics? How many bridge repairs? Standing in the long shadow of this latest monument to profit, we'll never know.

JOSHUA BARNETT, RA
NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY

"I went out to see the NY Times building and was very impressed with how well it is working. Below is a picture I took of the commissioned 8th floor, and you can see how much energy is being saved right in the picture..."

Francis Rubinstein
Staff Scientist
Building Technologies Department
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HOME SHOPPING NETWORK

Preppy fashionistas got a midcentury modern treat while perusing the paisley chinos of J.Crew last month, where Richard Neutra's Kaufmann Desert House was featured prominently in the retailer's catalog and website. We're only a *little* disgusted by the current owners shamelessly cashing in on Neutra's legacy—after all, Edgar J. Kaufmann himself was a department store tycoon—but we were curious about the impeccable timing of the high-profile exposure, since the 1946 house is expected to fetch around \$25 million at Christie's International in May. A rep from Christie's claims the J.Crew shoot was coincidental but “certainly welcome,” and tipped us to the fact that the house is also working hard in ads for glam-tastic 7 For All Mankind jeans. Also likely surprised by the shoot were **Leo Marmol** and **Ron Radziner**, whose firm Marmol Radziner handled the home's extensive renovation in the late 1990s. The firm declined to comment about their handiwork being used to sell summerweight cashmere cardigans, but perhaps all the attention will help spur interest in another Marmol Radziner desert property on the block. Their 2005 prefab prototype in Desert Hot Springs has plummeted from \$1.85 million to \$1.495 million since it went on the market in February.

HEAVEN, WE'RE IN HEAVEN...

And we find that we can hardly speak...when we think about Lord **Norman Foster** rumba-ing his way across British TV screens this fall. According to *Building* magazine, that is exactly what he will be doing as a contestant on *Strictly Come Dancing*, Britain's version of *Dancing With the Stars*. The article claims that the 72-year-old architect professes a love of ballroom dancing, and pooh-poohs questions about his age, which is, shall we say, rather above the show's median. While we have never quite understood why anyone in his or her right mind would consent to be a contestant on a reality show, we do fondly recall our abortive efforts to master the cha-cha, and at least it doesn't involve eating sheep's eyeballs or jumping through flaming hoops. Well, we wish him luck—shake what your momma gave you, Norman!

SEND TIPS AND TANGO SHOES TO EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM

MSG PULLOUT COULD KILL NEW TRANSIT HUB AND TOWER PROJECT

DARK DAYS FOR MOYNIHAN STATION?

Madison Square Garden sits over the Penn Station train tracks that deliver 550,000 train riders into Midtown each day, most of whom are commuters from Long Island and New Jersey. On March 27, the Garden's owners, the Dolan family, announced that they intend to renovate their aging arena instead of participating in a complex development project that could remake the neighborhood and create a two-building train hub called Moynihan Station. A week later, the Garden announced a \$500 million, self-funded interior renovation by Toronto's Brisbin Brook Beynon Architects. “We haven't seen MSG's plan yet but will be reviewing it,” said John Gallagher, a spokesman for Mayor Bloomberg. “We still think that it is in their best interest to build a new arena.” For two years, the development team and city and state officials had been working with the Dolans to move the Garden one block west, into the landmark Farley Post Office building. This would allow for a street-level commuter station where the Garden now sits.

Though a breakthrough seemed imminent in the days before the Spitzer scandal broke, the announcement threw the project into limbo. Former Governor Eliot Spitzer's point-man for the project, Patrick Foye, resigned soon after, while the same day, Senator Charles Schumer called on the Port Authority (and its \$2 billion reserve) to take over from the city and state. Civic groups offered guesses about next steps. Kent

Barwick, head of the Municipal Art Society, noted that the Dolans dropped the news just before a weekend when the governor needed to cut budget deals with Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, a Dolan ally.

One man in the thick of negotiations, Vishaan Chakrabarti, spoke at a gathering of brokers and office-leasing executives on March 28 and seemed to acknowledge that the Dolans hold an ace. As chief of the joint venture of the Related Companies and Vornado Realty Trust trying to finance the new station with office projects, Chakrabarti explained that the project needs access to the tracks under the Garden. “Farley can only siphon 20 percent of Penn Station's traffic,” he said, which suggests that the venture must create a commuter station on the Garden site.

There are ways to pay for connections to the tracks under the Garden, which Amtrak owns. Chakrabarti, who wrote the zoning for the nearby Hudson Yards office district when he headed the Department of City Planning's Manhattan office in 2005, invoked “a ring of transit-oriented development” around the station at the real estate lunch. Developers' capital could presumably smooth a deal with the Dolans. But they'd require a separate rezoning, the process of which would likely stretch into a recession and a new city administration. With Moynihan \$2 billion short and missing a clear captain, the Garden seems to have the civic enterprise stuck. **ALEC APPELBAUM**

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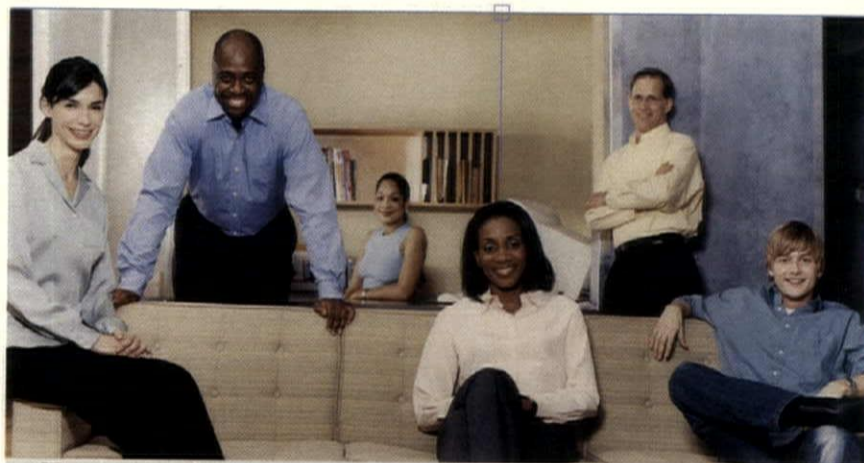
> PARTS + LABOR GALLERY

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Parts + Labor Gallery is a mobile arts and events space housed in an 18-foot commercial box truck. Conceived by a group of young artists, the gallery was built in a Long Island driveway last summer with help from friends and family. Clad in copper flashing affixed with stainless steel screws and featuring two full-height Plexiglas windows with wood and steel mullions, the truck turns the usual gallery experience on its head by shifting the focus from the works of art on display to the relationship between the works of art and their surroundings. Sitting on six wheels, the gallery can show up anywhere at anytime, acting as a lens between an exhibition and a changing context and sidestepping the city's back-breaking commercial rents. Focusing on events and shows that directly engage the public, Parts + Labor has hosted a film screening and lecture, a Thanksgiving banquet, a collage assembly line, and a series of happenings that featured different artists making talismans for passersby. The gallery currently spends its nights in a parking lot in Williamsburg and the directors are seeking proposals for future events. **AARON SEWARD**

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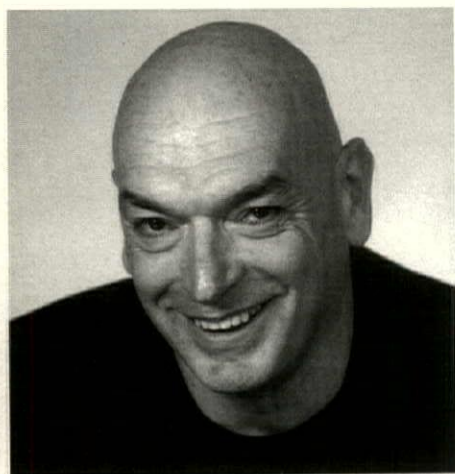
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JEAN NOUVEL HAS ARRIVED continued from front page Contemporary Art (Paris, 1994); the Agbar Tower (Barcelona, 2005); and the Guthrie Theater (Minneapolis, 2006). Over the past 12 months, Ateliers Jean Nouvel has announced a wide range of notable new projects, three of which are in the United States, including a 23-story condominium called the "Vision Machine" on 19th Street across from Frank Gehry's IAC headquarters on the West Side Highway; a new philharmonic hall for the Parc de la Villette in Paris; a satellite Louvre for the Saadiyat Island Cultural District in Abu Dhabi; the 75-story "Tour de Verre" adjacent to the Museum of Modern Art in Midtown; and, most recently, a 45-story luxury condominium, in Los Angeles that Nouvel described as a "green blade." And while it is perhaps not as grand, Nouvel's

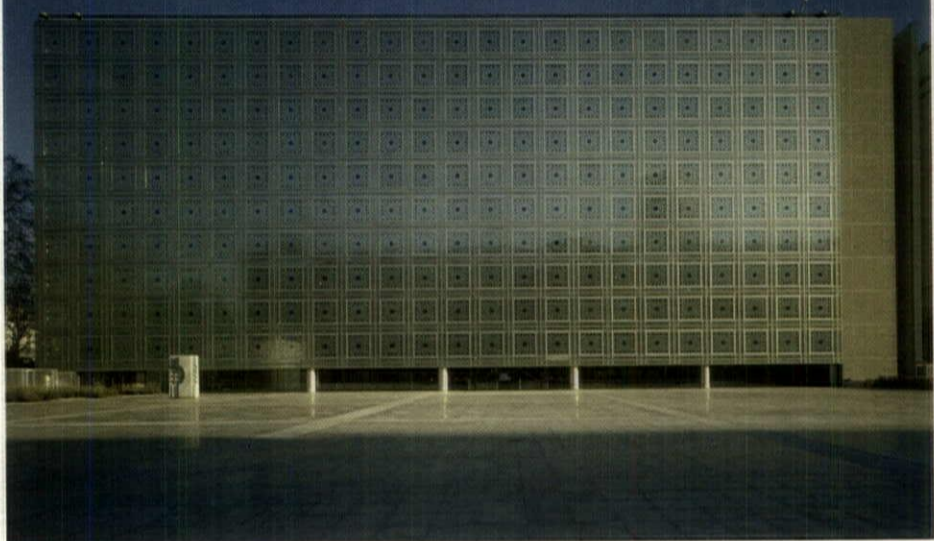
latest project cannot be overlooked: a limited edition perfume bottle shaped like a test-tube phallus for Yves Saint Laurent's new fragrance L'Homme.

Many will be surprised at the announcement, most likely because they thought that Nouvel had already received the Pritzker in 2006. That year, rumors ran high that he was favored to win due to the opening of both the Guthrie Theater and the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, but the prize actually went to the less familiar Paulo Mendes da Rocha of Brazil. But at age 63, Nouvel is right on course to be winning the profession's most prestigious prize. Renzo Piano and Thom Mayne were each 61 when they won Pritzkers in 1998 and 2005, respectively; Zaha Hadid was 54 when she got hers in 2004 and Rem Koolhaas, 56, when he won in 2000; Richard Rogers was a ripe 74 when he won last year.

Nouvel has carved out a body of work known for technological bravura shaded by a range of more sensory expressions, from the extruded red blocks of the Musée du Quai Branly to the geometric complexities of the cylindrical steel Doha tower underway in Qatar. "My work deals with what is happening now—our techniques and materials, what we are capable of doing today," he told one interviewer. And while many architects may say they work with light and dark, few are as bold as Nouvel in creating an architecture where the experience of darkness is as central as the emergence into light.

Nouvel often invokes the world of filmmaking when addressing how he likes to

Arab World Institute (Paris, 2001).



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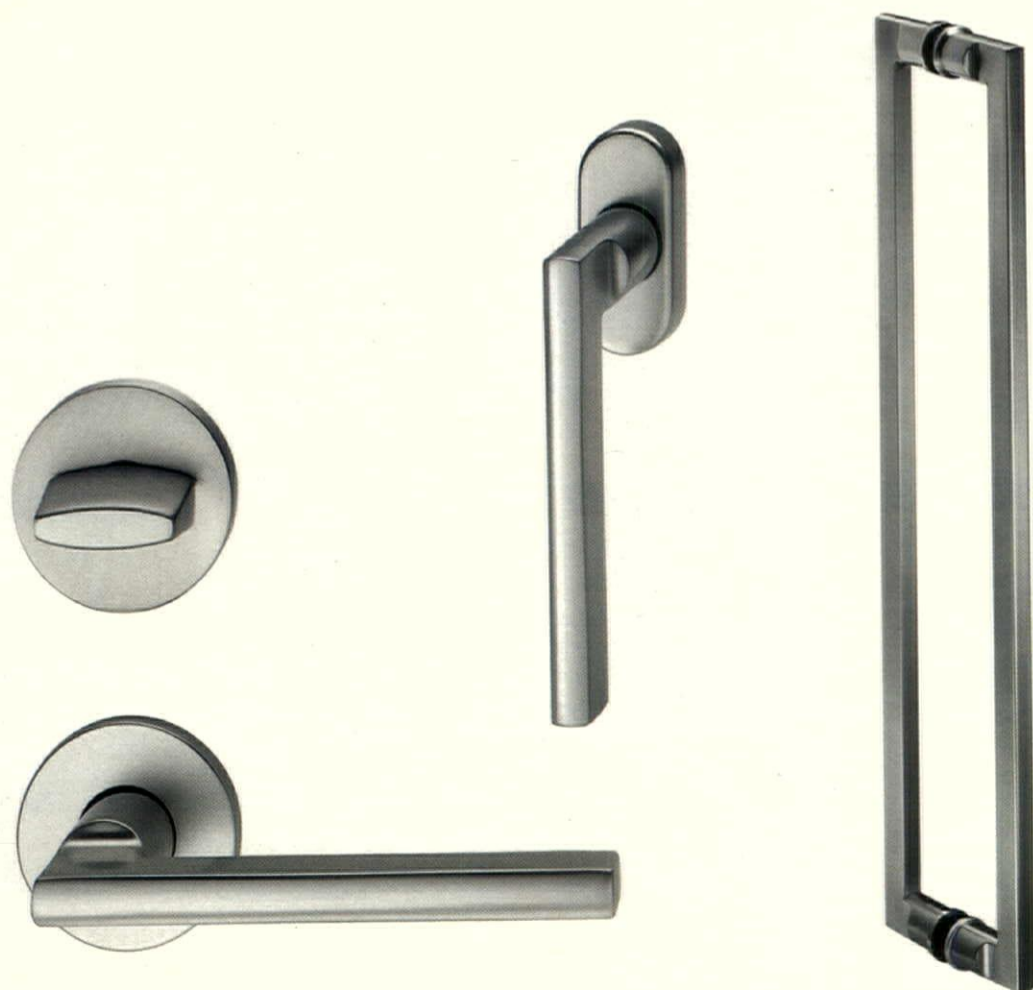
work collaboratively as well as how he likes to narrate his space-making.

Not surprising from one who spent a year in the office of architect/theorists Claude Parent and Paul Virilio, and many more as an exhibition designer, he seems to prefer words and visual sequencing as his tools over models and drawings that he says he mistrusts because they "fix things too early in the creative process." In 1994, he established Ateliers Jean Nouvel with Michel Pelissie;

the office in Paris has since grown to include 140 people and is one of the largest architecture practices in France. Nouvel, who has two sons and a daughter, is currently living in Paris with Swedish architect Mia Hagg. In a 2006 *A+U* special issue on his work, Nouvel said his motto was "When you're young, it's for your whole life," and added that he'd like to end his days "being killed by a jealous husband at age 99."

JULIE V. IOVINE

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athletic facilities, housing, parking, daycare, roadways, public transit, and stormwater reclamation projects.

Prior to the launch of the campus planning process, the Princeton School of Architecture completed a separate commission by Architecture Research Office (ARO) that demonstrates how highly Princeton values a smooth transition between the old and the new. The project re-centers the school around a glass-enclosed entryway that connects the existing 1962 building's two-story south wing to its three-story north wing. According to ARO's Adam Yarinsky, "The transparency of the building literally and conceptually opens the school up to the context of the campus."

The three-year, 6,000-square-foot renovation to the School of Architecture is only a fraction of the redevelopment that will occur on the Princeton Campus and in the surrounding neighborhood over the next ten years. Marc Sharifi of Beyer Blinder Belle remarked, "The university and the community are closely intertwined—what happens to one affects the other. We are cognizant that all recommendations for the campus have a wider impact on the neighborhood as a whole."

DANIELLE RAGO

NEW DIGS

Princeton University has recently unveiled the most comprehensive campus plan in its history. Precipitated by the university's need to expand, the plan sets forth guidelines for an estimated two million gross square feet of development to its 380-acre main campus over the next ten years and beyond. The plan outlines the framework for preserving the

intimate, coherent, and park-like character that defines the Princeton campus, while also adding new elements that will help meet future needs. Led by Neil P. Kittredge, partner-in-charge of the project at Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners, and a team of consultants, the plan includes new buildings, renovations, landscapes, wayfinding,



UNVEILED

PARK TOWER

Before he became an architect, Tom Gilman was a dancer, and it shows in the movement and dynamism his buildings express. "We want to embrace the excitement of a building under construction," Gilman said. "We don't want it to be a static, finished building." The Park Tower, which is currently under construction at the southern edge of the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, takes as its backdrop Prospect Park where it alights upon the skyline. A lot of experimentation in Google Earth helped determine the perfect views for the tower's two main volumes. To further draw distinctions between the pieces and to make it fit the skyline—it will be the tallest building on the park—Gilman uses blue and green glass meant to mimic the horizon. Adding to this floating character is a set of LEDs at the break between the volumes that will slowly transition colors throughout the day, like a 21st-century version of the clock on the Williamsburg Bank Building. **MC**

Architect: Gilman Architects
Developer: Henry Herbst
Location: Prospect-Lefferts Gardens, Brooklyn
Completion: Spring 2010

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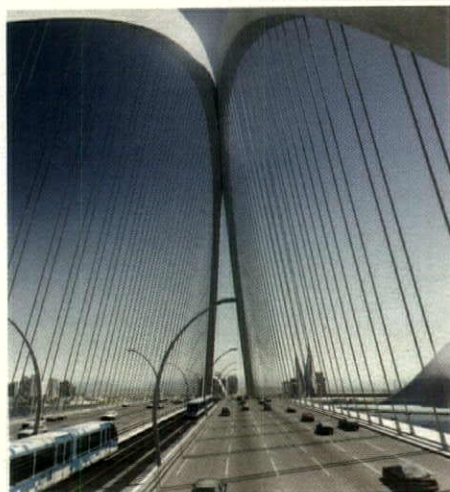
GREEN GOES GLOBAL continued from front page discussion, as represented by Peter Verwer, chief executive of the Property Council of Australia. He thinks that in addition to the system based on financial data Australia already has in place for public reporting, this will explain the social and environmental contribution that major property investors make to the community.

Peace said that currently, the group is still discussing the parameters of the system. It is unclear how buildings under construction, or operational efficiency in existing buildings will be measured, if at all. Individual countries could always add their own measures to adapt it to their climates, but Peace stresses that the system will be unique in that a company cannot simply win a good rating with a few exceptional buildings. If a property owner were to begin building many LEED-certified offices, for example, the rating system could still deem operations to be poor if the older holdings were particularly damaging to the environment. The system looks at corporate responsibility overall, and for now is aimed mainly at commercial properties, though it may broaden to include residential holdings. While no representatives from India or the Middle East were present, Peace explained that the development process is still in its very early stages and that she would like to see more countries included.

Currently, architects are dealing with the challenges of trying to build green in countries around the world while a global standard for construction does not exist. In Dubai, the Emirates Green Building Council is establishing and implementing a green

building model based on LEED. New York-based FXFowle won a design competition to build a bridge—the sixth crossing at Dubai creek—that will include a sustainable transportation station and pedestrian walkways in addition to six lanes in each direction for cars. Colin Montoute, a senior architect with the firm, explained that the strategy for building green is different in because local materials are largely unavailable. Instead, they try to create specific building solutions for performance-based measures. Montoute does not think that there can be one global standard, but believes that the framework of LEED can be modified to fit local conditions. He explained that “a global standard is a good thing. In addition to establishing benchmarks, it also keeps the issue at the forefront of discussion.” **SARAH F. COX**

FXFowle's Sixth Crossing bridge in Dubai.



COURTESY FXFOWLE

HOW THE WEST WON'T BE

ONE continued from front page get office construction underway. When complete in 2016, the design will be as different from the model as the politicians surrounding it.

This deal doesn't focus on architecture: it's about getting money to the MTA. The agency is facing serious deficits, and Tishman's willingness to sink capital into the neighborhood was particularly attractive. “Cash flows one way,” explained MTA's Gary Dellaverson to his board before unanimous approval for the tentative deal. “Tishman's obligation is to us.” The developer outlasted an early dropout (Brookfield Properties), a bidder for half of the site (the Related Companies), and a near-match from the Durst Organization and Vornado Realty Trust that Dellaverson described to his board as slightly less and later than Tishman's. Tishman is working out terms to lease the 26-acre site for 99 years, with rights to develop the western half one parcel at a time, selling each parcel only after paying the MTA for it and paying hundreds of millions in cash if it decides to quit.

But what will the new neighborhood look like? The draft commitment letter obliges the developer only to produce a place “consistent with developer site plan and master plan proposal.” Tishman will probably sell any parcel the 7 subway extension and economy make valuable when it's complete. At the ceremony, CEO Jerry Speyer affirmed that “any architect” could design the school, apartment towers, office buildings, cultural center, or park within the guidelines of the master plan. Speyer's son Rob, the company's president, insisted the builders would “keep an open mind” about whether the High Line stays intact, and on other questions that preoccupy urban-design types.

So the office towers' cantilever over the High Line, the classical fountain in the center, and the multicolored rooftops could vanish. Jerry Speyer said his group remains “absolutely” set on building the staircase from 10th Avenue, which is part of the master plan and which Rob Speyer has eagerly described as Manhattan's next great public space. But

a challenge in making a public space great will be getting people there: The site slopes downwards and will be hard to reach unless the planned 7 subway line extension finds money for a stop at 10th Avenue. “The most challenging part is how to avoid an overly-programmed, sterile, and disconnected end result,” said FXFowle partner Dan Kaplan, who worked on Durst/Vornado's bid and the Hudson Yards Development Corporation's design guidelines. Activists will undoubtedly also push for more affordable housing than the 391 units currently in the proposal.

At the ceremony, Governor Paterson said the best plan will come when “the elected community, developers, and planners consult with the public.” He was gently pointing out that the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, a six-month gauntlet of community meetings and scoping documents, will determine how quickly Tishman can leverage its investment and how hard it can push for office space to recoup extra spending.

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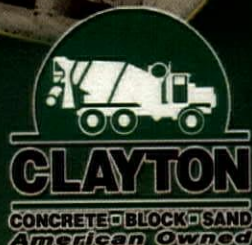
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CRIT: ALEXANDRA LANGE

AS ATLANTIC YARDS SHRINKS,
ITS CRITICS REJOICE, BUT
IS SMALLER STILL TOO BIG?

WILL MISS BROOKLYN BOW OUT?

For those of us who try to resist conspiracy theory's undertow, the March 21 news that all parts of Forest City Ratner's (FCR) Atlantic Yards project but the Brooklyn Nets arena are stalled was a definite blow. No "Miss Brooklyn," the mixed-use tower to be the tallest in Brooklyn, unless an anchor tenant responds to a letter Frank Gehry recently sent to the heads of major city corporations. No 6,000 market-rate, middle- and low-income affordable condominiums and rentals in towers embracing the arena and a new, somewhat lower-rise neighborhood around an Olin Partnership-designed open space until some unspecified later date. Instead, Brooklyn might just get the kind of sitting-duck arena that has failed so often in urban settings (see also: Madison Square Garden). Bruce Ratner's carefully hazy statements to *The New York Times* could be read as a threat—more money or the public benefits disappear—or as a fair indicator of how quickly economic times have changed, or as both.

Opponents of the Atlantic Yards project always said Frank Gehry's involvement, the community benefits agreement, and the promise of affordable housing were window-dressing for a land grab for the New Jersey Nets (the arena's tenant). Each offered a cynical ploy to block criticism from various constituencies in the adjacent neighborhoods of Park Slope, Prospect Heights, Clinton Hill, and Fort Greene. The upper middle class would be dazzled by the promise of titanium, the middle class by the promise of apartments, the working class by the promise of jobs.

Most cynical of all, perhaps, was the persistent renaming (by FCR, and then city and state officials) of the intersection at Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues as "Downtown Brooklyn," making the presence of a 600-foot office and hotel tower sound only natural. The new nomenclature suggested the location was the equivalent of Midtown or Wall Street, when in reality its context is four-story townhouses, the always out-of-scale Williamsburg Bank Tower, and FCR's cheap, depressing malls, Atlantic Terminal and Atlantic Center. An arena might have been better located in real downtown Brooklyn, where FCR's Metrotech is dead in the evenings, rather than in an enclave of housing and offices that had to be built from scratch and appropriated property.

But the new nomenclature caught on, spurring other, swifter-moving developments that bumped up the relative profile of the area before FCR even started. It cast a pall over Prospect Heights real estate, as prospective buyers considered living next to a ten- or fifteen-year construction site. And building demolitions created pockets of the blight FCR claimed was already there. Even if Atlantic

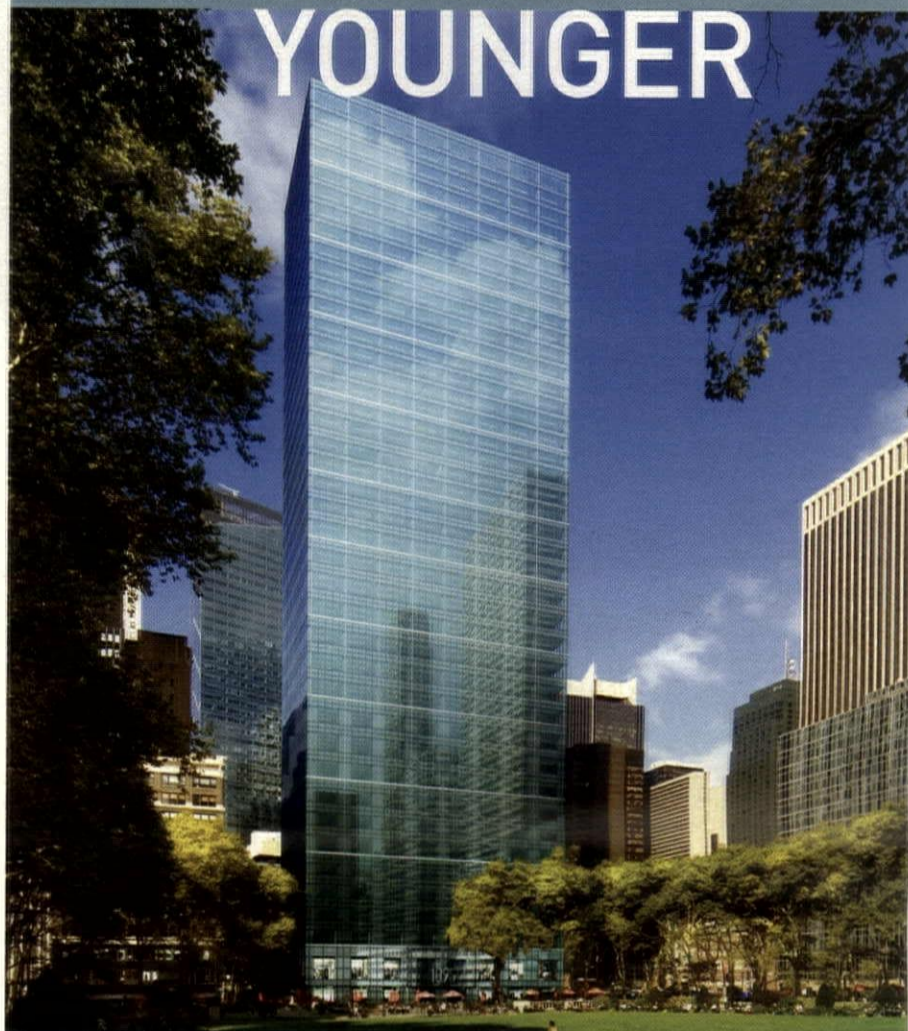
Yards and the arena never happen, Ratner and Gehry have already changed Brooklyn.

The New York Times architecture critic Nicolai Ouroussoff's analysis of the situation, published the same day, included his switching sides on Atlantic Yards from pro to con and a belated call for Gehry to do the right thing and walk away. But surely Gehry knew exactly how he was being used by the developer in the first place, as do many of the celebrity architects now deployed around the world. Bilbao made him a brand, and the idea that the hand of the master would be seen throughout the railyards build-out (construction was originally scheduled to run through 2016) was absurd. Ratner reeled him in with the promise of his first large-scale urban planning project, a step beyond the urban interventions around the Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. If he backs out now, it will be because he's not interested in designing merely an arena, not the bait-and-switch. In truth, the project now is similar to the concert hall: a largely windowless duck at a prominent intersection that could use a little pixie dust, both architectural and urban.

At bottom, Brooklyn never needed an arena, just as it never needed Miss Brooklyn. The idea of the Nets was always sold as a return to the glory days of the Dodgers, when Brooklyn had a big enough presence to have its own team (never mind the sport). But that thinking, enabled by Borough President Marty Markowitz's belief that anything named Brooklyn is a good thing, was based on a false sense of Brooklyn's inferiority complex. The real story in 2004 when this all began was that Brooklyn already thought of itself as an alternative to Manhattan rather than a comedown, and had been redeveloping itself, for better and for worse, in all kinds of smaller scale and more organic ways. The slow demise of a project that was always too big for Brooklyn, and yet is no better urbanism at its current shrunken scale, makes one wish for a time machine to go back to 2003, when the project was announced. Ouroussoff raises the possibility that FCR may just sell off chunks of the property. If there could be a new look at the zoning under the city's aegis—reduced scale, mixed uses—this might in fact be a blessing in disguise; the project is currently under state control and therefore exempt from ULURP. But that, again, would require a suspension of cynicism.

ALEXANDRA LANGE IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTING CRITIC TO AN. SHE IS ALSO A LONGTIME BROOKLYN RESIDENT, A CONTRIBUTING EDITOR AT NEW YORK MAGAZINE, AND TEACHES ARCHITECTURE CRITICISM AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY.

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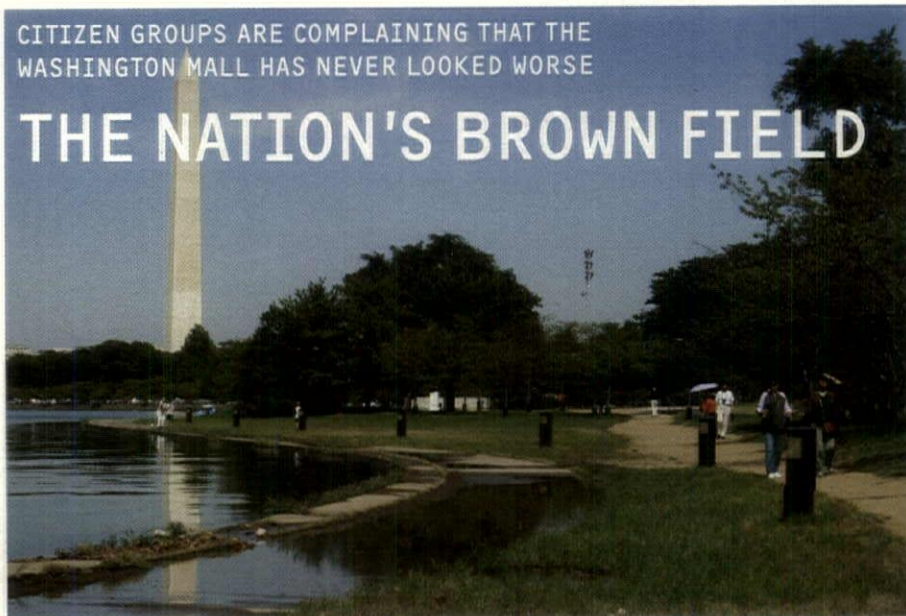
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CITIZEN GROUPS ARE COMPLAINING THAT THE WASHINGTON MALL HAS NEVER LOOKED WORSE

THE NATION'S BROWN FIELD



COURTESY CAROLINE CUNNINGHAM/TRUST FOR THE NATIONAL MALL

Talk about killing the things we love: 25 million visitors grind their way across the National Mall in Washington, D.C. each year as marches, concerts, movies, and festivals continue to throng its elm-lined expanse. Meanwhile, the cost of deferred maintenance around its museums and memorials by the National Park Service has reached \$350 million. Tourists who expect the shimmering greenswards they've seen on postcards instead find hardpan dirt, and, by the way, where's the nearest decent bathroom?

The problem is, the Mall's funding shortfall is an insignificant fraction of the \$5 billion needed to restore all the National Park Service-run sites around the country. So as the Park Service puts finishing touches on a 30-year management plan for the Mall that will be released later this year, two separate citizen-led groups in Washington are agitating for more tender loving care toward the space known as America's Front Lawn, with markedly different views about the problem.

One group, the Trust for the National Mall, began work in 2004 and is led by the Washington developer Chip Akridge. Last fall, the Trust became the Park Service's "official" fundraising partner, modeling itself on New York's Central Park Conservancy. When the Park Service does release its final Mall plan (a draft proposal drew 23,000 citizen comments in January 2008), the Trust intends to launch a campaign to raise \$500 million for improved infrastructure, amenities, and signage around the Mall. "We want all of America to be involved, from school-

children to trillionaires," Akridge said. "Our mission is to support the mission of the Park Service."

But the Park Service's mission isn't nearly broad enough, according to Judy Scott Feldman, who in 2000 founded the other group, the National Coalition to Save Our Mall, which has set up its own fundraising outfit called the National Mall Conservancy (also based on the Central Park model). "The Park Service is very good at taking care of wilderness parks, but not good in urban parks," Feldman said. "They're trying to get people off the Mall to protect its resources." Feldman's group is urging the Park Service to balance conservation of the Mall with its heavy human uses.

Feldman's group has produced a guide to recreation on the Mall and is currently working on recycling and educational programs for the area. In April, the coalition plans to issue a report calling for a new panel resembling the City Beautiful-inspired McMillan Commission of 1901-02, which outlined the Mall as we know it today. A new commission would take a comprehensive approach to the Mall and its surroundings, Feldman said, bringing in the Smithsonian and the Architect of the Capitol, whose territories dovetail all around the Mall. The Park Service, she said, isn't interested in such a commission because it would infringe on its turf. She believes the efforts of Akridge's group can only help in the long run: "The more people interested in the Mall, the better."

BRADFORD MCKEE

CHEERS, FRANK continued from front page and Rem Koolhaas. Last year's pavilion by Snøhetta partner Kjetil Thorsen and artist Olafur Eliasson was delayed until early fall, and the gallery turned to Zaha Hadid to save the day with a cluster of fabric mushrooms that opened just in time for the summer party season.

The design of Gehry's structure was unveiled at the end of March. Engineered in collaboration with Ove Arup, it will consist of large wood planks and several glass planes that will project in various angles and directions. Its supporting beams and columns of different lengths will create a warped envelope accentuated by disjointed wooden members that appear like spikes emerging from the top and sides of the structure. The project will serve as an

amphitheater for live events and, explained Gehry, as "an urban street," running from the park to the Serpentine's gallery.

The pavilion will be Gehry's first built structure in England. His only other completed UK building is the Maggie's Center cancer hospital in Dundee, Scotland, completed in 2003. For the Serpentine project, he is collaborating for the first time with his son Samuel Gehry, a designer.

The pavilion will be sited on the gallery's lawn for three months. Since 2001, it has attracted up to 250,000 visitors every summer and is accompanied by a program of public talks and events. Generally, the pavilion opens in July. As with all the previous designers, Gehry will have a maximum of six months from the time of his invitation to complete the work. **SAM LUBELL**



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LIGHT AT THE TOP OF THE STAIR

Steven Holl Architects recently designed a sunlit staircase as the centerpiece of an overhaul of 5 Washington Place for New York University's Philosophy Department. The so-called "Tower of Light" was created in sync with current academic thinking on encouraging spontaneous interaction, and was designed to provide a place where students and teachers can meet, socialize, and philosophize.

The mundane interior of the late-19th-century building didn't match its grand facade: on the ground floor was a large, underused classroom. A busy career services office occupied the second floor, and above that were a series of storage and music spaces. The old staircase was dark and had foam covering a low pass-through to fend off accidents for taller academics.

With wide, open platforms and a huge four-foot-by-four-foot skylight flooding the space with sunlight, the new staircase is designed so that students and teachers can see one another from different angles as they ascend and descend the stair. The walls are Fiberock

on the interior and white-washed ash wood on the exterior, and perforated with an abstract design that allows light through, giving the staircase an even greater sense of permeability. Influenced by Ludwig Wittgenstein's "Remarks on Color," Holl made the staircase almost entirely devoid of color except for rainbows that scatter on the walls when light passes through a prismatic film on the windows.

The designs for the other spaces in the six-floor building are more modest, and include faculty and student offices, two seminar rooms, a periodicals library, a lounge, a meeting room, and a 120-seat, cork-clad auditorium.

"There was this idea that the architecture would become a clean, simple backdrop to the way people inhabit the space," said Edward Lalonde, the project manager. The firm also designed the millwork, furniture, pendant light fixtures for the faculty offices, and stainless steel door levers, earning the project an AIA New York Chapter Educational Design Award in 2008. **AUDREY JAYNES**

PREPARING FOR THE R-WORD continued

from front page to turn down projects. Still, a number of sobering reports were released in recent weeks that show that trend may not continue. Chief among these was the AIA Architectural Billings Index.

The index is based on a monthly survey of over 100 firms and measures their current billings record. In February, it recorded its second lowest reading, 41.3, since its inception in 1995. It was also the steepest two-month decline, at 13.2 percentage points. Numbers above 50 represent an increase in billings, and below, a decrease.

For the past four years, the index has been on average five points ahead, indicating the robust construction market. The last time it showed a prolonged decline was in 2001, in line with the collapsing tech bubble that culminated in October of that year, when the index recorded its slowest month ever at 40.1.

Without March's numbers, due in mid-April, it is hard to say exactly where the market is headed, but the AIA chief econo-

mist Kermit Baker, who created the index and a number of other devices to track the architectural economy, said he remains circumspect. "It's very clear now that the economy is a good deal weaker than it was last fall," Baker said by phone from Boston, where he is also a senior research fellow at Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies. "I don't think you'll really see it in the construction economy until third or fourth quarter '08, but design usually comes first. Some of this is certainly indicative of where the construction economy is headed."

Baker said the situation is not as dire as the last recession because there is much less spec building. "You don't have these tech companies building with 20, 30, 50 percent excess space for projected expansion," he said. Baker also said that the nature of the downturn, which is concentrated in the housing market, is of less concern to AIA members; 85 percent of their work is non-residential, and that tends to be at the more stable high-end. The recent crisis in the

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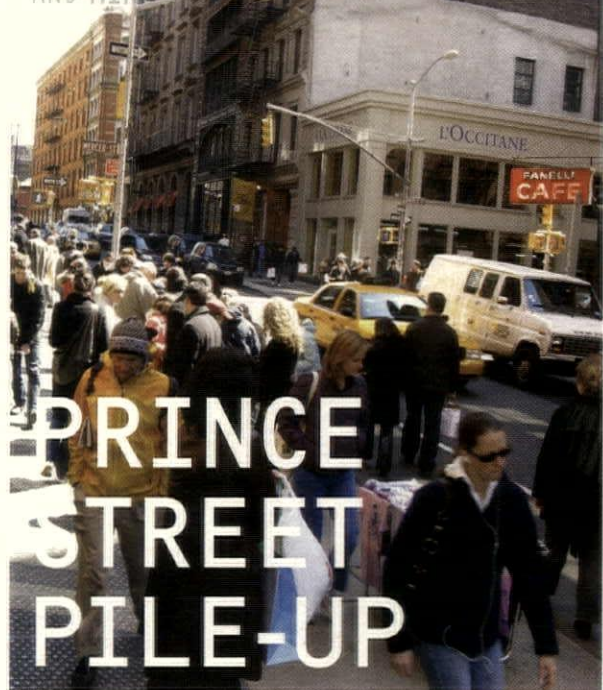
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SOHO SAYS NO TO TRAFFIC-BAN PLAN,
FEARING MASSIVE INFLUX OF UNICYCLISTS
AND MIMES



New York's sidewalk ballet is more like a scrum in Soho, where tourists, vendors, and strollers jostle during jam-packed shopping hours. So it was a shock to some residents when efforts to tame pedestrian chaos faltered last month after the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) unveiled a plan to ban traffic on a six-block stretch of Prince Street.

Conceived as a way to improve mobility in the district, the plan would take effect on summer Sundays from Lafayette Street to West Broadway, mimicking pedestrian malls in Paris and Copenhagen. But at a March 11 Community Board 2 meeting, more than 100 people denounced the plan as "a cockamamie experiment" destined to further transform the cast-iron neighborhood

into a gauntlet of hawkers, buskers, and mimes.

"This would be the final nail in the coffin of Soho as a residential neighborhood," said Sean Sweeney, director of the SoHo Alliance, a coalition of community groups. That fate was postponed when the board's traffic committee sent the proposal back to the DOT, a resolution seconded by a full board vote.

Many agree that Prince Street is a victim of its own success. "I would argue that Prince Street is a miserable pedestrian experience," said Ian Dutton, vice-chairman of the board's traffic and transportation committee. The area sees a weekend average of 4,500 pedestrians per hour, according to DOT figures, compared to 200 vehicles during the same period. "We're giving 80 percent of

the space to this very tiny minority of users who we don't want to prioritize," said Dutton. "It doesn't make sense."

But opponents say a pedestrian mall would encourage more vendors, whose tables already hog scarce sidewalk space. Public officials vowed to crack down on illegal vending activity, but residents remain skeptical. "There are so many loopholes in the current law that vending on the sidewalk is just a revolving door," Dutton said.

Others think design measures might better tamp down traffic. "If the goal is to take space away from cars, that's great," said Renee Kaufman, a community board member. "But widening sidewalks and removing parking is already a good way to take space away from vehicles." Indeed, many successful pedestrian streets are not completely blocked to cars, such as in London's Chinatown district, where portal-like gates deter drivers.

Public agencies are putting the matter under review.

"We have listened to the concerns voiced by SoHo residents and will find ways to address our shared concerns about traffic, street vendors, and congestion," said DOT spokesman Seth Solomonow in a statement.

This once-scruffy swath of New York is still no slice of Paris, and some are determined to keep it that way. "We didn't want sidewalk cafes for the same reason," said Sweeney. "We don't want a bourgeois, European sensibility in a 19th-century, industrial American neighborhood." **JEFF BYLES**

financial markets could have a greater impact, but Baker said the work will then shift to governments and institutions, which like to build when markets are down and prices are cheaper.

"Thank god we're global," Asymptote principal Hani Rashid said. "We made sure—or were fortunate—to find different clients in different economies to buffer us against what's happening now." Baker countered that only a small percentage of US firms work abroad, but said that this may provide an opportunity to reduce outsourcing of backend work like construction documents.

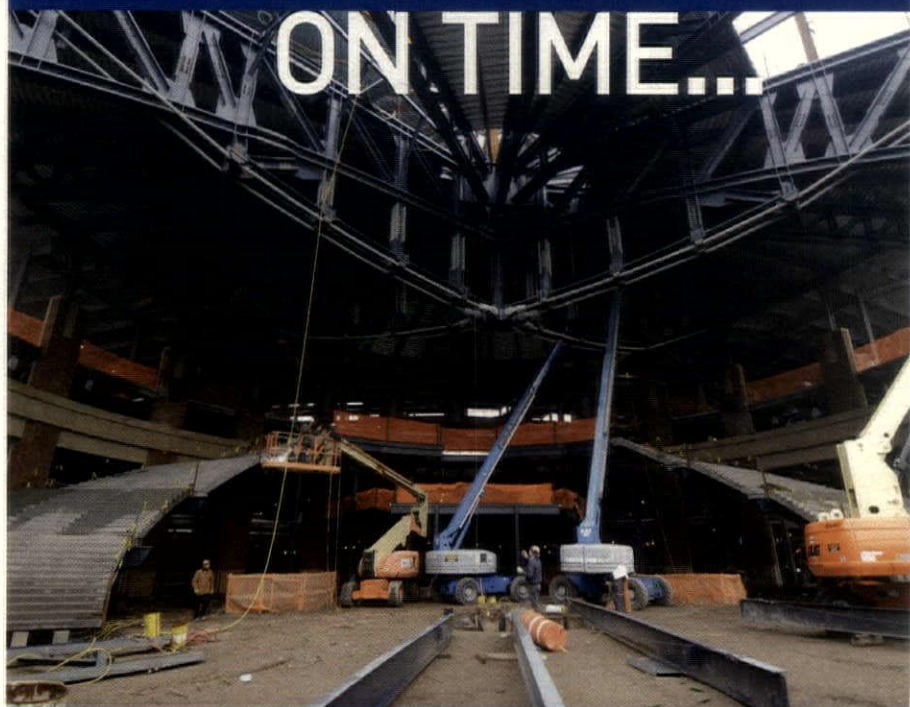
Though the New York City Department of Buildings said construction permits—another early indicator—were down 40 percent for January and February from the previous year, AIA New York executive director Fredric Bell said members remain as busy as ever. "I look out the window and I can't believe what I'm hearing," he said. "Just look at all the construction cranes."

Nancy Jenner, the deputy director of the Boston Society of Architects, said Boston had largely avoided the real estate craze whose aftermath now plagues most of the country since it was hit so hard in 2001. "Everyone's talking about it, but no one is feeling it yet," she said. "Sometimes it takes a while, but as far as I know, everyone is hiring."

Others have not been so fortunate. The travails of Miami are well known, and the local chapter is still counting the casualties. "Some people have a lot of work, and some people don't," said AIA Miami executive director Mike Brazlavsky. "The big firms are doing better. But everyone is still working for the time being."

David Gensler, an economist and executive director at his father's eponymous firm, may have thousands of projects in the works, but still feels cautious. "It's a weak market," he said. "I expect a few wild cards that will make this longer and deeper than many people expect." **MC**

IF YOU BUILD IT ON TIME...



Construction schedules always run against tight deadlines, but struggling to meet client move-in dates is extra important when the hopes and dreams of thousands of fans rely on the completion of a project. By choosing steel for the entire superstructure of **Citi Field**, **HOK Sport** opted for a material that can be erected faster than comparable systems, ensuring that the Mets will be the first Major League Baseball team in New York City to move into its new home.

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 16, 2008

For the last couple of decades, many in the design world have unfairly viewed Boston as something of a red-brick backwater. "Boston has a reputation as a town where talent flees," said Beth Whittaker, principal of Merge Architects. "We have all these great schools, and people often leave. But the fact is, that's changing." Her Boston-based firm is a perfect case in point, headed up by Whittaker, a Harvard GSD grad, and vice president Stephen Zeher, an alum of MIT. By demonstrating aptitude at a variety of scales and programs, an exacting attention to craftsmanship, an inventive use of materials, and a dynamic formal language, the firm's designs have scooped up several awards since it was formed in 2003, raising the profile of the brainy duo and their associates.

When Whittaker first left Brian Healy Architects to found the firm out of her home office in the Fort Point Channel district, many of her early projects were loft renovations and roof deck build-outs in her own neighborhood. The projects—and budgets—were extremely small, which gave Whittaker and her slowly growing

team the chance to experiment with various techniques and materials, learning to craft high design for low prices. "How are you inventive on such a small budget? Often, it's by using a simple, inexpensive material in a new way," Whittaker said.

No longer squeezed into Whittaker's house, the firm now numbers five (including two registered architects), working in a nearby office space. Judging by the number of projects recently completed and on the boards, the firm is still good at getting a lot from a little. As the firm's reputation has grown, an increasing number of commercial projects have come their way, and recently they have taken on a design for an institutional client, the YMCA. In keeping with their rising numbers and prominence, the firm changed names from Elizabeth Whittaker Architects to Merge Architects. The new moniker symbolizes not only the team's meeting-of-the-minds, but also their intense collaboration with artisans and builders to produce projects with a close attention to detail.

LISA DELGADO

PENN STREET LOFTS



LEFT: JOHN HORNER; RIGHT: SILVIA ILLIA

YMCA CAMP INFIRMARY
AND WELLNESS CENTER

ALL IMAGES COURTESY MERGE ARCHITECTS

VICKI LEE'S BAKERY AND CAFÉ



VICKI LEE'S BAKERY AND CAFÉ
BELMONT
MASSACHUSETTS

This bakery and cafe could be called a symphony in OSB. The oriented strand board floor was whitewashed, whereas the soffit and front of the counter have only a clear sealant. Behind the counter, sections of shelves feature the material covered with sandblasted Plexiglas, giving it a milky look and a sense of depth. The OSB shelf edges appeared overly raw, so the carpenter had to splice in small edge-bands for a more finished look. Another challenge came when Whittaker wanted clean lines for the glass pastry cases, but found it impossible to find off-the-shelf ones that weren't curved, so she elected to custom-design them.

NATIONAL JEAN COMPANY



NATIONAL JEAN COMPANY
WEST HARTFORD
CONNECTICUT

A casual clothing store's cavernous location cried out for some design interventions to bring it down to scale. "It was just an enormous space that would've felt like a department store if it hadn't had some delicate elements inserted," said firm member Andrew Richardson. The architects added a suspended soffit covered with knotty pine, which also runs down an adjoining wall. Attached to the soffit are custom-designed curvy steel ribbons painted scarlet, adding an eye-catching design element with a practical use: They house sliding tracks that let a series of brushed-nickel clothing racks easily move to various locations in the store. Matching red laminate also appears in display areas and the cashwrap.

MINILUXE



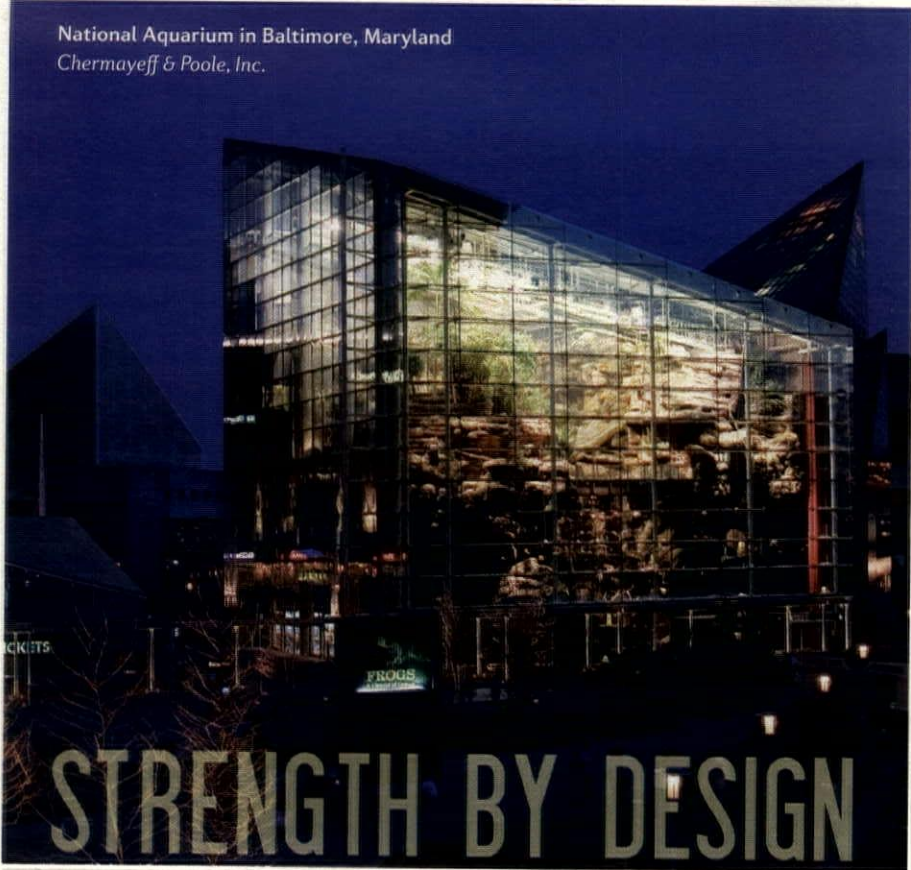
MINILUXE
NEWTON
MASSACHUSETTS

This mid-range nail salon company needed help coming up with a visual identity, so it called on Merge to create a prototype design for a salon in Newton that would be versatile enough to work in other locations. The silhouettes of hands and feet adorn birch-plywood panels perforated with a CNC machine. Subtle during the day, when the sunlight fades the panels begin to glow, giving the space a lounge-like look and allowing it to double as a private party venue. The architects also designed wallpaper featuring abstract, nail-like shapes in the company's colors. The rounded shape of a custom-designed drying bar aids in circulation; it also echoes the contour of a well-manicured fingertip.

YMCA CAMP INFIRMARY
AND WELLNESS CENTER
WEST BROOKFIELD,
MASSACHUSETTS

For a YMCA camp infirmary and wellness center, the architects drew upon the simple design vocabulary of a cabin, with a contemporary spin. Slot windows will make an interior effect "similar to the dappled light effect through a grove of trees," Whittaker said. From outside at night, the narrow rectangles of light will look "like a lantern in the woods," she added. Large windows at one entrance offer views of a nearby lake to lift the spirits of young patients, and a prominent stairway offers a hangout spot for them to see visitors. The structures will be rented out for retreats during the off-season, so the design includes several movable walls for a variety of possible uses.

National Aquarium in Baltimore, Maryland
Chermayeff & Poole, Inc.



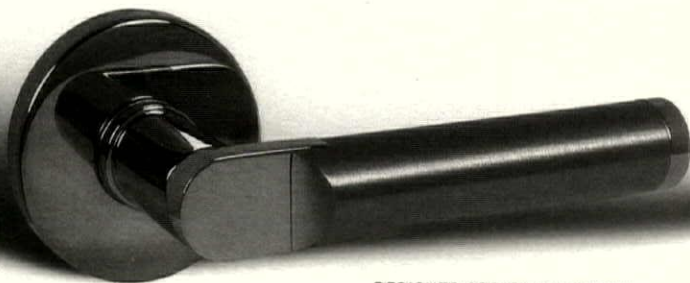
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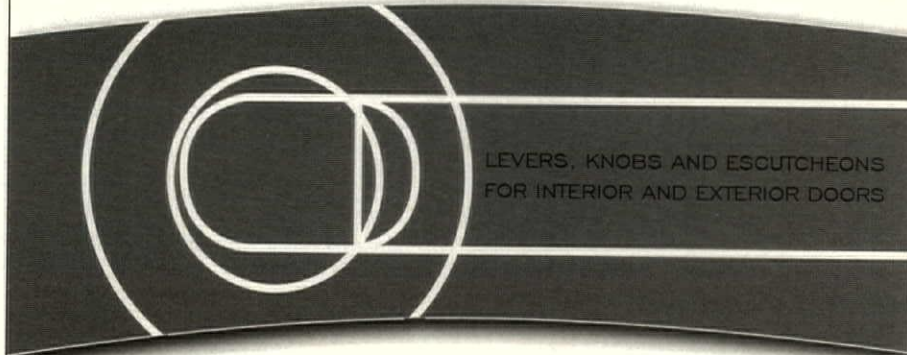
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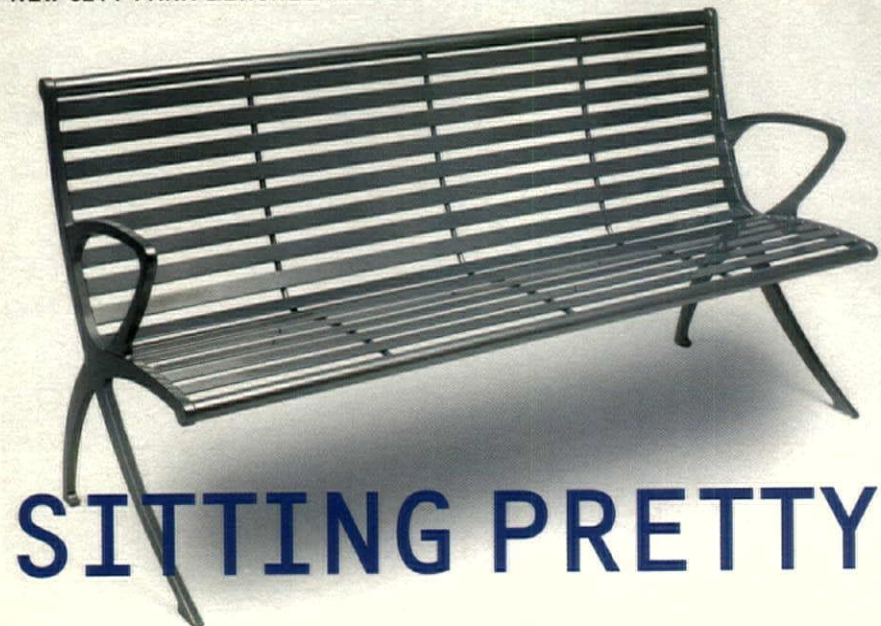


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NEW CITY PARK BENCHES ARE BOTH SUSTAINABLE AND HIP



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COURTESY LANDSCAPE FORMS

The design division of New York City's Department of Parks & Recreation has partnered with the Design Trust for Public Space to create a sustainable design manual for all city parks. The manual is still in development, but sustainable practices already seem to be taking hold in the department. They have selected a stylish new bench by the Michigan-based Landscape Forms that should begin appearing in parks in the near future. The bench with steel slats is constructed of nine percent post-consumer waste that Parks design chief Charles McKinney claims answers "many of the sustainability goals we have set for

the department." The technical qualities of its plasma-cut steel frame, he added, "are excellent. It is extremely comfortable and the steel should be easier than wood to take care of in the future."

Speaking of the future, McKinney added that the bench is not only sustainable, but also "expressive of this century, not the last." The designer John Rizzi has taken his cues from the "asymmetric patterns in nature and the classic Parisian bench," but interpreted them in an elegant, stylized, pop outline that captures the essence of past and future both.

WILLIAM MENKING

NEW BUILDINGS MUST INCLUDE TREES, LANDSCAPING

GREEN ACRES

On the streets surrounding City Hall, a handful of trees were beginning to bud on March 25. Inside, the City Planning Commission had just approved two zoning amendments that would give those half-dozen lonely trees some much-needed company. One amendment encourages the planting of street trees, and the other requires the landscaping of front yards. "The more trees in the city, the better," said Susan Gooberman, executive director of Trees New York. "All the new buildings, and especially the green ones, should all have trees. The urban forest is an important part of the urban fabric."

According to the Department of Parks and Recreation, the city currently has roughly 600,000 street trees. The city expects the new zoning requirements will add 10,000 trees a year to that number, towards Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's PlaNYC goal of adding a million trees by 2017. With front yards, the city is trying to reverse the trend of paving the yard to accommodate cars and lazy homeowners—the chief complaint has been about having to mow lawns.

Outside of the big parks, greenery has had a rough time in the city, which is why the Bloomberg administration has embraced zoning mandates to encourage verdancy. Under the new rules, any new development or major renovation of more than 20 percent of a property will require the planting of at least one tree for every

25 feet of street frontage. The trees will be provided by Parks and Recreation.

In low-density residential neighborhoods, which comprise 70 percent of the city's residential area, 20 percent of lots less than 60 feet wide would have to be landscaped, while lots wider than that would require 50 percent coverage. The front yard regulations also offer recommendations for side and rear yard arrangements to provide for better parking options. As a safety precaution, driveways may not slope more than 11 percent below grade.

"We hope both green initiatives will be adopted by the City Council in time for the spring planting season," commission chair Amanda Burden said. That seems likely given the general zeal for environmentalism these days and the support of those council members familiar with the plan, including Land Use Committee chair Melinda Katz.

But Councilmember Tony Avella urged revisions, especially in the lowest density neighborhoods. "We don't want someone putting an addition on their house, and suddenly they have to go out and plant a bunch of trees," he said. **MC**

A new zoning amendment could ensure that more city streets are as lush as Park Slope.



WALLY ©/COURTESY FLICKR

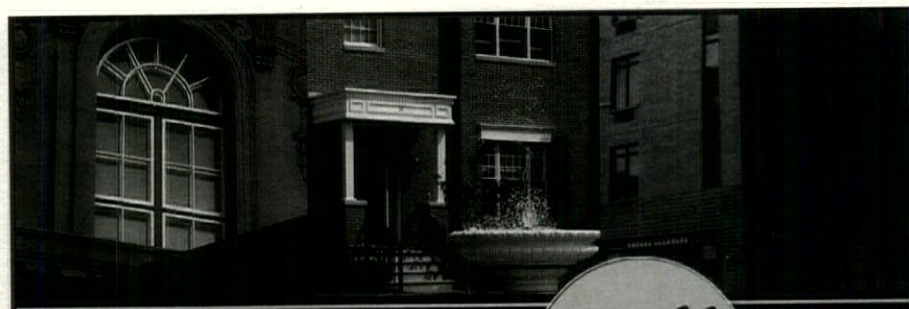
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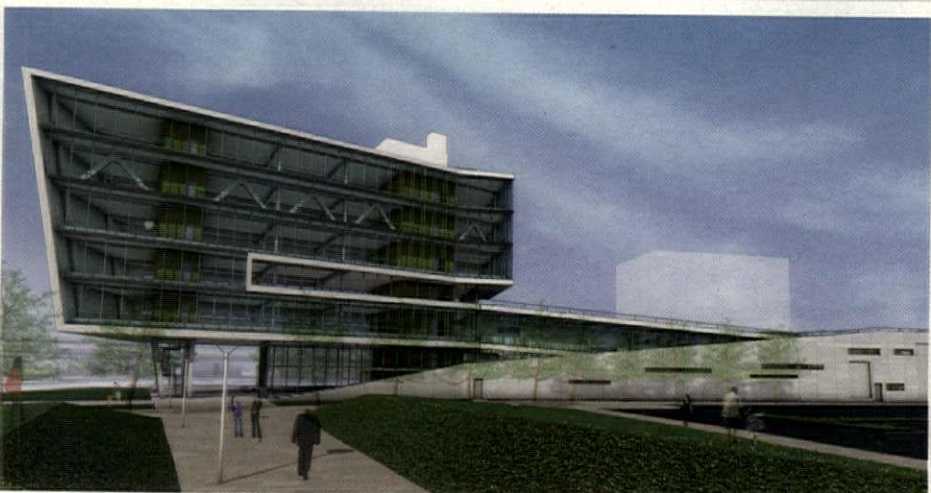
Clockwise from top left: The Warehouse contains swing space for the architecture school; inside the Warehouse; student housing by Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects; Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems by Toshiko Mori Architect (TMA); Link Hall addition by TMA.



COURTESY SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COMMITS FINANCIAL CAPITAL AND SERIOUS ARCHITECTURE TO BOOST STRUGGLING UPSTATE CITY.

CAN ARCHITECTURE SAVE SYRACUSE?



On March 7, the dean of the Syracuse University School of Architecture, Mark Robbins, was named senior advisor for architecture and urban initiatives for the university. The announcement formalized a role Robbins has been playing since he arrived there in 2004.

The struggling upstate city has already benefited from the attention of Robbins and the university, and in the next couple of years the dean plans to roll out an impressive roster of new buildings and initiatives both for campus and town, including projects by such marquee names and emerging talents as Toshiko Mori, Koning Eizenberg, and Field Operations.

"It's part of an evolving commitment we are making to the city," said university chancellor Nancy Cantor. Robbins and Cantor share a belief that engagement with the city is mutually beneficial. "We want to be a sustainable anchor in this community," she said, calling the private university and the city "joined at the hip." Practical concerns such as attracting faculty and students are driving the projects, she added, in addition to loftier goals: "We are committed to engaged scholarship. Our intellectual capital can make a difference."

Like much of upstate New York, Syracuse faces daunting economic and urban challenges. According to a 2005 report by the Syracuse Arts Initiative, the city has lost nearly one third of its population since a 1950 peak of 220,000. The housing vacancy rate is almost double the state average. In the same period, suburbs around the city swelled. Poverty is concentrated in the central city, with median incomes in the city approximately half that of the county. "They've lost population, lost tax base, but unlike Detroit or Buffalo, the city is small enough that we can have an impact," Robbins said. "I believe the city and the region can be a very active field for us."

In spite of the challenges, Robbins sees opportunities in the city, especially for architects. "You have to look at your available resources," he said. "We have tremendous intellectual capital and architectural patrimony." Inexpensive real estate helps. While looking for a downtown building to renovate for his own home, Robbins also looked at a couple of large properties that could serve as a swing space for the architecture school. After locating a former furniture warehouse downtown as the likely site, Robbins called on Richard Gluckman, a Syracuse alumni, to



From left, the West Side InfoCenter by Ruff Works Studio; the WCNY public broadcasting station by Koning Eizenberg; and Mark Robbins' bank hall apartment renovated with Fiedler Marciano Architecture.



renovate the 135,000-square-foot structure, now called the Warehouse. The building brought 500 students and faculty downtown, and, with glowing Panelite-covered openings in its massive concrete walls, it looks like a hive of activity at all hours of the day and night. "It's made a very real difference," said Tim Carroll, legislative aide to Syracuse mayor Matthew Driscoll. "Both the look and the perception of the university's commitment to the city have vastly improved." Acknowledging some town/gown differences in the past, Carroll praised both Robbins and Cantor: "There was a perception in the community that the university didn't always give

back to the community, but the chancellor has turned that on its head in short order." After the Warehouse opened, a private developer acquired two adjacent lots, testifying to the project's catalytic effect.

In addition to the \$9 million Warehouse, the university has been active in bringing high-level design thinking to a variety of civic concerns. Field Operations contributed a master plan for a corridor connecting many of the city's arts, cultural, and educational institutions, to be called the "Syracuse L." The chair of Harvard's architecture department, Toshiko Mori, working with local firm Ashley McGraw Architects, designed a new 55,000-

square-foot Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems, also for downtown. Santa Monica-based Koning Eizenberg Architecture is working on a new public broadcasting station due to break ground this year, with bold super-graphics incorporated into the facade and a folded green roof. Syracuse faculty are also involved. Scott Ruff and Timothy Stenson are converting a house into an info center and an artist-in-residence apartment in a depressed neighborhood adjacent to downtown that is also becoming an area of targeted investment for the city and the university. Arthur McDonald Architect is renovating the 1910 Syracuse Trust building for

mixed uses. On campus, the building continues with a new athletic center by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, a possible law school renovation and expansion by Gluckman Mayner, and a residence hall expansion by Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects due for completion in the Fall of 2009.

"Every place does it differently—Cincinnati, the University of Pennsylvania—we have our own particular strategy," Cantor said. If one can detect a certain neo-modernist stylistic bias among the designs, one can also sense a greater degree of urban engagement than, say, at Cincinnati: There is not a Gehry crumple or a Calatrava bobble on the boards.

Adaptive reuse is as often the strategy as new construction. "It's more about people and programs, culture and community, than it is about buildings," Cantor said.

Robbins acknowledges that architecture alone cannot rescue a city. "I don't mean to be overly instrumentalizing about design," he said. "But architects have a role to play." From the perspective of city government, the university and other institutions such as hospitals are key to the city's future. "There is a sense that the important players here—the city, the institutions, the developers—are pulling in the same direction," said Carroll. "We're cautiously optimistic."

ALAN G. BRAKE

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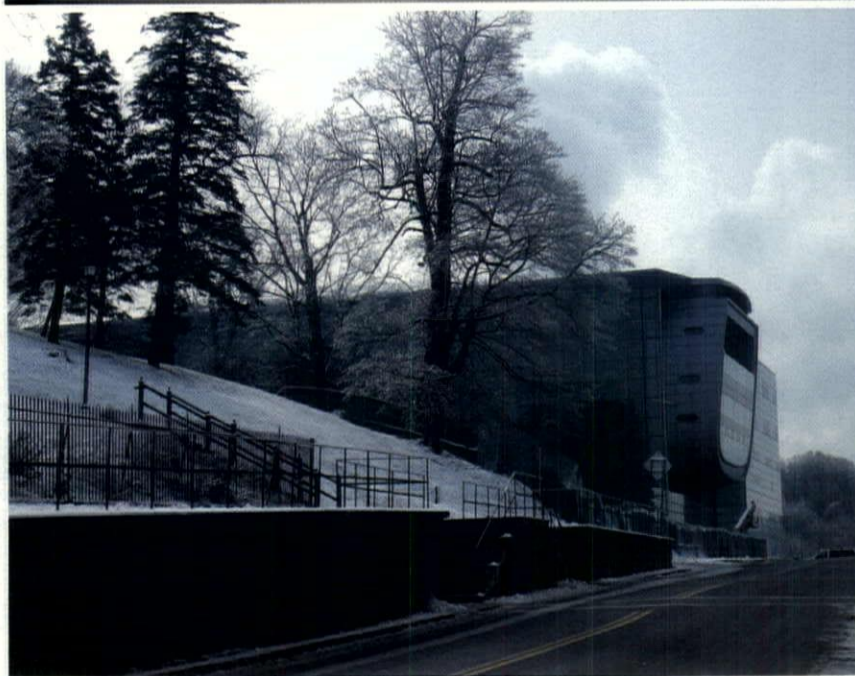
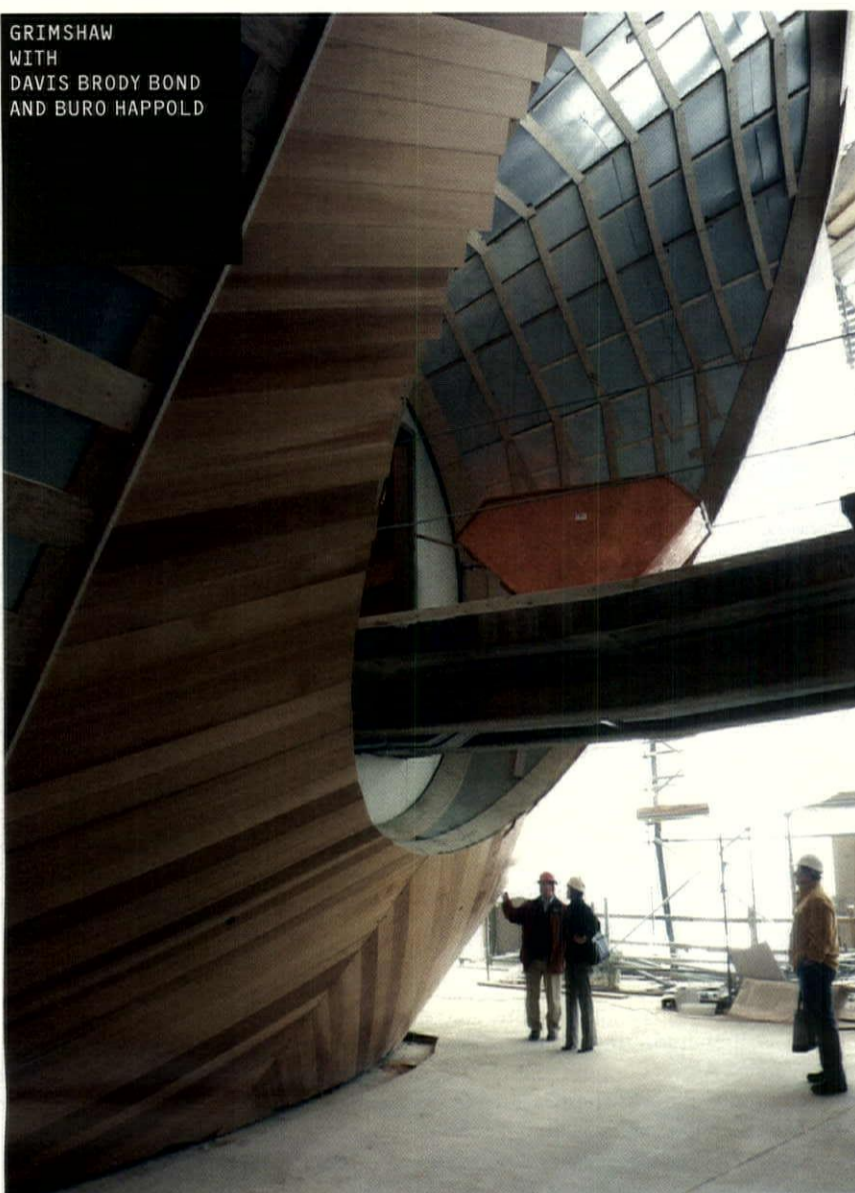
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GRIMSHAW
WITH
DAVIS BRODY BOND
AND BURO HAPPOLD

When one thinks of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), one's first association is typically not an avant-garde arts program, but the institution is hoping to change that. President Shirley Jackson recently created EMPAC, the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, which will be both a program and a facility. The program, according to RPI's website, seeks to explore "where the arts challenge and alter our technology, and technology challenges and alters the arts." The facility, designed by Grimshaw and currently under construction, goes out of its way to express this convergence of art and technology.

Grimshaw is known for its striking designs for buildings with unusual programs, and EMPAC fits neatly within that lineage. The 200,000-square-foot structure houses a 1,200-seat concert hall, a 400-seat theater, a 3,500-square-foot and a 2,500-square foot studio, artist in residence suites, and a slew of recording, broadcasting, rehearsal, and other support spaces, all under one roof. Early on in design development, Nicholas Grimshaw envisioned the concert hall as the hull of a wooden vessel that would dock in a voluminous atrium space and anchor circulation to the other, peripheral elements of the program. A full-elevation

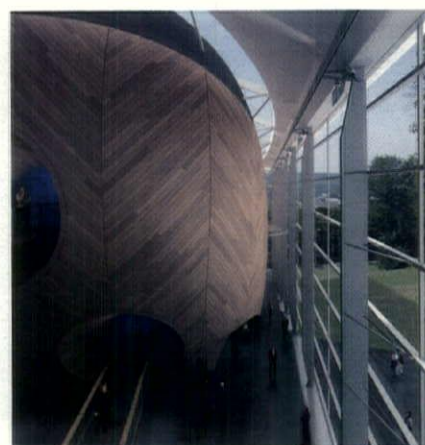
picture window on the building's south face would open the atrium space up to the site's panoramic views of the Hudson River Valley, and also allow a glimpse of the hall's fuselage from the exterior.

These became the enduring themes of the design, though other elements of the original scheme had to change. Situated on a steeply sloping plot at the western fringe of RPI's Troy, New York, campus, Grimshaw's initial proposal buried the black-box elements of the program—theater and studios—deep within the hillside. But tests revealed that the substantial excavation necessary for this arrangement would not be feasible given the site's poor soil conditions. Accordingly, the architects moved these spaces out from beneath the earth and placed them adjacent to the hall and atrium, stepping the building down the hill rather than cutting into it. In the final scheme, the theater and studios are housed in a blank white glass box that sits a bit awkwardly beside the transparent glass box of the atrium, which has the certified western red cedar-clad egg of the concert hall lodged inside it. But there is still plenty of wonder here. Grimshaw specified a curtain wall for the atrium's picture window designed by Gartner in Germany. The first of its kind in the United States, it has hot water flowing through the mullions, radiating heat and reducing downdraft during the long, cold, winter months.

Even with the new layout, the facility's foundations required a feat of engineering. The clay earth's limited bearing capacity required boring deep piles to bedrock, and to keep the building from slipping down the slope, rock anchors tie the footings to the underlying granite at 45-degree angles. Driven as much as 250 feet into the ground, some of these are possibly the longest rock anchors in North America. In addition, Buro Happold, the project's structural and mechanical engineer, had to design independent foundations for each of the major program elements to avoid cross talk between the spaces. This measure, along with other acoustical shielding, should mean that a 150-decibel rock show could be going on in the concert hall and you wouldn't hear a peep in the theater side door.

Gobs of time and money went into the foundations, but the real convergences of art and technology are found in the parts of the building that you can see, especially in the concert hall. Grimshaw worked with acoustical consultants Kierkegaard Associates of Chicago to design a world-class facility tuned for Romantic-period classical music. Based on the classic 19th-century halls, the interior is a double cube in volume, while convex wall shapes help spread the sound through the room. The lower portions of the space are clad in wood, while the upper walls are clad in cast stone with a rough-cut pattern that helps diffuse sound. The fabric ceiling is convex and made from Nomex, a DuPont super-fiber that reflects high-frequency sound but lets mid- and low-frequency sounds penetrate. This creates clarity of sound while the space above the fabric acts like a base box.

Finally, finding furniture available on the market clunky, Grimshaw worked with Italian furniture house Poltrona



Frau to design fixed chairs for the hall: The simple wooden clamshell frames with perforated leather cushions provide the acoustic diffusiveness necessary while keeping the nose from crinkling in aesthetic distaste.

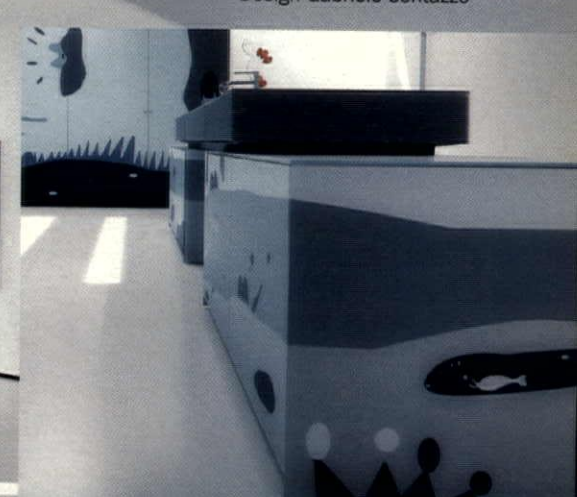
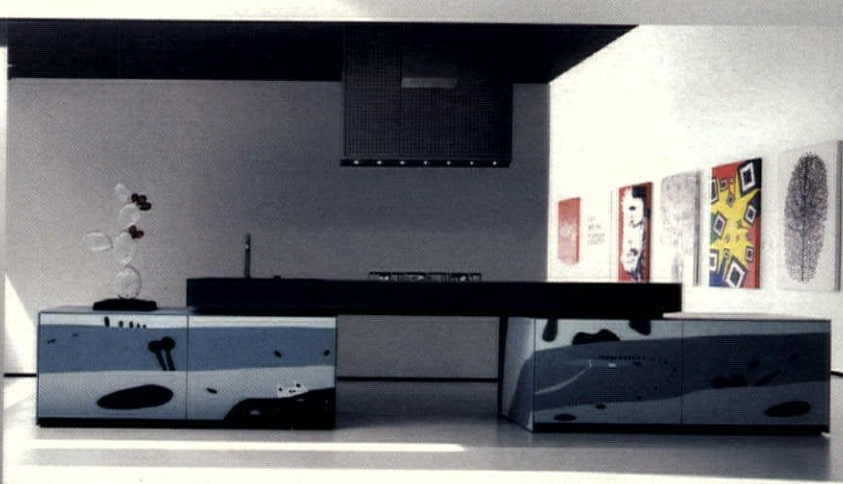
AARON SEWARD

The 200,000-square-foot EMPAC facility sits on a sloping site at the western fringe of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's campus. Its main programmatic element is a 1,200-seat concert hall, which Grimshaw designed as the hull of a wooden vessel docked within a voluminous, glass-enclosed atrium space.





Design Gabriele Centazzo



FROM ITALIAN GENIUS—ARTEMATICA ARTE: FIRST GLASS ART KITCHEN

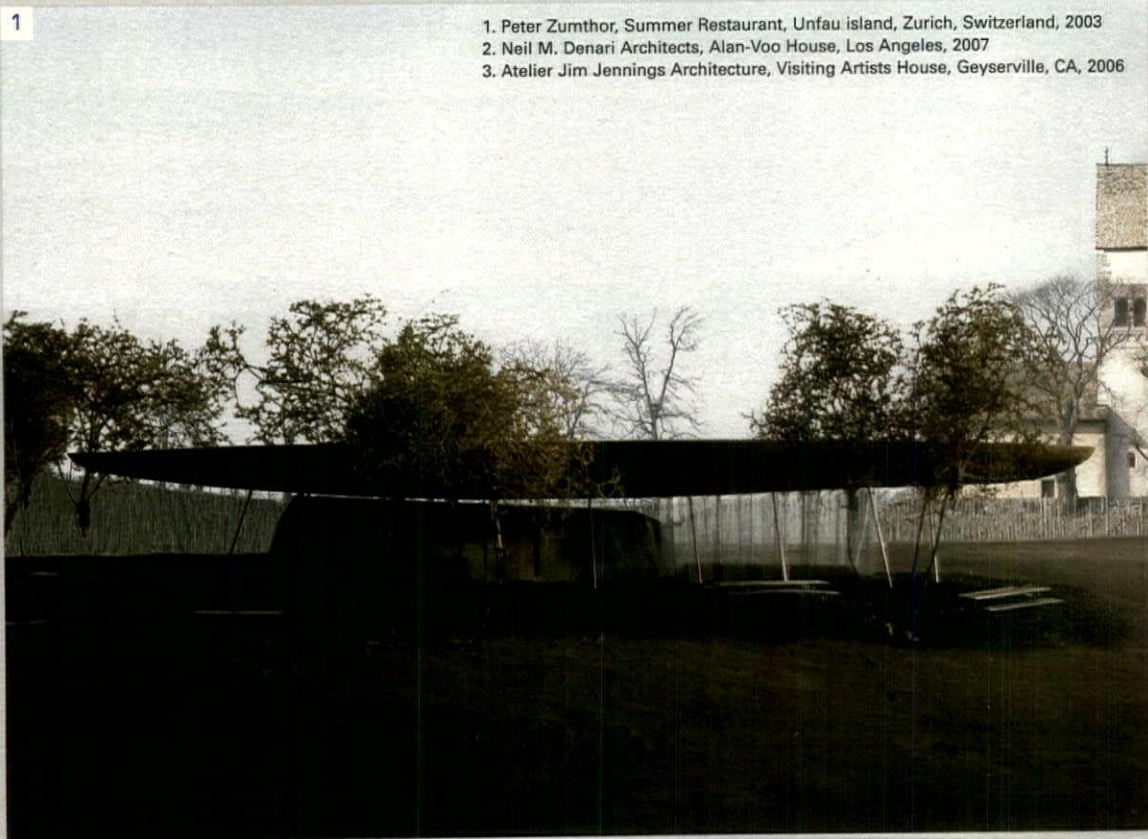
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CNU CHARTER AWARDS 2007



The American Academy of Arts and Letters has announced the 2008 recipients of its awards in architecture. According to a statement, the \$5,000 Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize in Architecture, which is given "to an architect of any nationality who has made a significant contribution to architecture as an art," will go to **Peter Zumthor** of Switzerland. California had a strong showing, with Los Angeles-

1. Peter Zumthor, Summer Restaurant, Unfau island, Zurich, Switzerland, 2003
2. Neil M. Denari Architects, Alan-Voo House, Los Angeles, 2007
3. Atelier Jim Jennings Architecture, Visiting Artists House, Geyserville, CA, 2006

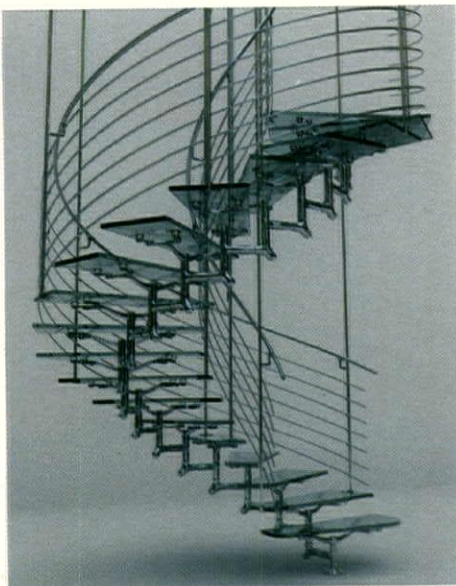
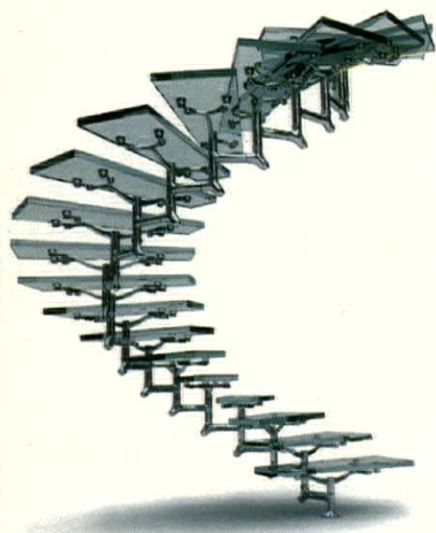


based **Neil M. Denari** and San Francisco-based **Jim Jennings** each taking \$7,500 awards granted to architects "whose work is characterized by a strong personal direction." The historian **Kenneth Frampton** and architect **James Carpenter** also received \$7,500 Academy Awards as "designers who explore ideas in architecture through any means of expression."

The jurors, a who's who of the New York architectural

establishment, included Henry Cobb (jury chair), Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey, Hugh Hardy, Steven Holl, Ada Louise Huxtable, Richard Meier, Cesar Pelli, James Stewart Polshek, and Billie Tsien. Awards are given in the fields of Art, Architecture, Literature, and Music and an exhibition honoring their work at the Academy runs from May 22 through June 15.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COURTESY KUNSTHAUS BREGENZ; PHOTOWORKS/BENNY CHAN; TIM GRIFFIN



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TWO ARTISTS DEVISE A HAMPTONS HOUSE TO CHALLENGE
RESIDENTS TO LIVE HARDER

EMOTIVE ARCHITECTURE

The Bioscleave House in Easthampton, New York, is a cross between a child's adventure playground and one of Kurt Schwitters' experimental Merzbau studio houses. An extension to the back of an existing Hamptons weekend house, it is the creation of artists Madeline Gins and her partner Arakawa, who proposed the name "Bioscleave" as a way to suggest the active verb form of biosphere as well as an architecture about process and thought, not simply form.

This is not your typical beach house addition, nor is it intended to be, but rather the result of the artists' investigations into the meaning of the human body's relationship to architecture and architecture's own responsibility to human emotional life. Bioscleave is more art installation than family getaway, and a challenge to all who enter its confines. In fact, the couple consider the regulation Hamptons home as a place that "stuns our species into silence and passivity." A recent feature in *The New York Times* had a hard time getting around the stumbling blocks to weekend living that the house presents.

But the challenge of the space is the way it takes us out of our normal relationship to time and place. That removal, the artists believe, is powerful enough to have an effect of "reversing human destiny" and preventing aging and even death.

The exterior walls are hung from a steel frame divided into 45 different color grids (that extend into, through, and across its interior spaces), allowing for the

creation of a large, centrally-planned open space and adjacent doorless nooks and angular spaces. To pass through the simple modern house that fronts the addition and into Bioscleave is an experience unlike any other.

Leaving behind the rational and ordered space of modern domesticity, one passes through a bland hallway and enters a provocative and unsettling realm. Bioscleave's central space is dominated by a floor constructed of nubbin-covered, earth-colored concrete that rises up like an ant mound and then flows into a central green-walled kitchen pit and dining environment, where a fixed concrete table and skylight in the shape of the building's floor plan take center stage. Looking across this space, a series of colored poles rise from floor to ceiling, further emphasizing the up-down landscape. But these polls serve the more important function of helping to hold up those who attempt to navigate its bumpy, uneven terrain as it purposefully

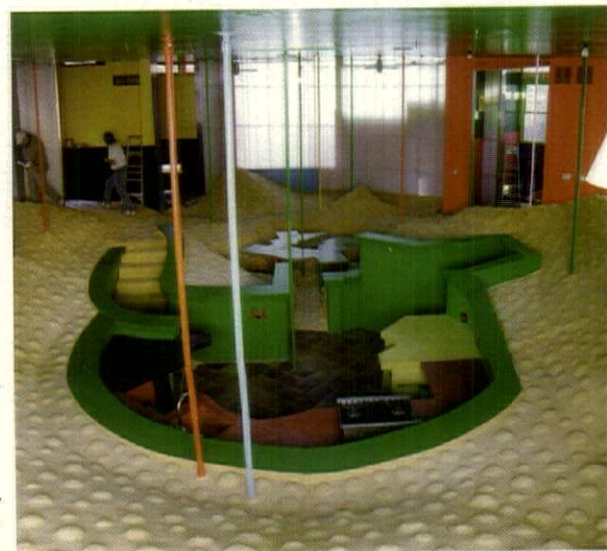
works to throw one off balance and down into the kitchen pit.

The experience of traversing this space is exactly its point. The architecture here is intended to heighten our attention and awareness and "enlist us in a thoroughgoing architectural questioning of the species," said Gins, thereby allowing us to "escape so-called human destiny, the as-if-ordained downhill course of things."

If architecture, as architects often remind us, is not simply about design and building but also about the ideas that architects bring to a site or project, then Bioscleave should provoke architects to think more profoundly about the purpose, function, and even ability of their work to transform life and experience. The house and its addition are currently owned by a group of artist investors, and is up for sale.

WM

Above: Madeline Gins and Arakawa's addition to the East Hampton home. Below: the kitchen pit.



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RMJM ENDOWS NEW \$2 MILLION GSD PROGRAM

GET SMARTS

With the help of the largest cash donation since the Aga Khan's in 1999, Harvard's Graduate School of Design has launched a new educational program to bolster the management and negotiating skills of architecture students. Announcing the RMJM Program for Research and Education in Integrated Design Practice, dean Mohsen Mostafavi, professor Spiro Pollalis, and Peter Morrison, who heads up the Edinburgh-based RMJM Group, emphasized that moving projects from design to realization requires increased facility with the languages of business.

"If we as professors live in ivory towers, we misuse our positions," Pollalis said at the program's inaugural presentation in Cambridge on March 17. Pollalis, a civic infrastructure specialist, called RMJM's \$1.5 million donation (which will be matched by another \$500,000 from Harvard's Professorship Challenge Fund) a way to improve architects' ability to advise clients strategically, control design processes, and "drive the market, not be driven by the market."

The five-year grant will support interdisciplinary teaching and research, including symposia, conferences, publications, case studies in collaboration with the Business School, and continuing education. The partnership adds to RMJM's increasing visibility in the wake of its work with Enric Miralles on the Scottish Parliament and its controversial proposal for the Gazprom/Okhta Tower in St. Petersburg, Russia.

With the program's specifics still being defined, speakers addressed its broader purposes. Morrison expressed a preference for the "master builder" role over that of the much-derided "starchitect." Noting that architects' relatively low compensation fosters a brain drain to management consultancy and other fields ("McKinsey and Kohl are inching their way into our space," he commented) and citing an observation by Richard Jennings that architects in the 1920s earned as much as surgeons, Morrison decried the profession's marginal-

ization in today's construction environment. As more projects emphasize sustainability, he added, architects need the leverage to ensure that environmental concerns are central to the process, not merely window dressing.

The new program is clearly geared to keep architecture students in the real-world loop. Brian Kenet of Environmental Financial Consulting Group, a GSD fellow and an organizer of the new program, noted that when architects deem business priorities a distraction, clients often turn to value engineers: "In an effort to keep pure, you lose control of your design." He also commented that "architects seem to be far more successful at creating value for their clients than they are at capturing their fair share of that value," even though other parties, he added, "like the way architects think" and hire them as problem-solvers. "If an investment bank is doing this, why can't we do it for ourselves?"

An energetic panel featured Joshua Prince-Ramus of REX, Jon Maass of the Paratus Group, Florian Idenburg of Solid Objectives-Idenburg Liu (SO-IL), and Joseph Brown of EDAW, along with Pollalis, Morrison, and an outspoken audience. Discussion focused on the nuts-and-bolts of office management, rainmaking, and the challenge of quantifying the value of high-level design work. Prince-Ramus was adamant that "if we are marginalized... it's our own damn fault," and suggested that to be serious players, architects should assume liability and itemize deliverables. Brown likewise emphasized a strategy of basing fees on entrepreneurial risk, not hourly rates. (He is still rankled by a Harvard alumni presidents' fund-raising meeting 25 years ago where there was an assumed distinction between "major" schools such as law, medicine, and business and the rest, including architecture.) "Design is a first-tier societal need," he insisted, but "the value system that we have evolved to is not supporting that."

Morrison told Maass, an architect-turned-project manager, that "the evolution of your business [results] from our failings." Maass in turn lamented a practice environment—particularly painful to New Yorkers of late—where "developers do the dreaming."

BILL MILLARD

AT DEADLINE

STRIKE THREE

Talk about a bad day. In just over 24 hours, the Related Companies learned that it lost out on the Hudson Yards, that the Dolans had pulled out of Moynihan Station, and finally, that the Hudson River Park Trust had turned down its offer for "Vegas-on-Hudson" at Pier 40. The \$625 million plan, which would have housed Cirque du Soleil and the Tribeca Film Festival among other amusements, was sunk by its insistence on a 50-year lease. The trust preferred a 30-year deal, which may be bound for a developer championed by locals, who want to preserve the pier's athletic fields. They have 90 days to submit a new plan.

NOT SO FAST

The two major holdouts standing in the way of Columbia University's planned Manhattanville expansion, which passed last December, took action against the school in very different ways last month. Nick Sprayregen, owner of Tuck-It-Away Storage, filed suit against Columbia and the city on March 27. The suit contends that the environmental review of the project's 7-story below grade bathtub poses far greater risks than initially considered and should be nullified. Meanwhile, Anne Whitman wants her 1903 dairy stable, which is listed on the state's register of historic places, moved beyond the expansion zone. And then there is newly seated Governor David Paterson. Two years ago, following the infamous *Kelo* case, he called for a statewide moratorium on eminent domain, fearing the "gold rush" that could threaten property owners. Columbia opponents hope for a sympathetic ear in their fight with the university.

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KALLISTA.





THEY COME FROM DIFFERENT SIDES OF THE BUSINESS, BUT RESTAURATEUR DANNY MEYER AND ARCHITECT DAVID ROCKWELL BOTH KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT WHAT MAKES A RESTAURANT WORK, FROM THE STRAIGHTFORWARD CHALLENGES OF CIRCULATION, LIGHTING, AND SEATING PLANNING TO THE MORE EVANESCENT ISSUE OF CREATING ATMOSPHERE. BUT THEY ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT IN A CITY LIKE NEW YORK, A RESTAURANT CAN HAVE A ROLE THAT GOES BEYOND DINNER. *AN* SAT DOWN WITH THE TWO AT GRAMERCY TAVERN AS THEY TALKED ABOUT DESIGN, PUBLIC SPACE, AND THE GIVE-AND-TAKE BETWEEN A RESTAURANT AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD.

BY ANNE GUINEY AND JULIE V. IOVINE. PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM FRIEDBERG

FOOD AND THE CITY



David Rockwell and Danny Meyer at Gramercy Tavern, March 27, 2008.

AN: We've been thinking about restaurants and their role as public spaces, and the way they interact with and influence the life of a neighborhood. In different ways, both of you have worked to expand that role. Danny, this neighborhood has changed a lot [20th and Broadway] in the last 15 years, and must have seemed on the fringe when you decided to open. What brought you here?

DM: It's hard to give language to what was a gut feeling. With Union Square Cafe in 1985, it was an infatuation with the Greenmarket. In 1993, this was still sort of a no-man's-land, bizarre but true, but the architecture in the neighborhood wasn't going to change dramatically. It is also a classic feature of New York to have pockets of industries, and here, they were on the wane: In Union Square, there was the men's garment district, and literally you couldn't get down the sidewalk on 16th Street without bumping into rolling garment racks; you knew that wasn't going to last. In Madison Square, there were wholesale industries, like toys, tabletop, kitchens ...

DR: How much of that was a conscious process?

DM: When I realized I'd dumbed into making it work at Union Square, I thought, 'Well, this can work anywhere,' and started looking for dying industries. In 1985, I walked around the Meatpacking District and thought it was one of the world's great stage sets. Later on, it hit with a combustibility that made it completely unattractive for me.

DR: Now you'll have to wait for its revival in 50 years! It's like South Beach without the beach.

DM: It doesn't have a natural balance of residences and businesses; it's still a stage set. If you're the kind of chef who likes Las Vegas, this is where you would do it in New York.

DR: Thinking back 15 years to when we designed Nobu, Tribeca had a lot of the characteristics you're describing, like great architecture, but it also had residential pockets. I think part of the appeal for people going to restaurants is the exotic journey to a place where they didn't live, the notion of a destination. The Meatpacking District is by-and-large design boutiques and restaurants, as opposed to being embedded in a fabric that's kind of growing around it.

DM: I always felt that if the balance tipped either way too much, it would be less appealing. Why? Because I wanted to be busy at lunch and dinner. Midtown was never interesting to me because it was all business, and the Upper West Side, because it was all residential.

DR: There is also something about authenticity, in being the quintessential embodiment of the neighborhood. Think of the Theater District: I'm a huge theatergoer, and after all these years, I still go to Orso's on 46th Street because it feels like an integrated part of the community. As a designer, that's fascinating to me. Design has become a bigger discussion point in restaurants—which it wasn't when we started 22 years ago—and what has become clear to me is that there has to be a leader—a restaurateur or a chef who has a vision that the design can relate to. If not, it becomes sort of an alien object. I was going to Union Square Cafe long before I knew Danny, and what I admired about it most is that you couldn't put your finger on the single ingredient that made it work. That's what we strive for in design: to have the design embedded in the concept of the owner and the operator in a way that it provides a back story; then design decisions aren't arbitrary.

DM: The neighborhood is the frame that provides the context, and the restaurant has to belong in that frame. I wanted to pick neighborhoods that I felt comfortable in. One of the reasons you don't see me in Las Vegas (so far) or you wouldn't see me in the Meatpacking District, is that it's not who I am.

DR: Another week, you never know!

DM: But it's not going to ring true. I always thought that, like Union Square, I'm weird, but not too weird, and normal, but not too normal.

DR: You know it's interesting you mentioned Vegas, which is nothing like this city. Just take the circulation in Vegas, for example, where it's a one-way corral—there's a way in, there's a way out, and you're largely directed like cattle. I think most people who look at restaurant design don't understand that the biggest decisions really aren't what things look like. The biggest decisions are about choreography, circulation, scale, a series of views that unfold, the ability to get the food to the tables, how the first 15 people feel—all of the basic decisions that break down the scale of the room. And all of those decisions have to be driven by a relationship with the restaurateur or chef.

AN: Those are all urban design issues, too.

DR: Exactly.

DM: I think a good designer is like a really good shrink. The information is there, you just don't know how to pull it out of your subconscious. This is what I've loved about the relationships I've had with architects. It was dumb luck that I met Larry Bogdanow, who designed Union Square Cafe. I didn't know the first thing about architecture. I told him I wanted a place that looks like an architect was never in there, and that you'd never know it had been designed in 1985. But what I learned was that all these small episodes that happened because of that architecture are what people wanted. Here at Gramercy Tavern, I wanted to create episodes so that, as a diner, wherever you are, you're in your own neighborhood. Another neat thing happened—David probably figured this out 30 years ago, but I hadn't—when you create more small communities within the restaurant, you multiply the number of corner tables!

DR: Another fascinating thing is the collaboration that goes on in a restaurant. It's a social place in which you are eating food that is hand-made for you, so you have the ability to make links between all of these things and the texture of a place. I think more than ever, since we're in this world of sameness and can replicate a design through CNC milling a million times, that the notion of craftsmanship and sense being touched by the human hand is increasingly important.

AN: We wanted to ask you both about private programming in public spaces, in particular the controversy over replacing the restaurant in the old bathhouse in Union Square. On the one hand, there's been a seasonal restaurant there, Luna Park, for years, but many argue that it amounts to a privatization of public space.

DM: It's a fascinating issue for me. Any question that begins with 'What does the community want?' always leads me to wonder, 'Well, who is the community?' Whether or not you ever went to Luna Park or ever believed it should have been put smack dab in the middle of Union Square, there were lines of people trying to get in every single night. There was clearly a community of people who loved having a place to go. To some degree, it made others feel safe because there

were people in the park. These are people who may not go to community board meetings or get politically active. Then there are also preservationists, and people who think there shouldn't be any money exchanged in a public space unless it's for the public good. It's kind of like religion—no one religion can be all right unless the rest are all wrong. All these constituencies need to be balanced: There is a playground constituency, a Greenmarket constituency, a food constituency, a dog-run constituency... I'm very comfortable, for example, with the model we have at Shake Shack, where we have a partnership with Madison Square Park Conservancy so that we can return money to that park.

DR: The opportunities for architects to work with public/private partnerships to create interesting new opportunities is going to grow exponentially—with tighter budgets, there's just less and less public money. We've been thinking for three or four years about playgrounds, and wanted to establish a pro bono, not-for-profit group in New York. I realized early on that we had to build in parents as a constituency—the people who use playgrounds had to be comfortable with it. And so when we were making our presentation—it had to be approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the Seaport, and Community Board 1—it was hard for them to understand at first that there was no reason for us to do this other than to contribute, and we volunteered to raise money to endow the organization. That's when the light bulb went off for them. Now we're approached by every community in New York that wants a playground. They're all private groups for public places.

DM: People are okay with playgrounds because you don't have to pay to use them.

DR: But the link that I'm making is about the programming of public spaces. And one of the things that we haven't touched on, Danny, though it is an interesting point, is to look at the city inside-out. Look at the role of restaurants, and by extension hotel lobbies—New York's inner spaces. During the 1920s, which was the golden age of hotels in this country, lobbies were an extension of the public realm; they're private spaces but opened to the public. The city looks so neat and organized from the air, and then when you get down to the ground, it's much messier and it's much more vital—that's what is fascinating.

DM: I moved to New York for good because I had fallen in love with the Algonquin lobby.

DR: I moved to New York because when I was 11, we came into the city, went to lunch, and then went to the theater to see *Fiddler on the Roof*. And with both of those city experiences, a kind of light bulb went off and I knew that this is where I wanted to be. I got a sense of the relationship between communal spaces and storytelling, and it was a real eye-opening experience for me, to see the relationship between audience and performer.

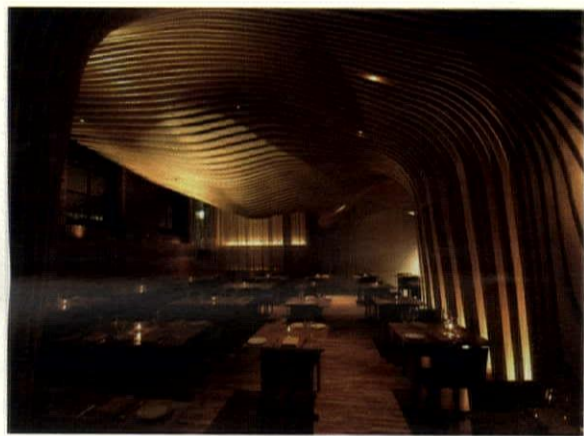
DM: Well, that's New York. In fact, it's the dialogue between whoever is performing and whoever is the audience, everywhere. Those were my first experiences, too—it could have been theater, it could have been jazz, it could have been in a restaurant. There's always someone who has something to say and someone who's there listening. That's what the whole city is about.



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- A FIN'S
- B SECOND HOME
- C BANQ
- D COMPANY
- E LOCKWOOD
- F SIXTEEN
- G THE SMITH
- H CAFÉ GRUMPY
- I DARYL
- J SWEETGREEN



D



E

RESTAURANT ROW

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PRODUCED BY JEFF BYLES WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ALAN G. BRAKE, MATT CHABAN, JULIE V. IOVINE, AND AARON SEWARD.

FIN'S
BOSTON
STUDIO LUZ ARCHITECTS

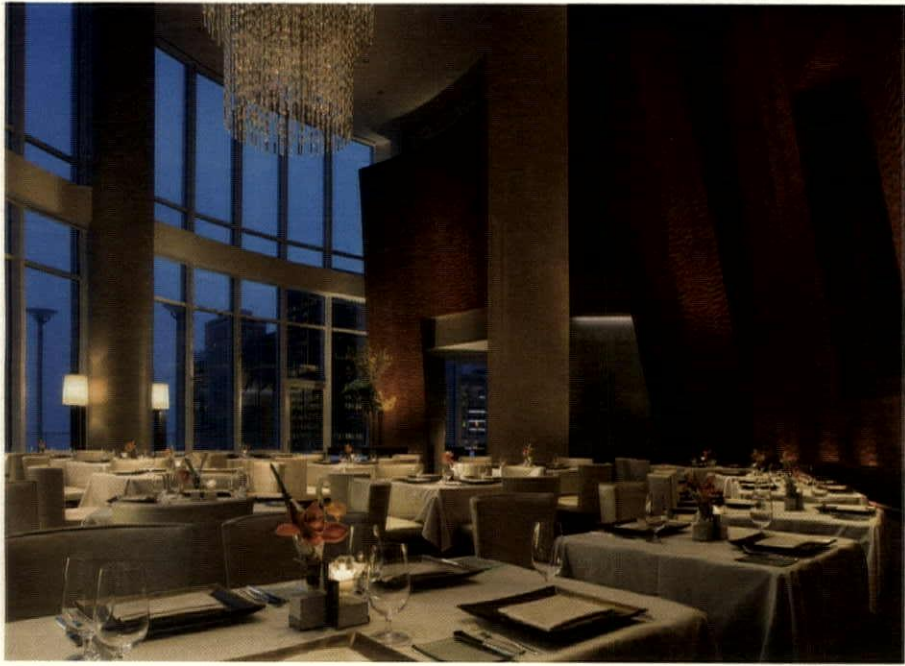
Inspired by Japanese *torii* gates, a series of passageways defines this sushi spot's dining hall, arching across the ceiling and folding into shelves and table-bracing brackets. Laser-cut from cold-rolled steel, the gates were easily bolted together on site. A gun-blue patina and coat of butcher's wax, all hand-finished, protect them from restaurant wear and tear, while offset columns create niche-like spaces near the bar. Atop the gates, embedded LED strips soften the room with ambient light.

SECOND HOME
DENVER
ANDRE KIKOSKI ARCHITECT

When you come down from your Rocky Mountain high, Second Home offers a cozy environment to thaw the chill. The designers blended rugged, continental-divide surfaces such as dry-stack stone walls and rough-hewn wood plank ceilings with more cosmopolitan design elements, including 1950s Italian chandeliers, graffiti-covered chairs, fin-de-siècle Viennese secessionist banquettes, and upholstered walls. A sultry, low-slung lounge and open-air patio with a 15-foot fire pit sum up the restaurant's frontier chic.

BANQ
BOSTON
OFFICE DA

Inserted within the 1917 Penny Savings Bank building, Banq gives the radical-ceiling motif a sleek update. For this upscale South End eatery, the designers turned the task of concealing mechanical systems into a design brief: Wooden slats rise up from the floor and flow across the ceiling in undulating patterns to express vents, plumbing, and lighting, all of which form a grotto-like canopy soaring above the dining room.



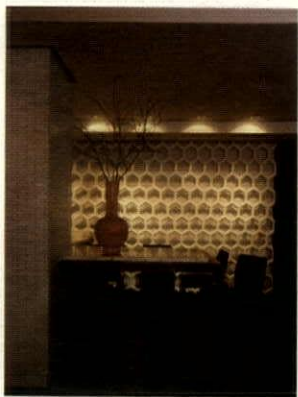
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COMPANY
LAS VEGAS
AVROKO

Company is AvroKO's second foray in Las Vegas. Located in the Luxor Hotel, the space is the result of creative thinking after the client asked for a lodge-look. Literal not being AvroKO's style, they deconstructed various big-country motifs—think toboggan blades and wooden skis—and stacked them to create screens between the main dining area and a floor-to-ceiling wine wall. Over-scaled light wheels made of iron brackets and translucent fabric update the notion of saloon chandeliers, and a grid of aspen trunks greets guests at the entrance.

LOCKWOOD
CHICAGO
EDG

Located in the Palmer House Hilton, Lockwood is hard by Millennium Park, making it a good watering hole for architecturally inclined visitors. An island bar unites the historic lobby and contemporary restaurant, while square amber shades enclose original Tiffany chandeliers. "We wanted to create a hybrid, to be complementary without trying to replicate," said Jennifer Johanson, principal of EDG. "We think Bertha Palmer [who first helped plan the interior] would have wanted to be on the leading edge."

SIXTEEN
CHICAGO
VALERIO DEWALT TRAIN

Working with Ivanka Trump, Joe Valerio has created a destination restaurant in the new SOM-designed Trump Hotel that's all about the view. Named after the floor where the restaurant resides, Sixteen's neutral palette—a limestone floor, amber glass ceiling, tan leather seating—keeps the eye focused outward on the bridges, lake, and landmark architecture like the nearby Wrigley Building. Divided into three dining areas, the restaurant draws on the iconography of the city rather than the flash of the Trump brand.

THE SMITH
NEW YORK
ZEFFDESIGN

Putting a slicker face on the urban rustic trend that has ruled the city's hipster dining scene, this East Village bistro summons the vibe of a New York social club: Behold a 40-foot zinc bar, custom ceiling lights fitted with antique glass lampshades, old subway tile walls, and classic Thonet-style dining chairs. The main room features photographs of Victorian nudes, while the party-room walls show images from vintage magazines and books that contain the name Smith.

CAFÉ GRUMPY
NEW YORK
Z-A

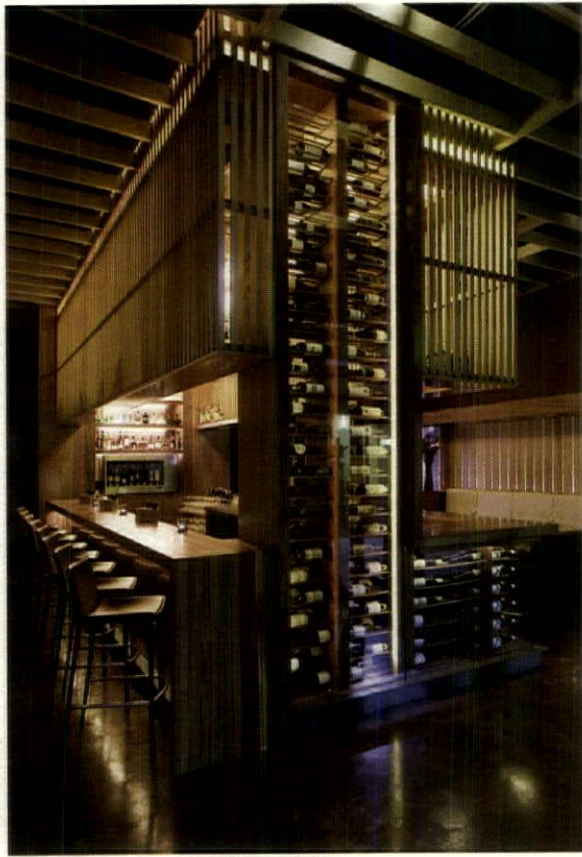
City traffic flows in streams and pools in eddies. Guy Zucker of Z-A used that metaphor as a design template for Chelsea's Café Grumpy. Stuffed into a typically tight New York storefront, the cafe, designed with Cheng+Snyder, is organized around a coffee bar of plywood blocks that divides the space into an in-out corridor and small inlets for seating. The understated blond wood and exposed brick interior focuses all the attention on the java.

DARYL
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY
RISCALA AGNESE DESIGN GROUP

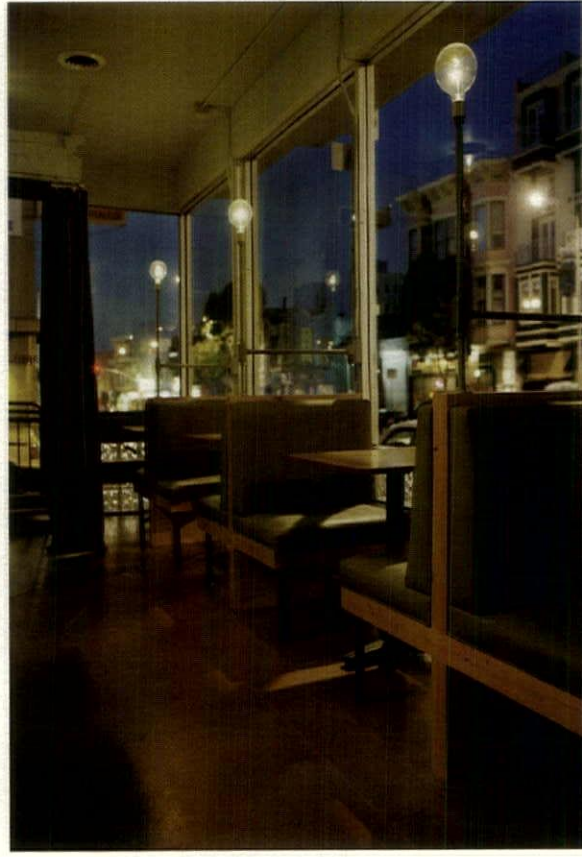
A CNC-milled honeycomb forms the backdrop for this wine bar at New Brunswick's Heldrich Hotel, its palette crafted to show off the beverage of honor. "For any material we chose, we tried to superimpose a glass of wine next to it to see if it would look good," said principal Fadi Riscala. The bar itself, made of white quartz slabs from Kentucky-based supplier Rover, harmonizes with white-glass-tiled columns. Custom-designed chairs offer privacy without blocking views—of the wine rack, of course.



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SWEETGREEN
WASHINGTON, D.C.
CORE

Reuse was the motto in designing Sweetgreen, a grab-and-go yogurt and salad bar near Georgetown University. The owners procured a 500-square-foot burger franchise whose exteriors were inspired by Tudor cottages. CORE changed little on the outside except to turn the red roof green. On the interior, reclaimed hickory planks run from the door to the floor, walls, and ceiling; a custom stainless steel serving counter focuses attention on the nutritious offerings; and brightly-lit menu boards reinforce the fast-food motif.

SINJU
TUALATIN, OREGON
SKYLAB DESIGN GROUP

Bolts of crimson and cobalt lure patrons to this locale in a suburban mall: A red ceiling band and floors to match pull visitors toward a lacquer-red-tiled fireplace. Taking a detail from Skylab's Doug Fir Lounge in Portland, sixty thousand linear feet of horizontal fir line the walls. In the restaurant, a backlit ceiling features pyramidal forms borrowed from Japanese screens, a motif with a witty twist in the stunning "blue room" and its wall of tiled sushi plates.

SPLIT
TUALATIN, OREGON
COLAB ARCHITECTURE + URBAN DESIGN

Evoking the fall harvest season, this wine bar makes use of American white oak, stained concrete, leather, and copper in a tonal and textural homage to vintners, growers, and distillers. The sculptural, double-sided bar creates a social nexus with flexible seating options, defined by varied ceiling heights and color-coded nooks. The compact design also neatly meets the client's request that the restaurant be operated by as few as two people—one in the kitchen and one tending bar.

SPORK
SAN FRANCISCO
MARTIN HEID DESIGN/
BUILD

It is fitting that a slow food-as-fast food restaurant in the Mission District would find a former KFC for its home. Not only did KFC popularize the spoon-fork hybrid for which the restaurant is named, but Spork's owners aim to reclaim hamburgers and fried chicken as wholesome food. Designer Eric Heid recycled many original KFC features for this "utilitarian diner." The fryers' stainless steel hood has been bolted to the ceiling as lighting, and the re-upholstered plywood booths are crisper versions of their predecessors.

RED EGG
NEW YORK
OPENSHP|STUDIO

The Lower East Side and Chinatown have always been liminal spaces between Old World and New. Bridging that gap was the main challenge in designing Red Egg. Would it be a small-plates bar or a restaurant with an ample lounge? Fish tank or light installation? Openshop opted to embrace it all: The ceiling is adorned with a constellation of "88 lucky koi" light bulbs; the bar is flanked by communal tables; and banquettes in back allow for more secluded dining.

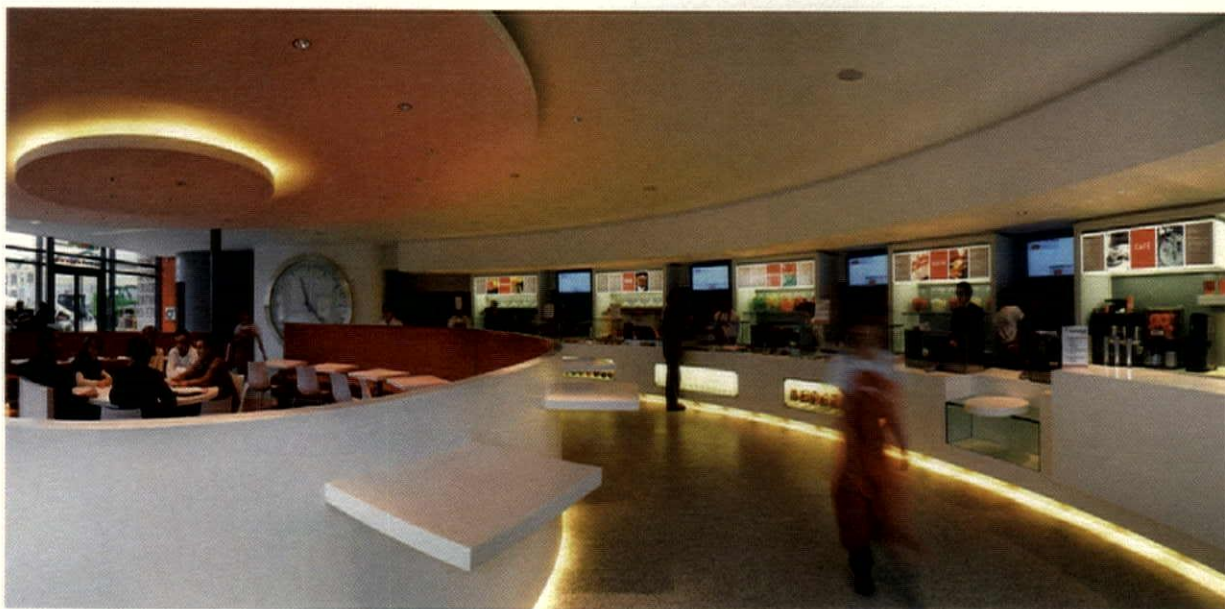
LUCKY DEVILS
LOS ANGELES
JOHN FRIEDMAN ALICE KIM
ARCHITECTS

Located in a storefront space in Hollywood, Lucky Devils presents a quintessential LA vibe, right down to the wallpaper showing a time-lapse night-shot image of Highway 101. The 2,000-square-foot space presents a clean, well-lit room with banquettes and plastic chairs from the Italian manufacturer Kartell. The ceiling is more animated, with dropped white panels for subliminal way-finding. Regulation track lighting bounces off crumpled, red paper to toss "flames" that reinforce the restaurant's inferno-based name.

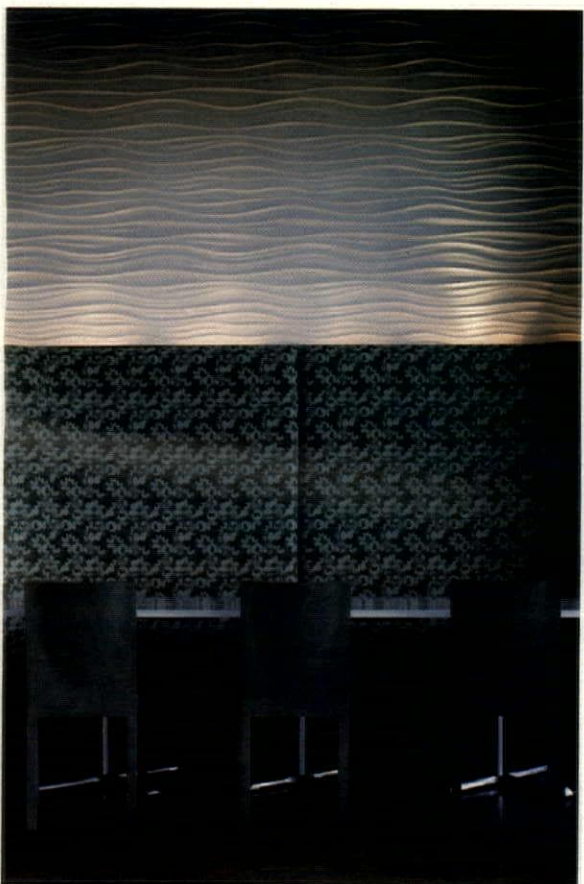
K: STEVE CRIDLAND; L: DALE DERRY PHOTOGRAPHY; M: SEAN DAGEN; O: BENNY CHAN; P: BRUCE BUCK; R: JOE AKER; T: ARCHPHOTOINC/EDUARD HUEBER; U: RYAN CHARLES



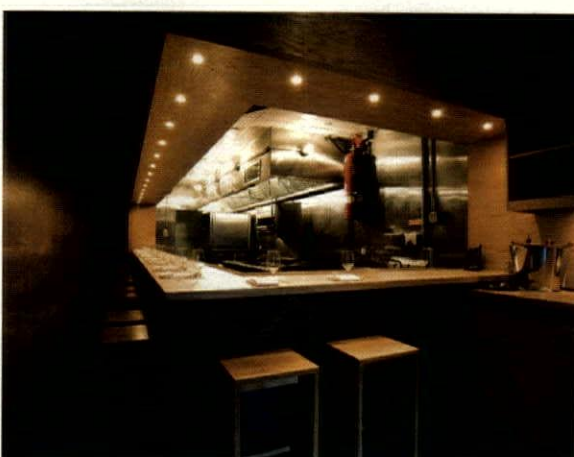
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- K SINJU
- L SPLIT
- M SPORK
- N RED EGG
- O LUCKY DEVILS
- P ADOUR ALAIN DUCASSE
- Q L'OUEST EXPRESS
- R REEF
- S KO
- T CIELO
- U MERKATO 55

ADOUR ALAIN DUCASSE
NEW YORK
ROCKWELL GROUP

Located in the St. Regis Hotel, Adour takes the idea of urban theater long associated with the hotel lobby and translates it into dining experience as public ritual. For Rockwell Group, that meant layers of luxurious textured craft, from a bronze-based bar with a parchment goatskin top to panels of antique seeded glass. The main dining room is fashioned after an elegant library, where temperature-controlled armoires display an extensive wine collection, and the furniture is upholstered, naturally, in wine-colored leather.

L'OUEST EXPRESS
LYON, FRANCE
PIERRE-YVES ROCHON

L'Ouest Express, conceived by super-chef Paul Bocuse and French designer Pierre-Yves Rochon, aims for a new concept in restaurants that would be an oxymoron in less expert hands: elegant fast-food dining. Opened in January in Lyon, the first L'Ouest Express has a clean look based on big curves, a duotone palette, and a flattering lighting system that could have been borrowed from the cosmetics department of a high-end department store. It's an aesthetic bound to travel far and fast.

REEF
HOUSTON
OFFICE FOR DESIGN 04D

Housed in an old Pontiac dealership, this 8,000-square-foot Gulf Coast seafood restaurant combined an existing building's industrial vocabulary with polished accents. The architects then structured their palette around oysters: rough on the outside, shimmering on the inside. The exposed kitchen opens onto an expansive dining room of patched concrete floors and pearlescent tabletops lit by capiz shell chandeliers. Shades of sea green and a wavy plaster wall above the banquette complete the aquatic ambience.

KO
NEW YORK
STUDIO MÄRZ

David Chang has built his burgeoning Momofuku empire by taking exquisite ingredients and making simple dishes from them—ramen, pork buns, and chicken wings. It could be said that Hiromi Tsuruta of Studio März has worked this magic in reverse. At Ko, he takes simple materials—plywood, halogen lamps, brushed slate, an artfully rusted metal grating—and creates a sleekly understated 12-seat bar that puts the food first while still offering a comfortable atmosphere for enjoying the restaurant's only offering, a marathon seven-course meal.

CIELO
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA
BENTEL & BENTEL
ARCHITECTS

Located atop a 24-story tower in the Boca Raton Resort and Club, Cielo overlooks ocean and sky on three sides. Patrons enter the space on a slight platform (the architects raised the elevator stop to eliminate the step up) to maintain an unobstructed view. Ceiling "clouds" are made from a variety of materials, including stretched, reflective white PVC. Most diners sit a tier below at glass-topped tables on white, motorcycle-leather-clad chairs. "At night, the building envelope nearly disappears," said partner Carol Bentel.

MERKATO 55
NEW YORK
MENNO SCHMITZ

Dutch artist Menno Schmitz designed Merkato 55, the latest Meatpacking District food palace, with the same panache he brought to his silk screens of famous American jazz musicians and not-so-famous Dutch rock bands. Here, Schmitz recasts African art and design in a contemporary American restaurant. From the massive silk-screened portraits of Africa's many nations to the beaded chandeliers, the space has an unmistakable African character that artfully avoids pastiche.



MICHAEL WEBER/COURTESY AVROKO

THE STORYTELLERS

GUIDED BY AN ABIDING CURIOSITY ABOUT THE PAST LIVES OF BUILDINGS, OBJECTS, AND NEIGHBORHOODS, THE PARTNERS OF THE DESIGN AND CONCEPT FIRM AVROKO HAVE DEVELOPED A DISTINCT VISUAL LANGUAGE FOR SOME OF NEW YORK'S MOST POPULAR RESTAURANTS. THEIR AESTHETIC MAY HAVE BEEN DUPLICATED, BUT THEIR NARRATIVE-BASED APPROACH MAKES IT HARD TO MATCH.

BY EVA HAGBERG



YUKI KAWANA

"We like to think of ourselves as the most open-minded clients we're going to have," said Greg Bradshaw, principal of the downtown architecture/interiors/fashion/book/concept/ethos/lifestyle/design firm AvroKO, which he heads along with Kristina O'Neal, Adam Farmerie, and a very tired—that evening, at least—William Harris. The four of them were sitting at the end of the bar at PUBLIC, their first venture as their own clients, and were talking about everything from the just-completed transfor-

mation of the restaurant Park Avenue Winter into Park Avenue Spring (on which Harris has been working non-stop), to their plans for a new restaurant on the rapidly gentrifying Bowery, to joking about what exactly O'Neal's SAT scores were, and what exactly they mean.

The four, who met when they were eighteen, each have different approaches, personalities, and skills, but together they make up a coherent and collaborative whole. Initially, however, they operated as two firms, Avro Design (Bradshaw and Farmerie) and KO Media Studios (O'Neal and Harris). After many years of collaborating, the two firms merged while working on PUBLIC. Their ethos is research-driven as much as it is fantastical, interpretive as much as creative, and conceptual as much as style-conscious. The firm has become known mostly for its historically referential restaurant design, clear in everything from the Lower East Side's Stanton Social, which adopted the neighborhood's long history of tailoring with a herringbone-riffing wine

wall, to PUBLIC—the restaurant they own and above which they work—where they took the discarded fixtures of municipal buildings from the 1930s and recast them, so that an old library card catalog is used to store old menus.

Bradshaw talks about the process of collaborating (on a good day) and struggling (on a bad) with a client. “Most clients don’t have briefs, or an idea of what they want to do,” O’Neal explained. “If they’re coming to us, it’s often because they’re looking for a concept or a name—for the tabletop, the interior design, architecture.” So how do they make something—the boudoir-inspired upstairs dining room at Stanton Social, the gastropub-meets-manoir-kitchen of E.U.—from nothing? “We try to apply information based on what we’re feeling on the location, space, and chef,” O’Neal said. “And then we find the seed idea.”

The seed for Stanton Social, then, was a gender-specific interpretation (silk florals upstairs, manly leather downstairs) of the neighborhood’s fashion history. The seed for E.U. was to turn the kitchen inside out, embracing the theater that restaurants have become in the last few years.

And for Park Avenue [Season], the seed was a cheekily literal take on the current craze for food that is fresh, seasonal, and local, and a recognition of the fact that people like to eat differently in different weather. Switching from one season to another is a 72-hour process that completely transforms the space at the same time as the chef is transforming the menu. In the most recent transition from Winter to Spring, AvroKO replaced a spare white motif with one that Bradshaw described only as “Green!!!” Not literally, they all jumped in to explain, but more the idea of what “green” could be—by swapping out cushions, changing the lighting and fixtures, and re-coloring the wall. “Everything had to be flexible,” Farmerie explained of the firm’s design, which was as much about creating the details—quick but stable snaps, packing systems, storage ideas, and an installation plan—as a look.

AvroKO’s adoption of restaurant-as-stage is one sign of the way in which the firm co-opts the contemporary ethos without adopting the current trend. It’s easy to see the horse head jutting out of one of PUBLIC’s walls as just another example of the urban-rustic style currently fashionable in restaurant design—weird taxidermy, rusty farm implements, and un-ironic waistcoats—until it’s just as easy to remember that not only did AvroKO come first, but they’re already onto the next thing. “The design that we’re doing in New York now is shifting away from that,” O’Neal said of the craze for

At the Park Avenue [Season] Restaurant, snap on upholstery, mountable wall panels, and pendant lamps can all be easily changed and stowed away until next year.

old brick and dark wood. “It starts as an ethos and then gets translated down as a trend,” she pointed out. “So what you wind up with is a flat version of what should be a dynamic experience.”

So. How to keep things moving?

“Neon!” Farmerie said, and it’s a sign of how thoroughly defined AvroKO’s overall aesthetic is that none of the group—especially him—took it seriously. “Our design is driven by our desires and wants and needs, and that’s driven by the landscape,” Harris said. “And if that landscape starts to shift, then we’ll shift as well.” Their Bowery restaurant is a perfect example.

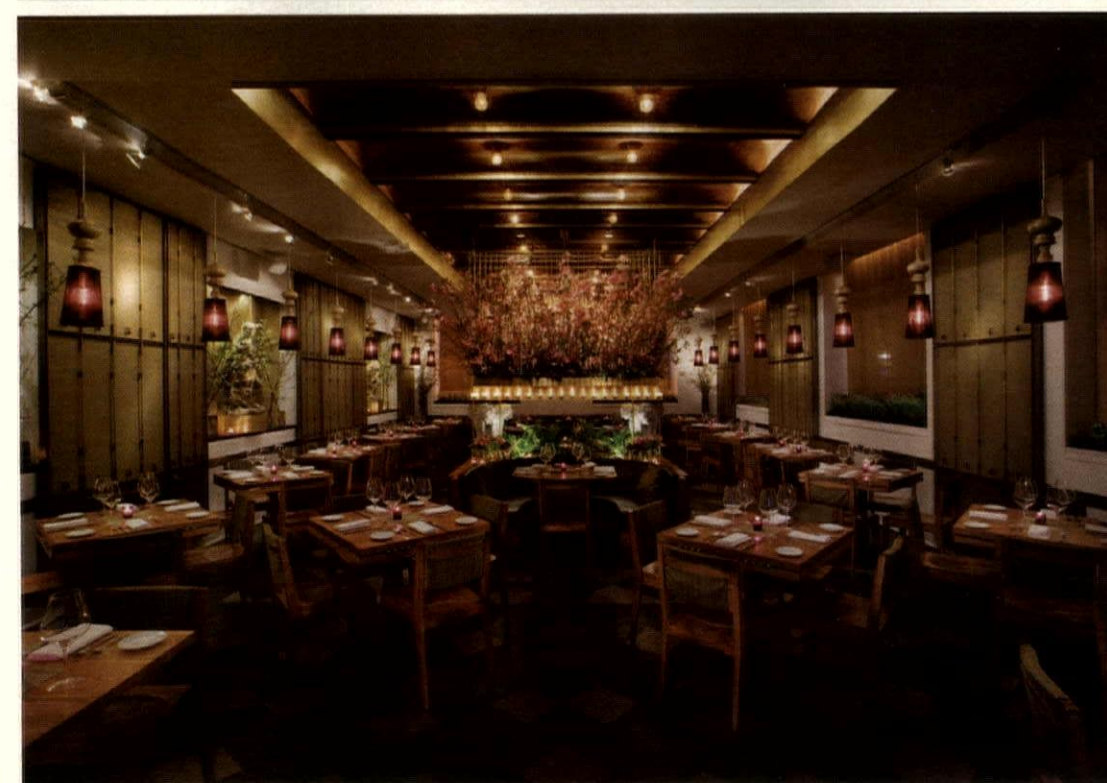
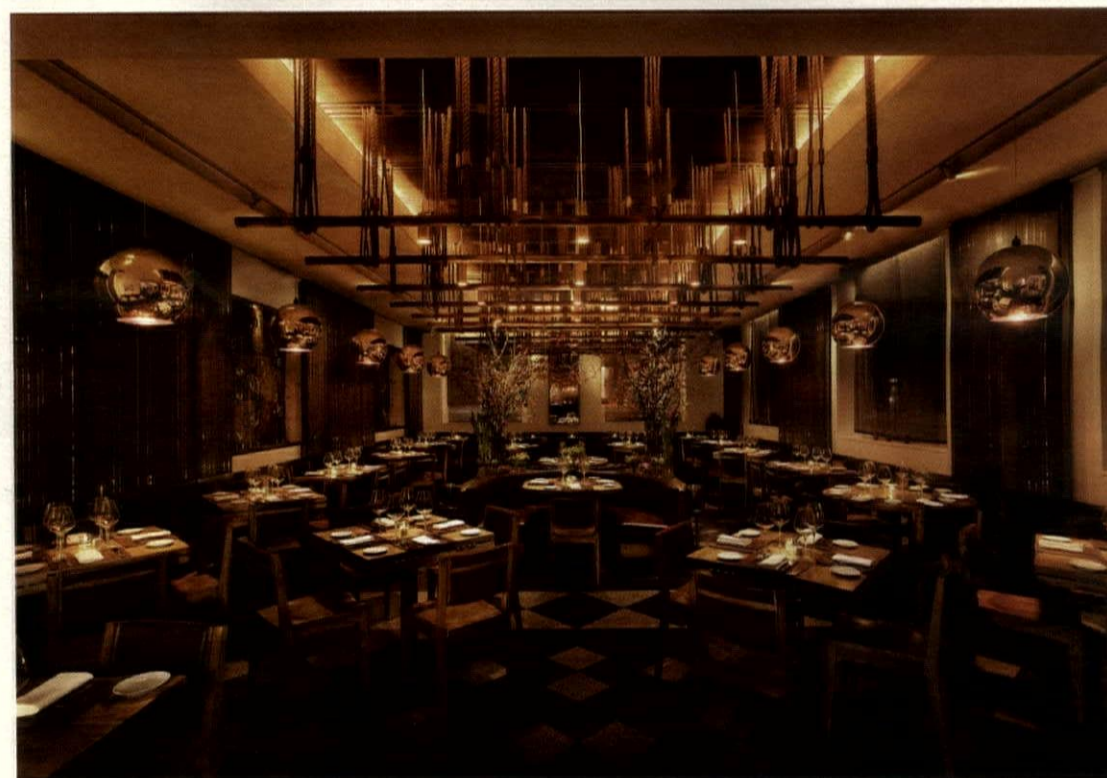
When the Bowery Hotel was under construction two years ago, homeless men took shelter under the scaffolding; by the time it opened, the glitterati that fill it every night had forgotten this. “It has so many histories—its rock-and-roll history, its life as a restaurant supply center,” Farmerie said of the neighborhood. “But I think there’s a sensibility of invention that’s always been on the Bowery.”

“It’s about not making things too precious,” Harris added. “Many designers can get very wrapped up in quote-unquote design.”

Instead, the four are looking to push things as far as they can. How far? “It’s like the title of the book; it’s the best of the worst,” Harris said, talking about *Best Ugly*, a book on the firm’s design philosophy that has just been released by HarperCollins. “It’s not conventional, it’s not traditional, it’s not so self-conscious—you just have to let things float and trust yourself enough.” How do they know when they’ve pushed it too far? “It’s when all four of us are looking and we all say ‘that doesn’t work,’” O’Neal said.

It’s clear, talking and listening to them, that the way they work together can’t be easily broken down into Bradshaw and Farmerie: architect or Harris: designer—much as they like to break it down into personalities like, “Kristina: smart one.” The number of sentences that go unfinished and the ones that go lovingly heckled is a sign of just how entrenched these four are in working together. “Before PUBLIC, we were like individual cowboys working together,” Harrison said. “And with PUBLIC, we were like a gang!”

EVA HAGBERG LIVES IN BROOKLYN AND WRITES ABOUT ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN, AND FOOD.



CHANGING TASTES

BY ANGELA STARITA
PHOTOGRAPHS BY EDWIN MONTOYA

WHAT AND WHERE A NEIGHBORHOOD EATS CAN REVEAL A LOT ABOUT IT AND IS A RELIABLE BAROMETER OF CHANGE. BROOKLYN'S BUSHWICK IS THE LATEST IN A LONG SERIES OF NEW YORK NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE NEW RESTAURANTS SIGNAL THAT THE PROCESS OF GENTRIFICATION IS WELL UNDERWAY.

To understand how food can reflect the debates surrounding a gentrifying neighborhood, look no further than the Bushwick entries on the blog Chowhound. One writer calling himself LittlePiggy asks for help dealing with "the food wasteland of the Morgan stop." Another retorts, "MOVE BACK TO MANHATTAN!!!! This is a neighborhood that is primarily Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Mexican. You will find great food all around you if you stop expecting to see a French Bistro (I am sure there will be one soon)."

Bushwick, a neighborhood until recently viewed as down-and-out, victim of both looting after the 1979 blackout and the end of big manufacturing in New York City, has become popular with artists looking for large spaces at lower rents than in Williamsburg or in Greenpoint just to the west. A highly visible sign of the undercurrent of change here has been the handful of restaurants opening in the last few years, places meant to appeal to people newly moved into the area—young, single, often white. Of course, there are many Latino restaurants in Bushwick, from Los Hermanos, the popular taco cart parked in a tortilla factory on Starr Street, to the homely Mexican and Ecuadorian storefronts like El Jarro on Knickerbocker Avenue. But the newer places, with comfort food menus and rustic-chic designs,

work like an extended living room for the "loft kids," the not-always-flattering moniker for new residents. Like the highly-designed Thai restaurants in Williamsburg and the first bistros on Smith Street in Carroll Gardens, these restaurants telescope a clear message to potential residents and investors: The neighborhood is safe, interesting, and poised for middle-class gentrification. Whatever prejudices this might reveal, the arrival of more upscale restaurants signals neighborhood regime change.

Though the Chowhound writer viewed the Morgan Street stop on the L train as a culinary dead end, it happens to be sited near the newest Bushwick eatery. Right beside the subway is a cafe and DVD rental store called the Archive, a well-stocked grocery named Brooklyn Natural, and a new pizzeria, Roberta's, which was recently reviewed in the \$25 and Under column in *The New York Times*. The reviewer, Peter Meehan, said the restaurant, which opened on Moore Street three months ago, "has a D.I.Y. feel, like a Bushwick loft." That aesthetic isn't so surprising given the restaurant's former incarnations: It had been a construction depot, a commercial landscaping factory, and a nuts and bolts warehouse. Before Roberta's opened, the building was vacant for three years.

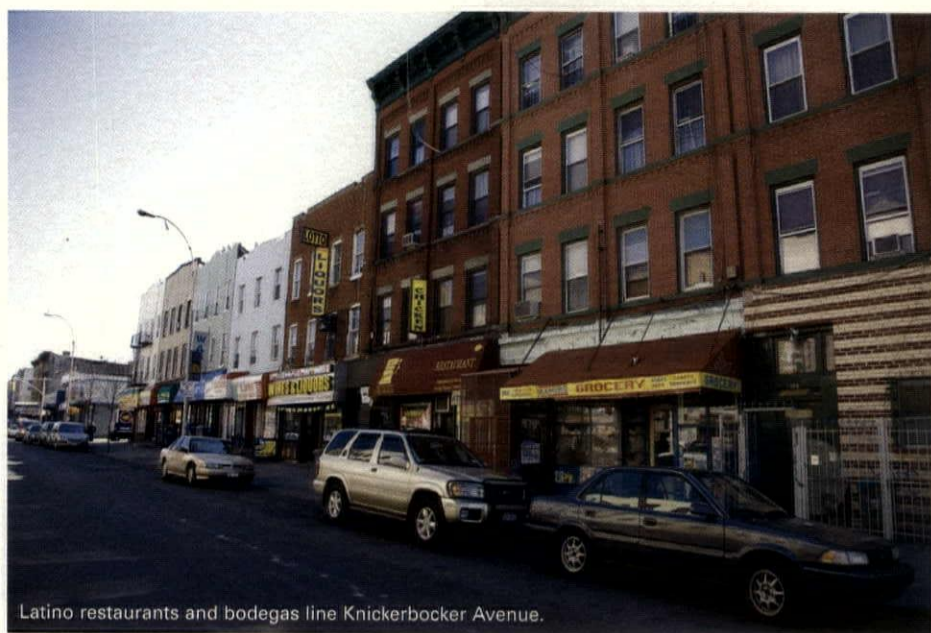
From the outside, the restaurant looks less than unassuming with a cinder block facade. Inside, the look is still rough, but considerably warmer: There are two long wooden tables that lend themselves to communal dining, and smaller round tables in back. A stack of firewood lines one wall, the fuel for the focal point of Roberta's: a red pizza oven the owners bought in Italy and shipped to Brooklyn. The ingredients used are geared toward a hip, health-conscious clientele—fresh mozzarella, San Marzano tomatoes, and organic Berkshire pork—with prices to match. A personal-size Margherita costs \$8; a Millennium Falco with tomatoes, breadcrumbs, parmigiano Reggiano, onion, and pork sausage, \$13.

Chris Parachini, one of the restaurant's three owners and himself an artist and musician, moved to Bushwick two years ago because he wanted a neighborhood quieter than Greenpoint, where he had lived for a year in the late 1980s. He believes that in the most industrial sections of Bushwick, "there are no old-timers. It was like moving out to the country." He believes the new, non-manufacturing businesses haven't been the cause of the neighborhood's financial tensions. "They were kicked out by the laws of economics," he said of local factories, not by small restaurants and cafes.





Northeast Kingdom is one of Bushwick's newer restaurant arrivals.



Latino restaurants and bodegas line Knickerbocker Avenue.

Parachini maintains that artists are, in their way, keeping the industrial tradition alive in Bushwick: "People are still manufacturing, but they're working alone in their studios."

Yet according to one advocacy group, true manufacturing continues in Bushwick, if on a smaller scale than a generation ago. Paul Parkhill of Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center, a group dedicated to keeping light industry in New York, said that while many factories look empty, they house small manufacturers. Small companies' greatest hindrance isn't foreign competitors

but the cost of rent in New York, Parkhill said. Landlords know they can get more from newcomers.

At the same time, small delis and restaurants that catered to factory workers find business considerably slower. Maximiliano Gonzalez, owner of the I & B Deli, had dozens of customers from manufacturing plants who would buy groceries or the hot lunch Gonzalez serves—roast pork, boiled platanos, and *mondongo*, a stew of tripe and potatoes. Gonzalez, who has been in business for 20 years, said that with so many factories closed he

can no longer count on a steady flow of customers during the day, even with new residents moving in. If people aren't working in the neighborhood, his business suffers. "They go to work in Manhattan and buy their things there."

For others, the arrival of Roberta's, along with the older Life Café NINE83 and Northeast Kingdom, means not having to go to Williamsburg to get the kind of food they want. Paige Newman, a 27-year-old trend forecaster, said that at Northeast Kingdom, "I can get nitrate-free bacon and mac-and-

cheese with gruyère." Newman, who moved to the neighborhood in 2003, likes Bushwick because of its relaxed atmosphere, less conspicuously fashionable than the world of Bedford Avenue.

Around the corner at Ad Hoc Gallery, Andrew Ford talks to three high school boys who have come by to see the exhibit called *Brick Ladies of NYC* showing the work of legendary graffiti artist Lady Pink and street artist, Aiko. Ford has been working in Bushwick since 2003 and likes to eat at a diner on Flushing Avenue called Tina's, a place that

opens at 3:30 in the morning and closes at 4 in the afternoon to suit the schedules of truckers coming into the Boar's Head meatpacking plant across the street and cops from around the corner. He's glad that new places like Roberta's have opened, but Tina's, he said, is an old standby: cheap, simple, and a gathering place for a different demographic in the neighborhood. "It's real. You know what I'm saying?"

ANGELA STARITA IS A BROOKLYN-BASED FREELANCE WRITER.

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APRIL

WEDNESDAY 16
LECTURES

Dr. Martha McNamara
Magnificent Temples of Justice: Law and Architecture in Massachusetts

6:00 p.m.
The Boston Public Library
Rabb Lecture Hall
700 Boylston St., Boston
www.architects.org

Dan Doctoroff
Reflections on Six Years in City Hall

6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

FILM

The Fall

(Tarsem, 2006), 115 min.
7:30 p.m.
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

THURSDAY 17
EXHIBITION OPENING

Robert Polidori
VERSAILLES: États Transitoires
Edwynn Houk Gallery
745 5th Ave.
www.houkgallery.com

LECTURES

Kate Stohr, Jens Holm, Martin C. Pedersen
Architecture and Recovery
6:30 p.m.
Museum of Arts and Design
40 West 53rd St.
www.madmuseum.org

Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel
Icons: NYC Landmarks to Remember
7:00 p.m.
New York Stock Exchange, 7th Fl.
11 Wall St.
www.downtownny.com

J. Meejin Yoon
Projects in Play
5:15 p.m.
Cornell University School of Architecture
Sibley Hall, Ithaca
www.architecture.cornell.edu

FRIDAY 18
LECTURE
Barry Bergdoll, Olafur Eliasson, Mark Wigley, et al.
The Colors of the Brain
6:00 p.m.
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Frederick Kiesler
Co-Realities
The Drawing Center
35 Wooster St.
www.drawingcenter.org

Yüksel Arslan
Visual Interpretations
The Drawing Room
40 Wooster St.
www.drawingcenter.org

Rodney Graham
303 Gallery
525 West 22nd St.
www.303gallery.com

EVENT

Earth Day
Socrates Sculpture Park
32-01 Vernon Blvd.,
Long Island City
www.socratessculpturepark.org

SATURDAY 19
SYMPOSIUM
The Colors of the Brain
10:00 a.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Theory and Practice
Andrew Leo Baron, Alan Bigelow, Deric Carner et al.
If So, Then So!
Kevin Darmanie
Gallery Aferro
73 Market Street, Newark
www.aferro.org

SUNDAY 20
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Olafur Eliasson
Take your time
P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center
22-25 Jackson Ave., Queens
www.ps1.org

El Greco to Velázquez
Art during the Reign of Philip III
Museum of Fine Arts
465 Huntington Ave., Boston
www.mfa.org

TUESDAY 22
LECTURE
For the Greener Good: Planning for a Chinese Century
6:30 p.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW,
Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Jeff Koons
Jeff Koons on the Roof
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

WEDNESDAY 23
LECTURE
Mark Cousins
Use and Utility in Architecture
6:30 p.m.
Princeton School of Architecture
Betts Auditorium, Princeton
www.princeton.edu/~soa

EXHIBITION OPENING
Daniel Guzmán, Steven Shearer
Double Album
New Museum of Contemporary Art
235 Bowery
www.newmuseum.org

THURSDAY 24
LECTURE
Lauren Ewing, Kory Rogers
Enduring Influence: Contemporary Artists on Shaker Design
6:00 p.m.
Bard Graduate Center
38 West 86th St.
www.bgc.bard.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Rachel Feinstein
Marianne Boesky Gallery
535 West 22nd St.
www.marianneboeskygallery.com

FRIDAY 25
LECTURE
Eve Blau, Ivan Rupnik
Project Zagreb: Transition as Condition, Strategy, Practice
7:00 p.m.
Architectural League
The Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.archleague.org

SYMPOSIUM
Buckminster Fuller Conference
8:00 a.m.
Harvard Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy St., Cambridge
www.gsd.harvard.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
George Lois
The Esquire Covers
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

Mathieu Lehanneur, Anthony van den Bossche
Local River
Artists Space
38 Greene St., 3rd Fl.
www.artistsspace.org

SATURDAY 26
LECTURE
Morrison H. Heckscher, Barry Lewis, et al.
Creating Central Park
2:30 p.m.
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

TUESDAY 29
LECTURES
Mario Botta
Spotlight on Design
6:30 p.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW,
Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

Kenneth Frampton
Architecture in the Age of Globalization
6:30 p.m.
Harvard Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy St., Cambridge
www.gsd.harvard.edu

WEDNESDAY 30
LECTURE
Marc M. Angéil
Negotiating Circumstances
6:00 p.m.
Princeton School of Architecture
Betts Auditorium, Princeton
www.princeton.edu/~soa

MAY

THURSDAY 1
LECTURES
Julie Nicoletta
Shaker Dwelling Houses: The Architecture of Order and Disorder
6:00 p.m.
Bard Graduate Center
38 West 86th St.
www.bgc.bard.edu

Vito Acconci
Recent Architecture and Directions in the Field
6:30 p.m.
New York City College of Technology
Voorhees Building
186 Jay Street, Brooklyn
www.citytech.cuny.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Rory Donaldson
Winkleman Gallery
637 West 27th St.
www.winkleman.com

Milton Resnick
Cheim & Read
547 West 25th St.
www.cheimread.com

FRIDAY 2
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Philip Guston
Works on Paper
The Morgan Library and Museum
225 Madison Ave.
www.themorgan.org

Adolph Gottlieb
PaceWildenstein
32 East 57th St.
www.pacewildenstein.com

SATURDAY 2
EXHIBITION OPENING
Robert Mapplethorpe
Polaroids
Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Ave.
www.whitney.org

WEDNESDAY 7
LECTURE
Christopher Gray
The Most Beautiful Block in the World
11:00 a.m.
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Superheroes: Fashion and Fantasy
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

THURSDAY 8
LECTURES
Shigeru Ban, Karen Van Lengen
Paper Houses and the Architecture of Disaster Relief
12:00 p.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW,
Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

Michael Webb
Two Journeys
6:30 p.m.
New York City College of Technology
Voorhees Building
186 Jay Street, Brooklyn
www.citytech.cuny.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Walton Ford
Paul Kasmin Gallery
293 10th Ave.
www.paulkasmingallery.com

Ann Pibal
Steingrímur Eýfjörð
Max Protetch Gallery
511 West 22nd St.
www.maxprotetch.com



FREDERICK KIESLER:
CO-REALITIES
The Drawing Center
35 Wooster Street
April 18 to July 24

The first New York exhibition of Frederick Kiesler's work in almost 20 years, *Co-Realities* presents over 30 drawings by the Austro-American architect, artist, designer, and theoretician that explore notions about the totality of experience and perception, as well as Kiesler's radical ideas on the relationship between man, nature, and technology. His work as an exhibition designer provides a window into his distinctive philosophy. *Study for exhibition design, Bloodflames 1947*, depicts the broken outline of a man's figure fading into an abstract gallery space with art covering the floor, ceiling, and walls, collapsing the boundaries between perceiving subject, architecture, and artwork. Kiesler is best known for his *Endless House*, and a small five-by-eight-inch pen drawing (above) portrays the curved biomorphic walls of this iconic work.



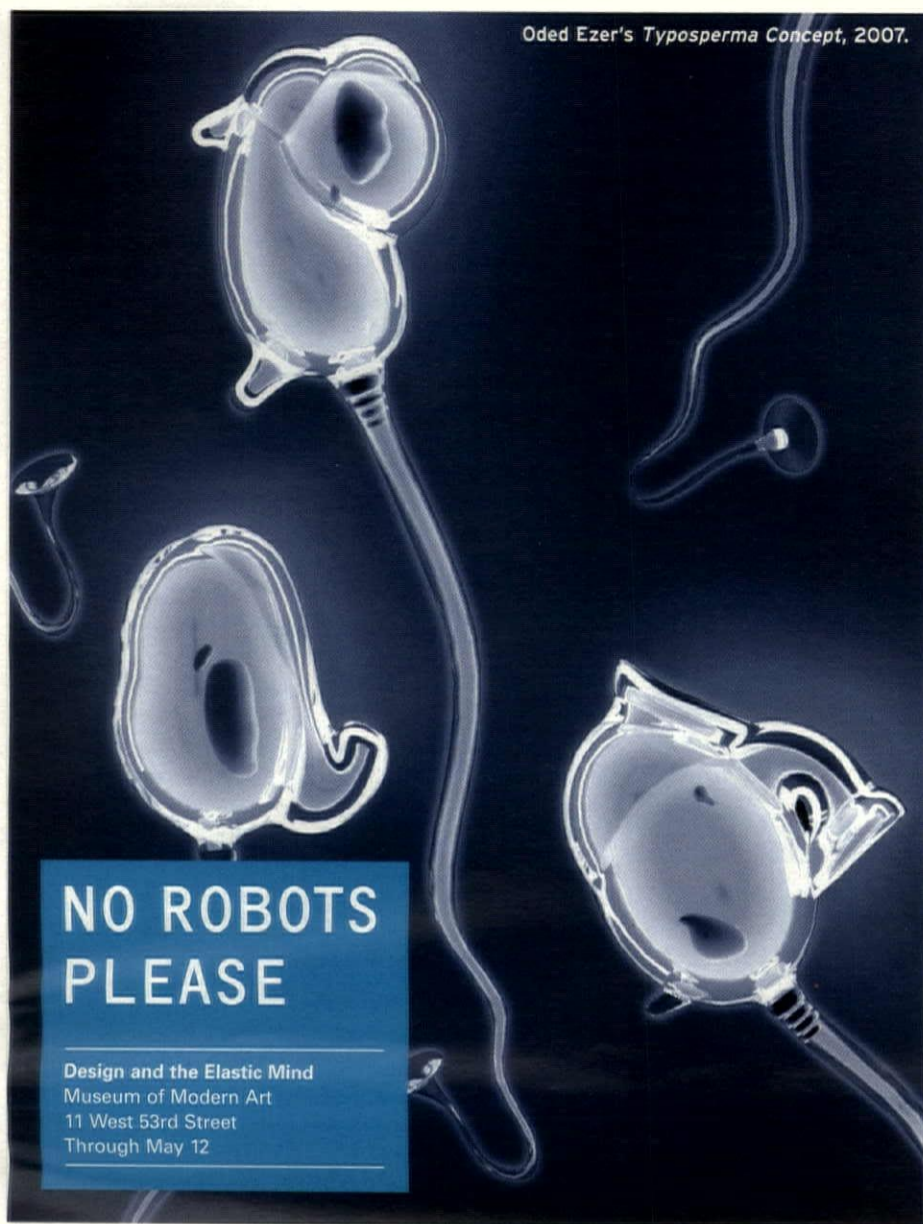
MOMENTUM 10:
RANJANI SHETTAR
The Institute of Contemporary Art
100 Northern Avenue, Boston
Through July 13

Delicately floating above the gallery floor, Ranjani Shettar's suspended sculpture appears to transcend the law of gravity. Organic in form, the sculpture is reminiscent of mushroom caps, soap bubbles, or multiplying cells, and is part of the museum's Momentum series that examines new developments in contemporary art through emerging artists from the United States and around the world. Shettar, born and based in Bangalore, India, is the tenth artist to be exhibited in the series. Using both organic and manmade materials, Shettar constructed the sculpture on stainless steel armatures that have been wrapped in muslin and dipped in tamarind kernel powder. According to exhibition curator Emily Moore Brouillet, the artist fell in love with the beautiful natural light that poured into the 1,000-square-foot gallery space from the skylights, and conceived the idea for her piece *Sun-sneezers blow light bubbles*. The title references the phenomenon whereby people sneeze when exposed to bright light or the sun.

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Oded Ezer's *Typosperma* Concept, 2007.



"I want to be a machine." Visitors casting a sidelong glance as they enter *Design and the Elastic Mind*, the whirlwind sensorium of a show now at the Museum of Modern Art, might spy that cryptic observation by Andy Warhol in the wall text that introduces the adjacent exhibition, *Color Chart: Reinventing Color 1950 to Today*. Warhol's comment identified a shift in the material practice of painting from color as a matter of technique to a matter of technology. "Straight out of the can," observed Warhol contemporary Frank Stella, "it can't get better than that."

This dream that even such mysterious aspects of human behavior as the apprehension, application, and affect of color could take on the clarity and efficiency of the mechanical might have represented the last legacy of an earlier machine age. At MoMA, this era was bracketed by two shows: 1934's *Machine Art*, which found inadvertent aesthetic power hidden among implements of manufacturing like ball bearings and welding masks; and 1968's *The Machine*, which celebrated the charm of mechanical ephemera in everything from Duchamp to Calder to Tinguely, even

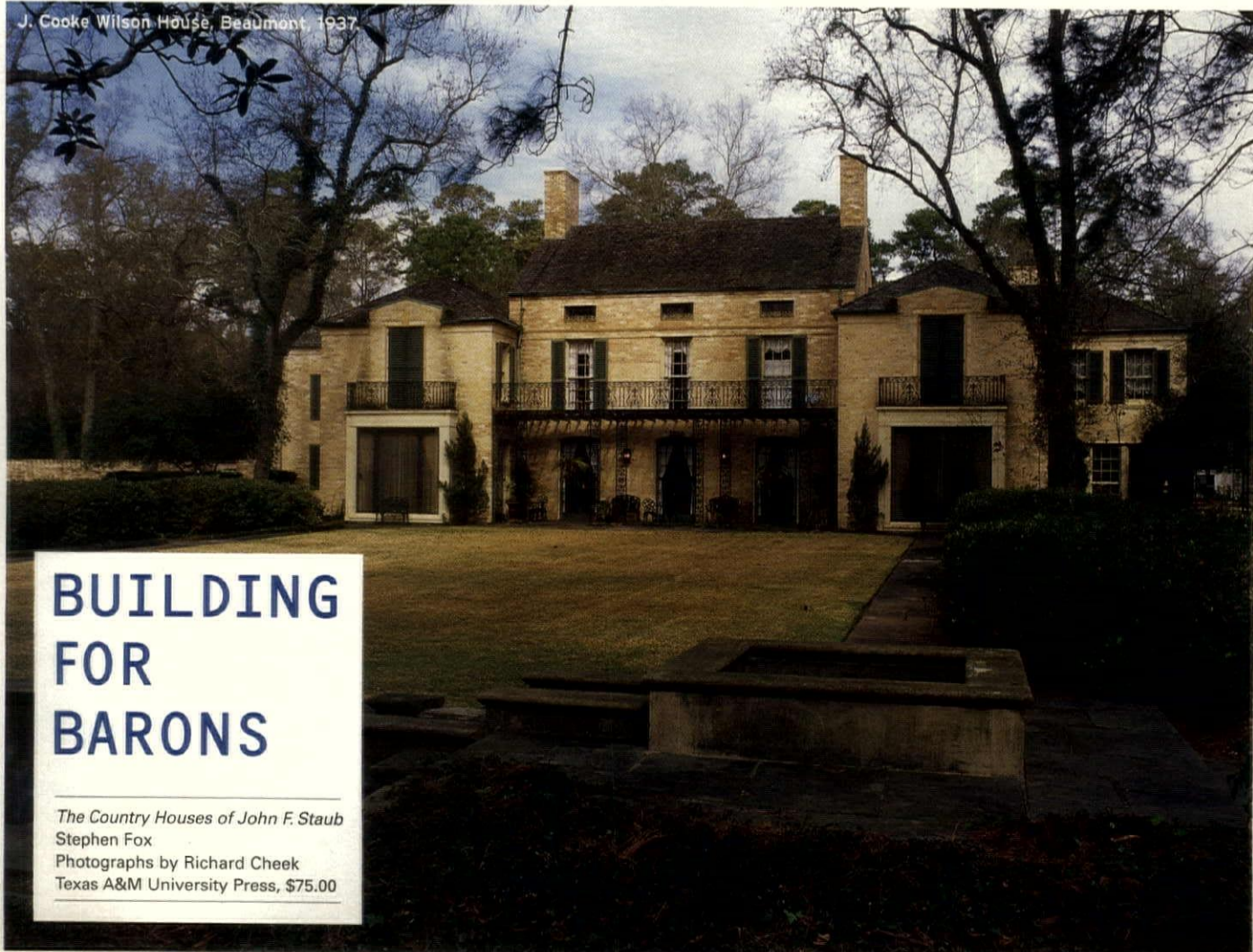
as it electrifyingly identified a post-mechanical, proto-digital sensibility in the early works of Nam June Paik and other young artist-engineers commissioned to contribute to the show. Those young artists used motors, plastic, computers, screens, and whatever was at hand to extend the tacit assertion of both shows: that as our technology and tools became ever more refined, powerful, and complex, we human beings would begin to resemble them. Multi-screen projections would spawn multi-track minds; electronic processing would make us faster; mechano-digital repetitiveness would add regularity and precision to our sensibilities. Perhaps, somewhere between texting thumb and iTuned ear, some of this has come to pass. But *Design and the Elastic Mind* suggests something altogether stranger and more interesting: the simultaneously reassuring and disconcerting idea that our technology will come ever more to resemble what comes naturally—will resemble us in all our biologically squishy and psychologically shadowy glory.

Evidence: a Mercedes-Benz that moves like a tropical boxfish; DNA-based origami;

eyelashes as long as bangs; blinking, blushing buildings; stem-cell jewelry; an alarm clock that feels like your lover's hair; bubble screens; solar bottles; oaken robots; statistical clocks; memory envelopes; and, not least, an exquisite honeycomb vase from Studio Libentiny manufactured over a week by 40,000 bees. Prefixes like bio-, kine-, eco-, and nano-attach wonderfully and relentlessly to suffixes like -matics, -metics, -metrics, and -matrix.

For architects, some of this is not news. Anyone who has stumbled past an architecture school in the past decade has overheard someone talking about the emergent performative behavior of a flock of birds or a school of fish, and wondered how cathedral-level complexity might arise from an accumulation of bird brains. Similarly, the file-to-factory features of rapid-prototyping machines and 3-D resin printers, and subsequent strategies of fabrication and tectonics, are no longer breathtaking. The biomorphic formalism of 3-D Max-era software has been around so long that it's starting to look intriguingly retro. But the exhibit adds to this catalogue of curiosities a tacit but **continued on page 43**

J. Cooke Wilson House, Beaumont, 1937



BUILDING FOR BARONS

The Country Houses of John F. Staub
Stephen Fox
Photographs by Richard Cheek
Texas A&M University Press, \$75.00

Among major American cities, Houston is unique in that it has no definitive book on its architectural history, yet that history has been definitively assembled in the brain of a single individual. Stephen Fox knows more about Houston than anyone knows about any other American megalopolis. Among historians, he is legend.

During his decades at Rice University, where he has an office but no teaching duties, Fox has culled a trove of material on his adopted city (he was born in Brownsville, Texas) and written voluminously about Texas architecture. He not only knows the history of the place, but also follows the comings and goings of Houston's design community in *Cite*, the publication he helped to found at the Rice Design Alliance in the early 1980s. Surprisingly, his first major book comes in the guise of this massive coffee table volume, with luscious photographs by Richard Cheek. Don't be fooled by the cover, for there is much to be learned here about Houston's architecture and urbanism in its very detailed text. *The Country Houses of John F. Staub* offers up none of the saccharine paeans to interior decor and "taste" that fill typical chronicles of life among the plutocracy, but rather takes a challenging look at how social elites control their image through architecture.

Indeed, the author and photographer take pains to present the domestic architecture of John Staub as a microcosm for Houston's growth during the oil boom of the first half of the 20th century. The characters in their story—Cullinans, Farishes, Neals, Cullens, and friends—are familiar **continued on page 43**

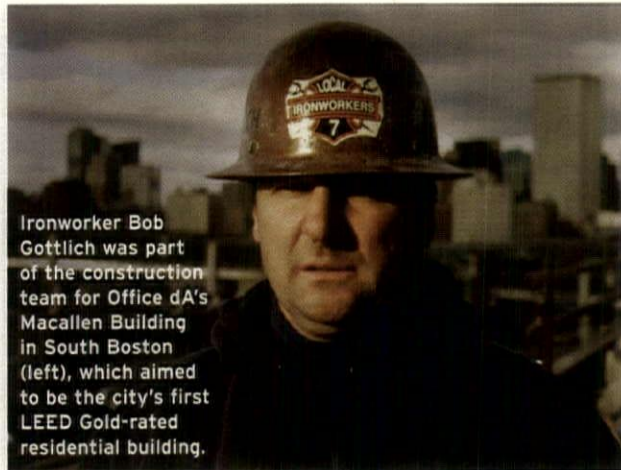
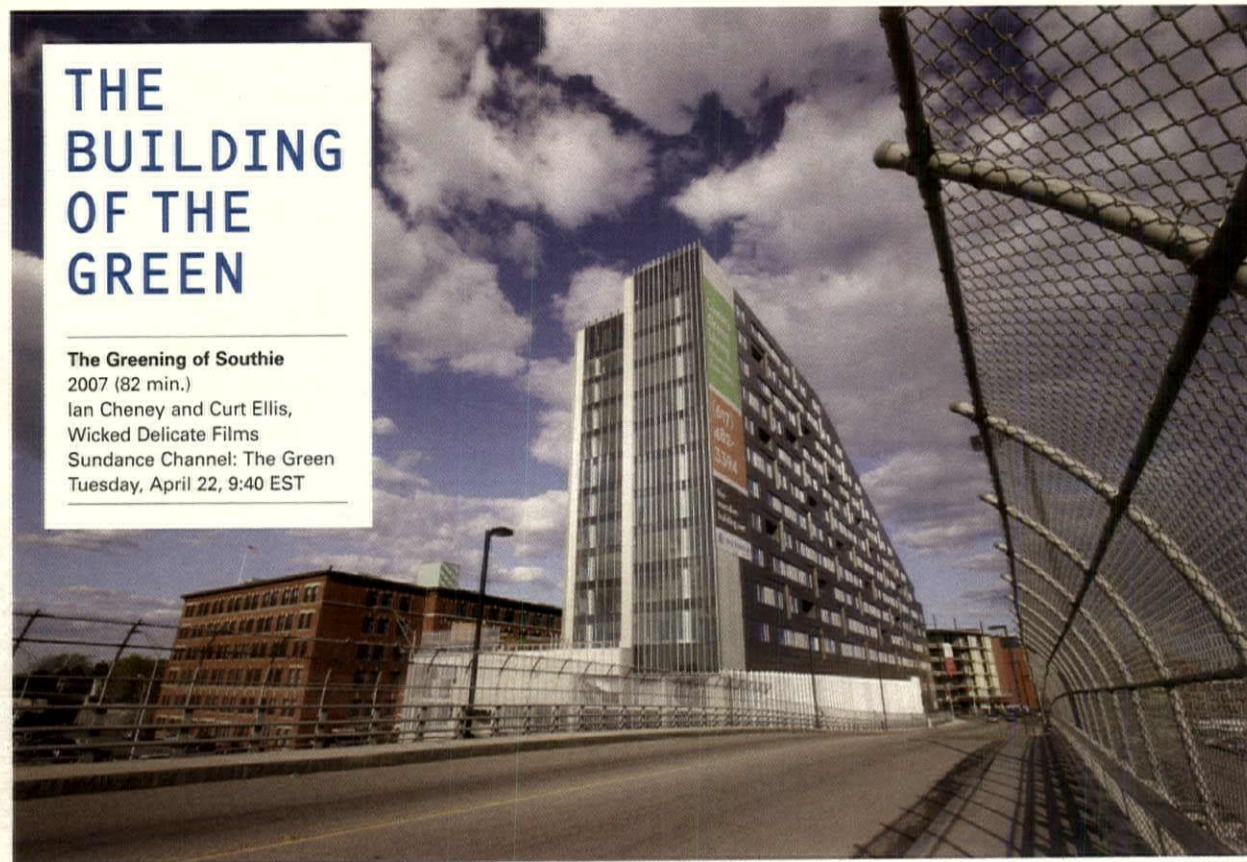
THE BUILDING OF THE GREEN

The Greening of Southie

2007 (82 min.)

Ian Cheney and Curt Ellis,
Wicked Delicate Films

Sundance Channel: The Green
Tuesday, April 22, 9:40 EST



Ironworker Bob Gottlich was part of the construction team for Office dA's Macallen Building in South Boston (left), which aimed to be the city's first LEED Gold-rated residential building.

Even the staunchest advocate of sustainable building practices might hesitate at the thought of a movie about LEED certification, but *The Greening of Southie* is just that, and enormously entertaining. The documentary follows the process of constructing the Macallen, a condominium project in South Boston designed by the firm Office dA to get a Gold rating from the United States Green Building Council. The filmmakers find narrative drive

both in the pleasure of watching a building go up and the drama of the will-they-or-won't-they struggle for gold. More compellingly, they do so in following the evolving thinking of some of the ironworkers, sheet-rockers, roofers, painters, and site laborers who are putting it up. It is probably safe to say that these union guys—the vast majority are men, and Massachusetts through-and-through—hadn't spent a lot of time worrying about their

respective carbon footprints before starting work on the Macallen, but as the building progresses, along with feelings of pride in it, that changes. They are often very thoughtful, and always very funny.

While there is straightforward explanation of how one goes about developing a sustainable building, there is none of the stale air that pervades instructional videos: *The Greening of Southie* tells a story through its characters,

first and foremost. Bob Gottlich is an ironworker in Local 7, and describes his first response to the idea of a green building. "I'm not a nature person...but put it this way: How many times have you driven by a parking lot and seen a junked car just sitting there?" he asks. "Why don't they just recycle it, and make a beam out of it?" Many of his colleagues come to appreciate the idea too, often in terms of his own trade. The gregarious Wayne Phillips, a

laborer in Local 223, who keeps the site clean, explains it to his kids—and laughingly if unscientifically explains double-flush toilets—and ends as a true believer. Gottlich, too, becomes proud: "The people who will benefit are the people who live here...I'll never get to see it, but I'm happy with it."

The movie also quietly underscores some of the problems that are built into the LEED process. One feature of the condos is the hand-selected bamboo flooring from China, touted as a renewable resource and one that garners the Macallen a point. However, the final score will not take into account the fact that the low-VOC glues used ultimately didn't hold, and the floors began to buckle. Almost all of them had to be ripped out. And because the original source they had used required a long lead-

time, the team ordered a different type in hopes it would work. Nobody liked it, and back to China it went. LEED grants points for locally-sourced materials, but doesn't take into account the three extra container-ship voyages that went into the floors.

The film's name gets at another element of the story, too: Southie has been a famously clannish, primarily Irish working class neighborhood in Boston, but as with the rest of the city, that is changing, and the Macallen building is a tangible sign of that change. Joe Miller, of the Quiet Man pub across the street, knows that he will soon enough be pushed out by rising prices. One of the film's pleasures is that it recognizes that sustainability can be far more complex than just building green.

ANNE GUINEY IS AN'S NEW YORK EDITOR.

THE URGE TO FLOURISH

Rococo:
The Continuing Curve, 1730–2008
Cooper-Hewitt,
National Design Museum
2 East 91st St.
Through July 6



Left: Marcel Wanders' Coryza Vase, 2005; Right: Dale Chihuly's Sconce, 1996.

designs into three-dimensional objects that retain their whimsical lightness, rebellious curves, and architectural morsel-ness without being hobbled by excessive ornamentation and complexity. Only later, when standing before stocky German and Dutch rococo chairs that would look at home in a petrified forest, does the viewer fully appreciate Meisssonier's skill.

In the realm of furniture, rococo embellishment in carved wood console tables had a more coveted counterpart in the art of *ébénisterie*, which consisted of veneered furniture or cabinetwork. On view here are pieces that combine oriental scenes lacquered onto oak, gilt bronze frames, and leafy accents in a single 18th-century commode, topped with a slab of shimmering marble. These extreme works, Penelope Hunter-Stiebel notes in a catalogue essay, "are presented individually, not in the pairs or sets that made their eccentricity more palatable to a public accustomed to repetition and symmetry."

In 1777, architect Jacques-Francois Blondel was befuddled by "the ridiculous jumble of irregular cartouches" of the ornament used in his day, but it was in fact his own patron Louis XV and his mistress Madame de Pompadour who championed this novel decorative language known as "rococo." A sweeping exhibition now on view at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum surveys this stylistic movement from its origins in 18th-century France through to the present day, where Alvar Aalto's undulating Savoy vase and Marc Newson's bent wood chair

are descendants of the same urge to throw a curve.

It all began with a frustrated architect. Born in Italy to a family of goldsmiths, Juste-Aurèle Meisssonier (1695–1750) is the acknowledged inventor of rococo, although the term wasn't coined until the early 19th century, most likely a combination of the French *rocaille* (the shell-laden rockwork used to embellish grottoes) and *barocco* (an Italian adjective meaning baroque, as in misshapen or malformed). With a swirling, free-form asymmetry that he applied to everything from candelabra

and furniture to stage sets and Versailles courtyard fireworks displays, Meisssonier worked as an official designer to Louis XV and was wildly influential, but never achieved his lifelong dream of becoming an architect.

The exhibition starts with a series of lyrical etchings of Meisssonier's designs, among them elements that a 1734 French magazine described as "morsels of architecture with bizarre and picturesque effects." From these first displays, one feels the fascinating tension that pulses through the show: the challenge of translating free-flowing, sensuous

The exhibition's final rooms are filled with a contemporary cacophony of curves and the occasional rococo satire. It is convergent evolution at its finest, with such divergent work as the streamlined swoops found in chairs by Frank Gehry, gilt-framed mirrors by Jeff Koons, and the pink Limoges tureen adorned with photo transfers of Cindy Sherman dressed as Madame de Pompadour.

In an era of rapid prototyping and techniques borrowed from the auto and aircraft industries, designers continue finding new ways of achieving sinuous curves and natural forms. Many contemporary manifestations of the rococo sensibility introduce a new aspect of the accidental combined with a dollop of surrealism, as seen in the Coryza vase of Marcel Wanders. "Even though I often put as much detail work into what I do as anyone, it always appears casual," Gehry has said. "That's the edge I'm after. For people to see what I want them to see, but for them not to be quite sure if it was designed or if it just happened."

STEPHANIE MURG IS A NEW YORK-BASED ARTS WRITER.

BUILDING FOR BARONS continued

from page 41 to those few who follow the business of big oil, but will surprise most students of architecture with their wit, style, and intelligence. At the center of the story is an architect of uncommon grace and grit, and one who deserves to be better known among masters of the modern house.

Fox cites "the construction of spatial continuity, so critical to urban reform programs during the Progressive era" as one of Staub's innovative strategies in the planning and design of country houses for the oil barons and their friends. Using theories of social scientists as a basis, he follows the "social construction of upper-class identity" through an analysis not only of house types, but also of elite neighborhoods, the enclaves that the wealthy built to ensure their caste solidarity and distinction in the modern metropolis. Though occasionally weighed down by academic jargon, he maintains his thesis throughout the book, using it to connect such disparate architectural types as the large suburban houses of River Oaks to the small rustic summer retreats on the Guadalupe River. Armed with the visual documentation provided in Cheek's dazzling photographs, he succeeds admirably in making

a case for a non-style-based treatment of eclectic architecture.

Among Houstonians, John Staub is best known as the architect of Bayou Bend, the house museum built by Ima Hogg in 1926 and now run by the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. Renowned for its American furniture collection and its colorful patron, the house and gardens are extraordinary in other ways as well. Fox and Cheek expand upon the virtues of this and other River Oaks houses to help make a case for Staub as a master of planning, proportion, and subtle formal design, always tailored to his clients' needs. As an architect of modern houses for wealthy Americans, Staub was required to follow shifting technology, taste, and identity among the upper classes. "Staub's versatility," Fox writes, "his concern for avoiding repetition, and the responsibility he felt for producing houses that were specific to their owners enabled him to continue to lead by serving, reinterpreting the country house in a lower key so that it might continue to perform efficiently as an instrument of upper class taste and power." He designed an astounding variety of houses—in size, pretentiousness, abstraction, style, locale—yet followed core principles that are quite

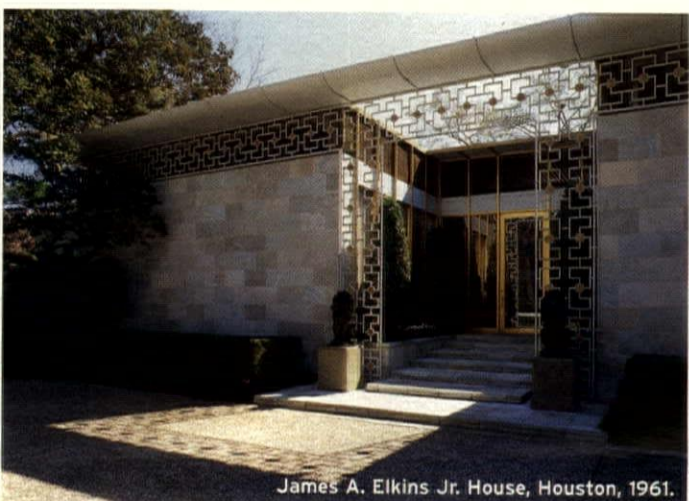
consistent with those of his modernist contemporaries such as William Wurster, Marcel Breuer, and Philip Johnson. Perhaps that is why Howard Barnstone, one of Houston's premier modernists, wrote the first book to treat Staub's work during the 1970s.

One of the great virtues of this large format book is that the text may be explicated in photographs of details as well as overall views. Richard Cheek, one of the premier architectural photographers of his generation, knows how to highlight both formal and sensuous qualities of buildings. His magnificent color photos bring out qualities of Staub's work that would go unnoticed in standard monographic studies of

an individual architect. Matched with Fox's detailed analyses, the reader can appreciate what clients saw in Staub's architecture and why he had such a long and successful career.

The Country Houses of John F. Staub is but one of many recent monographs on the work of 20th-century traditional architects and decorators, but it stands well out from the crowd. Fox and Cheek have created what will likely become the definitive academic study of an American regionalist architect's domestic work. It is also one of the most beautiful architecture books of the year.

MARK ALAN HEWITT IS AN ARCHITECT AND PROFESSOR OF ART HISTORY AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY.



James A. Elkins Jr. House, Houston, 1961.

RICHARD CHEEK

NO ROBOTS PLEASE continued from page 41 significant ethical message, that during turbulent times, the designer is positioned as a mediator and translator between technologies or other phenomena at invisibly vast or miniature scale and our visible, tangible world.

The strongest works in the exhibit show how to do this. Aranda/Lasch's *Rule of Six* project elegantly translates molecular behaviors and geometries of "self-assembly and modularity" along an intriguingly sliding scale to conceptualize new possibilities for landscapes both domestic and geographical. Columbia University's Spatial Information Design Lab harvests GPS and GIS technology to visualize critical sociological inequities at urban scales. Other work, however, such as Oded Ezer's "typosperma" installation of typographical data into spermatozoa result in a visually striking but conceptually trivial translation of data between natural and cultural contexts.

"No Robots Please," was the rule given by Alan Outten of the Royal College of Art when he invited ten-year-old schoolchildren, having been introduced to new biological and ecological technologies, to envision the future. The result, featured at MoMA, was post-global-warming mermaids. Outten's description of the kids' reaction to these technologies applies to *Design and the Elastic Mind* itself: a delightful balance of "sheer marvel [and] unadulterated yuck." Warhol would have died for exactly this effect.

THOMAS DE MONCHAUX IS AN ARCHITECT AND WRITER LIVING IN NEW YORK.

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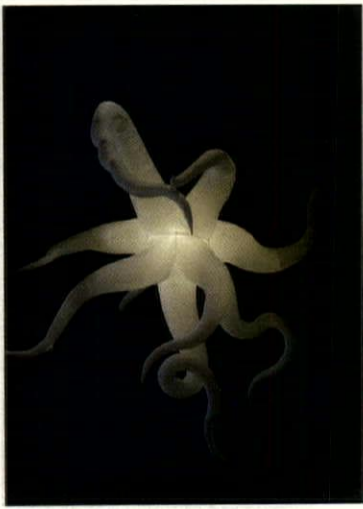
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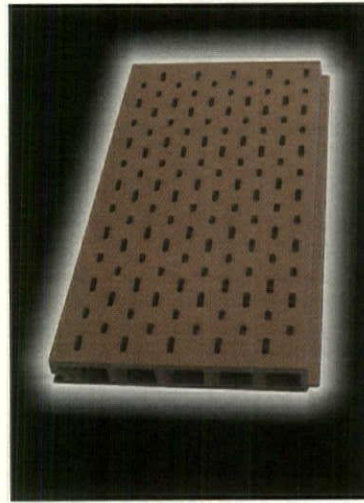
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RESOURCES

New Digs (p. 9): The structural engineer for the new architecture school lobby was Leslie E. Robertson Associates, 30 Broad St., New York, NY 10004, 212-750-9000, www.lera.com. The MEP engineer was Vanderweil Engineers, 501 Seventh Ave., ste. 422, New York, NY 10018, 212-921-4616, www.vanderweil.com.

The curtain wall was designed by Front, 185 Varick St., New York, NY 10014, 212-242-2220, www.frontinc.com.

Unveiled (p. 9): The structural engineering for the Park Tower is provided by Versatile Engineering, 240-02 66th Ave., Douglaston, NY 11362, 718-428-5025. The owner's representative is KMM Consultants, 108 Wooster St., #C2, New York, NY 10012, 212-656-1074, www.kmm-consultants.com.

Light At the Top of the Stair (p. 14): The general contractor for the NYU Philosophy was Sciamé, 14 Wall St., New York, NY 10005, 212-232-2200, www.sciame.com. The security consultant was C.H. Guernsey,

555 N. Grand Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73112, 405-416-8100, www.chguernsey.com.

In Detail (p. 22): The theater consultants for the EMPAC was Fisher Dachs Associates, 22 W. 19th St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10011, 212-691-3020, www.fda-online.com. The cedar was fabricated by Architectural Woodwork Industries, 1616 Walnut St., ste. 1919, Philadelphia, PA 19103, 215-546-6645, www.awin.net. The skylight was fabricated by FOILTEC North America, 13 Green Mountain Dr., Cohoes, New York 12047, 518-783-0575, www.foiltecna.com.

Emotive Architecture (p. 26): Concrete fabrication for the Bioscience House was by Get Real Surfaces, 143 W. 29th St., ste. 1100A, New York, NY 10011, 212-414-1620, www.getrealsurfaces.com. The lighting consultant was L'Observatoire, 295 Lafayette St., ste. 915, New York, NY 10012, 212-255-4463, www.lobintl.com.

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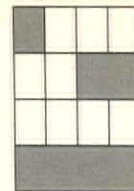
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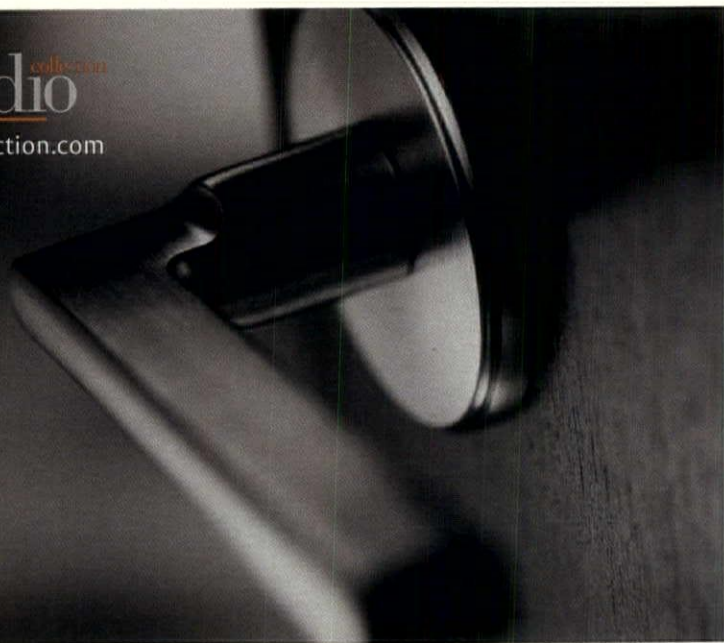
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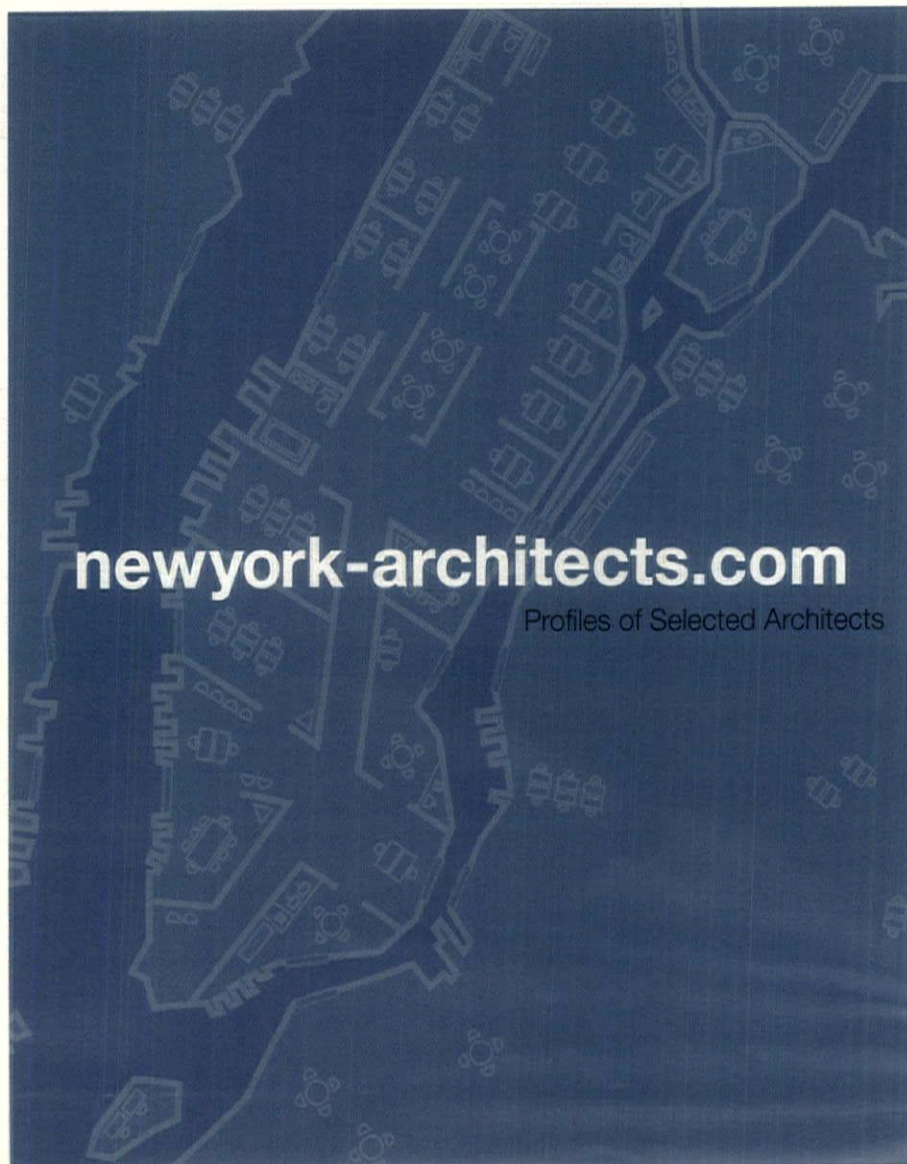
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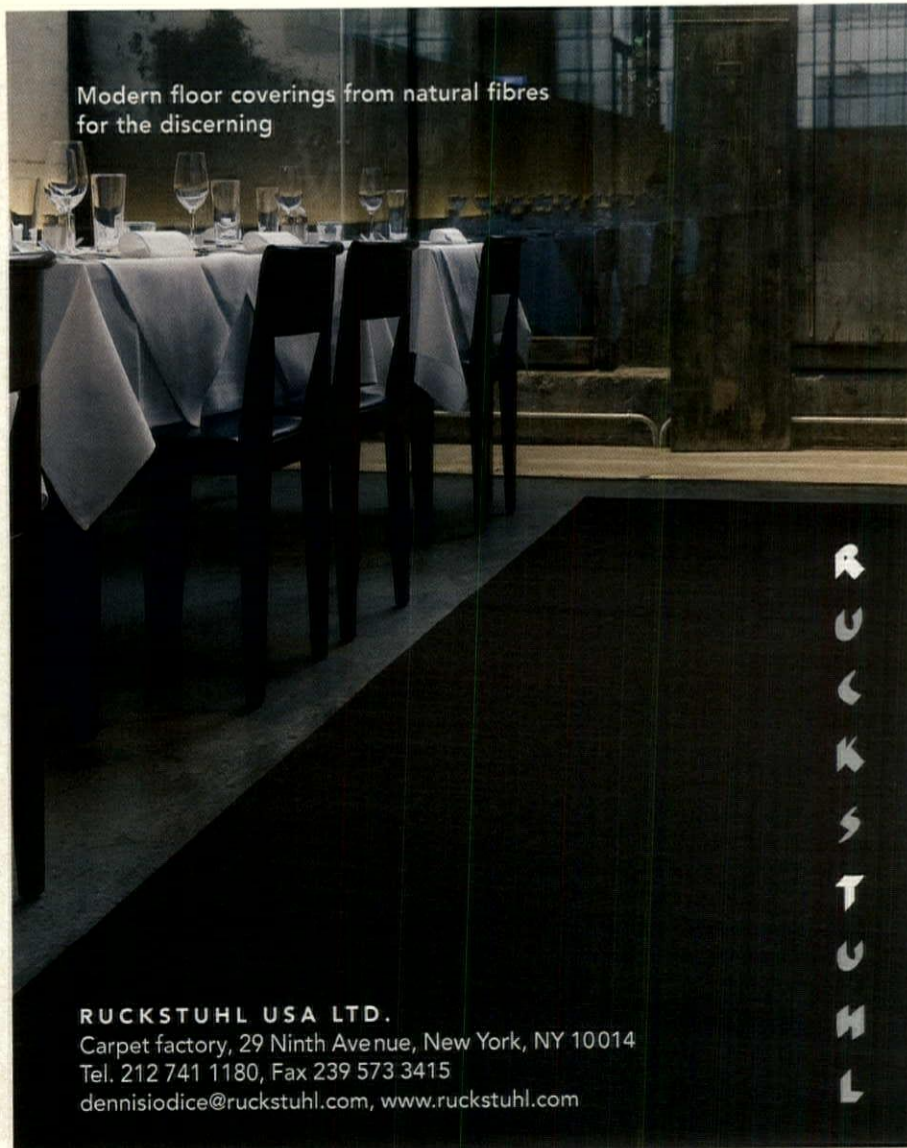
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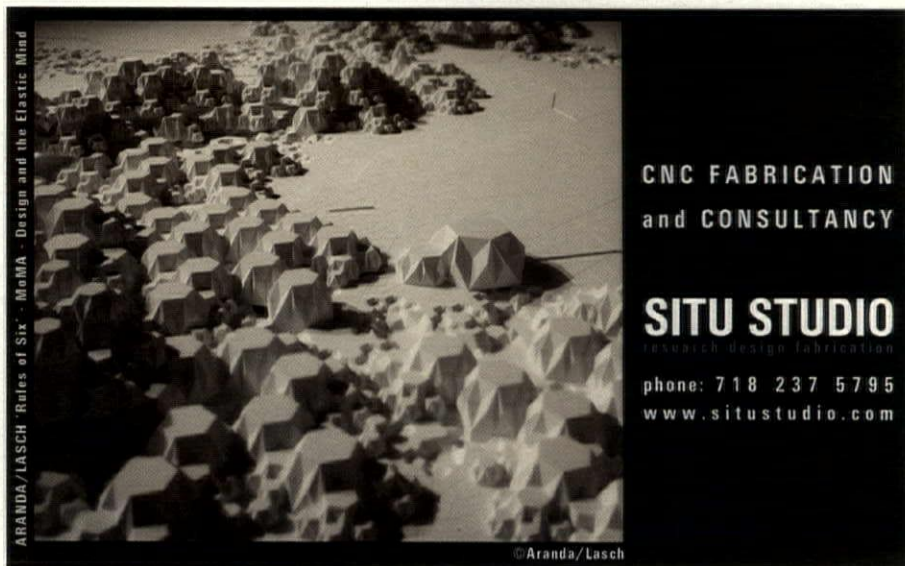


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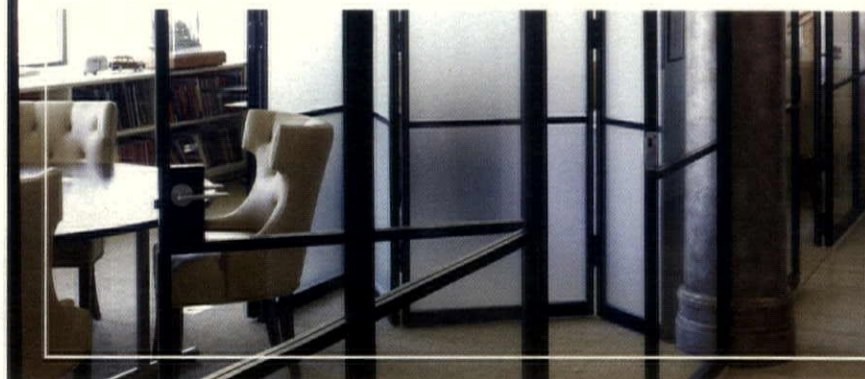
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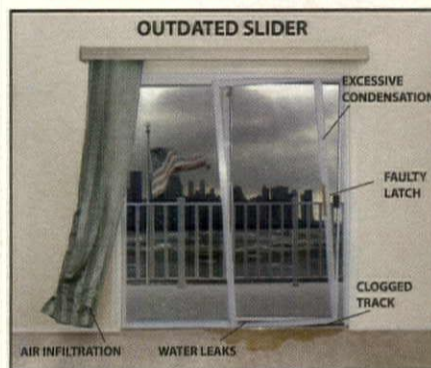
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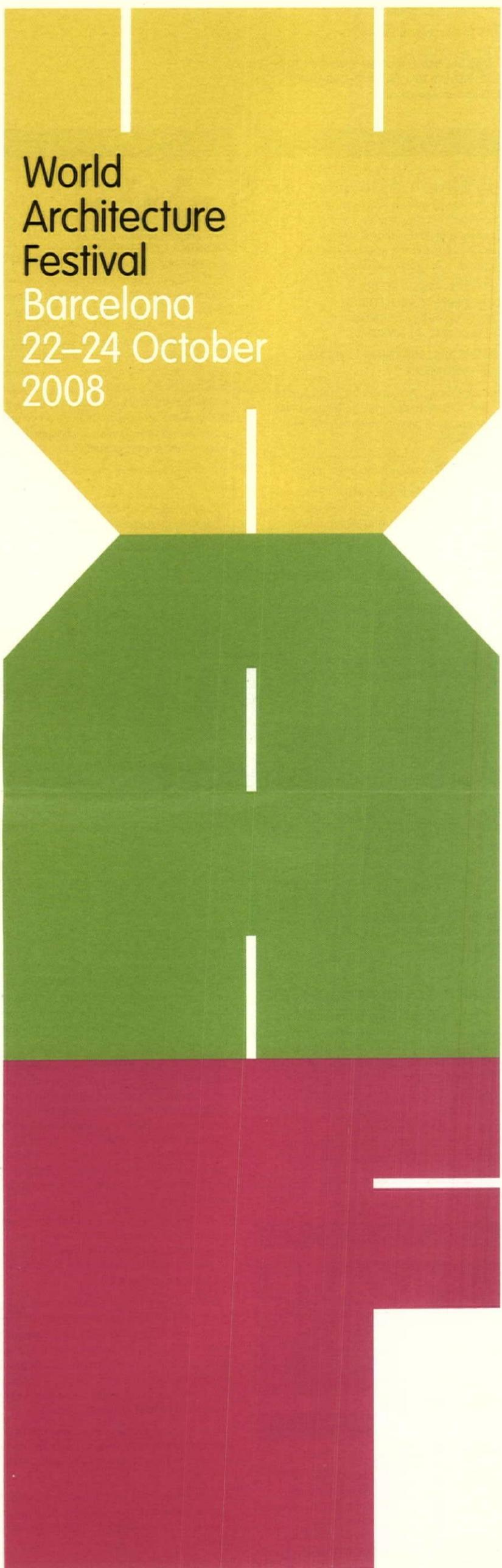
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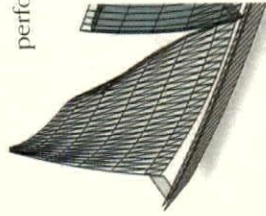
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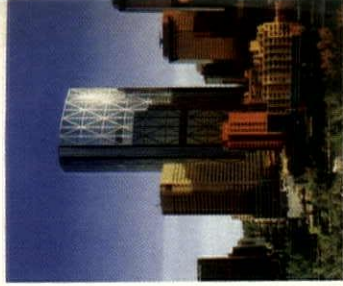
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